

IRELAND



WILD ATLANTIC WAY  
PASSPORT



**WILD ATLANTIC WAY**  
SLÍ AN ATLANTAIGH FHIÁIN



WILD ATLANTIC WAY  
PASSPORT

*The journey of a lifetime*



**WILD ATLANTIC WAY**

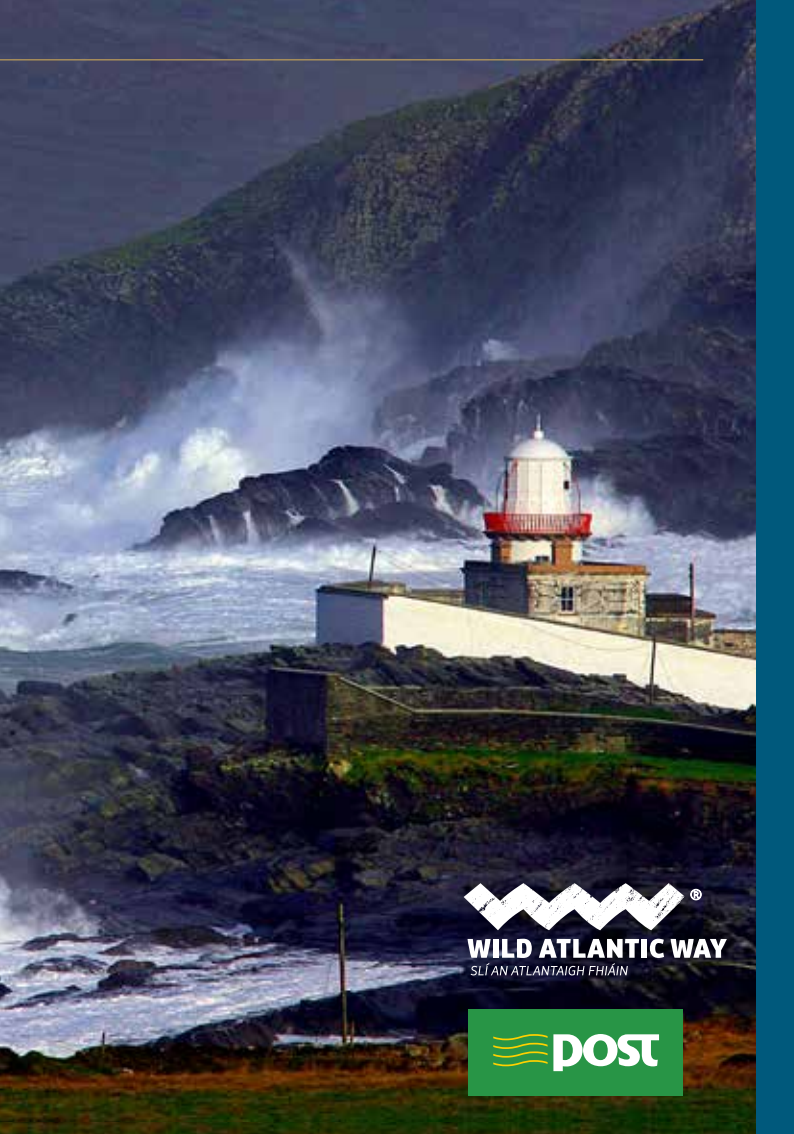
SLÍ AN ATLANTAIGH FHIÁIN

## Welcome to the WILD ATLANTIC WAY.

Wild, Rugged, Liberating... find the  
Ireland you've always imagined...

Here, the ocean's force has carved a coast of wild, raw beauty. Huge Atlantic rollers crash and churn, shaping jagged ocean crags, archipelagos and inlets, sea loughs, surfing strands, and the sheer granite walls of cliffs that are amongst some of the highest in Europe.

All along this spectacular journey you're aware of the elemental power of the Atlantic Ocean, turning from grey to green to azure blue as great weather fronts roll in and through. Take time to stop often at the many small settlements and towns along the route or maybe you'll hunker down and stay a night or two to get to know the places and the people... to climb cliffs, surf waves and ride bikes. You could join in the craic at sessions and festivals, go island-hopping and visit ancient sites or sit by turf fires in traditional pubs, where you'll eat the freshest seafood and hear the Irish language, songs and stories. You'll probably see a lifetime's rainbows in just one trip.



**WILD ATLANTIC WAY**  
SLÍ AN ATLANTAIGH FHIÁIN

 **POST**

# WILD ATLANTIC WAY PASSPORT

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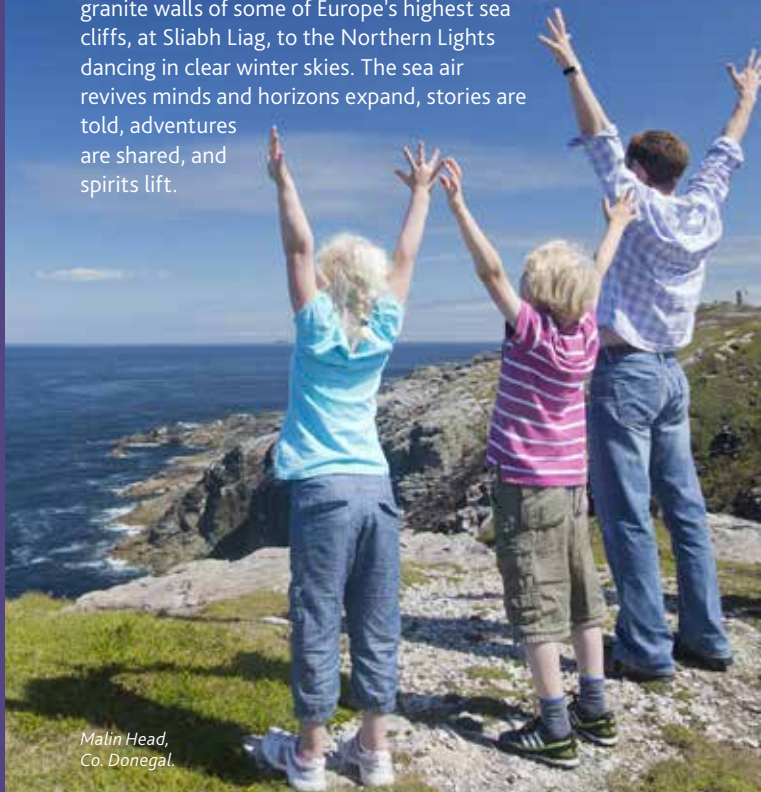
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# NORTHERN HEADLANDS

Untouched and virtually unexplored, this ruggedly beautiful and remote region lies at the far north of the Wild Atlantic Way. Nature is spectacular and bracing here, from the sheer granite walls of some of Europe's highest sea cliffs, at Sliabh Liag, to the Northern Lights dancing in clear winter skies. The sea air revives minds and horizons expand, stories are told, adventures are shared, and spirits lift.

*Malin Head,  
Co. Donegal.*









### **Malin Head, Co. Donegal.**

Rugged, yet inviting, Malin Head, the most northerly outpost on the Wild Atlantic Way, is steeped in history and is an outdoor playground with an abundance of activities – walking, bird watching, angling and swimming. At Banba's Crown, Ireland's most northerly point, relax with a picnic and enjoy the stunning panorama which includes Inistrahull and Tory islands, as well as the Scottish hills on a clear day.







### **Cionn Fhánada, Co. Donegal.**

Fanad Lighthouse has been voted one of the most beautiful lighthouses in the world. Take time to explore the wild and wonderful natural world around you from the top of the light house tower and see the area regularly visited by whales and dolphins. Or really take time out and stay in one of the lightkeepers houses.





### **Sliabh Liag, Co. Donegal.**

This is one of Ireland's ultimate sea cliff experiences and is a place of sacred Christian pilgrimage and a rich Irish heritage and culture. These are amongst the highest sea cliffs in Europe rising 600m above the ocean below. Sliabh Liag is truly Mother

Nature's finest canvas where tales of myth and legend, local history and Irish tradition seem to be painted into this wild and rugged landscape.





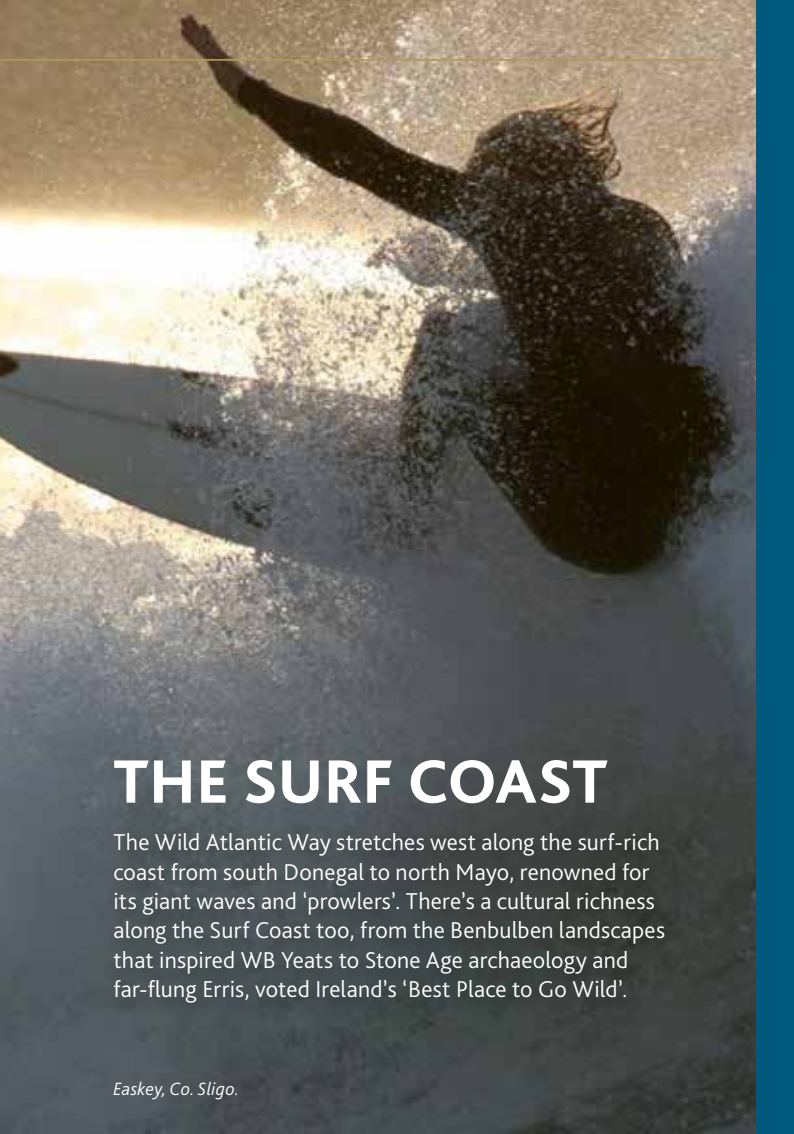
*This is Donegal, what fills the eyes fills the heart:  
The sea in all her moods of blue, crescents of  
golden sands,  
hidden corners, cliff edges, blazing sunsets or  
footprints of history.*

*This is Donegal; wild and worldly, known and  
not known,*

*Dhún na nGall, Tír Chonaill, Home. Once seen,  
never forgotten.*

*This is Donegal, Denise Blake.*





# THE SURF COAST

The Wild Atlantic Way stretches west along the surf-rich coast from south Donegal to north Mayo, renowned for its giant waves and 'prowlers'. There's a cultural richness along the Surf Coast too, from the Benbulbin landscapes that inspired WB Yeats to Stone Age archaeology and far-flung Erris, voted Ireland's 'Best Place to Go Wild'.

*Easkey, Co. Sligo.*



### **Mullaghmore Head, Co. Sligo.**

Escape to the small fishing village of Mullaghmore which should be on any outdoor enthusiast's itinerary, especially for those chasing the next big wave. The sandy beach stretches as far as the eye can see and is ideal for a spot of swimming or windsurfing. You can also venture out to the Atlantic for an excursion to the 6th century monastic site of Inishmurray or enjoy a sea angling trip.





### **Downpatrick Head, Co. Mayo.**

Jutting out into the ocean and rising almost 40m above the waves, Downpatrick Head provides unparalleled views of the Atlantic and the unique collection of islands known as the Staggs of Broadhaven. This majestic heritage site lies close to Dún Briste sea stack, with its myriad-coloured layers of rock and flocks of nesting sea birds.





*Come away, O human child!  
To the waters and the wild  
With a faery, hand in hand,  
For the world's more full of weeping than  
you can understand.*

*The Stolen Child, W.B. Yeats.*

# THE BAY COAST

From distant Erris to the 'savage beauty' of much-loved Connemara, here the Wild Atlantic Way skims south around huge bays. The largest of these – Clew Bay – is said to have 365 islets and islands, one for every day of the year. The Bay Coast is a salt, open-air playground with dazzling beaches and Blueway trails, where people kayak, kiteboard, paraglide, swim and dive.

*But to specify my  
favourites spot is  
difficult to do,  
When there's beauty  
there round every bend.*

*Scenic Connemara –  
Celebration,  
Michael O'Connor.*

Clare Island, Co. Mayo.





### **Keem Bay, Co. Mayo.**

Keem Bay on Achill Island, Ireland's largest island, nestles at the head of a valley between Benmore cliffs and Croaghaun Mountain. The beach, which is lifeguarded during the summer months, is very popular with swimmers and is the site of a Blueway snorkel trail. If you prefer to keep your feet dry, then have your eyes peeled for the porpoises that regularly visit this sheltered bay to stage their amazing acrobatic displays.





### **Killary Harbour, Co. Galway.**

Located in the heart of Connemara, Killary Harbour is one of only three fjords in Ireland and forms a natural divide between the counties of Galway and neighbouring Mayo. Here, you will find some of the most dramatic scenery in Ireland with Mweelrea, Connacht's highest mountain, towering over the northern shore and the Maamturk Mountains and Twelve pins to the south.





### **Derrigimlagh, Co. Galway.**

This site is home to two stories of international historical significance. First you will pass the remnants of the world's first wireless transatlantic radio station.

This was built by Marconi and transmitted the first radio signal in 1907.

The white memorial in the shape of an aeroplane wing, pays tribute to John Alcock and Arthur Whitten Brown – they were the first pilots to fly non – stop across the Atlantic before they crash landed(safely) in Derrigimlagh Bog.









# THE CLIFF COAST

'The land is hard, the soul is not' says the Lonely Planet about the Cliff Coast... where ice-age landscapes meet west-coast warmth, and music is a way of life. It's a place for clifftop walks, island-hopping, traditional pubs... and stirring views of colonies of puffins on the sheer Cliffs of Moher; bottlenose dolphins in the mouth of the Shannon; and the view of Clare's mountains from the Cliffs of Dooneen.

*Cliffs of Moher. Co. Clare.*







### **Cliffs of Moher, Co. Clare.**

The iconic Cliffs of Moher are one of Ireland's most visited natural attractions. Stretching for 8km along the Atlantic coast of Clare, the cliffs reach 214m at their highest point at Knockardakin. Midway along the cliffs you'll find the environmentally friendly visitor centre set into the hillside. Here, you can discover O'Brien's Tower and access 800m of protected cliff side pathways with viewing areas.





### **Loop Head, Co. Clare.**

At the western tip of County Clare, where the calm waters of the Shannon Estuary turn into the powerful waves of the Atlantic, you'll find Loop Head Peninsula. Travel along the Loop Head Drive to see its famous lighthouse, which sits on land dotted with colourful wild flowers. You can climb to the top of the lighthouse and take in splendid views that stretch from County Kerry to the Cliffs of Moher.





*The fish that leap in the air with glee  
And the speckled perch with gambols free,  
The labouring waves laving the shore  
With glistening spray and rumbling roar,  
The sea-gulls shrieking and reeling wide,*

*The Midnight Court, Brian Merrian*



# SOUTHERN PENINSULAS

In Ireland's beautiful far south west – the ancient Kingdom of Kerry meets wild West Cork – five great Peninsulas where mountainous spines stretch miles out into the ocean. Let the peninsulas reveal themselves. Stand on wind buffeted mountain tops to watch the cloud shadows on distant mountains and sandy beaches. Soak up the fresh seafood, the music, the stories, the gaelige. These are the things that make the memories.

*Cahersiveen, Co. Kerry.*

## SOUTHERN PENINSULAS

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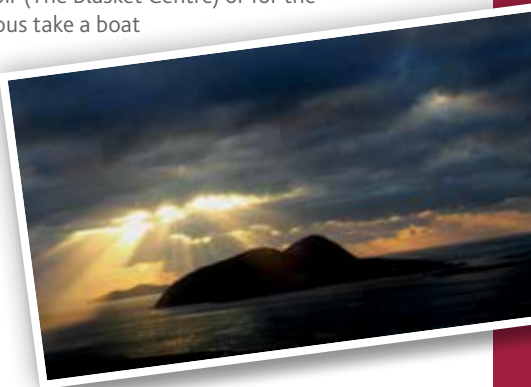






### **Ionad an Bhlascaoid Mór, Co. Chiarraí.**

Out on the very edge of Europe, off the Dingle Peninsula, lie the mystical Blasket Islands, a small archipelago renowned for its storytellers. After many years of hardship and emigration, the last inhabitants left in 1953, and today, you can celebrate the story of the Blasket Islanders and their unique literary tradition at Ionad an Bhlascaoid Mhóir (The Blasket Centre) or for the more adventurous take a boat trip to the big island.



## SOUTHERN PENINSULAS

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### **Skellig Michael, Co. Kerry.**

The Skellig Islands, Skellig Michael and Small Skellig, stand aloof in the Atlantic Ocean some 12 km southwest of Valentia Island, County Kerry. A designated UNESCO World Heritage site, Skellig Michael is renowned among archaeologists as the site of a well-preserved monastic outpost of the early Christian period. Small Skellig, meanwhile, is famous in the world of ornithology and is home to some 27,000 pairs of gannets, making it the world's second largest colony of the impressive sea – birds.



## SOUTHERN PENINSULAS

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### **Dursey Island, Co. Cork.**

The most westerly of Cork's inhabited islands, Dursey is separated from the mainland by a narrow sound known for its strong tides. It is accessed by Ireland's only cable car, which runs about 250m above the sea and it can carry six people at a time on the 15 minute journey. The island is largely deserted, which guarantees relaxation, solitude, peace and tranquility. Dursey is known for its great walks and magnificent selection of bird species.



## SOUTHERN PENINSULAS

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### **Mizen Head, Co. Cork.**

Mizen Head, Ireland's most south-westerly point, is home to an award-winning Irish Lights signal station built to save lives off the rocky shoreline. Completed in 1910, the signal station became home to Ireland's very first radio beacon in 1931. Located 5km from Goleen, Mizen Head is a spellbinding place. On a clear day the imposing Fastnet lighthouse stands on a rock, known as Ireland's tear drop. For emigrants to the New World this was their last sight of their native land.



## SOUTHERN PENINSULAS

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*Now a beehive hut in a butterfly world  
Perched on the edge  
Of heritage  
Tells blow-in me not mainly of hardship  
But of a wildly simplifying place.  
Sister Skellig, Chuck Kruger.*



# THE HAVEN COAST

The Southernmost stretch of the Wild Atlantic Way zigzags gently through Ballydehob and on to Kinsale. By hundreds of inlets, tiny coves, safe harbours and blue flag-beaches, just right for long days spent in the salty air... beachcombing, island-hopping, whale-watching, kayaking on a saltwater lake in the moonlight. There is something restorative about the temperate Gulf Stream climate, the peaceful vibe and the lively, creative, arts and crafts scene. Here nature sets the pace.

*The Beacon, Baltimore, West Cork.*





*All day the sea's been in my head, frothing and  
jostling over the jetty heaving in great swells,  
white lines skirting the coast, sparking like nerve-  
endings from the cliff's fingers – licks of wave-  
quiffs spraying back.*

*Rag and Bone Man, Adam Wyeth.*

### **Old Head of Kinsale, Co. Cork.**

The Old Head of Kinsale is a remarkably dramatic piece of Ireland, protruding more than 3km into the Atlantic Ocean. Long before it became a golfer's paradise, Old Head was known for its lighthouse, established in the 17th century by Robert Reading. This is also the nearest land point to the site where the RMS Lusitania sank in 1915, after being torpedoed by a German U-boat.





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*Benbulbin,  
Co. Sligo.*



*Horn Head, Dunfanaghy, Co. Donegal.*





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