

St Edmundsbury Cathedral



IN THOSE FIRST FOOTSTEPS

Follow in the footsteps of the first Benedictines from
St Benet's Abbey in Norfolk to Bury St Edmunds

FROM	To	OS MAP	MILES/KM
Ranworth	Norwich	OL40	15/24
Norwich	Caistor St Edmund	OL40 OS237	12/20
Caistor St Edmund	Diss	OS237/230	24/39
Diss	Bardwell	OS230	16/26
Bardwell	Bury St Edmunds	OS230/229/211	15/24

St Benet's Abbey, Norfolk to Bury St Edmunds

In 1020 King Cnut asked 12 monks to come from St Benet's Abbey to found the Abbey of St Edmund. The exact route taken is unknown, and the geography of North-East Norfolk has changed since that time anyway, with the development of The Broads from peat harvesting. St Benet's is now a ruin amongst the marshes, with a ruined mill within the medieval gatehouse. It celebrated its own Millennium in 2019 and is well worth visiting on its own.

Bury St Edmunds subsequently became a pilgrimage centre during the Middle Ages until the Abbey's dissolution in 1538. Pilgrims came to worship at the shrine of Saint Edmund, former Anglo-Saxon king, one-time patron saint and saint of pandemics

To walk from St Benet's to Bury St Edmunds would be an unforgettable journey but one with two significant challenges: Firstly, to get to Norwich from St Benet's it is necessary to cross the river Bure. Some compromise might be needed, which could include starting the walk at Ranworth on the other side of the river, or persuading someone with a boat to take you across. There is no bridge across until Wroxham. Secondly, the walk on Day 3 is very long due to lack of accommodation along the way.

The entire walk could also be divided into chunks provided transport can be arranged.

Getting to St Benet's

St Benet's lies 2 miles south of the village of Ludham. The church there is worth a visit with a medieval rood screen, which depicts St Edmund. There is no accommodation although there is a shop and a pub. You might wish to consider staying your first night at Horning, which is 4.5km away. Hotel or Bed and Breakfast accommodation is available

By Public Transport: In theory there are buses from Norwich to Wroxham, and from there to Ludham, but check times carefully as the latter only run four times a week.

Day 1 Ludham to Norwich

n.b Unless you have secured a boat to cross the Bure we recommend starting you walk at Ranworth on the south side of the river, but the walk will be described from Ludham Church in case you are lucky enough to have made arrangements.

From St Catherine's Church, Ludham walk west along the A1062 until you reach a footpath on the left after about 400m. Go down this, bearing right to go past Ludham Hall, a former Bishops' Palace (which now has a cottage available for rent). Turn left past the Hall, then right after 300m and walk straight towards the Abbey ruins. You will see Ranworth across the river.



St Benet's. Spend time at the atmospheric ruins of the former Benedictine Abbey. [St Benet's Abbey](#)

From St Helen Church, Ranworth Start by walking up the tower of the Church! This gives wonderful views of the Broads and the journey ahead. The interior of the Church is full of treasures, with a wonderful medieval rood screen.

Walk westwards along the Woodbastwick Road. This follows round into Woodbastwick where there is a Brewery with café and toilet facilities.

Carry on along the Salhouse Road, bearing right as you enter Salhouse along Vicarage Road. There is a footpath which turns left about 500m along- take this to Salhouse Church and a war memorial. The path turns right along Bell Lane, then Left aft 50m past Hagg Wood and over the railway line. From there it goes across a wide field to reach Stonehouse road. Keep going along this to cross the Wroxham Road. You may like a diversion on the left to the isolated church of All Saints, Rackheath - now redundant, but a lovely setting for a picnic.

Keep walking Westwards as far as the North Walsham Road, where you turn left down towards the roundabout. Although this is a busy road there is a wide verge - unpleasant but safe. Keep going over the roundabout then turn left after about 800m down Church Lane. This takes you to the wonderful church of St Mary and St Margaret, Sprowston. By this stage the roads have pavements and it is easy walking to meander your way in a southwards direction to find an entrance to Mousehold Heath. There are several paths - you are aiming for the Bishops' Bridge.

Cross the bridge and you are nearly there! Walk up towards the Cathedral, past the Great Hospital on the right - a former pilgrim hostel.

Day 2 Norwich to Dunstan

There is a lot to see in Norwich! We recommend you spend the morning exploring the Medieval Quarter whilst looking out for provisions for a picnic. We use information published by St Stephen's Church on <https://www.ststephensnorwich.org/the-pilgrimage-of-medieval-norwich/>

Try and end up at St Julian's shrine off Rouen Road by mid-day.



St Julian's shrine. Perhaps the most well-known words of Julian of Norwich are 'All shall be well, and all shall be well, and all manner of things shall we well'. Visit the Julian Centre in Norwich and spend time in prayer.

<https://julianofnorwich.org/pages/learning-at-the-shrine>

The shrine lies on the beginning of the Boudicca Way. This is a Long Distance Footpath of 36m from Norwich to Diss, which is well sign-posted. To shorten the journey, however, there are some variations worth noting.

Head out of Norwich down King Street to join the A147 briefly, taking the first left off the roundabout down Bracondale and over the river Yare. The path will bear right at Trowse Newton to join White Horse Lane, walking south-west. This Lane crosses the A146 and the footpath leaves the road on the Right at an area of common marked "Henge" to join the Stoke Road. Turn Left down this and cross over the A47, leaving all major roads behind at this stage.

Turn left briefly down Arminghall Lane and the footpath leaves the road on the right side to zig-zag across the fields. Leave the Boudicca Way when you reach a cross-road of paths, turning right to get back onto Stoke Road, and from there walk to Caistor St Edmund. The Church of St Edmund, once the property of the Abbott of Bury St Edmunds, is on the edge of the Roman settlement Venta Icenorum.

Continue down the road to Stoke Holy Cross and turn right towards Dunstan. It is possible to reach Dunstan Hall through the back beside the Church of St Remigius. The Hall is a hotel with all facilities.

Day 3 Dunston to Diss

This is the longest day, through gentle farmland and woodland. There are no significant hills. We would advise an early start to be on the road by 8 am if possible, starting back at the memorial cross at St Remigius. Aim for 2-3 miles per hour and the distance will pass. Don't forget to stay well-hydrated and in company.

Walk back to Stoke Holy Cross and continue south along the road to Shotesham. There is a junction by the Church, and just to the right of it there is the entrance to a footpath: briefly you are back on the Boudicca Way! However, there is a crossroads after about 700m where you keep going straight on

when the Boudicca Way turns right. Join Chequer's Lane and keep walking south through Saxlingham Green across the fields towards Hempnall.

Hempnall has a village store and a church. Go past the Church and turn right on the B1527. After 300m there is a footpath on the left which joins The Street, which takes you past the isolated church of St Catherine's, Fritton - a perfect spot for a picnic.



The beauty of creation. As you make your way across the East Anglian countryside, take time to consider the beauty of the creation around you. Look at the flowers and hedgerows, the birds in the air and the trees lining the route. With increasing awareness of the impact of our lifestyles on the environment, give thanks for the creation you are seeing today.

Keep going into Fritton and you will rejoin the Boudicca Way, which follows in a south-westerly direction, passing through Pulham Market where there is a store. The Boudicca Way is well sign-posted. Just keep following the signs to Diss!

Day 4 Diss to Bardwell

This walk starts with the Angles Way, another long distance footpath between Great Yarmouth and Thetford.

Start from Fair Green and walk Westwards - the path turns off at a fork left, taking you around the top of Roydon Fen Nature Reserve and across Wortham Ling. There you turn right towards the remains of an old watchtower, rejoining a road briefly before turning right again, zig-zagging across fields to Dashes Farm, where you turn left along Fen Street. At the time of writing part of the way by Redgave and Lopham Fen is blocked by fallen trees. We took a detour by continuing along Fen Street, then turning right by The Willows, up to the Fen, and then walking westwards on the Angles Way via Fir Tree Farm and Hinderclay Fen. Here you leave the Angles Way to reach St Nicholas Church, Thelnetham for a picnic lunch.



St Nicholas, Thelnetham. One of many beautiful churches you will see on this route. As you pause here for lunch, take time to look around the church. Look at the stained glass and memorials and consider the many people who have worshipped here over the centuries.

You have now left the Angles Way and will be walking in a south-westerly direction. Along Church Lane, turn left down the "High Street" as far as Slade's Farm where a footpath takes you across to New Road. Take a track right to Weston Hindle Farm and continue along a path called Wood Lane to the Rectory at Hepworth. A quick right, then left again along a footpath to Star Cottage. Turn left along Market Weston Road and left again down a track called Field Lane. After about 300m you will turn right along a path over fields to meet George Lane, a track which takes you onto the Stanton road. Turn left and then right along the Care Lane track after 200m. This takes you onto the road leading to Bardwell, where there is accommodation and the Church of St Peter and St Paul.

Day 5 Bardwell to Bury St Edmunds

The final day!

Starting from the windmill, head due west along the road towards Ixworth Thorpe. Turn left and walk beside the A1088 for around 300m, where you cross and take the footpath opposite by a small green. This zig-zags across fields to join Common Lane, where you will find the church of St Mary the Virgin at Troston. Do not miss the wall painting of St Edmund. Continue into Troston and keep going in the same direction towards Great Livermere. The footpath turns right as you enter this village in the direction of the Church of St Peter, also well worth exploring.

From the church at Great Livermere walk due west across Livermere Park towards the next village of Ampton. You will pass Ampton Hall on the left. Just beyond the church there is a footpath which turns right, cutting off the corner of the road which turns towards Ingham.

Reaching the A134 turn left and turn into the entrance to Place Farm past a series of farm buildings. Keep going due west and you will come out about 130m from the entrance to Culford School on the other side of the road.

From this point you are joining another long distance footpath, the Saint Edmund Way, which runs from Manningtree to Brandon. Walk southwards along the road and you will find a footpath around 400m along on the other side of the road. This cuts through a small wood to reach the road from West Stow. Turn left to walk along the road around 300m before turning right down a track, which takes you to the river Lark. Once there turn left and follow the river past Ducksluice Farm and over the road at the edge of Fornham All Saints to go across the golf course. Keep next to the river until the path turns right onto the Mildenhall Road.



Approaching Bury St Edmunds. As you approach Bury St Edmunds, look out for glimpses of the Cathedral Tower, which was only completed in 2005. This is the modern day successor of the Abbey. Medieval pilgrims would have seen the towers of the Abbey across the flat East Anglian skyline. This would have assured them that they are nearly at journeys end. How are you feeling now that your journey is nearly over?

There are various entries possible into Bury St Edmunds from this point. If you are aiming for the Cathedral we would recommend that you continue along the St Edmunds Way in the following manner: Cross the Mildenhall Road and walk up Wordsworth Road, turning left where this joins Gloucester Road and left again up Philip Road. This reaches Tollgate Lane, which you cross to find a footpath opposite which takes you down Northgate Avenue. At the end is a footbridge, which takes you across the A14 with a good view of the sugarbeet factory! From there the path follows down onto the Mildenhall Road opposite the old pilgrim hospital (hostel) of St Saviour's. Cross beneath the railway bridge and over the roundabout to Northgate St.

For a final flourish we would recommend entering the Abbey Gardens through the East Gate entrance on Mustow St, and coming into Angel Hill through the Abbeygate.