

Out-and-about Guides

A series of self-guided local excursions on foot or using public transport for English Naturally visitors.

Winchester to St Cross

An easy circular walk from Winchester to St Cross via the Water Meadows and St Catherine's Hill.



Highlights Water meadows, St Cross Hospital, river views, city views from St Catherine's Hill (optional)

Total distance 4 miles (6.5km)

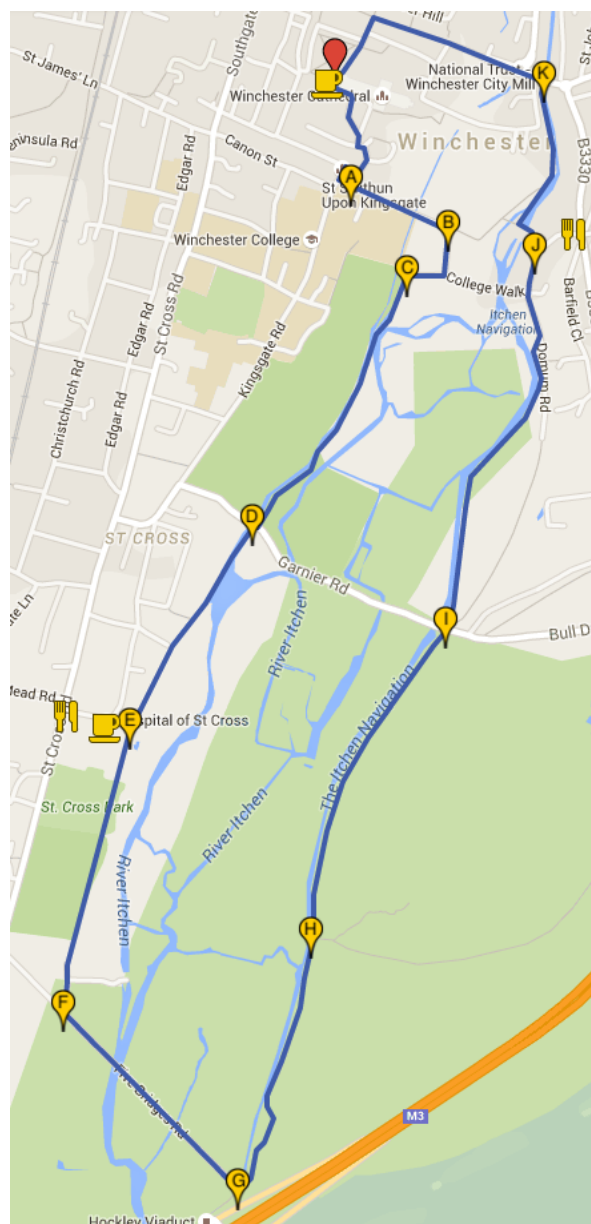
Time needed 3-4 hours

Starting point Winchester Cathedral

Watering holes The Bell, St Cross (pub)
St Cross Hospital (teas)
The Black Boy (pub)
Cathedral Refectory (teas/lunches)

Directions

1. Go through the Cathedral Close exiting into St Swithun Street. Turn left through Kingsgate, and left again into College Street past the house where Jane Austen spent her final months (A) and carry on past the entrance to Winchester College.
2. Turn right opposite Wolvesey Castle (B) into College Walk and then right again before passing through a gate (C) on the left into the Water Meadows immortalised by John Keats.
3. Cross Garnier Road (D) and continue to St Cross (E), a stunning medieval Hospital, which you can also visit if you have time. Don't miss the Chapel and the beautiful walled garden at its most attractive during spring and autumn. During the summer refreshments are available in the Tea Rooms.
4. Continue along the path on the river side of St Cross until you get to Five Bridges Road (F), now closed to traffic. Turn left and continue to the end (G) before turning left again to head back towards Winchester on a path more or less parallel to the one you took earlier.
5. You will see St Catherine's Hill (H) on your right while the Itchen Navigation (canal) is on your left.
6. Continue along the canal or climb the hill if you are feeling energetic: the views from the top are lovely



and there is an ancient grass labyrinth to find before a steep descent the other side.

7. Cross Garnier Road (I) again and continue along the footpath until you get to Wharf Hill (J). If you walk up here you and go to the right you will find the famous Black Boy pub.
8. Continue along the river to arrive at Winchester City Mill (K) at the bottom of town near King Alfred's statue from where you can make your way back to the start.

Find out more about ...

A

Jane Austen's House The well known novelist Jane Austen spent the last few months of her life in an unassuming house at 8 College Street in Winchester before her death in July 1817. She had moved from her home in nearby Chawton to be with her sister Cassandra in Winchester for better medical care when she became ill. She is buried in Winchester Cathedral. The house is now a private home and is not open to visitors. It is, however, possible to visit Jane Austen's House in Chawton.

B

Wolvesey Castle /'wʊlzi 'kɑ:s(ə)l/ has been the principal residence of the Bishops of Winchester since Norman times. The first fortified stone castle building was erected in 1110. The site has seen many historic events including a wedding breakfast on 25 July 1554 for Philip II of Spain and Queen Mary before they went on to Winchester Cathedral for the wedding ceremony itself. Many improvements and extensions were made to the castle over the centuries until, in 1680, all were demolished to make way for the present Bishop's Palace which is still in use for official business. All that remains of the earlier Wolvesey Castle buildings are ruined walls and the chapel.
<http://www.english-heritage.org.uk/visit/places/wolvesey-castle-old-bishops-palace/>

E

St Cross Hospital is not a hospital in the modern sense of the word. It is an almshouse /ɑ:mzhaʊs/ founded by Henry of Blois in 1132. Its mission was to house 13 poor men who were too ill to work and to provide food for 100 men at the gates each day. The almshouses are still home to 25 elderly men known as lay brothers. The brothers wear traditional gowns and trencher hats. If they request it at the Porters Gate, travellers are still granted food and drink known as 'Wayfarer's Dole' (bread and ale). Visitors are welcome and modern refreshments (tea, coffee, cake) are available at the Hundred Men's Hall.
<http://hospitalofstcross.co.uk/>

H

St Catherine's Hill is a steep chalk hill first used as a fort by Iron Age settlers. There are lovely views from the top if you can manage the strenuous climb to get there. In Norman times a chapel to St Catherine was built at the top, but this was destroyed in 1537. All that remains of the chapel is now covered by a clump of beech trees. Next to the clump of trees is a mizmaze, or grass labyrinth, dating from the 17th century. Originally used for penitent rituals in medieval times, such mizmazes were later walked as a recreational activity.

I

The Itchen Navigation provided an important trading route from Winchester to the sea from 1710 for about 150 years, and comprises sections of river and sections of canal with locks where the River Itchen was not suitable for barges carrying goods. Following the opening of the railway in 1840 traffic decreased and in 1869 the navigation ceased to operate. Today the towpath has been restored and the Itchen Navigation is popular with walkers.
<http://www.hiwwt.org.uk/itchen-navigation>

K

Winchester City Mill is a working watermill powered by the River Itchen. The original medieval mill was rebuilt in 1743 and remained in use until the early 20th century. Today it is a museum where you can see the mill working and even buy flour that has been ground on the premises.
<http://www.nationaltrust.org.uk/winchester-city-mill/>