

Popular Walks in County Wicklow

Below you will find a tempting choice of walks in the Wicklow Mountains. No matter which walk you choose, you will find yourself walking through a surprising variety of terrain, including colourful heather-covered moorland, airy ridges, ancient woodland and glaciated river valleys. Despite its obvious attractions, the area still maintains a feeling of tranquillity and wild natural beauty – the perfect place to unwind. The walks featured represent only a small selection of the walking opportunities within the Wicklow Mountains and are intended to give you an indication of the type of walking this area has to offer.



Lowland Walks

Vale of Clara

This is a lovely walk along a riverbank through woodland and down ancient cart tracks, long forgotten except by the deer and the badgers which shelter among the deep foliage of bilberry. The old church and stone bridge in the centre of the valley date from the 18th century. The Vale of Clara is one of the glaciated valleys in the Wicklow Mountains and is now a nature reserve. The river Avonmore cuts through rocks which rise on either side to about 300 metres (600 feet) above sea-level. This quiet river valley is the largest area of semi-natural woodland in Wicklow. It is mainly oak woodland with holly, birch and some hazel. There are woodland flowers such as woodrush, bluebell and wild garlic to be seen and you may come across typical woodland breeding birds including sparrow hawk, woodcock, blackcap and jay.

Distance: 10 km/6.25 mi

Walking Time: 4.5 hours

Coastal Walk from Bray to Greystones

A spectacular walk along an airy cliff path which takes you past coves and secluded beaches into the lovely coastal town of Greystones. The rugged cliffs provide a home for a huge variety of seabirds - cormorants, shags, herring gulls, kittiwakes, razorbills and fulmars can be seen along the way. In Bray there is a long sand and shingle beach to walk on which is fronted by a spacious Esplanade complete with bandstand, a sea life centre and a fun park. Greystones is a charming seaside town with an untouched, old style seafront of Georgian and Victorian houses. There is an option of using a local train back to Bray. If you need to wait, find a pub down the seafront. A perfect Irish day!

Distance: 6 km/3.7 mi

Walking Time: 2 hours

Glendalough & Wicklow Mountains National Park

Follow ancient trails in the footsteps of Irish heritage. The English name Glendalough comes from the Irish *Glenn Dá Locha* which translates to “the valley of the two lakes”. This is a relaxing and scenic low level walk along well maintained tracks and paths in the heart of the Wicklow Mountains National Park. In addition to the obvious interest provided by the enchanting 6th century monastery site of Glendalough, the route enjoys an idyllic woodland setting and splendid views of the lakes and the surrounding mountains.

Distance: 10 km /6.25 mi

Walking Time: 4 hours

Devil's Glen

A nineteenth-century traveller described the Devil's Glen as "inconceivably grand and beautiful". This glen was cut out gradually by melting water at the end of the last Ice Age and is now a deep gorge through which the Vartry River flows. Stand still for a moment and listen to the roar of the water as it plunges between the boulders, filling the valley with damp spray. High overhead the rocky crags seem to hang suspending among the trees. An impressive waterfall and pool at the head of the glen is called the 'Devil's Punchbowl'. The track runs both by the river and higher up in the glen, with a unique collection of contemporary wood sculpture by Irish and international artist along the way.

Distance: 4 km/2.5 mi

Walking Time: 4 hours

Long Distance Routes

County Wicklow offers many opportunities for multi-day walks and two specific routes have been designated as waymarked trails. These are the Wicklow Way and the Saint Kevin's Way. Saint Kevin's Way, a traditional pilgrim's path, stretches for 30 kilometres (19 miles) from the village of Hollywood in West Wicklow over the Wicklow Gap to Glendalough. The 120 kilometres (75 miles) long Wicklow Way is part of the most westerly section of the E8 footpath which extends much of Europe. A combination of parkland, forest trails, and wild and scenic mountain landscape turning to rolling countryside offers a wonderfully varied experience for hillwalkers.

High-Level Mountain Hikes

Luggala & Knocknacloghoge

This picturesque circuit with spectacular views from beginning to end starts at the entrance to the Guinness Estate of Lord Iveagh and will reward your effort with some of the most memorable views in Ireland. You will walk the dramatic cliff top of the mighty Luggala, overlooking the dark blue water of Lough Tay, with its white beach and a wonderfully inviting landscape of luxuriant hills and valleys, forests and rivers beyond. A truly classic mountain hike!

Distance: 13 km/8 mi

Walking Time: 4.5 hours

Scarr & Lough Dan

Rugged granite-studded hills, deep blue lakes, white beaches – this is one of the finest walks in Wicklow. A very special atmosphere pervades this part of the mountains that is steeped in history. In the 1798 uprising the valley surrounding the beautiful lakes Lough Dan and Lough Tay provided a stronghold for rebels. Today, one can stand among the ruined dwellings and imagine how it may have looked a long time ago. The man-made features in this beautiful part of Wicklow – dry stone walls, romantic little cottages, fields bearing the marks of long gone potato ridges – blend perfectly with the landscape and only serve to enhance the feeling of timelessness.

Distance: 13 km/8 mi

Walking Time: 4.5 hours

Circuit of Glendalough Valley

This is an outstanding walk which takes you around one of County Wicklow's most spectacular valleys. The mix of splendid mountain views and tranquil mountain lakes combined with the unique brooding atmosphere of this area makes this part of Wicklow one to capture the imagination. Wildlife you may encounter along the way includes moorland birds such as ravens, red grouse, skylarks, meadow pipits, peregrine falcons and merlin. A large herd of red/sika deer hybrids is present in the area, in addition to otters, red squirrels, badgers, foxes and hares.

Distance: 17 km/10.6 mi

Walking Time: 7.5 hours

Lugnaquilla from Glen of Imaal

The Wicklow mountain range includes the highest mountain on Ireland's east coast –

Lugnaquilla. This walk is one of the most dramatic in the area with extensive granite plateau and wide horizons dominating the landscape. It promises excellent views of the surrounding Wicklow Mountains, the Blackstairs Mountains to the south, and given fair weather, even across the Irish Sea to Snowdonia in Wales. The route suggested here follows the perimeter of the Glen of Imaal military range and is demanding, but rewarding.

Distance: 20 km/12.5 mi

Walking Time: 7.5 hours

Djouce & Maulin

This walk starts near the charming village of Enniskerry, which lies south of Dublin in the foothills of the Wicklow Mountains. Climbing up along the 'Wicklow Way', you will walk along a lofty trail overlooking Powerscourt Demesne. This is an old estate which is world-famous for its magnificent formal gardens, exotic trees and semi-natural woodland. From this trail you will also have wonderful views over Ireland's highest waterfall, tumbling from a height of 120 metres. One of the great joys of walking in this part of Wicklow is the contrast between walking through a variety of landscapes, from forests of dappled light over moorland to high and remote mountain cols.

Distance: 16 km/10 mi

Walking Time: 6 hours

The Brockaghs & Tonelagee

An exhilarating walk of far reaching mountain views and breathtaking panoramas with the cliffs of Tonelagee providing a spectacular backdrop for most of the day. The Brockaghs provide a blend of wild moorland, fields criss-crossed by dry stone walls and gentle hills, which in August are painted purple by blooming heather. The ruins of several houses can be seen along the way, these were occupied in the last century. The land around here is covered in boulders deposited after the ice age and much work must have been spent in creating usable fields. The name 'Brockagh' derives from the Irish 'Broc' for badger and undoubtedly there are badger sets in the woods surrounding this area.

Distance: 17 km/10.6 mi

Walking Time: 6.5 hours

Circuit of Upper Glenmalure

The spectacular Glenmalure is the largest of a series of glaciated valleys in County Wicklow and provides a superb starting point for this walk. The sheer size of this glen is quite stunning. Viewed from the mountain tops, great fields of bolder scree catch the morning sun as its low light penetrates from the south-east. Many of the valley slopes are afforested and above there is heather covered moorland and wide open grassland. Look out for herds of deer and especially large flocks of raven which are sometimes seen here in late summer and autumn. As the final stop on your adventures the lovely old-worldly Glenmalure Lodge (established in 1801) is one of Ireland's oldest Coaching Inns and provides the perfect location to relax with a pint.

Distance: 16 km/10 miles

Walking Time: 6 hours

Lough Firrib & Three Lakes

This area of the Wicklow Mountains offers a sense of remoteness with expansive views across high moorland. Walk through an untamed wilderness of craggy outcrops and undulating hills. Experience the feeling of loneliness and tranquillity surrounding Lough Firrib. This is walking for those who enjoy being out there with only the skylark and the raven for company. Other wildlife includes the fox, rabbit, deer, badger and hare, while peregrine falcon, kestrel and hen harrier hunt over the open moorland. This walk is a navigational challenge; the rewards are splendid views of the surrounding mountains and a real wilderness experience!

Distance: 14.5 km/9 miles

Walking Time: 5.5 hours