Medieval markets, mazes and Morris dancing

Saffron Walden and Thaxted routes

Total distance of main route is 55km/34miles

Short rides
A 10.2km/6.4miles
B 29.3km/18.3miles
C 19.7km/12.3miles
D 24.3km/15.2miles

Attractions along this route
- Saffron Walden Museum
- Bridge End Garden
- The Fry Art Gallery
- Audley End House
- Debden Antiques
- Thaxted Guildhall
- St. John the Baptist Church
- John Webb’s Windmill
- St. Mary’s Church, Chickney
- St. Mary’s Church, Stansted
- Mountfitchet Castle & Toy Museum
- Prior’s Hall Barn

Accommodation
for details see overleaf
- Fieldview Bed & Breakfast
- Brocking Farm Cottages

Places to eat
1. The Eight Bells
   01799 522790
   www.8bells-pub.co.uk
2. The Fleur de Lys
   01799 543280
3. The Cricketer’s Arms
   01799 543210
   www.thecricketersarmsricklinggreen.co.uk
4. The Cricketers
   01799 550442
   www.thecricketers.co.uk
5. Axe and Compasses
   01799 550272
   www.axeandcompasses.co.uk

This map is intended as a guide only. Please refer to relevant OS Explorer maps for specific details.
Saffron Walden

Saffron Walden is an ancient town with a rich heritage of old buildings reflecting its wealth as a rural market town. The name Saffron relates to the importance of the valuable coccus crocus sap rewards between the 15th and 18th centuries, grown as a medicine, dye and flavouring. The local market was established in 1434 and received the first Charter in 1236. It is now held on Tuesdays and Saturdays and together with many specialist small shops it contributes to making shopping in Saffron Walden a very pleasant and relaxed experience.

The town’s crowning glory is St Mary’s parish church, the largest and one of the most beautiful examples. As well as its landmark church, the largest and one of the most beautiful parish churches in Essex, built between 1470 and 1540. Nearby, the Museum, built in 1834 to house the collections of the Saffron Walden Natural Heritage of old buildings reflecting its wealth as a town. The Museum is one of the earliest purpose built museums in the country. It now contains many interesting collections and displays from Africa, the Americas, Australasia and the Pacific, as well as decorative arts that include ceramics, glass, furniture and woodwork, costumes and needlework, dolls and toys.

The delightful Victorian gardens at Bridge End were created during the late 19th century and middle 20th century and have been recently restored to their original Victorian splendour. The town is uniquely fortunate to have two impressive mazes: the yew hedge maze in the Bridge End Garden and the 15th century turf maze on the Common, which is the largest example of its type in the world and one of only eight surviving turf mazes in England.

Attractive route: 1. Saffron Walden Museum

Friendly, family-size museum. Exhibits include moccasins, mummy cases, woolly mammoths and Wallace the Lion! Meadow for picnics with the organic Kitchen Garden. The service wing provides a fascinating insight into life ‘below stairs’ and the restored stables are complete with resident horses and Victorian groom.

Tel: 01799 513633

www.saffronwalden.gov.uk/museum

Thaxted

Thaxted is a historic town and a real architectural gem. As well as its landmark buildings, St John the Baptist church and the 15th century Guildhall, there is plenty more to see.

The compact nature of the historic centre with its timber framed buildings, its steeply pitched roofs and chimney pots with the surrounding agricultural mosaic of brown, yellow and green, Gustav Holst, the celebrated composer, lived in Town Street and drafted part of the Planets Suite here, a Blue Plaque marks the house. The music tradition has been very much kept alive by the annual music festival held mainly over the weekends, last two in June and the first two in July – attracting performers of international repute. The festival is known for its ambitious repertoire including orchestral and choral works.

Thaxted is also the venue of the famous Morris Ring on the first weekend after Spring Bank Holiday attracting up to 300 Morris dancers from all over the country.

2. Bridge End Garden

Very interesting Victorian garden that has undergone major restoration. Bridge End Garden is in fact a series of seven interlinked gardens laid out by the Gibson family in the 19th century. These grade II listed gardens featured in the Hidden Gardens series on BBC.

Tel: 01799 524002

www.visitsaffronwalden.gov.uk

3. The Fry Art Gallery

Unique collection of work by 20th century artists who have lived in and around Great Bardfield & Saffron Walden, e.g. Edward Bawden, Michael Holmgren, Eric Ravilious and others. Significant contemporary works to demonstrate the area’s continuing artistic tradition.

Tel: 01799 513779

www.thefrygallery.org

4. Audley End House (English Heritage)

Audley End is one of England’s most magnificent stately homes. Enjoy over 30 lavishly decorated rooms and a wonderful collection of paintings and furnishings. Explore the beautiful Italian garden, 19th century parterre with its elaborate floral displays and the organic Kitchen Garden. The service wing provides a fascinating insight into life ‘below stairs’ and the restored stables are complete with resident horses and Victorian groom.

Tel: 01799 523942

www.english-heritage.org.uk/audleyend

5. Audley End Miniature Railway

The Audley End Miniature Railway is a delightful 1.5 mile ride on Lord Braybrooke’s private 10¼ gauge track through the estate woodland.

The children all enjoy looking out for the teddies that live in the woods, while the adults are reminded of childhood adventures! Visit the shop on site which is stocked with railway memorabilia and with a selection of confectionery.

Tel: 01799 541354

www.audley-end-railway.co.uk

6. Debden Antiques

Displayed in a beautiful 17th century Essex Barn, you will find a wonderful selection of antique furniture and in the Courtyard Garden fountains, statues and an array of unusual items.

Tel: 01799 544018

www.debdenbarns.co.uk

7. Thaxted Guildhall

In the example of a medieval guildhall few of which now remain. It was built in the 15th century and houses a permanent display of old photographs and objects relating to the history of Thaxted.

Tel: 01371 830856

www.thaxted.co.uk/content/guildhall

8. St John the Baptist Church, Thaxted

The church stands proud and spacious in a gently undulating landscape. Its splendid 18th century south east形 Steeple dominates the countryside for miles. Saved from harvest, the medieval church’s Gothic architecture is at its best.

Tel: 01371 831917

9. John Webb’s Windmill, Thaxted

John Webb’s Windmill was built in 1804 by John Webb, a local farmer, at a time when the demand for milled wheat and malt was increasing. The mill stands on the site of the earlier Church Mill and was constructed of local bricks. It has been recently restored and is now open to the public.

Tel: 01371 830285

www.thaxted.co.uk/content/windmill

10. St. Mary’s Church, Chipping

A remote and rustic little Saxon church with 1000 years of history, St Mary’s of Chipping is delightfully unspoilt and demonstrates examples of many periods of craftsmanship including a 14th century tower and late 15th-16th century work.

Tel: 01371 831237

www.churches-uk.org

11. St. Mary’s Church, Stansted

A pretty medieval church with Norman arches. St Mary’s is a peaceful place, inside, striking memorials show wasp-waisted Hester Salusbury dressed in hunting clothes and a cross-legged knight with his feet resting on a lion.

www.visitchurches.org.uk

12. Mountfitchet Castle & Toy Museum

Mountfitchet Castle Experience is a multi-attraction incorporating Mountfitchet Castle and Norman Village, House on the Hill Toy Museum and Dinosauro Encounters as well as an interactive haunted house.

Tel: 01279 833237

www.mountfitchetcastle.co.uk

13. Prior’s Hall Barn

One of the finest surviving medieval barns in eastern England, free entrance dated to the mid-15th century, with a long gallery wattle and daubed interior and crown post roof which is the product of some 400 oaks.

Tel: 01799 599546

www.english-heritage.org.uk/priorshallobarn

Getting to Saffron Walden

Ariving by Rail

Train services from London Liverpool Street to Audley End Station (2 miles away).

www.abbellogreatanglia.co.uk Tel: 0845 600 7245

Accommodation

1 Fieldview Bed & Breakfast

Howell End, Wimbish, CB10 26W

Tel: 01799 599561

www.fieldviewbedandbreakfast.com

2. Brocking Farm Cottages

Self Catering

Brocking Farm, Roast Green, Clavering, CB11 4SH

Tel: 01279 777349

www.brockingfarmcottages.co.uk

3. Fieldview Bed and Breakfast

Howlett End, Wimbish, CB10 2XW

Tel: 01799 513779

www.fieldviewbedandbreakfast.com

Tourist Information

Saffron Walden Tourist Information Centre

Telephone 01799 524002

www.visitsaffronwalden.gov.uk

www.visitessex.com

Essex County Council

www.visitessex.com

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