



Royal  
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with IBG

# Nature in the heart of the city

A self-guided walk around botanical Oxford



Discover unusual stories about Oxford's trees, plants and animals  
See how many species you can spot in parks and gardens  
Explore natural history collections in the museums

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the stories of our landscapes  
discovered through walks



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Cover image: Flowers in Oxford University Botanic Gardens © Rory Walsh

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# Nature in the heart of the city

## Discover a greener and more exotic side to Oxford

Oxford is one of Britain's most visited tourist destinations, famous for the 'dreaming spires' of its university which dates back 800 years. This walk however is designed to show a different perspective of the city.

Discover some unusual stories about the trees, plants and animals of Oxford and their connections to countries round the world.

Find out how different animals have been used symbolically in architecture and sculpture. See how many real live species you can spot in the parks and gardens. Explore natural history collections in the museums. Learn about the characters that travelled the world to collect specimens of trees, plants, seeds and animals.



Scenes from botanical Oxford  
Rory Walsh © RGS-IBG Discovering Britain



## Route map



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### Stopping points

- 5.** Oxford Town Hall
- 2.** Oxford Town Hall
- 3.** Ashmolean Museum
- 4.** Plane trees, St Giles
- 5.** Lamb & Flag pub, St Giles
- 6.** Lamb and Flag Passage
- 7.** Museum of Natural History tower
- 8.** Megalosaurus prints
- 9.** The 'Great Debate' monument
- 10.** Museum of Natural History
- 11.** Giant Sequoias, The University Parks
- 12.** The University Parks
- 13.** Mesopotamia, The University Parks
- 14.** Willow trees, The University Parks
- 15.** Department of Plant Sciences
- 16.** Rhodes House
- 17.** The Indian Institute
- 18.** Hertford College
- 19.** Bodleian Library
- 20.** 83 High Street
- 21.** Magdalen Grove
- 22.** Danby Gate, Botanic Garden
- F.** Danby Gate, Botanic Garden

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## Practical information

<b>Location</b>	Oxford, Southeast England
<b>Getting there</b>	<p><b>Train</b> - Oxford station is well served by the railway network with services to London Paddington, Reading, Didcot, Newcastle, Bournemouth, Manchester Piccadilly and Birmingham New Street.</p> <p><b>Bus</b> - many city centre routes and long distance coaches, including routes to Heathrow, Gatwick and Victoria coach station</p> <p>There are 5 <b>park and ride</b> depots around the city centre; Pear Tree (route 300), Redbridge (route 300), Seacourt (route 400), Thornhill (route 400) and Water Eaton (route 500)</p> <p><b>Car</b> - Oxford is accessible via Junctions 8 and 9 of the M40. The city is surrounded by the Oxford Ring Road. Drivers are advised to use park and ride services into the city centre.</p> <p><b>Bicycle</b> - Oxford is a very popular cycling city and features on National Cycle Route number 5 among others</p>
<b>Start point</b>	Oxford Town Hall, OX1 1BX
<b>Finish point</b>	Oxford University Botanic Garden, OX1 4AZ
<b>Distance</b>	2 ½ miles
<b>Level</b>	Gentle – a mostly flat city centre and parkland route
<b>Suitable for</b>	<p><b>Families</b> – family-friendly but some busy roads</p> <p><b>Pushchairs / wheelchairs</b> – a completely step-free route</p> <p><b>Dogs</b> - must be kept on a lead</p>

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### Conditions

The whole route is on pavements and paths. Make sure to take care when crossing busy roads

### Getting from the railway station to the walk start

The walk starts 1 mile from the station. From the station, turn right and exit onto Park End Street. Turn right into Hollybush Row then take the first left onto the continuation of Park End Street. Continue ahead (along New Road then Queen Street) up to the junction with St. Aldate's. Turn right here, following signs for Oxford Town Hall.

### Onward journey

Please use Directions 23 (on page 8)

### Refreshments

There are numerous cafes, pubs and restaurants in the town centre, including inside the museums

### Toilets

Public toilets in the town centre and museums

### Other info

The city centre can be very busy at weekends and in the summer tourist season.

### Family-friendly activities

**The Ashmolean Museum** (Stop 3) is open Tuesdays to Sundays from 10am to 6pm. Free entry. Tel: 01865 278002

**Oxford University Museum of Natural History** (Stop 10) is open daily from 10am to 5pm. Free entry. **Note** - *closed 2013 for roof repairs for more information call 01865 272950*

**Oxford University Botanic Garden** (Stop 23) is open daily from 9am. Closing times and ticket prices vary throughout the year. Tel: 01865 286690

### Tourist information

**Oxford Visitor Information Centre**, 15-16 Broad Street, OX1 3AS (Tel: 01865 252200)

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## Directions

These directions are for use with the Oxford walk audio commentary. Listen to each track then read the directions below to get to the next stop.

### 1. Welcome to Oxford

#### Oxford Town Hall, St Aldate's

**Directions 1** - Make your way to Oxford Town Hall on St Aldate's. Stop when you have a good view of the building (the best is probably across the road). Take care crossing the road here as traffic can be busy. Listen to Track 2.

### 2. Strong as an Ox

#### Oxford Town Hall, St Aldate's

**Directions 2** - From the Town Hall walk uphill and all the way along Cornmarket. At the junction with George Street, go straight across with shops on the left and a church on the right. At the junction with Beaumont Street, cross over at the traffic lights and turn left. Go into the entrance courtyard of the Ashmolean Museum and listen to Track 3.

### 3. A wealth of world connections

#### Ashmolean Museum, Beaumont Street

**Directions 3** - When you are ready, leave the museum by the main entrance. Go down the steps and turn left onto Beaumont Street. At the traffic lights you need to go straight across to the opposite side of St Giles. Use the pedestrian crossings and take care.

Once on the opposite side, turn left up St Giles. Outside the main entrance to St John's College is a raised area under some trees. Stop there and listen to Track 4.

### 4. A tree from east and west

#### Plane trees, St Giles

**Directions 4** - Continue along the right hand side of St Giles until you reach the Lamb & Flag pub. Stop outside the pub and listen to Track 5.



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## 5. Sacrificial lamb

### The Lamb & Flag pub, St Giles

**Directions 5** - Go down the Lamb and Flag Passageway at the side of the pub. Take care for cyclists. Before the passageway bends is a large tree. Stop by the tree and listen to Track 6.

## 6. Beyond conkers

### Lamb and Flag Passage

**Directions 6** - Continue along Lamb and Flag Passage and straight along Museum Road. Cross Parks Road at the pedestrian crossing and turn left. Stop on the grass outside the Oxford University Museum of Natural History and listen to Track 7.

## 7. Long distance travellers

### Oxford University Museum of Natural History

**Directions 7** - Go towards the building and look for some large footprints in the grass. Stop when you have found them and listen to Track 8.

## 8. Watch out for the Megalosaurus!

### Oxford University Museum of Natural History

**Directions 8** - Go over to the stone pillar outside the main entrance. Stop there and listen to Track 9.

## 9. The Great Debate

### The 'Great Debate' monument, Oxford University Museum of Natural History

**Directions 9** - Go inside the museum if it is open. Stop in the entrance lobby. Go inside and listen to Track 10.

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## 10. Cathedral of science

### Oxford University Museum of Natural History

**Directions 10** - When you are ready leave the museum by the main entrance and turn right along Parks Road. Turn right through the ornamental Keble Gate into the University Parks. Pick up a leaflet from the information board which contains a map of the park. Turn left along West Walk. Shortly before the corner with North Lodge are a group of six tall trees. Stop at the six trees and listen to Track 11.

## 11. Six giants

### Giant Sequoia trees, The University Parks

**Directions 11** - Make your way along the North Walk and listen to Track 12 as you continue.

## 12. International roots

### The University Parks

**Directions 12** - When you reach the river, turn right, following the footpath parallel to the river. Stop at the bridge and listen to Track 13.

## 13. Parklife

### Mesopotamia, The University Parks

**Directions 13** - Continue a short way along the footpath, keeping the river on your left. Listen to Track 14 as you continue.

## 14. Heavenly trees

### Willow trees, The University Parks

**Directions 14** - Keep the river on your left then follow Lucas Walk to the right along to the South Lodge Gate. Leave the park at South Lodge and turn right along South Parks Road. Keep on the right hand side. Just before the pedestrian crossing is the University's Department of Plant Sciences. Stop outside and listen to Track 15.

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## 15. Saving the forests

### **Oxford University Department of Plant Sciences, South Parks Road**

**Directions 15** - Continue along South Parks Road. Stop outside the University's Department for Inorganic Chemistry. Look on the opposite side of the road at the building with columns and a green dome and listen to Track 16.

## 16. Bird on a tightrope?

### **Rhodes House, South Parks Road**

**Directions 16** - Continue along South Parks Road. Turn left at the traffic lights along Parks Road. Stop at the junction with Holywell Street, Catte Street and Broad Street and listen to Track 17.

## 17. Elephant ride

### **The Indian Institute, Holywell Street / Catte Street**

**Directions 17** - Go past the Indian Institute and along Catte Street. Pass the Bridge of Sighs and stop outside the entrance to Hertford College to listen to Track 18.

## 18. The hart of Hart Hall

### **Hertford College, Catte Street**

**Directions 18** - From the entrance to Hertford College, go straight across the road to the Old Bodleian Library. Stop in the courtyard and listen to Track 19.

## 19. Funny faces

### **Bodleian Library, Catte Street**

**Directions 19** - Leave the courtyard of the Bodleian Library and turn right along Catte Street. Go through Radcliffe Square and through the passageway to the High Street. Keep on the left hand side and pass Queens College. Then look across the road and find number 83 on the right hand side immediately before the University Examination Schools. Stop and listen to Track 20.

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## **20. A taste that travelled the world**

### **83 High Street**

**Directions 20** - Continue along the left side of the High Street. At Longwall Street, turn left. A short way along the right hand side is the side gate into Magdalen College. Go in if it is open. Stop by the railings overlooking the garden and listen to Track 21.

## **21. Oh deer!**

### **Magdalen Grove, Longwall Street**

**Directions 21** - Retrace your steps back down Longwall Street. Turn left along the High Street and cross over at a safe place. Just before the bridge over the River Cherwell, stop by the elaborate stone entrance to Oxford University Botanic Garden. Listen to Track 22.

## **22. A seedy place**

### **Danby Gate, Oxford University Botanic Garden**

**Directions 22** - Remain by the Danby Gate and listen to Track 23.

## **23. The green heart of the city**

### **Oxford University Botanic Garden**

**Directions 23** - You can now explore the Botanic Gardens or retrace your steps along the High Street to revisit some of the parks, gardens, museums and colleges.

**To return to the start of the walk** - follow the High Street and turn left at the end into St Aldate's. The Town Hall will be on your left.



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## Further information

Find out more about the walk story and places of interest along the route:

### **Ashmolean Museum of Art and Archaeology**

[www.ashmolean.org](http://www.ashmolean.org)

### **Bodleian Library**

[www.bodleian.ox.ac.uk/bodley](http://www.bodleian.ox.ac.uk/bodley)

### **Hertford College**

[www.hertford.ox.ac.uk](http://www.hertford.ox.ac.uk)

### **Magdalen College**

[www.magd.ox.ac.uk](http://www.magd.ox.ac.uk)

### **Oxford University Museum of Natural History**

[www.oum.ox.ac.uk](http://www.oum.ox.ac.uk)

### **Rhodes House**

[www.rhodeshouseoxford.com](http://www.rhodeshouseoxford.com)

### **The University Parks**

[www.parks.ox.ac.uk](http://www.parks.ox.ac.uk)

### **The University of Oxford Botanic Garden**

[www.botanic-garden.ox.ac.uk](http://www.botanic-garden.ox.ac.uk)

### **University of Oxford Department of Plant Sciences**

<http://dps.plants.ox.ac.uk/plants>

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## Credits

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