

Northern Ireland Causeway Coast Guided Trail

Tour Style: Guided walking

Destinations: Northern Ireland & United Kingdom

Trip code: XCLDW-7

Trip Walking Grade: 2



HOLIDAY OVERVIEW

Northern Ireland's rugged Causeway Coast delivers on far-reaching Atlantic views, mist-wreathed headlands, and a slew of spots that eagle-eyed visitors may recognise from Game of Thrones. Learn about long-gone Gaelic kingdoms as you explore the crumbling clifftop remains of Dunseverick and Dunluce castles and test your mettle crossing the nerve-shredding Carrick-a-Rede rope bridge. There's also the chance to spot rare seabirds on Rathlin Island and visit the UNESCO-listed Giant's Causeway – a geological marvel with approximately 40,000 hexagonal-shaped stepping stones dating back almost 60 million years.

WHAT'S INCLUDED

- Comfortable en-suite rooms in our partner accommodation(s)
- Cooked or continental breakfast every morning
- Daily packed lunches
- Three-course evening meals, plus tea & coffee
- Guided walks with an experienced HF Holidays Leader

- All transport to and from walks where necessary
- Return flights from London Heathrow to Belfast, including hold baggage and airport transfers

Please note - Admission costs are in addition to your holiday price, please see "Essential Information" section for details.

HOLIDAY HIGHLIGHTS

- Walking the best of the Causeway Coastal Route
- Spending time in historic Belfast
- Crossing the Giant's Causeway
- A boat trip to Rathlin Island
- Spotting rare seabirds and wildlife
- Soaking up views over Ballycastle and the coast

TRIP SUITABILITY

This Best of the Causeway Coast Guided Trail holiday is graded 2 which involves walks/hikes on good paths, and includes plenty of time for photography and sightseeing stops along the way. It is your responsibility to ensure you have the relevant fitness required to join this holiday. A sustained effort is required to complete this walk and provision cannot be made for anyone who opts out. Please be sure you can manage the daily mileage and ascent as listed. The walking day is normally 6-7 hours. It is important for your own enjoyment, and that of your fellow guests that you can maintain the pace. It makes a lot of sense to spend time getting some additional exercise before your holiday. We suggest that you try to fit in a number of longer walks, including some on hilly terrain. Other exercises such as cycling, jogging and swimming are also excellent for developing increased stamina.



ITINERARY

Day 1: Arrival Day

Meet at the hotel reception at 1830 for a quick introduction to the holiday before dinner. If you're in Belfast

early, take time to visit the Titanic museum (booking advisable), it's well worth it, and if you've the energy after dinner, take a stroll to the famous Crown Bar, and enjoy the craic.

Day 2: North To The Causeway Coast

Our local guide takes us on a discovery of the stories and histories of Belfast this morning, before we head north to the Causeway Coast, with time to explore the mystical "Dark Hedges" on the way. Time to relax at the hotel this afternoon, or join us for a walking tour of charming Ballycastle, our base for the rest of our holiday.

Day 3: Giant's Causeway

This has to be one of the best walks in Northern Ireland, and leads from the clifftop ruins of Dunseverick Castle, to the geological wonder and world famous UNESCO site of Giant's Causeway. Plenty of time to explore as our walk takes us through the towering basalt columns (the tallest is 12m high and there are approx. 40,000 of these impressive hexagonal columns in total). Our transport picks us up from here and takes us on to Dunluce Castle for a short visit, before we head back to Ballycastle.

Please note – entrance to the visitor centre at Giant's Causeway & Dunluce Castle has not been included in the price, as many of you will be entitled to free or reduced entrance fee if you have National Trust membership.

6.5 miles (10.5km) with 1,000 feet (300m) of ascent

Day 4: White Park Bay & Ballintoy

Explore the spectacular White Park Bay beach and its rock formations before following the Causeway Coastal Path past Ballintoy harbour to the viewing point at the Carrick a Rede bridge. Time to enjoy the dramatic scenery before heading for Ballintoy village for a well deserved cuppa or something stronger.

6 miles (9.5km) with 850 feet (260m) of ascent

Day 5: Rathlin Island

Rathlin Island. The northernmost point of the [Antrim Coast and Glens Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty](#), and home to tens of thousands of seabirds including guillemots, kittiwakes, puffins and razorbills. Stunning walking today, and plenty of free time this afternoon to visit the RSPB centre, the lighthouse, take a bus tour of the island, or to take the ferry back to Ballycastle and relax at our hotel.

6 miles (9.5km) with 550 feet (170m) of ascent

Day 6: Fairhead

Breathtaking views from the cliff tops of Fairhead on this wild and ruggedly beautiful walk. Fantastic views towards Ballycastle and Rathlin Island, and to picturesque Murlough Bay.

4 miles (6.5km) with 850 feet (280m) of ascent

Day 7: Glengariff

Home to Northern Ireland's most impressive waterfalls, we'll follow the forest trails that showcase the best of the park before joining a section of Moyle Way from Lara Lodge, to finish in the pretty Glengariff/Watertop Village. On our route home we'll make a stop to discover the stories and histories of Loughareema/The Vanishing Lake.

7.5 miles (12km) with 450 feet (140m) of ascent and 1,100 feet (340m) of descent

Day 8: Departure Day

A morning group transfer takes us back to Belfast today, to the City airport, and afterwards (on request) to Great Victoria Street railway station.

ACCOMMODATION

The Clayton Hotel, Belfast

The Clayton Hotel, Belfast, is a comfortable 4* hotel, in the perfect location. A short walk from the railway station, and easily reachable from the airport bus route, the Clayton is the ideal base for us to explore the city from. All rooms have tea/coffee making facilities, free wifi, TV, hairdryer etc.

Marine Hotel, Ballycastle

A cracking seafront location in the heart of charming Ballycastle, the 3* Marine Hotel looks out over the town's beautiful beach and marina, and gives us the perfect base for our walks exploring the Causeway Coast. All rooms are comfortable en-suites, with tea/coffee making facilities, TV, hairdryer, and free Wi-Fi is available in the public areas. This hotel is dog-friendly so you may meet four legged friends in some of the communal areas.

USEFUL HOLIDAY INFORMATION

Holiday Information

In the hopefully rare event of any cause for complaints regarding accommodation, you should notify your leader who can then attempt to rectify the problem.

Food & Transport

Your stay is full-board. This includes daily breakfasts, packed lunch options, and evening meals. Vegetarian choices and dietary requirements can be catered for (please give advance notice when booking).

Packed lunches

Our packed lunches will be too much food for some and not enough for others; if you feel you might need more food during the walk, please bring a supply of snacks to supplement this – it won't always be possible to buy these on the route. Your packed lunches will include: a bread sandwich or roll with a choice of filling; some fresh fruit; fruit cake/flapjack or similar, crisps and/or biscuits. For those of you tackling a level 4 or above holiday, we would highly recommend bringing some trail mix or something similar to ensure you've some fuel in reserve should you need it.

Dietary requirements

Our partner hotels can cater for most dietary requirements, but it is important you advise us of any allergies and dietary restrictions you have at the time of booking.

Luggage transfers

When you change from one hotel to another, we will arrange for your luggage to be transferred for you. This is included in the cost of your holiday. Please remember that other people will need to move your suitcase so please pack thoughtfully. Your flight baggage allowance will be detailed on your holiday despatch documents, received 4-6 weeks prior to the start date, and if you can limit your luggage to one bag, rucksack or suitcase that would be very helpful. Make sure your bags are clearly labelled with your name and "HF Holidays".

Joining Instructions

This holiday begins in Belfast. For those who have booked our "with flight" option, you will fly from London to Belfast City airport, from where you will be transferred to the Clayton Hotel.

Your holiday ends in Belfast. If you have booked our "with flight" option, we will take you back to Belfast city airport. If you have booked without-flight, you're welcome to either leave the holiday in Ballycastle, or to join the group transfer back to Belfast on the departure day, and we will make a stop at the airport and at Great Victoria Street railway station on request (times to coincide with group flights).

Essential Information

It's best to be prepared for all weather conditions. To make it easier, here is a list of items you should consider packing.

Essentials

- Walking boots
- Waterproof jacket
- Waterproof trousers
- Insulated jacket/top
- Walking clothing
- Walking socks (plus spares)
- Sunhat
- Gloves/mitts and warm hat
- Water bottle (minimum 2 litre capacity)
- Headtorch
- High-factor sunscreen (minimum SPF 30)
- Sunglasses with a dark lens
- Rucksack (15-30 litres)
- Mobile phone
- Personal first aid kit (containing your medication, blister plasters, etc.)
- Passport
- Visa (if applicable)
- Copy of your travel insurance policy
- UK Global Health Insurance Card (**formerly known as EHIC**)

Recommended

- Collapsible walking poles
- Swimwear and travel towel
- Snacks
- Dry bags
- Rubbish bags
- Insect repellent

Optional extras

- Camera
- Sit mat
- Flask for hot drinks
- Durable lunch box
- Gaiters
- GPS device

Safety On Your Holiday

Walks may be changed for safety reasons and are subject to a maximum and minimum number of guests.

Leaders always consider the safety of the group as a whole, and may need to alter or curtail the walk if the conditions dictate. Your leader may refuse to accept a guest while clothing, equipment or behaviour is unsuitable. In the event of a problem all leaders carry a mobile phone, first aid kit, group shelter, spare maps and a compass.

Please note: If you choose to leave the group your leader is no longer responsible for you.

If you have a particular health condition or disability please put this on your guest registration form. This information will be confidential to your leaders and the house manager, but leaders do need to take account of any issues when planning walks. Please carry a copy of these trip notes with you, or note down the contact phone number for your accommodation (details in the travel section) should you need them in case of emergency.

Useful Information

Ticks

Ticks are tiny creatures that live in vegetation and can attach themselves to passing animals or walkers and may carry a risk of Lyme Disease. Please refer to NHS advice and guidelines for information prior to your holiday.

Travel Insurance

We strongly recommend that you take out travel insurance and any other personal insurance relevant to you and the holiday. It is particularly important with the possibility of flight changes and cancellations due to the challenging weather conditions that can occur on the islands and might impact your onward travel arrangements.

TRIP NOTE VALIDITY

These Trip Notes are valid based on the date printed at the bottom of the page. They will occasionally be updated post booking and pre-departure. We will send you the latest trip notes prior to departure through a link in your pre departure documents or we can send you a copy in the post if preferred.

In booking this trip you should be confident in your ability to participate in all activities described in these Trip Notes. If you have any doubt about your suitability you should call HF Holidays and ask to speak to one of the team about this itinerary.

The information in these Trip Notes is given in good faith. Where differences exist between the Trip Notes and our current brochure, the Trip Notes supersede the brochure. All holidays can be subject to unexpected changes; so please be prepared to be flexible where necessary. At times, it may not be possible to follow the itinerary as planned due to weather conditions, political, physical or other factors. In these circumstances we will make the best possible alternative arrangements to maintain the integrity of the original itinerary.

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