

There is nothing nicer than getting away from it all for a couple of hours and getting into the car on a nice summer's day and taking the perfect drive on the Dingle Peninsula.

I pack the car up with a picnic basket, a nice rug, my camera, and not forgetting the kids I head off on our travels.

From Dingle I take the R559 from the bridge at Milltown passing by the Dingle Distillery. It is absolutely advisable to go clockwise, and the drive is 45km or 30 miles long. It can be driven in just over an hour but to really appreciate it you will need to allocate at least three hours. I always say that you could spend three hours, or three lifetimes and you will still see something different every time.



Our first stop is the beautiful Beach at Ventry (Ceann Tra) which is located just 6km from Dingle town. This is a stunning beach for a walk or just for the kids to play in the sand dunes. It is a crescent shaped beach and it is quite sheltered which is why we love it. We spend a little while there walking - (there is a little metal bridge over the river that connects one part of the beach to the other), collecting shells and rocks before continuing our adventure.

Tip: There is a little tap at the entrance/exit to the beach which is a God send for washing sandy feet, buckets and spades before getting into the car.

Back in the car we head along the narrow road towards Fahan and Cashel Murphy (which predates the pyramids) which is well worth a stop. We call to Aodhan and the "Pet a Baby Lamb", the kids love this, and it reminds me of my childhood growing up on a farm. From here you continue past the roadside Crucifixion statues and you get your first glimpse of the Blasket Islands. I cannot underestimate how beautiful this view is!

Then you continue the road passing by the Pier at Dunquin, an iconic pier, where the

Blasket islanders landed having rowed across the water in a Naomhog. The Blasket passenger Ferry runs from here and sheep are still transported across from this pier. Continuing to Dunore Head and the gorgeous Coumeenole Beach (made famous in Ryan's Daughter). I would normally stop here for a little while and take in the views.

Tip: There is a little picnic table at the top of the walk down to Coumeenole which has got to be one the best views you can get

Continuing on you pass through the village of Dunquin and pass by the turn on the left for the Blasket Centre, which is the most wonderful insight to life on the Great Blasket Island which was abandoned in 1952.

Continuing on our drive we get to Ceann Sibéal and get our first view of the Three Sisters mountain peaks, with Clogher Beach and the Atlantic Ocean in all its glory. We stop at Tig Aine and sit out in the garden enjoying our yummy cakes and coffee or in the coffee shop in Louis Mulcahy's before stopping at Clogher Beach. This is one of my top tips - absolutely stop here - walk on the beach and marvel at the magnificent force of the Atlantic Ocean waves pummeling the cliffs. It is simply breath taking!



Continue on through to Ballyferriter village passing by the turn for Dingle Golf Course. In the village I stop at Sinead Lough's beautiful pottery shop. We then continue until we reach the Dingle Peninsula Hotel and we can either continue on straight or take a right towards Murreagh Village. Just after the football pitch on your right and another on the left, the road veers to your left, but if you take the little turn to the right this will bring you up towards Gallarus Oratory.

In Murreagh there is a little crossroads, and you can have a few options - 1. if you take a right you will pass by Kilmalkedar Church before continuing on to Dingle. 2. If you take a

left you take the little road to Ballydavid, which is just the most gorgeous little village. Have a drink or something to eat outside T.P O'Connors pub looking over to the Three sisters and the Atlantic Ocean. 3. If you continue straight onwards at Murragh you will pass through Ballydavid coastal drive passing O'Gormans Guesthouse on your right, and Dooneen Pier on your left. You will then reach an area called Feohanagh and from here you can continue straight to Dingle or you can take the left turn over the little metal bridge, which will bring you towards the turn for Mount Brandon passing by the turn for Brandon Creek (which deserves a visit if you have time). This is the most amazing mountain walk but you will need at least four hours to complete it, and honestly you need to dedicate at least half a day, if not a full day to really enjoy it.



We then return to Dingle and finish the day with a well-deserved ice-cream from Murphy's ice-cream or Kool Scoops on Strand Street, and just sit by the Pier or Marina and enjoy the views. All in all, a perfect day!

You can download a [route map here....](#)