

KILMALLOCK LOOPED WALK

- **Distance:** 7 km
- **Start/End:** King's Castle Car Park
- **Difficulty:** Easy

If Kilmallock's walls could talk, they'd have some intriguing tales to tell. Travel through the centuries and discover Kilmallock's fascinating rich history and medieval marvels on a series of heritage trails around this charming walled town.

This looped walk incorporates a number of trails guiding you through the architectural heritage and national monuments around the town. Additionally enjoy Kilmallock's scenery, its beauty and serenity as you stroll along the banks of the River Loobagh.

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Points of Interest



Car-parking available at **P**

- 1 King's Castle, Sheares Street
- 2 Fenian Monument, Sheares Street
- 3 Medieval Mural, Sheares Street
- 4 Dominican Priory
- 5 River Loobagh
- 6 Serenity Garden
- 7 North Bridge
- 8 The Hill
- 9 St. Peter & Paul Catholic Church, Sheares Street
- 10 The Outer Ditch, West Wall Walkway
- 11 Earthen Bastion and Martyr's Monument
- 12 Famine Memorial Park, Gerard Road
- 13 Kilmallock Library & Courthouse
- 14 Lord Edward Street
- 15 Bank of Ireland, Lord Edward Street
- 16 Church of Ireland, Saints Peter & Paul, Deebert
- 17 Deebert House Hotel
- 18 Water Bridge/Water Gate, Wolfe Tone Street
- 19 Poet's Cottage, Wolfe Tone Street
- 20 Collegiate Church, Orr Street
- 21 SuperValu, Sarsfield Street
- 22 Sarsfield Street/Orr Street Junction
- 23 Friars' Gate Theatre, Sarsfield Street
- 24 The Merchant's House, Sarsfield Street

-  Town Walls
-  Playground
-  Blossom Gate - Kilmallock's surviving Medieval Gatehouse

-  The Priory Walk
-  The John Tierney Way
-  Memorial Walk
-  West Wall Walkway
-  The Famine Graveyard
-  Poet's Walk

FREE Medieval Guided Walking Tour

-  First Sunday of each month at 11am
-  Starting at King's Castle

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Kilmallock started as a monastic settlement. In around 600 AD, Saint Mocheallóg founded a monastery on Kilmallock Hill, giving the town its name, 'Cill Mocheallóg'.



1 King's Castle

King's Castle, built on Kilmallock's original North Gate, is a striking 15th century tower house rising 20m high. Its battlements feature stepped merlons for defence, and an angled base to deflect missiles. The pointed 18th century windows add character. Over the centuries, it has served as an armaments store, hospital, forge, jail, and school.

2 Fenian Monument

A Celtic cross erected in 1898 commemorates the Fenian rebels who lost their lives during an attack on Kilmallock Barracks in 1867, and those who subsequently died from hardships endured in prison.

3 Medieval Mural

An eye-catching mural by Uto Hogerzeil, entitled *A Rich and Splendid Town*, illustrates a 16th century view of street life along the main thoroughfare, known then as High Street, when Kilmallock was at the height of its prosperity.

4 Dominican Priory

Perched on the banks of the River Loobagh, "The Abbey" as it is known locally, is a medieval marvel dating to 1291. Closely associated with the White Knight, this beautifully preserved priory boasts a five-light east window, a cloister, and intricately carved stone heads. Despite centuries of rebellion, monks lived and worked here until the 1700s, leaving behind a legacy etched in stone.

5 River Loobagh

Originating in the Ballyhoura Mountains, the River Loobagh flows for 21km through Kilfinane and Kilmallock before joining the River Maigue. Its name is derived from the Irish word *Lúbach* (winding), reflecting the river's meandering path.

6 Serenity Garden

As you come from the banks of the River Loobagh, this is a space for all to relax and enjoy the wonders of nature. The garden is a voluntary community initiative with active planting that gives colour throughout the year. An opportunity to sit and relax and enjoy the sensory experience. As part of the community initiative a fairy garden is being installed for the young at heart to enjoy.

7 North Bridge

The second of Kilmallock's main bridges in the 13th century, the North Bridge was located here. The current five-arch bridge was originally built c. 1800 and was rebuilt in 1916.

8 The Hill

A lookout point on Kilmallock Hill marks the ancient site where a monastery was founded by Saint Cheallóg around 600 AD, giving the town its name, *Cill Mocheallóg*. The monastery was relocated to the banks of the River

Loobagh in the 11th century where the Collegiate Church of St. Peter and Paul was later built. A chapel remained on the hill until the 15th century.

9 St. Peter & Paul Catholic Church

Easily identified by its soaring steeple, this elaborate church, designed by Gothic Revival architect J.J. McCarthy, was opened in 1888. Two of the stained-glass windows are inspired by designs in the Dominican Priory and Collegiate Church, while three others are dedicated to local saints Cheallóg, Ita and Munchin.

10 The Outer Ditch

The original defence of the town was described as a fosse or ditch. Following the construction of the wall, a town ditch or fosse was recorded surrounding the walls. The ditch is still visible on the northern half of the West Wall Walk.

11 Earthen Bastion and Martyr's Monument

Behind the church lies Crochta, meaning "the hanging place", once a 17th century bastion turned execution site. In 1579, Bishop Patrick O'Hely and Fr. Conn O'Rourke were tortured and executed here during the Desmond Rebellion. A monument now honours them and Fr. Maurice Mac Enraghty, a Kilmallock native, martyred in 1586.

12 Famine Memorial Park

The limestone memorial, built by the local community in this peaceful park, pays tribute to the thousands of undocumented victims of the Gorta Mór (The Great Hunger) 1845 – 1850. Known as 'Bully's Acre', the land here was used as a mass burial ground, many of whom died in the nearby workhouse.

13 Kilmallock Library & Courthouse

Kilmallock's Courthouse once housed the town's Workhouse, opened in 1841 to aid Ireland's poor. During the Great Famine, it overflowed. Some 1,200 people crammed into a space meant for 800, half of them children. Disease spread, food was scarce, and many perished. Later a hospital, the building was seized by British forces in 1920 and burned down during the Civil War.

14 Lord Edward Street

A confident Catholic middle class emerged at the end of the 19th century, leaving their mark on the streetscape. You can see a terrace of impressive three storey cut limestone buildings with red bricked window surrounds and chimneys, the first of which was constructed by William Henry O'Sullivan, a prominent businessman and political figure in Kilmallock. In 1871, he established a mineral water and lemonade factory, leading to significant employment in the town. The Allied Irish Bank building was completed in 1877, its design based on Kilmallock's earlier stone houses, providing a modern connection with the past. Balbec House, at the Wolfe Tone Street junction, is another distinctive building from this period.

15 Bank of Ireland, Lord Edward Street

Once the Royal Irish Constabulary barracks, this site saw fierce action during Ireland's struggle for Independence. In 1867, three men: Daniel Blake, Dr. Michael Clery, and Patrick Hassett, were killed in a failed raid, now remembered by the Celtic cross at King's Castle. Over 50 years later, a deadly shootout in 1920 claimed two RIC constables and IRA Captain Liam Scully.

16 Church of Ireland, Saints Peter & Paul, Deebert

Perched on the outskirts of town, this striking Romanesque Revival style structure was built in 1938. It was designed by architect Frederick George Hicks; his style is reflected in the church's brickwork and recurring arches. Prior to this, the Collegiate Church served as the Anglican parish church until it was destroyed in an arson attack in 1935.

17 Deebert House Hotel

The Deebert House Hotel combines modern facilities and old world charm with unique Kilmallock hospitality in this family run hotel. It is an ideal base for walking, cycling, mountain biking, golf or heritage enthusiasts to discover the riches of Kilmallock and Ballyhoura Country.

18 Water Bridge/Water Gate

The site of one of the town's two main bridges in the 13th century, Water Bridge was accessed from Wolfe Tone Street. Built c. 1800, with fabric dating from the 13th to 15th centuries.

19 Poet's Cottage, Wolfe Tone Street

Alongside Water Bridge sits the 200-year-old cottage, where poet Aindrias MacCraith died in 1795. His fondness for drinking, while inspiring his work, also landed him in trouble. His most famous poem *Goodbye to the Maigue*, displayed in the doorway, was written after his banishment from nearby Croom in 1744 by the parish priest.

20 Collegiate Church

A gem in Kilmallock's story, the Collegiate Church of Saints Peter and Paul served as the parish church for 700 years before a fire in 1935. Its graveyard holds both Catholic and Anglican burials, including several ornate tombs from the 1500s, most notably the Fitzgerald, Verdon, and Blakeney families. The church also houses the preserved base of an 11th century round tower, hinting at an even older monastic past. Just outside lies the grave of Aindrias MacCraith, the 18th-century poet known as *The Merry Peddler*.

21 SuperValu

Surviving sections of two 16th century merchants' stone houses, one semi-intact, were revealed during renovations, and have been respectfully incorporated into the present-day supermarket.

22 Sarsfield Street/Orr Street Junction

This marks the spot where the medieval market cross stood up to 1777, a focal point of trade and market activity in the town and where proclamations and punishments were carried out.

23 Friars' Gate Theatre

Theatre and arts lovers can enjoy live stage productions, exhibitions and culture in this intimate venue within a historic setting. The 130-seat theatre occupies the site where Sarsfield House once stood, a 16th century merchant's dwelling whose gable walls are still visible either side of the building's façade.

24 The Merchant's House, Sarsfield Street

This beautiful cut stone building was one of a series of wealthy merchants' houses, which lined the street in the late 16th century, reflecting the town's affluence. It is the best surviving example of the many medieval mansions and is of national importance due to its rarity in Ireland. Features of note include the arched doorways, one of which has a decorative stone at its base, and the limestone hood mouldings above the first-floor windows.

Town Walls

Kilmallock is one of Ireland's finest examples of a medieval walled town. Although the town walls were frequently damaged due to war and conflict, 11km of the original 17km walls survive in an excellent state. The walls generally measured over 5m high and 12m wide, with a protected walkway along the top, with four corner towers at the northern & southern ends and a wide ditch outside, creating a 13-hectare town within.

Kilmallock's Medieval Gatehouses

Five gates led into the walled town of Kilmallock - St John's Gate to the north, Ivy Gate on the southern side, Water Gate on the east, Friars' Gate leading to the Dominican Priory, and Blossom Gate, the only surviving original gate which dominates Emmett Street. At one side of the tower, projecting stones are visible, marking where the gate joined the town walls. In times past it was also known as Pigeon Castle and Mallow Castle.

Sources: Kilmallock Tourism Group, Kilmallock Historical Society, Limerick City and County Council and Local Authority Archaeologist Sarah McCutcheon.

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