



Borough of Richmond upon Thames

Thames River Boats

Westminster - Hampton Court



Westminster Passenger Services Association (WPSA)

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Cruises between Central London and Hampton Court Palace with pick-up and set-down stops in Kew and Richmond. A standard adult one-way trip from Westminster to Hampton Court Palace costs £15 and lasts 3 hours. The Westminster to Richmond cruise is £13.50 and takes 2 hours, while Richmond to Hampton Court Palace is £9 and takes approx. 1 hour. Child, senior and family rates also available. The boats stop at Richmond Pier, past Richmond Bridge towards Twickenham. Boats for party hire and evening cruises are also available. Visit the website or phone for the timetable and more information. Discounts with valid travel cards, for groups of 20 or more and for freedom pass holders.

Before You Go

Bring a camera and binoculars to capture the riverside scenery. Because of lower temperatures on the river and an occasional sharp wind, bring a heavy sweater or jacket and hat. Comfortable shoes with rubber soles support a tour of Hampton Court and also prevent slippage on the riverboat deck.

Time Frame

Scheduled Hampton Court cruises generally operate between April and September or October, determined by the individual operator. From Westminster Pier at the base of Big Ben, travelers can take scheduled river cruises with a choice of operators to Hampton Court. The 22-mile journey, depending on the tide, can take as little as 2 1/2 hours up to four hours. From the Runnymede Boathouse, the riverboat S.L. Nuneham departs at 9:15 a.m. and arrives at Hampton Court by 1:15 p.m. At the Kingston Bridge, a short 25-minute river cruise takes passengers from Kingston to Hampton Court, departing at 10:45 a.m.

Features

Riverboat comfort and amenities contrast significantly. The Kingston cruise has a short excursion time. The vessel has front-to-back row seating and offers no extra services. The Thames River Boats come equipped with a licensed bar, snacks and more comfortable seating. The Maynard Cockney Sparrow, a two-level riverboat boasts a large, enclosed saloon and an open-top deck. The well-appointed French Brothers' S.L. Nuneham features a raised-roof saloon with time-honored teak decks and polished brass. On a grander scale, a cruise on the eight-passenger Magna Carta barge provides hotel luxury services and modern amenities with overnight accommodations.

Attractions on the Thames

While the guide presents anecdotes and a historical overview, the riverboat passes by tiny hamlets, riverside pubs and peaceful countryside. When departing from Westminster, places of interest includes Syon House and the London Apprentice Inn, which “stands opposite the spot where the Romans crossed the Thames in 54 AD,” according to London Encyclopedia. View Richmond Hill in Richmond-upon-Thames, which ascends the landscape on the river’s northern side. Kingston-to-Hampton Court cruises offer vistas of Raven’s Ait (island) upstream of the Queen’s promenade and Thames Ditton Island. Heading downstream, Runnymede travelers can experience Chertsey Lock with frequent wildlife sightings and views of Magna Carta Island.

Considerations

With the exception of the Magna Carta barge cruise, Hampton Court river cruises are considered family-friendly. The locks, with the Teddington as the river’s busiest, tidal conditions and an active river day can cause unexpected delays. In determining which cruise to take, estimate an average visit time to Hampton Court of three hours. Check the time of the last riverboat before touring Hampton Court. Visitors can also hire a private charter cruise to Hampton Court with two moorings located near the palace for public use.

Tips

Travel via the River Thames to Hampton Court one-way and take the tube or British Rail for a faster return trip back to London. Purchase tickets online or at the dock ticket office. Before purchasing tickets, ask operators about lower fares using an Oyster Card or Travelcard, which can offer up to a 33 percent discount. Alternatively, download a child’s “passport to fun” for riverboat discounts up to 20 percent. Have lunch prepared beforehand at Harrods or Marks and Spencer to picnic at Hampton Court. Upon embarking, head to the bow for optimum viewing.

Welcome aboard!

SERVICE RESTARTS APRIL 2012



Westminster Passenger Service Association are the only riverboat company operating a scheduled service from Westminster to Kew, Richmond and Hampton Court. Daily sailings from Westminster Pier are operated between April and October.

The pier can be found next to Westminster Bridge, opposite the The Palace of Westminster (Houses of Parliament), the nearest Underground station is Westminster (Jubilee, Circle and District lines).

From the heart of London, following the Royal Barge Route of King Henry VIII and other British monarchs, passing the Royal Botanical Gardens at Kew, and historical Richmond, you will transit the locks as the river winds and twists to the Royal Palace of Hampton Court, which has stood on the banks of the river for more than 500 years.

All our vessels are available for private charter. Ideal for Disco Parties, Weddings and Corporate Events. Please contact us now for the most competitive charter rates available.

Be sure to check the [Latest Sailings](#) page for recent updates to our timetable, and the [Events](#) page where you will find details of upcoming events and activities along the Thames.

Sailings 2012

Discounts are available with Travel Cards but not with pay as you go Oyster Cards

The cruise from Westminster to Kew Gardens

Journey time approximately an hour and a half each way



The Royal Botanic Gardens at Kew are laid out over 300 acres, and boast more than 100,000 species and varieties of plants, Royal buildings and statues and the famous Palm House. On 3 July 2003 the Royal Botanic Gardens, Kew was officially inscribed on the list of World Heritage Sites by UNESCO.

Kew Village is an eighteenth century English village complete with a village green, where cricket is still played to this day.

Our journey starts at Westminster Pier right beside Westminster Bridge and the Houses of Parliament. Among the many sights and landmarks as we proceed up-river are: -

- **Lambeth Palace.** The London residence of the Archbishop of Canterbury since the 13th century.
- **The Tate Gallery.** The famous art gallery established by Sir William Tate the sugar millionaire.
- **The Royal Hospital Chelsea.** Designed by Sir Christopher Wren and home to the Chelsea pensioners.
- **Chelsea Old Church.** Stands on the site of the original chapel where Henry VIII married Jane Seymour in secret.
- **St Mary's of Battersea.** A popular church to get married in owing to its 'Christmas card' appearance.
- **Putney.** The starting line of the Oxford Cambridge university boat race.
- **Barnes.** Sought after riverside properties.
- **Mortlake and Chiswick.** The bridge at Chiswick is the finishing line for the university boat race.
- **Strand on the Green.** Oliver's Ait where Oliver Cromwell planned his battle strategies.

Up-river from Kew you'll find Richmond Park, which contains over 200 acres that were originally enclosed by Charles I for hunting. Now open to the public it is notably famous for the herds of deer that roam wild here.

Richmond shopping centre has a mixture of main stores and specialist shops, especially dealing with antiques. From Richmond Hill some of the finest views in London and the Thames are to be found.

The cruise from Kew to Hampton Court Palace



Hampton Court Palace was built in 1515 by Cardinal Wolesey and presented to King Henry VIII in 1529. This tudor palace houses a large collection of original arms, armour, tapestries and fine paintings. It is famous for its gardens, maze and the Great Vine, planted in 1769.

The round trip from London to Hampton Court Palace is a day out in itself. If you wish to make more than a short visit to the palace we suggest you take the one way trip and return with British Rail. This is very easy to do as the Station lays just the other side of Hampton Court Bridge and every half an hour a train departs for London (Waterloo).

Certainly the most interesting and scenic part of the trip is between Kew and Hampton Court Palace, transit the locks at Richmond and Teddington as the river increasingly winds and twists, look out for fishing herons among the willows of the picturesque natural embankments.

Other sights and landmarks are: -

- **Syon House.** In the early 17th century James I gave it to the Earl of Northumberland and it has remained a home of the Percy family ever since.
- **The London Apprentice.** A famous inn where Henry VIII did some of his courting and close by, Old Isleworth Parish Church where victims of the great plague were buried
- **Richmond Hill.** Surmounted by the impressive 'Star and Garter'.
- **Ham House.** Can be seen on the south shore and Marble Hill House, residence of several royal mistresses in the 18th and 19th centuries on the north shore.
- **Teddington Lock.** The river above this lock is non tidal, the TV studios are on your right.
- **Kingston.** Where medieval Kings were crowned and just recently voted 'Top Town' in the Guinness Guide to the best place to live in the UK.
- **Hampton Court Palace.** The last stop on the tour, where you'll find grand state rooms, excellent gardens and that undeniable sense of history.
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Time and Tide

The river trip from Westminster to Hampton Court is unique. At 35 kilometres (22 miles) one-way, it is the longest regular scheduled boat service available from London. On a fiercely tidal river such as The Thames it is difficult and sometimes impossible to provide an exact time of arrival. The timetable on this website accounts for all predictable factors and is able to give a best estimate of journey times. It is worth listing here the factors taken into consideration when preparing our timetables, as many of the delays en route are the very features that render this trip incomparable.

There are two tides a day on the Thames it takes approximately five hours to come in and little over seven hours to go out. Each high tide occurs slightly more than twelve hours later than the last, commanded by the gravitational pull of the moon the tide advances.

Near to the new and full moons (about every two weeks) we have spring tides when there is a rise and fall between low tide and high tide of up to 8m (26'). Seven to eight days after spring tides we have neap tides where the tide is neither as low nor as high, then the difference between low water and high water is around 5m (16').

Unfortunately, tidal predictions cannot allow for other factors such as wind in the estuary and land water from the hills, that all have a bearing on the time and height of tide.

The most obvious way the tide affects vessels is direction. Traveling along with the tide; upstream with the flood and downstream with the ebb, is more efficient than pushing against the ebb going up and the flood going down. To illustrate, the Kingwood can complete the journey from Westminster to Kew in 55 minutes with the tide yet the same journey takes 90 minutes against the tide.

The Locks

Richmond lock and footbridge is described as a half tide lock. In each arch of the footbridge there is a shutter known as a curtain. Two hours after high water the curtains are lowered into the river, creating a barrier to maintain the level of water above this point. While the curtains are in the lowered position, vessels are obliged to use the lock.

The time taken to transit the lock will of course vary depending on the time of tide. Two hours before the next high water the curtains are lifted, which allows vessels to navigate unimpeded through the bridge. The river above this point now becomes tidal until Teddington Lock.

The next major obstacle is Teddington Lock and although generally a faster lock to pass through Teddington is probably the busiest lock on the Thames and again in the summer months getting locked out can mean a wait of up to half an hour added to the journey time.

We have often had difficulty in the past explaining to the public why last Monday (for instance) it took two and a half hours to Hampton Court Palace but this Monday it will take over four hours. A combination of unpredictable tidal conditions, bad luck at the locks and an unusually busy river can cause unforeseen delays.

	Adult fares		Children/Freedom Pass Holder		Senior citizen /NUS card holder		Family Ticket (2 adults + 2 children)	
	Single	Return	Single	Return	Single	Return	Single	Return
Westminster to Kew	£12.00	£18.00	£6.00	£9.00	£8.00	£12.00	£30.00	£45.00
Westminster to Richmond	£13.50	£20.25	£6.75	£9.75	£9.00	£13.50	£33.75	£50.25
Westminster to Hampton Court	£15.00	£22.50	£7.50	£11.25	£10.00	£15.00	£37.50	£56.25
Kew to Richmond	£6.75	£10.50	£3.35	£5.25	£4.50	£7.00	£18.00	£27.75
Kew to Hampton Court	£12.00	£18.00	£6.00	£9.00	£8.00	£12.00	£30.00	£45.00
Richmond to Hampton Court	£9.00	£12.00	£4.50	£6.00	£6.00	£8.00	£22.50	£30.00