

# UK Canal Boating

Escape with a canal boating holiday!

## Bradford on Avon and return from Aldermaston

Cruise this route from : Aldermaston

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Cruising Days : 10.00 to 15.00

Cruising Time : 74.50

Total Distance : 111.00

Number of Locks : 162

Number of Tunnels : 2

Number of Aqueducts : 14

Cruise most of the Kennet & Avon Canal.

Newbury was an affluent C17th and C18th cloth town, which is apparently evident by the size of its church. The area called West Mills still has much evidence of its period charm, with a pretty ornamental bridge over the canal, and also the almshouses.

Kintbury and Pewsey are pretty little villages along the Canal

Hungerford is a small historic town located in the midst of an Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty.

Nationally – even internationally - famous and frequently starring on TV, Hungerford's many antiques specialists attract visitors to the town every day.

Bradford on Avon has delightful shops, restaurants, hotels and bed and breakfasts lining the narrow streets of the town centre. The surrounding hillside is covered with cotswold stone houses and cottages of every shape and size.

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## Cruising Notes

## Day 1

If you want to make a start on your journey today, you can travel for around an hour to Woolhampton, where you can moor for the night. If you prefer, you can stay at the marina overnight, and travel for a little longer tomorrow.

For those who choose to stay put, there is a pub at the marina called The Butt Inn, where you will be sure to get a good meal and a few drinks, ready to start tomorrow morning.

If you chose to start your journey, immediately your first task is to navigate the Aldermaston Lift Bridge which spans the road. Follow the instructions at the bridge. Next, you will encounter your first lock.

You will pass through some countryside, with Woolhampton soon reached. The Row Barge Inn is Canalside, with more pubs in the village.

## Day 2

If you spent the night at the marina, it won't take you long to make up the hour and cruise to Woolhampton. There are 4 locks before you approach the outskirts of Thatcham, a rapidly expanding small town in Berkshire. You will notice that the town is entirely to the right of the canal. If you want to moor up here, you can go into the town and indulge in a spot of retail therapy, or just stock up on essentials, or perhaps have a coffee (or something stronger!) in one of the cafe's.

North of Widmead Lock is a their website where you will find all sorts of information.

When you leave Thatcham you will notice it gets more built-up as you approach Newbury, where to your left, you will see the racecourse. For details of race days, see their website

Newbury was an affluent C17th and C18th cloth town, which is apparently evident by the size of its church. The area called West Mills still has much evidence of its period charm, with a pretty ornamental bridge over the canal, and also the almshouses.

The shops in the town centre now mask much of the evidence of the C18th houses, which is a shame, but nonetheless, the town is still well worth visiting. There are a wealth of shops, cafe's, restaurants, pubs and things to do. Nearby are parks, Greenham Common, and much more, which can be found on the towns' website. It is 5 hours to Newbury from Woolhampton.

## Day 3

You will be heading towards Kintbury, a pretty little village in West Berkshire. It is a much sought-after village due to its rail links to London, and is in the commuter-belt.

On the way there, you will navigate Hamstead Locks, then cruise through Hamstead Park, with its beautiful landscape. And moving on you will pass an area to your right, called 'The Wilderness', and area with woodland that extends the other side of the canal into Irish Hill Copse.

A little further, and you will approach Kintbury, where you will clearly see, on the south bank, right on the canal, The Dundas Arms. This pub has a decking area which is effectively on 'stilts' in the canal. It is perfectly situated for a quiet drink and perhaps some lunch, while you watch the world go by. Perfect!

Leaving here to go towards Hungerford, you will cruise through water meadows and countryside, with the River Kennet flowing alongside the canal.

Once through the Dunmill Lock, you will approach the suburbs of Hungerford, a market town in Berkshire,

which marks the border between the South East and South West of England. The town has a website that you might like to have a look at, as it gives lots of information about the town, things to do and see, local attractions. You will find plenty of shops to browse around, cafe's and pubs, so there is something for everyone. It is 6 hours to here from Newbury.

#### Day 4

Leaving Hungerford, the countryside opens up and you will cruise through water pastures and fields of buttercups, very peaceful and relaxing, only the occasional train breaking the silence, and very soon you will come to Froxfield, a small village on the border of Berkshire and Wiltshire.

If you moor up near Bridge 90, access to Froxfield is easy. The main feature of the village, is The Somerset Hospital. This was set up from the Will of Sarah Seymour, Duchess of Somerset, when she died in 1694, and was intended for use by widows. It was created from the almshouses and the chapel, and by 1995 it provided accommodation for in excess of 45 women. If you are interested and would like to find out more, visit their website.

There is a pub in the village called The Pelican, so if you're in need of liquid refreshment, or lunch, this would be a nice place to stop. There is a pretty beer garden with a stream and a duck pond and is only a five minute walk from the canal. Dogs and children are welcome.

The canal from Froxfield to Great Bedwyn is more or less straight, and is flanked by farmland, fields and open countryside. Great Bedwyn's claim to fame was Wolfhall (Wulfhall), which was the seat of the Seymour family and birthplace of Jane Seymour, one of Henry VIII's wives. It is also the inspiration for the book Wolf Hall by Hilary Mantel.

Soon you will be approaching Crofton Pumping Station, which still operates on some weekends, and has one of the oldest working Cornish engines which dates from 1812. If you are interested in this please see their website for more details.

Now you will be approaching Bruce Tunnel, the nearest place to here is Wootten Rivers, a typically English little village, with pretty thatched cottages, a C16th pub, and at the Lock, there is a keepers cottage. It is well worth having a stroll around

Moor here and you will have cruised for 9.5 hours.

#### Day 5

Once you set off, you will be cruising towards Pewsey, via tiny villages and hamlets, such as New Mill, Milkhouse Water, Knowle, and Wilcot, where there is a nice little pub called The Golden Swan. Moving on from here, you will now head towards All Cannings, first coming to a canalside village called Honeystreet, where The Barge Inn claims to be 'Probably the most famous pub in the universe', because it has been the Crop Circle Pub of the Year for several years. You may have noticed some crop circles as you cruised along the canal, but even if you didn't, you will end up being fascinated by the theories, once you enter this pub. To find out much more, visit their website.

Other villages and hamlets you will cruise through are Stanton St Bernard, All Cannings, Horton and Bishops Cannings. Along this route, the canal twists and turns as it meanders through the villages.

Very soon you will reach the suburbs of Devizes, moor here and you will have cruised for 4.5 hours

Devizes itself has the atmosphere of an old country market town. Handsome 18th century buildings now surround the square.

Devizes museum has one of the finest prehistoric collections in Europe including the Stourhead collection of relics excavated from burial mounds on Salisbury Plain.

Devizes visitor centre is home to an interactive exhibition introducing visitors to the medieval origins of the town.

Wharf Theatre is canalside and hosts a variety of performances throughout the year. There are the usual pubs, restaurants, take-aways. Shops and a cinema in the town.

The battle of Roundway was fought near here in 1643 between the Roundheads and the Royalists and the Roundheads were all killed or captures. The battlefield is largely intact & can be explored on foot.

## Day 6

Much of today will be spent tackling the Caen Hill Flight of 16 locks, plus other locks, making a total today of 29 locks.

If you didn't go into Devizes yesterday, you may want to this morning. In any case, it would be a good idea to have a good breakfast, as you won't be able to stop in the flight of locks. So, you could either find somewhere in Devizes, or at Lock 44, you will find Caen Hill Tearooms.

Once at the end of the locks, you will cruise over a small aqueduct, and under several bridges, before you shortly arrive at your mooring for the night Seend Wharf after bridge 19, there are nice pubs here.

It is 7.5 hours to here

## Day 7

You will reach Bradford and Frome Wharves today, where you will need to turn for the journey back to Aldermaston.

When you leave the mooring, you are not far from Seend Cleeve, where there is a lovely pub, right alongside the canal. A beautiful spot for a nice relaxing drink or a snack before continuing your journey. Soon you will approach the outskirts of Trowbridge, where you will find Hilpertown Marina, a convenient place to moor up and go and take a look around Trowbridge, the county town of Wiltshire.

The town centre shops are old buildings, but there is a modern shopping centre here called The Shires Shopping Centre, where you will find many shops, and cafe's. There is literally something for everyone, so if you're in need of some retail therapy, now's your chance! If you want to know more, visit their for more information.

Carrying on, you will soon reach Bradford and Frome Wharves, where you can turn, in preparation for your return journey tomorrow.

However, before turning, you might like to take a stroll around Bradford on Avon, perhaps take a trip into Bath, where there is a wealth of attractions, shops, activities, cosmopolitan cafe's and restaurants, and much, much more.

It is 4 hours to here.

Day 8

Day 9

Day 10

Day 11

Day 12

It is just over 9 hours cruising a day to get back to Aldermaston.

## Useful Links

Description : Newbury Race Course

Website : <http://www.racecoursenewbury.co.uk/>

Telephone : 01635 40015

Description : Hungerford Tourist Information

Website : <http://www.hungerford.co.uk>

Telephone : n/a

Description : Crofton Beam Engines

Website : <http://www.croftonbeamengines.org/>

Telephone : 01672 870300

Description : Bradford on Avon tourist information

Website : <http://www.bradfordonavon.co.uk>

Telephone : 01225 865797

Description : The Somerset Hospital

Website : <http://www.duchessofsomerset.co.uk/>

Telephone : 01672 515151

Description : Newbury Town's Website

Website : <http://www.visitnewbury.org.uk/>

Telephone : n/a

Description : Nature Discovery Centre

Website : <http://www.naturediscovery.org.uk/>

Telephone : 01635 874381

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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