



Beara Way

THE COMPLETE GUIDE



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Last updated 14 June 2026

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Overview

Beara Way: A Complete Hiking Guide

The Beara Way is a **206 km waymarked loop** around the Beara Peninsula in south-west Ireland, between Bantry Bay and the Kenmare River estuary. Most walkers take **9 days** for the full route including island options; the core waymarked loop is closer to **152 km**. Officially graded **strenuous**, it suits fit hikers who are comfortable with rough bog, rocky upland passes, remote stretches, coastal paths and frequent Atlantic weather changes.

Route Overview

The route begins and ends in **Glengarriff, County Cork**, although some walkers start from Kenmare because it is a circuit. Most itineraries go anti-clockwise via **Adrigole, Castletownbere, Allihies, Eyeries, Ardgroom, Lauragh, Tuosist, Kenmare and Bonane**, with optional loops on **Bere Island** and a spur to **Dursey Island**. The trail follows old droving roads, bog roads, green tracks, quiet lanes, cliff paths and open moorland below the Caha Mountains and Slieve Miskish. Optional island transport uses the **Bere Island ferry** and **Dursey Island cable car**. For comparison with other long Irish routes, see the [Dingle Way](#), [Blackwater Way](#) and [Cape Clear Island Loop](#), or browse more hiking in [Ireland](#).

O'Sullivan Beare, Dunboy and the Beara-Breifne connection

Beara's hills hold Bronze Age stone circles, standing stones and ring forts, but the peninsula is especially linked with the O'Sullivan Beare clan. Their stronghold, **Dunboy Castle** near Castletownbere, was captured in 1602 after the Battle of Kinsale. That winter, Donal Cam O'Sullivan Beare led a long march north to West Breifne; the modern **Beara-Breifne Way**, of which the Beara Way is the first section, commemorates it. The Allihies copper-mining boom and famine-era emigration also shaped the peninsula.

Notable highlights

- **Dursey Island & cable car:** A remote island spur at the western tip of the peninsula, reached by Ireland's only cable car. It is a memorable add-on for Atlantic views, seabirds and a wilder end-of-land feel.
- **Dunboy Castle:** A ruined O'Sullivan Beare tower house near Castletownbere overlooking Bearhaven. Its 1602 siege is one of the key historical episodes tied to the route.
- **Allihies Copper Mines & museum:** The trail passes mine engine houses and spoil heaps from the 19th-century copper-mining village. The museum is housed in a former Methodist church.
- **Ardgroom Stone Circle:** A Bronze Age stone circle, also called Canfea, set against the Beara mountains. It is one of several prehistoric monuments showing the peninsula's long settlement history.
- **Caha Mountains & Slieve Miskish:** The mountainous spine of Beara gives the route its rougher upland character, with high ground around **500–560 m** and views between Bantry Bay and the Kenmare River.

- **Castletownbere:** The peninsula's main town and one of Ireland's largest fishing ports. It is a practical resupply and accommodation stop with access to Bearhaven and Bere Island.

Challenges to expect

Expect a strenuous cumulative effort: the route has about **5,245 m of ascent**, rough boggy upland sections, rocky passes, quiet-road walking and remote stretches between villages. Atlantic weather is changeable year-round, with rain, wind and low cloud common on higher ground. Waymarking is by the yellow walking-man/yellow-arrow markers, but visibility and boggy terrain can still make navigation slower. Resupply is spaced out, and dogs are not permitted on the trail.

Key Data

Country	Ireland
Distance	206 km
Duration	9 days
Difficulty	Strenuous
Trail type	Loop
Elevation gain/loss	5245 m
Highest point	560 m
Terrain & landscape	Mountainous, Coastal
Trail surface	Dirt, Rocky, Gravel
Accommodation	Hotels, Hostels, Lodges, Campsites, Wild Camping Spots
Average daytime temp.	15°C
Chance of rainfall	High
Estimated cost	\$\$
Optimal season	Spring, Summer, Autumn
Facilities	Restrooms, Water Sources, Campsites, Shelters, Picnic Areas
Permits & fees	No permits or fees

Introduction

The Beara Way is a rugged waymarked circuit around one of south-west Ireland's quieter peninsulas, starting and finishing at Glengarriff on Bantry Bay. It suits fit, experienced walkers who want a long coastal-and-mountain route without technical climbing, but with real wildness underfoot.

The trail threads between painted villages, fishing ports and open upland below the Caha Mountains and Slieve Miskish. Castletownbere, Allihies, Eyeries, Ardgroom, Lauragh and Kenmare give the route its rhythm, while optional legs reach Bere Island and Dursey Island.

This is not a gentle village-to-village stroll. Boggy tracks, rocky passes, exposed Atlantic weather and long gaps between services make the Beara Way a demanding cumulative hike, even though it is waymarked with the standard yellow Irish trail markers.

Plan it carefully and it becomes one of Ireland's most rewarding multi-day walks: rough ridges above Bantry Bay, old mining country above Allihies, stone circles near the northern side of the peninsula and a strong sense of remoteness between the roadheads.

Accommodation and transport need organising in advance, especially away from the larger stops.

This guide covers stages, days, accommodation, food, transport, terrain and the common mistakes to avoid.

Stage-by-Stage Guide

The stages below follow the standard 9-day clockwise circuit from Glengarriff. Distances are approximate, and the Beara Way's total length varies depending on which spurs and options are included. Treat each day as a planning unit rather than a turn-by-turn route description, and carry OSi mapping as well as following the yellow walking-man / yellow-arrow waymarks.

Stage 1: Glengarriff to Adrigole — approx. 18 km

This is one of the most serious opening stages on any Irish waymarked trail, climbing quickly from the wooded and coastal setting of Glengarriff into the Caha Mountains. The route reaches roughly 560 m on a ridge above the Coomerkane valley, the high point of the Beara Way, before descending towards Adrigole on the Bantry Bay side of the peninsula.

Underfoot, expect a mix of tracks, boggy ground and rocky upland going. In poor visibility this stage can feel much more committing than its distance suggests, as the higher ground is exposed to Atlantic rain, wind and low cloud.

The main highlight is the high crossing of the Caha Mountains, with views towards Bantry Bay when the weather allows. Hungry Hill, the highest summit in the Caha range, is passed in the wider mountain landscape but the Beara Way does not climb it.

Glengarriff is a practical start point with accommodation and services, but do not rely on mid-stage food or water supplies once above the village. Carry a full day's food and water from the start.

Adrigole has accommodation at or near the stage end, but options are more limited than in the larger towns. Book ahead, especially if walking in summer or if using baggage transfers tied to fixed stages.

Road access is possible at Glengarriff and Adrigole, but public transport across the peninsula is sparse and seasonal. Any bus, coach, taxi or transfer arrangements should be checked before travelling.

Navigation is generally by waymarking, but this is a day where map-and-compass competence matters. The combination of bog, upland rock and cloud can make the line harder to follow, and this is not a stage to start late in poor weather.

Stage 2: Adrigole to Castletownbere — approx. 22 km

This longer stage continues west below the Caha Mountains towards Castletownbere, the main town on the peninsula. It is a useful day for settling into the rhythm of Beara: substantial distance, mixed surfaces and a finish with proper resupply options.

The route uses a combination of old tracks, bog roads, rough ground and quiet lanes. Conditions can be wet underfoot even outside prolonged rain, so waterproof footwear and gaiters are useful rather than optional luxuries.

Views open across Bantry Bay and towards Bearhaven as the route approaches Castletownbere. Near the town, Dunboy Castle is one of the key historical landmarks associated with the route, overlooking Bearhaven and tied to the O'Sullivan Beare history of the peninsula.

Carry food and water from Adrigole, as mid-stage facilities should not be assumed. Castletownbere is the principal resupply stop on the southern side of the loop and one of Ireland's largest fishing ports, making it a good place to restock before the western stages.

Accommodation is concentrated in Castletownbere, with more choice than in the smaller villages. It is still best booked in advance because many walkers use the town as a staging point, and it is also the access point for the optional Bere Island loop.

Castletownbere has better road access than most Beara villages, though services remain limited by wider peninsula standards. Public transport, local coach links and taxis should be checked before relying on them.

Waymarking is the main navigation aid, but lane junctions and transitions between tracks can be missed if walking in bad weather or late in the day. Watch for traffic on quiet road sections; they are not busy urban roads, but they are still shared roads.

Stage 3: Castletownbere to Allihies — approx. 15 km

This is a shorter stage on paper, but it should not be treated as a rest day unless the optional Bere Island loop has been skipped and conditions are good. The route moves from the peninsula's main town towards the mining village of Allihies, with coastal and upland elements typical of western Beara.

Terrain is mixed, with lanes, tracks and rougher sections. The walking is less defined in places than on more manicured long-distance paths, and wet ground is a normal part of the day.

Castletownbere is also the point for the optional Bere Island ferry loop. Bere Island has archaeological sites and former British military forts overlooking Berehaven, but the ferry runs to its own timetable and any island extension needs to be planned before committing to onward accommodation.

The approach to Allihies brings the trail into the landscape of the 19th-century copper mines. Engine houses and spoil heaps above the village are among the most distinctive industrial-history features on the Beara Way, and the Allihies Copper Mine Museum is housed in a former Methodist church.

Stock up in Castletownbere before leaving. Do not rely on food or water between the two settlements unless current local provision has been checked.

Allihies has accommodation in or near the village, but capacity is limited compared with Castletownbere and Kenmare. Book ahead, particularly if planning to stay two nights for the Dursey Sound stage.

Road access is possible at both ends, though public transport is limited and may not suit a walking schedule. Taxi or accommodation transfers are often more practical, but arrangements should be made in advance.

Navigation is generally straightforward in clear weather if waymarks are followed carefully. Mine workings and old tracks can create tempting lines, so remain on the waymarked route and avoid entering unstable or unsafe mine-related ground.

Stage 4: Allihies to Dursey Sound and back / area — approx. 16 km

This stage explores the far western end of the Beara Peninsula, usually as an out-and-back or local circuit from the Allihies area towards Dursey Sound. It is a day of exposed coastal and open-country

walking, with a strong end-of-land character and little shelter in poor weather.

Expect a mixture of quiet lanes, tracks, rougher paths and open, wind-exposed ground. The walking is not technically difficult, but Atlantic weather can make the stage feel hard, especially in rain or strong wind.

Dursey Sound is the key landmark, with the optional Dursey Island cable car crossing to the island. The cable car is Ireland's only cable car and the only one in Europe crossing open water, but it has its own operating timetable and periodic closures, so it must be checked before planning to visit the island.

Dursey Island itself is an optional addition rather than something to assume within the day's walking. If including it, allow for waiting time, weather disruption and the need to return to the mainland or to accommodation as planned.

Carry all food and water needed for the day from Allihies or from accommodation. There should be no assumption of reliable supplies at Dursey Sound or on any island extension.

Most walkers use accommodation in the Allihies area before and after this stage, or arrange a transfer if continuing differently. Availability is limited and should be booked before arrival.

Road access exists towards Dursey Sound, but public transport is sparse and should not be relied on without checking current services. The cable car timetable should be treated as a critical piece of transport planning, not as a casual optional detail.

Navigation is usually a matter of following waymarks and keeping a clear sense of return logistics. In low cloud, rain or strong wind, the exposed western end of the peninsula can be disorientating, so carry mapping and avoid pushing onto optional ground if time, weather or transport do not allow it.

Stage 5: Allihies area to Eyeries — approx. 23 km

This is one of the longer standard stages, linking the western mining landscape around Allihies with the colourful coastal village of Eyeries on the northern side of the peninsula. It is a demanding day mainly because of cumulative distance, exposure and the typical Beara mix of rough and wet surfaces.

The terrain includes tracks, lanes, moorland and coastal-facing paths. Conditions can change quickly as the route turns from the Atlantic-facing west towards the Kenmare River side of the loop.

Allihies' copper-mining remains are the main feature at the start of the stage, while Eyeries is one of the best-known painted villages on Beara. In clear weather, this section gives a strong sense of the peninsula narrowing between sea, mountains and scattered villages.

Carry a full day's food and water. Mid-stage services should not be assumed, and this is too long a day to begin under-supplied.

Eyeries has accommodation in or near the village, but the supply of beds is finite and stage lengths on this part of Beara leave few easy alternatives. Advance booking is strongly recommended.

Road access is available at the villages, but public transport remains limited. If splitting the stage or using a transfer, arrange it before walking rather than expecting on-the-day options.

Navigation is usually manageable in clear conditions, but care is needed at lane-and-track changes and across any boggy or open sections. Watch the weather forecast closely; strong wind and rain can make

this otherwise straightforward long stage significantly harder.

Stage 6: Eyeries to Ardgroom — approx. 14 km

This shorter stage gives some recovery after the longer western days while continuing along the northern side of the peninsula. It links two small settlements and remains very much a rural Beara stage rather than a service-heavy day.

The route uses a mixture of lanes, green tracks and rougher ground, with softer going likely after rain. Shorter distance does not mean fast progress if the ground is boggy or the waymarks require careful attention.

The day's appeal lies in the quieter northern Beara landscape and the approach to Ardgroom. The area is associated with prehistoric stone circles, including Ardgroom, also known as Canfea, reflecting the long settlement history of the peninsula.

Food and water should be carried from Eyeries. Any facilities at or near the stage end should be checked before travelling, as smaller villages cannot be treated like full resupply towns.

Accommodation in the Ardgroom area is more limited than in Castletownbere or Kenmare. Book ahead and be clear whether the accommodation is directly on the walking line or requires a pickup.

Road access is possible, but public transport options are sparse. Local taxis or accommodation transfers may be needed for flexible itineraries, and these should be arranged in advance.

Navigation is generally by standard Beara Way markers. Take care not to relax too much because of the shorter distance: small errors on quiet lanes and tracks can add unnecessary time, especially if accommodation check-in or transfers are fixed.

Stage 7: Ardgroom to Lauragh — approx. 14 km

Another moderate-distance stage, this section continues through the northern Beara landscape towards Lauragh. It is a practical day for walkers who have built in longer western stages, but the terrain can still be rough, wet and slow in places.

Expect quiet roads, old tracks and boggy sections rather than consistently firm trail. Rain can turn soft ground heavy underfoot, and progress may be slower than the distance suggests.

The area around Lauragh is one of the key prehistoric landscapes on the route. The Uragh stone circle near Lauragh is among the notable monuments associated with this part of Beara, set against mountain scenery.

Carry food and water from Ardgroom unless current local provision has been checked. Do not assume reliable mid-stage supplies.

Accommodation around Lauragh is limited and should be planned carefully. If the chosen bed is off-route, arrange pickup or know the exact walking distance involved before starting the day.

Road access exists through the area, but public transport is not frequent enough to rely on casually. Transfers and taxis should be booked ahead, especially outside the main summer season.

Navigation should be straightforward with waymarks in good visibility, but boggy ground and minor road junctions still need attention. Waterproof kit remains important even on these lower, shorter northern stages.

Stage 8: Lauragh to Kenmare — approx. 20 km

This stage takes the Beara Way towards Kenmare, the largest amenity stop on the northern side of the circuit. It is a longer day and a useful resupply point before the final return to Glengarriff.

The route continues through a mix of rural lanes, tracks and rougher ground, with the Kenmare River landscape shaping the northern side of the walk. Although the finish is a substantial town, the approach should still be treated as a full hillwalking day rather than an easy town-to-town stroll.

Kenmare is a major highlight in practical and cultural terms, with a heritage market-town feel and a Bronze Age stone circle of its own. It is also the most common alternative start or finish for walkers who prefer to begin or end in a larger town.

Carry food and water from Lauragh, as mid-stage facilities should not be assumed. Kenmare is the best resupply point on this side of the loop, so use it to restock for the final stage.

Accommodation choice is broader in Kenmare than in the smaller Beara villages, but advance booking is still wise in the main walking season. It is also a sensible place to build in a rest night if the cumulative distance and boggy terrain have taken a toll.

Kenmare has better road access than the smaller settlements, though public transport should still be checked before relying on it. For section-walkers, it is the most practical northern access point on the circuit.

Navigation remains by Beara Way markers, but be attentive on the approach to town where lanes, tracks and local paths may intersect. A larger finish does not remove the need to carry mapping for the day.

Stage 9: Kenmare to Glengarriff — approx. 23 km

The final stage closes the loop from Kenmare back to Glengarriff, passing through the Bonane / Bunane area and returning from the Kenmare River side towards Bantry Bay. It is a long finish and should be treated as a strenuous mountain-and-bog day, not simply a walk back to the start.

Terrain includes quiet lanes, tracks, boggy upland and rougher ground associated with the Beara Way's crossing between the northern and southern sides of the peninsula. After several days of walking, this stage can feel harder than its distance suggests.

The main reward is completing the circuit and returning to the wooded coastal setting of Glengarriff after the exposed northern and western sections. In good visibility, the shifting views between the Kenmare River side, the Caha Mountains and Bantry Bay give a strong final summary of the route's geography.

Leave Kenmare with enough food and water for the full day. Do not assume supplies between Kenmare and Glengarriff unless current local options have been checked.

Glengarriff has accommodation and end-of-walk services, but beds should still be booked in advance if finishing on a fixed date. Some walkers instead end in Kenmare, which is a practical alternative if

transport works better from there.

Road access exists at Kenmare, Bonane / Bunane and Glengarriff, but public transport across the peninsula is limited. End-of-walk transport, taxi connections and onward travel should be arranged before setting out on the final stage.

Navigation deserves full attention to the end. Low cloud, wet bog and fatigue are a poor combination, so keep checking the map against waymarks and avoid rushing the final kilometres. Dogs are not permitted on the Beara Way, and this applies throughout the route rather than just on farmland or upland sections.

Recommended Itinerary

The Beara Way is best planned around accommodation rather than mileage alone. Villages are spaced unevenly, public transport is limited, and the rough upland sections can be slow in poor weather, so book beds before committing to daily stages.

Distances vary depending on which options and spurs are included. The table below follows the standard 9-day structure using the stage distances supplied for the route; check official mapping before booking if adding Bere Island, Dursey Island or other route options.

Standard 9-day itinerary

This is the most balanced full-circuit schedule for fit walkers who want to complete the loop without turning it into a forced march. It keeps the bigger days manageable, gives the western tip its own day, and uses the main Beara villages as overnight anchors.

Day	From	To	Approx. distance	Why this stage makes sense	Services/accommodation notes
1	Glengarriff	Adrigole	18 km	A demanding opening day over rougher Caha Mountains ground, including the high upland character that defines the route early on. Starting with a moderate distance is sensible because weather and underfoot conditions can slow progress.	Glengarriff is the normal start and has the best pre-walk logistics on the southern side. Adrigole is a smaller stop, so accommodation should be booked before travel.
2	Adrigole	Castletownbere	22 km	A longer but logical stage leading into the peninsula's main town. It avoids trying to combine the rough opening section with the major resupply point.	Castletownbere is the principal resupply and accommodation stop on the route and the access point for the Bere Island ferry. If adding Bere Island, allow extra time and check ferry timetables before relying on them.
3	Castletownbere	Allihies	15 km	A shorter day after the longer approach to Castletownbere, with time to deal with supplies, weather delays or the historical detour interest around Bearhaven and Dunboy Castle.	Allihies is one of the key western overnight stops. Book ahead, especially in the main walking season.

Day	From	To	Approx. distance	Why this stage makes sense	Services/accommodation notes
4	Allihies	Dursey Sound / Allihies area	16 km	This day gives the far western end of the peninsula proper space rather than squeezing it between longer walking days. It works as an out-and-back or area day, with Dursey Island only included if the cable car timetable and conditions allow.	Do not plan this day around the Dursey Island cable car without checking current operating times and closures. Accommodation is best treated as part of the Allihies-area booking plan unless other arrangements have been made.
5	Allihies area	Eyeries	23 km	One of the longer standard days, continuing along the western and northern side of Beara. Starting from the Allihies area keeps it feasible while still making useful progress around the loop.	Eyeries is a recognised overnight stop, but beds are limited compared with larger towns. Reserve accommodation in advance.
6	Eyeries	Ardgroom	14 km	A shorter recovery stage after the previous long day. It also creates a practical split before the more remote northern-side walking towards Lauragh and Kenmare.	Ardgroom is a smaller village stop; confirm accommodation before fixing this stage. Nearby prehistoric sites are a reason not to rush this part of the route.
7	Ardgroom	Lauragh	14 km	Another shorter stage, useful for managing cumulative fatigue on rough, wet ground. It keeps the northern side of the loop broken into realistic sections.	Lauragh is a small overnight base. Book ahead, and check whether any transfer is needed if accommodation is not directly on the walking line.
8	Lauragh	Kenmare	20 km	A substantial but sensible day into the largest amenity stop on the northern side of the loop. The route passes through the Tuosist side of the peninsula before reaching Kenmare.	Kenmare is the best place on the northern side for accommodation, food and onward transport options. It is also the most common alternative start or finish for walkers not beginning in Glengariff.

Day	From	To	Approx. distance	Why this stage makes sense	Services/accommodation notes
9	Kenmare	Glengarriff	23 km	A long final stage closing the circuit back to Bantry Bay. Treat it as a full walking day, especially in wet or low-cloud conditions on higher ground.	Finish logistics in Glengarriff should be arranged in advance because public transport on the peninsula is sparse and seasonal. Local taxi or transfer arrangements may be needed.

Slower variant: 10–11 days

A slower schedule suits walkers carrying heavier packs, those who want to include Bere Island or Dursey Island properly, and anyone who prefers a weather buffer on a route with boggy upland and exposed Atlantic conditions.

The simplest way to slow the itinerary is to add an extra night at Castletownbere for Bere Island, or an extra night around Allihies for the Dursey Sound and Dursey Island area. Another option is to break the longer days, but this depends entirely on accommodation availability or pre-arranged transfers; do not assume there will be beds at every convenient midpoint.

Use the slower variant if comfort, photography, historical stops and reliable logistics matter more than keeping to a fixed 9-day schedule. It is also the better choice if walking in shoulder-season conditions when daylight and weather windows are less forgiving.

Faster variant: 7–8 days

A faster itinerary is only suitable for strong, experienced walkers who are comfortable with long days on rough bog, rocky passes and remote ground. It usually works by omitting optional island legs and combining shorter adjacent stages, rather than by underestimating the mountain sections.

The most obvious saving is to remove the dedicated Dursey Sound / Dursey Island day if the western spur is not a priority. Very fit walkers may also combine shorter northern stages, such as Eyeries to Lauragh via Ardgroom, but that creates a much bigger day and should only be planned after checking official mapping and accommodation.

Do not use a fast schedule if relying on sparse public transport, if accommodation is not already secured, or if carrying full camping weight. On the Beara Way, poor weather can turn an ambitious timetable into a logistical problem quickly.

Planning the Route

The Beara Way is best planned around its settlements rather than around evenly measured mileage. Accommodation and food are concentrated in Glengarriff, Adrigole, Castletownbere, Allihies, Eyeries, Ardgroom, Lauragh, Tuosist and Kenmare, with long, rougher stretches between them. Book beds first, then build each walking day around what is actually available.

A 9-day itinerary is the standard practical plan for the full circuit, giving enough time for the rougher upland and coastal sections without making every day a forced march. Faster 7-day schedules are possible for strong walkers travelling light, but they leave little margin for wet bog, low cloud, transport delays or tired legs. Slower 10- or 11-day schedules suit walkers who want to include island options, allow for poor weather, or reduce the cumulative strain.

Choosing a start point

Glengarriff is the official start and finish of the loop, and it works well if arriving from the Cork side. Because the route is circular, Kenmare is also a common alternative start or finish, especially for walkers who prefer to end in the largest town on the northern side of the peninsula.

Whichever start point is chosen, public transport should be treated as a constraint, not an afterthought. Services to Glengarriff, Castletownbere and Kenmare are limited and can be seasonal or infrequent, so onward buses, local coaches, taxis, transfers or self-drive arrangements should be checked before travelling.

How many days to allow

The route length varies depending on whether the island spurs and route options are included. The core waymarked circuit is shorter than the headline full route, while the wider waymarked network including all spurs is longer again. For planning, treat the Beara Way as a roughly 200 km undertaking if walking the full loop with options, rather than relying on a single exact mileage.

A typical 9-day structure is:

Day	Stage	Approx. distance	Planning notes
1	Glengarriff to Adrigole	18 km	Includes the major Caha Mountains crossing and the route's highest ground, so weather and visibility matter.
2	Adrigole to Castletownbere	22 km	A longer day into the peninsula's main town and key resupply stop.
3	Castletownbere to Allihies	15 km	Shorter on paper, but plan around accommodation and any Bere Island ferry option from Castletownbere.
4	Allihies to Dursey Sound area and back / area	16 km	The Dursey Island cable car is an optional add-on and must be checked before relying on it.
5	Allihies area to Eyeries	23 km	One of the longer scheduled days; start with enough food and water for the stage.

Day	Stage	Approx. distance	Planning notes
6	Eyeries to Ardgroom	14 km	A shorter stage, useful after the longer western days.
7	Ardgroom to Lauragh	14 km	Accommodation availability may dictate the exact end point.
8	Lauragh to Kenmare	20 km	A longer approach into the largest amenity stop on the northern side.
9	Kenmare to Glengarriff	23 km	A substantial final day over remote ground back to the south side of the loop.

Daily distances alone do not tell the full story. Boggy ground, rocky passes, wet lanes, wind and low cloud can make a moderate-distance stage feel much longer, especially late in a multi-day walk.

Shortening or extending the walk

The easiest way to shorten the Beara Way is to walk a Glengarriff-to-Kenmare itinerary instead of the full loop. These shorter schedules are commonly planned over 6 to 8 days and still include much of the peninsula's mountain and coastal character.

The main ways to extend the walk are the optional Bere Island loop from Castletownbere and the Dursey Island spur at the western tip. Both depend on separate transport links: the Bere Island ferry from Castletownbere and the Dursey Island cable car. Timetables, operating days and closures should be checked before building either into a fixed itinerary.

Section hiking

Section hiking is possible, but it is not as straightforward as on trails with frequent railheads or dense bus coverage. The peninsula has sparse public transport, so point-to-point days often require taxis, pre-arranged transfers or a second vehicle.

The most practical section breaks are the larger or better-served settlements on the loop: Glengarriff, Castletownbere and Kenmare. Smaller villages can work as overnight stops, but transport in and out may be limited. This should be checked before travelling.

Accommodation and food planning

Accommodation is the single most important booking issue on the Beara Way. Hotels, guesthouses, B&Bs, hostels and a few campsites or wild-camping possibilities are spread across the peninsula, but they are not evenly distributed. On remote stages, a missing bed can mean a much longer walking day or a transfer.

Book accommodation ahead, particularly in the smaller villages. Castletownbere and Kenmare are the main places to think about resupply, with Castletownbere acting as the principal service stop on the western side and Kenmare the largest amenity stop on the northern side.

Do not assume food will be available between stage ends. Leave each overnight stop with enough food and water for the day, especially on the upland, boggy and coastal sections where services are limited.

Navigation, weather and daily timing

The Beara Way is waymarked with the standard Irish yellow walking-man / yellow-arrow markers, but the route still needs proper navigation planning. Carry OSi mapping and the Beara Way / Beara-Breifne Way guide material, particularly for the rough, remote and boggy upland sections.

Low cloud on the Caha Mountains and Slieve Miskish can make waymarks harder to follow, and Atlantic rain can quickly change the feel of the ground underfoot. Proper waterproofs, warm layers and enough daylight margin are essential even in the usual April-to-September walking season.

Plan the higher and more remote days conservatively. The first stage from Glengariff towards Adrigole reaches the Caha Mountains ridge at about 560 m, and exposed weather can slow progress well before the mileage becomes the problem.

Other practical constraints

Dogs are not permitted on the trail, so the Beara Way is not suitable for walking with a dog. This needs to be factored in before booking accommodation or transport.

There is no single permit-style booking that solves the route logistics. The important advance checks are accommodation, island transport, public transport, transfers, weather, mapping and food between villages.

Towns, Villages and Overnight Stops

Accommodation on the Beara Way is workable, but it needs planning. The best-served stops are Glengarriff, Castletownbere, Allihies, Eyeries and Kenmare; between them, some stages pass through much smaller places where beds, meals and onward transport can be limited.

Book overnight stops before fixing daily mileage, especially if walking in summer or using the optional island legs. In the smaller villages, check whether evening meals, packed lunches, luggage transfers and taxi pick-ups are available before relying on them.

Glengarriff

Glengarriff is the standard start and finish of the waymarked loop, on Bantry Bay in County Cork. It is one of the most practical places to begin because accommodation is available in the village and it has better visitor infrastructure than many of the smaller Beara settlements.

It is also one of the key transport access points for the route. Bus Éireann, local services and seasonal coaches can reach Glengarriff, but services are infrequent and should be checked before travelling; many walkers use a taxi, transfer or self-drive arrangement from Cork or another regional hub.

For itinerary planning, Glengarriff is the last reliable base before the tough first crossing towards Adrigole and the Caha Mountains. Start with waterproofs, food for the day and a clear accommodation booking for the next stop rather than assuming options will appear en route.

Adrigole

Adrigole is the usual first overnight stop when walking clockwise from Glengarriff. It sits after a demanding opening stage that crosses rough upland ground below the Caha Mountains, so it is a logical place to break the route before continuing towards Castletownbere.

This is a smaller stop than Glengarriff, Castletownbere or Kenmare. Accommodation and food options should be booked and checked in advance, including whether an evening meal and packed lunch can be arranged.

Adrigole is useful because it keeps the first day to a manageable length and avoids pushing straight on after the high, exposed section out of the Coomerkane valley. Public transport should not be relied on here without checking current services or arranging a local transfer.

Castletownbere

Castletownbere is the peninsula's main town and one of the most important planning stops on the Beara Way. It is a major accommodation and resupply point, and a natural place to pause, restock and reorganise before the western stages.

This is the best-served stop between Glengarriff and Kenmare. Expect a better choice of places to stay and eat than in the smaller villages, although beds should still be booked ahead during the main walking season.

Castletownbere is also the access point for the optional Bere Island ferry loop. It is the place to check ferry times, luggage arrangements and whether adding the island will affect the following day's mileage.

Transport links are better here than in most Beara villages, with Bus Éireann, local services and seasonal coaches serving Castletownbere at limited frequency. Current timetables and taxi options should be checked before relying on them.

Bere Island

Bere Island is an optional ferry loop from Castletownbere rather than an essential overnight stop on the main circuit. Walkers add it for the island walking, archaeological sites and former British military forts overlooking Berehaven.

Whether it fits the itinerary depends on ferry times and how the day is being staged. The ferry runs to its own timetable, so this should be checked before travelling and again before fixing accommodation for the nights either side.

Do not assume the island can be added casually to a tight schedule. If walking the full Beara Way with options, allow enough time for the ferry, the island route and the return to Castletownbere or onward accommodation.

Allihies

Allihies is a key western stop and one of the more useful overnight villages on the route. It is commonly used after the stage from Castletownbere and again as a base for the Dursey Sound / Dursey Island section, depending on the itinerary.

Accommodation is available in the village area, but capacity is not unlimited, so book ahead. Food arrangements should also be checked, particularly if arriving late after a wet or slow day on rough ground.

The village is worth planning around because the Beara Way passes the Allihies copper-mining landscape, with engine houses, spoil heaps and the mining museum housed in a former Methodist church. It is also a practical place to decide whether to include the Dursey spur or keep to the main loop.

Dursey Island

Dursey Island is an optional spur at the far western end of the peninsula, reached by cable car from Dursey Sound. It is not a routine overnight stop for most Beara Way walkers; it is usually planned as an out-and-back addition from the Allihies area.

The cable car timetable and any maintenance closures must be checked before relying on this leg. If the cable car is not operating, the Dursey Island section cannot simply be treated like a normal walking detour.

Allow enough margin for weather, waiting time and the return journey. Adding Dursey can affect accommodation timing on the Allihies to Eyeries part of the route, so do not attach it to an already long day unless the logistics are secure.

Eyeries

Eyeries is a well-used overnight stop on the northern side of the western peninsula. It follows the long Allihies-area to Eyeries stage on standard itineraries, so having accommodation booked here is important.

The village is one of the recognised Beara Way accommodation centres, but it is still smaller than Castletownbere or Kenmare. Check availability, evening food and breakfast or packed-lunch options before arrival.

Eyeries is a good place to reset after the exposed western stages before the route continues towards Ardgroom. It also gives a sensible break before the quieter northern side of the circuit, where facilities become more spread out.

Ardgroom

Ardgroom is a smaller route village between Eyeries and Lauragh. It is often used as a stage end because it keeps the northern-side walking days at manageable lengths.

Do not treat Ardgroom as a large service centre. Accommodation and food options should be checked before travelling, and any taxi or luggage-transfer arrangement should be confirmed in advance.

The area is associated with the Bronze Age stone circles of Beara, including Ardgroom / Canfea. For walkers, its main value is practical: it breaks the route before the next section towards Lauragh and the approach to the Kenmare side of the peninsula.

Lauragh

Lauragh is another small but useful overnight stop on the northern section of the Beara Way. It sits between Ardgroom and Kenmare, making it a logical base before the longer stage into the larger town.

Accommodation and meals should be booked ahead. As with other smaller Beara villages, do not assume shops, cafés or pub food will be available at the exact time needed; check directly with the place you are staying.

Lauragh is close to the Uragh stone circle area and sits in one of the more remote-feeling parts of the loop beneath the mountains. It is a good place to avoid overextending the day into Kenmare, especially in poor weather or low cloud.

Tuosist

Tuosist is on the northern side of the route between Lauragh and Kenmare. It is more of a route locality than a major overnight hub for most walkers.

Use it cautiously in planning unless accommodation has been arranged in advance. Food, public transport and taxi availability should be checked before travelling.

For most end-to-end itineraries, Tuosist is part of the Lauragh to Kenmare walking day rather than a primary stop. It can still be useful for breaking up the route if a local bed or transfer has been secured.

Kenmare

Kenmare is the largest and most practical amenity stop on the northern side of the loop. It is also the most common alternative start or finish for walkers who prefer to begin or end in a larger town rather than Glengarriff.

Accommodation, food and resupply options are better here than in the smaller villages, making it a natural rest, recovery or itinerary-adjustment point. Book ahead in busy periods, especially if using Kenmare as the final night before returning to Glengarriff.

Kenmare has limited public transport links, with Bus Éireann, local services and seasonal coaches reaching the town infrequently. Timetables, onward connections and taxi options should be checked before relying on them.

The town also has its own Bronze Age stone circle and sits at the head of the Kenmare River. For walkers, the main practical point is that this is the last major service centre before the return leg over remote ground towards Glengarriff.

Bonane / Bunane

Bonane, also spelt Bunane, lies on the return side of the loop between Kenmare and Glengarriff. It is relevant mainly as a route place on the final stage rather than as a standard overnight stop.

Facilities should not be assumed. If planning to stop, shorten the final day or arrange a pick-up in this area, accommodation, food and transport must be checked before travelling.

Most walkers using a 9-day schedule continue through this section to finish in Glengarriff. Because the final leg still involves rough, exposed Beara terrain, carry enough food and waterproof kit even though the loop is nearly complete.

Getting to the Start

The Beara Way is a loop, so the standard start and finish is Glengarriff in County Cork. Because public transport on the Beara Peninsula is limited, many walkers either arrive via Cork and continue by bus, taxi or pre-arranged transfer, or start in Kenmare if that is easier for accommodation and onward travel.

By train

There is no railway station at Glengarriff, and rail does not reach the Beara Peninsula. The practical rail approach is to travel to Cork city, then continue west by bus, local coach, taxi or pre-booked transfer.

Do not plan a same-day long train journey and first walking stage unless the onward connection to Glengarriff is already certain. Services beyond Cork are infrequent and may be seasonal. This should be checked before travelling.

By bus

Bus Éireann, local services and seasonal coaches serve parts of the peninsula, including Glengarriff, Castletownbere and Kenmare, but frequencies are limited. Timetables can make evening arrivals difficult, especially outside the main summer season.

For the standard Glengarriff start, allow enough time to reach the village the day before walking. For alternative itineraries starting at Kenmare, check whether current services suit the planned direction and finish point before booking accommodation.

If bus times do not align with flights, trains or accommodation check-in, a local taxi or private transfer may be the simplest solution. Availability should not be assumed at short notice. This should be checked before travelling.

By car

Self-driving is often the most straightforward way to reach Glengarriff, particularly for walkers arriving with limited time or travelling outside peak season. The loop format makes this convenient if starting and finishing in the same village.

Long-stay parking arrangements are not something to leave until the morning of departure. Ask accommodation in Glengarriff whether parking is available for the duration of the walk, or arrange secure local parking in advance. This should be checked before travelling.

If starting at Kenmare instead, the same principle applies: confirm where the car can be left for multiple days before finalising the route plan.

From the nearest airport

Cork Airport is the nearest practical airport for the Beara Way. From there, most walkers need to connect via Cork city or arrange onward road transport to Glengarriff.

Public transport from the airport to the trailhead is not something to rely on without checking the full chain of connections. Flight arrival times, seasonal coach schedules and the limited frequency of

peninsula services can leave little margin. This should be checked before travelling.

For late arrivals, it is usually safer to stay in Cork or travel to Glengarriff by pre-booked taxi or transfer, then begin walking the following morning.

Where to stay before starting

Glengarriff has accommodation suitable for a pre-walk night, including hotels, guesthouses and B&Bs. Booking ahead is sensible, especially because the first stage towards Adrigole is not a gentle warm-up: it leads into rougher upland terrain below the Caha Mountains.

Starting well-rested matters on this route. Arriving the night before also gives time to sort food, water, maps and waterproof kit before leaving the village.

Kenmare is the most common alternative start and finish for walkers who prefer a larger town with more amenities on the northern side of the loop. If using Kenmare as the start, make sure the chosen itinerary, accommodation sequence and onward transport all line up before booking.

Getting Home from the Finish

The Beara Way is a loop, so most walkers finish back in **Glengarriff**. That simplifies logistics if a car has been left there or if accommodation has been booked for the final night, but public transport from the peninsula is still limited and should not be treated like a turn-up-and-go service.

Some walkers finish in **Kenmare** instead, especially on shorter Glengarriff-to-Kenmare itineraries. Kenmare is the larger amenity stop on the northern side of the route and can be a more convenient place to end if onward transport or an extra night in town is needed.

By train

There is no railway station at Glengarriff, Kenmare, Castletownbere or the other Beara Way villages. Leaving the finish by train requires a road transfer first, usually towards a larger transport hub.

For most walkers, **Cork** is the practical hub for onward travel by rail or coach. The exact bus, taxi or transfer connection from Glengarriff or Kenmare to a rail station is timetable-dependent and should be checked before travelling.

If an onward train is booked for the same day as the final stage, allow generous time. The last walking day from Kenmare to Glengarriff is a substantial stage, and delays from weather, boggy ground or tired legs can easily make a tight transport connection unrealistic.

By bus

Bus Éireann, local services and seasonal coaches serve parts of the Beara Peninsula, including **Glengarriff**, **Castletownbere** and **Kenmare**, but services are sparse and can be infrequent. Timetables vary by season and day of the week, so onward buses should be checked before committing to accommodation or flights.

From **Glengarriff**, expect to plan around limited departures rather than frequent services. If finishing late in the afternoon, it may be more practical to stay overnight and travel the next morning.

From **Kenmare**, onward options may be easier to arrange than from smaller Beara villages, but they still require advance checking. Kenmare is the common alternative finish for walkers who prefer to end in a larger town with more services.

By car/taxi

Self-drive is one of the simplest ways to handle the Beara Way finish because the route returns to **Glengarriff**. If parking is arranged at the start, the car is waiting at the end of the walk, avoiding the need to match a remote finish with a limited bus timetable.

Local taxis and private transfers are often the practical solution for reaching onward buses, rail connections or accommodation elsewhere on the peninsula. They should be booked ahead, especially for evenings, Sundays, public holidays or any finish away from Glengarriff or Kenmare.

If using taxis to connect with public transport, build in a margin. The final stage, weather and underfoot conditions can all make arrival times less predictable than the map distance suggests.

From the nearest airport

The nearest practical airport hub for the Beara Way is **Cork Airport**. Reaching it from the finish involves a road journey from Glengarriff or Kenmare, normally by a combination of local bus/coach, taxi or private transfer.

Same-day flights after finishing the walk are risky unless the final stage is shortened or the transfer has been firmly arranged. For most independent walkers, the safer plan is to finish, stay locally, and travel to Cork the following day.

Airport and coach timetables, transfer availability and seasonal services should be checked before travelling.

Where to stay at the finish

Glengarriff has accommodation and is the natural overnight stop at the end of the full circuit. Booking a final night there is strongly recommended if relying on public transport, as it removes pressure from the last walking day and gives more options for onward travel the next morning.

If ending in **Kenmare**, accommodation choice is generally stronger than in the smaller Beara villages, and the town works well as a buffer before onward travel. It is also a sensible finish point for shorter itineraries that do not complete the full return to Glengarriff.

Beds on the Beara Peninsula should still be booked ahead, particularly in the main walking season. Do not assume late arrival will be easy to combine with both accommodation and onward transport on the same day.

Which Direction Should You Walk?

Standard direction: Glengarriff to Adrigole first

The most straightforward way to walk the Beara Way is the standard clockwise-feeling circuit from Glengarriff to Adrigole, then on to Castletownbere, Allihies, Eyerles, Ardgroom, Lauragh, Kenmare and back to Glengarriff via Bonane / Bunane. This is the direction used by many typical stage plans, so it is the easiest direction for matching accommodation nights to the common 9-day itinerary.

This direction puts the Caha Mountains crossing early, including the high ground between Glengarriff and Adrigole. That means the route becomes serious quickly: rough upland, boggy ground and exposed weather are not saved for later in the walk. Fit walkers often prefer this, as it gives an immediate test of pace, kit and navigation before the long western and northern sections.

The scenery also builds logically around the peninsula. You leave Bantry Bay, reach Castletownbere and the Bearhaven area, continue towards Allihies and the Dursey end of the peninsula, then work back along the northern side towards Kenmare before the final return to Glengarriff.

Reverse direction: Glengarriff to Kenmare first

Walking the loop in reverse is entirely possible, but it is less convenient for following standard stage descriptions. You would first head from Glengarriff towards Bonane / Bunane and Kenmare, then continue west along the northern side before returning via Eyerles, Allihies, Castletownbere and Adrigole.

The main practical issue is not waymarking, but planning. Accommodation, transfers and luggage services are often arranged around the usual village sequence, so a reverse walk may need more careful booking. This should be checked before travelling, especially outside the main April to September walking season.

A reverse route changes the order of the hard ground rather than removing it. The same boggy uplands, rocky passes and exposed sections still have to be crossed, and the Caha Mountains section between Adrigole and Glengarriff becomes a late-stage effort rather than an early one.

Starting or finishing in Kenmare

Because the Beara Way is a loop, Kenmare is a practical alternative start or finish for some walkers. It is the largest amenity stop on the northern side of the route and can feel like a more substantial place to end than a smaller village stage.

This can be useful if the aim is to finish with easier access to accommodation, food and onward transport options. Public transport on the peninsula is still limited and seasonal, so Kenmare, Glengarriff and any transfer arrangements should all be checked before committing to a start point.

Weather and exposure

There is no dependable directional advantage for weather on this route. Atlantic rain, wind and low cloud can affect the higher ground in either direction, particularly across the Caha Mountains and other open upland sections.

Do not choose direction in the hope of avoiding exposure. Choose direction based on accommodation availability, transport, fitness and whether it suits the itinerary to tackle the hardest mountain ground early or late.

Recommendation

For most walkers, the best choice is the standard Glengarriff–Adrigole–Castletownbere–Allihies–Eyerries–Kenmare–Glengarriff direction. It matches the common staging, gives the clearest accommodation flow, and follows the established village sequence around the peninsula.

Choose the reverse only if accommodation availability, transport or personal scheduling makes it work better. Choose Kenmare as a start or finish if ending in a larger town is more useful than completing the circuit exactly where the official loop begins.

Accommodation Along the Route

The Beara Way works well as an inn-to-inn walk, but only if accommodation is planned before the walking days are fixed. Beds are concentrated in Glengarriff, Castletownbere, Allihies, Eyeries and Kenmare; several intermediate places are much smaller, and the long, rough stages leave little margin for walking on to the next village if a room is unavailable.

The practical approach is to decide first whether you are walking the full loop, a shorter Glengarriff-to-Kenmare itinerary, or adding the Bere Island and Dursey Island options. Then book the overnight stops around the actual stage ends rather than assuming every place on the map has a wide choice of beds.

Accommodation is mixed: hotels, guesthouses, B&Bs, hostels and a few campsites or informal wild-camping possibilities. Exact availability changes seasonally, and small rural places may have only a handful of rooms, so this should be checked before travelling.

Best overnight bases

Place	Accommodation level	Best for	Notes
Glengarriff	Good	Start/finish logistics; first or final night	One of the key accommodation villages on the loop and the standard start/end point on Bantry Bay. Useful for arriving the day before the walk rather than starting after a long transfer.
Adrigole	Limited	Breaking the first mountain stage	A practical overnight stop after the Caha Mountains crossing from Glengarriff. Book ahead, as this is not one of the larger service centres.
Castletownbere	Good	Resupply, rest night, Bere Island ferry access	The peninsula's main town and one of the strongest places for accommodation and services. A sensible place for a shorter day, rest night or luggage-transfer handover.
Bere Island	Limited	Optional island loop	Treat as an optional add-on from Castletownbere rather than a necessary overnight unless suitable accommodation and ferry times have been arranged. Ferry timetables should be checked before planning this leg.
Allihies	Good	Western stages; Dursey Sound out-and-back	One of the main accommodation villages on the western side of the route. Often used for the night before and/or after the Dursey Sound stage.
Dursey Island / Dursey Sound	None	Day spur only for most walkers	The standard walking plan treats Dursey as an optional excursion from the Allihies area rather than a dependable overnight stop. The cable-car timetable and any maintenance closures must be checked before relying on this spur.

Place	Accommodation level	Best for	Notes
Eyeries	Good	Northern coast stages	A useful accommodation stop after the longer western-to-northern stage from the Allihies area. Book ahead in the main walking season.
Ardgroom	Limited	Shorter stage between Eyeries and Lauragh	Useful for keeping daily distances manageable, but accommodation choice is more limited than in Castletownbere, Kenmare or Glengarriff.
Lauragh	Limited	Breaking the north-side route before Kenmare	A practical overnight before the walk towards Kenmare. Because the surrounding terrain is rural and remote, do not assume last-minute availability.
Tuosist	Limited	Alternative or adjusted north-side staging	Can be relevant for walkers modifying stages between Lauragh and Kenmare, but arrangements should be made in advance.
Kenmare	Good	Major resupply, rest night, alternative start/finish	The largest amenity stop on the northern side of the loop and the most common alternative start or finish. A good place to build in flexibility before the return leg to Glengarriff.
Bonane / Bunane	Limited	Breaking the Kenmare–Glengarriff return, if needed	Relevant to the final side of the circuit, but not a place to rely on without a confirmed booking or transfer plan.

Booking strategy

Book the smaller overnight stops first: Adrigole, Ardgroom, Lauragh, Tuosist and Bonane / Bunane are the places most likely to shape the itinerary. Once those are secured, the larger stops such as Glengarriff, Castletownbere and Kenmare are easier to fit around them.

For a 9-day walk, the standard stage pattern uses village-to-village walking and suits walkers who prefer a bed each night. However, the Beara Way is not a route where every stage can be casually shortened by stopping at the next settlement; the boggy upland sections, exposed passes and sparse services make advance planning important.

Summer has the longest daylight and is the main walking period, but it is also when small B&Bs and guesthouses can fill, especially at weekends. Spring and autumn may be quieter, but some services can be more limited, so current opening and booking conditions should be checked before travelling.

Using transfers for awkward gaps

Luggage transfer and local taxi transfers can make the Beara Way much easier to organise, especially where accommodation is limited at the natural stage end. This is particularly useful for walkers who want to stay two nights in a stronger base such as Castletownbere, Allihies, Eyeries or Kenmare and transfer to or from the trailhead for a day's walking.

Transfers are also useful if a small village is fully booked, but they should be arranged in advance. Public transport on the peninsula is sparse and seasonal, so it is not a reliable fall-back for missed bookings or

late finishes.

Camping and hostels

Camping is possible only in places where a campsite or suitable permission-based wild-camping arrangement is available. The route crosses rough, wet and exposed ground, so camping should not be treated as an easy solution to accommodation gaps unless the walker is equipped for Atlantic weather and has a clear plan for where it is permitted.

Hostels may be part of the accommodation mix on the peninsula, but availability varies by place and season. For independent walkers, the safest assumption is that every night needs a confirmed bed, campsite pitch or agreed camping arrangement before setting out.

Camping and Wild Camping

Camping is possible on the Beara Way, but it needs more planning than on routes with a campsite in every stage village. The peninsula has a few campsites and some informal wild-camping possibilities, but accommodation and services are unevenly spaced, especially away from Glengarriff, Castletownbere, Allihies, Eyeries and Kenmare.

A tent-based itinerary suits experienced walkers who are already comfortable with rough, wet ground and exposed Atlantic weather. It is less forgiving for first-time long-distance campers: the trail includes boggy upland, rocky passes, long quiet stretches and high, open ground where wind, rain and low cloud can make camping difficult.

Campsites and planned camping stops

Do not assume there is a formal campsite at the end of every Beara Way stage. The main towns and villages are the practical places to look for camping, food and facilities, particularly Glengarriff, Castletownbere, Allihies, Eyeries and Kenmare, but current campsite availability should be checked before travelling.

If camping the full loop, plan each night around confirmed places to pitch rather than simply following a standard B&B stage schedule. Some standard stages finish in small settlements such as Adrigole, Ardgroom, Lauragh, Tuosist or Bonane / Bunane, where camping options may be limited or absent. This should be checked before travelling.

A mixed approach often works best: use campsites or accommodation in the larger stops, and only consider wild camping on the more remote sections where it is legal, discreet and locally acceptable.

Wild camping: legality and local reality

Wild camping in Ireland is not a blanket right. Much of the Beara Way crosses private land, farmland, open hill and commonage-style upland, so permission should be sought where ownership is clear and camping should never be treated as automatic.

In practice, discreet one-night camping may be tolerated in some remote upland areas if done responsibly, well away from houses, roads, livestock, walls, gates, ruins and cultivated ground. That does not make every rough patch of moorland a suitable or lawful pitch. Where access rules, land ownership or local restrictions are unclear, ask locally or choose formal accommodation.

Do not camp on the trail itself, in enclosed fields, beside farm buildings, near livestock, at archaeological remains, or in visible spots close to villages and roads. The route passes historic sites and old settlement landscapes as well as working rural land, so a low-impact approach is essential.

Where camping is most practical

The most practical camping-based plans keep resupply and wet-weather recovery stops in the larger settlements. Castletownbere and Kenmare are especially important because they are the largest amenity stops on the loop; running short of food, gas or dry kit between remote villages can quickly become a problem.

The western and northern sides of the peninsula can feel remote, with long stretches between settlements around Allihies, Eyeries, Ardgroom, Lauragh and Tuosist. These areas may offer more scope for discreet overnight stops than the busier village edges, but they are also exposed to Atlantic wind and rain.

The Caha Mountains section between Glengarriff and Adrigole is not an ideal place to be searching late in the day for a pitch. The ground is rough, boggy and exposed, and the route reaches around 560 m on the ridge. Treat this as a committing walking section, not as a guaranteed camping area.

Optional island legs to Bere Island and Dursey Island should not be planned around camping unless local permission and transport timings are clear in advance. The Bere Island ferry and Dursey Island cable car run to their own timetables, and the Dursey cable car can have maintenance closures, so island plans need checking before travel.

Water, food and resupply

Carry enough water from villages, accommodation or known services for the day ahead. The route crosses wet, boggy country, but peat-stained surface water should not be assumed safe to drink. If natural water is used, it should be treated or filtered.

Food resupply should be planned around the main settlements rather than expected in every village. Castletownbere, Allihies, Eyeries, Kenmare and Glengarriff are the most important planning points on the standard loop; smaller stage ends may have limited services or variable opening times.

Because the route is strenuous and wet underfoot, camping gear adds a noticeable burden. Keep the shelter, sleep system and cooking kit light enough for repeated boggy climbs, but robust enough for wind-driven rain.

Leave No Trace and fire safety

Follow Leave No Trace principles throughout the Beara Way:

- pitch late, leave early and stay only one night in any informal spot;
- camp well away from houses, roads, farms, livestock and the waymarked path;
- leave no litter, food waste or toilet paper;
- bury human waste well away from watercourses, paths and buildings, or carry it out where appropriate;
- avoid disturbing walls, gates, fences, ruins or archaeological features;
- do not light fires.

Open fires are inappropriate on this route. Peat, heather and coastal vegetation are easily damaged, and fire scars remain visible long after a camper has moved on. Use a stove only where it is safe, stable and permitted, and be prepared to cook inside a sheltered area only if ventilation and fire safety are adequate.

Seasonal considerations

April to September is the usual walking window, but waterproof kit is still essential. Summer gives the best daylight for finding legal, discreet places to pitch, while spring and autumn can feel quieter but

bring shorter days and more pressure to identify a stopping place early.

After heavy rain, flat-looking ground can be saturated and unsuitable for a tent, especially on peat and rough moorland. In strong wind or poor visibility, drop to a safer, lower option where possible rather than trying to camp high on exposed passes or ridges.

Food, Water and Resupply

Food planning on the Beara Way is straightforward in the larger towns but much less reliable on the remote western and northern sections. Castletownbere and Kenmare are the key resupply points; Glengarriff is also a practical start/end point for buying supplies before the first stage or after finishing.

Between these towns, the route links small villages where food options may be limited to seasonal cafés, pubs, small shops or accommodation meals. Do not assume that every overnight stop has a full shop, evening food, breakfast service or packed-lunch option available every day.

Practical food strategy

Carry lunch and snacks for each day from the previous overnight stop whenever possible. On longer or more remote stages, especially Glengarriff to Adrigole, Allihies to Eyerias, Lauragh to Kenmare and Kenmare to Glengarriff, carry a full day's food plus an emergency buffer.

Rural opening hours can be short, seasonal and affected by Sundays or public holidays. If relying on a pub, café, village shop, supermarket or petrol-station-style convenience stop, this should be checked before travelling.

Accommodation providers may be able to provide evening meals, breakfasts or packed lunches, but this should be arranged when booking rather than assumed on arrival. This is especially important where stage ends are small villages rather than larger service towns.

Water planning

Start each stage with enough water to reach the next settlement. A sensible baseline for most walkers is around 1.5–2 litres per person, with more needed in warm weather, on exposed upland sections, or if moving slowly over boggy ground.

Reliable potable refills are most dependable at accommodation, cafés, pubs and shops in towns and villages. Ask before filling bottles, and do not count on finding public taps between settlements.

The route crosses wet upland, boggy ground and rural mountain terrain, so streams and run-off may be present, but natural water should be filtered, boiled or chemically treated before drinking. Peaty water, agricultural run-off and poor visibility can all make natural sources unreliable as a primary plan.

Section-by-section resupply notes

Section	Food availability	Water availability	Notes
Glengarriff to Adrigole	Stock up in Glengarriff before leaving. Food between the villages should not be relied on.	Fill in Glengarriff. Treat any natural upland water.	This is a rough Caha Mountains stage with remote ground; carry lunch, snacks and enough water for the full day.

Section	Food availability	Water availability	Notes
Adrigole to Castletownbere	Limited until Castletownbere, which is the peninsula's main town and principal resupply stop.	Refill before leaving Adrigole and again in Castletownbere.	Use Castletownbere for a proper food reset before the western stages.
Castletownbere and optional Bere Island loop	Castletownbere is the best place to buy food before any island outing. Do not rely on finding supplies on the island without checking.	Refill in Castletownbere before taking the ferry. Island refill options should be checked before travelling.	Ferry times and any island logistics should be checked before committing to the loop.
Castletownbere to Allihies	Buy food in Castletownbere. Allihies is a village stop, but opening hours and meal options should be checked.	Fill before leaving Castletownbere; refill at accommodation or services in Allihies.	Carry a full day's food rather than depending on intermediate services.
Allihies to Dursey Sound / Dursey Island spur	Carry food from Allihies. Do not plan on resupply at Dursey Sound or on the spur unless checked in advance.	Carry enough water from Allihies; refill options near the far western end should not be assumed.	The Dursey cable car runs to its own timetable and has closures, so avoid making food or water plans dependent on it.
Allihies area to Eyeries	Food options between the villages are limited; carry lunch and snacks from Allihies.	Fill before leaving Allihies; refill in Eyeries where available.	One of the longer village-to-village days on the standard schedule, so leave self-sufficient.
Eyeries to Ardgroom	Carry food from Eyeries. Ardgroom is a small village, so evening food and packed-lunch options should be checked.	Fill in Eyeries; refill at accommodation or local services in Ardgroom.	Shorter than some stages, but still not a section for assuming mid-stage resupply.
Ardgroom to Lauragh	Limited rural resupply; arrange food before leaving Ardgroom or through accommodation.	Fill before departure; refill in Lauragh where available.	Treat this as a self-contained day between small settlements.
Lauragh to Kenmare via Tuosist	Carry food from Lauragh. Kenmare is the major resupply point on the northern side of the loop.	Fill in Lauragh; refill properly in Kenmare.	A good place to restock before the final return to Glengarriff.
Kenmare to Glengarriff via Bonane / Bunane	Stock up in Kenmare before leaving. Do not rely on meaningful resupply before Glengarriff.	Fill in Kenmare and carry enough for the full stage; treat any natural water.	This final crossing is a long, exposed day back towards Bantry Bay; leave Kenmare fully supplied.

Navigation and Waymarking

The Beara Way is an official waymarked loop, using the standard Irish National Waymarked Trail symbols: a yellow walking-man and yellow arrows on a black background. In normal visibility, much of the route is straightforward to follow where markers, lanes and established tracks coincide.

Do not treat the waymarking as a substitute for navigation. The route crosses rough bog, rocky upland passes and remote ground below the Caha Mountains and Slieve Miskish, where low cloud, Atlantic rain and poor visibility can make even a well-marked trail harder to read. Missing a marker on open moorland or at a track junction can cost time and energy.

Maps, GPX and guides

Carry paper OSi mapping for the route, along with a compass and the ability to use both. The Beara Way / Beara-Breifne Way guides are also sensible planning tools, particularly because the Beara Way forms the first section of the longer Beara-Breifne Way and includes spurs and options.

A GPX track or offline digital map is strongly recommended, especially for the upland and boggy sections. Download mapping before setting out each day rather than relying on live mobile data. Battery management matters on this route: long days, wet weather and remote terrain make a power bank more than a convenience.

Use mapping that shows topography, rights of way/tracks, minor roads, contours and waterlogged ground as clearly as possible. A simple road map or phone app without offline topographic detail is not enough for the higher and rougher sections.

Route options and spurs

Navigation is made slightly more complicated by the Beara Way's network of options. The core circuit, the longer loop with options, and the wider waymarked network including spurs are listed at different distances, so walkers should know exactly which version they are following before starting.

Pay particular attention around Castletownbere, Bere Island, Allihies, Dursey Sound and the western peninsula, where optional island legs and spurs can affect both distance and logistics. If planning Bere Island or Dursey Island, check the ferry or cable-car arrangements separately before relying on them.

Areas where care is most important

The section out of Glengarriff towards Adrigole climbs into the Caha Mountains and reaches the route's high ground at about 560 m. This is a serious navigation area in poor visibility: the trail does not involve technical climbing, but the combination of steep ascent, boggy ground, rocky upland and cloud can make progress slow.

The more remote stretches between villages also need attention. On sections linking Adrigole, Castletownbere, Allihies, Eyeries, Ardgroom, Lauragh, Tuosist and Kenmare, services are spaced out and turning a navigation error into a long road walk or late finish is easy.

Mobile signal and bad-weather planning

Assume mobile signal may be unreliable on the more remote upland and coastal sections. Save maps offline, keep the phone dry, and avoid depending on cloud-based route instructions.

In low cloud, heavy rain or strong wind, navigation should be conservative. If markers become hard to see, stop and relocate using map, compass and GPS rather than continuing on a vague line across bog or rough ground.

Suitability for less experienced navigators

The Beara Way is not a good choice for walkers whose navigation depends entirely on waymarks and a phone. It is well marked for a strenuous Irish waymarked trail, but the terrain, weather and remoteness make independent navigation skills important.

Fit walkers with limited navigation experience should consider using a luggage-transfer or walking-holiday itinerary, walking shorter stages, and practising with map and compass before taking on the full loop. Experienced hillwalkers will find the route manageable, provided they carry proper mapping and do not underestimate the weather.

Terrain, Conditions and Difficulty in Practice

The Beara Way is strenuous less because of any single technical obstacle and more because of the cumulative mix of rough ground, repeated climbing, exposed weather and long gaps between villages. The route is waymarked and does not involve technical climbing, but it should be treated as an upland walk rather than a simple coastal ramble.

Underfoot conditions change often. Expect a mixture of old droving roads, bog roads, green tracks, quiet tarmac lanes, woodland paths, cliff paths and open moorland below the Caha Mountains and Slieve Miskish. Some kilometres are straightforward on firm lanes or tracks; others are slow, soft and wet across peat, heather and rough upland.

Bog, wet ground and rough tracks

Boggy ground is one of the defining practical difficulties of the route. After rain, peat sections can become waterlogged and tiring, with slow progress even where the gradient is modest. Waterproof boots, gaiters and spare dry socks are far more useful here than lightweight fair-weather footwear.

Green tracks and bog roads can look easy on the map but may still be wet, rutted or uneven. The pace on these sections is often much slower than on surfaced lanes, so daily distances should not be judged by kilometres alone.

Rocky upland and mountain passes

The route crosses rough upland below the main Caha Mountains and Slieve Miskish summits, with rocky passes and exposed ridges giving the trail much of its character. The high point is around 560 m on a Caha Mountains ridge reached after a steep climb out of the Coomerkane valley between Glengarriff and Adrigole.

This is not scrambling terrain, but wet rock, peat and uneven footing can make climbs and descents awkward. Walking poles are useful for balance on boggy ground and for reducing strain on long descents, especially over a full 9-day itinerary.

Climbing, descent and accumulated fatigue

The total ascent is about 5,245 m, so the Beara Way is a repeated up-and-down route rather than a flat coastal circuit. The climbs are not Alpine in height, but they often rise from near sea level and come with rough surfaces underfoot.

The first major upland crossing between Glengarriff and Adrigole sets the tone: steep, exposed and potentially slow in poor weather. Later stages mix lower coastal and village walking with further moorland and hillside sections, so tired legs can become a bigger factor as the week progresses.

Road walking and easier going

There is some quiet tarmac lane walking, particularly where the trail links villages, accommodation and resupply points. These sections can be welcome after bog and rock, but they are still tiring over long days and can be hard on feet with a full pack.

The easier ground is one reason the route can be completed without technical mountain skills. It should not, however, be confused with an easy trail: the harder upland sections, exposure and weather make the overall route demanding.

Exposure, wind and low cloud

The Beara Peninsula is open to Atlantic weather. Rain, wind and low cloud are common on higher ground, and conditions can change quickly between sheltered village sections and exposed ridges or coastal headlands.

Low cloud can reduce visibility on the Caha Mountains and other open moorland sections. The waymarking is helpful, but OSi mapping and the Beara Way / Beara-Breifne Way guides should be carried, especially for the rougher and more remote upland stretches.

Seasonal conditions

April to September is the usual walking window, with summer offering the longest daylight and generally the best margin for completing long stages. Even in summer, waterproof clothing should be packed and used as essential hill kit rather than emergency backup.

Spring and autumn can be excellent walking seasons, but shorter days and wetter ground increase the planning margin needed. In poor weather, boggy sections become slower, rocky descents become more slippery and exposed ridges feel much more serious.

Access, gates and dogs

The route uses a mix of public lanes, tracks and waymarked paths through rural and upland terrain. Any gates and access points should be left as found, and walkers should stay on the waymarked line where it crosses working land or private access areas.

Dogs are not permitted on the trail. This matters for planning: it is not a route to attempt with a dog, even on a lead.

What makes the Beara Way hard in real life

The main difficulty is the combination of distance, rough surfaces and exposure. A fit walker may find an individual stage manageable, but nine consecutive days over bog, rock, lanes and hills adds up quickly.

The remoteness also raises the commitment level. Accommodation and services are concentrated in places such as Glengarriff, Castletownbere, Allihies, Eyeries and Kenmare, with longer stretches between smaller villages, so there is often limited flexibility once a day's stage has begun.

The route is best suited to walkers who are already comfortable with long hill days, wet ground, route-finding in poor visibility and carrying proper waterproof upland kit. Less experienced walkers should consider shorter itineraries, rest days or the more direct Glengarriff-to-Kenmare options rather than assuming the full loop will feel like a standard waymarked lowland trail.

Weather and Best Time to Walk

The normal walking window for the Beara Way is **April to September**. This is the period that gives the best balance of daylight, accommodation availability and manageable conditions on the exposed coast and upland crossings.

Waterproofs are essential in every month. The route sits between Bantry Bay and the Kenmare River estuary and crosses rough ground below the Caha Mountains and Slieve Miskish, so Atlantic rain, strong wind and low cloud can affect a day even in summer.

Best months

For most walkers, **summer is the most forgiving time** because it gives the longest daylight and somewhat more settled weather. That matters on the longer stages into and out of places such as Adrigole, Castletownbere, Eyerries, Kenmare and Glengariff, where slow boggy ground can make progress much slower than the distance suggests.

April to September is still a broad window rather than a guarantee of good weather. Spring and autumn can be excellent, but shorter daylight and wetter ground make early starts and conservative stage planning more important.

Period	What to expect	Planning advice
April to early summer	Usual walking season, but upland sections can still be wet, windy and cloudy	Carry full waterproofs and allow extra time for boggy ground
Summer	Longest daylight and generally the easiest period for multi-day logistics	Still plan for rain, wind and poor visibility on the Caha Mountains crossings
September	Still within the usual walking window, with shorter days than midsummer	Start early on longer stages and do not rely on late finishes in poor weather
Outside the usual window	Shorter daylight, rougher weather and more difficult logistics	Not the recommended period for a standard end-to-end Beara Way itinerary

Rain, wind and low cloud

The main weather problem is not extreme altitude, but exposure. The high point is around **560 m** on a Caha Mountains ridge, and several sections cross open moorland, rocky passes and remote bog where there is little shelter once the weather closes in.

Low cloud can make waymarking harder to follow on upland ground, especially where the path crosses open, wet terrain rather than obvious lanes. Carry OSi mapping and know how to navigate away from the yellow walking-man and arrow markers if visibility drops.

Wind is also a serious factor on the western and coastal parts of the peninsula, particularly around the Allihies, Dursey Sound and Eyerries side of the route. In strong weather, exposed headlands, open ridges and cliff paths can feel much more committing than the map distance implies.

Trail surface by season

Expect wet ground at any time of year. The Beara Way uses old droving and bog roads, green tracks, quiet lanes, cliff and woodland paths and open moorland, so conditions can change repeatedly in a single day.

After rain, the boggy upland sections can become slow, slippery and tiring. Waterproof boots or trail shoes with reliable grip, gaiters if preferred, and poles for balance are more useful here than lightweight fair-weather kit.

Hard-surfaced lanes can make some stages faster, but they do not remove the need for proper upland clothing. A dry village start can still become a wet, windy crossing later in the day.

Daylight and stage timing

The standard itinerary includes several days of about **20–23 km**, and those distances should not be treated like easy road walking. Rough bog, rocky upland, weather delays and navigation checks can all reduce pace.

In summer there is more daylight margin for slow ground, photo stops and minor route-finding delays. In April and September, plan earlier starts, especially on the longer stages between Kenmare and Glengarriff, Eyeries and the Allihies area, and Adrigole and Castletownbere.

Accommodation and seasonal logistics

Accommodation is concentrated in towns and villages such as Glengarriff, Castletownbere, Allihies, Eyeries, Ardgroom, Lauragh and Kenmare, with more remote gaps between them. Beds should be booked ahead during the walking season because stage lengths are often dictated by where accommodation exists.

Public transport on the peninsula is sparse and seasonal, so arrival and departure plans should not be left flexible unless using taxis, transfers or self-drive. Bus, coach and taxi options should be checked before travelling.

Optional island legs add extra seasonal risk to the plan. The Bere Island ferry and Dursey Island cable car operate to their own timetables, and the cable car has periodic maintenance closures; check current times before building either into a walking day.

Is the Beara Way realistic in winter?

The Beara Way is not best treated as a winter long-distance walk. The route is exposed, boggy and remote in places, daylight is limited, and Atlantic weather can make upland sections unpleasant or difficult to navigate.

Very experienced walkers may still tackle short sections in settled conditions, but a full winter circuit is a poor choice for most hikers. For an end-to-end itinerary, plan for the April-to-September window and keep at least one layer of spare time in the schedule for bad-weather delays.

Safety Notes

The Beara Way is waymarked and has no technical climbing, but it should still be treated as a serious upland and coastal walk. The main risks are rough boggy ground, long gaps between villages, road sections, exposed Atlantic weather and poor visibility on the higher crossings.

For emergencies in Ireland, call **999 or 112**. Do not rely on being able to make a call from every part of the route: the peninsula has remote valleys, upland ground and coastal sections where mobile signal may be weak or absent.

Weather and exposure

Waterproofs are essential year-round. Atlantic rain, strong wind and low cloud are common on the Caha Mountains and Slieve Miskish sections, and conditions can deteriorate quickly even in the usual April–September walking season.

The high ground between Glengarriff and Adrigole reaches about 560 m and is one of the places where mist, wind and wet rock can make progress slow. Carry warm layers, hat and gloves even in summer, and avoid assuming that a dry start in a village means settled conditions on the ridge.

Heat can also be a problem on long road and open moorland sections in settled summer weather. Carry enough water for the full day, especially where the next shop, café or accommodation stop is several hours away.

Navigation and remoteness

The route uses the standard Irish National Waymarked Trail markers — yellow walking-man or yellow arrow on a black background — but waymarking is not a substitute for navigation. Carry OSi mapping and know how to use it, particularly on boggy upland and remote open sections where a missed marker can cost time and energy.

Low cloud can make the higher ground confusing, and bog roads, green tracks and moorland paths may be less distinct in poor weather. A phone mapping app is useful, but it should not be the only navigation tool because battery life and signal cannot be guaranteed.

Tell someone where you are walking each day, particularly if hiking solo. Solo walkers should be conservative with stage timings and avoid pushing on into poor visibility late in the day.

Underfoot hazards

Expect wet peat, mud, rock and uneven old tracks. After heavy rain, boggy ground can be tiring and slow, and rocky passes can become slippery.

Wear boots or trail shoes with reliable grip and keep a realistic pace. The Beara Way's difficulty is cumulative: long days on wet ground can increase the risk of slips, twisted ankles and fatigue, especially towards the end of a multi-day itinerary.

Road walking and traffic

Some sections use quiet tarmac lanes and minor roads. Walk facing oncoming traffic where safe, use verges when available, and take extra care on bends, in rain, mist or low evening light.

High-visibility clothing or a bright pack cover is useful on road sections in poor weather. Do not assume drivers will expect walkers on narrow rural roads.

Livestock and dogs

The route crosses rural working landscapes. Give livestock space, close gates behind you, and avoid getting between animals and their young.

Dogs are not permitted on the Beara Way. This is an important access and safety rule, not just a convenience issue.

Coast, islands and water

The Beara Way includes exposed coastal sections and optional island legs to Bere Island and Dursey Island. Stay on the waymarked line, keep back from steep or eroded edges, and take particular care in strong wind, wet grass or poor visibility.

The Bere Island ferry and Dursey Island cable car run to their own timetables, and the Dursey cable car can have maintenance closures. Check current operating times before relying on either, and do not plan an island day with no realistic fallback.

Daily safety checks before setting off

Before leaving each morning, check:

- the local weather forecast, especially wind, rain and cloud level on higher ground;
- that the day's distance and ascent match the available daylight;
- where the next village, road access or accommodation stop is;
- whether food and water can be obtained en route or must be carried from the start;
- that waterproofs, warm layers, map, navigation device, power bank and head torch are packed;
- that transport, taxis, ferries or the Dursey cable car are running if the day depends on them;
- that someone knows the intended route and expected arrival point.

If the weather is poor, shortening the day, taking a lower road option where available, or using a taxi transfer is often the safest decision. On Beara, the hardest days are not always the longest on paper: bog, wind and low cloud can make a moderate stage feel much more demanding.

Gear Recommendations

The Beara Way needs proper upland walking kit, not just light touring gear. The route is waymarked, but long stretches cross rough bog, rocky passes, open moorland and exposed coastal ground where rain, wind and low cloud can make progress slow.

Footwear

Choose footwear for wet peat, rock and long road sections. Waterproof walking boots with good ankle support are the safest default for most walkers, especially on the Caha Mountains crossing, the bog roads and the rougher upland sections below Slieve Miskish.

Experienced hikers who normally use trail shoes may prefer them in warmer months, but they should have aggressive grip and drain well. Lightweight trainers or road shoes are a poor choice: the route includes soft, waterlogged ground and rocky stretches where grip matters.

Gaiters are useful on the boggy days. They will not keep feet dry indefinitely, but they reduce water and peat getting into boots and make long wet sections more tolerable.

Waterproofs and warm layers

Carry full waterproofs every day, regardless of season. A reliable waterproof jacket and waterproof trousers are essential on this peninsula, where Atlantic rain and wind can arrive quickly and visibility can deteriorate on higher ground.

Pack at least one warm mid-layer even in summer. The trail reaches about 560 m in the Caha Mountains, and exposed ridges, passes and coastal headlands can feel cold when wet or windy.

A warm hat and gloves are sensible outside high summer and still worth carrying on forecast-poor summer days. Avoid relying on an umbrella: much of the route is too exposed and windy for it to be practical.

Navigation

The Beara Way is marked with the standard Irish yellow walking-man / yellow-arrow markers, but waymarking should not be the only navigation method. Low cloud, boggy ground, lane junctions and remote upland sections make a map and compass important.

Carry OSi mapping and a Beara Way or Beara-Breifne Way guide, plus an offline route on a phone or GPS device. A waterproof map case or phone pouch is useful because rain is a normal planning assumption rather than an exception.

A power bank is strongly recommended if using a phone for navigation, accommodation details, taxis or ferry and cable-car timetable checks. Keep electronics protected from rain and condensation.

Water and food carry

Fill water before leaving each village or accommodation stop. Services are spaced out on the more remote sections, and some days cross open ground where there may be no convenient place to buy

drinks or food.

Carry enough water for the full day's stage, adjusted for heat, pace and whether a café or shop stop is genuinely available. This should be checked before travelling, especially outside the main summer season.

Carry lunch and high-energy snacks daily. Castletownbere and Kenmare are the main resupply points, but smaller places such as Adrigole, Allihies, Eyeries, Ardgroom, Lauragh, Tuosist and Bonane / Bunane should not be assumed to have everything needed at the time you pass through.

Trekking poles

Trekking poles are useful on the Beara Way. They help with balance on boggy ground, reduce strain on long descents and give extra security on rocky or slippery sections.

They are especially worthwhile for hikers carrying a full pack or walking after heavy rain, when peat and grass can be unstable underfoot. Rubber tips are useful for the quieter tarmac lane sections.

Inn-to-inn hikers

Inn-to-inn walkers can keep packs moderate, but should not strip kit down too far. Even with luggage transfer, the day pack should contain waterproofs, warm layer, map/navigation, power bank, food, water, first-aid basics and a head torch.

Accommodation is concentrated in towns and villages, so each day's kit needs to cover the full stage rather than short strolls between services. Booked beds do not reduce the need for bad-weather gear on the remote upland sections.

Campers

Camping options are more limited than accommodation in the main villages, so camping plans need to be built around known places to stay and realistic stage lengths. Do not assume there will be a campsite at every natural stopping point.

A strong, waterproof tent or shelter is required for Atlantic wind and rain. A warm sleeping bag, insulated mat, stove, dry bags and reliable waterproof pack liner are important if carrying overnight gear across boggy ground.

Wild-camping possibilities exist in places, but permissions, land access and local conditions must be handled responsibly. This should be checked before travelling, and camp spots should never be assumed near villages, farms or sensitive ground.

Fast and section hikers

Fast hikers and section walkers can travel lighter, but the same weather and navigation rules apply. The route's rough ground and cumulative ascent make it easy to underestimate time, especially between villages or in poor visibility.

For single-day sections, carry waterproofs, warm layer, map/offline navigation, food, water and a power bank even when the forecast looks settled. Public transport is sparse on the peninsula, so gear should allow for delays, missed connections or a longer-than-planned day.

Seasonal extras

From April to September, add sun protection as well as waterproofs: exposed coastal and upland walking can bring sun, windburn and rain on the same day. Sunglasses, sun cream and a brimmed cap are useful in settled weather.

In warm, still conditions around boggy ground, a small insect repellent can be useful. In colder or wetter shoulder-season conditions, prioritise spare warm layers, dry gloves and a more robust waterproofing system.

If adding Bere Island or Dursey Island, carry extra food, water and a warm layer rather than relying on immediate onward transport. The Bere Island ferry and Dursey Island cable car run to their own timetables, and both should be checked before building them into the day.

Budget and Costs

Costs on the Beara Way vary heavily by season, availability and how much transport support you use. Treat the route as a rural, accommodation-led walk rather than a cheap hut-to-hut trail: beds are concentrated in villages, public transport is limited, and taxis or transfers can add significantly to the total. Check current prices before booking, especially for accommodation, local transport, the Bere Island ferry and the Dursey Island cable car.

Main cost items

Cost item	What to budget for
Accommodation	Hotels, guesthouses, B&Bs, hostels and a few campsites. Book ahead, particularly around Glengarriff, Castletownbere, Allihies, Eyeries, Kenmare and the more remote northern stages.
Food	Breakfast may be included in some B&Bs or guesthouses, but do not assume this. Budget for packed lunches, evening meals and extra snacks for long, wet upland days.
Transport to the route	Most walkers reach the area via Cork, then use Bus Éireann/local services, seasonal coaches, taxis, transfers or self-drive to reach Glengarriff, Castletownbere or Kenmare. Services can be infrequent. This should be checked before travelling.
Local taxis and transfers	Useful where accommodation is off-route, where public transport gaps do not fit walking plans, or where a shorter itinerary starts/ends away from Glengarriff. Agree the fare in advance.
Island options	The Bere Island ferry from Castletownbere and the Dursey Island cable car add separate fare costs if included. Timetables, prices and closures should be checked before relying on them.
Luggage transfer	Available through some walking-holiday arrangements and local providers. Costs depend on itinerary, number of bags and daily stages; confirm current prices before booking.
Maps and guide material	Carry OSi mapping and a Beara Way / Beara-Breifne Way guide for the rough, boggy and remote upland sections.

Budget approach

The lowest-cost version of the Beara Way means using hostels, campsites where available, simple food and minimal taxi use. This requires more planning than on routes with frequent towns, because campsites are limited and accommodation gaps can force paid transfers if beds are not available in the right place.

A budget walker should book early, carry lunches and snacks from the larger stops, and keep the itinerary close to the main villages rather than relying on last-minute options. Castletownbere and Kenmare are the most important resupply and services stops on the loop.

Mid-range approach

Most independent walkers should budget for a mid-range trip built around B&Bs, guesthouses and occasional hotels. This is the most practical style for a 9-day itinerary, as it keeps pack weight manageable and gives better resilience in poor weather.

Costs rise if accommodation is off the trail and daily taxi transfers are needed. Before confirming rooms, check whether the property is walkable from the route or whether a lift is available.

Comfortable approach

A more comfortable Beara Way budget covers private rooms throughout, regular evening meals, luggage transfer and taxis where public transport is inconvenient. This suits walkers who want to reduce pack weight or who are completing the route in a fixed holiday window.

Self-guided walking packages are also relevant on this trail. Operators commonly offer Beara Way itineraries over 7–11 days and may bundle accommodation, luggage transfer and route notes. Compare carefully: inclusions vary, and island options, extra transfers, single-room supplements and meals may not all be included.

Cost planning tips

Accommodation is the cost to secure first. Once the overnight stops are fixed, transport and food costs become easier to control.

Do not rely on being able to solve gaps cheaply on the day. The peninsula has sparse public transport, and a missed bus, full B&B or closed seasonal service can mean an expensive taxi or a changed stage plan.

If including Bere Island or Dursey Island, budget both time and money separately from the main walking stages. Ferry and cable-car arrangements can change, and the Dursey cable car has periodic closures, so current timetables and fares should be checked before booking accommodation around those legs.

Luggage Transfer, Guided Tours and Support Services

Support on the Beara Way is worth arranging early. The route is waymarked, but the peninsula has sparse public transport, long gaps between villages and several remote upland sections, so relying on last-minute lifts or same-day baggage arrangements is risky.

Most walkers who want support either book a self-guided walking holiday package or arrange taxis and accommodation directly. Independent walkers can complete the route without luggage transfer, but carrying a full pack over boggy ground, rocky passes and exposed sections of the Caha Mountains makes an already strenuous route significantly harder.

Luggage transfer

There is no single official luggage-transfer system specified for the Beara Way. Baggage movement is usually arranged through walking-holiday companies, local accommodation providers or local taxi operators, especially between the main overnight stops such as Glengarriff, Adrigole, Castletownbere, Allihies, Eyeries, Ardgroom, Lauragh, Kenmare and Bonane / Bunane.

If arranging the route independently, contact accommodation in each overnight village before booking and ask whether they can receive bags and help arrange onward transfer. This matters most on the western and northern parts of the loop, where services are more spread out and public transport is limited.

Keep luggage arrangements simple. One main bag moved from accommodation to accommodation, plus a daypack with waterproofs, food, water, map and emergency layers, is the usual setup. Do not assume a driver can collect from a trailhead or remote lane unless that has been agreed in advance.

For optional island legs, plan baggage conservatively. The Bere Island ferry from Castletownbere and the Dursey Island cable car operate to their own timetables, and the Dursey cable car has periodic closures, so treat island sections as requiring separate planning rather than assuming a standard baggage move will cover them. Timetables and any closures should be checked before travelling.

Self-guided walking holidays

Self-guided packages suit walkers who want to walk independently but prefer accommodation, luggage transfer and route logistics to be arranged in advance. Companies such as Hillwalk Tours offer Beara Way information and walking-holiday services; current itineraries, inclusions, dates and prices should be checked directly when booking.

Typical self-guided packages on the Beara Way are built around the main villages and usually include pre-booked accommodation, daily luggage transfer and route notes or maps. Operators commonly offer the full circuit over 7–11 days, while shorter Glengarriff-to-Kenmare itineraries of around 6–8 days are also common.

A package is particularly useful if accommodation availability is tight, if walking in the main April-to-September season, or if public transport connections into Glengarriff, Castletownbere or Kenmare do not line up neatly. It also reduces the need to negotiate individual taxi and baggage moves in smaller villages.

Self-guided support does not remove the need for proper upland preparation. The Beara Way still crosses rough bog, rocky mountain passes and exposed ground where low cloud, Atlantic rain and wind can make navigation and pacing difficult. Carry OSi mapping and the relevant Beara Way / Beara-Breifne Way guide material even when using route notes.

Guided tours

Fully guided Beara Way trips are less essential than on an unmarked mountain route because the trail is a National Waymarked Trail with yellow walking-man and yellow-arrow markers. However, a guide can be useful for groups, less confident navigators, walkers interested in local history, or anyone wanting support through the more remote upland sections.

Availability of guided departures varies by season and operator. If a guided trip is required, book well ahead and check exactly what is included: guide, accommodation, luggage transfer, transport to and from trailheads, island excursions, meals and contingency arrangements for poor weather.

For experienced walkers, a self-guided package or independent plan with luggage transfer is usually enough. For walkers unsure about long rough stages, exposed weather and navigation in poor visibility, guided support may be the safer choice.

Taxi transfers and local support

Taxis and private transfers are important on the Beara Peninsula because buses and local services are limited and can be seasonal or infrequent. Many walkers use taxis to reach Glengarriff, return from Kenmare, bridge awkward public-transport gaps, or shorten a stage if accommodation is unavailable in the ideal overnight stop.

Transfers are most useful at the start and end of the walk, around Castletownbere and Kenmare, and for connecting with accommodation away from the trail. They can also provide a practical backup if weather makes a high or exposed section unsuitable on a particular day.

Book taxi transfers in advance rather than assuming availability on the day. This is especially important outside larger towns, on Sundays or public holidays, and when connecting with the Bere Island ferry or Dursey Island cable car. Current fares and pickup arrangements should be confirmed before booking.

When support is unnecessary

Strong, experienced walkers who are happy carrying a multi-day pack can walk the Beara Way independently without formal support. The route passes through enough towns and villages to make a fully self-supported itinerary possible, provided accommodation is booked ahead and stage lengths are planned carefully.

Support becomes much more valuable if walking the full loop in a fixed number of days, travelling without a car, adding island spurs, or booking late in the season. On this route, paying for luggage transfer or occasional taxis is often less about comfort and more about keeping the itinerary workable on a remote peninsula with limited transport.

Shorter Hikes and Best Sections

The Beara Way works well as a section hike because the full route is a demanding loop with several natural village-to-village breaks. The main constraint is not waymarking but logistics: public transport is sparse, accommodation is unevenly spaced, and some of the best sections finish in smaller villages where a taxi or pre-arranged lift may be needed.

Approximate distances below use the standard village stages in the full-route itinerary. Island loops, spurs and local variants can change the final mileage.

Best for	Section	Approx. distance	Why choose it	Transport notes
Best day walk	Glengarriff to Adrigole	18 km	The most compact way to experience the Caha Mountains character of the route, including the steep climb out of the Coomerkane valley and the high ridge at about 560 m with views over Bantry Bay.	Glengarriff is one of the easier Beara trailheads to reach, but Adrigole has more limited onward options. Arrange a taxi, lift or accommodation transfer before setting out.
Best easier introduction	Eyeries to Ardgroom	14 km	One of the shorter village-to-village stages, with coastal Beara scenery and a manageable distance for walkers testing the route before committing to longer upland days.	Both ends are small settlements, so do not rely on turning up and finding transport. This should be checked before travelling.
Best weekend section	Castletownbere to Allihies, with the Dursey Sound out-and-back if time allows	15 km to Allihies; about 31 km including the Allihies–Dursey Sound day	A strong two-day taste of western Beara: Castletownbere, Bearhaven, the mining village of Allihies, the Allihies copper-mining landscape and the exposed far-western feel around Dursey Sound.	Castletownbere is one of the better-served towns on the peninsula. Dursey Sound is not a reliable public-transport finish, so plan a return to Allihies or arrange a pickup. Check Dursey cable-car timetables and closures before building a trip around the island.
Best 3–5 day section	Castletownbere to Kenmare via Allihies, Eyeries, Ardgroom and Lauragh	About 86 km over 5 walking days	The best short version for walkers who want a proper linear journey with regular village stops, the western Beara coast, colourful villages and the northern side of the peninsula towards Kenmare.	Castletownbere and Kenmare have better onward connections than the smaller villages, but services are infrequent and seasonal. Confirm buses, coaches or transfers before booking accommodation.

Best for	Section	Approx. distance	Why choose it	Transport notes
Best scenery	Glengarriff to Adrigole	18 km	The Caha Mountains crossing gives the Beara Way its most mountainous feel, with rough upland ground, open ridge walking and wide views between Bantry Bay and the interior of the peninsula.	This is a strenuous day rather than a casual scenic stroll. Avoid it in poor visibility unless fully equipped and confident with navigation.
Best for villages and accommodation	Castletownbere to Kenmare	About 86 km	This links several of the route's most useful overnight stops: Castletownbere, Allihies, Eyeries, Ardgroom, Lauragh and Kenmare. It is the most straightforward section for booking a sequence of beds without committing to the full loop.	Book ahead, especially in smaller villages where choice is limited. Kenmare is the largest amenity stop on the northern side of the loop.
Best for public transport	Kenmare to Glengarriff	23 km	A practical final-stage section between two of the more useful access points on the loop, with Bonane / Bunane on the route and a finish back at Bantry Bay.	Kenmare and Glengarriff are among the more realistic points for bus, coach, taxi or transfer arrangements, but services are still limited. This should be checked before travelling.

Best day walk: Glengarriff to Adrigole

This is the strongest single-day sample of the Beara Way's upland character. It climbs from the Glengarriff side into the Caha Mountains and reaches the route's high ground at roughly 560 m before descending towards Adrigole.

It is also one of the more serious day sections. Expect rough, boggy and rocky ground, and treat low cloud, wind and rain as normal planning factors rather than exceptional conditions.

Best weekend: Castletownbere, Allihies and Dursey Sound

For a short trip with a strong sense of place, start in Castletownbere and walk to Allihies, then use the following day for the Allihies–Dursey Sound section if transport and weather allow. This gives access to the western peninsula without needing to complete the full circuit.

The Dursey Island cable car is a major draw, but it should not be treated as a guaranteed add-on without checking the current timetable and any maintenance closures. If the cable car or return transport is uncertain, keep the plan to the mainland section and overnight again in Allihies.

Best 3–5 day section: Castletownbere to Kenmare

Castletownbere to Kenmare is the most coherent shorter journey on the Beara Way. It links the peninsula's main fishing town with Allihies, Eyeries, Ardgroom, Lauragh and finally Kenmare, giving a good balance of coast, village stops and the quieter northern side of the loop.

At around 86 km using the standard stages, it suits fit walkers with four to five days available. Adding the Dursey Sound or Bere Island options increases the time needed and makes transport planning more important.

Best section for beginners

The Beara Way is not an ideal first long-distance trail: even short sections can include rough, wet ground and exposed weather. For a cautious introduction, choose a shorter village stage such as Eyeries to Ardgroom, about 14 km, or Castletownbere to Allihies, about 15 km, in settled weather.

Beginners should avoid starting with the higher Caha Mountains sections unless already comfortable with upland navigation and poor-weather decision-making. Arrange accommodation and any return transport before walking, rather than relying on finding options at the end of the day.

Best for camping

Camping is possible only with careful planning, as the route's practical services are concentrated in towns and villages and suitable camping options are limited. The most sensible approach is to plan around known overnight stops on the western and northern side of the loop, such as Castletownbere, Allihies, Eyeries, Ardgroom, Lauragh and Kenmare.

Do not assume a campsite or legal wild-camping spot will be available at the end of each stage. Current campsite availability, permissions and any local restrictions should be checked before travelling.

Highlights and Points of Interest

The Beara Way's strongest points are its mix of rough upland walking, Atlantic headlands, small painted villages and unusually rich local history. The places below are the main stops worth allowing extra time for when planning stages, rest days or optional spurs.

Caha Mountains ridge and Bantry Bay views

The high point of the route is reached on a ridge of the Caha Mountains between Glengarriff and Adrigole, at about 560 m. This is one of the defining sections of the trail: rougher, more exposed and more mountainous than many Irish waymarked routes, with views over Bantry Bay in clear weather.

Hungry Hill, the highest summit in the Caha range at 685 m, is passed but not climbed by the Beara Way. The main route still gives a strong sense of the peninsula's upland spine, especially where the trail crosses boggy and rocky ground below the mountains.

Castletownbere, Bearhaven and Dunboy Castle

Castletownbere is the peninsula's main town and one of Ireland's largest fishing ports, making it one of the most useful places on the route for accommodation, food and resupply. It is also the base for access to Bearhaven and the Bere Island ferry.

Near Castletownbere, Dunboy Castle is one of the key historic sites on the Beara Way. The ruined O'Sullivan Beare tower house overlooks Bearhaven and is closely tied to the 1602 siege after the Battle of Kinsale, one of the major historical episodes associated with the peninsula.

Bere Island optional loop

Bere Island is an optional ferry loop from Castletownbere and is worth considering if there is room in the itinerary. Its appeal is different from the main peninsula walk: island walking, archaeological sites and former British military forts overlooking Berehaven.

Do not assume this can be added casually at the end of a long stage. The ferry runs to its own timetable, so times should be checked before booking accommodation or planning the day's walking.

Allihies Copper Mines and mining village

Allihies is one of the most distinctive stops on the western side of the loop, with brightly painted houses and the remains of its 19th-century copper-mining landscape above the village. Engine houses and spoil heaps make the surrounding hillsides a clear historic landmark rather than just a scenic backdrop.

The Allihies Copper Mine Museum is housed in a former Methodist church and is the main place to understand the village's mining history. This is one of the better places on the route to slow down, especially if walking the western stages over a less compressed schedule.

Dursey Island and the cable car

Dursey Island sits at the far western tip of the Beara Peninsula and gives the route its strongest end-of-land feel. The island is reached by Ireland's only cable car, and the only cable car in Europe crossing open

water.

The attraction here is remoteness: Atlantic views, seabirds and a sense of leaving the main peninsula behind. The Dursey cable car has its own operating pattern and can be affected by closures, so the timetable should be checked before relying on this spur.

Eyeries and the north coast villages

Eyeries is another of Beara's brightly painted villages and is a natural stop on the northern side of the western loop. Along with Allihies, it gives this part of the trail much of its visual character: small coastal settlements set against open hills and Atlantic weather.

Ardgroom, Lauragh and Tuosist mark the quieter progression eastwards along the northern side towards Kenmare. These are practical stage points as well as scenic ones, so accommodation availability can strongly influence how much time can be spent in each.

Bronze Age stone circles

Beara has important prehistoric remains, and the stone circles add a very different layer of interest from the mining and military sites. Ardgroom, also known as Canfea, and the Uragh stone circle near Lauragh are the notable examples associated with this part of the route.

Kenmare also has a Bronze Age stone circle of its own. If archaeology is a priority, the northern side of the loop and the Kenmare stop are worth giving more time rather than treating them simply as through-stages.

Kenmare

Kenmare is the largest amenity stop on the northern side of the Beara Way and the most common alternative start or finish for walkers not beginning in Glengarriff. It is a useful place for a rest, resupply and a more comfortable overnight break before the return leg towards Glengarriff.

Its position at the head of the Kenmare River makes it a natural pause point on the circuit. Walkers using a shorter Glengarriff-to-Kenmare itinerary often finish here, while full-loop walkers continue on towards Bonane / Bunane and back to Glengarriff.

Best places to allow extra time

Place or feature	Why allow extra time
Castletownbere	Main resupply and accommodation stop; access to Dunboy Castle, Bearhaven and the Bere Island ferry.
Bere Island	Optional ferry loop with archaeological sites and former British military forts; needs timetable planning.
Allihies	Copper-mining heritage, museum and one of the most characterful villages on the western stages.
Dursey Island	Remote Atlantic spur reached by cable car; check operating times and closures before planning around it.

Place or feature	Why allow extra time
Eyeries	Attractive painted village on the north-western side of the peninsula.
Lauragh / Ardgroom area	Access to notable Bronze Age stone circles, including Ardgroom / Canfea and Uragh near Lauragh.
Kenmare	Largest amenity stop on the northern side, with its own Bronze Age stone circle and good value as a rest or resupply point.

Common Mistakes and Planning Tips

The Beara Way is well waymarked, but it is not a casual village-to-village stroll. Most planning problems come from treating the peninsula as compact and easy to improvise, when the actual walk includes rough bog, exposed upland crossings, long gaps between services and limited transport.

Common mistake	Better plan
Treating the distance as a single fixed figure	Plan the route you are actually walking. The core circuit is shorter than itineraries that include route options and island spurs, while the full waymarked network is longer again. Use the day-by-day stages, accommodation stops and any Bere Island or Dursey Island additions to calculate your real distance.
Booking accommodation late	Reserve beds before committing to flights or transport. Accommodation is concentrated in places such as Glengarriff, Castletownbere, Allihies, Eyeries and Kenmare, with more remote sections between them. If a bed is unavailable, the practical stage length may change significantly.
Assuming every village is a full resupply point	Carry enough food for the day and do not rely on finding a shop at every overnight stop. Castletownbere and Kenmare are the principal amenity stops; smaller villages may have limited services. Opening times and food availability should be checked before travelling.
Underestimating the first and last mountain sections	The Caha Mountains give the route much of its difficulty, especially the rough ridge section between Glengarriff and Adrigole and the return over upland ground towards Glengarriff. Build in realistic time for bog, rock, ascent and poor visibility rather than planning by distance alone.
Relying only on waymarks	The yellow walking-man and yellow-arrow markers are useful, but they are not a substitute for navigation. Carry OSi mapping and know how to use it, especially on rough upland, open moorland and in low cloud. A GPS track can help, but should not be the only navigation method.
Packing for a low-level coastal walk	Bring proper waterproofs, warm layers and footwear suitable for boggy peat and rocky passes. The route reaches around 560 m in the Caha Mountains and is exposed to Atlantic rain, wind and low cloud even during the main April to September walking season.
Planning over-long days because the trail is waymarked	Keep daily distances conservative unless already fit and comfortable on rough ground. A 20 km day on Beara can feel much longer than a 20 km day on firm paths because of waterlogged peat, rocky sections, ascent and exposed weather.
Leaving transport to the last minute	Public transport around the peninsula is sparse and can be seasonal or infrequent. Many walkers use Cork as the wider access hub, then arrange local buses, taxis, transfers or self-drive logistics to Glengarriff, Castletownbere or Kenmare. This should be checked before travelling.
Forgetting that the loop does not have to start in Glengarriff	Glengarriff is the waymarked start and finish, but Kenmare is a practical alternative for walkers who prefer to begin or end in a larger town. Choose the start point that best matches accommodation and transport, not just the traditional route description.

Common mistake	Better plan
Adding Bere Island or Dursey Island without checking access	The Bere Island ferry and Dursey Island cable car operate to their own timetables, and the cable car can have maintenance closures. Check current times before building either island leg into a fixed itinerary, especially if accommodation or onward transport depends on it.
Taking a dog	Dogs are not permitted on the Beara Way. Do not plan this as a dog-friendly long-distance walk.

Route-specific planning tips

Build the itinerary around beds first, then transport, then daily mileage. On Beara, a theoretically neat stage plan is less useful than one that matches available accommodation in the right village on the right night.

Allow extra time for the western and upland sections. The days around Allihies, Dursey Sound, Eyeries and the Caha Mountains can be slow in wet or windy weather, even where the map distance looks moderate.

Do not overfill the itinerary with optional spurs unless there is slack in the schedule. Bere Island and Dursey Island are worthwhile additions, but they add transport dependencies as well as walking time.

Carry enough cash or payment options for small settlements, taxis, ferries or last-minute changes, but confirm current prices before booking. The route is in Ireland, so costs are in euro.

Check the forecast daily and be willing to shorten or delay an exposed stage. The Beara Way has no technical climbing, but poor visibility and Atlantic weather can make the rough higher ground serious for tired walkers.

Final Advice

The Beara Way is best suited to fit, self-reliant walkers who are comfortable with rough bog, rocky upland paths, exposed coastal weather and long gaps between services. It is not technically difficult, but the cumulative ascent, remote ground and Atlantic conditions make it a serious undertaking rather than a gentle village-to-village ramble.

The main planning priority is logistics. Book accommodation ahead, build stages around the available beds in places such as Glengarriff, Castletownbere, Allihies, Eyeries, Ardgroom, Lauragh and Kenmare, and do not assume public transport will neatly fit the walking schedule. If using the Bere Island ferry or Dursey Island cable car, check current timetables and closures before committing to those spurs.

The most rewarding sections are the ones that feel distinctly Beara: the rough Caha Mountains crossing, the western stages around Allihies and Dursey Sound, the fishing-port stop at Castletownbere, and the quieter northern side towards Kenmare. These are also the places where weather, navigation and timing matter most, so carry OSi mapping, proper waterproofs and enough food for the day.

For walkers with the time and fitness, the full loop gives the best sense of the peninsula's changing character, from Bantry Bay to the Kenmare River and back to Glengarriff. A shorter section hike is still worthwhile, especially between Glengarriff and Kenmare or around the western villages, but transport between trailheads may require taxis or pre-arranged transfers.

Do not underestimate the route because it is waymarked. Yellow markers are helpful, but low cloud, boggy ground and exposed passes can slow progress quickly. Dogs are not permitted on the trail, and all transport, island access and accommodation details should be checked before travelling.