



Wicklow

Way  
eBook



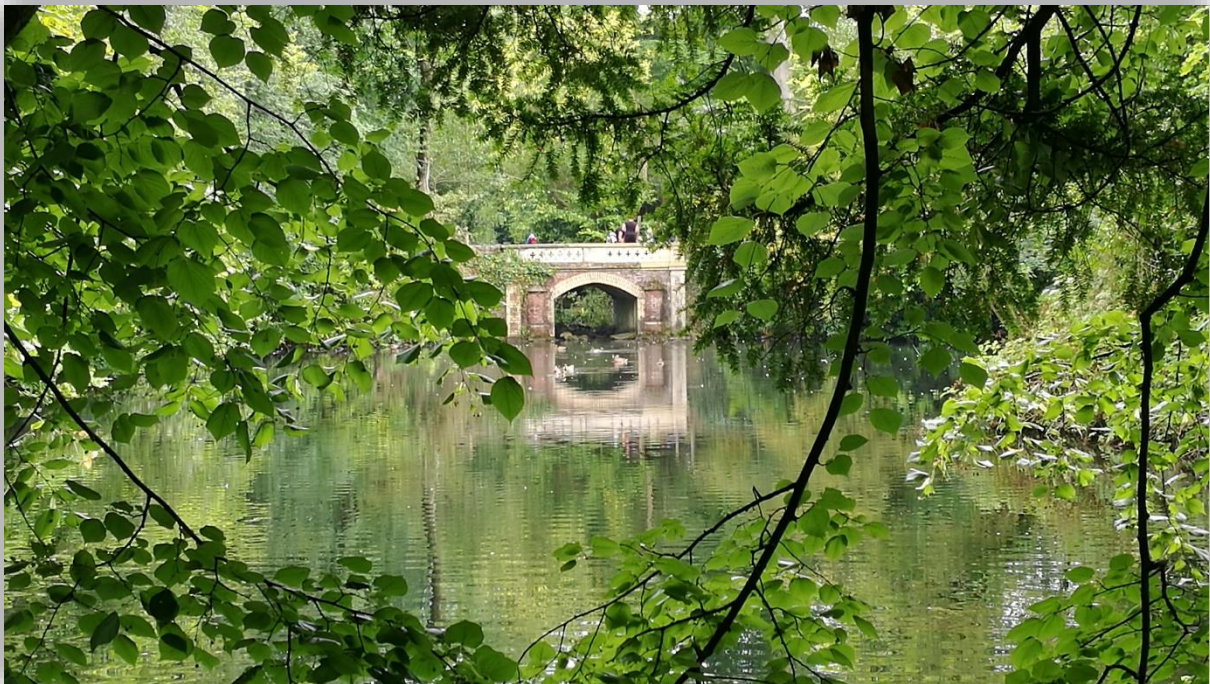


# The Wicklow Way: Overview & User Guide

The Wicklow Way. Ireland's oldest waymarked hiking route and the brainchild of J.B. Malone, who is commemorated along the route with a fitting memorial overlooking Lough Tay and the rolling hills of Wicklow.

Traditionally started in Marlay Park in the southern suburbs of Dublin, it snakes its way south through Ireland's Ancient East, into the Dublin foothills and onwards through the undulating Wicklow Mountains. The route itself continues along mainly sustainable trails for approximately 127km, climbing some 3500m+ and taking the average walker about 40 hours to complete.

Although the route is traditionally thought of as beginning in Dublin, our research suggests that for those who are reliant upon public transport and/or transfers, logistically it can be easier to start at the end of the route and make your way back to Dublin, particularly if you are travelling outside peak season.



*Marlay Park*

The Way itself can be broken down into as few or as many stages as desired to suit your fitness level and sight-seeing priorities. In general, walkers and trail runners tend to split the route into 5 - 10 sections or stages, with 7 appearing to be the most popular way of breaking it down into bite sized chunks – even if some of those bites are still rather large mouthfuls! Those shorter on time often ‘cherry pick’ which sections to do, to achieve their own personal holiday or walking goals.

Tour operators in the area offer guided and self-guided packages to suit most budgets, they will organise baggage transfers, collection and drop off to trail heads amongst other logistical necessities to take all or part of the headache away from you.

For those who prefer to be completely self-sufficient, this guide is aimed to steer you in the direction of all the information you need to make informed decisions about your route and the services you will need along the way.

# General Information

The maps in this guide are intended for use as a rough guide only. Recommended maps of the route are:

- EastWest Mapping: 'The Wicklow Way Map Guide'. (Scale: 1:50,000)
- OSI Discovery Series: Sheets 50, 56 and 62. (Scale: 1:50,000)
- OSI Adventure Series: Wicklow North, Wicklow Central and Wicklow South. (Scale: 1:25,000)

All the above maps are available in good outdoor stores and online.

By using this guide, you accept that walking has inherent risks and that you accept those risks. Wicklow Tourism and adventure.ie will accept no responsibility for any injury to person or baggage how-so-ever caused while using this guide.

Permission has been granted for pedestrian access only. Cycling, mountain biking, quads, pony trekking etc. on these routes is not allowed. Dogs are not permitted on this route. Camping along the route is difficult and is forbidden in places. Landowners reserve the right to refuse access.

Every care has been taken to ensure the accuracy of this publication. Wicklow Tourism and adventure.ie cannot accept responsibility for errors or omissions.

Minor route diversions, primarily due to timber harvesting may be in place. Please check [Irish Trails](#) for information on these.

Whilst all information in this guide is deemed correct at time of publication and we endeavour to update the information regularly, your assistance in this matter is welcome by submitting updates to [info@visitwicklow.ie](mailto:info@visitwicklow.ie)

If you have an appropriate business in the immediate vicinity of the Wicklow Way, are not currently listed, and would like to be, please email us at [info@visitwicklow.ie](mailto:info@visitwicklow.ie)

We would be delighted if you would use the following hashtags on social media:

#WicklowWay #WicklowOutdoors #WalkingWicklow #VisitWicklow #IrelandsAncientEast

Or tag [@visitwicklow](#) for a feature/repot

## Ethics & Environment

Following a marked trail already means that you are helping to preserve the environment and keeping disturbance of wildlife to a minimum. However, more can always be done. While you are enjoying the outdoor environment, please take responsibility for your actions and endeavour to reduce the negative impact that outdoor activities can have on the environment.

### Leave No Trace

Following the [7 Principles of Leave No Trace](#) will go a long way towards achieving that goal.



1. Plan ahead and prepare
2. Be considerate of others
3. Respect farm animals and wildlife
4. Travel and camp on durable ground
5. Leave what you find
6. Dispose of waste properly
7. Minimise the effects of fire



Click on the link provided above to find out more about what each principle entails.

If you do have the misfortune of discovering illegal dumping, please report this to PURE (Protecting Uplands & Rural Environment) by calling 1850 365 121

## Wild Camping

To camp your way along the entire route is challenging because The Wicklow Way travels through privately owned land, Coillte State Forestry and The Wicklow Mountains National Park.

Camping is not permitted at all in the Glendalough Valley and this is rigorously enforced. Neither is it allowed on private land.

Wild camping is possible however, in parts of The Wicklow Mountains National Park and on a permit basis with Coillte. If you are considering wild camping along The Wicklow Way, you will need to know whose land you are on, apply for the necessary [permits](#) and follow the [Wild Camping Code](#).

Additionally, there are three Adirondack style (3 sided) shelters along the Wicklow Way where it is also possible to camp or bivouac.

## Safety Advice

### Following the trail

The Wicklow Way is a waymarked trail, marked with a combination of brown metal finger boards and black recycled plastic marker posts featuring a yellow walker and directional arrow. They are placed only at junctions and on longer straight sections at 500m intervals. There are a limited number of information boards also.

If you have travelled a kilometre or more without seeing a way marking post, the chances are that you may have missed a turn off. Verify your location before continuing to ensure you don't add unintentional distance to your route.

Distance remaining or travelled is not currently indicated. The Wicklow Way intercepts other waymarked trails. **Ensure that you are following the correct posts.**

Distance from road/trail heads to the nearest village is also not currently indicated on the trail itself. Use this guide in conjunction with your map.

There are no indicators that you have reached the end or start point of any suggested stage. Be aware of where you are on the route at all times.



*Wicklow Way*



*Dublin Mountains Way*



*Wicklow Way Metal Finger Boards*

To report incorrect or missing signage, please contact [info@visitwicklow.ie](mailto:info@visitwicklow.ie)

## Before you start

**Consult the weather forecast and plan accordingly.** Although the Wicklow Mountains are not especially high, there are sections of The Wicklow Way which are quite exposed in poor weather conditions. Weather in the mountains can change quickly, ensure that you have good quality clothing and equipment to deal any eventuality, day or night.

You do not have to stick to stages described here, in guidebooks or online. **Choose your route distance and difficulty to suit your physical fitness, ability and the weight of your pack.**

Wear clothing and footwear suitable for trekking in the mountains. Footwear should have good ankle support and outsoles should be Vibram or similar. Trekking poles are useful for providing extra stability and support, particularly if carrying a heavy pack.

In the summer months, consider packing insect repellent to keep biting midges and ticks at bay.

**Bring enough food and water for your route.** Due to forestry, wildlife and farming, water courses along the route may not be potable. It is recommended to fill your water bottle(s) at your accommodation before you commence your daily walking. Alternatively, a suitable water filter should be used, or divert to one of the nearby villages to obtain water. **There are no fountains along the route.**

Sections of The Wicklow Way follow public road. **Exercise due care on these roads and road crossings.**

**Ensure that your phone is fully charged** before your walk. It is also advisable to carry a power-bank or suggest that one person in the group keeps their phone off in case battery power is needed for emergency purposes.

## In the event of an emergency

If you or a member of your group becomes ill or injured, it is important that you stay calm, keep that person warm and seek help if needed. Call 112/999 and ask for Mountain Rescue in Wicklow.

You should provide emergency services with your name, the number of people in your group, a list of mobile phone numbers of those in your group and an idea of where along The Wicklow Way you are.

Mountain Rescue in Ireland is a voluntary emergency service and is provided free to those who need it. Mountain Rescue teams will gladly accept donations to ensure that they can continue to provide this service.

# Transport & Transfer Options

Hiring a local company to transfer your bags along the way for you and indeed pick you up and drop you off at the beginning and end of each stage, is by far the easiest option for you logistically. Some will even collect you from the airport, ensuring a headache free trip. Check out these tour operators for their rates and options:

- [Footfalls Walking Holidays](#) – Walking Hiking Ireland. Based near Glendalough, offering guided and self-guided Wicklow Way packages.
- [Hilltop Treks](#) – Dublin based company offering guided and self-guided Wicklow Way packages.
- [Hillwalk Tours](#) Galway based company offering guided and self-guided Wicklow Way packages.
- [Lough Dan House](#) – Based just off the Wicklow Way and offering accommodation, guided and self-guided Wicklow Way packages.

For hiring a private guide, check out our [Walking Holidays & Guides](#) page in the Activity page of VisitWicklow.ie.

If you prefer to do it yourself, but like the idea of someone else transporting the heavy bags, check out [Wicklow Way Baggage](#) – Open from St. Patrick's Day in March to the end of October, this company will transfer your heavy bags to your next accommodation, so you only need to carry your day pack!

Public and private transport options relevant to each stage are indicated within the stage information sections themselves.

As you would expect, the more rural the route becomes, the more difficult it is to link up with public transport. The [Wicklow Way Bus](#) company, based mid-way along the route in the village of Rathdrum, make those links easier between Glendalough and Tinahely. Please be mindful that this is not a scheduled service and currently runs *only* if pre-booked.

For those attempting to rely as much as possible on public transport, the Transport for Ireland [Journey Planner](#) is a very useful tool. The same website also provides a [taxi fare calculator](#) which gives a guideline price for a taxi between two destinations. The [MyTaxi App](#) (available for both iOS and Android devices) is a useful tool for ordering taxis, particularly if your spoken English isn't good.

Timetables can be viewed and in some cases, bookings can be made from the following websites:

- [Dublin Bus](#) (Dublin city and suburbs)
- [Irish Rail & DART](#) (Nationwide rail service)
- [LUAS](#) (Dublin Tram service)
- [Bus Éireann](#) (Nationwide bus service)
- [St. Kevin's Bus](#) (Glendalough & Roundwood bus service)

## Planning your Trip

You've come to the right place! VisitWicklow.ie has done the information gathering for you. We have collated what's already out there and combined it with our own knowledge bank and research. If there is anything you want to ask us about, please feel free and if we don't have the answer ourselves, we will do our best to point you in the right direction!

The Wicklow Way is divided into 7 stages:

- Stage 1 South: Marlay Park – Knockree / Stage 7 North: Knockree - Marlay
- Stage 2 South: Knockree – Roundwood / Stage 6 North: Roundwood – Knockree
- Stage 3 South: Roundwood – Glendalough / Stage 5 North: Glendalough – Roundwood
- Stage 4 South: Glendalough – Aghavannagh / Stage 4 North: Aghavannagh – Glendalough
- Stage 5 South: Aghavannagh – Tinahely / Stage 3 North: Tinahely – Aghavannagh
- Stage 6 South: Tinahely – Shillelagh / Stage 2 North: Shillelagh – Tinahely
- Stage 7 South: Shillelagh – Clonegall / Stage 1 North: Clonegall - Shillelagh

Within each stage, public and private transport options are identified, emergency mobile phone coverage along the route is supplied, accommodation, restaurants, shopping and other essential services provided on or close to the route are also listed.

Each section also contains information on the flora, fauna and geology of The Wicklow Way, stories of historical or local significance are also supplied.

You can choose to print, view online or download this eBook in its' entirety *or* section by section to suit your needs.

This eBook contains additional information via clickable links and as such is best viewed online.

### Other Resources

Another good online resource is the [wicklowway.com](#) website, a variation on the original 7 staged route, as proposed by J.B. Malone. Both this website and Megarry & Bardwell's guidebook "The Wicklow Way" (Rucksack Readers) offer

potential section choices, information on services, nearby villages and some additional sights to see, whilst Megarry & Bardwell and [EastWest Mapping](#) delve further into the flora, fauna and history of this particular section of Ireland's Ancient East.

EastWest Mapping don't break the route into 7 stages. Rather, they offer an informative Map Guide of the Wicklow Way adapted to suit whichever direction you choose to travel in. This Map Guide is broken down into 11 detailed 1:50,000 maps of the route, including legends in both French and German. It also offers a further 2 maps outlining the E8 route which follows the River Dodder from Dublin Port to Marlay Park and another to guide walkers to/from Clonegall to the better serviced village of Kildavin or to Bunclody town.

For our sources and other recommended reading, please see our bibliography at the end of the eBook.