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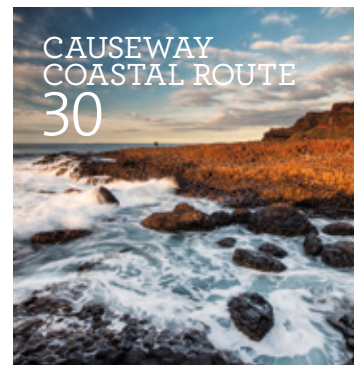
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IRELAND WELCOME

Think epic. Think exhilarating. Think enchanting. In Ireland you can expect the very best, with incredible landscapes, warm, friendly people, and villages that are pure charm. Delve into Ireland's Ancient East, where compelling stories will grab your attention; feel the ocean's blast and travel a coastline like no other on the Wild Atlantic Way; or see unforgettable sights along the Causeway Coastal Route. The time is right...

Jump into
Ireland



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Published by
Tourism Ireland
Marketing the island of Ireland



PICTURE THIS

CARRICK-A-REDE ROPE BRIDGE
They must have been brave souls – those hardy fishermen who first built a rope bridge on this craggy stretch of north Antrim coastline in 1755. Today, the 98ft-high bridge has been modernized and updated and is now a highlight along the Causeway Coastal Route. A natural wonderland, the area around the bridge is home to many species of sea bird; and dolphins, porpoises and basking sharks are regularly seen in the waters below. After the thrilling crossing, reward yourself with tea and cake in the Weighbridge Tea Room, with views out to Rathlin Island.

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Kylemore Abbey, Connemara, Co. Galway

DO SOMETHING DIFFERENT

Take a trip beyond the ordinary – Ireland is bursting with amazing things to do, from traditional music to following the trail of the Vikings

1 A view over Muckross Lake, Killarney, County Kerry. A beautiful place to start your pony-and-carriage tour of Killarney National Park. 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 Saul Church, County Down. Built to commemorate St Patrick’s first church in Ireland. 5 Traditional Irish music session. Feel the beat of Ireland’s traditional music.

A PONY AND CARRIAGE
Clip-clopping through the Killarney National Park has to be one of the world’s great pleasures. What better way to experience this delightful part of Ireland than in a traditional jaunting car with a cheerful guide? The tours cover the park’s most scenic spots, including the 15th century Ross Castle and tranquil Lough Leane, with backdrops that are simply stunning. Carriages are available for hire both in Killarney town and at Muckross House – all you have to do is sit back, relax, and enjoy an effortless outdoor adventure.



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 with the Epic Tour of the Viking Triangle. Or jump on a replica Viking ship in Athlone with Viking Tours Ireland and sail to the monastic site of Clonmacnoise on the River Shannon. What a way to arrive!

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BLACK TAXI TOUR
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 Belfast inside and out will guide you around some of the most interesting sights, from the grand City Hall to the famous wall murals. Tours include a Belfast Historical Buildings Tour, a Belfast Political & Mural Tour, and even a trip out to the Causeway Coast and stunning Giant’s Causeway. All from the comfort of your own cab!

WALK WITH ST PATRICK
St Patrick’s legacy looms large in Ireland, and to understand the humble shepherd who became a patron saint why not follow in his footsteps. St Patrick’s Trail brings you through the places, spaces, and fascinating ancient monastic sites connected to the saint, from the two majestic cathedrals in the city of Armagh to the quietly beautiful Saul Church. Along the way, visit Saint Patrick’s Centre, which tells the story of Patrick’s life; Slemish Mountain, where he tended sheep in the 5th century; and Down Cathedral, where his remains are buried.



TRADITIONAL MUSIC
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, and you’re guaranteed an amazing experience in the Dufferin Arms in Killyleagh, County Down.



Lough Eske Castle, a Solís Hotel & Spa



Lough Eske Castle, a Solís Hotel & Spa sits within 43 acres of forest woodland open since December 2007, this lovingly restored castle-hotel blends its historic past with a dash of contemporary elegance. Whether you wish to relax and rejuvenate in our award-winning Spa Solís, indulge in a sumptuous dining experience or explore the great outdoors of Co. Donegal, Lough Eske Castle truly has it all.

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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 scenes at Edenvale in County Down are delightful. Located about a half-hour drive from Belfast, this B&B in a beautiful Georgian house 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. A great way to start the day. edenvalehouse.com

2. BALLYVOLANE HOUSE

If relaxing in a friendly Irish country home with views overlooking formal gardens, parklands, and lakes sounds up your street, then Ballyvolane is for you. Originally built in 1728, this magnificent period property mixes relaxed hospitality with the beautiful surroundings of the Blackwater Valley in County Cork. With just six bedrooms, the house feels private and intimate, and boasts views over the scenic gardens. ballyvolanehouse.ie

3. THE CLIFF HOUSE HOTEL

Clinging to the edge of a cliff in County Waterford, the Cliff House Hotel is pure luxury. Each room boasts views of tranquil Ardmore Bay, while the interior mixes rugged local textures with flashes of vibrant color. What's more, it's located 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. thecliffhousehotel.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, nestled 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 – every level of golfer is catered for, and there's a fine-dining restaurant, two bars, and a spa. loughernereresort.com

5. MARKREE CASTLE

Ireland is justly famous for its magnificent castle hotels such as Ashford Castle in County Mayo. A hidden gem, though, is Markree Castle in County Sligo, enjoying views over the formal gardens or quiet woodland. Set within a secluded 500-acre estate close to some great golf courses, the castle ripples with old-world charm and offers great food, wine, and tranquility. markreecastle.ie



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





- 1 Edenvale House, County Down Views reach out over the gardens of this elegant country house.
- 2 Ballyvolane House, County Cork Award-winning country house accommodation.
- 3 Cliff House Hotel, County Waterford Stunning views of Ardmore Bay make this a great choice.
- 4 Lough Erne Resort, County Fermanagh Regarded as one of the top golf resorts on the island of Ireland.
- 5 Markree Castle, County Sligo Set within 500 acres of secluded countryside.

For more information on accommodation, visit: ireland.com

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DISCOVER ALL ABOUT.. CASTLES

Legend, lore, and lavish surroundings have ensured that Ireland's castles never fail to capture the imagination. Explore these 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 River Shannon or relax in the elegant surrounds of Ballygally Castle Hotel in County Antrim – whatever you're looking for, Ireland's castles will deliver.



1 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 straight 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!

2 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.

3 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 rumored to have vacationed here.

4 With a beautiful 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 Ulster and today houses the Fermanagh County Museum.

5 **Trim Castle** in County Meath has been many things: fortress, home, prison, even film set (Braveheart was filmed here). But

throughout it all, it's retained its grandeur and imposing height. Built in the 12th century, the castle boasts a 20-sided tower and overlooks the River Boyne.

6 One of Ireland's most famous castles, **Blarney** 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."

1 Dunluce, County Antrim Did this place inspire Cair Paravel in CS Lewis's The Chronicles of Narnia? 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 Blarney, County Cork Home to the famous Blarney Stone.

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Directed by JOHN McCOLGAN

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 flavors to their menus. Combining high-quality local ingredients with the latest 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 – it's 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 favorite 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 contemporary 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 specialty 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 award-winning **AJ Apple Juice**, made from freshly pressed Armagh apples – simply delicious! 🍏

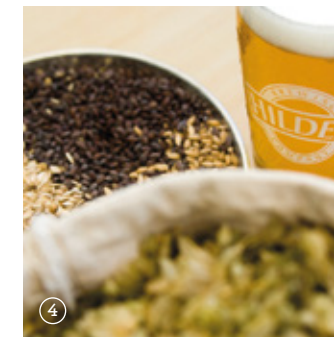
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Ireland Food



1 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 interpretations of traditional Irish dishes. 4 Hilden Brewery, Lisburn The oldest independent brewery on the island of Ireland. 5 Stunning seafood at Ox, Belfast Michelin-starred dishes made with the best local ingredients.



TOP TIP

Visit a farmers' market such as The English Market in Cork (pictured), St George's Market in Belfast, and the Temple Bar Food Market in Dublin, as well as smaller local markets across the island.

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5 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, and cousins, as far back as possible. 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 life. Karel Kiely of Roots Ireland recommends trying to find out where they died, if they appear in ships' passenger lists, newspapers, or have naturalization or census records in their own country. Collect as much information as you can and keep notes.

2. THINK OUTSIDE THE BOX

You will encounter obstacles along the way, so be flexible. Online databases make a good place to go hunting. Use websites such as the Irish Government-sponsored irishgenealogy.ie, or build a family tree on ancestry.com that faraway relatives can add to. Ireland Family History on Facebook is great for making contacts, while the Ulster Historical Foundation is a useful foundation tracing Scots-Irish and Irish roots (ancestryireland.com). 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. MAKE THE JOURNEY HOME...

New Yorker Gerry Britt, who traced his ancestors back to a small village in County Tipperary, explains the importance of this next step: "Coming here gives you an experience that records just can't. Knowing your family history is one thing – living it is quite another."

4. RESOURCES YOU'LL FIND IN IRELAND

Check out the free walk-in advisory services and 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) there's free access to public records (PRONI), and registers of births, deaths, marriages, and adoptions (GRONI). Dublin's Glasnevin Cemetery holds burial records for over 1.5 million people and a Genealogy Research Centre (glasnevintrust.ie), while the Military Archives offers a range 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. Many counties boast their own county genealogy centers and a list is available 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. 🍀



- 1 Clonmacnoise, County Offaly Stepping into Ireland's past.
- 2 Dunbrody Famine Ship, County Wexford Tracing Ireland's emigrant history.
- 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.





CITY BREAKS

Take a break in some of the most exciting cities in the world, from the cobbled streets and traditional old pubs of Dublin to great sightseeing in Belfast and Cork

1



2



3

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), and 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 center. 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 cobbledstone alleys, and past lively pubs, you'll find everything from secret stained-glass windows by Irish artist Harry Clarke on Asdill's Row 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 stunning Georgian architecture

surrounding beautiful city parks at St Stephen's Green, Merrion Square, and Fitzwilliam Square. Step inside Trinity College to see the famous 9th century illuminated manuscript, the Book of Kells; explore a dazzling collection of prehistoric gold jewelry 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 to eat, there's no better place to be. 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 shellfish pot at the casual seafood eatery of Catch 22 on South Anne Street.

Thanks to its historic traditional pubs, such as the Stag's Head, the Palace Bar, and Kehoe's; an acclaimed theater and music scene; and year-round festivals, Dublin isn't just a great city to visit – it's an adventure in itself.

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, offering delicious fish dishes in casual surroundings. Walk into the **Winding Stair** on Lower Ormond Quay and you'll feel like you're in a book – or at least a bookstore! This great restaurant has a downstairs store and serves up tasty, modern Irish dishes overlooking the River Liffey. Or go for critically acclaimed cooking in charming surroundings at **Delahunt** restaurant, located in a historic building on Lower Camden Street. Inside, there's a lovely mahogany bar, picture-lined walls, and pretty lace curtains.

DRINK Looking for traditional Irish music in a great setting? 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 paneling and cozy 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 Boasting a beautiful conservatory-style restaurant and with a great location just off Grafton Street, the **Westbury Hotel** offers five-star luxury with an Irish twist. Go for relaxed glamor at the **Shelbourne Hotel** on St Stephen's Green, with bars, restaurants, and a central location. Or opt for old-school opulence at the **Merrion Hotel**. Comprising four Georgian townhouses, it's also home to a two-starred Michelin restaurant.

DO Built in 1796, **Kilmainham Gaol** has been at the center of much of Ireland's modern history, and has been a court, a fortress, even a site of execution in its time. The guided tour is compelling. Showcasing the journey of Irish people throughout the world, **EPIC Ireland** is a new visitor center on Custom House Quay with state-of-the-art galleries and an Irish Family History Centre. Tucked away on St Stephen's Green is the **Little Museum of Dublin**, housing an eccentric collection of Dublin artifacts.

EXPLORE Dublin is the perfect place to mix culture with sea air. Head southside to the **James Joyce Tower and Museum** in Sandycove and the Victorian pier in **Dun Laoghaire**, or go north for a seafood lunch by the harbor in **Howth**, and historic **Malahide Castle**. You'll get the best coastal views with walks around **Howth Head** in the northern suburbs or up **Killiney Hill** in south County Dublin.



4



5



GOOD TO KNOW
Ireland's national museums and 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 fall the Dublin Festival Season covers theater, 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 Trinity College Dublin This historic university was founded in 1592. 3 Temple Bar Dublin's cultural quarter is filled with galleries, pubs, and restaurants. 4 The Winding Stair Perfect for a taste of modern Ireland. 5 Ha'penny Bridge Dublin's iconic bridge was constructed in May 1816.



1

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 Killeel, 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 charm. Their "Taste of Ulster Tasting Menu" is a good way of trying out local flavors. Taste some of Northern Ireland's famous beef at **Meat Locker**, which uses Hannan meats – matured in a Himalayan salt chamber and cooked over a charcoal grill. Delicious.

DRINK Step into a world of glorious Victoriana at the delightful **Crown Liquor Saloon**. Its beautifully carved ceilings, mahogany detailing, and gas lamps make it 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 glamor, 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. This charming B&B is located within an old church and serves award-winning breakfasts.

DO With a beautiful Palm House and Tropical Ravine, Belfast's **Botanic Gardens** are a 19th century horticultural wonderland and make a great place to relax in the heart of the city. Take a tour around **City Hall**, which opened its doors during a time of real prosperity in Belfast back in 1906. **The Ulster Museum**, meanwhile, displays 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 of the city on the shores of Belfast Lough is **Carrickfergus Castle**. Built in the 12th century, it has been besieged by the Scots, Irish, English, and French. Further on at Islandmagee is **The Gobbins**, a majestic cliff path originally opened in 1902 that has been restored and extended with bridges and tunnels.



4



5

BELFAST

With cutting-edge modern restaurants, Titanic sightseeing, and an 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 super-friendly locals, atmospheric pubs, and great local 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, the world's largest Titanic visitor experience, that's really

the star of the show. Step inside this shimmering titanium giant and you'll find state-of-the-art interactive displays and compelling exhibitions.

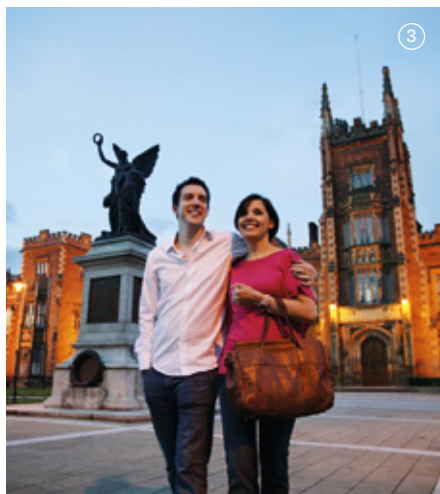
At the heart of Belfast's social and cultural action, the Cathedral Quarter is the go-to for an afternoon of galleries and an evening of socializing. Visit The MAC Belfast for dynamic exhibitions, before partaking in culture of a different sort in traditional pubs such as the John Hewitt.

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. Call into George's of the Market while you're here – it's famed for serving a great Ulster Fry, Northern Ireland's legendary cooked breakfast. After that, go for some upscale dining at Michelin-starred Ox and Eipic, or keep it more relaxed at the buzzing eateries of 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.



2



3



GOOD TO KNOW

Belfast's national museums and galleries all have free entry, but Titanic Belfast charges an entry fee. Book ahead at busy times to avoid disappointment.

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

Belfast is very accessible from Dublin. Driving between the two cities will take around two hours. The cities are also connected by rail. The journey time is around two-and-a-half hours and trains go regularly.

WHEN TO GO: Any time is a great time to visit Belfast, but for festival fun, try the fall, when the Belfast International Arts Festival runs 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.



CORK

Is Cork the best place in the world? The locals certainly think so. One thing you'll notice about this charming 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 for its food, which is sourced from within 12 miles of its door. Try the vibrant and fresh flavors of **Orso** with an Irish take on Mediterranean 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 because it offers tunes seven nights a week, or step into the atmospheric and cozy **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 **The English Market** Cork's famous 18th century market is the go-to for local foods and flavors. 4 **Hayfield Manor** Five-star hotel luxury just outside the city center. 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 center 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. 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 uniquely Cork experience, ring church bells at St Anne's Church, take in the eerie 19th century history of the Cork City Gaol, or uncover 17th century history at Elizabeth Fort.

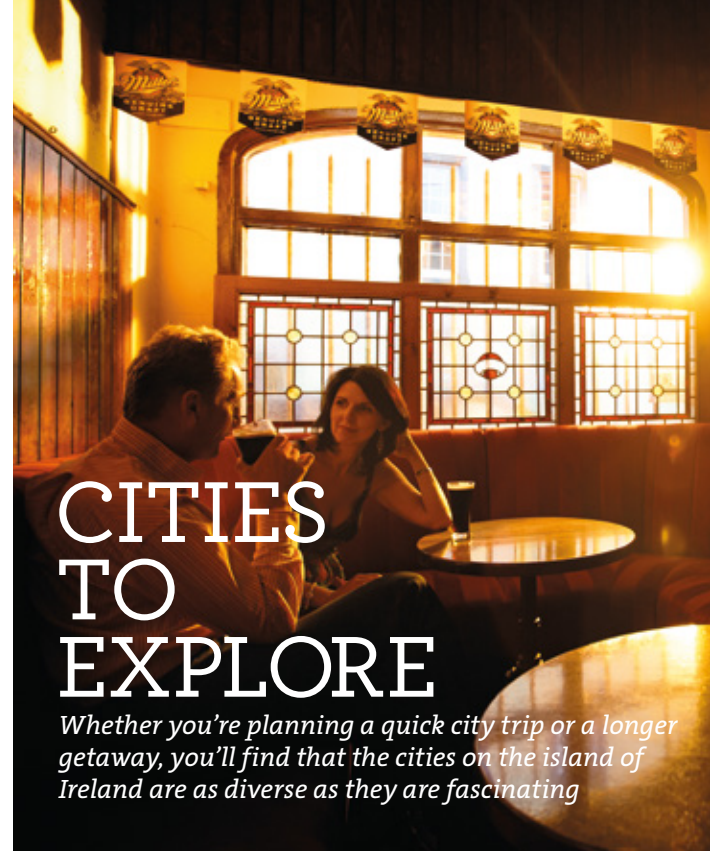
Foodies will discover that Cork is something of a culinary hub. Walk around the historic English Market and you'll find artisan cheese, smoked fish, and creamy chocolate among the buzzing food stalls. Flavor, quality, and innovation drive the city's vibrant restaurant scene, with favorites such as Café Paradiso and Farmgate Café sitting alongside new hotspots like Electric, Salt, Miyazaki, and Elbow Lane. When it comes to drinks, you can expect the same level of class that fires up the food scene. Cork's local brews are big right now – Eight Degrees Brewing, Rising Sons, and Elbow Lane 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 of 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 that boasts a 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, female prison, and a police station over the centuries. Just 1.2 miles from the center 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**. Visit the seafood town of **Kinsale**, or head out to **Spike Island**. Known as "Ireland's Alcatraz," it was used to house convicts before penal transportation.



CITIES TO EXPLORE

Whether you're planning a quick city trip or a longer getaway, you'll find that the cities on the island of Ireland are as diverse as they are fascinating



ARMAGH

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 savored.



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. Also explore 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 waterside 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 colorful store fronts, gives the feeling of a rolling

street party. A super little museum, thriving food scene (Galway boasts two Michelin-starred restaurants, Aniar and Loam), and the 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 workshops.



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. See rugby at Thomond Park, try local food at the Milk Market's weekend market, or explore the fortifications of 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 center of linen production during the 19th century, but today it keeps things lively with a dynamic arts scene, great little 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. Waterford was founded by the Vikings and its history is covered in the Viking Triangle, which contains 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. 🍀

TOP IRELAND EXPERIENCES

The island of Ireland is packed with incredible things to see and do, from epic landscapes to fabulous festivals. Get inspired with some of the best...



1



2

THE CLIFFS OF MOHER AND THE BURREN

County Clare

1|2. Soaring to 702ft and stretching down the craggy western coastline, 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 soar above, waves surge below, and viewing platforms boast incredible panoramas. The cliffs sit on the edge of one of Ireland’s most unique geological landscapes, known as the Burren. This vast, moon-like, karst limestone plateau spreads down to the ocean, with delicate arctic-alpine plants, orchids, and patches of grassland. Take a walking trail, explore the history, and relax in one of the wonderful surrounding towns and villages, such as Ballyvaughan, Doolin, and Lahinch.



3

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 center 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.

RING OF KERRY

County Kerry

4. Beginning and ending at Killarney, the Ring of Kerry is one of the island’s most lauded spots, loved by National Geographic and Vogue magazines alike. This looped route on the Iveragh Peninsula in Ireland’s southwest boasts exceptional sights, from quiet Valentia Island to the stunning mountain pass of Moll’s Gap, while charming villages such as Killorglin, Kenmare, and Waterville all make lovely stops for great seafood and atmospheric pubs. The scenery here is something else! Expect everything from powdery white beaches to green hills and bleakly beautiful bogland. And a real highlight? It’s got to be Muckross House, Gardens, and Farm, a Victorian estate on the edge of one of Killarney’s three lakes.



4



5

POWERSCOURT ESTATE

County Wicklow

5. The jewel in County Wicklow’s crown, Powerscourt Estate boasts 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. You can easily spend hours wandering this lush, playful, and enchanting creation, from the pretty Japanese garden to the wooded valleys and back to the quirky pet cemetery, which sits in a quiet part of the estate surrounded by azaleas, rhododendrons, and roses in the summer. And if you’re hungry after all that walking, feast on an array of tasty dishes served up in the resident Avoca Restaurant and Café.



6

THE GOBBINS

County Antrim

6. Ancient cliffs, sparkling sea, and a walk full of excitement: this is The Gobbins, a 100-year-old revitalized cliff-face 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.



7

SKELLIG MICHAEL

County Kerry

7. There are few words to describe the sheer magnificence of Skellig Michael, lying 7 miles 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 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.” Ochre hills, navy lakes, and towns and villages that thrum with traditional music – this is Ireland unplugged. Connemara’s raw, untamed landscapes and glorious white-sand beaches have made the area a chosen destination for artists, poets, and thinkers through the ages. Incorporating parts of Galway and edging into Mayo, this unique area covers everything from the breathtaking Killary Fjord to the ancient bogs around Roundstone. Visit beautiful Kylemore Abbey, walk one of the Connemara National Park trails, enjoy a pint in a traditional pub such as Coyne’s in Kilkerrin Bay, or take a boat trip to the island of Inishbofin.



8



9

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 run-up to the big day is a great excuse for a four-day festival (16-19 March 2017) that turns the city into carnival-central. Events take place in quirky and interesting venues all over Dublin, while on the streets you’ll witness everything from street theater to céilís (traditional dances). The festival’s crowning glory is, of course, the parade – a joyous procession that snakes its way through the historic city streets and wows the crowds. After that, take a walking tour, visit a funfair, enjoy a literary talk, or just relax in one of the Dublin’s legendary pubs.

DERRY~LONDONDERRY CITY WALLS

10. There are so many things that make Derry~Londonderry a fascinating city: the vibrant cultural life, great restaurants, and fabulous music pubs for starters. But one of the biggest draws here is the 17th century city walls. Derry~Londonderry is one of the finest examples of a walled city in Europe, and these huge barricades, built between 1613 and 1618, form a historic walkway of just under half a mile around the city. Look out for the cannons, too – Derry~Londonderry boasts Europe’s largest collection of cannons and it’s not hard to imagine how imposing they must have seemed during two 17th century sieges. Find out more about these, as well as other aspects of the city’s history, in the award-winning Tower Museum, which offers interactive displays and an open-air viewing platform.



10

YOUR PRIVATE PENINSULA AT THE GATEWAY TO NORTH WEST IRELAND



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IRELAND'S ANCIENT EAST

Stunning scenery, vivid tales, and adventure with the ancients, discover the power of the past on a trip around this incredible part of the island of Ireland



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 beautiful 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 harbor 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. 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 fueled 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 Bóinne 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 land 2,000 years ago, and keeping the gods happy was a driving force in their lives: sacrificial deaths were just one way to appease their 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 Fáil, which is still standing today.

SACRED IRELAND

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



1 Rock of Cashel, County Tipperary 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 spot along the banks of the river. **4** Newgrange, County Meath An ancient burial mound. **5** Clonmacnoise, County Offaly This monastic site was established by St Ciarán in 544. **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 centers of learning and religion. >



7



8

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.

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, tranquil waters, boating and watersports, and 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 fairytale-like 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

the scars of a spiteful family feud in the serene setting of Belvedere. 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 multicolored 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 sip 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 center 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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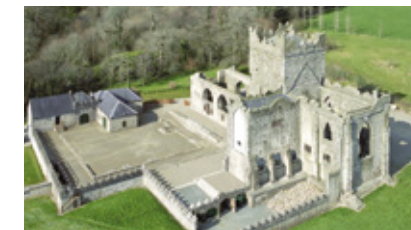
Visit Ireland's Heritage Sites



Ross Castle, Killarney, County Kerry



Céide Fields Visitor Centre, Ballycastle, County Mayo



Tintern Abbey, Saltmills, New Ross, County Wexford



Newgrange Megalithic Tomb, County Meath



Athenry Castle, Athenry, County Galway



The Main Guard, Clonmel, County Tipperary

Full details www.heritageireland.ie



CAUSEWAY COASTAL ROUTE

When it comes to epic, Northern Ireland is blessed with one of the most inspirational driving routes in the world. Linking the cities of Belfast and Derry~Londonderry, the Causeway Coastal Route takes in coastal roads, mountain tops, and sleepy villages



NEED TO KNOW

DISTANCE
195 miles.

TIME
You could drive it all in a day, but give yourself at least 2-3 days if not longer to fully explore enjoy all the sights the coastline and glens have to offer.

PUBLIC TRANSPORT
Yes, there are buses and trains along the way. Find out more at: translink.co.uk or journeyplanner.transportforireland.ie

NEAREST AIRPORT
Belfast International Airport, George Best Belfast City Airport and City of Derry Airport.

IMPORTANT INFO
Distances are in miles in Northern Ireland; speed limits range from 30mph in built-up areas up to 70mph on motorways.

¹ Giant's Causeway, County Antrim
The UNESCO World Heritage site jewel in the Causeway Coastal Route's crown.
² Whitepark Bay, County Antrim
Between two headlands sits this wonderfully secluded sandy beach.

Dramatic cliff-top castles, vast white-sand beaches, charming little villages – the Causeway Coastal Route delivers an incredible amount of beauty within just 195 miles. 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 savoring the sights, sounds, and flavors 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 going to get them here.

Frequently cited as one of the best touring routes in the world, it's no surprise that the Causeway Coastal Route is a joy to drive. Each weave and turn of the car brings another gorgeous panorama into 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; The Gobbins, a restored 100-year-old cliff path that brings you through tunnels and over scenic chasms; Glenarm Castle, home to the Earls of Antrim for 400 years; and the fairytale beauty of Glengariff Forest Park.

But nothing can quite compare with the jaw-dropping Carrick-a-Rede rope bridge, which >



swings and sways 75ft over the sea between the mainland and Carrick-a-Rede Island. Crossing is an exhilarating experience, with the bridge bouncing with every step and the ocean crashing 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 center 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 comes along. Take it slow, savor it all, and recharge your batteries in the pleasant surrounds of Bushmills village. Small, quaint, and friendly, the village boasts lovely restaurants, such as The French Rooms, as well as The Bushmills Inn Hotel, 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 movie, this dramatic 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 locals, on a dark, stormy night in the 17th century, parts of the kitchen collapsed into the Atlantic 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 great 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, County Antrim A stunning 17th century castle overlooking the golden sands of Ballygally Bay with views toward Scotland.

LISTEN TO MUSIC AT...

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

ENJOY SOME IRISH STEW AT...

The Red Door Tea Room, Ballintoy, County Antrim This traditional Irish cottage tearoom in the 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 Sea Tours, Portrush, County Antrim Enjoy 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."

- 3 Mussenden Temple, County Londonderry Dramatic temple overlooking Downhill Beach.
- 4 Portstewart Strand, County Antrim Enjoy miles of golden sand on this stunning beach.
- 5 Glenariff, County Antrim Bluebells in spring.
- 6 Ballintoy Harbour, County Antrim With great views of the Atlantic.
- 7 Ballygally Castle Hotel, County Antrim Set within a 17th century castle that overlooks the golden sands of Ballygally Bay.

If you'd been around since 1780, you might need a bit of a facelift too.

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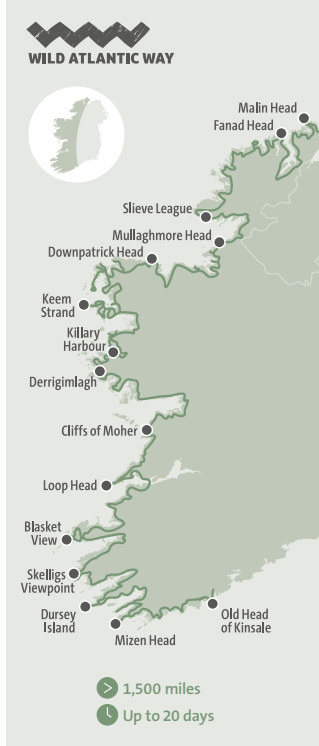
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IRISH NATIONAL STUD & GARDENS

6 WAYS TO EXPLORE THE WILD ATLANTIC WAY

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

Stretching 1,500 miles 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 into as the mood strikes. And did we mention that it's the longest defined coastal touring 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 incredible sights and charming villages where you can listen to traditional music, eat great seafood fresh from the boats, or join in the fun at an enjoyable local festival.



NORTHERN HEADLANDS

Malin Head ➤ Donegal town

The northwest is one of the island's least explored 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!

TASTE THIS

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.

DON'T MISS

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

TRY THIS

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

TOP TIP

Donegal is one of Ireland's best places to go walking, with quiet routes and amazing views. For a personalized tour, try **WalkingDonegal.net**



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 adored by surfers – although watching their aqua acrobatics from the shore is a great option, too. On this stretch you'll also find Céide Fields – a 6,000-year-old monument of stone-walled fields, houses, and tombs – and Ben Bulbin, 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.

DON'T MISS

Glencar Waterfall, County Leitrim – set inland from the coast, it's so pretty WB Yeats immortalized it in a poem; **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.

TOP TIP

Don't miss **Downpatrick Head**, which has close links to St Patrick, as well as some of the most spectacular sea stacks on the island of Ireland.

THE BAY COAST

Erris, County Mayo ➤ Galway Bay

Whether you're a walker, cyclist, or driver, 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 island-studded Clew Bay. The views are fit for a saint.

TASTE THIS

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.

DON'T MISS

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 a 17th century fort and looped walks (ferries leave from Cleggan).

TRY THIS

Check out life and times of the original Wild Atlantic Way woman, 16th century pirate queen, Grace O'Malley at **Westport House**.

TOP TIP

Keep a watch for signposts signalling the tidal timed dates for the **Omev Beach Races** – horses, music, dance, and lots of fun, it's a must-do!



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.

TASTE THIS

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

DON'T MISS

The **Cliffs of Moher** are a must-see – try walking to them along the cliff path (5 miles) from Doolin; the **Flying Boat & Maritime Museum** in Foynes, Limerick, tells the story of the golden age of transatlantic travel.

TRY THIS

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

TOP TIP

Take a guided tour of the **Aillwee Cave** in the heart of the Burren. The 30-minute stroll takes you into a dramatic underworld of waterfalls, caverns, and past extinct brown bear bones.

1 Malin Head, County Donegal Rugged beauty on the north coast of County Donegal. 2 Broadhaven Lighthouse, County Mayo On the tip of the Mullet Peninsula. 3 Dog's Bay Beach, County Galway A mile-long sandy white beach. 4 The Cliffs of Moher, County Clare The cliffs soar to 702ft.

"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



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

SOUTHERN PENINSULAS

Tralee, County Kerry 7 Ballydehob, 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 – Dingle, Iveragh, Beara, Sheep's Head, and Mizen – jut out into the ocean from Kerry to Cork. These peninsulas are as far west as Ireland gets, stashing away the beautiful Bere Island, Kerry's International Dark Sky Reserve and, of course, the Skellig Islands, now famous all over the world as a location for Star Wars: The Force Awakens.

TASTE THIS

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

DON'T MISS

Skellig Michael is an ancient monastic outpost seven miles 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** and find spellbinding views and perfect photo opportunities.

TOP TIP

Take a boat trip out of Dingle to see the town's famous dolphin, Fungie.



6

PHOTO: IAN THOMPSON

THE HAVEN COAST

Ballydehob, County Cork 8 Kinsale, County Cork

Start or finish your Wild Atlantic Way on the Haven Coast, and you're in for an unforgettable treat. Meandering from the lovely coastal village 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 like **An Súgán**. For more great flavors of the sea, try the acclaimed **Fishy Fishy Café** in pretty Kinsale.

DON'T MISS

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).

TOP TIP

Take in the natural beauty of the hidden gem of **Lough Hyne**.

"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

6 GREAT EXPERIENCES

TORY ISLAND

County Donegal

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. Here, expect cliff-edge scenery, shipwrecks, monastic ruins, folklore, and very friendly locals.



Killary Fjord

THE SKELLIG RING

County Kerry

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 world's Top 10 Regions in Lonely Planet's Best in Travel 2017.

KILLARY FJORD

County Galway

One of just three glacial fjords in Ireland, Killary offers unforgettable cruises, where resident dolphins may pop up to say hello. Or head to Gaynor's Pub in Leenane village at the mouth of Killary Harbour, where part of the movie adaptation of John B Keane's *The Field* was filmed.



Exploring a lighthouse

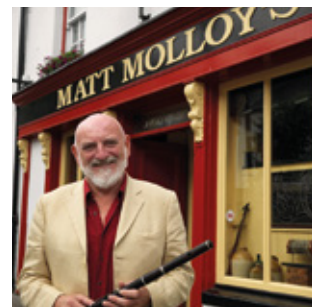
SAMPLE THE SEAWEED

County Mayo

Seaweed is a cutting-edge health and food trend, but for communities along the 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 ADVENTURE

Several lighthouses have been restored and rebooted as visitor attractions, and some even offer accommodation in cottages and lighthouses themselves. Check out the Clare Island Lighthouse in Clew Bay (a great place to stay), Fanad Lighthouse in Donegal, or Loop Head in County Clare.



Matt Molloy's Pub in Westport

MATT MOLLOY'S PUB IN WESTPORT

County Mayo

As traditional bars go, Matt Molloy's ticks all the boxes. As flautist of The Chieftains, Matt knows trad musicians love an intimate venue, so he keeps his bar small and his customers happy with sounds playing seven days a week!

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6 REASONS TO LOVE GOLF IN IRELAND

The island of Ireland. Home of champions. And a place where nature combines with the lie of the land to create some of the most incredible golf courses in the world



1

1. CHAMPION'S CHOICE ROYAL COUNTY DOWN GOLF CLUB County Down

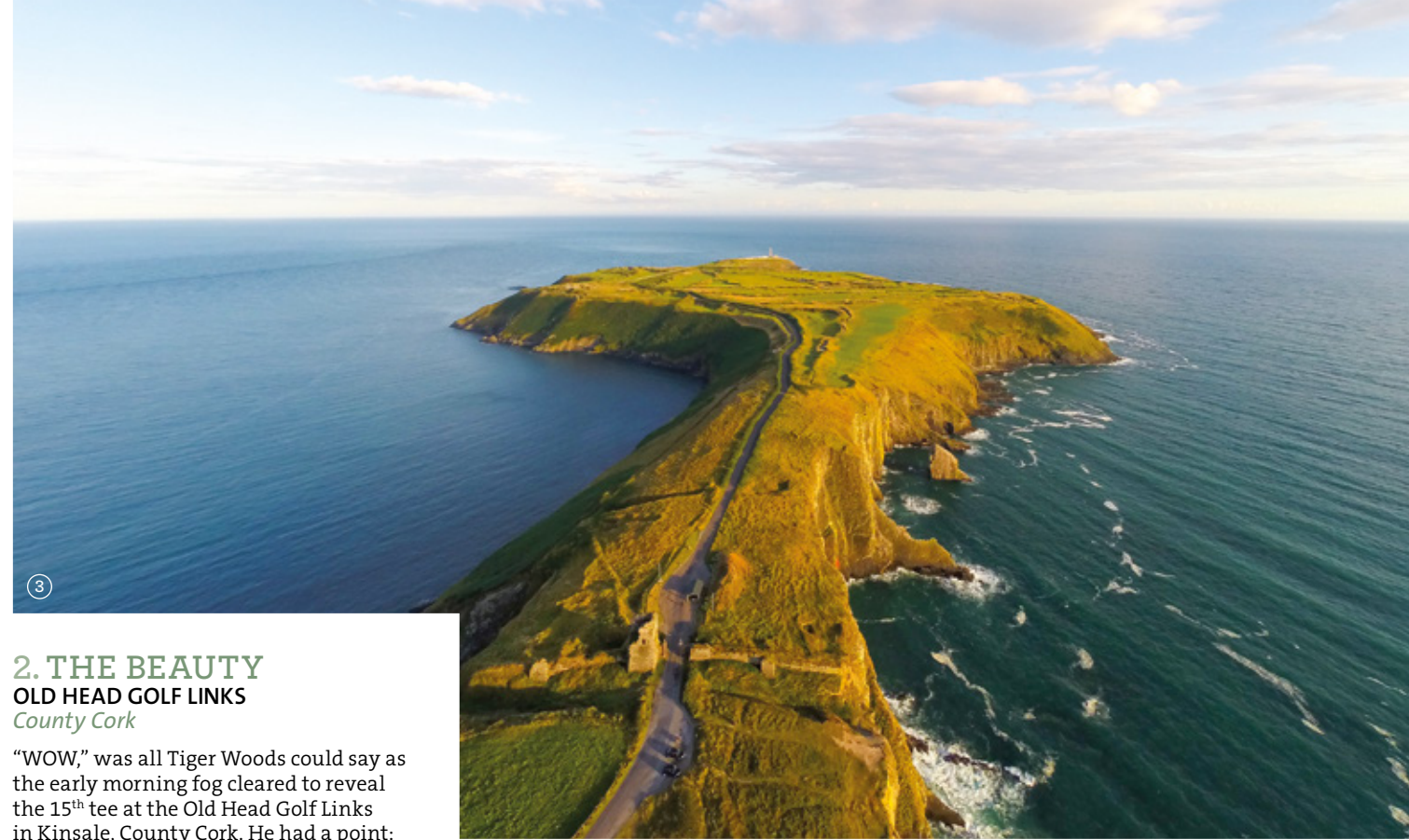
It may look beautiful, but Royal County Down – Golf Digest’s World Number 1 course in 2016 – is one of the toughest courses on the island. Jack Nicklaus couldn’t conquer it and nor could Tom Watson. Arguably Ireland’s finest course, it’s the pride of the scenic seaside town of Newcastle, County Down. Modern equipment has left many great courses defenseless in recent years, but the links at Newcastle laughs in the face of technology, requiring intelligence and a large degree of skill to subdue its myriad blind shots, subtle run-offs, and fringe-topped bunkers. Whether the wind whips in from Dundrum Bay, roars up the coast from Baltray, or wafts over the Mourne Mountains and down to the sea, it makes for the perfect place to test your skills.

ANOTHER CHAMPION CHOICE

Portmarnock Golf Club, County Dublin
No longer only accessible by boat, Portmarnock has seen no less than 10 major champions lifting The Irish Open title on its course – including José María Olazábal, Bernhard Langer, Seve Ballesteros and Ben Crenshaw.



2



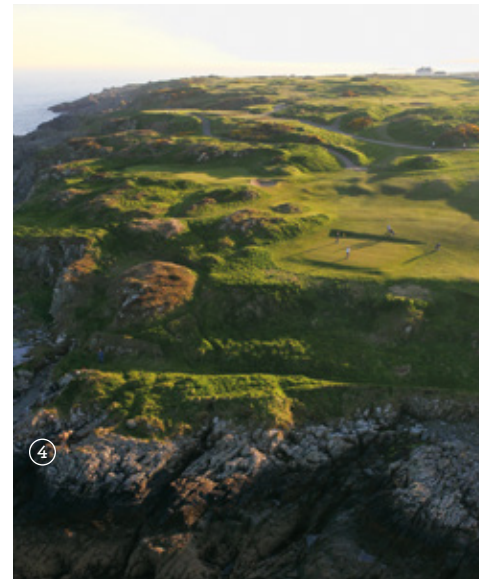
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2. THE BEAUTY OLD HEAD GOLF LINKS County Cork

“WOW,” was all Tiger Woods could say as the early morning fog cleared to reveal the 15th tee at the Old Head Golf Links in Kinsale, County Cork. He had a point: humpback whales splashing in the swirling waters, swooping sea birds, and scampering hares – you’re certainly at one with nature’s immense power on this beautiful links. Few courses inspire such outbursts as this beauty: sitting on 180 acres, with a rocky promontory extending 2 miles out to sea, it boasts cliff-top drops to the Atlantic Ocean for half of its 18 holes. The Old Head crew doesn’t want you to feel intimidated, though, so do make use of the professional caddies. Designed as a walking course, this is where memories will be made – just remember to keep your eyes on the ball.

ANOTHER BEAUTY

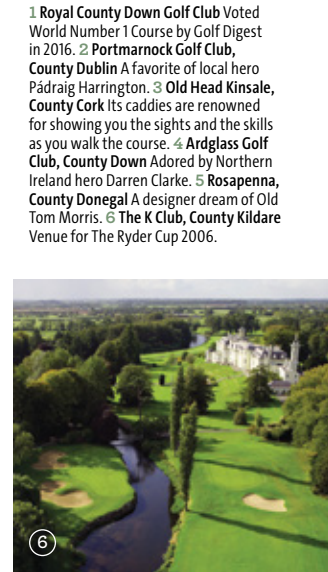
Ardglass Golf Club, County Down
Nestled next to the fishing village of Ardglass, the course has been described as “links golf as it should be.” With the magnificent Mournes as your backdrop, keep this one in your mind as a true hidden gem.



4



5



6

1 Royal County Down Golf Club Voted World Number 1 Course by Golf Digest in 2016. 2 Portmarnock Golf Club, County Dublin A favorite of local hero Pádraig Harrington. 3 Old Head Kinsale, County Cork Its caddies are renowned for showing you the sights and the skills as you walk the course. 4 Ardglass Golf Club, County Down Adored by Northern Ireland hero Darren Clarke. 5 Rosapenna, County Donegal A designer dream of Old Tom Morris. 6 The K Club, County Kildare Venue for The Ryder Cup 2006.

3. DESIGNER DREAM ROSAPENNA HOTEL & GOLF RESORT County Donegal

In 1891, the legendary Scot, Old Tom Morris, was a guest of Lord Leitrim at his estate. Taking a drive, Morris was quick to spot the golfing potential of the fine stretch of Donegal coastline around Rosapenna. Before returning to Scotland, he had already staked out the first links course in the village of Downings. Bounded by the Atlantic Ocean on one side, with rolling hills on the other, the views are still enjoyed by golfers over a century later, while the forces of nature continue to shape the land.

ANOTHER DESIGNER DREAM

The K Club, County Kildare
Designed by the late Arnold Palmer, the Palmer Ryder Cup Course is a favorite of champions, with the Ryder Cup 2006 and The Irish Open 2016 both paying homage to his creation. Described as an inland links, the Smurfit Course was designed so that golfers could experience something completely different side by side.



7

5. STAR ATTRACTION WATERVILLE GOLF LINKS County Kerry

Don't be surprised when you see a statue of the late US Open winner Payne Stewart at Waterville – a small piece of golfing heaven where mountains and Atlantic Ocean meet in perfect harmony. He stayed here with Tiger Woods and Mark O'Meara on a memorable trip in the late 1990s, and adored the 19th hole in the town's Butler Arms Hotel. Such was his popularity that a life-sized bronze statue was erected in his memory shortly after his death in 1999. Stewart and O'Meara were regulars at Waterville before heading on to play in The Open, and were often joined by Tiger Woods, Ernie Els, Jim Furyk, Stuart Appleby, David Duval, and Lee Janzen – who all went on to become members, too.

ANOTHER STAR ATTRACTION

Actor Bill Murray has a bit of a soft spot for **Tralee Golf Club**, County Kerry: "It's the most beautiful golf course I've ever played... The sea and the light and the sky and the hills and the fields... It's just the prettiest one."

7 **Waterville Golf Links, County Kerry** The golf is superb, and so is the town – enjoy! 8 **Lahinch Golf Club, County Clare** On the Wild Atlantic Way, nature, Morris, and MacKenzie have combined to make something beautiful. 9 **Royal Portrush Golf Club, County Antrim** Home of The Open in 2019. 10 **Carton House, County Kildare** Venue for World Amateur Team Championships in 2018.



8

4. THE CLASSIC LAHINCH GOLF CLUB County Clare

A product of three top designers, Lahinch has undergone many changes since it was first designed in 1894. That said, two of the course's most famous holes remain in their original state: the par-5 4th hole called The Klondyke, and the stunning par-3 5th, The Dell. In 1926, Dr Alister MacKenzie was called in to recreate a new links and while he would go on to build Augusta National and Royal Melbourne, golf lovers will still argue that the County Clare creation is his finest links course. And Lahinch's beautiful location adds to its appeal, with the Atlantic Ocean right on the doorstep.

ANOTHER CLASSIC

Some courses simply get finer with age, especially **The Royal Belfast Golf Club**, which saw its first holes played on Boxing Day 1881. Still retaining its original charm, it boasts local hero Rory McIlroy as a member.



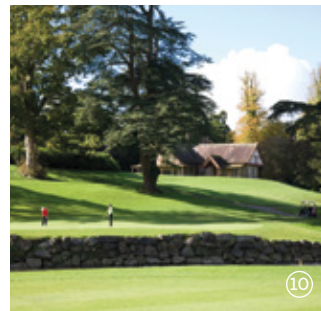
9

6. THE OPEN 2019 CHOICE ROYAL PORTRUSH GOLF CLUB County Antrim

Host to over 50 national championships in its time, Royal Portrush Golf Club became the first course on the island of Ireland to stage The Open back in 1951 – and will do so again on July 18-21, 2019. "This is among my favorite places to play in Northern Ireland, one of the truly great links courses," extolled Rory McIlroy. And he's not the only one – this is the course that 2016 European Ryder Cup team captain, Darren Clarke, credits for his love of the game. And when you're done on the greens, it's off to Old Bushmills for a celebratory whiskey for the 19th.

OTHER BIG PLAYERS

A big one to watch is **Portstewart Golf Club**, one of the island's finest links courses and host of the 2017 Irish Open. The Irish Open has also been hosted by many other courses including **Fota Island Resort** in Cork, **Mount Juliet Estate** in Kilkenny, and **Portmarnock Golf Club** in County Dublin (along with The Walker Cup).



10

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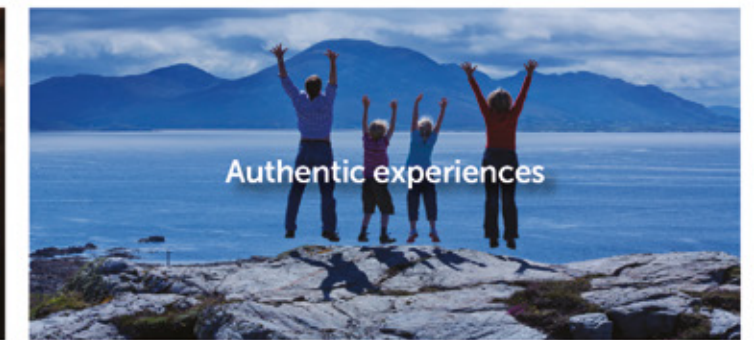
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THE LAST WORD ON... TRADITIONAL CULTURE

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:

FESTIVAL OF THE FIRES

Uisneach Hill, County Westmeath (May).

Held in the mythological and sacred center of Ireland, the Uisneach Festival of Fire celebrates a tradition that stretches back to this site over 1,400 years.



PUCK FAIR

Killorglin, County Kerry (August).

With a history dating 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.



BANKS OF THE FOYLE HALLOWE'EN CARNIVAL

Derry-Londonderry city (October).

The Irish invented Halloween (October 31) so no wonder it's such a big deal on our island.

Derry-Londonderry is definitely the place to go and the city's annual carnival is now the biggest of its kind in the world.



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 the 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 textiles. 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, jewelry, 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 center is ideal for learning about its history.

DON'T MISS The House of Waterford Crystal Visitor Centre in Waterford is a must-visit to find out about this famous crystal – you can even see pieces created before your eyes. The Irish Linen Centre, Lisburn, County Antrim is great for a walk-through of this historic and prestigious industry. The Claypipe Centre, County Roscommon, tells the story of the traditional craft of claypipe making, which dates back to the 1700s.

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 22 miles. The Irish thatched cottage also holds centuries of tradition within its walls and can be seen all over the island. Back in the 1800s, it's thought that half the population slept in thatched cottages. Visit the village of Adare in County Limerick for a picture-postcard scene.



DID YOU KNOW?

THE CLADDAGH RING

One of Ireland's most famous pieces of jewelry has to be the Claddagh Ring. Believed to have originated in the village of Claddagh on Galway Bay, you wear it with the crown pointing in if you're in love or married; or pointing out if you're looking for love! Thomas Dillon's in Galway city has been making this 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.

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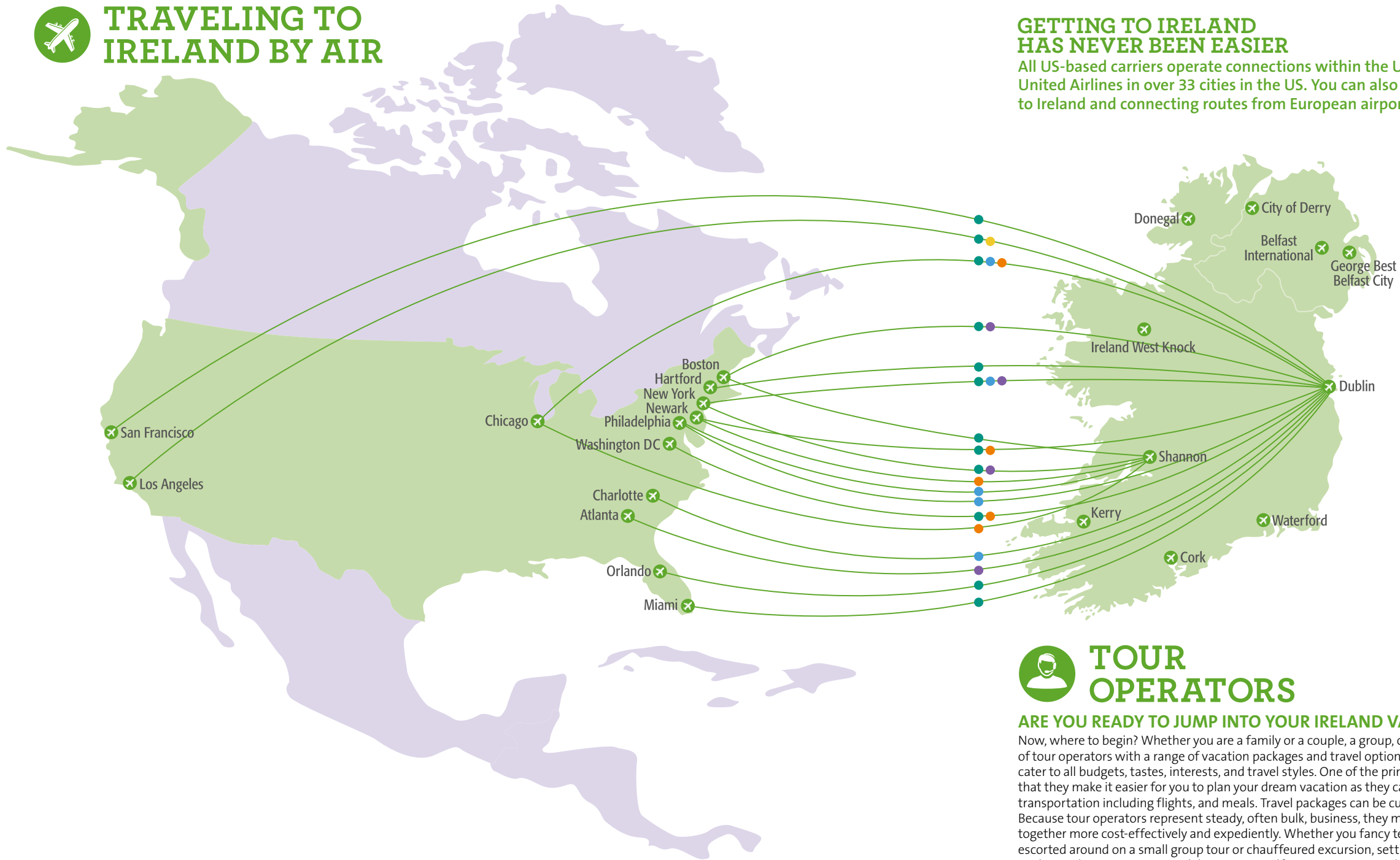
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All US-based carriers operate connections within the US or in Europe. Aer Lingus connects with JetBlue Airways and United Airlines in over 33 cities in the US. You can also fly direct to Ireland from Canada. For more information on routes to Ireland and connecting routes from European airports, visit ireland.com

CARRIER	CONTACT	ROUTE
Aer Lingus	aerlingus.com	Boston (BOS) – Dublin Boston (BOS) – Shannon Chicago (ORD) – Dublin Hartford (BDL) – Dublin Los Angeles (LAX) – Dublin Miami (MIA) – Dublin (Sept 2017) Newark (EWR) – Dublin New York (JFK) – Dublin New York (JFK) – Shannon (Seasonal) Orlando (MCO) – Dublin San Francisco (SFO) – Dublin Washington (IAD) – Dublin
American Airlines	aa.com	Charlotte (CLT) – Dublin (Seasonal) Chicago (ORD) – Dublin (Seasonal) New York (JFK) – Dublin (Seasonal) Philadelphia (PHL) – Dublin Philadelphia (PHL) – Shannon (Seasonal)
DELTA	delta.com	Atlanta (ATL) – Dublin (Seasonal) Boston (BOS) – Dublin (May 2017 Seasonal) New York (JFK) – Dublin New York (JFK) – Shannon (Seasonal)
UNITED	united.com	Chicago (ORD) – Dublin (Seasonal) Chicago (ORD) – Shannon (Seasonal) Newark (EWR) – Dublin Newark (EWR) – Shannon Washington (IAD) – Dublin
Ethiopian	ethiopianairlines.com	Los Angeles (LAX) – Dublin

TOUR OPERATORS

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Now, where to begin? Whether you are a family or a couple, a group, or traveling solo, there is a large variety of tour operators with a range of vacation packages and travel options for you to choose from. Tour operators cater to all budgets, tastes, interests, and travel styles. One of the primary advantages of using a tour operator is that they make it easier for you to plan your dream vacation as they can arrange accommodation, sightseeing, transportation including flights, and meals. Travel packages can be customized to exact preferences and budgets. Because tour operators represent steady, often bulk, business, they may be able to pull all the pieces of a vacation together more cost-effectively and expediently. Whether you fancy teeing off on a world-class links course, being escorted around on a small group tour or chauffeured excursion, setting off on a coach trip, or renting a car and exploring the scenic routes and detours yourself, tour operators can help you plan the trip of a lifetime to Ireland.

Please visit ireland.com/offers for a complete listing of tour operators with whom Tourism Ireland partners in the United States. Be sure to check out the Vacation Offers page where you will find some great value deals.

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CURRENCY

Higher denomination notes such as €100, €200 and €500 will not normally be accepted in retail outlets, so bring cash in lower denominations when you're coming to Ireland.

CREDIT CARDS

Visa and Mastercard are widely accepted throughout the island of Ireland; American Express is accepted in some places but not all. Credit cards can be used for purchases and also to access money from ATMs (although this usually is accompanied by a high fee). You can also withdraw money from ATMs with your US debit card, fees will still be charged but they are not as high as credit cards and the money will come directly from your US checking account. Each ATM has a list of card symbols that can be used there. Ireland uses a "chip and pin" system for debit and credit card purchases, which means you key your pin into a pinpad. If your card doesn't have a chip, most retailers will still accept it and you can just sign for your purchases.

VAT (SALES TAX) AND REFUNDS

In the Republic of Ireland, tourism services such as restaurant meals and accommodation benefit from a lower VAT (sales tax) rate of 9%. Visitors to Ireland from non-EU countries can claim back sales taxes on purchases made in Ireland; shopping in Ireland is subject to a sales tax of 23%. Always look for the "Tax-Free >

IRELAND KEY TRAVEL FACTS

SMOKING RESTRICTIONS

Smoking is banned in enclosed public places.

CUSTOMS

Customs operate green and red channels at most ports and airports. If you need to declare goods over the duty and tax-free allowances for non-EU visitors you must use the red channel. Pass through the green channel if you have nothing to declare. The United States Customs and Border Protection (USCBP)

facility at Terminal 2 in Dublin Airport is a purpose-built facility that allows US-bound passengers to undertake all immigration, customs, and agriculture inspections at Dublin prior to departure. Shannon Airport also has pre-clearance facilities available.

WEIGHTS AND MEASURES

The metric system is used in the Republic of Ireland (not strictly enforced at times); imperial in Northern Ireland.

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For details on how to claim tax back on goods bought in Northern Ireland, please visit gov.uk/tax-on-shopping/taxfree-shopping

LANGUAGE

Irish (Gaelic) and English are the official languages of the Republic of Ireland; street and road signs are all bilingual. In Gaeltacht (Irish-speaking) areas, road signs may only be displayed in Irish and Irish is spoken daily, though everyone speaks English as well. In Northern Ireland, English is the official language. The Irish language is also taught in many schools and summer schools. Ulster-Scots is also spoken in Northern Ireland.

CLIMATE

Ireland has a mild, temperate climate with summer temperatures generally ranging from 60°F to 70°F. Temperatures in spring and autumn are generally 50°F, and in winter between 40°F and 46°F. Snow is rare but rain showers can occur at any time of the year. For up-to-the-minute weather reports visit met.ie

PASSPORT/VISA REQUIREMENTS

A valid US passport is required to visit the island of Ireland and no visa is required. However, if you are traveling on a passport issued by another country (although a resident in the United States), please check visa requirements with the embassy.

DRIVING IN IRELAND

American visitors to Ireland must bring a valid American driver’s license with them. Driving in Ireland is on the left of the road and seatbelts



must be worn at all times in the front and back of the vehicle. Drivers should note that they are obliged by law to carry their driver’s license at all times. Motorcyclists and their passengers must wear helmets. There are very strict laws on drinking alcohol and driving, and the best advice is simply “don’t drink and drive.” The measurement of speed limits on roads in the Republic of Ireland is kilometers per hour (km/h). The measurement of speed limits on roads in Northern Ireland is miles per hour (mph). Drivers are urged to remember the change of driving laws between Northern Ireland and the Republic of Ireland.

CAR RENTAL

Most of the major car rental companies have desks at airports, ferry terminals and cities across Ireland. Some companies do not rent cars to drivers under 21 years or over 70 years, but please check with your car rental company before making a reservation. All drivers must hold valid licenses. It is advisable to book in advance, especially if you are traveling during the high season, as it is generally cheaper. The majority of rental cars are standard shift but automatic cars are available, if booked in advance, for an additional charge. Child seats should also be booked in advance. To avoid misunderstandings, it is recommended that you always check the detailed terms and conditions of your rental booking in advance. Even if you book through a third party (broker, agent, tour operator) you will be required to sign a rental agreement with the car rental company, so spend some time in advance selecting the various insurances, waivers and other options appropriate to your needs and understand the costs involved.

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

The trade organization for the car rental industry in the Republic of Ireland is the **Car Rental Council**. carrentalcouncil.ie

In Northern Ireland contact the **British Vehicle Rental and Leasing Association**. bvrla.co.uk

ACCESS

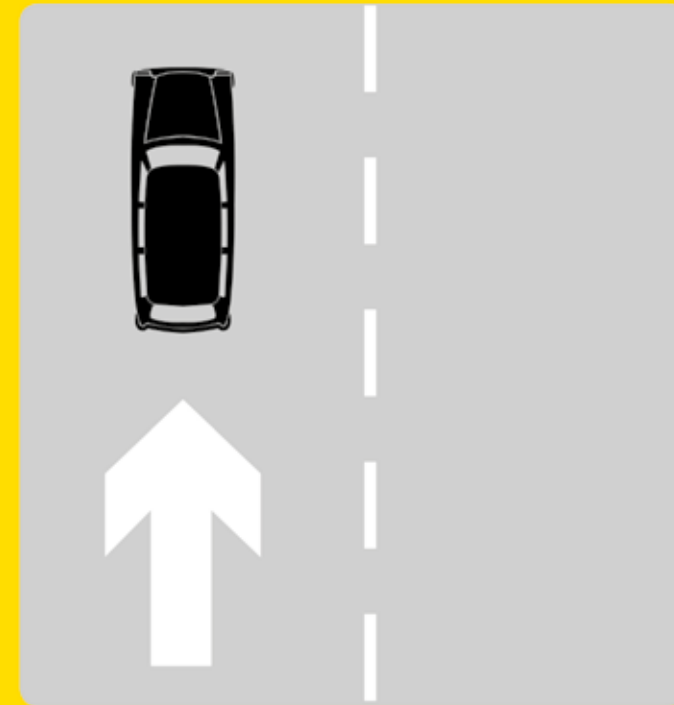
For details on airline services to Dublin, Belfast and Shannon, please see the map on page 46.

PUBLIC HOLIDAYS 2017

New Year’s Day Holiday	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.

**ATTENTION /
ACHTUNG**



**Drive on left
Conduire à gauche
Links fahren**





MAP & ROUTE MILEAGE PLANNER

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



Legend:

- M** Motorway
- Motorway (Under Construction)
- Primary road
- Secondary road
- Mainline Train
- Ferry
- ✈** Airport
- I** Tourist Information (Year round)
- I** Tourist Information (Seasonal)
- Beach

Scale: 0 20 40 60 80km / 0 10 20 30 40 50miles

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	Armagh	Athlone	155	96																		
	Belfast	227	141	31																		
	Coleraine	89	252	99																		
	Cork	302	264	136	242																	
	Donegal	428	520	209	111																	
	Dublin	266	31	73	150	10																
	Dundalk	69	402	151	180	183	128															
	Enniskillen	85	157	156	323	149	84	144	53													
	Galway	101	37	61	275	92	81	82	52													
	Kilkenney	177	237	202	204	272	209	300	306	98	236											
	Limerick	190	148	136	127	139	199	190	58	146												
	Lisburn	112	231	197	114	309	335	148	353	284	116	257										
	Londonderry	107	144	123	153	152	238	51	273	177	78	150										
	Maynooth	301	98	408	228	230	102	24	105	142	360	153	119	168	29							
	Newry	187	61	253	143	155	70	15	65	98	88	224	94	36	98	18						
	Roscommon	169	149	247	264	158	80	104	151	156	151	211	251	246	224	32	158					
	Shannon	241	257	211	348	275	98	274	35	245	153	391	397	208	382	300	276					
	Sligo	234	154	330	25	372	195	195	93	289	264	278	282	351	128	380	346	113	283			
	Waterford	166	95	339	15	231	84	95	57	182	165	176	258	40	256	215	83	176				
	Wexford	218	325	85	174	232	226	343	245	138	66	166	274	66	185	336	192	206	117	145		
		223	152	82	208	266	129	307	195	48	210	281	242	163	57	382	156	399	133	164	307	
		182	95	51	129	165	80	222	120	30	137	175	151	98	222	238	78	243	207	108	187	
		61	307	213	19	222	235	190	336	254	80	253	239	226	135	372	378	187	360	309	184	254
		39	191	133	12	138	146	118	202	68	50	152	182	14	68	231	235	116	223	152	117	164

While every care has been taken to ensure accuracy in the compilation of this map, Tourism Ireland cannot accept responsibility for errors or omissions. Due to the small scale of this map, not all holiday centers can be shown. The information on this map is correct at time of going to press. © 2017 Tourism Ireland. Map creation by Michael Schmeling, www.maps.audoocean.com | Map data © OpenStreetMap contributors, CC BY-SA



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