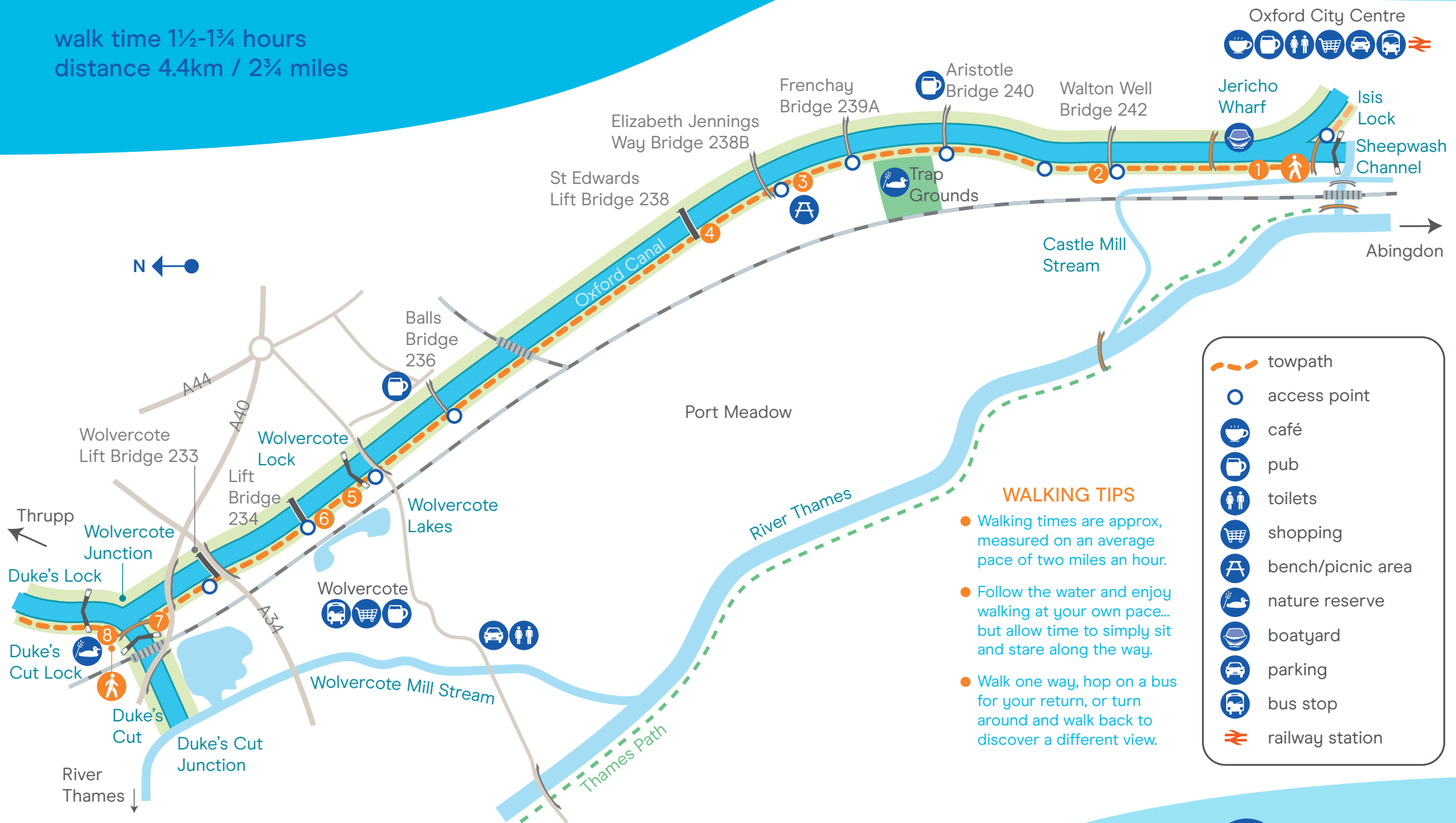


# Oxford Wellbeing Walk




## Isis Lock to Duke's Cut

walk time 1½-1¾ hours  
distance 4.4km / 2¾ miles



## The Walk - Step by Step

This leafy walk follows the Oxford Canal's green corridor as it heads away from the city. 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 an important feature of the city and the canal is connected to it via Isis Lock at its most southern point, and higher up via the short Duke's Cut. Ambling along this towpath, it's hard to imagine the Oxford Canal was once part of a busy major freight route between London and the Midlands.

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-  The River Thames is an important feature of Oxford. The canal connects to it via Isis Lock and the Sheepwash Channel at its most southern point, and again higher up via the Duke's Cut. Isis Lock, in a calm leafy setting close to the city, drops the canal down to the Sheepwash Channel.
  - 1 Head north to follow the towpath alongside Castle Mill Stream and the railway, with boats moored on both sides of the canal. Jericho Wharf opposite, overlooked by the campanile of the Grade I-listed St Barnabas Church, has long been the focus of a battle to conserve the boatyard as part of a sensitive community development.
  - 2 Just beyond Walton Well Bridge, the leafy towpath passes rows of gardens opposite, many clearly enjoying their position by the water.
  - 3 Near Trap Grounds Local Wildlife Site, Frenchay Bridge and Elizabeth Jennings Way Bridge are both colourfully decorated with murals as part of the Oxford Canal Mural Project. Long stretches of the canal and its banks are designated Conservation Areas, protecting species such as the elusive water vole.
  - 4 Continuing northwards, the towpath runs through a linear residential community of moored boats, passing St Edward's Lift Bridge which is usually left open. Another linear boating community spreads from Balls Bridge towards Wolvercote.
  - 5 Wolvercote Lock and bridge sit in a pretty setting just by the railway.
  - 6 Signage on the towpath announces residential community moorings from here past a lift bridge through to the A34 flyover, which starts to make its presence felt as you approach. Wolvercote Lift Bridge sits just beyond its shadow and, almost immediately, another main road, the A40, crosses the canal on a more appealing skewed brick bridge.
  - 7 The canal widens and there are expansive views over the fields opposite at the junction with Duke's Cut, a short connection between the Oxford Canal and the River Thames. The Cut was created in 1789 for the Duke of Marlborough, owner of Blenheim Palace and major shareholder in the Oxford Canal.
  - 8 Walk up and over the Grade II-listed red-brick bridge at the junction. The Oxford Canal continues straight through Duke's Lock next to its pretty lock cottage.
  -  Grade II-listed Duke's Cut Lock was originally designed to allow for variations in the level of the River Thames, using two lock gates rather than one, though one is no longer used. Once you've finished exploring, retrace your steps back to Isis Lock, or hop on a bus from Wolvercote back to Oxford.

**CANAL:** Oxford

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

**FINISH:** Duke's Cut  
OS Grid ref: SP488106 Postcode: OX2 8JT

**DISTANCE:** 4.4km / 2¾ miles

**APPROX TIME:** 1½-1¾ hours

**PUB/CAFÉ:** Anchor by Aristotle Bridge 240, Plough near Balls Bridge 236, various in Wolvercote & 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](http://www.nationalrail.co.uk)

**BUS:** Traveline  
Tel: 0871 2002233 [www.traveline.info](http://www.traveline.info)

