



Getaways

Lucy Young checks out dog-friendly breaks on British waterways.

A boating holiday offers access to beautiful countryside.

# Boating holidays

**T**here is something so incredibly relaxing about looking at water, and I'm not talking about the type that falls from the Great British sky in such huge quantities – that I could do without! I'm referring to sitting by a river or lake at sunset, with a glass of wine in my hand and a well-behaved dog snoozing at my feet, gazing at the sun reflecting on the gently lapping water.

In reality, I'll probably be shouting at Henry to stop rolling in duck poo, and shivering thanks to an unseasonably cold summer's day. But, that aside, I absolutely love boating holidays.

They're certainly not for everyone, though – if you're after a fast-paced holiday then I wouldn't recommend a boating break. This type of trip is for lazy days exploring the waterways of the UK at a leisurely pace of 4mph, stopping off at pubs for lunch, basking in the sunshine and eagerly waving at all the landlubbers as you pass them (what is it about being

on a boat that makes people wave?).

But before you book a holiday on a boat, do think about what type of dog you have and whether it's going to be as much fun for him as it is for you – is he going to get restless without much room to stretch his legs? Of course, a daily walk with your pooch on the footpath, often accessing beautiful countryside that you wouldn't ordinarily get the chance to see, will go a long way to keeping him happy.

And do make sure there is plenty of shade on the boat for your dog, on the off chance we do get some sunshine this year. Or ever again. It's also worth considering a canine lifejacket, even if your dog is a strong swimmer. If he falls or jumps into a canal or river, there might not be an easy way to get him safely back on the boat or onto dry land.

If the thought of being called 'Captain' for a week or two does appeal, then I would suggest you head to West Yorkshire and hire a canal boat. All 18 boats owned by

Shire Cruisers are pet-friendly and there is no charge for the first dog (additional dogs are £25 each per week). The narrowboats are gorgeous and the company is happy to offer advice on routes and places of interest you might want to head to. It suggests dog owners work out a strategy when it comes to locks, as they are a two-man operation; if there are only two of you on board, there's nobody to watch the dog so make sure he's shut away safely inside the boat.

Prices start at £365 for a short break and £565 for a

week. Shire Cruisers is part of the Drifters hire boat operator consortium, which operates over 500 boats from 35 bases and these are almost all pet-friendly boats. Visit [www.shirecruisers.co.uk](http://www.shirecruisers.co.uk) or call 01422 832712 for details. ●

### About the author



**Lucy Young** is a journalist living in Cambridgeshire with her Cocker Spaniel, Henry. She recently started blogging at [www.doggydaily.co.uk](http://www.doggydaily.co.uk)

### You could also try...

The Norfolk Broads are another fabulous destination for a boating holiday, offering the chance to cruise through reed marshes, meadows and woodland, mooring close to riverside pubs and restaurants,

villages and market towns. Hoseasons offers a range of dog-friendly boating options, such as a week's stay on Swan Ripple, sleeping four, which starts from £525. Visit [www.hoseasons.co.uk](http://www.hoseasons.co.uk) or tel. 0844 847 1100.

