

Itineraries

TAILORED FOR ALL SORTS OF TRAVELLERS



There's so much to do, see, eat, drink and experience around the Munster Vales that it can be hard to fit it all in on one trip.

This is a unique rural region with great hikes, views and backdrops provided by the various mountain ranges – **Comeraghs, Nagles, Knockmealdowns, Ballyhoura and Galtees.**



*A selection of
itineraries*

✓ 5 Day

✓ 3 Day

✓ 2 Day

✓ 1 Day

1 Day Trip

2 Day Trip

3 Day Trip

5 Day Trip

Make sure you check out our route planner and check the great tips on our website to plan your visit. And to make things even easier, we have put together a selection of **5 Day, 3 Day, 2 Day** and **1 Day itineraries** so you can just follow our lead!

These are tailored for **all sorts of travellers**, so whether you're looking for action or want to take it easy, travelling as a **family** or a **group of friends**, have an interest in **local history** or **local food**, we've got something to suit everyone.

All you need to do is pick which suits, make sure you book ahead where needed, and **immerse yourself in the magical Munster Vales**.



A day on the trails

- ✓ Ride Ballyhoura Mountain Bike trails
- ✓ Eat at Deebert House

A day on the trails

If you want to spend an active day in the Munster Vales, get yourself kitted out with bikes and safety gear to hit the 98km's worth of **Ballyhoura Mountain Bike Trails**.

Ballyhoura Trailriders will lease bikes and tailor your treks to help you attempt anything from the simple 6km loops to a more demanding 50km. This is the longest trail network of its kind in Ireland so, if you're looking for a challenge, this could be it!

Swap the saddle for something a bit comfier at the nearby **Deebert House Hotel** where you can relax and refuel with their range of traditional dishes and everyday specials.

1 Day Trip



A day in the country

- ✓ Explore Donneraile and Fermoy
- ✓ Eat at Hannas Café

A day in the country

Spend your day at the **Donneraile Estate and Wildlife Sanctuary** exploring the five themed gardens and 400 acres of parkland which is home to deer, otters, herons and squirrels. Make sure you take time to check out the fabulous local crafts at **Great Artitude**.

The place is bursting with handmade items such as woven baskets, crochet toys and wooden pieces as well as fine art, jewellery and ceramics. Stop off for food at the popular **Townhouse Café** which has a variety of deliciously fresh dishes.

Take the 5km walk up Corrin Hill in Fermoy to catch the spectacular views of the valley and the Galtee Mountains, and treat yourself to a visit to **Hanna's Café** where you can pick up luxury sandwiches, homemade drizzle cake and Irish apple juice for a picnic by the river Blackwater.



A castle day

- ✓ Check out Lismore Castle Gardens and Dungarvan
- ✓ Eat at Cookhouse 360
- ✓ Cycle the Waterford Greenway

A castle day

Start the day off at **Lismore Castle Gardens** and meander around the tree lined avenue, market garden and meadows in what are said to be the oldest cultivated gardens in Ireland. You can also link in via virtual reality to get the lowdown on the Castle's history and its famous inhabitants.

Spend some time at **Lismore Castle Arts**, or take a gentle stroll along Lady Louisa's Walk which brings you along the river and through some stunning woodland.

From here, head to Dungarvan and drop into **Cookhouse 360** with fabulous all day food and a great set up. You can choose from beautifully cooked fish, meat and falafels or pitch up at the streetside cookshack for something quick and easy.

You've still time to check out **Dungarvan Castle** or pick up bikes from Garvan at **The Greenway Man** to cycle part of the Waterford Greenway.

1 Day Trip



A day on the hills

- ✓ Visit Mt Melleray and Mahon Falls
- ✓ Follow up with a guided walk to Coumshingaun
- ✓ Takeaway food from Barrons Bakery

A day on the hills

To match up a great hike to your abilities and requirements, hook up with Mario from **Muddyboots** to design your ideal mountain trek. If you're looking for a moderate to strenuous hike with fantastic panoramic views, take their favourite route up to the Coumshingaun Horseshoe.

Pick up lunch at **Barron's Bakery and Coffee Shop** in Cappoquin including their tasty scotch brick oven baked bread and take a trip to the peaceful oasis of **Mount Mellary Abbey** to take in the amazing views across the valley and visit its perfect little coffee shop.



A day at the coast

- ✓ See the Copper Coast and town of Kilmactomas
- ✓ Eat at the Coach House Cafe

A day at the coast

To get the best of the Munster Vales scenery, pick up the stunning Copper Coast drive at Dungarvan which has plenty of stop off options and unforgettable views. We recommend a visit to the **Copper Coast UNESCO Global Geopark** where you can book a tour to learn about the geological, archaeological and biodiverse importance of this area.

Stop off at the lovely town of Kilmactomas which has walks along the River Mahon and all the way to the Mahon Falls.

Then pick up some deli food and sweet treats washed down by a hand roasted coffee at the **Coach House Cafe**.

2 Day Trip



For a short family trip

Day 1

- ✓ Check out Ormond Castle
- ✓ Eat at O Ceallaichain's Gastro Bar
- ✓ Visit the Tudor Artisan Hub

Day 2

- ✓ Cycle the Suir Blueway with Blueway Bike Hire
- ✓ Eat at Raheen House
- ✓ Visit Tipperary Museum of Hidden History

One more thing...

- ✓ Catch an exhibition at the beautifully restored former courthouse and barracks the Main Guard in Clonmel

For a short family trip

For a short two day break with the family in the Munster Vales, there's a great choice of hotels such as the charming **Carraig Hotel** in the gorgeous town of Carrick-on-Suir.

Spend Day 1 at **Ormond Castle**, an impressive Elizabethan manor joined to an earlier medieval castle which sits along the riverside and offers audio visual aides which help bring its history to life. Settle in for a good feed at the cosy, family friendly **O Ceallaichain's Gastro Bar** which has a range of mouth watering choices.

Next, we suggest a trip to the **Tudor Artisan Hub** which is home to a collective of over 100 artists from around the region. This quirky, buzzy hub has crafts from across the arts using all sorts of textiles and skills.

On Day 2, get out into the heart of nature with a cycle along the Suir Blueway. Pick up your bikes and helmets from **Blueway Bike Hire** and explore the woodlands, castles and wildlife along this safe riverside route.

Stop off for lunch at the 17th Century **Raheen House** for a beetroot salad or deluxe toastie with a tasty range in sides; or pick up a daily special from **Fodar at Hotel Minella** and take a stroll around the gardens at Raheen.

Head into Clonmel for a really fun, interactive session on the history of Tipperary at **Tipperary Museum of Hidden History**. It covers rural life in Tipperary and Big House living, the politics, fighting and wars and the key players in all of it.



Group together for a two day culturefest

Day 1

- ✓ Fethard Town and Fethard Horse Country Experience
- ✓ Eat at Emily's Café

Day 2

- ✓ Visit Cahir Castle and Swiss Cottage
- ✓ Apple Farm
- ✓ Eat at River House Restaurant Cahir

One more thing...

- ✓ Enjoy a trip to Galtee Honey Farm where Aoife will talk you through how their bees deliver the best products

Group together for a two day culturefest

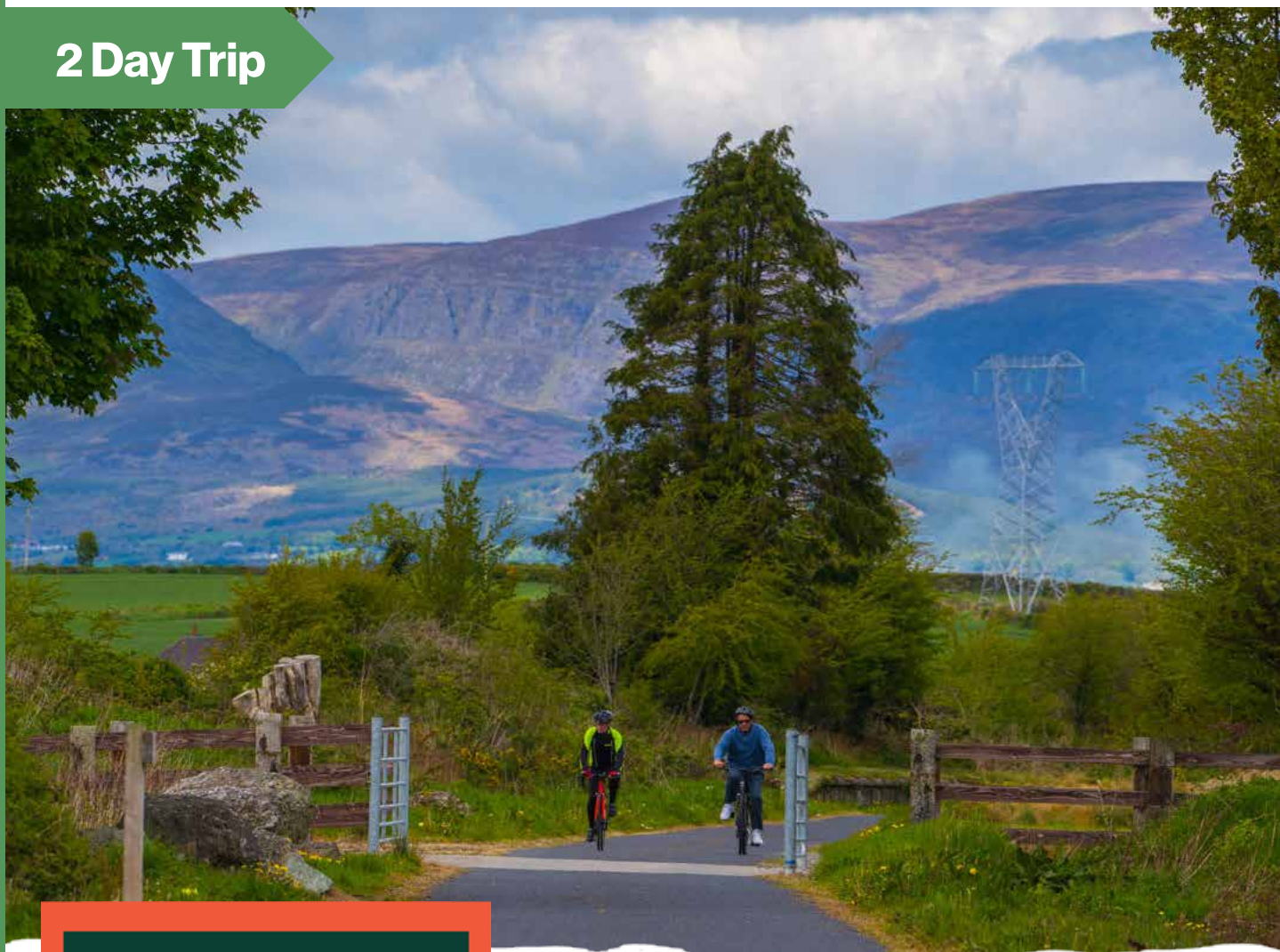
There is so much cultural choice around Munster Vales but for a short two day trip, you might want to check out **Clonacody House**. This beautiful old house has spacious rooms and beautiful views of the surrounding gardens and trees, and is incredibly peaceful. This is a perfect choice for a large group of up to ten and has a minimum two day stay. If you want to travel with a smaller entourage, have a look at the options at Boolakennedy Self Catering which has a range of cosy and modernised farm cottages.

Swap this on **Day 1** for the bustling, walled town of **Fethard** which marries medieval buildings with a variety of modern shops, pubs and restaurants. You can download audio trails to talk you through the historical relevance of the town. Stop by the **Fethard Horse Country Experience** which has interactive exhibitions to give you a real feel of the importance of horses to the people and the land. Eat at **Emily's Deli and Tearoom** where you'll have the difficult choice of picking between the tasty wraps, foccacias and pulled pork baps, the noodle bowls and homemade quiches.

Day 2 After a morning getting up to date with the unforgettable **Cahir Castle** and **Swiss Cottage**, take time at the environmentally responsible **Apple Farm** which grows a variety of fruit to produce their own jams, sparkling apple juice and cider vinegar.

Call into the **River House Restaurant** in Cahir to sample their fabulous menu ranging from Spanish style Carbonara to Tomato and Orange Risotto.

2 Day Trip



Relaxing family break

Day 1

- ✓ Liscarroll Donkey Sanctuary and looped walk
- ✓ Eat at Thatch and Thyme Cafe

Day 2

- ✓ Annestown Valley Walkway and Wildlife Centre
- ✓ Visit Dunhill Eco Park
- ✓ Eat at The Happy Grind

One more thing...

- ✓ Squeeze in a trip to Blackwater Valley Makers which has a range of artworks from local makers

Relaxing family break

Get away with the family and relax in the Munster Vales with a stay in either Co Waterford's **Dungarvan Park Hotel** with easy access to the start of the Waterford Greenway where you can hire bikes from Garvan **The Greenway Man**; or **Charleville Park Hotel** which offers a supervised movie night for kids at the weekend. Both options have swimming pools, steam rooms and saunas.

The kids will love a visit to the **Liscarroll Donkey Sanctuary** on **Day 1** where you can book some time at the open farm and check out how Lockdown Lockie, the foal, is getting on. Stop by **Thatch and Thyme Café** to sample their luscious salads, creamy chowder and big, wholesome bakes.

On **Day 2**, take a trip to the **Anne Valley Walkway and Wildlife Centre**. This is a lovely flat walk, ideal for children, with lovely views and quirky little touches such as a worry tree and fairy doors. Stop off for barista coffee, snacks and a chat with the locals at the seasonal **Happy Grind coffee wagon**. Follow that up with a visit to **Dunhill Eco Park** where you can learn about the various local businesses operating from the premises and visit the community garden to learn about growing your own food and sustainable living.



For a two day spoiler

Day 1

- ✓ Take a tour of Cashel Blue Cheesemakers
- ✓ Eat at Dooks
- ✓ Tour the Rock of Cashel

Day 2

- ✓ Hike the Glen of Aherlow or rent a bike with BB Bikes
- ✓ Eat at the Glen of Aherlow Hotel

One more thing...

- ✓ Get a different view with a boat, kayak or SUP along the Suir Blueway

For a two day spoiler

There's so much to do, see, eat and drink around the Munster Vales so with two days to spare, you might want to check out Co Cork's **Ballywillin House**, a charming house on the edge of Mitchelstown with peaceful gardens, farmed deer and wild boar. It's well known for its sustainably produced food, wine tasting and mindfulness retreats. Take a walk through Mitchelstown and check out the Holy Well dedicated to the town's patron Saint, St Fanahan.

Start **Day 1** at **Cashel Blue Cheesemakers** where you'll get a taste of how the journey of the creamy blue cheese from the grass fed milking cows to your cheese platter. Leave plenty of room though for the delights of the very popular **Dooks Fine Food's** which serves up fresh, seasonal dishes with a delicious twist. You can't go to Cashel without getting up close to the iconic **Rock of Cashel** so make sure you book a ticket.

On **Day 2**, take a trip to **Mitchelstown Caves** in Co Tipperary for an awe inspiring tour of the unique formation of these underground chambers and passages. Then head off to explore the Glen of Aherlow with a hike to the top or bike hire from nearby **BB Bike Hire**. Grab a coffee and a bake from **Ri Coffee Van** or drop into the **Aherlow House Hotel** which is surrounded by trees and an unbeatable view of the rugged, rural landscape. You can choose from their sumptuous three course lunch and dinner menus, or the hearty bar menu.

2 Day Trip



Nail your two day adventure

Day 1

- ✓ Horse riding with John Joe of Ballyhoura Horse Riding
- ✓ Visit Donneraile and Eat at Donneraile Townhouse

Day 2

- ✓ Pitch up at Ballyhass Adventure Centre
- ✓ Eat on site

One more thing...

- ✓ Check out the working dairy farm and luscious setting of Glenroe Farm Cottage

Nail your two day adventure

There plenty of accommodation choices in the Ballyhoura area – a handy stay is the central and accessible **Ballyhoura Luxury Hostel** located in the picturesque mountain village of Kilfinane Co Limerick which you can book privately for up to 25 people.

Get on your horse on **Day 1** with John Joe at **Ballyhoura Horse Trekking**. You can ride out along forest trails and mountain vales to get a real flavour of the Ballyhouras. Once you've built up an appetite, fill up on warm Clonakilty salads, homemade soups and flatbreads at the stylish **Donneraile Townhouse**. If that is not enough activity, check out the various walks in Ballyhoura by accessing their handy walking app.

On **Day 2**, pack up and get yourselves over to the **Ballyhass Adventure Playground** in Mallow where you can tackle the inflatable water park, try the ancient skill of archery or give axe throwing your best shot. There's also a range of high ropes and nets as well as kayaking, wakeboarding and SUP. A pretty full-on day so thankfully you won't have to worry about finding somewhere to eat – you can grab something at the on-site café between activities.



Go the St Declan's Way

Day 1

- ✓ Ardmore Cappoquin Lismore

Day 2

- ✓ Ardfinnan and Surrounds

Day 3

- ✓ Cashel

One more thing...

- ✓ Take a guided boat tour with Blackwater Boating near Cappoquin

Go the St Declan's Way

St Declan's Way is a pilgrim walking route which takes you all the way from St Declan's Monastery in Ardmore, Co Waterford to the Rock of Cashel. If you fancy taking on the full walk, get in touch with Phil and Elaine at **Waterford Camino** who can take you through some tailored options.

Alternatively, we suggest getting the most out of the route and various stop offs by breaking it up over three days with some transport back up!

Book into the stunning **Cliff House Hotel**, with luxurious rooms, a fabulous pool and Michelin starred food. On **Day 1**, get inspiration for your trip at the Round Tower where St Declan built his monastery, and take a walk along the coastal cliff path to drink in the views. We suggest taking the car to the lovely town of Cappoquin where you can pick up the 7km trail to nearby Lismore. This is a pleasant, rural walk through fields and along the Blackwater River. When you get to Lismore, make sure you stop off at **Lismore Heritage Centre** and **Lismore Castle Gardens** where you can learn more about the significance of the historical buildings. Fuel up at **Foley's on the Mall** which is full of character and exceptional food before heading back along the marked route to Cappoquin.

If you have time, make sure you pay a visit to **Cappoquin House and Gardens** which has been home to the Keane family for almost 300 years.

And if you're up for another 10km, you could pay a visit to the peaceful oasis of **Mount Melleray Abbey**.

On **Day 2**, we suggest spending time walking the route around Ardfinnan. You can choose to walk part or all of the trail through the beautiful Knockmealdown Mountains. The route takes you to Ardfinnan Castle which was built in the early 12th Century to guard the access bridge across the River Suir. Or take the trail along the River Suir, past the Swiss Cottage and Cahir Park Gardens as far as Cahir. Treat yourself to lunch at the **Lava Rock** – you'll not regret it!

Head to Cashel for your last leg and check into the town's popular **Bailey's Hotel**. You can take on some or all of St Declan's Way from here on **Day 3**, as it leads you through luscious countryside and past medieval Castles. And if you're all walked out, there's plenty to do and see in Cashel from visiting the iconic Rock to the **Heritage Centre and Cashel Folk Village**. Take your pick from the equally delicious Mikey Ryan's or Café Hans.

3 Day Trip



Ultimate family getaway

Day 1

- ✓ Enjoy Blackwater kayaking at Waterford with Dennis
- ✓ Eat at Barron's Bakery Cappoquin

Day 2

- ✓ Visit Fethard Horse Country Museum
- ✓ Eat at Dook's
- ✓ Spend time at the Tipperary Museum of Hidden History

Day 3

- ✓ Cycle Suir Blueway
- ✓ Eat at Coco Grill
- ✓ Shop in Clonmel

One more thing...

- ✓ Drop by St Patrick's Holy Well near Clonmel to make a wish or, if you time it right, catch Clonmel Apple Fest

Ultimate family getaway

For the ultimate three day family getaway, you have some great choices: you can base yourselves at the **Clonmel Park Hotel** which has a kids' cinema club, or check into the Georgian built **Hotel Minella**. Both hotels have swimming pools which are guaranteed to keep most kids happy!

Spend **Day 1** at the fabulous **Blackwater Kayaks and Canoes** – pick your preference and get out onto the water supported by Dennis's expert tutoring. Grab lunch at **Barron's Bakery** in Cappoquin where they serve all sorts of soup and sandwiches but stand out for their tasty scotch brick oven baked bread.

Take yourselves off to the **Fethard Country Horse Museum** on **Day 2** for all you need to know about the historical and modern day importance of horses throughout the county. The museum has some great interactive information points just perfect for kids. Don't visit Fethard without eating at **Dook's Fine Foods**. This is truly fine dining where you can order anything from mouthwatering sausage rolls to hot smoked salmon, served up with fresh, local vegetables.

After that, it's worth visiting the **Tipperary Museum of Hidden History** to learn about sustainability in previous decades, the history of local waterways and stories of the otherworld. They hold regular exhibitions so there's always something going on.

Start **Day 3** with the wind in your hair as you cycle along the Suir Blueway. The routes take you along the river's Blueways and are ideal for families, so hire bikes locally and go as far as you like along the 21km marked trail which ends at Carrick-on-Suir. Once you're back in Clonmel, stop at **Coco's Café** which pleases even the fussiest of little eaters with everything from healthy salads bowls to venison hot dogs and American style pancakes.

You've got time for a spot of shopping around Clonmel, a really pretty town with a good range of quirky little gift shops.



Get active in Ballyhoura

Day 1

- ✓ Have fun at Ballyhass
- ✓ Eat on site

Day 2

- ✓ Ride Ballyhoura Bike trails

Day 3

- ✓ Walk with Ballyhoura Walking app
- ✓ Eat at Molly's Kilfinane

One more thing...

- ✓ Spend the afternoon at Ballyhoura Apple Farm or take a leisurely stroll at Lough Gur Heritage Centre where the serene lake sets the scene for a relaxing afternoon

Get active in Ballyhoura

One of the great accommodation choices for a three day outdoor and active break around Ballhoura is **Ballyhoura Mountain Lodges**. There are nine lodges - each sleeping up to six people - scattered around this rural oasis with plenty of trees and greenery.

Spend **Day 1** at **Ballyhass Adventure Playground** where you can take on everything from archery to axe throwing to the more gentle arts of throwing yourself around an inflatable water park, kayaking or supping. Give yourself a bit of a break and eat at the on-site cafe.

Get on your bike on **Day 2** and head into the trails around Ballyhoura Mountains. Hire bikes and tailor your treks with help from **Ballyhoura Trailriders** to tackle anything from the 6km loops to a more demanding 50km. If you're looking for a challenge, this could be it!

There's still loads more to see around Ballyhoura, so we suggest downloading the **Ballyhoura Walking app** on **Day 3** to pick one of 11 walks, ranging in ability and views. There are some fabulous vistas around this area so take your time and drink it in.

You'll have earned your food, so treat yourselves to a good substantial meal at the charming **Molly's** in Kilfinane.

3 Day Trip



At your own pace

Day 1

- ✓ Visit Cappoquin House and Gardens
- ✓ Eat at Barron's Bakery

Day 2

- ✓ Spend time at Black Water Valley Makers in Castletownroche
- ✓ Tour Tourin House and Gardens
- ✓ Eat at Pilgrims Rest Hotel

Day 3

- ✓ Wander around Lismore Heritage Centre, Castle Gardens and Lismore Castle Arts
- ✓ Enjoy Lismore Escape Room at the heritage Centre and take time out at the Millennium Park
- ✓ Eat at Foleys on the Mall Lismore

One more thing...

- ✓ For more garden fun, check out the Ballyhoura Garden Experience

At your own pace

If you are looking for comfort, charm and that little bit of luxury in the Munster Vales, a great option would be **Richmond House** at Cappoquin. This 18th Century Country House has spectacular views of the surrounding gardens, and the owners source their produce from the local area. Linger over the extensive breakfast before beginning **Day 1** with a visit to **Cappoquin House and Gardens**. The house has been home to the Keane family for 300 years and has a working farm, 100 acre orchard and a sunken garden which you can learn all about with the help of a tour guide. A charming way to spend the day.

Spend the morning of **Day 2** perusing a range of ceramic, fine art, woodturning and jewelry at **Black Water Valley Makers** in Castletownroche, all contributed by local artists.

Once you've picked your souvenir, drive over to **Tourin House and Gardens**, a 16th Century Italianate style house. You can take your time touring the expansive walled and pleasure gardens, the boardwalk and the pond area or head over to the nearby **Dromana House and Gardens** overlooking the Blackwater

River.

We suggest eating at the nearby **Pilgrims Rest Hotel** for reasonably priced and hearty food.

For your final **Day 3** in this beautiful, culture filled area, we suggest spending time at **Lismore Heritage Centre** which has a range of options to get you up close to the history of Lismore and its Castle. You can step back in time by using virtual reality headsets and find out all about the priceless artefacts that went forgotten for 200 years.

Alternatively, you can choose the guided 360 imagery tour using modern technology to bring history alive, or attempt to solve the Robert Boyle mystery by cracking the code of an escape room.

Back out in the real world, you can opt for a one hour tour of the town to hear about the Viking invasion and Norman settlement, or take some time to relax in the beautifully laid out Millennium Park.

We suggest eating at **Foley's on the Mall** where you can choose from fresh soups, warm quiches, spicy burgers and good old fish and chips.



A little bit of luxury

Day 1

- ✓ Hike the Nagles with Mark Britton
- ✓ Eat at Longueville

Day 2

- ✓ Take a morning yoga walk with Yoga Walks Ireland
- ✓ Visit Fermoy for shopping and picnic by the river
- ✓ Taste some local cider

Day 3

- ✓ Visit Nana Nagle Place
- ✓ Visit Great Artitude
- ✓ Eat at The Townhouse in Donneraile

One more thing...

- ✓ Check out the history of Charleville with a guide from Charleville Heritage Society

A little bit of luxury

If you're looking for a little bit of luxury, you might want to check out **Longueville House** in Mallow, Co Cork. Not only is the accommodation pure comfort but their sustainability credentials are impressive. All the food they serve is either grown in their walled garden, foraged from the hedgerows or supplied by local producers. Their orchard provides honey from the bees, and cider and brandy from the apples.

It's hard to leave, but worth it to spend **Day 1** hiking the Nagles with qualified mountain leader **Mark Britton**. Mark will take you through the best hiking options with the ultimate views or you could sign up to one of his navigation classes to hone your skills.

Head back to Longueville House for dinner which changes each day to ensure that the freshest produce is used from their garden and paired with the meats, fish, cheeses and eggs sourced from local artisan providers.

Start **Day 2** off with the most relaxing walk possible by booking in with Caroline of **Yoga Walks Ireland**. This is the ideal way to immerse yourself in nature and engage your

senses and, when you're ready, spend the rest of the day in the lovely town of Fermoy to wander around their unique little shops. Pick up some luxury sandwiches, homemade drizzle cake and Irish apple juice at **Hanna's Café** and picnic by the Blackwater River.

Back at Longueville House, get the "InCider" story with a tour of the distillery and orchards to find out how their cider and brandy come to life.

On **Day 3**, pay a visit to **Nano Nagle Place** to hear about the inspirational Nano Nagle who was responsible for the education of hundreds of impoverished Catholic children. A self-tour of the building will cover the history of 18th Century Cork and the importance of Nano Nagle's work in Cork City.

From there, travel to nearby Donneraile to check out the fabulous local crafts at **Great Artitude**. The place is bursting with handmade items such as woven baskets, crocheted toys and wooden pieces as well as fine art, jewelry and ceramics. Eat at the popular **Townhouse Café** which has a variety of deliciously fresh dishes.



Variety is the spice!

If you want to truly savor the local culture of the Munster Vales and get a real farm to fork experience, a great option is to check into **Ballyvolane House** in Castlelyons in Co Cork. The owners of this beautiful big house complete with high ceilings, buckets of light and wonderful views, pride themselves on providing mostly locally grown and sourced food. And if you prefer a taste of the outdoors, Ballyvolane offers exceptional glamping pods with a tasty welcome box and a communal chill out area.

Kick off **Day 1** with a walking tour of **Buttevant Heritage Town** with a guide from **Say Hello to Ireland Tours**. This medieval town is bursting with stories, with archaeological digs as recent as 10 years ago shedding even more light on the town's origins.

Head over to Donneraile to eat at the popular **Townhouse Café** which has a variety of hearty salads, soups and breads with a delicious twist. Spend the afternoon at the **Donneraile Estate and wildlife sanctuary** exploring the five themed gardens and the 400 acres of parkland which is home to deer, otters, herons and squirrels.

On **Day 2**, start your day at the 6,000 year old lake of Lough Gur. You can book a guided tour to find out all about the history and folklore of the area. Check into the community run Visitor Centre and explore the ruins of a Norman Castle known as Black Castle.

If you have time, head over to the **Kenndy Rooms** in Bruff, a former convent with a great history and links to John F Kennedy.

Back at Ballyvolane House, you can book a session to get a taste of their very own **Bertha's Revenge Gin**. You can't stay at Ballyvolane House without sampling their tasting menus which are tailored to make use of their produce across each of the four seasons.

For the next three nights of your stay, other great options could be **Grenane House** with its listed gardens and stunning hand painted playroom; or the luxurious Georgian **Lismacue House** which is surrounded by 200 acres of parkland and views of the Galtee mountains. The 800 year old Castle, **Castlegarde**, is another good choice. And if you want to get a bit closer to the scenery, pitch a tent or caravan at the **Glen of Aherlow Caravan and Camping Park**.

Spend **Day 3** exploring the Glen of Aherlow with its scenic drive up to the Christ the King statue. There are some great hikes around the area but make sure you take time to check out the **Heritage Trail**. Head over to Tipperary to fuel up with freshly cooked and responsibly sourced food at the popular **Flanagan's Lane Restaurant**. Then spend the afternoon at **Tipperary Excel Heritage Centre** which offers a great gallery space and a fascinating section on genealogy and heritage.



The centre also hosts theatre, film and events.

A great way to spend **Day 4** is to take a Family History Tour at **Grenane House** which, if you time it well, will include lunch! This will also provide a great opportunity to explore this wonderful house and gardens. Alternatively, take a tour of **Castlegarde** to find out its 800 year old story or the beautiful Georgian Manor, **Lismascue House**.

When it's time to eat, why not check out the menu at the **Ballykisteen Hotel** which includes everything from light wraps to succulent burgers.

And finally, on **Day 5**, take yourself off to explore the iconic **Rock of Cashel**, an imposing and spectacular archeological site outside the Tipperary town of Cashel, the seat of the High Kings of Munster. A great choice for brunch or lunch is **Mikey Ryan's** which has great food and a fantastic outdoor space.

After lunch, visit Cahir Castle, one of the largest ancient castles in Ireland which appears to jut out of the rock at the River Suir. Take the pretty, tree lined 2km walk along the river to reach the quaint, historical Swiss Cottage. Once you're back in Cashel, it's time to try out the Michelin starred **Chez Hans & Cafe Hanz** which is, simply, unmissable.



Variety is the spice!

Day 1

- ✓ Take a walking Tour of Buttevant Heritage town
- ✓ Eat at The Townhouse Café
- ✓ Visit Donneraile Estate and wildlife sanctuary

Day 2

- ✓ Spend time at Lough Gur
- ✓ Visit the Kennedy Rooms at Bruff
- ✓ Tour the distillery at Ballyvolane House
- ✓ Eat at Ballyvolane House tasting menu

Day 3

- ✓ Visit the Glen of Aherlow
- ✓ Stop off at Tipperary Town Art Gallery and Excel Centre
- ✓ Eat at Flanagan's Lane
- ✓ Hang out at the Tipperary Excel Heritage Centre

Day 4

- ✓ Take the Family History Tour at Grenane House, Castlegarde or Lismascue
- ✓ Eat at Ballykisteen Hotel

Day 5

- ✓ Check out the Rock of Cashel
- ✓ Eat at Micky Ryan's
- ✓ Visit Cahir Castle and walk to Swiss Cottage
- ✓ Eat at Chez Hans & Cafe Hanz

One more thing...

- ✓ Visit the prehistoric burial monument Labbacallee wedge tomb near the scenic village of Glanworth

5 Day Trip



The family way

One of many options to get your Munster Vales family activity trip off to a great start is to set up base at **Villierstown Blackwater Eco hub**. You can hire one of their dinky Eco pods which are kitted out with everything you need with lovely outdoor space, and good proximity to the all important shop and pub.

For **Day 1**, we suggest a trip to **Lismore Castle Gardens** where you can meander around the meadows, tree lined avenue and market garden. Open seven days a week, these are said to be the oldest cultivated gardens in Ireland, once owned by Sir Walter Raleigh and where Edmund Spenser reportedly came up with 'The Faerie Queen' over 400 years ago. The Castle offers really interesting virtual reality visits which get you even closer to its story.

Or you may want to take a gentle stroll along Lady Louisa's Walk, which meanders alongside the river, through some stunning woodland with great views of the Castle. If you don't want to go it alone, you can pick up a themed walking tour from the **Heritage Centre**.

If you're lucky enough to be there on a Sunday, you can pick up some fresh food at the Farmer's Market on the avenue leading to the Castle. If not, make this your excuse to eat out at **Foley's on the Mall** which has a range of really delicious, fresh dishes.

If that hasn't tired you out and you fancy looking at the views from a different perspective, we suggest a boat trip with **Blackwater kayaking and canoeing** which will definitely be a hit with the kids.

It's off to the Copper Coast for **Day 2** where you can pick up the stunning coastal drive from Dungarvan with plenty of stop off options and unforgettable views. We recommend a visit to the **Copper Coast UNESCO Global Geopark** where you can book a tour to fill you in on the geological, archaeological and biodiverse importance of this area, or you can download audio trails to walk you through the must see areas.

A four minute walk and you're straight onto Bunmahon beach to relax or get fired up on the waves with surf lessons or body board hire from **Bunmahon Surf School**. That sea air will definitely help you work up an appetite so head over to **The Engine House** for some great quality food and a fantastic outdoor space.

And, if you have energy left, a 15 minute trip will bring you to **Annestown**, one of the area's best surfing beaches. It's a great beach for families too so pack a picnic and take some time out. Just up the road, you can stop by **Dunhill Castle**, have a quick hike to the top to take in some great views.



For **Day 3**, head over to the beautiful town of Fermoy where you can take a 5km walk up Corrin Hill to catch the spectacular views of the valley and the Galtee Mountains. This is bound to build up a good appetite so, once you're down, fuel up at the seriously impressive **Hanna's Café** and spend the rest of the day exploring the Castle and woodlands of the peaceful little village of Ballyhooley.

For Nights 4 and 5, you can stay at the beautiful rural retreat of **Charleville Park Hotel and Leisure Club**, a cracking choice for families with a pool, kids' movie night, kids' club and even a dog friendly policy.

Take the activity down a level on **Day 4** with some leisure time at **Charleville Golf Course**, a beautifully laid out course with great mountain views. Visitors can book in advance. We suggest eating at the hotel which has a great range from its Bistro and Restaurant menus.

We recommend spending **Day 5** at **Ballyhass Adventure Centre** where you can decide whether to spend your time at the Aqua Park, the high wires and nets, the archery or even have a go at axe throwing.

We suggest bringing plenty of tasty snacks from the likes of Heinemann's Bakery & Café!



The family way

Day 1

- ✓ Visit Lismore Castle Gardens and Art Centre and Lady Louisa's walk
- ✓ Eat at Foley's on the Mall
- ✓ Blackwater kayaking and canoeing

Day 2

- ✓ Spend the day at Copper Coast Drive and Dunhill Eco Park
- ✓ Chill out and picnic at Annestown Beach or Bunmahon Beach

Day 3

- ✓ Climb Corrin Hill in Fermoy and check out Ballyhooley
- ✓ Eat at Hanna's Café

Day 4

- ✓ Hang out at Charleville Golf Club
- ✓ Eat at Charleville Park Hotel and Leisure Club

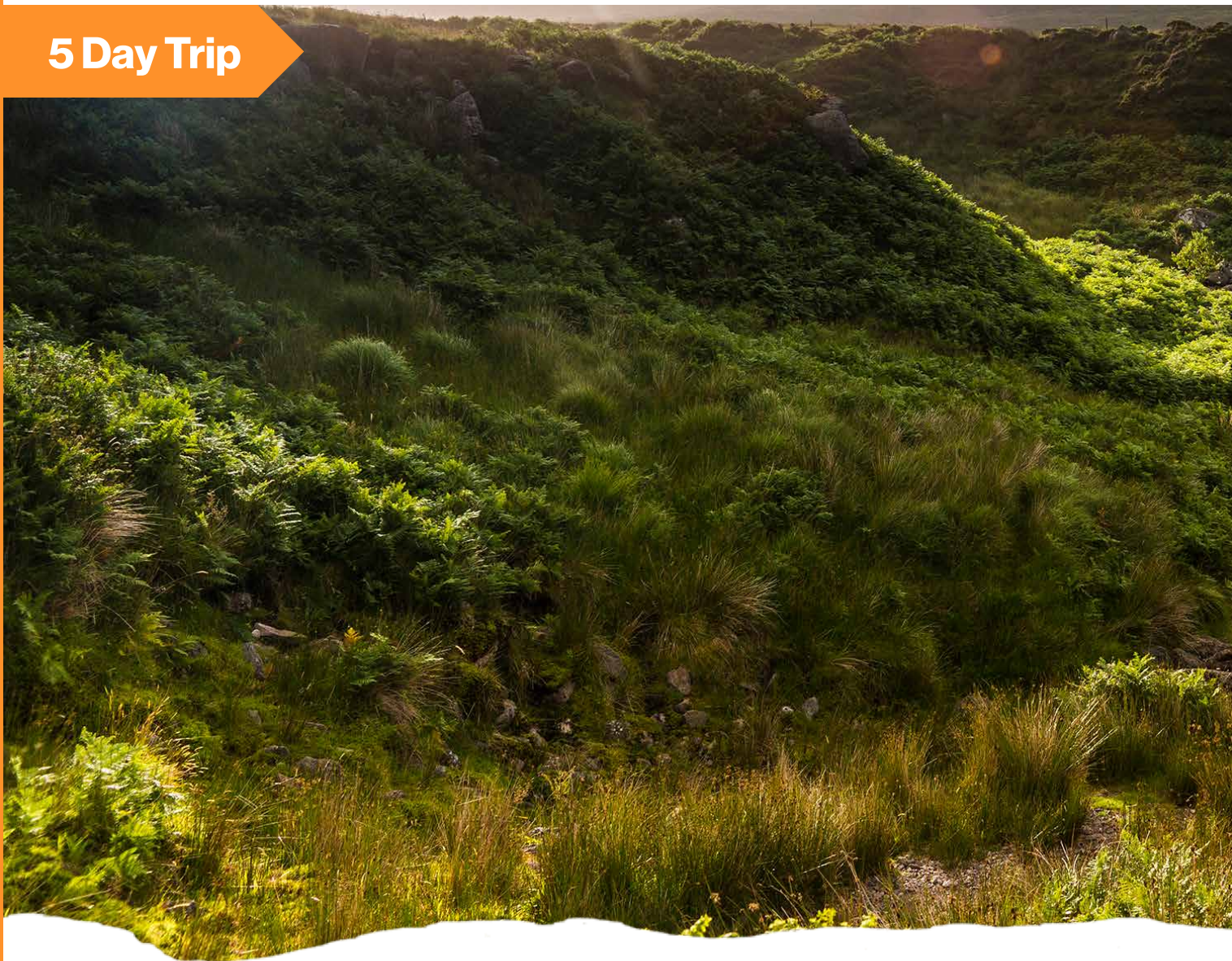
Day 5

- ✓ Spend the day at Ballyhass Adventure Centre

One more thing...

- ✓ Squeeze in an exhibition at Lismore Castle Arts which has a full programme of works scheduled between March and October

5 Day Trip



Get active

If you want to get as close to nature as possible without trading comfort, you should set yourself up at the **Nire Valley Eco Camp** in Co Waterford. Described as a bedroom in a meadow, this is glamping at its finest. Breakfast will be delivered to your door every morning, and with fresh brown bread, local eggs, yoghurt and fruit, it will certainly set you up for the day. The camp is so peaceful and comfortable, yet so handy to lots of hiking, cycling and day tripping options, that you get the best of everything. Or you could bed down at **Rathgormack Hostel and Hiking Centre** with easy access to the Comeragh Mountains.

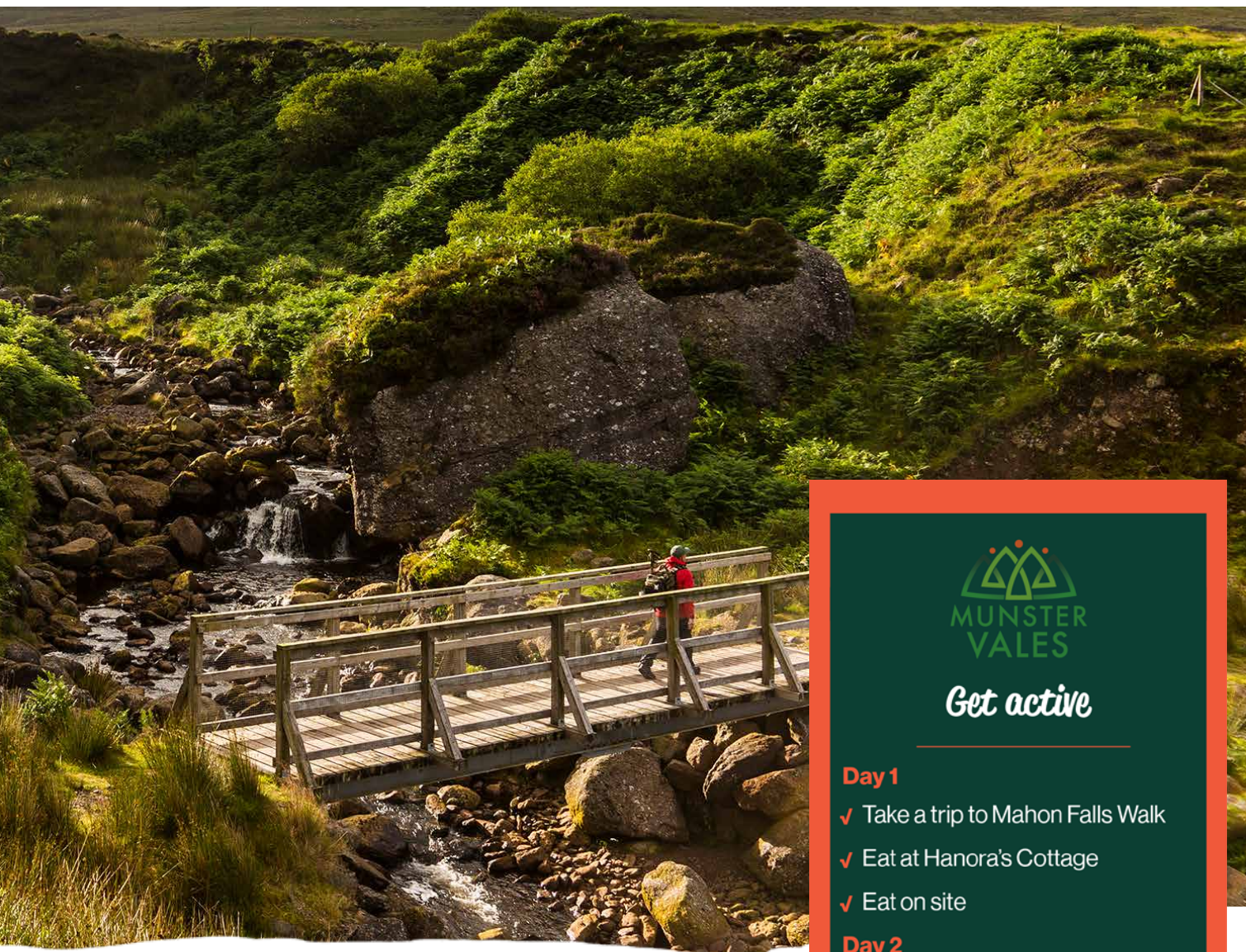
Kick off **Day 1** with a walk up to the nearby Mahon Falls. Part of the Comeragh Mountain range, it's a lovely, looped hike with some great views. As with all hikes, bring snacks, but you'll still have worked up an appetite for lunch at **Hanora's Cottage**. The menu makes use of plenty of regional produce such as

local cheeses, Dunmore East scallops and Kilkenny lamb, and caters for all diet choices with a great standalone vegetarian menu.

Relax back at the Eco Camp in the evening by cooking on their dinky little stoves – just make sure you stock up in Clonmel or Dungarvan so you have everything you need.

It's on your bikes for **Day 2** with trip along the Waterford Greenway. You can pick up bikes from **The Greenway Man** at **Dungarvan Park Hotel** in Waterford and plan your trip along this safe and scenic 46km trail. Make sure you factor in food at the **Coach House** in Kilmactomas – pick up their freshly roasted coffees and artisan foods and take a breather by the Mahon River.

On **Day 3**, it's time for some waves so head over to one of the best surfing beaches in the area at the beautiful village



of Annestown. Stop by the nearby **Copper Coast UNESCO Global Geopark** where you can learn about the geological heritage of this important area and stop for lunch in their Visitors' Park.

For **Day 4**, we suggest getting out on the kayaks to view the countryside from a completely different angle. The River Suir is the ideal destination so head up to Cahir and pick up a kayak from **Suir Valley Adventures** for a two hour lesson, or a half/full day of activity. There's plenty to see, do and eat in Cahir but try not to go past **The Keep Coffee Shop** which has a mouth watering selection of cakes, buns and homemade ice cream.

Take some time on **Day 5** to take on the **Waterford Camino Tour**. You can walk, hike or dander at your own pace, on mountains, cliffs or Greenway, with plenty of opportunities to stop off for refreshments along the way.



Get active

Day 1

- ✓ Take a trip to Mahon Falls Walk
- ✓ Eat at Hanora's Cottage
- ✓ Eat on site

Day 2

- ✓ Cycle the Greenway
- ✓ Eat at Coach House Kilmacthomas

Day 3

- ✓ Surf at Annestown
- ✓ Eat at Copper Coast Geopark Café

Day 4

- ✓ Kayak at Cahir
- ✓ Eat at The Keep Coffee Shop

Day 5

- ✓ Walk the Waterford Camino

One more thing...

- ✓ You can also hire surf and body boards from the nearby Bunmahon Surf School



Follow the food trail

There is so much lovely food to sample across the Vales that we've dedicated a whole five day itinerary so you can get the best of the best as you travel across the area.

There are plenty of ideal options for accommodation: you could base yourself in the luscious **Longueville House** in Co Cork where they not only make their own cider and brandy for sampling and to take away, but they pride themselves on producing most of their food in and around their 400 acre estate. Or you could opt for the B&B and self-catering options at Mallow's **Park South Accommodation** which, with its delicious home baking, feels like a real home from home.

You'll find it hard to move on from either, but when you do, we suggest spending **Day 1** at one of the local Tipperary Food Producers such as **Cashel Irish Farmhouse Cheesemakers** which has been churning out the famous Cashel Blue cheese for nearly 40 years. You can take a tour to find out how this surprisingly creamy cheese became such a hit and learn about the commitment of this family business to quality and sustainability.

If you're not too full up on cheese, we recommend your next foodie stop is **Emily's Deli and Tearoom** in nearby **Fethard** where they do a fabulous range of wraps, rolls and noodle bowls. From Thai Chicken and southern fried, to beef satay and smoked turkey, even checking out the menu will get your mouth watering.

You'll want to get smartened up for pre-dinner cocktails and the seasonal menu at Longueville that night, but we suggest you head off on **Day 2** to Kilfinane's **Ballyhoura Apple Farm** where you can quench your thirst with the unusual and delightful mixes such as Apple & Beetroot, Apple Chai Iced Tea and Irish Red Mulled Apple Juice. You can also get the lowdown on the history of this quirky local producer and the work they do to keep their carbon footprint low and sustainability high.

Head over to Kilfinane to lunch at **Molly's** which has been serving up traditional family food for the past 20 years.

For Night 3, we suggest checking into the charming **Old Bank** in Bruff where the major hit is their absolute feast of a breakfast starring Miriam's home baking and her butcher husband's award winning sausages. Another great option is the chilled surroundings of **Deebert House** at the foot of Ballyhoura Mountains which produces the tastiest dishes using produce from their own garden.

On **Day 3**, we recommend heading to **Dungarvan Brewing Company** to find out all about their traditional method of brewing their range of stouts, ales and barley wine. Follow that up with a visit to **Crew's** for the ideal blend of classic and classily modern chic with everything from chunky chowder to homemade lamb burgers.



Alternatively, if spirits are more your thing, head to the **Blackwater Distillery** in Ballyduff for info on the ancient art of producing award winning gins and whiskeys. To balance out the tasting, drop into **Cookhouse 360**, where not only the food stands out as superb, but the décor and outdoor eating options are a complete delight.

For **Day 4**, spend some time at **JJ Craft Brewery** in Killmallock where the guys knew they were on to a winner when their brews were snapped up at every family BBQ.

Head to **Deebert House** where you may be swayed by their freshly made cakes and sandwiches or decide to take time out to sample their delicious dinner menu.

Day 5 takes you back to the cheese with some time at **Bluebell Falls Artisan Cheese** where you'll see dozens of free range goats providing their morning and evening milk to make this rich in protein, low in fat goats cheese.

Don't miss out on a visit to nearby **Spruce and Willow** in Ardpatrick, particularly their amazing brunch menu of brioche toast with berry compote, avocado toast with balsamic glaze and sauteed mushrooms on sourdough.



Follow the food trail

Day 1

- ✓ Get a taste of Cashel Blue Cheese
- ✓ Eat at Emily's Café in Fethard
- ✓ Eat at Loungueville House

Day 2

- ✓ Visit Ballyhoura Apple Farm
- ✓ Eat at Molly's in Kilfinane

Day 3

- ✓ Spend time at Dungarvan Brewing Company
- ✓ Eat at Crews

or

- ✓ Book Blackwater Distillery
- ✓ Eat at Cookhouse 360

Day 4

- ✓ Drop into JJ Craft Brewery
- ✓ Eat at Deebert House

Day 5

- ✓ Find out about Bluebells Falls Artisan Cheese
- ✓ Eat at Spruce and Willow

One more thing...

- ✓ Take the orchard tour and sample the home made brandy at Longueville House



Take on St Declan's Way

Walking St Declan's Way will bring you along the pilgrimage taken by St Declan 1,600 years ago. The Saint was a local contemporary of St Patrick and was said to have brought Christianity to the area. The walk is 115km of cliff paths, mountain ranges, coastal views, castles and holy wells. If you're up for walking the whole thing, why not sign up with the **Waterford Camino** who will take the lead so you can concentrate on stepping back in time.

If you want to get a taste of the walk without the full 115km commitment, we suggest starting your trip in Cashel by setting up in the central and charming **Cahir House Hotel** or in Cashel's **Bailey's Hotel**.

Start **Day 1** exploring the walk from Cashel to Ardfinnan. This 28km route takes an average of 5 hours each way, so, if you're up for the whole trek, be prepared to take on a flat walk along the River Suir, past the Swiss Cottage then through luxuriant countryside, past large ringforts and several medieval castle ruins.

If tackling the whole thing isn't for you, we suggest spending the morning taking a tour of the historic town of Cashel. From its iconic Rock to the **Cashel Folk Village** to the Heritage Centre, there is plenty of history to catch up on. Grab lunch at the wonderful **Mikey Ryan's** or **Café Hans** which will set you up to walk as much or as little of the route as you choose. The whole trail is marked so you can plan out your desired distance and return journey.

Pick up the trail on **Day 2** in the town of Ardfinnan at the foot of the Knockmealdowns. Spend some time at Ardfinnan Castle

which was built in the early 12th Century to guard the access bridge across the River Suir. The trail will take you past a ruined 14th Century Abbey and across a picturesque footbridge over the River Tar, where you can access the route into the mountains. You can either continue the mountain path past the Liam Lynch monument through the Knockmealdowns or return to your car and drive to the peaceful abbey of **Mount Melleray** where you can take a tour and eat at their cosy little tearoom.

This would be a good time to change camp and check into the warm and welcoming **Pilgrims Rest Hotel** near Mount Melleray; or consider the fabulous **Blackwater Eco Pods**, a community established, not for profit enterprise in Villierstown.

On **Day 3**, it's time to take on the Mount Melleray to Lismore leg of the trail, which will take you right through the heart of peaceful, rural countryside. This is a short walk so can be easily done with time to spend in Lismore before heading back for the car. We suggest heading to **Lismore Castle Gardens**, said to be the oldest cultivated gardens in Ireland and to the **Lismore Heritage Centre** where you can book a virtual reality visit to get a real feel of its history.

Or you may want to take a gentle stroll along Lady Louisa's Walk, which follows the river and trails through stunning woodland with great views of the Castle.

You'll have definitely earned your lunch, so we suggest dropping into **Foley's on the Mall** which has a range of really delicious, fresh dishes.



On **Day 4**, you'll find the Lismore to Cappoquin leg of the journey by far the quickest, taking just 1 ½ hours through pleasant countryside and alongside the River Blackwater. When you reach Cappoquin, visit **Cappoquin House and Gardens**. The house has been home to the Keane family for 300 years and has a working farm, 100 acre orchard and a sunken garden which you can learn all about with the help of a tour guide.

Grab lunch at Cappoquin's **Barron's Bakery and Coffee House** which uses a rare Scotch Brick oven said to provide its bread with a unique flavour.

The last leg of St Declan's Way on **Day 5** is almost 30km and likely to take around 6 hours, so make sure you have return arrangements in place for when you get to Ardmore. There are some great sights on this part of the trail, including both **Dromana House** and **Tourin House** in addition to the strikingly beautiful Hindu Gothic Dromona Gate which marks the original entrance to the Dromana estate.

Alternatively, take the car and stop off for parts of the trail to get the best of the experience without the worn-out soles.

Once you get to Ardmore, head to the Round Tower where St Declan built his monastery, take a dander along the coastal cliff walk and treat yourself to a meal at the Michelin starred **Cliff House Hotel**.



Take on St Declan's Way

Day 1

- ✓ Cashel

Day 2

- ✓ Ardfinnan Surrounds

Day 3

- ✓ Lismore

Day 4

- ✓ Cappoquin

Day 5

- ✓ Ardmore

One more thing...

- ✓ Visit Tourin House and Gardens or take a walk through the Dromona looped walks



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