



Two Saints Way

THE COMPLETE GUIDE



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Overview

Two Saints Way: Chester to Lichfield Pilgrimage Walk

The Two Saints Way is a 148 km waymarked pilgrimage trail across [England](#), linking Chester Cathedral in Cheshire with Lichfield Cathedral and St Chad's Well in Staffordshire. Allow 6–9 days for this moderate point-to-point walk. It suits hikers who want a low-level, historically themed route with varied terrain: canal towpaths, field paths, lanes, towns, woodland and heath. The Cheshire half is generally gentler; the Staffordshire half brings the main hills around Beacon Hill and Cannock Chase.

Route Overview

The route starts at Chester Cathedral and finishes at Lichfield Cathedral, though it can be walked either way. Chester to Lichfield is signed as **The Way of St Chad**; the reverse is **The Way of St Werburgh**. The trail is organised into four colour-coded sections: Chester to Nantwich, Nantwich to Stoke-on-Trent, Stoke-on-Trent to Stafford, and Stafford to Lichfield. Key places include Beeston Castle, Nantwich, Englesea Brook, Stoke Minster, Stone, Stafford, Cannock Chase and Castle Ring. As a linear walk, plan your start and finish logistics in advance. For comparison with other UK routes, see the [Ashby Canal Trail](#) and [Amber Valley Route](#).

Pilgrimage between two Mercian saints

The Two Saints Way revives a medieval pilgrimage link between the shrines of St Werburgh at Chester and St Chad at Lichfield, both important seventh-century Mercian saints. St Werburgh was a Saxon princess associated with Chester; St Chad was an early bishop of Mercia whose shrine and well drew pilgrims to Lichfield. The tradition was broken by the Reformation. The modern route was researched and created by David Pott through the TSW Project, with the inaugural pilgrimage in March 2012.

Notable highlights

- **Chester Cathedral:** The start of the walk and former shrine of St Werburgh. Its medieval fabric and monastic buildings make it a fitting launch point for a pilgrimage route.
- **Beeston Castle:** A ruined 13th-century castle on a rocky crag above the Cheshire Plain. It is one of the first major landmarks after leaving Chester.
- **Nantwich:** A Cheshire market town with timber-framed buildings and the large medieval St Mary's Church. It marks the end of the first route section and is a practical overnight stop.
- **Potteries Museum & Art Gallery, Stoke-on-Trent:** Home to the Staffordshire Hoard, tying the route directly to its Mercian and Anglo-Saxon theme near the halfway point.
- **Cannock Chase AONB & Castle Ring:** The wildest part of the walk, crossing heath and forest to the route's highest ground around Castle Ring.
- **Lichfield Cathedral & St Chad's Well:** The pilgrimage destination, with St Chad's shrine at the cathedral and the well nearby.

Challenges to expect

Expect mostly low-level walking, but not a uniform towpath stroll. Rural field paths can be muddy after rain, and the Staffordshire half is hillier, especially around Beacon Hill and Cannock Chase. There are urban and industrial stretches through Stoke-on-Trent and Stafford. Around 95% of the route is waymarked, so carry the guidebook, map or GPX for gaps and junctions.

Key Data

Country	United Kingdom, England
Distance	148 km
Duration	6-9 days
Difficulty	Moderate
Trail type	Point to point
Elevation gain/loss	1650 m
Highest point	244 m
Terrain & landscape	Forest, Urban, Rural
Trail surface	Dirt, Gravel, Paved
Accommodation	Hotels, Guesthouses, Hostels, Campsites
Average daytime temp.	15°C
Chance of rainfall	Medium
Estimated cost	\$\$
Optimal season	Spring, Summer, Autumn
Accessibility	Family Friendly, Pet Friendly
Facilities	Restrooms, Water Sources, Campsites
Permits & fees	No permits or fees

Introduction

The Two Saints Way is a low-level English pilgrimage from Chester Cathedral to Lichfield Cathedral and St Chad's Well, linking the shrines of St Werburgh, St Wulfad and St Chad. It suits walkers who want history, churches, canals and market towns without committing to high mountains or remote terrain.

The route begins in Chester, leaves the city past Roman and medieval landmarks, then crosses the Cheshire Plain by towpath, field path and quiet village lanes. Nantwich, Barthomley, Stoke-on-Trent, Stone and Stafford give the walk regular structure and practical overnight options.

Its character changes as it moves south-east. The early miles are flat and canal-led, while the Staffordshire half becomes more varied and more demanding, finishing over the heath, forest and sandy tracks of Cannock Chase before the descent towards Lichfield.

This is not a technical trail, but it still asks for steady daily mileage, sensible pacing and basic navigation. Waymarking covers most of the route, but muddy field paths, urban sections and occasional gaps mean a guidebook, map or GPX should be carried.

This guide covers stages, day planning, accommodation, food, transport, terrain and the common mistakes to avoid.

Stage-by-Stage Guide

The stages below follow a practical six-day itinerary rather than the official short-stage structure. They suit fit walkers comfortable with repeated days of 19–30 km; anyone wanting more time for churches, towns and the pilgrimage sites should split the route into 7–9 days, especially between Chester and Stoke-on-Trent and across Cannock Chase.

Stage 1: Chester to Barbridge / Bunbury area — approx. 29 km

This is a long but relatively gentle opening day, leaving Chester Cathedral and crossing out through the historic city before settling into the flat Cheshire countryside. The route begins with some of the strongest pilgrimage context of the whole walk: Chester Cathedral, the former shrine of St Werburgh, then the city streets past the Roman amphitheatre and St John's church.

Beyond Chester the walking becomes low-level and mostly straightforward, passing Christleton and Waverton before the line of the route reaches the wider canal-and-farmland landscape. Beeston Castle is the major landmark of the day, standing above the Cheshire Plain and giving the stage its clearest visual focus.

Expect a mix of towpath, field paths, quiet lanes and village approaches. The Cheshire half of the Two Saints Way is generally flat, but field sections can be muddy or overgrown after rain, and the towpath can feel repetitive late in the day.

Food and drink are most reliably planned around Chester at the start and the larger villages on or near the route. Do not assume every small settlement has dependable daytime services; carry enough water and lunch or snacks to reach the Barbridge / Bunbury area comfortably.

Accommodation is more limited at the end of this stage than in Chester or Nantwich. Barbridge and Bunbury are practical stopping areas for a six-day schedule, but beds should be arranged before starting, especially in summer.

Chester has excellent rail access, making it an easy start point for a linear walk. Public transport options around Barbridge and Bunbury are less central to the route than at the main rail-linked towns; this should be checked before travelling.

Navigation is usually helped by Two Saints Way waymarking, but the whole route is not uniformly signed. Leaving Chester, threading village paths, and picking up the correct line through farmland are places where the guidebook, map or GPX should be close to hand.

Stage 2: Barbridge to Weston via Nantwich — approx. 26 km

This stage continues through the flat Cheshire section and is shaped by canal walking, market-town services and quiet rural paths. It is less dramatic than the Cannock Chase end of the route, but it is one of the most practical days for resupply because it passes through Nantwich.

From the Barbridge area the route heads towards Acton and Nantwich. Nantwich is a key waypoint on the Two Saints Way, with timber-framed buildings and the large medieval church of St Mary's, and it makes a natural break for food, water and a longer pause.

After Nantwich the route continues towards Wybunbury and Weston. The walking remains predominantly low-level, with a mix of towpath, field paths, lanes and village sections rather than sustained climbing.

Nantwich is the main food-and-water stop on this day and should be used as the dependable resupply point. Services beyond Nantwich are more rural and should not be relied on without checking opening times.

Nantwich is also the strongest accommodation option in this part of the route. Weston is a practical six-day stopping point, but accommodation choice is likely to be more limited than in Nantwich, so bookings should be made in advance.

Nantwich has a railway station, which makes this stage useful for section walkers or anyone wanting to shorten the itinerary. Transport onward from Weston should be checked before travelling.

Navigation is generally uncomplicated where the route follows clear canal and village corridors, but field-path exits and waymark gaps can still cause delays. After wet weather, expect muddy field sections and allow more time than the flat profile might suggest.

Stage 3: Weston to Stoke-on-Trent via Barthomley and Audley — approx. 27 km

This is the transition stage from the Cheshire lowlands into Staffordshire and the more varied middle section of the route. The day still has plenty of gentle walking, but the landscape becomes a little less flat and more enclosed as the route approaches Audley and Stoke-on-Trent.

Barthomley is the standout village on this stage, with the sandstone church of St Bertoline marking a quieter, more historic section of the walk. From there the route continues through the higher ground near Audley before entering the urban approach to Stoke-on-Trent.

Terrain is mixed: rural field paths, lanes, village paths and urban streets. This is not a mountain stage, but it is a full day, and the contrast between muddy rural paths and harder urban surfaces can be tiring.

Food and water planning needs more care than on the Nantwich day. Weston and the smaller intermediate villages should not be treated as guaranteed resupply points unless opening times have been checked; Stoke-on-Trent is the reliable end-of-day service hub.

Stoke-on-Trent has the best accommodation choice on this stage and is a logical overnight stop. It is also a useful place to reset supplies before the Trentham and Stone section.

Stoke-on-Trent has a railway station, so this is one of the easiest places to join, leave or split the walk. Road and local transport options in the smaller places before Stoke should be checked before travelling.

The navigation issue on this stage is the change in character: open rural paths, village connections and then urban walking. Waymarking is extensive but not complete, and the approach through Stoke-on-Trent is a place to keep the map or GPX available rather than relying only on signs.

Stage 4: Stoke-on-Trent to Stone via Trentham — approx. 19 km

This is the shortest stage in the six-day schedule, and it gives a useful recovery day after three longer days from Chester. It links the Potteries with Stone, shifting from the urban fabric of Stoke-on-Trent towards the Trent-side canal town associated with St Wulfad.

Stoke-on-Trent is one of the route's major historical points. The Potteries Museum & Art Gallery is near the halfway point of the full walk and houses the Staffordshire Hoard, while Stoke Minster has a Saxon preaching cross nearby.

The route continues via Trentham towards Stone. Walking is a mixture of urban streets, towpaths and easier low-level paths, with the canal environment becoming increasingly important as the route approaches Stone and the Trent & Mersey Canal corridor.

Food and water are straightforward to plan at both ends, with Stoke-on-Trent and Stone offering town services. Trentham may also provide opportunities, but current availability and opening times should be checked before relying on them.

Stone is a strong overnight stop, with accommodation and town facilities. It is a sensible place to pause before the longer Stone–Milford and Milford–Lichfield stages.

Stoke-on-Trent has a railway station and is one of the best access points on the route. Public transport details for Stone are not specified here; this should be checked before travelling.

Navigation is less about remote route-finding and more about staying alert through built-up areas, canal junctions and transitions between streets and paths. Hard surfaces can be tiring despite the shorter distance, so footwear should be comfortable for both towpath and pavement.

Stage 5: Stone to Milford via Stafford — approx. 24 km

This stage follows the route south from Stone through a varied Staffordshire corridor, passing Burston and Salt before reaching Stafford and continuing to Milford. It is a moderate full-day walk and acts as the lead-in to the hillier Cannock Chase finish.

Stone is one of the three saintly anchors of the medieval pilgrimage, linked with St Wulfad, and the canal-town setting gives the start of the day a clear sense of continuity from the previous stage. Stafford is the main intermediate centre and the best point for services before Milford.

Terrain includes canal-side walking, lanes, field paths and urban sections through Stafford. The walking remains low-level compared with the final day, but it is more varied than the long flat Cheshire towpath sections.

Food and water should be topped up in Stone and again in Stafford. Between the main towns, rural services may be limited or seasonal, so carry enough for the full day if opening times are uncertain.

Milford is a practical overnight stop before Cannock Chase, but accommodation on this side of the route is sparser than in Stone, Stafford or Lichfield. Book ahead and avoid arriving without a plan.

Stafford has a railway station, making this stage easy to split for section walking. Transport and road access around Milford should be checked before travelling.

Navigation through Stafford and onward to Milford can involve the usual long-distance-route mix of urban streets, paths and lanes. Keep the route notes or GPX available, particularly where waymarks are less obvious or where the trail leaves the more intuitive canal and town corridors.

Stage 6: Milford to Lichfield over Cannock Chase — approx. 30 km

The final stage is the longest in this six-day itinerary and the most strenuous section of the Two Saints Way. It crosses Cannock Chase, the wildest and hilliest part of the walk, before descending towards Chorley and the pilgrimage finish at Lichfield Cathedral and St Chad's Well.

This is where the route changes character most strongly. Instead of flat canal-and-field walking, expect heath, forest and sandy tracks, with the high ground around Castle Ring and Beacon Hill reaching the route's maximum height of 244 m.

Castle Ring, an Iron Age hill fort, is the main landscape landmark of the day, and the route also passes the Katyn Memorial. The final approach to Lichfield brings the walk back to its shrine theme, ending at England's three-spired medieval cathedral and St Chad's Well at Stowe nearby.

Food and water planning matters more here than on town-based stages. Start from Milford with enough supplies for the Chase crossing unless current facilities on or near the route have been checked; Chorley and Lichfield come late in the day.

Lichfield is well served for accommodation and makes the obvious final overnight if not travelling home immediately. It is still worth booking ahead in busy periods.

Lichfield has two stations, Lichfield City and Lichfield Trent Valley. Lichfield Trent Valley is on the West Coast Main Line, and direct trains between Chester and Lichfield Trent Valley via Crewe make the linear route easy to arrange by rail.

Navigation on Cannock Chase deserves more attention than earlier stages. The terrain is not exposed or technical, but heathland and forest tracks can be less intuitive than canal towpaths, and waymark gaps are more consequential late in a long day.

Allow extra time for this stage, especially after rain or in poor visibility under tree cover. The cumulative fatigue of the previous five days often makes the Chase feel tougher than its modest height suggests.

Recommended Itinerary

The Two Saints Way is easiest to book as a town-to-town walk, using larger service centres where possible and accepting that a few rural overnight stops need extra care. Distances below are approximate; check official mapping before booking accommodation, especially where a night stop may sit just off the line of the route.

Standard 6-day itinerary

This is a practical fit-walker schedule. It keeps the walk to six days but includes several long stages, with the toughest finish over Cannock Chase.

Day	From	To	Approx. distance	Why this stage makes sense	Services/accommodation notes
1	Chester	Barbridge / Bunbury area	29 km	A strong first day that leaves Chester, passes Christleton, Waverton and Beeston Castle, then works through the flat Cheshire canal-and-farmland section towards Bunbury and Barbridge.	Chester has the strongest choice of accommodation and onward transport. Barbridge and the Bunbury area are more rural, so beds should be booked ahead and the exact overnight location checked against the route.
2	Barbridge	Weston, via Nantwich	26 km	Uses Nantwich as the main mid-stage service point, then continues through quieter Cheshire country via Acton, Wybunbury and towards Weston.	Nantwich is a useful place for food, restocking and accommodation if shortening the day. Weston is a smaller rural stop; accommodation availability should be checked before committing to this split.
3	Weston	Stoke-on-Trent, via Barthomley	27 km	A longer linking day from the Cheshire plain into Staffordshire, passing Barthomley and Audley before reaching the urban services of Stoke-on-Trent.	Stoke-on-Trent is one of the best-served overnight hubs on the route and has rail access. This is a good place to reset supplies before the hillier Staffordshire half.
4	Stoke-on-Trent	Stone, via Trentham	19 km	A deliberately shorter day after three long stages, moving through Trentham and on towards the Trent & Mersey Canal and Stone.	Stone is a natural overnight stop on the pilgrimage, with a stronger choice of places to stay than the surrounding rural stretches. Book ahead in busy periods.
5	Stone	Milford, via Stafford	24 km	Links Stone to Stafford and then positions the walker at Milford for the final crossing of Cannock Chase.	Stafford is a major service point and has rail access, making it useful for section walkers. Milford is more limited, so accommodation should be secured before relying on it as a stop.

Day	From	To	Approx. distance	Why this stage makes sense	Services/accommodation notes
6	Milford	Lichfield, over Cannock Chase	30 km	The longest and most strenuous day, crossing the wildest section of the route over Cannock Chase, including the high ground around Castle Ring and Beacon Hill, before descending towards Chorley and Lichfield.	Start early and carry enough food and water for the Chase section. Lichfield has accommodation and rail access via Lichfield City and Lichfield Trent Valley.

Slower variant: 8–9 days

A slower itinerary suits pilgrims, first-time long-distance walkers and anyone who wants more time for churches, museums and rest stops. The official/British Pilgrimage pace is 9 days, and the route is also organised into four sections split into sixteen short stages of roughly 3.5–8.5 miles.

For a slower plan, use the official guidebook or GPX to divide the longer six-day stages, especially:

- Chester to Barbridge / Bunbury area
- Barbridge to Weston via Nantwich
- Weston to Stoke-on-Trent
- Stone to Milford via Stafford
- Milford to Lichfield over Cannock Chase

The main advantage is reduced daily mileage and less pressure on the hilly final section. The trade-off is accommodation: rural stops between the market towns are sparser, so the exact overnight points should be fixed before travel.

Faster variant: 6–7 days

The six-day table above is already the faster practical version for most independent walkers. Fit walkers may also spread it over 7 days by splitting one of the long stages, which is usually more comfortable if weather is wet, paths are muddy or the final Cannock Chase day feels too large.

Going faster than six days is not recommended for normal planning. It would mean repeated long days on mixed towpaths, field paths, lanes and urban sections, with limited flexibility where rural accommodation is thin.

Planning the Route

How many days to allow

Most walkers should plan the Two Saints Way around accommodation hubs rather than trying to force perfectly even daily distances. The route passes several useful towns, but there are also rural stretches where beds are thinner, especially away from Chester, Nantwich, Stone, Stafford and Lichfield.

A 6-day itinerary is realistic for fit walkers who are comfortable with repeated days of roughly 19–30 km. It is efficient, but the final day over Cannock Chase is long and hillier than the Cheshire towpath sections, so it should not be treated as an easy finish.

A 7–9 day plan suits most independent walkers better. The official pilgrimage-style itinerary is 9 days, and the route is also organised as four colour-coded sections, each split into four short stages of about 3.5–8.5 miles. That slower structure gives more room for churches, towns, cafés and the route's pilgrimage character, and reduces the pressure caused by mud, navigation gaps or accommodation availability.

Practical staging

The following 6-day structure uses practical overnight hubs, but it is a demanding version of the walk rather than the default for everyone:

Day	Stage	Approx. distance	Planning notes
1	Chester to Barbridge / Bunbury area	29 km	A long first day out of Chester into flatter Cheshire countryside. Book ahead, as rural accommodation is less concentrated than in Chester or Nantwich.
2	Barbridge to Weston via Nantwich	26 km	Nantwich is the key service town on this section and a natural place to resupply or shorten the day if needed.
3	Weston to Stoke-on-Trent via Barthomley	27 km	A longer cross-country day into the more urban Potteries area. Keep navigation tools handy for field paths and built-up sections.
4	Stoke-on-Trent to Stone via Trentham	19 km	A shorter day, useful after three longer stages. Stone is one of the better-served overnight stops on the route.
5	Stone to Milford via Stafford	24 km	Stafford is the main service point. Milford works as a staging point before Cannock Chase, but accommodation should be arranged before committing to this split.
6	Milford to Lichfield over Cannock Chase	30 km	The longest and hillier finishing day, crossing the wildest section around Cannock Chase, Castle Ring and Beacon Hill before Lichfield. Start early and carry enough food and water.

If using this outline, the most important bookings are the rural nights: Barbridge / Bunbury area, Weston and Milford. These are not as straightforward as Chester, Nantwich, Stoke-on-Trent, Stafford or Lichfield, so accommodation should shape the final itinerary.

Walking fast or slow

The Two Saints Way is not technically difficult, so the temptation is to walk it quickly. That works for strong walkers, but the route is better paced when the flatter Cheshire half does not lead to over-long early days and the hillier Staffordshire finish is given proper time.

A slower plan also makes the urban and canal sections more enjoyable. Long towpath walking can become monotonous, and mud or overgrown field paths after rain can slow progress more than the height profile suggests.

For a first pilgrimage or first long-distance walk, 8–9 days is the safer planning choice. For experienced walkers using trains and booked accommodation, 6–7 days is practical if daily distance is the main priority.

Shortening, extending and section hiking

Section hiking is one of the route's strengths. Chester and Lichfield both have strong rail access, and useful intermediate rail-linked towns include Nantwich, Stoke-on-Trent and Stafford. This makes it possible to split the route into shorter blocks without needing a car shuttle.

The route can also be planned around its four broad sections: Chester–Nantwich, Nantwich–Stoke, Stoke–Stafford and Stafford–Lichfield. These work well for weekends or long weekends, depending on walking speed and accommodation.

Shortening a full end-to-end walk is easiest at Nantwich, Stoke-on-Trent or Stafford. Extending daily mileage is usually possible on paper, but should be decided only after checking accommodation and transport for the next viable stopping point.

Accommodation planning

Accommodation is the main constraint. Chester, Nantwich, Stone, Stafford and Lichfield are the strongest overnight bases, with a mix of hotels, guesthouses, B&Bs and inns. Stoke-on-Trent also works well as a practical midway stop.

Between these towns, options are more limited. Rural stops such as the Barbridge / Bunbury area, Weston and Milford need earlier planning, particularly in summer. If an intended stop has no suitable bed available, the whole day's distance may need adjusting rather than simply walking a few extra kilometres.

Camping and hostel options exist in some areas, but availability and exact locations should be checked before travelling. Do not assume that every stage end has a campsite or budget bed.

Food and water

The route passes towns, villages, churches and cafés, but food planning should still be deliberate. Larger resupply points include Chester, Nantwich, Stoke-on-Trent, Stone, Stafford and Lichfield; smaller villages may have limited or no reliable services on the day you pass through.

Carry lunch and enough water each day, especially on the longer rural stages and the Cannock Chase finish. On a 6-day itinerary, the 27–30 km days leave little margin if a planned café is closed or a shop is off-route.

Navigation and waymarking

The Two Saints Way is well waymarked for most of its length, but not uniformly. Around 95% is waymarked, leaving enough gaps that a guidebook, map or GPX track should be carried.

Direction matters. Walking Chester to Lichfield, follow the Way of St Chad, marked with the cross of St Chad. Walking Lichfield to Chester, follow the Way of St Werburgh, marked with a goose symbol.

Navigation needs most attention through urban stretches, field-path junctions, and any place where rural signage has deteriorated or been refreshed. Current waymarking and path diversions should be checked before travelling.

Transport planning

The route is straightforward to arrange as a linear walk by train. Chester has a mainline station with services from Liverpool, Manchester, Crewe and North Wales. Lichfield has Lichfield City and Lichfield Trent Valley, with Lichfield Trent Valley on the West Coast Main Line and direct trains to London Euston, Crewe and northbound destinations.

There are direct trains between Chester and Lichfield Trent Valley via Crewe, which makes it practical to leave the car at home. Nantwich, Stoke-on-Trent and Stafford also have stations, making partial trips and bail-out plans easier than on many rural long-distance routes.

Train times, ticket validity and engineering works should be checked before travelling, especially when planning a same-day return after a long final stage.

Weather and ground conditions

The main weather issue is underfoot condition rather than exposure. Towpaths, field paths and rural tracks can become muddy after rain, while overgrown summer paths can slow progress through the farmland sections.

The Cheshire half is generally flatter and lower, but that does not always mean faster if towpaths are wet or field edges are heavy going. The Staffordshire half is hillier, with the final approach over Cannock Chase bringing heath, forest and sandy tracks as well as the route's highest ground.

Waterproof footwear, gaiters in wet periods and a realistic pace are more useful here than technical mountain kit. The route is low-level, but long daily distances in poor weather can still make it tiring.

Towns, Villages and Overnight Stops

The easiest overnight plan is to use the larger towns and canal settlements rather than trying to stop in every village. Chester, Nantwich, Stoke-on-Trent, Stone, Stafford and Lichfield are the most dependable bases; Barbridge/Bunbury, Weston and Milford can work for a shorter-stage itinerary but need more careful booking.

Smaller villages on the route are useful for pacing, churches, pubs or short breaks, but should not be treated as guaranteed accommodation or resupply points. Opening hours, room availability and any current path diversions should be checked before travelling, especially outside summer weekends.

Chester

Chester is the natural start point, with the route leaving from Chester Cathedral and passing through the city before heading out towards Christleton and Waverton. It is the best place to stay before an early start, with the broadest choice of hotels, guesthouses, B&Bs and food options on the route.

Transport is straightforward: Chester has a mainline station with services from Liverpool, Manchester, Crewe and North Wales. If arriving by train, allow enough time to get from the station to the cathedral and to orientate before leaving the city streets.

Christleton

Christleton comes early after leaving Chester and is better viewed as a first pause rather than an overnight target. It sits before the route settles into the flatter Cheshire canal-and-farmland walking.

Do not rely on Christleton as a resupply point without checking current opening hours. For most walkers, Chester remains the practical place to stock up before this section.

Waverton

Waverton is another early Cheshire village on the line out from Chester towards Beeston and Bunbury. It can help break up the first day mentally, but it is not one of the main accommodation hubs on the Two Saints Way.

Food, pubs and shop options should be checked before travelling. Walkers aiming for Barbridge or Bunbury should leave Chester carrying enough food and water for the day rather than assuming every village will have services open.

Beeston Castle

Beeston Castle is a major landmark above the Cheshire Plain rather than a standard overnight stop. It is useful for navigation and pacing on the first section, sitting between the Chester outskirts and the Bunbury/Barbridge area.

Accommodation and resupply should be planned elsewhere unless a specific nearby booking has been made. The castle area is more important as a scenic and historical waypoint than as a logistics base.

Bunbury

Bunbury is one of the more useful village stops in the first half of the walk and can work with the Barbridge area as an end point for a long first day from Chester. It suits walkers who want to avoid pushing all the way to Nantwich on day one.

Accommodation is more limited than in the larger towns, so rooms should be booked ahead. Check food and pub opening times before committing to Bunbury as an overnight stop, particularly midweek or outside the main walking season.

Barbridge

Barbridge is a practical stopping area on the canal section and is used in the six-day itinerary as the first overnight area after Chester. It sits before the route continues towards Acton and Nantwich.

This is not a large town, so accommodation choice is limited compared with Chester or Nantwich. It is best treated as a pre-booked stop rather than somewhere to arrive speculatively at the end of a 29 km day.

Acton

Acton lies before Nantwich and is mainly a useful short-stage point rather than a major overnight base. It can be a convenient place to pause before entering the Nantwich area.

Do not assume reliable shops or evening food without checking current details. Nantwich is the stronger choice for accommodation, meals and resupply on this part of the route.

Nantwich

Nantwich is one of the key overnight stops on the Two Saints Way. It is a market town with St Mary's Church, good access to services, and sits at the end of the first official section of the route.

For practical planning, Nantwich is a strong place to break the walk, restock and reset after the flat canal-and-field walking from Chester. It has accommodation options and a railway station, making it useful both for full-route walkers and for anyone section-hiking.

Wybunbury

Wybunbury comes after Nantwich as the route heads south-east towards the quieter ground near Weston and Barthomley. It is a useful intermediate village but not one of the main overnight hubs.

Food and accommodation should be checked before travelling. Walkers staying in Nantwich or Weston should plan this stretch as a linking section with limited guaranteed services between larger stops.

Weston

Weston is used as an overnight point in the six-day schedule between Nantwich and Stoke-on-Trent. It is useful because it breaks up what would otherwise be a long and awkward section across the Cheshire/Staffordshire transition.

Accommodation is likely to be more limited than in Nantwich or Stoke-on-Trent, so booking ahead matters. Check evening food options before committing to a stay, and carry enough supplies from

Nantwich if services are uncertain.

Barthomley

Barthomley is a quiet village with the sandstone church of St Bertoline and sits on the higher, quieter ground as the route leaves Cheshire towards Staffordshire near Audley. It is a good waypoint and rest stop, but not a primary accommodation base.

This section is less urban and should be planned with more care than the canal approach to Nantwich. Do not rely on finding food, shops or rooms at short notice; this should be checked before travelling.

Audley

Audley is passed as the route approaches the Staffordshire side and continues towards Stoke-on-Trent. It can be useful for pacing before the more urban walking into the Potteries.

It is not listed as one of the principal accommodation hubs for the route, so treat it as a possible service point only after checking current facilities. Stoke-on-Trent is the more dependable overnight and transport option ahead.

Stoke-on-Trent

Stoke-on-Trent is a major practical stop near the middle of the route and a logical overnight base after the rural approach from Weston and Barthomley. It also gives access to the Potteries Museum & Art Gallery and Stoke Minster area, both relevant to the route's Mercian and pilgrimage themes.

The city has a railway station on the route, making it one of the best places to start or finish a section walk. It is also a sensible resupply point before continuing towards Trentham and Stone.

Trentham

Trentham lies between Stoke-on-Trent and Stone on the shorter fourth day of the six-day schedule. It is mainly a through-place on this route rather than a core overnight stop.

Walkers should use Stoke-on-Trent or Stone for the more dependable accommodation and transport logistics. Any food or café stop around Trentham should be checked before travelling, particularly if walking early or late in the day.

Stone

Stone is one of the best overnight stops on the Staffordshire half of the route. It is a Trent-side canal town linked to St Wulfad, one of the three shrine saints associated with the medieval pilgrimage.

For walkers, Stone is useful because it offers accommodation and town services after the urban and canal walking from Stoke-on-Trent. It is also a sensible place to resupply before the route continues towards Burston, Salt and Stafford.

Burston

Burston sits after Stone on the way towards Salt and Stafford. It is best treated as an intermediate village rather than a main overnight target.

Services are less certain than in Stone or Stafford, so carry what is needed for the day. If planning a shorter-stage itinerary with a stop in or near Burston, accommodation and food should be arranged in advance.

Salt

Salt is another small place on the Stone to Stafford section. It is useful for breaking up the day but should not be relied on for accommodation or full resupply without prior checking.

Most walkers will find it simpler to plan this leg around Stone and Stafford, both of which are stronger service centres. Rural paths in this part of the route can be muddy after rain, so allow time rather than planning tight onward arrangements.

Stafford

Stafford is a major logistics point and one of the most useful towns on the route. It has accommodation, town services and a railway station, making it a strong overnight stop or section-hike access point.

On the six-day schedule, Stafford is passed before continuing to Milford, but many walkers may prefer to stop here to shorten the next leg. It is also a sensible place to stock up before the Cannock Chase section, where services become sparser and the walking becomes hillier.

Milford

Milford is a practical staging point at the edge of the final, hillier section over Cannock Chase. It is used in the six-day itinerary as the overnight stop before the long final day to Lichfield.

Accommodation and food options should be booked or checked in advance, as this is not as dependable a service centre as Stafford or Lichfield. Starting from Milford gives a well-positioned approach to the heath, forest and sandy tracks of Cannock Chase.

Cannock Chase, Castle Ring and Beacon Hill

Cannock Chase is the wildest and hilliest part of the Two Saints Way, with the route reaching its high ground around Castle Ring and Beacon Hill. This is a walking section rather than an obvious overnight area.

Do not plan to rely on accommodation or resupply on the Chase itself. Carry food and water from Milford or Stafford, and allow enough daylight for the final approach to Chorley and Lichfield, especially in autumn.

Chorley

Chorley comes after the Cannock Chase high ground on the final approach to Lichfield. It is a useful waypoint once the harder final section is easing, but it is not one of the route's main service hubs.

Any local food, pub or accommodation options should be checked before travelling. Most walkers will continue to Lichfield for the night, where transport and accommodation are much stronger.

Lichfield

Lichfield is the finish of the route, with the pilgrimage ending at Lichfield Cathedral and St Chad's Well at Stowe nearby. It is the best place to stay after completing the walk, with the widest local choice at the southern end.

Transport is excellent for a linear walk. Lichfield has two stations, Lichfield City and Lichfield Trent Valley; Lichfield Trent Valley is on the West Coast Main Line, with direct London Euston, Crewe and northbound trains, and there are direct trains between Chester and Lichfield Trent Valley via Crewe.

Finish-day accommodation is worth booking ahead if arriving late from Milford over Cannock Chase. After a long final stage, Lichfield gives the simplest combination of food, beds and onward travel.

Getting to the Start

By train

The start is at **Chester Cathedral** in central Chester. The nearest rail access is **Chester station**, which has mainline services from **Liverpool, Manchester, Crewe and North Wales**.

For walkers coming from farther afield, **Crewe** is the key rail interchange to plan around. One of the simplest logistics for this point-to-point walk is to travel to Chester by train, walk south to Lichfield, then return from **Lichfield Trent Valley** by train via Crewe.

There are also direct trains between **Chester and Lichfield Trent Valley via Crewe**, which makes either end workable as a rail base. Timetables, engineering works and ticket restrictions should be checked before travelling.

By bus

Chester is a major city with local and regional bus services, but the easiest public-transport approach to the trailhead is normally by train. If using buses to reach the city or to connect from nearby accommodation, plan the final leg to **Chester Cathedral** using current local timetables.

Bus routes, evening services and Sunday frequencies can change, so this should be checked before travelling. A taxi from Chester station or elsewhere in the city is the straightforward fallback if arrival times do not match local bus services.

By car

Driving to Chester is possible, but this is a **linear walk ending in Lichfield**, so parking needs more thought than for a circular route. If leaving a car in Chester, the return journey from Lichfield can be made by rail from **Lichfield Trent Valley** to **Chester via Crewe**.

Alternatively, some walkers may prefer to park at or near the Lichfield end first, take the train to Chester, and then walk back towards the parked vehicle. That avoids having a long train journey after the final day, but it depends on suitable long-stay parking and train times.

Do not assume overnight or multi-day parking is available in city-centre car parks. Long-stay options, charges, height restrictions and maximum stay rules should be checked before travelling.

From the nearest airport

Chester is best reached by connecting into the rail network rather than treating the trailhead as an airport transfer. Practical rail approaches include routes via **Manchester, Liverpool, Crewe and North Wales**, depending on where the flight arrives.

Airport-to-station transfers, late arrivals and Sunday/public-holiday services should be checked before booking accommodation in Chester. If arriving late, staying in Chester before starting is usually more sensible than trying to begin the walk the same day.

Where to stay before starting

Chester is the natural place to stay before Day 1. It is well served by accommodation, and starting from the city keeps the first morning simple: the route begins at **Chester Cathedral** before leaving through the city past the Roman amphitheatre and St John's church.

Book ahead in busy periods, especially if starting at a weekend or during summer. The first walking day commonly continues out towards the **Barbridge / Bunbury area**, so a calm early start from Chester is useful for keeping the day manageable.

Getting Home from the Finish

By train

Lichfield is one of the easier long-distance-walk finishes to leave by public transport. The city has two railway stations: **Lichfield City** and **Lichfield Trent Valley**.

For longer-distance journeys, **Lichfield Trent Valley** is the key station. It is on the West Coast Main Line, with direct trains to **London Euston**, **Crewe** and northbound destinations. There are also direct trains between **Lichfield Trent Valley** and **Chester** via **Crewe**, which makes the Two Saints Way straightforward to arrange as a one-way walk without needing a car shuttle.

If returning to the start at Chester, build the journey around **Lichfield Trent Valley → Crewe → Chester** or a direct through service where available. Timetables, engineering works and last trains should be checked before travelling, especially if finishing late after the Cannock Chase section.

If the final day runs long, do not assume there will be convenient evening rail options from both Lichfield stations. Check the last practical train before setting off from Milford or Cannock Chase, and have a taxi or overnight plan if arrival in Lichfield may slip into the evening.

By bus

Local buses may be useful for short onward journeys from Lichfield, but they are less useful than the train for most end-to-end walkers. Services, routes and evening frequency are timetable-dependent and should be checked before travelling.

For most hikers, the practical public-transport plan is to finish at **Lichfield Cathedral / St Chad's Well**, then use a Lichfield rail station for the onward journey. If relying on a bus after finishing late in the day, confirm the final departure in advance rather than assuming a turn-up-and-go service.

By car/taxi

Because this is a point-to-point walk from **Chester Cathedral** to **Lichfield Cathedral and St Chad's Well**, leaving a car at the finish only makes sense if transport to Chester has already been arranged. The strong rail link between Lichfield and Chester via Crewe usually makes a train-based plan simpler than a two-car shuttle.

Taxis are useful as a fallback if the final stage over **Cannock Chase** takes longer than expected, or if accommodation is outside central Lichfield. Pre-booking is sensible for evening arrivals, weekends and busy periods. Current taxi availability and fares should be checked before travelling.

From the nearest airport

Most walkers will find rail travel more relevant than flying for this route. If an airport connection is needed, plan the first leg from **Lichfield Trent Valley** or **Lichfield City** by train, then connect onward through the appropriate mainline interchange for the chosen airport.

The best airport and transfer route depends on the direction of onward travel and current rail timetables. This should be checked before travelling.

Where to stay at the finish

Lichfield is a good place to stay at the end of the Two Saints Way, particularly after the long final stage from **Milford** over **Cannock Chase**. Staying overnight removes pressure from the last day and gives enough time to visit both **Lichfield Cathedral** and **St Chad's Well** without racing for a train.

Accommodation should be booked ahead in busy periods. If planning to travel home the same day, choose a realistic finishing time and check the last suitable train from Lichfield before starting the final stage.

Which Direction Should You Walk?

Standard direction: Chester to Lichfield

Chester to Lichfield is the natural and most satisfying direction for the Two Saints Way. This is the route as a pilgrimage to St Chad: it begins at Chester Cathedral, the former shrine of St Werburgh, and finishes at Lichfield Cathedral and St Chad's Well, the main pilgrim destination.

It also gives the best progression underfoot. The first half across Cheshire is flatter, with canal towpaths, field paths and farmland through places such as Christleton, Waverton, Bunbury, Barbridge and Nantwich. The route then becomes more varied and more strenuous through Staffordshire, with Stoke-on-Trent, Stone, Stafford and the final crossing of Cannock Chase before Lichfield.

That makes the walk feel as though it builds towards a proper finish. The high ground around Castle Ring and Beacon Hill comes late, followed by the descent towards Lichfield's three-spired cathedral and St Chad's Well. For most walkers, that is a stronger ending than finishing on the flatter canal-and-farmland sections into Chester.

Waymarking also supports this direction clearly: Chester to Lichfield is signed as the Way of St Chad, using the cross of St Chad. Around 95% of the route is waymarked, but the guidebook, map or GPX should still be carried for the unsigned gaps and any confusing urban or rural sections.

Reverse direction: Lichfield to Chester

Walking from Lichfield to Chester is perfectly viable. In this direction the route is signed as the Way of St Werburgh, using the goose symbol, and the finish at Chester Cathedral is still a meaningful cathedral ending.

The main difference is pacing. The hillier Staffordshire and Cannock Chase section comes early, so the walk starts with its wildest and most physically demanding terrain before gradually easing into the flatter canal towpaths and Cheshire countryside. That can suit walkers who prefer to get the hardest ground done first.

The reverse direction is less compelling as a pilgrimage journey because it moves away from St Chad's Well and Lichfield Cathedral rather than towards them. It may, however, suit anyone with fixed accommodation, rail plans or onward travel that works better from Chester.

Transport and accommodation

Transport does not strongly favour either direction. Chester has a mainline station with services from Liverpool, Manchester, Crewe and North Wales, while Lichfield has both Lichfield City and Lichfield Trent Valley, with the latter on the West Coast Main Line. Direct trains between Chester and Lichfield Trent Valley via Crewe make the linear walk straightforward in either direction.

Intermediate rail access at Nantwich, Stoke-on-Trent and Stafford also makes section-walking practical both ways. This is one of the easier point-to-point pilgrim routes in England to split into rail-linked sections.

Accommodation flow is broadly workable in either direction, but rural stretches and the Cannock Chase side need planning. Chester, Nantwich, Stone, Stafford and Lichfield are the strongest overnight hubs; smaller canal villages and rural stops have fewer options, so bookings should be arranged around realistic day lengths rather than assuming a bed will be available at every stage end.

Weather and climbs

Weather direction is not a major factor on this route. The Two Saints Way is an inland, low-level walk with no long exposed ridge walking, and the highest ground is only 244 m on Cannock Chase.

The climbs are not technically difficult in either direction. What changes is the timing: Chester to Lichfield saves the hillier Cannock Chase section for the end, while Lichfield to Chester puts it near the start. The real challenge is cumulative mileage, muddy field paths after rain, urban navigation and maintaining pace over several days.

Recommendation

Walk the Two Saints Way from **Chester to Lichfield** unless there is a strong transport or accommodation reason to do otherwise. It follows the clearest pilgrimage logic, gives the best scenery progression from flat Cheshire towpaths to the heath and woodland of Cannock Chase, and ends at Lichfield Cathedral and St Chad's Well — the most satisfying finish on the route.

Accommodation Along the Route

The Two Saints Way works well as an inn-to-inn walk, but it is not a route where accommodation is evenly spaced. The easiest approach is to build the itinerary around the larger overnight hubs — Chester, Nantwich, Stoke-on-Trent, Stone, Stafford and Lichfield — then use rural inns, B&Bs or taxi transfers to solve the thinner sections.

The main pressure points are the first two rural nights if walking a 6-day schedule, especially around the Barbridge / Bunbury area and Weston. The final approach over Cannock Chase also needs planning, as the route becomes more rural and hilly before Lichfield. Book ahead in summer and for weekend arrivals, particularly if aiming to stay in a specific village rather than a larger town.

Best overnight bases

Place	Accommodation level	Best for	Notes
Chester	Good	Start night; rail arrival; cathedral start	Strongest choice at the northern end, with hotels, guesthouses and B&Bs. Useful if arriving by train the day before starting.
Christleton / Waverton	Limited	Short first day or late start	Village options should not be assumed. Most walkers will be better served starting from Chester or continuing towards the canal villages.
Beeston Castle / Bunbury / Barbridge area	Limited	First night on a 6-day itinerary	Practical for breaking the long Chester–Nantwich section, but choice is much thinner than in Chester or Nantwich. Book before committing to daily distances.
Nantwich	Good	Reliable overnight hub; section break	One of the best-planned stops on the route, with market-town services and a station. A sensible fallback if rural accommodation before or after is unavailable.
Wybunbury / Weston	Limited	Rural stop between Nantwich and Stoke-on-Trent	Accommodation is sparser here, so do not leave this night to chance. If nothing suitable is available, use Nantwich or Stoke-on-Trent as a base and arrange a taxi transfer.
Barthomley / Audley	Limited	Quiet intermediate stop	Useful only if the available accommodation fits the itinerary. Services are not as dependable as in the main towns.
Stoke-on-Trent	Good	Mid-route reset; rail access; shorter next day	A practical mid-walk base with broad accommodation choice and a station. Particularly useful after the more rural Nantwich–Stoke section.
Trentham	Limited	Short day between Stoke-on-Trent and Stone	Possible as an intermediate stop, but most walkers will find Stoke-on-Trent or Stone easier for accommodation and onward logistics.

Place	Accommodation level	Best for	Notes
Stone	Good	Canal-town overnight; St Wulfad connection	A strong stop with town services and a natural place to overnight before continuing towards Stafford.
Burston / Salt	Limited	Quiet rural break	Treat as a bonus rather than a guaranteed stop. Check availability before designing a shorter itinerary around these villages.
Stafford	Good	Major overnight hub; rail-linked section break	One of the most useful bases on the southern half of the walk. Good for splitting Stone–Milford or for section walkers.
Milford	Limited	Staging point before Cannock Chase	Convenient for the final crossing towards Lichfield, but accommodation choice is not as broad as Stafford or Lichfield. Book early or use Stafford with a transfer.
Cannock Chase / Castle Ring / Beacon Hill	Limited	Daytime crossing, not an overnight hub	The Chase is the wildest and hilliest part of the route, but it is not the place to rely on finding last-minute accommodation. Plan to sleep before or after the crossing.
Chorley	Limited	Late-stage rural stop	Only useful if it fits a slower itinerary and accommodation is available. This should be checked before travelling.
Lichfield	Good	Finish night; cathedral end; rail departure	Strong choice at the southern end, with the cathedral and St Chad's Well nearby. Worth booking a finish-night stay if arrival time is uncertain after Cannock Chase.

Planning by itinerary length

A 9-day pilgrimage-style itinerary is easier to fit around villages and shorter stages, but it still needs pre-booking in the rural gaps. The official route is split into shorter stages, so walkers using that format should check each intended stop rather than assuming every stage end has a full range of beds.

A 6-day itinerary is more demanding logistically. The likely pressure points are the long Chester to Barbridge / Bunbury area day, the Weston stop before Stoke-on-Trent, and the Milford to Lichfield finish over Cannock Chase. These are the nights to secure first.

Fit walkers completing the route in 6–7 days will often benefit from using the larger towns as anchors and accepting occasional transfers. Nantwich, Stoke-on-Trent, Stone, Stafford and Lichfield give the most flexibility if a village stop is full or inconvenient.

Booking strategy

Book the rural nights before the city nights. Chester, Stoke-on-Trent, Stafford and Lichfield have broader choice, while the canal villages, Weston, Milford and the Cannock Chase side are more exposed to limited availability.

Summer weekends should be treated as high-demand periods. Prices and availability can change quickly, so confirm current rates, cancellation terms and food availability before booking.

Even where a village has accommodation, evening meals are not guaranteed. Check whether the accommodation serves food, whether there is a nearby pub or shop, and whether arrival after a long walking day will still be practical.

Luggage transfer and taxi workarounds

Do not assume a dedicated end-to-end luggage-transfer system on the Two Saints Way. If walking with bags moved ahead, arrange this directly with accommodation providers or local taxi firms; this should be checked before travelling.

Taxi transfers can make the route much easier without changing the walking line. Common uses are staying in Nantwich when rural beds are unavailable near Weston, staying in Stafford rather than Milford before the Cannock Chase stage, or returning to a rail-linked town after a short section.

For section hikers, the route is particularly practical because Chester, Nantwich, Stoke-on-Trent, Stafford and Lichfield are on the rail network. This makes it possible to walk the more awkward accommodation gaps as day sections while sleeping in larger towns.

Camping and Wild Camping

Camping is possible on the Two Saints Way, but this is not a route with a continuous chain of obvious trail-side campsites. It is a lowland pilgrimage across canals, farmland, villages, towns and Cannock Chase, so most walkers will find B&Bs, inns and hotels easier to organise than a tent-based itinerary.

There are some campsites and hostel-style options in and near the larger towns and canal villages, but the brief does not support naming specific sites. Availability, opening seasons, prices and whether a site accepts one-night backpacking stays should be checked before travelling, especially in summer.

Does the route suit camping?

The route can suit a lightweight camper who is happy to plan carefully and leave the trail for overnight stops where needed. It is less convenient for spontaneous camping because much of the Cheshire half follows canal towpaths, field paths and settled farmland, while the Staffordshire half includes urban stretches through Stoke-on-Trent and Stafford before the more open ground of Cannock Chase.

A camping itinerary will usually need shorter or more flexible days than the 6-day walking schedule. The practical overnight hubs on that faster schedule — Barbridge / Bunbury, Weston, Stoke-on-Trent, Stone, Milford and Lichfield — should be treated as planning areas rather than guaranteed camping locations.

Wild camping legality and practical reality

Wild camping in England is generally not allowed without the landowner's permission. The Two Saints Way crosses private farmland, canal corridors, villages, urban areas and protected countryside, so it should not be treated as a wild-camping route.

Discreet permission-based camping may occasionally be possible by asking a landowner, pub, farm or other local host before stopping. Do not camp in fields with livestock, on canal towpaths, beside churches, in woodland without permission, or on public access land where camping is not explicitly allowed.

Cannock Chase is the wildest-feeling part of the walk, but it is also a sensitive protected landscape. Do not assume that the heath, forest or sandy tracks around Cannock Chase, Castle Ring or Beacon Hill are available for overnight camping; local restrictions should be checked before travelling.

Where camping is most realistic

Camping is most realistic where the route passes close to established settlements and canal-side services rather than in the open countryside itself. Useful planning areas include Chester, Nantwich, Stoke-on-Trent, Stone, Stafford, Milford and Lichfield, along with smaller canal villages such as Barbridge and Bunbury where accommodation may exist nearby.

The Cheshire canal sections can look tempting on a map, but towpaths are not campsites and are often busy, exposed to passing walkers and cyclists, and unsuitable for pitching. The more rural sections between Weston, Barthomley and Audley also pass through working countryside, where permission is essential.

Water and supplies for campers

Do not rely on canal water, field taps or streams as drinking-water sources. The safest approach is to refill in towns, cafés, pubs, shops and accommodation stops, and to carry enough water between them.

The route has regular settlements compared with remote upland trails, but services are still uneven between towns. This is especially relevant if camping, as evening food, breakfast supplies and water need to be planned around the end of each day rather than assumed to be available at the pitch.

Fires, stoves and Leave No Trace

Open fires are not appropriate on this route. They are unsafe on farmland, canal margins, woodland edges and heathland, and are particularly unsuitable on Cannock Chase, where dry heath and forest areas can be vulnerable.

Use a small stove only where it is permitted and safe, and never on dry vegetation, wooden benches, towpath edges or church grounds. Pack out all rubbish, avoid trampling crops or long grass, and leave no toilet waste or tissue in fields, woods or hedgerows.

Seasonal considerations

Spring, summer and autumn are the main walking seasons, but campsite availability can be seasonal and should be checked before travelling. Summer weekends can make accommodation and camping pitches harder to secure, while wet weather can make field paths muddy and less pleasant for anyone carrying camping weight.

In short, the Two Saints Way can be camped with advance booking and a flexible route plan, but it is better approached as a serviced lowland pilgrimage than as a wild-camping trail.

Food, Water and Resupply

The Two Saints Way is not a remote trail, but it should not be treated as a continuous high-street walk. The safest approach is to use the larger towns as resupply anchors — Chester, Nantwich, Stoke-on-Trent, Stone, Stafford and Lichfield — and carry enough food for the rural and canal-side stretches between them.

Food is easiest at the start, finish and main overnight hubs. It becomes less predictable through smaller villages, along towpaths, across field paths and on the Cannock Chase section, where opening hours and seasonal availability can affect cafés, pubs and village shops.

Practical resupply strategy

Buy breakfast supplies, lunch and snacks before leaving each overnight town, especially on the longer 6-day itinerary. Chester, Nantwich, Stoke-on-Trent, Stone, Stafford and Lichfield are the most reliable places to plan around; smaller places such as Barbridge, Bunbury, Weston, Barthomley, Audley, Salt, Milford and Chorley should be treated as useful but not guaranteed resupply points.

For a typical stage, carry a full day's walking food: lunch, high-energy snacks and a reserve item in case a planned café or pub is closed. On the longer days — Chester to Barbridge / Bunbury, Weston to Stoke-on-Trent, and Milford to Lichfield — it is sensible to start with everything needed until the evening stop.

Sunday and bank-holiday trading can be restrictive in rural villages. Pub food times can also be shorter than opening hours, and cafés may close early. This should be checked before travelling, particularly if relying on a single village for lunch or an evening meal.

Water

Start each day with filled bottles from accommodation or a confirmed tap source. Public refill points cannot be assumed on the rural sections, and canal water should not be treated as a normal drinking-water source.

Most walkers should carry at least 1.5–2 litres per day in mild conditions, more in hot weather or on the longer Cannock Chase day. The route is low-level, but long towpaths, lanes and exposed heathland can still feel dry in warm weather.

Natural water is not a dependable part of the plan on this route. If taking water from any untreated source in an emergency, it should be filtered and/or chemically treated, but the better strategy is to refill in towns, cafés, pubs or accommodation before gaps.

Section	Food availability	Water availability	Notes
Chester to Barbridge / Bunbury area	Good at Chester; more limited and less predictable through Christleton, Waverton, Beeston, Bunbury and Barbridge.	Fill before leaving Chester; top up only where a confirmed café, pub or accommodation stop is available.	A long first stage on canal and rural paths. Carry lunch and snacks rather than assuming village food will fit your timing.

Section	Food availability	Water availability	Notes
Barbridge / Bunbury to Weston via Nantwich	Nantwich is the key resupply point and a natural place to buy food for the rest of the day. Smaller places before and after should not be relied on without checking.	Refill in Nantwich if stopping there; otherwise start with enough for the full day.	This is one of the easier sections for food planning because Nantwich sits on the route, but onward options towards Weston are less certain.
Weston to Stoke-on-Trent via Barthomley and Audley	Sparse through the rural middle of the day; Stoke-on-Trent is the reliable end-of-day service centre.	Carry enough from Weston or the previous overnight stop; refill opportunities in villages should be checked in advance.	Treat this as a self-sufficient walking day until Stoke-on-Trent, especially if walking on a Sunday or arriving outside normal lunch hours.
Stoke-on-Trent to Stone via Trentham	Good at the Stoke-on-Trent end and in Stone; intermediate availability depends on timing and exact stopping points.	Easy to start full from Stoke-on-Trent; refill again in Stone.	A shorter stage than most 6-day schedules, so food and water risk is lower if starting prepared.
Stone to Milford via Salt and Stafford	Stone and Stafford are the main food points; Stafford is the obvious place to resupply before continuing to Milford.	Fill in Stone and top up in Stafford. Do not assume rural taps between settlements.	Stafford breaks up the day well. Buy food there for the evening or the next morning if staying somewhere with limited nearby services.
Milford to Lichfield over Cannock Chase, Castle Ring / Beacon Hill and Chorley	Limited on the hillier Cannock Chase section; Lichfield is the reliable finish.	Start full from Milford. Carry more water than on the flatter stages in warm weather.	This is the longest and wildest day on a 6-day itinerary. Carry all food needed until Lichfield unless a specific open stop has been checked.

Navigation and Waymarking

The Two Saints Way is generally straightforward to follow, but it should not be treated as a route where the signs can be followed blindly. Around 95% of the route is waymarked, leaving enough gaps for a guidebook, GPX track or map to be genuinely useful.

The route is signed in both directions, with different pilgrim symbols depending on which way you walk. Chester to Lichfield is marked as the **Way of St Chad**, using the cross of St Chad; Lichfield to Chester is marked as the **Way of St Werburgh**, using a goose symbol. The route is also organised into four colour-coded sections.

How reliable is the waymarking?

Waymarking is good overall, especially for a revived pilgrimage route crossing a mixture of canal towpaths, farmland, towns and heathland. It is not completely uniform, and some rural signage has deteriorated and been refreshed over time, so current waymarking and any path diversions should be checked before travelling.

The easiest navigation is on the long canal sections, particularly on the Shropshire Union and Trent & Mersey canals, where the towpath gives a clear linear line. Navigation becomes more demanding where the route leaves the canals for field paths, lanes and woodland tracks, or where it threads through urban areas.

Where extra care is needed

The main navigation risk is not difficult mountain terrain, but missed turns. Pay particular attention:

- when leaving or joining canal towpaths;
- on field-edge paths and rural rights of way after rain or summer growth;
- through Stoke-on-Trent and Stafford, where urban signs can be easier to miss among street furniture;
- on Cannock Chase, where heath, forest and sandy tracks create more route choices than the flatter Cheshire sections.

The final Staffordshire section over Cannock Chase is the wildest and hilliest part of the walk. It is still low-level, with a high point of 244 m, but the landscape is less linear than the canals and needs more active checking at junctions.

GPX, guidebook and maps

A GPX file is strongly recommended, even for confident walkers. It is most useful for the unwaymarked sections, urban exits and places where several paths leave a field, lane or woodland track.

Offline mapping is sensible. Use an app that allows downloaded maps, public rights of way and GPX import, rather than relying on a live mobile connection. Ordnance Survey-style mapping is the most useful base layer for checking rights of way, field boundaries, lanes and woodland paths.

The dedicated guidebook, **The Two Saints Way** by David Pott, is the key printed route resource. Carrying paper mapping or printed route notes is also sensible, particularly if walking long stages or using a phone as the main navigation device.

Mobile signal and battery use

Do not depend on continuous mobile signal for navigation. The route passes through well-served towns such as Chester, Nantwich, Stoke-on-Trent, Stone, Stafford and Lichfield, but rural farmland, canal corridors and Cannock Chase can still leave gaps or weak data coverage.

Download the GPX and maps before setting off each day. A small power bank is a practical addition if using a phone for navigation over the longer 24–30 km days.

Is it suitable for limited navigation experience?

Yes, provided you are prepared. The Two Saints Way is a moderate, low-level walk with no technical navigation, no exposed ground and mostly clear linear sections. It is suitable for hikers with limited navigation experience if they can follow waymarks, check a map or GPX at junctions, and avoid pressing on blindly when signs disappear.

For a first long-distance walk, the safest approach is to walk with the GPX loaded, keep the guidebook or route notes accessible, and check each major turn before leaving towns, canals or obvious tracks.

Terrain, Conditions and Difficulty in Practice

The Two Saints Way is moderate because of length, accumulated fatigue and mixed lowland conditions, not because of technical ground. There is no sustained mountain terrain, no exposed scrambling and no high pass: the highest point is only 244 m on Cannock Chase, with total ascent of around 1,667 m spread across the full 148 km.

What changes the walk in practice is the contrast between the flat Cheshire half and the more varied Staffordshire finish. The early days are often steady canal-and-field walking; the later stages add more undulation, woodland, heath and a longer final day if walked on a six-day schedule.

Underfoot: towpaths, fields, lanes and urban streets

Long sections use the Shropshire Union and Trent & Mersey canal towpaths. These are generally straightforward, low-level and easy to follow, but they can feel repetitive over a full day and may become tiring on the feet if combined with road and town walking.

Away from the canals, the route uses field paths, woodland paths and quiet lanes. Rural field sections are the main place where conditions can slow progress, especially after rain when mud builds up and waymarks may be less obvious across fields or through vegetation.

There is also unavoidable urban walking, particularly through Stoke-on-Trent and Stafford. These sections are not technically difficult, but they change the rhythm of the walk: expect pavements, road crossings, canal-side approaches and navigation that relies more on checking the next turn than simply following an open path.

Mud, overgrowth and wet-weather difficulty

Mud is the main condition-related difficulty on this route. The Cheshire and Staffordshire farmland sections can become slow after rain, and field paths may also be overgrown in places during the growing season.

Waterproof footwear is more useful than heavy mountain boots for most walkers, provided it is comfortable over repeated towpath, lane and pavement miles. Gaiters can be worthwhile after wet weather, especially for anyone walking the rural stages in spring or autumn.

The canal sections are usually simpler underfoot than the field sections, but towpaths are still affected by rain and regular use. In wet conditions, allow extra time rather than planning the days purely from map distance.

Climbs, descents and the Cannock Chase finish

The route becomes hillier in Staffordshire and reaches its wildest ground on Cannock Chase, around Castle Ring and Beacon Hill. This is where the walk feels most like upland country, though still at modest height and without exposed or technical terrain.

The final section from Milford to Lichfield is one of the tougher days on a six-day itinerary because it combines distance with the hillier heath, forest and sandy tracks of Cannock Chase. Walkers who have found the canal sections easy should not assume the last day will feel the same.

The climbs are not severe in isolation. The difficulty comes from reaching them with several long days already in the legs, particularly if walking the route in 6–7 days rather than following the shorter official-style stages.

Navigation and waymarking in real conditions

The route is well waymarked overall, with around 95% signed, but it is not a route to walk without a guidebook, map or GPX. The remaining gaps matter most where the path leaves obvious towpaths, passes through urban areas, or crosses field systems where the trodden line is less clear.

In the Chester to Lichfield direction, look for the Way of St Chad signs with the cross of St Chad. In the opposite direction, the Way of St Werburgh uses a goose symbol. Current waymarking, path diversions and any temporary closures should be checked before travelling.

Road walking and hard-surface fatigue

Quiet lanes and urban streets are part of the route. They are not the headline terrain, but they add impact over multi-day walking, especially between canal and town sections.

Footwear should be chosen for mixed surfaces rather than for mountains alone. A stiff, heavy boot can feel excessive on towpaths and pavements, while very light shoes may be less comfortable in muddy fields after rain.

Seasonal conditions

Spring, summer and autumn are the most practical seasons for the Two Saints Way. Spring and autumn bring cooler walking temperatures but a higher chance of soft ground and mud after rain.

Summer gives longer daylight and generally easier logistics, but rural paths can be more overgrown and accommodation should be planned ahead in busier periods. Hot weather can also make long, open towpath and lane sections feel more tiring than the elevation profile suggests.

Winter is not the natural season for this route. The low-level terrain remains possible in principle, but short daylight, wetter fields and more demanding navigation through muddy or unsigned sections make it less attractive for most long-distance walkers.

What makes it feel easier

- Low altitude and no exposed ground.
- Long, obvious canal sections on the Shropshire Union and Trent & Mersey canals.
- Frequent towns and villages compared with many wilder long-distance routes.
- Good waymarking for most of the route.
- Rail-linked places on or near the line of the walk, including Chester, Nantwich, Stoke-on-Trent, Stafford and Lichfield.

What makes it feel harder

- Repeated long days if compressed into a 6-day itinerary.
- Muddy or overgrown rural field paths after rain.

- Monotonous towpath mileage in the Cheshire half.
- Urban navigation through Stoke-on-Trent and Stafford.
- The hillier Cannock Chase section arriving near the end of the route.
- Waymarking gaps, especially where the route leaves obvious linear features.

Overall, the Two Saints Way suits walkers with steady endurance rather than technical hill skills. The best preparation is not scrambling experience, but the ability to walk 20–30 km days on mixed surfaces, keep navigating when signs are intermittent, and manage wet lowland paths without losing time or morale.

Weather and Best Time to Walk

Best months

The Two Saints Way is best walked in **spring, summer or autumn**, with the most practical conditions usually falling between **late April and early October**. The route is low-level and non-technical, so the main weather issues are not exposure or altitude, but **mud, rain, overgrown field paths, warm towpath days, and short winter daylight**.

May, June and September are often the best choices for an end-to-end walk. They give a useful balance of daylight, manageable temperatures and less pressure on accommodation than the peak summer period.

Season	What to expect	Planning advice
Spring	Good daylight, fresh growth on field paths, wet ground after rain	A strong choice, but expect mud on rural paths and carry waterproofs
Summer	Longest daylight and easiest scheduling for 6-day itineraries	Book accommodation ahead, especially in Chester, Nantwich, Stone, Stafford and Lichfield
Autumn	Cooler walking and often good conditions underfoot early in the season	Start early as daylight shortens; woodland and field paths can become slippery after rain
Winter	Possible, but less forgiving	Best for shorter rail-linked sections rather than a fast end-to-end unless conditions and daylight are carefully managed

Rain, mud and trail surfaces

Rain affects this route more through **surface condition** than through danger. The Cheshire half has long canal towpath and farmland sections, where wet weather can mean greasy towpaths, puddled field edges and slow going through mud.

The Staffordshire half is hillier and more tiring, especially the final approach over **Cannock Chase**, with heath, forest and sandy tracks around the route's highest ground. After prolonged rain, expect slower progress on woodland paths and rural sections, even though the route never reaches high mountain terrain.

Waterproof footwear is sensible outside dry summer spells. Lightweight trail shoes can work in settled conditions, but after rain many walkers will be happier in boots or grippier walking shoes.

Heat, sun and summer accommodation

Summer gives the longest walking window, which helps on the longer 6-day version of the route, including days of around 26–30 km. The trade-off is that warm weather can make the flat canal sections feel slower and more repetitive, particularly where there is limited breeze.

Carry enough water between villages and towns rather than relying on every rural church, café or pub being open when needed. Accommodation should be booked ahead in summer, especially where the

route passes through smaller canal villages and the sparser rural stretches before or after the main towns.

Cold, snow, fog and wind

The Two Saints Way is not a high or exposed upland route: the high point is only **244 m on Cannock Chase**. That keeps winter risk lower than on mountain trails, but cold rain, frost, fog and occasional snow or ice can still make walking slower and navigation less reliable.

Fog is most relevant on the quieter rural sections and on Cannock Chase, where paths through heath and woodland are less obvious than canal towpaths. Since around **5% of the route is unwaymarked**, a map, guidebook or GPX should be carried in all seasons, and becomes more important in poor visibility.

Daylight and itinerary length

Daylight matters because the common 6-day schedule includes several long days, including roughly **29 km from Chester to the Barbridge / Bunbury area** and around **30 km from Milford to Lichfield over Cannock Chase**. These are much more comfortable in late spring and summer than in midwinter.

In autumn and winter, use the route's rail-linked towns to shorten days where possible. Nantwich, Stoke-on-Trent and Stafford are useful break points, and both Chester and Lichfield have strong rail access for starting, finishing or section-walking.

Is the route realistic in winter?

Yes, but winter is better treated as a **section-walking season** than the ideal time for a full pilgrimage. The terrain is low-level, but short daylight, wet fields, cold towpaths and possible ice can make the route feel considerably harder than its modest height profile suggests.

A winter end-to-end is most realistic with short stages, early starts, flexible accommodation and a willingness to alter plans if heavy rain, fog or icy paths affect progress. Current path conditions, diversions and accommodation availability should be checked before travelling.

Safety Notes

The Two Saints Way is a low-level, non-technical walk, but it is still a 148 km point-to-point route with long days, muddy field paths, canal towpaths, urban sections and a hillier finish over Cannock Chase. Most safety issues are practical rather than dramatic: navigation gaps, tiredness, road crossings, slippery ground after rain and making sure each day's distance matches daylight, fitness and accommodation plans.

Emergency help

In an emergency in the UK, call **999 or 112** and ask for the appropriate service. Give the nearest place name, road, canal bridge, church, station or grid reference if available.

Mobile coverage is generally more likely around the towns and villages on this route, including Chester, Nantwich, Stoke-on-Trent, Stone, Stafford and Lichfield, but it should not be relied on everywhere. Rural field sections, wooded ground and parts of Cannock Chase may have patchier reception, so carry offline maps or a GPX file as well as the guidebook or paper mapping.

Navigation and waymarking

The route is well waymarked for most of its length, but not continuously. Around 5% is unwaymarked, and rural signage can change or deteriorate over time, so do not rely on waymarks alone.

Check the next day's route before setting off, especially through field-path sections, urban exits and the Cannock Chase stage. Current path diversions and waymarking condition should be checked before travelling.

Road walking and urban sections

Expect a mix of towpaths, lanes, field paths and town streets. Road sections are part of the walk, so use pavements where available, face oncoming traffic on narrow lanes where safe, and take extra care at bends, junctions and canal access points.

The route passes through larger urban areas, including Stoke-on-Trent and Stafford. Normal town-walking awareness applies: keep valuables secure, avoid headphones where traffic or cyclists are present, and plan late finishes carefully if walking solo.

Canal towpaths and water safety

Long sections follow the Shropshire Union and Trent & Mersey canals. Towpaths are usually straightforward but can be narrow, muddy, uneven or slippery after rain, especially near locks, bridges and moored boats.

Keep a sensible distance from the canal edge, particularly when tired, in poor light or when sharing the towpath with cyclists and dog walkers. Take care on stone steps, bridge approaches and lock-side paths, where surfaces may be worn or wet.

Mud, livestock and field paths

Rural field paths can be muddy or overgrown after rain. Waterproof footwear with good grip is useful even though the route is low-level, and gaiters can be helpful in wet months or after prolonged rain.

Where fields contain livestock, keep dogs under close control, pass calmly and give animals plenty of space. Close gates behind you unless they are clearly meant to remain open, and avoid lingering in fields with cattle if there is an obvious alternative line within the right of way.

Weather and exposure

The Cheshire half is comparatively flat and low, while the Staffordshire half becomes hillier, with the wildest ground on Cannock Chase around Castle Ring and Beacon Hill. There is no high mountain terrain, but open farmland, heath and forest tracks can still feel exposed in wind, heavy rain, heat or poor visibility.

Carry waterproofs and an insulating layer even outside winter, and use sun protection in warm weather on open towpaths and heathland. In hot conditions, the long flat canal sections can feel deceptively draining because shade and services are not continuous.

Solo walking

Solo walkers are well suited to this route if daily distances are realistic and accommodation is fixed in advance. The main caution is not remoteness, but the combination of long stages, occasional navigation gaps and variable services between villages.

Leave a simple route plan with someone, especially for longer days such as the Chester to Barbridge/Bunbury area stage and the Milford to Lichfield stage over Cannock Chase. Share intended overnight stops and check in at the end of each day.

Before setting off each day

Use a short routine before leaving each overnight stop:

Check	Why it matters on this route
Weather forecast	Mud, wind, heat and poor visibility affect towpaths, field paths and Cannock Chase.
Route line and GPX/map	Waymarking is good but not complete, and urban/rural gaps can cause delays.
Food and water	Services are frequent in towns but less predictable between rural villages and on the Cannock Chase side.
Daylight and distance	Several practical itineraries include long days of 24–30 km. Start early enough to avoid finishing in poor light.
Accommodation and onward transport	Overnight options are sparser in rural stretches, so check bookings and transport plans before committing to the day.
Phone battery	Keep enough charge for navigation, calls and train or accommodation updates; a power bank is sensible on longer days.

The route is manageable for a prepared walker, but it rewards steady pacing. Most problems are avoided by starting early, carrying proper mapping, allowing time for mud and navigation checks, and not underestimating the cumulative distance.

Gear Recommendations

The Two Saints Way is a low-level walk, but it is not a pavement-only pilgrimage. Pack for repeated long days on canal towpaths, muddy field paths, lanes, urban streets and the hillier heath and woodland of Cannock Chase.

Footwear

Choose footwear for mixed surfaces rather than mountain terrain. Lightweight walking boots or grippy trail shoes both work, provided they are comfortable for 20–30 km days and cope with mud after rain.

Waterproof boots are useful in spring and autumn, especially on field paths and wetter rural sections. In drier summer conditions, breathable trail shoes may be more comfortable for the long canal and town stretches, but they still need enough grip for mud, grass and sandy tracks on Cannock Chase.

Avoid new footwear. The route's main physical test is cumulative distance, so hot spots and blisters are more likely to stop a walk than steep ground.

Waterproofs and clothing

Carry a proper waterproof jacket throughout the route. The walk is exposed enough in places for wet weather to become uncomfortable, even though it never reaches high altitude.

Waterproof trousers are worth carrying outside settled summer weather, particularly for wet field paths, overgrown sections and the longer rural days between market towns. A light warm layer is also sensible, as the final section over Cannock Chase is hillier and more open than the flat Cheshire canal stages.

A practical clothing system is:

- breathable base layer for long walking days;
- fleece or light insulated layer for stops and cooler mornings;
- waterproof jacket;
- waterproof trousers in unsettled conditions;
- spare socks, especially if walking after rain.

Navigation

Do not rely on waymarks alone. The route is well signed for most of its length, but about 5% is unwaymarked and signage can be uneven in rural areas and through urban stretches.

Carry at least one reliable navigation backup:

- the Two Saints Way guidebook;
- a paper map or printed route notes;
- GPX on a phone or GPS device;
- a battery backup for phone navigation.

This matters most where the route moves between field paths, lanes and settlements, and through larger urban areas such as Stoke-on-Trent and Stafford. In the Chester to Lichfield direction, look for the Way of St Chad cross; in the reverse direction, look for the Way of St Werburgh goose symbol.

Water and food carry

This is not a remote mountain trail, but some rural stretches and the Cannock Chase side have fewer obvious resupply options than the towns. Start each day with enough water for several hours of walking, and increase the carry on the longer 26–30 km days.

Food planning should be based around the main service towns: Chester, Nantwich, Stoke-on-Trent, Stone, Stafford and Lichfield. On days finishing or starting in smaller places such as Barbridge, Weston or Milford, carry lunch and emergency snacks rather than assuming frequent shops or cafés.

A small sit-down café plan is fine for the canal and town sections, but it should not replace carrying food. Bad weather, closures and timing can make services unreliable on a long-distance walk. This should be checked before travelling.

Trekking poles

Trekking poles are optional, not essential. The route has no sustained steep or technical ground, and poles can feel unnecessary on canal towpaths, lanes and urban pavements.

They become more useful in three situations:

- muddy field paths after rain;
- long days when knee fatigue builds up;
- the hillier final section over Cannock Chase around Castle Ring and Beacon Hill.

If using poles, choose collapsible ones so they can be stowed easily through towns, narrow towpath sections and when entering accommodation.

Power and electronics

A power bank is strongly recommended if navigating by phone. Long walking days, GPX tracking, photos and poor signal in rural pockets can drain batteries quickly.

Carry charging cables, and consider downloading offline maps before leaving each overnight stop. Phone navigation should not be the only method of route-finding on a 148 km walk with occasional waymarking gaps.

Sun, insects and seasonal extras

In spring and summer, pack sun cream, sunglasses and a cap or brimmed hat. Canal towpaths, field edges and heathland can leave walkers exposed for long periods even on a low-level route.

Insect repellent is useful in warm weather, particularly near canals, woodland and stiller rural sections. In autumn, add gloves, a warmer hat and a slightly more robust insulation layer for early starts and exposed stops.

After wet weather, gaiters can be useful on muddy field paths and overgrown grass. They are not essential, but they help keep socks and trouser legs cleaner across repeated days.

Inn-to-inn hikers

Most walkers using hotels, guesthouses, B&Bs or inns should aim for a light pack. The route is long enough for pack weight to matter, but serviced overnight stops mean there is no need to carry camping gear.

Prioritise:

- comfortable footwear and blister care;
- waterproofs;
- guidebook, map or GPX;
- power bank;
- one warm layer;
- lunch, snacks and water for the day;
- minimal spare clothing.

A small daypack or lightweight multi-day pack is sufficient for most inn-to-inn itineraries. Laundry and drying opportunities vary by accommodation, so quick-drying clothing is more useful than multiple heavy spare outfits.

Campers

Camping is possible only where suitable campsites are available in or near the route's towns and villages. Availability is not uniform, especially on rural stretches and around Cannock Chase, so camping nights should be planned and booked in advance. This should be checked before travelling.

Campers should keep equipment compact and light, because the walking itself is not hard but the daily distances can be. A small tent, lightweight sleeping system, compact stove where permitted, headtorch and dry bags are more appropriate than bulky expedition kit.

Do not assume that every day naturally ends at a campsite. The Two Saints Way is better suited to planned campsite-to-campsite walking than improvised camping.

Fast and section hikers

Fast walkers and rail-linked section hikers can travel very light, especially when using Chester, Nantwich, Stoke-on-Trent, Stafford or Lichfield as access points. Even so, the basics should not be stripped too far back.

For a single long section, carry:

- waterproof jacket;
- route map or GPX with offline access;
- power bank;
- water and high-energy snacks;

- blister kit;
- warm layer outside settled summer weather.

Trail shoes are often the most efficient choice for fast sections, provided conditions are not very wet. For the Cannock Chase finish, grip matters more than speed: sandy tracks, woodland paths, mud and rolling ground make road-running shoes a poor choice after rain.

Budget and Costs

The Two Saints Way is usually a moderate-cost UK walk rather than an expedition-style route. Accommodation is the main expense, followed by meals and rail travel; navigation costs are low if you already have mapping, and the route does not require specialist mountain equipment.

Costs vary sharply by season, booking lead time and whether you walk the 6-day version or the official-style 9-day itinerary. Current prices should be checked before booking, especially for summer weekends and school-holiday periods.

Main cost factors

Cost area	What to budget for	Planning notes
Accommodation	Hotels, guesthouses, B&Bs, inns, some hostels and campsites	Chester, Nantwich, Stone, Stafford and Lichfield are the easiest places to book. Rural stops and the Cannock Chase side need more planning.
Food and drink	Breakfasts, packed lunches, café stops, pub or restaurant meals	The route passes regular towns and villages, but not every rural section has convenient supplies at the right time of day. Carry lunch where services are uncertain.
Transport	Rail to Chester and back from Lichfield, or rail-linked section walking	Both ends have strong rail access. Nantwich, Stoke-on-Trent and Stafford also have stations, which helps keep taxi use down.
Local transfers	Short taxis to or from accommodation off the line	Most useful where accommodation is sparse, particularly around rural overnight stops. This should be checked before travelling.
Camping	Campsite fees where available	Campsites exist in some areas, but the route is not a continuous campsite-to-campsite trail. Do not rely on camping without planning each night.
Luggage transfer	Optional baggage movement between overnight stops	Route-specific availability and prices should be checked before travelling.
Guidebook / mapping	Guidebook, map app subscription or GPX-capable navigation	Worth budgeting for: around 5% of the route is not waymarked, and rural signage can be inconsistent.

Budget approach

A lower-cost Two Saints Way depends on using public transport, booking simple accommodation early, carrying lunches and avoiding taxi transfers. Stoke-on-Trent, Stafford and other rail-linked towns make it practical to split the walk into sections rather than paying for a full continuous trip.

Camping can reduce costs where suitable sites line up with the itinerary, but it should not be treated as the default option. The route has well-served towns, but some rural stretches are sparse for overnight stops, so a budget walker may still need occasional B&B, inn or hotel accommodation.

Walking the route over 6 days reduces the number of paid nights compared with a 9-day pilgrimage itinerary, but the daily distances are longer. A 9-day plan usually costs more overall because it needs more nights, even if each walking day is easier.

Mid-range approach

Most independent walkers will find the simplest mid-range plan is to book B&Bs, inns or modest hotels in the main overnight hubs: Chester, Nantwich, Stoke-on-Trent, Stone, Stafford and Lichfield, with careful planning around Barbridge, Bunbury, Weston, Milford and the Cannock Chase approach.

This approach gives flexibility on food, with breakfasts at accommodation, packed lunches from towns and evening meals in pubs or town centres. It also keeps transport straightforward, as the main rail-served places allow easy start, finish and section-hiking options.

Comfortable approach

A more comfortable budget should allow for private rooms throughout, shorter daily stages, taxis to reach accommodation away from the trail, and possibly a rest or half-day in one of the larger towns. Chester, Stoke-on-Trent, Stafford and Lichfield are the easiest places to build in extra comfort because they have broader accommodation and transport options.

The comfortable option is particularly sensible for walkers who want to follow a 9-day pilgrimage pace rather than a fitter 6-day itinerary. The trade-off is a higher total accommodation cost.

Transport costs

Rail is the most practical way to control transport costs on this route. Chester has mainline rail services from Liverpool, Manchester, Crewe and North Wales, while Lichfield has Lichfield City and Lichfield Trent Valley stations; Lichfield Trent Valley is on the West Coast Main Line, with direct London Euston, Crewe and northbound trains.

There are direct trains between Chester and Lichfield Trent Valley via Crewe, so a one-way walk is easy to arrange without returning to the start by taxi. Nantwich, Stoke-on-Trent and Stafford also have stations, making shorter rail-linked sections realistic.

Rail fares vary by date, route and booking time, so current prices should be checked before travelling. Budget extra if accommodation forces a taxi link away from the route, especially in the rural sections and around the Cannock Chase finish.

Packages, luggage and guided options

The Two Saints Way can be walked independently without a commercial package, and its rail access makes self-planning straightforward. If using luggage transfer, a guided pilgrimage, or a self-guided accommodation package, availability and current prices should be checked before booking.

For many walkers, the best value is a self-guided itinerary using the guidebook or GPX, rail at the start and finish, and pre-booked accommodation in the main towns. The key saving is not cutting navigation or footwear costs, but avoiding last-minute accommodation gaps that force expensive taxis or off-route detours.

Luggage Transfer, Guided Tours and Support Services

The Two Saints Way is straightforward to walk independently, but it is not a route where baggage support should be assumed at every stop. Most walkers either carry their own kit, use rail-linked section walking, or arrange private taxi transfers between accommodation points.

Because the route passes through useful towns such as Chester, Nantwich, Stoke-on-Trent, Stafford and Lichfield, support is easier than on a remote upland trail. The weaker points are the rural overnight areas — particularly around Barbridge / Bunbury, Weston and Milford — where accommodation and transport should be arranged before setting off.

Luggage transfer

There is no route-wide baggage system that can be relied on without prior arrangement. If walking inn-to-inn with luggage moved each day, book this as part of a walking package or arrange it directly through local taxi firms and accommodation providers.

This works best if overnight stops are fixed well in advance and each property is happy to receive bags. Give each host clear instructions, label luggage with name and destination, and avoid sending valuables, medication or essential waterproofs ahead.

For many walkers, carrying a light pack is simpler. The terrain is low-level, services are frequent enough in the larger towns, and the main difficulty is cumulative distance rather than technical ground. A modest pack also avoids being tied to exact drop-off times.

Self-guided walking packages

A self-guided package is worth considering if you want accommodation, luggage movement and route notes arranged together. Where available, a good package should normally include pre-booked overnight stops, baggage transfer, route information or GPX files, and a contact for practical issues during the trip.

Before booking, check that the itinerary follows the Two Saints Way itself rather than a loosely similar Chester-to-Lichfield route. Also check whether the company uses the 9-day pilgrimage-style itinerary or a faster 6–7 day schedule, as the daily distances change significantly.

Ask specific questions about the rural nights. Barbridge / Bunbury, Weston and Milford are the places where accommodation location can affect the day more than it first appears, especially if the booked lodging is off the line of the route.

Guided walks and pilgrimage support

Guided options are more likely to appear as occasional pilgrimage walks, church-linked events or bespoke group arrangements than as a daily commercial guided-tour calendar. The official Two Saints Way website, the British Pilgrimage Trust and the cathedral route information are the natural places to check for current pilgrimage activity, events and route updates.

A guided option suits walkers who want the historical and spiritual context of St Werburgh, St Wulfad and St Chad explained on the ground, or groups who prefer someone else to manage navigation

through towns, field paths and waymarking gaps. Independent walkers with a guidebook, map or GPX should not need a guide for safety reasons; the route is moderate, low-level and mostly waymarked.

Dates, group sizes and inclusions vary, so current details should be checked before booking.

Taxi transfers and rail-based support

Taxis are the most flexible support tool on the Two Saints Way. They are useful for reaching off-route accommodation, shortening a long day, returning to a rail station, or avoiding an awkward end point where there is no suitable lodging.

Pre-book taxis for rural pick-ups rather than relying on availability at the end of the day. Give a clear road-accessible meeting point; canal towpaths, field edges and woodland tracks are poor places to arrange collection.

Rail access also reduces the need for baggage transfer. Chester and Lichfield are both well served by train, and Nantwich, Stoke-on-Trent and Stafford provide practical break points for section walking. Direct trains between Chester and Lichfield Trent Valley via Crewe make the linear logistics unusually manageable for a point-to-point walk.

Support option	Best suited to	Practical notes
Carrying your own kit	Independent walkers, budget walkers, flexible itineraries	Keep the pack light; the route is low-level but several days are long.
Private luggage transfer by taxi	Walkers booking B&Bs, inns or hotels each night	Arrange in advance and check each accommodation will receive bags.
Self-guided package	Walkers who want accommodation and baggage handled together	Check the exact itinerary, daily distances and whether rural stops are on or off route.
Guided pilgrimage or group walk	Walkers interested in the route's religious and historical context	Availability is variable; check current dates before travelling.
Rail-based section walking	Walkers avoiding luggage transfer altogether	Chester, Nantwich, Stoke-on-Trent, Stafford and Lichfield are the most useful rail-linked points.

Shorter Hikes and Best Sections

The Two Saints Way is well suited to section hiking because several of its main towns are on the rail network. The easiest short trips are the linear sections between Chester, Nantwich, Stoke-on-Trent, Stafford and Lichfield; rural starts and finishes such as Barbridge, Weston, Milford and Chorley need more careful transport planning.

Distances below use the practical stage distances for this route, so treat them as planning figures rather than exact door-to-door mileage from accommodation.

Best for	Start → end	Approx. distance	Why choose it	Transport notes
Best straightforward day walk	Stoke-on-Trent → Stone, via Trentham	19 km	The shortest of the practical day stages, with a mix of urban Potteries walking, Trentham and canal-side approach into Stone. Good if you want a manageable sample of the Staffordshire half without committing to Cannock Chase.	Stoke-on-Trent has a station. Onward transport from Stone should be checked before travelling.
Best scenic section	Milford → Lichfield, over Cannock Chase	30 km	The wildest and hilliest part of the route, crossing heath, forest and sandy tracks around Cannock Chase, Castle Ring and Beacon Hill before the final approach to Lichfield Cathedral and St Chad's Well. This is the best choice for walkers who want landscape rather than canal mileage.	Lichfield has stations at Lichfield City and Lichfield Trent Valley. Access to Milford should be checked before travelling.
Best weekend section	Stone → Lichfield, via Stafford, Milford and Cannock Chase	54 km	A strong two-day walk combining Stone's canal and St Wulfad associations, Stafford, and the high ground of Cannock Chase. The usual split is Stone → Milford at about 24 km, then Milford → Lichfield at about 30 km.	Stafford is on the rail network and makes a useful bail-out or joining point. Lichfield has two stations. Transport at Stone and Milford should be checked before travelling.
Best 3-day section	Stoke-on-Trent → Lichfield	73 km	The most rewarding short version if time is limited: it includes Stoke-on-Trent, Trentham, Stone, Stafford, Milford, Cannock Chase and the Lichfield finish. It also gives a fuller sense of the Staffordshire half, where the route becomes hillier and more varied.	Stoke-on-Trent, Stafford and Lichfield all have stations, making this one of the easier multi-day sections to arrange without a car.

Best for	Start → end	Approx. distance	Why choose it	Transport notes
Best rail-linked multi-day section	Chester → Stoke-on-Trent, via Barbridge / Bunbury, Nantwich and Weston	82 km	A good 3-day canal-and-farmland traverse across the flatter Cheshire half and into Stoke-on-Trent. It suits walkers who prefer easier gradients, town stops and railway access more than the hillier Cannock Chase finish.	Chester, Nantwich and Stoke-on-Trent have stations. Rural overnight points between them need advance planning.
Best for villages and accommodation	Chester → Weston, via Barbridge / Bunbury and Nantwich	55 km	This gives the strongest village-and-market-town feel: Chester, Christleton, Waverton, Beeston, Bunbury, Barbridge, Acton, Nantwich, Wybunbury and Weston all sit on this early part of the route. It is also the least strenuous terrain overall, with long flat canal and field sections.	Chester and Nantwich are the most practical transport and accommodation anchors. Rural stops around Barbridge, Bunbury and Weston should be booked ahead; onward transport from smaller villages should be checked before travelling.

Best choice for beginners

For a first taste of the Two Saints Way, **Stoke-on-Trent to Stone** is the most practical single-day option at about **19 km**. It is long enough to feel like a real stage but shorter than the 26–30 km days elsewhere on the route.

Beginners wanting a gentler weekend should not try to force the full Chester-to-Barbridge or Milford-to-Lichfield stages into a first outing. Use the official short-stage structure instead, as the route is also organised into shorter stages of roughly 3.5–8.5 miles; exact break points, accommodation and transport should be checked before travelling.

Best choice for public transport

The most convenient rail-linked sections are **Chester to Stoke-on-Trent** and **Stoke-on-Trent to Lichfield**. Chester, Nantwich, Stoke-on-Trent, Stafford and Lichfield are the key rail-access points on or near the line of the walk.

For a simple one-way short trip, **Stoke-on-Trent to Lichfield** is particularly useful because it can be walked as a three-day section with railway access at the start, midway at Stafford, and at the finish in Lichfield. Lichfield Trent Valley also sits on the West Coast Main Line, with services including London Euston, Crewe and northbound trains.

Camping and low-cost section hiking

Camping is possible in the sense that there are some campsites and hostels in or near towns, but the Two Saints Way is not a camping-first trail. Accommodation and camping options are more reliable around the larger towns, while rural stretches and the Cannock Chase side are sparser.

For a low-cost trip, plan around towns such as Chester, Nantwich, Stone, Stafford and Lichfield rather than assuming there will be a campsite at the end of every day. Current campsites, hostel availability and

any local restrictions should be checked before travelling.

Highlights and Points of Interest

The Two Saints Way is strongest as a cultural and historical walk rather than a wilderness route. The best places to allow extra time are Chester, Nantwich, Stoke-on-Trent, Stone, Cannock Chase and Lichfield, with several smaller villages and canal sections giving the route its quieter character.

Highlights in Route Order

Place / feature	Why it matters	Planning note
Chester Cathedral	The walk begins at the former shrine of St Werburgh, a Saxon princess and patron saint of Chester. The cathedral and its medieval monastic buildings give the route its pilgrimage starting point.	Worth arriving early, or staying in Chester the night before, rather than rushing straight onto the trail.
Roman amphitheatre and St John's church, Chester	The route leaves Chester through a compact area of major historic sites before heading out towards the countryside.	These are close to the start, so they fit naturally into the first morning.
Shropshire Union Canal	One of the defining features of the Cheshire half: easy towpath walking, bridges, locks and narrowboats through lowland countryside.	Good underfoot in many places, but long flat canal sections can feel repetitive; use villages and canal junctions as natural breaks.
Beeston Castle	A dramatic 13th-century ruined castle on a rocky crag above the Cheshire Plain, and one of the first major landmarks after leaving Chester.	One of the best viewpoints on the route. Opening arrangements and any admission charges should be checked before travelling.
Bunbury and Barbridge area	A useful canal-and-village stopping area after the first long day out of Chester on a faster itinerary.	Practical for breaking the opening stage before continuing towards Nantwich.
Nantwich	A handsome Cheshire market town with timber-framed buildings and the large medieval church of St Mary's. It marks the end of the first official section and is a natural overnight stop.	One of the best places on the route for food, accommodation and a slower evening.
Wybunbury, Weston, Barthomley and Audley	This quieter middle stretch links Cheshire farmland with the approach into Staffordshire. Barthomley is especially notable for St Bertoline's sandstone church and its estate-village setting.	Allow enough daylight here: rural field paths can be muddy or overgrown after rain, and services are more limited than in the larger towns.
Stoke-on-Trent	Near the halfway point, the route passes through the Potteries, giving the walk its most urban and industrial-cultural section.	A useful rail-linked break point for section-hikers. Expect more street walking than on the rural stages.
Potteries Museum & Art Gallery, Stoke-on-Trent	Home to the Staffordshire Hoard of Anglo-Saxon gold, which ties directly into the Mercian and early medieval themes of the pilgrimage.	A strong reason to build extra time into the Stoke stage. Opening times should be checked before travelling.

Place / feature	Why it matters	Planning note
Stoke Minster	Close to the Stoke-on-Trent section and notable for its Saxon preaching cross.	A worthwhile short cultural stop if time allows.
Trentham	A transition point between the urban Stoke section and the easier approach towards Stone.	Useful as a mental marker on the Stoke-to-Stone day.
Trent & Mersey Canal and Stone	Stone is a Trent-side canal town linked to St Wulfad, one of the three saints honoured by the medieval pilgrimage between Chester, Stone and Lichfield.	Stone is one of the most logical overnight stops, with the canal giving straightforward onward walking.
Burston, Salt and the approach to Stafford	A quieter Staffordshire stretch between Stone and Stafford, mixing rural paths and lanes.	Navigation should not be taken for granted; carry the guidebook, map or GPX for any waymarking gaps.
Stafford	A major town on the route and a practical resupply, accommodation and transport point before the final approach to Cannock Chase.	Useful for splitting the walk into rail-linked sections or shortening the final two days.
Milford	A common staging point before the Cannock Chase crossing.	A good place to position an overnight stop before the hillier final section to Lichfield.
Cannock Chase AONB	The wildest and hilliest part of the Two Saints Way, with heath, forest and sandy tracks replacing the flatter canal and field walking of Cheshire.	This is where the walk feels most strenuous. Save energy, carry water and allow time for slower progress.
Castle Ring and Beacon Hill area	The route reaches its highest ground around Cannock Chase, with the high point at 244 m near Castle Ring hill fort and Beacon Hill.	The best upland-feeling section of the route and a key viewpoint area. Weather can make this feel more exposed than the lowland stages.
Katyn Memorial	Passed on the Cannock Chase section, adding a more recent historical point of interest to the final day.	A brief but notable stop on the route across the Chase.
Lichfield Cathedral	The pilgrimage destination: England's only three-spired medieval cathedral and the site where St Chad's shrine once stood.	Plan enough time at the finish rather than treating Lichfield only as a transport endpoint. Cathedral visiting arrangements should be checked before travelling.
St Chad's Well, Stowe	The traditional final devotional point associated with St Chad, close to Lichfield at Stowe.	Include it in the finish if completing the pilgrimage theme properly.

Best Viewpoints

The clearest early viewpoint is Beeston Castle, where the crag gives wide views over the Cheshire Plain. It is the first place where the route feels visually expansive after the flatter towpaths and farmland out of Chester.

The second major viewpoint area is Cannock Chase, especially around Castle Ring and Beacon Hill. This is the highest and most open-feeling part of the walk, and the contrast with the Cheshire canals is one of

the route's main rewards.

Best Places to Spend Extra Time

Chester and Lichfield deserve the most time if the walk is being treated as a pilgrimage. They frame the route with the shrines of St Werburgh and St Chad, and both cathedral areas are central to the meaning of the Two Saints Way.

Nantwich is the best smaller-town stop in the Cheshire half, with enough historic interest and services to justify a relaxed overnight. Stoke-on-Trent is the most important cultural detour, chiefly for the Potteries Museum & Art Gallery and the Staffordshire Hoard.

Stone is worth lingering in because it links the route to St Wulfad and breaks up the Staffordshire canal section well. Milford is less of a sightseeing stop, but it is strategically useful before the harder Cannock Chase day.

Common Mistakes and Planning Tips

Common mistake	Practical fix
Treating the Two Saints Way as an easy canal stroll from start to finish	Plan for two different walks. The Cheshire half is mostly flat canal-and-farmland walking, but the Staffordshire half is hillier, with the final section over Cannock Chase reaching the route high point around Castle Ring and Beacon Hill. Keep energy in reserve for the later days, especially on a 6-day schedule.
Compressing the route into over-long days without checking overnight options	The full route can be walked in 6–9 days, but the 6-day version includes several long stages of roughly 24–30 km. Accommodation is best planned around Chester, Nantwich, Stoke-on-Trent, Stone, Stafford, Milford and Lichfield, with rural options more limited. Book ahead in summer and avoid assuming that every village has suitable lodging.
Relying only on waymarks	The route is well waymarked for most of its length, but not uniformly; around 5% is unwaymarked and some rural signage can change or deteriorate. Carry the guidebook, map or a current GPX track, and check current path diversions before travelling.
Following the wrong directional symbol	Chester to Lichfield is signed as the Way of St Chad, using the cross of St Chad. Lichfield to Chester is signed as the Way of St Werburgh, using the goose symbol. Walkers heading south-east from Chester should not blindly follow every Two Saints Way marker without checking the direction.
Underestimating mud and overgrowth because the route is low-level	Low altitude does not mean clean, fast walking. Field paths and rural sections can be muddy or overgrown after rain, particularly away from the canal towpaths. Waterproof footwear, gaiters in wet periods and realistic daily timings are more useful than mountain gear.
Assuming the flat canal sections will be quick and effortless	The Shropshire Union and Trent & Mersey canal sections are straightforward underfoot, but long towpath miles can be repetitive and tiring. Build in short breaks, manage foot care early, and avoid starting the walk with an overloaded pack from Chester.
Leaving food and water planning to chance	The route passes through major towns and several villages, but services are not evenly spaced and rural stretches should not be treated as continuously supplied. Carry enough food and water to cover the distance between planned stops, especially between overnight hubs and on the Cannock Chase section. Opening times should be checked before travelling, particularly on Sundays and bank holidays.
Treating Stoke-on-Trent and Stafford as navigation afterthoughts	The route includes town and urban street walking, not just countryside paths. Urban sections can be slower than expected because of junctions, crossings and waymarking gaps. A phone map or GPX track is especially useful through Stoke-on-Trent, Stafford and the transitions in and out of town.
Forgetting that the finish is a linear transport problem	The walk is point-to-point from Chester Cathedral to Lichfield Cathedral and St Chad's Well. Rail access is strong at both ends, with Chester station and Lichfield City / Lichfield Trent Valley available, and route towns including Nantwich, Stoke-on-Trent and Stafford also on the rail network. Check train times before booking accommodation, especially if splitting the walk into sections.
Planning the final day as if it were another canal stage	The Milford to Lichfield day on a 6-day itinerary is around 30 km and crosses the heath, forest and sandy tracks of Cannock Chase. It is the wildest and hilliest part of the route, so start early, carry enough supplies, and avoid leaving navigation checks until dusk.

Common mistake	Practical fix
Using old notes without checking current conditions	Waymarking, access arrangements, accommodation availability and path diversions can change. Use the current Two Saints Way guidebook or route information, download an up-to-date GPX if using one, and confirm accommodation and any key services before travelling.

Final Advice

The Two Saints Way is best suited to walkers who want a meaningful, low-level long-distance route with strong rail access, historic towns and manageable terrain rather than wilderness or mountain walking. It is a good first pilgrimage or first multi-day walk for reasonably fit hikers, provided the daily distances are planned sensibly.

The main planning task is accommodation. Chester, Nantwich, Stoke-on-Trent, Stone, Stafford and Lichfield are practical overnight hubs, but rural stretches and the Cannock Chase side have fewer easy options, so book ahead in summer and avoid assuming there will be a bed at every small village.

Navigation is straightforward for most of the route, but not automatic. The waymarking is strong overall, with the Way of St Chad signs leading Chester to Lichfield, yet around 5% is unwaymarked and some field paths can be muddy, overgrown or unclear after rain. Carry the guidebook, mapping or a GPX file, and check for current diversions before travelling.

The most rewarding section for many walkers is the Staffordshire finish: Stone, Stafford, Milford, Cannock Chase, Castle Ring and the approach to Lichfield give the route its strongest sense of progression, with hillier ground, heath and woodland before the final cathedral arrival. The Cheshire half is easier underfoot and historically rich, but long canal stretches can feel repetitive if rushed.

For a continuous walk, 6–7 days suits fit walkers comfortable with several 24–30 km days; 8–9 days gives more time for churches, towns and rest stops. As a section hike, the route works very well because Chester, Nantwich, Stoke-on-Trent, Stafford and Lichfield all have rail access, making it easy to split across weekends or shorter trips.

The final recommendation is simple: treat the Two Saints Way as a real long-distance walk, not just a sequence of gentle towpaths. The terrain is rarely technical, but the cumulative mileage, mud, urban navigation and final hills over Cannock Chase will punish poor pacing. Start with realistic day lengths, keep wet-weather footwear in mind, and allow enough time at Lichfield for both the cathedral and St Chad's Well.