

5.0/5 30 walker reviews



Cooley & Mournes Hiking Tour

Ancient myths, granite peaks and a border crossed on foot

DURATION

8 days

WALKING DAYS

6

TOTAL DISTANCE

84.3 km

GRADE

Moderate

From

€879

per person

Book or enquire at

walkingholidayireland.com/walking-tours

[See website for current rates](#)

About This Tour

An 8-day self-guided hiking tour through the Cooley Peninsula and Mourne Mountains — ancient trails, dramatic peaks, medieval Carlingford, and the best of Ireland's Ancient East with B&B accommodation and luggage transfers included.

Tour Highlights

- **Medieval Carlingford**

Explore Ireland's best-preserved medieval village — cobbled streets, a Norman castle, fresh oysters, and traditional pubs right on the shores of Carlingford Lough.

- **The Mourne Way & Mourne Wall**

Walk through an Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty following the Mourne Way past granite peaks, the famous Mourne Wall, and through ancient forests including Tollymore — a Game of Thrones filming location.

- **Cross-Border Trail**

A unique hiking experience that crosses from the Republic of Ireland into Northern Ireland on foot — two countries, two landscapes, one incredible trail.

- **Myths, Legends & History**

Walk in the footsteps of the warrior Cúchulainn along the Táin Way, follow old smugglers' paths over the Brandy Pad, and discover Viking heritage at every turn.

Who Is It For?

This tour is ideal for experienced hillwalkers and adventurous hikers who enjoy moderate to challenging terrain with some longer days. You should be comfortable walking 15–20 km per day over hilly, sometimes rocky ground with notable ascent — particularly on the Cooley Peninsula day which involves 971 metres of climbing.

It's perfect for walkers who love getting off the beaten track. Unlike Ireland's more famous trails, the Cooley and Mournes feel wonderfully uncrowded. You'll meet more sheep than fellow hikers on many stretches, and the sense of wild solitude is a real draw.

This self-guided tour suits solo walkers, couples, and small groups who want the freedom to walk at their own pace while having all the logistics handled.

Day-by-Day Itinerary

DAY
1

Arrival in Dundalk, County Louth

Overnight: Dundalk

Arrive in Dundalk, your base for the first night. This historic town is perfectly positioned between Dublin (80 km south) and Belfast (100 km north), making it easy to reach by bus, train, or car.

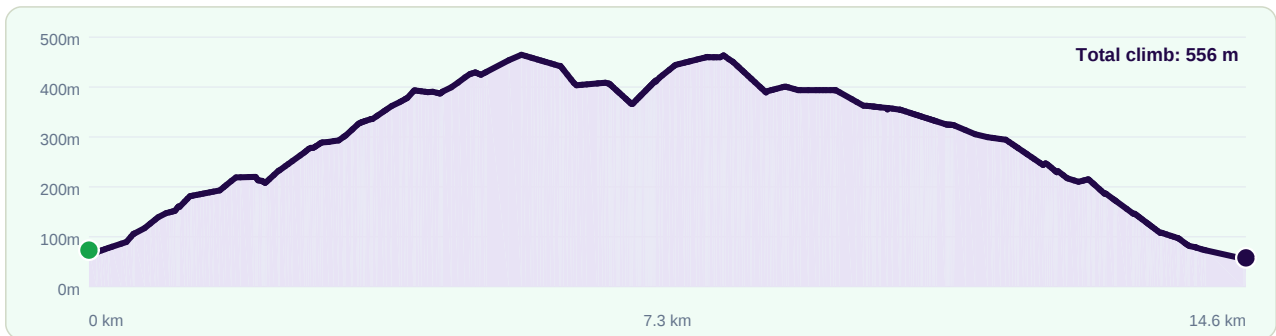
Settle into your B&B, explore the town and find some live music, and enjoy a relaxed dinner. We provide you with detailed public transport information on how to get here in your pre-departure travel pack.

DAY
2

Ravensdale Forest to Lumpers Pub

Walk: CM Annaverna to Lumpers (14.6 km) · Overnight: Dundalk

ROUTE 14.6 km · 556 m ascent · Moderate · Annaverna to Lumpers



Your first walking day takes you through the beautiful Ravensdale Forest and up into the Cooley Mountains. The trail climbs steadily through mixed woodland before opening out onto heather moorland with sweeping views over Dundalk Bay and the Cooley Peninsula.

The reward at the end? A well-earned pint at Lumpers Pub in Ballymakellett — a proper Irish welcome to the trail.

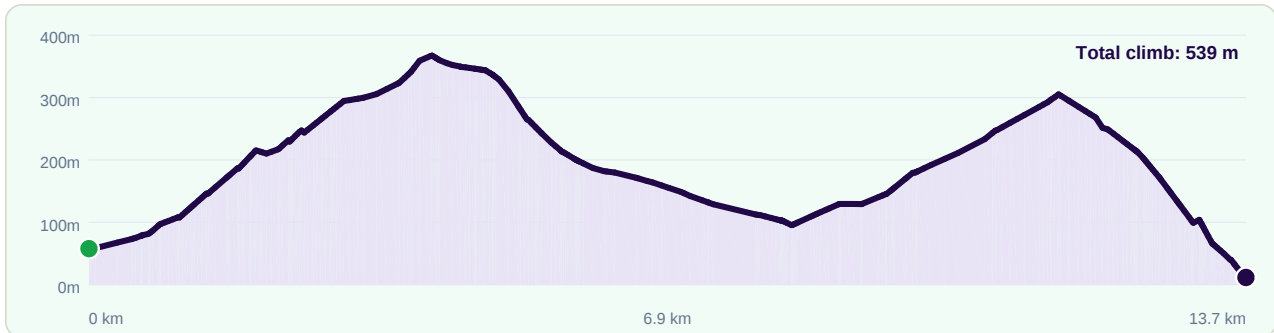
DAY

3

Lumpers to Carlingford via the Cooley Ridge

Walk: CM Lumpers to Carlingford (13.7 km) · Overnight: Carlingford

ROUTE 13.7 km · 539 m ascent · Easy · Lumpers to Carlingford



This is the most demanding and most spectacular stage of the tour, following the Táin Way along the spine of the Cooley Peninsula. You'll cross Maeve's Gap between Slieve Foye and Barnavave, with views that stretch from the Irish Sea to the Mourne Mountains across Carlingford Lough. The descent into medieval Carlingford is unforgettable — the village appears below you like something from another century. Celebrate with fresh Carlingford oysters and a traditional music session.

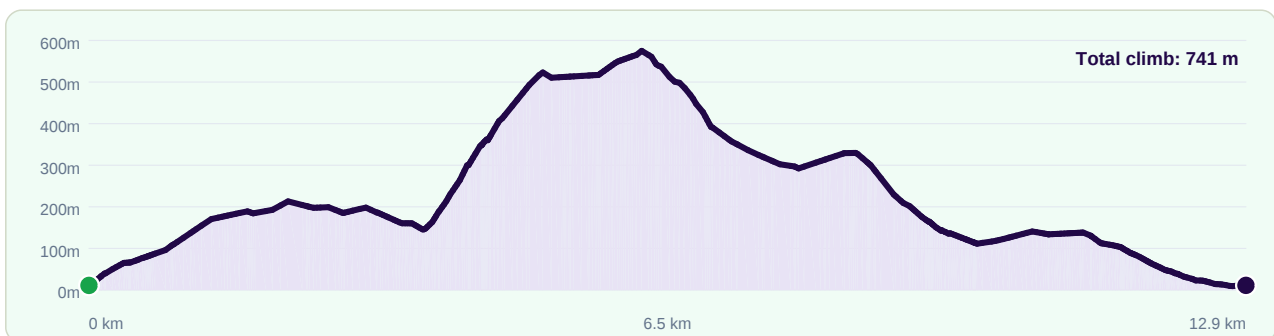
DAY

4

Free Day in Carlingford

Walk: CM Slieve Foye Loop (12.9 km) · Overnight: Carlingford

ROUTE 12.9 km · 741 m ascent · Moderate · Carlingford to Carlingford



A well-earned rest day in one of Ireland's most charming villages. Wander the medieval streets, visit King John's Castle, browse the craft shops, or sample more of those famous oysters. If your legs are willing, choose from several optional walks: the gentle Carlingford Lough Greenway (6.2 km along an old railway line), a loop up Barnavave for panoramic views, or the challenging summit of Slieve Foye itself.

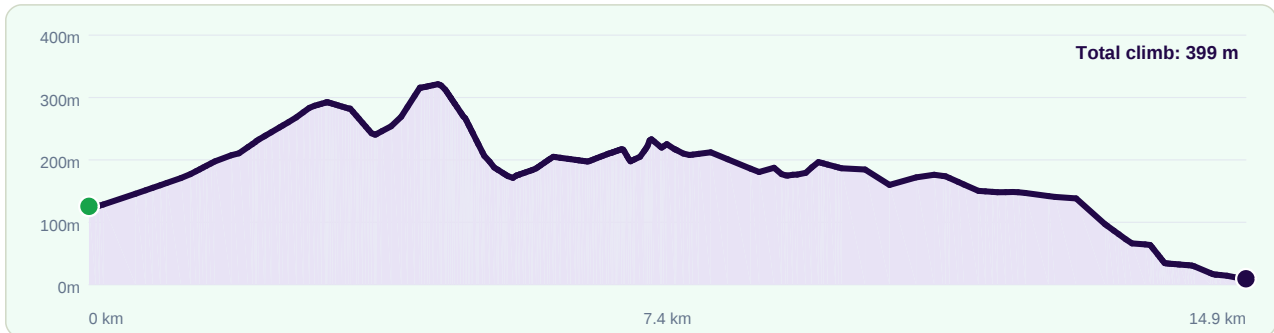
DAY

5

Mourne Way Part 1

Walk: CM Mourne Way Part 1 (14.9 km) · Overnight: Rostrevor

ROUTE 14.9 km · 401 m ascent · Easy · Rocky River to Rostrevor



Today you cross the border into Northern Ireland and begin the Mourne Way. The trail leads you through Kilbroney Forest and into the foothills of the Mournes.

The walking is gentler than yesterday — mixed woodland, riverside paths, and wonderful views over Carlingford Lough. Rostrevor is a pretty Victorian village nestled between the mountains and the lough, perfect for an evening stroll before dinner.

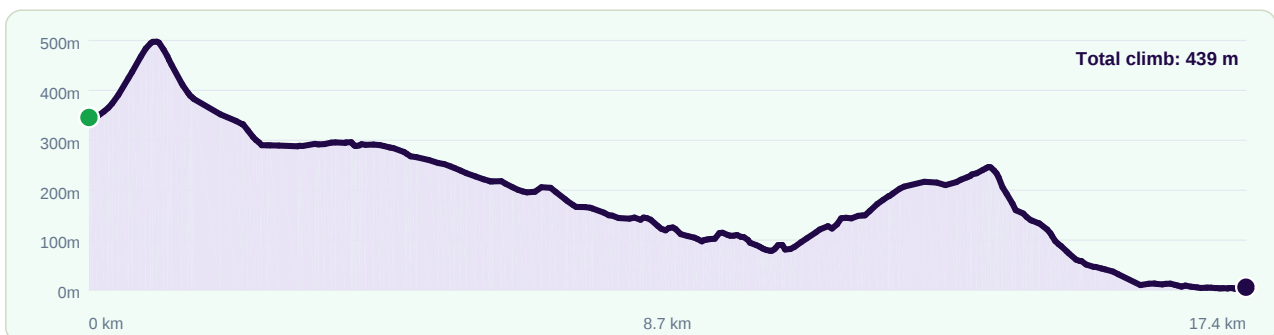
DAY

6

— Mourne Way Part 2: Rostrevor to Newcastle

Walk: CM Mourne Way Part 2 (17.5 km) · Overnight: Newcastle

ROUTE 17.5 km · 453 m ascent · Moderate · Deerpark, Spelga Dam to Newcastle



A beautiful day following the Mourne Way through rolling countryside and ancient woodland. The highlight is Tollymore Forest Park — one of Northern Ireland's finest forests and a filming location for Game of Thrones.

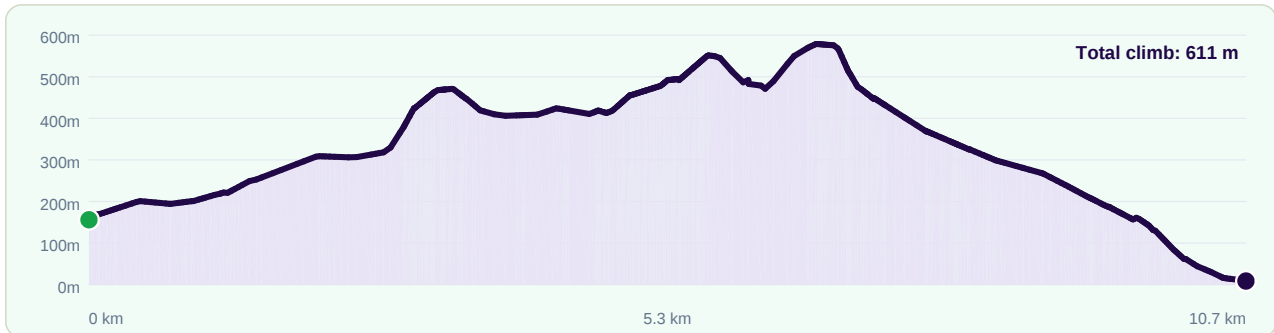
The trail winds through towering conifers, crosses elegant stone bridges, and follows the Shimna River before emerging in Newcastle, a seaside town sitting in the shadow of Slieve Donard, Northern Ireland's highest peak (853m).

DAY
7

Mourne Mountains: Brandy Pad, Hare's Gap & Silent Valley

Walk: CM Kilcoo to Newcastle (10.7 km) · Overnight: Newcastle

ROUTE 10.7 km · 611 m ascent · Easy · Kilcoo to Newcastle



Your final walking day offers flexible options in the heart of the Mourne Mountains. The classic route follows the Brandy Pad — an old smugglers' track that winds through dramatic mountain scenery past Hare's Gap, with the famous Mourne Wall as your constant companion. For a gentler finish, explore the beautiful Silent Valley reservoir walk. More ambitious hikers can extend to take in Slieve Donard or follow a longer section of the Mourne Wall.

DAY
8

— Departure from Newcastle

After a final Irish breakfast, it's time to say goodbye. We can arrange a transfer to Dublin Airport (approximately 2.5–3 hours) or Belfast (1.5 hours). Alternatively, take the bus to Belfast or Dublin at your own pace.



Along the trail in Cooley and Mournes, Ire

What Our Walkers Say

Rated 5.0/5 by 30 walkers

Lovely scenery, great accommodation, lovely local pubs and cafes . The greenway at Carlingford was a lovely contrast to the hill walking. Everything in the schedule went to plan .it was lovely to be in small towns for the night.

- Mary - 2026

With 15 Nordic walkers we arrived at the Ballymascanlon Hotel near Dundalk, a very good hotel in the middle of a golf course. The whole week we were transferred in a little bus with a private chauffeur. We walked four times (15-20 km), with and without Cliff, in the Cooley and Mourne Mountains. One evening we met real Irish musicians. And we ate in a real Irish steak restaurant. The last day we visited Dublin. All was very well organised by Cliff.

- Els (group of 15 Nordic walkers) - 2021

As a couple, we enjoyed a beautiful walking holiday organised by Cliff Wayenberg of Walking Holiday Ireland. The six days of walking in the Dundalk area, Carlingford and the Mourne Mountains were a good combination of different types of scenery, from easy walking to steep climbs. Walking distances each day were a bit longer and more difficult, giving a nice challenge every day. B&Bs located in towns with lots to see and to do in the evening, and all with very enthusiastic hosts. We stayed two...

- Swab (couple) - 2021

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

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Web: walkingholidayireland.com

This tour: walkingholidayireland.com/walking-tours/cooley-mournes-SAE-CM-8D

FROM

€879

per person

See website for current rates