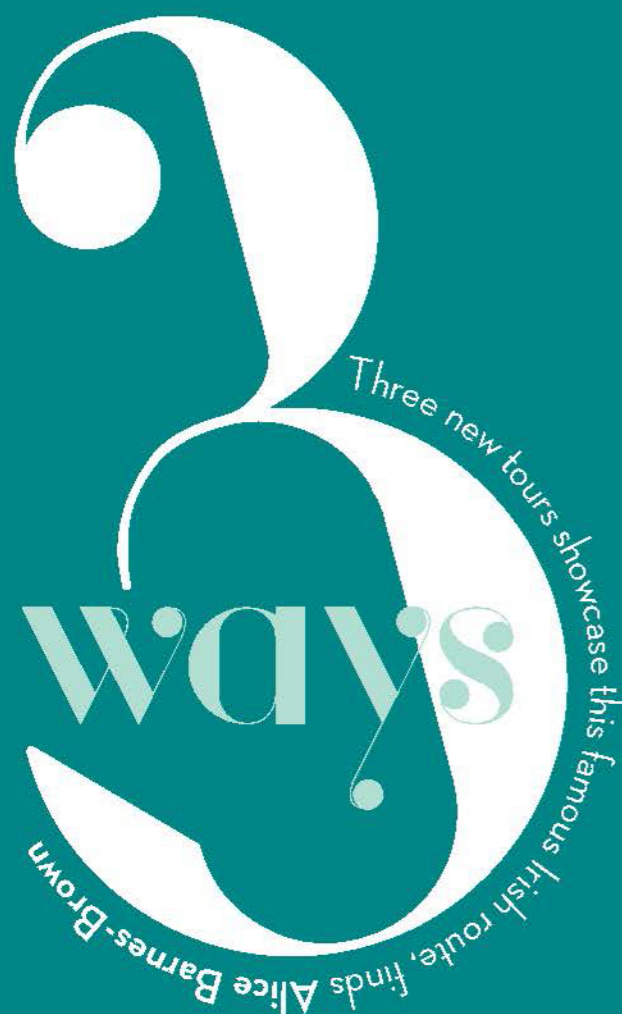


WILD ATLANTIC WAY



Ireland's Wild Atlantic Way – which marks its 10th anniversary this year – weaves 1,600 miles around the west coast, from the gnarly Old Head of Kinsale in County Cork to Donegal's northernmost point, Malin Head.

The route is marked by a blue zigzag on road signs, so navigation is easy – and with 157 'discovery points' to stop off at, there are plenty of places to see. As you'd expect of the Emerald Isle, there are glorious green scenes as well as jaw-dropping panoramas; for example, the cloud-topped cliffs at Slieve League are some of Europe's highest sea cliffs, rising 598 metres from the blue Atlantic waters.

Fishing towns painted in every colour of the rainbow, seaside restaurants serving up fresh local fish, craft breweries, quirky museums and even openings such as the National Surf Centre in Sligo showcase the breadth of things to do along the Wild Atlantic Way. However clients choose to do the WAW – hike, bike or drive it – these new tours can guide them every step of the way.

Walk



The Dingle Peninsula

New to Exodus Adventure Travels for 2024 is the Walking Ireland's Wild Atlantic Way itinerary, which covers some of the most famous sections of Ireland's spellbinding west coast on foot – although no day involves more than 10 miles of walking.

From Dublin, a coach whisks a small group to Killarney, the starting point for guided climbs of 535-metre Torc Mountain and walks in the famed Ring of Kerry, where white-sand beaches and ruined abbeys are steeped in Irish myths and fairy lore. At Derrynane Beach,

clients will meet a Kerry seaweed forager, who explains its many foodie and pharmaceutical uses.

No trip to Ireland would be complete without seeing the Cliffs of Moher – the sheer and stern-faced giants of County Clare. Swapping walking shoes for sea spray, clients will get to see the cliffs from the awe-inspiring viewpoint of a boat and might spot wild goats teetering at the top of the cliffs.

Have you seen *The Banshees of Inisherin*, starring Colin Farrell and Brendan Gleeson? The trip includes an excursion to one of

Another newcomer for 2024, Wilderness Ireland's exciting bike-based itinerary exploring western Ireland combines the rewarding feeling of pedal power with the ease of e-biking.

Although days on wheels can cover up to 43 miles, the boost of an e-bike's motor means that even the most leisurely of cyclists can keep up – and there's always a cosy Irish B&B to look forward to at the end of the day.

After being picked up from Galway train station, the tour begins in charming Clifden, Connemara, where e-bikes are hired and custom-fitted to clients' requirements. A 10-mile warm-up cycle on Connemara's Sky Road

reveals the waves of the Wild Atlantic Way from up high.

Next day, the tour changes gear with a 40-mile loop through the mirror-like lakes and endless grasslands of Connemara National Park, stopping off at a Lough Inagh fishing lodge for lunch to give the legs a break.

The scenery changes as the trip winds inland through County Clare, where greenery becomes sparse and the terraced, rocky mounds of Burren National Park take over. Although it's Ireland's smallest national park at just under six square miles, Burren has plenty of interesting residents: rare pine martens and lesser horseshoe bats make their homes in the nooks and crannies. An e-bike allows clients

to speed through their habitat without disturbing them, offering greater chances to spot wildlife.

After returning the bikes, a coach transfers the group back to Galway: suggest clients add on a couple of nights in this harbourside city for a bit of Irish cultural immersion. Eating a cone of brown bread ice cream from Murphy's parlour is one way to cool off on a warm summer day. Sipping a pint of Murphy's by the waterfront is another.

Book it: E-Bike Ireland's West Coast is priced from £2,833 (with departures on June 22, August 10 and September 21), including e-bike rental, meals, transfers and accommodation. Flights are extra. wildernessireland.com

Cycle



Connemara

its filming locations, Inishmore. A guide born and bred on the isle will lead a wander through its harsh karst landscape, shedding light on natural wonders such as the Serpent's Lair rectangular pool and a mystical prehistoric hill fort, Dún Aonghasa.

Book it: The eight-day Walking Ireland's Wild Atlantic Way costs from £2,899. Includes seven nights' B&B accommodation, transfers, six lunches, two dinners and listed activities. Excludes transport to Ireland. Departures from June 15. exodus.co.uk

PICTURE: Exodus/Ireland Walk Hike Bike

DESTINATIONS

UK & IRELAND | WILD ATLANTIC WAY



Teelin village, Donegal

PICTURE: Shutterstock/Kevin George



“The Wild Atlantic Way covers over 1,600 miles of coastline, so clients can break it up into smaller sections, as each part has enough to fill a holiday on its own. Suggest pairing Clare and Connemara, Cork and Kerry, or Sligo with Mayo and Galway – that doesn’t even include Donegal. The Wild Atlantic Way is an epicurean’s dream – think fantastic seafood and amazing local cheeses. In Cork, there’s a herd of water buffalo that produces award-winning mozzarella! For something off-piste, mystical islands make for brilliant day trips – for instance, the Skelligs have ancient stone monasteries.”

Chris Hendrie
business and product
development manager,
McKinlay Kidd



This electric vehicle tour of Ireland, unveiled by Scottish operator McKinlay Kidd late last year to celebrate the Wild Atlantic Way’s 10th anniversary, is the first of its kind.

There’s a choice of two types of vehicle: a Tesla Model Y Long Range or a Polestar 2, each with a range of up to 400 miles. The self-guided itinerary is meticulously planned, with charging points at every overnight stop – so there’s no worry about running out of juice, even in the remotest parts of rural Ireland.

Starting in Dublin, clients will drive north to Donegal (passing back into UK territory at Lough Erne

“On the cards for the penultimate day is a phenomenal kayaking trip

on the way). At Malin Head, the strong Atlantic breeze buffets from all sides, but should clients come back after dark – which they can, thanks to the freedom a self-guided tour permits – they might get a glimpse of the northern lights.

After a detour to Achill – Ireland’s largest island – led by a

local guide, the itinerary pauses at the Wyatt Hotel in Westport, which has a classy cocktail bar and recently renovated rooms. Then it’s a slow wind down through Connemara and Clare until the route reaches the Shannon estuary, where bottlenose dolphins can be found playing in the wake of the ferry that takes cars to Kerry.

On the cards for the penultimate day is a phenomenal kayaking trip through the sheltered and sandy bays of West Cork, where experienced guides help a small group glide through Gulf Stream-warmed waters to uninhabited islands and secret swimming spots.

En route to Dublin, clients will have time to break their journey in Cork for souvenir shopping in the 18th-century English Market, as well as a pit stop for a photo at the mystical Rock of Cashel in County Tipperary. It’s a long way to go – but it doesn’t feel like it when you’re cruising in a sleek electric vehicle.

Book it: McKinlay Kidd sells the 10-night Wild Atlantic Way EV Road Trip from £2,895 per person, based on two sharing, departing in October. Includes breakfast, EV hire and all tours. Transport to Ireland is extra. mckinlaykidd.com **TW**