

# WALKING IN MAYO

West Mayo is one of Ireland's most spectacular and beautiful walking destinations. It offers not only wild mountain scenery but also dramatic coastal walks and seascapes. The vast Nephin Mountain Range and iconic seascape of Clew Bay, with its drowned drumlin islands, provide spectacular views and ever changing hues. Mayo is a county of great geographical contrasts, offering walkers a quality of terrain that few places can compete with...



## Clew Bay Coastal Walk (Guided)

Clew Bay is one of Ireland's most iconic seascapes and a "must see" for any visitor. Discover Mulranny's Machair sand dunes, one of Europe's rarest habitats – dynamic landforms renowned for their variety of wild flowers, they feature a variety of habitats including beach, dune, mudflat and Atlantic salt marsh. Rosmurrevagh is a fine example and home to rare species of fungi, moths and curious beetles.

Historic sites on the route include a Celtic Midden, a Killeen, Gairí Beagh Na bPáistí, (the Children's small garden), a fairy fort Blea Na Shee, (the curve of the fairies) a fine lime kiln and the magnificent single arch Washing Pool Bridge. Rosturk takes you deeper into the bay offering exceptional views of Clew Bay's drowned drumlins, a beautiful legacy of the last Ice Age. You can walk past the historic Rosturk Castle and the guides offer a unique opportunity to access the once inhabited island of Moynish Mór.

**Route 5** **Grade:** Moderate **Length:** 19km – The walk takes 5 – 5½ hours **Recommended:** Boots, waterproofs, water & snacks.

Other Guided walks can be organised through [www.mulrannywalking.com](http://www.mulrannywalking.com) and the Mulranny Park Hotel.

### Experienced Walking Guides

There are a number of very knowledgeable experienced walking guides in Mayo. Using a walking guide on any walk will change the way you look at the living landscape. Find more information on walking guides at [www.mulranny.ie](http://www.mulranny.ie)

## Erris Head Loop

The Mullet Peninsula is bounded by the Atlantic Ocean and the islands of Inishkea, Inishglora and Duvillaun More to the west. The peninsula is one of the most remote areas of Ireland and is characterised by spectacular scenery and unspoilt natural amenities. Visitors will find an easy-going, traditional lifestyle intact. Erris is a Gaeltacht area and the Irish language is still practiced.

**Grade:** Moderate **Length:** 5km – The walk takes 1½ – 2 hours **Recommended:** Boots, waterproofs, water & snacks.

## Carrowteige/ Ceathrú Thaidhg Loops

"The finest sustained coastal walk in western Ireland, with a profusion of precipitous cliffs, crags, caves, chasms and islands along the remote North Mayo coast." – Lonely Planet.

The three Carrowteige loop walks are amongst the best coastal walking trails anywhere in Ireland. Taking the walker from Carrowteige village onto a section of the dramatic North Mayo coast that includes breathtaking sea cliffs and lovely sandy beaches. From the trailhead follow the blue arrows for the Children of Lir loop (10km), the red arrows are for the Black Ditch Loop, (13km), the green arrows follow a shorter loop.

Please be aware that the cliff edge is unfenced, so keep dogs and kids under strict control. Don't miss the view over Tráigh Na bhFothantaí Dubha from Black Ditch path and the view of Stags of Broadhaven from cliffs near the Children of Lir monument.

**Grade:** Moderate **Length:** Varies – The walk takes 2½ – 3 hours **Recommended:** Boots, waterproofs, water & snacks.

## Achill Island

Achill Island stands strong in the Atlantic Ocean. Looking out over the sea with the breeze in your face, nothing invigorates like a visit to the largest island off Ireland. Achill has glorious cliff scenery, spectacular drives and walks and beautiful beaches. With its Atlantic location, five Blue Flag beaches and breathtaking mountain landscapes, Achill provides an unrivalled arena for outdoor activities and watersports for all types.

There are lots of walking options on Achill from easy loop walks to challenging mountains... There are no fewer than 13 self guided loop walks graded from easy and suitable for all the family to those that are not for the faint hearted! For those looking for a mountain challenge choose from a number of stunning routes on Slievemore or Croaghan.



## Take to the Hills

The Nephin Beg Mountain range dominates the landscape in North West Mayo. It offers some of the best Hillwalking opportunities anywhere in Ireland. This relatively undiscovered mountain range contains five iconic hikes for the experienced hillwalker. Nephin itself is a towering mountain of some 806 metres and the views from the top are impressive. On a clear day Slieve League in Donegal is visible. Nearby Bireencorragh Horseshoe is a tough but very rewarding circuit. It rises to 698 metres with a Bronze Age burial site at the top.

Glendahork Horseshoe (714m) is one of Ireland's finest high level circuits. Nephin Beg (627m) and Slieve Carr (541m) are more remote but well worth the hike into the north Mayo wilderness and Ballycroy National Park.

Nearby Achill Island & the Corraun Peninsula have some of the best high level hikes with Croaghnaun (688m) and Slievemore (672m) as two examples with dramatic views of the Atlantic Ocean.

Further south there's the iconic Croagh Patrick that rises 764 metres into the sky above Mayo. The tradition of pilgrimage to this holy mountain stretches back over 5,000 years from the Stone Age to the present day without interruption. Magnificent views of Clew Bay and the surrounding south Mayo countryside are spectacular from all stages of the ascent of the mountain. At 750 metres it is one of the highest peaks in the West of Ireland.

Mweelrea is the highest mountain in both Mayo and Connaught. Standing at 814 meters the peak offers panoramic and dramatic views of surrounding mountains such as the Sheeffry Hills, the Twelve Pins, Croagh Patrick with the backdrop of the Atlantic Ocean, Killary Harbour and some of Mayo's finest beaches. With all these wonders on offer you'll not be surprised to learn that these vistas are not given lightly but are earned. Not for the faint hearted! As with all hikes they require a guide and demand good levels of fitness, experience, water, food and appropriate hiking gear.

**Walking & Cycling Trails**

- 1 Great Western Greenway
- 2 Mulranny Loop
- 3 Letterkeen Loop
- 4 Lettermaghera Loop
- 5 Clew Bay Coastal Walk
- 6 Achill Cycle Hub & Achill Spur

**Getting to Mulranny**

To Mulranny from Knock Airport: 1 hour 28 min  
Galway: 90 min Westport: 25 min  
Castlebar: 30 min

By Air  
Ireland West Airport Knock

By Rail  
Train to Westport or Castlebar

**GREAT WESTERN GREENWAY**

Easy/Moderate	Length: 42km	Mulranny to Newport (18km)
Achill to Mulranny (13km)	Cycling Time: 2 to 2.5 Hours	Walking Time: 5 to 5.5 Hours
Cycling Time: 1 to 1.5 Hours		Newport to Westport (11km)
Walking Time: 2 to 2.5 Hours		Cycling Time: 1 to 1.5 Hours
		Walking Time: 3 to 3.5 Hours

A European Destination of Excellence

A Collection of Stunning Walks Suitable For All

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WALKING EXPERIENCE  
CO MAYO



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A Mulranny Tourism initiative

For further information please contact  
[www.mulranny.ie](http://www.mulranny.ie)  
[www.mulrannyparkhotel.ie](http://www.mulrannyparkhotel.ie)  
[www.greenway.ie](http://www.greenway.ie)  
[www.discoverireland.ie](http://www.discoverireland.ie)





# WALKING FROM MULRANNY CO MAYO

The beautiful seaside village of Mulranny is a walkers haven. Located 25 minutes from Westport and 15 minutes from both Achill Island and Ballycroy National Park, it is the ideal base for walking in Mayo.



Mulranny & the Great Western Greenway have been designated a European Destination of Excellence. The award recognises the outstanding locally driven achievements, including the opening of the great Western Greenway, the sensitive restoration of the stunning Mulranny Park Hotel and the regeneration of Mulranny's Victorian Causeway and Look Out Hill walks. Combined with a truly spectacular location these developments enhance an already remarkable place.



## Great Western Greenway

Mulranny & the Great Western Greenway is a designated European Destination of Excellence. They are a jewel in the county of Mayo.

The Great Western Greenway follows the old railway line from Westport to Achill Island. On opening in 1895 it was known as one of the most scenic railways journeys in western Europe. The railway line operated until 1937. Today the line with its many fine engineering structures and breathtaking scenery has been given a new lease of life and is a fitting reminder of the glorious railway era.

The Greenway is the first of its kind in Ireland and is the longest off road walk and cycle trail in the country.

**Route ①** Grade: Easy Length: 42km – The walk takes 10-11½ hours Recommended: Boots, waterproofs, walking stick, binoculars, water & snacks.



## Mulranny Loop - Lookout Hill

Based in the village of Mulranny this is a walk of stunning beauty and immense diversity. Such is the biodiversity here that you enter three different European designated areas of conservation and Ireland's largest National Park. On the way visit Ireland's only stand of Mediterranean heather, woodland, beaches, rare Machair dunes, Atlantic salt marsh and traverse Trawoughter Bay along Mulranny's unique causeway. The route features elevated views of the dramatic deep sided Bellacragher Bay and to the south the stunning spectacle of Clew Bay and its drowned drumlin islands set against the majestic Croagh Patrick.

**Route ②** Grade: Moderate Length: 5½km – The walk takes 2½ hours Recommended: Boots, waterproofs, walking stick, binoculars, water & snacks.



## Letterkeen Loop

The Letterkeen Loop takes in a hidden area of outstanding natural beauty, rugged landscape and coniferous forest. Set in the remote out-back of the Nephin Mountains, unspoilt bog and mountain stretches as far as the eye can see. This way marked walk is made up of mountain track, a somewhat challenging scramble across deforested bog land and mountainous terrain. Hike here and you'll see that bogs can be beautiful. On a sunny day in July, the views take on an almost hallucinogenic hue: the peat bogs burn shocking pink and acid green. The route circles back to the bothy via a stretch of the Western Way, following another rugged riverside.

**Route ③** Grade: Hard Length: 10km – The walk takes 4 hours Recommended: Boots, waterproofs, water and snacks.



## CYCLING

Within Mayo, there is a feast of great cycling options through a series of scenic routes. There are country roads leading to seaside coves and to mountain tops. The variety of scenery is almost endless: Islands, lowlands with rural villages and towns, castles, historic sites and parks to visit; highlands with fantastic scenery; and the stunning Atlantic coastline. Rich in breathtaking scenery, the area has been referred to as the cyclist's paradise.

The choices of terrain on offer range from hill-climbs to flatland so a trip may be planned which will tax the seasoned cyclist's ability or alternatively will make for a holiday of gentle exercise. So why not hire a bike or bring your own and explore many of the Mayo Greenways, Cycle ways and Cycle hubs.

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**Route ⑥**



## Lettermaghera Loop

This walk starts at the Deradda Community Centre and takes a meandering route through Burrishoole's "lake district" with the Nephin Beg range as a stunning backdrop. Along the route you can visit the famous "Salmon Leap" at Lough Furnace, part of Europe's oldest salmon research centre. Here you can enjoy the beautiful sight of different kinds of fish swimming in the water. You then join a bog road crossing the lower slopes of the Bengorm Mountains, which offers splendid views across Clew Bay and its islands. The route turns south again passing through Burrishoole's "lake district" and crossing the new Great Western Greenway until you are back at the Community Centre.

**Route ④** Grade: Easy Length: 7km – The walk takes 2½ hours Recommended: Boots, waterproofs, water & snacks.



This walking brochure gives a taster for the walks available in Co Mayo. We are surrounded by some of the best walks in Ireland including the Burrishoole Loop series of walks which is one of the most comprehensive networks of Fáilte Ireland approved walks anywhere in the country. It's just waiting for you to explore...

All walking networks depend upon the goodwill of a variety of local stakeholders including landowners, local businesses and communities. Please respect the property, the rights and the needs of each of these groups especially as most of these walks depend upon permissive access from landowners. Close gates behind you, take your litter with you and don't bring your dog as you may travel on working farmland.



## ECOTOURISM

"I visited Mulranny as part of a tour around all the EDEN award-winning destinations in Ireland... These are small regions which have been awarded the EU's European Destination of Excellence Award for sustainable tourism practices.

A long time ago, the railway brought this community together and now the Greenway plays that role linking cyclists with canoeists, walkers with wildlife photographers and sailors with surfers. Although it is the extraordinary achievement of the Great Western Greenway that most people are hearing about, what they don't discover until they get here is the whole web of wonders which weave out from the Greenway. Electric bike tours along the Bangor Trail, catamaran sailing on Bellacragher Bay, a plethora of loop walks straight out of the Mulranny Park Hotel and then Achill Island at the end of it which, when you cycle around it, is like saving the icing on the cake until last. Having met a lot of the tourism providers who have come together in vital networks to make this web accessible and attractive, I was bowled over by the community-driven commitment to sustainable tourism in Mulranny, and consequently would happily cite it as a top model of ethical and sustainable tourism"

– Catherine Mack

*Travel writer specialising in responsible and ecotourism*



## Last Stronghold of the Old Irish Goat

Mulranny's Old Irish Goats are colourful characters. The males in particular are impressive animals, a veritable melting pot of all things masculine – long hair, quiffs, beards and sideburns, not to mention their impressive horns. The females have a more delicate frame and a matriarchal role, their lineage is the social thread of the herd. Collectively these attributes make them a fascinating part of our natural heritage. Mayo is now the last stronghold of the Old Irish Goat, and although elusive, they are still regularly seen on the foothills around Mulranny.



## The Local Environment

Clew Bay is one of the most spectacular seascapes in Europe. The descent of its drumlins into the Atlantic Ocean is marked, first by an array of peninsulas and then an archipelago of drowned drumlin islands and inlets stretching out into the bay. This delicate ice sculpted landscape is a haven for otters and seals, seabirds and wild flowers, a panoramic vista of unparalleled beauty.

Mulranny commands a superb view over the bay and its Machair sand dunes, which provide a safe idyllic platform to explore the terrestrial and inter-tidal reaches of the bay. The dunes are one of Europe's rarest and most bio-diverse habitats and a unique attraction of Co Mayo.

A multi media presentation is available in the Mulranny Tourist Office which gives an insight into the local environment and our fascinating history.



This is an Outdoor Ethics Programme designed to promote and inspire responsible outdoor recreation through education, research and partnerships.

The Seven Principles of Leave no Trace are:

- Plan ahead and prepare
- Be considerate of others
- Respect farm animals and wildlife
- Travel on durable ground
- Leave what you find
- Dispose of waste properly
- Minimise the effects of fire

Practice a Leave no Trace ethic and make it hard for others to see or hear you.