

WELLBEING ITINERARY

A Spiritual Journey

Highlights

A windswept hillside under rearing cliffs that has featured in a host of Game of Thrones® most memorable scenes.

The remains of a Bronze Age fort perched atop a soaring headland.

The mountain where St Patrick, patron saint of Ireland, received his calling.

Travel time

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

2 HOURS

From atop Slemish Mountain, the vast sky stretches away into the far distance. Patchwork fields, divided by dry stone walls, and the grasslands of the Shillanavogy Valley are burnished gold by the sun. The Scottish coastline hovers on the eastern horizon, the Antrim Hills roll across the north, shimmering Lough Neagh fills the western lowlands. St Patrick stood here 1500 years ago and these same views inspired his spiritual journey.

When you're overloaded by the pressures of life and your world seems to offer no escape – try ours. Had enough of urgent deadlines? Rushing to meetings? Rushing home? Just rushing? Here's our solution.

Sit on a rock watching the thunderous beauty of a waterfall cascading into a forest clearing. Wander a 200-year-old walled garden, famous for its unusual plants. Try a hot stone massage, relax in a hot tub and watch a river roll by from one of the world's most luxurious spas.

Here's our guide to the highlights of a soul journey through Mid & East Antrim. Experience them at your leisure.



GLENOE WATERFALL

Prepare yourself with a hearty breakfast in historic Carrickfergus and then set out through countryside to Glenoe. This quaint village, a clutch of whitewashed houses gathered around a stream, retains the rustic charm it acquired in a pre-industrial age. Take the short walk from the main street into a wooded ravine. Here the stream cascades over Glenoe Waterfall, a place so precious that it is protected by the National Trust.

ALLOW
1 HOUR





CAIRNCASTLE

Drive eight miles through the hedgerows, across the fields towards the coast. Here, you'll find the rugged beauty of Cairncastle, a rampart of cliffs and grassy uplands overlooking the north channel and distant Scotland. This is an ancient place, where an early fort once stood. It has been a regular location for Game of Thrones® filming, this is where Ned Stark beheaded a deserter from the Night's Watch, where the Lord Baelish convinces Sansa Stark to marry Ramsay Bolton, and where Daenerys is found by the Dothraki horde after fleeing Meereen on Drogon's back. Even if that last sentence made no sense to you, the bottom line is this – Cairncastle is a breathtaking place.

ALLOW
1 HOUR



KNOCKDHU

About a mile west of Cairncastle is Knockdhu, the Black Hill. At its summit is a 4000-year-old Bronze Age fort, carved into the towering headland overlooking the Antrim Coast. This enigmatic place was excavated by Channel 4's Time Team in 2009. Their investigation led them to believe that this was once a village of some thirty or forty roundhouses, protected by a ditch and earthwork wall, perhaps topped with a palisade. Here, up to one hundred and fifty people once lived. At the foot of the hill is a flint mine, and the people who lived here traded this commodity with communities in Scotland, plying the sea in outrigger canoes with the same confidence that we take to the motorway in cars. Wear sensible shoes and dress in layers. The wind can be strong and the weather changeable up here.

ALLOW
2½ HOURS



CARNFUNNOCK COUNTRY PARK

Drop into Carnfunnock Country Park for fun with the family. Let those restless kids loose in the hedge maze. Best your rivals at giant chess. Tuck into a picnic at one of the many public tables or enjoy great food in the café. While you're planning, why not get in touch with Paul Moore at the Northern Ireland Survival School? He can show you how to get by if you're lost in the wild while enjoying the natural beauty of this special place.

ALLOW
2 HOURS



BALLYGALLY CASTLE HOTEL

Visit nearby Ballygally Castle, a luxury hotel fashioned from a 400-year-old baronial castle. Legend has it that its rooms are haunted by the ghost of its founder's wife, Lady Isabella Shaw. Stop for a traditional afternoon tea, or take to the sea for surfing or paddle boarding.

ALLOW
1½ HOURS



GLENARM CASTLE

Take the Coast Road north, where the fields roll down into the translucent waters of the Irish Sea. You'll find Glenarm nestled into a narrow bay, its castle and church rising above the coloured houses. Glenarm Castle was built four hundred years ago, during the conflicts between the McDonnell and McQuillan clans and stands at the heart of one of Northern Ireland's oldest estates. Today, the ornamental Walled Garden is a beautiful place to take tea and sample delicious local produce – organic beef, salmon, bread, cakes and scones.

ALLOW
1½ HOURS



BROUGHSHANE

Turn inland on the A42 and drive the fourteen miles through rolling green countryside to the village of Broughshane. This delightful little village was awarded Channel 4's UK Village of the Year, 2018. Raceview Mill is a lovingly-restored textile mill, first built in the 19th century. Today it hosts galleries, artisanal food and health and beauty shops. It's also the beginning of the Butterfly Path, that winds through a nature reserve on the banks of the River Braid.

ALLOW
1½ HOURS



SLEMISH MOUNTAIN

Broughshane stands in the shadow of soaring Slemish Mountain, the centrepiece of this spiritual journey. Its dramatic peak was forged in a volcanic eruption millions of years ago. In the 400s, a young slave was forced to shepherd a flock on its slopes. That boy later became St Patrick, and it was here during his captivity that he drew close to God. The walk to the summit is only 1.2 miles long, but you'll want to stop and enjoy the views. Irish hares make their homes in the grass. Ravens and buzzards wheel overhead. The fields of the Shillanavogy Valley roll away to the Antrim coast.

ALLOW
2 HOURS



GALGORM GOLF RESORT & SPA

You'll be physically tired and spiritually refreshed after a day as full as this one. It's time to experience some comfort at the Galgorm Golf Resort & Spa. Stay the night in opulent rooms, luxuriate in blissful treatments and indulge in fine cuisine. You deserve it!

STAY THE
NIGHT

For more incredible adventures in a region shaped by sea and stone,
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