



Hillwalk Guides – Hikes in Clare

Carran Loop (*Info Booklet*)

Dear fellow hiker!

We trust that you are looking forward to a wonderful walk in the heart of the Burren - exploring the history, flora, archaeology and geology of this landscape with its folded limestone layers.

In this document, we have put together some information that will help you to maximise the enjoyment of your walk. Please consider the environment when printing this booklet, route notes and map (supplied separately).

- Important Information for your walk
- What to Wear & What to Bring
- The Burren
- The Burren Way
- Local Attractions
- Where to Eat
- Safety Information
- Emergency Procedure
- Leave No Trace & Countryside Code
- More from Hillwalk Tours

IMPORTANT INFORMATION FOR YOUR WALK

PARKING: Your walk begins from the car park opposite Cassidy's Pub in Carran (GPS: 53.0353, -9.0766) on the L1014 road between Kinvarra and Kilfanorra.

WEATHER: Check the weather forecast before hillwalking and do not do so during any known weather event. Conditions locally can vary, even in the absence of weather warnings, so always consider your own stamina, confidence and comfort level when deciding if you will go ahead with any walk. See the What to Wear, What to Bring and Safety Information sections for more details.

BRINGING YOUR DOG: This hike crosses land that is used for cattle and sheep grazing. For this reason, we recommend that you do not bring your dog on this hike.

COMMENTS, SUGGESTIONS & FEEDBACK: Hillwalk Tours take great care in the preparation of all our material. However, we rely on comments and suggestions from walkers to continue to provide the best experience possible. We consider all feedback, make improvements where possible and reply individually to every walker. Send your thoughts to feedback@hillwalktours.com – thanks!

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What to Wear

BASE LAYER - This is what you wear against your skin and the best options are breathable and wicking fabrics that will move moisture away from the skin instead of cotton t-shirts.

FLEECE – Will keep you warm in the cooler months and on top of the hills, and it will allow you to shed layers when you are working hard in the summer.

LIGHT AND COMFORTABLE TROUSERS - Make sure you choose trousers that are stretchy or allow enough space to move your legs freely. Jeans / Denims are not suitable for hill walking.

WATERPROOF JACKET AND OVER-TROUSERS - You never know when you will need protection from wind and rain so make sure you pack a breathable, waterproof jacket and over-trousers.

WICKING SOCKS - Choose non-cotton socks that fit well and will move moisture away from your feet to stop them feeling sweaty. This will help to reduce the likelihood of blisters.

FOOTWEAR – We recommend you bring comfortable, waterproof, lightweight shoes or boots, that provide good ankle support and offer good grip on rock, grass and mud. Remember that many trails can become quite wet and muddy, after periods of rain.

WARM HAT & GLOVES – Can be essential, even in summer, at higher altitudes and on exposed places.

CHANGE OF CLOTHES: We advise bringing a change of clothes (which can be left in your car, if preferred) in case you get wet during your hike, ensuring a more comfortable journey home.

What to Bring

MOBILE PHONE – Fully charged it will allow you to call for help in an emergency. If you are planning on using our GPS tracks as a navigational aid or referring to this booklet on your phone during your hike you may need to pack a power-bank to supplement your phone battery.

BACKPACK / RUCKSACK (*with Waterproof Cover or Liner*) - To store all your essentials including extra layers of clothing, your waterproofs, first aid kit, camera and your lunch, snacks and drink

WATER - Don't forget how important it is to stay hydrated and bring at least 1 - 2 litres of water per person, and more depending on the weather!

PICNIC LUNCH: Even on shorter walks it is essential to bring some food with you. Even for the most experienced hiker, being adequately fuelled throughout a walk will add to your overall enjoyment.

FIRST AID KIT – It is a good idea to have a small, basic first aid kit to deal with little injuries such as sprains, scrapes, cuts and blisters.

WHISTLE & TORCH – In the very unlikely event you need to signal for help (whistle/torch) or if your walk takes longer than expected (torch).

Additional Suggestions

SUN CREAM, SUNGLASSES AND SUNHAT – Let's hope you'll need those ☺

MIDGE/INSECT REPELLENT – A good idea in the summer, especially if you are prone to get bitten

CAMERA – Vital for capturing photos of the stunning scenery

WALKING POLES – Assist forward movement and balance, reduce impact on your knees, and help with balance in difficult terrain. A pair is best, but many hikers also just use one.

SIT MAT – A small, foldable mat that provides comfort when sitting on the ground during breaks.

HILLWALK TOURS

Escape to Nature!

The Burren

“A country where there is not water enough to drown a man, wood enough to hang one, nor earth enough to bury them.” Edmund Ludlow, Member of British Parliament, 1651-52.

The Burren forms the northern part of County Clare, overlooking Galway Bay and the Atlantic Ocean. The word “Burren” comes from an Irish word “Boíreann” meaning a rocky place. This is an appropriate name when you consider the lack of soil cover and the 130 square kilometres of spectacular terraced carboniferous limestone hills and valleys that characterise the area.

Human civilisation came to the Burren shortly after the end of the Ice Age, 10,000 years ago. Stories of the ancient peoples are still passed on by word of mouth, through imaginative tales that take the form of the folklore for which Ireland is famous as well as through serious scholarship.

There is evidence of past cultures and learning everywhere in the Burren. Indeed, in addition to its unique geological attributes, the Burren is also renowned for its collection of archaeological sites and artefacts – a collection which led famous cartographer Tim Robinson to describe the region as one ‘*vast memorial to bygone cultures*’.

The magnificent portal tomb at Poulnabrone in the rocky heart of the Burren is one of the most easily recognised monuments in Ireland but is only one very small piece of an extraordinary wealth of heritage to be found in the Burren.

However, this one monument alone reveals much about the people who live here. Dating back around 5,800 years, studies have shown that this tomb contained the remains of up to 22 people, interred over six centuries. Evidence recovered from this site indicated that these people were farmers of cattle, sheep and goat, and that cereal was also grown.

Farming has been important to the area for over 6,000 years and it is hard to believe today that the apparently barren Burren could once have supported a large, thriving and settled farming community. But when the first farmers arrived in the Burren the landscape was covered with a shallow but fertile soil which supported extensive woodlands of hazel and pine.

This woodland was much easier to clear than the dense, deep-rooted elm and oak forests of the lowland regions. Year-round natural fertilising with manure further improved the existing soil and even today there are still places in the Burren with deep, fertile soil that are known as *gáirdíní* (*little gardens*).

That said, in the years leading up to the Great Irish Famine (1845-52), far too much pressure was being put on the land (up to 400 people living off one square mile of land) with the result that it had the appearance of a barren, desolate wasteland. Following the famine, the pressure on this environment diminished notably through an enlargement in farm holdings, a decline in sheep numbers and a reduction in population.

As well as farming, the Burren (and neighbouring Aran Islands) was home to some of the earliest places of education in Europe. Missionaries from far and wide would come to train at the monastic school at Kilmacduagh during the 7th century while the law school at Cahermacnaughten and the bardic (poets, artists, etc.) school at Finavarra thrived between the 6th and 16th centuries.

In addition, the Burren has a long history of traditional Irish music. It is particularly known for the “West Clare Style” of concertina playing and the music festival in Doolin and the region is home to countless artists and writers who are part of a continuing revival of the west of Ireland.

The Burren Way

One of the best ways to experience the Burren is by walking the Burren Way. This 123km long trail starts at Lahinch, follows the coast along the Cliffs of Moher past Doolin and on to Fanore before turning inland and making its way through the heart of the Burren to Corofin.

This walk takes in the best of what the Burren area has to offer. From the coast at Doolin to the remains left by the Neolithic inhabitants of the Burren to the rich heritage of early Christian churches and sites. Terrain consists mainly of quiet tarmac roads, old green roads, ancient cattle droving roads, paths and forestry tracks.

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Local Attractions

Michael Cusack Centre, Carran - Celebrating the life and world of the father of the GAA

The Michael Cusack Centre, 2km south of Carran along the L1014 road, which celebrates the life and achievements of the founder of the GAA. Based around the original thatched cottage where Michael was born in 1847, during the Famine years, they provide a unique cultural, historical and educational tour in their contemporary expo centre combined with an interactive holographic tour in the restored thatched cottage.

Guided tours are usually available each day from 10am. Also provided are a Burren walking trail, café facilities, gift shop, toilet facilities, picnic area & ample free bus and car parking.

For more details, opening times and prices visit michaelsusack.ie or call +353 (0)65 708 9944

Burren Perfumery, Carran – Something Smells Good!

A family run business deep in the heart of the Burren, the Perfumery produces a range of soaps, balms, creams and perfumes using only natural and organic ingredients. Ingredients are sourced worldwide but local flora is also used and some of them, such as meadowsweet and marjoram, are harvested from the surrounding area each summer.

One of the main attractions of the centre is the possibility to mingle with the staff and learn about and witness the manufacturing process from start to finish. Visit the *Soap Room* to find out why it takes six weeks to handcraft one 100g bar of soap or drop into the *Blending Room* to learn how to make the perfect hand cream or body lotion.

The on-site tea rooms also come highly recommended and are a beautiful spot in which to relax and enjoy the freshly baked breads, cakes and scones, the locally produced cheeses and herbal teas from the on-site garden.

Opening hours at the Burren Perfumery are from 10am to 5pm year-round, with longer opening hours in the summer. See website for more details. All products are for sale, make wonderful gifts and can be shipped worldwide directly from the Perfumery.

For more details, opening times and prices visit www.burrenperfumery.com or call +353 (0)65 7089102

Caherconnell Stone Fort & Poul nabrone Dolmen – The Best of Irish Archaeology & Sheepdog Demonstrations

Caherconnell, near Carran and Ballyvaughan in County Clare, is one of the best-preserved stone forts in the Burren. This impressive structure, which measures 45 metres in diameter and is protected by a 3-metre-high wall, was built 1500 years ago. The visitor centre provides an informative 20-minute audio-visual presentation on the fort, its inhabitants, its rich history and archaeology.

Learn about the lives the former inhabitants led and the stories they told in the shadow of the great stone fort. Ongoing excavations by the archaeology field school during the months of June, July, and August each year have yielded fascinating results, enhancing Caherconnell's reputation as a prominent archaeological site.

A visit to Caherconnell Stone Fort from May to September may also coincide with enthralling sheep dog demonstrations.

As well as giving you a chance to get more acquainted with the history of the area, the Mountain Haven Café provides a welcome respite from the walking and is a great place to savour delicious farm fresh food, home baking and freshly ground coffee.

For more details, opening times and prices visit www.burrenforts.ie or call +353 (0)65 7089999

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Ailwee Cave & Birds of Prey Centre, Ballyvaughan – Deep Underground & High into the Sky

The Burren region is full of thousands of ancient caves but, of these, Ailwee is considerably older than most with calcite samples taken from the cave adjudged to be more than 350,000 years old.

The cave system itself has more than 1km of passages leading into the heart of the mountain above. Once home to a fast-flowing underground river, this flow of water has now largely left the cave leaving behind interesting geological features such as stalactites, stalagmites and a small waterfall.

One other interesting aspect of the caves is the fact that it was once home to a group of brown bears. These animals have been extinct in Ireland since the 10th Century (due to over-hunting) but caves such as Ailwee would be typical of the type of shelter they would have sought out.

The Birds of Prey Centre beside the cave has been educating and entertaining visitors with dynamic flying displays set against the dramatic Burren Landscape since 2008. The mission of the Centre is to aid the conservation of Birds of Prey through visitor awareness and education.

For more details, opening times and prices visit www.aillweecave.ie or call +353 (0)65 7077036

Cliffs of Moher, near Doolin – “The Eighth Wonder of the World”

Standing a stomach churning 214m above the Atlantic Ocean at their highest point, it is no wonder that the famous Cliffs of Moher are consistently ranked as one of Ireland’s premier tourist destinations and were put forward as Ireland’s finalist in the global campaign to nominate an 8th Wonder of the World.

Look south and on a good day you will see the shape of Mount Brandon on the Dingle Peninsula, more than 110km (70 miles) away. Looking west, across the Atlantic Ocean, you will see the three islands that make up the Aran Islands while further to the north the mountain ranges of Connemara are clearly visible.

In addition to the compelling views, the Cliffs are home to one of the major colonies of seabirds in Ireland with 40,000 breeding pairs making their homes there. Puffins, Guillemots, Razorbills and Kittiwakes are just some of the birds to look out for. Although, to be honest, you will probably hear their raucous calls before you see them!

To learn more about the Cliffs, we recommend that you make time to explore the Cliffs of Moher Information Centre, which you will pass on your walk (see route notes). The centre is open throughout the year from 9am until the early evening (at least 6pm) and has a wide range of facilities (ATM, gift shop, café, public toilets, first aid, etc.) as well as an interesting exhibition area.

For more details, opening times and prices visit www.cliffsofmoher.ie or call + 353 (0)65 7086141

The Doolin Cave & Visitor Centre – Home to the longest free-hanging stalactite in Europe

This limestone cave hosts the truly impressive Poll an Eidhneáin, the Great Stalactite. The stalactite is said to weigh over 10 tonnes and is reported to be 7.3m in length, hanging freely from the ceiling of the cave. This makes it the longest known free-hanging stalactite in Europe! Usually stalactites grow at roughly 10cm per 1,000 years - so the Great Stalactite likely took over 70,000 years to form.

Opened in 2010, the development of the cave as a visitor attraction was subject to criticism by environmentalists for years. In order to create a facility that is accessible to visitors, blasting was not allowed as it was feared that this would cause damage to the Great Stalactite. The development of the cave as a tourist attraction was only granted under the condition that a visitor centre was also built, which would monitor and control visitor numbers to the cave, in an effort to protect it.

Apart from the Great Stalactite, the Doolin Cave & Visitor Centre also features a self-guided outdoor nature trail, a pottery shop and a café that serves soups, tasty sandwiches and home-baked cakes. The perfect place for a coffee break for hungry walkers! The outdoor nature trail is free to all cave visitors and you can also enjoy the delightful fairy village during your visit.

The Doolin Cave & Visitor Centre is generally open between 10am and 6pm. Tours are approximately 45 minutes in length and the last tour leaves at 5pm. You will be happy to hear that they also offer a 20% discount to walkers, or if you pre-book your ticket online!

For more details, opening times and prices visit www.doolincave.ie or call +353 (0)65 7075761

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Where to Eat

Below is a selection of evening meal suggestions near your walk, put together based on the recommendations of previous walkers and on the advice of members of the local community.

Cassidy's Bar & Restaurant, Carran: Cassidy's is the only pub and restaurant in Carran and Robert & Michelle Cassidy have made sure it's the perfect place for food and drink, with a reputation that reaches far beyond the borders of the Burren. Tel. +353 (0)65 708 9109. *Note: Cassidy's Restaurant is generally open from Easter Saturday until the 1st of October from 12.00 pm until 9.00pm Monday to Saturday and until 8pm on Sundays. Call ahead for more details.*

Burren Perfumery Tea Rooms, 2km from Carran (GPS: 53.0435, -9.0465): Relax in the rose covered Tea Rooms, which serve organic cakes, scones, pies, homemade soups, local cheeses and salads made with organic vegetables from local suppliers. All this is accompanied by herbal teas from the garden and coffees from around the world. Tel. +353 65 708 9102. *Note: The tea rooms are normally open daily from Mid-March to October from 11 am to 5pm. While they are not officially open during the winter months, they keep the door open and provide facilities for tea, coffee and snacks! Call ahead for more details.*

Depending on by which direction you are returning home, other nearby options for food are **Linnane's Lobster Bar**, in New Quay, along the N67 between Ballyvaughan and Kinvarra, and of course the **cafes, pubs and restaurants in Ballyvaughan, Kinvarra, Kilfenora and Corrofin.**

Safety Information

Even on the best of days there is the possibility that something can go wrong. All it takes is an accidental slip and a badly sprained ankle. In order to know what to do in those circumstances and how to prevent them, if possible, we have provided the following information.

General Advice

- We recommend that, if possible, you **stay on the trail** during your hike.
- Take particular **care on the descent** and/or when you are tired, as this is when most accidents occur.
- Be careful when walking near cliffs and stay clear of the edge.
- Remember, the general rule for **walking on roads** in Ireland is to walk on the right-hand side (facing oncoming traffic). However, if the road is turning to the right, cross over to the left-hand side for better visibility of oncoming traffic.
- Note that the provided walking times do *not* account for breaks taken for lunch/rest/photos/etc. Always ensure that you still have plenty of time to reach the end of your hike before darkness falls.

Encountering Animals

DOGS may occasionally be encountered while on the trail. If you are fearful, or the dog is threatening, the general rule is to try to get out of the situation calmly and quickly without making the dog any more upset.

- Try to stay calm and don't yell at the dog or scream. Don't throw anything at the dog or pick up a stick as a weapon. Many dogs are simply afraid of you and this will only make their fear worse.
- Never run from a dog as it will outrun you easily. Running triggers a dog's instinct to chase you. Avoid sudden movement.
- Speak to any harassing dog in a firm, calm voice. Don't smile or speak in a pleading voice. When using vocal commands, deepen your voice as much as possible.

CATTLE are a common feature on some of our walks where the hiking trails cross private land. Cattle may look intimidating but are generally quite timid. Here are some tips for dealing with cattle on your hike:

- If possible, walk around cattle not through the middle of them and don't walk between cows and their calves.

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- Calves and young bullocks are very curious and may even run towards you. Continue walking normally. Don't run away. If you do this, the cattle will simply follow you. If they get too close for comfort, don't worry. Simply stand your ground, jump up and shout and they will run away again.

MIDGES can become a real nuisance as they often appear in great numbers and their bite can leave an itchy rash. Midges don't like direct sun and prefer calm, humid weather. They are most active in the early morning and late evening. Midges only attack bare skin and can't bite through cloth. In general, you will not be pestered by midges while walking. Nevertheless, it can be a good idea to bring an insect and tick repellent on your walk.

TICKS are tiny (1mm), spider-like blood sucking creatures which feed on many different types of animals, including humans. They are frequently found in moorland and other grassy areas, usually close to the ground, especially in moist, shaded places. Once attached ticks feed for several days and then simply drop off. Through their bite ticks can, **very rarely**, transmit a bacterial infection called Lyme disease or Borreliosis. *For information on prevention of tick bites and what to do if bitten, see www.ticktalkireland.org.*

EMERGENCY PROCEDURE

- **In case of an emergency, try to stay calm. Try to work out your exact location on the map and decide if you can help yourself out of the situation.**
- **In a genuine emergency call 112 or 999 free of charge.** The operator may ask you which service you require. For example, ambulance (*if you are near a road*), mountain rescue (*for inaccessible places*), coast guard (*near the sea*), etc.
 - You can call emergency services using any mobile/cell phone - even if does not have call credit or is locked. Simply type 112 instead of the unlock code.
 - If you do not have a phone signal it may still be possible to contact emergency services. Emergency calls can be made on *any* available mobile phone network. If no networks have signal, you will be told that there is no reception and you cannot make emergency calls. You will have to move to another location to place the call, if possible.
 - Please keep in mind that if your phone does not have network coverage on your own network **others will not be able to call you back. So, do not hang up unless directed to do so!**
- You can also signal for help using your whistle or torch. The International distress signal is six blasts on your whistle or six flashes with your torch. If your whistles are heard, you should hear three whistles in reply. Keep repeating the whistle blasts so that your location can be determined.
- Try to keep everyone safe, warm and comfortable while waiting for help, particularly **if you have an injured person**. Move to a sheltered area if possible. Ensure everyone puts on any spare layers of clothing that they are carrying. Insulate everyone from the ground by placing backpacks underneath them (if it is safe to move them). You may loosen the laces on your boots, but *do not* remove them, even in the case of swelling. Try to keep everyone well hydrated, but only drink bottled water.
- If there is no signal to phone emergency services, and you are not capable of moving to an area where there is signal, do not panic. Someone will always know to look for you, or someone will find you e.g. other walkers using the trail.

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The Countryside Code

While out walking in the countryside, remember you are walking in areas where people live and work. And we also share the countryside with much wildlife.

The following are a number of important recommendations to abide by when out walking:

- **Be safe - plan ahead and follow signs**
- **Leave gates and property as you find them**
- **Protect plants and animals, and take your litter home**
- **Where you are permitted to bring them, keep dogs on a lead**
- **Consider other people**

Leave No Trace

Hillwalk Tours is a proud supporter of **Leave No Trace** – an Outdoor Ethics Programme designed to promote and inspire responsible outdoor recreation through education, research, and partnerships. An ethic can be defined as knowing what the right thing to do is, and doing it, even if there is no one about to see you do it. Leave No Trace depends more on attitude and awareness than on rules and regulations.

Practising a Leave No Trace ethic is very simple: Make it hard for others to see or hear you and LEAVE NO TRACE of your visit. See <https://www.leavenotraceireland.org> for more information.

Toilets: If you need to answer 'the call of nature' and there are no facilities nearby, please take care to find a discreet spot away from the trail and any water sources. Ensure that you **Leave No Trace** of your visit, i.e. bury your waste and 'pack out' your toilet paper by bringing it with you inside a double zip-lock bag or similar. You can find more info on this at www.trailspace.com/articles/backcountry-waste-disposal.html

More from Hillwalk Tours

Did you enjoy your self-guided walk? Consider one of our walking holidays!

Hillwalk Tours was founded by Kilkenny man, James Byrne, and is based in Galway. We have been organising self-guided hillwalking tours in the Burren and other parts of Ireland, the UK and Spain for over 10 years, providing thousands of happy hiking experiences to our many loyal walkers. This walk is a perfect introduction to our other offerings that include overnight accommodation, luggage and walker transfers if required. We take care of everything so all you need to do is put one foot in front of the other along some of the most beautiful landscapes in the world!

We have over 200 walks across 20+ different trails with options to suit everyone from the part-time hiker to those with more experience.

Explore our catalogs to learn more about our exciting walking holidays. Discover the diverse range of experiences that await you on each adventure by [clicking here](#).

See our website www.hillwalktours.com for more or contact us at info@hillwalktours.com and one of our team will personally advise you.



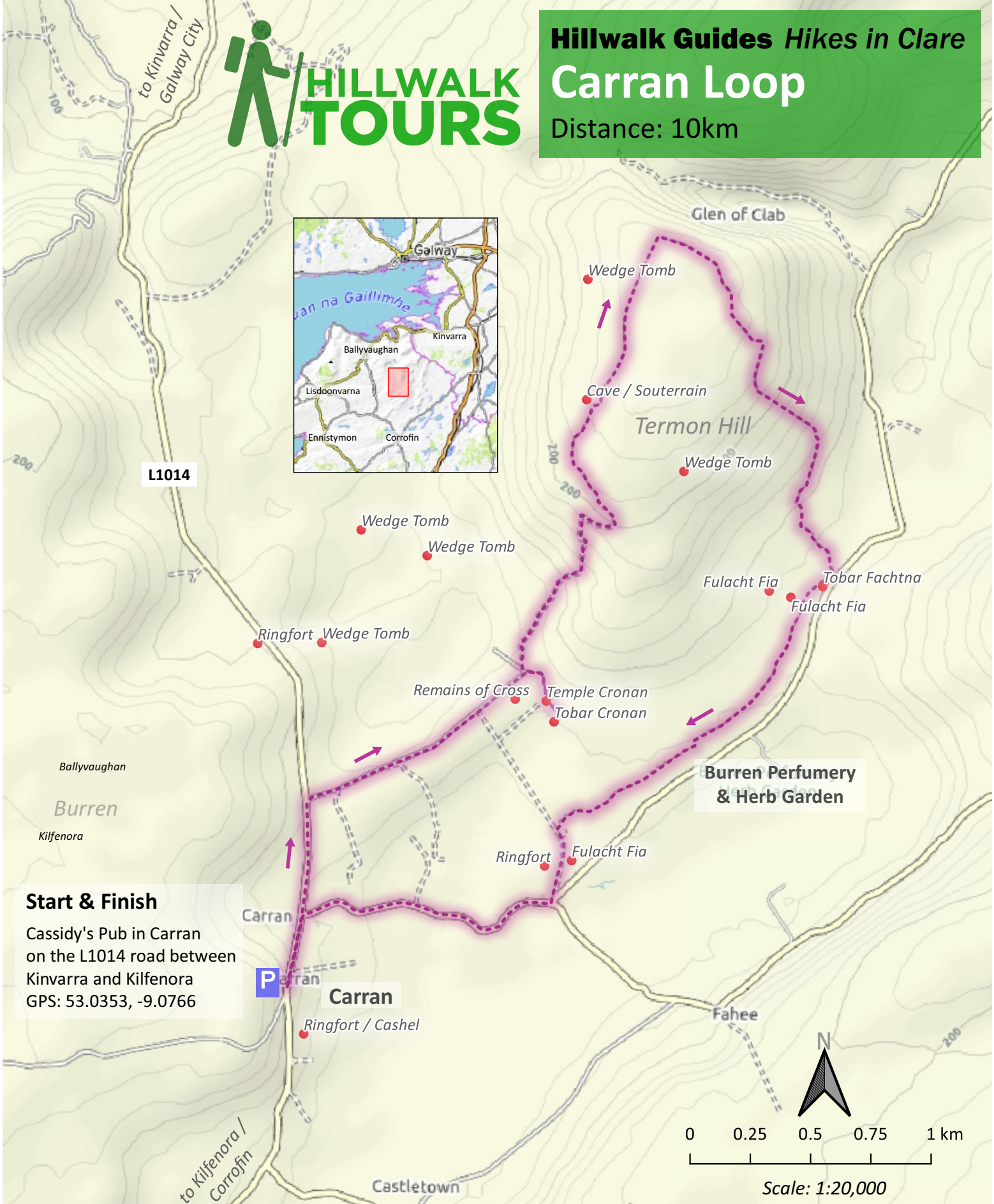
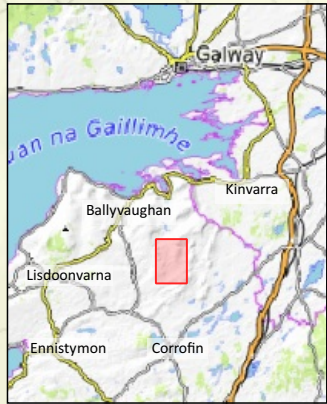
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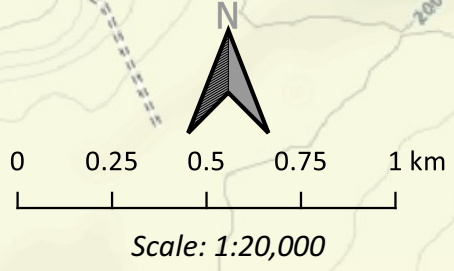
Hillwalk Guides Hikes in Clare

Carran Loop

Distance: 10km



Start & Finish
 Cassidy's Pub in Carran
 on the L1014 road between
 Kinvarra and Kilfenora
 GPS: 53.0353, -9.0766



Hillwalk Tours Ltd does not accept any responsibility or liability for any damage or loss to any person for the result of any action taken on the basis of this information.



Hillwalk Guides – Hikes in Clare

Carran Loop (Route Notes)

Please Note:

- Please be aware that changes to the route may occur of which we are unaware.
- The approximate **‘Walking Time’** is based on a moderate walking speed of 4km per hour and does not include any breaks.
- The **‘Total Ascent’** is the cumulative elevation gain or climb over the entire distance of the walk.

YOUR WALK AT A GLANCE

Distance: 10km

Walking Time: 3-4 hours

Total Ascent: (↑) 160m

Terrain: This loop follows minor roads, tracks and open limestone pavement across and around Termon Hill. There is a minor climb to the top of the hill and a slightly steeper descent on the other side. Some sections of the walk follow paved roads. Note that the open limestone pavement across the hill can make for a slightly challenging walking experience. Watch out for hidden ‘grykes’ (vertical cracks in the limestone) and make sure you wear good supportive boots.

Food & Drink: Carran, Kinvarra, Ballyvaughan, Kilfenora, Corrofin

Way Marking: The waymarking for this walk is a purple arrow. However, there are places where these markers may be missing. In those cases please refer to these directions.



Access & Parking: The walk starts from the car park opposite Cassidy’s Pub in Carran (GPS: 53.0353, -9.0766) on the L1014 road between Kinvarra and Kilfenora.

From Cassidy’s Pub in Carran (GPS Coordinates: 53.0353, -9.0766):

- Pass the pub on your right and walk downhill for 300m.
- ① *To your left is **St. Columba’s Church** (built 1861) and on your right is the old National School, built 1858. **Michael Cusack**, founder of the Gaelic Athletic Association (GAA), was born in Carran in 1847, went to school here and later also worked here as a teacher.*
- Continue straight on and ignore the road on the right just past the school. After 450m, take a small road on the right, signposted for ‘Templecronan Church’.
- Follow this road for 1.1km until you come to a series of gates and a track leading off to the left.
- Leave the road and cross a stile to the right of the gate that lies directly in front of you.
- At this point the walk takes a short (200m) detour to *Templecronan Church*: After crossing the stile, continue straight on and slightly to the right for 50m to another gate.
- Cross the stile on the right into the field ahead and turn right.
- Walk across the field keeping the wall on you right and cross another stile in a wall after 70m.
- You can now see the little chapel 40m ahead on the other side of the field. There is a stile that allows you to climb the wall surrounding the chapel.
- ① *The romantic **‘Temple Cronan’** (Irish for ‘Cronan’s Church’) is one of the hidden gems of the Burren. It is thought to be a pre-12th century oratory and may have then been rebuilt and changed in the 12th and 15th century. Some evidence even suggests that it could have been a pre-Christian pagan shrine long before that.*

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Look for the numerous human and animal head carvings dispersed around the building and also for the two wonderful tomb shrines located at the site. The one on the southeast side of the church is said to mark the grave of St. Cronan.

① *If you continue past the chapel a narrow path on the far side will bring you to **St. Cronan's holy well** after 80m.*

- After your visit to the chapel and holy well return the same way you came to the stile where you have left the road.
- Then, with the gate and the road from Carran on your left, continue next to the stone wall on your left for 15m and then turn right onto a track leading towards Termon Hill.
- Pass through a gate, after 90m, and follow the track as it bears to the right just beyond the gate.
- After 250m, the track starts to climb up the side of the hill. Follow it and ignore the grassy path on the right after a further 175m.
- The track surface changes from rock to grass and back to rock over the next 230m until the track turns sharply right.
- Follow the track for a further 150m but turn off it to the left before the next gate.
- Follow the wall on your right for 40m where you will find a stile to cross through. Turn left on the other side of the wall and follow the grassy path running parallel with the wall for 275m.
- Turn right at the trail marker, 50m before the corner of the field and follow the faint path running parallel with the wall 30-40m away to your left.
- Continue in this direction for 275m and aim for the tall stone slabs ahead to your right. They are marking an old stone enclosure or cattle pen.

① *In 2003 a souterrain and cave have been discovered just to the left of the enclosure. Souterrains are underground galleries, often lined with stone slabs or wood. They do not appear to have been used for burial or ritual purposes, and it has been suggested that they were food stores or hiding places. This souterrain had been constructed against the entrance of a larger natural cave which reaches a total length of 12m before becoming choked by boulders.*

- Cross over the stile to the right of the enclosure and continue in the same direction as before, keeping the wall on left at a distance of around 50m.
- Cross through another wall, after 220m and then walk straight on and slightly to the left towards the wall.
- After 180m, you'll find yourself beside the wall once again.
- Keep this wall your left for 350m and then turn right and walk away from it at a right angle.
- To your left is now the remote and steep sided *Glen of Clab*. Cross through a stile in a wall, 250m after you turned right and veer slightly to right beyond the wall.
- There is a ditch to your right that invites you to follow it - but stay to the left of the ditch and walk away from the wall at an angle of 45°.
- Cross a section of limestone pavement and then aim for the left end of the wall 100m ahead. Once you reach the end of the wall, you will realise that it is in fact a corner.
- Turn left and walk away from it towards a low, ancient wall 80m ahead. Cross the wall, continue straight for 50m and then bear left and downhill for another 50m until you come to a wall with a stile.
- Cross through the stile and follow the path to the right and slightly downhill for 200m through some grass, heather and shrubs towards a wall. Turn left before the wall and follow the path downhill with the wall on your right for 330m.
- At the end of your descent, you reach another wall straight ahead of you. In a corner to the right, where the two walls meet you will find a stile that brings you onto some limestone pavement on the far side.
- Continue straight on with the wall 10-20m away on your left until you enter some dense hazel woodland after 200m.

HILLWALK TOURS

Escape to Nature!

- Follow the rocky and uneven path through the 'green tunnel' of the hazel trees for 200m. Soon after the trees end, you come to a stile in a wall with a small field beyond it.
 - Cross the field to a gate on the far side, 60m ahead, and follow the track beyond the gate to another gate after 20m.
 - Pass through this gate as well and follow the rough track beyond it towards a gate next to a road after 230m.
 - Just before the gate, turn right off the track and continue for a little over 100m until you come to some man-made stone pillars standing forlorn on the limestone pavement.
- ① *This is **Tobar Fachtna**, a holy well dedicated to St. Fachtna, the founder of the Cathedral in Kilfenora. The stone pillars are the stations of the cross used in religious ceremonies in the catholic church. The actual well is a small hole in the ground in front of a low rectangular pillar beside the trail.*

From here you have two options on how to continue (both are the same distance):

Option 1: Follow the road (with the option to visit the Burren Perfumery)

Option 2: Continue on the trail across the limestone pavement

Option 1 – along the road:

- To continue on the road, cross through the stile in the wall beside the well and turn right onto the road. After 750m, you have the opportunity to visit the Burren Perfumery on your left.
- ① *The **Burren Perfumery**, a family run business, makes perfumes, creams, soaps and balms by hand using natural ingredients in a beautiful location in the heart of the Burren. You can visit the soap making and still room where soaps, creams, oils and herbal teas are prepared using traditional methods. Or relax in the extensive native herb garden and sample a fresh scone in the peaceful tea rooms which serve organic homemade food amidst the natural beauty of the Burren.*
- To continue on the Burren Way, keep going straight on, following the road for a little over 1km until you come to a T-junction.

See notes below for directions from here

Option 2 – along the trail:

- To continue on the trail, leave the stile to your left and continue in the same direction as before, keeping the wall on your left 10-40m away.
- After a little over 320m, the path bears slightly to the left and downhill and after 40m you'll reach a little spring with a wet and grassy area beside it on your left. This is actually a little turlough and after a lot of rain a little lake can form here.
- Walk around the right side of this turlough/grassy patch for 100m until you reach a stone wall and stile amongst some trees and bushes.
- Cross through the stile and the bushes and continue on the stone pavement beyond, keeping the wall on your left.
- After 450m, the path leads you to a stile in the wall on your left. Cross through it, turn right and continue along the wall but this time keeping it on your right.
- Cross through a stile after 170m, and after a further 50m, bear slightly to the left, away from the wall for 100m before veering right again to resume your previous direction parallel with the wall, which is now 40m to your right.
- After 180m, the path brings you to a grassy knoll. Bear slightly to the left from here and after 80m follow the path down a few rocky steps.
- Now, aim for some trees and a stone walled enclosure ahead of you and pass the enclosure on the right.
- Just 30m beyond the enclosure, you will meet an old 'Green Road'. Turn left here and follow the Green Road as it bears slightly to the right towards a gate a little over 300m ahead.

HILLWALK TOURS

Escape to Nature!

- Cross the stile beside the gate, turn right onto the road and continue for 15m to a T-junction.

Option 1 re-joins here

- Turn right again (the joining the route of the Burren Way) and follow the road for a little over 1km to a junction beside the school in Carran.
- Turn left and follow the road uphill through the village back to Cassidy's Pub.

ⓘ *On your way you might be able to enjoy some views of the Castletown River and the Carran Turlough to your left. Turloughs, are temporary (largely seasonal), shallow, groundwater-fed lakes which are often used as pastures in the summer. So, depending on the season you might see a lake or just a large field with a river running through the centre.*

After Your hike

For local refreshments and food try Cassidy's Pub or the café in the Burren Perfumery. Depending on by which direction you are returning home, other nearby options for food are Linnane's Lobster Bar, in New Quay, along the N67 between Ballyvaughan and Kinvarra, and of course the cafes, pubs and restaurants in Ballyvaughan, Kinvarra, Kilfenora and Corrofin.

Carran (Irish: Carn, meaning "The Cairn"), sometimes also spelled "Carron", is a tiny village of 100 inhabitants in the heart of the Burren. It is notable mainly for being the birthplace of Michael Cusack, the inspirer and co-founder of the Gaelic Athletic Association.