

5.0/5 · 13 walker reviews



The Beara Peninsula

A self-guided walking holiday

TOURS AVAILABLE

5

DURATION

5-9

DISTANCE

54.1-105.9 km

GRADE

Moderate

Ready to Book?

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About This Walking Area

Ireland's wildest peninsula — 196km of remote mountains, copper mine ruins and untouched Atlantic coastline where solitude and raw beauty reward the walker who ventures beyond the crowds.

The Beara is geologically one of southwest Ireland's most dramatic landscapes. Mountains reach only 685 metres but feel vast because they rise directly from the Atlantic with no gentle transition. The granite and quartzite Caha Mountains form a ragged spine with dramatic corries and waterfalls on the north side and steeper, exposed faces on the south. The eastern section through Eyeries is pastoral and sheltered; the southern coast is raw and elemental.

Rocky hillsides, ancient stone walls in disrepair, windswept bogland and constant Atlantic swells shape the terrain. Light changes with extraordinary speed: clear sunshine with Bantry Bay views can shift to enveloping mist within minutes. Wildlife is abundant: gannets dive off southern cliffs; red grouse flush from heather; sea cliffs support razorbills, guillemots and choughs.

Summer brings wildflowers; in autumn, rowan trees turn brilliant orange-red against grey granite. The sense of wildness emerges from genuine remoteness, absence of development, constant Atlantic presence, and deep time.

BEST MONTHS

May

June

September

October

Why Walk Here

The Beara carries deep history: copper mining, famine catastrophe, and persistent fishing communities. Allihies' mines (1812-1884) employed over 1,600 workers; the Copper Mine Museum tells this story with genuine depth. Famine reshaped the population from 39,000 to fewer than 6,000.

Empty cottages and landscape silence mark this catastrophe. Castletownbere harbour remains the economic heart, a working port where commercial fishing still dominates. Milleens Cheese, made by Veronica Steele since 1976, represents post-famine recovery and sparked an Irish farmhouse cheesemaking revolution.

Daphne du Maurier's 1943 novel *Hungry Hill* drew inspiration from copper mining and the Puxley family. Castletownbere fish — Ireland's largest whitefish port; brown crab and lobster are landed daily and served simply.

Milleens Cheese — unpasteurised, washed-rind farmhouse cheese with international recognition. Durrus Cheese & Woodcock Smokery — artisan West Cork products using local ingredients. Hearty pub food — village pubs serve generous stew, fresh fish and local meat

Who Is It For?

The Beara Way is for experienced walkers wanting genuine wildness and comfortable with navigation and remote, exposed conditions. If the Kerry Way feels too busy and you want solitude, challenging terrain and discovery, the Beara is your trail.

It suits confident hillwalkers understanding weather management, comfortable navigating with map and compass, and prepared for landscapes offering limited shelter. It's particularly rewarding for those interested in industrial heritage and famine history.

Not ideal for first-time long-distance walkers or those uncomfortable with poor-visibility navigation.

Terrain & Difficulty

The Beara Way suits experienced walkers with strong fitness and mountain terrain confidence. Daily distances run 14 to 26 km with ascents of 400 to 800 m on mountain sections involving sustained height gain over rough, undefined terrain where paths exist only as faint moorland tracks.

The trail is less comprehensively waymarked than popular routes. Open mountain sections, particularly around Hungry Hill, present navigation challenges in poor visibility.

Waterproof footwear and full weather-appropriate gear are mandatory year-round. The southern coast crossing and Hungry Hill approach are most demanding, with exposed terrain. Early Glengarriff stages are gentler, letting you settle rhythm before terrain becomes serious.

Available Walking Holidays

The Beara Way Walking Holiday — 5 Days (Moderate)

5 days · 3 walking days · 54.1 km · Moderate

Three walking days along the southern shore of Beara — from Glengarriff oak woods under Hungry Hill to the copper-mining village of Allihies and its red

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From

€595

per person

The Beara Way Walking Holiday — 6 Days (Moderate)

6 days · 3 walking days · 68.1 km · Moderate

Four walking days from Glengarriff to the painted village of Eyeries. 76km along the Beara peninsula, over the Caha Mountains, on copper-mine trails

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From

€695

per person

The Beara Way Walking Holiday — 7 Days (Moderate)

7 days · 5 walking days · 82.5 km · Moderate

Five walking days from Glengarriff to the Bronze Age stone circles above Ardroom. 95km along Ireland's wildest peninsula, over the Caha Mountains,

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From

€795

per person

The Beara Way Walking Holiday — 8 Days (Moderate)

8 days · 6 walking days · 94.2 km · Moderate

Six walking days from Glengarriff to Lauragh on Kenmare Bay. 94 km around the Beara Peninsula, over the Caha Mountains, along the copper mine coast

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From

€885

per person

The Beara Way Walking Holiday — 9 Days (Moderate)

9 days · 7 walking days · 105.9 km · Moderate

Seven walking days from Glengarriff to Lauragh on Kenmare Bay. Almost the whole Beara Way, over the Caha Mountains and along the copper-mine coast,

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From

€1,095

per person

Practical Information

Best Time to Visit

May, June and September are optimal. May brings long daylight, moorland wildflowers and relatively stable westerly winds. June offers longest days, making remote southern sections more manageable. September combines golden light, noticeably fewer visitors and cooler temperatures comfortable for mountain walking. July and August can be busy; accommodation books up and exposed sections can feel uncomfortably hot.

Accommodation

Accommodation is simpler and more dispersed than popular Kerry trails; booking ahead is essential. Family-run bed and breakfasts and small guesthouses are standard, comfortable and genuinely local. Villages like Castletownbere, Eyeries, Allihies and Glengarriff have most options.

We pre-book quality accommodation with breakfast included and arrange luggage transfers. This is important on the Beara, where distances are substantial and rough terrain makes carrying full packs unpleasant.

Practical Information

Cork Airport (ORK) and Kerry Airport (KIR) are approximately 90 minutes from Glengarriff. Cork is larger with better international connections. Bus Éireann and GoBus operate express services from Cork City and Killarney, taking approximately 1.5 hours.

We provide full transfer guidance with every booking. Glengarriff's limited taxis require advance arrangement. Irish Rail services Cork and Killarney but not Glengarriff directly; the nearest railheads are Mallow (90 minutes' drive) or Killarney (1.5 hours).

During the walk, Castletownbere is the largest resupply point with a supermarket, butcher and post office.

Gallery



Along the trail in Beara Peninsula, Ireland



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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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