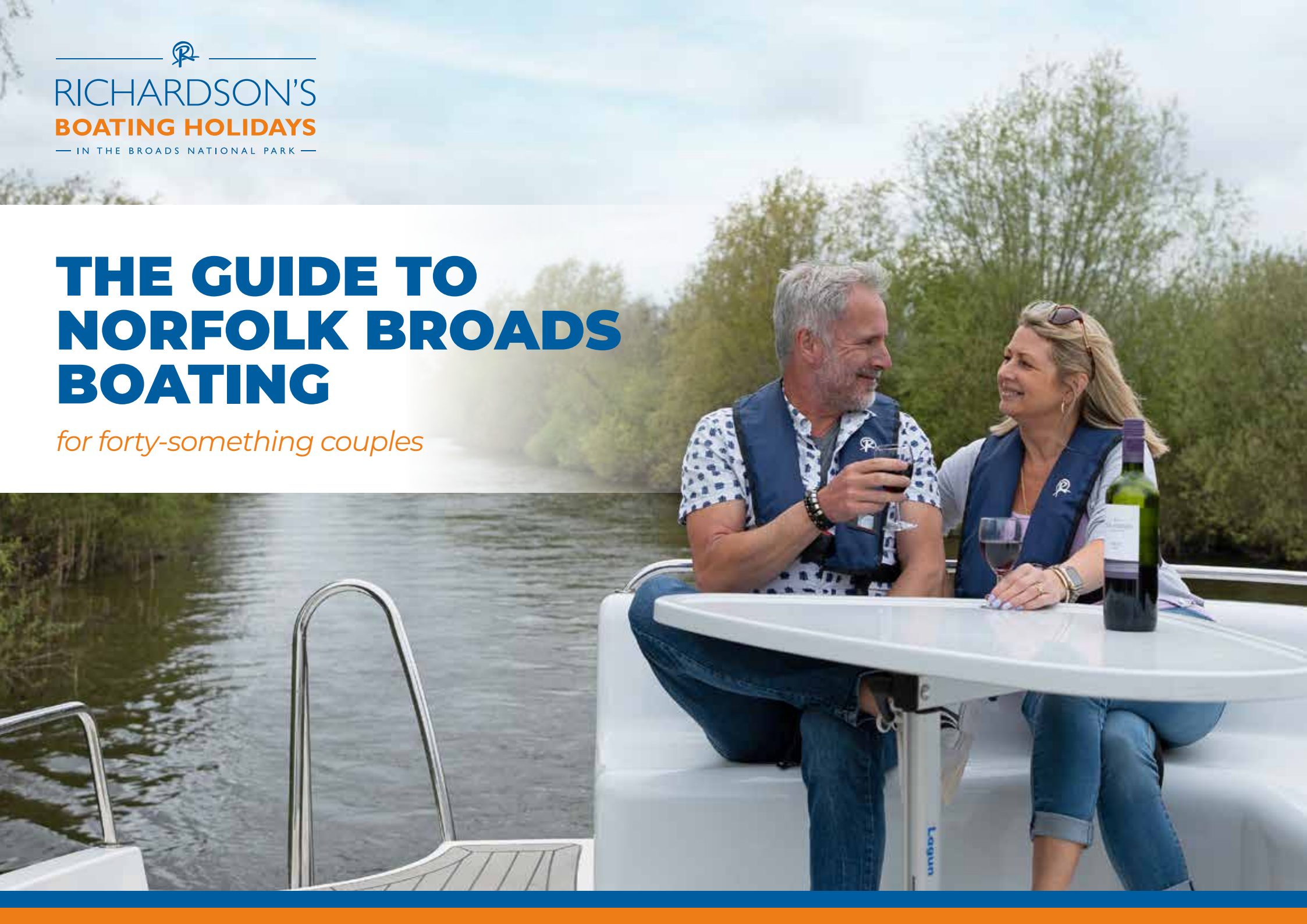
















RICHARDSON'S  
**BOATING HOLIDAYS**  
— IN THE BROADS NATIONAL PARK —

# THE GUIDE TO NORFOLK BROADS BOATING

*for forty-something couples*



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# INTRODUCTION

**A boating experience for two on the Broads is a different kind of holiday. And if you've never been before, you've probably got a lot of questions. But why should you be interested in a boating holiday in first place? Here are a few reasons...**

## **1. Boating is intimate**

Whether it's for a few days or a couple of weeks, holidaying on a Broads cruiser is a great way to spend time together. You can get away from the hassles and stresses of the modern world, and enjoy a personal space that's just for the two of you.

This is a holiday that's all about

getting cosy, creating quality time and working as a team without the pressures of day-to-day life.

## **2. It's about exploring**

There's a freedom to boating that you don't get with many other holidays. You can become explorers of wide open spaces, soak up culture and history and take in amazing views of one of Britain's most beautiful environments.

Boating is about simple pleasures: the wind in your hair, the sun on your back and discovering something new around every corner.

## **3. Go at your own pace**

Boating means you can create your

own adventure together. But there's no rush. No urgency. You can explore the area in your own time. You can go wherever you want to go. So the freedom and adventure that the Broads offers can be explored at your own leisurely pace.

That means that while boating can be an active experience, there's plenty of time to relax.

## **4. Creating memories**

When you stay still, days can blur into one another. Not on the Broads. On a boating holiday you're mobile and independent, and every day creates new experiences to get nostalgic about in years to come.

What memories will you be creating, exactly? Well, that's up to you, and what you do. As you'll see, the things you're interested in will lead to your own bespoke trip.

## **5. Broad range of options**

There's so much to do on a boating holiday that you could take a Broads trip many times and always discover new places and faces.

There are points of interest for walkers, foodies, ale fans, nature lovers, wildlife enthusiasts and history buffs. And that's just skimming the surface! This book will help you discover a full range of options to see and do on your Broads holiday.



# TOP 5 HIGHLIGHTS

This book is designed to provide you with ideas and suggestions of things you'll enjoy doing together on a Broads boating holiday. Later on we'll explore some types of these experiences in more detail, but here are some recommended highlights for your trip.

## 1. The boating experience

Part of the attraction of a Broads holiday is the experience of boating itself. On a Broads boat you can independently explore more than 125 miles of lock-free rivers.

It's an intimate, leisurely way to spend time. No external pressures, demands or commitments; just the

simple pleasure of cruising downriver on your own private adventure.

## 2. Shopping and beaches

When it comes to shops, you'll find lots of boutique craft stores on the Broads. And in Norwich, you'll be able to stroll the city and visit two great malls - Chapelfield and Castle Mall. If smaller shops are more your thing, you could explore Norwich Lanes, the Royal Arcade or the city's central outdoor market.

If you fancy swapping the city for the sand, you can reach the Norfolk coast via the Broads. You could even soak up some sun at Great Yarmouth and visit Pleasurewood Hills Theme Park.

## 3. Wildlife and walking

The Broads are teeming with wildlife, from fish, birds and butterflies to dragonflies, snakes and otters. For any wildlife enthusiast - especially bird watchers - the region has lots to offer.

When you want to exercise your legs, the Broads has plenty to offer walkers. There are lots of nature reserves, including nature trails.

## 4. Visiting historical sites

There's plenty to experience on the Broads for history buffs. The region provides a link to our past - even its formation tells us how people lived and worked centuries ago.

Heritage fans will find castle ruins,

old churches, Victorian windmills and even Norman cathedrals and castles.

In total, there's more than 1,000 years of human and natural history to discover on the Broads - you will find one trip simply isn't enough!

## 5. Enjoying local food and drink

One of the greatest pleasures of Broads boating is stopping by a riverside pub and enjoying some traditional classics, such as fish and chips or a great big carvery.

You'll also find plenty of local award-winning ales on the Broads; the region is a gateway to a number of microbreweries, some of which operate in their own pubs.

# THE BASICS OF BOATING

**Many people are put off the idea of taking a boating holiday. Why? Because the prospect of operating and living on a Broads cruiser seems daunting. But it shouldn't be! Here are some basics to help you feel more confident about approaching a Broads experience.**

## **You don't need experience**

If you've never set foot on a boat, it's not a problem. You don't need to be a seasoned sailor to enjoy a Broads holiday. The principles of boating are easy to pick up. You'll know your bow from your stern in no time, and soon you'll be all set for a fantastic holiday.

## **Anyone can drive a boat**

All you need is some basic coordination, spacial awareness and a little common sense. And you don't even have to figure it all out for yourself; when you pick up your cruiser from the boatyard, a seasoned Broads expert will talk you through a thorough Trial Run.

This basic hands-on tutorial explains the fundamentals of how the boat works, and how to drive it.

## **The river rules are simple**

During your Trial Run you'll be advised how to operate the boat in relation to conditions and other boaters. It's a lot less challenging

than driving a car, and without river locks to worry about normal cruising will be plain sailing.

Things that seem more complicated, like approaching bridges and other boats, will all be explained to you.

## **Mooring isn't complicated**

For some people the thought of 'parking' the boat can be the most stressful. But just with driving, in your Trial Run you'll learn all about how to manoeuvre the boat into a mooring spot and tie simple knots to lock yourself in place. This all gets easier with practice. It's fine to do it slowly, just always do it *safely*.

## **You won't be running on empty**

Unlike static holiday properties or your own home, boats don't effectively have unlimited supplies of fuel, gas and water. But that's nothing to worry about.

A typical boat will be fitted with enough gas for your holiday, and you might just need to top up your water every day or two. And if you run out of food and drink, there's probably a shop (or pub!) nearby.

## **See how easy it is**

Watch our instructional video by visiting the first timers' section on our website at [richardsonsboatingholidays.co.uk/first-timers](http://richardsonsboatingholidays.co.uk/first-timers)



# PUBS AND RESTAURANTS

**An enjoyable break on the Broads could easily consist of nothing more than some leisurely boating and regular stop-offs at many of the fine pubs that line the waterways. Here's a selection that come highly recommended.**

**Great for traditional food**

If you're in the mood for simple but tasty pub dishes, then the Broads has you covered. You could try Upton's highly-praised The White Horse or The Kings Arms in Ludham. The Lion Inn at Thurne and The Surlingham Ferry are also highly thought of by boaters, as is The Fur and Feather in Woodbastwick, which has a lovely beer garden.

**Brilliant for river views**

Watching the world go by is one of the purest pleasures of the Broads. The Maltsters at Ranworth is a loved all-rounder, The Swan Inn at Horning is full of timbered charm and offers great views across the Bure River, while the Reedham Ferry Inn is a great place to see passing boats. The Bridge Restaurant at Wroxham and the Bure River Cottage in Horning are particular favourites for lovers of fish and seafood.

**Perfect for a classic carvery**

Sometimes nothing will do like a good roast dinner. The Wherry Hotel at Oulton Broad has had boaters

salivating, and other much-loved carvery experiences can be found at Hotel Wroxham, Kings Arms Ludham and Horning's Ferry Inn.

**Ideal for friendly atmosphere**

Atmosphere and service are all part of the experience, and warm welcomes can be found at The White Horse in Loddon, The King's Head in Acle and The Berney Arms, near Reedham. If you're used to impersonal city service, get ready for some Norfolk charm.

**Perfect for character**

Occasionally a little olde English character is in order, and it can be

found in spades at The Rising Sun in Coltishall. Next door is The King's Head, a pleasant 17th Century Inn. Elsewhere, the Wheatacre White Lion in Beccles is situated in two acres of pretty countryside giving it quaint gentry charm.

**Excellent for value**

Value for money is important, and The Acle Bridge Inn is often praised for its reasonable prices as well as its atmosphere, food and service. Another inexpensive restaurant that comes highly recommended by regulars is The Dog Inn near Ludham Bridge, which is perfect if you're boating on a budget.



# COOKING IDEAS

**The pubs and restaurants on the Broads are fantastic, but part of the fun of a boating holiday is cooking for yourself. Here are some simple tried-and-tested recommendations from Richardson's fans on Facebook.**

"A good old Full English fry-up with Norfolk bangers and a French stick."

"We normally get an oven pizza and garlic baguettes for the first night."

"Chicken Chasseur. It's simple and easy."

"A one-pot curry in the evening, moored up against a bank in the middle of nowhere with a glass of wine!"

"Rhubarb crumble with plenty of cream. I make it at home the day before our holiday."

"Slow-cooked brisket with loads of gravy and mashed potato. Works a treat!"

"Barbecue steak and a few beers when moored up."

"Steak, oven chips and salad."

"Either pork chops or chicken in a white wine sauce with boiled potatoes and veg."

"Bacon and fresh bread for chunky bacon sarnies. Don't forget the brown sauce!"

"Some lovely fresh fish - maybe some kippers if the wife lets you!"

"We always take large pan of homemade stew, and have it with mashed potatoes and Yorkshire pudding."

"A big pot of lovely risotto with a large helping of cheese and a bottle of white wine."

"A frozen batch of chilli comes in handy if you want to moor up for a night away from the pub."

"Anything! Everything tastes better when you're afloat."



# WHAT TO TAKE

**When you arrive to pick up your boat, a lot of holiday basics will already be waiting for you - there's no need to pack the kitchen sink. But there are some things you can bring to make your boating holiday easier, more comfortable and lots more fun. Here are some suggestions**

## **Holiday paperwork**

Bringing all your booking confirmation details to the boatyard will help your holiday get off to the smoothest possible start.

## **Toiletries**

All boats will come with bed linen

provided, but you'll need to bring all your own products and toiletries (although toilet roll is provided). If you forget, there's a Tesco handily five minutes from the Stalham boatyard and a Budgens at Acle.

## **Appropriate clothing**

Getting your clothing right is important for safety and comfort. Bring flat, rubber-soled shoes for maximum balance and grip. It can also get cold and wet on the Broads, so bring plenty of changes of clothes - including some thick jumpers and wind-resistant jackets. But don't forget your nice outfits for those romantic evenings out.

## **First aid kit**

Make sure you bring a small first aid kit to cover any minor injuries, plus any regular medicine you take and common painkillers.

## **Food and drink**

It's a good idea to start your trip with the main components for the meals you want to cook. While there are plenty of fine pubs and restaurants on the Broads, sometimes for romance you can't beat an intimate evening meal onboard with a nice bottle of red wine.

## **Entertain yourself**

Evenings onboard can be great fun

if you bring your own form of entertainment. Board games can keep friends occupied for hours and playing cards will ensure that all hands on deck will be a phrase used more than once on your holiday!

## **An itinerary**

Or not. It depends what kind of trip you want. Some people like to plan in meticulous detail, others prefer to freestyle. It's entirely up to you. Just bear in mind how far you can travel to keep things realistic. The speed limit on the Broads is 3-6 mph, so in a ten-hour stretch you could cover a maximum of 25-30 miles.





**By now you'll have a fair grasp of all the exciting things you can do on a Broads holiday. But if you're a boating beginner, there's probably a lot you're still wondering about. Here are a few hints, tips and reminders.**

#### **Keep safe**

On your Trial Run you'll be talked through the key safety aspects of life onboard a boat, but you'll also be given information that you can refer back to throughout your holiday. Some important things to remember are life jackets, correct driving and mooring activity, as well as appropriate clothing and behaviour onboard.

#### **Take it easy**

On the Broads there's no rush. You set your own pace. Going slow and steady not only helps avoid making mistakes, it makes it easier to correct them. And if you're still struggling with anything, don't be afraid to ask!

#### **Make simple meals**

You won't be reduced to eating cold food out of cans. Most boats have a full-size gas oven, grill and hob and some have a microwave. So you can basically cook as you would at home. The only real difference is the size of the kitchen and dining area. It's cosy. So simple one-pot meals requiring minimal preparation space work best.

#### **Check what's onboard**

It's worth researching exactly what you're likely to find onboard, so you can manage your creature comfort expectations! For example, all cruisers will have hot water, bed linen, toilet roll, a TV, CD player, pots, pans, a fridge and a small freezer. And they might have a DVD player and 240 Volt Power System. Check the Richardson's website for full details of what's included.

#### **Bring your pet**

Pets are like family, and many couples want to bring them. Most common pets will be suitable to bring along to enjoy your holiday with you. As long

as you moor up often enough they'll have plenty of opportunities to stretch their legs. If you're unsure whether your pet is suitable to bring onboard, just get in touch.

#### **Respect others**

The Broads are full of fellow first-timers and returning regulars. Everyone is there to enjoy the wonderful waterways, and there's plenty of space for everyone. So try to be mindful of any behaviour that others might find inconsiderate. Above all, keep smiling and being friendly - there's a cosy camaraderie on the Broads that adds to the enjoyable experience.



**The more you understand about a place, the easier it is to appreciate it. And the story of the Broads leaves a lot to appreciate. Here's a brief backstory to one of Britain's natural treasures.**

One of the most interesting aspects of the Norfolk Broads is that this beautiful network of waterways and wildlife is actually man-made.

Back in the 10th Century, settlers in Norfolk realised that peat in the region could be used as a supply of natural fuel. So for more than 200 years the farmers of Norfolk dug peat, and when tides began to rise

in the area, water filled the gaps left by digging to form some 200km of rivers, lakes and marshes we know today as the Broads.

Perhaps nearly as curious as the Broads' formation is that while the area is commonly referred to as the 'Norfolk Broads', they are not exclusive to Norfolk. In total, they cover a 188-square mile area, filling a geographical triangle between Cromer, Norwich and Lowestoft. This means they extend well into Suffolk, and the southern region of the Broads shouldn't be overlooked by inquisitive boaters.

By the 16th Century, the Broads was a key national transport hub.

Norwich was the second-largest city in England - only slightly smaller than London - and the Broads served to carry vast supplies of wool and agricultural produce. This arrived in the country via Great Yarmouth, and was transported across East Anglia's waterways on the iconic Norfolk Wherry boats - some of which can still be seen today.

These days, the Broads are mainly used by boaters to enjoy the culture and tranquility that can be found on the network's largest rivers - the Bure, the Yare, the Ant, the Thurne, the Chet and the Waveney.

Fans of local heritage will find 1,000 years of human history to

be explored on the Broads, from Norman-era architecture and medieval ruins to Victorian windmills and vessels.

For natural history enthusiasts the Broads are also an exciting place; this protected wetlands has cultivated numerous nature reserves over the last 100 years, and the region's fens, rivers, marshes and reeds are home to some wonderful animals, including kingfishers, dragonflies, otters, marsh harriers, swallowtail butterflies, grass snakes and grey heron.

So whether you're interested in the Broads for nature, wildlife, history or culture, there's a world to discover for those eager to explore.

# A WORLD OF WILDLIFE

**The Broads are a wonderful place for romantic garden strolls, rustic nature trail walks and leisurely wildlife-spotting. Here is a brief Q&A guide to enjoying the natural wonders of the Broads.**

## **What animals live on the Broads?**

There's a diverse wildlife population on the Broads. You'll find lots of magnificent birds, including marsh harriers, swans, mallards, coots, moorhens, cranes and kingfishers.

The Broads are also famous for insects, such as Norfolk hawker dragonflies, swallowtail butterflies and damselflies. Elsewhere, there are voles, otters and a large variety of fish.

## **Where's best for wildlife spotting?**

Strumpshaw Fen Nature Reserve and

Surlingham Church Marsh Nature Reserve are both RSPB areas and offer a mixture of reedbeds, woodlands and meadows, so they're ideal for birders.

Fancy a whimsical afternoon dragonfly-spotting? Your best bet is probably Upton Broad and Marshes or Hickling Broad National Trust Reserve.

## **What are the nicest nature reserves?**

That's hard to say! Ranworth Broad is very popular for dedicated nature lovers, families and couples alike, so that might be a good place to visit if you're a only stopping at one place. It even has a floating Broads Wildlife Centre.

## **Where are the prettiest gardens?**

There are many lovely gardens on the Broads, but maybe you'd enjoy visiting The How Hill Trust. It's based in

an Edwardian thatched mansion which looks out over a 365-acre estate. The grounds include some beautiful gardens to explore at a relaxed pace.

## **Where can we do a good walk?**

For a brisk stroll start from the Salhouse Broad moorings and spend 30 minutes walking to the picturesque village of Woodbastwick and its charming village green.

For a mid-distance option try the Stalham Circular Walk, an enjoyable five-mile trip featuring a mix of country lanes, footpaths, tracks and roads.

A more physically robust choice is the Horning and Neatishead Walk, where an eight-mile journey will take you from Horning to the nearby village of Neatishead via a series of paths and pleasant country lanes.



# HERITAGE TO EXPLORE

**The Broads are a playground for curious couples with an a passion for history and heritage. There are countless sites of interest, and here are some of the most fascinating ones to explore.**

**Cathedrals, churches and castles**  
Unsurprisingly, the city of Norwich is home to some of the most impressive historical sites on the Broads. Norwich's Cathedral and Castle were both built about 900 years ago by the Normans. The Cathedral is an amazing sight and offers an idyllic cloisters stroll, while the Castle was designed as a royal palace and features a great mix of art and archeology. Haven't satisfied your

cathedral fix in Norwich? You can also find the elegant St. John the Baptist Catholic Cathedral.

Further afield is the site of St. Benet's Abbey in Horning. This was once a grand structure, and the 1,000-year-old ruins on the River Bure are well worth a visit. Accessible medieval Broads sites worth mooring up for include the 14th Century remains of St. Olave's Priory on the River Waveney and Holy Trinity Church in Ingham.

If you prefer your history a little more ancient or active, the 3rd Century ruins of the Roman-built Burgh Castle is an interesting site, as is the 89-step tower of St. Helen's Church in Ranworth which you can climb.

## **Windmills and cottages**

The Broads and windmills are synonymous, and you'll glimpse a fair few. The Berney Arms on the edge of Breydon Water dates back to 1870 and offers spectacular views.

Elsewhere, the Thurne Dyke Drainage Mill is highly photogenic, the Turf Fen Drainage Mill in Barton Turf is worth a look and the Hunsett Drainage Mill in Stalham is attractive, although it's inaccessible by land.

In terms of cottages, the wonderfully named Toad Hole Cottage in the How Hill nature reserve has been furnished as it would have been 100 years ago when a marshman and his family lived there.

## **Museums**

The Museum of the Broads in Stalham is an absolute must, and shows visitors how people's lives have shaped the landscape over the centuries.

Great Yarmouth offers the Time and Tide Museum, which tells the story of the area from its Ice Age origins to the present day.

The town is also home to the Elizabethan House Museum, where you can experience 16th Century life first-hand by going to work in the kitchen and scullery!

Elsewhere, Carlton Colville is home to the East Anglia Transport Museum and its early 20th Century collection of vehicles.

# BROADS MAP



# SUGGESTED ROUTES

## 1. The Short Breaker

Route: Stalham - Acle

Rivers: Ant and Bure

Start out from **Stalham**, a nice town with plenty of shops, pubs and the Museum of the Broads. From Stalham you make the short journey to **Barton Broad** and **How Hill** nature reserves. The scenery enroute is stunning.

Back on the water continue to **Ranworth**, home to The Malters pub, a nature trail and a floating Broads Wildlife Centre. If you're feeling energetic, climb the 89-step tower at St. Helen's Church for amazing views of the Broads landscape. Continue on to **Horning**, which is a small village but has picturesque boat houses and shops. Stop by The Ferry Inn for a good meal.

From Horning go to **Wroxham**, explore some local shops, pop into The Bridge Restaurant and visit the Hoveton Hall Gardens. If you have time, stop by Wroxham Barns and enjoy its tea room and craft shops. Locomotive fans will also love the nearby Bure Valley Steam Railway, Finally, cruise to **Acle** which has a lovely church and shops.



# SUGGESTED ROUTES

## 2. The Full Weeker

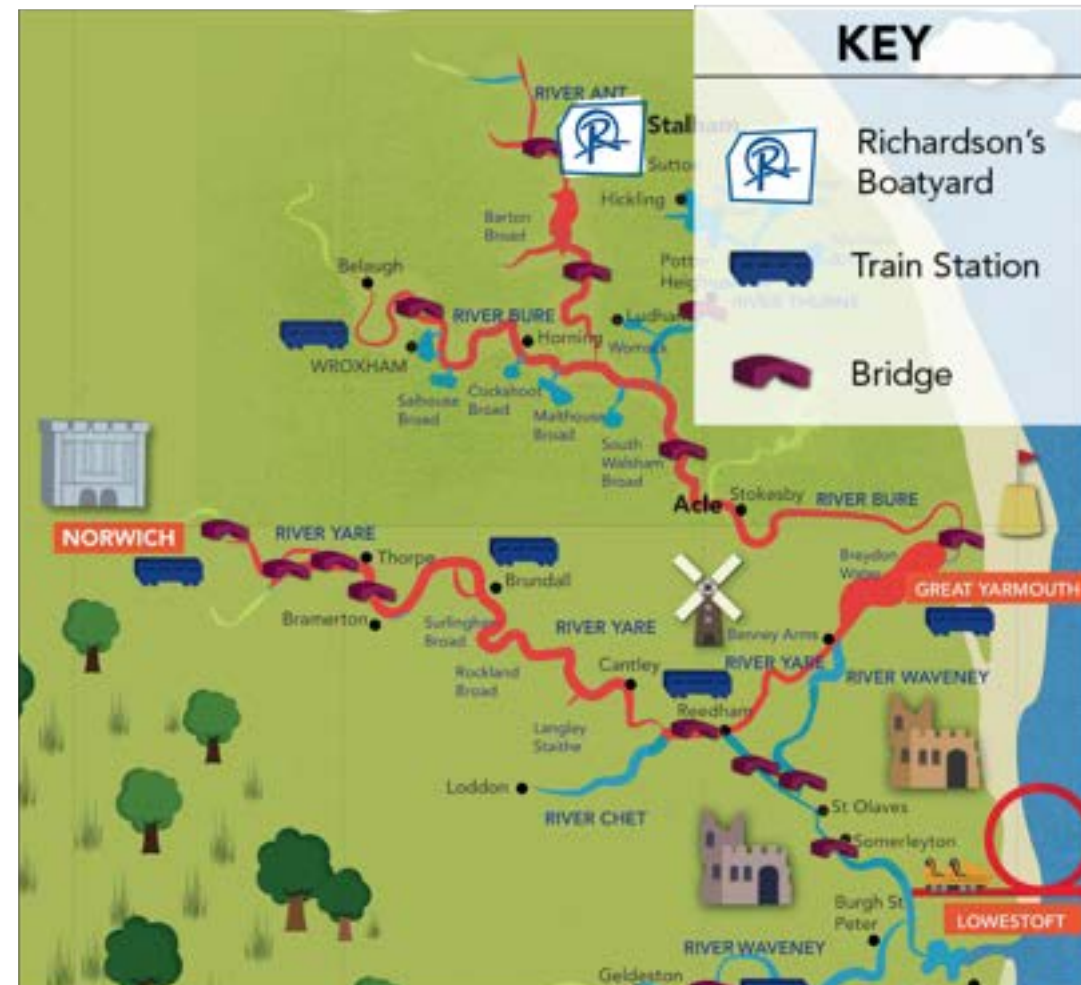
Route: Stalham - Norwich  
Rivers: Ant, Bure and Yare

Start from **Stalham**, and enjoy much of The Short Breaker. But from **Acle**, cruise on to visit **Great Yarmouth**, which is famous for its pier and seaside bright lights. Great Yarmouth is home to beaches, amusements, shops and the Sealife Centre.

After soaking up the seaside at Great Yarmouth continue on through **Breydon Water** and Marshes, which is home to breeding waders, windfowl and lapwings. At the southern end is Burgh Castle with lovely views of Berney Arms Windmill and great scenic footpaths. Be sure to moor up at The Berney Arms for a welcome meal.

Next, pootle along the River Yare to where you can eat at the excellent Reedham Ferry Inn. **Reedham** is also well-known for its chain ferry. For wildlife enthusiasts, there's a beautiful nature reserve at Strumpshaw Fen and Surlingham Marsh.

After passing by Bramerton you'll reach **Norwich**, which has an abundance of history, architecture and culture. In total, there are more than 1,500 historic buildings in the city, including a Norman castle and cathedral.





'The Guide to Broads Boating for Fortysomething Couples' was brought to you by Richardson's Boating Holidays. We hope you enjoyed reading our ebook!

Want to create your own Broads experience? Book your boating holiday by visiting [www.richardsonsboatingholidays.co.uk](http://www.richardsonsboatingholidays.co.uk) or calling 01692 668 981.

You can get in touch with us by visiting:

[www.richardsonsboatingholidays.co.uk/contact-us/](http://www.richardsonsboatingholidays.co.uk/contact-us/)

Alternatively, you can reach us at: Richardson's Holiday Group, The Staithe, Stalham, Norwich, NR12 9BX

You can also join our friendly and helpful online community by following us on social media.

Facebook: [www.facebook.com/BoatingHolidays](https://www.facebook.com/BoatingHolidays)

Twitter: [www.twitter.com/BroadsBoating](https://www.twitter.com/BroadsBoating)

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