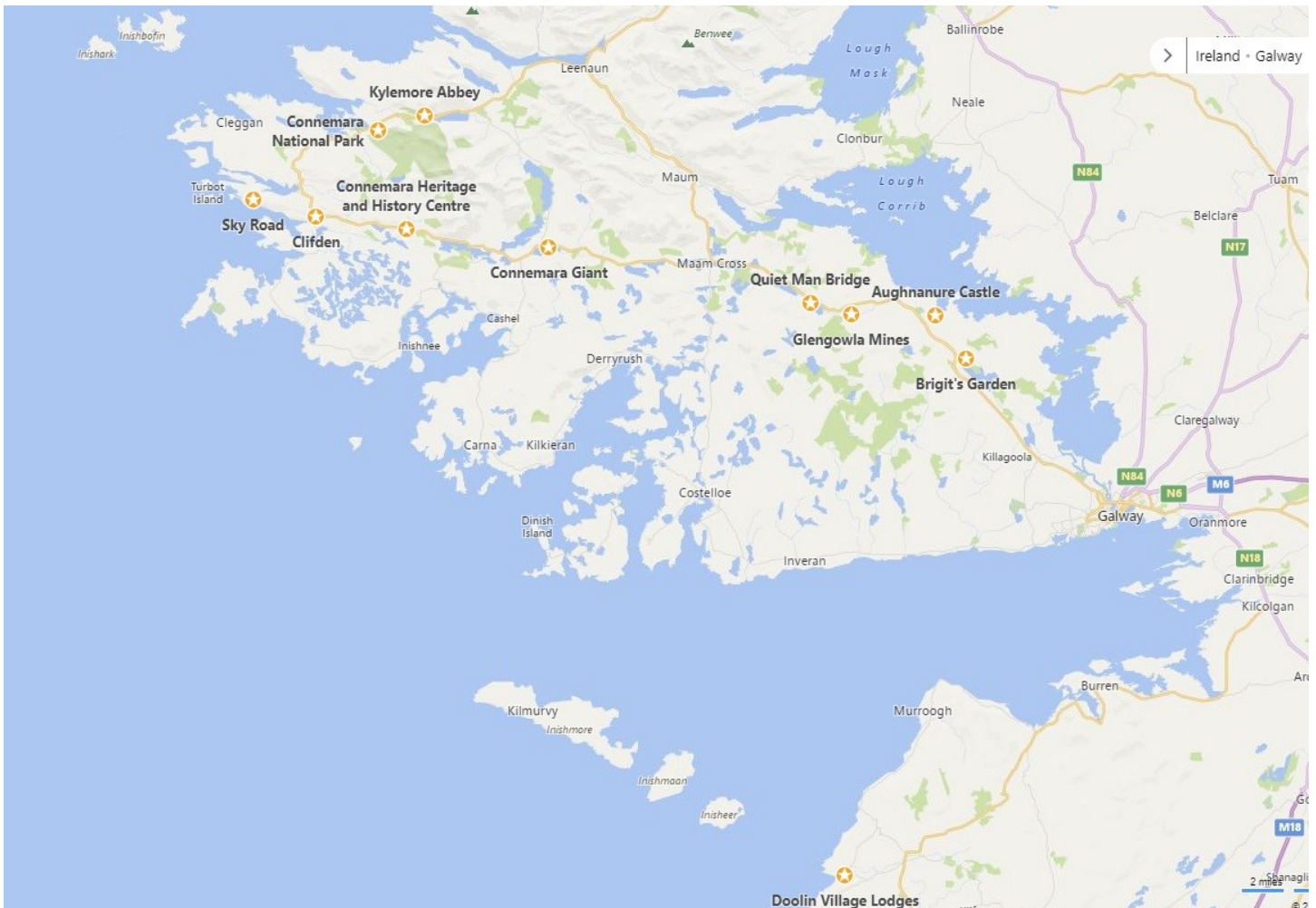


Itinerary 3: Day Trip to Connemara

Connemara is located in the farthest westerly reaches of County Galway. In this 'Wild West of Ireland' the roads undulate between a coastline filled with inlets and boggy lowlands and the towering Twelve Bens (or Twelve Pins) Mountains where famed Connemara Marble is mined.

This trip will take a full day so plan to head out early to take advantage of everything Connemara has to offer!



Estimated drives time to key locations:

Doolin to Galway: 1 hour 45 minutes

Galway to Clifden: 1 hour 30 minutes

Clifden to Kylemore Abbey: 30 minutes

Once you are through Galway city the scenery begins to change. Gone are the fields of limestone, replaced with rivers, lakes, and bog lands.

Must See Sights in Connemara

You have truly entered Connemara when you see the statue of the Connemara Giant. Legend says that if you touch the hand of Conn, Son of the Sea, you will be blessed with the knowledge of his ancient tribe.

It's your choice to decide which hand is the hand of knowledge!

Irish tales are often told through song. Such is the story of Dan O'Hara who was evicted from his Connemara cottage in the 1840s and forced to emigrate to New York. The [Connemara History and Heritage Centre](#) is based around this cottage. The guided tour takes you on a ride through the hill farm and to the cottage where you may get to cut turf and try *poitín*, a (once illegal) homemade whiskey.

The charming town of Clifden is the perfect spot to stop and grab a light picnic or just a sweet treat and a cuppa tea at Walsh's Bakery. Built around a central square the town is filled with wonderful shops and lively pubs.

Suitably refreshed leave Clifden via the Sky Road, a dramatic peninsula drive that hugs the cliffs as the road rises and falls, at times feeling like you may drive directly into the ocean!



The ruins of Clifden Castle sit below the Sky Road. If you wish to visit the ruin park at the open lot across the road from the stone castle gates.

The walk to the castle is relatively flat and easy. Remember that this is private land; act respectfully. You may encounter cattle or sheep in adjoining fields or at the castle. Do not disturb the livestock.

Leaving the Sky Road turn north to continue on to [Kylemore Abbey](#). This romantic castle turned abbey, nestled at the base of a mountain on the edge of a sparkling lake, may be the most photographed building in all of Ireland.



Three rooms in the abbey have been restored to the elegance the original owners enjoyed. Beyond that the castle is private residence; it is, after all, a working abbey. Follow the lakeside trail to discover the tiny neo-Gothic church, stunning in its small stature and intricate details. Turn opposite to follow the Woodland walk to the spectacular Victorian Walled Garden. (Shuttles run throughout the day for those who don't wish to walk.)

More Connemara Highlights

If you enjoy a really good hike visit [Connemara National Park](#) to climb Diamond Hill. You'll find an upper loop walk which takes you across the top of the mountain, as well as a lower loop walk that is still a fine climb with stunning views. The park also has a few shorter walks, as well as a very nice playground and picnic tables.

Fans of The Quiet Man will want to watch carefully for a small brown sign between Oughterard and Maam Cross which points toward the bridge from which Sean Thornton first viewed his wee humble cottage.

The [Glengowla Mines](#) were a source for both silver and lead. A guided tour leads you through the abandoned mine and museum

[Aughnanure Castle](#) was built in the 1500s near the shores of Lough Corrib. The well-preserved tower house includes a banquet hall, a watch tower, and an unusual double bawn (defensive wall).

[Brigit's Garden](#) is an award winning Celtic Garden set within 11 acres of native woodlands and meadows. The four main gardens take you on a journey through the Celtic fire festivals. This family friendly stop also features a kids discovery trail and natural playground.

Planning to visit Galway?

You probably won't have time enough to include it in this day trip. Plan a half-day to visit the city and enjoy a few more of the Burren's sites on your way back to