

Telephone : 01395 443545

UK Canal Boating

Email : bookings@ukcanalboating.com

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Booking Office : PO Box 57, Budleigh Salterton. Devon. EX9 7ZN. England.

Stourport ring from Alvechurch

Cruise this route from : Alvechurch

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Stourport ring from Alvechurch

Cruising Days : 7.00 to 11.00

Cruising Time : 51.50

Total Distance : 84.00

Number of Locks : 118

Number of Tunnels : 10

Number of Aqueducts : 0

Offering an interesting mix of river, countryside and cities, this route will take you through the historic city of Worcester, along the River Severn to one of the prettiest canals in England- The Staffordshire & Worcestershire

Take a Steam train ride in the Severn valley and cruise through Birmingham to the superb 26 acre outdoor Black Country Museum, the cosmopolitan Gas Street Basin with all its cafes and bars, and Cadbury World at Bournville.

Stourport ring from Alvechurch

Cruising Notes

Novices should take 10-14 days to complete this ring, but experienced boaters can do it in 1 week, but if you want to stop off & explore you will need 10-14 nights.

Day 1

Cruise from Alvechurch marina southwards towards Worcester and you will soon encounter your first tunnels, although at 613 yards and 580 yards they are some of the shorter ones.

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.

By the time you have had your training & stowed your belongings, time will be passing when you leave Alvechurch. so if you cruise for about 1 ½ hours you should get through the 1st lock of this long flight, and there will be room to moor up just after that.

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

Day 2

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!

It is 7 hours cruising to here.

Day 3

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, which is also our marina.

It takes about 8 ¼ 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 4

After negotiating 2 locks, you will be ready for the last lock on the Worcester & Birmingham Canal before you reach the River Severn (turning right onto the Severn)

Continue up the River Severn leaving Worcester behind, and cruise through the lovely Worcestershire countryside. There are very few locks, but the Beverle lock is one of the prettiest.

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.

The locks are open 24 hrs, and form a staircase, the lock-keeper is usually around 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, & good moorings at Weavers wharf , with supermarkets & cafes nearby.

It is 9 hours cruising to here, with 15 locks.

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.

Why not disembark at Bewdley & take a trip to the safari park with it's free roaming giraffes, elephants & big cats and small theme park with over 20 rides. Bewdley is a magnificent small 17/18th century riverside town, & is well worth a visit.

Day 5

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. There are occasional locks and canalside pubs including a 2 step staircase at Botterham lock which has 4 locks in total. There are pubs by bridges 43 & 45, and shops near 44.

A good place to moor up for the night you have cruised for 8.5 hours

Day 6

Have an early breakfast & prepare for a long day with lots of locks!

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.

You are soon approaching the outskirts of Wolverhampton, there is a handy supermarket near Compton Lock.

You turn off right onto the main line of the Birmingham Canal. 21 locks will carry you up into the heart of Wolverhampton.

Dunstall Park racecourse is passed on the right.

After the last lock you can moor up in the broad Street basin, as there are useful water and refuse points and plenty of takeaways and shops close by. The Wulfrun shopping Centre is in the city centre just off Dudley Street also the Mander centre with over 100 shops.

Continue down the main line of the Birmingham canal, ignoring the left turn up the Wyrley & Essington Canal, and later on the Wednesbury Oak Loop . After the short Coseley Tunnel you will see a canal leading off to your right which you should take towards Dudley and the Black Country Museum. It is worth mooring up near this superb 26 acre outdoor Museum which has been built around a re-constructed canal village, with a pub, shops and an inland port. You can ride on a trolley bus or tram, try sweet making , metal working or glass cutting, experience an underground coal mine & meet the characters in the shops and houses.

It is 11 hours cruising to here, and there are 31 locks.

Day 7

Day 8

Turn right along the Wolverhampton level canal, it is lock free for a while now, ignore the right turning at Oldbury Junction, and turn right at the Spon Lane Junction. There are 3 locks at Smethwick, but after these it is lock free again. Keep on the Birmingham main line towards the Gas Street basin which is where you will join the Worcester & Birmingham Canal again on your way back to Alvechurch.

For those on a 10-14 night cruise it is worth mooring up in the Gas Street basin which is in the heart of

Birmingham's canal network, and 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.

Continuing 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 West Hills Tunnel, at 2726 yards it is one of the longest in the country.

After the tunnel you will have left Birmingham behind and soon reach your home destination of Alvechurch marina, tired but exhilarated by the places you have been & the things you have seen on your journey.

Cruising time 9 ¼ hours 3 locks

Useful Links

Description : Cadbury World

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

Telephone : 0844 880 7667

Description : National Sea Life Centre

Website : <http://www.visitsealife.com/birmingham/>

Telephone : 0871 423 2110

Description : Visit Birmingham

Website : <http://visitbirmingham.com/>

Telephone : n/a

Description : The Black Country Museum

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

Telephone : 0121 557 9643

Description : Worcester City Museums

Website : www.whub.org.uk/cms/museums-worcestershire.aspx

Telephone : 01905 25371

Description : Gas Street Basin, Birmingham

Website : <http://canalrivertrust.org.uk/directory/65/gas-street-basin>

Telephone : n/a

Description : The Bullring Shopping Centre, Birmingham

Website : <http://www.bullring.co.uk/shops>

Telephone : 0121 632 1500

Description : The Mailbox, Shopping Centre, Wharfside
Website : <http://www.mailboxlife.com>
Telephone : 0121 632 1000

Description : Museum of Royal Worcester
Website : www.museumofroyalworchester.org/
Telephone : 01905 21247

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

Description : Treasure Island
Website : <http://www.stourportfair.co.uk>
Telephone : 07976 413330

Description : Stourport-on-Severn Tourist Info
Website : <http://stourporttown.co.uk>
Telephone : n/a

Description : Severn Valley Railway.
Website : <http://www.svr.co.uk>
Telephone : 01562 757900

Description : West Midlands Safari Park, Bewdley
Website : <http://www.wmsp.co.uk>
Telephone : 01299 402114

Description : Kinver Edge and Holy Austin Rock Houses
Website : <http://www.nationaltrust.org.uk/kinver-edge/>
Telephone : 01384 872553

Description : Dunstall Park Racecourse, Wolverhampton
Website : <http://www.wolverhampton-racecourse.co.uk/>
Telephone : 01902 390000

Description : Wulfrun Shopping Centre, Wolverhampton
Website : <http://www.thewulfrunshoppingcentre.co.uk/>
Telephone : 01902 424536

Description : Mander Shopping Centre, Wolverhampton
Website : <http://www.mandercentre.co.uk/>
Telephone : 01902 711084

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](#).

