

IRELAND: CORK & KERRY

# Guest Handbook

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. Orientation meeting upon arrival at your hotel. 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.

## Overnight in Gougane Barra

## 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.



## Overnight in Gougane Barra

## DAY 3

The Sheep's Head Way; 6.6 miles, moderate, 500-ft. elevation gain and 1,000-ft. elevation loss

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 (please note that Bantry House is closed on Mondays from April 14–May 31 and September 1–October 31; please avoid starting your tour on a Saturday during this time frame should you wish to visit Bantry House on Day 3). Your final destination of the day is just a few miles away in the quiet coastal village of Ballylickey.

## **Overnight in Ballylickey**

### **DAY 4**

Derrycunihy Church to Killarney; 7 miles or 9.5 miles, easy to moderate, 850-ft. elevation gain and 1,050-ft. elevation loss

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.

## **Overnight in Killarney**

## 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.



### Overnight in Killarney

## DAY 6

The Dingle Way: Ventry to Dunquin; 7.4–9 miles, easy to moderate, 900-ft. elevation gain and loss

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.

### **Overnight in Dingle**

#### **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.

### **Overnight in 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 at [countrywalkers.com/sustainable-travel](https://countrywalkers.com/sustainable-travel).

# 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, 2019. Please note that Bantry House is closed on Mondays from April 14–May 31 and September 1–October 31; please avoid starting your tour on a Saturday during this time frame should you wish to visit Bantry House on Day 3. 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

2019 departures	Per person 2 guests	Per person 3 guests	Per person 4+ guests	Single +	Solo Surcharge
April 15–June 30	\$3,198	\$3,098	\$2,998	\$530	\$975
July 1–August 31	\$3,298	\$3,198	\$3,098	\$565	\$1,010
September 1–30	\$3,198	\$3,098	\$2,998	\$530	\$975

## STARTING POINT

**Cork, Ireland** (bus/train station, airport, or city hotel)

**Based upon individual arrival times**

## ENDING POINT

**Tralee, Ireland** (bus/train station or a city hotel)

**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. **Remember: preparation is the key to ensuring your tour readiness; the more you walk or participate in aerobic exercise prior to your trip, the more you will enjoy your experience!**

## 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 water- and tear-resistant Route Notes and maps
- » 24-hour tour-related support provided by Country Walkers' local partner
- » 24-hour travel-related support provided by 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:

### **Within 24 hours of reservation confirmation:**

A Confirmation Email with a link to our online guest portal, My Account, which allows you to view important information and manage parts of your account online. Similar to other web-based portals you may already use for online banking or shopping, My Account will let you:

- a. View your active reservations.

- b. Make a payment.
- c. Access the latest version of your reservation invoice.
- d. Access your guest profile where you'll be able to update essential information and preferences (passport information, important dietary considerations, allergies, etc.).
- e. Ensure that your contact information is the most up to date (name, address, phone number, email).
- f. Provide us with your tour arrival and departure details so that we may arrange any included arrival and departure transfers and/or orientation meetings.

### **One day following reservation confirmation:**

An Online Participation Agreement Form to sign and submit (emailed).

### **Within one week of reservation confirmation:**

- a. Your reservation invoice (emailed).
- b. Welcome Documents including your specific dated Hotel Itinerary and this Guest Handbook (emailed).

### **Approximately one month prior to departure:**

Your Travel Documents including the following items (mailed):

- a. Printed water- and tear-resistant Route Notes (day-to-day walking directions; emergency contact information; detailed daily itinerary; information regarding included meals, transfers, and daily logistics; restaurant recommendations for non-included meals; town maps; and information regarding optional activities and transportation).
- b. Printed Travel Documents (your specific dated Hotel Itinerary, Daily Itinerary Overview, and—if included—Arrival & Departure Transfers Overview).
- c. Luggage tags.

### **At your orientation meeting:**

- a. Maps.

## **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, especially by your driver(s). 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** (bus/train station, airport, or city hotel)

### **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 at least 45 days prior to departure through our online portal, My Account. (A Confirmation Email with a link to My Account will be sent to you within 24 hours of reservation confirmation.)**

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 AIRPORTS

Dublin International Airport (DUB), Dublin

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

Shannon Airport (SNN), Shannon

**[shannonairport.ie](http://shannonairport.ie)**

## GETTING TO THE STARTING POINT

**From Dublin:** 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.

Due to the length and cost of a private transfer from Dublin to Cork, we recommend taking a train or bus from Dublin to Cork; Country Walkers is unable to make arrangements for private transfers originating in Dublin. 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).

**From Shannon:** The main carriers here, Aer Lingus and Ryanair, are backed by several U.S.-based airlines, including United Airlines, Delta, and American Airlines. Buses depart Shannon Airport hourly for Cork. The journey takes approximately 2½ hours. For more details on schedules and fares, please visit [buseireann.ie](http://buseireann.ie). Alternatively, Country Walkers would be pleased to arrange a 2½-hour private transfer for you from Shannon directly to your first hotel, Gougane Barra, at an additional cost of \$110 per person (based on two travelers). Please contact us to request this service as soon as possible. The cost is payable directly to Country Walkers and is due with your final payment 90 days prior to departure. Our normal cancellation policy applies.

## PRE-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).

Alternatively or additionally, you may wish to stay in Gougane Barra at the hotel where you will spend Nights 1 & 2 of the tour (keep in mind this is a remote area). Country Walkers would be happy to make a reservation on your behalf. Please contact us to request this service as soon as possible to ensure availability. The cost (subject to change) of \$270 USD per double/twin room or \$165 USD per double-for-single use room, including tax, breakfast, and dinner, is payable directly to Country Walkers and is due with your final payment 90 days prior to departure. Our normal cancellation policy applies. These rooms are reserved as a service for you and include a service charge. Better rates may be available online; however, please note that if you make your pre-tour reservation directly with the

hotel, you may not be able to secure the same room as assigned to you for the nights on tour.

## ENDING POINT

**Tralee, Ireland** (bus/train station or a city hotel)

### **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, please provide us with your arrival and departure details at least 45 days prior to departure through our online portal, My Account. (A Confirmation Email with a link to My Account will be sent to you within 24 hours of reservation confirmation.)**

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 or private transfer. 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). Alternatively, Country Walkers would be pleased to arrange a 2¼-hour private transfer for you from Dingle directly to Shannon Airport or a Shannon/Limerick hotel at an additional cost of \$140 per person (based on two–three travelers) or \$90 per person (based on four–eight travelers). Please contact us to request this service as soon as possible. The cost is payable directly to Country Walkers and is due with your final payment 90 days prior to departure. Our normal cancellation policy applies.

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.

## **POST-TOUR ACCOMMODATIONS**

Should you wish to spend an additional night or two at your final hotel in Dingle, we would be happy to make a reservation on your behalf. Please contact us to request this service as soon as possible. The cost is payable directly to Country Walkers and is due with your final payment 90 days prior to departure. Our normal cancellation policy applies. These rooms are reserved as a service for you and include a service charge. Better rates may be available online; however, please note that if you make your pre-tour reservation directly with the hotel, you may not be able to secure the same room as assigned to you for the nights on tour. Please call for current rates.

# Information & Policies

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## GUARANTEED DEPARTURES

Country Walkers guarantees the departure of every tour\*, which gives peace of mind for every guest. From the moment your reservation is confirmed, 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 early.

*\*except in cases of force majeure*

## RESERVATIONS

Please note that the method by which Self-Guided Adventures are reserved differs in important ways from typical scheduled tours. We encourage all guests to refrain from purchasing plane tickets or making contingent plans until they receive confirmation from us. Here's how the process works:

1. **Reservation Request.** The process begins when you make a reservation request for this tour, either online at [countrywalkers.com](https://countrywalkers.com) or by calling Country Walkers at 800.464.9255. Please note the online form does not on its own constitute a final reservation or a guarantee of tour space. If you use the form, one of our Tour Consultants will call within one business day. Outside of 90 days prior to the tour start date, a \$350 per person deposit is required at the time of the reservation request. Within 90 days prior to the tour start date, your final tour cost is required. If we are unable to accommodate you on your preferred dates/tour (or an alternative of your choice), this payment is fully refunded.
2. **Reservation Request Receipt.** Upon receipt of your deposit and preferred tour start dates, you will be provided with an emailed reservation request receipt, stating your reservation number and reconfirming the details of your reservation request (tour name, departure date, and tour price), while we get working on securing availability with all the hotels.
3. **Confirmation.** Our goal is to confirm your reservation request within five business days; however, this may take longer for a variety of reasons. All of our accommodations are available on a request basis; we do not hold blocks of rooms and, therefore, must confirm availability at the time of your request. If possible, we recommend you provide a range of back-up tour start dates at the time of your initial request. Once your reservation is confirmed, a Tour Consultant will contact

you. Once you have received our official confirmation, you can make flight reservations.

4. **Final Payment.** Final tour payment is due 90 days prior to tour departure date. As pricing is determined over a year in advance, we may be forced to change our listed price over time. However, please note that once your reservation is confirmed, we will always honor the price quoted when you booked.

## TOUR ACCOMMODATIONS

**Hotel Availability:** Since we typically use small, boutique properties for Self-Guided tours, securing availability can sometimes prove challenging, especially on short notice. (Again, we encourage guests to book early and be flexible.) On some tours, if our standard property is not available, we may have alternate hotels of equivalent quality that we have approved. We'll book one of these alternates if the standard property is not available. If the hotel or room type requires a surcharge, we will contact you prior to reserving it. We will not reserve non-approved properties.

**Room Category:** We typically book standard rooms. If you are interested in upgrading your room type, please contact a Tour Consultant. Please bear in mind that upgrades are not available at every hotel; surcharges will be determined once we know what's available. Triple rooms (or rooms with two beds) can be a rarity. Should you desire such an accommodation, we may need to offer two rooms—supplements may apply. Please allow us extra time to sort the options out.

## ORIENTATION MEETING & TRANSFERS

Though Self-Guided tours are a predominantly private experience, there are occasions where you may be in contact with others. Because guests are allowed to pick their own start dates, there may be other Country Walkers travelers staying in the same properties as you or even starting on the same date. For this reason, we may need to combine your orientation meeting with that of other guests or ask you to share on-tour transfers. This does not mean you need to walk together.

## 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. Prior to your adventure you will be asked to sign a Participation Agreement to accept your responsibilities.

## **CHANGES IN PLANS**

After booking, you may change your reservation's destination, departure date, departure city, or Tour Extensions for a \$100-per-person administrative fee. We will waive this fee for changes made within the first two weeks of booking. Any cancellation charges or applicable fees imposed by hotels or operators will be passed along to the guest. We encourage you to consult our cancel policy for the particular trip you have booked. All changes are subject to availability and cannot be guaranteed. Please note that tours with seasonal pricing may involve a higher price point. Please note: This change policy does not apply to Special Departures. Please notify us in writing.

## **CANCELLATIONS AND REFUNDS**

Cancellations must be made in writing and fees are applied as noted. Cancellation refunds will be calculated as of the date we receive your written cancellation. All payments for travel services not provided to the guest will be refunded in accordance with these Terms and Conditions and in accordance with Country Walkers' cancellation policy. Exceptions to this cancellation policy cannot be made for any reason, including personal emergencies, illness, or weather. 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.

### **Self-Guided Adventures**

- » Cancellations received on or before 91 days prior to the start of the trip: \$150 per person
- » Cancellations received 90 to 61 days prior to the start of the trip: 25 percent loss of trip price
- » Cancellations received 60 or fewer days prior to the start of the trip: 100 percent loss of trip price

## TRAVEL PROTECTION PLAN

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

## SELF-GUIDED FLIGHT CONCIERGE

Our knowledgeable team will happily find flight itineraries that sync perfectly with your international Self-Guided Adventure. Simply request a price quote at the time of booking and, once your reservation is confirmed, we will contact you with available options. Please note that you are under no obligation to purchase the quoted flight itinerary.

Learn more about the Self-Guided Flight Concierge—including our complete policies—on our website at: <https://www.countrywalkers.com/self-guided-air-terms-and-conditions/>.

Other travel arrangements not included in the price of your trip (such as local train tickets or pre/post-tour excursions) can be purchased through your local travel agent, or Better Travel, a Vermont-based agency (800.331.6996 or [bettertravel@madriver.com](mailto:bettertravel@madriver.com)).

# Ireland at a Glance

## ENTRY REQUIREMENTS



**U.S. citizens:** Passports are required. To minimize any inconveniences during travel, the State Department recommends that passports be valid for at least six months following your scheduled return. Visas are not required for stays of up to 90 days. For more information, see [travel.state.gov](http://travel.state.gov).

## CURRENCY

The Republic of Ireland uses the euro (EUR). For current exchange rates, visit [oanda.com](http://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.

### 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.

## 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](http://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](http://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."

### 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.

## 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](http://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](http://qwikcast.com). For historical average temperatures and rainfall, see [weatherbase.com](http://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.



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](http://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](http://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](http://aerlingus.com).

### Train

**Irish Rail:** [irishrail.ie](http://irishrail.ie), the national railway company site with schedules, fares, and pass options.

**Raileurope:** [raileurope.com](http://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.)

## 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](http://buseireann.ie), as well as Dublin bus for traveling in and around Dublin, [dublinbus.ie](http://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](http://ireland.com/en-us/about-ireland/travelling-within-ireland).

### 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/](http://ebstudio.net/irelandbycar/).

# Packing List

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## 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. If you are bringing a favorite pair of older boots, please check that soles and seams are in good shape before you depart! By the time you're ready to join your walking tour, you should be able to complete 4-9 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.
- » 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

- » Cell phone (an International cell phone or your own cell phone with an International calling plan): for both practical and safety reasons, **we strongly advise that you carry a cell phone while traveling and at all times while you are out walking.** (Please note you may encounter intermittent coverage while on the trail or in remote areas.)
- » Travel adapter/s (connectors that change the plug shape to match the electrical outlet, thereby allowing a dual-voltage appliance or a converter from one country to be plugged into the wall outlet of another country) and converter/s (only if bringing electric appliances, such as a hair dryer, iron, or any appliance that has a mechanical motor. If the appliance is electronic, which contains a computer chip, a converter is usually not required.)
- » 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
- » Bathing suit for optional use of hotel pools or spas
- » 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
- » Folding umbrella
- » Waterproof poncho (in addition to aforementioned rain gear, especially if expecting wet weather): while the aforementioned rain gear may suffice, a poncho offers the advantage of being lightweight, compact, big enough to cover both you and your backpack, long enough to allow for sitting on wet surfaces or act as a shelter, cool enough to wear during summer rains, and is cheap!
- » 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, car, or boat rides
- » Alarm clock

## ONLINE STORE

To help you prepare for your trip, we've carefully selected a range of comfortable, easy-packing travel apparel and accessories from leading brands such as Eagle Creek, Craghoppers, Patagonia, Tilley, and others. Whether you're traveling to Vietnam, walking in Canada, or exploring the hills of Ireland, our Travel Shop is here to ensure you're ready to enjoy your adventure to the fullest.

**Visit the CW Travel Shop at [cw.newheadings.com](http://cw.newheadings.com).**