

Causeway Coastal Route Drive Guide

Northern Ireland's great coastal drive: Belfast to Derry

Interactive route map + GPX download: the full Causeway Coastal Route, Belfast to Derry, with all stops plotted, is on our website. Download the GPX file to load the route into Google Maps, a sat nav or your phone for the drive.

At a Glance

Stretch	Distance	Highlights
Belfast to the Glens	~30 miles	Carrickfergus, Gobbins, Glenarm, Carnlough
The Glens of Antrim	~25 miles	Glenariff, Cushendun, Torr Head
Ballycastle to Carrick-a-Rede	~15 miles	Rope bridge, Ballintoy, Dark Hedges
Bushmills & the Causeway	~10 miles	Bushmills, Giant's Causeway
Dunluce to Derry	~40 miles	Dunluce, Portrush, Portstewart, Derry

Safety Tips

Drive the route Belfast to Derry, keeping to the seaward side for the best views. The main A2 coast road is easy, but the Glens detours and the Torr Head loop are narrow, steep and single-track with passing places, not for nervous drivers, caravans or campervans. Keep your speed down, use the lay-bys, and watch for cyclists, walkers and sheep. Northern Ireland uses MILES, not kilometres. Drive on the left. Book the Giant's Causeway and Carrick-a-Rede in advance in peak season.

Belfast & Dublin Airport Access

Belfast is the natural gateway, with two airports (Belfast International and George Best Belfast City) and the start of the route on its doorstep. Dublin is a popular alternative around two hours from the coast, with the widest choice of flights and suppliers. City of Derry Airport sits at the far end.

Book your hire car at getcarhire.com/ireland.htm and compare all the main suppliers in one search, with insurance and taxes included.

Causeway Coastal Route Drive Guide

Northern Ireland's great coastal drive: Belfast to Derry

Food & Where to Eat on the Causeway Coast

The Ramore complex (Portrush harbour)

Several restaurants and a lively bar under one roof, from the Harbour Bistro's wood-fired grills to the Mermaid's fresh fish. The standout on the coast.

Harry's Shack (Portstewart strand)

Top-class seafood right on the sand, washed down with its own Shacked Beach pale ale. One of the most memorable meals on the coast.

Tartine at the Distillers Arms (Bushmills)

Inventive modern European cooking using local award-winning produce, in the former home of the distillery owners.

Nelly Rua's (Ballycastle)

Famous for its seafood chowder, made with fish straight from the harbour.

The Bushmills Inn

A lovely spot for dinner by a turf fire, a stone's throw from the Giant's Causeway.

Best Pubs for a Pint & Trad Music

The Bush House (Bushmills)

Said to serve the best pint of Guinness on the north coast.

The Harbour Bar (Portrush)

One of the oldest pubs on the coast, with live entertainment most evenings.

The Fullerton Arms (Ballintoy)

Overlooking Ballintoy Harbour, the perfect place to end a day on the road, with hearty food, a warm welcome and live music.

Old Bushmills Distillery

The world's oldest licensed whiskey distillery, dating to 1608. Tours end with a tasting of the smooth triple-distilled whiskey.

Menus and opening hours change, especially out of season, so it is worth checking ahead before relying on any one stop.