

Itinerary 4

Scenic Causeway Coastal Route

Follow the Causeway Coastal Route, one of the world's great scenic roads, and on a single day you can see several of the Northern Ireland's finest attractions.

1. Take a detour and drive to the top of Binevenagh, the dramatic mini-mountain in its own national nature reserve. Views over Lough Foyle are superb, but note signposts warning of the dizzy precipice ahead. BT49 9NN
2. A few miles along the road drive onto Downhill Beech, an 11-kilometer stretch of sand that is ideal for walking or surfing. Perched on the cliff edge 120 feet above is the Mussenden Temple, a folly built as a library by the Bishop of Derry in 1783. The ruins of his palace and splendid gardens are nearby. BT51 4RP
3. On the cliff-top road a mile or so before Portrush is the magnificent ruin of 16th century Dunluce Castle, once the stronghold home of the wild and violent MacDonnell clan. Their colourful history involves Queen Elizabeth 1, the Spanish Armada and the tragic loss of cooks when during a grand banquet one stormy night the kitchen crashed into the sea below. BT57 8UY
4. A few miles on is Ireland's first World Heritage site, the Giants Causeway. Tourists from many nations mingle and marvel at the 40,000 interlocking hexagonal basalt columns disappearing into the sea. Myth says giant Finn McCool created it; science says it was volcanic activity 50-60 million years ago. Cliff walks and good visitor centre. BT57 8SU
5. A bit beyond is the Carrick-a-Rede rope bridge, a crossing for only the bold. The constantly moving bridge carries those who dare 90 feet above the sea to a small rocky island. BT54 6LS
6. Returning to Beech Hill stop at Bushmills, the world's oldest whisky distillery. They've been making whisky here for 400 years. Sample, shop or take a tour. BT57 8XH