



**AT THE
HEART
OF IT!**
READING 2024



**GREAT
WEST WAY**



**VISIT
READING**

[VISIT-READING.COM/TRAVELTRADE](https://visit-reading.com/traveltrade)



Reading is a cornerstone of English history, brilliantly connected into the UK transport system, the regional hub for shopping and dining and a great base to explore the Great West Way. And as you might expect from a global centre for climate research, a visit to Reading is a sustainable one – public transport, walking, local products, respect for our rivers and a tourism sector committed to reducing their carbon footprint. Whichever way you look at it, Reading is at the heart of a visit to the South of England.

One of the best-connected destinations in the country

By coach

Reading is easily reached by coach off the M4 or A34. Coach parking can be booked in advance at Reading Buses Great Knolly Street depot (RG1 7HH). Call 0118 959 4000. Drop off at Reading Museum in the town centre on Valpy Street or at MERL.

By rail

Reading has direct rail links to London and the South West, the Midlands and North West as well as the South Coast. Reading is also now the western terminus of the new Elizabeth Line. We have rail connections to Heathrow and Gatwick airports as well as Birmingham and Southampton airports.

Once you're here, you'll find that Reading train station is in the heart of the town, making everywhere easily walkable.

- Reading is just 22 minutes out of London Paddington on fast GWR services.
- London Freedom Pass holders can travel for free to Reading on the Elizabeth Line.
- GWR has a group booking discount of 26% for groups of 10 or more.

On route

Reading is also on the Thames Path, the St James' Way, the King Alfred's Way cycle route and a number of Sustrans cycle routes. No wonder it is a popular stopping off point on the Great West Way!

Where the Thames Valley comes to shop

From quirky indie shops to high street big names, Reading is a great place to shop. Two shopping malls in the heart of the town alongside Reading's main pedestrianised shopping street make Reading a vibrant retail centre. You'll find everything you want from John Lewis to a comic shop, House of Fraser to a hat shop, a cheese retailer to Primark.

- Reading Museum and The MERL shops have great Reading gifts
- The Harris Arcade and Union Street have lots of small independent shops

READING OFFERS A GREAT VISIT FOR GROUPS

TELLING OUR STORIES

A unique place in our history

Reading was the burial place of King Henry I almost 900 years ago. The ruins of his mausoleum, Reading Abbey, are a must visit in central Reading. Reading's Abbey Quarter also boasts the school room of Jane Austen, the only full-scale replica of the Bayeux Tapestry and a new Banksy to mark Oscar Wilde's imprisonment in Reading Gaol. And you'll love the Victorian architecture in Central Reading which uses the lovely Reading brick, just one of Reading's 4Bs – Biscuits, Beer, Bricks and Bulbs, which underpinned the town's success in Victorian times.

- Walk in the footsteps of medieval pilgrims along the St James' Way, which sets out from Reading Abbey to Southampton and which is part of the world-famous Camino de Santiago pilgrimage route
- Take a guided walk of Biscuit Town or the Abbey Quarter
- Check out Banksy's Create Escape on the walls of Reading Gaol
- See where Jane Austen went to school – visit Reading Museum's Victorian School Room Experience in the Abbey Gateway

Unique museums

Reading's five unique museums tell the compelling stories of Reading and beyond. Reading Museum is the starting place for anyone interested in how Reading came to be and developed. The MERL (Museum of English Rural Life) tells the story of food, farming and the countryside with unique collections of farming equipment as well as the Huntley & Palmers archive. The Cole Museum of Zoology has recently reopened in new facilities at the University of Reading, where it is joined by the Ure Museum of Greek Archaeology. The Museum of Berkshire Aviation tells the unique story of the aviation industry locally.

- Don't miss Britain's Bayeux Tapestry and the Story of Reading and Huntley & Palmers galleries at Reading Museum
- Bring back those childhood memories at The MERL's Ladybird Collection of children's books

Tours

There are lots of ways to bring Reading's stories alive with tours and guided walks. And the good news is that Reading is very compact which makes for easy walking.

- **Abbey Quarter guided tours** – let Reading Museum's volunteer guides bring the Abbey Quarter to life
- **Reading Walks** – a new kid on the block offering group walking tours
- **Terry's Reading Walkabouts** – Terry offers over 16 different themed guided walks around Reading
- **Tours2Order** – Graham Horn is a Blue Badge guide based locally with a range of Reading and beyond tours
- **RABBLE** – Professional medieval history theatre in the Abbey Ruins
- **ReadingRep** – a leading producing theatre offering a free ticket for group organisers

Where the Thames meets the Kennet

Reading emerged 1000 years ago at the point where the River Kennet flows into the Thames and Reading embraces its waterways to this day. Take a Thames River Cruise upriver to Mapledurham. There are regular services throughout the summer and weekends as well as private hire options.

- Try a Thames River Cruise Afternoon Tea cruise
- Pop into the Thames Lido for coffee or lunch
- Dine alongside the Kennet & Avon Canal at The Oracle Riverside





Stay the night

Reading has the widest selection of accommodation in the region, from 5-star luxury and excellent top-end hotels to many of the budget brands. Choose between the town centre to access Reading's attractions and the Thames or hotels south of the centre close to the M4.

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| Reading Hilton – 0118 916 9000 | Sure Hotel Best Western – 0118 931 1311 |
| Crowne Plaza Reading – 0118 925 9988 | Voco Reading – 0118 925 3500 |
| Crowne Plaza Reading East – 0118 944 0444 | Travelodge – 08719 846211 |
| Roseate Reading – 0118 952 7770 | Market House – 0118 304 3400 |
| Malmaison – 0118 334 1331 | Premier Inn – 0330 135 9038 |
| Penta Hotel – 0118 958 6222 | House of Fisher (serviced apartments) – 0118 951 4151 |
| Novotel Reading – 0118 952 2600 | Premier Suites (serviced apartments) – 0118 324 9700 |
| Ibis – 0118 953 3500 | |
| Holiday Inn – 0871 942 9067 | |

More details on Reading accommodation – visit-reading.com



Reading is an ideal overnight stop on the eastern section of the Great West Way. Reading has plenty to entertain in its own right and is a good base to explore the surrounding area, from Oxford to Windsor, Newbury Races to Silchester Roman ruins.

CONTACTS

Reading Museum
0118 937 3400
readingmuseum.org.uk/your-visit/group-visits

The MERL (Museum of English Rural Life)
0118 378 8660
merl.reading.ac.uk/visit-us/group-visits

Cole Museum of Zoology
collections.reading.ac.uk/cole-museum/visit-us/group-visits/

Ure Museum of Greek Archaeology
0118 378 6990
collections.reading.ac.uk/ure-museum

The Berkshire Museum of Aviation
museumofberkshireaviation.co.uk

Reading Abbey Ruins
0118 937 3400
readingmuseum.org.uk/whats-on/reading-abbey-quarter-tour

Thames River Cruise
0118 948 1088
thamesrivercruise.co.uk

Tours 2 Order
07827 715353
tours2order.com

Walk Reading
walk-reading.co.uk

Terry's Reading Walkabouts
07505 351517
readingwalkingtours.co.uk

Abbey Quarter Tours
0118 937 3400
readingmuseum.org.uk/whats-on/abbey-quarter-walking-tours

St James' Way
visit-reading.com/pilgrim

Rabble Theatre
rabbletheatre.com

Readingrep Theatre
readingrep.com

REDA – Reading's Destination and Economy Agency
alex.brannen@reading.gov.uk 07860 779166
The Library Building, Abbey Square, Reading, RG1 3BQ

VISIT-READING.COM/TRAVELTRADE

