on the Jakes

THINGS TO SEE AND DO

DISCOVER IRELAND'S HIDDEN HEARTLANDS





A VOYAGE OF DISCOVERY



Go Wild Magazine - On the Lakes, Summer Edition 2018



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Go Wild magazine flies the Irish flag with a 'Best in Food Tourism Magazine' Award at the Gourmand World food finals in China

Ireland's Go Wild Magazine has been named Best Food Tourism magazine in the World at the finals of the Gourmand World Cookbook Awards in China recently.

Go Wild MD, Robert Power, says they are delighted with the win and are thrilled to have had the chance to represent Ireland. The Gourmand World Awards are run over four days and cater for up to 1,200 delegates. The event includes a world food forum, as well as a range of Food awards and cultural tours.

"This is a major achievement for a company as young as ours," says Bobby Power. "We're proud to have the honour of receiving the award and also having Darina Allen carry the Irish flag for our team at this world gathering of foodies, after just three years in operation."



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Publisher's Note



aving established 'Go Wild Tourism' for the Wild Atlantic Way, 'Go Wild the Food Experience' for the Wild Atlantic Way and 'Go Ancient East' for Ireland's Ancient East; we are delighted with our new 'On the Lakes' issue which covers impressive parts of this fair isle not fully included in our other titles.

We were delighted to receive the 'Best Food Magazine in the World' at the Gourmand World Awards in Yantai, China, recently - a very proud moment for our small team of dedicated professionals and of course, our advertisers and contributors.

That pride is now extended to our 'On the Lakes' issue, which set us a new challenge and hopefully one that we have mastered in bringing this issue to print; while offering you information to enhance your experience in Ireland. A sincere thank you to David O Brien who helped to kickstart the project and provided valuable content.

Whether you are enjoying the Lakelands or the Hidden Heartlands of Ireland, we want you to have a most memorable holiday, and hopefully, you will return home refreshed and ready to book Ireland again next year.

Céad Míle Fáilte,

obbu Power

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To download all of our Go Wild Tourism, Go Ancient East, Go Wild On The Lakes, and 2 Go Wild Food Experience magazines titles directly to your device, please visit http://:www.issuu.com/gowildmagazine

Letter from the editor

Welcome to our new magazine 'Go Wild On the Lakes and Hidden Heartlands' which showcases all of the amazing things to do and places to see in the heart of Ireland.

The beautiful Lakelands is one area that is, perhaps, less well-known to visitors - but hopefully, this magazine will give you a greater insight in the delights that await you - from Fermanagh to Killaloe - on Ireland's waterways.

Combining the Lakelands and Fáilte Ireland's new tourism initiative, the Hidden Heartlands, has provided

our team with a beautiful challenge; one each member has enjoyed fulfilling with exciting editorials and magical discoveries.

We hope that the information contained within this title will enhance your stay in Ireland.

Have a wonderful holiday!

For all the latest news, visit www.gowildmagazine.com - your official guide to the Wild Atlantic Way

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A special thank you to Fáilte Ireland for their support with content and imagery. Go Wild Food Experience | Go Ancient East | Go Wild On the Lakes

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JOIN THE FUN!

IRELAND'S HIDDEN HEARTLANDS

FIVE THINGS YOU NEED TO KNOW

Ireland has unveiled 'Ireland's Hidden Heartlands' as its latest new tourism brand - designed to boost tourism and drive visitor growth across the Midlands region

1 - It's all about getting active in nature

Ireland's Hidden Heartlands has been developed to offer a distinctive flavour of Ireland, complementing Fáilte Ireland's other three brands – Wild Atlantic Way, Ireland's Ancient East and Dublin.

It will leverage a growing tourism trend for soft activities (outdoor activities combined with nature or cultural element) by encouraging visitors to be 'active in nature' and to explore the region through a range of activities including walking, food, cycling, fishing, and boating routes.

2 - There's a lot more to do and see in the Midlands than you might imagine

We know there is a growing tourism trend for soft activities and the Midlands has an excellent basis to provide this. It has abundant natural assets including its many lakes, walkways and blueways.

Whether it's cruising the Shannon, walking Beara Breifne Way, exploring Lough Key Forest, or taking an electric bike trail in Leitrim, there is something for everyone. Not to mention the vast amount of activities like boating and fishing offered by the region's many lakes - including Lough Derg and Lough Allen. Complementing these activities is a wealth of culture to explore, from the Arigna Mines or Strokestown Park House in Roscommon, as well as the Castles at Athlone and Birr and the sacred site of Clonmacnoise. With a vast range of accommodation and restaurants in the locality, the Midlands has excellent potential to become the ideal location for a holiday to get away from it all.

3 - If the Wild Atlantic Way is 'primitive landscapes' and Ireland's Ancient East is 'history', Ireland's Hidden Heartlands is 'a gentle exploration in nature'

Ireland's Hidden Heartlands is all about being active in nature. This gives the area its distinctive aspect of Ireland's tourism offering compared to the other regional destination brands.

The assets in the area deliver an authentic experience that allows visitors to get off the beaten track and explore unique waterways, roads and trails at a gentle pace – a chance to relax and recalibrate with friends and loved ones.



TAKE THAT! STAND UP PADDLE BOARDING, WITH SOULKITE, AT KILLALOE, CO. CLARE



AN EMERALD STAR SHANNON CRUISE, PORTUMNA, CO. GALWAY

Whether it's cruising the Shannon, walking Beara Breifne Way, exploring Lough Key Forest, or taking an electric bike trail in Leitrim - there is something for everyone."

4 - The investment in the new brand starts today

Ireland's Hidden Heartlands will now become a tourism development zone with Fáilte Ireland allocating significant investment and resources across the region. The first round of investment will help to develop visitor experiences and the development of infrastructure, tourism products, services and marketing. Over the next few years, significant investment will be required to create new (and boost existing) attractions in the region to unleash the brand's full potential.

5 - You will see the first advertising for the new brand this summer

Fáilte Ireland plans to launch the new regional experience brand to a domestic audience this summer. This comprehensive through-the-line campaign will build awareness of the area as a visitor destination amongst Irish and Northern Irish consumers while showcasing some of the many attractions and experiences available to visitors.



FAMILY FUN AT ZIPIT, LOUGH KEY FOREST AND ACTIVITY PARK, BOYLE, CO. ROSCOMMON



CYCLISTS ENJOYING A SPECTACULAR VIEW OVERLOOKING LOUGH DERG

ROSCOMMON CASTLE, CO. ROSCOMMON

Roscommon Castle, to the north of the town, was built by the Normans in 1269 and four years later was captured by the Irish and raised to the ground, to be rebuilt in 1280.



Interview with Cathal Quinn of Flanagan's on the Lake

Situated on the shore of Lough Derg, in the picturesque town of Ballina, Flanagan's on the Lake is a must-visit spot.

his superb restaurant serves a wide range of modern Irish cuisine catering for all tastes and features prime aged Irish beef, fresh fish, delicious burgers and pizzas from their traditional pizza oven.

Flanagan's also boasts one of the finest bars in the country, serving cocktails and craft beers as well as an extensive range of whiskeys. During the summer months, Flanagan's also offers an outdoor BBQ option so you can enjoy a scrumptious burger with a Sundowner in the outside seating area on the shores of the lake.

Cathal Quinn, a proud Tipperary man, is the proprietor of this gem and here he tells us his story of growing the business during the recession, as well as his introducing his new venture in the Limerick, Flanagan's Townhouse.

How did you get involved with the restaurant/bar business?

I became unemployed in 2009 as a result of the economic crisis and became aware of an opportunity to lease Flanagan's on the Lake.

Having formerly worked in the construction industry, as a project manager, I was well aware of the how bleak the outlook for the economy was at this time. However, I took on the lease and managed to develop and grow the bar and restaurant business during tough times.

People had very little disposable income at this time but still needed to socialise and dine out. So, by being inventive, we managed to increase our business.

In 2013, things had improved, and the business was growing. With this in mind, I approached the banks to raise capital to buy the premises. It was a difficult time to get funds. However, the business was sound, my proposal was promising, and I managed to raise the necessary capital and purchased Flanagan's.



What distinguishing features have you added to Flanagan's?

Over the years, we have tried many things to attract customers and build the business; most notably making 'The Whiskey Tower' a purpose-built room in a tower at the end of the restaurant. This is where Flanagan's Whiskey Club meets monthly, and we also arrange private whiskey tasting packages. These can be tailored to suit any palate, from novice to the discerning connoisseur, with a whiskey menu boasting some of the finest whiskeys in the world.

Recently, to the make the most of the experience for tourists, I have acquired some self-catering accommodation which is situated behind Flanagan's, so that those visiting can stay beside the restaurant and in the heart of Ballina, close to the lake.





The Whiskey Tower has become a destination for tourists. How have you achieved this?

The tourists that visit The Whiskey Tower at Flanagan's come for the unique opportunity to attend a masterclass in whiskey and explore many beautiful bourbons from around the world.

Recently, there has been a revolution in Irish whiskey worldwide, and as a result of this, we can see considerable growth in sales, mainly from Europe and USA.

By visiting the tower, you can take a trip through time; from the Irish monks making 'Uisce Beatha' (the water of life) which led to the birth of whiskey, to Ireland, Scotland and on to the USA, sampling different bourbons as you go through the story.

What else has Flanagan's done to encourage this growth?

The towns on the shores of Lough Derg are vibrant, busy places with lots on offer to locals and tourists alike. Flanagan's has been lucky enough to grow and develop, thanks to these two cohorts. An essential part of our growth was our involvement in local initiatives to support our community and in the development of external tourism.

The Ring of Lough Derg is a specialist tourism agency catering for visitors to the area, and with the help of other local business on the shore of the lake, we can offer an authentic and unforgettable experience of the Lough Derg region. Tailor-made packages are on offer to cater for all tastes.

There is also an annual Ring of Lough Derg BBQ Festival, and then a BBQ competition is hosted by us at Flanagan's, where teams of aspiring chefs take to their grills to battle it out for the coveted prize - An Fulacht Fia Cup.

How has your experience in the construction industry helped you in running Flangan's?

If you do not have an excellent team to work with, it doesn't matter how many customers there are as you will not be able to offer a unique service or culinary experience. Most of the team that work with me here at Flanagan's have been here since I took over the business in 2009.

My previous experience in project management has given me an excellent base for running the team here. We split the business into different projects, based on season, and we work as a team. It is essential, particularly in the hospitality industry, to get good people working in your business; to treat them well and keep them. They are the backbone of Flanagan's.

What's next for Cathal Quinn and Flanagan's?

Our next significant development is an expansion into Limerick City, the Treaty City, situated on the banks of the Shannon. We unveiled Flanagan's Townhouse and Whiskey Cellar in early 2018 to cater for the growing tourist's numbers in Limerick during the summer and the local trade in the winter.

The premises is in a Georgian building, which has been lovingly restored by specialists and promises a sophisticated, elegant setting for dining. It is an exciting development, and as Limerick is on the up, I see this is a natural next step for Flanagan's.



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ESCAPE TO ROSCOMMON

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

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

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

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

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

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



Visit Roscommon...





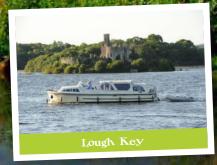




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Discover our Culture & History... **Discover our Activities in Nature...**

There is so much to see and do... So come Discover the Real Roscommon!











A Taste of Tuscany On the lakes







imerick-based businesswoman and mother-oftwo, Sabrina Amodeo, has always aspired to do something big. She has achieved just that since moving to Ireland in 1999, opening three restaurants, starting a food-catering business, and founding Amodeo dressings – a line of salad dressings and balsamic vinegar based on an old family recipe – all while raising two kids.

As a family, what was the inspiration for you to get into the food industry?

The most incredible memories of my parents cooking for us as children. Mealtime was the best part of the day! My parents, grandparents and the owner of a hotel we used stay in while skiing, inspired my total and utter passion for good, tasty food.

Did you always want to be a Restaurant owner and have your girls directly involved in the business?

Not at all, marketing was always my number one interest. Moving to Ireland made me change gears. My mother Mariarosa Gennaro was in Ireland with me at the time and we always talked about combining her amazing cooking skills with my business interest. I am so glad we did!

The girls are an integral part of the restaurants. Their contribution, input and involvement is essential. We call ourselves the Tre Porcellini, three little pigs because we love our food so much.

What does your daily role as Executive Chef/ Restaurant Owner entail?

I have my finger in every pie! Marketing, operations, sales, HR, legal, finance, Health & Safety, business development for Amodeo Dressing and all three Tuscanys. Life is busy!

How long have you been working at Tuscany and what brought you there?

I have been running Tuscany since 2003. Where have the last 15 years gone? Love brought me to beautiful Ireland.

What distinguishes Tuscany from other restaurants?

Using fresh, quality ingredients, creating delicious yet simple dishes, huge focus on customer service, attention to detail, a team who truly cares in a stunning environment and comfortable atmosphere.

Why do you think the three Tuscany restaurants are becoming such a popular culinary destination? We strive to create the Tuscany experience.

What is the favourite food of your daughters (truthfully, without upsetting Mum), and what dish do you like to order when you dine out?

Taines creates her pizza with buffalo mozzarella, red peppers and rocket; and the chocolate fondant.

Maxine loves the cannelloni and tiramisu. They are both vegetarian and input significantly on menus.



Have they a desire for their entrepreneurial path, having watched Mum for so many years?

They both have incredible focus supported by the drive. They are such strong woman and know they can achieve anything they set their minds to.

How has the Irish food industry changed in recent years?

People have become more adventurous with their palates and conscious of what is in their food and where it comes from.

Where do you source your produce?

We focus on local where possible and being Italian and Mediterranean; we would also use Italian produce.

Who has been the most famous diner that you have had in Tuscany?

Now that would be telling! We enjoy the company of a good few celebrities, but they enjoy their anonymity.

What do you think the future holds for the Irish food industry?

Healthier lifestyles, more conscious eaters and educating our children about the importance of a proper diet.

What advice would you give to aspiring young restaurant entrepreneurs?

The restaurant industry requires an enormous amount of resilience, perseverance, determination, commitment and bloody hard work. However, if that is your obvious passion, then go for it with everything you have and more. It is such great fun, you will make the most amazing friends, and it will be a rewarding and satisfying journey.

Sabrina's salad dressing and balsamic vinegar can now be found in Super Valu stores.

For more information, visit www.tuscany.ie or www.amodeodressing.com.



Delicious!

LEGENDS OF LOUGH DERG

Lough Derg, 'the lake of the bloody eye' is the southern-most lake on the River Shannon - it spans 32,000 acres and is a fully navigable waterway.

Why the 'bloody eye'? Poets held huge power in ancient Ireland and were sometimes merciless.

A king living near the lake, Eochy Mac Luchta, had only one eye - having lost his other one in battle. A famous poet, Aithirne, visited him but on leaving, asked for the remaining eye. People were frightened and superstitious of poets and their power so the king immediately, without question, plucked it out and gave it to Aithirne.

As he washed the blood from his face, the lake turned red. The king proclaimed that the lake be called 'Loch Dergdheirc', the 'lake of the bloody eye' as it is still known today.

The lake is surrounded by woods, rocky beaches and filled with wooded isles, giving it a feeling of enchantment. There are picturesque towns and villages situated along the banks of the lakes, which are steeped in history.

Killaloe was founded by St Molua, an Irish priest from the 6th Century who had been trained in the same monastery at Bangor, Co. Down as Columba and Gall. His original oratory stands in the grounds of St Flannan's Cathedral in Killaloe.

The lower part of the lake is flanked by Ballycuggaran and Tountinna. Ballycuggaran, or Baile Ni Chogarain, was named after the O'Cuggarans who were an important family in the court of Brian Boru. It is situated on Crag Hill overlooking Lough Derg.

There is a fort - the reputed home of the O'Briens and birthplace of St Flannan - on the southern side of Crag which dates back to the early Christian period.

At the highest point of Ballycuggaran is Aoibheal's Rock, which is the mythical home of Aoibheal the fairy queen of the O'Briens. Great oak woods originally covered these hills but they were cut down to fire iron furnaces in East Clare and for shipbuilding.

Tountinna can be translated as the 'Hill of the Waves' and according to legend when the great floods came, the only survivors were the people



living on this hill. On this side of this mountain are the remains of a megalithic tomb which is thought to date from no later than the Bronze Age.

Legend has it that a high status Leinster king was killed here with a small group of his men early in the 11th Century. There are differing accounts of what happened. One is that the Leinster men were in Kincora to pay Brian Boru tribute, but become involved in a dispute over a chess game. After they departed, they were caught by Brian Boru's men and following a skirmish - were killed.

The other story is that the king was ambushed, with his men, on his way to marry Brian Boru's daughter by a group sent by Brian Boru's wife Cormfhlaith; who didn't approve of the match.

However, in reality this grave was created 3,000 years before the birth of Brian Boru and very little is known of those who built it.

Inis Cealtra, Holy Island, is situated off the western shore of Lough Derg. It was once a monastic settlement founded by St Colum in 520CE, but is uninhabited today. A second monastery was founded by St Caimin and became a famous school of learning.

In 836, Vikings - led by Turgesius - visited the island and killed many of the monks. In 922, another Viking attack took place under the leadership of Tomran. Brian Boru's brother Marcan was Bishop-Abbot of Tuamgreaney and Inis Cealtra until his death in 1003.

There is an Irish Round Tower and the ruins of some small churches, four high crosses and a holy well also to be found on the island. The island, having been part of County Clare, was transferred to County Galway in 1849 as part of Griffith's Valuations. However, it was transferred back to Clare in 1899 under the Local Government (Ireland) Act, 1898.







There are several ecclesiastical ruins on the island: The Pilgrim's Path is a low curved ironwork that lies between St Michael's and St Caimin's Church.
The Baptism Church is a small Romanesque church enclosed by a stone wall. This church was blown down in 1839 and rebuilt as a house and iron works.
The only roofed building on the island is St Caimin's Church, which dates back to the 10th Century. Inside the church are monuments, crosses, a sundial and gravestones.
St Mary's Church ruins contain graves and an O'Brien tomb and dates from the 13th Century.

The ruins of small building, which has the appearance of a church, is known as St Michael's Church. It was marked as 'Garaigh Mhicheail' (Michael's Garden) on old Ordnance Survey maps and was most probably a burial ground for unbaptised children, a cilin. Dr Liam de Paor surveyed The Round Tower and it was restored between 1970 and 1980. During this restoration work, the tower's cone cap wasn't found - which implied that the tower had never been finished. This fits with the local legend that a beautiful witch had entranced and distracted the stonemason. The Saints' Graveyard can be accessed through the 19th Century graveyard. The inscriptions on these 11th Century markers are in Irish.

Bushy Island is situated off the coast of Mountshannon on the west shores of Lough Derg. It is home to a breeding pair of white-tailed sea eagles, Saoirse and Caimin. They created history in 2013, becoming the first pair in 110 years to successfully rear chicks and teach them to fly from their nest. There is a viewing point in Mountshannon by the busy harbour where these magnificent birds can be observed.



"The Pipers Inn Bar & Restaurant" is nestled into the East Clare countryside. Located along the East Clare Way and less than 2km from the Twomilegate Lakeside Amenity Park and slipway, Ballycuggeran Woods and the University of Limerick Activity Centre, it is an ideal location from which to explore the many local walking and cycling routes as well as water-based activities.

Whether you enjoy a meal in our cosy restaurant, book a function in the private function room or relax and enjoy a pint of Guinness or a glass of wine by the stove in the authentic stone-walled bar, there is something to be found for everyone.

There is plenty on site parking and coach parking, free Wi-Fi, disabled facilities and an outdoor seating area. Food is served seven days a week from 12 pm with Daily Lunch Special available. A la carte menu is served from 6-9pm.

> For Bookings or Enquiries, please contact us on 061 374717 www.thepipersinn.ie or thepipersinn@hotmail.com

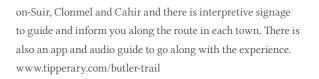
THINGS TO SEE AND DO IN TIPPERARY

JUNCTION FESTIVAL, CLONMEL, 2ND - 8TH JULY

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

THE BUTLER TRAIL

The Butler Trail is a fantastic experience that takes you around Tipperary revealing the influence and impact the Butler family dynasty had on the physical, social and economic fabric of these Tipperary towns and communities. The route links Carrick-



LOUGH DERG

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





Lough Derg

h/ Dem



Experience the Lough Derg Blueway

With summer here, it's time to plan out the next few weeks of fun and activities. Whether you're a family, a couple, or a lone wolf, Lough Derg will provide you with more than enough adventure to keep you going! With its blissful, blue, clear water and beautiful, dramatic surrounding countryside, the Lough Derg Blueway stretches across three Irish counties - Clare, Tipperary and Galway - each with its own list of activities, trails and loops to explore.

Best of all, you can do it your way - by canoe, paddle board, under sail, cruising, by bicycle or by foot. North, south, east and west, we simply can't choose a favourite, so you'll have a ball no matter where you go! If you really can't decide, here are Go Wild's highlights along the Lough Derg Blueway.

Northern Highlights: Portumna, Terryglass and Lorrha

The northern side of the lake has plenty to offer, from walking to kayaking, driving to horse-riding. There are plenty of ways to enjoy this part of Lough Derg and more activities than you can fit into a weekend.

If you're looking for a good hike, there's no shortage of beautiful trails in Portumna Forest Park, with a range of different hike lengths so you can find one suited to your family or group, and many are bike trails also. Don't pass up the chance to watch beautiful white-tailed eagles from a bird hide in the forest - if you're lucky enough to see them, it's an inspiring experience.

g Blueway

Visit Portumna Castle to bring you back in time to the 17th Century and why not recharge in the newly-opened tea rooms and enjoy some delicious treats in the historical surroundings on the castle grounds?

There's plenty in the way of accommodation up this side of the lake too, but if you're looking for something a little bit different, check out the 'glamping' facilities at Podumna. The little wooden pods offer a unique experience, with all the fun and feel of a woodland setting in a convenient town central location and bikes for rent too.

Don't miss the opportunity to try kayaking in Terryglass with Lough Derg Water Sports. Learn from the experts as you tour around the beautiful harbour and lake at your own pace. The harbour also offers an excellent playground and the country village is home to two welcoming bars with restaurants.

Lorrha Monastic Village is just a short spin from the lake and is home to important ecclesiastical ruins, well worth a visit and try to catch a local tour while you are there to hear the ancient tales of the area..

Eastern promise: Garrykennedy, Nenagh and Dromineer

Dromineer is a beautiful place to gaze across Lough Derg, listening to the water lapping and the clinking of the dinghies in the small harbour. Stroll beside the boats, let the children loose in the playground, or at 'Aquasplash', an inflatable water park operating in the summer months; or

Lough Derg



relax at the nearby café, bar and restaurant. Go back in time and immerse yourself in local heritage at Garrykennedy Castle - this area is perfect for casual strolling close to the water in the woods, or along the harbour, watching the yachts and cruisers come and go. There are two lovely traditional Irish pubs in the idyllic village, and Larkin's serves some top-notch food. Visit on a Sunday if you can as they have great classical music in the evenings and additionally on Wednesdays in summer. If you fancy a cycle, then follow the North Tipperary Cycle Routes that take in Nenagh, Terryglass, Garrykennedy, Cloughjordan and Borrisokane. Don't miss the chance to climb the 101 steps to the top of the majestic Nenagh Castle; while surveying your surroundings, and you'll see Lough Derg and beyond in the distance. The Lough Derg area has a rightly deserved reputation for gastronomy - options for fine dining or grazing at a farmer's market are equally catered for through 'A Taste of Lough Derg'. See www.atasteofloughderg.ie for a series of summer food events for visitors to enjoy. If you've only time for one walk in this part of the lake then make it the Arra Mountain Loop (six hours). Travelling over tarmac, bog roads, farm tracks, gravel paths and fields, it winds past the northern edge of the Slieve Arra. It is a strenuous walk with some climbing, so it's not for the faint of heart! There are wooden steps up most of Laghtea Hill but stick with it and you will be rewarded with spectacular views of Lough Derg.

For your holiday photo, stop off at The Lookout in Portroe offering panoramic views of Lough Derg and take a trip down to Castlelough for a swim in the lake, or stroll in the woods, where fairy doors adorn the trees! All that is before you even consider the kayaking, horseriding, stand-up paddling, cycling and variety of other activities on offer around Lough Derg.

Southern Sights: Ballycuggeran, Killaloe/Ballina

In Killaloe/Ballina, Lough Derg is in the centre of everything; it bustles with sailing boats and cruisers and echoes with the clink of halyards on masts.

If you want to unwind and relax then experience the area from the water in the comfort of Killaloe River Cruises. Enjoy a different perspective of Killaloe from the water by contacting Soulkite Stand Up Paddling to arrange a trip along the Shannon and the picturesque canal. You'll have a blast trying to maintain your balance and, once you do, you'll be the envy of everyone watching from the shore - provided they haven't already seen you fall off 15 times! There are significant architectural and heritage sites close to Killaloe/Ballina. You can undertake a self-guided tour of this historic area, or be guided by a local if you'd like to hear all the local stories. The tour includes the 13th Century St Flannan's Cathedral with its Ogham stone carvings, Romanesque doorway and the tomb of Muircheartaigh, the last O'Brien to be High King of Ireland. Killaloe is also home to two oratories - named after St. Flannan and St. Lua. The twin towns are home to elegant boutiques, bakeries, artisan shops and galleries - making it the perfect location to explore the old and the new. There is a beautiful riverside park and seasonal outdoor swimming pool, plenty of moorings for cruisers, and the jetty offers a platform to fish from.

There are many enticing eateries dotted around the twin towns, making it difficult to choose, but The Wooden Spoon, Goosers, Tuscany and Flanagan's are hard to pass by! With two hotels and many self-catering and guest house options, you won't be stuck for a place to stay either.

Lough Derg



Who says you need to go to the coast to visit the beach? Lough Derg has three Blue Flags, and one of these is at Two-Mile-Gate, a little lakeside beach where you can dip your toe or go for a swim. Here, you can stop off to enjoy a picnic on the boats and just across the road is Ballycuggeran Woods, impressive oak wood with looped walks and panoramic views of Lough Derg from its highest point. Scarriff and Tuamgraney are beautiful historical villages with a marvellous woollen mill and chocolate factory - just two of the hidden gems you might find. Trips out on the lake are offered at Scarriff Harbour with Derg Boat Trips.

If you head for Mountshannon, there's another Blue Flag beach here, but this time, travel out across the lake to Holy Island with local guide Gerard Madden of Holy Island Tours. You can spend a half day here walking amongst its six ruined churches and round tower while keeping a lookout for the local white-tailed sea eagles, which were reintroduced to the area in 2012. This is a breathtaking experience, but bring wellies - it's mucky in places! Across from the harbour, you can go for a walk through the quirky and beautiful Aistear park in Mountshannon. Run through the maze and along the paths overlooking the lake, or travel along the labyrinth. The wildness and beauty of this area have attracted many skilled artists and provides a diverse range of crafts, paintings, bog oak sculptures and mosaics for gifts and take-home memories. Some of these artists offer workshops as well, so you might even pick up a skill!

For an alternative view, try discovering the great outdoors and beautiful nature of Lough Derg on horseback with a guided tour with An Sibin Riding Centre in Whitegate. Enjoy a combination of visiting the ancient Irish castles, and monastic ruins with a lovely guided trail ride through Irish bogs, fields and local farmland.

Our top destination picks around Lough Derg

- Holy Island
- Castlelough
- Nenagh Castle
- Lookout at Portroe
- Portumna Forest Park
- Portumna Castle
- Iwo-Mile-Gate
- Aistear Park
- Tountinna
- Saint Cronan's Church, Tuamgraney
- St Flannan's Cathedral

A Taste of Lough Derg:

The lakeside towns of Lough Derg are renowned for their impressive array of award-winning restaurants, cafes, pubs and speciality food shops, all offering a famously warm, Irish welcome. For a chance to meet some of the area's food gurus, look no further than the many farmer and country markets that take place throughout the year in Killaloe, Scarriff, Mountshannon, Nenagh, Portumna and Terryglass. Catch one of the many food events that take place around the lake during the summer months as part of the 'A Taste of Lough Derg' food series. Visit www.atasteofloughderg.ie for more details.

Help planning your next trip

For some inspiration and to help you plan your trip to Lough Derg in Ireland's Hidden Heartlands, visit www. discoverloughderg.ie, where you'll find details of accommodation and activity providers and some special offers too.

Follow on Facebook Discover Lough Derg or
 twitter @discoverlderg.
 www.discoverloughderg.ie



NEW TOURISM BRAND TO "SIGNIFICANTLY ENHANCE THE MIDLANDS"

Minister for Transport, Tourism & Sport, Shane Ross TD welcomes the announcement of Ireland's Hidden Heartlands



I am delighted to launch Ireland's Hidden Heartlands – a new tourism brand that will significantly enhance the Midlands and bring jobs and economic growth to the whole region.

Minister Moran, during the talks for Government, was firm in his view that a stand-alone tourism project for the greater Midlands region is adopted and included in Fáilte Ireland's long-term investment plans to complement existing projects, The Wild Atlantic Way, Ireland's Ancient East and many other projects. The economic benefit to the Midlands from this proposition was very obvious to Minister Moran right from the outset, as it would benefit not only Longford and Westmeath but also a much broader area including Roscommon, Offaly and East Galway.

After talking with key industry players in the region, including John O'Sullivan and galvanising local political support, Minister Moran got a commitment in the programme for Government, backed by the Independent Alliance to develop a new regional tourism brand, as a separate proposition, side by side with Ireland's Ancient East, and The Wild Atlantic Way.

Minister Moran can rightly take credit for Ireland's Hidden Heartlands and for having the vision and tenacity to see it through from Government commitment to today's announcement.

This new brand will be the final piece in the jigsaw for Ireland's tourism regions. It will complement Fáilte Ireland's crucial other tourism experience brands – the Wild Atlantic Way, Ireland's Ancient East and Dublin.

Through the success of these brands, we've seen just how vital high-level

visitor experiences are for tourism. Although every Irish town has its unique charm, we need to package and promote visitor experiences of scale so that they will stand out to international markets.

Ireland's Hidden Heartlands touring region will bring to life the Midlands' rich natural assets – including its many spectacular lakes, walkways and blueways.

It will cover the 'heart' of the country, from Leitrim down to East Clare and extending through Longford, Roscommon, East Galway, as well as parts of Westmeath, Cavan, North Tipperary and Offaly.

There is already so much to do and explore here on the ground. Whether it's cruising the Shannon, walking the Beara Breifne Way, exploring Lough Key Forest Park or taking an electric bike trail in Leitrim - not to mention the considerable amount of activities, like boating and fishing, on offer at the region's many lakes (including Lough Derg and Lough Allen).

Through Ireland's Hidden Heartlands brand, Fáilte Ireland will be supported by Government to develop what already exists and bring new experiences to the table.

Regarding next steps, it is now following the brand launch - that the work begins in earnest.

Fáilte Ireland - in collaboration with local businesses and other key strategic partners - are working to bring all of these gems and assets together and package them as a full and exciting tourism offering - one that is distinctly different to Ireland's other tourism brands and will leverage the area's strengths.

For example, the River Shannon will be a central focus of the brand. Fáilte Ireland, in partnership with Waterways Ireland, is currently developing a Shannon Master Plan to drive tourism opportunities, both on and off the water, and in the towns surrounding it.

Another asset for Ireland's Hidden Heartlands will be the Beara Breifne Way, which spans the whole region. Here, Fáilte Ireland will develop a compelling walking and trial experience to international standards.

Fáilte Ireland is investing €2 million to commence the development stage of the brand. This initial round of investment will help to develop visitor experiences and supporting tourism infrastructure, products, services and marketing.

Over the coming years, I aim to secure further resources to push the brand forward and ensure it delivers on its full potential.

Last month, we welcomed figures which confirmed that 2017 was another record year both concerning visitor numbers and revenue - with overseas visitors spending almost €300 million more in Ireland last year compared to 2016. Regarding jobs, Fáilte Ireland estimates that tourism employment grew by an impressive 10,000 jobs last year.

This growth in revenue and its ability to spur employment underscores the vital importance of tourism for Ireland.

Its importance is even more significant when you consider the fact that the economic contribution of tourism is felt right across the country, in both urban and rural areas - including in areas where there aren't many other major industries.

Government and the tourism agencies will continue to support and invest in tourism. We are placing a particular emphasis on 'seasonality' and 'regionality' - in other words, extending the tourism season for many operators and driving activity into those parts of the country with additional visitor capacity and potential for further tourism growth.

We are committed to ensuring that Ireland's success as a worldclass tourist destination is shared among the regions.

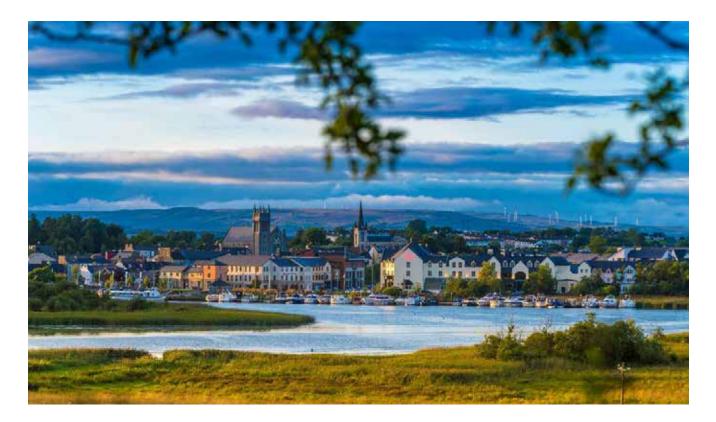
Looking at the Midlands region specifically, it stands to benefit enormously if we all get behind Ireland's Hidden Heartlands brand.

Some of the country's most beautiful natural assets are here in the Midlands. I know the new brand will bring these gems to life and offer a unique, engaging experience that can be packaged and promoted both domestically and internationally.

So I encourage all local tourism businesses, communities and other key stakeholders to collaborate with Fáilte Ireland on the new brand and to align your offering accordingly. This approach will ensure maximum benefit for all.

I am confident that Ireland's Hidden Heartlands will transform the whole region and how it is positioned to tourists. With continued collaboration and support, we can grow tourism revenue, create more jobs and bring about real change in local communities.

CARRICK-ON-SHANNON IN FULL BLOOM



Granted its royal charter in 1607, Carrick-on-Shannon has blossomed in recent years into a bustling hub for cruising on the River Shannon. The town won a gold medal in the 2010 Entente Florale Awards and attractions range from the Leitrim Design Centre, to the fascinating audiovisual displays at St George's Heritage & Visitor Centre.

Carrick's heritage trail kicks off on the quays, proceeding past the old barrel store (now housing the tourist office) before crossing a fine arched bridge to skirt around an area known as The Liberty. This was where Catholics were permitted to live during the 17th Century, when Carrick was a well-to-do Protestant enclave.

Carrick's sombre-looking courthouse dates from 1821, but it has recently been restored for a much merrier use as The Dock - a gallery, studio and recital space that anchors the scores of artists and craftspeople working in various media throughout County Leitrim. Another highlight is Costello Chapel on Bridge Street, reckoned to be one of the smallest in the world. This tiny monument has a big heart, however – it was erected by local merchant Edward Costello after the premature death of his wife in 1877. Husband and wife now rest here, under a single stained glass window, in an enduring testament to love.

Costello Chapel is right next to Carrick's Market Yard, which dates from 1839 but has also been restored – this time to house a restaurant, shops and farmers' market. From here, you can continue along Bridge Street to the birthplace of Susan Mitchell, the poet and so-called 'red-headed rebel' who became a biographer of George Moore.

Carrick has some sweet examples of 19th Century architecture, including St George's Terrace and elsewhere on the trail, you'll find a town clock dating from 1839. In Summerhill, the site of a fever hospital, there is a restored workhouse attic (where the deaths of 1,896 people were recorded) and a Famine graveyard memorial.



Head into Blue



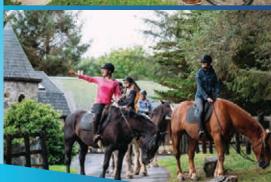
An adventure waiting for you on our waterways...

...Do it your way











For special offers and more www.headintotheblue.org

THINGS TO SEE AND DO IN OFFALY

TULLAMORE D.E.W.

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



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

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



BALLINAHOWN CRAFT VILLAGE

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

TREE HOUSE ADVENTURE, BIRR CASTLE

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



COUNTY ARMS HOTEL BIRR





The 4* County Arms Hotel is beautifully situated on a 9-acre estate in the Heritage town of Birr. A superbly restored Georgian house, the County Arms Hotel is run by the Loughnane family for over 55 years, as a trusted Wedding venue.

We offer a choice of banqueting suites. Up to 350 guests can be catered for in the Moorpark Ballroom with Private Bar, smoking courtyard and reception lobby. Within 90 minutes from all major cities, the County Arms Hotel Birr is the ideal venue for Wedding Receptions from all over the

Your base to discover all that Offaly has to offer from Georgian Heritage to Lively pubs and eateries s the 4 star County Arms hotel offering genuine Irish hospitality for over 50 years.



If its adventure that you are after then you can choose from questrian, walking, cycling, Nature valks or a round of golf at three ocal golf clubs.

Discover WOW - Wild Offaly Way and WOW breaks by contacting Grainne today to discuss your next WOW break on 057 9120791 or info@countyarmshotel. com

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THINGS TO SEE AND DO IN LONGFORD

CHURCHES, ABBEYS AND MONASTERIES

The old cemetery at Tubberpatrick is found just 5km from Ballinamuck, County Longford. It contains fascinating memorials to General Blake and Gunner Magee, who were executed following their defeat in the 1798 Battle of Ballinamuck. Telephone: +353 (0)43 3324848

CORLEA BOG

Corlea Bog is found near Keenagh, County Longford and demonstrates how the growth of raised bogs caused problems for people. It is also home to an Iron Age trackway. Telephone: +353 (0)43 3322386

ABBEYDERG

In the 13th Century, Gormgall O'Quinn founded an Augustinian monastery in the village of Abbeyderg, which is situated about five kilometres from Kenagh in County Longford. Telephone: +353 (0)43 3346566

ABBEYSHRULE MONASTERY

The charming village of Abbeyshrule lies about 30 kilometres northwest of Mullingar in County Longford and is home to a Cistercian abbey, founded in 1150 following the success of Mellifont. Telephone: +353 (0)43 3342577

GRANARD MOTTE AND BAILEY

Granard Motte and Bailey in Co. Longford is one of the best examples of an Anglo-Norman fortifications in the country.

BALLINAMUCK VISITOR CENTRE

The Ballinamuck Visitor Centre, in County Longford, presents a lively exhibition which gives details of the Year of the French and the Battle of Ballinamuck, which took place in 1798. Telephone: +353 (0)87 2055462

CORLEA TRACKWAY VISITOR CENTRE

The Corlea Trackway in Co. Longford is an Iron Age bog road, dating back to 148–147 BC. Visitors to the Corlea Trackway Visitor Centre can explore its history as an ancient transport route and view a stretch of the preserved trackway on display. Telephone: +353 (0)43 3322386

CASEY'S BOGWOOD SCULPTURES

Michael and Kevin Casey are artists who create beautiful sculptures from bogwood found in Irish bogs. Visitors are invited to their workshop and studio which is located in Newtowncashel, County Longford. Telephone: +353 (0)43 3325297

ST MEL'S CATHEDRAL

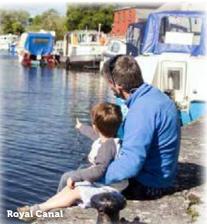
St Mel's Cathedral is a landmark building in Longford. Recently restored after the Christmas Day fire of 2009, it has been wonderfully restored as the focal point of the local Catholic community. Telephone: +353 (0)43 3346465



VISIT LONGFORD

Longford, centrally located in Ireland's Hidden Heartlands, an excellent base for travelling around Ireland, for regional conferences or merely relaxing







Longford is served by a national train and bus service and is at the key axis point of Ireland's N4 and N5 National Primary routes.

Longford is rich in history and culture with stories of Maria Edgeworth, Michael Collins, Oscar Wilde, Corlea Trackway, Ardagh Heritage Town and the Battle of Ballinamuck.

It is also home to the wonderfully restored St. Mel's Cathedral which was extensively damaged in the Christmas Day fire of 2009 and reopened for services at midnight mass on Christmas Eve 2014. It has since become a significant tourist attraction.



Fancy cycling, walking and canoeing along the blue ways, greenways and Slí na Sláinte walks? Enjoy being active, followed by good food and beverages. The Royal Canal 144km greenway connects Dublin's Spencer Dock with Richmond Harbour in Co. Longford and is the most extended such greenway destination in the country. This is an off-the-road walking and cycling track, located alongside the Royal Canal connecting the capital with the midlands passing through counties Dublin, Kildare, Meath, Westmeath and Longford.

Summer 2019 will see the opening of Center Parcs Ireland which is currently under construction in County Longford. The short



breaks on offer in the high standard of accommodation are perfect for family and friends in the beautiful secluded setting of Newcastle woods.

If you are interested in slow tourism, County Longford is rich in biodiversity with woodland and bog walks. Visit Longford and discover the hidden gems on offer in the heart of Ireland.

Contact details:

Phone: 043 3342577 Website: www.visitlongford.ie Facebook: Longfordtourism







THINGS TO SEE AND DO IN WESTMEATH

MULLINGAR TO ATHLONE GREENWAY

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



MOATE AGRICULTURAL SHOW, SUNDAY AUGUST 26TH

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

MULLAGHMEEN

Mullaghmeen in north Westmeath is the largest planted beech forest in Ireland. This 1,000-acre forest has an extensive network of waymarked trails for varying levels of fitness. Along with beech, Mullaghmeen also has Sitka Spruce, Scots Pine and Noble Fir and a fascinating native tree collection. The forest offers picnickers a shady haven in which to feast and provides the more energetic with scenic walks of varying length. The underlying geology is limestone rock, and the area is populated with grey squirrels, jays, badgers, foxes, pheasant, rabbit and hares, as well as a large selection of songbirds.

ATHLONE CASTLE

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



Westmeath's Lakes of Legend



Westmeath makes a great holiday destination; a place where thousands of years of intriguing history can be discovered in hidden landscapes of true beauty.

Known as the 'Lake County', its captivating stories are linked through water and lush green countryside. Getting off the beaten track is easy; hire a boat or a bike from local friendly providers, or bring your walking shoes and you are on your way. Lough Ennell and Lough Owel are popular spots for watersports and angling and the Royal Canal Greenway links these majestic lakes with the bustling town of Mullingar. Belvedere House Gardens and Park on the shores of Lough Ennell is a must-visit, with its beautifully restored Georgian villa, Victorian walled garden and woodland walking trails.

Lough Derravaragh is integral to Irish mythology, where legend has it the Children of Lír were turned into swans by their jealous stepmother, condemned to 900 years of wandering. Close to this mystical lake, you will find Tullynally Castle and Gardens, an ornate estate that is well worth the stop.

Westwards from Mullingar, you can pedal your way through the tranquil midlands on the Old Rail Trail Greenway, to the vibrant town of Athlone on the banks of the majestic River Shannon.

Visit www.mullingar.ie or www. athlone.ie to plan your visit.

FERMANAGH & OMAGH TOURISM



WONDERS ABOVE AND BELOW GROUND IN FERMANAGH AND OMAGH

Fermanagh and Omagh covers two of the nine Northern Ireland tourism destinations - Fermanagh Lakelands being wholly with the council area and the Tyrone and Sperrins destination being shared with a number of local authorities.

The area has so much to offer visitors and tourists in terms of attractions; rural heritage and history (loughs, lakeside and forest), UNESCO Marble Arch Caves and Geopark, outdoor activities, and events.

FERMANAGH LAKELANDS – Ireland's very own little venice!

Discover the shores and waterways of Ireland's premier Lakeland destination.Follow an ancient pilgrimage route along the Erne Canoe trail, hire a boat, or take a taxi and enjoy a picnic on one of the many secluded islands. Or, explore Ireland's only island town of Enniskillen from the unique perspective of the waterway.

Splash, dive and swim at one of several outdoor activity centres on Lough Erne under the watchful eye of highly trained professionals. After a day's fun-filled activity, relax and unwind with a cocktail or two; while watching the sun ripple gently away over the horizon at one of the many quality overnight holiday establishments.

MARBLE ARCH CAVES - UNESCO GLOBAL GEOPARK

While in the Fermanagh Lakelands, discover the Marble Arch Caves UNESCO Global Geopark, a hidden gem tucked away in the northwest corner of Ireland.

Spanning the border between County Fermanagh and County Cavan, it's the first-ever international Geopark encompassing a portion of both jurisdictions - allowing visitors to appreciate the best of what this remote and unspoilt region has to offer.

After an exhilarating walk up to the summit of Cuilcagh Mountain, experience awe-inspiring panoramic views over rugged outcrops, upland blanket bog, rolling drumlins and winding rivers laid out before you on a natural canvas.

Explore this unique landscape, which dates back over 895 million years, with a visit to the Marble Arch Caves to learn more about the natural and built environment, its associated folklore and follows the footsteps of the first Victorian explorers as you descend into the darkness.

There is so much to see and do in the Geopark, whether you want to indulge in a spot of sightseeing – with some of the finest vistas in Ireland, you'll not be disappointed – or whether you want to explore some of the landscape on foot – there are over 25 different walking trails within the Geopark for all ages and abilities – there's something for all the family.

Fermanagh Lakelands

Say Hello to Summer! Say Hello to Fermanagh Lakelands!

With top events, stunning scenery, a fascinating history and heritage, unique shopping and first class accommodation, Fermanagh Lakelands is the perfect choice for a break this summer. Get out on the water and explore the Lakelands on a cruiser, day boat, canoe or a guided boat tour – the options are endless! Climb Fermanagh's 'Stairway to Heaven' and take time to experience the breath-taking views from the top. Go underground on a spine tingling guided cave tour. Immerse yourself in the area's fascinating history and heritage. From castles to pre-historic monuments and mountain tombs this magical county is just waiting to be discovered.

Get away from it all and take in all that Fermanagh has to offer – you won't be disappointed

Say 'hello' to special offers, events and accommodation at **fermanaghlakelands.com** T: +44(0)2866325000

info@fermanaghlakelands.com #sayHellotoFermanagh





FERMANAGH & OMAGH TOURISM

FESTIVAL LOUGH ERNE

Foodie and water activity enthusiasts flock to Enniskillen Castle to experience Festival Lough Erne on the third weekend of September every year.

This two-day event attracts both locals and visitors similar to the Lakelands and offers a full programme of activities; including a Food Hall, offering a range of delights from Erin Grove Preserves to Lough Erne Cakes, the Boatyard Distillery and Kennedy Bacon.

Celebrity and local chefs regale visitors as they watch cooking demonstrations in the Chefs' Marquee. Local bands showcase their craft through music and song. The Castle courtyard comes to life with street entertainers and face painters, while the Marble Arch Caves Global Geopark staff keep children busy with fossil activity quiz.

For history enthusiasts, the Lough Erne Heritage Group provide lots of historical information to visitors and showcase their cot and clinker boat-making skills. The event is a marvellous showcase of local food producers, culinary talent and local eateries and it is great to see such a hive of activity at Enniskillen Castle. Many of the visitors avail of the opportunity to tour the new galleries and all the museum facilities on site.

Festival Lough Erne is organised by Fermanagh and Omagh District Council and supported by Fermanagh Lakeland Tourism, Waterways Ireland and Enniskillen BID Ltd.

FERMANAGH LAKELANDS

Step into Summer in the Fermanagh Lakelands and indulge in a wide range of visitor attractions, tours and activities. Why not check out our website fermanaghlakelands.com for more information on attractions & activities, upcoming events, eating out and accommodation or avail of some of our tantalising summer break special offers. Get away from it all and take in all that Fermanagh has to offer – you won't be disappointed.







Fun for all the family!

SHARE is positioned on Upper Lough Erne just outside Lisnaskea, offering a range of over 30, land, water and arts activities.

Family & Group bookings available Activity Sessions run daily in July & August for the public. Canoe, Kayak & SUP hire available.

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THINGS TO SEE AND DO IN FERMANAGH

ENJOY AN UNDERGROUND BOAT TRIP

Take a subterranean boat trip through the watery show caves of the Marble Arch Caves Global Geopark. Taste the deliciously cool damp air as you are guided through underground rivers, secret winding passages and lofty chambers. This truly spectacular natural wonder is best experienced on hot sunny days from March to September.

SEE FLORENCE COURT IN THE AUTUMN

The joys of Florence Court are obvious at any time, but in early autumn they are awesome. Enjoy kicking crisp leaves and searching for horse chestnuts, and if the rose bushes are still in bloom, you will catch their gentle perfume. Tour the mansion, or explore the walled garden and pleasure grounds - and don't miss the famous Florence Court yew tree.

EXPLORE ENNISKILLEN CASTLE

Set on the edge of the River Erne, Enniskillen Castle dominates its home town. The visitor experience brings to life the castle's 600-year history, first as the Maguire family stronghold and on through to Fermanagh's important role in World War II. There are two museums to explore, the Inniskillings Museum and Enniskillen Castle Museums.

SLEEP BENEATH THE STARS

The roof of a Finn Lough bubble dome is a 360-degree window to the night sky. Dazzling in the summer and so cosy in the longer autumnal nights, this is a magical stargazing experience. If you manage to leave the pod, the Finn Lough site includes a great restaurant, plus fishing, boats, tennis, walking trails and an indoor play area for children.

TAKE THE BELLEEK POTTERY TEA TEST

It's a fact: Tea tastes better when it's served in Belleek cups. Take the 30-minute tour of the historic factory and witness the ongoing production of the delicate pottery. Follow that with some excellent Belleek shopping and then it will be time to see if your tea tastes better.

FISH ON LOUGH ERNE

With such a vast expanse of water so perfectly suited to fishing, every day on Lough Erne can be a different adventure. You never know what you might hook next, but with trout and salmon among the top targets and superb coarse fishing in some of the best boat and bank fishing grounds in Europe, all types of angler can succeed here.

SNOOP AROUND A MAGNIFICENT MANSION

Castle Coole is the other big house in Fermanagh. Dating back to 1798, it is an opulent display of the era. Take in the stately 'upstairs' grandeur, then visit the huge basement where an army of servants worked downstairs and exit via their underground tunnel. Take a long walk on the estate, enjoy a picnic, or drop into the tea shop for a treat.

PADDLE THE LAKES

Roaming on a canoe or kayak is a serene way to traverse Fermanagh's lakelands. All you'll hear is the soft slap of the water on your hull, and the cry of the curlew or lapwing. Upper Lough Erne has sheltered bays for beginners, while Lower Lough Erne's windier waters provide waves for experienced paddlers.

LIVE LIKE A PRESIDENT AT LOUGH ERNE

Stay in Lough Erne Resort's lakeside lodges where G8 world leaders laid their heads – it's best to sleep with the curtains open and witness the morning light trickling across the lough. David Cameron went swimming in the lough and Barack Obama went to the gym. You can do the same or enjoy the deep relaxation of the spa, exquisite food, and golf on the Nick Faldo-designed course.

GO ISLAND HOPPING

Hire a cruiser for some island-hopping on the lakelands and you won't regret it. Devenish Island, White Island, Boa Island and Inish Corkish, home to Fermanagh's Black Bacon, and another 150 islands can be all your own for a few hours - or even overnight alone with nature. Or, let someone else steer - hop on board the Erne Water Taxi.





Looking for an ecommerce store? LEO are offering Trading Online Vouchers for Small Irish Businesses

Who can apply?

The online trading voucher is open to all businesses with ten or less employees, intends to trade online (provided that the business is located and operates within the area of an Enterprise Office) and whose website has a content management system that can be added to over time.

Need help? Contact us

If you would like more information about grants available to you and your business or would like to discuss any of the points that you have read about here, please do not hesitate to contact us and we would be happy to help.



Sales Danny: 087 232 6762 Robert: 087 446 7007

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Enquiries Email: info@brainstorm.ie Office: 061 748 278

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EASTERN PROMISE

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

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

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

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

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

You took office in June 2017. Is there anything you have learned, or by which you have been surprised, since being involved the tourism sector?

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

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

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

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

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





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

What contribution does tourism have to the Irish economy?

Tourism is one of Ireland's most important economic sectors and continues to play a key role in Ireland's economic





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

renewal. 2016 was a record year for Irish tourism with the highest ever number of overseas visits to Ireland of over 9.5 million. Expenditure by overseas visitors in 2016 was €4.577 billion(excluding fares). When carrier receipts are included, along with cross-border visitors, the figure rises to just over €6 billion. Spending on domestic tourism in 2016 was €1.77 billion. Total spending on tourism in 2016 was therefore almost €7.8 billion (including carrier receipts). At present, there are over 150,000 people employed in the 'Accommodation and Food Services' sector in Ireland. Fáilte Ireland estimates that total tourism employment (when other parts of the industry such as conferencing, attractions and festivals are included) is in the region of 228,000. We aim to increase this number to 250,000 by 2025.

What does Tourism mean to Ireland?

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

ANCIENT HISTORY AT LOUGH ALLEN

The uppermost of the three main lakes on the mighty Shannon River, Lough Allen lies to the south of the source, close to the Iron Mountains.

Hundreds of stone tools have been collected around the lakeshore, as well as significant traces of Mesolithic inhabitants. Most of these stone tools are evidence of the Later Mesolithic period, with some evidence for Early Mesolithic and possibly Neolithic activity.

Slieve Anierin (Mountain of Iron) borders the lake and iron ore has been extracted here for millennia and transported over Lough Allen. Most of the ironworks were destroyed during the Irish Rebellion in 1641 but the English revived many of them after the Irish Confederate Wars.

The lake became a storage reservoir for a power station almost 100 miles down river when the Shannon

Hydroelectric Scheme was constructed in 1925-9. Sluices were constructed to control the flow into the river and this maintains that same flow. The Lough Allen Canal was rarely used by this time but was restored in 1996.

During the mid 19th Century, M O'Conor held regattas at Lough Allen Island, also known as O'Reilly's Island, at the southern end of the lake.

The regatta parties took place at Birchill's house and were attended by EK Tenison, a world famous photographer; Captain Birchill, Francis la Touche and Captain Tottenham. The 'Shamrock', 'Corsair', 'Querida' and 'Avenger' were among the yachts that competed in the regattas. Only a ruin of the house remains.

THE SECRETS OF LOUGH REE

Spirits of High Kings and lost warriors, chanting of long gone monks in the distance and even whispers of a lake monster – welcome to Lough Ree.

Lough Ree can be translated as 'Lake of the Kings' and is the second largest lake on the River Shannon in the midlands of Ireland. It is a mystical lake with islands where myth and legend abound.

Inchcleraun, Quaker Island, is an island in the northern part of the lake founded by Saint Diarmuid in early 540AD. This early Christian era monastery became a place of pilgrimage and learning for hundreds of years. The remains of six ancient churches, graveyards and a fort to protect against Vikings can be explored on the island. According to Irish legend, it was on Inchcleraun that Queen Maeve was killed. A ringfort on the shores of the island was controlled by the Viking Turgesius until he died by drowning in Lough Owel.

There are many other islands in Lough Ree; The Black Islands, Inchmore, Hare Island and Inch Turk were all inhabited until the 1950s. There are religious sites and ancient ruins from the Middle Ages to be found on these islands also.

Other islands in Lough Ree also have religious sites. Many of these still contain ancient ruins from the early Middle

Ages - Inis Inchturk, Inis Inchmore, Inis Inchbofin and Inis Ainghin (Hare Island) are the larger ones.

The most credible monster sighting in the world is said to have occurred in Lough Ree. Not unlike Lough Ness in Scotland, it is thought that a sea serpent inhabits these waters.

Three priests went fishing on May 28, 1960, and as they were enjoying their day on the lough, one of them spied a strange creature in the near distance. The priests turned their focus to the creature and made notes, recording its size and physical features in great detail. Their story was picked up by many local newspapers and even made it to the international press when it was featured by the BBC.

According to the details recorded by the priests, the creature is said to be six foot in length with a head of about 18 inches in diameter. There have been a few other sightings by locals and some fishermen since and many Shannon cruisers have reported loud knocking sounds as they cruised through the lough.





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Fishing on the Lakes

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Lough Allen

Lough Allen supports a large and varied population of fish; particularly coarse fish such as bream, roach, rudd, hybrids, tench, pike, perch and eels. However, it is less known that there is a good stock of trout also - with an average weight of 1.5lb. In 1998, a trout was caught on a rod and line weighing 12.5lb. The mayfly hatch is small and it is maintained that the best trout fishing is during April, August and September. On the east shore, from Gobcormongan to the mouth of the Stoney river is considered the best area for trout. It is known by anglers trolling for pike as 'Murder Mile' due to the number of trout which rise to the baits. Lough Allen is famous for being home to the most ferocious fighting pike in Europe. In 1902, 'Old Harry McVeigh' was reported to have captured an enormous fish. He hooked him on a set land but couldn't land him, so he tied him to a float and watched him travel the lake for a day before he finally landed him. He weighed a staggering 42lb and the knuckles of his backbone measured two inches in diameter.

Lough Ree

The second largest lake on the River Shannon, Lough Ree is 10,500 hectares in area. It houses a mixed fishery with good stocks of pike, trout and coarse fish. Lough Ree has recently seen a large improvement in the stocks



of wild trout, thanks to a dramatic improvement in water quality. The local angling club, in conjunction with the fisheries programme, operates a hatchery on the system. There are hotspots such as Inch More, Inch Turk and Hare Island, which are worth a visit to find some of the finest wild brown trout specimens in Irish waters. The lake has all the usual fly hatches typical of an Irish limestone lake i.e. duckfly, olives, mayfly, sedges and in September some good fishing dapping the daddy longlegs is possible. Wet fly and dry fly both work well.

Lough Derg

A large lake which is more than 30 kilometres in length, Lough Derg is regarded as a mixed fishery. Lake brown trout, which are indigenous to Lough Derg, are well distributed through the lake. The season opens in March; however, the height of the angling year is during the mayfly season. The fish greedily feed on mayfly and are in prime health as they take their migratory journey up the river to heir spawning grounds. The lake is also teeming with pike, roach, perch and bream. Legend has it that in the 1800s, a pike of 92lbs was hooked from the lake.



Ballynahinch Castle is set on a 700 acre estate in the heart of Connemara with 48 bedrooms & suites, all tastefully & invidiually decorated

The hotel's restaurant is renowned for its excellence, which of course, serves locally-sourced produce and locally-caught fish. It might be the height of summer in Ireland, but a seat by a log fire in the cosy bar will always be welcome after a day's hiking or fishing on the hotel's own salmon river and lakes. Other activities at the castle include biking, hiking, game bird hunting, walking trails, cycling, fly-fishing, and locally a boat trip from Roundstone to Inishlaken, a deserted island in Roundstone Bay. In fact, there's so much to do on the estate, lots of visitors never leave the grounds.



Tel + 353 95 31006 Email info@ballynahinch-castle.com Ballynahinch Castle Hotel, Recess, Connemara, Co. Galway, Ireland



TAKE A TOUR OF TULLAMORE

TULLAMORE IS A CHARMING TOWN IN CO. OFFALY WITH A RICH HISTORY AND INVITING CULTURAL CALENDAR

The picturesque Grand Canal runs through the town. Today, the Tullamore Dew Heritage Centre is situated on its banks, a venue dedicated to the famous distilling heritage of the town, as well as its urban history.

One of the town's most famous exports is Tullamore Dew, established in 1829. The Tullamore name became world-famous following the success of Tullamore Dew whiskey, and its offspring, Irish Mist liqueur.

By Irish standards, Tullamore is a very new town, having been little more than a village until well into the 18th Century. Prosperity came in the form of the Grand Canal, a link from the port of Dublin in 1798.

Planned in the classical style, Tullamore's 19th Century district is contained mostly between the canal to the north and the railway to the south. The 20th Century saw great expansion into spacious suburbs, thanks to the introduction of many new industries.

Tullamore today is a vibrant hub, with excellent food and accommodation and a great variety of leisure activities such as boating, fishing, golfing, walking and riding.

One of Ireland's most splendid Gothic buildings, Charleville Castle, stands in a parkland setting outside Tullamore, which contains the King Oak, one of the biggest and oldest oak trees in the country. The oak woodland is botanically an important survivor of primeval stock.

Numerous high profile events take place in Tullamore every year, including the Tullamore Show, the Queen of the Land Festival and the Tullamore Phoenix Festival. Visit Tullamore for the perfect slice of life in the Irish midlands.

EQUESTRIAN CENTRE

Annaharvey Farm Equestrian Centre is situated just outside Tullamore, County Offaly, in the heart of Ireland. It is also a guesthouse offering full board or bed & breakfast, making it an ideal place for equestrian holidays. Telephone: +353 (0)57 9343544



TULLAMORE DEW VISITOR CENTRE

Tullamore Dew is an Irish whiskey, which was produced by William Grant & Sons in Co. Offaly before moving production to Midleton, Co. Cork in the 1950s. Today, the visitor centre guides visitors around a new distillery located once again in Offaly. Telephone: +353 (0)57 9325015

MEZZO ITALIAN RESTAURANT

Enjoy food in a relaxed atmosphere, seven days a week. Delivery service from 5pm until 11pm. Telephone: +353 (0)57 9329333

OFFALY HISTORICAL SOCIETY

Offaly Historical Society is operated by the Offaly Heritage Centre in Tullamore. It provides services for those wishing to trace their ancestors in County Laois and Offaly. Telephone: +353 (0)57 9321421

CHARLEVILLE CASTLE

Completed in the early 1800s, Charleville Castle is a splendid Gothic revival building set in oak woods just outside Tullamore, County Offaly. The castle is available for weddings, concerts and other special events. Telephone: +353 (0)57 9323040

ATHLONE CASTLE

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

ATHLONE CASTLE VISITOR CENTRE www.athlonecastle.ie

LUAN GALLERY

Luan Gallery is Athlone's municipal visual art gallery. Featuring exhibitions of contemporary and traditional art.

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The Tullamore Court Hotel Midlands Overall Hotel of the Year Offering luxury accommodation, delicious food, a multi award winning Leisure Centre complimented with friendly professional staff making this town centre hotel the perfect choice for your next get away.

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LUAN GALLERY

w.luangallery.ie

THINGS TO SEE AND DO IN LEITRIM

ARIGNA MINING EXPERIENCE

The Arigna Mining Experience is a unique community-inspired initiative, which records 400 years of mining history in the area. Coal mining provided much-needed work in a region of poor agricultural land. Regular employment was uncommon in the province of Connaught in the 19th and 20th centuries, and it is often said; "There was money in Arigna when there was no money elsewhere". The industry sustained the community of Arigna down through the centuries and helped it through the horrors of the famine years (1845 to 1852).

GLENCAR WATERFALL

Glencar Waterfall is situated near Glencar Lake, 11 kilometres west of Manorhamilton in County 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'.

ZIPIT FOREST ADVENTURES

Zipit is a high wire forest adventure park with a difference. It's a place for young and old, where children can let their imagination run wild and where adults can embrace their inner child. You can climb high into the treetops, swing into cargo nets, even ride a BMX across a bridge, before zipping down one of many ziplines. Come as a family, come on your own, or bring along a group. Children from age seven to adults can enjoy up to four hours of excitement and adventure. Forget the day-to-day stuff. Put down your smartphone and let yourself go in nature.

LOUGH KEY FOREST PARK

The Lakeside Visitor Centre is the gateway to more than 800 acres of parkland and forest at Lough Key. Its contemporary

design showcases timber frame construction from renewable sources, while embracing the landscape it sits in. The large area of glazing to the front of the centre captures the magnificent views over Lough Key, in addition to maximising passive solar gain - making the building highly energy efficient. Environmental sustainability and energy efficiency is continued throughout the design with the use of a wood pellet heating system, solar water heating panels on the roof and reduced glazing to the northern aspect of the centre.

PARKES CASTLE

A restored plantation castle of the early 17th Century, picturesquely situated on the shores of Lough Gill, once the home of Robert Parke and his family. The courtyard grounds contain evidence of an earlier 16th Century Tower House structure once owned by Sir Brian O'Rourke, who subsequently was executed at Tyburn, London in 1591. The castle has been restored using Irish oak and traditional craftsmanship.

WOODLAND SEGWAY

Go gliding in the beautiful surrounds of Lough Key Forest & Activity Park with Woodland Segway. Enjoy a guided glide, a historical tour, or a session on the lawn on the amazing technological marvel that is the Segway.

BOYLE ABBEY

An impressive and well-preserved Cistercian Monastery, which was founded in the 12th Century under the patronage of the local ruling family, the MacDermotts. Though mutilated during the 17th and 18th centuries, when it was used to accommodate a military garrison, Boyle Abbey nevertheless retains its ability to impress the visitor as one of the most formidable of the early Cistercian foundations in Ireland. A restored gatehouse of 16th/17th Century houses an exhibition.

Electric Bike Trails

"Leitrim is like a walled garden lying at the heart of an estate to which the key has been lost" - Eivlin Roden

"Having lived and worked in the area all our lives, we have lived the culture and heritage of this rural area. Our business is family-run from our base in Leitrim village," says Eileen Gibbons. "Seamus has been a local businessman for the last 30 years, and I worked in environmental protection for the same length of time. Bringing together our combined knowledge and experience, we have developed this Electric Bike Trails business to share with the tourists the best that this area has to offer.

"To us, Leitrim is one of the most beautiful counties in Ireland with fantastic scenery across its many lakes, rivers and mountains to equal other renowned parts of the country. It is one of the unsung counties of Ireland, and we want to show it off to Ireland and the rest of the world. "It has achieved the title 'lovely Leitrim', due to the beauty of its lakes and waterways which lie scattered throughout its length and breath. "Exploring on electric bikes is an ideal way to enjoy the unique qualities of our county. We also rent a broad range of hybrid bikes, children's bikes, carts and seats. It is crucial for us to do this in an environmentally friendly manner, and leave-no-trace principles are practised.

"It is imperative to us that you have a great cycle experience and we will do all we can to make that happen. We have used our local knowledge to map out the best routes in the area for cycling and have trails to suit all levels of fitness and interests. "When you arrive at our premises, we will discuss the routes and help you to choose the route best suited to you. We will also provide you with lots of local information



on places to visit and best places for refreshments along the way," said Eileen.

Electric Bike Trails offer cycle tours of the north-west of Ireland and day trips with five mapped trails to choose from, using battery assisted peddle bikes or regular bikes. One of the most popular routes is the Shannon Blueway, which is a trafficfree cycle along the bank of the Lough Allen Canal (20km round trip linking Leitrim village and Drumshanbo village).

Phone: +353 (0) 71 9623609 or +353 (0) 87 7386439. Email: info@electricbiketrails.com



The Arigna Mining Experience

A unique initiative inspired by the local community to record the 400-year history of mining in the area. This is an area of poor agricultural land, so coal mining provided much-needed employment in the region.

In the 19th and 20th centuries regular employment was rare in Connaught, and so it was said: "There was money in Arigna when there was no money elsewhere." Coal mining sustained the community of Arigna through the centuries and helped them survive the famine years, 1845 to 1852.

The last of the mines were closed in 1990, and the development of a visitor centre was first mooted then. The local community drove this idea with support from other agencies within County Roscommon. The Arigna Mining Experience was opened in April 2003 by the then Minister for Transport, Jim McDaid.

The complex gives visitors an insight into this industry that was fundamental to life in Arigna for many generations. It is now a cultural visitor centre of national and international significance.



The Bight Derg Buego

Travel through rural Ireland on foot, bike, or canoe, exploring the Lough Derg Blueway. On or by clear water with family and friends, there is plenty of fun to be had in the midst of this dramatic and beautiful countryside.

Launched in March 2018, the Lough Derg Blueway is an initiative driven by a successful partnership between the County Councils of Clare, Tipperary and Galway, the Lough Derg Marketing Group and Waterways Ireland.

The communities and businesses of Lough Derg are the heart of this project and have been driving forces since its inception. There is a succession of recreational trails which are multi-activity by water and on land. Beautiful adventures can be had packed full of enjoyable and exhilarating activities.

There are 21 shoreline-paddling journeys around the lake with a complementary sequence of cycling and walking trails, ensuring there is something for everyone to enjoy. Visit Podumna Village Glamping Pods for rest during your adventure. Set in a treelined village, these pods are comfortable, functional and very charming. They make an excellent base for your daytime excursions. All seeds are insulated, have power and heating, mattresses and their own deck area furnished with a table and chairs.

Blas restaurant can satiate your appetite before you start your trips with a full Irish breakfast, or whatever gets you going. Bike hire is available in the area to discover the beautiful Portumna Forest Park, the Portumna Castle and much more in this area.

Fishing Lough Derg makes for a fun family day out also, and all the rods, reels etc. are available for hire. While relaxing with your rod, you may also be able to spot one of the famous Lough Derg white-tailed eagles who nest on an Island close to Mountshannon.

The Lough Derg Blueway is a multi-activity recreational trail on or alongside this idyllic lake with easy access to canoe and bike hire, maps and trail information. There are many starting and finishing points, which are family and group friendly. All information can be found www.BluewaysIreland.org.



TAKE THE SCENIC ROUTE

Sail between Greenore, Co Louth and Greencastle, Co Down Continue the journey at carlingfordferry.com



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THINGS TO SEE AND DO IN CAVAN



TASTE OF CAVAN, 10-11TH AUGUST

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

TAKE A WALK

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

CAVAN COUNTY MUSEUM

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

CAVAN CATHEDRAL

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



House of Waterford Crystal

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





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

On tour, visitors first visit the mould room where they witness the mould making, a technique that has remained unchanged throughout the centuries, as Master Blowers shape the molten crystal flawlessly with the use of wooden moulds and hand tools. The next part of the tour is truly magical, as visitors enter the blowing department where they see glowing balls of crystal transformed into majestic shapes as they are put through the 1300-degree furnace. The Waterford Crystal pieces are afterwards hand marked for precision and accuracy, and they are subsequently cut, sculpted and engraved.

Visitors get a behind the scenes sneak peek of the highly skilled method of crystal manufacturing and see the high standards that the House of Waterford Crystal has for each and every piece that leaves the factory. The crystal is inspected at each stage of production, so each piece no matter how small goes through six inspections, and if it fails to reach the Waterford Crystal standards at any stage, it is smashed and returned to the furnace to be re-melted so that the piece can be started again. Some of the best-known trophies and prizes around the world have also been handcrafted in The House of Waterford Crystal, including the annual Peoples Choice Awards, the Solheim Cup, the Irish Open trophy and the Vincent Lombardi trophy.

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

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

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



See Exquisite Pieces of Crystal manufactured before your eyes



The House of Waterford Crystal brings a visit to Waterford to a whole new level, as visitors can witness the creation of crystal masterpieces right before their very eyes. The factory tour is a unique and captivating experience that allows people go behind the scenes for over an hour and see exactly how Waterford Crystal pieces are made and they can witness every stage of production, from the initial design stage right up to the final engraving of the piece.

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THINGS TO DO AT GOUILD LOUGHALLEN On the Jakes

Pink Apple Orchard

Try Eco Glamping in the beautiful and rustic surroundings of Leitrim. Glamping is a growing global trend which offers outdoor devotees a step up from traditional camping.

There's no tent to pitch, no sleeping bag to unroll and no lumpy ground to toss and turn on. It could be a bell ten, airstream, yurt, treehouse or tepee, all wonderful ways to feel close to the great outdoors without sacrificing comfort and luxury. There are three different styles of yurt to choose from; all hand-built and designed at the camp site - Hobbit House, Teepee or Gypsy wagon. This is a family-friendly resort with a children's play area nestled alongside the kitchen. There is plenty of outdoor seating and a large BBQ for alfresco eating on mild evening. To have the full outdoor peaceful experience in the midst of nature, Pink Apple Orchard is a WIFI-free zone.



Wilderness Therapy and Survival skills workshops will enable you to get in touch with the lives our ancestors lived and immerse yourself in the true beauty of nature. You will leave feeling energised after this positive wilderness experience which is suitable for all ages, from 16 to 90.



Corry Strand Beach

Located on the banks of Lough Allen, this is a beautiful and safe strand beach. Perfect for a swim with the kids, chill and picnic by the water.

Lough Allen Adventure Centre

This is an award-winning outdoor recreation centre on the banks of Lough Allen. Eco-friendly programmes allow you to enjoy amazing adventures while reducing your carbon footprint.

The activities range from adrenaline-fuelled water sports, such as kayaking and windsurfing, to scaling the summits of some of the Ireland's fabulous mountains.

This is an award-winning eco facility committed to protecting the environment. You can use solar power showers to warm you up after a windsurfing session.



ALL ROADS LEAD TO NENAGH

NENAGH IS A MOST ACCESSIBLE TOWN, TRAVELLING SOUTH FROM DUBLIN AND NORTH FROM LIMERICK, 100 MILES AND 25 MILES AWAY RESPECTIVELY

Conscious of its central location, Nenagh has striven to accommodate passing visitors and encourage overnight stays. Consequently, the town has a wide range of favourite places to stay in and eat at. In 1999, the town was by-passed to reduce excessive traffic and today offers the visitor great comfort and convenience. Nenagh is a friendly town (its name derives from Aonach, meaning a 'market' or 'gathering place') and people have been trading here for over 1,000 years.

The impressive Nenagh Castle tower - standing 100 feet in height - is prominent in location and stands as a poignant reminder of the first castle built by the great Butler family around 1220. The town lies in a fertile plain between the Arra and the Silvermines mountains and just a few miles from Lough Derg, one of the biggest lakes in Ireland. This position explains its importance since medieval times, which led the conquering Anglo-Norman warlords to establish it as a tremendous administrative centre. The magnificent Nenagh Castle, which they built in the 13th Century, is still dominant in the town. Beautiful townhouses from the 18th Century, together with the 19th Century courthouse, form an exciting cluster of good architecture.

MARKED WAYS

Stretching from Murroe in County Limerick, to Silvermines Village in County Tipperary - a total distance of approximately 44km - the Slieve Felim Way takes you into the very heart of beautiful, rural countryside.

NENAGH HERITAGE CENTRE & NORTH TIPP GENEALOGY CENTRE

Housing the Nenagh Heritage, Genealogy Centre and Museum, the Nenagh Heritage Centre is located in two stone Georgian buildings. These were built in 1840-1842 as the Governor's House and Gatehouse of an extensive gaol complex for North Tipperary.

IRISH FISHING TOURS

Irish fishing tours provides customised fishing holidays based in the picturesque harbour village of Garrykennedy on the shores of Lough Derg, Tipperary. Telephone: +353 (0)87 9553554

AONACH AR SIÚL WALKING CLUB & FESTIVAL

Aonach ar Siúl Hill Walking Club was founded in Nenagh in 2000 and has over 60 members. They organise outings throughout the year. Telephone: +353 (0)85 8267645

BALLYHOURIGAN WOODS LOOP

Ballyhourigan Woods Loop overlaps with a short section of the Slieve Felim Way - a waymarked route which travels from Murroe in County Limerick to Silvermines in County Tipperary.

LARKINS BAR & RESTAURANT

This traditional family-run bar and restaurant is situated in Garrykennedy, on the south shore of Lough Derg on the River Shannon.

LOUGH DERG GARDEN TRAIL

An exciting route of beautiful gardens within easy reach of Lough Derg, the garden trail includes both public and privately owned spaces. They also vary in size and style, ranging from manicured gardens to gardens with wildlife.



Bogwood Sculptures

Near the picturesque Barley Harbour, on the banks of Lough Ree, Micheal and Kevin Casey produce their magnificent sculptures in bog oak and other forms of bog wood.

The father and son team have collectively spent over 60 years honing their skills to make them masters of this art. Michael's lifelong love of wood is at the centre of his sculptures, which can be found in private and public collections all over the world.

He has worked from his workshop on the shores of Lough Ree for the last 40 years, moving from the medium of Elm to Bog Oak after the Elm disappeared from Europe.

Luan Gallerv

Situated in Athlone. the Luan Gallery has showcased national and international visual arts projects since 2012. The gallery is part of an extension to the 1897 Fr Matthew Temperance Hall and won both the RIAI Best Cultural Building 2013 and the coveted Civic Choice award in 2014. The gallery's projects ensure there is an engaging and varied arts programme available to the people of Athlone and visitors to the town. It provides a strong educational programme with guided tours, workshops, lectures and classes throughout the year. The name Luan comes from Lugair, the son of Lugaid, who was a mythical chief that gave his name to the town.

Quay Arts - Ballina, Co Tipperary

Quay Arts is a dedicated creative space located on the southern shores of Lough Derg. It is a bright, contemporary venue, suitable for all arts, with a light well-equipped space to give the community, tutors and artists somewhere to work and express themselves. Quay Arts offers events suitable for all age groups and abilities, with in-house classes, exhibitions, workshops and other events.

The space is also available for hire to those artists or tutors who wish to give classes, put on exhibitions etc. It is a space to be creative, open minded, meet others and have fun.

Bridge House Studios – Killaloe, Co. Clare

Bridge House Studios is run by printmaker and artist Iseult O'Flynn and picture framer Chloe Croydon. They have a shop in Killaloe where work can be dropped in for framing; or vou can just browse art materials, beautiful Japanese papers and a selection of art for sale. Bridge House Gallery, housed in a 19th Century cottage, is in the heart of East Clare, five minutes from Killaloe. It is an ideal environment for artists, writers and those seeking time-out or inspiration in this beautiful place. An eclectic mix of past and present, its rustic setting and contemporary styling makes it a wonderful place to visit.



Kingfisher Holiday Homes

Kingfisher Holiday Homes are ideally situated on the banks of Upper Lough Erne, with some offering direct access to the Shannon-Erne Waterway.



The houses offer the holidaymaker a peaceful, quiet and relaxing stay with all the benefits of being located close to the water's edge. All guest houses are newly-decorated and offer a high level of spec and comfort. They are equipped with most mod cons, including free Wi-Fi.

Importantly, some Kingfisher Holiday Homes are wheelchair friendly with downstairs bedrooms and bathrooms. Located in the heart of the wellknown town of Belturbet, famous for its fishing and water sports such as rowing and kayaking, it is situated in the only International Geopark with protected wildlife sanctuaries - offering the visitor many varied walks and wildlife spotting opportunities.

Nearby popular amenities in the vicinity are a Championship golf course, the Scouts centre at Castle Saunderson, the Belturbet parkland golf course, Crom Estate, the Marble Arch Caves, Florence Court, the Cavan Burren, Breffni Park, St Tiernach's Park and the Shannon Erne Waterway.

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THINGS TO SEE AND DO IN ATHLONE

The bustling town of Athlone sits on the boundaries of two counties - Westmeath and Roscommon - and is very popular as a destination for touring holidays.

With a wide range of attractions, high quality accommodation and modern restaurants, Athlone has a character and local vibrancy all of its own.

Known as a 'Gateway to the West', Athlone's location on the River Shannon makes it a popular stop for pleasure boats and cruises. An ideal place for adventure-based holidays, this busy and prosperous town has activities that cater for all the family.

The town's riverside location (opening onto nearby Lough Ree) is the cornerstone of its attraction and the source of its natural beauty. Athlone is proud to be the centre of Shannon Cruising and its hire boats are available for day trips and longer tours. Other activities in the area include walking, angling, cycling and golfing.

Athlone's theatrical scene is varied: There are three theatres - the Dean Crowe Theatre & Arts Centre, the Little Theatre and Passionfruit Theatre have interesting programmes for all ages.

The RTÉ All-Ireland Drama Festival takes place annually in the town, bringing together amateur drama groups from across Ireland. Street theatre, art exhibitions, workshops, and events for young people are all part of the festival, making it an exciting time to visit Athlone.

The Athlone Literary Festival is an annual event which began in 1999, originally as a weekend celebration of the life and works of John Broderick, but which now features a great variety of speakers and debaters. With exciting festivals, excellent shopping facilities and great access to water sports and adventures, Athlone is a fantastic town and the perfect base for your holiday in Ireland this year.

LOUGH REE YACHT CLUB

Lough Ree Yacht Club in Athlone, County Westmeath is the second oldest sailing club in the world.

THE PALACE BAR

Open every Thursday to Sunday, with late bars every Thursday, Friday and Saturday. The Palace Bar has become known as Athlone's live music venue.

BAYSPORTS

Baysports is a water adventure centre on the shores of the majestic Lough Ree.

ATHLONE CASTLE VISITOR CENTRE

Athlone Castle in Westmeath is a 12th Century castle and family-friendly attraction in the heart of Ireland. See Athlone's history, people, castle and battles explored and brought to life at Athlone Castle Visitor Centre with modern exhibitions.

GERTIE BROWNE'S BAR

Gertie Browne's is famous in Athlone, Co.Westmeath. It has a live music session on Monday nights and is always full to the brim.

VISITOR FARMS

Glendeer Pet Farm, in County Westmeath, is an interactive experience where people can see, feed and pet animals. Animals include deer, pot belly pigs, llamas, emu, ostrich, goats, donkeys, sheep, monkeys, wallabies and tortoises.

MULLINGAR - ATHLONE - OLD RAIL TRAIL GREENWAY

The Old Rail Trail is a rural route through the heart of the Irish midlands connecting the bustling town of Athlone with the market town of Mullingar, passing through the town of Moate.

A day out for everyone at

Lough Key Forest Activity Park

Enjoy a trip back in time through old servant tunnels that once belonged to Rockingham House, followed by a walk along Ireland's only tree canopy trail, with the Lough Key Experience in Co. Roscommon

The canopy trail is a walkway above the treeline, 350 metres long and up to 10 metres high, offering fabulous vistas over the forest and lakelands.

Younger children can let their imagination run wild in the fabulous enclosed Adventure Play Kingdom, a safe outdoor play area with spongy ground surface and colourful equipment - including obstacle courses, a castle, slides and even a mini zip line for kids up to 12.

Older children can opt for four hours of fun at the adrenalin-packed Zipit Forest Adventures – a fantastic high-rope course in the natural forest setting – with zip lines, rope bridges and cargo nets, set out over 1.6km, with 88 activities and five circuits for different ages, heights and abilities.

Then, it's time for lunch at the Lakeside Café on the outdoor deck overlooking Lough Key. The café also does takeaway items if you want to build your own picnic (indeed, you can bring your own picnic) and enjoy the stunning scenery from any of the outdoor seating areas.

Once refuelled, if you are ready for a challenge, then enter the Boda Borg puzzle rooms. There's funfilled activities, creative puzzles and enjoyable tasks - but no instructions!

Lough Key has terrific orienteering facilities, and there is also Wheel-O



(wheelchair friendly orienteering). Meander through the historical and woodland walking trails or take the cycle trail...in fact, there are eight kilometres of traffic-free trails in the park, so you can bring your bikes and experience safe, off-road cycling at its finest.

The park itself stretches over 350 hectares, so what better way to see it all than by hiring a bike on-site, maybe even an electric bike?

Or, for an entertaining way of getting around, Woodland Segways take you on a half-hour Segway glide through the forest. There is even more fun for the younger kids who want to try out their driving skills, Woodland Safari offers a Kids Mini Jeep Driving Experience on a specially formed track!

Take a look at the islands dotting Lough Key by hiring rowing boats or opt for the more relaxed option and take a guided Lough Key Boat Tour.

End the day with a barbecue and head on back to your tent or caravan at the newly-renovated on-site Caravan and Campsite, but be sure to book ahead as it gets bustling during peak times.

www.loughkey.ie www.zipit.ie

Breffni Arms Hotel Weddings Cavan

We cater for all sizes when it comes to weddings. Whether it's a small intimate affair of 40-80 people or a more massive party for 300, we have the venue to match. Combined with hospitality, comfort and professional service unite to make us a leading choice for wedding celebrations and significant gala events in the area.

The Breffni Arms Hotel has a reputation for detailed planning, personal service and great food. Central to this commitment is the fact that we will host only one wedding celebration per day so you can relax in the knowledge that you are getting the full dedication of our management and staff. We're ready to work with you to make planning and execution of your event trouble-free and ensure a splendid time is had by all your guests.

For more information and our Wedding Packages, please contact info@breffniarms.com



Shannon Ferries

From early morning, as the mist descends the Shannon Estuary to the Wild Atlantic Sea, to the setting of the sun in the late of the evening, Shannon Ferry will take you and your vehicle on this memorable 20-minute journey across the estuary; linking the iconic tourist destinations of the Banner County of Clare to the Kingdom of Kerry.

This is a lovely experience for visitors who would like a short break in their journey to relax as they sail across the majestic Shannon Estuary. And if you're lucky, you might even catch a glimpse of the dolphins, which in the summer, can sometimes swim so near the ferry, as if just to entertain you.

As the only vehicle ferry trip on the central spine of the Wild Atlantic Way, this invigorating journey allows you experience the rugged nature of land and

sea as you breathe in the fresh salty sea ai.

online booking.

Texas Steakout Limerick

This sums up what the Texas Steakout is about. From the very start, we wanted to make the restaurant homely and comfortable, so the use of more recipes from your Grandmother's kitchen was a better option than food that people - at that time - were unfamiliar with.

The Texas Steakout Restaurant was established almost 29 years ago and since its opening has remained one of the top favourites on the Limerick dining scene. Located in the very heart of town, the 'Steakout' is a meeting place for people from all walks of life. At the 'Steakout' we cater for all varied tastes: not just for meat lovers. We also have an excellent choice of chicken, vegetarian and fish dishes. And then there is our Mexican Menu - the likes of which you would have to travel to Central America to get anything better!

The Islands of Ireland: Scattery Island off Kilrush Co. Clare

Scattery Island round tower and Teampall Naomh Mhuire, off Kilrush Co. Clare, has been uninhabited since 1978 but was previously home to a monastic settlement for 600 years, writes Dan MacCarthy

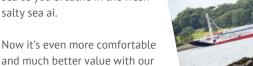
Its name sounds like a cry of a forlorn hunter, or perhaps some kind of military ordnance, but Scattery Island or Inis Cathaig, in the Shannon estuary, is far from being forlorn. Yes, it has been uninhabited since 1978, but it has had an illustrious history. It was home to a monastic settlement for 600 years, it was plundered in numerous Viking raids, and at its peak was home to 141 people.

Last month Scattery Island was named as Irish winner of the 2017 European Destination of Excellence (Eden). And edenic it indeed is.

Located 2.5km off Kilrush, Co Clare, it is a haven of peace and tranquillity. Not too far from the mainland to be isolated but enough out to sea for you to stand in awe of the mighty Atlantic crashing on its western shore.

Scattery Island inhabitants earned a reputation as river pilots, guiding ships upstream to Limerick. But it was a hazardous occupation and many drowned directing larger vessels to the city through treacherous currents.





Summer at SHARE!

SHARE Discovery Village is an activity centre based 15 miles outside Enniskillen on the shores of Upper Lough Erne in County Fermanagh.

You can visit for a day of activities or, if you fancy staying a little longer, SHARE offers self-catering chalets with up to 12 beds and a 3* NITB Camping and Caravan site.

SHARE provides a vast variety of affordable outdoor and indoor activities onsite, offering fun for people of all ages - whatever the weather!

A daily activity programme made up of one-hour and two-hour activities from as little as £6 per person is on offer over the summer months. Activities include banana boating, stand up paddle boarding, canoeing, kayaking, indoor and outdoor climbing, indoor and outdoor archery, arts & craft activities.

SHARE's new Water Park will also be open daily throughout the summer months!

For those with a bit of experience who would like to explore the lake and islands themselves, SHARE offers canoe, kayak or stand up paddle board hire.

So come on, visit SHARE this Summer! What are you waiting for? Book to avoid disappointment on www.sharevillage.org; call 028 677 22122, or check out our Facebook page.





The Pipers Inn

The Pipers Inn is located just off the main road connecting Killaloe and Scarriff.

First established in the 1920s by Mrs Mary Wallace as a Licenced House and Inn, the Pipers Inn was made famous between 1978 and 1987 by Tony Keegan, the original 'Piper', who established the pub as a centre of traditional music for local and visiting musicians alike. After several owners, the Pipers Inn closed its doors in 2007 until it was purchased by its current owners in 2011.

After extensive renovation and refurbishment, The Pipers Inn was re-launched in September 2012. It is now a family-run business providing a modern, yet cosy restaurant; a bar with a snug area and a private function room catering for all your needs.

For visitors who want to pitch up a tent, or park up the campervan, they've recently opened Killaloe's only campsite. It offers a great location to base yourselves while touring the local area.



The Snake in the Lake

More commonly known as the 'Snake in the Lake', the Acres Lake floating boardwalk is the first of its kind in Ireland. Curving around the shores of the lake, this 600m floating walkway was developed to connect and extend the towpaths along the Shannon Blueway, and now forms part of a 14km multi-activity trail connecting the towns of Drumshanbo and Carrick-on-Shannon. This easy-to-use trail is suitable for all ages and abilities and can be completed by bike, boot or even boat.

For more information on the Blueways in Ireland, visit www. bluewaysireland.org.



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Stunning vistas, rolling sand dunes, dramatic cliff edge backdrops - golfing along the Wild Atlantic Way's world-class championship golf courses is every golfer's dream.

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COUNTY SLIGO GOLF CLUB, CO SLIGO

Set in the picturesque seaside village of Rosses Point, the 27-hole complex County Sligo Golf Club course is regarded as one of the great championship links courses. The club is home to the famous West of Ireland Open amateur championship (since 1923) and has hosted many other prestigious events including the Home Internationals, the Irish Close and the Irish Professional Matchplay Championship.



OLD COURSE, BALLYBUNION, CO KERRY

Having gained a reputation as one of the best links golf courses in the world, The Old Course, Ballybunion, is covered with rolling sand hills and grassy dunes. The challenging layout features narrow, contoured fairways that feel as though they are tunneled through the dunes. The already beautiful landscape is further enhanced by the stunning views of the Atlantic.



WATERVILLE GOLF LINKS, CO KERRY

Continually rated among the top five courses in Ireland, and in the top 20 links courses in the world, Waterville Golf Links is an exceptional experience. Over 100 years old, Waterville combines sand dunes, gorse and native grasses, firm fairways, sod-faced bunkers and subtle putting surfaces, all intertwined by the ever-changing weather.



OLD HEAD GOLF LINKS, KINSALE, CO CORK

Built on 220 acres of land and jutting out into the Atlantic, Old Head Golf Links offers stunning ocean views, and an exceptional golfing experience. The links and practice area occupy 180 acres, with the remaining 40 acres taken up with unspoilt cliffs, which frame the course. With the ever-changing sea breezes, the course provides a stern test to the touring pro and the high handicapper alike.



DOONBEG GOLF LINKS COURSE, CO CLARE

Designed by two-time British Open Champion Greg Norman, the world renowned 18-hole championship, Doonbeg Golf Links Course at Trump International Golf Links & HoteI™ Ireland (formerly the Doonbeg Golf Club), spans 1.5 miles of crescent-shaped beach and century-old sand dunes along Doughmore Bay. The County Clare golf course was officially opened in 2002 and immediately earned the prestigious title of Golf Digest's Best New International Course.



ENNISCRONE GOLF CLUB, CO SLIGO

Repeatedly a top-20 links course in Golf Digest's review of Irish golf courses, Enniscrone Golf Club's Dune course is now considered one of Ireland's top-ranked championship links courses. Set against the spectacular backdrop of the Nephin and Ox Mountains, and the Atlantic Ocean, Enniscrone is a must-play for golf enthusiasts.



LAHINCH GOLF CLUB, CO CLARE

Ranked among the world's greatest links courses, The Old Course, one of two 18-hole courses at Lahinch Golf Club, is a classic seaside links layout with rolling greens and undulating fairways. The towering sand dunes that cover the landscape guarantee that golfers will encounter several blind shots. The unpredictable winds coming off the ocean add an interesting twist to the round.



CARNE GOLF LINKS, BELMULLET, CO MAYO

Lying amidst one of the most beautiful, breathtaking and unspoilt of areas in Ireland, Carne Golf Links is famed the world over for its exceptional golf course and the surrounding white sandy Atlantic beaches that stretch for miles. Overlooking Blacksod Bay and the Atlantic Ocean, Carne Golf Links was the last links course to be designed by the late Eddie Hackett, and it is now believed by many who have played it to his most significant challenge.



PORTSALON GOLF LINKS, CO DONEGAL

One of the oldest golf courses in the world, with golf being played here since the 1880s, the Portsalon Golf Links is ranked as one of the top courses in Ireland by Golf Digest. The club was one of the founder members of the Golfing Union of Ireland, the oldest golfing union in the world. Stretching along Ballymastocker Beach, which was voted the second most beautiful beach in the world by Observer readers, golfers at Portsalon are in for a treat of the senses and a true golf links test.





TRALEE GOLF COURSE, CO KERRY

Built by Arnold Palmer, Tralee Golf Course has all the ingredients of an exceptional Irish golfing experience - beautiful surroundings, stunning views of the Atlantic, and a challenging course. One of the finest courses in Ireland, Palmer chose it to be his first golf course in Europe.



DONEGAL GOLF CLUB, MURVAGH

With the Atlantic to one side and a forest of evergreen to the other, the challenging Murvagh Links golf course offers wonderful views and satisfying golf in abundance. One of Ireland's most outstanding championship links golf courses, the course was designed by the legendary course architect, Eddie Hackett, and further enhanced in recent years by master of Links design, Pat Ruddy.



CONNEMARA GOLF LINKS, CO GALWAY

Located in the rugged and scenic land between the Twelve Bens and the Atlantic Ocean, the Connemara Golf Links offers some of the finest golf in the country. Designed by Eddie Hackett, the course offers a challenge for all levels.

Offaly – Ireland's hidden gem

The great thing about a visit to Offaly is that you're always going to be surprised. Around every bend and down every country road, you'll come upon an unexpected view, or a tucked-away gem of a place. Join us at the newly-renovated home of Tullamore D.E.W. Irish Whiskey and immerse yourself in the history and magic that lies inside the walls of this 19th Century bonded warehouse, where the whiskey-making tradition began.

Located on the banks of the grand canal in Tullamore, the Visitor Centre has been beautifully restored to all its original glory. Once inside, you can enjoy a genuine Irish welcome and a guided tour which blends both audiovisual and traditional storytelling to help you see, smell, taste and understand the craft, time and passion dedicated to each glass of Tullamore D.E.W. Irish Whiskey. The award-winning gardens of Birr Castle Gardens and Science Centre are both abundant in amazing feats of science and engineering; as well as rare trees and flowers, beautiful wildlife, and walks along peaceful rivers and the lake. Created over generations, it is an environmental and scientific time capsule with the added excitement for little ones in the Treehouse Adventure Area, featuring Ireland's largest treehouse.

Art meets nature in Lough Boora Discovery Park, which is home to a dramatic outdoor sculpture park displaying 24 large-scale sculptures. Walk, run, cycle, fish and explore this magical world where the fairy avenue leads to Mesolithic sites. The beautiful thing about the Slieve Bloom Mountains (besides being the most unspoilt and uncongested in the country) is that you'll find trails to suit every ability; from the experienced hiker to the casual stroller. Choose from a selection of 21 marked walks, ranging in length from one hour to four hours and varying degrees of difficulty.

Westmeath's lakes of legend

Westmeath makes a great holiday destination; a place where thousands of years of intriguing history can be discovered in hidden landscapes of real beauty. Known as the 'Lake County', its captivating stories are linked through water and lush green countryside. Getting off the beaten track is easy; hire a boat or a bike from local friendly providers or bring your walking shoes and you are on your way.

Lough Ennell and Lough Owel are favourite spots for watersports and angling, and the Royal Canal Greenway links these majestic lakes with the bustling town of Mullingar. Belvedere House Gardens and Park on the shores of Lough Ennell is a must-visit, with its beautifully restored Georgian villa, Victorian walled garden and woodland walking trails.

Lough Derravaragh is integral to Irish mythology, where legend has it the Children of Lír were turned into swans by their jealous stepmother, condemned to 900 years of wandering. Close to this mystical lake, you will find Tullynally Castle and Gardens, an ornate estate that is well worth the stop.

Westwards from Mullingar, you can pedal your way through the tranquil midlands on the Old Rail Trail Greenway, to the vibrant town of Athlone on the banks of the majestic River Shannon. Visit www.mullingar.ie or www.athlone.ie to plan your visit.

The Killaloe Hotel

Located quite literally on the shores of the beautiful Lough Derg, the four-star Killaloe hotel is ideal for those seeking a break from the hustle and bustle of modern life.

The 32-bedroom hotel offers comfort and style, to create a warm, welcoming ambience that brings guests back again and again.

The hotel is a stylish wedding venue with couples coming from all over Ireland, attracted by the location and the award-winning personal service provided by proprietor Catherine Fahy and her team.



Tullamore Court Hotel

Just a short 5-minute walk from Tullamore Train Station, our Tullamore town centre hotel has something for everyone - luxury accommodation complemented by fine dining, extensive leisure facilities complete with 20 meters swimming pool and friendly professional staff.

Over the years, the hotel has gained a reputation for excellent food and has won numerous awards for the dining facilities. They also have a dedicated conference centre which, combined with the large car park and distance from all major towns in Ireland, make it an ideal location for your next conference or meeting.

Check back regularly for your guide on what to do in the area and our line-up of fantastic concerts throughout the year is all listed on their upcoming events page.

Situated in the heart of the Irish countryside in Tullamore, County Offaly, the hotel is only 60 minutes from Dublin or Galway and 75 minutes from Limerick.

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