

# UK Canal Boating

Escape with a canal boating holiday!

## Oxford and return from Rugby

Cruise this route from : Rugby

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Oxford and return from Rugby

Cruising Days : 11.00 to 15.00

Cruising Time : 67.50

Total Distance : 119.00

Number of Locks : 84

Number of Tunnels : 0

Number of Aqueducts : 0

Rugby is a large town with many shops and of course is the home of the game of Rugby. There is a pedestrianised shopping centre and an open market with a town crier.

The Web Ellis Rugby football museum tells the story of the game of Rugby over the last 160 years

As part of your tour of the birthplace of the game be sure to take a walk along the Pathway of Fame, a unique tour which celebrates the history of the game and some of its most notable players.

The town and borough has much more to offer than its unique connection with the famous game. It has links to great literary figures such as Rupert Brooke, Matthew Arnold and Lewis Carroll.

The city of Oxford was founded in the 10th century and has been a University city since the 13th century.

The University houses the Bodleian library which was opened in 1602, and it contains 9 million books on 176 km of shelving. It is housed in a remarkable group of buildings which form the historic heart of the University, and you can explore the quadrangles of these magnificent structures at no charge. Different ticket options allow you to visit the interior of some of the buildings.

Oxford and return from Rugby

## Cruising Notes

Rugby is a large town with many shops and of course is the home of the game of Rugby. It is 30 minutes walk

to the town centre. There is a pedestrianised shopping centre and an open market with a town crier.

The Web Ellis Rugby football museum tells the story of the game of Rugby over the last 160 years. As part of your tour of the birthplace of the game be sure to take a walk along the Pathway of Fame, a unique tour which celebrates the history of the game and some of its most notable players.

The town and borough has much more to offer than its unique connection with the famous game. It has links to great literary figures such as Rupert Brooke, Matthew Arnold and Lewis Carroll.

This cruise is planned over 10 nights, but can easily be extended to 14 by cruising for less than 8 hours each day.

## Day 1

From the marina cruise south down the Oxford canal, leaving Rugby behind.

There are shops to the south of bridge 59 and a picnic area below bridge 58 with a huge Tesco supermarket nearby.

Your first locks are by Hillmorton and you can stop for the night by Bridge 71 where there is Bardsey's Lock stop Cafe bistro, which is open Wednes-Sat for meals or takeaways & has won awards for the best waterside restaurant.

If your 1st night is a Sunday or Monday, cruise onto Bridge 73, where the Royal oak is canalside.

Cruising hours to Bridge 71 is 1.25 hours

## Day 2

After passing under the M45 motorway the canal leaves all civilisation behind, and does not pass any villages until it reaches Braunston Turn. The village of Braunston is set up on a hill to the north of the canal, and is a very well known canal centre. You make a right hand turn along the Grand Union Canal away from Braunston to rejoin the Oxford canal at Napton junction, where you go straight on instead of turning right.

The windmill on top of Napton hill can be seen from Napton Junction, if you cruise on to Bridge 113 there is a water point and The Folly pub is canalside at bridge 113, and there is a useful shop next door. The shops and pubs are at the bottom of the village, but if you want to climb over 400 feet to the top of the hill you can see the 13th century church, and seven counties can be seen from this vantage point.

It is 6 hours cruising to here

## Day 3

The flight of 8 locks at Napton start first thing this morning, so make sure you all have a good breakfast. After the locks the canal continues its twisting course, with villages scattered along the way.

Priors hardwick is east of bridge 124 along the footpath, The Butchers Arms is a smart village restaurant.

Fenny Compton is approached from Bridge 136, about 1 mile west of the wharf, the Merrie Lion pub is in the village.

There are 5 locks by Claydon, the village of Claydon is worth a look, because of the Bygones museum access

from Bridge 145.-The museum houses a unique collection of antiques and memorabilia gathered together by the owners over a period of sixty years. And you are encouraged to peruse in a free and relaxed atmosphere. There is a replica of a 1920's kitchen, electricians workshop, blacksmith, wheelwright and a boat-builder,

1903 Traction Engine, 1912 Steam Roller, Six tractors, a Trailer Fire Pump and many smaller machines and equipment and steam engines.

There are another 4 locks before you reach the quiet village of Cropedy, which bursts into life during the annual Folk Festival, now Europe's largest, which is held on the 2nd weekend in August. It originally started in 1979 when Fairport Convention held their farewell concert here.

In 2012 it is being held from 9th to 11th August.

Cromwells forces came under attack at the battle of Cropedy in 1644, and the Royalist cavalry managed to defeat the Roundheads despite being outnumbered, and thus protected Oxford.

In the village is the Red Lion- a beautiful 15th century pub opposite the church, also the Braenose Arms is canalside.

It is 9.5 hours cruising to here

Day 4

Banbury is soon reached after another 3 locks which should take just under 3 hours.

If you are on a 10/11 night holiday you will need to push on- maybe stopping at Upper Heyford for the night which is just over 9 hours cruising, and on the next day- Day 5 get to Oxford in 9.5 hours.

A nursery rhyme, 'Ride a Cock Horse', has made Banbury one of the best-known towns in England. It has been suggested that the 'Fine Lady' of the nursery rhyme may have been Lady Godiva or Elizabeth I. More likely it was a local girl who rode in a May Day procession. The original cross was pulled down at the end of the 16th century. The present cross was erected in 1859 to celebrate the wedding of the then Princess Royal to Prince Frederick of Prussia.

Banbury Cakes, a special fruit and pastry cake, are still produced. At one time they were being sent as far afield as Australia, India and America.

Banbury has a massive indoor shopping centre called Castle Quay where almost 250000 people visit every week. All the majors stores are here, also restaurants and cafes.

Day 5

Beyond Banbury there are a series of lift bridges that are normally left open.

Where the River Cherwell crosses the navigation at Aynho Weir lock there is a strong stream lock. Observe the water level reading on the coloured level indicator board, on the top side of the lock, before deciding to continue.

This pleasant rural stretch of the canal is well punctuated by the characteristic wooden lift bridges that are usually left open.

It is well worth walking a mile east of Aynho Wharf by bridge 190 to visit the village of Aynho.

There is a pub canalside called the Great western. The village square has been untouched throughout the generations, and a 17th century mansion called Aynho Park is on the other side of the road.

The canal continues its rural path, through water meadows and open pastureland.

The village of Upper Heyford is close to the canal, and there are a couple of pubs here, the main street of thatched stone cottages falls steeply to the canal.

Lower Heyford also has a village pub- the Bell Inn an attractive 17th century pub just off the towpath.

Rousham House is to the right of Bridge 207 and the gardens are open to the public. The house dates from 1635 but is not open to the public.

It is worth mooring up near here, as you have done 7 hours cruising.

Day 6

The canal is very wooded around here, the woods becoming very thick, the overhanging trees making a tunnel through which the canal passes.

The Oxford Arms is a ½ mile from the canal in Kirtlington, the lane to it is to the left of Pigeon bridge 213.

By Bridge 216 is the Rock of Gibraltar pub which has moorings.

Shipton-On-Cherwell is off to your right past Bridge 219, the church overlooks the canal. In 1874 the village was the scene of a railway disaster when 34 people were killed when the train fell into the frozen canal off Shipton bridge. In the 1860s the thighbones of a huge dinosaur were found in a nearby quarry & are on display in the University Museum in Oxford.

By bridge 221 in the lovely canalside village of Thrupp is the the Boat Inn, and by bridge 223 is the Jolly Boatman which has a canalside patio.

The canal skirts around Kidlington which is a suburb of Oxford until it reaches Dukes Cut where you can join the Thames (Licence required), or continue into Oxford, although be aware that there are limited Visitor moorings due to designated conservation areas and private moorings.

It is 9 hours cruising to here.

The city of Oxford was founded in the 10th century and has been a University city since the 13th century.

The University houses the Bodleian library which was opened in 1602, and it contains 9 million books on 176 km of shelving. The Bodleian Library is a working library which forms part of the University of Oxford. It is housed in a remarkable group of buildings which form the historic heart of the University, and you can explore the quadrangles of these magnificent structures at no charge. Different ticket options allow you to visit the interior of some of the buildings, such as the University's oldest teaching and examination room, The Divinity School (built 1427-88). Here you will discover more of the University's fascinating history.

Also worth seeing is the Saxon Tower, which is the oldest building in Oxford- The tower is the easiest climb in Oxford, with good solid stairs including a handrail. There are several places to stop and rest if you need to. From the top of the tower there is a marvellous view of the city of Oxford and its famous "dreaming spires".; also the 15th century pulpit where John Wesley, founder of Methodism, preached the Michaelmas Day sermon on 29th September 1726; 13th Century stained glass in the East Window; 14th Century font from St Martin's Church ; Reredos of the 14th century Lady Chapel, restored in 1941; The door of Archbishop Cranmer's prison cell from Bocardo Prison is held in the tower. Archbishop Cranmer and his fellow bishops Latimer and Ridley were burned at stake in Broad Street in 1556; The church treasury, which includes a Elizabethan chalice dated 1562, and a Sheela-na-gig, dating back to late 11th or 12th century.

The Sheldonian Theatre was built in 1668 from a design created by Christopher Wren. It was named after

Gilbert Sheldon, who was Chancellor of the University at the time the construction was funded. The theatre is used for music recitals.

Blackwell's Bookstore is an institution in Oxford. It's not just a regular bookstore - it has the largest single room devoted to book sales in all of Europe (the 10,000 sq. ft. Norrington Room). In order to create such a large space in a small city, Blackwell's excavated underneath Trinity College's gardens. Blackwell's sells both new and second-hand books, and has a cafe.

The Botanic Gardens are located on the peaceful banks of the Cherwell River, the gardens were started in 1621 as the Physic Gardens, for the study of medicinal plants. These are the oldest botanic gardens in Britain. In addition to the lovely outdoor gardens, there are greenhouses which grow many varieties of exotic plants and flowers. Just next to the gardens, crossing over Rose Lane, there are rose gardens that are exquisite in July.

Hertford Bridge is often called the Bridge of Sighs because of the similarity to the famous bridge in Venice. Actually, it looks more like the Rialto Bridge, and this Oxford structure was never intended to be a replica of any existing bridge. It was completed in 1914 to connect two sections of Hertford College.

Oxford castle was originally built in 1071 for William the Conqueror, to enable the Normans to control the area. A prison was built within the castle, which continued to be in use until 1996.

The prison was mainly used to house prisoners from Oxfordshire and Berkshire, and also the University's 'rebellious scholars' (as recorded in 1236). From 1613 until 1785, the prison and castle were owned by Christ Church, who leased the jail (gaol) to prison keepers. In 1785 it was redeveloped into a prison and house of correction, with a tower on which they held public executions. The last execution was in 1863.

Day 7

Day 8

Day 9

Day 10

Day 11

Day 12

Day 13

Day 14

It is just over 36 hours cruising back to Rugby marina, with 41 locks, so you can stay for a while in Oxford, and wander home slowly if staying for 14 nights. If you are on a 10 or 11 night holiday you will have reached Oxford on Day 5 and need to start the journey home .

## Useful Links

Description : Webb Ellis Rugby Football Museum

Website : [www.webb-ellis.co.uk/](http://www.webb-ellis.co.uk/)

Telephone : 01788 567777

Description : Bygones Museum

Website : [www.daytripfinder.co.uk/attractions/bygones-museum](http://www.daytripfinder.co.uk/attractions/bygones-museum)

Telephone : 01295 690258

Description : Castle Quay Shopping Centre, Banbury

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

Telephone : 01295 256296

Description : Sheldonian Theatre Oxford

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

Telephone : 01865 277299

Description : Visit Oxfordshire

Website : <http://www.visitoxfordandoxfordshire.com/>

Telephone : n/a

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 : Rugby Tourist information

Website : <http://www.enjoyrugby.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](#).

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