The Thames Path

This 184-mile (294km) Trail meanders with the river from its source in the Cotswolds, through peaceful, grazed water meadows, historic towns and cities and many unspoilt rural villages, before cutting through the heart of London to the Thames Barrier at Greenwich just a few miles from the sea. Walking along the Thames Path is one of the easiest and best ways to explore both the countryside and the capital city of Britain.

Places to stay

There are campsites, hostels, traditional farmhouses, village inns and some of the finest hotels in the country alongside the Trail. The National Trails Office produces a comprehensive guide, The Thames Path Companion, (ISBN: 978-0-9561074-2-8) listing accommodation, facilities and services. Contact the Thames Path National Trail Office for information or visit the website.

A Trail for everyone

The Trail is well marked and it’s difficult to get lost as it rarely leaves the riverbank. The Thames Path is a flat, easy Trail accessible for walkers of many ages and abilities. Riverside pubs, country houses, royal palaces, castles and gardens line the banks to welcome walkers and entice a stop. Many visitors are drawn to the Trail on day trips or enjoy it over a series of weekends, often inventing circuits between bridges and locks to suit. But others, enchanted by the river, manage to find a couple of weeks to indulge themselves in its entirety from source to sea.

Following the Greatest River in Britain

In partnership with Aurum Press, Natural England publishes two official guide books, which include ordnance survey maps and colour photographs:


Thames Path in the Country from the source to Hampton Court, written by the original instigator of the Trail, David Sharp, with Tony Gowers ISBN 978-1-84513-717-5

The trail is well served by trains, buses and boats, visit our website for details:

www.nationaltrail.co.uk/thamespath

For information or publications please contact:
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Email: thames.path@oxfordshire.gov.uk
Website: www.nationaltrail.co.uk/thamespath
When to go

In summer, when the wildlife and the countryside colours are at their best, most of the Trail can be walked in lightweight comfortable shoes. In winter, or when it’s wet, wear wellys or walking boots. After heavy rain some parts, particularly west of Oxford, may be flooded and therefore unwalkable.

For up-to-date information on flooding contact the Environment Agency’s Floodline on +44 (0) 845 988 1188 (11, 11, 11, 11) or visit the flood warning pages for the River Thames at www.environment-agency.gov.uk.

The Thames Path in London remains walkable and popular any time of the year, used regularly by local people and tourists alike as a convenient and attractive way to get to work, to visit some of the top tourist attractions and as a place to retreat from the bustle of city life.

Famous faces

Kenneth Grahame, inspired by the wildlife he observed from the Thames Path, wrote the children’s classic Wind in the Willows. “It was so very beautiful that the mole could only hold up both fore paws and gasp, ‘O my! O my! O my!’”

Others, including poet Shelley, artists such as Sir Stanley Spencer and William Morris, and the numerous kings and Queens of England have all played their part in recognising the river to be “The most loved of all the Ocean’s sons” (Sir John Denham 1615).

184 miles following The Greatest River in Britain