

Kerry Highlights

Small group 8-day guided walking tour



The County of Kerry consists of a series of mountainous peninsulas divided by deep-sea inlets. Here is found the Macgillycuddy's Reeks, Ireland's highest mountain range, centred on the dramatic Carrauntoohil.

This itinerary explores the extraordinary scenery of the Dingle Peninsula and the Ring of Kerry. Connecting the coastal peninsulas are a network of ancient routes, many of which form part of the walks that you will enjoy during your exploration of the region.

The name 'Kerry' comes from the word Ciarraige, meaning the people of Ciar, an early Celtic tribe that are believed to have settled in the area around 300 BC. Kerry is an ancient land with a wealth of historical, archaeological & early Christian sites, some of which date back over 7,000 years. This cultural legacy will also form part of your itinerary, as you explore the history of the region from the Iron Age remains of Dunbeg Fort through to the 19th-century Muckross House, in Killarney National Park.

Day 1: Arrive Killarney (D)

You will be met on arrival at Kerry Airport and transferred to Killarney, where you spend your first night in Ireland.

Depending on the time of your arrival, there will be time this afternoon to relax, settle into your room, and perhaps explore Killarney independently, before meeting with your guide and fellow travellers at 5pm for a short pre-tour briefing, followed by dinner at a local pub or restaurant.

You stay tonight in Killarney at the Abbey Lodge, a cosy 9-room B&B that is a short stroll from the centre of town.

Day 2: Killarney National Park (B, L)

After a delicious cooked breakfast at the lodge, set off for Killarney National Park.

Killarney is one of Ireland's most famous national parks on account of its stunning scenery of mountains, ancient oak & yew woods, lakes and moorland. Your walk today will initially take you around the outer edges of the park before joining a trail into its heart known as the "Old Kenmare Road". Following the Old Kenmare Road, you'll journey over the uplands of Killarney, past Torc Mountain and Torc Waterfall, to arrive at Muckross House late this morning.



Dating back to the mid-19th-century, Muckross House and estate sits at the centre of Killarney National Park, surrounded by the Killarney Lakes of Lough Leane, Middle Lake and Upper lake, and the crags and moors of Purple Mountain (832m) & Knockrower (552m). Formerly a private mansion, it is now a heritage site, and the surrounding lands a designated Unesco Biosphere Reserve. Here are to be found Ireland's only herds of wild red deer, along with Japanese Sika Deer. The Killarney wetlands are also a haven for birds, dragonflies and butterflies, including such rarities as Marsh fritillary butterfly and the Purple hairstreak butterfly.

There will be time to explore Muckross House and its grounds at leisure this afternoon, followed by a boat ride across the lakes.

Return to Killarney town on foot via Muckross Abbey, one of Ireland's oldest surviving ecclesiastical sites, built in 1448 for the Franciscan Monks and later used as a burial place for Irish chieftains and poets. It has suffered a violent history that has seen it damaged and rebuilt many times, but the cloister, with an old yew tree at its centre, remains complete. The upper parts of the Abbey have splendid views of the lake.

Return to Abbey Lodge in Killarney for overnight. Dinner this evening to own account.

Terrain: Rocky tracks (sometimes wet), road walking

Distance: 15kms

Ascent: 484m



Day 3: Derrynane House & Gardens (B, L)

After breakfast, set off with your guide for a drive of approx. 1½ hours to reach the beautiful Derrynane House & Gardens. Derrynane was the home of Daniel O’Connell, a 19th-century Irish statesman known locally as the “Liberator”, as well as the first Catholic to sit in the UK House of Commons. His house is now a museum, where you can learn more about the history of the Irish nationalist movement.

From Derrynane, you follow a coastal trail along pristine beaches before arriving at Abbey Island, where you can explore the remains of Derrynane Abbey, said to have been founded in the 6th-century by St Finnian. (Abbey Island is in fact no longer an island, as the land has silted up, meaning it’s possible to reach the remains of the abbey on foot).

Return to Derrynane House for refreshments before continuing to Waterville, a small, lively town with a spectacular location on a narrow isthmus between the Atlantic Ocean and Lough Currane.



In Waterville, you stay two nights at O’Dwyers Hotel and Bar. This small, family-run accommodation is located close to the centre of town and offers stylish, comfortable rooms. Meals and snacks are served in the bar and there is live music here most weekends.

Terrain: Grass tracks, gravel tracks and beach
Distance: 15kms
Ascent: 379m

Day 4: Mountain of the Wells (B, L)

Today will see you climb the Mountain of the Wells, one of the primary mountains on the Iveragh Peninsula. The scenery en route to the summit is extremely impressive, with far reaching views of the Kerry Mountains, Dingle Bay, Valentia Island, Caherciveen, the Skellig Islands and west Cork.

As well as being scenically beautiful, the Mountain of the Wells is a site of great religious significance. You'll follow an old pilgrim's route that has been used for hundreds of years. In 1885, the local priest in the nearby parish of Caherciveen built fourteen stations of the cross along the trail, and these still remain as markers to this day, guiding walkers to its summit.

At the end of the walk, you'll return to Waterville. Evening at leisure.

Terrain: Mountain tracks with uneven and rocky sections. May be boggy in parts.
Distance: 9kms
Ascent: 690m

Day 5: The Brandon Massif (B, L)

Enjoy superb views of both the southern and northern coastline of the Dingle Peninsula as you trek the Brandon Massif. The Peninsula attracts not only walkers but also photographers, painters and film makers owing to its stunning coastal scenery. Today will involve a walk of approx. 14kms, during which you'll be able to take the time to enjoy the ocean views from a high point of the Brandon Massif, before continuing to Dingle, the main town on the peninsula, and your home for the next three evenings.



Dingle sits in a protected bay with beautiful beaches and a colourful harbour flanked by painted houses. You stay for three nights at the Ashes Guesthouse, located in the centre of Dingle. The Ashes offers spacious bedrooms and delicious breakfasts made using local organic produce. Nearby is an excellent choice of restaurants, pubs and shops.

Terrain: Mountain tracks with uneven and rocky sections boggy in parts.

Distance: 14kms

Ascent: 725m

Day 6: Sleah Head Walk (B, L)

Today you'll hike around Sleah Head, the most westerly promontory on the Dingle Peninsula, and one of the richest archaeological areas in the region. Historical and natural landmarks you can expect to see include the beehive huts (early medieval stone-built houses), the remains of an Iron Age fort at Dunberg, and Ventry beach. The views to the Blasket Islands from Mount Eagle are also highlights of today's walk.



After the walk, you'll be returned to your accommodation in Dingle for overnight.

Terrain: Rocky and grass tracks; beach walking, some road walking.

Distance: 11kms

Ascent: 326m

Day 7: Cloghane & Sas Creek (B, L, D)

Today your guide will take you to the northern side of the Dingle Peninsula, which sees comparatively few visitors. Starting from the village of Cloghane, you'll enjoy a wonderful hike, taking you across hills and bogland to arrive at Sas Creek, a large U-shaped inlet with steep slopes that plunge 300m into the sea. At the end of your walk, return to the village of Cloghane for a drink, then back to Dingle for a group dinner and overnight at the Ashes Guesthouse.

Terrain: Rocky and grass tracks; beach walking, some road walking.

Distance: 13kms

Ascent: 630m



Day 8: Depart Dingle (B)

Your tour finishes this morning with another delicious breakfast and a private transfer to Kerry Airport for your flight out.

Booking Information:

*This is a scheduled group tour accommodating up to 12 walkers and departing at fixed dates throughout the year. The cost to join is **£1,990 per person**, and the optional single supplement is £440. This itinerary can also be booked on a private basis, either as a self-drive or with private guide and vehicle. For more details, including private departure costs, please [contact us](#).*

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

Includes:

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

Excludes:

- International flights – please ask us for a quote
- Lunch and dinner to own account except where stated otherwise in itinerary
- Travel insurance
- Personal expenses and tips