

Wicklow Way Guided Mini-Break Holiday:



The county of Wicklow is often called 'the Garden of Ireland', alluding to the fine agricultural land and magnificent scenery in the hinterland of Dublin, Ireland's capital city. There are several fine country houses with estates: Powerscourt, Avondale, Russborough, Kilmacurragh, Kilruddery and Mount Usher. However, Wicklow is not all country estates and green, rolling hills. The Wicklow Mountains (which together with the Dublin Mountains form a single range) constitute the highest unbroken highland area in Ireland. The predominant rock is granite, forming a plateau mainly covered with peaty soil. Most of the valleys which cut into this plateau run down to the east coast (Glencullen, Glencree, Glendalough and Glenmalure) or west to the plains of Kildare and Carlow (Glen of Imaal and the Upper Liffey Valley).

The jewel of Wicklow is undoubtedly Glendalough, 'the valley of the two lakes' where St. Kevin founded a monastery in the 6th century. A number of buildings remain (mainly from the 10th and 11th centuries), including the cathedral, a chapel known as St. Kevin's Kitchen, the round tower and several subsidiary churches. The nearby interpretative centre has an audio-visual presentation on monastic life in Ireland and a scale model showing how the monastic city looked in its heyday. The Upper Lake at Glendalough is in a deep U-shaped glacial valley which can be appreciated in full by making the steep climb to the viewpoint of the Spink.

Wicklow is an ideal area for walkers who want to enjoy splendid scenery without too much arduous terrain. Most of the walks are on well-walked tracks, many of them waymarked, with some stretches on minor roads. The climate in Wicklow, being on the east coast, is noticeably drier than in the West of Ireland. Access to the region is simple from Dublin and a tour of Wicklow can easily be combined with a visit to Ireland's capital.

Trip Outline:

Day 1 You start your walking holiday along the shore of Lough Dan, one of the largest lakes in the Wicklow Mountains, continuing along through the "lost village", then on to the summit of Brown Mountain, Scarr, and by joining the Wicklow Way on Paddock Hill you return on foot to Laragh. This is one of the "classic" Wicklow walks and has to be experienced to be appreciated. Dinner and overnight in Laragh.

Walk Details: Approx. Distance: 16 kms. Approx. Duration: 6 hours. Max. Height: 641 metres. Pathways, some road walking, forest track and trails, with open mountain paths. Can be wet underfoot/soft. Boots essential.

Day 2 This morning you leave the Glendalough valley via the Upper Lake and the 'Spink' to visit the old lead works, disused mines and the upper regions of the famous National Park that is the Glendalough Valley. After lunch you will enjoy a 'Free afternoon' - this is an opportunity to spend some "quality/personal time" in the famous monastic village of Glendalough with its seven Churches and St. Kevin's Round Tower. Overnight and dinner in Laragh

Walk Details: Approx. Distance: 8kms. Approx. Duration: 3.5 hours. Max. Height: 600 metres. Paths, forest track and trails with open mountain side. Can be wet underfoot. Boots essential.

Day 3 Leaving the Glendalough Valley, you now walk south via the Giants Cut, Derrybawn and Cullentragh Mountains to descend into the Glenmalure Valley and the tiny hamlet of Drumgoff on the banks of the Avonbeg River. The views as you leave Glendalough and cross over the mountains are breathtaking and help to give a great understanding of the plateau that is the Wicklow Mountains. This is not a long day's walking BUT is rewarded by the quality of the trek. Overnight and farewell evening dinner in Glenmalure.

Walk Details: Approx. Distance: 10 kms. Approx. Duration: 4.5 hours. Max. Height: 650 metres. Path, some road walking, forest track and mountain path. Can be wet underfoot. Boots essential.

Day 4 The Glen of Imaal and rugged Lugnaquilla dominate today's walk as you enjoy your final day in the beautiful 'Garden of Ireland'. From the summit of Lugnaquilla you have views to the north towards Dublin City and to the south towards the Saltee Islands off the coast of Wexford. Being the third highest mountain in Ireland, Lugnaquilla offers a fitting climax to the week's walking/hiking in Wicklow, which is the largest upland granite plateau in Northwest Europe. Overnight and evening farewell meal at Glenmalure.

Walk Details: Approx. Distance: 12 kms. Approx. Duration: 6 hours. Max. Height: 930 metres. Path, some road walking, forest track, open mountain side and paths. Can be wet underfoot. Boots essential.

Day 5 Departures. After breakfast we bring you to Wicklow Bus/Rail station for approx. 09.30/10.00 hrs. from where there is an excellent bus/rail service to Dublin or to Rosslare.

Holiday Includes – 4 nights bed in room with private shower/ bathroom. Full Irish breakfast each morning. Picnic lunch (on walking days only), 4 Evening Dinners, 4 Days Walking with an expert Irish Guide who accompanies the group for the duration of the holiday. Transport to/from each day's walking locations. Luggage transfers when required. Transfers to nearest bus/train station at end of holiday (also within our timetable). Public Bus Service may be used.

Not Included - any boat trips, personal drinks, entrance fees to theatres, parks or museums etc. , medical expenses or gratuities.

If we do not hear from you within two weeks of the start date of the tour, we will assume that you will make your own way to the first night's accommodation. Your guide will meet you there at 18.00 hrs. for a Briefing Session followed by dinner with the group at 19.00 hrs.

- Should you require extra night's accommodation before or after your holiday, please advise us at the time of booking.

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Please note that Ireland can be a bit 'damp' both underfoot and overhead, with some liquid sunshine! Irish weather is unpredictable and the nature of walks can change quickly and dramatically because of the weather. This is one of the many pleasant aspects of walking in Ireland. We reserve the right to alter this itinerary due to weather conditions or the walking ability of each group.

2012 Dates:

June 5 - 9

August 7 - 11

Difficulty of Walks: 1 Boot