



Wicklow Way

THE COMPLETE GUIDE



hikelist.com/hikes/wicklow-way

Last updated 5 June 2026

© 2026 HikeList.com · All rights reserved

Contents

- 01** Overview

- 02** Key Data

- 03** Introduction

- 04** Stage-by-Stage Guide

- 05** Recommended Itinerary

- 06** Planning the Route

- 07** Towns, Villages and Overnight Stops

- 08** Getting to the Start

- 09** Getting Home from the Finish

- 10** Which Direction Should You Walk?

- 11** Accommodation Along the Route

- 12** Camping and Wild Camping

- 13** Food, Water and Resupply

- 14** Navigation and Waymarking

- 15** Terrain, Conditions and Difficulty in Practice

- 16** Weather and Best Time to Walk

- 17** Safety Notes

- 18** Gear Recommendations

- 19** Budget and Costs

- 20** Luggage Transfer, Guided Tours and Support Services

- 21** Shorter Hikes and Best Sections

- 22** Highlights and Points of Interest

- 23** Common Mistakes and Planning Tips

- 24** Final Advice

Overview

Wicklow Way: A Complete Hiking Guide

The Wicklow Way is a 130 km point-to-point National Waymarked Trail in [Ireland](#), crossing the Dublin and Wicklow Mountains from Marlay Park to Clonegal. Usually walked in 7 days, it is a moderate long-distance hike: non-technical, but with exposed upland, boggy ground, forest tracks, boardwalk and long road or lane sections. It suits fit walkers who want a waymarked inn-to-inn route with mountain scenery, Glendalough, Glenmalure and quieter south Wicklow villages.

Route Overview

The route is normally walked north to south, starting in Marlay Park in Dublin's southern suburbs and finishing in Clonegal, County Carlow. It climbs through Kilmashogue, Fairy Castle and the Dublin Mountains, then continues via Knockree, Glenree, Crone Wood, Djouce, White Hill, Lough Tay, Roundwood and the Vartry Reservoir to Glendalough. South of Glendalough it crosses Glenmalure, Moyne, Tinahely and Shillelagh before the final approach to Clonegal. It is a linear trail, so plan start and finish logistics rather than expecting a loop. For other Irish multi-day walks, compare the [Beara Way](#), [Dingle Way](#) and [Causeway Coast Way](#).

History of the Wicklow Way

The Wicklow Way was conceived by Irish hill-walker J. B. Malone, who proposed the route in newspaper articles in 1966. Its first section opened on 15 August 1980 and the full trail was completed in 1982, making it the first of the Republic of Ireland's National Waymarked Trails. The line uses old drove roads, military routes and pilgrim paths through the Wicklow Mountains, linking Dublin's edge with historic valleys such as Glendalough and Glenmalure.

Notable highlights

- **Glendalough monastic city:** A 6th-century monastery founded by St Kevin in a glaciated valley of twin lakes. The Wicklow Way passes through the valley, close to its round tower and early-Christian remains.
- **Djouce and the White Hill boardwalk:** The trail's highest and most exposed section crosses open mountain and blanket bog on timber boardwalk. White Hill is the route high point at 630 m, with views towards Lough Tay.
- **Lough Tay, the "Guinness Lake":** A dark corrie lake below the cliffs of Luggala, known for its black water and pale beach. It is seen from the high ground around White Hill.
- **Powerscourt Waterfall viewpoint:** From the Crone Wood and Djouce area the route gives views towards Powerscourt Waterfall, fed by the River Dargle. A detour reaches the waterfall park, where an entry fee applies.
- **Glenmalure valley:** A long, steep-sided glacial valley and one of the route's wildest-feeling sections. It is also linked with the O'Byrne clan and the 1580 Battle of Glenmalure.

Challenges to expect

Expect changeable upland weather, wet bog, exposed mountain sections and cloud on the Djouce and White Hill area. The walking is not technical, but several days are long and the early mountain stages and southern stages are more strenuous than the overall moderate grade suggests. There are no designated trail huts, and facilities are limited in the remote middle and southern sections, so book accommodation and food stops ahead.

Key Data

Country	Ireland
Distance	130 km
Duration	7 days
Difficulty	Moderate
Trail type	Point to point
Elevation gain/loss	3320 m
Highest point	630 m
Terrain & landscape	Mountain, Forest, Moorland, Farmland
Trail surface	Boardwalk, Dirt, Gravel, Paved
Accommodation	Hostels, Guesthouses, Hotels
Average daytime temp.	15°C
Chance of rainfall	High
Estimated cost	\$\$
Optimal season	Spring, Summer, Autumn
Accessibility	Family Friendly, Pet Friendly
Facilities	Water Sources, Campsites, Shelters
Permits & fees	No permits or fees

Introduction

The Wicklow Way is Ireland's original National Waymarked Trail: proposed by J. B. Malone in 1966, first opened from Marlay Park to Luggala in 1980 and completed to Clonegal in 1982. It runs north to south from Dublin's southern edge at Marlay Park, past Knockree and through the Wicklow Mountains to County Carlow, and suits fit walkers who want a proper inn-to-inn mountain journey without technical scrambling.

The route leaves the city fringe quickly, climbing through forest and onto open mountain, blanket bog and granite upland. Its highest point is White Hill at 630 m, where the trail crosses timber boardwalk — the *tóchar* — above Lough Tay, the dark corrie lake known as the "Guinness Lake", below the cliffs of Luggala and close to the J. B. Malone memorial stone.

Glendalough is the great cultural set-piece of the walk. The descent into Laragh and Glendalough brings you into St Kevin's 6th-century monastic city, set in a glaciated twin-lake valley with its round tower, early-Christian remains and Upper and Lower Loughs.

South of Glendalough the character changes again, first through the wild-feeling glacial trench of Glenmalure, then into quieter Wicklow and Carlow countryside. The final days move at a slower rhythm through forestry, rolling farmland, hedgerowed boreens and small villages such as Tinahely and Shillelagh before the finish at Clonegal.

Do not mistake waymarked for easy: this is officially a strenuous trail, with roughly 130 km of walking, about 3,320 m of ascent, exposed mountain weather and wet ground common underfoot. Neither end has a railway station, public transport is limited at Clonegal, and accommodation is sparse in the middle and southern sections, so the practical planning matters as much as fitness.

This guide covers stages, daily planning, accommodation, food, transport, terrain, navigation, gear and the common mistakes to avoid.

Stage-by-Stage Guide

The stages below follow the common 7-day north-to-south itinerary from Marlay Park to Clonegal. Distances are approximate: daily mileage varies slightly with accommodation detours, visits into villages and any temporary forestry diversions.

Stage 1: Marlay Park to Knockree — approx. 21 km

The Wicklow Way begins gently in Marlay Park, but this is not a soft opening day. The stage moves from suburban parkland and quiet roads into Kilmashogue Forest, then onto more open Dublin Mountain ground around Kilmashogue, Fairy Castle / Two Rock and Tibbradden.

Underfoot, expect a mix of forest paths, tracks, upland trail and road sections. The open heath and bog around Fairy Castle and Two Rock can feel exposed in poor weather, and waymarks are less obvious than on roads and forestry tracks.

The route crosses towards Glencullen, follows the R116 briefly, then climbs towards the Prince William's Seat area before crossing from County Dublin into County Wicklow. The final section descends towards the Glenree valley and Knockree, where the Way passes through the grounds of Knockree Hostel.

There are no shops or cafés directly on the trail between Marlay Park and Knockree. Start with a full day's food and water from Dublin. Enniskerry is a useful off-trail services stop, with shops, cafés and restaurants, but it adds a detour.

Accommodation is unusually straightforward at the end of this stage because Knockree Hostel is directly on the route. Enniskerry, around 7 km off-trail, offers further options including inns and hotels, but walkers staying there should factor in the extra distance or arrange a lift.

There is no direct public transport to Knockree Hostel. Enniskerry has bus connections, including route 44 from the city centre and route 185 from Bray, and taxis or pre-arranged transfers are commonly used for access to Knockree.

Do not underestimate this first day. At around 21 km, with several upland sections and a heavy pack, the final descent into Glenree can feel harder than the distance suggests.

Stage 2: Knockree to Roundwood — approx. 18 km

This is the most dramatic mountain stage of the Wicklow Way and one of the most demanding. From Knockree the route works around Knockree Hill, drops towards the Glenree River valley and passes through Crone Wood, a useful road-access point with a car park.

The climb from Crone Wood brings views towards Powerscourt Waterfall and Powerscourt Deerpark. The trail then crosses the Dargle River area and climbs onto the eastern shoulder of Djouce; it does not go to the summit of Djouce, but contours below it on exposed open ground.

The high point of the entire Wicklow Way is White Hill at 630 m. This is crossed on the OPW timber tóchar, built to protect the fragile blanket bog. The boardwalk is clear but narrow and can be slippery when wet.

Near White Hill, the J. B. Malone memorial stone looks out over Lough Tay, one of the route's defining views. The dark corrie lake, pale beach and Luggala cliffs make this a natural stopping point in good weather, but it is not a place to linger in wind, mist or heavy rain.

The descent continues through Ballinastoe Woods and eventually joins the Roundwood–Sally Gap road before reaching Roundwood village. The day has a long exposed middle section, so a late start from Knockree is a poor choice in unsettled conditions.

There is no reliable food or water on the trail between Knockree and Roundwood. Carry a full day's supply, with at least enough water for a long open-mountain crossing. Roundwood is one of the key resupply points on the Wicklow Way, with a shop, pubs serving food and ATMs.

Roundwood has several walker-friendly accommodation options, including B&Bs, guesthouse-style accommodation and hostel/B&B options. It is still a small village, so booking ahead is sensible, particularly from late spring to early autumn.

Navigation is generally clear on the boardwalk and forest tracks, but mist on Djouce and White Hill can make the open sections serious. A map and compass should be carried and usable; phone navigation alone is not enough for this stage.

Stage 3: Roundwood to Glendalough — approx. 12 km

This is the shortest standard stage and gives some recovery after the first two strenuous days. The route leaves Roundwood, climbs over Paddock Hill, then continues through Brockagh Forest, Drummin forest and old woodland paths before descending towards Laragh and Glendalough.

The walking is mostly on forest tracks, woodland path and quiet boreens, with a gentler overall feel than the previous day. It still includes some climbing, but the distance is short enough that many walkers reach Glendalough with time to explore.

Laragh comes shortly before Glendalough and is an important services point. It has shops, pubs serving food and accommodation, making it one of only three places on the Wicklow Way with a shop.

Glendalough is the main landmark of the stage. The route brings walkers into a glaciated twin-lake valley with St Kevin's early-Christian monastic site, the round tower, stone churches and remains around the Lower Lake and Upper Lake area.

The visitor area can be busy with day-trippers, especially in summer from mid-morning to mid-afternoon. Entry to the monastic grounds is free, but the OPW visitor centre exhibition and some visitor facilities may involve charges; this should be checked before travelling.

Accommodation is available in both Glendalough and Laragh, including hostel, hotel and B&B options. This is one of the busiest overnight areas on the route, so summer beds should be booked well ahead.

Glendalough is one of the better mid-route exit or joining points. St Kevin's Bus links Glendalough with Dublin city centre, and booking is recommended in busy periods.

Camping is prohibited in the Glendalough valley under Wicklow Mountains National Park rules. Anyone planning to camp elsewhere on the route should check current National Park guidance before setting out.

Stage 4: Glendalough to Glenmalure — approx. 14 km

This stage is shorter than the big 20 km days, but it has a serious mountain profile. From Glendalough the route leaves by the Upper Lake and climbs steeply beside Poulanass Waterfall, gaining height quickly out of the valley.

The trail reaches the Spinc, the boardwalked ridge above the south side of the Upper Lake. Views back over Glendalough's twin lakes are among the best on the route, but the boardwalk and steps can be slippery in wet weather.

Beyond the Spinc, the route continues into the Lugduff valley and climbs towards the shoulder of Mullacor. The boggy saddle between Mullacor and Lugduff is crossed on boardwalk, after which the route becomes open, remote and more exposed.

In clear conditions there are views west towards Lugnaquilla, Wicklow's highest mountain. The descent into Glenmalure is long and eventually enters forest tracks before reaching the valley.

Glenmalure is a remote overnight stop with very limited services. There are no shops, and mobile signal in the valley is poor or absent. The Drumgoff area includes the Wicklow Way halfway marker near the forest entrance.

There is nothing to buy between Glendalough and Glenmalure. Fill bottles and organise a packed lunch before leaving Glendalough or Laragh. The next reliable shop is not until Tinahely, two stages later.

Accommodation in Glenmalure is limited and should be booked early. Options include Glenmalure Lodge, hostel accommodation and a small number of B&B-style places; some walkers instead arrange a taxi back to Laragh for more choice.

There is no public transport to Glenmalure. Access is by car, taxi or pre-arranged transfer, and anyone using luggage transfer should ensure the accommodation is reachable by the operator.

Navigation on the Spinc is straightforward, but the open ground between Mullacor and Lugduff can be confusing in mist. This is a stage for proper waterproofs, warm layers and a map-and-compass backup, even when the forecast looks settled.

Stage 5: Glenmalure to Moyne — approx. 21 km

The character of the Wicklow Way begins to change south of Glenmalure, but this remains a strenuous day. It starts with a steep climb out of the valley onto Slieve Maan and open upland ground.

The route crosses the Military Road / R115 and continues around the Carrickashane area, with views towards Lugnaquilla in clear weather. It then descends gradually into the Ox River valley, crosses Ballyteigue Bridge and moves into a mix of forestry, farmland and quiet roads.

This is a long, self-sufficient stage. There are no shops between Glenmalure and Moyne, and Moyne itself is a very small hamlet with no walker services. Carry food from Glendalough, Laragh or Glenmalure, and leave with enough water for the full day.

Accommodation at Moyne is one of the tightest logistics on the whole route. Options are very limited, with farm/B&B-style accommodation in the wider area; some walkers divert or transfer to Aughrim, around 3 km off-trail, for more services.

There is no public transport at Moyne. Road access is by car or taxi, and transfers should be arranged before walking into this section.

Navigation is generally by waymarked upland, forestry and road sections, but the Slieve Maan area is exposed and can be bleak in cloud. This stage comes after several hard days, so fatigue is a real planning factor: start early and avoid leaving Glenmalure short of food or water.

Stage 6: Moyne to Shillelagh — approx. 21 km

This stage moves through rolling south Wicklow countryside, with a growing amount of breen and tarmac walking. The route passes through the Ballycumber Hill, Garryhoe Hill and Hacketstown area before reaching Tinahely, the main services point of the day.

Tinahely is critical for resupply. It has shops, a supermarket, cafés, pubs and takeaway options, and is one of only three villages on the Wicklow Way with a shop. Stock up here, especially for the final stage to Clonegal.

After Tinahely the route continues through Muskeagh Hill and along Coolafunshoge Lane, an old droving path. It passes the Stranakelly crossroads area, known for the Dying Cow pub/rest stop, before continuing through Raheenakit Woods towards Shillelagh.

The walking is less mountainous than the central Wicklow stages, but it is still a long day and the harder surfaces can be tiring. Feet often suffer more here than on the boggier upland sections, so road-friendly footwear and blister management matter.

Shillelagh has limited accommodation, including pub-with-rooms options and small private places. Book ahead, as there are not many beds and the village is an important overnight stop on a 7-day itinerary.

Tinahely has limited bus links, while Shillelagh has very limited public transport. Anyone finishing or joining here should arrange transfers in advance rather than relying on same-day options.

Waymarking is generally easier to follow on roads, lanes and forestry tracks, but pay attention at junctions and crossroads. The final southern section of the Wicklow Way includes a high proportion of tarmac, so do not treat this as an easy rest day simply because the mountains are lower.

Stage 7: Shillelagh to Clonegal — approx. 23 km

The final stage is a long approach through quiet country roads, forestry tracks and rolling farmland. It is generally less exposed than the earlier mountain stages, but the amount of road walking makes it hard on tired feet.

From Shillelagh the route passes through the south Wicklow countryside towards Mullinacuff, Moylisha and Urelands Hill. In clear weather there are distant views towards Mount Leinster and the Blackstairs Mountains.

The trail eventually leaves County Wicklow and enters County Carlow, crossing the final county boundary of the route. Wicklow Bridge and the River Derry area lead towards Clonegal, close to the Wexford border.

Clonegal is a quiet estate village rather than a busy trail town. The Wicklow Way finishes at the village green, with a map board and stone bench; do not expect shops, transport offices or a large finishing

infrastructure.

There is no reliable food or water on the trail between Shillelagh and Clonegal. Carry a packed lunch and enough water from Shillelagh. Clonegal has limited food and drink options, including a pub and seasonal dining, but opening hours should be checked before travelling.

Accommodation in Clonegal is very limited. Bunclody, around 5 km away, has more options and is commonly used by walkers who want a wider choice of beds or onward travel.

There is no direct bus from Clonegal. The usual solution is a pre-booked taxi or transfer to Bunclody or Kildavin for onward Bus Éireann links, including route 132 between Bunclody and Dublin. Do not arrive in Clonegal without an onward transport plan, as there is no taxi rank and public transport is very limited.

The main warning for the final day is road walking. Keep to the correct side of narrow lanes, stay alert on bends and expect tired legs to make the last kilometres feel longer than the map suggests.

Recommended Itinerary

The most practical Wicklow Way itinerary is the standard 7-day north-to-south schedule from Marlay Park to Clonegal. It keeps the longest days to around 21–23 km, uses the main accommodation stops, and leaves a deliberately short day into Glendalough for recovery and sightseeing.

Distances are approximate. Off-trail accommodation and service diversions, especially Roundwood and Glenmalure, can add time to the day, so check official mapping before booking.

Standard 7-day itinerary

Day	From	To	Approx. distance	Why this stage makes sense	Services/accommodation notes
1	Marlay Park	Knockree	21 km	A strong opening day that leaves Dublin's southern suburbs and climbs into the Dublin Mountains, with forest, moorland and early upland walking. There is no particularly convenient overnight stop between Marlay Park and Knockree, so this is a natural first stage despite the distance.	Knockree Hostel sits directly on the trail and is the key overnight option. There is no village at Knockree; Enniskerry is about 7 km off-trail for shops, pubs and B&Bs. There is no public transport to Knockree itself, so book accommodation before setting off.
2	Knockree	Roundwood	18 km	This is one of the signature mountain days, crossing the Djouce and White Hill area, including the trail high point at White Hill on the timber boardwalk, with views towards Lough Tay. It is exposed in poor weather, so start early if the forecast is unsettled.	Roundwood is about 2 km west of the trail but is worth the diversion for resupply. The village has shops, pubs, food, accommodation and bus connections with Dublin via St Kevin's Bus; check the current timetable before relying on it.
3	Roundwood	Glendalough	12 km	The short day is intentional. It gives tired legs a lighter stage and leaves time for Glendalough's monastic site, round tower, lakes and valley paths.	Laragh and Glendalough have the broadest accommodation choice on the route, including B&Bs, hostel accommodation and hotel options. Laragh has a convenience store, pub and café. The Glendalough Visitor Centre may charge entry, and the area is busy from April to October.

Day	From	To	Approx. distance	Why this stage makes sense	Services/accommodation notes
4	Glendalough	Glenmalure	14 km	A shorter but strenuous upland stage, leaving the busy Glendalough valley for a wilder crossing and descent into Glenmalure. The stage feels more remote than the distance suggests, especially in poor visibility.	Glenmalure is the most accommodation-constrained overnight on the route. Options include Glenmalure Lodge, Wilderness Lodge and An Óige Glenmalure Hostel, but there is no shop or café in the valley. Stock up in Laragh before leaving.
5	Glenmalure	Moyne	21 km	One of the tougher and more remote days, moving from mountain ground towards quieter farmland around south Wicklow. There are no services en route, so this stage needs a full food-and-water plan.	Moyne is a tiny settlement with limited services. Kyle Farmhouse is a common overnight near Moyne; Aughrim is about 3 km off-trail and gives more accommodation and food options. Do not leave Glenmalure without a booked bed.
6	Moyne	Shillelagh	21 km	The character changes to south Wicklow farmland, forest, boreens and hedgerows. Tinahely sits part-way through the day and works well as a lunch, coffee or resupply stop.	Tinahely has useful services including food, shops, ATM, post office and laundrette. Shillelagh has a supermarket, pubs, food and limited accommodation, including Central House and Hunter's Lodge. Book ahead, as rooms are limited.
7	Shillelagh	Clonegal	23 km	The longest stage by distance, but generally gentler than the northern mountain days. It finishes the route through quiet rural country into Clonegal on the River Derry.	Clonegal is a small village with very limited accommodation, so many walkers leave after finishing. There is no railway station. Plan onward transport before starting the trail: common options include a pre-booked taxi or transfer to Bunclody or Kildavin for onward bus links, or a pre-booked Wicklow Way Bus transfer.

Slower variant: 8–9 days

A slower itinerary suits first-time long-distance walkers, anyone carrying a heavier pack, and hikers who want more time in Glendalough. It is also a sensible choice if accommodation availability forces a shorter or more flexible day.

Useful ways to slow the route down include:

Adjustment	How it helps	Planning notes
Split the opening stage with an overnight around Enniskerry	Reduces the impact of the 21 km first day from Marlay Park to Knockree.	Enniskerry is off-trail but has services and accommodation. Exact walking distance depends on the diversion used; check official mapping before booking.
Add a rest or half-rest day at Glendalough	Gives proper time for the monastic site, lakes and valley, and provides a natural recovery point before the more remote southern stages.	Glendalough and Laragh have the best accommodation choice on the route, but they are busy in peak season. Book ahead.
Break the Glenmalure to Moyne stage by using the Aughrim area	Makes the long, service-poor Day 5 more manageable.	Aughrim is about 3 km off-trail and has more services than Moyne. Transport or walking logistics should be arranged before committing to this split.
Overnight in Tinahely instead of continuing to Shillelagh	Shortens the Moyne to Shillelagh day and gives access to good mid-route services.	Tinahely has food, shops, ATM, post office, laundrette and some accommodation. This can make the final two days easier to balance.

Faster variant: 6 days

A 6-day Wicklow Way is realistic only for experienced long-distance walkers who are comfortable with repeated 20 km-plus days, exposed upland conditions and tighter accommodation logistics.

The cleanest faster option is to avoid an overnight in Roundwood by walking from Knockree through to Glendalough, making a long mountain day of roughly 30 km. This saves one night but removes the easier resupply stop at Roundwood and gives little time to enjoy Glendalough on arrival.

Another way to compress the walk is to keep daily stages closer to 21–22 km throughout, matching the broad 6-day approach used by Sport Ireland. Exact stopping points depend heavily on accommodation availability, especially around Glenmalure, Moyne, Shillelagh and Clonegal.

Combining Moyne to Clonegal into one very long final day is not recommended for most walkers. It creates a roughly 44 km finish and leaves little margin for tired legs, poor weather, navigation delays or onward transport from Clonegal.

Section-hiking options

Roundwood and Glendalough are the easiest mid-route access points because they have bus links with Dublin. They are also useful bail-out points if weather, injury or accommodation problems disrupt the itinerary.

The northern half from Marlay Park to Glendalough is the more mountainous and scenic half, with Djouce, White Hill, Lough Tay and Glendalough as the main rewards. Allow 3–4 days depending on fitness and accommodation.

The southern half from Glendalough to Clonegal is quieter, more rural and less dramatic, with farmland, forest, burreens and smaller villages. It also needs careful planning because accommodation and transport become thinner towards the finish.

Itinerary planning notes

Book the constrained stops first: Knockree, Glenmalure, Shillelagh and Clonegal. Glenmalure in particular should not be treated as a turn-up-and-find-a-bed stop.

Carry enough food for the remote middle stages. There are no services between Glenmalure and Moyne, and no shop on the route until Tinahely the following day.

Check current trail information before walking near Drumgoff, where forestry works have affected routing. Follow signed diversions on the ground.

Plan the Clonegal exit before leaving Dublin. Public transport is limited at the southern terminus, and a pre-booked taxi or transfer can prevent a stressful finish.

Luggage transfer is available through services such as Wicklow Way Baggage, and private transfers such as Wicklow Way Bus can be useful on the Roundwood to Clonegal corridor. Confirm current arrangements, collection times and prices before booking.

Planning the Route

How many days to allow

Most walkers should plan the Wicklow Way over **7 days**. That gives a steady rhythm of roughly 18–21 km on most days, with the shorter Roundwood to Glendalough stage leaving time for the monastic site and valley.

A **6-day itinerary** is realistic for fit walkers who are comfortable with consecutive long days, but it leaves less margin for poor weather, transport delays or slow going on wet upland ground. A **5-day crossing** means sustained 23–27 km days and is best kept for experienced long-distance hikers travelling light.

An **8-day plan** works well if you want a gentler pace or a rest/half day at Glendalough. This is the easiest place on the route to slow down, resupply, use bus links and spend extra time without disrupting the rest of the itinerary.

Stages are dictated by accommodation

On this trail, daily distances are not just a matter of preference. The practical stages are strongly shaped by where beds, food and transport actually exist, especially after Glendalough.

Overnight area	Planning notes
Knockree	The key first-night stop in the early mountain section, with Knockree Youth Hostel on or close to the route.
Roundwood	A useful village stop with B&Bs and Wicklow Way Lodge; also useful for section access.
Laragh / Glendalough	The best-served mid-route base, with hotels, B&Bs and hostel options. Good place for a shorter day or rest/half day.
Glenmalure	The main bottleneck on the route. Glenmalure Lodge has very limited bed space and should be booked early.
Moyne	A tiny hamlet with very limited accommodation. There is no shop directly in Moyne; nearest supplies are around 2 km away in Knockananna.
Tinahely	One of the more reliable southern overnight stops, with small-town services and B&B options.
Shillelagh	Usable as a village stop, but accommodation remains limited.
Clonegal	The southern terminus has limited accommodation. Many walkers finish and transfer to Bunclody for beds and onward transport.

Book accommodation before committing to flights or fixed travel. In June, July and August, allow at least **8–10 weeks** where possible, and book earlier again around Irish bank holidays.

Glenmalure is the critical booking. If there is no bed there, the surrounding stages often need taxis, transfers or a redesigned itinerary rather than a simple distance adjustment.

Typical costs vary, but hostel beds are commonly around **€25–35 per night**, while B&Bs are often around **€40–60 per person per night**. Confirm current prices, opening dates and booking terms before relying

on them, especially in the quieter southern section and outside the main season.

Walking fast or walking slowly

The Wicklow Way rewards a measured pace. The trail is waymarked and non-technical, but the combination of ascent, exposed mountain weather, boggy ground, forestry tracks and long southern stages makes over-ambitious mileage a common mistake.

A fast schedule is most demanding from Glendalough southwards, where services thin out and escape options are less convenient. The Glenmalure to Moyne stage is a particular one to respect: it is a long day with very limited services en route, so food and water planning matter more than the map distance alone suggests.

A slower schedule is easiest to build around Glendalough, Roundwood or Tinahely. Adding a night elsewhere can be useful, but only if accommodation and transfer logistics work; there are not always convenient extra stopping points directly on the route.

Shortening or extending the route

The easiest way to shorten the walk is to finish at **Glendalough**. The northern half from Marlay Park to Glendalough is the most popular shorter version: it is mountainous, scenic and better connected by bus than the quieter southern half.

Another common adjustment is to start at **Enniskerry**, skipping some of the first approach from Dublin's southern suburbs. This should be planned carefully against the current route, access point and transport options before travelling.

The best simple extension is a rest or half day at **Glendalough / Laragh**. It gives time for the monastic city, the lakes and resupply without forcing a difficult detour or extra transfer.

Section hiking

Section hiking is practical, particularly between Dublin, Roundwood, Laragh and Glendalough. The northern sections are the easiest to access and the most commonly walked as weekends or short breaks.

The southern half from Glendalough to Clonegal is quieter and less bus-served. It can still be split into sections, but it usually needs more deliberate planning, taxis or a booked transfer service.

Useful access options include:

Access point / service	Practical use
Marlay Park	Reachable from Dublin by Dublin Bus (such as route 16 to Grange Road) and Luas-plus-bus/taxi combinations. Check the current Dublin Bus network before travelling.
St Kevin's Bus	Links Dublin (St Stephen's Green North), Roundwood on request, Laragh and Glendalough. Useful for starting, ending or splitting the northern and middle route. Check the timetable before building a section plan around it.

Access point / service	Practical use
LocalLink 183	Links places including Arklow, Avoca, Rathdrum, Wicklow Town, Ashford, Roundwood and Laragh / Glendalough. Useful for south Wicklow access.
Wicklow Way Bus	Book-in-advance transfer service covering the Roundwood to Clonegal corridor, including walker pick-ups and drop-offs. Useful for Glenmalure, Tinahely, Clonegal and airport or station transfers.
Clonegal finish	No public transport in the village itself. Plan a taxi to Bunclody, a pre-booked transfer, or another arranged collection.

St Kevin's Bus publishes a Dublin–Glendalough service via St Stephen's Green North, with Roundwood available on request. Published fares include €14 single and €23 return, but timetables and fares should be checked before travelling.

Transport planning: do not leave Clonegal to chance

The start is straightforward by Dublin standards: Marlay Park is in the southern suburbs and can be reached by public transport and a short local connection. The finish is the opposite.

Clonegal has no railway station and no regular public transport from the village itself. The usual solutions are a pre-booked Wicklow Way Bus collection, a taxi to Bunclody for onward bus links, or a private transfer arranged before the final walking day.

This is one of the most important logistics on the whole route. Do not assume a taxi or lift will be available at the exact time you arrive in Clonegal.

Food and resupply

Carry lunch and snacks from the previous overnight stop unless there is a definite shop or café on the next stage. Several days have no reliable food stop between villages.

The key food gap is **Glenmalure to Moyne**, a full walking day with very limited services en route. Moyne itself has no shop, so plan supplies around your accommodation, Knockananna, or the previous day's stop.

Glendalough / Laragh and Tinahely are the most useful places to reset food supplies. Roundwood is also useful before the middle stages.

Water

Carry enough water for each full stage and refill at accommodation where possible. Mountain streams are common in the northern uplands, but water should still be treated if taken from natural sources.

In the southern half, the route passes more grazed farmland and quiet lanes, so natural water is less appealing without filtering or purification. Tinahely has a public tap, but elsewhere it is safer to rely on accommodation, cafés, shops where available, or carried water.

Navigation

The Wicklow Way is generally well waymarked with the yellow walking man or yellow arrow on a black background, along with brown fingerposts in places. That is enough for much of the route in clear weather, but it should not be the only navigation plan.

Carry an offline GPX track and a backup map. The relevant OSI Discovery Series sheets are **50, 56 and 62**, and a printed Wicklow Way map guide is also widely used.

Mist, forestry operations and open moorland can make waymarks harder to follow. Before setting off, check current trail notices and diversions, particularly around forestry areas such as the Drumgoff section.

Weather and season

Spring, summer and autumn are the main walking seasons. Even then, the Wicklow Mountains can bring rapid changes in visibility, wind and rain.

Waterproofs are essential, not optional. The Djouce / White Hill boardwalk above Lough Tay and the approaches around Glenmalure are exposed enough that windproof layers and warm spare clothing should be carried even on a mild forecast.

Wet ground is common on bog, forest track edges and upland paths. Footwear should be chosen for mud, rough track and long paved boreens rather than for dry parkland walking.

Permits, fees and restrictions

No permit is required to walk the Wicklow Way, and the trail itself is free. Some trailhead car parks may charge small fees.

At Glendalough, the monastic ruins are free to enter, while the Visitor Centre exhibition may charge an entry fee. Powerscourt Waterfall is a paid detour if you choose to visit the waterfall park rather than simply viewing the area from the route.

Key planning mistakes to avoid

- Leaving Glenmalure accommodation until late.
- Assuming Clonegal has buses or a railway station.
- Planning the southern stages purely by distance, without considering sparse services.
- Failing to carry lunch on stages with no food stop.
- Relying only on waymarks in mist or forestry areas.
- Forgetting to check St Kevin's Bus times before using Roundwood, Laragh or Glendalough as a section access point.
- Booking a fast itinerary before checking whether accommodation exists at the required stops.

Towns, Villages and Overnight Stops

Accommodation on the Wicklow Way is unevenly spread. Dublin, Roundwood, Laragh and Glendalough give the widest choice, while Glenmalure, Moyne and Clonegal have very limited capacity and should be treated as booking pinch points.

The route is often walked inn-to-inn, but several signed points on the map are not villages in the practical sense. In the remoter middle and southern sections, do not assume there will be a shop, café, taxi rank or spare bed unless it has been arranged in advance.

Marlay Park, Rathfarnham, Dublin

Marlay Park is the northern trailhead, in Rathfarnham in Dublin's southern suburbs, around 9 km from the city centre. There is no accommodation at the park itself, so most walkers stay in Dublin the night before and travel out to the start in the morning.

The Wicklow Way start marker is near the park entrance. There are no useful hiker services at the trailhead, so buy food, gas where needed, and any missing supplies in Dublin before setting out.

Dublin Bus routes 16, 116 and 161 serve the Grange Road entrances. The nearest Luas Green Line stops are Balally and Dundrum, both roughly a 30-minute walk away, with local shuttle or taxi options from the Dundrum area. Timetables should be checked before travelling, especially for early starts.

Kilmashogue

Kilmashogue is an early upland access point after leaving the Dublin suburbs. It is useful as a route landmark rather than an overnight stop.

There are no village services, shops or regular accommodation here for Wicklow Way walkers. Treat this as part of the first walking day between Marlay Park and Knockree, not as a place to resupply.

Fairy Castle, Dublin Mountains

Fairy Castle is crossed in the Dublin Mountains section before the route drops deeper towards the Wicklow side of the range. It is an exposed upland point, not a settlement.

There are no accommodation, food or transport services at Fairy Castle. In poor visibility this part of the day still needs proper navigation attention, despite the route being waymarked.

Knockree

Knockree is the standard first overnight stop on a 7-day north-to-south itinerary, around 21 km from Marlay Park. It is not a village: for practical purposes, Knockree means the hostel above the Glencree valley.

Knockree Hostel, run by An Óige / Hostelling International, sits directly on the Wicklow Way. It is a walker-focused hostel in a restored 18th-century farmhouse, with en-suite rooms, family rooms, a self-catering kitchen, restaurant on site and parking.

There are no shops at Knockree. Either carry food from Dublin, use the hostel restaurant where available, or plan meals before arrival. The nearest town is Enniskerry, about 7 km away, with pubs and restaurants, but it is not a casual evening stroll after a long first stage.

There is no direct public bus to the hostel. Access is usually via Enniskerry, served by Dublin Bus route 44 from the city centre and the route 185 link from Bray, followed by a taxi or walk. If using public transport, arrange the final leg in advance.

Glencree

Glencree lies in the valley between the Dublin Mountains and Knockree. The route passes through the area on the first day, but it is not a practical overnight base for most walkers.

The Glencree Centre for Peace and Reconciliation is located here, but Glencree itself has no public walker accommodation, shops or pubs. Continue to Knockree or arrange off-route accommodation before committing to a stopping point.

Crone Wood

Crone Wood is a key route point on the second stage between Knockree and Roundwood, on the approach towards the Powerscourt and Djouce area. It is a forest and access area rather than a village.

There are no shops, pubs or accommodation at Crone Wood. It is useful as a landmark and possible access point, but not as an overnight stop.

Powerscourt / Djouce Area

This section is one of the most important mountain parts of the route, but it has no village infrastructure on the Wicklow Way itself. Walkers pass through the broader Powerscourt and Djouce area between Knockree and Roundwood.

The route gives views towards Powerscourt Waterfall from the Crone Wood and Djouce area. A paid detour reaches the waterfall park; entry arrangements and opening times should be checked before travelling if planning to visit.

Do not plan on food, shops or accommodation in this upland section. Roundwood is the next practical overnight stop for most walkers heading south.

White Hill

White Hill is the high point of the Wicklow Way at 630 m, on the southern shoulder of Djouce. The route crosses this exposed blanket-bog area on the OPW timber boardwalk, the tóchar, above Lough Tay and near the J. B. Malone memorial stone.

This is a mountain section, not a stopping place. There are no services, shelter, food outlets or accommodation, and weather can be much harsher than in the villages below.

Lough Tay, Luggala

Lough Tay is passed as a view from the high ground around White Hill and the Luggala area. It is one of the most memorable points of the northern half of the walk, but not a service stop.

There is no hiker accommodation or resupply at Lough Tay on the Wicklow Way. Continue towards the Roundwood side for facilities.

Roundwood

Roundwood is one of the most useful overnight stops on the entire route, commonly reached after the stage from Knockree. It sits slightly off the official Wicklow Way line, with approaches via Ballinastoe car park or the R759 junction.

Accommodation includes B&Bs, guesthouses and walker-friendly places on or near the main street. The Roundwood Inn is popular with walkers and is known for food and drying rooms. Book ahead in summer, as the village is a natural stopping point for Wicklow Way itineraries.

Roundwood is the best resupply point on the northern half of the route. Services include a Centra supermarket, ATM, post office, petrol station and pharmacy. Food and drink options include Byrne and Woods Gastro Bar, Kavanagh's Vartry House pub and café or bistro choices.

Transport is relatively good by Wicklow Way standards. St Kevin's Bus runs from St Stephen's Green in Dublin via Bray and Kilmacanogue towards Glendalough, stopping at Roundwood, usually twice daily; current timetables should be checked before booking. Local Link Bus 183 also provides access between Wicklow Town, Ashford/Rathnew, Annamoe, Laragh and Glendalough.

For southbound walkers, Roundwood is the last major resupply before the more mountainous Roundwood–Glendalough–Glenmalure run. Stock up here if accommodation or meal arrangements ahead are uncertain.

Vartry Reservoir

Vartry Reservoir lies close to the Roundwood part of the route and helps orientate the approach into the village area. It is not an overnight stop in itself.

Use Roundwood for accommodation, food and resupply rather than expecting services at the reservoir. The practical value of this area is its proximity to the village.

Laragh

Laragh is one of the best-serviced stops on the Wicklow Way and works well as the overnight base for the Glendalough stage. It lies at the entrance to Glendalough, about 1 km from the monastic site area and close to the main valley facilities.

There is a good spread of guesthouses, B&Bs and hotel accommodation, including long-established walker places such as Heather House, Tudor Lodge and Lynham's Hotel. Glendalough International Hostel and Wicklow Way Lodge add budget options. The area can book out quickly in July and August, so reserve well ahead.

Laragh has small shops, cafés, pubs serving food, the Laragh Pub and other village services. It is one of the few places on the whole route where shops are available, making it an important resupply point before the more remote Glenmalure section.

St Kevin's Bus connects Laragh with Dublin, Roundwood and Glendalough, stopping in the village. It is the main public transport link for this part of the route and should be booked in advance in busy

periods.

Many walkers spend at least one night here, partly because it gives time to visit Glendalough without rushing the walking day. It is also a sensible place for a rest day or short extra walk, including the Spinc ridge loop or Derrybawn ridge, if conditions and energy allow.

Glendalough

Glendalough sits about 1–2 km from Laragh in the glaciated twin-lake valley and is one of the main reasons many walkers choose this route. The Wicklow Way descends into the Laragh/Glendalough area before climbing out towards Glenmalure.

Accommodation is available in the Glendalough area, including Glendalough Hotel, B&Bs and Glendalough International Hostel. Demand is high in summer, especially around July and August, so do not leave this stop to chance.

Food options include the pub and restaurant at Glendalough Hotel and cafés in the area, though some services can be seasonal. The OPW-managed visitor centre and monastic sites may involve entry fees for some facilities, while walking the valley itself is free.

St Kevin's Bus terminates at Glendalough Visitor Centre. Midday can be busy with coach day-trippers from Dublin; early morning and evening are usually quieter for visiting the monastic city and lakes.

Glenmalure

Glenmalure is the crucial remote overnight after the Glendalough stage, around 14 km beyond Glendalough on the common 7-day itinerary. It is a long glacial valley in the heart of the Wicklow Mountains, with no village infrastructure and no shops.

Accommodation capacity is very limited. Glenmalure Lodge is the main walker stop, with B&B rooms, a pub, food and a traditional lodge atmosphere. Wilderness Lodge self-catering is another option, but all accommodation here needs early booking.

The pub at Glenmalure Lodge is effectively the only dinner option on this stretch. If not eating there or at pre-arranged accommodation, carry food.

There is no public bus to Glenmalure. Rathdrum railway station is about 9 km away, on the Irish Rail line from Dublin via Wicklow to Rathdrum, and Glenmalure Lodge hosts can organise pickup from the station or help arrange a taxi. This should be arranged before travelling.

For summer trips, Glenmalure should be booked 8–10 weeks ahead if possible. It is one of the tightest accommodation bottlenecks on the Wicklow Way.

Drumgoff

Drumgoff is at the entrance to Glenmalure and functions mainly as a road-junction landmark. It is not a village stop with services.

There are no shops or general walker facilities at Drumgoff. Any forestry-works reroute or local diversion in this area should be checked on the official trail information before walking, then followed on the ground by current signage.

Moyne

Moyne is a scattered rural locality in south Wicklow, commonly used as an overnight after the long stage from Glenmalure. It is not a village with a centre, shop or pub.

Accommodation is very limited and tends to be in B&Bs, farmhouses or self-catering properties in the wider area. Options include Kyle Farmhouse, where the Wicklow Way passes through the farm, Coolalingo B&B and Rath Ban Farm Cottage. Some walkers instead stay off-route in Aughrim, which requires a taxi.

Do not expect evening food services at Moyne. Meals need to be arranged with accommodation or carried. The stage from Glenmalure is around 21 km, so arriving without a confirmed bed and food plan is risky.

There is no direct public bus serving Moyne. Car pickup, taxi or accommodation transfer should be arranged in advance. In high season, book 8–10 weeks ahead where possible.

Tinahely

Tinahely is the best-served stop on the southern half of the Wicklow Way. It is a small market town in the valley of the Derry River and is a useful resupply and recovery point after the remoter south Wicklow stages.

Services include a bank, ATM, post office, supermarkets, pharmacy, laundrette and general shops. This is the place to restock before continuing towards Shillelagh and Clonegal, where services are more limited.

Food and drink options include a restaurant, coffee shop and several pubs. Seaver's Bar hosts traditional music on alternate Wednesdays, and the town also has Tinahely Arts Centre in the courthouse.

Accommodation is available in B&Bs and guesthouses, but the choice is still modest compared with Dublin, Roundwood or Laragh. Book ahead, especially if walking a fixed-stage itinerary.

Transport is limited but better than the very remote stops. A daily Carlow–Arklow bus stops at Tinahely Pharmacy, Bus Éireann's Dublin–Tinahely service is very limited, and Wicklow Way Bus operates a Tinahely / Iron Bridge to Rathdrum service. The Wicklow Way Bus fare has been listed at €13 one-way and €20 return, but current fares and timetables should be checked before booking.

Shillelagh

Shillelagh is a small rural village in south County Wicklow and a common late-route overnight before Clonegal. It has fewer services than Tinahely but more of a village centre than Moyne.

Accommodation includes Central House guesthouse, with en-suite rooms above a family pub, and B&Bs such as Old Shillelagh B&B. There is also a golf resort nearby for walkers wanting a more comfortable final-night option.

Village services include a supermarket, takeaway and restaurant options. John F. Kenny's Pub is a long-running family pub, and the village is associated with the traditional blackthorn walking stick known as the shillelagh; the Shillelagh Stick Shop is in the village.

Transport options include buses on the Carlow–Arklow corridor and the Wicklow Way Bus serving the area. Connections are limited, so pre-arrange transport if using Shillelagh as a start, finish or bail-out

point.

Clonegal, County Carlow

Clonegal is the southern terminus of the Wicklow Way, on the River Derry near the Wicklow/Wexford border. It is a small estate village rather than a transport hub, so finish-day logistics need planning.

Accommodation is very limited. Huntington Castle offers B&B and self-catering in the castle grounds, and An Teach Beag is a self-catering cottage close to the trail end. Book well ahead if staying in the village after finishing.

There is no supermarket and only very limited shopping in Clonegal. Séan O'Dúinn's pub is less than 10 m from the Wicklow Way end marker, where walkers can receive a complimentary drink on completion and collect an official completion certificate. Osborne's pub is also in the village.

Clonegal has no direct bus or railway station. The usual approach is to pre-book a taxi or arrange an accommodation lift to Bunclody, about 5.5 km away, for Bus Éireann connections to Dublin, Carlow, Wexford and Waterford. Do not rely on finding ad-hoc transport at the finish.

Walkers continuing beyond the Wicklow Way can link towards the South Leinster Way at Kildavin, but onward transport or accommodation should be planned before leaving Shillelagh or Clonegal.

Booking Priorities by Stop

Stop	Accommodation situation	Practical advice
Dublin / Marlay Park	Plenty in Dublin; none at the trailhead	Stay in Dublin and travel to Marlay Park in the morning.
Knockree	Hostel only at the route stop	Book several weeks ahead, especially summer weekends.
Roundwood	Good village choice, but popular	Useful resupply stop; book ahead in summer.
Laragh / Glendalough	Good choice but high demand	Book 6–8 weeks ahead for July and August.
Glenmalure	Very limited capacity	Book 8–10 weeks ahead in summer; arrange dinner and any transport.
Moyne	Very limited rural accommodation	Book 8–10 weeks ahead and confirm meals or pickup.
Tinahely	Best services in the south, modest accommodation	Use for resupply; book ahead.
Shillelagh	Small village choice	Good final overnight option, but transport is limited.
Clonegal	Very limited finish accommodation	Book early or pre-arrange taxi to Bunclody.

Getting to the Start

The Wicklow Way starts at Marlay Park in Rathfarnham, in Dublin's southern suburbs, about 9 km from the city centre. The trailhead is inside or beside the park, and the most straightforward approach for most walkers is by Dublin Bus.

Neither Marlay Park nor Clonegal has a railway station, so this is not a rail-to-rail trail. Plan the start and finish as separate transport problems rather than assuming an easy train connection at either end.

By train

There is no train station at Marlay Park. Dublin Connolly and Dublin Heuston are the main rail termini for walkers arriving in Dublin by intercity train, but both require onward travel by bus, Luas, taxi or a combination of these to reach Rathfarnham.

From central Dublin, it is usually simplest to make for a Dublin Bus route serving Marlay Park rather than trying to approach the start by suburban rail. The Luas Green Line can be useful if staying near stops such as St Stephen's Green, Harcourt or Charlemont, but it does not reach the trailhead directly.

Dundrum and Balally on the Luas Green Line are the most useful tram stops for the start area. From either, continue by Dublin Bus route 74 or 16 towards the Marlay Park entrance. Current Luas and bus connections should be checked before travelling.

For walkers joining later sections, Rathdrum station is useful for the central Wicklow area, with onward taxi or private transfer connections towards places such as Glendalough, Glenmalure and Tinahely. It is not a practical way to reach the official start at Marlay Park.

By bus

Dublin Bus route 16 is the key public transport link to the start. It runs from Dublin Airport through central Dublin, including O'Connell Street and D'Olier Street, then south towards Ballinteer/Kingston via Marlay Park.

The stop for Marlay Park is on or very close to Grange Road, opposite or near the park entrance. From Dublin city centre, allow roughly 40–50 minutes in normal conditions. Daytime services are frequent, but exact times and stopping patterns should be checked before travelling.

Route 16 is also useful for airport arrivals, but the direct journey from Dublin Airport to Marlay Park is long, at around 1 hour 45 minutes. The standard Dublin Bus fare is about €3, but fares should be checked before travelling.

Routes 74 and S8 also stop near Marlay Park and may suit walkers staying in south Dublin. Use Transport for Ireland or Dublin Bus journey planning to check the best current stop and connection.

For private transfers, Wicklow Way Bus operates a walker-focused service by advance booking. It is not a scheduled bus, but can be useful for airport transfers, train-station pickups, and some route logistics from Roundwood southwards. Prices are quoted on request and should be confirmed when booking.

By car

Marlay Park is well signposted in south Dublin and has free car parking within the park. Parking can fill on busy weekends and during events, so an early arrival is sensible if being dropped off or starting from the park by car.

Leaving a vehicle at Marlay Park for the full walk is usually a poor thru-hike strategy. The route finishes at Clonegal in County Carlow, with very limited public transport, so returning to a car at the start can become awkward and time-consuming.

For walkers flying in, long-stay parking at Dublin Airport can be more practical than leaving a car at the trailhead. From there, continue to Marlay Park by bus, taxi or a booked transfer.

From the nearest airport

Dublin Airport is the nearest major airport and Ireland's main international hub. It is about 20 km from Marlay Park, though journey times vary significantly with traffic.

The cheapest simple option is Dublin Bus route 16 direct from the airport to Marlay Park. Allow around 1 hour 45 minutes, as the bus travels through the city centre before reaching the southern suburbs. Check the current airport stop, timetable and fare before travelling.

A faster public-transport option may be Dublin Coach route 750 from Dublin Airport to the Wesley College area near Dundrum, followed by a local Dublin Bus connection to Marlay Park. This can take about 35 minutes to the Dundrum area before the onward bus, with typical fares around €4–7 for the coach leg. This should be checked before travelling.

A taxi from Dublin Airport to Marlay Park is the simplest option with luggage or a late arrival. Typical journey time is about 28 minutes in normal traffic, with fares often around €35–45, but both time and price depend on traffic and time of day.

A pre-booked Wicklow Way Bus transfer can also work well for walkers arriving with baggage or wanting direct logistical support. Confirm pickup arrangements and current pricing before booking.

Where to stay before starting

Most walkers stay in Dublin the night before and take route 16 to Marlay Park in the morning. This gives the widest choice of accommodation and makes it easier to buy any last food, gas-compatible supplies or forgotten gear before leaving the city.

Staying in south Dublin can reduce travel time on the first morning. Areas close to the Luas Green Line, such as Ranelagh, Dundrum and nearby south-side districts, are convenient because they keep the onward bus or taxi to Marlay Park relatively short.

An early start is useful if walking the common first stage from Marlay Park to Knockree, which is around 21 km and includes the first proper climb into the Dublin Mountains. Staying closer to the start avoids losing daylight to cross-city travel.

Before setting out, check live bus times and any event-related access restrictions at Marlay Park. Dublin Bus, Transport for Ireland and the relevant operator websites should be checked before travelling.

Getting Home from the Finish

Clonegal is a small village finish, not a transport hub. There is no railway station, no scheduled bus stop in the village, and very limited onward travel available without pre-booking.

The practical escape points are Bunclody, about 5 km south of Clonegal, and Carlow Town, which has the nearest useful railway station. Arriving in Clonegal late in the afternoon with no taxi, transfer or accommodation arranged is one of the easiest ways to make the final day unnecessarily stressful.

By train

There is no train from Clonegal or Bunclody. The nearest useful station for most walkers is Carlow Town, on the Irish Rail Dublin Heuston–Waterford line.

Carlow to Dublin Heuston takes about 64 minutes. Services are reasonably regular for an Irish regional line, but still timetable-dependent: typically 8 trains per day Monday–Friday, 8 on Saturday and 4 on Sunday. Check current times on irishrail.ie before fixing onward travel.

From Clonegal, most walkers either take a taxi directly to Carlow station or taxi first to Bunclody and continue by bus or taxi from there. A direct taxi to Carlow is usually the simplest option if connecting with a train, especially after a long final stage.

Rathdrum station can be useful for section hikers leaving the route earlier in County Wicklow, but it is not a practical railway option for the Clonegal finish.

By bus

Clonegal itself has no scheduled bus stop, so bus travel normally starts with a taxi or lift to Bunclody, or a walk or taxi to Kildavin.

Option	How it helps	Important notes
Bus Éireann Route 132	Links Bunclody with Dublin Connolly / Busáras via Wicklow and Carnew	Dublin–Bunclody is about 2 hours. Frequency is limited and historically only 1–2 departures per direction per day. This should be checked before travelling.
TFI Local Link Route 369	Serves the Kildavin / Bunclody area, with Route 369 running Enniscorthy–Bunclody–Tullow	Kildavin is about 3 km from Clonegal. Services are limited and Monday–Saturday; bookings may be required for demand-responsive services.
TFI Local Link demand-responsive services	Can connect Bunclody with Carlow Town	Very limited frequency. Contact Local Link Carlow/Kilkenny/Wicklow or Local Link Wexford before relying on it.
Wicklow Way Bus	Pre-booked transfer from the Clonegal finish to Dublin airport, Dublin train stations or accommodation along the trail	Not a scheduled bus. Book at least 24 hours ahead; a minimum 3-person equivalent fare applies. Phone: 087 817 6630.

For Bus Éireann Route 132, the key point is that Bunclody is the boarding point, not Clonegal. Allow enough time for the short taxi from Clonegal and do not plan on just turning up without checking the current timetable.

By car/taxi

A taxi is the most reliable first step out of Clonegal. Pre-booking is strongly advised, particularly outside peak summer, on Sundays, or if finishing late in the day.

Taxi operators serving the Bunclody / Clonegal area include:

- Clody Cabs, Bunclody: 087 983 3304
- Joe's Cabs, Bunclody: 086 401 4690

Both can collect from Clonegal village, but availability should be arranged in advance. Mobile reception and passing transport should not be relied on at the finish.

Clonegal to Dublin is roughly 110–120 km by road and takes about 1.5 hours in normal conditions via the M9 / N81. Bunclody to Dublin Airport is about 127 km and around 1 hour 30 minutes by car.

If a car has been left back in Dublin near the start at Marlay Park, a pre-booked shuttle or Wicklow Way Bus transfer is usually easier than trying to piece together public transport after the final stage.

From the nearest airport

Dublin Airport is the nearest realistic international airport for the Wicklow Way finish. It is about 130 km from Clonegal and roughly 1 hour 30 minutes by car.

There is no direct airport bus from Clonegal or Bunclody. The simplest options are a pre-booked taxi or private transfer, or the Wicklow Way Bus if booked ahead.

A public-transport route is possible but awkward: taxi from Clonegal to Bunclody, Bus Éireann Route 132 to Dublin city, then onward city-to-airport transport. This is slow, timetable-dependent and not ideal for same-day flight connections unless there is a large time buffer.

Cork Airport and other Irish airports are much less convenient from Clonegal. For most walkers, Dublin is the airport to plan around.

Where to stay at the finish

Staying overnight at or near the finish is often the best plan, especially if the final stage from Shillelagh to Clonegal is walked as a full day. It removes the pressure of catching a scarce bus or arranging an evening transfer after 23 km of walking.

Clonegal has very limited accommodation, so book well ahead. Carraig Guest House is about 800 m from the Wicklow Way trail end, and Clonegal Hostel on Carrow Road generally operates around March–October.

Sha-Roe Bistro in Clonegal is a Michelin Bib Gourmand restaurant in an 18th-century building and is a useful dinner option if open, but advance booking is essential. Opening days and holiday closures change, so check current hours before relying on it.

Bunclody, about 5 km from Clonegal, has a wider range of accommodation, shops, cafés, pubs and better transport links. Many walkers either overnight in Clonegal or Bunclody after finishing, then travel to Carlow, Dublin or Dublin Airport the following morning.

Which Direction Should You Walk?

The Wicklow Way is normally walked **north to south**, from Marlay Park in Dublin to Clonegal in County Carlow. This is the traditional direction, the one assumed by the standard stage plan, and the direction most accommodation and baggage-transfer arrangements are built around.

Walking **south to north** is entirely possible, but it is a more independent way to plan the trail. It mainly suits walkers who want to finish in Dublin, or who prefer an easier opening through the quieter southern countryside before taking on the main mountain stages.

Direction at a glance

Direction	Best for	Main drawback
North to south: Marlay Park to Clonegal	Most walkers; easiest start logistics; standard accommodation flow; dramatic mountain stages early	Finishes in Clonegal, where onward transport needs planning
South to north: Clonegal to Marlay Park	Walkers who want to finish in Dublin; those who prefer a gentler build-up	Starts with awkward transport to Clonegal and puts the hardest upland sections later

Transport: north to south is simpler

Transport is the strongest practical argument for walking north to south. Marlay Park is in Dublin's southern suburbs and is straightforward to reach by public transport from the city centre.

Dublin Bus route 16 runs from O'Connell Street towards Marlay Park, with a journey of roughly 40–45 minutes in normal conditions. Marlay Park is also reachable from the Dundrum Luas stop with a walk, and other bus options serve the area. Current timetables and stop details should be checked before travelling.

Clonegal is a much less convenient transport point. There is no railway station at either end of the Wicklow Way, and Clonegal has no direct bus service. Most walkers leaving Clonegal need a taxi or pre-booked transfer to Bunclody or Kildavin, then onward bus connections towards Dublin or Waterford.

This means the standard direction gives you the easy logistics at the start, when timing matters most. The awkward transport leg is at the end, where it can be arranged in advance through accommodation, a taxi, or a transfer service.

Scenery and route progression

North to south gives the Wicklow Way a strong natural rhythm. The route begins in Marlay Park and the Dublin Mountains foothills, then quickly moves into the more open mountain country around Glencree, Crone Wood, Djouce, White Hill and Lough Tay.

The high, exposed section over White Hill — the trail's high point at 630 m — comes early in a standard itinerary, usually on the Knockree to Roundwood stage. Glendalough then arrives soon after as a major

mid-route landmark, before the walk continues through Glenmalure and gradually unwinds into the quieter farmland, boreens and villages of south Wicklow and Carlow.

In reverse, the route starts gently through Clonegal, Shillelagh, Tinahely and the rolling southern stages. The mountain drama builds later, with Glenmalure, Glendalough, White Hill and the Djouce area saved for the final part of the walk before Dublin.

Neither progression is wrong. The standard direction gives the big scenery while legs are still relatively fresh; the reverse gives a slower build-up and a more convenient finish.

Climbs and fatigue

The Wicklow Way is not technical, but it is a strenuous waymarked walk with around 3,320 m of total ascent. Direction changes how that effort feels.

Going north to south, the hardest upland walking arrives early. In the standard 7-day plan, the Knockree to Roundwood stage includes the exposed White Hill boardwalk and the Djouce shoulder, followed soon after by the Glendalough and Glenmalure sections. This can feel demanding on days 2–4, but most walkers tackle the biggest mountain stages before cumulative fatigue has fully set in.

Going south to north, the first days are generally gentler and lower, with more farmland, lanes and rolling countryside. The trade-off is that the serious mountain terrain arrives after several long days, when legs may already be tired.

Fit walkers can manage either direction. For most independent walkers, the north-to-south sequence is the more balanced option because the toughest ground is not left until the very end.

Wind and exposed ground

Ireland's prevailing wind is generally from the south-west. On the Wicklow Way this matters most on the exposed upland sections around Djouce, White Hill, Lough Tay and the open mountain above the valleys.

Walking north to south often puts that prevailing wind more behind you or across you, rather than directly into your face. Walking south to north can make the exposed mountain stages feel more blustery when the wind is from the usual quarter.

This is only a secondary factor. Actual conditions in the Wicklow Mountains can change quickly, and forecast, visibility and ground conditions matter more than direction.

Accommodation and baggage flow

Accommodation planning is generally easier north to south. The usual overnight pattern — Marlay Park to Knockree, then Roundwood, Glendalough or Laragh, Glenmalure, Moyne or Tinahely, Shillelagh, and Clonegal — follows the established flow of the route.

Hostels, B&Bs, guesthouses and hotels are not evenly spread along the Wicklow Way, so the direction that matches the standard stage structure is useful. It also aligns better with luggage-transfer services such as Wicklow Way Baggage, which are commonly arranged around the north-to-south itinerary.

Walking south to north is still workable, but you should build the accommodation plan carefully before committing to dates. The remote middle and southern sections leave less room for improvising if a

village is full.

The finish: Clonegal or Dublin?

Finishing in Clonegal gives the walk a quiet rural ending. It is a small village on the River Derry near the Wexford border, and it feels like a clear point-to-point completion rather than a return to the edge of a city.

The disadvantage is practical: getting away from Clonegal normally needs a taxi or pre-booked transfer before joining the wider bus network. This should be arranged before the final walking day, especially if onward travel is time-critical.

Finishing at Marlay Park in reverse is much easier for onward travel. Dublin accommodation, buses, Luas connections, rail links, ferries and the airport are all far more accessible from the northern end. The finish itself, however, is a suburban park rather than a remote or dramatic trail terminus.

Recommendation

For most walkers, **walk the Wicklow Way north to south: Marlay Park to Clonegal.**

This is the traditional and most practical direction. It gives the easiest start from Dublin, follows the standard accommodation and baggage-transfer pattern, reaches the Djouce, White Hill, Lough Tay and Glendalough sections while legs are still relatively fresh, and lets the route soften into the quieter southern countryside before the finish.

Choose **south to north** only if finishing in Dublin is a priority, or if a gradual warm-up through the southern farmland appeals more than starting with the mountain stages. It is a valid alternative, but it needs more careful planning around transport from Clonegal, accommodation sequencing and the timing of the hardest upland days.

Accommodation Along the Route

Accommodation is one of the main constraints on the Wicklow Way. The route works well as an inn-to-inn walk, but only with firm bookings, especially through Glenmalure and the Moyne area where beds are scarce or off-route.

Options are strongest around Roundwood and Laragh/Glendalough. They thin out sharply after Glendalough, then improve again around Tinahely, Shillelagh and Bunclody.

Accommodation by place

Place	Accommodation level	Best for	Notes
Marlay Park / Rathfarnham	Good nearby	Pre-walk night in Dublin	The start is in Dublin's southern suburbs, so most walkers stay in Dublin or near Rathfarnham before beginning. Wicklow Way Baggage does not collect from Dublin city accommodation; it starts from Marlay Park onward.
Knockree / Enniskerry	Limited on-trail; good nearby	Night 1	Knockree Hostel is the most convenient walker option, on or very close to the trail in the Glencree Valley, with dormitory and private rooms. Enniskerry, about 7 km off the trail, adds B&B/inn and hotel choices including the Powerscourt Arms, Enniskerry Inn and the high-end Powerscourt Hotel.
Roundwood	Good	Night 2, services, food	One of the best practical stops before Glendalough, with several B&Bs and pub/guesthouse options. The Coach House B&B, Lus Mór and Roundwood Inn are commonly used by walkers. Book ahead in summer despite the stronger choice.
Laragh / Glendalough	Good	Night 3, rest stop, extra facilities	The strongest accommodation cluster on the route, with hotels, hostels and B&Bs. Options include The Glendalough Hotel, Lynhams Hotel in Laragh, Wicklow Way Lodge, Glendalough International Hostel and local B&Bs. This area also attracts non-walking visitors, so summer availability disappears quickly.
Glenmalure	Limited	Night 4, essential mountain stop	The most constrained overnight on the route. Realistic options are Glenmalure Hostel and Glenmalure Lodge; the lodge is roughly 2 km from the main trail and offers food and B&B accommodation. There are no shops and no broad choice of places to eat, so this night should be booked early.
Moyne area	None on-trail	Awkward split between Glenmalure and Tinahely	Moyne itself has no on-trail accommodation. Walkers typically use an off-route farmstay or cottage, such as Kyle Farmhouse or Rath Bán Farm Cottage, or transfer by taxi to Aughrim for B&Bs. This is the second hardest overnight to arrange after Glenmalure.

Place	Accommodation level	Best for	Notes
Tinahely	Good	Night 6, recovery after sparse middle stages	A useful village with proper services, pubs and shops. Murphy's Hotel and Madeline's B&B are practical walker choices, with Murphy's adjacent to the trail.
Shillelagh	Limited	Final overnight before Clonegal	Beds are limited but workable if booked. Options include The Olde Shillelagh, Central House, Hunter's Lodge and Stoops Guesthouse. Some walkers are transferred back to Tinahely for the night if Shillelagh is full.
Clonegal	Limited	Finish night if available	Clonegal is tiny, with limited beds such as Carraig Guesthouse and Sha-Roe Bistro with accommodation. Availability can be tight in summer.
Bunclody	Good nearby	Practical finish base	Bunclody, about 5 km from Clonegal, is often the easier overnight base after finishing. Options include Meadowside B&B and Clody Lodge, and the town has more services and onward transport options than Clonegal.

Where booking pressure is highest

Book Glenmalure first. It is the critical pinch point, with only Glenmalure Hostel and Glenmalure Lodge serving the valley in any realistic way for most walkers.

The next difficult section is Moyne. There is no accommodation directly on the trail, so the plan usually depends on an off-route booking, a taxi transfer, or changing the stage pattern to avoid needing a night there.

Glendalough and Laragh have the best range of beds, but also the most visitor pressure. They are popular with walkers, day visitors and tour groups, so they should not be treated as a place where a last-minute bed is likely in summer.

How far ahead to book

For June to August, including Irish bank holiday weekends, book 3–6 months ahead where possible. Glenmalure should be treated as the priority reservation.

For April–May and September–October, 4–8 weeks is often enough for the easier stops, but Glenmalure and Glendalough/Laragh can still fill earlier. Smaller B&Bs may have limited availability outside peak season.

From November to March, some accommodation may close or operate only by advance reservation. Hostel opening dates, especially at Glenmalure, should be checked before travelling.

Typical accommodation costs

As a broad planning guide, hostel or bunkhouse beds are usually the cheapest, with B&Bs and guesthouses forming the main mid-range option. Hotels are available at selected stops such as Glendalough/Laragh, Tinahely and the Enniskerry area.

Typical ranges to budget around are:

Type	Indicative cost
Hostel / bunkhouse	€18–40 per person per night
B&B / guesthouse	about €50–60 per person per night, or roughly €90–120 for a double room
Hotels	from about €75+ per room, with higher prices at popular or higher-end properties
Luxury hotel near Enniskerry	significantly higher

For a 7-night walk, a mixed hostel/B&B budget might fall around €250–400 in total, depending on room sharing, season and availability. Current prices should always be checked before booking.

Luggage transfer and taxi transfers

Wicklow Way Baggage provides door-to-door luggage transfer along the full route from Marlay Park to Clonegal. It operates daily from 1 March to 24 October, with collection from 08:30 and delivery by about 16:30.

The service is priced from €12 per bag per day, with a minimum charge of €25 per day and a maximum bag weight of 15 kg. It does not collect from Dublin city accommodation and does not arrange accommodation, so all overnights must be booked separately. Current dates, prices and limits should be checked before travelling.

Taxi transfers are a practical solution for the awkward gaps, especially around Glenmalure, Moyne, Shillelagh and the Clonegal/Bunclody finish. Some hosts can help with local transfers or luggage arrangements, but this should be agreed at the time of booking rather than assumed on arrival.

Inn-to-inn practicality

The Wicklow Way is suitable for inn-to-inn walking, but it is not a turn-up-and-find-a-bed trail. A realistic plan needs confirmed accommodation before starting, particularly between Glendalough and Tinahely.

The safest booking order is: Glenmalure first, then Moyne/off-route transfer arrangements, then Glendalough/Laragh, then the start and finish. Once those pinch points are secured, the rest of the itinerary is much easier to build.

Camping and Wild Camping

The Wicklow Way is a workable camping route, but it needs more planning than an inn-to-inn schedule. Campsites are unevenly spaced, the central National Park section has strict rules, and the quieter southern half passes through a mix of private farmland and forestry where permission matters.

Most camping walkers use a combination of official campsites, the three basic Adirondack shelters and occasional low-impact wild camping where it is lawful and appropriate. Carrying a tent gives useful flexibility, but do not rely on finding a legal pitch at the end of every stage without planning.

Campsites on or near the Wicklow Way

Place	Position on the route	Practical notes
Wicklow Way Camping, Oldbridge	Directly on the Wicklow Way, between Roundwood and Glendalough	A strong option for a camping itinerary, roughly 4 km from Roundwood, 5 km from Laragh and 6 km from Glendalough. It has 10 semi-private pitches, hot showers, toilets, WiFi, car parking, a fire pit, food/drink at The Hungry Hut and a sauna with plunge pool. Contact: +353 1 908 1226 / info@wicklowwaycamping.com .
Roundwood Caravan & Camping Park	Off-trail option at Roundwood	Useful after the Marlay Park–Knockree–Roundwood opening stages, with village services nearby. Book ahead in busy periods.
Glenmalure Lodge	In Glenmalure valley, about 2 km off the direct trail	Basic camping in the grounds of the lodge/pub, with access to the bar and sanitary facilities. It is a practical end point for the Glendalough to Glenmalure stage, but facilities are limited and there is no nearby shop.
Knockree / An Óige Hostel	The Wicklow Way passes through the hostel grounds	Knockree is a logical first-night stop after Marlay Park. The hostel has dormitories, private rooms and a self-catering kitchen; camping availability should be checked directly before travelling.

Wicklow Way Camping at Oldbridge is especially useful because it sits directly on the route between Roundwood and Glendalough, where many walkers need to choose between a short day, a detour or a longer push. Glenmalure Lodge is the main practical camping option for the remote valley stage after Glendalough.

Adirondack huts on the route

There are three free, open-sided Adirondack-style shelters on Coillte forest land, built by Mountain Meitheal. They have three walls, a roof and a raised sleeping platform, but they are not hostels: expect shelter from weather only, no booking system and very basic conditions.

Hut	Approximate position	Notes
Brusher's Gap Hut	Between Oldbridge and Glendalough, around Paddock Hill	The most popular hut. It has a fire pit, picnic table and a water source nearby, and tents can usually be pitched outside if the platform is full.

Hut	Approximate position	Notes
Mullacor Hut	South of Glendalough, on the climb towards Glenmalure	Remote and exposed. Do not rely on water at the hut.
Mucklagh Hut	South of Glenmalure, near Aghavannagh / Carrickashane Mountain	The most southerly hut. It is a basic shelter with a raised sleeping platform; pack out everything, as this area has had litter problems.

The huts usually sleep only 4–5 people on the platform and can fill quickly on summer weekends. Carry a tent or bivvy system as a backup rather than planning an itinerary that depends on a hut space being available.

Wild camping rules and reality

There is no general statutory right to wild camp in Ireland, and much of the land beside the Wicklow Way is privately owned. On private land, camping without permission is trespass, so ask the landowner where feasible and do not camp near houses, farm buildings, livestock, forestry operations or road access.

In the Wicklow Mountains, discreet upland camping is common, but it must be low-impact and it must respect the land status. The most important distinction is the Wicklow Mountains National Park section, where wilderness camping is allowed only under the National Park Wild Camping Code.

Within Wicklow Mountains National Park:

- Camp at least 500 m from roads accessible to vehicles and 500 m from buildings.
- Choose a visually unobtrusive site.
- Move the tent after every second night to allow vegetation to recover.
- Remove all waste, including food scraps and biodegradable items.
- Keep soap and toothpaste at least 50 m from watercourses.
- Strain washing-up water and scatter it at least 50 m from streams, rivers and lakes.
- Do not disturb wildlife, local communities or other visitors.
- Use a lightweight stove only.

Campfires are absolutely prohibited throughout Wicklow Mountains National Park. Glendalough Valley has an additional restriction: no camping of any kind is permitted there, and the ban is enforced by park rangers.

Outside the National Park, particularly on the quieter Glenmalure to Clonegal half, the route passes more private farmland, forestry and small rural communities. Wild camping here should be treated as permission-based camping, not a right. If permission cannot be obtained, the only responsible approach is to avoid sensitive ground, arrive late, leave early, stay out of sight and leave no trace.

Powerscourt Estate forest is private land and camping is prohibited there.

Best parts of the route for camping

The easiest camping logistics are around Roundwood, Oldbridge, Glendalough/Laragh and Glenmalure, where there are known campsites or camping-adjacent services. A camping itinerary often works best by

using an official site at Oldbridge or Roundwood, avoiding any attempt to camp in Glendalough Valley, and then using Glenmalure Lodge or the huts to bridge the central mountain stages.

The southern stages from Glenmalure towards Moyne, Tinahely, Shillelagh and Clonegal are quieter, but they are not necessarily easier for camping. There are fewer formal facilities, and much of the land is private, so food, water and overnight plans need to be organised before leaving the larger overnight points.

Water for camping

Streams and rivers are frequent in the upland sections, and Brusher's Gap Hut has a water source nearby. Natural water is still not guaranteed in dry spells, and water near farmland should always be treated because of livestock contamination risk.

The safest strategy is to fill bottles at accommodation, campsites or village services at the start of each day, then treat any stream water used later. Carry a filter or purification tablets, especially if camping away from serviced accommodation.

Do not wash directly in streams, rivers or lakes. Keep soap, toothpaste and washing-up water at least 50 m from watercourses, and scatter strained grey water well away from open water.

Fire, waste and Leave No Trace

No campfire should be planned on the Wicklow Way. Fires are banned in the National Park, and elsewhere they are strongly discouraged because the route crosses forestry, moorland and boggy upland where fire damage can be serious.

Pack out all rubbish, including tea bags, fruit peel, wipes, toilet paper and food scraps. Do not bury waste; animals and erosion can expose it, and biodegradable rubbish still damages popular camping spots.

Use a stove for cooking, camp on durable ground where possible, keep groups small and avoid trampling wet bog vegetation. The Adirondack huts and their surroundings are particularly vulnerable to overuse, so leave them cleaner than found.

Seasonal considerations

July and August are the busiest months for campsites, huts and popular areas such as Glendalough. Book paid campsites where possible, and do not assume a hut space will be available at weekends.

Spring and autumn are usually quieter for camping, but the Wicklow Mountains are wet and exposed in all seasons. A robust waterproof tent, proper groundsheet or footprint, and the ability to pitch on damp or uneven ground are important.

Camping gear adds weight on a route with roughly 3,320 m of ascent, boggy ground and several long days. Keep the kit list disciplined: a light but weatherworthy shelter, warm sleep system, stove, water treatment and enough food for the remoter stages matter more than comfort extras.

Food, Water and Resupply

The Wicklow Way is not a continuous village-to-village resupply trail. Food is straightforward in Roundwood, Laragh / Glendalough, Tinahely and Shillelagh, but several stages have no shops, cafés or pubs at all.

The key planning point is the central section from Glendalough to Moyne. Once you leave Glendalough, you should have lunch for the day, a booked meal at Glenmalure Lodge, and a packed lunch arranged for the long Glenmalure to Moyne stage.

Resupply overview

Section	Food availability	Water availability	Notes
Marlay Park (Day 1 start)	Good: park café and Dublin shops nearby	Tap	Stock up well before leaving Dublin; there are no shops once the trail climbs into the Dublin Mountains.
Marlay Park to Knockree	None on trail	Streams only if treated	Carry lunch and snacks from Dublin / Marlay Park.
Knockree (Day 1 end)	Limited: An Óige hostel mini-shop, breakfast available	Tap	No independent village shop. Bring dinner or arrange food with the hostel.
Knockree to Roundwood via Crone Wood, Djouce and White Hill	None on trail	Streams only; filter or purify	Do not rely on the occasional coffee van at Crone Wood. Carry a full lunch and enough water for a long exposed day.
Roundwood (Day 2 end)	Good: small supermarket, petrol station, pubs and restaurants	Tap	First proper resupply point. Useful place to buy food for the next stage.
Roundwood to Laragh / Glendalough	Little to none en route	Streams only; filter or purify	Shorter day, but still leave Roundwood with lunch or snacks.
Laragh / Glendalough (Day 3 end)	Good: convenience store in Laragh, cafés, pubs, food trucks in season, Glendalough Hotel	Tap	Resupply well here before the more remote central stages. Weekends and bank holidays can be busy.
Glendalough to Glenmalure	None on trail	Streams only; filter or purify	Carry lunch. There are no facilities until Glenmalure Lodge.
Glenmalure Lodge / Drumgoff (Day 4 end)	Good: full pub and restaurant; packed lunches may be arranged	Tap	The only food option in Glenmalure. Book dinner in advance and ask about a packed lunch for Day 5.

Section	Food availability	Water availability	Notes
Glenmalure to Moyne	None at all	Streams only; filter or purify	Longest blank food section on the route. Carry all food from Glenmalure and at least 2 litres of water.
Moyne (Day 5 end)	Accommodation meals only	Tap at accommodation	No shop or pub. Dinner and breakfast should be arranged when booking accommodation.
Moyne to Tinahely	Limited until Tinahely	Streams only; filter or purify	Most walkers aim to reach Tinahely for lunch and resupply.
Tinahely (Day 6)	Very good: supermarket, pharmacy, ATM / bank, post office, laundrette, pubs, restaurants and coffee shop	Tap	Main southern resupply point. Stock up properly here.
Shillelagh (Day 6 end)	Moderate: supermarket, pub food, restaurant and takeaway	Tap	Smaller than Tinahely but useful for final-day supplies.
Shillelagh to Clonegal	None on trail	Streams only; filter or purify	Carry everything needed for the final day from Shillelagh.
Clonegal (finish)	Very limited: one village pub; no supermarket	Tap via accommodation / hospitality	Not a resupply point. Bunclody, by taxi, has fuller services if staying nearby.

Where food is easy

Roundwood is the first proper resupply stop after leaving Dublin. The village has a small supermarket, a petrol station for convenience supplies, a post office and several pubs serving food, including Roundwood Inn, Byrne & Woods Bar & Restaurant, Tochar House and The Coach House.

Laragh and Glendalough are also useful food stops. Laragh has a convenience store, pubs and restaurants including Wicklow Heather, while Glendalough has cafés, the Glendalough Hotel, the National Park visitor area and seasonal food trucks near the Upper Lake Car Park.

Tinahely is the best-stocked stop on the southern half of the route. It has a proper supermarket, pharmacy, ATM / bank, post office, laundrette, pubs, restaurants and a coffee shop, making it the best place to reset supplies before the final stages.

Shillelagh is smaller but still practical, with a supermarket, pub food, a restaurant and takeaway options. It is the last sensible place to buy food before Clonegal.

Where food is limited or absent

There are no shops or cafés between Marlay Park and Knockree. Knockree itself has no village shop, so the An Óige hostel mini-shop is the only local back-up for basics and toiletries.

The Knockree to Roundwood stage is a full mountain day with no reliable commercial facilities. The route passes through Glenree, Crone Wood and the exposed Djouce / White Hill area above Lough Tay; carry

a complete lunch and snacks from Knockree.

There are no facilities between Glendalough / Laragh and Glenmalure. Glenmalure Lodge is the only food option in the valley, with a pub and restaurant, so dinner should be booked in advance, especially at weekends.

The Glenmalure to Moyne stage has no shops, cafés or pubs and is the most important food-carry day on the Wicklow Way. Moyne is a very small settlement with accommodation only, so dinner and breakfast need to be arranged with the B&B or guesthouse before arrival.

Clonegal is a quiet finish point rather than a resupply hub. It has a village pub but no supermarket, so final-day food should be bought in Shillelagh.

Packed lunches and accommodation meals

Packed lunches are a normal part of Wicklow Way logistics. Most B&Bs and guesthouses along the route will prepare one if asked the night before, typically around €7–10, though current prices should be checked when booking.

This is especially useful for the foodless stages: Knockree to Roundwood, Glendalough to Glenmalure, Glenmalure to Moyne, and Shillelagh to Clonegal. At Glenmalure Lodge, ask about a packed lunch for the next day when booking dinner or accommodation.

Evening meals should not be left to chance in Knockree, Glenmalure and Moyne. These are not places where a walker can simply browse several nearby options after arrival.

Water on the Wicklow Way

Tap water is the most reliable water source. Refill at accommodation and village facilities in Knockree, Roundwood, Laragh / Glendalough, Glenmalure Lodge, Tinahely and Shillelagh.

Moyne and Clonegal should be treated as accommodation-based water stops rather than places with public drinking-water facilities. Fill bottles before leaving each overnight stop.

Natural water is common in the Wicklow Mountains, with many streams and rivers across the upland sections. It should still be filtered or purified before drinking.

Many streams run through blanket bog and can be peat-stained, with a brown or oily-looking colour and earthy taste. This is often natural, but it is still sensible to treat the water.

Grazing is also common across the uplands and farmland, so streams below sheep or cattle pasture can carry pathogens. Forestry run-off is another reason to avoid assuming that clear water is safe.

Carry a filter such as a squeeze filter, hollow-fibre bottle filter or equivalent, or use chemical purification tablets. When choosing a natural source, take water from fast-running side streams higher on the hill where possible, and avoid slow, peaty lowland water if there is a better option nearby.

How much to carry

As a baseline, leave every village or overnight stop with at least 2 litres of water. Carry more in warm weather, when cafés may be closed, or when walking slowly over the exposed upland sections.

Food carrying should be planned by stage rather than assumed day by day. For the easier resupply days, lunch and snacks are enough; for the remote stages, carry all food until the next confirmed meal.

The most important carries are:

- **Day 1, Marlay Park to Knockree:** lunch and snacks from Dublin / Marlay Park.
- **Day 2, Knockree to Roundwood:** full lunch, snacks and water; no reliable food before Roundwood.
- **Day 4, Glendalough to Glenmalure:** lunch from Glendalough / Laragh.
- **Day 5, Glenmalure to Moyne:** full day of food from Glenmalure, plus a pre-arranged evening meal in Moyne.
- **Day 7, Shillelagh to Clonegal:** full final-day food from Shillelagh, as Clonegal is not a proper resupply point.

Sundays, holidays and seasonal hours

Small rural shops may have reduced Sunday hours or close earlier than expected. Roundwood, Tinahely and Shillelagh are the key places where this matters, especially if arriving late in the day.

Village pubs are often more reliable than shops on Sundays, but food service hours can still vary. Accommodation hosts are usually the best local source for current opening times and packed-lunch arrangements.

Glendalough is busy with day-trippers at weekends and bank holidays, so cafés and food trucks can have queues. If passing through at a busy time, carry lunch rather than relying on a quick stop.

Spring, summer and autumn are the normal walking seasons for the Wicklow Way. Outside the busiest months, seasonal cafés and food trucks should not be treated as guaranteed, and rural opening times should be checked before travelling.

Navigation and Waymarking

The Wicklow Way is an official National Waymarked Trail and is generally straightforward to follow in good conditions. It uses the Irish national waymarking style: a yellow walking-man symbol and yellow directional arrow on a black background.

Markers appear on black posts, wooden boards and tree trunks. On road sections, brown fingerposts may also supplement the standard waymarks, especially where the route leaves or joins quiet lanes and boreens.

Waymarking is good overall, but it should not be treated as flawless. Forestry work, replanting, muddy vehicle tracks and multiple woodland junctions can make some sections less obvious, and the more open mountain sections are much harder to read in mist or low cloud.

How difficult is navigation?

Most walkers with limited navigation experience can manage the Wicklow Way in settled weather, provided they carry a map and have a GPX track loaded before setting off. The route is not technically complex and does not require advanced mountain navigation in normal visibility.

Poor weather changes the character of the route. On high ground around White Hill and the Djouce area, cloud, fog and heavy rain can make waymarks harder to spot and reduce the usefulness of distant landmarks such as Lough Tay. Basic map-and-compass competence is sensible for these sections.

The trail is also not a pure “follow the signs and stop thinking” route. In commercial forestry, signs can be obscured or temporarily moved, and at road junctions in the southern stages the main risk is simply missing a turn onto a lane, forest track or field edge.

Maps and GPX files

A GPX track is strongly recommended. It reduces stress at forest junctions, helps check road-turns in the southern half, and is especially useful if visibility deteriorates on the upland sections.

Useful digital options include the downloadable full-route GPX and printable stage maps from Visit Wicklow, GPX resources associated with the Cicerone guidebook, Komoot, Outdooractive and the ActiveME app. Download maps for offline use before starting, as mobile signal is not reliable everywhere.

Paper mapping is still sensible, particularly for walkers carrying only one phone or relying on battery-powered navigation. The main options are:

Map option	Usefulness
EastWest Mapping Wicklow Way Map Guide, 1:25,000	A dedicated full-route map guide in waterproof booklet format; one of the most practical single printed options for the trail. Check current edition details before purchase.
Harvey Maps Wicklow Way map, 1:40,000	A convenient dedicated single-sheet option, smaller scale than the EastWest guide but easier than carrying multiple OSI sheets.

Map option	Usefulness
OSI Discovery Series 1:50,000 sheets 50, 56 and 62	Covers the route across the Dublin Mountains, central Wicklow Mountains and the southern section towards Clonegal.

If buying OSI mapping, check the current sheet coverage before travelling. Some route descriptions and map listings have varied over time, and the exact combination needed can depend on the edition and format being used.

Places where extra care is useful

Area	Why it needs attention	Practical approach
Crone Wood and other forestry sections	Multiple forest roads and fire-break tracks can make junctions look similar. Forestry work can also obscure signs.	Check each junction against the GPX rather than assuming the largest track is correct.
White Hill / Djouce area	This is the highest, most exposed part of the route, crossing open mountain and blanket bog on the tóchar above Lough Tay.	In mist, stay disciplined with the line of the boardwalk and check the route before leaving high ground.
Glenmalure approach and nearby forest tracks	Woodland junctions and forestry roads can be confusing, especially after felling or maintenance work.	Use both waymarks and a map/GPX; do not rely solely on visual line-of-sight to the next marker.
Drumgoff area	Sport Ireland has listed a temporary forestry-works reroute near Drumgoff, following the Clohernagh brook on uneven ground, with signage in place.	Check the latest Sport Ireland or wicklowway.com reroute information before setting off; older GPX files may not match the signed route.
Tinahely and the southern stages	Waymarking is weaker in places, and much of the final approach uses quiet roads and lanes where it is easy to miss a small turn.	Keep the GPX visible at road junctions and check turns before continuing along a lane.

Mobile signal and phone navigation

Mobile signal is generally better in valleys, towns and villages such as Roundwood, Laragh, Glendalough, Tinahely, Shillelagh and Clonegal. It can be patchy or absent on higher ground, including around White Hill, Djouce and Mullacor, and in some deeper valleys.

Do not rely on live mobile data for navigation. Download offline maps, save the GPX in more than one app if possible, and carry a power bank on longer stages.

A phone GPS can still locate position without mobile signal, provided the mapping has been downloaded in advance. The common failure points are flat batteries, wet screens, broken phones and out-of-date GPX files, not GPS itself.

Current diversions and route changes

Check the official Wicklow Way website and Sport Ireland trail page shortly before walking. Forestry work is the main reason for temporary diversions, and the Drumgoff reroute is the key one to check.

Where a signed diversion conflicts with an older printed guidebook or GPX track, follow the current on-the-ground signage unless there is an obvious safety issue. Downloading a fresh GPX before departure is particularly important because older tracks may not include temporary reroutes.

Terrain, Conditions and Difficulty in Practice

The Wicklow Way is not technically difficult, but it is harder than its waymarking and moderate daily distances can suggest. The difficulty comes from repeated climbs, wet upland ground, exposed mountain sections, long days over 21 km, and a surprising amount of tarmac in the southern half.

There is no scrambling, rope work or exposed ridge-walking. This is waymarked hillwalking on a mix of forest road, open moorland, timber boardwalk, rocky upland path, farmland and quiet country lanes.

What the ground is like underfoot

Expect constant changes of surface rather than a single trail character. Forest tracks are common and often make for fast, straightforward walking, while the open mountain sections can be wet, slow and exposed even when the route is easy to follow.

Surface type	What to expect in practice
Forest and forestry tracks	A major part of the route, usually gravel or compacted track. Generally fast underfoot, but can feel repetitive and may be affected by forestry works.
Open moorland and blanket bog	Found particularly in the Dublin and Wicklow Mountains. Boardwalk protects the wettest and most fragile sections, but boggy and muddy ground is still common after rain.
Timber boardwalk / tóchar	Most notable on White Hill above Lough Tay and on parts of the Glendalough to Glenmalure stage. Helpful in bog, but slippery when wet, icy or algae-covered.
Rocky upland path	Most significant on the mountain stages, especially the descent into Glenmalure. Careful footing is needed in wet weather.
Tarmac lanes and boreens	A substantial feature of the route, especially south of Glenmalure and from Iron Bridge towards Clonegal. Usually quiet, but hard on feet over long days.
Farmland paths	More frequent in the southern stages, with gates, stiles, livestock fields and hedgerowed lanes.

Roughly 41 km of the Wicklow Way is on tarred country roads. Road walking is limited on the northern mountain stages, but increases sharply in the south; from Iron Bridge towards Clonegal the route is largely on lanes, boreens and lowland tracks.

Where the route feels hardest

The official Strenuous grading is mainly about conditions and cumulative effort, not technical danger. Fit walkers used to long hill days should find the route manageable, but first-time long-distance walkers should not underestimate the early mountain stages.

The main difficulty factors are:

- sustained climbing on the first, second and fourth stages;
- exposed high ground around Fairy Castle, Prince William's Seat, Djouce / White Hill and the Glendalough–Glenmalure crossing;
- boggy ground away from the boardwalks;

- slippery timber boardwalk in wet or icy conditions;
- long daily distances, with several stages around 21–23 km;
- hard tarmac underfoot on the southern stages;
- a steep, rocky descent into Glenmalure that is much slower when wet.

Stage-by-stage terrain notes

Marlay Park to Knockree

This is a tougher opening day than many walkers expect. The route leaves the parkland and tree-lined paths of Marlay Park, passes under the M50, then climbs into the Dublin hills through Kilmashogue, Two Rock, Fairy Castle and Tibbradden.

Underfoot, it mixes narrow upland paths, heathland, forest passages and some road sections. The exposed ground around Fairy Castle and the re-ascent towards Prince William's Seat can be windy, wet and short of shelter, making this stage feel serious in poor weather.

Knockree to Roundwood

This stage contains the route's best-known upland terrain: the timber tóchar across the blanket bog of White Hill, the official high point of the Wicklow Way at 630 m. The trail crosses the southern shoulder of Djouce and does not summit Djouce itself.

The boardwalk makes the bog passable and protects fragile ground, but the surrounding terrain is still wet and exposed. After heavy rain, sections off the timber can be ankle-deep in water, and the boardwalk can be slippery.

The descent towards Ballinastoe Woods begins on raised boardwalk before giving way to forest tracks. In clear weather this is one of the most rewarding walking sections, with views over Lough Tay and the Luggala cliffs, but in wind, rain or mist it becomes one of the more testing parts of the route.

Roundwood to Glendalough

This is generally the easiest stage. The walking is lower, less exposed and more forgiving, with forest tracks, quiet roads and easier gradients around the Paddock Hill area.

There is no major bog or high mountain exposure on this section. It is a useful recovery day between the Djouce / White Hill stage and the harder climb out of Glendalough.

Glendalough to Glenmalure

This is the most physically demanding mountain stage. After leaving Glendalough past the Upper Lake and Poulanass waterfall area, the route climbs steeply towards the Spinc and the shoulder of Mullacor.

The ascent is sustained, gaining roughly 400 m over 4–5 km, and can feel relentless with a full pack. Boardwalk helps across boggy ground between Mullacor and Lugduff, but wet patches and slippery surfaces should still be expected.

The descent into Glenmalure is long, steep and rocky. In dry weather it is straightforward hillwalking; in wet conditions it needs patience, good footwear and careful foot placement, especially on stone and mud.

Glenmalure to Moyne

This stage begins the transition out of the higher Wicklow Mountains, but it is not an easy lowland walk. The route climbs through the wooded slopes of Slieve Maan, loops around Carrickashane Mountain and descends towards the Ow River valley and Iron Bridge.

Expect forest tracks, rougher paths and open mountainside. The Slieve Maan area can feel exposed and boggy, and poor visibility makes this section slower even though the route remains waymarked.

Forestry operations can affect parts of this area, including around Drumgoff. Current diversions and signage should be checked before travelling.

Moyne to Shillelagh

South of Moyne the route becomes softer in character. The terrain shifts towards forest, farmland, hedgerow-bordered boreens and quiet country lanes, with lower hills and easier gradients.

There is still a long day's walking involved, and the road sections can be tiring on feet and knees. The route passes through Tinahely, and farmland access means gates, stiles and livestock fields should be expected.

Shillelagh to Clonegal

The final stage is the gentlest in terrain but one of the longer days. Walking is predominantly on quiet lanes, boreens and forest tracks, including sections through Raheenakit Forest and the Derry River valley before the approach to Clonegal.

There is little technical difficulty and the gradients are generally easy. The main challenge is distance, hard road surface and keeping concentration on a lowland finish after several days on the trail.

Bog, mud and wet ground

Wet ground is a normal part of the Wicklow Way, not an exceptional condition. The boardwalks around White Hill and other boggy areas make the route much more sustainable and walkable, but they do not remove mud from the trail.

The boggiest and wettest sections are most likely on the open mountain stages: around Djouce / White Hill, between Glendalough and Glenmalure, and on parts of the Slieve Maan area. After prolonged rain, expect slow going, wet boots and muddy trousers.

Waterproof boots or robust trail shoes with good grip are more important than heavy mountaineering footwear. In wet or cold seasons, ankle support and a stiffer sole can be helpful on the rocky descent into Glenmalure and on long road sections.

Road walking and hard surfaces

Road walking is one of the defining practical issues of the Wicklow Way. It is not constant, but it becomes much more noticeable after Glenmalure and especially from Moyne and Tinahely southwards.

Most road sections are on quiet country lanes and boreens rather than busy roads. Even so, long tarmac stretches can cause hot spots, tired calves and sore knees, particularly on the final two stages.

Good socks, well-tested footwear and blister management matter as much as hill fitness. Walking poles can help on descents, but some walkers find them less useful on long tarmac sections.

Gates, stiles and livestock

The route crosses farmland on several stages, especially in the southern half. Expect routine countryside access: gates, stiles, field edges, hedgerows and occasional livestock fields with sheep or cattle.

Keep gates as found, give animals space and avoid lingering near livestock. Dogs are not a simple choice on this route because of farmland, livestock and access rules; arrangements should be checked carefully before planning to walk with one.

Exposure and navigation in poor weather

The Wicklow Way is waymarked with the yellow walking man / yellow arrow on a black background, but waymarking does not remove the need for basic navigation. Mist, forestry tracks, diversions and open bog can all make the correct line less obvious.

The most exposed areas are the first two mountain days and the Glendalough to Glenmalur crossing. In poor visibility, wind or heavy rain, these stages feel significantly harder than their distances suggest.

A map, offline route file and the ability to relocate at junctions are sensible. The route is not a wilderness expedition, but it should not be treated as a park walk once it reaches the open hills.

Seasonal conditions

Spring is usually a good walking season, especially from April into May. Lower ground is fresh and manageable, but the high bogs may still be wet, and cold mornings are common.

Summer gives the best chance of drier underfoot conditions, though rain can still make boardwalk and rock slippery. July can bring midges on still evenings, particularly around Glendalough and forested sections.

Autumn can be excellent in September and early October, but rain and mud increase as the season progresses. By October, shortening daylight becomes a real planning factor on the 21–23 km stages.

Winter, from November to March, is not recommended for most walkers. Boggy ground holds water, boardwalk can become icy or slick, daylight is short, and the exposed mountain stages can be dangerous in poor visibility or freezing conditions.

Weather and Best Time to Walk

The practical walking season for the Wicklow Way is **April to October**. The best all-round months are usually **May and September**, when there is a useful balance of daylight, open accommodation, milder temperatures and fewer booking pressures than high summer.

June to August gives the longest days and warmest conditions, but it is also the busiest period for beds in places such as Knockree, Roundwood and Glendalough. **October** can be rewarding in the woods and bracken, but rain increases, daylight shortens quickly and wet ground becomes more tiring.

Best months at a glance

Period	What to expect	Planning advice
April-May	Cooler mornings, showers, clearer spring light and generally quieter trails. Boggy ground remains wet after winter.	A strong choice if you are happy carrying warm layers. Book accommodation ahead, especially around weekends.
June-August	Warmest weather, longest days and the driest underfoot conditions of the year, though rain is still common.	Best for long stages and first-time long-distance walkers. Book beds well in advance.
September	Often one of the best months: good daylight, cooler walking temperatures and less pressure than summer.	A very good thru-hiking month. Waterproofs and warm layers are still essential.
October	Autumn colour, quieter trails, wetter ground and much shorter days.	Keep stages conservative and start early. Accommodation and food options may begin to narrow.
November-March	Short days, wet bog, cold wind, possible snow or ice on the high ground, and limited accommodation.	Not recommended unless you have winter hillwalking experience, appropriate kit and flexible plans.

Rain, bog and wet ground

Rain is a normal part of walking the Wicklow Way, not an exception. The Wicklow Mountains are much wetter than the east coast towns, with roughly **1,000–2,000 mm of annual rainfall**, and even the drier months still average many wet days.

The relatively driest period is **March to May**, but a week-long crossing should still be planned on the assumption that it will rain. **October and November** are among the wettest months, with December to February also very wet.

The blanket bog around **White Hill and the Djouce shoulder** stays wet even after warm, dry spells. The OPW timber boardwalk, or **tóchar**, above Lough Tay is there for both access and bog protection; stay on it, especially in poor visibility or saturated conditions.

Wind, mist and exposed upland weather

The most weather-exposed part of the route is the high crossing around **Djouce, White Hill and Lough Tay**, where the Wicklow Way reaches its high point at **630 m**. Wind, horizontal rain and fast-moving mist can make this section feel much more serious than its height suggests.

Low cloud can descend quickly on the White Hill boardwalk, making it the route's most navigationally vulnerable section. Glendalough can also sit under morning valley fog, while autumn and winter bring more persistent mist across the hills.

Wind chill matters. A mild valley day can feel **5–10°C colder** on the open mountain sections, particularly when wet. Even in summer, carry a warm layer, hat and gloves for the higher ground.

Temperatures by season

Season	Typical hiking conditions
Spring	Around 8–13°C at elevation in April–May, milder in the valleys. Cold starts and showers are common.
Summer	Around 13–18°C at lower elevations , with mountain tops more often 10–14°C . Warm spells can be higher, but exposed wind still cools the route quickly.
Autumn	Around 10–15°C , dropping to 8–12°C at elevation . Rain and mist become more frequent as the season progresses.
Winter	Often 0–10°C , with freezing conditions possible on exposed upland sections such as White Hill and the Djouce shoulder.

Daylight and stage length

Daylight is a major planning factor because Wicklow Way stages are often **6–9 hours of walking**, especially on the longer days south of Glenmalure and through the final lowland sections.

Time of year	Approximate daylight implication
Late June	Around 17 hours of daylight , with sunset near 21:45–22:00 . Long stages are easiest to manage.
August	Still 15+ hours of daylight, with sunset around 21:00 .
September	Around 13 hours of daylight, with sunset around 19:30 . Still practical for a 6–8 day itinerary.
October	Around 11 hours of daylight, with sunset around 17:30 . Early starts become important.
November–February	Very short days, down to about 7 hours 38 minutes around the December solstice. This sharply reduces the safe window for high-level walking.

From late October onwards, avoid ambitious stage plans unless you are comfortable navigating and finishing in low light. In poor weather, the combination of short days, wet ground and mist can make even moderate distances feel slow.

Snow, ice and winter walking

The Wicklow Way has no route-wide winter closure, but winter conditions can make the route unrealistic for many long-distance walkers. Snow is possible on the higher ground from **November to March**, and ice on the White Hill boardwalk can be hazardous.

Winter attempts should only be considered with hillwalking experience, full waterproof and warm-weather systems, a short-day strategy and the ability to change plans if the mountain forecast deteriorates. The exposed high sections should not be tackled in storm conditions or high winds.

Accommodation also becomes a limiting factor in winter. Some B&Bs, hostels and visitor facilities reduce hours or close outside the main April–October season, so off-season itineraries need more flexibility and advance checking.

Trail surface through the year

Season	Underfoot conditions
April–May	Wet but manageable boggy sections, soft forest tracks and higher streams after winter rain.
June–August	Best underfoot conditions, though bog remains wet in places. Gravel forest roads are generally easier and forest shade is useful in warm weather.
September–October	Bog becomes wetter again, bracken grows tall and stream crossings can run higher after rainfall.
November–March	Waterlogged bog, standing water on upland paths, possible snow or ice, and slippery boardwalk. Progress can be much slower.

Insects and ticks

Midges can be a nuisance on still summer evenings, especially in **July and August** around wet moorland, valley stops and the Glendalough area. They are usually less of a problem while moving, and wind on the exposed sections often keeps them down.

Ticks are not a defining issue on the Wicklow Way, but standard checks are sensible after woodland and bracken sections such as **Crone Wood** and the Glendalough forests, particularly from **May to October**.

Forecasts and weather checks

Use **Met Éireann** for Irish weather forecasts and check the forecast again each evening before the next stage. For the high ground through Wicklow Mountains National Park, use the mountain forecast information linked by the National Parks and Wildlife Service.

Before committing to the White Hill/Djouce section, check for high winds, low cloud and storm warnings. If conditions are poor, delaying or shortening the day is safer than pressing on into exposed mountain weather.

Safety Notes

The Wicklow Way is a non-technical waymarked trail, but it crosses exposed upland, wet blanket bog, remote valleys and narrow rural roads. Treat it as a mountain walk rather than a countryside stroll, especially between Knockree, White Hill, Roundwood, Glendalough and Glenmalure.

Emergency help

In an emergency in Ireland, call **999 or 112**. Ask for **Mountain Rescue**; the Garda will alert the appropriate team.

Emergency calls may connect even when normal calls or data do not, because the phone can use any available network. Text messages can sometimes get through when a voice call fails, but do not rely on this as the main plan.

Two mountain rescue teams cover the Wicklow uplands: Dublin & Wicklow Mountain Rescue Team and Glen of Imaal Red Cross Mountain Rescue Team. Both are activated through **999 / 112**, not by calling the teams directly.

At Glendalough, a first aid kit and AED defibrillator are available at the Glendalough Information Office. For serious incidents, assume evacuation and onward medical care may take time, particularly in Glenmalure and on the higher ground.

Mobile signal and navigation

Mobile coverage is generally usable in towns and villages such as **Roundwood, Laragh, Glendalough, Tinahely, Shillelagh and Clonegal**, but it becomes patchy on higher and more remote ground. Expect unreliable signal around **White Hill**, the **Djouce shoulder**, the open moorland between **Knockree and Roundwood**, and in deep glacial valleys.

Glenmalure is the key black spot. The valley bottom is notably remote and may have no mobile signal, so do not leave route decisions, accommodation calls or transport arrangements until arrival there.

Carry at least one reliable offline navigation method. A paper map or fully downloaded GPS track is strongly recommended, with the phone charged each night and a power bank carried on longer days.

On forestry tracks, avoid assuming the broadest track is the Wicklow Way. Follow the yellow waymarkers and check position at junctions, especially in mist or when forestry operations have changed the feel of a section.

Weather and exposure

The Wicklow Mountains are wet, changeable and exposed. Annual rainfall is high, and even from May to September there are frequent wet days, so waterproofs should be packed even in settled-looking weather.

The most exposed section is the **White Hill / Djouce shoulder** area on the Knockree to Roundwood stage. The Wicklow Way reaches its high point at **White Hill, 630 m**, where wind, cold rain and mist are realistic at any time of year.

Mist can arrive quickly on the open ridge and make waymarkers harder to follow. If visibility drops, stop, check the map or GPS position, and avoid pressing on by guesswork.

If conditions deteriorate seriously on White Hill, Lough Tay or the open moorland stages, turning back is a sensible decision. The route is not technically difficult, but exposure, wind chill and poor visibility can make it serious.

Winter walking from November to March is best left to walkers with solid hillwalking experience. Short daylight, wet ground, ice and colder wind increase the margin for error.

Section-specific hazards

Section	Main safety points
Marlay Park to Knockree	A long first day leaving Dublin's suburbs and gaining height. Watch road crossings and follow waymarkers carefully through the suburban fringe.
Knockree to Roundwood	The most exposed stage, crossing White Hill on the timber boardwalk over blanket bog. Stay on the tóchar and pay close attention to navigation in mist.
Lough Tay / Luggala area	Exposed and relatively remote, with limited quick escape if the weather turns poor. Check the forecast before committing to this section.
Glendalough to Glenmalure	Descents can be slippery in wet weather. Glenmalure is remote, with limited services and poor mobile signal in the valley bottom.
Glenmalure to Moyne	A long stage through Drumgoff and open ground south of Glenmalure. A forestry-works reroute has affected the Drumgoff area; check the official Wicklow Way website or Sport Ireland updates and follow current signage.
Tinahely to Shillelagh to Clonegal	Much of this southern section uses quiet boreens and country roads. Traffic is light but roads are narrow; walk facing oncoming traffic and be visible in low light or fog. Take particular care at the busier Hacketstown–Tinahely road crossing.

Bog, boardwalks and underfoot conditions

The boardwalk over White Hill protects both walkers and the blanket bog. Do not step off it unless absolutely necessary: the surrounding ground can be deeply saturated and slow to cross.

Steep descents into places such as Glendalough and Glenmalure can be loose or slippery after rain. Poles can be useful, particularly with a full pack.

Waterproof hiking footwear is strongly preferable. Wet grass, boggy margins, muddy woodland and stony tracks are common enough that lightweight road-style footwear is a poor choice for most walkers.

Road walking and visibility

The later stages include significant road walking on narrow rural lanes. The most important rule is simple: **walk facing oncoming traffic** unless the bend, verge or visibility makes the other side safer for a short distance.

Wear or carry something visible in dull weather. Mist, rain and hedge-lined bends can make walkers hard to see, even on quiet roads.

Avoid using headphones on road sections. Being able to hear vehicles approaching from behind is a basic safety advantage on boreens and country roads.

Livestock, dogs and farmland

The Wicklow Way crosses farmland and open mountain where sheep and cattle may be present. Close gates properly, use stiles where provided and give livestock space.

Cattle can be curious or protective, especially around young animals. Move calmly, do not get between cows and calves, and avoid crowding animals at gates.

Dogs should be kept on leads at all times around livestock and within Wicklow Mountains National Park. Free-roaming sheep are common on open mountain sections, so dog control is a safety issue as well as a land-access responsibility.

Water safety

Do **not** drink untreated water from streams or rivers along the Wicklow Way. Agricultural runoff and livestock make surface water potentially contaminated, including water that looks clean in upland areas.

Carry enough water between villages and accommodation stops. As a practical minimum, carry **1-2 litres**, with more in warm weather or on longer stages such as Marlay Park to Knockree, Glenmalure to Moyne, and the southern road-walking days.

Refill at accommodation or known drinking-water points in villages. In a genuine emergency, stream water should be filtered, chemically treated or boiled before drinking.

Solo hiking

The Wicklow Way is commonly walked solo and is generally straightforward for prepared walkers, but solo hikers should be disciplined about check-ins. Each morning, leave the day's plan and intended accommodation with someone who will notice if arrival is overdue.

This matters most around **White Hill**, **Lough Tay** and **Glenmalure**, where poor visibility, exposure and weak mobile signal can combine. Solo walkers should start these sections with a charged phone, offline route loaded, waterproofs accessible and a realistic estimate of daylight remaining.

Fire safety

Fires are not permitted in Wicklow Mountains National Park, which covers much of the northern half of the route. Do not light campfires or disposable barbecues.

In dry summer periods, upland vegetation can become highly flammable. Follow any local fire warnings and avoid any activity that could start a wildfire.

Daily safety checklist

Before setting off each day:

- Check the **met.ie mountain forecast**, not just a general town forecast.
- Check for any current Wicklow Way diversions, especially around **Drumgoff**.

- Load the route offline and carry a map or backup navigation method.
- Charge the phone and carry a power bank on longer days.
- Pack waterproofs, a warm layer, food and enough water.
- Tell someone the day's route and expected destination.
- Start early enough to avoid finishing road sections or remote valleys in poor light.
- If the forecast is poor for White Hill or the Djouce shoulder, be prepared to delay, shorten or turn back.

Gear Recommendations

The Wicklow Way is not a technical mountain route, but it is hard on gear: wet upland, blanket bog, timber boardwalk, forestry tracks, rocky path, farmland and long stretches of quiet road all come in quick succession. Pack for Irish mountain weather rather than for the forecast in Dublin.

The two biggest gear mistakes are starting in untested footwear and treating the route like a dry lowland trail. Waterproofs, blister prevention and reliable offline navigation matter more here than specialist mountaineering equipment.

Footwear: prioritise waterproofing and comfort

Waterproof ankle boots are the safest standard choice for most walkers. The upland sections around Djouce, White Hill, Glendalough and Glenmalure can be wet and boggy even when the timber tóchar keeps you above the worst ground, and mud is common away from the boardwalks.

A waterproof breathable lining such as GORE-TEX or equivalent is strongly recommended. Boots must be properly broken in before Marlay Park; blisters are one of the most common problems on the Wicklow Way, especially after the road-heavy early stages.

Trail runners can work for experienced walkers who know their feet and accept wetter conditions, but choose cushioning carefully. The road walking, particularly on the first two days out of Dublin and across the southern boreens, can be relentless on thin soles.

Carry at least 2–3 pairs of good wool or synthetic hiking socks and avoid cotton. Alternating dry sock pairs during the week helps reduce rubbing, and a spare dry pair in the daypack is worth the small weight penalty in wet weather.

Lightweight camp shoes, flip-flops or packable slip-ons are useful at the end of each stage. They are not essential on the trail itself, but being able to get out of wet boots in Knockree, Roundwood, Glendalough, Glenmalure or later village stops is a genuine comfort upgrade.

Waterproofs and layers

A proper waterproof and windproof jacket is non-negotiable. The route crosses exposed upland, including White Hill at 630 m, and weather in the Wicklow Mountains can change quickly from mild valley walking to cold wind and rain.

Waterproof overtrousers are strongly recommended rather than optional. Even if the week starts dry, a full day in wet trousers across bog, forestry and open moorland is a fast way to get cold and uncomfortable.

Use a simple layering system:

Layer	What to pack	Why it matters on this route
Base layer	Wicking synthetic or merino top	Manages sweat on the climbs and dries faster than cotton
Mid-layer	Fleece or synthetic insulated layer	Needed for stops, exposed ridges and cool evenings

Layer	What to pack	Why it matters on this route
Outer shell	Waterproof, windproof jacket	Essential for White Hill, Djouce area, Glenmalure and wet forest sections
Leg protection	Waterproof overtrousers	Keeps warmth in during prolonged rain and boggy walking
Extremities	Warm hat and gloves	Worth carrying even in summer for exposed upland days

A sun hat or baseball cap is also useful in settled summer weather. A waterproof sun hat works well on this route because it covers both strong sun and sudden showers without needing a separate cap.

Gaiters

Low gaiters are useful on the Wicklow Way, especially in spring, autumn or after rain. They help keep mud, wet vegetation and grit out of boot cuffs without the bulk of full mountaineering gaiters.

They are less important in a dry summer spell, but the route still crosses enough boggy and muddy ground to justify carrying them if conditions look mixed. Full winter-style gaiters are usually unnecessary for the normal spring-to-autumn walking season.

Navigation and route-finding

The Wicklow Way is waymarked with the yellow walking-man symbol and yellow arrows on a black background, but waymarking should not be the only navigation tool. Some forks and forestry sections need attention, and mobile signal can be unreliable in the more remote central sections, including Glenmalure and the Glenmalure-to-Moyne area.

Download offline maps before starting. HiiKER is widely used for Irish hiking and supports offline mapping, while GPX files are available through Visit Wicklow and Sport Ireland.

A paper backup is still sensible. The EastWest Mapping Wicklow Way Map Guide is the standard printed strip-map guide for the trail, published for both north-south and south-north walking, and is supplied in a plastic wallet. A compass is useful as a backup in poor visibility, even though the route is waymarked.

Before setting off, check for current diversions and forestry-work reroutes, particularly around Drumgoff and other managed forest sections. This should be checked before travelling.

Water capacity and treatment

Carry 1.5–2 litres of water as a normal day capacity between overnight stops, and more in hot summer weather. Inn-to-inn walkers should refill fully before leaving each accommodation stop rather than assuming a mid-stage tap or shop will appear.

Streams and farm-area water sources exist, but they should not be treated as automatically safe. Livestock contamination is a real consideration on this route, particularly through farmland and lower valleys.

Campers should carry a filter such as a Sawyer Squeeze or similar, plus a backup purification method if relying on natural water. A labelled drinking-water tap has been noted near Brusher Gap, but individual

taps and access points should not be built into a plan without checking current conditions on the ground.

Food carry and resupply

Plan to carry lunch from the previous night's stop on most days. Shops and cafés are not frequent enough to rely on spontaneous resupply, especially in the more remote middle and southern sections.

High-energy snacks are worth packing from the start: nuts, chocolate, energy bars, dried fruit and other food that survives rain and being crushed in a pack. Between Glenmalure and Tinahely in particular, avoid assuming that food will be available exactly when needed.

Inn-to-inn walkers can keep food weight modest, but every daypack should contain more than just lunch. A spare snack reserve is sensible in case a stage takes longer than expected due to weather, navigation or foot problems.

Trekking poles

Trekking poles are useful but not essential. Fit walkers with light packs may find them unnecessary, and they can be awkward on long road sections if left extended.

They become much more valuable on steep descents, boggy ground and long wet days. The descent into Glenmalure and uneven upland sections are good examples of where poles can reduce strain and improve balance.

Campers carrying 50–65 litre packs should strongly consider poles. Section hikers and fast walkers can use lightweight folding poles and pack them away on road-heavy stretches.

Rucksacks and packing style

Your pack size depends heavily on whether luggage transfer is used. Keep everything inside waterproof dry bags or use a reliable pack liner; a rain cover alone is not always enough in persistent Irish rain.

Walking style	Recommended pack	Key gear priorities
Inn-to-inn with luggage transfer	20–30 litres	Waterproofs, warm layer, lunch, 1.5–2 litres water, first aid, navigation, power bank
Inn-to-inn carrying all luggage	35–45 litres	Spare clothes, toiletries, evening footwear, dry bags, but keep weight disciplined
Self-sufficient camping	50–65 litres	Tent or hut sleeping kit, stove, fuel, water filter, warmer sleep system, food carry
Fast or section hiking	15–25 litres	Minimal but complete safety kit: shell, insulation, water, food, offline map, phone power

Luggage transfer changes the experience significantly. A light daypack makes the 21–23 km stages and repeated road sections much easier on feet and knees, but the daypack still needs to be a mountain-weather pack, not a city bag.

Camping-specific gear

Self-sufficient walkers need a lightweight three-season tent unless using the route's Adirondack-style mountain huts. The huts are open-sided, cannot be booked, and should not be treated as guaranteed accommodation.

A three-season sleeping bag is appropriate for most summer and autumn trips; colder spring conditions may require a warmer bag or liner. A groundsheet or robust sleeping mat is useful in huts as well as in a tent.

Campers also need a stove, fuel, water filter and enough food to bridge sparse resupply sections. Pack weight can become heavy quickly, and the Wicklow Way's 3,320 m of ascent makes overloaded camping packs noticeably harder.

Power, phone and electronics

Carry a power bank of 10,000–20,000 mAh if using a phone for mapping, GPX navigation, photos or tracking. Navigation apps and wet, cold conditions can drain batteries faster than expected.

Do not assume that every overnight stop will allow a full recharge, especially in more remote accommodation. Put the phone in a waterproof pouch or dry bag, and keep a cable accessible rather than buried in a transferred main bag.

First aid and foot care

A blister kit is essential. Pack blister plasters, second-skin dressings or similar, tape, and small scissors; treat hot spots immediately rather than waiting until the end of the day.

Anti-chafe products such as Vaseline or Body Glide are also useful. The combination of rain, sweat, long days and repeated road walking makes chafing a realistic problem over 130 km.

A small first-aid kit should include basic painkillers, antihistamines, personal medication and tweezers. Tweezers are useful for ticks as well as general first-aid tasks.

Insects, ticks and sun protection

Midges are not usually a major issue on the Wicklow Way in the way they can be in the Scottish Highlands or parts of western Ireland. Heavy-duty midge nets are normally unnecessary.

Tick awareness is more important. Wear long trousers through heathery, bracken or rough grassy sections, check skin each evening, and remove ticks promptly with tweezers or a tick tool.

Carry sunscreen and sunglasses in summer. The open sections around the Dublin and Wicklow Mountains can feel exposed in clear weather, and road sections offer limited shade at times.

High-visibility for road sections

A bright pack cover, reflective detail or lightweight high-visibility vest is sensible. The Wicklow Way includes significant road walking, particularly on the early stages out of Dublin and on later quiet boreens.

This does not need to be heavy or elaborate. The aim is simply to be more visible to local traffic in rain, mist, low light and on narrow rural roads.

Seasonal adjustments

Season	Gear adjustments
Spring	Warmer layers, gaiters, reliable overtrousers, earlier starts for shorter daylight
Summer	Sunscreen, sun hat, extra water capacity in warm spells, but still carry full waterproofs
Autumn	Warmer gloves and hat, gaiters, stronger emphasis on dry bags and early starts
Winter	Not recommended for most walkers; short days, poor visibility, frozen or icy high ground and harsher conditions require winter hillwalking judgement

Even in summer, do not remove the waterproof jacket, warm layer or navigation backup from the pack. The high point at White Hill and the exposed upland around Djouce can feel very different from the villages and lower forest tracks.

Budget and Costs

All costs on the Wicklow Way are in euros (€). Prices change by season and availability, so check current rates before booking, especially for accommodation, luggage transfer and buses.

The trail itself has no permit, registration fee or national park entry fee. The biggest costs are accommodation, food, luggage transfer if used, and getting away from Clonegal at the southern end.

Typical total budget for a full Wicklow Way

The figures below are per person and assume a full north-to-south walk using paid accommodation. They use a 7-night allowance, which suits a standard week-long itinerary with an extra night around the route; reduce the accommodation total if walking a 6-night schedule.

Style	What it usually means	Likely total per person
Budget	Hostels where available, self-catered lunches, hostel cooking or occasional pub meal, public transport, no luggage transfer	€360–€480
Budget with luggage transfer	As above, but with one transferred bag	€450–€560
Mid-range	B&Bs/guesthouses, breakfasts included, pub dinners, some packed lunches, public transport/taxis, luggage transfer	€764–€1,014
Comfortable	B&Bs and small hotels, restaurant dinners, luggage transfer, more taxi use and extras	€1,114–€1,620
Self-guided package	Accommodation, luggage transfer, maps/GPS and support arranged by an operator; meals beyond breakfast usually extra	€900–€1,400+

These totals exclude a Dublin hotel before or after the walk. If staying in Dublin, allow roughly €20–€35 for a hostel dorm or €80–€200+ for a hotel room, depending on season and location.

Accommodation costs

Accommodation is the main cost on the Wicklow Way. Hostels keep the budget down, but they are not available at every overnight stop, so many walkers use a mix of hostels, B&Bs, guesthouses and occasional hotels.

Book ahead, particularly around Knockree, Roundwood, Laragh/Glendalough and Glenmalure. The middle and southern sections have sparse facilities, and turning up without a booking can create expensive taxi detours.

Accommodation type	Typical cost per person per night	Notes
Hostel dorm	€18–€27	Knockree Hostel dorm beds are typically around €18–€22; hostel breakfasts and packed lunches may cost extra.

Accommodation type	Typical cost per person per night	Notes
Hostel private room	€22–€32.50	Usually priced per person; availability is limited.
B&B / guesthouse	€40–€75	Breakfast is usually included. A realistic rural Wicklow average is often around €55–€60.
Hotel	€70–€120+	Most relevant around busier places such as the Glendalough area.
Single occupancy	Often €20–€40 extra per night	Solo walkers should budget carefully; single supplements can add a lot over a full week.

Approximate accommodation totals for 7 nights are:

Style	7-night accommodation budget
Hostels	€126–€189
B&Bs / guesthouses	€280–€525
Hotels	€490–€840+

Food and drink

Food planning matters because services are unevenly spaced. Roundwood, Laragh/Glendalough, Tinahely and Shillelagh are the most useful resupply and meal stops, while the Glenmalure to Moyne stage and the Moyne to Shillelagh stage have limited options on the trail.

Carry lunch, snacks and enough water for the longer rural stages. Do not assume there will be a shop or café during the walking day.

Item	Typical cost
Self-catered packed lunch and snacks	€8–€12 per day
Hostel breakfast	Around €3 extra where offered
Café breakfast	€8–€13
Pub main course	€13–€19
Pub dinner with a drink	€19–€25
Pint of Guinness	Around €6
Coffee/snack stop	€3–€6

Daily food budgets are usually:

Food style	Likely daily cost
Budget: self-catered lunch, simple dinner or hostel cooking, occasional pub meal	€25–€35

Food style	Likely daily cost
Mid-range: breakfast if not included, packed or pub lunch, pub dinner	€45–€65
Comfortable: restaurant meals, drinks and regular café stops	€70–€90+

B&B rates normally include breakfast, which helps control costs. Hostels may charge separately for breakfast and packed lunches, so add these when comparing nightly prices.

Transport to the start at Marlay Park

Marlay Park is in Dublin's southern suburbs and is the cheapest end of the route to access. There is no railway station at the trailhead, but Dublin Bus and Luas-plus-bus options make it straightforward from the city.

Option	Typical cost	Notes
Dublin Bus to Marlay Park	About €3–€4	Route 16 or similar services run from the city centre area; Leap card fares are usually cheaper than cash.
Luas to Dundrum plus short bus	About €3–€5 total	Useful if staying near a Luas stop.
Taxi from Dublin city centre	About €20–€35	Practical for an early start or a group sharing the fare.

Check current Dublin Bus and Luas fares before travelling, as fare structures and routes can change.

Transport from Clonegal

Clonegal is the awkward end of the Wicklow Way. It has no railway station and no direct bus service, so most walkers use a taxi or pre-arranged transfer to reach Bunclody, then continue by bus.

Option	Typical cost	Notes
Taxi from Clonegal to Bunclody	About €13–€17	Bunclody is the usual onward transport point.
Bus from Bunclody to Dublin	About €12–€18	Journey time is around 2 hours 15 minutes; services are limited.
Taxi + bus from Clonegal to Dublin	About €25–€35 total	The most economical typical exit plan.
Private taxi from Clonegal to Dublin	About €100–€140	Useful for groups, late finishes or missed buses.

Because Bunclody bus services are limited, check the timetable before fixing the final walking day. A late arrival in Clonegal can turn a cheap bus exit into an expensive taxi.

Mid-route transport and section-hiking costs

Glendalough is the most useful mid-route exit or entry point. St. Kevin's Bus links Dublin city with Glendalough, with a single fare around €14 and a return around €23; it is useful for section hikers or for leaving the trail early.

This service also makes it possible to walk a northern or central section without committing to the full trail. Check the current timetable before relying on it, especially outside the main walking season.

Luggage transfer

Luggage transfer is optional but popular on the Wicklow Way because of the long stages, wet ground and exposed upland sections. Wicklow Way Baggage is the main dedicated provider.

Typical terms are €12 per bag per day, with a minimum of two bags or a €25 daily minimum. Bags are limited to 15 kg, with morning collections and afternoon deliveries; current operating dates should be checked, as the service is seasonal from roughly April to late October.

Luggage transfer item	Typical cost / condition
One bag, 7 days	About €84–€91
Two bags, 7 days	About €175
Maximum bag weight	15 kg
Dublin city hotel collection	Not included; Marlay Park pickup only

Outside the operating season, do not assume a dedicated baggage service will be available. Either carry full kit, use taxis selectively, or arrange private transfers in advance.

Entry fees and optional extras

There is no fee to walk the Wicklow Way and no charge to enter Wicklow Mountains National Park. Glendalough's monastic site and lakes are free to visit on foot.

Some optional visitor attractions do cost extra. The Glendalough Visitor Centre charges an admission fee, often around €5–€7 for an adult, and Powerscourt Waterfall is a paid detour near the Crone Wood and Djouce area, typically around €8–€10 for an adult. Check current prices before visiting.

Car parking charges at Glendalough are not normally relevant to thru-hikers arriving on foot.

Camping and campsite costs

Most Wicklow Way budgets are built around hostels, B&Bs and guesthouses rather than campsites. Indoor accommodation is also the more dependable option for linking the standard overnight stops.

If planning to camp, identify legal campsites or permitted camping arrangements before travelling and budget separately. Do not rely on being able to improvise camping near every stage end.

Self-guided and guided package costs

Self-guided packages suit walkers who want accommodation, luggage transfer and route materials arranged in advance. They usually include B&B accommodation, breakfast, luggage transfer, maps or GPS support, and emergency assistance; lunches, dinners and drinks are normally extra.

Typical per-person package prices, based on sharing, are:

Operator style	Typical price
7-day / 6-night self-guided package	From about €979
8-day self-guided package	From about €1,029
10-day self-guided package	Around €1,399
Shorter 4-day package	From about €585
Guided group tour	Around €1,195

Solo walkers should pay particular attention to single supplements. Full-route self-guided packages can add roughly €460–€570 for single occupancy, depending on itinerary and operator.

Cash and contingency money

Carry some cash on the Wicklow Way. Card payment is common in larger stops, but some rural B&Bs, small services and taxis may prefer or require cash.

A sensible contingency is €30–€50 on a tight budget, or €50–€80+ on a mid-range trip. This covers extra snacks, an optional visitor fee, a short taxi, laundry, or replacing food when a planned shop is closed.

Luggage Transfer, Guided Tours and Support Services

The Wicklow Way is straightforward to walk independently, but support services are genuinely useful on this route because accommodation is unevenly spaced and several stages are long. The most important choices are whether to use luggage transfer, whether to book a self-guided package, and how to handle taxi links in the southern half of the trail.

Luggage transfer on the Wicklow Way

Wicklow Way Baggage is the dedicated luggage-transfer operator for the route, based near Roundwood and associated with Footfalls Walking Holidays. It covers the full trail from Marlay Park to Clonegal and is the main option for walkers who want to hike with a daypack rather than a full rucksack.

Key details:

Service detail	Practical note
Operator	Wicklow Way Baggage — wicklowwaybaggage.com
Contact	+353 86 2698659 / info@wicklowwaybaggage.com
Route coverage	Marlay Park to Clonegal
Start collection	Marlay Park only; Dublin city accommodation is not served
Bag limit	15 kg per bag
Indicative price	From €12 per day for one bag; €25 per day for two bags; custom rates for 10+ bags
Collection / delivery	Collections from 08:30; deliveries normally completed by about 16:30
Operating days	Monday to Sunday during the operating season
Season	April 1 to October 24; closed October 25 to March 31
Booking	Online form via wicklowwaybaggage.com

Check current prices, operating dates and collection rules before booking, especially if walking at the edge of the season. If starting from accommodation in central Dublin, plan to bring bags to Marlay Park rather than expecting a city pick-up.

Luggage transfer is most useful on the longer and more strenuous days: the first stage from Marlay Park to Knockree, the later stages through Glenmalure, Moyne and Shillelagh, and the final approach to Clonegal. Walking these with a 15 kg pack is possible, but it adds a lot of effort on climbs, boggy sections and road-heavy southern stages.

Fit walkers can still carry their own kit, particularly on a 7-day itinerary with disciplined packing and a light load of around 8–10 kg. Campers should generally expect to carry their own gear; do not assume baggage drops to campsites.

Self-guided walking-holiday packages

A supported self-guided package suits walkers who want to hike independently but avoid the work of booking accommodation, arranging bag transfers and assembling route notes. These packages typically include accommodation, breakfasts, luggage transfer, maps or app navigation, and emergency phone support.

They are particularly useful on the Wicklow Way because places such as Roundwood, Glendalough, Glenmalur, Moyne, Tinahely and Shillelagh have limited accommodation compared with busier walking routes. Booking through an operator can reduce the risk of awkward gaps between overnight stops.

Operator	Typical Wicklow Way offering
Footfalls Walking Holidays	County Wicklow-based operator offering 5-day, 6-day, 10-day and other self-guided options. Packages include en-suite B&B accommodation, full Irish breakfast, daily luggage transfers, waterproof maps and route notes, GPS files and 24/7 emergency phone support. Indicative 5-day prices start from about €659 per person sharing, with solo and single-room supplements available.
Walking Holiday Ireland	Offers 5-day, 7-day full-trail and 8-day packages. Packages include en-suite B&Bs, full Irish breakfast, daily luggage transfers, detailed maps with waterproof case, GPS app with offline maps and 24/7 emergency contact. Indicative prices include 5-day options from about €655 per person and 7-day full-trail options from about €885 per person.
Macs Adventure	Self-guided Wicklow Way packages with accommodation, daily breakfast, luggage transfer, offline route guidance through the Macs Adventure app and 24/7 support. Prices vary by market and departure, so check the current quote when booking.
Wonderful Ireland	Offers Wicklow Way packages with accommodation, private bathroom, full Irish breakfast and luggage transfers between guesthouses. Indicative prices have been around €1,195 per person sharing.
Hillwalk Tours	Offers shorter Wicklow Way options, including 5-day/4-night and 7-day/6-night itineraries. Indicative prices start from about €719 per person for shorter packages and about €979 per person for 7-day options.
Inn Walking	Offers self-guided Wicklow Way packages. Check current itineraries and inclusions before booking.
UTracks	Offers a shorter self-guided option, A Taste of the Wicklow Way. Check current route coverage before booking if intending to walk the full trail.

Package prices and inclusions change by season, room type and availability. Always check whether transport to Marlay Park, transfer from Clonegal, lunches, evening meals and travel insurance are included; many packages exclude these.

Guided and supported options

Most walkers complete the Wicklow Way self-guided. The route is a National Waymarked Trail and is marked by the yellow walking-man symbol and yellow arrows on a black background, so a guide is not normally necessary for navigation in settled conditions.

Guided group options are less common than self-guided packages, but companies such as Hilltop Treks and Wonderful Ireland offer guided or more supported walking arrangements. Lough Dan House, near Roundwood, offers a 9-day tour with an escort driver who parallels the route and provides local knowledge without walking alongside throughout.

A guided or escorted format suits walkers who prefer social walking, extra local context, or support with transport and day-to-day decisions. Independent walkers who are comfortable with maps, GPX navigation and weather judgement will usually find a self-guided package, or luggage transfer alone, sufficient.

Taxi and local transfer support

Taxis are an important part of Wicklow Way logistics, especially where accommodation sits away from the trail or where public transport is thin. This is most relevant around Glenmalure, Moyne, Tinahely, Shillelagh and Clonegal.

Pre-book taxis rather than relying on same-day availability, particularly at weekends, bank holidays and in the southern sections. Clonegal and Shillelagh have very limited public transport; many walkers arrange a taxi from Clonegal to Bunclody for onward Bus Éireann connections, or use a local operator for a longer transfer towards Arklow or Dublin.

Route area	Taxi / transfer contacts
Marlay Park – Knockree	Bray Cabs: (01) 286 1111; Alpine Cabs, Enniskerry area: 087 299 8836
Knockree – Roundwood	Glendalough Minibus Service / Jerry O'Toole: 087 204 7916; glendaloughminibushire@gmail.com . Covers Dublin Airport, Enniskerry, Bray, Roundwood, Glendalough and further south.
Roundwood – Glendalough	Glendalough Cabs: 087 972 9452; info@glendaloughcabs.ie
Glendalough – Glenmalure	Mick Dunbar: 087 817 6630; info@mickdunbar.com . Covers Rathdrum, Glenmalure, Glendalough and Dublin Airport. N11 Cabs, Rathdrum: (0404) 29000
Glenmalure – Moyne / Tinahely area	Tinahely Cabs: 086 815 7065; PJ Cabs, Tinahely: 087 775 8905
Shillelagh / Clonegal area	Coolattin Cabs, Shillelagh: 087 976 9200; Buggy Pat Murphy, Shillelagh: 087 946 9978; Clody Cabs, Bunclody / Clonegal: 087 983 3304; Joe's Cabs, Bunclody: 086 401 4690

Phone numbers, availability and operating areas can change, so confirm arrangements before travelling. For critical transfers, book by phone or email and reconfirm the day before.

What to book ahead

Book accommodation first, then book luggage transfer once overnight stops are fixed. Wicklow Way Baggage can fill quickly in peak summer from June to August and around bank holiday weekends.

Self-guided package operators commonly advise booking 3–6 months ahead for July and August departures. This matters most for Glendalough and Roundwood, where beds can be limited relative to demand.

Southern-stage taxis should also be arranged in advance, especially for Moyne, Tinahely, Shillelagh and Clonegal. Do not finish in Clonegal assuming there will be an immediate onward public transport option.

Shorter Hikes and Best Sections

Most walkers choosing only part of the Wicklow Way should look first at the northern and central stages. Stages 1–4 give the best mix of mountain scenery, Glendalough, accommodation and workable public transport.

The southern stages are quieter and worthwhile, but they are harder to use as short breaks because accommodation and transport are sparse, especially around Glenmalure, Moyne, Shillelagh and Clonegal.

Best for	Section	Approx. distance	Why choose it	Transport notes
Best day walk	Roundwood to Glendalough	~12 km	Short, scenic, manageable, with Glendalough as the finish	St Kevin's Bus serves both Roundwood and Glendalough
Longer day challenge	Marlay Park to Knockree	~21 km	Walk from Dublin's edge into the Dublin Mountains	Dublin Bus route 16 to Marlay Park; onward exit via Enniskerry should be planned
Best weekend	Knockree to Glendalough	~30 km over 2 days	Djouce, White Hill tóchar, Lough Tay and Glendalough	Access via Enniskerry/Knockree; return from Glendalough by St Kevin's Bus
Best 3-day section	Marlay Park to Glendalough	~51 km over 3 days	A complete, logical mini-Wicklow Way from Dublin to Glendalough	Excellent start and finish access from Dublin
Best scenic section	Knockree to Glenmalure	~44 km over 3 days	The route's mountain core and wildest-feeling valleys	Start logistics are manageable; Glenmalure exit usually needs a taxi
Best for beginners	Roundwood to Glendalough	~12 km	Easiest serious taste of the trail with good transport	St Kevin's Bus makes it the simplest car-free option
Best for villages and beds	Marlay Park to Glendalough	~51 km over 3 days	Knockree, Roundwood and Laragh/Glendalough give the strongest accommodation chain	Book well ahead for summer weekends

Best day walk: Roundwood to Glendalough

Roundwood to Glendalough is the best single-stage sample of the Wicklow Way for most walkers. At about 12 km, it is the shortest standard stage and gives a satisfying day without forcing a very early start or a late finish.

The walking is gentler than the high Djouce and Glenmalure stages, with rolling Wicklow ground, some road walking near Roundwood and a descent towards the Glendalough valley. The finish is the main reason to choose it: Glendalough's monastic city, round tower and twin-lake setting are among the strongest cultural highlights on the whole route.

Transport is unusually straightforward for this trail. St Kevin's Bus runs from Dublin to Roundwood, Laragh and Glendalough, with a return service from Glendalough in the late afternoon; current times

and fares should be checked before travelling. As a rough guide, Dublin to Roundwood takes about 75 minutes and return fares vary by boarding point.

This is the best choice for day-trippers from Dublin, first-time Wicklow walkers and anyone wanting a low-risk introduction before committing to the full route.

Longer day challenge: Marlay Park to Knockree

Marlay Park to Knockree is the classic first day of the full route and works as a demanding standalone hike for fit walkers. At about 21 km, it is much longer than the Roundwood to Glendalough option and should be treated as a proper mountain day rather than a casual city-edge stroll.

The appeal is the transition from Dublin's southern suburbs into the Dublin Mountains, with forest, open upland and wide views over Dublin Bay and the Wicklow Mountains. It is a good test of whether the longer Wicklow Way days will suit you.

Marlay Park is reached by Dublin Bus route 16 from the city centre to Rathfarnham, near the park entrance. Knockree has An Óige hostel on the trail; for a same-day exit, Enniskerry is the practical public-transport link, but the connection from Knockree should be planned in advance.

Best weekend section: Knockree to Glendalough

For a two-day Wicklow Way weekend, Knockree to Glendalough is the strongest choice. It covers about 30 km over the route's most rewarding northern stages without needing to walk the entire trail.

Day 1, Knockree to Roundwood, is the harder and more dramatic stage. It crosses the Djouce area, reaches the White Hill tóchar at 630 m, gives the famous view over Lough Tay, then descends towards Roundwood.

Day 2, Roundwood to Glendalough, is shorter and gentler, making a good contrast after the exposed mountain walking. Finishing at Glendalough gives the weekend a clear destination rather than just an arbitrary stopping point.

Roundwood has B&Bs, village services and pub food, but accommodation should be booked early in summer. Access to Knockree is usually arranged via Enniskerry, reached by bus route 185 from Bray, while the return from Glendalough is by St Kevin's Bus to Dublin. Timetables should be checked before booking accommodation.

Best 3–5 day sections

Marlay Park to Glendalough: easiest 3-day logistics

Marlay Park to Glendalough is the most convenient three-day section for walkers based in Dublin. It covers about 51 km across Stages 1–3: Marlay Park to Knockree, Knockree to Roundwood, then Roundwood to Glendalough.

This section feels like a complete short journey. It starts at the official northern trailhead, crosses the Dublin and Wicklow mountain fringe, takes in the White Hill and Lough Tay area, and finishes at Glendalough.

Transport is the major advantage. Dublin Bus route 16 serves the Marlay Park start, and St Kevin's Bus runs back to Dublin from Glendalough. Accommodation is also simpler here than on the southern half of the route, with Knockree, Roundwood and Laragh/Glendalough forming a workable chain.

Knockree to Glenmalure: best 3-day mountain core

Knockree to Glenmalure is the better three-day choice if scenery matters more than transport simplicity. It covers about 44 km across Stages 2–4 and includes the strongest mountain walking on the Wicklow Way.

The first day gives Djouce, White Hill and Lough Tay. The second day eases into Glendalough, allowing time for the monastic site and lakes. The third day climbs steeply out of Glendalough, passes through the Lugduff and Mullacor area, then descends into Glenmalure.

The weak point is the finish. Glenmalure has very limited public transport, so a pre-booked taxi to Laragh is usually the practical exit, with onward bus connections from there. Do not leave this until arrival.

Knockree to Moyne: best 5-day sampler

Knockree to Moyne gives a longer five-day section of about 65 km, covering Stages 2–5. It includes the northern mountain highlights, Glendalough and Glenmalure, then continues into quieter south Wicklow.

This is a good choice for walkers who want more than a weekend but do not have the full week. It gives a better sense of how the Wicklow Way changes after the headline mountain stages, with longer, quieter walking beyond Glenmalure.

Logistics become harder towards the end. Moyne has limited transport, so a taxi to Tinahely or a pre-arranged collection is the practical plan. Accommodation and food should be booked before committing to this section.

Best section for scenery: Knockree to Glenmalure

The most scenic continuous section is Knockree to Glenmalure, about 44 km over three days. It combines the open Djouce and White Hill high ground, Lough Tay, Glendalough and the descent into Glenmalure.

The White Hill tóchar is the trail's high point at 630 m and one of its most exposed sections. In poor weather it can feel serious despite the waymarking and boardwalk, so waterproofs, warm layers and navigation backup still matter.

Glendalough to Glenmalure is also one of the finest stages for walkers who like wilder valleys. The route climbs out of Glendalough past Poulanass Waterfall, crosses high ground around Lugduff and Mullacor, then drops into the long glacial valley of Glenmalure.

If adding extras, Powerscourt Waterfall is reached by a detour from the Stage 2 area near Crone Wood. The detour is about 5 km and the waterfall park charges admission; opening hours should be checked before relying on it.

Best section for beginners

The best beginner section is Roundwood to Glendalough. It is short, transport-friendly and far less committing than the longer mountain stages, while still feeling like a real Wicklow Way walk.

A second beginner option is Shillelagh to Clonegal, about 23 km, especially for walkers who want rolling farmland, boreens and small plantations rather than upland exposure. It is less technical underfoot than the northern mountain stages, but the distance is still substantial.

The drawback of Shillelagh to Clonegal is access. Clonegal has very limited public transport, and the usual southern-end workaround is a taxi connection with Bunclody, where Bus Éireann route 132 passes. Accommodation and food at the southern end should be confirmed before travelling.

Best section for public transport

Roundwood to Glendalough is the easiest car-free section. Both ends are on the St Kevin's Bus route between Dublin, Roundwood, Laragh and Glendalough, making it the simplest there-and-back day from Dublin.

For a multi-day public-transport trip, Marlay Park to Glendalough is the best option. Start from Dublin by bus to Marlay Park, walk Stages 1–3, then return from Glendalough by St Kevin's Bus.

Knockree to Glendalough is also workable, but the Knockree end needs more care. Enniskerry is the useful access point, reached by bus route 185 from Bray, with the final link to Knockree planned separately. All bus times and fares should be checked on current operator timetables before travelling.

Best section for villages, food and accommodation

Marlay Park to Glendalough is the strongest section for accommodation and services. It uses the most practical overnight chain on the route: Knockree, Roundwood and Laragh/Glendalough.

Knockree has An Óige hostel directly on the trail. Roundwood has B&Bs, pub food and village supplies. Laragh and Glendalough have guesthouses, pubs and access to the Glendalough visitor facilities, though beds book quickly in peak season.

This is the section to choose if travelling without a car, using luggage transfer, or walking the trail for the first time. Wicklow Way Baggage offers luggage transfers between accommodations, which can make these shorter multi-day sections much easier to manage.

The contrast with the southern half is sharp. Glenmalur has only limited accommodation, while Moyne, Tinahely, Shillelagh and Clonegal are small places with fewer options. For Stages 5–7, do not assume there will be a bed, meal or taxi available without booking.

Camping and lightweight section hikes

The Wicklow Way is usually easiest to section-hike using booked accommodation rather than camping. The practical short sections above are built around places with beds, food and transport, especially Roundwood and Glendalough.

No campsite-based Wicklow Way section is the obvious choice in the same way that Roundwood to Glendalough is the obvious day walk. If planning to camp, check current campsite availability, access rules and onward transport before committing to a stage plan.

Highlights and Points of Interest

The Wicklow Way has two distinct characters: exposed upland and glacial valleys in the north and centre, then quieter farmland, lanes and small villages through south Wicklow and into County Carlow. If you have flexibility in the itinerary, the places most worth allowing extra time for are White Hill and Lough Tay in clear weather, Glendalough, Glenmalure, and the final village-to-village stages through Tinahely, Shillelagh and Clonegal.

Key highlights from north to south

Place / section	Why it matters	Planning note
Marlay Park	Official northern trailhead in Dublin's southern suburbs, with Marlay House, parkland, ponds, lawns and a craft courtyard.	A practical, low-stress start point before the route leaves suburbia for the Dublin Mountains.
Fairy Castle and the Dublin Mountains	The first real upland feel of the walk, with the transition from city edge to open mountain happening quickly.	Weather exposure begins early; do not treat the first day as a gentle park walk.
Crone Wood / Djouce area	Forest, open hillside and views towards Powerscourt Waterfall and the Wicklow uplands.	Powerscourt Waterfall is a paid detour; it can also be seen from the Wicklow Way at the Ride Rock viewpoint.
White Hill and the tóchar boardwalk	The highest point of the Wicklow Way at 630 m, crossing exposed blanket bog on timber boardwalk below Djouce.	One of the most weather-dependent sections; mist, wind and wet boards can slow progress.
J. B. Malone memorial and Lough Tay	A major viewpoint above the dark corrie lake of Lough Tay, with the trail's history closely tied to this spot.	Worth pausing for in clear conditions; the estate below is private.
Glendalough	A 6th-century monastic city in the glaciated Gleann Dá Loch, with round tower, churches, gateway and lakeside walking.	One of the best places on the route to build in extra time or a shorter walking day.
Glenmalure	A long, steep-sided glacial valley with a remote mountain feel and strong historical associations.	The descent into and climb out of the valley make this one of the more demanding transitions.
Tinahely and Shillelagh	Small south Wicklow settlements with useful services, traditional village character and quieter rural surroundings.	Good places to break up the long southern stages if accommodation is available.
Clonegal	Southern terminus on the River Derry, near the Carlow/Wexford border, with Huntington Castle and village pubs.	Public transport is limited, so onward travel should be arranged before arrival.

Marlay Park and the Dublin Mountains

Marlay Park is a practical and attractive start rather than just a trail marker. The park includes Marlay House, managed parkland, duck ponds, lawns and a craft courtyard, and entry is free.

The first kilometres are notable for the fast change in setting. The route leaves Dublin's southern suburbs and climbs towards the Dublin Mountains, giving the walk an immediate sense of escape without requiring a remote start point.

Fairy Castle and the early upland ground are a useful early test of pacing, clothing and navigation discipline. Although the route is waymarked, this is where walkers begin to feel the difference between an urban approach and exposed hill country.

Powerscourt Waterfall and the Crone Wood / Djouce area

The Crone Wood and Djouce area gives some of the most rewarding early mountain scenery on the Wicklow Way. From the trail, walkers can get views towards Powerscourt Waterfall from the Ride Rock viewpoint without leaving the main route.

Powerscourt Waterfall is billed as Ireland's highest waterfall at 121 m and is reached by a paid detour off the Wicklow Way. The waterfall park has a separate entrance from Powerscourt Estate, with facilities including a car park, picnic area and viewpoint close to the falls; adult entry is around €8, but current prices should be checked before travelling.

The detour is only worth adding if the day's distance and transport or accommodation plans allow it. Walkers on a tight schedule can still enjoy the distant waterfall view from the route itself.

White Hill, Djouce and the tóchar boardwalk

White Hill is the highest point on the Wicklow Way at 630 m. The trail does not go to the summit of Djouce; it contours below it and crosses White Hill on the OPW timber boardwalk, or tóchar.

This is the most exposed and mountain-like section of the route. The boardwalk crosses blanket bog and wild heather at height, protecting fragile upland ground from erosion while giving walkers a clear line across otherwise wet terrain.

In clear weather, the views extend across the Wicklow Mountains and towards the Lough Tay basin. In mist or wind, the same section can feel bleak and slow, so it is a place to treat with proper hillwalking respect rather than as a casual boardwalk stroll.

J. B. Malone memorial and Lough Tay

The J. B. Malone memorial stone stands at Barr Rock on the ridge above Lough Tay. It is a fitting location: Malone proposed the Wicklow Way in 1966, and this viewpoint is closely associated with his vision for a long-distance trail through the Dublin and Wicklow Mountains.

Lough Tay is one of the defining views of the route. The lake sits below the steep granite face of Luggala, with dark peaty water and a pale beach on the northern shore giving rise to the nickname "the Guinness Lake".

The surrounding Luggala Estate is private, so Wicklow Way walkers experience the lake from the high ground rather than from the shoreline. There is also a designated public viewing point on the R759, but that is separate from the main line of the trail.

Lough Tay also has a strong cultural profile. It was used as the fictional harbour town of Kattegat in the TV series *Vikings* and *Vikings: Valhalla*, and a longship settlement was built on the beach for filming.

Wicklow Mountains National Park and upland wildlife

The central stages pass through Wicklow Mountains National Park, which covers around 23,000 hectares. The route crosses habitats including blanket bog, wet and dry heath, upland grassland, corrie lakes and oak woodland.

Wildlife is part of the appeal, especially around the quieter valleys and higher ground. Red deer, largely Red-Sika hybrids, are present, while peregrine falcons nest on cliffs around Glendalough and other ridges; the peregrine is the park's symbol.

Other species associated with the park include hen harrier, whooper swan, otter and several bat species. In boggy areas, look for sundew, an insectivorous plant, along with heather and bilberry.

There is no entry fee for the national park itself. The main practical point is to stay on established paths and boardwalks where provided, particularly across blanket bog, which is easily damaged and slow to recover.

Glendalough monastic city and twin-lake valley

Glendalough is the major historic stop on the Wicklow Way. Its Irish name, Gleann Dá Loch, means "Valley of Two Lakes", and the monastic remains lie near the lower lake within a dramatic glaciated valley.

The monastic settlement was founded in the 6th century by Saint Kevin, or Caoimhín in Irish, and became one of early medieval Europe's important centres of learning and religion. The valley setting makes it worth more than a quick pass-through, especially if the walking day into Laragh or Glendalough is short.

Key features include the 33-metre round tower, St Kevin's Cathedral, St Kevin's Church, ornate High Crosses and the medieval Gateway. St Kevin's Church is often called "St Kevin's Kitchen" because its barrel-vaulted nave and small round tower chimney give it a distinctive outline.

The monastic city itself is free to walk through. The OPW Visitor Centre charges entry; 2026 rates are Adult €5, Senior/Group €4, Child/Student €3 and Family €13, with seasonal opening hours, so current details should be checked before travelling.

The wider valley also rewards extra time. St Kevin's Bed cave lies above the Upper Lake, peregrine falcons nest on the cliffs, and deer are present in the surrounding woodland.

Glenmalure

Glenmalure is one of the wildest-feeling sections of the Wicklow Way. The valley runs deep into the southern Wicklow massif and is widely described as Ireland's longest glacial valley, at around 20 km.

The walking here is physically memorable because the route descends steeply into the valley and then climbs steeply out again. Dark forestry tracks, fast-flowing streams and open hillside give this section a more remote character than the easier village approaches.

The valley also has important historical associations. It was a stronghold of the O'Byrne clan, with Fiach MacHugh O'Byrne based at Balinacor, and was the scene of the Battle of Glenmalure in 1580, when an English force under Lord Grey de Wilton was routed.

From the valley floor there are views towards Lugnaquilla, at 925 m the highest peak in Wicklow. The An Óige hostel at Drumgoff/Glenmalure is also part of the area's walking heritage and is one of the earliest established An Óige hostels in Ireland.

South Wicklow: Tinahely and Shillelagh

South of the high Wicklow ground, the route changes character completely. The final stages move through rolling farmland, hedgerowed boreens and quiet rural lanes with very little traffic.

Tinahely is the largest settlement encountered on the southern stages. It is useful as well as attractive, with a supermarket, pharmacy, pub and restaurant options, and the Tinahely Arts Centre in a restored courthouse.

Shillelagh is a smaller, traditional village with cut-stone estate houses, a former courthouse with a clock tower and a pub at its heart. The village gives its name to the Irish hardwood walking stick, traditionally made from blackthorn or oak associated with nearby Shillelagh Wood, one of Ireland's last remnants of ancient oak forest.

These southern stages are less dramatic than White Hill or Glendalough, but they are important to the feel of the full route. They turn the Wicklow Way from a mountain crossing into a complete journey through working rural Ireland.

Clonegal and the River Derry

Clonegal is the southern terminus of the Wicklow Way, set on the River Derry near the Carlow/Wexford border. It is an attractive one-street village and a satisfying low-key finish after the longer southern walking days.

Huntington Castle is the main local landmark, a four-hundred-year-old castle that is still partially inhabited. Finishing pubs include Osborne's and Sean O'Duin's.

Because Clonegal has very limited public transport, it is not a place to leave onward plans until the end of the walk. A taxi or transfer to or from Bunclody, with onward bus links, is commonly the practical solution.

Common Mistakes and Planning Tips

Leaving accommodation too late

The Wicklow Way has a real accommodation bottleneck problem, especially from late May to August and around Irish bank holidays. The route passes through small villages and remote valleys where there may be only one practical place to stay, and walking on to the next settlement is often not a realistic fallback after a full stage.

The tightest points are Glenmalure, Moyne, Tinahely, Shillelagh and Clonegal. Glenmalure has Glenmalure Lodge directly on the route, but no wider choice in the valley; Moyne has no accommodation in the village itself, so walkers usually need Aughrim, about 3 km off-trail, or Kyle Farmhouse by prior arrangement.

Fix: book the whole route before committing to travel dates. For summer, allow 8–10 weeks as a sensible minimum; for May and late-August bank holiday periods, book earlier. When booking, ask whether the accommodation is actually on the trail, whether a lift or taxi is needed, and whether dinner is available.

Place	Common trap	Practical fix
Glenmalure	Assuming there are several valley options	Book Glenmalure Lodge early or arrange a taxi to accommodation outside the valley
Moyne	Treating it as an overnight village	Plan for Aughrim or Kyle Farmhouse, and arrange transport if needed
Tinahely	Expecting a wide accommodation choice	Book ahead; options are limited
Shillelagh	Relying on pub rooms being available on arrival	Reserve well in advance in peak season
Clonegal	Finishing and then looking for a bed	Book Clonegal or nearby Bunclody before starting the walk

Underestimating the finish transport from Clonegal

Clonegal is a small village and the southern terminus has almost no transport infrastructure. There is no railway station at Clonegal, and there is no railway station at Marlay Park either, so both ends need planning rather than improvisation.

Common exit options involve a pre-booked taxi or transfer. Walkers often use a taxi to Bunclody, about 5 km away, for onward Bus Éireann services, or a taxi to Kildavin for the Dublin–Waterford Expressway stop. Wicklow Way Bus can also collect from Clonegal by prior arrangement and transfer walkers to Rathdrum for an Iarnród Éireann train to Dublin.

Fix: arrange the return journey before setting off from Marlay Park. Sunday finishes need particular care, as bus frequency can be reduced and rural taxi availability may be limited. Current bus times, transfer availability and taxi arrangements should be checked before travelling.

Assuming every village has a shop or café

The Wicklow Way is not a continuous chain of serviced trail towns. Several stages pass through forest, open mountain, farmland and quiet boreens with no mid-stage food options.

Glenmalure has the lodge for meals but no shop, so food should be bought before leaving Laragh or Glendalough. The Drumgoff and Moyne area has no shop, and the long southern stages from Moyne to Shillelagh and Shillelagh to Clonegal should be treated as carry-your-own-lunch days.

Fix: plan food carries by stage, not by what looks like a village name on the map. Roundwood has a Centra, ATM and cafés; Laragh has shops, cafés and pub food; Tinahely has a bank, ATM, supermarket, cafés and pubs. Shillelagh has an ATM but limited services, and Clonegal has essentially no shop.

Not carrying enough cash

Card payment should not be assumed everywhere on the route. Rural pubs, small guesthouses and remote accommodation can have limited payment flexibility, and there is no ATM at Clonegal.

Fix: carry enough euro cash for food, taxis and small accommodation extras, especially from Glenmalure southwards. Use ATMs in larger service stops such as Roundwood, Tinahely and Shillelagh rather than leaving it until the finish.

Relying only on waymarks

The Wicklow Way is generally well waymarked with the yellow walking man and yellow arrows on a black background, but that does not remove the need for navigation. Commercial forestry can create confusing junctions, and signs may be obscured, moved or affected by forestry operations.

Open upland sections can also be awkward in poor visibility. Around White Hill and the Djouce area, waymarks can be harder to pick out in mist or low cloud, and the terrain beside the boardwalk is wet blanket bog.

Fix: download the latest GPX from Visit Wicklow or the official Wicklow Way website before starting. Carry a paper backup such as Ordnance Survey Ireland 1:50,000 Discovery Series sheets 56 and 62, or the Harvey Superwalker Wicklow Mountains map. Do not rely on mobile data alone, as signal can be patchy in valleys and on mountain sections.

Using an outdated GPX file

Forestry diversions mean old GPX files can send walkers into closed or altered forest sections. The Drumgoff area has been affected by a reroute linked to forestry works, with uneven ground underfoot on the diversion.

Fix: check Sport Ireland's Wicklow Way page for current notices shortly before departure, and follow local signage if it differs from an older track on a phone. Avoid using GPX files from old blogs or walking-app routes unless they have been updated recently.

Underpacking for the exposed early mountain stages

The route may be non-technical, but the high ground is not benign. The highest and most exposed section crosses White Hill at 630 m on the timber tóchar above Lough Tay, contouring below Djouce

rather than going to the summit.

Wind, rain, mist and sudden temperature changes are common on the open mountain sections. Wet boggy ground sits close to the boardwalk, and waterproof footwear matters even in settled weather.

Fix: carry full waterproofs, warm layers, gloves or a hat in cooler conditions, and waterproof boots. Gaiters are useful for the wet and muddy sections. Treat the Glendalough to Glenmalure stage seriously too: it includes a substantial climb and feels more remote than the map may suggest.

Compressing the route into too few days

The standard seven-day plan has days between roughly 12 km and 23 km, but the effort is shaped by ascent, surface and exposure rather than distance alone. The 21 km stages from Marlay Park to Knockree and from Glenmalure to Moyne, plus the 23 km final stage from Shillelagh to Clonegal, are longer than they look on paper.

Six-day schedules are possible for strong walkers, but they leave less room for poor weather, navigation delays, tired legs or accommodation constraints. The southern half has fewer easy escape options and fewer services between stages.

Fix: use seven days unless there is a clear reason to go faster. If adding detours such as Powerscourt Waterfall, allow extra time and check the current entry fee before committing to the longer day.

Ignoring Sunday and seasonal opening hours

Small shops, cafés, post offices and pubs in rural Wicklow and Carlow may have reduced hours on Sundays. Sunday evening is the highest-risk time to arrive hungry in a small village and find that food service is limited or finished.

Some B&Bs and guesthouses also close outside the main walking season. Spring, summer and autumn are the normal seasons for the Wicklow Way; winter and early spring require more careful checking of accommodation and food availability.

Fix: when booking each night, ask three specific questions: is dinner available, does it need to be booked, and what time does service end? For Sunday stages, carry an emergency meal or enough food to get through the evening if local options are closed.

Not booking dinner at remote stops

Accommodation does not always mean food will be available on arrival. At Glenmalure, around Moyne or Aughrim, and in Shillelagh, evening meals may need to be reserved in advance.

Fix: treat dinner as part of the booking, not something to sort out after the day's walk. Ask whether packed lunches are available for the next stage, especially before the long rural days in the south.

Misjudging the finish in Clonegal

The walk ends at Clonegal near the River Derry, close to the Wexford border, in a quiet village with sparse services. It is a satisfying finish, but not a place to arrive without a plan for food, sleep or onward travel.

Fix: if finishing late in the day, especially on a Friday, Saturday or Sunday, book accommodation in Clonegal or Bunclody and arrange the taxi or transfer at the same time. Do not leave the final logistics until the last morning of the walk.

Final Advice

Who the Wicklow Way is best for

The Wicklow Way suits reasonably fit walkers who want a fully waymarked, inn-to-inn mountain route with real upland days but no technical climbing or scrambling. Previous long-distance walking experience helps, but determined first-timers can complete it if they train for repeated 18–22 km days, wet ground and roughly 3,320 m of total ascent.

It is not a route to underestimate because it starts near Dublin. The early mountain stages over the Dublin and Wicklow Mountains, especially around Djouce, White Hill and Lough Tay, require proper hillwalking judgement, waterproofs and the ability to keep moving in exposed weather.

The one thing to plan carefully

Accommodation is the biggest planning constraint. The middle and southern sections have sparse facilities, so book as far ahead as possible for May–September, particularly around Knockree, Glenmalure, Moyne and Shillelagh.

Transport from Clonegal also needs arranging before the final day. The village has very limited public transport; many walkers pre-book a taxi to Bunclody, where onward Bus Éireann Expressway services run towards Dublin and Waterford. TFI Local Link also serves Kildavin, around 3 km from Clonegal, with onward links to Carlow town. This should be checked before travelling.

Luggage transfer can make the accommodation gaps much easier to manage. Wicklow Way Baggage operates April–October and has been listed from €12 per bag per day; confirm current prices and operating dates before booking.

The most rewarding sections

The White Hill tóchar is the physical high point of the walk: an exposed boardwalk crossing at 630 m above Lough Tay, with the Djouce plateau giving the route its strongest mountain character. Start early on this section if poor weather is forecast, as there is little shelter on the open ground.

Glendalough is the emotional centrepiece for many walkers. The descent into the glaciated valley, with St Kevin's round tower and the twin lakes below, is the point where the route feels most strongly tied to Wicklow's landscape and history.

The southern stages are quieter rather than spectacular, but they matter to the full journey. The shift into boreens, hedgerows, small villages and rolling farmland gives the Wicklow Way a satisfying end-to-end rhythm that is lost if the walk is rushed.

Thru-hike or section hike?

The classic option is the full north-to-south thru-hike from Marlay Park to Clonegal, usually over seven days. This gives the best sense of progression: city edge, open mountain, glacial valleys, remote Wicklow stages, then the quieter countryside of south Wicklow and County Carlow.

Section hiking also works well, especially from Marlay Park to Glendalough and from Glendalough to Glenmalure, where scenery is concentrated and public transport is more practical. The southern stages are harder to break up without a car because services are limited.

Walkers with only three or four days are usually better served by walking the northern half properly than by trying to compress the whole route.

Final checks before setting off

Check Sport Ireland and wicklowway.com for current route updates before walking. Forestry works, including diversions near Drumgoff in recent years, can make older GPX files unreliable, so current signage and official updates should take priority.

Do not assume every stop has a shop, pub or ATM, especially Knockree, Glencree, Glenmalure, Drumgoff and Moyne. Carry enough food for the day, keep waterproofs accessible every morning, and treat the Wicklow Way as a mountain walk with villages rather than a village walk with hills.

With accommodation booked, onward transport from Clonegal arranged and weatherproof kit packed, the Wicklow Way is one of Ireland's most complete and achievable long-distance hikes.