







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.

READING

OFFERS A

GREAT VISIT

FOR GROUPS

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 (RG17HH). Call 0118 959 4000. Drop off at Reading Museum in the town centre on Valpy Street or at MERL.

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.

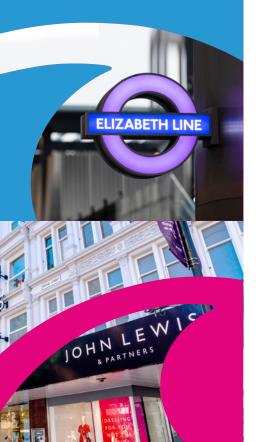
Reading is also on the Thames Path, the St James' Way, the King Alfred's Way cycle route and a number of Sustrans cycle routes. No wonder it is a popular stopping off point on the Great West Way!

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





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
- Walk Reading 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





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/colemuseum/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

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