



Corn Exchange

Built in 1856 the Corn Exchange is a Grade II listed building that provides a varied programme of theatre, cinema and live screening experiences. You may also recognise it as the home to Causton Theatre in Midsomer Murders. www.cornexchange.org.uk

Cholsey and Wallingford Railway

A preserved section of railway known locally as the 'Bunkline', which connects Wallingford with GWR trains at Cholsey and the home of the Cholsey and Wallingford Railway Preservation Society. Trains run on selected weekends and bank holidays throughout the year and, where available, are steam hauled. www.cholsey-wallingford-railway.com

Agatha Christie trail

Discover more about Wallingford's former resident. A five mile circular walk takes in places linked to the writer including her former house and grave. www.wallingford.co.uk/agathachristie

River Thames

Wander along the Thames Path from Wallingford to Benson Lock or take a boat trip to Abingdon or Reading. Take time to discover Wallingford Bridge, important historically and one of the finest bridges on the River Thames. It's 300m long and only 5m shorter than the old London Bridge.

Riverside splash park and swimming pool

Take a dip in the outdoor heated pool and splashpark located alongside the River and adjacent to the magnificent Wallingford bridge. Also a great spot for a picnic.



Town Information Centre



Please visit us under the Town Hall whilst you are in Wallingford for advice on what to see and do. You can also find further information at

www.wallingford.co.uk

Opening hours

From March to November:

Mondays-Fridays 10.00-13.00 and 13.30-16.00, Saturday 10.00-14.00

From December to February:

Mondays-Saturdays 10.00-14.00.

Closed: Sundays and Bank Holidays

Wallingford Town Information Centre,

Town Hall, Market Place, Wallingford, Oxfordshire. OX10 0EG

Contact us: **Tel:** 01491 826972 **Email:** tic@wallingfordtowncouncil.gov.uk



Every effort has been made to ensure that the contents and information contained in this brochure were correct at time of going to press.

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MIDSOMER
MURDERS TRAIL

CASTLE RUINS
& GARDENS

SHOPS
& MARKETS



EXPLORE
WALLINGFORD
A MARKET TOWN STEEPED IN HISTORY



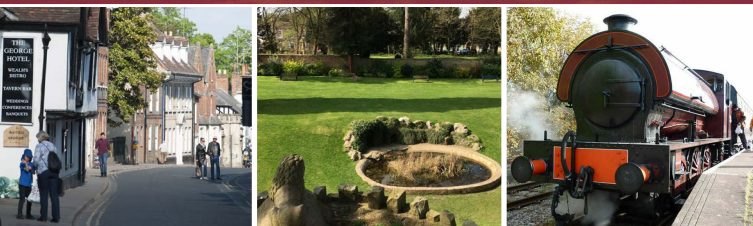
CAFES, PUBS &
RESTAURANTS

ON THE
RIVER THAMES

CELEBRATIONS
& EVENTS

A classic English market town

A quintessential English market town with a rich history that encapsulates the entire town. Explore the site of one of England's most important castles and shop in the independent shops that surround the market place.



Things to see and do

Castle gardens and meadows

One of England's strongest and most important castles. Crumbling castle ruins, earthworks and ramparts set in beautiful gardens.

Explore the shops

Wallingford is celebrated for its collection of antique and independent shops. These unique shops blend seamlessly with national retail chains to offer an excellent and refreshing way to buy both every day and unusual products.

Midsomer Murders trails

Explore the real-life location for the popular TV series with trails designed to take in the filming locations around the town and neighbouring areas. www.wallingford.co.uk/midsomermurders

Wallingford Museum

There's no better way to discover the secrets of Wallingford's amazing history than visiting this family-friendly, delightfully intimate local history museum. In the words of the visitors: 'What a surprise round every corner'. 'Small in size, huge impact!!' 'Lovely bits on Agatha Christie'. 'Charming, fascinating and endlessly engaging museum'. www.wallingfordmuseum.org.uk



Shops and restaurants

Celebrated for its collection of independent shops Wallingford is a great destination for shopping and enjoying a meal, or a drink at one of the restaurants, cafes or tea rooms and inviting pubs.



Shopping

Wallingford is a great place to spend a relaxing day browsing and discovering something old and new. The town has an eclectic mix of independent retailers selling unique and interesting wares, coupled with household name high street stores. The shops are within walking distance from the market place, which dates back to Saxon times, and are just a stone's throw from the picturesque riverbank.

Wallingford has a growing reputation as a destination for specialist shops, arts and crafts, antiques and collectibles sitting alongside vintage and unique clothing shops, craft businesses and card and gift shops.

In the Lamb Arcade on the High Street you'll find over 40 shops situated within one historic building, each one showcasing a diverse selection of antiques from jewellery and small trinkets to furniture and decorative items.

Markets

The town is host to four regular markets selling everything from fruit and vegetables to unique crafts and gifts:

Charter Market

Wallingford's oldest market, in operation since 12th Century. Takes place every Friday all day in the Market Place

Farmers' Market

Selling local produce. Every third Tuesday and first and fifth Saturday in the Market Place from 8.30am to 1pm

Country Market

Selling genuinely homemade produce. Fridays 8.30am to 12 noon in the Regal Centre, Goldsmith Lane Car Park



Local Producers Market

All products are grown, farmed and produced with 30 miles. Saturdays – 10am to 1pm in the Regal Centre visit www.wlpm.org.uk

Places to eat and drink

You are spoilt for choice in Wallingford, it is possible to enjoy good food and drink without having to leave the town centre. Around the Market Place, St Martins and the High Street you will find national chains comfortably trading side by side with local independently owned pubs, restaurants and cafes.

There is a varied choice of restaurants, you can choose to revel in European cuisine or savour the delicate spices of Thai and Indian food. Some of the town's best food can be found at the inviting gastro pubs, some of which use local produce to create some delicious homemade meals.

There is a wide selection of cafes and tearooms clustered around the heart of the town, many of which are in listed buildings with the original features and charms.

There are so many fantastic shops to explore and wonderfully delicious independent cafes, restaurants and pubs that you will be enticed back to repeat the experience!



History and heritage

From the medieval bridge over the Thames to the grassy banks of its ancient fortifications, Wallingford proclaims a colourful past.



Wallingford: Saxon Town & Medieval Borough

The town of Wallingford was built in the 9th century by King Alfred of Wessex, to help protect his kingdom against Viking attacks. The remains of the defensive earth walls, once capped with a wooden palisade and surrounded by a wet moat, are still visible today, the best surviving example of their kind in England. The river and a bridgehead formed the fourth side of the town's defence and the Saxon street layout is still largely unchanged.

St Leonard's church has surviving Saxon features, and as you shop in Waitrose, the 10th-14th century cemetery of St Martin's lies quietly beneath you! Saxon kings held land in Wallingford, maintained soldiers here and allowed coins to be struck by a royal moneyer.

In 1066, William the Conqueror came to Wallingford, crossed the Thames with his army and negotiated terms for the surrender of the kingdom.



For their co-operation, the people of Wallingford gained an extra hour before curfew - 9pm instead of 8pm. The curfew bell is still tolled.

In 1067 William ordered the building of a royal castle. It became the third great royal castle of the Thames Valley, (alongside the Tower of London and Windsor), one of the most impressive and powerful castles in England, with its three walls and moats. During the 12th century Civil War, it was a stronghold of Queen Matilda, besieged unsuccessfully by her cousin Stephen. The truce that ended the war was agreed here in 1153.

In 1155, Henry II rewarded the town for supporting his mother Matilda, by granting a Charter of Liberties – one of the oldest in England. It confirmed Wallingford's ancient rights to have a Guild and Burgesses and to hold markets, traditions which continue to this day. The 17th century town regalia, including the silver-gilt mace, Mayoral chain and badge, and the Loving Cup, each with a portcullis and chain insignia, are still in use.

In the 13th century the town thrived, with its own law courts, 11 parish churches, two gate chapels, a hospital, and a Priory, but by the next century economic decline and the ravages of the Black Death left a much reduced population to face the growth of rival towns.

The castle continued as a royal stronghold, a principal holding of heirs to the throne, including King John (the town is mentioned in Magna Carta), Henry III and his brother Richard Earl of Cornwall, who greatly extended the castle. Edward II's favourite, Piers Gaveston, held a great tournament in Wallingford in 1307 but Edward's wife, Isabella, plotted here with Roger Mortimer, who was eventually executed for Edward's murder. Isabella's grandson, Edward the Black Prince, kept Wallingford as his major residence. In the 15th century, the young King Henry VI was tutored at Wallingford Castle protected by Owen Tudor, whose liaison here with Henry's widowed mother, Katherine of Valois, led eventually to the Tudor monarchs of England, who had little use for Wallingford Castle. In the 1550s timber and lead from Wallingford were shipped down river for use at Windsor Castle.

In the 17th century Civil War, Wallingford was re-fortified by Charles I to defend his new capital at Oxford. The inner castle walls were repaired and new gun emplacements set up. The king made several visits to Wallingford and castle troops were engaged in many skirmishes and battles. By 1646, the King had abandoned Oxford, but Wallingford withstood a twelve week siege, surrendering with full honours, only on the king's command. In 1652, Oliver Cromwell ordered and paid for the castle's demolition. The stone was sold and some was used to build a new tower for St Mary's church, in the Market Place.

Wallingford - The Later Years

After the castle's demolition Wallingford became an ordinary market town. Its brewing and malting industries, together with later iron-founding, complemented the local rural communities and lasted till the 20th century.

Three parish churches survive, St Leonard's (the oldest), St Mary's and St Peter's. A Quaker meeting house built in 1724 introduced non-conformism; Baptists and Methodists followed, while the Roman Catholic church was formerly a Congregationalist chapel!



St Peter's, noted for its 18th century architecture and spire, is the burial place of Judge William Blackstone, who is internationally famed for his Commentaries on the Laws of England, written in Wallingford by 1769 and much used in the creation of the new laws and Constitution of the USA.

The railway came to Wallingford in 1866 in the form of a branch line from Cholsey. It closed in 1959 but is now a heritage railway, running alongside the Agatha Christie trail.

Wallingford continues its long tradition as a Market Town with its centuries-old Charter Market and an impressive mixture of independent businesses and long-established family shops. The numerous antique shops delight collectors and browsers with remnants of the past, while the town's delightful museum brings the whole Wallingford Story vividly to life.

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Detective and crime writing connections

Discover where Dame Agatha Christie, the English crime novelist, short story writer and playwright lived as well as exploring Causton, the capital of fictitious Midsomer County.



Agatha Christie

In 1934 Agatha Christie and her renowned archaeologist husband Max Mallowan, bought Winterbrook House, a Georgian property on the edge of Wallingford, close to the road but with large gardens sweeping down to the river, and a fine cedar tree on the lawn. It was to be their home until Agatha's death there in 1976, aged 85.

'Mrs Mallowan' was well known to local shopkeepers, arriving with her basket to purchase necessities, but she valued her quiet life away from the limelight, writing many of her best novels at Winterbrook House.

In 1951 she agreed to become President of the Sinodun Players, the local drama group, provided she did not have to make speeches! She enjoyed attending performances, especially pantomimes, which she loved. A fascinating series of personally written letters, now displayed in Wallingford Museum, testify to her involvement.

Writing shortly after her death, Max commented:

'What was truly valuable in Wallingford was her privacy and freedom from social involvement for in this way she was able to devote her time to creative work which gave pleasure to millions.'

The Mallowans worshipped at their parish church in nearby Cholsey and their grave lies in the peaceful churchyard, visited by admirers from all over the world. © Judy Dewey 2017

Midsomer Murders

You can follow in the footsteps of Detective Chief Inspector Tom Barnaby whilst in Wallingford, as the town is the original Causton, the capital of fictitious Midsomer County. The Market Place is a well-used filming location for Midsomer Murders, as well as the Town Hall and The Corn Exchange which doubles as the Causton Playhouse. Visit the Wallingford Museum to see various paraphernalia from the series, including props, scripts and photographs.

The River Thames

Wallingford is well known for being on the banks of the River Thames, taking its name from the crossing it provided to animals and people.



Enjoy the River Thames

It is possible to explore the River Thames by boat in the summer months by taking an organised boat trip to Reading or Abingdon from the Riverside Park, and in nearby Benson you can hire rowing boats, canoes and motorboats.

In July you can see Royal Swan Upping. Royal Swan Uppers who wear the scarlet uniform of Her Majesty The Queen, travel in traditional rowing skiffs for the annual ceremony where the census of the swan population is taken.

Wallingford boasts a Thames-side campsite, open-air swimming pool and splash park suitable for all the family, and a perfect location for a picnic.

For those who enjoy walking you can follow the Thames Path at Wallingford. The Thames Path is a long distance walking trail, following England's best known river for 184 miles. It is a gentle trail that can be walked by people of all ages and abilities.

There are excellent mooring facilities available on both banks very near to the ancient Wallingford bridge, just a short walk from the Market Place.

To hire rowing boats, canoes and motorboats visit www.avboats.co.uk

For organised boat trips visit www.salterssteamers.co.uk

Accommodation in the Town Centre

There are a number of places to stay within walking distance of the town centre – a hotel, pubs with bedrooms and a campsite, so something for everyone.



Places to stay in the town centre

Within a stone's throw from the town centre you could stay in a 16th Century Coaching Inn, enjoy the home-from-home setting of a B&B or make the most of your budget and stay in a picturesque, family run camping and touring caravan park.

THE GEORGE HOTEL

High Street
Wallingford
OX10 0BS
Telephone: 01491 836665
www.peelhotels.co.uk

THE TOWN ARMS

102 High Street
Wallingford
OX10 0BC
Telephone: 01491 837773
www.thetownarms.com

THE COACHMAKERS ARMS

37 St Mary's Street
Wallingford
OX10 0EU
Telephone: 01491 838229
www.coachmakersarmswallingford.co.uk

THE PARTRIDGE

32 St Mary's Street
Wallingford
OX10 0ET
Telephone: 01491 839305
www.thepartridge.co.uk

BRIDGE VILLA

The Street
Crowmarsh Gifford
Wallingford
OX10 8EB
Tel: 01491 836860
www.bridgevilla.co.uk

The Tourist Information Centre also has a listing of Bed and Breakfasts and accommodation in the surrounding areas, or visit www.southernoxfordshire.com/accommodation

