

KILDAVIN TO THE NINE STONES

**Trailhead:** Kildavin, County Carlow

**Services:** Kildavin, Bunclody and Myshall

**Distance/Time:** 11.6km & approx. 4 hrs

**Difficulty:** Hard

**Terrain:** Minor roadways, forestry tracks and hillside paths

**Ascent:** 475 metres

**To suit:** Experienced walkers

**Minimum gear:** Hiking boots, rain gear, fluids, snacks and mobile phone.

**OSI maps:** OSI Discovery Series 68, 75 and 76 and the *Blackstairs, Mount Leinster and the Barrow Valley* from East West Mapping [www.eastwestmapping.ie](http://www.eastwestmapping.ie)

**Type of trail:** National Way Marked Trail – yellow arrow on black background

**Emergency services:** 999 or 112

**Contact email:** [secretar@carlowcoco.ie](mailto:secretar@carlowcoco.ie)

The village of Kildavin is nestled in the shadow of the Blackstairs Mountains and has the River Slaney running through it. The Mill at Ballypierce, the Forge, Corn store, sand pits and wool store all tell something of the history of the area. Only two places in Ireland have what is known as ‘High Beach’ sand. One is Lahinch in County Clare and the other is here in Kildavin. The area offers beauty, peace and unspoilt scenery as well as a rich and varied past in holy wells and church ruins. A famous son of the area – Cardinal Francis Spellman of New York – is remembered in Spellman Hall and Spellman GAA complex. The village garden created on the site of the old ball alley links local wildlife, sustainable willow and shrub planting with local granite stone. It is situated in the village centre beside St. Paul’s Church of Ireland. The Wicklow Way long distance walking route covering a distance of 127 kilometres finishes in the beautiful village of Clonegal, 4 kilometres north-east of here. For more information visit [www.clonegalkildavin.ie](http://www.clonegalkildavin.ie)

**A-B:** From the trailhead close to Conway’s Pub, follow the footpath south gently uphill towards Bunclody, passing Spellman Hall on your right. After 500 metres, reach the main road and taking great care, turn right to follow it for a short distance. Cross the main road with care to gain a minor tarmac road on the far side. Follow this for 2 kilometres as it climbs steadily uphill.

**B-C:** Reach Mount Leinster Cottages and turn left and steeply uphill on a rough unsurfaced track to enter a forest. Now follow the forest road uphill to reach a junction after 500 metres. Turn right and follow the forest road as it climbs more gently along the slopes of the forested hillside. After 2.5 kilometres reach the crest of the hill and a short gap between two forests, that yields good views.

**C-D:** From the crest of the hill, continue on downhill, passing a right turn after a short distance. There are signposted loop trails here, so take care to follow the yellow arrows. Continue on downhill for 1.5 kilometres to reach the Kilbrannish Forest Recreation car park. Turn right and follow the tarmac road with care uphill to reach Carroll’s Crossroad just before Corrabut Gap.

**D-E:** Turn left at Carroll’s Crossroad and follow the tarmac mountain road with care. This climbs steadily with excellent views down into Coolasnaghta on your right. After 3 kilometres reach the large Nine Stones car park which lies on the crest of the hill.

The Nine Stones Viewing Point provides an unrivalled vista of the rich and colourful Carlow countryside spread out like a tapestry before you. Eight counties can be viewed from this spot – Carlow, Laois, Kildare, Wicklow, Wexford, Waterford, Kilkenny and the mountains of Tipperary, and on a clear day the coast of Wales, to the east.

On the lower side of the road, you will see an alignment of nine small stones in the ground. These are said to commemorate nine shepherds lost on Mount Leinster in some distant winter storm, hence the origin of the viewing point’s name.



Spellman Hall, dedicated to Cardinal Francis Spellman, Archbishop of New York (1889 – 1967)



Young’s Bridge near Kildavin



St. Lazerian’s Roman Catholic Church



St. Paul’s Church of Ireland, Kildavin



View of Mount Leinster, the highest peak in the Blackstairs Mountains



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Public House



Picnic Area



Shop



Gardens



ATM



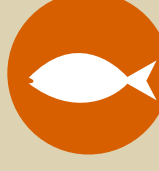
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Stately Home



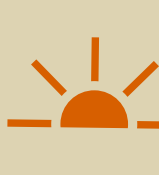
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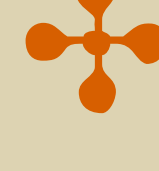
Fishing



Restaurant/Café



Viewpoint



Heritage site



Graveyard

