



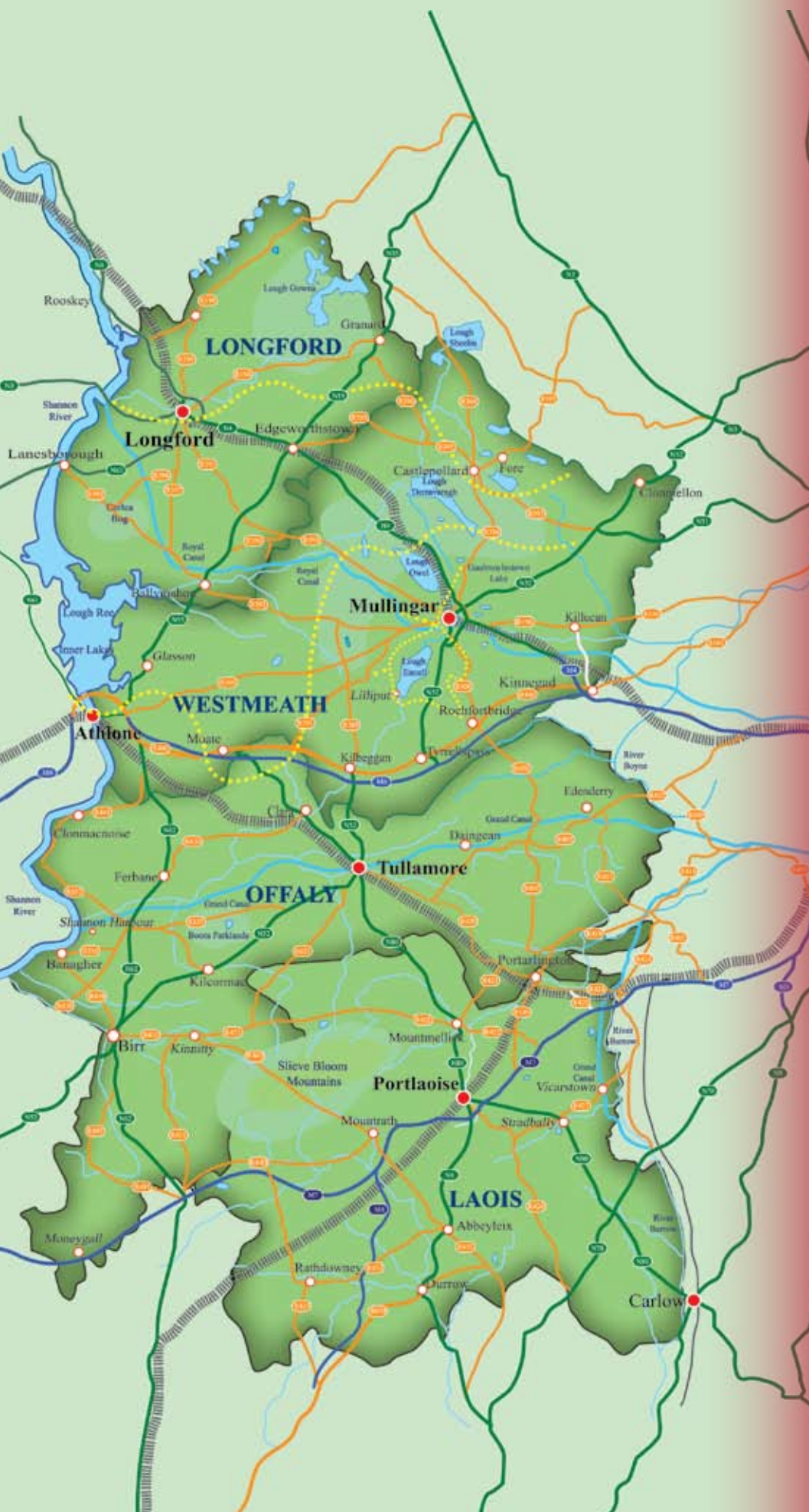
MidlandsIreland.ie
gateway to tourism

Guide



LAKELANDS &
inland **WATERWAYS**





The MidlandsIreland.ie brand promotes awareness of the Midland Region across four pillars of Living, Learning, Tourism and Enterprise.

MidlandsIreland.ie Gateway to Tourism has produced this digital guide to the Midland Region, as part of suite of initiatives in line with the adopted Brand Management Strategy 2011-2016. The guide has been produced in collaboration with public and private service providers based in the region. MidlandsIreland.ie would like to acknowledge and thank those that helped with research, experiences and images.

The guide contains 11 sections which cover, Angling, Festivals, Golf, Walking, Creative Community, Our Past – Our Pleasure, Active Midlands, Towns and Villages, Driving Tours, Eating Out and Accommodation.

The guide showcases the wonderful natural assets of the Midlands, celebrates our culture and heritage and invites you to discover our beautiful region. All sections are available for download on the MidlandsIreland.ie

Content:

Images and text have been provided courtesy of Áras an Mhuilinn, Athlone Art & Heritage Limited, Athlone, Institute of Technology, Ballyfin Demense, Belvedere House, Gardens & Park, Bord na Mona, CORE, Failte Ireland, Lakelands & Inland Waterways, Laois Local Authorities, Laois Sports Partnership, Laois Tourism, Longford Local Authorities, Longford Tourism, Mullingar Arts Centre, Offaly Local Authorities, Westmeath Local Authorities, Inland Fisheries Ireland, Kilbeggan Distillery, Kilbeggan Racecourse, Office of Public Works, Swan Creations, The Gardens at Ballintubber, The Heritage at Killenard, Waterways Ireland and the Wineport Lodge. Individual contributions include the work of James Fraher, Kevin Byrne, Andy Mason, Kevin Monaghan, John McCauley and Tommy Reynolds.

Disclaimer:

While every effort has been made to ensure accuracy in the information supplied no responsibility can be accepted for any error, omission or misinterpretation of this information. Where such are brought to our attention future guides will be amended accordingly.

04 WALKING

COO

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Laois

Ballacolla, County Laois

www.npws.ie/naturereserves/laois

Situated in the south-west of County Laois, Coolacurragh Wood sits just north of the R433 and midway between Ballacolla and Rathdowney. It is adjacent to but not directly connected to Grantstown Wood and Lake Nature Reserve. Coolacurragh Wood has a designated car parking area at the entrance gate and a 1km circular walking trail.

Capard Loops

Slieve Bloom Mountains Nature Reserve.

www.slievebloommountainsnaturereserve.ie

Set off from the Glenbarrow Car Park and trace your way along the banks of the River Barrow,

skipping over footbridges (footbridge closed downstream of waterfall, cutting off the path there) to explore both sides of the river. Numerous waterfalls tumble over the red sandstone rock beside the trail, but the most impressive of these has to be the triple-tiered Clamphole Falls, which cascade brilliantly alongside their woodland setting. Beyond the falls, follow the mountain track up onto the Ridge of Capard, which stands at 350m high. Take time to look around, visit the viewing platform along the new boardwalk and you'll be rewarded with splendid panoramic views. To the southeast, check out the striking profile of the Wicklow Mountains. Follow the blue signed Capard Route for a leisurely 2km stroll or the purple signed Glenbarrow Route for a 4km walk. Your gradual descent takes you along clearly signposted bog roads, woodland paths and forestry tracks until you reach Glenbarrow Car Park once more.





Carrick Wood

www.coillteoutdoors.ie

Carrick Wood is about 2.5 km south of Portarlinton on the R419 to Portlaoise. Turn left for 2.5 km The Spire walk is a 1.5km walk along forest paths.

Clonaslee Walks

www.slievebloom.ie

Clonaslee is at the northern gateway to the Slieve Bloom Mountains. A picturesque village, founded in the eighteenth century, here lies the traditional seat of the O'Dunne's. Clonaslee lies on the famous Slí Dála or Munster Way. There are 3 looped walks here, Rickets Rocks, Brittas Loop and the Glendineoregan loop, varying in length from 4 km to 15 km.

Collin's Bog Loop

www.irishtrails.ie

Collin's Bog Loop is a national looped walk (Loop 137A) and is classified as 4.5km easy walk with woodland tracks, bog paths and old railway line.

Cullahill

www.discoverireland.ie/loopedwalks
www.irishtrails.ie

Cullahill is located on the main N8 road between Durrow and Urlingford. Make a quick escape into the surrounding countryside, the village derives its name from an ancient forest that clothed nearby Cullahill Mountain

extending down to the castle and village. Binnianea Loop is a 10km looped walk offering panoramic views of the countryside. Stroll along old quiet lanes, open hillside and woodland paths.

Durrow

www.discoverireland.ie/loopedwalks
www.irishtrails.ie
www.coillteoutdoors.ie

The town is surrounded by some fine woods, hilly forests and a maze of rivers. The Leafy Loop walk offer the serious walker a loop of 21 km or a shorter loop. In Dunmore Wood on the edge of the town forest paths offer some short loops for the casual stroller.

Emo Walks

www.irishheart.ie

There are three walks of varying lengths and all follow the various roads and forest tracks around Emo Court which is now managed by the Office of Public Works and Coillte. The Slí na Slainte route is 4.3km in length and starts at the entrance to Emo Court Estate, in the centre of Emo village. There is a pleasant picnic area and a cafe beside the house and you may also explore the gardens and lakeshore paths.



Glenbarrow

www.slievebloom.ie

www.discoverireland.ie/walking

Glenbarrow is about 6 km east of Clonaslee on R423 to Mountmellick. Turn right for 3.5 km. The River Barrow, which gives its name to the valley, has its source at the head of Glenbarrow. Natural and artificial waterfalls occur along the river. The bedrock of old red sandstone is exposed at or near the waterfalls. The Clamphole Falls adjacent to the log cabin is a good example. There are looped walks from the Trailhead here of varying length and difficulty. Details on the mapboard in the carpark and the walks are colour coded.

Killnamuck Loop

www.irishtrails.ie

Killnamuck Loop is a national looped walk (Loop 137B) and is classified as 8km easy walk with minor roadways, river-bank, forestry paths and woodland tracks.

Monicknew

www.coillteoutdoors.ie

Monicknew is about 11.5 km south of Clonaslee on the road (scenic route over Slieve Blooms) to Mountrath via The Cut. There are several loop walks from the Trailhead here and Monicknew is also on of the Slieve Bloom Way. The woodlands are situated in a valley and the site is crossed by the Glen River.

Slí Dála

The name Slí Dála means: The Way to the Assembly. According to Irish legend, during the reign of the Irish High Kings, five great highways or in Irish, Slighe, radiated from Tara. Tara was probably the location of the assembly. The highway going south to Munster was known as the Slí Dála and there is evidence that its route dissected this area. There are a variety of river, lake, canal and forest walks available in Ballyroan, Emo, Mountmellick and Portlaoise.



Slieve Bloom Walks

+353 (0)57 913729

www.slievebloom.ie/ecowalks

Five eco-walks have been developed in the Slieve Bloom Mountains, by the local community in association with Coillte and Laois and Offaly County Councils. Each of these looped walks showcases a different and special element of the geology and wildlife of the Slieve Blooms. The walks, which tie in with the Slieve Bloom Way, are Glenbarrow and Gorteennameale in Laois, and Glenafelly, Knockbarron and the Silver River in Offaly. Glenbarrow is the longest of the five Slieve Bloom EcoWalks. It begins by going upstream along a stretch of the river where the rocks of the Old Red Sandstone Formation can be explored and appreciated really well. It then takes to the higher ground of Capard to take in the wonderful view and explore other facets of its geology, ecology and cultural heritage. The focal point of the Gorteennameale walk is the site of the spectacular bog burst that occurred here a quarter of a century ago: but en route the explorer's eye is drawn to other facets of the mountain landscape and its formation "the things we pass by until our attention is drawn to them and then we wonder how we could have missed them all this time!

Slieve Bloom Looped Walks

www.slievebloom.ie

www.discoverireland.ie/walking

A selection of 16 different looped walks ranging in length and varying degrees of difficulty from 6 trailheads Trail Heads at Clonaslee Monicknew, and Glenbarrow. The remaining Trail Heads are in County Offaly, located at Cadamstown, Glenafelly and Kinnitty Castle.

Slieve Bloom Way

www.slievebloom.ie

www.irishtrails.ie

www.discoverireland.ie/walking

The Slieve Bloom Way takes in parts of both Laois and Offaly. The 84km trail is circular and takes walkers through the beautiful Slieve Blooms, one of the oldest mountain ranges in Europe. The Laois portion of the route takes in the source of the River Barrow at Glenbarrow, and passes near the Clear Lake, which is a short distance to the west of the route at the head of Gorteennameale, situated on open moorland with stunning views of the surrounding countryside. The Giants Grave is located to the north of the Way in Sheskin.





Spink Walks

Spink is a rural townland in the parish of Ballinakill, situated on the Abbeyleix-Carlow Road. It is mainly an agricultural area with a population of circa three hundred. Cooper was a landlord in the area following the plantations of Laois & Offaly in the sixteenth century. This Walk traverses the hills where his estate lay. There is a pleasant picnic and viewing area on the walk.

Stradbally Walks

www.coillteoutdoors.ie

Oughaval Wood is located about 1.5 km from Stradbally on the Carlow Road. There are up to 6 km of walks and you will find a Mass Rock in the wood. The woods are largely planted with a mixture of beech and cypress trees, with a prominent understorey of holly bushes. Note the network of old walls and ditches, remnants of boundaries that once subdivided forest from field

Timahoe

The Esker Walk, A short 1km walk along the esker which is suitable for families with young children but be prepared to carry a buggy for a short distance. There is an interpretative panel at the start of the walk.

Longford

Contact details and information for all walkways in County Longford is available from Longford Tourism Office, Market Square, Longford.

Tel: +353 (0)43 3342577

+353 (0)85 8888876 | info@longfordtourism.ie

www.longfordtourism.ie

Abbeyshrule and Ferefad Walks

Abbeyshrule, County Longford

www.abbeyshrule.com

A looped walk taking in the artistic, archaeological and natural features of the village of Abbeyshrule and its surrounding boglands and the Royal Canal has been developed by the local community.

Ferefad Walkway is situated 3 km from Longford Town on the Ardagh Road

Corlea Bog Walks

Corlea Trackway Visitor Center offers the visitor a fascinating interactive and educational account of the bogs of Ireland as well as displaying part of the largest Iron Age bog road in Europe, discovered preserved in the bogland of Corlea in 1984, and dated by experts to 148BC. Tours of the local bog walks can be taken from the Visitor Centre. Bogs are quite common features of the midlands of Ireland. The word bog is derived from the Irish word 'bogach' which means soft, referring perhaps to the fact that the peat from the bog consists of over 95%



water. The boglands of Ireland have developed over thousands of years, hold an important record of past climates and act as carbon sinks to help reduce the impact of climate change. Due to their waterlogged condition they also hold and preserve archeological and organic remains. The boglands of Ireland have been cut and used for fuel over many centuries meaning that there is very little active bog habitat of conservation value left. These valuable wetland habitats have a rich diversity of flora and fauna, which makes taking a walk near or through such terrain a fascinating adventure for both adults and children.

Derrycassin Woods

+353 (0)86 2532328

Dring, County Longford

www.coillte.ie

The lands of Derrycassin were acquired by the forestry department in the 1960's and are now managed as a commercial forest by Coillte.

It covers an area of 179 acres and hugs the shoreline of Lough Gowna. It consists of three recommended walks, the Nature Trail, the Walled Garden Walk and the Main Avenue Walk, but the visitor is welcome to explore and create their own walking route. There are a variety of tree species, wild flowers and fungi to admire although what you find will depend on the time of year you visit. There are interesting low linear hills that date back to the ice age and also the remains of a rath or ringfort dated between 500-1500 AD. The woods were once part of a larger estate that belonged to the Dopping Heppenstall family. Derrycassin House was built in 1760 and at the time boasted beautiful walled gardens and an orchard which supplied the main house with fruit and vegetables. Unfortunately the house no longer exists but an afternoon spent walking the woods and taking in the splendid views of the lovely Lough Gowna transports the visitor back in time as many of the tracks are broadly the same as those used by the original owners.





Edenmore Bog Walk

Edenmore bog is one of a network of 'Raised Bogs' that can be found throughout the midlands of Ireland. Raised Bogs are highly acidic, waterlogged and nutrient-deprived habitats which support a range of specialised plants and animals. This habitat has become very rare in Europe. The centre of Edenmore Bog is in relatively pristine condition, and supports two rare mosses that are only found on high quality raised bog. The edges of the bog support a range of woodland, grassland and wetland habitats, which add to the diversity of flora and fauna in the area. Peat provides an important source of fuel for the local community, many of whom have turbarry (turf-cutting) rights for small sections around the edges. Turbarry rights are assigned to families or to houses, and this is a traditional practice that has been in place for centuries. A circular walk of about 4.5km around the bog has been developed by the Ballinamuck Community Enterprise Group, with the support of Fáilte Ireland. This walk aims to provide a guided tour of the plants and animals that you can see as you follow the path, along with any other features of interest along the journey.

Lanesboro Wood Walk

Commons North Woodland Walks
Lanesboro, County Longford
Tel: +353 (0)43 3321977
lanesborotourismcoop@gmail.com

This walk begins at Lanesboro Bridge and proceeds along the shore of Lough Ree. The path leads past two historic limestone quarries entering Commons North Wood, a deciduous

woodland, with two interconnecting loops. The walk is over 4Km and beautifully-produced interpretive boards provide information on the history and the flora and fauna of the area.

Newcastle Wood

+353 (0)86 2532328

Newcastle, Ballymahon, County Longford
www.coillte.ie

Newcastle Wood is part of the old eighteenth century Newcastle Demesne near Ballymahon. This unique forest is a Coillte owned semi-mature mixed woodland of 325 hectares that extends to both sides of the River Inny, a main tributary of the River Shannon. There are 28 kilometres of forest roads, trails and walkways ranging in length from the 400 meter Access for All Walk to the 5km Church Walk. The visitor to the forest can meander at a leisurely pace through the diverse ecological woodland and enjoy the tranquility and the wilderness effect of the forest canopy. There is also a surfaced walk down along the River Inny and a half mile of wheelchair accessible pathways through the wood, along with picnic and car parking areas. Signage provides an interpretation of the woods diverse flora and fauna. Newcastle Wood was once part of the Newcastle Demense, an estate owned and run by the King-Harmon family in the 1800's. Newcastle House has recently been restored to it's former glory and the grounds are used as the location for many special events throughout the year. The River Inny below Newcastle bridge is renowned for it's rapids and is popular for canoeing, kayaking and other water sporting activities.



The Mall Walk

+ 353 (0)43 3342577

Longford Town, County Longford

info@longfordtourism.com

www.longford.ie

The Mall is a beautifully landscaped park on the banks of the river Camlin and situated in the heart of Longford town. Home to Longford's sports and leisure complex, the Mall is the perfect venue for leisurely walks, picnics and sporting activities. Surrounded by trees and flower gardens with the well stocked river running through the heart of it, the Mall is a haven of tranquillity, a retreat from the hustle and bustle of town life. The park also contains outdoor exercising equipment, a childrens activity play area and all weather football pitches. There is also a wildlife sanctuary in the centre of the park which is home to different species of wild duck. The park affords local residents the opportunity to connect with nature and with their community, while offering visitors to the town a quite space to relax and while a way a hour or two.

The Royal Canal Way

The Royal Canal Way is a 90 mile long publicly owned right of way which links Dublin to Clondra in County Longford. It is at Richmond Harbour in Clondra that the Royal Canal links up with the River Shannon. The pathway crosses through counties Dublin, Kildare and Meath before entering County Longford, its final destination. It is a unique walkway that allows the visitor to meander at their own pace, through County Longford from Abbeyshrule, then Ballymahon, Kenagh, Killashee, and on to Clondra village. The walker has the choice of branching off into Longford town or continuing on to Clondra, whichever they prefer. Much of the canal paths close to the villages have been enhanced in recent years. Being a canal bank walk, the gradient is never steep, making it an ideal introduction to long distance walking. Walking the Royal Canal Way is possible either as a long distance walk or as a series of short walks.

The Táin Trail

The Táin Trail is the longest and most historic route in Ireland. It retraces the trail taken by Queen Maeve of Connaught and her armies in the Irish epic The Táin Bo Cuailgne. The trail takes you not only to the legendery places of the Táin but through some of the most beautiful countryside in Ireland, land steeped in history and hiding a treasure trove of ancient sites and majestic scenery. At 365 miles in length the trail runs from Rathcroghan in County Roscommon, through County Longford, on to the Cooley Peninsula in County Louth and back again. It is fully signposted with distinctive Brown Bull finger post signs, as well as striking pictorial maps located in key towns along the route,



including Longford town. The Táin Bo Cualigne - the Cattle Raid of Cooley - is the most famous of Irish sagas and one of the most ancient epics of Northern Europe. The modern version of the trail was initially set up in 1985-86 to ring the Cooley Peninsula in County Louth but was then extended to encompass the complete route followed by the rampaging armies of the legendary Queen Maeve of Connaught from Rathcroghan in County Roscommon to the Cooley peninsula.

Offaly

Boora Parklands

+353 (0)57 9345978

Teach Lea, Leabeg, Tullamore, County Offaly
www.loughbooraparklands.com

The Lough Boora Parklands development comprises four distinct areas: Lough Boora Parklands, Turraun Wetlands, Finnamore's Lakes area and Cloghan Wetlands/Loch Clochan. The parklands can be enjoyed throughout the four seasons. Walkers are offered a level landscape and so can be enjoyed by all age

groups. There are information signs at car parks that give details relating to site histories and also about the flora and fauna found at Lough Boora parklands. There are also maps at the start of each walk, which outline the route. To the delight of ornithologists, the extensive wetlands now attract wintering flocks of wildfowl. There are 50 km of paths in the Parklands ranging in length from a short stroll to 5 km. Whether taking a closer look at the Parkland's flora and fauna, or simply taking a quiet walk, these paths are the ideal way to see the Parklands.

Durrow Abbey

Heritage Office, Offaly County Council,
Charleville Road, Tullamore, County Offaly
+353 (0)57 46800

heritage@offalycoco.ie www.offalycoco.ie

Durrow Abbey can be found 6.5 km from Tullamore off the Tullamore-Kilbeggan and Tullamore-Clara road. There are walks up to 5 km in length available.





Gloster

+ 353 (0)57 9352617

Tullamore Tourist Office,
Tullamore Dew Heritage Centre,
Bury Quay, Tullamore, County Offaly
www.tullamore-dew.org

Gloster is about 5 km north west of Roscrea on N62 to Birr. Turn right and travel for about 1.5 km. Here you will find about 2 km of forest walks. In the adjoining townland of Ballybeg there is a fine example of a Norman moated site. The area surrounds an artificial lake (four hectares) known as Lough Roe which was built to supply water to the Gloster Demesne for domestic and ornamental use.

Pilgrim's Path

Lemanaghan to Clonmacnoise

Heritage Office, Offaly County Council,
Charleville Road, Tullamore, County Offaly
+353 (0)57 46800 | heritage@offalycoco.ie
www.offalycoco.ie

The main route crossing early historic Ireland from east to west was known as an tSlí Mór, the Great Road, and where it crossed the Shannon River lies Clonmacnoise, a place of peace and sanctity on the site of an ancient monastery which became a popular amongst pilgrims. The modern Pilgrim Path covers the stretch of that ancient road from Ballycumber to Clonmacnoise. The first major stop is Boher where the remarkable shrine of St Manchan, one of Ireland's most important pieces of twelfth-century religious metalwork, is preserved in the Catholic church. Continuing to the Ballycumber to Clonmacnoise cycle

route, the road winds along the Esker Riada and provides an elevated view of the bog, rich in wild flowers and insect life. Doon Castle, approximately halfway along the route, was the fortified residence of the Mooney family in the sixteenth century and from here the route passes the small raised Mongan Bog, which lies to the south of the Pilgrim Path and is one of the few intact examples of its kind in the country, before progressing to its final goal, the ancient monastery of Clonmacnoise. Founded by St Ciarán in 545, the modern site is exceptionally rich in ecclesiastical detail and includes a pre-Norman cathedral, seven other churches, several high crosses and two roundtowers.

Slieve Bloom Eco Walk

info@slievebloom.ie

www.slievebloom.ie/ecowalks/

Nature's beauty and diversity is part of the attraction of most walks in rural Ireland, but the special EcoWalks in the Slieve Bloom Mountains draw the walker's attention to flora, fauna and geology in a much more concentrated way; indeed, they will give you new eyes for familiar places, and enrich the walking experience wherever you go! There is a selection of five walks ranging in length which vary in degrees of difficulty. Knockbarron Wood shelters one of the finest intact esker systems in the country. Detailed information on the Slieve Bloom website focuses the visitor's attention on its fascinating Ice Age story and on the ecology of the woods. The Silver River is the type section for the Old Red Sandstone formation in Slieve Bloom. The walk explores one of its loveliest stretches, in the gorge above Cadamstown,



opening a window on the world of the late Devonian period of earth history 354 million years ago.

The walk in Glenafelly tells a tale of late-glacial times, takes a detailed look at the flora and fauna of Slieve Bloom, and gives a glimpse of what human life in the glens was like at two periods in the past: 4,000 years ago and in the last century.

Slieve Bloom Looped Walks

www.slievebloom.ie www.irishtrails.ie
www.discoverireland.ie/walking

A selection of twenty one marked walks ranging in length from one hour to four hours and varying degrees of difficulty. There are six trailheads,. These include Clonasle Monicknew and Glenbarrow. The remaining three trailheads points are in County Offaly, located at Cadamstown, Glenafelly and Kinnitty Castle.

Slieve Bloom

www.slievebloom.ie
www.irishtrails.ie
www.discoverireland.ie/walking

The Slieve Bloom Way is a 84 km long, circular walking trail which stretches across counties Offaly and Laois through the wild and mysterious Slieve Bloom Mountains Environment Park - an area of undiscovered environmental beauty, boasting a fabulous array of flora and fauna, remarkable deep glens, rock outcrops and waterfalls, Truly 'a walk on the wild side' along forest paths to the heart of Ireland's midlands.

The Grand Canal Way

+ 353 0(1) 8680148
Waterways Ireland,
Eastern Regional Office, Floor 2,
Block C, Ashtowngate, Navan Rd, Dublin 15
www.waterwaysireland.org
info@waterwaysireland.org

The Grand Canal runs from Dublin port on a westerly course via Tullamore to join the River Shannon near Banagher. Construction on the





canal began in 1756, in all there are forty-four locks on the main line. Several aqueducts were needed to cross the rivers along the route and a total of seventy-nine bridges were built. The canal itself thrived for about fifty years and goods traffic struggled to continue for many years after the arrival of the railway. Walkers can now use the towpath along the 114 km of the canal, a route sheltering a wealth of flora and fauna and allowing inspections of eighteenth and nineteenth century engineering works, some of which are still in use. All stretches give easy, level walking. The Offaly section, involving over 64 km of canal and crossing large tracts of bogland, enters the county near Edenderry and extends westwards through the towns and villages of Daingean, Tullamore, Rahan, Pollagh and Belmont to join the Shannon at Shannon Harbour.

The Offaly Way

+353 (0)57 9352617

Tullamore Tourist Office,

Tullamore Dew Heritage Centre,

Bury Quay, Tullamore, County Offaly

www.Irishtrails.ie www.slievebloom.ie

www.discoverireland.ie/walking

tullamoredhc@eircom.net

The Offaly Way is a linear route linking the Slieve Bloom Way to the Grand Canal Way. Only 38 km long, it nonetheless includes areas of mountain and riverside as well as long stretches of bogland. Though the highest point is only 140m, much of the Way commands wide views over a comparatively flat landscape. The route has ecclesiastical and prehistoric interest.

The Way starts in Cadamstown, with the Slieve Bloom Way less than 2 km away. Just north of here is an interesting geological formation where a fine outcrop of rock has been exposed by erosion caused by the Silver River. The waterfalls and gorge along here are most attractive features. The Way crosses the Black River and ascends Knock Hill, at 140m the highest point on the Way, before descending into Ballyboy.

Here the Way crosses the Silver River and runs along its bank into the town of Kilcormac. The town holds the Kilcormac Pietà, a 16th century representation of the Virgin Mary mourning over the body of Christ. For 60 years, during a time of persecution, the pieta was hidden in a bog. Beyond Kilcormac, the Way enters Boora Bog, an area of peatland formerly harvested for turf. Now a wide variety of uses, including amenity use, are being encouraged. Nearby is Lough Boora, formerly a lake and now a fen and nature reserve. This area is of great historical interest since excavations have revealed Mesolithic remains.

Close to the end of the present phase of the Way at the Grand Canal is Turraun Nature Reserve, formerly a cutaway bog and now an area where more than 80 species of birds and 150 species of plants have been recorded. The birds include a flock of 200 Whopper Swans.





Westmeath

Carn Park Raised Bog and Woodland Walks

Tel: +353 44 9397583 | www.coillte.ie

Coillte's Carn Park Raised Bog and woodlands are situated near Baylin Village just a few miles from Athlone Town in County Westmeath. It is situated off the R390 (Mullingar to Athlone) road. Entrance to the site (E 212519.19 N 24176.29).

At this site the visitor can easily see two distinct habitats, to the left of the walk is Raised Bog habitat (132 hectares), while to the right lies a mixed woodland. Good examples of raised bog habitat are now very rare in Ireland and throughout the EU. Only a fraction of this habitat of conservation value remains. Carn Park raised bog has recently been restored by Coillte, under a project co-funded by the EU through its LIFE-Nature Programme. The flora and fauna that live in this bog enjoy the wet and nutrient poor conditions that prevail here. Restoration of this important habitat involved removal of non-native trees and invasive shrubs which can out compete and over grow the native vegetation. Old forest drains which had been dug before the trees were planted have now been blocked. This was done to raise the water levels on the site which in turn create the conditions needed to help sphagnum mosses (peat building mosses) to grow again on this bog. Active growth of these mosses means that the bog can slowly re-build itself. There is a short boardwalk and interpretative signage approx 180 yards along the path from the Car Park which allows visitors to safely view the blocked bog drains and the

recovering bog vegetation.

The visitor can see the mixed woodland habitat (30 hectares) to the right and then to the left as they meander along the path. The woodland contains a variety of native and non-native tree species (some excellent old Scots pine trees on the right hand side of the trail approx 400 m from the board walk) while the predominantly native woodland on the right contains a variety of tree species consisting of birch, hazel, rowan, holly, blackthorn, hawthorn, ash and oak. All of these trees provide excellent habitat for many species and is especially attractive to our woodland bird fauna such as woodcock, blackcaps, migrating warblers, dunnocks, wood pigeons as well as some of our more common garden birds. Avail of the opportunity at the turn of the trail to sit and listen to the various bird songs while enjoying the peace and quiet and taking in the panoramic view of Carn Park bog. The linear walk (3kms) brings you back to the public road.





Kilpatrick Woods

+353 (0)86 2532328

Ballinafid, County Westmeath

www.coillte.ie

Kilpatrick is located on the main Mullingar-Sligo road near Ballinafid, 1.5 km past the Covert Pub and turn left. There are a number of short lakeshore walks. This area is part of the old Lord Greville Estate.

Portlick Millennium Forest

Portlick, Athlone, County Westmeath

The Peoples Millennium Forest Project is a research project established to restore and create new native woodlands and to create awareness amongst the general public through various initiatives. Portlick woodland is situated on the eastern shore of Lough Ree, approximately five kilometres northwest of the village of Glasson and eight kilometers north of Athlone. Portlick has several short scenic walking loops which are a must when visiting the area.

The Royal Canal Way

+ 353 0(1) 8680148

Waterways Ireland, Eastern Regional Office,
Floor 2, Block C, Ashtowngate, Navan Rd,
Dublin 15

info@waterwaysireland.org

www.waterwaysireland.org

The Royal Canal dates from the great days of canal construction, the late eighteenth century and links Dublin with the River Shannon at Clondra in Co. Longford. Started in 1790, it was tended as a rival to the older Grand Canal, which runs from Dublin west to the River Shannon at Shannon Harbour. Following about thirty years of modest success, the arrival of the railway signaled its demise. Restoration work on the Royal Canal commenced in 1988 and this work was completed in 2010 with the Canal being formally re-opened in October 2010 as a navigable waterway from Dublin all the way to Clondra. With ongoing improvements the Royal Canal Way now extends as far as Walshes Bridge, west of Mullingar, a distance of 79 km (approx). It is possible however, to follow the line of the canal westwards through attractive towns and villages such as Abbeyshrule, Ballymahon and Clondra.





Mullaghmeen

+353 (0)86 2532328

Mullaghmeen, Castletown,

County Westmeath

www.coillte.ie

In northwest corner of County Westmeath, Mullaghmeen is equidistant from Castlepollard & Oldcastle & thirty minutes from Mullingar and Longford. This one thousand acre forest offers picnickers a shady haven in which to feast and provides the more energetic with scenic walks of varying length. Work on the walking trails is ongoing and education trails are being prepared. There are a number of trails varying in length from 1 to 20 km long. Yellow trail is 3 km long, White trail is 10.5 km long and the Blue trail is 20 km long for the experienced walker.

Westmeath Way

+353 (0)44 9332136

Westmeath County Council,

County Buildings

Mullingar, County Westmeath

www.westmeathcoco.ie

info@westmeathtourism.com

The Westmeath Way is a way marked walking route from Kilbeggan to Mullingar in County Westmeath. It is 33 km in length and can be comfortably walked in two days. From Kilbeggan, the route travels along the River Brosna (for approx. 7 km), providing a surprising passage through the broad open country of County Westmeath. The riverside meadows are mainly grazing for herds of cattle but one will also experience a rich variety of wildlife from larks singing to foxes running for cover into scrub woodland. From Ballinagore the road leads to Lilliput on the shores of Lough Ennell, one of the several large lakes in the region and a popular picnic spot. Finally the banks of the Royal Canal are followed gently into the centre of Mullingar town where the Way currently ends at the Harbour Bridge. The Westmeath Way can be walked in sections also, i.e. Kilbeggan to Lilliput; Lilliput to Ladestown and Ladestown to Harbour Bridge Mullingar.



Sli na h-Iarmhí
WESTMEATH WAY



Midlandsireland.ie

gateway to tourism

Midlandsireland.ie

Bridge Centre, Bridge Street

Tullamore, County Offaly

T: + 353 (0) 57 93 52996/7

E: info@midlandsireland.ie

www.midlandsireland.ie

