

The South of Ireland

8-DAY SELF-DRIVE TOUR





Self-Drive Experience

Ireland is one of the world's most enchanting self-drive destinations, offering travellers the freedom to explore dramatic coastlines, storied landscapes, and vibrant cultural heartlands at their own pace. With its winding coastal roads, historic manor houses, boutique retreats, and world-class food scene, Ireland blends natural beauty.

A self-drive journey allows you to savour the country's most iconic regions while also discovering its quieter, more intimate corners—places where Irish hospitality, heritage, and storytelling come alive. From the rugged headlands of the Wild Atlantic Way to the serene lakelands and elegant Georgian towns, each day brings new vistas, new flavours, and new memories.

HIGHLIGHTS

Scenic Coastlines & Mountain Passes: Ireland's coastal and mountain routes are among the most breathtaking in Europe. Picture yourself cruising along windswept headlands, secluded bays, and dramatic cliffs, or navigating iconic passes like Healy Pass or Conor Pass—each offering sweeping panoramas worthy of a postcard.

Heritage, Culture & Craft: Venture off the main routes into charming villages, medieval towns, and historic estates. Visit world-famous distilleries, artisan workshops, ancient castles, and early monastic sites that reveal the depth and richness of Ireland's cultural tapestry.

Food & Culinary Experiences: Indulge in Ireland's exceptional food scene—from Michelin-listed restaurants to coastal seafood shacks and farm-to-fork cafés. West Cork, Killarney, Galway, and Dublin offer outstanding culinary moments that elevate the entire journey.

Island Adventures & Hidden Gems: Take ferry trips to remote islands, wander through walled gardens, explore dramatic coastal trails, or simply enjoy a quiet moment overlooking the Atlantic from your luxury suite or private terrace.

A luxury self-drive tour through Ireland blends freedom, comfort, local connection, and unforgettable scenery. It's an immersive, elegant way to experience the essence of Ireland—one winding road, one warm welcome, and one spectacular view at a time.



Daily Itinerary

- 1 Arrive in Dublin – explore the city
- 2 Dublin to Cork via the Rock of Cashel
- 3 Cork to Killarney
- 4 Ring of Kerry
- 5 Dingle Peninsula
- 6 Dingle to Doolin
- 7 Doolin to Galway
- 8 Departure



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 Cork

After breakfast, you begin your journey south from Dublin into the heart of Ireland, 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 3: 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 4: 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 return to Killarney, the mountains of the MacGillycuddy's Reeks rise dramatically around you, completing a circle of some of Ireland's most breathtaking landscapes.

MEALS

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

OVERNIGHT

4* Hotel or guesthouse in Killarney.

TRAVEL TIME

3.5–4 hours with no time allocated for stops.



Day 5: Dingle Peninsula

This morning, set out west to experience one of Ireland’s most enchanting coastal landscapes—the Dingle Peninsula, the westernmost point in Europe and a region steeped in myth, history, and breathtaking scenery. As you leave your accommodation and follow the winding coastal roads, you’ll discover a landscape shaped by ocean winds, ancient settlements, and the rich traditions of the Gaeltacht (Irish-speaking region).

Your journey takes you to remarkable historic sites including the Gallarus Oratory, one of Ireland’s best-preserved early Christian churches, and the famous clocháns (beehive huts), whose dry-stone architecture has endured for over a thousand years. Along the route, dramatic views of the Blasket Islands unfold—rugged, uninhabited islands renowned for their wild beauty and literary heritage.

Continue your drive along the world-famous Sleat Head, one of the most scenic stretches on the Wild Atlantic Way. Here, steep cliffs plunge into turquoise waters, sandy coves appear between rocky outcrops, and every bend in the road reveals another postcard-perfect vista. Take time to stop at viewpoints, artisan craft shops, or local cafés to truly savour the charm and authenticity of this extraordinary peninsula.

After completing the loop, arrive in the colourful seaside town of Dingle, your home for the night. Known for its friendly pubs, incredible seafood, and vibrant music scene, Dingle offers the perfect balance of lively atmosphere and coastal tranquillity. Enjoy a stroll around the harbour, explore the town’s boutiques and galleries, or settle into a cosy restaurant for a memorable evening meal.

MEALS

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

OVERNIGHT

Boutique Guesthouse or B&B in Dingle.

TRAVEL TIME

2–2.5 hours, including drive around Sleat Head, not allowing for stops.



Day 6: Dingle to Doolin

After breakfast, it's time to leave the Kingdom of Kerry behind and begin your journey north toward the colourful village of Doolin, gateway to the Cliffs of Moher and the Burren. Today offers two equally memorable route options, allowing you to tailor the day to your preferred pace and interests.

Option 1: Coastal Route via Ferry

Travel northeast from Dingle to Tarbert, where you can board the short Shannon Ferry crossing to Kilimer—a relaxing and scenic way to enter County Clare. From here, follow the spectacular Loop Head coastline, stopping in charming seaside towns such as Kilkee, Doonbeg, and Lahinch. Each offers opportunities for coastal walks, fresh seafood, and panoramic Atlantic viewpoints.

Continue onward to the Cliffs of Moher, one of Ireland's most iconic natural wonders. These soaring cliffs rise dramatically above the Atlantic Ocean and are best appreciated on foot along the coastal paths. You may also choose to take a boat cruise from the base of the cliffs for a completely different—and unforgettable—perspective. Arrive in the lively village of Doolin, famous for its traditional music, warm hospitality, and proximity to the Burren.

Option 2: Inland Route via Limerick & Bunratty

Travel east from Dingle toward Limerick, a vibrant riverside city with medieval landmarks, excellent cafés, and museums. You may wish to stop and explore King John's Castle, stroll along the Shannon riverside, or enjoy lunch in the city centre.

From Limerick, continue north with the option to visit Bunratty Castle & Folk Park, one of Ireland's best-preserved medieval fortresses and heritage villages. Further along, you may also take a scenic detour into the Burren National Park, with its unique limestone landscapes, rare flora, and quiet walking trails. Finish your day at the Cliffs of Moher (time permitting) before arriving at your accommodation in Doolin, ready to enjoy its lively pubs and traditional Irish music.

MEALS

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

OVERNIGHT

4* Hotel or guesthouse in Doolin or Lahinch.

TRAVEL TIME

Option 1: 3–3.5 hours including a 20 min ferry crossing.
Option 2: 3.5–4 hours
Both the above do not allocate time for stops.



Day 7: Doolin to Galway

This morning, depart the charming village of Doolin and travel north toward the lively harbour city of Galway. As you make your way through the limestone landscapes of the Burren, you may wish to stop at some of the region's most remarkable cultural and geological sites. One such highlight is Poulnabrone Dolmen, a striking Neolithic portal tomb standing solitary on the karst plateau. Nearby, the engaging Burren Visitor Centre in Kilfenora offers excellent insight into the region's unique ecology, archaeology, and heritage—an ideal stop for those who want to deepen their understanding of this extraordinary landscape.

Continue to Galway, a city renowned for its colourful streets, vibrant arts scene, and exceptional food culture. Spend time exploring the pedestrian-friendly Latin Quarter, where musicians, cafés, and artisan boutiques bring the city to life. Visit landmarks such as the Spanish Arch, Galway Cathedral, or the bustling market stalls near St Nicholas' Collegiate Church, or simply enjoy the atmosphere as you wander through the lively laneways.

Galway offers a diverse range of dining options—from traditional Irish pub fare to innovative Michelin-recommended restaurants—making it a wonderful place to enjoy lunch before continuing your journey.

If you have an early departure tomorrow, yater in the afternoon, begin your return eastward to Dublin or Dublin Airport for your final overnight.

Whether you choose to enjoy a last evening in Ireland's cultural capital or rest up before your next day's departure, this concludes your journey along some of the most beautiful coastal and cultural landscapes in the country.

MEALS

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

OVERNIGHT

4* Hotel in Galway or Dublin.

TRAVEL TIME

1.5- 2 hours from Doolin to Galway, not allowing for stops.



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.

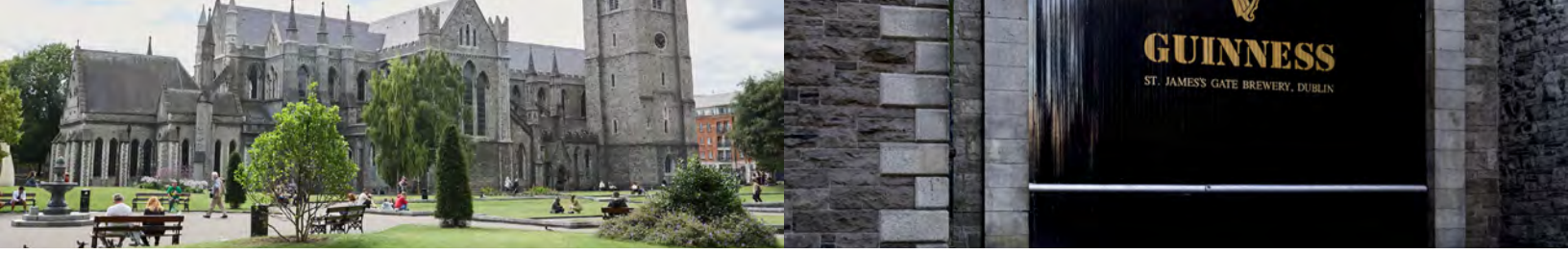
4 or 5-Star Hotels: These hotels offer a higher level of comfort and service, with spacious, well-designed rooms, gourmet restaurants, fitness centers, and sometimes pools or wellness facilities. The emphasis is on premium quality and attentive service, creating a relaxing environment after a day of 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: [!\[\]\(3a3d478a97a3c7090b6b6914a68b80f4_img.jpg\) Facebook](#) [!\[\]\(fdf8d0b3f3ccf3be9a6d5d668b6f1f0c_img.jpg\) Instagram](#) [!\[\]\(775a0e990da54fc76123689cff36f0a9_img.jpg\)](#)