



## **Narrowboat FAQs**

### **What if I fall in?**

It is unlikely that you will, but everyone will wear a life jacket when on deck and round the locks. If you did fall in, in most places the canal is only 4ft deep so you would be able to stand up - although the bottom is so muddy it would be better to swim to the bank first.

### **Can I come if I can't swim?**

Absolutely; you will be wearing a life jacket when on deck and on the bank, and the canal is generally shallow (see above).

### **Will I get sea-sick?**

Very unlikely. Personally, I get travel sick very easily (aeroplanes, boats, coaches, cars...) - but I have never felt sick on a canal.

### **How fast do we go?**

Slowly! The maximum speed on a canal is 4mph which is a brisk walking speed - generally we go slower than this.

### **Won't I get bored?**

Although we go slowly, there is still plenty to do and see. There are frequent locks on the Kennet and Avon canal, when half the people on board will get off to operate the paddles and lock gates and the other half will have the fun of going through the lock in a boat. There are also a number of swing bridges which need to be opened, and we will also teach you how to steer the boat. You can find out more about narrowboating by watching the "Boaters' Handbook DVD" on Youtube.

There are craft activities and games on board if you have time to spare, and of course a beautiful ever-changing view and plenty of wildlife to watch. You will probably see herons, you may see a kingfisher, and, if you are very very lucky, an otter.

### **Aren't locks dangerous?**

Locks can be dangerous if people don't know what they are doing, but you will be trained to operate the locks safely by the qualified skipper.

### **Can I stand up in the boat?**

Yes! The boat has a normal height ceiling all the way.

### **How do we cook and eat our food?**

The kitchen area has a gas cooker with hobs and oven like the one you might have at home, a normal fridge, and a sink with hot and cold taps. There are cupboards for storing food, and crockery and cutlery for all on board. A large portable table in the seating area means that everyone can sit down to eat together.

### **What about toilets and washing facilities?**

There are two flush toilets on board the boat each with a washbasin with hot and cold water. There is also a shower. Drinking water is filtered and comes out of a special tap. We generally fill up the water tank every day so there should be plenty of water for what we need.

### **Where do we sleep?**

You will have your own bunk, in the sleeping area at the back of the boat. The top bunks require a certain amount of agility to get into and some are quite narrow; the bottom ones are more spacious.

### **Can I bring my hairdryer / laptop / phone?**

Electricity on board is reserved for essential items such as lighting and the fridge. There are no electric sockets, so you would not be able to charge your laptop or plug in a hairdryer. There is a USB socket for charging phones when the engine is running, but the skipper's phone has priority as this will be needed in an emergency; it would be helpful if you could bring a powerpack for your own phone. We would also encourage you to put social media aside for the time you are on the boat so you can socialise with the people sitting next to you!

### **Can't you get Weil's Disease from canal water?**

Weil's Disease is a very rare development of the leptospirosis virus which has sometimes been reported in canal water. To put it in perspective, however, only a handful of people in the UK develop the disease each year, and these are usually people who work in water or mud for most of the time. On a narrowboat contact with canal water is minimal, and simple precautions such as covering cuts with waterproof plasters and washing one's hands after handling wet ropes make the chances of contracting the disease extremely small. However, anyone developing flu-like symptoms in the weeks following the trip should mention to their doctor that they have been in contact with canal water so the disease can be ruled out at an early stage.