



Saint Patrick's Way

A self-guided walking holiday

TOURS AVAILABLE

3

DURATION

6-9

DISTANCE

57.2-149.2 km

GRADE

Moderate

Ready to Book?

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About This Walking Area

Walk 132km from Armagh to Downpatrick on Ireland's pilgrim trail — through the Mourne Mountains, along ancient paths, earning your Pilgrim Certificate at Down Cathedral.

Saint Patrick's Way crosses three distinct landscapes. The first section moves through County Armagh's drumlin country — gentle green hills, hedgerow-lined lanes, and quiet farmland that feels untouched by time. The Newry Canal section is flat and peaceful, following Ireland's oldest canal through a corridor of wildlife and water.

Then the Mournes. The crossing from Rostrevor to Newcastle is the most dramatic day on the trail — granite peaks rising to over 800 metres, heather moorland, forest trails, and views across Carlingford Lough that make you stop and stare. Slieve Donard, Northern Ireland's highest mountain at 850m, dominates the horizon. The descent to Newcastle brings you to a classic seaside town with the mountains literally at its back door.

The final section — Newcastle to Downpatrick — is coastal and gentle: Murlough Bay's sand dunes, the ruins of Dundrum Castle, Tyrella's vast beach, and the quiet lanes leading to Downpatrick and Down Cathedral.

BEST MONTHS

[Apr](#)[May](#)[Jun](#)[Jul](#)[Aug](#)[Sep](#)[Oct](#)[June](#)[July](#)[August](#)

Why Walk Here

The cultural depth of Saint Patrick's Way is extraordinary. Begin at the Navan Centre & Fort — the ancient capital of Ulster, a site of myth and archaeology dating back 3,000 years. Armagh itself is Ireland's ecclesiastical capital, with two cathedrals (one Catholic, one Church of Ireland) both named after St Patrick. The Georgian Mall and the observatory add Georgian elegance.

Along the route: Scarva's canal village, Newry's merchant heritage, Rostrevor's Victorian charm, Kilbroney Forest Park, and the fishing port of Kilkeel. Newcastle sits beneath the Mournes and has been a resort town since the Victorian era. The 3,000-year-old Ballynoe Stone Circle is just off the trail near Downpatrick.

The journey ends at Down Cathedral, where a granite slab marks St Patrick's final resting place. Nearby: Saul Church (the first church in Ireland), Struell Wells (ancient holy wells), and Inch Abbey. Castle Ward — the Game of Thrones Winterfell filming location — is just a short drive from Downpatrick.

Who Is It For?

Saint Patrick's Way appeals to pilgrims, heritage walkers, mountain lovers, and anyone who wants something more meaningful than just another hiking route. If you've walked the Camino de Santiago and want another pilgrim trail, this is Ireland's answer. The Pilgrim Passport and Certificate give the walk a sense of purpose and completion that few trails offer.

The route suits confident walkers with reasonable fitness — the Mourne Mountains crossing is the test, but our 8-day package splits it into two manageable days via Kilkeel, and our 9-day Entire Route walks just one stage per day throughout for the gentlest pace of all. History buffs, photographers, and Game of Thrones fans all find something extraordinary on this trail.

Terrain & Difficulty

Saint Patrick's Way is a moderate trail with one genuinely challenging section. The Armagh-to-Scarva and Scarva-to-Newry stages are on country lanes and canal towpath — straightforward walking with some ascent. Newry to Rostrevor involves hill walking above Carlingford Lough.

The crux is the Rostrevor-to-Newcastle Mourne Mountains crossing — 38km with over 450m of ascent through exposed mountain terrain. This is a proper mountain day that requires good fitness, appropriate gear, and weather awareness. However, we offer an 8-Day Easy option that splits this into two gentler days via Kilkeel.

The final stages — Newcastle to Tyrella to Downpatrick — are moderate coastal and rural walking, a welcome recovery after the Mournes.

Available Walking Holidays

Saint Patrick's Way Walking Holiday — 6 Days (Hilltown to Downpatrick)

From

6 days · 3 walking days · 57.2 km · Moderate

€755

per person

Walk the Mournes from Hilltown to Newcastle, take a rest day under Slieve Donard, then complete the pilgrimage along the coast to Saint Patrick's grave

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Saint Patrick's Way (Armagh to Hilltown)

From

6 days · 4 walking days · 87.6 km · Moderate

€755

per person

Walk Saint Patrick's Way Part A — 84km from Armagh through canal country and Carlingford Lough to the Mourne foothills at Hilltown. 5 nights, Pilgrim

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Saint Patrick's Way Walking Holiday — 9 Days (Entire Route)

From

9 days · 8 walking days · 149.2 km · Moderate

€1,195

per person

Walk the entire 149km Saint Patrick's Way from Armagh to Downpatrick — one stage per day, eight walking days, Pilgrim Certificate at Down Cathedral.

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Practical Information

Best Time to Visit

April to October is the walking season, with May, June, and September the ideal months. The Mourne can be misty and cool even in summer — layers and waterproofs are essential for the mountain crossing. July and August are warmest but may have more cloud on the peaks. St Patrick's Day (17 March) brings festivities to Armagh and Downpatrick but the trail is not yet in season. Late spring and early autumn offer quieter trails, golden light, and fewer visitors at heritage sites.

Accommodation

Accommodation along Saint Patrick's Way is in family-run guesthouses and B&Bs, chosen for their warmth, comfort, and connection to the communities along the route. Armagh offers city guesthouses and boutique options. Scarva and Rostrevor have characterful village B&Bs. Newcastle is a seaside resort with a wider range. Downpatrick has heritage guesthouses near the cathedral.

All rooms are en-suite. Full cooked breakfasts are standard. Your hosts know the trail, the local history, and where to eat in the evening. Luggage is transferred between each accommodation, so you walk with just a daypack.

Practical Information

Getting there: Armagh is approximately 1 hour from Belfast, 2 hours from Dublin. Regular bus services from both cities. Downpatrick is 30 minutes from Belfast by car.

Currency: Northern Ireland uses British Pounds (£). Some establishments near the border also accept Euros.

UK entry (ETA): The trail is entirely within the UK. Since 2025 most non-UK and non-Irish visitors need a UK Electronic Travel Authorisation (ETA, about £16), applied for online before travel. Irish passport holders are exempt.

Terrain: Mixed — canal towpath, country lanes, mountain paths, and coastal trails. Proper walking boots essential for the Mourne section.

Pilgrim Passport: Collect your passport at the Navan Centre, stamp it at 10 points along the route, and receive your Certificate of Achievement at the Saint Patrick Centre in Downpatrick.

Gallery



On the walking trails of Ireland



Along the trail — County Carlow, Ireland

Ready to Book?

See live availability, full daily itineraries and current rates on our website. Each holiday includes accommodation, daily breakfast, luggage transfers and route notes.

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