

Esknamucky Walk

Distance: 3km
Duration: 90 minutes
Rating: moderate
Terrain: steep footpath with steps.

Waterfall Walk

Distance: 0.5km **Duration:** 15 minutes
Rating: easy **Terrain:** gentle slope with some steps

The River Walk

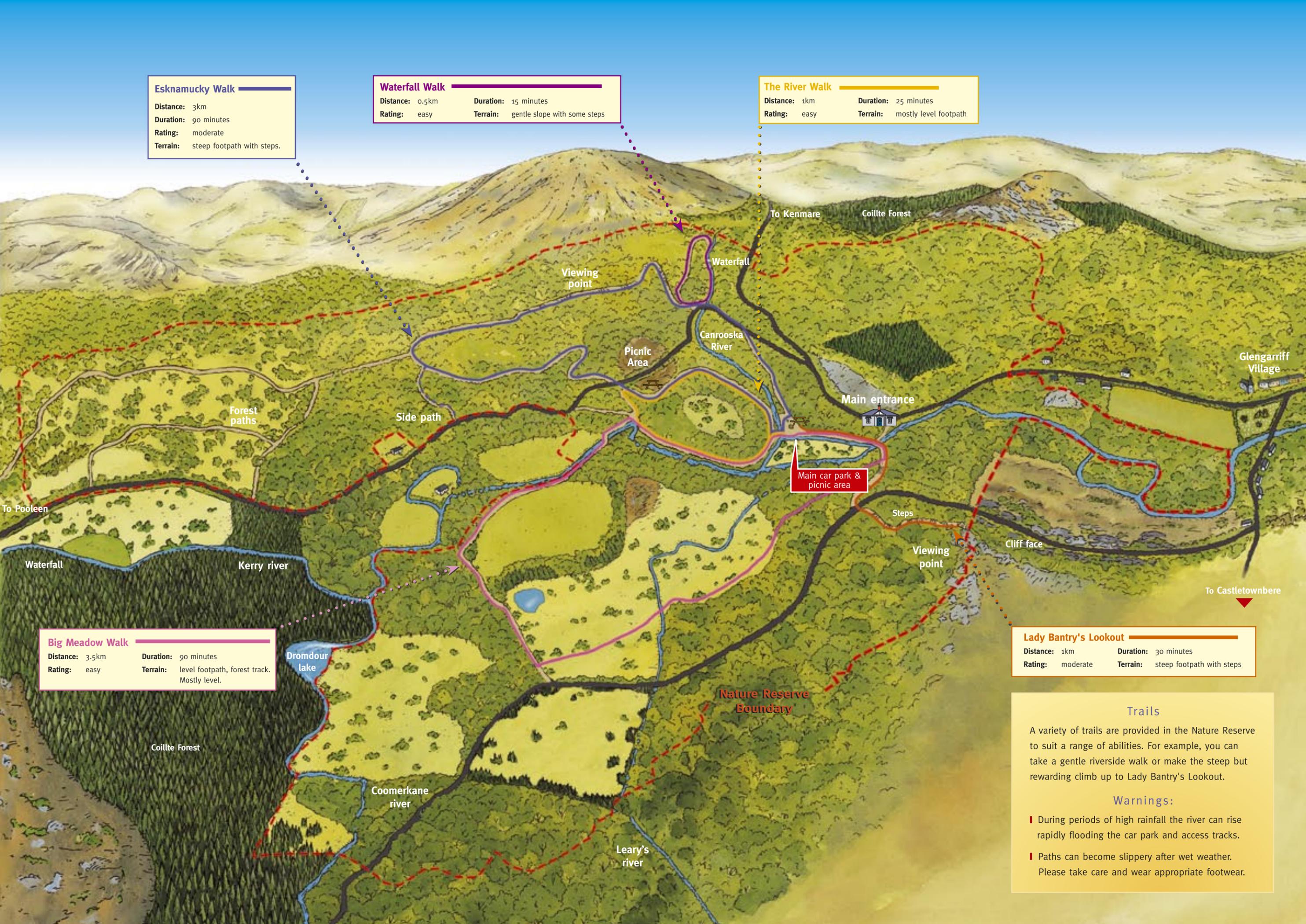
Distance: 1km **Duration:** 25 minutes
Rating: easy **Terrain:** mostly level footpath

Big Meadow Walk

Distance: 3.5km **Duration:** 90 minutes
Rating: easy **Terrain:** level footpath, forest track. Mostly level.

Lady Bantry's Lookout

Distance: 1km **Duration:** 30 minutes
Rating: moderate **Terrain:** steep footpath with steps



Trails

A variety of trails are provided in the Nature Reserve to suit a range of abilities. For example, you can take a gentle riverside walk or make the steep but rewarding climb up to Lady Bantry's Lookout.

Warnings:

- During periods of high rainfall the river can rise rapidly flooding the car park and access tracks.
- Paths can become slippery after wet weather. Please take care and wear appropriate footwear.



Glengarriff Woods Nature Reserve

Walking trails in



You can help

The National Parks and Wildlife Service is responsible for the conservation and protection of Ireland's natural heritage. Under the terms of the Wildlife Act 1976 and the EU Habitats Directive, it is in the process of establishing a country-wide network of Nature Reserves, Special Areas of Conservation and Natural Heritage Areas. Please help us to protect Glengarriff Woods Nature Reserve by observing the following points:-

- Please remove all litter from the Nature Reserve.
- Please do not pick flowers or damage plants. Leave them for others to enjoy.
- Please keep dogs firmly under control. Their scent will scare wildlife and reduce your chances of seeing animals.
- Please do not disturb or injure any animals or birds. Wildlife is strictly protected.
- Please do not light fires. A fire is easily lit, but much harder to put out once it is out of control.

Other places to visit

In West Cork, there are other State properties to visit.

- ◆ In Glengarriff Harbour, the famous gardens on Illnacuillin are open to the public daily from March 1st to October 31st. A walk around this island, with its wide variety of ornamental plants, makes a pleasant excursion from Glengarriff village.
- ◆ Just south of Skibbereen is Lough Hyne Marine Nature Reserve, a marine lake connected to the sea by narrow rapids. The Reserve provides habitats for a wide variety of flora and fauna, including many rare and beautiful species. Adjacent to the lough is Knockomagh Woods Nature Reserve, a wooded hill which can be climbed by a winding path. From the summit there are spectacular views out over the surrounding countryside and the Atlantic beyond.

Walking Trails in Glengarriff Woods Nature Reserve

Glengarriff Woods Nature Reserve is located approximately 1km from Glengarriff village on the Kenmare Road (N17).

At one time the woods were part of Lord Bantry's estate, but they were handed over to the State in 1955 for forestry purposes. However in 1991, 300ha were designated as a Nature Reserve and the woodland is now managed by the National Parks and Wildlife Service of the Department of the Environment, Heritage and Local Government primarily for conservation and amenity purposes.

The woodland is one of the best examples of oceanic Sessile Oak woodland in Ireland, being rated second only in importance to the Killarney Oakwoods. The setting of the reserve is spectacular, with the woods nestled in a sheltered glen opening out into Glengarriff Harbour. Above the woods rise the Cahah Mountains, with their dramatic layers of Sandstone rock.

There are a variety of trails in the Glengarriff Woods Nature Reserve to suit a range of abilities. You can take a gentle amble along the River Walk or make the steep, but rewarding climb up to Lady Bantry's Lookout. Longer options include the Big Meadow circuit, which takes you through woodlands and old grassland, or the more rugged Esknamucky Trail, with its wonderful views out over the trees to the mountains beyond.

The Nature Reserve's main car park is the starting point for the walks and all require strong shoes, with walking boots recommended for the Esknamucky Walk and Lady Bantry's Lookout. For more information on the history, flora and fauna of the woods please read the Glengarriff Woods Nature Reserve leaflet.



The River Walk

Distance: 1km **Duration:** 25 minutes
Standard: easy **Terrain:** footpath, mostly level

This is a lovely introduction to Glengarriff Woods Nature Reserve, taking you on a gentle wander through old oak woods and along the banks of the Glengarriff River. Take time to look around and see the ferns, mosses and lichens growing on the old oak trees – this lush growth is typical of the oceanic woodlands in the south-west of Ireland, where the Gulf Stream ensures the climate is warm and wet. Beneath the oak canopy, the most common tree is the evergreen Holly with its prickly leaves and red berries. Looking down into the river you may be lucky to spot a Freshwater Pearl Mussel. This rare species lives to over 120 years old, making it the longest living animal in Ireland.

Directions

Leaving the main car park, cross the footbridge and turn left. Half way round this circular walk, is a footbridge (cross the bridge if you wish to embark on the Big Meadow walk). To continue the River Walk, ignore the bridge and carry straight on until you near the public road. Climb the steps and in a few minutes you'll be back at the car park.



Lady Bantry's Lookout

Distance: 1km **Duration:** 30 minutes
Standard: moderate **Terrain:** steep footpath with steps

This walk is a must on any fine day. The climb up through the woods is steep, but the effort is worth it. From the top there are panoramic views over Glengarriff to Garinish Island, Whiddy Island and Bantry Bay. To the north you can see the full extent of Glengarriff woodlands, nestling in the rugged glen rimmed by the Cahah Mountains.

Directions

From the car park head south along the track to the bend. Cross the narrow footbridge and head up the footpath, which follows the line of an ancient road down the Beara peninsula. Crossing the public road, the steep ascent begins. As you near the top, one of the last trees on the left is a Strawberry Tree (*Arbutus unedo*). Lookout for the characteristic red fruit in late summer. To return to the car park retrace your steps.



Big Meadow Walk

Distance: 3km **Duration:** 90 minutes
Standard: easy **Terrain:** footpath, forest track.
Mostly level.

The unique feature of this walk is the Big Meadow, an area of old grassland that has not been fertilised or ploughed in living memory. There are hundreds of anthills and several stately oaks. In winter, the meadow is grazed by Kerry cattle to prevent scrub invading the grassland. After passing through the meadow, you come to a lake dug in 2006 and now home to the rare Downy Emerald dragonfly. The walk also features large areas of young broad-leaf woodland which is naturally re-colonising areas which have been cleared of conifers.

Directions

Take the River Walk until you reach a footbridge. Cross this bridge, keep left and cross a second bridge. Turn right to reach the Big Meadow. At the end of the meadow turn left along a forest track and past a lake. Near the end of the forest track turn left onto another track. After 1.3km you will reach a sign to Lady Bantry's Lookout. Turn left to get back to the car park (or right if you still have the energy to climb up to the viewing point).



Esknamucky

Distance: 2.8km **Duration:** 90 minutes
Standard: moderate **Terrain:** steep footpath with steps

Otherwise known as the High Walk, this trail climbs up through the woods for views over the trees to the mountains beyond. It can also be combined with the waterfall walk (below)

Directions

Leaving the car park follow the track north to the public road and turn left. After a short distance you will cross a stone bridge over the Canrooska River. Take the left hand path at the picnic table. Soon after, the path climbs up to a series of viewing points before descending again to a forest track by a grove of Eucalyptus trees. Turn left off the forest track onto a path that winds its way down to the public road. Cross this road and turn left onto the River Walk and the car park is reached in a few minutes.



Waterfall Walk

Distance: 0.5km **Duration:** 15 minutes
Standard: easy **Terrain:** gentle slope

The waterfall, which is especially impressive after rain is on the Canrooska river, which flows down to meet the main Glengarriff river.

Directions

Leaving the car park follow the track north to the public road and turn left. After a short distance you will cross a stone bridge over the Canrooska River. Take the right hand path at the picnic table and follow the path along the river bank to a small waterfall. Return by the same path and either take the Esknamucky Trail (above) or return to the car park.



Red Squirrel