

# UK Canal Boating

Escape with a canal boating holiday!

## Llangollen canal from Blackwater

Cruise this route from : Blackwater

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Cruising Days : 8.00 to 0.00

Cruising Time : 46.00

Total Distance : 88.00

Number of Locks : 42

Number of Tunnels : 6

Number of Aqueducts : 4

Cruise the whole of the Llangollen canal in a week

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

If you want to spend a day or so at Ellesmere, there are some lovely castles & stately homes within a short drive:

If you base yourself at Ellesmere on the first or last few days, Powis castle is only 25 miles away by car (30 minutes), this is the home to the Earls of Powis, and was built by the Welsh Princes in medieval times. Also only about 30 minutes away from Ellesmere is another National Trust property- an 18th century Regency mansion.

You can cruise for a couple of hours today, and moor at Polletts Bridge No. 6, about 4 miles away. Leaving the marina, you will be on the Llangollen canal and heading towards Frankton Junction, where you need to keep to the right, on the main canal, where it now straightens out as you approach your mooring, near to Welsh Frankton.

Welsh Frankton is a tiny village, but it has a pub, called the Narrow Boat Inn, where they serve hot and cold food and real ale. The pub is right beside the canal, with lovely unspoilt views. What better way to relax on the first night of your trip?

You have now cruised 4 miles in 2 hours.

## Day 2

Today you will reach the spectacular Pontcysyllte Aqueduct, a Grade 1 listed building opened in 1805, and rising 38 metres above the River Dee. This magnificent 19 arch structure was engineered by Thomas Telford, and is 307 metres long. The view from the top is stunning, and not for the faint-hearted! On one side is a narrow footpath, on the other – a very small ledge.

But, before you get there, you will navigate two locks, cruising through largely unspoilt countryside, on a fairly straight stretch of canal. You will notice the landscape becoming more mountainous and the canal cuts through it, then, rounding a bend, you will be faced with Chirk Aqueduct, just prior to Chirk Tunnel. This aqueduct is smaller than Pontcysyllte, at just 21 metres high and 220 metres long, with just 10 arches. Thomas Telford was also the architect for this one and it was opened in 1801.

The views from here are just as spectacular, and running alongside the aqueduct is the railway viaduct.

Once over the aqueduct, you will immediately approach the tunnel, which has a towpath the entire length inside. Before you enter the tunnel, do make sure that there is no boat coming towards you as the it is only wide enough for one boat at a time.

At the other end of the tunnel you will cruise through a long, wooded cutting, with the railway running alongside, and if you want to moor up here, you can walk to Chirk Castle along its own path, about half an hour away.

The Castle is beautiful, and stands in its own extensive grounds. It was completed in 1310, and is still lived in today. For lots more information, visit their website where you will find prices, opening times and much more.

Moving on from here, your next point of interest is Whitehouses Tunnel, which is only 191 yards long, and after this the canal meets the valley of the River Dee. The scenery here is spectacular, with views across the valley.

You will soon reach Froncysyllte, a small village nestled on the hillside, on the banks of the River Dee. From here, you can see the Cefn Railway Viaduct over the river. There is a lovely old coaching inn here, just above bridge 28, with wonderful views over the aqueduct. You won't miss it because it is painted bright yellow! This is a beautiful spot for a nice meal and relaxing drink.

You will now head for the magnificent Pontcysyllte Aqueduct, via a deep valley on a massive embankment. Once you are on the aqueduct, remember to take lots of photos of the fabulous scenery all around you. (Before entering the aqueduct, make sure no-one is coming towards you as it is only wide enough for one boat. You may have to wait your turn if there are other boats waiting to cross).

At the north end of the aqueduct you will need to make a difficult left turn to go towards Llangollen, but you might like to stop first and take a look around Trevor, a pretty little village to the right of the canal. There is a nice pub here called The Sun, so if you want to have a drink or something to eat before you continue, now would be a good time.

### Day 3

Leaving here, you will notice that the canal narrows considerably as you approach the Vale of Llangollen, so do take care.

As you continue your journey, the canal clings to the hillside over the Dee Valley, with fantastic views all around. You can relax and enjoy the peace and quiet, birdsong and the gentle chugging of the boat as you slowly make your way to Llangollen.

This narrow stretch of canal is on the side of tree covered mountains and is an area of outstanding beauty. You will be cruising high above the town, until you reach Siambri Bridge No. 45, where you will need to turn.

However, before you turn, moor up at the bridge and make the most of your time in Llangollen. (see Navigational Notes above). A short walk will take you to the Horseshoe Falls, where you can take a trip on a horse drawn boat along the canal.

The Horseshoe Falls were designed by Thomas Telford and were completed in 1808. It is well worth visiting even if you don't go on the boat, as the walks are just as lovely.

If trains are more your thing, you might like to visit the Llangollen Steam Railway. For prices and timetables, see their website. You will find the railway beside Dee Bridge in Llangollen.

When you leave here, head back towards the Vale of Llangollen, where you can moor for the night, at Plas Ifan Bridge 40.

You have cruised 16 miles and navigated 2 locks in just over 7 hours.

Leaving your mooring, you will head back towards Blackwater Meadow to moor up for the night, via the Aqueducts.

### Day 4

It is a relatively short distance from here to Grindley Brook Bottom Lock No. 14, where you can moor for the night.

The canal wends its way through small villages and open countryside until you reach Whixall Moss Nature Reserve. If you want to find out more, there are many good websites giving information about the wildlife that can be found here.

You will navigate an underpopulated stretch of canal as you make your way to Whitchurch.

Houses and shops from all periods can be found in Whitchurch. It is a lovely town, with lots of little side streets

to explore, and plenty for the whole family to do.

Just a little further on from Whitchurch, you will reach the Grindley Brook Locks, where at No. 14 you can moor up.

The distance covered today is 13 miles and 5 locks in just over 7 hours.

## Day 5

Your destination today is Hurleston Bridge No. 1A, where you will also need to turn for the journey back to Blackwater Meadow.

Leaving your mooring, you will soon approach more locks, so you will be busy for a while.

Once through them, you will be at the Willey Moor Lock, where there is a very conveniently placed pub called The Willey Moor Lock Tavern. It was originally a lock-keepers cottage, and is very popular with boaters, walkers and cyclists. If it's around lunchtime, you may like to sample some of the traditional pub food on offer, or maybe just have a nice refreshing drink and relax by the canal side.

A little further along from here, after a wide curve to the right, you might like to stop at Marbury, a pretty little village near the canal. From the village you can see the obelisk in Combermere Park.

Leaving here you will now be heading towards Wrenbury, where you might like to moor at the marina and go for a stroll around. In the village there are three early examples of Thomas Telford's drawbridges.

If you fancy another break for liquid refreshment, you may like to try The Dusty Miller or The Cotton Arms, both of which are worth visiting, so have a relaxing drink before continuing towards Hurleston Junction.

The canal is quite remote, with little sign of habitation as you pass through the villages of Swanley and Burland. Locks are few and far between, so you can relax and enjoy the peace and serenity of the canal.

Shortly you will reach Hurleston Bridge No. 1A, where you can moor up for the night.

You have cruised 11 miles and navigated 10 locks in just over 7 hours.

## Day 6

## Day 7

## Day 8

After turning at Hurleston Junction, you will now make your way back towards Blackwater Marina over the next two days, or 15 hours cruising.

Where you choose to moor is up to you, as are places of interest.

## Useful Links

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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