

The North Coast & Antrim: A Walker's Guide



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Your definitive guide to walking in Northern Ireland

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Also available is [The Mourne Mountains: A Walker's Guide](#). This guide will outline the key walking areas in Northern Ireland's highest mountain range, offering 5 varied itineraries sampling the best hillwalking the Mournes have to offer.

Introduction: A Walker's Guide

"Climb the mountains and get their good tidings. Nature's peace will flow into you as sunshine flows into trees. The winds will blow their own freshness into you and the storms their energy, while cares will drop off like autumn leaves." John Muir

Recreational walking is an outdoor pursuit enjoyed by millions of people throughout the world and Northern Ireland is widely recognised as an attractive destination with tremendous opportunities for unparalleled walking. Spectacular scenery with a diversity of landscape and physical features offer a simply unique walking experience.

John Muir's quote above typifies what walking in Ireland is all about. This 'Walker's Guide' is not going to 'glam up' our key walking areas by claiming that visitors need not pack anything other than shorts and t-shirts! Similarly we're not looking to avoid any possible negative issues, such as access limitations to certain walks. Rather, this document is designed to be an informative walker's guide to enable visitors to better enjoy the natural beauty of Ireland's dramatic, rugged landscape all year round. Our ever-changing natural environment shapes the Irish walking

experience and we are proud of having four distinctive seasons, each bringing their own inspirations.

Northern Ireland is rapidly becoming a 'must see' destination on the world map and in turn, some incredible landscapes are being revealed to walkers of all ages and abilities. Deceptively, this 'wee' country has numerous walking areas each offering their own distinctive take on natural beauty. From the rugged cliffs of the North Antrim Coast to the rounded summits and lush pastoral valleys of the Sperrin Mountains, Northern Ireland really is a walker's paradise if you know where to look!

This Walker's Guide will give you enough information to enable you to plan your walking trip and make your own discoveries in the North Coast and Antrim.





View from top of Lurigethan Mountain overlooking Glenariff

The North Coast & Antrim

“The grandeur of the rugged North Antrim Coast and the deep glens set against the pastoral farmland create other worlds away from busy life.” Dawson Stelfox, first Irishman to summit Everest.

The North Coast and Antrim are justifiably famous for the Giant’s Causeway, wonderful coastlines and a unique natural beauty. The area includes 3 designated areas of outstanding natural beauty, nine glens including Glenariff the ‘Queen of the Glens’, lush forest parks, secluded coastal tracks and numerous quaint fishing villages.

Exploring this world famous landscape on foot not only enables you to engage first hand with a breath-taking coastline. It also offers an escape

from the crowds and the opportunity to lose yourself in the history and geology of an area which has inspired countless myths and legends. Walking on the Causeway Coast is mostly on relatively flat coastal paths and trails. Routes are linear with good transport and accommodation options.

When walking in the North Coast & Antrim use the Ordnance Survey Northern Ireland (OSNI) ‘Glens of Antrim’ and ‘Causeway Coast and Rathlin Island’ Activity Maps 1:25 000 available from www.osni.gov.uk. Also available for walking in the North Coast are the OSNI sheets 4 & 5 1:50 000. You can also purchase these maps in most of the tourist information centres, see page 21.

Walking Itineraries

There are 25 Quality Walks in the [North Coast and Antrim](#) area as part of the Quality Walk Scheme, accommodating all levels of fitness. Whilst the coastal walks on the North Coast are stunning and very popular, there is also some excellent hillwalking in the Antrim Hills and Binevenagh, as well as wonderful walks around Glenariff Forest. To learn more about the Quality Walk Scheme visit www.walkni.com/useful-info/quality-walks

The WalkNI team have put their heads together and designed a variety of walking itineraries to enable visitors to get the best out of a short break in the North Coast & Antrim. We have put together 3 itineraries of what we judge to be the best walking in the North Coast and Antrim. There are of course many other combinations of walks and part of the joy of recreational walking is mixing and matching routes to create your own personal adventures. Use these itineraries as a guide.

The 3 suggested walking itineraries are:

- **Causeway Coast Way**

This 2 day long-distance linear route, from Portstewart to Ballycastle, passes through the Causeway Coast Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty, several Areas of Special Scientific Interest and of course the Giant's Causeway, a UNESCO World Heritage Site. Staying in coastal towns of Portstewart, Bushmills and Ballintoy, this 33 mile (53km) walk offers unparalleled views of the Atlantic Ocean, dramatic cliffs, sandy beaches and off-shore rocks. This really is one of Northern Ireland's iconic walks.

- **North Coast Highlights**

A 3 day itinerary walking the best routes along the North Coast and 1 day on Rathlin Island, reached by ferry. Bushmills provides a good base for the 2 days of coastal walking, with 1 night on Rathlin Island. Walkers can either use public transport to reach their start point and walk back or can set off from Bushmills and get public transport home again. Either option enables walkers to enjoy the spectacular North Coast highlights in 2 relaxed days with a further day's walking on Rathlin Island.

- **Antrim Hills Way**

The Antrim Hills Way is a 2 day, 27 mile (43km) linear route through the Antrim Hills. The walk cuts a scenic route through the Antrim Coast and Glens Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty. It explores a high coastal plateau and encompasses some of the most enjoyable upland walking in County Antrim. Dramatic scenery, isolated hills and fantastic history are just some of the treats on offer. Walkers set off from Glenarm with Linford as the half way point. We have listed a number of accommodation providers who provide transfers to and from Linford and Slemish (end point for this walk).



'Causeway Coast Way' 33 miles (53 km)

This 2 day long-distance linear route, from Portstewart to Ballycastle, passes through the Causeway Coast Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty, several Areas of Special Scientific Interest and of course the Giant's Causeway, a UNESCO World Heritage Site. This route also passes the iconic Carrick-a-Rede rope bridge and the spectacular ruins of Dunluce Castle. From sandy beaches to cliff-top paths, from natural heritage to unique geological sites, this 33 mile (53 km) section of the Ulster Way is one of the finest coastal walks in Europe.

Don't just take our word for it. Check out some of the comments left by walkers on our [WalkNI](#) page.

[Full Route Description, Photos and Ordnance Survey Maps](#)

If you are walking the Causeway Coast Way use Sheet 4 and 5 of the OSNI Discovery Series 1:50 000 available from local tourist information centres ([see page 21](#)) or visit www.osni.gov.uk



Download your free Causeway Coast Way Guide from www.walkni.com/walks/186/causeway-coast-way

Start Point: Portstewart

The route starts at Portstewart Strand with the nearest accommodation in Portstewart town. There is a wide range of accommodation here however we recommend the following B&Bs and Guest Houses as the most suitable for walkers and walking groups. Visit [WalkNI.com](#) for a list of special offers for walker friendly accommodation in the area. A full list of accommodation in the North Coast & Antrim can be found at www.causewaycoastandglens.com and www.discovernorthernireland.com.

Name	Nearest Town or Village	Phone	Website	Accommodation Type
Carnalbanagh House	Portstewart	+44 (0)28 7083 6294	www.carnban.com	A rural B&B less than 2 miles (3km) from Portstewart - 7 rooms.
Cromore Halt Guest Inn	Portstewart	+44 (0)28 7083 6888	www.cromore.com	Guest Inn with 12 rooms. Restaurant also.
Cul Erg	Portstewart	+44 (0)28 7083 6610	www.culerg.co.uk	B&B two minute walk from promenade - 10 rooms.
Wanderin Heights	Portstewart	+44 (0)28 7083 3250	www.wanderinheights.com	B&B with spectacular Atlantic views - 5 rooms.

Where to eat/drink?

There are many good places to eat in Portstewart including:

The Ice House Bar & Restaurant serves great bar food and is situated close to the harbour with panoramic views over the sea. Tel: +44(0)28 7083 1103 www.icehouseonline.co.uk

Shenanigans restaurant has a reputation for good food. Tel: +44(0)28 7083 6000 www.shenanigansportstewart.com

There is one restaurant in Portrush with an excellent reputation that is definitely worth a visit: **Ramore Wine Bar** Tel: +44(0)28 7082 4313 www.ramorerestaurant.com

55 Degrees North Tel: +44(0)28 7082 2811 www.55-north.com

Day 1: Portstewart to Portballintrae/Giant's Causeway 15 miles (24.5 km)

The walk on day 1 takes walkers on the first 3 sections of the Causeway Coast Waymarked Way and has been hailed by many as one of the best coastal walks in Europe. Beginning at St Patrick's Well at the head of Portstewart Strand, this route follows the coastline via the cliff path as it passes the holiday resort of Portrush and the spectacular 16th Century Dunluce Castle before reaching Portballintrae. The walk continues alongside a section of the Giants Causeway and old Bushmills Railway to reach the Giant's Causeway UNESCO World Heritage Site.

Where to Stay?

There are some great locations to stay in this area including Portballintrae, a picturesque fishing village, and Bushmills, a historic village with many pubs, restaurants and the home of Bushmills Whiskey.

Name	Nearest Town or Village	Phone	Website	Accommodation Type
Carnside Guest House	Bushmills	+44 (0)28 2073 1337	www.carnsideguesthouse.co.uk	B&B with 11 rooms Under 2 miles (3km) from Bushmills.
Mill Rest Youth Hostel	Bushmills	+44 (0)28 20731222	www.hini.org.uk	Top rated youth hostel. Ensuite rooms for up to 22 people. Dorms available.
The Bushmills Inn	Bushmills	+44 (0)28 2073 3000	www.bushmillsinn.com	Luxury hotel in the village with a fine restaurant.
The Smugglers Inn	Bushmills	+44 (0)28 2073 1577	www.smugglers-inn.co.uk	Guest house with 12 ensuite rooms & restaurant.
Causeway Hotel	Giant's Causeway	+44 (0)28 2073 1210	www.giants-causeway-hotel.com	Great location if a little dated. 28 rooms.
Bayview Hotel	Portballintrae	+44 (0)28 2073 4100	www.bayviewhotelni.com	Hotel with 25 rooms. Very accommodating for walking clubs.
Manor House B&B	Portballintrae	+44 (0)28 2073 2002	www.portballintrae.org	Located on the seafront. This is a B&B with 5 good-sized rooms.

Visit WalkNI.com for a list of special offers for walker friendly accommodation in the area. A full list of accommodation in the North Coast & Antrim can be found at www.causewaycoastandglens.com and www.discovernorthernireland.com.

Where to eat/drink?

There are a number of places to eat in the Bushmills area frequented by walkers, including:

The Bushmills Inn has a fine dining restaurant renowned for its award winning food. Tel: +44 (0)28 2073 3000 www.bushmillsinn.com

The Smugglers Inn serves good bistro-style food. Tel: +44 (0)28 2073 1577 www.smugglers-inn.co.uk

The Nook, near the Giant's Causeway, is a pub with good food in an old school house Tel +44 (0)28 2073 2993

Did you know?

The Giant's Causeway was formed during the early Tertiary period some 62 to 65 million years during a long period of igneous activity. The fascinating hexagonal pattern that we see in the causeway stones formed as a result of rock crystallisation under conditions of accelerated cooling, this usually occurs when molten lava comes into immediate contact with water, as happens today in Hawaii, the resulting fast accelerated cooling process causes cracking and results in what we see today at the causeway.

Day 2: Portballintrae/Giant's Causeway to Ballintoy/Ballycastle 16 miles (25.5 km)



Day 2 of this itinerary takes walkers round Benbane Head and past the ruins of Dunseverick Castle. This section of coast from Giant's Causeway to Dunseverick Castle is officially referred to as the North Antrim Cliff Path and is maintained by The National Trust. After reaching the tiny hamlet of Portbraddan, the route follows the sweeping sands of White Park Bay around a headland of jumbled boulders and sea stacks to the picturesque harbour at Ballintoy. A short detour here will take walkers to Carrick-a-rede with the opportunity of an exhilarating walk across the world famous rope bridge.

Note: The final 6 miles (10km) of the route, Ballintoy to Ballycastle, is all on-road. For many walkers this is not a highlight, so we suggest you cut the route short and finish at

Ballintoy. However, some may want to finish at Ballycastle as this gives you the opportunity to go over to Rathlin Island on the ferry from Ballycastle. For information on Rathlin Island Ferries phone +44 (0)28 2076 9299.

Also note: It is worth checking the tide timetable for White Park Bay as this part of the walk can only be accessed at low tide (www.bbc.co.uk/weather/coast/tides - check Ballycastle and Portrush). There is an alternative route along the A2 Whitepark Road however the walk along White Park Bay will certainly enhance your experience.

Where to Stay?

Ballintoy is a small harbour village located between the Giant's Causeway and Carrick-a-rede rope bridge. Ballintoy's hidden beauty is found at the end of the harbour road where you will find a small beach and a limestone harbour dating back to the 18th Century. The following places to stay are walker friendly. Visit WalkNI.com for a list of special offers for walker friendly accommodation in the area. A full list of accommodation in the North Coast & Antrim can be found at www.causewaycoastandglens.com and www.discovernorthernireland.com.

Name	Nearest Town or Village	Phone	Website	Accommodation Type
Fullerton Arms	Ballintoy	+44 (0)28 2076 9613	www.fullerton-arms.com	Guesthouse with bar & restaurant. 13 ensuite rooms.
Glenmore House	Ballintoy	+44 (0)28 2076 3584	www.glenmore.biz	4km from Ballintoy. Walking friendly country house and restaurant.
Sheep Island View	Ballintoy	+44 (0)28 2076 9391	www.sheepislandview.com	Modern hostel for up to 110 people close to the coast. Pick-up service for local areas.
Whitepark Bay Youth Hostel	Ballintoy	+44 (0)28 2073 1745	www.hini.org.uk	Ensuite facilities and sea views. Sleeps 40.

Where to eat/drink?

There are 2 places to eat in Ballintoy. There is a delightful café down at the harbour that is open during the day and serves homemade food.

The Fullerton Arms serves traditional food using mostly local produce. Tel +44 (0)28 2076 9613 www.fullerton-arms.com

If you want a bigger choice of places to eat, Bushmills is only a few kilometres away. See previous page.

Did you know?

Portbradden is a beautiful small hamlet with stunning views out across Whitepark Bay. There is a local myth that Portbradden is the location of the smallest church in Ireland. Picturesque it might be, however it was originally a cow byre built in the 1950's with the building mistakenly listed without adequate research. When the true facts emerged the church had to be de-listed! However, the myth lives on.



'North Coast Highlights'

35 miles (56 km)

Using Bushmills as a base, this 3 day itinerary takes in 2 outstanding sections of the Causeway Coast Waymarked Way. Highlights include the Giant's Causeway, stunning views across the Atlantic Ocean, Dunluce Castle and the wonderful array of flora and fauna along the way. The final day of this itinerary takes place on the rugged wilds of the Rathlin walking trails including a stunning walk out to the RSPB bird sanctuary perfect for nature lovers.

This itinerary is suitable for those who don't want to do the complete Causeway Coast Way linear route (see page 5) preferring instead to enjoy the highlights of the North Coast from a base in Bushmills village with 1 night on Rathlin Island. This itinerary is ideal for those with good fitness levels who enjoying walking on spectacular cliff paths.

Where to Stay?

For this itinerary we suggest that walkers base themselves in or around the historic village of Bushmills for the first 2 days. Day 3 is on Rathlin Island. A selection of walker friendly accommodation ideal for the 'North Coast Highlights' are listed below. Visit WalkNI.com for a list of special offers for walker friendly accommodation in the area. A full list of accommodation in the North Coast & Antrim can be found at www.causewaycoastandglens.com and www.discovernorthernireland.com.

Name	Nearest Town or Village	Phone	Website	Accommodation Type
Ballylinny Cottages	Bushmills	+44(0)7771 886 516	www.giantscauseway.co.uk	9 luxury self-catering cottages with views over Giant's Causeway.
Carnside Guest House	Bushmills	+44 (0)28 2073 1337	www.carnsideguesthouse.co.uk	B&B with 11 rooms Under 2 miles (3km) from Bushmills.
Mill Rest Youth Hostel	Bushmills	+44 (0)28 20731222	www.hini.org.uk	Top rated youth hostel. Ensuite rooms for up to 22 people. Dorms available.
The Bushmills Inn	Bushmills	+44 (0)28 2073 3000	www.bushmillsinn.com	Luxury hotel in the village with a fine restaurant.
The Smugglers Inn	Bushmills	+44 (0)28 2073 1577	www.smugglers-inn.co.uk	Guest house with 12 ensuite rooms & restaurant.
Giant's Causeway Holiday Cottages	Giant's Causeway	+44 (0)28 2073 1673	www.giantscausewaycottages.com	8 self-catering cottages close to the Giant's Causeway.
Rathlin Manor House	Rathlin Island	+44 (0)28 2076 3964	www.rathlinmanorhouse.co.uk	Georgian house B&B and restaurant run by National Trust. Sleeps 10.
Soerneog View Hostel	Rathlin Island	+44 (0)28 2076 3954	www.rathlin-island.co.uk/soerneog	Hostel catering for 6 people.

Rathlin Island is accessible by ferry throughout the year from Ballycastle www.rathlinballycastleferry.com

Where to Eat?

There are a number of places to eat in the Bushmills area frequented by walkers. Below are some of our own personal favourites.

The **Bushmills Inn** has a fine dining restaurant renowned for its award winning food
Tel: +44 (0)28 2073 3000 www.bushmillsinn.com

The **Smugglers Inn** serves good bistro-style food. Tel +44 (0)28 2073 1577 www.smugglers-inn.co.uk

The **Nook**, near the Giant's Causeway, is a pub with good food in an old school house
Tel +44 +44 (0)28 2073 2993

There are two restaurants in Portrush which are definitely worth a drive to as they have excellent reputations:

Ramore Wine Bar Tel: +44(0)28 7082 4313 www.ramorerestaurant.com

55 Degrees North Tel: +44(0)28 7082 2811 www.55-north.com

Day 1: Bushmills to Ballintoy

12.4 miles (20km)

The first day of the 'North Coast Highlights' itinerary takes in the famous Giant's Causeway and some wonderful coastal views. From the cliffs past Benbane Head you look out not just on the Causeway itself but also over the wreck site of the Girona, one of the ships of the ill-fated Spanish Armada which foundered here in 1588. In good visibility you can even see Scotland's Mull of Kintyre and the Hebridean islands of Islay and Jura.

When the cliffs end, the path descends past the ruins of Dunseverick Castle and through a natural rock arch to reach the tiny hamlet of Portbradden. Beyond Portbradden the route follows the sweeping sands of White Park Bay to the picturesque harbour at Ballintoy. The adjacent tearooms are perfect for a coffee and snack.

[Full Route Description, Photos and Ordnance Survey Maps](#)

This is a linear route, so most walkers prefer to make their way to Ballintoy (ideally by bus) and walk back to their accommodation in the Bushmills area or vice versa. Check out the timetable for the Causeway Rambler (Service 402) which operates from the beginning of June to middle of September. Visit www.translink.co.uk/Services/Other-Translink-Services/The-Rural-Transport-Fund/ or Tel: +44 (0)28 9066 6630.

Did you know?

The Old Bushmills Distillery is Ireland's oldest licensed whiskey distillery having received its licence to distill in 1608. In 1608 Sir Thomas Phillips was granted a licence to distil whiskey by James I of England, however, mentions of distilling traditions in the surrounding environs date back to 1276. Bushmills is a popular visitor attraction. Tel: +44 (0)28 2073 3218 or visit www.bushmills.com

Day 2: Bushmills to Portrush

6.6 miles (10.6 km)

Day 2 is a moderate 7 mile (11km) walk taking in the stunning Dunluce Castle, the pretty village of Portballintrae, not to mention the jaw dropping coastal scenery along the way. Beach walking, through fields and coastal paths. This day's walking is over a mix of terrain offering varied walking through simply breath-taking landscape.

[Full Route Description, Photos and Ordnance Survey Maps](#)

This is a linear route, so most walkers prefer to make their way to Portrush (ideally by bus) and walk back to their accommodation in the Bushmills area or vice versa. Check out the timetable for the Translink Antrim Coaster Bus (Service 252) which operates from March to October. Visit www.translink.co.uk/Services/Other-Translink-Services/The-Rural-Transport-Fund/ or contact +44 (0)28 9066 6630.

Did you know?

Dunluce Castle is sited dramatically close to the edge of a headland, along the North Coast. Surrounded by stunning coastal scenery, this medieval castle stands where an early Irish fort was once built and where its history can be traced back to early Christians and Vikings. You can visit the castle and visitor centre from Easter to end of September. Tel: +44 (0)28 2073 1938

Day 3: Rathlin Island

8-16 miles (12.9 - 25.8 km)

Day 3 incorporates a number of walking trails on Rathlin. Starting from the harbour the 4 mile (7km) [Rathlin Trail](#) will take you to the RSPB Seabird Centre located by the West Lighthouse. After an initial steep section out of the village, it is a fairly gentle walk on an almost traffic-free road. During the Summer months there is also the option to get the Puffin bus to the lighthouse (call +44(0)775 2861 788 for more info). Once at the West of the island you can enjoy the [Kinramer North Walk](#) (2.1 miles, 3.4km) which will take you through Kebble Nature Reserve and features sections through rough terrain, with steep slopes providing amazing views of dramatic sea cliffs before returning along the edge of Kinramer Wood. This can then be joined with the [Kebble Cliff Walk](#) (1.9 miles, 3km) taking in the south of the island with stunning views of dramatic sea cliffs and of Ballycastle beyond. Walk back or catch the puffin bus back to the harbour, where you can explore the South of the island on the 4 mile (6.4km) [Roonivoolin Walk](#). Experience the tranquility of the island as you venture south through the RSPB Roonivoolin Reserve where amazing views of the coastline can be enjoyed as well as wildlife such as seals, irish hare and curlew.

[See links above for Full Route Description, Photos and Ordnance Survey Maps](#)

Did you know?

There are many tales of myth and mystery surrounding Rathlin, the most famous tells of Robert the Bruce. In 1306, the Scottish King was driven from Scotland by Edward I of England and took refuge on Rathlin. While he was on Rathlin, it is said that he watched a spider persevering again and again to bridge a gap with its web. Eventually it succeeded. Robert the Bruce took heart from the spider's efforts, raised fresh forces and returned to Scotland to fight for his kingdom. He too, eventually succeeded and in 1314, regained the crown of Scotland.

'Antrim Hills Way'

22 miles (35 km)

The Antrim Hills Way is a 2 day 27 mile (43km) linear route through the Antrim Hills. The walk cuts a scenic route through the Antrim Coast and Glens Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty. It explores a high coastal plateau and encompasses some of the most enjoyable upland walking in County Antrim. Dramatic scenery, isolated hills and fantastic history are just some of the treats on offer.

[Full Route Description, Photos and Ordnance Survey Maps](#)

Download your free Antrim Hills Waymarked Way Guide from www.walkni.com/walks/51/antrim-hills-way

Start Point: Glenarm

The Antrim Hills Way starts in the village of Glenarm. There is only one B&B in Glenarm, but in the nearby villages of Carnlough and Cushendall, there are more accommodation options. Visit WalkNI.com for a list of special offers for walker friendly accommodation in the area. A full list of accommodation in the North Coast & Antrim can be found at www.causewaycoastandglens.com and www.discovernorthernireland.com

Name	Nearest Town or Village	Phone	Website	Accommodation Type
Glenview	Carnlough	+44 (0)28 2888 5546		B&B with 3 rooms - Just outside Carnlough. Will do pick ups.
Londonderry Arms	Carnlough	+44 (0)28 2888 5255	www.glensofantrim.com	Traditional hotel with 35 rooms.
The Cove	Carnlough	+44 (0)28 2888 5570		B&B in Carnlough with 3 rooms.
Ard Na Grena Beach House B&B	Cushnedall	+44(0)77 6476 2580		Modern B&B located on the beach.
Cullentra House	Cushendall	+44(0)28 2177 1762	www.cullentrahouseireland.com	Country house B&B with 3 bedrooms.
Garron View	Cushendall	+44(0)28 2177 1018	www.garronview.co.uk	Small B&B on a working farm.
Glendale	Cushendall	+44(0)28 2177 1495		B&B within easy walking distance of the village.
Killoughagh House	Cushendall	+44(0)28 2177 1741		B&B with double, twin and single enSuites.
Riverside	Cushendall	+44(0)28 2177 1655	www.theriversidebandb.com	Small, family run 2 bedroom B&B.
The Burn	Cuhendall	+44(0)28 2177 1733		B&B with 3 double enSuites.
The Glens Hotel	Cushendall	+44(0)28 2177 1223	www.theglenshotel.com	Family run hotel with 21 rooms.
The Meadows	Cushendall	+44(0)28 2177 2020	www.themeadows.cushendall.com	6 bedroom B&B.
The Village B&B	Cushendall	+44(0)28 2177 2366	www.thevillagebandb.com	Georgian town house with 4 bedrooms in the centre of Cushendall.
Castleview	Glenarm	+44 (0)28 2884 1587	www.castleviewbandb.net	Only accommodation in Glenarm apart from self-catering. B&B with 2 beds.

Where to Eat?

Sally's Coffee Shop in Glenarm serves fresh coffee and snacks open daily 9am to 5pm from April onwards. Tel +44(0)28 2884 1139

Walkers can also visit the Walled Garden Tea Rooms in Glenarm Castle open from March to September, Monday to Saturday 10am to 5pm and Sunday 11am to 5pm. www.glenarmcastle.com/tea-room-gift-shop.aspx

For a hearty meal **The Londonderry Arms Hotel** in Carnlough serves good traditional food in a traditional setting. www.glensofantrim.com

There are 2 other places to eat in Carnlough, **The Harbour Lights** Tel +44 (0)28 2888 5950 and **The Glenclay Inn** Tel +44 (0)28 2888 5226.

Day 1: Glenarm to Linford

6 miles (9.5 km)

Starting in Glenarm the Antrim Hills Way climbs steeply out of the village to Black Hill at 381m and then leads south across a series of summits between 300m and 400m high. All these hills rise gently to the west but fall away steeply to the east, a conspicuous geological landform that is a legacy of the last ice age. The most striking formation is Sallagh Braes; a semi-circular basalt escarpment with wonderful views out to sea. Walkers are able to view the spectacular Sallagh Braes when arriving in Linford, at the end of this day's walking.

Did you know?

Sallagh Braes is a vast natural amphitheatre of cliffs. In spring a carpet of bluebells covers the fields in the townland of Sallagh. The horseshoe of cliffs protects the flowers from the prevailing weather much as a forest would afford such protection.

Where to Stay?

There are no transport links or accommodation in Linford. However, some accommodation providers in the area do pick ups from Linford car park if arranged in advance and are identified below. Visit WalkNI.com for a list of special offers for walker friendly accommodation in the area. A full list of accommodation in the North Coast & Antrim can be found at www.causewaycoastandglens.com and www.discovernorthernireland.com

Name	Nearest Town or Village	Phone	Website	Accommodation Type
Ballygally Castle Hotel	Ballygally	+44 (0)28 2858 1066	www.hastinghotels.com	Luxury option in a stunning hotel with 44 rooms. Doesn't do pick ups.
Halfway House Hotel	Ballygally	+44 (0)28 2858 3265	www.thehalfwayhousehotel.com	Hotel with 16 rooms. Doesn't do pick ups
Lynden Heights	Near Ballygally	+44 (0)28 2858 3560		B&B with 2 rooms. 7.5 miles (12km) from Linford. Nice up market restaurant. Will do pick ups.
Derrin Guesthouse	Larne	+44 (0)28 2827 3269	www.derrinhouse.co.uk	Homely B&B guesthouse with 7 rooms. Will do pick ups.

Where to Eat?

There are a number of places to eat in the Ballygally / Larne area:

The Halfway House Hotel has very good bar food and is owned by Dave 'Boy' McCauley, a well known boxer in Northern Ireland. Tel +44(0)28 28583265.

Ballygally Castle Hotel has fine dining Tel: +44 (0)28 2858 1066

The Kiln Restaurant in Larne has a great culinary reputation Tel: +44 (0)28 2826 0924

Billy Andys pub & restaurant outside Larne is a traditional pub with traditional music and contemporary fine food. Tel: +44 (0)28 2827 0648 www.billyandys.com

Day 2: Linford to Slemish

16 miles (26 km)

The southern part of this route passes the Sallagh Braes and climbs the slopes of Agnew's Hill (474m), crossing more high and exposed ground which can be boggy in damp conditions. The pinnacle of this day's walking is reaching the distinctive Slemish Mountain at a height of 437m. Slemish, which is also the end point for this walk, is the highest point in the region and dominates the landscape for miles around. This route provides wonderful panoramic views for walkers over the Antrim Hills with coastal views stretching out as far as Scotland.

Did you know?

Slemish has a strong association with St. Patrick and has long been a place of pilgrimage on St Patrick's Day (17th March). The mountain was the site of the saint's slavery, where he spent 6 years herding livestock for Mulchi, the local chieftain. After 6 years he escaped but later returned to devote the remainder of his life to bringing Christianity to the Irish.

Where to Stay?

There are no transport links or accommodation at Slemish itself, however, below are some accommodation providers in the Broughshane area who will do pick ups from Slemish Interpretive Centre (the end point of the route) if arranged in advance. Visit WalkNI.com for a list of special offers for walker friendly accommodation in the area. A full list of accommodation in the North Coast & Antrim can be found at www.causewaycoastandglens.com and www.discovernorthernireland.com

Name	Nearest Town or Village	Phone	Website	Accommodation Type
Limecourt B&B	Broughshane	+44 (0)28 2563 1755	www.limecourtbandb.co.uk	A few minutes drive from Broughshane, Caters for up to 10. Will do pick ups.
Lough Connolly Farmhouse	Broughshane	+44 (0)28 2568 4380	www.loughconnollybandb.com	Attractive farmhouse with excellent views of Slemish Mountain. 3 rooms. Will do pick ups from Slemish.
Quarrytown Lodge	Broughshane	+44 (0)28 2586 2027	www.quarrytownlodgeuk.com	A few minutes drive from Broughshane, this B&B caters for 6. Will do pick ups.

Where to Eat?

The recommended place to eat in Broughshane is **The Thatch Inn** in the centre of the village. This is a restaurant & traditional pub serving good food. Tel +44 (0)28 2586 1366

Other Walking Options

The above itineraries are by no means an exhaustive list of all quality walking areas and routes in the North Coast and Antrim. This region is an extensive, varied destination allowing walkers to spend many trips exploring all the hidden nooks and crannies of the area. Here are 3 other exceptional routes / places that we believe are well worth a visit.

Glenariff

Meaning 'Queen of the Glens', is widely regarded as the most beautiful and striking of the 9 Glens of Antrim and offers the best and most extensive walking. 19th Century English novelist William Thackeray called it "a Switzerland in Miniature", no doubt inspired by its waterfalls, rich woodland and steep, glacial escarpments. The main focus is Glenariff Forest Park (Tel: +44 (0)28 2955 6000) with its excellent network of signed trails and paths. A great way to start is to follow the [Waterfalls Walk](#) through Glenariff Glen Nature Reserve. This steep-sided gorge is punctuated by a series of dramatic waterfalls including the impressive double-drop of Ess-na-Larach. The dense woodland and abundant moisture have created a verdant carpet of moss and ferns on the rock walls. For more information visit www.walkni.com/walks/197/glenariff-nature-reserve-waterfalls-walk

The Moyle Way

You can experience the best of the northern Glens of Antrim by following the 22 mile (35km) linear waymarked Moyle Way from Ballycastle south to Glenariff. Along the way the route, which is also part of the Ulster Way, winds past ancient monuments, across rivers and high mountain tops. In the final section the route walkers descend through the heart of Glenariff Forest Park and its many woodland waterfalls to finish on the Irish Sea coast in the village of Glenariff or by walking a further mile to the village of Cushendall. For more information including a free downloadable guide on the Moyle Way visit www.walkni.com/walks/187/moyle-way

Mussenden Temple

Situated in Downhill Demense, Mussenden Temple is located near Castlerock in County Londonderry. It perches dramatically on a 120ft cliff top, high above the Atlantic Ocean on the north-western coast of Northern Ireland, offering spectacular views westwards towards County Donegal and to the east towards Fair Head. This is truly an enchanting place. It is open to the public (Tel. +44 (0)28 2073 1582) and there is a 2 mile (3.5km) walk on offer. For more details visit www.walkni.com/walks/112/mussenden-temple-downhill-demesne

Specialist Walking Providers

Using a walking guide will give you unparalleled access to local knowledge, history and insight as to how and why the North Coast and Antrim has inspired so many over the years. Below is a list of some recommended walking guides, a full list of walking providers can be found on www.walkni.com

Name	Contact	Email	Website
Celtic Trekking	+44 (0)28 7082 9698	davewsouthall@hotmail.com	
Rathlin Walking Tours	+44 (0)28 7032 7960	paul.quinn33@hotmail.co.uk	www.rathlinwalkingtours.com
Walk Antrim Hills	+44 (0)28 2858 3483	cowper@walkantrimhills.com	www.walkantrimhills.com
Walk Talk Ireland	+353 74 9159366	info@walktalkireland.com	www.walktalkireland.com
Away a Wee Walk	+44(0)78 3770 3643	info@awayaweewalk.com	www.awayaweewalk.com



Festivals

Walk the Glens Walking Festival

Now in its 15th year, the Walk the Glens festival usually takes place during the first week in June. This festival is reasonably low key however the organisers have agreed access with landowners across countryside which is otherwise inaccessible. This provides a unique opportunity for walkers to explore virtually untouched countryside. For more information on this walking festival visit www.walktheglens.co.uk/festival.html

Auld Lammas Fair

Ireland's oldest traditional market fair takes place in Ballycastle at the end of August every year. You can expect horse trading, street entertainment and market stalls. Sample the local specialities including 'dulse' a dried edible seaweed, and the deliciously sweet chewy toffee 'yellow man'. Visit www.causewaycoastandglens.com

Tullamore Dew Causeway Coast Golf Tournament

This is the largest amateur golf tournament in Europe, held every summer on some of the North Coast's finest courses. The event regularly attracts up to 1100 golfers from as far a field as South Africa, Canada, Australia, the USA as well as Europe. Visit www.tullamoredewgolf.com

International Air Show

A free 2 day airshow in the beautiful setting of West Bay, Portrush featuring the Red Arrows. As well as many air displays each day, the shoreline is covered in arena acts, children's entertainment, exhibitions and a trade village. The event usually takes place in early September. Visit www.causewaycoastandglens.com

What else is there to do in the North Coast & Antrim?

Outdoor Activities

There are a whole host of other outdoor activities available in this area. We have listed some highlights below. Visit www.outdoorni.com/areas/north-coast/ideas for more information and a full list of outdoor activity providers in this area.

Coasteering

Get up close and personal with the rugged beauty of the North Coast. Coasteering provides an action packed way to take in amazing caves, gullies, cliffs, rocks and marine wildlife. www.xploreoutdoors.co.uk tel: +44 (0) 7773 359 773 and www.ardclinis.com tel: +44 (0) 28 2177 1340 are the local experts.

Surfing in Portrush

The North Coast offers some of the best surfing breaks in Ireland. Portrush is a popular spot for surf schools offering beginner lessons. If you would like to have a go contact Alive Surf School on +44(0)79 3595 2532 www.alivesurfschool.com or Troggs Surf School +44(0)77 4825 7717 www.troggsurfschool.com

Sea Safaris

Experience the North Coast from a different perspective on a sea safari. Aquaholics +44(0)28 7083 2584 www.aquaholics.org and Portrush Sea Tours +44(0)77 6169 6060 www.portrushseatours.com offer trips on their rigid inflatable boats (RIB) taking in the sites from the sea including the Giant's Causeway, Rathlin, Carrick-a-Rede Rope Bridge and the stunning beaches along the coast.

Canoeing

The North Coast caters for all levels of canoeists. Beginners can go for a morning canoe session on the Lower Bann Canoe Trail with Xplore Outdoors www.xploreoutdoors.co.uk

Cycling

Cycling part of the legendary Ballyshannon to Larne Cycle Route is a wonderful way to view the attractions and sights along the north coast. Visit www.cycleni.com/106/ballyshannon-to-larne for more information. For other cycle routes in the North Coast and Antrim click here www.cycleni.com/antrim/

Hovercrafting

Experience the thrill of gliding over land and water on a cushion of air at speeds of up to 30mph. Check out www.foylehov.com or phone +44 (0)28 7772 2235 for information on how to go hovercrafting in the Limavady area.

Relaxation

The Galgorm Resort and Spa, near Ballymena, is a fabulous place for a little luxury and to revitalise your body at the spa after a hard days walk. Set in 163 acres of lush parkland, the Galgorm is the perfect place to rest tired legs. Contact the resort on +44 (0)28 2588 1001 or visit www.galgorm.com for more information on relaxation packages.

Attractions

Many of the North Coast & Antrim's famous attractions and landmarks you will actually encounter on the walking itineraries outlined above such as The Giant's Causeway, Dunluce Castle, Mussenden Temple and Carrick-a-rede Rope Bridge. However, there are a number of other attractions that are definitely worth making time to see including Bushmills Distillery, Ireland's oldest working distillery.

For your full guide to all attractions, visit www.discovernorthernireland.com and www.causewaycoastandglens.com

Transport around the North Coast & Antrim

Translink, who operate Northern Ireland's bus and rail services, run 3 special bus services around the North Coast each of which may be of interest to walkers to get to the start point of their walk.

- **Causeway Rambler Service 402 : (summer service – beginning of May to end of September)**

A fully accessible bus which travels from Coleraine and Portrush to Carrick-a-Rede Rope Bridge. This bus takes in all of the main attractions:

- Bushmills
- Giants Causeway
- Dunseverick Castle
- Whitepark Bay
- Ballintoy
- Carrick-a-Rede Rope Bridge

- **Antrim Coaster Service 252 (spring & summer service – March to September)**

This is a day return service from Belfast to Coleraine for sightseers but it can be a useful service for walkers as it stops at all the main tourist destinations and points of interest.

- **North Coast Open Topper Service 17 (Summer service - July and August)**

The 'North Coast Open Topper' Service 177 (weather permitting) is an open top double-decker bus from Coleraine to the Giant's Causeway.

For more information and detailed timetables visit www.translink.co.uk/Services/Other-Translink-Services/The-Rural-Transport-Fund/ or contact +44 (0)28 9066 6630



Further Information on Walking in the North Coast and Antrim

Access and Protection

Many of the walking routes in the North Coast and Antrim are not formally designated public rights of way. Access depends on the goodwill and tolerance of local landowners. Walkers are advised to respect that they may be walking on private land and are encouraged to make themselves aware of and adhere to the principles of '**Leave No Trace**'. Below is some information on the organisation who strive to sustain the beauty of this unique landscape.

The Causeway Coast and Glens Heritage Trust

The Causeway Coast and Glens Heritage Trust is a partnership body established in May 2002 in order to promote and enhance the unique qualities of the Causeway Coast and Glens area. The trust aims to promote environmental management, in turn, protecting the unique heritage of the Causeway Coast and Glens area.

The Trust arose from the work of the Causeway Initiative which brought together a range of different organisations interested in the promotion of sustainable tourism in the Causeway Coast and Glens area. As part of this work, the initiative commissioned a 'visitor and environmental management strategy' which recommended the formation of a permanent Trust in order to promote visitor and environmental management and sustainable tourism in the area.

The Causeway Coast and Glens Heritage Trust has set up a management group for each of the three Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty (the Causeway Coast, Antrim Coast and Glens and Binevenagh) with representatives from central government, local authorities and environmental, economic and community sectors. For each of the Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty a management plan has been produced and is being implemented. For more information on the Causeway Coast and Glens Heritage Trust visit www.ccght.org

Leave No Trace

Leave No Trace is an Outdoor Ethics Programme designed to promote and inspire responsible outdoor recreation through education, research, and partnerships. As increasing numbers of people seek the beauty and exhilaration of outdoor recreation, our collective mark on the environment and its natural processes, increases. Litter, disturbance to vegetation, water pollution, wildlife, livestock and other people are all indicators of the need to develop a national ethic that protects both natural and cultural heritage. Techniques designed to minimise the social and environmental impacts to these areas are incorporated into the Leave No Trace Outdoor Ethics Education Programme as seven principles.

The Seven Principles of Leave No Trace

- 1..... Plan Ahead and Prepare
- 2..... Be Considerate of Others
- 3..... Respect Farm Animals and Wildlife
- 4..... Travel and Camp on Durable Ground
- 5..... Leave What You Find
- 6..... Dispose of Waste Properly
- 7..... Minimise the Effects of Fire

Practising a Leave No Trace ethic is very simple: Make it hard for others to see or hear you and LEAVE NO TRACE of your visit. For more information on Leave No Trace, please visit www.leavenotraceireland.org.

Outdoor Shops

Lindsays Protective Clothing, 26 Ballyrashane Road, Coleraine stocks a lot of good quality outdoor gear.

Porstewart Clothing Company, located along the Promenade is a popular outdoor clothing store stocking mainly regatta clothing. Tends to be cheaper than other alternatives.

Maps of the North Coast and Antrim

The best maps for walking in the North Coast and Antrim are the 'Causeway Coast and Rathlin Island' and 'Glens of Antrim' Activity Maps 1:25 000 available from www.osni.gov.uk. Also available for walking in the North Coast are the OSNI sheets 4 & 5 1:50 000. You can also purchase these maps in most of the tourist information centres in the area.

Further walk descriptions, images and downloadable detailed maps are available free of charge from www.walkni.com

Tourist Information

Below is a list of all the tourist information centres in the area and respective contact details.

Tourist Information Centre	Contact
Ballymoney Tourist Information Office.	+44 (0)28 2766 0230
Giant's Causeway Tourist Information Office.	+44 (0)28 2073 1855
Ballymena Tourist Information Office.	+44 (0)28 2563 5900
Limavady Tourist Information Office.	+44 (0)28 7776 0650
Coleraine Tourist Information Office.	+44 (0)28 7034 4723
Larne Tourist Information Office.	+44 (0)28 2826 0088
Ballycastle Tourist Information Office.	+44 (0)28 2076 2024

Getting to the North Coast and Antrim

With airports expanding and increased investment in road infrastructure in Ireland the North Coast and Antrim have never been more accessible.

- Ballynure, located at the southern point of Antrim, is around 12.5 miles (20km) from Belfast International Airport and 15.5 miles (25km) from George Best Belfast City Airport.
- Glasgow to Belfast is around 50 minutes on a number of airlines.
- A drive up from Dublin to the North Coast should take around 3 hours by car.

Below is some further information on travelling to the North Coast and Antrim from both the Republic of Ireland and Great Britain.

From the Republic of Ireland

By Car

If you are travelling to the North Coast and Antrim from Dublin by car you can expect to reach the Antrim Hills in around 2 hours and 30 mins. If you are planning on basing yourself in Bushmills, follow the M2 out of Belfast signposted Ballymena. Continue along the A26 to Ballymoney before turning off on the B62 Balybogy Road, signposted Bushmills, Portrush. After around 6 miles (10km) turn right, again signposted Bushmills. This B17 Priestland Road will take you into Bushmills Village. For those who wish a scenic drive you can take the Causeway Coastal Route ([see website](#)) which passes through Larne, Glenarm, Cushendall, Cushendun and Ballycastle, a drive which is regarded by many as one of the World's great road journeys. Note, this route will take considerably longer.

By Bus

Aircoach provides a 24hour coach service between Dublin Airport to Belfast. Please follow the link for journey times and prices www.aircoach.ie or call +353 (0)1 8447118

Bus Eireann provides bus services to Belfast, Enniskillen and Derry. Call +353 (0)1 8366111 or visit www.buseireann.ie

By Train

Translink and Irish Rail offer a joint Enterprise service from Dublin to Belfast. Translink offer a further train service on up to Portrush on the North Antrim Coast. For more information on the Enterprise and Portrush service visit www.translink.co.uk or call +44 (0)28 9066 6630.

By Ferry

From Magilligan in County Derry to Greencastle in County Donegal, a shuttle ferry service operates during peak periods with a crossing time of approximately 10 minutes cutting 49 miles (79km) off the journey by road. Visit www.loughfoyleferry.com or call +353 749381901 for times and prices.

From Great Britain

By Ferry

Northern Ireland has first-class ferry connections with Scotland, England and the Isle of Man. High speed vessels, enhanced on-board amenities, entertainment and shopping, together with lower prices, make the car ferry a very attractive, affordable travel option.

Stena Line offer frequent sailings from Liverpool and Cairnryan direct to Belfast Port.

Visit www.stenaline.co.uk for timetable information and to book. P&O Ferries also operate between Larne, Cairnryan and Troon. Visit www.poferries.com for timetable information and to book.

By Plane

Scheduled air services operate to both the George Best Belfast City and Belfast International Airports from nearly all other major UK airports with a select number of airlines also flying into the City of Derry Airport just 27 miles to Portstewart on the North Coast. The George Best Belfast City Airport is around 5 miles (8km) from the heart of Belfast, 15.5 miles (25km) from Ballynure at the southern tip of the Glens of Antrim. Visit www.discovernorthernireland.com/information/travel.aspx for up to date information on flights operating in and out of Northern Ireland.

View from Cushendall Beach, looking towards Lurigethan Mountain



Outdoor Recreation NI has provided this information and images. Every care has been taken to ensure accuracy of the information. Outdoor Recreation NI however, cannot accept responsibility for errors or omissions but where such are brought to our attention, the information for future publications will be amended accordingly.

If you have any comments or queries regarding this Walker's Guide or require the Guide in an alternative format please contact:

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