

UK Canal Boating

Escape with a canal boating holiday!

Oxford and return along the Thames from Aldermaston

Cruise this route from : Aldermaston

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Cruising Days : 7.00 to 0.00

Cruising Time : 42.50

Total Distance : 100.00

Number of Locks : 50

Number of Tunnels : 0

Number of Aqueducts : 0

Cruise along the Thames past Palladian mansions and lovely Thames towns.

Oxford, The City of Dreaming Spires, is famous the world over for its University and place in history. For over 800 years, it has been a home to royalty and scholars.

Oxford was founded in the 10th century and today is a lively cosmopolitan centre of learning, tourism and industry. There are excellent guided walks each day from the Tourist Information centre inc an Inspector Morse Tour and a Ghost Tour. It is the 39 colleges that give Oxford its unique character, and some of these can be visited, but times vary so check with the TIC. The Sheldonian Theatre was built by Christopher Wren in 1669, its interior is delightful, it is open at various times to the public. The Old Bodleian houses a fine collection of old manuscripts dating from the 16th and 17th centuries and is open for guided tours.

Christ Church cathedral is mainly 12 century with later additions. The Ashmolean museum is one of the oldest public museums in Britain and one of the most rewarding outside of London. It opened in 1683 and has an outstanding collection of Eastern and European archaeology, also 17th and 18th century silver collection, and a vast display of coins, and also drawings by Michelangelo, Leonardi da Vinci and Rubens. The University Muesum's interior is a forest of columns and skeletons and houses the very rare head and claw of the extinct dodo.

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Cruising Notes

At Aldermaston Wharf is the Kennet & Avon Canal Trust Visitor centre, with a picnic area, and serving light refreshments from Easter -Oct. There is also the Butt Inn pub at Aldermaston Wharf, serving real ales and excellent food for all the family.

Day 1

From the marina cruise East, Padworth Lock will soon be reached.

The canal heads North East, constantly joining and re-joining the River Kennet. Beyond Tyle Mill

are a series of gravel pits offering a wildlife haven, the canal continues through wooded fields past the village of Sulhamstead. The nature reserves of Cumber lake to the North and Woolwich Green lake to the south can be reached by a short walk from Sulhamstead Lock. There is a swing bread at Theale, the village is $\frac{3}{4}$ mile to the north, there are a few pubs, stores, garage, and a chemist and a bank in the quiet village.

It is just under 3 hours to here, and an ideal place to stop for your 1st night.

Day 2

The peace of the surroundings is momentarily interrupted as you go under the M4 motorway, but on the outskirts of Reading the water filled nature reserve gravel pits bring a degree of serenity.

The River cuts through the middle of the town and so access to all facilities is easy, but the River is through a narrow channel & fast flowing, so care is needed, there are traffic lights controlling this section.

Reading is a large town with lots of shops and pubs. Visit the website for what to see & do:

The Museum of English Rural life, also Reading Museum, & 12th century Abbey ruins. There are 2 big shopping centres, the Oracle and Broad St Mall, which includes big High Street names, and independent shops.

The River museum is by Blakes Lock, housed in the city's old sewerage pumping station, displays include a gipsy caravan. The old turbine house has lovely views over the River.

RIVER THAMES LICENCE- Some of the hire boats already have this , please check first .From Inglesham to Teddington the narrowboat has to be registered with the Environment Agency and must display a current licence. Short period registrations are available for boats visiting the River Thames, and can be obtained at many of the locks as you come onto the River, or telephone in advance or download an application form from the website. The speed limit is 5 miles per hour.

You leave the Kennet & Avon Canal just beyond Blakes Lock and enter the River Thames, turning left with Reading on your left and Caversham on your right. The Thames continues past Tilehurst and soon Mapledurham House is reached with mooring just beyond the lock. The house is still occupied by the Blount family who bought it in 1490, and built the present Elizabethan manor house, with grounds sweeping right down to the Thames. The House and Watermill are open on Saturdays, Sundays and Bank Holidays from Easter Saturday until the end of September .

The wide reach above Whitchurch is often busy with sailing and rowing boats from Pangburne College. The Thames enters open farmland and one of its most pretty stretches.

Beale Park , to your left, covers 300 acres of water meadows, and the bird collection includes peacocks,

flamingoes, parrots, and rare owls. Open March-Dec 10.00-18.00. There is mooring here, also nearby is Basildon Park & house. Now run by the National trust, built around 1776, this is the most splendid Palladian mansion in Berkshire. Open Wed-Sun 13.00-17.30 April -Oct. Also gardens and woodland walks.

Goring is set in a splendid deep wooded valley by one of the most spectacular reaches on the River. The Church Bell dates from 1290 and is one of the oldest in England. There are moorings before Goring bridge.

It is an ideal place to spend your 2nd night as it is 7.5 hours cruising from Theale to here.

Day 3

The River follows open countryside again, with just Goring Lock and Cleeve Lock to negotiate in the next couple of hours until you reach Wallingford. Moorings just past Wallingford Bridge.

This town is one of the oldest in the borough dating from 1155. Well preserved banks and ditches of Saxon defences still remain. At the rear of the George Hotel is the entrance to the remains of the Norman castle built on a mound in 1071 and finally destroyed by Fairfax in 1646. Walk up the hill from the river to enjoy the town centre, shops and market square. The Cholsey and Wallingford Railway is 15 mins walk west of Wallingford, steam and diesel trains run on 2.5 miles of track.

Just past Benson Lock is the town of Benson, which is hardly more than a village but was once the home of the Kings of Mercia. There is a stores and pub.

The River Thames turns west and north to take a wide berth around the Roman town of Dorchester, passing the massive 114 acres of earthworks known as Dyke Hills. It continues to make its widening way past Abingdon, there are moorings just before the bridge.

Abingdon is a 18th century market town which grew up around the abbey. It has an extensive shopping centre with precinct. Abbey meadow by the river, is a public park with swimming pool and cafe. The River is dominated by the gaol, an impressive stone bastille built around 1805, which is now a leisure and sports centre. Abingdon Museum is housed in what is one of the finest town halls in England, built by one of Wrens masons.

The Thames then passes through open countryside on its final stretch up to Oxford. It is a lovely stretch of urban waterway up to Osney Bridge, with terraced houses facing the river. The river is much used by rowing clubs and small boats so care should be taken. There are moorings below Osney Bridge, above Sheepwash channel, or if you want out of town moorings- at Binsey and you can stroll back into Oxford.

It will take 10.25 hours to reach Oxford from Goring.

Day 4

Time to explore Oxford.

Oxford was founded in the 10th century and today is a lively cosmopolitan centre of learning, tourism and industry. There are excellent guided walks each day from the Tourist Information centre inc an Inspector Morse Tour and a Ghost Tour. It is the 39 colleges that give Oxford its unique character, and some of these can be visited, but times vary so check with the TIC. The Sheldonian Theatre was built by Christopher Wren in 1669, its interior is delightful, it is open at various times to the public. The Old Bodleian houses a fine collection of old manuscripts dating from the 16th and 17th centuries and is open for guided tours.

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Day 5

Day 6

Day 7

Day 8

It is 21 cruising hours back to Aldermaston Wharf, so if you cruise for 6-7 hours per day you should have a comfortable trip back, and look at some of the things you didn't have time to do on the trip up to Oxford.

Useful Links

Description : Reading Tourist attractions

Website : <http://www.dayoutwiththekids.co.uk/things-to-do/reading>

Telephone : n/a

Description : Sheldonian Theatre Oxford

Website : <http://www.ox.ac.uk/sheldonian>

Telephone : 01865 277299

Description : Visit Oxfordshire

Website : <http://www.visitoxfordandoxfordshire.com/>

Telephone : n/a

Description : River Thames License

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

Telephone : 0118 953 5650

Description : Mapledurham House nr Tilehurst

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

Telephone : 0118 972 3350

Description : Beale Park Wildlife Gardens

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

Telephone : 0844 826 1761

Description : Reading Festival-Headline Acts like Mumford & Sons and many others appear in a 3 day Music festival

Website : <http://www.readingfestival.com/>

Telephone : n/a

Description : Reading Tourist Information

Website : <http://livingreading.co.uk/visit-reading>

Telephone : n/a

Description : Reading Tourist Information

Website : www.reading.gov.uk

Telephone : 0118 937 3400

Description : Cholsey & Wallingford Steam & Diesel Vintage Railway

Website : <http://www.cholsey-wallingford-railway.com/>

Telephone : 01491 835067

Description : Abingdon Museum

Website : <http://www.abingdon.gov.uk/partners/abingdon-county-hall-museum>

Telephone : 0870 333 1181

Description : Bodleian Library Oxford

Website : <http://www.bodley.ox.ac.uk/>

Telephone : 01865 277162

Description : Ashmolean Museum Oxford

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

Telephone : 01865 278000

Description : Inspector Morse Walking Tours of Oxford

Website : <http://www.visitoxfordandoxfordshire.com/oxford-inspector-morse-tour/details/?dms=13&venue=2925527&feature=1024>

Telephone : n/a

Description : Botanic Gardens Oxford

Website : <http://www.botanic-garden.ox.ac.uk/>

Telephone : 01865 286690

Description : Sightseeing in Oxford

Website : <http://www.oxfordcityguide.com/ee2/index.php?/Touristinfo/sightseeing>

Telephone : n/a

Description : Bucklebury Farm Park offers a magical experience and a great value day out in the countryside

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

Telephone : 0118 971 4002

Description : Shaw House was built in 1581 by Newbury clothier Thomas Dolman. This fine Elizabethan building was home to successive Dolman families, the flamboyant Duke of Chandos and the Andrews and Farquhar families. Shaw House then began a new life as a school for g

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

Telephone : 01635 279279

Description : The Reading paintballing centre is one of the largest in the UK and offers six huge paintball game zones, such as the epic London Apocalypse

Website : <http://www.paintballgames.co.uk/paintball-reading-centre>

Telephone : 0844 477 5115

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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