

Foxton, Watford, Braunston and Rugby

~ Photographer's dream ~

Cruising pace: 3/5

Holiday: 1 week

Cruise highlights

- Restful pace
- Suitable for novices
- Explore the famous Braunston canal village
- Stunning staircase locks at Foxton and Watford
- Shopping afternoon in Rugby

At a glance

- 86 miles
 - 12 tunnels
 - 42 locks
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Suggested itinerary

FRIDAY: 3 HOURS CRUISING

- Comprehensive boat handling training at Union Wharf marina.
- Cruise along the Harborough Arm, opening the swing bridge along the way.
- Moor up just before the Foxton basin for the night.
- Walk down the towpath to enjoy a meal in the bar or restaurant at Foxton Locks Inn (0116 279 1515 to book at busy times).

SATURDAY: 6.5 HOURS CRUISING

- You can buy breakfast rolls and coffee at the top and bottom of the locks to ease yourself into the day.
- Find the volunteer lock keeper and book your ascent (you can check the lock opening times on www.foxtonlocks.org.uk/boaters).
- Make the most of the stunning views as you progress up the locks.
- Enjoy a leisurely cruise through the waterways, navigating through Husbands Bosworth tunnel.
- Continue on through this winding and unspoilt section of the canal until you find the perfect spot to moor up for the night. If your timing is good, you may reach Bridge 12 at Crick, where you can enjoy a meal at The Moorings (www.mooringscrick.co.uk or 01788 822517 to check food serving times in the winter.)

SUNDAY: 6.5 HOURS CRUISING

- Head on through Crick tunnel (wide enough for two narrowboats to pass.)
- Moor up just before Watford Locks to book your passage down with the lock-keeper. This beautiful flight of locks is fully staffed by Canal and River Trust volunteers and they'll "walk" you through the process if you forget how to operate the locks. There's the added bonus of it being much less busy and "touristy."
- At Norton Junction, bear right towards Birmingham and then drive on through Braunston Tunnel, which is wide enough for two boats to pass.
- Next are a series of six locks, well-spaced apart. These are wide enough to carry two boats at once, so if you meet any other boats going your way, it makes things much easier to share.
- Moor up in between the locks when you've had enough – there is no rush to get through them all today. Braunston played a pivotal role in the English canal system and has a fascinating heritage. Photograph opportunities include a beautiful pair of cast-iron bridges completed in 1834 and the 1730 Admiral Nelson pub (<http://www.theadmiralnelson.co.uk>) beside lock number 3 which is said to be haunted by a figure in black. Read more on the village history [here](#).

MONDAY: 6 HOURS CRUISING

- Complete Braunston Locks and stop for brunch at The Gongoozler's Rest, a quirky narrowboat café moored outside the Stop House.
- Bear right onto the Oxford Canal and take a nice easy stretch through the countryside up to Rugby.
- Moor up at Bridge 59 and take the short walk into town for a spot of shopping.
- Cruise on to Green's Bridge number 51 and the Newbold Visitor Moorings, to cosy down for the night.

TUESDAY: 5.5 HOURS CRUISING

- Turn (wind) at the Winding Hole after Easenhall Lane Bridge number 34. If you miss this, there's another half a mile away.
- Cruise on back down through Rugby, back through the restful landscape, stopping for lunch en route.
- Bear left at Braunston and on back through the locks again. After you've chosen your mooring spot, enjoy a wander down the towpath to choose a pub for dinner tonight.

WEDNESDAY: 5 HOURS CRUISING

- Start the day with an adventure through Braunston Tunnel.
- If you moor up just after Norton Junction (be sure to keep left), you can take a short towpath walk for lunch back to The New Inn at Long Buckby, with its lock-side beer garden.
- Head for the Watford Lock flight and book your passage through Watford Locks with the lock-keeper. Keep an eye on the lock closing times, particularly in times of water shortages, when the last boat may not be allowed through after 3.15pm.
- Travel on back through Crick tunnel and moor for a spot of dinner at The Moorings (01788 822517 to check food serving times.)

THURSDAY: 6 HOURS CRUISING

- Go on through Husbands Bosworth tunnel and up to the top of Foxton Locks.
- Find the volunteer lock keeper and book your descent down Foxton locks, checking the lock opening times. In the winter and at times of water shortages, the last boat through the locks is permitted at 3:15 PM.
- Once you are down the flight, take the right arm towards Market Harborough.
- There are two swing bridges to navigate back to Harborough, where you can moor up in the basin and enjoy a meal at The Waterfront (01858 434702.) In the warm months, choose a table outside and watch the boats as they navigate their way around the basin. In the winter, the restaurant offers outdoor “igloos” which are fun.

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 box for Grand Union Canal:

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