

Stoke Bruerne, Linford and Return

~ Idyllic England~

Cruising pace: 3/5

Holiday: 1 week

Cruise highlights

- Authentic canal village of Stoke Bruerne
- Moor at The Wharf Inn
- Spectacular flight of locks at Watford

At a glance

- 89 miles
- 4 tunnels
- 44 locks
- More than a dozen canalside pubs

Suggested itinerary

Friday: 3 hours cruising

- Comprehensive boat handling training at North Kilworth marina.
- Cruise southwards on the Grand Union Canal, keeping right through Welford Junction.
- Enjoy the splendid isolation of the waterway, navigating the red-brick bridges which characterise this stretch.
- Find a peaceful spot to moor the night around Smart's Bridge number 24.

Saturday: 6.5 hours cruising

- Cruise on south, down through Crick tunnel.
- Stop at the top of Watford Locks and book your descent with the lock-keeper.
- Once you are through the lock flight, moor up for a well-deserved towpath picnic.
- Cruise on, bearing left at Norton Junction to begin the Buckby locks.
- The Buckby locks are unstaffed but much further apart than those at Watford. They are double locks, meaning that you can pair up with another boat if one comes along, and share the operation of the locks.
- Pause at Lock 8 at Anchor Cottage Crafts, for an icecream and to browse the canal souvenirs.
- Moor up for the night once you are through the bottom lock number 13, just past Whilton Marina.

Sunday: 6 hours cruising

- Travel on south through Weedon village. If you are ahead of time, moor up at Weedon Bridge number 24 and browse the lovely Village Antiques Centre (they only take cash but there is a cashpoint at the Tesco Express nearby.) There are several other Antiques Shops on the same road.
- At the village of Bugbrooke, moor up for a well-deserved lunch at The Wharf Inn. If you're lucky, you'll be able to bag a spot right at the bottom of their beer garden.
- Once on the move again, keep to the right as you pass through Gayton Junction.

- Blisworth tunnel is next, the third longest in Britain that you're able to navigate.
- Settle in at Stoke Bruerne for the rest of the day, to enjoy a lovely example of an English canal village. There's a Canal Museum here, and a variety of pubs, cafes and restaurants. We suggest you moor up after Lock 15 and pick your favourite for a spot of people-watching.

Monday: 6 hours cruising

- Start the day by working through Stoke Bruerne locks and then weave through the countryside until you reach The Navigation pub at Cosgrove.
- Bear left towards Milton Keynes.
- Wind (turn) at Linford Wharf Bridge number 77.
- End the day at The Black Horse pub at bridge number 76.

Tuesday: 6 hours cruising

- Cruise back up to Stoke Bruerne, bearing right after Cosgrove Lock.
- Move up through the locks.
- You can either pause for lunch here, or cruise on through Blisworth Tunnel and moor up for a towpath picnic.
- Bear left at Gayton Junction and moor up for the evening. Bridge 42 would be a good spot, or if you enjoyed The Wharf Inn on the way down, it's only another four bridges further on (about a mile and a half.)

Wednesday: 6 hours cruising

- Enjoy a leisurely, lock-free morning and at Bridge number 18 visit the boutique shopping village and teashop, The Heart of the Shires (www.theheartoftheshires.co.uk)
- Allow 2.5 hours to return to the Buckby Locks and complete the ascent before dark.
- Once through the locks (last one is beside The New Inn), moor up for the night and walk back to enjoy a waterside pub dinner.

Thursday: 6 hours cruising

- Bear right onto the Grand Union Canal.
- Find the volunteer lock keeper at Watford Staircase Locks and book your ascent.
- Crick Tunnel is shortly after the locks.
- As you emerge from the tunnel, go under Bridge 11 and tie up at The Moorings (www.themooringscrick.co.uk) for a well-earned lunch.
- Enjoy a leisurely cruise through the waterways, bearing left at Welford Junction.
- Moor up at North Kilworth Marina for the night.

Friday

- Enjoy a final breakfast aboard, before vacating the boat by 9.30am.

Please check that your route isn't affected by any canal closures before you travel, by searching on the Canal and River Trust's live update page. You'll need to tick the search boxes for Grand Union Canal:

<https://canalrivertrust.org.uk/notices>