

# Ireland

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# IRELAND

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Printed on paper that is sourced from managed, sustainable forests using print technology that accords to the ISO14001 environmental standard.



**38**  
PLAYING  
THE  
GREATS



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LOCAL  
HEROES

Published by  
**Tourism Ireland**  
*Marketing the island of Ireland overseas*

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Copy and design: *Maxmedia Ireland Limited* Printing: *Wyndham Group*

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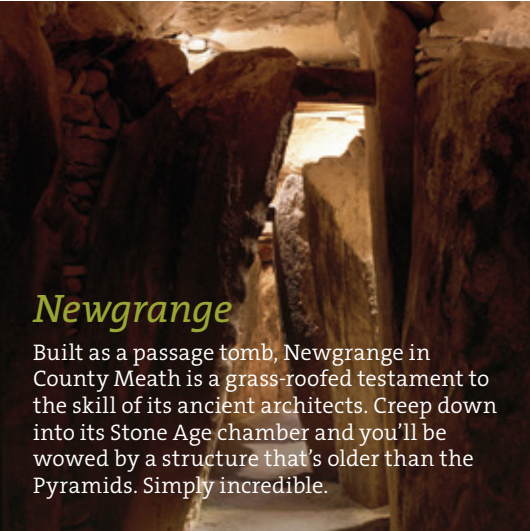


## PICTURE THIS...

*Take our word for it – the dramatic Carrick-a-Rede rope bridge in County Antrim looks scarier than it is! Originally built by local salmon fishermen, the heart-pounding crossing brings you over to a craggy island where you can enjoy dramatic views while the waves crash below.*

Carrick-a-Rede rope bridge, County Antrim





Newgrange

Built as a passage tomb, Newgrange in County Meath is a grass-roofed testament to the skill of its ancient architects. Creep down into its Stone Age chamber and you'll be wowed by a structure that's older than the Pyramids. Simply incredible.



Island adventures

The islands off Ireland's coast are something special. Truly special. Why not head to the Irish-speaking Arans off County Galway, the birdwatching paradise of Rathlin off County Antrim, or Tory Island off north Donegal, which even has its own King. It doesn't get any better than this.

DO SOMETHING DIFFERENT

In Ireland the magic is real. From regal island outposts to cosy old pubs, this is your chance to embark on the ultimate escape with amazing adventures you won't forget



International Appalachian Trail

If you're looking for an international walking experience like no other, then this unique route that stretches from Donegal across Northern Ireland is a must. Expect inspirational scenery, friendly locals and an authentic edge-of-the-world feel.



Hurling

Fast-paced, frenetic and hugely enjoyable, hurling has been played in Ireland for over 2,000 years and is as popular now as it's ever been, with regular games happening all over the island. Things reach fever-pitch at the All-Ireland Hurling Finals played in Dublin's Croke Park in September, with a festival atmosphere that's second to none.



Traditional pubs

From the Victorian splendour of the Crown Liquor Saloon in Belfast to the grocery-style pubs of Dingle, there's something special about an Irish pub. You'll find them in nearly every town and village, so get ready for cosy snugs, music sessions, and roaring fires. Perfect.

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Ross Castle, Killarney, Co. Kerry

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Ballyvolane House, County Cork



Ashford Castle, County Mayo



Coolanowle Country House, County Carlow



Crom Castle, County Fermanagh



Blackhead Lightkeepers' House, County Antrim



No.1 Pery Square, Limerick

# STAY SOMEWHERE DIFFERENT

No matter what your tastes, the island of Ireland has the perfect place for you to stay during your holiday. So why not try something a little bit different?

If **your idea** of luxury is decadent drawing rooms and afternoon teas, then a luxury country house is for you. Often owned by the original families, these grand houses sit on tranquil estates and offer old-fashioned informal hospitality, blazing fires and antique furnishings. Why not try Newforge House in County Armagh, and Ballyvolane House in County Cork for relaxed yet stylish accommodation?

Finding an Irish castle to lay your head is a cinch on an island that ripples with history. There are stunning self-catering properties where you can be lord of your own manor, and five-star resorts, where your every need is catered for. Just look at Dromoland Castle in County Clare, which has hosted US presidents over the years, and Luttrellstown Castle just outside Dublin, where the Beckhams tied the knot.

That's not forgetting the lovely Ashford Castle in County Mayo. Or how about The West Wing, Irish-style? At Crom Castle in County Fermanagh, you can rent the entire west wing for unrivalled privacy.

All over the Irish countryside, you'll see a huge number of farms. And if you want to sample rural life, then a farmhouse B&B nestled amongst green fields is ideal to get a feel for country living. Enjoy fresh farm produce for breakfast, sylvan landscapes and a real sense of getting away from it all in places such as Coolanowle Country House in County Carlow, and Lisnoe Old Farmhouse in County Antrim.

Lots of farms offer activities, so saddle up a pony, have a go at milking cows, or learn the art of cooking Irish soda bread. You can even live with an Irish family as a volunteer on a host farm, with summer

WWOOFing (World Wide Opportunities on Organic Farms).

If you're looking for a room with a view then you won't get much better than an Irish lighthouse. Perched on the edge of precipitous cliffs, Blackhead Lightkeepers' Houses in County Antrim, and the Loop Head Lightkeeper's House in County Clare make for inspirational accommodation, with blasts of fresh sea air.

In the cities, go for the ultimate in elegant accommodation with a Georgian townhouse, which offers the style of a bygone era with a contemporary edge. For a dose of chic, why not try the boutique hotel retreats of No.1 Pery Square in Limerick and Number 31 in Dublin.

For more information on accommodation, visit: [ireland.com](http://ireland.com)

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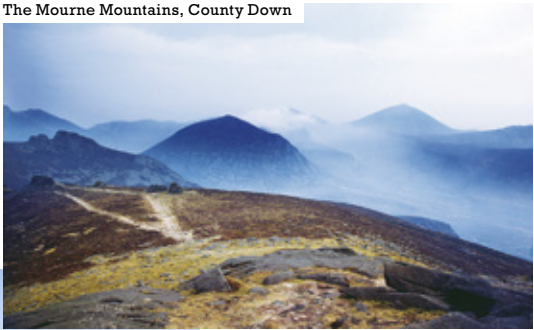
The Celtic Tenors: James, Daryl and Matthew

Treasure Island

Inishmore is the largest of the Aran Islands in Galway Bay and is full of historic treasures, including ancient stone forts on the edge of cliffs. Rich in tradition, the island is also part of Ireland's Gaeltacht (Irish-speaking) area.

Inspirational mountains

When it comes to literary landscapes, it doesn't get much better than the Mournes, which inspired the writer C.S. Lewis to create The Chronicles of Narnia.



The Mourne Mountains, County Down



The Giant's Causeway, County Antrim



Glandore, West Cork

Q&A  
THE CELTIC  
TENORS

Matthew Gilsean, Daryl Simpson and James Nelson of *The Celtic Tenors* reveal their favourite things to do, see and visit on the island of Ireland, from the Belfast Festival at Queen's to the town of Kinsale

What makes Ireland special?

**Daryl:** I think the people add a certain atmosphere that is not found anywhere else. If you don't come away from Ireland with a warm fuzzy feeling, I'd be surprised.

**James:** I think it is the signature "C  ad Mile F  ilte" (100,000 welcomes), which is still very much in evidence. Then there's our sumptuous cultural, artistic and musical heritage, and our breath-taking scenery. What a luxurious tapestry for an island to build on.

What has been your best holiday in Ireland?

**Daryl:** A break in Kinsale, County Cork, a few years ago really brought a proper sense of balance and perspective. It's a great place for relaxing, and enjoying the very best seafood.

**James:** Recently I have been paying many visits to the Aran Islands, off the west coast, Inishmore in particular. I doubt I'd ever get tired of walking by those endless stone walls out to the prehistoric fort of Dun Aengus. Inishmore for me is a truly special and unique place.

What are your favourite places on the island?

**Daryl:** Galway, Sligo and, of course, the amazing Giant's Causeway.

**James:** The entire west coast from the south tip of West Cork, through Kerry and Clare, Galway, Mayo, Donegal and my own beloved Sligo, which has such a wide variety of beautiful beach, lakeland and mountain scenery.

What makes Irish music special?

**Daryl:** Irish music has its own voice, and it's hard not to be taken in by the powerful rhythms, complex tune patterns and sheer virtuosity of the musicians. The vocals often centre around loss, love or reminiscing of times past. I think "soul" music is a literal phrase that suits the essence of Irish music.

What are your favourite festivals?

**Daryl:** The Belfast Festival at Queen's in October is an amazing mix of traditional and contemporary music, art and drama. Certainly something for everybody.

**Matthew:** I live near Moynalty, around an hour from Dublin, and every year on the second Sunday in August, the most charming, uncommercialised, real-deal festival takes place – the Moynalty Steam Threshing Festival. Perfect for seeing the old rural life in Ireland!

What's your favourite view on the island?

**Daryl:** The Mourne Mountains in County Down, where C.S. Lewis got his inspiration for The Chronicles of Narnia. Beautiful at any time of the year.

**James:** Achill Island in County Mayo is almost like "Ireland in miniature", and the Atlantic Drive here is incredible, perhaps only surpassed by the view down on Keem Bay (also on Achill).

Take the scenic route and explore

Ireland's  
Wild Atlantic Way



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At the very edge of Europe, on the shores of the Atlantic Ocean, the landscape has been shaped by the sea into something truly epic and unforgettable, as *Pól Ó Conghaile* discovers



Garnish Island, West Cork

**Imagine driving along** the absolute edge of western Europe. Imagine exploring a 2,500km-long coastline dotted with beaches, harbours, headlands and over 150 stunning viewing points, as it nips and tucks from Cork to Donegal. Imagine stopping your car, feeling the salt spray on your face, getting stuck into Atlantic surf. Imagine peering over the sheerest of cliffs, discovering the island of Ireland’s oldest traditions, boarding its only cable car and learning the secrets only the locals know.

You can do it all – and more – on the Wild Atlantic Way. This is one of the world’s great long-distance driving routes, and it can be driven in whole or in part, dipped into for a few hours or a few weeks, enjoyed as a once-in-a-lifetime experience, or revisited again and again. Its scenic highlights are spectacular, but it gets under Ireland’s skin, too – bringing you up close and personal with a unique culture and people as it travels through many of the island’s traditional Gaeltacht (Irish-speaking) areas.

The route begins (or ends, depending on your direction) in West Cork, weaving its way through lively towns such as Clonakilty and Baltimore. Whale and dolphin watching are popular in these waters from May to November, and seafaring

traditions are very much alive along the Mizen, Sheep’s Head and Beara Peninsulas. These areas are rich with natural wonders, with fishing villages, walking trails and clues to past ways of life – deserted mining posts, milk churn collection points, lighthouses flashing in the blackness.

The Beara Peninsula is also where Cork leads into Kerry, with the Ring of Kerry the best-known coastal loop here, combining awesome scenery with ancient heritage, super-fresh seafood and exciting towns and villages as it circles the Iveragh Peninsula.

Continuing north, Kerry’s Dingle Peninsula was home to the Antarctic explorer, Tom Crean, who retired to run the South Pole Inn in the village of Annascaul after adventuring with Scott and Shackleton. Modern-day explorers can find the same hostelry on a peninsula defined by its mountain ranges, heritage treasures and a famous dolphin named Fungie. Dingle is the peninsula’s biggest town – a cosmopolitan and festival-rich hotspot with cracking seafood restaurants and traditional grocery-pubs. The town is a gateway to the historic Sleat Head Drive to Coumeenole, a fantastic sweep of beach bounded by craggy rocks and overlooking the romantic Blasket Islands, uninhabited since 1953.

From here, the Wild Atlantic Way edges along the north Kerry coast, crossing the River Shannon to enter west Clare. Loop Head is breath-taking – a compilation of cliff-craggy coastline, churning surf, dramatic sea arches and isolated structures – a lighthouse here, a 15th century tower house there. So memorable is it that it ranks as a European Destination of Excellence.

West Clare’s coastline continues past beaches such as Spanish Point, the surfing and golfing hub of Lahinch and the Cliffs of Moher towards the Burren National Park. This is one of the most unusual and largest karst landscapes in Europe, a strange swirl of moonscape-like limestone that shelters an incredible diversity of flowering plants, from Arctic alpinists to Mediterranean species.

Hugging Galway Bay, the coastline continues



Inisheer, County Galway

### Take it further

The Wild Atlantic Way is so good you might never want it to stop. And the good news is that it doesn’t have to. As you travel along Donegal’s magnificent coastline, you come to another great driving route: the Causeway Coastal Route (193km). Start off in the cultural hub of Derry~Londonderry, and explore its ancient city walls. Then head for the UNESCO World Heritage



Whiterocks Beach, Antrim coast



Coumeenole Beach, County Kerry



The Glens of Antrim

Site of the Giant’s Causeway, and on to the Carrick-a-Rede rope bridge. The gorgeous Glens of Antrim, with their undulating green valleys that dip and peak through charming towns and villages are a visual thrill. The Gobbins Path is a great cliff-hugging path built in 1902, and due to be restored in autumn 2014. The route culminates in Belfast, a fitting end to a monumental journey where you can visit the Titanic Belfast, and relax in the city’s lively bistros.

into Galway city, a buzzing urban interlude along the Wild Atlantic Way. Why not break your journey here, and enjoy some time at the Galway Arts Festival (July), the Galway Races (July/August) and the famous Galway International Oyster and Seafood Festival (September) before easing out along the Connemara coast?

It’s hard to tell where the mainland stops and the islands start along the raw seascapes of Galway and Mayo, but highlights range from Irish-speaking enclaves such as Spiddal to remote beaches like Dog’s Bay and Gurteen. Then there’s the jaw-dropping majesty of Kylemore Abbey and the cone of Croagh Patrick overlooking Clew Bay. It was on this mountain that St Patrick is said to have banished snakes from Ireland, and pilgrims still climb its stony paths today.

Continuing north, you’ll pass through the windswept Mullet Peninsula, before veering back east towards Killala Bay, where General Humbert launched the first French battle of the 1798 Rebellion. Killala is reputed to have been where St Patrick first arrived in Ireland, and the local diocese – the highlight of which is a beautiful round tower – dates back to the 5th century.

The next stretch of the Wild Atlantic Way skirts around Sligo Bay, a landscape dominated by Ben Bulbin mountain. The surfing village of Strandhill, the court tomb (a megalithic chamber tomb) at Creevykeel, and a walk around Mullaghmore Head are all must-dos in these parts.

Donegal is the final (or first!) county on the Wild Atlantic Way. Its long and indented coastline swings around the northwestern corner of the island, throwing up adventures and surprises at every turn. It’s an area that has a remote aspect, with edge-of-the-world highlights such as the Slieve League Cliffs, the highest accessible sea cliffs in Europe.

Wherever you start, whenever you finish, Ireland’s Wild Atlantic Way is an unforgettable long-distance driving route, a thrilling trip along the line where the island of Ireland meets the ocean and the epitome of the waters and the wild.



Slieve League Cliffs, County Donegal



For more information visit: [ireland.com](http://ireland.com)



The Greenhouse, Dublin



The Cliff House Hotel, County Waterford

Lough Erne Resort, County Fermanagh



# LOCAL HEROES

*Created out of exceptional artisan produce, using the very best ingredients from the land and sea and drawing on respected traditions, a new style of Irish cooking has been born. By Aoife Carrigy*

**Surrounded by rich** greenery in the tiny West Cork village of Ballylickey is a little deli that typifies what Irish food is all about right now. Sit outside Manning's Emporium in the late afternoon sunshine and life feels pretty good. In the warm summer breeze, you can tuck into a platter of local artisan produce: Gubbeen oak-smoked cheese, a sweet pepper relish from Janet's Country Fayre in County Wicklow, and fresh crusty breads from The Breadcrumb in County Kerry – washed down with an ice-cold Irish apple juice from The Apple Farm in County Tipperary.

Here, with the dramatic West Cork landscape around you, it's easy to see where Ireland's appreciation of gourmet food comes from – the pure countryside, respect for tradition and slower pace of life are perfectly tailored to a more measured, artisan-inspired approach, from the traditional smokehouses of Connemara to the cider makers in

Armagh. The Slow Food Movement in Ireland, with its emphasis on counteracting fast food and fast life, has helped to drive this ethic of good, clean food, and chimes perfectly with an island where taking it easy is a national sport.

But you don't have to go foraging for seaweed on Irish beaches or rustle through the woodlands for wild fruit to appreciate the island's natural bounty. You only have to visit a deli, take a food trail, go to a market or enjoy a food festival.

In pubs around the island, menus reflect the emphasis on fresh local food with smoked fish platters and cheese plates, which match up nicely with craft beers such as Belfast Ale or Galway Hooker. Meanwhile, in the island's top restaurants, dynamic chefs are pushing the creative boundaries of how local produce can be used, and dishes at fine-dining hotspots such as The Greenhouse, Dublin, The Cliff House Hotel in Waterford and



*In pubs around the island, menus reflect the emphasis on fresh local food, with smoked fish platters and local cheese plates that match up nicely with craft beers such as Belfast Ale or Galway Hooker*

Roundstone Harbour, County Galway



Frank Hederman

**Smoke signals**  
Smoked fish is just one of the local delicacies that the island of Ireland excels at producing. Acclaimed smokehouses such as The Burren Smokehouse in County Clare, The Connemara Smokehouse in County Galway, and Belvelly Smokehouse in Cobh, County Cork, provide smoked mackerel and salmon to some of the most prestigious restaurants in Ireland.

Michael Deane's in Belfast have been known to leave customers lost for words. A bit of an achievement on an island where people love to talk.

Stefan Matz of Ashford Castle has been based in Connemara since the early 90s, and believes that the food culture in Ireland has been transformed over the past 20 years. "I don't think the same passion levels for producing the best quality possible exist in other countries the way they do here," he says.

Ross Lewis of Dublin's Michelin-starred Chapter One couldn't agree more. Chapter One built its stellar reputation by seeking out the best Irish produce for its diners. A meal here might start with carpaccio of Tom Durcan's spiced beef, a cured meat beloved in the southwest of Ireland from where Lewis hails, and finish with a characterful Cashel Blue cheese from County Tipperary. And this search for the best produce possible is by no means unique. Around the island, you'll find chefs with a similarly strong commitment to quality local ingredients and a love of "cooking through an Irish prism," as Lewis describes it.

Stephen Toman, head chef at one of Belfast's hottest restaurants, Ox, has been clocking up the critical acclaim and is equally passionate about what's available. "The quality and choice of Irish food is amazing," he enthuses. "We're serving Mourne Mountain lamb, which is fed on heather, and it's world class. We have outstanding dairy, amazing shellfish and the meat here is second to none; you're actually proud to work with it." From Ox's homebaked bread with local Abernethy Butter through to dessert of Bushmills' whiskey jelly and Armagh kemp apples, the local accent here is ever present.

"We do have something special in terms of our produce," says Paul Flynn of The Tannery Restaurant, guesthouse and cookery school in Dungarvan, County Waterford. "I've always tried to look at vegetables like turnip in soft focus; to take hearty, staple veg and do something exciting with them. It's all about how you do it." >



## At the market

Permanent indoor markets such as Cork's **English Market** and Belfast's **St George's Market** (Fri-Sun) have served Irish consumers for centuries, and regular country markets across the island have long subsidised the household income for Irish farmers and their families selling baked goods or farmyard produce. But in the late 1990s, the arrival of the outdoor weekly or monthly farmers' market to these shores proved



English Market, Cork

to be a game-changer for producers and consumers of local Irish artisan food.

One of the charms of a morning spent at these hubs of great food is the chance not only to graze your way through samples of local produce, but to talk with the producers themselves about what you're tasting. The Irish, of course, love to chat – so give yourself a generous timetable for what can prove a very sociable couple of hours. In Dublin, try the markets in **Dun Laoghaire's People's Park** (Sun), **Howth** (Sat and Sun) and **Temple Bar** (Sat) in the city centre. Or head to **Galway city**, **Mahon Point** in Cork city and the **Tyrone Farmers' Market** on the first Saturday of each month. And in Waterford city, **Slow Food Ireland** hosts the **Merchant's Quay indoor market** every Saturday and Sunday.



Balloo House, County Down



Ireland is famous for its fresh local produce



St George's Market, Belfast

Ard Bia Café, Galway



*From the relaxed, boho vibe of the Ard Bia Café in Galway city to Balloo House, a 19th century coaching inn in County Down, you'll find dishes on the menu that reflect traditional flavours*

This simplicity is at the heart of cooking in Ireland, as Flynn explains: "The thing I love about Irish food is that it doesn't have to be expensive. We're on a journey to learning to appreciate our simple food traditions." And it definitely looks that way. From the relaxed, boho vibe of the Ard Bia Café in Galway city, to Balloo House, a 19th century coaching inn in Killinchy, County Down, you'll find dishes on the menu that reflect both local and traditional flavours: treacly soda bread and seafood chowder, bacon and cabbage, smoked salmon.

You can try a "blaa" (a soft white roll) in Waterford; feast on the legendary Ulster fry for breakfast in Belfast; and snack on dulce (salty seaweed) in coastal areas. Then there's Irish stew, award-winning black pudding, crab claws, and a staggering range of chutneys, jams and relishes. And let's not forget the potato...

"People sometimes make fun of the fact that we are still so obsessed with the potato," says chef Liz Moore, formerly of Belle Isle Cookery School in County Fermanagh. "But look at the amount of amazing dishes that are derived from it: champ (oniony, buttery, pure comfort food), fadge (potato cakes), boxty (potato pancake), colcannon (mashed potato with creamed kale) and more."

And while colcannon would traditionally have been eaten by families at Halloween, it's now on the menu at fashionable urban restaurants such as Dublin's **Fade Street Social**. Nip into **Gallagher's Boxty House** in Temple Bar, meanwhile, and you'll find a veritable altar to the potato, with light potato pancakes cooked on a hot griddle. It doesn't get more delicious.

This traditional and local trend has been given a very contemporary twist in some of the island's coolest eateries. Pop downstairs into the Georgian "Irish kitchen" of **Hatch & Sons** on Dublin's >

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Johnnie Fox's pub, County Dublin

pretty St Stephen's Green, and you'll find stylish city locals and relaxed families enjoying beef and Guinness stews, smoked fish boards, and Waterford "blaas" filled with Kettyle bacon from Fermanagh. In Galway's only Michelin-starred restaurant Aniar, you can go for a full-on fine dining experience and try the fruits of foraging with starters of wild asparagus, nettle, goat's curd and hen egg, as well as desserts delicately garnished with sorrel.

And what happens in the big cities always filters across the island because – put simply – good taste spreads. Take the likes of The Moody Boar in Armagh's Palace stables; its home-cured beetroot salmon with hot creamed leeks on wheaten bread has to be tasted in person for the full-range of sensory appreciation.

From small, local villages with thriving markets to the hippest sections of the island's cities, tradition and a commitment to quality are alive and well, and in a world where food trends are becoming homogenous, it's good to know Ireland is keeping it authentic.

### *Foods to look out for*

**Country butter**  
Ireland is known for its superlative dairy, and small producers, such as the Abernethy Butter Company in the hills of County Down, are exploring this potential.

**Fermanagh Black Bacon**  
Try this traditional dry-cured bacon from rare-breed pigs, which roam free on a herb-heavy island on Lough Erne in County Fermanagh.

**Irish stew**  
A big bowl of slow-cooked Irish lamb, potato, carrot and barley goodness is like a hearty hug from an Irish mammy. Try it in The Brazen Head, Dublin's oldest pub, with a lineage back to 1198.

**Milleens cheese**  
Produced in County Cork by the son of pioneer Veronica Steele, this original Irish farmhouse cheese is still one of the best around.

**Seafood chowder and fresh soda bread**  
You'll find versions of Ireland's take on seafood chowder in most coastal towns, but McGann's in Doolin, County Clare, nailed it as the standard to beat according to the Irish Fireside blog. Enjoy your chowder with traditional Irish soda bread.



**Smoked fish platters**  
Sally Barnes's Woodcock Smokery in County Cork is one of the finest of Ireland's fish smokers, featuring wild salmon, mackerel, haddock and tuna.

**Spiced beef**  
Traditionally served at Christmas and New Year, spiced beef is an Irish favourite. Seek out Tom Durcan's stall in Cork's English Market.

**Blaa**  
A fresh bread roll unique to Waterford and best eaten mid-morning filled with bacon.

**The soda farl**  
A flattened dough bread that can be eaten fresh from the griddle with butter and jam or cooked until golden and served alongside the traditional full Northern Irish breakfast, the famous Ulster fry. It's delicious, no matter what way you choose to eat it.



Belfast Taste & Music Fest

### *Food Festivals*

Nothing quite beats an Irish food festival for atmosphere, taste and downright good fun.

**Belfast Taste and Music Fest**  
Set in Belfast's Botanic Gardens in August, this festival brings together two of the city's great loves: music and food.

**The Galway International Oyster and Seafood Festival**  
Seafood and fun come together each September at this Galway classic with seafood trails, oyster hotspots and oyster shucking championships.

**Kinsale Gourmet Festival**  
The gourmet town of Kinsale in County Cork comes alive every October with a massive celebration of all things fabulously foodie.



Irish farmhouse cheeses



Harlem, Belfast



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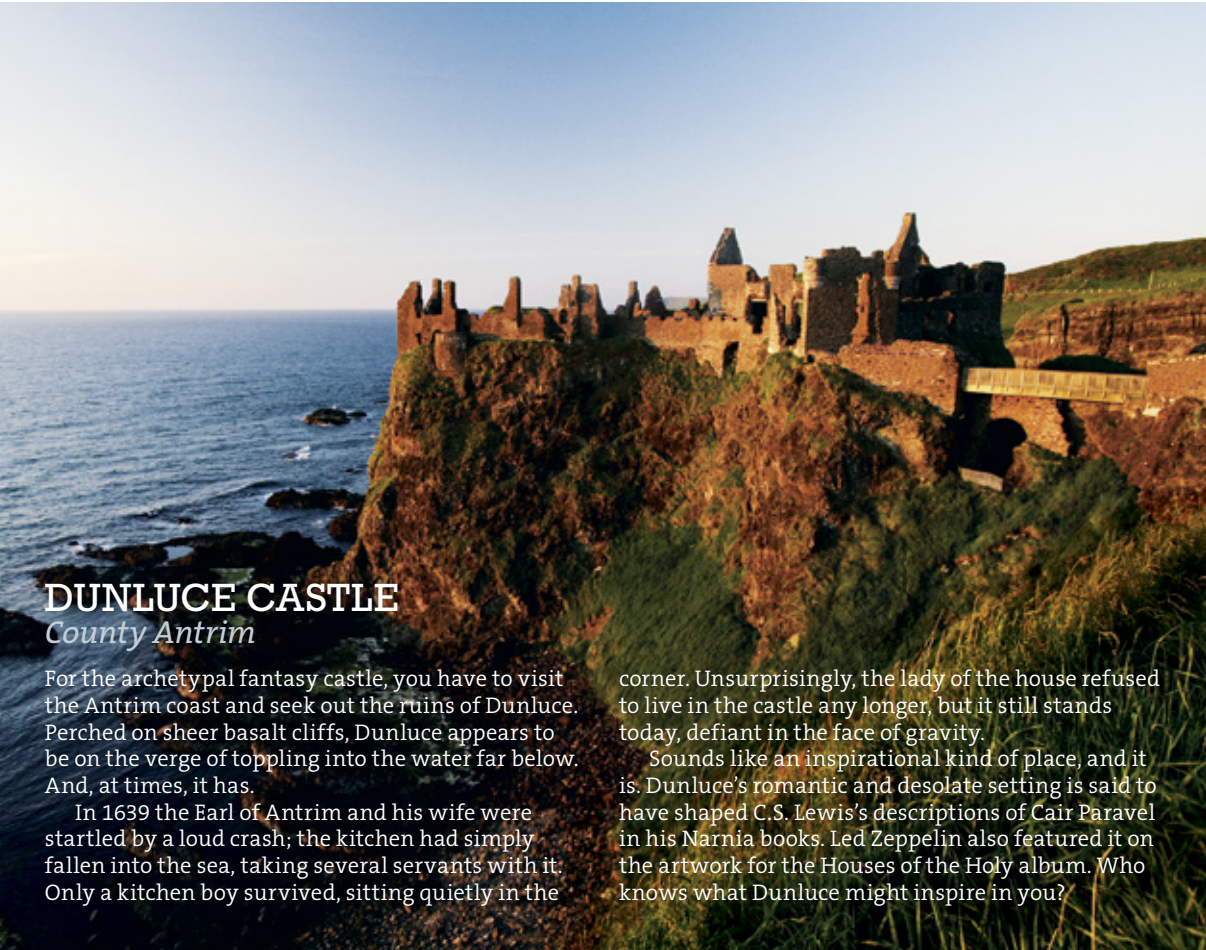




Blarney Castle, County Cork

# GREAT TALES

From wild fairy tales and blood-soaked battles to Titanic-era glamour, Ireland’s great castles are straight out of a fantasy novel, while the island’s handsome manor houses and their grand gardens reveal an aristocratic age of elegance, says **Vanessa Harriss**



## DUNLUCE CASTLE County Antrim

For the archetypal fantasy castle, you have to visit the Antrim coast and seek out the ruins of Dunluce. Perched on sheer basalt cliffs, Dunluce appears to be on the verge of toppling into the water far below. And, at times, it has.

In 1639 the Earl of Antrim and his wife were startled by a loud crash; the kitchen had simply fallen into the sea, taking several servants with it. Only a kitchen boy survived, sitting quietly in the

corner. Unsurprisingly, the lady of the house refused to live in the castle any longer, but it still stands today, defiant in the face of gravity.

Sounds like an inspirational kind of place, and it is. Dunluce’s romantic and desolate setting is said to have shaped C.S. Lewis’s descriptions of Cair Paravel in his Narnia books. Led Zeppelin also featured it on the artwork for the Houses of the Holy album. Who knows what Dunluce might inspire in you?

## BLARNEY CASTLE County Cork

One of the most famous castles on the island, Blarney is a romantic partial ruin set in glorious County Cork countryside. Built on the site of a 10th century wooden structure, the castle grounds are filled with wooded hollows, strange rock formations and a sleepily flowing river. Croften Clark, a 19th century writer, described it as “indeed a fairy scene... I know of no place where I could sooner imagine these little elves holding their moon-light revelry”.

At the heart of Blarney Castle lies one of its quirkiest attractions. Kissed by world statesmen, literary giants and famous film stars, the huge Blarney Stone is said to impart the gift of eloquence or “the gift of the gab”. Thankfully, these days you don’t have to be held by the ankles and lowered over the battlements to plant your lips on this legendary piece of rock. A gentle lean backwards helped by a trusty guide will do the trick just as well. Promise.

When it comes to the stone’s origins, the debate rages... some say it was a pillow for a saint; others that it was a chunk of Scotland’s Stone of Destiny brought back to Ireland by the King of Munster, Cormac McCarthy, in the mid-15th century.

Kiss it, and you might be able to come up with a few stories of your own.



## RUSSBOROUGH HOUSE County Wicklow

Near the Blessington Lakes in County Wicklow stands Russborough House, one of the island’s most beautiful manor houses. Built between 1741 and 1755, the house entered its own age of elegance in the mid-20th century when Sir Alfred Beit bought it after spotting an ad in Country Life magazine. Beit – heir to a South African mining fortune – liked the look of Russborough so much he didn’t even visit before he signed the deal. And in 1953, once he had moved in, he set about installing a phenomenal art collection, which included works by Vermeer, Rubens and Gainsborough. Despite no less than four dramatic – if botched – robberies, the collection remains largely intact. There’s no doubt that Lord and Lady Beit brought unrivalled glamour to the house; the wide circle of friends hosted at Russborough included Jackie Onassis, Fred Astaire and the Guinness family.





HUNTINGTON CASTLE  
*County Carlow*

It seems a little unfair to have to share your 17th century family home with a pack of lively ghosts, but that’s exactly what the Durdin-Robertson family endures. Besides a sprinkling of monks who date back to the 13th century Franciscan monastery, the Durdin-Robertsons’ Huntington Castle is also frequented by the spirit of Aoife Esmonde, who fled an unhappy marriage with her son, only for her husband to replace her speedily (and bigamously) with wife number two.

The family also has to endure a Bishop of Limerick who died in 1770, and a 17th century spy whose disguise proved so successful a colleague shot him by mistake.

Beyond the ghosts, Huntington is a treasure trove of oddities – and that’s without counting the temple to the Egyptian goddess Isis in the basement. Don’t forget to wander around the grounds where you can enjoy the formal Italian gardens, water features and the 600-year-old yew tree walk.

CASTLE WARD  
*County Down*

When it comes to quirkiness, you can’t get much more unique than Castle Ward in Downpatrick. This is one of the instances where “castle” actually refers to a large house, but whether it is Palladian or Gothic depends on your point of view. Literally. Set in a stunning location on the edge of Strangford Lough, and boasting spectacular gardens, this 18th century house was commissioned by Lord Bangor and his wife, who accommodated their very different tastes by making one side of the house classical, all columns and pediments, and the other side crazily Gothic with battlements, finials and pointed arches.

The same rules apply inside. The house is split down the middle lengthways – one side filled with Gothic twiddles; the other ruled by classical austerity. Elegant, exciting and rich with imaginative eccentricities – if this is what the house is like, it must have been quite a marriage.

*Castles to enjoy* Like castles so much you want to eat, dine and party in one? You’re in luck, the island’s castles aren’t just for looking at...



Party

Exclusive and unique, **Lismore Castle** in County Waterford can be rented for weddings and parties, and offers accommodation for up to 27 guests. Perfect if you want to celebrate your special event against a panoramic backdrop of wooded hills and valleys.



Luxury

Luxury – and the chance to meet a ghost or two – is on offer at the delightful **Castle Leslie** in County Monaghan, one of Ireland’s great castles. Go for one of the unique rooms (good enough for Rolling Stone Sir Mick Jagger) or relax in one of the converted cottages.



Sleep

Stay in the fortress of **Killyleagh**, County Down, the oldest inhabited castle in Ireland, parts of which date back to the 12th century. Its owners, the Hamiltons, host occasional performances from the likes of famous Northern Irish singer Van Morrison.



Play

The five-star **Ashford Castle** in County Mayo is one of the island’s most distinguished castle hotels. Once owned by the famous Guinness family, Ashford knows a thing or two about entertaining its guests, with everything from clay pigeon shooting to falconry.



Eat

If you want to get a fun feel for history, **Bunratty**, a unique 15th century castle in County Clare, has a folk park and holds medieval banquets throughout the year. Quite simply, it’s one of the finest examples of an authentic medieval castle you’ll ever see.



Learn

You’ll find a fantastic cookery school at **Belle Isle Castle** in County Fermanagh, on the shores of beautiful Lough Erne. Stay here and you can brush up on your culinary skills, while enjoying the extensive grounds and lovely 17th century castle surrounds. Complete bliss.

PHOTO: THE NATIONAL TRUST / BERNIE BROWN



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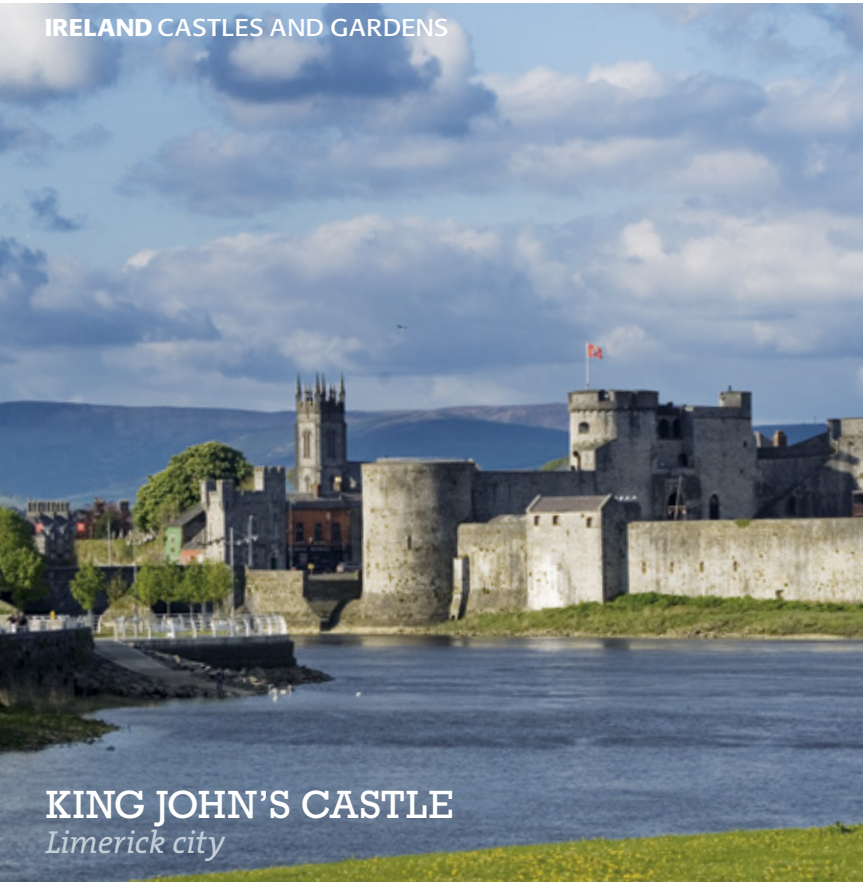
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IRELAND CASTLES AND GARDENS

## KING JOHN'S CASTLE

Limerick city

If you believe all history is living, then head for Limerick city's King John's Castle on the banks of the River Shannon, and you can practically live through its 800 years of drama. This mighty fortress at the heart of medieval Limerick, Ireland's first City of Culture 2014, has a stunning new visitor centre. Touchscreen points bring to life tales of torrid sieges and dramatic warfare, along with ghostly projections to make the hairs on the back of your neck truly stand on end! Move out into the courtyard where you can discover the castle's remarkable archaeology and wander through scenes from a 17th century siege, while costumed guides reveal the secrets and scandals of castle life.



## TRIM CASTLE

County Meath

Trim Castle, an imposing Norman stronghold on the banks of the River Boyne, has been glowering out at the surrounding landscape for almost 800 years, ever since it was built on the land awarded to Hugh de Lacy, Lord of Meath, by Henry II of England.

The Irish, headed by their high king, Ruaidrí Ua Conchobair (Rory O'Connor), burned down the original wooden fortifications. But De Lacy was not easily deterred. He simply switched

to building with stone and his handiwork, completed by his son in 1224, still stands as the largest Anglo-Norman castle in Ireland.

De Lacy's high opinion of himself was not always shared by those around him. He irritated Henry II by marrying without permission, and was finally finished off by an axe in the back, wielded by an aggrieved mason on his next building project, another castle at Durrow in County Laois. Several centuries later, Trim was sold by one Arthur Wellesley, better known as the Duke of Wellington, after whom Wellesley Street in Auckland city and New Zealand's capital city Wellington are named. Eventually Trim Castle's austere beauty was to serve as a backdrop for Mel Gibson's film, Braveheart.



## Gardens to enjoy

*The island of Ireland's castles and manor houses boast stunning gardens that whisk you away into a luscious otherworld. From herbs to flowers and from manicured formality to natural-style planting, the escape starts here*

### Herb-rich beauty

Herbs are the cornerstone of the gardens at **Kilgraney Country House** overlooking the Barrow Valley in County Carlow. Areas are devoted to teas and infusions, kitchen plants, aromatics for cosmetics, medicine, and a medieval monastic garden. Produce from the gardens is used to create and contemporary effect in the great restaurant here, too.

### Grand designs

Compared with the homespun folk knowledge at Kilgraney, the grandeur of the gardens at **Curraghmore** in County Waterford is a world away, but the formality complements the 18th century classical architecture of the house. Ancient oak forests, an ornamental lake and pristine lawns carry an air of manicured perfection, but the scale is truly breath-taking.

### Literary vision

Home of the talented literary Pakenham family, **Tullynally Castle** in County Westmeath offers a walled flower garden, a grotto, a Chinese plant collection, woodlands full of exotic trees, a vast kitchen garden with two Regency hothouses, and even some llamas to keep the grass under control. Adorably eccentric.

### A lady's delight

The mild climate beside Strangford Lough in County Down, the imaginative planting of Edith, Lady Londonderry and her remodelling of the grounds throughout the 1920s and 30s have produced an astonishingly varied garden at **Mount Stewart**, which is now being proposed as a UNESCO World Heritage Site.

### Wild at heart

Also in County Down is the informal **Rowallane Garden**, planted by Reverend John Moore with exotic species that date back to the 1860s. Spectacular rhododendrons and azaleas along with wildflower meadows, a rock garden wood for shade-loving plants and a lovely walled garden mean there is something for all seasons.

### Walled wonder

Similarly informal, mature trees, winding paths and unfussy lawns give a relaxed, slightly haphazard air to the gardens at **Florence Court** near Enniskillen, County Fermanagh, in perfect keeping with the mountain views. The three-acre walled garden and famous yews are a draw, and you should try to make time to look around the fine 18th century house.



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*A big part of Ireland's appeal is that it is so compact, making it perfectly suited to driving tours. You can go from mountains to sea within minutes, stopping off at all sorts of exceptional places along the way. Pól Ó Conghaile selects some to get you started*

## THE RING OF KERRY

*County Kerry*

**The Ring of Kerry** in the southwest of Ireland is one of the island's quintessential touring loops, combining stunning coastal and mountain scenery with ancient heritage, tasty food and lively towns. Our advice? Take it slowly and ease your way around it over a few days.

Starting from Killarney, head west towards Killorglin on the N72 and follow the N70. The winding road skirts along the north coast of the Iveragh Peninsula and there are fabulous beaches like sandy Rossbeigh and secluded St Finian's Bay. From corkscrew roads around Waterville to the hulking MacGillycuddy's Reeks and bustling towns, the variety of the route is jaw-dropping.

Towards the tip of the peninsula, follow the smaller Skellig Ring as it loops off the main route towards Portmagee. This is the staging post for day trips to the Skellig Islands, a pair of jagged rocks punching out of the ocean 13km off Bolus Head. Monks established beehive huts here in the 6th century, and boats take visitors out to explore the UNESCO World Heritage Site for themselves. Alternatively, you can simply visit the Skellig Experience nearby.

Following the N70 back east, a necklace of beaches opens up along the southern shores of the peninsula towards Kenmare, a thriving town in which everything from water sports to a luxury overnight stay is an option.

 **ireland.com**

The Ring of Kerry

Don't be tempted to rush the final stretch. From Kenmare to Killarney, the N71 is strewn with photo-finish moments – most famously Moll's Gap, an unforgettable beauty spot with views over MacGillycuddy's Reeks. And the highlight? It has to be the Lakes of Killarney, which are best seen from the Ladies View (named after Queen Victoria's ladies-in-waiting who visited here in 1861).

Take time to enjoy the Killarney National Park, which offers everything from a woodland stroll to a visit to Ross Castle, or even an unforgettable trip in a traditional jaunting car. Then finish up with the splendid 19th century Muckross House and Gardens. Now that's what we call an ending.

**Distance:** 180km  
**Time:** 3-10 days



*Like that?*  
**Try this:**



The Beara Peninsula

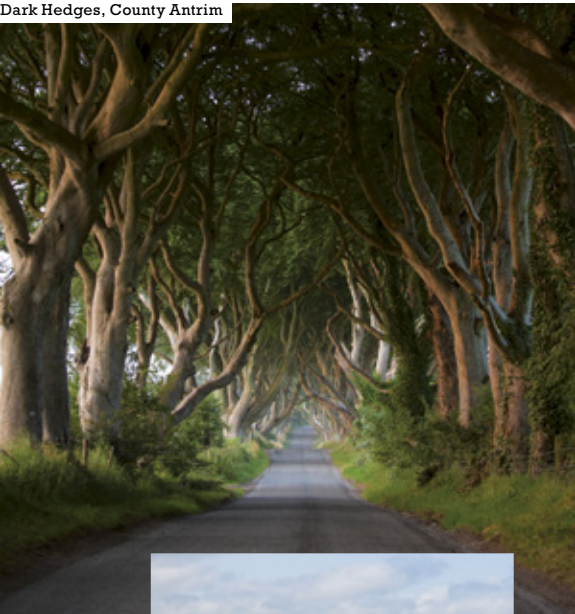
### *The Ring of Beara* **Cork and Kerry**

The Beara Peninsula lies south of the Ring of Kerry, and its driving route is just as sublime, connecting Kenmare to Glengarriff (or vice versa) via a 110km loop. Highlights include fishing towns such as Castletownbere and mind-blowing mountain passes. Once you get to what feels like the ends of the earth, go even further and join a cable car connecting the peninsula with the lovely Dursley Island (estimated population: six).



# THE GAME OF THRONES TOUR

Northern Ireland



Dark Hedges, County Antrim



Causeway Coastal Route, County Antrim

**Westeros isn't just** a fantasy landscape. It's alive and thriving in Northern Ireland, one of the main filming locations for Game of Thrones, the hit HBO series. This driving tour takes in some of the highlights – not only for fans but for anyone who likes their scenery with a touch of fantasy.

Setting out from Belfast, the route takes in the 400-million-year-old caves at Cushendun, where a shadow was born amidst dramatic scenes in season two. Along the magical Causeway Coastal Route of the A2, you'll find Larrybane, AKA Storm's End – a walk along the base of the cliffs here towards the Carrick-a-Rede rope bridge offers epic panoramas out towards Sheep Island.

At Ballycastle, detour south to Gracehill House, an 18th century pile best known for its Dark Hedges. This eerie avenue of beech trees was planted over 200 years ago, and is said to be haunted by a mysterious Grey Lady.

Head back north to Ballintoy and Antrim's Causeway Coast. The approach from Ballycastle



Cushendun, County Antrim

presents sensational views – some of which you may recognise as Pyke and the Iron Islands from the fantasy series. When you get to Downhill Beach, look up and you'll see the 18th century Mussenden Temple perched on the cliff-top.

Belfast (where much of Game of Thrones is filmed in Titanic Studios) is a good place to overnight before you venture southbound the next day, with a 50-minute drive to Castle Ward. This 18th century mansion overlooking Strangford Lough provided Westeros with locations for its Whispering Wood and Winterfell. It's a wonderful mix of styles, with a vast demesne full of exotic gardens and woodland paths.

Nearby Tollymore Forest Park, which appeared in season three, is another treat – with follies including faux-Gothic gate arches and a barn dressed up as a church. To finish, take the car ferry from Strangford to Portaferry and return along the lakeshore towards Belfast via Newtownards... a perfect way to end your journey.



Like that?  
Try this:



Quiet Man Cottage, Cong

## Connemara Film Trail

Galway and Mayo

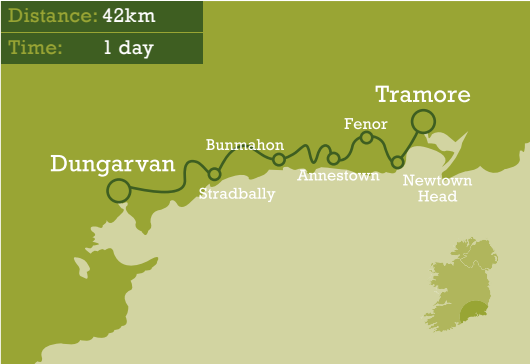
Ireland's Atlantic coast has a mythical feel, so it's no surprise that it's been the location of so many films. Cong (The Quiet Man, 1952), on the border of Galway and Mayo, may be the most famous spot, but there are plenty of hidden gems here, too. Owen Wilson and Jennifer Aniston had their car blocked by sheep at Lough Na Fooley (Marley and Me, 2008). And when Gabriel Byrne headed Into the West (1993) this was where he went. The Connemara Film Trail lets you follow in the footsteps of screen legends such as John Wayne, Meryl Streep and even Ireland's own Brendan Gleeson. All from the comfort of your car!



Dungarvan, County Waterford

# THE COPPER COAST

County Waterford



**The short blast of** County Waterford coastline connecting Tramore and Dungarvan is one of Ireland's great seaside secrets. Stunning beaches, pretty villages and the husks of old Cornish engine houses are just some of the treats along this strip of the sunny southeast.

Start off with a stroll through Tramore, a town that changed forever when railways brought the first Victorian holidaymakers in the 1850s. Today's seaside resort is full of surf schools and nostalgic amusement parks, and a vinegary whiff of fish 'n' chips lingers in the air, but the main attraction remains unchanged – a sandy beach stretching out for several kilometres.

From Tramore, continue west along the coast road as it skirts around Newtown Head. If you've got your swimsuit, a dip at nearby Guillamene Cove is not to be missed.

The Copper Coast, a European Geopark named for its 19th century mining heritage, comes into its own along the R675. There are photogenic villages

such as Fenor, Annestown and Stradbally, and hidden beaches lined with sea stacks. Crumbling cliffs, ancient smugglers' coves and, in winter, even the occasional passing whale, mark a coastline that is far away from life's hustle and bustle.

Potential stop-offs come thick and fast. There is Stradbally Cove, surrounded by a thatch of oak, ash, hazel and alder trees. There is surfing at Bunmahon, or the shell of an old Cornish engine house a kilometre west at Tankardstown.

Dungarvan marks a natural end to the Copper Coast. With several restaurants and cafés deeply involved in west Waterford's foodie scene, you'll find lots of local ingredients on the menus. Depending on how your day is panning out, you could overnight in the town, continue west towards the heritage town of Ardmore, or circle back towards Waterford city on the N25 via the Comeragh Mountains.



Dunmore East, County Waterford

Like that?  
Try this:



The Mourne Mountains

## The Kingdom of Mourne

County Down

As you drive south from Belfast, the majestic Mourne Mountains emerge before you in all their glory. This Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty has been shaped by ice and steeped in legend. Along the stunning coast you can stop off to explore pretty seaside towns such as Warrenpoint and Newcastle. Go inland and you'll discover the secrets of the Mournes, including the 35km stone wall enclosing the Silent Valley and Ben Crom reservoirs. Don't miss the Cloughmore Stone, a 40-tonne granite boulder, and Tollymore Forest Park, which is filled with specimen trees and Gothic follies.





# THE GREAT OUTDOORS

From high-octane surfing to scenic canoe trails, Ireland hits the mark when it comes to outdoor pursuits, with an unspoiled natural playground that’s the envy of the world. **David Mills** gets out and about

## WALKING the coasts

“I’ve done a lot of coastal walking, but there is nothing else like the north Antrim coast. It tops them all,” Toby Edwards, a National Trust Warden, tells UK newspaper the Guardian. “My favourite part is the highest section of the cliffs, which give an incredible 360-degree view of the area, leaving you in awe of the forces of nature.”

For those who may not know it so well, the north Antrim coast includes one of Ireland’s most famous sights, the Giant’s Causeway, all geometric columns of basalt and crashing waves.

Head up to Donegal and you can test your nerves with some of Europe’s highest sea cliffs, the Slieve League Cliffs, which feel like you’re standing on the edge of the world.

Ireland’s coastal walking highlights don’t stop there, either. The west of the island has given rise to some truly spectacular scenery where you can really get away from it all. Out in the gorgeous wilds of Connemara on the west coast, you’ll find kilometre upon kilometre of craggy landscapes that crash down to the sea, with villages that are built upon a bohemian spirit and golden stretches of sand slotted in between.

At County Clare’s Cliffs of Moher, a 20km walking trail winds along one of the most dramatic and memorable coastal landscapes, with cliff-top paths, remote terrain and steep ascents. It’s best tackled by experienced walkers, but the views are exceptional. And while it’s not suitable for children under 12, you’ll find a wide variety of walking trails around the island, from the dramatic yet peaceful Sheep’s Head Peninsula in County Cork to the Ards Peninsula in County Down.



## SURFING in County Sligo

What would the Yeats brothers – artist Jack and poet W.B. – have thought about big-wave surfing in their beloved county of Sligo? Would the sight of surfers at Mullaghmore slicing through 49ft walls of foam-flecked water have inspired them like their beautiful land did?

Some things we’ll never know – but we do know why surfers come to Sligo: the waves here are immense. And the village of Mullaghmore, sitting under Ben Bulbin mountain and in the shadow of the Gothic Classiebawn Castle, is not the only slice of County Sligo attracting surfers.

Track south through Sligo town, stay close to the county’s Atlantic edge and you’re at another beach, another castle and more waves. A bounty of two reef breaks and a stone beach (making for faster breaking waves) mark Easkey Beach out as one of Europe’s most incredible surfing locations. Easkey is best tackled by experienced big-wave surfers, but there are lots of smaller beaches nearby that offer a beginner’s introduction to the Atlantic waves.

Beyond the beach, Sligo delivers plenty of scenic highlights. Abbeys and castles, a long jagged coastline, and waters that turn from silver to emerald in seconds make this place something of a scene-stealer, whether you’re surfing or not. And as beautiful as they are, Easkey and Mullaghmore are just brushing the surface of what Sligo has to offer; the natural beauty of Strandhill and the charming seaside village of Enniscrone are quickly becoming the county’s hard-to-keep secrets.



Like the sound of that? Try these:



Bundoran in County Donegal has attracted surfers from all over the world, beginners and pros alike, and has a lively surf scene centred around the town.

Head to picturesque Portrush in County Antrim, meanwhile, for consistent waves that strike a good chord with beginners. There are two great beaches here: West Strand and East Strand.





CRUISING  
the Shannon-Erne  
Waterway

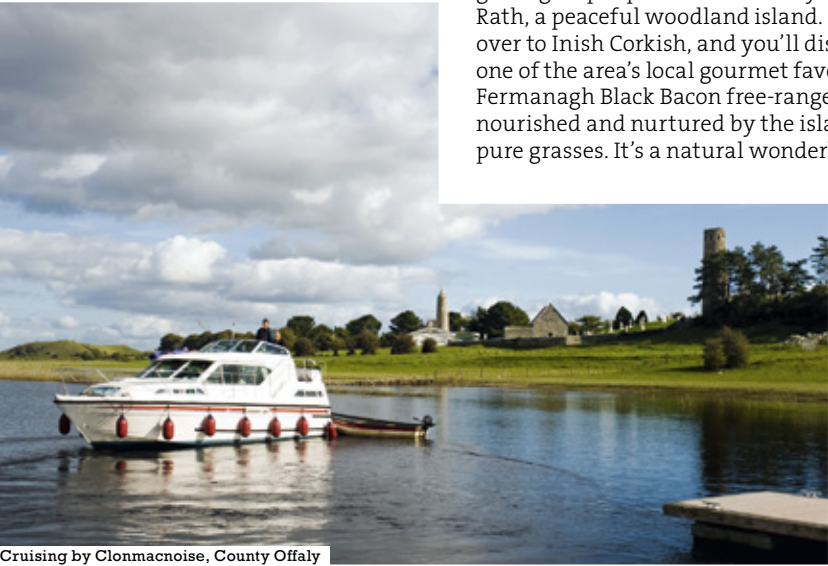
It seems almost unfair that one of Europe’s smallest countries enjoys both salt and fresh water playgrounds. Unfair maybe, but everything is possible in Ireland.

Scan a map of the island and you can quickly see how the centre is split with a network of rivers and lakes that would set any cruising enthusiast packing their bags to visit. As Cruise Ireland notes: “From Belleek at the northern tip of Lough Erne to Killaloe at the southern end of the River Shannon, there are 483km of inter-connecting rivers and lakes.” For “483km” read “endless possibilities”.

Pick your cruiser up at Lough Erne and it’s hello to the Fermanagh Lakelands. Hello to White Island’s ancient mysterious stone figures, and Boa Island’s anthropomorphic carved stones.

Here, you’ll glide past towns and villages that seem perfectly in tune with the waters onto which they front. Make time for pottering around Belturbet in County Cavan and Ballinamore in County Leitrim, where a tasty pub lunch makes a good break from the water. Soon you’re slipping under the tiny ivy-covered horseshoe bridge into Lough Allen (anglers take note: bream and roach are in good supply here).

Lough Ree serves up stunning visual moments, as it opens into a panorama of tiny forested islands and glassy waters. And you’re in for a visual treat near the end as you reach the broad body of the River Shannon with its whitewashed marina houses and cosy little pubs. When you moor your boat for the final time, be sure to pat its hull and remind it you’ll be back – you’ve only skimmed the surface.



Cruising by Clonmacnoise, County Offaly

Tranquillity on Lough Erne, County Fermanagh



CANOEING  
in Lough Erne

The “canoeing capital” of Ireland? It can only be County Fermanagh. Split through the middle with watery veins, it really is the island’s lakeland paradise.

And what an incredible mass of water it is. Take Lough Erne, for starters. Connected by a sliver of the Erne River on its way to the Atlantic Ocean, the lough (consisting of Upper and Lower lakes) is a stunning water highway. Unlike most highways, though, here silence is golden.

The Upper Lough is calm and quiet, while the Lower Lough has a rugged shoreline and can have large waves at times so is best for experienced paddlers. But it’s the attractions here that make it such a perfect place to take to the water. There’s the stately Crom Castle and the crumbling monastic remains of Devenish Island. If your canoe had crept past here around 837 AD you would have shared this site of religious scholarship with Viking raiders.

Cutting your oar leisurely through peaceful water, it’s worth remembering that from the road, you wouldn’t even get to glimpse places such as tiny Inish Rath, a peaceful woodland island. Peek over to Inish Corkish, and you’ll discover one of the area’s local gourmet favourites: Fermanagh Black Bacon free-range pigs, nourished and nurtured by the island’s pure grasses. It’s a natural wonderland.



Devenish Island, County Fermanagh

Hungry for more?  
Paddle your way to  
relaxation with these:

The island-studded Clew Bay in County Mayo is one of the most scenic parts of Ireland, and there couldn’t be a better way to see it than by kayak or canoe with Ireland West Sea Kayaking. This is island hopping, Irish style. Canoeing is not something you can usually slot into a city break, but Atlantic Sea Kayaking can show you Cork from the water, an innovative way to explore the city and the many bridges across the River Lee. There’s also an evening trip – perfect for those long summer nights when the sun doesn’t set until after 10pm.



Sea kayaking, Slieve League, County Donegal

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SHORE ANGLING  
in County Kerry

According to angling journalist Henry Gilbey, shore fishers in the northern hemisphere use the same gear, fish the same species and the same seasons. In Ireland, though, “You get more fish, less people and more open spaces. You also get so much water that you’d need several lifetimes to fish it.”

Good news, isn’t it? In Kerry it gets even better. A county largely defined by its romantic yet rugged relationship with the Atlantic Ocean, Kerry is a veritable paradise for shore anglers, and the waters of the staggeringly beautiful Iveragh Peninsula are the perfect angling playground. On a good day this means bass, ray, pollock, conger eel, cod, flounder, wrasse, mullet, bull huss and mackerel.

If you find yourself looking north and eyeing the glittering waters of the Dingle Peninsula, you wouldn’t be the first. Henry Gilbey cites Kerry’s Atlantic stretch as a stand-out for shore fishing where “you could even hook a big stingray or tope from some of the beaches”.

So why not take a trip to the waterside and find out for yourself?

Sounds like an  
angler’s paradise?  
Here are some more:

Ireland is often picked as an ideal spot for pike anglers, and here’s why: the superb lakes, rivers and canals all over the island boast huge pike, the largest of the freshwater predators. Try **Loughs Derg, Ree and Erne**, and the **Lough Oughter** complex in County Cavan. Ireland’s rivers, from the massive **Shannon** to the tiny **Inny** are great pike destinations, with specialist angling accommodation sprinkled along the banks.



Fruits of the shoreline in County Kerry

PHOTO: HENRY GILBEY

Enjoying County Fermanagh’s quiet country roads



CYCLING  
the Kingfisher  
Cycle Trail

“There’s nowhere like Ireland for cycling,” says Rory Wyley, president of Cycling Ireland. “The incredible network of roads and boreens (small roads) means you can go out with no planned route in mind and follow your nose.” That fact is not lost on the many cyclists that come here. And from 9-11 May 2014, the island is also welcoming one of the world’s biggest bike races, the Giro d’Italia, which kicks off in Belfast before racing to Armagh and Dublin.

If you’re not in the professional league, don’t panic. You can still take it easy as you watch lots of fluorescent Lyrca speeding past you! Try the Kingfisher Trail, which travels through counties Fermanagh, Cavan, Donegal, Monaghan and Leitrim. This is Ireland’s original long-distance cycle trail and is still one of the best. The whole trail is 480km, but there are six smaller loops along the way where you can see everything from manor houses and islands to glassy rivers and the 650-million-year-old Marble Arch Caves.

If you want to pick up the pace, try mountain biking in the Ballyhouras and the Mournes. Rostrevor Forest in County Down is popular among XC bikers while Castlewellan Forest Park, also in Down, has trails suitable for all ages and abilities. You can get more information on these trails at mountainbikeni.com



Rostrevor Forest, County Down

On your bike with  
two more cycling routes:

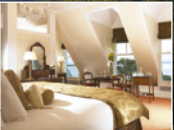
The **Beara Way** in County Cork, blessed with broken stone walls, desolate craggy hills and wave-lashed cliffs, has a fantastic 138km route taking you to the rim of the Atlantic Ocean.

The 42km **Great Western Greenway** is great for families, and is the longest off-road cycle trail in Ireland, stretching all the way along the old Westport to Achill railway line in County Mayo.



The Great Western Greenway, County Mayo

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Statue of Irish emigrant Annie Moore, Cobh, County Cork



# FAMILY TIES

Seeking out your family’s links and visiting the place where it all started is a life-changing experience. With a vast diaspora now settled in Australia and New Zealand, **Vanessa Harriss** speaks to the experts about what to expect along the way



**When it comes** to the reasons why people trace their family heritage, the answer seems simple. “I think people like to see themselves as being part of history,” says historian Turtle Bunbury. “They like to know where they came from and how they fit into the past.” Sometimes people are interested for health reasons, according to family historian Lesley Anderson. “Or they want to connect with living relatives and travel to the land where their ancestors lived.”

And while shows such as *Who Do You Think You Are?* have popularised the subject, Lesley explains that it is technology that is really driving the momentum. “We have the internet and companies such as Ancestry.com, which make it easier than ever to access historical documents. You can see a parish register from the 1800s while sitting in your pyjamas.”

Dunbrody Famine Ship, New Ross, County Wexford



Linen Hall Library, Belfast

## Getting started

Of course, the first few steps on this kind of journey can feel daunting – it’s hard to know where to start, but as American genealogist Megan Smolenyak explains, it’s all about narrowing the search. “The key is identifying a town of origin,” she says, “then you’ve got a shot at learning more, but it can take some digging.”

Helen Robinson from Sydney used a family project to get things going. “My aunt started some research into her mother’s family and sent me copies of what she had found, and it sparked my interest.”

If you’re researching an Ulster-Scots background then Boyd Gray, an amateur family historian who works for the West Ulster Genealogy Society, notes that church records can be useful. “Most of the Presbyterian churches kept records from around 1830,” says Boyd. “The Church of Ireland started decades before that and often includes Catholic and Presbyterian baptismal records. This is because it was the only church by law allowed to record baptisms, marriages or burials.”

## Changing lives

Talk to anyone who has researched their family history and you’ll find that the rewards make up for the winding roads along the way. Learning about your family can really change your view of history, says Megan, and it can have a profound effect. “I think the most common response is respect and admiration for what our ancestors endured, and a sense of hope and strength that comes from knowing that their blood flows in our veins. If they could survive war, famine or uprooting, you can weather your current problems.”

Helen Robinson agrees. “I discovered one convict, Jane Molloy, who came to Australia with the 2nd Fleet and married one of my Irish ancestors in Tasmania,” she says. “Having a convict in your family tree is almost a badge of honour in Australia. It has made me want to visit Ireland again. I have a better knowledge of why my forebears might have settled in or left Ireland,



Murrisk Famine Memorial, County Mayo

such as the Plantation of Ulster and the Famine.” It’s that sense of endurance and determination that really impresses Heather Garnsey, executive officer of the Society of Australian Genealogists. “It definitely makes you marvel at the pioneering spirit. Not many 16-year-old girls today would get on a boat to the other side of the world and quite possibly never see their family, friends or homeland again. I’m not sure we can really appreciate how big a step that was for them.”

Connecting with people from the past is life-changing, as Col Graham from New South Wales discovered when he traced his ancestors to Galway, Clare and Limerick. In Clare, a local asked him why he was there. He explained his ancestors had left 150 years ago and he was back to find his roots. “So you have come home to live then?” was the reply. Col felt he had... even if it was only for a short time.



**Did you know?**  
An incredible 70 million people worldwide are said to claim Irish ancestry (2.4 million of them in Australia and New Zealand), and while some of them are obvious, others take you by surprise – such as Che Guevara, George Clooney and Mohammed Ali (his great grandfather left Ireland for the US in the 1840s). Even Kylie Minogue, Nicole Kidman, Johnny Depp and Barack Obama claim Irish ancestry.

## The essentials

### Australian resources

The National Library of Australia’s Trove site of historical newspapers makes searching historical newspapers by name easy. The National Archives of Australia has done phenomenal work digitising WWI soldier records and helping with post-Federation (1901) records when the states and colonies came together. [naa.gov.au](http://naa.gov.au)

### Census records

Ireland’s 1901 and 1911 census records are easily searchable online and should be a touchstone in any ancestral quest. [census.nationalarchives.ie](http://census.nationalarchives.ie)

### County genealogy centres

Many counties in Ireland boast their own local genealogy centre and the level of knowledge can be very useful in breaching any walls your search may throw up. The National Archives has a list of each of the county centres. Glasnevin Cemetery in Dublin also has a genealogy centre. [nationalarchives.ie](http://nationalarchives.ie)

### Griffith’s Valuations

It’s doubtful that Sir Richard Griffith, the Irish baron in whose name Griffith’s Valuation was carried out, could have guessed how essential this record would

be to researchers some 160 years later. If your query is between 1860 and 1900, this is the place to search. [askaboutireland.ie](http://askaboutireland.ie)

### Ireland Family History on Facebook

This page was created to help people on their Irish genealogy adventure. It shares interesting stories, alerts you to new resources available, and lets you share your experiences. [facebook.com/IrelandFamilyHistory](https://facebook.com/IrelandFamilyHistory)

### Ireland Reaching Out

Ireland Reaching Out (also known as Ireland XO) is a “reverse genealogy project”, which aims to connect the Irish diaspora of 70 million. Rather than waiting for ancestor hunters to come here, Ireland XO is reaching out through genealogists who can put you in touch with people tracing your family tree. [irelandxo.com](http://irelandxo.com)

### Military archives

The Military Archives and the recently launched records website hosts an astoundingly rich and diverse body of information. [militaryarchives.ie](http://militaryarchives.ie)

### National Library and the Irish Times

There are few finer resources than Dublin’s National Library or the Irish Times Ancestry project. The National Library (with its beautiful reading room) outlines the basics. Meanwhile, the Irish Times

last name search is a gem of a resource. [nli.ie](http://nli.ie) and [irishtimes.com](http://irishtimes.com)



PRONI, Belfast

### Public Record Office of Northern Ireland (PRONI)

Located within the Titanic Quarter of Belfast, this is the official depository for all public records from Northern Ireland. Its huge range of material comprises records of historical, social and cultural importance, all of which are available to the general public for free. The General Register Office for Northern Ireland registers all births, deaths, marriages and adoptions in Northern Ireland and is an invaluable resource. [proni.gov.uk](http://proni.gov.uk) and [nidirect.gov.uk](http://nidirect.gov.uk)

### Ulster Historical Foundation

This non-profit family history research foundation has been helping people trace their Scots-Irish and Irish roots for over 50 years. There are over 200 family history records here, as well as a free Ulster-Scots app. [ancestryireland.com](http://ancestryireland.com)





OLD HEAD  
County Cork



Rory McIlroy

# PLAYING THE GREATS

For a small island, Ireland packs a mighty punch when it comes to golf, with some of the finest links courses on the planet. **Brian Keogh** looks at the natural powerhouses shaped by nature, adored by the professionals and waiting for you

**Top shots**  
Rory McIlroy perfected his swing on some of Ireland's top golf courses, including his home club at Holywood, County Down, and the mighty links courses at Portrush, Rosses Point and The European.

**Ireland is the world's** smallest golfing superpower. The island has claimed seven of golf's Major titles over the last few years, and boasts some of the greatest courses – and golfers – in the world. This isn't some idle claim either; there are little more than 150 links courses on the planet, and Ireland has a third of them, making a trip to the island essential for any golfer who's looking for a combination of primeval terrain and world-class golf. All this and a golfing scene that's relaxed, accessible and very affordable – who could ask for more?

Great courses produce great players and none more so than Royal Portrush on the rugged north coast of County Antrim, just a stone's throw from the iconic Giant's Causeway. It was here that 2011 US PGA champion Keegan Bradley let himself get swept away in the emotion and power of it all. Originally from Vermont, but with ancestors from County Cork, Keegan made the trip "home" for the Irish Open at Royal Portrush in 2012.

"Hundreds of people have told me 'welcome home', which gives me chills almost every time they say it," said Keegan at the time. And he made sure he also got in a trip to the Giant's Causeway and the Old Bushmills Distillery on his visit. "Everybody has just been so great. The area is unbelievable and the people are extraordinary."

No wonder 2010 US Open champion Graeme McDowell, and 2011 British Open winner Darren Clarke are proud to call the small coastal town of Portrush their home. "People should come and play in Ireland because we have a lot of the best courses in the world, not just up here near Portrush, but all over Ireland," says Clarke.

Originally from Dungannon in County Tyrone, Clarke moved from London to the north Antrim seaside town in 2009 and won the Open soon afterwards. "The Irish are friendly and welcoming," Clarke explains. "You'd go a long way around the world to find people better than the Irish."



THE EUROPEAN  
County Wicklow



Darren Clarke



ROYAL COUNTY DOWN  
County Down

Over the course of his many visits, Tiger Woods has played the famous Royal County Down course at the foothills of the Mourne Mountains



ROYAL PORTRUSH  
County Antrim

It's a fact that's not lost on some of the game's legends, many of whom have been coming to Ireland for years – both for the quality of the courses and the unrivalled atmosphere. Tiger Woods has frequently touched down at the island's best links courses to practice for the British Open (and get in a little fishing in his spare time). On some of his many visits, Woods has played the famous Royal County Down course, voted Ireland's top course in the 2013 Golf Digest Ireland Top 100. Created by the legendary architect Old Tom Morris at the foothills of the Mourne Mountains, neither Jack Nicklaus nor Tom Watson managed to conquer its majestic, savage beauty. Royal County Down is a unique test in the game with its myriad blind shots, subtle run-offs and fringe-topped bunkers in a picture postcard setting.

Heading south from Royal County Down, you come to the hidden gem of the County Louth Golf Club, or "Baltray" as it's known, arguably the

friendliest club in Ireland. If you're in any doubt, ask the visitors who once teed off there and ended up finishing their round on neighbouring Seapoint Golf Links. They had inadvertently crossed the boundary wall at the 14th tee, and continued their game on the fine course next door. The group didn't realise the mistake until heading to the car park to search, in vain, for their hire car. But they were soon fed, watered and taken back to Baltray by the Seapoint folks, where they continued on their way.

Of course, if they had kept going south along the east coast, they would have soon reached County Dublin and some of its great links courses including The Island at Donabate, world-famous Portmarnock and its next-door neighbour Portmarnock Links. Further down the coast at Brittas Bay in County Wicklow, The European Club awaits in all its splendour. Framed by sand dunes on the edge of the Irish Sea, The European is where three-time major winner Pádraig Harrington >

**Natural beauty**  
Situated on the stunning north Antrim Causeway Coast, the Royal Portrush Golf Club is the only club on the island of Ireland to have hosted The Open Championship. The club welcomes visitors all year round to play the Dunluce Links and Valley Links courses.





Graeme McDowell

### Parkland excellence

*Ireland may enjoy spectacular links, but the island is also home to some of the world's finest parkland courses, with something for all levels of skill*

MOUNT JULIET  
County Kilkenny

Often described as the best parkland course in Ireland, Mount Juliet's par 72, 7,300-yard course was designed by Jack Nicklaus and boasts a stunning 3rd hole – a par 3 from an elevated tee to a green edged by a natural stream and lake. The luxurious five-star hotel here makes a great base to explore the sights and scenery of County Kilkenny.

MALONE GOLF CLUB  
County Antrim

Fancy teeing off on a hidden gem? Then make sure to check out Malone, described by the website [top100golfcourses.co.uk](http://top100golfcourses.co.uk) as "one of Ireland's best parkland courses". Located just outside Belfast, it has 27 holes set around a trout lake. As local man Rory McIlroy says: "A great place to relax and enjoy golf with friends."

ADARE MANOR  
County Limerick

With the magnificent Desmond Castle providing a scenic backdrop and the ruins of a Franciscan Abbey dominating the centre, Adare is nothing if not spectacular. Designed by Robert Trent Jones Snr and generally acknowledged as one of his finest creations, the course hosted the Irish Open in 2007 and 2008.

WATERVILLE  
County KerryPORTSTEWART  
County Londonderry

*You'll make friends as easily as a double bogey in Ireland, where you should expect the unexpected as readily as a bad bounce*

honed his game for those back-to-back wins in the British Open, and it presents a test that has flummoxed even Tiger Woods, who has played it twice. Maybe Adam Scott should try his luck here, that's certainly a test we'd like to see.

Perfectly suited to the cerebral golfer, there are a few quirky little additions here for the more emotional among us, such as the famous "Cursing Stone" not far from the 10th tee. According to local legend, you can curse a person or thing if you rotate the seven small stones on the top of the rock in an anti-clockwise direction.

Head southwest along the coast and you can stop to play at Rosslare in County Wexford, where generations of visitors have witnessed the sea in all its turbulent majesty, or head on to County Kerry and lose yourself in the dunes of Waterville, Tralee, Dooks or Ballybunion.

Don't be surprised when you see a statue of the late US Open winner Payne Stewart at Waterville on the beautiful Ring of Kerry. Stewart enjoyed a few memorable golfing trips here in the late 1990s, made even more memorable by that other great Irish tradition: the 19th hole knees-up.

On one occasion Stewart, along with Aussie star Stuart Appleby, and Americans Lee Janzen and David Duval provided the floor show for patrons in their packed hotel bar; as the ebullient Stewart belted out tunes on his harmonica, the other three provided the vocals, laughing and shaking their heads at his antics.

You'll make friends as easily as a double bogey on the island of Ireland, where you should expect the unexpected as readily as a bad bounce. "That's links golf," says Harrington with a laugh. "You hit it and it's still a mystery until you actually find your golf ball. It's the same thing when you travel around the country – it looks small on a map but get out there and explore; you're always discovering new places to go, new people to meet." >

PHOTO: WILLIAM HUTCHINSON

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[www.emeraldtravel.com.au](http://www.emeraldtravel.com.au)



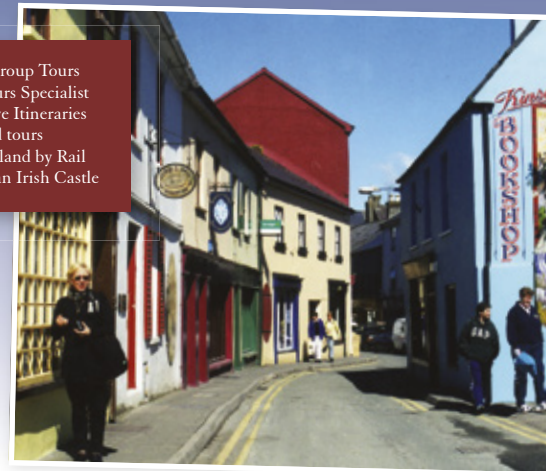
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travel options in Ireland. Individuals or groups, tailor-made itineraries, self-drive or chauffeur-drive staying at B&Bs, inns, country house hotels or castles are all part of our service.

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- CIE Tours Specialist
- Self-drive Itineraries
- Escorted tours
- Tour Ireland by Rail
- Stay in an Irish Castle



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[www.handpickedholidays.com.au](http://www.handpickedholidays.com.au)

e [ireland@handpickedholidays.com.au](mailto:ireland@handpickedholidays.com.au) t (02) 95926555; Outside Sydney metro: 1300 30 85 16

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LAHINCH  
County Clare

Pádraig Harrington

STRANDHILL  
County Sligo

Drive north through Limerick into County Clare and you have the new and the old side by side with Greg Norman's modern Doonbeg links less than 33km from storied Lahinch, home of the late, great amateur golfer John Burke. Winner of no fewer than 26 amateur championships, nine of them at national level, he was a true character with a typical Irish sense of humour.

Given the golf, the scenery and the people, it's no wonder that many find it a wrench to head back home. Two-time Masters champion Bernhard Langer had just that experience when he stopped off to practice in County Sligo on the wild west coast; he ended up staying for a week at Enniscrone. He could easily have spent his time at County Sligo Golf Club's famous Rosses Point links, home of the West of Ireland Championship, which Rory McIlroy won back-to-back as a teenager in 2005 and 2006. Or he could have stopped along the way there to see the wild dunes at Carne Links in County Mayo or the lilting charms of Connemara

Golf Club in beautiful County Galway.

If you think that's all that Ireland has to offer, keep heading north along the Atlantic coast for the pristine beaches of County Donegal and the ultimate links experience at the likes of Ballyliffin, Rosapenna, Portsalon, Narin and Portnoo, Dunfanaghy or little Cruit Island, the nine-hole course you reach by boat.

Most visitors travel from one great place to the next by car, but not American author Tom Coyne, who one day realised that Ireland was ringed with golf holes and set off to play every single seaside course he encountered – on foot. Coyne, whose hilarious and uplifting book, *A Course Called Ireland*, was an international bestseller, explains that many people who have played in Ireland several times write to him asking where they should go next.

"I usually tell them to go up into the northwest, go to Mayo and up to Sligo and Donegal. Those are places that I really loved. It's like you're going back in time..."

## Need to know the essential information

*The inside track on how to make your golfing holiday as smooth and enjoyable as possible*



### Be prepared

The Irish weather might be unpredictable but that doesn't mean you can't play all year round, especially on a links. April to October is the best time and with those long summer evenings, you can play until 10pm and still make it to the 19th hole for some post-game relaxation.

### Dress to impress

Most golf clubs on the island of Ireland are relaxed and informal, but there is usually a basic dress code. Jeans, shorts and trainers are generally frowned upon, while some clubs might insist on a jacket and tie for the dining room. The safest bet is smart-casual. It's best to have waterproof gear and sunscreen at hand just in case. Many clubs will only allow soft spikes, so do check in advance.

### Book ahead

Going where the road takes you is part of the beauty of a trip to Ireland. Still, it's always best to call ahead and book in advance rather than risk disappointment. Most clubs offer special green fee rates for visitors and groups so check with the club or your tour operator about any special offers. If you haven't brought your own clubs, you can rent them at many clubs or hire before you fly and pick them up at the airport through European Ryder Cup captain Paul McGinley's [clubstohire.com](http://clubstohire.com) service.

### Do your research

Planning ahead is always a good idea. Check out a list of clubs on the island in the county-by-county list provided by the Golfing Union of Ireland [gui.ie](http://gui.ie), the oldest golfing union in the world.

For the lowdown on golf in the Home of Champions, visit: [ireland.com/golfnow](http://ireland.com/golfnow)



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USEFUL INFORMATION



General information and key travel facts

Travelling to Ireland by air

Travelling to Ireland by sea

Australian tour operators

New Zealand tour operators

Travelling around Ireland

Map of Ireland

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VISITORS WITH DISABILITIES

Ireland extends a warm welcome to visitors with disabilities. Many public places and visitor attractions are accessible to wheelchair users, and an increasing number of hotels and restaurants are well equipped to accommodate guests who have any kind of disability. Useful contacts include:

REPUBLIC OF IRELAND

National Disability Authority  
Tel: +353 1 608 0400; [nda.ie](http://nda.ie)

NORTHERN IRELAND

Adapt NI  
Tel: +44 28 9023 1211; [adaptni.org](http://adaptni.org)  
Disability Action  
Tel: +44 28 9029 7880; [disabilityaction.org](http://disabilityaction.org)

CURRENCY

The euro is the currency of the Republic of Ireland. One euro (€) consists of 100 cent. In Northern Ireland, the currency is pound sterling (£). There are 100 pence to each pound sterling.

ELECTRIC CURRENT

The standard electricity supply on the island of Ireland is 230 volts AC, the same as in the UK. Visitors from elsewhere may require a transformer and plug adaptor (to convert 2-pin plugs to the standard 3-pin plugs), which can be bought at airports or electrical suppliers.

PUBLIC HOLIDAYS 2014

New Year's Day Holiday	1 Jan
St Patrick's Day Holiday	17 Mar
Good Friday (NI only)	18 Apr
Easter Monday	21 April
May Bank Holiday	5 May
Spring Bank Holiday (NI only)	26 May
June Bank Holiday (ROI only)	2 June
July Holiday (NI only)	14 July
August Bank Holiday (ROI only)	4 Aug
August Bank Holiday (NI only)	25 Aug
Oct Bank Holiday (ROI only)	27 Oct
Christmas Day	25 Dec
St Stephen's Day (ROI)/Boxing Day (NI)	26 Dec

*Good Friday is not an official public holiday in the Republic of Ireland, although most shops and businesses, and all pubs, are closed.*

IRELAND GENERAL INFORMATION & KEY TRAVEL FACTS

PASSPORT/VISA REQUIREMENTS

Australia and New Zealand citizens are simply required to show a valid passport. If you wish to work in Ireland, you may apply for an authorisation permit to do so. However, there are certain criteria you will need to meet for a permit to be considered and strict rules apply. Working permits must be gained prior to arrival in Ireland.

EMBASSIES & CONSULATES

**Embassy of Ireland – Australia**  
20 Arkana Street, Yarralumla, ACT 2600  
Tel: (02) 6273 3022  
Email: [canberraembassy@dfa.ie](mailto:canberraembassy@dfa.ie)  
**The Consulate General of Ireland – Sydney**  
Level 26, 1 Market Street  
Sydney NSW 2000  
Tel: (02) 9264 9635  
Fax: (02) 9264 9740  
Email: [sydneycongen@dfa.ie](mailto:sydneycongen@dfa.ie)

**The British High Commission – Australia**  
Commonwealth Avenue  
Yarralumla, ACT 2600  
Tel: (02) 6270 6666  
[gov.uk/government/world/australia](http://gov.uk/government/world/australia)  
**Consulate General of Ireland – New Zealand**  
Level 3, Tower One  
205 Queen Street  
Auckland City 1140  
Tel: (09) 977 2252  
Email: [consul@ireland.co.nz](mailto:consul@ireland.co.nz)  
[ireland.co.nz](http://ireland.co.nz)  
**The British High Commission – New Zealand**  
44 Hill Street, Thorndon, Wellington 6011  
Tel: (04) 924 2888  
[gov.uk/government/world/new-zealand](http://gov.uk/government/world/new-zealand)

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TRAVELLING TO IRELAND BY AIR

AIRPORTS

The island of Ireland is easily accessible by air, with over 30 airlines flying routes from more than 70 destinations to Ireland's international and regional airports. Both Emirates/Qantas and Etihad Airways/Virgin Australia offer a one-stop service from Australia to Dublin. Most other carriers that operate out of Australia offer a one-stop service to mainland Europe, allowing passengers to continue onwards to Ireland. From NZ, Emirates provides a two-stop option direct to Dublin, as do codeshare partners Etihad Airways and Virgin Australia. In fact most airlines flying between NZ and UK/ Europe provide fares that incorporate a side-trip to Irish gateways.

AIRLINE CONTACT DETAILS

AUSTRALIA

AIRLINE	TELEPHONE	WEBSITE
Aer Lingus	1300 304 016	<a href="http://aerlingus.com">aerlingus.com</a>
Air France	1300 390 190	<a href="http://airfrance.com/au">airfrance.com/au</a>
Austrian Airlines	1300 655 727	<a href="http://austrian.com">austrian.com</a>
British Airways	1300 767 177	<a href="http://britishairways.com.au">britishairways.com.au</a>
Cathay Pacific	131 747	<a href="http://cathaypacific.com.au">cathaypacific.com.au</a>
Emirates	1300 303 777	<a href="http://emirates.com">emirates.com</a>
Etihad Airways	1800 998 995	<a href="http://etihadairways.com">etihadairways.com</a>
Japan Airlines	1800 802 228	<a href="http://au.jal.com">au.jal.com</a>
KLM Royal Dutch Airlines	1300 392 192	<a href="http://klm.com.au">klm.com.au</a>
Lufthansa	1300 655 727	<a href="http://lufthansa.com">lufthansa.com</a>
Malaysia Airlines	132 627	<a href="http://malaysiaairlines.com.au">malaysiaairlines.com.au</a>
Qantas Airways	131 313	<a href="http://qantas.com.au">qantas.com.au</a>
Scandinavian Airlines	1300 727 707	<a href="http://flysas.com">flysas.com</a>
Singapore Airlines	131 011	<a href="http://singaporeair.com.au">singaporeair.com.au</a>
Thai Airways International	1300 651 960	<a href="http://thaiairways.com.au">thaiairways.com.au</a>
Virgin Atlantic	1300 727 340	<a href="http://virginatlantic.com.au">virginatlantic.com.au</a>
Virgin Australia	136 789	<a href="http://virginaustralia.com.au">virginaustralia.com.au</a>

NEW ZEALAND

AIRLINE	TELEPHONE	WEBSITE
Aer Lingus	(09) 308 3351	<a href="http://aerlingus.com">aerlingus.com</a>
Air France KLM	(09) 921 6040	<a href="http://klm.com/travel/nz_en">klm.com/travel/nz_en</a>
Air New Zealand	0800 737 000	<a href="http://airnewzealand.co.nz">airnewzealand.co.nz</a>
Austrian Airlines	0800 945 220	<a href="http://austrian.com">austrian.com</a>
British Airways	(09) 966 9777	<a href="http://ba.com">ba.com</a>
Cathay Pacific	0800 800 454	<a href="http://cathaypacific.co.nz">cathaypacific.co.nz</a>
Emirates	0508 352 436	<a href="http://emirates.com/nz">emirates.com/nz</a>
Etihad Airways	(09) 977 2207	<a href="http://etihadairways.com">etihadairways.com</a>
Lufthansa & Swiss	0800 945 220	<a href="http://lufthansa.com/swiss.com">lufthansa.com/swiss.com</a>
Malaysia Airlines	0800 777 747	<a href="http://nz.malaysiaairlines.com">nz.malaysiaairlines.com</a>
Qantas Airways	0800 808 767	<a href="http://qantas.co.nz">qantas.co.nz</a>
Scandinavian Airlines	(09) 977 2214	<a href="http://flysas.com">flysas.com</a>
Singapore Airlines	0800 808 909	<a href="http://singaporeair.com">singaporeair.com</a>
Thai Airways International	0800 100 992	<a href="http://thaiairways.co.nz">thaiairways.co.nz</a>
Virgin Australia	0800 670 000	<a href="http://virginaustralia.com">virginaustralia.com</a>

REGIONAL AIRPORTS

The following internal flights are available within Ireland:

DEPART	ARRIVE	AIRLINE	TELEPHONE	WEBSITE
Dublin	Donegal	Flybe operated by Loganair	+44 139 268 3152	<a href="http://flybe.com">flybe.com</a>
	Kerry	Aer Lingus Regional	+353 818 365 000	<a href="http://aerlingus.com">aerlingus.com</a>

*All information correct at time of going to press but may be subject to future operator changes. Airlines may also operate/change code sharing and franchise operator agreements. Please see websites for details.*



EUROPEAN

AIRLINE	TELEPHONE	WEBSITE
Aer Lingus	+44 871 718 5000	<a href="http://aerlingus.com">aerlingus.com</a>
British Airways	+44 844 493 0787	<a href="http://britishairways.com">britishairways.com</a>
CityJet	+44 871 666 5050	<a href="http://cityjet.com">cityjet.com</a>
Citywing	+44 871 200 0440	<a href="http://citywing.com">citywing.com</a>
easyJet	+44 843 104 5454	<a href="http://easyjet.com">easyjet.com</a>
Flybe	+44 139 268 3152	<a href="http://flybe.com">flybe.com</a>
Jet2.com	+44 203 059 8336	<a href="http://jet2.com">jet2.com</a>
Loganair	+44 871 700 2000	<a href="http://loganair.co.uk">loganair.co.uk</a>
Ryanair	+44 871 246 0002	<a href="http://ryanair.com">ryanair.com</a>

*All direct routes/information correct at time of going to press but may be subject to future operator changes. Airlines may also operate connecting/change code sharing and operator franchise agreements. Please see websites for details. Calls to airlines may incur local or national call charges.*

TRAVELLING FROM DUBLIN AND BELFAST AIRPORTS INTO CITY CENTRES

DUBLIN

On arrival in Dublin Airport, you can take a bus or a taxi into Dublin city centre. Buses and taxis are located just outside the arrivals hall. Dublin Airport is north of the city so a taxi to the north side will normally be cheaper than one to the south side. Dublin Bus Airlink operates direct buses to the city centre, bus and train stations; €6\* single and €10\* return. Children travel half price.

BELFAST

Belfast International Airport

Belfast city centre is just 29km from the airport and can be accessed by bus and taxi. Airport Express 300 now

operates a 24-hour service between the airport and the city centre with buses departing regularly throughout the day; £7.50\* single and £10.50\* return. The bus leaves from the bus stop located opposite the terminal exit. A taxi fare to the city centre is approximately £30\*.

**George Best Belfast City Airport**  
Airport Express 600 into the city centre runs on the hour (every 20 minutes during peak time); £2.20\* single and £3.30\* return. Taxi fare to the city is approximately £10\*. Trains run from adjacent Sydenham station to Belfast and beyond.

*\*Prices are subject to change.*



IRELAND INFORMATION

AIR ROUTES

DEPART	ARRIVE	AIRLINE
Aberdeen	Dublin	Aer Lingus Regional
	George Best Belfast City	Flybe
Birmingham	Belfast International	easyJet
	City of Derry	Ryanair
	Cork	Aer Lingus
	Dublin	Aer Lingus, Ryanair
	George Best Belfast City	Flybe
	Ireland West Airport Knock	Aer Lingus Regional, Flybe
	Shannon	Aer Lingus Regional
	Waterford	Flybe
Blackpool	Belfast International	Jet2.com
	Dublin	Aer Lingus Regional
Bournemouth	Dublin	Aer Lingus Regional
Bristol	Belfast International	easyJet
	Cork	Aer Lingus Regional
	Dublin	Aer Lingus Regional, Ryanair
	Ireland West Airport Knock	Ryanair
Cardiff	Dublin	Aer Lingus Regional
	George Best Belfast City	Flybe
East Midlands Nottingham	Cork	Ryanair
	Dublin	Ryanair
	George Best Belfast City	Flybe
	Ireland West Airport Knock	Ryanair
Edinburgh	Belfast International	easyJet
	Cork	Aer Lingus Regional
	Dublin	Aer Lingus Regional, Ryanair
	George Best Belfast City	Flybe
	Ireland West Airport Knock	Flybe
	Shannon	Aer Lingus Regional
Exeter	Dublin	Flybe
	George Best Belfast City	Flybe
Glasgow International	Belfast International	easyJet
	Cork	Aer Lingus Regional
	Donegal	Flybe/Loganair
	Dublin	Aer Lingus Regional
	George Best Belfast City	Flybe
	Shannon	Flybe
Glasgow Prestwick	City of Derry	Ryanair
	Dublin	Ryanair
Inverness	George Best Belfast City	Flybe
Isle of Man	Dublin	Aer Lingus Regional
	George Best Belfast City	Citywing
Jersey	Belfast International	Jet2.com, easyJet
	Cork	Aer Lingus
	Dublin	Aer Lingus
	George Best Belfast City	Flybe

IRELAND INFORMATION

TRAVELLING TO IRELAND BY SEA

FERRY PORTS

The island of Ireland has five main ferry ports accessible from Great Britain – Belfast, Dublin, Dun Laoghaire, Larne and Rosslare.

DEPART	ARRIVE	CARRIER	VESSEL	DURATION
Cairnryan	Larne	P&O Ferries	Express	1hr
			Superferry	1hr 45mins
	Belfast	Stena Line	Superfast VII/VIII	2hrs 15mins
Fishguard	Rosslare	Stena Line	Stena Express Superferry	2hrs 3hrs 30mins
Holyhead	Dublin	Irish Ferries	Cruise Ferry	3hrs 15mins
		Irish Ferries	Dublin Swift	1hr 49mins
		Stena Line	Superferry	3hrs 15mins
	Dun Laoghaire	Stena Line	HSS Fast Craft	2hrs
Isle of Man	Belfast	Steam Packet Company	Fastcraft	2hrs 55mins
	Dublin	Steam Packet Company	Fastcraft	2hrs 55mins
Liverpool	Dublin	P&O Ferries	Irish Sea Ferry	7hrs 30mins
Liverpool (Birkenhead)	Belfast	Stena Line	Stena Lagan	8hrs
			Stena Mersey	8hrs
Pembroke	Rosslare	Irish Ferries	Cruise Ferry	3hrs 45mins
Troon*	Larne	P&O Ferries	Fastcraft	1hr 49mins

\* Mar-Oct. All information correct at time of going to press.

FERRY AND COACH OPERATORS CONTACT DETAILS

FERRY COMPANY	TELEPHONE	WEBSITE
Irish Ferries	+44 871 730 0400	irishferries.com
P&O Ferries	+44 871 702 3477	poferries.com
Steam Packet Company	+44 872 299 2992	steam-packet.com
Stena Line	+44 844 770 7070	stenaline.co.uk
Eurolines Coach & Ferry	+44 871 781 8181	eurolines.co.uk

\* All information correct at time of going to press but may be subject to future operator changes. Calls to sea/coach operators may incur local or national call charges. Please see websites for details.

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F: +353 (0) 66 713 6008  
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www.traleegolfclub.com

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IRELAND YOUR TRAVEL MAGAZINE 47





# AUSTRALIA TOUR OPERATORS

COMPANY	TELEPHONE	WEBSITE	B&B	Car hire	Coach/rail tours	Cruising	Cycling	Entertainment	Equestrian	Ferries	Fishing	Golfing	Hostels	Hotels	Luxury travel	Rail/bus passes	Self-catering	Special interest	Walking	Motor homes	Dublin pass
Access Ireland Holidays	1800 336 676	accessirelandholidays.com	•	•	•		•	•		•		•		•	•		•				•
Avis International	136 333	avis.com.au		•																	
Budget Car Rental	1300 362 848	budget.com		•																	
Celtic Travel	(02) 8243 2600	celtictravel.com.au	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•
Compass Car Rentals	(02) 9037 1366	compasscarrental.com.au		•																	
Creative Holidays	1300 747 400	creativeholidays.com	•	•		•				•				•	•	•	•				
DQ International Travel Service	(03) 9614 4588	email: travel@dqinternational.com.au		•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•		•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•
DriveAway Holidays	1300 723 972	driveaway.com.au		•																•	
Drive Travel	(03) 8781 1120	drivettravel.com		•		•									•					•	
Emerald Travel	(03) 96709696	emeraldtravel.com.au	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•
Eurovillas	(03) 9593 2170	eurovillas.com.au	•	•										•	•		•				
Freestyle Holidays	1300 880 268	freestyleholidays.com.au	•	•										•	•						
Globus Family	1300 130 134	globusfamily.com.au			•									•	•						
Golf Explorer	(08) 8376 4495	golfexplorer.com.au										•									
Golf Holidays International	(02) 9387 8587	golfholidaysinternational.com.au										•									
Handpicked Holidays	(02) 9592 6555	handpickedholidays.com.au	•	•	•									•	•	•					•
Hertz Australia	13 30 39	hertz.com.au		•																	
Holiday Autos	1300 554 507	holidayautos.com.au		•																	
Holidays on Location	1300 651 065	holidaysonlocation.com	•	•	•		•	•				•		•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•
Insight Vacations	1300 302 957	insightvacations.com.au			•													•			
Irelandjourneys	0417 206 932	irelandjourneys.com.au																•			
Leading Hotels of the World	1800 222 033	lhw.com												•	•						
Outdoor Travel	1800 331 582	outdoortravel.com.au					•	•												•	
Qantas Holidays	13 14 15	qantasholidays.com.au	•	•	•			•		•				•			•				
Rail Plus	1300 555 003	railplus.com.au			•																
Shamrock Travel	(03) 9819 6674	shamrocktravel.com.au	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•
Shamrockcr	1300 301 776	shamrockradventures.com			•																
Singapore Airlines Holidays	1300 888 172	siaholidays.com.au		•										•			•				
Small Luxury Hotels of the World	1800 251 958	slh.com												•	•						
Teed Up Golf Tours	(02) 8458 9000	teedupgolf.com										•									
Tempo Holidays	1300 558 987	tempoholidays.com	•	•	•									•		•					
The Wayfarers – Stewart Marketing Services	(02) 9428 4222	thewayfarers.com																	•		
Trafalgar Tours	(02) 9657 3333	trafalgartours.com.au			•																
Utracks	1300 303 368	utricks.com					•												•		
World Drive Holidays	1300 653 270	worlddriveholidays.com.au		•																	
Youth Hostel Association	(02) 9261 1111	yha.com.au											•								

For a full list of Australia tour operators, visit [ireland.com/touoperatorslandings](http://ireland.com/touoperatorslandings).  
All information correct at time of going to press but may be subject to future operator changes.



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[www.tridentholidayhomes.ie](http://www.tridentholidayhomes.ie)  
or call  
00353 (0) 1 201 8449



# NEW ZEALAND TOUR OPERATORS

COMPANY	TELEPHONE	WEBSITE	B&B	Car hire	Coach/rail tours	Cruising	Cycling	Entertainment	Equestrian	Ferries	Golfing	Sports	Hotels	Rail	Self-catering	Special interest	Walking	Motor homes	Other	Dublin pass
A Walker's World & Cycling Europe	(09) 486 7473	walkersworld.co.nz & cycling-europe.com	•	•			•						•				•	•		•
Air New Zealand Holidays	0800 737 767	airnz.co.nz/holidays-stores	•	•		•						•	•			•				•
Avis Rent-A-Car	-	avis.co.nz		•																
Budget Rent-A-Car	0800 283 438	budget.com		•																
Contiki Holidays NZ	0508 266 8454	contiki.com			•											•				
Drive Away Holidays	0800 885 590	driveaway.co.nz		•						•								•		
Eurolynx Travel Ltd	(09) 361 3661	eurolynx.co.nz	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•
Europcar	-	europcar.com		•																
First Travel Group	0800 432 737	first-travel-group.co.nz/our-members.aspx	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•
Flight Centre	0800 243 544	flightcentre.co.nz	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•
Flora Tours	0800 356 728	floratours.co.nz and pilgrimagetours.co.nz			•											•				
Globus Family	(09) 379 5375	globusfamily.co.nz			•	•										•			•	
Harvey World Travel	0800 758 7 87	harveyworld.co.nz	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•
Hertz New Zealand	0800 654 321	hertz.com		•																
House of Travel	0800 367 468	houseoftravel.co.nz	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•
Insight Vacations	(09) 300 1580	insightvacations.com			•											•			•	
Mondo	0800 955 655	mondotravel.co.nz	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•
PaRn.z. Corporate Events & Golfing Holidays	(09) 486 1077	parnz.co.nz			•						•		•			•			•	
Rail Plus	(09) 377 5415	railplus.co.nz												•						
Supreme Tours (for the mature traveller)	(09) 309 9822	supremetoursandtravel.com	•	•	•	•		•		•	•		•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•
Tempo Holidays	-	tempoholidays.co.nz	•	•		•							•	•						•
Trafalgar Tours (NZ) Ltd	0800 872 325	trafalgartours.co.nz			•	•													•	
Travel Managers	(09) 921 5070	travelmanagers.co.nz	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•
United Travel – Nearest Store	0800 730 830	unitedtravel.co.nz	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•
UK-Europe Self Catering	(09) 536 4200	uk-europe.co.nz													•					
Walk the West of Ireland	(03) 545 1071	walkthewestofireland.com															•	•		•
Williment Sports Travel	(04) 380 2500	williment.co.nz			•			•		•	•					•			•	
WP Maher Tours	0800 500 518	mahertours.co.nz			•	•										•			•	

For a full list of New Zealand tour operators, visit [ireland.com/offer](http://ireland.com/offer).  
All information correct at time of going to press but may be subject to future operator changes.



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## TRAVELLING AROUND IRELAND

### BUS AND RAIL

The island of Ireland has a comprehensive bus and rail system that links towns and cities, as well as ferry ports and airports. A selection of private coach services also operate between the main airports and cities all over the island.

**Dart:** The Dart (Dublin Area Rapid Transit) rail line runs along the Dublin coast; from Howth and Malahide in north County Dublin to Greystones in County Wicklow, via the city centre and Dun Laoghaire.

**Luas:** The Luas light rail services the south and west of Dublin city, including the city centre.

There are various discount tickets available, giving unlimited travel on bus and rail services, which offer good value for travellers. For more details on getting around Ireland, visit [ireland.com](http://ireland.com)

### REPUBLIC OF IRELAND

Irish Rail – Iarnród Éireann

Tel: +353 1 836 6222; [irishrail.ie](http://irishrail.ie)

Irish Bus – Bus Éireann

Tel: +353 1 836 6111; [buseireann.ie](http://buseireann.ie)

Dublin Bus – Bus Átha Cliath

Tel: +353 1 873 4222; [dublinbus.ie](http://dublinbus.ie)

### NORTHERN IRELAND

Translink (Northern Ireland Railways,

Ulsterbus, Metro – Belfast’s bus service)

Tel: +44 28 9066 6630; [translink.co.uk](http://translink.co.uk)

### BIKE

If you are travelling around Dublin, the Dublin Bike Sharing Scheme is a good option.

[dublinbikes.ie](http://dublinbikes.ie)

### INLAND FERRIES AND ISLAND BOAT SERVICES

Whether you’re visiting the offshore islands or travelling around the country, the ferry is a fun way to get around. Just make sure you check out timetables in advance, and again before travelling, since changes in the weather can affect services. Ferries are operated by different providers; for more details log onto [ireland.com](http://ireland.com)

### DRIVING

If you’re planning to drive in Ireland, bring a valid national driving licence with you. You are legally required to carry your driving licence with you at all times when driving in the Republic of Ireland.

Driving in Ireland is on the left and seatbelts must be worn at all times, in the front and back of the vehicle. Motorcyclists and their passengers must wear helmets. There are very strict laws on drinking and driving and the best advice is simply “don’t drink and drive”.

There is barrier-free tolling on certain motorways in the Republic of Ireland – visit [eflow.ie](http://eflow.ie) for more information.

### SPEED LIMITS

#### REPUBLIC OF IRELAND

Speed limits are in kilometres per hour km/h.

Towns and cities: 50

Regional/country roads (displayed by white signs): 80

National roads (displayed by green signs): 100

Motorways (displayed by blue signs): 120

Special speed limits: 30 and 60

### NORTHERN IRELAND

Speed limits are in miles per hour mph.

Towns and cities: 30

Regional/country roads: 60

Motorways: 70

Don’t forget the change in driving laws when you cross the border between Northern Ireland and the Republic of Ireland.

### RENTING A CAR

You’ll find car hire companies in airports, ferry ports, and sometimes in train and bus terminals. In many cases, the car hire company will have a city-centre base. Most rental cars are standard shift but automatic cars are available for an additional charge, if you book them in advance. Child seats should also be booked in advance.

For insurance reasons you should advise the car rental company if you intend travelling between the Republic of Ireland and Northern Ireland.

It is also recommended that you check the detailed terms and conditions of your rental booking in advance. Even if you book through a third party (broker, agent, tour operator), you will be required to sign a rental agreement with the car rental company, so spend some time in advance selecting the various insurances, waivers and other options appropriate to your needs and understanding the costs involved.

### REPUBLIC OF IRELAND

Car Rental Council

[carrentalcouncil.ie](http://carrentalcouncil.ie)

### NORTHERN IRELAND

British Vehicle Rental and Leasing Association

[bvrla.co.uk](http://bvrla.co.uk)



# MAP & ROUTE MILEAGE PLANNER

Roads in Ireland range from modern motorways to narrow country lanes, and driving in Ireland can be a magical experience, with scenic treasures around every corner.





# IRELAND AND BRITAIN BY COACH

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