

IRELAND

Cork & Kerry

A Self-Guided Walking Adventure





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Travel Style

Our Self-Guided Walking Adventures are ideal for travelers with an independent spirit who enjoy exploring at their own pace. We provide authentic accommodations, luggage transfers, and some meals, along with comprehensive route notes, detailed maps, and 24-hour emergency assistance. This gives you the freedom to focus on the things that matter to you—no group, no guide, and no set schedule to stand in the way of enjoying your adventure, your way.



Overview

This self-guided walking tour showcases the best of the southwest of Ireland—County Cork and County Kerry. The lakes and mountains of County Cork are a scenic beginning, along the shores and forest paths of Gougane Barra Lake. You continue on to Kenmare and Killarney, and the Killarney National Park, a UNESCO World Heritage site on the Ring of Kerry, the route that circles the Iveragh peninsula with its sweeping views and long beaches. You reach the coast in lively Dingle, rich in Irish traditions and history—from dozens of pubs where you can find music nightly, to Iron Age forts and stones, and early Christian sites on sweeping headlands overlooking the Atlantic. A contemporary Irish welcome greets you on your walks and in luxurious town- and country-house hotels and by the fireside at fine restaurants with the freshest local cuisine.



Daily Itinerary

DAY 1

Arrival in Cork. Transfer to Gougane Barra. Optional walk: Gougane Barra Forest Park; 2.5 miles, easy

From your arrival point, you are met and transferred to the small hamlet of Gougane Barra in western Cork, a wonderfully pristine part of Ireland, and to your lakeside family-run hotel overlooking St. Finbarr's Oratory on a small island. Surrounded by heather-clad mountains, the lake is a beautiful and peaceful place, and there is a lovely walk available to stretch your legs.

Gougane Barra Hotel, Gougane Barra

On the shores of tranquil Lake Gougane Barra, this traditional three-star hotel, in the same family for five generations, is adjacent to a national forest park with a large network of trails. Comfortable modern rooms in warm colors have either lake or mountain views. Available for guests' use are boats and bicycles, also several cozy sitting rooms, and a bar. An excellent restaurant serves updated traditional fare. The stone remains of a 7th-century monastery are on an island in the middle of the lake.

DAY 2

Gougane Barra Forest Park; 6 miles,
easy to moderate

Awakening to lakeside tranquility and a full Irish breakfast, today you explore the Gougane Barra Forest Park, which offers a range of trails of varying distances and degrees of difficulty, each one with a specific theme that best showcases the spectacular panoramas of mountain, valley, stream, and lake. Developed as a forest park in the early 1960s and officially opened in 1966, the Gougane Barra valley and lake owe their dramatic geology to glacial origins. The Forest Park of over 350 acres was planted in the late 1930s over what was once farmland. Now you walk amidst impressive stands of lodgepole pine, Sitka spruce, and light green Japanese larch. Finbarr, the founder of Cork, established a monastery here in the 6th century as well as a hermitage on the small island in Gougane Barra Lake (Lough an Ghugain), which can be reached by a short causeway.



Gougane Barra Hotel, Gougane Barra

DAY 3

The Beara Way: Bonane to Kenmare; 7 miles, easy to moderate

Today's walk is on the Beara Way, in an area that is probably one of the least-developed regions of Ireland. The route starts at Bonane Heritage Park. The walk around the archaeological site takes approximately 30 minutes and provides panoramic views of the surrounding landscape. An amazing Bronze Age stone circle with complex lunar and solar alignments, a ringfort, standing stone, famine house, and a *fulacht fiadh* (ancient cooking pit) can be seen. These structures reflect the long history of habitation in this area, dating back 5,000 years. Your final destination of the day is Kenmare. Founded in 1670 by Sir William Petty, it is one of Ireland's few "planned" towns, and with its wide range of pubs and restaurants where you can sample the "local flavors," it has been chosen by the Irish Tourist Board as one of only two Heritage towns in County Kerry.



Shelburne Lodge, Kenmare

Originally the country home of Lord Shelburne, a Dublin-born landowner who was commissioned with the design of the modern town of Kenmare, this charming 18th-century stone guesthouse has been run as a highly-rated B&B by the Foley family for the past 20 years. Set at the edge of town amid manicured grounds and lovely gardens, it is the

oldest house in Kenmare and displays great style and attention to detail; spacious common rooms include an elegant, comfortable guest sitting room with plenty of seating, a log fire, and interesting books to read. Inviting guestrooms are individually decorated with color schemes of yellow and peach, antique furnishings, and polished old wooden floors. The large dining room serves a legendary full Irish breakfast using the finest local produce. A planned 17th-century town, Kenmare is not only a center for outdoor activities such as golf, walking, and horseback riding, the charming town also has interesting shops (including Quills Woollen Market), services, and several excellent restaurants within walking distance of Shelburne Lodge.

DAY 4

Derrycunihy Church to Killarney; 7 miles or 9 miles, easy to moderate, 1,000-ft. elevation gain

Today begins with a transfer (45 minutes) over Moll's Gap, with the famous Ladies' View over the Killarney Lakes, and to the start of your walk at Derrycunihy Church on Galway's Bridge. The route takes you through the Killarney National Park, the home of the only natural herd of red deer in Britain or Ireland. You continue through the mountains to the Torc Waterfall and on to Muckross House and Abbey, where Queen Victoria paid a visit to the Herbert family in 1861. Today, many of the rooms in this magnificent mansion have been restored to their original Victorian splendor, and between the months of April and July, the mature rhododendrons of Muckross Gardens are in spectacular bloom. Adjacent to the house are Muckross Traditional Farms, which portray the farming methods and way of life of a typical rural community of the 1930s. The workshops, shops, and restaurant here are all worth exploring. From here you can either continue on foot, or take the famous "jaunting car," a local horse-drawn carriage, on into Killarney.

Victoria House Hotel, Killarney

This welcoming, family-run boutique hotel is situated in an ideal location, on the scenic Muckcross Road in Killarney, to access both the national park and the town. Guest rooms are stylishly updated cozy retreats, with goose-down comforters and pillows. The convivial fine-dining restaurant serves locally sourced fare. The hotel's bar has two fireplaces and, on certain nights, traditional music.



DAY 5

Layover day in Killarney

At your doorstep are a plethora of options in and around the town of Killarney, from a range of walks, to castle touring, town strolling and shopping, bike riding or pony trekking. Perhaps one of the best-known natural sites is the Gap of Dunloe, a narrow mountain pass between Macgillycuddy's Reeks and Purple Mountain. About seven miles in length, from north to south, within it are five lakes—Coosaun Lough, Black Lake, Cushnavally Lake, Auger Lake, and Black Lough,—all connected by the River Loe. Connecting the first two lakes is the Wishing Bridge, so-called because it is said that wishes made while upon it are destined to come true. Nearby is Ross Castle, standing on the shore of Lough Leane. The original home of the O'Donoghue Ross Chieftains in the 15th century, the castle has been magnificently restored. The site holds evidence of human habitation going back 9,000 years, with one of Europe's earliest Bronze Age copper mines dating back some 4,500 years. One walking option here is a 90-minute route around the archaeological sites of Ross Island. You can also walk into the vibrant and charming town center of Killarney, with its long tradition of late-evening shopping, and the tall-spired St. Mary's Cathedral, as well as a Gothic Franciscan church.

Victoria House Hotel, Killarney

DAY 6

The Dingle Way: Ventry to Dunquin; 6.5-8 miles, easy to moderate, 650-ft. elevation gain



This morning's destination is the Dingle Peninsula, just over an hour's drive away. A first short stop is at the fabulous Inch Beach, made famous in David Lean's 1970 film, "Ryan's Daughter." The drive takes you past Dingle (though you'll have plenty of time upon your return to explore the town and surroundings) and on to Ventry Beach, where you begin the day's walk. The route starts out along the

beach before rising slightly to skirt the base of Mount Eagle. Here spectacular views open up over the Blasket Islands and the Atlantic Ocean as you pass beside Neolithic beehive stone huts. The walk ends at the excellent Blasket Islands visitor center, which provides an informative overview. You soon return to Dingle, perhaps for a pint of Guinness at one of the town's 52 pubs, before walking to dinner at a favorite local restaurant.

Benners Hotel, Dingle

In the heart of the town of Dingle, this luxurious, family-run town hotel is a local landmark. Spacious guestrooms blend traditional antique-style furniture with elegant comforts. The bar and common rooms are richly decorated with antique furnishings and have fireplaces. Bustling Dingle's many restaurants, shops, harbor, and walking routes are all easily reached on foot.

DAY 7

Layover day in Dingle

The town of Dingle invites exploration—with its colorful houses, lively fishing port (and resident dolphin, Funghi), pubs and restaurants, inviting shops, and livestock market. Nearby are local walks, as well as boating options. A vibrant town of only 2,000 residents, it is a flourishing tourist, fishing, and agricultural center. Boat trips from Dingle include whale-watching excursions and deep-sea fishing. As a market and fishing town, its numerous pubs not only provide delicious food and drink, but some also specialize in selling items from Wellington boots to sheets, blankets, and fertilizer! The town is a center for traditional music, and you can listen to it in the pubs in the evening, and by day perhaps visit the Dingle Record Shop on Green Street, or the Dingle Music School, dedicated to making Irish music as accessible as possible. Pottery is another local craft.

Benners Hotel, Dingle

DAY 8

Departure from Tralee

After breakfast, a complimentary transfer from Dingle to Tralee is provided (45 minutes) to make your train or bus connections.

ITINERARY CHANGES

Please bear in mind that this is a typical itinerary, and the actual activities, sites, and accommodations may vary due to season, special events, weather, or transportation schedules. We reserve the right to alter the itinerary, since tour arrangements are made up to a year in advance and unforeseen circumstances may arise that mandate change. Itinerary changes are made to improve the tour and your experience.

RESPONSIBLE TRAVEL

Country Walkers is a leader in active travel with responsible tourism an integral part of our core values. Our tours reflect our dedication to best travel practices—and to the preservation of indigenous cultures and the environment. Country Walkers has made a donation on behalf of every traveler to the CW Travelers Fund, which supports designated projects in the communities and habitats in which we travel. We invite you to learn more about our efforts and initiatives for giving back.

Itinerary Overview

PLEASE NOTE: your detailed route notes will be mailed to you approximately one month prior to your departure. While these route notes may list a number of accommodation options, your specific accommodations are listed below. Please make sure to bring this Itinerary Overview with you.

STARTING POINT

Cork, Ireland

Based upon individual arrival times

NIGHTS 1 & 2

Gougane Barra Hotel

Gougane Barra

Ballingeary, Co. Cork, Ireland

Tel 011 353 26 47069

Email info@gouganebarrahotel.com

gouganebarrahotel.com

Wireless Internet, hair dryers, and laundry service available.

NIGHT 3

Shelburne Lodge

Cork Road

Kenmare, Co. Kerry, Ireland

Tel 011 353 64 6641013

Email shelburnekenmare@eircom.net

shelburnelodge.com

Wireless Internet and hair dryers available. Laundry service unavailable.

NIGHTS 4 & 5

Victoria House Hotel

Muckross Road

Killarney, Co. Kerry, Ireland

Tel 011 353 64 6635430

Email info@victoriahousehotel.com

victoriahousehotel.com

Wireless Internet and hair dryers available. Laundry service unavailable.

NIGHTS 6 & 7

Dingle Benners Hotel

Main Street

Dingle, Co. Kerry, Ireland

Tel 011 353 66 91 51638

Email info@dinglebenners.com

dinglebenners.com

Wireless Internet and hair dryers available. Laundry service unavailable.

ENDING POINT

Tralee, Ireland

Based upon individual departure times

Tour Facts at a Glance

TOUR LENGTH

8 days, 7 nights

DEPARTURES

This tour is available daily, on request, from April 15 through September 30, 2016.

TOUR PRICE

2016 departures	Per person	Single +	Solo Surcharge
April 15 – May 31	\$2,398	\$495	\$945
June 1 – 30	\$2,498	\$495	\$945
July 1 – August 31	\$2,498	\$545	\$975
September 1 – 30	\$2,398	\$495	\$945

STARTING POINT

Cork, Ireland

Based upon individual arrival times

ENDING POINT

Tralee, Ireland

Based upon individual departure times

ACTIVITY LEVEL

This tour is one of our Self-Guided Walking Adventures, rated easy to moderate, with an average of 4-9 miles per day, with options on some days. The terrain includes daily elevation gains and losses. Walks are on well-maintained dirt trails, either packed or with loose rocks and roots, as well as grassy paths and sandy beaches. This diverse and extensive itinerary includes some of southwest Ireland's most stunning attractions, such as Gougane Barra Lake and Forest Park, Killarney National Park, and the Dingle Peninsula; reaching these locations requires transfers of 1-2 hours. The tour offers full days of walking as well as

two layover days with fishing, horseback riding, whale watching, cycling, or shopping options, to name just a few.

INCLUSIONS

- » Full Irish breakfast daily and four dinners (days 1, 2, 4, and 6); beverages not included
- » All accommodations while on tour
- » Local transfers as noted in the itinerary
- » Orientation with a Country Walkers representative
- » Luggage transfers between the hotels
- » Detailed route notes and maps (mailed to you approximately one month prior to your departure)
- » 24-hour tour-related support provided by Country Walkers' local partner
- » 24-hour One Call International Emergency Hotline and Travel Assistance
- » The unbeatable and cumulative experience of the Country Walkers staff

LET THE JOURNEY BEGIN

Prior to your adventure you will be asked to sign a Guest Acknowledgment of Risk Form and you will receive:

- » A Guest Information Form to complete and return at least 45 days prior to your tour
- » Luggage tags
- » Route notes and maps
- » Your trip invoice

GRATUITIES

Standard gratuities for all hotels, meals, and services that are included in your tour price will be paid by Country Walkers; however additional tips are always welcome. Should you wish to tip for meals or services not included in the cost of the tour, please do so at your discretion. Local currency is preferred.

Traveling To and From Your Tour

STARTING POINT

Cork, Ireland

Based upon individual arrival times

A taxi driver will meet you in Cork (bus/train station, airport, or city hotel, holding a sign with Country Walkers and your name on it) and transfer you to the Gougane Barra Hotel, where the owners will meet you upon arrival to provide an orientation meeting, ensure you are comfortably settled, and answer any questions you may have.

In order to arrange your arrival transfer and orientation meeting, please provide us with your arrival and departure details by returning your Guest Information Form at least 45 days prior to the departure.

MOST CONVENIENT AIRPORT

Dublin International Airport (DUB), Dublin

dublinairport.com

GETTING TO THE STARTING POINT

Several airlines—particularly Aer Lingus (aerlingus.com)—offer direct flights from the east coast of the U.S. to Dublin International Airport. Airlink shuttles (dublinbus.ie) depart the airport for Heuston train station every 10 minutes and the journey takes 45 minutes. The same bus continues to the Dublin central bus station (Busaras) should you wish to spend pre-tour time in Dublin. Trains from Heuston station to Cork take approximately 2 hours and 40 minutes. For the most current rail information, including reservations, schedules, and fares, please call Rail Europe at 800.438.7245 or consult their website: raileurope.com. More information and schedules for the Irish rail system, Iarnrod Eireann, may be found at irishrail.ie. Please note that you might obtain better rates by booking directly with Iarnrod Eireann rather than through Rail Europe.

Another, yet longer, option is to travel to Cork by bus. Several buses depart directly from the airport (aircoach.ie, gobe.ie, gobus.ie, or buseireann.ie). If you are spending pre-tour time in Dublin, Bus Eireann (buseireann.ie) also offers service to Cork from the Dublin central bus station (Busaras).

PRE- AND POST-TOUR ACCOMMODATIONS

We recommend spending at least one day prior to and/or following the tour to explore the city of Dublin. For hotel and restaurant suggestions, please visit visitdublin.com.

DELAYS AND LATE ARRIVALS

If you are delayed while traveling or for any reason miss your scheduled transfer time (as outlined on your Guest Information Form), please call the first hotel as well as our local tour operator, Cycling Safaris, based in Ireland, at (011 if dialing from the U.S.) 353 (0) 12600749 or 353 (0)86 8265204 (insert the “0” only if dialing locally) to advise them of your delay and to obtain assistance with alternate arrival arrangements (at your own expense). Due to the time change, it is not advisable to leave this message at the Country Walkers office.

You may also contact our emergency assistance provider, One Call International. This service is available 24 hours/day, 7 days/week to assist you with any type of travel delay. Please refer to the Emergency Contact Information on your Itinerary Overview page for One Call International contact details.

ENDING POINT

Tralee, Ireland

Based upon individual departure times

A transfer (45 minutes) will be provided from your last hotel to the Tralee bus/train station or a city hotel.

In order to arrange your departure transfer to Tralee, please provide us with your arrival and departure details by returning your Guest Information Form at least 45 days prior to the departure.

MOST CONVENIENT AIRPORT

Shannon International Airport (SNN), Shannon
shannonairport.com

LEAVING THE TOUR

The easiest way to travel to your next destination is by bus. There are several buses from Tralee to Shannon per day (requiring one change in Limerick). The journey takes 3 hours. For more details on schedules and fares, please visit buseireann.ie.

If you are travelling to Dublin, buses to Dublin's central bus station (Busaras) are available every two hours. The journey takes 6 hours (with a change in Limerick). For more details on schedules and fares, please visit buseireann.ie. Or you may wish to take the train. The journey from Tralee to Dublin Heuston station takes approximately 4 hours (with a change in Mallow). For the most current rail information, including reservations, schedules, and fares please call Rail Europe at 800.438.7245 or consult their website: raileurope.com. More information and schedules for the Irish rail system, Iarnrod Eireann, may be found at irishrail.ie. Please note that you might obtain better rates by booking directly with Iarnrod Eireann rather than through Rail Europe.

Information & Policies

GUARANTEED DEPARTURES

Country Walkers guarantees the departure of every tour*—no exceptions and no disappointments! From the moment you make your deposit, you can start preparing for your adventure. We take care of all the details to ensure a seamless, self-guided experience. For best availability, reserve your trip today!

**except in cases of force majeure*

RESERVATIONS

Reservations for this tour may be made by calling Country Walkers at 800.464.9255. A \$350 per person deposit is required at the time of the reservation request. Final tour cost is due 90 days prior to tour departure date. As arrangements are confirmed at least a year in advance, the tour price is subject to change.

GUEST RESPONSIBILITIES

Each guest has the responsibility to select a trip appropriate to his/her abilities and interests and to prepare for the trip by carefully reading the confirmation materials. To join this trip, you must be in good health and capable of completing activities as described in the day-to-day itinerary. Our in-house experts welcome the opportunity to discuss the tour in more detail. In order to meet your needs, we ask that you please share any relevant physical limitations or health conditions when you make your reservation.

CANCELLATION POLICY

Cancellations received 91 days or more prior to the tour start date will incur a loss of \$150; cancellations received between 90 and 61 days prior to the tour start date incur a loss of 25 percent of the tour price; there are no refunds within 60 days of the tour start date. Up to 91 days prior to departure, you may transfer your reservation, depending on availability, from one departure to another in the same calendar year at no cost*. Please notify us in writing.

**One transfer per year; afterwards a modest per person transfer fee will apply. Please note that tours with seasonal prices may involve a higher price.*

TRAVEL INSURANCE

We offer guests the opportunity to purchase a Travel Protection Plan. Please contact us for details.

TRAVEL ARRANGEMENTS

Air or other travel arrangements to and from your tour are not included in the price of your trip. We encourage you to contact your local travel agent, or Better Travel, a Vermont-based agency (800.331.6996 or bettertravel@madriver.com), for any additional air, hotel, rail, or transfer arrangements you may need.