

Causeway Coastal Route

Your 5 Day Itinerary

Day 1: Belfast to Ballymena

Distance: 88.6km (55 miles)

Depart Belfast, Northern Ireland's vibrant capital city, on the M2 following the Causeway Coastal Route signs. Striking lough and coastal views set the scene for what is to come before the journey reaches Larne, gateway to the famous Glens of Antrim. Here you can take the loop around Islandmagee to Portmuck Harbour and the Gobbins Cliffs, home to a breathtaking variety of seabirds.

Head northwards enjoying the breathtaking scenery on this award winning route before arriving in the picturesque village of Ballygally. For the brave amongst you visit the 'ghost' room in the Hastings Ballygally Castle Hotel, haunted by a friendly ghost. Travel one mile north of Ballygally and the only screams you are likely to hear are those of children having fun in Carnfunnock Country Park. At the foot of Glenarm Glen sits Glenarm Castle, one of Ireland's oldest estates, with its splendid walled gardens and vivid blooms. From Glenarm take the opportunity to divert inland to the flower-filled village of Broughshane and to Slemish Mountain. Ireland's Patron Saint (Patrick) is said to have tended livestock on Slemish during the 5th century. Continue inland to Ballymena visiting the Mid-Antrim Museum at the Braid to learn about the national and local history of the region.

Day 2: Ballymena to Ballycastle

Distance: 72.2km (44.9 miles)

Returning to the coast, it's time to truly immerse yourself in the scenic splendour of the Glens of Antrim. Discover Glenariff (Queen of the Glens) with its forest park where you can enjoy one or more of the four walking trails in this fairytale landscape of leafy glades and tumbling waterfalls. Take the option to continue on the Causeway Coastal Route to Ballycastle, visiting Cushendun, the Vanishing Lake and Ballypatrick Forest Park on the way.

As an alternative, divert inland to Ballymoney, the home of motorcycle road racing legends, the Dunlop brothers. Memorial gardens to the famous brothers, Joey and Robert can be found in the town. Continue to just outside the village of Armoy (close to Gracehill Golf Club) where you will find a stunning and haunting avenue of trees known as The Dark Hedges.

Returning to the Causeway Coastal Route, head toward the seaside resort of Ballycastle. Take a stroll along the seafront overlooking the harbour.

Day 3: Ballycastle to Portrush

Distance: 31kms (19 miles)

Day 3 provides the option for a short ferry crossing and a full day visit to Rathlin Island or take in the stunning scenery before arriving at Carrick-a-Rede Rope Bridge suspended across a 20-metre chasm.

From Carrick-a-Rede, it's just a short hop to the UNESCO World Heritage Site, the magnificent Giant's Causeway. En route to the Causeway, be sure not to miss two of the region's prettiest harbours, Ballintoy and Portbradden, nestled in the shadow of Whitepark Bay. Science tells us the unique six-sided basalt columns and formations at the Giant's Causeway were formed by volcanic activity, but we know better. Legend has it that local giant Finn McCool created the world famous tourist attraction. Head inland to the village of Bushmills, home to Ireland's oldest whiskey distillery.

Still on the Causeway Coastal Route, on the approach to Portrush, is Dunluce Castle, perched precariously on the cliff top overlooking this seaside resort. One of the most iconic and historic images in Ireland, the castle dates back to the 14th century. Take time to discover Portrush with its golden beaches, a particular favourite with watersports enthusiasts or follow in the footsteps of our recent golfing champions with a round of golf at Royal Portrush Golf Club. Portrush is the region's leading family resort with a wide range of attractions and restaurants.

Day 4: Portrush to Limavady

Distance: 31.5km (19.6 miles)

Take a short drive from Portrush to its near neighbour Portstewart, and inland to the university town of Coleraine and home of one of the oldest known human settlements in Ireland at Mountsandel on the banks of the River Bann. Returning to the Causeway Coastal Route, head towards Limavady, passing by Castlerock. Look out for Hezlett House and the glorious Mussenden Temple, the cliff top folly is said to have been inspired by the Temple of Vesta at Rome. Take an opportunity to stroll on Downhill/Benone Strand, which offers mile upon mile of golden sand, surf and solitude.

Day 5: Limavady to Londonderry/Derry

Distance: 27.3km (17 miles)

Start your final day with a bracing walk on Binevenagh Mountain, one of many Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty, with panoramic views from the summit that stretch for miles, and slopes that are home to a number of rare plants and birds.

The vibrant market town of Limavady is the perfect place to unwind after Binevenagh's assault on the senses. Situated in the heart of the town is the Roe Valley Arts and Cultural Centre, offering a dynamic cultural programme of activities, including the best of national and international theatre, music, film.

Before leaving Limavady take the opportunity to detour to the magnificent Roe Valley Country Park where you can visit the beautiful country park.

This five-day odyssey along the Causeway Coastal Route finishes in Londonderry/Derry, the only completely walled city in Ireland and a compelling and unique experience for visitors.

If the 5 Day Tour is your idea of holiday heaven why not visit our accommodation and special offers section and spend a few days sampling what the region has in store.

For further details check out www.causewaycoastandglens.com.