

Cahergal Loop Walk

From the car park at the **Black Gate (Letter West) and Alice West Centre**, follow the purple loop walk arrows back along the public road for a short distance.

At waymarker no. 3 (Peakeen, Cahergal and Cahir), turn left off the public road. Continue up the track and onto the hill going through 4 stiles en-route until you reach way marker no. 15 (Peakeen and Cahir) and turn left.

Continue on, crossing the peninsula to the Bantry Bay side, until you reach the car park at **Cahergal**. Keep left after going over the timber stile and cross the road where you will go over another timber stile, passing waymarker no. 206.

Continue straight on, passing the ruins of a famine hamlet known locally as the “**Crimea**”. One of the houses has recently been restored and rethatched so walkers can appreciate it. 10Min later you pass the abandoned copper mine of **Gortavallig** with some old mine shafts (fenced off). The path then takes you along some cliffs, with spectacular views over the coastline. Next you pass the old miners' dwellings.

Eventually you reach **The Cove**, where a slipway gives testimony to the old harbour from where copper ore was shipped to England. The English writer J. G. Farrell drowned here in August 1979, when a freak wave pulled him into the water.

Follow the unsurfaced road shortly uphill until a waymarker leads you to the right along an old grassy borreen, running between stone walls through the fields.

Reach a junction at waymarker no. 238, turn left and walk a short distance along the public road. Soon pass a boulder with a poem by Denis M. Cronin, who emigrated in the 19th century from Kiltrohane to New York. Turn right at the finger post sign for “**The Poet’s Way**” and climb over a timber stile, at waymarker no. 65 Poet’s Way/Cahergal. Follow the path uphill until you meet a small road, turn left and follow it shortly before leaving it again by climbing over a stile on the right. Soon cross a small footbridge. Follow the waymarked path to traverse the peninsula to the south side, with views opening up across Dunmanus Bay.

Turn left when you meet waymarker no. 348 and continue straight on along the old military road, now just a path which is waterlogged in places. When you are near the first house, a detour to the right leads to the **Caherurlagh Marriage Stone**. Continuing on the track past the house, now ignore any waymarking. Meet a road in a bend and follow it to the right downhill back to the Black Gate / Alice West Centre.

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| Start/Finish: | Black Gate / Letter West Trailhead |
| Waymarkers | Purple loop walk arrows |
| Distance: | 8.4 km (approx) |
| Estimated time: | 3 hrs (based on average walking speed of 3 km per hour) |
| Metres Climbed/ Ascent: | 371 metres |
| Maximum Height: | 184 metres |

