

Ireland

Destination Guide



Contents




Ireland's roads bring back the joy of touring by car – so close, so easy, so much to see and do. See all that Ireland has to offer with the comfort and freedom of your own vehicle. Auto Europe have included all the information you'll need for a self drive holiday in Ireland. From hiring a car and rules of the road to some great ideas for touring the wonderful Emerald Isle!

Contents	Page
Renting a Car in Ireland	3
Rental Vehicle Insurance	4
Driving Rules & FAQs	5-7
Dublin	8
Self Drive Tours: Midlands Historic Houses and Castles / Coastal Route	9
Western Ireland	10
Self Drive Tours: Coast and Country Tour / Lough Derg Drive	11
Self Drive Tours: Wild Atlantic Way	12-13
Southern Ireland	14
Self Drive Tours: Surf and Turf Route / Ring of Kerry & Skellig Ring	15
Eastern Ireland	16
Self Drive Tours: The Braveheart Drive / Tour the Boyne Valley	17
Northern Ireland (UK)	18
Self Drive Tours: The Grand Tour / St. Patrick's Tour	19
Belfast	20
Self Drive Tours: Belfast to Dublin / The Causeway Coastal Route	21
Stay Healthy & Stay Safe	22
Money Matters	23

Renting a Car in Ireland



Class	Fuel Capacity	Type	Transmission	Fuel/Air Cond.
M = Mini	0.8 - 1.0	B = 2 Door	M = Manual	R = Yes
E = Economy	1.0 - 1.4	D = 4 Door	A = Automatic	N = No
C = Compact	1.2 - 1.6	C = 2/4 door	N = Manual 4WD	D = Diesel Air
F = Full size	2.0 - 3.2	L = Limousine	C = Manual AWD	Q = Diesel No Air
P = Premium	2.0 - 4.2	S = Sports Car	B = Auto 4WD	H = Hybrid Air
L = Luxury	2.0 - 4.2	T = Convertible	D = Auto AWD	I = Hybrid No Air
X = Special	1.2 - 3.0	J = All Terrain	Examples: ECMN: E = Economy C = 2 or 4 door M = Manual N = No Aircon FDAR: F = Full Size D = 4 Door A = Automatic R = Aircon	E = Electric Air
	R= Recreational	C = Electric No Air		
	F = 4 Wheel Drive			
	X = Special			
	K = Commercial Van/Truck			
	P = Ute			
	X = Special			
	E = Executive			

How do I figure out which car is right for me?

You can use the ACRISS system detailed above to find the car that suits your needs. This is an internationally recognised code that will ensure that you get the same standard of vehicle wherever you rent.

Automatic and Manual Transmissions

Yes, automatic cars are available in Ireland,. However, they are generally more expensive than manual cars and not as readily available.

Do I need a Credit card?

Yes. A credit card will be needed when collecting your vehicle and used for a security bond. The deposit is generally the insurance excess of the rental car, which depends on the category of vehicle you have booked and the rate type.

Collecting at an Airport in Ireland

At most Irish airports you will find your rental company has a desk in the arrivals hall, with the rental cars located within walking distance. However, at smaller airports you may be required to collect your vehicle from a downtown depot. A courtesy transfer will be provided from the airport to the depot in this instance. Auto Europe offer all-inclusive prices which generally include any location / airport fees and charges that may otherwise apply. Remember to check at the time of booking to ensure your rental will include all airport fees.



Rental Vehicle Insurance

Irish law requires all vehicles to have compulsory third party (CTP) injury insurance, although your car rental supplier should already have comprehensive insurance covering their cars. In the case of an accident, it must be reported to the insurance provider immediately and an excess will be due.

Car Rental Companies in Ireland will normally include:

- **Third Party Insurance and compulsory insurance** will be included in your car hire price. This covers you for other people's injury and damage to their vehicle.
- **Collision Damage Waiver (CDW):** This limits your financial liability for damage to the rented vehicle and is normally included in prepaid car hire prices. Rentals are normally subject to liability excess, which can be reduced at the time you collect your rental car or by taking out **Auto Europe Excess Refund Insurance**.
- **Theft and Loss Cover:** This limits your financial liability for the loss or theft of the rented vehicle and is generally included in the prepaid car rental price.
- **Fire and Liability:** Limits your financial liability for bodily injury or death, and is normally included in the prepaid car hire price.
- **Personal Accident Insurance:** This covers the driver for personal injuries and is generally not included in your car rental rate. It is considered an optional extra that you can take out upon collection of the car.

Auto Europe Excess Refund Insurance

When renting a vehicle, the rental rates include basic insurance. However, in the event that the vehicle is stolen or accidentally damaged, there is usually an insurance excess amount which the driver is liable to pay to the rental company. To avoid any unexpected costs opt for Auto Europe Excess Refund Insurance which will offer a reimbursement for the supplier's damage and theft excess to a maximum for AU\$5,000. Simply add this onto your car rental booking prior to departure and you could save thousands of dollars in case of an accident. To find out more, simply call Auto Europe on 1300 656 601 or visit the [Auto Europe website](https://www.autoeurope.com.au).

The Auto Europe Hire Car Excess Refund Insurance is managed by Accident & Health International Underwriting Pty Limited, ABN 26 053 335 952, AFSL 238261 and underwritten by CGU Insurance Limited, ABN 27 004 478 371, AFSL 238291.

Driving Rules



Driving In Ireland

- Drive on the **left** in Ireland; the driver sits on the right-hand side of the vehicle.
- Familiarise yourself with the rental car and controls.
- Review the road signs.
- Respect the right of way.
- Check your fuel gage! In rural areas, few petrol stations exist and there are substantial distances between them, so try to keep the tank full.
- Avoid illegal parking, which will result in fines or towing. Any fees or damage will most often not be covered by insurance, so make sure your car is parked legally.
- Expect the unexpected. The majority of driving you'll do in Ireland is in rural countryside, so don't be surprised by the unexpected farm machinery or herd of sheep on the road. Remember to drive cautiously.
- Traffic in Dublin can be heavy and parking is often expensive. However, there are many options for public transportation in and around the city.

Irish Driving Laws

- Seatbelts must be worn at all times in the front and the back of the vehicle.
- Motorcyclists and their passengers must wear helmets.
- Do not drink and drive. The blood alcohol content limit in Ireland is 0.08%. Those who drive above this level face imprisonment.
- In both the Republic and Northern Ireland, speed limits are 30mph/50kmph in built-up areas, 60mph/100kph on the open road and 100mph/110kph on the motorway.
- Children under 12 cannot ride in the front seat.
- Horns are not to be used between 11.30pm and 7.00am.
- It is against the law to use a mobile phone while driving
- Cars already on a roundabout always have the right of way. At unmarked crossings, give way to vehicles approaching from the right.
- In the Republic of Ireland, yellow signs with black markings will give instructions at marked crossings - a graphic approximation of the layout with thick lines denoting the right of way and thinner lines representing roads that have to give way.



Ireland FAQs

Toll Roads in Ireland

Tolls are present throughout Ireland and rates vary depending on vehicle type. Expect to pay anywhere from €1.00 to €3.10 for tolls. It is advisable to keep smaller denominations of currency available when travelling long distances

Parking in Ireland

Yellow lines indicate parking restrictions.

Double yellow lines mean no parking at any time.

Single yellow line mean no parking from 8.00am to 6.30pm Monday to Saturday.

Broken yellow lines mean there are restrictions which will be outlined on nearby signage.

Pay-and-Display - normally found in major towns and cities: enter the money for the required amount of time, collect the ticket and display the ticket clearly on the dashboard.

Do you have car hire depots at the ferry ports?

Yes, you can collect your car from Dun Laoghaire ferry port.

Type of Restraint	Weight	Approx Age
Group 0: forward facing seat	>10kg	Birth to 6-9 months
Groups 0+ : rearward facing seat	>13kg	Birth to 12-15 months
Group 1: forward facing seat	9-18kg	9 months—4 years
Group 2 : booster seat	12-25kg	4-6 years
Group 3 : booster cushion	22-36kg	6-11 years

Can I travel between Republic of Ireland & Northern Ireland?

Depending on the supplier, car rental companies will sometimes charge a **Cross Border Fee** to travel from the Republic of Ireland to Northern Ireland. Some companies require drivers attain written permission from the hire company to travel into Northern Ireland, as well as Wales, England and Scotland and may face substantial fines to travel to other countries without permission. The cost to travel from Northern Ireland to the Republic of Ireland will vary depending on the car hire supplier and often depends on the length of the time spent abroad. Check the details of your car rental before you book to ensure that you are aware of any additional charges.

Can I pick up a car in one Irish city and drop it off in another?

There may be additional charges to collect from one city and drop off in another within the same country. Some companies will not permit one way rentals from Republic of Ireland to Northern Ireland, and for one way rentals from Northern Ireland to Republic of Ireland fees vary anywhere from £100-£300. Inform Auto Europe when booking your car hire if you would like a one way rental. Remember that you may not be covered by insurance if you travel to another country without the rental company's permission.

Can I travel by car ferry?

There are many rivers throughout Ireland, so you may encounter ferry crossings on your travels. Expect to pay anywhere between €4 and €35 for foot passengers, cyclist and cars. Check with your car rental supplier before departure to make sure the vehicle is allowed to travel by ferry.

Road Sign Definitions

- Direction signs will be in blue for freeways/motorways, green for national roads and white for local roads.
- Tourist drives and places of interest are signposted in brown with white writing.
- Traffic calming – speed bumps ahead.
- In the Republic, signposts denoting distance are now in kilometres per hour. All signposts and place names are displayed in both Irish (Gaelic) and English. In Northern Ireland all signposts and limits are in miles per hour and place names are displayed in English.

Ireland's Counties

Dublin:

Dublin

Western Ireland:

Clare, Donegal, Galway, Leitrim, Limerick, Mayo, Offaly, Roscommon, Sligo and Tipperary

Southern Ireland:

Carlow, Cork, Kerry, Kilkenny, Tipperary, Waterford and Wexford

Eastern Ireland:

Cavan, Kildare, Laois, Longford, Louth, Meath, Monaghan, Offaly, Westmeath and Wicklow

Northern Ireland (UK):

Antrim, Armagh, Down, Fermanagh, Londonderry and Tyrone



Dublin



Situated on the east coast of Ireland, Dublin sits on the banks of the River Liffey. The capital of Ireland, Dublin is a vibrant and cosmopolitan city, full of trendy bars, luxury hotels, fine restaurants and high street shopping, yet still maintains a unique, down-to-earth spirit. Dublin is home to some of Europe's most remarkable historical sites, heritage and Georgian architecture. This fantastic blend of modern, energetic lifestyle, culture and history mixed with Irish humour and hospitality, make Dublin one of the world's most visited and enjoyed cities.

Attractions

The National Gallery, Library & Gallery – See Irish art, works by Yeats, relics & treasures from the Bronze Age, Vikings and ancient Egypt

The Dublin Writer's Museum – Huge collection of books, poetry and portraits for Ireland's literary greats

Trinity College – Built in 1592, Ireland's oldest university and home to the Book of Kells

Dublin Castle – Originally built in 1204, this castle now houses the Major Irish governmental complex with only the Record Tower surviving the original building

Malahide Castle – Beautiful castle set on 260 acre estate

St Patrick's Cathedral – Visit one of Ireland's earliest Christian sites and home to the Living Stones

The Temple Bar – Meander the cobbled streets of Dublin's Cultural Quarter and visit the myriad of pubs, street markets and restaurants

The Guinness Storehouse – Take a tour of the brewery that produces Ireland's signature beer

Croke Park - See a game of hurling and get a taste of traditional Irish sport

Phoenix Park – Take a break from the buzz of the city and visit Phoenix Park, home to Dublin Zoo as well as 12 hectares of landscaped gardens and nature trails

Events

January

Temple Bar TradFestival - A festival celebrating Irish music and culture at one of the country's most famous pubs

March

St Patrick's Festival - Celebrate this iconic Irish holiday in the nation's capital

April

Colours Boat Race - Also known as the Dublin University Boat Races, don't miss this rowing race between Trinity College and University College Dublin

June

Dublin Writer's Festival - Ireland's premier literary event, this festival includes readings, discussions, debates, workshops, performances and screenings

September

Dublin Fringe Festival - This fantastic 20 day event includes more than 300 performances from a variety of disciplines

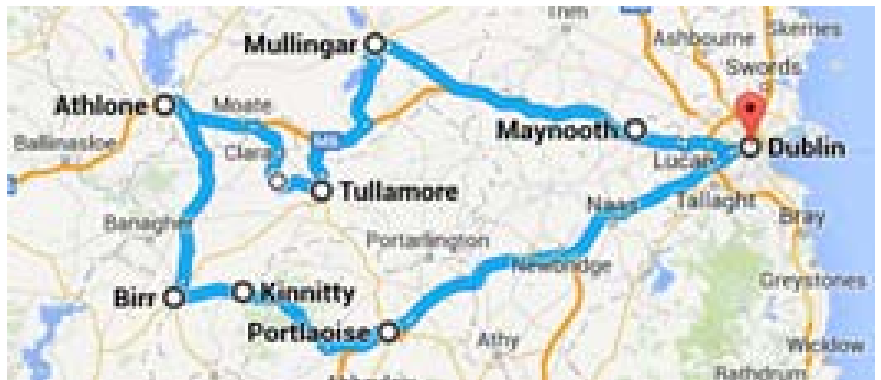
The Liffey Swim - Head to the Liffey Boardwalk to watch 350 swimmers race through this famous river in Dublin's centre

Self Drive Tours: Dublin



Midlands Historic Houses and Castles

Discover the historic houses, castles and religious foundations around Dublin. Drive along the N4 and M4 out of the city to the university town of Maynooth. Continue onwards on the M4 to Mullingar, where you can visit Belvedere House and Gardens. Head south to Tullamore, home of the famous Tullamore Dew whisky. From there, drive north west to the bustling town of Althone, situated on the banks of the River Shannon. Visit the ancient Celtic foundations of Clonmacnoise and see interesting ruins from the 13th Century. Head south along the N52 to the heritage town of Birr to visit its enchanting castle, then stop off at the castle in Kinnitty. Drive through the Slieve Bloom Mountains to the gorgeous town Portlaoise, where you can see an 800 year old castle at Dunamase. Visit the Irish National Stud and Gardens on the return to Dublin via the M7.



South of Dublin

Head south from Dublin toward the Wicklow Mountains, and stop at the pretty village of Enniskerry. See the Powerscourt Waterfall, the highest waterfall in Ireland. Drive through the Sally Gap towards Glendalough, one of the most picturesque valleys in county Wicklow, then through Rathdrum and Avoca towards the resort town of Arklow. From here, head north towards the town of Wicklow where you can enjoy great views of the bay, then stop by at Mount Usher Gardens just north of Wicklow. Drive on to Greystones and Bray and through the rugged Devils Glen and the Great Sugar Loaf Mountain. On your return into Dublin, drive through Killiney and Dalkey to enjoy the views of Dublin Bay and the city beyond.



Western Ireland

Western Ireland is a unique and alluring place. Facing the Atlantic Ocean, this region holds wild landscapes, entrancing towns and villages, long stretches of coastline, rugged sea cliffs and rough, barren landscapes. With heritage and history in spades, this area is a must see for anyone travelling to the Republic of Ireland.

Attractions

County Clare

Cliffs of Moher- These amazing cliffs rise 214 meters above the Atlantic Ocean and stretch 8km across the coast

The Burren- The Burren holds megalithic tombs, ancient Celtic crosses, and a wide variety of native wild flowers

County Donegal

Glenveagh National Park - Covering over 14,000 acres and houses Glenveagh Castle with its fabulous park and gardens

County Galway

Galway City- Said to be Ireland's fastest growing city, Galway is a lively, artistic city famous for its university and filled with pubs and restaurants

County Limerick

King John's Castle - This incredible building was built around 1200 on the banks of the River Shannon

Ballyhoura Mountains - Discover the Stone Age monuments, museums, parks and gardens in the beautiful Ballyhoura Mountains

County Mayo

Climb Croagh Patrick,- Ireland's Patron Saint spent 40 days and nights fasting and praying on the conical shaped mountain of Croagh Patrick, and today its one of the most climbed mountains in Ireland

Visit Achill Island, Co Mayo - The largest island off the coast of Ireland, it is linked to the mainland via a bridge

Events

July

Galway Arts Festival, Co Galway - Artists and musicians from all across Ireland convene for this event featuring art, music, comedy, literature and music

August

Galway Race Festival, Co. Galway - One of Ireland's most famous horse racing events

September

Galway International Oyster Festival, Co Galway - Galway City comes alive as thousands of people flock in from all over the globe to celebrate the oyster, known for its luxury and passion

Matchmaking Festival, Lisdoonvarna, Co Clare - Annual festival held to find that perfect match for the lovelorn

October

Connemara Four Seasons Autumn Walking Festival - Participate in strategically selected walking routes around Connemara, with tours led by renowned archaeologist, Michael Gibbons

December

Limerick Christmas Market at the Milk Market - This free market takes place in the famous Limerick Milk Market throughout the month of December, and features up to 60 vendors offering a wide range of holiday goods

Self Drive Tours: Western Ireland



Coast and Country Tour

Begin your tour from Galway city toward Connemara on R336 West, driving through towns of Spiddal, Inverin, Costello Cana and Clifden. From there, head north on N59 to Leenaun in Co. Mayo at the head of the Killary harbour and the Fjord. Enjoy the mountains, Doolough Lake and the Delphi Valley as you head further north to the town of Louisburgh. On the road east to Westport, make sure you stop at Croagh Patrick, Ireland's holy mountain and Christian pilgrimage destination.

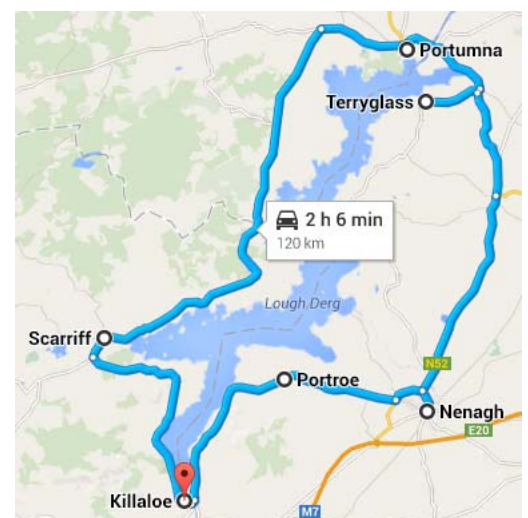


From Westport you can take a trip out to Achill Island by driving through Newport and Keel, then up to Dooagh. After you've explored the island, head back towards Mulranny and drive north to Bangor Erris to visit Ballycroy National Park. Visit the memorable Erris peninsula in the Mayo Gaeltacht. From there, take the coastal road R314 towards Ballycastle and admire in the wild coastal views on the way to Sligo and Donegal. Visit the Céide Fields in Co. Mayo, a five thousand year old farm settlement. On the return trip, drive through the towns of Castlebar, Claremorris and Tuam, and enjoy the views over Lough Conn. Please note that this drive crosses into Northern Ireland in the far north near Bridgend, County Donegal.

Lough Derg Drive, Co Clare

This is one of Ireland's less travelled routes, a 95-mile circuit around the largest lake on the River Shannon. The drive passes an assortment of charming marina villages and scenic delights along the way. Travel through Killaloe at the southern tip of the lake, on to Scarriff Bay, then continue on to Mount Shannon, one of the busiest yachting centres on Lough Derg. Stop by at Portumna at the very north of the lake to see the palatial 17th Century castle that overlooks the lake.

From there, head to the lovely village of Terryglass, then south towards the fishing and boating centre of Dromineer. On the way to Nenagh, stop to see the castle remains that date back to 1217 and the demolished county jail (spelled "gaol" in Ireland). From Nenagh, head west to Portroe for the best viewing points of the Lough Derg. Enjoy the final leg of the journey on the gentle road back to Killaloe.



The Wild Atlantic Way



Discover Ireland's newest self-drive experience, the Wild Atlantic Way, is one of the world's longest driving routes, stretching a total of 2,500 kilometres along the west coast of Ireland from Donegal to the Cork. This unbelievable coastal journey definitely warrants a spot on your bucket list. There are numerous stop-offs for the avid photographer to capture jaw-dropping views, such as along the Knockalla Coast Road. This self drive tour is breathtaking every step of the way.

Along this captivating coastal route, meander through secluded villages and towns snuggled into the coastline and discover delightful cafes and restaurants along the way where you can relish the true warmth of the Irish people first hand.

The magnificent coast of Donegal and Sigo are both perfect for experiencing the Atlantic's surfing beaches. Take time to discover the historic ruins of the 6th Century monastic settlement on Skellig Michael in Kerry. Explore the scenic Ards Forest Park in Donegal and watch the weather change from the historic Clare Island Lighthouse in Mayo.

This sign-posted route will take you off the beaten track towards more authentic discoveries, magnificent landscapes and quaint hidden gems for which Ireland is renowned!

View a map of this route on page 13.



Skellig



Mayo



WILD ATLANTIC WAY





Southern Ireland

Often described as “The Irish Riviera”, the South coast of Ireland has been a favourite holiday destination for both local and overseas travellers for years. This is a land of unparalleled beauty, with spectacular coastline that’s warmed by the Gulf Stream and a culture steeped in tradition.

Attractions

County Cork

Youghal – Pronounced “yawll”, this ancient town is situated on the estuary where the River Blackwater meets the sea, and is one of Ireland’s remaining medieval walled towns

The Blarney Stone at Blarney Castle – Kiss the famous Blarney Stone to acquire the gift of the Irish gab

County Kerry

Skellig Rocks – Islands on UNESCO World Heritage list, Gallarus Oratory, a monastic settlement of six beehive shaped huts dating back to the 6th Century can be found on Skellig Michael

Mount Brandon – This is one of Ireland’s highest mountains and provides magnificent views of the Atlantic ocean and countryside

County Tipperary

The Rock of Cashel – A spectacular group of medieval buildings set on an outcrop of limestone, including towers, a cathedral, chapel and high cross dating back to the 13th Century

County Waterford

Tramore - Dunes Walk - Follow this 5K walk from the Tramore beaches to some of Ireland’s highest sand dunes, and keep an eye out for unusual wildlife and seaside flora

Events

May

Féile na Bealtaine Arts Festival, Co Kerry - This eclectic arts festival in Dingle combines unique local music and visual arts from around the country

July

Cork Cycling Festival, Co Cork - This free event promoting the cycling culture is perfect for the whole family, with routes in both the city countryside

August

Waterford Spraoi, Co Waterford – 3 day festival incorporating stage acts, music and fun from all over the world

Rose of Tralee Festival, Tralee, Co. Kerry – One of Ireland's largest and longest running festivals, this is an international event that encompasses young women of Irish descent from around the world

Puck Fair, Killorglin, Co Kerry – Dating back to 1603, this three day festival is the oldest fair in Ireland and listed as one of the Top 10 Must See Annual Events in Ireland by Irish Central

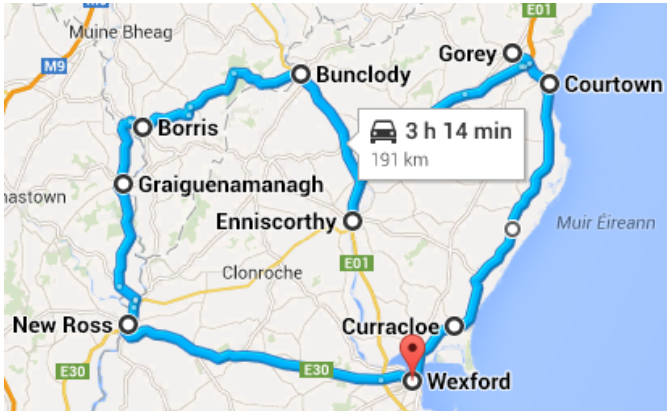
October

Guinness Cork Jazz Festival, Co Cork – Cork’s annual jazz festival, a celebration of music and performance

December

Waterford Winterval - A wonderful Christmas market with rare and entertaining events such as a demonstration of Viking Christmas traditions

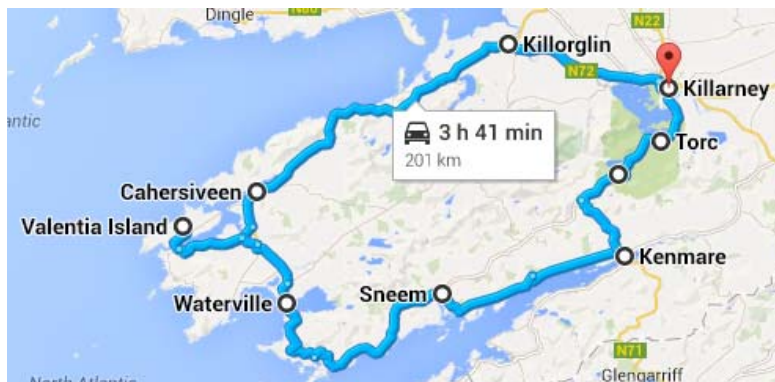
Self Drive Tours: Southern Ireland



Surf and Turf Route

This road trip follows the handsome coastline south of Wexford into the marvellous countryside of Carlow. Begin at Wexford, a town was originally founded by Vikings in 800 AD. Here you will see Johnstown Castle, the Wexford Bullring and the Selskar Abbey. Drive north along R672 coastal road to the beaches at Curracloe and Courtown, and then on to Gorey. From there, south west toward Enniscorthy on the banks of the River Slaney, where you'll find The Enniscorthy Castle, St Aidan's Cathedral and the National 1798 visitor centre.

From Enniscorthy, take the N80 to the market town of Bunclody. Drive on to Killeale and the Georgian city of Borris, then east along to Graiguenamanagh, located at the foot of Brandon Hill in the beautiful Barrow Valley and home to the 13th Century Duiske Abbey. Continue through St Mullins to the port town of New Ross, where you can see the Dunbrody Famine Ship and the Hook Lighthouse, which has served as a beacon since the 5th Century. From New Ross, return to Wexford via the N25.



Ring of Kerry & Skellig Ring

This circular route is Ireland's most popular drive. Beginning at Killarney, take the N70 to Killorglin along the banks of the River Glenbeigh. This section of the road boasts unparalleled views of the Dingle Peninsula. Follow along to the town of Cahersiveen, where you can see the Old Barracks Heritage Centre. In summer you can take the ferry to Valentia Island or continue along the way to the magnificent gardens at Glanleam. Take the coastal road to Portmagee and take a boat tour to the UNESCO World Heritage listed Skelligs Islands. You can enjoy an astonishing panorama of the Skelligs from Baile an Sceilge at the top of Coomanaspig.

Travel east on the R567 to the lovely village of Waterville, home to one of Ireland's top 5 golf courses. Stop off at the Coomakesta Pass for brilliant views of Kenmare Rover, Scariff and Deenish Islands. Further east on the N70, drive through the Derrynane National Park and Staigue Fort, the remains of a circular stone fort remains within the national park. Stop at the splendid village of Sneem, then continue to the Heritage town of Kenmare. On the final leg of the Ring of Kerry, drive north via Moll's Gap and Ladies View for great vistas of the Lakes of Killarney and the sixty foot Torc waterfall before returning to Killarney.

Eastern Ireland



Discover the spectacular sights, breathtaking scenery, unsurpassed history and heritage on the beautiful east coast of Ireland. Skirting the capital of Dublin, the east of Ireland is the ideal area to get a taste of both new and old Ireland. With natural attractions, cosmopolitan cities, rich culture and sunny and temperate climate, this region of Ireland is surely one not to be missed.

Attractions

County Kildare

The Irish National Stud – Home to Ireland's premier racing thoroughbreds, the Irish National Stud houses the stud, a horse museum, Japanese gardens and St Fiachra's Garden

County Louth

Visit Carlingford – This charming harbour village is nestled between Slieve Foy, Carlingford Lough and the Mourne Mountains

County Meath

Newgrange, Boyne Valley – Visit the Neolithic monuments in Knowth and Dowth that are a Stone Age Passage Tomb that date back to 3200BC.

Trim Castle – The largest Anglo-Norman castle in Ireland, this castle served as a site location for the movie "Braveheart"

County Offaly

Clonmacnoise – Ireland's most renowned monastic site, this location is known as The Lost City of Clonmacnoise

County Wicklow

Russborough House – Located near the lakes in Blessington, Russborough has often been described as the most beautiful house in Ireland

Events

April/May

Punchestown Irish National Hunt Festival, Co. Kildare – A five day festival buzzing with Irish and international attendees enjoying horse racing, live entertainment, food and family fun

May

Sleive Bloom Festival, Co.'s Laois & Offaly – Walking festival through the magnificent Bloom Mountains, combined with evening entertainment with music, singing and storytelling

July

Bray Air Display, Co Wicklow – A free air show in conjunction with the Bray Summerfest

August

The Hollywood Fair, Co Wicklow – A pre-1950s rural heritage themed fair hosted in Hollywood, Wicklow

September

Irish Bog Snorkelling, Castleblayney, Co. Monaghan – As the name suggests, watch the competitors snorkel along flooded bogs

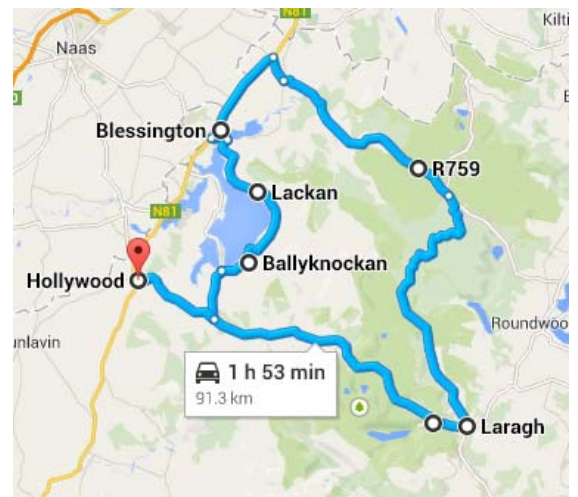
October

Shackleton Autumn School Festival, Co Kildare – This annual event includes lectures, film, excursions and a bit of drama, all in honour of Ernest Shackleton, an Irish-born polar explorer



The Braveheart Drive

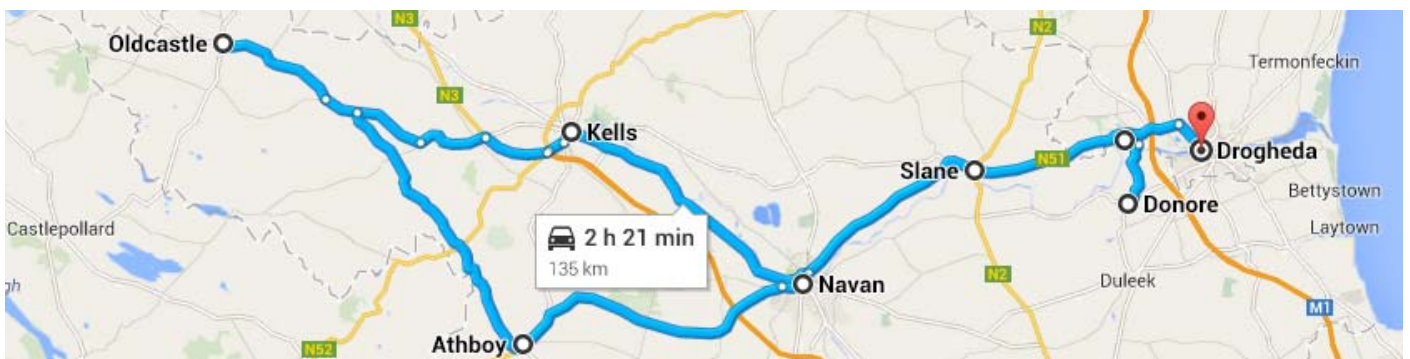
This drive will bring you through the beautiful County Wicklow, wooded glens and marvellous countryside. Here you'll see where scenes from the movie "Braveheart" were shot. Ironically, this tour begins in the tiny village of Hollywood on the N81, roughly 30kms south west of Dublin, and sets off in the direction of the Wicklow Gap. Follow the R756 to the junction with R758 and head towards Ballyknockan and Lacken, both of which sit along the Blessington Lakes. Follow the lakes to the town of Blessington. Here you'll see Russborough House, a magnificent 18th Century mansion. Continue on the R759, through the breathtaking West Wicklow Mountains and past the bogs at Sally's Gap, to the quiet town of Laragh. Follow the R756 from Laragh to the town of Glendalough, where you can see the 6th Century St Kevin's Monastic City, which is one of the most well preserved round towers in Europe. Head back through the Wicklow National Park along the R756, and end the drive back in Hollywood.



Tour the Boyne Valley

Begin this tour at Donore, just off the N51 outside of Drogheda at the Bru na Boinne Visitors Centre. Here you can explore the site of the Battle of Boyne. Take the R163 through Slane and into Kells, the original home of the Book of Kells. Drive on to Oldcastle, where you'll see ancient burial mounds. Get back on the N51 and drive toward the agricultural town of Athboy. Treasure views of the lovely Yellow Ford River along this path.

From here, head toward Navan to see the Hill of Tara, an archaeological site that houses ancient monuments and was once the seat of the High King of England. Further east along the N51 is the Georgian town of Slane on the River Boyne. Here you'll find the Slane Castle and the Hill of Slane, containing an ancient cemetery, the ruins of the friary church and a gothic tower. Follow the N51 to return back to Drogheda.



Northern Ireland



Discover Northern Ireland, a region in the north of the island of Ireland, but governed as part of the United Kingdom. Despite being part of the UK, there is still a distinctly Irish feel as you enter Northern Ireland, named one of Lonely Planet's Top 10 European Travel Destinations in 2013. Visit the magnificent Giant's Causeway and stroll the streets of Belfast on a fantastic adventure through the breathtaking country of Northern Ireland.

Attractions

County Antrim

The Giant's Causeway– One of Northern Ireland's most famous landmarks, made up of thousands of interlocking basalt columns as a result of an ancient volcanic eruption

The Bushmills Distillery– Ireland's oldest operating distillery

County Londonderry

The Walled City of Derry– The only fully walled city in Ireland

County Tyrone

Ulster American Folk Park– An open air museum illustrating the story of emigration to the US during the 18th & 19th centuries

County Fermanagh

The Lakelands– The Lakelands are a haven for both wildlife and sports enthusiasts, and offering spectacular scenery & woodlands

County Down

Discover the Mourne Mountains, Co. Down – Believed to be the inspiration behind C.S. Lewis' Chronicles of Narnia, see these majestic mountains, natural beauty and native wildlife

Round of Golf, Co.'s Antrim & Down – Pack the clubs and take a swing on Northern Ireland's famous fairways

Events

May

Carnival of Colours - An vibrant event full of street theatre, art and a variety of amusing side shows in St Columb's Park, County Derry

July

Lady of the Lake Festival - A 10 day affair packed with events in County Fermanagh

August

Hillsborough International Oyster Festival - Taste freshly shucked oysters while enjoying local music and entertainment in County Down

September

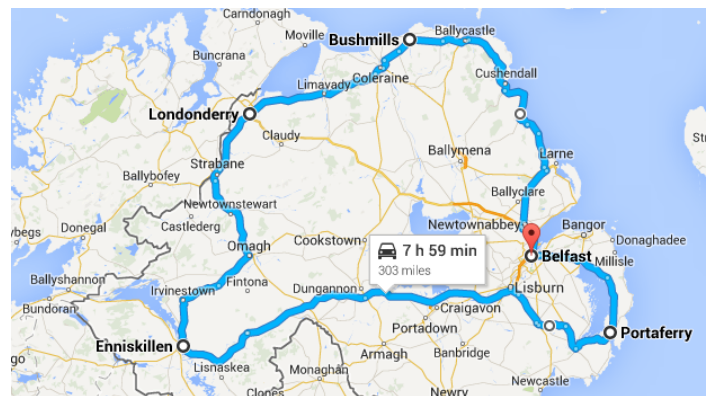
Appalachian and Bluegrass Music Festival - Take in a little Americana when American and European musicians come together in County Tyrone

Self Drive Tours: Northern Ireland



The Grand Tour

Follow this all encompassing, five day tour to see all most beautiful parts of Northern Ireland. Starting in Belfast, take the Causeway Coastal Route, pass through the nine Glens of Antrim and a series of other attractions, which you can stop to enjoy at your leisure. Spend the night in Bushmills, where you can tour the famous distillery. The next day, venture back to spend some time on the Giant's Causeway as you drive towards Londonderry for an overnight stay.



Explore Londonderry, then take the B48 and A32 to Enniskillen to explore the town and surrounding areas. From here, you'll drive to Portaferry, a fantastic waterfront village accessible by car ferry via Strangford. After you've enjoyed the waterfront scenery and activities, head to Belfast, Northern Ireland's capital, for a taste of city life in this fabulous country. Click to view a more detailed version of this [route](#).

Grand St. Patrick's Tour, Counties Down & Armagh

Delve deep into Ireland's history through Saint Patrick's Tour. Begin in the city of Armagh where you can see the Anglican and the Roman Catholic St. Patrick's Cathedrals, the County Museum and Saint Patrick's Trian. Take the Darkley Road through 'the Fews' and scenic woodlands of Keady and Newtownhamilton to Newry, where you can visit Bagenal's Castle, the Killevy Old Churches founded in 517AD and Kilnasaggart Stone. Follow the Newry Road through Rathfriland, Castlewellan and Clough, through to the town of Downpatrick. Here you'll find the Struell Wells, the first holy wells in Ireland, the remains of the Inch Abbey that date back to 1180, the Saul Church, Down Cathedral and St Patrick's grave. Head to Strangford and take the car ferry to Portaferry, then follow the Portaferry Road to Greyabbey where you'll find the splendid ruins of a Cistercian Abbey. Heading north drive on to Newtownards and see the Movilla Abbey, then follow the N21 for Bangor where you can visit the north Down Museum and Bangor Abbey.



Belfast



This beautiful Victorian city is a city reborn; where old and new stand proudly side by side to create a charm and character that is truly unique. Belfast's areas can be divided into quarters: the Cathedral quarter is the oldest part of Belfast, with cobbled streets, historic pubs and fantastic restaurants; the Titanic Quarter has an incredible maritime and industrial history and is home to the magnificent Belfast Waterfront Hall; the Gaeltacht Quarter holds the city's descriptive wall murals and is home to Irish language and culture; and the Queen's Quarter houses some of the best eateries and pubs in Belfast.

Attractions

St Anne's Cathedral – This magnificent cathedral was built in 1776, with an incredible black & white marble maze inside

Belfast City Hall – This is the home of Belfast City Council as well as the Belfast Wheel, which offers fantastic views across the city

Belfast Castle – Located 400 feet above sea level, visit for breathtaking views of the Belfast Lough from the castle's position on top of Cave Hill

The Odyssey Arena – This is fast becoming Belfast's premier entertainment and leisure venue for international artists and exhibitions

The Zoological Gardens – Belfast Zoo is home to over 1,200 animals, where the focus is on conservation and education

Belfast Botanic Gardens – These gardens were established in 1895 next to the Queen's University, and are home to Belfast's most historical landmark, the Great Palm House

St. George Market – Operating as Friday market since 1604, you can taste & buy almost any local or regional produce

Titanic Boat Tour – Take a tour of the shipyard of Harland & Wolff, the birthplace of the infamous Titanic.

The Crown Liquor Saloon – Enjoy a Pint of Guinness in the National Trust-owned Crown Liquor Saloon

W5 – A science and information attraction where you can partake in interactive exhibits to learn about science and animation

Events

March/April

Belfast Film Festival – A showcase of the newest and best in local and international film, complete with classes, workshops and special events

May

10 Cathedral Quarter Arts Festival – Held over two weeks, this is a celebration of life and art

Belfast Titanic Maritime Festival – This is a festival for all the family, including music, children's exhibitions, boat tours and a tall ship race

July

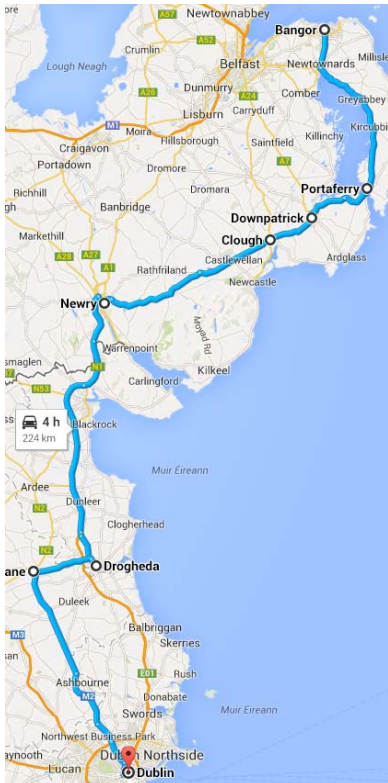
Rose Week – An amazing horticultural showcase held in Sir Thomas and Lady Dixon Park

August

Belfast Mela - A festival of world music, dance, fashion, food and fun at the Botanic Gardens

Shoreline Festival - A waterfront music festival with family activities, a variety of musical performances and sport and an array of other amusements

Self Drive Tours: Belfast



Belfast to Dublin

Drive from Bangor near Belfast along the A2 coast road to the seaside town of Ballywater, head west to Greyabbey, then south on the A20 to Portaferry. Take the car ferry over Strangford Lough to Downpatrick to visit St. Patrick's grave on Cathedral Hill.

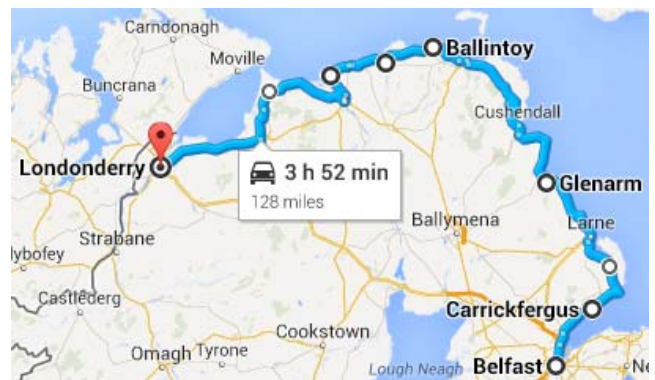
Drive through Clough and on to Newcastle where the Mournes "sweep down to the sea", then on to the fishing port of Kilkeel. Follow the A2 along the coast to Rostrevor, through Warrenpoint and along to Newry. From Newry, travel south toward Dublin, through Dundalk, stopping off at Drogheda to see the prehistoric tombs at Newgrange, Knowth and Dowth. See where St. Patrick lit the first paschal fire at Slane before continuing on to Dublin.

The Causeway Coastal Route

This is rated as one of the top 5 scenic drives in the world, running from Belfast Lough to Londonderry with an incredible mosaic of fishing villages, quiet beaches, rugged coastlines, mountains and magnificent scenery. Leave Belfast and join the Causeway Coastal Route at Newtownabbey. Enjoy the view of Belfast Lough to the right as you head further west toward the seaside town

of Carrickfergus, home to the well-preserved 12th century Norman castle. Drive on through Kilroot and to Larne, the gateway to the beautiful Glens of Antrim, and follow the Antrim Coast Road where you can enjoy the breathtaking scenery.

Drive on through to the lovely town of Cushendun and Torr Head, along to Ballintoy where you can walk across the Carrick-a-Rede rope bridge spanning a 24 metre chasm. If you veer inland you can visit the world's oldest licensed distillery in the village of Bushmills. From there you can head back to the coast to the UNESCO World Heritage listed site of the Giant's Causeway. See the romantic ruins of Dunluce Castle near Bushmills, and drive on to the lively seaside resorts of Portrush and Portstewart, then to the beautiful Bann Valley and market town of Ballymoney. Visit Mussenden Temple along by Castlerock towards Limavady, then take a walk on the remote beaches at Benone or Downhill. You can then travel on through the lovely Roe Valley, through Limavady to Londonderry, the only completely walled city in the British Isles.





Stay Healthy & Stay Safe

Stay Healthy

Your comprehensive travel insurance should cover any medical costs including medical evacuation, but make sure that your insurance covers you for the whole time you'll be away and be clear on what is not included. The Australian Government has signed a reciprocal health care agreement with the Government of the Republic of Ireland that gives Australians access to emergency medical services but does not provide for any ongoing treatment of existing health conditions. In Northern Ireland, Australians have access to free emergency medical services, not providing for any ongoing treatment of existing health conditions.

Plan the care of pre-existing conditions before you leave. Bring your medications in their original and clearly labelled containers with a declaration from your doctor describing medical conditions and medicines needed. If you wear contacts or glasses, bring a spare pair or bring a copy of your prescription.

Stay Safe

Travelling in Ireland is not dangerous, but a level of caution should always be taken when touring in any foreign country. Most crimes tend to occur in the larger cities, where tourists can be targeted for petty crimes like pick-pocketing. Keep your valuables close to your body, avoid quiet streets out of hours and avoid making yourself a target by flashing any money or valuables. Car break-ins, theft, smash and grab and vandalism on tourists vehicles can occur, but can be prevented by keeping valuables or bags out of sight, securely locking cars or using off-street supervised parking. When travelling, employ the same safety practices you utilise at home.

Northern Ireland is currently as safe as the Republic of Ireland, however there are areas where the sectarian divide is still prominent, particularly in some parts of Belfast. Try to avoid Northern Ireland around 12 July, which is the climax of the Orange marching season, and has been known to bring tension and disruption.

In the unlikely event of theft or loss, be sure to inform all your credit card companies as soon as possible.

Where to Get Help

Australian Embassy
7th Floor Fitzwilton House
Wilton Terrace
Dublin 2
Tel: +353 1 664 5300
<http://www.ireland.embassy.gov.au>



Money Matters

Republic of Ireland

The Euro is the local currency of the Republic of Ireland. EURO (€) = 100 cents. Notes are in denominations of €500, 200, 100, 50, 20, 10 and 5. Coins are in denominations of €2 and €1, and 50, 20, 10, 5, 2 and 1 cents.

Northern Ireland

The British Pound is the local currency of Northern Ireland. One Pound (£) = 100 pence. Notes are in denominations of £50, 20, 10 and 5. Coins are in denominations of £2 and £1, and 50, 20, 10, 5, 2 and 1 pence (p).

Currency Exchange

Foreign currency can be exchanged at Bureau de Change at international airports and major city centres, as well as banks, post offices and some hotels.

Banking Hours

Banks are open 10am to 4pm Monday - Wednesday and Friday, and 10am to 5pm on Thursday. In Northern Ireland bank hours are 9.30am to 5.30pm Monday to Friday.

ATMs

ATMs (Automatic Teller Machines) are located at most banks and accept most credit and debit cards.

Credit & Debit Cards

Visa, MasterCard or American Express will be widely accepted in Ireland. Most ATMs allow cash withdrawals on major credit cards and internationally branded debit cards.

Tax

Sales tax is called VAT (Value Added Tax), and is most often included in the price shown on goods. In the Republic of Ireland, the general rate of VAT is 21%, but there are rates of 13.5% for hotels, restaurants and car rentals. In Northern Ireland the VAT is 17.5% across the board.

Tipping

Tips of around 10-15% in restaurants and metered cabs are expected, unless it's already included in the total bill. Porters should be tipped around €1.50 or £1 per bag.



Drive the World with Auto Europe!

Auto Europe are Australia's leaders in self drive holidays. Established over 60 years ago, we offer more than 60 self drive suppliers at over 10,000 global locations. We boast an extensive choice of worldwide car hire, luxury and budget motorhome rentals and Peugeot leasing in Europe. Our expertise brings you highly competitive prices alongside outstanding customer service and efficiency.

Plan your next self drive adventure with Auto Europe. Enjoy the freedom of having your own rental car and discover the world at your own pace.

Booking is easy!

Once you have planned your self drive itinerary and are ready to book, simply visit www.autoeurope.com.au
Alternatively, call our dedicated reservations team on 1300 656 601.

We look forward to hearing from you!

Auto Europe Australia hopes that you find the information in this guide helpful for your self drive holiday in the Ireland. This touring information has been created to be used as a guide only. Thanks are given to Tourism Ireland for their support in creating this guide.

© Auto Europe - all rights reserved.

Updated: July 2014