

## A Brief History of Inishturk

Inishturk is a small beautiful island, 5km x 2.5km, located 9 miles (14.5km) off the west coast of Mayo, between the islands of Inishbofin and Clare Island. It rises boldly from the wild North Atlantic in wall like-cliffs to the north-west and steep hills to the north on which stands the ruins of the old Napoleonic signal tower 688 ft above sea level.

Inishturk, meaning ‘the Island of the Wild Boar’ in Irish, has been inhabited on and off since 4,000BCE and in its present phase since at least 1700. The old settlers seem to have congregated at the southwest corner round the beautiful little harbour of Portdoon, where there is ample archeological evidence of their presence. The ancestry of the current population includes Wicklow, Wexford and Galway. Some of the dominant names include O’Toole, Heanue and Concannon, names from Leinster, Ulster as well as the nearby Connemara Gaeltacht..



Traditionally islanders have emigrated since the famine, to America and England. As a result the island is now English speaking although at the beginning of the 20th century Irish was the first language. Inishturk has a good main harbour with a new improved pier, fine beaches and many interesting archeological sites. Geologically Inishturk dates from the Ordovician period. Two separate folds of schists and shales rise out of the Atlantic to form Inishturk, which is a continuation of the same folds as Croagh Patrick on the Mayo mainland.

Inishturk has much to offer the outdoor enthusiast – it is a painter’s paradise; ornithology enthusiasts will be enthralled by the number of bird sanctuaries on the island cliffs. The flora of inishturk is of international importance, The Spotted Rock-Rose (Tuberaria guttata) a rare endangered plant is found here. fiadh have been located on the island.

The island is ideal for deep sea diving and boat trips to the neighbouring islands can be easily organised; Celtic and early Christian fortified habitations are to be found and many fulachta

On the eastern side of the island are “Tranaun” and “Curraun”-sandy beaches which boast the clearest blue waters and some of the best views in Europe. Completely sheltered by coves, they are ideal for young and old alike to indulge in a bit of swimming.

Fishing for the Inishturk lobster and the Islands’s huge edible crabclaws are the main commercial activity on the Island, these along with the many coastal fish are served fresh in the island’s B & B’s. The waters off the west coast of mayo offer excellent bait for angling enthusiasts. Boat trips can be arranged on the Island.

**Details of Guest Accommodation for the island are as follows;**  
**Teach Abhainn, Anne & Paddy O’Toole, Tel: 098-45510**  
**Trànaun House, Tel: 098-45641, Fax: 098-45566**  
**Bill & Mary Heanue, Tel: 098-45520**



## Pirates of Inishturk

Tradition has it that the Dun at Portdoon was built by pirates who harboured their galleys in the creek below, screened by the rocks from the observation of those sailing past. The pirate crew were the last Danes in Ireland who knew how to make bier lochlannach, a priceless drink made from the heather-bloom. The fort was surprised and taken by the Irish who slaughtered the inmates except for one Dane and his son, offering to spare the captives if they told the secret of the bier, or as others said, the hiding place of their vast treasures, the plunder of may years. The old pirate, fearing the boy might be tempted or tortured into betrayal offered to tell if his son was put to death first, so none of his kin might see his treachery. This done, the pirate captain tore himself from his captors, and ran, shouting insults, to the deep chasm, springing over the cliff and carrying his secret to Odin.



## Ferry Services

Inishturk Ferries travel daily from Roonagh Pier, just west of Louisburgh, to Inishturk twice daily from June to September and O’Malley Ferries operate a service for the rest of the year. Details relating to ferry times can be obtained by contacting the Inishturk Community Office, Tel: 098-45862, Website: [www.inishturk.com](http://www.inishturk.com)

## Inishturk Island Loop Walk Details

### Trailhead

Pier on Inishturk Island – parking is at Roonagh Pier approximately 10km from Louisburgh, Co Mayo. Nearest services such as accommodation, shops & toilets, etc at Louisburg and on Inishturk Island.

## Lough Coolaknick Loop

<b>At a Glance</b>	<b>Green Walk</b>
<b>Theme</b>	<b>Island</b>
<b>Terrain</b>	<b>Surface roads, sandy tracks</b>
<b>Distance/Difficulty</b>	<b>5km/ Easy</b>
<b>Ascent</b>	<b>100m / 150m</b>
<b>Duration</b>	<b>1 hr – 1hr30mins</b>
<b>Minimum Gear</b>	<b>Trekking shoes, raingear, snacks &amp; fluid.</b>

### Loop Description

The trailhead is located at a gable wall 50m from pier. From the trailhead follow the surfaced road for 100m to pass the church (on your right) and reach the Community Development Office / Tourist Office. Continue to follow the road as it ascends to reach a 3-way junction. Turn right here.

The roadway ascends again to pass first Ocean View B&B and then the shop (both on your right). Continue along the road to reach a metal gate.

Pass through the gate taking care to close it after you) and follow the winding sandy roadway –enjoying the views of the Atlantic Ocean that open up in front of you. After almost 1km you reach Loch Cúil a Chnoic (Irish for lake at the back of the mountain!). Near the end of the lake the longer Mountain Common Loop swings right and ascends across the commonage. You continue straight – staying on the sandy roadway.



Follow the sandy roadway downhill to reach the sportsfield where the long loop joins again from the right. Pass through the gate / French gate here.

Stay on the sandy roadway past Teach Abhainn B&B (on your right) to reach a T-junction. The loop turns left here but you might fancy taking the short trip to Portdoon – a peaceful cove just 200m away (turn right and almost immediately left). If you do – be sure to make your way back to this junction again.

From the T-junction the loop follows surfaced road back to the trailhead. On your way you pass first the primary School and then the Community Club. If you have time to spare can you enjoy a pint or ‘cuppa’ and the company of some locals. The trailhead and pier are a 10min walk from the ‘club’

