



Discover Tramore

www.discovertramore.ie
mobile.discovertramore.ie

GOLDEN BEACH

Tramore's greatest attraction is its 3km golden beach. It provides the perfect setting for a relaxing walk, taking in natural habitats and wildlife. Discover all this and more, using this guide. Before going on this walk always acquaint yourselves with tidal and weather conditions.

1 Point 1

The beach walk begins at the 'Ladies Slip'. If you arrive just at low tide you will see the rocky seashore under the cliffs to the right. Here, you will find many underwater creatures exposed by the receding tide, including crustaceans such as crabs, and barnacles which adhere fast to the rocks. Various types of algae, like bladder-wrack and gut-weed, can be discovered here.

Tip: Never explore the rocky seashore alone. Wear non-slip shoes and always be aware of the tides and changeable weather conditions.

2 Point 2

As you walk down the beach, the promenade and storm-wall come into view on your left. If you look carefully in the sand you will see lug-worm casts, as well as sea snails tracks from where they were feeding at high tide. Lug-worms live in u-shaped burrows about a foot under the sand and you may also discover seashells and remains of crabs along the way.

3 Point 3

At the Lifeguards' hut, the beach takes on a different form. The ridge running the length of the beach is called the "shingle embankment" and was laid down at the end of the Ice Age. You will find specialised types of plants growing here, such as sea-beet, with large thick fleshy leaves; and sea sandwort, identifiable by small leaves and white flowers. At the halfway point down the beach, take some time to look at the stunning views of the Bay and headlands. Facing the water, turn left to see Brownstown Head with its two beacon towers, while on the right is Greater Newtown Head, with three beacon towers erected in 1821 to insure safe passage to mariners. From their promontory on the headlands, the beacons alerted sailors to the dangers of rocks below. The centre column is mounted by the Metal Man figure, whose twin is in Sligo. They say on stormy nights you can hear him cry out, "Keep out, keep out, good ship from me, for I am the rock of misery." Historically there have been many shipping tragedies here. Thankfully, modern technology has made sailing safer.

4 Point 4

Continue down as far as the neck of the sand dunes. You will notice some large rocks piled in order to prevent sea erosion. To the left of these rocks you will see a cut-through. Proceed along that route and stop next to the fence. On the right you will see a pile of what appears to be broken and burnt seashells. These are a national monument; the shells are evidence of the first settlers in Tramore, dating back some 10,000 years. This was their cooking area, known today as a kitchen midden. If you turn to the left you will see marram grass, which is only found in the environs of sand dunes. These grasses are dry and spiky to the touch, but maintain the sand dunes by their binding roots, while their leaves preventing wind from blowing too much sand away.

Tip: Only use the provided walkways. Do not enter fenced-off areas as these areas are very environmentally sensitive.

5 Point 5

Continue forward and you will arrive at the Back Strand. This area is an area of Special Conservation. The Back Strand is abundant in bird and fish life and the sand is littered with cockleshells which live under the mud-flats. Wading birds can be seen feeding at low tide, especially oyster-catchers, with their unmistakable black and white bodies and red beaks. This area fills and empties twice a day with the tides. You might be interested to observe that the sand is full of air and feels light and soft under the feet.

6 Point 6

Walk to the left and you will pass through what was the Malcolmson embankment, built to reclaim the Back Strand for a golf-course and race-course, the stands of which can be seen today. In the December of 1911 the embankment gave way in the middle, for the second time that year. The reclaimed land remains flooded to this day.

7 Point 7

As you walk back to Tramore the habitat takes on a new form; that of a salt marsh. You will see a reed-like grass called cordgrass covering a large area and in the early to late summer, carpets of sea pinks can be seen growing. At low tide, there are sea bait pickers in this area of the Back Strand, as fishing is a very popular past-time for locals and visitors and during the summer months a multitude of shoals of mackerel come to our shore. Keep an ear out and you may just hear a skylark in full song but you need a good eye to spot one as they fly up really high; look to the water's edge you may see a tall bright white bird wading for food. This is the little egret.

We hope you enjoyed some of the sights and sounds of Tramore's great front garden.

With thanks to Alan Walsh