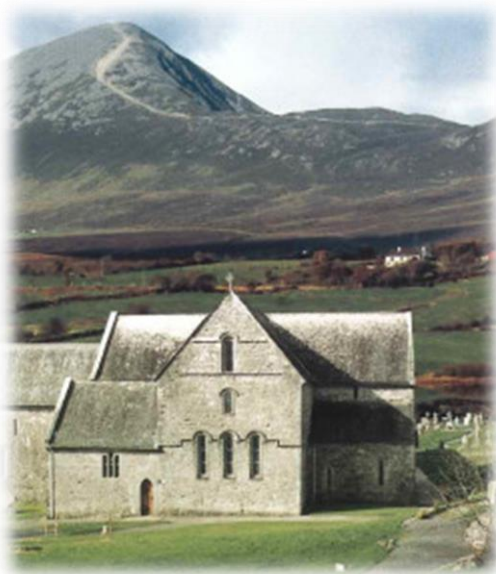


# BALLINTUBBER ABBEY

## About the Tóchar Phádraig – St Patricks Pilgrim Path

From Ballintubber Abbey stretching out to Croagh Patrick is Tóchar Phádraig, the ancient pilgrim path. Walkers can register at Ballintubber Abbey to walk the route (with a minimum of one other person). Guided group walks often take place throughout the year.

Originally the Tóchar Phádraig was the chariot road that went from Rathcruachan, the seat of the Kings and Queens of Connacht, to Aughagower and Cruachan Aille, as Croagh Patrick was called in Pre-Christian times.



After St Patrick's time pilgrims began to traverse that same road to the holy mountain and over time it became known as Tóchar Phádraig or St Patrick's Causeway.

After the pilgrimages to Jerusalem ceased in the C13th due to the taking over of the Holy Places by the Saracens, the pilgrimages to Croagh Patrick became even more important. When Ballintubber Abbey was built in 1216 a hostel was also put in place to cater for the many pilgrims. This hostel, the remains of which can be seen today in the grounds, incorporated a place for both ritual washing and actual cleansing. It is called Danchora or the 'Bath of the righteous'.

After 1588 it went into decline as a public road and in Penal times it ceased to be used as a pilgrim path. In 1987 it was restored and every year hundreds of pilgrims walk Tóchar Phádraig on pilgrimage - a distance of 22 miles (35km).



As you walk the Tóchar', whether on foot or in fantasy, you will be going not only on a spiritual pilgrimage, but on a cultural and historical journey down through the ages also. Both experiences, if fully entered into, should bring about the change of heart and insight of mind which is essential to a pilgrim's progress.

Every tree, every stone, every hill and hollow along the way seemed to cry out with a story. For everything, it seemed, had been adopted into human history. The fields and rocks and streams had been the recipients of man's sweat and blood and tears they had been named and given identity by these same human events.



The 'Legends' erected along the way indicate that this walk also marks out our own 'Pilgrim Journey' as a people.

We are also part of the Pilgrim Paths of Ireland. The Pilgrim Paths of Ireland are a collection of ancient religious routes with well documented claims of having been used by pilgrims since ancient times. Walking these ageless trails not only offers the opportunity for spiritual renewal but also provides a link to our past, while contributing to sustainable tourism and community development in each area. You can obtain your passport for all 5 walks here in Ballintubber and once completed we will issue your **Teastas**.

### Pilgrim Paths of Ireland – Passport Trails

1. St Kevin's Way, Co Wicklow.(30km)
2. Cosán na Naomh, Co Kerry. (18km)
3. Cnoc na dTobar, Co Kerry (7km)
4. St. Finbarr's, Co Cork. (37km)
5. Tóchar Phádraig, Co Mayo. (35km)

See [www.pilgrimpath.ie](http://www.pilgrimpath.ie) for more information.

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## REVIEWS

*"I have to save that the saying 'save the best til last' comes to mind after the five pilgrimages and there is indeed something quite special about this one. Again a sincere thank you to all involved even behind the scenes to maintain and promote this pilgrimage."*

**Jim**

*"Many thanks for all your help and assistance especially on the Tochar Phadraig Pilgrim Path".*

**Bernadette**

*"I want to thank you for this—I thoroughly enjoyed each one of the walks and the wonderful experiences I had along the way will remain as great memories with me forever."*

**Deirdre**

*"I wish to take this opportunity to thank everyone again for warmth of reception and support, friendship and encouragement while on walk over Croagh Patrick and confirmatory emails prior to my journey."* Denis

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## 'A Pilgrim Walk' - Elements of Pilgrimage:

There are certain elements of Pilgrimage built into the walk and reminders of these are erected at certain places along the way. They distinguish the 'Pilgrim' from the 'Tourist'

**Penance** - No complaining. Instead say "Thanks be to God"

**Community** - Include 'the stranger' in your group - No 'Cliques'

**Faith** - Light a Candle as symbol of your faith before setting out

**Mystery** - Silence observed at certain designated parts of Tochar.

**Celebration** - Share your Food, your Joy, your Love and your Care.

