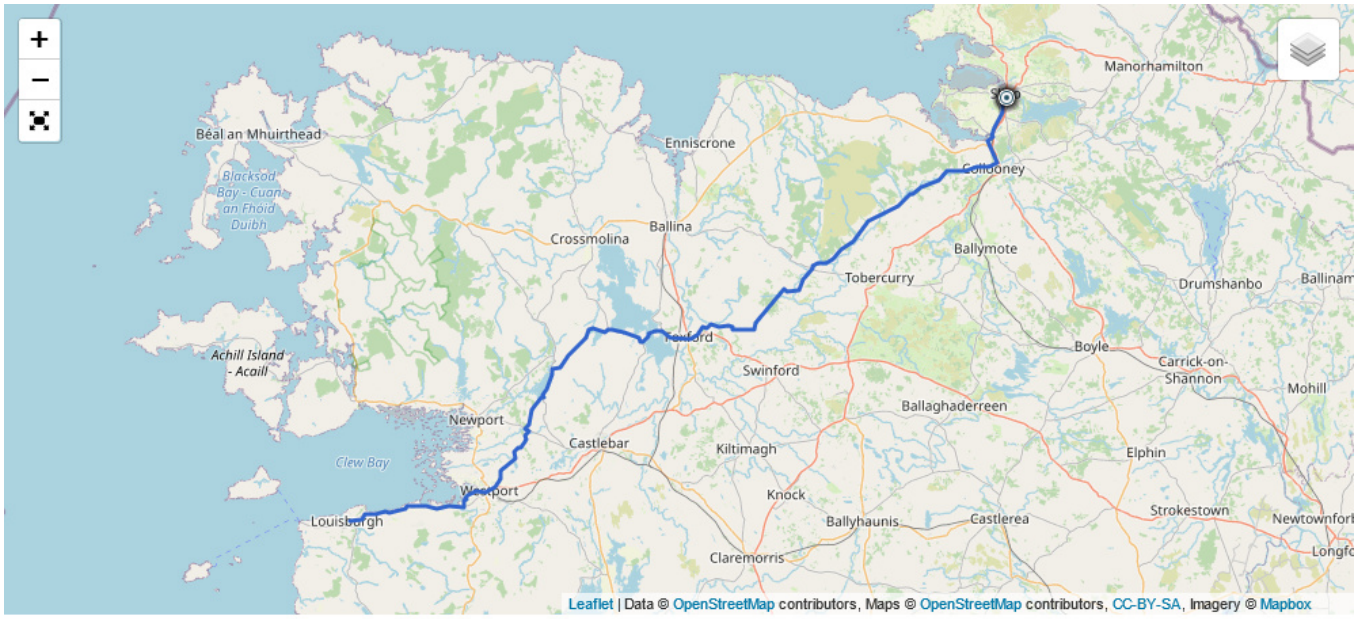


Tour of Ireland (Day 4)

Road

Distance : 130 km Elevation : 1315 m Difficulty : 3

Start point : Sligo End point : Louisburgh





This stage juggles between lakes, each one more beautiful than the other, passing through charming villages to end in the small coastal town of Louisburgh. The closer you get to the coast, the more you feel the wind and the smell of the sea.

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By Olivier Paudex

Leaving Sligo

This fourth stage will take us to the southwest, by the sea. I had planned to go to**Westport**, but without accommodation, I continued on to **Louisburgh**, a little over 20km from Westport. That's the bike trip too, without having organized or booked accommodation. It's rare, but it happens that you don't find anything at the place where you thought you would end your day. So, you have to get back on the saddle, take your courage with both hands (or both feet) and ride a few more miles to the next village.

The bucolic but relatively long and boring road continues between Sligo and Foxford. There is nothing very interesting to describe on the first 60km of this stage. Nature is beautiful and wild. We leave the county of Sligo to arrive in the county of Mayo. Funny name, for a county, but I didn't want to eat more mayo fries. Joking apart, we stop a few minutes in **Foxford** to buy water and we leave.



The bridge over the May river in Foxford

A taste of Connemara

The road continues towards Conn and Cullin lakes. It passes right in the middle. A foretaste of Connemara.





Lough Conn and Lough Cullin



Beltra Lough

Continuing the road southwards, we bike along the **lake of Beltra** before arriving at the pretty village of Westport, located on the seafront. Many tourists stop here because it is a central point to visit the Connemara region. As mentioned above, the few B&B's were all busy, even in September. So, I don't dare to imagine the real tourist season in July-August.

Louisburgh

So I continue on my way to **Louisburgh**. The road is quiet. Louisburgh is not very big, but it offers a few nice restaurants and pubs, and especially accommodations. There's even a bike store where the manager lent me his pump, much more practical than the small one I had taken in my luggage.



Main Street in Louisburgh