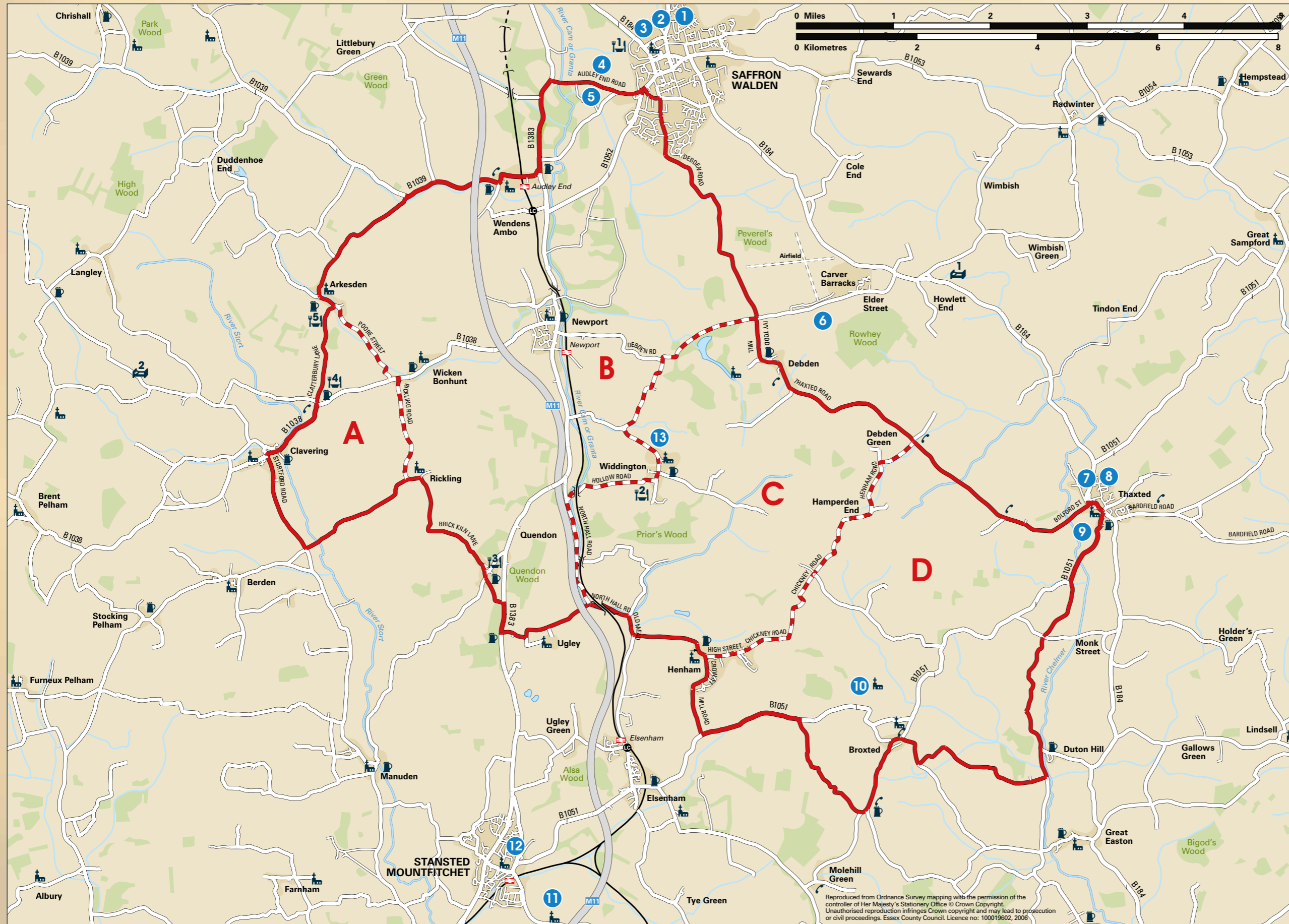


Medieval markets, mazes and Morris dancing

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

- 1 Saffron Walden Museum
- 2 Bridge End Garden
- 3 The Fry Art Gallery
- 4 Audley End House
- 5 Audley End Miniature Railway
- 6 Debdon Antiques
- 7 Thaxted Guildhall
- 8 St John the Baptist Church
- 9 John Webb's Windmill
- 10 St. Mary's Church, Chickney
- 11 St. Mary's Church, Stansted
- 12 Mountfitchet Castle & Toy Museum
- 13 Prior's Hall Barn

Accommodation

for details see overleaf

- 1 Fieldview Bed & Breakfast
- 2 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.

Key

- Cycle Route 1
- Short rides
- Place of worship
- Telephone in rural area
- Public House
- National Rail
- Accommodation
- Restaurants

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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 *crocus sativus* crop between the 15th and 18th centuries, grown as a medicine, dye and flavouring. The local market was established in 1141 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.

Saffron Walden successively prospered as a centre for wool production in the 15th century, saffron in the 16th and 17th centuries and malt in the 18th and 19th centuries. This continuing prosperity has left numerous fine old buildings whilst retaining the original medieval street layout. Bridge End, Castle Street, Myddylton Place and Church Street display many timbered houses dating from the 15th century, of which the Youth Hostel and the Old Sun Inn are outstanding examples.

The town's crowning glory is St Mary's parish 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 History Society, 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 and glass, furniture and woodwork, costumes and needlework, dolls and toys.

The delightful Victorian Gardens at Bridge End were created during the late 18th century and middle 19th century and have been recently restored to their original splendour. The town is uniquely fortunate to have two important mazes: the yew hedge maze in the Bridge End Garden and the ancient 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.

Thaxted

Thaxted is an attractive 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 chimneys contrasts 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 that is held over four 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.



Attractions along the route:

1. Saffron Walden Museum

Friendly, family-size museum. Exhibits include moccasins, mummy cases, woolly mammoths and Wallace the Lion! Meadow for picnics with castle ruins. Winner of Best Museum of social history. Accessible for disabled visitors. Tel: 01 799 510333 www.uttlesford.gov.uk/museum

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: 01 799 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 Rothenstein, Eric Ravilious and others. Significant contemporary works to demonstrate the area's continuing artistic tradition. Tel: 01 799 513779 www.fryartgallery.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 Elysian 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: 01 799 522842 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 10.25" 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 a nostalgic era, especially on weekends when the steam engines are running. Visit the shop on site which is stocked with railway memorabilia and with a selection of confectionery. Tel: 01 799 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: 01 799 544018 www.debdenbarns.co.uk

7. Thaxted Guildhall

Is a fine example of a medieval guildhall few of which now remain. It was built in the 15th century and it houses a permanent display of old photographs and objects relating to the history of Thaxted. Tel: 01 371 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 180ft high steeple dominating the countryside for miles. Saved from harsh restoration, this medieval church is Gothic architecture at its best. Tel: 01 371 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: 01 371 830285 www.thaxted.co.uk/content/windmill

10. St. Mary's Church, Chickney

A remote and rustic little Saxon church with 1000 years of history, St Mary's at Chickney is delightfully unspoilt and demonstrates examples of many periods of craftsmanship including a 14th century tower and rare pre-reformation altar (Churches Conservation Trust). www.visitchurches.org.uk

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 Dinosaur Encounters as well as an interactive haunted house. Tel: 01 279 813237 www.mountfitchetcastle.com

13. Prior's Hall Barn

One of the finest surviving medieval barns in eastern England, tree-ring dated to the mid-15th century, with a breathtaking aisled interior and crown post roof which is the product of some 400 oaks. Tel: 0870 333 1181 www.english-heritage.org.uk/priorsshallbarn

Getting to Saffron Walden

Arriving by Road

Travel on the M11 if travelling from London or the south. At junction 8 either take the A120 then B184 via Thaxted or the B1383 via Stansted Mountfitchet and Newport. Alternatively exit at junction 9 and travel south on the B184 via Great Chesterford. If travelling from the north arrive via the M11 taking the A505 at junction 10, then the A1301 and B184.

For detailed travel information call 0871 200 2233 or visit www.traveline.org.uk

Arriving by Train

Saffron Walden is served by a regular service by Abellio Greater Anglia directly from London Liverpool Street to Audley End Station (2 miles away). www.abelliogreateranglia.co.uk Tel: 0845 600 7245

Essex



Accommodation

1 Fieldview Bed & Breakfast

★★★★ B&B
Howlett End, Wimbish, CB10 2XW
Tel: 01 799 599616
www.fieldviewbedandbreakfast.com

2. Brocking Farm Cottages

★★★★ Self Catering
Brocking Farm, Roast Green, Clavering, CB11 4SH
Tel: 01 279 777349
www.brockingfarmcottages.co.uk

Tourist information

Saffron Walden Tourist Information Centre
Telephone 01 799 524002
www.visitsaffronwalden.gov.uk

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and Morris dancing

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