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READING 2024
VISITOR GUIDE

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“Fun, informative and enjoyable”
“A genuine joy to walk and talk”
“Very enjoyable and informative walk”

www.walk-reading.co.uk



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Welcome to the Reading Visitor Guide. We hope it will serve you well as an introduction to Reading. In the Guide you will find ideas and inspiration for things to do in Reading as well as a map of Reading town centre and suggestions on how to use Reading as a base for exploring the region and for day trips to London.

You'll find full contact details and much more for everything included in this Guide at visit-reading.com. We look forward to welcoming you to our town very soon.

AN INTRODUCTION TO READING

Reading is the UK's largest town but we are a city in all but name. We sit in the heart of the Royal County of Berkshire, on the banks of the River Thames and Kennet, just 23 minutes (by train) west of London.

Reading surprises people. It mixes heritage and modernity and challenges perceptions. It's a place that combines a thousand years of history with modern-day living, a location alongside the graceful River Thames but with a buzzy nightlife, home to inspiring museums, the region's best shopping and the whole world on a plate.



Reading's history is particularly striking to visitors. To quote one recent visitor: "I had no idea Reading has so much to offer. One visits Paris, Rome, Athens, Cairo and all the time there is all this history along the road."

Reading is one of the best-connected destinations in the UK. Easy to reach, wherever you are coming from. We are an easy day trip out of London, but best suited to a weekend break or as a base to explore the eastern section of the Great West Way or day visits to London. You'll find a great array of accommodation on offer, much of it walking distance from the station in the town centre or just off the M4.



Reading Abbey Ruins are the burial place of one of England's medieval kings, King Henry I



Oscar Wilde was imprisoned in **Reading Gaol**, immortalised in The Ballad of Reading Gaol



With their 24,000 seater stadium, **Reading Football Club** celebrated their 150th anniversary just recently. With recent experience in the Premier League, The Royals men's team are currently playing in League One



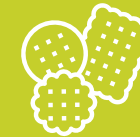
The **University of Reading** is one of the world's top research universities and a global centre for climate research. It has a beautiful 130 hectare parkland campus to explore



Jane Austen went to school in **Reading Abbey Gateway**, which is part of Reading Museum



Reading was once the world's largest producer of biscuits. See the **Reading Museum Huntley and Palmer Gallery** (Biscuits are one of Reading's famous 3Bs)



An idyllic stretch of the **River Thames** flows through the heart of Reading – book a cruise!



The **Reading Festival** attracts 100,000 festival-goers every August for one of the world's oldest music festivals



We are an accredited part of the world-famous Camino de Santiago pilgrimage route – see the **St James' Way**



The British Bayeux Tapestry – a full-scale Victorian replica of the original – can be seen in **Reading Museum**



Reading is the final stop on the new **Elizabeth Line** and so is part of the London Transport network



THINGS TO DO

See visit-reading.com for full contact details

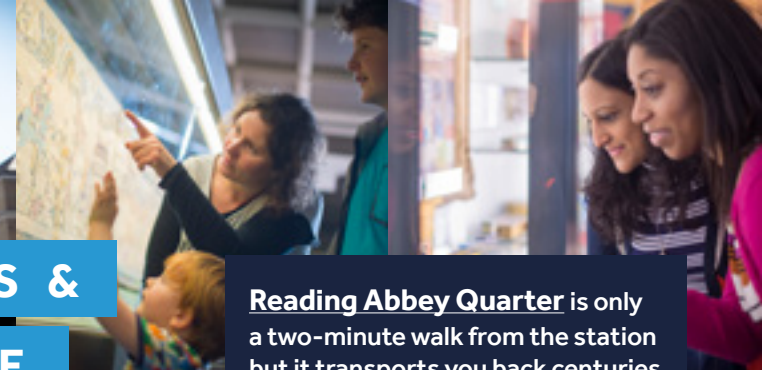
TAKE A TOUR

Reading town centre is compact and easy to walk around so a walking tour is the best way to find your feet and learn more about Reading's fascinating history which dates back to medieval times.

There are lots of options from **Reading Museum's tours of the Abbey Quarter** to **Terry's Reading Walkabouts** themed walks such as Reading architecture or its fame as biscuit town or **Walk Reading's** exploration of Reading's role in the history of photography, a Reading Miscellany or Reading's Lost Railway. You can hire your own Blue Badge Guide tour with **Tours2Order** who can introduce you to Reading's famous 3Bs (biscuits, bulbs and beer). You could also join a **Walk Works** free Wednesday lunchtime walk.



MUSEUMS & HERITAGE



Reading was founded at the confluence of the rivers Thames and Kennet a thousand years ago. The ruins of **Reading Abbey**, built over 900 years ago, are open every day and are free to visit. You can also peer over the wall at Oscar Wilde's cell in the neighbouring former **Reading Gaol**, itself a building of huge architectural and historical value.

Reading Museum is one of six museums in Reading and is your starting point for understanding Reading's history. *The Story of Reading Galleries* show the Abbey as it once was, while medieval Britain is also celebrated in the British Bayeux Tapestry, the only full-scale replica of the Norman original.

The Museum of English Rural Life celebrates all things food, farming and the countryside. It has a unique collection of farming implements and vehicles as well as the Ladybird Books Gallery and a great family garden and cafe.

The Cole Museum of Zoology and **Ure Museum of Greek Archaeology** are both on the University of Reading's Whiteknights campus. The Cole Museum has just moved into a brand-new home and has new displays of all things "animal". All four of these museums are free to visit.

Reading Abbey Quarter is only a two-minute walk from the station but it transports you back centuries. Within the ruins of the 12th century abbey, you can search for the burial place of King Henry I or see where the monks lived in medieval times. Free to visit.



Much of the Abbey was destroyed during the English Civil War but the **Abbey Gateway** survives and was school to Jane Austen in 1785. The Victorians created the pleasure gardens that exist today on the footprint of the Abbey and its grounds.

The **Museum of Berkshire Aviation** celebrates local aviation history with lots to explore including a plane open to visitors, while the **Berkshire Medical Museum** has a collection of many hundreds of artefacts and photographs relating to medicine, surgery, nursing, pharmacy and dentistry.





A FAMILY DAY OUT

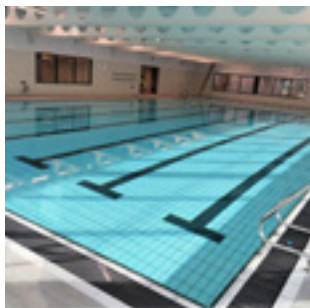


Reading's museums have lots of family-friendly activities. Dress up as a Victorian schoolchild at the free to visit [Reading Museum](#), find out about the history of biscuits and meet the museum's animal collection. Become a farmer at the also free Museum of [English Rural Life \(MERL\)](#) as you follow the trail around the galleries that tell the story of the countryside and food. Or climb aboard a plane at the [Berkshire Museum of Aviation](#) – it's all possible here.

Have fun on the water in the summer. [Caversham Lakes](#) and [Lagoona Park](#) offer SUP/paddle board rental, a beach and inflatable obstacle courses on the water.

Short distances from the town centre, [Wellington Country Park](#), [Beale Wildlife Park](#), [Bozedown Farm](#) and [Dinton Pastures](#) are wonderful spaces to explore with lots of family-focused outdoor activities on offer, from alpaca walking to a mini steam train and sailing among the options. Or try one of Reading's many parks – [Prospect Park](#) has a new children's area and cafe and monthly mini steam train rides while [Forbury Gardens](#) is a great place for a picnic near the station. And if the weather is bad, Reading has two indoor climbing centres, [Parthian Climbing Reading](#) and [Reading Climbing Hangar](#), and a brand-new swimming pool at [Palmer Park](#).

Look out for free Reading town centre trails at Easter, in the summer holidays and Halloween. You'll have great fun exploring the town centre to complete the fun trails. You can ride locally, try out track cycling at the [Palmer Park](#) outdoor velodrome, or go bowling, darts and crazy golf indoors at [Spinners](#).



WALKING & CYCLING

Maybe it's the scale of Reading or it's all about location, but Reading is excellently placed for walking and cycling. The town has grown up between the Thames and the Kennet / Kennet & Avon Canal so there are lots of great towpath and riverbank walks along the [Thames Path National Trail](#) or [Kennet & Avon Canal](#) towards Bath. The Thames Path is easily accessible from the station and town centre.

Reading is also on the [King Alfred Way](#), a 350 km circular off-road adventure route through 10,000 years of history, connecting some of England's most iconic sites. Reading is one of the key overnight stopping points on the route or a good place to join or leave the route via Reading Station. Several [Sustrans](#) national cycle routes also pass through Reading.

Reading sits on the [Great West Way](#), 125-mile-long national trail, stretching all the way from London to Bristol. Reading is proud to be featured at the centre of this route of discovery. So, if you fancy exploring our town as part of a road, rail, hiking or boat trip or just basing yourself

here at one of our great hotels, the Great West Way is your ultimate guide.

If you are in Reading in May, look out for the [Reading Walks Festival](#), a series of walks in and around Reading led by local experts. Or take one of Reading's walking tours – see Take a Tour.



Pilgrims have been walking to and from Reading since medieval times and the recently waymarked [St James' Way](#) retraces pilgrim footsteps along 68 miles of paths from Reading to Southampton and is an accredited part of the world-famous Camino de Santiago. The walk from Reading counts towards your Compostela should you walk on to Santiago. Start at Reading Museum in the Abbey Quarter and get your St James' Way passport stamped. The Reading for Modern Pilgrims map guide will show you where all the places of historic or pilgrim interest can be found before you head off.





ON THE WATER

Reading is on the Thames and the River Kennet/Kennet & Avon Canal as well as having a number of lakes to the north and south used for recreation. The Thames flows just north of Reading Station and a great way to explore is to join a **Thames River Cruise** circular cruise from Caversham Pier. There are also boat rides on the Kennet in central Reading aboard **Matilda Too** at weekends.

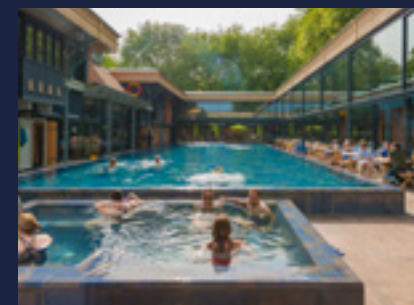
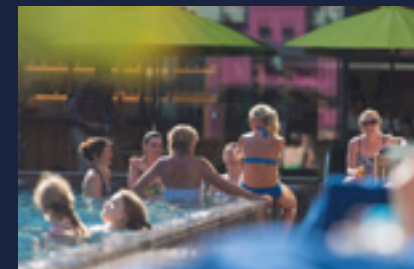


THAMES RIVER CRUISE

All aboard a Thames River Cruise at Caversham Pier to explore the Thames upstream to Mapledurham in Wind of The Willows country. Great for spotting river birds and other wildlife as you sit up front watching the world go by. Services operate from April through to the autumn. Afternoon Tea a speciality.



Open water swimmers can get their fix at **Caversham Lakes** or you could just hire a paddleboard or lounge on the beach. You could start a boating holiday on the Thames here with **Caversham Boat Services** or hire a kayak at **Wokingham Waterside Centre**. An indulgent floating experience can be had at **Nirvana Spa**.



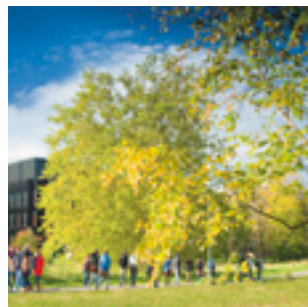
THAMES LIDO

A sedate watery experience can be enjoyed at **Thames Lido** where in addition to swimming in the former Edwardian bathing pool, you can have a massage, sunbathe with a drink of your choice or take advantage of the fabulous poolside restaurant. Try one of their Swim & Lunch or Swim & Massage packages to make a day of it!



GREEN SPACES

Reading is a surprisingly green town. With two rivers flowing through its heart, there are great walks and spaces for watching the river flow by. **Forbury Gardens** is the town centre park created by the Victorians on the footprint of the former Reading Abbey. You don't have to travel far to explore the **University of Reading's** 130-hectare award-winning green campus and its picturesque Harris Garden. Or visit **Thames Valley Park** alongside the Thames towards Sonning, Thames Promenade by Caversham Bridge or historic **Caversham Court Gardens** on the opposite bank, one of Reading's many other parks. A walk along the Kennet & Avon Canal from the town centre to Green Park is a favourite. You could walk all the way to Bath!



BREWERIES & VINEYARDS

One of Reading's famous 3Bs was Beer and although the old breweries are long gone, a new wave of micro-breweries have sprung up to keep the tradition going. **Double Barrelled** and the **Phantom Brewing Company** have tap rooms and regular events in Reading, while a nice walk from Caversham brings you to **Loddon Brewery**, also with their own shop and tap room.

One stop east of Reading on the train, the **Stanlake Vineyard** in Twyford has a lovely courtyard to sit and enjoy their wine, while the **Henley Gin Distillery** is just 3 miles east of Reading.



WATCH GREAT SPORT

For spectators, Reading is a sporting town, with football, rugby, basketball, hockey and rowing played to a high standard.

With the Thames at its heart, it is no wonder that Reading is a **rowing town**. You will always spot boats training on the Thames upriver from Caversham Bridge and downriver at Thames Valley Park. The University of Reading claims a good number of GB Olympians among their alumni.

Reading Canoe Club and **Wokingham Waterside Centre** are good places to start. You can also hire kayaks at **Thames Canoe Hire** by the Thames in Tilehurst.

You can also see high quality rugby, hockey and basketball at **Rams**, **Reading Hockey Club** and **Reading Rockets** respectively.



Reading Football Club is one of the oldest clubs in the world. Playing at the Select Car Leasing Stadium, you can get tickets to watch *The Royals* in Division One (men) and the Championship (women). Tickets are fairly easy to get and prices are very competitive compared to London clubs, especially for families.



THE ARTS

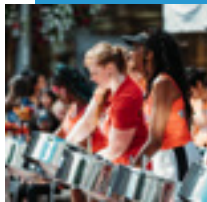
TOP 10

Reading is a very cultural town. Here is our top 10 arts experiences:

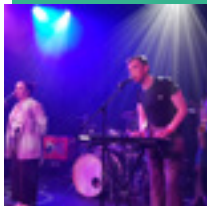
1 Reading is a **music** town. Aside from the annual Reading Festival (August), there are a number of other music festivals (**Are You Listening**, **Readipop** or **Down at the Abbey**) in the town and lots of live music venues such as **The Purple Turtle**, **Sub89** and **Facebar**. And live music is not just limited to rock, the **Aldworth Philharmonic Orchestra** put on regular concerts and there are a great number of choirs from the **Reading Bach Choir** to the **Reading Rock Choir**.



2 **Culture Mix Arts** is a music and Carnival arts company based in Reading. Among the many things they do, try and catch a performance by their Reading All Steel Percussion Orchestra (RASPO) or drop into a Reggae Friday.

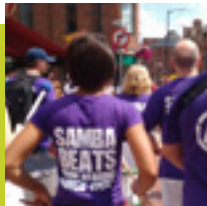


3 **South Street Arts Centre** and the **Hexagon** are iconic venues in Reading showcasing comedy, theatre, live music, dance and much more from



acts on their way up to those at the top of their game. There's always something on!

4 **Readipop** is a music charity based in Reading providing space for young people to engage in music. They also run the Readipop Festival in July as well as regular performances by their mass ukelele band and samba band.



5 **Art Trails** – Reading is home to a large community of artists. You'll find permanent studios at **Open Hand Open Space** and annual art trails such as **Whiteknights Arts Trail** (June) and the **Caversham Arts Trail** (May). Arts collective Jelly put on a regular series of art events in the town centre.



6 **Street art** – **Banksy** has contributed to Reading in recent years with a mural on the side of Reading prison imagining Oscar Wilde's escape from the Gaol. Reading's oldest mural in London Street recognises the town's black history while last year David Speed created a 20 ft high **Heather Small pilgrim work** in honour of Reading's link to the Camino de Santiago. You can find that in Friar Street. And there are a growing number of new works springing up under bridges and walkways.



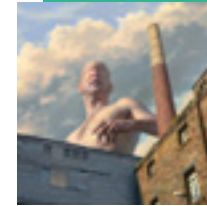
7 **Reading Festival** – no round up of Reading's art credentials can miss out one of the world's best known and oldest rock festivals. The Reading Festival is over 50 years old and every August attracts 100,000 to Reading to see some of the biggest names in music.



8 **Comedy** – Reading is one of the go to places in the UK to see comedy. All the big names include Reading on their tour and there are a number of venues that have regular comedy nights with up-and-coming comics.



9 **Galleries** – the **Madejski Gallery** at Reading Museum has a significant collection from which to draw for its temporary exhibitions, **Open Hand Open Space** have regular exhibitions, the University of Reading's **Art Department Graduate Show** is always inspiring and the **Gallery at Blake's Lock** has a regular programme of exhibitions over the summer.



10 **Theatre** – **RABBLE Theatre** are a Reading-based company that are carving out a name for themselves with electric performances of new work focusing on Reading's medieval history. Summer runs take place in the Abbey Ruins themselves. **Reading Rep** have opened a new theatre in Reading and are producing new shows for Reading mixing contemporary new work with twists on classic plays. **South Street Arts Centre** commissions its own programme of theatre in unusual spaces, **SITELINES**. Or enjoy a theatre dining experience at the lovely **Mill at Sonning**.





FOCUS ON READING TOWN CENTRE

Reading town centre is a great scale to explore on foot. Just a few hundred metres from the train station, you'll find the main shopping area, Abbey Quarter, bars, restaurants and clubs as well as lots of other entertainment alternatives.

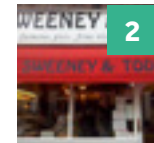
Pedestrianised Broad Street is the spine of the town centre with lots of streets running north and south of it. The Oracle and Broad Street Mall shopping centres bookend Broad Street with the Kennet & Avon Canal flowing through the former, providing lots of riverside dining and marking the edge of the town centre.



TOP 10 SUGGESTIONS FOR FOOD, DRINKS, SHOPPING & ENTERTAINMENT:



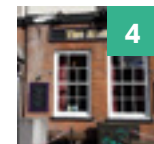
1 The Biscuit Factory
An arts cinema, bar and community café



2 Sweeney & Todd
A traditional pie shop and restaurant



3 Bhel Puri House
Authentic Indian food on Yield Hall Place



4 For a traditional pub
Look no further than The Ale House on Broad Street

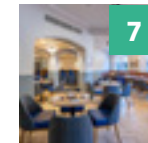


5 Street food
Blue Collar Corner offers street food with Reading brewed beer as well as

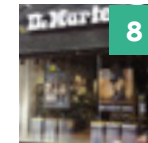
DJs in a modern container village environment – Thursday to Sunday, while Market Place holds street food markets twice a week (Wednesday/Friday lunchtimes)



6 Flamingo's Vintage
A new arrival on Queen Victoria Street with kilo sales



7 The Pantry
Café in Reading Town Hall. Great for relaxed lunches



8 Dr Marten's
The classic British shoe has evolved – so many designs to choose from



9 Escape Hunt Reading
In Kings Walk, choose from 6 escape rooms or try an outdoor city hunt



10 Market House
A bar and restaurant with rooms and a roof terrace

Attractions

- 1 Abbey Ruins, E3
- 2 Caversham Boat Services, B1
- 3 The Biscuit Factory, A4
- 4 Grosvenor Casino Reading, D4
- 5 Medical Museum Royal Berkshire, F5
- 6 Reading Museum, C3
- 7 Riverside Museum, F3
- 8 Thames Lido, E1
- 9 Thames Rivercruise Reading, A1
- 10 The Museum of English Rural Life, F5
- 11 Vue Cinema, D4
- 12 Spinners, A4

Venues

- 1 Hexagon, A4
- 2 Milk, B3
- 3 Oakford Social Club, C2
- 4 Reading Town Hall Concert Hall, C3
- 5 RISC, D5
- 6 South Street Arts Centre, D5
- 7 Sub 89, B3
- 8 The Purple Turtle, C4
- 9 University of Reading Great Hall, E5

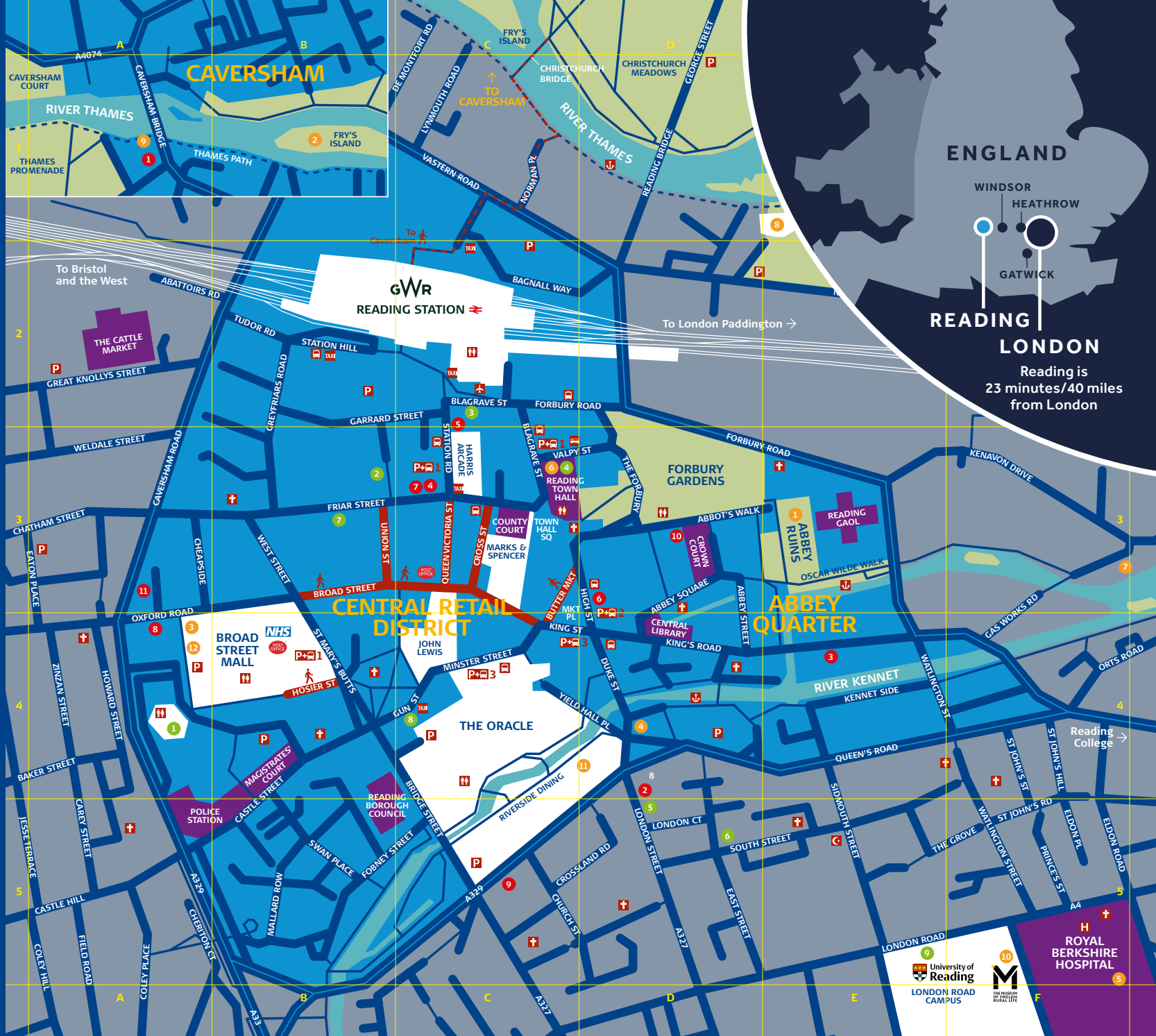
Hotels

- 1 Crowne Plaza Reading, A1
- 2 Hotel 1843, D4
- 3 House of Fisher 100 Kings Road (serviced accom), E4
- 4 ibis Reading Centre, C3
- 5 Malmaison Reading, C2
- 6 Market House Reading, D3
- 7 Novotel Reading Centre, C3
- 8 Pentahotel, A4
- 9 Premier Inn Reading Central, C5
- 10 The Roseate Reading, D3
- 11 Travelodge Reading Central, A3

Key

- Bus Stops
- Car Park with Disabled Spaces
- Coach Drop Off Point
- Public Toilet with Disabled Access
- Hospital
- Taxi Rank
- Park and Ride Pick Up and Drop Off
- Park and Ride Pick Up
- Park and Ride Drop Off
- Place of Worship
- Post Office
- Reading Walk-In Health Centre

get the app Reading Buses



ENGLAND

WINDSOR
HEATHROW
GATWICK

READING
LONDON

Reading is
23 minutes/40 miles
from London



BEYOND READING

Reading is surrounded by beautiful countryside and villages with plenty to interest the visitor. The National Trust has three properties within striking distance at **Basildon Park, the Vyne and Grey's Court**. Head to Twyford to visit the **Stanlake Vineyard** or Henley way for the **Henley Gin Distillery** and the **River and Rowing Museum**. **Silchester Roman Village** and **Wellington Country Park** are close by to the south of Reading, while **Didcot Railway Centre** is a great day out for young and old just a couple of stops up the railway line.

And you can also walk alpaca at **Bozedown Farm** to the west of Reading.

Reading is part of the **Great West Way**, national touring route which runs from West London to Bristol. Reading is a great stopping point for exploring the area. Base yourself here to easily visit Windsor (34 mins), Oxford (23 mins) and some of the surrounding quaint villages such as Goring and Streatley, Henley and Wargrave along the Way. They are all easily reached by train from Reading.



THE GATEWAY TO LONDON

London is only 23 minutes on the train from Reading with **GWR services**. And trains are very frequent, so you'll likely not have to wait long at all, but please check your journey at GWR.com before you travel. Also, don't forget that contactless payments are now accepted from Reading and into Central London, so you can just tap on and off using a debit or credit card. You'll arrive at London Paddington Station, just a few Tube stations or a 10-minute bus ride from Oxford Street and the West End.

Or you could take the **Elizabeth Line** stopping service direct to Central London. This is London's newest tube line and Reading is the end stop. You can travel to London's Bond Street, Tottenham Court Road, Liverpool Street or Canary Wharf without changing trains.

Staying in Reading will save money and there are many hotels near the station such as the Novotel, Malmaison, Penta, Roseate, Ibis and others. You can be in London in no time!



house of fisher

Serviced apartments for city living

100 Kings Road Aparthotel Reading

Studio, one, two & three bedroom serviced apartments

Rated 4.5 on TripAdvisor

City Wall House Reading Aparthotel

Studio, one & two bedroom serviced apartments

Rated 4.0 on TripAdvisor



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Car parking bookable*



Weekly Cleaning



Reading Station



WiFi available



Lift available



Air conditioning



Sky TV

*parking only available at 100 Kings Road

Visit www.houseoffisher.com or call 01189 51 41 51

TSC's apply. Full details on website

PLACES TO STAY

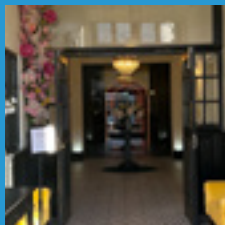


Reading has the largest selection of hotels and serviced apartments in the Thames Valley with over 2,500 bedrooms catering for all tastes and budgets. Many of our hotels are located in the heart of the town centre, a short walk from shopping, restaurants, attractions and Reading railway station. You could also choose to stay near to the University, Reading Football Club, The Thames or major road links.

You'll find full details of all Reading accommodation at visit-reading.com



Crowne Plaza Reading
Lovely views over the Thames



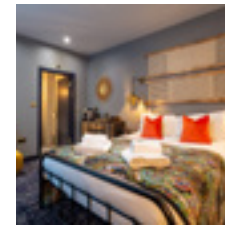
Hotel 1843
Reputed to have been opened by Charles Dickens



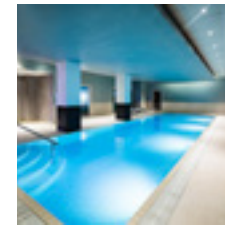
Ibis Reading Centre
In the heart of Reading's entertainment district



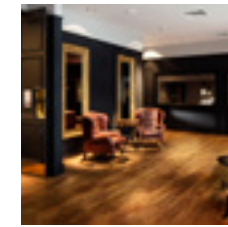
Malmaison Reading
The original Brunel railway hotel



Market House
Part bar, part hotel in a retro industrial chic style



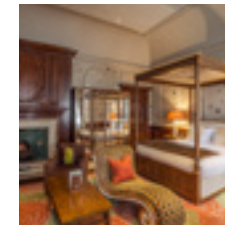
Novotel Reading
A hop, skip and a jump from the station in the heart of Reading



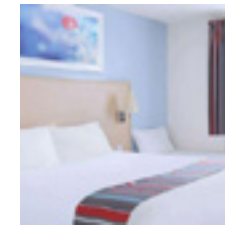
Penta Hotel
Lively atmosphere in the centre of town with great games in the bar area



Premier Inn
Take your pick of four across Reading



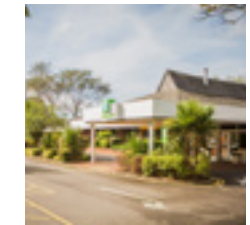
The Roseate Reading
Reading's 5 star luxury in the heart of the Abbey Quarter



Travelodge
Great location for shopping and the town centre

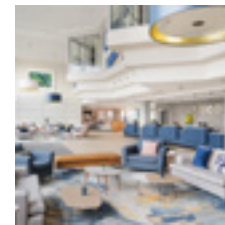


Hilton Reading
Handy for film studios, University and the Football Stadium with its own pool

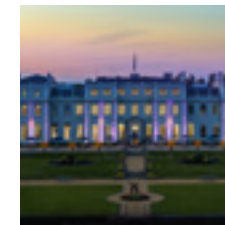


Holiday Inn Reading South
Good location just off the M4 and close to the Stadium

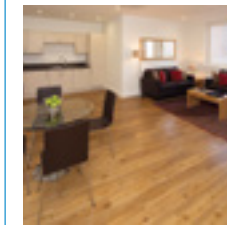
SERVICED APARTMENTS



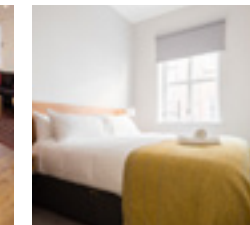
Voco Reading
The Reading Football Stadium hotel, close to the M4



Wokefield Park Estate
A classic country manor house with lovely grounds and its own golf course



House of Fisher
Several locations in Reading town centre for short and long-term stays



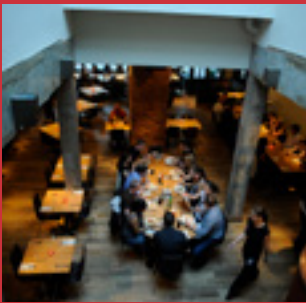
Premier Suites
In the heart of the town close to great shopping and night-life

EATING OUT

Reading knows a thing or two about food and drink, not least thanks to its own beer and biscuit heritage. We have an exciting foodie scene that spans quirky cafés and lively pubs and bars to fine dining and unique experiences. Reading is an amazingly diverse place and its food and drink reflects the rich culture found within its communities, with award-winning restaurants from around the world and street food from every continent.

For day-time visitors, Reading has established a thriving café culture stemming from its biscuit-making heritage. Street food markets run twice weekly (Wed/Fri) selling local produce and food from all over the globe. You'll find relaxed, fast-food eateries alongside fine dining restaurants, afternoon tea experiences and food events running year-round.

The abundant countryside surrounding Reading's town centre is home to many award-winning country pubs with beautiful scenery and there are also breweries and vineyards offering tastings, tours and local produce.



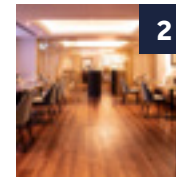
TOP 10 TIPS



1

Yaylo

Reading's exclusively gluten-free coffee shop offering gorgeous cakes, sandwiches, quiches



2

Reading Room

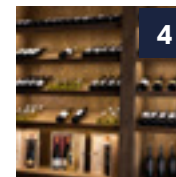
Fine dining in the Roseate Reading Hotel's restaurant, including Afternoon Tea inspired by Reading's biscuit heritage



3

Clay's

Award-winning Hyderabad Indian restaurant in Caversham



4

Veeno

Italian sharing plates and fine wine



5

Pepe Sale

A Reading fixture serving authentic Sardinian cuisine



6

Picnic

Independent café in the Butter Market serving fresh salads, sandwiches, soups and good coffee



7

Allied Arms

A traditional real ale pub in a historic building with courtyard garden



8

Thames Lido

Spanish/North African fine dining, tapas and bar alongside Reading's most glamorous water feature



9

GAIL's

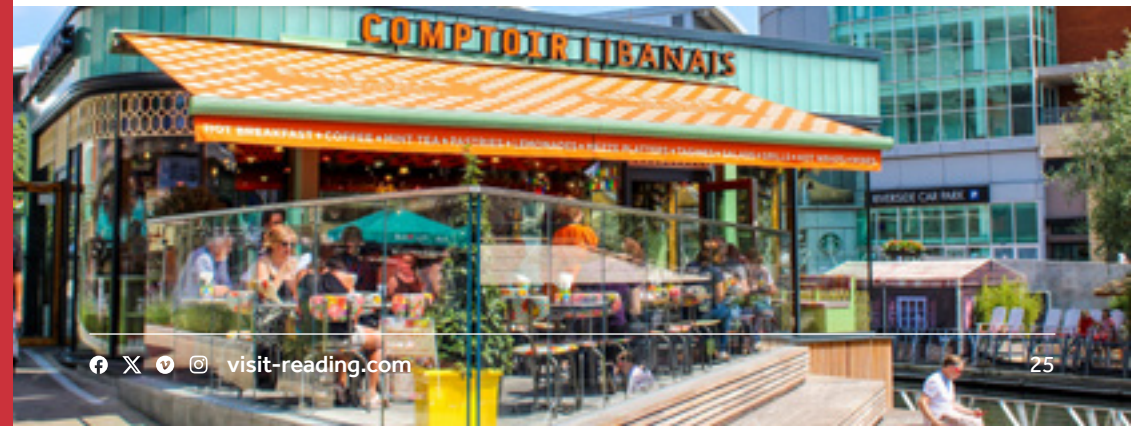
Bakery and café in the heart of town specialising in sourdough



10

Blue Collar Corner

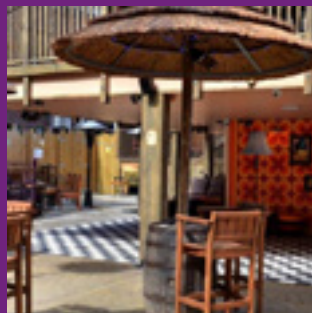
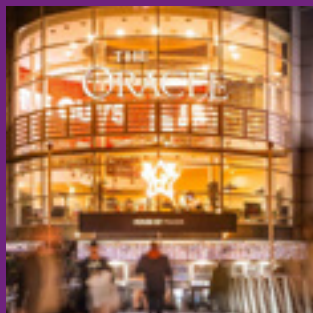
Container street food village with bar. A favourite millennial hangout



LATE NIGHT READING



Reading is a lively place, with a thriving nightlife, as befits a university town. You'll find lots to entertain you in the evening, from pubs and bars to eateries, entertainment, casinos and clubs. Importantly, Reading town centre is accredited by Purple Flag, a national scheme which recognises the creation of safe and thriving locations at night for all users.



TOP 10 SUGGESTIONS

Purple Turtle

Legendary music venue and bar – lively til late

Milk

Reading's rum bar at the heart of fast developing Station Hill area

Blaggrave Arms

Friendly bar popular with the LGBTQ+ community

Oakford Social Club

Live bands, DJs, quiz nights and everything in between opposite the station

Sub89

Reading's premier live music venue on Friar Street

Lolalo

A classic nightclub. Great for groups

Zero Degrees

Bar, restaurant and microbrewery all in one!

Biscuit Factory

An indie cinema and relaxed café and bar/community space

Be at One

Hip bar for drinks with friends

Grosvenor Casino

For those who fancy a gamble with good food and drink

SHOP TIL YOU DROP

Shopping in Reading is vast and varied, from its brand-packed high-street, renowned department stores to award-winning town centre shopping centres and good mix of independents.

Areas to shop in Reading are split between easily walkable town centre shopping and retail outlets just beyond the town centre. The main shopping in Reading is found in the centre, with a number of independent shops and three indoor shopping centres, offering a whole host of fashion and lifestyle brands, as well as food, drink and leisure facilities to help you relax after a day of retail therapy!

The Oracle Shopping Centre, Broad Street Mall, John Lewis, M&S, Primark and **Harris Arcade** are all in the town centre within 500 metres of each other. Pedestrianised Broad Street and its spur streets are home to much of the retail sector with lots of cafes and eateries dotted in between.

Looking for independents? Check out Harris Arcade or the shops in 'Smelly Alley'. You'll find big brands from **Apple** to **Zara** in the Oracle, while M&S and John Lewis are the main high street anchor stores.



AN A-Z OF SHOPPING IN READING

📱 **Apple**

The tech brand has a large store in the Oracle

🍞 **Bread**

Try the amazing sourdough, sandwiches and cakes at **Rise**

📖 **Comics**

Crunch Comics is a specialist shop in Harris Arcade

🍷 **Deli**

Try **Mama's Way** or **Madoo** on Bridge Street for Italian specialities

📺 **Electricals**

John Lewis is in the middle of Broad Street with phones, music, TVs and much more

♻️ **Fair trade**

The **RISC** world shop on London Street has fair trade and ethically sourced gifts and supplies

🎮 **Games**

Eclectic Games is an independent games store for all your board games

👒 **Hats**

Reading's very own milliner, **Adrienne Henry**, is in Harris Arcade

🛍️ **Independents**

The town centre is full of indies from **Sewmaster** to **London Camera Exchange**

💎 **Jeweller**

Jacob's independent jeweller has been in Reading for over 75 years

💄 **Kiko Milano**

Cosmetics in **The Oracle**

🧳 **Luggage**

The Bag Shop has a wide range of travel bags and accessories

👔 **Men's fashion**

Simon Dowling is a made-to-measure men's tailor

📖 **Novels**

Reading's **Waterstones** is in an historic chapel building on Broad Street

🏬 **Oracle**

Reading's biggest shopping mall is in the heart of the town centre and has 80 stores

📮 **Post Office**

Upstairs at **WHSmith** on Broad Street

🎁 **Quirky presents**

But Is It Art has a great range of unusual presents

🎵 **Records**

They're back in fashion – check out **Sound Machine** in Harris Arcade or **Pop Classics** in Caversham

🛋️ **Sofas**

Beadle Crome are a high-end furnishings store

🧸 **Toys**

The Entertainer and **Toys R Us** (upstairs **WHSmith**) are both on Broad Street

🎁 **Unusual presents**

Try **Reading Museum** or **The MERL** museum shops for Reading-themed presents

💰 **Value**

Miniso is a new arrival to Reading offering good value gifts

🛍️ **WHSmith**

All your staples plus the **Post Office** and **Toys R Us** in one building

🎸 **Xylophones**

Hickies Music Store has a wide range of musical instruments and sheet music

👕 **Yours**

Plus size clothing for sizes 16-36

👗 **Zara**


The Spanish fashion chain is laid out over three floors in the Oracle

WHAT'S ON IN READING

Reading is a very cultural place and there is something on every day of the year. To find out what's on while you are here, check out Reading's very own Whatsonreading.com. You'll find live music, comedy, dance, talks, festivals, walks, art events and classes, theatre and much more.



THE MAIN EVENTS

 **[Are You Listening Festival](#)**
A multi-venue one day music festival
Saturday 11 May

 **[Bastille Day](#)**
A weekend of all things French in Forbury Gardens
13 / 14 July

 **[Carnival of the World](#)**
A celebration of Caribbean music and culture in Broad Street
Usually 2nd Sat in August

 **[Cheese Feast](#)**
Street food and live music in Forbury Gardens
Late April

 **[Christmas in Reading](#)**
The lights go on in mid-November to herald in six weeks of Christmas events, food and shopping

 **[Dance Reading](#)**
A month of dance
November

 **[Diwali Parade](#)**
Reading town centre
Autumn

 **[Down at the Abbey](#)**
2 days of live music in the Abbey ruins
6 & 7 September

 **[East Reading Festival](#)**
A community festival in Palmer Park
23 June

 **[Heritage Open Days](#)**
Free events to explore many of Reading's heritage buildings
6-15 September


 **[Reading Children's Festival](#)**
11 May – 2 June

 **[Reading Festival](#)**
The big one! 100,000 will descend on Reading
21-25 August

 **[Reading Food Festival](#)**
Street food stalls take over Reading's Broad Street for the weekend
18 / 19 May


 **[Reading Indie Comedy Festival](#)**
17-19 May

 **[Reading Mela](#)**
Berkshire's largest celebration of South Asian music and culture in Palmer Park
Usually first weekend in August

 **[Reading Pride's Love Unites Festival](#)**
Reading's big LGBTQ+ celebration and parade
31 August

 **[Reading Vegan Festival](#)**
Food, products and all things vegan
21 September

 **[Reading Walks Festival](#)**
Explore Reading and the surrounding area with guided walks
11-19 May

 **[Readipop Festival](#)**
Reading's own open air music festival by the Thames
12-14 July

 **[Water Fest \(Celebrating 35 years in 2024\)](#)**
The festival of Reading's waterways alongside the River Kennet and Reading Abbey
8 June

READING

whatsonreading.com

What's On Reading is the ultimate listings guide for all things arts, culture and heritage in Reading – over 150 venues and organisations listing events, classes and activities all over town.



- Art & Exhibitions
- Cabaret & Variety
- Children
- Classical
- Comedy
- Community & Networking
- Dance
- DJ & Clubbing
- Festivals & Special Events
- Film
- Food & Drink
- History & Heritage
- Interactive & Games
- Music
- Natural Heritage
- Spoken & Written Word
- Theatre
- Tours & Walks

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Photo credits: Reading Arts | Reading Rep. Theatres/Harry Elletson/Muse Creative | Rising Sun Arts Centre | Heavy Pop | Stand & Deliver Comedy | Jelly

GETTING AROUND / GETTING HERE



Reading is one of the best-connected towns in the UK, offering lots of travel options and excellent transport links, whether you're travelling by car, bus, train, coach, bike, on foot – or even on the water! Plus, once you're here, it is a very walkable town with the Thames, town centre and many attractions within 500 metres of the station.


GETTING HERE


 **By train** – Reading is just 23 minutes from London on GWR Mainline Services and is often the first stop on many trains coming out of London heading west. Trains are very frequent, but you can easily check your journey at [GWR.com](#). There are so many trains you can often just turn up and just jump on the first train.

Reading is also on the **Elizabeth Line** (part of the London transport network), making it an ideal base to visit from the Capital. If you have a TFL Freedom Pass, you can travel to Reading for free on the Elizabeth Line.

Reading is linked to Gatwick, Heathrow, Southampton and Birmingham Airports by train.

A new station at Green Park also links Reading to the football stadium and Green Park business park by train. **Crosscountry trains** links Reading to the north and south of the UK too.

 **By car** – Reading is just two miles north of the M4 and not far from the M3 and A34 so we are very well linked into the road network. There is plenty of parking in and around Reading, with many multi-storeys right in the town centre at Broad Street Mall, The Oracle or Queen's Road as well as the station. There are also a number of park and rides dotted around the edge of Reading.

 **By coach** – The Rail Air Link from Heathrow is a 40-minute journey from all Heathrow terminals to Reading station. National Express serves Reading from all parts of the country.

GETTING AROUND READING

Reading is a very walkable town with the station in the centre. Many places in Reading will be less than 500 metres from the station.

By bus – Reading’s award-winning buses serve every inch of the region, so travelling by bus is a great option for those looking to avoid parking costs and reduce their carbon footprint. Reading Buses have introduced tap on/ tap off so you will never be charged more than the maximum daily fare.

Reading Buses cover all destinations in Reading, including the University, Royal Berkshire Hospital and business parks, as well as all of Reading’s residential areas. Bus stops can be found outside the station and in Friar Street and other town centre main arteries.

Cycle – Nowhere in Reading town centre is more than a 30-minute cycle and with plentiful cycle parking, travelling to and around Reading by bicycle makes an ideal sustainable travel option.

Walking – With a fully walkable town centre and miles of Thames Path to enjoy on its doorstep, Reading is a great place for walking, catering for everything from afternoon shopping strolls right through to riverside rambles.

Taxi – You can pick up black cab taxis at both sides of Reading Station at any time of the day or night.

The Reading Room at The Roseate Reading, wins the Trip Advisor 2023 - Traveler's Choice Award. It has been recognised as one of the top 10% of restaurants in the world! The continued trust and patronage of our invaluable guests continues to guide and inspire us!

THE ROSEATE
RESTAURANT & BAR
READING

here's an easier way to pay for bus travel

that always gives you the best price

reading-buses.co.uk/tap

tap on tap off

Readingbuses

SOCIAL MEDIA

- [f @VisitusinReading](https://www.facebook.com/VisitusinReading)
- [X @livingreading](https://www.x.com/livingreading)
- [v @livingreading](https://www.youtube.com/livingreading)
- [@livingreading](https://www.instagram.com/livingreading)

[visit-reading.com](https://www.visit-reading.com)



REDA – Reading’s Destination and Economy Agency

The Library Building, Abbey Square, Reading, RG1 3BQ



FIVE MESS ABOUT ON THE RIVER



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today and discover Reading,
the Thames Valley and beyond.

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ADVENTURES START HERE