

UK Canal Boating

Escape with a canal boating holiday!

Windsor and Oxford and return from Aldermaston

Cruise this route from : Aldermaston

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Windsor and Oxford and return from Aldermaston

Cruising Days : 10.00 to 15.00

Cruising Time : 63.50

Total Distance : 157.00

Number of Locks : 70

Number of Tunnels : 0

Number of Aqueducts : 0

10-14 night cruise and to the Royal town of Windsor and visit its famous castle and Legoland & to Oxford, The City of Dreaming Spires, famous the world over for its University and place in history.

Go past Marlow & Henley on Thames and through Reading.

Henley is a fine market town and the main street runs down to the River Thames. The famous Henley Regatta is held in the 1st week of July. There is a River and rowing museum just outside Henley. Exhibits include the worlds oldest rowing boat.

Also in Henley is Fawley Court which was designed by Wren & built in 1684, with grounds by Capability brown. It has a library with various documents of the Polish monarchy and Polish militia.

Windsor castle is the largest inhabited castle in the World, established by William the Conqueror during the 1070's the present castle was started by Henry 11 during 1165-1179. It has been meticulously restored after the disastrous fire in 1992.

LEGOLAND Windsor is a theme park dedicated to children aged 3-12 years old. An inspirational land where the kids are the hero.

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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Cruising Notes

10-14 night cruise and to the Royal town of Windsor and visit its famous castle and Legoland & to Oxford, The City of Dreaming Spires, famous the world over for its University and place in history. Go past Marlow & Henley on Thames and through Reading.

This cruise will involve River cruising beyond Reading on the River Thames, which requires an additional licence for some hire boats that don't already have it which can be bought at the lock at the junction of the canal and Thames.

On the Thames the locks are done for you . You cannot cruise beyond Teddington to Brentford unless you are very experienced.

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 bridge 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:

inc. 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 gypsy caravan. The old turbine house has lovely views over the River.

RIVER THAMES LICENCE- From Inglesham to Teddington the narrowboat has to be registered with the Environment Agency and must display a current licence, some boats already have this. 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 a application form from (contact info under useful links). The speed limit is 5 miles per hour.

You leave the Kennet & Avon Canal just beyond Blakes Lock and enter the River Thames.

Passing the large water filled gravel pits on your left, you will soon reach Sonning Lock. The Village, which lies back from the River, is a pretty meticulously preserved village & has a PO, stores, pubs and cafe. There is mooring beyond Sonning Bridge.

The river continues weaving its way through a series of islands to Shipway lock. Beyond Marsh Lock the famous rowing town of Henley on Thames is reached. There is mooring before and after Henley bridge. This is a good place to moor up for the night, it is nearly 7 hours cruising from Theale to here.

Henley has an attractive waterfront, many moored boats and resident swans.

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Also in Henley is Fawley Court which was designed by Wren & built in 1684, with grounds by Capability brown. It has a library with various documents of the Polish monarchy and Polish militaria.

Day 3

Leaving Henley the River passes Hambleden (moorings) and Hurley, a small village that has a couple of pubs. At Marlow you will see the elegant white Marlow suspension bridge with the lock just beyond. There are moorings before the bridge. Marlow is a very lively and handsome Georgian town. West street at the top of the High street has many literary associations, Thomas Peacock wrote Nightmare Abbey at No 47, Shelley wrote Revolt to Islam in Albion House, and his wife Mary Godwin created Frankenstein here. TS Eliot also lived here for a while.

This part of the Thames is very popular for sailing so watch out for all the pleasure craft.

Soon Maidenhead is reached, and the riverside is busy and attractive. There are moorings beyond Boulton's Lock, or Maidenhead Railway bridge. Maidenhead is a dormitory suburb of London with much new development, and has many shops, pubs and restaurants.

Beyond Bray Lock & The M4 bridge, is Monkey island with its smart Hotel, but which was once the fishing lodge and pavilion of the 3rd Duke of Marlborough built in 1744 on rubble salvaged from the Great Fire of London . To the north of Summer Leaze bridge is Dorney Court and Church, a gabled and timbered Tudor manor House built c.1440. The house has many original features and contains fine furniture and paintings.

The outskirts of Windsor are reached, the racecourse on your right is the only figure of 8 course in the country;- there are horse racing fixtures throughout the year.

There are moorings before or after Windsor railway Bridge, Windsor is to the south of the River, Eton to the North. It is 8 hours cruising from Henley to here.

Day 4

Explore Windsor:-

The main street of Windsor curves around the castle and is full of pubs, shops, restaurants and souvenir shops. Windsor castle is the largest inhabited castle in the World, established by William the Conqueror during the 1070's the present castle was started by Henry 11 during 1165-1179. It has been meticulously restored after the disastrous fire in 1992, and includes:

Magnificent State Apartments furnished with treasures from the Royal Collection

- St George's Chapel (one of the most beautiful ecclesiastical buildings in England and the burial place of 10 monarchs)
- Queen Mary's Dolls House, a masterpiece in miniature
- The Drawings Gallery featuring an exhibition (see below for current display).

LEGOLAND Windsor is a theme park dedicated to children aged 3-12 years old. An inspirational land where the kids are the hero. It's a family attraction like no other - where the fun never stops and imagination knows no bounds. With over 55 interactive rides, live shows, building workshops, driving schools and attractions, all set in 150 acres of beautiful parkland, LEGOLAND Windsor is a unique family theme park.

Across Windsor bridge is Eton, the long and rambling High Street is a pleasant place to walk, Eton College was founded in 1440 by Henry VI and 18 former Prime Ministers have been educated here.

Day 5

Day 6

It is 13 hours cruising to Caversham Bridge in Reading.

Go past the turning to the Kennet & Avon Canal at Reading and moor up instead just past Reading Bridge or Caversham Bridge.

Day 7

Time to explore Reading

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

From Caversham bridge cruise up the Thames towards Oxford.

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 Pangbourne 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 3.25 hours from Caversham bridge to here.

Day 8

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 store 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.

There are moorings at Clifton Hampden bridge also there is a Pub here – the Barlow mow.

Day 9

The Thames continues to make its winding way up to 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 Wren's masons.

It is 7 hours cruising from Goring Bridge to Abingdon.

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 4.25 hours to reach Oxford from Goring.

Day 10

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.

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 Museum's interior is a forest of columns and skeletons and houses the very rare head and claw of the extinct dodo.

Day 11

Day 12

Day 13

Day 14

It is 23 hours back to Aldermaston Wharf from Oxford , so about 6 hours cruising per day and plenty of time to stop and visit all those places you saw on the way up!!

On a 10 night cruise you will not have so much time to explore Windsor so cut out the sightseeing on Day 4 and days 5/6/7 can be done over 2 days, and days 9 onwards can be done over 3/4 days.

To extend your cruising, go past Windsor to Teddington which is just the other side of Kingston upon Thames which is an extra 19 hours cruising there & back. For Thrill seekers Thorpe Park is at Chertsey.

Or in the other direction go past Oxford to Lechlade- the end of the Thames navigation add an extra 24 hours for the trip.

Useful Links

Description : Reading Tourist attractions

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

Telephone : n/a

Description : The British Monarchy

Website : <http://www.royal.gov.uk/>

Telephone : n/a

Description : Sheldonian Theatre Oxford

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

Telephone : 01865 277299

Description : Windsor Castle

Website : <http://www.royalcollection.org.uk/visit/windsorcastle>

Telephone : 020 7766 7304

Description : Dorney Court Nr Windsor

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

Telephone : 01628 604638

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 : Royal Windsor Race Course

Website : <http://www.windsor-racecourse.co.uk/>

Telephone : n/a

Description : Legoland Windsor Resort

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

Telephone : 0871 2222 001

Description : River and Rowing Museum Henley on Thames

Website : <http://rrm.co.uk/>

Telephone : 01491 415600

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 : Wildcat Hovercraft can provide you activities that are great fun while also being a bit different.

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

Telephone : 0118 934 5299

Description : Henley on Thames tourist info

Website : <http://www.southernoxfordshire.com/henley.php>

Telephone : n/a

Description : Windsor Tourist Information

Website : <http://www.windsor.gov.uk/visitor-info>

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

Description : Henley on Thames Regatta

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

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
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