

Northern Ireland Causeway Coast Guided Walking with Sightseeing

Trip style: Walking with sightseeing

Destination: 📍 Northern Ireland

Trip code: XAB07-LDW11

Grades: 1, 2

Carbon Footprint: 🌳 309kg CO2



HOLIDAY OVERVIEW

Northern Ireland's rugged Causeway Coast delivers on far-reaching Atlantic views, mist-wreathed headlands, and a slew of spots that eagle-eyed visitors may recognise from Game of Thrones. Learn about long-gone Gaelic kingdoms as you explore the crumbling clifftop remains of Dunseverick and Dunluce castles and test your mettle crossing the nerve-shredding Carrick-a-Rede rope bridge. There's also the chance to spot rare seabirds on Rathlin

Island and visit the UNESCO-listed Giant's Causeway – a geological marvel with approximately 40,000 hexagonal-shaped stepping stones dating back almost 60 million years.

WHAT YOU'LL LOVE

- Walking the best of the Causeway Coastal Route
- Spending time in historic Belfast
- Crossing the Giant's Causeway
- A boat trip to Rathlin Island
- Spotting rare seabirds and wildlife
- Soaking up views over Ballycastle and the coast
- A more personalised experience thanks to small group sizes (maximum 15 people)

WHAT'S INCLUDED

- Comfortable en-suite rooms in our partner accommodation(s)
- Cooked or continental breakfast every morning
- Daily packed lunches
- Three-course evening meals, plus tea & coffee
- Guided walks with an experienced HF Holidays Leader
- All transport to and from walks where necessary
- Return flights from London Heathrow to Belfast, including hold baggage and airport transfers

Please note - Admission costs are in addition to your holiday price, please see "Essential Information" section for details.

TRIP SUITABILITY

This Best of the Causeway Coast Guided Trail holiday is graded 2 which involves walks/hikes on good paths, and includes plenty of time for photography and sightseeing stops along the way. It is your responsibility to ensure you have the relevant fitness required to join this holiday. A sustained effort is required to complete this walk and provision cannot be made for anyone who opts out. Please be sure you can manage the daily mileage and ascent as listed. The walking day is normally 6-7 hours. It is important for your own enjoyment, and that of your fellow guests that you can maintain the pace. It makes a lot of sense to spend time getting some additional exercise before your holiday. We suggest that you try to fit in a number of longer walks, including some on hilly terrain. Other exercises such as cycling, jogging and swimming are also excellent for developing increased stamina.

ITINERARY

Day 1: Arrival Day

Meet at the hotel reception at 1830 for a quick introduction to the holiday before dinner. If you're in Belfast early, take time to visit the Titanic museum (booking advisable), it's well worth it, and if you've the energy after dinner, take a stroll to the famous Crown Bar, and enjoy the craic.

Day 2: North to the Causeway Coast

Our local guide takes us on a discovery of the stories and histories of Belfast this morning, before we head north to the Causeway Coast, with time to explore the mystical "Dark Hedges" on the way. Time to relax at the hotel this afternoon, or join us for a walking tour of charming Ballycastle, our base for the rest of our holiday.

Day 3: Giant's Causeway

This has to be one of the best walks in Northern Ireland, and leads from the geological wonder and world famous UNESCO site of Giant's Causeway to the clifftop ruins of Dunseverick Castle. There is plenty of time to explore as our walks take us through the towering basalt columns (the tallest is 12m high and there are approx. 40,000 of these impressive hexagonal columns in total). Our transport picks us up from Dunseverick Castle and takes us on to Dunluce Castle for a short visit, before we head back to Ballycastle. Please note – entrance to the visitor centre at Giant's Causeway has not been included in the price, as many of you will be entitled to free or reduced entrance fee if you have National Trust membership. Entrance to Dunluce Castle is not included. 6.5 miles (10.5km) with 1,000 feet (300m) of ascent

Day 4: Ballintoy & White Park Bay

Walk the Causeway coastal path from Carrick a Rede to picture perfect Ballintoy Harbour, with the opportunity to cross the historic rope bridge to the "rock in the road". Continue along the shoreline to see fantastic rock formations and an array of coastal birds before exploring White Park Bay, a unique chalk beach. The charge for the Rope Bridge is not included, free for NT members. 6 miles (9.5km) with 150 ft (40m) of ascent and 450ft (140m) of descent

Day 5: Rathlin Island

Rathlin Island. The northernmost point of the Antrim Coast and Glens Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty, and home to tens of thousands of seabirds including guillemots, kittiwakes, puffins and razorbills. Stunning walking today, choose to include a bus tour to the *RSPB bird sanctuary (in season), or a cliff top walk to visit the seal colony at Ushet Point. Distance 6 miles (9.5km) with 550 feet (170m) of ascent *RSPB centre & bus tour not included in holiday price

Day 6: Fair head & Murlough Bay

A downhill walk on a winding tarmac road with stunning views takes us to one of the area's best kept secrets, beautiful Murlough Bay. After enjoying time to take in the scenery we'll meet our minibus and transfer to the start of our walk on Fair Head. Fair Head is wild and ruggedly beautiful, and offers breathtaking views towards Ballycastle

and Rathlin Island Distance: 4.5 miles (7km) Ascent: 290m (950ft)

Day 7: Glenariff

Home to Northern Ireland's most impressive waterfalls, we'll follow the forest trails that showcase the best of the park. We'll stop for lunch by the impressive Ess na Grub waterfall with refreshments available at the nearby Lara Lodge, before continuing alongside the Glenarriff River on the Waterfalls Walk. On our route home we'll make a stop to discover the stories and histories of Loughareema/The Vanishing Lake. Distance: 5.5 miles (8.5km) ASCENT: 800ft (240m)

Day 8: Departure Day

A morning group transfer takes us back to Belfast today, to the City airport, and afterwards (on request) to Great Victoria Street railway station.

The Clayton Hotel, Belfast

The Clayton Hotel, Belfast, is a comfortable 4* hotel, in the perfect location. A short walk from the railway station, and easily reachable from the airport bus route, the Clayton is the ideal base for us to explore the city from. All rooms have tea/coffee making facilities, free wifi, TV, hairdryer etc.

Marine Hotel, Ballycastle

A cracking seafront location in the heart of charming Ballycastle, the 3* Marine Hotel looks out over the town's beautiful beach and marina, and gives us the perfect base for our walks exploring the Causeway Coast. All rooms are comfortable en-suites, with tea/coffee making facilities, TV, hairdryer, and free Wi-Fi is available in the public areas. This hotel is dog-friendly so you may meet four legged friends in some of the communal areas.

Walking safety - SHARED WITH ALL

Walks may be changed for safety reasons and are subject to a maximum and minimum number of guests. Leaders always consider the safety of the group as a whole, and may need to alter or curtail the walk if the conditions dictate. Your leader may refuse to accept a guest where clothing, equipment or behaviour is unsuitable. In the event of a problem all leaders carry a mobile phone, first aid kit, group shelter, spare maps and a compass. Please note: If you choose to leave the group your leader is no longer responsible for you. If you have a particular health condition or disability please put this on your guest registration form. This information will be confidential to your leaders and the house manager, but leaders do need to take account of any issues when planning walks. Please carry a copy of these trip notes with you, or note down the contact phone number for your accommodation (details in the travel section) should you need them in case of emergency.

Packing list - Overseas Guided Walking

It's best to be prepared for all weather conditions. To make it easier, here is a list of items you should consider packing. Essentials Walking boots Waterproof jacket Waterproof trousers Insulated jacket/top Walking clothing Walking socks (plus spares) Sunhat Gloves/mitts and warm hat Water bottle (minimum 2 litre capacity) Headtorch High-factor sunscreen (minimum SPF 30) Sunglasses with a dark lens Rucksack (15-30 litres) Mobile phone Personal first aid kit (containing your medication, blister plasters, etc.) Passport Visa (if applicable) Copy of your travel insurance policy UK Global Health Insurance Card (formerly known as EHIC) Recommended Collapsible walking poles Swimwear and travel towel Snacks Dry bags Rubbish bags Insect repellent Optional extras Camera Sit mat Flask for hot drinks Durable lunch box Gaiters GPS device (excluding Bhutan, Georgia and India)
