

Saturday 26 & Sunday 27 April 2025



OLD TOWN FESTIVAL

ROMAN EDITION



Leicester
visitleicester.info



Leicester
City Council

Step into a world of the Romans and celebrate St George with a weekend of adventure, as the event evolves into Old Town Festival, celebrating the cities rich heritage with hands-on fun and time-travelling excitement. You can also get involved and be part of history as we rebuild a full-scale Roman monument right in the heart of Leicester, with workshops running throughout the Easter holidays.
(unless stated events take place on Saturday & Sunday).



DIARY OF EVENTS AT A GLANCE

	Jubilee Square	Leicester Cathedral	Cathedral Gardens	Leicester Guildhall
All Day	Roman Living History Camp Roman Trader Hands-On Activities The Bibliotheca Roman Forum Build (Sat) Roman Forum Demolition (Sun)	The Saints of Leicester Cathedral 12pm-5pm (Sat) 12pm-3pm (Sun)	Dress Up Booth Arts & Crafts Enchanted Face Painting Creative Corner BookBus Medieval Market	Cinema in the Cells from 12pm Medieval Market from 12pm Pedestrian Arts from 12pm
10am - 11am	Roman Soldier Muster and Roll Call Roman Warrior Training	St Nicholas Walking Tour (Sat)	Bike Park (Sat)	
11am - 12pm	Roman Soldiers through the ages Secrets of Roman Religion (Sun)	Richard III Guided Tour	Meeting point for the Roman chariots/bikes (Sat)	Self-Guided Tour St George & The Bard Tour (Sat)
12pm - 1pm	Roman March (Sat) Roman Warrior Training (Sun)	The Archaeology of Roman Leicester (Mathew Morris) St Nicholas Walking Tour (Sun)	Sir Guinebeard and Ladylot Inferno! The Dragon Stilt Walking Jesters Morris Dancers The Wandering Wizard Mystic Merlina	Riverside Collectives acoustic session
1pm - 2pm	Roman Soldiers Training (Sat) Roman March (Sun) Secrets of Roman Religion	Vlad the Flea and the Roman Triumph Spartacuss and the Trial of Hercules St Nicholas Walking Tour (Sat)	Knight of the Wobbly Table Inferno! The Dragon Sir Guinebeard and Ladylot Stilt Walking Jesters Morris Dancers The Wandering Wizard	Riverside Collectives acoustic session St George & The Bard Tour (Sat)
2pm - 3pm	Roman Warrior Training Roman Soldiers Through the Ages	Raksha Dave (Sat) Who were the Roman Army? Panel Discussion (Sun) Richard III Guided Tour St Nicholas Walking Tour (Sun)	Inferno! The Dragon Knight of the Wobbly Table Sir Guinebeard and Ladylot Mystic Merlina	St George & The Bard Tour (Sat)
3pm - 4pm	Roman Warrior Training	Septimius Severus (Sat) St Nicholas Walking Tour (Sat)	Inferno! The Dragon Stilt Walking Jesters Morris Dancers The Wandering Wizard Mystic Merlina	Self-Guided Tour
4pm - 5pm			Inferno! The Dragon Knight of the Wobbly Table Sir Guinebeard and Ladylot	

LIVING HISTORY

Join us for an action-packed celebration of Roman history, train like a warrior, march in a grand parade and experience Roman theatre.

STEP BACK IN TIME AT OUR ROMAN LIVING HISTORY CAMP

10am – 5pm
Jubilee Square

Ready for an adventure? Explore the vibrant everyday life of Roman Leicester - drop in, join the fun and let your Roman journey begin.

ROMAN TRADER

10am – 5pm
Jubilee Square

Meet our Roman Trader and discuss the skills and tools needed for all aspects of Roman life. He even has essential Roman items that you can buy, like wax tablets or a trusty sponge on a stick.



ROMAN WARRIOR TRAINING

10.30am, 1pm, 2pm, 3.30pm Saturday
10.30am, 12pm, 2pm, 3.30pm Sunday
Jubilee Square

Gear up for an epic adventure and test your skills as a Roman soldier. Learn to march like a legionnaire, wield your sword like a true Centurion and raise your shield to victory. Pre-booking required on the day. (duration: 30 minutes)

ROMAN SOLDIERS THROUGH THE AGES

11.30am & 3pm
Jubilee Square

Ever wondered how Roman soldiers transformed over 400 years? Join our interactive talk with dynamic reenactors and uncover the secrets behind evolving armour and battle tactics. History has never been so action-packed! (duration: 30 minutes)

MARCH THROUGH HISTORY!

12pm Saturday

1pm Sunday

Jubilee Square

Watch Roman soldiers and citizens parade through the streets of Ratae (that's what the Romans called Leicester!) joined by Active Travel on amazing Chariot Cycles. Follow the march, cheer them on and snap a selfie at the stops along the way.

SECRETS OF ROMAN RELIGION LED BY LONGTHORPE LEGION

1.30pm Saturday

11am & 1.30pm Sunday

Jubilee Square

Unlock the mysteries of ancient faith. Witness a spellbinding reenactment of a temple ceremony dedicated to Mithras, and experience first hand the rituals that captivated the Roman spirit. This is one sacred spectacle you won't want to miss. (duration: 30 minutes)



KING RICHARD III VISITOR CENTRE

12pm – 5pm

Step into history, explore exciting exhibits and see real archaeological finds.

One day special entry price: Valid for Sat 26 or Sun 27 April 2025 Adult £10 / Child £5

No other concessions. No pre-booking on the door offer only, quote 'OT-RE'. Also, pick up trails & event information at Visit Leicester Info.



CELEBRATE ST GEORGE

St George was likely a Roman soldier from 3rd-century Cappadocia (now Turkey). His bravery inspired legends, especially the famous tale of him slaying a dragon. While the story is likely symbolic, St George is still seen as a hero of faith and courage. He became the patron saint of England and many other places, and his red cross on a white background remains a national symbol today.

ENCHANTED FACE PAINTING

12pm – 5pm
Cathedral Gardens

Become a fire-breathing dragon, a fearless knight, or a mystical fairy with a wave of the painter's brush (small fee £2 per person).

INFERNO! THE DRAGON

12.15pm, 1.15pm, 2.15pm, 4.15pm
Cathedral Gardens

ROAR! A fire-breathing dragon is on the loose. Dare to meet this legendary beast if you're brave enough.



STILT-WALKING JESTERS

12.15pm, 1.45pm, 3.15pm
Cathedral Gardens

Watch out, these tumbling tricksters are taller than a castle tower and twice as silly!

MORRIS DANCERS

12.30pm, 1.30pm, 3pm
Cathedral Gardens

Kick up your heels and clap along as these lively dancers keep tradition alive with sticks, ribbons, and bells.

STORY TELLING & THEATRE

Step back in time with thrilling tales of heroes, legends, and epic adventures. Listen, imagine, or watch history come to life. BSL interpretation will be provided for talks where this icon appears. Saturday 26 only.



THE BIBLIOTHECA

10am – 5pm
Jubilee Square

Calling all bookworms and history buffs. Discover a treasure trove of Roman-themed literature and chat with best-selling authors who bring ancient stories to life through Roman-themed fiction and non-fiction books for adults and children.

Simon Turney - The Damned Emperors series
Alex Gough - Carbo of Rome series
Nick Holmes - Roman Non-fiction
Linda Trafford - Ancient Rome's Worst Emperors
Kate Cunningham - Vlad & The Roman Triumph
Robin Price - Spartapuss series
Simon Elliot - Septimus Severus
Anthony Riches - Empire series
Nick Brown - Agent of Rome series.

ALL ABOARD THE BOOKBUS

12pm – 5pm
Cathedral Gardens

Hop onto this magical, time-traveling library for storytelling adventures that transport you through history.

CINEMA IN THE CELLS

12pm – 5pm
Leicester Guildhall

Watch documented shorts inside the Guildhall's spooky cells and uncover Leicester's Roman past.

SIR GUINEBEARD AND LADYLOT – THE DARING DAMSEL

12pm, 1.30pm, 3pm, 4.30pm
Cathedral Gardens

Get ready for a giggle as you are wooed and wowed by the ridiculous romantic heroes Sir Guinebeard and Ladylot, and their pet dragon Scorch.



THE WANDERING WIZARD

12.15pm, 1.45pm, 3.15pm
Cathedral Gardens

Will you discover the secrets of ancient magic? Keep your eyes peeled for this mystical traveller!

MYSTIC MERLINA

12.30pm, 2pm, 3.30pm
Cathedral Gardens

Be amazed as Mystic Merlina dazzles with silly sorcery and a sprinkle of medieval mystery.

KNIGHT OF THE WOBBLY TABLE

1pm, 2.30pm, 4pm
Cathedral Gardens

A trio of clumsy knights take on daring quests and balloon sword duels.

VLAD THE FLEA AND THE ROMAN TRIUMPH

1pm
Leicester Cathedral



Vlad and the Roman Triumph follows the flea Vlad and his friend Felix the cat as they are brought from Egypt to Rome to participate in Emperor Augustus' Triumph, they get lost and explore the city. (duration: 30 minutes)

SPARTAPUSS - TRIAL OF HERCULES, POETRY & BEATBOX WORKSHOP

1.30pm
Leicester Cathedral



Join Spartapuss author Robin Price for a live looping beatbox adventure as he attempts to rap (some of) the 12 Labours of Hercules! (duration: 30 minutes)



HANDS ON

Your chance to get hands on with history, get involved and create. You can even make Roman themed crafts to take home.

ARCHAEOLOGY

10am – 5pm
Jubilee Square

Perfect for budding archaeologists ready to unearth the secrets of the past.

DRESS-UP BOOTH

12pm – 5pm
Cathedral Gardens

Become a gallant knight, a fearless dragon, or a magical maiden and snap a picture in your royal best.

HANDS-ON CREATIVE

10am – 5pm
Jubilee Square

Channel your inner artist with a Roman twist. Create your very own mosaic to take home in this creative, drop-in workshop.

CRAFT DAMSEL'S CREATIVE CORNER

12pm – 5pm
Cathedral Gardens

Make your own medieval crowns, shields, and magical wands.

THE FORUM

10am – 5pm
Jubilee Square

Be part of something extraordinary! Join us on Saturday 26 April as we raise a monumental forum in the heart of Leicester. Then, on Sunday 27 April take part in its dramatic deconstruction - a powerful celebration of art, community, and heritage.

Work alongside renowned artist Olivier Grossetête and his team as we bring history to life, recreating the iconic Roman forum right on Jubilee Square. Don't miss this once-in-a-lifetime experience!

URBAN MOSAIC

12pm – 5pm (Saturday only)
Leicester Guildhall

Join award-winning artists, Urban Canvas and help to create a mosaic inspired by Leicester's Roman craftsmanship. Step into history and bring mosaics to life.

TALKS TOURS & TRAILS

Hear exciting stories, talks and debates about the Roman world for all ages.

ST NICHOLAS CHURCH WALKING TOUR

10.30am, 1.30pm, 3.30pm Saturday
12.30pm & 2.30pm Sunday
Leicester Cathedral

Starting from Leicester Cathedral and ending at St Nicholas Church, the oldest place of worship in the city, this walking tour explores the long history of both sites and the various historic buildings along the route. £6 per person. Booking via Eventbrite.

RICHARD III: GUIDED TOUR

11.30am & 2.30pm
Leicester Cathedral

Discover the fascinating story, beautifully crafted tomb, and the magnificent Redemption Windows and see the Pall created for the lying-in-repose of Richard III. £4 per person. Booking via Eventbrite. Accompanied children under 16 free. (duration: 30 mins)

ST GEORGE & THE BARD

11.30am, 1pm, 2.30pm
Saturday only
Leicester Guildhall

Follow the legendary links between St George and Shakespeare. Pre-booking advised on the day.

THE SAINTS OF LEICESTER CATHEDRAL

Saturday 12pm - 5pm
Sunday 12pm - 3pm
Leicester Cathedral

Discover the stories of St George and the other saints by finding their pictures in the windows and statues. Follow the clues and the trail to get a small prize at the end.



ROMAN LEICESTER WITH MATHEW MORRIS

12pm

Leicester Cathedral



Explore the hidden history of Roman Leicester, once a key capital of Roman Britain. Join Mathew Morris from the University of Leicester Archaeological Service for a fascinating talk on the town's archaeology and what it reveals about life here nearly 2,000 years ago. (duration: 30 mins).

IN CONVERSATION WITH RAKSHA DAVE

2pm (Saturday only)

Leicester Cathedral



Join celebrated archaeologist, TV presenter and award-winning children's author Raksha Dave in conversation with local archaeologist Peter Liddle. Hear her story, explore exciting excavations worldwide, and get your questions answered. Raksha will also be signing copies of her book, *Lessons from Our Ancestors*. (duration: 30 mins).

'WHO WERE THE ROMAN ARMY?'

2pm (Sunday Only)

Leicester Cathedral

Join our panel of Roman experts as they explore the mighty Roman army. Discover the roles of fearless soldiers who fought for the Senate and people of Rome—from Centurions and Legionaries to Imperial Guards and even assassins.

SEPTIMUS SEVERUS - THE 1ST AFRICAN EMPEROR

3pm (Saturday only)

Leicester Cathedral



Uncover the incredible story of Septimius Severus, the first African Emperor. Join archaeologist and author Dr. Simon Elliott as he traces his journey from Libya to Northern Britain and explores a fascinating link to Roman Leicester. (duration: 40 mins).

THEATRE ON THE GO! ECHOES OF ROME

1.30pm, 3pm Saturday

11am, 1.30pm, 3pm Sunday

Meeting point Jubilee Square

Walk the streets of Roman Leicester in this immersive theatre adventure as you follow Gaius Marcius Victor through hidden ruins, grand history, and epic tales of power and betrayal in 3rd-century Leicester. Booking via Eventbrite.





Modern Day Craft Market

12pm – 5pm

Visit our modern day craft market from local independent businesses with arts, crafts, textiles and more.

Peruse the stalls in Leicester Guildhall & Cathedral Gardens.

COMING SOON!

DISCOVER A REAL ROMAN EXPERIENCE AT JEWRY WALL LEICESTER'S EXCITING NEW VISITOR ATTRACTION

Leicester's rich Roman heritage is about to come alive like never before as Jewry Wall reopens its doors! Following an extensive refurbishment, the museum will unveil an immersive, state-of-the-art exhibition that takes visitors on a journey through Roman Leicester, offering a unique blend of history, storytelling, and interactive experiences. Keep up to date at jewrywall.com

HAYMARKET SHOPPING CENTRE PRE-EVENTS

Roman Themed Fun
Thursday 24 April
11am - 3pm

A day packed with Roman-themed fun.

Active Travel: Graffwerks
Friday 25 April
11am - 3pm

Gear up for the Roman parade with a fun-filled workshop.

No booking needed - just drop in and let the adventure begin!

MONDAY 21 – FRIDAY 25 APRIL

WE NEED YOU!

Step back in time and help build a Roman forum that will be centre stage of the Old Town Festival!

Join our hands-on workshops led by renowned artist Olivier Grossetête.

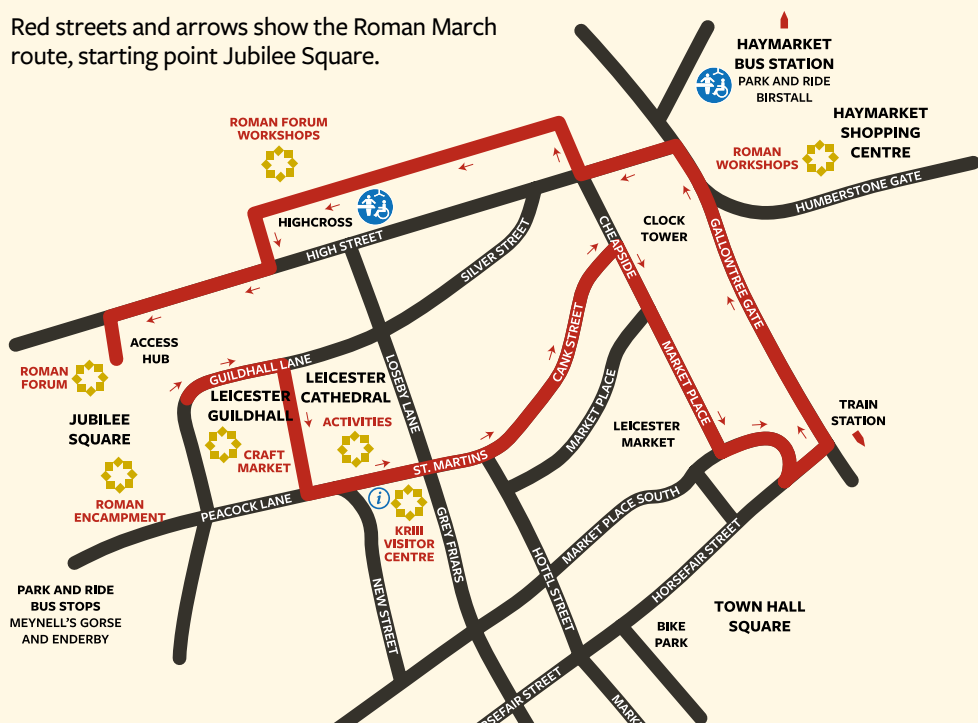
No experience needed. Suitable for ages 9+

Drop-in sessions: Monday 21 – Friday 25 April
10am – 1pm and 2pm – 5pm
Highcross Shopping Centre

Contact festivals@leicester.gov.uk to secure your place.



Red streets and arrows show the Roman March route, starting point Jubilee Square.



TRAVEL INFORMATION

For advice on planning your journey, we recommend: choosehowyoumove.co.uk

Getting here by bus

Leicester Buses supply frequent services to connect you straight to the city at a great value rate.

Plan your journey and check which service is best for your area

leicesterbuses.co.uk

Cycling

To visit the festival by bike, there is free secure bike park on site (Sat)

Alternatively free secure bike parking is available at Town Hall Square Bike Park.
Saturday: 8.30am-6pm,
Sunday: 10am-4pm

Car Park

There are a number of car parks in the city centre which are a short walk from the festival.

For further information contact:

W: visitleicester.info

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T: 0116 299 4444

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