

48 HOUR ITINERARY

From Castle to Coast...

Highlights

Follow The Gobbins Cliff Path.

Take home a unique memento from a visit to Steensons Jewellers.

Visit the ancestral home of the 21st United States' President.

Travel time

If you were to visit all the stops on this itinerary, you'd be driving for a total of:

DAY ONE - 1 HOUR

DAY TWO - 1 HOUR 20MINS

Mid & East Antrim's idyllic landscape was built over hundreds of millions of years. It began as a shallow sea in the tropics and drifted north - inch by inch. Eventually, this region collided with another continental plate resulting in a mountain-building phase that pushed up mountains in Scandinavia, Scotland, Ireland and the eastern United States - now far across the Atlantic ocean. These mountains were once higher than the Himalayas, but aeons of erosion have worn them down to the rolling landscape we're familiar with today. As the continental plates ground across the face of the Earth, this region experienced hot desert conditions, sprouted humid tropical forests and was thrown into the deep freeze of the ice ages. Recent eruptions created the basalt cliffs of The Gobbins and the heights of Mount Slemish.

People have shaped this place too - scenic trails, iconic roads and royal residences abound.

It may have taken an unimaginably long time for this land to form, but you can explore it all in just 48 hours with this handy itinerary.

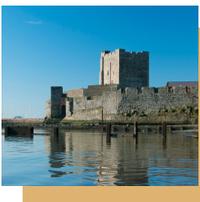
Day 1

CARRICKFERGUS CASTLE

First stop, Carrickfergus Castle. This iconic fortress has dominated the town of Carrickfergus for the past 800 years and it still does today. Let's walk in the footsteps of King Henry's Anglo-Norman invaders, as we visit medieval chambers, an ancient banqueting hall and walk the steep cobblestone steps to the panoramic views of the looking tower. With a castle as grand as this one, they needed all the protection they could get.

As you go, count how many large cannons you can spot!

ALLOW
2 HOURS





OLD TOWN WALLS & ST NICHOLAS' CHURCH

The 400-year-old defensive walls in Carrickfergus still weave their way through the streets of the modern town. They were vital to protecting the town from the 1641 rebellion, but also helped the town authorities tax traded goods. St Nicholas' Church is another example of the living history in Carrickfergus. It has stood since the 12th century and undergone many renovations and reconstructions since. Its unusual architecture reflects the changing fortunes of this storied town.

ALLOW
1 HOUR



WHITEHEAD VILLAGE & RAILWAY MUSEUM

The reflection of colourful homes dance on the water as we enter Whitehead.

This radiant town is known for its beautiful seaside and is home to Ireland's largest collection of heritage locomotives. The Whitehead Railway Museum offers history, family fun and local cuisine.

Whilst here, you can hop aboard the footplate of an 1879 steam engine or enjoy lunch in an Edwardian Tea Room.

ALLOW
1 HOUR



THE RINKHA

Nostalgic tourists from far and wide visit The Rinkha for a taste of their famous ice cream. Since 1921, the Hawkins family have been delighting tastebuds with their unrivalled recipe.

Once you try this homemade treat, you'll see why the people of Islandmagee have flocked here for nearly 100 years!

Ice cream was not the only passion of the Hawkins family, as they also opened a local dancehall.

Many locals shared their first dance within these very walls.

ALLOW
30 MINS



THE GOBBINS CLIFF PATH

Take a short walk from The Rinkha to The Gobbins Cliff Path. With the crashing waves of the North Channel underfoot, you will tread through underwater tunnels, dramatic bridges, ancient caves and more.

This cliff-hugging experience brings together all that's great about Northern Ireland. From the spectacular views of the sea, to the history of our coastlines. Not to mention the fantastic sound of birds overhead and the chance to see dolphins swimming on our rugged coastline.

Such a dramatic coastal walk is in high demand and must be booked in advance.

ALLOW
3 HOURS





BALLYGALLY CASTLE HOTEL

With a short drive to the top of the Causeway Coastal Route, we'll arrive in Ballygally. Built in 1625, the stunning Ballygally Castle is an iconic part of this seaside village.

Take in the beautiful surroundings with a spot of lunch in the Lounge. Here you can enjoy the unspoiled views of the Antrim coastline as you savour their menu of locally sourced ingredients.

Before you leave, don't forget to check out the castle's exclusive Game of Thrones® door.

ALLOW
1-2 HOURS

Day 2



GLENARM CASTLE WALLED GARDEN & TEA ROOM

Nestled in the heart of the Glenarm Glen is Glenarm Castle. This iconic building was built in 1636 and is currently owned by the son of the 14th Earl of Antrim, Randal, Viscount Dunluce.

The impressive grounds of the castle span far and wide with a Walled Garden, historic sculptures, views of the sea and a quaint little gift shop. You could spend all day here.

Walk the grounds, check out the castle and soak up yesteryears with a coffee in the Tea Room.

ALLOW
1 HOUR



STEENSONS JEWELLERS

Make this journey a memorable one with a keepsake from Steensons Jewellers. Watch as some of Ireland's finest goldsmiths cut, shape and manipulate metals right before your eyes.

Once the process is complete, the goldsmiths embellish their masterpiece with stone or textured finishes. This jewellers is so iconic that Game of Thrones® wanted in on the action.

Many of the crowns and jewellery featured in the hit TV show were made right here at Steensons.

ALLOW
1 HOUR



SLEMISH MOUNTAIN

As we drive, you'll start to see the dramatic facade of Slemish Mountain. Standing tall in both stature and history, this extinct volcano was once home to the Irish legend - Saint Patrick.

St Patrick was only a boy when he was captured during a raid on his home in northern England. His captors brought him here and put him to work as a shepherd. You can walk in his footsteps on a moderate hike to the summit.

The breathtaking views over Lough Neagh, the Sperrin Mountains, Bann Valley and the Scottish coast make it worth every step!

ALLOW
1-2 HOURS





ARTHUR COTTAGE

Now we'll travel to the ancestral home of the 21st President of the United States of America.

This modest cottage has been restored to how it used to look and function back in the 18th century.

We will listen to Irish folklore and learn about the link this rural village has to Chester Alan Arthur and the American Presidency.

You can also take part in a bakery demonstration and get pictures with people in period costumes.

ALLOW
1 HOUR



CROSSKEYS INN

Crosskeys Inn is the epitome of a traditional Irish bar from days gone by.

Being the oldest thatched pub in Ireland, the atmosphere is incredible. The sound of traditional Irish music and the aroma of the roaring turf fires makes this the best place to enjoy an Irish beverage.

So, get to the bar, order a pint of Guinness or a glass of Irish whiskey and raise a toast to this wonderful place.

ALLOW
1 HOUR