



# COSÁN NA gCAPALL BEARA BRIDLE WAY

# WELCOME TO THE BEARA BRIDLE WAY

Etched into the sides of the Miskish and Knockgour mountains of the Slieve Miskish range which knuckles the Beara peninsula west, the Beara Bridle Way is Ireland's first ever horse trail. The main trail hugs the flanks of the mountains, overlooking 17 kilometres of rugged mountain scenery, stunning seascapes and dazzling island views. It includes some optional but highly recommended detours that climb to access even better vistas from elevated viewing points.

The Bridle Way links Clonglaskin townland several kilometres west of Castletownbere town with the colourful village of Allihies, once famous for its coppermines, and the coastal townland of Urhan near picturesque Eyeries village.

Despite the wildness of the scenery, the terrain has something for all experience levels and can be undertaken at any pace.

## ALLIHIES TO CLONGLASKIN, CASTLETOWNBERE

The Beara community are delighted to revive this Bridle Way which was first opened to horses in 1824 to facilitate copper mining at Allihies. This 8 km trail includes a steep, 230m ascent and descent so it is recommended that both horse and rider are fit and have previous trekking experience.

The trail follows back roads out of Allihies village, past the disused copper mine, to join a track which climbs steadily up onto the shoulder of Knockgour giving panoramic views of both Allihies and, eventually, Castletownbere. The track then enters forestry for about 1.5km and begins to descend emerging finally at Clonglaskin.

There are three optional route spurs on this section, all well-signed.  
**1.** The first is offered while still on public road leaving Allihies. Riders will meet a bridle gate about 500m after leaving the main route where the spur continues on private land, climbing gently for 3km to breast a high point giving views west of Allihies and Ballydonegan Bay.  
**2.** The second is approximately 2.5 km long and leaves the main route about 2km along the old mining track after the main trail leaves the public road. The spur climbs north towards the summit of Knockgour before levelling and continuing towards the summit of Knockoura and rewards with panoramic views of both Kenmare and Bantry Bays.  
**3.** The final spur is offered about 1km after the second, just before the main trail enters forestry. It winds 1.3km south up Gour Hill towards the summit and a spectacular viewing point.

## ALLIHIES TO URHAN

The Bridle Way follows an old road originally built to enable villagers from Urhan and Eyeries to commute to the Allihies mines. The route is about 7km in length and comprises mostly moderate ascents and descents with just the occasional steeper section. There are also opportunities for a faster pace.

Leaving Allihies village the Bridle Way joins the old copper mines road and loops past the old mine Engine House to climb gently onto the north shoulder of Knockoura giving spectacular views of Kenmare Bay and, on a clear day, the jagged silhouette of the Skellig Islands. As Allihies disappears from view, Urhan and Eyeries hove into sight. The route descends gently towards Urhan where signs direct you off the route and towards the Urhan Inn which welcomes both horse and rider for refreshments and food. Advance booking would be prudent (027 74088).

Optionally, riders can instead carry on along the main trail as it joins a quiet tarmacked road for about 1km before turning onto a track leading to a bridle gate into private land where the track climbs steadily to a stunning viewing point over Coulagh Bay.



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## CONDITIONS OF USE

The Bridle Way has been developed by Beara Tourism on behalf of the local community who welcome all considerate users who are in compliance with the Conditions of Use. The trail follows both public and private tracks and the Bridle Way is only possible because of the kind permission of several private landowners.

- To ride on the Bridle Way you MUST become a member of the Beara Bridle Way and sign The Beara Bridle Way membership agreement.
- Membership of The Bridle Way is only open to Gold Members of the British Horse Society (BHS) OR by availing of the trekking services provided by local riding establishments.
- Members of The Bridle Way must adhere to the Code of Conduct of the membership agreement which should be read carefully and which includes:
  - Members must wear a properly fitted riding hat to a current approved standard and appropriate riding boots.
  - The Bridle Way can be used during daylight hours only.
  - Taking due care with other pedestrian users, livestock and vehicles.
  - Yielding at all times to pedestrians on the Bridle Way.
  - Taking the usual safety precautions with equipment, tack, first aid and care for both rider and horse including the carrying of equine shoes.
  - Obeying the country code and adhering to the marked route.
  - Members under 16 years of age must ride the Bridle Way with an adult member.
  - Absolutely no dogs are permitted on those sections of the Bridle Way on private land.
- It is also recommended that trail users ride at a pace appropriate to the level of experience of both the rider and the horse.

## SAFETY INFORMATION

For emergency services dial 999 or 112.

In anticipation of loss of a horse shoe, trail users should carry equine shoes.

The local veterinary can be contacted on 027 70366.

For the emergency farrier or horse box or any other horse-related issues please ring Tir na Hilan trekking on 086 172 1279 or Karin on 086 376 0688.

Please be aware that there is no mobile coverage for approximately 10% of the trail.

For more information on the trail contact Beara Tourism 027 70054 or bearatours@eircom.net

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