

UK Canal Boating

Escape with a canal boating holiday!

Llangollen and return from Whixall, cruise over the fantastic aqueducts

Cruise this route from : Whixall

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Cruising Days : 5.00 to 8.00

Cruising Time : 22.50

Total Distance : 51.00

Number of Locks : 4

Number of Tunnels : 6

Number of Aqueducts : 4

This very beautiful canal is one of the most popular Waterways in Europe, and includes the famous Pontcysyllte Aqueduct, which is one of the most spectacular and amazing feats of engineering on the Canal system. Built by Thomas Telford in 1805, the Aqueduct is 126 feet high, and spans over 1000 feet across a valley with the River Dee thundering away in the distance below your feet.

The Chirk Aqueduct is another impressive structure built by Thomas Telford, and is 70 feet high, and beside it at 100 feet high is an impressive Viaduct built in 1848 to take the Shrewsbury & Chester Railway across the valley. The Chirk Tunnel is 1,377 feet in length, and once through this you can moor up and walk to Chirk Castle, a 700 year old Castle managed by the National trust.

Llangollen, a very pretty Welsh town at the Western end of the Canal is a pleasant base to moor up for 24 hours.

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Cruising Notes

Day 1

Cruising westwards towards Llangollen, on the first day you probably will not get very far, as by the time

you've checked in and stashed all your belongings and provisions, watched the training video and had your training, time will be passing.

If you fancy a bit of cruising before dark, you will just have time to get used to the feel of your boat, and enjoy the beautiful countryside, before you moor up after a few miles and make yourself a cup of tea and relax after the stress and strain of the days car journey.

Turn left at the end of the Prees Branch towards Llangollen.

The canal passes into England and then into Wales, going backwards & forwards past a remote and unpopulated area.

Soon the open countryside gives way to more hilly wooded landscape as you start to pass through the Meres that make this area famously called the mini Lake District.

Cole Mere is the first on your left, then Blake Mere further on your right. The largest Mere is by Ellesmere itself, you can walk to it from Bridge 57 just after the short Ellesmere Tunnel. The Meres were carved out during the Ice Age.

You will soon be approaching Ellesmere, and a fine old warehouse and small canalside crane, and old canal company offices, testify to the canal trading that used to be carried out from here.

Ellesmere is a busy 18th century market town with delightful pubs and restaurants, also a variety of shops and a Co-op. Moor up the end of the Ellesmere Arm a canal branch to your right if you would like to take a look, there is a Tesco supermarket here at the end of the Canal Arm.

It is 3 cruising hours to here.

Day 2

Back on the Llangollen canal, the countryside once again becomes rural and quiet, and the canal very winding.

At Frankton Junction the Montgomery canal turns away to your left, it is navigable for about 4 hours cruising, just beyond Maesbury marsh. To enter the Montgomery canal there are 4 locks called the Frankton Locks, and these are only opened by a lock-keeper between 12-2pm (Please check hours when booking). 48 hours notice of passage is required. Only boats with a booking will be allowed through the locks. Please note that no passages will be allowed outside of the published hours. To book a passage call 01606-723800 during normal office hours from Monday to Friday.

Continue on through the green countryside passing Hindford Bridge, where there is a lovely Pub, The Jack Mytton Inn- right by the canal.

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 and you can moor here .

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.

If you want to first visit the fantastic medieval Chirk castle moor up just after Chirk Tunnel , walk along the road westwards (left) to the castle gates, it is about a 20 minute walk but well worth it. This magnificent 700 year old fortress was built by Edward the 1, and has family apartments, state rooms, servants quarters and dungeons which can be viewed.

It is 2.5 cruising hours to here from the Jack Lytton Inn at Hindford.

It is 5 hours from Ellesmere to Chirk.

Day 3

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 Canals & Rivers Trust 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, where you can moor if you want, or carry onto Llangollen so turn a sharp left as you leave the aqueduct. There is a pub – The Telford inn, next to the Anglo Welsh base.

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, its 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 3.5 hours cruising to here from Chirk

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.

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

Day 4

Day 5

Day 6

Day 7

Day 8

You now start cruising east towards Nantwich, and back the way you came .

It is just over 11 hours back to Whixall marina, so stay awhile in Llangollen or if you have time on your hands cruise back past Whixall marina to the town of Whitchurch.

It takes 3.5 hours each way to cruise from Whixall to Whitchurch.

Whitchurch is a fine old Roman town which has some beautiful old houses of all periods in its centre. The streets are narrow & it has a variety of shops and pubs, moor up along the Whitchurch Arm, it is about 15 minutes walk into the town.

Useful Links

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 : Chirk Aqueduct

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

Telephone : n/a

Description : Valle Crucis Abbey

Website : <http://www.cadw.wales.gov.uk/default.asp?id=6&placeid=140>

Telephone : n/a

Description : International Eisteddfod

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

Telephone : n/a

Description : Chirk Castle

Website : <http://www.nationaltrust.org.uk/main/w-vh/w-visits/w-findaplace/w-chirkcastle/>

Telephone : n/a

Description : Chirk Castle

Website : www.chirk.com/castle.html

Telephone : n/a

Description : Chirk Castle

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

Telephone : n/a

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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