



This third edition was researched and updated by **ANNA UDAGAWA** (above, centre), **WILLIAM ALLBERRY** (right) and **ISABEL HEYCOCK** (left). Between them in the UK they have walked Hadrian's Wall Path, The Ridgeway, Coast to Coast, Dales Way, West Highland Way and St Cuthbert's Way, as well as sections of the South Downs Way, North Downs Way, Offa's Dyke and much of the South-West Coast Path. Elsewhere they have walked Dingle Way and Tour du Mont Blanc and climbed Kilimanjaro.



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Last but not least, thank you to all our readers who contacted us with tips and recommendations for this latest edition, including Stuart Blackburne, Paul Chapman, Phil Robinson, David Schache and Janine Watson.

A request

The authors and publisher have tried to ensure that this guide is as accurate and up to date as possible. However, things change even on these well-worn routes. If you notice any changes or omissions that should be included in the next edition of this guide, please email or write to Trailblazer (address above). You can also contact us via the Trailblazer website (trailblazer-guides.com). Those persons making a significant contribution will be rewarded with a free copy of the next edition.

Warning – walking beside water can be dangerous

Please read the notes on when to go (pp11-15) and health and safety (pp73-6). Every effort has been made by the authors and publisher to ensure that the information contained herein is as accurate and up to date as possible. However, they are unable to accept responsibility for any inconvenience, loss or injury sustained by anyone as a result of the advice and information given in this guide.

Updated information will shortly be available on: trailblazer-guides.com

Photos – Front cover & this page: London's iconic crossing point: Tower Bridge (©AU)

Previous page: Following the river path beside Wallingford Castle Meadows (©WA)

Overleaf: On a quiet stretch of the Thames Path between Sunbury and Shepperton (©IH)

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Thames Path

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THAMES HEAD – WOOLWICH – THAMES HEAD

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THIRD EDITION UPDATED BY

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Above: Father Thames mural by the US embassy, Nine Elms, Vauxhall (©AU)

This guidebook contains all the information you need to walk the Thames Path. When you're all packed and ready to go, there's detailed information to get you to and from the Thames Path and, in the route guide, detailed maps (1:20,000) and town plans to help you find your way along it. The guide also includes:

- All types of accommodation with reviews of campsites, hostels, B&Bs, pubs/inns, guesthouses and hotels
- Walking companies if you'd like an organised tour and details of luggage-transfer services if you just want your luggage carried
- Suggested itineraries in both directions for all types of walkers
- Answers to all your questions: when to go, degree of difficulty, what to pack and the approximate cost of the whole walking holiday
- Walking times in both directions on route maps; GPS waypoints
- Details of cafés, pubs, tearooms, takeaways and restaurants as well as shops and supermarkets for supplies
- Rail, bus and taxi information for towns and villages near the path
- Street maps of the main towns on or near the path
- Historical, cultural and geographical background information

THIS GUIDE AND COVID

This edition was researched during 2021-22 when England was emerging from some pretty tight restrictions. As a result, many of the hotels, cafés, pubs, restaurants, offices and tourist attractions were operating at reduced hours and were uncertain if and when they would get back to a pre-Covid level.

As restrictions continue to ease, it's reasonable to assume that places will open on additional days and hours and, what's more, other businesses will reopen though sadly it is possible some will have closed.

In this book we have noted the opening times as they were at the time of research, or as the owners of the various establishments predicted they would be by the time this was published. It will be more important than usual for walkers to check opening hours though this is less of an issue in London as there are so many options. For this reason, for places out of London, we have noted businesses that have a Facebook page as, other than calling or searching on Google, that is generally the best place to check operating days/hours.

Booking was essential for many of the tourist attractions, and some restaurants, at the time of research so this also needs to be checked.

INTRODUCTION

This book follows the Thames Path National Trail between the river's source in Gloucestershire and Woolwich Foot Tunnel in London. When the path was created, the eastern end of the trail was the Thames Barrier but in January 2022 it was officially extended by a mile to Woolwich Foot Tunnel to link with the 47-mile TPEC route (see p248).

Officially, the Thames Path is now 185.2 miles (298km) in length based on following the southern riverbank route in London. The actual distance you walk depends on which of the alternative paths you take.

The path meanders, accompanied by its watery muse, through pristine and tranquil countryside, past historic sites and buildings, via pub, lock, weir and the occasional scattering of waterfowl to a city, once the fulcrum of an empire and now the heart of modern-day England. The river, responsible for the metropolis's very existence, inspires artists and authors, provides a home for swans, geese, and water voles, reflects the silhouettes of red kites and kingfishers, provides employment, entices adventurers

**The path begins,
as the river does,
in a meadow in the
Cotswolds**



One of the many brightly painted narrowboats that cruise up and down the Thames; this one moored near Kelmscott (©HS).



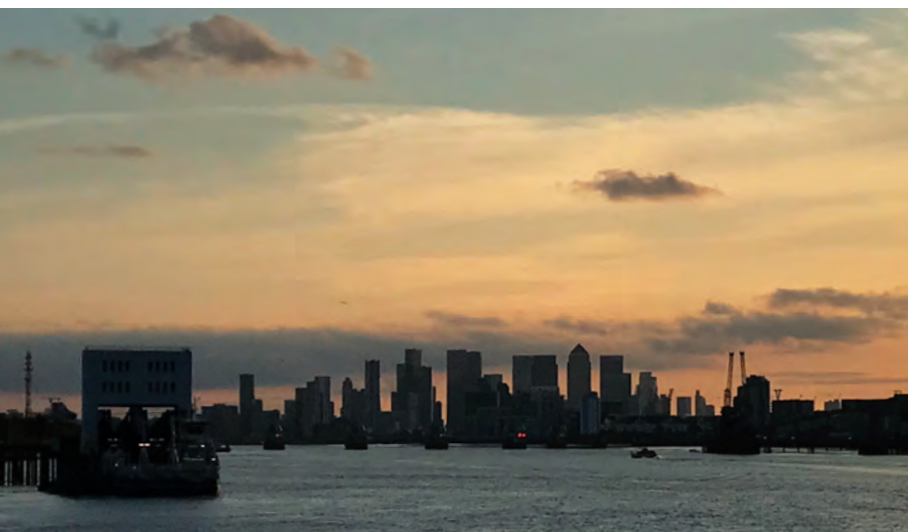
Above: Lyd Well (see p80) is the first (or last) time you see water on this path. The start of your walk and the actual source of the Thames is about a mile NW of here at a spot marked by an inscribed stone (©WA).

the city to come, and then pass Runnymede – the site of the signing of the Magna Carta over 800 years ago.

The history continues as you pass Hampton Court and eventually reach Kingston upon Thames and the start of London. Walking in London is not as blighted by sound, fury and concrete as many may imagine, as the river – and

and allows time for carefree pilgrims to meditate and think. And walking alongside it is a grand way to go for a ramble!

The path begins, as the river does, in a meadow in the Cotswolds. These early stages are lonely and wild, with the meadows and banks the domain of waterfowl and willow, while the riverbanks themselves are a collage of flowers, fishermen and farmers. As the waters deepen and spread, the settlements alongside begin to grow in both size and grandeur until, reaching Oxford, the solitude of the river slowly subsides and the trail becomes less about nature and more about history. There are venerable towns such as Lechlade, Abingdon, Wallingford and Henley as well as numerous ancient churches, abbeys and castles. Going through the ancient Goring Gap, dominated by the Chiltern Hills, you continue to Eton and Windsor, where the constant rumble of the planes overhead hint at the ominous size of



especially the route along the southern bank – remains relatively verdant, at least as far as Putney. From here as you continue eastwards the views of the Houses of Parliament and Tower Bridge are as fine as any along the Thames's green and scenic upper reaches. After central London the regenerated dockland areas of East London lure you to your journey's end and the conclusion of a most enjoyable and varied riparian ramble, quite unlike any other in Britain.

HISTORY OF THE PATH

The Thames Path is one of the 15 National Trails of England and Wales, though when the England Coast Path is completed – possibly in 2022 – there will be 16. Much of the trail follows the original towpaths along the river. Where there wasn't a towpath (because, for example, that portion of the riverbank was privately owned), either access has been negotiated with local landowners to allow you to continue along the banks, or bridges have been built to connect the trail with the opposite bank, so walkers can continue following the river wherever possible. Occasionally, where neither of these is feasible, there are diversions leading the trail temporarily away from the Thames. Indeed, the path owes its very existence to some protracted negotiations and long, hard campaigning by the River Thames Society, Ramblers Association (now Ramblers) and Countryside Commission (now Natural England).

The story began in 1984 when the then Countryside Commission published a study proving that the concept of a long-distance trail along the river was viable. This led to the official declaration of the Thames Path as a National Trail in 1987 though there was still much to do before it was officially opened – complete with the iconic National Trail acorns – in 1996. In 2021, the 25th anniversary of the path, the legal process of extending it officially to Woolwich Foot

Below: Sunset view from Woolwich, now the eastern end of the Thames Path (©AU).



Spring

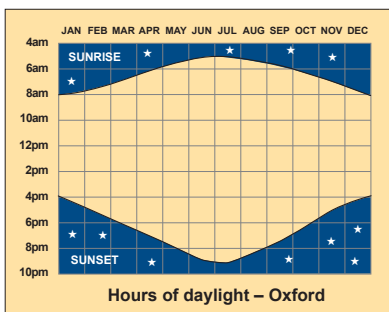
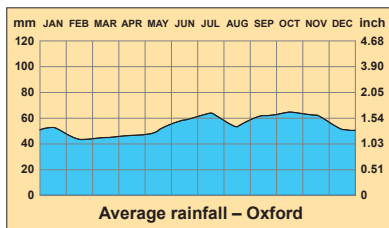
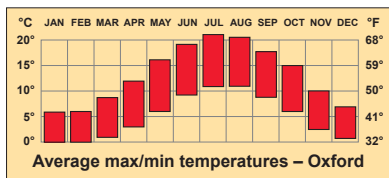
A dry patch in springtime (around the end of March to mid June) means you're in for a treat. The wild flowers are coming into bloom, lambs are skipping in the meadows and the grass is green and lush. Of course, the chances of avoiding rain completely are low but occasionally it happens and you have lovely sunny days.

Another advantage with walking earlier in the year is that there will be fewer walkers and finding accommodation is relatively easy, though do check that the hostels/B&Bs/campsites have opened. Easter – the first major holiday in the year – is the exception, for it can be very busy at this time too.

Summer

Summer, on the other hand, can be a bit *too* busy, at least in the towns and tourist centres, and over a weekend in August can be both suffocating and insufferable. Still, the chances of a prolonged period of sunshine are of course higher at this time of year than any other, the days are much longer, and all the facilities are operating. If you're flexible and want to avoid seeing too many people on the trail, avoid the school holidays, which basically means ruling out the tail end of July, all of August and the first few days of September. Alternatively, if you crave the company of other walkers, summer will provide you with the opportunity of meeting plenty, though do remember that you must book your





usually quiet and if it really does chuck it down at least it provides an excuse to linger in tearooms longer and have that extra scone. As long as you dress accordingly and take note of the safety advice given on pp73-5, walking in moderate rain is no more dangerous than walking at any other time; though do be careful, particularly on exposed sections, if the path becomes slippery or the wind picks up.

DAYLIGHT HOURS

If walking in winter, autumn or even early spring, you must take account of how far you can walk in the available light; it won't be possible to cover as many miles as you would in summer. Conversely, in the summer months there is enough available light until at least 9pm. Remember, too, that you will get a further 30-45 minutes of usable light before sunrise and after sunset depending on the weather.

THE BEST DAY AND WEEKEND WALKS

There's nothing quite like the satisfaction of having walked an entire long distance footpath from beginning to end. However, some people just don't have the time so the following offers you a 'smörgåsbord' of the best walks along the Thames, each with good public transport (see pp56-61) at the start and finish.

Day walks

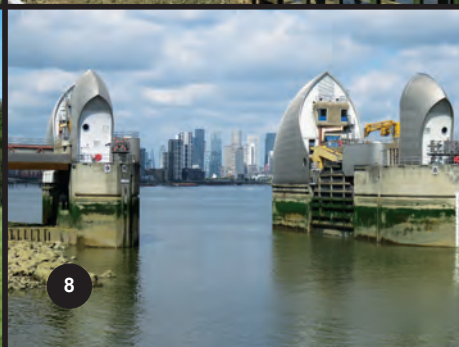
● **Newbridge to Oxford** As lonely as the Thames Path gets, this is 14 miles (22.5km) of sheer solitude, passing isolated locks and friendly riverside pubs as the Thames weaves its way to historic and magnificent Oxford; see pp104-21.

● **Abingdon to Wallingford** Laid out between two of the most attractive Thames-side towns, this 13½-mile (21.7km) stretch visits a number of other places of note including ancient Dorchester (quarter of a mile off the trail), picturesque Clifton Hampden and several locks; see pp130-41.

● **Bourne End to Windsor** This easy 11-mile (17.7km) stroll allows time to admire Cookham village as well as peer up at Windsor Castle; see pp173-85.



1: View of Isleworth from the path by Kew Gardens (©AU). 2 & 3: Chimney Meadows and Oxon Wildlife Trust's bird hide, (©WA). 4: The old (jetty) and the new (office blocks) near Thames Barrier (©AU). 5 & 6. The Magna Carta Monument and the Jurors sculpture at Runnymede (see p186, ©IH). 7: Pastoral scene below Richmond Hill (©AU). 8: The Thames Barrier (©AU).





Top: Once past Lechlade, you'll see numerous barges and other boats on the Thames (©HS).
Middle: Goring Lock (Map 30, ©WA). **Bottom:** Two barges using the lock at Brentford (©AU).



PLANNING YOUR WALK

1

Practical information for the walker

ROUTE FINDING



Your chances of getting lost on the Thames Path are slim. Along the length of the path, gates and signposts are marked with 'Thames Path National Trail' and the iconic **acorn symbol** of a National Trail; on the odd occasion the trail strays from the river these will ensure you stay on the path.

In London the route may be slightly less easy to follow but the maps in this book should help you keep to the trail, though the endless development does mean you may come across some new 'temporary' diversions; see also box on p219.

Using GPS with this book

Particularly given the above, modern Wainwrights will scoff at the idea of using GPS technology for navigation on this trail but, now built into most smartphones, it's an easily accessible if non-essential aid. In no time at all a GPS receiver with a clear view of the sky will establish your position and altitude.

The maps in the route guide include numbered waypoints; these correlate to the list on pp249-51, which gives the latitude/longitude position as well as a description. Where the path is vague, or there are several options, you'll find more waypoints. You can download the complete list of these waypoints free as a GPS-readable file (that doesn't include the text descriptions) from our website: trailblazer-guides.com.

It's also possible to buy digital mapping (see p43) to import into your phone or GPS unit, assuming that you have sufficient memory capacity, but it's not always the most reliable way of navigating and the small screen will invariably fail to put places into context or give you the 'big picture'.

Bear in mind that the vast majority of people who tackle this trail do so perfectly well without GPS.



ACCOMMODATION


There are places to stay all along the Thames Path though particularly on the eastern side. However, it is always a good idea to book your accommodation in advance (see box on p20) especially as places tend to fill up quickly on national holidays and during any major festivals and events (see p16).

Camping


Camping is a glorious way to experience the Thames; you can camp pretty much all the way between the source and Chertsey, a distance of 139 miles. That said, such a journey will take some organisation as you will need to use public transport (see pp52-61) on occasions. Alternatively, you can save yourself the hassle and spend the odd night in a hostel, pub, or B&B.

Booking is recommended for all campsites in school holidays and at other peak times but is otherwise usually not necessary.

The Itineraries section suggests routes for campers (see box p36 if walking east & p38 for west). If planning to walk with a **dog** see p28 and pp255-6.

Campsites The campsites along the Thames Path can be split into three types. Undoubtedly the best situated are those **run by the Environment Agency** ( gov.uk/river-thames-bridges-locks-and-facilities-for-boaters) though at the time of research all their sites were closed due to Covid. Most of the sites are actually hidden away on islands that are separated from the riverbanks by locks. In other words, you couldn't possibly stay any closer to the river without being in it! These sites are generally open between April and September and they are quite basic with just a toilet and water supply, though a few also have showers which either operate with a token (and extra charge) or will be included in the price. Most require you to arrive within the lock-keeper's hours (approximately 9am-5/6pm) so you can pay (cards accepted) and pick up a key which will give access to the site. Pitches (usually for up to two people and one tent) cost around £12. Part 4 of this book provides the relevant details for each site.

Camping at one of the many **pubs** en route is also an option and sometimes a cheap one (about £8-12pp) – the exact amount depending to a large degree on the facilities. On the plus side you'll be as close to the pub as it's possible to be!

However, the most prevalent sites along the path are **privately run campsites**. These can vary drastically, from the serenity of small family-run sites to huge family-orientated sites including two (Oxford & Chertsey) run by The Camping and Caravanning Club ( campingandcaravanningclub.co.uk/ukcampsites). Generally, the facilities are marvellous and most have small shops; indeed, some even have their own cafés and bars. However, some can be crowded and they aren't to everyone's taste. Some of these campsites charge per person and some per pitch but expect to pay £7-16pp.

Wild camping The Thames Path is not really suited to wild camping. If you want to camp wild you should ask permission from whoever owns the land. Finding which farmhouse owns the field you want to camp in is no easy feat and you may find yourself trudging along miles of country lanes – only to be

sometimes bunk beds or three/four single beds) for the night – and the next morning, often at a pre-arranged time if staying in a B&B, breakfast (see p22) is served to set you up for the day.

Wi-fi is available (usually free) in most accommodation. If planning to walk with a **dog** see p28 and pp255-6.

B&Bs and guesthouses B&Bs are a great British institution; they give you the opportunity to stay in a room in a family's home and you will often get a very friendly welcome, usually in the form of a cup of tea and cake/scone on your arrival. These days most rooms in B&Bs and guesthouses have **en suite** facilities, though staying in accommodation with shared facilities will save you a few quid. The shared facilities in many places are usually only a few steps from your room.

The main difference between a B&B and a guesthouse is that the latter offers evening meals and also has a sitting room (lounge) where you can go in the evenings and meet other guests.

Pubs The initial stages of the trail are not blessed with many traditional B&Bs. Fortunately numerous fantastic pubs make up for this peculiar anomaly by offering both decent accommodation and protein-replenishing breakfasts. Many are right on the river, and thus the path too. One advantage of staying in a pub is that most offer evening meals (see p23). However, they aren't always the most peaceful of places to stay, especially if your room is above the bar.

Hotels Apart from chain establishments (see opposite), many of the hotels en route tend to be upmarket, partly because they are in a wonderful location, and

BOOKING ACCOMMODATION IN ADVANCE

Booking ahead is a good idea for all types of accommodation as it guarantees a bed for the night, but also may mean you get a better rate. If you are walking alone it also means somebody is expecting you, which could prove a lifesaver if you go missing en route for some reason.

During the high season (July & August) you may need to book a few months ahead but note that many places do not accept single-night bookings in advance at peak times or, if they do, they charge more. In the winter, booking a few days or even the night before should suffice. If you are walking in the low season check that the proprietors provide an evening meal or that a local pub serves food. You may like to book through an online agency but do be aware that this may not be cheaper than booking direct and sometimes properties keep the best rooms for people who book direct; also agencies may exclude breakfast from their rates. Note that however you book you may have to pay a deposit.

Remember that even though it is possible to book chain hotels over the phone it will cost at least 10 pence per minute and you may have to pay a booking fee; you will find the best deals by booking online.

If the idea of booking all your accommodation yourself fills you with dread, you may want to consider booking a self-guided holiday (see pp25-8).

If you can't fulfil the booking do contact your host to cancel; it will save a lot of worry and allow them to provide a bed for somebody else.

out of the London area, you need to plan ahead to make sure the pub or café is open and that you'll reach it in time.

For an **evening meal** a pub is often the best place. Most on the Thames Path have large beer gardens which roll down to the water's edge and have their own place in the Thames's history, with many of them being centuries old. Hearty menus are usually on offer: most pubs have a relatively standard bar 'pub grub' menu featuring such regulars as burgers, sausages, pies and battered fish – all usually served with chips – supplemented by one or two 'specials' such as fresh fish; many establishments also have an attached *à la carte* restaurant with more elaborate meals. Most menus now include at least one vegetarian/vegan option. A large number of the pubs en route offer real ales (see box below) too.

All the towns along the river have restaurants and takeaways offering fish & chips, Indian, Chinese and Italian/pizza. At the other end of the scale, if you want to splash out on fine dining there are lots of very nice restaurants, and one or two even bask under the radiance of a Michelin star or two; you'll have to plan and book well in advance if you want to eat at these places on your trip – and it would be wise to pack a smart set of clothes too.



Buying camping supplies



There are enough supermarkets/convenience stores and shops along the Thames Path to allow self-catering campers to buy **food** regularly along the way. See pp30-5 for general location information and Part 4 for details about the relevant shops. The longest you should need to carry food is for two days on the stretch between Lechlade and Oxford (unless you divert to Standlake).






Drinking water

Filling your water bottle or pouch from the river is not recommended. Meandering its way through agricultural fields, the Thames collects heavy metals, pesticides and other chemical contaminants from the surrounding land. **Tap**

BEER AND PUBS

The two most common pub chains you'll come across on the Thames Path are those run by the **Young's** ( youngs.co.uk) and **Fuller's** ( fullers.co.uk) breweries. Real ales commonly available include **Bombardier** (4.1%) and **Young's London Gold** (4%). At Fuller's pubs, beers to sup from their core range include **London Pride** (4.1%) and the darker **London Porter** (5.4%).

The cheapest pubs you'll come across are typically those run by **Wetherspoon** ( jdwwetherspoon.com) or **Samuel Smith Brewery** ( samuelssmithsbrewery.co.uk). There's generally a great range of organic lagers, ciders and ales; the lack of any TV or music keeps the price of both food and drink to a minimum.

Other pub chains include those run by: **Arkells** ( arkells.com), **Brakspear** ( brakspear.co.uk), **Greene King** ( greeneking.co.uk), and **Nicholson's** ( nicholsonsbrewery.co.uk). A smaller brewer you may encounter is **Rebellion Beer Company/Marlow Brewery** ( rebellionbeer.co.uk), whose Rebellion range of beers are particularly popular along certain stretches of the trail. A few pubs have their own microbreweries, such as **The Red Lion** in Cricklade (Hop Kettle Brewery; see p86).

Camping

You can survive on about £20 per person (pp) if you use the cheapest campsites, never visit a pub, avoid all tourist attractions, cook all your own food from staple ingredients and generally have a pretty miserable time of it. Even then, unforeseen circumstances will probably nudge your daily budget above this figure. If you include the occasional pint and a pub meal every now and then the figure will be nearer to £30-35pp a day. And once in London you'll need to allow for the extra cost of a hostel (see p19) on at least two nights as there are no campsites.

Hostels

Assuming dorm beds are available expect to pay between £13pp (in the low season) and £35pp (peak times in London) per night. Some hostels offer private rooms, a few of which are en suite; 2-bed rooms typically cost £28-70 per night depending on the location and time of year. Rates do not include breakfast so allow for this as well as for other meals, unless you are self-catering. An amount for the extras mentioned above will need to be included in your budget.

B&Bs, guesthouses and hotels

On average, a night in a B&B will cost £30-55pp based on two people sharing a room (£65 for a single and often the room rate for single occupancy) per night.

Adding the cost of food and drink for both lunch and dinner as well as an allowance for the standard expenses mentioned above, you should reckon on an average of about £70-75pp per day, although other unexpected costs will likely mean you may need to budget slightly more. See also p78.

Itineraries

To help you plan your walk see the **colour maps** (at the end of the book); these show the walk divided into stages as in the route guide. The **Village and Town Facilities table** (p30-2 for walking east and pp33-5 if going west) provides a summary of the services en route. See p16 for the best **day and weekend walks** if you don't have time to do the whole walk in one go.

SUGGESTED ITINERARIES

The itineraries (for both directions) on pp36-9 are based on different accommodation types (camping/hostel and B&B-style), each divided into three options depending on your walking speed. They are only suggestions so feel free to adapt them. Don't forget to **add on your travelling time** before and after the walk. If using public transport a **map and service details** are on pp56-61.

Once you have an idea of your approach, turn to Part 4 for detailed information on accommodation, places to eat and other services in each village and town on the route. Also in Part 4 you will find summaries of the route to accompany the detailed trail maps.

(cont'd on p40)

WHICH DIRECTION?

The route descriptions and trail maps are tailored to suit walking in either direction as there are advantages both ways. Following the Thames Path from west to east – ie downstream from source to sea – you would witness the river's growth and you'll also be walking against the flow of the river; it's often said, too, that by walking east you'll have the weather (the prevailing wind and the sun) on your back for most of the time. But many folk – those three men in that boat for example (see pp49-50) – have tackled the river by leaving London and following the waters westward, in search of the source. And the advantage that way is that you finish your walk surrounded by rural scenery.

What to take

What – and how much – you should take are very personal choices. For those who are new to long-distance walking the suggestions below will help you reach a balance of comfort, safety and minimal weight.

KEEP YOUR LUGGAGE LIGHT

When packing your rucksack it cannot be emphasised enough that the less weight you are carrying the more you will enjoy your walk. If you pack a lot of unnecessary items you will probably find yourself gradually discarding them as you go. If you are in doubt about taking something, be ruthless and leave it at home.

Rucksack

If you are staying in B&Bs or hostels you will need a medium-sized pack of about 40-60 litres' capacity; just big enough to hold several changes of clothes, a waterproof jacket, a few toiletries, a water bottle/pouch and a packed lunch. Hostellers may require a few extras such as a towel and food for cooking. However, if you have quick-drying clothes and wash them as you go a 20- or 30-litre pack would suffice.

Those camping are going to need a rucksack big enough to carry a tent, sleeping bag, towel, cooking equipment and food; a pack of about 70 litres should be ample in this case.

If you are walking with an organised tour (see pp25-8) you will be able to pack the bulk of your gear into a suitcase or holdall and carry just a daypack with you on the trail itself, containing a spare jumper, waterproof jacket, water bottle/pouch, this guidebook and lunch, though the fully equipped walker may also want to bring a camera, map, walking pole(s), binoculars and first-aid kit.

It's advisable to pack everything inside a large plastic bag for protection against the rain; there are few things worse than discovering at the end of the

Getting to and from the Thames Path

Travelling to the start of the Thames Path by public transport makes sense. There's no need to worry about the safety of your temporarily abandoned vehicle while you walk along the trail, there are no logistical headaches about how to return to your car afterwards and it's one of the biggest steps you can take towards minimising your ecological footprint. Quite apart from that, you'll feel your holiday has begun the moment you step out of your front door rather than having to wait until you've slammed the car door behind you.

□ GETTING TO BRITAIN

● **By air** The best international gateway to Britain for the Thames Path is London with its five airports: **Heathrow** (the main airport), Gatwick, Stansted, Luton and **London City**. Both TfL Rail (📄 tfl.gov.uk/modes/tfl-rail; daily 2/hr) and Heathrow Express (📄 heathrowexpress.com; daily 4/hr) provide train services from Heathrow to London Paddington). However, to reach the western end of the path you could take First's Railair 1 (RA1; 📄 firstbus.co.uk/railair) bus service (1/hr; approx 60 mins) from Heathrow to Reading railway station and pick up a train to Kemble there.

Some airlines fly to **Bristol** (📄 bristolairport.co.uk) and from there you can take a train to Swindon and then change to a train to Kemble.

London City Airport is the most convenient for the eastern end of the path, particularly for reaching Woolwich, as from the airport you can take the Docklands Light Railway to Woolwich Arsenal DLR station.

See box on pp56-7 for details about train services in Britain.

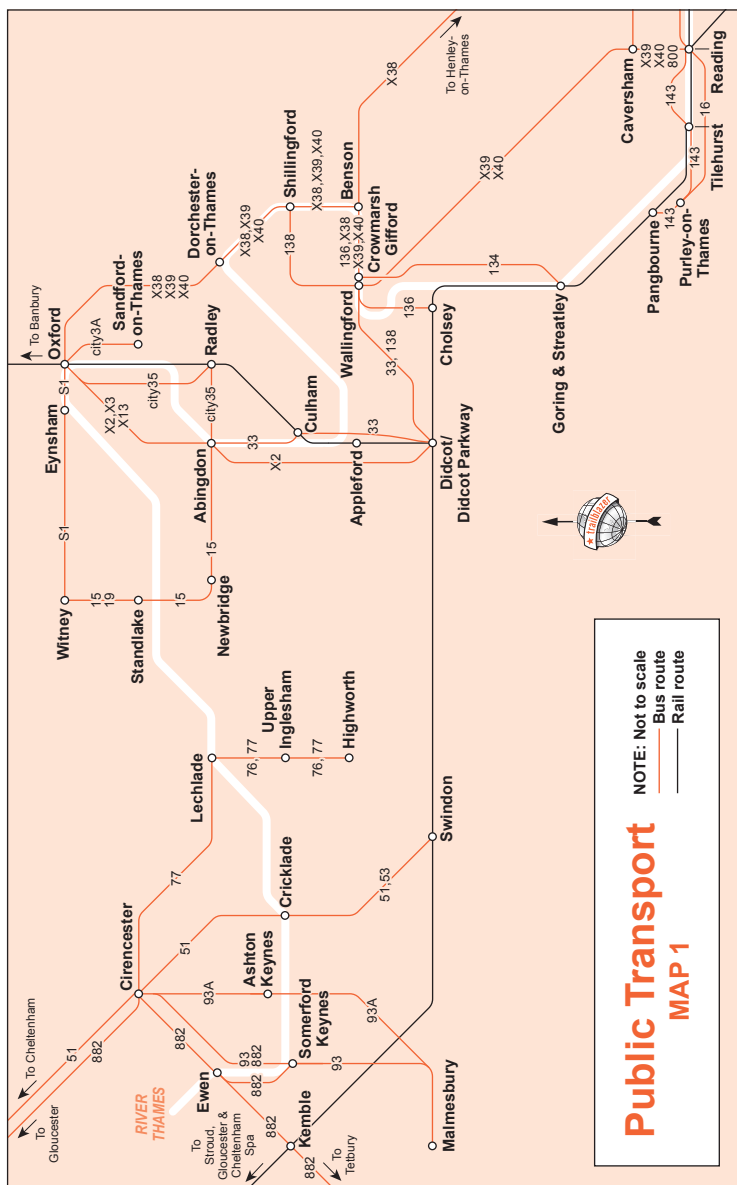
● **From Europe by train** Eurostar (📄 eurostar.com) operates the high-speed passenger service via the Channel Tunnel between Paris/Brussels/Amsterdam and London. The terminal in London is St Pancras International. St Pancras station provides connections to the London Underground (tube) and all other main railway stations in London. Trains to many Thames Path destinations leave from both Paddington and Waterloo stations; see box on pp56-7.

For more information about rail services from the Continent to Britain contact your national rail operator, or Railteam (📄 railteam.eu).

● **From Europe by coach** Eurolines (📄 eurolines.com) have a wide network of long-distance bus services connecting over 500 destinations in 25 European countries to London's Victoria Coach Station. Visit their website for details of services from your country.

● **From Europe by ferry (with or without a car)** There are numerous ferries plying routes between the major North Sea ports as well as across the Irish Sea and the English Channel. A useful website for information about the routes and the ferry operators is 📄 directferries.com.

● **From Europe by car** Eurotunnel (📄 eurotunnel.com) operates 'le shuttle' (the shuttle) train service for vehicles via the Channel Tunnel between Calais and Folkestone taking just 35 minutes. Remember, though, that if you drive into the centre of London you're liable to pay a congestion charge.



800	AB	Reading to High Wycombe via Caversham, Shiplake, Lower Shiplake, Henley-on-Thames & Marlow , daily 1-2/hr
850	AB	Reading to High Wycombe via Sonning , Twyford, Wargrave, Henley-on-Thames & Marlow , Mon-Sat 1/hr
127	CB	Maidenhead to Reading via Twyford & Sonning , Sat 4/day plus 1/day to Twyford
128	TV	Wokingham to Reading via Twyford & Sonning , Mon-Fri 8/day, Sat 6/day
129	TV	Twyford to Reading via Sonning , Mon-Fri 5/day
238	CB	Maidenhead to Cookham Dean via Hurley-on-Thames & Bisham , Tue & Thur 3/day
239	CB	Maidenhead to Hurley-on-Thames , Mon-Fri 5/day (on Mon, Wed & Fri 3/day continue to Henley), Maidenhead to Henley via Hurley , Mon-Sat 2/day
36	CrI	High Wycombe to Bourne End , Mon-Sat 2/hr
37/37A	AB	High Wycombe to Maidenhead via Bourne End & Cookham , Mon-Sat 1/hr, Sun 1/hr to Bourne End
8	CB	Maidenhead to Boulter's Lock , Mon-Sat 11/day
15	CB	Maidenhead to Slough via Dorney, Eton Wick & Eton , Mon-Sat 4/day plus to Eton Wick 1/day
16/16A	CB	Maidenhead to Windsor via Bray & Dedworth , daily approx 1/hr
8/8A	FB	Slough to Heathrow Airport Terminal 5 via Windsor, Old Windsor, Egham & Staines , Mon-Fri 2/hr, Sat & Sun 1/hr
458	DB	Staines to Kingston via Laleham, Shepperton & Walton-on-Thames , daily 1/hr plus Mon-Sat 1/hr to Walton-on-Thames
446	WB	Woking to Staines via Chertsey , Mon-Sat 1/hr plus Mon-Fri 1/hr to Chertsey
456	FA	Woking to Staines via West Byfleet, Addlestone & Chertsey , Mon-Sat 1/hr
555	DB	Heathrow Airport to Whiteley Village via Ashford, Sunbury, Shepperton, Walton-on-Thames & Hersham , daily 1/hr
557	DB	Addlestone to Sunbury via Chertsey, Shepperton & Upper Halliford , Mon-Sat 1/hr
461	AS	Addlestone to Kingston via Walton-on-Thames, East Molesey, Hampton Court & Hampton Wick , Mon-Sat 2/hr
411	LU	West Molesey to Kingston via East Molesey & Hampton Court , Mon-Sat 3-4/hr, Sun 1-2/hr

Operator contact details: (some operators are part of a group so have the same phone number)

PC (Pulham's Coaches; ☎ 01451-820369, ☐ pulhamscoaches.com); **CS** (Coachstyle; ☎ 01249-782224, ☐ www.coachstyle.ltd.uk);
SC (Stagecoach; ☎ 01865-772250, ☐ stagecoachbus.com); **OB** (Oxford Bus Company; ☎ 01865-785400, ☐ city.oxfordbus.co.uk);
TT (Thames Travel; ☎ 01865-785400, ☐ www.thames-travel.co.uk); **GF** (Going Forward Buses; ☎ 07484 605888, ☐ goingforwardbuses.com); **RB** (Reading Buses; ☎ 0118-959 4000, ☐ reading-buses.co.uk); **AB** (Arriva in Beds & Bucks; ☎ 0344 800 4411, ☐ arrivabus.co.uk); **CB** (Courtney Buses; ☎ 0118-973 3486, ☐ courtneybuses.com); **TV** (Thames Valley Buses; ☎ 0118-973 3486, ☐ thamesvalleybuses.com); **CrI** (Carousel; ☎ 01494-450151, ☐ carousellbuses.co.uk); **FB** (First Bus; firstbus.co.uk/berkshire-thames-valley); **WB** (White Bus; ☎ 01344-882612, ☐ whitebus.co.uk); **FA** (Falcon Buses; ☎ 01932-787752, ☐ falconbuses.co.uk); **DB** (Diamond Buses; ☎ 01784-425621, ☐ www.diamondbuses.com/south-east); **LU** (London United; ☎ 020-8400 6665, ☐ rapdevlondon.com).


2 THE ENVIRONMENT & NATURE

Flora and fauna

The following is not in any way a comprehensive guide – if it were, you would not have room for anything else in your rucksack – but merely a brief rundown of the more commonly seen flora and fauna on the trail, together with some of the rarer and more spectacular species.

BIRDS

A common occurrence – especially while walking in the upper Thames – is the sudden scattering of waterfowl, shocked into action by your unexpected appearance as you make your way along the bank. Whilst birds are almost omnipresent on the river it's also worth keeping your eyes on the trees which line the shore as well as on the skies above as there are plenty to be spotted there too.

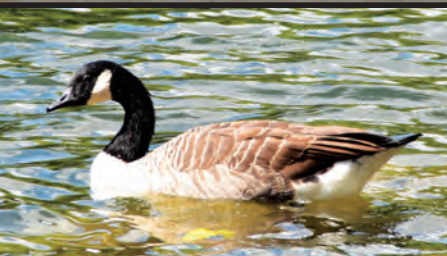
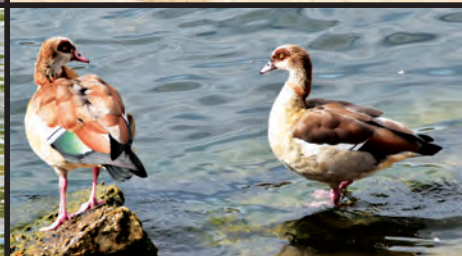
Worth visiting as you pass is the new **bird hide** at Chimney Meadows Nature Reserve (see p97;  bbowt.org.uk/nature-reserves/chimney-meadows); it is 10 metres from the path.

Waterfowl

Most of the waterfowl happily mingle and they are generally quite easy to identify. Needing no introduction, it's highly likely that the first bird you'll see gracefully gliding on the water is a **mute swan** (*Cygnus olor*, see Swan Upping on p16). Be wary of getting too close, especially if they have cygnets in tow. If you do invade their territory you'll soon discover that they're not actually mute at all as they'll warn you off with a threatening hiss. Often to be seen socialising with the swans are **mallard** (*Anas platyrhynchos*) – say the word 'duck' and it's a mallard most people immediately envisage with their shimmering green heads – and **tufted duck** (*Aythya fuligula*). The commonest diving duck, the tuft on the back of their heads (which gives them their name), along with their grey black-tipped bill, makes them easily identifiable. Tufted ducks are especially prevalent in winter.

Never ones to shy away from any form of riverborne congregation are **Canada geese** (*Branta canadensis*). Introduced to the estates of wealthy landowners approximately 300 years ago, the population has exploded since and they're now the most common goose in





Above, clockwise from top left: Pochard (©BT), mallard (©HS), Egyptian geese (©HS), family of greylag geese (©WA), Canada goose (©HS), curlew (©BT).



Himalayan Balsam
Impatiens glandulifera



© Jane Thomas

Red Admiral butterfly (*Vanessa atalanta*) on
Hemp Agrimony (*Eupatorium cannabinum*)



Common Vetch
Vicia sativa



Herb-Robert
Geranium robertianum



Red Campion
Silene dioica



Lousewort
Pedicularis sylvatica



Meadow Cranesbill
Geranium pratense



Common Dog Violet
Viola riviniana



Common Knapweed
Centaurea nigra



Common Centaury
Centaureum erythraea



Old Man's Beard
Clematis vitalba

Peacock
Inachis io



Small Tortoiseshell
Aglais urticae



Common Blue
Polyommatus icarus



Large Garden/Cabbage White
Pieris brassicae



Small Heath
Coenonympha pamphilus



Red
Admiral
Vanessa atalanta



Small Garden/Cabbage White
Pieris rapae



Painted Lady
Cynthia cadui



Small Copper
Lycaena phlaeas



Meadow
Brown
Maniola jurtina



Brimstone
Gonepteryx rhamni



3 MINIMUM IMPACT & OUTDOOR SAFETY

ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT

A walking holiday in itself is an environmentally friendly approach to tourism. The following are some ideas on how you can go a few steps further in helping to minimise your impact on the environment while walking the Thames Path.

Use public transport whenever possible

Public transport along the Thames Path is readily available (though it can be a little infrequent at times along the upper reaches). Public transport is always preferable to using private cars as it benefits everyone: visitors, locals and the environment.

Never leave litter

‘Pack it in, pack it out’. Leaving litter is antisocial so carry a degradable plastic bag for all your rubbish, organic or otherwise (you could even pick up other people’s too) and pop it in the first bin you see. Or better still, reduce the amount of litter you take with you by getting rid of packaging in advance.

● **Is it OK if it’s biodegradable?** Not really. Apple cores, banana skins, orange peel and the like are unsightly, encourage flies, ants and wasps and ruin a picnic spot for others; they can also take months to decompose. In high-use areas such as the Thames Path either bury them or take them away with you.

Buy local

Look and ask for local produce to buy and eat. Not only does this cut down on the amount of pollution and congestion that the transportation of food creates (so-called ‘food miles’), it also ensures that you are supporting local farmers and producers.

Erosion

● **Stay on the main trail** The effect of your footsteps may seem minuscule but when they’re multiplied by several thousand walkers each year they become rather more significant. Avoid taking shortcuts, widening the trail or taking more than one path, especially across meadows and ploughed fields.

● **Consider walking out of season** Maximum disturbance by walkers coincides with the time of year when nature wants to do most of



Top safety tips include:

- Do not swim alone
- Wear a bright coloured hat (preferably red) so that you can easily be seen
- If possible, ask local advice first before plunging in
- Acclimatise to cold water gradually
- Have warm clothes available for when you get out
- Make sure you know your exit point
- Always step in; whether you can see the bottom or not, do not jump in.

Avoidance of hazards

With good planning and preparation most hazards can be avoided. This information is just as important for those out on a day walk as for those walking the entire Thames Path. Always make sure you have suitable **clothing** (see pp41-2) to keep you warm and dry, whatever the conditions when you set off, and a change of inner clothes too. Carrying plenty of food and water is vital too.

Dealing with an accident

- Use basic first aid to treat the injury to the best of your ability.
- Try to attract the attention of anybody else who may be in the area. The **international distress (emergency) signal** is six blasts on a whistle, or six flashes with a torch; both are best done when you think someone might see the light flashes or hear the whistle blasts.
- If possible leave someone with the casualty while others go to get help. If there are only two people, you have a dilemma. If you decide to get help leave all spare clothing and food with the casualty.
- In an emergency dial ☎ 999 (or the EU standard number ☎ 112); report the position of the casualty and their condition. However, before you call work out exactly where you are; on the app What3words (what3words.com) the world is divided into three-metre squares and each has its own three-word geocode so it makes it easy to tell people where you are.

WEATHER FORECASTS

The weather along the Thames Path is as unpredictable as the rest of England and you'd be well advised to always prepare for the worst. Along the river's upper reaches, and especially during winter, **flooding** can be an issue. Before you set off for the day, look at the Government's flood information page (flood-warning-information.service.gov.uk) should you have concerns about the area in which you plan to go walking. Flooding along the tidal Thames in London is an issue and it would be worth consulting tidetimes.org.uk before you set out, although diversion signs are in place anywhere where flooding occurs regularly.

Most hotels, some B&Bs and tourist information centres will have a summary of the **weather forecast** somewhere. Alternatively you can get a forecast either through bbc.co.uk/weather, or metoffice.gov.uk/public/weather.

Pay close attention to the weather forecast and alter your plans for the day accordingly. That said, even if the forecast is for a fine sunny day, this is the British Isles and you should always pack some wet-weather gear.

ROUTE GUIDE & MAPS

4

Using this guide

This route guide has been divided according to logical start and stop points. However, these are not intended to be strict daily stages since people walk at different speeds and have varying interests. The maps can be used to plan how far to walk each day but note that these are walking times only (see box below). With so much accommodation available you can pretty much divide your walk into as few or as many days as you want. See pp36-9 for some suggested itineraries.

To provide further help, practical information is provided on the trail maps, including walking times, places to stay and eat, public toilets as well as shops and supermarkets. Further service details are given in the text under the entry for each settlement. For a condensed overview of this information see the **village and town facilities table** on pp30-2 (walking eastward) or pp33-5 (walking west).

For cumulative **distance charts** see pp252-4; and for **overview maps** and **map profiles** see the colour pages at the end of the book.

TRAIL MAPS [see key map inside cover; symbols key p251]

Direction

(See p40 for a discussion of the pros and cons of either walking west to east or east to west.) In the text that follows, look for the **E→** symbol for a route summary for those walking **from Thames Head to Woolwich (Foot Tunnel)** and the **W←** symbol with shaded text for those walking **from Woolwich to Thames Head**.

Scale and walking times

The trail maps are drawn to a scale of 1:20,000 (1cm = 200m; 3 1/8 inches = 1 mile). Walking times are given along the side of each map and the arrow shows the direction to which the time refers. Black triangles indicate the points between which the times have been taken.

The time bars are a tool and are not there to judge your walking ability. There are so many variables that affect walking speed, from

IMPORTANT NOTE – WALKING TIMES

Unless otherwise specified, **all times in this book refer only to the time spent walking**. You should add 20-30% to allow for rests, photos, checking the map, drinking water etc, not to mention time simply to stop and stare. When planning the day's hike count on 5-7 hours' actual walking.



the weather conditions to how many beers you drank the previous evening. After the first hour or two of walking you will be able to see how your speed relates to the timings on the maps.

Up or down?

The trail is shown as a **dashed red line** on all the maps. An arrow across the trail indicates the gradient; two arrows show that it's steep. If, for example, you are walking from A (at 80m) to B (at 200m) and the trail between the two is short and steep it would be shown thus: A — — — >> — — — B. However, as there is only one gradient of note on this entire trail you will only see this symbol (two arrows) on one map. Note that the arrow points uphill, the opposite of what OS maps use on steep roads. Reversed arrow heads indicate a downward gradient.

Other features


Features are marked on the map when of possible interest or pertinent to navigation. In order to avoid cluttering the maps not all features have been marked each time they occur. The numbered **GPS waypoints** refer to the list on pp249-51.

ACCOMMODATION

Apart from larger towns (and especially for the London area) where some selection of places has been necessary, almost every place to stay that is on, or very close to, the actual trail is marked on the map. Details of each place are given in the accompanying text.

The number of **rooms** of each type is stated, ie: **S** = Single, **T** = Twin room (with two single beds), **D** = Double room (with one bed), **Tr** = Triple room and **Qd** = Quad. Note that most of the triple/quad rooms have a double bed and one/two single beds (or bunk beds); thus for a group of three or four, two people would have to share the double bed, but it also means the room can be used as a double or twin. See also pp19-20.

Rates quoted for B&B-style accommodation are **per person (pp) based on two people sharing a room** for a one-night stay; rates are usually discounted for longer stays. Where a **single room (sgl)** is available the rate for that is quoted if different from the rate per person. The rate for **single occupancy (sgl occ)** of a double/twin may be higher, and the per person rate for three/four sharing a triple/quad may be lower. Unless specified, rates are for bed and breakfast. At some places the only option is a **room rate**; this will be the same whether one or two people (or more if permissible) use the room. See p22 for more on rates.

Unless otherwise stated you can assume that the accommodation described has **en suite facilities** in all its rooms. The text only mentions where places have **private**, or **shared, facilities** (in either case this may be a bathroom or shower room just outside the bedroom). In the text  signifies that at least one **bath** is available – either in an en suite room or in a separate bathroom – for those who prefer a relaxed soak at the end of the day.

Also noted is whether the premises have **wi-fi** (WI-FI) and if **dogs** (🐕 – see also pp255-6) are welcome in at least one room (often places have only one room suitable for dogs), or at campsites, subject to prior arrangement.

The route guide



If you're doing this walk in an **easterly direction** (from west to east starting at Thames Head and ending in Woolwich) follow the maps in an ascending order (from 1 to 65) and the text as below, looking for the **E→ symbol** on overview text.



If you're walking in a **westerly direction** (Woolwich to Thames Head) follow the maps in a descending order (from 65 to 1) and the text with a **red background**, looking for the **←W symbol** on overview text. **Turn to p246 to start your walk in this direction.**

KEMBLE

[Map 1, p80]

The source of the River Thames (see box below) – and thus the start/end of the Thames Path itself – is approximately 1¾ miles (2.8km; 35-45 mins) from the village of Kemble; for directions between Kemble and the source see p81. We have also marked on the map the route from The Thames Head Inn (see Map 1).

The site of 7th-century Anglo-Saxon cemeteries and, before them, where the Romans buried their dead too, Kemble's name has evolved from *Kemele*, meaning boundary. The village sits at a junction of several historical transport routes including the Thames, the Roman Fosse Way (which links Exeter with Bath and Lincoln) and the

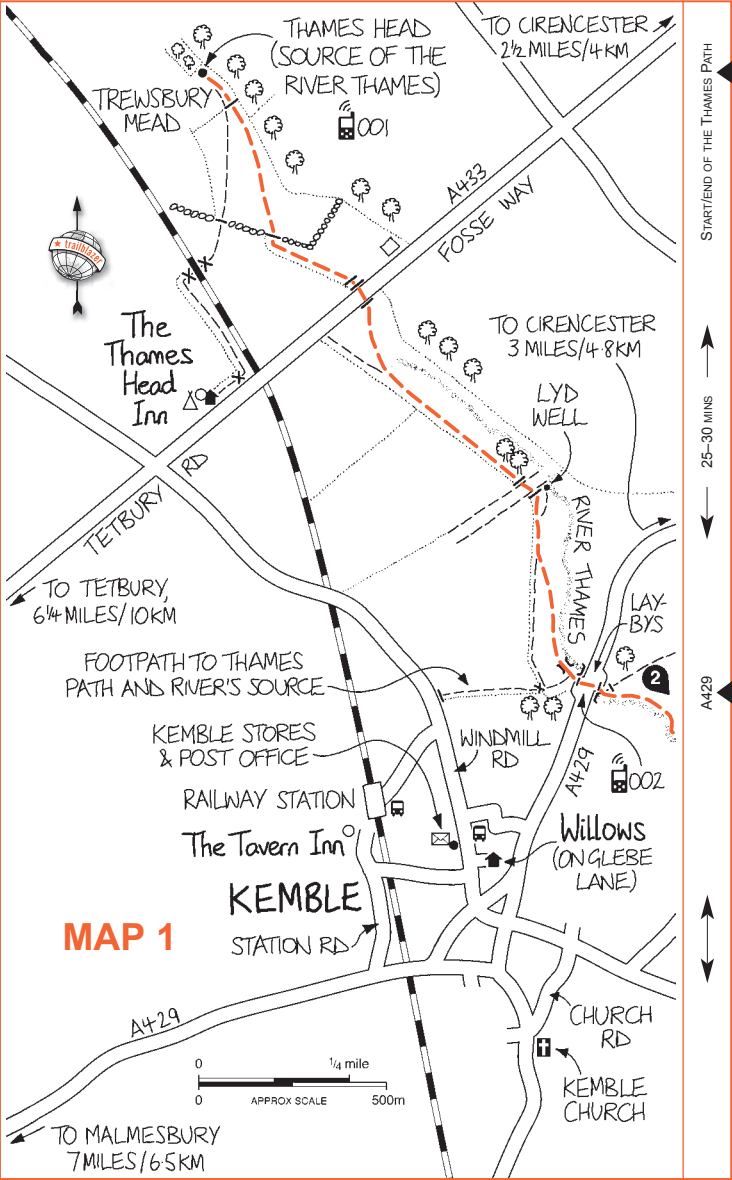
Great Western Railway. A local politician, Robert Gordon, was so affronted by the arrival of the railway at Kemble that he insisted that the new line be hidden from view when it passed in front of his house. A tunnel was thus built over the track to conceal it from his view. The main attraction, the **church** on its southern edge, has a Norman door and tower dating from 1250.

On Windmill Rd, **Kemble Stores** (Mon-Sat 8.30am-1pm & 2-6pm, Sun 9am-noon) provides the essentials; the **post office** (Mon, Tue, Thur & Fri 9am-1pm & 2-5pm, Wed & Sat 9am-1pm) is part of the shop and cash can be withdrawn depending on what debit card you have (see p24).

□ THE SOURCE OF THE RIVER THAMES

Approximately one mile north from Kemble the source of the river Thames is hidden deep in a Gloucestershire field known as **Trewsbury Mead**. Lying 105 metres (356ft) above sea level, the river's origin is marked by an **inscribed stone** next to an ancient ash tree. Thought to be two centuries old, the tree once had the initials 'TH' (Thames Head) carved in its bark; letters some beady-eyed folk still claim to be able to see. Despite photos from the 1960s showing young boys canoeing beneath the tree's boughs you will most likely see no water. Fear not though; deep in the earth below, the river's journey *is* beginning – as yours may be, though at ground level.

There is some dispute over the source of the River Thames, an alternative origin being Seven Springs at the head of the River Churn. Joining the Thames at Cricklade (Map 5) this would make the Thames 12 miles longer and 91 metres further above sea level. Historically, however, the Churn has always borne its own name so it is considered to be merely a tributary rather than the river itself. The honour of being the official source of the Thames thus goes to Thames Head.



For **B&B** in the village, *Willows* (☎ 01285-770667; 1T en suite shower/1D private bathroom; ☹; WI-FI) is tucked away down a quiet cul-de-sac at 2 Glebe Lane. The rate is £35-40pp (sgl occ from £65).

Between the village and the river source, there's no more appropriate place for Thames Path trekkers to stay and eat than *The Thames Head Inn* (☎ 01285-770259, 📧 thamesheadinn.co.uk; fb; 3D/1T; ☹; WI-FI; 🐾). **B&B** costs from £45pp (sgl occ £60); room-only rates are also available. **Camping** (from £20 per pitch) is an option and shower/toilet facilities are available. **Food** is served daily (Mon-Sat 11am-9.30pm, Sun from noon), Bob's bubble & squeak (£12.95) being particularly popular, and the homemade steak, kidney & ale pie (£14.50) is terrific.

The other option is *The Tavern Inn* (☎ 01285-770216, 📧 arkells.com/pub; fb; 🐾;

WI-FI), situated next to the railway station, an inviting family-friendly pub with a lovely garden. **Food** (Tue-Sat noon-2pm & 5.30-8pm, Sun noon-3pm) is available: at lunch you'll get a sandwich or baguette and chips for £7.50, and plenty more to choose from.

Kemble is a stop on GWR's (Paddington–Cheltenham Spa; see box on pp56-7) **train** service and on **bus** service No 882 (see pp58-61).

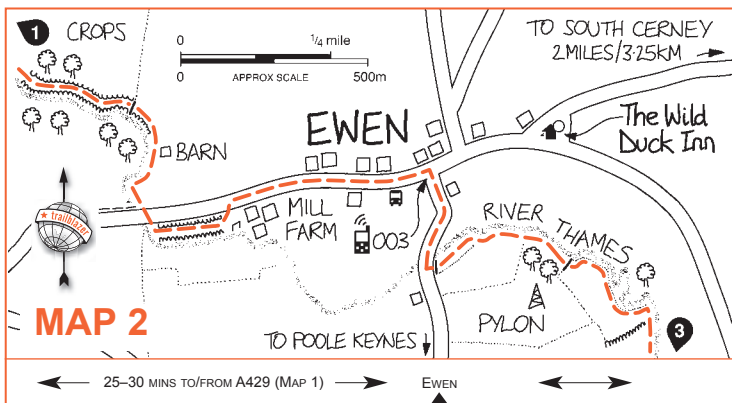
A few **taxi firms** operate in the Kemble area, including Reliance Taxis (☎ 07787-790644, 📧 reliancecaxiscirences.co.uk). Cirencester is a 10-minute drive away, but they can arrange to pick you up either at the Thames Head pub, or at the layby on the A429, just outside the town; these are both good places to have friends pick you up or drop you off, as the A433 (Fosse Way) is a narrow road with fast traffic.

E → THAMES HEAD TO CRICKLADE

[MAPS 1-5]

Your first day on the Thames Path is a tranquil **12¼-mile (19.7km, 4¼-5hrs)** stroll from Thames Head (see box on p79), through meadows and farmland to the village of Cricklade. From **Kemble** you will have to do some walking just to get to the start of the trail, and if you're starting from the railway station it's easiest to walk along the National Trail to the source, then turn around and walk back towards the village again!

The official stage begins with scarcely any water to be seen (unless it's raining, of course), but it is not long before you pass **Lyd Well** – the spring from



Exchange Shopping Centre and a Sainsbury's (Mon-Sat 7am-10pm, Sun noon-6pm) on Werter Rd. **ATMs** and **banks** are dotted along the High St.

Transport

Services to **Putney railway station**, on the High St, are operated by SWR (see box pp56-7). East Putney **tube station**, on Upper Richmond Rd, is on the District line.

The RB6 **river bus** (see p55) calls at the pier on the west side of the bridge.

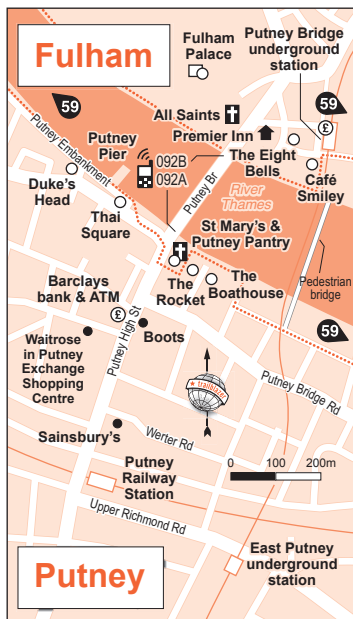
Where to stay, eat and drink

The best option for **accommodation** is the Premier Inn on the Fulham side of the river; see p21. For hostel accommodation **YHA London Earl's Court** (see p220 & p222) is a short journey on the tube (District line) from either East Putney or Putney Bridge stations.

The riverbank, Putney High St and many of its tributary side streets are lined with high-street chain cafés, pubs and restaurants. If seeking breakfast or other sustenance, **Putney Pantry** (☎ 020-8789 1137, putneypantry.com; Mon-Fri 10am-3pm, Sat to 5pm, Sun 11.30am-5pm; wi-fi; 🐾) is ideal. Part of St Mary's Church, here you'll find all-day breakfasts (from £6), as well as lunches (including sandwiches from £6.50) and delicious home-made cakes/tarts.

There are also several **pubs**. West of the bridge is **Duke's Head** (☎ 020-8788 2552, dukesheadputney.com; food Mon-Sat noon-10pm, Sun to 9pm; wi-fi; 🐾 bar only). Owned by Young's Brewery, it's a classy establishment with decent food (smoked haddock & salmon fish cake £16.50). There's also an outdoor seating area, perfect to enjoy a pint at the end of a long day's walk with your goal for the day – Putney Bridge – in your sights.

Past St Mary's Church is **The Rocket** (☎ 020-8780 8970, jdweatherspoon.com; food daily 8am-10pm; wi-fi). Wetherspoon's Putney branch offers a large



selection of ales and lagers and the usual lengthy, cheap no-frills menu, with mains for £8-11. Nearby, **The Boathouse** (☎ 020-8789 0476, boathouseputney.co.uk; food summer Mon-Sat 10am-9.30pm, Sun noon-8.30pm; wi-fi; 🐾 in bar) is rightly proud of its seafood; the menu is seasonal but may include Scottish mussels & fries (£18) and battered cod & triple-cooked chips £16. Options also include at least one vegan dish.

Should English pub grub be giving you a bellyache there is a branch of **Thai Square** (☎ 020-8780 1811, thaisq.com/restaurants; Mon-Fri noon-3pm & 6-11pm, Sat noon-11.30pm, Sun to 10.30pm; wi-fi) overlooking the river from Putney Embankment. Jungle curry (from £12.95) and all things Thai are available.

W ← Putney Bridge to Kingston upon Thames: southern bank

Route shown on following maps – **Map 59** p220, **Map 58** p214, **Map 57** p212, **Map 56** p210, **Map 55** p206, **Map 54** p205, **Map 53** p201

The RB1 **river bus** (see p55) service stops at Greenwich pier.

Where to stay and eat

Right by Greenwich station is a branch of **Novotel** (London Greenwich; ☎ 020-7660 0682), part of the Accor chain (see p21; 📧 all.accor.com); also part of this chain is the **ibis** (London Greenwich; ☎ 020-8305 1177), on Greenwich High Rd.

Pub food can be found adjacent to the Visitor Centre at **The Old Brewery** (☎ 020-3437 2222, 📧 oldbrewerygreenwich.com; wi-fi; 🍷; food Mon-Sat 10am-9pm, Sun to 8.30pm), with lovely outside seating and a menu consisting of sandwiches (Mon-Fri noon-3pm; from £7.50) and mains such as pork sausages with carrot & potato mash, cumin spiced tomato salsa, crispy shallots & gravy (£13.50).

A short way back from the river is **The Gipsy Moth** (☎ 020-8858 0786, 📧 thegipsymothgreenwich.co.uk; fb; food daily noon-10pm; wi-fi; 🍷). There's outdoor seating; the extensive menu includes a pale ale & steak pie with spring greens and chips or mash (£15) to chomp on as you watch Greenwich Mean Time go by.

There are also two decent pubs further along the path and away from the tourist masses. **Trafalgar Tavern** (Map 63; ☎ 020-3887 9886, 📧 trafalgartavern.co.uk; food Mon-Sat noon-10pm, Sun to 9pm; wi-fi; 🍷 in bar only) has a large menu including Trafalgar whitebait (£7.50), although the whitebait no longer come fresh from the river as they did in days gone by; while **The Cutty Sark** (Map 63; ☎ 020-8858 3146, 📧 cuttysarkse10.co.uk; food Mon-Sat 11am-10pm, Sun noon-9pm; wi-fi; 🍷 in bar) also



serves whitebait (£6.50) and has an interesting menu with options such as small plates (from £4.50), sharers and main dishes (both from £13). The pub has an outdoor area by the river. Chicken lovers will find a *Nando's*

(☎ 020-8269 1770, ☐ nandos.co.uk; daily 11.30am-10pm; WI-FI) by the entrance to the foot tunnel; while nearby is a *Zizzi* (☎ 020-3581 9819, ☐ zizzi.co.uk; daily 11.30am-10pm) serving Italian food.

E → GREENWICH TO WOOLWICH

[MAPS 63-65]

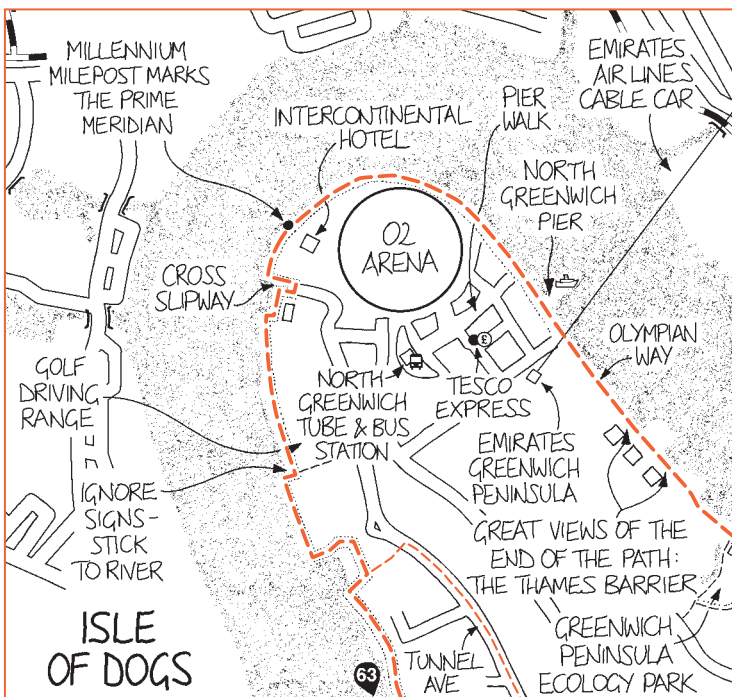
And so, via weir, lock and bridge, on footpath, bridleway and road, you've made it to this your final stage of the Thames Path. This stretch is **5½ miles (8.6km, 1¾-2¼hrs)** and the official path is only on the southern side of the river. The route goes round the North Greenwich peninsula and on to the Thames Barrier. Once at Woolwich Foot Tunnel your riverside odyssey will be at an end.

NORTH GREENWICH (PENINSULA)

[Map 64]

Built in 1999 to house an exhibition celebrating the start of the third millennium

(and at that time called the Millennium Dome) **The O2** (☐ theo2.co.uk) was opened as an indoor events arena in 2007.



House (☎ 020-3437 0900, 📍 theguardhousewoolwich.co.uk; food Mon-Sat 10am-10pm, Sun to 9pm; WI-FI; 🐕) is, as its name suggests, the original guard house building and even if you eat outside it is worth looking around inside. The menu may include caramelised apricot and sage sausages with crispy hispi cabbage & nduja potatoes (£14.25).

Right by the Uber Thames Clipper dock is **Con Gusto** (☎ 020-8465 7452, 📍 congusto.co.uk; 🍴; Wed-Sat 6-9.30pm), an Italian restaurant with a limited menu. The pasta is home-made and the menu may include tagliatelle with slow-cooked beef ragù & peas (£13); takeaway available.

Transport

There is a myriad of transport options. By **train**, Southeastern's (see box on pp56-7) services call at both Woolwich Dockyard and Woolwich Arsenal stations. Woolwich Arsenal is also a stop on Thameslink's services and the DLR line to London City

Airport (or Bank/Tower Gateway). The Elizabeth Line (Woolwich station; see box on p52) may finally open in mid 2022.

To reach the northern bank walkers are recommended to use **Woolwich Foot Tunnel** (open 24hrs a day; lifts and steps) as **Woolwich Ferry** (Mon-Sat 6.10am-8pm 4-8/hr; Sun 11.30am-7.30pm 3-4/hr; free) is primarily for vehicles and anyhow services were suspended early in 2022 due to engineering works.

East of the foot tunnel is **Woolwich (Royal Arsenal) pier**. Unfortunately, during the week there are only **river bus** services (see p55) in the early morning and then late afternoon and evening, though at the weekend there is a shuttle service (2/hr) to North Greenwich where you can pick up the main services. Despite these limitations this is the most enjoyable way to arrive or leave – you will get a very different perspective on what you have just walked or are about to walk.

📍 THE THAMES PATH ENGLAND COAST PATH



The Thames Path used to have a 10-mile (16km) extension path (identified by a sailing barge icon rather than the acorn used for national trails) to Crayford Ness, which linked up with the London Loop. However, on 12th January 2022 this became Thames Path England Coast Path (TPECP); the whole route is from Woolwich Foot Tunnel east to Grain (Isle of Grain) on the Hoo Peninsula, in all 47 miles (76km). Thus the approximate overall distance from the source (at Thames Head) to the sea, via the southern bank in London, is 232 miles/374km. Some signs for the TPECP have gone up but those for the extension path have not yet been removed.

The TPECP mostly goes along the coast though there are a few inland sections; the route is obvious and it is flat, easy walking. However, flooding can be an issue. The path passes near mudflats, saltmarshes and grazing marshes so there is a variety of wildlife; highlights include Swanscombe Peninsula (an SSSI) and RSPB Cliffe Pools (open all the time; free). Birds that may be spotted include: redshank, avocet, knot, dunlin, sandpiper, oystercatcher, marsh harrier, egret, wheatear and little grebe.



















Services are limited, unless you are happy to walk inland a bit, so taking a packed lunch and plenty of water is recommended.

OS Explorer 162 (Greenwich & Gravesend) & 163 (Gravesend & Rochester) maps and OS Landranger 177 (East London) & 178 (Thames Estuary) cover the area.

Convenient railway stations (apart from those in Woolwich) include Erith, Slade Green, Greenhithe and Gravesend; services are operated by Southeastern. At the Isle of Grain the only option is a bus; Arriva Kent & Surrey's No 191 (Mon-Sat 9/day, Sun 4/day) service operates between Grain and Chatham via Rochester railway station. Rochester is a stop on both Southeastern and Thameslink services.

MAP REF	GPS WAYPOINT	DESCRIPTION
Northern bank		
55 086b	N51 26.374 W0 19.953	Radnor Gardens
55 087b	N51 26.735 W0 19.763	Wharf Lane meets river
56 088b	N51 27.395 W0 18.504	Richmond Bridge
57 089b	N51 29.264 W0 17.263	Kew Bridge
57 090b	N51 28.482 W0 16.041	Chiswick Bridge
58 091b	N51 29.364 W0 13.779	Hammersmith Bridge
59 092b	N51 28.088 W0 12.743	Putney Bridge
59 093b	N51 27.947 W0 11.325	Wandsworth Bridge
59 094b	N51 28.991 W0 10.040	Albert Bridge
60 095b	N51 29.680 W0 07.486	Lambeth Bridge
61 096b	N51 30.582 W0 07.092	Waterloo Bridge
61 097b	N51 30.397 W0 04.462	Tower Bridge
62 098b	N51 30.345 W0 01.703	Canary Wharf pier
63 099b	N51 29.207 W0 00.561	Greenwich Foot Tunnel
Southern bank		
64 100	N51 29.690 E0 02.221	Thames Barrier
65 101	N51 29.666 E0 03.778	Woolwich Foot Tunnel

Map key

 Where to stay	 Library/bookstore	 Building
 Where to eat and drink	 Internet	 Other
 Campsite	 Museum/gallery	 Car park
 Post Office	 Church/cathedral	 Bus station/stop
 Bank/ATM	 Telephone	 Rail line & station
 Tourist Information	 Public toilet	 Park

 Thames Path	 Stile and fence	 Hedge
 Other path	 Gate and fence	 Trees/woodland
 4 x 4 track	 Bridge	 Rough grassland
 Tarmac road	 Stone wall	 Lock
 Steps	 Stream	 GPS marker
 Slope/ Steep slope	 River	 41 Map continuation

APPENDIX C: TAKING A DOG

TAKING DOGS ALONG THE PATH

Many are the rewards that await those prepared to make the extra effort required to bring their best friend along the trail. You shouldn't underestimate the amount of work involved, though. Indeed, just about every decision you make will be influenced by the fact that you've got a dog: how you plan to travel to the start of the trail, where you're going to stay, how far you're going to walk each day, where you're going to rest and where you're going to eat in the evening etc.

If you're also sure your dog can cope with (and will enjoy) walking 10 miles or more a day for several days in a row, you need to start preparing accordingly. Extra thought also needs to go into your itinerary. The best starting point is to study the village and town facilities tables on pp30-5 (and the advice below), and plan where to stop and where to buy food.

Looking after your dog

To begin with, you need to make sure that your own dog is fully **inoculated** against the usual doggy illnesses, and also up to date with regard to **worm pills** (eg Drontal) and **flea preventatives** such as Frontline – they are, after all, following in the pawprints of many a dog before them, some of whom may well have left fleas or other parasites on the trail that now lie in wait for their next meal to arrive. **Pet insurance** is also a very good idea; if you've already got insurance, do check that it will cover a trip such as this.

On the subject of looking after your dog's health, perhaps the most important implement you can take with you is the **plastic tick remover**, available from vets for a couple of quid. These removers, while fiddly, help you to remove the tick safely (ie without leaving its head behind buried under the dog's skin).

Being in unfamiliar territory also makes it more likely that you and your dog could become separated. For this reason, make sure your dog has a **tag with your contact details on** (a mobile phone number would be best if you are carrying one with you); the fact that all dogs now have to be **microchipped** provides further security.

When to keep your dog on a lead

- **When crossing farmland**, particularly in the lambing season (Mar-May) when your dog can scare the sheep, causing them to lose their young. Farmers are allowed by law to shoot at and kill any dogs that they consider are worrying their sheep. During lambing, most farmers would prefer it if you didn't bring your dog at all.

The exception is if your dog is being attacked by cows. Pretty much every year there are deaths in the UK caused by walkers being trampled as they tried to rescue their dogs from the attentions of cattle. The advice in this instance is to let go of the lead, head speedily to a position of safety (usually the other side of the field gate or stile) and, once there, call your dog to you.

- **In the presence of waterfowl** Ducks, swans and geese will not appreciate the approaches of your inquisitive hound.

- **Around ground-nesting birds** It's important to keep your dog under control when crossing an area where certain species of birds nest on the ground.

Most dogs love foraging around in the woods but make sure you have permission to do so; some woods are used as 'nurseries' for game birds and dogs are allowed through them only if they are on a lead.

- **At all locks** There's nearly always a sign at the start and end of every lock telling you to keep your dog on a lead; even if there isn't, assume you have to – it's only sensible.

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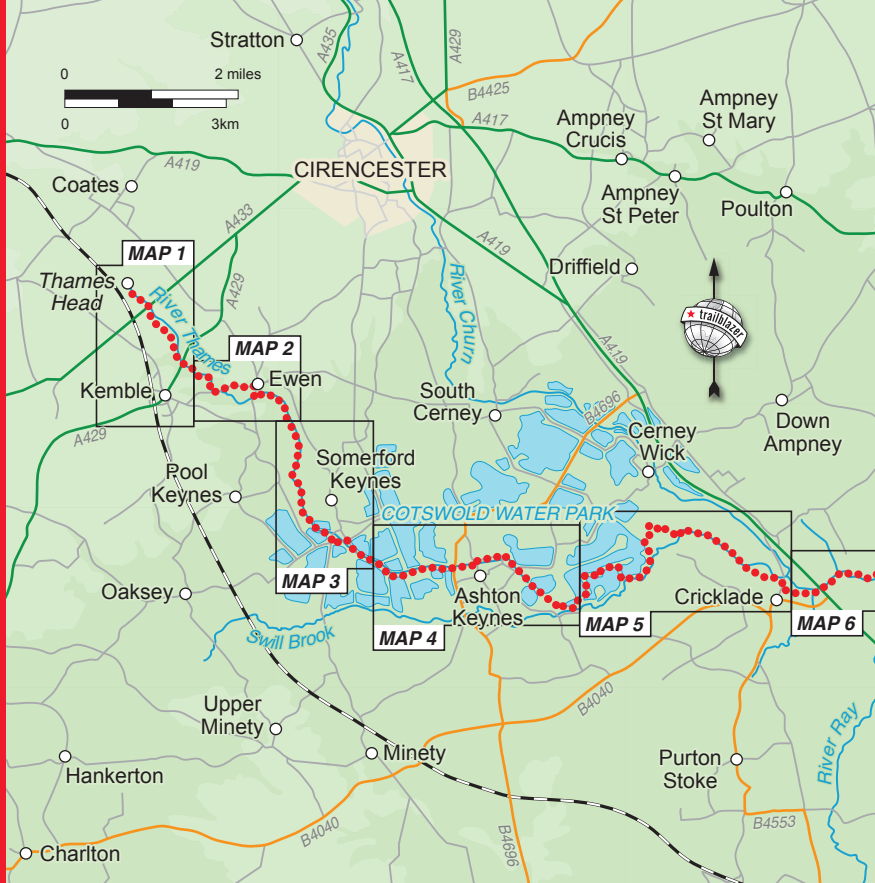
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**Thames
Head**

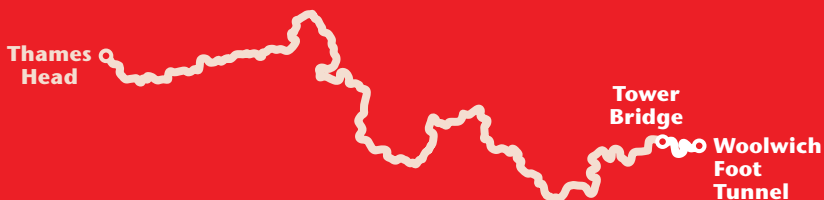
Cricklade

**Woolwich
Foot
Tunnel**

Maps 1 ↔ 5, Thames Head ↔ Cricklade

12¼ miles/19.7km – 4¼-5hrs

NOTE: Add 20-30% to these times to allow for stops



Maps 61 ↔ 65

Tower Bridge ↔ Greenwich

6¾ miles/11km – 2¼-3hrs via northern bank

5¾ miles/9.2km – 2-2½hrs via southern bank

Greenwich ↔ Woolwich Foot Tunnel

5½ miles/8.6km – 1¾-2¼hrs

NOTE: Add 20-30% to these times to allow for stops



3
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