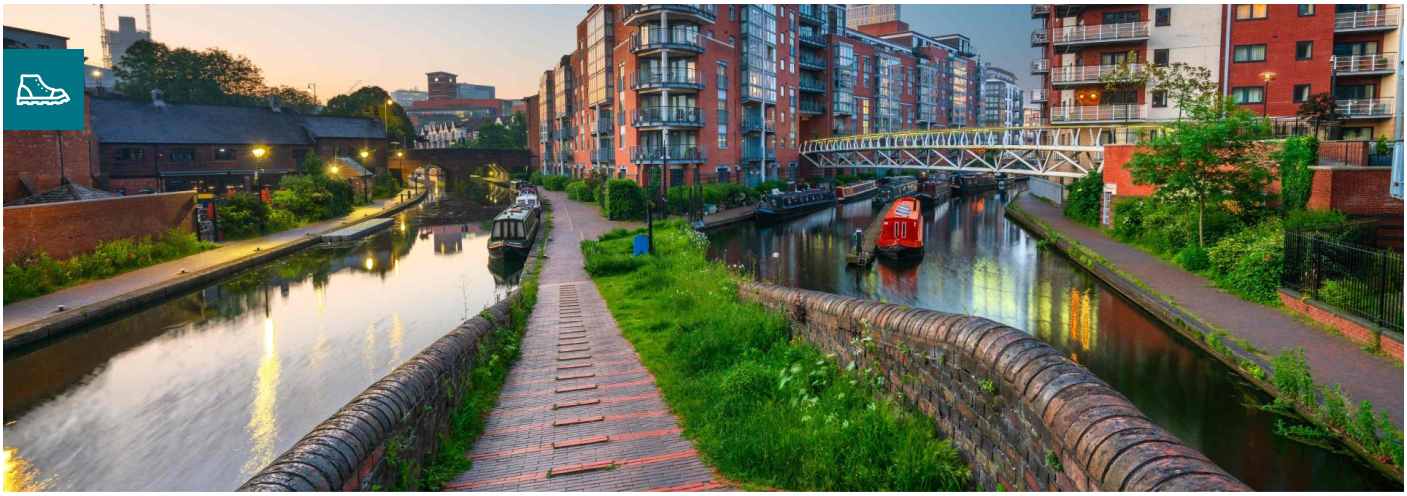
CH>RITY
CH>LLENGE

TRIP NOTES

BELIEVE ACHIEVE INSPIRE

BIRMINGHAM CANAL TO CASTLE TREK
UK

Sat 02 Oct - Sat 02 Oct 2027



In aid of your choice of charity

02 Oct - 02 Oct 2027

1 DAYS | UK | TOUGH

Take part in this one-day endurance challenge, trekking the scenic route from Birmingham Cathedral to Warwick Castle. Covering a full marathon distance of 42km, this event is the ultimate test of stamina and determination. Following the Grand Union Canal, the route transitions from Birmingham's bustling city streets to serene green spaces and picturesque waterways, culminating in a spectacular finish at Warwick's St Nicholas Park.

Your journey begins near Birmingham's vibrant city centre, with its mix of industrial heritage and modern charm. From there, you'll join the Grand Union Canal, passing through Solihull's leafy outskirts and the scenic countryside beyond. Enjoy well-placed checkpoints along the way, including pubs, cafés, and rest facilities, before reaching the final stretch along the River Avon. By the finish line, you'll have walked an inspiring distance and explored the distinct character of the Midlands' landscapes.

- Follow the historic Grand Union Canal to Warwick Castle.
- Explore a mix of urban landscapes and peaceful countryside.
- Perfect for walkers looking for a marathon challenge.
- Convenient rest stops and checkpoints with facilities and transport options
- Enjoy a picturesque finish at St Nicholas Park, Warwick

YOUR CHALLENGE DAY BY DAY

DAY 1 *Sat 02 Oct*

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Challenge Day

The trek will start at Birmingham Cathedral. You must arrive at the registration point by 7am to meet the team, receive your safety briefing, and prepare for the trek. The challenge begins at 7am, with participants weaving through the streets of Birmingham before joining the Grand Union Canal at Bordesley.

The first section takes you past Birmingham's industrial outskirts, gradually transitioning into greener spaces as you head toward Yardley and Solihull. At the 12km checkpoint, you'll stop for a quick break to refuel and refresh.

Continuing along the canal, you'll reach the halfway point at 21km alongside the canal, making this an ideal spot to rest and enjoy the surroundings. For those participating in the half marathon, this is the perfect place to start your trek, with easy transport links at Dorridge Railway Station.

The next stop will be at 34km near Hatton Locks, offering a scenic and tranquil setting to rest and recharge.

As you leave the canal for the final stretch, the route follows the River Avon into Warwick. The finish line is at St Nicholas Park, directly across from Warwick Castle. Here, you'll celebrate completing your challenge with your fellow participants.

You'll finish at around 5pm depending on your pace. Warwick Railway Station is just a 10-minute walk from the finish line, providing regular train services back to Birmingham Moor Street and Dorridge.

NB

Please note: Charity Challenge reserve the right to make any amendments necessary to this itinerary. Precise timings during the challenge may vary depending upon things such as weather, the groups' ability etc.

HOW TO FUND YOUR CHALLENGE

This page provides you details of the costs of your challenge.
The costs below are per person.

SELF FUNDER

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Pay a registration fee of £45.00 when you book
Then a balance of £130.00
(5 weeks before your challenge)
Raise as much as you can for your charity.

MINIMUM SPONSORSHIP

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Registration fee of £45.00 when you book
Raise a minimum of £265.00 for your charity.

WHAT'S INCLUDED

Before you go

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- Members only benefits and discounts at a wide range of clothing and equipment suppliers including Outdoorhire, Cotswold Outdoor, Runners Needs, Snow + Rock, Water to Go, The Altitude Centre, Sporttape and Nomad & MASTA.
- Sponsorship forms
- Public liability insurance
- Risk assessment and emergency management planning
- Fitness training notes
- Fundraising advice
- Access to your own password protected account including support materials and training schedules
- Support materials (itinerary, kit list, fact file, Q&As, health notes, travel tips, responsible travel policy and guidance)

On your challenge

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- All challenge management before, during and post event
- Full back-up support including first-aid qualified staff and first-aid supplies
- Charity Challenge buff, medal and certificate
- Checkpoint snacks and drinks
- Packed lunch and drinks

WHAT'S NOT INCLUDED

Before you go

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- Travel to and from the challenge start/finish point
- Clothing and equipment listed on your Kit List

On your challenge

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- Evening Meals
- Accommodation during the challenge (usually in twin share)
- Breakfast before the challenge

THE DETAILS

Fundraising deadlines	You will need to send your sponsorship money to the charity as you raise it. At least 80% of the minimum sponsorship required must be sent to the charity 8 weeks before departure (by 07/08/2027), and the remaining 20% within 4 weeks of completing the challenge (by 30/10/2027). If you have raised the necessary funds, the charity will then pay the balance of your challenge costs. The charity benefits by keeping the remaining sponsorship money and every pound over and above that you raise.
Typical group size	The typical group size is 30 - 50 participants

Why book with Charity Challenge?

- We are a multi-award winning challenge events specialist with over two decades of professional experience organising and leading challenges worldwide
- High quality route design that incorporates major landmarks and undiscovered highlights
- Fully supported walking challenge. Checkpoints, walking leaders and support vehicle.
- The very best leaders, who are fully qualified, highly experienced, knowledgeable and fun. They will do everything to help you complete the challenge and have a great time doing it!
- Thorough safety management systems in place (Challenge Safe)
- Engraved medal at the finish

Difficulty

This challenge is graded as **tough**. This is the perfect challenge for participants who are of an adventurous spirit and an open mind and who have taken part in a similar event previously and are prepared to put in the necessary training to push themselves on a more challenging trek.

Training

Our challenges are long, sustained events of up to 12 hours and cover varied terrain. They require a good to high level of fitness and you should not underestimate the importance of training beforehand. Even if you are active and exercise regularly, it's good to adapt your training towards your chosen challenge. This is vital in building strength, cardiovascular stamina and muscle endurance for the endurance challenge ahead.

We recommend you start training as early as possible, ideally at least 2-3 months before your challenge. Make sure you check the distance, ascent and terrain of your challenge and create a training plan that builds up to this. Whilst you could start with short walks in your local area, it's important to build up towards walking the distance of your actual challenge and being out and active for several hours at a time. Make sure you also check the type of terrain your challenge will take place in and plan your training to include similar terrain. Whilst an hour in the gym can help, you should ideally be training in a similar environment to that of your actual challenge and for several hours at a time.

For marathon distance challenges in more urban environments, we recommend training in similar urban environments. Focus on building up the distance walked so you are comfortable walking long distances with limited breaks. You should aim to walk at 4kmph as this is the speed we usually walk at to complete our urban challenges.

Training with the kit you will be using on your challenge is important so you can test it out beforehand and make sure it's fit for purpose. This includes wearing in any walking boots or shoes and experimenting with the socks you wear so you don't get blisters on your challenge. Make sure you also get used to walking with a backpack with at least 2 litres of water in. It's very important to test out your waterproofs (both jacket and trousers) in the rain as there's nothing worse than finding out your waterproofs leak 2 hours into your 12 hour challenge!

A healthy balanced diet is as important as your physical training. Make sure you fuel up on energy giving carbohydrates and muscle-repairing proteins before a long training session and test out the snacks you plan to take on your challenge as you walk. Not everyone gets on with energy gels, but most people can benefit from a slow energy release banana or a quick sugar hit from a jelly baby!

We provide plenty of additional information and guidance in your personalised login area, including warm up,

stretching, cardiovascular training, exercise intensity, cross training, resistance (weight) training, cool down and the hazards of over-training.

How is this event managed?

This is a leader-led challenge and you will be accompanied by our challenge leaders at all times.

We employ experienced and fully qualified walking leaders to accompany and lead you. The walking leaders are first aid qualified and have extensive experience in leading challenges throughout the UK. They will be ultimately responsible for the running of the itinerary and the safety of your group. They will be carrying safety equipment and first aid kits with them at all times.

This challenge is designed and run as a team event and we encourage everyone taking part to support each other throughout the trek. This challenge is not designed as a race for individuals.

Partway into the challenge you will have begun to spread-out into your natural walking speeds. For larger groups, once you reach the first 'checkpoint' you may be allocated into a small group and designated a walking leader. These leaders will then be responsible for your safety. If you have any problems or need to join a faster or slower moving group, then please speak to your leader.

If you wish to walk together with friends, colleagues, family etc then this is no problem. Please just ensure that you all keep together and reach the checkpoint at the same time so that we can ensure you all get allocated together.

Your leaders will be aware of several important cut-off times at locations that we need people to reach by a certain time so the group can complete the challenge. Your leaders will manage the group pace and keep you informed about these and your options if they think you might be struggling to achieve these times We ask everyone to respect the leaders decisions. They are made with the group's safety in mind.

Please note that this route will not be marked by event arrows, nor is the event designed as an event for individuals to race. It is designed to be a team event, with like-minded people, all raising money for charity, supporting each other throughout the challenge.

Weather

Weather, safety and decision-making

The weather in the UK can be unpredictable, particularly in mountainous and exposed areas. Charity Challenge plans for adverse weather on all UK challenges and closely monitors forecasts in the lead-up to, and during, each event.

We use the **Met Office weather warning system**, alongside specialist forecasts where appropriate (such as mountain weather forecasts), and live assessments by our experienced Event Managers and challenge leaders.

How we use Met Office weather warnings

- **Yellow weather warnings** indicate that conditions may be challenging. Events will usually go ahead, with leaders

managing conditions on the day and making adjustments where required. Rain alone rarely results in changes to our challenges.

- **Amber weather warnings** indicate a higher likelihood of severe weather and increased risk. This may result in significant route changes, altered timings or, in rare cases, postponement or cancellation if safety cannot be assured.
- **Red weather warnings** indicate dangerous conditions and events will not proceed.

Where thunder and lightning are forecast or observed, we follow a strict safety protocol. Challenges will not begin, or will end immediately, until it is safe to proceed.

How decisions are made

All weather-related decisions are made by Charity Challenge's **Event Manager in consultation with the leadership team**, using forecast information and real-time conditions on the ground. Participant safety is always the overriding priority, and leaders' decisions on the day are final.

Decisions around route changes, delays, early finishes or cancellation are based on the **expected weather conditions at the challenge location and along the event itinerary**.

Challenges will **not** be cancelled, postponed, or refunded solely due to severe weather warnings in a participant's local area or place of departure if conditions at the challenge location allow the event to proceed safely.

Unless Charity Challenge cancels or postpones an event, refunds or transfers are not available due to weather or travel disruption, in line with our terms and conditions.

Terrain

Despite its location in the UK, the difficulty of this trek should not be underestimated as it includes one long day of trekking.

Challenge Timings

Please note: Precise details and timings will be made available in your Final Details that are sent out 1 month prior to the challenge.

You will need to be at the registration point at 7am on the morning of the challenge for a mandatory safety briefing. The trek will begin at approx. 7.30 am. The total time to complete this challenge should be between 10-12 hours for the marathon distance and 5-6 hours for the half marathon distance. We will aim to have everyone finished between 6pm-7pm.

Please note: Whilst we shall do all we can to stick to this finish time, please make sure you book flexible return tickets

as delays can occur and we cannot guarantee a precise finishing time or be held responsible for any missed transport.

Getting to and from the Challenge

The registration point for this challenge will be near Birmingham Cathedral. This is conveniently located within a 10-minute walk of Birmingham's three principal railway stations (New Street, Snow Hill, and Moor Street). If travelling by car, there are several public parking options nearby.

The challenge finishes at St Nicholas Park in Warwick. We aim to complete this challenge between 5pm and 6pm. Warwick Railway Station, just a 10-minute walk from the finish, offers regular train services back to Birmingham Moor Street and Dorridge, making it easy to return to your starting point.

Please note: We will send you precise instructions about how to get to the registration point, and the timings of the event, one month prior to the challenge. We reserve the right to use alternative registration points and finishing points when necessary.

Accommodation

No accommodation is provided for this challenge.

Food and Drink

The following meals are included in the cost of this challenge:

- A packed lunch will be available to you during the day. This usually consists of a sandwich, fruit, crisps and a snack bar.
- At each checkpoint there will be water and checkpoint snacks available. These typically include a piece of fruit, crisps and chocolate/cereal bar per person per day.

We advise you to bring enough bottles to ensure you have 2 litres of water on you at all times. We would encourage you to also bring some of your own preferred snacks to keep you going during the challenge.

Please ensure you have had a substantial breakfast before arriving and that you arrive with your water bottles already filled.

If you have a severe allergy or dietary need, such as a severe nut allergy, please ensure you provide as much detail as possible about this when booking on the challenge (e.g. whether you need an epipen, whether it is an airborne allergy or not etc). If you have informed us of any allergies or special dietary needs as part of the challenge booking process,

we will endeavour to ensure appropriate meals and checkpoint snacks are available to you. However, we would encourage you to also bring your own favourite snacks with you to ensure your energy levels stay topped up throughout the challenge. Please be aware that it may not always be possible for us to cater to special dietary or allergy needs – we will get in touch if this is the case.

Clothing and Equipment

This is a tough challenge and to give yourself the best chance of successfully completing it please make sure that you have consulted the kit list carefully and that you have all kit marked as essential. No spare kit will be provided on the challenge.

Footwear

The most appropriate footwear for this challenge is a pair of trainers.

On our urban challenges sports trainers are recommended as we recognise that many people find them more comfortable to walk in when walking on paved paths and city streets.

If you are buying new footwear, it is important that it is the right fit for your feet. We recommend seeking advice from your local outdoor retailer and trying several different brands and models out to find the pair that you find most comfortable. Remember to check how waterproof they are.

It is particularly important that you make sure that your footwear is well worn in, that you have tested them out with suitable walking socks and that you have any blister plasters that you may need.

Waterproofs

As the weather can change quickly in the UK, it is important to make sure that you bring an appropriate waterproof jacket and waterproof trousers. Make sure you test these out before your challenge to check they can keep you dry for 10-12 hours at a time – you don't want to find out your waterproof jacket leaks partway into your challenge!

Personal first aid

Your leaders will carry an appropriate group first aid kit on the challenge, but it is a good idea to bring personal first aid items along for yourself. These may include blister plasters or physio tape, any personal medication and any knee or ankle supports.

If you carry an epipen, please make sure you bring two and that your leaders know where they are kept

As a Charity Challenge participant, you will get members only benefits and/or discounts at a wide range of clothing and equipment suppliers including Outdoorhire, Cotswold Outdoor, Snow + Rock, Water to Go, Sporttape and Nomad & MASTA.

Toilets

You will be made of aware of designated toilet points by your walking leaders.

Money

During the challenge, there are limited opportunities to spend any money. We would advise you should need no more than £20.00, excluding your joining and returning home travel costs.

Safety

Charity Challenge considers the safety of all of our participants and staff to be a top priority, and as such we have set up 'Challenge Safe', a thorough safety management system. 'Challenge Safe' formalises our ethos when it comes to safety, and brings together the procedures and risk management strategies that we use to audit all aspects of our challenges, from vehicles to accommodation to the challenge activity itself. Your welfare is absolutely paramount!

Here are a few important points that you should be aware of:

- Don't underestimate the difficulty of an urban challenge
- 42km is a tough and challenging distance
- Walking a marathon distance means you will be walking for approximately 10-12 hours so you should ensure your training has been tailored towards this
- Despite this being an urban challenge you should still make sure that you have all appropriate clothing and kit

Emergencies

Your leadership team is trained to deal with emergency situations and will be carrying mobile phones and radios in case the emergency services need to be contacted. The event is not run as a race and you will never be encouraged to walk at a pace 'beyond your ability'. There will always be a wide variety in people's walking abilities which will be carefully managed by the leader team. This team will keep the group together for maximum safety and set a sensible pace for all to achieve this challenge within the planned time frame. Should you find yourself unable to continue for any reason, then our support team, including our support vehicle, will be able to assist you coming off the challenge.

Pre-Existing Medical Conditions

We do not professionally vet your medical details. Please assess for yourself whether you are fit and able to take on the challenge. Please review the detailed Trip Notes and itinerary to get a better idea of what is involved. Please speak to your doctor or specialist if you have any concerns about taking part. If you think that there are things we can do to make the challenge more accessible/comfortable for you, it is your responsibility to let us know, and we will then let you know if we can accommodate your request.

Medical Support

First Aid qualified staff will be provided with the medical details that you give on your booking form but please note that

they are on the challenge to support with medical matters related to the challenge environment and terrain itself, i.e. heat/cold and so on. They will deal with any incidents and accidents (cuts, sprains, breaks and so on). They are not intended to continue any ongoing specialist medical care that you receive in the UK for pre-existing medical conditions, and should not be assumed to have any professional experience of your specific medical condition.

If you have any specific needs around pre-existing medical conditions, you should discuss these with your family doctor or specialist in advance and then discuss any advice given by them with the challenge leader.

Responsible Tourism

Charity Challenge believes that all of its challenges, whether in the UK or overseas, should have a positive impact on the communities we visit. We are committed to sustainable and responsible tourism and always aim to make sure that we minimise our impact on the local environment.

You can help us to achieve this goal by:

- Adopting a policy of 'leave no trace'. You can read more about this here.
- Taking all litter off the trek with you, including fruit peels and skins.
- Using public toilets when available and taking any tissues from 'wild wees' home with you.
- Stick to the footpaths at all times and avoid walking on their edges, to help prevent erosion from spreading.
- Only using the car park(s) designated for your event, and not parking on the local streets.
- Keeping noise to a minimum when passing houses in residential areas.
- Leaving rocks, plants and other natural objects as you find them. Please don't take these home with you.
- Avoid transporting and introducing invasive species by cleaning your outdoor gear regularly.
- Contributing to the local economy by paying for parking, staying an additional night in the local area or enjoying a local meal out.
- Being patient and understanding if at points you have to wait or slow down due to others being on the same path.

We ask you to think carefully about any memorial type activities you may plan for your challenge. We fully appreciate the emotional importance our challenges have for many of our participants and encourage you to mark that special moment in your own way, whilst ensuring that the natural beauty and protection of the environment you're in is maintained. Leaving photos or other memorabilia or writing on stones is contrary to the leave no trace principle. Remember: 'Take only memories, leave only footprints'.

For more details about our responsible tourism policy then please click here.

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Any more questions?

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