

UK Canal Boating

Escape with a canal boating holiday!

Stour Valley Ring from Stourport

Cruise this route from : Stourport on Severn

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Cruising Days : 8.00 to 0.00

Cruising Time : 45.00

Total Distance : 77.00

Number of Locks : 105

Number of Tunnels : 9

Number of Aqueducts : 0

This lovely cruising ring rises and falls between the River Severn and Birmingham, it takes you right through the heart of Birmingham which is reputed to have as many canals as Venice, and through the Cotswolds city of Worcester with its 1000 year old Cathedral and along the River Severn from Worcester to Stourport

Cruising Notes

Similar to the Stourport Ring this is slightly shorter taking a short cut to Birmingham through the Netherton Tunnel

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 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.

Turn right at the Stourbridge Canal and you immediately encounter 4 locks .

The Stourbridge and Dudley Canals link Birmingham to the River Severn and you pass through a mixture of fine countryside old industrial surroundings and new developments.

You pass pretty wooded countryside which surrounds the canal until 2 miles later you pass the Stourbridge Town arm to your right which you can ignore, keep straight on through the flight of 16 Stourbridge Locks which raise the canal 145 feet.

Beyond lock 13 the canal passes Redhouse Glassworks which houses Stuart Crystal . Moorings are provided for those who are visiting the Museum in a restored bottle kiln.

You can moor by lock 5 as there is a fine old canal pub here called the Samson & Lion where boatmans horses were once stabled where you can get a burger and pint!

It is 8.5 hours to here

Day 3

Ignore the Fens branch and take the right turn through Brierley Hill and Dudley. There is a handy Fish & chip shop and takeaway next to Farmers Bridge. A more open landscape flanks the canal now and the start of the Delph locks is in view and here the Stourbridge canal ends and the Dudley canal starts. The flight has been designated a conservation area .

Leaving the flight you pass the vast Merryhill shopping centre in Dudley with its 250 shops, and modern waterfront area with many restaurants and bars, so if you would like to stop for a bit of retail therapy or a meal in one of the lovely Restaurants now is your chance.

The Blowers Green Lock is the deepest on the Birmingham Canal navigation, and the pumphouse here has been restored. There are good views towards Netherton hill, at the top of the hill is St Andrews Church where cholera victims were buried in mass graves.

After the lock a sharp right turn is required as straight on the Dudley Tunnel which is impassible for boats with engines.

Netherton was once the centre for chains and anchors but the old wharves no longer house these activities.

Beyond Fox & Goose Bridge the houses retreat and a fine green open space by a lake lies beside the Windmill End Junction , with cast iron bridges and the remains of an Engine house with its tall chimney still standing, built to pump water from the local mines to keep them from flooding.

The Bumblehole Branch is off to the west, but you will continue straight on to the grand entrance of the Netherton tunnel , the canal is high on an embankment in a nature reserve.

Netherton Tunnel has a long history of haunting. At least 2 ghosts have been reported here. The first is an old time policeman who was said to have been murdered in the tunnel and the 2nd is a lady in a dirty white dress known as the Grey lady. People have also heard footsteps behind them which stop when they turn around, and also wet footsteps disappearing into the tunnel but which suddenly disappear!

Netherton tunnel is 3027 yards long and emerges to go under the Tididale aqueduct which carries the Wolverhampton level, and at Dudley Port Junction you turn right along the Birmingham Level main line.

At Bromford Junction do not turn off but keep straight on under the Stewart Aqueduct which takes the Wolverhampton level overhead, through Galton Tunnel (122 yards), ignoring the Soho Loop and Icknield Port Loop and you can moor by Sheepcote Street moorings or further on at Gas Street Basin.

You are in the heart of Birmingham's canal network, which has been redeveloped into a unique experience where traditional narrow boats moor up next to cosmopolitan cafes and bars.

The surrounding area is a vibrant arts & entertainment area and there are many shopping options within a short walk.

If you choose to moor up next to the Sea Life Centre, you will be spoilt for choice with the variety of cuisine on offer, with over 500 restaurants to choose from offering Caribbean to Nepalese, Thai to Italian, and many more. You will also find clubs and bars, cinema's, theatre's and comedy clubs.

Among other attractions are the National Sea Life Centre, Fine Art Galleries, and the Jewellery Quarter, which

dates back over 250 years and is still home to over 400 jewellery businesses.

It is a designated conservation area, with only 200 listed buildings, and has been described by English Heritage as 'a unique historic environment in England'.

For those who like a little retail therapy, a visit to the BullRing is a must. It covers an area the size of 26 football pitches, and has an enormous range of shops.

Also nearby, is the National Indoor Arena, one of the busiest large scale indoor sporting and entertainment venues in Europe.

It is 9 hours to here

Day 4

Depending on where you moored you head towards Gas Street Basin and continue on down the Worcester & Birmingham canal through Edgbaston & Selly Oak, you will reach Bournville where there are visitor moorings & you can visit Cadbury World, a must for adults and children alike!! You do need to book beforehand Tel. 0121 451 4159 . It is signposted from the canal. There is an exhibition dedicated to the history of chocolate, audio visual displays, Victorian Birmingham & a Jungle to explore!

After Bournville continue on at the Kings Norton Junction, ignoring the right hand turn to the Stratford on Avon canal, & soon you will come to Wast Hills Tunnel, at 2726 yards it is one of the longest in the country.

After the tunnel you will have left Birmingham behind as you cruise southwards towards Worcester and a couple of shorter tunnels.

After the last tunnel you will soon reach the Tardebigge Locks. These represent the Boaters Rite of Passage, as these 30 locks, combined with the nearby 6 Stoke Locks, represent 36 locks in 4 miles, and other groups of locks will pale into insignificance in comparison.

Tardebigge reservoir is near here, and the old Engine house is now restored as flats.

It is 6 hours cruising to here, it is worth going through Tardebigge top lock and mooring by Dialhouse bridge 55 to get away from the noise of the busy road .

Day 5

Have a good breakfast & then descend the Tardebigge flight set in very pretty rural surroundings, which can take 4-5 hours, but there are places in between the locks where you can moor up & have a breather!

At the bottom of the locks is the Queens Pub- Canalside at bridge 48, with good food and a lovely waterside terrace.

The 6 Stoke locks are slightly more interspersed and the canal continues through very rural surroundings towards the 5 Astwood Locks.

It is worth stopping near bridge 41 before these locks, as you can walk into the village of Astwood and find the

Bowling Green pub, which has a Bowling green in the garden! Or the Boat and railway pub is by bridge 42

It is 6.5 hours cruising to here.

Day 6

There are not so many locks today as you climb down through the countryside towards Worcester. The 6 Astwood locks start you off, and then there is a short tunnel at Dunhampstead to negotiate, with no more locks until you get to the 6 Tibberton locks. Soon you are passing the outskirts of Worcester and you can moor up near Lowesmoor Wharf.

It takes about 7 hours cruising to get here.

From the Wharf you can walk into the city centre of Worcester, with its splendid cathedral dating from 1074, & museums, art galleries and half timbered buildings. The museum at the Royal Worcester Porcelain works is well worth a visit, as it contains the most comprehensive collection of Worcester Porcelain in the world.

There are many bars, pubs and restaurants and take-aways around Worcester, and plenty of shops to stock up on supplies, or for a little retail therapy.

Day 7

Leaving 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.

From Diglis basin you enter the Diglis locks- 2 deep locks which take you out onto the River Severn. The locks are under the supervision of the lock-keeper, who should tell you whether it is alright to proceed onto the River Severn, but to make sure look out for the red, amber and green water level gauge to see if the Severn is in flood or not.

After coming out of the last lock onto the Severn, it is best to head towards the far bank heading south (in the opposite direction to which you will be headed) and then turn the boat to pick up your crew from the pontoon near the lock. So you do a half circle anti clockwise, the river is very wide so it is easy to do.

Heading upstream the River passes the imposing cathedral and then the fine five arched bridge. The famous

racecourse is on your right, and there are moorings here, also a water point.

The River winds through pleasant countryside to Bevere lock, but just before here is the Camp House inn pub on your left, with moorings. If you moor on the River leave your rope loose because it is tidal.

Check the opening hours of the Canal & Rivers Trust operated Bevere lock.

A mile beyond Bevere the river swings right, and soon you will see the entrance lock at the start of the Droitwich barge Canal.

You leave the River Severn at Stourport on Severn & join the Staffordshire & Worcestershire Canal.

This canal is one of the prettiest and most interesting waterways in England.

The canal basins at Stourport are full of pretty moored boats, there are 2 entrances to the basins from the Severn one through broad locks, and the second one through narrow locks which is the one you should take.

It is 6 hours back to your home mooring.

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](#).

PDF created : 19 Feb 2023

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