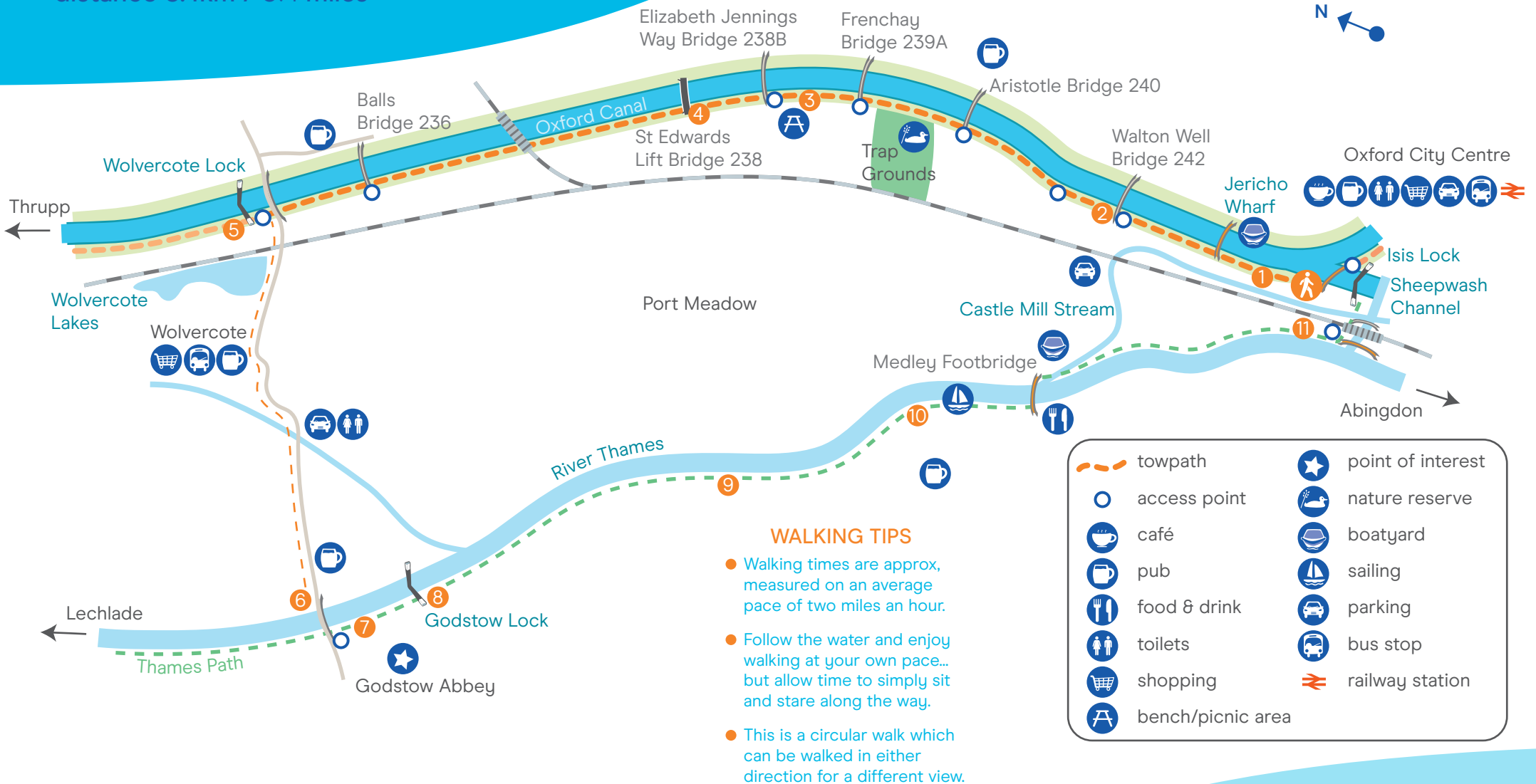


Oxford Wellbeing Walk




Oxford Circular

walk time 2½-2¾ hours
distance 8.4km / 5¼ miles



The Walk - Step by Step

Oxford, city of 'dreaming spires', is a world-famous seat of learning with its historic university, founded as early as 1264. The River Thames is important to the city and the Oxford Canal connects with it via Isis Lock at its most southern point, and higher up via the short Duke's Cut. This walk is a glorious mix of heritage and nature, worth every step you pace, taking you along Oxford Canal's green corridor through to the wide open expanse of the rural River Thames, with birdsong for company and views of grazing horses and cows.

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-  Isis Lock sits in a calm leafy setting close to the city, and drops the Oxford Canal to the Sheepwash Channel.
 - 1 Follow the towpath north alongside Castle Mill Stream and the railway, with boats moored on both sides of the canal. Jericho Wharf on the opposite bank has long been the focus of a battle to conserve the boatyard as part of a sensitive community development.
 - 2 Most bridges along the canal were built in the 1790s by engineer James Brindley and are now Grade II-listed.
 - 3 Frenchay Bridge, near Trap Grounds Local Wildlife Site, and Elizabeth Jennings Way Bridge are colourfully decorated with murals as part of the Oxford Canal Mural Project. Long stretches of the canal and its banks are designated Conservation Areas.
 - 4 The towpath runs through a linear residential community of moored boats, past an open lift bridge.
 - 5 At Wolvercote Lock, climb steps up to the road and turn right over the railway. The huge expanse of Port Meadow spreads out on your left. Go straight through Wolvercote, following Godstow Road as it branches left at Jacob's Inn, until you reach the Trout Inn.
 - 6 Cross the historic twin-arched Godstow Bridge, then the newer bridge before following Thames Path signs to head south beside the river. Be aware of flood warnings.
 - 7 A Benedictine nunnery dating from the 12th century, the Grade II-listed walled ruins of Godstow Abbey are also the burial place of 'Fair Rosamund', mistress of Henry II.
 - 8 Continue through gates past Godstow Lock, built to bypass the nearby weir. Expansive views open up across to the meadow and its grazing horses or cows, while lush trees, bushes and wild flowers line your path.
 - 9 The river is peaceful even if busy with boats, and there are many spots to picnic or just sit and watch. Gangs of geese and swans vie for position on the water. Keep your eyes peeled for heron, kingfishers and hedgerow birds too.
 - 10 Moored boats indicate the Perch at Binsey and, shortly after passing a boatyard, you cross over the Thames via Medley Footbridge. Continue past moored boats and over another footbridge to follow a more enclosed tree-lined path between waters.
 - 11 Turn left into Sheepwash Channel, reputedly so-called as farmers used to bring their flocks of sheep for dipping. Mind your head as you walk under low railway bridges and follow the path up and across Rewley Road.
 -  Cross the footbridge over Castle Mill Stream before arriving back at Isis Lock.

CANAL: Oxford

START & FINISH: Isis Lock
OS Grid ref: SP505066 Postcode: OX1 2RQ

DISTANCE: 8.4km / 5¼ miles

APPROX TIME: 2½-3¼ hours

PUB/CAFÉ: Anchor by Aristotle Bridge 240, Plough near Balls Bridge 236, Trout Inn by Godstow Bridge, Perch at Binsey, various in Oxford

PARKING: Nearest car parks – Oxford Station (postcode: OX1 1HS), Worcester Street (postcode: OX1 2BQ), Godstow (OX2 8PE)

TRAIN: Nearest train station - Oxford
National Rail Enquiries
Tel: 03457 484950 www.nationalrail.co.uk

BUS: Traveline
Tel: 0871 2002233 www.traveline.info