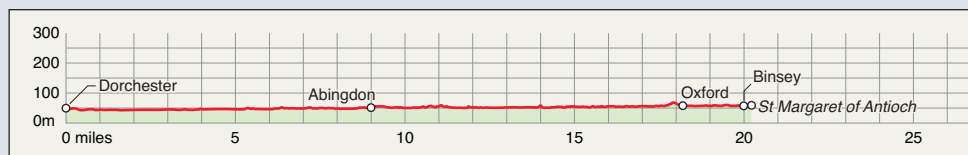


PRACTICAL INFORMATION



- **Terrain** The well-maintained Thames Path can be muddy in winter
- **Difficulty** Easy
- **Directions & GPS*** 009.pdf, 009.gpx, 009.kml at <https://trailblazer-guides.com/press>

* See p10-11 for more information on downloads

ROUTE OVERVIEW

20.6 miles (33.2km)

Following the route of the Thames almost all the way means very little map-reading and plenty of time to just enjoy the walking, away from the usual busy approaches towards the 'dreaming spires' of Oxford.

Dorchester to Abingdon

9.2 miles (14.9km)

- **Time** 3hrs 15mins actual walking time
- **Total ascent** 170m/556ft
- **Map** OS Explorer 170 *Vale of White Horse*

From Dorchester the route picks up the Thames Path, very well waymarked with its acorn signs, and follows it all the way to Abingdon. Being a riverside walk, the route is almost completely flat, and passes Clifton Hampden (3.5 miles) and Culham Lock (3.3 miles), reaching Abingdon in a further 2.4 miles.



Abingdon to Oxford and Binsey

11.4 miles (18.3km)

- **Time** 3hrs 50mins actual walking time
- **Total ascent** 209m/685ft
- **Map** OS Explorer 170 *Vale of White Horse*; 180 *Oxford*

You follow the Thames Path again today, walking via Sandford Lock (5.3 miles) and Iffley Lock (1.7 miles), reaching Christ Church, Oxford in a further 1.7 miles. The route leaves the Thames Path as you go through the city, but picks it up again when you return to the riverbank on the other side of town, finally leaving it at Fiddler's Island, in a further 1.8 miles, for the last 0.9 mile across meadows to Binsey.

Day walk options

● **By public transport** To reach Dorchester-on-Thames, take a train to Didcot Parkway then a bus or taxi. For Abingdon, travel by bus or taxi from either Didcot Parkway or Oxford.

- **Taxi option** Parkway Taxis (☎ 01235-603016, pwtdidcot.co.uk)

Where to eat or stay along the way

● **Dorchester on Thames** Stay in *The George* (☎ 01865-340404, historicinnz.co.uk/dorchester-on-thames, High St), built in 1495 and one of the oldest coaching inns in the country. Pack a **picnic lunch** from the Co-op (☎ 01865-340038, 43 High St; 7am-9pm) and eat it on the riverbank.

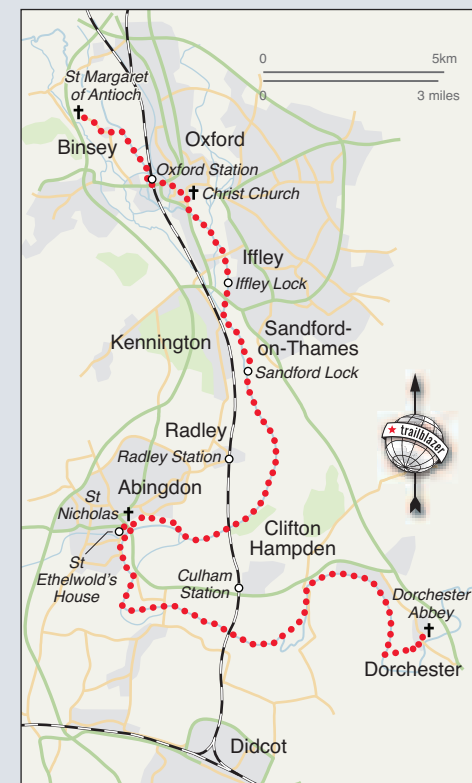
● **Clifton Hampden** If not picnicking, stop off for a **pub lunch** at the *Barley Mow* (☎ 01865-407847, chefandbrewer.com; food daily noon-9pm, Clifton Hampden Bridge).

● **Abingdon** Stay at the perfect pilgrim resting place of *St Ethelwold's House* (☎ 01235-555486, ethelwoldhouse.com, 30 East St Helen Street), a spiritual centre and B&B on the banks of the Thames. There is a wide choice of places to eat in the town.

● **Between Abingdon & Oxford** Enjoy a **pub lunch** by the Thames at either *The King's Arms, Sandford Lock* (☎ 01865-777095, chefandbrewer.com; food noon-9pm) or the *Isis Farmhouse, Iffley Lock*

(☎ 01865-243854, theisisfarmhouse.co.uk; food noon-9pm, closed Tue).

● **Oxford** Very wide selection of places to stay and eat.



PILGRIMAGE HIGHLIGHTS

- Visit **Dorchester Abbey** (dorchester-abbey.org.uk, open 8am-6pm, to dusk in winter) with its tomb of St Birinus, the Jesse Tree window and other treasures.
- Explore Abingdon's **Abbey Gardens** and surviving monastery outbuildings.
- Visit the shrine of St Frideswide at **Christ Church Oxford** (chch.ox.ac.uk/plan-your-visit; advance booking required).
- Complete your pilgrimage at the **Holy Well, St Margaret of Antioch** (osneybenefice.org.uk/church/st-margaret-antioch-binsey) in Binsey.

Saints' feast days: St Ethelwold 1 August;

St Birinus 4 September CofE, 3 December Roman Catholic;

St Edmund 16 October; St Frideswide, 19 October (Oxford pilgrimage held close to it).

			Walk 9: Dorchester to Oxford and Binsey
Distance from start	Distance from last direction	OS references	Direction
0	0	SU 57899 94196	Walk south from Dorchester Abbey, cross Henley Rd and bear right to walk down Bridge End up to the junction with Watling Lane.
330yds/300m	330yds/300m	SU 57873 93902	Turn right into Watling Lane and continue along until it begins to bend round to the right. Look out for the footpath signed on the left.
550yds/500m	220yds/200m	SU 57669 93951	Take the footpath signed on the left, a narrow route passing between gardens and then over rough pasture towards the Thames.
880yds/800m	330yds/300m	SU 57619 93678	At T-junction of paths, take footpath on right, running alongside an earth rampart called Dyke Hills, and follow it when it bears left between fields, up to the field corner.
0.9mile/1.4km	660yds/600m	SU 57016 93632	At Y junction of paths, take right fork towards the sluices.
1mile/1.6km	220yds/200m	SU 56835 93651	Take the footbridge over the river, turn right on the Thames Path and continue alongside the river for 2.5 miles to Clifton Hampden Bridge.
3.5miles/5.7km	2.5 miles/4.1km	SU 54757 95370	At Clifton Hampden bridge, turn right to cross to north bank of Thames. <i>If you plan to have lunch at the Barley Mow, turn left at this point. The pub is 100yds up High St, on the right.</i> To continue, cross Clifton Hampden bridge then turn left to follow the Thames Path, with the river now on your left. Stay on the Thames Path past Clifton Lock and under the railway line up to Culham Lock.
6.9miles/11.1km	3.3miles/5.4km	SU 54757 95370	At Culham Lock, cross Tolgate Rd and keep to Thames Path.
8miles/13km	1.2miles/1.9km	SU 50075 95689	At Culham Bridge, which you reach on the outskirts of Abingdon, watch for a Thames Path sign on your left, keeping close to the riverbank rather than bearing right towards the A415. The path joins a tarmacked route through a park as you approach the town.

9miles/14.5km	0.9miles/1.5km	SU 49969 96843	When you reach the main A415 road into Abingdon, cross left over Abingdon Bridge, following Bridge St up to the Town Square.
9.2miles/14.8km	330yds/300m	SU 49816 97067 SU 49870 97085	Reach the junction with High St and Market Place. Abingdon Town Square is ahead of you. St Nicholas's Church is on your right. <i>If you are overnighing at St Ethelwold's House, turn left into Market Place, which leads to East Saint Helen St. St Ethelwold's House is 200yds down, on your left.</i> To continue, walk to the right of St Nicholas Church, pass beneath abbey gateway and bear right into Abbey Close.
9.3miles/14.9km	110yds/100m		The former domestic abbey buildings are on your left.
9.4miles/15km	110yds/100m	SU 50112 97092	At the far end of the car park, take the footbridge on your right to cross Abbey Stream and enter Abbey Gardens. Bear left immediately after the bridge to follow the tarmacked path alongside the river towards the weir.
9.7miles/15.6km	660yds/600m	SU 50508 97221	Just before the weir, take the footbridge on your left, crossing Abbey Stream, then turn right along the Thames Path and continue to follow it as it winds along with the river, under a railway line and past Radley College boathouse until just before Sandford Lock.
14.4miles/23.2km	4.7miles/7.6km	SP 53032 01181	Shortly before Sandford Lock, follow the Thames Path sign and bear right on to island.
14.5miles/23.4km	220yds/200m	SP 53091 01311	Reach Sandford Lock. <i>For the King's Arms turn right and cross the lock.</i> Keep straight on to continue on the walk, over two more bridges and off the island, back onto the riverbank. Continue along as the path goes under another railway line and over a footbridge, then under the A423 to Iffley Lock.
16.2miles/26.1km	1.7miles/2.7km	SP 52547 03710	Reach Iffley Lock.

16.4miles/26.4km	330yds/300m		<i>Isis Farmhouse, another possible lunch point, is on your left.</i> Continue along the Thames Path which goes under the B4495 towards Oxford. After just over a mile, you will reach Oxford city centre and Folly Bridge over the river.
17.6miles/28.4km	1.2miles/2km	SP 51442 05507	When you reach Folly Bridge, take the ramp up to the road, St Aldate's, and turn right to cross the river. On the far side continue straight ahead along St Aldgate's to Christ Church.
18miles/28.9km	550yds/500m	SP 51442 05507	Reach Christ Church, Oxford. Turn left into the gardens for the ticket hall. To continue, walk back to St Aldate's, cross over and turn left into Brewer St.
18miles/29.1km	220yds/200m	SP 51226 05954	At the end of Brewer St, turn right into St Ebbes St.
18.1miles/29.2km	110yds/100m		Turn left into New Rd, continue into Park End St and through St Frideswide's Square and pass the railway station.
18.2miles/30.1km	990yds/900m	SP 50325 06233	Just past the station, before Osney Bridge, turn right onto the Thames Path.
18.9miles/30.5km	440yds/400m	SP 50354 06564	Take the footbridge left onto Fiddler's Island and continue to the footbridge at the end.
19.6miles/31.6km	0.7mile/1.1km	SP 49768 07482	Take the footbridge left to leave Fiddler's Island, then turn right on the riverbank and continue up to Medley Sailing Club.
19.7miles/31.8km	220yds/200m	SP 49644 07667	Just after Medley Sailing Club turn left, away from the river and off the Thames Path, to follow un-signed track to Binsey.
20.1miles/32.3km	550yds/500m	SP 49242 07614	Where the track meets a lane, turn right. In a few yards, a signpost indicates that The Perch pub is to your right. Turn left here to follow the lane for St Margaret's church, and the Holy Well.
20.6miles/33.2km	990yds/900m	SP 48564 08058	Arrive at St Margaret's, Binsey.