

5.0/5 · 16 walker reviews



Barrow Way Walking Holiday — 5 Days (Moderate)

A short Barrow Way break — Carlow to St. Mullins along Ireland's loveliest river

DURATION

5 days

WALKING DAYS

3

TOTAL DISTANCE

53.9 km

GRADE

Moderate

From

€635

per person

Book or enquire at

walkingholidayireland.com/walking-tours

[See website for current rates](#)

About This Tour

Three walking days along the most beautiful section of the Barrow Way, from Carlow's heritage streets through Bagenalstown and Borris to the ancient ecclesiastical site at St. Mullins. Flat, unhurried river walking — gentle on the legs, generous to the eye.

Tour Highlights

- **The Sweet-Spot Length**

Three walking days plus arrival and departure — long enough to feel properly immersed, short enough to fit a regular working calendar. You leave changed, not exhausted.

- **The Prettiest Section of the River**

South of Carlow the Barrow is at its loveliest — narrowing wooded valleys, working locks at Clashganny and Ballytiglea, the sweeping bend at Goresbridge. This is the section guests remember most clearly.

- **Three Real Irish Villages**

Bagenalstown, Borris and Graiguenamanagh — three places where the pub still has live music on a Saturday, the baker still uses a wood-fired oven, and you're welcomed like you belong.

- **A Finish at St. Mullins**

You end at one of Ireland's oldest and most atmospheric ecclesiastical sites — 7th-century monastic ruins, a stump of round tower, and a graveyard that has been in continuous use since the 600s. The peace here is real.

Who Is It For?

Anyone who wants a proper walking holiday but only has a working week to give it.

Five days is realistic, achievable, and deeply rewarding. Three walking days at 16–20 km on flat ground gives you a genuine sense of accomplishment without the back-to-back fatigue of mountain weeks.

First-time walking-holiday guests, returning walkers, and anyone with knees that don't love descents.

The towpath is flat the whole way — no climbs, no scrambling, no sharp descents to hammer your joints. Many of our Barrow guests are in their 60s, 70s and 80s, and they're having a wonderful time.

People who want quiet, not crowds.

The Barrow Way is one of Ireland's most peaceful long-distance trails. You won't queue for an attraction or share the path with coach tours.

Day-by-Day Itinerary

DAY
1

Arrival in Carlow

Overnight: Carlow

Make your way to Carlow town, where your Barrow Way holiday begins. Carlow is a Norman heritage town with a great deal more to it than guidebooks let on. Settle in to your accommodation, get your gear ready, and spend the afternoon exploring.

Carlow Castle commands the riverside skyline, and the cathedral nearby is unexpectedly moving inside. If you have the time, Brownseshill Dolmen — a 5,000-year-old portal tomb just outside town — is well worth the short walk out and back.

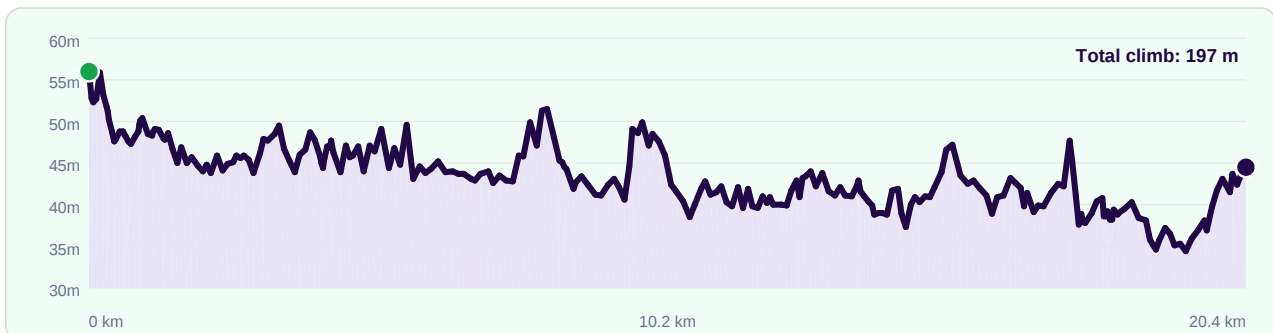
A quiet evening, an early dinner, and to bed. Tomorrow, the river.

DAY
2

Carlow to Bagenalstown

Walk: BW Carlow to Bagenalstown (20.4 km) · Overnight: Bagenalstown

ROUTE 20.4 km · 223 m ascent · Moderate · Carlow to Bagenalstown



Your first full day on the trail. Leave Carlow behind and pick up the towpath, then settle into the rhythm of the river. The walking is flat and entirely unhurried — pasture, willow, slow water, the occasional lifting bridge.

About 7 km in you reach Milford — three elegant bridges arching over the Barrow beside the shell of an old mill. It's one of the prettiest spots on the whole route, and a perfect place to stop for lunch.

Bagenalstown — locally known as Muinebheag — is a quiet Georgian village with good food and a warm welcome.

DAY

3

Bagenalstown to Borris

Walk: BW Bagenalstown to Borris (15.8 km) · Overnight: Borris

ROUTE 15.8 km · 156 m ascent · Easy · Bagenalstown to Borris



A slightly shorter day, which means time to linger. The towpath here briefly joins the Leinster Way, Ireland's second-longest waymarked trail. You'll pass Ballytiglea Bridge and a stretch of working countryside, before turning off the river for the final 2 km into Borris.

Borris is a village to savour. A wide stone-built main street, the grand gates of Borris House at one end, the rolling hills of Carlow rising behind. It's a pleasant evening to sit outside with a pint and feel the satisfaction of two days walking in your legs.

DAY

4

Borris to St. Mullins

Walk: BW Borris to St Mullins (17.5 km) · Overnight: Graiguenamanagh / St. Mullins

ROUTE 17.5 km · 318 m ascent · Moderate · Borris to St. Mullins



Your final walking day, and one of the loveliest of the route. South of Borris the valley narrows and the wooded hillsides close in around the river — this is the section many guests remember most clearly.

You finish at St. Mullins, one of Ireland's oldest and most atmospheric ecclesiastical settlements. Founded by St Moling in the 7th century, it sits where the Barrow meets the Duiske, surrounded by monastic ruins, a stump of round tower, and a graveyard that has been in continuous use for over 1,400 years. The peace here is real. You'll feel it.

Tonight you stay just upstream in Graiguenamanagh — a handsome stone-built town where Duiske Abbey still stands complete on the main street, one of the finest Cistercian abbey churches in Ireland. A good final evening: river, abbey, a proper meal, and the satisfaction of the miles behind you.

DAY

5

Departure

A leisurely morning. A last full Irish breakfast. A last look at the river.

Make your way onward — Dublin Airport is around 1 hour 45 minutes by road, and Kilkenny is just 40 minutes away if you fancy adding a night in one of Ireland's prettiest medieval cities before heading home.

What Our Walkers Say

Rated 5.0/5 by 16 walkers

The walk on the Barrow River Way was one of the best hikes I've ever done. It was exactly what I was looking for. At times I thought I was walking through a fairytale landscape. Thanks to Walking Holiday Ireland for the perfect organisation. My special thanks go to B&B Orchard Grove, Bagenalstown, Carlow. I had such a lovely stay there that it was really hard to say goodbye.

- Heike Schulz - 2024

Dear Cliff, we returned yesterday from our lovely walking holiday in Ireland. We enjoyed the country and the people again during the walking days.

- Family Barkhof and Nieuwenhuis - 2023

The Barrow Way was an absolute gem! I had such a fantastic time on my self-guided walking tour from Carlow to St Mullins. The scenery was breathtaking and it was so wonderful to explore such a picturesque area of Ireland. Many thanks for this wonderful experience - I will be recommending Walking Holiday Ireland to all my friends!

- Tim Dalton - 2023

Ready to Walk Ireland?

Every tour is self-guided with hand-picked accommodation, daily luggage transfer, detailed route notes and GPX files, plus our personal local support throughout your walk. Dates and group sizes are flexible — just ask.

What's Included

- ✓ Accommodation: Welcoming en-suite B&B rooms
- ✓ Breakfast: Full Irish breakfast every morning
- ✓ Luggage Transfer: Daily transfer of your main bag between accommodations
- ✓ Personalised Itinerary and route app for your smart phone that keeps you on the trail at all times.
- ✓ Support: 24/7 emergency support throughout your holiday
- ✓ Pre-Departure Pack: Information pack sent before you travel, so you know exactly what to expect

Not Included

- ✗ Flights: Travel to Ireland is not included
- ✗ Insurance: You'll need travel and walking holiday insurance
- ✗ Meals: Lunches and dinners are not included (though we'll recommend great local spots)



Get in touch

Email: info@walkingholidayireland.com

Web: walkingholidayireland.com

This tour: walkingholidayireland.com/walking-tours/barrow-way-SAE-BW-5M

FROM

€635

per person

See website for current rates