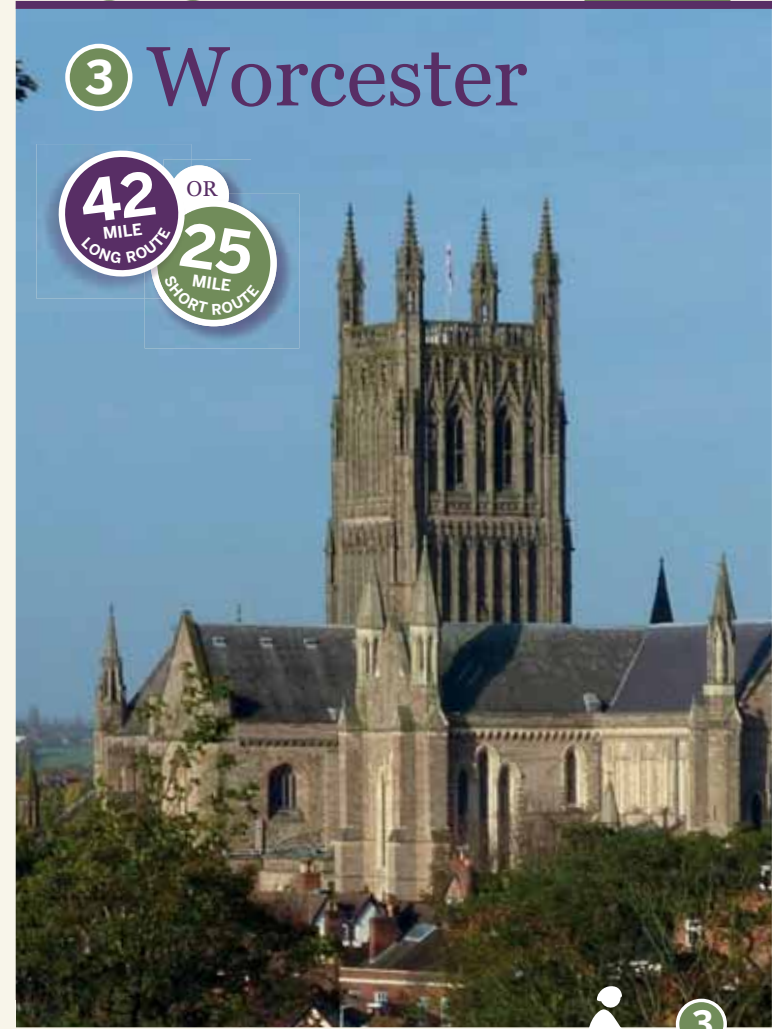




Towers & Spires

3 Worcester



A cycling tour
of churches around Worcester

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Towers & Spires

A 42-mile cycling tour of churches around Worcester

This is one of a country-wide series of cycle tours linking our magnificent cathedrals with some of the remarkable parish churches surrounding them. Each tour will use the cathedral as a start and finish point and take in a number of our most outstanding churches.

This cycle route takes you past just a few of the remarkable churches in the diocese. It will give you a clear sense that the church buildings have been shaped by generations of faithful worshippers and by forces beyond the local community. Churches serve as repositories of the stories of those who have lived and worked in the area and provide evidence of the political, religious and social changes that have occurred in this part of England since the earliest Christian communities.

1 Worcester Cathedral

The medieval cathedral priory was the focal point of religious life in the shire. As the wealth of the cathedral priory increased so the cathedral and associated buildings grew in size, grandeur and number. Phase after phase of improvements and enlargements continued until the dissolution of the monasteries. The cathedral had a turbulent history during the Reformation and the 16th- and 17th-centuries left their marks on the building which was in poor condition by the end of the 18th-century. During the 19th-century there were extensive repairs, restorations and alterations.

www.worcestercathedral.co.uk



Churches along the route

2 Claines - St John the Baptist

Located at the centre of what was once a very large parish which included much of what is now northern Worcester, this medieval sandstone church was restored and enlarged in the early 1800s including the porch and vestry by Aston Webb in 1887. It has a rather severe scraped stone interior but there is still much medieval detail and interest.

3 Salwarpe - St Michael

Close by Salwarpe Court, the building was considerably restored in the 19th-century. The interior is both a surprise and a delight. Inside the church reveals much of the building's late Norman origins and a host of intriguing items and remnants of previous liturgical uses, all of which indicate the building's rich history associated with the 'great and the good' of Worcestershire.

4 Droitwich - St Andrew

This church has intriguing traces of alterations and changes of which the most radical was when its tower was much reduced in 1911 due to major structural instability. To the east of the tower is a chapel which was dedicated in 1491 to St Richard de Wych, also known as St Richard of Chichester. St Richard was born in about 1197 in the manor house on the site of the recently closed nearby Raven Hotel.

5 Droitwich - St Augustine

The church lost its nave in the Civil War when in 1646 royalist troops attempted to remove roundhead soldiers by setting fire to the building. Internally the church is confusing because it has been re-orientated but the heart of the building is the crossing where the original chancel and north transept meet. Many of the fittings were given by John Corbett, the 'Salt King' of Droitwich in the 19th-century.

6 Huddington - St James

Much of the medieval church was rebuilt and restored in 1900 although traces of its early beginnings remain visible albeit relocated to new positions, including the rood screen and fragments of medieval glass. Please park your bicycles by the main gate at the road or in the yard to the east (left side) of the church and then walk along the drive and across the lawn to the church gate.

7 Grafton Flyford - St John the Baptist

While the sandstone tower is a substantial looking structure the main body of the church constructed of blue lias limestone is eroding badly since the Victorians scraped off its protective external layer of lime render. The late medieval timber bell frame is of considerable significance and there are two recently restored 16th-century paintings showing the symbols of St Mark and St John.

8 Bradley Green - St John the Baptist

This isolated building at the southern end of the straggling village, stands in a field close to a former Victorian school. Its 'Decorated' style is typical of churches built during the 1860s, this simple Victorian building is a successor to an 18th-century brick built church which had itself replaced an earlier medieval chapel. Most notable is the 'Bromsgrove Guild' west rose window which is the memorial to the men of the parish killed in the First World War.

9 Hanbury - St Mary

Located on an Iron Age hillfort, only traces of its medieval origins are visible. The box pews in the nave are an excellent demonstration of the adaptation of a medieval building so it could be used for 18th-century 'Book of Common Prayer' worship, all of which is in distinct contrast to George Street's later (1860) 'Victorian Gothic' choir stalls and altar in the chancel.

10 Himbleton - St Mary Magdalen

Dating from the Norman period, the setting of this church is delightfully located at the end of a long lane of timber-framed buildings at the northern end the village. Traces of its Norman origins are visible together with later medieval work including the font. There is some surviving early medieval glass in the top right corner of the east window of the chancel plus some more 15th-century glass in some of the other windows. There are traces of medieval wall painting in the south transept but these are insignificant compared to the remains of the royal coat of arms (Elizabeth I?) on the east wall of the chancel.

11 Crowle - St John the Baptist

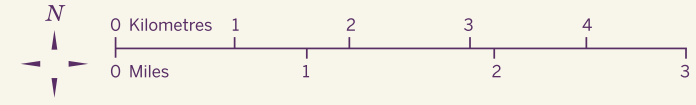
Only the porch of the building is medieval, the tower and the rest of the church were rebuilt in two stages between 1881 and 1885. Some of the medieval features were incorporated into the Victorian restoration. Of greatest interest is the limestone lectern which was found in 1845 buried the churchyard. The lectern dates from around 1200 and is thought to have come from the chapel of the court (which used to be next door). It is likely the lectern was buried at the time of the Reformation.

12 Oddingley - St James

A church is first recorded here in 1288, the medieval building was partially rebuilt in the mid-1800s and its setting is enhanced by the nearby canal. A great number of details from the 14th-century to the 18th-century are to be found including a medieval timber arch, medieval stained glass and 17th-century hour glass stand from pulpit. Oddingley is most notorious for the murder of the rector George Parker in 1806, after a dispute about tithes. The murderer escaped but some 25 years later, a skeleton found in a nearby barn was identified as the person hired by a local farmer to shoot the rector.

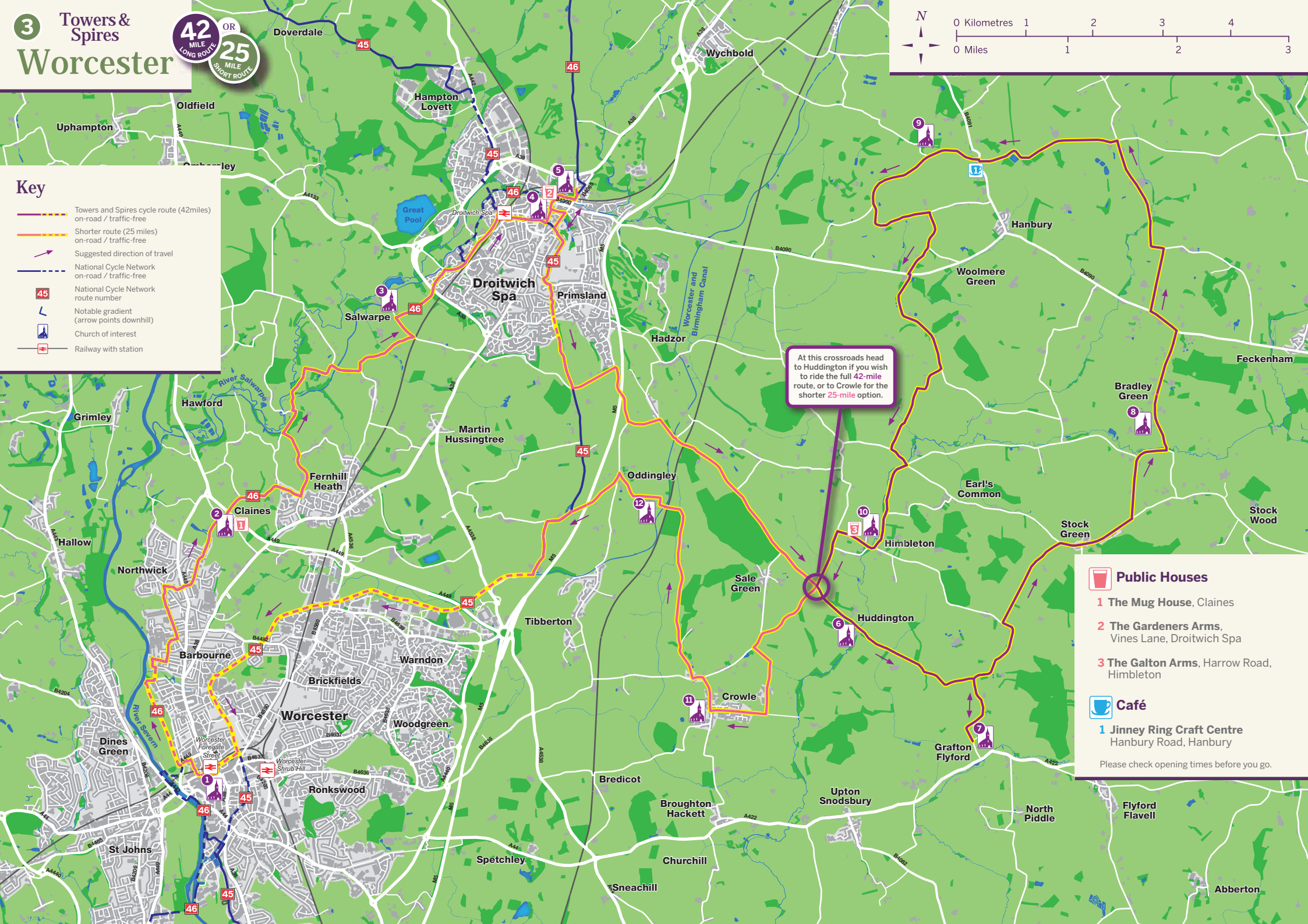
3 Towers & Spires Worcester

42 MILE LONG ROUTE OR 25 MILE SHORT ROUTE



Key

- Towers and Spires cycle route (42miles) on-road / traffic-free
- Shorter route (25 miles) on-road / traffic-free
- Suggested direction of travel
- National Cycle Network on-road / traffic-free
- National Cycle Network route number
- Notable gradient (arrow points downhill)
- Church of interest
- Railway with station



Public Houses

- 1 The Mug House, Claines
- 2 The Gardeners Arms, Vines Lane, Droitwich Spa
- 3 The Galton Arms, Harrow Road, Himbleton

Café

- 1 Jinney Ring Craft Centre, Hanbury Road, Hanbury

Please check opening times before you go.