



# MURRISK

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At the foot of Croagh Patrick

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### Murrisk Loop

Distance: 4.5 km  
Highest point: 114 metres  
Trail Surface: Minor roads, mountain  
Difficulty: Hill walking  
Duration: 2 - 2.5 hrs

This is a combined mountain, lane and footpath walk which offers spectacular views over Clew Bay as well as local sites of historical and archaeological interest.

### Mountain Loop

Distance: 3.5 km  
Highest point: 114 metres  
Trail Surface: Minor roads, mountain  
Difficulty: Hill walking  
Duration: 1.5 - 2 hrs

This is a moderate walk which climbs towards Croagh Patrick before turning left after the 'swing close' gate along a spectacular mountain route. This affords panoramic views over land and sea before passing sites that include fulacht fiadh, the mass rock, 'banrachs', lazy beds and the Deer Park wall.

### Murrisk Pier Loop

Distance: 3.6 km  
Highest point: 12 metres  
Trail Surface: Minor roads  
Difficulty: Easy  
Duration: 1 hour

This is an easy walk on good level surfaces which follows picturesque lanes to the old fishing harbour. It continues to the Fishermen's Memorial and across an old bridge before passing picnic areas and the Marian Shrine along the main road.

### Murrisk Abbey Walk

Distance: 0.8 km  
Highest point: 8 metres  
Trail Surface: Minor roads  
Difficulty: Easy  
Duration: 30 mins

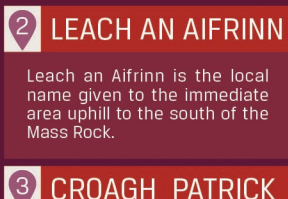
This is a short easy walk along a country lane to a 15th century Augustinian Abbey. Look out for the east window as well as face carvings on the east and south exterior walls.



### 1 FAMINE MEMORIAL

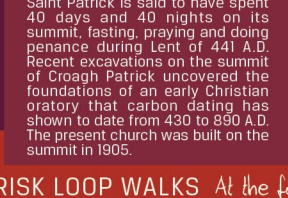
Constructed in the year 2000, this is a National memorial commemorating the Great Famine of the 1840's when over a million Irish people died from starvation and a similar number emigrated, mostly to the United States of America.

The Memorial is a bronze sculpture by the artist John Behan showing a 'coffin ship' with skeletons woven into the masts. It should be viewed as remembering all those who perished on the voyages to America. The Millennium Park is therefore a sacred space and should be treated as such. It is intended to be a prayerful place of reflection.



### 2 LEACH AN AIFRINN

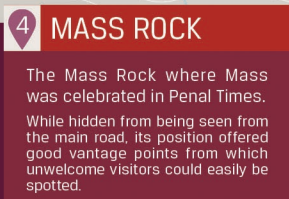
Leach an Aifrinin is the local name given to the immediate area uphill to the south of the Mass Rock.



### 3 CROAGH PATRICK

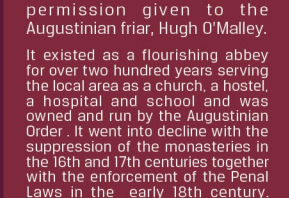
Croagh Patrick (Ireland's Holy Mountain) colloquially called 'The Reek' rising 765 metres above sea level, is the oldest pilgrimage site in Ireland.

Saint Patrick is said to have spent 40 days and 40 nights on its summit, fasting, praying and doing penance during Lent of 441 A.D. Recent excavations on the summit of Croagh Patrick uncovered the foundations of an early Christian oratory that carbon dating has shown to date from 430 to 890 A.D. The present church was built on the summit in 1905.



### 4 MASS ROCK

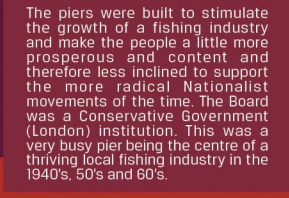
The Mass Rock where Mass was celebrated in Penal Times. While hidden from being seen from the main road, its position offered good vantage points from which unwelcome visitors could easily be spotted.



### 5 MURRISK ABBEY

Murrisk Abbey was founded in the year 1457 by Papal permission given to the Augustinian friar, Hugh O'Malley.

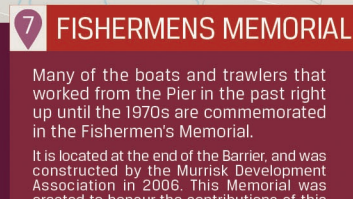
It existed as a flourishing abbey for over two hundred years serving the local area as a church, a hostel, a hospital and school and was owned and run by the Augustinian Order. It went into decline with the suppression of the monasteries in the 16th and 17th centuries together with the enforcement of the Penal Laws in the early 18th century. There is a record of one friar living there in 1801 following the 1798 rebellion while he was in hiding from the authorities. The East window is a spectacularly good example of the quality of stone masonry and building skills of the 15th century.



### 6 MURRISK PIER

Murrisk Pier was constructed under the auspices of the Congested Districts Board around the year 1900. It is one of a whole series of such piers built in the locality.

The piers were built to stimulate the growth of a fishing industry and make the people a little more prosperous and content and therefore less inclined to support the more radical Nationalist movements of the time. The Board was a Conservative Government (London) institution. This was a very busy pier being the centre of a thriving local fishing industry in the 1940s, 50s and 60s.



### 7 FISHERMENS MEMORIAL

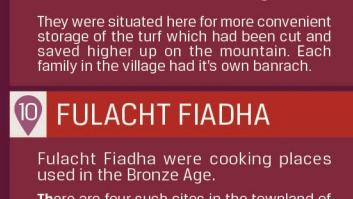
Many of the boats and trawlers that worked from the Pier in the past right up until the 1970s are commemorated in the Fishermen's Memorial. It is located at the end of the Barrier, and was constructed by the Murrisk Development Association in 2005. This Memorial was erected to honour the contributions of this traditional seafaring fishing community. It is a place of peace and reflection where people remember all those who worked on the boats that fished out of Murrisk.



### 8 PAIRC NA bFATAI

Pairc na bFatai are the fields containing the remains of potato ridges or 'lazy beds'.

This was where local people attempted to grow Potatoes in the days of the Great Famine 1845 to 1850.



### 9 BANRACH

An enclosure measuring about 10m x 3m of 3 walls each about 1m high which were used for the storage of turf.

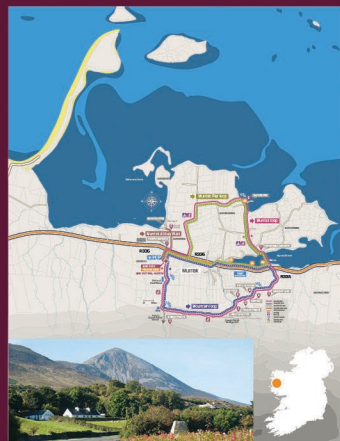
They were situated here for more convenient storage of the turf which had been cut and saved higher up on the mountain. Each family in the village had its own banrach.



### 10 FULACHT FIADHA

Fulacht Fiadha were cooking places used in the Bronze Age.

There are four such sites in the townland of Bealataleen, one of which can be seen in a hollow between two fertile green mounds located at the junction of two mountain streams.



### 11 DEERPARK WALL

The Deerpark wall bounds Deerpark East. It was part of the Westport House Estate used for hunting deer.

