IRELAND GOLF GUIDE 2019

- Championship Links Golf Courses
- Championship Parkland Golf Courses
- Hidden Gems Around The Island
- Where To Play - Where To Stay
- Essential Travel Information
IRELAND’S HIDDEN HEARTLANDS
YOURS TO UNCOVER

Lough Oughter, Co. Cavan
Welcome

Brendan Griffin T.D.

A message from the Minister of State for Tourism and Sport

Welcome to the ‘Ireland Golf Guide 2019’ designed specially to provide you with all the information you will need to plan your golf visit in Ireland – which we believe is one of the world’s finest golfing destinations.

Ireland is world-renowned for the high quality and great choice of golf courses it offers, hosting over 190,000 golf tourists each year and generating 1.7 million bed nights equating to €270 million in revenue to the Irish economy.

Spread throughout every corner of Ireland are more than 400 courses lying within our scenic landscape whether on the Wild Atlantic Way, Ireland’s Ancient East, Ireland’s Hidden Heartlands or Dublin. From championship links courses, to parkland courses and numerous hidden gems, there’s a course to please everyone!

Our passion for golf, combined with our renowned tradition of hospitality, makes us want to share our courses and our companionship with visitors and so we extend a ‘Céad M’le Fáilte’ or ‘One Hundred Thousand Welcomes’ to golfers from all over the world. It is of course, the people that really make Ireland stand out amongst other golf destinations - the friendly welcome and warm hospitality will make any golfer want to return.

We hope you can join us for this special year of the Opens, whether it’s the Dubai Duty Free Irish Open 2019 from the 3-7th July at the Lahinch Golf Club, in County Clare, or two weeks later The 148th Open from 14-21st July at the Royal Portrush Golf Club, County Antrim. These two spectacular settings which will take centre stage to an estimated audience of 500 million households and beamed across the globe showcasing our world class golf offering.

I hope that this ‘Ireland Golf Guide 2019’ will enable you to choose the golfing holiday in Ireland that is just right for you and your companions.

Enjoy your visit to Ireland, our landscape, our heritage, our food and our people - but most of all, enjoy our golf.

Brendan Griffin T.D.
Minister of State for Tourism and Sport

Brendan Griffin T.D.
Magnificent links courses of Ireland
TRALEE GOLF CLUB
Magnificent parkland courses of Ireland

CONCRA WOOD GOLF CLUB
CÉAD M’LE FÁILTE

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Finding Us  For special offers go to www.ireland.com/golf

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About the guide
The 2019 Ireland Golf Guide is designed to provide all you need to know about playing golf and travelling around the beautiful Emerald Isle. We hope that it’s user friendly, and that it helps you discover the many ways in which you can get the most out of your trip to Ireland.

Golf clubs and courses
Ireland has an embarrassment of riches when it comes to golf courses. The island might be small, but it is jam packed with many of the most illustrious, historic and talked-about courses, including one third of the world’s links. With over 400 courses to choose from, deciding where to play is never easy – but it is always fun.

Green fees
Special golf passes, early birds, group discounts – there are many ways to get a bargain at Irish golf courses. Contacting the club, or speaking with your tour operator, is always a good idea, but we’d like to be the first to dispel the myth about golf in Ireland being expensive – it’s not. For the calibre of the courses, the service and welcome you’ll receive, once you play here we think you’ll agree: golfing in Ireland is great value and a priceless experience.

Caddies, clubs, buggies and carts
Because of the unique environmental character and history of many of Ireland’s golf clubs, the experience might be a little different to what you’re used to. It is not always possible to use a buggy, but if you speak with the club about your special needs you’ll find them to be always friendly and accommodating. Caddies are almost always available, but should be booked in advance, and many courses these days now offer club hire also.

Dress code, soft spikes and handicaps
Golfing in Ireland is always a relaxed, friendly affair – but clubs do like to keep their traditions alive. Jeans and sneakers are best avoided, while if you dress smart casual you’ll be perfectly attired for most tastes. Occasionally, some clubs will require a jacket and tie for the dining room. Soft spikes are advised, as some clubs will not allow traditional spikes any longer. Handicap certificates should be brought where possible.
Dublin
Dublin is the vibrant capital city of Ireland bursting with a variety of surprising experiences where city living thrives side by side with the natural outdoors.

Ireland’s Ancient East
Enjoy some of the world’s best golf courses in Ireland’s Ancient East – from breath-taking links and championship parklands to magnificent golfing resorts.

Ireland’s Hidden Heartland
Explore the green heartlands of Ireland’s natural beauty, where activity and relaxation are centred around rural communities. With great golf courses like Slieve Russell and Glasson, there is an infinite variety of things to do for all ages.

Wild Atlantic Way
The magnificent links courses along the Wild Atlantic Way exploit the spectacular coastal scenery and beaches to the full and provide some of the most challenging and exhilarating golf in the world.

Northern Ireland
Home to Rory McIlroy, Graeme McDowell, Darren Clarke – and some of the world’s best golf courses.

Icons The facility icons listed for hotels and golf clubs have not been independently verified by the Fáilte Ireland Golf Guide. The icons shown are based on information supplied directly by the venues themselves. Errors and omissions excepted.

Every effort has been made to make this guide as comprehensive as possible. If we have overlooked any detail or club in any of the seven regions, please contact our office for inclusion in the 2019 guide. Walton Media Tel: 01 419 9604.
Dive INTO CLARE

Clare is a county renowned for its majestic coastline, traditional culture & heritage, unique environment and variety of landscapes. You will find interesting gems in every corner of Clare from breathtaking scenery to history and from its intriguing culture to fine dining.

Crucible of Golf

Clare has a long-standing history of welcoming visitors from across the water, particularly golfers.

Established in 1892, the Old Course at Lahinch Golf Club was designed by the father of modern golf, Old Tom Morris. It was redesigned in 1927 by Alistair McKenzie, who incidentally co-designed Augusta National. Considering this legacy, Lahinch could easily be described as the “Augusta of the West of Ireland”. From weather-forecasting goats to some of the most challenging golf shots in the world, Lahinch has never disappointed in its 125 year reign.

Further south, you’ll delight in the challenge of Greg Norman’s famous links at Trump International in Doonbeg, which in tandem with the Old Course at Lahinch; copper fastens County Clare as a focal point for European golf.

Home to the South of Ireland Amateur Championship since 1895, the fairways at Lahinch have tempered some of the greatest Irish golfers. In 2019, when Lahinch plays host to the Dubai Duty Free Irish Open, it will challenge the metal of some of the best golfers across the world. Whether you are a novice or a pro, there are lots of other golf courses in County Clare to meet any ability or budget. You’ll find lots of information to help you plan your trip on www.visitclare.ie.

Ennis... The Heart

Ennis, the county town of Clare, is full of character and natural charm.
Majestic Coastline

From ocean lovers to golfers, Clare offers a vast array of memory-making opportunities.

Some would argue that Lahinch is the spiritual home of surfing in Ireland, and boasting some of Ireland’s most renowned surf schools just waiting to get you into the magical Atlantic surf: they might be right. More experienced water-sport enthusiasts can explore the myriad of world-class breaks and beaches.

With Clare’s eleven award-winning beaches dotted all along its wild and rugged, you won’t be short of a place to dip your toes in the pristine waters of the Atlantic Ocean. Whether it is the White Strand beaches at Doonbeg or Miltown Malbay, the brown sugar sands at Spanish Point or the terracotta fringe of Fanore, you’ll be spoilt for choice.

Dating back to the 1670s, Loop Head Lighthouse stands proud on the western edge of Clare and the Loop Head Peninsula. This iconic landmark is steeped in history and is one of the Great Lighthouses of Ireland. Soak in the rich maritime heritage as you take in the exhibition in the Light Keeper’s Cottage, enjoy a guided tour of the tower and relish the wonders of Loop Head Heritage Trail with its stunning landmarks such as the Bridges of Ross.

No matter where you visit, outstanding views, unique landscapes, incredible culture and heritage abound in Ireland’s ‘Banner County’ - Clare.

Check out www.visitclare.ie for more.
Useful Info

Making the most of your break

Airline operators
Ireland is well served by a number of the major international carriers, many of which offer non-stop connections from major gateways in the US and Europe. Contact details for most of the airlines are readily available on the website of your destination airport in Ireland.

Ireland by car
Travelling by car in Ireland is a great way to see the country at your own pace and time. Some tips when driving in Ireland:
- Always drive on the left.
- All speed limits and distances are designated in kilometers. The maximum speed on motorways is 120 km/h. In urban areas, speed is restricted to between 30 and 50 km/h.
- Tourists require a driving licence issued by their country of origin.
- Drink driving is a very serious offence in Ireland and the best advice is not to drink and drive.
- The wearing of seat belts is compulsory in front and rear seats for all passengers.

Ireland by coach
The national bus company, Bus Éireann, operates a wide variety of services available to tourists. These include connections to and from all the main airports as well as Expressway services linking Ireland’s main cities and towns. For more information go to their website: www.buseireann.ie.

In addition, there are quite a number of private coach companies dedicated to serving the needs of tourists. These coach operators offer individualised service to groups, as well as regular sightseeing tours.

Ireland by rail
Irish Rail is the national rail company, with a comprehensive list of Intercity services across the country. For full details on destinations, routes, timetables and fares, visit their website: www.irishrail.ie.

In addition to the national rail links, there are two commuter rail lines serving the Greater Dublin Area: – the Luas Lines (www.luas.ie) and DART Lines (www.irishtrain.ie). Both of these offer tourists a reliable and inexpensive method of seeing the capital city.

Tipping in Ireland
Ireland does not have as strong a tipping culture as exists in other countries. However, locals and visitors tend to tip for restaurants and taxi services. A rough general rule is around 10% and all tips are at your own personal discretion, based on the quality of service delivered. In restaurants with table service, if you have received exceptional service you can tip slightly higher.

Currency/Credit cards
In common with most of the European Continent, the Republic of Ireland uses the Euro. The Euro has denominations of €500, €100, €50, €20, €10 and €5 in paper notes. Coinage consists of €1 and €2 coins, plus smaller denominations of 50c, 20c, 10c and 5c. (Note: the “c” refers to cent).

Banking hours are generally 10.00am to 4.30pm Monday through Friday, with some banks open on Saturday. ATM (cash) machines are located at most banks and Irish ATMs accept cards that have the CIRRUS, ACCESS or PLUS symbol. The ATMs may also issue cash on major credit cards. Visa, MasterCard and American Express credit cards are widely accepted in Ireland.

The Irish language
In the Republic of Ireland, both English and Irish (Gaelic) are the official languages, but most residents will use English as their primary language. Street name signs and directional road signage are all bilingual. In Gaeltacht areas of the country (typically found in the west around Galway, north in Donegal and south around Kerry), Irish is spoken daily. However, even in these regions, people will also speak English.
Welcome to Executive Helicopters where we’ll help you create spectacular memories of your golf trip to Ireland. See more courses with less hassle. Plus see the world famous beauty of the Irish Wild Atlantic Way by air.

Contact our Heli Golf Tours Team now for booking and more information.

A MULTI AWARD WINNING COMPANY

TRAVEL TIMES BY AIR

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Festival Times • Cultural events in 2019

Golf is just one of the many great activities on offer in Ireland, with many festivals to enjoy upon your visit to the island.

St Patrick’s Day Festival
14-18 March 2019

TEMPLE BAR TRADFEST
DUBLIN
23-27 Jan 2019

Temple Bar Tradfest is an annual music and culture festival that takes place in late January in Dublin. Taking place over five days and five nights, the festival features over 200 free events, and it showcases the cream of both Irish and international trad and folk artists, providing a stage to promote the next generation of Irish musicianship.

www.tradfest.ie

ST PATRICK’S DAY FESTIVAL
DUBLIN / VARIOUS
14-18 March 2019

Don your shamrock and enjoy the festival surrounding St Patrick’s Day, Ireland national day celebrating the patron saint of the country. The day showcases Ireland’s identity, arts and culture, with the very best of Irish and international talent for the world to see. The Dublin parade will travel across the city and will delight with its myriad of colourful performers and floats.

www.stpatricksfestival.ie

LISTOWEL WRITERS’ WEEK
LISTOWEL, CO. KERRY
29 May-2 June 2019

Listowel Writers’ Week is an internationally acclaimed 5-day literary festival devoted to bringing together writers and audiences at unique and innovative events in the historic and intimate surroundings of Listowel. It includes writing competitions, writing workshops, book launches, readings, lectures and seminars, showcasing the best of Irish literature from across the world.

www.writersweek.ie

RORY GALLAGHER FESTIVAL
BALLYSHANNON, CO. DONEGAL
30 May-2 June 2019

Guitar legend Rory Gallagher has sold over 30 million albums worldwide and the Rory Gallagher International Tribute Festival takes place in the town where he was born – Ballyshannon. With over 10,000 fans now attending the festival annually from all over the world, it features some top-quality rock-and-roll music from the big top concerts, as well as 25 hours of Free Open Air Concerts and Pub Gigs.

www.rorygallagherfestival.com

VHI WOMEN’S MINI MARATHON
DUBLIN
2 June 2019

The biggest all-women’s event of its kind in the world, the VHI Women’s Mini Marathon has grown steadily in numbers since it began in 1983. Women of all ages, representing every county and every walk of life, take part in this great festival of women. No pressure is put on anyone, all you have to do is walk, jog or run the 10k, it is up to each individual to set her own target.

www.vhiwomensminimarathon.ie

Rory Gallagher Festival
30 May - 2 June 2019
BLOOMSDAY FESTIVAL
DUBLIN
11-16 June 2019

The Bloomsday Festival is an annual celebration of James Joyce’s modernist epic Ulysses, the events of which take place on 16 June 1904. The day is named after the central character in the book, Leopold Bloom. A lively celebration of all things Joyce, join avid fans of the literature from all over the world as they descend on Dublin.
www.bloomsdayfestival.ie

BODY & SOUL FESTIVAL
KILRUSH UPPER, CO. WESTMEATH
21-23 June 2019

A bizarre and beautiful banquet of music, art, food, theatre and more, Body & Soul festival takes place over the Summer Solstice Weekend at Ballinlough Castle, where the grounds and woods are transformed to create a mystical atmosphere. You never know what you might stumble upon, with installations of all sorts around every corner.
www.bodyandsoul.ie

SEA SESSIONS
CO DONEGAL
21-23 June 2019

A surf and music festival in Co Donegal, Sea Sessions welcomes Two Door Cinema Club, Sigrid, Clean Bandit and more to the beach town of Bundoran this June. The location for the concert is breathtaking along the north-west coast and while taking in the great music, you can take your board and go for a surf, a swim or grab your skateboard for some nice flips.
www.seasessions.com

IRISH DERBY FESTIVAL
CO KILDARE
27-29 June 2019

The Irish Derby Festival is one of the highlights of the Irish horseracing calendar, taking place at the historic Curragh racecourse in Co Kildare. The three-day event promises a spectacle of fashion, entertainment, music and fine racing as attendees get swept up in the magic of an unmissable summer celebration.
www.curragh.ie/visiting-the-curragh/derby-festival

DUBAI DUTY FREE IRISH OPEN
CO CLARE
3-7 July 2019

The famous links at Lahinch Golf Club will host the 2019 Dubai Duty Free Irish Open. This year, the tournament will be hosted by 2014 Ryder Cup-winning captain Paul McGinley and promises to be a treat on one of the world’s best courses. With its Rolex Series designation on the European Tour, a world-class field is guaranteed, as many of the world’s best prepare for the The Open in Royal Portrush two weeks later.
www.dubaidutyfreeirishopen.com
NORTHERN IRELAND OPEN
BALLYMENA, CO. ANTRIM
July/August 2019
The Northern Ireland Open is a golf tournament at Galgorm Castle on the European Challenge Tour and a stepping stone to the ‘big time’ of world golf. It continues to grow every year thanks its family-orientated nature, with the NI Open Food Festival, exhibitors, live music, golf art exhibition and Fun Golf Area all included in the NI Open Village.
www.niopen.golf

FLEADH CHEOIL
CO LOUTH
11-18 August 2019
More than 500,000 people headed to Drogheda, Co Louth last year to take part in the Fleadh Cheoil, Ireland’s most famous Irish music festival. The best musicians in the country will be there for competitions for instruments such as the violin, tin whistle, harp and banjo, as well as singing and dancing. It is a unique and welcoming festival of the best of traditional arts that offers a wide range of activities to be enjoyed by all.
www.fleadhcheoil.ie

ROSE OF TRALEE INTERNATIONAL FESTIVAL
TRALEE, CO KERRY
23-27 August 2019
The Rose of Tralee International Festival is going into its 60th year in 2019. It brings young women of Irish descent from around the world to County Kerry and connects the global Irish community in a carnival atmosphere of street entertainment and live music, culminating in the selection of the Rose of Tralee for 2019.
www.roseoftralee.ie

GALWAY ARTS FESTIVAL
CO GALWAY
15-28 July 2019
Every July, the Galway Arts Festival turns the City of Tribes into a festival party with literature, drama, theatrics and pop-up surprises. Right on the Wild Atlantic Way, the festival is packed with history. The festival packs in over 200 shows in 25+ locations over 14 days.
www.giaf.ie

MONAGHAN COUNTRY MUSIC FESTIVAL
MONAGHAN, CO. MONAGHAN
20-23 July 2019
Monaghan Town Country Music festival is a charity-funded, open air, four-day country music and jiving festival, featuring some of the best Irish acts in country music. Beginning in 2013, the festival has taken over the entire town, and it also features a jiving dance competition with a prize of €1,000 up for grabs, so get practising!
www.monaghantowncountrymusic.ie

Fleadh Cheoil
11-18 August 2019

Rose of Tralee International Festival
23-27 August 2019
Lisdoonvarna Matchmaking Festival
30 August–22 September 2019

Europe’s largest matchmaking festival draws throngs of people to Lisdoonvarna every year, where they can enjoy live music and dancing with traditional music performances, endless opportunities to meet people – from speed-dating to sessions. Age is no barrier, those attending range from 18 to 80. Most importantly, it is great craic and will leave many long-lasting memories.
www.matchmakerireland.com

Electric Picnic
30 August - 1 September 2019

Electric Picnic is Ireland’s premier music and arts festival, which has consistently attracted some of the biggest names in music, from Kendrick Lamar to Arctic Monkeys, from the Sex Pistols to the Beastie Boys. More than just a music festival, the event also showcases art, theatre, comedy, food and holistic health.
www.electricpicnic.ie

Three Brothers Classic
CO Kerry
6–7 September 2019

Fifty-four teams of three brothers will take part in a two-day golf competition at Kenmare Golf Club. Teams will be travelling for the event from the US, France, the UK and around Ireland for this event. As well as the competitive side to the Classic, this event is an annual chance for brothers and their families to get together and experience all that Kenmare has to offer. Songs will be sung and stories told until late at night.
www.kenmaregolfclub.com/3-brothers/

National Ploughing Championships
17–19 September 2019

An outdoor agricultural show incorporating a ploughing contest, the National Ploughing Championships are a celebration of Irish rural life. Hosted since 1931, it draws over 1500 exhibitors and achieves attendances of over 200,000 each year. More than just farming, it features attractions such as live entertainment, fashion shows, crafts, live cooking demonstrations, sheep dog trials, pony games and welly throwing.
www.npa.ie

Banks of the Foyle Halloween Carnival
28–31 October 2019

Nowhere quite does Halloween like Derry! Every year, the city goes above and beyond to wow the festival goers with its spooktacular events. There’s something for every age group to enjoy, with a jam-packed carnival calendar extravaganza.
www.derryhalloween.com
Irish Theatre
Putting On A Show

Ireland is home to four Nobel Literature winners, who have worked in the many historic theatres across the island.

Ireland is known as the land of saints and scholars, with many literary giants growing up inspired by these shores. From acclaimed poets to world-class novelists, Ireland has had four Nobel Prize Winners for Literature - Seamus Heaney, William Butler Yeats, George Bernard Shaw and Samuel Beckett. Ireland is also the home of the great novelist James Joyce, who wrote Ulysses, often voted as the greatest novel of all-time.

Bernard Shaw and Beckett were particularly well known for their flair as playwrights, as well as Oscar Wilde, JM Synge and Sean O’Casey to name just a few. Plays like Waiting for Godot, Playboy of the Western World, Plough and the Stars and The Importance of Being Earnest are Ireland’s gift to the literary world. These plays and many others are often shown in the thriving Irish theatrical scene, with a host of festivals and events to enjoy.

Irish theatre venues are brimming with history and often played important roles in key moments of Irish history. For example, the Abbey Theatre, founded by WB Yeats, Edward Martyn and Lady Gregory, features heavily in Ireland’s nationalist independence struggle. The Abbey was often a venue of civil disobedience as playwrights tried to bring in brave new themes to theatre. When rioters returned for O’Casey’s Plough and the Stars, Yeats famously said, “You have disgraced yourself again. Is this to be the recurring celebration of the arrival of Irish genius?”

A stage adaption of The Country Girls, Roddy Doyle’s Two Pints, and Glasgow Girls are among the highlights of the 2019 schedule at the Abbey Theatre.

The Gaiety Theatre has given the people of Dublin opera, musicals, drama, comedy, concerts, dance, festivals and pantomime for 146 years. 2019 will see great shows such as The Cripple of Inishmaan, the Magic Flute and Riverdance. The similarly named but not-to-be-confused-with Gate Theatre features plays like the Great Gatsby and Roddy Doyle’s The Snapper this year, while the 2,111-capacity Bord Gáis Energy Theatre has a full line-up too, from ballet to musicals like Dirty Dancing.

Head to Belfast and you have the award-winning Lyric Theatre, which...
makes a unique and vital contribution to the community as the only full-time producing theatre in Northern Ireland. It has shows like Sweeney Todd and Ulster American coming up in 2019.

In Cork, you will find the 650-seat Victorian theatre, the Everyman Theatre, the oldest purpose-built theatre building in Cork, which features an eclectic mix of plays, operas and concerts, but specialises in drama. The Fit-up Theatre Festival in West Cork is a biennial festival in February and July and August, which brings touring shows to small towns and villages where theatre is only occasionally aired and promotes Irish writing.

In Galway, An Taibhdearc are Irish plays in Gaelic, the national Irish language theatre in Ireland. The theatre is busy during the two weeks of the Galway Arts Festival in July, one of many great literary festivals over the course of the year. Founded in 1976, the Galway Arts Festival has more than 200,000 attendees at 200 performances, talks and exhibitions across 26 venues. The BBC has described the Galway Arts Festival as “one of Europe’s most important cultural events”.

Elsewhere in Connacht, the Boyle Arts Festival in Co Roscommon is highly regarded for its group exhibition of contemporary Irish art, classical music, drama and literature, while the Westport Arts Festival is a mix of evening music and theatrical programmes from some of the best global acts in the world.

“Irish theatre venues are brimming with history and often played important roles in key moments of Irish history.”
Irish Whiskey Tours
Places to go and whiskeys to try in the home of ‘uisce beatha’

The venerable alcoholic spirit in Ireland for many centuries, whiskey is believed to have been invented in Ireland and Scotland in the 15th century. While there is some dispute over who made it first, the oldest licenced distillery is found in Ireland, the Old Bushmills Distillery in Co Antrim.

The key difference between the whiskey in the two countries is that the Irish version is generally distilled three times instead of two, producing smooth-tasting worldwide brands like Bushmills, Jameson and Powers. In Gaelic, whiskey is known as “uisce beatha”, meaning the “water of life”.

“Too much of anything is bad, but too much good whiskey is barely enough,” wrote Mark Twain about the drink, and you can explore the best Irish whiskey here with distillery tours, tours to the best pubs and bars in the country and the finest whiskey shops, where whiskey is as much at home as the excellent food and hospitality.

WHISKEY DISTILLERY
Learn how world-famous whiskey is prepared by going on a distillery tour. Jameson Whiskey was distilled at the Old Jameson Distillery in Dublin until 1971, which is a popular tourist attraction, as is the current location in Midleton in Cork. One can’t miss the popular Old Bushmills Distillery in Co. Antrim which produces the smooth-tasting Bushmills. Elsewhere, try the Connacht Distillery Company in Ballina, Mayo. Along the banks of the River Moy in a unique western Irish setting, the distillery’s barrel room houses casks full of whiskey, where it slowly matures.

The Tullamore Distillery is a new distillery in County Offaly, where you can taste the famous Tullamore Dew. Visitors on a tour can explore the production process from still house to warehouse and even create their own unique blend of whiskey in the blending room. Surrounded by the beautiful Wicklow Mountains guarded by the mighty Sugar Loaf, enjoying a temperate coastline climate and bathed by pure spring waters, try the Powerscourt whiskey for a new whiskey distilling experience. In Drogheda, the Boann Distillery sees every raw ingredient sourced 100 per cent natural and local, with every drop of water drawn from the Boyne Valley well. Born of heritage barley grown in Atlantic soil, Clonakilty Distillery in Co Cork is triple distilled in traditional copper pot stills and cut with the purest of water.

IRISH WHISKEY MUSEUM
Teeling Whiskey Distillery is in the historic Liberties of Dublin city centre, and each tour concludes with a taste of award-winning Teeling Whiskeys, with a selection of tasting options to suit the novice and aficionado alike. Also in Dublin city centre is the Irish Whiskey Museum at College Green, telling history and tales of the rise and fall of Irish whiskey, through interactive exhibits, plus a tasting at the end.

IRISH WHISKEY TRAILS
Irish Whiskey Trails are available not just for whiskey-lovers but also for anyone who wants to enjoy some of the very best Irish traditional pubs or who is simply interested in Irish history and culture. Visit pubs from McCaul’s in Cavan in the north to the Brian Boru Pub in Glasnevin, Dublin in the east, from Folk House Bar in Cork in the south to Lowry’s Pub in Galway in the west.

WHISKEY SHOPS
Buying the best whiskey comes sometimes from specialised whiskey shops, others are off-licences attached to pubs, but each offers you an exceptional choice of Irish whiskeys. Many of the whiskeys available in these shops cannot be found in airport duty-free shops or on ferries, so they are well worth checking out if you are looking for the fullest possible choice of Irish whiskeys.
EXPRIENCES MAKE YOUR JOURNEY

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Ireland is a nation that is booming economically, and after the tough days that followed the economic crash of 2008, the retail sector is thriving once more. Any visitor to Irish shores will find an array of gifts to take home from the world’s top fashion brands, as well as the best in Irish design. Ireland is known for its home products such as Irish crystal, Aran sweaters and Irish tweed, which are mentioned in detail elsewhere in the guide.

Dublin is a modern European city and the very best brands are available throughout stores in the capital. The city was recently voted fifth best shopping city in the world, with praise for the city’s “eclectic mix of shops, cafes, galleries and restaurants”. The elegant Grafton Street is one of the top shopping streets in Europe, and with buskers and street performers always around, it is always worth a walk down. Its flagship clothing department store, Brown Thomas is also located in Cork, Limerick and Galway, and includes designer brands from Chanel to Armani.

Shopping centres are common in the capital city. The largest of which is Dundrum Shopping Centre, which at 125,000 square metres and 170 shops and restaurants, is one of the biggest in Europe. Blanchardstown Shopping Centre has more than 180 stores, including four Starbucks, a nine-screen cinema and Leisureplex. From Liffey Valley to Jervis, from Ilac to Omni Park, there is something for everybody in Dublin’s shopping centres.

Just outside Dublin, shoppers must try out Kildare Village, a stylishly designed shopping village of designer outlet shopping, home to luxury fashion and homeware stores. Luxury goods on sale include Tommy Hilfiger, Gucci and Armani, which offer up to 60 per cent off all year round. Whitewater Shopping Centre in Newbridge, Co Kildare is Ireland’s largest regional shopping centre, with a whole host of retailers, from Debenhams to M&S, from Zara to H&M.

In Cork city, the newly added Opera Lane outdoor shopping mall and street has become a haven for shoppers, offering the best shopping mix in Munster. It is home to premium fashion stores and the prestigious Apple computer dealership, Compus, in the home city of Apple’s European headquarters.

In Belfast, Victoria Square Shopping Centre is home to more than 70 shops, cafes and restaurants, including House of Fraser, Apple, Topshop and Cruise. It is beautifully designed with a massive glass dome measuring 35m (115ft) in diameter. One of the most expensive property developments ever undertaken in Northern Ireland, there is a wonderful 80 ft viewing area for families to enjoy.

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The people of Ireland eat all types of food, like any other nationality, but there are certain oddities to their diet that are ingrained in Irish diet.

When you think of Irish eating habits, you may think of the potato, and they are still involved in a lot of traditional Irish meals, including the famous Irish stew. The exact recipe is not consistent from place to place but common ingredients include lamb or mutton as well as potatoes, carrots, onions and parsley.

Other traditional dishes include: bacon and cabbage (which consists of unsliced back bacon boiled with cabbage and potatoes), boxty (an Irish potato pancake) and colcannon (mashed potatoes with kale or cabbage).

It would not be a trip to Ireland without enjoying a traditional Irish breakfast, a common offering at Irish hotels before a round of golf or a day of sightseeing. The Irish breakfast includes bacon rashers, pork sausages, fried eggs, white pudding, black pudding, toast and fried tomatoes. Black pudding is made from blood, grain (usually barley) and seasoning. Tea or coffee is usually included also. In Northern Ireland, the Ulster Fry will see a slight variation, most notably soda bread and potato bread, with an omission of white pudding.

The “piece de resistance” of traditional Irish food is the Sunday Carvery, a roast dinner, but done in a buffet style, and see which hunk of roast meat you want cut for you, as well as your choice of mash, vegetables, gravy and roast potatoes.

Bread is loved in Ireland, particularly brown bread, made with coarse flour, typically covered in butter and jam, but also common with soup. Irish people will put just about anything in their sandwich, but try out a crisp sandwich, particularly with Tayto crisps, or a “chip butty” (chips in a sandwich). The chicken fillet roll from a deli is very popular throughout all corner shops in Ireland, a chicken sandwich with salad, placed in a baguette. When in Waterford, check out Waterford Blaa with its floury baps.

Ireland is surrounded by the sea and has a fine seafood industry to be enjoyed by tourists. Oysters from the Irish shores, and Gigas Oysters, Wild Mussels and Wild Surf Clams are harvested within Galway Bay. Top-class fish and chip restaurants can be enjoyed across the country, from Howth to Kinsale to Dingle, while trout, salmon, mackerel, cod and shellfish are also common seafood meals.
Irish Cottage Industry • Authentic Wool

In Ireland, everything was home produced in our grandparent’s time and some of those traditions still thrive today.

From Donegal Tweed to Aran Sweaters, Irish cottage industries produce unique clothing to take home. The history of the cottage industries dates back to a time when the skills of spinning and weaving in early Ireland were so important that the Brehon Laws included a part of a wife’s entitlement in case of divorce that she keep her spindles, wool bags, weaver’s reeds and a share of the yarn she had spun.

The earliest known evidence in Ireland of woven material dates from 1600 B.C., as pottery from that period shows signs of woven material in which the clay was placed before firing. A fragment of cloth in the National Museum, found in a bog in County Antrim, is dated from at least 700 B.C. Historically, weaving in Ireland took two forms. Firstly, the rural handweaver working in his own home, supplying his own and his neighbours’ needs. Secondly, from the 13th century onwards, the more organised urban craftsman weaved for a larger domestic and export market. This letter was largely destroyed by restrictive laws imposed on the export of Irish woollen cloth at the end of the 17th century and did not revive again until the late 19th century.

By the 20th century, there were power mills, handweaving mills and individual weavers operating. The handweavers were also encouraged by the Irish Homespun Society, which was founded in 1936. Kerry Woollen Mills is one of the last surviving traditional woollen mills still manufacturing in the wonderful Kerry countryside. The mill is set in a rural location with many of the 300-year-old buildings still standing and functional. The company produces natural fibres in classic and traditional styles and colours. Perhaps the most famous product of the Irish Cottage industry is the Aran Sweater.

Often known as a Fisherman Sweater, they are distinguished by their use of complex textured stitch patterns, several of which are combined in the creation of a single garment. Aran Sweaters were knitted using unscoured wool that retained natural oils, which made garments water-resistant and meant they remained wearable even when wet. Famous for its warmth and durability throughout the world, the hand-weaving skills of Donegal Tweed have been passed down through many generations.

Today, most Donegal Tweed comes from the Magee, Molloy & McNutt factory power looms which yield 600 or more yards a day, but there are still some 25 local craftsmen working at home, turning out the all-wool, handwoven fabric that is treasured throughout the world. Cushendale Woollen Mills in Graigueamangh, Co Kilkenny dates back to Cistercian monks in the early 13th century and Flemish weaves in the 17th century. In the 19th century, a man called Patrick Cushen began making wool there and the business is still run by relatives of that family. You can visit the various mill shops to view the full range of Irish wool and tweed available.
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Irish traditional • Folk Music and Dance

Take part in a ‘session’ of trad music to experience the craic and ceol Ireland is famous for.

Irish music comes in many forms, from popular music from rock acts like U2 and Hozier to the mystic Celtic music of Enya. But if Ireland is known for one type of music, it is traditional Irish music.

“There are no notes on a banjo. You just play it,” said famous folk musician, Pete Seeger, and that kind of joie de vivre is present in all types of traditional music from the banjo to the fiddle to the tin whistle.

Irish traditional music began as an oral tradition, passed on from generation to generation by listening, learning by ear and without formally writing the tunes on paper. It originated with the Celts 2,000 years ago, who were influenced by music of the East. It is believed that the traditional Irish harp may have originated from Ancient Egypt.

It was not until the 18th century that music was officially written down for the first time. The collecting of music continues today, and the Irish traditional music has travelled much further than Ireland thanks to our long history of emigration, especially during the Great Famine, where vast numbers of Irish moved to the United States and brought their music with them.

Traditional music, or trad for short, has endured more strongly against the forces of cinema, radio and mass media than the indigenous folk music of other countries.

The popularity of the Fleadh Cheoil music festival is one reason why the music has endured to present day. Every year, hundreds of thousands flock to a designated host town for a music competition. This year it is in Drogheda, Co Louth and it promises to be a week to remember. Another traditional Irish music festival to watch out for is the TradFest in Temple Bar, which attracts some of the biggest international names in folk and traditional Irish music, right in the heart of bustling Dublin city centre, attracting some of the biggest names internationally in folk and traditional Irish music.

Aside from festivals, trad music can be found in bars throughout Ireland. A gathering of people that play trad music is known as a “session”, an experience that is shared, not a performance that is bought and sold, and one that often goes on until the early hours of the morning.

Common instruments used to play traditional music include the fiddle, accordion, tin whistle, flute and Uilleann pipes. The 4-string banjo and guitar are also regularly used. The bodhrán drum is famous in Irish traditional music, measuring from 35 to 45 cm. A goatskin head is tacked to one side, with the other side open-ended for one hand to be placed against the inside of the drum head to control pitch and timbre.

The harp is one of the chief symbols of Ireland and the Celtic Harp is a beautiful wire-strung instrument requiring great skill and practice to play. Irish traditional songs are written in English and Irish. Vocals unaccompanied by music are called sean nós and are considered the ultimate expression of traditional singing, with songs called caoineadh often sang in sorrow at funerals.

But most trad music is upbeat, suiting Irish dancing of jigs, reels and polkas. Irish dancing was, of course, made famous by the Riverdance show, which took off as an interval performance act during the 1994 Eurovision Song Contest, featuring Irish dancing champions Michael Flatley and Jean Butler. It has since visited over 450 venues worldwide and has been watched by over 25 million people, making it one of the most successful dance productions in the world.

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Irish Pubs • Craic agus Ceol

One of Ireland’s greatest exports, the Irish pub is home to a hearty welcome and a pint of Guinness.

Good puzzle would be cross Dublin without passing a pub,” mused Leopold Bloom in James Joyce’s novel Ulysses. This is the case not just in Dublin but across Ireland. Figures from the Drinks Industry Group of Ireland show that there are 7,140 pubs nationwide and are the social hub of activity in cities, towns and villages across the country.

Internationally, the words “Irish pub” are met with respect, as the pub sparks thoughts of a unique culture, a casual and friendly atmosphere, hearty food and drink, Irish sports and traditional music.

For many years, the local pub was considered the cornerstone of the community in the same way the local church would be. It functioned as both a place to consume alcohol at leisure as well as a place in which to meet and greet people of the locality. The congenial atmosphere still exists today, where a warm and friendly atmosphere is extended to outsiders.

While not all Irish pubs will feature live Irish music, it is an important part of the culture, along with food, drink and sports. Drinks include a variety of spirits and beers on tap, including Guinness and Irish whiskeys such as Bushmills or Jameson. As the home of the “Black Stuff”, the quality of the Guinness in Ireland is unmatched elsewhere, and a pint is an essential experience for all visitors in the country.

The main cities on the island have a vibrant nightlife. Temple Bar in Dublin is packed with pubs playing live music, and if you fancy hanging around to the late hours of the morning, try the famous nightclub Copper Face Jacks. The Cathedral Quarter is the cultural hub of Belfast, from the Dirty Onion to the Duke of York. Galway is one of the most authentic Irish “going out” experiences, while Cork is unmatched for the quality of its nightlife on Oliver Plunkett Street.

In truth, every urban area, no matter how small in Ireland, has its fair share of interesting pubs. And some of the most authentic Irish drinking experiences will come in rural areas, where you will be transported back to a simpler time of “craic and ceol”.

EXPLORE

The South Pole Inn, Co Kerry

Local Dingle legend Tom Crean was involved in three of history’s most punishing Antarctic expeditions and earned a medal for bravery. On returning to his native county, Crean opened The South Pole Inn, where the shelves are packed with stories attesting to his heroism.

GALLERY

Grogan’s, Co Dublin

Grogan’s is one of Dublin’s liveliest city centre pubs on South William Street, but it differs from pubs around it in that it also operates as a gallery. The pub showcases a revolving display of work from local artists. It decorates the pub nicely, while giving exposure to local art. With some of the best Guinness in the world, Grogan’s is one of those places where time stands still and the world passes by.
“… this is our first chance to focus on a piece of ground that was created by nature. We are fortunate to work on some of the top golf courses around the world but there is something romantic about this.”

Gil Hanse, Architect, Narin & Portnoo Links

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ireland is perhaps better known for a delicious, creamy pint of Guinness from the pub than it is for its food offering. But as the years go by, pubs have adapted to the needs of the 21st century, realising that the bar is more than just a place for drinking, it can be a place for high-quality dining as well.

Take, for example, the Wild Honey Inn in Lisdoonvarna, Co Clare. In 2018, the family-run bar became the first Irish pub to win a coveted Michelin Star. Run by chef Aidan McGrath and his wife, Kate, the Irish Times review wrote that it was a “great combination of a pub full of character and a kitchen that cares about putting the food of the Burren onto plates”.

A Michelin star is a long way from the days where a packet of Tayto crisps and a packet of nuts would be the only thing to eat in many pubs across the country. Today, it is unusual for a pub not to offer a food menu of some sort, with carvery dinners particularly popular at lunchtimes and weekends, with their Sunday roast dish.

Food in the pub also benefits from the cozy atmosphere of historic venues. Billy Andy’s in Co Antrim, for example, is a 19th century traditional pub with peat fires, low ceilings and traditional music, but also exciting and contemporary fine food at reasonable prices. It is one of 30 pubs listed in Michelin’s “Eating Out in Pubs” guide for 2018.

An emphasis on fresh local quality pub is seen in Cronin’s Sheebeen in Westport, Co Mayo, overlooking Clew Bay on the west coast of Ireland, a former winner of Hospitality Ireland’s Best Traditional Pub competition. For delicacies to try when in the pub, experience a “blaa” (a soft white roll) in Waterford, an Ulster Fry with soda bread and potato farls in Belfast or try a “boxty” with traditional potato pancakes. From colcannon to Irish stew, there is something for everyone in the pub grub across Ireland.
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Outstanding hospitality comes naturally to Irish people, which is why Ireland is a home to Céad Míle Fáilte, or a thousand welcomes. Famous Irish hospitality takes its roots from the ancient Brehon law of Celtic times, where all households were obliged to provide some measure of oigidecht (hospitality) to travellers, even if unknown, including food, drink, a bed and entertainment. No prying questions would be asked of the guest, while exchanges of travelling tales, poetry and songs were welcome.

Today, the highest level of accommodation is maintained with Fáilte Ireland’s Welcome Standard, where hotels and lodgings are assessed on their behavioural standards, customer journey, meeting customer expectations and quality of the experience. This is seen particularly along the winding roads of Ireland’s Ancient East, which offer the unique opportunity to stay in a magnificent house, stately home or castle. Live like a Lord or Lady in your very own demesne. Visitors can absorb centuries of history, enjoying sumptuous afternoon teas and sipping drinks in old-world libraries. Visiting the likes of Castle Leslie in Co Monaghan or Ballyfin Demesne in Co Laois and the elaborate architecture, lush gardens and grand interiors will add a touch of magic to your trip.

Meanwhile on the Wild Atlantic Way, right on the edge of west Europe, there is the chance to stay in some of the most remarkable places imaginable, with blasts of sea air, stunning views and dramatic landscapes. Take, for example, Bantry House in Co Cork where you can stand atop the parterre and be treated to a magnificent panorama that reaches in the wild, wonderful, green blue mists of Bantry Bay, while the rooms overlook the 19th century Italianite garden. Enjoy similar experiences at Clare Island Lighthouse in County Mayo and Coopershill in Co Sligo.

Northern Ireland is full of unique accommodation options. From cruisers to castles, mountain lodges to coastal lighthouses and luxury spas to glamping, there is something for everyone. For something different, cast away to Finn Lough, a 75-acre peninsula resort in the Fermanagh Lakelands, where you can lie back in a four-poster bed and watch the starry night skies above in a secluded forest bubble dome.
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Irish caddies make the game so much more fun

They are a unique breed, with a unique sense of humour, essential for any real Irish golf experience.

By Dermot Gilleece

Caddies, according to the distinguished American professional, Raymond Floyd, are like your wife: they’re always right. Few players would argue with that, but whatever the rights and wrongs of their behaviour, they are invariably a fascinating bunch.

Whenever I think of that great line from one of the Pink Panther movies “Give me 10 men like Clouseau and I could destroy the world”, the resourcefulness of golf caddies immediately springs to mind. They’re the ultimate backs-to-the-wall brigade, who seem capable of prompting tears, cheers and recrimination in equal measure.

They can become extremely loyal friends to their master, which is not difficult to understand when we realise that player and caddie probably spend more time together than the average married couple. Which leads me to a scene of high emotion that I witnessed at Augusta National on the opening day of the 2004 US Masters, when it emerged that Tom Watson’s long-time caddie and friend, Bruce Edwards, had died that morning from motor neurone disease, less than two hours before the opening shots of a tournament he loved so well.

“DAMN THIS DISEASE!,” Watson shouted in anger in the media centre. “DAMN IT!” And it was only when his tears began to irritate his mouth that he thought of wiping them away with a tissue. This was a different side to golf; a deeply caring side that seemed starkly removed from blinkered battling for a Major trophy.

Sadly for Edwards, he never got the chance of caddying for Watson in the Masters victories of 1977 and 1981, which occurred before players were given the option of using their own caddies in 1983. Known in the US as Lou Gehrig’s disease, it had been diagnosed in January of the previous year. By then, Edwards had only 15 months to live.

All of which was a world away from the humour we associate with caddying, especially in this country. I’m thinking of Peter Maguire, an irrepressible character who caddied and did odd-jobs for all of 50 years at Portmarnock GC until his death in March 2001. Small wonder that his passing was
marked by a large turn-out, including the club captain, Vincent Sex, who delivered a warm tribute at the funeral mass.

Colourful of speech and much loved of the members, Peter was the source of some marvellous stories. Like the one about the American visitor who, pointing to the pond on the short seventh, enquired: “Peter, is that casual water?” To which the caddie replied: “Oh no sir. There’s no f....ing way you can drink that water.”

Then there was the visitor who, after being instructed by Peter to slide his sand wedge under the ball, made several vain attempts at extricating it from the cavernous bunker fronting the green at the long sixth. Exasperated, the caddie demanded: “Give me the club.” And when he, too, had smashed the ball into the face of the bunker, he remarked without batting an eyelid: “That’s what you’re f....ing doing wrong.”

During the 1950s, in the whole of his health, it was no trouble to Peter to carry two bags at weekends, so he was understandably miffed when a regular client turned up with a new-fangled caddie-car.”
up with a new-fangled caddie-car. On the fourth, after carving his approach into uncharted territory, the man with the wheels enquired: “Did you see that, Peter?” Whereupon the caddie turned directly to the caddie-car and repeated the question: “Did you see that?” The contraption didn’t reappear.

On a flight back to Dublin after the 1997 Open at Royal Troon, I happened to be sitting beside John O’Reilly. He had two requests: how much had his employer, Padraig Harrington, won by finishing in a share of fifth place behind Justin Leonard the previous day, and would I share his considerable load of duty-free cigarettes going through customs.

Nothing from the Tallaght caddie ever surprised me. Like when he told Paul McGinley that whether or not he was invited to the player’s 1996 wedding at Luttrellstown Castle, he planned to be there. And he was. But I must confess to a bit of a jolt when, on informing him that Harrington’s cheque from Troon was for £62,500, he had worked out in his head in a matter of seconds that his own, seven and a half per cent share, amounted to £4,687.50.

Then there was the time when Reilly, as he’s popularly known, bet £5 that he would buy himself a drink in the Members’ Bar of the Royal and Ancient clubhouse at St Andrews. Impossible? South Africa’s Hugh Baiocchi clearly thought so when gladly proffering the fiver. With a group of tournament players and fellow caddies watching, Reilly headed into the locker-room, where he had full access, and from there to the Members’ Bar, where he most certainly did not have access. On being stopped at the door as he had anticipated, the grizzled Dubliner took off his watch and insisted that it belonged to his “master”, Des Smyth, and that he had to return it to him.

“Sorry sir. Cannae do that,” insisted the doorman, even after Reilly declared it to be a valuable Rolex, which it clearly wasn’t. “But if anything happens to this watch, I’ll be sacked,” he pleaded. At this, the doorman wavered fatally and when it was followed up with “Oh look! There he is”, Reilly had his opening.

Before the bemused Scot realised what was happening, Reilly darted past him and headed straight for an untended glass of beer on a table. As he later recalled: “I picked it up and went straight over to the window so that my friends could see me. There, I was in the act of saluting the lads outside with my glass when I felt this hand on my shoulder. It belonged to Keith MacKenzie [then secretary of the R and A].”

“What the hell are you doing in here?” the voice thundered, as only MacKenzie could thunder. Whereupon Reilly was effectively frogmarched back whence he came. But on arriving outside, he was greeted like a conquering hero to resounding cheers from admiring players and caddies alike. As he put it: “My mission had been accomplished. It was the sweetest fiver I ever earned.”

Given such levels of ingenuity, the notion of caddies as little more than menials is to seriously undervalue their craft. And by way of emphasising this point, a Tralee caddie grandly described himself as a ‘wind and distance consultant’. Bangor-born David Feherty has described caddies as “the lifeblood of the pro game.” The US TV commentator added: “When golfers ask if they’ve chosen the right club, a caddie has to know whether the player actually wants an opinion or just wants his opinion confirmed. That’s the trick. Small wonder the relationship between player and caddie is considered the most stressful any human being is likely to encounter, outside of armed conflict.”

Having got through his formative years on tour with O’Reilly, Harrington won his three Major championships with brother-in-law, Ronan Flood, on his bag. It’s a relationship based essentially on companionship, respect and friendship. There are probably as many caddie-
stories as there are golfers. And even in its relatively short existence, the caddieshack at Old Head Links has already produced a wealth of humour from the largest and most professional group now working at club level in this country.

They were originally under the command of Noel Hurley, the caddie-master when the course opened officially in June 1997. His staff were recruited from scratch and Jack Jolley, the caddiemaster from Loch Lomond GC came over to help streamline the process before Hurley eventually took sole charge.

During the golfing season from April to November, they stay locally, either in a caravan park or in bed-and-breakfast accommodation and are never short of work. In times of relaxation, there is the prospect of a song from Leprechaun Danny, so christened by Hurley because of his small stature. His given name is Pat Daly and his son, Cian, caddied for Tiger Woods during a memorable visit in July 1999.

Hurley proudly claimed that Leprechaun Danny sang in Carnegie Hall, before adding: “When I heard him singing one day to nobody in particular, I could tell he had a good voice.” In the event, he proved to be quite a balladeer, giving rousing renditions of such favourites as “The Holy Ground”, “The Banks of My Own Lovely Lee” and “Danny Boy”, along with the little-known Kerry song, “Boys of Ba na Sraide”.

Mind you, the singer didn’t always have an appreciative audience. As Hurley recalled: “One day, an American visitor asked me what sort of a singer Leprechaun Danny was. And when I said he was a tenor, our guest replied ‘here’s 20 bucks: tell him to get lost.’” The vast majority of his audience, however, delighted in the singing, nor was it unusual for him to be called upon in Kinsale’s restaurants to entertain guests at the table while they dined.

Most golfers will be familiar with the old chestnut about the player who complains: “You have got to be the worst caddie in the world.” Prompting the reply: “Impossible sir. That would be too much of a coincidence.” As Floyd observed so accurately, the seasoned bagman is always right.
Dublin is a growing modern city, the tech capital of Europe, booming with foreign investment, but its historic golf courses are often an insight into its storied past.

Royal Dublin, for example, is Ireland’s second oldest club, situated on Bull Island on the Dollymount Strand. It was instituted at a meeting held all the way back in 1885 on Grafton Street and one of the island’s premier links courses has seen the world’s best players play on it for hundreds of years. The club once hosted the greatest pioneer in the history of the game, Old Tom Morris, who played two matches there in 1894.

Some of the world’s best golfers from Jack Nicklaus to Lee Trevino to Greg Norman to Ernie Els have played at Royal Dublin, while it was also a favourite of former US President Bill Clinton and showbiz stars.
Bob Hope and Sean Connery. Both Bernhard Langer and Seve Ballesteros won Irish Opens there in the 1980s. Bull Island is also home to another classic links in St Anne’s Golf Club, a tight course with holes nearby and parallel to each other, where the final three holes will send you to the clubhouse with a smile.

Links courses may be more associated with the West of Ireland and the Wild Atlantic Way, but there are few more treasured links in the world than Portmarnock Golf Club, which will host the Amateur Championship in 2019. Just 12 miles from the city centre, it is regularly voted among the best golf courses in the world.

It has a long history of hosting golf tournaments, including the 1960 Canada Cup, when an American team of Arnold Palmer and Sam Snead won the trophy. Portmarnock was Palmer’s first ever experience of links golf and Palmer fell in love with the course and that type of game. Upon returning home to America, he said:

“I recall saying to Sam that every aspect of our games was examined that week. It’s the first time I’ve played a course like this one, and I’ve learnt a lot of shots - shots I’ve never played before in my life.”

The King would go on to win the 1961 and 1962 Open, and his love of links would later inspire him to design Tralee Golf Links in Kerry, a magnificent course almost the equal of the great Dublin course. Portmarnock has been played by the best in golf, from Tom Watson to Phil Mickelson to Seve Ballesteros, who won the Carroll’s Irish Open there in 1986. The course has not held an Irish Open since 2003 but has been used by the best golfers in world to tune up for The Open, including former World Number 1 Dustin Johnson. Tiger Woods used to play at Portmarnock en route to his record-breaking displays at golf’s oldest championship. “Coming here has been instrumental in preparing for the British Open, not only for getting me adjusted to the time difference but also for getting used to playing links golf,” Woods said. “We’ve played Portmarnock just about every year. It’s one of the most enjoyable links courses I have had the opportunity to play.”

Bernhard Langer won the Dubai Duty Free Irish Open at Portmarnock in 1987 and he liked the area so much that he came back less than a decade later to create the wonderful Portmarnock Hotel and Golf Links beside the famous links. The Hotel course is more accessible than its older brother and combines the charm of a traditional style layout with the challenges of the modern game.

A trip around Dublin’s premier links courses wouldn’t be complete without a
visit to the magnificent The Island Golf Club, near Donabate in north Dublin. It is bordered on three sides by water, its massive dunes are its only protection from the winds that appear to blow almost incessantly. The Island was once only accessible by boat - golfers rowed across the estuary from Malahide from its founding in 1890 until 1973 when the burgeoning membership opted for the car as its preferred mode of access. The Island will host the qualifying rounds of the Amateur Championship in 2019, and this par-71 challenge is far from easy. Darren Clarke has fond memories of The Island, and shot an eight-under-par, course record 63 there, in the second round of the Irish PGA Championship.

When in the area, check out the wonderful Corballis Links with its rugged beauty and lovely views. It is also a very accessible course with its very reasonable green fees among the best value for money in Ireland.

Moving away from links courses, there are several excellent parkland set-ups in the north of the county, a short drive from the city centre. Balbriggan Golf Club, just 15 minutes from Dublin Airport, has been newly developed by Eddie Connaughton with USGA standard sand-based greens and tee boxes along mature tree-lined fairways and well-placed hazards. One of the more scenic locations to play golf in Dublin is Howth Golf Club, meandering across the Hill of Howth, featuring panoramic views of Dublin Bay and the north Dublin coast. Situated in the picturesque fishing town, it has a selection of world-class seafood restaurants to enjoy after the round.

North of the city, there are also newer additions like St Margaret’s, Roganstown, Hollywood Lakes and Hollystown that ensure a fun day out. If staying in the city centre and looking for a budget option, there are some public courses accessible by Dublin’s expansive public transport system of rail, tram and bus. Access the 4 bus to arrive at Silloge Park Golf Club, access Elm Park Golf Club and Deer Park Golf Club from the Dart line. Designed by Eddie Hackett, Malahide Golf Club combines the pleasant ambience of parkland with a whiff of salty sea air.

In the north-west of the county, you’ll find the excellent Luttrellstown Castle Resort. Cast by the same design team that created the likes of Turnberry and Royal St George’s, Luttrellstown is an impressive venue with a great course in excellent condition. The clubhouse facilities further complement the wonderful on-course experience. It is beautifully maintained all year round and run with precision by former European Tour player and Spanish Open winner Peter Lawrie.

Not far from Luttrellstown is Hermitage Golf Club, a quality parkland course popular with the rich and famous. Blessed with a verdant, rolling setting, it is within the part of the beautiful Liffey Valley known as the Strawberry Beds.

Head for the leafy suburbs of Dublin, south of the River Liffey and you will find an abundance of great courses. The course at Castle Golf Club is located in what was Rathfarnham Castle estate and is an excellent test laid out in two loops of nine holes with a sting in the tail.
Three-time major winner Harrington was a member of another Rathfarnham club, Stackstown, which sits high above the city in the Dublin mountains.

2014 Ryder Cup-winning captain Paul McGinley learned the game at neighbouring course at The Grange and another Ryder Cup star, Eamon Darcy, was assistant professional there. Situated in the foothills of the Dublin mountains, just 15 minutes from the city centre, it has been voted the best parkland course in Dublin by Golf Digest.

McGinley won the World Cup with good friend Padraig Harrington in 1997. Three-time major winner Harrington was a member of another Rathfarnham club, Stackstown, which sits high above the city in the Dublin mountains, offering panoramic views of the metropolis and its golfing delights. Visitors can bask in the history of Harrington’s major wins at Stackstown with the ‘Harrington Room’, where one can see the trophies and memorabilia of the Irishman’s great achievements.

“One of the underestimated tourist destinations is staying in the centre of Dublin city and travelling from there,” Harrington said. “You probably have half a dozen great links courses within 30-40 minutes of where you are staying. It’s a great golfing destination.”

It is hard to argue with Harrington. As the nation’s capital, Dublin serves as a superb access point to visit the many fantastic courses across the island. But it sometimes easy to forget how great golf is in the county itself. And with the capital attracting most tourists who come to Ireland every year, golf must rank as one of our most hidden assets.
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- **Tel:** 353 (0) 1 8414229
- **Email:** balbriggangolfclub@eircom.net
- **Web:** www.balbriggangolfclub.com
- **Course:** Parkland
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- **Tel:** 353 (0) 1 8436583
- **Email:** info@corballisgolfclubs.com
- **Web:** www.corballislinks.com
- **Course:** Links
- **Length:** 4,682 metres
- **Par:** 66

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**The Island Golf Club**
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- **Tel:** 353 (0) 1 8436205
- **Email:** info@theislandgolfclub.com
- **Web:** www.theislandgolfclub.com
- **Course:** Links
- **Length:** 6,479 Metres
- **Par:** 71

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- **Tel:** 353 (0) 1 8336346
- **Email:** info@theroyaldublingolfclub.com
- **Web:** www.theroyaldublingolfclub.com
- **Course:** Links
- **Length:** 7,297 yards
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St. Margaret’s
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Stackstown
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Sutton
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**Email:** reservations@castleknockhotel.ie  
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Into the heartlands

Home is where the heart is, and that’s especially true when it comes to golf and passion for the game.

By Brian Keogh

Home is where the heart is, and that’s especially true when it comes to golf and passion for the game.

Golfers are products of their environments, and just as Stackstown, Grange and Esker Hills shaped the games of Pádraig Harrington, Paul McGinley and Shane Lowry, a great golfing adventure through Ireland’s Hidden Heartlands is a golden opportunity to discover the real Ireland.

Lowry grew up in Clara in County Offaly, a 20-minute bike ride from the rolling fairways of Esker Hills, one of the many magnificent, modern parklands built in Ireland in the past 30 years and the perfect starting point for a magical golfing voyage of discovery.

Trace a route along the iconic River Shannon and its environs, and you will pass through some of the most beautiful parts of Ireland — Leitrim, Roscommon and Longford as well as parts of Clare, Westmeath, Cavan, North Tipperary, Galway, and Offaly.
Known as the Faithful County, Offaly is home to some of Ireland’s great parkland courses with Esker Hills a superb foil to its neighbours Birr, Castle Barna and Tullamore.

Built on the ancient Esker Riada — a series of low-lying ridges composed of sand, gravel and boulders that were deposited by melting glaciers around 10,000 years ago — it proved the perfect training ground for a future world star and is now a place for pilgrimage for golf lovers from all over the world.

“I have a good short game, and I learned all the difficult shots by playing off hilly lies and playing into tough greens around Esker Hills,” Lowry says of his home course. “Playing at Esker Hills taught me so much about the game. I just loved heading out there from school and taking a club or two out to chip around and teach myself those shots.

“I’d say I used to drive them mad out there. I’d be out there all day every day and had no problems playing 36, 45 holes some days; I used to love it.”

A worldwide tour winner, Lowry has played all the great Irish courses, but he’s always enjoyed a game at his local courses in Offaly, such as Tullamore or Birr, both of which have more than a century of history behind them.

Birr is a testing par-70, measuring just over 6,500 yards from the tips and some of Ireland’s most celebrated players have tested themselves there including the club’s former Walker Cup and PGA Tour player Richie Coughlan and Challenge Tour player Justin Kehoe.

“I remember going out to watch the last five holes when Peter Lawrie shot a course record 62 back in 1996,” recalled Kehoe, a former Irish international.

“And I remember Harrington too because, at the 18th, his tee shot ended up in the valley, which you can bomb your drive over now.

“It’s a hole full of character because the fairway still has visible traces of the ridges left from the potato drills that date to Famine times.”

Head north from Offaly to Leitrim, and you can play the county’s only course, Ballinamore. Beautifully situated on the Shannon Erne Waterway, you can drink in panoramic views of the Slabh an Iarainn (Iron Mountain) and test your game before head further west across the border into Roscommon where Carrick on Shannon Golf Club, a parkland course constructed to the highest USGA specifications on the banks of the great river, awaits.

Set in the shadow of the Argina Mountains, it’s an excellent 18-hole course with its new nine holes built on land that sweeps down to Drumharlow Lake and the Boyle River.

From there it’s but a 30-minute drive south to nine-hole Strokestown Golf Club and another short hop from there to Roscommon Golf Club, which was established in 1904 as a nine-hole course on the old Mote Park Estate before the members bought an additional 58 acres in 1991 to create a championship standard 18-hole course.

Mature trees, which once graced Lord Crofon’s estate, have been retained and new trees have been strategically planted, which not only add to the scenic beauty but challenge the golfer to plan their
route from tee to green.

Cross the Shannon again heading east, and you will come to County Longford Golf Club, founded in 1894 but not extended to 18 holes until 1969.

It is not a long course from the members’ tees by any means. However, tight fairways and several well-placed water hazards mean you have to be on your game to score well.

The signature hole is the 453m (495-yard) par-five 18th, which plays uphill towards a large conifer know locally as the Christmas Tree.

A straight drive will leave you in position to lay up left of the tree and play your third over a stream which cascades from the left side into a small pond.

From here you can head north to the drumlins and lakes of County Cavan, where Slieve Russell Hotel, Golf and Country Club, Belturbet, Farnham Estate, Co Cavan and Blacklion offer some excellent golf.

The Slieve Russell has been a massive favourite with Irish golfers since 1990 and as home to the Maguire sisters, Leona and Lisa, it’s a great test of golf.

Another beautiful Patrick Merrigan design, it’s a championship standard layout that now boasts a popular, nine-hole Adventure Golf Course, designed by Ken Kearney, that’s proving to be a huge success for guests with young families.

County Westmeath lies further south along the Shannon with four magnificent challenges awaiting at Athlone, Glasson Country House Hotel & Golf Club, Mount Temple and Moate.

Known as the Faithful County, Offaly is home to some of Ireland’s great parkland courses with Esker Hills a superb foil to its neighbours Birr, Castle Barna and Tullamore.
Designed by Christy O’Connor Jnr, Glasson is a golfer’s dream venue, set on the shores of Lough Ree just a few yards from the front door of the top class hotel with the signature, 180-yard, par-three 15th, requiring a brave tee shot to a green that juts out into the lake.

Head south from Glasson’s sylvan splendour, and you will enter north Tipperary where Nenagh and Roscrea await.

Affiliated to the Golfing Union of Ireland in 1929, Nenagh started as a nine-hole course designed by Alister McKenzie of Augusta National fame before and remained substantially unchanged until 1973, when Eddie Hackett developed Nenagh’s first 18 hole course.

The purchase of additional land in the 1980s and 90s allowed the club to undertake a major re-development that led to the creation of a new 18-hole course, designed by the great Merrigan in 2001. It’s a splendid test for golfers of all abilities while the town offers the chance to visit some historic sites in the area, including Nenagh Castle, a Norman keep built around 1200 by Theobald Walter, the 1st Baron Butler.

Roscrea is equally beautiful and challenging, nestled in the shadows of the Slieve Bloom Mountains in the geographical centre of Ireland. The town is situated strategically in a gap in the hills on one of the great ancient roads of Ireland, the Slighe Dála but Roscrea is famous for another road.

Every Irish course has its Joe Carr story, and Roscrea’s inevitably involves its most iconic hole — the Burma Road.

The moniker was first used to describe the West Course at Wentworth during World War II when the course was requisitioned by the military and allowed to grow wild because it was feared that enemy aircraft might land on the fairways.

Towards the end of the war, German prisoners were brought in from a nearby internment camp to clear the course. One of the officers overseeing the clearance operation reputedly said: “Let this be their Burma Road”.

Roscrea’s Burma Road is equally treacherous — a long, 559 yard, tree-lined par-five with out of bounds in the form of a bog and forest running the entire length of the left-hand side and tall trees all down the right.

The hole remains one of the best-loved originals at the club, which celebrates its 125th anniversary this year and its journey from its first home at Millpark in Golden Grove in 1892 to idyllic parkland surround at its current home at Derryvale near Racket Hall in 1911.

While it has been an 18-hole course since 1992, when Dr Arthur Spring built 11 new holes, it was a much-loved nine-hole course for many years and the venue for Roscrea’s popular Phoenix Senior Scratch Cup.

It’s always tough to resist the lure of the west and crossing the Shannon once more we are faced the choice between the parklands of East Clare, Shannon and Woodstock in County Clare or the Galway gems that are Portumna, Ballinasloe and Mountbellew.

Clare is famous for its links courses, such as Lahinch or Doonbeg, but while some clubs are held in high esteem for their towering dunes, their storied architecture or their huge historical significance for the game, there is more to golf in Ireland than links.

Shannon Golf Club is just 53 years old, but its story is a microcosm of the recent history of Irish golf and a great place to blow away the cobwebs after a long transatlantic flight into Shannon Airport.

Memorable International Pro-Ams held there in the late 1970s, and early 1980’s when the likes of Greg Norman, Seve Ballesteros, Bernhard Langer and Nick Faldo would turn up to play the testing parkland course by the Shannon estuary before heading on to play the Irish Open.

It’s a testament to the quality of the course that it has hosted the Irish Amateur Close Championship, the European Ladies Junior Team Championships, the All Ireland Cups and Shields and a host of other major national and international events.

It’s also a gentle reminder that for all its great championship courses, Ireland boasts its share of hidden gems in its Hidden Heartlands, where a warm welcome is always guaranteed.
Golf for all Seasons

Winter golf is Ireland not only offers the best in value but also the greatest challenge

By Dermot Gilleece

In talking the talk of golf-tourism promotion, Paddy O’Looney of SWING liked to claim that the world’s committed practitioners were waterproof, war-proof and recession-proof. So he would have had no problem in suggesting winter visits to Irish terrain, notwithstanding serious drops in temperature.

Though the leading tour operators tend to take a more conservative view, our links courses offer tremendous appeal, certainly in the domestic market. Indeed with so many advances in the maintenance of parkland terrain, circumstances there have also changed dramatically from only 30 years ago, when it was commonplace to see mats introduced on tees on October 1st every year, irrespective of the weather.

That was a time when the appeal of links terrain was unrivalled, especially during the festive season. And Christmas golf for the Smyth family of Mornington, was a well-regulated affair. “It took the form of an annual outing,” recalled tournament professional Des, of their festive trips to the splendid links of Laytown and Bettystown.

“Having gone to midnight mass the night before, our only concern was the time my mum (Josie) would have stipulated for the Christmas dinner, he went on. Breakfast would be cooked by my dad [Paddy], who then joined my brothers Val, Pat and myself on the links. Later, by way of bowing to the passing years, my dad stopped playing and my younger brother, Raphael, would take his place.

We’d play nine or maybe 12 holes and though I was too young to drink, I remember back in the car-park, someone would hand out bottles of beer from the boot of a car, by way of spreading seasonal cheer.”

These festive gatherings are so precious, that the dreaded notice, “Course Closed” (because of frost) can come as a crushing blow. Indeed seething resentment is often directed towards the unfortunate greenkeeper, especially when his counterparts elsewhere, seem to have no problem with footprints on frost-affected surfaces.

Still, even in really extreme conditions, the enthusiastic golfer tends to find a way. I can recall a chat with the late Paddy Harrington about a particular winter’s day when his son, Padraig, asked if he would join him at their club, Stackstown, situated on its hilly perch in south-west Dublin. This, even though the ground was covered in a thick blanket of snow.

Won over by the eagerness in his son’s eyes, Paddy agreed to make the trip. He recalled: “When we went up there, Padraig cleared away snow from one of the tees and began hitting balls into a sea of white. The thought of missing a day’s practice would have killed him.”

Another of Ireland’s leading players, Paul McGinley, recalled similar conditions around Christmas time in Dunfanaghy, his father’s home club in northern Donegal.

“I remember one of the guys had a screwdriver with him to get tees into the icy ground on the par-threes,” he recalled. That was Bernard Hanlon, a past captain of the club, who was a sufficiently good player to have competed in the West of Ireland Championship.

McGinley added: “Normally on Christmas Day, I’d play with dad and my brother Michael. And maybe with my mother. That would be after mass in the local church up in Donegal. Those were my teenage years when I wasn’t a particularly good player. To be honest, I wouldn’t play in those conditions any more. Nor would I go out hitting balls in a strong breeze. Maybe I’m getting soft in my middle years.”

That, too, was traditional links terrain. Golf has since become so important to the Irish tourist industry, however, that the condition
of the better-quality parkland layouts has been transformed by money and greenkeeping expertise. Nowhere is this more apparent than at Adare Manor, where the owner, JP McManus, is nursing eminently realistic aspirations of staging the 2026 Ryder Cup. There, winter golf was put sharply into context by the country’s leading player, Rory McIlroy, in the wake of a visit late in 2017. Only a matter of days after the south-west had been lashed by rain, McIlroy could only marvel at the quality of finish and firmness of the soil which had been wrought by dramatic upgrading of the layout. “I came here, played the golf course, and it felt like it was the middle of summer,” he said. This is the experience that lies in wait for winter visitors to a course where one of the world’s leading golf-course architects, Tom Fazio, has left his indelible imprint. Some of the country’s other leading venues, however, choose to close their doors to tourists during the winter months from November until April when, in Shelley’s immortal words, “thine azure sister of the spring shall blow her clarion o’er the dreaming earth.”

Opportunities for open competitions, however, are quite limited, not least due to the traditional boost activities of club members around the festive season.
He went on: Obviously smaller in number than during the summer months, some will be here without indicating the precise purpose of their visit. Either way, we can now offer a far stronger golfing menu in winter, than would have been the case in the past. This stems from the fact that parkland courses are now more robust than they were, with advanced drainage techniques making them playable 12 months of the year, for the most part. In our experience, there’s certainly a market for winter golf.

Rugby internationals are another lucrative source of off-season tourist revenue for golf clubs, especially in the Dublin area, where a round can be arranged online, possibly for a Friday afternoon, to tie in with the match the following day. In fact the internet has opened up exciting possibilities for clubs interested in boosting their green-fee traffic. Opportunities for open competitions, however, are quite limited, not least due to the traditional boost in activities of club members around the festive season. There is also the fact that after a busy season, links courses need the chance to recover during the off-season through the protection of mats on fairways or moving balls off the fairway entirely.

In this context, greenkeepers have been known to take contrasting approaches to course protection. For instance, Paul McGinley informed me that his local club, Sunningdale in Surrey, remains open in the severest of frost. “It never closes,” he said. “I’m not an expert on greens, but the only thing that would close it is fog, because of the danger of hitting somebody.”

When I informed Gerry Byrne, greens superintendent of The K Club of McGinley’s observations, he remarked: “Yes, I know about Sunningdale. And I know they don’t close Wentworth for frost either. But we do here.” These last words were uttered with a finality which brooked no argument.

His views on the damaging effects of frost are shared by Declan Branigan, a leading golf-course designer and agronomist, with a master’s degree in soil structure. Branigan’s clear, clinical view was: “Water accounts for 75 to 85 per cent of the total weight of grass and helps maintain the turgidity of plant cells, which is where frost becomes a problem.”

He explained: “Though the ionic properties of the plant solutions create a lower freezing rate than for water, unfortunately they have little or no anti-freeze protection. And in the case of very short grass on greens, our severe frosts are capable of freezing the water within the plant.

“Though of itself, this would rarely kill the grass species, which are quite hardy, they are reduced to a very brittle state and break quite easily. So, the downward pressure from vehicles or pedestrian traffic is sufficient to fracture stems with a high water content. And when broken completely, the grass plant dies. In some cases, traffic doesn’t completely kill the grass which, despite sustaining brown or blackish footprints or tyre-marks, recovers as soon as growth returns. In other cases, however, the plant is shattered irreversibly.

“Where golfers claim to have played frozen greens with no ill-effect, this can be attributed simply to luck, since basic science doesn’t lie. The fact is that a few hours’ golf could do sufficient, serious damage to put greens out of play for months.” So now you know.

Branigan concluded: “Members who think they are taking a harmless walk on a frost-affected course, could find their footprints still visible after a week or two. In my opinion, they should be made aware of this in the club’s autumn newsletter.”

So, in the matter of promoting off-season tourism, caution needs to be exercised. But in milder winters, an eye on business clearly makes financial sense.
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of those par-4s were par-5s. A great links,” Tiger said.

Padraig Harrington credits winning the Irish PGA Championship there in in 2007 and 2008 for giving him the perfect preparation for winning the Open a few weeks later, while Rory McIlroy said that he considered The European Club to be the best links he had played, “including Royal St. George’s, Royal Portrush and Royal County Down.” Another links to try out in Wicklow is Arklow Golf Club, just 20 minutes down the road, where Eddie Connaughton’s green designs are a marvellous collection, rolling raucously and undulating violently in some places.

Wicklow is known as the Garden of Ireland, with some magnificent greenery and landscapes to take in. Look no further than Powerscourt Hotel Resort & Spa to experience that beauty, where the five-star estate includes a garden ranked number 3 in the world’s top 10 gardens by National Geographic, where The Walled Gardens, Italian and Japanese Gardens, Dolphin Pond and Pet Cemetery all feature. It features two Championship courses in spectacular surroundings, East and West, with fast greens and hilly fairways.

There is another five-star resort with a great golfing history at Druids Glen Hotel & Golf Resort in Wicklow, where Sergio Garcia won his first professional event at the 1999 Irish Open, and features two fine courses - Druids Glen and Druids Heath.

Druids Heath features golden fescues and gorse protecting the course in a heathland fashion, while the pristine Druids Glen is a fine test of golf, with views over the Irish Sea coupled with the surrounding woods. Wicklow has a history of hosting international tournaments - Dun Laoghaire Golf Club, at the foot of the spectacular Sugarloaf Mountain, hosted the 2016 Curtis Cup.

The Paul McGinley-designed Macreddin Golf Club is one of the best new parklands in Ireland, incorporating statuesque pines, well protected greens, elevated landing areas and a free-flowing brook to a course with wonderful definition. Another picturesque wooded challenge is Woodenbridge, which has been described as ‘Ireland's Augusta’, and makes wonderful use of the Avoca and Aughrim rivers throughout. Other parkland classics to play in Wicklow include Tulfarris Hotel, Delgany Golf Club, Woodbrook, Charlesland and Greystones Golf Club, where golf star Paul Dunne grew up.

Bordering Wicklow to the south is Carlow and Wexford, where another links test, Rosslare Golf Club, is an original Hawtree design and a great example of a traditional links. Head to Wexford town and you will find Wexford Golf Club in the heart of the town, which has reaped the rewards of recent upgrades to the course. Meanwhile, Bunclody Golf & Fishing Club is a beautiful open parkland course which features mixed terrain that will challenge golfers, especially the string of quality ending holes that culminate with the tree-lined par 5 18th.

To the west of Carlow is Kilkenny. Golf in Kilkenny is dominated by the superb Mount Juliet Estate, which has twice hosted the World Golf Championship.

NEWGRANGE, CO. MEATH

To the west of Carlow is Kilkenny. Golf in Kilkenny is dominated by the superb Mount Juliet Estate, which has twice hosted the World Golf Championship.
the wandering pheasants.

Head south of Kilkenny to Waterford, with great courses like Waterford Castle, which is Ireland’s only true island golf course, accessed by complimentary car ferry. Also worth checking out are West Waterford, Tramore and Faithlegg House Hotel and Golf Resort. A thriving resort that is popular with golfers and families alike, Faithlegg is an enticing parkland challenge designed by the great Patrick Merrigan, and features undulating greens, water hazards and perfectly placed sand traps, which complete and heighten the challenge.

There are few greener counties than Tipperary and it is no surprise that it is also home to some wonderful parkland courses from Clonmel and Cahir Park to the Philip Walton-designed Tipperary Golf Club, Ballykisteen Golf and Country Club or Thurles Golf Club. The county is brimming with wonderful attractions such as the Rock of Cashel - a spectacular collection of medieval buildings set on an outcrop of limestone in the Golden Vale.

Cork city is the third biggest on the island and a treat for the visitor with a host of attractions for lovers of music, the arts and sport. Not only are you within a short drive of the Blarney Stone, it is also a great place to golf with up to a dozen clubs within easy reach from the city, including Douglas, Mahon, Lee Valley and Muskerry. One of Irish golf’s historic clubs, Cork Golf Club was formed in 1888 by prominent Cork businessmen, before undergoing a major redesign by Dr Alister MacKenzie - the future designer of the likes of Augusta National, Cypress Point and Royal Melbourne - in 1926. Outside Cork city is Fota Island Hotel & Golf Resort in Cobh, a three-time host of the Dubai Duty Free Irish Open. Also host to Ireland’s only wildlife park and the historical Fota House, it is a tremendous golfing facility with a course that features tricky bunkering and engaging greens.

Head up to the midlands and you have got another stunning Championship course in Laois, the five-star Heritage Resort and Spa, created by the great Seve Ballesteros in partnership with Jeff Howes. Set in the beautiful rolling countryside, the course wanders its way through this picturesque setting, featuring some tricky water hazards and a plethora of bunkers. The course hosted the 2007 Seve Trophy. It is a special place that is so well built that it is playable all through the winter and spring, no matter how much rain might fall.

Shane Lowry won the Mullingar Scratch Trophy as an amateur, as did Rory McIroy and Darren Clarke, and this famous competition on the Irish amateur scene is held at Mullingar Golf Club in County Westmeath, a James Braid classic that winds its way through this wooded parkland setting. Nearby New Forest is an undulating parkland gem with some of the finest putting surfaces in Ireland.

Shane Lowry famously burst onto the scene when he won the Dubai Duty Free Irish Open at the peaceful links at County Louth Golf Club in Baltray, one of the top ranked links courses in the country. The serene atmosphere gives way to towering dunes, treacherous rough and long holes that will make use of every club in the bag, which tests the best amateurs in the East of Ireland Championship every year. Elsewhere in Louth, the excellent Seapoint is another cleverly designed links course.
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Escape, Relax, Unwind
Kildare is a treasure trove of golf courses from Dunmurry Springs to Moyvalley to Palmerstown to Royal Curragh Golf Club, which is believed to be the oldest golf club in the country.

Course that will test all golfers, while there is good golf to be had at Greenore, Ardee and Dundalk Golf Club.

Neighbouring Meath includes another quality links test in Laytown & Bettystown, as well as parkland classics like Royal Tara, County Meath Golf Club and two courses at Headfort Golf Club, the Old and the New Course. It also includes Killeen Castle, home to a magnificent Jack Nicklaus designed golf course, which hosted the 2011 Solheim Cup. With beautiful views of the Co Meath countryside throughout the 600-acre estate, players will never come bored of the golfing test that is provided.

From one top parkland to another, Concra Wood, host of the Monaghan Irish Challenge on the European Challenge Tour, is one of the Christy O’Connor Jnr’s greatest creations. The Co Monaghan course is strikingly beautiful with brilliant landscape features carefully sculpted around Lough Muckno. When in the area, don’t forget to check out Rossmore Golf Club, a lovely little design in the drumlins of Monaghan where views stretch four counties during a clear day.

That leaves us with the golfing heartland of Kildare to finish, where Carton House is well worth a visit, where you tee off the first in County Meath and, with any luck, your drive should land in County Kildare on the other side of the River Rye. It is home to the Golfing Union of Ireland and features two great courses, the Montgomerie and the O’Meara.

Kildare is a treasure trove of golf courses from Dunmurry Springs to Moyvalley to Palmerstown to Royal Curragh Golf Club, which is believed to be the oldest golf club in the country. Then there is the most famous club of them all in the county, the prestigious Kildare Club, otherwise known as The K Club, a five-star hotel and venue that has hosted many great tournaments, from the Dubai Duty Free Irish Open to the European Open to the 2006 Ryder Cup. It features the Smurfit Course, designed with dunetype mounding, and the Palmer Course, which displays all the daring risk-and-reward shot selection of its late designer, Arnold Palmer. Rory McIlroy’s heroic shots to win the 2016 Dubai Duty Free Irish Open showcased the finish at the Palmer course to the world, which is one of the most dramatic parkland finishes that you will play anywhere on the planet.
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Brú na Bónne Visitor Centre interprets the Neolithic monuments of Knowth, Newgrange and Dowth. Knowth is over 500 years old and Newgrange itself is older than the Egyptian Pyramids being built in the Neolithic period.
www.knowth.com

**BIRR CASTLE**
**CO. OFFALY**
The Award-Winning Gardens of Birr Castle Gardens and Science Centre 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. The Parsons family invite you to explore one of the most extraordinary places in Ireland.
www.birrcastle.com

**THE HILL OF UISNEACH**
**CO. WESTMEATH**
The Hill of Uisneach is Ireland’s ‘mythological and sacred’ centre where the festival of fires, Bealtaine, is celebrated every year to welcome the summer season. It is located, geographically, right at the centre of Ireland.
www.uisneach.ie

**MOUNT CONGREVE GARDENS**
**CO. WATERFORD**
Words can only convey a small impression of what Mount Congreve has to offer. The gardens at Mount Congreve, Waterford, consist of around seventy acres of intensively planted woodland garden and a four acre walled garden.
www.mountcongreve.com/gardens

**TULLAMORE D.E.W. - IRISH WHISKEY DISTILLERY**
**CO. OFFALY**
Set in the heart of Ireland, the old bonded warehouse sits on the banks of Tullamore's Grand Canal. For whiskey explorers eager to learn about the history and craft of the world-renowned Tullamore D.E.W.
www.tullamoredew.com

**FETHARD HORSE & COUNTRY MUSEUM**
**CO. TIPPERARY**
An interactive exhibition, which aims to showcase the link between the people, the land and horse in the surrounding area. Discover the rich culture and heritage in this high-spec museum
www fhcexperience.ie

**VIKING 3D EXPERIENCE**
**CO. WATERFORD**
The world’s very first virtual reality Viking experience. The adventure takes place in a reconstructed Viking house and seamlessly blends cutting-edge technology with ancient Viking house building techniques.
www.kingofthevikings.com
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Kids Stay Free when sharing with parents
More information on Ireland’s Ancient East courses at www.ireland.com/golf
### A-Z GOLF COURSES IN IRELAND’S ANCIENT EAST

| 1.  | Abbekyleix   | 49. | Druid’s Glen  |
| 2.  | Ardee        | 50. | Druid’s Heath |
| 3.  | Arklow       | 51. | Dundalk       |
| 4.  | Ashbourne    | 52. | Dundrum House |
| 5.  | Athy         | 53. | Dunganvan     |
| 6.  | Ballinastoe  | 54. | Dunmore East  |
| 7.  | Ballinlough Castle | 55. | Dunmurry Springs |
| 8.  | Ballykisteen | 56. | East Cork     |
| 9.  | Ballymoney   | 57. | Edenderry     |
| 10. | Baltinglass  | 58. | Enniscorthy   |
| 12. | Birr         | 60. | European      |
| 15. | Blessington Lakes | 63. | Fernhill      |
| 16. | Bodenstown   | 64. | Fota Island   |
| 17. | Borris       | 65. | Frankfield    |
| 18. | Bray         | 66. | Glebe         |
| 20. | Cabra Castle | 68. | Gowran Park  |
| 21. | Cahir Park   | 69. | Greencore     |
| 22. | Callan       | 70. | Greystones    |
| 23. | Carlow       | 71. | Headfort      |
| 24. | Carrick-on-suir | 72. | Highfield    |
| 25. | Carton House | 73. | Kilcock       |
| 26. | Castle Barna | 74. | Kilcoole      |
| 27. | Castlecomer  | 75. | Kilkeny       |
| 28. | Castlemartyr | 76. | Killeen       |
| 29. | Castiewarden | 77. | Killeen Castle |
| 30. | Celbridge Elmhall | 78. | Killarig      |
| 31. | Charlesland | 79. | Knightsbrook  |
| 32. | Cill Dara    | 80. | Knockakanly  |
| 33. | Clone        | 81. | Laytown & Bettystown |
| 34. | Clones       | 82. | Leinster Hills |
| 35. | Clonmel      | 83. | Lismore       |
| 36. | Co Louth     | 84. | Macreddin     |
| 37. | Co Meath     | 85. | Mahon         |
| 38. | Cobh         | 86. | Mannan Castle |
| 39. | Conca Wood   | 87. | Millicent     |
| 40. | Coollattin   | 88. | Mitchelstown  |
| 41. | Cork         | 89. | Monkstown     |
| 42. | Courtown     | 90. | Mount Juliet  |
| 43. | Craddockstown| 91. | Mount Wolseley |
| 44. | Crover House | 92. | Mountain View |
| 45. | Delgany      | 93. | Mountrath     |
| 46. | Djouce       | 94. | Moyvalley     |
| 47. | Doneraile    | 95. | Mullingar     |
| 48. | Douglas      | 96. | Naas          |
|      |              | 97. | Navan         |
|      |              | 98. | New Forest    |
|      |              | 99. | New Ross      |
|      |              | 100. | Newbridge    |
|      |              | 101. | Nuremore      |
|      |              | 102. | Old Conna     |
|      |              | 103. | Palmerstown House Estate |
|      |              | 104. | Portarlington |
|      |              | 105. | Portlaoise    |
|      |              | 106. | Powerscourt   |
|      |              | 107. | Raffeen Creek |
|      |              | 108. | Rathcore      |
|      |              | 109. | Rathdowney    |
|      |              | 110. | Rathsvilleagh |
|      |              | 111. | Ringenane     |
|      |              | 112. | Roscrea       |
|      |              | 113. | Rossare       |
|      |              | 114. | Rossmore      |
|      |              | 115. | Roundwood     |
|      |              | 116. | ‘Royal Curragh’ |
|      |              | 117. | Royal Tara    |
|      |              | 118. | Scarke        |
|      |              | 119. | Seapoint      |
|      |              | 120. | Slievenammon  |
|      |              | 121. | South Meath   |
|      |              | 122. | St. Helen’s Bay |
|      |              | 123. | Summerhill    |
|      |              | 124. | Tara Glen     |
|      |              | 125. | Templemore    |
|      |              | 126. | The Heath     |
|      |              | 127. | The Heritage  |
|      |              | 128. | The K Club    |
|      |              | 129. | Thurles       |
|      |              | 130. | Tipperary     |
|      |              | 131. | Townley Hall  |
|      |              | 132. | Tramore       |
|      |              | 133. | Tulfarris     |
|      |              | 134. | Tullamore     |
|      |              | 135. | Virginia      |
|      |              | 136. | Water Rock    |
|      |              | 137. | Waterford     |
|      |              | 138. | Waterford Castle |
|      |              | 139. | West Waterford |
|      |              | 140. | Wexford       |
|      |              | 141. | Wicklow       |
|      |              | 142. | Williamstown  |
|      |              | 143. | Woodbrook     |
|      |              | 144. | Woodenbridge  |
|      |              | 145. | Woodlands     |
|      |              | 146. | Youghal       |
### Blainroe Golf Club
Blainroe, Co Wicklow

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Tel</th>
<th>353 (0)404 68168</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Email</td>
<td><a href="mailto:info@blainroe.com">info@blainroe.com</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Web</td>
<td><a href="http://www.blainroe.com">www.blainroe.com</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Course</td>
<td>Parkland</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Length</td>
<td>6,800 yards</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Par</td>
<td>72</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


### Clonmel Golf Club
Clonmel, Co Tipperary

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Tel</th>
<th>+353 52 6124050</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Email</td>
<td><a href="mailto:cgcc@indigo.ie">cgcc@indigo.ie</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Web</td>
<td><a href="http://www.clonmelgolfclub.com">www.clonmelgolfclub.com</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Course</td>
<td>Parkland</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Length</td>
<td>5,821 metres</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Par</td>
<td>71</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Located two miles from bustling Clonmel town, this wonderfully elevated course offers unparalleled views of the valley of Sleevanamon and the Comeragh mountains. Providing meet & greet and full catering facilities to all Society and Open Day visitors, Clonmel Golf Club offers a unique challenge to golfers of all ages and abilities. 2018 Full & Distance membership available.

### Concra Wood
Concra Wood Golf & Country Club
Castleblayney, Co Monaghan

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Tel</th>
<th>353 (0) 42 974 9485</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Email</td>
<td><a href="mailto:info@concrawood.ie">info@concrawood.ie</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Web</td>
<td><a href="http://www.concrawood.ie">www.concrawood.ie</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Course</td>
<td>Parkland</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Length</td>
<td>6,048 Metres</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Par</td>
<td>72</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Concra Wood Golf and Country Club was designed by Christy O’Connor Junior and Christy O’Connor Senior. We have now hosted three PGA Europro Tour Events. Eleven holes lure you to the water’s edge, promising danger and excitement time and again. It is a stern and beautiful test of golf, whatever your ability. Green fees available on request.
Summer Stay & Play
1 night and 1 round of Golf
€99 per person sharing
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Overnight in Clody Lodge www.clodylodge.ie

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• Competitive society rates
• Customised menus available
• Complimentary 4 ball for societies
• All subject to terms & conditions
• Buggies available all year round

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or visit www.buncloidygfc.ie

Phone: 05393 74444 | Email: proshop@buncloidygfc.ie | www.buncloidygfc.ie
County Louth Golf Club
Baltray, Drogheda, Co Louth

Tel 00 353 41 9881530
Email liam@countyloaghanclub.com
Web www.countyloaghanclub.com
Course Links
Length 6,328 metres
Par 72

Classic traditional Links course located on Ireland’s East coast, one hour north of Dublin. Host to many Championships over it’s 125 years, including the Irish Open in 2004 and 2009. A member owned club that offers a warm welcome to visitors from all over the world.

Dundrum House
Golf & Leisure Resort
Dundrum House Resort, Co Tipperary

Tel 353 (0)62 71116
Email golfshop@dundrumhouse.ie
Web www.dundrumhousehotel.com
Course Parkland
Length 5,922 m
Par 72

This magnificent 18 Hole Championship Course has been woven into the fabric of a mature Georgian Estate and is a real challenge to golfers of all levels. The Resort offers golf lodge accommodation adjacent to an excellent clubhouse and leisure club. Renowned for its warm, friendly welcome and great food. Green Fees from €20-€39.

Fota Island Resort
Fota Island, Co Cork

Tel 353 (0)21 488 3700
Email pshop@fotaireland.ie
Web www.fotaireland.ie
Course Parkland
Length 7043/7183/7416 Yards
Par 71/72/73

Fota Island Resort, host to the Irish Open 2001, 2002 and 2014, has three championship courses set amongst beautiful scenery and maintained to the highest standards. Fota Island Resort is the ideal venue for any golfing break with a five-star hotel, self-catering lodges and an exceptional golf academy facility available on site. Green fees: €85 to €110. Group and residential rates available.

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Per Person

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IRELAND’S ANCIENT EAST

**Headfort Golf Club**  
Navan Road, Kells, Co Meath

- **Tel**: 353 (0)46 924 0146  
- **Email**: info@headfortgolfclub.ie  
- **Web**: www.headfortgolfclub.ie

**Course**: Parkland  
**Length**: 6,741 m  
**Par**: 73

Established in 1928, Headfort Golf Club is one of the finest 36 hole complexes in Ireland. Headfort has two magnificent parkland courses, with the Christy O’Connor Jnr designed Headfort New Course is consistently in the Top 10 ranked parkland course in Ireland. Contact the club directly for bookings or visit our website for offers.

**The Heritage Golf Club**  
Killenard

- **Tel**: 353 (0)57 864 2321  
- **Email**: info@heritageresort.ie  
- **Web**: www.heritageresort.ie

**Course**: Parkland  
**Length**: 6,588 metres  
**Par**: 72

Ireland’s only Seve Ballesteros designed championship course. Located less than 1 hour from Dublin, this state of the art facility regularly features in the top 20 parkland courses in Ireland. If you’re looking for spectacular, then the Heritage is a must play with water a major feature on 10 holes.

**Mount Juliet Golf Club**  
Thomastown, Co. Kilkenny

- **Tel**: 353 (0)56 777 3071  
- **Email**: golfreservations@mountjuliet.ie  
- **Web**: www.mountjuliet.ie

**Course**: Parkland  
**Length**: 6,600 metres  
**Par**: 72

Set on 500 acres of rolling pastures in Ireland’s sunny South East, the course is both captivating and memorable. Mount Juliet is consistently regarded as Ireland’s leading parkland golf course. Mount Juliet Golf Course has improved on an already outstanding layout and facilities, in its ongoing pursuit of golfing excellence - a perfect golfing venue.

**Monkstown Golf Club**  
Monkstown, Co Cork

- **Tel**: 353 (0) 21 484 1376  
- **Email**: office@monkstowngolfclub.com  
- **Web**: www.monkstowngolfclub.com

**Course**: Parkland  
**Length**: 5,672 metres  
**Par**: 70

100 years old in 2008. Mature and scenic parkland course with a good variety of holes. Pleasant to play and presenting a good test to all standards of golfers. New clubhouse and well known for high standard of catering. Green fees: €30-€35.
THE STORY OF A FAMILY WHO EXPLORED THE UNIVERSE FROM THE MIDDLE OF IRELAND.

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GREAT STORIES STAY WITH YOU FOREVER
Find yours at IrelandsAncientEast.com
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Club Name</th>
<th>Phone Number</th>
<th>Email</th>
<th>Web Address</th>
<th>Course</th>
<th>Length</th>
<th>Par</th>
<th>Notes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Palmerstown House Estate</td>
<td>+353 4590 6901</td>
<td><a href="mailto:golf@palmerstownhouse.ie">golf@palmerstownhouse.ie</a></td>
<td><a href="http://www.palmerstownhouse.ie">www.palmerstownhouse.ie</a></td>
<td>Parkland</td>
<td>6,750 metres</td>
<td>72</td>
<td>Golfers of all skill levels will find enjoyment and challenge on our well-designed 18-hole championship course. This challenging course is set amidst thousands of mature trees that boast a variety of colour throughout all four seasons, and each hole has its own individual charm. The course presents players with feelings of tradition, excellence and quality.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Powerscourt Golf Club</td>
<td>353 (0) 1 204 6033</td>
<td><a href="mailto:golf@powerscourt.net">golf@powerscourt.net</a></td>
<td>powerscourtgolfclub.com</td>
<td>Parkland</td>
<td>6,416 metres</td>
<td>72</td>
<td>Nestled in the foothills of the Wicklow Mountains and surrounded by breath-taking views, The East &amp; West Courses at Powerscourt Golf Club are a magnet for both novice and experienced golfers. With its spectacular vista, delectable food from a varied menu and friendly staff, Powerscourt has all the makings of a great day out!</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rosslare Golf Club</td>
<td>353 (0) 53 9132203</td>
<td><a href="mailto:office@rosslaregolf.com">office@rosslaregolf.com</a></td>
<td><a href="http://www.rosslaregolf.com">www.rosslaregolf.com</a></td>
<td>Links</td>
<td>6,800 metres</td>
<td>72</td>
<td>Rosslare Golf Links is the hidden gem of Irish links golf courses. Situated in the sunniest part of the country, it stands on a narrow peninsula with the Irish Sea on one side and the huge expanse of Wexford Harbour on the other. High Season €80.00. GUI /LGU Rate €50.00 Wends €40.00 Wdays. Shoulder Season and Low Season from €25.00. For group rates and special offers call 053 9132203 or visit our website <a href="http://www.rosslaregolf.com">www.rosslaregolf.com</a>.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Royal Tara Golf Club</td>
<td>353 (0) 46 902 5508</td>
<td><a href="mailto:info@royaltaragolfclub.com">info@royaltaragolfclub.com</a></td>
<td><a href="http://www.royaltaragolfclub.com">www.royaltaragolfclub.com</a></td>
<td>Parkland</td>
<td>5,580 metres</td>
<td>72</td>
<td>Nestling at the base of the historic Hill of Tara in County Meath, Royal Tara Golf Club is among Ireland’s most enjoyable and conveniently located golfing complexes with 27 holes set in mature parkland. All visitors are assured of a warm welcome to a royal golfing gem with terrific facilities. Venue for the All Ireland GUI Clubs Cups &amp; Shields Finals 2013. Green fees: contact the club or see website for offers.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Concra Wood, host of the Irish Challenge Tour 2018, located between Dublin and Belfast. Draped lazily around the shores of Lough Muckno, in Castleblayney, it is one of Ireland’s most beautiful and evocative settings for golf.

The shape and flow of the golf course are perfectly complemented by the drumlins that roll across the countryside. This easy rhythm adds to the beauty and challenge of the course; and with 11 holes luring you to the waters edge, it promises a stern and beautiful test of golf whatever your ability.

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For all golfing enquiries:
Call: 042 9749485  Email: info@concrawood.ie  Web: www.concrawood.ie

Address:
Dundalk Road, Castleblayney, Co. Monaghan.
Just 15 minutes off Jct. 17 on the M1 at Dundalk, and 1 hour from Dublin and Belfast
Seapoint Golf Links
Drogheda, Termonfeckin, Co Louth
Tel 353 (0) 41 9822333
Email golflinks@seapoint.ie
Web www.seapointgolflinks.com
Length 7,150 yards
Par 72

Seapoint is one of the most beautiful links courses in the world. Playing this course means you are becoming part of an exclusive club. Experience this impressive course on a stunning stretch of coastal land, with breathtaking views of the Mountains of Mourne alongside a sweeping Irish Sea. Green fees €45-€150.

The K Club Ryder Cup Course
Straffan, Co. Kildare
Tel 353 (0) 1 601 7200
Email sales@kclub.ie
Web www.kclub.ie
Course Parkland
Length 6,720 metres
Par 72

Ranked regularly in the top 3 parkland golf courses in Ireland, this Palmer designed golf haven is a must play ‘badge of honour’ that has hosted the top golf players in the world. Recognised as one of Europe’s most spectacular courses, the Ryder Cup Course features a dramatic layout with numerous water hazards.

The K Club Smurfit Course
Straffan, Co. Kildare
Tel 353 (0) 1 601 7200
Email sales@kclub.ie
Web www.kclub.ie
Course Links
Length 6,654 metres
Par 72

Described as the greatest inland golf course in Ireland, the Arnold Palmer designed Smurfit Course features a dramatic landscape with dune type mounding throughout and some 14 acres of water worked into the course design.

Tullamore Golf Club
Brookfield, Tullamore, Co Offaly
Tel 353 (0) 57 932 1439
Email info@tullamoregolfclub.ie
Web www.tullamoregolfclub.ie
Course Parkland
Length 6,472 yards
Par 70

This James Braid designed course was recently upgraded and is regarded as one of the top parkland courses in the country. Centrally situated an hour from Dublin it has hosted many major amateur championships. The high quality of the course with its mature trees and level terrain make it an attractive venue for all visitors. Green fees for our Opens at €20 to €40 with group rates available. Check our Website for Opens and to view a video of our course (also on Youtube).
Macreddin Golf Club
Designed by Ryder Cup winning captain Paul McGinley

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www.macreddingolfclub.com

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Tel: +353 (0)46 924 0146
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Web: www.headfortgolfclub.ie

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Web: www.headfortgolfclub.ie

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The IGTOA – Ireland Golf Tour Operators Association is the recognised Irish Golf Tourism industry representative body.

Our organisation represents the various companies who form the wider Irish Golf Tourism sector. The IGTOA represents leading Golf Tour Operators who actively promote Ireland as a primary golfing destination. We also represent Ireland’s many golf courses, golf resorts, accommodation and transportation providers operating within the Irish Golf Tourism industry. These companies offer a vital service to our sector and they are represented through our annual IGTOA Partnership Program.

The IGTOA is actively engaged with Fáilte Ireland, the Northern Ireland Tourist Board and Tourism Ireland.
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Course designed by the Late Christy O’Connor Jnr

- Located in the heart of the Boyne Valley, 40 minutes from Dublin Airport
- 131 Contemporary Executive Style Bedrooms
- 28 Self Catering Courtyard Homes
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- Award Winning River Spa

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€85.00pps - One Night Bed & Breakfast and One Round of Golf
€123.50pps - One Night Dinner, Bed & Breakfast & One Round of Golf
Green Fees start from €30.00
Blainroe Golf Club
Blainroe, Co. Wicklow
‘A Hawtree Design’
Book tee-times online at www.blainroe.com
Tel: 0404 68168
Email: info@blainroe.com

- Golf Digest top 100 course
- 3 miles from Wicklow town & 40 mins from Dublin
- Full bar & Catering facilities open daily.
- Fully equipped Pro-Shop. Buggy hire
- Online teetime offers available

The K Club Golf Club

Dunbur Road, Co Wicklow

Tel 353 (0) 404 67379
Email info@wicklowgolfclub.ie
Web www.wicklowgolfclub.ie
Course Seaside
Length 6,035 yards
Par 71

Set between the scenic splendour of the Irish Sea and the Wicklow Mountains, you will find 18 holes of unbeatable golfing pleasure. Wicklow Golf Club is a picturesque seaside course which follows the coastline of Wicklow Bay and is situated just outside the historic town of Wicklow. Please view our website for open days. Green fees: from €20-€35. Go to our website to book online.

Woodenbridge Golf Club

Avoca, Co Wicklow

Tel 353 (0) 402 35202
Email reception@woodenbridge.ie
Web www.woodenbridge.ie
Course Parkland
Length 6,341 Yards
Par 71

Surrounded by rivers and mature forests, Woodenbridge Golf Club is situated just south of the village of Avoca in Wicklow, where the Avoca and Aughrim rivers meet some 45 minutes from Dublin. Woodenbridge was described by the legendary Joe Carr as “Ireland’s Augusta” and “the most scenic golf course in Ireland, a hidden gem.”
<table>
<thead>
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<th>Club Name</th>
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<td><a href="mailto:info@ballykisteengolfclub.com">info@ballykisteengolfclub.com</a></td>
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<td><a href="http://www.bellerstowngolfclub.ie">www.bellerstowngolfclub.ie</a></td>
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<td><a href="mailto:golf@woodlandsgolf.com">golf@woodlandsgolf.com</a></td>
<td>00 353 (0) 50 46 1333</td>
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<td>Youghal</td>
<td>Golf Links Road, Youghal, Co Cork</td>
<td><a href="http://www.youghalgolfclub.ie">www.youghalgolfclub.ie</a></td>
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MACREDIN GOLF CLUB

IRELAND’S ANCIENT EAST
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<tr>
<th>Ashdown Park Hotel</th>
<th>Dundrum House Golf &amp; Leisure Resort</th>
<th>Fota Island Resort</th>
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<tr>
<td>Coach Road, Gorey</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Tel</strong> 00353 53 948 0500</td>
<td><strong>Tel</strong> 353 (0)62 71116</td>
<td><strong>Tel</strong> 353 (0)21 488 3700</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Email</strong> <a href="mailto:reception@ashdownparkhotel.com">reception@ashdownparkhotel.com</a></td>
<td><strong>Email</strong> <a href="mailto:reservations@dundrumhouse.ie">reservations@dundrumhouse.ie</a></td>
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<td><strong>Web</strong> <a href="http://www.fotaisland.ie">www.fotaisland.ie</a></td>
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Ashdown Park Hotel is located in Gorey, Wexford and is less than an hour from Dublin airport. The hotel is minutes away from excellent golf courses, both links and fairways, suitable for all handicaps. It is renowned for its food, spacious and comfortable rooms & excellent service. Book now you will not be disappointed.

**Nearby Golf Courses:** Courtown, Arklow, Coillattin, Buncloody, Woodenbridge

Located in County Tipperary amidst the beauty and splendour of Ireland’s Golden Vale, these beautifully spacious Golf Lodges are situated adjacent to the Venue Clubhouse Bar & Restaurant and Leisure Club. GREAT STAY & PLAY PACKAGES available at Dundrum House - renowned for its warm welcome in a stunning Resort setting.

**Nearby Golf Courses:** Thurles, Tipperary Town

Fota Island Hotel & Spa is set in a 780 acre private island. This luxury five star Hotel in Cork boasts 123 en-suite rooms, 8 private suites and a selection of dining options. The Resort also boasts luxury Self Catering Lodges, an award winning Spa with a wide range of treatments and an Adventure Centre including activities such as Obstacle Courses, Kayaking and Archery.
Greenore Golf Club is conveniently located beside the picturesque and vibrant village of Carlingford making it the ideal destination for your next golfing getaway. Where every hole is memorable and every visitor is given a very warm welcome, this 18 hole links course is a must for lovers of golf. Practice area, club and buggy hire are available as well as full bar and restaurant facilities. Treat yourself to spectacular views of Carlingford Lough and the Mourne mountains at this “gem” of a course.

Greenore Golf Club
GREENORE, CO LOUTH

Greenore Golf Club
www.greenoregolfclub.com

+353 42 9373212
robert@greenoregolfclub.com

One night bed & breakfast and one round of golf from per person sharing €60

Woodenbridge Hotel & Lodge
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E: info@woodenbridgehotel.com

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Tel 353 (0)21 480 0500
Email info@thekingsley.ie
Web www.thekingsley.ie

The Kingsley is a luxury four-star hotel with 131 spacious and modern guest rooms, including a handsome penthouse suite and 19 apartments, all with modern, contemporary décor. Just a stroll away from Cork’s city centre, many rooms offer stunning views of the iconic River Lee. The luxury spa has a world-class thermal suite and a beautiful, serene pool.

Nearby Golf Courses: Fota Island Resort, Cork Golf Club, Lee Valley Golf Club, The Old Head

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Thomastown, Co. Kilkenny

Tel 353 (0) 56 777 3000
Email info@mountjuliet.ie
Web www.mountjuliet.ie

Mount Juliet Estate remains one of Ireland’s finest country Estates. We are proud to maintain traditions and standards that have endured from the glory days, just as we are proud of the hospitality that has brought us international renown. Enjoy a play & stay at the Manor House or the newly refurbished Hunter’s Yard.

Nearby Golf Courses: Mount Juliet, Kilkenny, Mount Wolseley, Faithlegg

Nuremore Golf Club
Carrickmacross, Co Monaghan

Tel 353 (0)42 966 1438
Email sales@nuremore.com
Web www.nuremore.com

Course Parkland
Length 5,870 metres
Par 71

Located in beautiful rolling Monaghan countryside, the four-star Nuremore Hotel & Golf Country Club is the perfect location for leisure, business or holidays. Renowned for having one of the best championship length golf courses in Ireland, the hotel offers golfers and non-golfers alike the chance to relax, unwind and enjoy a little luxury. Green fees: from €25.
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Fermoy Golf Club, Corrin Hill, Cullenagh, Fermoy, Co. Cork, Ireland
T: 00353-25-31472  E: fermoygolfclub@eircom.net  www.fermoygolfclub.ie

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Greystones Road, Bray Co Wicklow
T: 01-276-3200    E: info@braygolfclub.com
www.braygolfclub.com
IRELAND’S ANCIENT EAST

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Email sales@kclub.ie
Web www.kclub.ie

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Nearby Golf Courses:
Ryder Cup Course
and the Smurfit Course

Woodenbridge
Hotel & Lodge
Vale of Avoca, Arklow, Co Wicklow

Tel 353 (0)402 35146
Email info@woodenbridgehotel.com
Web www.woodenbridgehotel.com

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Tullamore Golf Club is a truly championship course of the highest calibre, consistently rated in the top 30 parkland courses in Ireland. It is situated just an hour from Dublin off the M6 motorway. Set amongst mature hardwood trees the redesign of the course has embellished the work of the original designer, James Braid, with a delightful blending of the new with the old. The finished product demands concentration and provides a challenge for all level of golfers. Visitors are always welcome and are guaranteed a memorable golfing experience.

Tullamore Golf Club, Brookfield, Tullamore Co. Offaly
T: +353 (0)57 932 1439 E: info@tullamoregolfclub.ie W: www.tullamoregolfclub.ie

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The One
The Open

The Open makes a comeback to Royal Portrush for the first time since 1951

By Dermot Gilleece

ne of this island’s leading golf club administrators, captured beautifully the essence of what this year’s Open at Royal Portrush will mean to her revered establishment. “My marketing budget has been reduced to zero,” said Wilma Erskine, the secretary/manager of the Co Antrim links.

Big sport generates big money, and the famed Dunluce stretch didn’t have to wait until this year to cash in on the return of the game’s most celebrated event after a lapse of 68 years. The very idea of such status has been enough to send pulses racing among peripatetic golfers worldwide.

Apart from contributing more than £100m to the local economy, The Open will secure the venue’s future for the next generation, according to past captain, Sir Richard McLaughlin. The 1951 Open continued to bring people here, he said. And there’s no doubt that the Dubai Duty Free Irish Open became a complete turning point in getting it back. Indeed the importance of that 2012 staging with its record-breaking attendances, couldn’t be overstated. It was all there in an interview which Peter Dawson, the now retired chief executive of the Royal and Ancient, gave to Scotland on Sunday newspaper in January 2012. “We will be very interested to see how the course copes commercially and in terms of spectator movement when the Dubai Duty Free Irish Open is held there later this year, he said. So we are taking it seriously.”

Local personalities also played their part, notably the 2011 Open champion, Darren Clarke, who badgered the R&A relentlessly in pursuit of this prize. He could recall a somewhat dispiriting start of a crushing nine at the first hole on his competitive debut over Dunluce, as a 15-year-old. “I would consider it tighter than most of the other Open courses,” he said. “Stand on the ninth tee out there and you’ve got to hit the fairway, which is a big ask. It is simply a very demanding course.”

On a memorable Tuesday in July 2005, Rory McIlroy needed to par the finishing two holes for a course-record 63 in the second qualifying round of the North of Ireland Amateur Championship. From the very back tees of a course measuring 7,134 yards, he responded to the challenge with two birdies for a stunning 61, two months past his 16th birthday.

Looking further back, we are drawn inevitably to stories of 1951 when local hero, Fred Daly, signed more autographs than he might sensibly not have done. The 34-year-old Englishman was declared a very worthy winner of the top prize of £300, by a two-stroke margin over Argentinian, Antonio Cerda. And out of the total prize fund of £1,700, there was...
sufficient for a reward of £20 to a virtual unknown by the name of Christy O’Connor, from Tuam GC.

References to autographs stem from the fact that by his own estimation, Daly signed as many as the rest of the field put together, while Faulkner seriously tempted fate by signing himself Open Champion 1951, with a final round still to play. Granted, he was a comfortable six strokes clear of his closest challengers after 54 holes, but the more superstitious among players known to be notoriously superstitious, were absolutely horrified than he should have been so presumptuous.

Still, we’re told that Bernard Darwin of the Times, quickly brought him back to earth. “Faulkner,” barked the doyen of golf-writers, within minutes of the final putt finding the cup, “I understand you’ve won The Open. Sit there and I’ll write about you.” The thoughts of issuing such a command to modern-day practitioners such as Nick Faldo, Ernie Els or Tiger Woods, is enough to chill the blood.

On seeing for the first time the masterpiece which Harry Colt had created in the Dunluce Links, Darwin wrote that the architect had built himself a monument more enduring than brass. The link with Colt stemmed from his redesign of Royal Dublin after it had been used as a musketry range during World War I. In this context, a key figure was Sir Anthony Babington, a one-time Dublin resident who was a prominent member of both Royal Dublin and Royal Portrush.

As Ian Bamford pointed out in his fine history of Royal Portrush: “Only men of perception and foresight would have contemplated improving on a natural championship links, which had been the venue of a most successful Irish Amateur Open Championship in 1919 and had been the venue of the 1911 and 1924 British Ladies Championships.” Babington was such a man. Given that both men practised law, though Colt had quit his practice as a solicitor in Hastings, Kent, by that stage, they became firm friends, and the architect was often Babington’s guest on visits to this country. So it was that, in 1923, Colt prepared a comprehensive layout for two new courses, though it was eight years later
before leases were acquired to the land.

Then there was the price. Though Colt's initial figure for the development was £7,000, he intimated that the eventual cost would probably be closer to £10,000. This was accepted by the club, despite the fact that they had insisted at a general meeting in 1932 that the cost should not exceed £3,200. Little more than a year later, the Dunluce course was formally opened, having been played on as early as Easter of that year.

The Valley course, which was a particular favourite of Babington's, took somewhat longer. And when completed, the entire project reflected enormous credit on the determination and foresight of a man who was captain of the club from 1932 to 1936, and president for eight years, from 1938 to 1946.

The reward for all of this endeavour was becoming the first and still the only club outside of mainland Britain to stage The Open. Understandably, there was huge excitement in the build-up to the event not only in Portrush, but in the neighbouring resort town of Portstewart, which would be used for the qualifying stage.

Despite the hardship of the post-war years, golf had become a significant part of everyday life in the area. We should emphasise, however, that the scale of the championship was actually quite modest, when compared with the present-day when daily crowds in excess of 40,000 are pretty-much routine. Back in 1951, when, incidentally, the last two rounds were staged on Friday, July 7th, attendances were estimated at around 7,000 per day earlier in the week and roughly 8,000 for the climax.

Still, for the avid fan it was an absolute treat, with crowds permitted to walk the fairways which were not roped off. There were restrictions, however, on encroaching into the precious dune structure, not unlike the arrangements which were deemed necessary at Ballybunion GC for the 2000 Murphy’s Irish Open.

It will be quite a different course, this time around. It was decided that the land occupied by the 17th and 18th holes was required so as to accommodate the modern Major. Architect, Martin Ebert, found the answer in a new seventh and a new eighth.

These holes take in elements of the adjoining Valley course, so facilitating a finish on the existing 16th which becomes a suitably testing, 463-yard par-four.

Halfway up the right side of the sixth, is the tee for the new, par-five seventh of 572 yards. And a highlight will be a replica in scale and shape of the iconic, Big Nellie bunker from the old 17th, generated by computer.

The 435-yard eighth returns to a green about 25 yards back, right of the existing sixth green. Meanwhile, the bunker count on the entire course has been increased by three to 62. Acknowledging this assignment as a considerable feather in his designing cap, Ebert said: “It is hard to argue against this being the finest piece of linksland on which The Open is played. No other venue,
in my view, has such pure links undulations through its 18 holes. And the great skill of the original designer, Harry Colt, was as a master in traversing such difficult terrain to bring the best out of it, without making you feel that you’re walking uphill. Then we have the detailing and shaping of the greens and surrounds, which is just second to none.”

Justifiably proud of this momentous revival, there may be a tendency among Northern fans to focus credit for events next July on the Major achievements of McIlroy, Clarke and Graeme McDowell from their part of the island, quite apart from Portrush native, Daly, who was the first Irish winner of the Open in 1947.

Clarke, however, takes a different view. All of this wasn’t started by G-Mac or Rory, it was started by Padraig [Harrington] winning, he said. We all followed him. Just so.
Just out of the tourist glare, stretching from Leitrim to Lough Derg along the River Shannon, the Hidden Heartlands is full of golf courses and towns brimming with character.

The collection of counties that cover Ireland’s Hidden Heartlands - encompassing Leitrim, Roscommon and Longford as well as parts of Clare, Westmeath, Cavan, North Tipperary, Galway and Offaly – are off the beaten track, but are more enticing for it. The Hidden Heartlands put the focus back to nature, taking deep breaths and immersing yourself in a gentler form of tourism. The area hugs the Shannon’s long shoreline and is marked by the gently undulating landscapes of the middle of the country. A good place to start is in County Cavan, the so-called “Lakeland County” with its 365 lakes, one for each day of the year. Lakes provide a prominent feature on one of the best parkland courses in Ireland, Slieve Russell.
The course is a part of a popular resort, which is ideal for weddings and short breaks, and recently hosted the Fine Gael National conference, the government of Ireland.

There are few better stay and play offerings in Ireland, with the Slieve Russell set in 300 acres of country bliss. The fantastic golf course has been designed with a certain boldness and sureness of instinct, which has resulted in the development of a truly strategic test. Watch out for the dramatic 16th hole, a par 3 all over water, which sent many golf balls from the world's best to their watery grave when the course hosted the North West Ireland Open on the European Tour. Slieve Russell is the home course of former World Amateur Number 1 and budding Tour star Leona Maguire, and she tries to play it when she can to test her game for the Tour.

Slieve Russell in Ballyconnell in Cavan is the perfect base to explore Cavan, where you can look at the fascinating patchwork of Neolithic tombs, 19th-century farms, glacial erratics and karstic limestone around Cuilcagh Mountain in County Cavan. Or tackle part of Ireland's newest long-distance walking route, the Beara Breifne Way, mapped over the trail undertaken by Irish chieftain O'Sullivan Beare and his followers in 1603, a 14-day march from Blacklion, County Cavan to Dursey Island in Cork.

Excellent parklands dot through Cavan, including County Cavan Golf Club, which carved through the natural drumlin terrain of the Lakeland region. The 18-hole layout at Farnham Estate Golf Club is a superb contemporary course that came directly from the design studio of Kilkenny-based Canadian architect Jeff Howes. A wandering stream and several lakes – plus a fairy fort and wishing – make an appearance, adding to the mystique.

Longford, Leitrim and Roscommon may be sparse in terms of population, but feature some nice courses, including Longford Golf Club, which is ideally located in the heart of the “Lakelands and Inland Waterways” region, making it a perfect place for those with a love of water sports. There is great golf on offer at tracks such as Strokestown, Castlerea, Boyle and Ballaghaderreen or more demanding 18-hole tests such as Carrick-on-Shannon, Roscommon or Athlone on the shores of Lough Ree.

Off the course, you can zip through trees, go for easy boat rides or jump aboard a Segway at Lough Key Forest Park, just outside Boyle, Co Roscommon. In Leitrim, the Glencar Waterfall is situated near Glencar Lake, 11 kilometres west of Manorhamilton in Co Leitrim. It is particularly impressive after rain and can be viewed from a lovely wooded walk. There are more waterfalls visible from the road, although none is quite as romantic as this one, which is mentioned by WB Yeats in his poem “The Stolen Child”.

Offaly is famous for its bogs, which have gifted Ireland a treasure trove of Bronze Age artefacts that date from between 6,800 - 6,000 BCE of Manorhamilton in Co Leitrim. It is particularly impressive after rain and can be viewed from a lovely wooded walk. There are more waterfalls visible from the road, although none is quite as romantic as this one, which is mentioned by WB Yeats in his poem “The Stolen Child”.

Offaly is famous for its bogs, which have gifted Ireland a treasure trove of Bronze Age artefacts that date from between 6,800 - 6,000 BCE. It features Tullamore Golf Club, which is an excellent parkland challenge thanks to massive clusters of century old oak, beech and chestnut trees. With Slieve Bloom Mountains as a backdrop, Tullamore is one of the more underrated courses in Ireland. The inward half will live long in the memory for the standard of shotmaking required to make a good score.

The county is also the home to European
Tour star Shane Lowry, who grew up at Esker Hills. Esker Hills was designed by the great Christy O’Connor Jnr, who created a challenging layout where land is rolling, with four lakes. The club takes its name from the Esker Riada, where over 10,000 years ago, retreating glaciers shaped the land at the end of the Ice Age. As the frozen water melted, narrow ridges of sand and gravel – called eskers – were left behind, deposited by streams that flowed in tunnels under the melting waters.

Athlone in Co Westmeath is known as the “heart of Ireland”, and is known for its 12th century castle, housing eight chronologically themed interactive exhibition rooms. A former garrison town, it’s rich with heritage and history – making it the perfect location for a getaway. Be sure to sample some of Athlone’s excellent cuisine, accessible without even leaving a boat across the River Shannon; or you can make a designated stop: Athlone alone is emerging as a major foodie hub, with some exquisite restaurants well worth the effort. Check out Sean’s Bar when you’re there, the oldest bar in Ireland, dating back more than 1,000 years.

Just outside the town is the family-run Glasson Country Hotel & Golf Club, one of the best hotels and golf courses in the region. The hotel dating from 1780 is renowned for its hospitality, while another masterpiece from Christy O’Connor Jnr awaits, an excellent Championship course with lakeside scenery to die for, and tour-quality conditions to enjoy. Athlone alone is emerging as a major foodie hub, with some exquisite restaurants well worth the effort. Check out Sean’s Bar when you’re there, the oldest bar in Ireland, dating back more than 1,000 years.

Head south from Athlone and you will find Portumna, the market town on the border between Galway and Tipperary. The town is located to the west of the point where the River Shannon enters Lough Derg. With so much water around, fishing is very popular, but so is golf, no surprise given that Portumna Golf Club is an excellent parkland course. To use a hackneyed term, Portumna is very much a “hidden gem” in the Irish golfing landscape, as the course weaves around mature trees that bound many fairways, providing seasonal colour. Watch out the wild deer that roam the course and provide a nice diversion.

Loaded with natural charm, Lough Derg offers stunning views, water sports, scenic walking trails, and 90+ heritage sites. Explore during the day and settle into an evening of fine dining, lively pubs and eclectic history. Check out the Portumna Forest Park, where 430 hectares on the shores of Lough Derg are dominated by coniferous woodland, offering excellent views of the lake from its four trails, which are suitable for all walkers.

Head the other side of Lough Derg and towards the southern end of the River Shannon and you will find Shannon Golf Club, just south of Shannon Golf Club. Shannon is one of the best inland courses in Co Clare, where holes have been fitted into a tidy parcel of land beside the Shannon Estuary, with many fairways bounded on either flank by a variety of deciduous trees. Experience the East Clare Way, a 172km circular walking route that takes you through some spectacular countryside, mainly consisting of quiet tarmac roads, forestry tracks, bog roads, open ground and field paths. Start and finish in the town of Killaloe.

The Hidden Heartlands is about exploring ‘off-radar’ Ireland, and in so doing discovering a more sedate, easygoing part of the country, where the threads of a more traditional life are still in evidence and the unaffected friendliness that Ireland is so famous for is on full display. Slow down, breathe and relax; you might want to stay awhile.
**Walk The Board**
**CO. LEITRIM**
Between the towns of Drumshanbo and Carrick-on-Shannon, the 600m boardwalk meanders across the serene waters of Acres Lake. Linking up with the Lough Allen canal, the boardwalk provides access northwards to Lough Allen, south to Carrick-on-Shannon and west, to Lough Key Forest Park and Boyle.

www.bluewaysireland.org

**Lough Oughter**
**CO. CAVAN**
One of the county’s most idyllic watery gems is Lough Oughter. With the historic Clough Oughter castle as a backdrop, the choice is yours to pedal or paddle around the archipelago of islands of the Erne River system.

cavancanoeling@gmail.com

**Wilde Irish Chocolates**
**CO. CLARE**
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www.wildeirishchocolates.com

**Arigna Mines**
**CO. ROSCOMMON**
Overlooking the Lough Allen, the most northerly lake of the River Shannon, the Arigna Mine was the last working coal mine in Ireland. With a former miner as your guide, take a journey underground to the literal coal face of Ireland’s Hidden Heartlands.

www.arignaminingexperience.ie

**Blue and Green Ways**
**CO. LONGFORD**
Getting off the beaten track couldn’t be easier in County Longford, where a network of routes weave their way along and over canals and quiet back roads. Experience how nature has colonised the history and archaeology of Ireland’s Hidden Heartlands as you pedal past lost Iron Age trackways, ruinous medieval churches and abandoned relics of an industrial age.

www.osi.ie/blog/irlands-greenways-and-trails/

**Clara Bog Nature Reserve**
**CO. OFFALY**
With 464 hectares of raised bog with evident lag and soak systems the nature reserve is home to many protected wildlife species. The installation of a 1km-looped timber boardwalk with interpretive panels at Clara Bog has provided for local recreation and tourism. Clara Bog Nature Reserve and Visitor Centre are managed by National Parks and Wildlife. the Visitors can park at the Centre and walk to the nature reserve, alternatively there is an area for cars at the nature reserve.

www.clarabognaturereserve.ie

**Boat Trip on Lough Derg**
**CO. TIPPERARY**
A sightseeing cruise on the River Shannon and Lough Derg. A commentary is provided as we gently cruise along the calm sheltered waters of Ireland’s finest waterway. There is an open top deck with seating for all passengers where they can truly appreciate the magnificent scenery. The lower deck is fully enclosed to ensure a comfortable cruise.

www.killaloerivercruises.com

**The Irish Workhouse Centre**
**CO. GALWAY**
Visitors enter the workhouse via the waiting room, the actual room people came through when seeking admission to the workhouse. A short film is then shown in what was the girls’ classroom. After this, visitors are guided through the yard and dormitory block, including the matron’s quarters, the nursery, the women’s workroom and then the laundry. The guided tour lasts about one hour with complimentary teas/coffees afterward, and there are ongoing exhibitions also.

www.irishworkhousecentre.ie

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**CO. CLARE**
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### A-Z Golf Courses in Counties on the Hidden Heartland

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County Cavan Golf Club
Drumellis, Cavan, Co Cavan

Tel 00353494331388
Email info@cavangolf.ie
Web www.cavangolf.ie
Course Parkland
Length 5,627 metres
Par 70

Enjoy a unique golfing experience in the Lakeland Region. Many of our fairways are lined with mature trees, in particular the last 4 holes. This is sure to provide you with an enjoyable and unforgettable experience. Visitors and societies welcome. Open singles Thursdays D15. Green Fees €20 - €25. Visit website for special offers.

Glasson Golf Club
Glasson, Athlone, Co. Westmeath

Tel 353 (0) 90648512
Email info@glassoncountryhouse.ie
Web www.glassoncountryhouse.ie
Course Parkland
Length 7215 metres
Par 73

Designed by Christy O’Connor Junior and previous host to two Televised European Challenge Tour Tournaments, the superb lakeside setting makes Glasson one of the most visually stunning Parkland Courses you will play. With its undulating Greens, superb views and a warm welcome and on-site Hotel a visit is a must!

Slieve Russell Golf Club
Ballyconnell, County Cavan, Ireland

Tel 353 (0) 49 952 5090/93
Email golf@slieverussell.ie
Web www.slieverussell.ie
Course Parkland
Length 6500 metres
Par 72

Forming part of a magnificent 300 acre estate, including 50 acres of lakes, our 18-hole championship course is sensitively wrapped around the lakes and the drumlins of County Cavan. The course presents a wonderful challenge and the devilishly tricky greens present a searching examination of accurate approach play. Ranked top 5 parklands in Ireland 2019.
Glasson Country House
Glasson, Athlone, Co. Westmeath

Tel 353 (0) 90 64 85120
Email info@glassoncountryhouse.ie
Web www.glassoncountryhouse.ie

This 65 Bedroom Four Hotel is situated in the middle of a superb Christy O’Connor Junior designed Golf Course. With stunning lakeviews and an on-site Golf Academy & Driving Range - a must visit venue!

Nearby Golf Courses: Glasson Country House Hotel & Golf Club.

Slieve Russell Hotel
Ballyconnell, County Cavan, Ireland

Tel 353 (0) 49 952 26444
Email enquiries@slieverussell.ie
Web www.slieverussell.ie

Slieve Russell prides itself on its opulent surroundings, congenial atmosphere, friendly staff & superb cuisine. Set in 300 acres the resort offers a unique experience in relaxation & leisure. Facilities include 222 stylish bedrooms, world-class spa, excellent conference and banqueting facilities & leisure centre. Enhancing the facilities is a superb 18-hole championship & 9-hole Academy golf course.

Nearby Golf Courses: Lough Erne, Farnham Estate, Conera Wood
# Club listings in Ireland’s Hidden Heartland

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Location</th>
<th>Address</th>
<th>Website</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Athlone</td>
<td>Hodson Bay, Athlone, Co Roscommon</td>
<td><a href="http://www.athlonegolfclub.ie">www.athlonegolfclub.ie</a></td>
<td>00 353 (0) 90 649 2073</td>
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<tr>
<td>Ballaghaderreen</td>
<td>Ballaghaderreen, Co Roscommon</td>
<td><a href="http://www.ballaghaderreengolfclub.com">www.ballaghaderreengolfclub.com</a></td>
<td>00 353 (0) 94 986 0295</td>
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<tr>
<td>Ballinamore</td>
<td>Creavy, Ballinamore, Co Leitrim</td>
<td><a href="http://www.ballinamorgolfclub.ie">www.ballinamorgolfclub.ie</a></td>
<td>00 353 (0) 71 964 4346</td>
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<tr>
<td>Ballinasloe</td>
<td>Rosgloss, Ballinasloe, Co Galway</td>
<td><a href="http://www.ballinasloegolfclub.ie">www.ballinasloegolfclub.ie</a></td>
<td>00 353 (0) 90 964 2126</td>
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<tr>
<td>Belturbet</td>
<td>Erne Hill, Belturbet, Co Cavan</td>
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<td>00 353 (0) 71 985 3024</td>
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<td><a href="mailto:ijcmooney@eircom.net">ijcmooney@eircom.net</a></td>
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<td>Glack, Dublin Road, Longford</td>
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<td><a href="mailto:eastclaregolfclub@eircom.net">eastclaregolfclub@eircom.net</a></td>
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<td><a href="mailto:info.farnham@radissonblu.com">info.farnham@radissonblu.com</a></td>
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The 2019 Official Fáilte Ireland Golf Guide 117
Lahinch set for special Dubai Duty Free Irish Open celebration

Golf is a global village and if you’re looking experience traditional Irish links golf with a smattering of international glitter, Lahinch is the place to be in 2019

By Brian Keogh

aul McGinley, whose connection with the great County Clare links goes back to his teenage years caddying for his father Mick in the South of Ireland Championship, will host the European Tour’s Dubai Duty Free Irish Open there from July 4-7.

Defining what makes Lahinch so special is akin to describing that happy glow that comes with a well-struck drive. But the denizens of the venue many consider the St Andrews of Ireland are confident that its special essence and the club’s privileged place at the heart of the Irish game will produce an unforgettable event.

There is no one key to what is hoped will be a huge success, but when you take the organisational skills and the charisma of arguably the greatest Ryder Cup captain Europe has produced and add a generous sprinkling of world stars battling for a $7 million prize fund, the possibilities are endless.

“They come for the golf; they come back for the experience,” is a motto that sums up Lahinch’s inimitable charm. And that’s the key to McGinley’s plan for the Irish Open, which will take place just two weeks before The Open, which is set for Royal Portrush.

“I want to say to the guys that if you really want good preparation for The Open, the Irish Open at Lahinch is going to provide that,” McGinley said.

“I want a festival atmosphere and for the fans to really get involved and have a good time. It’s going to be a carnival atmosphere with a great crowd and a great course that’s going to be a great test.

“Those are all the things that add to the theatre of an event, which is crucial when TV pictures go out across the world.

“A great hurling match is a great hurling match but when it is a great hurling match with 80,000 watching it goes to another level.

“That’s what I’m looking for; big crowds, big corporate engagement to make this a tournament we are all going to be proud of.”

Special venues make for special events and Lahinch is certainly unique, situated just a few miles from the famous Cliffs of Moher in the heart of the west of Ireland, easily accessible from Cork, Limerick and Galway.

How many courses on earth can claim to have been shaped by nature and some of the biggest names in golf course design?

Old Tom Morris laid out the original course in 1894, but its essence is very much intact and the club remains central to daily life in this small seaside town, buffeted year round by the breeze from the Atlantic Ocean.

Dr Alister MacKenzie, who would go on to create Augusta National with Bobby Jones, was retained to design a new course in 1926 and the famous links remained largely untouched until 2000 when Dr Martin Hawtree was retained to modernise it.

The result was a resounding success and happily for anyone with an interest in the history of the game, its two most famous
holes have remained untouched since Old Tom laid them out more than 100 years ago.

The par-five fourth, known as Klondyke, is played down a narrow valley and requires a blind approach over a huge dune. Then there is the stunning, par-three fifth, The Dell, which is played blind over a whitewashed stone sitting high on another dune to a green that hides from the elements, and the golfer, in a natural depression.

What makes Lahinch even more special is the people that created the myriad stories that are still told in the club’s bar.

When returning to the club for dinner held in honour of past winners of the South of Ireland Championship, McGinley recounted how his victory with Pádraig Harrington over Tiger Woods and Davis Love in the Saturday afternoon foursomes in the 2004 Ryder Cup at Oakland Hills might not have happened but for the matchplay lessons he learned caddying for his father and later playing himself in what’s fondly called “the South”.

Harrington was ordered by skipper Bernhard Langer to hit a wedge to the bottom tier of the par-three 13th because the back tier was too firm. He was reluctant to hit the shot, preferring to go with a nine-iron to attack the flag. But Langer insisted and Harrington eventually came up short on the bottom level, 45 feet away.

McGinley recalled the matchplay tricks he learned at Lahinch and immediately took out his putter, letting it glint in the sunshine before leaning on it in full view of Woods, as if to say, “We’re on the green and we’re two up — let’s see what you’ve got.”

Woods flew the green and Harrington and McGinley went on to claim a crucial 4 and 3 win.

“That came from here in the clubhouse in Lahinch, many years earlier,” McGinley said of his golfing apprenticeship, pointing to a corner of the bar, overlooking the first tee, where the greats of yesteryear would gather to tell their golfing tales.

“Paraic O’Rourke had done the same here that year on the 16th - taking out the putter. His opponent missed the green and he won 3 and 2. It’s a story of the importance of the mental edge in golf.

“I learned that in amateur golf from one of my heroes, here in Lahinch. It’s not necessarily about what you learn on the course but also about how you learn and listen and the lessons you learn.

“It’s also about the friends you make and those friends are often made around a drink, in the clubhouse.”

McGinley won the “South” in 1991 and it proved to be the turning point in his career.

“Without winning the South of Ireland, I wouldn’t have made the Walker Cup team that year and without making the Walker Cup team, I wouldn’t have gone to the tour school,” he said. “So it all evolved from my success here in Lahinch.”

He has insisted on the importance of maintaining the integrity of the Old Course for the Irish Open, which will be a par-70

“That’s what I’m looking for; big crowds, big corporate engagement to make this a tournament we are all going to be proud of.”
measuring just over 7,000 yards.

The only concession to the power hitters comes with the conversion of the second (534 yards from the back tee) and fourth (475 yards) from par-fives to par-fours and the construction of a new back tee at the driveable 13th, stretching that great risk-reward hole from 280 yards to around 340 yards.

With the new tee now some 60 yards further back and right, players would be required to carry The Mine and fly the ball over 300 yards to reach the green.

The club’s new short game academy, which offers great views of the 18th green, has been earmarked for corporate hospitality while five new target greens have been added to the practice ground.

With no restrictions on re-entry, crowds of up to 25,000 per day will be able to come and go as they please for what promises to be a festival of golf with the village set to become an integral part of the event.

“There’s huge excitement both at home and overseas especially amongst the golfing fraternity,” said Lahinch Golf Club’s general manager Paddy Keane, who is a member of the club’s organising committee.

“With the tradition of ‘the South’, there’s a huge affinity with Lahinch and the excitement will only increase.”

What Lahinch’s famous goats— proudly displayed in the club crest — will be doing during the Irish Open remains to be seen but there are sure to have a role.

The story goes that former club secretary Brud Slattery, frustrated with the frequent breakdowns of the barometer in the porch, put a sign on it that simply read — “See Goats”.

According to tradition, if they are seen near the clubhouse, the weather prospects are not good. If they are out on the dunes, the weather is sure to be fine.

The first game of golf was played at Lahinch on Good Friday, 15th April 1892 between Lieutenant William McFarlane of the Black Watch Regiment and William F. McDonnell, a Limerick businessman. Feathers and sticks were used to mark out the course.

In the days of the Golf Links Hotel and the West Clare Railway, a golfer could leave Euston Station, London at 6 p.m. and arrive in Lahinch for lunch the following day. Sadly, neither the hotel nor the West Clare Railway survived into modern times but the arrival of the Irish Open will elevate the club and Irish golf to new heights.

Pádraig Harrington, Graeme McDowell and Darren Clarke all won titles there but the likes of Phil Mickelson, Tom Watson, Greg Norman, Curtis Strange, Ken Venturi, Luke Donald and Bubba Watson have also visited and enjoyed its charms.

Consistently ranked among the Top 50 courses in the world, the stories that the course has created are innumerable.
railway that prompted Percy French to write “Are You Right There Michael?”, the links have undergone a marvellous renaissance over the past few years, leaving it well-placed to vie with Royal County Down, Portmarnock, Royal Portrush and Ballybunion for the unofficial title of Ireland’s premier club.

“Lahinch is one of Ireland’s great golfing venues, not just because of the golf course but also the town, which is right on the doorstep of the golf club and is always buzzing with life,” McGinley said. “That whole region on the west coast is just very special.”

Last year’s Irish Open at Ballyliffin in Donegal created memorable television pictures that were beamed around the world.

“It was a marvellous event which the whole of Donegal should be proud of,” McGinley said. “Now I want to bring that feel-good factor to County Clare.

“I will be aiming to set the course up to make it perfect preparation for the players ahead of The Open in Portrush two weeks later and I think we will attract a world-class field. It promises to be a fantastic occasion.”
A 2,500-kilometre, hair-raising route that passes through some of the greatest courses ever created, enjoy the Wild Atlantic way, the world’s most diverse and spectacular coastline.

Described by Lonely Planet as “untamed and utterly divine”, the Wild Atlantic Way is a sensational journey of soaring cliffs, buzzing towns and cities, hidden beaches and epic bays.

From the wind-whipped tip of Malin Head to the safe haven of Kinsale Harbour, it is home to many of the world’s best links courses from 2018 Irish Open venue Ballyliffin on the north coast to the beautiful Ballybunion in County Kerry.

Filled with courses that are on every golfer’s bucket list, none more so than the magnificent Old Head Golf Links in Kinsale. One of the most dramatic, it
sites for golf in the world, it will leave memories that you will never forget. One of the most dramatic sites for golf in the world, you are at the edge of the world at Old Head, three hundred feet up, looking over the edge of a cliff, with Atlantic waves crashing onto the rocks. With an iconic lighthouse in view, it protrudes more than 3km into the heaving Atlantic Ocean.

It is a favourite with American visitors, as is Waterville Golf Links in Co Kerry, where the late Payne Stewart is remembered with a statue. Situated on the shores of Ballinskelligs Bay, Tom Fazio, was commissioned to update the memory of this Eddie Hackett masterpiece. It provides a true links golf experience, complete with rolling dunes, firm fairways and sod-faced bunkers.

Kerry has some of the greatest courses in the world, particularly Tralee Golf Club, where significant investment has been undertaken to improve its practice facilities and to introduce a Hawtree-designed par 3 course. This is to complement an Arnold Palmer-designed course that is one of the most majestic courses you will ever encounter. The front nine features some spine-tingling holes that navigate the rocky Atlantic coast, but it’s the back nine’s massive dunes and challenging tee placements that leave a lasting impression.

Meanwhile, a Tom Watson favourite, Ballybunion is natural golf at its best. With very few man-made elements, it offers an unparalleled back nine...
I first looked at this site, I thought I was the luckiest designer in the world. If I spent the rest of my life building courses, I don’t think I’d find a comparable site anywhere."

One site that may be comparable is the host of the 2019 Dubai Duty Free Irish Open, which will be hosted by former Ryder Cup-winning captain Paul McGinley. Lahinch Golf Club dates back to 1892 and is one of the world's greatest courses. Created by Old Tom Morris and revised by Dr Alister Mackenzie, the course overlooks Liscannor Bay and is an enchanting place to play links golf. Head further inland towards Limerick city and Adare Manor and Dromoland Castle offer five-star stays with top-class golf as well. Dromoland Castle has been one of Ireland’s premier resorts for over 40 years, where investment continues to improve the golf course set amidst 150 hectares of woodland.

Adare Manor, meanwhile, is a truly stunning €70 million development from JP McManus, where no stone was left unturned in making it a stunning stay and play for all guests. McManus brought in Tom Fazio, who helped make changes to Augusta National, to improve the golf course with the stated goal to turn Adare into the “Augusta of Europe”. The course is heavily tipped to host the 2026 Ryder Cup, and will welcome Tiger Woods and other top golfers to the JP McManus Pro-Am in 2020. Oh, and the hotel has been named Best Hotel in the World. Adare Manor must be experienced.

Galway is at the heart of the craic and ceol of Ireland and it also has some excellent golf courses. Galway Golf Club, home of the late
Christy O’Connor Snr and Jnr, is laid out by Dr Alister MacKenzie nearly 100 years ago. Galway has undergone an extensive upgrade programme in recent years but has lost none of its original charm, especially when the gorse is in full bloom with Galway Bay as a backdrop. Galway Bay Golf Resort was created by O’Connor Jnr, and it is a sensational golfing enclave, thanks to the Atlantic Ocean, which surrounds virtually the entire course.

Connemara Golf Links is one of Galway’s great venues - a starkly beautiful links golf course, designed by the Eddie Hackett for a very modest fee at the behest of a group of locals led by an enthusiastic curate, Fr Peter Waldron, the local parish priest who pushed to get the course built. The course has received many illustrious visitors over the years, including five-time Open champion Tom Watson, who raved about the elevated and “spectacular” greens on the back nine. “If there were a course like this on the west coast of England, it would surely host the British Open,” said former Ryder Cup star and commentator Peter Alliss.

Head north to Mayo, one of Eddie Hackett’s masterpieces, the great Carne Links at Belmullet must be played. The remote beauty of the Mullet peninsula and inquisitive holes are laid out through some of golf’s largest dunes. From the towering dunes of Carne Golf Links there is a sensational drive through Co Mayo to Westport Golf Club. Off it is then to Sligo, the county which Nobel Prize-winning poet WB Yeats so revered. Enniscrone Golf Club is one of Ireland’s greatest links courses. Set in the scenic splendour of the sand dunes with
The 2019 Official Fáilte Ireland Golf Guide

WILD ATLANTIC WAY

breath-taking views overlooking Killala Bay, it is not to be missed. Strandhill is a links course with a terrific variety of challenging shots and dramatic scenery. The most famous Sligo course of the lot, however, is County Sligo Golf Club at Rosses Point, where Rory McIlroy won back-to-back West of Ireland Amateur titles as a teenager. There is something epic about the venue that kicks off the elite amateur season in Ireland, and each hole brings a new challenge as golfers navigate along the Atlantic and Benbulben Mountain.

Then we hit Donegal, named the “coolest place on the planet” by National Geographic. Let’s start with the rugged beauty that is Rosapenna Hotel and Golf Resort in north Donegal, which combines the old with the new - the Pat Ruddy designed Sandy Hills Links and the Old Tom Morris Links, created by Old Tom in the 19th century and updated in 1900s by the greatest players of the time, Harry Vardon and James Braid. Rosapenna Hotel is a four-star hotel with 65 bedrooms and extensive facilities. Recently added to resort was the Sandy Hills Links, designed by Pat Ruddy. Last year, the 2018 Irish Open was a tremendous success for Ballyliffin Golf Club, as Russell Knox was victorious in the Rolex Series event on the European Tour. The world was watching as the stunning views were broadcast of the two brilliant courses on site, the Glashedy and the Old Links, which was upgraded and re-opened by Nick Faldo in 2006.

Also in the north of this large county is Portsalon Golf Club, founded in 1891. Rated among the top 25 courses on the island by Golf Digest Ireland, the par 4 second is one of the world’s great holes with the 14th - named Matterhorn - not far behind. Undulating and eccentric holes means that this is a shotmaker’s paradise. Narin & Portnoo Golf Club, one of the most picturesque courses in Ireland, has sweeping views of Gweebarra Bay taking the breath away. Just north is the nine-hole Cruit Island, on a small inhabited island in the Rosses region, linked by bridge.

Head south and you will find County Donegal Golf Club, otherwise known as Murvagh, one of the great links courses, which has been described as the Muirfield of Ireland. Isolated from the outside world by a forest of evergreens, washed on one side by the great Atlantic Ocean and by Donegal Bay on the other, it is one of Darren Clarke’s favourite courses in the world.

A golfing pilgrimage awaits. Experience golf on the Wild Atlantic Way.

“The then we hit Donegal, named the “coolest place on the planet” by National Geographic.”
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3rd - 7th July 2019
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<td>96. Woodstock</td>
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For special offers go to [www.ireland.com/golf](http://www.ireland.com/golf)
Surrounded by the Atlantic, Tralee’s magnificent and challenging Arnold Palmer course offers incomparable views on all sides. Castles, distant islands, towering mountains and the beach that figured prominently in Ryan’s Daughter will captivate you.
Voted among the world’s top 10 ocean courses

Surrounded by the Atlantic, Tralee’s magnificent and challenging Arnold Palmer course offers incomparable views on all sides. Castles, distant islands, towering mountains and the beach that figured prominently in Ryan’s Daughter will captivate you.

For special offers and packages visit our website at www.traleegolfclub.com

Tel: +353 (0)66 713 6379   Email: info@traleegolfclub.com
**WILD ATLANTIC WAY**

### Ballyliffin Golf Club
Ballyliffin, Inishowen, Co Donegal

<table>
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<th>No. holes</th>
<th>Club shop</th>
<th>Practice Facilities</th>
<th>Club hire</th>
<th>Tuition</th>
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**Tel** 353 (0) 74 9176119  
**Email** info@ballyliffigolfclub.com  
**Web** www.ballyliffigolfclub.com  
**Course Links**  
**Length** 7,462 yards (Glashedy)  
             6,937 yards (Old Links)  
**Par** 72 Glashedy / 71 Old Links

Ballyliffin has two of the finest championship links courses in the world. The Old Links and Glashedy Links are set in stunning duneland overlooking the Atlantic Ocean. A majestic clubhouse offers fine dining and boasts the warmest welcome in golf. Visitors to Ballyliffin will always return for this unforgettable golfing experience. Open all year and visitors always welcome. Host Venue 2018 Dubai Duty Free Irish Open.

---

### Bantry Bay Golf Club
Bantry, Co. Cork

**Tel** 353 (0)27 50579  
**Email** info@bantrygolf.com  
**Web** www.bantrygolf.com

**Course** Parkland  
**Length** 6144 metres  
**Par** 71

Bantry Bay Golf Club is a truly beautiful and challenging 18 Hole Championship golf course. A parkland course with 14 holes immediately overlooking the sea. Designed by Christie O’Connor Junior and Eddie Hackett. The perfect combination of golf, nature and amazing views.

---

### Bearna Golf Club
Corboley, Bearna, Co Galway

**Tel** 353 (0)91 592677  
**Email** info@bearnagolfclub.com  
**Web** www.bearnagolfclub.com

**Course** Moorland  
**Length** 6,094  
**Par** 72

Located at the gateway to Connemara in the Gaeltacht, with commanding views of Galway Bay, the Burren and the Aran Islands, and only five miles from Galway city. Built on Connemara moorland with breathtaking views. Wonderful characteristics of gorse bushes, ditches, humps and bumps, twists and turns make for a thrilling round of golf. Mon- Thurs: B45 Friday: B55 Sat-Sun: €75 Buggy Hire: €40 Club Hire: €20.

---

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Philip Reid, Irish Times Sportswriter

Stand on the stunning coast of West Donegal... overlooking Gweebarra Bay... and take in the history...

“... We were caught off-guard by how beautiful the countryside is... how it translates from mountain to peat to links - and the rocky coast - and the ocean. Everything about it has been a revelation to our eyes. It’s just special. We’re really lucky to be here.”

Gil Hanse, Architect, Narin & Portnoo Links

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www.connemaragolflinks.com
Beaufort Golf Club
Churchtown

Tel 353 (0)646 644440
Email info@beaufortgc.com
Web www.beaufortgc.com
Course Parkland
Length 7007 metres
Par 71

Beaufort Golf Club is a superb 18 hole parkland championship golf course located just 10 minutes from Killarney Town on the Ring of Kerry road. It is a spectacular course in stunning surroundings and is enjoyable for all standards of golfers.

Bundoran Golf Club
Bundoran, Co Donegal

Tel 353 (0) 71 98 41302
Email info@bundorangolfclub.com
Web bundorangolfclub.com
Course Links
Length 5729 metres
Par 70

Bundoran GC, established 1894, is a challenging Par 70 cliff-top links on a scenic rugged headland overlooking Donegal Bay on the Wild Atlantic Way. A windy day may add to the challenge of this Harry Vardon designed Links. The Course is surrounded by the famous Roquey Walk. You may also see surfers and seals in the Bay.

Castleisland Golf Club
Doneen, Castleisland Co Kerry

Tel 353 (0) 66 714 1709
Email office@castleislandgc.com
Web www.castleislandgolfclub.com
Course Parkland
Length 6034 metres
Par 72

Castleisland Golf Course overlooking the N21 and its scenic views of the county make it the gateway golf course to Kerry. A parkland course built in 2001 on 200 acres to the highest championship standard with modern sand based greens and tees has matures into a gem of a golf course.
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Galway Golf Club, Blackrock, Salthill, Galway • Telephone 00 353 (0)91 522033 • Email: info@galwaygolf.com • Facebook: www.facebook.com/galwaygolfclub

Enjoy 27 holes of picturesque golf in a seaside setting.

With over 15 hotels locally, this beautiful course is perfect for a weekend or midweek getaway with friends or family.

The Dunes Championship Links at Enniscrone Golf Club is ranked #13 in Ireland Top 100 Courses by Golf Digest.

Lying in the bosom of Donegal Bay, this superb links occupies an elegant peninsula which is backed by the magnificent Bluestack Mountains by the North West Atlantic

You are invited to play on the links at

Enniscrone Golf Club

Tel: 353 (0)74 97 34054 | www.donegalgolfclub.ie
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Club Name</th>
<th>Course Details</th>
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<tr>
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<td>Tel: 353 (0)95 23502</td>
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<td>Email: <a href="mailto:info@connemaragolflinks.com">info@connemaragolflinks.com</a></td>
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<td>Web: <a href="http://www.connemaragolflinks.com">www.connemaragolflinks.com</a></td>
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The only Links course in Galway with 27 Championship holes along the rugged Connemara shoreline on the Wild Atlantic Way. Established in 1973, designed by Eddie Hackett, the course is a true links challenge with the most unique rocky landscape and breathtaking scenery. Voted Best Links Course in Connaught 2013, 2016 and 2018. Rates Online.

| Ceann Sibéal (Dingle) Golf Links  | No. holes: 18  |
|                                   | Club shop:     |
|                                   | Practice Facilities: |
|                                   | Club hire:     |
|                                   | Tuition:       |
|                                   | Food & Drink:  |
|                                   | Buggy hire:    |
| Ballyferriter, Dingle, Co. Kerry  | Length: 6,696 yards  |
| Tel: 353 (0)66 915 6255            | Par: 72        |
| Email: dinglec@iol.ie             |               |
| Web: www.dinglelinks.com          |               |

Founded in 1924, Dingle Golf Links moved to Ballyferriter in 1970. The course was designed by Eddie Hackett and Christy O’Connor Jnr. The townland of Ballyferriter occupies a very special and historic corner of Kerry. Each hole on this glorious links is carved from the natural landscape of one of the most unspoiled parts of Europe. Green fees: €75-€90.

| Donegal Golf Club                 | No. holes: 18  |
|                                   | Club shop:     |
|                                   | Practice Facilities: |
|                                   | Club hire:     |
|                                   | Tuition:       |
|                                   | Food & Drink:  |
|                                   | Buggy hire:    |
| Murvaghy, Laghey, Co Donegal      | Length: 6,349 metres  |
| Tel: 353 (0)74 973 4054           | Par: 73        |
| Email: info@donegalgolfclub.ie    |               |
| Web: www.donegalgolfclub.ie      |               |

Donegal Golf Club is an outstanding links golf course. Designed by the legendary course architect Eddie Hackett, it is continually featured in Golf World’s Top 100 courses in Ireland and Great Britain. We now feature an online availability facility and you can also view the course through our new virtual tours. Visitor welcome 7 days a week all year round.
“WHERE CHAMPIONS TREAD”

“WHERE GOLFERS EMBRACE PERFECTION”
Dromoland Golf Club
Newmarket on Fergus, Co Clare

Tel 353 (0) 61 368444
Email golf@dromoland.ie
Web www.dromolandgolf.com
Course Parkland
Length 6,240 metres
Par 72

20 minutes from Shannon Airport, this terrific parkland course is presided over by the incredible 16th century 5 star Dromoland Castle hotel. Redesigned by renowned architects Ron Kirby and J.B. Carr, the course sweeps through 410 acres of shady woodland, open pasture and feral lakes. A must-play for those visiting the West of Ireland.

Enniscrone Golf Club
Enniscrone, Co Sligo

Tel 353 96 36297
Email info@enniscronegolf.com
Web www.enniscronegolf.com
Course Links
Length 6,430 metres
Par 73

Established in 1918, Enniscrone Golf Links began as a nine hole course on a spectacular piece of links land near a picturesque seaside resort in County Sligo, Ireland. Today there are 27 holes of golf situated on a 400 acre promontory on Killala Bay and the Atlantic Ocean. A true links with spectacular dunes.

Galway Golf Club
Blackrock, Salthill, Galway

Tel 353 (0) 91 522033
Email info@galwaygolf.com
Web www.galwaygolf.com
Course Parkland
Length 5,974 metres
Par 72

Dooks Golf Club is one of the premier links courses in the South West of Ireland

Redesigned by Martin Hawtree in 2005 Dooks is situated only 30 minutes from Killarney and offers breath taking views of Dingle Bay

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A: Glenbeigh, Co. Kerry  T: +353 (0) 66 976 8205  E: office@dooks.com  W: www.dooks.com
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www.portsalongolfclub.com

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Paul McGinley

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Beaufort Golf Club
15.1 km 15 mins

Dooks Golf Club
35 km 35 mins

Ballybunion Golf Club
67 km 38 mins

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T: + 353 64 663 1158 E: INFO@KILLARNEYHEIGHTS.IE W: WWW.KILLARNEYHEIGHTS.IE
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**Killarney Golf & Fishing Club**  
Killarney, Co. Kerry  
Tel: 353 (0)64 663 1034  
Email: reservations@killarneygolfclub.ie  
Web: www.killarneygolfclub.ie  
Course: Parkland  
Length: (K) 7,249 yds, (MP) 6,780 yds  
Par: (K) 72, (MP) 72

Killarney Golf & Fishing Club is one of the oldest clubs in the country and the home of golf in Ireland. The two Championship courses, Killeen and Mahony’s Point, nestled amidst unrivalled lake and mountain scenery. Killeen has been a four-time host of the Irish Open, while Mahony’s is one of the most traditional layouts in the country. For green fee rates contact the club, or visit our website www.killarneygolfclub.ie.

**Lee Valley Golf Club**  
Clashanure, Ovens, Co. Cork  
Tel: 353 0 21 7331721  
Email: reservations@leevalleygccc.ie  
Web: www.leevalleygccc.ie  
Course: Parkland  
Length: 6,185 metres  
Par: 72

Located only 15 minutes from Cork city, Lee Valley Golf & Country Club is situated in one of the most beautiful parts of southern Ireland. Enjoy a game of golf around our picturesque, 18-hole Championship golf course, or get away from it all with a stay at one of our four star holiday homes.

**Letterkenny Golf Club**  
Barnhill, Letterkenny Co. Donegal  
Tel: 353 (0) 74 9121150  
Email: admin@letterkennygolfclub.com  
Web: www.letterkennygolfclub.com  
Course: Parkland  
Length: 6,282 metres  
Par: 72

The Premier parkland course in the North West with tree lined fairways, several lakes and scenic views of Lough Swilly. The signature hole Par 3 5th gives all golfers a challenge as well as the view of the Inishowen Hills in the background. Golfers can relax after their round in the Barnhill Bar & Grill.

**Narin & Portnoo Golf Club**  
Portnoo, Co. Donegal  
Tel: 353 (0)74 9545107  
Email: info@nandinportnoolinks.com  
Web: www.narinandportnoolinks.com  
Course: Links  
Length: 6,108 metres  
Par: 72

The Links is located on the Northwest coast of Ireland and in 2018 was purchased by a new owner who continues to upgrade all the facilities. Gil Hanse completed a redesign and 12 holes of the new layout will be in play by April 2019 while 18 holes will still be available for the season.

**Newcastle West Golf Club**  
Newcastle West, Co. Limerick  
Tel: 068 76500  
Email: info@newcastlewestgolf.com  
Web: www.newcastlewestgolf.com  
Course: Parkland  
Length: 6,451 metres  
Par: 71

This is a unique golf course, featuring strategic bunkering, water hazards and well designed risk and reward holes. The course is playable all year round and is maintained to the highest standards. The club house offers visitors the very finest of Irish hospitality and has earned the reputation as ‘Munster’s Friendliest Golf Club’.
Experience Championship Golf in an Unrivalled Setting

Visit Killarney Golf & Fishing Club and experience this slice of golfing heaven on the doorstep of one of the most popular towns in Europe. The Championship courses at Killarney have hosted multiple European Tour and Ladies European Tour events. They have undergone significant development in recent years ensuring a fantastic playing experience for golfers of all abilities. The friendly relaxed atmosphere, unrivalled setting and legendary après-golf make Killarney a unique and unmissable experience.

Visitors, societies and corporate events welcome. Limited Overseas Membership also available.
Old Head Golf Links
Old Head of Kinsale, Kinsale, Co Cork

Tel: 353 (0)21 4778444
Email: marketing@oldhead.com
Web: www.oldhead.com
Course: Links
Length: 5361 - 7149 yards
Par: 72

Located in County Cork on the South West Coast of Ireland, as the incredible brainchild of the late John O’Connor together with his brother Patrick, the Club has developed into one of the most recognised and sought after golf experiences anywhere on earth. Green fees: €350 high season, €200 low season.

Rosapenna Golf Resort
Downings, Letterkenny, Co Donegal

Tel: 00353 (0)74 915 5000
Email: golf@rosapenna.ie
Web: www.rosapenna.ie
Course: Links
Length: Old Tom Morris 6,901 yards, Sandy Hills 7,183 yards
Par: Old Tom Morris 71, Sandy Hills 72

The Rosapenna Hotel & Golf Resort is set alongside the beautiful Sheephaven Bay in North-West Donegal. The two championship links courses have the luxury hotel on site providing great value play & stay packages from March-October. The Old Tom Morris Links & Sandy Hills Links welcome visitors for green fee play seven days with online offers available on our website. Green Fees: see our website for all online offers.

Trump International Golf Links & Hotel, Doonbeg
Doonbeg, Co. Clare, Ireland

Tel: 00353 (65) 905 5600
Email: Doonbeg.Reservations@trumphotels.com
Web: www.trumpirelandhotel.com
Course: Links
Length: 7028 yards / 6,425 metres
Par: 72

The course follows nature along 1.5 miles of crescent-shaped beach and dunes, with ocean views from 16 of 18 holes and has recently been redesigned by Dr Martin Hawtree. With natural routing among dunes resulting in an uncommon combination of 5 par 3s and 5 par 5s. Variation in wind speed assures the course plays differently almost every day; most holes feature 5 or more tee locations to allow for a range of conditions and abilities.

Waterville Golf Links
Waterville, Co. Kerry

Tel: 353 (0) 66 9474102
Email: info@watervillegolflinks.ie
Web: www.watervillegolflinks.ie
Course: Links
Length: 7,365 yards
Par: 72

Mystical links on the roaring Atlantic. Founded in 1889 and ranked among the top three of Ireland and the top 100 in the world. Golf at Waterville is a mystical experience – the beauty of classic links land, surrounded by sea, yet forever challenged and shaped by the elements. Visitors and societies welcome. For accommodation, tee times, rates and reservations please contact the clubhouse.
Your home for golf in the North West of Ireland... & “A river runs through it...”

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Contact us today for more information:
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Tel: 00353 (0) 96 74472 Email: info@mountfalcon.com Web: www.mountfalcon.com
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Located on the north west coast of County Kerry, on a beautiful stretch of sand dunes overlooking the Atlantic Ocean, you’ll find two wonderfully challenging and unique links golf courses at Ballybunion - the Old Course and the Trent Jones Cashen Course.
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- Ballyliffin • Castlerock • Portstewart
- Royal Portrush • Ardglass

ASSOCIATED MEMBER CLUBS
- Galway Bay • Westport • Lough Erne • Portsalon

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<th>Website</th>
<th>Contact</th>
<th>Phone</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Abbeyfeale</td>
<td>Dromtreana Collins, Co Limerick</td>
<td><a href="http://www.abbeyfealegolfclub.com">www.abbeyfealegolfclub.com</a></td>
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<td>Castlerosse Hotel, Lakes of Killarney, Killarney, Co Kerry</td>
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<td><a href="mailto:golf@castletroygolfclub.ie">golf@castletroygolfclub.ie</a></td>
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Tel    353 (0)74 915 5586
Email  info@downingsbayhotel.com
Web    www.downingsbayhotel.com

Nestled on the banks of Sheephaven Bay lies the modern and relaxing Downings Bay Hotel. Offering 40 bedrooms, entertainment and dining all year round this family run hotel is the ideal base for your next golf trip. Nearby courses include Rosapenna Golf Resort, Portsalon GC and Ballyliffin GC. All packages include complimentary parking, wifi and leisure facilities.

Nearby Golf Courses: Rosapenna, Letterkenny, Portsalon, Dunfanaghy

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www.TrumpHotels.com/Ireland
Dromoland Castle
Newmarket on Fergus, Co. Clare

Tel +353 (0) 61 368 144
Email sales@dromoland.ie
Web www.dromoland.ie

On the Wild Atlantic Way, the 5 star Dromoland Castle is, quite simply, one of Ireland’s finest castle hotels. Offering guests the experience of living like royalty, surrounded by luxury, beauty and exceptional service. It’s the perfect Irish luxury retreat; with archery, falconry, a spa and a terrific 18 hole parkland golf course.

Nearby Golf Courses: Dromoland Castle, Lahinch Links, Doonbeg Links

Harvey’s Point
Lough Eske, Co. Donegal

Tel +353 74 9124369
Email stay@harveyspoint.com
Web www.harveyspoint.com

Located on the shores of Lough Eske, Harvey’s Point, is a luxurious hotel featuring the very best in accommodation to international standards, fine dining cuisine and traditional hospitality. Owned and managed by Swiss family Gysling, the hotel strives to become one of the leading hotels in Ireland. TripAdvisor’s NO1 hotel in Ireland 2013 -2017.

Nearby Golf Courses: Donegal Golf Club, Narin Portnoo, Sligo Golf Club

Killeen House Hotel
Aghadoe, Killarney, Co. Kerry

Tel 353 (0) 64 663 1711
Email charming@indigo.ie
Web www.killeenhousehotel.com

A charming 23 bedroom country house Hotel, famed for its superb food, its superb service and the superb water pressure in its showers. Beautifully located just 4 miles outside of Killarney, Ireland’s premier Tourism centre. Also home to the only Pub in the world that accepts golf balls as Legal Tender. We kid you not!

Nearby Golf Courses: Killarne, Ballybunion, Waterville, Tralee, Dooks
Set within the picturesque Sheephaven Bay, Rosapenna is the ideal venue for your golfing break with two of Ireland’s finest links just a 7 iron from the hotel. Relax with an afternoon stroll on the famed Tramore Beach just minutes from your bedroom. Both championship links are ranked inside Golf Digest Ireland’s Top 50 in the country and the Sandy Hills Links was recently ranked No.44 in the 2019/20 Golf Monthly Top 100 UK & Ireland list, the 11th ranked Irish course.

Luxury hotel on site providing exclusive golf & accommodation packages for couples, four balls and larger groups

Rosapenna - Ireland’s Home of Golf
Lahinch Coast Hotel
Lahinch, Co. Clare

Tel  353 (0) 65 7081100
Email info@lahinchcoasthotel.ie
Web www.lahinchcoasthotel.ie

Take a stroll to Lahinch’s famous beach & renowned Lahinch Golf Club hosting the 2019 Dubai Duty Free Irish Open. Accommodation includes Deluxe rooms and one or two bedroom suites. Dining options include Restaurant, Bar & Café. Swimming pool and gym. Perfect for golf enthusiasts, couples and families. Cliffs of Moher and Aran Islands nearby.

Nearby Golf Courses:
Lahinch Golf Club
Trump International Doonbeg

Meadowlands Hotel
Tralee, Co. Kerry

Tel  +353 (0)66 718 0444
Email info@meadowlandshotel.com
Web www.meadowlandshotel.com

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Situuated on beautiful private gardens, the Meadowlands Hotel is a traditional hotel with a contemporary & stylish design on the Wild Atlantic Way and amidst Kerry’s finest golf courses. The Gaeltacht family run hotel offers comfort, culture and a friendly welcome! Golfers Rates, Dry Roomy/Storage, Bar & Restaurant

Nearby Golf Courses:
Tralee Docks, Killarney, Beaufort, Killorglin

Muckross Park Hotel & Spa
Muckross, Killarney, Co. Kerry

Tel  353 (0) 64 662 3400
Email reservations@muckrosspark.com
Web www.muckrosspark.com

Muckross Park Hotel & Spa is a 5 star hotel in Killarney National Park. 70 deluxe bedrooms and suites with onsite facilities including 2 bars, Yew Tree Restaurant and The Spa at Muckross. Shuttle service and bike hire included. Self-catering apartments available. Close to great golf courses in County Kerry.

Nearby Golf Courses:
Killarney Golf & Fishing Club
Old Ground Hotel  
Ennis, County Clare

Tel  +353 65 6828127  
Email reservations@oldgroundhotel.ie  
Web  www.flynnhotels.com

The Old Ground Hotel developed from an historic manor house into a luxurious 4★ hotel with many elegant features and ultra comfortable bedrooms. Superb food is served in the Brendan O’Regan Room and the Town Hall Bistro. Traditional Irish music is very popular in the Poet’s Bar where many locals will share a story.

Nearby Golf Courses: Doonbeg, Lahinch Woodstock Ennis Shannon East Clare

Quinlan & Cooke  
3 Main Street, Cahersiveen, Ring of Kerry

Tel  +353 66 947 2244  
Email hello@qc.ie  
Web  www.qc.ie

Winner of the ITGOA Boutique Golf Hotel of the Year 2017. When you are playing the finest links courses in Ireland, such as Waterville or Dooks, then you deserve to stay in the finest boutique townhouse in Kerry. QC’s guests can unwind in luxury rooms, all individually decorated in a unique and quirky style.

Nearby Golf Courses: Waterville, Dooks, Skellig Bay, Ring of Kerry

Salthill Hotel  
Promenade, Salthill, Co Galway

Tel  353 (0) 91 522711  
Email reservations@salthillhotel.com  
Web  www.salthillhotel.com

Salthill Hotel is renowned as one of Galway’s premier hotels providing the perfect venue for leisure breaks and golf breaks. The Clare Hills and world famous promenade provides a spectacular backdrop to the hotel with stunning sea views. The hotel has 161 bedrooms, many of which have exquisite sea views, two restaurants, one bar and two swimming pools to choose from.

Nearby Golf Courses: Galway, Bearná
Shandon Hotel & Spa
Portnablagh, Dunfanaghy, Donegal

Tel  00353 (0) 749136137
Email  info@shandonhotelspa.com
Web  www.shandonhotelspa.com

Newly opened 4 star resort right on the Wild Atlantic Way Donegal with unrivalled views over Sheephaven Bay. Luxury, award winning spa and within walking distance of Marble Hill Beach. Perfect base location to explore Donegal's finest Gold Courses.

Nearby Golf Courses: Dunfanaghy, Rosapenna, Portsalon & Letterkenny

Sligo Park Hotel & Leisure Club
Pearse Road, Sligo

Tel  +353 71 919 0400
Email  sligo@leehotels.com
Web  www.sligopark.com

Located on the Wild Atlantic Way just on the edge of Sligo Town the luxurious 4 star Sligo Park Hotel is set in quiet Parkland. This contemporary style Hotel Boasts 135 spacious, comfortable bedrooms. The Hotel has an AA Rosette award winning Restaurany, also a new state of the art Leisure Club with natural light streaming into the Swimming Pool and Jacuzzi.

Nearby Golf Courses: Rosses Point Golf Club, Strandhill Golf Club & Enniscrone Golf Club

The Brehon & Angsana Spa
Killarney

Tel  353 (0)64 6630700
Email  info@thebrehon.com
Web  www.thebrehon.com

The Brehon is a luxurious 4 star hotel in beautiful Killarney. The boutique style rooms vary in design. Choose from deluxe bedrooms, superior bedrooms or suites. Unwind after a day’s golf with complimentary relaxation time in the Vitality Suite of the Angsana Spa, followed by dinner in the award winning Danú Restaurant.

Nearby Golf Courses: Killarney, Waterville, Ballybunion, Tralee, Dooks
Scotts Hotel is a luxury 4-Star deluxe Killarney town centre hotel, combining contemporary luxury and service in the heart of Killarney Town.

With 125 bedrooms, we offer guests a variety of extravagantly designed bedrooms, deluxe suites and plush self-catering apartments. Scotts has a lively traditional bar that host music 7 nights a week over the summer months. Nearby Golf Courses: Killarney Golf & Fishing Club, Dooks Golf Club.

Tel 064 663 1060 | info@scottshotelkillarney.com | Scotts Street, Killarney

www.scottshotelkillarney.com

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**Great Southern Killarney**  
East Avenue Rd, Killarney, Co. Kerry, V93 R866  
Tel  353 (0)64 665 8000  
Email  info@greatsouthernkillarney.com  
Web  www.greatsouthernkillarney.com

Killarney's premier historic hotel, established in 1854, The Great Southern is a stunning Victorian hotel situated on six acres of gardens in the heart of Killarney. Great Southern combines old world charm with luxurious modern facilities and is renowned for its wonderful food, attentive service and comfortable surroundings. Winner of IGTOA Large Golf Hotel of the Year for 2018.

**Nearby Golf Courses:**  
Killarney, Ballybunion, Dooks, Tralee and Waterville

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**The Red Door Country House**  
Fahan, Inishowen, Co. Donegal  
Tel  353 (0)74 93 60289  
Email  info@thereddoor.ie  
Web  www.thereddoor.ie

17th Century Country House located on the banks of Lough Swilly along the Wild Atlantic Way. 20 minutes from Ballyliffin, home of the Irish Open 2018.
- Award-winning evening dining,  
- Afternoon Tea and Sunday Lunch  
- 4 individually decorated bedrooms  
- Intimate wedding venue

**Nearby Golf Courses:**  
North West, Ballyliffin, Buncrana

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**The Rose Hotel**  
Tralee, Kerry  
Tel  353 (0) 66 7199100  
Email  reservations@therosehotel.com  
Web  www.therosehotel.com

The Rose Hotel is a four-star hotel located in Tralee, close to the town centre with the backdrop of the Slieve Mish Mountains. We have 161 spacious bedrooms, choose from classic, executive or deluxe rooms. Relax in Dott's Bar after a great day's golf, enjoy a variety of whiskies, cocktails and delicious food menu. We also have two restaurants, Spa, Gym & Drying Room.

**Nearby Golf Courses:**  
Tralee, Ballybunion, Dooks, Killarney, Waterville

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**The Smugglers Inn**  
Waterville, Co. Kerry  
Tel  353 (0)66 9474330  
Email  info@thesmugglersinn.ie  
Web  www.thesmugglersinn.ie

Restored Farmhouse with 180 years history situated on 2km sandy beach on the famous Ring of Kerry. Comfortable en-suite rooms with TV, hairdryer, tea/coffee, free WiFi. Award winning gourmet restaurant, with ocean views overlooking Ballinskelligs Bay, serving Modern Irish & Continental cuisine, specialising in fresh seafood & local produce. Fully licenced bar serving bar food.

**Nearby Golf Courses:**  
Waterville Golf Links Hogs Head Golf Club
The Killeen House has been owned and personally managed by Michael & Geraldine Rosney since 1992.

In that time, their charming little hotel has become a home from home for many repeat guests from all over the world.

With just 23 bedrooms, the property is beautifully set in an acre of its own manicured gardens, and less than a 10 minute drive from the centre of Ireland's most vibrant town, Killarney.

The Killeen House is home to Rozzers Restaurant, acknowledged to be one of the finest dining experiences in the Kerry region.

Complimentary car-parking, and complimentary wifi throughout the building are just two more great reasons to choose the Killeen House for your Irish vacation.

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www.killeenhousehotel.com
Tales of the unexpected
Sometimes the truth is stranger than fiction

By Dermot Gilleece

When Jan Blomqvist was a highly ambitious coach to the developing Swedish national golf team, he would remark with more than a little envy on Ireland’s great tradition in the game. “That’s the one, key ingredient our players are missing,” he observed, more than 30 years ago. “We’ve got to build our own tradition.”

It certainly would be difficult to imagine a scene in the Baltic Sea, comparable to the sort of activity observed off the coast of west Cork, early in the last century. That was when, rather than relying on a nod and a wink, golf club activity was organised by semaphore (flag signals). Indeed players were expected to be ready for play inside 24 hours notice, back in 1902 at Castletown Berehaven.

Details of this extraordinary venture, appeared in “The Irish Tourist” magazine in 1902. Known as the Atlantic Fleet Golf Club, the nine-hole layout on Bere Island was described elsewhere as being “most inaccessible, except for residents and members of the Fleet.”

“The Irish Tourist” reported:
“Castletown Berehaven is now becoming an important naval station and is destined to become a harbour and refuge, second only to Portsmouth. Owing to the high pressure at which our naval staff are kept working when on the high seas, it is found necessary to run into some convenient harbour for recreation purposes.

“Not very long ago, 10 war ships ran into Castletown for this object, and it was resolved to form a golf club and that a match should be played at two o’clock the next day. After coming to anchor, accordingly, a committee was formed by signal and called together immediately, comprising an officer from each vessel.

“Within 15 minutes, the committee had met and sent ashore a sub-committee to survey, select and obtain a suitable site for a nine-hole course. This was done within the space of an hour or so; Jack tars were then told off, each ship providing a battalion to tackle and finish, fit to play, one green and teeing ground.

The report went on: “The result was evidently satisfactory and play was begun at two o’clock precisely as resolved at the meeting held at 12 o’clock the day previous. This is a record performance in the way of establishing a golf club and it is interesting to know that this club is in a thriving state, supported almost entirely by naval officers.

It concluded: “The small farmer who provided the ground on which the links were made, has dropped agriculture and, instead, has built an iron pavilion, become greenkeeper and caterer and is now thriving better at this occupation than he did at farming.”

In informing its readers about the Royal Naval Club, Berehaven, “The Irish Golfing Guide” of 1916 reported: “There are nine holes which have been laid out within the past few years, three miles to the east of Castletown.

Formerly, the club existed as the Atlantic Fleet Club and had a nine-hole course on Bere Island.” Affiliated to the Golfing Union of Ireland in 1939, Berehaven GC lasted about 40 years before becoming defunct.

This is part of the tradition which enhances golfing activity on this island. In fact by its very nature, golf has been the source of some decidedly rum occurrences since it began to grow in popularity here during the closing decades of the 19th century.

As it happened, west Cork had become noted for other, less wholesome activities...
prior to the arrival of the royal and ancient game. A century further back, Bullen's Bay, at the landward end of The Old Head promontory, got its name from a local family notorious for lucrative smuggling activities, mostly involving tea, tobacco and spirits, especially brandy, on which no tax was paid.

We’re informed that the smuggled goods were sourced from Lorient and Roscoff in Brittany and Guernsey in the Channel Islands and were unloaded onto smaller boats in Bullen's Bay. Most of the goods were moved on to Kinsale and to the city of Cork. Indeed there was such popular support for smuggling that a customs informer was beaten to death by a mob in Kinsale in 1735. Happily, the promontory is now known for the quality of a golf course that is widely regarded as the most spectacular in the world.

Around 180 miles to the north, a charming house called “The Chalet” on the fashionable Grove Road in Malahide, was the abode of Major Duff Gillespie. He played golf left-handed; had a notoriously brittle temperament and was captain of Malahide Golf Club in 1910.

It was claimed that the major was once heard threatening to shoot a skylark because its singing was distracting him while he lined up a tricky putt. And given his background in the British military, it was also considered no surprise that the bold major should have been instrumental in having a certain John Dolan sacked from Findlaters for being a member of the Volunteers.

It so happened that when Major Gillespie went to play golf at The Island GC, where he was also a member, he would bring his little terrier with him. It seems that the dog roamed freely among the sand dunes, as little terriers are wont to do, while the major concentrated on life's more important matters.

One day, shortly after the Dolan sacking, two local lads caught the little dog and painted him green, white and orange, before leaving him waiting at the boat slip for the major's return. Though his reaction on seeing the coloured canine is not recorded, we understand that Duff Gillespie was the very model of a galloping major as he set off in search of the culprits.

Though we’re told that he did so with some enthusiasm, it seems that the mischievous locals were never caught.

Castletown Berehaven is coming an naval station estined to harbour and second only tsmouth.
Meanwhile, mischief of an unworldly nature has long been associated with the Galgorm Castle GC in Ballymena, Co Antrim. In fact locals believe that Dr Alexander Colvill of the Brooke family who inhabited the castle, outwitted the devil himself. The story goes that having agreed to sell his soul for a bootful of gold, the wily alchemist humbugged the devil by cutting the heel off the leather boot strategically placed over a hole in the floor, so that the coins fell into the room below.

The devil, apparently, was so ashamed at being outwitted by Dr Colvill, that he quit the castle “very quietly and never has set foot in Galgorm since.” In his place, albeit three centuries on, the estate acquired a golf facility that enthusiasts from near and far, welcomed as heaven-sent.

Then there were the strange happenings around Binion Bay, close to Ballyliffin GC on Donegal’s Inishowen Peninsula. Locals will tell tales of sinister happenings involving ghosts and it is said that the unwary traveller could meet a mermaid on Binion sands. And it is believed that long dead souls come and go on lonely paths around the beach.

It is also said that a piper entered Poll an Phoibaire (The Piper’s Cave), which some believe has no end, playing a special air, ‘Girls will be old women before I return.’ And that was the last that was ever heard of him, though you can still hear music on the breeze when the fairies rest on Glashedy Island.

Back in the modern world, manic motorists returning from Carlow to Dublin, had cause to be on the lookout for gardaí, long before the M7 and M9 motorways were built. Indeed the activities of one such driver significantly increased the
loss incurred by Carlow GC, when Gene Sarazen, one of the many great practitioners to grace Irish terrain, played Joe Kirkwood in an exhibition there on July 15th, 1934.

Part of the Sarazen deal was that the club would hire a taxi from Doyle's of Bachelor's Walk, Dublin, to drive the players there and back, at a cost of three guineas (about £4.20 in today's money). The final bill was somewhat higher, however, due to the fact that the taxi driver, a certain D Hunt, was fined £5 for dangerous driving, having been stopped by Gardai on the return journey.

On appeal, the fine was later reduced on appeal to £1, which the club were obliged to pay along with legal costs of six shillings and eight pence. All of which had to be added to an official loss on the exhibition of £17.15s.

In 1997, Jean Kennedy Smith was US ambassador to this country when I happened to attend an early-morning media gathering at Iveagh House in Dublin. Though it had to do essentially with the impending Columbia Space Shuttle mission, there was a fascinating golfing dimension.

We were informed that through the influence of Paddy O'Looney, a pennant would be carried on board by astronaut Lt Col Jim Halsell, incorporating the logos of nine Irish golf clubs in the south-west region. Which was typical of the sort of exposure achieved by Paddy O'Looney, the former chief executive of SWING, based in Tralee.

One imagines that Sweden's Jan would have been rightly envious and even further daunted, if he learned that Ireland's golfing tradition had extended all the way into space.

Then there were the strange happenings around Binion Bay, close to Ballyliffin GC on Donegal's Inishowen Peninsula. Locals will tell tales of sinister happenings involving ghosts.
The world will be watching Northern Ireland this year as major golf comes to Royal Portrush in July, but casual onlookers may be surprised to learn that is only a small sample of what the region has to offer.

This year shall be a special year for golf in Northern Ireland. The Open Championship returns to these shores for the first time in almost 70 years, when Royal Portrush hosts the major tournament from July 18-21. The eagerly anticipated return of The Open to Royal Portrush is sure to become one of the highlights of the Championship’s long and illustrious history. An event you won’t want to miss, only three hours from Dublin. The historic return of The Open is set to attract an audience in excess of 190,000 spectators to the region and images of the Championship will be...
ROYAL PORTRUSH GOLF CLUB
NORTHERN IRELAND
beamed into an estimated 600 million homes worldwide.

Geographically Northern Ireland is not huge, but it is a giant in terms of golf. From the dedicated golfer to the first timer, Northern Ireland offers new places, new stories and new experiences to last a lifetime. Evidence lies scattered across the landscape, from the course at Royal County Down being voted number one in the world to world-renowned professionals whose origins lie in all corners. Therefore, it’s not just the fans who are excitedly awaiting the return of The Open – the local players are looking forward to seeing it back on home turf.

Founded in 1898 with two 18-hole courses, Royal Portrush Golf Club’s celebrated Dunluce Links was redesigned by Harry Colt in 1932 and has hosted the Open once before, in 1951, when Max Faulkner won. Its 17th and 18th holes have been replaced by spectacular new 7th and 8th holes, borrowed from an area of duneland spanned by two holes of its sister Valley course, to allow for the spectator village area at the 2019 Open. The new holes opened for play to critical acclaim in June 2017. Other tournaments it has hosted include the Irish Open four times and the Senior British Open six times.

Royal Portrush also offers the par-70 Valley course. It may not have the royal monicker, but Portstewart Golf Club, just 15 minutes from Royal Portrush, has 54 holes of links golf and boasts one of Ireland’s most modern clubhouses, completed in 2009. Its Strand Course, venue for the 2017 Dubai Duty Free Irish Open, is set amidst towering dunes between the Atlantic and the River Bann and its opening hole is regarded by many as the best in Ireland.

Beyond capital Belfast’s five parkland beauties there’s a wealth of inland courses for golfers to play throughout the region. There are three golf resorts in Northern Ireland, all of them offering extensive golf facilities as well as accommodation, bars, restaurants, recreational activities – and full-service spas with massage treatments, to help ease those aching muscles after a round or prepare the body for the next golfing foray.

Lough Erne Resort opened in 2010 and has 120 rooms, suites and loughside lodges. Its Thai Spa offers a dual treatment room ideal for couples, with treatments including a two-hour Golfers Tonic massage. The resort’s Catalina Restaurant is named after the World War II flying boats that were based on Lough Erne. Lough Erne Resort welcomed world leaders including Barack Obama, Vladimir Putin, Angela Merkel and David Cameron when it hosted the G8 summit in 2013. Roe Park Resort lies in the beautiful surroundings of the Roe Valley Country Park. Facilities also include an academy and high-tech indoor teaching studio.

Formerly a stately country house dating to 1729, Roe Park Resort’s four-star hotel opened in 1995 and offers 118 rooms and suites, two restaurants, including its restored 18th century Coach House, and a spa that is a teaching academy for Elemis. The resort offers a Couples Escape package that includes dinner, bed and breakfast plus
a mud skin treatment for two followed by a couples massage.

Although not connected, Galgorm Resort & Spa is close by for those playing golf at Galgorm Castle Golf Club and it features a new riverside Thermal Village. A couple’s package includes bubbly and truffles on arrival, use of the Thermal Village and a Deluxe Duo treatment, with optional four-course meal and a cocktail or glass of wine. The hotel, which hosted the World Luxury Spa & Restaurant Awards in July, has opened a new 150-seat barbecue smokehouse restaurant, the Castle Kitchen Bar, at Galgorm Castle Golf Club in a £600,000 investment. It also features a 60-seat balcony terrace providing alfresco dining with views across the castle grounds and golf course.

Galgorm Castle Golf Club is laid out through mature wooded grounds in the heart of the 220-acre Galgorm Castle Estate, alongside its 17th century castle, and stages the annual Northern Ireland Open, part of the European Tour’s Challenge Tour. More than 40,000 people watched the free-to-enter tournament in 2017, a record for the tour.

From Kilkeel to Massereene, from Newtownstewart to Tandagree, there is something for every golfer in almost every pocket of Northern Ireland. Darren Clarke’s home club, Dungannon Golf Club, has a restaurant was named regional and overall restaurant of the year for Northern Ireland in the 2016 Food Awards Northern Ireland, winning the regional category for County Tyrone again in 2017.

Several excellent seaside courses lie in the shadows of renowned venues. Just around the coast from the celebrated Royal County Down, the short but spectacular Ardglass Golf Club links hugs the rocky shore and cliffs, with several holes offering views across the bay to Coney Island. Golfers can enjoy the craic after their round in the bar of the oldest clubhouse in the world, originally built as a castle over 600 years ago and with cannons pointing out over the fairways just in front.

Kirkistown Castle Golf Club, on the Ards Peninsula, is the closest links course to Belfast and was designed by legendary architect James Braid, while Ballycastle Golf Club, a mix of parkland and links, lies opposite Rathlin Island on the Causeway Coast alongside the ruins of 500-year-old Bonamargy Friary.

In the region’s capital, Belfast, few cities offer such a choice of quality golf courses on its doorstep as Northern Ireland’s capital.
centre. That makes a short break in the city combining golf, sightseeing and soaking up the sounds, culture, nightlife and culinary scene a very attractive proposition. And when the golf is done, enjoy the nightlife of a once-troubled city that has been transformed in little more than a decade and is now one of Europe’s friendliest, most vibrant and most cosmopolitan cities.

It is just as lively during the week as on weekends. Belfast’s golf is very close to the city’s heartbeat. Just three miles (5km) from its centre, Belvoir Park Golf Club is the nearest course to the city. Yet golfers feel a world away from the metropolis, both on its fairways, edged by large trees, and the aptly-named restaurant and bar of its modern clubhouse, The View, looking out across the course to the Black Mountains, complete with outdoor terrace.

Malone Golf Club, only five miles (8km) from the city centre, lies in 330 acres of mature wooded parkland on the Ballydrain Estate and its clubhouse – the 200-year-old former manor house – is reached via a tree-lined drive. Comprising three nine-hole layouts, two of them forming its championship 18 course with the other including junior tees, its centrepiece is a 27-acre lake that comes into play on four of its closing holes.

The club hosted the Irish Senior Championship in 2017. Northern Ireland’s oldest royal club, the Royal Belfast Golf Club, lies alongside Belfast Lough, the main seaway into the city’s harbour. Seven holes look over the lough, the 9th green and 10th fairway playing next to it. The course is popular with golfing passengers from the cruise ships that regularly visit Belfast Harbour and it hosted the 2017 Ladies’ Senior British Open Amateur Championship. Shandon Park’s modern clubhouse has one of the liveliest atmospheres of Belfast’s golf clubs, thanks in part to its many nongolfing social members as leafy Shandon Park suburb has no other drinking or dining establishments. Its course is short but it produced a mercurial champion in Rory McIlroy, the young McIlroy honing his skills on Holywood’s hilly fairways and greens. Rory is still a member, as is his father, and he often drops in to see old friends when he is back in Northern Ireland.

Away from the fairways, the striking £77 million Titanic Belfast attraction, which opened in 2012, a century after the RMS Titanic hit an iceberg on its maiden voyage and sank, was named the world’s leading tourist attraction at the World Travel Awards in December 2016. Other options include Belfast City Hall for its exhibition charting the history of the city, a tour of the once-infamous Crumlin Road Gaol, now a tourist attraction documenting its 150-year history, and a tour of the city’s powerful political and historical street-art murals, some framed by the towering, landmark gantry cranes of the Harland and Wolff shipyard, known as Samson and Goliath. The city offers excellent shopping, and there are fantastic wining and dining options, especially in Belfast’s city-centre Cathedral Quarter, which is eminently walkable as is the adjacent Linen Quarter, regarded as one of its most exciting up and coming areas.

From bistros and gourmet coffee bars to gastro pubs, Belfast has it all. Besides being perfect for a golfing city break, Belfast can also be a base for playing golf in other parts of Northern Ireland. Royal County Down is less than an hour away and 2019 Open Championship host Royal Portrush is barely more than an hour’s drive, with other courses also within easy reach. One thing’s for sure: a golfing visit to Northern Ireland will leave titanic memories.
## A-Z Golf Courses in Northern Ireland

1. Antrim  
2. Ardglass  
3. Ardminnan  
4. Ashfield  
5. Aughnacloy  
6. Ballycastle  
7. Ballyclare  
8. Ballymena  
9. Balmoral  
10. Banbridge  
11. Bangor  
12. Belvoir Park  
13. Blackwood  
14. Bright Castle  
15. Brown Trout  
16. Bushfoot  
17. Cairndhu  
18. Carnalea  
19. Carrickfergus  
20. Castle Hume  
21. Castlereagh Hills  
22. Castlerock  
23. City of Belfast  
24. City of Derry  
25. Clandeboyce  
26. Clogher Valley  
27. Cloverhill  
28. Co Armagh  
29. Crossgar  
30. Cushendal  
31. Donaghaddee  
32. Down Royal  
33. Downpatrick  
34. Dungannon  
35. Dunmurry  
36. Edenmore  
37. Enniskillen  
38. Faughan Valley  
39. Fintona  
40. Fortwilliam  
41. Foyle  
42. Galgorm Castle  
43. Gracehill  
44. Greenacres  
45. Greenisland  
46. Helen’s Bay  
47. Hilton  
48. Templepatrick  
49. Holywood  
50. Kilkeel  
51. Kilrea  
52. Kirkistown Castle  
53. Knock  
54. Lambed  
55. Lame  
56. Lisburn  
57. Lough Erne  
58. Loughgall  
59. Lurgan  
60. Mahee Island  
61. Malone  
62. Manor  
63. Massereene  
64. Mayobridge  
65. Mount Ober  
66. Moyola Park  
67. Newtownstewart  
68. Omagh  
69. Ormeau  
70. Portadown  
71. Portstewart  
72. Rathmore  
73. Rockmount  
74. Roe Park  
75. Royal Belfast  
76. Royal Co Down  
77. Royal Portrush  
78. Scrabo  
79. Shandon Park  
80. Silverwood  
81. Spa  
82. Strabane  
83. Tandragee  
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86. Warrenpoint  
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Legend has it that this area of 40,000 interlocking basalt columns was built by an Irish giant Fionn Mac Cumhaill. The result of an ancient volcanic eruption, this is one of Ireland’s most popular tourist attractions. So popular Lonely Planet has named Belfast and the Causeway Coast 2019’s number one region to visit.
www.giantscausewayofficialguide.com

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www.nationaltrust.org.uk/carrick-a-rede

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This Global Geopark features a series of natural limestone caves located in County Fermanagh. Journey underground and prepare to be awe inspired. Visitors are guided through a fascinating natural underworld of rivers, waterfalls, winding passages and lofty chambers.
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DERRY
There are very few completely walled cities left in Europe and even fewer in such great condition. The Derry-Londonderry walls are a 400-year-old treasure you can explore on a brilliant walking tour. You’ll follow the old fortifications around the city centre, hear all about their history and even see all the original cannons used in 17th Century sieges.
thederrywalls.com

OLD BUSHMILLS DISTILLERY
CO. ANTRIM
One of the most popular spots along the Antrim Coast is the village of Bushmills, site of the world’s oldest (legal) distillery. The whiskey is made with Irish barley and water from St Columb’s Rill, a tributary of the River Bush, and matured in oak barrels.
www.bushmills.com

BLACK TAXI TOUR
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West Belfast, the neighbourhood that for three decades was at the heart of the conflict known as ‘the Troubles,’ is now perfectly safe to visit, and the best way to do so is on a black taxi tour. The cabs visit the more spectacular murals as well as the Peace Line (where you can write a message on the wall) and other significant sites.
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Ballycastle Golf Club sits on the shoreline of the spectacular Causeway Coast in County Antrim. The course has a multitude of personalities and offers both wild links and tame parkland holes. The back nine launches you up into the seaside hills that command panoramic views of Fairhead, Rathlin Island and on a clear day Scotland.

Belvoir Park Golf Club, a classic links course set on the North Coast of Ireland. The Mussenden Course is an 18 hole championship course designed by legendary club maker Ben Sayers and Harry Colt, which is a real test of golf! The Bann Course, situated on the banks of the river Bann and is a great 9 hole course designed by American Professional Harvey Penick.

Kirkistown Castle is the only “links” golf course in Ireland designed by the legendary James Braid. It has a tremendous variety of holes with some elevated greens and tees making perfect use of two hillocks at either end of the course. Visitors are assured of a very warm welcome, a challenging but very enjoyable golfing experience and unsurpassable value for money for a true links golf experience. Green fees: From £35.

Malone Golf Club is a fine championship course situated on 330 acres of wooded parkland. Its 27 holes of secluded parkland countryside is just five miles from Belfast City centre. The centre piece of the course is the beautiful natural trout lake which extends across some 27 acres. The course is a real challenge for all levels of golfer. Green fees: from £20–£85.

Lough Erne Resort is Northern Ireland’s luxury five-star resort featuring two championship golf courses, including The Faldo Course measuring 7,071 yards, Par 72 and designed by Sir Nick Faldo. Exceptional dining experiences can be enjoyed by Executive Chef Noel McMeel and his culinary team or why not pamper your senses in The Thai Spa?

Nearby Golf Courses: Murvagh, Rosses Point, Strandhill, Slieve Russell.

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CASTLEROCK GOLF CLUB

Castlerock Golf Club is a classic links course set amid the towering dunes on the North Coast of Ireland. Situated on the causeway coast it not only boasts some stunning views down the coastline but proves a great test of traditional links golf. The club formed in 1901 boasts two golf courses onsite, firstly The Mussenden Course which is an 18 hole championship course and rated in the top five courses in Ireland. The course designed by legendary club maker Ben Sayers and Harry Colt is a great test of golf to golfers of any level. To the testament of the course it has held many National Championships both Amateur and Professional.

The Bann Course is situated on the banks of the river Bann and is a testing 9 hole course. Don’t let the fact that there is only 9 holes fool you, it is every bit of a test as its partner. With 3 restaurants an extensive wine list there is certainly no better destination to relax and enjoy some of the finest Irish Hospitality.

TEL: - 028 7084 8314 WEB: - WWW.CASTLEROCKGC.CO.UK
Experience golf on the North Coast like you have never experienced it before with the Causeway Coast Golf Tournament. For 2019 the organisers are pleased to announce return of Bushmills Irish Whiskey as the event sponsor.

A golfing summer extravaganza, the five-day Causeway Coast Golf Tournament takes place over four wonderful courses on the glorious Causeway Coast, surrounding the World Heritage Site of the Giant’s Causeway in Northern Ireland.

The largest amateur tournament in Europe, it has been running successfully ever since 1967. A highlight of the golfing calendar, it has attracted over 1,000 golfers from all over the world in the past. The competition is popular, not only with Irish golfers, but players from mainland UK, Canada, USA, Scandinavia and continental Europe.

Taking place in the middle of the summer, from 3-7 June 2019, golfer will take on four links classics in Castlerock Golf Club (Mussenden Links), Ballyliffin Golf Club (Old Course) and Ballycastle Golf Club (The Warren Links) and North West Golf Club.

It comes at a special time for the North Coast of Ireland, the world will be watching in 2019, when Royal Portrush hosts the Open Championship, the first major championship to hit these shores in almost 70 years. Alas this will mean a change for The Causeway Coast Event as the Valley Course at Royal Portrush will be unavailable in 2019 so the organisers have introduced North West Golf Club to the course rota.

The Mussenden Links at Castlerock Golf Club is set among rolling sand dunes, where its scenic qualities embrace the River Bann flowing out to the Atlantic. Another top-class links that has been played by the best, there are eye-catching views of Donegal and the Isle of Islay towards Scotland.

The Warren Links at Ballycastle is situated in an ‘Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty’ on the North Antrim coast, and offers a part links, part parkland course. It is a spectacular stretch of coastline, with panoramic views of the like Mull of Kintyre, Rathlin Island and Ballycastle Bay, which mixes flat, low-lying holes with seaside classics.

The Old Course at Ballyliffin has had the input of one of golf’s greatest champions, Nick Faldo, all over it on this stunning 36-hole facility in Donegal. The Old Links undulates in the glory of its natural terrain, presenting a golf course that is considered among the top 20 best courses in Ireland, according to Golf Digest.

Situated on the shore of Lough Swilly in County Donegal, on the Wild Atlantic Way, The North West Golf Club has been described as the St Andrews of Ireland. The North West is a challenging course that offers breath taking views, fantastic hospitality and will require everything you have in the bag. This hidden gem in the rugged North West of Ireland is surely not to be missed.
The quality of the courses speak for themselves, but it also offers another chance to visit the Causeway Coastal Route. Walking tours provide the opportunity to see the causeway coast on foot, while Coasteering with Aquaholics allow you to catch the sights of the coast – Dunluce Castle, Portrush beaches and more – in a highspeed boat.

With the Causeway Coast Foodie Tours, you can take the Catch and Sea Tour where you can even get to catch your own breakfast in the crystal clear waters of the Causeway Coast before you head out to the links.

And if you’re feeling mythical, the ruined medieval castle of Dunluce Castle is only a five-minute drive from Portrush. This castle is surrounded by extremely steep drops on either side and is famous for appearing as the House of Greyjoy in Game of Thrones.

Northern Ireland’s most famous natural attraction, Giant’s Causeway, an ancient volcanic disruption, the area of around 40,000 interlocking basalt columns, is not to be missed.

Less than a 10-minute drive away from Giant’s Causeway is the Bushmills Distillery, the oldest in Ireland and the home of our sponsors, which produces the smooth-tasting whiskey known all over the world.

More than anything, you will discover the friendliness and camaraderie that comes with playing in the tournament. It is no coincidence that many of the golfers are repeat business, they come back every year to play these great courses and reminisce with friends in this picturesque part of the island.

A T-bone steak at the Harbour Bar in Portrush each night was believed to have been the secret behind Jon Rahm’s Dubai Duty Free Irish Open triumph at Portstewart, and there are many fantastic bar and restaurant options along the North Coast, including Ramore Restaurant, The Anchor Bar and Ocho Tapas Bistro.

One of Ireland’s best known luxurious hotels, the four-star Bushmills Inn is situated in an enviable location, only a stone’s throw from Portrush, the Distillery and the Causeway.

Entrance fees are only £170 for GUI residents and £230 for overseas visitors, including green fees. The competition runs over five days, with one rest day, and complimentary practice rounds at the courses may also available. There are opening and closing ceremonies, with drinks receptions and prizegiving. For more information, check out www.causewaycoastgolf.com
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  - www.cloverhillgolfclub.co.uk
- 39-41 Castle Road, Antrim, Co Antrim
  - 00 44 (0) 28 9127 0922
  - secretary@ashfieldgolfcourse.com
  - www.ashfieldgolfcourse.com
- 25 Springvale Road, Ballyclare, Co Antrim
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