

Bikexplore

Leicestershire & Rutland

Fixed centre, Half board
(Tour N° TG241)

30th August to 6th September 2024



Tour Prospectus

Although a quintessential part of the Heart of England, the historic counties of Leicestershire and Rutland are much less celebrated (and visited) than their counterparts further south. However, this should not detract from the variety the area offers in terms of landscapes, vistas and vernacular building styles. We will be based for the week in a comfortable hotel in the middle of the mostly rural central and eastern portion of this unsung area. This gives us ready access to a good network of minor roads, enabling us to explore the rolling hills and vales in all directions over the six days' riding. In the process we will visit country parks, churches, windmills, canals, pretty villages and other landmarks, as well as sampling a wide range of cafés and tea rooms.

Itinerary

Fri 30 Aug	Arrive and check into hotel in Melton Mowbray (from 4pm). Meet in bar before dinner at 7.30pm. Stay 7 nights.	
Sat 31 Aug to Thur 5 Sept	Cycle circular routes each day, in different directions (order to be decided, according to weather, etc.).	40-50 miles approx
Fri 6 Sept	Tour ends after breakfast.	

Accommodation and meals

3-star hotel and restaurant on a half-board basis (bed, breakfast, evening meal).

Price: £730

The price is based on a minimum number of 9 participants booking on the tour. If there are insufficient bookings by 16th August, we will contact you and return all monies paid.

Price includes:

- 7 nights sharing twin or double room
- All breakfasts and evening meals
- Tour information pack (including GPS routes)
- Bikexplore costs

Price does not include:

- Single room occupancy (£230 supplement payable, limited availability)
- Travel to and from Melton Mowbray
- Drinks with evening meals
- Lunches or refreshments at morning and afternoon stops
- Entry fees at any attractions visited
- Any other personal expenses
- Travel Insurance.

Payment schedule

In view of the short notice full payment is required as soon as possible once you receive your acceptance letter (see *To make a booking* below).

Cancellations

Should you be forced to cancel your booking for any reason you must notify us in writing. Cancellation charges are as follows:

Written notice received:	Cancellation charge:
From booking through to departure	100% (£730)

To make a booking

Read the section on 'Booking a Holiday' on the Bikexplore website, then contact the Tour Leader to check that there are still places available. If there are, download and complete the booking form and email it to the Tour Leader. Once it's been processed instructions on how to pay the deposit (and balance) will be sent to you.

Organiser's Information Sheet

Leicestershire & Rutland

30th August to 6th September 2024



This holiday is classed as Grade 4 – Moderate



The information below is intended to help enquirers decide if the tour is suitable for them.

The area covered by the tour

The historic counties of Leicestershire and Rutland occupy a broad swathe of central England, their borders stretching from Staffordshire in the west to Lincolnshire in the east. The area immediately around our base in Melton Mowbray is characterised by rolling limestone or ironstone hills interspersed with lower lying vales and river valleys. These parts are predominantly rural and the population is relatively sparse, with the scattered villages often sited on a hilltop and gathered around an imposing stone church. They are connected by a good

network of country lanes which at one moment dip and dive to cross a small stream, and the next soar upwards to give a breezy view of the surrounding landscape. The country abounds in historical landmarks, including country houses in their parkland settings, Iron Age forts, old windmills, relics of the canal age and other curiosities. Only a few instances of modernity intrude, such as the massive Rutland Water reservoir near Oakham. Further west, beyond the urban sprawl along the valley of the River Soar between Leicester and Loughborough, lies the distinctive Charnwood Forest, a former royal hunting area that contains some of the oldest sedimentary rocks in Britain. One of our day rides will visit this area, aiming to reach one of its high points in order to enjoy the panoramic view.

Rides and rest days

There will be a nominated ride on each of the six days from the Saturday to the Thursday. We will decide the order mainly according to forecast weather conditions, but also taking into account group preferences. The precise routes are still at the planning stage, but all will include at least one café stop (usually two), and in terms of distance are likely to be between approximately 40 and 50 miles. Wherever possible rides will be designed so that we can visit places of interest, such as Beacon Hill, Foxton Locks, Woolsthorpe Manor (Newton's birthplace) and the turf maze at Wing. While there are no 'official' rest days, the plus of a fixed centre holiday like this is that participants are able to have a day off the bike whenever they wish.



Travel and Parking

Melton Mowbray railway station is located just over a mile from the hotel. It has an hourly service for most of the day, connecting directly to/from Leicester and Birmingham in one direction, and Peterborough, Cambridge and Stansted Airport in the other. There are connections at these stations as well as other intermediate stops to/from all other parts of Great Britain.

The town is situated midway between the M1 motorway and the A1 (part motorway, part dual carriageway trunk route), with reasonable main road connections between the two. There is ample off-road parking at the hotel.



For those wishing to cycle there is a wide choice of country lane routes from all directions. It is also worth noting that the National Cycle Network (NCN) Route 64 from Market Harborough to Lincoln runs directly through Melton Mowbray.

Accommodation / Meals

We will be staying in a family-run 3-star hotel on the edge of Melton Mowbray on a half board basis (bed, breakfast and evening meal). All rooms are en suite, most having a shower over a bath. The majority are situated on the first floor, but there are a small number on the ground floor too. Please note that the hotel does not have a lift.

The hotel has its own restaurant, set in an airy conservatory, where all our meals will be taken. This has a good reputation for freshly prepared dishes using seasonal produce, sourced from local suppliers wherever possible, and a regularly changing range of 'specials'. As Melton Mowbray is hailed as England's Rural Capital of Food (with pork pies and Stilton cheese amongst its culinary claims to fame) we should be in the right place for some excellent meals.

The hotel is also billed as 'bike friendly', offering secure under cover space for overnight cycle storage and a range of tools for basic maintenance.

Group information

The maximum group size will be 14 (including the leader).

Weather and clothing

The holiday will be taking place towards the end of summer and the start of autumn, implying that a mixture of weather conditions should be anticipated through the week. Previous tours at this time of year have generally enjoyed fine conditions, with usually just one day with persistent rain and others alternating between sunny and showery. The best approach is to plan for a similar unpredictable blend this time too. In general temperatures should be pleasant, but it can feel cold on the bike in rainy and/or windy conditions, so make sure you have an effective set of waterproofs with you, as well as gloves and an appropriate base layer to keep yourself warm.

Cycles / Equipment

A touring bike will give you the most comfortable ride, particularly for those days when we will be covering longer distances. However, expedition/gravel bikes or MTBs with road tyres would also be suitable. Whatever type of bike you bring, note that there are some short unmetalled stretches of cycle path or canal towpath to follow, so you are advised to fit hard-wearing touring tyres, rather than racing slicks. As there are also a few steep hills to negotiate, a bottom gear of at least 25 inches is recommended (i.e., rear sprocket larger than the smallest front chainring). Bikes should be fitted with mudguards, to avoid spraying others in the group in case we encounter wet roads, and have racks to secure panniers, saddlebags or day packs. You should ensure that your bike is in sound mechanical order before leaving home. I will advise on what spares and tools you should bring in the final tour information bulletin.

Maps

Although detailed route cards and GPS tracks will be provided, you should bring a suitable map with you in case you lose your way. The Ordnance Survey 1:250,000 OS Road Map No. 5: East Midlands and East Anglia covers the whole area and more, but is not always easy to follow. If you require more detail, the best choice would be the following OS 1:50,000 Landranger sheets:

- 129 - Nottingham & Loughborough
- 130 - Grantham
- 140 - Leicester, Coventry & Rugby
- 141 - Kettering & Corby.

About the leader

I have been combining my love of the outdoors and travelling through cycle-touring for more than 40 years, exploring many parts of the British Isles and Europe, as well as further afield in South Africa and the Americas. I was CTC Tour Leader for 22 years, running over 40 tours, 15 of which visited different parts of Spain. I have also organised several cycle trips in Britain, both fixed centre and moving on, and currently I am keen to explore different areas of our own country that have hitherto remained unfamiliar to me.



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