

River Severn

Bridgenorth to Upper Arley

Easy to Moderate Trail

Route Summary

This is one of the prettiest river trips in England, on one of the longest rivers. This section is between wooded slopes, with a good flow of water, and small villages providing stopping places. This section has been selected due to its continual interest, and has only very small rapids, and no difficulties.

Nearest Town – Bridgenorth

O.S. Sheets - Landranger No. 138 – Kidderminster and Wyre Forest

Start - Public car park, upstream of bridge on east side, Bridgenorth – SO 719933

Finish – Upper Arley – a very small village, with grass car parking in the summer upstream of the old ferry landing, Kidderminster, Worcestershire

Waterways Travelled – River Severn

Type of Water - Natural river

Distance – 10.5 miles

Licence Information – No licence required

Local Facilities – In Bridgenorth

Vehicle Shuttle Required - Yes - The shuttle down to Arley is via the A442 road on the east side of the river, from Bridgenorth to Kidderminster. The turn down to Upper Arley is at Shatterford, and is well signposted. It is a cul-de-sac lane of one and a half miles.

Portages and Locks - None

Description

The launch point in Bridgenorth is upstream of the road bridge (the one in the town, not the new by-pass bridge south of the town). Approaching from the north, the Telford direction, on the east side of the Severn, the large riverside park is fairly obvious, with plenty of parking. A ramp leads down to the river, and on summer weekends, this area can be very busy. Several commercial outfits regularly use this part of the Severn for taking groups canoeing. If the passage under the bridge in the town is shallow and a scrape, the river is low, but the Severn often floods to an enormous extent in the winter.

Bridgenorth is an ancient market town, and well worth visiting. It is known as 'Italianate' with an obvious church tower rising above the trees on the hill, which is 'High Town'. 'Low Town' is down by the river, and the two are linked by a funicular railway. High Town has many black-and-white Tudor buildings, and is very pretty. Low Town is a bit more of a working place, and the last of the

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riverside warehouses, with its block and tackle for lifting cargoes off barges was only converted into flats a few years ago.

The start through Bridgenorth is great – a fast current through the bridge, and soon out into countryside, although the main road down to Kidderminster will be following you on the left side. On the right bank, the noise and clouds of steam on the right bank will be the Severn Valley Railway, also well worth a ride on.

Anglers will abound, in any weather, and this is coarse angling, carried on for most of the year. The bypass bridge is over you after a half mile, and then the river bends to the left towards the village of Quatford, on the A442. Caravans and chalets abound on the banks. A bend to the right takes the river over towards the railway, and the hamlet of Lower Forge. The Chelmarsh reservoir is high on the right bank, and invisible.

The paddler is now approaching Hampton Loade, which is a useful halfway stopping point. The Lion Inn is on the left bank, and a campsite on the right bank. A small passenger ferry crosses the river during summer, useful for late night drinkers from the campsite! All of these Severn valley villages become very crowded on weekends of good weather in the summer, so be warned. Paddling in higher water in Spring or Summer might be a good idea.

After the village, peace returns with the railway close on the right bank, great for steam train photography.

The next village is Highley, on the right side, a former coal-mining village, and a remnant of the Shropshire coalfield to the north, obvious from the brick terraced cottages. There is a pub here, for those with the energy to climb the steep bank.

The banks become a little lower, as the Severn approaches Upper Arley via a corridor of leafy trees on both banks. On a busy weekend, the large field used for a car park announces the village coming up, on the left side, and eventually the metal footbridge becomes visible. This replaced the car ferry which plied its trade over the river during the 1950s and 60s. The former ferry ramps are very convenient for canoeists to land on, and on most days, the empty boats signal that the occupants are either shopping for ice cream at the village shop, or in a pub!

Useful Information

Bridgenorth – www.visitbridgenorth.co.uk/

Severn Valley Railway – www.svr.co.uk/

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 work out and spend time with friends and family. It can also be a dangerous journey, if appropriate safety guidelines are overlooked. Always follow these basic rules and comply with navigation rules- keep to the right of on-coming boats. There are a number of sharp bends on this canal to require keeping a sharp look out at these points.

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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.

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.

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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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