

The South of Ireland

8-DAY SELF-DRIVE & HIKE TOUR





Self-Drive & Hike Experience

Ireland is one of the world's most rewarding destinations for a combined self-drive and hiking adventure, giving travellers the freedom to explore the country's dramatic coastlines and majestic mountains while also stepping out on foot to immerse themselves in its most remarkable landscapes. With winding coastal routes, peaceful valley roads, charming villages, and some of Europe's best waymarked trails, Ireland offers a perfect balance of exploration, discovery, and outdoor adventure.

A self-drive & hike journey lets you savour iconic regions—while also uncovering quiet trails, hidden beaches, ancient pathways, and upland viewpoints that can only be reached on foot. Each day brings a new experience: scenic drives through postcard-perfect countryside followed by the option to enjoy a handpicked walk, from gentle coastal loops to exhilarating mountain hikes. Along the way, Ireland's legendary hospitality, vibrant culture, and world-class food scene elevate every moment of your journey.

HIGHLIGHTS

Scenic Coastal & Mountain Drives

Enjoy unforgettable road journeys along Ireland's most celebrated routes—from the cliffs and coves of the Wild Atlantic Way to heathered mountains, peaceful glens, and dramatic headlands. Drives over iconic mountain passes, such as Healy Pass or Conor Pass, offer sweeping panoramas at every turn.

Daily Hiking Options

Most days include optional hikes tailored to your ability and interests. Explore cliff-top trails, lakeside paths, lighthouse loops, ancient monastic valleys, and remote mountain ridges—each revealing a different facet of Ireland's natural beauty.

Heritage, Culture & Craft

Between walks, discover medieval towns, artisan craft studios, island communities, and early monastic sites. Visit distilleries, castles, and historic estates that bring Ireland's cultural tapestry vividly to life.

Food & Culinary Delights

Savour Ireland's exceptional gastronomy—from seafood fresh off the Atlantic to creative tasting menus, farmer's markets, and cosy cafés. Regions such as West Cork, Kerry, Galway, and Dublin shine with culinary excellence.

Island Adventures & Hidden Gems

Take ferries to offshore islands, wander through walled gardens, explore remote peninsulas, or simply pause at a viewpoint to admire the ocean stretching endlessly to the horizon.



Daily Itinerary

- 1 Arrive in Dublin
- 2 Dublin to Laragh with Glendalough Hike
- 3 Laragh to Cork via Rock of Cashel
- 4 Cork to Killarney with Sheep's Head Hike
- 5 Killarney to Dingle via Ring of Kerry with Derrynane Mass Path Hike
- 6 Dingle Peninsula Hike
- 7 Dingle to Galway via Cliffs of Moher
- 8 Depart Galway



The South of Ireland Self Drive Tour

DETAILED ITINERARY

Day 1: Dublin

Welcome to Ireland's vibrant capital city—Dublin! Upon arrival at the airport, you have the flexibility to collect your rental car today or wait until tomorrow before setting off on your first driving day. If you prefer a relaxed start without navigating city traffic, we recommend transferring directly to your centrally located accommodation and collecting your car the following morning.

After checking in, take some time to explore this historic and endlessly fascinating city. Wander Dublin at your own pace—strolling Georgian squares, crossing the River Liffey, or browsing lively neighbourhoods such as Grafton Street and Temple Bar. If you'd like a deeper introduction, you can join a privately guided walking tour to uncover the city's most iconic landmarks and colourful stories.

No visit to Dublin is complete without experiencing St. James's Gate and the world-famous Guinness Storehouse, where you can learn the story of Ireland's most iconic stout before enjoying a pint with sweeping panoramic views from the Gravity Bar.

Settle in and enjoy your first evening in Ireland, soaking up the culture, hospitality, and charm that make Dublin such a captivating beginning to your self-drive adventure.

MEALS

Dinner recommendations will be listed in your route notes.

OVERNIGHT

4* Hotel in Dublin City

RENTAL VEHICLE

Manual or Automatic Transmission rental car options available

TRAVEL TIME

20–45 minutes from the airport to your hotel



Day 2: Dublin to Laragh with Glendalough Hike

This morning, begin your journey south from Dublin and enjoy a beautifully scenic drive into the heart of the Wicklow Mountains. Leaving the energy of the capital behind, the route quickly transforms into rolling countryside, quiet forests, and heather-clad hills as you approach the peaceful village of Laragh, your base for the night. This gateway to Glendalough is perfectly positioned for exploring some of Ireland's most celebrated natural and historic landscapes.

Once in Laragh, leave your vehicle behind and step straight into the tranquillity of the Wicklow Way, Ireland's oldest and best-known long-distance walking trail. From here, well-marked forest paths guide you gently into the glacial valley of Glendalough, one of the country's most treasured heritage sites. Founded by St. Kevin in the 6th century, Glendalough is famed for its early medieval monastic settlement, serene lakes, and dramatic mountain backdrop.

Depending on your energy and interest, there are multiple trail options to choose from. Adventurous hikers may wish to take on the more challenging upper-level loop, climbing toward one of the stunning viewpoints overlooking the Upper Lake. The reward is a sweeping panorama of deep forests, still waters, and steep valley walls—one of the most iconic vistas in Ireland.

For a more relaxed afternoon, follow one of the gentler lakeshore or woodland trails. These peaceful walks bring you past ancient ruins, through stands of native woodland, and along boardwalks that reveal the delicate flora and vibrant birdlife of the area.

After exploring this legendary valley at your own pace, return to the village of Laragh—perfect for an evening of calm, warm hospitality and anticipation of the adventures still to come.

MEALS

Only Breakfast included.
Dinner recommendations will be listed in your route notes

OVERNIGHT

Guesthouse or 3* Hotel in Laragh

TRAVEL TIME

Dublin to Laragh /
Glendalough will take 1.5-2 hours without allocating time for stops.



Day 3: Laragh to Cork

After breakfast, you continue your journey south from Laragh, travelling at your own pace along a route rich in history, culture, and scenic beauty. Today is designed to be flexible, allowing you to explore the places that inspire you most as you make your way toward Cork.

Your first major highlight is the magnificent Rock of Cashel, one of Ireland's most celebrated heritage sites. Rising dramatically from the Tipperary landscape, this ancient limestone outcrop is crowned with medieval towers, a soaring cathedral, and the beautifully preserved Cormac's Chapel with its remarkable stone carvings. Take your time exploring the ruins, enjoying both the sweeping views across the Golden Vale and the extraordinary history embedded in every wall.

From Cashel, you may choose one or more of several optional detours—each offering its own charm:

Cahir Castle

One of Ireland's best-preserved castles, set on a rocky island in the River Suir. Its towering walls and atmospheric halls offer a vivid look into medieval life

Kilkenny City

A vibrant medieval town known for its winding streets, artisan shops, and the elegant Kilkenny Castle. Ideal for lunch, a stroll, or a deep dive into Irish craftsmanship.

Blarney Castle

Explore beautiful gardens, woodland walks, and the famous Blarney Stone—said to bestow the “gift of eloquence” upon all who kiss it.

After a day rich in discovery, continue to Cork, Ireland's culinary capital. Check into your hotel before you head into the city to enjoy Cork's vibrant dining scene at your leisure.

MEALS

Only Breakfast included.

Dinner recommendations will be listed in your route notes

OVERNIGHT

4* Hotel or guesthouse in Cork City

TRAVEL TIME

Dublin to Cork via the Rock of Cashel will take 3–3.5 hours without allocating time for stops.



Day 4: Cork to Killarney

Today offers two wonderful ways to travel from Cork to Killarney, depending on whether you'd like a leisurely scenic drive or more time to explore Killarney's world-famous landscapes and attractions.

Option 1: Scenic Coastal Route via the Wild Atlantic Way

If you prefer a day filled with dramatic scenery and charming coastal towns, follow the Wild Atlantic Way west from Cork. Your journey will bring you through:

- Kinsale – Ireland's colourful gourmet capital, perfect for a morning coffee and a stroll along the harbour.
- Bantry – Overlooking its beautiful bay, an ideal stop to stretch your legs or browse local shops.
- Kenmare – One of Ireland's prettiest towns, known for its boutiques, cafés, and traditional charm.

This route showcases rugged coastlines, rolling green landscapes, and picturesque villages—perfect for those who want to enjoy a full day immersed in coastal scenery before arriving in Killarney for the evening.

Option 2: Direct to Killarney – Explore Killarney & the National Park

If you'd prefer a more relaxed day with extra time to enjoy Killarney, take the direct inland route from Cork. Once you arrive, you can spend the day exploring:

- Killarney National Park – Lakes, waterfalls, mountains, and woodland trails.
- Muckross House & Gardens – A stately Victorian mansion surrounded by beautifully manicured gardens.
- Torc Waterfall – A short, scenic walk to one of Killarney's most photographed natural landmarks.
- Ross Castle – A 15th-century lakeside fortress with spectacular views over Lough Leane.
- Killarney Town – Filled with lively pubs, traditional music, craft shops, and cafés.

This is the ideal choice for travellers who want to slow the pace and enjoy the beauty, history, and hospitality of Killarney at their leisure.

Whichever option you choose, your journey from Cork to Killarney promises a memorable blend of landscapes, culture, and warm West of Ireland charm.

MEALS

Only Breakfast included. Dinner recommendations will be listed in your route notes

OVERNIGHT

4* Hotel or guesthouse in Killarney.

TRAVEL TIME

Option 1: 4–4.5 hours

Option 2: 1.25–1.5 hours

Both the above do not allocate time for stops.



Day 5: Killarney to Dingle via Ring of Kerry

Today you embark on one of Ireland's most celebrated scenic journeys: the world-famous Ring of Kerry. Renowned for its sweeping coastal views, rugged mountains, golden beaches, and timeless rural charm, this iconic route offers an unforgettable immersion into the wild beauty of the southwest.

As you travel through this storied landscape, the scenery shifts constantly—from the vast, open Atlantic to sheltered bays dotted with islands, from dramatic cliffs to tranquil lakes. Charming villages such as Glenbeigh, Cahersiveen, Waterville, and Sneem invite you to pause, stroll, and soak up the warmth of local life. Along the way, you'll discover ancient stone forts, hidden beaches, and scenic lookouts that showcase the very best of County Kerry.

Optional stops include the striking Kerry Cliffs, offering towering views over Puffin Island and the Skelligs; the historic Skellig Ring extension with its rugged, remote character; or a visit to Derrynane House, home of famed statesman Daniel O'Connell, surrounded by lush parkland and beaches. With complete flexibility, you can tailor the day to your interests—photography, heritage, gentle walks, artisan cafés, or simply enjoying the freedom of the open road.

As you come to the end of the driving route you will detour to Dingle via the coastline and Inch Beach for your overnight.

MEALS

Only Breakfast included. Dinner recommendations will be listed in your route notes

OVERNIGHT

4* Hotel or guesthouse in Kenmare.

TRAVEL TIME

3.5-4 hours without allocating time for stops.



Day 6: Slea Head Hike

This morning, a short transfer brings you from Dingle town to just beyond the beautiful curve of Ventry Harbour, where today's unforgettable coastal walk begins. From here, you follow one of the most scenic and historically rich stretches of the Dingle Peninsula—an 8.5 km route around the world-famous Slea Head, the westernmost point in Ireland and one of the most photographed locations on the Wild Atlantic Way.

Your hike carries you along quiet cliff-top trails with panoramic views across the Atlantic Ocean. Along the route, you will have the opportunity to see the remarkable beehive huts (clocháns), ancient dry-stone dwellings dating back hundreds of years. These perfectly preserved structures offer a fascinating glimpse into early Gaelic settlement and the long history of life on the peninsula.

As you continue west, the views open dramatically toward the Blasket Islands, a remote and rugged archipelago famed for its wildlife, literary heritage, and haunting beauty. On a clear day, the islands appear almost within touching distance—an inspiring sight as you near the end of your hike.

Your walk finishes in the tiny village of Dunquin, the most westerly settlement in Ireland and home to the iconic pier that descends in a zig-zag path toward the sea. Here, you have two wonderful options: visit the Blasket Centre, an award-winning interpretive museum telling the story of island life, or—weather permitting—take a boat trip across to the Great Blasket Island for an unforgettable encounter with its history, scenery, and resident seals.

At a pre-arranged time, we will collect you from Dunquin and return you to Dingle, where you can enjoy another relaxing evening in this lively fishing town.

MEALS

Only Breakfast included.
Dinner recommendations will be listed in your route notes

OVERNIGHT

Boutique Guesthouse or B&B in Dingle.

TRAVEL TIME

15 min in morning to start of hike with 25 in the evening.



Day 7: Dingle to Galway via Cliffs of Moher

After breakfast, bid farewell to the Kingdom of Kerry and begin your journey north along Ireland’s wild Atlantic edge. Your day starts with a scenic drive from Dingle to Tarbert, where you’ll board the ferry for a short but memorable crossing to Kilimer—a perfect way to transition from Kerry into County Clare. Once ashore, follow the beautiful coastal road through Kilkee, Doonbeg, and Lahinch, each offering rugged seascapes and colourful village charm.

Your main highlight today is the unforgettable Cliffs of Moher, one of Ireland’s most iconic natural wonders. Rising dramatically 214 metres (702 ft) above the Atlantic, the cliffs are best experienced up close—and the most immersive way to do this is on foot. We recommend the Hag’s Head Trail (approx. 5 km), a spectacular coastal hike along the southern end of the cliffs. This route offers breathtaking views of sheer drops, swirling seas, and seabird colonies, all leading toward the main Cliffs of Moher Visitor Centre. From here, you can return to your car on foot via the same trail or take a convenient shuttle back to the start point.

Continuing north, travel through the extraordinary Burren—a remarkable karst landscape often described as “otherworldly.” Its limestone pavements, rare wildflowers, and sweeping Atlantic views make this a scenic and memorable part of the journey.

Arriving in Galway, the bohemian heart of the west, you’ll quickly feel the city’s creative energy. Take time this evening to wander the lively streets, sample its exceptional culinary offerings, enjoy traditional music, or explore historical highlights such as the Spanish Arch or St Nicholas’ Collegiate Church.

MEALS

Only Breakfast included.
Dinner recommendations will be listed in your route notes

OVERNIGHT

4* Hotel Galway.

TRAVEL TIME

5–5.5 hours including a 20 min ferry crossing.



Day 8: Depart Galway

This morning, savour one last delicious Irish breakfast before departing for the airport or starting your next adventure.

The drive from Galway to Dublin Airport takes approx. 2.5–3 hours and we recommend being at the airport at least 3 hours before your departure.

If you have an early flight we recommend adding an extra day to overnight in Dublin before your flight or travelling to Dublin following your time in Galway on Day 7.

MEALS

Only Breakfast included. Dinner recommendations will be listed in your route notes

TRAVEL TIME

2.5–3 hours to Dublin Airport from Galway.

What's Included:

- 4* Hotel & Boutique Guest House accommodation
- Complimentary access to our app, tailor-made for your tour, containing all your documents, Google Map Links for navigation & points of interest
- Emergency telephone support
- Detailed, easy to read, digital Route Suggestions
- Extra days/ nights booking on request
- Full pre-departure information to help you get the most from your Irish experience
- Holiday Specialist to assist with planning any additional days, additional activities, travel, airport transfers, etc.

What's Excluded:

- Airfare
- Meals not mentioned as included
- Travel insurance
- Medical costs, personal expenses, gratuities
- Items of a personal nature
- Any items not specifically listed as included in the programme
- Extra hotel nights before or after the tour

“ We gave Ireland Walk Hike Bike our itinerary and they planned everything for us - accommodations were excellent, the hire car was great, the private experiences were fabulous, the routings were well-planned. All-in-all a really great trip!! ” — **NICOLEL.**



Accommodation



We partner with a carefully curated selection of 4* hotels and boutique guest houses, chosen for their exceptional comfort, warm hospitality, and distinctive local character. Each property offers a stylish and welcoming retreat at the end of your touring day, blending high-quality service with the unique charm that makes Irish accommodation so memorable.

Our 4* hotels provide an elevated level of comfort, featuring thoughtfully designed rooms, excellent on-site dining, quality leisure facilities, and attentive professional service. These properties often sit in prime locations—close to historic towns, coastal viewpoints, or national parks—allowing you to enjoy both convenience and elegance throughout your stay.

Complementing these are our handpicked boutique guest houses, where intimate scale and personal attention create a truly special atmosphere. Often family-run or owner-managed, these charming properties showcase the best of Irish hospitality. Expect beautifully styled rooms, character-filled interiors, and a warm, genuine welcome from hosts eager to share local knowledge, dining recommendations, and hidden gems you might otherwise miss.



Culinary Delights

Ireland's culinary offerings are a well-kept secret, providing hearty and abundant fare—a perfect reward after a satisfying hike through the hills. Breakfast is served daily at your accommodation. Vegetarian and gluten-free options are available with advance notice. If you have specific medical dietary needs, please inform us in advance to arrange suitable meals. Recommendations for dinner spots are provided for your leisure on your free evenings.



Upgrade Options

For those seeking a more luxurious stay during your holidays we can offer upgraded accommodations in some locations. These provide additional amenities and a higher level of service, ensuring guests enjoy a more indulgent experience while still being immersed in the beauty of Ireland's landscapes.

Boutique Hotels: These are carefully selected hotels offering a blend of contemporary luxury and traditional Irish charm. They typically feature stylish, well-appointed rooms, fine dining options, spas, and additional amenities such as lounges and on-site bars. Many boutique hotels are located in scenic settings or within walking distance of popular hiking routes.

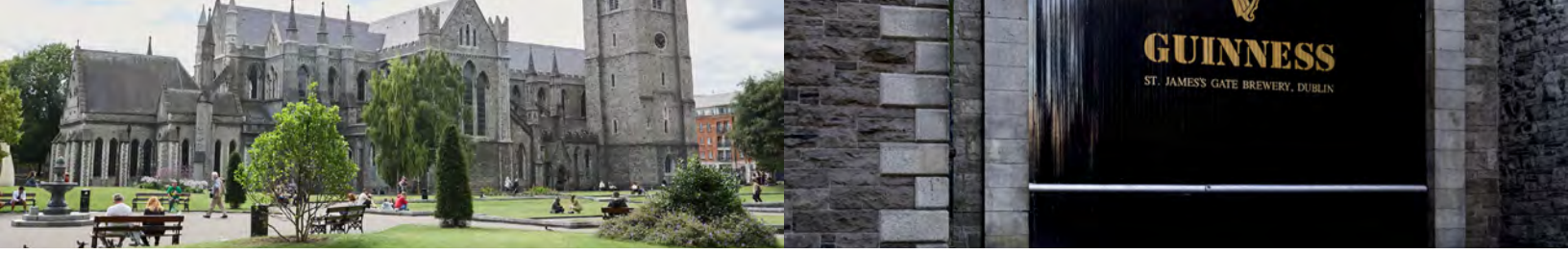
4 or 5-Star Hotels: These hotels offer a higher level of comfort and service, with spacious, well-designed rooms, gourmet restaurants, fitness centers, and sometimes pools or wellness facilities. The emphasis is on premium quality and attentive service, creating a relaxing environment after a day of hiking.

Country Houses and Manor Hotels: Set in tranquil rural locations, these stately homes and country houses offer a more peaceful, refined experience. They often come with lush gardens, elegant dining rooms, and a welcoming atmosphere. Staying in a country house can feel like being a guest in a grand private estate, with the charm of old-world Ireland.

Highend Guesthouses: These upgraded guesthouses offer a more intimate setting than hotels but still provide higher levels of comfort and service. Rooms may be more spacious with added amenities such as premium bed linens, complimentary refreshments, and en-suite bathrooms with higher-quality toiletries.

These upgraded accommodation options are ideal for those who want to combine outdoor adventures with a touch of luxury, offering guests a perfect balance of relaxation, comfort, and access to the natural beauty of Ireland.

“ Everything was perfect! Great personalized service; knowledgeable, very nice and very experienced guides. Great choice of walks, accommodations, restaurants, side visits and excellent recommendations. They treat their walkers as special guests. I have used many walking companies in Europe and I know I am a tough, demanding customer. They are in the top 1%, they excel in every area. ” — **ROSA G.**



Exploring Dublin

Pre-Tour Recommendations

If you plan to arrive a few days early before beginning your adventure, Dublin is the perfect base. Ireland's capital blends rich history, lively culture, and warm hospitality, offering endless ways to immerse yourself in the country before you set out into the peaceful landscapes of Wicklow. With world-class museums, iconic landmarks, and a vibrant food and music scene, Dublin sets the tone for an unforgettable Irish journey.

Things to See and Do in Ballycastle

Trinity College & the Book of Kells

Walk through Ireland's oldest university, famed for its cobbled courtyards and historic library. The 9th-century Book of Kells is one of the country's greatest artistic treasures.

Dublin Castle & Chester Beatty

Explore centuries of Irish history at Dublin Castle, then wander next door to the Chester Beatty Library—an award-winning museum housing rare manuscripts, artworks, and global artefacts.

Kilmainham Gaol

A powerful and moving museum offering insight into Ireland's struggle for independence, housed within a former 19th-century prison.

St Stephen's Green & Grafton Street

Enjoy a relaxed stroll through this elegant city park, then wander nearby Grafton Street, known for its boutique shops, cafés, and talented street musicians.

The Guinness Storehouse

Discover the story of Ireland's most famous stout across seven interactive floors, finishing with panoramic views over the city from the Gravity Bar.

Temple Bar

The cultural heart of Dublin, filled with traditional pubs, live music, colourful murals, and a buzzing atmosphere day and night.

Phoenix Park

One of Europe's largest enclosed city parks—home to Dublin Zoo, sweeping lawns, woodland trails, and a resident herd of wild fallow deer.

Why Ireland Walk Hike Bike?

For more than 25 years, Ireland Walk Hike Bike has been crafting journeys that reveal the heart and soul of Ireland. Our founder, Linda Woods, built the company on a simple belief: travellers deserve the time and space to truly connect with Ireland—its landscapes, its people, and its stories. Rather than rushing from place to place, our tours are designed to help you slow down, savour every moment, and experience the country in a more meaningful, immersive way.

A luxury self-drive tour with us blends freedom and flexibility with the reassurance of expert local planning. Whether you're travelling for scenic exploration, cultural discovery, or pure relaxation, our team of travel specialists is here to ensure your holiday is seamless, personal, and unforgettable..

- Irish Owned & Operated
- More Than 25 Years in Business
- Highly Knowledgeable Local Guides
- 4.9 Stars on Google Reviews
- Exceptional Customer Service
- Handpicked Accommodations

We've designed our Tours to maximize every moment of your holiday. Every detail is taken care of so you can just show up, unplug and relax.

- **Tailormade app** with all your documents included along with Google Maps integrated into each day of your Route Suggestions.
- With our Self-Guided Tours you can book your tour **start date to match your travel plan** (subject to accommodation availability)
- **Select accommodations** with genuine local hospitality
- An expert, local **holiday specialist** during the planning process to help with any questions you may have in the build up to your trip
- **Pre-Tour briefing**, in person to go through the entire itinerary and fit you on your bike
- **Emergency contact** number for any issues while you are on the routes



Travel Insurance

We highly recommend that you obtain suitable travel insurance before your departure date to protect yourself throughout your trip. This coverage should include comprehensive medical insurance for illness and injury, trip cancellation, and should cover for your other travel arrangements such as flights, pre and post-tour arrangements and your personal possessions.

Our travel insurance partners are World Nomads.

Visit www.irelandwalkhikebike.com/questions/travel-insurance-partner to get a quote, or you can contact your own insurance provider.

Getting to Dublin

There are four primary international airports in Ireland: Dublin, Shannon, Cork, and Belfast (Aldergrove) International. Several smaller regional airports—Kerry, Knock, Donegal, and Belfast City (George Best)—also provide convenient access from mainland Europe and the UK.

For tours beginning in Dublin, Dublin Airport is by far the most convenient arrival point. It is Ireland's busiest and best-connected airport, served by hundreds of international flights daily. We recommend arriving at least one day before your tour begins to allow time to relax and enjoy the city before heading south toward the Wicklow Mountains.

Dublin Airport (www.dublinairport.com)

Located just 10 km from the city centre, Dublin Airport offers excellent transport links. Over 1,000 buses operate daily to Dublin City and beyond, with direct services stopping right outside the arrivals area. Taxis and car-hire options are also readily available. .

Booking Details

ENQUIRIES

For questions about this hiking tour, reach out to our Ireland Travel Specialists at info@irelandwalkhikebike.com.

RESERVATIONS

To book your tour, sign up online [HERE](#) or email us at info@irelandwalkhikebike.com

PAYMENT CONDITIONS

A deposit of €150.00 per person is required at the time of booking. Balancing payments are then required no less than 8 weeks prior to the tour start date.

Our full terms and conditions can be found at www.irelandwalkhikebike.com/terms-conditions

CANCELLATIONS

Should you need to cancel, cancellation charges will apply. These are calculated from the day written notification is received by the company or our agent as a percentage of the total tour price, including surcharges as follows:

More than 56 days from start date: Deposit only

35 to 55 days from start date: 30%

15 to 34 days from start date: 50%

14 days to departure day: Nil Refund

To book your place, sign up online [HERE](#) or email us at info@irelandwalkhikebike.com.

We look forward to helping you plan an amazing adventure in Ireland — one you'll remember for years to come!

—Ireland Walk Hike Bike

Interested in exploring Ireland beyond your chosen hiking tour?

Ask us about our cycling and self-drive tours. Book two tours back to back, or add a pre or post-tour adventure.

Ireland Walk Hike Bike has got you covered!

Ireland Walk Hike

Bike

+35366 7186181

Tralee

info@irelandwalkhikebike.com

Follow us on our social media for more Ireland travel inspiration: [!\[\]\(4406e0f3c17d7dcab32dbbaf5d4fe35c_img.jpg\) Facebook](#) [!\[\]\(91addc5be131d0b80cd6ef999666a6dc_img.jpg\) Instagram](#) [!\[\]\(d2db12242016b842079e8d30c863aad7_img.jpg\)](#)