



Unexpected Reading

A unique place in history, Reading is a surprise at every turn



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Dear subscriber

We've been cooped up for a year and it's time to start looking forward to getting back to what we like doing best – making the most of the leisure time. A visit to Reading this spring/summer offers a wide variety of great outdoor experiences to ensure social distancing, as well as the region's best range of accommodation, from top hotels to family serviced apartments.

With the stay at home rule ending but still a need for caution, Reading is a great outdoor option this year. Explore the Abbey Quarter with the 900-year old ruins of Henry I's monastery, take a selfie with Reading's new Banksy, cruise up the Thames on an open-top boat or be among the first to try out Reading's new aqua park.

Has online taken the pleasure out of your shopping? Get back to the shops and regain your sense of touch. Reading has a vibrant high street with two large shopping centres, all the big brands as well as a selection of unique independents. Add on outdoor dining on the river and plentiful coffee stops and you'll see that Reading is putting the fun back into shopping from 12 April.

The hotels and apartments are looking forward to the time when we can welcome you back, and in the meantime, the businesses are ensuring that they have adapted their operations to meet COVID-19 public health guidance. Look out for "We're Good To Go". From 17 May, you could stay in 5-star luxury, get the family together in an apartment stay or take plunge in a town centre hotel pool.

As you see, there's lots to do in Reading itself and with the River Thames and Kennett and Avon Canal flowing through the centre of town and the Chilterns on the doorstep, Reading also makes a great base for getting out and about. We're easy to get to by train, road, bike or by boat so we hope to see you back here soon.



Enjoy an open-air town centre experience

As Government guidelines allow more outdoor activities over the coming weeks and months, there's plenty in Reading to do while safely adhering to the rules. Take a look at Reading's new Banksy – the map will show you how to get there easily from the station. Nearby,



Reading's outdoor attractions welcome visitors from 12 April

The garden and outdoor cafe at the Museum of English Rural Life opens on 12 April. A short journey from Reading, Beale Wildlife Park opens 7 days a week from 12 April with new activities for 2021.

Reading Abbey Quarter includes the ruins of Henry I's monastery, the former school room of Jane Austen and the walls that kept Oscar Wilde imprisoned. After all that, the Wednesday/Friday street food market will keep you fed and watered.

[Find Out More](#)



Start planning your Reading Spring/Summer break

From a yoga break at the 5-star Roseate Hotel to an extended family reunion at one of Reading's serviced apartments, from 17 May there is a wide range of options to help you get away, in a home from home break.

Opt for the town centre, riverside views or easy access off the M4.

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Lights, camera, action! Visit Reading on film

Get a feel for Reading with the new two-minute introductory film to visiting the capital of the Thames Valley.

From history to shopping, music to Thames river trips, eating out to staying over. There's lots on offer.

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Watch life pass from the deck of a Thames Rivercruise boat

Reading is a waterways town with the longest stretch of River Thames frontage of any local authority area.

Take a 45-minute open-air circular cruise with

The parkland of its neighbour, the National Trust's Basildon Park, is open for bookings. Or for a great family day out try Wellington Country Park or the new aqua park at Caversham Lakes.

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Walk through 900 years of history at Reading Abbey

Reading Abbey was founded 900 years ago in 1121 by King Henry I, youngest son of William the Conqueror.

He was buried in Reading before the Abbey's High Altar. In its heyday the Abbey was one of the largest monastic sites in Europe and the ruins evoke the grandeur and scale of the medieval abbey. Reading Abbey Ruins are free to visit every day.

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Britain's Bayeux Tapestry enters the digital age

Reading Museum boasts the only full-scale copy of Normandy's famous tapestry depicting the Battle of Hastings.

The 70-metre long Reading tapestry was stitched in Victorian times and Reading Museum has launched a new scene-by-scene interactive digitised version. Or visit the original when the Museum reopens this summer.

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Touch before you buy in the region's retail capital

Reading is the best shopping destination in the Thames Valley.

All the shops including the Oracle Shopping Centre, Broad Street Mall, John Lewis, Primark

Thames Rivercruise's open-top Caversham Princess – sailings from 11am – 4pm in the Easter holidays, 12 – 18 April and then at weekends until 17 May.

and M&S, as well as lots of great independents, are easily walkable within the town centre and will be open again from 12 April.

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Find out more about visiting Reading at www.livingreading.co.uk or the sister site www.whatsonreading.com

For information on other River Thames destinations, places to stay and things to do go to www.visitthames.co.uk

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