DriveNow

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GRAND TOUR BY CAR · 7 DAYS FROM DUBLIN AIRPORT AND BACK

Ireland - 7 day Grand Tour - Self-Driving Itinerary

Take a trip around the green lands of Ireland with DriveNow, journeying back in time through historic towns, villages, rustic pubs and rugged landscapes.

Pick up your hired car from Dublin Airport and start your Irish adventure - expect a picturesque and fun journey that takes you to some of the oldest locations in the world. Meet the friendly locals everywhere as you go from the capital Dublin, south into Kilkenny and Cork, into the western regions of Clare, Limerick and Galway, and north to Sligo and Dundalk before returning to Dublin.

DISTANCE	DAYS	ROUTE	DRIVING TIME
About 870 km	7 days, 7 drives	Round trip from Dublin Airport	About 12 h by car

LONGEST DRIVE	VEHICLE
165 km, Sligo to Dundalk	Car or motorhome



Benbulbin, County Sligo, day 5 · Illustrative image



Planning overview, not navigation. Map data © OpenStreetMap contributors · coastline Natural Earth · relief Terrain Tiles (EU-DEM, SRTM).

Picking up at Dublin Airport

Bring your physical driver's licence, a card in the main driver's name and your booking confirmation to the counter, and check the car against its condition report before you drive away. See what to bring to the counter and checking the car at pick-up. More on car hire at Dublin Airport.

DRIVE

140 km from Dublin Airport

about 1 h 40 min by car · about 2 h by motorhome | Via **M50**

DAY 1

Dublin to Kilkenny

PICK-UP

Finding the right car for your Irish adventure is simple with DriveNow. All you have to do is choose your dream vehicle type and the dates of travel - DriveNow will do all the hard work locating the best deal for your trip. As such, when you land at Dublin Airport, the keys are ready and waiting at the hire car firm.

With a full tank, get on the M50 which takes you around the edge of Dublin until you get to the N7 intersection. From here, you're heading south towards the medieval city of Kilkenny - making the turn onto the M9 just outside of Newbridge.

Spend the day exploring Kilkenny, visiting local sites such as Kilkenny Castle, St. Canice's Cathedral & Round Tower and Jerpoint Abbey. Don't miss a tour of Kilkenny Castle which was built back in 1195 to control the River Nore and several routeways. The dramatic castle has extensive parklands, an art gallery and a playground for the kids.

Stop off at the legendary Smithwick's Experience Kilkenny for a bite to eat and a sample of the local brew. In the afternoon, challenge yourself on the Brandon Hill Loop where you can overview the local area - located 40 mins east via R700.

DRIVE

145 km from Kilkenny | **about 2 h** by car · about 2 h 20 min by motorhome | Via **R693**

DAY 2

Kilkenny to Cork

The next day depart Kilkenny west on the R693 towards the M8 then south to Cork. This scenic route passes through some of the richest Irish farmland, and there are many small towns to pop into for a spot of brunch.

This university city's centre is on an island in the River Lee - connected to Cork Harbour. Spend the morning in the heart of the city at the English Market, exploring Brown Thomas for some shopping and snapping a souvenir photo at St Patrick's Bridge. In the afternoon, you can look into the historic side of Cork - namely the Cork City Gaol, dating back to 1806 and Crawford Art Gallery which houses collections of 17th century classical Greek and Roman statues. Enjoy dinner at Cafe Paradiso Restaurant - one of the best eateries in Cork.

Cork is also home to the famous Blarney Stone, a block of Carboniferous limestone that tourists come to kiss to be blessed with the gift of the gab. Part of Blarney Castle, it's simply something that a visit to Ireland must include!

DRIVE

99 km from Cork | **about 1 h 30 min** by car · about 1 h 40 min by motorhome | Via **N20**

DAY 3

Cork to Limerick

From Cork, travel north on the N20 before joining the N21 and M20 into Limerick. Set in the Munster province, Limerick is well known for its old town (St Mary's Cathedral and St John's Square).

Take some time to visit the historic King John's Castle on the River Shannon before having lunch at The Glen Tavern. If you time your visit, you could also watch Munster play at Thomond Park Stadium - one of world rugby's spiritual homes.

DRIVE

98 km from Limerick | **about 1 h 20 min** by car · about 1 h 30 min by motorhome | Via **N18**

DAY 4

Limerick to Galway

From Limerick, set your GPS north for the N18 and M18 towards Galway - a harbour city on the edge of the River Corrib and the Atlantic Ocean. Entertain yourself at the 18th century Eyre Square where you can enjoy traditional pubs with live Irish folk music, used famously by Ed Sheeran for his 2017 hit single 'Galway Girl'.

The Latin quarter still retains its medieval city walls with various boutiques and art galleries to explore. Galway is certainly one of the best night's out in Ireland - enjoy a wide range of dining options from across the continent in an environment described as "less conservative" than the rest of the country.

DRIVE

135 km from Galway | **about 2 h** by car · about 2 h 20 min by motorhome | Via **N17**

DAY 5

Galway to Sligo

The next day, travel north from Galway along the N17 and N4 towards the coastal seaport of Sligo. Here you can see the wonder of the rugged Irish landscape from Knocknarea and Benbulbin to Strandhill Beach. If the sea air has you feeling a little hungry, pop into Eala Bhan for the best Irish fare in town.

The Sligo Abbey also dates back to the 13th century if you're interested in the history of the area. Enjoy a guided tour of the Abbey which includes Gothic and Renaissance tomb sculpture and the only 15th century high altar left in an Irish monastic church.

DRIVE

165 km from Sligo

about 2 h 40 min by car · about 3 h 15 min by motorhome | Via **N16**

DAY 6

Sligo to Dundalk

From Sligo, travel east along the N16, which passes into Northern Ireland on the N54, N2 and N53 before returning to Ireland into the county town of Dundalk. In the morning, visit the historic St Patrick's Cathedral which dates back to the 19th century. For a touch of natural beauty, drive towards the Northern Irish border on the R173 from Dundalk to Carlingford Lough. This glacial fjord connects to the Irish Sea; take one of the many scenic drives or forest walks to get picturesque views of the sea inlet at dawn or dusk.

After a spot of lunch at Fitzpatrick's bar and restaurant, stop by the Cooley Whiskey Visitor Centre for insight into how this famous drink is made.

Book ahead:
The Cooley Whiskey Visitor Centre is at Martin's Bar in Riverstown, near the distillery, which itself doesn't take visitors. Book its tours and tastings before you go.

DRIVE

85 km from Dundalk | **about 1 h** by car · about 1 h 20 min by motorhome | Via **M1**

DAY 7

Dundalk to Dublin

RETURN

The home stretch from Dundalk to Dublin on the M1 hugs the Irish Sea. Before dropping off the car rental at Dublin Airport, take your time to explore the cosmopolitan capital.

Whether you're in the mood for history, art, sport or simply want to relax in the park, Dublin has something to offer you. Highlights include Kilmainham Gaol, a walking tour of the city's main attractions and a tour of Croke Park Stadium - home of Gaelic Football.

Returning the car at Dublin Airport

Plan to return the car on time with the fuel level your agreement asks for, and if your return time changes, call the branch as soon as you can. See returning your car and late and early returns.

Ready to explore the historic isle of Ireland? If you're looking for a hire car from Dublin Airport, DriveNow is your first stop for finding the best deals without having to look for that pot of gold!
Visit our site today and experience the DriveNow difference for yourself.

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