

The Sheep's Head Way

7-DAY SELF-GUIDED HIKING TOUR





The Sheep's Head Peninsula

The Sheep's Head Peninsula is one of Ireland's most serene and unspoilt walking destinations, offering a wonderfully peaceful hiking experience along narrow headlands, dramatic cliffs, and quiet inland trails. Tucked between Bantry Bay and Dunmanus Bay in West Cork, Sheep's Head is celebrated for its raw natural beauty, gentle solitude, and warm local character. Far less travelled than other coastal regions in the southwest, the Sheep's Head Way rewards walkers with a sense of remoteness and calm that feels truly special.

Hiking the Sheep's Head Way carries you along rugged cliff-top paths, grassy ridgelines, old country lanes, and bogland tracks that open onto some of the most breathtaking seascapes in Ireland. The route showcases the essence of the Wild Atlantic Way – sweeping ocean vistas, sculpted headlands, tranquil coves, and the ever-changing colours cast by Atlantic light across the hills of West Cork.

HIGHLIGHTS

Sheep's Head Lighthouse: Standing at the very tip of the peninsula, this remote lighthouse is the culmination of the trail and offers exhilarating views across both bays and out to the distant horizon.

Dunmanus Bay & Bantry Bay: The peninsula's twin bays create constantly shifting scenery, from calm sheltered waters to dramatic cliff faces, giving walkers a remarkable variety of viewpoints.

Quiet, Unspoilt Trails: With minimal development and fewer visitors than neighbouring peninsulas, Sheep's Head is the perfect destination for those seeking peaceful, meditative walking in a landscape that feels timeless.

Village Charm: Small villages like Kilcrohane and Ahakista provide warm welcomes, traditional pubs, and glimpses of everyday rural life in West Cork.

Archaeological & Natural Interest: Discover ancient standing stones, old farmsteads, coastal birdlife, and wildflower-strewn paths as you traverse the peninsula.



Daily Itinerary

- 1 Arrive in Bantry
- 2 Bantry to Glanlough
- 3 Cahergal to Kilcrohane
- 4 Kilcrohane to Durrus
- 5 Depart Durrus



The Sheep's Head Self Guided Hike

DETAILED ITINERARY

Day 1: Bantry

Upon arriving in Bantry, settle into your accommodation and take a moment to enjoy the friendly, laid-back atmosphere of this vibrant West Cork town. Overlooking the sheltered waters of Bantry Bay and surrounded by rolling hills, Bantry makes an ideal starting point for your Sheep's Head adventure. If time allows, stretch your legs with a gentle stroll along the waterfront or explore the town's colourful streets filled with cafés, artisan shops, and local craft boutiques.

For a scenic warm-up walk, consider visiting Bantry House and Gardens, one of Ireland's most historic stately homes. Its terraced gardens offer beautiful views across the bay, while wooded paths and formal walkways provide a peaceful introduction to the landscape. Alternatively, follow the harbour paths to watch fishing boats come and go, or enjoy a short walk toward the quiet lanes on the edge of town.

As evening settles in, Bantry offers plenty of inviting restaurants and cosy pubs where you can savour fresh local produce and the warm hospitality for which West Cork is known. Whether you choose a relaxed meal overlooking the bay or traditional music in a lively pub, Bantry provides a welcoming and atmospheric start to your journey.

Rest well tonight as you prepare for the spectacular coastal trails awaiting you on the Sheep's Head Peninsula.

MEALS

None.

OVERNIGHT

Select guesthouse accommodations included as standard. Hotel upgrades available here on request.



Day 2: Bantry to Glanlough

Your first full day on the Sheep's Head Way begins by leaving the bustle of Bantry behind and joining the marked trail that follows the northern side of the peninsula. The route quickly immerses you in the peaceful, rural landscapes for which West Cork is so beloved. With Bantry Bay stretching out below and gentle hills rising ahead, the opening section offers a beautiful and balanced introduction to the terrain you'll encounter over the days to come.

The trail soon begins to climb gradually across open farmland and low, heather-covered slopes. As you ascend, wide views unfold across the bay, revealing the distant Caha Mountains, the Beara Peninsula, and the ever-changing play of Atlantic light on the water. This northern corridor of the Sheep's Head Way is wonderfully quiet—perfect for settling into a relaxed pace and enjoying the natural rhythm of the walk.

Your route leads you toward Knockboolteenagh, one of the early high points on the trail. From here, the panoramas are especially rewarding: rolling green fields, patchworked farms, scattered white cottages, and the long blue sweep of Bantry Bay stretching back toward the town you left behind. It's a place that invites a pause to take in the stillness of the landscape and appreciate the wild simplicity of the peninsula.

From Knockboolteenagh, the trail gently undulates across the hills, following old pathways, grassy ridgelines, and quiet sections of bogland bordered by low stone walls. The scenery shifts between open skies and sheltered pockets of woodland, offering a lovely variety throughout the day. A final descent brings you into the peaceful rural hamlet of Glanlough, where you finish your walk surrounded by the calm beauty of West Cork's countryside.

You will transfer to Kilcrohane at the end of your hike, your base for the next 3 nights.

MEALS

Only Breakfast included.
Lunch can be purchased in a local store. Dinner recommendations will be listed in your route notes

OVERNIGHT

Select guesthouse accommodations included as standard. Hotel upgrades unavailable.

HIKE DISTANCE

14.40 km / 8.95 mi

ELEVATION GAIN

460 m / 1509 ft

TERRAIN

32% paved paths and roads, 68% trails
Some roadwalking and forestry tracks, some muddy & rocky tracks and some sections with no clear path. Can be very wet underfoot.
. Boots essential.

TRANSFER TIME

15 minutes



Day 3: Cahergal to Kilcrohane

Today's hike is one of the true highlights of the Sheep's Head Way, carrying you around the western tip of the peninsula—a wild, windswept, and wonderfully remote stretch where the Atlantic feels close enough to touch. Starting from Cahergal, the route leads you steadily toward the edge of the land, offering wide-open views across both Dunmanus Bay and Bantry Bay as you approach the peninsula's dramatic point.

The early part of the trail follows rugged upland paths and old trackways, revealing remnants of the area's mining history. Passing the old copper mines, you get a glimpse into the lives of those who once worked these isolated hillsides. As you continue west, the landscape becomes increasingly elemental—open sky, rolling waves, and cliffs shaped by centuries of Atlantic winds.

Reaching the very tip of the peninsula, the iconic Sheep's Head Lighthouse comes into view. Perched above the swirling waters below, the lighthouse stands guard over the meeting point of the bays, offering one of the most breathtaking viewpoints on the entire Wild Atlantic Way. This is a perfect place to pause, breathe in the sea air, and take in the spectacular, uninterrupted views stretching far along the coast.

From the lighthouse, the trail curves northward and then east along the rugged northern shoreline. This section is truly exhilarating, with panoramic cliffside views, rocky outcrops, and the steady sound of the Atlantic surf accompanying your steps. Partway along, you'll find the much-loved Bernie's Cupán Tae, a welcoming café and rest stop—an ideal place to enjoy a break and a warm drink in an unforgettable setting.

The final stretch brings you back toward the village of Kilcrohane, descending through open hillsides and quiet country lanes. As you arrive, the warm charm of this coastal village provides the perfect end to a magnificent day's walking.

MEALS

Only Breakfast included. Lunch can be purchased in a local store. Dinner recommendations will be listed in your route notes

OVERNIGHT

Select guesthouse accommodations included as standard. Hotel upgrades unavailable.

HIKE DISTANCE

21.00 km / 13.00 mi

ELEVATION GAIN

662 m / 2172 ft

TERRAIN

23% paved paths and roads, 77% trails
Grass mountain tracks with some rocky sections. Gravel tracks and some road walking. Boots essential.

TRAVEL TIME

15 minutes



Day 4: Kilcorhane to Durrus

This morning begins with a short transfer from Kilcrohane to the peaceful village of Ahakista, a sheltered harbour community set along the southern side of the Sheep's Head Peninsula. From here, you rejoin the Sheep's Head Way and begin your eastward journey toward Durrus. Today's stage follows gentler terrain than the previous days but offers no shortage of beautiful views, quiet paths, and the tranquil coastal character that defines this peninsula.

Leaving Ahakista, the trail meanders through a mix of woodland paths, open farmland, and low hills that rise gently above Dunmanus Bay. This southern shoreline feels wonderfully calm and reflective, with sweeping bay views framed by rolling fields, stone walls, and the distant silhouettes of the Mizen Head and Beara peninsulas beyond. The walking here is peaceful and steady, allowing you to settle into a relaxed rhythm as you take in the expansive coastal scenery.

As you continue east, the path passes through small rural settlements and quiet country lanes, offering glimpses of everyday West Cork life—grazing sheep, traditional farmyards, and tidy whitewashed cottages. The landscape here is softer than the rugged western tip, but no less captivating, with the shimmering waters of Dunmanus Bay almost constantly in view.

The trail gradually curves inland toward the welcoming village of Durrus, the gateway to both the Sheep's Head and Mizen peninsulas. Durrus is known for its friendly atmosphere, artisan foods, and cosy pubs—an ideal place to celebrate the end of your final walking day. Enjoy a relaxing evening surrounded by the warmth and charm of West Cork, reflecting on the spectacular coastal journey you've completed along the Sheep's Head Way.

MEALS

Only Breakfast included. Lunch can be purchased in a local store. Dinner recommendations will be listed in your route notes

OVERNIGHT

Select guesthouse accommodations included as standard. Hotel upgrades unavailable.

HIKE DISTANCE

18.20 km / 11.30 mi

ELEVATION GAIN

420 m / 1378 ft

TERRAIN

40% paved paths and roads, 60% trails
Some road walking, muddy grass and muddy tracks, rocky in places. Some road walking. Boots essential.

TRANSFER TIME

10 minutes



Day 5: Depart Durrus

This morning, savour one last delicious Irish breakfast before departing for the airport or starting your next adventure. You will be transferred to Bantry, from here is a regular bus service from Bantry to Cork, taking approx. 2 hours.

If travelling to Dublin today, both the train and bus stations are located in Cork. Train travel to Dublin typically takes about 2.5 hours, while the bus takes around 3.5 hours.

MEALS

Breakfast

*GRADING LEVELS

Moderate

Terrain includes open mountain and bogland, uphill and downhill sections with some steep slopes, with a maximum height of around 800 meters (2,600 feet). Suitable for hikers with a good fitness level, capable of hiking up to 25 kms (15 miles) a day, and average 4-5 hours.

Elevation Graphs

Please see below daily elevation graphs for your selected tour



Bantry to Glanlough Hike | Max Elev: 254m | Elev Gain: 460m | Elev Loss: 408m



Lighthouse Hike Hike | Max Elev: 242m | Elev Gain: 622m | Elev Loss: 673m



Kilcrohane to Durrus Hike | Max Elev: 120m | Elev Gain: 420m | Elev Loss: 435m

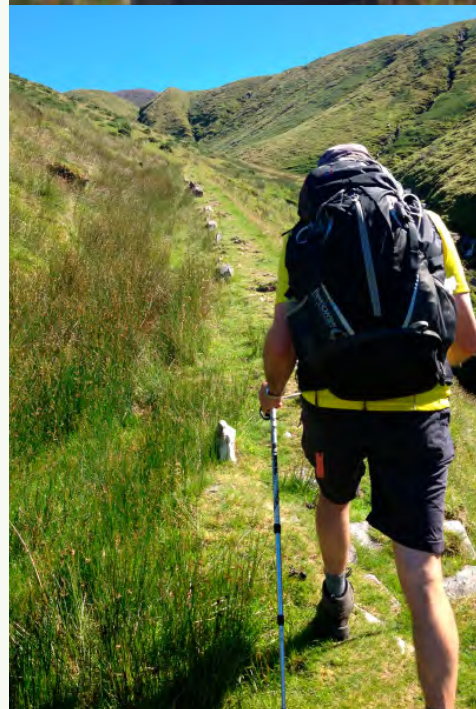
What's Included:

- Handpicked B&B (or small hotel) accommodation at each location in an en-suite room with delicious breakfast included
- Complimentary access to our app, tailor-made for your tour, containing all your documents, GPS navigation & points of interest
- Emergency telephone support
- Detailed, easy to read, digital Route Notes with marked maps of each route
- Extra days/ nights booking on request
- Full pre-departure information to help you get the most from your Irish hiking 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
- Airport transfers to/from Dublin
- Medical costs, personal expenses, gratuities
- Items of a personal nature and hiking gear
- Any items not specifically listed as included in the programme
- Extra hotel nights before or after the tour

“ I wholeheartedly recommend this company and would go with them again without hesitation. Our guide could not have been more perfect for our group, the routes we took were stunningly beautiful and the Irish people could not have been more warm and welcoming. The accommodations were very comfortable... Can't wait to go back to Ireland! ” —**NICOLEL.**



Accommodation



We use a selection of comfortable and welcoming bed and breakfast (B&B) accommodations that offer a homely, intimate atmosphere for our guests. These B&Bs are often family-run, providing a personal touch and excellent local hospitality. The accommodations are carefully chosen for their locations, offering easy access to walking and hiking routes, with many situated in picturesque villages or near stunning natural landscapes.

The style of B&Bs varies, but all offer cosy rooms with traditional Irish décor, comfortable furnishings, and modern amenities like en-suite bathrooms, Wi-Fi, and tea/coffee-making facilities. Some properties may have more luxurious options, while others maintain a charming, rustic charm that reflects the local culture. You can expect hearty breakfasts, typically with local produce such as Irish soda bread, smoked salmon, and eggs, served to fuel you for a day of outdoor activities.



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 Cork

Pre-Tour Recommendations

Your adventure begins in the vibrant harbour town of Bantry, a welcoming gateway to the landscapes of West Cork and the Sheep's Head Peninsula. Nestled at the head of Bantry Bay and framed by rolling hills and wooded slopes, Bantry offers a lively yet relaxed base as you prepare for your journey. With its bustling squares, waterfront views, artisan food scene, and friendly local atmosphere, the town provides the ideal blend of comfort and character. Its central location and easy access to the Sheep's Head Way make Bantry the perfect place to begin your walking adventure.

Many guests choose to spend a night or two in Cork City before making their way west. As Ireland's "food capital" and one of the country's most vibrant cultural hubs, Cork offers a fantastic blend of history, character, and lively local experiences.

Highlights include:

The English Market – a historic covered food market filled with artisan producers, perfect for sampling local cheeses, baked goods, and regional specialities.

Shandon Bells & Tower – climb to the top for panoramic views of the city and ring the famous bells yourself.

Cork City Gaol – a fascinating 19th-century prison museum that brings Cork's social history to life.

The Crawford Art Gallery – showcasing Irish and international art in a beautiful historic building.

St Patrick's Street & Oliver Plunkett Street – the heart of Cork's shopping, cafés, and street culture.

A lively pub and music scene – from traditional Irish sessions to contemporary venues, Cork's nightlife is welcoming and full of character.

From Cork City, a scenic journey brings you through rolling countryside and into the mountains as you travel to Glengarriff.

If you prefer to settle straight into a slower pace, Glengarriff itself is also a wonderful pre-tour option. Enjoy gentle walks in the Glengarriff Nature Reserve, explore the famous Italianate gardens on Garnish Island, or simply take in the calm of the harbour.

Whether you arrive energized by Cork City or relaxed from time in Glengarriff, both locations provide a welcoming start to your holiday and set the tone for the spectacular hiking days ahead.

Why Ireland Walk Hike Bike?

Having watched many travelers flash through Ireland, founder Linda Woods wanted to provide a more slow-paced, immersive approach to experiencing the country. "My aim was to slow people down so that they could really sink their feet into the soul of the country, meet the locals and discover what makes Ireland and the Irish tick."

Whether you're looking to walk, hike or bike, or a combination, our team of local travel specialists and guides are here to ensure that you have a most delightful and memorable trip to Ireland.

- 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.

- **GPS app** with voice prompt functionality to direct you at every bend on the road
- 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
- **Luggage transfer** each day with some to ensure you only need to think about the days ride
- 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 Bantry

There are four primary international airports in Ireland: Dublin, Shannon, Cork, and Belfast (Aldergrove) International. In addition, several regional airports provide access from the UK and mainland Europe, including Kerry, Knock, Donegal, and Belfast City (George Best).

Most of our guests travelling to Bantry choose to arrive at Dublin Airport and transfer by bus or train to Cork, before continuing onward to Bantry. Alternatively, you can fly directly into Cork Airport, which is the closest airport to Bantry and offers the most convenient onward connections. We recommend arriving at least one day prior to the start of your tour to allow time to settle in.

Dublin Airport (www.dublinairport.com) is located 10 km north of Dublin City and is serviced by over 1,000 buses daily. From the airport, you can easily reach Dublin City Centre and connect to major train and bus routes across Ireland. Long-distance coaches also operate directly to Cork and other key towns. Taxis and car hire are available outside arrivals.

Shannon Airport (www.shannonairport.ie), located approximately 150 km from Bantry, receives a strong selection of transatlantic flights, especially in summer. It is served by bus routes, taxis, and car hire. Travel time to Bantry by public transport typically involves a bus connection through Limerick and Cork.

For the smoothest experience, we advise confirming your tour reservation with Ireland Walk Hike Bike before booking flights or onward travel arrangements. This helps ensure your arrival aligns comfortably with your tour start date and any planned pre-nights in Bantry.

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

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