

Here is my planning sheet from yesterday, with minor updates:

Offpeak Standard Day Travelcard - Didcot to Paddington for Saturday 9th July 2022

£35.30 each - x4 Groupsave = £23.25 each = £93.00

£35.30 each - x1 Senior Railcard = £23.25

Offpeak Standard Day Return - Melksham to Oxford for Saturday 9th July 2022

£18.65 each - x4 Groupsave = £12.30 each = £49.20

£18.65 each - x1 Senior Railcard = £12.30

Total £177.75 = £35.55 each

List price - £66.60 (if you just get separate Melksham to London travelcards) or £43.95 with groupsave for three or more. That's for a superoffpeak period return. Ticket machine if working likely (unless you know which menu to find it on) to offer you off peak at over £80, and does not sell groupsave.

"Groups of three to nine adults can get 1/3 off Off-Peak tickets when travelling together. The group must travel together at all times. No further discounts (using Railcards, for example) are available for any of the passengers. All members of the group must travel together for outward and return journeys.

My use of a senior railcard in the above example saved no money, but gave me the flexibility (which I did not use) to travel back from London on a different train to them.

Take the local train from Melksham to Swindon and change there onto an express for London. You must choose an express that calls at Didcot (most do) because that is where you switch from one ticket to another. You buy a ticket to Oxford because it's cheaper than a ticket to Didcot, routed via Didcot, and you don't have to go all the way.

For two adults plus one child, you could by a Groupsave for 3 people:

Offpeak Standard Day Travelcard - Didcot to Paddington

£35.30 each - x3 Groupsave = £23.25 each = £69.75

Offpeak Standard Day Return - Melksham to Oxford

£18.65 each - x3 Groupsave = £12.30 each = £36.90

Total cost £106.65

Half price child fares are available – however, if you bought one of these for your daughter, you would not get the Groupsave discount on the tickets for the adults and so you would end up with a higher bill (£134.85). Although tickets are often described as "adult" they are actually valid for a person of any age, so your daughter is allowed to travel on one. You should be prepared to explain this to staff, who may be wondering why she is not on a child ticket.

The rail fare system is too complex for purpose, and if you ask staff for the cheapest option (in those words) they will probably NOT offer you a "split ticket". Give them the above, show them you know what you're about, and you'll get a grin of admiration for having worked it out!

Correct to the best of my knowledge as of today (10th July 2022) – any problems let me know.