

UK Canal Boating

Escape with a canal boating holiday!

Aqueducts and Llangollen and return from Blackwater

Cruise this route from : Blackwater

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Cruising Days : 4.00 to 0.00

Cruising Time : 16.00

Total Distance : 38.00

Number of Locks : 4

Number of Tunnels : 4

Number of Aqueducts : 4

In a weekend you can cruise over the famous and breathtaking aqueducts at Chirk and Pontcysyllte -a World Heritage Site, called 'the stream in the sky', to the delightful Welsh town of Llangollen, seeped in myth and legend and with the River Dee thundering through the centre.

The surrounding scenery is beautiful with the Welsh hills, and the Dee valley.

Llangollen hosts the Llangollen International Musical Eisteddfod every July which brings in some 120,000 visitors and turns the town into a vibrant international stage.

Also of interest is the Llangollen steam railway, there are 7.5 miles of track on which you can take a steam train trip.

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Cruising Notes

Day 1

Turn right out of the marina and pass the Ellesmere branch, take the left fork.

This part of the Canal is very rural, and all you will see is fields full of cows and sheep.

You will presently pass the junction with the Montgomery Canal on your left, 7 miles of this is navigable, up to

Maesbury, and if you want to cruise along here you have to book with the Lock keeper the day before. (Ask at Blackwater reception before you leave).

From this junction onwards towards Llangollen, the Bridges start being numbered from No 1, so you can easily count your progress, and how successful you have been in navigating under the bridges without touching the sides!!

If you want to stop off there is a pub coming up after a tricky bridge (No 4)- the Narrow Boat Inn, just before the Maestermyn Marina at Whittington.

If you have made good headway, you may want to spend your 1st Night here.

Alternatively there is another lovely canalside pub at bridge 11, the Jack Mytton Inn, Hindford, both serve good food & beer.

It is 2.5 hours cruise from Blackwater to Hindford .

Day 2

The next day head towards Chirk.

Shortly after Bridge 11, you will come to your only locks on this part of the Canal. There are 2 locks quite close to each other.

If a boat has just come through, past you, you are in luck, as the lock is with you, and you can open the gates and go straight in.

Get your crew out just before the lock, and make sure they have the windlass to operate the lock gates, as you were shown in the training.

After the 2nd lock on the right hand side, you can moor up and fill up with water if needed (you will need the British waterways key that is on your bunch of keys). Water points are marked on your map along the canal.

A bit further on, after Bridge 15, there are some very posh moorings outside the Lion Keys Pub & restaurant, just before you go under the A5 road. There are 20 moorings for customers.

You will start to see less cows & sheep & see more houses now, as you are approaching the town of Chirk.

At Bridge 21 you can moor up and walk to the Bridge Inn, the last pub in England, before you cross the Chirk Aqueduct into Wales. Make sure there is no-one coming over the aqueduct.

The Aqueduct is 70 feet high and was built between 1796 and 1801 by Thomas Telford & William Jessop, it is a practise run before you get to the Pontcysyllte Aqueduct, but it is very beautiful in itself, and crosses over the River Ceiriog.

It is not as frightening as you would think, with spectacular views of the River cascading down the valley below, and the Chirk Viaduct above you.

You cannot go very fast across the Aqueduct, so just enjoy the view, as very soon you come to the end, and the beginning of the Chirk Tunnel, which at over 400 metres is one of the longest tunnels on the waterways system to have a towpath running through it.

After you have emerged from the tunnel you might want to moor up & take a look at Chirk, or get some

supplies.

The area's main visitor attraction is Chirk castle (NT), a magnificent 700 year old fortress built by Edward the 1.

As you pass Chirk marina on your left there is a Golf Course and driving range.

Once the canal turns away from the railway you will find the Offas Dyke path following the Canal.

There is a very quaint lift bridge to negotiate at Froncysyllte, you will have to lift it up using your windlass key.

If you want to build up your nerve before crossing the Pontcysyllte Aqueduct, you can stop at Froncysyllte, there are 2 pubs, the Britannia Inn and the Aqueduct Inn.

You might have to queue for the Aqueduct, you will need a runner to go ahead & see if any boats are coming over towards you, if not you can go for it.

They sometimes have British waterways staff here who will try & organise who can go first!!

The views are breathtaking, but so is the fact that you have nothing but fresh air for 130 feet below you on your left. There is a walkway on your right.

The River Dee thunders away far beneath you.

You immediately come into Trevor Wharf, which might be a bit congested if boats are queueing to go over the aqueduct, but you ignore them & turn a sharp left towards Llangollen, unless you want to use some of the facilities at Trevor Wharf, water, pump out, chandlery shop etc.

You will encounter shallow water & narrow sections of canal between here & Llangollen, in some cases down to single file.

Be careful all along the Canal about going too close to the sides, as in some cases it is shallow & you may get stuck, in which case you will need to reverse & use your pole to push yourself away from the bank, or jump out and push off.

It takes about 3 hours to navigate to Llangollen, and requires a bit of concentration & some reversing, but it is well worth it.

It is very pretty hilly countryside, but have your first mate & other shipmates handy, in case they need to jump off & hold the boat steady by the ropes whilst you pull in & let other boats pass, it's all part of the adventure.

You pass by another pub at bridge 41, the Sun Trevor, in case you are in need of some refreshment.

When the sun is shining, you can think to yourself that there is no better place to be than amongst the Welsh hills & valleys.

As you plod on towards Llangollen, you will see the mysterious ruins of Dinas Bran castle on top of a very steep hill, and you know that you are not far away now.

However you have the narrowest bit to negotiate now, all single file traffic with just a few passing places.

You will need to send a runner ahead to see if it is OK to proceed.

You eventually emerge into Llangollen and if the ticket office is open you can purchase a ticket for about £7 to moor overnight in the Canal basin, or there are some moorings on the left where you can tie up for a few hours.

If the ticket office is closed, just purchase a ticket when it reopens.

The Canal basin has electric hook up & water, so you can connect yourself to the mains & do some sightseeing for a day or so.

It is 5.75 hours cruising to here from Hindford Bridge.

Llangollen is very pretty, with the River Dee cascading through the town, with lots of white water crashing through the rocky river bed.

If you are lucky you will see the steam engines as you walk into the town, at the Llangollen Steam railway, and it is well worth having a ride on one. It will take you to Carrog & back, some 8 miles of some of the most stunning scenery in Britain.

There are many craft & souvenir shops & even some selling gorgeous chocolate & fudge, plus cafes, bars, tearooms & restaurants.

If you tire of Llangollen & want some exercise after being on a boat for a few days, take a walk to the beautiful Horseshoe falls, just a couple of miles along the towpath to the end of the canal.

On the way back stop off for a pub lunch at the Chainbridge Hotel, where you can enjoy spectacular views of the River Dee beside you.

You can take a detour near here as just off the A542 is the ruins of the beautiful Valle Crucis Abbey, one of the most complete Cistercian abbeys in Wales.

Then getting back on the towpath again, you pass a very quaint Canal & motor Museum, which is worth a look.

Back in Llangollen there is more to see & do, including Plas Newydd, an 18th century house open to the public, which now houses a museum and steam train rides go from Llangollen Station with 7.5 mile of track.

Of course every July the International Eisteddfod is held here, this world renowned International musical festival has some world class artists

Day 3

You now start cruising east back the way you came to Ellesmere.

It is 8 hours cruising back to Ellesmere, if you have time, sample one of Ellesmere's delightful pubs or restaurants for the evening. Ellesmere is a busy 18th century market town.

Day 4

Disembark by 9.30am

Useful Links

Description : Attingham Park

Website : <http://www.nationaltrust.org.uk/attingham-park/>

Telephone : 01743 708123

Description : Ellesmere, Shropshire

Website : <http://www.ellesmere.info/>

Telephone : n/a

Description : Chirk Castle

Website : www.nationaltrust.org.uk/chirk-castle/

Telephone : 01691 777701

Description : Plas Newydd

Website : <http://www.llangollen.com/plas.html>

Telephone : n/a

Description : Llangollen Railway

Website : <http://www.llangollen-railway.co.uk/>

Telephone : 01978 860979

Description : Pontcysyllte Aqueduct

Website : <http://www.pontcysyllte-aqueduct.co.uk/>

Telephone : 01978 292015

Description : Powis Castle

Website : <http://www.nationaltrust.org.uk/powis-castle/>

Telephone : 01938 551944

Description : Chirk Aqueduct

Website : <http://www.chirk.com/aqueduct.html>

Telephone : n/a

Description : Castell Dinas Bran

Website : <http://www.castlewales.com/dinas.html>

Telephone : n/a

Description : Valle Crucis Abbey

Website : www.llangollen.com/valle.html

Telephone : 01978 860326

Description : Llangollen International Eisteddfod

Website : <http://international-eisteddfod.co.uk/>

Telephone : 01978 862003

The information above is provided in good faith to assist you with planning your canal boat holiday.

Information accuracy cannot be guaranteed, however, if you do see something that needs updating, please don't hesitate to [contact us](#).

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