

Suggestion for a Norfolk Broads Itinerary - option to print at foot of page

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One week's Norfolk Broads boat hire starting from Horning

This itinerary includes many of the attractions on the Norfolk Broads to entertain the whole family such as Pettitts Animal Farm, The Bure Valley Railway, Bewilderwood, Great Yarmouth Pleasure Beach, The Broads Museum and many nature walks.

Day 1 Afternoon

Horning to Ludham Bridge

4 Miles

1 hour cruise time

Leaving your home boatyard, turn left onto the River Bure. Soon after you pass the moorings for Cockshoot Dyke on your right. Cruise on in the same direction. The signpost for Ranworth is the next junction you see, also on your right-hand side of the river. Continuing on will bring you to the signposted entrance to the River Ant, and Stalham. Take a left turn onto the Ant. Soon after, you will see Ludham Bridge spanning the river in front of you. Approach with care, as this is a busy stretch of the river, and you will often come across craft coming from your opposite direction, intending to pass under the bridge. Free moorings are available on either side of the river, just after the bridge. These are your moorings for the night.

Day 2 Morning

Ludham Bridge to Gays Staithe

6 Miles

1 hour & 15 mins cruise time

Leave your moorings and cruise away from the bridge. Soon after, you pass the extensive moorings of How Hill, on your right bank. You'll make a stop for lunch here, on the return leg of your voyage. Continue on, passing through the picturesque village of Irstead on your left, with its luxury properties and thatched roofed cottages. Soon after, the river opens out onto Barton Broad, a wide expanse of water, and a popular haunt for yachts and their skippers. You need to keep between the marker posts, to avoid running aground. Take the left channel, which heads out across the lower end of the Broad. Cruise on, keeping left at the yellow post that marks where the channel diverges for Stalham. Eventually, the Broad narrows to the channel that leads to Gays Staithe and Neatishead. Cruising slowly down, you will see the free moorings of Gays Staithe on your

left. Neatishead is a further 10-minute cruise away. You will need to moor stern on here. Barton Broad Boardwalk is a .1.5 mile, wildlife trail taking you through swamp, reed and marshland, culminating with a panoramic view over Barton Broad

Day 2 Afternoon

Gays Staithe to Stalham

3.5 Miles

45 mins cruise time

Return back out on to Barton Broad, following the channel you used to arrive. You will soon see the yellow post signposted for Stalham. Follow this channel, to the far end of the Broad. Look out for the signpost for Stalham and Wayford Bridge, which will lead you out of the Broad. Follow the signs for Stalham, which will take you past the entrance to Sutton Staithe, on your right. After a while, you will see the large boatyard belonging to Richardsons ahead of you. There are multiple free moorings here. Keep to the right, to enter the moorings. If you go left, you will arrive at Stalham Staithe, which also offers free moorings, though they are limited to around five or six boats, and turning is a little awkward. Stalham has The Museum of the Broads, close to these moorings, The museum is easily accessible from the moorings at Richardsons also. The town centre is around 15 minutes walk away.

Day 3 Morning

Stalham to How Hill

5.5 Miles

1 hour & 15 mins cruise time

Head back out of Stalham, and cruise to Barton Broad. Keep within the marked channel, bearing left, so that you aim for the point at which you arrived on the Broad yesterday. Leave the broad behind, and cruise past Irstead on your right bank. A further cruise brings you to the moorings at How Hill, and its house on the hill. The moorings are free here. This makes a good stop for lunch, with tea rooms, serving hot and cold food in How Hill House, together with woodland walks, a secret garden, an electric boat taking you through the backwaters of the river, and a restored Victorian eel catcher's cottage

Day 3 Afternoon

How Hill to Acle

7.5 Miles

1 hour & 45 mins cruise time

Continue on in the same direction, back towards Ludham Bridge. Once through, cruise on to the junction with the River Bure, turning left towards Yarmouth. You pass the entrance to South Walsham Broad on your right, and soon after, the ruins of St Benets Abbey, on the left bank. There are free moorings here if you want to explore the site. Otherwise, continue on, passing the signposted entrance to the River Thurne and Potter Heigham, on your left bank. Next, you pass the entrance to Upton Dyke on your right-hand side. After a short while, you will see Acle Bridge spanning the river ahead. The moorings here, are your destination for an overnight stay. You can moor free on the left bank, just before the bridge, and at a fee, on the right bank, both just before, and after the bridge. This will be the first time you have really encountered a running tide, and coming alongside requires some additional steps. You need to always come in to moor, against the running tide, Imagine that your boat was stationery mid-river. A running tide will either push you forward or backwards. If you attempt to come alongside in the same direction as a running tide, you will likely approach too fast, lose control, and may collide with the next boat along. Mooring against a running tide slows your craft down on approach and makes it easier to control. The Bridge Inn, next to the bridge, has outdoor pursuits for children, as well as an amusement arcade. It's very popular, and making a table reservation is advisable

Day 4 Morning
Acle to Yarmouth

11 Miles
2 hours & 15 mins cruise time

As explained earlier, the tidal current here will affect your arrival and departure from the moorings. You need to leave against the running tide, as again, you will have less control, and may career into the next boat along when trying to depart. To do this, you may need to turn your boat, using its ropes. Once mid-stream, continue in the same direction, towards Yarmouth. After a while, you will see the riverside village of Stokesby on your left bank, followed by the extensive moorings of Stracey Arms Windmill, on your right. The last leg of the journey to Yarmouth takes you through mostly featureless marshland until you see the moorings of the now derelict Yarmouth Marina on your left bank. From here, Yarmouth Yacht Station (not just for yachts), is a further 10 to 15 minutes cruise away. There are extensive moorings at the Yacht Station, but you need to pay a fee to overnight there. The tide runs faster here, and great care must be taken to ensure you moor against the tide, as explained earlier. Once alongside, the on-site staff will help you tie up for the night, and give you directions towards Great Yarmouth town centre. They are also available to give advice on the best time to arrive, bearing in mind the height of your cruiser, and the low bridges ahead. In addition, they can meet you on arrival, if you might need assistance. Call them on 01493 842794.

Day 4 Afternoon
At Yarmouth

0 Miles

0 mins cruise time

Great Yarmouth has a host of attractions for the family. There is an outdoor market and shopping centre, just 15 minutes from the moorings. A further 15 minutes will take you to the seafront, with its fine sandy beach. There are cinemas, theatres, crazy golf, a funfair, two piers, a circus, a museum, The Marina Complex for swimming, a Sealife Centre, and lots of amusement arcades,

Day 5 Morning

Yarmouth to Stracey Arms

8 Miles

2 hours cruise time

This morning, you are heading back upstream, away from Yarmouth. With the fast-flowing currents, it's essential that you leave your moorings against the tide (as explained earlier). You may have to turn your boat on its ropes to do this. If in any doubt, consult one of the Yacht Station staff, who will be pleased to assist you in your departure from the quayside. Once mid-stream, cruise away from Yarmouth, back into the marshland, and on until you see Stracey Windmill, and its extensive free daytime moorings, on your left bank. Choose a spot to moor, coming alongside against the tidal current, even if that means you have to turn your boat in the opposite direction. The Stracey Arms Windmill has a shop and tea rooms serving hot and cold food and beverages. The children will love the "domesticated" sheep, donkeys, and goats that roam the moorings freely.

Day 5 Afternoon

Stracey Arms to Potter Heigham

9 Miles

2 hours & 15 mins cruise time

Leave the moorings against the tide, turning your boat on its ropes if necessary. Continue in the same direction, cruising away from Yarmouth. A little further on, you pass the village of Stokesby on your right bank, then pass under the bridge at Acle. Soon after you pass the entrance to Upton Dyke on your left, comes the junction with the River Thurne on your right bank. Take this signposted turn, heading for Potter Heigham. You see the magnificent white Thurne Windpump, standing at the head of Thurne Dyke, on your right. A further cruise, takes you on, past the entrance to Womack Water on your left, before arriving at the beginning of Potter Heigham village, which is marked by a long line of chalets and holiday homes, hugging each bank of the river. Eventually, you see Potter Heigham Bridge, an old stone-arched road crossing. Free moorings are offered on the right-hand side, just before the bridge. Alternatively, pass under the footbridge on the opposite bank, which will take you into the Herbert Woods boatyards also offering extensive free moorings.

Day 6 Morning

Potter Heigham to Ludham

2.5 Miles

45 mins cruise time

Retrace your steps, back down the Thurne, for this short cruise to Ludham (not to be confused with Ludham Bridge on the River Ant. Watch out for the signposted entrance to Womack Water and Ludham that you passed yesterday. It's on the right bank. Turn down the dyke, and cruise on until you see the channel widen out onto Womack Water. The free moorings are at the top of the lake, on the right bank. You will need to moor stern on here. The quaint village of Ludham, a 15-minute walk from the moorings, is well worth a visit. It resembles a TV location modelled on the middle of the nineteenth century, with its many stone-built cottages and thatched roofs.

Day 6 Afternoon

Ludham to Ranworth

6.5 Miles

1 hour & 30 mins cruise time

Return the way you came, back out onto the River Thurne, turning right at the junction. Continue on, past the White Thurne Windpump, and then turn right again, at the junction with the River Bure. Continue your cruise, which passes the ruins of St Benets Abbey, and the entrance to The River Ant, both on your right. Eventually, you see the signposted entrance to Ranworth, on your left bank. Turn down the dyke, which after a short while, opens out onto Malthouse Broad. Ranworth, and its accompanying free moorings, can be found at the far end of the Broad. You will need to stern-moor here. The area is popular with boaters, and you may need to wait for a mooring to become available. Ranworth has lots to entertain the kids, including a boardwalk through reeds and marshes to a conservation centre on the edge of the private Ranworth Broad. It's a good place to see all manner of wildlife and waterfowl. St Helens Church, a short walk from the moorings, has interesting artefacts and you can climb to the top of the tower, for a panoramic view of the area.

Day 7 Morning

Ranworth to Wroxham

7 Miles

1 hour & 45 mins cruise time

So it's back out onto the River Bure, turning left at the junction. You pass the Cockshoot Dyke moorings on your left, before cruising through the picturesque waterside village of Horning. Sail on through, passing the dyke leading to your home boatyard on the right. Leaving Horning, you pass the entrances to Salhouse and Wroxham Broads, before arriving at the first signs of Wroxham, marked by riverside chalets and holiday homes. The Barnes Brinkcraft boatyard on the right has plenty of free moorings for visitors.

Alternatively, cruise on down to the stone arched bridge spanning the river. The last dyke on the left before the bridge takes you to the extensive free moorings of Faircraft Loynes.

On the opposite bank, next to the bridge, there is room for a small number of cruisers, outside the Wroxham Hotel, though these are not free.

Day 7 Afternoon
at Wroxham

0 Miles
0 mins cruise time

The afternoon is free to enjoy the many family-based activities that Wroxham has to offer. These include The Bure Valley Light Railway, which trundles up to Aylsham. A permanent model railway exhibition close to the train station, Wroxham Barns, for arts and crafts demonstrations, and Bewilderwood, a fantasy playground for the younger members of the family. Bicycle hire is also available from within the grounds.

Day 8 Morning
Wroxham to Horning

5 Miles
1 hour & 15 mins cruise time

On your final morning of the holiday, you need to ensure you leave Wroxham early enough, to arrive back at your home boatyard by the official hand back time. Make your way back down the Bure, passing the entrances to Wroxham and Salhouse Broads on your right. Soon enough, the holiday homes of Horning will come into sight. Cruise through the village, looking out for the Ferry Inn (TFI), which marks your close proximity to your home yard. Soon after, you will see the entrance to the yard on the left bank. Once moored, you can begin loading your vehicle with your belongings and leave your cruiser behind for the next occupants.