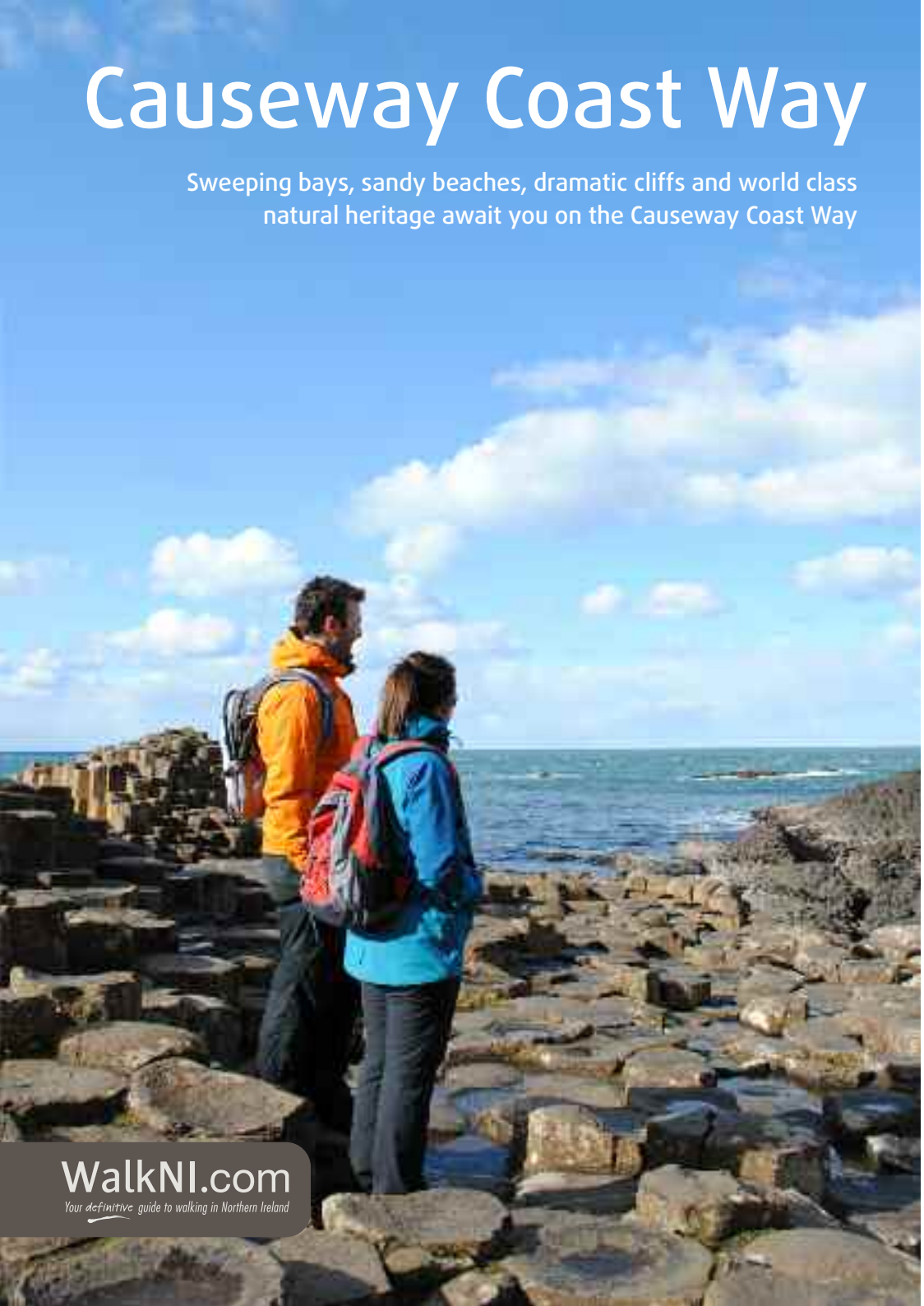
Causeway Coast Way

Sweeping bays, sandy beaches, dramatic cliffs and world class natural heritage await you on the Causeway Coast Way



WalkNI.com

Your definitive guide to walking in Northern Ireland

Key to Map

- **SECTION 1** - PORTSTEWART TO PORTRUSH (10km)
- **SECTION 2** - PORTRUSH TO PORTBALLINTRAE (9.3km)
- **SECTION 3** - PORTBALLINTRAE TO THE GIANT'S CAUSEWAY (4.3km)
- **SECTION 4** - GIANT'S CAUSEWAY TO DUNSEVERICK CASTLE (7.3km)
- **SECTION 5** - DUNSEVERICK CASTLE TO BALLINTOY HARBOUR (7.8km)
- **SECTION 6** - BALLINTOY HARBOUR TO BALLYCASTLE (12.6km)

View of The Skerries and Rathlin Island from Ramore Head, Portrush

Welcome to the Causeway Coast Way

This superb, two-day walking route takes you along Northern Ireland's most celebrated coastline. High cliffs, secluded beaches and numerous historic and natural landmarks are just some of the treats on offer. With frequent access points and terrain suitable for all fit walkers, this is one route you'll remember for years to come..

East Strand, Portrush

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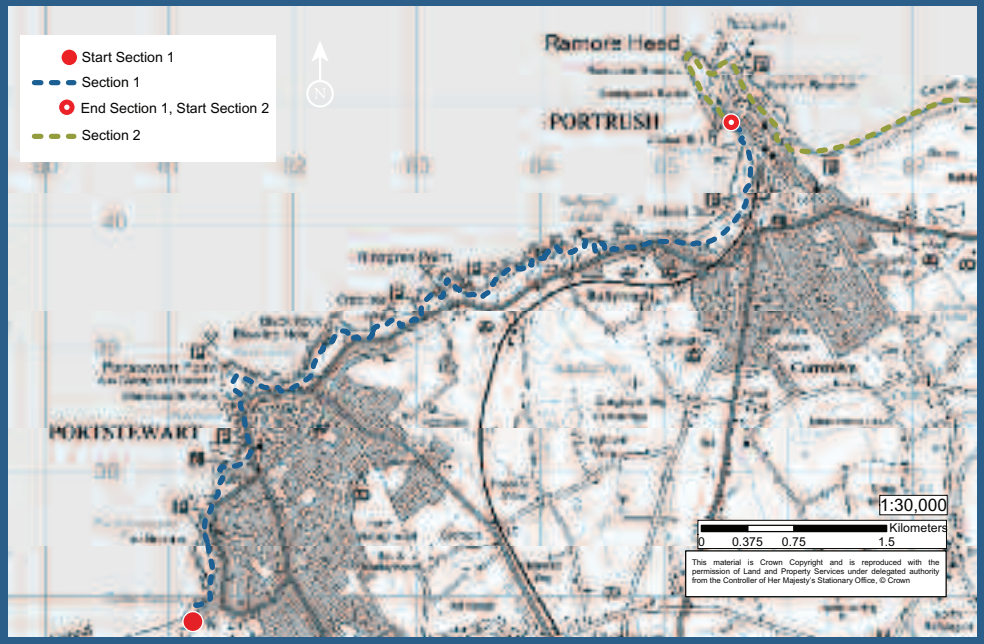
Portstewart Strand

Did You Know?

The site known today as Tubber Patrick, or St Patrick's Well, was originally used by pre-historic communities as a source of water, as well as being venerated by pagan pilgrims looking for medical cures. Later, when Ireland's patron saint passed through the area around 450 AD, he blessed the spring and it became equally important for Christians.



Section 1 - 10km

The route starts with a popular stretch of path that carries you between two Victorian seaside resorts.

Begin opposite Portstewart Golf Club. Before you set off, it's well worth making the 20 metre detour to visit Tubber Patrick, or St Patrick's Well. Then follow the path towards the sea. Turn right onto a wide pavement that passes between the shore and a line of waterfront houses, heading towards the crenellated outline of O'Hara's Castle. The path squeezes past the seaward side of the castle (now a school, Dominican College), climbing onto a balcony built into the cliff. Now descend a flight of steps and continue north along Portstewart Promenade. Just beyond the picturesque harbour, look out for a route marker directing you up a flight of steps between two houses. The steps lead onto the cliff-fringed headland of Portstewart Point.

Continue along the promenade, then a short stretch along the A2 road leads out of town. At a golf course look out for signs directing you left, along low-lying coastline beside the greens and fairways. There are often different paths to choose from, but just keep as close to the shore as possible. As you near Rinagree Point, the path climbs steeply to a headland with good views in both directions. Continue along the edge of the cliff, occasionally dipping down to cross a cove. Here you pass the promontory that once held Ballyreagh Castle, though little remains of the building today.

Another short stretch beside the A2 brings you to a sudden view over Portrush. Follow the path across grassy slopes to reach the promenade, which runs the length of West Strand and brings you to Portrush harbour.

Portstewart Promenade

East Strand, Portrush

Whiterocks Beach

Section 2 - 9.3km

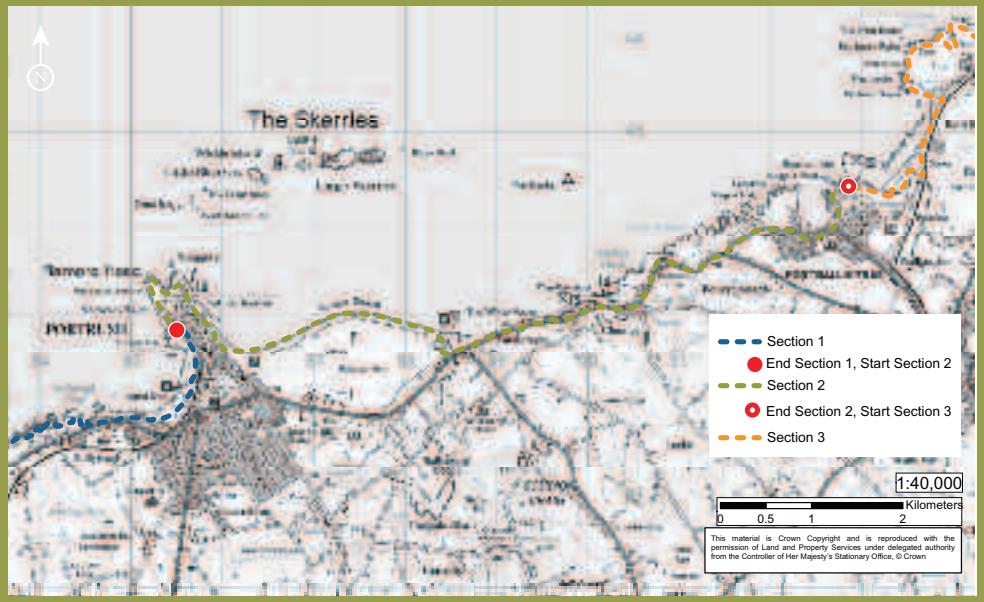
A long, sweeping beach and a medieval castle are highlights of this section.

Continue past Portrush harbour and onto a path that runs around Ramore Head. This is a great viewpoint, with Dunluce Castle clearly visible on the cliff top some 4km to the east. Now follow the path around to Curran Strand, or East Strand as it is known locally.

Set out along the beach, following the sand for over 2km to reach the parking area at White Rocks. This area derives its name from the striking limestone cliffs that line the back of the beach. Follow the route markers up to the A2 road and turn left beside the tarmac.

Although you'll be walking along a pavement beside a busy road for the next 3km, fantastic coastal views keep your progress interesting.

After 2km, detour left onto a short access lane to reach Dunluce Castle. Perched spectacularly on a rocky promontory high above the sea, it's well worth pausing on your journey to explore the site properly. A quick exploration of the grounds will reveal the sea cave that completely undercuts the castle, once providing a personal disembarkation point for seafaring visitors.



Portballintrae Bay

Now return to the A2 road and continue to follow it east. You soon pass a place where the carriageways split, then, 500m later, reach a left turn towards Portballintrae. Follow this road into the heart of the village, passing round the back of the central cove and harbour. Continue to a car park above a larger beach, which is known as Runkerry Beach.

Did You Know?

Dunluce Castle is one of Ireland's most spectacular medieval castles, perched on a crumbling basalt outcrop above the pounding surf. There has been a castle here since the 13th century, and it was the seat of power for the MacDonnell clan who dominated this part of Ulster during the 16th and 17th centuries.

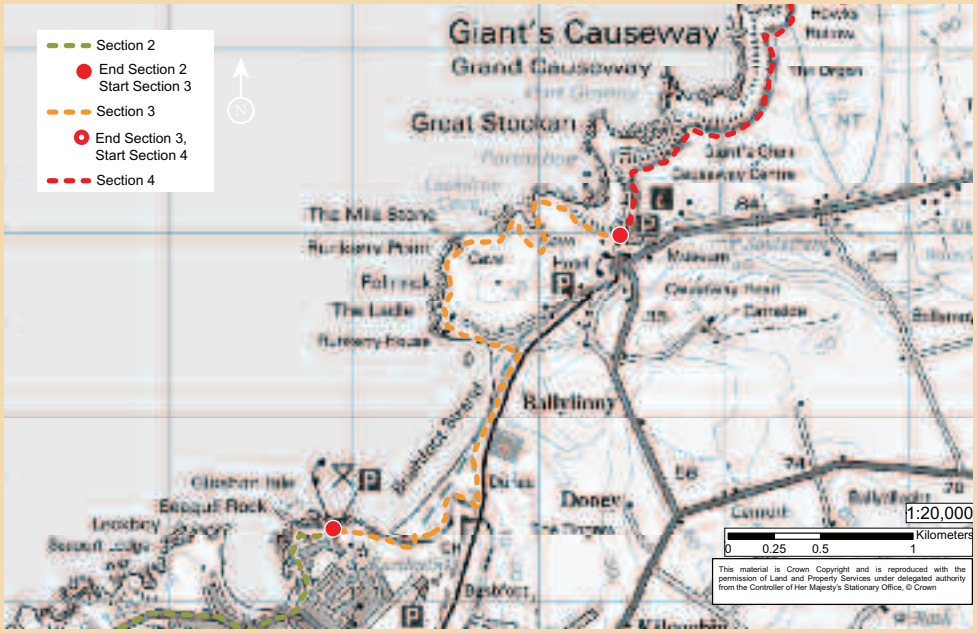
Dunluce Castle

Runkerry Beach Sand Dunes

Giant's Causeway

Did You Know?

The Giant's Causeway is Ireland's only natural World Heritage Site. Some 40,000 hexagonal columns were created here during a period of intense volcanic activity some 60 million years ago. An analogy often used to illustrate the cooling process of the lava is the cracking of lake beds when they dry out in the sun.



Section 3 - 4.3km

This section is entirely off-road, bringing you round a beach and onto the high, wild coastline that characterises the middle part of the route.

From the car park above Runkerry Beach, follow a gravel footpath downhill. Cross a footbridge over the Bush River and turn right onto a wooden boardwalk that traces the bank of the river. At a junction with a gravel path, turn left. You now pass through an extensive sand dune system, walking beside the track of the Giant's Causeway and Bushmills Railway. Cross the tracks twice to reach a wooden gate, where you should turn left.

Follow this path towards the beach, then veer right and descend across a footbridge at the end of the sand. Continue between a slipway and the impressive building of Runkerry House, which dates from the early 1860s. The path now climbs onto the cliff tops, passing around the edge of Runkerry Head. This is the start of a beautiful and dramatic stretch of natural coastline that will continue for the next 10km.

From the top of the headland, there's a great view east towards the Giant's Causeway. Dip across a cove, then continue to an information sign detailing the walking trails around the causeway. You have just joined the Green Trail, which follows this path back to the visitor centre.

Continue around the headland, past the white building of the Causeway Hotel. Just beyond this you reach a flight of steps heading down to your left. It may not be obvious, but you are now on the grass-covered roof of the Giant's Causeway visitor centre.

SECTION 4 - GIANT'S CAUSEWAY TO DUNSEVERICK CASTLE

The Causeway Coast Way

Section 4 - 7.3km

A grassy path continues along the cliff tops and over the route's highest point.

Dunseverick Castle

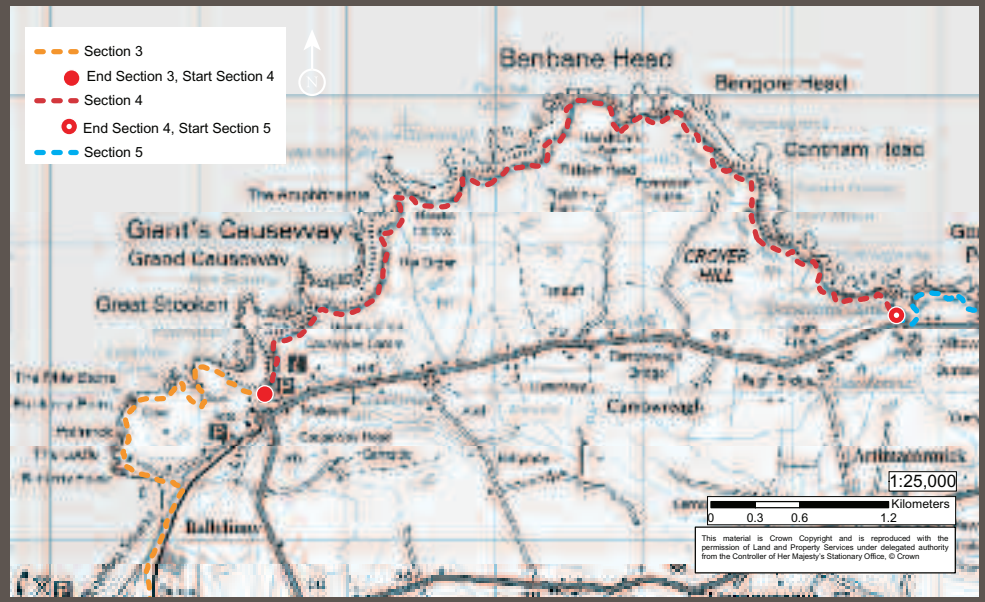
From the Giant's Causeway Visitor Centre you have two options. If you have visited the causeway before, simply continue along the cliff-top path, also signed here as the Red Trail. If you haven't been here before and want to explore the shoreline formations, turn left and descend the flight of steps, following the Blue Trail beside the access road. Explore the main cluster of columns at your leisure, then continue east along a low-level path, past the formation known as The Organ, to reach another set of steps on the right. These are the Shepherd's Steps, and a steep climb to the top will reunite you with the cliff path.

The cliff path now continues east along the seaward side of a fence, passing above a series of precipitous coves. The second of these is known as Port na Spaniagh and contains the wreck of the Girona, one of the ships from the ill-fated Spanish Armada. With height established approximately 100m above the ocean, the path undulates past the dramatic rock scenery around Benbane Head. Hamilton's Seat, at the tip of the headland, marks the highest point of the entire route.

You now begin a steady descent southeast, passing above Port Moon to reach Dunseverick Castle. Little remains of this ancient promontory fort, which is reputed to have been at the end of one of the five roads emanating from Tara. Later St Patrick was to bless the castle, although it was eventually sacked by Vikings and fell into ruin, being replaced as a local stronghold by Dunluce.

Did You Know?

The Girona was one of 24 ships from the 1588 Spanish Armada that were wrecked along the Irish coast. Of the estimated 1300 people on board, less than 10 survived. In the 1960s a team of divers investigated the wreck and salvaged the greatest haul of Armada treasure ever recovered, which is now on display in Belfast's Ulster Museum.



Portbraddan

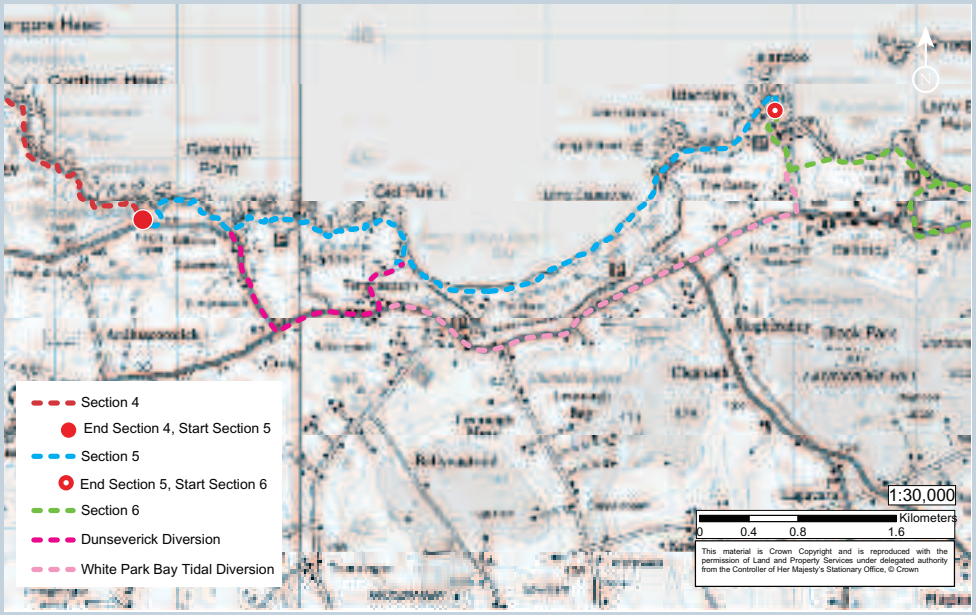
Section 5 - 7.8km

To enjoy this section at its best, check the tide times before you set out and avoid walking past White Park Bay at high tide. If the tide is high, you'll have to follow the A2 road from Dunseverick village to Ballintoy.

From Dunseverick Castle, continue east along the coastline. After roughly 800m you pass beneath the white houses of Dunseverick village. The coast is lower now, and you pass over a couple of grassy knolls then climb some stone steps to reach a lane. Further progress along the coast has been blocked by a landslide, so you must now detour inland. Turn right and follow the lane to a T-junction, then turn left to reach the main A2. Turn left again after 1km, descending along a smaller road to the hamlet of Portbraddan. Nestled at the foot of steep slopes, this village is home to St Gobban's Church, the smallest church in Ireland.

Drop onto the rocky shore and turn right towards White Park Bay. Access to the bay is protected by limestone cliffs that rise from a jumble of slippery boulders. At high tide these boulders may be impassable, but if the tide is in your favour then a few minutes of careful boulder hopping will carry you onto the 2km sweep of golden sand.

Cross the beach to its eastern end, where the route skirts around the base of more cliffs. Again, this section may be impassable at high tide. Otherwise, it is an easy hop across the rock slabs to reach grassy ground. The coastline now shatters into a series of rock arches, stacks and islets. Follow a footpath, then a track, to reach the car park at Ballintoy harbour.



Ballintoy Harbour

Did You Know?

As well as being a favourite location for summer activities, White Park Bay contains an extensive sand dune system that provides a protected habitat for many species of fauna and flora. This was also one of the first places in Ireland to be settled by Neolithic communities, and numerous tools and tombs have been unearthed around the bay.

Carrick-a-Rede Rope Bridge

Section 6 - 12.6km

Visit the thrilling Carrick-a-Rede Rope Bridge before following a road to the finish.

The Diamond, Ballycastle

Leaving Ballintoy may be easier said than done, because this is one of those quiet, picturesque little harbours that compel you to sit down and take it easy for a while. When you're ready, climb away from the water along the twisting access road. At a bend beside the church, turn left onto a footpath. This grassy trail leads across fields to the cliff top, where it curves past Sheep Island.

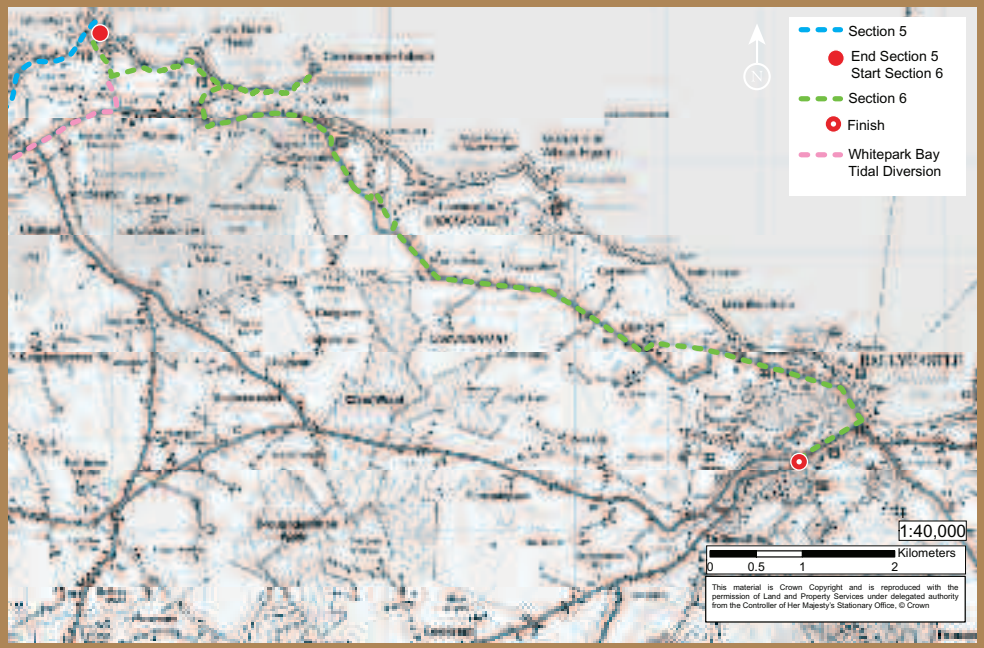
Soon you arrive at the car park for Carrick-a-Rede Rope Bridge. If you want to visit the bridge, pay your dues at the entrance kiosk and continue east along a well-benched path for 1km. Here you can cross the 20 metre suspension bridge to Carrick-a-Rede Island. The outpost affords particularly good views over Rathlin Island and Scotland's Mull of Kintyre.

Retrace your steps back to the car park and turn left. Climb along the access road, passing an old lime kiln to reach the B15. Turn left here, taking care because there is no footpath and traffic travels quickly along the road. Follow the tarmac for 6km, then turn left onto a smaller road. Pass several houses, and where the road bends left, turn right onto a farm track. This takes you between fields and rejoins the road near a sign marking the boundary of Ballycastle.

Continue straight ahead along the road, descending towards the town centre. Pass the harbour and seafront amenity area, then keep straight ahead at a roundabout. Follow Quay Road for 800m to reach the historic square known as The Diamond, the official end of the route.

Did You Know?

A rope bridge was raised annually at Carrick-a-rede for over 250 years to allow fishermen to access their summer nets. The bridge now stays up all year round. The Salmon migrate past the island, giving rise to its Gaelic name Carrig-a-Rade, which translates as 'The Rock in the Road'.



Walker Friendly Accommodation

You will find 100s of accommodation options on the North Coast – from 4* hotels to self catering cottages. For a full list visit **www.discovernorthernireland.com**. However the following accommodation providers offer services and facilities specifically to meet the needs of walkers. These include:

- Location within 500m of the route
- Packed lunches available to take away in the morning – upon request
- Suitable overnight area for drying wet clothes/boots
- Late meal/early breakfast available - upon request
- Detailed walking information available
- One night bookings available
- Approved by the Northern Ireland Tourist Board

- Glenmore House (7 ensuite rooms)
- Sheep Island Hostel (14 ensuite rooms)
- Bushmills Inn (41 ensuite rooms)
- Waters Edge (2 ensuite rooms)
- Ard Na Tra (3 ensuite rooms)
- Knock B&B (2 ensuite rooms)
- Sea Gem (3 ensuite rooms)
- Home Sweet Home (2 ensuite rooms)
- Aaronmore Lodge (5 ensuite rooms)
- Linksview B&B (6 ensuite rooms)
- Beulah Guest House (9 ensuite rooms)
- Antrim House (6 ensuite rooms)
- Harbour Heights (9 ensuite rooms)
- Portrush Holiday Hostel (6 ensuite rooms)

Accommodation	Location	Telephone	Email/Website
Bushmills Inn Hotel	Bushmills	+44 (0)28 2073 3000	mail@bushmillsinn.com www.bushmillsinn.com
Sheep Island View	Ballintoy	+44 (0)28 2076 9391	info@sheepislandview.com www.sheepislandview.com
Glenmore House	Ballycastle	+44 (0)28 2076 3584	glenmorehouse@lineone.net www.glenmore.biz
Linksview B&B	Portrush	+44 (0)28 7082 3769	bookings@linksviewportrush.co.uk www.linksviewportrush.co.uk
Antrim House	Portrush	+44 (0)28 7082 3609	antrimhouse@hotmail.com www.antrimhouseni.co.uk
Beulah Guest House	Portrush	+44 (0)28 7082 2413	stay@beulahguesthouse.com www.beulahguesthouse.com
Home Sweet Home B&B	Portrush	+44 (0)28 7082 9805	countryniknaks@googlemail.com www.homesweethomebandb.co.uk
Portrush Holiday Hostel	Portrush	+44 (0)28 7082 1288	info@portrushholidayhostel.co.uk www.portrushholidayhostel.co.uk
Harbour Heights	Portrush	+44 (0)28 7082 2765	info@harbourheightsportrush.com www.harbourheightsportrush.com
Aaranmore Lodge	Portrush	+44 (0)28 7082 4640	aaranmore@talk21.com www.accommodation-northernireland.com
Sea Gem	Portstewart	+44 (0)28 7083 6140	myrtle.millar@btinternet.com www.seagem.co.uk
Ard Na Tra	Portstewart	+44 (0)28 7083 2768	ardnatra@lineone.net website.lineone.net/~ardnatra
Knock B&B	Portstewart	+44 (0)28 7083 5914	stonesbythesea@hotmail.com www.knockbedandbreakfast.com
Water's Edge	Portstewart	+44 (0)28 7083 3766	info@walkingtoursni.com www.walkingtoursni.com

Where to Eat

The Causeway Coast has a wealth of restaurants and cafes that serve high quality, home cooked and locally produced food. For a full list of where to eat on the Causeway Coast please contact the Portrush or Ballycastle Tourist Information Centres (P19) or visit **www.heartofthecausewaycoastandglens.com** and **www.northcoastni.com**

Other Information

Other useful maps – available from www.osni.gov.uk/mapstore
OSNI Discoverer Map Series 1:50 000 Sheets 4 and 5. OSNI 1:25,000 Activity Maps Causeway Coast and Rathlin Island, and the Glens of Antrim. Walkers are always recommended to carry the relevant OSNI map.

Walking Providers
The Causeway Coast Way is waymarked and should be straightforward to navigate. However, should you wish to explore the wider area including Rathlin and the Glens of Antrim, contact one of the guides specialising in this area to guide you.

Name	Telephone	Email/Website
Walk Talk Ireland	+44 (0) 74 9159366	info@walktalkireland.com www.walktalkireland.com
Walking Tours NI	+44 (0) 77 59767218	info@walkingtoursni.com www.walkingtoursni.com
Celtic Trekking	+44 (0) 28 7082 9698	davewsouthall@hotmail.com
Rathlin Walking Tours	+44 (0) 774 5566 924	paul.quinn33@hotmail.co.uk www.rathlinwalkingtours.com

Walkni.com
For further information on the Causeway Coast Way and all other walks across Northern Ireland, please visit **www.walkni.com**. Here you will find short, medium and long distance walks, as well as downloadable maps, suggested itineraries, and everything you need to know when planning a walking trip in Northern Ireland.

Leave No Trace
In order to minimise your social and environmental impacts on the outdoors, please follow the principles of Leave No Trace. Leave No Trace is an outdoor ethics educational programme designed to promote and inspire responsible outdoor recreation through education, research and partnerships. For more information please visit **www.leavenotraceireland.org**.

Go Prepared
Weather conditions on the north coast can be changeable – even during summer months. Waterproof and windproof clothing are essential and strong walking boots are advised.

Emergency
In the event of an emergency call the police on 999 or:
Police Service NI Coleraine +44 (0)28 7034 4122, or
Police Service NI Ballycastle +44 (0)845 600 8000
Causeway Hospital A&E, Coleraine 0044 (0)28 7032 7032

OTHER USEFUL INFORMATION

Other Information

Other Activities & Places to See
The Causeway Coast is renowned for its natural beauty, outdoor recreation, culture, tradition, folklore and heritage. In addition to walking, a wide variety of activities and attractions are on offer – including cycling, horse riding, angling, water sports, golfing and arts and crafts. To find out more visit Coleraine, Portrush (seasonal) or Ballycastle Tourist Information Centres (contact details below). Tourist Information is also available at the Giant's Causeway Visitors Centre.

Coleraine Tourist Information Centre
Railway Road, Coleraine, Co. Londonderry BT52 1PE E. info@northcoastni.com
Tel. +44 (0)28 7034 4723

Ballycastle Tourist Information Centre
Portnagree House Harbour and Marina Visitor Centre, 14 Bayview Road,
Ballycastle BT54 6BT Tel: +44 (0)28 2076 2024

Portrush Tourist Information Centre
Dunluce Centre, Sandhill Drive, Portrush, Co Antrim, BT56 8BF, Tel. +44 (0)28 7082 3333,
portrushtic@btconnect.com

Outdoor Shops in the area
Portstewart Clothing Company
Family run outdoor clothing company, established 18 years ago.
The Promenade, Portstewart, County Londonderry BT55 7AE Tel. +44 (0)28 7083 4896

Public Transport
The Causeway Coast is well served by public transport. Buses link Portstewart, Portrush, Coleraine and Ballycastle. Service 140A and B passes within 500m of the start of the route in Portstewart. The Causeway Rambler Bus Service runs from start of June to end of September each year, stopping at ten points between Coleraine, Portrush and Carrick-a-rede. Coleraine and Portrush are accessible by trains from Belfast and Londonderry.

Timetables are available from Bus Stations or Tourist Information Centres across Northern Ireland. For more information call (028) 9066 6630 or visit www.translink.co.uk. Over 60s travel free on presentation of a valid SmartPass.

Taxis:
Portstewart Taxis, Portstewart.....+44 (0)28 7083 3149
Andy Brown Taxis, Portstewart.....+44 (0)28 7083 2701
North West Taxis, Portrush .....+44 (0)28 7082 4446
Get me a taxi, Bushmills .....+44 (0)77 5415 8077
Direct Taxis, Ballycastle.....+44 (0)79 7675 1617
Fast Cabs, Ballycastle .....+44 (0)28 2076 1000

Disclaimer
Every care has been taken to ensure accuracy in the compilation of this guide. The information provided is, to the best of the promoter's knowledge, correct at the time of going to print. The promoters cannot accept responsibility for any errors or omissions but if any are brought to their notice, future publications will be amended accordingly.

Land Access
Some popular walking routes in Northern Ireland are not formally designated public rights of way. Access is on a de-facto basis and depends on the goodwill and tolerance of local landowners. Walkers are advised to respect that they may be walking on private land and are encouraged to make themselves aware of and adhere to the principles of 'Leave No Trace' **www.leavenotraceireland.org**.

For any questions on walking in Northern Ireland contact
Outdoor Recreation NI
The Stableyard, Malone Road, Barnett's Demesne, Belfast BT9 5PB
Tel: +44 (0)28 9030 3930
Email: info@walkni.com

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Your definitive guide to walking in Northern Ireland

leave no trace

OUTDOOR RECREATION NORTHERN IRELAND