

# OFFALY OUTDOORS

The ultimate guide



[Visitoffaly.ie](http://Visitoffaly.ie)

**OFFALY**  
IRELAND'S HIDDEN Gem





## Introduction

Offaly is at the heart of Ireland and welcomes the visitor to enormous tracts of wilderness, expanses of bogland, a vast mountain park, esker hills and deep wooded valleys with their streams and rivers. The majestic Shannon River defines its western boundary and the gently rolling hills of the Slieve Bloom Mountains, a national nature reserve, rise up in the east. The great thing about a visit to Offaly is that you're always going to be surprised. For walkers, cyclists, adrenaline junkies and lovers of the great outdoors, Offaly has something for you.

Featuring walking, cycling, water sports, mountain biking and, oh yeah, skydiving, you will enjoy an abundance of wildlife and scenic landscapes during your visit. Throughout the county, cruising, equestrian, golfing, and fishing enthusiasts are well catered for. The Grand Canal transverses the county from Edenderry and joins the River Shannon at Shannon Harbour. Edenderry is a noted angling centre. The Shannon callows are of European importance for a number of bird species.



## Love this place. Leave no trace.

Ensure you have prepared and planned for the activity you choose by checking the weather forecast and been prepared for changing weather conditions. Leave details of your plans with somebody. If parking your car unattended, do not leave items on view or anything too valuable in the car. Remember to park your car in designated parking areas and be mindful of gates, ways and point of entries. Where and when possible, travel and camp on durable ground.

Respect private property, farmland and the rural environment and do not interfere with livestock, crops, machinery

or other property. Leave all environments (including farm gates) as you find them. Do not litter. Take all your litter home and protect wildlife, plants, trees and waterways. Guard against all risks of fire, especially near forests. Always stay on and follow marked trails and ways and ensure to take heed of warning signs. Keep children supervised at all times. Please remember those who take part in the recreational activities at the locations listed in this book do so at their own risk.

For more information go to [www.leaveonotraceireland.org](http://www.leaveonotraceireland.org)

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## OFFALY WAY

Explore the peaceful hidden heartlands of County Offaly on the Offaly Way, a linear route measuring 38 km that links the Slieve Bloom Way at the village of Cadamstown to Slí Mór and the ancient monastic site of Lemanaghan on the road between Clara and Ferbane.

Although the highest point is only 120 metres, much of the Offaly Way commands wide views over a comparatively flat landscape with the terrain consisting of mainly quiet side roads and some riverbank paths. As the route is mainly flat it is 'easy to moderate' in difficulty and suitable for walkers of average levels of fitness or higher.

The Offaly Way takes in a rich collection of features that will ensure many walkers will want to linger along the journey including the scenic Silver River, an old bridge that Red Hugh O'Donnell's army is said to have crossed en route to the Battle of Kinsale in 1601, a rare Mesolithic site at Boora, St Manchan's Holy Well and St Mella's Cell.

A number of shorter looped walks (ranging from 1hr to 4hrs) start and finish at each of the trail heads and are more suitable for the occasional walker. The Offaly Way is a waymarked trail that has been developed with the agreement and support of landowners whose lands are crossed on the route and is marked with direction arrows.

[Slievebloom.ie](http://Slievebloom.ie)

### Lemanaghan Early Christian Site

At the start / end point of the Offaly Way is the ruins of a medieval church, holy well and holy tree. This was a site founded by St. Manchan. Visited for centuries, a tradition that continues, there is also an amazing 12th century shrine from Lemanaghan on display in nearby Boher church.

A togher (stone lined causeway) connects the graveyard with St Mella's Cell, a rectangular medieval enclosure containing a single oratory. St Mella was the mother of St Manchan. There are two Bullaun stones, one at the holy well and one in the island at the road junction. Bullaun stones are recognisable as cup-shaped hollows in stone that are often associated with early Christian sites.







## GRAND CANAL WAY

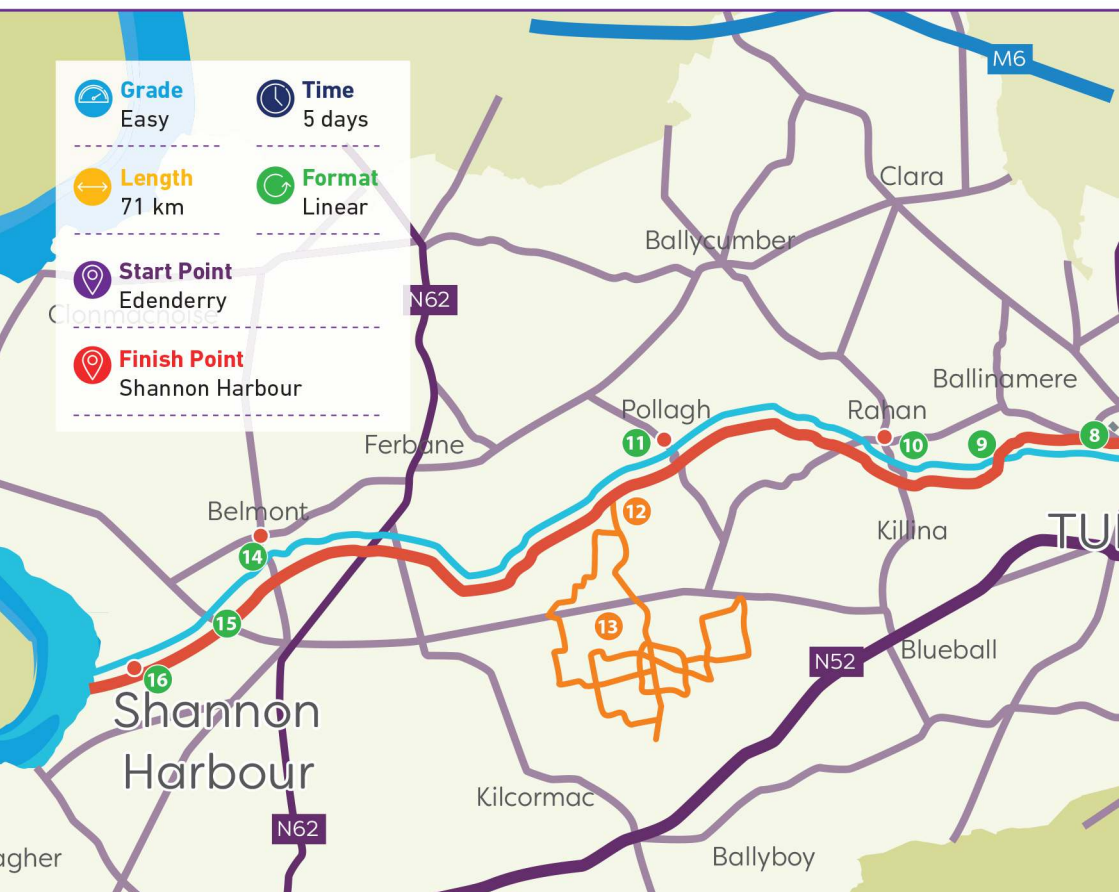
What better way to see Offaly from a different perspective than to savour all the wonderful delights and surprises that the Grand Canal way has to offer.

Covering a distance of 131km and running all the way from Ringsend in the Dublin docklands to Shannon Harbour, the Grand Canal meanders through the Offaly countryside from Edenderry in the east to Shannon Harbour in the west of the county.

The Offaly section of the Grand Canal route is punctuated by historic sites, canal locks, lock houses and industrial architecture from bygone days.

The route embraces landscape that has been untouched by modern agriculture and remains a linear oasis for the flora and fauna that was originally common throughout our countryside.

Dotted along the 71km on the Offaly route are the towns and villages of Daingean, Ballycommon, Tullamore, Rahan,





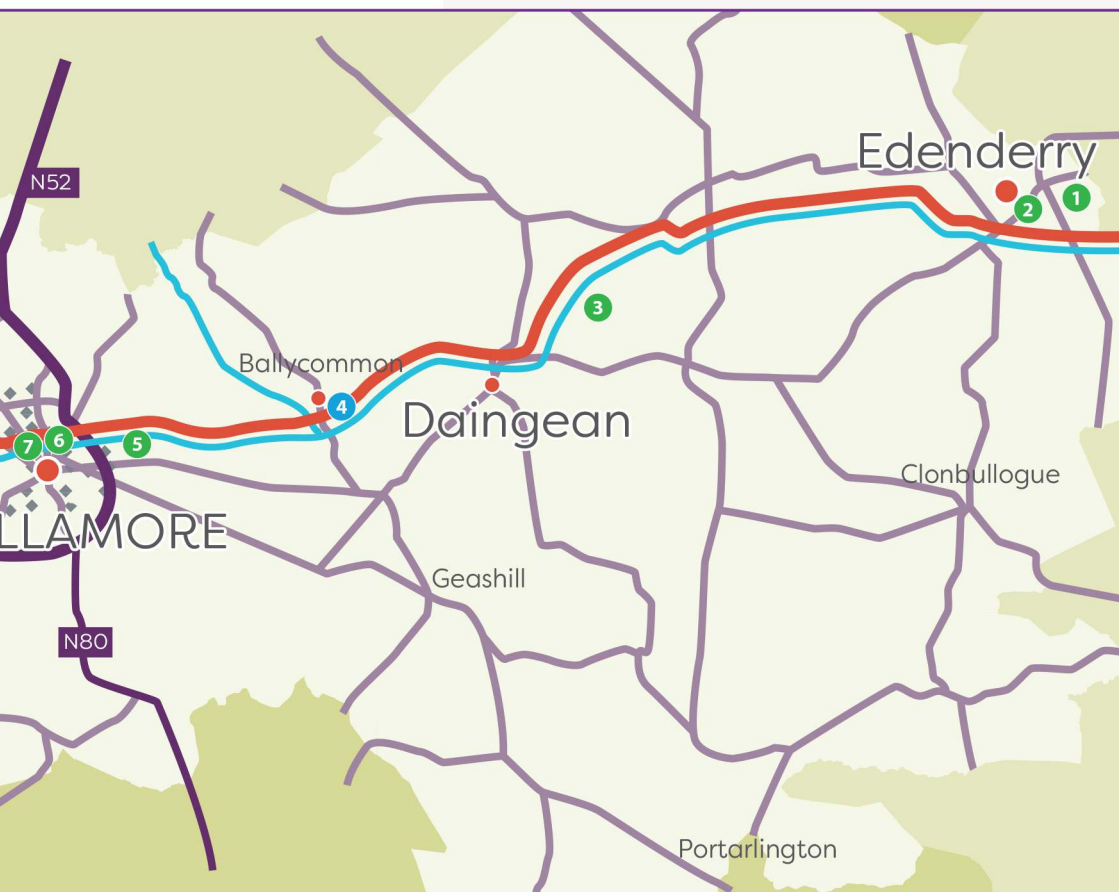
Pollagh and Belmont offering accommodation to walkers, cyclists and boating enthusiasts.

Offaly County Council are currently in partnership with Waterways Ireland and Bord na Mona working towards completing a full off-road Grand Canal Greenway.

## Points of Interest

- |                                       |                               |
|---------------------------------------|-------------------------------|
| 1 Blundell Aqueduct                   | 9 Ballycowan Castle           |
| 2 Edenderry Heritage Trail            | 10 Rahan Monastic Site        |
| 3 Mount Briscoe                       | 11 Pollagh Church             |
| 4 Killbeggan Branch Link              | 12 Turraun Wetlands           |
| 5 Boland's Lock                       | 13 Lough Boora                |
| 6 Tullamore Dew Old Bonded Waterhouse | Discovery Park                |
| 7 Tullamore Town Historical Tour      | 14 Belmont Mill & Art Studios |
| 8 Srah Castle                         | 15 Clonony Castle             |
|                                       | 16 Shannon Harbour            |

[Visitoffaly.ie](http://Visitoffaly.ie)



## SLIEVE BLOOM MOUNTAINS

The Slieve Blooms, along with the Massif Central in France, are the oldest mountains in Europe; they were once also the highest at 3,700 metres. Weathering has reduced them to 527 metres.

With hundreds of walking trails and guided tours throughout the year, driving routes for motorists and a network of mountain bike trails, the Slieve Blooms provides the perfect setting to get out and explore the unspoilt magical beauty of Ireland's oldest mountain range.

All nature lovers will appreciate a visit to the Slieve Blooms as they are rich in flora and fauna and as many as sixty five different bird species have been sighted here and the many glens are alive with the sigh of trees, the rush of water, the sound of birdsong and the bark of deer.

Only an hour and a bit from Dublin, Galway and Limerick and two hours from Cork, the Slieve Blooms are easily accessible from all corners of Ireland. Explore the Slieve Blooms and you'll be rewarded by spectacular views stretching across the midlands of Ireland and on a clear cloud free day you can see the four highest points of each of Ireland's four provinces.

[Slievebloom.ie](http://Slievebloom.ie)

### Looped Walks

Walkers have a choice of twenty-one marked routes ranging in length from one hour to four hours and varying degrees of difficulty. Choose your access point from one of five key trailheads which provide map-boards and car-parking.





## SLIEVE BLOOM WAY

If you fancy getting off the beaten track for three days on a mountain trekking adventure, then pack your rucksack and take on the Slieve Bloom Way. Covering a distance of 70.5 km, your daily hikes will consist of four to five hour walks across a mixture of terrain; from gorse-covered flatlands to relatively gentle inclines.

The Slieve Bloom Way is a circular walking trail which stretches across the Slieve Bloom Mountains Environment Park - an area of undiscovered environmental beauty. Expect idyllic forest scenery as the loop crosses high, heathery ridges and dips down into many deep and beautiful glens, sprinkled with trickling streams.

This stunning trail does have a few rough and rugged sections but these stretches rarely rise to high altitudes and don't demand great stamina.

The Slieve Bloom Way is best accessed by one of the five trailheads. Apart from the village of Kinnitty, there is no accommodation available on the actual route, but there are many characterful towns and villages dotted around the mountain range - some quite close to the route - that provide overnight accommodation.

**[Slievebloom.ie](http://Slievebloom.ie)**

### Slieve Bloom Eco Walks

Nature's beauty and diversity is part of the attraction of most walks in rural Ireland but the special Eco Walks in the Slieve Bloom Mountains draw the walker's attention to flora, fauna and geology in a much more concentrated way. There is a selection of four walks ranging in length which vary in degrees of difficulty. Eco walks are located at Glenbarrow, Silver River at Cadamstown, Knockbarron Wood and Glenafelly (both near Kinnitty).



## SLEEVE BLOOM WAY



Grade

Strenuous







Length

70.5 km



Time

3.75 days

-  Regional Road
-  Minor Road
-  Dirt Road or Bog Road
-  Track
-  Sleeve Bloom Way
-  Other Walking Routes

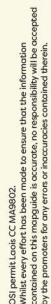
-  Car Park
-  Tourist Information
-  Accommodation
-  Shop, Pub / Restaurant



Dogs are not permitted  
on any section which  
crosses private farmland







## PAUL'S LANE LOOP



**Grade**

Strenuous



**Format**

Loop



**Length**

4.5 km



**Trailhead**

Cadamstown Village Car Park



**Time**

2 hours





## SILVER RIVER NATURE TRAIL



**Grade**  
Strenuous



**Format**  
Loop



**Length**  
7 km



**Trailhead**  
Cadamstown Village Car Park



**Time**  
2.5 hours



## GIANT'S GRAVE LOOP



**Grade**

Strenuous



**Format**

Loop



**Length**

11 km



**Trailhead**

Cadamstown  
Village Car Park



**Time**

2.5 hours



Dogs are not permitted  
on any section which  
crosses private farmland

500 Metres

Coolgreen 1/2 Mile



## GLENAFELLY ECO WALK



**Grade**  
Strenuous



**Format**  
Loop



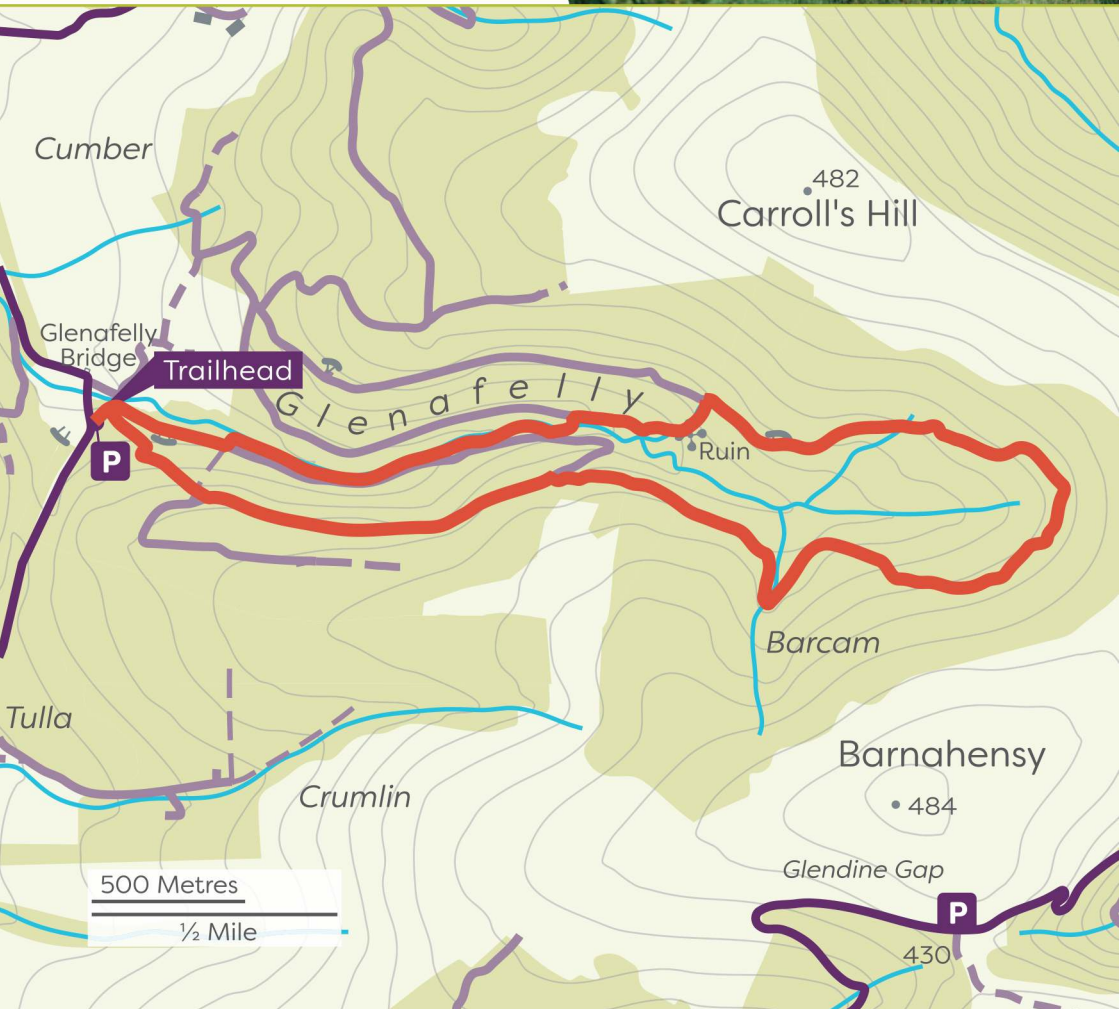
**Length**  
7 km



**Trailhead**  
Glenafelly Forest  
Car Park



**Time**  
2 hours



## GLENREGAN LOOP



**Grade**

Strenuous



**Format**

Loop



**Length**

11 km



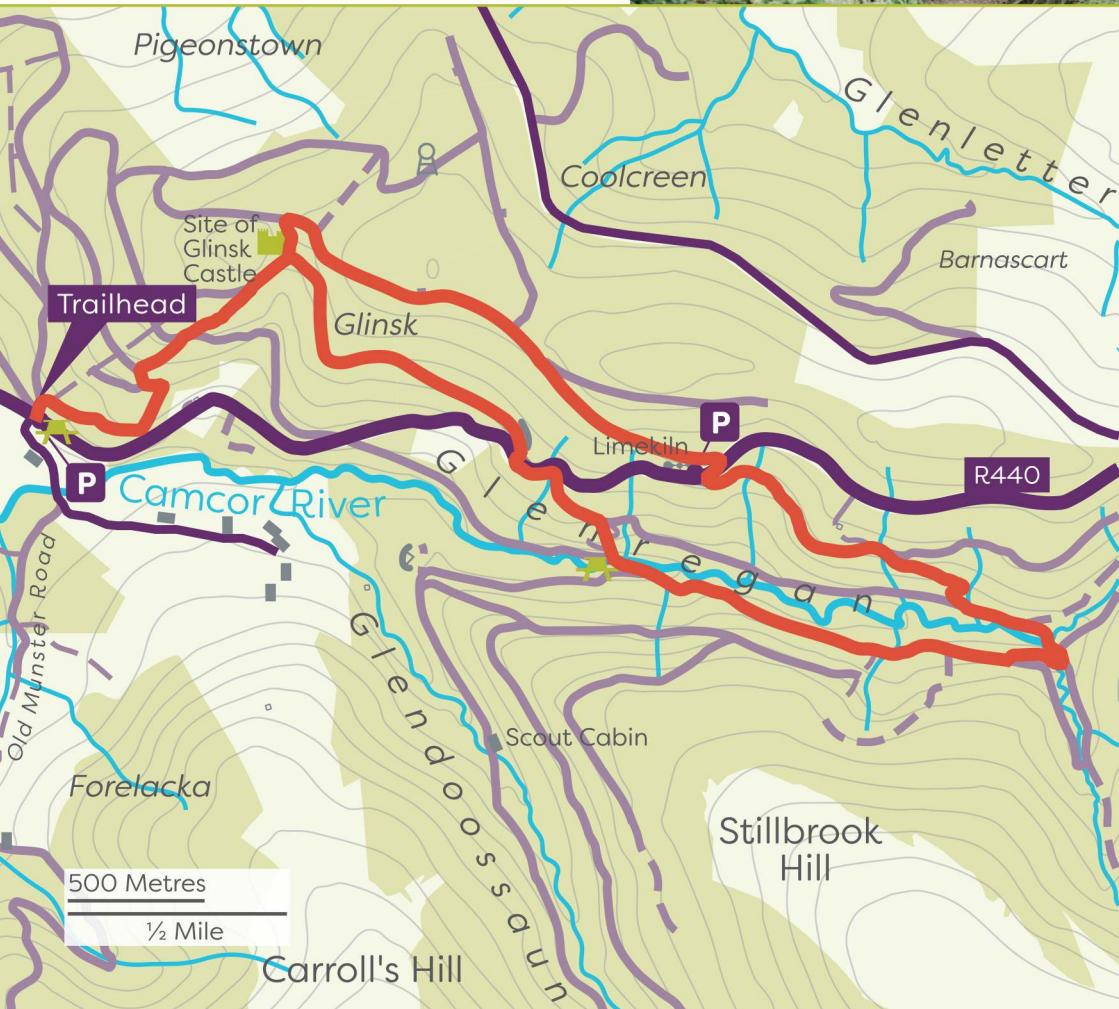
**Trailhead**

Car Park at Glenregan  
Forest Entrance



**Time**

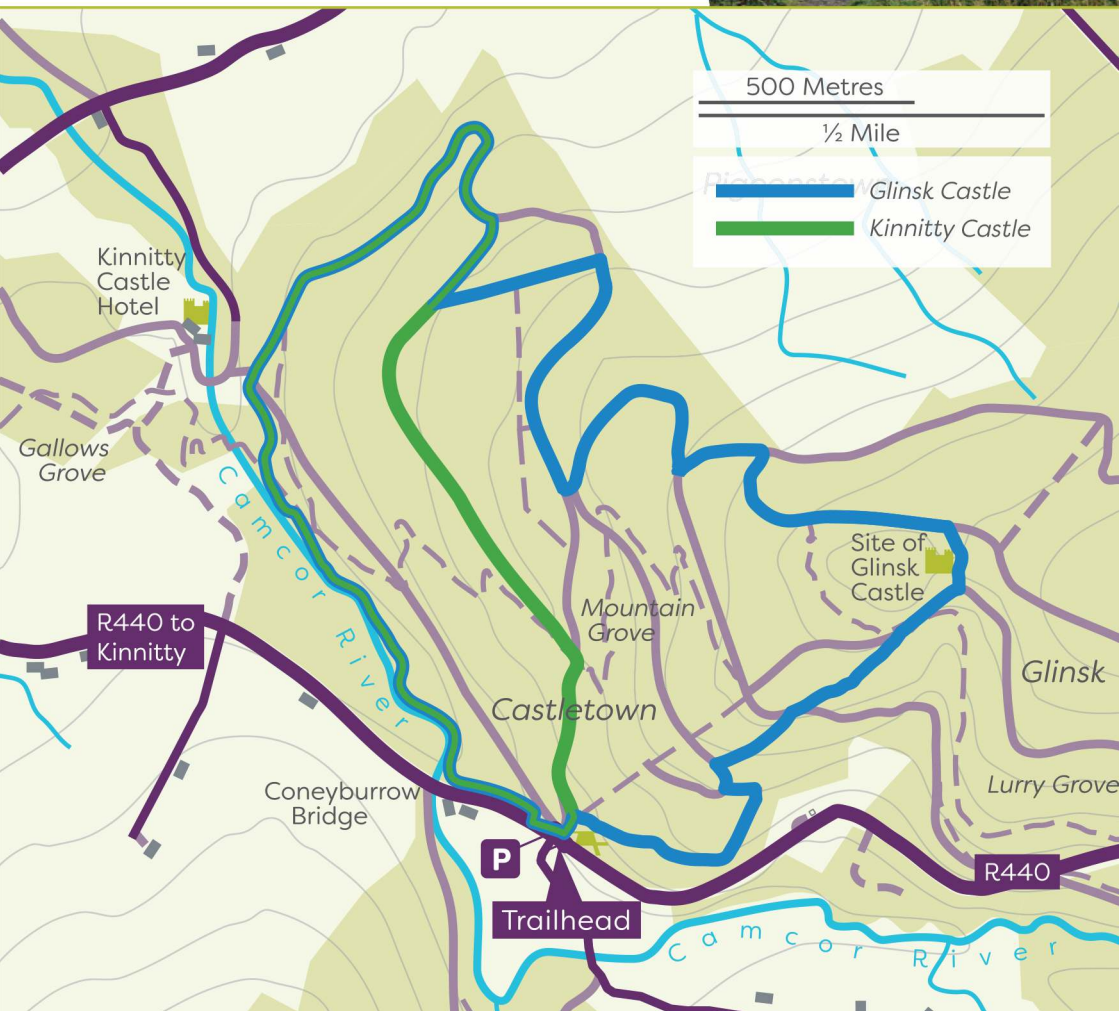
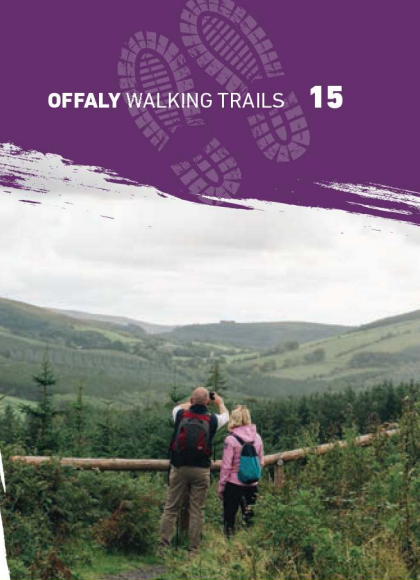
3 hours





## KINNITTY - GLINSK CASTLE LOOP

	<b>Grade</b> Moderate		<b>Length</b> ● 6.7 km ● 4.5 km		<b>Time</b> ● 3 hours ● 1.5 hours
	<b>Format</b> Loop		<b>Trailhead</b> Kinnitty Forest Entrance		



## KNOCKBARRON WOOD ECO WALK



**Grade**  
Moderate



**Length**  
5 km



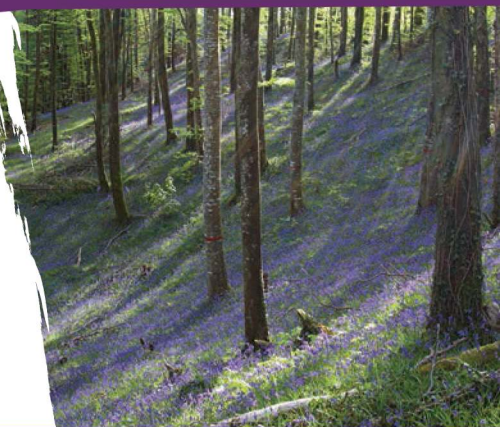
**Time**  
1.5 hours



**Format**  
Loop



**Trailhead**  
Carpark





## CLARA ESKER LOOP WALKS

Grade	Length	Time
● Easy	● 4.5 km	● 1.5 hours
● Easy	● 2 km	● 30 mins

Format	Trailhead
● Loop	Mulligans Carpark



## CLARA BOG

With the Slieve Bloom mountains as a backdrop Clara Bog Nature Reserve is one of the most important raised bogs in Europe and is the finest remaining example of a raised bog in Ireland today.

Clara Bog Nature Reserve is home to many protected wildlife species and it has been

said that visitors here can experience ten thousand years of history in the ten square kilometres that accommodate Clara Bog and its surroundings. Covering 840 hectares it is home to hundreds of plant and animal species with many totally unique to this site.

[www.clarabognaturereserve.ie](http://www.clarabognaturereserve.ie)

### Boardwalk

Clara bog's one kilometre looped boardwalk affords visitors the perfect opportunity to view some of the many protected wildlife species and birds that have made the place their home. Parking available on the road at the entrance.



### Visitor Centre

With its colourful wildlife displays, documentaries and touch screen info-graphics, the close-by award-winning Clara bog Visitor Centre offers visitors the opportunity to get a deeper appreciation and unique insight into the bog.





## CLARA BOG

 **Grade**  
Easy

 **Format**  
Loop

 **Length**  
1 km

 **Trailhead**  
Clara –  
Rahan Road

 **Time**  
15 mins



## POLLAGH LOOP WALKS

### Length

- 5 km
- 3.2 km

### Format

Loop

### Time

- 1 hour
- 40 mins

### Trailhead

Carpark at Church





## CLOGHAN LAKE

### Length

● 1.6 km

● 2.3 km

### Time

● 25 mins

● 40 mins

### Format

Loop

### Trailhead

Carpark at Lake



## SHANNONBRIDGE - RIVER SHANNON LOOP



**Grade**  
Moderate



**Length**  
5.2 km



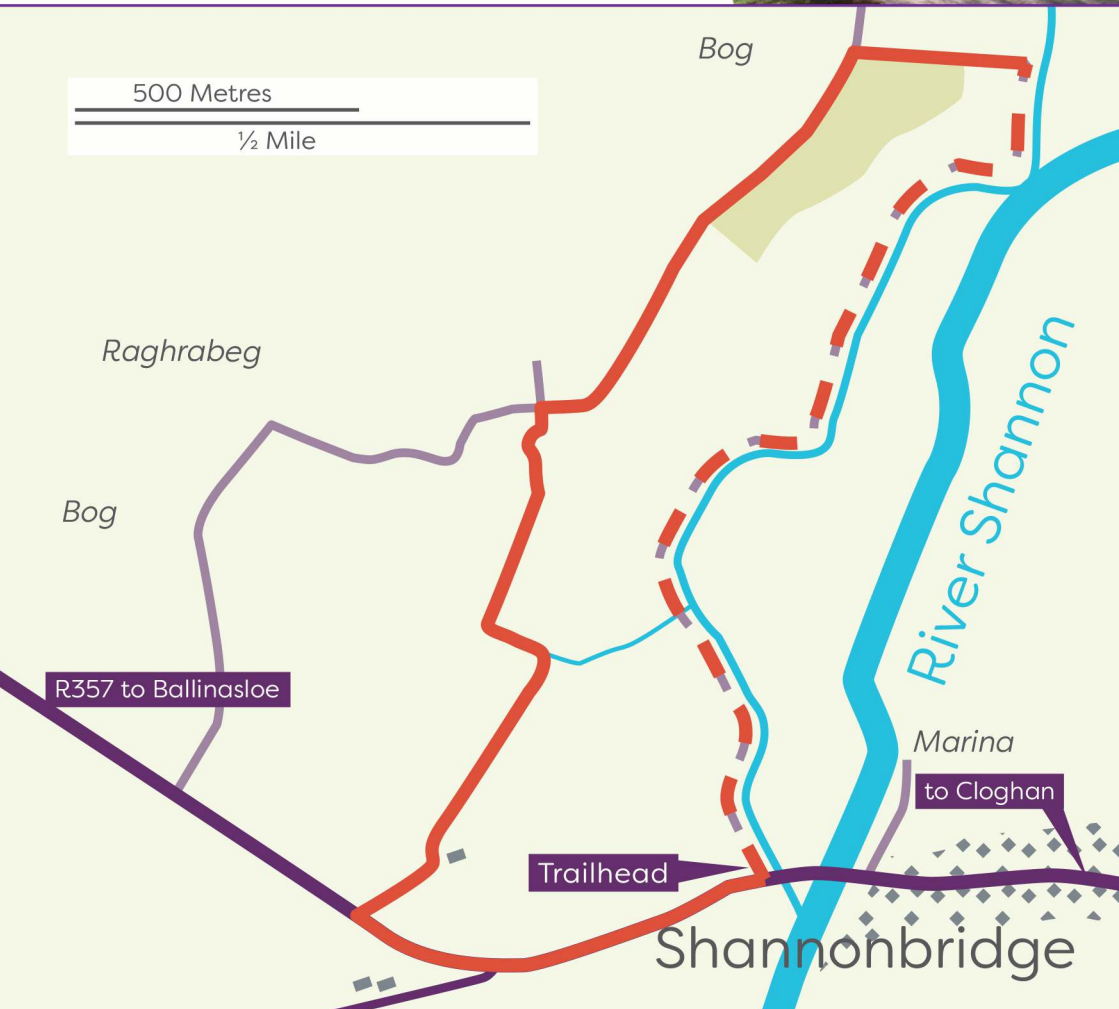
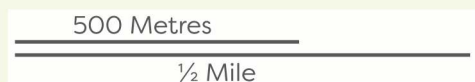
**Time**  
2 hours



**Format**  
Loop



**Trailhead**  
Shannonbridge, Opposite Tourist Office





## MONEYGALL ROCK OF LOYER LOOP



**Grade**  
Moderate



**Format**  
Loop



**Length**  
4.5 km



**Trailhead**  
Moneygall Activity Park



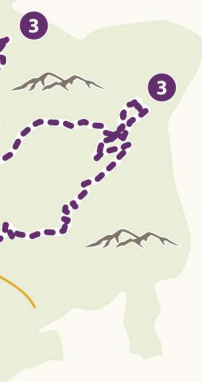
**Time**  
1.5 hours



-  Cycling
-  Road Cycling
-  Sleeve Bloom MBT
-  Watersports
-  Boating
-  Fishing
-  Bird Watching
-  Skydiving
-  Equestrian
-  Golf













## Walks & Trails

- 1 Offaly Way
- 2 Grand Canal Way
- 3 Slieve Bloom Way
- 4 Paul's Lane Loop
- 5 Silver River Nature Trail
- 6 Giant's Grave Loop
- 7 Glenafelly - Eco Walk
- 8 Glenregan Loop
- 9 Kinnitty - Glinsk Castle Loop
- 10 Kinnitty - Castle Loop
- 11 Knockbarron Wood
- 12 Clara Bog
- 13 Clara Esker Loop Walks
- 14 Pollagh Loop Walks
- 15 Cloghan Lake
- 16 Shannonbridge - River Shannon Loop
- 17 Moneygall Rock of Loyer Loop
- 18 Mount Lucas
- 19 Barrow Walk & Garryhinch Loop
- 20 Birr Castle Demesne
- 21 Croghan Hill
- 22 Mesolithic loop
- 23 Sculpture Route
- 24 Turraun Route
- 25 Finnermore Lakes Route

## MOUNT LUCAS

 **Grade**  
Easy

 **Time**  
50 mins – 2hrs 45mins

 **Length**  
 2 km  
 2 km  
 1 km  
 3 km  
 2 km

 **Trailhead**  
East / North Carpark





## BARROW WALK & GARRYHINCH LOOP

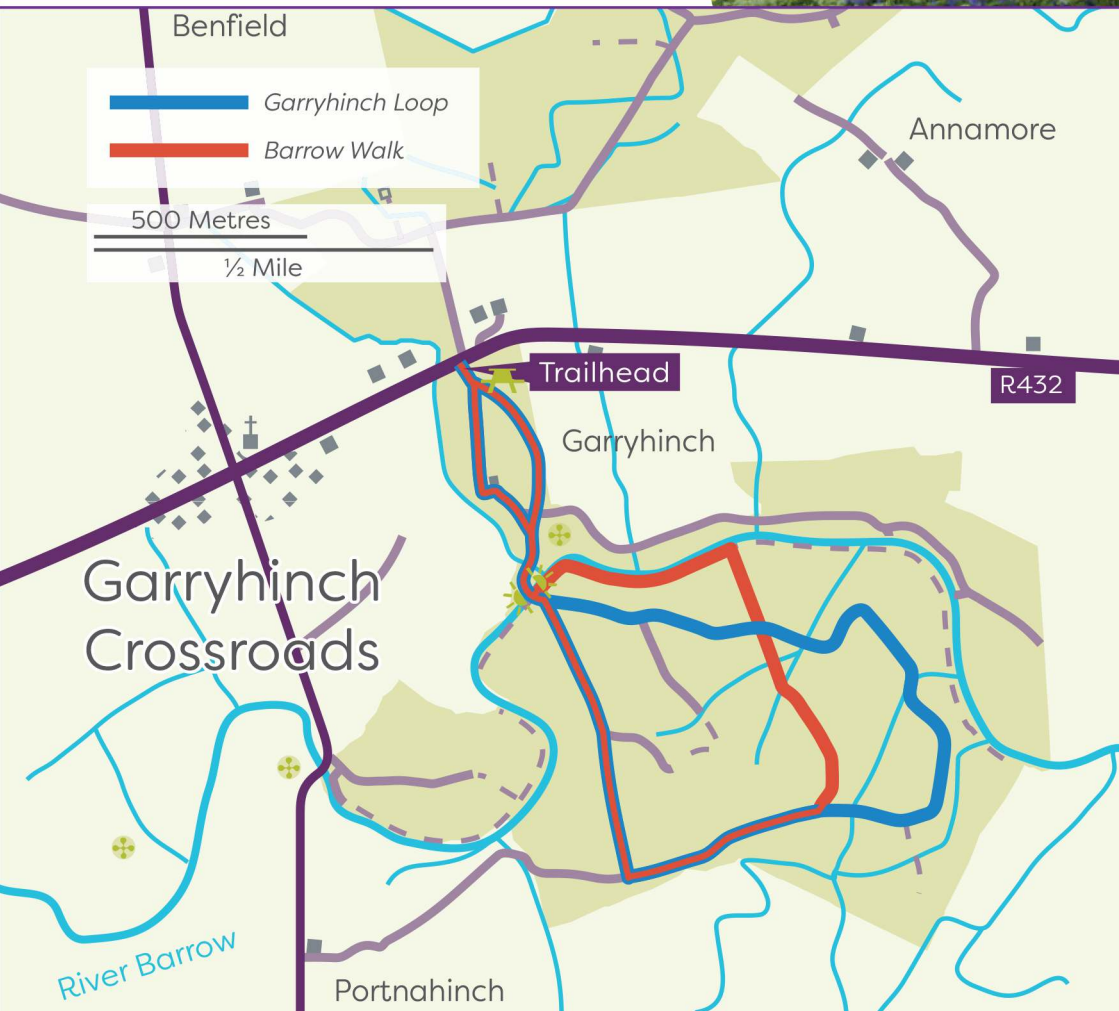
 **Grade**  
Easy

 **Length**  
● 3.2 km  
● 3.8 km

 **Time**  
● 45 mins  
● 45 mins

 **Format**  
Loop

 **Trailhead**  
Carpark



## CROGHAN HILL



**Grade**  
Moderate



**Length**  
1.8 km



**Time**  
40 mins



**Format**  
Linear



**Trailhead**  
Croghan Community Centre





## LOUGH BOORA DISCOVERY PARK

Seven kilometres from Blueball and located off the main Tullamore to Birr road is the majestic Lough Boora Discovery Park covering 2,000 hectares of cutaway boglands that have been rehabilitated to provide a world class resource which is open to enjoy 365 days a year.

The parklands consist of a magnificent collection of natural and man-made lakes, wetlands, woodland areas, 50km of walkways, natural recolonisation and pastureland whilst providing a new habitat for wildlife, flora and fauna.

Lough Boora is a family friendly environment and offers trails ranging from a short stroll to longer treks to take you through the Park's diverse amenities. All routes start and end at the Visitor Centre, with a level walking landscape that can be enjoyed by all age groups. Visitors to the park can also enjoy fishing and birdwatching.

[www.loughboora.com](http://www.loughboora.com)

### Sculpture Park

Inspired by the surroundings and covering an area of 50 acres the Sculpture trail in the Parklands is a series of specially commissioned large-scale sculptures that are now part of the park's permanent collection.



### Fairy Trail

The fairy trail at Lough Boora Parklands will take you along a magical journey down 'Fairy Avenue'. There are 14 fairy families living throughout the forest and they are very proud with their brightly painted front doors. Each fairy has a name with a different meaning and children will love to learn about the different characters living along 'Fairy Avenue'.



### Bike Hire

What better way to explore Lough Boora Parklands than on two wheels and bike hire for all the family is available at the Visitor Centre. There are three designated cycle routes; the Mesolithic (9.3km), Farmland (6km) and Turraun (15.8km), all with picnic areas throughout.



## MESOLITHIC LOOP

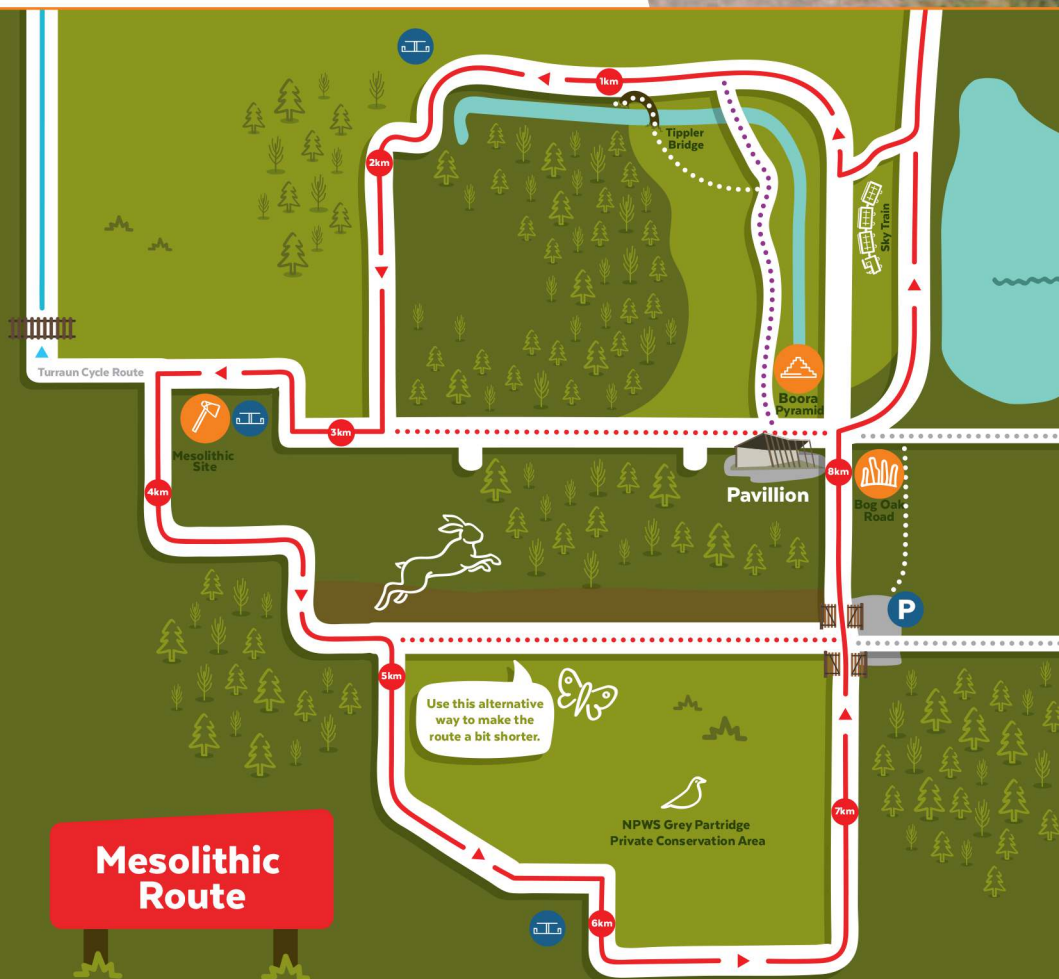
 **Grade**  
Easy

 **Format**  
Loop

 **Length**  
9.3 km

 **Trailhead**  
Visitor Centre Car Park

 **Time**  
2 hours



## SCULPTURE ROUTE

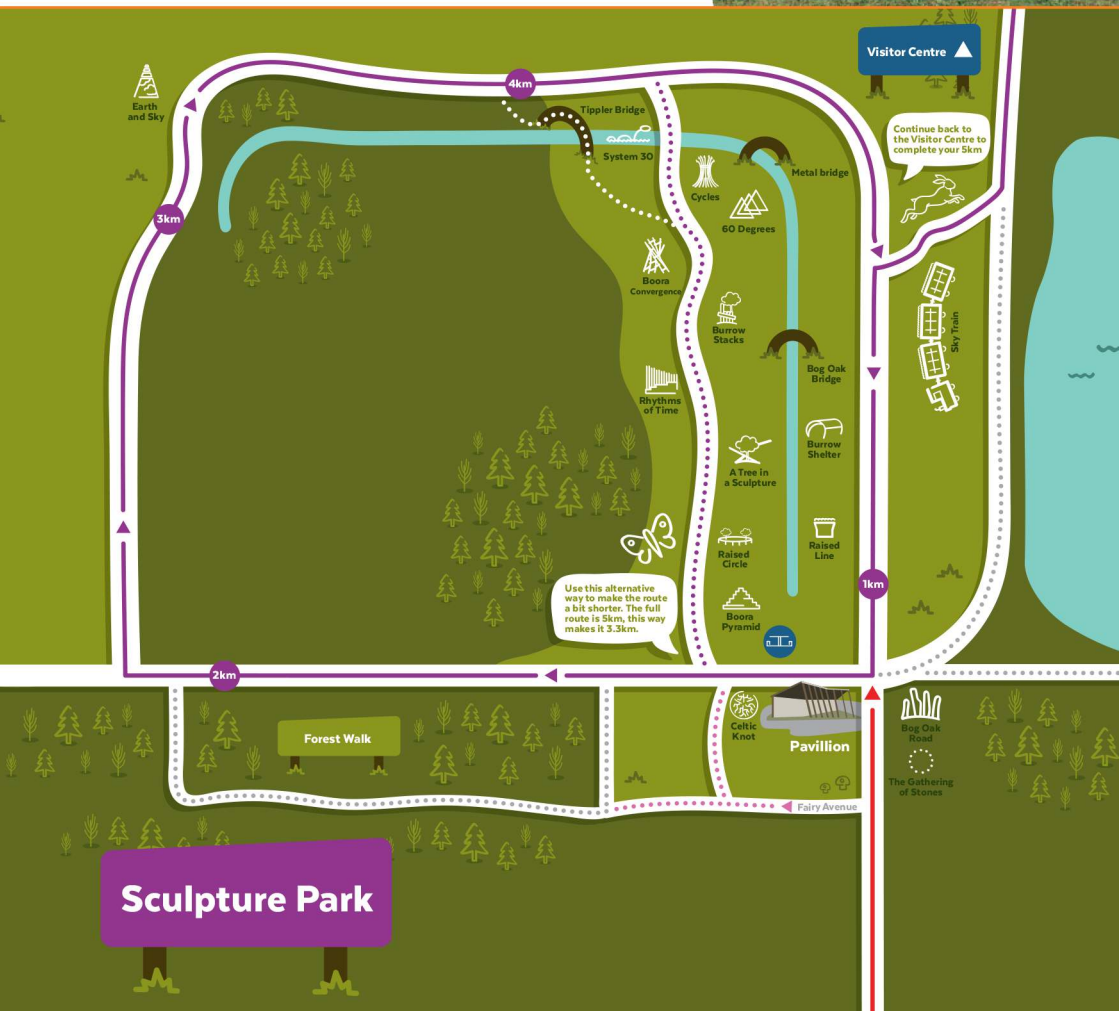
 **Grade**  
Easy

 **Format**  
Loop

 **Length**  
3.3 km

 **Trailhead**  
Visitor Centre Car Park

 **Time**  
40 mins





## TURRAUN ROUTE

 **Grade**  
Easy

 **Format**  
Loop

 **Length**  
15.8 km

 **Trailhead**  
Visitor Centre Car Park

 **Time**  
3 - 4 hours

### Turraun Route

The main road is not safe for bikes.  
Please keep to the designated blue route.

Leabeg Wetlands

Boora Lake

Mesolithic Site

Pavilion

Bord na Móna  
Boora Office

Boora  
Church

P

9km

13km

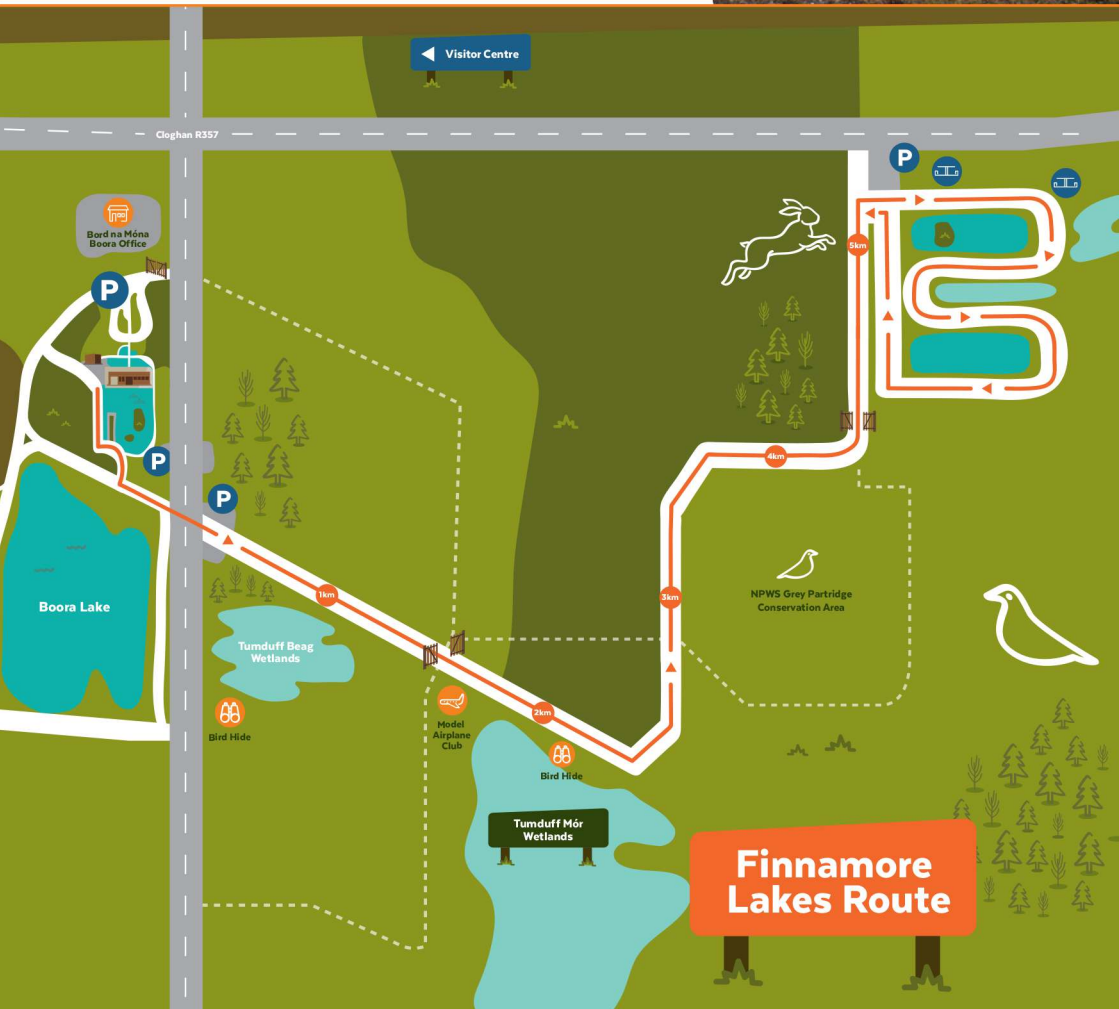
15km

3km

2km

6km

## FINNAMORE LAKES ROUTE



## BIRR CASTLE DEMESNE

Prepare to be amazed by the extraordinary achievements of the Parsons family who have a global reputation for their ground-breaking inventions and feats in the fields of science, engineering, photography, astronomy, and botany. For over 400 years, this remarkable family has resided at the romantic and inspirational setting of Birr Castle Demesne that is now home to the 7th Earl and Countess of Rosse.

Set in the heritage town of Birr on 120 acres (50 Hectares) of parklands and gardens, this castle demesne boasts a rare collection of over 5000 trees and plants, wonderful wildlife and ten kms of peaceful walks along rivers, waterfalls, and lake.

Suited to nature lovers, gardening enthusiasts, scientists, historians, family groups and photographers.

[www.birrcastle.com](http://www.birrcastle.com)

### Things to-do

- Enjoy one of the many **Trails** on offer
- Hug our **Giant Redwood**
- Marvel at the **Great Telescope**
- Measure your height at the **Worlds tallest boxhedge**
- Wander along the **River Camcor**
- Visit our **Formal Gardens**
- Climb **Ireland's tallest Treehouse**
- Visit the **Seven Gallery Science Centre**
- Visit **Mary Rosse** in one of the world's oldest darkrooms





## The Gardens

The gardens are home to an abundance of rare plants, collected by the Earls of Rosse on their travels around the world over the last 150 years. Within the 50 hectares you will find the world's tallest box hedges, over 40 champion trees, over 5000 species of plant as well as rivers, lake and waterfalls. It now has plant material collected and subscribed for by three generations of the family, as well as some of the most famous plant hunters, past and present.



## Parklands and Trails

We have a wonderful selection of trails to choose from:

**The Solar Trail** – suited to those young budding scientists

**The Quest** – Great fun family activity

**The Red Tree Trail** – 5km long and includes a selection of 65 wonderful Trees.

Over 10km of walks throughout the parklands and Gardens. Trails are included in your general admission tickets, best to choose one. Detailed Visitor Guides with Map are given out on arrival.



## The Great Telescope

In 1845 The Great Telescope was built by the Third Earl of Rosse and was the largest in the world for over 70 years. Through this telescope the 3rd Earl discovered the spiral nature of some of the galaxies.

The 'Leviathan' as it is otherwise named remains in the centre of the demesne and is known as one of Ireland's greatest scientific wonders.



## CYCLING

There's no better way to soak up a county and its culture than by bike and that's why cycling in Offaly is a delight. Cycling is an amazing way to spend quality time together as a family as well as getting active and promoting a healthy lifestyle.

County Offaly offers a terrific variety of on and off road options for those of all fitness

and cycling levels. Enjoy a leisure spin along the flat and peaceful surroundings of Lough Boora Discovery Park, Mount Lucas Windfarm or the Grand Canal Greenway. Looking for a bit more of challenge? Get yourself to the Slieve Bloom Mountain Bike Trail in Kinnitty and hold on and enjoy the ride.

[Visitoffaly.ie](http://Visitoffaly.ie)

### Lough Boora Discovery Park

What better way to explore Lough Boora Parklands than on two wheels and bike hire for all the family is available at the Visitor Centre. There are three designated cycle routes Mesolithic (9.3km), Farmland (6km) and Turraun (15.8km), all with picnic areas throughout.



### Grand Canal Greenway

Meandering through the Offaly countryside the Grand Canal greenway invites visitors to see Offaly from a different perspective. When fully completed, cyclists will be able to travel off-road from Edenderry in the east to Shannon Harbour with a link to Lough Boora.





## ROAD CYCLING

In Offaly you have a number of great cycling options through a series of scenic routes to choose from where you are free to explore at your own pace and take breaks whenever needed. The choices of terrain on offer range from hill climbs up the Slieve Bloom Mountains to the flat plains of peatland areas. This allows for a trip to be planned which will tax the seasoned cyclist's ability or alternatively will make for a holiday of gentle exercise.

### Pilgrim's Path - Ballycumber to Clonmacnoise

The 24.4km Pilgrim Path route covers a stretch of the ancient road from Ballycumber to Clonmacnoise. Stop first at Boher and marvel at the remarkable shrine of St Manchan, preserved in the local Catholic church. Continuing to Ballycumber, the road winds along the Esker Riada providing elevated views of the local area and bog. You will also come across Doon Castle, approximately halfway along the route, and the raised bog of Mongan Bog, before progressing to the ancient monastery of Clonmacnoise.



The Cut at an elevation of 430 meters in the Slieve Blooms is located on the mountain road between Mountrath and Clonaslee and provides an incredible viewpoint across the valley. Alternatively, take time to discover what's off the beaten track and cycle Birr Cycle Hub routes, the Pilgrim's Path or Kearney's loop in Moneygall.

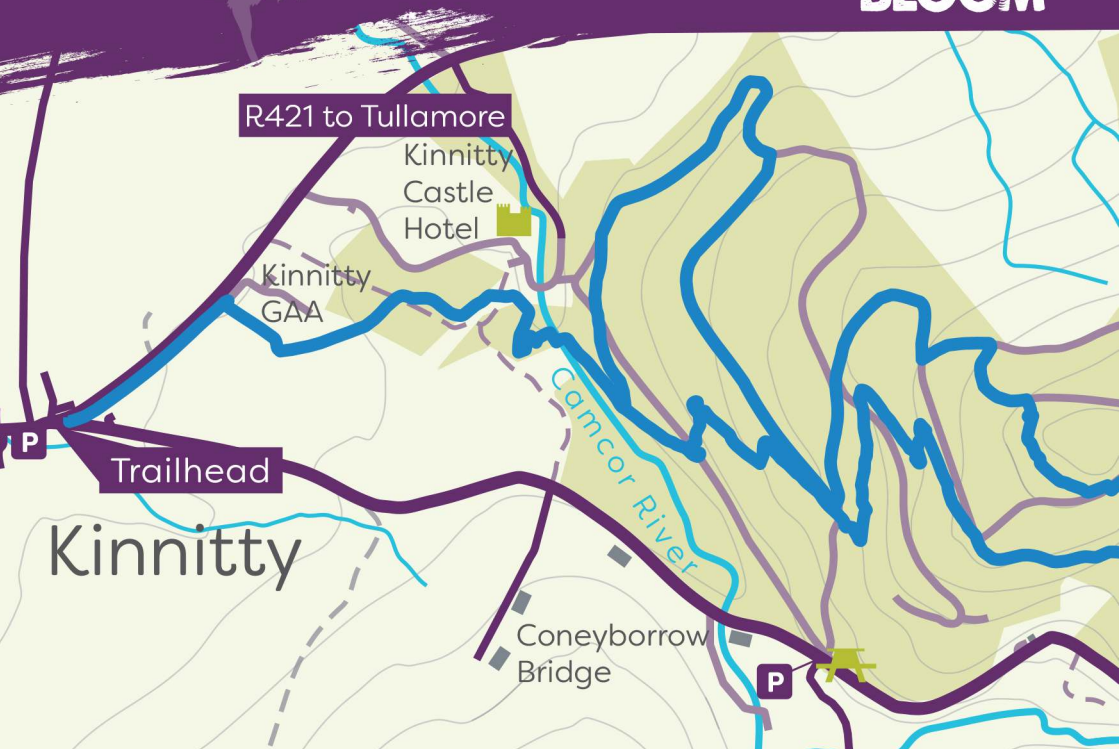
[Visitoffaly.ie](http://Visitoffaly.ie)

### Slieve Bloom Mountains

Head to the stunning Slieve Bloom Mountains where you can enjoy a number of different grades and distances of cycling routes. For those looking for lengthy challenge to discover the region try the 95km Slieve Bloom Village & Heritage Cycling / Driving Route. For a shorter but more strenuous climb the scenic Glendine Cycling / Driving Route is more suitable. Birr Cycle Hub also offer a variety of routes that include traveling through the mountains, Lough Boora and a number of local villages.







## SLIEVE BLOOM MOUNTAIN BIKE TRAILS

Want to get out of the house, out of the office and into some adrenaline filled action?

If so, the Slieve Bloom Mountain Bike trails in Kinnitty are for you. Here you'll find a network of purpose-built single-track trails and forest roads that are designed for use by mountain bikes on waymarked circular routes.

The routes are graded blue (moderate) and red (difficult/severe). This is the first phase of an extensive trail system being built in the Slieve Blooms. When complete, there will be more than 80kms of trails ranging from blue to black grade trails, complete with full trailhead facilities and visitor services in Kinnitty village.

The trails will cover a vast swath of Coillte's forests from Offaly to Laois and back. This first phase takes the riders through beautiful forest and open land with fantastic views over Kinnitty castle and village and beyond. Forest road climbs lead you into tight twisty singletrack with loads of fast descents, ups and downs, tight turns and technical rocky bits, guaranteed to leave you smiling!

Mountain bikes (including electric MTB's) can be hired from a number of suppliers locally.

[Slievebloom.ie](http://Slievebloom.ie)





Site of  
Glinsk  
Castle

Please control your  
speed on public  
road decent

R440 to  
Kinnitty

R440 to Mountrath

Scout  
Cabin

500 Metres

½ Mile

Stillbrook Hill



**Grade**

- Moderate
- Difficult / Severe



**Format**  
Loop



**Length**

- 14 km
- 10 km



**Trailhead**  
Kinnitty

Mountain Bike (MTB) trails are intended for MTB use only and should never be used by walkers.

MTB trails cross walking trails in many places and appropriate signage is erected at these points to inform both walkers and cyclists.

Mountain bikers are asked to only use waymarked MTB trails and not to use other forest roads or tracks.



## WATERSPORTS

When you think of Offaly, water sports is probably not the first image that springs to mind. Although landlocked there are an abundance of water related activities within the county that are suitable for both young and old.

Relax your body and unwind your mind with a Stand Up Paddle Board Safari or Kayaking Tour with Mid Ireland Adventure on the majestic river Shannon or Grand Canal. Set out from their riverside base in Banagher and explore the same waterways that the Vikings navigated in the 10th century.

Using the River Shannon as its base, Birr Outdoor Education Centre delivers action-packed programmes for young adventurers. The Centre offers a wide range of water sports courses including canoeing, sailing and board-sailing, plus summer camps (residential & non-residential) during July and August. The centre has a full range of specialist equipment for all its courses, including a lecture-room and swimming pool.

[www.midirelandadventure.ie](http://www.midirelandadventure.ie)  
[www.birroec.ie](http://www.birroec.ie)

### Banagher Outdoor Pool

Banagher outdoor pool is one of Ireland's most unusual pools. It's located in the River Shannon, with Offaly on one side and Galway on the other. This pool is free to use and is perfect for an early morning swim. The water is clean and blue and you'll be able to dry off with a picnic on the riverside afterwards. Bliss!



### Kayak Safaris

This two and half hour Kayak Safari begins at the Mid Ireland Adventure base located at Banagher Marina before you'll take Cromwell's Castle, the Martello tower and Banagher bridge.





## BOATING

Cruising the tranquil waters of Ireland's longest river is on the bucket list for many Irish People. If you like the idea of setting your own course and choosing when and where to stop off and explore, then a trip along the Shannon could be just the ticket.

Start your riverside adventure in Banagher and cruise on one of the finest natural inland waterways in Europe as the unspoilt River Shannon meanders through beautiful countryside, past historic towns offering the best in Irish hospitality.



Decide whether to head north or south. If you choose a northerly direction, you'll take in; Shannonbridge and Clonmacnoise or steer southwards towards Lough Derg taking in the many picturesque towns and villages along the Shannon before eventually arriving at Killaloe. For something a little bit different, the Grand Canal offers an idyllic alternative to the large lakes and rivers of the Shannon.

[www.silverlinecruisers.com](http://www.silverlinecruisers.com)

[www.cruise-ireland.com/carrickcraft](http://www.cruise-ireland.com/carrickcraft)

### The River Queen

Sit back, relax and enjoy a Shannon cruise aboard Silver Line Cruisers' 50 seater passenger boat the "River Queen". Enjoy a one hour river cruise from Shannonbridge/ Clonmacnoise, taking in the spectacular natural beauty of the Shannon waterway. The boat is enclosed with all-round visibility and live commentary.



### Shannonbridge Fortifications

Heading North from Banagher, a stop off at Shannonbridge Fortifications is a must. They were built in 1810 at this strategic location. A visit to the free exhibition in the main building of the Fortifications gives you an insight into why these Napoleonic Fortifications were built along the River Shannon. You can also follow the self-guided walk around The Fort and stop for a coffee/ meal in the main building.



## FISHING

Offaly offers a real mixture of fishing and a variety of waters for anglers of all ages and there are great fishing spots dotted throughout the county. Canal fishing can be found on the picturesque Grand Canal with specially designed fishing stands offering access to anglers with disabilities which have been installed at a number of locations along the Canal. Significant stretches of water have been carefully restocked to create some of the best fisheries in Europe.

If you're on the Shannon, a good place to start is Banagher which offers very accessible fishing on the Shannon network at such famous spots as Meelick Weir and Bullock Island while around the renowned hot-water stretch at the power-station at Shannonbridge you can find big tench and hybrid. Offaly has also other wonderful rivers like the Brosna, Yellow River, Camcor, Gageborough and the Clodiagh. Alternatively Offaly offers some peaceful lakes that can be fished, including Cloghan Lake, known for its fly fishing and stocked with rainbow and brown trout.

[Visitoffaly.ie](http://Visitoffaly.ie)

### Angling in Lough Boora

Lough Boora Discovery Park is home to a series of magnificent angling lakes which are stocked with adult Trench (up to four pounds in weight), juvenile carp and adult bream. Bank fishing is available and stands are also in place.



### Wheelchair Angling

Loch an Dochais, which means 'Lake of Hope', is a one-hectare coarse fishing lake in Lough Boora Discovery Park. The man-made lake has been developed to facilitate anglers with disabilities and is complete with a fishing stand designed for wheelchairs and a specially designed car park with connecting concrete pathways.





## BIRD WATCHING



More people are watching birds today than ever before; its popularity as a pastime has been growing rapidly over the past few years and for the visiting bird lover, Offaly offers some of the most varied bird-watching opportunities in the country.

The natural floodplain known as the Shannon Callows is world renowned for its birds and wildlife and has one of the largest concentrations of breeding waders in these islands with Lapwing, Redshank, Curlew, Sandpiper and Godwit living there.

Offaly's other notable bird-spotting areas include; the Lough Boora parklands/wetlands, Little Brosna (Ashton's) Callows, the Slieve Bloom Mountains and Turraun Nature Reserve.

[Visitoffaly.ie](http://Visitoffaly.ie)

### Little Brosna Callows

The Little Brosna Callows is one of the top ten spots to see wintering waterfowl in Ireland. Rare birds such as the Greenland White-fronted Goose and Black-tailed Godwit attract avid bird watchers from around the country. Home to over 20,000 birds in the wintering season the site is of international importance. During these months one can expect to see Wigeon, Teal, Pintail, Shoveler, Lapwing, Whooper Swans and Golden Plover. This special protection area has a two-storey bird watching hide that allows visitors to view these natural wonders without disturbing them.

### Grey Partridge

The Grey Partridge is one of Ireland's most iconic native game and rarest birds. It is one of our most endangered bird species and the last remaining population is now found around Lough Boora Discovery Park. The National Parks and Wildlife Service and Bord na Móna are involved in a programme to conserve this population and expand its numbers again throughout the area. They can be seen at the Grey Partridge sanctuary adjacent to park.



### Slieve Bloom Mountains Reserve

The Slieve Bloom Mountains are a designated Special Protection Area (SPA) for the rare bird life found there; two emblematic bird species; the Hen Harrier which is one of Ireland's rarest birds of prey and the secretive game bird, the Red Grouse.





## SKYDIVING

The Irish Parachute Club's HQ is located not far from Edenderry, just outside the village of Clonbullogue. Open all year 'round, the club is the longest established of its kind in Ireland. Every level is catered for, from first time jumpers to seasoned skydivers. Free fall through the sky's at speeds of up to 200km/h in a never to be forgotten experience. In excess of 12,000 jumps are made annually at the Irish Parachute club which has its own fleet of aircraft and the most modern up to date parachuting equipment.

[www.skydive.ie](http://www.skydive.ie)

### Tandem Skydive

Enjoy the thrill of free fall from 10,000 or 13,000 feet at a speed of 200 km per hour, over the most stunning of sceneries. Go for **13,000ft** which gives you almost double the free fall experience – making it extra special!



### Solo Jump

Become a solo jumper after expert training and progression from a static line jump. Normally requiring 7 – 8 jumps, the Irish Parachute Club have a fantastic progression system for all solo jumpers to advance and secure their licence.



## EQUESTRIAN

Saddle up and explore Offaly's timeless land of wild beauty, dramatic mountains, ever changing woodlands and rust coloured bogs, along with a sensory trail.

Whether it is an afternoon trek, some intensive training, a gallop across a specially-built cross-country course, a trail ride that will take you through breathtaking scenery, or a one on one Therapeutic Riding experience, the choice is all yours in County Offaly with friendly horses and amazing facilities.

[www.birrequestrian.ie](http://www.birrequestrian.ie) | [www.annaharveyfarm.ie](http://www.annaharveyfarm.ie)

### Cross Country Challenge

With Indoor and outdoor arenas, together with over 200 carefully constructed cross country fences covering 380 acres of farm and woodland, Annaharvey Farm Equestrian Centre in Tullamore has an abundance of horse riding options available in all disciplines.



### Trekking In The Slieve Booms

What better way to explore the undiscovered beauty of the Slieve Bloom Mountains than on horseback and Birr Equestrian Centre operates a trekking facility in the grounds of Kinnitty Castle at the foothills of the mountains.





## GOLF

Offaly is home to the 2019 Open champion Shane Lowry and also home to five wonderful golf courses providing a challenging and enjoyable experience for golfers of all levels. The James Braid designed Tullamore Golf Club and the Christy O'Connor Jnr course at Esker Hills are in the capital town, with Portarlington, Edenderry and Birr located either end of the county.

[Visitoffaly.ie](http://Visitoffaly.ie)

### Esker Hills

Designed by Christy O'Connor Junior, Esker Hills, just outside Tullamore, is where The Open champion Shane Lowry honed his skills. It is regarded as one of Ireland's leading inland golf courses. It is noted for its distinct links feel, superb sand based greens and all year playability.

[www.eskerhillsgolf.com](http://www.eskerhillsgolf.com)



### Tullamore

This 18-hole championship golf course was originally designed by five time British Open champion James Braid and is ranked among the top 30 parkland courses in Ireland. In 2019 it was awarded Best Parkland Course in Ireland's Hidden Heartlands and ranked 21st in the Top 100 courses by Irish Golfer Magazine.

[www.tullamoregolfclub.ie](http://www.tullamoregolfclub.ie)





## Portarlinton

This beautiful parkland course was designed by Eddie Hackett. The magnificent old trees and the wildlife that roam the fairways and woods make the course an enchanting venue. The golf course is a serious challenge to all golfers and a warm welcome is guaranteed.

[www.portarlintongolfclub.ie](http://www.portarlintongolfclub.ie)



## Birr

One of the oldest clubs in Ireland, founded in 1893, Birr has been carved out of natural woodland and eskers and provides a strong challenge for even the most accomplished golfers. Undulating fairways, ridges, hills and hollows represent the nearest inland equivalent to the links courses around our coast.

[www.birrgolfclub.ie](http://www.birrgolfclub.ie)



## Edenderry

Designed by Eddie Hackett and less than an hour from Dublin, Edenderry is built on the natural peat-land synonymous with the county. The course has an abundance of mature trees and strategically placed bunkers making it a challenging, but fair test of golf for the experienced and beginner alike.

[www.edenderrygc.com](http://www.edenderrygc.com)



# OFFALY'S PLAYGROUNDS

**Because there is always time to play...**

Climb, explore, play – Offaly's Playgrounds offer loads of fun for kids. Playgrounds offer all kinds of imaginative play opportunities, from climbing frames to zip-wires, swings and see-saws. When you need to tire out the children, try one of these for size.

## **Birr Municipal District**

**Birr – Wilmer Road**

**Birr – Camcor Park**

**Birr – McAuley Drive**

**Ferbane**

**Banagher**

**Crinkle – Grove St**

**Crinkle – Grove St**

**Shannon Harbour**

**Birr – Roscrea Rd.**

**Elderberry Drive Moneygall**

**Shinrone**

**Shannonbridge**

## **Kilcormac**

**Moneygall Elderberry Drive**

**Cloghan**

**Kinnitty**

## **Tullamore Municipal District**

**Tullamore – Lloyd Park**

**Tullamore – Connolly's**

**Tullamore – Kilbrook**

**Tullamore – Whitehall**

**Erry Mill – Clara**

**Rahan – College View**

**Clara**

## **Edenderry Municipal District**

**Edenderry – Churchview Heights**

**Portarlinton – St. Joseph's Terrace**

**Edenderry – Granary Park**

**Rhode**

**Daingean (Molesworth)**

**Croghan Community Playground**

**Geashill**






# OFFALY

IRELAND'S HIDDEN GEM





 Silver River, Cadamstown

# OFFALY

## DISCOVER IRELAND'S HIDDEN GEM...

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