

## Topic Page: [Colchester](#)

Definition: **Colchester** from *Merriam-Webster's Collegiate(R) Dictionary*

 [pronunciation](#)

town SE England in Essex pop 141,100

### Summary Article: **Colchester**

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

City and river port in Essex, eastern England, on the River Colne, 80 km/50 mi northeast of London; population (2001) 104,400. It is the market centre of an agricultural and shell-fishing area, roses and oysters being notable products. Industries include engineering, printing, and the manufacture of clothing. The oldest recorded town in England, Colchester was the capital of the kingdom of the chieftain Cymbeline, until his death in about AD 40. As **Camulodunum**, it was the first capital of Roman Britain, and it was burned by the queen of the Iceni, Boudicca, in AD 60.

**Features** Remains of the Roman walls and gateway; ruins of a castle dating from 1070, with the largest Norman keep in the country; the gateway of the 11th-century monastery of St John; and the ruins of the 12th-century St Botolph's priory church. There is an army base in the town, and the University of Essex opened in 1965 at nearby Wivenhoe Park.

**River port** The Colne is navigable by large ships from the North Sea to within 5 km/3 mi of Colchester, and by **hoys** (large one-decked single mast boats) and small **barks**, or barques, (three-masted vessels) to the Hythe.

**History** Following the Roman invasion in AD 43, Camulodunum became the headquarters of the Romans in Britain. A temple dedicated to the Divine Claudius was erected here, and it became a colony for Roman ex-soldiers in AD 50, and one of the most prosperous towns in Roman Britain. Boudicca devastated the town in AD 60 when she led a rising of the Trinobantes and Iceni against the Romans. After her defeat a new town was established on the site of modern Colchester. It was defended by a wall which may have been over 6 m/20 ft high and 3 m/10 ft thick. The Roman occupation of Colchester lasted until about the end of the 4th century.

The settlement later became the Saxon stronghold of **Colneceaster**, and William (I) the Conqueror built a castle on the site of the Roman temple. The town flourished as a centre of the weaving and cloth trade from the 14th to 17th centuries. During the English Civil War, the town surrendered to the Parliamentarians in 1648 after an 11-week siege. In 1884 the town was badly shaken by the Essex earthquake and several buildings were damaged.

**Museums** Holly Tree Mansion (1718) houses a museum of 18th- and 19th-century social life. A museum in the castle contains a large collection of Romano-British antiquities. All Saints' Church houses a natural history museum.

### **weblinks**

Welcome to Colchester

**APA**

Chicago

Harvard

**MLA**

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Colchester. (2018). In Helicon (Ed.), *The Hutchinson unabridged encyclopedia with atlas and weather guide*. Abington, UK: Helicon. Retrieved from <https://search.credoreference.com/content/topic/colchester>

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## APA

Colchester. (2018). In Helicon (Ed.), *The Hutchinson unabridged encyclopedia with atlas and weather guide*. Abington, UK: Helicon. Retrieved from <https://search.credoreference.com/content/topic/colchester>

## Chicago

"Colchester." In *The Hutchinson Unabridged Encyclopedia with Atlas and Weather Guide*, edited by Helicon. Helicon, 2018. <https://search.credoreference.com/content/topic/colchester>

## Harvard

Colchester. (2018). In Helicon (Ed.), *The Hutchinson unabridged encyclopedia with atlas and weather guide*. [Online]. Abington: Helicon. Available from: <https://search.credoreference.com/content/topic/colchester> [Accessed 18 September 2019].

## MLA

"Colchester." *The Hutchinson Unabridged Encyclopedia with Atlas and Weather Guide*, edited by Helicon, 2018. *Credo Reference*, <https://search.credoreference.com/content/topic/colchester>. Accessed 18 Sep. 2019.