

**R. Exe and Exeter Ship Canal  
Loop 1  
Exeter Quay to Salmonpool  
Easy Trail**

**Route Summary**

This is an unusual and pleasant trip right in the centre of a major city, taking a circular route down the River Exe, and back up the Exeter Ship Canal, which was built to enable sailing ships to reach the city centre. It is under 2 miles long, and gives great views of the city to the east side, and an easy paddle. There are two portages around weirs, and another to reach the canal from the river. There are Waymarker points at these locations with a canoe on them.

Exeter was an important wool trade exporter from centuries back, until a dispute arose with Topsham downriver, a weir being built to divert off trade. To enable ships to still reach the centre of Exeter, the canal was built in 1566. The main traffic today is recreational.

**Nearest Town** – Exeter

**O.S. Sheets** - 192 Exeter & Sidmouth

**Start and Finish**

Haven Road, Exeter, Devon EX2 8BP

The start is at Exeter Quayside (south side), reached by the riverside upstream, where there is adequate street parking (pay parking by the hour). A riverside walkway leads down to the Quay, where there is a large paved area between the river and canal. There are several cafes and public toilets in this area. This area of Exeter is to the west of the city centre, and on the west bank of the Exe. From the city centre, cross the main bridge, and turn left to follow the river downstream for about a third of a mile.



From the M5, approaching Exeter from the east, cross the river on the motorway, to the junction with the A30 to the north and west, and after 1.5 miles, turn right towards the city centre, turning off to the right before the river bridge.

**Waterways Travelled** - River Exe and Exeter Ship Canal

**Type of Water** - Urban river and canal

**Distance** - 1.56 miles

**Licence Information** – A license is not currently required for this waterway

**Local Facilities**

Exeter Quayside (both sides of the river), have ample facilities and many eating places. There is the canoe shop also between the river and canal.

**Vehicle Shuttle** - is not required

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**Portages and Locks** – I possibly 2. A portage might be required early in the trip to avoid a weir on the River Exe, and definitely for St. James's Weir downriver. There is a portage of 150m between the river and the canal. Steps, slipways, or landing stages are provided.

### Description

Facing the river, the direction is to the right, downstream.

The launch point might have to be altered, as Trews Weir on the river is almost at the start. To avoid the weir, paddle down the canal for about 100m, and carry over to the river below the weir. There are slipways on both sides of the river above the weir. Setting off downstream you will soon reach the area of Trews weir. On the left is the Port Royal pub. The weir, built in the 1860's, is shootable at most water levels, when low a diagonal fish run will provide sufficient depth. Whether shooting the weir or portaging it, keep to the right side of the river below it.



The building you now see on the left is known as the Old Match Factory (now flats) was built in 1774. Continuing, you will pass the City Parks nursery. Keep well to the right (to avoid conflict with property owners) and you reach the St. James's Weir.

Shooting the weir is possible at most levels either down the face or using the diagonal fish run. When the river is high beware of the strong holding stopper and tow back, which runs most of the length of the weir. The weir pool and the river below are affected by the tide and is an important salmon fishery.

The weir can be avoided by a short portage of 50m. on the right bank, off the river via a platform, and back on up steps. Shortly afterwards is the way off the river, up a flood relief channel which looks like a set of steps, just before it joins the river. The portage is 150m, with the way onto the canal at a landing stage by the side of a car park for the playing fields.

About halfway back to the start is a landing stage near to Water Lane car park, on the left side. The canal then leads the paddler back to the start at the canal basin.

### Useful Information

On the Quay in Exeter is [A/S Watersports](#) - a canoe shop - and they are more than happy to help you with canoeing information in the area.

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[www.exeter.gov.uk/](http://www.exeter.gov.uk/)  
[www.exeterviews.co.uk/](http://www.exeterviews.co.uk/)  
[www.exeter-cathedral.org.uk/](http://www.exeter-cathedral.org.uk/)

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## Recommended Next Trail

If you have enjoyed this trail why not try out one of the many trails available.

## Safety Information

Spending an afternoon canoeing can be a fun way to experience nature, get a great workout and spend time with family and friends.. However, it can also be a dangerous journey, if safety guidelines are overlooked. Always follow these basic rules and comply with navigation rules- keep to the right of on-coming boats. Please be careful at points along the trail where there are sharp bends on the waterway and keep a look out at these points for oncoming traffic.

### ***Wear appropriate clothing***

Always wear shoes. Rocks, rough terrain and river beds present serious hazards to boaters without the proper attire. Nearly 90per cent of all boating injuries are attributed to lack of proper footwear. Other canoe safe clothing includes hats, additional dry clothing towels, and layered items which can easily be removed.

### **Be sure to**

- Know the weather forecast before you set out canoeing.
  - Familiarise yourself with the local area, it's sensitive places and protected areas.
  - Leave the environment as you found it. Please read [You, Your Canoe and the environment](#)
  - Take your litter home with you.
  - Follow the navigation rules for the waterway you are on.
  - Keep noise to a minimum.
  - Do not damage bank side vegetation when launching or landing. (No Seal Launching)
  - Where possible keep to any designated paths or launching points.
  - Canoe a safe distance away from wildlife.
  - Check your equipment.
  - Observe the navigation rules for this waterway.
  - Check to see if there are any events on the waterways when you wish to travel.
- Use the checklist below to make sure you have everything you need.

#### Checklist:

1. Boat
2. Paddle
3. Buoyancy Aid
4. Bailer/sponge
5. Small First Aid Kit
6. Penknife
7. Mobile telephone (in a waterproof bag....Please note that in some areas due to the location mobile telephone reception might be nonexistent)
8. Fresh drinking water
9. Sun cream, hat and sunglasses
10. Light waterproof jacket
11. Footwear
12. Licence

**ALWAYS** be certain to let others know where you're going and when you're expected to return.

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### Specific Environmental Information:

Please ensure you don't remove or damage any plants or animals from the waterway as they may be protected or harmful if transferred to other catchments.

Canoeists and kayakers take very seriously environmental concerns and already follow existing voluntary environmental codes of conduct, including Canoe England's own guidance notes outlined in the "You your canoe and the environment" publication.

By following the simple steps below you can ensure your presence is not detrimental to the freshwater environment, minimize and avoid accidentally disturbing wildlife and their habitats.

- Find out about the area before you go, noting its sensitive places, species and breeding seasons.
- Leave no trace of your visit and take your litter home with you.
- When clearing litter left by others, handle it with care.
- Leave the environment as you find it
- Keep noise to a minimum.
- Do not "seal" launch or drag boats to avoid wearing away natural banks. Float your canoe for launching, lift out when landing and carry it to and from the water.
- Do not damage bank side vegetation when launching or landing.
- Where possible keep to any designated paths or launching points.
- On rivers, avoid paddling over gravel banks in low water conditions – they may contain fish spawn.
- Constantly assess wildlife. If you see signs of disturbance move away quietly.

Be the eyes and ears on the water. Report pollution, wildlife problems, damage, incidents etc to the relevant authorities.

Canal & River Trust - Emergencies- Telephone 0800 47 999 47

RSPCA for wildlife and animals in distress – Telephone 0990 55 59 99 (24 hours)

Environment Agency - Telephone 0800 80 70 60 (24 hours)

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