

UK Canal Boating

Escape with a canal boating holiday!

River Severn to Gloucester and Sharpness from Worcester

Cruise this route from : Worcester

View the latest version of this pdf

[River-Severn-to-Gloucester-and-Sharpness-from-Worcester--Cruising-Route.html](#)

Cruising Days : 8.00 to 0.00

Cruising Time : 33.00

Total Distance : 92.00

Number of Locks : 2

Number of Tunnels : 0

Number of Aqueducts : 0

Cruise along the River Severn where all the locks are done for you through lovely countryside past small villages and historic towns like Tewkesbury and Gloucester and then onto the Gloucester and Sharpness Canal with its immense swing-bridges and ornate bridge-keepers' houses add to its unique identity. It connects Gloucester to Sharpness, allowing boats to bypass a treacherous stretch of the River Severn. From the canal, there are spectacular views of the Severn Estuary, the Forest of Dean and the Cotswolds.

At Gloucester Docks, you can get a real sense of the canal's cargo-carrying heritage. Listed warehouses have been converted into shops and leisure facilities, and the marina is still busy with boats. The National Waterways Museum Gloucester tells the story of the canal and has a fascinating collection of historic boats.

Cruising Notes

The mighty River Severn is Britain's longest river. It runs for 220 miles from the Welsh mountains, through the beautiful Shropshire and Worcestershire countryside and down to the flatlands of the Severn estuary.

The River Severn is prone to rapid rise and fall in water levels following heavy rainfall, so always check on the CRT website for current conditions.

Remember to stay in the centre of the channel whenever cruising the Severn, but pass other approaching vessels on the right-hand side (port-to-port). Vessels heading downstream (towards Gloucester) should generally have right of way over those travelling upstream

It's best to approach a mooring with the boat facing into upstream. This will allow you to hold the boat stationery, have better control at very low speed and prevent the boat being swept past your stopping point. So, if you're heading down stream, you'll need to pass the mooring and turn your boat around. The River is wide so there is plenty of room for manoeuvring.

When mooring allow for the tide by having slack in your mooring ropes, but tie the boat up firmly .

Moorings on the river are available at:

Upper Lode Lock (above the lock)

Lower Lode Hotel (BW moorings).

Yew Tree Inn (pub moorings).

The Coalhouse Inn at Apperley (pub mooring for one boat)

Haw Bridge (BW plus pub moorings).

The Boat at Ashleworth (pub moorings, fee for overnight)

With the Severn, the locks are not operated by boaters themselves, but by lock keepers who operate the locks using automated hydraulic systems. When the water level under your boat is the same as the level you're moving to, the gates will open.

See Severn User guide in the links below for more information ,

Bridge and lock opening hours The following hours apply to both locks on the River Severn above Gloucester, and the Gloucester and Sharpness Canal. Check the notice boards or www.waterways.org.uk for exact dates.

Winter 0800 – 1600 (roughly, 22 October – late March) Spring / Autumn 0800 - 1800 Summer: 0800 - 1900

Note that the bridges at Llanthony and over Gloucester Lock shut during rush hours (08:20 - 09:00 and 16:30 - 17:30 on weekdays).

Fretherne Bridge also closes 0820 - 0900 on weekdays during school terms.

No bridges or locks are user-operated. The table below indicates approximate air drafts for boats that will not require the structure opened.

The bridges at High Orchard and Netheridge require 24 hours' notice to be opened and will only be operated outside "rush hour". During the period roughly November – March, the canal is closed (other than to commercial traffic) on Tuesdays and Wednesdays. Check the dates on www.waterways.org.uk During this period on Thursdays - Mondays, many keepers will operate two or more structures. If no-one is available at a bridge, there is a contact telephone number posted in the windows of the keeper's hut.

Operation of the Severn locks (other than Gloucester) requires 24 hours' notice during the winter periods.

Day 1

Turn right out of Lowesmoor wharf down the Birmingham & Worcester canal & soon you will encounter 2 locks, one called Blockhouse lock, followed by Sidbury lock. which will get you into the swing of things. It takes about an hour to get to Diglis basin, and if time is passing it is best to stop there for the night, and then you will have time to explore the city of Worcester. There is a water point just above Diglis lock.

The Marina is a short walk from the City centre, where you can explore the lovely cathedral dating from 1074. There is a wealth of stained glass and monuments to see including the tomb of King John. Also a good place to visit is the Museum of Worcester Porcelain, which not surprisingly has the largest collection of Worcester Porcelain in the world. The Guildhall in the High street was built in 1721 and has a fantastic elaborate facade with statues of Charles I and II and Queen Anne.

In Friar Street is Greyfriars, dating from 1480, this was one part of a Franciscan priory, and is one of the finest

half timbered houses in the country. Charles II escaped from this house after the Battle of Worcester in the civil war in 1651. In the George Marshall Medical museum you can meet the past heroes of medicine. Regular bus service from Crown Gate Bus station.

Close to Sidbury lock is the Commandery Civil War Centre, a museum devoted entirely to the story of the Civil War. The museum dates from the reign of Henry 8th and served as Charles 11's HQ before the Battle of Worcester in 1651.

It should take 1 hour from Lowesmoor to Diglis basin

Day 2

Cruising out of Worcester, you will pass the yacht club, then leave the suburbs at Kempsey. The River wends its way further south, through largely open countryside, with tall, steep red cliffs rising to over 100ft either side, where foliage struggles to grow on the slopes.

The village of Hanley Castle is to your right, and there is a pub here called The Three Kings, in the village centre. Well-behaved children and dogs are welcome, and there is a family room and garden.

A little further along, round the curve, Upton on Severn is located on your right. This is a pretty town with all amenities, including banks, shops and pubs/restaurants, among which are Ye Olde Anchor Inn, The Bell House and The Swan Hotel. If you want more information about Upton on Severn, see the link below. There is mooring here.

A little further you will cruise through a pretty village called Ripple. There is also a pub here called The Railway, which can be reached by following the footpath into the village. Real ale and bar meals are served. There is outside seating and children are welcome.

Shortly, you will go under the M50 bridge, cruising along on a quiet stretch of river, unspoilt by towns and villages. Soon you will enter the suburbs of Tewkesbury, with the main town appearing to your left.

Tewkesbury is a little way from the canal, so you would need to turn off of the Severn to moor up. The town has medieval streets and the high street shops are for the most part, independent.

Back on the Severn, you will go through Upper Lode Lock, then onwards to Deerhurst and Apperley, two tiny villages to the left of the canal. The Severn is tidal to Upper Lode lock at Spring tides. Just beyond Apperley is Haw Bridge, beside which is The Haw Bridge Inn and The Riverside Inn, so if you want to moor here for the night, you are ideally placed for some real ales and food. The Riverside Inn does not allow dogs, but both allow children.

You will have cruised 21 miles and navigated 6 locks in around 6.25 hours.

Day 3

Cruising on, you may catch a glimpse of the spire of Ashleworth Church to your right, as you pass nearby the tiny village.

The Eastern channel is just past an area of open meadow on the east bank. It is marked from a distance by a small factory chimney, and is clearly signposted.

Before entering the Eastern channel it is essential to contact Gloucester Lock on 01452 310832 : there may be large boats coming up the channel and passing room is limited.

Once in the Eastern Channel, beware of boats coming in the opposite direction. There is limited passing room, and some tight bends. This stretch of water is still used by commercial traffic, albeit at much lower levels than in years gone by. The final approach to Gloucester is under three bridges and a series of sharp, blind bends. Gloucester lock is manned and the opening times vary with season. When nearing the lock, (e.g. at the first of the bridges, about ten minutes from the lock) give the keeper a second call to ask him to set it for you. On rounding the final bend towards Gloucester lock, drop speed and keep to the left (East) bank. The previously tree-lined left bank becomes a tall, concrete quay. The final hundred metres or so before the lock has chains and vertical lines let into grooves in the concrete for mooring. If the lock is not ready, do not try to turn the boat upstream. Have the stern line available, and keeping as close to the quay wall as possible bring the boat to a halt with reverse gear. Slip the stern line around one of the mooring chains as far back from the lock as possible and fix it to a stern stud, then allow the boat to drop back onto the line. Just in front of the lock, the river sweeps sharply to the right and will take the bows of the boat around very rapidly if there is any current flowing. Aim for the left hand wall. Be prepared to enter the lock a bit faster than normal: there is plenty of room inside to stop. In most years boats have to be recovered from below the lock: the channel below the lock is very narrow, rubbish-strewn and fast-flowing, and leads quickly to the weir. There are vertical mooring straps set into the lock side, or the lock-keeper may lower a hook to take bow and stern lines around a bollard. As the lock is very deep, lines of at least 10 m, preferably 15 m, are needed. The lock is quite turbulent when filling, so keep as far back from the front gates as possible (avoiding the bridge at the tail of the lock!).

If you want to visit Gloucester, there are plenty of moorings which will give easy access.

There are many, many pubs and restaurants in Gloucester, among them The Fountain Inn, The Dick Whittington, The Linden Tree, and The Tall Ship. To see all that Gloucester has to offer, see tourist information link below

You can moor here & explore the historic city of Gloucester

Its is 3 hours to here. There are visitor moorings near Llanthony Bascule Bridge at Llanthony pontoons. Access onto Llanthony road is by BW key.

Day 4

The Gloucester & Sharpness Canal is a commercial Waterway with manned bridges check with lockkeepers for hours.

Most visitor moorings on the canal are 48 h (five days in parts of Glos. Docks in the Winter months, 6 h between Sandfield and Junction Bridges). In most places there is at least 1 m of water at the bank.

It is possible to moor just about anywhere safely on the towpath side except:

- Between any traffic lights and the bridge controlling them
- Approximately 100m North and South of Patch Bridge
- Between the Upper and Lower Purton Bridges
- Between Purton Lower Bridge and the former dredger station beyond the cottages
- Beyond Sharpness High-level bridge
- Just below Fretherne Bridge

Movements through all bridges and locks are controlled by traffic lights which must be obeyed. Red means "stop"; flashing red is used to indicate that the bridge-keeper knows you are there and needs you to wait; green means "go". If no light is showing, the bridge is un-manned, proceed with caution (air draft permitting!)

Gloucester is a very large place, and it is some time before you reach the outskirts, cruising through Quedgley

and Hardwicke, where the Gloucester and Sharpness Canal runs alongside the River Severn. Then you will cruise through the Vale of Gloucester, which is sometimes wooded, but more often very open, with little sign of habitation.

Cruising on, you will soon reach Saul Junction, where the Cotswold Canals Trust Visitor Centre is situated: There are useful facilities here if you want to moor up for a bit.

Stay on the main canal, cruising through Frampton on Severn, a pretty village with a village green, to the left of the canal, which now straightens out. As it gently curves to the right, you will be near Cambridge Arms Swing Bridge, where you can moor up for the night if you wish. There are several pubs between Frampton on Severn and the bridge – The Three Horseshoes, The Bell Inn, The Ship Inn, The Anchor, and The Stables Cafe.

You will soon reach Patch Swing Bridge, to the right of which is The Wildfowl Trust at Slimbridge. It worth visiting Slimbridge, its only half a mile from the canal and it houses the largest collection of captive wildfowl in the world, and the reserve attracts many thousands of migrant birds from all over the world. You can wander freely around the reserve , there is a restaurant here, and exhibitions.

A little further, and you see what is called 'The Royal Drift' off to the right. At Patch Bridge are two pubs – Slimbridge Boat Station and The Tudor Arms.

Moor along the Sharpness Old Arm
See link below for information about Sharpness and the Docks

You will have cruised 15 miles in around 6½ hours.

Day 5 6 7
Turn your boat around and make the return trip.

Useful Links

Description : Tewkesbury Tourist Information
Website : <http://www.tewkesbury.cotswolds.info/>
Telephone : n/a

Description : Worcester Porcelain Museum
Website : <http://www.worcesterporcelainmuseum.org.uk/>
Telephone : n/a

Description : Worcester Cathedral
Website : <http://www.worcestercathedral.co.uk>
Telephone : 01905 732900

Description : Tewkesbury Abbey
Website : <http://www.tewkesburyabbey.org.uk/>
Telephone : 01684 850959

Description : River Severn users guide

Website : <https://canalrivertrust.org.uk/refresh/media/thumbnail/27339-new-river-severn-navigation-guide-april-2016.pdf>

Telephone : n/a

Description : Sharpness and the Docks

Website : <https://canalrivertrust.org.uk/about-us/where-we-work/south-wales-and-severn-waterways/sharpness-port>; <https://www.gloucesterdocks.me.uk/sharpness/docks.htm>.

Telephone : n/a

Description : Severn waterways information

Website : https://www.waterways.org.uk/gloucandhereford/gs_boaters_guide

Telephone : n/a

Description : Slimbridge Wetland Centre

Website : <http://Slimbridge Wetland Centre>

Telephone : n/a

Description : Gloucester Tourist information

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

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](#).

PDF created : 20 Feb 2023

© <https://ukcanalboating.com>