

Connemara Drive Guide

The classic loop from Galway, from Shannon or Knock

Route map: the Connemara loop from Galway via the N59 to Clifden, the Sky Road, Kylemore Abbey and the Killary Fjord. (Map image to be added once finalised.)

At a Glance

Stretch	Distance	Highlights
Galway to Oughterard	~27km	Lough Corrib, Oughterard
Oughterard to Clifden	~50km	Maam Cross, Twelve Bens
The Sky Road loop	~16km	Clifden Castle, Upper Sky Road
Clifden to Kylemore	~20km	Letterfrack, Kylemore Abbey
Kylemore to Leenane	~20km	Killary Fjord, Leenane

Safety Tips

The N59 spine is an easy two-lane road, but the scenic detours are narrow: the Sky Road and the Roundstone coast lanes have passing places and, in parts, no guard rails above steep drops. Keep your speed down, use the lay-bys, and drive the Sky Road clockwise from Clifden. Avoid unmarked sat-nav shortcuts and stick to the marked R roads. Watch for sheep and Connemara ponies on the open bog. Fuel up in Galway, Oughterard or Clifden. Drive on the left.

Shannon & Knock Airport Access

Shannon Airport is around 90 minutes from Galway, with a good range of flights and suppliers. Knock Airport to the north is a similar distance and handy for combining Connemara with Mayo. Galway city is the natural base.

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

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Food & Where to Eat in Connemara

Mitchell's (Clifden)

One of Ireland's finest seafood restaurants, serving Killary mussels, oysters and the day's catch.

The Misunderstood Heron (Killary Fjord)

A celebrated food truck beside the fjord, famous for mussels and chowder with one of the best views in Ireland.

Connemara mountain lamb

The region's signature dish, prized across Ireland, found on menus throughout the loop.

Kylemore Abbey tea rooms

A scenic lunch or afternoon-tea stop in the grounds of the abbey.

Best Pubs for a Pint & Trad Music

Griffin's (Clifden)

The town's oldest family pub, claiming the finest pint of Guinness in Clifden, with traditional music nightly.

Cloverfox (Letterfrack)

Pairs Connemara lamb and local seafood with pints by an open fire, a warm welcome after the road.

Galway city pubs

If basing in Galway, the medieval streets are full of lively trad pubs and fresh oysters to round off the day.

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