



WalkingWomen Low Intermediate County Clare, Ireland 26 – 31 May (Sun-Fri)

Holiday details

A taste of Ireland brought to you by sisters Mary and Breda whose warm hospitality and breadth of knowledge make this a truly unique insight into the area. A wonderful opportunity to explore the fauna, geology and history of County Clare in Ireland along with a taste of Irish culture. The karst scenery of the Burren is known for the grikes, (cracks) in the limestone pavements which support Arctic, Mediterranean and Alpine species.

On one day we will walk along the Cliffs of Moher, a spectacular stretch along the Atlantic coast with views across Galway Bay, the Aran Islands and the Twelve Pins mountains of Connemara. On another day we may take the ferry out to the Aran Islands – a spectacular trip in itself - and walk there for the day. The trip is weather dependent so not included in the cost of the holiday (approx 30e).

We'll be based in the lovely village of Ballyvaughan at the Meadowfield Guest House. The rooms are all ensuite and our hostess, Breda, will make you very welcome. In the evening, Mary will take us to dinner in a variety of local restaurants and pubs to enjoy the atmosphere of village life. We'll also get to experience local music first hand.

Price includes: 5 nights full board in ensuite twin rooms; all transport to walks. Single rooms available if you book early – £15 per night supplement.

Not included: flight to Shannon; ferry to Aran islands (if used)

Itinerary

Please note that the itinerary is subject to change

Day 1: Meet and greet at Shannon Airport - Minibus transfer to Meadowfield Guesthouse, Ballyvaughan, Co Clare. Leaving Shannon airport, we drive through green farmland towards Ennis, the largest town in County Clare and a major centre of traditional Irish music. Past the village of Corofin, we enter the Burren region close to the imposing Leminagh Castle, home of the legendary Maire Rua. The Burren has been inhabited for over 5000 years and on the road to Ballyvaughan we will visit three sites of early settlement, the Poulabrone Dolmen, Caherconnell Stone Fort and the Stone Fort at Ballyaliban. After settling in to your accommodation at Meadowfield, you will have a briefing of what adventures the next 4 days will bring. Dinner will be in one of the village pub restaurants.

Day 2: After breakfast, today we walk directly from Meadowfield along the valley rising gradually to climb the Aillwee and Dangan Hills – This is approx a 4 - 5 hour walk on tracks, green roads, private farmland, and open Burren landscape with wonderful views and an opportunity to see how farming and tourist activities provide sustainable living in this area. We will walk through the Aillwee Cave Park and can make an optional visit to the Burren Bird of Prey Centre en route. Lunch will be taken on Aillwee Hill with spectacular views over Galway Bay. This walk provides a great opportunity to see many of the wildflower varieties which grow in the Burren at this time of year.

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Day 3: This morning following breakfast we take a short 15-minute transfer to the back of the Fenagh Valley. Following the Black Head Trail we climb gradually towards the Gleninagh Ridge along farm tracks. Today's walk is a great opportunity to experience the open Burren landscape, on tracks and green roads. There will be spectacular views across Galway Bay and Connemara and once again this walk is a wonderful opportunity to experience the unique Burren flora in bloom amid the limestone pavement. At the end of the walk we will be transferred back to Meadowfield, visiting the round tower of Newtown Castle on the way. Dinner will give you the opportunity to experience a different restaurant in the local village.

Day 4: This morning we take a 45-minute transfer to the village of Liscannor, to walk along the Cliffs of Moher. The cliffs extend from Hags Head to Doolin with a stop mid-way at the Cliffs of Moher visitor centre. Standing 214m (702 feet) at their highest point they stretch for 8 miles along the Atlantic coast of County Clare. From the Cliffs of Moher on a clear day you can see the Aran Islands and Galway Bay, as well as the Twelve Pins mountains in Connemara. O'Brien's Tower stands near the highest point and has served as a viewing point over the cliffs for hundreds of years. A huge variety of birdlife nest along the cliffs. Our walk will finish in the lovely village of Doolin where we will have an early dinner in one of the many pub restaurants – equally well known for good food and traditional music.

Day 5: Today's walk will be a coastal walk from Gleninagh Castle to the Rine Pebble and Sand Beach, a 3 hour walk along the shores of Galway Bay with beautiful views and an opportunity to see local birdlife and coastal plants.

Optional Day: Spectacular trip but weather permitting – on one of the above days we could take the ferry from Doolin to one of the Aran Islands off the coast and walk the trails there for the day – Ferry is about 1.5 hours each way and costs approx. €30.00 per person. Features of the three Aran islands are the incredible limestone walls and early Christian settlement sites which co-exist with a traditional way of life.

Travel options

You can travel by plane or car/ferry to Ireland.

Flights & Transfers – Flight to Shannon is not included We believe that this gives maximum flexibility and the best chance of getting a good price as well as the option to extend your stay. Flights must fit with the transfers below otherwise you will be responsible for your own transfer. To find suitable flights try www.skyscanner.net

Aer Lingus from London Heathrow

DATE	FLIGHT	AIRPORT	COUNTRY	CHECK-IN	DEPART	ARRIVE	AIRPORT	COUNTRY
26/05/19	EI385	London Heathrow	UK	1245	1445	1615	Shannon	Ireland
31/05/19	EI384	Shannon	Ireland	1025	1225	1400	London Heathrow	UK

BA /Aer Lingus from Manchester

DATE	FLIGHT	AIRPORT	COUNTRY	CHECK-IN	DEPART	ARRIVE	AIRPORT	COUNTRY
26/05/19	BA1391	Manchester	UK	0945	1145	1255	London Heathrow	UK
26/05/19	BA5943	London Heathrow	UK	Transfer	1445	1615	Shannon	Ireland

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31/05/19	BA5942	Shannon	Ireland	1025	1225	1400	London Heathrow	UK
31/05/19	BA1396	London Heathrow	UK	Transfer	1600	1705	Manchester	UK

Meeting up for the transfer to Ballyvaughan

There will be one transfer from/to Shannon airport to/from Ballyvaughan. The minibus driver will be at arrivals holding a WalkingWomen sign. If you wish to take a flight that arrives at a different time from those mentioned above you will be responsible for your own transfer arrangements. You can travel to Ballyvaughan by bus from/to Shannon airport. See the following website for journey information: <http://www.buseireann.ie/>

Travel By Car/Ferry

You can also travel to Ireland by car, taking the Holyhead - Dun Laoghaire ferry and continuing on the N67 to Ballyvaughan. For timetable information and prices please see: <http://www.stenaline.co.uk/ferry/routes/holyhead-dun-laoghaire>

If you are traveling to our accommodation independently the address is:

Meadowfield Bed and Breakfast, Ballyvaughan, Co Clare. Tel 00353 65 7077083

Foreign currency

Ireland's currency is the Euro. There are ATM machines and Bureau de Change at the airport but there are **no** cash machines or banks in Ballyvaughan and the nearest one from there is some distance. Most restaurants & shops accept credit cards.

Visas and Passports

For UK citizens traveling from the UK, a passport is not required by immigration officials; however, you must bring official ID of some sort, preferably passport, driver's license, or another official form of identification. We strongly recommend a passport. Your airline or ferry company may have stricter ID requirements in place, and you should check with them prior to travel to avoid disappointment.

Citizens of the EU and Switzerland are required to bring their passport or national identity card.

Citizens of all other countries must bring their passports. A visa is not required if you are a UK or EU citizen.

What to bring

- **Walking boots** - leather or waterproof fabric, broken in and comfy, with sufficient tread left for good grip.
- **Several pairs of walking socks.** If your feet blister easily, try 2 thin pairs of coolmax to reduce how hot your feet get.
- **Waterproof jacket and trousers.** It will certainly rain!
- **Extra fleece or sweater** to put on during a stop or if it's windy.
- **Trousers &/or shorts** - loose enough not to restrict your movement (Jeans are not advisable)
- **Daypack** - to carry spare gear, waterproofs, packed lunch, water & other bits and pieces.
- **Water flask** or strong plastic water bottle - 1.5 litres. The Platypus water system (or similar) is very effective.
- **Sun screen, lip salve, sun hat**
- **Large plastic bag** to keep the contents of your rucksack dry if it rains.
- **Walking poles** - not essential, but very good if you have troublesome knees or difficulty with uneven ground.
- **Cash in Euro, up to date Passport & flight booking reference, insurance details, this holiday sheet for contact details**

Non-essential, but they may be important to you!

Camera, spare film & spare battery, charger; maybe binoculars, a mat to sit on during a drink stop. Flask for hot drinks. Mobile & charger. Spare bootlaces. Flower book. Zinc Oxide tape to prevent blister - and Compeed in case you didn't put the zinc oxide tape on in time.

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