

Topic Page: [Bicester \(England\)](#)

Summary Article: **Bicester**

From *The Hutchinson Unabridged Encyclopedia with Atlas and Weather Guide*

Market town in Oxfordshire, England, 21 km/13 mi northeast of Oxford; population (2001) 31,100. A retail park of factory outlet stores, Bicester Village, attracts many thousands of shoppers to the town each week. One of the British Army's largest ordnance depots is 3 km/2 mi away. A weekly street market and an annual fair are held in Bicester.

Bicester is recorded in the Domesday Survey of 1086, and there are remains of an Augustinian priory dating from 1182. The town was granted its first market in 1239 which prospered throughout the centuries in such trades as Jersey wool, leather, lace, chair-making, straw-plaiting, and printing. In 1441 another market was granted, and this has continued to the present day. The Ordnance Depot was established in Bicester in 1941, and is the clothing depot for the whole of the British Army. The town experienced rapid population growth in the late 20th century. Between 1961 and 1971 the town's population doubled. By 1981 it had risen a further 30% to 16,000, and has continued to rise considerably.

The town has a number of gabled 16th-century houses. The ruins of the Roman settlement of Alchester lie 2 km/1.2 mi southwest of Bicester, on the line of the Roman road known as Akeman Street. The parish church, dedicated to St Edburg, dates from the 15th century, although there has been a church on this site since Saxon times. The original foundations may date from the seventh century.

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