

Fireside Stories with Father Christmas

Frequently Asked Questions

1. What will happen at Fireside Stories with Father Christmas?

Your experience will start under the canopy in the Coach Yard of Raby Castle, where you will be greeted by Elvis (the cheeky) Christmas pony who will gather the group together and lead you to the Castle. Please dress warmly as there may be a short time to wait outside. The Footman will greet you at the Castle and show you to your seats near the roaring log fire. Father Christmas will entertain everyone by telling a special story and singing songs, assisted by his footmen to get the whole audience involved. Father Christmas will check his list and give a special gift to each child.

2. How long will it last?

Each session will last around 45 minutes from gathering at the gate including the story telling and handing out of gifts

3. What time should I arrive?

Please arrive at the canopy in the Coach Yard within plenty of time to enjoy a hot chocolate and a look in our Christmas Shop, but at least ten minutes before your scheduled time, to allow time for checking tickets and the walk up to the Castle. There may be a short time to wait outside so please dress warmly. Follow signage to the Tearooms once you have parked.

4. What if I am late for my time slot?

It is your responsibility to arrive on time for your time slot. Please plan and check for anything that might delay you, road closures, weather etc. Unfortunately, late arrivals cannot be guaranteed entry or transferred to another time slot

5. What else is at Raby Castle?

During the Christmas opening at Raby Castle, our Coach Yard is open which includes real Christmas trees for sale, our Christmas Gift Shop & Tearooms. Why not arrive early and enjoy our Winter Wonderland with craft activities and enjoy hot drinks and tasty treats from our Tearooms and kiosks. Fireside stories with Father Christmas takes place inside Raby Castle's Grand Entrance Hall, although the rest of the Castle is closed to visitors.

6. Is there car parking?

There is ample car parking in the grounds of Raby Castle, mainly on grass, please follow signage or instructions from staff to parking areas once you arrive at Raby.

7. Will there be food and drink available?

The Raby Tearooms will be open from 9am until 5pm. Take away hot drinks and festive treats will be available in the Coach Yard.

8. Is there disabled access?

Your experience starts with a walk from the Coach Yard to the Castle, it is possible to meet the group at the Castle gates adjacent to the accessible parking area, if required, however please let us know in advance if you require this. If you are able to join the walk, accessible parking is available in the main car park. There is

a level entry into the Entrance Hall. Please call 01833 660202 for further information and to explain your specific needs and we will do our best to accommodate you.

9. Can I leave my child while they visit Father Christmas?

Children must be accompanied by an adult at all times when visiting Raby Castle

10. Will I be allowed to take photographs of my child?

There will be time for a quick photo as your child receives their gift from Santa so make sure you bring your camera or a phone that is fully charged with spare memory space!

11. How many adults can I bring?

Due to space limitations we can only welcome up to 2 accompanying adults per child. Each child ticket includes one adult, if you would like to bring an additional adult, please select the ticket option for 1 child incl. 2 adults.

12. Do you have to pay for under 1's?

Under 1's will be classed as 'babes in arms' and do not require a ticket, however they will not receive a gift from Father Christmas and their name will not be read out.

13. What age is this event suitable for?

We allow you to decide whether this event is suitable for your child, but it is naturally aimed at young children who still believe in the magic of Christmas. Children of all ages will enjoy the spectacle of arriving at Raby Castle and seeing it decorated for Christmas, seeing Father Christmas, listening to and taking part in songs and receiving their gift. They must be able to sit for around 30 minutes of interactive entertainment. Each child taking part in the experience, including receiving a gift must have a valid ticket for entry.

14. What should we bring?

We suggest bringing a camera and dressing warmly as there is a short walk between the Castle and car park and you might be required to wait outside for a short time.

15. What is the address of Raby Castle?

Raby Castle, Staindrop, Darlington, Co Durham, DL2 3AH

16. What is the cancellation policy?

Unfortunately, due to the popularity of this event, there are no refunds or cancellations permitted. Please be sure that when you make your reservation, you know exactly which date and which time slot you wish to secure. The event will still take place in rain or snow and weather cancellations are extremely rare. In the event of cancellation, you will be notified immediately and given a complete refund or the opportunity to reschedule.

17. How do I contact Raby Castle?

You can call the office at Raby Castle on 01833 660202 between the hours of 9am and 4.30pm Monday to Friday, or email admin@rabycastle.com.