

Social Story Guide

A Visit to Glendalough



Glendalough is famous for its Early Christian Monastery founded by St Kevin in the 6th century. Many people were attracted to his life and a monastic settlement developed in the valley. This settlement grew to become one of the most important places of education and pilgrimage in Ireland during the Middle Ages. The site today includes a round tower, cathedral, stone churches and decorated crosses, which date from the tenth and twelfth centuries. Glendalough remains to be one of the most visited places in Ireland and as well as being a famous National Monument is within The Wicklow Mountains National Park comprising of over 20,000 hectares protecting a range of habitats including blanket bog, heath and woodlands.

I arrive:

I arrive at the Visitor Centre Car Park. There is a €4.00 parking fee and the car park attendants will issue a parking ticket at the gate. This ticket can be used to get a discount off admission tickets into the Visitor Centre so I bring it to reception if I wish to visit the Visitor Centre.

Sometimes there are sounds in the carpark that are not what I expect to hear in Glendalough. The leaf blower and lawnmower can be noisy but the ground staff want to make sure that the grounds in Glendalough are kept clean and tidy. This is a video clip of this sound in case the ground staff are using the leaf blower today.



The Visitor Centre

The Visitor Centre has an exhibition on the history of St Kevin and Glendalough. It also has an Audio Visual Presentation called Ireland and the Monasteries, which is about Early Irish Monasteries and Saints. Here is a clip of Glendalough Visitor Centre below.



My Visit to Glendalough Visitor Centre:

Reception Desk

I will see the reception/ticket desk on the left. This is where I collect my ticket before I enter the exhibition area.

Visitor Centre Staff



I will meet the Visitor Centre Staff at Reception, the Ticket Desk and on the Monastic Site. The Staff can answer questions I might have about the Monastery's history and they are here to assist me. If I am overwhelmed and need to go to the quiet space, I can ask one of the Guides/Staff to show me where it is. They do not have a uniform but wear dark colours, usually black & navy. The Guides wear a shirt or a jacket with the letters OPW.

The Exhibition

As I enter the exhibition area, I notice that it is dark. The screens light up as I walk past them. The exhibition is designed this way to save energy and to help to protect the environment.



Behind the picture of the Upper Lake, there is a story corner about the legends of St Kevin and the animals. This is designed for children but adults also like to listen to the stories. If there is someone in the story corner, I wait until they leave and then I can go inside. This video clip below shows how it works.



In the centre of the exhibition, I will find a model, which explains about what life was like in the Monastic Settlement in the 12th century. There is a button at the corner of the model and if I press this button, I will hear a commentary. This is a clip of the model below:



There are many more models and exhibits that will tell me all about Glendalough and life in an Early Irish Monastery. There is also an Audio Visual Presentation called Ireland of the Monasteries, which explains about many of The Early Irish Saints, and Monasteries. This video is 15 minutes long. It is in a theatre, which is like a cinema so it is in a darkened room. There is a part of the video, which talks about Ireland's Pagan Culture, and there are faces on the screen, which some people might find frightening. This is the clip of the video below so I know what to expect.



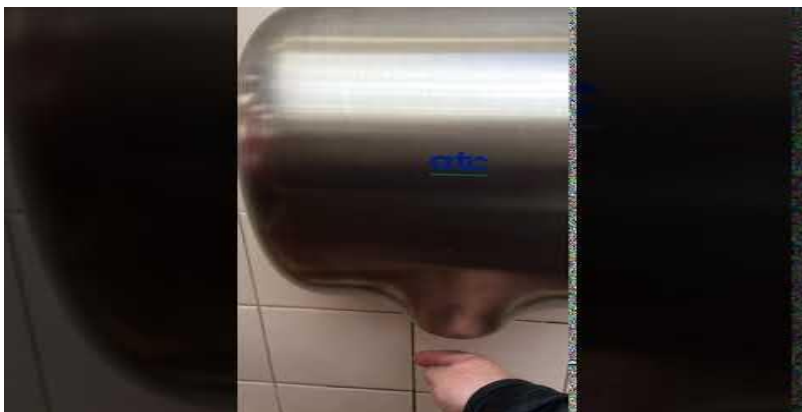
I can watch the Audio Visual show but if I do not want to watch the video and go outside for a walk this is okay, I can ask the Visitor Centre Staff for directions.

Toilets

There are toilets outside the Visitor Centre that I can use before I walk to the monastery and the lakes.



Some people find the hand dryers in the toilet very noisy. This is a video of the noise they make below:



If I find this noise very loud, I can ask the staff to turn off the hand dryers while I use the toilet.

Signage

I will see many different signs on my visit to Glendalough. I can ask the Guides/Staff if I do not understand a sign.



This is a sign with all the leaflets and postcards that I can purchase at reception.



This is the Admission sign where I can get information about getting a ticket



This sign tells me that food or drink is not allowed into the Visitor Centre.



This sign directs me into the exhibition



This is a Fire Extinguishing point



This sign tells me where the exit is



This sign tells me that I can leave through this door if there is an emergency



These signs tell me where the toilets are located



This is a map of all the trails in Glendalough. This map is located at the front of the Visitor Centre and there is another map at the Upper Lake



I will find all the coloured arrows at the Upper Lake. Each colour is for a different trail. There are maps at the Visitor Centre Grounds and at the Upper Lake which will describe each walk.



The yellow arrows are for the Wicklow Way. This long trail starts in Marley Park in County Dublin and ends in Clonegal in County Carlow. It passes through the Glendalough Valley.

The Monastic Site



When I leave the Visitor Centre, I can ask a member of staff and they will give me directions to the Monastery and the trails. On the way to the lake, I will see a bridge that takes me into the Monastic Site. This is where I will find St Kevin's Church, the Cemetery, the Cathedral and the Round Tower. There will be a member of staff on the site. I can talk to them and ask them any questions that I might have about the history and any other information that I would like to know about the area. After my visit to the monastery, I can return to the path and continue walking to the Upper Lake. It is a 30-minute walk to the Upper Lake.

National Park Information Office



Just before the Upper Lake, I will see a white cottage on the right. This is the National Park Information Office where there are National Park Staff and they can give me more information about the area and the other trails that I can do in Glendalough.

We hope that you enjoy your visit!