

Royal Canal Way

[Review this Trail](#)

Trail Overview Details

Grade: **Easy** Format: **Linear** Trail Quality: ******

County:	Dublin, Kildare, Meath, Longford, Westmeath
Category:	Walking/Hiking Trails
Type:	National Waymarked Trail
Length (Kms):	144.00
Climb (m):	Minimal
Estimated time:	3 days
Start point:	First Lock
Start point grid ref:	O 168 356
End point:	Cloondara
End point grid ref:	N 063 757
Nearest town to start:	Dublin
Ordnance survey map:	OSI Discovery Series Sheet 40, 41, 48* (*ca 1.3km on canal bank), 49 and 50
Dogs Allowed:	Yes
Facilities:	Parking At Start - none At End - on Street in Cloondara
Public transport:	At Start: Rail Check with: Iarnrod Eireann . Bus Check With: Dublin Bus . At End: Good bus service; Check with Bus Eireann . . Rail Check with: Iarnrod Eireann .
Map guide available:	Guide to the Royal Canal of Ireland - The Waterways Service & Inland Waterways Association of Ireland.

Waymarking

Yellow arrow on black background

Description of Trail

Work began on the construction of the 146 km long Royal Canal, to connect Ireland's capital city, Dublin, with the upper River Shannon in 1790, and the canal was completed in 1817. It operated in competition with the Grand Canal which ran an almost parallel route never more than 30 km to the south, and with the Grand, was made redundant by the advent of the railways in the mid-19th century. The canal was officially closed to all navigation in 1961, but like the Grand Canal, much of the Royal has been restored in recent decades, and the Royal Canal Way currently follows grassy towpaths, gravel and sometimes tarmac canal-side roads from the Dublin suburb of Ashtown 105 kilometres to the village of Abbeyshrule in County Longford. Some sections of tow path can be muddy. Further restoration will take the navigable canal and the walking route all the way to the Shannon. There is a good range of options for overnight accommodation along most of the route: it is, however, relatively easy to walk some sections and return to your starting point by public transport. Apart from the glorious, linear cordon of unspoilt countryside the route provides, there are a number of significant examples of late-eighteenth century industrial archaeology to admire along the way, including the Ryewater Aqueduct which takes the canal high over the Rye river, and which took six years to build.

Trail Reviews

★★★★★

20/06/2016 15:31 by Su from Antrim

I cycled from Maynooth to Mullingar - with a couple of friends a couple of years ago and was not expecting the path to be so rough up to the Westmeath border. The recent comments on this site make that much clearer so that is good. I now would like to do the Dublin section and so need to know when the surfaced path runs out?? I'm planning to start at the Samuel Beckett Bridge. I would then like to do the whole of the Westmeath section as the surface there is very easy and I will be bringing (at least) two teenagers, are there any good camping grounds or B&Bs at the end of that section (Abbeyshrule?)

Note to reviewers – if you have a question rather than a review you

Comments

9 kms or 12% of the Way follows local roads. There may be some waymarking issues at some points along the trail.

Dogs under effective control allowed. Please clean up after your dog

Downloads

[Royal Canal Way - Overview Map](#)

[RCW - Map 1 Liffey to Ashtown to M50](#)

[RCW - Map 2 M50 to Leixlip](#)

[RCW - Map 3 Leixlip to Maynooth](#)

[RCW - Map 4 Maynooth to Kilcock](#)

[RCW - Map 5 Kilcock to Enfield](#)

[RCW - Map 6 Enfield to Longwood](#)

[RCW - Map 7 Longwood to Ballasport Bridge](#)

[RCW - Map 8 Ballasport Bridge to Neads Bridge](#)

[RCW - Map 9 Neads Bridge to Mullingar](#)

[RCW - Map 10 Mullingar to Dolan Bridge](#)

[RCW - Map 11 Dolan to Ballynacarrigy](#)

[RCW - Map 12 Ballynacarrigy to Abbeyshrule](#)

[RCW - Map 13 Abbeyshrule to Drum Lough](#)

[RCW - Map 14 Drum Lough to Lyneen](#)

[RCW - Map 15 Lyneen to Cloondara](#)

Trail management organisation contact details

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