

BRAY HEAD TO GREAT SUGAR LOAF HERITAGE TRAIL

Co. Wicklow is renowned for the many wonderful walking trails which traverse its **spectacular landscape**. These trails showcase the county's wealth of beautiful scenery, its abundant wildlife and echo its fascinating history through its **diverse geological formations** and the structures remaining from its **past inhabitants**.

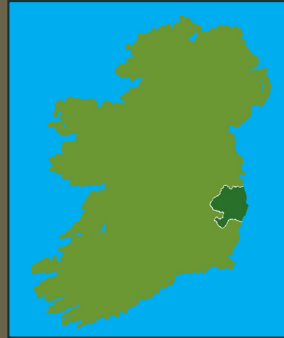
Taking in **15km of the north-east of the county**, this 4-hour walking trail is suitable for **experienced walkers**, traversing the three most prominent features of north Co. Wicklow - **Bray Head** (241m), the **Great Sugar Loaf** (500m) and the **Little Sugar Loaf** (342m). The route encompasses the recently developed **Bray Head Loop**, **Belmont/Killruddery Trail** and the **Sugar Loaf Way Trails**.

This trail provides **breathtaking views** out over the surrounding landscape, the Irish Sea and towards the vast, **17th century elegance of Killruddery House** and gardens. The trail passes through **Belmont Demesne** and the **atmospheric medieval ruins** nestled within the village of **Kilmacanogue** before climbing towards the **Great Sugar Loaf** mountain.



This leaflet is produced by **Wicklow Uplands Council** (WUC). The mission of WUC is to support the sustainable use of the Wicklow Uplands through consensus and partnership with those who live, work and recreate there. Other heritage trails to explore in this area include those at **Vартry Reservoirs** and the **Avonmore Way**. For more information visit www.wicklowuplands.ie

To learn more about the wonderful and diverse built, natural and cultural heritage of Co. Wicklow please visit the county community heritage archive at www.countywicklowheritage.org



LEGEND

- Bray Head Loop Walk
- Belmont / Kilruddery Way
- Sugar Loaf Way
- Place of interest
- Town / Village
- ▲ Mountain
- 🕒 Bird Watching



4

Kilmacanogue

Kilmacanogue lies nestled in the valley between the Great and Little Sugar Loaf Mountains. The village takes its names from the Irish, 'Cill Mocheanóg' or 'Church of Mocheanóg', a Welsh saint martyred in 492. The name illustrates the connections between this part of Wicklow and Wales over 15 centuries ago.

Located on an ancient ecclesiastical site dating to the 6th century, sits the intriguing ruins of a medieval church and graveyard along with a fascinating granite bullaun stone.



5

Great Sugar Loaf

At over 500m, the Great Sugar Loaf is the highest of the trio of landmarks in north Co. Wicklow. Its name comes from the shape in which mounds of sugar were sold up until the late 19th century. The mountain was formed 500 million years ago, constant freezing and thawing over the millennia since have shattered its exterior rocks, revealing the conical shape that we see today.

Two fascinating prehistoric cairns are visible from the mountain's summit along with wonderful views of the surrounding landscape and, on a clear day, the Snowdonia Mountains in Wales.



2

Killruddery House

One of the finest period houses in Ireland, Killruddery House is the home of the Brabazon family, who have held the Earldom of Meath since the early 17th century.

Killruddery sits within a wonderful 850-hectare demesne, the extensive formal gardens are said to be modeled on those at Versailles. Killruddery has been used as a location for many screen productions, including My Left Foot, Angela's Ashes, The Tudors and Camelot.

3

Little Sugar Loaf (342m)



1

Bray Head

Sitting at a height of 241m, Bray Head provides spectacular views over Co. Dublin and the Irish Sea. A designated Special Area of Conservation, this rocky outcrop is of geological significance for its fossils and ancient pre-Cambrian shales and slates.

Bray Head supports native woodland, heath and sea-cliff vegetation and has nationally important populations of seabirds such as Kittiwake and Black Guillemot. Other species such as Peregrine Falcon and Kestrel are known to nest here also.

The large concrete cross on the summit was erected in 1950 to mark Holy Year. The atmospheric ruins of a small medieval church known as Raithin an Chluig or the 'Little Rath of the Bell' lies on the head's northern slopes.



3

Little Sugar Loaf

At 341m high, the Little Sugar Loaf is one of three distinctive elevations in north Wicklow. The mountain is composed of volcanic quartzite and slate rocks which are resistant to erosion. Glacial action during the last Ice Age formed the conical peak that we see today.

Little Sugar Loaf is known in Irish as 'Giolaspar' which derives from the English 'gilt spur'. In the 12th century, land around the mountain was leased for the annual rent of a pair of gilt spurs.

