

Westport Town Walk

START The Octagon

TIME 2 hours

TERRAIN Mainly roads with some walking on an old foot track which can be wet underfoot.

The Town Walk can be enjoyed as one long or two short walks as it is formed of two loops, bringing you back almost to your starting point in the middle. The first loop takes approximately 1 1/4 hours, the second loop about 45 minutes.

This walk starts at The Octagon, in the town centre. Go down James Street and straight over the bridge at the bottom onto the N59, the Newport road. Pass Holy Trinity, the attractive Church of Ireland, on the left and continue up the hill. For a short distance there is no path on either side; take great care at this point. The path soon resumes on the left, below the level of the road with a wall on the right. Follow the path as far as the Teagasc building on the left, then go through the stile in the wall and cross the road with care.

Turn right immediately down a small by-road marked "Cul de Sac". On the left hand side you will notice a small monument marking the point where Michael Davitt and Charles Stewart Parnell addressed a Land League meeting in 1879. Follow this narrow lane as it winds and turns right up a hill. At the top continue straight on; the lane becomes an overgrown path. The surface here is uneven and may be wet underfoot.

As the footpath rises, look out for Nephin mountain in the distance to your left. At the top turn right onto a wider cart track and descend the hill with a fine view of Croagh Patrick to the right. Turn left at the bottom by the little cottage and continue on past the Allergan pharmaceutical plant. This brings you out onto the main Castlebar-Westport road where you turn right, back towards Westport Town. This is a busy road so keep to the footpaths, first on the left and then on the right hand side. Use the pedestrian lights to cross Distillery Road at the bottom of the hill. Then, just before the bridge, turn left along the river and walk down the North Mall with its fine display of Georgian buildings.

At the end of the Mall turn right onto Mill Street and on to the clock at the end. The first loop is now complete, if you wish to return to the the start of the walk, turn right and walk along Shop Street to The Octagon. If you wish to continue on, turn left up High Street, a very steep hill. Look to the right of the bridge for the entrance to the old railway line and follow it to the right leaving the bridge behind you.

When the railway line ends and the walkway narrows, you will see a primary school on the right. Walk past that and keep to the left, past the bus station to the R335, the Louisburgh road, by the sea. Turn right, and head back towards town along The Quay, with its new apartment buildings. Follow the main road as it swings right up the hill, keeping to the path on the left. Stay on the left, walking to the centre of town, crossing Church Street to bring you back to the Octagon where the walk began.

