

WHITBY, NORTH YORKSHIRE – A dog-friendly tale

By Joanna Bunbury - one time Whitby holiday-maker turned local

Whitby is a truly magical place steeped in history and mythology. It's the birthplace of Dracula, where Captain Cook learnt to be a great seaman and the home of the magnificent Whitby Abbey founded in 657AD. Whitby has been inspiring artists for centuries. Come see why, you and your dog(s) are assured a warm welcome. Most people in Whitby have grown up around dogs and to my mind dog-people are good people. If I ever want to ask a dog related question I simply pop down the pub and ask a local. You'll also benefit from Northern prices, and a picturesque place that's deservedly won awards for its coastline, shopping, beach-combing and romantic train journeys. Plus there's loads to see, do and eat! Instead of being limited by having your dog you're spoilt for choice in Whitby as it really is a dog-friendly paradise. Let me fill you in;

For those of you arriving late you'll be pleased to know we have a popular restaurant with a dog-friendly room; RomeroJo's on Golden Lion bank www.romerojos.com open 4–10pm, it's a friendly licensed restaurant serving up delicious authentic Latin-American food. For accommodation there is an abundance of dog-friendly holiday cottages, guesthouses & campsites to choose from. To find them visit www.whitbyonline.co.uk and www.wonderfulwhitby.co.uk or search on www.dogfriendly.co.uk Direct Whitby is a pet-friendly award winning business; www.directwhitby.co.uk Posh dog-friendly accommodation options include Dunsley Hall Country House and Raithwaite Hall which has a dog spa.

So your evening meal and accommodation is sorted. Let's get you off to a good start in the morning by heading to Becketts Coffee Shop on Skinner Street. The staff love dogs and the Beckanini's are scrumptious. Again though, you're spoilt for choice. Whitby is jam-packed with gorgeous independent and unique cafes and many are dog-friendly. So do leave room for more tea and cake. You'll see many dog-friendly signs on café windows but if there's one you fancy trying that doesn't scream 'dog-friendly' – ask, they often are. I even know of one, Sherlocks on Flowergate where the waitresses happily dog-sat a lost terrier until his owner retraced his steps. How could you forget your dog you ask! Well, that brings me to the treasure trove of fantastic proper pubs we have. It's easy to pub-crawl your way around Whitby but to get you started I'll share with you some of my favourite dog-friendly ones; The Buck Inn on St Ann's Staith with harbour views and a big screen TV the size of a small planet. The Black Swan on Baxtergate with Ben the black lab and a private former stables courtyard, The Station Inn on New Quay Road with real ales and live music, The George Hotel, Baxtergate is lively in the evening and has a downstairs nightclub, The Little Angel on Flowergate has a nice courtyard & great open mic nights. For a residential local haunt try First In Last Out, 1 York Terrace its cosy and super friendly. Then over on the east side (across the swing bridge) you have The Fleece with a terrace over the harbour, locals fav The Endeavour on Church Street and The Black Horse in the heart of Whitby's old town. Plus many more so get out and find your own favourites!

At some point you'll be hankering for some Fish & Chips, you are by the seaside after all. Whitby has many award winning Fish & Chip restaurants and the pleasure is in finding your own personal favourite – get a take-away and settle outside to take in the beautiful views over the sea or harbour. Just be careful! It's a common sight to see the seagulls dive-bomb tourists and steal their meals. For a ring-side view of that spectacle get an outside table at the Pier Inn on Whitby harbour front. If you

want to sit in Mr Chips on Church Street is dog-friendly. Or stay in your holiday cottage and call Railway Chippy who deliver. When you've had your fill of Fish & Chips there are many other great options for foodie tourists, one dog-friendly restaurant that's popular for good reason is Humble Pie & Mash on Church Street.

Right, time to walk off all that food and drink! There are many incredible walks to do in and around Whitby. Here are some options; fossil hunt on the Dinosaur coast. Beach walk (dogs are only banned from some beaches in summer) or can take in a guided Ghost or Dracula walk in the evening. For the great outdoors there is the Cleveland Way to follow for dramatic coastline and heathered moorland. If you want some local advice The Whitby Gazette columnist Stu has written a book called 'Rambling On and On' which is available to buy from the Whitby Gazette. Do buy a ticket and go into the Whitby Abbey grounds with your dog(s) – you simply don't get a real feel for it by just viewing from the walls outside. In summer there is free entertainment in the Abbey grounds sometimes and in October they spectacularly illuminate it at night. If you prefer strolling around shops you'll be happy to find many true independent little gems. You can buy the famous Whitby jet jewellery (Black Market in Sandgate is good), outdoor gear, gifts, hand-crafts, fashion, games, chocolate, souvenirs, fresh produce (try Ellis on Baxtergate), pet products (Whitby Pet Shop, Station Square) and much, much more! Many shops do allow dogs in, just ask first. At Christmas there is a lovely Christmas market with stalls inside colourful beach huts. After shopping why not take a little cruise out to sea on the replica Endeavour, my two dogs have been sailing on it many times.

If however you want to partake in activities like surfing, beauty treatments, horse-riding, (Borrowby Equestrian Centre even do 'pub rides') golf, fishing excursions, whale watching or see a show at the pavilion call Rose-Marie on 01947 606947 for dog walking/sitting. Or Goldenhill Farm www.goldenhillfarm.co.uk a short drive on the Moors has kennels for day or overnight stays. They also have a campsite with real Gypsy wagons available to stay in.

Most visitors head to Whitby by car and come mainly from the North. Only a few adventurous Londoners and Southerners visit but once they have they often come back. I think the journey may be what puts them off erroneously. Although we're isolated by the North York Moors Whitby is an easy train journey. It is also in the Telegraphs Top Ten most romantic train journeys; both routes from London to York and from Middlesbrough to Whitby. However that is the long way (4hr 42mins). If you want to get here quicker from London it's under 2 hours from Kings Cross to York then 50 mins train to Scarborough. From Scarborough take a taxi (approx. 20 mins) picturesque drive over the Moors to Whitby. Taxi fare from £28 if you pre-book a Whitby cab or you can take the bus.

Visitors also mainly arrive in summer but the truth is Whitby offers different kinds of magic all year round. In the colder months you can experience atmospheric sea frets or snowy coastline. In spring you can walk through bluebell covered fields and spot incredible wildlife. Off season you'll get some great deals and all the beaches are open to dogs.

Entertainment wise, Whitby likes to party! There are festivals all year round from Goth, Folk, Regatta, Angling, Vintage and the Pirate Festival to name a few. To find out local information 'Like' the Real-Whitby facebook page which will keep you updated.

Hope to see you soon!