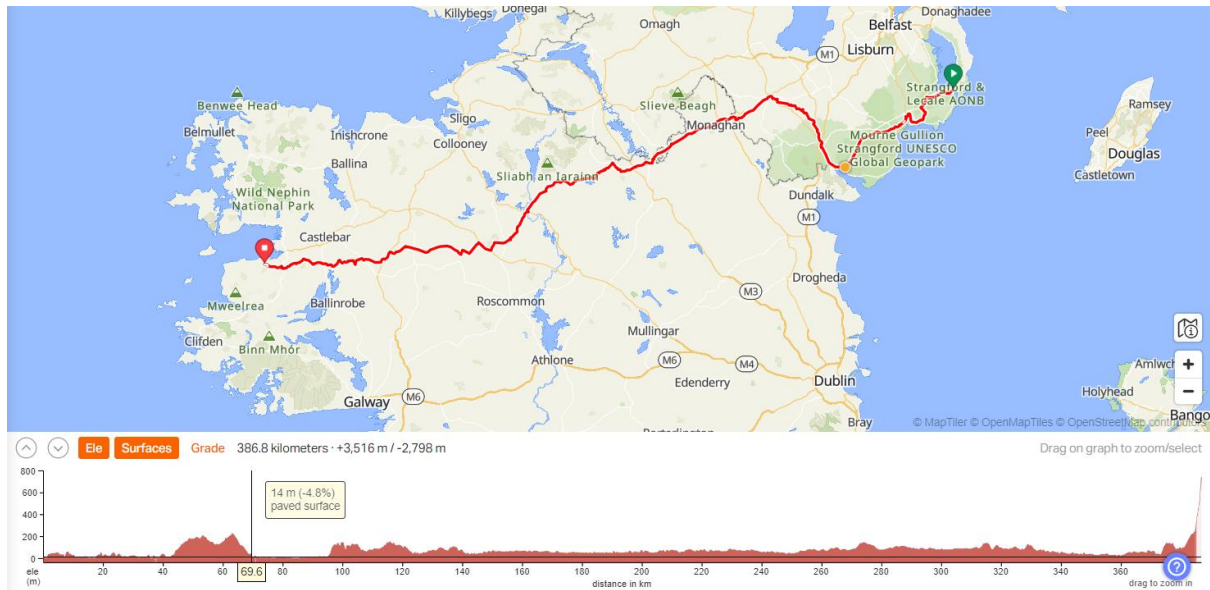


A Guide to Saint Patrick's Way

Welcome to **Saint Patrick's Way**, a scenic 364 km route that allows you to trace the journey of Ireland's beloved patron saint. From **Strangford Lough** in County Down to **Croagh Patrick** in County Mayo, this pilgrimage offers not only spiritual significance but also a deep dive into Ireland's history, culture, and natural beauty. As a cyclist, you can experience this journey in 4-5 days, averaging 80-100 km per day. As a walker it can be broken down to smaller more manageable stages. Along the way, you'll visit ancient landmarks, historic churches, and sacred wells.



Route Overview

- **Total Distance:** 364 km
- **Days Required:** 4-5 (cycling 80-100 km/day)
- **Main Stops:** Strangford Lough, Downpatrick, Armagh, Rathcroghan, Knock, Croagh Patrick
- **Terrain:** Varies from smooth paved roads to hilly countryside, so a good hybrid or road bike is recommended.

Stage 1: Strangford Lough to Downpatrick (12 km)

Start your journey at Strangford Lough, where Saint Patrick is believed to have landed on his second visit to Ireland in 432 AD.

- **Slieve Patrick** (3 km from start): Take a short detour to see the world's largest statue of Saint Patrick.
- **Saul Church** (3.5 km): Visit the site of Saint Patrick's first church, located in a barn donated by Dichu.

- **Struell Wells** (8.1 km): These ancient wells were used for spiritual purposes by Saint Patrick and make for a peaceful stop.



Downpatrick (12 km): Follow the Quoile River to this historically significant town.

- **Down Cathedral** (10.9 km): Pay your respects at Saint Patrick's grave, a simple stone marking his final resting place.
- **The Saint Patrick Centre** (11.6 km): Learn more about the life of Saint Patrick through an engaging multimedia exhibit.



Stage 2: Downpatrick to Armagh (85 km)

Today is a longer stretch as you cycle west to **Armagh**, Ireland's ecclesiastical capital.

- **St. Patrick's Anglican Cathedral** (85 km): Visit one of Ireland's oldest Christian sites, with commanding views over the city.
- **St. Patrick's Roman Catholic Cathedral** (86.5 km): A beautiful Gothic structure just 1 km away, worth stopping for its architecture and serene atmosphere.



Stage 3: Armagh to Drumcru (127 km)

Pedal on towards **Drumcru** in County Monaghan, where you'll find **Saint Patrick's Well (Jaundice Well)**.

- **Saint Patrick's Well**: Known for its reputed healing properties, particularly for jaundice. A refreshing stop after a long day of cycling.



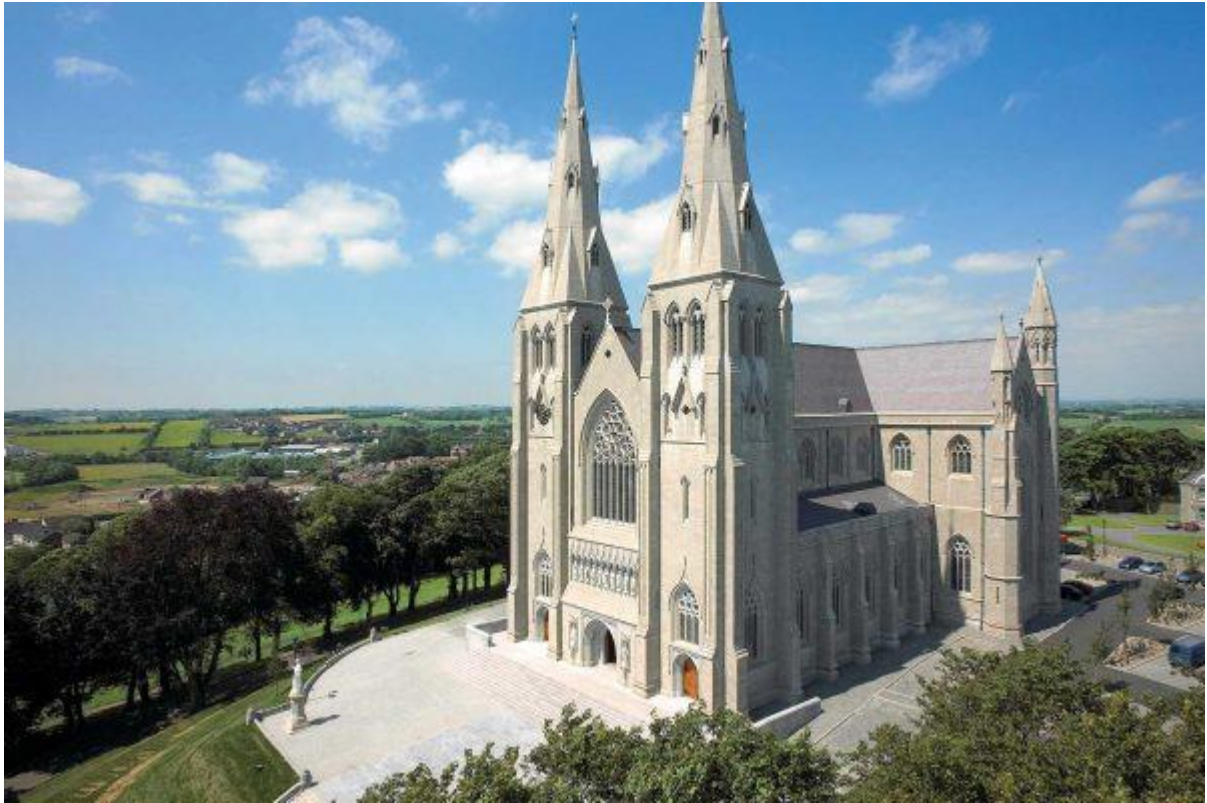
Stage 4: Drumcru to Cavan Town (162 km)

Continue southwest to **Cavan Town**.

- **Cathedral of Saint Patrick and Saint Felim:** This cathedral combines modern and traditional designs, standing as a religious and cultural landmark.

From Cavan, head further southwest towards **Moyne** and **Dromard Wells**:

- **Saint Patrick's Well (Moyne)** (192 km): Another well associated with the saint, offering a spiritual rest stop.
- **Tobarpatrik (Dromard)** (195 km): A sacred spring just 3 km further along the route.



Stage 5: Dromard to Rathcroghan (247 km)

Today's destination is **Rathcroghan**, a site steeped in Irish mythology and history.

- **Rathcroghan:** Once the seat of Queen Medb and the site where the festival of Samhain (Halloween) originated, this ancient capital of Connacht is a must-visit for those interested in Irish prehistory.



Stage 6: Rathcroghan to Knock (297 km)

Cycle from Rathcroghan to **Knock**, a globally renowned Marian shrine.

- **Knock Shrine:** This pilgrimage site attracts thousands every year, including visits from Popes. Its peaceful atmosphere and spiritual significance offer a moment for reflection.



Stage 7: Knock to Mayo Abbey (314 km)

Head north to **Mayo Abbey**, once a major center for religious learning in medieval Ireland.

- **Mayo Abbey:** Founded by Saint Colman in 668 AD, this abbey was a renowned monastic center, drawing students from across Europe.



Stage 8: Mayo Abbey, Clogher to Ballintubber Abbey (330 km)

Cycle onward to **Ballintubber Abbey**, a site deeply connected with Irish spirituality.

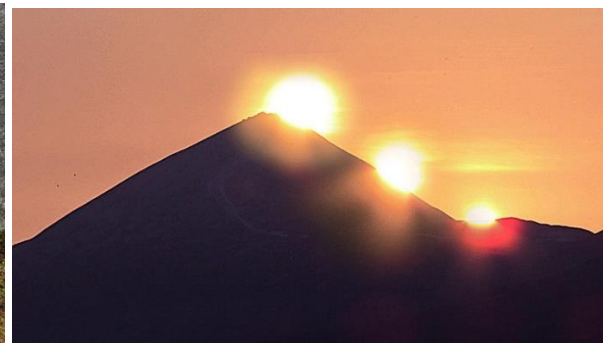
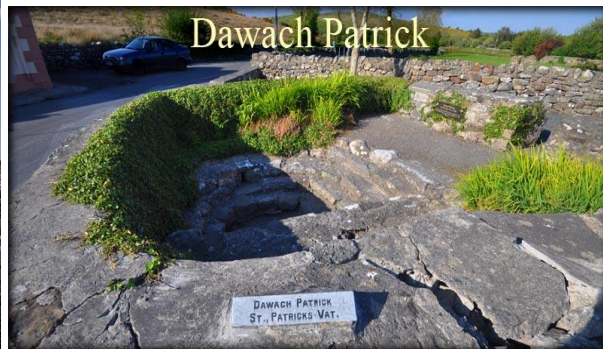
- **Ballintubber Abbey:** Founded in 1216, this abbey has survived through centuries of hardship and continues to be an active religious site.

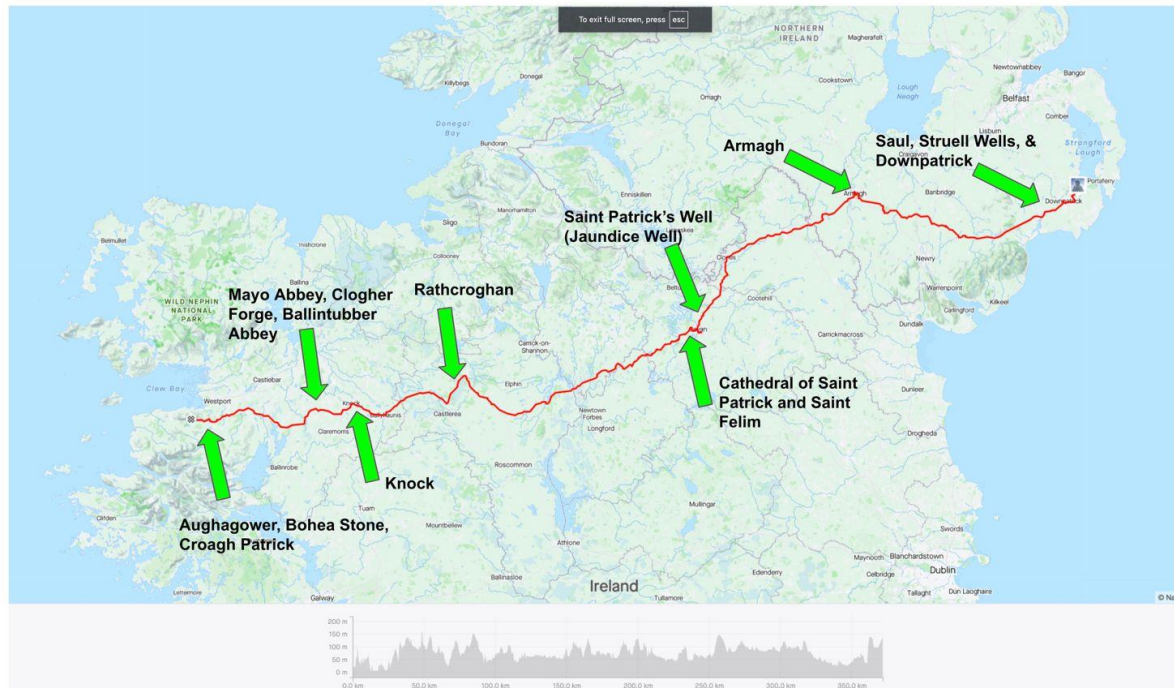


Stage 9: Ballintubber Abbey to Croagh Patrick (364 km)

The final leg of your journey takes you to **Croagh Patrick**, Saint Patrick's sacred mountain.

- **Aghagower Round Tower and Church:** A historic monastery founded by Saint Senach, with connections to Saint Patrick.
- **Boheh Stone:** Near the village, see ancient carvings and witness the "Rolling Sun" phenomenon during April and August.
- **Croagh Patrick:** Ascend this iconic mountain, where Saint Patrick fasted for 40 days. The summit offers breathtaking views and is a fitting conclusion to your pilgrimage.





Final Thoughts

Cycling **Saint Patrick's Way** is a unique and rewarding experience that combines physical challenge, spiritual discovery, and an exploration of Ireland's rich history. Whether you're seeking a deeper connection with your faith or simply wish to enjoy the stunning Irish landscapes, this pilgrimage route will leave a lasting impression. Prepare well, enjoy the journey, and follow in the footsteps of Ireland's most revered saint.

