

## How long will it take?

Refer to Table 1 for distances and suggested days for the two trails, to which you should add at least a day to visit Rathlin Island. The Moyle Way is the tougher trail, with some difficult terrain and an overall ascent of over 850 m (2800 ft). If you are extremely fit, you could complete it in a single very long day, especially if you shorten it to 21 miles by starting from the entrance of Glenariff Forest Park. (This option misses out the famous waterfalls within the Forest Park.)

If the weather has been extremely wet, consider cutting out the section of trail over Trostan and Slieveanorra, and start your second day from Altarichard Road (relying on a lift from your B&B host or a taxi). You could spend your first day on the short trails within Glenariff Forest Park instead, exploring its fine waterfalls. Resuming the Moyle Way next day, you will have avoided the worst of the waterlogged sections.

Rathlin Island offers many options, including the three trails that we describe on pages 31 to 33. Although most of this is road walking, there is almost no traffic and you can hire a bicycle from the Soerneog View Hostel: see page 29.

If you are pressed for time, you can shorten the CCW's first day by taking a bus from Ballycastle to Ballintoy. This avoids a long stretch of road walking, at the price of losing the chance to visit Kinbane Castle. Carrick-a-Rede Rope Bridge is an easy, and partly offroad, walk from Ballintoy.

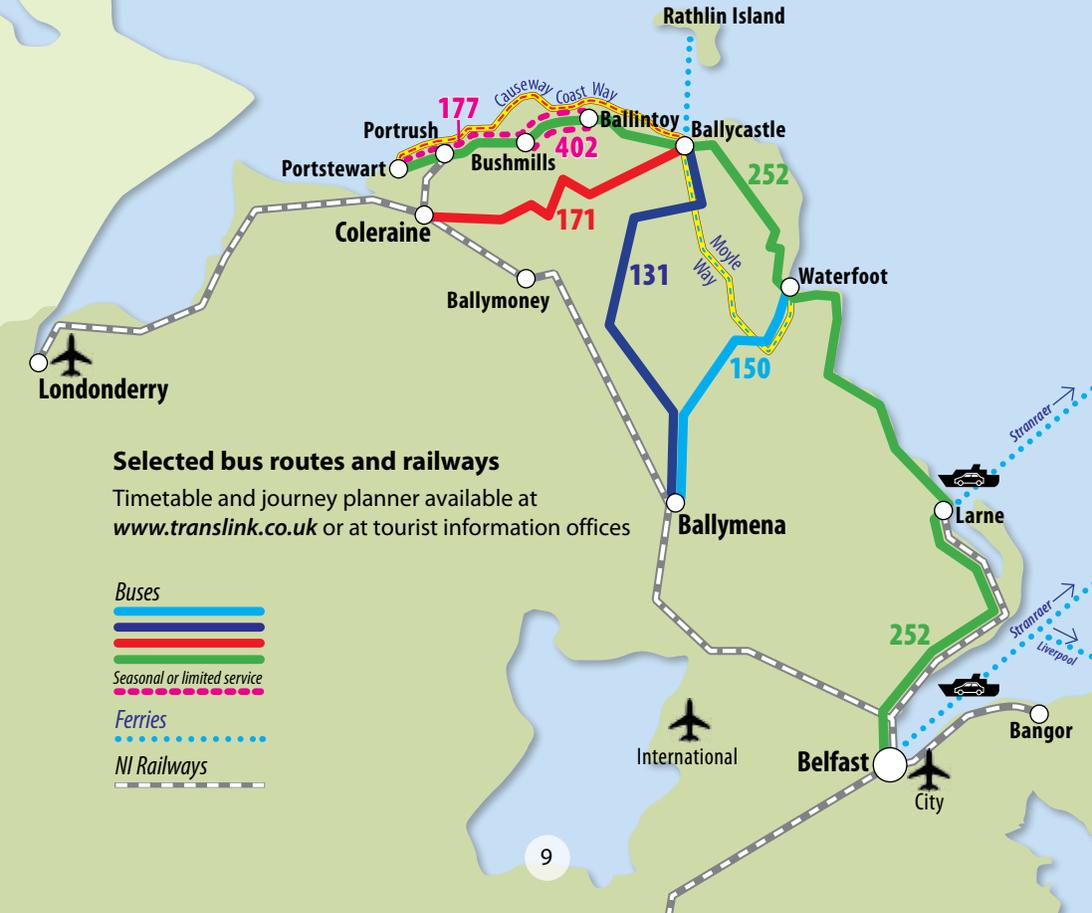
Only one national railway line reaches the Causeway Coast Way at Portrush, with trains from Coleraine roughly hourly (journey time 10 minutes). Connecting trains take 1½ hours from Belfast or 45 minutes from Derry. There are about 10 trains every day, with fewer on Sunday.

The main bus service that covers all the villages from Portstewart to Waterfoot is the number 252 Antrim Coaster, but sadly it makes only two trips a day and plies from April to September only. For bus services that are useful for getting to the start, and away from the finish, of these walks, see the map and Table 2:

	<i>miles km</i>	
<b>Moyle Way</b>		
<b>Waterfoot</b>		
3-1	13½	22
3-2	12½	20
<b>Ballycastle</b>		
<i>Sub-total (MW)</i>	26	42
<b>Causeway Coast Way</b>		
<b>Ballycastle</b>		
4-1	7	11½
<b>Ballintoy</b>		
4-2	13	21
<b>Portballintrae</b>		
4-3	11½	18½
<b>Portstewart</b>		
<i>Sub-total (CCW)</i>	31½	51
<b>Total distance</b>	<b>58</b>	<b>93</b>

**Table 2** Bus routes and frequency

<i>bus route</i>	<i>places served</i>	<i>frequency</i>
<b>131</b>	Ballycastle, Ballymena	2–5 buses daily, except Sunday
<b>150</b>	Ballymena, Glenariff Forest Park Waterfoot, Cushendall, Cushendun	3–6 buses daily, except Sunday
<b>171</b>	Ballycastle, Coleraine	2–6 buses daily, except Sunday
<b>172</b>	Ballycastle, Ballintoy, Giant's Causeway, Bushmills, Portballintrae, Coleraine, Portrush	2–7 buses daily, except Sunday
<b>177</b>	Giant's Causeway, Bushmills, Portballintrae, Dunluce Castle, Portrush, Portstewart, Coleraine	4 buses daily July and August only
<b>217</b>	Ballycastle, Ballymena	2–4 buses daily, except Sunday
<b>252</b> Antrim Coaster	Belfast (Europa Buscentre), Waterfoot, Cushendall, Cushendun, Ballycastle, Ballintoy, Giant's Causeway, Bushmills, Portballintrae, Portrush, Portstewart, Coleraine	2 buses daily, April–September + Sundays July–September
<b>402</b> Causeway Rambler	Carrick-a-Rede, Ballintoy, White Park Bay, Dunseverick Castle, Giant's Causeway, Bushmills	7 buses daily June–September only



**Selected bus routes and railways**

Timetable and journey planner available at [www.translink.co.uk](http://www.translink.co.uk) or at tourist information offices

- Buses
- Seasonal or limited service
- Ferries
- NI Railways

## What is the best time of year?

Although both trails are open year-round, the months from November through to March are not ideal. In addition to poorer weather and boggy underfoot, there are much shorter hours of daylight, fewer buses run and less accommodation is open. The Moyle Way in particular has poor drainage, making its terrain challenging in the wet.

There are many factors that may affect your decision:

- There is more pressure on accommodation during July and August.
- The Orange Order's marching season peaks on the 12th of July. Although most parades pass without incident, they affect traffic.
- Biting insects, such as midges and horse-flies are most active during summer months, especially July and August. Forested areas on the Moyle Way are most affected.
- Around the equinoxes, tides are extra high (21st September and 21st March). This may require careful timing of your walk across White Park Bay: see page 47.
- Bird-watchers may prefer to visit Rathlin Island between May and July to observe puffin breeding.
- Some areas along the Moyle Way have shoots during the game season (August to January).

All in all, the ideal time of the year to visit Antrim is from April to June. All the tourist attractions are open, the evenings are getting longer and it is the best time for watching wildlife.

*West from White Park Bay*



## New to long-distance walking?

The Causeway Coast Way requires little experience in the way of map-reading, never ventures above 150 m/500 ft and is full of points of interest: it's a good choice for your first long-distance walk. If you are new to such walking, you will enjoy the experience much more if you prepare for it and obtain the proper equipment. Start by getting advice on footwear and waterproofs, for example from our *Notes for novices*: see page 62.



*Unprotected cliff edge at Ballyreagh*

Aim to build up your fitness and ability to navigate before starting out on the trail. Start with day walks and build up to walking for 4-6 hours at a stretch. If you prefer sociable walking, consider joining a local walking club or go with somebody who has previous experience. If you intend walking independently of a luggage transfer service, practise carrying extra weight in your rucksack. Unless you are good at travelling light, you may find that such a service helps you to make the most of your holiday.

The Moyle Way is much less suitable for beginners. If you plan to attempt it, you should either have some experience of map-and-compass navigation in poor visibility, or walk with somebody who has.

*Slieveanorra from Glendun*



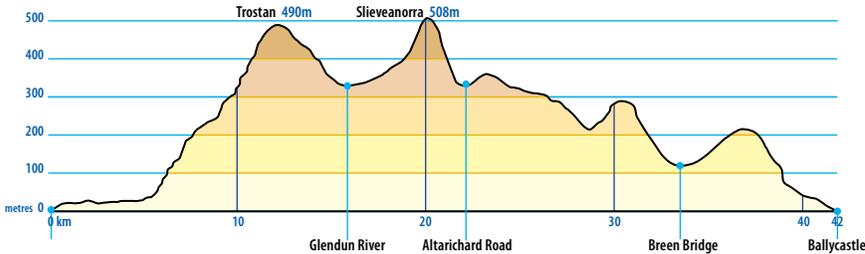


Head of White Park Bay

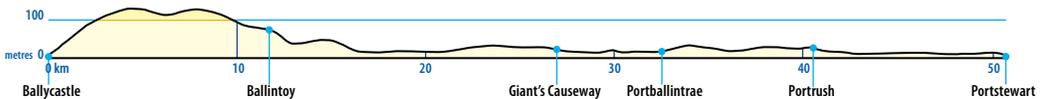
### Altitude, pace and navigation

The two Ways stand in strong contrast. The Moyle Way goes through forestry and across open mountainside. It has several long ascents, two of which reach the 500 m (1650 ft) contour. The route of the CCW is largely dictated by the coastline, it is always low-lying and its terrain comprises beaches, clifftop paths and occasional road stretches. It undulates and in places is punctuated by stiles and flights of steps.

### Moyle Way



### Causeway Coast Way



Overall, you can expect to maintain a pace of 3-4 km/hr (2-2½ mph) for most of the CCW. You may find beaches slow going, enjoying a barefoot walk or paddle. White Park Bay has rocky scrambles at both ends: see photograph above. High winds on clifftop paths may slow you down. To estimate your day's walking time, allow for rest and refreshment stops, and also for the time you will want to spend visiting castles, watching wildlife and, above all, enjoying the features of the Giant's Causeway.

Navigating the CCW is fairly straightforward. Keeping the sea to your right is your main navigational aid. Signposts are infrequent and the occasional arrow or logo have been prised off by vandals. However, if you follow our directions carefully and refer to our dropdown map, you should be able to follow the trail.

The Moyle Way is more challenging, and demands a larger-scale map: see page 63. Weather will affect your pace more: recent rainfall makes for boggy trails and slow progress. In the mountains, your pace will be slowed by gradients, as well as by terrain. Fog and mist will also hamper your speed, demanding careful navigation on the open hillside. Expect to average no more than 3-4 km/hr (2-2½ mph) when walking the MW, excluding stops.

On the MW, at least one member of your party should be competent at navigating, and it may be prudent to carry GPS as backup. Between Waterfoot and Ballycastle, the trail passes through extremely remote areas. Sections of the trail are poorly signposted and there are some discrepancies with OSNI maps, explained in Part 3. Remain vigilant, keep track of your position on the map and check each junction for signs.

*Various signage used on the trails*



## Safety, weather and tides

Weather is a major factor in walker safety, as well as comfort. Heavy periods of rain can cause havoc to sections of the Moyle Way. The banks of the Glenariff River rest on a contained overflow area. If the water level is dangerously high there, divert to the Glen Road to the east of the valley.

Rain on higher ground can make the going treacherous, although proper hill-walking gear, including waterproof hiking boots and hiking poles, will help. Breathable, windproof and waterproof clothing is essential to keep dry and avoid hypothermia. The contents of your rucksack may become soaked and useless unless protected with a waterproof rucksack cover or internal waterproof bags.

Windy conditions also pose risk to walkers, especially on the cliffs of the CCW and Rathlin Island. Beware of leaning into the wind when walking along an unprotected cliff edge in case the wind suddenly drops and you lurch forward. Maintain a safe distance from the cliff edge.

On the CCW, both ends of White Park Bay are potentially dangerous at high tide, so find out in advance and plan your walk accordingly. Ask a local source for the times of high tides or use a website for online tidal prediction: see page 61. If the sea state makes the route unsafe, the fallback is to stick to the main road: see page 47. High tide is not ideal for your visit to Giant's Causeway either: at low tide, more basalt columns are exposed and they are less crowded with people.

Don't rely on a mobile phone in an emergency. There are many 'black spots' at the base of cliffs and in the remote glens of Antrim. For maximum safety in remote areas, walk in a group of three so that if an accident occurs, one person can seek help whilst the third person waits with the injured person.

### ***The Mountain Code***

***To report an accident dial 999 or 112 and ask for Mountain Rescue***

#### ***When you go***

- ***Never go alone***
- ***Leave a note of your route, and report on your return***
- ***Take windproofs, waterproofs and survival bag***
- ***Take suitable map and compass, torch and food***
- ***Wear suitable boots***
- ***Take special care in winter***

#### ***Before you go***

- ***Learn the use of map and compass***
- ***Know the weather signs and local forecast: see page 61***
- ***Plan within your abilities***
- ***Know simple first aid and symptoms of exposure***
- ***Know the mountain distress signals***