

## Skibbereen

Skibbereen is a bustling and scenic town approximately 30km from Clonakilty. Skibbereen is the most southerly town in Ireland, and is the largest settlement along the Ilen River. The town plays host to a vibrant arts and cultural scene, and acts as the administrative and commercial centre for a large rural hinterland. Skibbereen is the gateway to Roaringwater Bay and the West Cork Islands, and is therefore the ideal starting point for the Ilen River Blueway. Further information on Skibbereen can be found at [www.skibbereen.ie](http://www.skibbereen.ie).



Photograph: Dennis Scannell

### Tourist Information

#### Accommodation

There is a wide variety of accommodation available along the route of the Blueway. Visitors can choose from a choice of B&Bs, self catering accommodation, hostels and hotels.

#### Food & Drink

Skibbereen and Baltimore play host to a large selection of high quality restaurants and public houses. Blueway visitors can choose from a broad range of cuisine along the route.

### Points of Interest

#### Skibbereen Heritage Centre

Skibbereen Heritage Centre is located in the award winning, beautifully restored Old Gasworks Building on the banks of the Ilen River. The heritage centre incorporates two exhibitions:

**The Great Famine Commemoration Exhibition** commemorates the tragic period in the 1840's that is known in Irish history as the great hunger. Skibbereen, along with many areas of the West, was very badly affected losing up to a third of its population to hunger, disease and emigration.

**The Lough Hyne Visitor Centre** explores the unique nature of this salt-water marine lake, Ireland's first marine nature reserve. Nestled in a fold of hills 5km south west of Skibbereen, this marine lake is fed from the sea by a narrow tidal channel known as "The Rapids". This unique lake and its surrounds are home to a rich and varied range of plants and animals, including many rare and beautiful species.

**Uillinn: West Cork Arts Centre** is a purpose-built building for the arts in West Cork. It comprises two contemporary galleries, three artists' studios, a work space, a multi-purpose dance, performance, film and lecture space, café, courtyard and office space. A full exhibition programme runs throughout the year comprising works by local, national and internationally-renowned artists.



## Baltimore

Baltimore is a picturesque village with spectacular views 10km south west of Skibbereen. Baltimore is a hub of maritime activity with a wide variety of water-based activities in and around the village's well developed harbour. The main pier is the main point of departure for the islands of Cape Clear and Sherkin. Users of the Ilen River Blueway will find plenty to do both on and off the water in Baltimore. Further information on Baltimore can be found at [www.baltimore.ie](http://www.baltimore.ie).



Photograph: Fáilte Ireland

### Tourist Information

#### Outdoor Activities

Visitors to the Blueway can also partake in the following activities, amongst others, in the area:

- Angling
- Diving & Snorkelling
- Powerboating
- Sailing
- Walking & Cycling
- Whale & Dolphin Watching

#### Wildlife

The Ilen River is a natural habitat for many species of birds, fish and mammals. Along the Blueway you may encounter Seals and other wildlife, and it is important that trail users do not disturb wildlife along the trail. Baltimore is also a great location for setting off on an offshore whale and dolphin watching excursion.

### Points of Interest

#### West Cork Islands

The Ilen River flows directly into Roaringwater Bay, the setting for a number of inhabited islands. The islands of Sherkin, Hare and Cape Clear offer visitors a wide variety of activities. Each island also provides a range of accommodation, places

to eat and points of interest. There are regular ferry services to these islands departing from Baltimore.

#### Dún na Séad Castle

The castle that watches over Baltimore Harbour from its rocky outcrop was first built by the Anglo-Norman Lord Sleyne in 1215. The name means 'fort of the jewels', which it is thought may be a reference to the castle's role in the collection of taxes levied on foreign vessels entering the harbour.

During the course of a long and turbulent history Dún na Séad passed through many different hands, notably those of the O'Driscoll's, until it eventually fell into ruin after being taken by Oliver Cromwell as a garrison for his troops in 1649. Among the first to sack the castle were McCarthys in 1305. By a happy coincidence the present castle has now been carefully restored by other McCarthys, the present owners. Visitors can once again admire the 'Great Hall' or take in the panoramic view across Baltimore Harbour from the battlements.

VI July 2016



# The Ilen River Blueway

Gormshlí Abhainn Ilen



Paddling Trail



Cover Photograph: Fáilte Ireland



Cork County Council  
Comhairle Contae Chorcaí

# TRAIL INFORMATION



## Chapel Quay (Skibbereen) to Deelish Pier

- 1 Green Trail:** Beginner Trail  
**Access Point** Chapel Quay (1) or Deelish Pier (2)  
**Distance** 2.7km | **Duration** 1 Hour  
**Description** Short trail to be travelled 3 hours either side of high tide. This trail can be completed in either direction. Tide clocks are provided at both of these trail heads. Beware on the downstream side of the Ilen Bridge is a small and short grade 1+ rapid.



## Deelish Pier to Glebe Graveyard

- 2 Blue Trail:** Intermediate Trail  
**Access Point** Deelish Pier (2) or Glebe Graveyard (3)  
**Distance** 6.0km | **Duration** 2 Hours  
**Description** This can be completed in either direction. Approximately 1km downstream of Deelish Pier the trail takes a sweeping turn heading south. This bend creates a shallow silt deposit on the southern bank on the inside of the bend (indicated on map), hence trail users should follow the northern bank, outside of the bend. As the trail approaches Inish Beg, mud flats can appear on both banks in low tide (as indicated on map), trail users should stay in the centre of the channel. On reaching Inish Beg Island trail users should take the northern channel. Glebe Graveyard trail head is on the northern bank shortly after the Inish Beg Junction.



## Glebe Graveyard to Baltimore

- 6 Red Trail:** Advanced Trail  
**Access Point** Glebe Graveyard or Baltimore  
**Distance** 8.6km | **Duration** 3 Hours  
**Description** This trail is the most challenging of the three trail sections to complete and is only suitable for experienced trail users or guided groups. The trail can be completed in either direction. The trail travels around the southern and western shores of Ringarogy and Spanish Island. The trail users must be particularly cautious of wind conditions as the trail is exposed to the prevailing south westerly winds as well as south easterlies, especially south of Ringarogy Island. The trail also includes several open water crossings, in particular a crossing of approximately 500 metres between Baltimore and Ringarogy Island where the crossing point is marked by flags (4) and (5). Wind flags at points (3), (4), (5) and (6) will indicate local wind conditions however trail users must also consult the weather forecast prior to embarking.

Disclaimer: Users of these trails do so at their own risk.



### Map Legend

Cafe / Restaurant	Slipway
Fresh Water	Pier
Harbour	Toilets
Historical building / ruins	Tourist Information
Hotel	Warning
Parking	Do not Disturb Seals
Public House	Local Ferry Route
Put in / take out points	Exclusion Zone - Seals
Shop	Rapids under Ilen Bridge
Shower	Mud Flats

### Local Advice for Users

Trail users must check the weather forecast and beware of the wind especially in open water crossings. In case of an emergency dial **112** or **999** to contact the emergency services. Use VHF Channel 16 to contact the Coast Guard.

## Trail Safety Information

Canoeing and Kayaking are adventure sports. When you go canoeing follow the five points below to stay safe:

### Planning

Plan your trip well in advance by consulting with the Blueway website and local providers.

### Experience

Ensure the Blueway is a suitable match for your group's experience. Water can be dangerous, if you are inexperienced use a local guide and seek formal training.

### Conditions

Consult the weather forecast and tide tables in advance of your trip and if unguided only go out in favourable conditions, clear days with low wind.

### Equipment

Always wear an approved buoyancy aid. Ensure your boat has adequate buoyancy. Bring suitable clothing, such as a wetsuit and equipment to deal with an emergency.

### Emergencies

In the event of capsize, stay with your craft, be ready and equipped to help one another. Always bring some form of communication with you, i.e. mobile phone/VHF. Ensure your group has a towing system in place.

**For more information and safety tips, visit [www.bluewaysireland.org](http://www.bluewaysireland.org).**

In case of an emergency dial 112 or 999 to contact emergency services. Use VHF channel 16 to contact the coast guard. **BE RESPONSIBLE AND STAY SAFE TODAY.**

### LEAVE NO TRACE

Take only pictures, leave only ripples. [www.leaveonotraceireland.org](http://www.leaveonotraceireland.org)



### INVASIVE SPECIES

Help stop the spread of invasive species – wash your boat before and after your paddle. [www.invasivespeciesireland.com](http://www.invasivespeciesireland.com)

We welcome feedback about your paddling experience. Please contact us at [info@bluewaysireland.org](mailto:info@bluewaysireland.org).

For further local information please contact either:  
**CORK COUNTY COUNCIL**  
[www.corkcoco.ie](http://www.corkcoco.ie)  
**SKIBBEREEN TOURIST OFFICE**  
[www.skibbereen.ie](http://www.skibbereen.ie)

## Wind Flag Indicator

**Wind Flag Sagging:** Slack Winds favourable paddling conditions

**Wind Flag Extended or Flapping:** High Winds, not favourable paddling condition

**No Flag:** Trail CLOSED

