



Fastnet Trails

Gortdubh Loop 14km

Map of the Gortdubh Loop



Walk Guide

This 13.5km walk is "strenuous" only in short steep stretches along paved country roads and only crossing main roads twice. Walkers of good fitness should be able to complete the walk without difficulty in 4 hours.

As much of the walk is alongside sheep farms, we requests that you keep your dog on a lead at all times.

The route is marked with GREEN arrows which you need to look out for.

Start at the Goleen Community Centre, where there is plenty of parking. The Trailhead Map is here showing both the Gortdubh and Lissagriffin Loop walks.

On leaving the Community Centre gates, turn RIGHT, the lane begins with a gentle climb then gradually steepens. Over your right shoulder is Knockaphuca and beyond is Mount Gabriel.

After 450m you reach another rise where the lane turns right (1) heading due north up gentle rises. Look out to sea for Cape Clear and Sherkin islands. Continue 230m and the Fastnet Lighthouse will come into view.

After 500m the lane bears left (2) and begins to climb.

Continue upwards crossing two bridges over ravines that roar after a heavy rain. A deserted stone cottage is on the left and below on the right are well-cropped contours of pasture.

500m on the road dips then ascends steeply up Knocknamaddree for another 350m, levels out then a final 200m brings you to the highest point of the loop walk (3). The view waiting for you is well worth the climb as Dunmanus Bay lies below with Sheep's Head peninsula on the opposite shore and the Beara mountains beyond.



Courtesy Roaringwater Journal

From here the road descends steeply for 400m where you come to a T-junction and the busy coastal road **(4)**.

Take care and turn LEFT on the coast road for 160m and follow the RIGHT fork **(5)** which descends steeply.

The lane continues to descend for another 1.4 km past some abandoned stone cottages on either side, another steep descent and a charming house right on the edge of the lane which veers to the RIGHT and again you are walking downhill with another sharp turn to the right which brings you to Dooneen Coos quay **(6)**.

Leaving the sea behind, the lane turns inland rising gently for 750m with some steeper inclines and

passes among 5 houses and continues up to a main road where you turn LEFT **(7)**.

Continue through another cluster of 4 houses and old farm buildings to a T-junction with the main coast road **(8)**. The LEFT turn is well-marked and after 30m turn LEFT **(9)** again down a tree lined, twisty lane for 740m back towards the sea.

Here a sign points to another Cove, Canties Cove or Smugglers Cove **(10)**, which is worth a short detour. The Loop walk continues left along a gravel lane above the cove which stretches for 240m back to a pave road that lies between two houses. Continue for another 650m back to the main coast road **(11)**.

Cross carefully and continue the gentle climb back across the peninsula. Whispering pines are to the right, then a lone cottage that was once a local shop. Follow on noting the reed beds alongside and the gentle descent back to the east side of the peninsula.

Just past a large modern barn as the road veers left, follow the markers onto a grassy track to the LEFT past a house and through a pine wood **(12)**.

Once through the wood, turn RIGHT **(13)** and cross this main road with care. Follow the arrows along this quiet country road for 20 minutes (1.7km) avoiding side turns. It will bring you back to the main road (R591). Turn LEFT along the main road **(14)** for 200m taking special care before turning LEFT **(15)** again onto another quiet road which will bring you to the heart of Goleen village.

Turn RIGHT along Goleen's high street and cross to the left side and continue along the pavement exiting the village and turn LEFT onto the road that brought you to the Community Centre at the start. Continue along this stretch until you have completed the Gortdubh Loop and have returned to your car.

It is highly recommended that you wear a hi-viz vest for safety reason and good footwear for comfort. Also as this is longer walk, it is advisable to bring along a snack and water.