



ABC BOAT HIRE

Holiday Guide

2015




www.abchoathire.com

ABC Boat Hire is a trading name of ABC Leisure Group Ltd. Reg No. 2860394 Reg Office: Scarfield Wharf, Alvechurch B48 7SQ



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Introduction

Thank you for booking your holiday with ABC Boat Hire.

We hope you have a wonderful experience exploring some of the beautiful waterways of England, Scotland and Wales.

This holiday guide is intended to help you enjoy your narrowboat holiday by ensuring that you are able to prepare yourself fully before you arrive at the marina. Each of our boats is also equipped with a **comprehensive manual** containing further local information and instructions specific to your particular boat. Any boat handling and navigation instructions given are intended to compliment 'The Boater's DVD' published by the Canal & River Trust which will be shown to you on arrival, and sent to you as a web link prior to your holiday.

Please can you ensure that you and all of your crew watch 'The Boater's DVD' before you start your holiday. You will be asked to sign and confirm that you have watched this for health and safety purposes. **If it is your first canal holiday, please DON'T WORRY.**

Our experienced staff will ensure that everything is explained and demonstrated and you will be given practical instruction in boat handling at the start of your cruise.

More information, including the video of the Boaters DVD as well as directions to your start base can be found on our website:-

www.abcboathire.com

Arrival & Departure

We will endeavour to have your boat ready for you to take over at 2:30pm. If for any reason you are unable to arrive until after 4:30pm **please telephone the Boatyard in advance.** An additional charge will apply after 5:00pm and we may not be able to complete the handover until the next morning.

Under no circumstances can we allow a boat to depart without a full demonstration.

Please report to reception upon arrival.

When your boat is ready, our staff will be pleased to show you on board and leave you to stow everything away.

When you are unpacked and ready one of our staff will show you through the boat and explain how everything works, then see you safely on your way (*a copy of these instructions will be in the boat manual in case you forget anything*).

Also included in the manual is a copy of the boat's inventory which we ask you to check to satisfy yourself that everything is present and in good order before you leave.

There is ample parking at each of our bases, but all parking arrangements are at your own risk.



Returning The Boat

Your boat should be returned to the marina by no later than 9:30am on the final day. It is very important that boats are not handed back late as the whole turnaround routine depends on boats being available at the correct time. Late returns will be charged for and can mean that there is insufficient time to properly prepare the boat before the next guests arrive.

When you have removed all your belongings please call at reception.

We would very much like to hear about your holiday experience before you depart. If you wish to depart on your last night please inform the Boatyard in advance so they can provide instructions for the car park and boat keys.

Cleaning

A most important factor in getting the boat ready on time for the next holiday is the condition in which it is returned.

We do ask that the boat is left in a clean and tidy condition with all items back in their original place.

Please dispose of all your rubbish in our on-site refuse containers. All of our marinas have glass bottle recycling and general recycling facilities, so we ask that you use these where possible.



Ask marina staff if you are unsure where these are located.

Licenses & Mooring Fees

Cruising Licenses

Our boats are licensed for all the canals and rivers governed by the Canal & River Trust (*about 2,200 miles*), but not for a few other waterways. This means that if you plan to cruise the Rivers Avon, Thames or Nene, you will need to pay for a short term visitor's licence.

We will be pleased to advise you, when you collect your boat, on current procedures and costs. Our boats are not allowed to navigate tidal waterways except the River Thames between Brentford and Teddington in favourable conditions.

Please Note

If you are planning to cruise on the River Thames from **Aldermaston Wharf**, we provide each boat with a Gold Thames License so there is no need to purchase your own.

Mooring Fees

Most visitor moorings on canals and rivers governed by the Canal & River Trust are free of charge. In fact, you are permitted to moor anywhere on the towpath side of the canal free of charge so long as you are not causing an obstruction.

However, at certain privately owned sites there may be a fee for overnight mooring. The River Thames is a typical example, as well as parts of the Kennet and Avon canal and Bristol Dock.



General Guidelines

- 1 No person under the age of 18 years should operate the boat unless an adult is at the young person's side (*i.e. someone above the age of 18*).
- 2 You are not permitted to cruise after dark. The boat is not fitted with navigation lights and the insurance becomes invalid.
- 3 The maximum speed allowed on the canals is 4mph. If the wash from the boat creates a wave along the bank your speed is too high.
- 4 The canals are a 200 year old man-made navigation system and you should always bear in mind that things can go wrong from time to time so you should always leave extra time in case of delay.
- 5 The waterways are a resource to be enjoyed by everyone and we would ask you to respect other users. Please slow down when going past other boats, particularly when moored.
- 6 Fishermen generally prefer you to slow down when going past them, but it is important that you try to stay in the centre of the canal where the water is deepest.
- 7 Please note that neither the boat or locks should be operated by the helmsman or crew while they are under the influence of alcohol or drugs.

Fishing

Most of the waterways you can reach can be fished, providing you hold a national licence available from UK Post Offices and online.



www.postoffice.co.uk/rod-fishing-licence

You must also purchase a day ticket from the owners of the fishing rights either in advance or from the bailiff for the water in question.

For reasons of hygiene, we cannot allow you to keep live bait on the boat.

CLOSE SEASON: *Fishing is not allowed on rivers from 15th March to 15th June inclusive*

Pets (First pet FREE, £30 for additional pets)

Your pets are welcome on board subject to notification and payment where appropriate before the start of your holiday (maximum two per boat unless otherwise agreed in advance), but we do ask that you keep them off the beds, seats and soft furnishings.

An extra charge may also be made if additional cleaning is required, or if they cause any damage.

Your Rubbish Disposal

There are plenty of disposal points along the waterways so please use them. Most boatyards will provide facilities (*sometimes at a small charge*) if you cannot locate a Canal & River Trust disposal point. Do not spoil the enjoyment of others by throwing your litter in the canal or leaving it on the canal bank.



What To Wear & Bring

A canal holiday is very informal so bring casual, comfortable clothes suitable for operating the boat and locks.

These will tend to be T-shirts and jeans, or trousers, with shorts for hotter days. A good sweater or coat is also useful for cold mornings or evenings, as are gloves when operating locks. Gardening type gloves are ideal. The most important item of clothing for the holiday is a pair of non-slip, flat, rubber soled shoes.

Trainers etc, are suitable, but not leather or hard soled shoes – a shoe with a firm grip will avoid slips around the boat and locks. Other items we recommend you bring are waterproof clothing such as anoraks, sunglasses to avoid glare off the water, a washing bag and nightwear.

A pair of boots can also be useful especially if you want to do any walking. Your boat will be fully equipped with all the necessary crockery, cutlery and cooking utensils. All of our boats have CD and DVD players, so you can bring a supply of your favourite CDs or DVDs with you. Freshly laundered bed linen is provided on all the boats including duvets, duvet covers, bottom sheets, pillows and pillow cases.

Towels

Each person is provided with a bath towel and a hand towel, as well as an extra hand towel per bathroom.

Luggage

We recommend that your luggage is of the soft bag type as large suitcases are difficult to store on the boat.

Where this is not possible we suggest that you leave suitcases in your car.

Buoyancy Aids / Life Jackets

Buoyancy aids/lifejackets are provided free of charge on request at the start of your holiday.

These are compulsory for non swimmers and those under 18 years of age

Grocery Shopping / Food

Your boat is fully equipped with all the utensils, cooker, oven, fridge etc, to enable you to cook, if you wish, to the same standards that you would at home. There is hot and cold running water in the galley and adequate room. You will be able to replenish the larder at some canal side towns and villages which you will pass and many boatyards operate a small grocery shop. It is becoming more common for supermarkets to be built near to the canals, which often have cash points so you can stock up your wallet as well as your larder!

You will find a full list of what we provide in our brochure on page 34, or on our website (*address below*)

PLEASE NOTE: The marina will advise on local eateries along your route. We recommend you book a table in advance and also, not all of them accept credit / debit cards.

www.abcboathire.com/equipment-on-board.aspx

Where To Go & What To Do

There is a great temptation to undertake long circular cruises or rings only to discover that it is all proving to be much harder work than you first thought. We always recommend an out and return route for beginners – many experienced boaters also prefer this.

Working through the locks does take some effort and whilst this activity is part of the enjoyment of a canal cruise, you do not want to make it a chore. A cruising day of about 8 hours is the most that you should plan for, and remember that you might want some time to do other things as well.

As a rough calculation when planning a route, add the number of locks to the distance in miles and divide the total by 3 to give cruising time in hours. Guide books for all the canals and navigable rivers are available in our marina shops and via mail order on 0330 3330 590. You can also buy them online at the address below.

www.abcwebchandler.com/products/maps

Places of interest and the facilities you may need are listed and described alongside the maps, so you will always know in advance what is to be found around the next bend.

Route Availability

For up-to-date information on restrictions and stoppages concerning your chosen route, please visit www.canalrivertrust.org.uk

The marina will also provide you with any route information when you collect the boat.

Routes and timings are approximate and will be affected by available cruising hours, weather conditions and amount of traffic on the waterway.

When planning any river cruising within your route, do bear in mind that in some weather conditions river navigation may be restricted, so it would be a good idea to have an alternative route in mind.



What Are The Routes?



A selection of the available routes are presented in our brochure organised by base location on pages 6 to 33, and also on our website at www.abcboathire.com under 'Choose your route'.


The marina staff will also explain your chosen route in detail upon arrival advising the best mooring locations, attractions and various bits of advice gained from their local knowledge of the canal system.

Boat Services & Supplies

Electricity

The boat's electrical systems are supplied by heavy duty batteries which are recharged by the propulsion engine.

All the essential boat equipment including the TV operates on a 12-volt DC supply. There is, however, a 240-volt supply point for **electric shavers ONLY** and a 12-volt car cigar lighter socket suitable for charging phones and tablets, however you will need your own 12 volt lead / adapter.

Some boats (marked  in the brochure) provide a 240-volt power supply for the appliances provided. We advise against bringing your own appliances to run off the boat's 240-volt system, however, **if you do so it is at your own risk.**

You must remember that being battery supplied, the total electrical capacity is not unlimited. You must run the engine for at **least 5 hours each day** to recharge the batteries which is normally done while cruising.

Protect The Environment

We must ask you to do all you can to protect the environment by reducing exhaust emissions and obeying the **4mph** speed limit.

Excessive throttle use equals noise, bank erosion and pollution. It is very easy to double the amount of throttle use yet go no further or faster than someone handling the boat with care and thought.

Fuel

Your fuel tank will be full with about 50 gallons or 225 litres of diesel fuel when you start and this will normally last more than 2 weeks. *For long trips, the marina will advise about refuelling.*

Fuel Deposit

Upon completion of your booking you will have paid a fuel deposit of £50, £90, £140 or £180 depending on the length of your holiday.

You will only pay for the fuel that you use, so at the end of your holiday, your boat will be refuelled which is how we calculate the cost of your fuel usage compared to the deposit you have paid.

As an example, if you use £60 worth having paid a deposit of £90, you would be due a refund of £30.

If you use more than the deposit you paid, we will ask you to pay the difference.

Diesel Heating

Your boat may also have diesel heating so you should be careful not to leave it on unnecessarily. Your heating usage will obviously impact on your fuel consumption.

LPG Gas Supply

Two or more gas cylinders are carried on board the boat. Gas is used for cooking and on some boats for heating and hot water.

If the boat has gas heating providing it is used wisely, you have a sufficient supply for at least one week in the coldest part of the season and plenty for two weeks in the Spring and Summer. Of course, if you leave the heating on full with the doors wide open you will use up your supply much sooner and possibly run out at a time and place when you cannot easily obtain replacement cylinders.

For safety and legislation reasons no other portable gas appliances such as barbeques may be carried / stored onboard.



Toilets & Water Usage

Toilets

All of our boats are equipped with fresh water flushing toilets designed to need emptying only once a week with average use.

Should the toilet tank need emptying during the holiday it is a chargeable service that is provided by most boatyards. Having been emptied during the turnaround, the toilet should be entirely trouble free providing it is used correctly. **Only human waste and toilet paper should go down the toilet.**

Any other items (*including sanitary articles, nappies, wet wipes, kitchen towels and quilted toilet paper*) **SHOULD NOT BE FLUSHED DOWN THE TOILET**, but placed in the bags provided to hygienically transfer these items to a suitable bin.

Any of the above items are likely to cause a blockage which may in turn delay your progress if an engineer has to be called. If a blockage is found to have been caused due to ignoring these instructions a charge may be made for the engineer's time.

Water

All our boats carry around 100 gallons or 450 litres of water which is delivered to the taps by an automatic electric pump.

You are advised to refill your water tank every day. This reduces the filling time, which can be lengthy at some taps if you leave the water tank to become nearly empty and avoids the risk of running out at an inconvenient place or time.

There are many water points along your route and all will be shown in the various canal cruising guides.

Nearly all boatyards have water points (*there may be a small charge*), but do remember to ask first as there are no special rights or agreements.

Water Filter System

On each of our boats, in the kitchen there are 3 taps by the sink. There are the standard hot and cold taps as well as an extra tap which releases water from a filter system.



Appliances Onboard

TV, DVD & CD

All of our boats are fitted with colour televisions, DVD players and CD/Radio players with USB sockets for iPod's & MP3 players.

TV reception quality is not always good on the canals because the aerial is generally not high enough. Your ability to get a good picture is dependent on aligning the aerial in the right direction and in selecting and tuning to the correct channel.

All of our TV's and aerials are digital, and as such are able to receive digital TV signals however only trial and error will get it right and the results obtained can often be disappointing.

Other Appliances

Some of our boats have microwaves on board as well as coffee machines, hair dryers, hoovers and toasters (*inclusion of these items are specified in the brochure*).

These appliances should only be active while the engine is running as they rely on the 240 volt electrical system. If these appliances were used without the engine running, they will draw power from the domestic battery bank and in turn, may drain them.

You will be instructed on your technical handover about the usage of these items.

FREE **Wi-Fi**

New for 2015, All of our boats are fitted with free Wi-Fi.

Free Wi-Fi is now available on all of our boats. Please be aware that the Wi-Fi on board is not the same as at home and requires a network signal. The amount of data provided at the start of your holiday should be sufficient for browsing or e-mail but not for downloading or streaming.

If you use all of the data provided free of charge you will have the option to purchase more direct from the provider.

For further information about our free Wi-Fi service please go to www.abcboathire.com





Payments & Charges

The final balance of holiday payment is due 8 weeks prior to the start date of the holiday, which you may have now paid. If you have not already made payment please make it by any of the following methods in pounds sterling only:

Cheque

Cheques should be made payable to ABC Leisure Group at the address below.

Please write the following details on the reverse of the cheque:

The booking reference number, name of the person who booked, the start date of the holiday and the class of boat.

PO Box 232, Worcester, WR1 2SD

Credit / Debit Card

We accept payments from Solo, Maestro, Visa and Delta debit cards, or by Visa or Mastercard credit cards.

Go to www.abcboathire.com to make a secure online payment



Please Note: We do not accept American Express

Overseas Payments

All payments are required in pounds sterling. Payment in any other currency and/or from a non-UK bank incurs heavy bank charges, for which you will be responsible. The best exchange rates are probably obtained by using a debit or credit card, for which you can go to www.abcboathire.com to make an online payment.

We look forward to welcoming you on-board

