

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 Bantry Bay 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

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## 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 Sheep's Head Way; 6.6 miles, moderate, 500-ft. elevation gain

Today, stroll along a section of the Sheep's Head Way, a long distance trail over 93 miles (150 km) in length, which passes along the coast of the Sheep's Head Peninsula and throughout the general Bantry area. Walking here, you'll discover a peaceful, unspoiled peninsula which has some of the most beautiful scenery in all of Ireland—low, rugged hills and cliffs that feel wonderfully remote, despite being no more than a few hundred meters from roads at any point. After a short taxi transfer from your hotel, the route starts at a pass along the spine of the peninsula and follows a stretch of this ridgeline, with extensive panoramas of the Atlantic. The Caha Mountains and the Beara peninsula are clearly visible across Bantry Bay to the north and to the south the more sheltered Dunmanus Bay, with its pretty villages nestled along the shore. At the end of your walk, you arrive at Bantry House, a stately 18th-century mansion set in formal gardens on the southern shore of Bantry Bay. It was the seat of the Earls of Bantry and has extensive gardens, as well as a very pleasant café, on the grounds. Admission



here is included on your tour. Your final destination of the day is just a few miles away in the quiet coastal village of Ballylickey.

### **Seaview House Hotel, Ballylickey**

Set in manicured grounds and stunning subtropical gardens overlooking Bantry Bay, this elegant Victorian manor house is renowned for its gracious hospitality

and attention to detail—a warm and inviting staff always happy to chat, fresh flowers, attractive antiques, sumptuous fabrics, and furnishings with personality. In the award-winning restaurant—set with polished mahogany tables and crisp linen—service is friendly and informal while the menu features superb cuisine based on local produce, complemented by a well-stocked wine cellar.

## **DAY 4**

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

Today begins with a transfer (approximately one hour) 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 transfer to your accommodation for the next two nights in Killarney.

### **Cahernane House Hotel, Killarney**

The former estate of the Earls of Pembroke, this hotel was built in 1877 amidst tranquility and lush greenery on the doorstep of Killarney National Park and a 15-minute walk from the center of town. The country manor's deluxe rooms and

inviting common areas are decorated in Victorian style. The property also boasts an award-winning restaurant as well as bistro-style dining in the old wine cellar.

## 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.

### Cahernane 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 restaurant of your choosing.

### **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 (60–90 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

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**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](mailto:info@gouganebarrahotel.com)  
[gouganebarrahotel.com](http://gouganebarrahotel.com)  
Wireless Internet, hair dryers, and laundry service available.

## NIGHT 3

### **Seaview House Hotel**

Ballylickey  
Bantry, Co. Cork, Ireland  
Tel 011 353 27 50073 / 50462  
Email [info@seaviewhousehotel.com](mailto:info@seaviewhousehotel.com)  
[seaviewhousehotel.com](http://seaviewhousehotel.com)  
Wireless Internet and hair dryers available. Laundry service unavailable.

## NIGHTS 4 & 5

### **Cahernane House Hotel**

Muckross Road  
Killarney, Co. Kerry, Ireland  
Tel 011 353 64 6631895  
Email [info@cahernane.com](mailto:info@cahernane.com)  
[cahernane.com](http://cahernane.com)  
Wireless Internet, hair dryers, and laundry service available.

## **NIGHTS 6 & 7**

### **Dingle Benners Hotel**

Main Street

Dingle, Co. Kerry, Ireland

Tel 011 353 66 91 51638

Email [info@dinglebenners.com](mailto:info@dinglebenners.com)

[dinglebenners.com](http://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

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## TOUR LENGTH

8 days, 7 nights

## DEPARTURES

This tour is available daily, on request, from April 15 through September 30, 2017. Please note that the tiered tour price is based on a guarantee of a specified number of guests—should your group decrease in size, we reserve the right to alter the per person price if necessary as reflected in the Tour Price table. Please also note that the tour price includes one arrival transfer from Cork to Gougane Barra on Day 1 of the tour and one departure transfer from Dingle to Tralee on Day 8 of the tour. If traveling in a group of two or more with separate arrival and/or departure times, additional charges will apply for multiple transfers.

## TOUR PRICE

2017 departures	Per person 2–3 guests	Per person 4+ guests	Single +	Solo Surcharge
April 15–June 30	\$2,698	\$2,598	\$440	\$855
July 1–August 31	\$2,798	\$2,698	\$485	\$885
September 1–30	\$2,698	\$2,598	\$440	\$855

## 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, 3, and 4); 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
- » 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 Participation Agreement 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

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## 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.**

Please note that the tour price includes one arrival transfer from Cork to Gougane Barra on Day 1 of the tour. If traveling in a group of two or more with separate arrival times, additional charges will apply for multiple transfers.

## MOST CONVENIENT AIRPORT

Dublin International Airport (DUB), Dublin

[dublinairport.com](http://dublinairport.com)

## GETTING TO THE STARTING POINT

Several airlines—particularly Aer Lingus ([aerlingus.com](http://aerlingus.com))—offer direct flights from the east coast of the U.S. to Dublin International Airport. Airlink shuttles ([dublinbus.ie](http://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](http://raileurope.com). More information and schedules for the Irish rail system, Iarnrod Eireann, may be found at [irishrail.ie](http://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](http://aircoach.ie), [gobe.ie](http://gobe.ie), [gobus.ie](http://gobus.ie), or [buseireann.ie](http://buseireann.ie)). If



you are spending pre-tour time in Dublin, Bus Eireann ([buseireann.ie](http://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](http://visitdublin.com).

### **ENDING POINT**

**Tralee, Ireland**

**Based upon individual departure times**

A transfer (60–90 minutes) will be provided from your last hotel in Dingle 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.**

Please note that the tour price includes one departure transfer from Dingle to Tralee on Day 8 of the tour. If traveling in a group of two or more with separate departure times, additional charges will apply for multiple transfers.

### **MOST CONVENIENT AIRPORT**

Shannon International Airport (SNN), Shannon  
[shannonairport.com](http://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 three hours. For more details on schedules and fares, please visit [buseireann.ie](http://buseireann.ie).

If you are travelling to Dublin, buses to Dublin's central bus station (Busaras) are available every two hours. The journey takes six hours (with a change in Limerick). For more details on schedules and fares, please visit [buseireann.ie](http://buseireann.ie). Or you may wish to take the train. The journey from Tralee to Dublin Heuston station takes approximately four 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](http://raileurope.com). More

information and schedules for the Irish rail system, Iarnrod Eireann, may be found at [irishrail.ie](http://irishrail.ie). Please note that you might obtain better rates by booking directly with Iarnrod Eireann rather than through Rail Europe.

# Information & Policies

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## **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. Please note that the tiered tour price is based on a guarantee of a specified number of guests—should your group decrease in size, we reserve the right to alter the per person price if necessary as reflected in the Tour Price table.

*\*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](mailto:bettertravel@madriver.com)), for any additional air, hotel, rail, or transfer arrangements you may need.