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Publisher's Note

Hello and welcome to our first Go Wild tourism issue of 2019 for Ireland's Wild Atlantic Way.

Planning and putting together the content for this title is always done with a sense of excitement as each year we continue to be spellbound by the Wild Atlantic Way.

We will follow this issue with our other Tourism titles Go Wild Dublin, Go Ancient East, Go Wild on the Lakes and our world award-winning issue Go Wild Food Experience.

All of these titles will be available to download for free once published, so continue to stay with us and check out www.gowildmagazine.com.

Please have the most fantastic holiday and feel free to email me with your stories on travelling the Wild Atlantic Way.

A huge thank you to everyone involved in creating this issue.

Bobby Power

Publisher, Go Wild Magazine titles

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Editor's Welcome

Fáilte go hÉireann - welcome to Ireland and to the March 2019 edition of Go Wild Tourism, which celebrates all that is magnificent, breathtaking and entertaining along the Wild Atlantic Way.

We are delighted to be back, bigger and better for 2019, gratefully clutching another award – Best Food & Tourism Publisher 2019 – and our thanks to all at EU Business News for the recognition.

I must own up. I am a child of the Wild Atlantic Way, growing up with salty air and crashing waves on my doorstep right at the start of the famed trail in Kinsale, County Cork. So, I guess that makes me both lucky and biased, for it would take some work to persuade me that there is a more beautiful country in the world - especially when the sun shines!

Ireland broke all records for tourist numbers in 2018, with more than 10.6 million people making the journey to our shores. Yes, Brexit poses challenges and uncertainties for 2019, but our celebrated status as a world class destination remains intact and another bumper year is coming up.

Our ideas at Go Wild HQ are always huge but the concept remains simple – we aim to produce a guide to all that

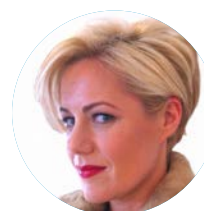
is wonderful along the Wild Atlantic Way, nudging you gently to the not-to-be-missed sights, the best eateries and the secret gems.

Bring us home with you and show your friends just how good it really is. We want to share our small beautiful nation with the world; for you will always be sure of a warm welcome and a great time. I hope a flick through Go Wild will inspire you, so that Ireland might delight you. Have a fantastic stay,

Wendy Good

Editor

Go Wild Magazine titles



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

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

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Gougane Barra, Co Cork



Shay Hunston
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MAYO.IE

Escape Explore Enjoy

Welcome to County Mayo, the third largest county in Ireland offering the longest coastline, highest sea cliffs and the largest island. For visitors and locals alike, Mayo is home to a host of attractions and activities to enjoy. What better way to discover Mayo's charm than by taking to the great outdoors!

Right at the heart of Ireland's Wild Atlantic Way, Mayo embraces the Atlantic Ocean with many of the county's unforgettable landmarks dotted along its coastline - majestic Croagh Patrick, Clew Bay, Achill's unmistakable cliffs, the Stags of Broadhaven and the sea stack Dún Briste.

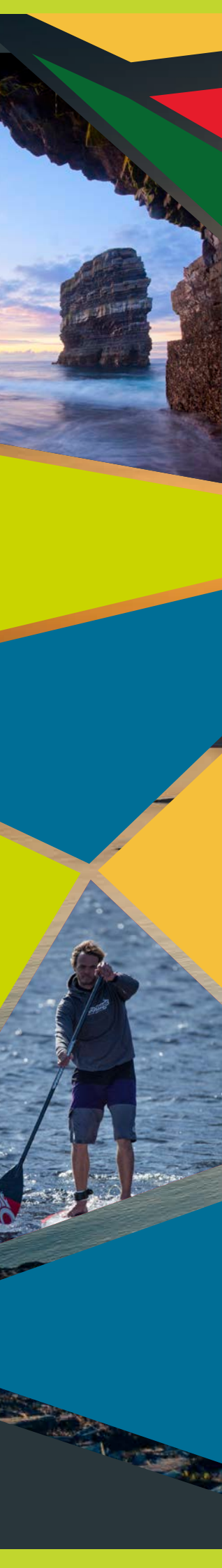
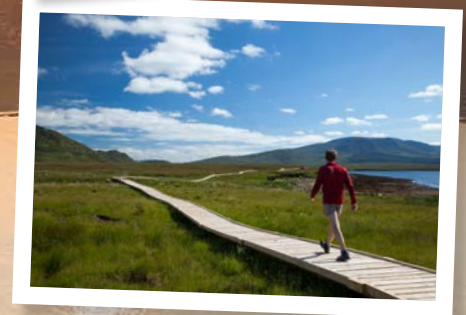
Mayo's Atlantic coastline is a playground for those with an adventurous spirit, offering world class deep-sea fishing, surfing, coasteering, kayaking and kitesurfing. For those who enjoy going off the beaten track, you can't beat North Mayo or Erris - a region voted best place to go wild in Ireland! (The Irish Times) This area is a haven for walkers, anglers and golfers alike, with Ballina's Ridge Pool on the River Moy renowned worldwide for its salmon angling, the Foxford Way walking trail and a championship course at the exceptional Carne Golf Links.

The Great Western Greenway, connecting two of Mayo's premier tourist locations (Westport and Achill Island), offers an award-winning family-friendly biking and walking trail, with stunning scenery, historic villages, ancient ruins, arts & crafts, the Gourmet Greenway and Mulranny's famous goats to discover along the way.

The rich heritage of Mayo means there's plenty for the culturally curious to explore too. The National Museum of Ireland - Country Life located in Turlough (near Castlebar) tells the story of rural life in Ireland through the years, while the Jackie Clarke Collection in Ballina shares one man's incredible collection of Irish historical material. Mayo's religious heritage reminds us that the county was once a place of spiritual reflection for the religious, among them St Patrick, Ireland's national saint. A tour of Westport House, one of Ireland's best-loved attractions and once home to Grace O'Malley, the renowned 16th century Pirate Queen, offers a fascinating insight into history.

County Mayo has its own International Airport known as Ireland West Airport Knock. A true gateway to the west of Ireland, the airport serves more than 25 scheduled and charter destinations across Ireland, Europe, the UK and further afield.

For further details and information on County Mayo please check out our website at www.mayo.ie



Mayo - Things to see and do!

Climb Croagh Patrick

Croagh Patrick, Ireland's most famous holy mountain, stands at 764m (2,507ft) and is best known for its association with Saint Patrick, who is said to have fasted for 40 days at the summit. In its entirety, the route is a 7km long round-trip but there are viewing points along the route that allow the less active to enjoy stunning views of Clew Bay without the strenuous climb.

Cycle the Great Western Greenway from Westport to Achill

Escape the bustle of urban life on one of Ireland's longest off-road cycling and walking trails. The old Westport to Achill railway line, which closed in 1937, is 42km long and almost entirely traffic-free. Ideal for a spin on the bike and for a day of family fun.

Visit Westport House & Adventure Park

There has been a 'big house' on this site since the 1500s, when Grace O'Malley, the famous Pirate Queen, built one of her many castles here. The current house, built in 1730, has an abundance of artefacts, artwork and treasures that will fascinate all culture-vultures! The Pirate Adventure Park – perfectly suited to children under 12 – will leave the kids screaming for more with rides, slides, boats and trains. And the more adventurous can enjoy everything from archery to zorbing!

Visit Ireland's largest Island - Achill Island

Achill is one of Ireland's most spectacular and unique places. Its rugged landscape features dramatic cliffs, soaring mountains, remote lakes and secluded beaches. Explore one of the Wild Atlantic Way signature discovery points at Keem and try out some water-based activities at our newly-established Blueway location.

Experience coastal walking at Ceathrú Thaidhg - located in Erris, on the North Mayo coast

Enjoy one of the many spectacular walks in the Ceathrú Thaidhg area, providing an exhilarating escape into the wilderness of this remote region. The Lonely Planet Walking in Ireland guide describes it as "the finest sustained coastal walk with a profusion of cliffs, crags, caves, chasms and islands along the remote north Mayo coast."

Visit Ballycroy National Park

Ballycroy National Park is Ireland's sixth National Park and is located in north-west Mayo. It comprises 11,000 hectares of Atlantic bog and mountainous terrain, covering a vast uninhabited and unspoilt wilderness dominated by the Nephin Beg Mountain range. The views are suitably captivating, offering stunning views over the landscape of Co. Mayo.

Visit Downpatrick Head and the Céide Fields

Older than Egypt's pyramids, the Céide Fields are the oldest known field systems in the world. The remnants of the ancient settlements and megalithic tombs have been preserved thanks to a protective bog environment. Here, you can indulge yourself in a vast prehistoric landscape, a natural wild ecology of blanket bog, dramatic cliffs and coastline and of course the majestic Downpatrick Head, one of the signature points on the Wild Atlantic Way.

Take a boat trip along the famous River Moy

Renowned as Ireland's premier salmon river, experience the Monasteries of the Moy with a fascinating boat trip.

Step into the past with a visit to Rosserk Abbey and Moyne Abbey, the beautifully preserved religious sites of North Mayo, witnessing one of the finest preserved Franciscan friaries in Ireland - Rosserk. Follow the River Moy to its estuary and you'll find Moyne Abbey, founded in 1460 for the Franciscans. The extensive ruin includes a cruciform church, chapel, tower and cloisters. Visitors can also explore the sacristy, chapter house, kitchen and refectory.

Visit the National Museum of Ireland - Country Life

Visit the Museum of Country Life situated in the stunning grounds of Turlough Park, near Castlebar. The museum comprises the estate's original house, which has been fully restored, as well as a purpose-built exhibition gallery. The innovative exhibits on show at the museum tell the story of Irish country life between 1850 and 1950.

Visit Knock - Ireland's Holy Shrine

Visit Knock Shrine, the site of an apparition of Our Lady, St Joseph and St John the Evangelist, in 1879. Knock is one of the nine Marian apparition sites worldwide and is described as the "spiritual heart" of the Roman Catholic Church. Knock Shrine is revered by Catholics around the world as a special place of prayer and pilgrimage, healing and hope. In 1979, St John Paul II described Knock Shrine as "the goal of my journey to Ireland".

Cong

The village of Cong is nestled along Mayo's border with County Galway and commands great respect with historians throughout Ireland. The world famous Ashford Castle lies on the shores of Lough Corrib and attracts a large number of visitors annually. The Ashford Estate was founded in the early 1700s but Ashford Castle dates back to the 12th Century, when it was built by the De Burgo family.





ALL THAT SPARKLES...

The world's finest crystal continues to be made by skilled craftsmen at the House of Waterford Crystal factory, situated in the heart of Waterford City, in Ireland's Ancient East.

The House of Waterford Crystal scooped the Best Ireland's Ancient East Tourism Experience (greater than 50,000 visitors) at the Irish Tourism Industry Awards 2019 at a recent awards ceremony in Dublin.

The awards, organised by the Irish Tourism Industry Confederation (ITIC), Fáilte Ireland and Tourism Ireland, gathered the crème de la crème of the Irish tourism industry together, announcing 15 winning companies as best in their category from 75 shortlisted finalists.

David McCoy, Director of Sales & Marketing at the House of Waterford Crystal expressed delight with winning the award for Best Ireland's Ancient East Tourism Experience: "This is a great achievement for us and we are delighted to be recognised as winner – tourism is vital for the national and regional economy and we are so pleased to play our part in such a key sector," he said.

A significant tourist attraction, the House of Waterford Crystal welcomes 200,000 visitors annually from across the world. The factory on the Mall is now a major tourist attraction as well as a crucial business for the Irish economy.

"We have a manufacturing plant and brand experience in Waterford, where we produce crystal and give visitors an opportunity to tour the factory and see how we make our products," explains David.

The factory in Waterford contains a brand new continuous melt tank furnace that has been tailor-made for Waterford Crystal's specifications and produces two tonnes of molten crystal every day. It uses leading edge technology to deliver molten crystal of the highest quality for skilled master blowers to hand-shape and hand-blow Waterford Crystal's range of premium products.

"We have a 12,000 sq ft showroom which represents everything we do in crystal, including a whole section on golf and sport, where we are heavily involved," says David. "Even though our audience is beyond Ireland in the US, Australia and the UK, everyone at home wants to be part of something that is part of the fabric of Ireland and our heritage. "A lot of thought goes into our products, which are inspired by Irish heritage, by our landscape, our music and the arts. It is not just about the shape or the design of the products, but the stories behind those designs. In many cases, those designs reflect Irish culture in terms of castles,

music and art. If you want to recognise a special achievement or give a special gift for a celebration, Waterford is one of the first places people look. In the same way, Waterford is present in so many homes around the world – some very famous home – in lighting and chandeliers."

Waterford Crystal continues to provide some of the most prestigious trophies to the world's great sporting events, all made at the facility. The list of famous trophies produced by Waterford Crystal for the sports industry alone is simply staggering; the Irish Open Trophy, the Honda Classic and the Masters Snooker trophy, to name just a few.

Waterford Crystal also designed the spectacular Times Square Ball – a crystal ball which forms a prominent part of a New Year's Eve celebration in Times Square in New York, colloquially known as the ball drop.



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Trailblazing Irish Beauty Queen Makes Data Fashionable!

by Nicky Sullivan



Emma Waldron is no stranger to the spotlight. The former Miss Ireland has been showcasing some of our favourite brands and presenting television shows for the likes of Larry King ever since she won her title in 2010.

But now she's hoping to turn that spotlight around with a new app — waldron.app — that helps women and men find the fashion inspirations that are right for them, while also actively promoting the spaces in which female creatives can flourish.

Which is also why the dynamic young entrepreneur has made

“It was a strategic decision to move here; when you’re starting a business, you just have to go where you need to be. But I love it so much and for now, it’s home.”

...

her home in New York for the last four years. “I can’t believe it’s been four years already,” she enthuses on a call to Go Wild magazine.

“In some ways, it feels like I’ve been here longer, but then I go home and it’s like I just left.”

This is not Emma’s first entrepreneurial outing. Several years ago, after finding herself inundated with products that were not really her style, she launched an app that set out to match brands with the influencers that are right for them. Waldron.app is really an extension of that, in that it seeks to match the



fashion-conscious with the fashion content that is right for them.

“It’s essentially a single platform for shoppable personalised fashion content,” she says, giving the elevator speech before launching into an energetic explanation of how it works. Think Netflix, but for all the fashion-oriented articles, ideas and inspirations that work for you.

“I’ve been playing with the beta version. Every time you swipe this way or that, it’s like you’re training a little computer that’s learning who you are and then serving you content that you want to see. There is so much content out there now and it’s so hard to sift through it and find what’s right for you. I basically want to give people their time back.”

But it’s more than that. Emma also wants to use it as a platform that focuses on female creations, whether it’s fashion or television, film, written media, whatever.

“I want a platform where you can go to support other female content creators, watch movies and series that have female leads and producers, and just by virtue of you being on the platform, you’re helping to empower these women and helping to create more content that is female-centric. That’s the dream!”

For Emma, landing in the States came as something of a shock. “I grew up being taught that if you work hard, you can do anything and then I came here and realised that that wasn’t necessarily the case. The stats are crazy! So, even though female companies create 60% more value for investors, they still only get 2% of venture capital funding.”

You can still hear the shock in her voice. But the woman who considers any challenge as an opportunity to show people what she’s made of, was not going to be deterred.

Suffice to say that the model-

turned-entrepreneur, who recently delivered a lecture to NYU Ph.D students on the application of data science in fashion, wrapped up her latest funding round with some of the biggest VC hitters on American shores, including Burch Creative Capital and Caivis Investments, co-founded by former Apple CMO John Sculley and David Steinberg.

Waldron.app will launch on iOS this April, and will also include content from Ireland, including Emma’s favourite designer, Alison Conneely of the Ardmore Peninsula in Galway, of whom she can’t get enough. “Her stuff is amazing. I’m obsessed with it,” she says.

It’s clear that no matter how much Emma has flourished in the fertile grounds of New York, a part of her will always be at home in Ireland.

One can’t escape the feeling that she’s only really just getting started Stateside though...

Photo credits: Don Nixon and Andre Grey

Key Sites To Visit During Your Trip along the Wild Atlantic Way

Malin Head

Looking out over the North Atlantic from the mainland, Ireland's most northerly point at Malin Head feels a bit like reaching the end of the world, with little separating you from the Arctic other than ocean – you can even see the Northern Lights from here if you time it right.

Fanad Lighthouse

The crowning point of County Donegal's Fanad Peninsula, is a lighthouse dating back to 1818. Fanad Head Lighthouse is one of 12 that make up Great Lighthouses of Ireland – an initiative allowing visitors the chance to visit or stay in an Irish lighthouse.

Letterkenny

Donegal's largest town Letterkenny is known as the Cathedral Town, for having Donegal's only Roman Catholic cathedral. It is also home to the Donegal Museum, set in a former famine workhouse and officially recognised by the Irish government as the best of Ireland's county museums.

Sliabh Liag

Sliabh Liag's cliffs aren't as well-known as the Cliffs of Moher, but they are nearly three times taller. Europe's highest sea cliffs at 601 metres, seeing them is truly a once-in-a-lifetime experience.

Inis Meáin, Aran Islands

The smallest of Galway Bay's Aran Islands in terms of population, Inis Meáin is described as 'one of the most important strongholds of traditional Irish culture'. An extension of The Burren's karst landscape, this beautifully remote area is a must-visit for any tourist on the route.

Strandhill

Strandhill, a surfer's paradise, is the biggest coastal village in County Sligo and one of its most scenic, nestled at the base of Knocknaree hill and looking out across the Atlantic.

Kylemore Abbey

A Benedictine monastery based in a 19th Century castle on a picturesque lakeshore, Kylemore Abbey in Connemara is well worth visiting. As well as exploring the abbey itself, visitors can tour the entire 1,000 acre estate, including six acres of Victorian walled gardens.

Galway City

Welcoming and colourful, the harbour city of Galway has everything you could possibly want from an Irish city, it is even set to be European Capital of Culture in 2020.

Doolin Cave

Inside the Doolin Cave in County Clare, you will find the longest free-hanging stalactite in the entire Northern Hemisphere. A staggering 7.3 metre (23 feet) structure hanging from the ceiling, it was formed from calcium deposits from a single drop of water, dripping over thousands of years.

The Cliffs Of Moher

As one of Ireland's most visited sites, the majestic Cliffs of Moher on the Clare coast need no introduction. Providing views of the Aran Islands, the Maumturks and Twelve Pins mountain ranges, and Loop Head peninsula, these spectacular cliffs are a natural national treasure.

Bunratty Castle

Clare's 15th-Century tower house known as Bunratty Castle has become another major tourist attraction, famous for its long history (the site was originally a Viking trading camp in 970) and its medieval-style banquets – a tradition that has survived since 1963.

Slea Head Drive

Taking in some of Ireland's most striking vistas, Dingle's circular Slea Head driving route has so many fabulous stopping points that it's impossible to pick just one. Travellers are advised to set aside at least a half-day to get the most out of this breathtaking journey.

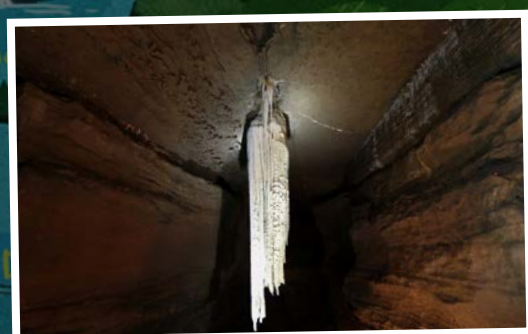
Skellig Micheal

The site of a former monastery and featured in the recent Star Wars films, the larger of County Kerry's two Skellig islands is as arresting in person as it looks on film.

Mizen Head Signal Station

The southerly equivalent of Malin Head, the cliffs at Mizen Head have their own visitor centre, where the brave can cross a startlingly high bridge and watch for seals, whales and dolphins in the waves below.

Courtesy of Kate Phelan @ the culture trip





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Things to Do in Mayo



Croagh Patrick

Croagh Patrick is a well-known mountain and an important site of pilgrimage in County Mayo. You can find it 8km from Westport, above the villages of Murrisk and Lecanvey. It is the third highest mountain in County Mayo after Mweelrea and Nephin. If you visit, you will be joined by pilgrims who make the journey which Saint Patrick himself once did.

Achill Island

Achill Island is the largest island off the coast of Ireland, and is situated off the west coast. It has a small population of 2,700 and is attached to the mainland by Michael Davitt Bridge. Achill Island occupies an area of some 57sq miles but its actual coastline – including all the inlets and spars – measures over 80 miles. Two particular stretches of road have been designated as Achill's Atlantic Drive; a spectacular journey with breathtaking views which can be completed in a vehicle, by bicycle, or on foot.

Moyne Abbey

Moyne Abbey has to be one of most impressive ecclesiastical ruins in Mayo and is recognised as a national monument. It was built by the Burke family, consecrated in 1462 and is located north of Ballina on the west side of Killala Bay. The friary was built in the late Irish Gothic style and has extensive ruins, consisting of a church and domestic buildings situated around a central cloister.

The Coffin Ship

This piece of art by John Behan is an impressive monument showing a ship full of skeletons – a symbol to remember all the people who died on the ships to America when they wanted to escape Ireland's potato famine in the 19th Century. The monument was unveiled in 1997 to mark the 150th anniversary of the famine.



Keel Beach

Keel Beach is a beautiful beach, one of Mayo's finest. It is quite popular with tourists and locals as a surfing location. If you are not into surfing, you can still enjoy the beautiful sand and excellent views.

Clew Bay

Want to see an amazing island formation without having to travel to the Caribbean? Then go to Clew Bay. Clew Bay is a natural ocean bay in County Mayo which contains Ireland's best example of sunken drumlins.

Downpatrick Head

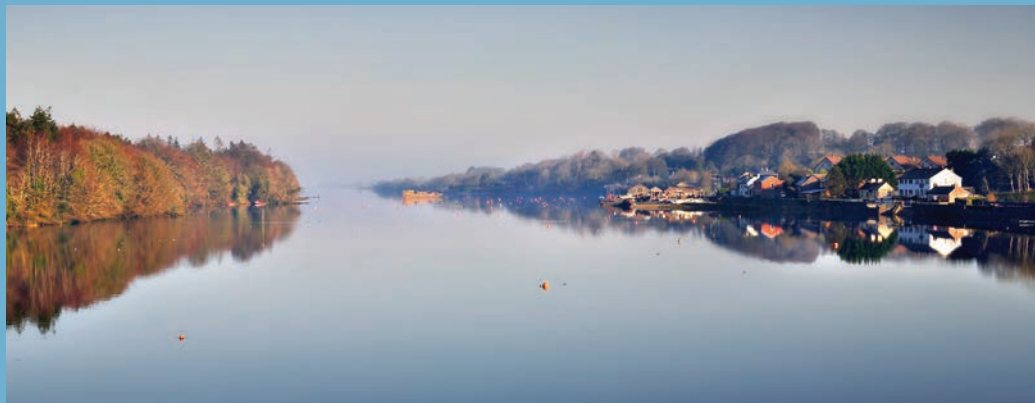
Just a few miles north of Ballycastle village in County Mayo is the windswept outcrop of Downpatrick Head. This is the perfect place to park up and stretch your legs with an invigorating coastal walk. The name Downpatrick is derived from a time when St Patrick himself founded a church here. You can still see the ruins of the church building, a stone cross and holy well here today.



Keem Bay

Keem Bay is a heavenly secluded valley at the very western tip of Achill Island. It is extremely popular during warmer months when the strand is a magnet for beach-goers and those interested in scenic walks. This bay was formerly the site of a basking shark fishery and a British army lookout post.

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Things to Do in Clare



Cliffs Of Moher

One of Ireland's most visited natural attractions, at 702ft above the crashing Atlantic swells, it's not hard to see why. With a superb visitor centre, an invigorating coastal walking route and beautiful birdlife, the Cliffs of Moher's hefty 8km breadth delivers at every turn.



Poul nabrone Dolmen

One of the most memorable spots in the Burren and Cliffs of Moher Geopark, sitting high on a limestone plateau you'll find the ancient Poul nabrone Dolmen. This portal tomb is one of Ireland's most recognisable archaeological sites and is the oldest megalithic monument in the country.

The Burren

Ticking all the boxes as an historical, geomorphic, geological and archaeological wonder, the intriguing stony karst landscape of the Burren is a marvel to roam, cycle, spot unique flora and fauna on and even follow a food trail over. At its UNESCO-recognised geopark, discover the longest cave system in Ireland, the largest stalactite in Europe and plenty more.



Scattery Island

A small monastic settlement a few kilometres from the Kilrush shore, Scattery Island boasts a still-functioning lighthouse, six ancient church ruins and one of the highest round towers (120ft) in the country. An historic island, Scattery has seen its fair share of invasions and has plenty of far-fetched legends and tales to tell.

Aillwee & Doolin Caves

At the Aillwee Cave, take a tour of this stony underworld of winding passages, chasms, strange rock formations and waterfalls. While at Doolin Cave with its famous Great Stalactite, head 200ft underground to go an astonishing 350 million years back in time.

Loop Head & Lighthouse

On the Loop Head Peninsula, right on the very western edge of Clare, you'll find this pristine lighthouse, with views that unravel all the way to the Cliffs of Moher. Head to the top of the lighthouse to take it all in from a 90-metre height and keep an eye out for the 160+ dolphins that call these waters home.

Fanore Beach

A stretch of sandy paradise in the heart of the Burren, with its borders of sand dunes and west coast waves, Fanore Beach is a hit with walkers, surfers, anglers, families and more. After those beach-side strolls, stop by Fanore Village and Ballyvaughan, perfect places to round off a day by the sea shore.

Clare Golf Gems

Resplendent scenery can make for astounding golf links and Clare offers some of the very best. From Lahinch Golf Club's showcase of natural terrain which dates back to 1892, to Doonbeg Golf Club's idyllic crescent beach and Atlantic views on almost all of its 18 holes; a round on this landscape is a real temptation.



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Things to Do in Limerick



King John's Castle

King John's 13th Century fortress on the banks of the Shannon River was recently renovated to better explain its history, which includes medieval battles, a siege and, naturally, a lot of inter-kingdom trade. With a self-led tour and lots of interactive displays to explore, it's also home to the best view of the stunning Shannon River you'll find.



Thomond Park

Munster, the iconic rugby team representing Ireland's south province, plays the majority of its home games at this smart, modern stadium. Thomond Park also hosts the occasional gig and colourful storytelling tours for non-event days. Munster is at the very core of Limerick life, making this an essential stop-off.

St Mary's Cathedral

One of two cathedrals in the city, St Mary's has been at the heart of Limerick's religious life since the 12th Century. As the oldest building in the city, much of Limerick has grown up around this spot, and you can touch a little of that history in the scratch marks around the west door where defenders of the city sharpened their swords during the city siege eight centuries ago.

The Milk Market

Limerick's home to all the locally produced fresh food you could ask for (and a growing number of impressive foodie offerings based upon farm products, in particular), the iconic Milk Market is full of great finds; while its surroundings date back more than

a century and-a-half One of Ireland's most enticing markets, it can be quiet during the week but really comes to life on bustling Saturdays.

Terra Nova Fairy Garden

The mythical side of Irish life is one of the great Irish experiences for many people. Terra Nova is a magical garden that contains an ancient fairy fort dating back thousands of years, though the addition of modern fairy statues and magical touches will probably entice most visitors. Atmospheric, to say the least.



Adare

A picture-postcard 13th Century village set against a rural river bank, Adare is just gorgeous. The Heritage Centre, creamery, manor and abbey make it a very worthwhile way of spending a day and give a very different sense of what Limerick is, other than the city itself.

The Hunt Museum

A locally themed, ever-changing museum displaying the largest private collection in Ireland, The Hunt Museum mixes art, antiques, early Irish history and the establishment of Christian institutions. There's a strong collection from Greece and Italy too, but it's the local history, covered in detail through eclectic items (ranging from tribal drinking horns to Celtic cross carvings), that's the must-see.

Foynes Flying Boat and Maritime Museum

This appealing mishmash of attractions hosts a full-size replica of a B314 flying boat, an exhibition on the history of Shannon River and a nearby 1940s style tearoom. There are also Irish coffees served in this spot that claims to have invented them. The exploration of 1930s and 1940s trans-Atlantic flights (the preserve of the uber-rich) is also a highlight.

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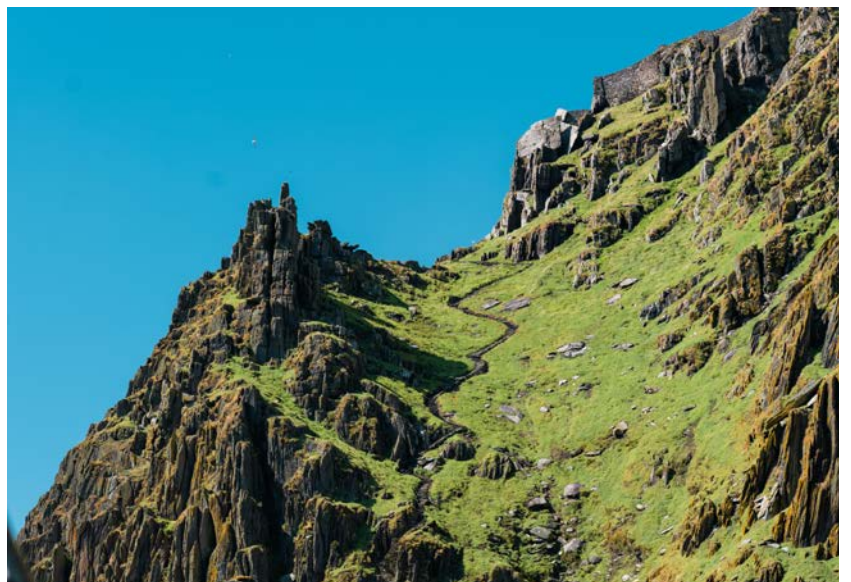
MAY THE 4TH BE WITH YOU ...AGAIN

BY NICKY SULLIVAN

Want to walk in the footsteps of Luke Skywalker and Darth Vader without having to warp speed out of the galaxy? Well, now you can.

Two of the latest Star Wars movies were filmed along the Wild Atlantic Way and there's no better way to dive into the magic of the Star Wars universe than during this year's May the 4th Be With You festivals being hosted in Kerry and Donegal.

Kicking off on May 3rd in the Kerry village of Portmagee and for the first time, across Donegal's Inishowen Peninsula, the three-day festival includes a host of fun activities for all-ages to celebrate May the 4th.



Filming for the recent Star Wars films took place in locations across Kerry, Cork, Clare and Donegal. The festivals include visits to the home base for the cast and crew, while they shot on the extraordinary Skelligs in Portmagee County Kerry; exclusive screenings of Star Wars movies against actual film

locations, behind-the-scenes exhibitions, visits to local historical sites that formed key backdrops, tours, tastings and even trainings in the way of the Jedi. Then, of course, there's the ability to soak up that otherworldly atmosphere of the Wild Atlantic Way, from County Kerry, to Loop Head in Clare, and

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Malin Head in County Donegal. Announcing this year's 'May the 4th Be With You' festival, Minister of State for Tourism and Sport, Brendan Griffin said: "The inclusion of iconic Irish landscapes in the Star Wars films has given the Wild Atlantic Way fantastic exposure around the world and with events in Kerry and Donegal this year, the festival is a brilliant opportunity

to promote the West Coast of Ireland and the country as a whole."

New to this year's 'May the 4th Be With You' festival will be a geodesic space marquee, where fans can immerse themselves in a galaxy far, far away with interactive activities from panel discussions to video game competitions. Also joining the programme this year

will be a display of Star Wars-themed sand sculptures, an Augmented Reality treasure trail and an epic lightsabre battle, all set against the breathtaking backdrop of the west coast.

A full programme of events for the 'May the 4th Be With You' festival will be unveiled soon, please visit: www.wildatlanticway.com/may-the-fourth

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Things to Do in Kerry



Muckcross House

At Muckcross House, you'll get a glimpse into a luxurious 18th Century life at this fantastic, manicured throwback. It's a rural estate that's home to horse-pulled jaunting cars, fantastic gardens, lake views and craft stores.



Skellig Michael

A jagged, difficult-to-access island off the Kerry shoreline, Skellig Michael was once an isolated hermitage and is now almost as well-known for its core role in two Star Wars movies. To get there, you'll need good summer weather and your climbing legs, but toiling amid the puffins is well worth it for the rustic housing and glorious views.

Fungie the dolphin

Resident in the harbour of gorgeous Dingle, Fungie has long been Ireland's most famous non-human and he plays to the crowds. Heading out on a boat to meet – or better still, to swim with – this playful mammal is a Kerry essential. Better still, if you don't find him, you don't pay.

Carrauntoohil

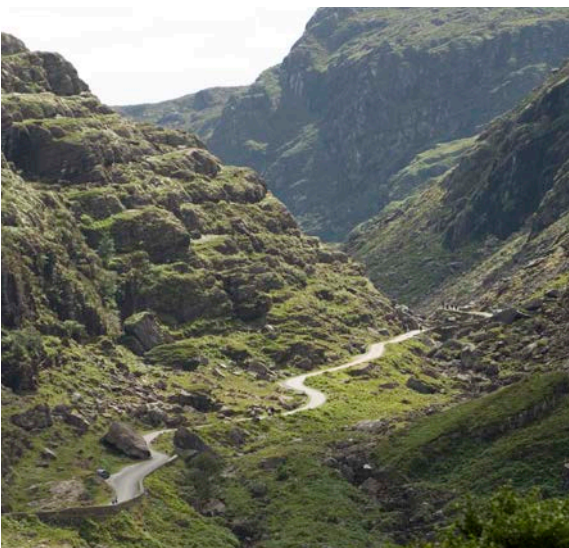
The highest peak of the McGillicuddy Reeks mountain range, Carrauntoohil is a challenging climb for intermediate-level hikers. It rises to just over 1,000 metres via the dramatic, slippery 'Devil's Ladder'. At its peak, you'll find a huge iron cross and spectacular views across the Kerry countryside. A selfie-nut's dream location!

The Ring of Kerry

Not so much a single site as an entire circuit of rugged, rural beauty, this is the one tour you must do while in Kerry. It's so worth it. The 'ring' takes you around the Iveragh Peninsula, past a host of gorgeous Atlantic views, quaint towns and tiny, enticing beaches. Around every corner is a photo, so go under your own steam, if possible.

The Blasket Islands

The Blasket Islands once had a thriving Irish-speaking population, but were evacuated due to harsh Atlantic conditions in the 1950s. Jokingly called 'next parish America', this spot is as 'battered west coast' as you can hope to see. There's a stunning beauty in that.



Gap of Dunloe

A fantastic drive into the Kerry Hills, the Gap of Dunloe is a narrow mountain pass through the McGillicuddy Reeks, a tough trail by car, but easily passable in the popular horse-pulled jaunting cars that are abundant in Killarney National Park. It's popular to hike or bike the route, with Kate Kearney's Cottage – a 150-year-old pub-craft-shop – a popular launching spot.

Kerry Cliffs, Portmagee

The Cliffs of Moher in County Clare, are Ireland's most famous cliffs, but Portmagee's cliffs offer incredible walks, dramatic drops and views out to Skellig Michael. Why are they less popular than Moher, yet 85 metres higher? Because buses can't get here. In other words, they're a lesser-known treat. Avoid in strong winds.

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Things to Do in Cork



The English Market

In the heart of Cork City and with an eye-catching fountain at its centre, this quirky roofed food market has been trading since 1788. Under the possession of the Cork City Council, it's one of the world's oldest municipal markets. Artisan breads, fruit, and freshly caught seafood are just some of the specialities on offer. In recent years, the market gained worldwide fame when Queen Elizabeth II of Great Britain dropped by on her first-ever state visit to the Republic of Ireland in 2011.

St Patrick's Street

This has remained Cork's main shopping hub. An easy couple-of-minutes' stroll from The English Market and known locally as "Pana" the broad, curving street boasts many fine shops. Various architectural styles reflect change over the past 200 years or so.

Cork City Gaol

Another of Cork city's must-dos is the atmospheric and historic City Gaol, which opened in 1824 and closed in 1923. Originally the prison housed both male and female prisoners who committed crimes within the city borders. In 1878, the City Gaol became an all-female prison, which it remained until men opposed to the 1920 Anglo-Irish Treaty were incarcerated there in 1922-1923. The complex then deteriorated until its restoration and re-opening to the public as a tourist attraction in 1993.

Crawford Art Gallery

A two-minute walk from St Patrick's Street, art-lovers may like to take in this regional museum dedicated to the visual arts, both historic and contemporary. The gallery receives in excess of 200,000 visitors per annum and hosts a range of permanent exhibitions including 18th Century European and Irish sculpture, a collection of Greek and Roman sculpture casts, and contemporary video installations.

St Finbarre's Cathedral

A leisurely 10-minute walk from St Patrick's Street takes visitors to this Anglican Cathedral. If preferred, a bus journey (No's 214, 208, 203) will shave a couple of minutes off the journey time. The eye-catching structure in French Early Gothic style was designed by William Burges and consecrated in 1870. It's situated on a site where Christian worship has been taking place since the 7th Century. By its completion, in excess of £100,000 was spent on the building, an enormous amount of money at the time.

Farmgate Cafe

An unmissable experience at the heart of the English Market, the Farmgate is perched on a balcony overlooking the food stalls below, the source of all that fresh local produce on your plate – everything from crab and oysters, to the lamb in your Irish stew. Go up the stairs and turn left for table service, or right for counter service.



Cork Opera House

Given a modern makeover in the 1990s, this leading venue has been entertaining the city for more than 150 years with everything from opera and ballet to stand-up comedy, pop concerts and puppet shows. Around the back, the Half Moon Theatre presents contemporary theatre, dance, art and occasional club nights.

Franciscan Well Brewery

The copper vats gleaming behind the bar give the game away, the Franciscan Well brews its own beer. The best place to enjoy it is in the enormous beer garden at the back. The pub holds regular beer festivals together with other small independent Irish breweries.

Triskel Arts Centre

A fantastic cultural centre housed partly in a renovated church building – expect a varied programme of live music, installation art, photography and theatre at this intimate venue. There's also a cinema (from 6.30pm) and a great cafe.



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Irish tourism *enjoying a record-breaking boom*

By Nicky Sullivan

Millions of people all over the world dream of coming to Ireland and more people than ever are realising that dream, as the nation's 2018 tourism figures show.

Last year, more than 10.6 million people made the journey to the Land of Saints, Scholars and the odd sup of Guinness - almost 700,000 more than the year before.

Ireland's status as a world-class destination is beyond question thanks

to its natural charms, celebrated culture, incredible range of things to do and, of course, our unique welcome. This exceptional combination is exerting a special appeal for American visitors in particular, 2.4million of whom made the journey across the Atlantic to learn history, savour delicious Irish food and enjoy good old Irish "craic".

The CEO of Fáilte Ireland (Ireland's tourism board), Paul Kelly, says Ireland's

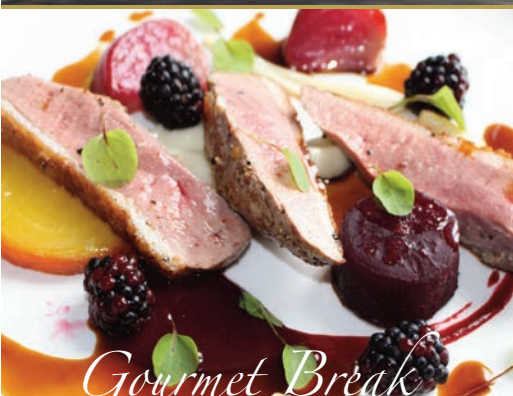
highest-ever number of visitors reflects the country's growing appeal as a destination for all seasons.

"We have been very much focused on driving a more seasonal spread of these growing tourist numbers, which is vital in helping tourism businesses to stay open longer," he said. "This strategy, including our season extension programmes in local towns across the country, is paying dividends, which is evidenced in the strong growth



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recorded in the final months of the year. Our own industry barometer reflects this growth, with tourism businesses telling us that a strong autumn season boosted their overall annual performance.” In other words, visitors to Ireland are not the kind to be put off by the threat of a little rain.

Other threats loom large in the industry’s mind however; as uncertainty around Brexit may have played a role in the reduced number of visitors coming from Ireland’s neighbour across the Irish Sea. Visitors from Britain did increase, by just under 1%, but this

was a substantially lower rise than from other parts of the world.

For example, the number of visitors from Europe grew by 9.5% for the year, while the number from other parts of the world - other than America and the UK - grew by 6.7%. Concerns over Brexit are a reminder that one should never sit on one’s laurels, and the industry is responding accordingly.

“At Fáilte Ireland, we are significantly ramping up our activities to ensure Irish tourism is both ‘product-ready’ and ‘industry-ready’ ahead of the UK withdrawal from the EU, with a

€5million fund to support the sector as it prepares for Brexit,” said Mr Kelly. “It is crucial now that the industry remains as competitive as possible, despite ongoing cost pressures.

There is no doubt that Brexit poses a significant threat to the ongoing success of our tourism industry and, with the increasing likelihood of a no-deal, as well other unforeseen political and economic developments in the US and Northern Europe, the sector will need to continue to show agility and resilience in the months ahead,” he said.



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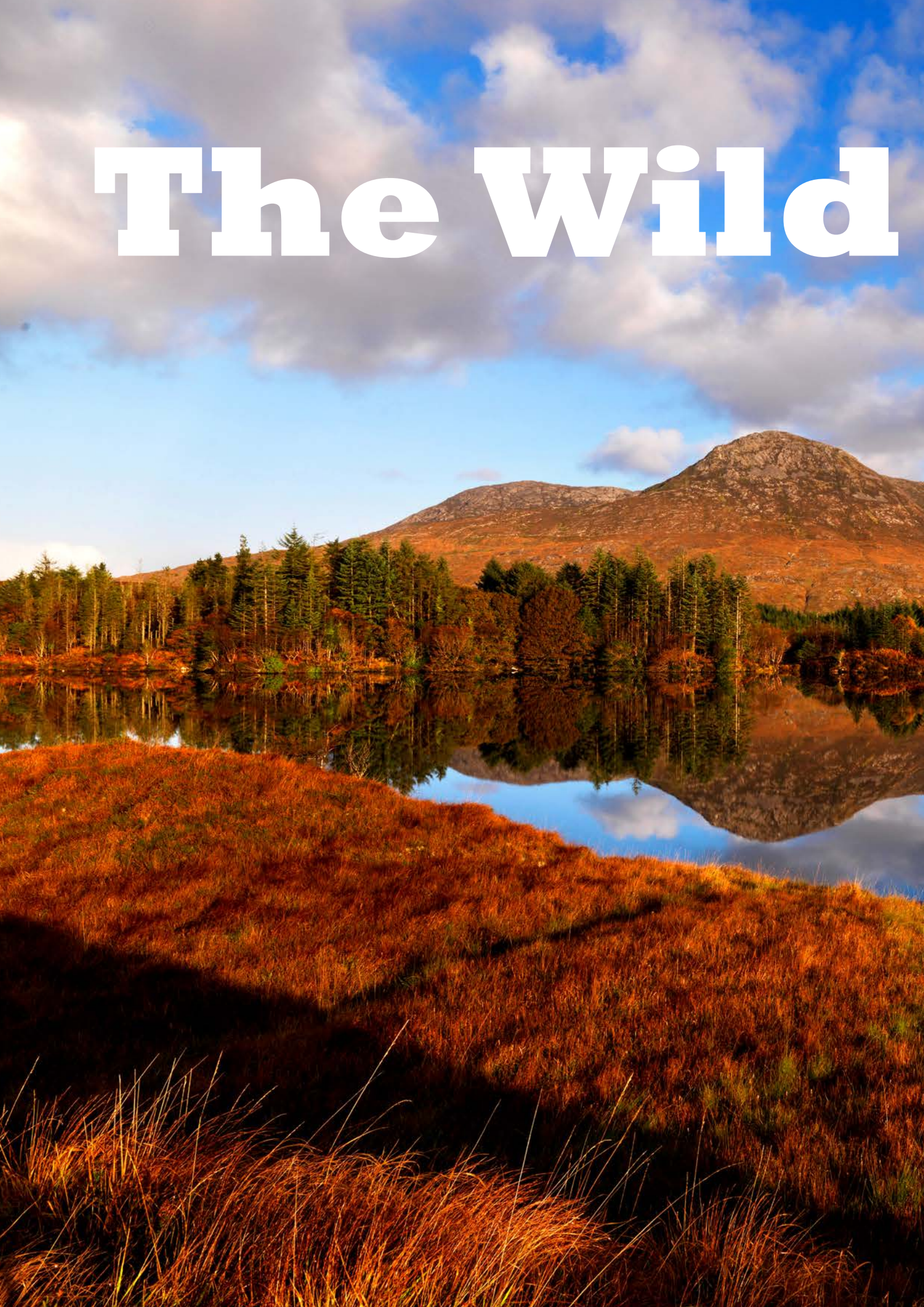
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“Ireland is a great place to holiday, even on a wet day”

By Liz O'Brien

Hotelier Francis Brennan had explored the stunning west coast of Ireland long before it was ever known as the Wild Atlantic Way.

As a director of the country's national tourism body - Fáilte Ireland - the proprietor of a five-star hotel and a TV star, he has visited some of the nation's prettiest locations. So, when he divulged his Wild Atlantic Way must-see list, I was all ears.

Be it horse riding on the beach, cliff-walking, or night-kayaking, Francis believes the best of what Ireland has to offer can be experienced along the Wild Atlantic Way.

“Ireland has five-star hotels, it has cottages, it has everything - everything from A to Z of tourism is on the Wild Atlantic Way. “It starts in Kinsale (County Cork), which is great for the food.

“There are some lovely restaurants there and what's really nice about Ireland is that a lot of the

restaurants are family businesses, so they have a longevity. Kinsale is really nice, but I like the rural places; off the beaten track.”

Francis lives by the sea in Kenmare, County Kerry - one of nine counties along the WAW's 2,500 kilometre stretch. He and his brother John run the five-star Park Hotel Kenmare which, next year, marks 40 years in business. “We're a family-run hotel and we offer a warm Irish-style welcome. The hotel is like a cup on a saucer; the saucer is the garden and the cup is the hotel, so when you walk through the garden, you're in the town.”

“In Kerry, there are two places I always tell people to go. One is Gleninchaquin - it's a lovely walking amenity here, looking right out over the Atlantic Way on the Ring of Beara. There's a waterfall there that's outstanding - you walk up one side of the mountain, you cross a bridge over this waterfall and it's like you're 'in' the waterfall! “Another is a looped walk in



Valentia - it's about seven kilometres and I send people all summer long down there and they love it. It's right out to the old lighthouse looking out to the Skelligs - like, you could touch them! “You're out in the countryside - sheep on one side of you and the sea at the other side and that's it.”



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Another of his tried and tested recommendations is Emerald Outdoors - a relatively new business venture in Kenmare - making waves on TripAdvisor for paddleboarding, kayaking and bioluminescent night tours.

"There's also horse-riding down on the beaches in Derrynane and then of course we have the Dark Sky Reserve."

A stargazer's dream, the reserve stretches from Kells Bay to Caherdaniel; it's protected from light pollution and is the only gold tier Dark Sky Reserve in the northern hemisphere.

But, enough about Kerry; Sligo is also somewhere Francis spends a lot of his time.

"Up around Strandhill and Ross' Point in Sligo is beautiful

- there are two lovely bays and there's always someone surfing, morning, noon and night - which is great to watch."

Further north in Co. Mayo are the Céide Fields - an archaeological site that's home to Ireland's most extensive Neolithic site and the world's oldest known field systems.

"I've never been there, but my brother John went and said they are outstanding," said Francis. "A little bit inland from that, on the must-see list is the National Museum of Ireland, near Castlebar. I've been there a few times and I've brought my mother. They have all old Irish things, like old transistor radios, old buckets they'd use for milking the cows and all that; it's a really great place to go." When filming the hit TV show

'At Your Service' - which sees Francis and John come to the rescue of struggling businesses within the hospitality industry - Francis became fond of Bundoran, a seaside town in Donegal.

"It's a lively town and kids love it - there are hurdy gurdys and bumper cars, it's like a playground for children and there's the beach, so it's great for a family holiday."

According to statistics, Ireland's tourism revenue set a new record last year - in the first half of 2018 it increased by 8.5% on the same period of the previous year.

"It's definitely a great time to come to Ireland; the country is in positive mode. Certainly, last year was very buoyant and we got great weather, which gives everyone a boost. Ireland is a great place to holiday, even on a wet day."

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Limerick to host Tag Rugby World Cup

Limerick has been announced as the first northern hemisphere host of the Tag World Cup.

A joint bid, led by the University of Limerick (UL) Conference and Sports Campus and the Irish Tag Rugby Association - supported by Shannon Region Conference and Sports Bureau, Failte Ireland and Limerick City and County Council - was successful in winning the event for Limerick, which will see over 3,000 tag rugby players from well over 20 countries and their entourage travel to the Treaty City in August 2021.

The event is expected to deliver a minimum €5m boost for the Limerick economy and 20,000 bed nights. It is held across four days but, with many participants travelling from the southern hemisphere, teams are expected to travel to Ireland for up to three weeks in advance of the competition.

The bid involved a year-long process that was initiated after two of the Tag Rugby Ireland management team, Barry Keary and Shane Landers, approached the UL Conference and Sports Campus team with the idea.

A partnership involving the three local entities, supported by Failte Ireland, put together a detailed bid and beat off stiff opposition, after organisers decided to take the event out of the southern hemisphere for the first time. Tag rugby has grown enormously

in popularity over the past decade, particularly in Australia and New Zealand but also in Ireland and Great Britain. The three previous International Tag Federation World Cups were held in New Zealand (2012) and Australia (2015, 2018) but organisers decided to take the next edition to the northern hemisphere and have been won over by the Limerick bid.

Welcoming the announcement, Limerick Mayor James Collins said that it was a victory for Limerick and recognition of its status as a city of great hospitality and great facilities. "We all know Limerick's proud sporting heritage, not least in rugby. Tag rugby has become very popular in Limerick over recent years, not least as a result of the hugely successful Pig 'n' Porter festival. The Tag World Cup is, however, a very serious and competitive event and it's great that not alone was the rugby DNA and hospitality and warmth right for the organisers to host it here, but also that we had the facilities at UL.

"We have an excellent track record in terms of hosting major events here, the 2013 Rugby League World Cup among them. Hosting this event is further proof that Limerick is ripe for such events. We congratulate all involved in the successful bid and will now set about making sure that Limerick will deliver an experience for players and supporters alike that will raise the bar again for the tournament." Simon Bewley, Irish Tag Rugby Association

said: "The Irish Tag Rugby Association are delighted to be chosen as the host nation for the 2021 Tag World Cup.

As the founders on Tag in Ireland, we are celebrating 20 years of running national and international Tag events. We look forward to partnering with University of Limerick and the ITF to host and run the biggest and most exciting International Tag event in Europe."

David Mahedy, Director, Sport & Recreation University of Limerick said: "We are extremely excited at the prospect of hosting this incredible competition at the University of Limerick and work has already begun to make this a World Cup to remember for every player and supporter that makes Limerick their home for the duration of the Championship."

Tag Rugby

- Limerick is one of Ireland's top centres for tag rugby, with the annual Pig 'n' Porter festival one of the biggest annual in the country, drawing teams in recent years from as far afield as Australia.
- Ireland has also improved its ranking in the game over recent years, winning gold in the Men's Over-50s and Silver in Women 27s at the last Tag World Cup.
- The competition will involve various age categories in mens, womens and mixed. Teams have to be registered through their national federation to compete.

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IRELAND IS WAITING

Outdoor fun for all ages

By Nicky Sullivan

When you've had your fill of live music, great food, fabulous museums and perhaps the odd pint, it could be time to hit the trails and suck in a deep lungful of fresh, breeze-blown salty air.

There are few better ways to enjoy Wild Atlantic Ireland's stunning natural beauty than from the saddle - bicycle or horse - or by striking out along any of the well-marked paths that cut across the counties. Getting back to nature, in

all its elements and glories, is one of the biggest reasons for visiting Ireland's Wild Atlantic Way.

For all of these adventures and more, plenty of opportunities present themselves - whether you want to explore independently, or take advantage of the inside knowledge on offer from one of the many tour companies that have sprung up along the route.

With almost 180 different walks to choose from, walkers of all

abilities and inclinations will find something to please them. Whether you're looking for a stunning coastal cliff walk, a gentle bogland ramble, a romantic meander through a forest, or the challenge of taking on a rocky mountain trail, the choice is entirely up to you. Ireland is waiting.

Walks can be as long or as short as you need them to be and are a perfect way for families to explore Ireland's deeper secrets. And even inveterate urbanites will feel at

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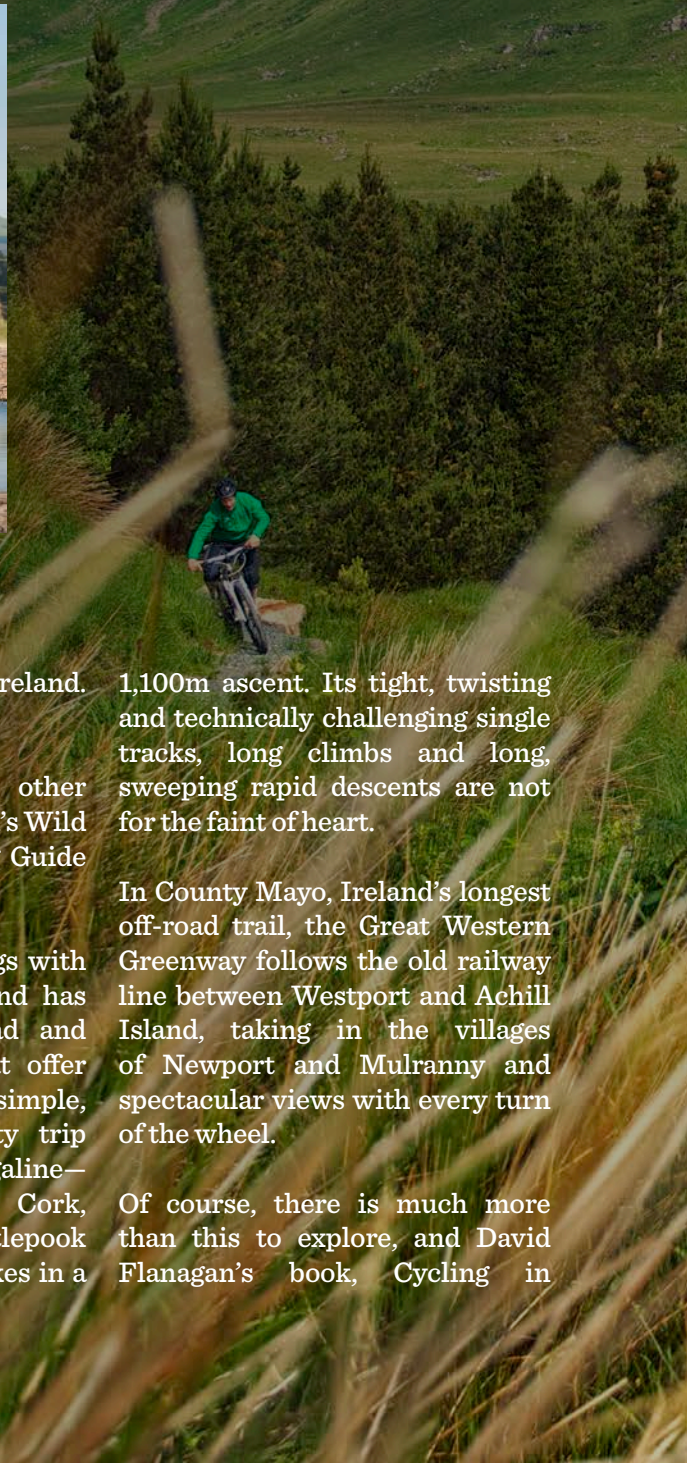
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home with options such as the Donegal self-guided historic town walk to give them an edge in one of the country's oldest cities.

It's no exaggeration to say that some of the best hiking in Europe can be found along the Wild Atlantic Way; from the Baltimore Heritage Trail in County Cork all the way up to Sliabh Liag in Donegal. The biggest problem will be deciding which trail to choose. For those who really want to push the boat out, the 196km loop of the Beara Way takes in ancient archaeological sites, stone circles and ring forts, traditional fishing spots and some

of the best restaurants in Ireland. You'll have earned it.

For details of these and other walks, take a look at Ireland's Wild Atlantic Way — A Walking Guide by Helen Fairbairn.

For those who prefer things with a little more speed, Ireland has you covered with on-road and off-road cycling trails that offer everything from the simple, flat and exquisitely pretty trip along the 5km Carrigaline—Crosshaven Greenway in Cork, to the Ballyhoura—Castlepook Loop - a tough ride that takes in a

1,100m ascent. Its tight, twisting and technically challenging single tracks, long climbs and long, sweeping rapid descents are not for the faint of heart.

In County Mayo, Ireland's longest off-road trail, the Great Western Greenway follows the old railway line between Westport and Achill Island, taking in the villages of Newport and Mulranny and spectacular views with every turn of the wheel.

Of course, there is much more than this to explore, and David Flanagan's book, *Cycling in*



Ireland: A Guide to the Best of Irish Cycling, is one of many excellent resources, with detailed descriptions of 80 routes all over the country.

Then of course there is the most unquestionably romantic way of exploring Ireland's Wild Atlantic Way; from the back of a horse. From a one-hour hack with a glorious gallop across a beach, to a week-long trail riding holiday, it's hard to imagine a more stunning way to take in Ireland's incredible beauty.

All levels of rider are catered for

and if horse fans would like to experience the unique thrill and romance that only horses can deliver, there are also plenty of long-running annual horse shows throughout the region. With events such as show jumping, dressage, eventing competitions and hunter trials, you don't need to hop into the saddle to come into contact with the spectacular glory of Irish horses. It's also a wonderful family day out.

The Association of Irish Riding Establishments accredits horse riding stables all over Ireland. Their website contains a comprehensive

list by county of all accredited stables, which are subject to annual inspections in order to maintain their membership.

There are so many ways to experience Ireland, and these are just a handful. But whatever you do and wherever you go, never forget the old Irish saying: Glac bog an saol agus glacfaidh an saol bog tú — "Take the world nice and easy, and the world will take you the same."

Go Wild

60 seconds with

Donald Morrissy of Parknasilla



Donald Morrissy started out in the hotel industry when he was just 16, working as a porter. Since then, he's worked for some of Ireland's most highly regarded hotel groups. The new General Manager of Parknasilla Resort and Spa lets us in on his favourite place to spend a day off - it involves a pint and a pot of steamed mussels!

Tell us about you...

I got my first job as a hall porter in a hotel in Cork when I was 16 and went to Shannon when I was 18 to study Hotel Management. I have been in hotels ever since. I travelled around, as every young person in hospitality should do when they have the chance, and I've worked in some great hotels in Ireland, UK and Scotland. I moved back to Cork in 2007. When the chance came for me to move over the border to Kerry, I jumped at it.

You started at Parknasilla, in Sneem, Co. Kerry last summer; how has it been?

I started at the busiest time of the year for the hotel, so I had no choice but to get stuck in, but that's the best way to see the operation.

My role as GM has been diverse and every day is different. I try to stay out on the floor to meet the regular and new guests and assist the team when necessary. I like to get involved and, in my opinion, the only way to ask others to look after a guest is to be seen doing it yourself.

Your thoughts on the tourism industry?

It's doing well and it's great to see so many different nationalities in the hotel and the surrounding areas. Our main source of business is domestic, with mainland Europe, Britain and US secondary. But, while business is good at present, nobody can predict what's around the corner - politics in the UK or America, oil prices in the Middle East, even unpredictable weather closer to home; it can all quickly disrupt business. I'm lucky there's a great team here and we all keep a close eye on the business to ensure it's working at optimal capacity.

Is it a good time to visit Ireland? What about Brexit?

It's a great time to visit Ireland. Brexit will lead to its own problems for all business to some degree,

but we must just get on with it and we'll deal with the aftermath. Ireland is a great country with loads to do and see - the food and accommodation is very good and there's great value to be had, too.

What do you recommend people see along the Wild Atlantic Way?

As a Corkman, it's odd of me to say this, but I suggest the Ring of Kerry - it's spectacular. The views and scenery are wonderful. Also, if the weather permits, Skellig Michael - where parts of Star Wars was filmed - is a must for both Sci-fi and non Sci-fi enthusiasts alike. Venture back over the border to Cork and the west Cork coastline, as far as Kinsale, is a must.

Your favourite restaurants and pubs along the Wild Atlantic Way?

By far, my favourite pub on the Wild Atlantic Way is our local 'Teddy's' in Kilmacalogue. Honestly, a great day out is the boat trip we organise at the hotel, to take you across the bay to Teddy's for a pint and their infamous pot of steamed mussels. The Chart House restaurant in Dingle is also not to be missed - yum!



Discover Paradise - Discover Parknasilla



enjoy • relax • explore

Parknasilla is only a short drive along the Wild Atlantic Way from the vibrant town of Kenmare. But what really counts is our immediate location set within a "Tropical Paradise" of islands, inlets & hidden beaches. Come stay with us and wake up to our beautiful sea views, indulge in spa pampering, explore one of our many coastline walking trails, enjoy a guided sea kayaking tour, play golf and in the evening come dine with us in The Pygmalion Restaurant where exemplary cooking, good wine and great service will impress.

www.parknasillaresort.com

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Truly in a world of its own



Gearing up for the Ring of Kerry Cycle

By Nicky Sullivan



Surely the best way of appreciating Kerry's wild, unspoilt beauty is from the saddle of a bicycle?

In case you worry that might be a lonely pursuit, you could always join the 8,000 enthusiasts who are expected to sign up for this year's 175-kilometre Ring of Kerry Cycle, an annual event that has become the biggest single-day fundraiser in all of Ireland. It's open for anyone to take part, though you may want to limber up a little bit first. But if you do, the cycle is an extraordinary opportunity to enjoy some of Ireland's most breathtaking scenery, while helping to raise thousands of euros for essential charitable work across the whole country.

"I've been involved with this race since it started 36 years ago," says Cathal Walshe, public relations officer for the cycle. "It's a very special event." Cathal himself took part for the first 19 of those 36 years until illness forced him off the road. But he clearly gets as much satisfaction from being part of the crew behind the event. "It's not just the extraordinary beauty of the Ring of Kerry itself; and the lakes, mountains and scenery of the Wild Atlantic Way," he says. "There's

also the €16 million that has been raised over the years for hundreds of Irish charities, and we are hoping to raise €1 million again this year.

"Then, there's the huge satisfaction of completing the cycle itself — it's important that it's not a race, but a cycle in support of the charity of your choice. And you'll see, it's the first-time cyclist who completes the course who gets the very most satisfaction from the day."

In fact, the cycle has become so popular that the organisers had to limit the numbers to 8,000 (registered on a first-come-first-served basis) after 11,000 people took part a few years ago. Not bad for an event that started off as a little fun thing with just 46 people taking part in order to raise funds for the local hospital. The selected charities this year are national organisations carrying out essential work in support of cancer research and recovery services, children and young adults with special intellectual needs, a home for people with physical and intellectual needs, rape and sexual abuse counselling.

Cyclists, fun-seekers and simple beauty appreciators travel from all over the world to take part in the



cycle and last year, the organisers counted people from countries including Australia, New Zealand, Canada, Dubai and the United States. "The atmosphere is tremendous," says Cathal. "At the end of the day, there's music and food, and everyone is so happy. You couldn't beat it."

Speaking at the launch on 25 February, Bridget McGuire, Chairperson for the Ring of Kerry Charity Cycle, said: "I am delighted to be working with the Ring of Kerry Charity Cycle this year. For the past 36 years, it has been a significant charity fundraising event and I know it holds a special place in the hearts of Kerry people.

"We're encouraging everyone to experience and participate in this year's Ring of Kerry Charity Cycle in some way — whether it's participating in the cycle, volunteering, working with the charities involved or supporting the event on the day." The whole event couldn't happen without the hard work of the volunteers, all of whom will be provided with refreshments on the day and receive a certificate of appreciation in recognition of their hard work and support. It's hard to think of a more distinctive souvenir.

For more information and to register or volunteer, take a look at the event website: www.ringofkerry.ie

Mizen Head

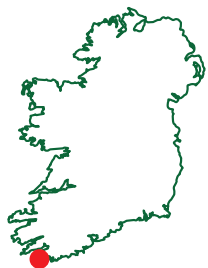
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THE WONDERS OF THE WILD ATLANTIC WAY

with **Mary Hopkins**, Founder, Hopkins Communications. (Ireland)

Ballybunion, Co. Kerry

Mary, tell us a little about yourself:

A twin child of the Wild Atlantic Way (from Ballyhahill, County Limerick, now living in Cork) I have quite recently shaken off the pressures of a media-mad business life, set my children up for life and I'm on a mission to enjoy every day to the maximum.

Career-wise, tell us about founding Hopkins Communications:

In 1990, I took the plunge and started our agency in Cork city. I was pretty fearless, felt I had nothing to lose and a lot to gain. I made tremendous friends through my work, through volunteering, and through my leadership roles in several business organisations, and received outstanding support to grow my business.

Hopkins Communications is now the region's largest communications agency, handling media-buying (TV, radio, print, digital), public relations, event management, experiential marketing, graphic design and print for a host of large and small businesses, trading nationally and internationally. Being a family business is one of our USPs - it gives consistency, which clients love. www.h-c.ie

You've retired - well, from the office part of the job! How are you enjoying life after work?

It took me two years between re-structuring the company and closing my chapter, happy in the knowledge that the new business partners (my son Mark and my daughter Judy) would look after the business and grow it.

Now that Dave and I are retired, we're like mad ones, planning trips, hopping up and down to West Cork, attending Munster/Ireland rugby matches, a lot of sailing, some creative writing, the odd holiday abroad, loving our grandchildren, and looking up old friends now that we have time on our hands.

You love Ireland and travel the length and breadth of the country frequently. What are your thoughts on the tourism industry in Ireland at the moment?

Perched at the gateway to Europe, I think we have an awesome country, warm and welcoming people, great traditions, world-class music, wonderful art & craft, fabulous scenery, and the best food in the world. This is Ireland's time to shine. www.discoverireland.ie

Some highlights from your Irish travels:

Dave is a ship's captain, so I feel safe sailing around the coast with him. Some of our favourite places are Baltimore, Ahakista and Bantry in County Cork; Derrynane, Port Magee, Knightstown and Dingle in County Kerry; Inishboffin and the Aran Islands (particularly Inis Meann) in County Galway. We've hit nasty swells and storms, fallen overboard (that's me - four times!), slept aloft in balmy weather and travelled with the dolphins, basking sharks, whales and the loveable little puffins. Then it's exciting to tie up and scoot ashore to the little pubs and restaurants, where there's always a welcome and scrumptious food. We're shoving on in age but always seem to be the last to leave ...old habits die hard.

What do you love about the Wild Atlantic Way (WAW), in particular?

Stretching from Kinsale, County Cork, right up to The Inishowen peninsula in County Donegal, it reminds me of Highway No 1 along the Californian Coast, except it's more vivid, colour wise that is.

Everything seems to be exaggerated, green being the stand-out colour, with hues of copper, russet, silvery grey and of course, the blue/teal/white of the ocean as it embraces the colours and reflections of the seasons.

Some of your favourite restaurants, pubs and attractions along WAW:

County Cork has fabulous hostels along the Wild Atlantic Way. Courtmacsherry is a joy to behold, as is Baltimore, home to Bushe's Bar and The Waterfront in the square. Then on to Castletownbere and the snug in McCarthy's Bar, stopping into The Tin Pub in Ahakista to see Mary O'Sullivan. The Bank House on Whiddy Island is another little gem - I had the best salad in Ireland there this summer. A veritable feast of not just good food, Cork and West Cork have carved a crafty niche for themselves with the popular annual Cork Craft Week in August.

www.baltimore.ie

www.corkcraftanddesign.com



Clare Island Lighthouse, Co. Mayo

County Kerry's coolest town is Kenmare, bursting with great restaurants, hotels and bars, notably Packies, The Lime Tree and my personal favourite, The Horseshoe. Home to the famous 5-star Park Hotel and Sheen Falls Country Club - a real treat, Kenmare has several mid-priced hostels and the standards are consistently good, with gorgeous art and craft outlets in the town and hinterland. As for Killarney, what can I say?

“

I think we have an awesome country, warm and welcoming people, great traditions, world-class music, wonderful art & craft, fabulous scenery, and the best food in the world.

Falls Hotel, Ennistymon, Co. Clare



Schull Harbour, Co. Cork



Dolphins on the Wild Atlantic Way



Baltimore Village Co. Cork

The Brehon Hotel is awesome as is the centrally-situated Great Southern Hotel. Pop over to see Fungi the dolphin in Dingle and you could stay at the wonderful Dingle Skellig Hotel, which commands Dingle Bay like no other. A visit to Ballybunion is also a must, with fantastic beaches and a world-class golf course. Festivals are big in Kerry, with the internationally renowned Rose of Tralee Festival and the traditional Puck Fair in Killorglin in August.
www.discoverireland.ie/kerry
www.ballybunionbythesea.ie

Skipping up to **County Clare**, via the Shannon Ferry at Tarbert, there are so many attractions, it's hard to pick the special ones. I'd recommend getting



family passes for the intriguing Bunratty Castle and Folk Park - you too could be King of the Castle for a night!
www.shannonheritage.com

The Falls Hotel in Ennistymon is probably my favourite mid-priced hotel in Ireland, with spa treatment rooms, large pool, sauna and outdoor tub. Then uptown to Byrnes Restaurant or pop over to the nearby town of Lahinch, which hosts the Irish Open this summer.

Glorious Galway! I love this city, with its rich music and cultural activities everywhere you go, and much to do for all ages. The city is known for its involvement in The Volvo Ocean Race, Galway International Arts Festival, Galway Races and its oyster festival. You have to visit Sheridan's Cheesemongers & Wine Bar, McCambridge's food emporium in Shop Street, the award-winning Fork Restaurant at Nox Hotel and my favourite, Kirwan's Lane. There's also an interesting hostel offering, named Snoozles, on Quay Street and Foster Street.

— ” —

Then it's exciting to tie up and scoot ashore to the little pubs and restaurants, where there's always a welcome and scrumptious food.

Connemara, Sligo and Donegal are just a revelation every time I visit. Shimmering lakes and rocky waterways are everywhere, and the landscape stretches for miles, overseen by The Twelve Pins and Benbulbin in The Yeats Country - Sligo. Upwards towards County Mayo you have classy Westport town with its interesting restaurants, and Killary Harbour, a natural fjord, which is probably my favourite place in The West. Sligo and Donegal beckon as we move northwards to Strandhill and the wonderfully wild ocean that sweeps around the coast, dominating its surroundings. Enniscrone is another lovely town and if you're interested in the historical houses of Yeats Country, swing by Lissadell House where Constance and her family will welcome you.

Ah, it's **Donegal** at last! It's simply beautiful, bleak, blustery and breathtaking all in one! With Gola Island, Glenveagh National Park, magnificent

Mount Errigal, beautiful beaches and rolling seas all around the coast. Last but not least - the top of Ireland - Tory Island. Saint Colmcille founded a monastery on the island in the 6th Century, and mythology is alive and well here! Designated a Special Protection Area for birds by the EU, you'll see black-backed gulls, guillemots, oystercatchers, falcons, ravens and other beauties in abundance. In fact, Tory is one of a few places where the endangered corncrake is heard - I had the pleasure of hearing its ratchety chanson one late night after a party in the community hall. I almost fell off my bicycle with the shock and was convinced it was a recording - it was so loud and wonderful in the stillness of the night. www.welovedonegal.com

Any WAW secret gems we should know about?

The Lighthouse on Clare Island.

There are several lighthouses taking guests around the Irish coast - see www.greatlighthouses.com

A Taste of West Cork Food Festival.

A festival like no other, in 40 towns, villages and islands in West Cork. It runs en fête over a 10-day period every September. www.atasteofwestcork.com

Man Friday Restaurant, Kinsale.

Consistently good.
www.manfridaykinsale.ie

Anything else you'd like to add?

I've enjoyed re-living my experiences here, and it makes me so much more appreciative of the wonderful people I've met along my own wild and wonderful way. I feel a road trip coming on...

email: mary@hopkinscommunications.ie
web: www.h-c.ie

Things to Do in Galway

Great Grub in Galway

Savour the tastes - from fabulous farmhouse cheeses at Sheridan's, to the irresistible McCambridge's food emporium – you'll find something to suit your taste in Galway.

Grab a window seat upstairs in McCambridge's and watch the world go by, while your taste buds are satisfied by a huge array of gastronomic offerings.

Traditional Music on Quay St

A mecca of pubs restaurants and cafes, Quay St also has the best selection of live traditional music in bars such as the Quays, Tigh Neachtain and the Spanish Arch hotel.

Visit The Spanish Arch

A true Galway icon, The Spanish Arch was built in 1584 and overlooks the River Corrib. The arches were used to access the quays from the town when Galway was a walled city and this is all that remains.



Galway Crystal

Visit the stunning crystal factory located just outside Galway City. It's easy to pass a full day just staring at the amazing crystal creations. Galway Crystal was established in 1967 by a group of local business people from the Galway Chamber of Commerce. Through the years many well-known people have passed through the doors of Galway Crystal, from presidents to celebrities. Galway Crystal can be found in the most prestigious homes, including our own Áras an Uachtaráin, the residence of the Irish President.

Festival capital

Galway is a Festival town and there appears to be a different festival every weekend. Check out the local Fáilte Ireland tourist office on Forster Street for up-to-the-minute information. It's great craic!

Galway Cathedral

Galway Cathedral was constructed in the late 1950s, at a time when most similar buildings were using concrete. It is, therefore, the youngest of Europe's great stone cathedrals.

Dedicated to Our Lady Assumed into Heaven and St Nicholas, it was designed by J.J. Robinson in a very eclectic style. It includes some Renaissance details mixed with the Romanesque and Gothic traditions.

The cathedral also boasts an impressive variety of art, including a statue of the Virgin by Imogen Stuart, a large Crucifixion mosaic by Patrick Pollen, rose windows by George Campbell and more.

Galway Hooker boats

The Galway Hooker is a traditional fishing boat developed in the 18th Century. Many of the boats have been restored by Hooker enthusiasts and can be seen during a festival in Kinvara, Co. Galway, which is a village certainly worth a visit.



Ballynahinch Castle

Ballynahinch Castle Hotel is one of Ireland's finest luxury castle hotels. Voted #1 in Ireland by the readers of Condé Nast magazine. Set in a private 700-acre estate of woodland, rivers and walks in the heart of Connemara, Co. Galway, this authentic and unpretentious Castle Hotel stands proudly overlooking its famous salmon fishery, with a backdrop of the beautiful 12 Bens Mountain range.

Relax in your beautifully appointed bedroom or suite with wonderful views and wake up to the sound of the river meandering past your window before enjoying breakfast in the elegant restaurant, which was voted the best in Ireland in April 2017 by Georgina Campbell.

Ballynahinch Castle is the perfect destination for an activity break or simply relaxing by one of their six open log fires. Expert guides are available to assist in every activity - on the sea, the mountains, rivers and trails, or in the library exploring the rich culture of this spectacular region.

Ballynahinch Castle Hotel is located along the Wild Atlantic Way in the West of Ireland. This makes us a perfect base for touring this 2,500km (1,500miles) of amazing driving route from Donegal to Co. Cork. Local attractions in Connemara on the drive include Killary Harbour, Inish Bofin, Sky Road and Roundstone village.

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As we open our doors for the 52nd year we are delighted to welcome you to the Glencolmcille Folk Village. Glencolmcille Folk Village is located in one of Donegal's most idyllic valleys, situated along the dramatic coastline of Glen Bay with its spectacular views of Glen Beach and Glen Head.

We stock the best variety of local hand crafts in the County. When you visit the Folk Village, you will experience a genuine Irish welcome with the thatched cottages offering an authentic glimpse into rural Ireland from 1750 onwards.

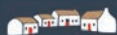
Tour booklets are available in several languages.

The Folk Village is an ideal attraction to visit on your excursion to Sliabh Liag cliffs we are only 20 minutes along the coast. Tá fáilte an Ghleanna romhat nuair a thugann tú cuairt ar Chlachán Ghleann Cholm Cille.

Insítear scéal an phobail stairiúil seo agus cuirfidh tú aithne ar bhunadh na háite atá ag obair anseo chomh maith le fios a fháil ar scéal saoil an Athair Mhic Daidhir.

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Exciting times for **The Savoy Group with planned expansion into historic mill**

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Renowned in Limerick for their exceptional customer service and hospitality skills, the Limerick Savoy collection operates the five-star Savoy Hotel, the iconic Hamptons Bar & Grill and the George Boutique Hotel, named 'Best Boutique Hotel of the Year in Ireland' at the 2018 Irish Hotel Awards.

Handsome, polished and perfectly placed, The Savoy is right in the heart of the Savoy Group and vibrant downtown Limerick and is the city's only 5-star hotel. The Savoy is a name that has been associated with culture and sophistication in Limerick since the 1930s, when the original renowned cinema, theatre and restaurant opened its doors on this site.

The Savoy Hotel is built where the old Savoy once stood and the hotel continues the long tradition of style, sparkle and hospitality associated with this name in this historic city centre location. Sleekly modern but resolutely old-school in terms of impeccable levels of service and classic touches, The Savoy is a luxurious city centre option for business or pleasure.

Behind the continued developments, partnerships and achievements is Managing Director Ronan

Brannigan, who has been at the helm of the Savoy Group for over 10 years.

Exciting times are set to continue in 2019 and beyond with planning permission granted early in 2019 which will see The Savoy extend into the neighbouring historic Mill building at the Henry Street and Shannon Street junction, creating 75 construction jobs in the process of a multi-million-euro investment from the Savoy Group.

With 25 new permanent jobs to be created within the hotel, the development will include 35 new bedrooms, bringing The Savoy Hotel's number of bedrooms to 129. In addition to the bedrooms, the new extension will include commercial units at ground level, including a European-style brasserie style restaurant.

This new development follows on from the recent opening of their Alex Findlater & Co Wine Hall, the sumptuous, red velvet, jazz style Grill Room and the lavish Oyster and Seafood Bar.

Wherever you are on your Irish journey, the Savoy Group in Limerick will make your holiday even more memorable.

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Sligo sets your spirit free



Sligo will enchant you; it is a county that celebrates its independent spirit and that is why writers and artists have long been inspired by its wild beauty.

The world-renowned poet W.B. Yeats adored the scenery around County Sligo and you will find this captured in Yeats' poetry such as the 'Lake Isle of Innisfree'. The final resting place of W.B. Yeats, the site of a 6th Century Columbian monastery, nestles under the spectacular Benbulbin mountain.

The Model, home of the Niland Collecton, is one of Ireland's leading contemporary arts centres, featuring works by John and Jack B. Yeats, Estella Solomons, Paul Henry and Louis Le Brocqy - among others.

Sligo is proud of its traditional music heritage, which is celebrated at regular events throughout the year. The popular Michael Coleman Heritage Centre draws together the many strands of traditional music and is the place to go for 'the real thing!'

Sligo is a fantastic foodie destination too. Take in some of the exciting Food Trail experiences - from a craft beer

tour and baking classes, to lunch on the seashore with your ancestors.

Take a Sligo Food Tour, meet the proud personalities behind Sligo food, hear fascinating local stories and gain some insider knowledge on where the food comes from and how it is produced.

www.sligofoodtours.ie/book-tour

Check out the Sligo Oyster Experience: Indulge in Sligo Bay Oysters at WB'S Coffee House, while you are guided by owner Aisling through the history and current farming methods of harvesting oysters on the Wild Atlantic Way.

<https://sligooystereperience.ie/product/book-the-sligo-oyster-experience/>

The Sligo Foodie Tour brings you on a culinary tasting and the experience is different on each and every tour. Discover lively locals in vibrant neighbourhoods with a mix of cultural and architectural heritage.

<https://hookedsligo.ie/sligo-foodie-tour/>

Sligo's archaeological and mythological heritage is incredibly rich, with one of the highest concentrations of prehistoric and later monuments in Western Europe. This ancient county is filled with over 5,000 archaeological sites.

Carrowmore Megalithic Cemetery is the largest cemetery of megalithic tombs in Ireland. Overlooking Carrowmore, on the summit of Knocknarea Mountain, is the huge flat-topped cairn called 'Miosgan Meadhbha' (Maew's Cairn), 55m in diameter and 10m high. In the beautiful limestone upland of the Bricklieve Mountains, above the western shore of Lough Arrow, is the impressive passage tomb cemetery of Carrowkeel.

Creevykeel Court Tomb, in the foothills of Tievebaun Mountain, is one of the best examples of a court tomb in Ireland. Knocknashee (The Hill of the Fairies), located near Tubbercurry, is a spectacular limestone tabletop plateau commanding a widespread view of the north Connaught plain.

Sligo offers an array of outdoor activities and is renowned for its surfing. There's something to suit every interest, from walking trails in stunning landscapes, championship links golf courses, stand up paddling, off-shore diving and kiteboarding; to a relaxed afternoon of fishing, or even an uplifting horse ride along the beach.

Sligo's stunning coastline hosts many discovery points along the Wild Atlantic Way. Bustling seaside villages and hidden bays alike are waiting to be found.

Mullaghmore Beach, overlooked by the majestic Classiebawn Castle, is situated in north Sligo next to the picturesque village of Mullaghmore. Nearby, Streedagh Strand is a 3km sandy beach with dunes and a lagoon behind with fantastic views over the sea to the mountains of Donegal, and behind to the famous Benbulbin mountain.

Further along the coast at Rosses Point - the area that inspired many of Jack B. Yeats' artwork - are three sandy beaches, where there will always be space to walk, run, or simply sit. The coastal towns of Strandhill and Enniscrone offer both spectacular scenery and activities, all overlooking the vast Atlantic Ocean.

Walking trails are plentiful around the county. Easy-going terrains set in beautiful forests, hills and lakesides are accessible for families and make for a great day out. Longer trails like the Sligo Way (a 74km walking route that traverses the county) or the Miners' Way and Historical Trail offer more challenging routes for the dedicated walker. Popular walking routes include Queen Maeve's Trail on Knocknarea, Benbulbin-Gortarowey Trail and The Devil's Chimney.

www.sligowalks.ie

Also not to be missed:

WALKING TOUR: Free guided walking tour of Sligo city: June – September, the tour departs from the Discover Ireland Tourist Office, O'Connell Street. Monday-Saturday 11am (duration two hours approx.) This tour will include places of historical, musical, sporting and cultural interest.

RACING: Go racing at Sligo race meetings on the following dates: 21 May/18 Jun/14 July/7, 8, 20 Aug/5 Sept.

LISSADELL HOUSE: The magnificent Lissadell House, so beloved of W.B. Yeats, was built in 1830 by the famous Gore Booth family and should not be missed.

MULLAGHMORE HEAD: The surf haven of Mullaghmore is one of the most popular places to visit in Sligo.

STREEDAGH: From the Spanish Armada shipwreck site, to the

fascinating fossils embedded in the rocks, a visit to the golden strand at Streedagh is one of the best things to do in Sligo for children.

CONEY ISLAND: The largest and most popular of the islands in Sligo Bay. Boasting 400 acres of beaches and green fields, criss-crossed by old stone walls and populated by an abundance of rabbits, it's a great place to spend a relaxed afternoon.

SLIGO ABBEY: The medieval Dominican abbey in Sligo Town offers a peek into an intriguing past, with artefacts, lore and a rich history dating back to 1252.

EAGLES FLYING - IRISH RAPTOR RESEARCH CENTRE: More than 100 magnificent birds of prey, falcons, hawks and eagles, some with wingspans of 3 metres, await visitors at the Eagles Flying centre near Ballymote, Co Sligo.

Festivals

- 6-12 May: Cos Cos 13th Annual Sean Nos Festival
- 13-16 June: Yeats Day Festival
- 14-16 June: Rosses Point Wild Atlantic Shanty Festival
- 14-16 June: Paddy Killoran Traditional Festival
- 6-13 July: Cairde Sligo Summer Festival
- 23-30 July: Sligo Jazz Project & International Summer School Festival
- 18-28 July: Tread Softly Festival
- 25 July-7 August: 60th Yeats International Summer School
- 2-5 August: James Morrison Traditional Weekend
- 8-11 August: Sligo Summer Festival
- 10-14 August: Tubbercurry Old Fair Day Festival
- 22-25 August: Coleman Traditional Festival
- 27-29 September: 24th Sligo Festival of Baroque Music
- 20-22 September: Celtic Fringe Festival
- 27 Sept-1 October: Frank Finn Traditional Singing Weekend
- 23-28 October: Sligo Live & Roots Festival
- 15-17 November: International Choral Festival



For more information, please visit www.sligotourism.ie



SIX OF THE BEST

By Nicky Sullivan

Rich havens of unspoilt beauty, Ireland's national parks are a magnet for nature lovers, walkers, photographers or those simply seeking a little peace in an ever-maddening world.

Ireland has six national parks, covering a collective area of 650km², and five of these are threaded along the Wild Atlantic Way. While every national park is dedicated to preserving a safe and beautiful environment for Ireland's wildlife and plant life, each one has its own very distinct character, offering a very different experience at every turn.

Glenveagh, County Donegal

From the Irish phrase Gleann Bheatha, meaning 'glen of the birches', this 16,000-acre park of mountains, lakes, glens, cliffs, peat bogs and woods sprawls above 19th Century Glenveagh Castle and the shores of Lough Veagh. The estate is home to a network of some of the most celebrated gardens in Ireland, bursting with an array of exotic and delicate plants and flowers from far-flung corners of the world. It is no surprise that Glenveagh won the National Heritage Award at this year's CIE Tours International Awards of Excellence.

Ballycroy National Park, County Mayo

A vast, uninhabited wilderness of blanket bog and mountain, dominated by the Nephin Beg mountain range, Ballycroy is home to one of the last intact active peatland systems in Ireland.

The youngest of Ireland's national parks, consecrated in 1998, Ballycroy is a unique environment with a diverse array of flora and fauna. Greenland white-fronted geese, golden plover, red grouse and otters are just some of the important animals found in the park.



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Depicting busy market days, this is a joyful discovery for young and old alike. Relax and enjoy a cup of coffee/tea in our cafe or visit our Gift Shop in an authentic train carriage. Take a tour of Clonakilty town aboard the Choo Choo Road Train.





Connemara, County Galway

One of the most romantic locations in Ireland, Connemara is a rugged, rocky wilderness of scenic mountains, bog expanses, heaths, woods and grasslands. Centred around one of the most photographed buildings in Ireland, the exquisite Kylemore Abbey, the park is also the site of megalithic tombs, more than 4,000 years old, as well as a mysterious graveyard. Once owned by one of the founders of the Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals, the park is home to a diverse array of birdlife and wildlife, including the famous Connemara Pony.

The Burren, County Clare

An extraordinary, otherworldly landscape of cracked limestone, chalky grassland, hazel scrub and ash and hazel woodland, The Burren is home to plant life found nowhere else on Ireland; as well as archaeological sites and monuments that are older than Egypt's pyramids. This is where Arctic-alpine and

Mediterranean plants live side by side, while woodland plants inhabit open plains. Mysterious dolmens, tombs and almost 500 ring forts made of stone and earth. Not to be missed in the summer, when pockets of landscape explode in riots of colour.

Killarney National Park, County Kerry

Killarney National Park is the jewel in southwest Ireland's crown. According to the Irish Times, this stunning area has something to appeal to everyone: From adventure junkies, who can take their pick of climbing, hiking, canyoning and kayaking, to nature enthusiasts who will be thrilled by Ireland's last herd of native red deer, the Japanese sika deer and Killarney's wide range of bird species; to history buffs who can stalk the halls of Ross Castle and Muckross House to their hearts' content, and families who can loosen their spirits on the pony-and-trap rides and boat trips.

The sixth national park is in Wicklow, situated in the beautiful

Ancient East. Too beautiful too omit, we must give it an mention!

Wicklow Mountains National Park, Co. Wicklow

Wicklow Mountains National Park was established in 1991 to conserve the flora, fauna and scenery of the Wicklow uplands. The Wicklow Mountains are also a Special Area of Conservation (SAC) and a Special Protection Area (SPA) under EU law. The National Park has 20,000 hectares of upland habitats, each with their range of plant and animal species. Notable areas include the Liffey Head Bog, a very good example of an active growing mountain blanket bog. Native deciduous oak woodland is found in the valley of Glendalough, and native Scot's pine woodland at Coronation Plantation and also at Glendalough. Deep mountain lakes and upland rocky streams occur throughout the park. For information on all of Ireland's national parks, what you'll find and how to get there, take a look at: www.npws.ie.

Shay Hunston

My name is Shay Hunston, I'm a freelance photographer following the 2,500km route of the Wild Atlantic Way from Kinsale to Donegal, taking black & white portrait photographs of the people living in the towns, villages and remote locations amongst the stunning beauty of this diverse and ancient landscape set against the vastness of the Atlantic Ocean.

In towns and villages along the route, I'm staging exhibitions of the photographs plus people's thoughts, experiences and sense of place. Upon completion of the project, I will produce a book of photographs and all the proceeds from the sale of the book will be donated to the RNLI.

I'm overwhelmed by the positive response I've received so far, everybody loves the project. Ireland is indeed a stunning beautiful country but its the people that are the real gems, their kindness and generosity of spirit has been amazing. I'm constantly receiving offers of help, encouragement and support along the way.

The project is a celebration of these wonderful people living on the west coast of Ireland, an open minded, independent, welcoming, tolerant people - a people free in spirit and wild at heart, living on the edge of the world.

The opportunity to travel the route from Cork to Donegal and to put together a collection of their photographs inspired the project.

The Wild Atlantic Way is a massive success story for the west coast of Ireland. Tourism figures are increasing year after year and are exceeding projections. Locals are starting to establish small businesses to cater for the increased number of tourists.



Rachel Dare - Bantry, West Cork.



Mick O'Callaghan - Schull, West Cork.



*Noel McCarthy
- Sheep's Head, West Cork.*



*Caroline O'Donnell - Ballydehob,
West Cork.*

Scattery Island... Yours To Explore!

Located on the Wild Atlantic Way, just off Kilrush in Co. Clare, Scattery Island is truly unforgettable experience. Recently awarded a European Destination of Excellence, Scattery has a wealth of historic sites including five Churches, a Cathedral, a magnificent Round Tower, Napoleonic Artillery Battery and working Lighthouse. Today the island is completely uninhabited and visitors can explore its ancient historic sites and experience its natural beauty in peace and tranquillity.

Scattery is an ideal location for anyone interested in Ireland's rich history or simply those that wish to experience an unspoilt glimpse of an Ireland gone by. On arrival to the island, you will enjoy a guided walking tour around the monastic sites and listen to the

island's fascinating story that begins with St. Senan, who established a monastery there in the 5th Century. The story continues with the Viking invasion and Brian Boru, the High King of Ireland who defeated the Limerick Vikings in a great battle on Scattery, the arrival of the Spanish Armada, right up to the last of the islanders who lived on Scattery up to the early 1970's. You can enter the round tower which is believed to predate Clonmacnoise, and visit the islands well, that is said to have special healing powers.

Currently ranked at #2 on Trip Advisors Top Things to do in Co. Clare (as at Jan 2019), Scattery leaves a lasting impression with visitors. It is as if the land and the buildings are talking to you - a silent speech, about its life and times and the great people who lived, loved, played and died there

during a history that spans from the 5th to the 20th century.

Tours to Scattery Island depart from Kilrush Marina. From there, it is just a short 15 minute sailing time across the sheltered waters of the Shannon River. Visit www.scatteryislandtours.com for further information.



Limerick entrepreneur wins European award

Limerick-based online travel agency www.FlyCruiseStay.com has scooped the prestigious title of Best Online Travel Agency 2019 - Republic of Ireland.

Declan Hughes, founder and director said: "We are very grateful to accept this marvellous award from LUX-life Magazine on behalf of our valued international client base, our dream team, preferred partners and of course my wonderful wife and kids. I am dedicating the award to my late mother, who always inspired me."

FlyCruiseStay.com is a one-stop travel shop powered and backed by a consortium of travel brands whose mission is to save clients time

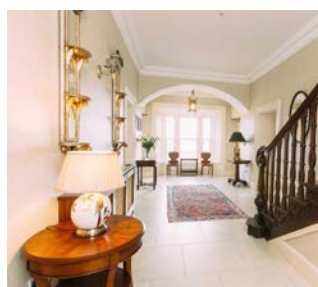
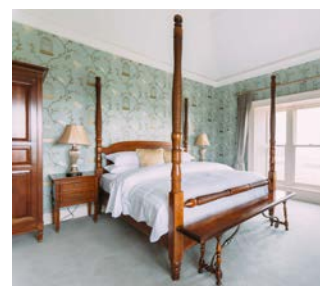
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SPANISH POINT HOUSE

“Growing up in Spanish Point I always admired the house, its imposing presence and Georgian architectural features. However, I never imagined it would come on the market so, when it did, I didn’t hesitate in organising a viewing for my wife, Aoife and I.”



From the moment we entered the house, we knew it was something special; the high ceilings, the thick walls, the original features and the breathtaking sea views from almost every room.

We instantly fell in love with the house and could see its potential as a luxurious guest house by the sea and we felt that with our experience in the hospitality industry we could create something unique. During our two year extensive renovation of this 1830’s listed building we, on occasion, questioned our decision to take it on but our desire and ultimate vision for the property saw us through.

Formerly a boarding school, run by the Sisters of Mercy, Spanish Point House is now a 10-bedroom, family-run, luxury guest house with a dedicated team of staff. Our son Ríain (7) “helps out” at the weekends so we’re very lucky in that respect. We are delighted

to welcome guests from all over the world and we strive to exceed all our guests’ expectations in every aspect of their stay. They are welcomed with a complimentary tea or coffee served with homemade cookies, kindly made each day by Aoife’s mum Ann. These can be enjoyed in one of our two guest lounges, both with views of the Atlantic Ocean and which are exclusively for our residents.

Located just over 10 minutes from Lahinch and Doonbeg, we are proving to be an ideal base for golfing enthusiasts or for those wishing to visit the Cliffs of Moher (25 mins), to explore the historical area of Spanish Point with its beautiful sandy beach and 9 Hole links, or visit many of the other nearby attractions. We’re also the ideal destination for guests who want to simply escape the hustle and bustle of a busy life and relax and unwind. From the moment our guests arrive, whether

it be providing them with tourist information, local history or just making sure that they have the best experience possible, we endeavour to make their stay a memorable one.

A lasting memory we aim to create is of a sumptuous breakfast, which is served each morning in our breakfast room with wonderful views of the ocean. We proudly serve locally-sourced produce like the award-winning sausages and pudding from Jack Kelly Butchers in Kilrush and the delectable Burren Oak Smoked Salmon from Lisdoonvarna. Many guests have returned home with our homemade bread recipes.

Spanish Point House is an historic house that has been sensitively and lovingly restored. That, combined with our attention to detail and the sense of warmth and intimacy is the reason, we feel, that so many of our guests have returned.

First Guinness brewery in USA open to the public

The new home of Guinness in America – the Open Gate Brewery & Barrel House in Maryland opened its doors on Friday, August 3, 2018. Will you be planning a trip?

“This brewery has long been a dream for Guinness, and an incredible amount of hard work has gone into getting these doors open,” said Diageo Beer Company USA Chairman and Diageo Global Chief Sales Officer Tom Day.

“I can’t wait to see people enjoying the fantastic beer our brewers have made in this historic and beautiful building. I’m proud that we have created something special and quintessentially Guinness here in Maryland.”

Located just 10 miles from downtown Baltimore and 30 miles northeast of Washington DC, the Open Gate Brewery & Barrel House is part of an exciting and growing brewing scene in Maryland. It will be the home of Guinness Blonde, along with new Guinness beers created for the US market.

The creation of a world-class brewery, barrel house and visitor centre and development of packaging and warehousing operations has generated more than 200 jobs and represents an investment by Diageo of approximately \$90 million in the Maryland project.

The Open Gate Brewery & Barrel House is the first Guinness brewing operation on US soil in more than 60 years and is home to two custom-built brewhouses: A 10-barrel brewhouse and a 100-hectoliter brewhouse, both of which are set up to brew and ferment different styles. The 10-barrel system is the small-batch experimental brewery, while the 100-hectoliter system will initially brew Guinness Blonde for national distribution. Led by Brewmaster Peter Wiens and Head Brewer Hollie Stephenson, the Maryland brewing team has already begun producing beers for the on-site taproom. While the majority of beers will be available exclusively in the taproom, a few brews will make their way to the greater DC, Maryland and Virginia areas, with some even rolling out nationally.



The first part of the brewery’s name takes inspiration from the Guinness Open Gate Brewery in Dublin – where the company has experimented in beer for more than a century. The second part of the name, ‘Barrel House’, is a nod to the long history of Guinness brewers maturing beer in wood barrels, a tradition this new brewery intends to continue. While many Guinness classic stouts, including Guinness Draught, Extra Stout and Foreign Extra Stout, will continue to be brewed at St James’ Gate in Dublin, guests can enjoy them responsibly alongside the new American innovation beers in the brewery taproom. The exact number of beers on tap will vary, but there will typically be more than 15 beers available at one time. Visitors can tour the 10-barrel brewery and try the beers made on site. The initial line-up will include: Guinness IPA, a hit in the Test Taproom and Crosslands Pale Ale, a beer made entirely with Maryland-grown malted barley and hops. Tickets will be available for purchase on site, but Guinness recommends buying them ahead of time at www.GuinnessBreweryBaltimore.com.

All you need to know about the Skellig Rock UNESCO World Heritage Site

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Waterville House & Golf Links

The Georgian Manor is an 18th-century manor house that sits on a narrow isthmus facing the wild Atlantic with beautiful Lough Currane on its eastern perimeter. The Currane River bisects the 50-acre estate as it flows into Ballinskelligs Bay. The Manor was built by the Butler family in 1790, and the estate was called "Waterville".

Aside from its comfort and charm, the four-star residence has 12 bedrooms, and a private Fazio designed practice facility. Guests enjoy preferential tee times and access to fishing the famous Butler's Pool and private rivers and lakes. The ancient Weir of Butler's Pool is listed in the book, Iveragh Peninsula Archaeology, and is part of Ireland's Salmon Research program, supplying critical spawning migration data.





Getting down with the kids!

By Liz O'Brien

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Family holidays can be tricky, it's not always easy to keep all ages happy. One person wants to chill out during their precious time off; another relaxes by climbing mountains – and that's before you ask the children!

The Wild Atlantic Way is not all historical buildings and beautiful scenery, there's plenty to keep younger family members entertained as well. So, to help you decide, here's a list of top things to do – come rain, hail or shine – along the Wild Atlantic Way.



Let's go and find a dolphin

You might have heard of Flipper the dolphin? Well, in County Kerry, there's a dolphin almost as well-known, called Fungie. He's been attracting crowds to Dingle Harbour since the 1980s and ever since, local skippers have taken passengers on tours of the mammal's natural habitat. Among them were celebrities Pierce Brosnan and Jean Kennedy-Smith.

Dolphin sightings, however, are not just exclusive to Dingle - or Kerry for that matter. West Cork is known for sightings of dolphin, seal, basking sharks, majestic minke and fin whales.

Further up the coast, Kilrush in County Clare is home to Ireland's only known resident group of bottlenose dolphins; swimming wild and free in the Shannon Estuary. You can see actual skeletons of whales and dolphins at the nearby Shannon Dolphin and Wildlife Centre.



Fun for all ages

We all know that kids need constant entertaining; no matter what age. But, how do you keep everyone happy if your children fall into different age brackets? Check out Westport House in County Mayo.

The entire estate - which covers 480 acres and overlooks Clew Bay - boasts its own Pirate Adventure Park, with zip-wires, rides, slides, bouncy castles and giant swan pedal boats. There's also an activity centre with orienteering and archery and if that wasn't enough to convince you; there's also remnants of a 16th Century castle and dungeon on-site - dating back to when the Pirate Queen of Connacht, Grace O'Malley, ruled the land and seas around the estate. There's plenty to entertain all ages and there's accommodation on and off site.



A Burren adventure

The Burren and Cliffs of Moher usually feature on people's hit lists when visiting the Wild Atlantic Way - and rightly so. About a half-hour drive away is the Burren Nature Sanctuary in Kinvara - an interpretive centre for the natural history of the Burren.

Kids love it and it's easy to see why. There's an adventure playground, giant sand pit and a one kilometre looped nature trail on site. You can even feed the sheep and see llamas.

Also, with Ireland's unpredictable weather, it's always a good idea to have an indoor activity up your sleeve for a rainy day. Indoors, there's a soft play area, slides, ball pool, climbing frames and of course an artisan cafe to sit and enjoy a bite to eat.



Time to get wet!

With thousands of kilometres of coastline at our fingertips, it's no wonder water sports are increasing in popularity. Plenty of surf schools have popped up along the Wild Atlantic Way in recent years.

Strandhill in Sligo is a great spot for surfers, but also for onlookers. If your family is brave enough to give it a go, local surf schools offer private or group lessons. Make sure to rent wetsuits, the water can be really cold.

For the more daring family; how about coasteering? The

combination of cliff jumping, swimming and exploring caves and rocks is high energy and exhilarating.

For something in between, kayaking tours operate right along the coast - the night-time, bioluminescent trips are particularly spectacular.

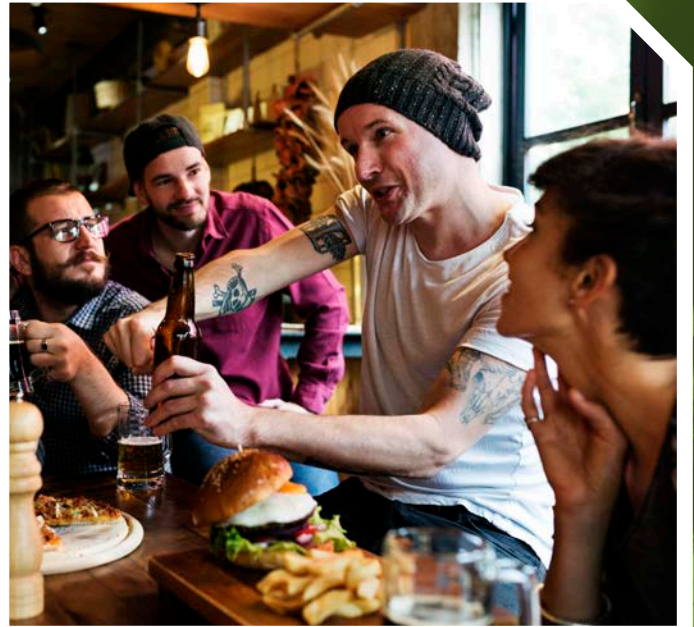


Zorbing adventures

Why should the kids have all the fun? Instead of living vicariously through them, join in! Try something the whole family can do; zorbing anyone? If rolling down a hill, while strapped into a transparent plastic orb isn't for you there's plenty more to choose from.

Activities such as paintballing, abseiling, obstacle courses, treasure hunts and horse-riding can be found in adventure centres all along the Wild Atlantic Way. The Wild Atlantic Adventure Centre on Donegal's Inishowen peninsula has an adventure package that's sure to make you jump out of your comfort zone!

The rise of the Gastropubs



The classic Irish combination of a drink and a bit of craic has been winning fans since humans learned how to beat a rhythm.

And sure, if you were feeling peckish along the way, you could always tuck into a packet of crisps or a penitential toasted cheese sandwich, before heading back to the shindig. But those days are over.

Not because there's no more craic, but because Ireland's pubs have turned to food and made it a thing. Gastropubs have sprung up all over the country, serving delicious food that is worth celebrating in its own right and giving fine dining restaurants a run for their money.

Ireland's pubs are genuinely unique. The atmosphere, character and characters you'll find in them simply can't be bottled and reproduced in any way, anywhere else in the world. They stand for centuries of tradition, but in today's fast-changing world, they also embrace dynamism and innovation.

The bare stone walls and warm fires that have sheltered the Irish for hundreds of years as they tell tall tales, talk of rebellions and make the air ring with their song, sorrow and laughter; now house comfortable, stylish bars that are as welcoming to a solo female traveller as they are to a happy-go-lucky group. But nowhere are the recent changes more evident than on their menus.

Even the Michelin Guide has noticed. In 2018, the global foodie bible listed 30 Irish pubs in its selection.

From Toddies at The Bulman in Kinsale, to Hardagans in Sligo, you'll find half of Michelin's pub selections sprinkled along the Wild Atlantic Way, or certainly within a short detour of it. They offer a cosy respite from your journey while serving up all the flavour, and less of the fuss, of 'smarter' establishments.

One of them — the Wild Honey Inn in



Lisdoonvarna, Co. Clare — has even won the most highly coveted prize of all, a Michelin star.

But Michelin is not the only standard. Ireland has a huge number of gastropubs that are turning out inspired food mixing fresh, modern takes on high-end cuisine with traditional pub fare such as scampi — don't miss this at Clonakilty's An Sugán — smoked Irish salmon served with rich soda bread, crab claws, juicy Irish beef burgers, hearty sandwiches and chowders that are the subject of fiercely fought national competitions.

The beef & Guinness pie at Flanagan's Townhouse, or Mike's baked fish pie at John Benny's in Dingle are surely not to be missed and you'll even find a prawn cocktail at Moran's on the Weir in Galway. You can't get more classic than that.

Some take a creative spin on traditional dishes, such as the Mad Fish Soup at the award-winning

Cronin's in Crosshaven — a Mediterranean style soup of house-made shellfish stock and a mix of market-fresh fish enriched with brandy and cream — or the organic spiced salmon with couscous, cucumber, radish and a lemon dressing at The Glasshouse in Sligo.

Meanwhile, others blend tradition with a fresh new level of creativity. Tune in to Deasy's in Clonakilty for a taste of salt ling with celeriac and caper salad; tuck into a pigeon and Parma ham salad at Cronin's Shebeen in Co. Clare, or drop by The Derg Inn on Lough Derg, Tipperary, where you can enjoy a monk tail scampi in kataifi pastry with garlic mayonnaise and chilli jam.

This is but a small taster of the delights that lie in store along the Wild Atlantic Way. It would take a book to describe the world of delicious possibility waiting for you out there.

A night out with extra sparkle at 101 Limerick

101 Limerick is the name on everyone's lips right now and is Limerick's most popular hotspot. Located on the main street, 101 Limerick is a multi-leveled cocktail bar with an edge, offering three floors of fun in the heart of the city.

'The Basement' at 101 is an authentic and comfortable Irish bar, decorated with paintings by the acclaimed Irish artist Solus and tales of 'Dead' Rob Rich to give visitors a taste Limerick character.

The heart and uniqueness of 101 Limerick is their signature outdoor bar. With ample heating, colourful

lighting, plants and creative design, the bar offers an escape into a stylish 'Secret Garden' venue.

101 Limerick brings an air of old-school glamour with its slick and suave décor in 'The Piano Bar', the ideal venue for a night out with extra sparkle.

The venue features a mix of live music and DJs throughout the week and on weekends, a visit to the exclusive 'Opium' Lounge is a must; with bottle service, top class liquor and an oriental vibe, this seductive atmosphere will have you dancing early into the morning.

www.101limerick.com



Maggie Choo's

Maggie Choo's is a reliable venue for impressing first-time visitors to Limerick. Step past the street lights and the dark doors into an abundance of textures; with coloured tiles and intricately sculpted wood.

The bar is vast, and stocked with top class liquor. The bar is dotted with an impressive amount of detail that gives the place its soul. If you hear whispers of secret passageways behind the walls, secret cocktail bars or secret gardens — know that it's all true.

www.101limerick.com



Texas Steakout

RESTAURANT



Food, Glorious food in Limerick's City Centre

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!



Shay Hunston

www.shayhunstonphotography.com



Things to Do in Donegal



Glenveagh National Park

Glenveagh National Park is one of the six beautiful national parks in Ireland. Situated in the Northwest of Co. Donegal, Glenveagh encompasses some 16,000 hectares in the heart of the Derryveagh Mountains.

Such a great wilderness is the haunt of many interesting plants and animals. These lands were managed as a private deer forest before becoming a national park in 1975. With the completion of public facilities, Glenveagh National Park was officially opened to the public in 1986.



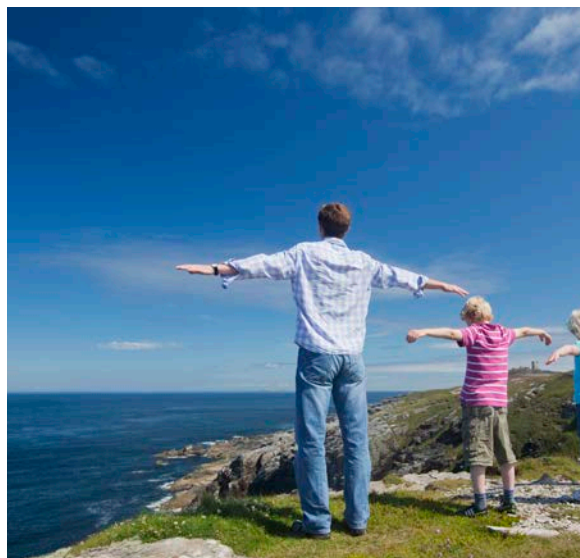
Glenevin Waterfall (Clonmany)

This amazing waterfall is located at the top of a short 2km hike through the woods in Clonmany. There are picnic areas on the way to the waterfall which blend in beautifully with the natural landscape. Footbridges towards the waterfall are dotted along the track as visitors criss-cross the stream using the stepping stones.

Daniel O'Donnell Visitor Centre

If you are a fan of Daniel O'Donnell then you will not want to

miss a trip to Dungloe to experience this dedicated permanent tribute to the boy from Donegal. The visitor can follow Daniel's life from his roots in a small coastal village to the world stage and see some of the many awards he received, including his gold and platinum albums. Video screens show extracts from many of the top TV shows he has appeared on, along with all his own song promo films and extracts from many sell-out concerts since his career began.



Malin Head

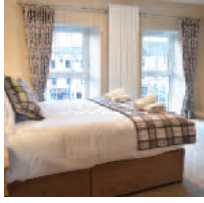
Malin Head is located on the Inishowen Peninsula, County Donegal. Here you will find the most northern point of the whole island of Ireland. The northernmost tip is the headland named Dúnalderagh (Banba's Crown). The views in this area is spectacular and it is a place that any tourist must visit when they come to Donegal.

Mount Errigal

Mount Errigal is a beautiful mountain near Gweedore in County Donegal. It is both the tallest peak of the Derryveagh Mountains and of all the peaks in County Donegal. Errigal is also the most southern, steepest and highest of the mountain chain, called the "Seven Sisters" by locals. The mountain is beautiful in both Summer and Winter and is a must-see

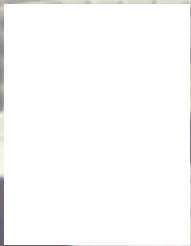
Narín & Portnoo Beach

One of Ireland's finest beaches! This beach has everything: beautiful sand, peninsulas and hills in the background. It is an absolute gem and should not be under-estimated. Anyone who has been there will know what we are talking about!



The Foyle Hotel have poured their passion for high-quality, locally-inspired food made from the best of Donegal produce.

Foyle Hotel brings the love of their home town into this unique project which combines Brian's culinary skills as one of Ireland's best-known chefs and Brenda's managerial expertise to create a boutique hotel, wine bar and eatery which celebrates the best of Donegal food and hospitality.



www.foylehotel.ie

Main Street Moville | Inishowen | Donegal

T: 074 93 85280 E: info@foylehotel.ie



Ard Nahoo Eco Cabins
Holiday Accommodation • Retreats • Treatments



Our award-winning yoga retreat center welcomes individuals, couples, families and groups and offers an escape from the grind of busy lives .

Our little piece of heaven in the West of Ireland is the perfect place to hide away, relax and recharge. We invite you to enjoy the beauty and simplicity of country living – you will leave with a whole new positive perspective in your pocket.

Just off the Wild Atlantic Way in the North Leitrim hills, we are perfectly located as a base for touring the west and north of Ireland.

A warm welcome is waiting for you.

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- **Yoga Retreats**
- **Personal Retreats**
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Ard Nahoo Yoga Retreat Centre

Our award-winning yoga retreat centre welcomes individuals, couples, families and groups and offers an escape from the grind of busy lives – we try our best to accommodate everyone.

Our little piece of heaven in the West of Ireland is the perfect place to hide away, relax and recharge. This WiFi free zone invites you to enjoy the beauty and simplicity of country living – you will leave with a whole new positive perspective in your pocket.

A warm welcome is waiting for you.





Surf's up for

Sea Sessions Music Festival



By Nicky Sullivan

Surf's up! And what better way to round off a beautiful day of long, rolling waves than with some seriously great music, food, dance and a lively carnival atmosphere?

Where can you do that? At SeaSessions 2019, an amazing festival in one of the country's top surfing locations, taking place at Bundoran, Co. Donegal, from June 21 to 23, 2019.

When you take Ireland's pounding Atlantic waves, ruggedly dynamic coastline and near-constant winds, it's no wonder that it has become one of the most exciting surfing destinations in the world. Bundoran is a near-legendary surf spot, regularly topping 'best surf spots in Europe' lists thanks to its shimmering green waters and rolling waves shaped by the headlands and flat rock reefs that flank the coastline.

The music will be supplied by some of Europe's and Ireland's most exciting contemporary acts, with Sigrid, Clean Bandit, Two Door Cinema Club headlining the nights' performances. More than 40 other acts are part of the extravaganza, including Jax Jones, The Magician, Wild Youth, Hermitage Green, Sugarhill Gang with Grandmaster Melle Mel and Scorpio, Le Boom, Jerry Fish, Bitch Falcon, Trojan Sound System, DJ Hype, Boots & Kats, Kormac (AV show)



Inhaler, Jack Vallier, Moncrieff, The 2 Johnnies, Stevie G, Columbia Mills, Al Gibbs, Josh McClorey, Get Down Edits, The Wood Burning Savages, Vulpynes, Pontious Pilate & The Naildrivers, Josh Gray, Paddy Hanna, Silverbacks, Montauk Hotel, Somebody's Child, Tim Chadwick, ALT 8, Colin Perkins, Michael Pope, Thumper, Classic Yellow and Noel Phelan.

Daytime activities are not just restricted to surfing either. There are plenty of beach sports events — including beach volleyball, tag rugby and barefoot soccer — with cash prizes to be won, as well as some “epic coastal walks” to be found nearby. Rougey Walk is just beside the festival site, and a prime spot for soaking up Donegal Bay.

The jagged stretch of the Wild Atlantic Way, leading from Donegal Town

through Sligo to far-flung Erris in Mayo, is renowned for its surf and attracts some of the world's top wave-riders. But that's only the beginning.

There's a cultural richness along the Surf Coast too, from the Neolithic Céide Fields to, of course, the legacy of poet WB Yeats, who immortalised the landscapes of his childhood in some of his best-known works — including the 'Lake Isle of Inishfree'.

Sea Sessions 2019 day and weekend tickets are on sale from Ticketmaster outlets nationwide and www.ticketmaster.ie. Tickets start at €119.90 for three days non-camping, and €149.90 including four nights camping. Single day tickets are available from €54.90 (Friday and Sunday) and €59.90 (Saturday) + VIP Upgrades for €50. See www.seasessions.com



Romantic Retreats

Treat yourself to and your better half to a fabulous getaway along the Wild Atlantic Way and you won't be disappointed! Whether it's romance, tranquility, or activity you're seeking - Ireland's 2500 kilometre stretch of coastline offers it all.



An island to remember

Truly switch off and escape the daily grind by heading out to sea to stay on one of Ireland's inhabited islands. Offering unspoiled views and a slower pace of life, islands are a great option for couples looking to unwind. Most are accessible by ferry and have plenty of tourist accommodation, especially in summer.

Cape Clear - off the coast of West Cork - hosts an annual International Storytelling Festival, starting in August. Cape Clear is said to enjoy its own microclimate and with a glampsite boasting ocean views from Mongolian yurts and tepees, it's the perfect retreat for a couple wanting to relax but also enjoy an authentic Irish experience.

Locals speak both, Irish (Gaeilge) and English; so keep one ear cocked and you could even take home a few phrases "as Gaeilge".
www.yurt-holidays-ireland.com

A lighthouse romance

If solitude is your idea of heaven, consider shacking up in one of the country's disused lighthouses. Ditch the fancy phone apps and fall asleep to the soothing sounds of actual waves crashing just outside your window.

Surrounded by epic views of the Atlantic Ocean, this is definitely one for the romanticists and couples dreaming of a retreat with a difference.



A piece of heritage

Ireland's landscape is rich in history and in a bid to conserve and sustain the nation's iconic buildings - historic castles, former schools, country manors, round towers - the Irish Landmark Trust has turned many heritage buildings into self-catering holiday accommodation that can be rented exclusively. See for yourself at: www.irishlandmark.com



Go climb a tree

Treehouse, anyone? Talk about being at one with nature! Outside of Skibbereen - in West Cork - lies an array of cottages and tree-houses, specifically designed with couples in mind. Nestled under a canopy of trees, complete with four-poster beds, private hot-tubs and leafy views, the quirky homes are ideal for couples craving a restful, yet romantic retreat.

But perhaps you might prefer a cottage? Cottages are synonymous

with Ireland - and there are plenty of older, thatched style dwellings available for rent right around the country. A quick search online will return lots of modern and quaint abodes.



Best of both worlds

Taking care of your mind and body is more on-trend than ever before. So, it's no wonder spa breaks and active holidays are increasing in demand. There are an abundance of spa hotels along the Wild Atlantic Way to choose from; many of which have teamed up with local tour operators and adventure centres to provide discounts for activities in their locality - surfing, paddle-boarding, kayaking, horse-riding, biking and walking tours.



A spot of pampering

Every couple deserves pampering and indulgence, especially while on holiday. It's easy to find both along the Wild Atlantic Way; with plenty of four and five-star-hotels offering the optimum in comfort, food and service. TripAdvisor recently named its Top 10 Irish hotels for 2019, with eight of the 10 hotels awarded on the Wild Atlantic Way.

Also listed were Ireland's six best spas 2019. The ESPA at The Europe, Kerry and Fota Island Resort in Cork both made the cut; something to keep in mind when spoiling your significant other.

Cobh Heritage Centre

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

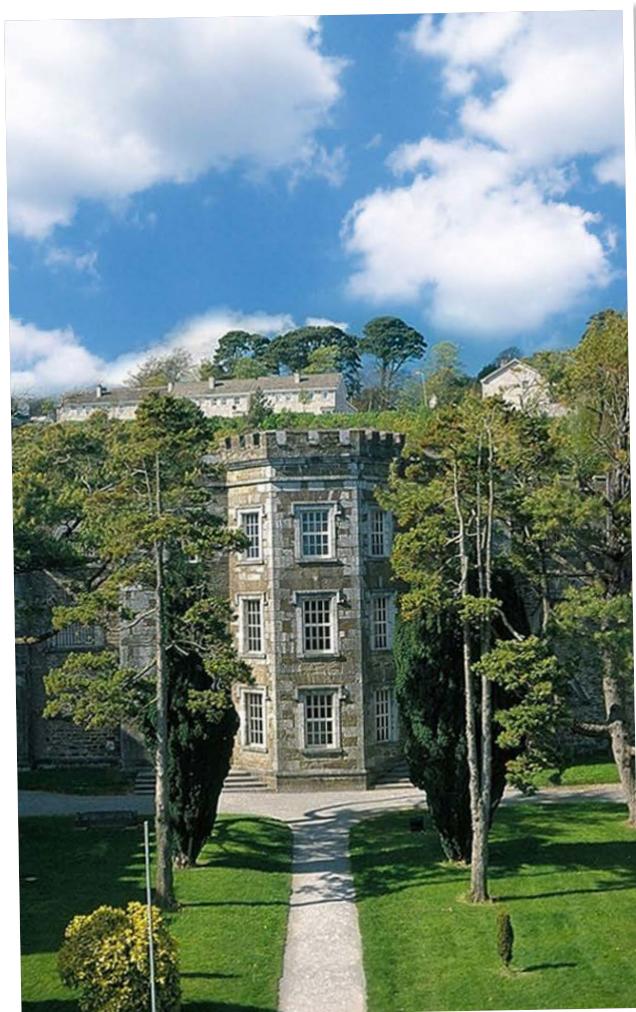
This beautiful, informative and sometimes emotive cultural centre is situated within Cobh's beautifully restored Victorian railway station, a building with its own historic story.

Cobh: The Queenstown Story.

GPS 51 50 55.68N 8 17 57.72W

Michael Collins House

Michael Collins House, Clonakilty is a museum dedicated to Michael Collins and the story of Irish independence; offering an insight into the life of 'The Big Fella' and much more. History is brought to life through guided tours, interactive displays, audio visuals, original artefacts and much more. An affordable, educational and entertaining experience that is suitable for all ages. For more information contact 023-8858676, email info@michaelcollinshouse.ie or visit www.michaelcollinshouse.ie



Be happy at 56 Central in Galway

56 Central was created with one thing in mind - happiness!

This stylish world above the streets has, over the years, been a place of joy, content and positive vibes, hence the tagline #ourhappyplace. Fun and laughter radiates through the walls of 56 Central. It is a place for everyone - families, friends and old acquaintances - to catch up and enjoy each other's company. Don't forget that happiness is contagious, so spread the joy!

Upon arriving in the restaurant, you are immediately greeted with a big smile, the sound of laughter and a friendly "hello". From open to close, the restaurant is always full of old friends catching up over a glass of bubbles, children busy colouring and general good vibes. The key to happiness is connection, living life mindfully and being a part of something bigger. The crew aim to make sure that everyone leaves with a smile and from day one, the crew are taught the value of making a difference to the lives of others. The crew are known for their kind hearts and their love for helping others.

Everyone at 56 Central realise that day-to-day life is full of ups and downs but if they manage to make your day even 1% better, they are content they have done something worthwhile.



On your bike in Killarney!

David and Fiona O'Sullivan opened O'Sullivan's Cycles in the early 1990s in Bishop's Lane, New Street, Killarney with bike sales and repairs.

Since then, they have expanded this family business to three outlets within Killarney town, to include bike rental and outdoor gear sales. O'Sullivan Cycles are agents for the leading bike manufacturers of the world including Trek, Giant, Specialized and many more.

They have a wide range of bicycles for hire to suit all tastes; whether you're interested in exploring the nearby National Park for a day, or planning a week-long excursion around Kerry.

Contact: 064 6631282

A photograph of a man and a woman smiling and posing together in a lush green jungle. In the background, several gorillas are visible, partially obscured by the dense foliage. The man is wearing a blue t-shirt, and the woman is wearing a grey jacket. The overall scene is vibrant and captures a moment of joy during a wildlife encounter.

Peel back the cultural layers with Irish-designed travel app

By Nicky Sullivan

Image credits: Dee Mee

Your bags are packed, passport is safely stashed in a waterproof wallet and you've ticked off the online check-in. A well-earned rest is on the way and you're absolutely raring to go. But wait...

What about travel plugs? Do you need to pack a few of those too? Will it be alright to wear a bikini on the beach, or does the local culture value a little more modesty? What's the correct way to greet someone local and how do you avoid getting ripped off by a taxi driver at the airport?

There's so much to think about and so little time to do it in. But you can find all this information in one place, for up to 75 countries, with Culture Mee, a mobile app designed by Irish woman and inveterate traveller, Dee Lee.

Dee found herself confronted with many of these questions while travelling through south-east

Africa, shortly after qualifying as an accountant. Confounded by a plug, she couldn't find the answers she needed in one easy place and, out of sheer frustration, decided to create one herself.

The result, Culture Mee (rhymes with Dee Lee!) is the world's first app designed to help travellers manage culture shock, before they even set foot in their destination.

"You have a map to help you get to your destination, but when you get there, what do you have to understand the local people?" says Dee, who says the app has even helped to transform the way she herself travels.

"It just helps to unwrap the magic of the local culture and for us, it makes it a much more authentic and enjoyable travel experience. I've become even more fascinated

They call it the Central Hotel

As one of the longest established hotels in the North West, renowned for its unique setting in the centre of the historic Donegal Town, with idyllic views of Donegal Bay in the background, the hotel is perfectly located to enjoy the beautiful County of Donegal. Within minutes of stunning coastal drives, beaches and signature discovery points of the famous Wild Atlantic Way, The Central Hotel Donegal Town is the perfect location for you to stay.

The Central Hotel Donegal Town is a premier venue for live music events including country & western weekends, comedy shows and live bands to name but a few; with lively traditional Irish Folk Music in the popular Upper Deck Bar as a regular occurrence.

Specialising in weddings and civil ceremonies for between 50-250 guests, the Central Hotel Donegal Town is the perfect venue for your special day, and our experienced Wedding Co-ordinators are here to ensure you have a day to remember. We have a range of superbly appointed bedrooms including family rooms, suites, inter-connecting rooms and enabled access rooms, with complimentary access to our leisure facilities.

Just Williams Bistro serves a traditional carvery lunch daily and is the perfect place to meet and enjoy our amazing mouth-watering homemade cakes, scones and soups made the Irish way by our chefs.

The Upper Deck Bar is a lively place to enjoy Live Entertainment every Tuesday night from March to the end of September, with an extensive Traditional Irish Fayre Bar Food Menu with lots of variety to suit every palate. Why not try one of our speciality Cocktails or one of our large selection of Irish Craft Beers?

The Central Restaurant – Our fine dining a la carte restaurant with a Thai influence, specialising in locally sourced seafood along with walshes butchers award winning meat dishes.

Cork City Gaol

Another of Cork city's must-dos is the atmospheric and historic City Gaol, which opened in 1824 and closed in 1923. Originally the prison housed both male and female prisoners who committed crimes within the city borders. In 1878, the City Gaol became an all-female prison, which it remained until men opposed to the 1920 Anglo-Irish Treaty were incarcerated there in 1922-1923. The complex then deteriorated until its restoration and re-opening to the public as a tourist attraction in 1993.



The Foyle Hotel - Wine Bar and Eatery

Ireland's Top 100 Restaurants

The Foyle has been a runaway success: Everything works like clockwork, and everything serves Mr McDermott's mantra of clean, moreish, delicious, modern Donegal cooking, not least his unforgettable dark brown soda bread, surely one of the finest loaves in Ireland. A new star is born. – *John & Sally of the McKenna Guide*

Ireland's Newcomer of 2019

Well known throughout Ireland as a TV chef and teacher with a great commitment to promoting the superb produce of his native Donegal and the North-West of Ireland, Brian McDermott and his wife Brenda have restored the old Foyle Hotel to create a boutique hotel, wine bar and informal dining destination that is sure to attract many more visitors to this beautiful area – *Georgina Campbell*

Boutique hotel on Moville's main street overlooking Lough Foyle. Explore your Wild Atlantic Way adventure here.

Website: www.foylehotel.ie Telephone: 074 9385280

Email: info@foylehotel.ie



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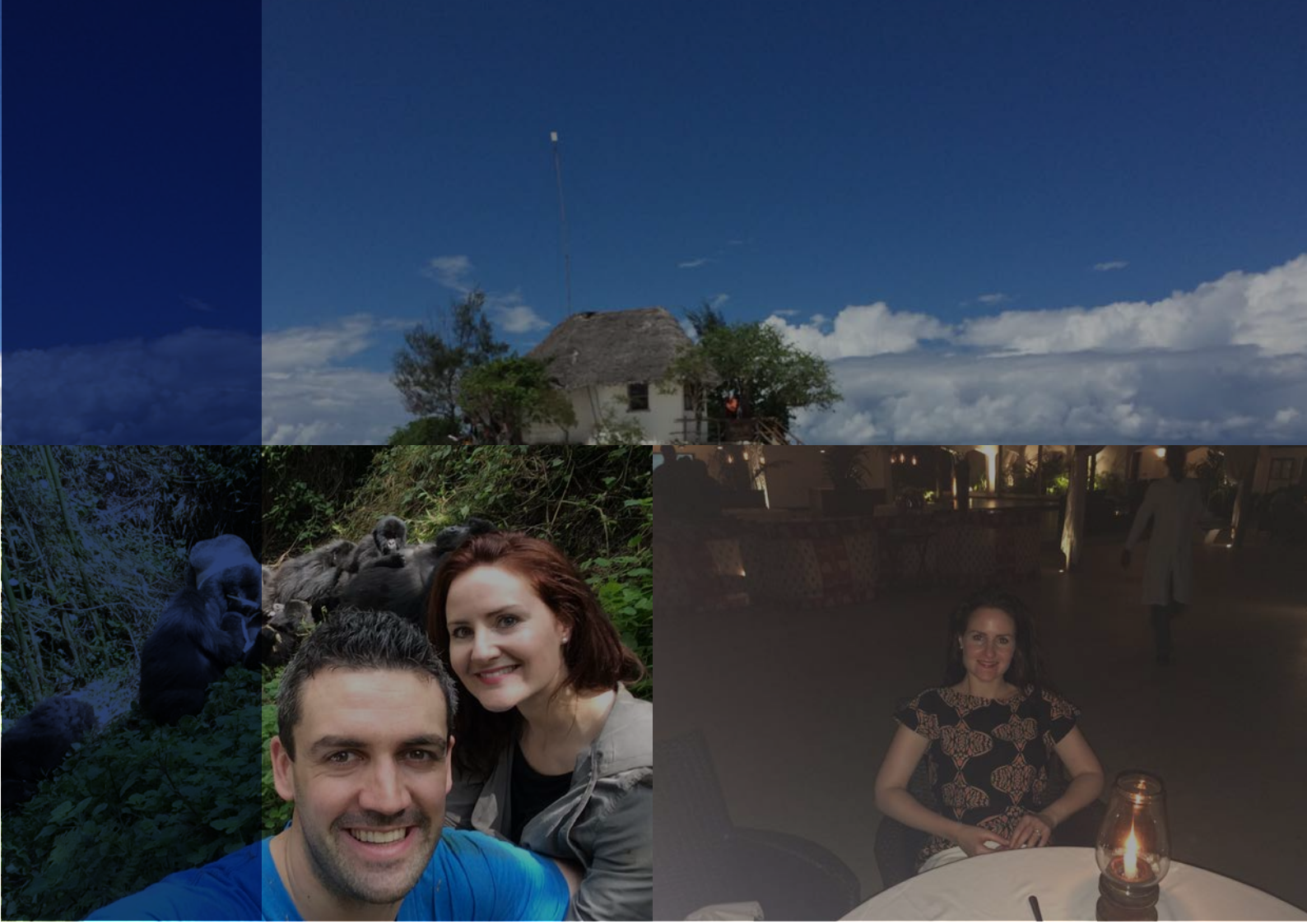
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Web

www.brainstorm.ie



by cultural traditions and have a better understanding of why people do things differently from us.”

Free to download for IOS and Android systems, the award-winning app does more than simply tell you which plugs to pack, the visa, vaccines and emergency numbers you’ll need, or how to negotiate the transport system.

Thanks to Culture Mee’s partnership with Hofstede Insights, it’s also a riveting source of absolute pearls of cultural information relating to how the people in the country you’re visiting greet each other, do business, view the world, engage with a queue, play sports, pay tips, organise their meals, and much more. You can even run a direct comparative between your culture and your destination’s under headings such as power and relationships, individualism, uncertainty avoidance and long-term orientation.

So much of this can be key to making each holiday an infinitely more pleasurable one because it bridges the gaps between you and your hosts. “One simple example is how we communicate,” explains Dee. “90% of our communication is non-verbal, however in many countries, such as Ireland, we focus on the

10% that comes through words. Whereas in Japan, they focus on the 90% that is non-verbal, which is why they have a saying ‘The eyes speak as much as the mouth’.”

Ireland is, of course, on the list of countries covered by Culture Mee. Dee has always had a soft spot for Connemara, wild terrain and landscape she fell in love with many years ago.

“Driving through Inagh Valley and from Leenane to Letterfrack is one of the most beautiful stretches of road I have ever had the pleasure to travel on,” says the veteran of adventures in more than 60 countries. “I’d love to spend some time living there at some point in the future.”

And what is her personal advice for visitors to Ireland?

“My advice to travellers is to make Dublin a quick pit stop and go and see the rest of the country as soon as you can. We have such a beautiful country and every county has something special about it. I’m from Leitrim, which is known for all its beautiful lakes, for example.

“Go to the local pubs, enjoy the local traditional music and try to meet as many local people as you can as Irish people are known the world over for their friendliness, humour and wit.”

The George Hotel

The George Hotel is a luxury hotel located on O'Connell Street - right in the heart of Limerick city centre, close to shopping, entertainment and the commercial district.

A luxury hotel that will not disappoint, we boast an eclectic mix of contemporary style and comfort in a premier central location. Our guests experience the perfect match of a cutting-edge cosmopolitan boutique hotel, style along with an unparalleled standard of service. Our accommodation is sure to impress even the most discerning traveller.

If you are visiting Limerick on business, or looking to hold a meeting in Limerick city, we offer competitive business rates. If you are looking for great value Limerick hotel deals, we feature great value midweek and weekend hotel breaks.

If what you want is some girly glamour in the heart of Limerick city, our boutique hotel offers great value Hen Party Packages – the perfect choice for a great night in Limerick. Our downtown location is also ideal for you to enjoy the post-match fun if you are visiting the home of rugby to watch Munster play in Thomond Park.

Hospitality at its finest at Carrygerry Country House

Carrygerry Country House & Restaurant is a charming, old-world country house built in 1793.

Located just outside Newmarket-on-Fergus in scenic County Clare, the charming hotel is family-owned by Niall and Gillian Ennis for the last 15 years and they have built it into a 'must-visit' destination for lovers of great food and amazing hospitality.

It comprises 11 stunningly appointed bedrooms, a beautiful conservatory restaurant, and a function room to cater for weddings or corporate events.

Niall's homemade jams and seafood chowder have regularly won national food awards so make sure that you grab some before you leave. You won't regret it!

As Carrygerry is only 10 minutes from Shannon Airport, it is an ideal location to explore the local attractions such as Cliffs of Moher, Aillwee Caves, Ennis, Galway, Bunratty Castle & Folk Park, King John's Castle, Limerick and Adare - to name but a few.

The intimacy, the great food and the warm welcome that you receive in Carrygerry Country house will leave you refreshed and reinvigorated for the next stage of your Irish journey. Tel: +353-61-360500



Kilronan – a world class authentic castle experience

Kilronan Castle Estate & Spa has 85 superbly appointed bedrooms, with luxurious and decadent furnishings capturing the original ambiance of the castle.

Choose from Classic King to Family rooms, and for that extra special occasion - you can upgrade to a Lake View room, or a four-poster Authentic Castle Suite.

Our World Class Spa & Thermal Suite creates an oasis of calm for you to relax and unwind in, with luxurious individual treatments and retreats carried out by our highly qualified therapists.

Our Leisure Club boasts facilities such as 18m pool, sauna, steam room and Jacuzzi - as well as gym and fitness studio.



The Falls – a perfect base for explorers!

The Falls Hotel & Spa is nestled in a wooded vale beside the tumbling waters of the River Inagh in Ennistymon, at the gateway to the exhilarating Cliffs of Moher and Burren Geopark.

With beautiful beaches on its doorstep, along with hiking, kayaking and cycling – it is a wonderful base from which to explore this unique area.

Their award-winning River Spa and Leisure Centre is also the perfect place to relax after a day of exploring.



Hotel city chic at The Ice House

Perched on the banks of the Moy, with stunning views across the river and out to the Wild Atlantic Way, The Ice House whisks all stress away.

A world away from the city, it feels like a happening hotspot in a bubble that's all your own. Think eclectic style, laid-back buzz and brilliant flavour in a place of unhurried peace and easy natural beauty. A visit to the Ice House is an escape to the extraordinary.

<https://www.icehousehotel.ie/>



The Savoy Hotel: Beyond Your Expectation

Perfectly placed and set within vibrant shopping and theatre district of Limerick City, The Savoy is Limerick's most celebrated and glamorous 5* luxury hotel.

It boasts 92 lavishly appointed rooms and suites which feature luxurious marble bathrooms and all the little extras one could hope for. For relaxation or exercise, indulgent spa treatments, gym, and a private pool are also available.

The Savoy is a destination for food lovers and drink connoisseurs alike: a choice of five stylish restaurants and bars offer something to suit all tastes. Dine informally in the New York Style Hamptons Bar and Grill, where an imaginative extensive menu of sustainable, fresh fare is on offer from lunchtime until night.

The Savoy Restaurant on the first floor with its distinct relaxed atmosphere and elegant, airy décor, is just perfect to enjoy dinner with friends and family, or have a tasty working lunch with colleagues.

Surrounded by some of Ireland's most scenic landscapes, The Savoy provides the perfect location from which to discover, and be a part of, life in Limerick. Explore many famous Irish landmarks, theatrical and sporting events, only a short walk or taxi-ride away from your base at The Savoy.

Explore Connemara from Ballynahinch base

Ballynahinch Castle Hotel & Estate is set on 700 acres in the heart of Connemara, with 48 bedrooms and suites. Enjoy lunch in the Fisherman's Pub, dinner in the elegant Owenmore Restaurant or, at the weekend, treat yourself to afternoon tea. On-site activities include walking trails, cycling, fly-fishing and more. We are also the perfect base for exploring the Wild Atlantic Way & Galway.

Tel: + 353 95 31006 | Email: info@ballynahinch-castle.com | www.ballynahinch-castle.com



Dromoland Castle is the pinnacle of excellence

Arriving at Dromoland Castle, guests are greeted by a handsome baronial façade resplendent with turret and towers; a powerful reminder that this iconic hotel holds a significant place in Ireland's history.

It is the ancestral home of the O'Brien's of Dromoland, whose lineage dates back 1,000 years to Brian Boru, one of the last High Kings of Ireland. The pinnacle of excellence, they've been welcoming guests to Dromoland Castle since 1963.

The imposing baronial façade wraps around a startling interior that seamlessly marries historic opulence with five-star finesse. The multi-million-dollar refurbishment has seen them revamp every space in the castle, from the fabulous Gallery and Library Bar, to the outstanding bedrooms and suites, which have been tricked out in a soothing contemporary palette.

The 16th Century stronghold sits in a 450-acre estate that offers guests the perfect opportunity to enjoy Irish country life.



*All that
jazz...*





The Guinness Cork Jazz Festival is an iconic festival on the Irish cultural calendar, sending crowds flocking to the city every October bank holiday weekend.

The festival is Ireland's biggest jazz event and attracts hundreds of musicians and thousands of music fans each year. The first festival began on Friday October 27, 1978 and has been held every year since. In 2019, The Guinness Cork Jazz Festival will take place from Thursday October 24 to Monday, October 28.

An average of €300 an hour was spent by the 50,000 fans who visited in 2018, as the Cork festival continued to rival landmark jazz events in Montreal and New Orleans. The festival offers a €35m boost to the Cork economy every year and more than 95% of the music sessions in 60 Cork pubs, hotels and clubs are free to the public.

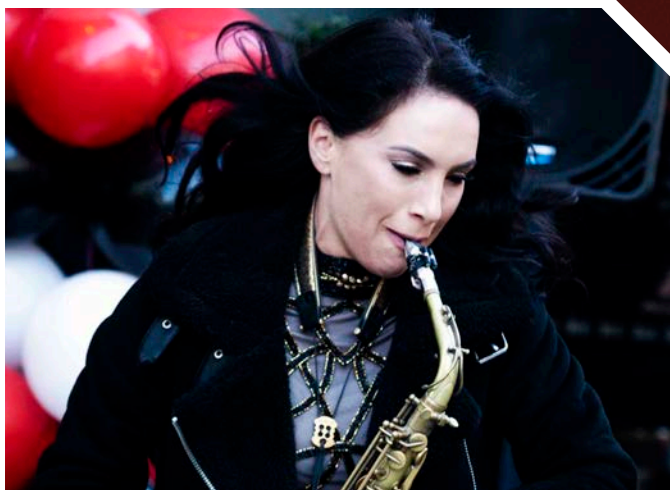
Jim Mountjoy founded the festival in October 1978. Mountjoy was a marketing manager of the Metropole Hotel in the city at the time and he received a visit in from the organisers of a bridge event who had booked the premises for the new October holiday weekend that had only been introduced the year before, in 1977. The bridge club had decided to cancel.

He found himself with an upcoming bank holiday and a lot of empty rooms. Then came the lightbulb moment. The regular sessions at the hotel with Cork jazz stalwart Harry Connolly and other musicians had been doing quite well. What if they could be extended into a mini-festival?

Mountjoy bounced his plan off various other people and the idea soon snowballed into something much bigger. Others in the Metropole's hierarchy saw how it might make sense and cigarette brand John Player agreed to put up £7,000 to become the festival's sponsor. Guinness (and parent company Diageo) became the major sponsor in the 1980s.

It was a steep learning curve for all concerned, but for an inaugural event, they still managed to put together an impressive line-up that included three English jazz legends: Ronnie Scott, George Melly and Kenny Ball.

Mountjoy later recalled that Friday, October 27, 1978, was a red-letter day for Cork. "At around eight o'clock, in the evening, a dark, thin Londoner called Ronnie Scott sauntered on stage in the ballroom of the Metropole Hotel and told an audience of 300 people that it was the first time he'd seen dead people smoke." Scott then picked up his saxophone and blew the first notes of Cork's first ever jazz festival.



As festival director between 1978 and 1986, Mr Mountjoy also introduced a Pub Trail, a Jazz Boat (from the UK) and a Jazz Train (from Dublin) to expand the festival. He also travelled to the UK, mainland Europe, Canada and the United States to promote the festival.

To date, over one million jazz fans have visited Cork to hear noted jazz musicians such as Ella Fitzgerald, George Shearing, Oscar Peterson, Dizzy Gillespie, Lionel Hampton, Buddy Rich, the Blind Boys of Alabama and The Maria Schneider Orchestra.

Non-jazz artists have also played at the festival over its long tenure – for example the 2015 line-up included Gary Numan, The Boomtown Rats and The Coronas. These acts, while always popular, did prompt claims that the festival was being watered down.

However, in 2018, a new festival director was appointed and Sinead Dunphy has kicked off what she calls “a renaissance of Cork jazz” with the focus very much being on bringing the biggest names in the business to the festival in 2019 and beyond.

“Jazz offers a myriad of options in terms of its contemporary offerings of playing and composition, and

although it’s hard to fit in every genre and style, a festival is the best place in the world to be able to platform the established and legendary, side by side with the new and contemporary,” she said.

“We all know that Jazz isn’t something we love through just listening to recordings, it’s in our veins, and it pulses as a live art form through so many media, including films and television, dance and art.

“Jazz has so many synergies with so many of these different art forms and that’s why the Guinness Cork Jazz Festival is hoping to take things to new heights. Whether that’s with gigs, flash mobs, exhibitions, a Jazz Ball, Jazz DJ’s, Swing classes, major concerts, theatre shows or interactive street performances, jazz is about to find its way into the hearts of so many more people around the world.

“We’re on an upward trajectory of jazz, adrenalin-fuelled by the best vocalists, bassists, trumpeters, drummers, pianists, saxophonists and everyone in between!” She said.

See guinnessjazzfestival.com for more.

Food Focus - Best in Cork

Cork's recipe for Michelin magic

By Nicky Sullivan

It's no secret that Cork is where you'll find some of the very best fresh produce in Ireland. Those lush green fields and rocky hills are the birthplace of divine flavours that inspire passion and deft creativity among Ireland's crop of modern chefs.

And what happens when you put world class produce into the hands of world-class chefs? The magic and Michelin stars start to flow...

Last October the standard setter for superb food around the world added three new Irish restaurants to its 2019 edition of the Michelin Guide Great Britain and Ireland. All three were in Cork, which came as no surprise to any of those lucky enough to have already enjoyed the sublime offerings of Mews in Baltimore, Chestnut in Ballydehob, or Ichigo Ichie in Cork city.

Each restaurant is fairly new on the scene. Both Chestnut and Ichigo Ichie opened only last year, while Mews Restaurant has been thrilling diners under its new ownership since 2015. But they each have a completely different ethic.

The old hand, Mews, blends old-school, high-end hospitality with a traditional Irish touch. You'll find white linens, exposed stone walls, wooden rafters and exquisitely moulded dining chairs, all of which serve as a graceful backdrop to Chef Ahmet Dede's modern cooking.

Not far away in Ballydehob, Rob Krawczyk came home to set up Chestnut in what was once a traditional Irish pub. Originally from the neighbouring village of Schull, Rob grew up immersed in

the traditions of local Irish produce. The intimate 18-seater has kept many of the old pub's original features to create a distinctive yet elegant space with a relaxed feel, a mirror to his own cooking style too.

"West Cork has a different pace of life," explains Rob Krawczyk, who runs Chestnut in partnership with his wife Elaine, who leads the front-of-house team.

"When we were planning on opening our own restaurant, we wanted to have somewhere with high-end food but serve it in a relaxed and homely atmosphere, somewhere everyone can come to enjoy great food. West Cork is my home and we love that it's such a relaxing place to experience, and it lends its atmosphere so well to what we wanted to achieve internally for the restaurant."

Meanwhile in Cork City, Chef Takashi Miyazaki has been steadily building up a cult following since he opened his first, tiny, restaurant in the city centre in 2015. He finally opened Ichigo Ichie last year, making it the first kappou-style, kaiseki (multiple course meal that is left up to the chef to design) restaurant in Ireland.

Without a direct translation, the name means something like "once in a lifetime experience" and few who have tried Chef Miyazaki's cooking would disagree with the description.

What the restaurants all have in common though is their focus on local ingredients. Whether it



is Japanese innovation elevated by Irish ingredients, or Mews and Chestnut's modern Irish approach, local ingredients are very much at the heart of what they do.

Rob Krawczyk, who worked in a string of Michelin-starred restaurants including Chez Panisse in California, grew up immersed in the best that West Cork has always been able to produce. "My own parents had a restaurant in their sitting room," he said, adding: "Growing up, they taught me so much about quality of produce and being surrounded by it here in West Cork, you are constantly inspired by the seasons' larder. In my cooking, I've learned not to over complicate things, and to allow ingredients to be the main focus.

"When you have such amazing quality produce, that is half the job done for you."

Just having the Craic!

By Liz O'Brien



We Irish are a funny lot. Full to the brim with tall tales and odd phrases, we're never short of something to say – we even have an Irish twist on the English language! In the land of Saints and Scholars there are plenty of sayings, customs and words that you don't have to be a saint, or a scholar to know...but they are fun.

Sayings:

Having the craic - having fun

Mug of scald - cup of tea

Up to my oxters - I am very busy!

He's on fire - he's doing really well

She's not a patch on you - she's not as good as you

That's a different kettle of fish - when comparing one situation to another

Made a bags of it - made a mistake

I will yea – this means “I definitely won't.” We're big into our sarcasm here!

A whale of a time - usually used after a night out.

Happy out – just means happy.

Jammy beggar - someone who has got lucky

Words:

The jacks: If you ask someone for the restroom, you'll confuse the natives. It's either called “the toilet,” or even

more commonly “the jacks.” In pubs, the genders are often written in Irish on toilet doors. So you have the “fir jacks” (men) and the “ban jacks” (women). Not to be confused with “banjaxed,” which means something is broken.

Quare: An odd pronunciation of “queer,” used as a replacement for “very.”

The press: A press is a cupboard in Ireland. However, the “hotpress” is the airing cupboard.

Wrecked: If you're very tired. Normally used after a big night out.

The boot: The trunk of in a car.

Minerals: This is what we call soft drinks.

Chips: In Ireland, chips are crisps and French fries are chips.

A jumper: Sweaters, or pullovers, are called jumpers in Ireland.

The messages: The messages are what some Irish people call the groceries.

Ossified: Very drunk.

Did you know?

Ireland's national emblem is the harp

The harp is the only musical instrument used as a national emblem in the world. The world's oldest known harp dates back to the 1300s and it's on display in Trinity College, Dublin. The harp is also the symbol for Guinness.



St Patrick is Ireland's male patron saint

Saint Patrick is not only the patron saint of Ireland, but he is also the patron saint of Australia, Nigeria, and Montserrat, which gives him a universal recognition in the Church and in the world.

According to a legend, Saint Patrick used the shamrock to try to explain how there can be three divine persons in one God, because there are three leaves in one stem on the shamrock.

Patrick is also the one who left us with the Celtic Cross. When he began to evangelise, he found that many of the pagans had worshiped the sun and so he incorporated the sun into the Latin Cross.

Likewise, when he met the Druids, who worshiped a sacred standing stone that was marked with a circle which was symbolic of the moon goddess, he incorporated that also. The Celtic Cross is now world famous and almost every country celebrates their Irish links on March 17 every year.

St Brigid is Ireland's female patron saint

Her feast day takes place on February 1st, the first day of spring in ancient Ireland. While converting a dying chieftain to Christianity on his deathbed, St Brigid is said to have made a cross from wild reeds, to explain to him the story of Christ's crucifixion.

This became known as Saint Brigid's Cross - even though it is more likely to have originated before Christianity even came to Ireland. It was believed the cross would protect a house from fire. St Brigid's crosses are a still common sight in Irish homes today.

Stop the clocks

According to folklore, when someone died at home the clocks would be stopped and mirrors covered. Some people believe that stopping the clock was to mark the exact time the loved one had died. The clock would be set to go again, after the funeral.

Shrove/Pancake Tuesday

Before Pancake Tuesday got its name, it was called Shrove Tuesday. Shrove Tuesday marks the final day of eating well before the feast of Lent.

According to folklore, the time between the Epiphany and Lent was the most traditional time for marriage. So, any eligible, unmarried men and women were traditionally ridiculed and stigmatised on Shrove Tuesday, just for being single!

Kylemore Abbey

Looking for the perfect day out in the West of Ireland? Well in that case look no further than Kylemore Abbey and Victorian Walled Garden, one of Ireland's best-loved and most iconic tourist attractions and home to the Benedictine nuns since 1920. At Kylemore Abbey and Victorian Walled Garden, there is so much for all the family to enjoy. Visit the restored rooms of the Abbey and learn about its history of tragedy, romance, education, innovation and spirituality.

Explore the six-acre Victorian Walled Garden with its delightfully restored garden buildings. Discover woodland and lakeshore walks that will take you on a beautiful journey through our 1,000-acre estate. The beautiful Gothic Church is a short walk from the Abbey, nestled nearby is the Mausoleum where Mitchell and Margaret Henry are buried side by side. Children will enjoy making a wish at the Giant's Ironing Stone.



Padraicins Galway

While you are travelling along the Wild Atlantic Way and the ol' tummy starts to rumble, then a quick stop in to the beautiful Padraicins restaurant in Furbo Co. Galway is the answer to your prayers.

Offering some of the best seafood dishes, an extensive all-day restaurant menu and honest pub grub fayre using local food produce - all whilst overlooking Galway Bay - this is a little piece of heaven to enjoy on your Wild Atlantic Way journey. Located just 10 minutes from Galway City on the coast road to Connemara. Pop in and get a genuine Irish welcome from the Padraicins team.

Spring is in the air at Belleek Pottery

We are shaking off the winter blues at Belleek Pottery Visitor Centre and getting ready for a busy Spring and Summer season. Our tour guides are waiting patiently to take guests on the 30-minute guided tour of the pottery where visitors have an opportunity to see first hand how handcrafted pieces are carefully created by the crafts men and women that work at Belleek.

From design to completion, visitors get a real sense of the intricate work that takes place at Ireland's oldest working pottery. For younger visitors, The Bloomfield Trail is the perfect way to enjoy a tour. A map detailing points of interest along the tour keeps children occupied and interested.

Once you have completed your tour, there is ample opportunity to browse the Belleek Collection in the museum. Our audio visual theatre tells the extended story of Belleek and its history. ONE SIXTY a photographic exhibition which was launched in 2017 tells a very special social history story and is a favourite with visitors and especially with those who have a connection to the pottery. Before leaving, take a little time to relax in the elegant surroundings of our restaurant where you can enjoy freshly baked scones or a light lunch. For that all-important gift, you will find something in our showroom which is stocked with a wide selection of home and giftware, including some visitor centre exclusives that can only be purchased at Belleek Pottery.

Check our website www.belleekpottery.ie for tour times or call Belleek Pottery Visitor Centre on + 44 (0)28 6865 9300. You can also keep up-to-date with other events at Belleek Pottery by checking out Belleek Pottery on Facebook.

Romance and a warm welcome at Inchydoney

Inchydoney Island Lodge & Spa is Irish-owned and operated with kindness since 1998.

It is located just outside the colourful heritage town of Clonakilty in West Cork, a region blessed with some of Ireland's most spectacular scenery. Overlooking the Atlantic Ocean and a Blue Flag beach, the resort has long been appreciated for its romantic and picturesque location.

A warm welcome awaits you in one of Ireland's most exclusive and tranquil retreats, a true destination for people who value time together.



Hamptons on Henry Street

Hamptons Bar & Grill is a New York-style restaurant, located next door to the Savoy Hotel. At Hamptons they are proud to have custom designed their own wood-fired Robata ovens and grills, unique to Limerick and Ireland. Built to ensure the maximum in flavour and succulence in all steaks, chicken and seafood, they use the best beech wood charcoal which imparts its unique signature in a slow release formula. All meats are marinated overnight in their secret recipe rubs and dressings before being grilled or roasted for your delectation.



Bus Eireann Expressway

Expressway services operate 22 routes and link every major town/city and airport in the country, providing direct and regular services making it the quickest way to an unrivalled number of destinations.

Our modern fleet of comfortable coaches offers a cost-effective alternative to the hassle of increasingly restricted car parking, car access in town centres and motorway tolls.

Other benefits when travelling Expressway are free Wi-Fi, extra comfort seats, free charging points and hourly services on main routes.

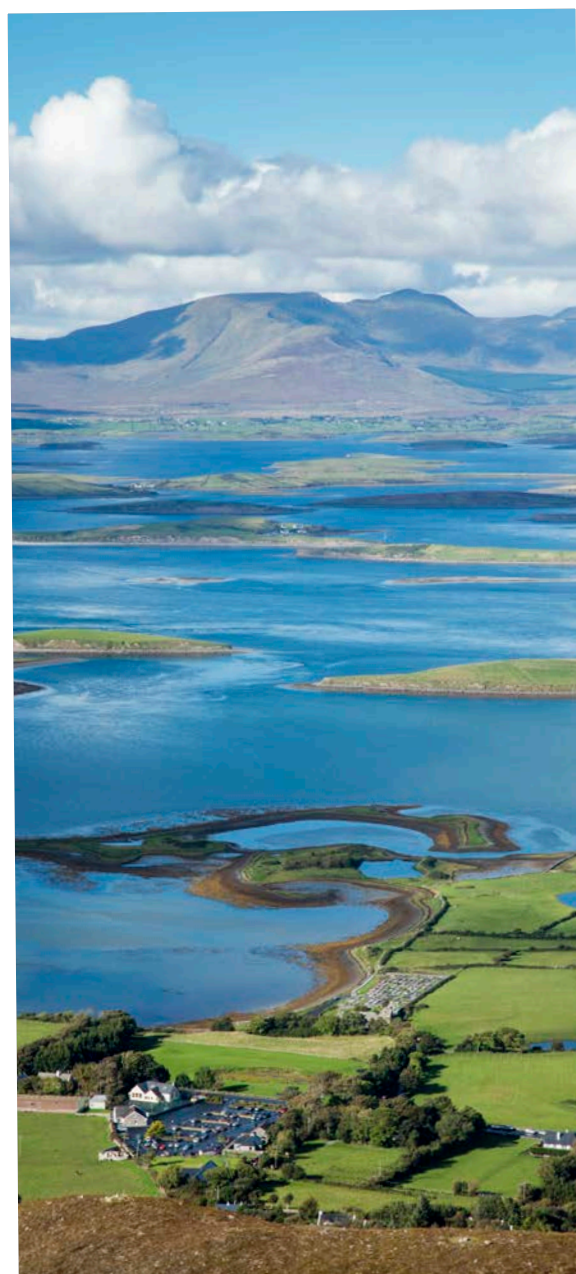


Expressway
www.expressway.ie

Clew Bay Bikes

The original and best bike operator in the West, the Platinum Package is the ultimate Great Western Greenway experience, combining both land and sea. This package includes everything from our other packages and also includes a return boat trip via private fishing charter across Clew Bay watching for seal colonies, dolphins, and perhaps try your luck at catching a few mackerel on the way back.

This tour is small and intimate with groups of no larger than 12 people. As this is a special tour, we do need to have a minimum of six passengers to operate the tour. Please don't worry if your group does not have six as we can add you to a waiting list and hopefully add some others to your group and make a few new friends. Please ask the staff if you have any questions about this tour. This tour is subject to both tides and weather.



Shannon Ferries

From early morning, as the mist descends the Shannon Estuary 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 main 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 air that encapsulates Ireland's Wild Atlantic Way.

Now it's even easier and much better value with our online booking.



Eagles Flying/Irish Raptor Centre

Nestled in the green hills of south Sligo, Ireland's largest sanctuary for raptors and owls, the Irish Raptor Research Centre / Eagles Flying is situated on more than 27 acres of mature parklands near Ballymote. Currently it is the home of more than 100 eagles, hawks, owls, falcons and vultures. Altogether there are more than 450 birds and animals, encompassing nearly 100 different species, in the centre.

The Irish Raptor Research Centre was established in 1999 as an institution for research on birds of prey and in 2003, parts of the area were opened to the public. Now Eagles Flying is one of the major tourist attractions in the northern part of Ireland, attracting tens of thousands of visitors annually to see the spectacular bird shows with eagles, hawks, falcons, vultures and owls.

Folk village depicts Irish life from centuries ago

Glencolmille Folk Village, also known as Father McDyer's Folk Village Museum, celebrated 50 years in business in 2017.

This thatched-roof replica of a rural village in Ireland's most north-westerly county offers a glimpse into daily life as it was during past centuries.

The Folk Village Museum is a cluster of several small cottages, called a 'clachan', perched on a hillside overlooking the sandy curve of Glen Bay Beach in the Gaeltacht (Irish-speaking area) of south-west Donegal. Designed, built and maintained by the local people, the folk village is one of Ireland's best living-history museums.

See their Facebook page for details of 2019 events. Contact 074-9730017



Welcome to The Skellig Experience Visitor Centre

This visitor attraction was developed by Cork Kerry Tourism in 1991-1992 to make the four treasures of the off shore Skellig Islands more easily understood by all. The exhibition building is a purpose built visitor centre opened in 1992, designed to be rugged in feeling and finishes, to reflect the experience which will be undertaken by visitors. The use of concrete vaults with grass topping is designed to echo the wild quality of the south west of Ireland and to blend in with the surrounding hills.

The exhibition has four themes. The history and archaeology of Skellig Michael's Early Christian monastery. The Sea Birds, their habitat, their world wide travels. The Lighthouses, which have given 161 years of service to mariners. The Underwater Skellig, which has colour and magic equal to any sea in the world.

The Exhibition Centre has an 80-seat auditorium where a 14-minute film presentation 'An Island On The Edge Of The World' takes visitors to the magical place Skellig Michael.

Fabulous dining at Flanagan's Townhouse

Flanagan's Townhouse, located on Thomas Street in Limerick, is a must-visit for the hungry tourist in Limerick city centre.

Always popular with locals and tourists alike, the newly-renovated Georgian townhouse has been lovingly restored to make this a fabulous dining experience.

Flanagan's is a sister business to Flanagan's on the Lake in Killaloe and they offer a delicious menu to suit all palettes and also boast a full bar to complement the thriving restaurant.

Flanagan's always provides a real Irish welcome, so pop in and say hello!



Aillwee Cave & Bird of Prey Centre

From a 'hole in the ground' to 'soaring with eagles', time spent at Aillwee Cave & Bird of Prey Centre is always enjoyed by all. For three generations, Aillwee Cave and Bird of Prey Centre has welcomed visitors to The Burren in County Clare. Our family gives your family a chance to explore its weirdly shaped underworld and enjoy unexpected freedom with majestic birds of prey.

Stroll along our hazel, ash and holly woodland walk, or trek our Aillwee Burren hillside; while taking in panoramic views of Galway Bay and the Wild Atlantic Way.

Hear and feel the beat of a falcon's wing as it swoops. Smell the earthy dampness of a long dried up river bed decorated with twinkling crystalline formations. Indulge in the tasty rewards of smoky cheese or sweet fudge.

This Summer, experience what one recent visitor called "a fantastic forever-remembered day" and enjoy all of what Aillwee Cave and Bird of Prey Centre has to offer.

Award-winners of 'Family Venue of the Year' 2017 at the Irish Hospitality Awards and voted one of the 'Top Ten Visitor Attractions in Ireland' by Independent.ie

Open daily from 10am and for more details, check out our website, www.aillweecave.ie



New IHF President Lennon **faces Brexit challenge**

The Irish Hotels Federation (IHF) has appointed Michael Lennon as its President for a two-year term. A fifth-generation hotelier with over 25 years' experience in the hotel sector, Mr Lennon becomes the 37th President of the IHF, succeeding Joe Dolan.

The IHF represents almost 1,000 hotels and guesthouses, which employ over 60,000 people throughout the country.

During his term, Mr Lennon will give priority to addressing the ongoing challenges facing the hotel and guesthouse sector, focusing on ensuring that the right business environment exists to support the sustained growth of Irish tourism.

His key priorities include mitigating the risks posed to the industry from Brexit, tackling the high cost of doing business in Ireland, increased marketing and product development support for tourism - particularly in the regions - and the continued expansion of skills and training support for employees within the tourism and hospitality industry.

"Tourism has enjoyed strong growth in recent years. The renewed confidence felt by hoteliers can be seen in the growing numbers employed within the sector, with tourism now supporting over 230,000 jobs, making it Ireland's largest indigenous employer.

"It is also reflected in the increased investment taking place in hotels, from refurbishment and expansion to new developments, particularly in the case of Dublin, where it is much needed," he said.

"However, there are serious



challenges that need to be tackled to ensure the sustained growth of the tourism and hospitality sector. Chief among these is Brexit, which poses a particular risk to tourism in the regions. Tackling the high cost of doing business in Ireland will help to ensure that the right business environment exists to withstand the negative impact of Brexit.

"In recent years, we have seen how market diversification and new product development can open up new parts of the country to tourism to great success. We must build on that success, particularly for those parts of rural Ireland that are in danger of being left behind. And we as an industry must prioritise the development of best-in-class

training and skills programmes for our employees, helping them to build successful and flexible careers.

"Given the right support, Irish tourism has the capacity to generate a further 40,000 new jobs by 2021, which would be of tremendous benefit to the economy," said Mr Lennon.

A native of Co. Carlow, Michael Lennon is a graduate of the College of Catering, Cathal Brugha Street. He began his career in Chicago before returning to Ireland, where he initially worked with the Great Southern Hotel Group, before joining Brian McEniff Hotels. Together with his wife, Joanne McEniff, he owns and runs the Westport Woods Hotel, which they bought over 20 years ago.

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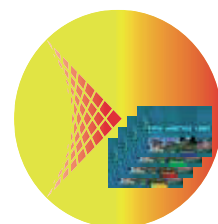
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