

A day trip to Canterbury

Fun Facts

- ★ Canterbury is a UNESCO World Heritage site, attracting eight million visitors a year.
- ★ Canterbury is the site of the oldest Christian church in the English-speaking world still in use and was for centuries a major destination for pilgrims.
- ★ The Archbishop of Canterbury is the most senior bishop of the Church of England and of the Anglican Church worldwide.
- ★ King's School, Canterbury claims to be the oldest (c. 600 A.D.) school in the world.
- ★ Canterbury is home to three universities.

Canterbury Cathedral

Canterbury is dominated by its majestic Gothic Cathedral, which stands in the centre of the city, is surrounded by a walled precinct and is entered via a magnificent gatehouse. As it costs £18,000 a day to run, there is an entrance charge for visitors (Student £10.50).

A striking memorial marks the site where Archbishop Thomas Becket was murdered by four knights in 1170. His martyrdom made Canterbury one of Europe's greatest shrines and put pilgrimage at the heart of the city's prosperity. The cathedral has superb stained glass windows, handsome cloisters and the oldest Christian murals in the country. Apart from St. Thomas Becket, St. Augustine, Edward, the Black Prince and King Henry IV are also buried here.

St. Augustine's Abbey

Founded shortly after 597, St. Augustine's marked the rebirth of Christianity in southern England. Now a picturesque ruin, the abbey stands outside the old city walls and is often missed by visitors. The entry fee (£6.50) gives admission to a museum with a free audio guide and a Virtual Reality experience of the abbey as it would have been around 1500.

Museums

The Beaney House of Art and Knowledge This is a (free) local museum and art gallery which also houses the Visitor Information Centre where you can book a local walking or river tour.

Canterbury Roman Museum Built around an existing Roman pavement mosaic this museum also has a Roman underfloor heating system and wall paintings and exhibits of pottery, glassware, jewellery and weapons (£7.00).

Canterbury Heritage Museum The museum (£6.00) features not only what you might expect - archaeology, social history, transport, warfare, medieval Canterbury - but also exhibits themed around Film and Media, Toys and Hobbies, Costume and Textiles and the wartime Blitz. Unusually

there are also features relating to locally important individuals including novelist Joseph Conrad, murdered playwright Christopher Marlowe and Rupert Bear, Bagpuss and the Clangers

Also ...

St. Martin's Church Situated about fifteen minutes walk from the Cathedral, St. Martin's is the first church founded in England. Unlike the Cathedral St. Martin's is small, plain - and peaceful.

Westgate Towers Museum and Viewpoint. Housed in England's largest surviving medieval (1380) gateway, this once housed the city's prison which is now a restaurant. The exhibits are themed around City Wars, Crime and Punishment, Westgate Through History and Magna Carta. There are splendid views over the city from the 60 foot tower. And only £3 entry fee.

Canterbury Castle Originally built ca.1070 this has been a roofless ruin since the seventeenth century and is currently closed to the public.

Eastbridge Hospital A former hostel for pilgrims this complex of historic buildings is noted for its chapel and tranquil Franciscan Gardens. (Only £2.00).

The Canterbury Tales This visitor attraction (£9.95) recreates five of Geoffrey Chaucer's Canterbury Tales as costumed guides introduce the sights, sounds - and smells - of medieval England.

Picture This

Apart from the places mentioned above you might want to take photographs of:
The Old Quarter; The Garden of St. Mary de Castro; River Stour riverside pathway;
Abbott Mills Garden; St. Margaret's Street; St. George's Street; Blackfriars Street;
Dane John Gardens; The Buttermarket; Turnagain Lane; Conquest House;
Avery Sabine's House; St. George's Tower

Getting There

Trains run from Charing Cross and St. Pancras International to Canterbury West. Some St. Pancras trains require a change at Ashford. Trains from Victoria go to Canterbury East. The journey time varies from just under an hour to one hour fifty minutes. The stations are each a mile from the city centre.

The coach journey time from London Victoria is about one hour fifty minutes.