



## Athlone Urban Fossil Trail

Ireland's Fossil Heritage has created a series of urban fossil trails that guide you to fossils in the buildings, paving stones and walls in several towns and cities across Ireland.

The Athlone urban fossil trail begins on Main Street behind Athlone Castle and finishes on the plaza outside the civic centre and library.

### Leave No Trace

We encourage all visitors to the outdoors, including fossil sites, to follow the principles of the Leave No Trace campaign. We strongly discourage hammering and removal of fresh rock samples! Many fossil sites, including sites in Ireland, have been irrevocably impacted by irresponsible fossil collection, resulting in the destruction and loss of our natural heritage. Instead "Leave What You Find" – aim to minimise your mark on the natural environment and leave the fossils there for the next visitor to enjoy.

### Find Out More

You can learn more about the fossils found on this trail and other Irish fossils on our website:

<https://www.ucc.ie/en/fossil-heritage/>

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### 1. Athlone Castle

- Begin at Main Street behind Athlone Castle. The dark grey paving stones on the streets around the castle are full of white fossils which are very easy to spot. Fossils here include brachiopods, corals and gastropods. The brachiopod fossils can be recognised as white circles or semicircles. The gastropods are recognisable as shells spiralled or coiled horizontally along a flat plane or elongated into a cone shape. The corals are characterised by a polka dot pattern. When you look at the “dots” closely you can see that they are circles with radial lines (like the spokes on a bicycle wheel).
- Walk around to the other side of the castle by the bridge, there are dark grey sandstone paving slabs along the steps down to the river/quay. The dark grey sandstones show striking curved lines - these are fossil burrows called Olivellites.

### 2. Church of Saints Peter & Paul Athlone

- Walk up Castle Street and turn right onto Barrack Street, crossing the road to the Church. The pillars at the gate to the churchyard are made of grey limestone with

white crinoid fossils. Individual ossicles can be seen as well as longer stem sections. There are also solitary corals here.

**3. Luan Gallery**

- Walk along Church Street and turn left before the bridge onto Custume Place. The paving stones outside the Luan Gallery are dark grey limestone with white brachiopods, solitary and colonial corals.

**4. Athlone Brigade Monument**

- Walk along the Athlone Town Bridge and cross the road to the Athlone Brigade Monument. The paving stones behind the monument contain brachiopod and coral fossils.

**5. Church Street**

- Explore the paving stones that line the road along Church Street. These also contain brachiopods and corals.

**6. Athlone Civic Centre and Library**

- Continue walking along Church Street onto Dublin Gate Street and turn left behind St. Mary's Church. Walk to the plaza in front of the Athlone Civic Centre and Library. The paving stones here are full of amazing examples of fossils including brachiopods and corals.



Solitary coral outside the Church



Brachiopods on Church Street



Gastropod outside Athlone Castle



Olivellites near Athlone Castle



Brachiopods and corals outside civic centre



Gastropod outside civic centre