

# Mizen Head to Malin Head



The Mizen Head to Malin Head cycle tour or “Head to Head” conjures up a variety of images: rolling green fields, fantastic pubs, the “Craic”, the odd puncture, stunning scenery and a tremendous sense of achievement. Travelling from south-west with prevailing winds (hopefully!) we reach Malin Head over 10 days, covering a total of 570 miles.

Keeping away from busy roads, this tour encompasses some of Ireland's most stunning scenery, often hugging parts of the coastal Wild Atlantic Way.

This exciting and challenging tour provides another rewarding experience in a similar vein as our LEJOG or Channel to the Med tour with the ‘magic van’ providing refreshments throughout the week. Your bags will be transported for you each day and we will be having some fantastic lunches along with our famous ‘brew stops’ twice a day providing you with everything you need to keep you going – you certainly won’t go hungry!

## Highlights

- Exhilarating, wild scenery throughout the route
- Cycle along much of The Wild Atlantic Way
- Ferry rides to link various peninsulas and headlands
- Majestic Gap of Dunloe, Cliffs of Moher and The Durren
- Buzzing Irish towns of Clifden, Westport and Galway as well as quieter destinations of Lahinch and Portnoo

## What's included?

10 nights' accommodation, 10 breakfasts, 9 lunches

Refreshment stops with our famous red brew vans

Mechanical support including spare bikes and equipment

GPS files and route notes

Full logistical planning and support from the first to the last night including luggage transfers

2 back up vans and a guide cycling at the back of the group

Pick up from airport / station on arrival day (Wednesday) and transfer to Belfast at the end of the tour (Saturday)

Peak Tours cycle shirt and certificate

Lots of fun!



# Itinerary

## Wednesday: Non-riding day

Arrival day in Cork – welcome to the tour!

We will collect you from Cork airport if required. There will be an evening briefing at approximately 19.00 followed by a group meal.

## Thursday: Day 1 Mizen Head to Glengariff

Distance: 39 miles / 62 km  
Elevation: 2100 ft / 640 m

After transport down to Mizen Head, take the obligatory starting photos before a shorter day to Glengariff.

## Friday: Day 2 Glengariff to Tralee

Distance: 59 miles / 94 km  
Elevation: 4620 ft / 1410 m

Cycle into picturesque Kerry, we then make our way over the 'Gap of Dunloe' in the Macgillycuddy mountain range before reaching the bustling town of Tralee, famous for the international Rose of Tralee festival.

## Saturday: Day 3 Tralee to Lahinch

Distance: 77 miles / 122 km  
Elevation: 3280 ft / 1000 m

A flatter day sees us take in lovely coastal views before catching a ferry between Kerry and Clare. Hugging the coast in the afternoon we reach Lahinch, famous for surfing.

## Sunday: Day 4 Lahinch to Galway

Distance: 60 miles / 99 km  
Elevation: 2700 ft / 840 m

Pass by the iconic Cliffs of Moher, head to the geologically interesting area of 'Karst' limestone known as 'The Burren.'

This evening's destination is the vibrant, friendly, bohemian city of Galway.

## Monday: Day 5 Galway to Clifden

Distance: 67 miles / 107 km  
Elevation: 2200 ft / 670m

A stunning route takes us west around the Galway peninsula.

Enjoy many pretty villages including Roundstone before reaching Clifden the 'Capital of Connemara.'

## Tuesday: Day 6 Clifden to Westport

Distance: 60 miles / 96 km  
Elevation: 3600 ft / 1100 m

Take in the views from the 'Sky Road' this morning as we leave Clifden and head towards the Connemara National Park.

Skirt around the peninsula on coastal routes before heading inland for truly magnificent scenery.

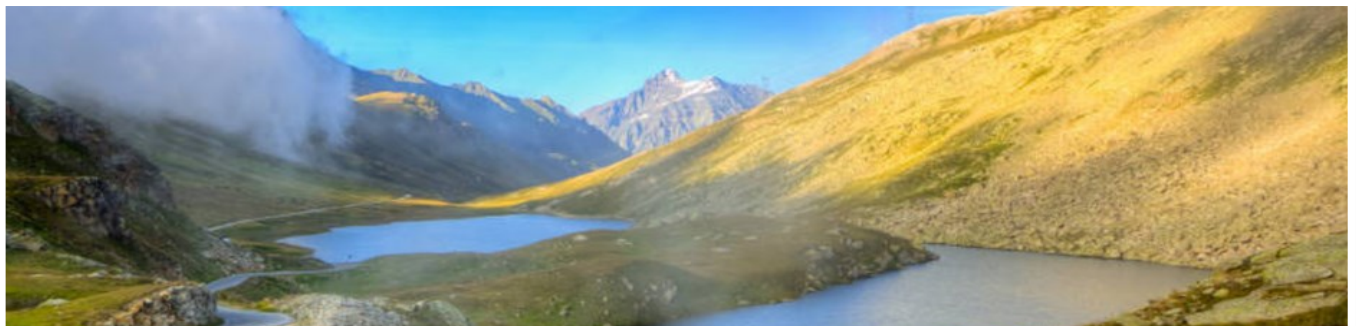
Spend the evening in the lovely town of Westport, in the shadow of 'Croagh Patrick', Ireland's famous pilgrimage mountain.

## Wednesday: Day 7 Westport to Sligo

Distance: 68 miles / 107 km  
Elevation: 3720 ft / 1135 m

Another pleasant day in the saddle today along pretty undulating roads and rolling hillsides.

Dramatic scenery around Croaghmoyle mountain ahead of the lively town of Sligo, famous for live music.





# Itinerary

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## Thursday: Day 8 Sligo to Portnoo / Narin

Distance: 73 miles / 117 km  
Elevation: 4700 ft / 1430 m

Follow the Sustrans 'North West Trail' from Sligo, through seaside villages, lovely back roads and even a short ride on the beach to reach our lunch destination.

Pass through dainty Donegal (stop and have an ice cream!) and head in to the hills and mountains before dropping out of the hills to the gorgeous setting of Narin and Portnoo, with white sandy beaches

## Friday: Day 9 Portnoo to Malin Head

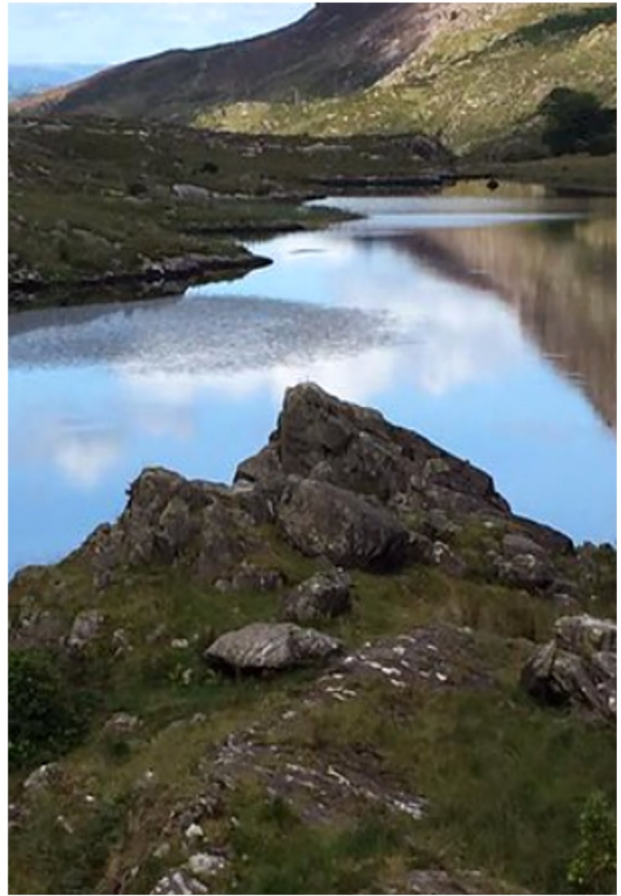
Distance: 77 miles / 123 km  
Elevation: 4900 ft / 1490 m

Our final day is another day of magnificent beautiful scenery. Start along the Gweebarra river and climb toward the stunning Glenties National Park.

Take the ferry over to Buncrana for our final stretch of wild and rugged roads towards our destination of Malin Head. Our end point is often a little windy but this never detracts from the sense of achievement and smiles seen in everyone's photos!

## Saturday: Departure Day

After last night's celebratory meal transport will take us to Derry / Londonderry or Belfast airports.



# Tour Logistics

## The start of the tour

The tour starts in Cork (transfer to Mizen Head to begin cycling) and finishes at Malin Head.

There will be a welcome meal at approximately 7.30pm on the first evening. There are a few options for arriving in Cork.

**Plane:** There are many flights to Cork airport.

**Train:** Cork train station has good connections to many places across Ireland.

**Car:** If you are using a hire car there are plenty of car hire companies who have a depot at Cork.

**Bike:** You may choose to cycle to Cork!

Let us know if you would like collecting from the train station, airport or car hire depot and we will meet you and transport you and your luggage to your first night's accommodation.

## The end of the tour

After the last days cycling to Malin head, a coach will pick us up and transport us to our final hotel in the Derry/Londonderry area where we will have our final meal.

Then on Saturday a coach will transport us to Belfast airport. You should arrive at Belfast airport for around 10.00.

If you are taking your bike back with you then we will transport your bike to Derry or Belfast for you or we can take it back to our HQ in Glossop for you to collect at a later date.

If you choose the 'return transport' option then your bikes will be packed & couriered back to your address for you.

## Support

Usually each tour has 3 guides:

- One driving the 'brew van' - each day will usually have a morning and afternoon 'brew stop,' with a table full of snacks and drinks. You will also bring a small bag/rucksack to the morning brief and leave this in the 'brew van' which can be accessed throughout the day.
- One driving the 'luggage / lunch van' - transporting your luggage from hotel to hotel, as well as setting up your lunches.
- One riding at the back of the group - you will have detailed route notes so that you can go slower or faster than the leader if you prefer or you can cycle with the tour guide at the back so that you don't have to navigate at all.
- Mechanical support: we carry a range of spare parts so that repairs can be made en route and we also have spare bikes available in the event that your bike has a serious breakdown. If we can't fix your bike then we will get it to the nearest bike shop.
- Each guide will be contactable by phone during the day so if you have any issues you can get straight in touch with them.
- For smaller groups you might only have one guide that cycles with the group and one back up driver or for groups of 12 or less just one tour leader will provide back-up for you.



## What's Included?

- 10 nights' accommodation, 10 breakfasts, 9 lunches
- Refreshments from the brew van
- Mechanical support including spare bikes should these be needed
- GPS files and route notes
- Full logistical planning and support from the first to the last night including luggage transfers
- 2 back up vans
- A guide cycling at the back of the group
- Pick up from airport / station on arrival day and transfer to Belfast at the end of the tour
- A Peak Tours cycle shirt and certificate
- Luggage transfer each day
- Lots of fun!

## Food

### Breakfast

Breakfast is included in the cost of the tour, and will vary slightly between the various hotels and B&Bs that we use, but you can usually expect have a choice of some cooked breakfast options, as well as toast, cereals, fruit juices, tea, coffee etc.

### Lunch

Lunches will be provided each day and will generally be a buffet at a cafe or a country pub.

### Evening meals

Evening meals can be bought at your accommodation or in a nearby pub. On the first and final evenings of the tour we will have a group meal at the hotel.

### Dietary requirements

Please let us know of any dietary requirements you have and we will ensure that all lunch stops and places we eat evening meals are informed.

There will also be snacks on the 'brew van' to suit any and all dietary needs!

## Accommodation

You have a choice sharing a double or a twin room. If you would like your own space then you can choose the single room option, or sole occupancy of a double. Most of the rooms are en suite however there maybe a few nights where your room isn't en suite (Sole occupancy of a double room is guaranteed en suite). Generally on the Mizen Head to Malin Head tour we stay in hotels, pubs or smaller bed and breakfasts.

## What's not included?

- Evening meals / dinner
- Drinks at lunchtime
- Travel to Cork and home from Belfast
- Cycle hire (available for a fee)
- Garmin hire (available for a fee)
- Transport to the start and from at the end of the tour for you and your bike (available for a fee)
- Insurance

*"The tour was a good balance of challenges and achievable rides. It also gave a good view of the west of Ireland's scenery and countryside. It wasn't always easy but was deeply satisfying by the end." Martin and Sue*

## Kit list

Clothing for all weathers is recommended so waterproofs are essential.

A full recommended kit list is provided and we are always happy to answer any questions that you may have. You can see details of a kit list [here](#).

Luggage is restricted to a maximum of 18kg per person—we have to look after our guides and their backs as they will be carrying your luggage in and out of the hotels!

## Insurance

We strongly recommend that you take out adequate insurance for your tour which, as an absolute minimum should cover accident & medical expenses if you are travelling outside the UK, cover for your bike and belongings and cancellation cover in the event that you have to cancel your tour for unforeseen circumstances.

You should be aware that if you have an accident or fall ill while on the tour you will lose the money paid for the trip. A travel insurance policy would allow you to reclaim most of the money as well as providing insurance in case you lose your bags or if your bike is stolen, broken etc.

Your policy should also cover cancellation costs if you cancel the tour within 8 weeks of departure. If this happens we will try to fill your space and return your funds to you but if we are unable to fill your place you will lose the funds paid for the tour.

We have partnered with Yellow Jersey who provide Travel and Cycle insurance for UK residents. You can find further details [here](#).



# Am I fit enough?

## Difficulty

The Mizen Head to Malin Head route is a reasonably challenging and rewarding route, full of stunning scenery as you cover the length of the Emerald Isle.

This tour is classed as a grade 6 tour so slightly easier than our 14 day LEJOG tour. See details of difficulty rating [here](#).

You will be expected to be able to complete an average of 64 miles / 102 km per day.

Most people on the tour will be fairly active cyclists, and cycling the above distances on consecutive days will not be too challenging for them.

## How fast do I need to be?

Generally, most cyclists completing this tour will be capable of cycling at 10 miles / 16 kmph over the whole day, keeping in mind that some days are hillier than others, and you will be stopping for breaks and lunches

Most days start at 8:30 and we ask that all riders are finished by 19:00 at the latest if possible, to allow you time to relax and explore the places that you stay in the evenings

## Are there any hills on the tour?

The route does not have many tough long climbs but there are some undulating coastal routes as well as roads through some mountain ranges.

## Training

The fitter you are and the more training that you do beforehand will add to the enjoyment of your tour and improve your chances of succeeding the challenge.

If you need any advice about fitness please contact us and we will be happy to discuss any questions and concerns that you may have.

We have a training document which has a suggested training programme, which you can access [here](#).

## Bikes

The Mizen Head to Malin Head tour can be completed by people on all types of bikes: it is important you ride on a bike on which you are most comfortable. Most people choose to ride on road or touring bikes for this tour

We recommend sturdy, 28mm tyres and above for this trip (25mm would probably be the minimum) due to the nature of some sections of the route. There are stunning bits of road but these are not the smoothest in parts so sacrifice a bit of speed for comfort on this tour to get the best out of it

You can transport your bike in the following ways:

- Bringing your own - most people using this option will arrive by train.
- We can transport your bike for you—ask us for more information regarding the collection/drop-off of your bike.

Please ensure that your bike is fully serviced and in good working order before the start of the trip. It is advisable to have your bike service a few weeks before the start of the tour. This will allow time to 'bed in' before you start your ride.

Alternatively you can hire a bike from us, please see our website for more information.

