

Newbury to Reading



The Route

Where: Newbury to Reading along the Kennet and Avon Canal

National Route Number: 4

Distance: 19 miles

Terrain: mostly traffic-free canal towpath, with some minor roads

Public transport: Railway stations at Reading, Theale, Aldermaston, Midgham, Thatcham and Newbury

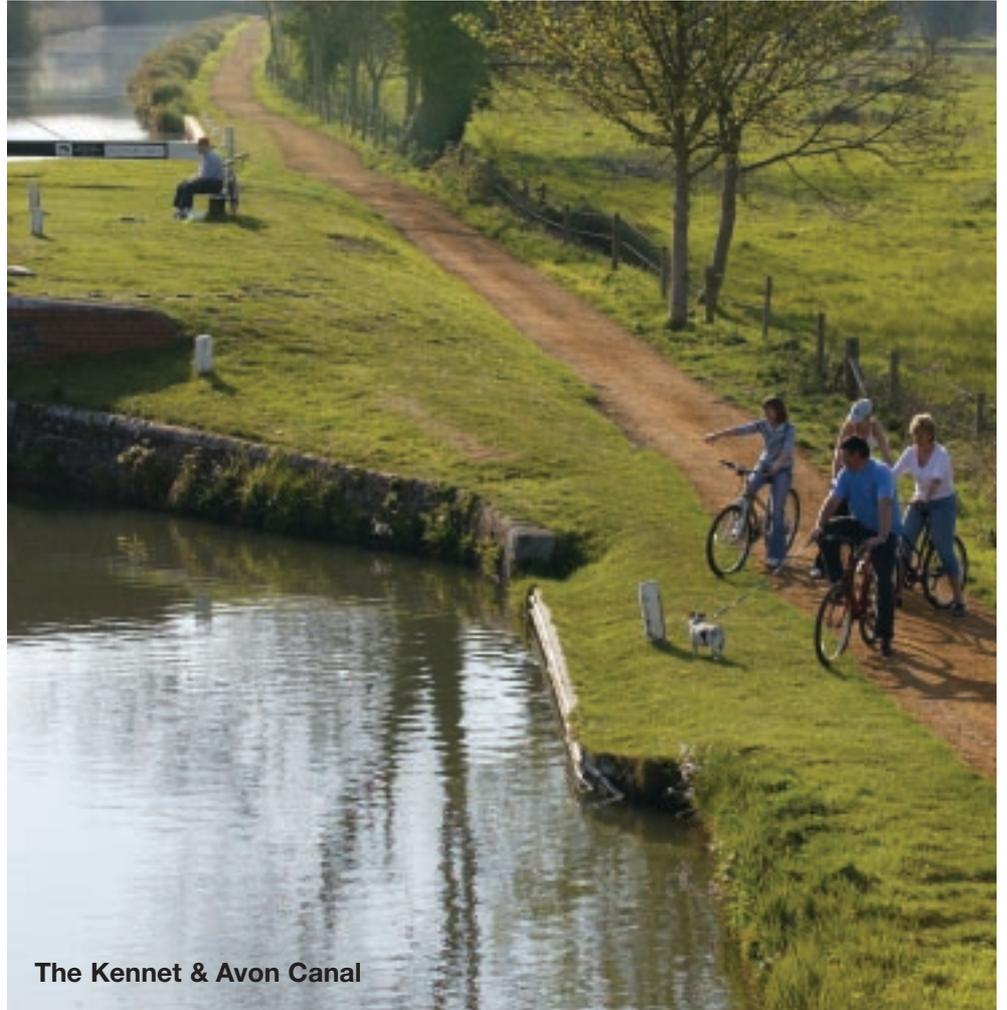
Bike hire: MJ Muttram in Thatcham - 01635 868740

Maps: Severn & Thames National Cycle Network map, free British Waterways leaflet about the Kennet & Avon Cycle Route

OS maps: Explorer 158/9, Landranger 174/5

Tourist information: Reading - 01189 566 226, Newbury - 01635 302 67

Towns to search for on Sustrans website mapping: Reading, Theale (West Berkshire), Woolhampton, Thatcham, Newbury



The Kennet & Avon Canal

With its gentle gradients and the close-up view of canalside life, this route is a wonderful way to explore this corner of Berkshire. From the modern centre of Reading the route follows the canal towpath, with an occasional on-road detour.

There is usually something moving on the Kennet & Avon, either the waterfowl or one of the many narrowboats that navigate its waters. Either way, a cyclist pedalling at a leisurely pace will probably be the fastest thing on the move. You can't rush along a canal towpath, especially if it's popular with anglers, so allow enough time to enjoy the slower pace of life here.

Please watch out for the potentially slippery grass at Tyle Mill sluice - surface improvements are planned here, but it is a sensitive conservation area. At Woolhampton there is a length of privately-owned towpath on which cycling is not allowed. Please wheel your bike for this 600-metre section.

You might want to stop at the Nature Discovery Centre and reed beds (open from 1pm to 3pm except on Mondays) just west of Thatcham. The route leaves the towpath at Thatcham station and follows the road into the centre of town, and then returns to the towpath along shared use paths. This is signed as Route 4.

The link to Reading station is shown on the Kennet & Avon Cycle Route leaflet. The link to the station at Newbury is rather more complicated, and it's best to get hold of a copy of the Newbury town cycle map. Cycle shops and Tourist Information Centres in the area should have them, otherwise ring West Berkshire Council on 01635 519623.

