

Spend a leisurely afternoon in Henley-on-Thames



How long do I need? Half a day

Where is it? Henley-on-Thames

Highlights

For rowing enthusiasts – and everyone who loves the river – Henley-on-Thames is the classic choice for a visit. Henley Royal Regatta has made the town the international home of rowing - Sir Steve Redgrave, Britain's greatest Olympian, was an outstanding competitor at the regatta over a period of 20 years. The river here at Henley is broad and beautiful - a scenic setting for passenger boats and hire craft, the River & Rowing Museum and lovely waterside walks along grassy banks on The Thames Path National Trail. The town is popular as a relaxed and interesting place to eat and to shop and the surrounding villages in the Chiltern Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty add their own magic.

Start your visit with lunch

Enjoy a light lunch in the Terrace Café of the River & Rowing Museum, or take a picnic on the river. You can hire a rowing boat or a small motorboat from [Hobbs of Henley](#) boathouse in Station Road, just 100 yards from the museum. Boats seating three to five people can be hired by the hour and you can make up the picnic at Henley Tea Rooms in Station Road, just yards from the boathouse.

Choose from these highlights to make the most of your afternoon:

[The River & Rowing Museum](#)

A statue of Sir Steve Redgrave greets visitors to this dynamic museum, following the story of rowing and the River Thames from Olympic heights to the minutiae of life on the willowy river banks. A special exhibition is planned to mark the 2012 Olympic rowing events but in the meantime, the permanent International Rowing Gallery shows just what it takes to be a champion and gives us a taste of how it must feel to compete on the water. Thrilling film footage, memorabilia and interactive exhibits re-live

Olympic and other famous race triumphs, profile the great stars of the sport and introduce the coaches and boat builders whose expertise is part of the winning formula.

The largest of the museum's permanent galleries explores the river from source to sea, explaining intriguing aspects of its life from art and poetry, to locks and weirs, boatbuilding, birds and bugs. The *Wind in the Willows* exhibition is a family favourite, depicting the adventures of Mr Toad, Ratty, Mole and friends with 3-D models of E.H. Shepard's endearing figures, aided by theatrical lighting and sound. The Henley Gallery gives an excellent overview of the town itself, past and present, complete with a touch-screen virtual town tour. The museum is open daily until 17.30. Admission charges apply.

The River & Rowing Museum

Mill Meadows, Henley-on-Thames, Oxfordshire, RG9 1BF

Opening hours: Open daily until 17.30

Costs: Admission costs apply – see website or call for details

Tel: +44 (0)1491 415600

Web: www.rrm.co.uk

[Hobbs of Henley](#)

Take a relaxed trip along the beautiful Henley Royal Regatta reach, in one of Hobbs of Henley's elegant passenger boats. The 60-minute river trip covers the 1 mile 550 yards of the Regatta Course, from its finishing point by the bridge in the town centre to the starting point at Temple Island, and continues downstream to turn at pretty Hambleden Lock. A recorded commentary points out all the highlights of this very scenic route. Summer trips operate throughout the afternoon. Just turn up or, if you prefer, make your booking in advance on the day.

Hobbs of Henley

Station Road, Henley-on-Thames, RG9 1AZ

Opening hours: March-October with special cruises until December – see website or call for more details.

Costs: Costs apply – see website or call for details

Tel: +44 (0)1491 572035

Web: www.hobbs-of-henley.com

Shop 'til you drop

Start your shopping expedition in Hart Street, leading from the bridge to the Market Place. Call in to [Lovibonds Brewery](#) shop at the rear of 19 – 21 Market Place to talk to the brewer and sample and buy local craft beers. Follow the main line of shops along Duke Street and Bell Street to complete the loop back down to the bridge via New Street. Cross the bridge to buy rowing memorabilia, jewellery and casual clothing in the [Pink Hippo Shop](#) in the famous Leander Rowing Club - home to sporting heroes including Sir Steve Redgrave, Sir Matthew Pinsent, James Cracknell, Debbie Flood, Steve Williams and the champions of tomorrow.

A gentle riverside walk

Enjoy wonderful views of the River Thames as it winds through green meadows, on the gentle 2 ½ mile walk along the Thames Path from

Henley to Lower Shiplake. The walk takes approximately 1 ½ hours and is signposted for [The Thames Path National Trail](#). To begin, join the river path at the River & Rowing Museum, with the river on your left. Pass first through Mill Meadows then over the footbridge to Marsh Lock, enjoying spectacular views over the River Thames and the rushing weirs. From here the walk becomes more rural, with wide open views of water meadows and steep wooded hills. Reaching the end of the meadow, the path swings away from the river and over a footbridge, passing Bolney Court and along Bolney Road to a surfaced lane. Continue along this road, turning right after 'Rivermead House' for Shiplake station. To return to Henley: First Great Western run frequent train services on the [Regatta Line](#), which links Reading and Oxford with Henley. Trains from Lower Shiplake to Henley run approximately every half hour, with a journey time of 5 – 7 minutes. [National Rail Enquiries](#) (+44 (0)8457 484950) have the details.

Time in the countryside ...

Once outside Henley-on-Thames, you are instantly in the countryside of the Chiltern Hills, officially designated an Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty. Head for Hambleden, in the Hamble Valley, signposted off the A4155 Marlow road just two miles outside Henley. This pretty little village, with the [Stag & Huntsman](#) pub, has provided the perfect location for numerous period film and TV productions. Continue further along the winding valley to find [The Frog at Skirmett](#), 2010 Good Pub Guide County Dining Pub of the Year, then branch off for tiny Turville – home of TV's popular *Vicar of Dibley* and [The Bull & Butcher](#) pub.

Getting to Henley-on-Thames

Henley is situated 16 miles (26km) from Windsor / Dorney. [AA Route Planner](#) can provide a choice of routes, with full details. For this itinerary, park at the pay and display long-stay car park at Mill Meadows, in front of the River & Rowing Museum or at the Railway Station, which is five minutes' walk from the Museum. You can also reach Henley-on-Thames by train, from Windsor & Eton Station. The journey takes approx. one hour, with two changes. [National Rail Enquires](#) (tel: +44 (0)8457 484950) has the details of all rail options.

More visitor information

Visit www.visitsouthoxfordshire.co.uk. Call in at Henley Visitor Information Centre, Town Hall, Market Place, Henley-on-Thames RG9 2AQ. Tel: +44 (0)1491 578034. Open: Monday – Saturday 10.00 – 16.00.