Bath v Leinster Rugby
Saturday, 8 December 2018
KO: 3:15pm

GUIDE TO BATH

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Introduction

Bath is undoubtedly one of the most beautiful cities in England. Having been a tourist draw for nearly 2,000 years, this rugby mad city was founded on the top of natural hot springs and is home to one of the world’s best-preserved Roman bathhouses. The city has a population of nearly 89,000 and is home to two universities, as well as sporting clubs Bath Rugby and Bath City Football Club. Located near the southern part of the Cotswolds, geothermal springs originate as rain on the Mendip Hills, which makes the Bath Spas the only hot type in the UK. Three of these hot springs feed into the thermal baths. Industry wise, Bath once played an important role in the manufacturing sector however like many areas in the UK this is now in decline. Today the region is recognised as a national centre for publishing with many large employer’s present. Tourism is also very important for the city with over 400 retail shops in existence, of which over half are independent. There are also a large number of restaurants and cafés that are enjoyed by both locals and tourists alike. The city centre is compact and easily walk-able on foot, most importantly the venue for this weekend’s European tie, The Recreation Ground (or ‘The Rec’) is located in the middle of the old city with a beautiful backdrop of the River Avon.

Getting to Dublin Airport

Get to/from Dublin airport the easy way with Aircoach, official coach supplier to both the team and the OLSC for our inter-provincial away trips. Full time table information and their cheapest fares can be found at www.aircoach.ie (you can also buy on board). Those driving and who may need car parking at Dublin Airport can get 10% off any non-promotional rates in the red zone by using ‘OLSC10PDACP’ at www.dublinairport.com or via their app.

If you need a taxi, try www.irelandbytaxi.com to pre-book and lock in your fare to/from the airport – there will be no unexpected surprises!

Getting from Bristol Airport to Bath

The nearest airport is Bristol and it is served by both Aer Lingus and Ryanair.

The OLSC is running a special non-stop airport bus transfer service from Bristol Airport to Bath on Saturday, 8 December serving flights FR504 and EI3280. There is also a return bus on Sunday, 9 December from Bath to Bristol Airport serving flights FR509 and EI3283. To book your place on the OLSC bus service, please send €20pp with your name and a contact number to olsc@leinsterrugby.ie via Paypal. Return passengers will be given priority but one-way passengers are also welcome at a cost of €15pp. Please note that availability is limited.

If the OLSC bus service does not suit, the Airdecker bus service (www.airdecker.com) operates buses to Bath from Bristol Airport every 30 minutes (on the hour and on the half hour). Prices are £14 one-way or £20 return and the journey takes roughly 50 minutes.

If travelling by train, you can get a train from Bristol Temple Meads to Bath Spa and the journey time is less than 20 minutes. However, a bus transfer from Bristol Airport to Bristol Temple Meads is required and is available from outside the arrivals building. Tickets for the train can be purchased from www.thetrainline.com.
Accommodation Tip

At the time of writing, accommodation was already full, try www.laterooms.com or stay in nearby Bristol, the last train to Bristol after the game on Saturday night is 23.10 and the journey is 18 minutes – again, more details can be found at www.thetrainline.com.

If you cannot stay in Bath, staying at the IBIS Bristol Temple Meads hotel is an option as it is beside the Bristol Temple Meads train station and ideal for the last train from Bath.

Supporters HQ

Like our last visit in November 2015, the OLSC will once again be using the Pig & Fiddle on Saracen Street as our base across the weekend. Alex and the team welcome our supporters with a wide range of beverages and meals, the base is open from 11am to Midnight on match day and from noon on Sunday. Supporters can avail of £5 credit and other discounts while visiting the Pig & Fiddle by registering for free at www.butcombeloyaltyclub.com. Show staff the loyalty card number that is emailed to you (when you sign up). Five of the venue’s six screens with BT Sport will also be showing the other European rugby matches from across the weekend, there is also free wifi and both indoor and outdoor areas to cater for the blue army. Remember that pubs shut earlier in the UK than at home so for a late drink we recommend Belushi’s on Green Street, open until 2am on Saturday.

Flags and being blue!

The flags issued in the RDS and Aviva Stadium (with a white plastic pole) have been cleared by the Dublin airport authority for hand luggage and should also be acceptable to pass through UK airports. Thanks to Bank of Ireland the OLSC team of volunteers will have a limited number of flags and Bank of Ireland blue Santa hats to hand out in Bath however please bring what you can from home.

Wining and dining

Bath has no shortage of cafés, restaurants and bars. One we can recommend is Sotto Sotto on North Parade, Bath BA2 4AL. A great Italian restaurant, bookings for groups for more than 8 people are required. For more see www.sottosotto.co.uk
Things to see and do during your stay

1. Bath Rugby v Leinster Rugby – kick off is 3.15pm, Saturday
2. Visit the Bath Rugby Shop, close to The Rec at 1 Argyle Street, Bath BA2 4BA
4. Open-top deck red bus – buy tickets on board at stops around the city
5. Southgate – a large shopping centre located in the city centre
Getting to the Ground

This weekend’s fixture will be played at the home of Bath Rugby, The Recreation Ground – better known as ‘the Rec’ which is located in the city centre. Make sure you get to the ground early to soak up the pre-match atmosphere. Gates and bars inside the ground open at 1.00pm.

The Recreation Ground Spring Gardens, Bath, BA2 4DS Tel: + 44 1225 469230 [www.bathrugby.com](http://www.bathrugby.com)
Message from the Coach

We spoke in October about the significant challenge of away trips and we saw at first hand in that month just how difficult these trips can be.

The Heineken Champions Cup trip to Toulouse started off a three match schedule on the road that also took us to Italy and to South Africa. It is not easy on players, staff or indeed supporters to be on the road for three weekends in a row.

The Toulouse performance was a mixed bag from us. There were elements that we can be very happy with and we were in control of the game as we hit the home stretch but certainly there were other elements that we can be better at and in particular not giving ourselves such a mountain to climb early on.

For all the experience gained over the last few seasons, a game like that in the Stade Ernest Wallon, in an atmosphere like that, was new to a lot of the players and they will be the better for it.

We went there with the intention of winning that game and while a losing bonus point may not be a bad result as the pool plays itself out, it is very difficult to think that way in the immediate aftermath of a game. We wanted to win but credit Toulouse and now we are the ones chasing them in Pool 1 with a tricky trip to The Rec next up.

Bath are a team and The Rec is a venue that we know well. We played Bath in Europe only three seasons ago and have played them in pre-season fixtures also. There is also the added element of Girvan Dempsey being on their coaching staff, with all that he knows about our players and our plays. It will be good to catch up with Girv after the game but business as usual before then.

Bath have been going well in the Premiership and should be unbeaten in our Champions Cup pool. They had an excellent 35-35 draw away to Wasps in Round 2 and lost very late in the game to Toulouse at home in Round 1. A proud team, they won't want a second loss at home.

What the trips to France, to Italy and to South Africa, and no doubt the trip this week to Bath, prove once again is that we have a very committed and loyal following that we are extremely grateful for.

The pockets of blue dotted around the grounds are not taken for granted. We are now in the chasing pack in our pool so your support and your vocal support at that, will be needed more than ever as we go back to back against Bath over the next two weekends.

A sincere thank you also to Bank of Ireland, our title partners in Leinster Rugby, but also huge sponsors of the OLSC and of the Away Guides. Without partners like Bank of Ireland on board it is very difficult to do what we do and we are very grateful for their support.

Have a safe trip to Bath and enjoy the weekend,

Leo
Head Coach
Wherever you go.
Message from the Committee

Hello from the OLSC Committee...

We hope you enjoy the trip to Bath this weekend for Round 3 of the Heineken Champions Cup.

Bath is a very special rugby experience for the city itself, the people of Bath and the old school feel of the Recreation Ground, affectionately known as the ‘Rec’. These are indeed special times for Leinster Rugby supporters in the pool of champions.

This is the second of our European away trips but the third round of fixtures in this season’s Heineken Champions Cup. We are into the back to backs, where we meet the same opposition home and away two weeks in a row. As we look to build on the success of last season and defend our European title, the drive for five hots up.

The second round of fixtures saw Leinster visit Toulouse who have been woken from their slumber with the terrifying thought that Leinster may reach five before them. What a game at Stade Ernest-Wallon, but a somewhat disappointing result for players and supporters. Still, that bonus point could be worth its weight in gold come the closing games of Pool 1. Two games in and a return of six points puts Leinster in touching distance of Toulouse just two points ahead as both teams look to take control of the pool. We now enter that special phase of European rugby, the back to backs. Leinster play Bath at the Rec first up followed by a Christmas special at the Aviva. They say cups are not won in December, but at the conclusion of these back to backs one team will have taken a firmer grip on the pool of champions. Bath and Wasps will also be looking to reassert their challenge. Bath away is as close as you get to a must win fixture this time of year. Do the business and the game in the Aviva becomes the next must win.

If this is your first away trip, ENJOY IT, you probably couldn’t have picked a better one. The last time we visited Bath back in 2015 we tasted defeat. That season seems an age ago, but it was a tough one for Leinster. In reaction to that adversity, the seeds to a fourth title success were sown. Can our reaction to adversity in Toulouse spur us on over these back to back games against Bath to see us stamp our authority on Pool 1. On Saturday, we take another step towards that goal.

The RDS was a cauldron against Wasps. We were blue, loud and proud away in Toulouse with a large travelling contingent. Our collective disappointment at the final whistle in Toulouse is a testament to players, supporters and Leinster Rugby as a whole, that our ambition is set high. Today we need to join with the team, to be the 24th man on our road to determine how the story of our season unfolds.

YOUR team needs YOU. Make sure the support is both seen and heard for every one of those 80 minutes in The Rec, and then we will do it all again at the Aviva Stadium next week. It is crucial we let the players know that we are there for them. That we are supporting them EVERY STEP of the way.

Bath is a lovely city at any time of the year but let’s look to take the victory to make the memories of our trip even sweeter. Be seen, be heard, be loud, be proud and most importantly BE BLUE!

C’MON LEINSTER!
The OLSC Committee