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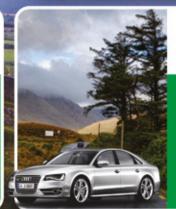


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Jump into So Ireland



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Community



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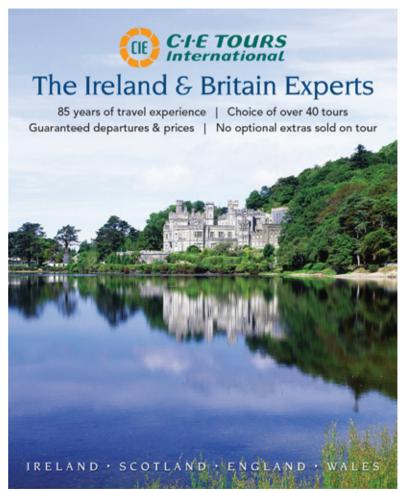




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1 Carrick-a-Rede rope bridge, County Antrim A bridge was used here in 1755 by salmon fishermen. 2 Reginald's Tower, Waterford The first tower on this site was built by the Vikings after 914. 3 Black Taxi Tour Travel like a local on a tour of Belfast. 4 Traditional Irish music session Feel the unmissable beat of Ireland's traditional music. 5 Hurling This Gaelic sport has a history stretching back 3,000 years

It sways, it wobbles, it swings – crossing the Carrick-a-Rede rope bridge is a phenomenal experience and don't worry, despite the fact that it looks scary, it's all perfectly safe. Traditionally used by salmon fishermen, the bridge hovers above a chasm that divides the edge of the Causeway Coast and Carrick-a-Rede Island. While you're crossing, keep your eye out for swirling sea birds above; while below in the Atlantic, you might be lucky enough to spot a basking shark, dolphin or porpoise. Truly a one-of-a-kind experience.



There's nothing like the atmosphere of a traditional music session in Ireland. Toes are tapped, hands are clapped, and everyone joins in as musicians come and go, adding to a great feeling of spontaneity. It's part of what makes Ireland's cities, towns and villages such captivating places to visit. County Clare in particular is known for its great traditional music villages such as Doolin, Kilrush and Ennis, while you're guaranteed an amazing experience in the Dufferin Arms in Killyleagh, County Down.



There are guided tours – and then there's the Black Taxi Tour in Belfast. If you're looking for a unique and entertaining way to see the city then jump into a traditional black taxicab. Local drivers who know this city inside and out will guide you around some of Belfast's most interesting sights from the grand City Hall to the famous wall murals. Tours include a Belfast Historical Buildings Tour, a Belfast Political & Murals Tour, and even a trip out to the Causeway Coast and stunning Giant's Causeway. All from the comfort of your own cab!







TAKE A VIKING TOUR

The Vikings landed in Ireland in the 800s and we haven't stopped talking about them since. Much of the island's Viking history is concentrated in Ireland's Ancient East and the cities and towns of Dublin, Wexford, Waterford, Cork and Limerick. Make your way to Waterford city, founded by the Vikings in 914, and take a guided walk through the city's history with the Epic Tour of the Viking Triangle. Or jump on a replica Viking ship with Viking Tours Ireland and sail to the monastic site of Clonmacnoise on the River Shannon. What a way to arrive!



© EXPERIENCE GAELIC GAMES

Ireland's native games (Gaelic football, hurling and camogie, among others) are fast-paced, exhilarating and great fun to watch. Whether at a local match or an All-Ireland final, the passion of the players and spectators makes these events something special. Get to grips with the history of Gaelic games at the GAA Museum at Croke Park stadium in Dublin, then walk the Skyline – an incredible panoramic tour of Dublin, 17 storeys up. You can even pick up some of the basic techniques at Experience Gaelic Games in Cork, Dublin and Galway. 🗞

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ROOMS WITH A VIEW

From cliff-edge hotels to B&Bs nestled into idyllic scenery, Ireland offers truly unique places to stay with some of the best views on the island...

1. EDENVALE HOUSE

Strangford Lough, the Mourne Mountains, gardens and pretty paddocks — the views from Edenvale in County Down are delightful. Located about a half-hour drive from Belfast, this historic B&B makes a great base for exploring the surrounding area with everything from horse riding to golf close by. And as if that wasn't enough, Edenvale's breakfast is legendary, with their own eggs, homemade bread and local bacon. edenvalehouse.com

2. INIS MEÁIN SUITES

In the rugged stone landscape of this Aran Island sits a very special place to stay. Just five suites cocoon guests in luxury in its most simple form, with interiors featuring wood, limestone and wool. The views at Inis Meáin Suites are outstanding – stretching out over grey stone that tumbles down to the Atlantic Ocean. Guests are provided with a hotpot lunch, exploration kit and bicycles, meaning you can discover this place at your own pace. Glorious isolation at its finest, inismeain.com

3. THE CLIFF HOUSE HOTEL

Clinging to the edge of a cliff in County Waterford, the Cliff House Hotel is pure glamour. Each room boasts views of tranquil Ardmore Bay, while the interior mixes rugged local textures with flashes of colour. This is a place of real escape in a part of Ireland's Ancient East that's filled with great restaurants, historic country houses and hidden coves. Treat yourself to a gourmet feast in the Michelin-starred House Restaurant, take a seaweed bath in the Outdoor Summer Spa or simply lie back and enjoy the views. the cliffhousehotel.com

4. LOUGH ERNE RESORT

There's a real sense of quality to the Lough Erne Resort: this is one of Ireland's finest golf resorts on a 600-acre peninsula with stunning views of the Fermanagh Lakelands. Home to two Championship Golf Courses, it's the perfect destination for a golfing break with every level of golfer catered for. And after testing your skills, there are plenty of opportunities for relaxation with a 3 AA Rosette restaurant, two bars and a luxurious spa. lougherneresort.com

5. MARKREE CASTLE

Ireland is justly famous for its castle hotels, such as the gorgeous Ashford Castle in County Mayo. A hidden gem, though, is Markree Castle in County Sligo, with views over gardens and woodland. Home to the Cooper family for over 370 years, the castle ripples with old-world charm and offers great food, wine and tranquillity. markreecastle.ie







1 Edenvale House, County Down Views reach out over the gardens of this elegant country house B&B. 2 Inis Meain Suites Cool grey beauty on a quiet Aran Island. 3 Cliff House Hotel, County Waterford Stunning views of Ardmore Bay make this a great choice. 4 Lough Erne Resort One of Ireland's most acclaimed golf resorts. 5 Markree Castle, County Sligo Set within 500 acres of secluded countryside.

"CLINGING TO
THE EDGE OF A
CLIFF IN COUNTY
WATERFORD,
THE CLIFF HOUSE
HOTEL IS PURE
GLAMOUR, WITH
VIEWS OF TRANQUIL
ARDMORE BAY"





For more information on accommodation, visit: ireland.com



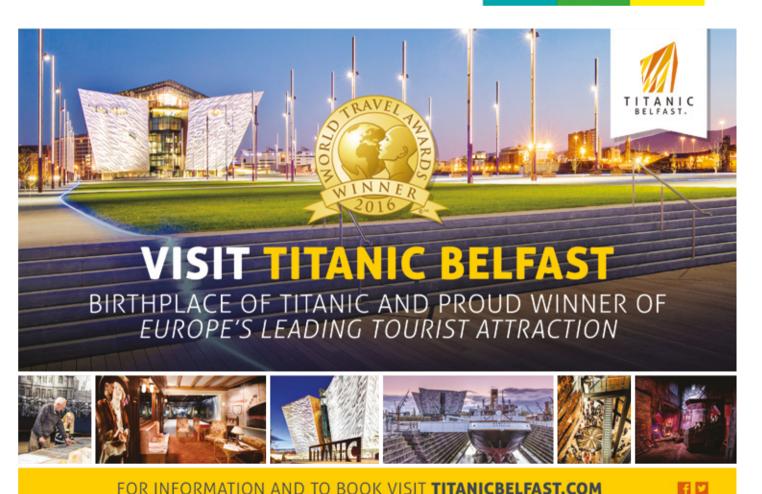


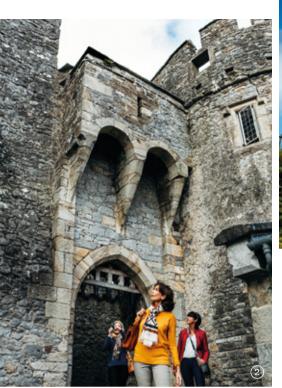
The Dubliner's Guide to Dublin dodublin.ie dublinsightseeing.ie















1 Blarney, County Cork Home to the famous Blarney Stone.
2 Cahir, County Tipperary Scene of countless sieges and bombardments. 3 Glenveagh, County Donegal Built to resemble a romantic highland retreat. 4 Enniskillen, County Fermanagh Originally built in the 16th century. 5 Trim, County Meath Ireland's largest Norman castle. 6 Dunluce, County Antrim Did this place inspire Cair Paravel in CS Lewis's The Chronicles of Maraia?



DISCOVER ALL ABOUT... CASTLES

There's a reason why Ireland is famous for its castles: they're everywhere. Small villages, towns, cities and even the remotest parts of the countryside boast epic reminders of Ireland's past

Arriving with the Anglo-Normans, many castles in Ireland began as earth and timber structures, but by the late 12th century, it was all about stone. Today, you'll find everything from crumbling tower houses to huge medieval structures. Get to grips with tales of brutal sieges in Athlone Castle on the banks of the River Shannon or relax in elegant Ballygally Castle Hotel in County Antrim — whatever you're looking for, Ireland's castles will deliver.



- One of Ireland's most famous castles, **Blarney**Castle in County Cork is a magnificent blend of history, beauty and fun. Kiss the famous Blarney Stone for the "gift of the gab", wander the gorgeous gardens and soak up the romantic atmosphere in the Rock Close, described by a writer in 1824 as "indeed a fairy scene".
- Dating to the 13th century and seeming to grow out of the rock around it, Cahir Castle in County Tipperary is one of the biggest in Ireland. Over the years, it's been enlarged, rebuilt, besieged and has witnessed everything from treason to murder. It even starred in John Boorman's Excalibur take it from us, this one's a star.
- Built in the Scottish Baronial style, Glenveagh Castle sits within an area of wild beauty in Glenveagh National Park, County Donegal. The location is simply breathtaking, so it's no surprise that stars such as Marilyn Monroe, Clark Gable and Charlie Chaplin are rumoured to have holidayed here.
- With a lovely location in the historic town of Enniskillen, County Fermanagh, Enniskillen Castle was built nearly 600 years ago by the ruling Gaelic Maguire family. Overlooking the River Erne, it traditionally guarded one of the few passes into UIster and today houses the Fermanagh County Museum.

5 Trim Castle in County Meath has been many things: fortress, home, prison, even film set (Mel Gibson's Braveheart was filmed here). But throughout, it's retained its stern grandeur and height. Built

in the 12th century, it boasts a 20-sided tower overlooking the River Boyne.

The magnificent cliff-top Dunluce Castle in County Antrim is one of the island's most iconic sights. Teetering on the edge of a basalt outcrop, this structure looks like something out of a fantasy film with steep drops on either side – so steep, in fact, that one stormy night in 1639 the kitchen fell into the sea!



For further information please contact . Visitor Services, OPW, Unit 20. Lakeside Retail Park. Claremorris, Co. Mayo, Ireland Tel: +353 1 6476000 email: info@heritageireland.ie



For further information on the OPW Heritage Card please contact Tel: +353 1 6476592 email: heritagecard@opw.ie

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Newgrange Megalithic Tomb, County Meath





Full details www.heritageireland.ie



IRELAND



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FOOD IN **IRELAND**

With great restaurants, gastropubs and fab farmers' markets, Ireland's food scene is on top form

TRADITIONAL TASTES

Ireland's food traditions are undergoing an exciting revival right now, and many restaurants are adding traditional flavours to their menus. Combining high-quality local ingredients with modern techniques, the result is dishes that taste fresh, modern and delicious while still staying true to their heritage. If you're looking for a taste of authentic Ireland, then don't miss out on a bowl of coddle at The Woollen Mills in Dublin – a hearty dish of sausages, bacon and potatoes that's unique to the city. You can unearth Cork's food culture at The English Market, where you'll find Tom Durcan's acclaimed spiced beef. Try it for yourself with lunch at No 5 Fenn's Quay, where it makes a great sandwich served with cabbage pickle.

Irish stew is an enduring favourite thanks to its hearty, rustic combination of lamb, potatoes and carrots, and Gleeson's of Roscommon is reputed to serve one of the best. Popular all along the Wild Atlantic Way, smoked fish platters combine the best of the sea, and bring a modern edge to one of Ireland's oldest food traditions.

And that's not all - there's black pudding (blood sausage) from Clonakilty, freshly baked brown soda bread and great potato pancakes called boxty. One dish definitely not to miss is an Irish cooked breakfast: Northern Ireland's speciality is the Ulster Fry, a traditional fried feast of bacon, black and white pudding, tomato and sausages served with a potato farl (potato bread) and soda bread

THE NATURAL LARDER

Ireland excels at producing local artisan cheese – all with different styles and a distinctive creamy taste. Look out for Milleens, Kearney Blue, Cashel Blue, St Tola, Leggygowan and the first smoked brie in Europe, Ballyoak from Fivemiletown Creamery. Expect high-quality, grass-fed beef such as Glenarm Shorthorn Beef and herb-fed mountain lamb such as Comeragh Mountain Lamb. And from oysters to crab claws, mussels to lobster, Ireland's seafood is exceptional. Our advice? Go simple with Guinness and oysters or super-fresh fish and chips. It doesn't get better than that.

THE BEST LOCAL DRINKS

Great food deserves great drinks to go with it. And Ireland certainly delivers. Irish whiskey ranges from the traditional Bushmills and Jameson to newer tastes of Teeling, Glendalough, Nephin and Blackwater. The craft-beer industry is flourishing, with Brú Brewery, Bo Bristle and Hilden to name just a few. Or try one of the new breed of Irish artisan gins from small distilleries including Dingle Distillery in County Kerry and ShortCross Gin in County Down. Finally, don't miss the awardwinning AJ Apple Juice, made from freshly pressed Armagh apples – simply delicious!









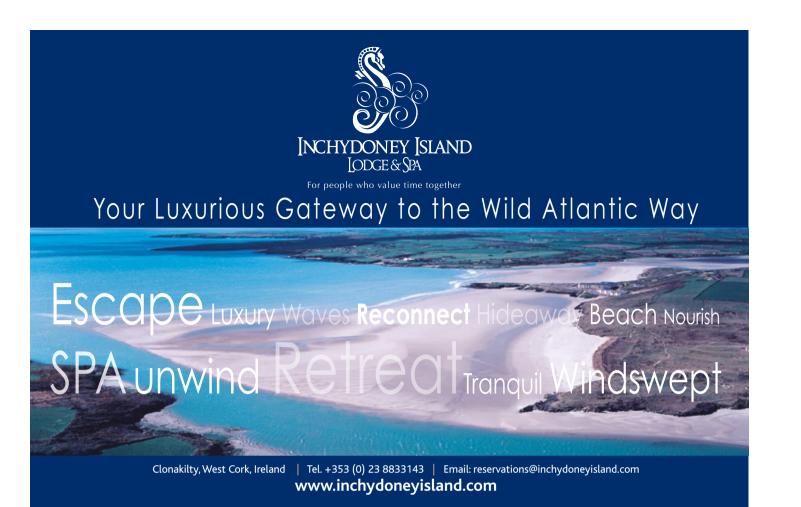
L Hatch & Sons, Dublin A great place in the heart of the city for local, traditional dishes. 2 Established Coffee, Belfast Delicious breads, salads and apple pies in the charming Cathedral Quarter district. 3 The Woollen Mills, Dublin Serves up tasty interpretation of traditional Irish dishes. 4 Hilden Brewery, Lisburn The oldest independent brewery on the island of Ireland. 5 Stunning seafood at Ox, Belfast Michelin

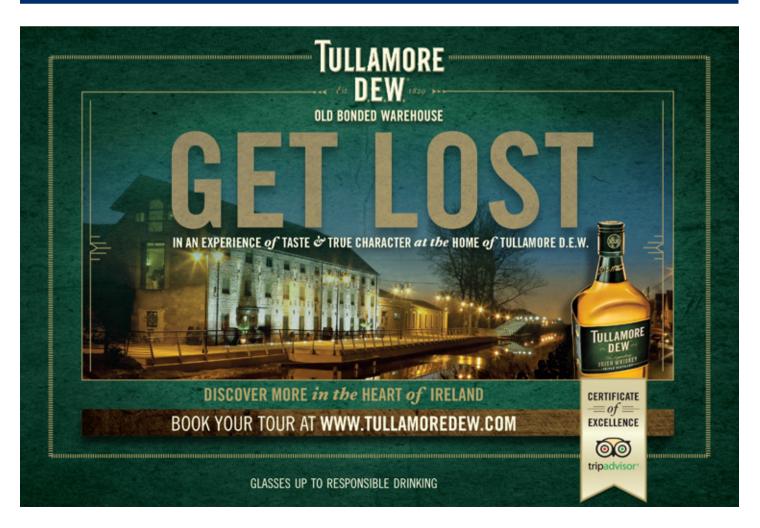






TOP TIP









1 Clonmacnoise, County Offaly
Stepping into Ireland's past. 2 Trinity
College Dublin Think outside the box
on where to look for information.
3 Epic Ireland, Dublin This new visitor
attraction boasts an excellent Irish
Family History Centre. 4 Glasnevin,
Dublin Glasnevin Cemetery holds
the burial records for over 1.5 million
people. 5 Linen Hall Library, Belfast
The right resources and the right
research may yield amazing results.





FIVE THINGS YOU NEED TO KNOW ABOUT... GENEALOGY

Curious about your Irish ancestors? Here's how to get started on an adventure into your past...

1. ESTABLISH BASIC FACTS

Make a list of siblings, parents, grandparents, cousins, as far back as you can go. Include names, dates of birth, where they lived and were born. If you don't know, ask relatives. Gather any material you can, including letters, birth, marriage or death certificates, photos, or even memorial cards and locations of family graves. Focus your research first on where you know the ancestor spent the last years of their lives. Karel Kiely of Roots Ireland recommends trying to find out where they died, if they appear in ships' passenger lists, newspapers, or have naturalisation or census records in their own country. Collect as much information as you can and keep meticulous notes.

2. THINK OUTSIDE THE BOX

You will encounter obstacles along the way, so be flexible. Online databases of Ireland's records make a good place to go hunting. Use websites such as the Irish government-sponsored <code>irishgenealogy.ie</code>, or build a family tree on <code>ancestry.com</code> that faraway relatives can add to. Ireland Family History on Facebook is great for making contacts and asking questions, while the Ulster Historical Foundation is a useful research foundation tracing Scots-Irish and Irish roots (<code>ancestryireland.com</code>). Remember that sometimes you don't need to start your research in Irish databases, though, as Karel Kiely advises: "If your ancestor emigrated from Ireland, don't start your research in Ireland. Working back from the known to the unknown, generation by generation, is the only way to be sure."

3. THE INTERNET WILL ONLY TAKE YOU SO FAR

The next step is a trip to Ireland. Here you'll find free walk-in advisory services along with census records at the National Library and National Archives in Dublin. At the Public Record Office of Northern Ireland (PRONI) and General Register Office for Northern Ireland (GRONI), you'll find free access to all public records (PRONI), and registers of births, deaths, marriages and adoptions in Northern Ireland (GRONI). Glasnevin Cemetery holds burial records for 1.5 million people and a Genealogy Research Centre (glasnevintrust.ie), while the Military Archives offers a diverse body of information for the Republic of Ireland (militaryarchives.ie). And don't miss the Irish Family History Centre at EPIC Ireland in Dublin, with genealogy experts, family history records and interactive displays.

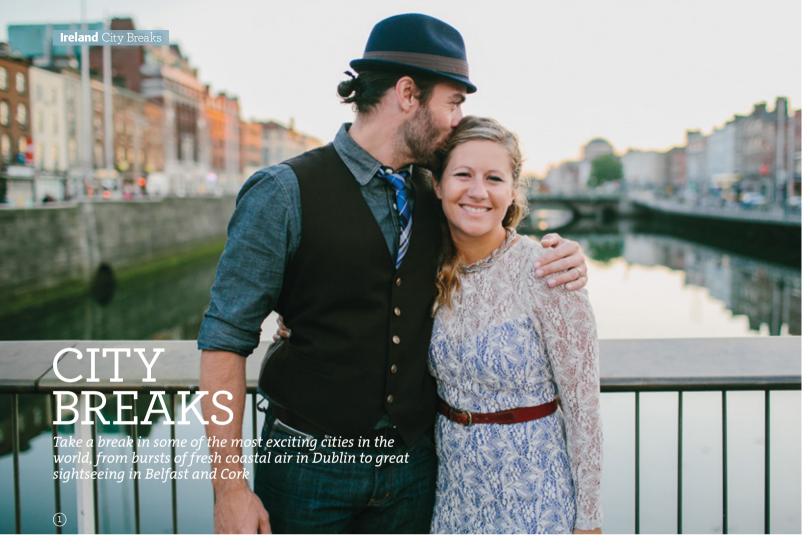
4. USE COUNTY GENEALOGY CENTRES

Many counties in Ireland boast their own county genealogy centres with very useful levels of information. They make a good next step and you'll find a list on rootsireland.ie

5. HAVE FAITH

Researching your ancestry is full of pitfalls and sideways turns, but keep going and you'll be rewarded. The right resource, the right help and the right amount of luck can turn dreams into reality.





OUT AND ABOUT

EAT Located near the 17th century marketplace of Smithfield (where you'll find the Old Jameson Distillery), **Fish Shop** is a delight, with delicious fish dishes in casual surroundings. Downstairs in the Winding Stair on Lower Ormond Quay you'll find a bookstore, but head upstairs to the restaurant and you can enjoy tasty modern Irish dishes overlooking the River Liffey. Or go for critically acclaimed cooking in charming surroundings at **Delahunt** restaurant. located inside a beautiful, historic building on Lower Camden Street. Enjoy a pre-dinner drink in the charming cocktail bar on the first floor.

DRINK Looking for traditional Irish music in great surroundings? Head to O'Donoghue's pub on Baggot Street, where the music sessions are legendary. The Long Hall on South Great George's Street is something of an institution with a Victorian interior that has changed little since the 1860s. Wood panelling and cosy little snugs (traditional booths) define the atmosphere at the small but charming Toner's on Lower Baggot Street. It opened in 1818 as a bar and grocery store, and today retains many of its original features.

sleep Redefining the term "hostel", the Generator in Smithfield offers quality accommodation at affordable prices in a modern environment, with private single, twin, double and shared rooms. Go for boutique glamour at The Dean Dublin Hotel near St Stephen's Green, with bars, a rooftop restaurant and design-focused rooms. Or opt for old-school glamour at The Merrion Hotel. Irish luxury at its finest.

Do Dublin boasts two great distilleries: the Old Jameson
Distillery (opening spring 2017 after refurbishment) and the newer Teeling
Distillery in the historic Liberties area of the city. Both offer tours and tastings.
Showcasing the journey of Irish people throughout the world, EPIC Ireland is a new visitor centre on Custom House Quay boasting state-of-the-art galleries and an Irish Family History Centre.
Tucked away on St Stephen's Green is the Little Museum of Dublin, with an eccentric collection of Dublin artefacts.

EXPLORE Sandwiched between mountains and sea, Dublin is the perfect place to mix culture with a breath of fresh air. Why not go kayaking around Dalkey Island (kayaking.ie), walk the Victorian pier at Dun Laoghaire, enjoy a seafood lunch by the harbour at Howth, or explore historic Malahide Castle? You'll get the best coastal views with refreshing walks around Howth Head or up Killiney Hill.









DUBLIN

Backed by mountains and on the edge of the Irish Sea, Dublin is a place that makes the most of its striking location. Breezy and easy-going, the city is surrounded by gorgeous coastal villages that ooze charm and offer a bounty of cliff walks, castles, cool bars and *craic* (fun), while the Dublin Mountains are a walker's paradise.

All this right on the doorstep gives Dublin its edge, but if you're looking to discover the city's distinctive personality – head straight to the centre. Creative, charismatic and cultural, Dublin buzzes with energy, from the lively cobbled streets of Temple Bar to the grand galleries of the Irish Museum of Modern Art, the Hugh Lane and the National Gallery of Ireland.

Walking the city is easy. Crossing over bridges, down small cobblestone alleys and past bustling pubs, you'll find everything from secret stained glass windows on Asdill's Row by Irish artist Harry Clarke to boardwalks along the River Liffey. There's Christ Church Cathedral, dating to 1030; Dublin Castle, with a history that stretches back to the first Celtic settlement in the 1st century AD; and Kilmainham Gaol, one of the

largest unoccupied prisons in Europe, and a place with a key role in modern Irish history. Step inside Trinity College to enjoy the famous 9th century illuminated manuscript, The Book of Kells; explore a dazzling collection of prehistoric gold jewellery at the National Museum of Ireland; and get the inside track on Ireland's most famous stout at the Guinness Storehouse, with its panoramic Gravity Bar.

And if you're looking for great things

Fast-paced and cutting-edge, Dublin's food scene makes the most of the island's natural bounty in a never-ending stream of hip cafés, street food and high-grade restaurants. Feast on fresh oysters at the Temple Bar Food Market on Saturdays, enjoy the five-course tasting menu at the acclaimed Forest Avenue, or grab a bowl of hearty fish chowder at Catch 22 on South Anne Street.

With traditional pubs, such as the Stag's Head, the Palace Bar and Kehoe's; lovely green spaces along the Grand Canal and Phoenix Park; and year-round festivals, Dublin isn't just a great city to visit – it's an adventure in itself.



GOOD TO KNOW

Ireland's national museums an galleries all have free entry.

Dublin is a UNESCO City of Literature - find out more at the Dublin Writers Museum on Parnell Square

Dublin is small and walkable but Dublin Bus, the Luas tram and the DART (the railway that travels out to the north and south coasts) are great ways to get around.

WHEN TO GO: Dublin buzzes all year round. There's the St Patrick's Festival in March, great summer festivals in the city parks and on the docklands, and in autumn the Dublir Festival Season covers theatre, fashion, music and Halloween events. Come December and January, things don't go quiet, with the New Year's Festival and Temple Bar TradFest in January.

1 River Liffey Many bridges cross the River Liffey, which divides the city into north and south. 2 Coliemore Harbour, Dalkey A gorgeous little harbour on Dublin's south coast. 3 Temple Bar Mix it up in Dublin's cultural quarter with music, art, food and film. 4 The Winding Stair Perfect for a taste of modern Ireland. 5 Ha'penny Bridge Dublin's iconic bridge was constructed in May 1816

16 Ireland reland.com





With its critically acclaimed modern restaurants, Titanic sightseeing and engaging cultural scene, it's easy to see why Belfast is one of Europe's most appealing destinations. Located on the island's northeast coast, this is a city that feels cosmopolitan and international, but retains its individuality thanks to the friendly locals, atmospheric pubs and sightseeing tours with a twist.

You don't have to dig deep to uncover Belfast's charms. From red-bricked Victorian architecture to the salty docklands and the green open spaces of Belfast Castle Estate and Sir Thomas and Lady Dixon Park, there's always somewhere different to discover. Wander along the River Lagan and you'll get a taste of what Belfast must have been like in its shipbuilding heyday when the world's biggest ocean liner, Titanic, was built here.

At the Titanic Quarter, Belfast's maritime history can be enjoyed in all its glory with the SS Nomadic (the world's last surviving White Star Line ship) and HMS Caroline, a WWI light cruiser. But it's Titanic Belfast that's really the star of the show. Step inside this shimmering

titanium giant and you'll find stateof-the-art interactive displays and compelling exhibitions.

At the heart of Belfast's social and cultural action, the Cathedral Quarter is the place for an afternoon of galleries and an evening of socialising. Visit The MAC Belfast for changing exhibitions, before partaking in culture of a different sort in traditional pubs such as the John Hewitt.

Hip, innovative and accessible, Belfast's food scene is a flourishing mix of outstanding local ingredients and acclaimed chefs. To get a feel for all things foodie, visit the St George's Market on a Friday or Saturday and you'll find everything from local cheese to chocolate. Make sure to call into George's of the Market while you're here — it's famed for serving a tasty Ulster Fry, Northern Ireland's legendary breakfast.

After that, get into the Belfast culinary swing of things at the Michelinstarred Ox and Eipic, as well as more relaxed eateries including Stix & Stones and The Muddlers Club. It's this great mix of culture, tradition, food and entertainment that makes Belfast such a memorable place to visit.

OUT AND ABOUT

EAT Enjoy a taste of Ireland's seafood at the Mourne Seafood Bar. Fresh produce is brought in daily from the ports of Annalong and Kilkeel, so expect bowls of delicious mussels, oysters and seafood chowder as well as classic fish and chips – perfect with a glass of stout. A stalwart of the restaurant scene. James Street South is ideal for anyone looking for fine dining with a touch of relaxed glamour. Their "Taste of Ulster Tasting Menu" is a good way of trying out local flavours. Check out some of Northern Ireland's famous beef at **Meat** Locker, which uses Hannan's meats matured in a Himalayan salt chamber and cooked over a charcoal grill.

DRINK Step into a world of glorious Victoriana at the delightful Crown Liquor Saloon. With beautifully carved ceilings, mahogany detailing and gas lamps, it's a great place to relax with a glass of real ale or local cider. Lively traditional music kicks off on Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday and Saturday at Kelly's Cellars, built in 1720, with musicians from all over Ireland joining sessions. And if you're after an upscale cocktail in an environment that gives an Irish twist on Belle Époque glamour, then check out Aether & Echo, on Lower Garfield Street, with food, drink and music.

SLEEP Right in the middle of the Cathedral Quarter, the Merchant Hotel is set within an old 1860s bank, and boasts an opulent and elaborate interior. Adjacent to the Grand Opera House, the Europa Hotel is an excellent central choice, or try the Old Rectory Guesthouse in south Belfast — a charming B&B with award-winning breakfasts.

DO With a beautiful Palm House and Tropical Ravine, Belfast's **Botanic Gardens** are a 19th century horticultural wonderland and an oasis of green in the middle of the city. Take a tour around **City Hall**, which opened its doors back in 1906. **The Ulster Museum**, meanwhile, gives an insight into the art, history and natural science of Northern Ireland.

EXPLORE Stroll up the slopes of Cave Hill to enjoy spectacular views of Belfast from the **Belfast Castle** Estate and Cave Hill Visitor Centre. Great walking trails here will take you past caves, an ancient fort and Belfast Castle. Around 30 minutes outside the city on the shores of Belfast Lough is Carrickfergus Castle. Built in the 12th century, this impressive structure has been besieged by the Scots, Irish, English and French over the years. It's one of the best-preserved medieval castles in Ireland. Further on at Islandmagee is **The Gobbins**, a majestic cliff path originally opened in 1902 and restored and extended with bridges and tunnels.





Befort Could Befor

GOOD TO KNOW

Belfast's national museums and galleries all have free entry, but Fitanic Belfast charges an entry iee. Book ahead at busy times.

Belfast, along with the rest of Northern Ireland, is not in the Eurozone and uses pound sterlir

Belfast is very accessible from Dublin. Driving between the two cities will take around two hours. The cities are also connected by rail. Journey time from Dublin to Belfast is around two-and-ahalf hours.

WHEN TO GO: Any time is a great time to visit Belfast, out for festival fun, try the autumn season with the Belfast international Arts Festival running from October to November.

1 Belfast City Hall Public guided tours of the building's finest rooms are available. 2 HMS Caroline The last surviving ship from the Battle of Jutland in 1916. 3 Queen's University A red-bricked beauty dating back to 1849. 4 St George's Market Victorian covered market built between 1890 and 1896. 5 Titanic Belfast The world's biggest Titanic visitor attraction.

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CORK

Is Cork the best place in the world? The locals certainly think so. One thing you'll notice about this captivating city on Ireland's southwest coast is that it inspires a devotion in those who live here that no other place can rival.

Sitting proudly on an island in the middle of the River Lee, Cork is a bustling collection of atmospheric coffee shops, vibrant art galleries, unusual museums and seriously good pubs. Despite being a



OUT AND ABOUT

EAT A little outside the city itself in the nearby town of Midleton, Sage Restaurant has been garnering rave reviews, with food that is sourced from within 19km of its door. Try the vibrant and fresh flavours of Orso with an Irish take on Mediternaean fare, or nip into The Fish Wife for great fish and chips. Get a box or a bag to take away and walk down to the quays by the River Lee to enjoy them alfresco.

DRINK You can mix great craft beer with a bite to eat at the **Franciscan Well Brewery**, built on the site of an old Franciscan monastery. **Crane Lane** is a good option if you're after a bit of music, with tunes seven nights a week, or step into the higgledy-piggledy **Sin É**, which is big on atmosphere and feels like the quintessential "Irish pub".

1 Elizabeth Fort Built in 1601 on a rocky outcrop overlooking the city.
2 Blackrock Castle Observatory Enjoy science and the cosmos in a 16th century castle. 3 English Market Described by chef Rick Stein as the "best covered market in the UK and Ireland". 4 Hayfield Manor Five-star luxury hotel just outside the city centre. 5 Cobh A pretty town near Cork city with Titanic connections.

city, there's a decidedly towny feel – life is laidback, nothing is too much hassle and the city centre is easily walkable.

A good place to start is the Crawford Art Gallery, where Irish artists such as Paul Henry, Jack B Yeats and Dorothy Cross share space with the original 5th century Athenian discus-thrower, Discobolus. It's located in a building that was formerly Cork's Custom House. The Triskel Arts Centre takes culture to the next level with everything from arthouse films to intimate gigs within a beautiful converted church, while the Butter Museum offers a surprisingly interesting take on one of Cork's historic industries. And if you're looking for a unique experience, ring church bells at St Anne's Church, take in the eerie 19th century history of the Cork City Gaol, or float under the city's bridges on an urban kayaking tour.

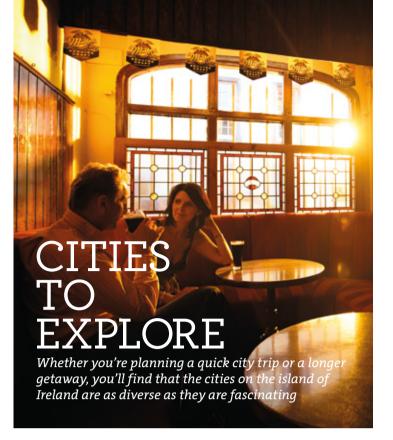
Foodies will love Cork's bustling food scene. Walk around the historic English Market and you'll find artisan cheese, smoked fish and creamy chocolate among the buzzing food stalls. Flavour, quality and innovation drive the city's vibrant restaurant scene, with favourites such as Café Paradiso and Farmgate Café sitting alongside new hotspots of Electric, Salt, Miyazaki and Elbow Lane. When it comes to drinks, you can expect the same level of quality that fires up the food scene. Cork's local brews are big right now, and Eight Degrees Brewing, Rising Sons and Elbow Lane are among the names to look out for; not forgetting Ireland's alternative stout, Murphy's.

Small, tasty, creative... once you've sampled Cork, you'll probably start agreeing with the locals.

SLEEP Just outside the city, the award-winning **Hayfield Manor** is a haven of elegance, calm and five-star luxury. **The Clarion** overlooks the River Lee and is a good, modern choice with swimming pool and spa. Or try the **Maldron Hotel**'s spacious and comfortable rooms in a central location.

DO The compelling tour of early 17th century **Elizabeth Fort** off Barrack Street – it's been used as an army barracks, a female prison and a police station over the centuries. Just 2km from the centre you'll find **Blackrock Castle Observatory** on the banks of the River Lee, or get an art fix at the elegant **Lewis Glucksman Gallery**.

EXPLORE One of the most popular daytrips from Cork is to **Cobh**, a beautiful seaport town and Titanic's last port of call – find out more at the **Titanic Experience Cobh**. Kiss the Blarney Stone at **Blarney Castle**, or head out to **Spike Island**. Known as "Ireland's Alcatraz", this island prison was used to house convicts before penal transportation.



ARMAGH Ireland's eccles to Armagh, pro

Ireland's ecclesiastical capital? Welcome to Armagh, proud possessor of two cathedrals, both dedicated to St Patrick. A compact city, Armagh is perfect for exploring on foot. Wander through the gracious tree-lined Georgian Mall (once a rather scandalous racecourse); watch out for the 22 quirky bronze gargoyles

and angels hidden around the city; or try stargazing at the planetarium. With a great collection of restaurants including the Moody Boar and Uluru Bistro, Armagh is a city to be savoured.



DERRY~ LONDONDERRY

Ancient city walls, great pubs and a rich cultural scene are making Derry~Londonderry one of the most exciting cities to visit on the island of Ireland. The gorgeous natural setting is complemented by structures that really set Derry~Londonderry apart: the Peace

Bridge, the fully intact city walls and the Edwardian Guildhall. After that, enjoy the Bogside murals, the award-winning Tower Museum and traditional pubs, such as Peadar O'Donnell's.

GALWAY

The spirit of Ireland's west coast is very much present in this vibrant seaside city. Galway is never far from a festival (arts, film, horse racing and oysters are all celebrated in quick succession during the summer months). This, combined with its compact streets and colourful shop fronts, gives the feeling of a rolling

street party. The super Galway City Museum, thriving food scene (Galway has two Michelin-starred restaurants, Aniar and Loam) and the scenic coastal suburb of Salthill seal the deal.



KILKENNY

Located in Ireland's Ancient East,
Kilkenny mixes nightlife, great food and
culture to perfection. This city will wow
you with medieval showpieces by day,
and keep you entertained in traditional
pubs by night. Walk the Medieval Mile
and be catapulted back centuries with
Tudor inns, old merchant townhouses.

hidden alleys and historic big hitters such as Kilkenny Castle and St Canice's Cathedral. The city also boasts great craft shops, design studios and the Smithwick's Experience Kilkenny.



LIMERICK

Limerick is a place with culture at its heart. Overlooking the River Shannon, this charismatic medieval city is known for its festivals, galleries and museums. There's the faded Georgian elegance of the Newtown Pery district; the Hunt Museum, with its collection of precious art and antiquities; and the Frank

McCourt Museum, based in the author's old school. Watch rugby at Thomond Park, try local food at the Milk Market's weekend market and explore the 13th century King John's Castle.



LISBURN

In terms of heritage, Lisburn goes way back, as you'll discover when you wander down the 18th century streetscapes to the Irish Linen Centre and Lisburn Museum. The city was once a large centre of linen production during the 19th century, but today it keeps things lively with a dynamic arts scene, great restaurants

and excellent shops. It's also just a short drive from the city to Hillsborough Castle and Gardens, the official residence of Her Majesty the Queen in Northern Ireland.



NEWRY

Scratch the surface of this modern urban hub and you'll discover a history that stretches over 850 years. Bagenal's Castle, a 16th century fortified house with an adjoining 19th century warehouse, is a good place to start. It now houses the Newry and Mourne Museum, which traces the city's story back to prehistory.

Afterwards, walk or cycle along the Newry Canal Path – a towpath that was used by the horses pulling the canal boats – and relax in the buzzing bars, clubs and restaurants.



WATERFORD

The atmosphere in Waterford is more small town than big city, but you'll find lots to do in this mini medieval metropolis in Ireland's Ancient East. Founded by the Vikings, Waterford's history is covered in the Viking Triangle of museums, with the Medieval Museum, Bishop's Palace and Reginald's Tower.

See beautiful cut glass at the House of Waterford Crystal, taste a freshly baked "blaa" (bread roll) at the Granary Café or "walk the quay" – a mile-long stretch from Rice Bridge to the plaza.







GIANT'S CAUSEWAY

County Antrim

3. It's a moment of fantasy, the Giant's Causeway – the kind of place you can't quite believe exists. Here, 60-million-year-old volcanic activity and the pounding of the ocean have created 40,000 hexagonal basalt columns that tumble down to the water. Now a UNESCO World Heritage Site, the Causeway is perched on the edge of the famous Causeway Coastal Route and is a place where the facts about its formation are as compelling as the legends that surround it. Walk the coastal paths, enjoy the views from the surrounding cliffs and step inside the award-winning visitor centre to find out more about this geological wonder. For a view with a difference, take to the water with a boat trip around the stunning coastline with Portrush Sea Tours.

POWERSCOURT

County Wicklow

4. The jewel in County Wicklow's crown, Powerscourt Estate contains what are widely considered to be among the most majestic gardens in the world. When the house was completed in 1741 it was praised as possessing the "massive dignity of a great Italian Renaissance villa", but it is the gardens that really make this place special. Lush, playful and enchanting, you can easily spend hours wandering from the pretty Japanese gardens to the wooded valleys and back to the quirky pet cemetery, which sits in a quiet part of the estate surrounded by roses and rhododendrons in summer. And if you're hungry after all that walking, feast on cakes, salads and soups served up in the Avoca Restaurant and Café.



BEARA PENINSULA

County Cork

5. In Ireland, the further west you go, the more rugged the landscape becomes. And nowhere is this more evident than on the Beara Peninsula, which juts out into the Atlantic Ocean and feels almost as wild as the island can get. This is a landscape of isolated forests, of vibrant island communities, of dramatic cliffs overlooking the Atlantic. Drive the circular 137km Beara Way route, or take to two wheels on the Beara Cycling Route, and you'll discover everything from the colourful villages of Allihies and Eyeries to an island garden called Garinish – filled with lush, exotic plants. Hidden inland is the Healy Pass, a winding mountain road that will take your breath away. His one of a kind



THE CLIFFS OF MOHER AND THE BURREN

County Clare

1|2. Soaring to 214 metres and stretching down the craggy western coastline for over 8km, the Cliffs of Moher bring a real wow factor to the Wild Atlantic Way. This is the kind of place that makes the heart beat faster – sea birds swirl above, waves surge below and viewing platforms boast incredible panoramas. The cliffs sit on the edge of one of Ireland's most unusual geological landscapes, known as the Burren. This vast, moon-like karst limestone plateau spreads down to the ocean, with arcticalpine plants, orchids and patches of grassland. Take a walking trail, explore the history and relax in one of the wonderful surrounding towns and villages.



THE GOBBINS

County Antrim

6. Ancient cliffs, sparkling sea and a walk full of excitement: this is The Gobbins, a 100-year-old revitalised cliff path in County Antrim. The trail clings to the edge of Islandmagee – a small peninsula just a short drive north of Belfast – and it's about as close to walking on water as you can get on the island of Ireland. Designed in 1902 by railway engineer Berkeley Deane-Wise, The Gobbins closed to the public in 1954, but was restored and rebooted in 2015 to great acclaim. Strap on a helmet and join the guided tour and you'll be taken over dramatic bridges, down steps that snake around the edges of cliffs and through smugglers' caves. It's a perfect introduction to the glories that lie ahead on the Causeway Coastal Route.



SKELLIG MICHAEL

County Kerry

7. There are few words to describe the sheer magnificence of Skellig Michael, lying 11.7km off the coast of County Kerry. It was here, between the 6th and 8th centuries, that devout Christian monks sought extreme isolation, and they certainly found it. This is an extraordinary place, described by writer George Bernard Shaw as "part of our dream world". Walk up 600 stone steps and you'll encounter a small monastery, made up of six dry-stone beehive huts and two oratories. More recently, Skellig Michael hit the big screen with a starring role in Star Wars: The Force Awakens. Numbers allowed on the island are limited so book ahead. or opt for a boat trip around the island instead. Either way, it's an unforgettable experience.

CONNEMARA

County Galway

8. Oscar Wilde was certainly onto something when he called Connemara "a savage beauty". Tobacco-coloured hills, navy lakes, and towns and villages that thrum with traditional music – this is Ireland unplugged. Famous for its raw, untamed landscapes and glorious white-sand beaches, Connemara has been a chosen destination for artists, poets and thinkers through the ages. Covering parts of Galway and edging into Mayo, this unique area covers everything from the breathtaking Killary Fjord to the ancient bogs around Roundstone. Ride a Connemara pony, walk one of the Connemara National Park trails, enjoy a pint in a traditional pub or take a boat trip to the island of Inishbofin.





ST PATRICK'S DAY

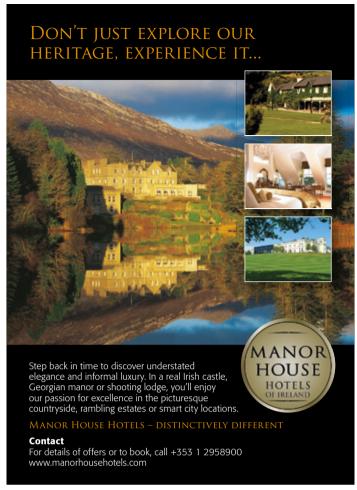
9. Get the party started: St Patrick's
Day in Ireland is one of the highlights
of the festival calendar, with a
fantastic array of events taking
place all over the island. In Dublin,
the big day is a great excuse for a
four-day festival (16-19 March 2017)
with everything from street theatre
to céilís (traditional dances); and
Derry~Londonderry's St Patrick's
Day Spring Carnival is a cheerful
celebration with events throughout
the city. There are parades in
Downpatrick and Armagh, while
what's thought to be the oldest
St Patrick's Day parade in Ireland
takes place in Wexford town. And
wherever you go, expect a flurry of
green, as well as traditional song,
dance, and that great celebratory

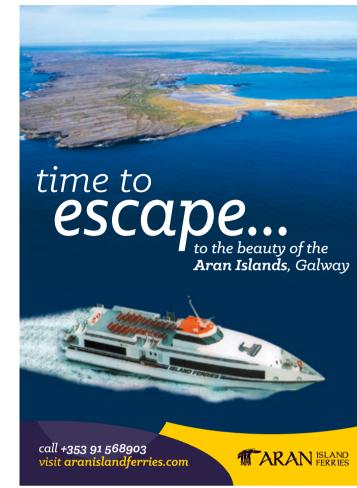


GREAT COUNTRY HOUSES

10. If you want to experience a touch of aristocratic glamour on the island of Ireland, step inside a great country house. Here you can experience a bygone age, when lavish interiors, grand architecture and genteel gardens acted as a backdrop to sumptuous lifestyles. Be wowed by the setting of Bantry House, County Cork, which looks out onto the blues of Bantry Bay. Or explore Russborough House (pictured), with its impressive art collection, in the wilds of County Wicklow. Take in the magnificence of 18th century Florence Court or go trout and salmon fishing in the grounds of Colebrooke Estate, both in County Fermanagh. And if it's a great story you're after, visit Belvedere House in County Westmeath. The "jealous wall" here is a testament to one of the most bitter love triangles in history.













Prehistoric passage tombs haunted by the past; stunning monastic sites that once drew scholars from all over Europe; dramatic castles rocked by bloody sieges. This is Ireland's Ancient East, a vast playground of fascinating history, compelling characters and quiet green pastures. Comprising 17 counties east of the River Shannon and tracing 5,000 years, here the past comes alive with every step you take, from gracious mansions set in lush valleys to bogs that harbour secrets of Iron Age Ireland. Trace Ireland's maritime history along a coastline with Titanic connections, walk with the Vikings through one of Ireland's oldest cities and encounter the world of Stone Age man. A trip around Ireland's Ancient East brings history to life. It's time to peel back the centuries...







GETTING GOING

With so much at your fingertips in Ireland's Ancient East, it can be hard to know where to start. But there is one thing that links these amazing places, from the medieval city of Kilkenny to the mystical Hill of Tara, and that's the stories... Discover the tales behind these landmarks and you'll unearth the hopes and dreams that fuelled the lives of high kings and heroes, saints and scholars. Here are some ideas to get you going.

ANCIENT IRELAND

History inhabits almost every corner of County Meath, an apt place to kickstart your journey. Here, over 5,000 years ago, Neolithic people cultivated land and created farms, but what they left behind are among the world's most astonishing monuments: curving softly from the green fields of the Boyne Valley is the passage tomb of Newgrange, dating back to 3200BC. Enter the Brú na Boinne Visitor Centre and it's your key to 5,000-year-old ingenuity at Newgrange – a UNESCO World Heritage Site – the passage tomb erected to line up with the first rays of sunlight on the winter solstice, and the equally fascinating burial mounds of Knowth and Dowth. County Meath also boasts the Loughcrew Cairns (4000BC), which according to legend were made when a witch dropped an apronful of rocks as she leapt across mountains. Its 30 or so tombs make up what's said to be the world's oldest cemetery.

HIGH KINGS AND HEROES

Everyone loves a good story, and in Ireland's Ancient East you can delve into some of the most fascinating around. Ireland's ancient kings ruled the landscape 2,000 years ago, and keeping the gods happy was a driving force in their lives, with sacrificial deaths a way of appeasing the deities. The history of these kings is wrapped in fabulous legends, such as the story of King Laoghaire who was buried upright on the Hill of Tara, the ancient capital of Ireland, with a sword in hand to keep his enemies at bay – even in death. Around 142 kings reigned at Tara, crowned on a coronation stone called the Lia Fail, which is still standing today.

The longest Viking ship ever recorded was built from oak beams from Glendalough in 1042, but this idyllic



This glorious site is also known as St Patrick's Rock. 2 Ardmore Cathedral, County Waterford Founded by St Declan in the 5th century. 3 River Barrow, County Carlow A picturesque and quiet spot along the riverbank.
4 Clonmacnoise, County Offaly This monastic site was established by St Ciarán in 544. 5 Newgrange, County Meath An ancient burial mound. 6 Jerpoint Park, County Kilkenny A great example of a 12th century medieval town.

Wicklow valley of the two lakes is best known for its early medieval monastic site. Although raided by marauding Norsemen at times, the remarkable cathedral, round tower and stone huts testify to the life of worship enjoyed here since the 6th century, when St Kevin founded the site. Similar serenity can be found at Jerpoint Abbey, a 12th century church that was once the spiritual heart of a now vanished Irish province, the Kingdom of Osraige. In a time of saints and scholars in Ireland, women made their mark in County Kildare at the religious settlement now occupied by St Brigid's Cathedral. The resident abbess held so much sway that even the bishop of the region used to bow to her will when visiting.

ANCIENT HIGHWAY

In a similarly sacred setting, this time on the banks of the mighty River Shannon in Offaly, is Clonmacnoise. Complete with round towers, churches, cathedral and high crosses, this Early Christian site was once one of Europe's most important centres of learning and religion. >



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Part of Clonmacnoise's importance lies in its strategic position – at the heart of the island's ancient crossroads on the Shannon, a watery highway that has been used as far back as the Iron Age. Today, it's all about pleasure, stunning unspoilt waters, boating and watersports, as well as the great towns and villages along the banks.

TRACING THE VIKINGS

Bearing down on an unsuspecting Ireland from Scandinavia, hordes of Vikings first arrived in the 8th century. They looted Ireland's monasteries, battled kings and established cities that still exist today. Waterford, which dates back to 914, is one of the oldest cities in Ireland, and one of the most important for Viking history. Take a walking tour of the Viking Triangle and step inside the trio of museums called Waterford Treasures to discover all about the Vikings' effect on the city.

CASTLES AND CONQUESTS

Castles don't come more fairy tale than the spellbinding Rock of Cashel in County Tipperary. Traditionally the seat of the Kings of Munster and visited by St Patrick in the 5th century, this remarkable place has one of the most impressive collections of medieval architecture and Celtic art in Europe. Over at the Rock of Dunamase in County Laois, you'll find another storybook sight. If it looks like an unlikely wedding present, that's because it is. History tells of how in 1170, the castle of Dunamase once formed part of the dowry of Aoife Rua, daughter of the King of Leinster. Equally impressive is Kilkenny Castle, the pride of the Medieval Mile and an ode to the glory days of epic architecture. As you stand in the beautifully kept grounds and look up at the castle, it's hard to imagine that it was nearly brought to its knees during a siege in 1922.

BIG HOUSES AND HARD TIMES

Hidden within quiet valleys are some of the island's most spectacular reminders of indulgent aristocratic life, including Russborough House in County Wicklow, Beaulieu House in County Louth, and Curraghmore House in County Waterford. One of the most beautiful, though, is Castletown House in County Kildare — a Palladian Manor built by William Conolly, once the wealthiest commoner in Ireland. While in County Westmeath, seek out

7 Glendalough, County Wicklow Situated within the wilds of Wicklow National Park. 8 Kilkenny Castle, Kilkenny city With a majestic location at the entrance to the city.

the scars of a spiteful family feud amid the tranquil surrounds of Belvedere House. In stark contrast, life was very different for poverty-stricken locals. You can find out more about their experiences at the Dunbrody Famine Ship and Irish Emigrant Experience in New Ross, County Wexford.

MARITIME GATEWAY

Ireland's relationship with the sea stretches back millennia. At the pretty port town of Cobh in County Cork, you'll find rows of multicoloured houses and the heartbreaking stories of emigrants. It's thought that over 2.5 million people departed from here between 1848 and 1950. Cobh was also the last port of call for the Titanic. Take a ticket in the name of a real-life passenger at the Titanic Experience to see how you would have fared on that tragic night.

SPORT OF KINGS

From 3rd century kings racing their chariots to the lush landscapes ready for a countryside canter or a race for the finish line, nowhere is our love affair with the steed more clearly seen than County Kildare. Witness the spectacle of long lines of thoroughbreds training across miles of flat, rich plains at the Curragh, or visit the Curragh Military Museum and see how these grounds, in their time, were used for the Jacobites and their war horses in 1686, as well as British soldiers during WWI. Simply incredible. &

ALONG THE WAY

TAKE A TOUR: One of the best ways to experience Ireland's Ancient East is with a tour guide. You'll find fantastic tour guides with great stories everywhere from heritage towns such as Birr in County Offaly to mansions like Curraghmore, County Waterford.

EXPERIENCE: Ireland's Ancient East offers excellent festivals from beach horse racing at Laytown (Sept) to the entertaining Waterford Spraoi International Street Arts Festival (July).

ENJOY: Sample a sup of ale at the Smithwick's Experience Kilkenny, shop for great bargains at Kildare Village Designer Outlet and discover craft from Waterford Crystal to Nicholas Mosse Pottery.



10 GREAT EXPERIENCES

HOOK LIGHTHOUSE

This County Wexford lighthouse boasts stunning views and is the oldest operational lighthouse in the world.

CAVAN BURREN PARK

Walk through the world of prehistoric man in County Cavan – it's one of Ireland's most unusual landscapes.

CORLEA TRACKWAY

Step back to 148BC with this Iron Age bog road in County Longford – the biggest of any found in Europe.

ATHLONE CASTLE

Take a journey into the history of this riverside town in County Westmeath, where a brutal siege raged in 1691.

LOUGH GUR

At Lough Gur in Limerick, a hoard of Viking spoils awaits. Iron knives, jet bracelets, spindle whorls and a store of Danish silver reward the visitor at this tranquil lake, along with the silent stone forts of Carraig Aille.

ST PETER'S CHURCH DROGHEDA

After its owner was hung, drawn and quartered in 1681, St Oliver Plunkett's head now sits in a vast gilded shrine in St Peter's Church, County Louth.

BATTLE OF THE BOYNE

Head to County Meath to see where 60,000 troops fought in one of Ireland's most defining battles in 1690.

CARRICKMACROSS FAMINE WORKHOUSE

Built in the 1840s, this County Monaghan Famine workhouse is one of only a few left in Ireland.

KENNEDY HOMESTEAD

The visitor centre in County Wexford showcases an exhibit examining the legacy of five generations of the famous Kennedy family.

CARLINGFORD

Take a medieval walking tour of this pretty County Louth town, with its castle, friary and 15th century mint.

For more information on ways to explore Ireland's Ancient East, visit Ireland.com





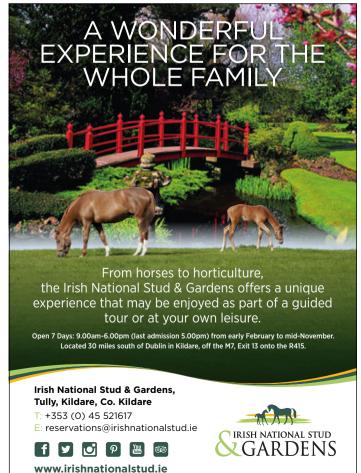


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charming little villages – the Causeway Coastal Route delivers an incredible amount of beauty within just 314km. Starting in the vibrant city of Belfast and finishing in Derry~Londonderry (or the other way around if you prefer), the route is all about taking your time and savouring the sights, sounds and flavours of this spellbinding coastline. See show-stopping panoramas from the craggy heights of Torr Head, experience the warmth of local people in the villages of the Glens of Antrim, and feel the joy of sipping a whiskey in The Bushmills Inn after a day of outdoor adventure. If you're looking for memorable experiences, you're certainly

Frequently cited as one of the best touring routes in the world, it's no surprise that the Causeway Coastal Route is a genuine joy to drive. Each weave and turn of the car brings another gorgeous view, with the road hugging the coastline so closely at times that you can taste the sea salt in the air. And it's not just the views that impress, either. Part of this route's allure is that so many great places are packed into a relatively short stretch of coastline. There's Carrickfergus, with its dramatic 12th century castle; there's The Gobbins, a restored 100-year-old cliff path that brings you through tunnels and over chasms; there's Glenarm Castle, home to the Earls of Antrim for 400 years; and there's the fairytale

But nothing can quite compare with the

Dramatic cliff-top castles, vast white-sand beaches, going to get them here.

beauty of Glenariff Forest Park.

Carrick-a-Rede rope bridge. A bridge has been here



from the mainland to Carrick-a-Rede Island. Crossing is an exhilarating experience with the bridge bouncing with every step you take and the Atlantic Ocean crashing against the shore below.

If you're expecting downtime after that, think again. Next up is the UNESCO World Heritage Site of the Giant's Causeway, just a short distance away. From the Visitor Centre perched at the top of a hill, a winding road leads down to the main attraction: 40,000 hexagonal stone columns that blanket the landscape and disappear into the ocean like stepping stones to a lost world. According to science, intense volcanic activity 60 million years ago created this whimsical landscape, but the local legend of warring giants is a lot more fun.

It's typical of the Causeway Coastal Route that just when you think you've seen it all, more keeps coming. Take it slow, savour it all and recharge your batteries in Bushmills village. Small, quaint and friendly, the village boasts lovely restaurants, such as The French Rooms, as well as the charming Bushmills Inn and the famous Old Bushmills whiskey distillery.

As you head along the coast, Dunluce Castle keeps drama high on the agenda. Like something out of a film, this ruined 14th century castle sits on a stark, rocky headland. And

if it looks like it's about to topple into the sea, that may be because it once did. According to local tales, on a dark and stormy night in the 17th century, parts of the kitchen actually collapsed into the Atlantic pounding the shore below.

After all the cliff-edge cragginess, it's time to relax on the long, wide sands of Portstewart Strand. You'll find towering dunes behind the beach – some of the tallest in Ireland – with the waters of the North Atlantic lapping at the shore. More beauty awaits at Downhill Beach – but make sure to look up: on the edge of a cliff here sits Mussenden Temple built in 1785, a replica of the Temple of Vesta in Rome. As views go, it doesn't get much better – a lasting memory of what truly is one of the world's great road trips.



HIDDEN GEMS ALONG THE WAY

ENJOY THE ELEGANT SURROUNDINGS AT.

Ballygally Castle Hotel, Ballygally A stunning 17th century castle overlooking the golden sands of Ballygally Bay with uninterrupted views towards Scotland.

LISTEN TO MUSIC AT...

The House of McDonnell, Ballycastle Park up the car and settle in for a Friday night of great traditional Irish music in this lovely old pub, founded in 1766.

ENJOY SOME IRISH STEW AT...

The Red Door Tea Room, Ballintoy This traditional Irish cottage tearoom in the charming village of Ballintoy is a proper delight. As well as Irish stew, you'll find fish chowder and local mackerel.

TAKE TO THE WATER AT...

Portrush

Portrush Sea Tours offers everything from one-hour journeys to full-day boat charters to some of the big sights and tiny islands of the Causeway Coast.

ENJOY ONE OF THE WORLD'S GREAT TRAIN JOURNEYS FROM...

Coleraine to Derry~Londonderry Described by travel journalist Michael Palin as "one of the most beautiful train journeys in the world".

1 Ballintoy Harbour, County Antrim A small shallow harbour that opens into the Atlantic. 2 Portstewart Strand, County Antrim Enjoy miles of golden sand on this stunning beach. 3 Mussenden Temple, County Londonderry Dramatic temple overlooking Downhill Beach. 4 Carrick-a-Rede rope bridge, County Antrim Fishermen first used a bridge here in 1755. 5 Glenariff, County Antrim Bluebells in spring. 6 Giant's Causeway, County Antrim UNESCO World Heritage Site. 7 Ballygally Castle Hotel, County







NEED

KNOW

DISTANCE

314 km.

CAUSEWAY COASTAL ROUTE

You could drive it all in a day, but give

yourself at least 2-3 days, if not longer.

Yes, there are buses and trains along the

way. Find out more at: translink.co.uk or

Belfast International Airport; George Best

journeyplanner.transportforireland.ie

Belfast City; City of Derry Airport.

Distances are in miles in Northern

Ireland; speed limits range from

70mph/112km on motorways.

30mph/48km in built up areas to

PUBLIC TRANSPORT

NEAREST AIRPORT

IMPORTANT INFO

30 Ireland

TO

since 1755 and was used by salmon fishermen to get

a ireland.com Ireland 31



Backed by the Mourne Mountains and weaving along Carlingford Lough and the Irish Sea, the Mourne Coastal Drive has all you could want from a road trip: scenery, adventure and charm.

Starting off in Newry, the route weaves through Warrenpoint, along the northern shore of the ever-pretty Carlingford Lough. This glacial fjord has seen a lot over the years, including Viking invasions and Norman conquests. It's also an outdoor wonderland, with everything from golf at the Warrenpoint Golf Club to scenic boat tours.

Tracking the road along the shore, you'll reach the village of Rostrevor at the foot of Slieve Martin Mountain. Stunning walking trails suitable for all abilities run through Kilbroney Park and Rostrevor Forest, while Rostrevor is also considered the best place for mountain biking on the island of Ireland.

If perfecting culinary skills is more up your street, head along to the Mourne Seafood Cookery School in Kilkeel. Overlooking the water, the cookery school specialises in local dishes.

As you pass through the harbour village of Annalong, the scenery revs up with the moody blue tones of the Mourne Mountains. The Mournes were an inspiration for author CS Lewis's Narnia – see them in winter and you'll realise why.

Onwards to the scenic seaside town of Newcastle. A great place to end your trip with a walk along beaches, through stunning mountain trails or a round of golf at the world-famous Royal County Down course.

EAT Enjoy delicious locally sourced produce at Maisons in Rostrevor. SLEEP Slieve Donard Resort in Newcastle makes a great base for exploring the area. ENJOY Take a Bay and Harbour Cruise or a Castle Cruise of Carlingford Lough with Carlingford Lough Cruises.







If you're looking for fantasy landscapes, mysterious woodlands and beautiful harbours, you've come to the right place. Northern Ireland is Game of Thrones* territory. This is real-world Westeros.

The journey begins at Tollymore Forest Park in County Down, better known as the Haunted Forest, a beautiful woodland of follies, grottos and caves, all overlooked by the Mourne Mountains. Still in Down, you might recognise 800-year-old Inch Abbey as the backdrop for some compelling moments from the series, and Castle Ward on the shores of Strangford Lough adds a serious "wow" factor. Game of Thrones' spent eight weeks here, building the set of Winterfell and today Winterfell Tours offers a Game of Thrones' experience: medieval banquets, face-to-face meetings with direwolves and a location tour.

Instantly recognisable as the Kingsroad from Game of Thrones® is the atmospheric Dark Hedges in County Antrim. It's a beautiful drive to get there through Belfast and with a detour through the Shillanavogy Valley (the Dothraki Grasslands). Turn off the quiet country road and there it is... a magical avenue of beech trees. Pictures taken, it's back on the road to Ballintoy Harbour, near the Giant's Causeway. You may recognise this stone harbour as Lordsport Harbour in Pyke, one of the Iron Islands.

Joining up with the Causeway Coastal Route is Larrybane, AKA the Stormlands, with views out towards Sheep Island. Dragonstone is next – or rather Downhill Beach. This golden stretch of sand is a suitably dramatic ending.



"As you pass

through the

harbour village

scenery revs up

with the moody

blue tones of

the Mourne

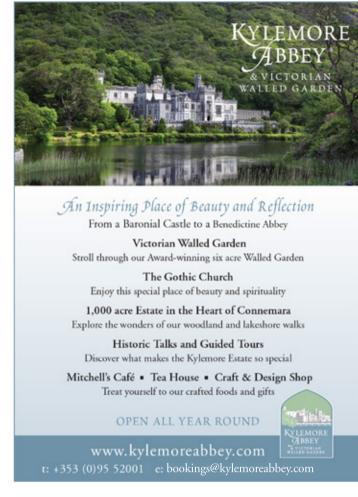
Mountains'

of Annalong, the



8 Mourne Mountains, County Down Dramatic peaks, gentle slopes and crystalline lakes. 9 The Dark Hedges, County Antrim A romantic avenue of beech trees. 10 Inch Abbey, County Down Atmospheric monastic site. 11 Quintin Castle, County Down Built by John Ad Course in 1194













Welcome to one of the world's most captivatina coastlines – the Wild Atlantic Way. Pól O'Conghaile looks at six different ways to travel this magnificent coastal highway

Stretching 2,500km along the coast of western Ireland from Malin Head in County Donegal to Kinsale, County Cork, the Wild Atlantic Way is a sensational journey of soaring cliffs and buzzing towns, of traditional culture and epic bays. It's a route that can be driven end to end or dipped in to as the mood strikes. And did we mention that it's the longest defined coastal driving route in the world? At that length, driving the Wild Atlantic Way top to toe is a once-in-a-lifetime experience. But you can also take it in smaller sections, each of which offers majestic sights and charming villages where you can listen to traditional music, eat seafood fresh from the boats and relax on deserted beaches.

Cliffs of Moher

1,500 miles/2,500km

Up to 20 days

NORTHERN HEADLANDS

Malin Head Donegal town

The northwest is one of the island's most unexplored areas, a rugged and remote coastline way off the beaten track. County Donegal is home to some of Europe's highest sea cliffs at Slieve League and one of Ireland's most spectacular lighthouses at Fanad Head. You might see a basking shark, learn a few words of Irish in the Gaeltacht, or even get to witness a dazzling display of the Northern Lights. Make no mistake, this is Ireland's Northern Star!

Treat yourself to the acclaimed six-course dinner at the award-winning Mill Restaurant in Dunfanaghy, or head to The Village Tavern, just outside Donegal, for equally great seafood dishes and craft beers in a pub that dates back to 1798.

Take in great views from **Malin Head** – Ireland's most northerly point; explore Grianán of Aileach, a stone fort from 1700BC; and walk through Glenveagh National Park.

Learn to play the bodhrán (a type of Irish drum) at Oideas Gael language and cultural centre in the beautiful surrounds of Gleann Cholm Cille.

Belfast International Airport; George Best Belfast City Airport; City of Derry Airport; Donegal Airport (flights from Dublin and Glasgow).

THE SURF COAST

Donegal town Erris, County Mayo

Stretching from southern Donegal to the wilds of western Mayo, Ireland's Surf Coast witnesses epic winter waves, but you don't have to be into surfing to get your kicks here. The landscapes offer everything from Céide Fields – a 6,000-year-old monument of stone-walled fields, houses and tombs - to Ben Bulben, County Sligo's dramatic tabletop mountain. Little wonder Irish poet WB Yeats dubbed Sligo and Leitrim his "Land of Heart's Desire".

TASTE THIS

Head to the delightful Lyons Department Store in Sligo town for cakes, bakes and gourmet sandwiches at the Lyons Café. Or try some steamed mussels in the charming **Beach Bar** in Aughris, County Sligo, set within a traditional Irish thatched cottage.

Glencar Waterfall, County Leitrim – it's so pretty WB Yeats immortalised it in a poem; **Lissadell House** in County Sligo, a beautiful Greek-Revival house in lovely countryside: **Ballycroy National Park** in County Mayo. with blanket bog and mountain terrain.

TRY THIS

Round up sheep with **Atlantic Sheep Dogs** (+353 85 7402836), where you can meet and spend time with clever Irish sheep dogs.

NEAREST AIRPORT

Ireland West Knock Airport

THE BAY COAST

Erris, County Mayo OGalway Bay

Whether you're a walker, cyclist or motorist, the Bay Coast beckons. This is where you'll find Galway city, home to some of Ireland's most vibrant festivals and food, and Achill Island, with its beautiful beaches. The Bay Coast also cradles Connemara, a stunning sprawl of mountains, loughs, islands and bogs that makes an impression whatever the weather. At the heart of it all is Croagh Patrick, overlooking islandstudded Clew Bay. The views are fit for a saint.

Mixing mountain and sea views, the thatched cottage of **Cronin's Sheebeen** overlooks Clew Bay and serves great pub food. Head to **Kai** in Galway city for delicious dishes using local ingredients.

Kylemore Abbey is famed for its beauty and romantic tales; **Slievemore** Deserted Village on Achill Island, County Mayo, boasts remains of almost 100 abandoned stone cottages; or head out to Inishbofin to enjoy coral beaches, a 17th century fort and looped walks (ferries leave from Cleggan).

TRY THIS

Take to the seas for a half-day boat trip with **Clew Bay Angling** (clewbayangling.com), catch some mackerel and cook it on board. NEAREST AIRPORT

Ireland West Knock Airport.





THE CLIFF COAST

Galway Tralee, County Kerry

Prepare for some incredible sights here: the Cliffs of Moher and the Burren are highlights but Ireland's Cliff Coast has lots of off-the-beaten-track moments. too. Detour onto Loop Head for sky-high sea arches, crashing waves and an ends-of-the-earth lighthouse or enjoy one of County Clare's hopping traditional music pubs. For the bucket list, take a trip to the Aran Islands, see the Burren in wildflower season (May) or book a round of golf at Ballybunion.

The **Wild Honey Inn** on the edge of Lisdoonvarna village dates from 1860 and serves modern Irish bistro fare. With great views of Liscannor Bay, Barrtrá Seafood Restaurant within a traditional white cottage is a top spot for local seafood.

The **Cliffs of Moher** are a must-see – try walking to them along the cliff path (8km) from Doolin; the Flying Boat & Maritime Museum in Foynes, Limerick, tells the story of the golden age of transatlantic travel; or relax on Fanore Beach, a stretch of butter-coloured sand in the Burren.

Jump on the **Dolphin Discovery** in Kilrush (discoverdolphins.ie) to see one of the island's only resident group of bottlenose dolphins.

NEAREST AIRPORT

Shannon International Airport.

1 Malin Head, County Donegal Where dramatic views are an everyday occurrence. 2 Broadhaven Lighthouse County Mayo On the northeastern tip of the Mullet Peninsula. Dog's Bay Beach, County Galway A mile-long sandy white heach 4 The Cliffs of Moher, County Clare The cliffs soar to 214 metres

"I have been photographing the Wild Atlantic Way for over 20 years now and I still find it exciting to go out there, explore and shoot. I think that says it all"

Carsten Krieger Photographer This is the Burren

ireland.com 34 Ireland Ireland 35



5 Valentia Island, County Kerry A stunning island linked to the mainland by bridge. 6 Kinsale, County Cork One of Ireland's nrettiest coastal towns is famed for

"I love the Wild Atlantic Way because it taps into the primal human desires to explore, to discover, to embark on a voyage, and to see for yourself what lies around the next corner"

John McKenna Author and food writer

SOUTHERN PENINSULAS

Tralee, County Kerry Dallydehob, County Cork

From the Ring of Kerry to Ireland's most southwesterly point at Mizen Head, this sensational stretch of the Wild Atlantic Way sees five craggy peninsulas jut out into the ocean from Kerry and Cork. These peninsulas are as far west as Ireland gets, stashing away the beautiful Bere Island, Kerry's newly-accredited International Dark Sky Reserve and, of course, the iconic Skellig Islands, now famous all over the world as a Star Wars: The Force Awakens location.

Enjoy delicious seafood at the super-friendly Moorings Restaurant in Portmagee, County Kerry, and taste West Cork's fabulous flavours at Manning's deli, just outside Bantry.

Skellig Michael is an ancient monastic outpost off the mainland in the Atlantic Ocean (booking ahead advised); see beautiful Bantry House, with its views of Bantry Bay, and Gougane Barra, a delightful monastic retreat set in the lush green landscapes of West Cork.

TRY THIS

Cross the iconic Mizen Head Bridge with spellbinding views and perfect photo opportunities.

NEAREST AIRPORT

Kerry Airport, Cork International Airport

Start or finish your Wild Atlantic Way on the Haven Coast, and you're in for an unforgettable treat. Meandering from the lovely seaside town of Ballydehob to the Old Head of Kinsale, taking in offshore islands, tropical gardens and refreshing sea-kayaking, it's the route in a nutshell. Watch whales on a trip out into the Atlantic, trace centuries of history, and taste the meats, fish and cheeses that have made West Cork a fabled foodie destination. It's all here for the taking.

TASTE THIS

Clonakilty is famous for its black pudding, but it's also got high-grade seafood in lovely pubs such as An Súgán. For more great flavours of the sea, try the acclaimed Fishy Fishy Café in pretty Kinsale.

A visit to either **Cape Clear Island** or **Sherkin Island**, off the coast of Cork; a round of golf at the Old Head of Kinsale Golf Links; or a view from on high at the Galley Head Lighthouse, built in 1875 near Rosscarbery, West Cork.

TRY THIS

Go whale watching off the coast of West Cork – it's reputed to be the best place in Europe to spot minke whales, humpback whales and basking sharks (whalewatchwestcork.com).

NEAREST AIRPORT

Cork International Airport

THE HAVEN COAST Ballydehob, County Cork **②** Kinsale, County Cork

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GREAT IRISH FOOD AND THE LARGEST

SELECTION OF LOCAL IRISH CRAFT BEERS

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VEGETABLES. IN FACT, LONELY PLANET RATE US AS ONE OF THE TOP S PLACES TO FIND 'REAL IRISH FOOD IN DUBLIN'

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our quality assured quest house.

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one man

The award winning Jackie Clarke Collection comprises over 100,000 historical artefacts, spanning 400 years.

Located in a restored 19th century bank in the centre

of Ballina with a newly designed walled garden. Special

features of the attraction include a memory booth where

you can record your own memories and interactive

FREE ADMISSION

Open Tuesday to Saturday 10-5

touch-screens throughout. Suitable for all ages.

It includes items associated with some of the most

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...100,000 items

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Bailiúchán

<u>Uí</u> Chléirigh

The Jackie

Collection

Sheáin

Clarke

Kildare Town, Co. Kildare

Ph:+353 (0)45 522232

6 GREAT EXPERIENCES

TORY ISLAND

Embark on a trip to Tory, the most remote of Ireland's inhabited islands. Tory is a place that feels unique, it even has its own elected king. Expect cliff-edge scenery, shipwrecks, monastic ruins, folklore and very friendly locals.

THE SKELLIG RING

36 Ireland

This touring route, an extension of the Ring of Kerry, offers breathtaking Atlantic views, lively villages, quirky experiences and, of course, access to the Skellig Islands. Hardly surprising that it's been named one of the Top 10 Regions in Lonely Planet's Best in Travel 2017.



THE KILLARY FJORD **BLUEWAY**

One of just three glacial fjords in Ireland, Killary offers unforgettable snorkelling and kayaking experiences along the Blueway. Take a trip to Glassilaun beach, where you can snorkel into Killary Bay Little to the north

SAMPLE THE SEAWEED

Counties Kerry Mayo Slia Seaweed is a cutting-edge health and food trend, but for communities on the Irish coast, it's been that way for centuries. Take a family foraging day with Wild Atlantic Cultural Tours in Mayo, a seaweed walk with Atlantic Irish Seaweed in Kerry, or relax with a seaweed bath in Sligo.



A LIGHTHOUSE

Several lighthouses have been restored and rebooted as visitor attractions and some even offer accommodation in cottages and lighthouses themselves. Check out Clare Island Lighthouse in Clew Bay, Fanad Lighthouse in Donegal, Loop Head in County Clare or Galley Head in West Cork.



GREAT WESTERN GREENWAY County Mayo

This 42km off-road cycle and walking track links Achill and Westport along the line of a former narrow-gauge railway. You can do it in sections or its entirety. Quiet, leisurely and traffic-free, it also boasts incredible coastal views. 🗞







and wild landscapes, Ireland is home to gardens of all types and sizes. There are grand formal lawns, tumbling terraces, Victorian walled gardens and wild natural spaces. From one of the most beautiful gardens in the world at Powerscourt Estate in County Wicklow to the stunning walled garden of Florence Court in County Fermanagh, it's time to discover a world in bloom.

GREAT PLACES TO TRY In the glorious region of Connemara in County Galway, Kylemore Abbey basks in beauty with a six-acre walled garden dating to the Victorian period. The historic Lissadell House in County Sligo has a two-acre alpine garden dating back to 1740, and a walled kitchen garden from 1840, featuring heritage fruit and vegetables. One of Northern Ireland's most beautiful green spaces, Rowallane Garden in County Down has a mix of formal an informal spaces; while Glenarm Castle in County Antrim boasts one of the island's oldest walled gardens – and gardeners who are always happy to answer visitors' questions.

TIPS & INFO Check garden opening hours before your visit — some are closed to visitors during winter months. To maximise enjoyment of Ireland's gardens, consider a garden trail, such as the Antrim Garden Trail, the Carlow Garden Trail or the Wexford Garden Trail.



A river cruise is one of the most relaxing ways to soak up the scenery and discover nature, history and landmarks along Ireland's quiet waterways. Moor up for lunch at a waterside restaurant, watch the world go by along the river banks and visit fascinating lake isles. Top off your days with a quiet sunset meal before enjoying the buzz of local villages. You don't need a licence to go cruising, there's no commercial traffic, and, as it's your bed for the night, it's also great value.

GREAT PLACES TO TRY
The gorgeous Shannon-Erne Waterway is ideal for a river cruise, passing through calm canals and canalised rivers, under stone bridges and past reed banks and teeming hedgerows. The 63km-long waterway links the River Shannon with the Erne System and has 16 locks. For food or refreshments, stop off at a village or pub along the way – and don't forget to bring angling equipment, as well as bikes and walking shoes for exploring.

TIPS & INFO Rent a self-drive barge or a river cruiser from one of the many waterway operators – a good place to start is the marina at **Ballinamore**, County Leitrim. For more information, log on to Ireland.com



1 Bantry House, County Cork
A delightful 18th century mansion
overlooking Bantry Bay. 2 Florence
Court, County Fermanagh Look out for
the Florence Court Yew – reputedly the
"parent" of all Irish yew trees. 3 Rent a
barge Enjoy a view of Ireland that most
people don't get to see on the ShannonErne Waterway. 4 Go cruising Take
Ireland at a slower pace. 5 Rathlin Island,
County Antrim An island filled with myth
and legend. 6 Inis Oirr, County Galway
The smallest of Galway's Aran Islands.



Fire up the imagination on ancient monastic islands such as Devenish on Lough Erne and Holy Island on Lough Derg and you'll understand why Ireland's islands are wild outposts of traditional culture, wildlife and folklore. Yet regardless of how remote they seem, many are reached by bridge, while others are a ferry ride away.

GREAT PLACES TO TRY

Take the ferry across the Sea of Moyle off the coast of County Antrim and you might spot a dolphin on your way to Rathlin Island. Once there, enjoy the seals basking on rocks, hear tales of ancient shipwrecks and see one of the most flourishing sea bird populations in Ireland. Off the Galway coast, travel to the Aran Islands and you're stepping back in time, with a beautifully stark landscape and seas that glow turquoise on sunny days. The largest, Inis Mór, boasts an incredible cliff-top prehistoric fort called Dún Aonghasa, while Inis Oírr is famed for its sandy beaches. Day-trippers and bird-watchers should make their way to the Saltee Islands, just 5km away from Kilmore Quay in County Wexford. A haven for sea birds, the islands are among the most ancient in Europe and show evidence of primitive Stone Age man.

TIPS & INFO Always check sailing times. Bring food and water with you to uninhabited islands and note that many will have no facilities. Bring sunscreen, walking shoes and weather-appropriate clothing.



38 Ireland Spireland.com



WALKING

Boasting coasts, mountains, forests, National Parks and Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty, Ireland has scenic walking trails for all levels. And the really great thing about it? After exploring brooding valleys, scenic cliff edges and green pastures, you can relax in one of the island's welcoming towns and villages, where you'll find music pubs and great seafood restaurants.

GREAT PLACES TO TRY
For a mix of woodland trails, lakelands and peat bogs, take to the Sperrin Mountains in County Tyrone for a variety of walks that let you soak up the unspoilt scenery. With over 40,000 acres, Donegal's Glenveagh National Park has six options for all levels of fitness. To make sure you get on the right track, the Trail Walker Bus takes walkers from the Visitor Centre on Saturdays, Sundays and Bank Holidays. For something gentler, the eight looped walks at the Glen of Aherlow in County Tipperary (from 2km to 10km) will take you through the forests and moorland of the beautiful Galtee Mountains.

TIPS & INFO Weather can change quickly – check the forecast, wear layers and bring a waterproof jacket, hiking boots, sunscreen and plenty of water. For details of all routes check out walkni.com and irishtrails.ie



CITY TOURS

The best way to get your bearings in one of Ireland's cities is to take a guided walking or bus tour – then go back and explore the places you love in more detail.

GREAT PLACES TO TRY Kilkenny is small enough to be explored on foot, especially along the Medieval Mile. Discover its secrets and hear stories of witches and the Black Death with Kilkenny Walking Tours, visiting the medieval laneways, old city walls and the Black Abbey. For larger cities such as Belfast and Dublin, get your bearings with a Hop-On Hop-Off Bus Tour. Highlights of **Dublin Bus's 90-minute tour** include the Guinness Storehouse, Kilmainham Gaol and Dublin Castle, while Sightseeing Belfast's tour takes in the Cathedral Quarter, Belfast City Hall and the Peace Wall. Or brave two wheels for a Segway Guided **Tour** of Belfast, gliding around the Titanic Quarter. In Cork, discover the city on the **Fabulous Food Trail**, a gentle walk with tastings and stops at markets, artisan cheesemongers and bakers.

TIPS & INFO Book walking tours in advance, especially during peak season and holiday weekends. Wear comfortable shoes and bring a raincoat, just in case...



7 Glenveagh National Park, County Donegal Set in the Donegal mountains, keep your eye out for the park's large herd of red deer. 8 Kilkenny's Medieval Mile On the River Nore, a tour of the city takes in 13th century 5t Canice's Cathedral and Kilkenny Castle. 9 Coasteering Cliff jumping is one way to get the adrenaline pumping while exploring Ireland's stunning sea caves and rocks.

10 Sea kayaking Spend a morning on a sea kayaking trip along the south Dublin coastline.



WATERSPORTS

With so many miles of coastline including the Wild Atlantic Way, the Causeway Coast and parts of Ireland's Ancient East, as well as inland lakes and rivers, Ireland is perfect for watersports lovers. Prepare to get wet.

GREAT PLACES TO TRY What better way to explore County Waterford's Copper Coast than by kayak? Paddling this UNESCO Global Geopark reveals sea stacks, sea arches, caves, blow-holes and tunnels, all close up. Whether you're experienced or a novice at kayaking, you can find an adventure to suit. Coasteering also offers a chance to explore sea caves and rocks along areas like the Causeway Coast, with some climbing and bouldering as well as (optional) cliff jumping. Or make for the waves in County Sligo, one of Ireland's most popular surfing destinations. Take a beginner or improver lesson on the beach in Strandhill with Strandhill Surf School, before heading into a cosy Sligo pub for a hearty bowl of seafood chowder.

TIPS & INFO Safety is important: always use a registered and qualified watersports operator. Watersports are a real summer treat – but in the winter, the west coast of Ireland sees some of the world's most impressive waves – perfect for very experienced surfers. Visit Ireland.com for more information on everything from windsurfing to scuba diving.



REMEMBER - DUBLIN'S M50 TOLL IS BARRIER-FREE

Located between Junction 6 (N3 Blanchardstown) & Junction 7 (N4 Lucan) on the M50 motorway, instead of a conventional barrier plaza, the toll is operated using eFlow's registration plate recognition technology. Gantry-mounted video cameras are used to record details of passing vehicles which are then allocated a toll. Just look for the purple signs.

How does the M50 Toll work?



- The M50 barrier-free toll is clearly marked between Junction 6 (N3 Blanchardstown) and Junction 7 (N4 Lucan). Look for the purple signs.
- When you drive through this junction, cameras will automatically read your vehicle registration number (from both directions).
- 3. The toll charge is then assigned to your vehicle depending on its size.
- 4. You have until 8pm the day after your journey to pay the toll.
- 5. If you miss the payment deadline of 8pm, fines will be issued.



3 simple ways to pay your Toll

- A. Prepay your journey at eflow.ie
- B. Pay before 8pm the day after your journey at **eflow.ie**
- C. Go to your nearest payzoneoutlet and pay in person.





Pay by 8pm next day at eFlow.ie

THE LAST WORD ON... TRADITIONAL CULTURE

Traditional culture is alive and well on the island of Ireland. Here's how to enjoy it...

FESTIVALS TAKE THREE Traditions are at the heart of

festivals in Ireland

BANKS OF THE FOYLE HALLOWE'EN CARNIVAL Derry~Londonderry city (October)

The Irish invented Halloween (31 October) so no wonder it's such a big deal on our island. Derry~Londonderry is definitely the place to go: the city's annual carnival is now the largest of its kind in the world.



Killorglin, County Kerry (August) With a history stretching back almost

400 years, Puck Fair is thought to be one of Ireland's oldest. Celebrations last three days and see a mountain goat crowned.

FESTIVAL OF THE FIRES

Uisneach Hill, County Westmeath (May) Held in the mythological and sacred centre of Ireland, the Uisneach Festival of Fire celebrates a tradition that stretches back to this site over 1,400 years.







LOOK OUT FOR:

Dry-stone walls in the west of Ireland, particularly along the Wild Atlantic Way. What's remarkable is that these traditional walls are held together with just stone and no mortar. In Northern Ireland, you'll find the Mourne Wall in County Down, which is the longest on the island and stretches for over 35km. The Irish thatched cottage also holds centuries of tradition within its walls and can be spotted all over the island. Back in the 1800s, it's thought that half the population slept in a thatched cottage. Visit the village of Adare in County Limerick for a picture-postcard scene.





TRADITIONAL CRAFTS

From glassblowing to pottery, weaving to woodwork – craft in Ireland is thriving. Connected to the landscape and calling on skills passed down from generation to generation, craft is an integral part of Irish culture whether it's knitwear, basket-weaving or lace-making. In Donegal, the hills and sheep that roam them have led to a rich tradition of handweaving, with Donegal tweed famous all over the world. Visit Handwoven Tweed in Ardara for great wool blankets and tweed. Kilkenny's creative spirit can be enjoyed to the full on the Made in Kilkenny Craft Trail, which allows you to meet the makers of textiles, ceramics, jewellery and glass in idyllic locations. Or make your way to Belleek in Enniskillen, County Fermanagh, one of the oldest working potteries creating fine Parian china. A tour of the visitor centre is ideal for learning about its history.

DON'T MISS The House of Waterford Crystal Visitor Centre,

Waterford, is where pieces of this famous crystal are created before your eyes. The **Irish Linen Centre**, Lisburn, is great for a walk-through of this historic and prestigious industry. The Claypipe Centre, County Roscommon, is where to discover all about the traditional craft of claypipe making, which dates back to the 1700s.

DID YOU KNOW?

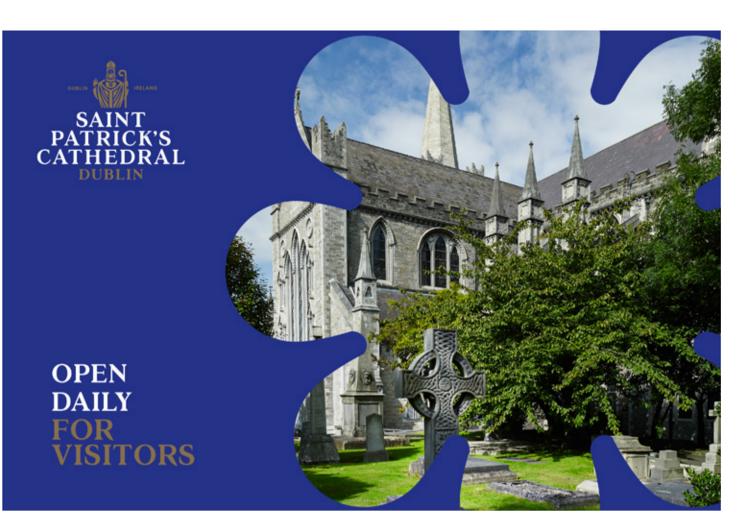
THE CLADDAGH RING his iconic ring since 1750.

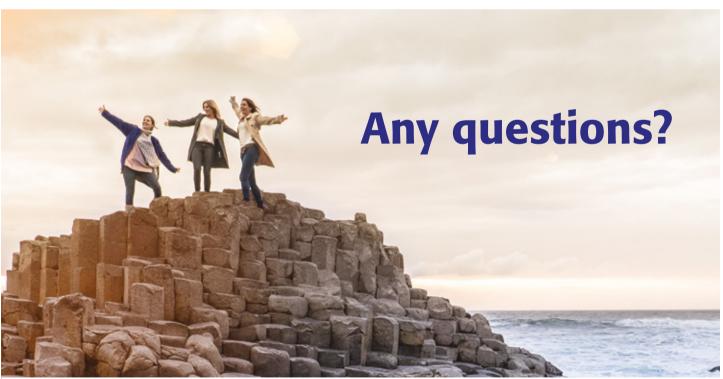


LISTEN OUT FOR:

The Irish language spoken in the Gaeltacht (Irish-speaking areas). You'll find Gaeltacht areas around the west coast of the island, along with parts of counties Cork, Donegal, Meath and Waterford. And in Northern Ireland, keep an ear out for Ullans, a variant of Scots-Irish.







Thinking of a trip – but not sure where to begin? We're right here to help! For tips, tricks and recommendations, talk to the people who know Ireland best.











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) 6214 0000

Email: 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

The British High Commission - Australia 130 Commonwealth Avenue, Yarralumla, ACT 2600

Tel: (02) 6270 6666 gov.uk/government/world/australia

& KEY TRAVEL FACTS

Consulate General of Ireland - New Zealand Tel: (09) 919 7450; email: consul@ireland.co.nz

Twitter: @irlnz1 Facebook: ConsulateGeneralofIrelandAuckland

The British High Commission – New Zealand 44 Hill Street, Thorndon, Wellington 6011 Tel: (04) 924 2888

gov.uk/government/world/new-zealand

VISITORS WITH DISABILITIES

Ireland extends a warm welcome to visitors with disabilities. Australian & New Zealand Disability Parking Permits can be used in Ireland and allow parking in areas reserved for people with disabilities, or longer parking periods or exemption from charges. 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

NORTHERN IRELAND

Disability Action

Tel: +44 28 9029 7880; 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

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

PUBLIC HOLIDAYS 2017

New Year's Day	2 Jan
St Patrick's Day Holiday	17 Mar
Good Friday (NI only)	14 Apr
Easter Monday	17 Apr
May Bank Holiday	1 May
Spring Bank Holiday (NI only)	29 May
June Bank Holiday (ROI only)	5 June
July Holiday (NI only)	12 July
Aug Bank Holiday (ROI only)	7 Aug
Aug Bank Holiday (NI only)	28 Aug
Oct Bank Holiday (ROI only)	30 Oct
Christmas Day	25 Dec
St Stephen's Day (ROI)	26 Dec
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.

TRAVELLING AROUND IRELAND

The island of Ireland is well serviced with bus, coach and train operators. You can plan your trip using public transport by using the Journey Planner. journeyplanner.transportforireland.ie

If you're travelling in your own car, or renting a vehicle, it's important to know the following: cars drive on the left-hand side of the road; signposts in Gaeltacht (Irish speaking) areas are written in Irish (Gaelic); you will need either a full valid national driving license or an international driving permit to drive on the roads: Northern Ireland uses miles per hour. while the Republic of Ireland uses kilometres; and passengers are required by law to wear seat belts at all times in the front and back of the vehicle

There are no tolled roads in Northern Ireland but you'll find tolls on a number of roads in the Republic of Ireland (disabled drivers are not charged). These are managed by the National Roads Authority and Dublin City Council. Generally tolls are paid at the barrier of the toll booth, however, there is one exception: M50 eFlow Barrier System. For more information











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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 and Etihad offer one-stop services with direct access to Ireland from Australia, via the Middle East (Emirates is also offering a one-stop service from New Zealand). Both airlines also operate codeshare partnerships with Emirates/Qantas and Etihad Airways with Virgin Australia and a number of other partners, offering a wide choice of one-stop services from Australia (and two-stops from New Zealand). A large number of airlines offer fares to Dublin as a continuation of their one-stop services to the UK and continental Europe. "Open-jaw" airfares are also commonly available (i.e. fly into London and out of Dublin or vice versa, or fly into Paris and out of Dublin or vice versa). From Auckland, travellers can fly to Dublin via San Francisco or Los Angeles with Air New Zealand and Aer Lingus.

AIRLINE CONTACT DETAILS

AUSTRALIA

AIRLINE	TELEPHONE	WEBSITE
Aer Lingus	1300 304 016	aerlingus.com
Air France	1300 390 190	airfrance.com/au
Austrian Airlines	1300 655 727	austrian.com
British Airways	1300 767 177	britishairways.com.au
Cathay Pacific	131 747	cathaypacific.com.au
Emirates	1300 303 777	emirates.com
Etihad Airways	1300 532 215	etihadairways.com
Finnair	1300 132 944	finnair.com/au
Japan Airlines	1800 802 228	au.jal.com
KLM Royal Dutch Airlines	1300 392 192	klm.com.au
Lufthansa	1300 655 727	lufthansa.com
Malaysia Airlines	132 627	malaysiaairlines.com
Qantas Airways	131 313	qantas.com.au
Scandinavian Airlines	1300 727 707	flysas.com
Singapore Airlines	131 011	singaporeair.com.au
Thai Airways International	1300 651 960	thaiairways.com
Virgin Australia	136 789	virginaustralia.com.au

NEW ZEALAND

46 Ireland

AIRLINE	TELEPHONE	WEBSITE
Aer Lingus	(09) 308 3351	aerlingus.com
Air France KLM	(09) 921 6040	klm.com/home/nz/en
Air New Zealand	0800 737 000	airnewzealand.co.nz
Austrian Airlines	0800 945 220	austrian.com
British Airways	(09) 966 9777	ba.com
Cathay Pacific	(09) 379 0833	cathaypacific.co.nz
Ethiopian Airlines	(09) 300 4514	ethiopianairlines.com
Emirates	0508 352 436	emirates.com/nz
Etihad Airways	(09) 977 2207	etihadairways.com
Finnair	(09) 969 7603	finnair.com
Lufthansa & Swiss	0800 945 02111 902435 220	lufthansa.com/swiss.com
Malaysia Airlines		malaysiaairlines.com
Qantas Airways		qantas.co.nz
Scandinavian Airlines		flysas.com
Singapore Airlines	0800 808 909	singaporeair.com
Thai Airways International	0800 100 992	thaiairways.co.nz
United	02111 902435	united.com
Virgin Australia	0800 670 000	virginaustralia.com



EUROPEAN

AIRLINE	WEBSITE
Aer Lingus	aerlingus.com
British Airways	britishairways.com
CityJet	cityjet.com
Citywing	citywing.com
easyJet	easyjet.com
Finnair	finnair.com
Flybe	flybe.com
Ryanair	ryanair.com

REGIONAL AIRPORTS

The following internal flights are available within Ireland:

DEPART	ARRIVE	AIRLINE	WEBSITE
Dublin	Donegal	Aer Lingus Regional	aerlingus.com
	Kerry	Aer Lingus Regional	aerlingus.com

TRAVELLING FROM **DUBLIN AND BELFAST AIRPORTS INTO CITY CENTRES**

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. runs on the hour (every 20 minutes Children travel half price. Aircoach also runs coaches from Dublin airport to and from the city centre and suburban County Dublin locations and to and from Belfast. For details visit: aircoach.ie

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 during peak time); £2.50* single and £3.80* return. Taxi fare to the city is approximately £10*. Trains run from adiacent Sydenham station to Belfast and beyond.

*Prices are subject to change.



FERRY PORTS

The island of Ireland has 5 main ferry ports – Belfast, Cork, Dublin, 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	2hrs
			Superferry	3hrs 30mins
Holyhead	Dublin	Irish Ferries	Ulysses Cruise	3hrs 15mins
			Ferry	
		Irish Ferries	Dublin Swift	1hr 49mins
		Stena Line	Superferry	3hrs 15mins
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	Belfast	Stena Line	Stena Lagan	8hrs
(Birkenhead)			Stena Mersey	8hrs
Pembroke	Rosslare	Irish Ferries	Cruise Ferry	3hrs 45mins

FERRY AND COACH OPERATORS CONTACT DETAILS

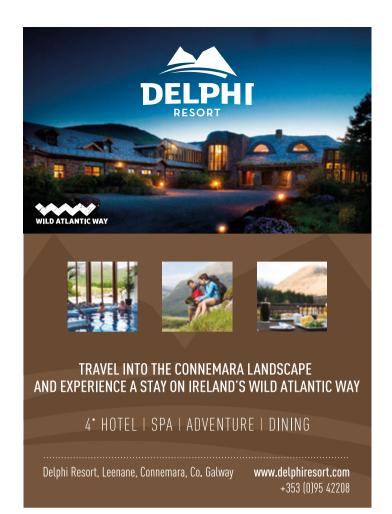
TELEPHONE	WEBSITE
+44 871 730 0400	irishferries.com
+44 871 702 3477	poferries.com
+44 872 299 2992	steam-packet.com
+44 844 770 7070	stenaline.co.uk
+44 871 781 8181	eurolines.co.uk
	+44 871 730 0400 +44 871 702 3477 +44 872 299 2992 +44 844 770 7070

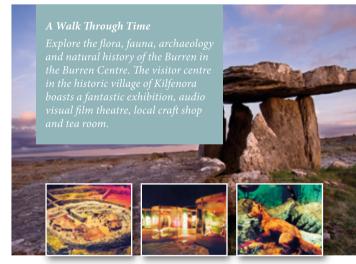
^{*}All direct routes/information correct at time of going to press but may be subject to future operator changes. Please see websites for details. Calls to operators may incur local or national call charges.





All information correct at time of going to press but may be subject to future operator changes.





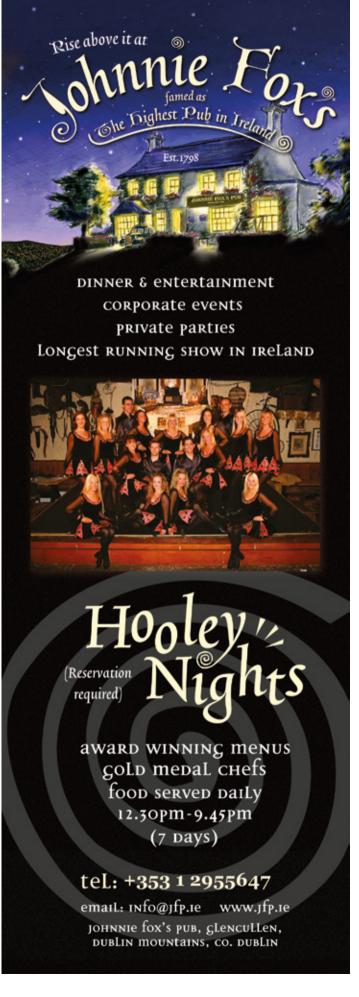


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OPENING TIMES Mid March to May 10am-5pm; June to August 9.30am-5.30pm; September to October 10am-5pm; Last admission is 30 minutes before closing



NEW ZEALAND TOUR OPERATORS

			8	Car hire	Coach/rail tours	Cruising	Cycling	Entertainment	Equestrian	Ferries	Golfing	Sports	Hotels		Self-catering	Special interest	Walking	Motor homes	Other Dublin pass
COMPANY	TELEPHONE	WEBSITE	B&B	Car	CO	Cru	Š	Ent	쁍	Feri	3	Spo	문	Rail	Sell	Spe	Wa	W	Other
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	•	•		•						•	•			•		1	•
Avis Rent-A-Car	0800 655 111	avis.co.nz		•															
Budget Rent-A-Car	0800 283 438	budget.com		•															
Contiki Holidays NZ	0508 266 8454	contiki.com			•											•			
Creative Holidays	0800 652 441	creativeholidays.com	•		•		•			•			•	•		•		1	•
Drive Away Holidays	0800 885 590	driveaway.co.nz		•						•								•	
Eurolynx Travel Ltd	(09) 361 3661	eurolynx.co.nz	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•		•	•	•	•	•	•	• •
Europcar	0800 800 115	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			•	•										•			•
Helloworld	0800758787	helloworld.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			•											•		(•
PaR n.z Corporate Events & Golfing Holidays	(09) 486 1077	parnz.co.nz			•						•		•			•		1	•
Rail Plus	(09) 377 5415	railplus.co.nz												•					
Supreme Tours (for the mature traveller)	0800 809 300	supremetours and travel.com	•	•	•	•		•		•	•		•	•	•	•	•	•	•
Tempo Holidays	-	tempoholidays.co.nz	•	•		•				•			•	•					•
Trafalgar Tours (NZ) Ltd	0800 484 333	trafalgartours.co.nz			•	•												1	•
UK-Europe Self Catering	(09) 536 4200	uk-europe.co.nz													•				
Walk the West of Ireland	(03) 545 1071	walkthewestofireland.com														•	•	1	•
Williment Sports Travel	(04) 380 2500	williment.co.nz			•				•		•	•				•		(•
World Travellers	0800777730	worldtravellers.co.nz	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	• •
WP Maher Tours	0800 500 518	mahertours.co.nz			•		•									•		(•
You Travel	0800 YOU TRAVEL	youtravel.co.nz/home	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	• •











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