

Burren Self-Guided Mini-Break



'Burren' is derived from the Irish word boireann meaning 'place of stone', and the name could not be more apt. There is no part of Ireland where rock so obviously dominates the landscape as it does in the Northwest corner of County Clare. The Burren covers an area of some 260 square kms and is famous for its bare limestone pavements dissected by deep crevices and traversed by countless stone walls.

Almost devoid of trees and surface water, it has been described as 'lunar' in its appearance, an ancient limestone plateau beneath which is a labyrinth of pot-holes, caves, streams and lakes. Surprisingly, this bizarre and apparently hostile environment is a botanist's paradise as around ¾ of Ireland's plant species are found in the Burren.

Day 1: Arrive to Doolin where you will be spending your first night. On arrival at your first accommodation, your hostess will give you your full Detailed Information pack. She will also be able to recommend some of the excellent local restaurants and suggest some of the pubs where you will find great traditional Irish music.

Access for this holiday is made by a taxi or bus connection from Galway or Shannon Airports to Doolin. This service is available all year round.

Day 2: You will be driven guesthouse to the start of your walk at the Cliffs of Moher.(9km) From here you follow the "Burren Way" along the cliff tops to "Hags Head" & return the same route but enjoying a completely different panorama. On arrival back to the Visitor Centre where you started this walk – you will then follow the "Burren Way" along old green roads and one primary road to finish back in Doolin Village.

Alternatively - should you wish to avail of this opportunity to visit the wonderful Aran Islands – your morning transport will take you to the pier in Doolin to avail of one of the many ferry services out & back to any of the three islands. Overnight in Doolin.

Walk Details: For Cliffs of Moher walk - Distance: 17kms. Duration: 5 hours. Max. Ascent: Level – descending at end of day. Some road walking, muddy and rocky grass tracks, can be wet underfoot. Boots essential. Walking close to exposed cliff edge.

Day 3: You will be driven a short distance from your guesthouse to the start of your walk at Ballinalacken Castle. From here you follow the "Burren Way" along old green roads into the heart of the Burren, with wonderful limestone pavements and walls all around you. There are fantastic views over Galway Bay and the Aran Islands as you continue on, passing Fermoye Chapel, to Lismacshedy. Old ring forts can be found along the way as you continue on past the impressive Newtown Castle and finish in Ballyvaughan. Overnight in Ballyvaughan.

Walk Details: Distance: 20 kms. Duration: 6 hours. Max. Ascent: 250m. Some road walking, muddy and rocky grass tracks, can be wet underfoot. Boots essential.

Day 4: A short drive will take you to the start of today's walk. Walking across Moneen Mountain and continuing on over to the magnificent Turlough Hill with it's Iron Age Ring Fort – you then descend to the historical Corcomroe Abbey to finish your walk at Bell Harbour. Return to Ballyvaughan for overnight.

Walk Details: Distance: 18kms. Duration: 6 hours. Max. Ascent: 280m. Rocky walking with no clear path a lot of the way. Some road walking. Boots essential.

Day 5: After a full Irish Breakfast depart for Galway City, where there is a good Bus/Train Service all the major cities/Airports.

We reserve the right to alter this itinerary due to weather conditions, the conditions of the walks, or the ability of clients. The above Walk Details are only a guideline - these may not be accurate on the day due to weather or individual walking pace.

Please note that Ireland can be a wet country both underfoot and overhead.

Irish weather is unpredictable, that's one of the "joys" of walking in Ireland, and the nature of walks can change quickly and dramatically because of the weather. For all self-guided holidays you must be able to map read and navigate with a compass.

There is some roadwalking on self-guided holidays. Some parts of the walks in Ireland are very remote in places. This is true of the Burren and especially of Connemara. Very often there are no opportunities to purchase a mid-day lunch – a packed lunch is required in such locations.