

40,000 Basalt Columns by Day, Titanic's Slipways by Night — A 5-Day Belfast & the Causeway Coast Itinerary

Forty thousand hexagonal basalt columns, a rope bridge swaying 100 feet above the Atlantic, and the shipyard where Titanic was built — a 5-day loop through Belfast and the Causeway Coast, with real hotels, real distillery tours, and 2026 prices.

DURATION 5 Days	BEST TIME TO GO May to September The warmest, driest stretch of the year and the longest daylight for coastal walking; Carrick-a-Rede's rope bridge and several National Trust sites trim their hours from November to February, and high winds occasionally close the bridge outright.	FROM \$600 USD / person for 2 people, incl. 4 nights' hotel across Belfast, Bushmills and Portrush, Titanic Belfast, a Black Taxi tour, the Giant's Causeway visitor centre, Carrick-a-Rede Rope Bridge, and a Bushmills Distillery tour (excl. meals and rental car)
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A five-day loop through Northern Ireland's compact capital-and-coast combo: two nights in Belfast for the Titanic Quarter, the Troubles-era murals of West Belfast, and a Victorian prison turned museum, then two nights on the Causeway Coast for Ireland's oldest whiskey distillery, a rope bridge over the Atlantic, and the hexagonal basalt columns of the Giant's Causeway itself. Real hotels, real tour operators, and 2026 prices for every stop.

Day 1

Belfast Arrival & the Titanic Quarter

A first afternoon in Belfast's regenerated Titanic Quarter, where the slipways that built the most famous ship in history sit a short walk from the hotel, before a Cathedral Quarter dinner to close out the night.

Transfer — Belfast International Airport (BFS) to City Centre

~45 min · Airport Express 300 bus from \$10 USD/person, or taxi from \$55 USD

Belfast International Airport sits about 19 miles northwest of the city. The Airport Express 300 coach runs straight into the Europa Buscentre every 15–20 minutes; taxis and rideshares take the M2 motorway in about the same time.

Translink · www.translink.co.uk

Hotel Check-In — Grand Central Hotel Belfast

From \$220–270 USD / night, for 2 people

Belfast's tallest hotel, a 23-story tower on Bedford Street built on the site of the original Victorian Grand Central. The 11th-floor Observatory bar wraps around the building with a 360-degree view over the city.

Grand Central Hotel Belfast · www.grandcentralhotelbelfast.com

Titanic Belfast & SS Nomadic

~2.5 hrs · ~\$30 USD / person

Nine interactive galleries inside a silver, four-pointed building shaped like the ship's hull, built on the exact Harland & Wolff slipway where Titanic was constructed. A combined ticket also boards the SS Nomadic, the last surviving White Star Line vessel, moored a few minutes' walk away.

Titanic Belfast · www.titanicbelfast.com

Dinner — Deanes at Queens

~1.5 hrs · ~\$45–55 USD / person

Michael Deane's relaxed bistro near Queen's University, a sibling to his Michelin-starred EIPIC in the Cathedral Quarter, serving modern Northern Irish plates in a converted red-brick building.

Deanes at Queens · www.deanesbelfast.com

Day 2

Cathedral Quarter & West Belfast Stories

A full day inside Belfast's two very different histories: the murals and peace walls of West Belfast by black taxi, then the Victorian prison that held both loyalist and republican inmates, before a historic pub walk through the Cathedral Quarter's cobbled streets.

Black Taxi Political Tour — West Belfast Murals

~1.5 hrs · from \$45 USD / person (private taxi, up to 4–6 people)

A black-cab driver-guide traces the peace walls and gable-end murals of the Falls and Shankill roads, narrating three decades of the Troubles from the neighborhoods where it happened — still one of the most direct ways to understand modern Belfast.

Ulster Walking Tours · www.ulsterwalkingtours.com

Crumlin Road Gaol Tour

~1.5 hrs, guided · ~\$19 USD / person

A working Victorian prison from 1846 until 1996, with an underground tunnel once used to march prisoners to the courthouse across the street. The guided tour runs through original cells, the hanging cell, and the execution chamber.

Crumlin Road Gaol · crumlinroadgaol.com

Cathedral Quarter Historic Pub Walk

~2 hrs, self-guided · pints from \$7 USD

Belfast's old entertainment district, its cobbled lanes centered on St Anne's Cathedral and threaded with some of the city's oldest pubs, including the Duke of York's whiskey-barrel snug and walls papered with decades of Irish political posters.

Overnight — Grand Central Hotel Belfast

Second night, same rate as Day 1

Back to the same Bedford Street rooms for a second night before tomorrow's drive up to the Causeway Coast.

Grand Central Hotel Belfast · www.grandcentralhotelbelfast.com

Day 3

Transfer to the Causeway Coast & the Giant's Causeway

An hour and a half northwest to the Antrim coast, where 40,000 interlocking basalt columns step down into the Atlantic and Ireland's oldest licensed whiskey distillery sits a five-minute drive inland.

Self-Drive — Belfast to Bushmills

~1 hr 30 min · ~60 miles via the A26 & the Causeway Coastal Route

A straightforward run up the A26 past Antrim and Ballymena, picking up the signed Causeway Coastal Route for the final stretch into Bushmills — one of the UK's most scenic drives, with the coastline opening up around Ballycastle.

Giant's Causeway — National Trust Visitor Centre

~2 hrs, self-guided · ~\$20 USD / person (visitor centre & shuttle; coastal path is free)

A UNESCO World Heritage Site and Northern Ireland's only natural wonder of the world: roughly 40,000 hexagonal basalt columns formed by a volcanic eruption 60 million years ago, stepping down from the cliffs into the sea. The ticket covers an audio guide and the shuttle bus down to the stones; the clifftop path itself is open to all, free of charge.

National Trust — Giant's Causeway · www.nationaltrust.org.uk/visit/northern-ireland/giants-causeway

Bushmills Distillery Tour & Tasting

~1 hr, guided · ~\$20 USD / person

Ireland's oldest licensed whiskey distillery, granted its license in 1608 on the banks of the River Bush. The tour walks through the mash house and triple-distillation stills before ending in a tasting of three Bushmills expressions in the Distiller's Den.

Bushmills Distillery · bushmillsdistillery.com

Hotel Check-In — Bushmills Inn

From \$200–240 USD / night, for 2 people

A converted 17th-century coaching inn on the edge of the village, a five-minute walk from the distillery, with turf fires, gas lamps in the old stable-turned-bar, and a round tower housing the hotel's library.

Bushmills Inn · www.bushmillsinn.com

Day 4

Carrick-a-Rede, the Dark Hedges & Portrush

A short coastal loop from rope bridge to film-set avenue before settling into Portrush, the seaside town that anchors the western end of the Causeway Coast.

Carrick-a-Rede Rope Bridge

~1.5 hrs, timed entry · ~\$23 USD / person

A rope bridge strung 100 feet above the Atlantic to a small fisherman's island, first rigged by salmon fishermen nearly 350 years ago. National Trust manages timed-entry tickets, which sell out on clear-weather days, so book ahead.

National Trust — Carrick-a-Rede · www.nationaltrust.org.uk/visit/northern-ireland/carrick-a-rede

Dark Hedges — Kingsroad Photo Stop

~30 min, self-guided · free

A tunnel of wind-bent beech trees planted along Bregagh Road in the 1750s, made famous worldwide as the King's Road in Game of Thrones. Best visited at sunrise or dusk, when the tour coaches have thinned out.

Dinner — Ramore Wine Bar

~1.5 hrs · ~\$30–40 USD / person

A Portrush harbor institution since the 1980s, still run by the same family across several connected dining rooms, from the casual wine bar's pizzas to the more formal Harbour Bistro next door.

Ramore Wine Bar · www.ramorerestaurant.com

Hotel Check-In — Royal Court Hotel

From \$170–210 USD / night, for 2 people

A clifftop hotel on Portrush's Lansdowne Crescent, with sea-view rooms looking straight out over the Atlantic toward Royal Portrush Golf Club, host of The Open in 2019 and 2025.

Royal Court Hotel · www.royalcourthotel.co.uk

Day 5

Return to Belfast & Departure

A last coastal run back to Belfast, with a final market lunch before the flight home.

Self-Drive — Portrush to Belfast

~1 hr 20 min · ~60 miles via the A26

The same A26 corridor back south, with an easy stop in Ballymena or Antrim if there's time to spare before the return flight.

St George's Market

~1 hr, self-guided · free to browse (Fri–Sun only)

A Victorian covered market trading since 1890, with stalls of local cheese, seafood, and crafts and a weekend brunch crowd drawn by the live music. Open Friday, Saturday and Sunday mornings only, so this stop depends on the day of departure.

St George's Market · www.belfastcity.gov.uk/stgeorgesmarket

Farewell Lunch — Mourne Seafood Bar

~1 hr · ~\$25–35 USD / person

A Belfast seafood institution running its own oyster beds on the Co. Down coast, shucking straight to the table alongside chowder and fish and chips in a relaxed, brick-walled dining room.

Mourne Seafood Bar · www.mourneseafood.com

Departure Transfer — City Centre to Belfast International Airport (BFS)

~45 min · Airport Express 300 bus from \$10 USD, or taxi from \$55 USD

The same Airport Express run back out to Belfast International to close out the trip.

Translink · www.translink.co.uk