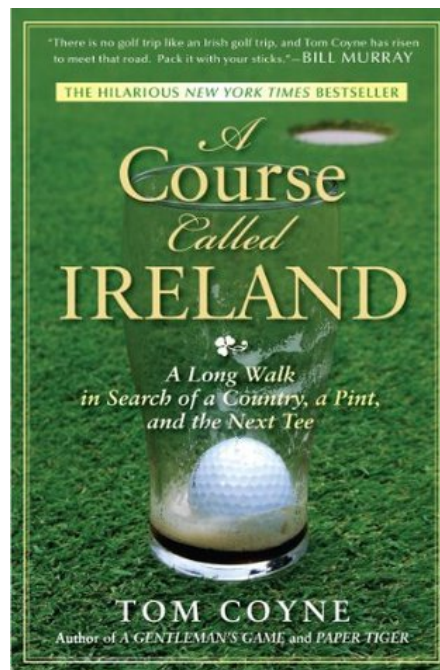




A Course Called Ireland: A Long Walk in Search of a Country, a Pint, and the Next Tee

Tom Coyne

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The hysterical story bestseller about one man's epic Celtic sojourn in search of ancestors, nostalgia, and the world's greatest round of golf

By turns hilarious and poetic, *A Course Called Ireland* is a magnificent tour of a vibrant land and paean to the world's greatest game in the tradition of Bill Bryson's *A Walk in the Woods*. In his thirties, married, and staring down impending fatherhood, Tom Coyne was familiar with the last refuge of the adult male: the golfing trip. Intent on designing a golf trip to end all others, Coyne looked to Ireland, the place where his father has taught him to love the game years before. As he studied a map of the island and plotted his itinerary, it dawned on Coyne that Ireland was ringed with golf holes. The country began to look like one giant round of golf, so Coyne packed up his clubs and set off to play all of it on foot.

A Course Called Ireland is the story of a walking-averse golfer who treks his way around an entire country, spending sixteen weeks playing every seaside hole in Ireland. Along the way, he searches out his family's roots, discovers that a once-poor country has been transformed by an economic boom, and finds that the only thing tougher to escape than Irish sand traps are Irish pubs.

A Course Called Ireland: A Long Walk in Search of a Country, a Pint, and the Next Tee Details

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From Reader Review A Course Called Ireland: A Long Walk in Search of a Country, a Pint, and the Next Tee for online ebook

Kevin Reeder says

brought back wonderful memories of our own time in Ireland

Tom Maentz says

A somewhat humorous tale of an arduous four month hike around the perimeter of Ireland to play 54 seaside links courses, imbibe in 196 pubs, lose 129 golf balls, encounter numerous Irish characters, and offer a variety of cultural anecdotes.

David Longo says

Tom Coyne's "A Course Called Ireland" is an easy and delightful read about, well, one man's quest to golf all of the links courses in Ireland while walking to each one. While the book is entertaining and enjoyable, I'm actually more impressed with the feat than I am the writing. Coyne walked almost 1200 miles over four months just to get to the courses themselves.

"A Course Called Ireland" is cut from the same cloth as "The Oregon Trail" by Rinker Buck. Actually, the other way around is more like it with the former book having been published first. The idea of the self-mission to cross a country in a most unconventional manner and then write about it is what I mean when I compare narratives. Coyne has a sense of humor and it's clear he loves the game of golf. As an avid golfer this was an obvious read for me and I recommend it to other fanatical links folks as well.

I have been to Ireland. It's a charming place (I recommend traveling there as well). I was familiar with some of the places the author discussed, though none of the courses as I did not play on the Emerald Isle. Knowing much of what Coyne discussed made this a more enjoyable read. I plan on delving into Coyne's new book, "A Course Called Scotland," soon. I have not been there but I have a feeling I will get a kick out of what the author has to say about that county too.

Matt says

Tom Coyne decides he's going to take a 4 month walk around the entire country of Ireland playing golf courses at every stop - it sounds like a crazy idea. But it turns out to be an idea worth writing about. The stories and experiences are funny and enlightening enough to fill the pages with yarns I enjoyed.

I found myself keeping my mobile phone nearby as I read the book, looking at each of the courses, towns, and pubs he visited. Golfers will probably enjoy the book more than non-golfers, but there's still something for everyone.

I suspect at some point in the future I will check out his sequel - A Course Called Scotland.

Mike says

Beer, Golf, Ireland - seemed like the perfect book for me, and it was pretty close. A doughy sports illustrated writer decides a golf trip with a twist is the way to find himself again, and maybe somehow pay for itself with a book. While I'm not sure this has mass appeal necessarily, there are a lot of doughy 20 to 40 year old males with Irish or other western europe roots who golf that this book targets very well. Coyne found himself at a crossroads in life, and upon remembering a golf trip years before with his dad, looking at a near-future with children and greater responsibility, and realizing his previous athletic body had turned into a cross between a pear and a teddy bear, he came up with the scheme of not just playing a bunch of courses in Ireland, but taking the "you always walk the course" motto over there to the extreme, turning the whole country into one long course and walking the entire way between courses.

Over more than 6 months, he saunters, ambles, jogs, stumbles and otherwise makes his way in a circle around the Irish coast, playing over 40 courses and finding out a lot more about dogs, military training, light packing and most importantly himself than he ever imagined. While the anecdotes concerning late nights at the pub with new friends, late nights at the pub with old friends and family that would come and join him for a few days and here, and late nights in a boarding home trying not to get arrested are humorous and keep the book lively, it's primarily about two things: a very specific guide to the courses he played that if you aren't a golf nut would quickly run together and get old, but if you are is very interesting, and a self-discovery diary as he looks inward quite a bit. On the first piece, the book is top notch - you really get a feel for the differences between each course and could use to plan a short or long trip. On the latter, I'm not sure what I think - honestly by the end of his long walk, I'm not sure he had really changed much other than physically. This doesn't take much away from the book as it's more the process that is the main point, but did find it interesting. End of the day, if you enjoy golf, this is a very good read.

Kathleen says

A delightful book.

Joy McGinnis says

I don't golf so some parts of this book I didn't even understand. But I love Ireland and the Irish and those parts were fun with some good stories of the Irish and Irish ways. A golfer who is Irish will love this book!

Dustin says

I enjoyed this well enough. It's a concept I'd rather experience than read, but all the same, a good book. I envy his being able to spend a month in Ireland, playing as many courses as he can, and visiting as many pubs as he can. By the end of the story, you're convinced that Coyne really did experience all of Ireland. The fact that he walked the majority of the country is all the more impressive. With the exception of the walking part, I could easily get behind this as a bucket list idea.

Jessica says

I'll admit, I would have never just picked this book up on my own, but since it was Chandria's selection for book club, I gave it a whirl. Now don't get me wrong, I love a good travel book and I have played golf (not for many, many years) so it had potential to be worthwhile. I finally cracked it open the Sunday before book club and delved into it. Looking up four hours later and halfway through the book, I was pleasantly surprised.

The author was pretty self-effacing and humble, knowing full well that walking the entire perimeter of Ireland to play what seemed like a kajillion links courses could quite reasonably lead to an untimely death-narrow roads with speeding trucks, wild mangey dogs...you know, road hazards.

His writing style wasn't too bad, and I found myself chuckling throughout, but geez, it seems like each course was better than the rest. I found myself not being able to keep up with where he was on the map, nor keep track of all the friends who joined him on the way, but I did enjoy the anecdotes of all the pubs, locals and hi-jinks the boys found themselves in. All in all, a good read, vividly descriptive, but not enough photos to accompany. If you've never seen a links course on the coast of Ireland, you really have to do a little google-image search to fully appreciate his descriptions.

Great book to give anyone who loves golf.

Chad Supp says

My friend, Al Johnston, gave me a copy of this book. I'm grateful he did, and glad he thought of me as someone who would appreciate it. Tom Coyne brings a sportswriter's touch, a golf course connoisseur's taste, and an Irish-American's sense of history and ancestry to a story about this unique island and its legacy of golf. The story is inspiring - I'm now planning my own Ireland links adventure. The story is funny as hell at times - Coyne's humor is self-deprecating (to the extreme, in the case of an "ugly American" incident that probably should have resulted in his deportation). The story is touching - a satisfying emotional conclusion to Coyne's adventure. I'm taking the copy that was given to me, and sending it to one of my friends who I hope to inspire to join me on an Irish golf trip.

Michael Hurley says

I don't care for most sports books, travel books, or the game of golf, but I loved this book. Tom Coyne was an established writer when he undertook this four month excursion to walk the perimeter of Ireland (including Northern Ireland) while playing every major course along the way, and as he was reporting as he went, the effort was undoubtedly supported by a significant advance. Regardless, this was a difficult undertaking on many levels, but the intimacy with which he engaged with the landscape and its people, including its tortured history and continuing political divide, developed deep insights into all of these. His telling is not pious, though. Nobody can spend that much time in Ireland and not have a lot of hilarious stories, and Coyne's are really funny.

Smh624 says

If you've had the chance to go to Ireland and play golf you will enjoy this book. I had the pleasure of doing that earlier this year so it was fun to travel along with the author and revisit the courses we played and the places we visited too.

Todd says

Disclaimer: I don't think this was the most well written book of all time or even worthy of 4 stars but I will freely confess my rating may be influenced by one of the following: my love for Ireland; my love for golf; my admiration for the task that Tom completed. At times I felt it plodded along as if I was on one of his epic walks but to be fair I did finish it with a deeper love of Ireland and it's people which I can't imagine would make the author unhappy. I will even admit to getting choked up when he called his father at the end of his journey to tell him what happened at Ballybunion. And if nothing else, his tips at the end of the book will hopefully assist me when I go back this September to play some of those same courses. Oh and I was thirsty for a Guinness the entire time I was reading it too.

Anikakb says

Loved this funny, spirited journey through the sights and sounds of Ireland, nominally from course to course

Philk81 says

Tom walked around the perimeter of Ireland with golf clubs on his back - played some 56 links courses, met up with friends and relatives, braved extreme weather, narrow roads and roving dogs and had one heck of an unfortunate incident in one B&B - and captured it all with wit and understated writing.

I would dock this at least half a star for the paucity of photos included (and he described people taking pictures at various points) - the black and white snaps don't do this justice. Inexplicable.

I really like golf and armchair adventure travel so this book was a very satisfying read for me. Detailed enough but with some opportunities to read between the lines(and laugh out loud). He balanced the consumption of Guinness with a steadfast discipline in not taking rides or shortcuts so I really commend the author for accomplishing this daunting (but rewarding in a once in a lifetime sense!) undertaking. And I'm glad he didn't hurl his clubs out to sea when it was all over, but found a better idea.

More than just a golf book it's a bittersweet connection with his past and a roaming adventure in Ireland, hemmed in by T-times but freewheeling just the same.
