

The Wild Atlantic Way *8-day small group walking tour*



One of Europe's most beautiful coastal routes, the Wild Atlantic Way is a sensational journey of soaring cliffs, hidden beaches, off-shore islands, colourful villages, and stunning coastal bays.

Starting in Castlebar and ending in Clifden, this 8-day guided walking tour will see you explore the coast of County Mayo, as well as the islands of Achill, Clare and Inishbofin. You'll encounter stunning scenery en route, and enjoy warm hospitality in the towns and villages you visit along the way. Highlights will include a climb of Croagh Patrick, Ireland's holiest mountain, a walk to beautiful Keem Bay on the island of Achill, and a chance to explore the medieval-era history of Clare and Inishbofin Islands. Throughout, you'll be accompanied by an experienced walking guide and up to 11 travelling companions.

Day 1: Castlebar – Achill Island (D)

Arrive into Knock airport and meet our driver for your transfer to the vibrant market town of Castlebar. In Castlebar, you'll join your guide and fellow travellers at 4pm and, after a short briefing, transfer approx. 1 hour to Achill island, your home for the next two nights.

You stay tonight at Roskeel House, a charming B&B situated within the village of Keel on the coast of Achill Island. Roskeel is a short 5-minute walk from the beach – some of the rooms have a view of the ocean. Restaurants, cafes, pubs are right on your doorstep.

In the evening, stroll to a nearby restaurant to enjoy a delicious dinner in the company of your travelling companions.

Your Financial Protection

All monies paid by you for the air holiday package shown [or flights if appropriate] are ATOL protected by the Civil Aviation Authority. Our ATOL number is ATOL 3145.

For more information see our booking terms and conditions.

Day 2: Slievemore Deserted Village hike (B, L)

This morning, begin your exploration of Achill Island.



Achill is tiny – 5 miles long and 3 miles wide – but it contains a number of lovely walking routes. Here are found quiet roads perfect for walking and cycling, and mountain trails leading to rugged cliffs. The beaches are pristine. Fishing and traditional farming ensure the survival of rare flora and fauna. Nature lovers can enjoy the wildflowers, sea colonies and bird life, including good prospects for sighting the endangered corncraek.

Today's walk will take you across (often very boggy!) moorland and past an inland lake to reach the Deserted Village at Slievemore, which consists of 80-100 stone cottages set along a mile-long stretch of road on the slopes of Slievemore mountain. Some of these 'booley' settlements were occupied only during summer months primarily to allow cattle to graze on summer pasture. This area is also rich in megalithic tombs and archaeological artefacts, evidence of much earlier settlement of the island.

At the end of the walk, you'll be returned to Roskeel House. Dinner this evening to own account.

Terrain: Grass tracks, gravel tracks and paved road.

Distance: 11km

Ascent: 176 m; **Descent:** 353m



Day 3: Keem Strand (B, L)

Continue your exploration of Achill island with a hike to Keem Strand, considered by many the most beautiful beach in Ireland. Keem Strand occupies a sheltered bay between the cliffs of Benmore and the Croachaun Mountain, backed by grassy slopes which support a variety of plants and wildlife. There will be time to take a break and rest at Keem – if you're feeling hardy, you may like to go for a swim in the bay!

From Keem, the circular route continues to Achill Head and along a bog valley to "Boycotts", former home of 19th-century English land agent, Charles Boycott, whose role during the Irish Land War gave rise to the phrase "to boycott".

At the end of the walk, you'll join with the vehicle and depart for the town of Westport, where you spend the next two nights.



Westport is a delightful heritage town situated on the Carrowbeg River and overlooking the Atlantic Ocean. A distinctive feature of the town is its tree-lined boulevard, and the charming old bridges which span the river Carrowbeg. There are plenty of good restaurants, pubs and shops to explore during your stay.

While in Westport you stay at the Wyatt Hotel, which sits right in the heart of town. Dinner this evening is to your own account. The Wyatt's award-winning restaurant and brasserie offers excellent food, while the Cobbler's bar serves lighter meals.



Terrain: Paved roads, travel tracks and grassy, muddy trails. Some off-trail walking over hillsides, boggy conditions underfoot.

Distance: 8.6km

Ascent: 673m; **Descent:** 353m



Day 4: Clare Island hike (B, L, D)

Today starts with a boat trip across Clew Bay to the mountainous and sparsely populated Clare Island, the largest island in the bay. Beginning your walk from the pier, you'll soon reach the lighthouse and, if time allows, climb to the highest point of the island with views back to Slievemore Mountain, on Achill Island, and to Croagh Patrick, tomorrow's hike! A hike around this magnificent island offers fabulous scenery and much else of historic interest.

At the end of the day, return to Westport for a group dinner and overnight at the Wyatt.

Terrain: Paved roads, gravel tracks & some grassy, uneven & muddy trails. Off-trail walking with some steep climbs.

Distance: 12.7km

Ascent: 348m; **Descent:** 347m



Day 5: Croagh Patrick hike (B, L)

Today will see you climb part way up Croagh Patrick, Ireland's holiest mountain and the place of many pilgrimages. Starting from Murrisk on the northern slopes, you'll follow the main pilgrim route, climbing approx. 400m to reach a high point on the shoulder of the mountain, below the summit (weather and time allowing, some members of the group may wish to climb to the summit; your guide will advise locally if this is possible). From here, you continue from the monastic settlement at Aghagower east along the ancient "Tochar Phadraigh" route, hiking around the southern foothills of Croagh Patrick in order to complete a full circuit of the mountain. The walk ends back at Murrisk, finishing at the visitor centre at the base of the mountain, where you can enjoy some well-earned refreshments. Later you will be taken to the ferry terminal for the 1-hour ferry crossing to Inishbofin Island.

You stay this evening at the Dolphin Hotel on Inishbofin Island. This small, owner-run hotel has been built using recycled local stone and weathered cedar. There are nine spacious rooms, and two outdoor deck areas for summer dining, as well as a small organic garden.

Terrain: Gravel tracks, loose scree, rocky and uneven conditions underfoot, muddy trails

Distance: 8km

Ascent: 470m

Day 6: East Inishbofin Island hike (B, L)

Your penultimate walk follows a circular route around the eastern coast of Inishbofin island. Along the way, you'll enjoy views of the stunning coastal scenery; of long sandy beaches backed by dramatic cliffs, and of the Atlantic waters. This is a gentler walk than yesterday's climb, with only brief hill sections.



The island is a protected conservation area and home to a variety of breeding birds, including the endangered corncrake which has been breeding and nesting on Inishbofin for many years. Inishbofin is also rich in history, containing the remains of monastic sites dating back to the 14th-century. Coastal fortifications, houses and barracks are dotted around the island from the time of Cromwell, who set up a penal camp here for priests and monks. It is believed that Inishbofin Island was inhabited as far back as 8000-4000bc.

Traditional Irish music and song is still heard on Inishbofin and the local pub has live music most evenings, which you might like to enjoy this evening.

Terrain: Paved roads, gravel tracks & rocky, uneven off-trail sections.

Distance: 11km

Ascent: 173m; **Descent:** 180m

Day 7: West Inishbofin Island hike (B, L)

Enjoy another hike on this special island, focusing today on its western region. Facing the Atlantic Ocean, Inishbofin's western coast is wild and rugged – many sea birds can be seen here. As well as the varied bird life, you'll also be able to enjoy Inishbofin's wildflower meadows and, with luck, you may spy some seals off the coast of Inishbofin!



Later today, you'll return to the mainland by ferry and then make the short journey to Clifden on the mainland coast for dinner and overnight.

You stay tonight at the Station House, a comfortable hotel located close to the centre of Clifden. This evening, enjoy a group dinner at a local restaurant in Clifden to mark the end of your journey.

Day 8: Departure (B)

Breakfast and transfer to Knock Airport for your flight out.

Booking Information:

*This is a scheduled group tour accommodating up to 12 walkers and departing at fixed dates throughout the year. The cost to join is **£1,745 per person**, and the optional single supplement is £435. This itinerary can also be booked on a private basis, either as a self-drive or with private guide and vehicle. For more details, including private departure costs, please [contact us](#).*

For a full list of upcoming departure dates, please refer to the price guide tab on our [Wild Atlantic Way overview page](#).

Includes:

- Private airport transfers from/to Knock Airport
- Accommodation as described on twin/double basis
- Local expert guide
- Delicious home cooked breakfast each day
- Picnic lunches
- 3 sumptuous evening meals in good restaurants
- Transport of luggage
- Transfers to and from each day's location

Excludes:

- International flights (allow approx. £200pp from the UK using Aer Lingus)
- Lunch and dinner to own account except where stated otherwise in itinerary
- Travel insurance
- Personal expenses and tips