

# Tourism Ireland trade itinerary

## Flavours of the Wild Atlantic Way

A flavour-filled trip along Ireland's rugged west coast

At 2,500km, the Wild Atlantic Way is Ireland's ultimate food trail, a winding route that is home to some of the island's most innovative artisan producers, brewers, distillers and chefs. Inspired by their spectacular surroundings, these food heroes produce world-class food and drink, often flavoured by generations of traditions.

Whether your tastes run to seafood fresh from the Atlantic, artisan gin and whiskey, wonderful local cheeses or charcuterie, they can all be sampled in restaurants, cafés, visitor centres and farmers' markets from Cork to Donegal. Discovering every tasty treat the Wild Atlantic Way has to offer would take a lifetime. But here are some suggestions to get you started.

*This is a sample itinerary to offer suggestions and ideas for planning trips. You can contact your local Tourism Ireland representative for further information.*

Theme: Foodie

Duration: 7 days

## The details

Nearest airports: Cork Airport, Donegal Airport, Ireland West Airport Knock, Kerry

Airport, Shannon Airport

Total distance: 1,178km

## Day 1 (31km) Cork city to Kinsale

### Morning

Our tour starts in Cork city, Ireland's foodie capital, with a visit to the **English Market** [<http://www.englishmarket.ie/>]. This Victorian gem is a Cork institution and is a go-to for great cheeses, charcuteries and award-winning patés and terrines. It opens 8am-6pm, Monday to Saturday (except bank holidays). But it does get busy, so large groups should avoid the peak hours of 11am-4pm, especially Friday and Saturday. While you're there, stop in to Frank Hederman's stall and sample smoked fish that will make your mouth water.

Leave the market behind and set out on the **Cork Tasting Tour with Fab Food**

**Trails** [<https://www.fabfoodtrails.ie/cork-tasting-trail>], a 2.5-3 hour stroll around the city and plenty of opportunities to sample some great food. The tour costs €59.50 per person. Groups are kept to a maximum of 12-14 people but arrangements can be made for larger groups.

### Lunch

Stay in Cork for a light lunch – afternoon tea at **Electric** [<https://www.electriccork.ie/blog/electric-afternoon-tea>] is just the thing, with delicious treats made with local ingredients. Groups are welcome but you'll need to book ahead and the afternoon tea experience costs from €24 per person (€30 if you'd like a gin and tonic for the road).

### Afternoon [31km, 36 mins]

Head south to the delightful gourmet town of Kinsale, officially the start/end of the Wild Atlantic Way. This is a town with a serious foodie reputation and its own annual gourmet festival that takes place each October. Step aboard the **Spirit of Kinsale** [<https://www.kinsaleharbourcruises.com/>] for a 50-minute cruise around Kinsale Harbour that offers fantastic views of the epic **Charles Fort** and the **Old Head of Kinsale**. Discount rates of €10.50 are available for groups of 10 or more.

Once you're back on dry land, make your way to the **Kinsale Mead**

**Co.** [<https://www.kinsalemeadco.ie/>] for a one-hour tour of the meadery and a chance to sample a selection of meads in the tasting room. Group tours are available on request.

### Overnight

Stay at **Actons Hotel** [<https://www.actonshotelkinsale.com/en/>], just a short walk from the centre of town. Eat at Finn's Table [<https://www.finnstable.com/>], where menus are inspired by local produce and given a modern twist.

## Images for Day 1

English Market, Cork: <https://www.irelandscontentpool.com/media/?mediald=F7D8D55C-F331-48D0-81AE4A080ED5A9CB>

Kinsale, County Cork: <https://www.irelandscontentpool.com/media/?mediald=425484C6-4762-4E74-887AA4B3ACBF7FC4>

## **Day 2 (202km) Kinsale to Killarney**

**Morning** [79km, 126 mins]

Heading west along the Wild Atlantic Way, our first stop is the little town of Clonakilty – famous for its black pudding. If you're passing through on Fridays, you can browse around the farmers market (9am-2pm). Nearby Sibbreen also has a farmers' market on Saturdays (9.30am-2pm) that's well worth a visit and offers a great excuse to enjoy a coffee and some homebaked goodies.

At Baltimore, hop on board the **Baltimore Sea Safari** [<https://baltimoreseasafari.ie/>] for a cruise by the Roaring Water Bay Rope Mussels farm and some wildlife spotting on the water. This exciting one-hour tour costs €20 per person. Groups of up to 21 can be accommodated but pre-booking is essential.

**Lunch** [41km, 41 mins]

**Organico** [<https://www.organico.ie/>] in Bantry is our lunch stop. Run by sisters Rachel and Hannah Dare, this health food café, shop and bakery serves up food that is organic (naturally), local and extremely tasty.

**Afternoon** [82km, 2 hours 20 mins]

No trip to Bantry is complete without a visit to the impressive **Bantry**

**House** [<https://www.bantryhouse.com/>], home of the While family since 1739. There are guided tours of the house daily from 10am-2pm and group rates are available on request. While you're there, you should explore the gardens. Climb the 100 steps to the top terrace and you'll be treated to panoramic views of Bantry Bay.

Time to set course for Kenmare now. The drive will take you through Glengariff (the island garden of **Garnish** [<http://www.garnishisland.com/>] is well worth a stop if you have time) and the Caha Pass, a spectacular mountain pass with breathtaking views. Kenmare is a charming town with plenty of quirky shops and galleries to explore and a great reputation for food and lively pubs. Stop in to **Jam** [<http://jam.ie/>] for coffee and cake and take the opportunity to stretch your legs and do some shopping. Then it's on to our final stop of the day, Killarney, with quick stops at the Moll's Gap and Ladies View viewing points, where the vista of Killarney's famous lakes will be spread out before you.

## **Overnight**

Tonight's stop is the **Brehon Hotel** [<https://www.thebrehon.com/>] in Killarney. Dine at **Treyvauds** [<https://treyvaudsrestaurant.com/>] for flavoursome food with an international twist and then round off the night with the Irish Whiskey Experience [<https://www.irishwhiskeyexperience.net/>], where you'll get a fascinating insight into the history and distilling of Irish whiskey and, of course, the opportunity to sample some uisce beatha (water of life). Groups are welcome and private tastings can be arranged.

## **Images for Day 2**

Bantry House: <https://www.irelandscontentpool.com/media/?mediald=A9E46358-8B0A-449C-BCC5B67E1D51D357>

Ladies View, Killarney Lakes: <https://www.irelandscontentpool.com/media/?mediald=AA4E81BF-99F3-411C-9122A1830E61D726>

## **Day 3 (253km) Killarney to Limerick**

**Morning** [66km, 1 hr 6 mins]

Set out for the beautiful Dingle peninsula, a must-visit for any self-respecting foodie. We're heading for the **Dingle Distillery** [<https://dingledistillery.ie/>] where they use three hand-crafted copper pot stills to create what the owners like to call the "ultimate whiskey". If whiskey isn't your tippie, they also produce very fine gin and vodka and you can sample all of them on a distillery tour. Pre-booking is essential and the cost per person is €15.

Cleanse your palate with a visit to local favourite, **Murphy's Ice**

**Cream** [<http://www.murphysicecream.ie/>] where they make ice cream that way it was meant to be made: with fresh local milk and cream, free range eggs and organic sugar. They even flavour their ice cream with sea salt made from Dingle sea water and distil the Dingle rain to make their sorbets.

If you have time, take the one-hour tour of Dingle Harbour to meet local celebrity, Fungie the Dolphin.

**Lunch** [15km, 18 mins]

**Caifé na Caolóige** at Louis Mulcahy Pottery [<https://louismulcahy.com/louis-mulcahy-cafe/>] serves a tasty selection of locally sourced seafood along with homemade soups and tasty sandwiches. After lunch, make time to browse around the showroom of one of the island's best-known potters.

**Afternoon** [172km, 2 hr 43 mins]

Head north along the Wild Atlantic Way to Limerick and stop off at the **Foynes Flying Boat & Maritime Museum** [<https://www.flyingboatmuseum.com/>]. It was here, in 1943, that chef Joe Sheridan created the famous Irish coffee as a winter warmer for plane passengers delayed by bad weather and refuelling on the way from Europe to America. Tour groups are welcome but advance booking is essential.

Continue on to Limerick city and explore culinary treats at the **Milk Market** [<http://www.milkmarketlimerick.ie/>], where stalls are laden with cheeses, pastries, meats and freshly baked breads. The market is open from Friday to Sunday.

Finally, don't miss one of Limerick's gems: **King John's Castle** [<https://www.kingjohnscastle.com/>], a 13<sup>th</sup> century fortress on the banks of the Shannon with a state-of-the-art visitor centre.

**Overnight**

Our stop is the **Clayton Hotel Limerick** [<https://www.claytonhotellimerick.com/>] in the city centre. Eat at **Dolan's Bar and Restaurant** [<https://www.dolans.ie/>], a short walk from the hotel, where you'll find great seafood and live music seven nights a week.

**Images for Day 3**

Dingle Distillery: <https://www.irelandscontentpool.com/media/?mediaId=FC39CE62-9413-44E9-B02D7A180B8C3859>

Foynes Flying Boat Museum: <https://www.irelandscontentpool.com/media/?mediaId=91F644FA-60BC-458E-9260D1DF410E211B>

**Day 4 (147km) Limerick to Galway**

**Morning** [99km, 1 hr 38 mins]

Our first stop in County Clare is a highlight of the Burren Food Trail and a real treat. **St Tola Goat Farm** [<http://www.st-tola.ie/>] sits on 65 acres of herb-rich pastures and produces handmade goats' cheese thanks to its herd of around 300 goats. Tours can be pre-booked for groups of any size; they last 1-1.5 hours and include a look around the farm, the Économusée and a cheese-making demonstration.

Next, we drop in to another foodie superstar – the **Burren**

**Smokehouse** [<https://www.burrensmokehouse.com/>]. From their base just 15 minutes from the iconic Cliffs of Moher, Birgitta and Peter Curtain have been perfecting the art of smoking fish since 1989. Take a tour, breath in the scent of oak smoke and sample the sublime smoked salmon. The visitor centre is open every weekday; there is a short DVD on salmon smoking that is available in English, French, German, Italian, Swedish and Spanish; and entry is free.

If time permits, take a brief detour to the **Poulnabrone Dolmen**, Ireland's oldest dated megalithic monument.

**Lunch** [9km, 14 mins]

Stop off in the pretty village of Ballyvaughan for lunch at **An Féar Gorta Tea and Garden**

**Rooms** [<http://www.tearoomsballyvaughan.com/>], where the food is fabulous, the ingredients are locally sourced and the quirky old building and gardens are utterly charming. The tea rooms are open from 11am-5.30pm but in May and June, they close on Tuesdays and Wednesdays, and in July and August, they close on Tuesdays only.

**Afternoon** [39km, 40 mins]

Perched on a rocky outcrop overlooking Galway

Bay, **Dunguaire Castle** [<https://www.dunguairecastle.com/>] is one of Ireland's most photogenic buildings and it's well worth a stop on the way to Galway. Restored to give an insight into how life was once lived there, there is an entrance fee of €7.20. But Dunguaire really comes to live

during the medieval banquets that take place there from April to October, so if you can fit that experience into your trip, you won't regret it.

When you arrive in Galway, you'll feel the city's party atmosphere buzzing in the air. This is a place that has a festival for everything and a real love of food. Step out on a foodie-focused walking tour with **Galway Food Tours** [<https://galwayfoodtours.com/>], where you can sample everything from crab and cheese to craft beer and oysters. The tour lasts for 2.5 hours, costs €60 per person and includes lots of tasty treats and a goodie bag at the end. Private group tours are available and pre-booking is essential.

### Overnight

Our overnight stop is the **Salthill Hotel** [<https://www.salthillhotel.com/>], in the popular seaside resort of Salthill, just north of Galway city. Dine out at **Quay Street Kitchen** [<https://www.facebook.com/TheQuayStreetKitchen/>], a cosy little restaurant, popular with locals, that offers a great range of seafood and vegetarian dishes. If you still have any energy at the end of the day, join the locals for a stroll along the **Salthill Prom**. Insider tip: kick the wall at the end of the Prom when you reach it. Don't ask why – it's just tradition.

### Images for Day 4

Burren

Smokehouse: <https://www.dropbox.com/s/0hd4gg26j8r6i01/BURREN%20SMOKEHOUSE%20BG%20OPTIO%20N%203.jpg?dl=0>

Dunguaire Castle: <https://www.irelandscontentpool.com/media/?mediad=A568E120-A9C2-444F-8CA2E7B2027E02FF>

### Day 5 (143km) Galway to Westport

**Morning** [95km, 1 hr 42mins]

We're heading to Rossaveal in Connemara to embark on a coastal walking and foraging tour with Cindy and Sinead O'Brien, owners of **Mungo Murphy's abalone farm** [<https://www.mungomurphyseaweed.com/>]. Experience local history and the stunning Atlantic environment as you learn about aquaculture and edible sea plants and sample dishes made with fresh seaweed grown on the farm and sea plants foraged on the tour. Tours last for 2 hours and take place all year. They cost €50 per person and must be booked in advance.

It's just a short jaunt to one of Connemara's gems

– **Kylemore Abbey** [<https://www.kylemoreabbey.com/>], a 19<sup>th</sup> century gothic mansion nestled into a lush wooded mountainside and overlooking Lough Pollacapull. Built by a wealthy businessman as a wedding gift for his new bride, Kylemore is now owned by the Benedictine order but is open to the public. Explore the beautifully restored reception rooms, visit the impressive Victorian walled garden, and take some time to explore the grounds before enjoying a browse in the craft and design shop. Discounted rates are available for groups of 15 or more and private tours can be pre-booked.

**Lunch** [10km, 14 mins]

One of the 10 coolest food trucks in the world, according to Lonely Planet, the **Misunderstood Heron** [<https://www.facebook.com/MisunderstoodHeron/>] sits on the edge of Killary Harbour in north Connemara, serving up Killary fjord mussels, Killary mountain lamb samosas and freshly baked salted caramel brownies to a grateful clientele. Run by Kim Young and her Chilean husband Roinaldo Seco, this is a busy spot but it's one of Ireland's great food experiences and is not to be missed. Open seven days a week and credit cards are accepted.

**Afternoon** [38km, 40 mins]

Once you've refuelled, it's off to the buzzy town of Westport in County Mayo. Designed as a place to live for the workers and tenants of nearby **Westport House** [<https://www.westporthouse.ie/>] in the 18<sup>th</sup> century, the streets here reverberate with history, and the colourful shop fronts give it a surprisingly jolly appearance. Take a tour of Westport House and hear about the scandalous history of Grace O'Malley, Connemara's 16<sup>th</sup> century pirate queen – the house is built on the foundations of one of her castles. Westport House is open year-round and private guided tours of the house and grounds can be pre-arranged.

Head back into Westport for the evening and sample the delicious local flavours on offer at **An Port Mór** [<http://anportmor.com/>] restaurant before stopping in to one of the town's lively pubs such as **Matt**

**Molloy's** [<http://www.mattmolloy.com/>] or **McGing's** [<https://www.facebook.com/mcgings/>] for a few drinks and a chance to hear some traditional Irish music.

### Overnight

Stay at the **Wyatt Hotel** [<https://www.wyatthotel.com/>] in the heart of Westport.

### Images for Day 5

Misunderstood Heron: <https://www.dropbox.com/s/c0zu5o6cc2g42z6/the-misunderstood-heron.jpg?dl=0>

McGing's: <https://www.irelandscontentpool.com/media/?mediald=74F04864-1640-41A2-A43C75912DC27F2D>

### Day 6 (231km) Westport to Donegal town

**Morning** [64km, 1 hr 3 mins]

Go foraging on the shores of Killala Bay with Denis Quinn from **Wild Atlantic Cultural**

**Tours** [<http://www.wildatlanticculturaltours.com/>]. He'll guide you along the coast in search of tasty wild morsels, including seaweed and mussels, and treat you to an outdoor seafood feast along the stunning County Mayo coast. Tours can be adapted to fitness levels and interests. Prices start at €35 per person for a half-day tour and discounted rates are available for groups.

**Lunch** [75km, 1 hr 9 mins]

If you're still hungry after that, stop by the charming **Shells** [<https://shellscafe.com/>] seaside café in Strandhill for lunch overlooking the beach. This is a popular spot so you may need to wait for a table but there's a cute gift shop beside the café where you can pass the time and a walk on the beach it always a good idea.

**Afternoon** [30km, 32 mins]

You might have seen the **Taste the Atlantic** [<https://www.wildatlanticway.com/highlights/taste-the-wild-atlantic-way>] signs along the Wild Atlantic Way. This dedicated seafood trail gives you the opportunity to sample the flavours of the coast. But it also lets you connect with the people who blend tradition and cutting-edge techniques to cultivate some of the best seafood in the world. One of the producers on the trail is **Wild Atlantic Oysters** [<http://wildatlanticoyster.com/>] – an oyster farming collective that operates on the grounds of **Lissadell House** [<http://lissadellhouse.com/>], one of Ireland's great stately homes that boasts its own rich history of oyster cultivation.

While you're at Lissadell, check out the well-tended Victorian kitchen garden, where you'll find no less than 180 types of potatoes – one of the largest collections in the world. Guided tours of the house are available, and entry to the Alpine Garden and the walled garden are included in the price.

**Overnight** [62km, 54 mins]

Our stop tonight is the **Mill Park Hotel** [<https://www.millparkhotel.com/>], just outside Donegal town. Stroll down to **The House Gastropub** [<https://thehousegastropub.ie/>] for delicious eats in a warm, friendly atmosphere.

### Images for Day 6

Wild Atlantic

Oysters: <https://www.dropbox.com/s/ntypmrh67ap8kgt/Wild%20Atlantic%20Oysters%20teaser%205.jpg?dl=0>

Lissadell House: <https://www.irelandscontentpool.com/media/?mediald=3E47FD17-4DD8-4AB3-BBF6BC44B4BB8030>

### Day 7 [171km] Donegal to Letterkenny

**Morning** [56km, 1 hr 14 mins]

Don't miss one of Donegal's best-kept secrets – the **Slieve League cliffs** [<http://www.sliabhliag.com/>], among Europe's highest sea cliffs and far taller than the more famous Cliffs of Moher.

Just a stone's throw away is **Sliabh Liag Distillers** [<https://www.sliabhliagdistillers.com/>], a family-owned craft distillery where Moira and James Doherty produce their Irish Maritime Gin, An Dúlámán using local seaweed such as pepper dulse. Guided tours of the distillery are available from Monday to Saturday at 12pm, 2pm and 4pm with discounted rates for groups but please note that there is no parking for buses.

**Lunch** [52km, 1 hr 3 mins]

Sample the award-winning food at the **Waterfront**

**Hotel** [<https://www.waterfronthotel Dungloe.ie/>] in Dungloe, where the focus is on locally sourced ingredients and the seafood options are excellent.

**Afternoon** [38km, 39 mins]

Head north to **Glenveagh Castle** [<https://www.glenveaghnationalpark.ie/>], a majestic stronghold set within 16,000 hectares of National Park. Glenveagh has real star power and has hosted an impressive roll call of glamorous guests in its day, including Marilyn Monroe, Charlie Chaplin and Greta Garbo. Access to the castle is by guided tour only but the castle gardens and the walking trails around the park are open to the public.

**Overnight** [25km, 30 mins]

Stay at the **Radisson Blu Hotel** [<https://www.radissonblu.com/en/hotel-letterkenny>] in Letterkenny. Eat at the **Lemon Tree Restaurant** [<http://www.thelemontreerestaurant.com/>], where traditional Irish cooking meets classic French style.

### Images for Day 7

Slieve League cliffs: <https://www.irelandscontentpool.com/media/?mediaId=12F8BF6E-61AC-41BF-BC2232DEFA6FA1A0>

Glenveagh Castle: <https://www.irelandscontentpool.com/media/?mediaId=F22A5102-23B3-45A1-BD76564F9AE48890>