The Thames Path National Trail follows the course of the river from the Thames Barrier below London to its source near Kemble in Gloucestershire, a distance of some 180 miles. Our holiday covers the 54-mile stretch above Oxford.

Trail Grading

This Guided Walking/Hiking Trail is graded 2 which involves walks/hikes on good paths, though often quite a distance each day. On the Thames Path we follow a good footpath for most of the way, though occasionally this becomes a track faintly trodden into the riverbank. There are a number of stiles and gates to negotiate. It is your responsibility to ensure you have the relevant fitness required to join this holiday.

Planned Itinerary

Osney Bridge to Bablock Hythe
We quickly lose sight of the dreaming spires and suburbs of Oxford and enter lush water meadows. We will see Port Meadow, ancient common grazing land presented to the Burgesses of Oxford by William the Conqueror and the remains of the Benedictine nunnery at Godstow; founded in 1139. We continue to Swinford Bridge, one of the two remaining toll bridges across the Thames. At Pinkhill Lock the path leaves the river and crosses fields to reach Bablock Hythe. 12 miles (19km) with 1,500 feet (450m) of ascent.

Bablock Hythe to Tadpole Bridge
We follow the river to the remote lock at Northmoor. We look at one of the weirs which retain the paddle construction of earlier times and continue to Newbridge, the second oldest of the Thames bridges. A remote meandering section of our walk follows with few signs of habitation. We see an isolated chapel in fields at Shifford, once an important town where a thousand years ago King Alfred held a meeting of the English Parliament. We follow Shifford Lock Cut, before rejoining the river to Tadpole Bridge, which was built to carry the turnpike road to Bampton. 9.5 miles (16km) with 200 feet (60m) of ascent.

Rest Day
A day without any walks programmed, giving you the opportunity to explore the local area independently.

Tadpole Bridge to Lechlade
We follow a towpath all the way to Lechlade. At Rushey Lock we shall see another paddle-weir and, over a side channel at Radcot, the oldest bridge on the Thames. We pass close to Kelmscott Manor; a house lived in by William Morris and his family for 25 years, before coming to Buscot Lock, where the National Trust has restored the lockkeeper’s cottage. After St John’s Lock, we continue to Lechlade. 10.5 miles (17km) with 200 feet (60m) of ascent.

Lechlade to Cricklade
Leaving Lechlade at Halfpenny Bridge, we follow the towpath to Inglesham Round House, the point where the Thames and Severn Canal once joined the river, and cross fields to visit the 13th century church at Inglesham. Inspired by William Morris, the Society for the Protection of Ancient Buildings carefully restored the church in the 1880s. There are a few sections of road walking. We rejoin the river for the final section into Cricklade. 11 miles (17.5km) with 230 feet (70m) of ascent.

Cricklade to the source
We cross the River Churn and enter the North Meadow Nature Reserve. After passing the Latton Aqueduct, a relic of the North Wiltshire Canal, we follow paths through the Cotswold Water Park, created by the flooding of old gravel pits. Frequent glimpses of the Thames headwaters lead us on to Ashton Keynes where the path will bring us to the last bridge where water can sometimes be seen. Near Upper Mill Farm, once a water mill, a windpump marks a spot where water used to rise vigorously but thereafter it is only just possible to discern the line of the river. We continue across open fields to reach the simple marble slab in Trewsbury Mead that marks the official source of the river and the end of our journey. 12.5 miles (20.5km) with 400 feet (120m) of ascent.

In the evenings
After a sociable evening meal, you can join in an organised activity such as a quiz or a talk about the local area, relax in the bar or use the Country House facilities.

The itinerary may be subject to change at the discretion of the leader with regard to the weather and other external factors.
Trail Leader
Our experienced and knowledgeable volunteer leaders undergo a thorough assessment to lead you on your Guided Walking /Hiking Trail and will also be delighted to share their knowledge and enthusiasm with you.

What to wear
To enjoy walking /hiking comfortably and safely, footwear, clothing and equipment needs to be suitable for the conditions. Safety is our priority and Britain is famous for its changeable weather, so our advice is to come prepared for all eventualities. Footwear with a good grip on the sole (e.g. Vibram sole) is the key to avoiding accidents. Walking/hiking boots providing ankle support and good grip are recommended (and ideally worn in), and specialist walking socks to avoid blisters. Several layers of clothing, which can be added or removed, are better than a single layer (include spares). Fabrics (lightweight and fast drying) designed for the outdoors are recommended. A waterproof jacket and waterproof over trousers are essential and a warm hat and gloves are useful additions. Gaiters are an optional but useful extra. Denim jeans and capes are not suitable on any walks. In one or two places, nettles can grow fairly high, so long sleeves and trousers may be advisable.

What to bring
Rucksack with a waterproof liner, thermos flask for a hot drink, water bottle (at least 1 litre) and spare high-energy food such as a chocolate bar, small torch (particularly in spring, autumn and winter) and first aid kit – your leader’s first aid kit doesn’t contain any medication or blister kits (such as Compeed). Walking poles are useful, particularly for descents. Insect repellent, sun hat, sunglasses and protection cream and camera are all optional extras you may choose to bring.

Ticks
Ticks are tiny creatures that live in vegetation and can attach themselves to passing animals or walkers and may carry a risk of Lyme Disease. Please refer to NHS advice and guidelines for information prior to your holiday.

Please ensure you complete and hand in your registration form on arrival and let the leader know about any medical problems you may have. This may be useful in the event of a problem on the walk and will be treated confidentially by the leader.

On the walk
We try to create a relaxed atmosphere on the walk but please listen to safety instructions from your leader. Keep members of the group in view especially when weather or visibility is poor. If you leave the group, then your leader will no longer have responsibility for you. Our leaders consider the safety of the group as a whole and are likely to be more cautious over potential risks such as bad weather.

In the event of a problem
If you become separated from the party please stay where you are. Your leader will retrace their steps to find you. All our leaders carry a mobile phone, group shelter, spare maps and a compass. In the unlikely event your leader is incapacitated, please use any emergency kit in their rucksack. Call the emergency services (call 999 in the UK, or 112 overseas). Please then try to call the hotel where you are staying to let them know there is a problem.

Accommodation
Harrington House
Sherborne Street, Bourton-on-the-Water, Cheltenham, Gloucestershire, GL54 2BY
Tel: +44 (0)1451 821213
Fax: +44 (0)1451 810988
Email: bourtononthewater@hfholidays.co.uk
Grid reference: SP 167 206

Your room will be ready from 2.30pm onwards (1pm for premium rooms). Afternoon tea will be provided on all arrival days so you can meet with your fellow guests. If you need assistance carrying your luggage to your room, please speak to the
House Manager when you arrive for this to be arranged.

Facilities
The bedrooms all have their individual layout and character, as befits a historic building, and are located in the main house and adjacent cottages. In your room you’ll find a TV with digital radio, hair dryer, towels and tea and coffee making facilities. On your departure day kindly vacate your bedroom by 10am. The public rooms at Harrington House retain many of the original historic features of this Georgian house. There’s a lounge, dining room, and licensed bar, open throughout your stay. The boot and drying room is available to store your boots and to dry wet outdoor clothing. Secure cycle storage is also available. WiFi is accessible in all public areas of the house. Due to the area in which the house is located, the mobile phone signal is patchy.

Fabulous food
All holidays at our Country Houses are full board, from evening meal on arrival to breakfast on the day of your departure. There’s a vegetarian option at all meals and we cater for gluten-free diets. For this and any other dietary requirements, please speak to the House Manager on your arrival.

Travel
By road to Harrington House
For those with satellite navigation, enter the postcode GL54 2BY and road name Sherborne Street if required. From the A429 take the road into the centre of Bourton-on-the-Water. At the war memorial by the village green, turn into Sherborne Street. Cross the narrow bridge and continue for approximately 100 yards. Just before the road forks, Harrington House is on your left. Look out for our sign. Visit your holiday page on our website for a map.

By rail
The nearest railway station to Harrington House is Moreton-in-Marsh. However, the nearest mainline station is at Cheltenham Spa which may be more convenient. For train times and general rail enquiries call 08457 484950 or visit www.nationalrail.co.uk. If you are phoning from outside UK call +44 (0)20 7278 5240.

Station transfer by taxi
The 8-mile journey from Moreton-in-Marsh railway station takes approximately 20 minutes. We have negotiated a preferential rate with Limozena for all pre-booked journeys of £20 for up to 2 passengers per taxi. The 17-mile journey from Cheltenham Spa railway station takes approximately 30 minutes. The preferential rate from Limozena is £40 per taxi and they will arrange shared taxis wherever possible. Waiting may be charged after the first 10 minutes, unless notification is given at least 30 minutes before due arrival time. Please phone the mobile number to notify.

Limozena
Tel: +44 (0)1451 820972
Mobile: +44 (0)7966 449397
Email: denwalmsley@yahoo.co.uk
Limozena is not owned or managed by HF Holidays.

Station transfer by bus
From Moreton-in-Marsh railway station catch the 801 bus. Alight next to the Edinburgh Woollen Mill Shop in Bourton-on-the-Water. Cross the road to the war memorial and continue across the bridge. Follow this road for 100 yards. Just before the road forks, Harrington House is on your left. Look out for our sign.

Car parking
Car parking is available. No responsibility can be accepted for loss or damage to guests’ property or vehicles. We advise not to leave valuables in cars.

Travel Insurance
Travel and any other personal insurance relevant to your holiday is recommended to all our guests.

While every effort has been made to ensure accuracy, the information in this guide may change after it has been printed. For the most up-to-date information please see our website or use the contacts below.

Enquiries
Local rate 0345 470 7558
(Standard rate +44 (0)20 8732 1250)
info@hfholidays.co.uk
www.hfholidays.co.uk