



## Boating Holidays

'Believe me, my young friend, there is nothing – absolutely nothing – half so much worth doing as simply messing about in boats.'

Of course, Ratty was absolutely right when he shared this nugget of wisdom with Mole in *The Wind in the Willows*. Moments later their boat struck the bank, but that didn't dent their enthusiasm for a jolly day out on the river.

You're bound to have the odd scrape or gunwale-grabbing moment if you take your kids on a boating holiday – safety obviously has to be paramount – but there's no denying the simple pleasures or sense of adventure that accompanies a journey by narrowboat or cruiser. Think it's all a bit too fuddy-duddy? Try telling that to children who love the idea of nesting in cosy cabins, taking turns at the helm, working lock gates, feeding swans, spotting kingfishers and tying up for riverside picnics. The leisurely pace of a boating holiday also makes it one of the best opportunities busy families will ever get to simply wind down, share a good book or simply chat. And don't imagine you'll be cramped or skimping on comforts. Most boats are cleverly equipped with kitchens, bathrooms and saloons, with many boasting mod-cons like flat-screen televisions.

Where to get afloat? The simple answer is 'Somewhere near you.' Britain's waterways range from the Norfolk Broads to Scotland's Caledonian Canal – with an intriguing tangle of canals and rivers stretching between Basingstoke and Skipton. Short breaks are available for testing the water, or you could embark on a two-week odyssey, perhaps sharing an eight-berth cruiser with another family.



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