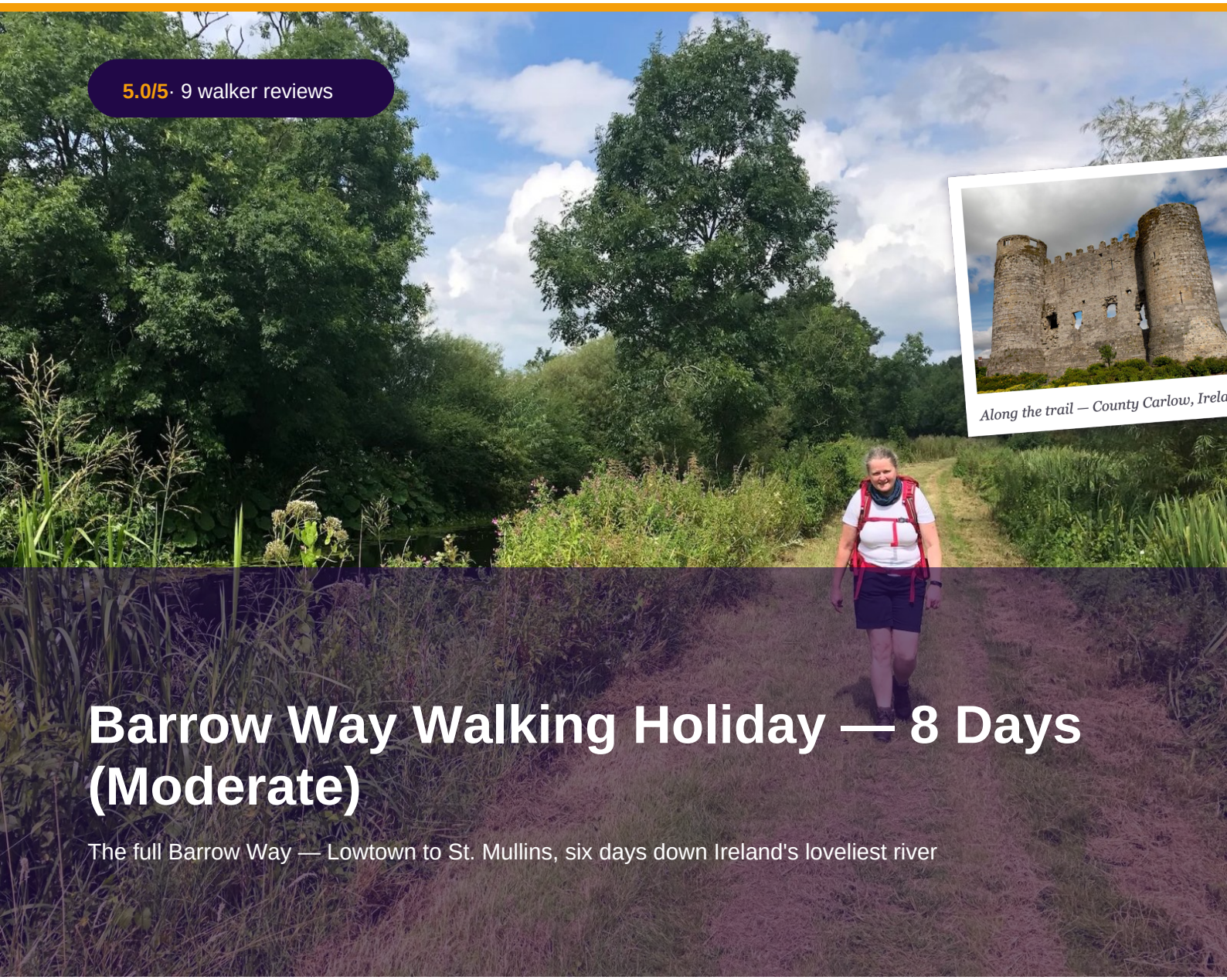


5.0/5· 9 walker reviews

Barrow Way Walking Holiday — 8 Days (Moderate)

The full Barrow Way — Lowtown to St. Mullins, six days down Ireland's loveliest river

DURATION	WALKING DAYS	TOTAL DISTANCE	GRADE
8 days	6	114.2 km	Moderate

From

€985

per person

Book or enquire at

walkingholidayireland.com/walking-tours

See website for current rates

About This Tour

Walk the full length of the Barrow Way over six unhurried walking days, from Lowtown on the Grand Canal all the way south to the ancient monastic site at St. Mullins. Flat towpath walking, Georgian river towns, woodland and meadow throughout — the most peaceful long-distance walk in Ireland.

Tour Highlights

- **The Whole Trail, End to End**
  Six walking days from Lowtown on the Grand Canal to St. Mullins where the Barrow meets the tide. Every working lock, every elegant lifting bridge, every river town — the full Barrow Way as it should be walked.

- **Completely Flat, Six Counties of Quiet**
  Six walking days on level towpath through Kildare, Laois, Carlow and Kilkenny. No climbs, no scrambling — just slow water and unhurried countryside. Ireland"s most welcoming long-distance trail.

- **A Thousand Years of Irish History**
  From the medieval Anglo-Norman castle at Carlow and the 13th-century Dominican priory at Athy, through Georgian Bagenalstown and Borris House, to 7th-century St. Mullins — you walk through history in a straight line beside the river.

- **Six Carefully Chosen Overnights**
  Kildare, Athy, Carlow, Leighlinbridge, Borris, and Graiguenamanagh — six hand-picked B&Bs and small guesthouses, every host known to us by name. Warm rooms, full Irish breakfasts, real local advice.

Who Is It For?

Walkers who want a real long-distance trail experience without mountain punishment.

Six walking days at 13–22.5 km on flat ground gives you a genuine long-distance achievement — over 117 km from canal to tidal river — without the joint damage of mountain weeks. The Barrow rewards persistence rather than fitness extremes.

Older walkers, returning walkers, anyone with knees that don't love climbs.

This is the trip you can do at 70 and still feel proud at the end. The towpath is flat, the surface is forgiving, and the daily distances are evenly paced. Many of our 8-day Barrow guests are walking with us for the third or fourth time.

People who want quiet, not crowds.

You'll walk for hours some days hearing only your footsteps, the occasional heron, and the breeze through the willows.

Day-by-Day Itinerary

DAY 1

Arrival in Kildare Town

Overnight: Kildare Town

Make your way to Kildare town, where your walking holiday begins. Kildare is a beautiful introduction to Ireland"s Ancient East — home to the famous Curragh racecourse, the Japanese Gardens, and the Irish National Stud, all within easy reach.

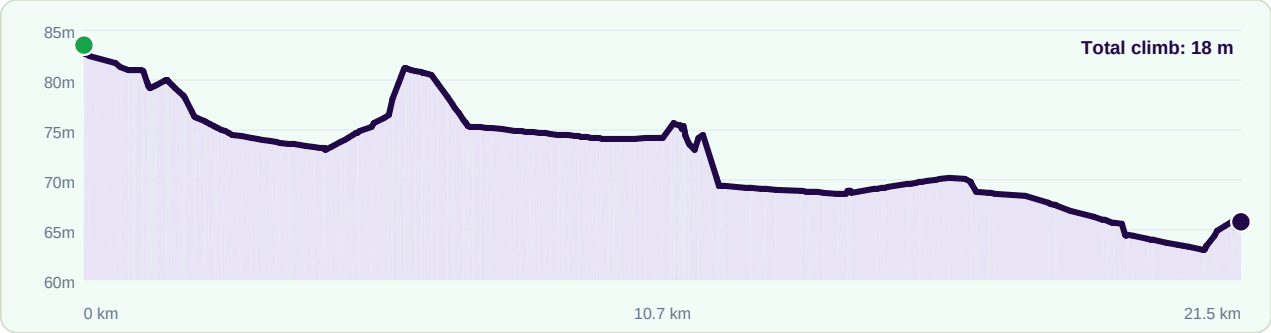
Settle in to your accommodation, get your gear ready, and enjoy a relaxed dinner. Tomorrow, the Barrow begins.

DAY 2

Lowtown to Monasterevin

Walk: BW 1 Lowtown (Travellers Rest) to Monasterevin (21.5 km) · Overnight: Kildare Town

ROUTE 21.5 km · Moderate · Lowtown to Monasterevin



An easy first walking day. After breakfast we transfer you the short distance to Lowtown — where the Grand Canal branches south for the Barrow Line — and you set off through quiet canal country to Monasterevin.

This is a flat, contemplative day along the towpath: lifting bridges, lock-keeper"s cottages, swans on the still water. Monasterevin itself is sometimes called "the Venice of Ireland" for the way the canal, the Barrow and the railway weave through it on aqueducts and bridges.

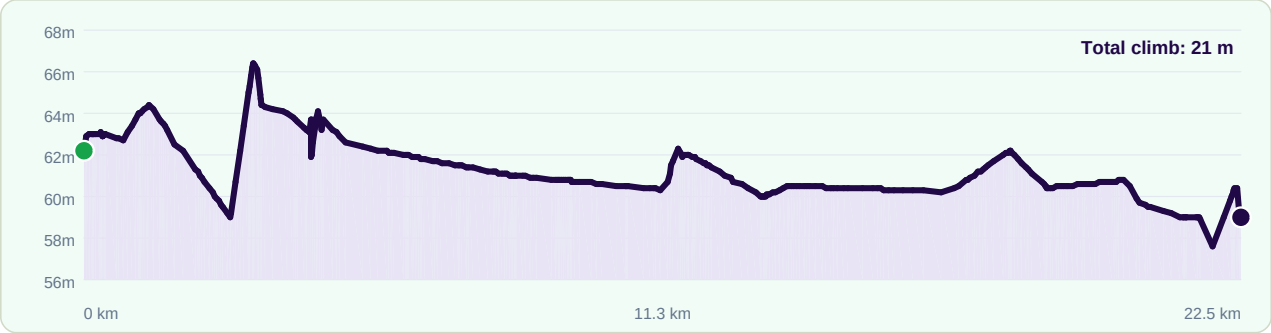
From Monasterevin we collect you and bring you back to Kildare for a second night.

DAY
3

Monasterevin to Athy

Walk: BW 2 Monasterevin to Athy (22.5 km) · Overnight: Athy

ROUTE 22.5 km · Moderate · Monasterevin to Athy



Back to Monasterevin after breakfast — where the Grand Canal meets the River Barrow — and on along the towpath south to the heritage town of Athy.

The walking is flat and rhythmic. Early on, you"ll see the dramatic ruins of the Rock of Dunamase rising from the plains to your east, and on a clear day the Wicklow Mountains in the distance. The countryside here feels unspoilt and calm. You"ll pass lifting bridges, old lock-keeper"s cottages, and the occasional narrowboat moored for the season.

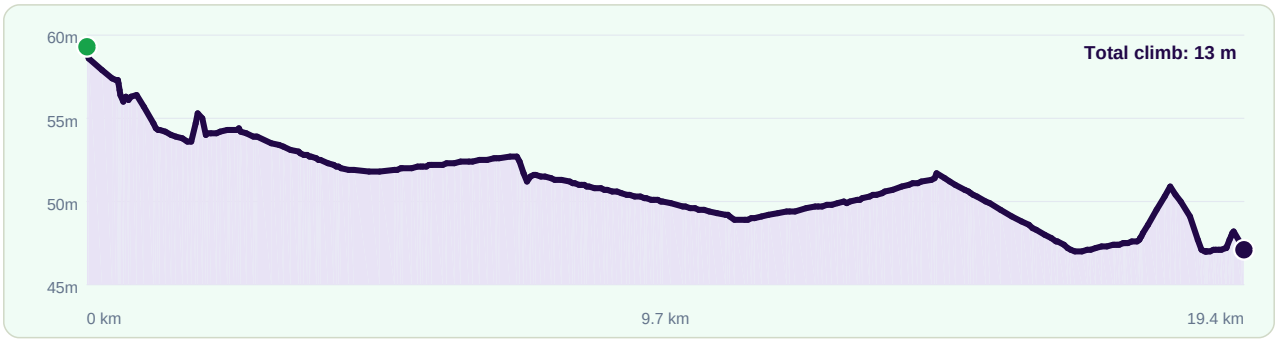
Athy itself is worth exploring — an Anglo-Norman town established in the 13th century to control the river crossing, with its castle, Dominican church and excellent heritage centre.

DAY
4

Athy to Carlow

Walk: BW 3 Athy to Carlow (19.4 km) · Overnight: Carlow

ROUTE 19.4 km · Easy · Athy to Carlow



Leaving Athy you join the river properly — the canal towpath gives way to the riverbank, and the character of the walk shifts. The Barrow widens and slows here, flanked by reeds and willows.

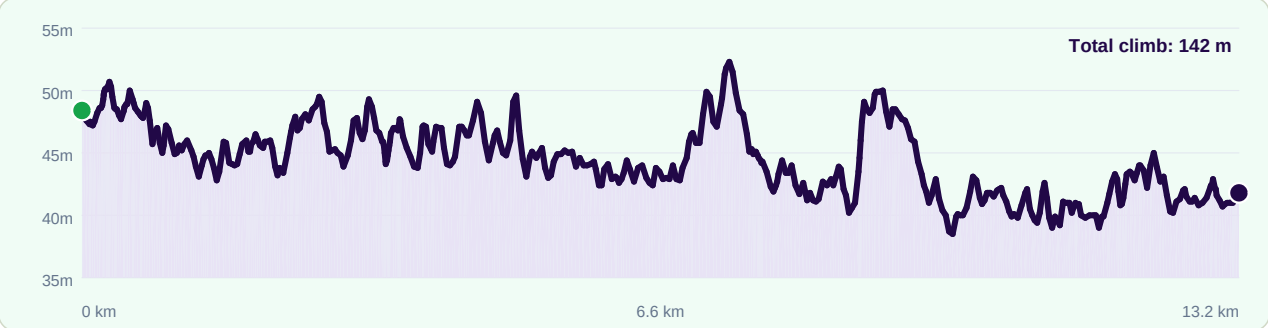
You''ll pass old mills and traditional lifting bridges along the way. Carlow is the largest town on the Barrow, and arriving on foot along the riverside feels like the right way to come in. Carlow Castle is remarkably intact considering its age — well worth a visit, along with the cathedral, before dinner.

DAY
5

Carlow to Leighlinbridge

Walk: BW Carlow to Leighlinbridge (13.2 km) · Overnight: Leighlinbridge

ROUTE 13.2 km · 9 m ascent · Easy · Carlow to Leighlinbridge



A short, gentle day on the river. Leave Carlow on the towpath and you are soon back in open country. The Barrow is broad and slow here, with herons in the shallows and the Blackstairs Mountains rising to the south.

About 7 km in you reach Milford. Three elegant bridges cross the river beside the shell of an old mill. It is one of the prettiest spots on the whole route, and a perfect place for lunch.

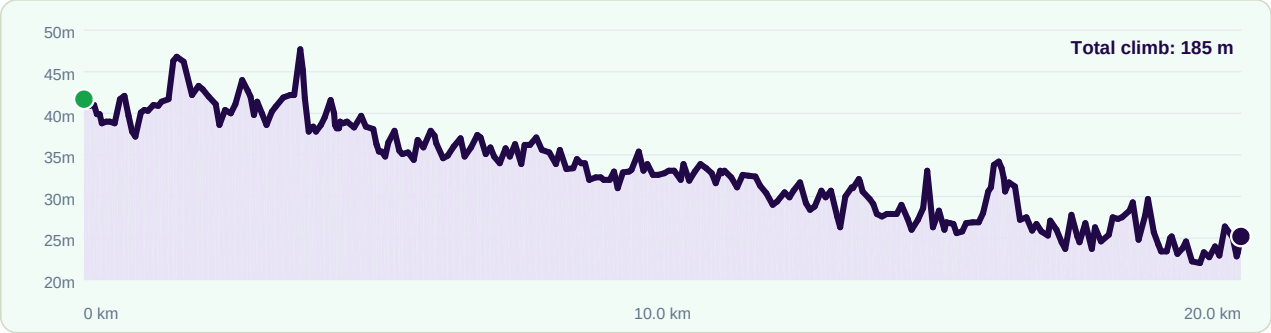
Tonight you stay in Leighlinbridge, one of the loveliest villages on the Barrow. The Valerian Bridge has carried traffic over the river since the 14th century. Beside it stand the ruins of the Black Castle. With a short day behind you, there is time to sit by the water and enjoy it.

DAY
6

Leighlinbridge to Borris

Walk: BW Leighlinbridge to Borris (20.1 km) · Overnight: Borris

ROUTE 20.1 km · Moderate · Leighlinbridge to Borris



A longer day, but the towpath is flat and easy the whole way. Soon after leaving Leighlinbridge you pass through Bagenalstown, a quiet Georgian town on the river. It makes a good spot for a morning coffee.

South of town the valley grows greener and closer. You pass the old stone bridge at Goresbridge, then Ballytiglea Bridge, where the towpath briefly joins the Leinster Way. Here you turn off the river for the final 2 km into Borris.

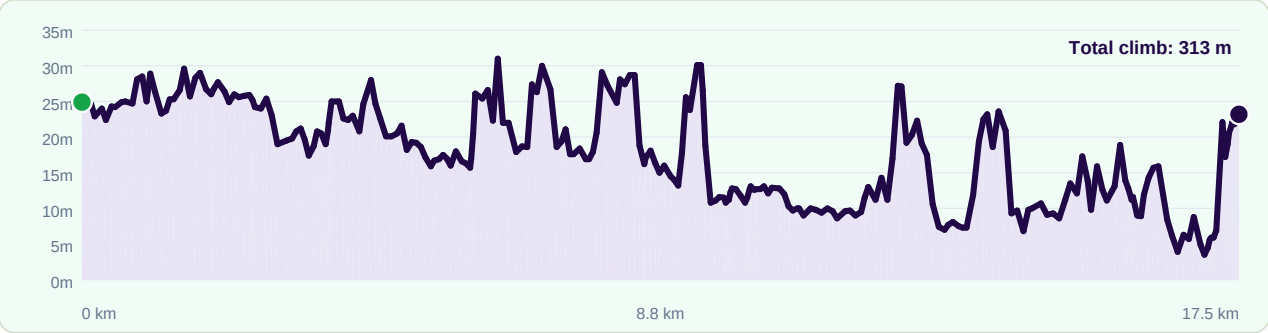
Borris is a village to savour. It has a wide stone main street, the grand gates of Borris House and the Carlow hills rising behind. It is a fine evening to sit outside with a pint and feel the miles in your legs.

DAY 7

Borris to St. Mullins

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

ROUTE 17.5 km · 87 m ascent · Easy · Borris to St. Mullins



Your final walking day, and one of the loveliest of the whole route. South of Borris the valley narrows and the wooded hillsides close in on both sides of the river — this is the section 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 round tower stump 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 8

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 9 walkers

*****

To anyone longing for an endless peaceful flat walk in deep green quiet, the Barrow Way is a hidden gem. We had most days to ourselves and a chance to move at our own pace. Our hosts and cab drivers were wonderful…funny, kind, and helpful. Small villages, bird song, laughter. The best holiday.

All of it was great. I loved the mixture of guest houses and hotels so I got country living and then something a little fancier in a nice rhythm. Declan was my favorite driver. What a good man. All your…

- Deborah A. - 2026

*****

My son and I really enjoyed our Barrow Way walk. We were blessed with very good weather, and the journey gave us plenty of memorable moments together. The Woodford Dolmen Hotel was a fantastic place to begin the trip. We especially want to mention Ter Kelly - what a gem! We really appreciated his service, banter, and warm smile throughout the trip. Thanks again for organising such a lovely experience!

- Barry M - 2025

*****

Thanks for everything for our trip last year on the Barrow Way. We had an amazing time. We loved all the places you selected for us. Even all the taxi drivers were amazing. Your package was very helpful and everything was easy to follow. It was a dream trip. We had such an amazing time and you did a great job we are looking at doing another trip, leaning towards the Wicklow Way.

- Kevin Zuech - 2025

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)

Along the trail — County Carlow, Ireland

Get in touch

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