

Chapter 14

14

HADRIAN'S WALL AND THE NORTHEAST

Updated by
Joseph Reaney



 Sights

★★★★☆

 Restaurants

★★☆☆☆

 Hotels

★★☆☆☆

 Shopping

★★☆☆☆

 Nightlife

★★☆☆☆

WELCOME TO HADRIAN'S WALL AND THE NORTHEAST

TOP REASONS TO GO

★ **Hadrian's Wall:** The ancient Roman wall is a wonder, as much for the wild countryside around it as for its stones and forts, such as Housesteads and Vindolanda.

★ **Castles, Castles, Castles:** Fought over by the Scots and the English, and prey to Viking raiders, the Northeast was heavily fortified. Barnard, Alnwick, and Dunstanburgh castles are spectacular remnants of this history.

★ **Medieval Durham:** A splendid Norman cathedral that dates back to the 11th century is just one of the city's charms. Take a stroll along its ancient winding streets.

★ **Lindisfarne (Holy Island):** To get to this remote, windswept island, visitors must drive across a causeway that floods at high tide. Island high-lights include the ruins of a Norman priory.

The Northeast can be divided into four distinct sections. The southernmost part of the region is County Durham, which is centered around the beautiful and historic cathedral city of the same name. Farther north, the art-loving city of Newcastle upon Tyne and its southern neighbor Gateshead straddle the region's main river, the muddy Tyne. A third area to the west of Newcastle is Hadrian's Wall country, where the remains of the famous Roman fortification snake through rugged scenery. Finally, it's up to the Far Northeast, where towering castles and misty islands punctuate the stunning, final miles of England's eastern shoreline.

1 Barnard Castle. A pretty market town home to the substantial ruins of a medieval fortification.

2 Bishop Auckland. Named for the Bishops of Durham, this small town includes a well-preserved bishops' palace.

3 Durham. A historic city set on a rocky spur, home to one of England's most spectacular cathedrals.

4 Newcastle upon Tyne. A sprawling metropolis with a lively regional arts

scene and the Northeast's best nightlife.

5 Hadrian's Wall. The famous wall that once marked the northern border of the Roman Empire.

6 Hexham. This pretty town is a useful base for visiting Hadrian's Wall and the wild countryside surrounding it.

7 Greenhead. A town surrounded on all sides by Roman history, including the Housesteads Roman Fort.

8 Morpeth. A lively medieval market town and an ideal base for exploring historic Cragside and Brinkburn Priory.

9 Alnwick. A small town with some big sights, including a Harry Potter-featured castle and spectacular gardens.

10 Dunstanburgh Castle. An evocative castle tower ruin that silently stands guard over a windswept beach.

11 Bamburgh. Another stunning castle ruin on the Northumberland coast; best viewed from the Farne Islands.

12 Lindisfarne (Holy Island). This historic isle—only accessible at low tide—has a Christian history dating back to AD 635.



HADRIAN'S WALL

The wall is a dramatic sight in the countryside.



Winding through the wild and windswept Northumberland countryside, Hadrian's Wall is Britain's most important Roman relic. It once formed the northern frontier of the Roman Empire—its most remote outpost and first line of defense against raiders from the north. Even today, as a ruin, the wall is an awe-inspiring structure.

One of the most surprising things about visiting the 73-mile-long wall is its openness and accessibility. Although many of the best-preserved sections are within managed tourist sites, Hadrian's Wall is also part of the landscape, cutting through open countryside. Signposted trails along the entire route allow you to hike or cycle along most of the wall for free. The area is also rich in archaeological treasures that paint a picture of a thriving, multicultural community. The soldiers and their families who were stationed here came from as far away as Spain and North Africa, and recent discoveries give us an insight into their daily lives.

POSTCARDS FROM THE PAST

"Oh, how much I want you at my birthday party. You'll make the day so much more fun. Good-bye, sister, my dearest soul."

"I have sent you two pairs of sandals and two pairs of underpants. Greet all your messmates, with whom I pray you live in the greatest good fortune."

—From 1st-century writing tablets unearthed at Vindolanda

SEEING THE WALL'S HIGHLIGHTS

Hadrian's Wall has a handful of Roman-era forts, the best of which are concentrated near Housesteads, Vindolanda, and Chesters. Housesteads is the most complete, although getting there involves a quarter-mile walk up a hill; Chesters and Vindolanda have excellent museums. The separate Roman Army Museum near Greenhead offers a good overview of the wall's history and is near one of the best sections in open countryside, at Walltown Crags.

GETTING AROUND BY CAR OR BUS

The tiny, winding B6318 road passes within a stone's throw of most of the forts. It's a true back road, so don't expect to get anywhere fast. Public transport is limited; the special AD 122 bus covers the highlights (but only during spring and summer), and several local buses follow parts of the same route.

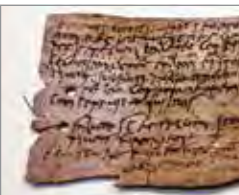
EXPLORING BY FOOT OR BIKE

Hadrian's Wall Path meanders along the wall's entire length; it's a seven-day hike. Joining it for a mile or so is a great way to see the wall and stunning scenery. Try the section around Walltown, or near Corbridge, where the path goes by the remains of a Roman garrison town. Hadrian's Cycleway, for bicyclists, follows roughly the same route.

SIGHTSEEING RESPONSIBLY

The wall is accessible, but vulnerable. **Do not** climb on it, and **never** break off or remove anything. In muddy weather you're encouraged not to stand directly next to the wall, as over time this can make the soil unstable.

Remains of a fort near Housesteads



Roman writing tablet from Vindolanda

WALL TIMELINE

55 BC Julius Caesar invades what's now southern England, naming the island Britannia.

AD 122 Emperor Hadrian orders the construction of a defensive wall along the territory's northern border.

208 After the Romans make another disastrous attempt to invade Caledonia, Hadrian's Wall is expanded.

410 The Romans leave Britain. Local tribes maintain the wall for at least a century.

1700s Stones from the ruined wall are plundered for road building.

1830s A local philanthropist buys land around the wall to save it from further destruction.

1973 First Vindolanda tablets are found. More than 1300 will be excavated over the next 40 years.

1987 Hadrian's Wall becomes a UNESCO World Heritage Site.

For many Britons, the words “the Northeast” provoke a vision of near-Siberian isolation. Although there are wind-hammered, wide-open spaces and empty roads threading the wild high moorland, the Northeast also has simple fishing towns, small villages of remarkable charm, and historic abbeys and castles that are all the more romantic for their often-ruinous state.

This is also where you'll find two of England's most iconic sights: the medieval city of Durham and the stark remains of Hadrian's Wall.

Even the remoteness can be relative. Suddenly, around the next bend of a country road, you may come across an imposing church, a tall monastery, or a Victorian country house. The value found in the shops and accommodations, the uncrowded beaches ideal for walking, and the general friendliness of the people add to the appeal. Still, outside of a few key sights, the Northeast is off the well-trodden tourist path.

Mainly composed of the two large counties of Durham and Northumberland, the Northeast includes English villages adjacent to the Scottish border area, renowned in ballads and romantic literature for feuds, raids, and battles. Fittingly, Durham Cathedral, the seat of bishops for nearly 800 years, was once described as “half church of God, half castle ‘gainst the Scot.” Hadrian's Wall, which marked the northern limit of the Roman Empire, stretches across prehistoric remains and moorland.

Not far north of Hadrian's Wall are some of the most interesting parts of Northumberland National Park. Steel, coal, railroads, and shipbuilding created prosperous towns such as Newcastle upon Tyne, now one of the country's cultural centers.

The region's hundred or so miles of largely undeveloped coast is one of the least visited and most dramatic shorelines in all of Europe. Several outstanding castles perch on headlands and promontories along here, including Bamburgh, which according to legend was the site of Joyous Garde, the castle of Sir Lancelot of the Round Table.

MAJOR REGIONS

County Durham. Durham—the first major Northeastern town on the main road up from London—is by far the region's most interesting historic city. Its cobblestone streets and towering cathedral make it a charming place to visit. The city is surrounded on all sides by scenic countryside, ruined castles, and isolated villages.

Newcastle upon Tyne. Linked by seven bridges over the River Tyne, the city of Newcastle upon Tyne and the town of

Gateshead together form the region's largest, liveliest, and most cosmopolitan urban hub. It's also home to a number of art highlights, from outdoor sculptures to world-class indoor galleries.

Hadrian's Wall Country. A formidable line of Roman fortifications, Hadrian's Wall was the Romans' most ambitious construction in Britain. The land through which the old wall wanders is wild and inhospitable in places, but that only adds to the powerful sense of history it evokes. Museums and information centers along the wall make it possible to learn as much as you want about the Roman era, while nearby market towns like Hexham make a great base for exploration.

The Far Northeast. Extraordinary medieval fortresses and monasteries line the final 40 miles of the Northeast coast before England gives way to Scotland. Northumbria was an enclave where the flame of learning was kept alive during Europe's Dark Ages, most notably at Lindisfarne, home of saints and scholars. Castles abound, including the spectacularly sited Bamburgh and the desolate Dunstanburgh. The region also has some magnificent beaches, though because of the cold water and rough seas they're far better for walking than swimming. The three-mile walk from Seahouses to Bamburgh gives splendid views of the Farne Islands, and the two-mile hike from Craster to Dunstanburgh Castle is unforgettable. A bit inland are a few other pretty towns and castles.

Planning

When to Go

The best time to see the Northeast is in summer. This ensures that the museums—and the roads—will be open, and you can take advantage of the countryside walks that are one of the region's greatest pleasures. Rough seas and

inclement weather make it dangerous to swim at any of the beaches except in July and August; even then, don't expect warm water. Winter here isn't for the fainthearted. The weather can be terrible, but there are few places in England so beautiful and remote.

Planning Your Time

If you're interested in exploring Hadrian's Wall and the Roman ruins, you'll probably want to base yourself at a guesthouse in or around Hexham. From there you can easily take in Housesteads and the other local landmarks. Anywhere in this area is within easy reach of Durham, with its lovely ancient buildings, or Newcastle, with its excellent museums. Romantics will want to spend a day or two driving up the coast to take in the incredible views.

Getting Here and Around

AIR

Newcastle's airport, which is a 15-minute drive from the city center, has regular flights from British and European cities.

CONTACTS Newcastle Airport. ✉ Off A696, Woollington ☎ 0871/882-1121 🌐 www.newcastleairport.com.

BUS

National Express and Megabus travel to Durham and Newcastle and leave from London's Victoria Coach Station. The journey takes between six and eight hours, more than twice the time it takes by train, but it can be considerably cheaper, especially if you reserve in advance (book online to avoid premium telephone charges). Connecting services to other parts of the region leave from those cities; Traveline has more information and a journey planner. The Network One Explorer North East ticket (£10.90, or £20.60 for families of up to five) allows unlimited one-day travel on most local bus and Metro train

services in the Northeast. It's available from most bus and Metro stations or through the Go North East app.

CONTACTS Explorer Northeast Pass. ☎ 0191/276-3706 🌐 www.networkonetickets.co.uk. **Megabus.** ☎ 0900/160-0900 🌐 uk.megabus.com. **National Express.** ☎ 0871/781-8181 🌐 www.nationalexpress.com. **Traveline.** ☎ 0871/200-2233 🌐 www.traveline.info.

CAR

If you're headed to small villages, remote castles, or Hadrian's Wall, traveling by car is the best option. The A1 highway links London and Newcastle (five to six hours) and continues all the way up to Lindisfarne. In the Far Northeast, there are also two alternative scenic routes: the rural A697, which branches west off the A1 north of Morpeth; and the coastal B1340, which leaves the A1 at Alnwick and snakes up to Bamburgh.

TRAIN

Within England, the train is still the best way to reach the Northeast. London North Eastern Railway runs train services; the average travel time from London to Newcastle or Durham is three hours. From Newcastle, you can catch local trains to Hexham (30 minutes), Morpeth (15 minutes), and Alnmouth (for Alnwick, 25 minutes). National Rail Enquiries has more information and a journey planner.

CONTACTS London North Eastern Railway. ☎ 03457/225333 🌐 www.lner.co.uk. **National Rail Enquiries.** ☎ 03457/484950 🌐 www.nationalrail.co.uk.

Restaurants

The Northeast has some very fine local meats and produce. Look for restaurants that serve game from the Kielder Forest; local lamb from the hillsides; salmon and trout from the rivers; and shellfish, crab, and oysters from the coast. Outside the cities, the region lags somewhat behind other parts of England in terms of

exceptional places to eat, although there are special spots to be found. Aside from the ubiquitous chains, the best bets are often small country pubs that serve the traditional, hearty fare associated with the region. Don't wait until too late to have dinner, though, as most places stop serving between 9 and 10 pm.

Hotels

The large hotel chains don't have much of a presence in the Northeast outside Durham and Newcastle. Instead, you can expect to find country houses converted into welcoming hotels, old coaching inns that still greet guests after 300 years, and cozy bed-and-breakfasts convenient to hiking trails. And if you've ever dreamed of staying in a castle, the Northeast delivers in spades.

Restaurant and hotel reviews have been shortened. For full information, visit Fodors.com. Restaurant prices are the average cost of a main course at dinner, or if dinner is not served, at lunch. Hotel prices are the lowest cost of a standard double room in high season, including 20% V.A.T.

WHAT IT COSTS in Pounds

\$	\$\$	\$\$\$	\$\$\$\$
RESTAURANTS			
under £16	£1-£23	£24-£30	over £30
HOTELS			
under £125	£125-£225	£226-£350	over £350

Visitor Information

CONTACTS Durham Visitor Contact Center. ☎ 03000/262626 🌐 www.thisisdurham.com. **NewcastleGateshead.** 🌐 www.newcastle Gateshead.com. **Hadrian's Wall Country.** 🌐 www.hadrianswallcountry.co.uk.

Barnard Castle

245 miles north of London, 15 miles southwest of Bishop Auckland.

The handsome market town of Barnard Castle has sights of its own and can also serve as a base for venturing into the Teesdale Valley to the northwest. Its unusual butter market hall (known locally as Market Cross), surmounted by an old fire-alarm bell, marks the junction of the streets Thorngate, Newgate, and Market Place. Stores, pubs, and cafés line these thoroughfares. In 1838, Charles Dickens stayed at the **King's Head Inn** here while doing research for his novel *Nicholas Nickleby*. The local tourist office has a free "In the Footsteps of Charles Dickens" leaflet.

GETTING HERE AND AROUND

Barnard Castle is around a five-hour drive from London on the A1 (the last 13 miles are on the A66). You can also make the journey by train to Darlington, followed by local buses X75 or X76; this takes between three and four hours.

ESSENTIALS

VISITOR INFORMATION Barnard Castle Visitor Information Point. ☎ The Witham, 3 Horse Market ☎ 01833/026-2626 🌐 www.thisisdurham.com.

Sights

Barnard Castle

CASTLE/PALACE | The substantial ruins of Barnard Castle, which gave the town its name, cling to an aerie overlooking the River Tees. From the outside, it looks satisfyingly complete from the right angle; inside it's rather more ruined, though there are still plenty of interesting sights to see. Climb to the top of the cylindrical, 13th-century tower for stunning river

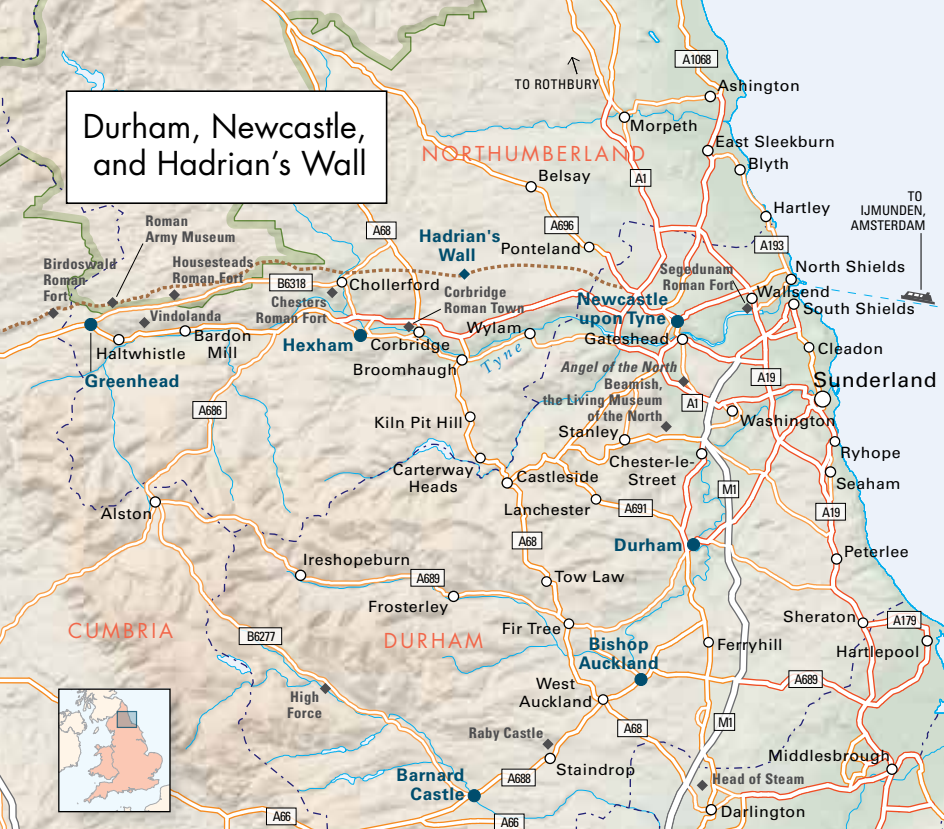
views; stroll around the remains of the Great Hall, once the castle's communal dining hub; and learn about the Victorian hermit who squatted here and charged locals an entrance fee. When in the Inner Courtyard, keep an eye out for the figure of a carved boar above the oriel window—it was the family emblem of King Richard III (1452-85), placed there during his reign in honor of the elevated status he bestowed upon the castle. ☎ Scar Top ⇨ Off A67 ☎ 01833/638212 🌐 www.english-heritage.org.uk/barnard £5.90 ☺ Closed weekdays Nov.-Mar.

★ Bowes Museum

MUSEUM | This vast manor house, inspired by a French château, was built between 1862 and 1875. Highlights include paintings by Canaletto, El Greco, Francisco Goya, and François Boucher, in addition to beautiful collections of ceramics and glass, 18th-century French furniture, and 19th- and 20th-century fashion. Free tours are available daily at 11:30 am. ■ **TIP → Don't miss the incredible 18th-century mechanical swan, which catches and swallows an articulated silver fish every day at 2 pm.** ☎ Newgate ☎ 01833/690606 🌐 www.thebowesmuseum.org.uk £14 (valid for a year).

High Force

BODY OF WATER | The Upper Teesdale Valley's elemental nature shows its most volatile aspect in the sprays of England's highest waterfall. Located 15 miles northwest of Barnard Castle, the dramatic High Force cascade drops 69 feet into a plunge pool. From the roadside parking lot it's a 10-minute walk through woodland to the massive rocks over which the water tumbles. ☎ Off B6277 ☎ 01833/622336 🌐 www.raby.co.uk/high-force/waterfall £2; parking £3 ☺ Closed in bad weather (often in winter).



Durham, Newcastle, and Hadrian's Wall

Bishop Auckland

15 miles northwest of Barnard Castle, 11 miles southwest of Durham.

For 700 years, between the 12th and 19th centuries, the powerful prince-bishops of Durham had their country residence in Auckland Castle, in the town of Bishop Auckland. When finally deprived of their powers in 1836, the bishops left Durham and made Bishop Auckland their official home.

GETTING HERE AND AROUND

Bishop Auckland is just off the A688 from Barnard Castle. Durham is accessible by continuing up the A688 to Spennymoor, where you change to the B6288 and A687. There's a train station in Bishop Auckland, but the line only runs east-to-west. Buses are the best option for going

south-to-north; it's around 50 minutes by bus from Barnard Castle and 40 minutes to Durham.

ESSENTIALS

VISITOR INFORMATION Bishop Auckland

Tourist Information Centre. ☎ Auckland Tower, Market Pl. ☎ 01388/743750
 🌐 www.aucklandproject.org/venues/auckland-tower.



Auckland Castle

CASTLE/PALACE | Arguably the greatest of the prince-bishops of Durham's properties is this Episcopal palace, which you enter through an elaborate stone arch. Much of what's on view today dates from the 16th century, although the limestone-and-marble chapel, with its dazzling stained-glass windows, was built

in 1665 from the ruins of a 12th-century hall. The extraordinary paintings of Jacob and his 12 sons, by the 17th-century Spanish artist Francisco de Zurbarán, hang in the Long Dining Room. ☎ Off Market Pl. ☎ 01388/743750 🌐 www.aucklandproject.org £10 Closed Mon., Tues., and Jan.–mid-Feb.

★ Head of Steam

MUSEUM | FAMILY | A family-friendly museum in nearby Darlington tells the story of the early days of rail travel. The town gained fame in 1825, when George Stephenson piloted his steam-powered *Locomotion No. 1* along newly laid tracks the few miles to nearby Stockton, thus kick-starting the railway age. Set in an abandoned 1842 train station, the museum has interactive exhibits and big steam trains that are great for kids; antique engines and scale models help bring history to life. There's also a café and children's activity room. Darlington is 13 miles southeast of Bishop Auckland, on the A68. There are also regular train connections. ■ **TIP→ A ticket for families with up to four kids costs £10.** ☎ North Road Station, Station Rd., Darlington ☎ 01325/405060 🌐 www.head-of-steam.co.uk £5.35.

★ Raby Castle

CASTLE/PALACE | The stone battlements and turrets of moated Raby Castle, once the seat of the powerful Nevills and currently the home of the 11th Baron Barnard, stand amid a 200-acre deer park and ornamental gardens. Charles Nevill supported Mary, Queen of Scots in the 1569 uprising against Elizabeth I; when the Rising of the North failed, the estate was confiscated. Dating mostly from the 14th century (using stone plundered from Barnard Castle) and renovated in the 18th and 19th centuries, the luxuriously furnished castle has displays of art and other treasures. Rooms in wonderfully elaborate Gothic Revival, Regency, and Victorian styles are open for public viewing, as are the 18th-century Walled

Gardens and the Coach House, home to a collection of coaches and carriages dating back to the Georgian era. The castle is seven miles southwest of Bishop Auckland. ☎ Off A688, Staindrop ☎ 01833/660202 🌐 www.raby.co.uk/raby-castle £13; park and gardens only £8 Closed Mon.–Tues. in Mar., June, and Sep.–Oct.; closed Mon. in July–Aug.; closed Nov.–Feb.

Durham

11 miles northeast of Bishop Auckland, 18 miles south of Newcastle.

The great medieval city of Durham, seat of County Durham, stands dramatically on a rocky spur overlooking the countryside. Its cathedral and castle, a UNESCO World Heritage Site, rise together on a wooded peninsula almost entirely encircled by the River Wear (rhymes with “beer”). For centuries, these two ancient structures have dominated Durham, a thriving university town that's the North-east's equivalent of Oxford or Cambridge. Steep, narrow streets overlooked by perilously angled medieval houses and 18th-century town houses make for fun exploring. In the most attractive part of the city, near the Palace Green and along the river, people go boating, anglers cast their lines, and strollers walk along the shaded paths. For great views, take a short stroll along the River Wear, and cross the 17th-century Prebends Footbridge. You can return to town via the 12th-century Framwellgate Bridge.

Despite the military advantages of its location, Durham was founded surprisingly late, probably in about the year 1000, growing up around a small Saxon church erected to house the remains of St. Cuthbert. It was the Normans, under William the Conqueror, who put Durham on the map, building the first defensive castle and beginning work on the cathedral. From here, Durham's prince-bishops,

granted almost dictatorial local powers by William in 1072, kept a tight rein on the county, coining their own money and maintaining their own laws and courts. It wasn't until 1836 that these rights were restored to the English Crown.

GETTING HERE AND AROUND

East Coast trains from London's King's Cross Station arrive at the centrally located Durham Station once an hour during the day. The journey takes about three hours. There are even more regular non-direct trains via York, with a similar journey time. A handful of National Express and Megabus buses make the seven-hour trip from London daily. The Durham Cathedral Bus (Route 40) links parking lots and the train and bus stations with the cathedral, castle, and university. Between 10 am and 4 pm Monday through Saturday, cars are subject to a "congestion charge" of £2 (on top of parking charges) to enter the Palace Green area. You can pay the charge at the Parking Shop or over the phone. Payment must be made by 6 pm on the day of usage, or you'll be subject to a £50 fine.

ESSENTIALS

VISITOR INFORMATION **World Heritage Site Visitor Centre.** ☎ 7 Owengate ☎ 0191/334-3805 🌐 www.durham-worldheritagesite.com. **The Parking Shop.** ☎ 3-10 Old Pit Ln. ☎ 0191/384-6633 🌐 www.durham.gov.uk.



★ **Beamish, the Living Museum of the North** **MUSEUM VILLAGE | FAMILY** | Made up of buildings found on-site or moved from elsewhere in the region, this sprawling, award-winning complex—which celebrated its 50th year in 2020—explores the way people in the Northeast lived and worked from the early 1800s to the mid-1900s. A vintage bus and a streetcar take you around the site to various points of interest, including a farm estate; a pit village and colliery;

and an entire 1920s town complete with a bank, convenience store, and Masonic hall. Everything is staffed by workers in period costumes, and you can buy era-appropriate food and drinks in the pub, bakery, and "sweet shop" (candy store). As well as the permanent exhibits, there are special events year-round, from weekend-long festivals, where you're encouraged to come in old-style fancy dress, to traditional English celebrations such as May Day and Harvest Festival. Beamish is nine miles northwest of Durham. ■ **TIP→ You can spend at least half a day here, and tickets are valid for a whole year in case you want to return.** ☎ Off A693, Beamish ☎ 0191/370-4000 🌐 www.beamish.org. uk 🎫 £19.50 🕒 Closed Mon. and Fri. in mid-Jan.–mid-Feb.

Durham Castle

CASTLE/PALACE | Facing the cathedral across Palace Green, Durham's stately, manorlike castle commands a strategic position above the River Wear. For almost 800 years the castle was the home of the enormously powerful prince-bishops; from here they ruled large tracts of the countryside and acted as the main line of defense against Scottish raiders from the north. Henry VIII was the first to curtail the bishops' autonomy, although it wasn't until the 19th century that they finally had their powers annulled. At that point, the castle was given over to the University of Durham, the third oldest university in England after Oxford and Cambridge (albeit more than 600 years younger; it was founded in 1832). The castle interior can only be seen on a 45-minute guided tour. These are usually available four times a day but are not held when the building is hired out for private events, so it's best to check the website or call ahead. ■ **TIP→ During university vacation times, the castle also offers bed-and-breakfast accommodations in the state rooms for around £200 per night; call or check the website for details.** ☎ Palace Green ☎ 0191/334-2932 🌐 www.dur.ac.uk/durham.castle 🎫 £5.



Rounded arches and columns with zigzag patterns are hallmarks of the Romanesque style at Durham Cathedral.

★ Durham Cathedral

RELIGIOUS SITE | A Norman masterpiece in the heart of the city, Durham Cathedral is a vision of strength and fortitude, a far cry from the airy lightness of later Gothic cathedrals. Construction began about 1090, and the main body was finished around 1150. The round arches of the nave and the deep zigzag patterns carved into them typify the heavy, gaunt style of Norman, or Romanesque, building. The technology of Durham, however, was revolutionary; this was the first European cathedral to be given a stone, rather than a wooden, roof.

Note the enormous bronze **Sanctuary Knocker**, shaped like the head of a ferocious mythological beast, mounted on the massive northwestern door. By grasping the ring clenched in the animal's mouth, medieval felons could claim sanctuary; cathedral records show that 331 criminals sought this protection between 1464 and 1524. An unobtrusive tomb at the western end of the cathedral, in the Moorish-influenced **Galilee Chapel**, is the

final resting place of the Venerable Bede, an 8th-century Northumbrian monk whose contemporary account of the English people made him the country's first reliable historian. In good weather, and if you're feeling up to it, you can climb the 325 steps up to the tower, which has spectacular views of Durham.

The impressive £10 million **Open Treasure** exhibition displays priceless artifacts from the cathedral's own collection. The exhibition also allows visitors to see parts of the cathedral that were previously closed to the public, including the **Monks Dormitory** and the **Great Kitchen**, with its breathtaking octagonal roof. Treasures on display include Anglo-Saxon art, gold and garnet crosses, elaborate vestments, illuminated manuscripts, and the original coffin of St. Cuthbert. Together it represents one of the most significant single collections of Anglo-Saxon artifacts in the world.

For a more modern take on this ancient monument, check out the elaborate LEGO model of Durham Cathedral,

situated between the Undercroft Restaurant and shop. It's made up of more than 300,000 bricks.

Guided tours of the cathedral (one hour) are available Monday through Saturday at 10:30 am, 11 am, and 2 pm, though times can change if there's a special service going on. A choral evensong service takes place Tuesday through Saturday at 5:15 pm and Sunday at 3:30 pm. ☒ *Palace Green* ☎ 0191/386-4266 🌐 www.durhamcathedral.co.uk 📄 Free (requested donation £3); *Open Treasure* £7.50; *tower* £5; *guided tours* £5; *combined tour and Open Treasure* £10 ☺ No tours Sun.

Oriental Museum

MUSEUM | A 15-minute walk from the cathedral, this Durham University-owned museum displays fine art and craftwork from all parts of Asia and the Middle East. Galleries are ordered by culture, including Ancient Egypt, Japan, China, and Korea. Among the highlights are some exquisite Qing dynasty jade and lacquer ornaments, ancient tapestries and embroideries from the Himalayas, and a collection of Japanese woodblock prints from the Edo period. ☒ *Off Elvet Hill Rd.* ☎ 0191/334-5691 🌐 www.dur.ac.uk/oriental.museum 📄 £1.50.

Prebends Footbridge

BRIDGE/TUNNEL | Delightful views are the reward of a short stroll along the River Wear's leafy banks, especially as you cross this 17th-century stone footbridge, reached from the southern end of Palace Green. J. M. W. Turner adored the view from here and painted a celebrated scene of Durham from the bridge. ☒ *S. Bailey.*

🍴 Restaurants

Cafedral

☎ **CAFÉ** | **FAMILY** | Ignore the dad-joke pun—this is a really good, modern, vegetarian- and celiac-friendly café. Mismatched, shabby-chic furniture fills the cozy dining room, where you can enjoy delicious, fresh scones, cakes, gluten-free desserts, and

tasty panini and wraps. **Known for:** fantastic gluten-free treats; vegetarian food; good coffee. ☎ *Average main:* £6 ☒ *Owengate House, 1st fl., Owengate.*

Finbarr's

☎ **EUROPEAN** | Excellent seafood and indulgent desserts are the specialties at this popular bistro, but there are steaks and a few veggie options on the menu as well. Order the fishcakes with buttered spinach or the jumbo shrimp grilled Tandoori style (with a hint of Indian spice), and save room for the Knickerbocker Glory, an old-fashioned concoction of ice cream, sponge cake, fruit, and chocolate, served in a tall glass. **Known for:** intimate atmosphere; great seafood; heavenly desserts. ☎ *Average main:* £20 ☒ *Aykley Heads House, Aykley Heads* ☎ 0191/307-7033 🌐 www.finbarrsrestaurant.co.uk.

Zen

☎ **THAI** | This colorful and inviting restaurant, where diners are "shaded" indoors by a faux cherry blossom tree, mainly serves Thai food, but the menu is also scattered with Japanese, Chinese, and Indonesian dishes. A rather dizzying trip around Asia can take you from Thai green curry to sizzling Mongolian lamb to Japanese teriyaki beef, as well as some less familiar dishes like cod fillet wrapped in banana leaves and served with chili and lime. **Known for:** eclectic pan-Asian menu; buzzing atmosphere; tasty Thai curries. ☎ *Average main:* £16 ☒ *Court Ln.* ☎ 0191/384-9588 🌐 www.zendurham.co.uk.

🏨 Hotels

Georgian Town House

☎ **B&B/INN** | At the top of a cobbled street overlooking the cathedral and castle, this family-run guesthouse has small, snug bedrooms with pleasant city views. **Pros:** great city center location; jovial owners; tasty pancakes right downstairs. **Cons:** most rooms are small; decor won't please everyone; some noise from nearby pubs. ☎ *Rooms from:* £95 ☒ 11

Crossgate ☎ 0191/386-8070 🌐 www.thegeorgiantownhousedurham.co.uk ➡ 8 rooms 🏠 Free breakfast.

★ Lumley Castle Hotel

☎ **HOTEL** | This is a real Norman castle, right down to the dungeons and maze of dark flagstone corridors—one room even has a bathroom hidden behind a bookcase. **Pros:** great for antiques lovers; gorgeous high-ceilinged restaurant; good value out of high season. **Cons:** easy to get lost among winding corridors; a little way out of Durham; (verily) ye banquet is cheesy. ☎ *Rooms from:* £190 ☒ *Off B1284, Chester-le-Street* ☎ 0191/389-1111 🌐 www.lumleycastle.com ➡ 73 rooms 🏠 No meals.

★ Seaham Hall

☎ **B&B/INN** | In 1815, Lord Byron married Annabella Milbanke in this foursquare mansion on a cliff top overlooking the sea; today, the sumptuous contemporary interior is a haven of luxury. **Pros:** pampering rooms; full of atmosphere; wonderful spa facilities. **Cons:** far outside town; high prices; you'll have to dress up for dinner. ☎ *Rooms from:* £305 ☒ *Lord Byron's Walk, Seaham* ☎ 0191/516-1400 🌐 www.seaham-hall.co.uk ➡ 19 suites 🏠 Free breakfast.

Victoria Inn

☎ **B&B/INN** | An authentically Victorian air pervades at this cozy pub near Durham Cathedral that also serves as a B&B. **Pros:** step-back-in-time atmosphere; lovely hosts; great value for city center. **Cons:** few amenities; pub doesn't serve full meals; some may find the decor a bit quaint. ☎ *Rooms from:* £95 ☒ *86 Hallgarth St.* ☎ 0191/386-5269 🌐 www.victoriainn-durhamcity.co.uk ➡ 6 rooms 🏠 Free breakfast.

🍷 Nightlife

The Half Moon Inn

BARS/PUBS | This handsome old pub is popular for its excellent range of traditional ales, as well as for its old-school atmosphere that reminds you pubs like this are a dying breed. ☒ *86 New Elvet*

☎ 0191/374-1918 🌐 www.thehalfmoon-inndurham.co.uk.

Market Tavern

BARS/PUBS | Fans of real ales are drawn to the Market Tavern, which has been in business since the late 18th century. Today, it's a Greene King pub, serving a good range of drinks and decent pub food. ☒ *27 Market Pl.* ☎ 0191/386-2069 🌐 www.greeneking-pubs.co.uk.

🛍 Shopping

Bramwells Jewellers

JEWELRY/ACCESSORIES | The specialty here is a pendant copy of the gold-and-silver cross of St. Cuthbert. ☒ *24 Elvet Bridge* ☎ 0191/386-8006 🌐 www.bramwellsjewellers.co.uk.

Durham Indoor Market

SHOPPING CENTERS/MALLS | The food and bric-a-brac stalls in Durham Indoor Market, a Victorian arcade, are open Monday through Saturday, 9 am to 4:30 pm. An excellent farmers' market is held in Market Place on the third Thursday of every month. ☒ *Market Pl.* ☎ 0191/384-6153 🌐 www.durhammarkets.co.uk.

🚶 Activities

Browns Rowing Boats

BOATING | At this downtown boathouse, you can rent rowboats from mid-March through late September. There are also short river cruises available from here. ☒ *The Boathouse, Elvet Bridge* ☎ 0191/386-3779 📄 £7; £20 for families.

Newcastle upon Tyne

18 miles north of Durham, 22 miles east of Hexham, 14 miles south of Morpeth.

Durham may have the glories of its castle, cathedral, and university, but the liveliest and most culture-crammed city in the Northeast is Newcastle upon

Tyne—along with its south-of-the-river neighbor Gateshead.

Settled since Roman times on the River Tyne, Newcastle made its fortune twice—first by exporting coal and later by shipbuilding. As a 19th-century industrial center, it had few equals in Britain, showing off its wealth in grand Victorian buildings lining the broad streets. Some of these remain, particularly on Grey Street, though it's the works of modern architecture that are most eye-catching today. The cluster of bridges (older and newer) crossing the Tyne is a quintessential city sight.

Much of the regeneration since the early 1990s has been based around the Quayside, particularly on the south bank in Gateshead. Here the Baltic Centre for Contemporary Art and the pedestrian-only Millennium Bridge—the world's first tilting bridge, which opens and shuts like an eyelid—have risen from industrial wasteland.

GETTING HERE AND AROUND

Newcastle Airport, a 15-minute drive from the city center, has flights from British and European cities. Metro trains connect to the center. The A1 highway links London and Newcastle (five to six hours).

East Coast trains from London's King's Cross take about three hours. National Express and Megabus have service from London's Victoria Coach Station several times a day; it's a six- to seven-hour trip.

Newcastle has a good public transportation system. Its Metro light-rail network is easy to use, well signposted, and has stops near most sights. Buses go to all the places the Metro doesn't reach.

ESSENTIALS

VISITOR INFORMATION **NewcastleGateshead Tourist Information.** ☎️ 🌐 www.newcastlegateshead.com.



★ Angel of the North

PUBLIC ART | South of Newcastle, near the junction of the A1 and A1(M) at Gateshead, stands England's largest—and one of its most popular—sculptures, the *Angel of the North*. Created by Antony Gormley in 1998, the rust-color steel sculpture is a sturdy, abstract human figure with airplane-like wings rather than arms. It stands 65 feet tall and has a horizontal wingspan of 175 feet. ■ **TIP → Despite its size, the Angel is notoriously impossible to photograph properly from a car; if you want to see it up close, there's parking nearby, signposted on the A167.** ☎️ *A167, Gateshead* 🌐 www.gateshead.gov.uk/article/3957/Angel-of-the-North 🆓 *Free.*

Baltic Centre for Contemporary Art

ARTS VENUE | Formerly a grain warehouse and now the country's largest national gallery for contemporary art outside London, the BALTIC (as it's often styled) presents thought-provoking exhibitions by top names and emerging talents. There's no permanent collection, and the temporary installations change regularly, so check the website for details. There are also two great dining options here: the riverside café-bar BALTIC Kitchen and the rooftop restaurant Six. ☎️ *Gateshead Quays, S. Shore Rd., Gateshead* ☎️ *0191/478-1810* 🌐 www.baltic.art 🆓 *Free.*

Discovery Museum

MUSEUM | **FAMILY** | Reconstructed streets and homes lead you from Roman times to the present day in this engaging museum. Kids will like its interactive approach to teaching Newcastle's history, and history buffs will be most thrilled by galleries showing off the town's maritime and industrial achievements, including the *Turbinia*. Built in 1894, it was once the fastest ship in the world and the first to be powered by steam turbines. ☎️ *Blandford Sq.* ☎️ *0191/232-6789* 🌐 www.discoverymuseum.org.uk 🆓 *Free (donations welcome).*

★ Great North Museum: Hancock

MUSEUM | An amalgam of several collections belonging to Newcastle University and named for a Victorian founder of the Natural History Society of Northumberland, this beautifully renovated museum contains an impressive array of ancient archaeological finds, plus galleries on natural history and astronomy. Highlights include artifacts left behind by the Roman builders of Hadrian's Wall; ancient Egyptian mummies; and a reconstruction of the 1st-century Temple of Mithras at Carrawburgh. This place isn't designed for kids, but there's plenty here to amuse them, including a planetarium and a life-size model of a T. rex. ☎️ *Barras Bridge* ☎️ *0191/208-6765* 🌐 www.greatnorthmuseum.org.uk 🆓 *Free (donations welcome).*

Laing Art Gallery

MUSEUM | One of the Northeast's finest art museums merits at least an hour's visit for its selection of 19th-century British art. The Pre-Raphaelites are on show, too, as are sculptures by Henry Moore. The new Northern Spirit gallery showcases some of the great artists from the region, including John Martin (1759-1854), who produced dramatic biblical landscapes, and siblings William and Mary Beilby, whose beautiful enameled-glass creations became highly prized in their 1770s heyday. ☎️ *New Bridge St.* ☎️ *0191/232-7734* 🌐 www.laingartgallery.org.uk 🆓 *Free* ☺️ *Closed Sun.*

Life Science Centre

MUSEUM | **FAMILY** | Three high-tech shows and 60 kid-oriented exhibits bring science to life, with a number of themed "zones" highlighting everything from research on genes to travel to Mars. New for 2020 is the "Space Zone," which shows how space technology is now a part of people's everyday lives. The museum is interactive throughout but particularly in the "Experiment Zone," which is full of hands-on scientific gizmos, including fun experiments to demonstrate magnetism and chain reactions, that make scientific learning feel

more like a trip to the playground. There are regular seasonal events, too, as well as an ice-skating rink in winter. ■ **TIP → Visiting as a family? Opt for the £31 family ticket for four.** ☎️ *Times Sq.* ☎️ *0191/243-8210* 🌐 www.life.org.uk 🆓 *£12.*

Newcastle Castle

CASTLE/PALACE | Overlooking the Tyne River, the remains of the Norman castle recall the city's earlier status as a defensive stronghold. Built in 1080, this was the "new castle" that gave the city its name. The gatehouse and stone keep are all that remain; although the effect is somewhat diminished by the railroad viaduct that thoughtlessly separates the two. The "black gate" remains the point of entry, with a small exhibition on the surrounding area of Castle Garth, but the most interesting stuff—including the impressive Great Hall, the vaulted dungeon, and the rooftop views—are in the keep. ☎️ *Castle Garth, Off St. Nicholas St.* ☎️ *0191/230-6300* 🌐 www.newcastle-castle.co.uk 🆓 *£8.50.*

Segedunum Roman Fort

MUSEUM | For a good introduction to Britain's Roman history, dip into this museum. It includes the remains of the substantial Roman fort of Segedunum, built around AD 125, as well as the easternmost section of the original Hadrian's Wall (there's a reason this part of town is called Wallsend) and a reconstructed Roman bath complex. Start your tour at the (unfortunately rather ugly) observation tower for a good overview of the site—as well as an exhibition on local shipbuilding—before heading down to ground level. The collection of artifacts covers the whole 300-year period of Roman occupation in the region, and it includes pieces of weaponry, armor, and a Roman stone toilet—the only one surviving in the country. ☎️ *Buddle St., Wallsend* ☎️ *0191/278-4217* 🌐 www.segedunumromanfort.org.uk 🆓 *£6* ☺️ *Closed Sun. in Jan.–Mar.*



Sir Norman Foster designed the Sage Gateshead performance venue, an emblem of Newcastle's revival.

Restaurants

Peace & Loaf

\$\$\$ | **BRITISH** | Aside from the labored pun-of-a-name, this fine restaurant, in the upscale suburb of Jesmond, hits all the right notes, with chef Dave Coulson serving up delicious, flavor-packed, and beautifully presented dishes. The interior is colorful and airy, and the waitstaff is friendly and attentive, though a little over-eager; you might struggle to catch your breath between servings of bread, drinks, endless amuse-bouches, and regular courses. **Known for:** rapid-fire service; good wines by the glass; triple-cooked chips with beef drippings.  **Average main:** £25 ☎ 217 Jesmond Rd. ☎ 0191/281-5222 🌐 www.peaceandloaf.co.uk.

★ 21

\$\$ | **MODERN BRITISH** | A Newcastle classic, this sleek, modern bistro is a local favorite for romantic dinners as the warm wood, leather banquettes, and crisp white table linens lend a polished look.

The menu focuses on contemporary, flavor-packed versions of classic British food, such as terrine of Northumbrian venison with celeriac and apple salad or fillet of smoked haddock with wholegrain mustard sauce. **Known for:** modern twists on traditional flavors; delicious desserts; romantic ambience.  **Average main:** £23 ☎ Trinity Gardens, Pandon ☎ 0191/222-0755 🌐 www.21newcastle.co.uk.

★ Ury

\$ | **INDIAN** | This friendly, simply decorated Indian restaurant specializes in dishes from the Kerala region, with an outstanding vegetarian selection, as well as meaty dishes like *jagajili* (lightly battered and fried chicken cubes with spices and onions) and *vadakara* roast beef with ginger and garlic. A shared dosa (light-as-a-feather flatbreads stuffed with vegetables or curried potatoes) is the ideal way to mop up the last of those heavenly sauces. **Known for:** delicious Keralan specialties; freshly baked dosa; great vegetarian options.  **Average**



main: £10 ☎ 27 Queen St. ☎ 0191/232-7799 🌐 www.uryrestaurants.com.

Hotels

★ Jesmond Dene House

\$\$ | **HOTEL** | Occupying a sprawling 19th-century mansion in the northeastern part of the city, this attractive, independent boutique hotel is surrounded by beautiful manicured gardens and filled with polished oak floors, huge windows, and wandering staircases. **Pros:** stylish bathrooms with underfloor heating; delicious breakfasts; free private parking. **Cons:** restaurant can get booked up; 15 minutes by bus or tram to the center; “New House” rooms are less interesting.  **Rooms from:** £195 ☎ Jesmond Dene Rd. ☎ 0191/212-3000 🌐 www.jesmonddenehouse.co.uk ➔ 40 rooms  **Free breakfast.**

Malmaison

\$\$ | **HOTEL** | Converted from an old riverside warehouse, this glamorous, design-conscious hotel sits beside the pedestrian Millennium Bridge. **Pros:** spacious and soundproofed rooms; relaxing spa; good restaurant with river views. **Cons:** unreliable Wi-Fi; bordello chic decor not for everyone; lacks the intimacy of small hotels.  **Rooms from:** £150 ☎ 104 Quayside ☎ 0191/389-8627 🌐 www.malmaison.com ➔ 122 rooms  **Breakfast; Some meals.**

Nightlife

Madame Koo

DANCE CLUBS | This quirky cocktail bar and nightclub has a loose 1920s Oriental theme. The dance-floor music choices are eclectic, often switching between classic soul, indie, disco, and pop within a single set. ☎ 28-32 Collingwood St. ☎ 0191/261-8271 🌐 www.madamekoo.co.uk.

Activities

City Baths

SWIMMING | FAMILY | Back in 2020, after an eight-year-long, £75 million transformation, Newcastle's City Baths feature a 25-meter-long pool, sauna, and Turkish spa, all set within a historic building. The large gym hall is where the old pool used to be; you can see the outline on the floor. ☎ Northumberland Rd. ☎ 07815/619127 🌐 www.city-baths.co.uk.

Performing Arts

Sage Gateshead

CONCERTS | The Sage Gateshead hosts concerts—jazz, world, pop, classical, folk, and rock—in a curving, silver building designed by Sir Norman Foster. ☎ West St. ☎ 0191/433-4661 🌐 www.sagegateshead.com.

Theatre Royal

THEATER | The region's most established performing arts center, the Theatre Royal stages high-quality productions and is also a venue for touring musicals and dance. ☎ 100 Grey St. ☎ 0844/811-2121 🌐 www.theatreroyal.co.uk.

Hadrian's Wall

73 miles from Wallsend, north of Newcastle, to Bowness-on-Solway, beyond Carlisle.

The most important Roman relic in Britain extends across the countryside and can be accessed at many different points. Committed hikers can tackle the full, 73-mile-long Hadrian's Wall Path. The Sill National Landscape Discovery Centre, about a mile northwest of Vindolanda, reveals more about the local landscape.

GETTING HERE AND AROUND

The A69 roughly follows Hadrian's Wall, although sometimes it's a few miles in either direction. The best sections of the wall are near the narrower B6318,

including Vindolanda, Housesteads Roman Fort, and Chesters Roman Fort. There's a small railway station at Hexham, with frequent trains from Newcastle.

The aptly named AD122 Hadrian's Wall Country bus runs between Newcastle and Carlisle during the summer months, stopping near all the major destinations along the way. A special "rover ticket" pass gives you unlimited travel on the route for one (£12.50), three (£25), or seven (£50) days. You can extend the tickets to cover any bus operating on the same route for a few extra pounds. Several other local buses depart from Newcastle and other towns in the region to various parts of the wall.

ESSENTIALS

VISITOR INFORMATION AD112 Hadrian's Wall Country Bus. 📞 🌐 www.hadrianswall-country.co.uk/travel/bus.



★ Hadrian's Wall

ARCHAEOLOGICAL SITE | Dedicated to the Roman god Terminus, the massive span of Hadrian's Wall once marked the northern frontier of the Roman Empire. Today, remnants of the wall wander across pastures and hills, stretching 73 miles from Wallsend in the east to Bowness-on-Solway in the west. The wall is a UNESCO World Heritage Site, and excavating, interpreting, repairing, and generally managing it remains a Northumbrian growth industry.

At Emperor Hadrian's command, three legions of soldiers began building the wall in AD 122 and finished it in four years. It was constructed by soldiers and masons after repeated invasions by Pictish tribes from what is now Scotland. During the Roman era it was the most heavily fortified wall in the world, with walls 15 feet high and 9 feet thick; behind it lay the vallum, a ditch about 20 feet wide and 10 feet deep. Spaced at 5-mile intervals along the wall were

massive forts (such as those at Housesteads and Chesters), which could house up to 1,000 soldiers. Every mile was marked by a thick-walled milecastle (a fort that housed about 30 soldiers), and between each milecastle were two turrets, each lodging four men who kept watch. For more than 250 years the Roman army used the wall to control travel and trade and to fortify Roman Britain against the barbarians to the north.

During the Jacobite Rebellion of 1745, the English army dismantled much of the Roman wall and used the stones to pave what is now the B6318 highway. The most substantial stretches of the remaining wall are between Housesteads and Birdoswald (west of Greenhead). Running through the southern edge of Northumberland National Park and along the sheer escarpment of Whin Sill, this section is also an area of dramatic natural beauty. The ancient ruins, rugged cliffs, dramatic vistas, and spreading pastures make it a great area for hiking. 🌐 www.hadrianswallcountry.co.uk.



BIKING

Hadrian's Cycleways

BICYCLING | Between Tynemouth and Whitehaven, Hadrian's Cycleway follows the River Tyne from the east coast until Newcastle, where it traces the entire length of Hadrian's Wall. It then continues west to the Irish Sea. Maps and guides are available at the Tourist Information Centre in Newcastle. 🌐 www.cyclenorthumberland.org.uk/listing/hadrians-cycleway.

HIKING

Hadrian's Wall Path

HIKING/WALKING | One of Britain's national trails, Hadrian's Wall Path runs the entire 73-mile length of the wall. If you don't have time for it all, take one of the less-challenging circular routes. One of the most scenic (but also most difficult)

sections is the 12-mile western stretch between Sewingshields and Greenhead. 🌐 www.nationaltrail.co.uk/hadrianswall.

Hexham

22 miles west of Newcastle, 33 miles northwest of Durham.

The busy market town of Hexham is a popular base for visiting Hadrian's Wall. Just a few miles from the most significant remains, it's a bustling working town, but it has enough historic buildings and winding medieval streets to warrant a stop in its own right. First settled in the 7th century, around a Benedictine monastery, Hexham later became a byword for monastic learning, famous for its book painting, sculpture, and singing.

GETTING HERE AND AROUND

The A1 and A69 highways link London and the region (five to six hours). No major bus companies travel here, but the AD122 Hadrian's Wall Country Bus from Newcastle and Carlisle does. East Coast trains take about three hours to travel from London's King's Cross to Newcastle. From there, catch a local train.

Hexham is a small, walkable town. It has infrequent local bus service, but you're unlikely to need it. If you're driving, park in the lot by the tourism office and walk into town. The tourism office has free maps and will point you in the right direction.

ESSENTIALS

VISITOR INFORMATION Hexham Tourist Information Centre.

📞 *Queens Hall, Beaumont St.* 📞 01670/620450 🌐 www.visithexham.net.



Chesters Roman Fort

MILITARY SITE | In a wooded valley on the banks of the North Tyne River, 4 miles north of Hexham, this cavalry fort was known as Cilurnum in Roman times,

when it protected the point where Hadrian's Wall crossed the river. Although the setting is not as dramatic as the nearby Housesteads Roman Fort, this mazelike layout of surviving fortifications is said to be Britain's most complete Roman cavalry fort, while the military bathhouse by the river is the best-preserved Roman structure of its kind in the British Isles. The Museum of Roman Finds includes a fascinating array of artifacts including statues of river and water gods and Roman jewelry. 📞 B6318, Chollerford 📞 01434/681379 🌐 www.english-heritage.org.uk/chesters 🎟 £7.20 🕒 Closed weekdays in Nov.–Feb.; closed Mon.–Tues. in Mar.

★ Corbridge Roman Town

ARCHAEOLOGICAL SITE | The foundations of this important Roman garrison town (the farthest north in the entire Roman Empire) are brought to life with a lively audio commentary, plus occasional reenactments during the summer. The recently renovated visitor center houses the Corbridge Hoard, a surprisingly well-preserved collection of tools and personal possessions left behind by Roman soldiers in the 2nd century, as well as other objects found in and around the site. In particular, look out for three items: the Corbridge Lion, a free-standing sandstone sculpture depicting a male lion on top of a deer; the Corbridge Lanx, a large silver dish intricately engraved with mythological scenes; and a gambling soldier's "cheat's dice," which on close inspection features two ones and no six. Corbridge Roman Town is around four miles east of Hexham. 📞 *Corchester La., Corbridge* 📞 01434/632349 🌐 www.english-heritage.org.uk 🎟 £7.90 🕒 Closed weekdays Nov.–Feb.

★ Hexham Abbey

RELIGIOUS SITE | A site of Christian worship for more than 1,300 years, ancient Hexham Abbey forms one side of the town's main square. Most of the current building dates from the 12th and 13th centuries, and much of the stone, including that of the Anglo-Saxon crypt, was taken from

the nearby Roman fort at Corbridge. Inside, you can climb the 35 worn stone “night stairs,” which once led from the main part of the abbey to the canon’s dormitory, to overlook the whole ensemble—look out for the drop of lead on the sixth step, a remnant from when the roof was set alight by a Scottish army in 1286. Also of note inside are the portraits on the 16th-century wooden rood screen and the four panels from a 15th-century *Dance of Death* in the sanctuary. You can find out more about the history of the abbey in the free, interactive exhibition *The Big Story*. ☒ *Beaumont St.* ☎ 01434/602031 🌐 www.hexhamabbey.org.uk 🚗 Free; requested donation £3.

Hexham Market Place

PLAZA | Since 1239, this pretty square has been the site of a weekly market, held each Tuesday and Saturday. Crowded stalls are set out across the square under colored awnings, attracting serious shoppers and souvenir hunters year-round. A popular farmers’ market takes over on the second and fourth Saturday of the month. Even when there’s not an official market on, there’s often one or two food stalls set up. ☒ *Market Pl.* ☎ 01434/230605 🌐 www.hexhamfarmersmarket.co.uk.

Old Gaol

MUSEUM | **FAMILY** | England’s oldest purpose-built prison, dating from 1330, Hexham’s Old Gaol houses fascinating exhibits about the history of the borderlands, including tales of the terrifying “reivers” and their bloodthirsty raids into Northumberland from Scotland during the 16th and 17th centuries. Photographs, weapons, and a reconstructed house interior give a full account of what the region was like in medieval times. A glass elevator takes you up and down four floors, including to the dungeon. ☒ *Hallgate* ☎ 01670/624523 🌐 museumsnorthumberland.org.uk/hexham-old-gaol 🚗 £5 🕒 Closed Nov.–Mar.

Restaurants

The Corbridge Larder

☎ **DELI** | Located near Corbridge Roman Town and the best deli for miles around, this place is filled with all manner of local produce, as well as specialty foods from small-time artisans across Europe. Try the delicious but alarmingly colored Delfts Blauw cheese from Holland; its almost fluorescent blue hue is entirely natural.

Known for: local and international artisanal produce; lovely upstairs café; village-shop atmosphere. ☎ *Average main: £10* ☎ *18 Hill St., Corbridge* ☎ 01434/632948 🌐 www.corbridgelarder.co.uk.

Hotels

Battlesteads Hotel

\$\$ | **B&B/INN** | 10 miles north of Hexham and “beyond the wall,” this delightful old inn combines three virtues: good food, cozy rooms, and eco-friendly credentials, with a string of awards to prove it. **Pros:** secret walled garden; excellent Sunday roasts; green ethos. **Cons:** some rooms on the small side; no mobile phone reception; service slow when busy. ☎ *Rooms from: £125* ☎ *Hexham Rd., Wark* ☎ 01434/230209 🌐 www.battlesteads.com 🚗 22 rooms 🍷 Free breakfast.

★ Langley Castle

\$\$ | **HOTEL** | Close your eyes and picture an English castle: you’re probably seeing Langley, a lavish 14th-century fortification complete with turrets and battlements. **Pros:** romantic and historic setting; lavish afternoon tea; full movies and sports TV packages in rooms. **Cons:** breakfast hit or miss; decor a little tired in places; service can be slow. ☎ *Rooms from: £175* ☎ *Off A686* ☎ 01434/688888 🌐 www.langleycastle.co.uk 🚗 27 rooms 🍷 Free breakfast.

Performing Arts

Queen’s Hall Arts Centre

ARTS CENTERS | A wide range of theater, dance, and art exhibitions are on the bill at the Queen’s Hall Arts Centre. ☒ *1-2 Beaumont St.* ☎ 01434/652477 🌐 www.queenshall.co.uk.

Activities

The Bike Place

This cycle-hire place in Kielder is the nearest to this part of Hadrian’s Wall, despite being 34 miles northwest of Hexham. Still, it’s a great excuse to head up into Northumberland National Park. Rental prices start at £30 per day, or £50 for e-bikes, and they can arrange delivery and collection for an extra fee. The main store is in Kielder village, though there’s a second on Kielder Waterside, which is marginally closer. ☒ *Kielder Cycle Centre, Station Garage, Kielder* ➔ *Take A6079 from the main A69 road. The shop is signposted on the main road through the village* ☎ 01434/250457 🌐 www.thebikeplace.co.uk.

Greenhead

19 miles west of Hexham, 51 miles northwest of Durham.

Greenhead may be small, but it’s a good base for exploring some of the Hadrian’s Wall sites that lie farther west, including the Housesteads Roman Fort, the Roman Army Museum, and Vindolanda. In Northumberland National Park, around 6 miles northeast of Greenhead, The Sill National Landscape Discovery Centre has informative displays about Hadrian’s Wall and can advise about local walks.

GETTING HERE AND AROUND

Greenhead is on the A69 and B6318. The nearest train station is 3 miles east, in Haltwhistle.

ESSENTIALS

VISITOR INFORMATION **The Sill National Landscape Discovery Centre.** ☒ *Northumberland National Park, Bardon Mill* ☎ 01434/341200 🌐 www.thesill.org.uk.

Sights

Birdoswald Roman Fort

ARCHAEOLOGICAL SITE | Beside the longest unbroken stretch of Hadrian’s Wall, Birdoswald Roman Fort reveals the remains of gatehouses, a granary, and a parade ground. You can also see the line of the original turf wall, later rebuilt in stone. Birdoswald has a unique historical footnote: unlike other Roman forts along the wall, it was maintained by local tribes long after being abandoned by the Romans. The small visitor center has artifacts discovered at the site, a full-scale model of the wall, and a good café. ☒ *Wallace Dr.* ☎ 0370/333–1181 🌐 www.english-heritage.org.uk/birdoswald 🚗 £8.60 🕒 Closed weekdays in Nov.–Feb.; closed Mon.–Tues. in Mar.

★ Housesteads Roman Fort

MUSEUM | If you have time to visit only one Hadrian’s Wall site, Housesteads Roman Fort is your best bet. Britain’s most complete example of a Roman fort also features long sections of the wall, with an informative visitor center showcasing a collection of artifacts discovered at the site and computer-generated images of what the fort originally looked like. The site is a 10-minute walk uphill from the parking lot (not for those with mobility problems), but the effort is more than worth it to see the surprisingly extensive ruins, dating from around AD 125. Excavations have revealed the remains of granaries, gateways, barracks, a hospital, and the commandant’s house.

■ **TIP** ➔ **Come for the history, stay for the views: the northern tip of the fort offers sweeping vistas of Hadrian’s Wall as it winds up and over distant hills and crags.** ☒ *Off*

B6318, Haydon Bridge ☎ 01434/344363
 🌐 www.english-heritage.org.uk/housesteads 🚗 £8.10; parking £3.

Roman Army Museum

MUSEUM | FAMILY | At the garrison fort of Carvoran, this museum makes an excellent introduction to Hadrian's Wall. Full-size models and excavations bring this remote outpost of the empire to life, with a host of historic artifacts including authentic Roman graffiti adorning the walls of an excavated barracks. There's also a flashy 3D film that puts it all into historical context. Opposite the museum, at Walltown Crags on the Pennine Way (one of Britain's long-distance national hiking trails), are 400 yards of the best-preserved section of the wall. The museum is 1 mile northeast of Greenhead. ☎ Off B6318 ☎ 01697/747485
 🌐 www.vindolanda.com 🚗 £7.25; £12.60 combined with Vindolanda ☺ Closed mid-Nov.–mid-Feb.

★ Vindolanda

ARCHAEOLOGICAL SITE | About 8 miles east of Greenhead, this archaeological site—which celebrated its 50th anniversary in 2020—holds the remains of eight successive Roman forts and civilian settlements, providing an intriguing look into the daily life of a military compound. Most of the visible remains date from the 2nd and 3rd centuries, and new excavations are constantly under way. A reconstructed Roman temple, house, and shop provide context, and the museum displays rare artifacts, such as a handful of extraordinary wooden tablets with messages about everything from household chores to military movements. A full-size reproduction of a section of the wall gives a sense of its sheer scale. ☎ Off B6318, Bardon Mill ☎ 01434/344277
 🌐 www.vindolanda.com 🚗 £8.50; £12.60 combined with Roman Army Museum ☺ Closed mid-Nov.–mid-Feb.

🍴 Restaurants

Milecastle Inn

\$ | **BRITISH** | The snug bar and restaurant of this remote, peaceful, 17th-century pub make an excellent place to dine. Fine local meat goes into its famous savory pies; take your pick from wild boar and duckling pie or maybe a plate of Whitby scampi with chips. **Known for:** tasty house specialty meat pies; traditional pub food; 17th-century building. [5] *Average main:* £12 ☎ B6318, Haltwhistle ☎ 01434/321372 🌐 www.milecastle-inn.co.uk.

🏨 Hotels

Holmhead Guest House

\$ | **B&B/INN** | Talk about a feel for history—this former farmhouse in open countryside, graced with stone arches and exposed beams, is not only built on Hadrian's Wall but also partly from it. **Pros:** full of atmosphere; close to Hadrian's Wall; reasonable rates. **Cons:** rooms are a bit of a squeeze; out of the action; you need a car to get around. [5] *Rooms from:* £72 ☎ Off B6318 ☎ 01697/747402
 🌐 bandb-hadrianswall.co.uk 🚗 No credit cards 🚗 5 rooms 🍳 Free breakfast.

Morpeth

16 miles north of Newcastle, 22 miles south of Alnwick.

Surrounded by idyllic pastures and tiny lanes, the hilly medieval market town of Morpeth is the closest thing this part of Northumberland comes to bustling. It's an ideal base for exploring some of the region's more hidden-away sights to the north of Newcastle.

GETTING HERE AND AROUND

Just off the A1, Morpeth is easily reached by car. Trains leave Newcastle every hour and take less than 15 minutes. Buses X14, X15, X18, and 44

connect Newcastle and Morpeth, and the journey takes around 40 minutes.

ESSENTIALS

VISITOR INFORMATION Morpeth Tourist Information Centre. ☎ The Chantry, Bridge St. ☎ 01670/623455 🌐 www.visitnorth-umberland.com.

👁 Sights

Brinkburn Priory

RELIGIOUS SITE | A fine historical anecdote concerns this idyllic Augustinian priory, founded in the early 12th century. A group of Scottish “reivers” came looking for the place to raid and loot it, but because it was entirely hidden by forest, they were unable to find it and gave up. The monks were so happy that they sounded the bells in celebration, thus revealing the location—and the Scots promptly returned and sacked the place. Most of the beautiful, light-filled building is the result of a loving Victorian restoration, though the spirit of the original has been retained, along with a few physical elements. Highlights of the interior include the stunning stone-carved altar, the striking stained-glass windows, and the William Hill organ, regularly used for classical music concerts. On the same site is a mill and a 19th-century manor house, which incorporates the undercroft from the former monk's refectory. The house is said to be inhabited by the spirits of a monk and a nun, and several workmen have reported sightings in recent years. ■ **TIP→ The walk from the car park takes 10 minutes, but it's a lovely way to first encounter the priory. Those with mobility problems can drive all the way down.** ☎ Off B6344 ☎ 01665/570628
 🌐 www.english-heritage.org.uk 🚗 £5.20 ☺ Closed Mon.–Tues. in Apr.–Sep.; closed weekends in Oct.; closed Nov.–Mar.

★ Cragside

HOUSE | FAMILY | The turrets and towers of Tudor-style Cragside, a Victorian country house, look out over the edge of a forested hillside. It was built between

1864 and 1895 by Lord Armstrong, an early electrical engineer and inventor, and designed by Richard Norman Shaw, a well-regarded architect. Among Armstrong's contemporaries, Cragside was called “the palace of a modern magician” because it contained so many of his inventions. This was the first house in the world to be lit by hydroelectricity; the grounds also hold an energy center with restored mid-Victorian machinery. There are Pre-Raphaelite paintings and an elaborate mock-Renaissance marble chimneypiece.

The grounds are as impressive as the house; they cover around 1,000 acres and include an enormous sandstone rock garden, a picture-perfect iron bridge, and 14 different waymarked paths and trails, which bloom with rhododendrons in June. There's also a children's adventure playground. If you come by car, don't miss the 6-mile Carriage Drive around the estate. There are some lovely viewpoints and picnic spots along the way, like at the gorgeous Nelly's Moss lake. ■ **TIP→ Paths around the grounds are steep, and distances can be long, so wear comfortable shoes.**

☎ Off B6341, Rothbury ☎ 01669/620333
 🌐 www.nationaltrust.org.uk/cragside
 🚗 Grounds and house £18; grounds only £13, in winter £7.50.

🍴 Restaurants

Central Bean Coffee House

\$ | **DELI** | There's a distinct Pacific Northwest vibe at this funky little independent eatery in central Morpeth. Locals flock to the place for fresh sandwiches, panini, cakes, or just a fine cup of joe. **Known for:** great coffee; quick breakfast spot; friendly staff. [5] *Average main:* £5 ☎ 21 Sanderson Arcade ☎ 01670/512300
 🌐 www.centralbean.co.uk 🚗 No credit cards ☺ No dinner.

Hotels

Macdonald Linden Hall

\$\$ | HOTEL | Built as a getaway for a wealthy banker in 1812, this charming country estate surrounded by 450 acres of private grounds is wonderfully secluded; it's a full five minutes' drive off the nearest public road. **Pros:** out-of-the-way escape; soothing spa; gorgeous original building. **Cons:** can get overrun by large tour groups; visiting spa means a trip outside; bedrooms not as well maintained as public areas.  Rooms from: £209  Off A697, Longhorsley  0344/879-9084  www.macdonaldhotels.co.uk  50 rooms  Some meals.

★ Thistleyhaugh

\$ | B&B/INN | This ivy-covered stone farmhouse sits at the center of a 720-acre organic farm. **Pros:** idyllic farmhouse location; wonderful hosts; excellent breakfasts. **Cons:** isolated location not for everyone; you'll need a car; minimum two-night stay in summer.  Rooms from: £100  Off A697, Longframlington  01665/570629  www.thistleyhaugh.co.uk  4 rooms  Free breakfast.

Alnwick

22 miles north of Morpeth, 24 miles south of Lindisfarne.




Dominated by a grand castle, the little market town of Alnwick (pronounced *ahn-ick*) is the best base from which to explore the dramatic coast and countryside of northern Northumberland.

GETTING HERE AND AROUND

If you're driving, Alnwick is just off the A1. Buses X15 and X18 connect Alnwick with Newcastle, Morpeth, and Lindisfarne. The nearest train station is 4 miles away in Alnmouth (pronounced *alun-mowth*); trains travel between here and Newcastle roughly every hour and take 25 minutes.

ESSENTIALS

VISITOR INFORMATION Alnwick Tourist

Information Centre.  The Playhouse, Bondgate Without  01670/622152  www.visitalnwick.org.uk.

Sights

Alnwick Castle






CASTLE/PALACE | FAMILY | Sometimes called the "Windsor of the North," the imposing Alnwick Castle will likely provoke cries of "Hogwarts!" from younger visitors as it comes into view over the hill; the grounds appear as the exterior of the famous School of Witchcraft and Wizardry in the *Harry Potter* movies. Older visitors might also recognize it as Brancaster Castle from the TV series *Downton Abbey*. In reality, the castle is the ancestral home to the dukes of Northumberland, whose family, the Percys, dominated in the Northeast for centuries.

Head inside to find family photos and other knickknacks scattered around the lavish staterooms, a subtle but pointed reminder that this is a family home rather than a museum. Highlights include the extraordinary gun room, lined with hundreds of antique pistols arranged in swirling patterns; the formal dining room, its table set as if guests are due at any minute; and the magnificent galleried library, containing 14,000 books in floor-to-ceiling cases.

There's plenty here for younger visitors: **Knights' Quest** lets kids dress up and complete interactive challenges; **Dragon's Quest** is a labyrinth designed to teach a bit of medieval history; and for the very young, there are Harry Potter-style events on certain dates, including **Broomstick Lessons** on the exact spot used in the movie (check the website for the schedule). Spooky ghost stories are told by costumed actors in the **Lost Cellars**. In addition, staff members hide a toy owl somewhere in each room of the castle, and kids get a









The romantic grounds of Alnwick Castle are filled with flowers and rolling fields.

certificate if they spot them all. Tickets are valid for one year, so you can come back if you don't see everything in a day.  Off B6431  01665/511100  www.alnwick-castle.com  £16.75; combined ticket with Alnwick Gardens £28.70  Closed Nov.–Mar.

★ Alnwick Garden

GARDEN | FAMILY | A marvelous flight of fancy, Alnwick Garden celebrated its 20-year anniversary at the turn of this decade and remains one of the area's most beautiful, unusual, and kid-friendly attractions. Alongside traditional features like perfectly manicured lawns, shaded woodland walks, and a charming rose garden are more unusual elements like the enormous Grand Cascade water feature, a Poison Garden with everything from hemlock to cannabis, and a labyrinth of towering bamboo. The grounds are also home to the largest "Tai-haku" cherry orchard in the world, as well as a recently spruced up shop and a number of excellent dining and drinking options, including one of the area's most unique

restaurants, the Treehouse.  **TIP** → You can buy clippings of the unique varieties of roses in the shop.  Denwick La.  01665/511350  www.alnwickgarden.com  £14.30; combined ticket with Alnwick Castle £28.70  Closed Jan.; closed midweek mid-Nov.–mid-Dec.

Restaurants

★ The Treehouse

\$ | MODERN BRITISH | The treetop location may sound gimmicky, but the effect at this extraordinary restaurant is quite magical and unexpectedly romantic, especially when the place is lit up at night. Here, an enormous complex of buildings spreads out over more than 550 square meters, with a roaring log fire at its center and furniture made from fallen branches. **Known for:** unique setting; Northeastern flavors and ingredients; inoffensive acoustic music on a loop.  Average main: £15  Alnwick Garden, Denwick La.  01665/660320  www.alnwickgardenhospitality.com  No dinner Sun.



It's worth the scenic coastal walk to see the remote clifftop ruins of Dunstanburgh Castle.

that it's easy to find). The coastal path starts here and is clearly signposted. It's a beautiful route, but a bit of a hike at around 2½ miles there and back.

Hotels

★ The Cookie Jar

\$\$\$ | HOTEL | With sumptuously appointed rooms, a popular bistro restaurant, and convenient location right by the castle, this historic convent-turned-boutique-hotel is Alnwick's most luxurious town-center stay. **Pros:** delicious cooked breakfast; spacious and comfortable rooms; homemade cookies in rooms. **Cons:** superior rooms are expensive; no dinner served midweek; unrelentingly blue decor. [5] Rooms from: £165 ☎ 12 Bailiffgate ☎ 01665/510465 🌐 www.cookiejaralnwick.com ➡ 11 rooms 🍷 Free breakfast.

Dunstanburgh Castle

8 miles northeast of Alnwick, 11 miles south of Bamburgh.

Dunstanburgh is as dramatic an old ruin as they come and more than worth the effort it takes to get here (this is not the kind of place where you can just drive up to the front gate).

GETTING HERE AND AROUND

The castle is accessible only by footpaths from the villages of Craster or Embleton off the B1339 rural road. The X18 bus from Alnwick is the only practical connection by public transportation; get off in Craster and head to the main public parking lot (the village is small enough

Sights

Dunstanburgh Castle

CASTLE/PALACE | Perched romantically on a cliff 100 feet above the shore, these castle ruins can be reached along a windy, mile-long coastal footpath that heads north from the tiny fishing village of Craster. Built in 1316 as a defense against the Scots, and later enlarged by John of Gaunt, the powerful Duke of Lancaster who virtually ruled England in the late 14th century, the castle is known to many from the popular paintings by 19th-century artist J. M. W. Turner. The castle is a signposted 1.3-mile walk from the nearest parking lot in Craster, on the outskirts of Alnwick. ■ **TIP** ➡ While Dunstanburgh is run by English Heritage, it's owned by the

National Trust, so a membership with either organization will get you in for free. ☎ Dunstanburgh Rd., Alnwick ☎ 01665/576231 🌐 www.english-heritage.org.uk/dunstanburgh ☎ £5.70 🕒 Closed weekdays Nov.–Mar.

Hotels

Doxford Hall Hotel

\$\$ | HOTEL | Around 6 miles east of Dunstanburgh Castle, halfway between Alnwick and Bamburgh, lies this 200-year-old country mansion—now a popular spa hotel. **Pros:** gorgeous Georgian property; fascinating “history of Northumberland” tapestry in hall; therapeutic deep pressure massage. **Cons:** some rooms old fashioned; gym is small and a little tired; can get booked up with weddings. [5] Rooms from: £220 ☎ Off A1, Alnwick ☎ 01665/589700 🌐 www.doxfordhall.com ➡ 36 rooms 🍷 Free breakfast.

Bamburgh

16 miles north of Alnwick, 14 miles south of Lindisfarne.

Tiny Bamburgh has a splendid castle, and several beaches are just a few minutes' walk away.

GETTING HERE AND AROUND

Bamburgh can be reached by car on the B3140, B3141, or B3142. Buses X18 and 418 run from Alnwick to Bamburgh a few times per day. The nearest train station is in Chathill, about 7 miles away.



Sights

★ Bamburgh Castle

CASTLE/PALACE | You'll see Bamburgh Castle long before you reach it: a solid, weather-beaten, clifftop fortress that dominates the coastal view for miles around. A fortification of some kind has stood here since the 6th century, but the Norman castle was damaged during the 15th century, and the central tower is all that remains intact. Much of the structure—the home of the Armstrong family since 1894—was restored during the 18th and 19th centuries. The interior is mostly late Victorian (most impressively, the Great Hall), although a few rooms, such as the small but alarmingly well-stocked armory, have a more authentically medieval feel. The breathtaking view across the North Sea is worth the steep climb up from the main road; bring a picnic if the weather's good (or order to-go sandwiches at the café). ☎ Off B1340 ☎ 01668/214515 🌐 www.bamburghcastle.com 💷 £11.75 🕒 Closed weekdays Nov.–mid-Feb.

Farne Islands

ISLAND | Regular boat trips from the little village of Seahouses, 3 miles down the coast from Bamburgh, provide access to the Farne Islands with their impressive colonies of seabirds—including puffins, kittiwakes, terns, shags, and

Walking and Biking in the Northeast



Wide vistas, quiet roads, and fresh air make for excellent hikes and bike rides in the Northeast. Long-distance footpaths include the 90-mile Teesdale Way, which follows the River Tees through Barnard Castle and Middleton-in-Teesdale. Otherwise, the russet hills and dales of Northumberland National Park will please any serious walker. Bike routes to explore—in whole or in part—are the 220-mile Northumbria Cycling Kingdom loop and the 81-mile Coast and Castles cycle route.

guillemots—and barking groups of gray seals. Inner Farne, where St. Cuthbert, the great abbot of Lindisfarne, died in AD 687, has a tiny chapel. Look out for the ruined lighthouse beacons as you pass Brownsman Island. Four companies are currently licensed to make the trip to Farne and the other islands. Of these, **Billy Shiel's Boat Trips** (01665/720308 🌐 www.farne-islands.com) has the most reliable advertised schedule; they cruise to Inner Farne every day April through October. There's always a 1 pm departure, as well as between two and five on-the-hour tours on either side of this; check the website for month-by-month schedules. They also visit the rocky Staple Island between May and July, daily at 10 am and 11 am. Cruises to each island cost £20 and take 2½ hours, including an hour's landfall (in good weather only). The other operators are **Golden Gate** (01665/721210 🌐 www.farneislands-boattrips.co.uk), **Serenity** (01665/721667 🌐 www.farneislandstours.co.uk), and **St. Cuthbert** (01665/720388 🌐 www.farneislands.co.uk); call or check online for their daily schedules. All boat services leave from Seahouses harbor—look for



The Farne Islands are home to a charming collection of seabirds, including a puffin colony.

the tiny booth selling tickets or the outlet in the main village parking lot. Each company offers a variety of other cruises, such as seal-spotting expeditions. Visit the individual websites to see what's on offer this season. ■ **TIP** → In addition to the cost of the boat trip, there's a **National Trust landing fee of £11.60 (May through July) and £7.70 (in April, and August through November)**. ☎ *Seahouses Harbour, Harbour Rd., Seahouses* ☎ 01289/389244 *National Trust* 🌐 www.nationaltrust.org.uk/farne-islands 📄 Landing fees £7.70–£11.60.



Restaurants

★ Grays Restaurant

\$\$ | **BRITISH** | Located on a quiet bay between Bamburgh and Lindisfarne and surrounded by 6 acres of woodland, this elegant, award-winning restaurant sits within the historic Waren House Hotel. The fixed-price dinners (one course for £22.50, two for £33.95, three for £42.50) feature local flavors, with options like the steamed Berwick white crab and apple

tian, Northumberland beef fillet with shallot confit, and Alnwick rum and chocolate ganache torte. **Known for:** picturesque surroundings; elegant, traditional menus; short serving time (from 6:30 pm to 8:30 pm). 💷 Average main: £22.50 ☎ Off B1342 ☎ 01668/214581 🌐 www.waren-househotel.co.uk.



Hotels

Beadnell Towers

\$\$ | **HOTEL** | Five miles south of Bamburgh on the scenic coastal road, this chic boutique hotel combines 18th-century heritage and character with 21st-century luxury and comfort. **Pros:** delicious, locally sourced food; free parking for guests; a short walk to sandy Beadnell Bay. **Cons:** room decor varies wildly so pick carefully; restaurant gets busy on weekends; dogs can stay so barking may be heard. 💷 Rooms from: £159 ☎ *The Wynding, Off B1340* ☎ 01665/721211 🌐 www.beadnelltowers.co.uk ➡ 18 rooms 🍳 Free breakfast.

Lord Crewe Hotel

§ | **HOTEL** | This cozy, stone-walled inn with oak beams sits in the heart of the village and has simple, modern guest rooms decorated with pine furnishings; some of them date back to the 1600s. **Pros:** in the center of the village; good seafood restaurant; close to Bamburgh Castle.

Cons: pub can get quite crowded; some uninspiring room decor; pet-friendly bar is ideal for dog lovers but not for allergy sufferers. 📍 *Rooms from: £110* 📞 *Front St. ☎ 01668/214243* 🌐 *www.lord-crewe.co.uk* 🚗 *7 rooms* 🍳 *Free breakfast.*

Lindisfarne (Holy Island)

14 miles north of Bamburgh, 24 miles north of Alnwick.

The cradle of northern England's Christianity and one-time home of St. Cuthbert, Lindisfarne (or Holy Island) has a religious history that dates from AD 635, when St. Aidan established a monastery here. Under its greatest abbot, the sainted Cuthbert, Lindisfarne became one of the foremost centers of learning in Christendom. Today, you can explore the atmospheric ruined priory and a castle.

GETTING HERE AND AROUND

By car, the island is reached from the mainland via a long drive on a causeway that floods at high tide, so check when crossing is safe. The tide schedule, which changes daily, is displayed at the causeway and printed in local newspapers. Traffic can be heavy; allow at least a half hour for your return trip. The only public transportation to Holy Island is run by Borders Buses. Bus 477 has limited service (a few buses per day and not every day) from Berwick-upon-Tweed railway station to the island.

ESSENTIALS

BUS CONTACTS Borders Buses.

☎ *01896/754350* 🌐 *www.bordersbuses.co.uk.*



Lindisfarne Castle

CASTLE/PALACE | Reached during low tide via a causeway from the mainland, this castle appears to grow out of the rocky pinnacle on which it was built 400 years ago, looking for all the world like a fairy-tale illustration. In 1903, architect Sir Edwin Lutyens converted the former Tudor fort into a private home that retains the original's ancient features. Across several fields from the castle is a walled garden designed by Gertrude Jekyll. Opening times are notoriously changeable—especially on Monday outside midsummer—and are always dependant on weather and tides, so it's best to call ahead. 📞 *Off Marygate, Lindisfarne ☎ 01289/389244* 🌐 *www.nationaltrust.org.uk/lindisfarne-castle* 💷 *£8.*

★ Lindisfarne Priory

RELIGIOUS SITE | In the year 875, Vikings destroyed the Lindisfarne community; only a few monks escaped, carrying with them Cuthbert's bones, which were reburied in Durham Cathedral. The sandstone Norman ruins of Lindisfarne Priory, reestablished in the 11th century, remain impressive and beautiful. A museum here displays Anglo-Saxon carvings. 📍 *Church Ln., Lindisfarne ☎ 01289/389200* 🌐 *www.english-heritage.org.uk/lindisfarne* 💷 *£7.20* 🕒 *Closed weekdays Nov.–Feb.*