

The Sperrins

SCENIC DRIVING ROUTES

Be part of the journey...



nature • culture • heritage

“Adventure slowly and be part of the journey..”

The Sperrins - an Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty - are Northern Ireland's most extensive mountain range and can be explored via a series of scenic driving routes.

There are four scenic driving routes to choose from: **North**, **Central**, **East** and **South**. Each route represents an opportunity to become immersed in an environment millions of years in the making and steeped in myth and legend.

- **North:** 50 miles/80km
- **Central:** 90 miles/145km
- **East:** 63 miles/101km
- **South:** 64 miles/103km



“Tune in to the rhythms of nature...”

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North Sperrins

1 GARVAGH

Destroyed by fire during the Battle of Garvagh in 1641, it is now a thriving rural market town. Of interest are Garvagh Museum, the stone clock tower and nearby forest.

2 LEGAVANNON POT

'Hollow of the Soul' - a spectacular melt water channel between Garvagh and Dungiven.



3 DUNGIVEN

The market town of Dungiven (meaning Given's Fort) lies nine miles south of Limavady near the foot of Benbradagh Mountain. Dungiven provides visitors with a range of locally owned shops on its Main Street and contains historic features such as Dungiven Priory and Castle. The area is also steeped in myth and legend - a rich cultural heritage reflected in a series of contemporary sculptures, two of which - 'Finvola, Gem of The Roe' and the 'O Cahan Harp' - can be found here. A third sculpture, 'The Last Serpent In Ireland' (image shown above) is also situated nearby at Feeny picnic site.

4 BANAGHER OLD CHURCH

An impressive ruin, Banagher Church is thought to date from the late 11th or early 12th Century. It is believed that the date 474 carved on the west door was done in the 18th Century. Nearby, the small tomb of St Muiredach O'Heney can be seen.



5 BANAGHER GLEN

Banagher Glen lies three miles south west of Dungiven accessed from the B74 and is a secluded, steep wooded glen leading to Altnahegligh Reservoir and Banagher Dam. One of the oldest ancient oak woodlands in Ireland, Banagher Glen is a Nature Reserve and Special Area of Conservation.

6 DERRYNOID WOOD TRAIL

The walk is an easy stroll and comprises a stoned pathway among native and coniferous woodland. Follow the green and yellow waymarkers from the car park, completing the walk in an anticlockwise direction. The walk commences in the car park of the Derrynoid Centre (Closed). Derrynoid Lodge was home to the notorious hanging judge, Judge Torrens. Although the buildings and centre are closed the grounds remain open to the public. The route makes for an easy stroll on forest paths with no obstacles or difficult sections.



	North Sperrins Scenic Route		Main Feature
	Alternative Route		Large Town
	Alt Route for heavy vehicles		Small Town
	A Road		Viewpoint
	B Road		Information
	Forest		Parking
	Mountains		Toilets
	River		Walking Route



7 MAGHERA WALLED GARDEN & ST. LURACH'S CHURCH

Maghera Walled Garden, a restored Victorian garden on the grounds of a medieval 4th Century royal dwelling and ancient monastery. Adjacent is the remains of St. Lurach's Church. St. Lurach- the patron saint of Maghera, established the monastery when he was converted to Christianity by St. Patrick. Within the ruins of the church is a significant 12th century Romanesque lintel which is one of the most detailed stone carved crucifixion scenes in early Irish art.



8 TIRKANE SWEATHOUSE

A rectangular structure built against the side of a hill with a roof of flat stones and chimney hole in one corner. According to the 'Ancient Monuments of Ireland, Vol. 2' sweat houses are the primitive forerunner of the modern Turkish bath, which are known in Germany as Irish baths.



9 TIRNONEY DOLMEN

A prehistoric tomb of at least 4,000 - 6,000 years old. Dolmens are tomb structures with standing stones and a horizontal capstone, found in a number of places in Ireland.



10 THE OLD MILL & FLAX VISITOR CENTRE IN UPPERLANDS

At Upperlands, Ireland's oldest linen village, learn of the fabric of local history by visiting the Old Mill Coffee Shop, which is located in an old industrial building opposite the last surviving linen beetling machines, a process dating from the 1730s. Upstairs is the Flax Visitor Centre with a display on the heritage of the linen industry and a model Irish village and railway.

11 GLENULLIN

Having a lowland raised bog as its dominant landscape feature, the Glenullin area also offers a choice of way marked trails.

12 ERRIGAL GLEN

An established woodland on the banks of the Agivey River with way marked trails and historic interest.

13 ERRIGAL OLD CHURCH & SOUTERRAIN

An ancient pagan ritual site, Christianised in the 7th century by St. Adamnan.

Central Sperrins



1 STRABANE'S HERITAGE IN SCULPTURE

Dance with the 'Tinnies', 5 sculptural figures measuring some 18 feet in height and representing the region's rich tradition of music and dance; or spend a moment of reflection with Strabane's very own wishing pig 'Ambrose', named after a literary creation of Flann O'Brien, one of Strabane's most famous sons. Flann himself is also represented sculpturally, taking pride of place within Strabane's town centre.

2 FAMOUS CONNECTIONS

Among the notable persons associated with Strabane are John Dunlap, printer of 'The American Declaration of Independence'; James Wilson, grandfather of U.S. President Woodrow Wilson; Sir Guy Carleton, a Governor General of Canada; Cecil Frances Alexander of 'All Things Bright & Beautiful' fame; and Annie Maunder, an accomplished astronomer who along with her husband had the 'Maunder' moon crater named in their honour. While in Strabane check out the Alley Arts & Conference Centre, Gray Printers, & the Wilson Ancestral Home.



3 SION MILLS VILLAGE

Once known for being the home of one of the world's leading linen producers, Sion Mills today is an idyllic tree lined village rich in industrial and architectural heritage. Discover more of Sion's wonderful history on a walking tour of the village or with a visit to the Sion Stables.

4 STEWART CASTLE, NEWTOWNSTEWART

This plantation building suffered severe damage during the 1641 insurrection and then in 1689 during King James' return from the Siege of Derry. A visit to the nearby ruins of the stronghold of Harry Avery O'Neill is also recommended.

5 GORTIN

Gortin is a small picturesque village nestling in the Owenkillew river valley. The village is an ideal starting point for exploring the surrounding hills and glens by bike or on foot, as well as offering welcoming hostelries to unwind after a day's exercise.

6 MULLAGHCARN

The site on the summit of Mullaghcarn is a place of great religious importance and most probably an ancient burial site.



	South Sperrins Scenic Route		Main Feature
	Alternative Route		Large Town
	Alt Route for heavy vehicles		Small Town
	A Road		Viewpoint
	B Road		Information
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	River		Walking Route



7 LOUGHMACRORY MEGALITHIC WEDGE TOMB
is a burial chamber which has a front chamber and a doorway marked by three stones. It is believed to have been constructed around 4000 years ago. Enjoy the flora and fauna of 'Loughmacrory Lakeside Walk'. This walk is set within a beautiful, unspoilt freshwater environment with changing views of the lough from around its shoreline.

8 NALLY HERITAGE CENTRE
(St Colmcille's GAA Ground)
The centre encompasses aspects of social, economic, political, sporting and geographical history relating to the local area. This is enhanced with artifacts which span from historic times to the modern day. 'Social Life of the People' examines the impact of churches, education and housing evolution on the lives of the people from as early as the 5th century. 'Making a Living' examines the development of the transport infrastructure from earliest times. Farming is also accorded special recognition to acknowledge its dominance for centuries in parish life.



9 AN CREAGÁN CENTRE is distinctively designed to mirror the archaeological sites of the area and gives you the opportunity to step back in time. It also houses an interpretative exhibition and offers archaeological, environmental and cultural guided tours of the surrounding area.



10 AGHASCREBAGH 'OGHAM' STONE
This is one of the very few 'ogham' stones in Northern Ireland. The marks on the edges of this stone are characters from an alphabet that was used in medieval Ireland. The 25-letter alphabet was supposedly inspired by Ogma, god of eloquence.

11 THE GLENELLY VALLEY
Carved by the glacial flows of the Ice Age this diverse and stunning landscape features picturesque walking and cycling routes, peaceful picnic sites, and mysterious archaeological remains which add to the enchantment of the region. Check out Bodoney Church, Glenroan Portal Tomb, and Clogherny Wedge Tomb.

12 LOUGHASH WEDGE TOMB
Sample something of the Sperrins' prehistoric past with a visit to this ancient burial chamber. The entrance, which faces west, has a double portal arrangement leading to a single burial chamber where it is believed 3 individuals were interred.

13 DONEMANA /DUNAMANAGH VILLAGE
A quiet country village nestling among wooded hillsides and providing an opportunity to sample something of our rural heritage. Take a small detour and visit Barrontop Fun Farm or the Mill Pottery.

East Sperrins



1 SPRINGHILL HOUSE

Springhill's welcoming charm reveals a family home with portraits, furniture and decorative arts, alongside its celebrated collection of 18th to 20th century costumes located in the old laundry. The walled garden and way-marked trails, with views of Slieve Gallion and the Sperrins, are great for exploring the grounds. Open all year round.

2 MANOR PARK

is an attractive park, within the conservation village of Moneymore, including a circular 1km walk with beautiful woodland areas, wildlife ponds, parkland, play area and picnic area.



3 THE JUNGLE NI

is Northern Ireland's leading outdoor adventure activity centre and offers an exciting choice of adrenaline-packed activities, exhilarating events, onsite glamping accommodation, an off-site residential centre and funky conference facilities.

4 REUBEN'S GLEN

A picnic area and wooded walk follows a small river, just over 1 mile /1.6km in distance. The sound of wildlife combined with the ripples of the stream, creates an oasis of tranquility in the midst of an intensive farming area.

5 INISCARN FOREST

has a range of walks and is also the starting point for those wishing to climb the hillwalk on Slieve Gallion Mountain.

6 SLIEVE GALLION

is one of the mountain peaks of the East Sperrins (total ascent 528m), offering views of the surrounding region.



7 LOUGH FEA

has a 4.15 km circular pathway offering panoramic scenery, making this the ideal place for walkers. Kids play area and picnic facilities are also available.



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8 DAVAGH FOREST TRAILS

Davagh Forest is a picturesque forest which boasts 31km of walking, cycling and mountain bike trails. The mountain bike trails consist of the 3km green trail, the 7.5km blue trail and the 18km red trail and are of varied difficulty. Suitability ranges from family friendly to experienced bikers who can test themselves against heart-racing single-track, berms, rock drops and extreme slab features. Facilities include play park, changing facilities, bike hire, car parking, toilets and bike wash.

9 BROUGHDERG is a rural area boasting many archaeological treasures indicating 7000 years of human habitation. Also offering magnificent views of the Sperrins.



10 BEAGHMORE STONE CIRCLES

A large, impressive series of Bronze Age ceremonial stone monuments excavated from the surrounding bog between 1945 and 1949 and in 1965. The main features include the six stone circles (built of fairly small stones) occurring in pairs, with 12 small cairns which held cremation burials and stone rows all running in parallel.



11 WELLBROOK BEETLING MILL

The last working water-powered linen beetling mill in Northern Ireland is a unique experience for all the family. Try some scutching, hackling and weaving and over the thundering cacophony of beetling engines, learn about the importance of the linen industry in 19th-century Ireland.

12 DRUM MANOR FOREST PARK is colourful in Spring and Autumn with a shrub, butterfly and Japanese garden, arboretum, ponds, mixed woodlands and way-marked trails. Facilities include a large play area, picnic provision and camping.

13 KILLYMOON CASTLE, originally built in 1671, and renovated in 1803 by the famous architect John Nash, is now open to the public. Drop into the tea room called 'Tommy's Kitchen' for homemade delights and a tour of the castle. Seasonal opening hours apply.

South Sperrins



1 OMAGH is situated at the place where the Drumragh and Camown rivers meet to form the Strule River. Its strategic location was recognised by the O'Neills who built a castle here and it became a dedicated market town following the Plantation of Ulster in 1610. Despite a major accidental fire in 1742 which destroyed most of its buildings, it developed to become the County Town of Tyrone in 1768, taking over from Dungannon. This led to it becoming a major centre for the local administration of justice with a fine courthouse and associated gaol.

2 CAPPAGH OLD CHURCH & GRAVEYARD
The main body of this church dates back to the 16th Century but this site may have been used as a church site since the early Christian period. A bell associated with this parish, known as the 'Cappagh Bell', is in the National Museum of Ireland, Dublin.

3 GORTIN GLEN FOREST PARK
A major recreational feature of the forest is the five-mile long drive, which offers some breathtaking views. A number of vista parks have been created where the motorist can pull in and enjoy the magnificent scenery. Also available is access to a number of walking trails.



4 GORTIN LAKES
These two lakes are known in geological terms as 'kettle hole' lakes left by uneven melting of glaciers. A path encircling the lakes affords spectacular vistas of the high Sperrins.

5 GORTIN VILLAGE
Gortin is a small picturesque village nestling in the Owenkillew river valley. The village is an ideal starting point for exploring the surrounding hills and glens by bike or on foot, as well as offering welcoming hostelries to unwind after a day's exercise.

6 HARRY AVERY O'NEILL CASTLE
The hills above Newtown Stewart provide the setting for the majestic ruins of one of the Gaelic strongholds of the O'Neills. Although traditionally associated with Henry Aibreidh O'Neill, who died in 1392, it is not certain whether this fortification dates from the 14th or 15th century. It is an unusual structure, especially important in relation to the study of native Irish Medieval life. A visit to the nearby ruins of the Stewart Castle in Newtown Stewart is also recommended.





7 ULSTER AMERICAN FOLK PARK & MELLON FUN FARM

The Ulster American Folk Park tells the story of emigration from Ulster to America in the 18th, 19th and early 20th centuries and provides visitors with a 'living history' experience on its outdoor site. Traditional thatched buildings, American log houses, and a full-scale replica emigrant ship help to bring a bygone era back to life. The Mellon Centre for Migration Studies is also on site.

8 THE ABINGDON COLLECTION represents over 45 years of passionate collecting and provides an opportunity for visitors to take a 'walk in the past'. If you lived through the 50's, 60's and 70's, or just like big boy toys, then there is definitely something for you. The collection is open by appointment only. The collection is free of charge, but contributions are gratefully accepted in aid of Cancer Research UK.

9 BARONSCOURT ESTATE
Baronscourt, the home of the Duke of Abercorn's family since the early 1600's, is among a handful of remaining old family estates which combine great historical and architectural interest with a landscape of outstanding natural beauty. Restricted access.

10 DAVIES BAWN & PARK AMENITY AREA
Built on a site occupied at one time by an O'Neill tower house, this defended stone house commands an area of once strategic importance on the River Derg. The bawn was a refuge for planter families and was eventually rendered unfit for occupation after an attack by the O'Neills. Today's ruins consist of a rectangular bawn with the remains of 3 square flankers still visible. Local legend has it that a piper got lost forever in a forgotten passage way under the ruins and his musical laments can still be heard on still quiet nights.

11 THE DERG VALLEY - ST. PATRICK
According to tradition St. Patrick travelled through the Derg Valley on returning from a period of Lenten Penitential Service at Lough Derg - one of Ireland's most prominent ecclesiastical centres. While in the area check out St. Patrick's Well - the water from which is said to cure toothache; or walk the International Appalachian Trail and discover our geological connections with North America, Europe & Africa. Persons of note associated with the area include hymn writer Cecil Frances Alexander; Davy Crockett - King of the Wild Frontier; and Joe Sheridan, the 'inventor' of Irish Coffee.

12 BOLAGHT MOUNTAIN
The northern slopes of Bolaght Mountain provide an excellent viewpoint from which to survey the rich diversity of the Derg Valley, the Sperrins' uplands and the hills of Donegal.

13 SLOUGHAN GLEN
This pleasant woodland walk along the Blackwater River takes the visitor steadily upwards to be greeted by the roar of its waterfall thundering over a rocky edge.

14 PIGEON TOP PICNIC SITE
This site overlooking Omagh, offers spectacular panoramic views of the region. Close by in the townland of Cavanacaw a seam of gold is being mined.

“Seek out inspiring sunsets and star filled night skies..”

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Beaghmore Stone Circles: Copyright Tourism NI

