

# Walks over water

**RATTY WAS RIGHT.** In *The Wind in the Willows* he famously says: 'there is nothing - absolutely nothing - half so much worth doing as simply messing about in boats.' And on these 10 paths, taking a ferry over the stream, river, lake, loch, canal or inlet is all part of the adventure. The boats vary in size and scale, from a wooden rowing boat summoned by ringing a bell, to an all-mod-cons craft running to a strict timetable, from a vintage steamer to a skiff that suffered a Martian attack. However your journey across the water, it's a chance to put your boots up and take in the views from a fascinating new perspective.



## FOR TASTING THE TRAIL

### Loch Lomond, Argyll/Stirling

Sailings of the West Highland Way Rambler cruise (£15 return, including drink) from Tarbet to Rowardennan are scheduled for walking a stretch of the Way on Loch Lomond's eastern side, where islands and mountains abound and Ben Lomond looms nearby. An upper path threads through ancient oaks; the lower scrambles over shoreline boulders, passing Rob Roy's cave. The routes reunite as the sound of small waterfalls signals the Inversnaid Burn, and the boat back to Tarbet. **WALK HERE:** Follow the well-signed West Highland Way north for seven miles from Rowardennan to Inversnaid Burn. See [www.west-highland-way.co.uk](http://www.west-highland-way.co.uk) **INFO:** [www.cruise Loch Lomond.co.uk](http://www.cruise Loch Lomond.co.uk)



## FOR THAMES TRADITION

### Shepperton, Surrey

Tread beside - and across - England's longest river on a leg of the Thames Path from Hampton Court. Walk west past islets called eyots and aits, one reputedly belonging to Nelson, and ring the bell to cross the river on the skiff Shepperton ferry (£2), which has run for over 500 years. Shepperton film studios are nearby and the ferry starred in *The War of the Worlds* suffering a Martian attack. Further on, the river winds by water meadows to Staines. **WALK HERE:** It's 12½ miles from Hampton Court to Staines: [www.nationaltrail.co.uk/thames-path](http://www.nationaltrail.co.uk/thames-path) **INFO:** [www.bit.ly/ViewbridgeFerry](http://www.bit.ly/ViewbridgeFerry)



## FOR COASTAL CHARM

### Southwold, Suffolk

One of Britain's last rowing-boat ferries links the refined resort of Southwold with the wild marshes of Walberswick. Take the Suffolk Coast Path south from town past beach huts to ferry across the Blyth (£1) and on to Walberswick nature reserve, one of the UK's largest reedbeds. Spot bird- and plant-life in Dunwich Forest before tracing the Sandlings Walk along the marsh-edge, over Bailey Bridge back to Southwold. **WALK HERE:** For a 10-mile loop, walk S on Coast Path, hop on ferry, and on to reach Dunwich Forest. Turn W to B1125 for Sandlings Walk NE back to start. **INFO:** [www.explorewalberswick.co.uk](http://www.explorewalberswick.co.uk)



## FOR VINTAGE STEAMERS

### Ullswater, Cumbria

Ullswater winds for eight miles through a crowd of handsome Lakeland fells. Ullswater Steamers' heritage fleet plies its waters, including the 130-year-old Lady of the Lake, so you can ride from Glenridding to Howtown, halfway up the lake, or to Pooley Bridge at its far end (£9.30), and then walk back along the eastern side. Stay by the water on a path Wainwright called 'the most beautiful of lake walks in the National Park' or head up into the fells for views. **WALK HERE:** Find a 10-mile Pooley Bridge to Patterdale walk at [www.ifto.com/cwroutes](http://www.ifto.com/cwroutes). Glenridding is a mile on. **INFO:** [www.ullswater-steamers.co.uk](http://www.ullswater-steamers.co.uk)

On a sunny summer's day there are few more enticing places to walk than next to water and these trails maximise your aquatic adventure with built-in boat trips across rivers, lakes and sea. **WORDS: ADRIENNE WYPER**



## FOR RIVER SKIPPING

### Dartmouth, Devon

The River Dart is laced with ferries and footpaths for a fun day out. From Dartmouth take the Coast Path south to the castle. Flip a sign to call the Castle Ferry (£2.50) back to town, then the ferry (£1.50) to Kingswear. Trace the east bank to Greenway, where you can ferry (£6.50) back to the start or ring the bell to hop across to Dittisham (£2) and walk hills back to Dartmouth. **WALK HERE:** Find a 10-mile walk at Dartmouth at [www.ifto.com/cwroutes](http://www.ifto.com/cwroutes) **INFO:** [www.dartmouthcastleferry.co.uk](http://www.dartmouthcastleferry.co.uk); [www.dartmouthrailriver.co.uk](http://www.dartmouthrailriver.co.uk); [www.greenwayferry.co.uk](http://www.greenwayferry.co.uk)



## FOR HAND-PULLED PINTS

### Symonds Yat, Glos

Thirsty walkers who've just sailed Yat Rock in the Forest of Dean can be thankful for two unusual ferries across the Wye run by a pair of pubs - The Saracen's Head Inn in Symonds Yat East and Ye Old Ferrie Inn in the West. Sip a pint on the riverside patio, then hop on a ferry (£1.20) which gets pulled by hand across the water, attached to a wire rope by a noose, to continue your walk through the woods. **WALK HERE:** Find a 10-mile walk via Symonds Yat and the Saracen ferry at [www.ifto.com/cwroutes](http://www.ifto.com/cwroutes) **INFO:** [www.saracensheadinn.co.uk](http://www.saracensheadinn.co.uk)



## FOR ISLAND HOPPING

### The Channel Islands

The 115-mile Channel Island Way is a five-island feast of beaches, cliffs, quiet lanes, wartime heritage - and the most sunshine in the UK. You can walk the whole Way in a fortnight or dip in for a day, so amass the ferry tables and devise your trek on Jersey, Guernsey, Alderney, Sark and tiny Herm. Condoz Ferries run from Poole to Guernsey or Jersey and on to Sark, with four other ferries sailing between the isles. **WALK HERE:** Walking on Jersey and Walking on Guernsey by Paddy Dillon cover the whole of the Way. **INFO:** [www.bit.ly/walkchannelislands](http://www.bit.ly/walkchannelislands)



## FOR INGENIOUS ENGINEERS

### Falkirk Wheel, Falkirk

Admire the brilliance of Ancient Greeks, Romans and Victorians on this walk: for the science behind the Falkirk Wheel, the Antonine Wall and the canals. Archimedes' principle - a boat displaces its own weight in water - is the basis for the wheel, a unique lift which carries boats between the Firth & Clyde and Union Canals. Tread the towpaths, jump on for a round trip (£12.50), and explore the turf and stone Antonine Wall which marks the northern limit of the Roman Empire. **WALK HERE:** Find your 7½ mile Falkirk walk at [www.ifto.com/cwroutes](http://www.ifto.com/cwroutes) **INFO:** [www.bit.ly/wheeloffalkirk](http://www.bit.ly/wheeloffalkirk)



## FOR SCENTED SERENITY

### Caldey Island, Pembrok

Walk around the seaside town of Tenby - past its town gates, sandy beaches, pastel townhouses and 13th-century walls - and you'll likely admire Caldey Island out in the bay. A converted fishing boat shuttles across the waves (£12 return) to a place where monks have been resident for 15 centuries and still make perfume and chocolate. Paths weave across the isle and highlights include the Italianate monastery, St Illtyd's Church, and wildflower cliffs. **WALK HERE:** Find your 4½ mile Tenby town and 4½ mile Caldey Island walks at [www.pembrokeshirecoast.org.uk](http://www.pembrokeshirecoast.org.uk) **INFO:** [www.caldey-island.co.uk](http://www.caldey-island.co.uk)



## FOR LITTLE LEGS

### Christchurch, Dorset

Start a fun family day out with lunch, afternoon tea - or crazy golf - at Tuckton Tea Gardens, then take the Vintage Ferry Service (£5) down the Stour through Christchurch Harbour, past the imposing Priory, an Anglo-Saxon watermill, and swarms of swans, to reach Mudeford Sandbank. The Stour Valley Way then walks you the three miles back to Tuckton, over view-laden Hengistbury Head, with the option of a 'hobby train' for tired legs. **WALK HERE:** Follow the Stour Valley Way from Mudeford Sandbank to Tuckton: [www.stourvalleyway.co.uk](http://www.stourvalleyway.co.uk) **INFO:** [www.bournemouthboating.co.uk](http://www.bournemouthboating.co.uk)