

WALKING  
ROUTES



# Make some tracks

Parknasilla is a private estate of over 500 acres/200 hectares of parkland on one of Ireland's most spectacular and scenic peninsulas.

Nearby the hotel has another 76 acres/31 hectares for clay pigeon shooting and archery. The estate is reserved for the exclusive use of guests. All tracks are clearly marked, generally gravelled and afford walks of character and charm to suit a wide variety of tastes and levels of activity. The seven walks that are entirely within the hotel grounds make Parknasilla, undoubtedly, the finest hotel in Ireland from a walker's point of view. The routes are arranged so that one has the option of either a short walk, say 30 minutes, or a longer version extending 1.5 to 2.5 hours. For most routes, strong walking shoes or boots would be advisable – rain gear being matter for judgement on the day. For more ambitious outings such as stages of the Kerry Way, some experience of long distance walking, adequate footwear and clothing plus some sustenance would be advisable.

## Safety & advice

### All walks

#### Footwear

Proper footwear is advised for all walks and is required for guided walks.

There is a stock of sturdy boots in most sizes available in the hotel. Please ask at the Porters' Desk.

#### Anorak

A waterproof and windproof anorak, for at least the upper body, is strongly advised.

#### Trousers

Do not wear jeans – they are uncomfortable to walk in, especially uphill or if they become wet. They are also difficult to dry!

#### Head Covering

It is advisable to have some form of head covering in cold weather. Most heat loss is through the top of the head!

### Guided walks

#### Footwear

Remember, to participate, you must have your own boots or wear the footwear provided.

#### Spares Clothes/Rucksack

Unless the day is perfect, put spare trousers, socks and shoes in a bag. Keep your hands free – use a rucksack.

#### Emergencies

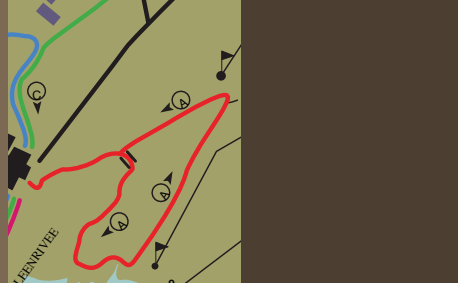
Your guide carries a mobile phone for use in any emergencies and you can of course bring your own if you wish.

# Map



# The magnificent seven

Enjoy seven stunning walks, all starting just a stones-throw from the site and taking in the best views that the region has to offer.



## A Seal Walk

*1,200 metres from Hotel to Hotel.*

A short walk giving a good introduction to both seashore and woodlands. From the main door of the Hotel descend the steps towards the sea, turn left and then right to follow the track.

After 100m turn right again and cross the footbridge. The route follows the shoreline ascending through groves of rhododendrons to reach a clearing with lovely sea views.

The walk then crosses more open ground with benches of rock which are good examples of how the Kerry sandstone was laid down in layers and then tilted under pressure. Along this coastal stretch you will spot many seabirds, maybe some seals and occasionally a solitary heron. You are now on the edge of the Golf Course. The route hugs the shoreline until just short of the eighth green.

From here the eye is drawn to the wooded Rossdohan Island and on across the broad Kenmare River to the Caha Mountains (If you carefully wind your way around the green and onto the tee just beyond at the end of which there is a seat to rest a while you will be rewarded with a 360° view which is well worth the detour).

Here the route turns left along the fairway rising gently until the path connecting the Golf Clubhouse with the Hotel is reached. Turn left at the signpost\* and continue to the Hotel.

\*Alternatively from this point you can continue to the start of Route E – The beautiful Clashnacree Walk – just inside the entrance from the main road to the Golf Course.

**30+ MINUTES**



## B Sea Baths Walk

*1,400 metres from Hotel to Hotel.*

A short walk with the opportunity of a swim in the open sea. From the Hotel entrance turn right and cross the flat roof to a little bridge which takes you down into the maze. Go through the maze and onto the seashore. Here, turn right and follow a track which is a partly boarded causeway at the edge of the shore to the distinctive white bathing cubicles.

The sea water is clear, inviting and warmer than you would expect due to the Gulf Stream. This is a lovely spot to sit and listen to the sea lapping in a gentle cove – bring a book – and your swimsuit!

Turn right keeping the woods on your left and after 250m turn left at a sign marked “Islands”. Follow the track through the woods to Illaunakilla (The Island of the Wood) as described in Islands Walk (Route D).

A little further on is a footbridge which leads to the island. Just before the footbridge at a picnic table go right and swing away from the seashore.

After 100m take a right fork\* which leads back to the Hotel.

\* This is the start of Route C Bessie’s Walk.

**30+ MINUTES**



## C Bessie’s Walk

*1,300 metres from junction with Sea Baths Walk to Hotel.*

Bessie’s favourite walk – Bessie was a faithful retainer of the Graves family which had a long association with Parknasilla.

Follow Sea Baths Walk (Route B) past the footbridge to Illaunakilla and at the next fork, branch left and continue around the head of the sea inlet following the seashore.

The track crosses several rock benches as it moves away from the seashore and rises through a stand of pine trees to reach the junction with Bishop’s walk 10 metres beyond which is a viewing point (marked on map) with adjacent picnic table. From here the views of the mountains to the west and north are really expansive and the sea views to the south quite breathtaking.

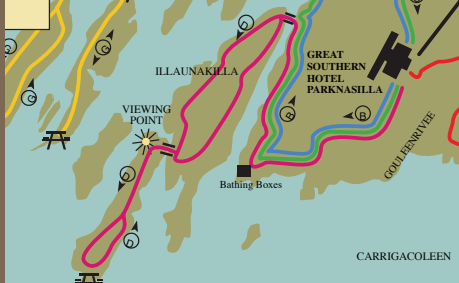
The track continues over open ground and then through woods. This connects with the Buggy Path to a roadway which connects the Woodlands development and the Paddock development after which it passes close by the Bishop’s House. This was the long time summer residence of the Graves family, one of Ireland’s great literary and academic lines. The line was established by Dr. Graves, Bishop of Limerick and continued through his son A.P. Graves, poet and grandson, Robert Graves, author of “I Claudius”, “Claudius the God” the historic novels of Imperial Rome as well as “Goodbye to All That”, a powerful indictment of war.

Continue past the Bishop’s house (refurbished now and used as staff quarters) and take the first left fork to rejoin Route B back to the Hotel.

Shortly after the viewing point you have a choice whether or not to take in Route G, Heron’ Walk.

Heron’s Walk should be taken in if at all possible.

**30+ MINUTES**



## D Islands Walk

*1,500 metres from 1st footbridge and back.*

A truly delightful excursion which involves island hopping and really gives the sensation of getting away from it all.

Follow the Sea Baths Walk (Route B) past the bathing spot to the footbridge which connects with Illaunakilla.

Cross to the island, immediately take the right fork and continue along the west side of the island for about 250 metres to a little crossroads of footpaths.

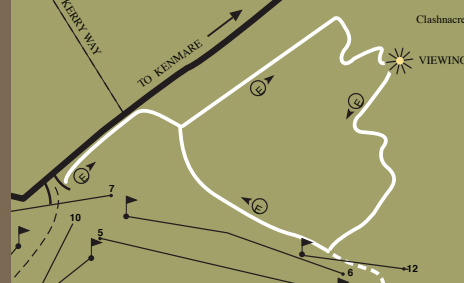
To the left is the parallel track up the east side of the first island, straight on at 20 metres gives a good view to sea and right, through a narrow rock-walled corridor leads to a second footbridge. The views northwards from the footbridge are magnificent as you are now well clear of woods and can enjoy uninterrupted vistas of peaks and valleys. Away to the right you will see the shapely top of Beann (Peak) and the Mullach an Aitinn (The Peak of the Furze). Moving on you will notice that vegetation on this island is of native holly and furze and the elsewhere all-persistent rhododendron has gained only a small foothold.

Take the right fork where the track divides and continue to the point on the tip of the island.

Here, if anywhere, you should pause a while and enjoy the isolation, tranquillity and the beauty of your surroundings. Notice all around you a huge variety of sea shells which would have been deposited there by birds dropping them from a height onto the rocks so as to break them and feed on them.

In due course, make your return on the east side of both of the islands, watching for seals on the offshore rocks and islets.

**45+ MINUTES**



## E Clashnacree

*1,800 metres from Golf Club entrance and back.*

A scenic route best done going clockwise. Do bring your camera along.

A few yards inside the entrance from the main road to the Golf course is a path going away from the Hotel and parallel to the main road. Follow this path until a track connecting with the main road is reached (you could alternatively park a car and start from here). Go right and follow the track for 80m and turn left heading north-eastward along what is in fact, the old road to Kenmare.

Rise gently through woodland and after 300 metres swing right onto cleared ground where the track winds upwards to its highest point, and a superb 360° viewpoint. There are two picnic tables here about 50 metres apart. To the south and west are unrivalled views of the Kenmare River and the Caha mountains.

To the east lies the adjoining property "Clashnacree House" (which gives this route its name) one of the many fine 19th Century houses of the area.

It was the home of James Franklin Fuller (1835 – 1924) a noted architect who designed Parknasilla Hotel. The nearby hill to the north is Knockanamadane (Hill of the Fool). The track here has been sensitively formed and is continuously gravelled. Close to the high point observe at the trackside that the depth of the soil is a mere 300mm.

Continue southwest feasting your eyes on the ravishing vistas and then drop in a series of zig-zags passing a fine stand of pine on the left. On reaching lower ground you re-join the track where you can turn right back towards the main road. Alternatively you can go left to picturesque Sheridan's Cottage from where it is possible to continue on to Rossdohan pier extending the walk by approximately 15 minutes each way.

**60+ MINUTES**



## F Bishops Walk

*750 metres from its junctions with Route C.*

A charming stroll through woodland with stretches of seashore and stream. This route commemorates Dr. Graves, Bishop of Limerick, who spent many summers here at the Bishop's House (the original "Parknasilla" – The Field of the Willows). See Route C for more information on the Graves family.

Starting from the scenic picnic table on Route C, head westwards dropping height instantly, and then rising through a splendid stand of mature pines.

How many varieties do you recognise? The track then follows a rock bench. Notice how the tops of the benches are smoothed and rounded by ice action.

Along here there are two junctions the first being the recommended starting point for Heron's walk Route G and the second being the recommended exit point from that walk. Heron's Walk is a truly magnificent walk and should be taken in if at all possible. If you do not wish to do this then at least at the second junction i.e. the recommended exit, follow the track maybe 20 metres to a bridge which crosses the mouth of a little sea bay. The sea is usually flooding in or flooding out at this point with great under water activity visible from the bridge. Besides which there is a little seat to rest a while.

Next comes the sea. Soon you are skirting a sea inlet and eventually crossing a little timber bridge. Pass through a grove of silver birch and then along by the seashore to a point opposite the pier at the head of Gouleenacorcha. From here the track rises with a stream on the left. Another bridge takes you across the stream, and into the Woodlands development after which going along the Buggy Path and passing the Paddock and the Bishop's House you return to the Hotel.

**20+ MINUTES**



## G Heron's Walk

*1,800 metres from junction with Route F and back.*

A 1999 creation based on 1838 paths - a very much away-from-it-all walk. On a fine day bring a book and loiter at the tip of one of the islands!

From the Viewing Point on Bessie's Walk it is a few minutes walk to a left turn which leads shortly to a bridge. Cross this and follow the secluded track through the woods until a second bridge is reached.

Follow across this bridge and on to the end of the island keeping a watchful eye and ear for herons which nest in this area. At the end of the pathway there is a viewing area where you can enjoy the tranquillity of this beautiful location.

Return to the second bridge immediately after which there is a left turn leading to another junction after a short distance. Here, turn left for the longest of the four bridges on this walk. Having crossed the bridge, continue on to where the path forks.

Take either path, though the right hand one affords a better emerging view, and continue on until the end is reached. Again there is a cleared area, table and seat for resting. Having enjoyed the tranquillity of this spot, continue the circuit of the island until the long bridge is again reached. Cross this and keep straight on enjoying a beautifully sculpted path through the woods, almost fairy-tale like in quality and keeping the creek Gouleenacorcha (Irish for "small inlet of the foam" - presumably because the sea foams at various stages of the tide!) on your left until a bridge is reached which crosses the entrance to what is effectively a small bay on the right. Pause a while at this bridge and reflect on this small bay. There is always activity in and on this little bay and when the waters are flowing in or out of it under the bridge there is considerable fish and shell fish activity underneath and visible from the bridge. Continue back towards Bishop's Walk.

**40+ MINUTES**



## The Kerry Way

Those staying at Parknasilla are very fortunate being only a few hundred metres from the Kerry Way. This circular walk which totals 215km/134 miles is usually walked anti-clockwise but can be done either way. It is the longest marked trail in the Republic of Ireland and links old drove roads, abandoned railways, “butter roads” and roads between early Christian settlements. The Kerry Way is mainly at a higher level than the public roads, and as a result the views are spectacular. It crosses the main Sneem/Kenmare Road six hundred metres to the east (Kenmare side) of the main Hotel entrance. About half way between that point and Sneem is an art studio. See sketch for details of the short (4km / 2.5 miles) stretch to Sneem. Those wishing to sample the Kerry Way might consider option 1 or 2.

### OPTION 01

East 30km / 19 miles to Kenmare via Tahilla Village Bridge, Lough Fadda, Blackwater Bridge, Templenoe Church and Templenoe then over Gortamullin (200metre / 650 ft.) to Kenmare.

### OPTION 02

West 4km / 2.5 miles to Sneem and then from Sneem 19km / 12 miles over fairly open countryside passing at one point very close to Staigue Fort, which dates back to 1,000 B.C., and then on to Caherdaniel.

Some parts of the Kerry Way can be very muddy so that those intending to explore any section should have strong boots and also should be prepared for weather changes. The Kerry Way Map / Guide is available at the Hotel. The Hotel will arrange taxis to or from any point along the Kerry Way.

For the short section in option 2 – from the Hotel to Sneem – turn right at the Hotel entrance and after 600 metres go left. Follow this mixed road and path past the picture gallery / art studio and, 100 metres further, a bat roosting site to Sneem.

Alternatively, if you wish to avoid the busy main road, combine the start of Route A Seal Walk with the start of Route E Clashnacree to arrive nearly opposite where the Kerry Way leaves the main Sneem/Kenmare road and from there to Sneem.



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