

UK Canal Boating

Escape with a canal boating holiday!

Staffordshire and Worcestershire countryside from Stourport on Severn

Cruise this route from : Stourport on Severn

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Cruising Days : 8.00 to 0.00

Cruising Time : 39.00

Total Distance : 67.00

Number of Locks : 62

Number of Tunnels : 4

Number of Aqueducts : 0

Secluded woodland and pretty locks , very pretty villages like Kinver, with its fascinating Rock houses, carved out of the cliffs and in continuous occupation for 150 years until 1935, also Brewood, and Wheaton Aston.

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Cruising Notes

Day 1

If time allows take a train ride on the Steam Railway. The Severn Valley railway is a full-size standard-gauge railway line running regular steam-hauled passenger trains for the benefit of visitors and enthusiasts alike between Kidderminster in Worcestershire and bridgnorth in Shropshire, a distance of 16 miles.

The journey is full of interest, for the route follows closely the meandering course of the River Severn for most of the way on its journey between Kidderminster and bridgnorth. One highlight of the trip is the crossing of the River Severn by means of the Victoria bridge - a massive 200-foot single span, high above the water which, incidentally, features in the film 'The Thirty-nine Steps' with Robert Powell in the leading role.

There being few roads in the Severn Valley, some of the views are only visible from the Railway. The scenery

is varied and largely unspoiled, punctuated by the quaint 'olde worlde' charm of country stations, each one giving ready access to local villages and riverside walks.

The canal basins at Stourport are full of pretty moored boats, the locks are open 24 hrs, and form a staircase, the lock-keeper is around much of the day in case of difficulties. You should proceed to the eastern corner of the upper basins to join the Staffs & Worcs canal. There is a useful tea room & craft shop by the lock and temporary moorings.

You soon leave Stourport behind and approach Kidderminster with its smart new developments. Beyond Falling sands Bridge look out for the steam trains on the Viaduct on the Severn valley Railway. There are good moorings at Weavers wharf between bridges 15 and 16 , with supermarkets & cafes nearby. It is 2.5 hours to here

Day 2

Leaving Kidderminster behind you soon enter the open countryside again, until the canal is encroached by trees and cliffs which make you feel you are in the jungle.

Wolverley is north west of bridge 20 and is a fascinating village once dedicated to the nail-making industry. The church stands on a sandstone rock so steep that the building has to be approached by a zig-zag path cut through the constantly eroding stone. In the base of this outcrop is the remains of a smithy's shop. Many of the houses nearby are partly carved from the rock, their dark back rooms actually caves.

At Debdale lock a doorway reveals a cavern cut into the solid rock, which may have been used to stable towing horses.

The canal continues through secluded woodland and pretty locks to the very pretty village of Kinver, where you can stock up on provisions or get some fish & chips! It is worth having a look at the fascinating Rock houses, carved out of the cliffs and in continuous occupation for 150 years until 1935.(Walk up Stone lane close to the White Hart Hotel until trees appear on your left, then follow the path into the trees, the rock houses are at Holy Austin Rock).

Stewponey Wharf at the head of Stewponey lock is very interesting wharf with a restored octagonal toll office.

You pass by the Stourbridge Canal and at the far end of the aqueduct near here is a curious narrowboat-house known as the Devil's Den, cut into the rock. Further on after Rocky Lock rooms have been carved into the sandstone.

The canal forks and you should keep left to avoid the marina, the countryside becomes flatter and more regular. Moor before Greenforge Lock, the Navigation Inn is canalside . It is 6.25 hours to here.

Day 3

There are occasional locks and canalside pubs including a 2 step staircase at Botterham lock which has 4 locks in total.

After Bumblehole Lock you reach the 3 Bratch Locks just north of Wombourne. These locks are open from 8am to 8pm and you should carefully study the operating instructions before use, or consult the lock-keeper if in any doubt.

The Octagonal toll house, lovely setting and unusual layout of the locks make an interesting view, but just treat each one as a separate lock & you should be OK.

Wightwick manor is about 300 yards north west of bridge 56 across the busy road and up the hill. It is National Trust, and has many William Morris wallpaper and fabrics, and beautiful 17 acre Edwardian gardens.

Moor here for the night, the Mermaid Pub is 100 yards west of bridge 56.

It is 5.5 hours to here

Day 4

You are soon approaching the outskirts of Wolverhampton, there is a handy supermarket near Compton Lock this lock marks the end of a 31 lock climb from the River Severn at Stourport a rise of 294 ft., the canal manages to preserve its rural character on the outskirts of Wolverhampton.

The Shropshire Union canal, or The Shroppie, starts the journey at Atherley Junction (turn sharp left) in the outskirts of Wolverhampton, known to the working boatmen as "Cut End" due to it being where the Shroppie met the much older Staffordshire and Worcestershire Canal, Atherley Junction was once a busy place with workshops, a toll office and stables, today Atherley has a boatyard with a hire fleet and a club house. Many of the original buildings still exist and it is home to Bridge #1 on the Shroppie which is an original design by Thomas Telford.

There is also the original shallow stop lock where Sam Lomas used to control boat movement and issue toll tickets. The lock has a drop of 1 inch, meaning no drop at all, so was purely used for Lomas's financial motives. Atherley is very attractive and full of canal history and it is worth giving yourself some time to look around!

We soon leave Wolverhampton behind and head northwards through a series of rocky cuttings, passing a disused airfield, a boat club and then traversing under the M54 motorway which is one of the only main roads that the canal encounters for around 50 miles when it reaches Chester.

Chillington Hall, close to the village of Brewood (pronounced Brood), is home to the "Fancy Bridge" named by the workers who built the Shroppie. Powerful landowners demanded grand and ornamental bridges where the canal crossed their properties and this is a fine example of such work. A tree lined avenue crosses the canal here leading up to Chillington Hall which is now a venue for Weddings.

Just a short distance upstream from Chillington Hall is Brewood and you will find shops, pubs and restaurants close at hand and there is also a boatyard all of which should meet any of your requirements. Just beyond Brewood you will see the Belvide Reservoir which supplies water for the canal. A very short distance from there is a cast iron aqueduct, the Stretton Aqueduct, which was built in 1832.

It is used to cross the A5 Watling Street and take you onwards to Wheaton Aston where you will find the first lock on the Shroppie other than the stop lock at Atherley. The Wheaton Aston lock is unique by way of being the only singular lock on the canal route as the other locks are bunched together in "flights". This made for quicker working by the boat people because locks could be easily prepared in advance of the boats. At Wheaton Aston you will find a waterside garage that offers some useful facilities for boaters and a canalside pub.

Wheaton Aston also has a few basic supplies.

Turn at Wheaton Aston winding hole, moor for the night it is 5.5 hours to here

Day 5 Day 6 Day 7

It is 19.5 hours back to the marina, so 6-7 hours per day will get you back

Useful Links

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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