

The Antrim Coast has been designated an Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty and the Causeway Coastal Route is considered one of the top five road trips in the world.



The **Carrick-a-Rede Rope Bridge** stretches 65 feet from the mainland to Rocky Island. It is suspended almost 100 feet above sea level and was first erected by salmon fishermen 350 years ago—but don't worry, you won't be walking on the original one! The bridge has been rebuilt

several times. If you are bold enough to cross, you will experience fantastic views of Rathlin Island, Scotland and the Causeway Coast. And you will get a bird's eye view of the clear green water flowing around ancient caves and caverns, if you are brave enough to look down.

The **Giant's Causeway** is an area of about 40,000 interlocking basalt columns on the northeast

of Northern Ireland. It is Northern Ireland's only UNESCO world heritage site. The first people to see the Causeway believed it was the work of giants, which is how it got its name, and many of the legends are about the Irish giant Finn McCool. In reality, 60 million years ago, when the climate here was warmer and the tectonic plates were shifting and separating Europe from North America, lava from deep inside the earth flowed through cracks in the surface. As it cooled the lava hardened into basalt. Hundreds of thousands of years later the earth cracked open again and more lava flowed out. This time it cooled slowly and evenly in a deep pool. As it cooled it condensed, and cracks ran through the cooling rocks creating the columns and honeycomb patterns that you can see today.



Later eruptions hid these columns deep underground and it took millions of years of erosion for the columns to be revealed.

It wasn't until the last Ice Age, about 15,000 years ago, that the columns began to peek out at the shore as they can be seen today.

Dunluce Castle

is located on cliffs that plunge straight into the sea along the North Antrim coast. It served as the headquarters of the MacDonnell Clan. There is evidence that parts of the castle date back as far as the 14th century, and recent archaeological excavations discovered a village that surrounded the castle but was destroyed by a fire in 1641. Due to its excellent vantage point, the castle was constantly fought



over; however, it gave way to the power of nature and part of it fell into the sea on a stormy night in 1639 and it was abandoned shortly afterwards. Be sure to download the free audio guide for apple and android devices to learn more about the castle and see a 3D recreation.

Portrush is a small seaside resort town on the border between Antrim and Londonderry counties. The main part of the old town is built on a mile-long peninsula. It is home to the Royal Portrush Golf Club, the only golf club outside of mainland Great Britain to host the British Open championship. It is also well known for its three sandy beaches: West Strand, East Strand and White Rocks. In the off-season, it is the dormitory town for the nearby campus of the University of Ulster.

