



## DISCOVER THE ENGLISH WATERWAYS BY NARROW BOAT

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*Take your very own behind-the-scenes tour and experience authentic English landscapes as you follow the waterways, meandering through wonderful countryside and into the heart of some of our best loved towns and cities.*

# DISCOVER THE HEART OF ENGLAND BY NARROW BOAT

Your journey along the Stourport ring will immerse you in miles of stunning canals, taking in beautiful surroundings, from historic villages and to market towns and vibrant cities, all whilst relaxing on your very own narrow boat.

Your waterways adventure will reveal wonderful English countryside, taking you to places that you won't have experienced before. You'll feel the freedom and peacefulness of cruising along the water, slowing down the pace and taking time to relax and enjoy your very own English waterways experience.



## What to expect:



### Travel and accommodation

Trains to and from airport, then travel and stay on your own traditional narrow boat.



### Unique Experiences

- Self-drive narrow boating break
- Black Country Living Museum
- Kinver Edge Rock Houses
- Severn Valley Steam Railway
- Worcester Cathedral
- Birmingham's Botanical Gardens

*\*\*To be able to experience all of this, we would recommend taking a 10 day cruise\*\**



### Dining options

A range of traditional English pubs and contemporary dining option along the way.

## Arrival information:

Arrive into Birmingham International Airport and take a train or taxi to Alvechurch marina.

All of our hire bases are within a reasonable taxi ride or train journey from Birmingham Airport and the Great British Boating team can provide all of the necessary details and contacts for you to arrange your transfers.

Meet and greet with your boat hire operator and familiarise with your narrowboat. Once you've learnt the ropes, begin your cruising along the canal.



# WATERWAY ITINERARY: STOURPORT RING

## DURATION: 7 NIGHTS

### Overview

Distance: 127 km      Locks: 116      Cruising time: 52 hours



### Day 1

Your journey in the slow lane starts at Alvechurch Marina. After an introduction and some training on how to handle your narrow boat and navigate the locks, head towards Hopwood on the Worcester and Birmingham Canal.

Depending on your arrival time you may want to consider mooring at the Hopwood House pub for the first night – it is only an hour's cruise from Alvechurch and the last stopping place with a canal side pub before Birmingham.

### Day 2

Going towards King's Norton Junction, you will reach the Wast Hills Tunnel and arrive at Bournville, where you could visit the Bournville Garden Factory and Cadbury World, visitor moorings are found here.

Entering the city centre of Birmingham you have a wealth of choice to suit your taste – stop off for some shopping at the Bullring, visit one of the many restaurants at the Mailbox and Brindleyplace, or indeed opt for a more peaceful experience, visiting Birmingham Botanical Gardens, which has 15 acres of beautiful gardens and four exotic glass houses.

From Gas Street Basin you travel towards Smethwick on to the Wolverhampton level line. This canal is lock-free to the end, where you can turn left and moor up at the Black Country Museum, just before the Dudley tunnel. This is a superb outdoor museum built around a reconstructed canal side village, with a pub, shops and an inland port.

### Day 3

Today your journey on the canal takes you from countryside into Wolverhampton – an area within the famous Black Country. There are plenty of places to eat and drink in Wolverhampton, as well as the Mander Centre with over 100 shops.

There are 21 locks to go through before you can emerge at Aldersley junction and turn left to join the Staffordshire and Worcestershire canal. There is the opportunity to stop and visit Wightwick Manor by Bridge 56, owned by the National Trust since 1937, the Manor and its grounds are open to the public. The house has 17 acres of lovely woodland and gardens and the outbuildings include parts of an earlier Jacobean manor house, stables (now a tea room); a gallery in the old malt house, a gift shop and a second-hand bookshop. If you would like to moor here for the night it is 8 hours' cruising to here from The Black Country Living Museum.



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## Day 4

Head through Wombourne and towards Swindon – along the way you will go through the three Bratch locks. These locks raise the canal level by over 30 feet and from the top there is a good view of the spire of Wombourne church. Keep following the canal going past Stourton junction and heading in the direction of Stourport. It's worth stopping at Kinver to look at the Rock Houses which were carved out of the cliffs and in continuous occupation for 150 years until 1935. There are pubs and shops in Kinver too. It's 8 hours' cruising to here from Wightwick.

## Day 5

Once you reach Kidderminster there are plenty of pubs and restaurants on offer. You can also visit the Severn Valley Railway, which offers a fantastic heritage steam and diesel service between Kidderminster, Worcestershire and Bridgnorth in Shropshire. There is also a small museum at the station. Continuing on your journey you will reach Stourport basins, where you join the River Severn. Between Bewdley and Kidderminster is the West Midlands Safari Park which has a wide range of rides and animals to see. Heading towards Worcester you go through Holt Fleet - there are four pubs on this stretch of river to enjoy, all serving up food and drink. It's 9 hours' cruising to Holt Fleet from Kinver.

## Day 6

Some further cruising and you will reach Worcester, where you can enjoy a visit to Worcester cathedral which dates from 1074. Or visit one of the many museums, such as the Worcester Porcelain museum, which contains the most comprehensive collection of Worcester porcelain in the world. After passing the cathedral on your left, you leave the River Severn at Diglis and re-join the canal navigations on the Worcester and Birmingham canal. Leaving the city you will go through the six Offerton locks to reach the village of Tibberton. Here you can visit the Bridge Inn - a canal side village local serving real ale and home cooked food. It is 8 hours' cruising to here from Holt Fleet.



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### Day 7

Today is a long cruising day but with a choice of many wonderful pubs to sample local food and drink along the way. You could choose the Speed the Plough, a 17th century country pub famous for its collection of clocks, and also serving real ales and bar meals. After going through Tibberton you will reach the Hanbury Junction where you will find the Eagle and Sun pub with indoor and outdoor seating overlooking the junction.

Further along your route, you will go through Astwood with its five locks to reach Stoke Prior and Stoke Pound. Whilst cruising through this stretch you can visit Avoncroft Museum of Historic Buildings. This is a wonderful open-air museum of 30 rescued historic buildings from the heart of England region. Set in 19 acres of attractive parkland these buildings show how the people have lived, worked and played over the last 700 years. Close to Avoncroft museum is the Queens Head pub, another canal side pub serving a variety of food and real ales, with plenty of indoor and outdoor seating.

Shortly after Stoke Pound are the Tardebigge locks. The Tardebigge Flight is the longest flight of locks in the UK, comprising of 30 locks. Allow a good 5 hours to complete the whole flight! At the top of the flight you could walk to the Tardebigge Inn for much needed refreshments. It is 9 and a half hours' cruising to here from Tibberton.

### Day 8

Finally, an hour's cruise through the Tardebigge and Shortwood tunnels brings you back to Alvechurch Marina to finish your journey.

