

YOUR EXCLUSIVE
TOURIST GUIDE

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Go Ancient East

Ancient Roots, MODERN MAGIC

DISCOVER IRELAND'S ANCIENT EAST

Ireland's VIKING HERITAGE

INVADERS FROM SCANDINAVIA

Natural WONDERS

OUTDOOR ACTIVITIES IN
IRELAND'S ANCIENT EAST



*“Myrtle Allen Is The Holy-Grail, The Mothership.
She’s Where Modern Irish Food Began”*

Allan Jenkin, Observer Food Magazine



“Irish country house cooking with a classical twist, utilizing the freshest fruit and veg from the walled garden, sublime fresh seafood from Ballycotton, superb local meat and one of the finest wine cellars in the country, all served in delightful surroundings”

Gillian Nelis, Sunday Business Post #GreatIrishRestaurants



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We have Irish Tourism
Covered

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Go Ancient East

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Ancient Roots Modern Magic



Welcome to the original and best Ireland's Ancient East tourism magazine for Irelands Ancient east. We bring you the history, happenings, events, things to see and places to go along Ireland's Ancient East route.

We are very proud of this issue, created by Marguerite Kiely and the hard-working team here at Go Ancient East. We hope it offers our readers a great insight in to the wonders of Ireland's Ancient East.

We are also delighted to announce that once this issue is published we are off to China to represent Ireland in the Gourmand World Food magazine final in Yantai and hopefully we will return triumphant!

To the Ancient East team at Failte Ireland we wish to extend every thanks for their assistance and to our creative director Dave Curtin, a congratulations for what I believe is an amazing magazine design.

Enjoy your journey and have a great holiday on Ireland's Ancient East. You can download and share every Go Wild magazine issue on www.issuu.com/gowildmagazine.

Slán agus beannacht!

Bobby Power

Publisher

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Letter from the editor

We are delighted to bring you the second edition of Go Ancient East which showcases 17 counties, 5,000 years of history and countless memories there for the making. Inside the magazine there are many historical, cultural and culinary delights to discover.

Voyage in to the past with tales of Ireland's Viking heritage (p. 62). With their their smash and grab attitude, the Scandinavian warriors may not have endeared themselves to the locals at the time but their influence remains both in our place names and surnames.

Discover the astonishing and world-famous passage tomb Newgrange in Co. Meath (p.24), the jewel in the crown of Ireland's Ancient East. Built by stone-age masters, the structure has astrological and spiritual significance to many. Just once a year, when the days are shortest, the rising sun penetrates the tomb's inner chamber, drenching it in light. Quite the achievement considering it was built 1,000 years before Stonehenge!

If you are an outdoor enthusiast there will be much to pique your interest. Hiking trails that highlight the beauty of Ireland's scenery and wildlife, cycling paths such as the

Waterford Greenway, endless miles of coastline ideal for sailing and horseback riding are just some of the natural wonders (p.44) on offer.

And no trip to this scenic region of the country would be complete without sampling the local cuisine and refreshments. Whether it's raising a glass by the fire in a cosy pub (p.42) or getting a taste of the world-class produce available (p.60) there is something to satisfy even the biggest of appetites!

We hope you enjoy exploring both the magazine and Ireland's Ancient East. And a special thanks to the team for their hard work and Failte Ireland for their support. Happy touring!

Marguerite Kiely

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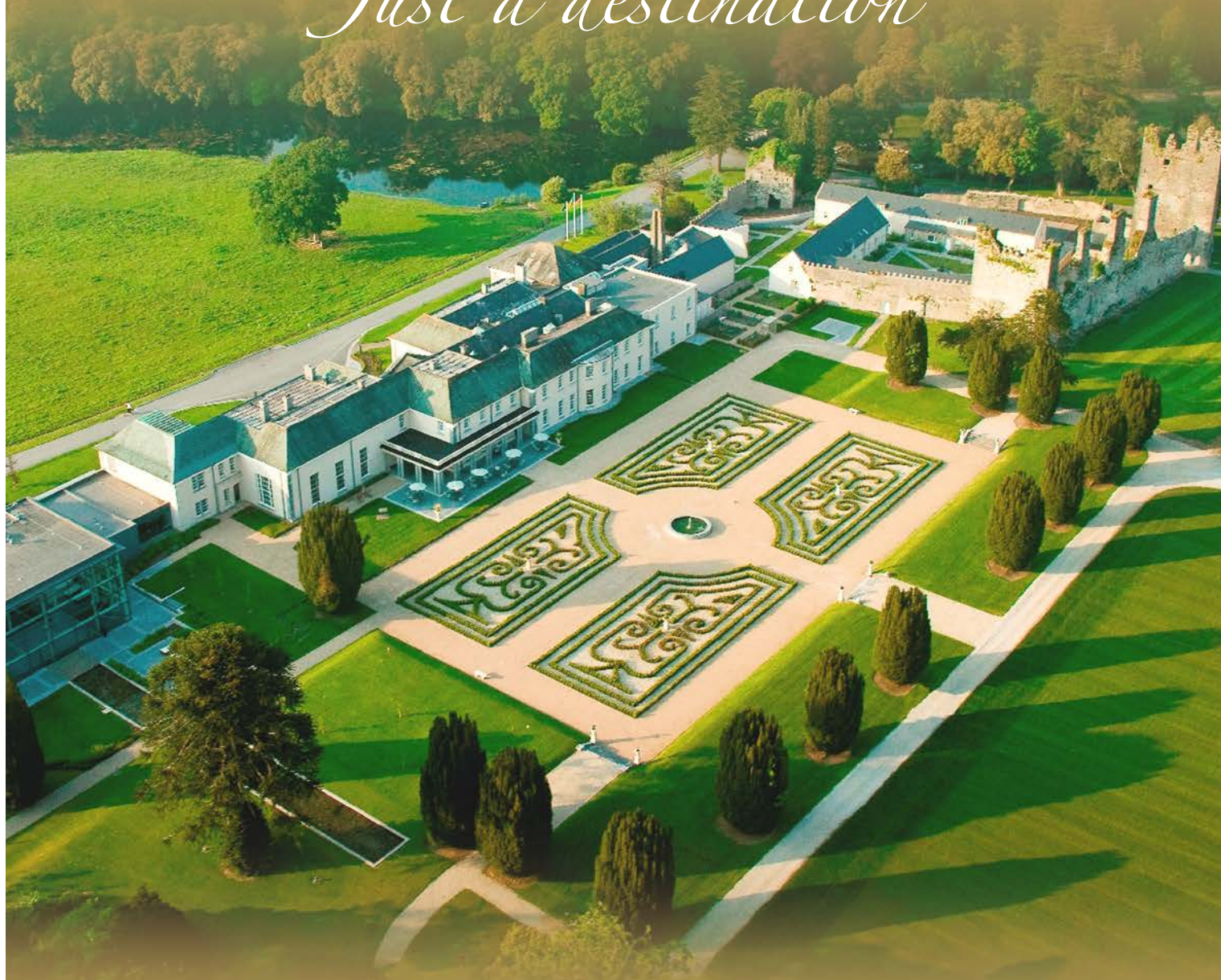
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CASTLES AND CONQUESTS

on Ireland's Ancient East

The castles tell spectacular tales that weave a web of stories over Ireland's Ancient East



BIRR CASTLE, CO. OFFALY

Birr Castle is a scientific marvel. Not only is the castle a beauty, the gardens are also filled to the brim with rare floral specimens – collected by the Earls of Rosse as they travelled the globe for the last 150 years. There are also plans to create the world's largest grove of giant redwood trees outside of California. And we haven't even mentioned the Great Telescope yet, which reigned as the world's largest telescope for over 70 years, and was responsible for the discovery of the spiral nature of nebulae in space!

CASTLE ROCHE, CO. LOUTH

The ruins of Castle Roche come with a sinister secret. If you climb towards the castle, surrounded by lush green fields, you'll notice a window high up in the tower. It's known as the Murder Window. A wealthy and beautiful woman once promised her hand in marriage to the man who would build her a castle to her exact specifications. Men came from far and wide for the opportunity, and the woman made her selection. True to his word, the chosen craftsman built the castle and, upon marrying his new wife, they climbed to the window to survey their lands – where she promptly pushed him to his death.

CASTLE LESLIE, CO. MONAGHAN

Sometimes there just aren't enough superlatives to illustrate just how jaw-dropping a place can be at first glance. Castle Leslie falls into this category, with its lush, 1,000-acre estate, 1,000 years of intriguing family history and the elegant building at the very heart of it all. And then there's the inside. Every room comes with a different story about a Leslie family member. And what a family! The owners of Castle Leslie have quite the lineage, with venerable artists, writers and decorated soldiers included. And they can trace their roots all the way back to Attila the Hun.



TRIM CASTLE, CO. MEATH

Towering above the surrounding landscape, 12th century Trim Castle has kept watch over the gentle hills of County Meath for quite some time. The largest Anglo-Norman castle in Ireland, Trim has seen wars and rebellions, has survived sieges and conflicts and anything else that saw fit to try to breach these stone walls. The most recent, though, was more faux than fierce, when Mel Gibson and his crew of hundreds filmed the movie *Braveheart* in 1995.



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A-Z Of The Ancient East



A IS FOR ARDMORE

The Round Tower in this Co. Waterford village, where St. Declan established his monastery, is the only monastery on Ireland's coast.

B IS FOR BRÚ NA BÓINNE

This UNESCO World Heritage Site is home to the largest concentration of stone art in Western Europe.

C IS FOR CINEMA

Over 25 different movies and TV series have been shot around the Palladian mansion and estate at Powerscourt, Co. Wicklow - including Black Beauty, The Count of Monte Cristo, Ella Enchanted and King Arthur.

D IS FOR DOLMEN

Brownshill Portal Tomb in Co. Carlow is Europe's largest dolmen. Its capstone weighs in at an impressive 150 tonnes!

E IS FOR EPIC

The Battle of the Boyne 1690 was the largest ever assembly of troops on an Irish Battlefield. 61,000 troops faced off on July 1, 1690.

F IS FOR FLASHY

According to Lonely Planet, Hook Light-house is the flashiest in the world! It's the oldest intact operational lighthouse, too.

G IS FOR GUINNESS

Arthur Guinness was born in Celbridge and ran his first brewery in Leixlip before trying his luck in Dublin. He is buried in Oughterard, Co. Kildare.

H IS FOR HALLOWEEN.

'Samhain' was originally a Celtic festival celebrated by pagans at the Hill of Ward (Tlachtga), Co. Meath, as far back as 200 AD.

I IS FOR INN

Kytler's Inn in Killkenny is named after Dame Alice Kytler, born in 1280 and reputed to be Ireland's last witch. Kytler was widowed four times and accused of poisoning all of her husbands... though she escaped capture.

J IS FOR JFK

President John F. Kennedy's family hailed from Dunbrody, Co. Wexford. The John F. Kennedy Trust was founded in 1988 to commemorate his legacy.

K IS FOR KILLRUDDERY HOUSE, CO. WICKLOW

The ancestral home to the Earls of Meath has been a popular location for many well-known movies and TV mini-series, including My Left Foot, Far & Away, Angela's Ashes, The Tudors and Camelot.

L IS FOR LONELY PLANET

The influential travel brand not only voted Ireland one of its hottest countries to visit in 2015, but ranked the Smith-wicks Experience in Kilkenny as one of the year's hottest attractions!

M IS FOR MUIREDACH'S CROSS

The tallest (and arguably most beautiful) remaining high cross in Ireland can be visited at Monasterboice, Co. Louth.

N IS FOR NEWGRANGE

This 5,000-year-old passage tomb was engineered 500 years before the Egyptian pyramids, and 1,000 years prior to Stonehenge!

O IS FOR OLD-SCHOOL

The High Kings of Ireland ruled from the Hill of Tara in Co. Meath. Meath continues to be known as the Royal County today.

P IS FOR PRESIDENT OF THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

Barack Obama's great -great-great grandfather was the son of a shoemaker from Moneygall, Co. Offaly. He left Ireland for America in 1850.

Q IS FOR QUAKER

Ballitore, Co. Kildare is the only planned and permanent Quaker Settlement in Ireland.

R IS FOR RUMBLED!

According to legend, the devil once called at Loftus Hall in Co. Wexford. His identity was uncovered during a game of cards, at which point he is said to have absconded... by flying through the ceiling.

S IS FOR SANTA CLAUS

The original St. Nicholas is said to be buried at Jerpoint Park, Co. Kilkenny... but sssh, don't tell the small people!

T IS FOR TITANIC

Cobh, Co. Cork, was the last port of call for the ill-fated White Star liner. 123 people boarded the ship at Ireland's most southerly point... although seven lucky souls disembarked. The ship struck an iceberg and sank on April 15, 1912.

U IS FOR MOUNT USHER

The Wicklow gardens were voted Best to Visit in Ireland by BBC Gardeners' World Magazine. Wicklow is known as Ireland's Garden County.

V IS FOR VOLCANO

Croghan Hill, Co. Offaly is the root of an ancient volcano.

W IS FOR WATERFORD, IRELAND'S OLDEST CITY

It was founded by Vikings between 856 and 914, making the city over 1,000 years old.

X IS FOR X-FACTOR

When mythical hero Fionn Mac Cumhaill tasted the Salmon of Knowledge, caught in the River Boyne, he was instantly filled with wisdom.

Y IS FOR YIELD

Something Sir William Wallace emphatically did not do during the Wars of Scottish Independence. Braveheart, which told the story, was filmed in part at Trim Castle, Co. Meath - Ireland's largest Anglo-Norman castle.

Z IS FOR... A ZILLION THINGS TO DO

in Ireland's Ancient East!





ATHLONE... *at the heart of it*

Here at the centre of Ireland, you're in the heart of our great historic assembly – the land of Gods, Saints and Kings.

The vibrant town of Athlone is situated in the very heart of Ireland on the boundaries of Westmeath and Roscommon, making it a very popular destination for touring holidays.

There are few regions in Ireland that enjoy as many major visitor attractions in close proximity such as Clonmacnoise, Birr Castle and Lough Boora Parklands in Offaly, the Hill of Uisneach and Belvedere House in Westmeath, Lough Key Forest Park, Rindoon Village and Strokestown House in Roscommon, the Islands of the Saints and Scholars in Longford, Athlone Castle, Luan Gallery, The Viking Ship Cruise and the largest water-based fun park in Europe at Bay Sports.

The area is, therefore, rich in history, culture, majesty, and stories from times gone by. It also has a great social scene, and there are lots to do for families from waterpark excitement to zip lining and cruising with the Vikings!

Athlone's situation on the stunning shores of Lough Ree and on Ireland's longest river, the River Shannon, makes it a popular destination for pleasure boats

and cruises. In the past, the town was of a large strategic importance as the enemy could approach the town by the river. In the eleventh century, King John built a stone castle on the Connaught side of town, Athlone Castle. This big castle still stands today, and a Visitors Center within tells the whole history of the area.

Watersports, fishing, trekking, biking, art and serious shopping – you have it all here! Climb the spectacular Slieve Bloom Mountains, enjoy gallery tours and whiskey tasting, take in centuries of history, tee off at one of the region's 6 golf clubs, or cycle the new 40k greenway on the old railway line. And as all of that is thirsty work, you can even have a pint at Ireland's oldest pub, Sean's Bar.

Athlone's theatre scene is also varied: three theatres, the Dean Crowe Theatre & Arts Centre, the Little Theatre, and Passionfruit Theatre all have exciting programmes for all ages. The RTÉ All-Ireland Drama Festival takes place annually in the town, bringing together amateur drama groups from across Ireland. Street theatre, art exhibitions, workshops, and events for young people are all part of the festival, making it



an exciting time to visit Athlone. The Athlone Literary Festival is an annual event which began in 1999, initially as a weekend celebration of the life and works of John Broderick, but which now features a great variety of speakers and debaters.

Athlone enjoys unrivalled access from all parts of the country be it by road, rail or water along with an excellent mix of quality accommodation and amenities. **For more see www.athlone.ie**

SLIDE...

...ON THE WORLD'S LARGEST WATERSLIDE AT BAY SPORTS

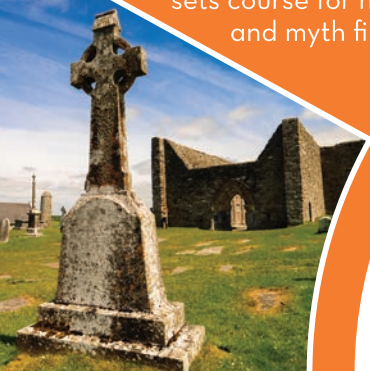
Home to the tallest floating slide in the world, Baysports is a playground for children and adults alike. Bounce, slide, thrill and splash!



SAIL...

... IRELAND'S LONGEST RIVER

Get on board for a bit of bearded wonder as Viking Mike sets course for history, beauty and myth filled magic.



EXPLORE...

... IRELAND'S RICHEST MONASTIC SETTLEMENT

With its two perfectly preserved round towers and high crosses, Clonmacnoise is 'must see' of Ireland's Ancient East.



SOAR...

... THROUGH IRELAND'S FIRST HIGH-WIRE AERIAL FOREST ADVENTURE

Less than an hour's easy drive north of Athlone, arrive at Lough Key Forest Park for a whole host of attractions for all ages.



CYCLE...

... IRELAND'S NEWEST GREENWAY

Whether for a leisurely 8km cycle from Athlone to Moate or the ambitious 40km from Athlone to Mullingar, follow the Old Rail Trail.



ENJOY...

... IRELAND'S OLDEST PUB

A pint in Ireland's oldest pub is a must for anyone visiting Athlone, pop into Sean's any night of the week for music, laughter and an atmosphere like no other.

CLIMB...

... IRELAND'S MOST FORTIFIED CASTLE

Experience the history of Ireland's Ancient East and a magnificent immersive journey through history at Athlone Castle Visitor Centre.



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EASTERN PROMISE

We chat with the Minister of State at the Department of Tourism and Sport, Brendan Griffin

As the Minister of State at the Department of Tourism and Sport, what would be a typical day for you?

When I'm at home in Kerry, my day starts at around 6.30 or 7am when our two-year-old son shuffles into our bedroom. His four-year-old brother is soon to follow and all systems are go after that! I'm usually gone from 8am-10 attending meetings and clinics in all parts of the county. When I'm in Dublin, the day is mostly confined to Leinster House and the Department, usually from 8am until midnight.

You were elected to the Dail in 2011 at just 29 years of age. Was it intimidating being so young entering the national political stage?

My first day in the Dail was my 29th birthday coincidentally. By that stage though I had been involved in Fine Gael for 13 or 14 years, had fought four campaigns of my own, had spent a few years on Kerry County Council and had spent 3 years as a parliamentary assistant, so making the step to being a TD wasn't the big issue. I think it was the fact that we were going in to government in 2011 that was daunting for everyone in Fine Gael and Labour, given the massive economic challenges at that time.

You took office in June 2017.

Is there anything you have learned or by which you have been surprised since being involved in the tourism sector?

It has reminded me just how many great people work in the sector and how people-centred the industry is. I worked in it for many years for many years and understand the hugely important role it plays in so many people's lives.

What is the biggest selling point for Ireland as a tourist destination, the secret to the country's success?

Irish tourism's biggest selling point is the Irish people. Time and again this comes across in the feedback received from overseas visitors to this country. People are genuinely taken with the welcome they receive when they come here. Combine this with our great scenery, food, heritage and culture and you have a top class offering.

Where would you like to see Ireland's tourism sector in 10 years?

My aim is that we will have a vibrant attractive tourism sector that makes a significant contribution to employment across the country and is economically, socially and environmentally sustainable. I would like to see a greater spread of tourists throughout the calendar year and also, a greater geographical spread

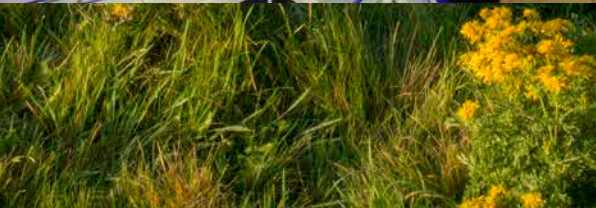


Minister Brendan Griffin

of tourists. There is capacity for development in off-peak periods and also in less developed destinations. In fairness, the tourism agencies are aware of this and are seeking to address it. It is also why it is great to see initiatives like the Munster Vales as it is one which can help address both issues.

What contribution does tourism have to the Irish economy?

Tourism is one of Ireland's most important economic sectors and continues to play a key role in Ireland's economic renewal. 2016 was a record year for Irish tourism with the highest ever number of overseas visits to Ireland of over 9.5 million.



I WOULD LIKE TO SEE A GREATER SPREAD OF TOURISTS THROUGHOUT THE CALENDAR YEAR AND ALSO, A GREATER GEOGRAPHICAL SPREAD OF TOURISTS. THERE IS CAPACITY FOR DEVELOPMENT IN OFF-PEAK PERIODS AND ALSO IN LESS DEVELOPED DESTINATIONS.

Expenditure by overseas visitors in 2016 was €4.577 billion (excluding fares). When carrier receipts are included, along with cross-border visitors, the figure rises to just over €6 billion. Spending on domestic tourism in 2016 was €1.77 billion. Total spending on tourism in 2016 was therefore almost €7.8 billion (including carrier receipts). At present there 's over 150,000 people employed in the 'Accommodation and Food Services' sector in Ireland. Fáilte Ireland estimates that total tourism employment (when other parts of the sector such as conferencing, attractions and festivals are included) is in the region of 228,000. Our aim is to increase this number to 250,000 by 2025.

What does Tourism mean to Ireland?

Tourism's contribution is not confined to directly generating employment, economic activity and exports. Tourism has played a vital role in reshaping North/South relationships through the joint marketing and promotion of the island of Ireland in international markets. Many of our tourist experiences promote and celebrate our culture and heritage from traditional music, to galleries, to theatre. Irish people love showing the best of our country to visitors and take huge pride in ensuring that our visitors have a great time while they're here.

The Wild Atlantic Way is well established and has been a huge success. How can the Ancient East achieve similar popularity?

While it is still very early days for the brand, I am pleased to report that there have been very significant signs of success, including season extension and growth in visitor numbers and revenue.

Our goal is to make Ireland's Ancient East the most personally engaging cultural destination in Europe by harnessing the authentic character of the real Ireland, its living culture, lush landscapes and hidden history, opening it up for everyone. By showcasing Ireland's living culture and ancient heritage and bringing it to life through stories that create unique visitor experiences and supporting vibrant communities, I am confident that Ireland's Ancient East will meet this goal and continue to drive growth in our industry.

Recently, you launched the Munster Vales initiative. Is there any specific activity or experience you would recommend to visitors and could you explain why it appeals to you?

The Dungarvan Greenway is one I am hoping to do as soon as possible - greenways should be called goldways given their revenue potential. They're also a great way of being active in a safe setting for people of all ages and abilities.

Tell us your one place that is a must see for tourists in the Ancient East.

There are far too many must-sees to identify just one. In Ireland's Ancient East you can stand inside mysterious tombs that are older than the pyramids. You can explore the land of saints and scholars, where monks lived in fear of vikings and hermits sought peace among natural beauty - in mountains, forests and inland islands. You can climb the steps to the top of the world's oldest operating lighthouse - and board a replica Famine ship whose passengers last view of Ireland was the light from that same lighthouse. Visitors will be spoiled for choice!

48 Hours

IN KILKENNY



If you find yourself in Kilkenny for a weekend, why not delve into a world of intrigue, magic and mystery. Here are our top picks for the marble city

Soak up the atmosphere of a historic castle

Where can you purchase a 12th-century castle for £50? Only in Kilkenny. The city's famous Norman castle was home to the Butlers of Ormonde for nearly five centuries, before the 6th Marquess of Ormonde offered it to the city of Kilkenny for £50 in 1967.

A tour will bring you to the Picture Gallery, and around the nooks and crannies of the library, with its psychedelic colour scheme. Don't feel like doing a tour? No problem: 500 years of history is condensed into a 12-minute film in the Medieval Room in the South Tower, and it's free – you only pay to go in to the rest of the castle!

Pick up a hurling stick, and make like a local!

The ancient Irish game of hurling has long links with Kilkenny – go on the Cats! The county's team colours – black and amber – are often seen flying on flags from every passing car, and in every window. If you want to get under the skin of the sport, then hook up with The Ultimate Hurling Experience Tour. Rated five out of five on TripAdvisor, the tour gives a great insight into the game of hurling, which according to tour guide Jim Croke, has been called “a mixture of ice hockey and murder”.

After a quick explanation of the rules, you'll be brought to an impeccably manicured pitch, and given a genuine ash wood hurley stick to try your hand at the game. The hard, leather-stitched ball is known as a sliotar – enjoy it, and good luck!

Experience mysterious Medieval Kilkenny

The Black Abbey, built in the 13th century, is a world of candlelit serenity. It features the largest rosary window of its kind in Ireland, containing an astonishing 10,000 pieces of ruby and sapphire glass. Telling the story of Jesus Christ and his life, it is absolutely breathtaking.

Just a short distance from Black Abbey is Rothe House and Garden, a restored 16th-century Tudor home. Recently, archaeologists found the remains of an earlier Medieval townhouse (thought to be the “city pad” of the Abbot of the nearby Duiske Abbey). History has shown that this guy lived pretty well – dinners of swan and steak, all washed down with a favourite Bordeaux wine. He certainly had style!

Taste the oldest ale in Ireland

The origins of Smithwick's Brewery date all the way back to 1231, when a few thirsty monks discovered ale when trying to purify water. Fast forward through 300 turbulent years of penal laws, world wars and poverty, and the brewery fell into the hands of the Smithwick family. The rest is, as they say, history, and this pale ale was being shipped worldwide by the 1800s.

The story of Smithwick's is told in full at the Smithwick's Experience Kilkenny. Walk through the original St. Francis' Brewery, discover the story of the beer, and finish your time off with a pint. You'll be thirsty after your long walk through history!



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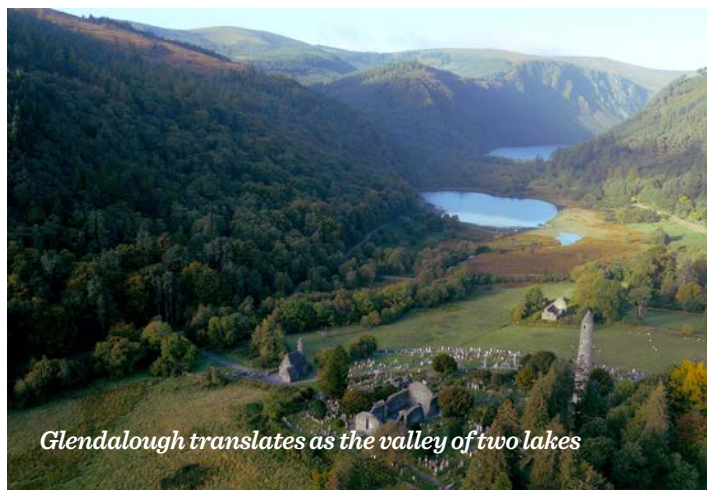
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Glendalough translates as the valley of two lakes



Wexford, which means 'The Muddy Fjord'

What's in a Name

Place names in Ireland can be very distinctive, and nearly any stereotypical depiction of an Irish village in television or film can be counted on to start with the prefix "Bally-". The names of settlements and natural features in Ireland's Ancient East can provide a fascinating window into their history.

Nearly all of Ireland's villages, towns and cities have two official names; one in Irish, and one in English. Generally (but not always), the English version is a corruption of the Irish name, like Cork (Corcaigh), Meath (An Mhí) or Drogheda (Droichead Átha). In some cases, however, like Dublin (Baile Átha Cliath), Waterford (Port Lairge) or Wexford (Loch Garman), it's clear that the Irish and English names don't exactly match up!

Irish names are a hodgepodge of native, Viking and English naming conventions, and some of the island's natural features like rivers or mountains still have names which pre-date even the arrival of the Celts, with their origins lost in the mists of time. Among the clues to the east's Viking heritage are the names of Wicklow (Vikingalág - The Viking's Meadow), Waterford (Veðrafrör - the Fjord of the Rams), Wexford (Veisafjör - The Muddy Fjord), and plenty more.

The most common component of Irish place names, "bally," comes directly from the Irish "baile" meaning town,

homestead or home. Other common prefixes include "dun" from "dún" (fortress); rath (another type of fortress); "cill" or "kil" from both "cill" and "coill" meaning "graveyard" or "forest"; "agh" or "ath" or even just "a-" from "ath," meaning "ford"; "agha" from "achadh" meaning "field" or "meadow"; "clon" from "cluain" meaning "meadow" and "carrick" from "carraig", meaning "rock".

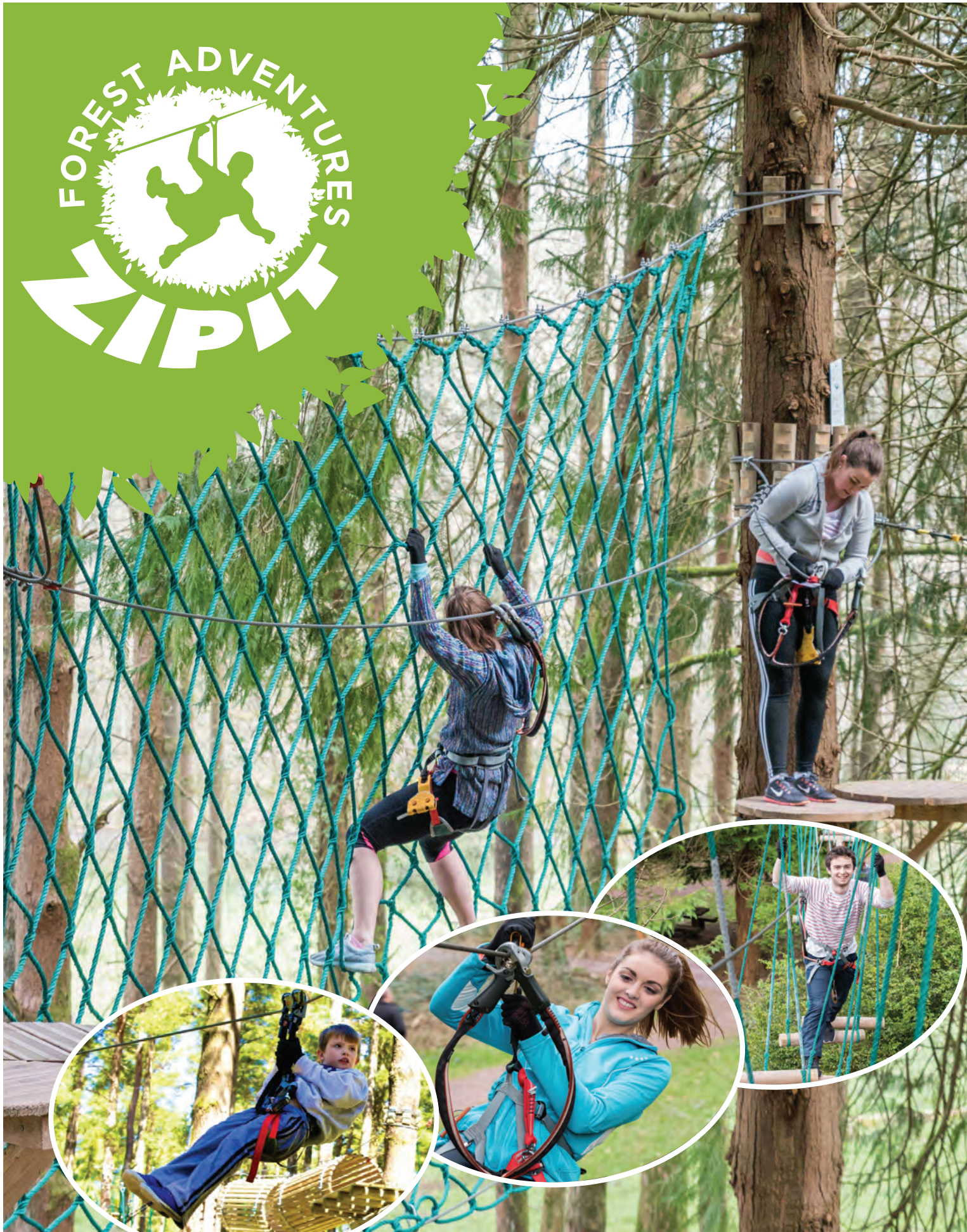
Very often, Irish names are simply descriptive. Glendalough, the astonishingly beautiful valley in Wicklow which was once home to St Kevin, is Gleann An Dá Locha; the valley with two lakes. Counties Meath and Westmeath – An Mhí and An Íarmhí – are "the middle" and "the western bit of the middle". Cork comes from "Corcaigh" – "a marsh" – and the gorgeous west Cork village of Baltimore comes from "Baile An Tí Mór" -- the town with the big house.

Some of the best known Irish placenames bring together more than one language: the provinces of Leinster and Munster (Cúige Laighin and Cúige

Mumhan, in Irish), for instance, are each a portmanteau of the name of an Irish tribe and the Old Norse word "staðr," meaning "place" or "dwelling". That word is still familiar in English words like "homestead" and in the German word for city: Stadt. Leinster, then, is "the homeland of the Laigin tribe" and Munster is "the homeland of the Muman tribe".

The Irish word for province is "cúige," which literally means "one fifth". Today, there are only four provinces in Ireland: Munster, Leinster, Ulster and Connacht. However, in antiquity there were indeed five: the fifth was called Midhe, "the middle", and its name remains today in the names of counties Meath and Westmeath!

Dublin, the capital, is a special case. Originally a Viking city, its Irish name is distinctly different from the English version: Baile Átha Cliath, the official name in Irish, means "the townland of the ford of hurdles" but Dublin comes from "Dubh Linn" – black pool – named for a pool on the River Poddle, a tributary of the Liffey. Baile Átha Cliath and Dubh Linn were originally two settlements, and after they merged the two names came to be used interchangeably until Dublin eventually became the English name and Baile Átha Cliath the Irish.



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Secret SPOTS

Of The Ancient East

There's just something oh-so-special about exploring somewhere that no-one else has experienced. These are 5 of the best of The Ancient East's hidden spots...

1. Ireland's last Leprechaun Whisperer, Co. Louth

Kevin Woods has a very special skill. He has the ability to talk to leprechauns, and he's also affectionately known as Ireland's last Leprechaun Whisperer. Explore the vistas around Carlingford Lough in Ireland's Ancient East with Kevin, paying a visit to the Leprechaun Cavern, and see if you can spot some of Ireland's most famous residents for yourself...

2. Waterford's Copper Coast

The Waterford Copper Coast is now a UNESCO Global Geopark, one of three in Ireland. It extends along the County Waterford coastline for 25kms and is named after the 19th century copper mines that lie at the heart of this spectacular stretch of cliffs.

3. The Guinness Lake, Co. Wicklow

A lake made out of Guinness? Only in Ireland! Drive yourself up into the Wicklow Mountains, and you'll find views over Lough Tay. The inky black waters are framed by golden sands, making this look like a lake poured directly out of the tap in your favourite Irish pub.



4. Fermanagh Lakelands, Co. Fermanagh

The Fermanagh Lakelands aren't really a secret, as this beautiful waterworld is a well-documented phenomena! With 154 islands to explore, this is a natural adventure-land. Hop in a boat, a canoe or a kayak and see the curious stone figures on White Island, the two-faced Janus statue on Boa Island, the monastic settlement of Devenish, or the pampered pigs of Inishcorkish Island, who produce Fermanagh's famously delicious black bacon!

5. Dalkey Island, Co. Dublin

On Dalkey Island, the hustle and bustle of Dublin feels a million miles away. Pick up some supplies in the gorgeous town of Dalkey, before you take the boat from Coliemore Harbour to the island, in the capable hands of enigmatic ferryman, Ken. The island itself has a history that stretches back over 6,000 years – there's evidence of settlers here from 4,500 BC. It's served as a Viking slave camp, become a principal port for Dublin in medieval times, and has a Martello tower (one of many lining this shoreline). This tranquil island retreat is perfect for a little offshore exploration, with stunning views of the mainland.





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ESCAPE TO ROSCOMMON

Land-locked Roscommon is sometimes overlooked by folks – which can turn out to be a blessing in disguise. We're talking no crowds, pristine countryside and all sorts of hidden treasures just waiting to be discovered.

We suggest you start your explorations in Boyle where you can immerse yourself in its local history. This town is graced with fine Georgian and medieval architecture and is a joy to stroll around.

Boyle Abbey, founded by the Cistercians in 1161 and reputedly haunted, is well worth a look, as is King House. Close to the town centre, this Palladian mansion now houses an interpretive centre which tells the tale of its former owners, the King family. Designed for both adults and children, exhibitions are spread throughout the building. Families can enjoy activities ranging from writing with a quill and ink to beating the regimental drum, or even dressing up like an Irish chieftain. Adults will be impressed by the magnificence of the period rooms but a trip to the cold and forbidding jail cells in the basement is a must for everyone!

After some lunch at the house's restaurant, make tracks for Lough Key Forest and Leisure Park. If the weather is nice, there is no end of outdoor activities to enjoy. Take a romantic walk down secluded forest paths, a boat trip out to the castle on the island, or learn about times past in the area; there are some unexpected gems like the 19th Century underground tunnels that the servants used. But whatever you do, don't miss the Tree Canopy Walk, the first of its kind in Ireland. Rising 9m above the woodland floor, it offers a bird's eye view of nature as it meanders through the treetops and affords panoramic views of the shimmering island-studded lake.

There is tonnes more to do too if the weather isn't so obliging, like the weird and wonderful two-story Boda Borg which is designed to entertain kids and big kids! To progress through its 47 rooms, you have to complete activities, puzzles and tasks – with no instruction!

If you're smitten with the park, you could always stay at its camping and caravan park.



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For more information visit www.roscommon.ie or [facebook/roscommon.ie](https://facebook.com/roscommon.ie)

THINGS TO SEE AND DO IN CAVAN

TASTE OF CAVAN, 10-11TH AUGUST

The Taste of Cavan will take place at Cavan Equestrian Centre this year, and promises to be even bigger and better than before. The event showcases extraordinary and diverse local food producers, chefs and restaurants in County Cavan and gives visitors an opportunity to sample and purchase the finest of Cavan fare, from award winning cheeses, hand made chocolate, ice cream and organic sausages to boxty, breads, muffins, mushrooms, liqueurs, honey, meats and local jams. Enjoy food demonstrations on both days by the best chefs in the country, while the kids will be entertained with a wide array of fun family activities and entertainment.

www.facebook.com/tasteofcavan



TAKE A WALK

Cavan has plenty of Failte Ireland looped walks to enjoy. Try gently rolling drumlins and upland blanket bogs. Enjoy the tranquillity of forest walks in Kingscourt, Cavan, Virginia and Bailieborough. Visit the Marble Arch Caves Geopark – accredited by UNESCO – spanning the uplands of Cavan and Fermanagh, neolithic Ireland reveals itself quietly as you stroll along. Or walk the Cavan Way from Dowra to Blacklion past the Shannon Pot – the source of the Shannon – a place of rich folklore. Cavan Walking Festival also takes place every May with guided walks taking place over a week throughout the county.



CAVAN COUNTY MUSEUM

Visit Cavan County Museum to discover the unique heritage and culture of County Cavan. Located in Ballyjamesduff, its galleries feature fascinating artefacts dating from the Stone Age right up to the 20th century, with material spanning over 6,000 years of occupation in Cavan. The Killycluggin Stone, the Ralaghan figure and the three-faced Corleck Head are three of its star exhibits and some of the most recognisable examples of Celtic spirituality in the country. The Cavan County Museum is also home to the World War One Trench Experience and the largest outdoor replica trench open to the public in Ireland and the UK.

CAVAN CATHEDRAL

In 1938 construction of Cavan cathedral began and was completed in 1942 under Bishop Patrick Lyons. The plan layout is quite unorthodox for Irish churches. The nave is lined with columns which extend down both sides, and unusually turn to form what could appear to be the beginning of a rood screen. The church is beautifully built in a white granite. Externally the cathedral is dominated by a classical portico surmounted by a tower. The cathedral was dedicated to Saint Patrick and Saint Felim in 1942. Six stained glass windows from the studios of Harry Clarke were added to the cathedral in 1994.

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REFLECT ON AN IDYLIC CHILDHOOD WITH A HOLIDAY TO WEXFORD

For many Irish, a trip to Wexford is reminiscent of the scent of childhood summers – the spray of the salty sea, sand filled sandwiches, and the delicate balancing of an over-sized 99 ice-cream cone. So for those with the winter blues day dreaming about their next vacation, break the perception that a holiday is about getting on a plane and look no further than Wexford for a hassle-free holiday at home, to create new, powerful memories to share with your own family.



EXPERIENCE HISTORY:
Dunbrody Famine Ship

From winding coastal roads, dramatic landscapes and breath taking views to movie star beaches, unforgettable experiences and magical family memories, a holiday to Wexford combines the best of an overseas holiday, without the hassle of long journeys, baggage restrictions and flight delays.

WEXFORD'S MOVIE-STAR BEACHES

So good, even Hollywood has visited them, Wexford boasts a series of stretched, sandy beaches which are ideal for building sandcastles, for water-sports enthusiasts, for swimming in rock pools, splashing around in the salty spray, and simply enjoying the sand between your feet as you munch down on fish and chips. These include the 13km oasis of golden sand that is Curraclloe Beach and further south, Ballinesker beach, both renowned for their filming of Saving Private Ryan and the Brooklyn movie, as well as Cahore Beach, Kilmore Quay and other sheltered, safe beaches such as Rosslare Strand, Poulshone Beach, Ballinoulart Beach and Europe's longest continuous stretch of beach, Morristcastle Beach, amongst many more!

THINGS TO DO & PLACES TO GO

Wexford was officially reported as the sunniest county in Ireland last year so it's easy to think only of beach days when considering your holiday plans but Wexford is host to a number of exciting activities, adventures and picturesque gardens for all ages to explore, creating precious family moments in stunning settings. Woodland walks, beautiful animals, a fairy garden and a fantastic restaurant await in Wells House and Gardens, whilst Dunbrody Famine Ship experience will provide an eye-opening tour of Irish history brought to life as you board a replica ship, followed by lunch in a spectacular, glass-front restaurant setting. The Irish National Heritage Park on the banks of the picturesque River Slaney will take you

on an unforgettable journey through Ireland's past where you will experience stories, sights and sounds that shaped our country. Visit a dungeon to see the rare medieval art at Enniscorthy Castle, built in the 13th century and climb to the top of the castle to marvel at views of Vinegar Hill. The enchanting Kia Ora Mini Farm will please all the animal lovers in your home and Pirates Cove is a must-visit for tiring the kids out with a play zone and adventure golf, enjoy 3D archery at a number of locations or grow your sea legs on a boat trip to the Saltee islands! Enjoy the thrill of kite surfing on Duncannon beach and create the memories of a lifetime!



FAMILY MOMENTS IN STUNNING
SETTINGS: Wells House & Gardens

WHERE TO STAY

For every visitor Wexford has a vast range of award winning accommodation options with the luxurious renowned 5-star Monart Destination Spa for relaxation & pampering to the renowned Marlfield House Hotel in Gorey, set in picturesque gardens and offering culinary delights for romantic breaks away. For families the choice is endless with the contemporary Maldron, Whitford House Hotel, Clayton Whites, & Talbot Hotels located in Wexford Town to coastal hotel stays close to the stunning beaches like the Upton

Court located in the village of Kilmuckridge and close to Morristcastle Strand and the cliff top Hotel Rosslare. Parents can enjoy downtime by booking some of the new additions to family choices through the award winning Amber Springs in Gorey who have recently added 36 large new family suites all custom designed, fully air-conditioned with couch and TV area with a kids den, a separate internal space/room for children to sleep and play in. The Riverside Park Hotel and Treacys Hotel in Enniscorthy offer new family suites with privacy and space for all. Enjoy the perfect cocktail after checking into the latest addition to the accommodation offering in Wexford in New Ross at the Kennedy Boutique Hotel located on the quay front. Along with self-catering accommodation, welcoming guesthouses and caravan parks & mobile home options there's no better destination for your family getaway as you create priceless memories during your visit.

CORNERSTONE OF IRELAND'S ANCIENT EAST

For holiday-makers interested in history and culture, or something out of the ordinary, Wexford has a vibrant history waiting to be explored. The county is home to a series of historical and architectural sights and some of the most scenic areas of Ireland's Ancient East such as Hook Peninsula, Johnstown Castle, Colclough Walled Gardens, Loftus Hall and Tintern Abbey that can be enjoyed as part of a tour or on a leisurely walk followed by a tasty lunch.

For the best of an overseas holiday, without the hassle and expense of travelling, whether you seek relaxation, adventure, culture or most importantly, to create a lifetime of memories to pass on to your own family, bring back the nostalgia of a holiday to Wexford this summer.

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Ancient Wonders

Lorcan Mac Muiris explores the mystical pre-historic sites of Newgrange, Knowth and Dowth, collectively known as Brú na Bóinne





More than thirty centuries before the birth of Christ, enormous teams of stone-age master craftsmen, builders, artists and religious leaders spent generations building one of the world's most important and astonishing ancient religious complexes near a bend in the River Boyne, in County Meath.

All but cut off from the rest of the island of Ireland by a horseshoe-shaped bend in the Boyne, with a smaller tributary, the Mattock, effectively completing the 'island' nature of the site, Brú Na Bóinne (known in English, quite boringly, as the 'Boyne Cemetery Complex') is most famous as the home of Newgrange, the enormous passage tomb at its heart.

Newgrange is a breathtaking example of the ingenuity and sophistication of the stone-age masters who built it. 100 metres (300 feet) in diameter and faced with glistening white quartzite, it is world famous for its most extraordinary feature: every year on the winter solstice – and only on this day – the rising sun sends its light through an aperture above the entrance called the 'roof box,' illuminating the central vault with the dawn glow. Older than Stonehenge, already ancient when the first pyramids were being built in Egypt, pre-dating even the famous Mycenaean culture in Greece, Newgrange is among the most significant stone-age structures in the whole world.

Newgrange is not the only reason to visit Brú Na Bóinne; nearby are Knowth and Dowth, two more giant passage tombs, and around the entire complex encompassed by the Boyne lie dozens more, of varying size and antiquity. Centuries later, Bronze age peoples added their own contributions in the form of henges and earthworks. Also on the site are smaller sub-complexes, with their own identity and presumably their own specialised functions, such as a man-made ritual pond and Monknewtown, and a still-visible cursus, or ritual parade route, leading to the central grave.

Thousands of years after Newgrange was built, it inspired the newly arrived Celts so much that they immediately incorporated it into their myths and legends

This enormous complex of ritual and memorial structures far pre-dates the arrival of the Celts in Ireland. In fact, it pre-dates many of the world's most famous ancient monuments. Brú Na Bóinne was built over the course of many centuries, and could well have been a significant site for more than one culture, each building on what had come before. Bronze-age and iron-age peoples, then

early Christians and eventually Vikings and Normans, used Brú Na Bóinne for their own purposes.

The people who built these structures did not have any metal to work with. They had no wheels to help them move the massive stones, and they had no writing with which to sit down and make a plan, or to preserve those plans for the future generations who would continue their work. That makes the precision with which the graves and monuments were built all the more remarkable.

Newgrange, called Sí An Bhrú in Irish, is most spectacular of all the structures at Brú na Bóinne. More than 200,000 tonnes of rock were moved to create the passage grave itself, which is faced with gleaming quartzite. It is surrounded by a circle of massive standing stones and ringed by huge boulders which form a kerb around its base. Many of these kerbstones are themselves works of art, laboriously decorated with swirls, spirals and other geometric patterns which were carved into each rock by hand, using harder stone. Each of them must have taken thousands of hours to complete.

At the heart of the mound lies a soaring vault in the shape of a cross, in which were found human remains and votive offerings. Its ceiling tapers upwards, disappearing into the darkness overhead. This is where the sun gleams for a few moments just once a year, marking the rebirth of fertility and light as the nights

begin to shrink and the days begin to grow. The quartzite came from the distant Wicklow mountains; coarse grey sandstone, heavy gabbro and rough siltstone were dragged from County Louth, and sparkling granodiorite from the Mountains of Mourne, as far to the north as Wicklow is to the south. Newgrange was an enormous undertaking which involved resources from miles around, and each of the different types of stone was used with a specific purpose in mind.

Thousands of years after Newgrange was built, it inspired the newly arrived Celts so much that they immediately incorporated it into their myths and legends, attributing its astonishing artistry and engineering to their own gods. Even today, it's bound up in folklore with figures such as Dagda, the father of the gods (whose house it was said to be), and his son Aengus Óg, the god of love, youth and poetry, whose mother was Boann, the personification of the River Boyne itself. Legend also has it that the High Kings of Ireland, crowned at Tara, were led to the underworld here.

Knowth, known in Irish as Cnóbha, is the site of a significant proportion of all the neolithic art known in Western Europe. Larger and more lavishly decorated than even nearby Newgrange, it is nevertheless eclipsed by its more famous counterpart because, at first glance, it appears less spectacular. However, on closer inspection, Knowth is absolutely astonishing. It may lack the gleaming white walls of Newgrange, and its vast trove of stone-age art may be a little less obvious, hidden in dark tunnels and vaults or tucked away behind recessed kerb stones, but the grassy mound – 40 feet high and 200 feet wide – rising from the plain of Brú na Bóinne, and its smaller satellite tombs, feel even more prehistoric and primeval than the more popular tomb a little over a kilometre away.

Surrounded by 17 smaller barrows, Knowth is a burial complex in its own right, and 35 separate graves have been identified here. It owes its more primitive look to the lesser amount of restoration it has received in comparison with Newgrange. Cremated remains were interred in the vaulted chambers dotted around the site, and Knowth too has an alignment with the sun...but its

roof box seems to have been taken from its entrance and moved deeper into its main passageway thousands of years ago.

Just outside is the Timber Circle, which may have been used to mark a site intended for worship or perhaps funeral rites. The artwork here is even more complex and impressive than that of Newgrange, incorporating more geometric shapes and intricate lines.

Later in its history, Knowth was damaged by numerous different activities carried out at the site. It appears to have become an inhabited spot for much of the past 1500 years, with Iron Age Celts and later Norman invaders using it as a base, possibly viewing it as a politically significant site. This led to quite a lot of damage, and many of its original mysteries are now lost forever.

Access to Knowth is by guided tour only.

Dowth is the middle child of the Brú na Bóinne family; older than Knowth but younger than Newgrange. It is visited far less frequently than its sisters. Even though it is a vast structure – 50 feet high and 280 feet in diameter – it is not as imposing or as spectacular as the other giant tombs in the Boyne complex. At its centre there is a depression in the mound, and it doesn't have the brilliant white facing of Newgrange or artwork to compare with Knowth. However, there is evidence that it was once faced with white quartzite, just like Newgrange.

Dowth remained impressive enough in historical times to attract the unwanted attention of Vikings, who severely damaged it in search of buried treasure, and of subsequent generations of would-be grave robbers. The remaining passage tomb is a horseshoe-shaped structure, with three western-facing passages leading into its heart. Deep inside sits a large

hollow, where the cremated bodies of the dead were placed. Early Christians also used the site..

Due to the amount of damage Dowth has suffered over the millennia, it is now the least accessible of all the major tombs at Brú na Bóinne, and its entrances are sealed against curious explorers. Nevertheless, it is well worth experiencing in the course of any visit to Brú na Bóinne.



The site of Knowth

Cast your mind back more than 5000 years. You have no metal tools. You don't know what a wheel is. You cannot read or write. Yet you and your community set about building something which is not only architecturally breathtaking, but also constructed with such precision that the sun itself is a feature...but only on the morning of the shortest day of the year. Can you imagine the logistics and calculation required to build something so precise and specialised?



TARA

THE SEAT OF THE HIGH KINGS OF IRELAND

Within few minutes' journey of the Brú na Bóinne stands the Hill of Tara, said to be the site of the coronation of Ireland's high kings. Nowadays, it's an area of considerable natural beauty and immense archaeological interest, and hasn't lost much of its magic or its connection to the past.

Tara is where you'll find the Lia Fáil, known in English as The Stone Of Destiny; an artefact associated with gods and kings...and god kings. Legend says that the Lia Fáil marks the very spot where the High Kings were crowned, and that it would cry out when the true king approached. Said to have been brought to Ireland by the Tuatha Dé Danann themselves, it sits proud atop the Forrad, an artificial mound upon which would stand the lesser kings and local lords, and the druids who oversaw the coronation ceremony.

According to some legends, the stone granted the kings of Ireland superhuman abilities, and their power increased when they were close to it. Other stories say that it has been silent ever since it cried out for Brian Ború, Ireland's last High King, who was slain by Vikings at the Battle of Clontarf, and that it used to be bigger but

that Cúchullain split it with his sword when it failed to acclaim his friend Lugaid Riab nDerg as king.

The Lia Fáil was said to be one of the four divine treasures brought to Ireland by the Tuatha Dé Danann. The others were the Claidheamh Solas (the sword of light); the Sleá Bua; a fearsome spear which belonged to the god Lugh and screamed for blood when brought out in battle; and the Coire Dagdae, the magical caldron of The Dagda himself, which provided infinite food and could even raise the dead.

Their early history is wrapped in fabulous legends – tales of great warriors and rulers both male and female with godlike powers.

The complex at Tara is more than just the Lia Fáil and the Forrad, however. Here you'll also find the Mound Of The Hostages (a neolithic passage tomb),

the Great Hall (which survives only as a huge rectangular earthwork), and a number of raths (forts), each enclosed by multiple ditches. Among them are the Rath of the Synods, where Ireland's wise men were said to meet to ponder life's mysteries and to advise the king and his court, and Rath Medhbh, said to be the resting place of the great Warrior Queen of Connacht. A succession of chapels has stood on top of the Rath of the Synods since at least the 1100s.

For all its incredible archaeology, it's not thought that Tara was ever a permanent settlement, but it appears to have been a place of special significance since the Neolithic era. The oldest surviving structure, the Mound of the Hostages, is a solar calendar, aligned with the sunrise between the spring and autumn equinoxes and the summer and winter solstices – the so called "quarter days".

Most of the structures at Tara are from the Iron Age, and associated with the arrival of Indo Europeans on the island of Ireland. Closer to our own time, it was used as a potent symbol of Irish independence, and was even damaged in the 20th century by a British cult convinced that the biblical Ark Of The Covenant had been hidden there by Tamar, a Hebrew princess!



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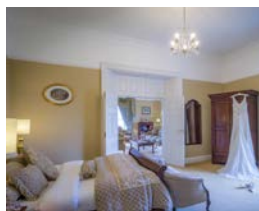
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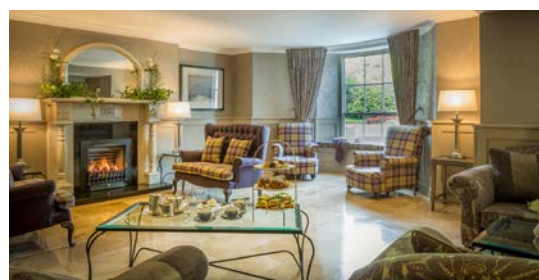
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★ ★ ★ ★

The 4 County Arms Hotel is situated on a 9 acre estate in the charming Heritage town of Birr in the centre of Ireland, within Ireland's Ancient East and only 90 minutes from all major cities.*

A superbly restored Georgian house, the County Arms Hotel is run by the Loughnane family for over 55 years with strong emphasis on service and food. The Hotel has seventy bedrooms comprising double, twin and family rooms. Springs Leisure Club has a 20 metre pool, hydrology area and high tech gym. Renowned for excellent food, an extensive menu serves daily in Bar 62. Birr is the ideal location for touring Ireland with Birr Castle, Gardens & Science centre just a ten minute walk from the hotel and other local attractions include Clonmacnoise, Lough Boora Parklands, Bike Park Ireland and Tullamore Dew all within a 25 minute drive.



County Arms Hotel, Birr, Co. Offaly, Ireland.

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EASTERN DELIGHTS

Editor of TheTaste.ie, Ireland's leading online Food & Drink Magazine, Jules Mahon shows us her favourite restaurants along Ireland's Ancient East



The stunning natural scenery and rich culture isn't the only reason to travel through Ireland's Ancient East this summer. As you learn about Ireland's ancient past, you will have the opportunity to sample some of the country's finest food offerings. Visitors fall

in love with the hidden gems that dot this rugged landscape and are constantly surprised by the diversity of cuisine on offer. Below I have picked my top five food destinations to explore along Ireland's Ancient East.

THE LEGAL EAGLE, DUBLIN

Located right in the heart of Dublin city, The Legal Eagle is the place to go for high-quality, old-fashioned Irish pub grub. With twenty craft beers on tap, you don't need to rush away from this spot as the staff lovingly prepares their own traditional meat platters, Irish potato flatbreads, pickled eggs and crisps right there.

THE DOG HOUSE, HOWTH, DUBLIN

Probably one of Dublin's best kept secrets, The Dog House is the perfect spot for a relaxing evening with friends and family (and yes, even your furry four-legged friend). Serving made to order wood-fired oven pizzas, as well as a selection of cakes, coffees and teas, the Doghouse will leave you barking for more.

LA CÔTE, WEXFORD

If you're searching for the finest seafood along the east coast of Ireland, look no further than award-winning La Côte in Wexford. Here you will discover the perfect combination of traditional French and Irish dishes prepared by Michelin-trained chef Paul Hynes and served with a truly modern twist.

THE BAY TREE BISTRO, WATERFORD

Entering into its third year in business, The Bay Tree Bistro has continued to delight food lovers across the country. Located in Waterford city, the award-winning restaurant is owned by Chef Keith Boyle, who was awarded the Best Chef in Waterford and Best Chef in Munster at the 2017 Restaurant Association Awards.

THE STRAWBERRY TREE, BROOKLODGE, WICKLOW

Set in a magnificent dining room, the multi-award winning Strawberry Tree restaurant in Brooklodge offers a truly unique dining experience in Co. Wicklow. With an innovative menu that is completely devoted to organic produce, you can be sure that your ingredients, many of which are grown to order on nearby farms, are of the utmost quality. The restaurant also has its own smoke house where they cure their own meat.



The Mullingar Myths and Legends Experience

Located in the centre of Ireland's Ancient East and the heart of Ireland itself, Mullingar, County Westmeath is steeped in history and legendary tales. Linked to every striking landscape are captivating stories of great kings, valiant heroes, epic deeds, sorcery and betrayal. Surrounded by scenic lakes and the tranquil Royal Canal, the area is easily explored by a number of dedicated off-road walking and cycling routes, along with high quality national roads, motorways and priority rail and bus routes. Mullingar is a bustling town, with a variety of quality accommodation options and superior local restaurants. Find out more on www.mullingar.ie

On your visit to Mullingar, don't miss:

The Hill of Uisneach

Visit the Hill of Uisneach to take a fascinating journey into the spiritual past of ancient Ireland. This ancient ceremonial site and mythological centre of Ireland is one of the most sacred and historic sanctuaries in the world. Guided tours are provided by entertaining storytellers to ensure a memorable visit. www.uisneach.ie



The Hill of Uisneach

Belvedere House, Gardens and Park

Visit this magnificent 160 acre estate on the shores of Lough Ennell with a fully restored Georgian Villa, Victorian Walled Garden and naturalistic designed 18th century parkland. Discover the romantic follies and the treacherous tales behind the Jealous Wall and the colourful characters who once occupied this impressive house. Playgrounds, a zip-line, magical fairy garden, woodland walking trails and breathtaking lake views are just some of the features to enjoy. Facilities include the Catoca fine food café, gift shop and ample car parking. Guided tours of the house and estate can be booked for groups. www.belvedere-house.ie

The Kilbeggan Distillery Experience

For an unforgettable experience, visit Ireland's oldest distillery, established in 1757. From our creaking timber water wheel, to our giant steam engine you will be transported back two centuries. The tour includes a chance to taste the world-famous Kilbeggan whiskey, still being produced at this ancient distillery. This is not just a "visitor centre" but a real working distillery run by a team of young enthusiastic craftspeople. www.kilbeggandistillery.com



Belvedere Gothic Arch

Tullynally Castle and Gardens

Located close to Lough Derravarragh, in a landscape steeped in history and legend, Tullynally Castle and gardens are 350 years old with a fascinating history. Visitors can explore the 12 acres of beautiful gardens which surround the castle, including walled gardens, extensive woodlands and 2 ornamental lakes, or take a tour of the castle itself. Don't miss the delightful tearoom in the castle courtyard and the splendid family coach on display. www.tullynallycastle.ie

Fore Abbey & the 7 Wonders of Fore

Nestled in a tranquil, green valley is the site where St Fechin founded a Christian monastery in the 7th Century. Housing 300 monks at this time, the monastery was set on fire 12 times. Among the remains on site, visitors can see St Fechin's church, built about 900 AD. St. Feichin's Way, a 3km Looped Walk around the site, allows visitors to explore the natural and historic landscape and discover the stories behind the 18 scattered stone crosses and the fascinating 'Seven Wonders of Fore'. www.heritageireland.ie



Fore Abbey

Visit www.Mullingar.ie for more great experiences, along with great places to stay, dine and soak up the unique culture and heritage of Ireland's Ancient East

THINGS TO SEE AND DO IN O'FFALY

TULLAMORE D.E.W.

You don't have to be a whiskey drinker to enjoy a trip to the Tullamore D.E.W. Old Bonded Warehouse. Situated on the banks of the Grand Canal, the distillery's original Bonded Warehouse was the last place the whiskey would rest; the final leg on its journey before being shipped up the canal for distribution around the world. But where the casks moved on, the history remained. Join Tullamore D.E.W. on a journey of discovery through almost two centuries of the distillery's history and enjoy a tippie of the legendary Irish whiskey itself.



BIRR VINTAGE WEEK & ARTS FESTIVAL, 3RD-12TH AUGUST 2

Turn back time in the beautiful Georgian heritage town of Birr and revel in its contemporary culture with a range of vintage and modern events for all ages during Birr Vintage Week & Arts Festival which this year celebrates its 50th anniversary. The all-inclusive programme includes a fantastic opening parade as well as the Ormand Flying Club's Annual Fly-In and display. There will also be a busking competition, free children's events, antiques and fine art fair, live music, sporting and literary events and a spectacular fireworks display which will illuminate the skies above the town.



BALLINAHOWN CRAFT VILLAGE

Located in the picturesque village of Ballinahown, a Tidy Towns Award winning village on the Offaly / Westmeath border is the Ballinahown Craft Village, a place to feast your eyes on Irish craft and design from artists, craftsman and sculptors. In the Celtic Roots Studio you will experience many aspects of craft. The bogwood sculptures sit alongside general crafts in this beautiful old house. The local bogwood used to create sculptures can be as old as 5000 years and was brought to the surface of the bog during peat production. This indigenous wood is collected and dried for two years before any artifacts are made by the artists in the Studio. www.celtic-roots.com

TREE HOUSE ADVENTURE, BIRR CASTLE

Kids will love the epic Treehouse Adventure Area in Birr Castle. The playground features Ireland's largest treehouse along with a bouncy pillow, sandpits and a hobbit hut. Little architects can build their very own castles in sandy play areas while the more adventurous are free to cross treetop rope bridges and secret tunnels. For inquisitive family members, take a step back in time and visit the historic Science Centre, then go for a stroll around their stunning gardens. That's where you'll find the Great Telescope - arguably the largest historic scientific instrument still working today. You'll find something for all the family to enjoy. www.birrcastle.com



MAGNIFICENT MALAHIDE CASTLE IS A STONE'S THROW AWAY

Malahide Castle is a magnificent medieval castle just 10 minutes from Dublin Airport. The castle is set on 250 acres of parkland with a story dating back to the 12th Century. Enjoy daily tours of the castle, visit the ornamental walled gardens and dine or shop at the Avoca Café and Retail store. We look forward to your visit.

For reservations please contact +353 1 8169538 or book online at www.malahidecastleandgardens.ie



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JFK Comes Home

Lorcan Mac Muiris looks at the Kennedy connection with Ireland



His beaming smile, distinctive New England drawl and glamorous, fabulously wealthy lifestyle would come to challenge Americans' image of the US Presidency, and his assassination in Dallas in 1963 would shock the world. JFK's brothers Bobby and Ted, his sister Jean, his father Joseph, his grandfather Patrick, his daughter Caroline, his grand-nephew Joe Kennedy III and other members of the far-flung Kennedy clan have been part of the political establishment of the United States for over a century, marking them out as arguably the most famous Irish-American family in the world.

JFK, known as 'Jack' to his family and friends, naturally gained a special place of affection in Irish hearts as the 20th century moved from the horror of the two world wars into a cautious optimism about the future, and his larger-than-life image bolstered Ireland's self-esteem on the international stage. The Kennedys had made their first foray into politics less than four decades after Jack's great-grandparents Patrick and Bridget left Ireland's Ancient East for Boston in the early part of the 19th century. Their home had been Dunganstown, near New Ross on the coast of County Wexford, though the Kennedy clan itself goes back much

i

JFK would not be the last president to highlight his Irish roots: In 1984 Ronald Reagan delighted the small village of Ballyporeen in County Tipperary by paying a visit to his ancestral home, and Barack Obama made a point of visiting his relatives in Moneygall, County Offaly, in 2011. Less auspiciously, Richard Nixon came to see his ancestors' homeland in Kildare in 1970.

further, to medieval Tipperary. JFK himself visited Dunganstown when he came to Ireland in 1963, nearly 120 years after Patrick and Bridget had left, and shortly before he met his end in Dallas. Today, his legacy and the legacy of the Kennedy family is maintained and explored in the locality.

The Kennedy Homestead

Five generations have passed since Patrick Kennedy was born here around 1823, and today his relatives – JFK's cousins – still work the land where the family made their living. This unique 'living museum' highlights Dunganstown's links to their most famous emigrant family, and remains a focal point for "the Kennedys who went away and the Kennedys who stayed behind." The interpretive centre at The Kennedy Homestead draws on a huge wealth of history, and has coordinated with the Kennedy Presidential Library to incorporate a wide range of sources and artefacts. The whole homestead has been preserved and restored, offering a glimpse into the

famine-stricken Ireland that Patrick Kennedy was forced to leave when he and Bridget set their sights on the new world and a legacy which would eventually come to shape America.

The John F Kennedy Arboretum

Set near New Ross, on beautiful and historic Hook Head, is the JFK Arboretum, dedicated to the memory of Jack Kennedy by Ireland's President Éamon de Valera in 1968 and built using donations from the USA. It covers 620 acres and boasts over 4500 different species of tree and shrub, some native to Ireland and others representative of a wide range of habitats all over the Earth. Of special interest is the track up to the summit of nearby Slievecoiltia, which provides a spectacular panorama of the arboretum below and the long, rugged rocks of Hook Head stretching out into the Celtic Sea. A short distance away is Dunmore East, in County Waterford, and Hook Head provides an incredible vista all the way down the Copper Coast towards the town of Dungarvan and distant Helvick Head.



GRAND HOTEL WICKLOW

The Grand Hotel in Wicklow Town has been welcoming guests to the scenic “Garden of Ireland” since 1896.

Situated in the charming seaside town of Wicklow, bordered by stunning coastline and surrounded by the Wicklow Mountains, making us the perfect setting for your visit to Wicklow.

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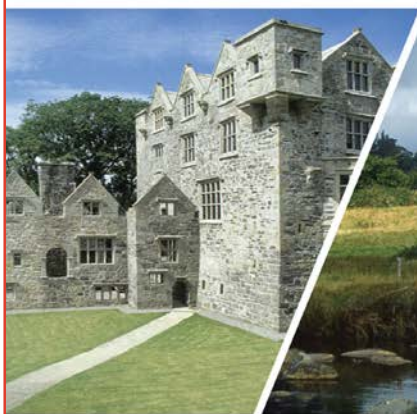
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DEAD GOOD

The Greats and Graves Of Glasnevin

Graveyards may not rank too high on many people's 'must see' lists when they're visiting a new country but, close to the heart of Dublin and adjacent to Ireland's beautiful National Botanic Gardens, Glasnevin Cemetery will challenge your preconceptions.

This is the first non-denominational cemetery in Ireland, permitted by the British at the tail-end of the Penal Law era when Catholics (and a small minority of nonconformist Protestants) were barred from celebrating their religion throughout the island of Ireland. The Penal Laws, which were in place in one form or another in Ireland from the 17th right up to the 20th century, was a form of discrimination “as well fitted for the oppression, impoverishment and degradation of a people, and the debasement in them of human nature itself, as ever proceeded from the perverted ingenuity of man” according to Edmund Burke. It was against this backdrop that Daniel O’Connell, still known as The Great Emancipator in Ireland, lobbied to allow for Catholics to hold funerary services and to enter their dead with dignity. Eventually – and very gradually – his arguments would begin to break down support for the Penal Laws, and from the day it opened, Glasnevin Cemetery was dedicated to allowing for the dignified burial of Dublin’s dead, no matter their religion.

As time went on, Glasnevin would become Ireland’s de facto national cemetery, and today it is the final resting place of patriots like O’Connell himself, the legendary Michael Collins, President Éamon de Valera and Countess Constance Markievicz – the first woman in the world to hold a cabinet position in a government. Also buried in Glasnevin are poets, artists and musicians like Brendan Behan, Gerard Manley Hopkins, Henry O’Neill and Luke



Kelly. They lie among one and a half million others, whose memories are kept alive in the vast and beautiful place, surrounded by the fast-paced hubbub of modern Dublin. Especially poignant is the “Angels’ Plot” – one of the few grounds where the bodies of unbaptised children are permitted to be buried in sanctified ground.

Unsurprisingly for a place where so much of Ireland’s recent history is laid out for all to see, the cemetery is noteworthy for other features too. Especially worth a look are the elaborate tombs and gravestones of many of the deceased here, ranging from the lofty stone tower, an imitation of the monastic ones of old, which stands over O’Connell’s ornate crypt, the finely carved Celtic cross headstones which adorn the graves of hundreds of those who rest here, the high walls and watchtowers – a reminder that the body-snatching trade was alive and well in Dublin almost into the 20th century – and of course the cemetery’s famous museum.

Glasnevin Cemetery Museum is a relatively recent addition to the expansive grounds. It opened in 2010, and features a series of interactive exhibits showcasing the cemetery’s



association with the movement towards religious equality in Ireland, the history of the cemetery itself, Ireland’s struggle for self-determination and independence, and the lives of some of the noteworthy people buried here. Its modern design blends impressively with its surroundings, adjacent to Daniel O’Connell’s high stone tower, and its café and shop are surprisingly popular.

The museum functions not only as an interpretive centre but is also a massive boon for anyone interested in exploring their Irish heritage. Glasnevin Cemetery has kept extensive records on every single one of its 1.5 million burials ever since 11-year-old Michael Carey became the first person to be interred here on February 22nd, 1832. It is even more valuable in this context since the Irish Civil War, when the Public Records Office at the Four Courts in Dublin went up in flames in 1922. If you want to explore your family’s Irish origins, the museum is a must-visit.

For more information about the cemetery itself and the museum, including opening hours, see their website: www.glasnevintrust.ie.

Visit Ireland's TALLEST ROUND TOWER!

Since 1832, more than 1.5 million people have been interred in Glasnevin. Located just 2.5km from Dublin's city centre, Glasnevin Cemetery covers 124 acres of glorious parkland with plenty to appreciate – perfect for those interested in exploring the legacies of Ireland's heroes.

A hauntingly gorgeous Victorian Garden cemetery each guide is passionate about sharing their love of heritage and history, telling the stories of Ireland's complex and fascinating history through daily walking tours turning a learning experience into a period of magic with a careful balance of passion, sensitivity and even fun.

Visitors to Glasnevin Cemetery can now climb the iconic O'Connell Tower for the first time in over 45 years - 198 steps to breath-taking views of Dublin and surrounding counties. The Tower is open to

visitors daily and bookings can be made online. The tower was built to commemorate the life of one of Ireland's greatest political figures, Daniel O'Connell (1775 – 1847) and took hundreds of skilled tradesmen 16 months to complete. O'Connell's final words "My body to Ireland, my heart to Rome, my soul to heaven" are inscribed in the elaborately designed walls of his crypt, located at the base of the tower.

Glasnevin, celebrating history, heritage and culture join this intriguing journey through Ireland's past.



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IN WATERFORD

An enchanting combination of history, a thriving foodie scene and a buzzing festival line-up – Waterford is not to be missed

It's Ireland's oldest city, and despite boasting a history of over 1,000 years, Waterford just keeps coming out with more surprises. Ancient Viking creations, Norman constructs and glittering expanses of immaculately crafted crystal – spend a weekend in this glittering gem in Ireland's Ancient East, and discover the not-so-secret treasures that make it truly special.

The crystal city

At the heart and soul of Waterford is the world-renowned Waterford Crystal. Since 1783, the factory has been crafting elegant crystal creations, and a host of craftsmen, glass blowers, cutters and engravers still work in Waterford to this day. Every day, two tons of molten crystal are shaped into the impossible and beautiful objects that give Waterford crystal its reputation for artistry around the globe.

Waterford's treasures

At Waterford's centre, the massive stone fortress of Reginald's Tower, named for Waterford's founder Ragnall, hosts beautifully wrought ancient metalwork, including the magnificent Kite Brooch, preserved through the ages. Climb to the top via the narrow spiral staircase, and look out over Waterford, imagining it as it must have appeared in the 13th century.

Close by, the Medieval Museum displays its own treasures, including the Great Charter Roll of 1373, which depicts Waterford as it was in the medieval ages, and the Cloth-of-Gold vestment, woven in Florence, embroidered in Bruges, and finding a home in Waterford. And finally, the Bishop's Palace is an elegant townhouse where you can discover another age of Waterford, the Georgian period.

Festival fun

When you've taken in your fair share of history, turn to the present – every August, Waterford hosts the Spraoi festival, named after the Irish word for fun. Live music and street performers light up the streets with a carnival atmosphere – big bands come in from all over the world, and floats take to the roads with explosions of colour!

And if you're looking for an altogether more relaxed experience, Waterford has a burgeoning food scene – their annual food festival gives you a delicious slice of Ireland's "sunny southeast". The homegrown delicacy is the blaa, a floury white roll that practically melts in the mouth. Top it with some of the homemade jams, spreads and cheeses you can pick up in the weekly farmer's market (every Saturday on Jenkin's Lane) and head to the quayside to enjoy.



THINGS TO SEE AND DO IN WICKLOW

ROUND IRELAND YACHT RACE, JUNE 29TH - JULY 1ST

The Round Ireland is Ireland's premier offshore yacht race, and the second longest race in the Royal Ocean Racing Club calendar. The first race took place in 1980 with only sixteen boats. Since then, held biennially, the fleet has grown steadily, attracting a record 64 entrants from all over the world. In the past, boats competing have ranged from a 98-footer former "round the world" maxi, to club boats one third the size, with all shades in between. The warm greeting and when returning to Wicklow brings competitors back year after year. 2018 marks its 40th year anniversary of the race, renowned for being one of the most gruelling offshore races in the global calendar.

NATIONAL AQUARIUM SEALIFE CENTRE

The National SEA LIFE Centre is one of Ireland's largest Marine and Freshwater Zoos and the only aquarium on the east coast of Ireland. SEA LIFE centre is completely indoors making it a perfect all weather activity. From sharks to seahorses, all creatures of the deep are on show at the aquarium, and you'll be able to get closer to them than ever before. With 30 displays, a kids quiz trail, a colouring table, an indoor play area for younger children, and hourly public feeds of animals, you won't get bored. www.sealife.ie.

BRAY AIR DISPLAY, JULY 28TH - JULY 29TH

Enjoy Ireland's Biggest Air Festival on Saturday, July 28th and Sunday, July 29th. Visitors will be treated to gravity-defying manoeuvres, flyovers and aerobatic performances that will leave you speechless. We promise you it's going to be an incredible show! While you wait for the activities to start in the skies over Bray there's some great events/activities on the ground from 12 noon. They include a static display, food, craft & business village, helicopter pleasure flights, a fun fair and live music. Why not take a stroll along the magnificent Victorian prom, checking out the spectacular views from Bray Head or the Cliff Walk and visit Bray's vibrant town centre. The event is free. brayairdisplay.com

POWERSCOURT ESTATE

Powerscourt is one of the world's great gardens and is located 20km south of Dublin city centre. Set against the backdrop of the great Sugarloaf Mountain, Powerscourt is stunning in every season. From the ornate Italian Gardens, to the formal walks of the Rose and Kitchen Gardens, there are many hidden treasures to explore. With over 200 varieties of trees, shrubs and flowers this 47 acres has something for everyone. The gardens were laid out over a period of 150 years and were designed to create a space that was part of the wider landscape, creating one of the most majestic vistas in Ireland. Fine statuary and ironworks collected from across Europe adorn these magnificent gardens. The Palladian Mansion was destroyed by fire in 1974 and re-opened in 1996, but not to its original glory. It is now home to a range of craft and interior shops featuring Irish design. The Terrace cafe offers Irish artisan home cooked cuisine. powerscourt.com



Russborough House, Co. Wicklow

Russborough is a stately house situated near the Blessington Lakes in County Wicklow, between the towns of Blessington and Ballymore Eustace and is reputed to be the longest house in Ireland, with a frontage measuring 210 m/700 ft. It is an example of Palladian architecture, designed by Richard Cassels for Joseph Leeson, 1st Earl of Milltown and built between 1741 and 1755. The interior of the house contains some ornate plasterwork on the ceilings by the Lafranchini brothers, who also collaborated with Cassels on Carton House. Sir Alfred & Lady Beit, heirs to a fortune made in diamond mining, purchased Russborough house and its parklands in 1952. In these new owners Russborough was fortunate to find custodians with both the means and passion to maintain it. Over the course of two decades the Beits added their unrivalled collection of Old Masters paintings, furnishings and decorative arts to the house. www.russborough.ie



Russborough
HOUSE & PARKLANDS

WHERE HISTORY
& CULTURE LIVE ON



Russborough is home to one of the most impressive private art collections in Ireland which may be viewed by taking a guided tour of the house. The 18th century walled garden has been under restoration since 2011 and is now open for pre booked groups.



For Family Fun there is a Maze, Fairy Trail, Playground & Tree Trail. Free coach park, car park has a €2 entry fee. Restaurant & gift shop.

Open 7 days a week from 1st March to 23rd December

Location: 20 km from Dublin off the N81, 4.5km outside Blessington, Co. Wicklow | Sat Nav GPS: Lat 53.135517 Long 6.572386
Tel: + 353 (0)45 865239 | Email: info@russborough.ie | www.russborough.ie



pubs of the Ancient East

sláinte!

Wherever you find yourself in the Ancient East, there's a pub to match your mood.

high spirits:

Henry Downes, Co. Waterford

Established in 1759, and in the same family for six generations, John de Bromhead's unusual pub in Waterford is one of the few remaining houses to bottle its own whiskey. Why not have a dram and soak up the atmosphere?

stayin' alive:

McCarthy's Fethard, Co. Tipperary

McCarthy's has a catchphrase: "We wine you, dine you and bury you". This is a pub, restaurant and undertaker service all rolled into one. Open since the 1850s, it's functioned as everything from grocery shop to draper. The counters and packed cabinets are throwbacks to its quirky history.

record breaking:

Sean's Bar, Co. Westmeath

This 1200-year-old pub is listed in the Guinness Book of Records as the oldest pub in Ireland and it hasn't changed for centuries, from the sawdust on the floor to the cannon ball decorations and open turf fire. Next door is Athlone Castle, a 12th century Norman pile.

time travel:

Morrissey's Pub, Co. Laois

Morrissey's opened in 1775 as a pub-come-grocery shop and the bric-a-brac produce lining the shelves are reminders from the house's earlier multi-tasking days. Original 19th century décor makes for a cosy setting. And on chilly days, warm up next to the pot belly stove.



high and dry:

Johnnie Fox's Pub, Co. Dublin

Situated in Glencullen on top of the Dublin mountains, Johnnie Fox's is one of Ireland's most famous traditional Irish pubs - and is also famed as the highest pub in the country. Why not relax and enjoy an Irish dancing performance at their famous Hooley Night dinner and show.



counting sheep:

Mutton Lane Inn, Cork city

A Cork pub much admired, the Mutton Lane Inn is probably one of the oldest drinking establishments in the city outside of the North/ South Main Street axis. Situated off St. Patrick's Street, Mutton Lane is one of many alleyways that lead into the famed English Market and used to be where live sheep were run into the market.



raise a glass:

Billy Byrnes, Kilkenny city

One of Kilkenny's most famous public houses, Billy Byrnes is more of a social club than a bar and a popular meeting place for young and old with a reputation for good beer, good food and a warm welcome. Whether you are looking for a bit of local colour, some top quality live music, or just a quiet corner to read the paper you will find it there.

NATURAL Wonders

Lorcan Mac Muiris discovers that Ireland's Ancient East has got everything the outdoor enthusiast could possibly want: forests, lakes, mountains, valleys, cycle tracks and walking routes, spectacular caves and of course miles and miles and miles of magnificent coastline, dotted with bays, inlets, harbours, beaches, cliffs, dunes and more.

There's no better way to appreciate Ireland's unique ecology and ecosystem than by getting out into it, and whether your idea of "the great outdoors" is lazing on a broad beach for a day, hiking along the top of a mountain ridge, or exploring ancient valleys peppered with history and archaeology, the island's compact size means you're never more than a short journey away from an incredible natural experience. Here are some of the best!

Hiking Trails

Nearly every county in Ireland's Ancient East has clearly marked hiking trails, optimised to showcase the beauty and diversity of Ireland's scenery and wildlife. From the Tain Way in County Louth, retracing the footsteps of the warriors of one of Ireland's greatest legends, The Cattle Raid of Cooley, in County Louth, right the way around to the challenging Allihies Loop in the far west of County Cork, dozens of well-signposted, popular hiking trails offer something to appeal to everyone, whether novice hiker or dedicated hillwalker. See www.irishtrails.ie for maps, tips and routes. You can choose your route to suit your needs: some are a pleasant stroll for a few hours, whereas some, such as the epic trek from the breathtaking Rock of Cashel in Tipperary to the round tower and ancient ruins at Ardmore in Waterford, will take days to cover.

Cycling Tours

Bike hire is ubiquitous in Ireland, and with good reason! Cycling is one of the most popular options for visitors who want to experience the as much of natural

Ireland as possible and provides a great way to really get up close and personal with the countryside. The truly hard-core cyclist will delight in veering off the main road and tackling the more isolated spots before enjoying a spot of camping (use official sites or make sure you have the landowner's permission first), but even inexperienced cyclists can make the most of it, and with the nation's network of dedicated cycle routes, such as the magnificent Waterford Greenway, it's easy to enjoy that distinctive feeling of freedom that only cycling can bring. Your hotel will usually have information about local bike-hire opportunities, and some shops even have deals with their counterparts elsewhere, making it possible to book a bike for a one-way trip before dropping it off for someone else to bring back.

Horseback Riding

Some country house hotels offer special deals for guests who feel like saddling up for a trot through the countryside, but even if that's not the case, most areas are near enough to a stable or riding school which will offer special deals on riding lessons or a horseback trek. Irish people love horses, and the quality of instruction for beginners is generally very high. More experienced riders can hire a guide and see the countryside from a whole new perspective. Make sure you check online before you get there, as you might have to book well in advance...as popular as they are, horses take a lot of space to look after and demand may be significant, especially in spring, summer and autumn.

Take To The Sea!

With 5000km of coastline, the island of Ireland is well served by a opportunities to

hire boats, yachts, sea kayaks, canoes and more...and that's without even mentioning inland lakes and waterways. Coastline tours are a fantastic way to get away from the hustle and bustle of the land and see Ireland from a whole new perspective. Sailing and sea kayaking lessons are available all down the east coast in the summer months, as are surfing and bodyboarding lessons; it's usually possible to hire surfboards, kayaks, bodyboards and wetsuits too but as always, it's a good idea to check in advance. If you're planning on heading out for a day of surfing, it's a good idea to carefully check the weather first: Irish weather is famously changeable, and you may end up missing out on your chosen activity due to unfavourable conditions. Some locations offer scuba diving excursions and beginner's scuba lessons too.

Beachgoers who intend to take a dip in the sea should keep an eye out for Blue Flag beaches. These are beaches which have passed rigorous standards for safety, cleanliness and water quality. The Blue Flag award is also granted to marinas with exceptional water quality.

Of course, whether you're surfing, kayaking, diving or even just swimming, you must always be sure that you're in a safe spot: pay close attention to warning signs and obey them to the letter, and take advice from locals before you set out. Swimmers should stick to spots with on-duty lifeguards, and must obey their instructions at all times. Beaches with red flags or without a flag are not safe for swimming.

Always remember, no matter what outdoor activity you choose, to help protect Ireland's delicate ecosystem by ensuring that you leave an area exactly as you found it: bag your litter, clean your campsite, ensure that you campfires are fully extinguished, and if you open a gate, be sure to close it again!

BrookLodge & Macreddin Village

Multi-award winning and located in a picturesque Wicklow valley, Macreddin Village is the perfect spot for a relaxing break and is only an hour from South Dublin.

A key food destination, hosting the renowned Strawberry Tree Restaurant, Ireland's first certified Organic Restaurant and La Taverna Armento an Italian inspired restaurant.

The luxurious Wells Spa features a hammam massage room, wet and dry floatation, heated relaxation loungers, a mud chamber, steam room, sauna, outdoor hot tub and indoor to the outdoor swimming pool.

BrookLodge & Macreddin Village have Midweek Bed & Breakfast available from just €65pps. Call the Macreddin Village Reservations Team on 0402 36444 to book your relaxing breakaway.
www.brooklodge.com.



Enjoy a Wild & Organic Dining Experience along Ireland's Ancient East

BrookLodge & Macreddin Village is home to Ireland's first certified Organic Restaurant - The Strawberry Tree, boasting a daily changing menu that reflects the seasons and featuring the freshest Wild & Organic foods.

At the heart of The Strawberry Tree Restaurant lies the treasure trove that is the Wild Foods Pantry which holds much of the produce foraged and prepared by the Kitchen Brigade.

Call the Macreddin Village Crew on 0402 36444 to secure your Wild & Organic Experience at The Strawberry Tree Restaurant

BrookLodge & Macreddin Village, County Wicklow
E: info@brooklodge.com W: www.brooklodge.com



THINGS TO SEE AND DO IN CORK

CORK HARBOUR FESTIVAL, 2ND-10TH JUNE

Taking place in the second largest natural harbour in the world, the Cork Harbour Festival is a celebration of Ireland's unique maritime culture and heritage. It attracts thousands of spectators and participants over the June Bank Holiday Weekend and the following week, connecting the city and coastal communities. The festival features dozens of exciting events - both on and off the water. The flagship event of the festival, Ocean to City - An Rás Mór draws hundreds of participants from all over the world competing in everything from traditional wooden boats, currachs, gigs and longboats to Chinese dragon boats, kayaks and canoes. More than just a race, Ocean to City represents a personal challenge, a shared effort and a coming together of people who love the water and love their boats.



THE ENGLISH MARKET

The origins of the English Market trace back to the times of King James I in 1610, some four hundred years previously and has been officially trading since 1788. A mix of traditional Cork fare and exciting new foods from afar, combined with long standing family-run stalls contribute to the unique appeal and atmosphere of this market. Long recognised by locals as a place to meet, eat and shop, the English Market offers tourists and locals alike a tantalising range of Irish food. Culinary delights include quality meats and fish, herbs, spices, fruit, vegetables, baked delicacies and speciality cheeses. Some of the more unique traditional fare includes drisheen (blood sausage), tripe, spiced beef and buttered eggs.

SPIKE ISLAND

Winner of Europe's Leading Tourist Attraction at the World Traveller Awards, Spike Island has been host to a 6th century monastery, and a 24 acre fortress, the largest convict depot in the world in Victorian times and centuries of homes. The island's rich history has included monks and monasteries, rioters and redcoats, captains and convicts and sinners and saints. Today the island is dominated by the 200 year old Fort Mitchel, the star shaped fortress which became a prison holding over 2300 prisoners. Take the scenic ferry ride from Kennedy Pier, Cobh, and enjoy a fully guided tour of the island and fortress. Get captured in the history and mystery of this magical heritage island.



FOTA WILDLIFE PARK

Opened in 1983, Fota Wildlife Park is Cork's most visited tourist attraction. The Park is set on 70 acres on the scenic Fota Island only 15 minutes from Cork City. The park is not like an ordinary zoo; here you can come face to face with free roaming animals and birds from all parts of the world. So whether it's a kangaroo that hops in front of you or a ring tailed lemur which jumps down from a tree, each visit is sure to bring its own fantastic memories. In addition to the wonderful array of free roaming animals, visitors also have the opportunity to see highly endangered species such as the rothschild giraffe, European bison, lion-tailed macaque and scimitar-horned oryx, most of them without the obstacle of fenced-in exhibits.



Hopkins Communications – Integration is key!

Judy Hopkins is Director at Hopkins Communications, an award winning integrated marketing communications agency, headquartered in Cork with office in Dublin and Limerick, and partnerships in the UK and US.

With a wealth of industry and agency experience, Judy heads up the PR, events and online department at the national creative marketing and PR agency. She is former Chair of the Marketing Institute of Ireland Cork region, a broadcaster on Cork City Community Radio 100.5FM and a member of the Public Relations Institute of Ireland, Cork Chamber, The Digital Marketing Institute and Network Ireland.

Celebrating over 28 years in business Hopkins Communications' clients range from SMEs, to large multinationals, to state and semi-

state bodies, across all industries including brands such as Dairygold, Munster Rugby, Pro14 Rugby, Barry & Fitzwilliam, Bon Secours Hospitals, Trend Micro, The K Club, IT Tralee, Shannon Ferries, Shannon Group, Pallas Foods, Musgrave, The Talbot Collection, Rowing Ireland, Compub and elave.

Their core team of 20 employees cover all aspects of campaigns from creative concepts to concise delivery and evaluation, and work in conjunction with over 60 national part-time promotional staff, in addition to their partner companies and contract workers.

Hopkins Communications services include; Public Relations, events and promotions, advertising, graphic design & print, digital media marketing, web design and development services.

www.h-c.ie



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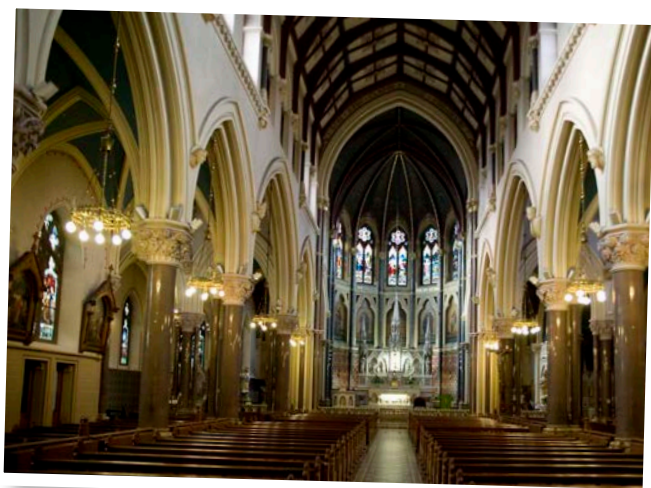
THINGS TO SEE AND DO IN LOUTH

VANTASTIVAL, 1ST-3RD JUNE

Vantastival is a family-friendly festival which takes place during the June bank holiday weekend. A host of live musical acts will perform, while a focus on the campervan lifestyle brings an extra dimension to the only festival of its kind in Ireland. Other attractions include gourmet food stalls, festival traders, scheduled kids' activities, art, craft and many other quirky additions, ensuring that Vantastival has something for everyone, with or without a campervan! www.vantastival.com

ST. PETER'S CHURCH, DROGHEDA

St. Peter's Roman Catholic Church in West Street, Drogheda is world famous for housing the shrine of St Oliver Plunkett. The first church on the site was built in 1791 to a design by Francis Johnston and the present church incorporates part of that building and it was opened in 1884. The facade is an imposing structure in the Gothic style, built of local limestone. St. Oliver Plunkett, was born at Loughcrew near Oldcastle, Co Meath and trained for the priesthood abroad, being ordained in 1654 and becoming Archbishop of Armagh in 1669. He spent a lot of time in Drogheda and is credited with bringing the Jesuits to town and opening a number of schools. His preserved head forms the centrepiece of the shrine in St. Peter's Church.

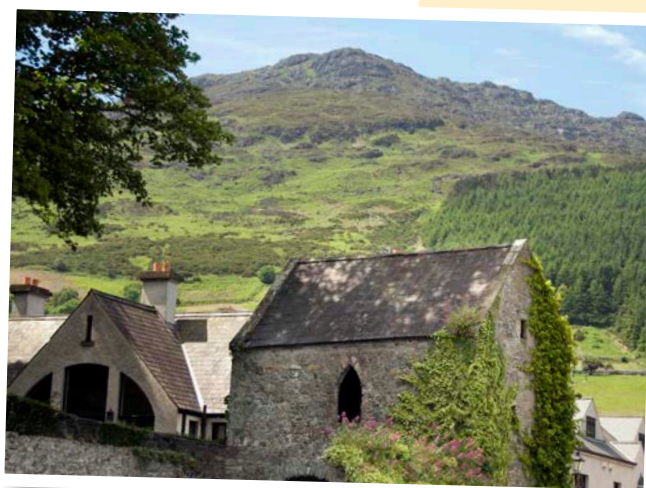


FLEADH CHEOIL NA hÉIREANN 2018, 12TH-19TH AUGUST

Fleadh Cheoil na hÉireann is the world's largest annual celebration of Irish music, language, song and dance. For many, it is the culmination of months of hard work and practice as they compete against fellow musicians, singers and dancers to achieve the recognition of being an All-Ireland champion. For others it is a unique and welcoming festival featuring the best of traditional arts. Fleadh Cheoil na hÉireann 2018 will take place in Drogheda. It will feature workshops for young musicians, competitions, concerts, singing, céilis and lots of fun.

MEDIEVAL CARLINGFORD

Carlingford is a magical village, full of character and is one of the best preserved medieval villages in Ireland. Its history, narrow medieval streets, lanes that lead to the harbour, majestic Slieve Foye mountain and the famous mountains of Mourne across the lough all combine to make Carlingford unique in Ireland. Today the inherent natural beauty can equally be appreciated on land or sea. Guided walking tours, cycling along the Great Eastern Greenway, horse trekking through the mountains, sailing, yacht charter, windsurfing, canoeing and water skiing can all be enjoyed here in Carlingford. The town has 14 reputable restaurants, cosy pubs and great accommodation. Enjoy the spectacular panoramic views and listen to the wealth of myths and legends which makes Carlingford unique.





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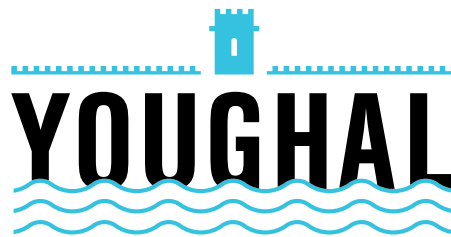
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Youghal, Co. Cork is a historic port town in Ireland's Ancient East with miles of sandy beach and a rich medieval history. Youghal sits midway between Cork City and Waterford City.

This largely unspoilt and undiscovered part of South East Ireland is a unique place, full of medieval history which has now been brought to life! We have a number of attractions in Youghal of international significance which can be incorporated into any itinerary, including tours of the newly opened Youghal Clock Gate Tower and St. Mary's Collegiate Church. However, no visit to Youghal is complete without a stroll along the 500m boardwalk. Our tours are suitable for F.I.T Groups, leisure and incentive visits.

For Tourist Information: www.youghal.ie Tel: 024-92447





Ancient Roots MODERN MAGIC

Three cities of
Ireland's Ancient East





Most of Ireland's cities and larger towns are in the east, facing the Irish Sea and the island of Britain. Trade with our larger neighbour was the east coast's lifeblood for centuries, and Dublin, Waterford and Cork, as well as important port towns like Rosslare and Wexford have historically been vital hubs for the movement of people and goods. Unfortunately, environmental and economic changes – and a lack of infrastructural investment – have meant that a lot of formerly bustling ports became shadows of their former selves during the 20th century...but many have taken up the slack by concentrating on tourism, which is excellent news for explorers of Ireland's Ancient East!

The majority of the larger settlements on the east coast were founded by the Vikings, sometimes in places where the native Irish had set up smaller, more scattered settlements, as in the case of Dublin, or where there was already a small monastic settlement, as happened in Cork. Those older congregations themselves sometimes grew at places which had been inhabited for millennia, as is the case in the beautiful seaside town of Youghal, in County Cork: the earliest inhabitants lived there in the Neolithic, about 5000 years ago. A church and an associated ecclesiastical settlement were in place by the 6th century, and the Vikings established the nucleus of the modern town about five centuries later.

Successive layers of heritage, from monks to Vikings, to Norman and British landowners, to modern links with Britain and Europe, have given the towns of Ireland's Ancient East a distinctive character, with layer upon layer of history evident in everything from the layouts of streets to the architecture, place names and even the local traditions and accents. This has resulted in vibrant, welcoming, interesting, fun destinations for the 21st Century explorer to see!

Dublin

Ireland's capital and by far its largest, Dublin (Baile Átha Cliath in Irish; the town of the hurdle ford, wears its ancient heritage



on its sleeve even as it's become a modern, exciting European city. Nearly one in every four Irish people lives here, and in recent years the city has also become a melting pot for the newest members of the Irish family, who have arrived from all over the world and are proud to call the place their home. Dublin is a city of contrasts, and the ancient, narrow, twisting streets of the heart of the old city give way to wide, tree-lined Georgian and Victorian avenues in the space of just a few metres.

Dublin is home to a vast array of cultural experiences: here you can find food from all over the world in the capital's thousands of restaurants, to refuel as you explore the museums, art galleries, and ancient buildings which show so much of the city's history.

A short stroll will take you from Christ Church Cathedral, founded by the Viking warrior Sitric

Silkenbeard, to the famous Temple Bar, popular for its legendary pubs and nightlife. The Phoenix Park is an enormous green space of 1750 acres, beginning just a short stroll from the city centre. Its size alone marks it out as special, as it's one of the largest parks of its kind in Europe. The Phoenix Park is home to Dublin Zoo, as well as Áras An Úachtarán, the home of the President Of Ireland. Dublin is also famous as the home of Guinness, one of Ireland's most famous contributions to the world, and no visit is complete without a tour of the Guinness Storehouse, one of Ireland's most popular tourist attractions, where you can learn more about "the black stuff" and its history in Ireland and abroad.

Check it out...

While in Dublin, check out the incredible library at Trinity College, Dublin, an inspiration for the creators of the Star Wars and Harry Potter movies and home to one of the world's most incredible collections of books... including the Book Of Kells, one of the world's most famous and precious works of art. Then make your way to Temple Bar for a drink and to experience the live music and energy of this popular area! For a taste of real a real Dublin pub you can't beat The Long Hall on South Great George's Street, one of the country's oldest and finest establishments, and a second home to poets, singers, writers and artists of note. No TVs, no bar food, no children allowed...this is an old school pub experience in a setting which hasn't changed in well over a century. Fans of fine dining should make a point of visiting the phenomenal Restaurant Patrick Gilbaud, the only restaurant in Ireland with two Michelin stars. You'll find it at the beautiful Merrion Hotel. Reservations are advised!

Waterford

Waterford is Ireland's oldest city, founded by the Vikings in the year 853. It remained their stronghold for nearly a century until the native Déise tribe defeated them, but that Irish victory was short lived, and the Vikings returned in the early 10th century under Ottar and Ragnar, and built a heavily fortified town. 160 years later, in 1170, Waterford would become the first city to be conquered by the Normans, who arrived here at the invitation of Diarmuid Mac Murchada (Dermot MacMurrough), who wanted them to help him claim kingship over Ireland. Diarmuid, who had been deposed as King of Leinster for kidnapping the Queen of Breifne, made a deal with the Welsh Norman Lord Richard de Clere, nicknamed "Strongbow".

In return for his help in subduing Diarmuid's enemies, Strongbow would be granted the hand of Aoife, Diarmuid's daughter, in marriage and would become the ancestor of the future kings of Leinster. The invasion was a success, and Strongbow and Aoife were married in Reginald's Tower, a Viking bastion which still stands at the very heart of Waterford City and is today a must-see museum. One year later, in 1171, King Henry II of England, fearful of Strongbow's new-found power in Ireland, set sail for Waterford, setting the stage for centuries of English domination over Ireland.

Reginald's Tower is the oldest continually used civic building in Ireland, and is believed to have been the very first building in Ireland to have been built using mortar. It's also the only civic building in the country to have retained its original, Viking name. It is the most famous of a network of Viking towers which still stand in Waterford, and are among the best examples in the world of medieval town defences. As well as serving as the site of the wedding of Strongbow and Aoife, it has been used as a mint, a magazine, and a prison, and was briefly home to King John, nemesis of Robin Hood, in the 13th century. A cannonball is visible embedded in the tower's walls: it was fired from one of Oliver Cromwell's cannon when he besieged Waterford in 1650. Local legend has it that King James II scaled the tower to stand on its roof and look out over Ireland one last time before leaving for exile in France following his defeat at The Battle Of The Boyne in 1690.



St Ann's Church, Dublin



Check it out...

Waterford provides a wealth of experiences for young and old. The Waterford Treasures Medieval Museum should be near the top of anyone's list; this eye-catching building contains a trove of incredible artifacts and amazing exhibits which bring the city's remarkable history vividly to life, including genuine medieval clothing, ancient maps, weapons and equipment. The museum itself is a historical artifact, and encompasses buildings from the 13th and 15th centuries! The Waterford Crystal Visitor Centre focuses on the city's world-famous crystal, including breathtaking displays of rare examples, the crystal's incredible production process, and the painstaking art and craft of making some of the world's most beautiful and sought-after pieces. Walkers and cyclists alike are well catered for, especially with the Waterford Greenway, which tours the stunning Copper Coast all the way to the vivacious town of Dungarvan. Nearby is the Comeragh Drive, which takes you through the beautiful Comeragh Mountains and reveals some of Ireland's hidden scenic treasures.

Cork

Cork City is nestled between the steep sides of the Lee Valley, built over a network of islands in the marshy land at the mouth of the Lee. Some branches of the river still flow under the city streets, and modern visitors can still see old mooring posts and water gates leading today to paved streets in the city centre, showing just how recently the river was covered up.

Cork is Ireland's second largest city, and its residents good-naturedly describe it as "The Real Capital". It's also known as The Rebel City, and Corkonians are proud of their distinctive history. A very strong French Huguenot influence left its mark on Cork's attitude, cuisine and even the oft-lampooned local accent and slang, and it's not uncommon for even other Irish people to be left behind when listening to a Corkonian conversation in full swing.

The heart of Cork is situated on Morriston Island, sandwiched between the two remaining overground branches of the River Lee, but the city has long spread out



The library of Trinity College Dublin

over the sides of the valley, and now extends up and down the harbour. Cork's mixed heritage is echoed today in its wide variety of places to go and things to do. The city is full of enchanting nooks and crannies, art galleries, cultural hotspots, theatres, exceptional pubs and restaurants and inviting, beautiful green spaces, especially towards the western end, where the grounds of University College Cork, Fitzgerald's Park and the Lee Fields provide ample opportunity to slow down and step away from the busy streets. The city has a vibrant and thriving nightlife, and an outstanding local music scene, and you can find everything from traditional Irish music sessions to jazz and blues, storytelling nights, comedy clubs, plays, street performances, swing dancing and much more.

The busy city centre is long and narrow, and enclosed by St Patrick's Street, a long, S-shaped thoroughfare built over a channel of the Lee, and St Oliver Plunkett Street. Between the two, you'll find everything from artisan coffee houses to curiosity shops, bars of



The English Market, Cork

all shapes and sizes, hidden gems of restaurants serving everything from traditional Irish food to exceptional world cuisine, and Cork's famous English Market, heaven on earth for foodies. The English Market is Cork's go-to place for everything from fresh, locally-caught fish to fine wines, world cuisine, outstanding cheeses and organic produce, adventurous new fusions and more. At the other side of St Patrick's Street is the Huguenot Quarter, a haven for oppressed French Protestants who fled here to escape persecution in their homeland. It's a warren of little streets branching off towards the Lee, filled with myriad shops and restaurants.

Check it out...

Cork is an ideal base for exploring the southern part of Ireland's Ancient East as well as an exceptional destination in its own right. Beer lovers should check out The Franciscan Well on North Mall, one of Ireland's oldest microbreweries and makers of world-famous prizewinning beers. Vegetarians and meat-lovers alike will be blown away by the incredible meat-free fare of Café Paradiso, on the Western Road. Explore the Stone Corridor and gorgeous riverside grounds of University College Cork, and be sure to visit the museum at nearby Fitzgerald's Park for a look back through millennia of Cork's history.

10 REASONS TO VISIT CAVAN THIS YEAR

Today's visitor to Ireland wants to find something different, authentic, and surprising on their travels, and not just tick the same old boxes on the guide book. One of the gems in the Hidden Heartland of this beautiful island of ours, County Cavan has lots to offer prospective visitors, from jaw-dropping scenery, to lip-smacking cuisine, not to mention a few of the aforementioned surprises. Here's just a few of our favourite things to do in the Breffni County:



CAVAN BURREN PARK

Located just outside the village of Blacklion, this stunning prehistoric landscape is set against the magnificent backdrop of Cuilcagh Mountain and West Cavan. The park is filled with fascinating Neolithic monuments, and features an interpretive centre and accessible walks, with handy information posts to guide you.

MARBLE ARCH CAVES UNESCO GLOBAL GEOPARK

One of three UNESCO Geoparks in Ireland, and the world's only cross-border Geopark, it covers most of Counties Fermanagh and Cavan, stretching from Cavan Town in the centre all the way to Dowra in the west of the county. Geoparks are areas with geological heritage of international significance, which contain sites of archaeological and historical significance, areas with interesting flora and fauna and also sites that have an interesting folklore behind them. Notable Geopark sites include Moneygashel Cashel, Tullydermot Falls, and The Shannon Pot, the source of the Shannon.

CAVAN COUNTY MUSEUM

Housed in a beautiful 19th century building in Ballyjamesduff, Cavan County Museum is home to the WW1 Trench Experience, the largest replica trench anywhere in the UK and Ireland. Painstakingly constructed to the specifications of a Somme trench, it's brilliantly evocative. Opened in 2016 were the 1916 Rising Experience, a walk-through exhibition bringing the experience of the Rising to life, complete with replica GPO facade, and a Battle of the Somme exhibit. Named in the Irish Independent's 20 must-visit attractions for 2018. See www.cavanmuseum.ie.

CLOUGH OUGHTER CASTLE

One of the last Irish outposts to hold out against the forces of Oliver Cromwell, it was here that the great Ulster General Owen Roe O'Neill lost his life. Its walls still blasted by cannon-fire, it stands like a lone sentry in the middle of the beautiful and isolated Lough Oughter. Cavan Canoe Centre hire canoes and rowing boats and can arrange guided boat tours, which are highly recommended.

MACNEAN HOUSE AND RESTAURANT

Home to the nation's best-loved chef, Neven Maguire, and set in the stunning little West Cavan village of Blacklion, this multi-award winning restaurant is on every foodie's bucket-list. Demand is understandably high, but it's always worth checking to see if there's a last-minute cancellation. See www.nevenmaguire.com.

THE TASTE OF CAVAN

Taking place on 10th and 11th August 2018 in Cavan Town, this is the biggest and best food event in the north-west, attracting tens of thousands of food lovers and families each year. Top celebrity chefs, over 120 stalls providing tasty samples of local food and drink, and lots of great family friendly activities too. See www.tasteofcavan.ie.

STRETCH YOUR LEGS

Cavan is a walker's paradise with stunning trails dotted across the county from east to west. Whether you're looking for a relaxing lakeside stroll, or you're a seasoned hillwalker, there's nowhere better to stretch your legs, breathe in and savour your surroundings. Cavan Walking Festival, which takes place each May, is an ideal introduction to a county that's 'made for walking'. See www.thisiscavan.ie/walking.

ANGLING

They say there are 365 lakes in Cavan, one for every day of the year. Truth is, that's probably a conservative estimate; rivers and lakes are everywhere, and they're teeming with course and game fish. Lough Sheelin, in particular, is one of Europe's best trout fisheries. It's no wonder English and German tourists have been enjoying Cavan hospitality for decades. See www.thisiscavan.ie.

BEAR ESSENTIALS

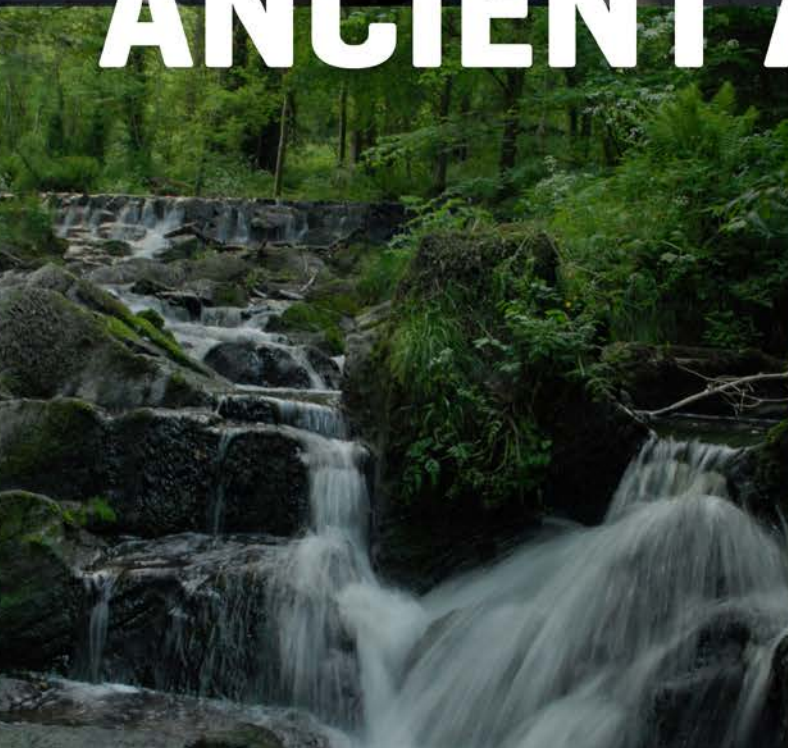
If you go down to Bawnboy today, you're in for a nice surprise...Bear Essentials is a magical and spacious place which is home to Ireland's largest selection of teddy bears and also hosts an array of build-your-own-bear workshops, events, crafts and parties. The Silver Bear Centre also showcases old and famous Teddy Bears, Irish artefacts, and even a Teddy Bear Hospital, where your old furry buddy can be made good as new! See www.bear essentials.ie.

CAVAN CANOE AND ACTIVITY CENTRE

Located at Inishmore, just 10 minutes from Cavan Town, Cavan Canoe Centre is the perfect place to stretch your legs and enjoy some fresh air and fun activity. Whether it's a boat trip to Clough Oughter Castle, or more high-octane activity, Cavan Canoe Centre has it all, from stand up paddling, canoeing and splash and dash, to cycling and pony trekking. During the summer months, Cavan Canoe Centre also operates out of the scenic Killykeen Forest Park with canoe and bike hire available. www.cavancanoeing.com



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Explore the stunning, unspoiled
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Adventure is on your
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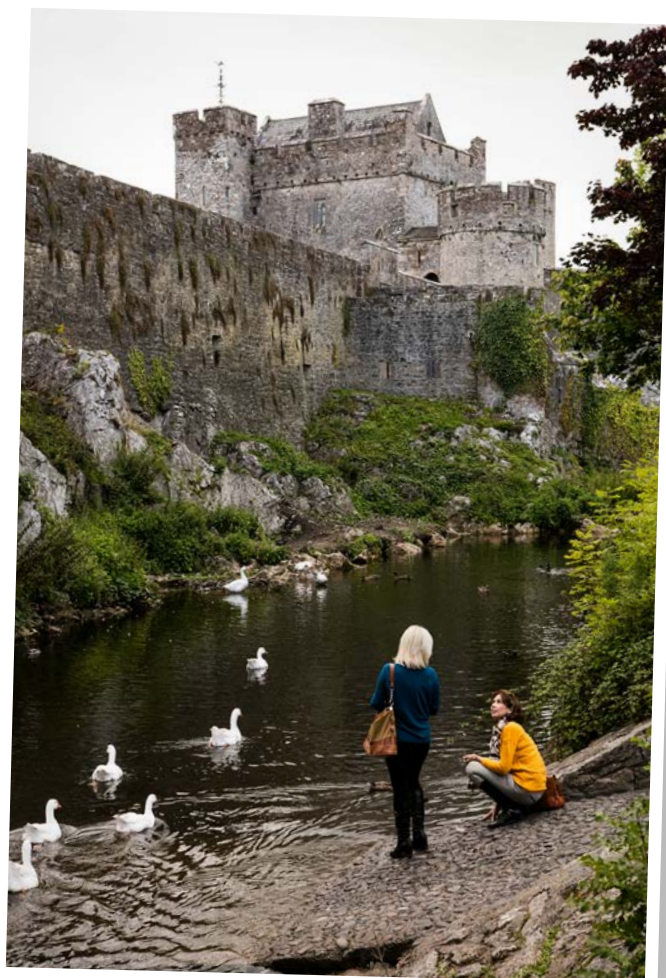
THINGS TO SEE AND DO IN TIPPERARY

JUNCTION FESTIVAL, CLONMEL, 2ND – 8TH JULY

Clonmel Junction is a varied festival with a focus on performance with theatre, circus, dance, rock, world music and comedy all featured. A unique aspect are the festival cafes, which see artists convert disused shops and offices in the town into artist spaces where they host a range of workshops during the week. There is always a big international element to the festival, and in previous years artists from the USA, Belgium, Switzerland, Bulgaria, Romania, Italy, Spain, Norway and the UK have all performed. www.junctionfestival.com

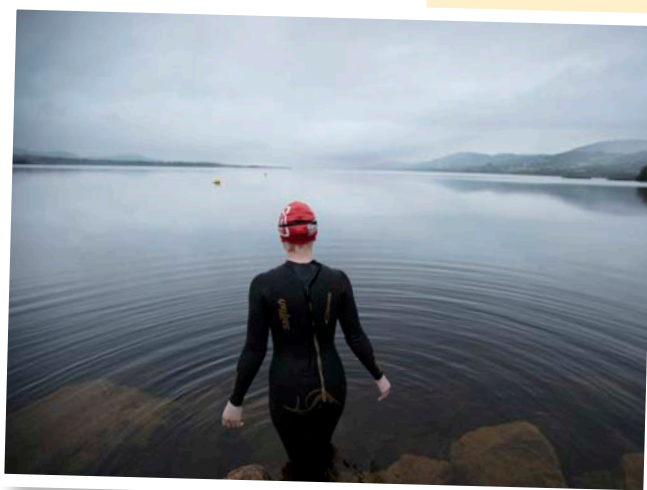
THE BUTLER TRAIL

The Butler Trail is a fantastic experience that takes you around Tipperary revealing the influence and impact the Butler family dynasty had on the physical, social and economic fabric of these Tipperary towns and communities. The route links Carrick-on-Suir, Clonmel and Cahir and there is interpretive signage to guide and inform you along the route in each town. There is also an app and audio guide to go along with the experience. www.tipperary.com/butler-trail



LOUGH DERG

Lough Derg is Ireland's third largest lake after Lough Neagh and Lough Corrib and is a fully navigable waterway. Lough Derg has 179 km of indented shoreline. The lake is 12km's wide at its widest point. Spectacular countryside terrain and the wonderful waters of the lake make an ideal setting for many pursuits. Canoeing, waterskiing, kayaking, surfing and sub-aqua diving are some high energy options on lough Derg, which is also an excellent angling destination. The cycling routes and mountain bike trails offer a variety of challenges with stunning scenery guaranteed. The Lough Derg Blueway was also launched in March. Blueways are a network of approved and branded multi-activity recreational trails and sites closely aligned with the water. www.discoverloughderg.ie



CLANCY BROTHERS MUSIC FESTIVAL IN 30TH MAY – 4TH JUNE

On June Bank holiday weekend music, art and tradition will flow through the streets of Carrick-On-Suir as the 11th Clancy Brothers Festival of Music and Art takes place. The festival honours the musical legacy of the influential Irish folk music group of the 1960s, 'The Clancy Brothers', whose home town was Carrick-On-Suir and who are credited with popularising Irish folk song across the world. The Festival embraces the local community and showcases the exceptional local talent in performing, visual & multi-disciplinary arts. Carrick-on-Suir boasts so much talent for a small community and The Clancy Brothers Festival is the perfect way to showcase local talent as well as national and international artists. clancybrothersfestival.com



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www.anochrestaurant.ie

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Clonegal, Co. Carlow



Visiting

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Huntington Castle
Clonegal, Co. Carlow
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info@huntingtoncastle.com
www.huntingtoncastle.com

SatNav: Latitude/Longitude
52.6905, -6.6492

Opening Times
Castle, Gardens and Tearooms are all open daily May - September

Admission Rates
Gardens only Adults €5, Child (U12) €2.50. Castle Tour & Gardens Adults 9 Child (U12) 4
Usual concessions apply

Parking
Ample free parking (including Coaches) on site

One of Ireland's historical gems, this amazing Castle is still lived in by descendants of the original builders. The guided tour (approx 35 mins) features the world famous Temple of Isis in the dungeons as well as Castle rooms and ghost stories. With formal gardens, an adventure playground, tearooms and giftshop, Huntington Castle is the perfect place for a day out.




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follow the flavours

Food tours around the island of Ireland

A lush green island surrounded by some of the world's purest waters, Ireland's strong agricultural tradition has evolved into a thriving local food scene. What better way to explore it and meet the people who work with its produce than a food-focused tour or self-guided trail?

1. Boyne Valley

Best known for the neolithic passage tombs of Brú na Bóinne, the Boyne Valley was named Ireland's number one Foodie Destination thanks to the calendar of eclectic food events. From apple blossom walks and midsummer solstice suppers to street feasts, harvest markets and maritime festivals, these are great opportunities to break bread with the locals. Many members of the collective offer bookable experiences, such as Rock Farm Slane's electric bike tour of local farmers, cheese-makers and cider producers.

2. Dublin

The foodie secrets of the buzzing capital city come alive when explored with expert guides who know where to sample the tastiest local delicacies (and know the best stories to wash them down with). Many of the guides on Fab Food Trails are well-established Irish food writers, while Delicious Dublin Tours is run by food blogger Ketty Quigley (aka French Foodie in Dublin).

3. Kilkenny

Imagine a day spent rubbing shoulders at traditional livestock markets, sampling local rainbow trout caviar, learning the secrets of farmhouse butter-making, touring organic cider apple orchards and feasting on locally crafted chocolate truffles. Welcome to Kilkenny, one of Ireland's first counties to offer a food trail. TASTE of Kilkenny Food Trail's interactive map will have you heading down leafy boreens and medieval alleyways for the most delicious adventures.

4. Cork

A stroll through Cork's historic English Market is a chance to discover some of Irish food's greatest treasures, from crubeens and drisheen to sweet smoked mussels and buffalo mozzarella. This place is a pleasure to just follow your nose through, but to meet the makers and sample their flavours, consider booking a guided market tour from Fab Food Trails or Good Food Ireland (whose tour finishes up with a post-lunch cocktail on a nearby terrace).



Food Festivals with a **TWIST**

The Eatyard Crisp Festival, 14th - 17th June

This festival celebrates what might be Ireland's favourite format of the humble spud: the crisp. From Tayto to King's and all the myriad of fancy versions in between, The Eatyard Crisp Festival is about everything crisps. There's a bottomless crisp brunch, crisp eating competitions, a serious debate about which brand is the best, even a crisp tasting menu.

The Bernard Shaw, Dublin

Carlingford Oyster Festival, 9th-13th August

The Carlingford Oyster Festival is an opportunity for the seaside town to celebrate its heritage and one of its most famous exports – their oysters. The festival spreads across four days and offers plenty of fun and food for all the family. For the little ones, there will be loads of children's activities, including a magic show, face-painting, a teddy bear's picnic, and much more.

Carlingford, Co. Louth

Seafood and Shanty Ballycotton Family Fun Day, Sunday, 3rd June

The small, picturesque fishing village of Ballycotton is the hidden gem of East Cork, surrounded by sandy beaches, and

overlooking the beautiful Ballycotton Bay. On the Sunday of the June Bank Holiday weekend, the pier at Ballycotton will host their Seafood and Shanty Family Fun day. This is a day for all the family to enjoy, with a variety of arts and crafts stalls. On the pier there will be cookery demonstrations, food stalls and plenty of seafood from the local area. You can take boat trips from the harbour around Ballycotton Lighthouse Island, and there's even the now traditional spectacle of the Crab Derby as the final event of the day.

Ballycotton Pier, Co. Cork

Enniscorthy Rocking Food Festival, 3rd-5th August

The Enniscorthy Rocking Food Festival takes over the town for the August Bank Holiday weekend and will transform it into a culinary capital with three days full of food and fun for all the family. The festival will feature artisan food and craft markets, a Mad Hatter's Tea Party, pottery classes, shield-making, 1798 battle reenactments, live music and loads more to keep everybody entertained. The highlight of the festival however are the food trails which showcase the finest food the region has to offer, and allow you to delve in and out of whatever restaurants and bars you want to sample.

Enniscorthy, Co. Wexford



Ireland's Viking Heritage

Is acher ingáith innocht
Fúfnasna faricce fíndfolt
Ni ágor réimn mora minn
Dondláechraid lainn ona lothlind

Tonight the wind is sharp,
Tousling the sea's white hair
I fear not the fearsome Norse
Hunting across the waves

Anonymous 9th Century Irish Poem, doodled in the margin of a sacred manuscript

"From the fury of the Northmen, O Lord
deliver us!"

Common Irish, English and French prayer, 10th century





Ireland has had a love/hate relationship with the Vikings for well over a thousand years. Back when Ireland truly was the land of saints and scholars, the riches of its monasteries didn't go unnoticed by the ferocious invaders from Scandinavia, and they descended on our coasts with depressing regularity. Though they weren't averse to ransacking pretty much anywhere, their favourite targets were the large, rich centres of Christian learning, from which they carried off gold, jewels, leather, textiles and slaves.

Naturally, this didn't endear them to the natives, but as time went on, the Vikings began to realise there was more to Ireland than terrified monks and their precious possessions. Eventually, the raiders began to establish permanent camps, which grew into settlements, which grew into towns, some of which became cities. At the very heart of the largest towns and all of the cities on the east coast lies a testament to the Vikings who put down roots, and stayed here.

Waterford is the oldest city in Ireland, and was founded by Vikings in the late 8th or early 9th century on the south bank of the Suir. Dublin was founded by the Vikings not long afterwards, at a spot that now lies under Wood Quay, though the rivers Liffey and Poddle had been home to Viking encampments long before that. Kings Island, in Limerick City, became a Viking stronghold at about the same time. Cork, previously an isolated monastic settlement hidden among marshy islands on the River Lee, was a thriving Viking area by the 10th century, at a spot now covered by a car park at the end of South Main Street.

In fact, everywhere you look along the coast of Ireland's Ancient East you'll find reminders that we owe much of to these fearsome invaders. Large port towns like Wexford, Youghal and Arklow (of these, only Youghal bears an Irish name), and towns along the River Shannon like Loughrea, all owe their origins to them. You can even see it in the people of Ireland: to this day you'll see more tall, blonde, blue-eyed people as you move from the Atlantic coast towards the Irish sea.

This clash of civilisations has led to some of the greatest stories in Irish history, including that of the mighty Brian Boru, known as The Last High King, who was slain after the Battle of Clontarf, near Dublin, in 1014. He had won the fight against the combined might of the armies of the Vikings Sitric Silkenbeard, Sigurd of Orkney and Brodar of Mann, and the traitorous

Irish King Maol Mórdha Mac Murchadh, but was killed by Brodar as he prayed in his tent that night. His victory, however, broke the power of the Vikings in the east and restored Gaelic Irish culture for generations.

Our Viking heritage is maintained not only in our place names and in some of Ireland's oldest buildings (Christ Church Cathedral in Dublin was founded by the same Sitric Silkenbeard who fought Brian Boru, for instance), but also in the heritage and surnames of today's Irish people. The surname O'Loughlin, means "descendant of the Vikings" from the Irish word for the seafaring scourge themselves: na Lochlannaigh. MacDougal, Doyle and MacDowell each comes from the Irish for "dark (in the sense of 'accursed') foreigner" or directly from Dugilla, a 10th century Viking lord of Carlow. MacAuliffe means "son of Olaf" and MacManus means "son of Magnus". Other Viking names you'll notice in Ireland's Ancient East include Cotter, Gould, O'Rourke, Higgins (originally 'Vikinger': "the Viking"), Broderick, Dowdall, Kirby, Hendrick or Hendrix, Hewson and more.

Today, when you meet someone with the surname O'Brien, you're meeting someone whose family claims descent from King Brian, defeater of the Vikings. As it's one of the most common surnames in the country, and one of the most stereotypical Irish surnames in the world, we can only assume that the king was very popular in his day!

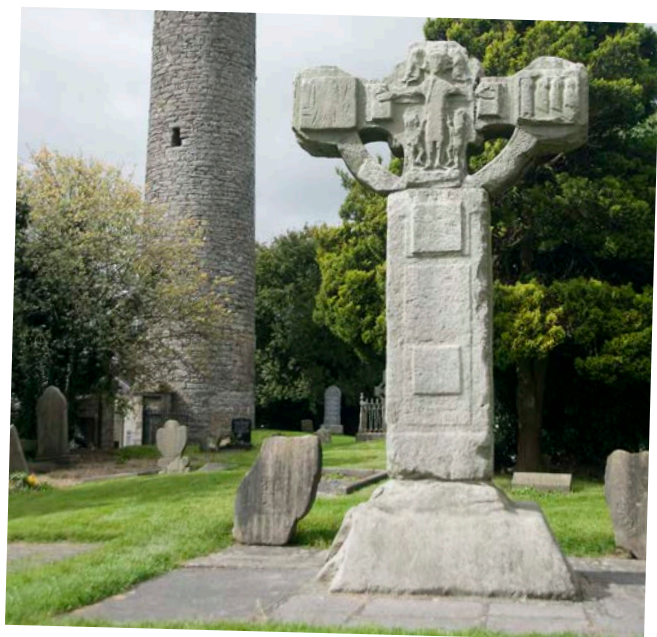
THINGS TO SEE AND DO IN MEATH

BLUE JEAN COUNTRY QUEEN FESTIVAL, 1ST-4TH JUNE

The Blue Jean Country Queen Festival was the brainchild of Patrick Farrelly, a member of Carnaross Macra na Feirme. After several visits to The Rose of Tralee, Patrick was so impressed by that festival that he wanted to start a similar festival in Meath. The very first Blue Jean Country Queen Festival took place in June 1987. It included many of the elements that would become mainstays of the festival to this day, including the queens' on-stage interviews, fashion show, fancy dress football and the Gala Banquet. Since 1987, many new elements have been added including the Saturday Carnival and Craft Fair, Sunday the Lark in the Park which have opened up the festival to the entire local community. It has also seen plenty of celebrity involvement from guest MCs like Brendan Grace, Ray D'Arcy, Hector Ó hEochagáin. bluejeanfest.com

KELLS

The town of Kells in County Meath is one of the highlights of any tour of Ireland's historic Boyne Valley. Boasting great religious significance, Kells Monastery originally included four high crosses built in the 9th century by the monks of St Colmcille's of Iona, Scotland in 804. The famous Book of Kells was completed at the monastery, which also features a round tower. The 9th century sandstone Market Cross, known as the "Cross of the Gate" has carvings which signified that a fugitive could claim sanctuary once inside the boundary of the monastic area. The South Cross, or the Cross of St. Patrick and St. Columba is closest to the roundtower and thought to be the earliest of the Kells crosses. Standing 3.3 meters high, it is carved from a single block of sandstone. Visit Kells in Co. Meath to examine the details of these monuments to the monastic age of Ireland.



BELLEWSTOWN RACES 29TH AUGUST - 30TH AUGUST

Horse racing at Bellewstown Racecourse, on the Hill of Crockafatha in Co. Meath, is beautifully situated with magnificent views of the Mountains of Mourne to the north and the Irish Sea to the east.

The tradition of summer racing at Bellewstown dates back centuries and the first record of racing here appears in the August edition of the Dublin Gazette and the Weekly Courier in 1726. This superb one mile and one furlong left handed course, in a truly unique location, features both flat and hurdle racing. Bellewstown Races are synonymous with top class racing, wonderful summer evenings, family entertainment and ladies day races which add to the fun.

www.bellewstownraces.ie



MEATH COUNTY CRAFTS

Meath County Crafts is housed in Trim Visitor Centre which is one minute's walk from King John's Castle. The centre has an excellent audiovisual show about the medieval past of Trim and Co. Meath. Meath County Crafts stock a huge range of crafts from the Boyne Valley region and the rest of Ireland, North and South. Many makers are Crafts Council of Ireland approved. The range includes pottery, leather, textiles, metalwork, ceramics, jewellery, wood, soaps and much more. To visit the workshops of some of the Meath craft workers, it is advisable to make an appointment prior to visiting.

clancybrothersfestival.com

Ireland's and Europe's only hands on privately owned Military Museum

Welcome to Ireland's and Europe's only hands-on privately owned Military Museum with Family Park, Playground and State of the Art Conference facilities (Camping Site opening soon).

Housing US Convoy Military Vehicles with extensive displays on WW1 1916 WW11 Irish Independence, Vietnam, War First Gulf War. Visit our full-scale indoor Trench Cafe and experience Trench life from first hand. Enjoy our delicious coffee food snacks and treats while surrounded by authentic Military artefacts in the unique Trench setting of our very own Sergeant Sullys Café.

Re-enactments Family Fun Days BBQs Halloween and Christmas Events are ongoing all through the year! Why not have your birthday celebrations on site or take a Tank Spin in our Tank or even learn to drive it? So why not join us at one of Ireland's best-kept secrets today!



IRISH MILITARY WAR MUSEUM

LIVING HISTORY MUSEUM & FAMILY PARK

OPENING HOURS 2018

TUESDAY - SUNDAY 10AM - 5PM

MONDAY - CLOSED (EXCEPT FOR BANK HOLIDAYS)

ADMISSION

ADULT: €10 CHILD: €5 FAMILY OF 4: €25

IRISH MILITARY WAR MUSEUM & PARK, STARINAGH, COLLON, CO, MEATH
TEL: +353 41 981 9501

THINGS TO SEE AND DO IN WEXFORD

THE HOOK LIGHTHOUSE

The Visitor Centre at Hook Lighthouse at the tip of the Hook Peninsula is the oldest operational lighthouse in the world. Lonely Planet describes it as one of the top attractions in Ireland. The centre offers guided tours of the lighthouse tower seven days a week. The lighthouse is a 13th Century Norman structure, built by the Earl of Pembroke as part of the development of his Lordship of Leinster, culminating with the spectacular view from the balcony. Relax by the sea and keep an eye out for seals, dolphins and even whales. In clear weather, you can see for miles, and in a storm the spray often reaches the top of the lighthouse! The Hook Lighthouse will host a celebration their maritime heritage with the Hooked On The Sea Festival on the June Bank Holiday weekend.

www.hookheritage.ie

WEXFORD FOOD FESTIVAL, 26TH-27TH MAY

The Wexford Food Festival is a tremendous weekend of excellent food and drink as well as live music and entertainment that's fun for all of the family in Wexford town. Over the course of the weekend, you can expect a tasty schedule of mouth-watering events including cookery demos, wine and beer tasting as well as foraging events and an open air local food producers' market.



SALTEE ISLANDS

A must-see for bird enthusiasts, the Saltee Islands consisting of Great and Little Saltee, are situated approximately 5 kms off the coast of Kilmore Quay Co. Wexford. The larger island Great Saltee is the most famous bird sanctuary in Ireland and is very popular with both day-trippers and birdwatchers alike. These Islands are privately owned and are one of the world's major bird sanctuaries. The Saltees are a haven for sea birds from gannets and gulls to puffins and manx shearwaters. The Great Saltee also has a breeding population of grey seals, one of the very few in eastern Ireland. As long ago as 3,500 to 2,000 B.C. there were people on the islands. The Saltees are privately owned. Day visits to Great Saltee are available between 11:30 a.m. and 4:30 p.m. Trips arranged from Kilmore Quay.



COCOA COOKHOUSE, GOREY

Explore the world of craft chocolate in a hands-on cacao 'bean to bar' class. Make your own chocolate bar the whole way through the process beginning with fine Colombian cacao beans. Roast, conch, grind and mould to create a unique freshly made all-natural chocolate bar. Discover how to pair artisan 'bean-to-bar' chocolates from around the world with coffee, cheese, wine etc. and learn about ancient cacao rituals and stories. Classes and parties can be tailored to any group size or age and take place in Cocoa Cookhouse's home at Wells House in Co. Wexford or in your own home/venue of your choice.



If you're fond of sand dunes and salty air then head the Strand Bar in Cahore, Co. Wexford where you'll find arguably the best ocean views in the sunny south-east. Here, Patrick Hanley who owns the premises with wife Aileen, explains why the little pub with a big personality stole their hearts.

WHERE DID YOUR CAREER RESPECTIVE PATHS TAKE YOU BEFORE BECOMING PROPRIETORS OF THE STRAND BAR?

I've worked various places around the world including Arizona, Belgium and New York and for the last three years I was the general manager of the Park Hotel in Kenmare.

Some of Aileen's workplaces have included Bellinter House, the Restaurant Association of Ireland and most recently she was the general manager of the Eccles Hotel in Glengarriff. She was there when Pippa Middleton stayed at the hotel, she spent four days in the area.

WHAT ATTRACTED YOU TO THE STRAND BAR?

Having worked in the industry our whole lives and being married for seven years, we realised that we

wanted to do our own thing as a couple. We spent quite a lot of time looking around at different projects, we had previously worked in Gorey so we knew the area. We only heard about the Strand Bar coming up for auction about a week beforehand and we were kicking ourselves as we were too late. But nothing happened with the sale so when it came up again we made a point of meeting with the owners at the time and had an immediate rapport with them. The way it worked out was very fortuitous.

WHAT MAKES THE STRAND BAR SO SPECIAL?

There are very few places in Ireland that have direct views that are completely uninterrupted, in an elevated position looking out to the Irish Sea, in the vicinity of a quaint pier, where you can sit by the fire and enjoy a beverage. And yet it's only an hour and twenty minutes from Stephen's Green in Dublin. So on one hand you have the beauty of this rural setting but on the other you are in driving distance of two million people and that's kind of unique. It's the kind of place that if you've not been and you get there you just think 'Wow, why have I never been here before?' And once people get there they will be blown away.

WHY WOULD PEOPLE WANT TO VISIT THE AREA?

Cahore is a tiny little fishing village and in the summer it's filled with kids looking for crabs and diving off the pier. Where we are located is one of the safest areas for a swim. Swimming classes are actually conducted there and happen at the pier, so it's a very family friendly location. There's also Southbeach which is Ireland's longest continuous stretch of beach, it's where Saving Private Ryan was filmed.

ARE THERE ANY EVENTS THAT PEOPLE SHOULD KNOW ABOUT COMING UP?

We have traditional music on Saturday nights and on Sundays depending on the weekend there'll either be BBQs, jazz music and other different activities. There's a regatta that happens on the pier over the August Bank Holiday weekend too which is a fundraiser for Cahore Inshore Rescue who provides a community lifeboat service. But our Facebook will have updates on what we have planned and what's happening.

www.strandbarcahore.ie

www.facebook.com/strandbarcahore

ANCIENT EAST INSPIRATIONS



DESIGNERS MAKING THEIR MARK

It may be a small island but Ireland has a big reputation for creativity in a whole range of areas from literature and art to music, craft, fashion and design. Research by the Arts Council of Ireland underlined that, indicating that the country is highly engaged with the arts as a nation. Irish people are highly educated, well-travelled and innovative, making their mark in creative industries right around the globe.

Eileen Gray, one of the most celebrated and influential designers and architects of the 20th century was born near Enniscorthy, Co. Wexford. Her work forms part of the permanent exhibition at the National Museum of Decorative Arts and History, Collins Barracks.

Design for the home is strong with a coterie of furniture and product designers exporting intricately crafted contemporary pieces. These range from the self-taught West Cork-based **Joseph Walsh** whose spectacular sculpted furniture is in many significant international museum and private collections to the bespoke lighting of Shane Holland in Meath and the

work of Jennifer Slattery Textiles which features digital printed imagery and embroidery.

Numerous independent studios and shops are dotted around Dublin and the rest of the country, showcasing everything from ceramics to jewellery. **The Irish Design Shop** on Dublin's Drury Street is just one such atelier.

The late **Sybil Connolly** blazed a trail for Ireland in fashion, creating haute couture from pleated linen and Carrickmacross lace, with clients including Jacqueline Kennedy. Today's stars include Dublin-based **Louise Kennedy** and **John Rocha**; his daughter **Simone**; **Orla Kiely**, **Philip Treacy**, **Paul Costelloe** and **Helen Steele**.

Joanne Hynes and **Natalie B Coleman** are among the new generation of outstanding fashion design talent. London-based **Una Burke's** leather accessories have been worn by Rihanna, Lady Gaga, Madonna, Heidi Klum and Daphne Guinness.

Offaly-born **Sorcha O Raghallaigh's** avant garde fashion designs have been spotted on Lady Gaga. Also on the up is Dublin-born **Danielle Romeril**, who has won the support of the British Fashion Council's New Generation (NewGen) sponsorship scheme.

The tweeds and aran sweaters of the past, with their classic cable stitching, have been drawn on and reinvented by modern-day designers. **Inis Meáin Knitwear** which is produced on one of the Aran Islands, sells its textured knits in department stores internationally.

Other success stories in Irish knitwear design include **Lainey Keogh** who has developed a menswear line with **Donna Karan**; **Tim Ryan**; **Edmund McNulty** luxury menswears; **Lucy Downes** of Sphere One which specialises in cashmere; **Sian Jacob**; **Heather Finn**; and the funky **Electronic Sheep** with their standout graphic looks.

In handicrafts, there are endless standout pieces to be found around the country in specialities such as glass, woodturning, pottery, bog oak design, woollen throws and handmade candles. **Carlingford Design House** in Louth is just one initiative promoting quality Irish craft alongside a craft classroom, the brainchild of resident goldsmith Garrett Mallon.



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Opening Times

Summer Opening Times
(May to September)
Tues - Sat: 10am to 5pm
Sunday: 12pm to 5pm
(last admission 4pm)

Winter Opening Times
Wed - Sat: 10am to 5pm
(October to April)



Cork
County Council
Comhairle Contae Chorcaí





To The Waters And The Wild

"Picture yourself in a boat on a river," as The Beatles said. The soothing lap of the water against the hull; a gentle bob as the water moves up and down; the sound of a ripple breaking against the bow, and on either side of you trees or fields, or the happy sounds of people passing on foot or bikes. Tempting, isn't it?



To The Waters And The Wild

Exploring Ireland's canals and navigable waterways is one of the best ways to really slow your pace as you enjoy your holiday, and a phenomenal way to see Ireland's Ancient East from a brand new perspective. And it's a lot easier and more affordable than you might think!

Our canal network is centuries old, and was built with the express intention of being shared by people and by goods. For an island as well-watered as Ireland, it was the most obvious solution for moving large loads, and one they were completed, our canals became the economic lifeblood of the east.

Most of the country's canals were built with the express purpose of connecting the Dublin region to the River Shannon, which is the longest river in Ireland or Britain. The Shannon stretches from

Our two most famous canals are also the most impressively named: The Grand Canal, which was completed in 1804, and the Royal Canal, immortalised in the song The Auld Triangle from Brendan Behan's play The Quare Fellow.

Cavan, in Ulster, all the way to its broad estuary between County Clare and County Kerry, where it flows into the Atlantic. At their height, an extensive network of canals criss-crossed the province of Leinster, linking to one another and to an equally vital network of navigable rivers. This system of canals, rivers and locks made it possible to move large volumes of goods from east to west (and vice versa) through the midlands without having to brave the rough seas off the west coast.

Nowadays, the network is much reduced and almost exclusively used by people who want to get away from the hustle and bustle, and the traffic, of speedier



transport. However, they're so popular that work continues on opening up more and more of the old waterways.

Our two most famous canals are also the most impressively named: The Grand Canal, which was completed in 1804, and the Royal Canal, immortalised in the song The Auld Triangle from Brendan Behan's play The Quare Fellow. The Royal Canal was completed in 1817. Both fell into disuse through the early part of the 20th century, but in recent years they've been extensively restored and are both almost back to their former glory. They're noted for outstanding scenery and the variety of towns, villages and landscapes through which they flow.

The Royal Canal was one of the most expensive projects ever undertaken in Ireland, and went massively over schedule and budget due to a combination of poor planning and bad luck. It took 27 years to build, and was declared officially open from the centre of Dublin to the River Shannon once again in 2010.

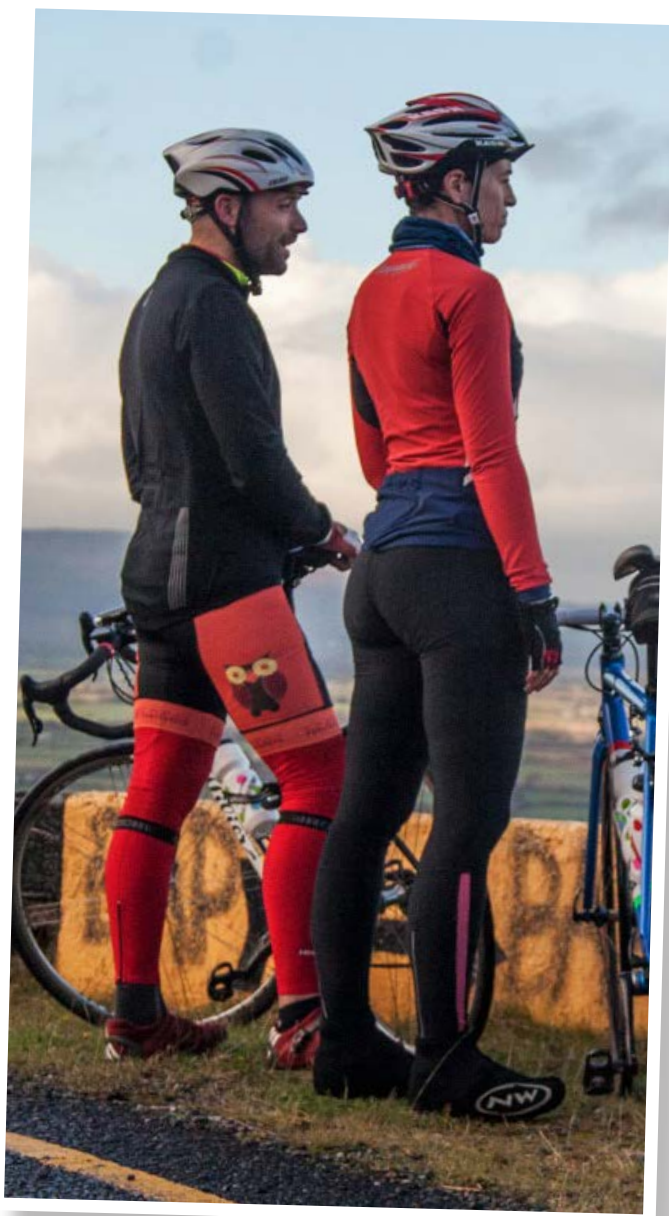
On your way along The Grand Canal and the Royal Canal you'll see phases of Ireland's history from ancient times right through to the 21st century, following in the wake of high kings and vikings, warriors, traders and travellers. Round towers, castles, ancient sites, groves of mighty trees, the broad, gently rolling fields of the midlands and the stunning natural beauty of Ireland's waterways and countryside guide you along their lengths.

The canals are administered by Waterways Ireland, an all-island authority dedicated to maximising the potential of our canals and navigable rivers. You may prefer to cycle or hike along the banks, but of course, the best way to experience them is by boat. Barges and smaller craft such as punts and kayaks can be hired along the length of the canals, and you can even hire a replica viking longboat at Lough Ree. For an extra special treat, consider getting nine of your friends to join you for the trip of a lifetime on board the Shannon Princess, a floating gourmet restaurant for hire, taking in Lough Ree and Lough Derg!

THINGS TO SEE AND DO IN WESTMEATH

MULLINGAR TO ATHLONE GREENWAY

This is a must cycle for anyone who likes getting out on their bike. Start in Mullingar and follow the path as it snakes along the canal to the head of the Greenway. For the next 40km you're in biking heaven. But don't let the distance scare you, hop off and visit Dún na Sí Amenity and Heritage Park along the way. You'll meet everyone on the route from passionate enthusiasts to those out for the fresh air. This is a dedicated cycle path that follows the old rail track under arched bridges, through a tunnel and past beautiful countryside all the way to Athlone.



MOATE AGRICULTURAL SHOW, SUNDAY AUGUST 26TH

Moate Agricultural Show is held in August, and attracts patrons and exhibitors from all over Ireland. There is something for all the family. It was first held in 1839 and is one of the oldest in the country. There are events featuring horses, cattle, sheep, poultry, farm produce, cut flowers and floral arrangements.

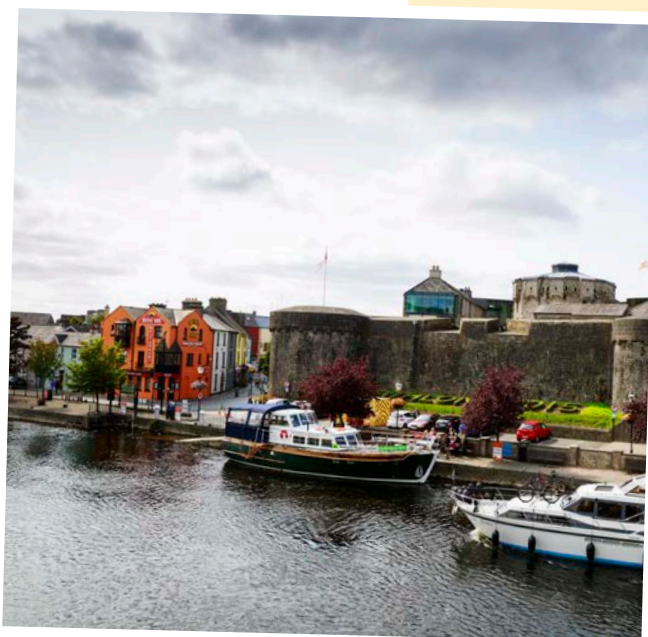
MULLAGHMEEN

Mullaghmeen in north Westmeath is the largest planted beech forest in Ireland. This 1,000 acre forest has an extensive network of way marked trails for varying levels of fitness. Along with beech, Mullaghmeen also has Sitka spruce, Scots pine and noble fir and a very interesting native tree collection. The forest offers picnickers a shady haven in which to feast and provides the more energetic with scenic walks of varying length. The underlying geology is limestone rock and the area is populated with grey squirrels, jays, badgers, foxes, pheasant, rabbit and hares, as well as a large selection of song birds.

ATHLONE CASTLE

Athlone Castle was first built to defend the crossing point on the River Shannon and evolved into a bold defensive structure over the centuries. Elements of the original castle can still be seen today. Prepare to walk in the steps of monks, kings, soldiers and generals. The story of Athlone Castle is told through a series of modern exhibitions, authentic museum artefacts, interactive games and a 360° cinematic experience of the Great Siege of Athlone.

www.athlonecastle.ie



ATHLONE CASTLE

Discover the history of Athlone, its castle and people through a series of interactive and audio visual exhibitions.

www.athlonecastle.ie



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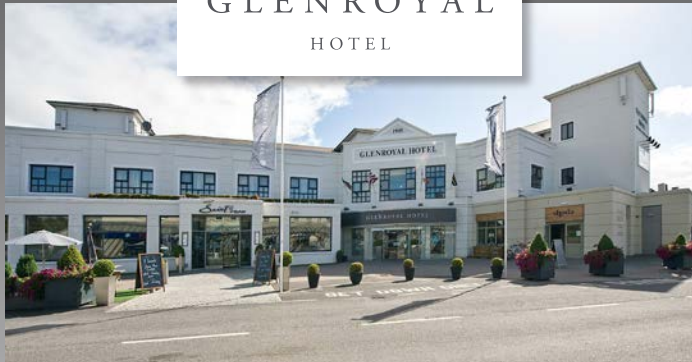
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www.glenroyal.ie
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COBH HERITAGE CENTRE

Learn about Irish Emigration story, trace your ancestors, hear about the ill-fated Titanic and the Lusitania, and immerse yourself in Irish naval and military history at Cobh Heritage Centre.

This beautiful, informative and sometimes emotive cultural Centre is situated within Cobh's beautifully restored Victorian railway station, a building with its own historic story.

Cobh: The Queenstown Story.

GPS 51 50 55.68N 8 17 57.72W



Ogham: Ireland's Ancient Alphabet



Dotted around Ireland's Ancient East, and in some rare cases, in the westernmost parts of Britain where ancient Irish raiders had invaded and set up communities, are the Ogham Stones – standing stones which are marked along their edges with mysterious sequences of notches and slashes, writes Lorcan Mac Muiris

These markings, called 'feda,' are the ogham alphabet, said to have been given to the ancient Irish by Ogmios, the god of art, creativity and writing. Another story claims that it was the first alphabet developed after the fall of the Tower of Babel, and was brought to Ireland by a Scythian king who headed west after that biblical calamity. In reality, ogham was most likely a simple cypher based on the Latin alphabet, which would have been familiar to Irish merchants in the 1st century AD.

Each succession of characters is based on groups of different types of feda, beginning with one rightward slash for "B", two for "L", three for "V" or "F", four for "S" and five for "N". This has led to an alternate name for the ogham alphabet: the bethluisven, from the sounds of the first five letters. Other marks are leftward slashes, notches, and slashes which span from right to left. Some stones also have more complicated characters which represent diphthongs like "ae" or "oa" but it's thought that these fedas were added long after the rest of the alphabet had been developed.

Ogham gives us our earliest glimpse of the Irish language, with the language of the very oldest inscriptions classified as Primitive Irish. The vast majority of what's written on the ogham stones is little more than the names of leaders or landowners, and it's likely they were a form of ancient signpost, letting travelers, invaders and guests know whose land they were on.

Some of the best examples are to be seen in the Stone Corridor at University College Cork, and others can be seen at St Declan's Cathedral in Ardmore, County Waterford, where you'll also see one of the country's best examples of a round tower and some exceptional early Christian stone carvings. In some cases, ogham stones were later incorporated into churches, and some even survived with a new lease of life as lintels or doorposts in ancient buildings.

University College Cork houses an impressive collection of Ogham stones



Fanciful writers in the Middle Ages came up with imaginary uses for ogham among the ancient Irish, including a method of signaling in battle by spelling out, with your fingers, ogham messages on one's arm (lámhoghām) or nose (srónoghām)...a sort of mythical version of ancient text messaging!

Nearly all ogham inscriptions lack a feda for the letter "P" because the "p" sound had disappeared from the Primitive Irish language spoken by the ancient Celtic people who carved them.

THINGS TO SEE AND DO IN CARLOW

SUMMERFEST CARLOW, JULY 21ST-JULY 22ND

Time to get your stetson on as Summerfest Carlow is a new music festival coming to Carlow town this July. Oak Park, Carlow Rugby Club's ground will play host to the festival, which will feature some of the biggest country and western artists from Ireland. Headlining the Summerfest are Nathan Carter and Derek Ryan. Carter specialises in a genre he calls "country and Irish" and has sold countless of records and tickets on the back of it. Derek Ryan, meanwhile, is a Carlow native, so this will be a happy homecoming. Also on the bill over the weekend are singers Cliona Hagan on Saturday and Barry Kirwan on Sunday, making this an unmissable couple of nights for fans of country music.

CARLOW BREWING COMPANY

Take a look behind the scenes at one of Ireland's craft brewing pioneers at Carlow Brewing Company. Celebrating 20 years in 2016, the independent Carlow Brewing Company owned by the O'Hara family, brews the critically acclaimed O'Hara's Irish craft beer range. During the Carlow Brewing Company tour you can meet the brewing team and discover Ireland's wonderful craft beer history. The tour also includes the chance to taste and compare award-winning brews.
www.carlowbrewing.com

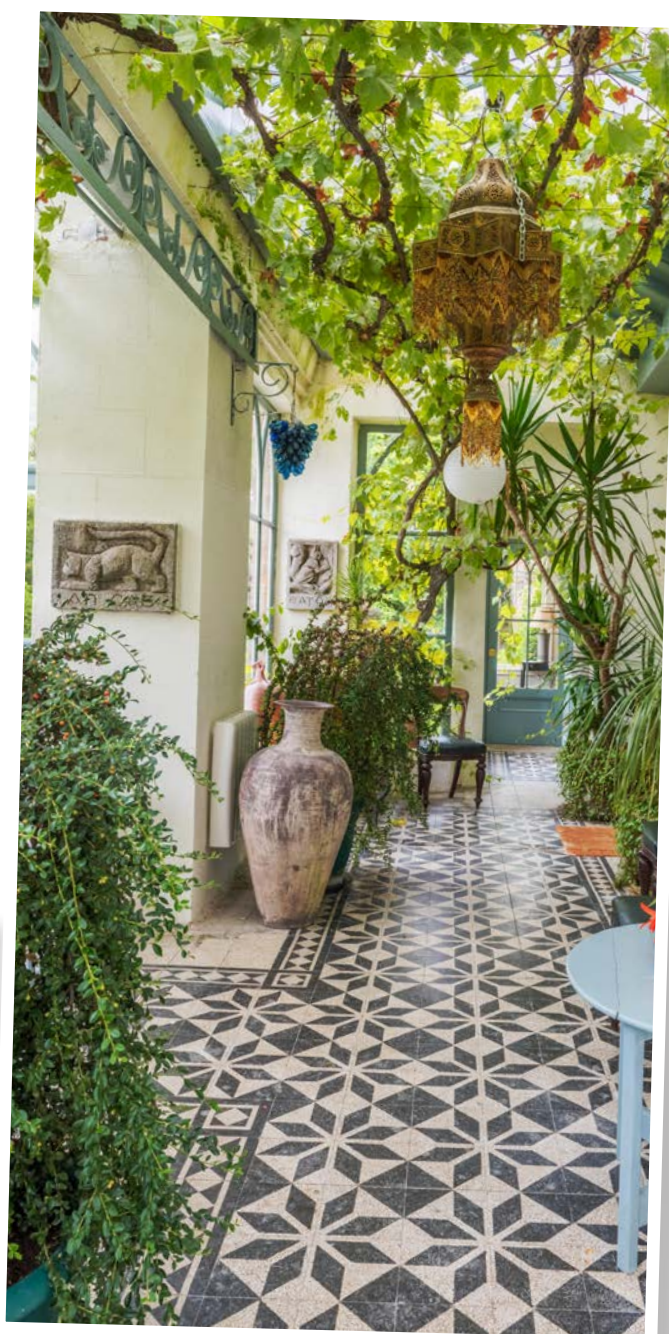
HUNTINGTON CASTLE

Originally constructed in 1625 by Sir Laurence Esmonde, Huntington Castle boasts some impressive features, such as the Georgian terraces and castellated Victorian extensions. The present castellated house is the result of additions and alterations of many periods its nucleus being the tower house. The castle offers 45 minute tours where you visit the Victorian kitchen, Jacobean hall, 17th century pond and even a spooky temple in the basement of the castle. Outside Huntington Castle there is also some 500 years old gardens.



DELTA SENSORY GARDENS, STRAWHALL ESTATE

Winner of the Trip Advisor certificate of excellence, Delta is a perfect space for anyone wanting peace and tranquility. These scenic gardens consist of 2.5 acres of land, decorated by of the country's top designers. Beginning as a centre for people with intellectual disabilities, it has now become one of Ireland's leading attractions. The Delta Sensory Gardens also a craft shop, cafe and hosts events throughout the year. www.deltacentre.ie



THINGS TO SEE AND DO IN MONAGHAN

ST. PETER'S TIN CHURCH

Constructed of tin, St. Peter's Tin Church Laragh is one of a kind in Co. Monaghan and unique on the island of Ireland for its quirky design and carefully considered features. It was listed as a Building of National Importance by National Inventory of Architectural Heritage in 2014. St. Peter's of historic Laragh village is literally built on a rock, in a beautiful woodland. It is a very rare example of a nineteenth-century corrugated-iron-clad church. The community of Laragh formed a voluntary group in 2012 to ensure its survival and conservation. St. Peter's Tin Church Laragh was re-opened in 2014 and is a very popular fringe venue for larger festival and touring musicians/drama groups in the region.



THE PATRICK KAVANAGH TRAIL, INNISKEEN, COUNTY MONAGHAN

Discover the essence of a poet who saw the beauty in ordinary things and take the trail around Inniskeen. Start in the churchyard where he is buried, St. Marys, moving on to the ancient round tower that was once part of St. Daig's Monastery. Enjoy a spectacular panorama of the land where fabled mythological warrior Cúchullain roamed and finish at the Kavanagh homestead.



MUCKNO MANIA FESTIVAL, CASTLEBLANEY

Muckno Mania festival promises fun and intrigue and is interactive and diverse event. This four day event in Castleblaney has become one of the most anticipated annual gathering in the North East. Emphasis on family entertainment and the focus on the arts ensure the festival's success and popularity. To celebrate the its 20th year, Wilbert and his gang have decided to look back on all the fun memories with this year's theme: Muckno Mania - 20 Years of Mania

www.mucknomania.ie

FREE WALKING TOURS OF CARRICKMACROSS

Carrickmacross, is one of the few surviving market towns in Ireland. It was developed around a castle built by the Earl of Essex in 1630. The Convent of the St. Louis Nuns now stands on the original castle site. The area has a number of historical sites including the Round Tower in Inniskeen. St Patrick's Cemetery Donaghmoynne is the final resting place of Cathal Bui Mac Giolla. It is home to the world famous Carrickmacross Lace. Walks will take place every Saturday morning from May 5 to September 29, departing from the Courthouse at 11am. The walk takes approximately 90 minutes. Everyone welcome and no booking is required.



NORMANS

IN IRELAND

From castles to place names, the Normans made an impression on Ireland's Ancient East, writes Lorcan Mac Muirís

At the height of the Viking reign of terror over Europe, the seagoing raiders established a colony in northern France. The locals named it for these 'Northmen' and today the region is still called Normandy. Here, a community of Vikings established a society which was more refined but no less ferocious, and in the space of a few generations they spoke their own dialect of French and had developed a distinct identity...one which would shape the destiny of Europe for centuries to come.

The Normans famously arrived in Britain in 1066, conquering the army of England's last Saxon king, Harold, and seizing the crown. It would not be until the reign of William the Conqueror's great grandson Henry II, however, that the Normans would turn their attention to Ireland.

After the initial wave of Norman invaders arrived in Ireland's Ancient East at the invitation of Diarmuid Mac Murchadh their forces, under their leader Strongbow, began to consolidate their power and expand their territory further up and down the east coast. Henry II, a French-born, French-speaking King of

England with a fiery temper and a keen mind, noted with concern the growing power of Strongbow's forces and knew he would have to act quickly in order to keep in check the Welsh Norman families now in the ascendancy in Ireland.

So it was that after the first wave of Norman soldiers had arrived in Waterford, Henry II's forces and the king himself arrived at the south-eastern tip of neighbouring County Wexford. Strongbow and his vassals paid homage to King Henry, as did their Irish tenants, proclaiming him lord of the newly seized Norman lands in Ireland. Thus began one of the most fraught and definitive periods in the history of the British Isles: Henry set in motion a process which would eventually see his descendant Henry VIII fully incorporate Ireland into what we today call the United Kingdom, where the whole island would remain until the 20th century. The next 800 years of relations between Britain and Ireland were to become some of the most intriguing and divisive in history.

The most visible remaining clues to the Anglo-Norman conquest of Ireland is the prominence of Norman surnames, still more common in

Ireland's Ancient East than to the west of the island (most of Ireland's 'Fitz' surnames, such as Fitzgerald, are Norman), and of course the castles which festoon the country even today.

The Norman castle was the cutting edge of medieval military technology, and ideally consists of a mound, called a motte, on which is built a sturdy keep, often surrounded by high curtain walls, called the bailey. These strongholds, all but impenetrable by the militaries of the time, were an imposing reminder of the superiority of the Norman forces, and were perfect staging posts for pushing further and further into conquered territory. Castles were instrumental in conquering England, and would become equally indispensable to the Normans who now set about the task of establishing their authority in Ireland.

Some of the most imposing, such as Dublin Castle, set the trend for successive waves of castle building on the same spot: Henry II's son John, the first Norman to be proclaimed the lord of the whole island of Ireland, built his primary fortress on the spot where the current castle still stands. It became



Kilkenny Castle



Lismore Castle



Dublin Castle

first the seat of Norman lordship, then the seat of the government of the Kingdom of Ireland, and finally the seat of government in Dublin for the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Ireland, which lasted until 1922.

The structure was built at the Black Pool of the River Poddle which gives Dublin its name, and today's Dublin castle is the site of the investiture of the Presidents of Ireland as well as the venue for state dinners. It is open to the public, who can explore the unbroken lineage from John's castle to the present building, even though the only remaining part of the original Norman castle is the Record Tower. As it has done for nearly 1000 years, the castle maintains its administrative functions, and it remains a place of work for employees of the Irish government.

Arguably the most beautiful castle in the country, and certainly among the most spectacular, sits on the bank of the River Nore in the heart of picturesque Kilkenny town. Kilkenny Castle was also built for King John, and construction was started in 1195 and continued for 20 years on a site first chosen for a fortress by Strongbow himself, who had married into the Irish royal family of Leinster. Strongbow built a wooden motte and bailey on the site of an older Gaelic fortification before the stone building was constructed. In 1391 the castle became the seat of the Butlers, one of the oldest and most powerful of Ireland's Norman families, and they remained there until 1935, when the castle began to fall into ruin. In 1967, the Butlers sold the castle to the town of Kilkenny for the princely sum of just £50. Kilkenny Castle itself is an incredible opportunity to follow in footsteps

nearly a millennium old, and its tranquil grounds and ornamental gardens, which slope down to the Nore, are a perfect place for a contemplative stroll in the shadow of one of the most impressive buildings in Ireland. The castle is also home to the Butler Art Gallery.

Further south, in County Waterford, Lismore Castle and its grounds are another must-see for castle enthusiasts. It is another of King John's original castles, and was built at the end of the 12th century along with its 'sister castle' in Ardfinnan, County Tipperary. As with Kilkenny Castle, it is set on a gorgeous and strategically important bend in a river, this time the stately Blackwater. It became a stronghold of the mighty FitzGerald, the Earls of Desmond, before briefly passing into the possession of Sir Walter Raleigh, introducer of the potato and tobacco to Europe for whom the city of Raleigh, in North Carolina, is named. Raleigh was subsequently forced to sell it to the Boyle family, who would become Earls of Cork. Later, it became the Irish seat of the Dukes of Devonshire, and the same family, the Cavendishes, still own it today. The grounds and a bright, airy art gallery are open to the public, and the entire castle itself can be rented out by groups of up to two dozen people for a truly once-in-a-lifetime holiday. Of particular interest is a large section of the Berlin Wall, set in the gardens close to the riverbank and still covered in graffiti and the marks of the sledgehammers used to knock it down.

Elsewhere in Ireland's Ancient East, the Norman influence remains strong. Old churches still bear the names of the Norman families

which financed them or who were patrons for generations, the fragmented remains of once-imposing castles stand in what are today fields and farmyards, and statues, monuments and gravestones recall the era of courtly chivalry and the crusades for which the Normans were famous.

The Norman affinity for castle building soon rubbed off on Ireland's natives, and it wasn't long before Gaelic Irish lords were aping their Norman rivals and constructing tough stone bastions in a sort of architectural arms race. Eventually, however, many of the richer and more influential Gaelic families ended up intermarrying with the Norman aristocracy, creating Hiberno-Norman and Anglo-Irish families which, in some cases, survive to this day... often living in or maintaining ownership of the same fortresses built by their ancestors centuries ago. Many of these ruins have their own stories, and are often reputed to be haunted; curious visitors can often learn more about this local folklore in conversations over a few drinks in nearby bars.

If you see a ruined castle on your trip around Ireland's Ancient East, be aware that it's more than likely on private land and that you might be trespassing if you decide to explore. And please, remember that unprotected, unrestored ruins can be extremely dangerous: do not try to climb or force your way into the last vestiges of the Norman invasion, or you might just end up the latest casualty in a chain of events begun in Waterford in 1169!

NIGHT AT THE OPERA

A firm fixture for operaphiles the world over. Ireland's National Opera House is not, as one might expect, in Dublin, but rather about 150km further down the east coast, in Wexford town.

The state-of-the-art building which now bears the title stands on the site of Wexford's venerable and much-loved Theatre Royal, spent the better part of two centuries as a cultural hub, drawing acts from as far afield as London.

Even though the Theatre Royal had garnered an enviable reputation and had long been a centrepiece of Wexford Town, by the early part of the 21st century it became clear that the facilities, which had expanded gradually into surrounding properties, were no longer suitable for Wexford's future plans. The old building was demolished in 2006, and the Wexford Opera House, more than 3 times larger than its predecessor, was opened in 2008. In 2014 it was renamed the National Opera House, ending Ireland's tenure as the only EU nation without an official national opera venue, and today it continues to go from strength to strength.

The building itself features two separate performance spaces; the O'Reilly Theatre seats 771, while the more intimate Jerome Hynes Theatre can accommodate an audience of 176. Its design, which is bold and modern but with subtle nods to the past, has netted a number of international architectural awards. As Ireland's only purpose-built opera house, its acoustics formed a central part of the design, both aesthetically and functionally, and have already gained legendary status among musicians and singers who have performed there.

Among its noteworthy features are the subtle facade, designed to blend into the ancient streets of Wexford town, which

belies the huge, ultra-modern building within. In the spectacularly beautiful O'Reilly Theatre, patrons are cocooned in rich, swirling walnut wood which gives the illusion that they're sitting within a gigantic musical instrument. The auditorium's lighting has also been co-opted to create the illusion, and brings to mind the bridges of violins, violas, cellos and basses. The seating arrangement is an homage to the Theatre Royal itself, sweeping down in a giant horseshoe and packing as many comfortable seats as possible into the space, while also maintaining first-rate sight-lines to the stage from every seat in the house.

Other facilities include the bright, airy Café Fusion, which is open all year and presents a menu that blends modern and classical cuisine, and the National Opera House's VIP rooms, which can be hired for special functions or just for a touch of extra exclusivity and decadence during performances.

So, why Wexford? Why not Dublin? The answer lies in the reason that the Theatre Royal had to be first expanded and then replaced in the first place: Wexford Festival Opera. Usually dubbed simply 'the festival' by Ireland's opera fans, this isn't just a big deal locally or nationally: the Wexford Festival Opera is on par with some of the most famous operatic spectacles in the world, comparable to similar events in Vienna, Salzburg, Berlin, Rome and London. In fact, the 2017 festival was voted the best opera festival in the world by the International Opera Awards!

Growing from the inaugural 'Festival Of Music And The Arts' in

1951, Wexford Festival Opera has become internationally renowned for concentrating on more obscure, eclectic works and often provides the only opportunity in the world to experience some lesser-known operatic gems...some of which have re-entered the opera world's consciousness following breathtaking performances on the banks of the Slaney.

This enthusiasm for little-known spectacles, combined with world-class technical prowess, phenomenal musicianship, minute attention to detail, Wexford town's legendary welcome and, of course, the amazing National Opera House itself have made Ireland's Ancient East a mecca for opera lovers – designers and directors – every autumn. From its inaugural performance of Michael Balfe's charming *The Rose Of Castille* in 1951, through lesser-known works by operatic heavyweights like Donizetti, Verdi and Rossini and even Mozart – the first Mozart opera to be performed at the festival was *La Finta Giardiniera*, an immature work which was not rediscovered in its entirety until the 1970s...his unfinished *Zaide* has also featured.

Today, Wexford Festival Opera is a firm fixture for operaphiles the world over, and thousands visit Wexford every October and November from all over Europe, the US, Australia, Japan, Russia and other far-flung quarters of the globe for the opportunity to hear masterful performances of comparatively uncommon works.

The good news for summertime visitors to Wexford is that opera resounds within this beautiful building all year



round. Not only that, but for those who aren't necessarily opera buffs, the magnificent National Opera House isn't reserved exclusively for the use of sopranos, altos, tenors, baritones and basses. The next few months will see operas like *The Marriage of Figaro*, plays such as *Cash On Delivery* and *Minding Frankie*, Irish and world folk music legends such as Heidi Talbot, Breannán Ó Beaglaoich, John McCusker and Paul Meehan all feature in its programme. American Pie megastar Don McLean, oratorios such as *Messiah* by Handel, comedy, country music, explorations of the works of Beckett, musical biographies of Simon & Garfunkel and Neil Diamond, classical music, ballet, spectacular displays of modern dance, chilled-out pop rockers Snow Patrol will also be included as part of its line-up.

For event bookings, festival bookings, updates and upcoming performances, see the National Opera House's website: www.nationaloperahouse.ie.



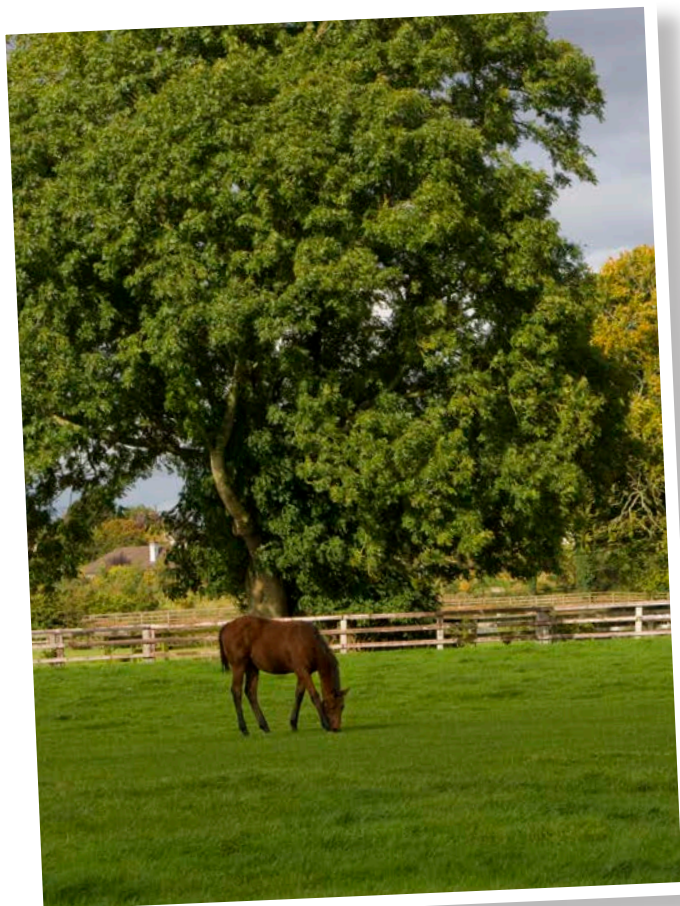
THINGS TO SEE AND DO IN KILDARE

DONADEA FOREST PARK

Donadea Forest Park is situated in northwest Kildare and comprises of approximately 243 hectares of mixed woodland. There are many different walks through the forest, including the 5km Aylmer loop, the lake walk (wheelchair accessible) and a nature trail with stops. The park is a designated National Heritage Area. There is a 9/11 Memorial at Donadea. The memorial was inspired by the memory of Sean Tallon, a young fire fighter, whose family had emigrated from Donadea. Additional facilities include public toilets with disabled access, coach parking and tea/coffee facilities.

THE IRISH NATIONAL STUD AND GARDENS

The Irish National Stud and Gardens is the home of equine royalty, immaculately-bred stallions, protective mares, frolicking foals and athletic yearlings. It is the only stud farm in Ireland open to the public and offering daily tours. Within the grounds are the world-famous Japanese Gardens, the Horse Museum and St Fiachra's Garden, created to celebrate the Millennium. Visit the Japanese Gardens for a relaxing stroll—created between the years 1906 and 1910, they were laid out by Japanese craftsman Tassa Eida and his son Minoru.



NEWBRIDGE SILVERWARE - MUSEUM OF STYLE ICONS

Originally set up as a cutlery manufacturing company in 1934, Newbridge Silverware today offers a unique tourism experience at its visitor centre. With one of the world's greatest collections of authentic couture style, Hollywood glamour, music memorabilia and other artefacts, the Museum of Style Icons is a treasure that has to be seen to be believed. Highlights of the collection include one of the greatest private collections of Audrey Hepburn garments in the world, two very famous outfits worn by Princess Grace of Monaco, Marilyn Monroe paper and garments, stage worn ensembles by Michael Jackson, plus much more. From summer 2018, the Newbridge Silverware Factory will also open to tourists for the first time ever. Guests will be transported behind the scenes and immersed in the history and craft aspects of the business.

LULLYMORE HERITAGE AND DISCOVERY PARK

Lullymore Heritage and Discovery Park is a family day out attraction set in the heart of Ireland's largest bog land, The Bog of Allen in Kildare. There is a great mix of fun, leisure and education activity to ensure that there is something to interest visitors of all ages. The woodland/bog land walks and themed gardens are famous for their vibrant colour throughout the summer. Also, an extensive outdoor adventure play area and the forest indoor play centre, 18 hole crazy golf, a pet farm with Falabella horses and a beautiful road train make Lullymore the kind of attraction you can't miss when visiting the midlands.



We simply love Irish Tourism



GoWild Magazine

World finalist
Gourmand World Food
tourism magazine final
in Yantai China
MAY 2018

THINGS TO SEE AND DO IN WATERFORD & KILKENNY

WATERFORD GREENWAY

What was once the Great Southern & Western Railway Line between Ireland's oldest city Waterford and the seaside hub of Dungarvan, is now a fantastic amenity for walkers and cyclists alike, the Waterford Greenway. At 46km in length, it is Ireland's longest Greenway. This reimagining of a railway line unused for 50 years features some of the most stunning natural scenery in the south-east, as well as encompassing the ancient and industrial along the way. Joining the picturesque dots of villages such as Kilmeaden, Kilmacthomas and Mount Cosgrove, the Greenway includes eleven bridges, three magnificent viaducts and a fairly spooky but perfectly safe tunnel. The route between Waterford and Dungarvan was travelled by railway passengers as far back as 1878 and today you too can make the journey along the Copper Coast, through the Comeraghs and on to the Viking capital of Ireland. Along the way, meet authentic and genuine Deise men and women famed for their hospitality and pride in their surroundings of beautiful Co. Waterford.

WATERFORD'S VIKING TRIANGLE

Waterford Viking Triangle is the city's Cultural and Heritage quarter, characterised by narrow streets, atmospheric public spaces and an array of attractions. It is so called because of the 1000-year-old Viking walls which once surrounded it. Perhaps the most famous building in the triangle is Reginald's Tower (which contains the Viking Museum) but the triangle is also the site of the Medieval Museum and the Bishop's Palace Museum, collectively known as Waterford Museum of Treasures. Discover Georgian Christ Church Cathedral on the site of the Viking church where the great Anglo-Norman knight Strongbow famously married the Irish princess Aoife. And if you'd like to step in to the present, in the House of Waterford Crystal you can see beautiful crystal being made.



KILKENNY ARTS FESTIVAL, 9TH-19TH AUGUST

Since its foundation in 1974, Kilkenny Arts Festival has gathered many of the world's finest musicians, performers, writers and artists in Ireland's medieval city each August. For ten days, the city's historic churches, castle, courtyards, townhouses and gardens offer a magical setting for unique collaborations and intimate encounters between audiences and artists. Classical music has been at the core of the programme, featuring globally acclaimed artists such as Victoria de los Angeles, Alfred Brendel and Joshua Bell among many others. Poetry has also featured prominently since the early years in the 1970s, when Seamus Heaney acted as literary curator and brought some of the world's finest poets to Kilkenny, including former US Poet Laureate Billy Collins, Kate Tempest and Robert Pinsky.

SMITHWICK'S EXPERIENCE

Discover the Irish draft that took over 300 years to perfect and the history of Smithwick's ale in Kilkenny, a city steeped in brewing tradition. The Smithwick's experience is an old Victorian brewing building in the heart of Kilkenny city and is just a five-minute walk from Kilkenny Castle, placed in the middle of Kilkenny's Medieval Mile. All visitors are fully guided by a local and knowledgeable host who will accompany you through the experience. You will also get the opportunity to sample the ruby red ale by the fireside.



ZIPIT

Zipit is a treetop high ropes park in Tibbradden Wood, Dublin 16, only 15 minutes from Dundrum Town Centre. Situated in the Dublin Mountains, you can get a treetop panoramic view across Dublin Bay. Zipit is a place for young and old, where children can let their imagination run wild and where adults can embrace their inner child. You can climb high into the treetops, swing into cargo nets, even ride a BMX across a bridge, before zipping down one of our many ziplines. Come as a family, come on your own, or bring along a group. Children from age seven to adults can enjoy up to four hours of excitement and adventure.

Whether you're an adrenalin junkie or just looking to try something different, Zipit offers a unique outdoor experience for everyone to enjoy. Forget the day to day stuff. Put down your smartphone. Escape the office. Get back to nature and let yourself go!

Zipit also has other parks in Farran Wood, Co. Cork and Lough Key, Co. Roscommon



COUNTY ARMS HOTEL BIRR, CO OFFALY

Welcome to the 4-star County Arms Hotel, founded by Michael & Margaret Loughnane in 1962 and Offaly's first four star Hotel. Join us in the elegant Georgian heritage town of Birr for meetings and conferences in the Heart of Ireland.

As a family run Hotel for 50 years, we look forward to helping you celebrate your special occasions – our Georgian private dining rooms are particular highlights

when added to our genuine care and attentive service. The County Arms Hotel is very popular for weddings from Tipperary, Offaly, Laois, Westmeath and Galway and our 3 generations of experience allows all our guests to relax and trust our expertise and traditional Irish hospitality. Birr in the lakelands of Ireland is a friendly town for a short break with Birr Castle, Birr Theatre, and a host of local activities including river Shannon cruising, walking in the Slieve Blooms, Bike Park Ireland, Birr Equestrian Centre, Lough Borra and Tearaways Pet Farm.

CAVAN BURREN PARK WHERE STONE-AGED KIDS PLAYED

Cavan Burren Park opened to the public in May 2014. But the site itself goes back a little longer...probably around 340 million years to the Carboniferous period when this whole area was covered in a shallow tropical sea. Back to the park, today you can

experience a wonderful interpretative centre and five amazing walking trails around Cavan Burren Park, all highlighting the spectacular prehistoric tombs, fantastic geology and special stories that make this such a unique environment. Carefully placed interpretation throughout this site explains all the features as you take in the 360° views. Stories of Giants and moving glaciers come to life with every step you take in this breath-taking prehistoric park. www.cavanburren.ie

House of Waterford Crystal

SINCE the House of Waterford Crystal manufacturing facility and visitor experience opened in June 2010, it has welcomed over one million visitors into its haven of crystal creativity and innovation.



Located on the Mall in the heart of Waterford City in Ireland's Ancient East, the House of Waterford Crystal brings a visit to Waterford to a whole new level as visitors can witness the creation of crystal stemware, giftware and masterpieces right before their very eyes. Every year the House of Waterford Crystal melts down more than 750 tonnes of crystal and produces pieces using traditional manufacturing techniques. The factory tour is a unique and captivating experience that is sure to enthrall visitors of all ages, both national and international. The tour lets people go behind the scenes for over an hour and see exactly how Waterford Crystal pieces are made and they can witness every stage of production, from the initial design stage right up to the final engraving of the piece.

On the tour, visitors first visit the mould room where they witness the mould making, a technique that has remained

unchanged throughout the centuries, as the Master Blowers shape the molten crystal flawlessly with the use of wooden moulds and hand tools. The next part of the tour is truly magical, as visitors enter the blowing department where they see glowing balls of crystal transformed into majestic shapes as they are put through the 1300-degree furnace. The Waterford Crystal pieces are then hand marked for precision and accuracy, and they are then cut, sculpted and engraved.

Visitors get a behind the scenes sneak peak of the highly skilled method of crystal manufacturing and see the high standards that the House of Waterford Crystal has for each and every piece that leaves the factory. The crystal is inspected at each stage of production, so each piece no matter how small goes through six inspections, and if it fails to reach the Waterford Crystal standards at any stage it is smashed and returned to the furnace to be re-melted so that the

piece can be started again. Some of the best known trophies and prizes around the world have also been hand crafted in The House of Waterford Crystal including the annual Peoples Choice Awards, the Solheim Cup, the Irish Open trophy and the Vincent Lombardi trophy.

The House of Waterford Crystal is also home to the largest collection of Waterford Crystal in the world; so for that special indulgence or a gift for any occasion, why not indulge in one of the designer Waterford Crystal pieces by John Rocha, Jasper Conran or Jo Sampson.

For further information visit waterfordvisitorcentre.com/email/houseofwaterfordcrystal@wwrd.com

Tel: + 353 (0)51 317000
Facebook: House of Waterford Crystal/Twitter: @WaterfordCrystl
Instagram: @waterfordcrystalfactory

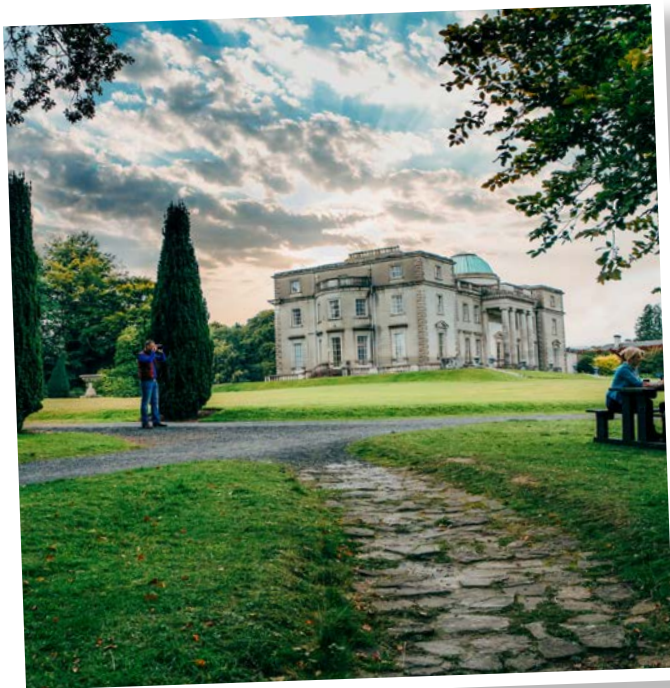
THINGS TO SEE AND DO IN LAOIS

DURROW SCARECROW FESTIVAL, 29TH JULY–6TH AUGUST 6TH

For one week every summer, the village of Durrow is transformed for its annual Scarecrow Festival. A playful and imaginative festival that includes many quirky and curious events for the local community and visitors alike. Enjoy the uninhibited imagination, creativity, music, food and fun of the festival, but above all marvel at the weird and wonderful scarecrows.

EMO COURT

Emo Court is a country villa designed by architect James Gandon (1743-1823), best known for his great public buildings, including the Custom House and the Four Courts in Dublin. The house is a magnificent example of the neo-Classical style, reflecting the architecture of ancient Greece and Rome. The house is surrounded by beautiful gardens and parkland which were first laid out in the 18th century and contain formal lawns, a lake and woodland walks with many very fine trees and shrubs.



CAPARD LOOPS

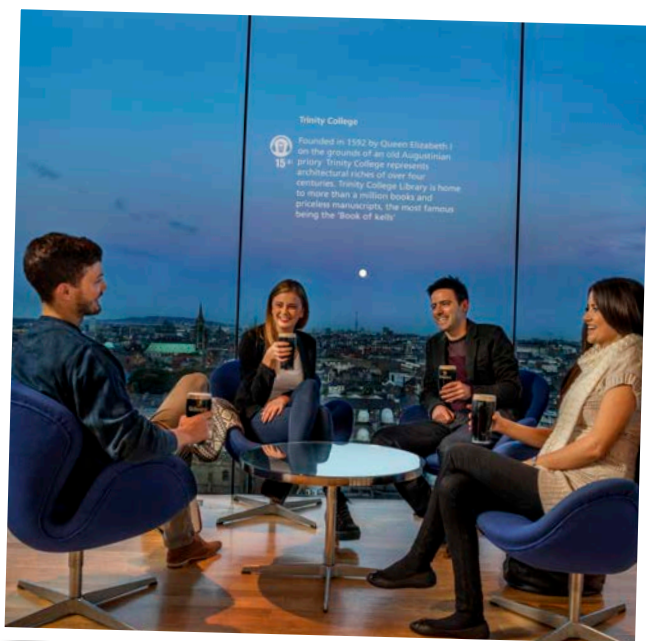
Situated in the Slieve Bloom Mountains the Capard Loop is one of the best walks and combines a beautiful wooded valley with lofty ridge views for all to enjoy. At almost 500m above the surrounding flat countryside, the wild windswept ridge is home to a vast array of wild plant and animal life and it is possible to see well into the counties surrounding Laois.

ELECTRIC PICNIC, STRADBALLY, 31ST AUGUST-2ND SEPTEMBER

Electric Picnic is an annual arts-and-music festival which has been staged since 2004 at Stradbally Hall. What began as a one-day event has expanded to a three day extravaganza and is now one of the major festivals in Europe. The music and arts event has everything from music and comedy to theatre and laughter. An unforgettable weekend is guaranteed.



THINGS TO SEE AND DO IN DUBLIN



THE BOOK OF KELLS EXHIBITION

The Book of Kells is the centrepiece of an exhibition which attracts over 500,000 visitors to Trinity College in Dublin City each year. It is Ireland's greatest cultural treasure and the world's most famous medieval manuscript. Written around the year 800 AD, the Book of Kells contains a richly decorated copy of the four gospels in a Latin text. Originally a single volume, it was rebound in four volumes in 1953 for conservation reasons. On display in Trinity since the 19th century, two volumes are normally on display, one opened at a major decorated page, the other at a text opening. It is accompanied by two pocket gospels.

KILMAINHAM GAOL

Dublin's Kilmainham Gaol held some of the most famous political and military leaders in Irish history such as Robert Emmet, Charles Stewart Parnell, the 1916 Rising leaders and Eamon de Valera. If for no other reason, Kilmainham Gaol in Dublin would be remarkable for being the biggest unoccupied gaol in these islands. As such, it gives the visitor a dramatic and realistic insight into what it was like to have been confined in one of these forbidding bastions of punishment and correction between 1796 when it opened and 1924 when it closed. It offers a panoramic insight into some of the most profound, disturbing and inspirational themes of modern Irish history. Leaders of the rebellions of 1798, 1803, 1848, 1867 and 1916 were detained here.



GUINNESS STOREHOUSE

The Guinness Storehouse is Ireland's number one International Visitor Attraction stretches across seven floors shaped around a giant pint, which, if filled would contain 14.3 million pints of Guinness. As you make your way through the impressive storehouse, discover the age-old art of brewing that makes Guinness so distinctive; visit the Tasting rooms, a multisensory tasting experience designed to help you appreciate the distinctive taste of the iconic stout. You can learn how to pour the perfect pint in the Guinness Academy or enjoy the best in Irish cuisine at the Guinness & Food Experience on level five. The highlight for many visitors is the Gravity Bar, symbolically the 'Head of the Pint', where you can enjoy panoramic views of Dublin city – views that are all the better with a complimentary pint in hand.



GAA MUSEUM, CROKE PARK

A trip to Croke Park wouldn't be complete without experiencing the treasured GAA Museum. Get ready to immerse yourself in the unique story of Gaelic games from ancient times to the present day. This museum is like no other sporting museum you'll ever visit. It not only celebrates Ireland's national games, it also vividly brings to life how the GAA has contributed to our cultural, social and sporting heritage. Featured exhibitions include the original Sam Maguire and Liam MacCarthy Cups, the Hall of Fame, and a whole floor dedicated to the games as they are today. When you're done exploring, get a taste of the action in the popular Interactive Games Zone, where you can test your hurling and Gaelic football skills!

VISIT IRELAND'S TALLEST ROUND TOWER!

Since 1832, more than 1.5 million people have been interred in Glasnevin. Located just 2.5km from Dublin's city centre, Glasnevin Cemetery covers 124 acres of glorious parkland with plenty to appreciate – perfect for those interested in exploring the legacies of Ireland's heroes.

A hauntingly gorgeous Victorian Garden cemetery each guide is passionate about sharing their love of heritage and history, telling the stories of Ireland's complex and fascinating history through daily walking tours turning a learning experience into a period of magic with a careful balance of passion, sensitivity and even fun.

Visitors to Glasnevin Cemetery can now climb the iconic O'Connell Tower for the first time in over 45 years - 198 steps to breath-taking views of Dublin and surrounding counties. The Tower is open to visitors daily and bookings can be made online.

The tower was built to commemorate the life of one of Ireland's greatest political figures, Daniel O'Connell (1775 – 1847) and took hundreds of skilled tradesmen 16 months to complete. O'Connell's final words "My body to Ireland, my heart to Rome, my soul to heaven" are inscribed in the elaborately designed walls of his crypt, located at the base of the tower.

Glasnevin, celebrating history, heritage and culture join this intriguing journey through Ireland's past.

BIRR CASTLE GARDENS & SCIENCE CENTRE

The Award-Winning Gardens of Birr Castle Gardens and Science Centre in Ireland, are both rich in amazing

feats of science and engineering as well as rare trees and flowers, wonderful wildlife, and walks along peaceful rivers and the lake. Situated at the heart of Ireland and created over generations by the Parsons family who still live there, it is an environmental and scientific time capsule.

DISCOVER CAPTAINS AND CONVICTS AND SINNERS AND SAINTS AT SPIKE ISLAND CORK!

Ireland's heritage island opened its doors to the public in 2016, having been off limits for 1300 years. Previously home to a 6th century Monastery, 18th century Fortress and the World's Largest Prison in the 1850's, today the island can be visited by ferry journey from Cobh. A guided tour relays our rich history before visitors can self explore our dark cells, deep tunnels and multiple museums. Will you escape from Fortress Spike?



MALAHIDE CASTLE, DUBLIN

Malahide Castle and Gardens is a beautiful and historic medieval castle, with a fascinating story dating back to the 12th Century. Located on the beautiful north coast of Dublin City, Malahide Castle was once owned by the Talbot Family for nearly 800 years and is one of

the longest owned castles by one family in the country. Set on 250 acres of stunning parkland, Malahide Castle is also home to one of Ireland's four botanical walled gardens with 5000 species of plants including a wonderful collection from many southern hemisphere countries. Guided tours of the castle take place daily from 9.30am all year round bringing to life the story of the Talbot family. www.malahidecastleandgardens.ie

WEXFORD ARTS CENTRE

Wexford Arts Centre has it all, with a year round programme of contemporary Art Exhibitions,

workshops for all ages from toddlers to adults, vibrant events in theatre, music, comedy, and dance with fantastic after-school programmes. Wexford Arts Centre promotes Arts and Culture on a local, regional, national and international level - so drop in and find out what's on while you're in Wexford!

KEADEEN HOTEL - YOUR HOME FROM HOME

Opened in 1970, The 4 star Keadeen Hotel is the oldest family-run hotel in County Kildare, located just 40 minutes south-west from Dublin City in the heart of 'Thoroughbred County'.

With 72 luxurious bedrooms and set on 9 acres of award-winning landscaped gardens the Keadeen hotel is ideal as a base to explore Ireland's Ancient East.



PASSAGE EAST FERRY

As you descend into the River Suir Valley to the Scenic Passage East Ferry, you are now on a voyage of discovery, exploring the rich Viking and Norman heritage in this historic corner of Ireland's Ancient East. There is so much to explore and discover on both sides of this historic estuary, from the Viking Triangle in Waterford to the Norman Trail in Co. Wexford; the oldest operational lighthouse in the world Hook Lighthouse, haunted houses, cookery schools, adventure centres, Ireland's longest greenway-Waterford Greenway, stunning beaches, golf courses, the Copper Coastline, President Kennedy's ancestral home, the Dunbrody emigration ship, to local mountains, wildlife and of course the world-famous Waterford Crystal. The ferry allows you to traverse the River Suir saving you time and money. It sails between Passage East, Co. Waterford & Ballyhack, Co. Wexford and caters for all vehicles except large coaches. Come and explore!



CASTLEMARTYR RESORT, CORK

Set adjacent to the ruins of 800-year-old castle, this 220-acre estate has a 17th-century manor house where guests can enjoy far-reaching countryside views and a stylish spa centre which includes an indoor swimming pool, 10 treatment rooms and a fitness studio.

The hotel has four dining options, including the award-winning restaurant The Bell Tower which offers gourmet dining as well as a traditional afternoon tea menu including Smoked Salmon on Irish Soda Bread and homemade scones made with fresh, locally sourced produce. Or you can visit their Italian casual dining restaurant, Franchini's, the relaxed yet elegant Knight's Bar or their informal Clubhouse.

The Castlemartyr Resort includes an 18-hole, link-style golf course. Guests can also enjoy a carriage tour of the estate, including a visit to the historic chapel, the

tomb of the 4th Earl of Shannon and Mitchell's Woods. www.castlemartyresort.ie

Set on 550 acres of mature parkland with the River Liffey flowing through the estate, the K Club boasts 4 fantastic restaurants, the K Spa, and 2 championship Arnold Palmer designed golf courses that have hosted the European Open. www.kclub.ie



WELLS HOUSE & GARDENS

Nestled in the heart of the south east, delivering the promise of Ireland's Ancient East is Wells House &

Gardens with something special for all generations to enjoy, such as enchanted woodland walks, animal farm, falconry, archery, an adventure playground, on site restaurant and so much more!

www.wellshouse.ie – info@wellshouse.ie - 0539186737

WELCOME TO THE GRAND HOTEL WICKLOW

The Grand Hotel in Wicklow has a great selection of hotel breaks in to choose from including weekend breaks, midweek special offers and seasonal hotel deals.

The Grand Hotel Wicklow has been welcoming guests to the scenic heart of the "Garden of Ireland" since 1896, and are the only hotel in Wicklow Town. Known for its friendly staff and relaxed atmosphere, the hotel are situated in the charming seaside town of Wicklow, bordered by stunning coastline and surrounded by the breathtaking Wicklow mountains, making it the perfect setting for your holiday.

The Grand Hotel is the perfect location from which to discover the picturesque town of Wicklow with its historic Wicklow Gaol, or to explore miles of spectacular beaches and the wild Wicklow Mountains National Park, visit world famous Glendalough with its iconic round tower, or view the wealth of historic houses and gardens like Powerscourt, Mount Usher, Avondale, Russborough Killruddery. If your idea of a perfect break is more sports orientated you won't be disappointed. Excellent hill-walking, fishing, cycling, horse-riding and all manner of water and adventure sports are available locally. Try the sightseeing tours and fishing trips on a comfortable boat with Wicklow Boat Charters.

www.wexfordartscentre.ie

VISIT A 13TH CENTURY CASTLE AND EXPERIENCE HISTORY BROUGHT ALIVE...

Athlone Castle was first built to defend the crossing point on the River Shannon and evolved into a bold defensive structure over the centuries. Elements of the original castle can still be seen today.

It tell the story of settlement in this part of Ireland's Ancient East, from the Neolithic period through Viking, and Medieval ages to modern life in Athlone. During your visit you will discover tales of bitter battles fought, territories won and lost and hear stories of bravery. Prepare to walk in the steps of monks, kings, soldiers and generals. You will be told



their stories and the story of Athlone Castle through a series of modern exhibitions, authentic museum artefacts, interactive games and an intense 360° cinematic experience of the Great Siege of Athlone. Some stories will be sad, some treacherous, some heroic and many will be bloody...

YOUGHAL CLOCK GATE TOWER

Youghal Clock Gate Tower is the iconic building straddling North & South Main Street and is the most visible landmark in Youghal town. A trip to Youghal is incomplete without a visit to this unique historic structure.

Visits to Youghal Clock Gate Tower are by way of pre-booked Guided Tour. Admission tickets are available online, or from Youghal Tourist Office on Market

Square, with adjacent Free Parking. A tour will take approximately 1 hour – you choose the tour time that best suits your itinerary.

While in Youghal Tourist Office, why not browse through the large selection of souvenirs and local crafts. Be sure to pop into Youghal Heritage Centre, housed within the Visitor Centre and get a feel of Youghal Heritage Town – it's FREE and makes the ideal forerunner to your upcoming tour.

Wondering where to go or what to do after your tour of Youghal Clock Gate? There is always something to do in Youghal – check out www.youghal.ie for more details.



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