

IRELAND

County Wicklow

A Self-Guided Walking Adventure





Table of Contents

Daily Itinerary	4
Itinerary Overview	9
Tour Facts at a Glance.....	10
Traveling To and From Your Tour	12
Information & Policies	14
Ireland at a Glance.....	16
Packing List	21

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 five-day, self-guided walking tour takes you south of Dublin to the Wicklow region, known as the “Garden of Ireland” and considered to be Ireland’s most romantic valley. A premier walking destination, the Wicklow Mountains form a granite chain of hills stretching 50 miles from Dublin to Wexford. And at the center is the famous “Wicklow Way,” Ireland’s oldest long-distance walking trail, the 82-mile north-south route that starts in Dublin. Beginning in famous Glendalough, with the evocative 6th-century remains of the monastery of St. Kevin, you walk part of the Wicklow Way, through parkland and beside rivers, through glens, and along panoramic cliff tops to two welcoming accommodations nestled between mountains and lakes, sampling Ireland’s best flavors along the way.



Daily Itinerary

DAY 1

Arrival in Dublin. Transfer to Glendalough. Monastic site visit

You are met in Dublin and transferred just over an hour south to the Vale of Glendalough in the Wicklow region and the Wicklow Mountains National Park. This U-shaped valley houses a fascinating and important early Christian and medieval monastic settlement, originally founded by St. Kevin in the 6th century. Your hotel is situated in the heart of the small village of Laragh, less than a mile from both the monastery buildings and the national park, with its network of walking trails and access to the Wicklow Way. Glendalough, meaning “valley of the two lakes,” contains religious structures from the 8th and 12th centuries—the most famous of which is a 100-foot stone tower—as well as a cathedral, churches, and decorated crosses. You may want to start your explorations with a visit to the comprehensive Glendalough Visitor Centre, and then proceed to walk amidst the 6th-century site.

Lynham's Hotel, Laragh

A traditional hotel with a historical pub dating from 1776, in the heart of the Wicklow Mountains National Park.

Spacious guestrooms are comfortably furnished, with classic décor and warm colors. With views of the national park and miles of trails and forest roads out the door, the hotel is also just under a mile from the monastic complex of St. Kevin at Glendalough.

Several dinner options are available, including the hotel's pub with a casual atmosphere, or perhaps an exquisite 3-course menu at the nearby Glendasan River Restaurant.



DAY 2

Derrybawn Woodland Trail; 6.8 miles, easy to moderate, 600-ft. elevation gain

After awakening in the heart of the countryside and to a full Irish breakfast, you start your walk just out the door of the hotel. Your route today takes you along the Derrybawn Woodland Trail, comprising terrain of very well-maintained paths and forest road. Beginning on the Green Road walking trail, you cross the river on a footbridge, passing the valley's lower lake before heading up into the hills by the Poulanass Waterfall. The route then ascends the side of Derrybawn Mountain through mixed woodlands, with views over the valley. After a pleasant descent through the forest, you arrive back at the Green Road on the valley floor, returning to the starting point. The well-marked network of trails in the area offers several possibilities to extend the walk by a few miles, or you may return to your hotel to relax over a pint (and enjoy music in the pub on Saturday nights).

Lynham's Hotel, Laragh



DAY 3

The Spinc and Wicklow Way; 8 miles, easy to moderate with one moderate climb of 600 steps, 1,380-ft. elevation gain

Today's route not only joins the Wicklow Way, Ireland's first long-distance walking trail, but it also provides perhaps some of the most stunning cliff-

top views in Ireland. The route starts as yesterday, heading up the valley and gently climbing by the Poulanass Waterfall. Here you split off to climb 600 steps to the cliff-edge viewpoint on the Spinc—a sweeping panorama of the hills around, the valley below, and, on a clear day, the Welsh mountains out to sea behind you. You enjoy the views along the Spinc boardwalk for a mile, and then continue to gain height gently until you are just above the saddle between Mullacor Mountain and Lugduff Mountain. From here you have wonderful views into the steep U-shaped valley of Glenmalure, which runs parallel to the Glendalough Valley. You can also see the highest mountain in Leinster, Lugnaquilla (just over 3,000 feet). As you descend into the col, you meet up with the Wicklow Way walking trail, which brings you gently down the partly wooded slopes to the Poulanass Waterfall and back to your hotel along the edge of the lower lake.

Lynham's Hotel, Laragh

DAY 4

Glendalough to Enniskerry—The Wicklow Way; 8 miles, easy to moderate, 900-ft. elevation gain

Today, the longest walk of your tour rambles over a combination of boardwalks, walking paths, forest roads, and quiet back roads. The day begins with a transfer to the road above the mesmerizing Lough Tay. This dark lake is set below the imposing cliffs of Luggala, and is surrounded by land that was part of the Guinness family estate. When viewed from above, the lake, with its cream-colored sandy beach, resembles a pint of Guinness! You leave the road and join the highest and most scenic section of the Wicklow Way, along the side of Djouce Mountain. Here you have extensive views along Ireland's east coast and, if the weather is clear, you might again catch a glimpse of the mountains around

Snowdonia in Wales. After Djouce, the route descends to the Dargle River, an excellent place for a picnic lunch. A short steep climb out of the Dargle Valley brings you to a path overlooking the Powerscourt Estate and waterfall. At almost 400 feet, it is the highest waterfall in Ireland and the UK. You may even spot some of the area's abundant deer.

The route continues downhill into the Glencree Valley, where you walk along the flower-filled banks of the Glencree River. Finally, you transfer to the lovely village of Enniskerry.



Ferndale B&B, Enniskerry

An intimate, upscale bed-and-breakfast in the charming 18th-century village of Enniskerry. Guest rooms are individually decorated with antique furnishings and carpets in this historical home and garden. Nearby is the Powerscourt Estate, one of Ireland's most beautiful historical castle and garden complexes, dating from 1300, and significantly altered in the 18th century. Also within walking or short driving distance are pubs and restaurants, including the famous Johnnie Fox's Pub, where traditional music is played every night.

DAY 5

Departure from Dublin

After breakfast, you are transferred from Enniskerry back to Dublin for your onward travels.

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

Dublin, Ireland

Based upon individual arrival times

NIGHTS 1, 2 & 3

Lynham's Hotel

Laragh, Co. Wicklow, Ireland

Tel 011 353 404 45345

Email info@lynhamsoflaragh.ie

lynhamsoflaragh.ie

Wireless Internet, hair dryers, and laundry service available.

NIGHT 4

Ferndale Bed and Breakfast

Church Hill, Enniskerry

Co. Wicklow, Ireland

Tel 011 353 128 63518

Email info@ferndalehouse.com

ferndalehouse.com

Wireless Internet and hair dryers available. Laundry service unavailable.

ENDING POINT

Dublin, Ireland

Based upon individual departure times

Tour Facts at a Glance

TOUR LENGTH

5 days, 4 nights

DEPARTURES

This tour is available daily, on request, from April 1 through September 30, 2016.

TOUR PRICE

2016 departures	Per person	Single +	Solo Surcharge
April 15 – May 31	\$1,198	\$275	\$475
June 1 – August 31	\$1,298	\$275	\$475
September 1 – 30	\$1,198	\$275	\$475

STARTING POINT

Dublin, Ireland

Based upon individual arrival times

ENDING POINT

Dublin, 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 5-10 miles per day, with options on some days. The terrain is fairly gentle with a few hills and one moderate section of 600 steps on Day 3. Walks are on very well-maintained trails combining single-track boardwalks, packed-dirt or grassy paths, both narrow and wide, with roots, gravel, and loose stones at times. The trails above the tree line may feel more challenging than expected because they are exposed to the elements, and some sections have a slight drop-off on one side, which may not be recommended for those with severe vertigo. The walking routes are framed by either yellow gorse or broom,

almost all season, and offer dramatic views of the Irish countryside, including deep lakes the color of Guinness.

INCLUSIONS

- » Full Irish breakfast daily and one dinner (day 2); beverages not included
- » All accommodations while on tour
- » Local transfers as noted in the itinerary
- » Orientation meeting 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, Cycling Safaris
- » 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 receive:

- » Guest Information and Acknowledgment of Risk Forms 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

Dublin, Ireland

Based upon individual arrival times

A tour representative will meet you in the Arrivals Hall of the airport (holding a sign with Country Walkers and your name on it) or at a Dublin city hotel to transfer you to the first hotel (approximately 1 hour). He/she will 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 Airport (DUB), Dublin

dublinairport.com

GETTING TO THE STARTING POINT

Several airlines offer direct flights from the U.S. to Dublin Airport, particularly Aer Lingus (**aerlingus.com**).

If you are spending pre-tour time in Dublin, you may take the Airlink shuttle, which departs the airport for the central bus station (Busaras) every 10 minutes. The journey takes 45 minutes. Taxis are also readily available and the journey costs 45 euros.

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**.

ENDING POINT

Dublin, Ireland

Based upon individual departure times

A transfer will be provided (35 minutes to 1 hour depending on traffic conditions) from your last hotel to the Dublin Airport or a city hotel. Please note that the journey from Enniskerry is on small roads and thus the transfer time may vary based upon traffic. Please check airline schedules carefully. If you plan to schedule return flights immediately following the tour's conclusion, please call your airline directly for specific check-in requirements.

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

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.

Ireland at a Glance

ENTRY REQUIREMENTS

U.S. citizens: Passports are required and must be valid for at least three months beyond the dates of travel. Visas are not required for stays of up to 90 days.

For more information, see travel.state.gov.



Travel Tip

Have a variety of options to start your trip: ATM card(s), credit card(s), some dollars to exchange, and some euros (and pounds) in small denominations.

CURRENCY

The Republic of Ireland uses the euro (EUR). For current exchange rates, visit oanda.com.

Many businesses in Europe will no longer accept credit cards without PIN numbers (chip and pin cards). Always contact your bank or your credit-card company for details on fees and card use when traveling.

TIME ZONE

Ireland is in the Greenwich Mean Time Zone, Eastern Standard Time plus five hours. For more information on worldwide time zones, see worldtimezone.com.

PHONE & INTERNET

Republic of Ireland country code: +353

Cell phone coverage throughout Ireland is extensive, but cannot be guaranteed to be accessible on all American mobile carriers or to function at all times while on the trail or in remote areas.

For more information regarding international phone use, please refer to countrywalkers.com/phones.

Internet access is generally very good in towns and villages; however, it is not guaranteed at all of the hotels used on the tour. For more details regarding Wi-Fi availability, please refer to the Itinerary Overview.



LANGUAGE

While Irish (Gaelic) is the official language of the Republic of Ireland, the everyday language of most citizens is English, which is recognized as the country's second language. You will see many public signs written in both languages. The most important Irish words you will probably need to know are *Fir* and *Mná*, used frequently outside public restrooms: *Fir* is “Men” and *Mná* is “Women.”

ELECTRICITY

Alternating current of 230V and 50Hz is used in Ireland. Plugs have three flat blades arranged in a triangular formation. For a full listing of electrical outlets worldwide, see electricaloutlet.org.

WEATHER

Although Ireland lies on the same northerly latitude as Newfoundland, it has a mild and moist climate year-round, which is due to the prevailing southwesterly winds and the influence of the Gulf Stream. Any given point in Ireland is never more than 70 miles from the sea or ocean, therefore, temperatures are uniform throughout the country. It actually does not rain all the time in Ireland; showers can occur frequently, but tend to pass quickly.

Temperatures range from the low to mid-60s in May and June to the mid- to high 60s in July and August, July being the warmest month on average. The pleasant summer days are long, with daylight lasting until 10:00 p.m.

For up-to-date forecasts, see qwikcast.com. For historical average temperatures and rainfall, see weatherbase.com.

FOOD & DRINK

The lands and seas of Ireland are the most unspoiled in Europe, and seafood and beef of the highest quality are exported worldwide. In the last 20 years, a style of Irish cuisine has evolved well beyond Irish stew and champ (mashed potatoes with spring onions), based on superb raw materials and an eclectic mix of international styles.



Travel Tips

- Bringing your own hair dryer or other electrical device? You'll need a travel converter, available at most hardware, travel, or consumer electronic stores.
- For laptops or an electronic device with a dual voltage switch, you'll need the adapter plug but not a converter.

Appetizers and entrées may feature locally caught fish (salmon or trout) and seafood (prawns, mussels, and oysters) accompanied by elaborate salads. Fine beef and lamb are widely available, and sometimes served with a decadent sauce of whiskey and cream. The use of potatoes, cabbage, and soda bread is still widespread; however, innovative chefs serve them in new and exciting ways. Desserts are rich and varied, incorporating seasonal fruit with melted chocolate, toffee, or vanilla custard.

Travel Tip

The Irish Pub

It seems that the traditional Irish pub is an endangered species, with one closing almost every day. However, in many places it is still the center of social life with all ages gathering for drink, food, singing, and *craic* (pronounced “krack” and basically meaning a good time). Like so many things in travel, there are many unwritten rules governing pub etiquette—catching the bar tender’s eye without wild gesticulation, not ordering an American-style cocktail, and paying immediately in cash for your drinks are just a few. A range of beers, whiskey, and non-alcoholic drinks are available at a pub. Draft beer is served in a pint or a half-pint glass, and comes in two basic varieties—lager or ale. Guinness stout is actually a type of ale, made from roasted barley, and it takes about 3 to 4 minutes to pour properly. What about Irish whiskey? It’s best drunk “neat” or straight, and its smooth quality is due to triple distillation in closed kilns, avoiding the smoky flavor of Scotch whisky. Food in an Irish pub may consist of sandwiches and soup at lunchtime, and in the evening, sausages, meat pies, and baked (jacket) potatoes.

Pub hours

Monday–Saturday: 10:30 a.m.–11:30 p.m.*

Sunday: 12:30 p.m.–2:00 p.m. and 4:00 p.m.–11:00 p.m.*

**Some pubs may have a late drinking license and be open until midnight or 2:00 a.m.*

LIFE IN IRELAND

Shopping and banking hours

Shops and stores are generally open Monday to Saturday between 9:30 a.m. and 5:30 p.m. and on Sundays from 11:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. Most department stores and some supermarkets are open all day, every day of the week, from 9:30 a.m. to 10:00 p.m.



Banks are open from 9:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m., Monday to Friday (with some branches open on Saturday mornings).

Meal times

Breakfast is served at hotels from 7:30 a.m. to 10:00 a.m. In restaurants and pubs, lunch is served from noon to 2:00 p.m. and dinner is usually served from 6:00 p.m. to 10:30 p.m. (but verify locally). Afternoon tea is usually taken around 4:00 p.m.

Tipping

If service is not included at a restaurant or pub (check your bill), it is customary to leave 10 to 20 percent of the total. Taxi drivers receive 10 to 15 percent of the fare. For luggage assistance, a small tip is appropriate, at your discretion.

TRAVEL RESOURCES

National Irish tourist board official site

ireland.com

Public holidays

To assist in travel planning, it may be helpful to be aware of Irish public holidays, festivals, or calendars of events. Visit the Irish tourist board's website for a list of public holidays under ireland.com/en-us/about-ireland/must-know-information/public-holidays-in-ireland.

TRAVEL IN IRELAND



Airports

The majority of international flights arrive at Dublin or Shannon airports. Ireland's national airline is Aer Lingus: aerlingus.com.

Train

Irish Rail: irishrail.ie, the national railway company site with schedules, fares, and pass options.

Raileurope: raileurope.com or 800.622.8600, a U.S.-based company that provides schedules, reservations, and ticketing for all European train networks (their multi-day/-week/-month passes in one country or combinations of countries may be an economical and convenient choice for European train travel.)

Travel Tip

If you rent a car in Ireland, remember to drive on the left side of the road and to pass on the outside right lane—also important to keep in mind when crossing busy city streets! Tourism Ireland provides a downloadable guide to driving in Ireland ebstudio.net/irelandbycar/.

OTHER LOCAL TRANSPORTATION

In addition to rail and airlines, Ireland also has an extensive bus (or “coach”) network that, for some towns and cities, may be more convenient and affordable than the train, see Irish Bus, buseireann.ie, as well as Dublin bus for traveling in and around Dublin, dublinbus.ie.

Most major car rental agencies are available at airports and train stations. Taxis are available at all major airports, train stations, and in smaller towns, and can be reserved in advance (your hotel can usually provide

assistance). For more information go to ireland.com/en-us/about-ireland/travelling-within-ireland.

Packing List

PACKING TIPS

Pack light! Keep in mind most hotels are small and family-run and may not provide luggage assistance from the reception area to the room so there will be times you may have to carry your own luggage short distances. Due to space constraints, we require you to limit your luggage to one medium piece (approximately 18x15x29 inches or 8,000 cu. in.) and one small carry-on, per person. Please note that due to health and safety reasons, our local representatives are not permitted to carry (individual) bags that exceed 30 lbs (15 kg). We recommend packing any personal necessities, medications, your hotel itinerary/emergency contact information, your hiking boots (or shoes), and extra clothes in your carry-on luggage in the event that your baggage is delayed. We suggest leaving valuable jewelry at home. A copy of your passport or other important documents should be kept in a separate area of your luggage. Always be alert when carrying a purse, camera, money belt, or backpack in busy cities, airports, and train stations.

FOOTWEAR

- » Hiking boots or shoes. There are many brands to choose from. Proper fit is crucial, so try on new boots or shoes while wearing socks you plan to use on tour. Be sure to break in new footwear well before your tour begins. By the time you're ready to join your walking tour, you should be able to complete 5-10 miles of walking without discomfort. We require lightweight boots or shoes with proper ankle support and good tread to ensure stability on all types of terrain. Waterproof footwear keeps feet dry in heavy rain and water resistant footwear keeps feet dry in heavy dew. Country Walkers reserves the right to deny participation to any guest not wearing appropriate footwear.
- » Comfortable shoes for evening strolls
- » Synthetic, moisture-wicking socks (cotton socks are not recommended for walking as they will quickly cause blisters)
- » Blister remedy

CLOTHING

- » Lightweight, wash-and-wear long pants

- » Long-sleeved, wash-and-wear shirt
- » T-shirts and shorts
- » Polar fleece or light wool pullover (it will keep you warm even when wet)
- » Dinner attire: dress is smart casual

OUTERWEAR

- » Waterproof (not only water resistant) rain gear: jacket, pants, hat, or hood.
- » Windbreaker with hood (your rain gear may be suitable)
- » Hat with a broad brim or visor
- » Lightweight fleece or wool hat and gloves

EQUIPMENT

- » Pack (minimum size of 25L): large enough to carry water, extra clothing, rain gear, lunch, and personal items (camera, etc.)
- » Waterproof cover for pack
- » Water bottle, canteen, or CamelBak-type water reservoir or hydration pack to carry your own water while walking (equivalent of one liter)
- » Sunblock and lip balm
- » Insect repellent
- » Sunglasses
- » Toilet kit for when facilities are not available on the walks. Include zip-lock baggies, tissues, and moist towelettes, which can be disposed of upon return to the hotel
- » Personal first-aid kit including any medications you ordinarily take (in their original container)

OPTIONAL

- » Telescopic walking sticks (Please note that while telescopic walking sticks are recommended for this tour, they are not provided by Country Walkers. Therefore please plan on bringing your own should you wish to use them.)
- » Binoculars
- » Flip flops or water sandals
- » Camera and charger and/or extra batteries

- » Zip-lock bags (to keep camera and valuables dry)
- » Small notebook and pen
- » Field guides (see enclosed reading list)
- » Folding umbrella
- » Bandana
- » Washcloth (many European hotels do not provide them)
- » Hand sanitizer and/or moist towelettes
- » Motion sickness bracelets or other non-sleep-inducing remedy if prone to motion sickness on bus or car rides
- » Alarm clock
- » International cell phone