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ESCAPE INTO THE EXTRAORDINARY
BEAUTY OF NORTHERN IRELAND

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This is Ireland



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Historic Places to Stay

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Ireland's Ancient East

Ireland Welcome

The scenery is enchanting, the culture is captivating, and the people will give you a welcome that will warm your heart. Ireland is unique, and a trip here will make memories that last a lifetime. Delve into Ireland's Ancient East, where history flows through the landscape; feel the ocean's blast on the Wild Atlantic Way as you travel a coastline like no other; or experience the drama of the Causeway Coastal Route. The time is right...



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PICTURE THIS

Kylemore Abbey County Galway

Hugging the edge of a glassy lake surrounded by the green hills of Connemara, Kylemore Abbey is nothing short of magnificent. Built by wealthy businessman Mitchell Henry in the late 1800s, the castle sits within an estate that feels like a secret world hidden in the wilds of County Galway. There's a truly delightful neo-Gothic church, Ireland's largest walled garden, and scenic woodland and lakeside walks. Step inside the castle to uncover its fascinating twists of fate, from lavish home to Benedictine abbey and even a girls' school. 🍀



Celebrate the enchantment of the Emerald Isle.

Yes, Ireland is rich in history and culture. Indeed, each step on Dublin’s cobblestone streets or through the surrounding countryside, seems to echo to bygone days that are still very close at hand. The Irish traditions in art, literature and music make every moment worth celebrating. Yet it’s the people and the legendary hospitality – and the young, vibrant spirit of a capital city that’s very much in the now – that make every visit to Ireland one to remember.

WestJet offers service from St. John’s, Newfoundland to Dublin every May through October.* Convenient connections are also available from other Canadian cities.

Visit westjet.com/ireland for details.



*Schedule subject to change.

PHOTO: @STORYTRAVELERS



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THIS IS IRELAND

A small island with a big heart, Ireland is a soul-stirring destination – a world unto itself, with wave-lashed cliffs, rolling green hills and historic, story-filled castles. It’s a land of vibrant cities bursting with top restaurants, hip cafés and friendly locals; and a destination dotted with isolated islands where traditions still define daily life. You’ll come across secrets, too, buried in silent monastic villages, winding along coastal roads and written in our libraries’ ancient manuscripts. But here’s the thing: you’ll find the people on the island of Ireland have little interest in keeping secrets. They are storytellers at heart, after all.

So make your way to a place that pulses with toe-tapping music, to traditional pubs where chatter and laughter rings in your ears; and to ancient tombs where you can connect with Stone Age man. Whether you’re travelling along the awesome Wild Atlantic Way, uncovering primitive history and spellbinding tales in Ireland’s Ancient East, or taking it to the edge on the Causeway Coastal Route, this island is a place where memories are created and stories are retold for years to come. Ireland is home to adventures both big and small. It’s time to discover them for yourself. 🍀



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- 01 Giant’s Causeway County Antrim
- 02 Dunquin Harbour County Kerry
- 03 Passing time in the local pub
- 04 Carrick-a-Rede rope bridge County Antrim
- 05 Seafood fresh from the sea
- 06 Gurteen Beach County Galway
- 07 Trillick Bay County Donegal

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HISTORIC PLACES TO STAY

From decadent drawing rooms to secret little libraries, explore an elegant side to Ireland with some of the island's most historic places to stay

Clare Island Lighthouse County Mayo

Boasting a dramatic location at the entrance to island-studded Clew Bay, Clare Island is all about getting back to nature. This vibrant destination rewards visitors with cliffs, woodland, mountains and Clare Island Lighthouse boutique accommodation. Here, guests relax in the well-stocked library, tuck into six-course feasts in the elegant dining room and explore the island's great walking routes. clareislandlighthouse.com

Rayanne House Belfast

Rayanne House offers boutique accommodation with a view over Belfast Lough, where the Titanic was constructed. Dating back to 1883, the house mixes period and modern features, and is perfect for accessing Belfast, as well as coastal and forest walks. Book a table in the restaurant and you can also enjoy the Titanic Menu, a recreation of the last menu service for first-class passengers aboard the "Ship of Dreams". rayannehouse.com

The Shelbourne Dublin city

With a beautiful location that overlooks the urban oasis of St Stephen's Green park, The Shelbourne is a Dublin institution and is packed with 200 years of history. Step inside this grande dame of hotels and you're enveloped in 5-star luxury with plush furnishings, stately rooms and fine dining. Don't miss the hotel's jewel-like Horseshoe Bar, – it's famed for its rich red walls, cozy feel and interesting artefacts. marriott.com

The Bushmills Inn County Antrim

If you like the idea of a warming whiskey beside an open fire after a day exploring the majestic Causeway Coastal Route, then The Bushmills Inn could be for you. In days of old, visitors to the coast would use the inn as a stopover, and the oldest part of the building is thought to date back to 1608. A gas-lit bar, nooks and crannies, and a secret library create an atmosphere of heritage in a village that's famous for its whiskey. bushmillsinn.com

Cnoc Suain County Galway

Wild heather, bogland, hedgerows and craggy stone surround these exceptional thatched cottages, one of which dates back to 1691. This is simple, authentic accommodation with a very Irish soul – local stone, salvaged timbers, handcrafted furniture and cast-iron beds add comfort and real character, while outside the beautiful Connemara countryside is waiting to charm.

cnocsuain.com

 ireland.com



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- 01 Clare Island Lighthouse
Clare Island, County Mayo
- 02 Rayanne House
Belfast
- 03 The Shelbourne
Dublin
- 04 Bushmills Inn
County Antrim
- 05 Cnoc Suain
County Galway



03

AT THE BUSHMILLS
INN, A GAS-LIT
BAR, NOOKS AND
CRANNIES, AND A
SECRET LIBRARY
CREATE AN
ATMOSPHERE OF
HERITAGE



04



05

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Stop to admire the spectacular Irish countryside

DISCOVER ALL ABOUT... IRELAND ON SCREEN

Lights, camera, action! There's a good reason that Ireland is a star of the screen – from the craggy castles to the mysterious beauty of the landscape, the island has a cinematic sense of style

The cliffs, the green fields, the quaint thatched cottages – it's no wonder Ireland has long been a favourite of filmmakers. This is an island that feels tailor-made for big-screen stardom, from the thrilling drama of Mel Gibson's **Braveheart**, starring Trim Castle in County Meath, to the vast, graceful sands of Wexford's beaches, perfectly pictured in **Brooklyn**. Tour the stunning Connemara film locations that featured in **The Quiet Man**; climb Killiney Hill in County Dublin, which wowed in Oscar-winning **Once**; or be awed by the Cliffs of Moher in County Clare, scenic stars of **Harry Potter and the Half-Blood Prince**.

Riding the swirling waves out to Skellig Michael off the coast of County Kerry feels cinematic enough in itself. But once you step onto this island, originally home to a community of monks from the 6th to the 13th century, it's hard not to feel like you've walked onto a film set. And that may be because you have: in addition to the fascinating history of this remote Atlantic monastic site, Skellig Michael made its on-screen debut at the end of **Star Wars: Episode VII – The Force Awakens**. This stunning Atlantic spot is not the only part of Ireland to feature in Star Wars, either – the location scouts were so taken with the Wild Atlantic Way, they also picked the coastal promontory of Malin Head at the tip of County Donegal to star in **Episode VIII**, as well as Loop Head in County Clare and Brow Head, near Crookhaven, County Cork, at the southwestern tip of the island.

With more Seven Kingdoms locations than anywhere else in the world – Northern Ireland has certainly earned its title as **Game of Thrones**® Territory. This epic medieval fantasy series employs bewitched forests, mysterious caves and otherworldly backdrops to deliver big-time drama and in Northern Ireland, they certainly found it. Just look at Tollymore Forest Park, a mesmerizing expanse of wild woodland known as the Haunted Forest in Westeros, and 12th century Inch Abbey, where the War of the Five Kings began. Other filming locations from the series include the ancient Antrim plateau (Dothraki Grasslands); the Shillanavogy Valley beneath Slemish Mountain in County Antrim (Dothraki Sea), where St Patrick once served as a shepherd; and the haunting beauty of the Dark Hedges (the Kingsroad), a captivating avenue of beech trees, also in Antrim.

Famous for its bohemian vibes, artistic outlook and creativity, **Galway** is a filmmaker's dream – a city both old and new that boasts medieval streets, charismatic old pubs and flashes of bold modern architecture. In 2014, this western gem was designated a **UNESCO City of Film**, acknowledging Ireland's writers and producers, as well as the Galway Film Centre, the Irish Film Board and TG4 (the Irish-language television station), all of which are based in the city. The **Galway Film Fleadh** (festival) in July is a great way to soak up a slice of Galway's film scene, and the intimate venues, post-screening events and sense of energy and fun during festival time give it a really unique ambience. Beyond the city, the county of Galway has featured in numerous films, including **Marley & Me**, **The Guard** and **The Field**.



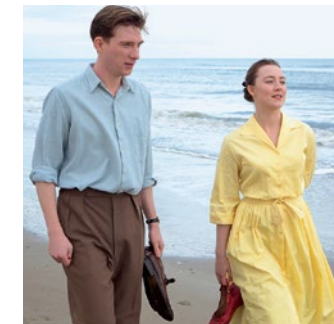
Ireland On Screen

PHOTO: @STORYTRAVELERS

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- 01 **Star Wars: The Force Awakens**
Skellig Michael, County Kerry
- 02 **Game of Thrones**®
Dark Hedges, County Antrim
- 03 **Brooklyn**
Curraclloe Beach, County Wexford
- 04 **Braveheart**
Trim Castle, County Meath

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FOOD IN IRELAND

With innovative restaurants, gastropubs and fab farmers' markets, Ireland's food scene is all fired up

When it comes to food on the island of Ireland, you need to start at the very beginning. The natural produce here has made Ireland one of Europe's most talked-about food destinations, with artisan cheese, exceptional beef and lamb, and fresh seafood. From smoked salmon to the creamiest butter, Ireland's food is pure and simple, while traditional dishes of coddle (a bacon, sausage, potato and onion stew), Irish stew (made with lamb, carrot and potatoes), soda bread (a brown bread) and the Ulster Fry (a cooked breakfast) celebrate the great flavours of the past.



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Traditional meets modern

With such a prodigiously stocked natural larder, it's no wonder that the island's chefs make full use of the great produce on their doorstep. You'll find a wonderful take on modern Irish food at **Canteen**, a simple, critically acclaimed eatery in Celbridge, County Kildare, that specializes in sourcing the very best ingredients. **Idás** in Dingle, County Kerry, also turns excellent local and foraged produce into amazing tasting menus that celebrate West Kerry's flavours, while **Wine & Brine** in Moira, County Armagh, brings age-old techniques to the table. To enjoy a different side of Irish food, try a festival such as the **Rockin' Food Festival** in Enniscorthy, County Wexford, or take time out at a cookery school. Darina Allen's **Ballymaloe Cookery School** in Cork is ideal for learning modern Irish techniques in a hands-on environment.

- 01 **Klaw** Temple Bar, Dublin
- 02 **Idás** Dingle, County Kerry
- 03 **Love Fish** Belfast
- 04 **Moran's Oyster Cottage** Kilcolgan, County Galway
- 05 **Taste & Tour** Belfast



01

A taste of the sea

With oysters and crab claws, mussels and lobster, Ireland's seafood is nothing short of exceptional. Enjoy plates of oysters at the **Temple Bar Food Market**, tasty mussels at the famous **Mourne Seafood Bar** in Dundrum, County Down, or fish and chips at **Love Fish** in Belfast. Fancy some top-notch seafood right by the water? Then check out **Harry's Shack** on Portstewart Strand, County Londonderry, and **Moran's Oyster Cottage** in Kilcolgan, County Galway, and **Trá Bán** in Strandhill, County Sligo. Seafood even has a cultural side in Ireland, with events such as the **Flavours of the Foyle Seafood Festival** in Derry~Londonderry (July) and the **Galway Oyster Festival** in Galway city (Sept) drawing huge crowds.



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The best local drinks

Great food deserves great drinks to go with it – and Ireland certainly delivers. Irish whiskey ranges from the traditional flavours of **Bushmills** and **Jameson** to the newer tastes of **Teeling**, **Glendalough** and **Nephtin**. Craft beers can be found everywhere, so keep your eye out for local brews such as **Trouble Brewing**, **James Brown Brews** and **Northbound**. Gin, meanwhile, is emerging as one of the island's most exciting artisan drinks, with small distilleries including **Blackwater No.5** and **Shortcross Gin**. Finally, enjoy a taste of the "orchard county", County Armagh, with the award-winning **AJ Apple Juice**, made from freshly pressed Armagh apples, and **Armagh cider** – simply delicious!



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Top Tip

Get to know Ireland's food scene from the inside out and taste some excellent local produce with a walking tour from Belfast's Taste & Tour, and Fab Food Trails in Dublin and Cork. ☘



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A JOURNEY INTO THE PAST

Curious about your Irish ancestors? Here's how to get started on an adventure into your own personal history

Getting started

Tracing your ancestry involves its fair share of history, bloodlines and late-night sleuthing, but when it comes to Ireland, it's also about the math. While just over six million people live on the island of Ireland, close to five million in Canada claim Irish ancestry. From Toronto to Vancouver, and St John's to Victoria, generations of religious, soldiers, traders and emigrants have spread their wings, taking their own brand of Irishness all over Canada. Of course, starting on a journey of discovery can be daunting, but it's a good idea to think simple. Make a list of siblings, parents, grandparents and cousins, as far back as possible and include any details you know: names, dates of birth, where they lived and were born. If you don't know, ask relatives. Next, gather together any material you can, including letters; birth, marriage or death certificates; photos; memorial cards; and locations of family graves. Focus your research first on where you know the ancestor spent the last years of their life, and broaden out from there. Karel Kiely of Roots Ireland recommends trying to find out where your relations died and if they appear in ships' passenger lists or newspapers. Collect as much information as you can and keep notes.



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Make the journey home

Coming to Ireland will add a whole new dimension to your genealogy experience and enables you to access an amazing amount of resources, as well as visiting the very place that your ancestors were born. There are free, walk-in advisory services and census records at the National Library and National Archives in Dublin, while in Northern Ireland you can access public records at the Public Record Office of Northern Ireland (PRONI) and registers of births, deaths, marriages, and adoptions at the General Register Office for Northern Ireland (GRONI). Many counties boast their own county genealogy centres and a list is available on rootsireland.ie. Dublin's Glasnevin Cemetery holds burial records for over 1.5 million people as well as a Genealogy Research Centre (glasnevintrust.ie), and the Military Archives offers a range of information for the Republic of Ireland (militaryarchives.ie). Don't miss the Irish Family History Centre at EPIC Ireland in Dublin, with genealogy experts, family history records and interactive displays. While rummaging through records is a vital part of the genealogy experience, remember that this is ultimately an emotional journey and nothing can compare with exploring the living history aspect of your past. It'll stay with you forever.



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Think outside the box

You will encounter obstacles along the way, so be flexible. Online databases make a good place to go hunting. Use websites such as the Irish Government-sponsored irishgenealogy.ie, or build a family tree on ancestry.com that faraway relatives can add to. Ireland Family History on Facebook is great for making contacts, while the Ulster Historical Foundation at ancestryireland.com is a useful resource that traces Scots-Irish and Irish roots. Remember that sometimes you don't need to start your research in Irish databases, as Karel Kiely advises: "If your ancestor emigrated from Ireland, don't start your research in Ireland. Working back from the known to the unknown, generation by generation, is the only way to be sure." 🍀



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- 01 Dunbrody Famine Ship Experience
New Ross, County Wexford
- 02 Glasnevin Cemetery
Dublin
- 03 EPIC Ireland
Dublin
- 04 Blasket Islands
County Kerry
- 05 Linen Hall Library
Belfast



IRELAND'S CITIES

Take a break in some of the most exciting cities in the world, from bursts of fresh coastal air in Dublin to great sightseeing in Belfast, Cork and Derry~Londonderry

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Dublin

Dublin charms with a gorgeous coastal setting, compelling history, lively nightlife and an impressive food scene. The city gives off a warm, laid-back atmosphere thanks to friendly locals who view the world with a wry smile. This is a destination you'll want to return to again and again.

Dating back to Viking times, Dublin is a city where historic buildings sit next to cool cafés and quirky craft shops. Take a wander around the old city area and you'll happen upon ancient structures such as **Christ Church Cathedral** (founded around 1030), **The Brazen Head Pub** (1198) and **Dublin Castle** (1204).

Around Merrion Square and Fitzwilliam Square, Georgian terraces of tall, elegant townhouses from the 18th and 19th century overlook leafy parks used for festivals and an outdoor cinema in summer. Georgian Dublin also boasts impressive, free-to-enter museums and galleries, including the **National Gallery** and the **Natural History Museum**.

Dublin is a cultural capital. You won't go far in the city without hearing a tune, whether it's from talented buskers on

Grafton Street or traditional Irish music coming from a pub. The city is also famous for being a powerhouse of the written word. In this UNESCO City of Literature, you can immerse yourself in all things literary at the **Dublin Writers Museum**; join the entertaining **Literary Pub Crawl** around some pubs beloved of writers, such as The Duke, frequented by Patrick Kavanagh and Brendan Behan; or visit the **James Joyce Museum** beside the sea in Sandycove, County Dublin, now a pilgrimage site for enthusiasts of modern literature.

Backed by mountains and on the edge of the Irish Sea, Dublin makes the most of its striking location, with great coastal villages that ooze charm and a bounty of cliff walks, castles, cool bars and "craic" (fun). So whether you're enjoying the energetic atmosphere of the modern city or a leisurely stroll to take in the views, you'll find Dublin is a breath of fresh air.

- 01 Ha'penny Bridge
- 02 Dublin Castle
- 03 Howth Head
- 04 Guinness Storehouse
- 05 Trinity College
- 06 The Forty Foot, Sandycove
- 07 Delahunt restaurant

Five great places to visit

Guinness Storehouse

Learn all about the history of Ireland's famous black stout in the impressive Guinness Storehouse at the home of the brewery in St James's Gate. The fascinating tour ends with a pint of the "black stuff" in the Gravity Bar, which has panoramic views across the city.

Trinity College and the Book of Kells

The cobblestone courtyards of Trinity College are a peaceful haven from the bustle of the city. Trinity's highlights include the Book of Kells, a richly decorated manuscript from the 9th century, and the impressive Long Room, home to 200,000 of the library's oldest books.

Kilmainham Gaol

When it first opened in 1796, this prison was used to house convicts bound for Australia. Kilmainham later became a symbol of the Irish fight for independence, when the leaders of the 1916 Irish Rising were executed here.

National Museum of Ireland

Uncover Ireland's rich history through artefacts that date back thousands of years. The glittering collection of prehistoric gold jewellery at Or, Ireland's Gold exhibition, includes decorative collars from the Bronze Age. And don't miss the section on the mysterious Iron Age bodies discovered in Irish bogs.

Temple Bar

In this central location between the River Liffey and Dame Street, you'll find pubs, restaurants and clubs along Temple Bar's cobbled streets. The Gallery of Photography, a weekend book market and a summer design market every Saturday at Cow's Lane add to the attractions.



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PHOTO: BARRY MCCALL

07

Food and drink

With its hip cafés, bustling brasseries and elegant fine-dining restaurants, Dublin's food scene is one of the most exciting in Europe.

Enjoy a taste of Ireland's famous seafood in restaurants such as **Matt the Thresher** on Pembroke Street Lower, **Fish Shop** in Smithfield and **Catch 22** on South Anne Street. Modern-meets-traditional at **Delahunt** on Camden Street Lower, where menus feature local produce transformed by often-overlooked cookery techniques. For innovative cuisine with a focus on the best local ingredients, try **Locks** in Portobello or the contemporary neighbourhood bistro **Bastible** on South Circular Road.

The **Temple Bar Food Market** in Meeting House Square is great for a Saturday stroll, featuring stalls laden with everything from seasonal fruit and vegetables to cheeses and meats. Don't miss **Leo Burdock's** at Christ Church Cathedral for traditional takeaway fish and chips wrapped in paper, or go for a light lunch in one of the city's popular cafés, such as **Bewley's**, a Grafton Street institution.



Dublin tips

Dublin has plenty of grassy spaces – there's St Stephen's Green, known for its pretty ponds and blooming flowerbeds, and Phoenix Park, Europe's largest enclosed city park, with its resident herd of fallow deer. Or try the peaceful Iveagh Gardens, a secret green oasis off Harcourt Street, which has a yew maze and ornate fountains.

For a bracing cliff walk and exhilarating sea views, spend a couple of hours exploring the remarkable cliff path on the Howth Peninsula, easily accessible by rapid rail service (DART) heading north from the city centre.

Take the DART south to Sandycove for a dip at the famous Forty Foot bathing spot, and a walk along the scenic seafront. Top things off with an ice cream from Teddy's, close to Dún Laoghaire's East Pier – it's a favourite of Dubliners.

See the 800-year-old mummies in the vaults of St Michan's Church. The first church was founded here in 1095 and the bodies are thought to have been preserved by limestone in the vault walls.



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Belfast

With welcoming locals and sensational sightseeing attractions, Belfast is a city with an undeniable allure. Spend a weekend, a week or even longer here, and you'll discover a place that can trace its origins back to the Bronze Age – a magnetic metropolis with a Titanic past and a vivacious present.

To soak up Belfast's unique atmosphere, it's best to explore it on foot, walking the compact centre to absorb the pulsating mix of music venues, traditional pubs, critically acclaimed restaurants and art galleries. The **Cathedral Quarter**, set around St Anne's Cathedral, contains some of the city's oldest streets and radiates an arty vibe, with fine old pubs such as the characterful **Duke of York**, as well as the restaurant-filled **St Anne's Square** and **The MAC** (Metropolitan Arts Centre).

Walk along the River Lagan, and you'll enter the heart of Belfast's industrial past, when it was once one of the greatest places in the world for shipbuilding. This is the city whose shipyards built the Titanic and her sister ships, the Olympic and Britannic. The **Titanic Quarter** in Belfast

Harbour is home to **Titanic Belfast**, a state-of-the-art exhibition tracing the tragic tale of the "Ship of Dreams". It's also where you can take a walk back in time on board the **SS Nomadic**, which once ferried first- and second-class passengers out to the Titanic, and is the last remaining White Star Line ship in the world. At Alexandra Dock, a short walk from Titanic Belfast, sits **HMS Caroline**, a WWI Light Battle Cruiser. The exhibition on board covers battles, weaponry and what life was like at sea for the 300 crew members.

In the **Queen's Quarter**, home of **Queen's University**, you'll find eclectic cafés and bars such as **Muriel's**, as well as the **Ulster Museum**, with ancient mummies and an impressive art collection. And in the **Gaeltacht Quarter**, learn more about Belfast and its political history, including the famous murals and Peace Walls, on an open-top bus or Black Taxi tour.

- 01 Titanic Belfast
- 02 Belfast City Hall
- 03 Queen's University
- 04 Crumlin Road Gaol
- 05 Carrickfergus Castle
- 06 The MAC
- 07 The Crown Liquor Saloon

Five great places to visit

Crumlin Road Gaol

A working prison from 1845 to 1996, Crumlin Road Gaol is now an exciting visitor attraction within a dramatic 19th century space. Concerts and events are regularly held at the prison, and those who dare can take the Paranormal Tour after dark.

Belfast City Hall

Belfast's architectural centrepiece is City Hall, with beautiful surrounding gardens and impressive statues. Free public tours bring visitors through the interior's finest rooms and exhibitions.

Ulster Museum

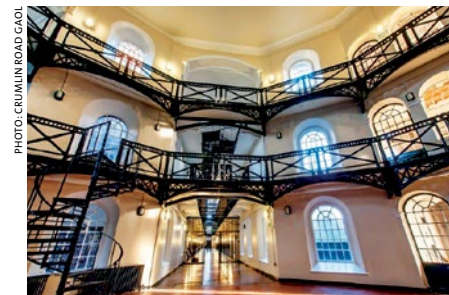
Set within the delightful Botanic Gardens, the Ulster Museum's exhibitions trace the history and prehistory of Ireland and map out the rise of Belfast's crafts and trades. There are marvels wherever you turn, so give yourself enough time to enjoy it all.

Carrickfergus Castle

About 30 minutes north of the city on the shores of Belfast Lough, you'll find Carrickfergus Castle. Built in the 12th century by the Normans, it has withstood sieges by the Scots, Irish, English and French over the years, and is one of the best-preserved medieval castles on the island of Ireland.

The MAC

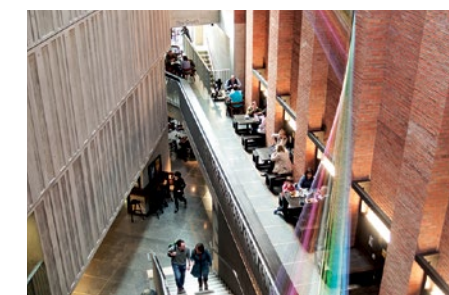
Belfast's award-winning cultural centre in the heart of the Cathedral Quarter occupies a beautiful modern building with three art galleries. It hosts a variety of exhibitions, theatrical performances, music and comedy.



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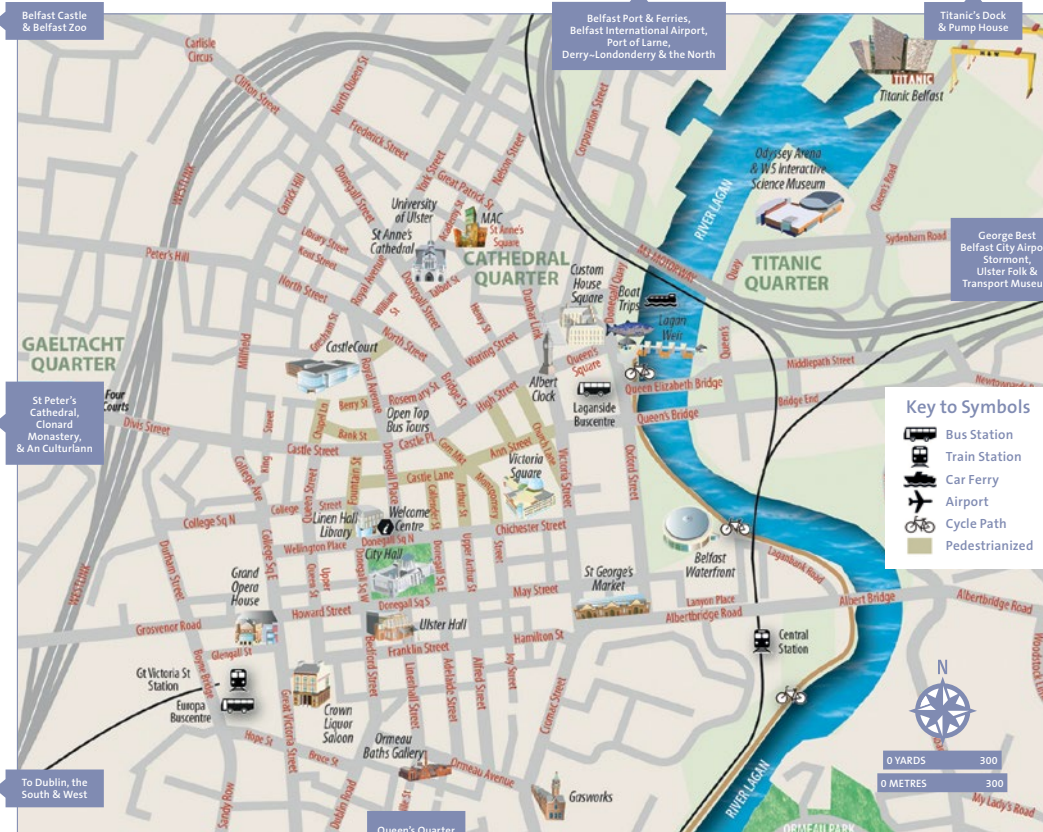
07

Food and drink

With esteemed Michelin-starred restaurants, award-winning food producers, breweries and food markets, Belfast's food scene is winning international accolades for good reason. The creativity in the kitchens of both **Ox** and **Eipic** has been recognized with Michelin stars in recent years, while fresh seafood is the star at **Fish City**, popular for its fish and chips.

Don't miss **St George's Market** (Fri–Sat), offering all types of gourmet nibbles from fresh produce to hot food, plus delicious coffees and cakes, often accompanied by live music. You can also take a guided food tour of the city from the market, sampling local drinks and dishes and learning about artisan food producers.

There are pubs to suit all tastes in Belfast, but it's the old pubs that have the most character. Between Ann Street and High Street, explore the tiny cobblestone area called The Belfast Entries, for old pubs such as **White's Tavern** and **The Morning Star Bar**. Or check out the beautiful 19th century **Crown Liquor Saloon** on Great Victoria Street.



Belfast tips

Almost hidden away on Donegall Square, the handsome Linen Hall Library is Belfast's oldest and was founded in 1788. A general tour of the building takes place Mon–Sat at 11:30am.

Drop in for lunch or afternoon tea at Belfast Castle Estate and Cave Hill Visitor Centre, and explore the gardens and walking trails – they offer lovely views over the city and Belfast Lough.

CS Lewis, author of *The Chronicles of Narnia*, was born in east Belfast – visit CS Lewis Square to see sculptures from *The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe*, or follow a self-guided trail to places from the writer's early life that may have inspired his later novels.

Take a day trip from Belfast to visit key *Game of Thrones* locations, such as the Dark Hedges and impressive Castle Ward, home of Winterfell. Or journey around the stunning Causeway Coastal Route, dropping in at the Giant's Causeway and then on to Ballintoy Harbour, otherwise known as the Iron Islands.



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Derry~Londonderry

With its ancient city walls, great street food and craft-beer scene, and a strong creative streak that vibrates through galleries, studios, shops and museums, the city of Derry~Londonderry has never been more exciting than it is right now.

Still buzzing from its year as UK Capital of Culture, the city's many layers unfold as you walk around its historic streets, from the soaring modern lines of the **Peace Bridge** to the **400-year-old walls**. As the main city in Ireland's northwest, Derry~Londonderry is where the Wild Atlantic Way meets the Causeway Coastal Route. The beauty of its setting on the River Foyle can be best enjoyed from these famous walls, where views stretch as far as the distant Donegal hills.

From on high, you can also look down on the tangle of city streets, where modern life bustles in energetic trad sessions, great local restaurants and enchanting old buildings – all combining to give the city its unique local flavour.

First time here? Take a tour and see one of the city's fascinating flipsides, whether it's the story of the colourful street art and murals with **Bogside Artists**, or artisan food tours with **Made in Derry**. Take a step into something special.



03

What to see

Sitting pretty within reach of the walls, the beautiful red-brick **Guildhall** boasts stunning stained-glass windows and stands like an anchor within the vibrant Guildhall Square. Mere steps from here is the river-spanning **Peace Bridge** – a Derry~Londonderry icon, and a scenic spot from which to watch the majestic River Foyle rush towards a meeting with Lough Foyle to the north. And don't miss the award-winning **Tower Museum**, which traces the city's history and culminates in a panoramic open-air viewing platform. Located within the historic city walls, the museum also includes an exhibition on the shipwrecked Armada vessel, La Trinidad Valencera.

- 01 The Guildhall
- 02 Derry~Londonderry Walls
- 03 The Peace Bridge
- 04 Warehouse No 1



07

What to see

Two Cork attractions allow an interesting peek into the bygone age of the penal system: the 17th century **Elizabeth Fort** was used as an army barracks, a female prison and a police station in its time, and **Cork City Gaol** housed prisoners during the 19th century. Take a walk on the wild side at the **Fota Wildlife Park**, a 30-minute journey from the city centre. Dedicated to conservation and education, the park is home to lions, gibbons, bison and red panda; animals either roam free or live in natural paddocks. Back in the city, get an art fix at the **Lewis Glucksman Gallery** or mix with the stars at the **Blackrock Castle Observatory**, just outside the city on the banks of the River Lee.

- 05 The River Lee
- 06 The English Market
- 07 Elizabeth Fort
- 08 Café Paradiso



04

Food and drink

Traditional pubs, culture on tap and elegant eateries: the Derry~Londonderry food scene is a joy to explore. A good place to start is the traditional pub of **Peadar O'Donnell's** for live music and a pint of porter. For something a bit different, the **Walled City Brewery** mixes a restaurant and brewery to great effect, serving craft beers and gins. A taste of Derry~Londonderry's renowned local food can be best appreciated in the fine-dining favourite, **Brown's**. Mixing elegant surrounds and top ingredients, it's one of the city's best restaurants. Finally, don't miss **Warehouse No 1** – boasting a shop, gallery, café and bistro, it's the perfect balance of culture and food in the scenic surrounds of Guildhall Square.



08

Food and drink

Foodies will get a real kick out of Cork's fabulous food scene. Walk around the historic **English Market** and you'll come across artisan cheese, smoked fish and creamy chocolate among the buzzing food stalls. The city's restaurants are energetic and innovative, with celebrated vegetarian hotspots such as **Iyers** and **Café Paradiso**. The **Farmgate Café** in the English Market does a nice line in traditional Irish food, while you'll get wonderful, zingy salads at **The Rocket Man** on Princes Street. And when it comes to pubs, you're spoiled for choice in Cork with the craft-beer favourite of the Franciscan Well Brewery, music-filled **Crane Lane** and **Dan Lowery's Tavern**, with local beers, sandwiches and traditional décor.

CITIES TO EXPLORE

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

Armagh

Ireland's ecclesiastical capital? Welcome to Armagh, proud possessor of two cathedrals, both dedicated to St Patrick. A small and attractive city, Armagh is perfect for exploring on foot. Wander through the gracious tree-lined **Georgian Mall** (once a rather scandalous racecourse); watch out for the 22 quirky bronze gargoyles and angels hidden around the city; or visit the ancient ceremonial monument of **Navan Fort**. Armagh has some great restaurants, including **The Moody Boar** and **Uluru Bar and Grill**, making this a spot to be savoured.

Galway

The spirit of Ireland's west coast is very much present in this vibrant seaside city. Galway is never far from a festival (arts, film, horse racing and oysters are all celebrated in quick succession during the summer months). This, combined with its compact streets and colourful shop fronts, gives the feeling of a rolling street party. The super **Galway City Museum**, thriving food scene (Galway has two Michelin-starred restaurants, **Aniar** and **Loam**) and the scenic coastal suburb of Salthill seal the deal.

Kilkenny

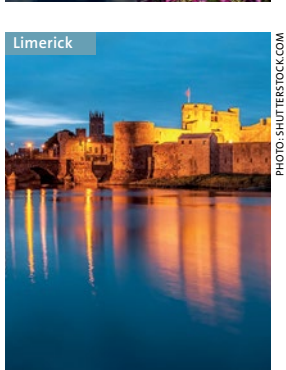
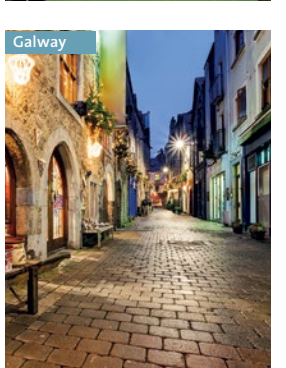
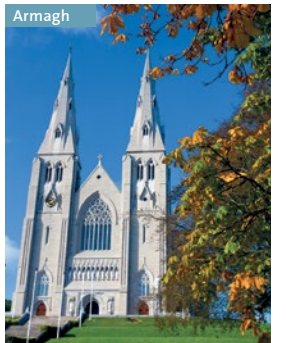
Located in Ireland's Ancient East, Kilkenny mixes nightlife, great food and culture to perfection. This city will wow you with medieval showpieces by day, and keep you entertained in traditional pubs by night. Walk the **Medieval Mile** and be catapulted back centuries with Tudor inns, old merchant townhouses, hidden alleys, **Kilkenny Castle** and the Gothic **St Canice's Cathedral**. The city also boasts great craft shops, design studios and the **Smithwick's Experience Kilkenny** brewery tour.

Limerick

Limerick is a place with culture at its heart. Overlooking the River Shannon, this appealing medieval city is known for its festivals, galleries and museums. There's the faded Georgian elegance of the **Newtown Pery** district; the **Hunt Museum**, with its collection of precious art and antiquities; and the **Frank McCourt Museum**, based in the author's old school. See rugby at **Thomond Park**, try local food at the **Milk Market's** weekend market and explore the fortifications of the 13th century **King John's Castle**.

Waterford

The atmosphere in Waterford is more small town than big city, but you'll find lots to do in Ireland's oldest city. Located in Ireland's Ancient East and founded by the Vikings, Waterford's history is covered in the **Viking Triangle**, which contains the **Medieval Museum**, **Bishop's Palace** and **Reginald's Tower**. See beautiful cut glass at the House of **Waterford Crystal**, taste a freshly baked "blaa" (a fluffy bread roll) at the **Granary Café** or take a walk along the historic quays. ☘





ONLY IN IRELAND

From adventures in remote parts of the island to exciting city escapes, the island of Ireland offers incredible experiences from the breathtaking to the musical

Walk in the footsteps of giants

The Causeway Coastal Route stretches from Belfast to Derry~Londonderry and is one of Ireland's greatest adventures. Right at the heart of it you'll find the astounding **Giant's Causeway**. This unusual, honeycomb landscape features 40,000 hexagonal basalt stepping stones, whose history reaches back 60 million years to a time of intense volcanic activity. Today, crashing Atlantic waves, soaring hills and fascinating legends that tell of warring giants make visiting this UNESCO World Heritage Site an experience to cherish. Hop over the terrain of interlocking stones splashed by waves, explore the different walking trails that reach out along the coast and marvel at the mix of science and stories within the award-winning Visitor Experience. After all of that, it's time to sit back, relax and watch the intense green, grey and warm orange of the landscape change in the light, over one of the most remarkable geological formations on the planet.



02

Have a banquet in a castle

A unique way to enjoy Ireland's castles is with a sumptuous banquet, which take place all over the island and offer great food, wine, storytelling and song within historic surroundings. There's the 15th century **Bunratty Castle** in County Clare, where the Earl of Thomond's butler hosts an evening within the Great Hall amidst decorative tapestries and medieval furniture. At the **Dunguaire Castle Banquet** on the shores of Galway Bay, the Banquet Hall brings you back to the medieval era with bench seating, dim candlelight and long oak tables. Or step into the world of Game of Thrones® at the **Winterfell Tours Medieval Banquet Nights** in the grounds of Castle Ward in County Down – filled with costumes, open fires, hog roasts and traditional music, all designed to recreate the famed series.



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Traditional music

Picture this: a cozy pub, friendly locals and the rapturous sounds of traditional Irish tunes. Irish music sessions are legendary for good reason – toes are tapped, hands are clapped and the atmosphere is electric. Dotted around the island, you'll find hundreds of traditional music pubs boasting local musicians and guest performers. Drop in, sit back and soak up the sounds, or if you can play an instrument, pull up a stool and take part – it's what makes a music session on the island of Ireland so enjoyable. Step through the doors of amazing pubs such as **The Cobbles** in Dublin, **Buckley's** in Killarney, County Kerry, and **Kelly's Cellars** in Belfast and you'll be treated to the delightful melodies made by *bodhráns* (a handheld drum), fiddles (violins) and tin whistles.

Experience St Patrick's Day

It's unique, it's iconic, it's exhilarating. On 17 March, the island of Ireland thrums with energy, celebration and events that range from artistic to eccentric. Dublin gives itself over to a fabulous four-day festival with a parade, music and a carnival atmosphere. Armagh and Down embark on a thrilling programme of events in the **Home of St Patrick Festival**. Special events feature local and international performers with music, art, and theatre all inspired by the life and work of St Patrick. And wherever you go, whether it's the oldest parade on the island in Wexford town or family concerts in Galway, you'll be treated to a celebratory atmosphere like no other.

Cross a swinging, swaying rope bridge

The creak of wooden slats. The waves swirling below. The salty spray on your face. Make no mistake – crossing the Carrick-a-Rede rope bridge is an awesome experience. There has been a rope bridge swaying between Carrick Island and the County Antrim mainland for over 250 years and it was initially built as the island was considered to be the best place for local fishermen to catch salmon. Back in the 1970s, the bridge comprised a single handrail and a handful of gapped wooden planks. Today things are a little sturdier, but it's still utterly exhilarating, as all who cross can testify! The Carrick-a-Rede rope bridge is operated as a timed ticket attraction by The National Trust.



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- 01 **Giant's Causeway** County Antrim
- 02 **Johnnie Fox's Pub** Glencullen, County Dublin
- 03 **Bunratty Castle** County Clare
- 04 **St Patrick's Festival** Dublin
- 05 **Carrick-a-Rede rope bridge** County Antrim



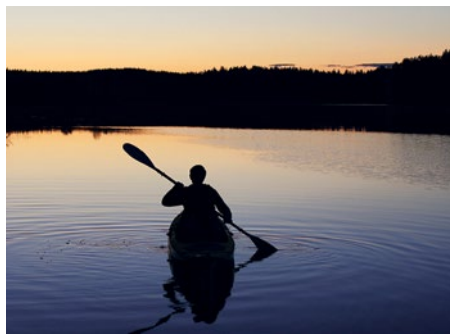
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Cycle onto an island

Cycling onto an island might sound like a hard thing to do, but not in Ireland! Take to two wheels on the **Great Western Greenway** in County Mayo and you can pedal right onto one of the most beautiful spots off Ireland's west coast – Achill Island. Starting in the lively town of Westport, which is famous for its traditional pubs and 18th century elegance, the 42km Greenway is a wonderful off-road walking and cycling trail, and reaches past mountain scenery, along Clew Bay and through the pretty villages of Newport and Mulranny, which make good places to stop for lunch. The end point is Achill – a craggy beautiful island boasting moody peat bogs, mountain peaks and the sublime Keem Bay, with its stunning arc of sandy beach. While on the island, don't miss the now-famous Dooagh beach, which reappeared after a 30-year absence and caused a sensation worldwide!



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Kayak through the stars

Encircled by a furrow of rocky hills in the heart of West Cork, Lough Hyne is Ireland's first Marine Nature Reserve and a unique sea-water lake. The small size of the lake coupled with the fact that it's salt water and not fresh water has created an incredible variety of plants and animals. Visit by day and you'll find the lough to be a delightful place for walking, hill climbing or a lovely wander along a quiet wooded trail beside the shore, but at night this place really comes alive. Venture onto the waters in a kayak and you can explore an incredible natural phenomenon – bioluminescence. Tiny phytoplankton illuminate like a cloud of stars with every swish of the paddle, a thrilling experience that you can enjoy with Atlantic Sea Kayaking and the Starlight Moonlight Tour.

PHOTO: SHUTTERSTOCK.COM

Experience a “walk on water”

Wrapped around the sea cliffs of County Antrim, **The Gobbins** is the only guided adventure walk of its kind in Europe. Here, along the Causeway Coastal Route only 32km from Belfast, lies a stunning sea-sprayed path that weaves around the coast, winds through passages hewn out of rock and over dramatic bridges suspended over the sea. Designed by the railway engineer Berkeley Deane Wise in 1902 as a bold new visitor attraction, the path was closed to the public in 1954. But after extensive, exciting renovations, this remarkable walk is once again thrilling visitors with glimpses of native sea birds, tales of smugglers' caves and exceptional coastal views. ☘

- 06 Killarney National Park County Kerry
- 07 Great Western Greenway County Mayo
- 08 Lough Hyne County Cork
- 09 The Gobbins County Antrim

09



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IRELAND'S ANCIENT EAST

At first glance, the east of Ireland is all soft green fields, busy little towns and gentle rivers. But this is a landscape full of secrets, of battles and betrothals, of stars and the spirit world, of wealth and sometimes wickedness. Welcome to Ireland's Ancient East



01 Brú na Bóinne County Meath

In a quiet part of County Meath is one of the most important prehistoric landscapes in the world. At Brú na Bóinne, human activity can be traced back 6,000 years and it's where you will find a passage tomb that predates the pyramids at Giza. Newgrange's spiral-engraved kerbstones and white Wicklow quartzite topped with grass make an impressive sight, but step into the dark heart of this UNESCO World Heritage Site and a secret is unveiled. Every year, on the winter solstice, a beam of sunlight travels up the stone-lined passage, illuminating the inner chamber. Quite literally, it's an ancient architectural masterpiece.

What's nearby

The Boyne Valley is packed with historical attractions, such as the passage tombs of **Knowth & Dowth**, the **Hills of Slane** and **Tara**, and the 6th century Christian settlement of **Monasterboice**.

Take time out

Enjoy lunch at elegant **Tankardstown House**, visit **St Peter's Church** in Drogheda to see the head of St Oliver Plunkett in its gilded glass case, and take a walk through the breathtaking **Loughcrew Gardens**.

Try something new

Get close to magnificent birds of prey with a falconry lesson at **Newgrange Falconry**.



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02 The Rock of Cashel County Tipperary

Nothing can quite beat the spectacle of the iconic Rock of Cashel, which looms above the landscape like a fairytale castle. Legend has it the towering rock was dropped here by the devil, but today it is home to one of the most impressive collections of medieval buildings in Europe. Centuries of history blow through the craggy and mysterious remains of the Gothic cathedral, round tower and 15th century castle. Listen closely, and you may hear tales of lightning strikes, massacres and the 5th century conversion of the King of Munster to Christianity by St Patrick (when he accidentally stabbed the king in the foot with his staff).

What's nearby

Seek out **Holy Cross Abbey**, a Cistercian monastery founded by the King of Munster in 1168. The abbey was bestowed with a piece of the True Cross by Queen Isabella of Angoulême around 1233.

Take time out

Visit the **Fethard Horse Country Experience** in the medieval town of Fethard, have lunch at **Café Hans** in Cashel, and take a walk in the verdant **Glen of Aherlow**.

Try something new

Check ahead to see what's happening at the **Brú Ború** centre, Cashel's famous hub for traditional Irish music and dance.

03 Kilkenny Castle

Kilkenny city

The city's famous 12th century Norman castle was home to the Butlers of Ormonde for nearly five centuries, before the 6th Marquess of Ormonde offered it to the city of Kilkenny for a mere £50 in 1967. A tour will bring you to the Picture Gallery and the library, with its vivid colour scheme of garnet-red curtains and Berber-style carpets. Don't have time for a full tour? No problem: 500 years of history is condensed into a 12-minute film in the Medieval Room in the South Tower. Afterwards, stroll around the stunning formal terraced gardens and parkland, with pleasant woodland walks beside the River Nore.

What's nearby

The **Medieval Mile** is a great way to uncover the city's many secret stories and historic attractions, which include accused witches and intricate stained-glass windows.

Take time out

Have lunch in the Michelin-starred **Campagne**, take a brewery tour of **Smithwick's Experience Kilkenny** to find out about the famous brew, and head out of town to the **Nicholas Mosse Pottery** mill by the River Nore.

Try something new

Join **The Kilkenny Way – Ultimate Hurling Experience** for an insight into the world's oldest and fastest field sport.

04 Russborough House County Wicklow

Tucked away in the County Wicklow countryside sits a grand Palladian mansion that is pure glamour. Step through the impressive façade of Russborough House (said to be the longest of any in Ireland), and you're into a world of captivating stories, sumptuous interiors and exquisite art. The house was bought by Sir Alfred Beit in the mid-20th century and once he moved in, Beit and his wife set about installing a truly phenomenal art collection. Today, the collection remains largely intact and it's a joy to behold these works in rooms that have entertained everyone from Fred Astaire to Mick Jagger.

What's nearby

Russborough sits on the edge of the **Wicklow Mountains National Park**, with its abundance of walking trails. The monastic site of **Glendalough** is nearby, while the **Blessington Lakes** are also only a stone's throw away.

Take time out

Enjoy a feast in the **Ballymore Inn**, visit the **Museum of Style Icons** at Newbridge, and walk the **Blessington Greenway**, which links Blessington with Russborough House.

Try something new

Watch a sheepdog demonstration in the grounds of Russborough House on weekend afternoons.



PHOTO: LOLA KINWADE / AKESTROM



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05 Cobh County Cork

Along an elegant stretch of promenade in the coastal village of Cobh, you'll come across a statue of Annie Moore – the first immigrant to be processed through Ellis Island in New York. Moore was just one of hundreds of thousands of people, from famine-stricken peasants to convicts bound for Australia, who left Cobh for a new and uncertain life elsewhere. The town also gained fame as the last port of call for Titanic before it left on its ill-fated transatlantic voyage. Discover all about Cobh's incredible maritime connections, history of emigration and Titanic tales at the Cobh Heritage Centre and the Titanic Experience Cobh.

What's nearby

A 30-minute journey by car or bus from Cobh is the city of Cork, with its great attractions including the food hub of the **English Market**, fascinating **Cork City Gaol** and the **Butter Museum**.

Take time out

Head to Middleton for dinner at **Sage Restaurant**, a whiskey tour of the **Jameson Distillery Middleton**, and the excellent **Middleton Farmers Market** on Saturdays.

Try something new

Jump on a boat from Cobh to **Spike Island**, where you can uncover the stories of a prison so petrifying it was once called "Ireland's hell".

06 Glendalough

County Wicklow

Walk among Glendalough's glassy lakes, wooded valleys and silent ruins and it's easy to see why St Kevin was drawn here in the 6th century. The saint lived as a hermit in solitude and prayer in this pastoral wonderland, before establishing a vibrant monastic settlement. The Round Tower, cathedral and priests' houses made the "valley of two lakes" a bustling hub – and a natural target for merciless Viking raids. Explore the ghostly monastic village before setting off into the surrounding landscape on one of the walking trails that skirt the lake and offer incredible views down through the valley.

What's nearby

With views of the River Vartry, **The Lighthouse Seafood Restaurant** in Wicklow town makes a nice stop; lunch at **Hunter's** in Rathnew – one of Ireland's oldest coaching inns – is something to savour; and the nearby gardens at **Mount Usher** make for a delightful afternoon stroll.

Take time out

Outside the village of Enniskerry is the stunning house and gardens of **Powerscourt Estate**, with the beautiful **Powerscourt Waterfall** just a 15-minute drive away.

Try something new

Kayak down the picturesque Avonmore River with **Wicklow Adventures**.

07 Viking Triangle

Waterford

The Vikings most certainly made their mark on Ireland. Bearing down on an unsuspecting island in the late 8th century, they went on to loot monasteries, battle kings and make off with priceless treasures. But they also laid the foundations of many Irish towns and cities, including Waterford, established by Norse raiders in 914AD. Today, Waterford celebrates its Viking legacy in the Viking Triangle at the heart of the city. Join the 45-minute Epic Tour of the Viking Triangle to trace the city's 1,100 years of history before visiting the King of the Vikings, an exciting 3D virtual-reality experience in a recreated Viking house.

What's nearby

Waterford itself is packed with things to do, from a visit to the **Waterford Crystal Visitor Centre**, to a tour of the **Waterford Treasures**, a trio of museums including the **Bishop's Palace**, **Reginald's Tower** and the **Medieval Museum**.

Take time out

Try a "blaa", the floury bread roll the city is famous for; drop into **Henry Downes** bar, with its own whiskey blend; or visit the seaside village of **Dunmore East**.

Try something new

Between Waterford and Dungarvan, journey to the stunning **Waterford Greenway** to walk or cycle all or some of the 46km off-road trail.



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08 Irish National Stud

County Kildare

Surrounded by the rich pastures of County Kildare, the National Stud is one of the most prestigious thoroughbred horse-breeding facilities on the island of Ireland. Here, stallions and stargazing are mixed – or at least they used to be – thanks to the superstitions of the stud's founder, Colonel William Hall Walker. The colonel drew up a birth chart for each foal, and if he didn't like the stars, the foal would be sold. Equestrian astrology seems a million miles away at the adjacent Japanese Gardens, created by Walker with the help of master horticulturist Tassa Eida from Japan. It's a peaceful place where the rest of the world seems to just fade away.

What's nearby

Two of Europe's best racecourses, **Punchestown** and the **Curragh** are nearby, and a race day at either is a thrilling experience. Or visit the **Curragh Military Museum**, which traces the area's absorbing military history.

Take time out

Indulge in some retail therapy at **Kildare Village**, a designer outlet that offers up to 60% off top labels; enjoy lunch at **Lock 13** overlooking the Grand Canal just outside Naas; and visit the blooming gardens at **Burtown House**, near Athy.

Try something new

Take a barge trip from Sallins through 250 years of history along the Grand Canal.

09 Clonmacnoise

County Offaly

Travelling down the River Shannon on a replica Viking ship to the ancient monastic site of Clonmacnoise is enough to give you goosebumps. It's an incredible way to arrive at this sacred place, which was founded by St Ciaran in 544AD. Today, Clonmacnoise catapults you back to a time of religious, literary and artistic creativity, and the site abounds with tales of devotion, Viking raids and kingly connections. Set amidst the beautiful green fields of County Offaly and next to the River Shannon, there are churches, two round towers, high crosses and a cathedral, and the largest collection of Early Christian graveslabs in Europe.

What's nearby

Follow the river north to the town of Athlone, where you can discover the history of the area at the **Athlone Castle Visitor Centre**; visit **Birr Castle, Gardens and Science Centre**; or explore the beautiful **Lough Boora Discovery Park**.

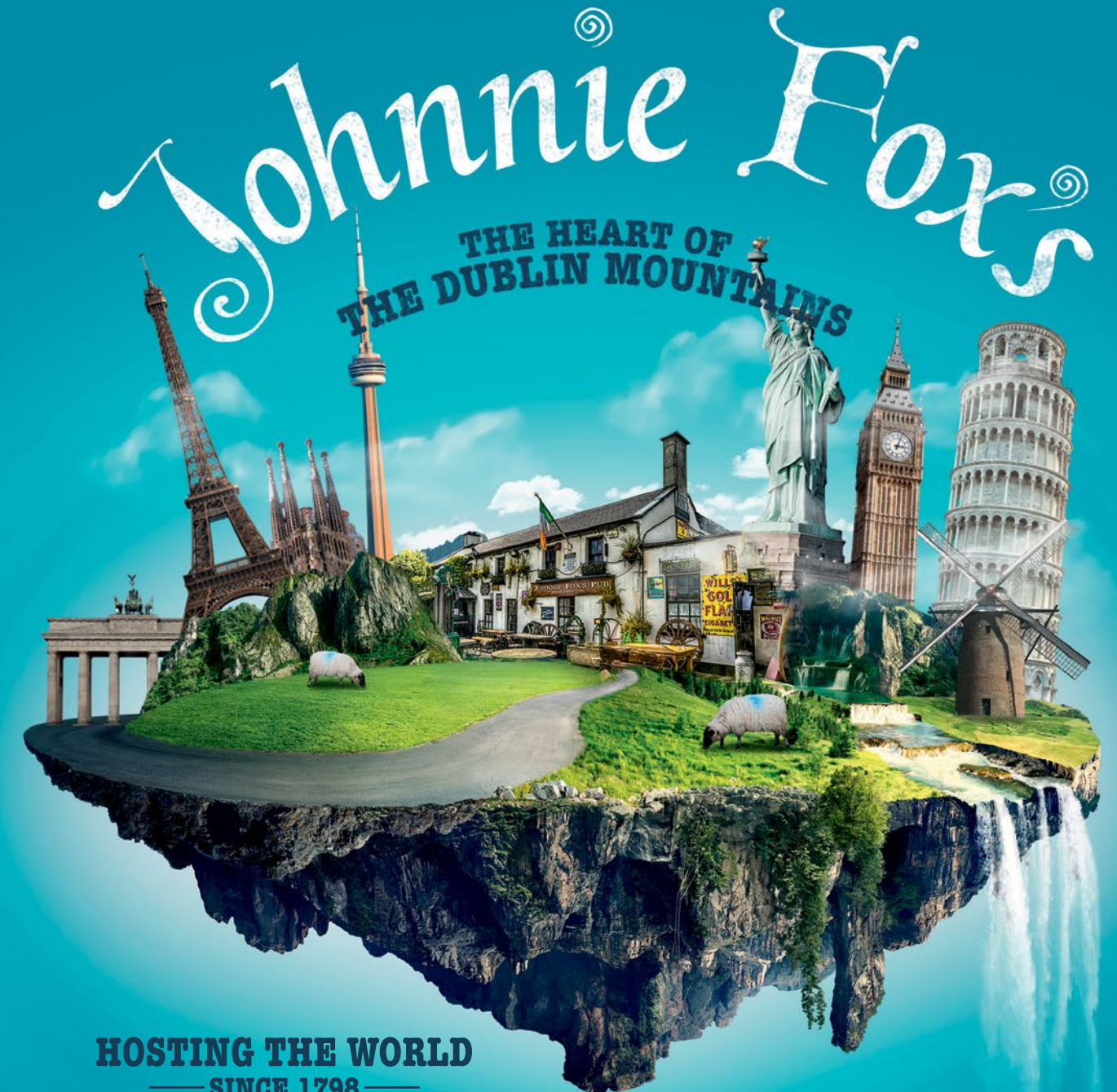
Take time out

Relax with a slow lunch at **The Fatted Calf** in Glasheen; have a pint in **Sean's Bar** in Athlone, reputed to be the oldest pub in Ireland; and take a stroll around the **Ballinahown Eco-Craft Village**, on the outskirts of Athlone.

Try something new

Take a boat trip down the River Shannon with **The River Run Pleasure Cruiser** from Athlone.

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Causeway Coastal Route

Dramatic clifftop castles, white-sand beaches, charming little villages – the Causeway Coastal Route delivers an incredible amount of beauty within just 314km. Starting in the vibrant city of **Belfast** and finishing in **Derry~Londonderry** (or the other way around if you prefer), the route is all about slowing down, taking your time, and savouring the sights, sounds and flavours of this spellbinding coastline. See show-stopping views from the craggy heights of **Torr Head**, experience the warmth of local people in the villages of the **Glens of Antrim**, enjoy music and storytelling, and tuck into fresh seafood in cozy pubs after a day of outdoor adventure.

Frequently cited as one of the best touring routes in the world, it's no surprise that the Causeway Coastal Route is a genuine joy to drive. And it's not just the views that impress, either. Part of this route's allure is that so many great places are packed into a relatively short stretch of coastline. There's **Carrickfergus**, with its 12th century Norman castle; there's **The Gobbins**, a restored 100-year-old cliff path through tunnels and over bridges; there's **Glenarm Castle**, home to the Earls of

Antrim for around 400 years; and there's **Mussenden Temple** perched on a clifftop above the churning ocean.

Catch the ferry from **Ballycastle** to **Rathlin Island** and you'll discover a haven of wildlife including basking seals and puffins. When you're back on the mainland again, the UNESCO World Heritage Site of the **Giant's Causeway** brings you the astounding sight of 40,000 hexagonal stone columns. According to science, intense volcanic activity 60 million years ago created this whimsical landscape, but the local legend of warring giants is a lot more fun.

If you want to slow the pace even further, leave the car and explore this magnificent coast on foot. With rugged cliffs and swirling ocean on one side, and lush, green meadows on the other, the **Causeway Coast Way** walking trail lets you experience everything that makes this region so special.

As you head along the coast, the ruins of the 14th century **Dunluce Castle** sit boldly on a stark, rocky headland. And if it looks like it's about to topple into the sea, that may be because part of it already has. According to local tales, on a dark and stormy night in the 17th century, part of the kitchen actually collapsed into the swirling ocean far below.

The route ends in Derry~Londonderry, which is famed for its 400-year-old city walls. Walking the ramparts, the beauty of Derry~Londonderry is revealed in all its splendour – a lasting memory of a unique journey. And if the Causeway Coastal Route has whetted your appetite for spectacular seascapes and memorable experiences, continue the journey on the Wild Atlantic Way.



Experience Food in Northern Ireland

Boundary-pushing chefs, a deep respect for local ingredients and a convivial atmosphere in pubs and restaurants have turned Northern Ireland into one of Europe's most exciting food destinations. And a great way to see the landscapes, meet the people and experience the incredible flavours is with a food-inspired tour that takes you from city to sea.

Thanks to an invigorating array of cafés, bars and restaurants that sit elbow-to-elbow with delis, street food and the historic **St George's Market**, Belfast is the perfect place to start. This vibrant city has a bumper crop of great places to eat including fine dining at Michelin-starred **Ox** and brunch Belfast-style at **Established Coffee** or **General Merchants Café**. To taste some of what the city is famous for, join a tour such as **Taste & Tour**, which offers outings with all sorts of themes, such as local producers, craft beer and whiskey.

Once you've enjoyed what Belfast has to offer, head south to County Down and the **Schoolhouse**. Set in the heart of the Comber countryside (famous for its potato, the Comber Early), this luxury guest house and restaurant has earned a Michelin Bib Gourmand for creative, quality cooking.

TAKE A WALK THROUGH THE SCENIC MURLOUGH NATURE RESERVE ACROSS THE LAGOON TO WORK UP AN APPETITE BEFORE ENJOYING A FEAST OF CRAB CLAWS

The Schoolhouse also makes a great base for discovering the local highlights, such as Strangford Lough, Mount Stewart House and Gardens, and the world of Game of Thrones® at Castle Ward, where the popular television series is filmed. Get a taste of all things Winterfell with ClearSky Adventure at the castle.

The historic **Balloo House**, a short drive away in the small village of Killinchy, is an impressive place to dine. This 400-year-old inn delivers a lovely mix of comfort and charm, with two different dining experiences under one roof. Downstairs is a classic pub, while upstairs you can enjoy seasonal dishes such as Finnebrogue venison liver with creamy mash, crispy onions, bacon, and red wine jus.

The shores of Dundrum Bay beckon next with a cluster of great local pubs and family-run eateries such as **The Buck's Head** and **The Dundrum Inn** as well as the celebrated **Mourne Seafood Bar**. Backed by the Mourne Mountains and overlooking



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- 01 Whiterocks County Antrim
- 02 Giant's Causeway County Antrim
- 03 Balloo House County Down
- 04 Ox Belfast
- 05 Taste & Tour, St George's Market Belfast
- 06 Mourne Seafood Bar County Down
- 07 General Merchants Café Belfast

the sea, this brasserie serves local seafood. Take a walk through the scenic Murlough Nature Reserve to work up an appetite before enjoying a feast of crab claws. The Mourne Mountains area is known for excellent produce, from artisan honey to Abernethy Butter, used in top restaurants around the world. **NI Food Tours** runs a number of treks in County Down, including a Deep in the Mournes jaunt, where you can meet some of the area's top artisan food producers and sample their award-winning fare.

Heading back to Belfast, stop in the small city of Lisburn, where the **Yellow Door Deli** serves up home-cooked breads, stews and pastries.



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Home of Saint Patrick

In Northern Ireland, soaring cathedrals, crumbling monastic ruins, and magnificent landscapes are all united by one incredible story – the tale of St Patrick, Ireland’s famed patron saint. Patrick’s story has fascinated people around the world for centuries and you can follow in his footsteps on **St Patrick’s Trail**. Winding through the rolling landscapes of **Down** and **Armagh**, you’ll come across sites where the saint first taught his message of Christianity, and it’s where you can get closest to Patrick himself.

A perfect place to start is the town of **Downpatrick** in County Down. It was not far from here that back in the 5th century Patrick encountered a local chieftain who gave him a simple barn for shelter. This very place is now marked by Saul Church, which was built in 1932 to honor the humble beginnings of St Patrick’s Christian odyssey around the island. Poignantly, Downpatrick is also where St Patrick is thought to be buried. A modest granite memorial stone was laid in 1900 to mark the location within the tranquil grounds of Down Cathedral.

A short walk away from the cathedral on Market Street, **The Saint Patrick Centre** offers a fascinating glimpse into the saint’s life and times in a state-of-the-art multimedia exhibition. From St Patrick’s intriguing background to the monastic chroniclers who ensured a legacy that would endure down through the centuries, it will change the way you think about the “Apostle of Ireland”.

Just over an hour away, the city of **Armagh** has the esteemed title of “ecclesiastical capital of Ireland” and it’s a place of secrets and surprises. Home to a planetarium with a 4.6 billion-year-old meteorite, Armagh also boasts narrow streets filled with hidden gargoyles,



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IN THE 5TH CENTURY, PATRICK ENCOUNTERED A LOCAL CHIEFTAIN WHO GAVE HIM A SIMPLE BARN FOR SHELTER. THIS PLACE IS NOW MARKED BY SAUL CHURCH, BUILT IN 1932 TO HONOUR THE SAINT

chimeras, and angels that linger in nooks and crannies, as well as **The Mall**, an elegant tree-lined promenade that was once a horse-racing track.

Overlooking the city, two cathedrals dedicated to St Patrick dominate the horizon and face each other on top of two hills. **St Patrick’s Church of Ireland Cathedral** sits on the site of St Patrick’s main church, which was established in the 5th century, while centuries later **St Patrick’s Catholic Cathedral** was built.

A walking tour of Armagh is a wonderful way to get under the skin of this enigmatic city, much of which is the result of the vision of Archbishop Robinson, who set about rebuilding the city in the late 18th century. Stroll the streets, explore the museums and library, and finish up with dinner in **4 Vicars**, where the very best local ingredients are served in simple surroundings overlooking the city. It’s the perfect place to raise a glass to St Patrick.



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Hidden gems

Dominated by the heather-clad **Sperrin Mountains**, County Tyrone is one of Ireland’s hidden gems. Dotted with the remains of Celtic standing stones and crisscrossed by a network of quiet farm roads, this is the ideal landscape for walking and cycling, as well as exploring the intriguing journey of the Irish emigrant at the **Ulster American Folk Park** in Omagh. Just 45 minutes from Belfast or Derry~Londonderry, the **Seamus Heaney HomePlace** is a must-see on any visit to Northern Ireland, and celebrates the life and literature of one of the world’s great Nobel laureates, the poet Seamus Heaney. The exhibition is filled with artefacts, personal stories, images and books, many of which have been donated by the Heaney family. ☘

- 08 St Patrick’s Cathedral (RC) Armagh
- 09 Down Cathedral Downpatrick
- 10 St Patrick’s Cathedral (COI) Armagh
- 11 Saul Church County Down
- 12 Seamus Heaney HomePlace County Londonderry



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SEVEN WONDERS OF THE WILD ATLANTIC WAY

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01

01 The Cliffs of Moher County Clare

Where is it?

The Cliff Coast.

Why is it a wonder?

Towering 702ft above the crashing Atlantic waves, County Clare's iconic cliffs offer incredible views out over the ocean. The cliffs are more than 300 million years old, and the walks they offer, the teeming birdlife and the interactive visitor centre make for an unforgettable few hours at the edge of the earth.

What is there to do nearby?

The Cliffs of Moher are close to the Burren National Park, a wonderland of karstic limestone formations. On your coastal drive, plan a stop in the lively music town of Doolin (where you can also catch a ferry to the Aran Islands) and, for a more remote Atlantic experience, take a car or bike around Loop Head, an awesome



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PHOTO: @STORYTRAVELERS



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headland where you can spot dolphins and whales, as well as the Loop Head Lighthouse, which dates back to 1854.

Where to eat?

Try Vaughan's Anchor Inn in the old fishing village of Liscannor, sample local Burren ingredients at the Wild Honey Inn in Lisdoonvarna, or stop into a restaurant with its own turf fire, such as the Riverside Bistro in Doolin. You won't go hungry on the Wild Atlantic Way!

02 The Islands

Where are they?

All along the Wild Atlantic Way.

Why are they a wonder?

Isolated, unique, friendly and steeped in traditional culture, Ireland's islands are full of exceptional landscapes, prehistoric forts, Irish-speaking communities and a real sense of escape. There are those that can be easily accessed, connected by bridges to the mainland at islands such as Achill, County Mayo, and Valentia, County Kerry, or abandoned gems such as Inishmurray off County Sligo and the Blasket Islands off County Kerry.

Which island should I visit?

There's an Irish island for every taste. Fancy a thrill? Take the cable car to West Cork's Dursey Island, where the resident population is said to be just three. Clear

blue waters meet secluded beaches on Inishturk, County Mayo; culture vultures can try a few words of Irish on Cape Clear, County Cork, or Tory, County Donegal; and Inis Mór in County Galway is perfect for families.

Where to eat?

Find local produce elevated to high art at Inis Meáin Restaurant & Suites on the Aran Islands, County Galway; break your adventure on Achill, County Mayo, with a stop at the Achill Cliff House Hotel; or try Seán Rua's restaurant and pizzeria on Cape Clear, County Cork.

03 Skellig Michael County Kerry

Where is it?

The Southern Peninsulas.

Why is it a wonder?

Skellig Michael lies over 11km off the coast of Kerry's Iveragh Peninsula, a shard-like rock capped by a UNESCO World Heritage Site with a difference. Close to its peak sit several beehive-shaped huts in a monastic site that dates back to the 6th century, with sensational views of the Irish coast. As seen in Star Wars: The Force Awakens, history, myth and stunning scenery collide with monumental effect at this wilderness site – but come prepared with food and



04

- 01 The Cliffs of Moher County Clare
- 02 Achill Island County Mayo
- 03 Skellig Michael County Kerry
- 04 Downpatrick Head County Mayo

drink (there are no facilities). Boats, both to the island and around the island, run from May to October, weather-dependent. There are also wonderful views of the islands to be had from the Kerry Cliffs.

What is there to do nearby?

The Ring of Kerry is Ireland's iconic touring loop around the Iveragh Peninsula, while the Dingle Peninsula is famous for seafood, the Sleat Head Drive and a celebrity dolphin called Fungie.

Where to eat?

The Moorings at Portmagee is where the Star Wars crew set up shop while filming on the Skelligs. QC's in Cahersiveen is the place to tuck into ocean-fresh seafood, or stop for a cup of hot chocolate at Skelligs Chocolate Factory overlooking the sea.

04 Downpatrick Head County Mayo

Where it is?

The Surf Coast.

Why is it a wonder?

Downpatrick Head is one of the most glorious places on the island of Ireland. It may look modest on the map, but those who venture out from nearby Ballycastle, County Mayo, are rewarded with stunning views of the Dún Briste sea stack, rugged coastal scenery and wildlife. Dún Briste means "broken fort" in Irish, and this piece of rock is believed to have broken away from the mainland in 1393. St Patrick is also said to have founded a church on a headland where you'll find an old holy well and stone cross perched above the Atlantic Ocean.

What is there to do nearby?

Visit the oldest known stone-walled farmlands in the world at Céide Fields; view the Staggs of Broadhaven – a set of five rocky islands off the shore of >

Mayo's Benwee Head; take a walk around Sligo's Mullaghmore Peninsula (in winter, watch the big wave surfers); or catch a wave yourself at Strandhill beach.

Where to eat?

Soak up views of Downpatrick Head from the Stella Maris Country House Hotel; have your fill of tasty home cooking at Mary's Cottage Kitchen in Ballycastle; or continue east to Sligo for the pick of Irish food and drink at Hargadon's atmospheric pub.

05 Old Head of Kinsale

County Cork

Where is it?

The Haven Coast.

Why is it a wonder?

Stretching over 3km into the Atlantic off the coast of West Cork, this dramatic headland is one of Ireland's most exceptional geographical formations. Although the tip of Old Head is now a private golf course, visitors can still take a stunning 6.5km walk around the base of the peninsula – or discover your adventurous side with a sea-kayaking tour. In 1915, German U-boats famously torpedoed the Lusitania offshore, and a 98ft-lighthouse guides ships to the safety of Kinsale Harbour.

What is there to do nearby?

Explore the foodie town of Kinsale (bring an appetite), which is packed with lovely craft shops, pubs and seafood restaurants; take a tour of the star-shaped Charles Fort, dating from the late 17th century; or travel west for a mosey around Clonakilty. Its colourful shops, restaurants and nearby Inchydoney beach make this a firm favourite with visitors.

Where to eat?

Eat beautifully presented local dishes in Pilgrim's of Rosscarbery, a small, friendly restaurant with a daily-changing menu; pop into Clonakilty for a local feast at An Súgán pub, restaurant and guesthouse; or head to Bastion for cutting-edge cuisine in Kinsale.

06 Killary Harbour

County Galway

Where is it?

The Bay Coast.

Why is it a wonder?

Located within the craggy landscape of Connemara, Killary Harbour stretches 16km inland from the Atlantic to its head below the Aasleagh Falls, and serves up some of the most dramatic views in Ireland. Cleaving the border between counties Galway and Mayo, activities in Killary range from sea kayaking to sightseeing boat tours. There's a stunning 19th century road here, too – the Green Road hugs the coastline tight above the



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waters of the fjord and is a leap into truly breathtaking scenery.

What is there to do nearby?

Drive to Westport through the awe-inspiring Doolough Valley, set between the Connemara mountains; visit the charming villages and towns of Cleggan, Clifden, Letterfrack and Roundstone; and don't miss Kylemore Abbey. The Benedictine abbey, casting a perfect reflection in its lake, is set on a 1,000-acre estate and is home to Ireland's largest walled garden.

Where to eat?

Pop into Mitchell's of Clifden for a local seafood feast; stop for some tasty, home-cooked fare at the Blackberry Café in Leenane; or break up your journey with delicious pub grub at O'Dowd's of Roundstone, all in County Galway.

07 Malin Head

County Donegal

Where is it?

The Northern Headlands.

Why is it a wonder?

Want the ends of the earth? Ireland's most northerly point is every bit as elemental as you would expect, with incredible rock formations, ancient ruins and some of Europe's largest sand dunes. Crowning the Inishowen Peninsula, Malin Head's

05 Old Head of Kinsale County Cork

06 Killary Harbour County Galway

07 Malin Head County Donegal

natural wonders include basking sharks and exotic birdlife. You might even see the Northern Lights, which are known to appear in the skies above the peninsula. Steeped in myth and history, the area also boasts Banba's Crown, a clifftop tower dating from 1805, and the ominously titled Hell's Hole, where dramatic Atlantic waves crash against cliffs.

What is there to do nearby?

Take a journey through Irish life from the 1840s to the present day at Doagh Famine Village; marvel at some of the highest sea cliffs in western Europe at Slieve League further south; or head towards Derry~Londonderry and explore the sights and sounds of the Causeway Coastal Route, where you'll find a host of amazing experiences all the way to Belfast.

Where to eat?

The genial Seaview Tavern is Ireland's most northerly bar, hotel and restaurant and boasts wonderful views overlooking islands in the Atlantic. You'll meet an equally friendly welcome at Lily's Bar and Tea Room in Malin town, or grab a cuppa and a pastry from Caffé Banba, the "café on wheels" at Banba's Crown (Easter to September). ☘

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TOWNS AND VILLAGES

Ireland's towns and villages are full of charm, with beautiful coastal, river and mountainside settings, fascinating historic attractions and best of all, great food, drink and entertainment. Whether you're dropping into a town or village for a browse around the shops and galleries, or picking a base for a few days of exploring the sights, you'll find a warm welcome waiting

Wild Atlantic Way

Sprinkled along the coastline of the Wild Atlantic Way, charming towns and villages offer the visitor a chance to relax and recharge after a windswept day out along the route that stretches from Malin Head in County Donegal to Kinsale in County Cork. Presiding over tranquil bays, cradled by hills or fronting vast Atlantic panoramas, these hamlets mix traditional culture, lively pubs and great seafood restaurants to create truly enchanting coastal destinations. Once home to the acclaimed Irish playwright Brian Friel, who lived here from 1960 until his death in 2015, **Greencastle** rests in calm on the edge of Lough Foyle in County Donegal. With a

lively port and pleasant beach, the village takes its name from an early 14th century castle, the ruins of which loom over the entrance to the lough. As well as being perfectly placed to enjoy the natural wonders of the stunning Inishowen Peninsula, the village is also home to the popular family-run Kealy's Seafood Bar, which overlooks the harbour and its busy fishing boats. Settle down and take in the view while enjoying great seafood dishes, such as pan-fried hake with chorizo, olives and cherry tomatoes. The lively heritage town of **Westport** in County Mayo is set around two main streets and is famous for its pubs, such as Matt Molloy's, which hosts nightly

traditional music sessions. By day, take a tour of Westport House, which was built in 1650, or bring younger visitors to enjoy the Pirate Adventure Park in the grounds. By night, seek out the town's best restaurants including An Port Mór, right in the centre. As well as being a destination in its own right, Westport is a great base for exploring the islands of Clew Bay and nearby Croagh Patrick Mountain, or for starting the Great Western Greenway cycle route, which winds its way to Achill Island. Nature has been kind to **Roundstone**, set in the fabled area of Connemara in County Galway. Surrounded by mountains and the sea, the village was built in the 1820s and boasts a busy harbour where fishermen haul in the day's catch of lobster, crab and mackerel. Boats bob in the water against a backdrop of the Twelve Bens Mountains, while craft shops, cafés and restaurants create an atmosphere that makes you want to linger. Just outside the village is one of the area's real highlights – the stunning Dog's Bay beach, and the Connemara National Park is a short drive away, with incredible walks among mountains, bog and heath. Thatched cottages, friendly music pubs and a perfect location in the heart of County Clare's Burren has made **Doolin**

one of the most popular destinations on Ireland's west coast. From the village, you can take a walk on the wild side along the Cliffs of Moher Cliff Path, which hugs the coast closely all the way to the cliffs themselves. Doolin is also perfectly placed for exploring the surrounding karst limestone plateau of the Burren, with its remarkable flowers that burst through the grey rock, as well as being one of the best places on the island for a night of traditional music in pubs such as Gus O'Connor's and McGann's. You may never want to leave... With bright, colourful shop fronts and cafés, and a row of fishing boats moored along the quay, **Dingle** in County Kerry is a thriving town and one of the most popular for visitors to the southwest. Take a trip out on the water to meet the town's most famous resident, Fungie the dolphin, who has been charming visitors since he moved here in 1983 (there are lots of boat trips available). When you return, tuck into some seafood along the quay, with live music in the evenings and great traditional pubs such as Foxy John's and Dick Mack's. And don't miss a visit to Murphy's – a tub of the sea salt and honeycomb ice cream here is a fast track to foodie heaven. Day-trip options abound from Dingle

- 01 **Murphy's Ice Cream** Dingle, County Kerry
- 02 **Matt Molloy's** Westport, County Mayo
- 03 **Roundstone** County Galway
- 04 **Kinsale** County Cork
- 05 **Westport House** County Mayo
- 06 **Doolin** County Clare
- 07 **Carlingford** County Louth
- 08 **Kealy's Seafood Bar** Greencastle, County Donegal
- 09 **Dingle** County Kerry

– go south and you'll hit the remarkable sands and dunes of Inch Beach, one of County Kerry's most beautiful. Or head out along the Sleah Head Drive, which weaves and curves around Sleah Head, taking in incredible sights such as the Early Christian stone church of Gallarus Oratory, views of the Blasket Islands and the much-photographed Dunquin Harbour.

Ireland's Ancient East

A former fishing village that is best known for its oysters, **Carlingford** in County Louth is an ideal spot for exploring the Cooley Peninsula. Its small medieval streets, where you can see historic sights such as the Tholsel (an old toll gate) and the old mint, are also home to plenty of places to eat, drink and stay. The ruins of King John's Castle look out over Carlingford Lough. and the waterfront area is now a popular spot for watersports. Try kayaking and boating, ➤



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as well as cruises or fishing trips on the sheltered lough.

It's hard to take your eyes off Trim Castle when entering the town of **Trim**, County Meath. Dating back to 1172, the Anglo-Norman castle overlooking the River Boyne is one of the most impressive in Ireland, with its long curtain wall and ten towers. After visiting the castle, spend a day exploring the town's historical sights, which include a medieval gate, Sheep Gate, the ancient St Peter's Bridge and the ruins of the Hospital of St John The Baptist, which dates back to the 13th century.

Birr town in County Offaly, which was originally planned around the estate of Birr Castle, the seat of the Earls of Rosse, is famous for its Georgian layout and architectural features. Spend an hour or two in the grounds of Birr Castle Demesne, where walking trails lead you into the tranquil gardens, the forest and along the river, with many rare species of trees and plants. In the grounds you can also see the Great Telescope, once the largest in the world. With great pubs and restaurants such as Spinners and The Thatch, the town makes a perfect base for exploring the beautiful Slieve Bloom Mountains and Lough Derg.

Set at the entrance to Waterford Harbour, **Dunmore East** in County Waterford is one of the southeast's most charming fishing villages. Taking its name from an Iron Age promontory fort, the village has a busy harbour and eye-catching cliffs, as well as sandy beaches and sheltered coves to explore, making it a popular holiday spot during summer. You can take to the water and have a go at sailing, kayaking, windsurfing or stand up paddleboarding. It's a short drive to Waterford city, and you can also access other small and delightful villages from Dunmore, such as the fishing port of Passage East.

CUSHENDUN HAS A PICTURESQUE HARBOUR AND THE CAVES NEAR HERE WERE USED AS A LOCATION IN HBO'S FANTASY SERIES, GAME OF THRONES*. ENJOY TEA AND CAKE IN THE LOVELY CORNER HOUSE TEAROOM

Northern Ireland

Dropped like a jewel into the Fermanagh Lakelands, the lively town of **Enniskillen** occupies a natural island that separates the upper and lower sections of Lough Erne. The beautiful waterside setting is accentuated by the stone bastion of stately Enniskillen Castle. Explore the castle museums, take in a music show at the Ardhoven theatre, or jump on a boat tour with Erne Tours at the Round O Jetty. The trip is the perfect way to enjoy some of County Fermanagh's natural landscapes.

In the pleasant courtyard of the old dairy market, now called the Buttermarket, you can browse galleries, craft studios and cafés, and the nearby beauty spots of Devenish Island, Florence Court, Crom Castle and Castle Coole make perfect day trips by car or boat. Back in town, top off the day with dinner at the family-run Blakes of the Hollow, a lovely Victorian pub.

A coastal gem near the top of Northern Ireland's Ards Peninsula, **Donaghadee** in County Down has a strong seafaring past. The scenic harbour has long been a haven for ships and boats, its famous lighthouse guiding the way for maritime traffic. Walk the south pier to soak up the coastal atmosphere; play a round of golf at the local golf club; or enjoy an evening at Grace Neill's pub – established in 1611,



11



12

- 10 Cushendun County Antrim
- 11 Birr Castle County Offaly
- 12 Enniskillen County Fermanagh

it's one of the oldest on the island of Ireland!

In a stunning setting amidst the rich, green Glens of Antrim, the village of **Cushendun** is a characterful spot, known for its graceful Georgian buildings that line the town's four original streets and its great traditional music pubs. It makes a wonderful base for visiting the Glenariff Forest Park, which is about 8km away and is an enticing natural wonderland of waterfalls, rivers, woods and rocky gorges.

Don't miss a visit to the nearby coastal village of **Cushendun**, just 8km to the north. Managed by the National Trust, it has a picturesque harbour and the caves near here were used as a location in HBO's fantasy series, Game of Thrones*. Pop into the Corner House Tearoom for tea and delicious cakes in a gorgeous setting.

Set at the mouth of Strangford Lough, and across the water from Portaferry and the Ards Peninsula, **Strangford** in County Down is a petite, well-preserved harbour village that has relaxation written all over it. It's ideal for accessing the very best this area of natural beauty has to offer, including delicious local food at The Cuan and The Poacher's Pocket, the delightful Castle Espie Wetlands and the 5th century Nendrum Monastic Site, which has links to St Patrick.

An attractive, wide main street and two squares lined with chestnut trees add to the charm of **Castlewellan** village in County Down, but the highlight has to be Castlewellan Forest Park and Lake just to the north of the village, which offers miles of walking and mountain bike trails, a giant maze, equestrian centre and camp grounds, plus an arboretum that was first planted in the 1740s. ☘



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01

THE LAST WORD ON... OUTDOOR ACTIVITIES

Head for the great outdoors on the island of Ireland with some of the very best watersports, as well as top walking and cycling trails

Go walking

With coasts, mountains, forests, National Parks and Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty, Ireland has scenic walking trails for all levels. Mountains, bog, rivers, beaches and towns are within easy reach, and that means you can wake up in the morning, check the weather and decide over breakfast which walk to do. Families are well catered for with city walking tours, forest walks, such as **Tollymore Forest Park** in County Down, and walks in unique landscapes, such as **The Burren** in County Clare. Embark on a coastal adventure with a trek around a Wild Atlantic Way peninsula, such as the **Dingle Way** (179km) and the **Sheep's Head Way** (200km), or head into the green heart of the island, with walks through the **Leitrim Way** (48km) in County Leitrim, the **Sperrins** in County Tyrone or the **Durrow Leafy Loop** (23km) in County Laois. For something unique, a walking festival combines beautiful scenery with nightly entertainment in some of the island's most charming towns and villages. Look out for the **Ballyhoura International Walking Festival** in County Limerick (May), the **Mourne International Walking Festival** in County Down (June) and the **Wicklow Walking Festival** (October).

Cycling

Ireland has spectacular cycling routes to suit any pace or ability. The **Kingfisher Trail** (480km) covers lakes and islands, rivers and streams and the green fields of Fermanagh, Leitrim, Cavan, Donegal and Monaghan. For a burst of adrenaline, try the thrilling **Blessingbourne** mountain-bike trail in County Tyrone. Greenways are great off-road cycle trails all over the island, with the new **Waterford Greenway** (46km) being one to try for 2018. And along the waterways, newly developed **Blueway** activity trails on the Shannon, Shannon-Erne Waterway and Royal Canal offer gentle cycling trails in gloriously quiet countryside running alongside the water.

- 01 Glenveagh National Park **County Donegal**
- 02 Waterford Greenway **County Waterford**
- 03 Rathlin Island **County Antrim**
- 04 White Park Bay **County Antrim**
- 05 Pollan Beach **Inishowen, County Donegal**



02



03



04

Three great walks

Causeway Coast Way **County Antrim**

A stunning 53km walk on Northern Ireland's Causeway Coastal Route. The walk takes you past the Giant's Causeway and Carrick-a-Rede rope bridge, along clifftops and past rock arches.

Dolmen Loop

Glen of Aherlow, County Tipperary
This 11km walk through Tipperary's green Glen of Aherlow passes megalithic tombs and ancient dolmens with views over the lush Golden Vale.

The Beara Way **County Cork**

You don't have to walk all of this 196km circuit, but if you do you'll be treated to some of the quietest corners and most captivating scenery on the island.



05

Water sports

Ireland has over 5,600km of coastline, as well as lakes, rivers and waterways. Try surfing in County Clare and County Sligo (famed for its big wave breaks), kayak through the still waters of County Fermanagh, go sub-aqua diving among shipwrecks and basking sharks off County Donegal. Or opt for high-adrenaline thrills with wakeboarding, water-skiing and windsurfing.

Something special

Connecting with nature on the island of Ireland is a special experience. Why not seek out **native red deer** in the lowland areas of Killarney National Park, County Kerry; go **whale watching** off West Cork, one of the best places in Europe to spot fin, humpback and minke whales; or visit the largest **seabird colony** in Ireland on the rugged and beautiful Rathlin Island, County Antrim. 🦋

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IRELAND GENERAL INFORMATION

CLIMATE

Ireland has a mild, temperate climate with summer temperatures generally ranging from 60°F/15°C to 70°F/20°C. Temperatures in spring and autumn are generally 50°F/10°C, and in winter between 40°F/5°C and 46°F/8°C. Snow is rare but rain showers can occur at any time of the year. For up-to-the-minute weather reports visit met.ie

EMBASSIES & HIGH COMMISSION

Canadian Embassy in Dublin
canadainternational.gc.ca/ireland-irlande
British High Commission
gov.uk/government/world/canada
Irish Embassy in Canada
embassyofireland.ca

PASSPORT/VISA REQUIREMENTS

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

VAT (SALES TAX) AND REFUNDS

In the Republic of Ireland, tourism services such as restaurant meals and accommodation benefit from a lower VAT (sales tax) rate of 9%. Visitors to Ireland from non-EU countries can claim back sales taxes on purchases made in Ireland; shopping in Ireland is subject to a sales tax of 23%. Always look for the "Tax-Free Shopping" sign in the windows of participating stores. To avail of your tax refund, complete a valid tax refund document, which you can get from participating stores. Present this and goods to customs on departure from the EU, and

you can receive your refund on the spot at some airports; otherwise, you can mail your tax refund document to the store and a refund will be issued. Select shopkeepers will offer you the Horizon Tax-Free Shopping card, a new paperless method of getting tax refunds brought to you by FEXCO Tax-Free Shopping. With each purchase, the card is swiped and tax-free eligible items are logged. At the end of your trip, hand in the card to the FEXCO Tax-Free Shopping desk at Dublin or Shannon Airport. You can apply for a card online at shoptaxfree.com

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

PUBLIC HOLIDAYS 2018

New Year's Day Holiday	1 Jan
St Patrick's Day Holiday	19 Mar
Good Friday (NI only)	30 Mar
Easter Monday	2 Apr
May Bank Holiday	7 May
Spring Bank Holiday (NI only)	28 May
June Bank Holiday (ROI only)	4 June
July Holiday (NI only)	12 July
Aug Bank Holiday (ROI only)	6 Aug
Aug Bank Holiday (NI only)	27 Aug
Oct Bank Holiday (ROI only)	29 Oct
Christmas Day	25 Dec
St Stephen's Day (ROI)	26 Dec
Boxing Day (NI)	26 Dec

Good Friday is not an official public holiday in the Republic of Ireland, although most shops and businesses are closed.

WHERE TO STAY

Hospitality comes naturally in Ireland, and the island boasts a wonderful range of places to stay – from the friendliest bed & breakfasts in the world to 5-star hotels. For fantastic accommodation offers and inclusive packages visit ireland.com/offer

Choose from hotels or guesthouses, elegant country homes, luxury castles, village pubs, Georgian manors, budget hotels and Victorian houses. You'll find welcoming bed & breakfasts throughout Ireland, even in the most remote areas, with friendly personal service and delicious full Irish or Ulster fry breakfasts. To feel part of the countryside, nothing compares to a farmhouse holiday, but book early as they are very popular – it's an excellent way to get to know local people.

Ireland's large network of hostels gives budget travellers great independence. Facilities vary so check in advance.

HOTELS & GUESTHOUSES

Irish Hotels Federation
irelandhotels.com
Northern Ireland Hotels Federation
nihf.co.uk

Ireland's Blue Book
irelands-blue-book.ie
Good Food Ireland
goodfoodireland.ie
Manor House Hotels and Irish Country Hotels
manorhousehotels.com
irishcountryhotels.com

BED & BREAKFASTS

B&B Ireland
bandbireland.com

COUNTRY HOUSES

The Hidden Ireland Guide
hiddenireland.com

HOSTELS

An Óige – Irish Youth Hostel Association
anoige.ie
Independent Holiday Hostels
hostels-ireland.com
Hostelling International Northern Ireland
hini.org.uk
Independent Hostels of Ireland
independenthostelsireland.com

The Quay House, Clifden County Galway



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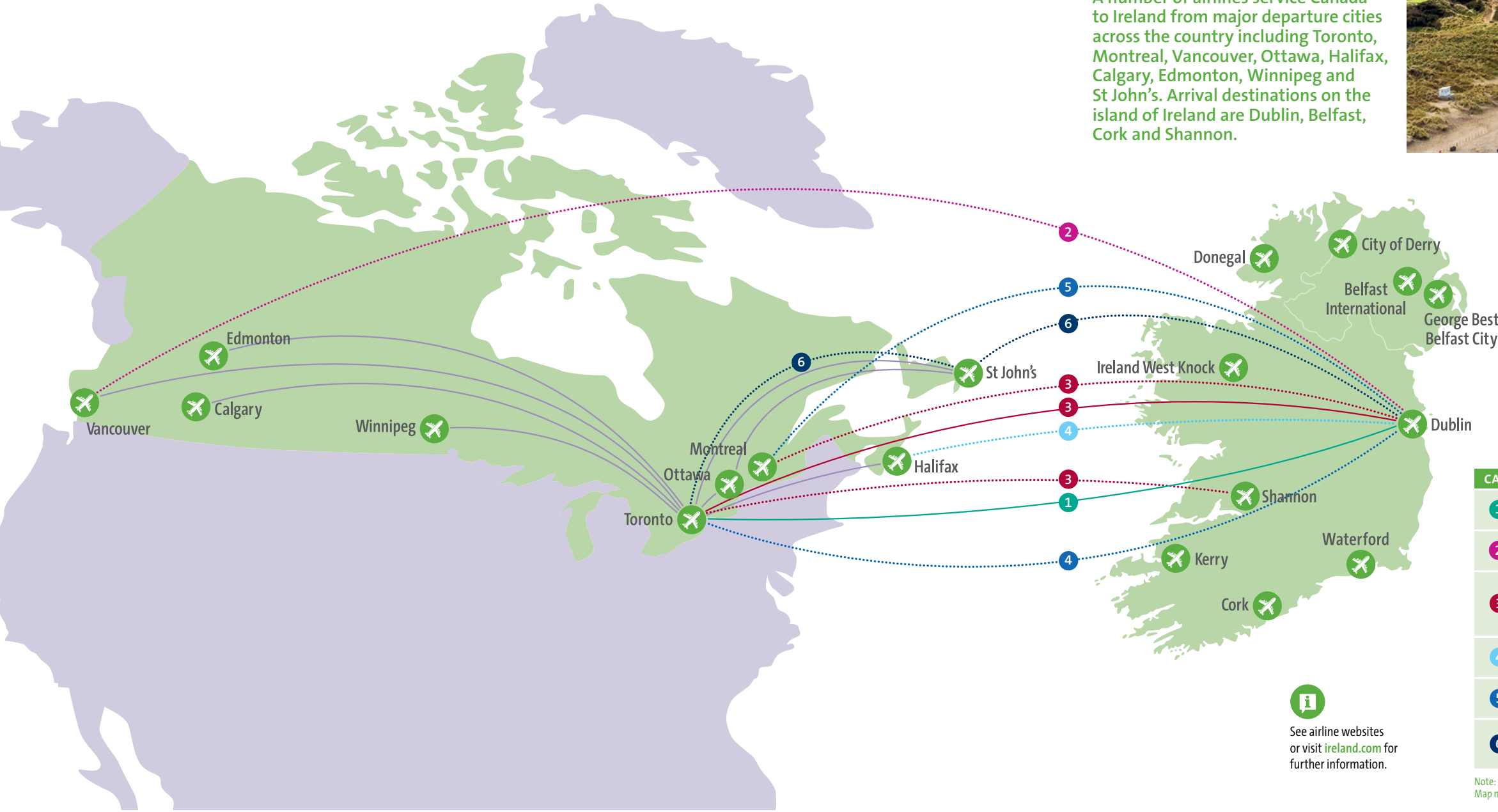
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You can fly direct from Canada to Ireland at any time of the year. A number of airlines service Canada to Ireland from major departure cities across the country including Toronto, Montreal, Vancouver, Ottawa, Halifax, Calgary, Edmonton, Winnipeg and St John's. Arrival destinations on the island of Ireland are Dublin, Belfast, Cork and Shannon.



Portstewart Strand County Londonderry



See airline websites or visit ireland.com for further information.

AIR SERVICES FROM CANADA

AIRLINE	TELEPHONE	WEBSITE
Aer Lingus	800 474 7424	aerlingus.com
Air Canada	888 247 2262	aircanada.com
Air Transat	866 847 1112	airtransat.ca
American Airlines	800 433 7300	aa.com
ASL Airlines	1 844 332 9090	aslairlines.com
British Airways	800 247 9297	ba.com
Delta Airlines	800 221 1212	delta.com
United Airlines	800 864 8331	united.com
US Airways	800 622 1015	usairways.com
Virgin Atlantic	800 862 8621	virgin-atlantic.com
WestJet	1 877 952 4696	westjet.com

CARRIER	CONTACT	ROUTE
1 Aer Lingus	aerlingus.com	TORONTO - DUBLIN (year round)
2 AIR CANADA rouge	aircanada.com	VANCOUVER - DUBLIN (June-Oct)
3 AIR CANADA	aircanada.com	MONTREAL - DUBLIN (June-Oct) TORONTO - DUBLIN (year round) TORONTO - SHANNON (June-Oct)
4	aslairlines.com	HALIFAX - DUBLIN (July-Oct)
5	airtransat.ca	MONTREAL - DUBLIN (May-Oct) TORONTO - DUBLIN (May-Oct)
6	westjet.com	ST JOHN'S - DUBLIN (May-Oct) TORONTO - DUBLIN (via St John's, May-Oct)

Note: Dotted line indicates seasonal service. Information correct at time of printing. Map not to scale.

Any questions?

Thinking of a trip – but not sure where to begin? We're right here to help! For tips, tricks and recommendations, talk to the people who know Ireland best.

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TRAVELLING FROM DUBLIN AND BELFAST AIRPORTS INTO CITY CENTRES

DUBLIN

BUS: Direct buses to the city centre, and bus and train stations are available from Dublin Bus Airlink; €7* single and €12* return. Children travel half price.

TAXI: Taxis cost between €20-30* depending on where you are travelling within the city.

BELFAST

Belfast International Airport

BUS: The 24-hour Airport Express 300 to and from Belfast city costs £7.50* single and £10.50* return.

TAXI: Fares to the city are about £30*.

George Best Belfast City Airport

BUS: Airport Express 600 into the city centre runs on the hour (every 20 minutes during peak times); £2.50* single and £3.80* return.

TAXI: Fares to the city centre are about £10*.

TRAIN: Trains run from Sydenham station near the airport to Belfast and beyond.

*Prices are subject to change.



Horse Riding County Sligo



CANADIAN TOUR OPERATORS

COMPANY	WEBSITE
ESCORTED TOURS & INDEPENDENT VACATIONS	
Air Canada Vacations	aircanadavacations.com
ATOURZ/Airliners	atourz.ca
CIE Tours	cietours.com
CIT Tours	cittours.ca
Collette Vacations	collettevacations.com
Contiki Holidays	contiki.com
Connection Tours	connectiontours.ca
Cosmos	cosmosvacations.ca
Craig Travel	craigtravel.com
Denure Tours	denuretours.com
DH Tour	dhgrouptours.com
Ellison Travel and Tours	ettravel.com
Exotik Tours	exotiktours.com
Gateway International	gateways-international.com
Globus	globusjourneys.ca
GoAhead Tours	goaheadtours.com
Goway	goway.com
Great Canadian Travel Company	greatcanadiantravel.com
Indus Travels	indus.travel
Insight Vacations	insightvacations.com
Irish Travel Bureau	irishtravel.ca
Kensington Tours	kensingtontours.com
Merit Travel Group	merit.ca
Monograms	monogramstravel.ca
NAVTOURS	navtours.com
Preference Vacations	vacancespreference.com
Romantic Planet	romanticplanet.ca
Rostad Tours	rostad.com
Royal Irish Tours	ritvacations.com
Senior Tours	seniordiscoverytours.ca
Tauk	tauck.com
Tours Chanteclerc	tourschanteclerc.com
Trafalgar	trafalgar.com

Transat	transat.com
Travel Only	travelonly.ca
Vacances Ideals	vacancesideal.com
GOLF	
Golf-Away Tours	golfawaytours.com
Golf the World Vacations	golftheworldvacations.com
Gryphon Golf Tours	gryphongolf.com
Merit Golf Vacations	meritgolfvacations.com
Strider Golf Adventures	strider.ca
ACTIVE VACATIONS	
Active Journeys	activejourneys.com
The Adventure Travel Company	theadventuretravelcompany.com
Butterfield & Robinson	butterfield.com
Comfortable Hiking Holidays	letshike.com
Freewheeling Adventures	freewheeling.ca
G Adventures	gadventures.com
Great Explorations	great-explorations.com
Hidden Trails	hiddentrails.com
Randonée Tours	randoneetours.com
The Vacation Station	thevacationstation.com
World Expeditions	worldexpeditions.com
YOUTH & EDUCATIONAL TOURS	
Celtic Learning	celticlearning.com
Connaissance Travel and Tours	connaissancetravel.com
EF Educational Tours	eftours.ca
Explorica	explorica.ca
Georgia Hardy Tours	ghardytraveltours.com
Languages Abroad	languagesabroad.com
Travelcuts	travelcuts.com

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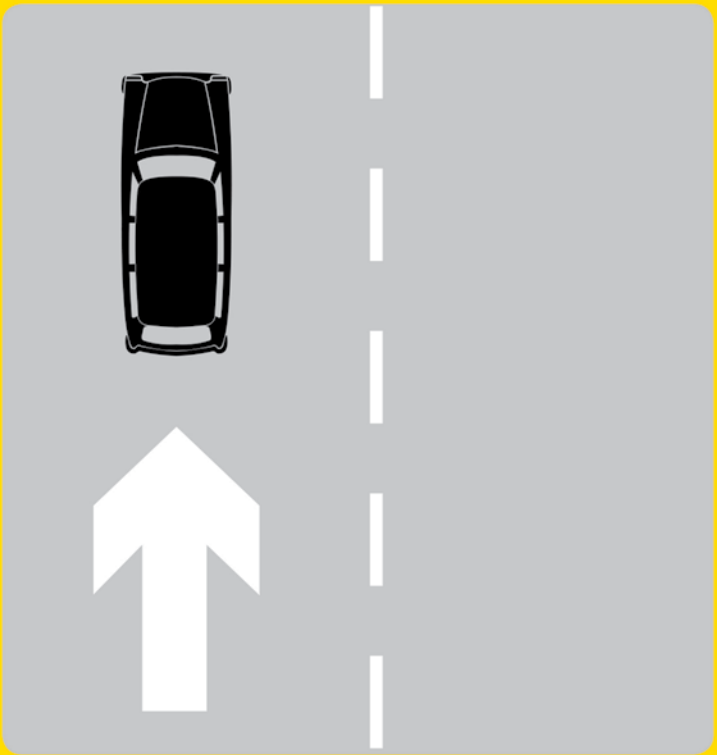
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TRAVELLING AROUND IRELAND

PUBLIC TRANSPORT BY RAIL

The rail network serves many large towns and cities across the island, including the ferry ports of Larne, Belfast, Dublin, Cork and Rosslare.

The Enterprise is a fast, high-quality rail network linking Dublin and Belfast. The journey takes around 2 hours and is probably the most comfortable way to travel between the two cities. Catch the Enterprise from Connolly Station in Dublin and Central Station in Belfast.

Britrail Pass Plus Ireland (must be purchased before leaving Canada) combines either 8 or 10 days of unlimited rail travel in Britain and Ireland with a round trip crossing of the Irish Sea by Stena Line. Eurail/Rail Europe also offer unlimited rail travel packages in the Republic of Ireland and Northern Ireland (must be purchased before leaving Canada).

BY BUS

Bus services link to the rail system as well as providing access to ferry ports and airports. Recent investment in road and rail provides more comfort for travellers, offers greater frequency of service and improves travel times. Services include the western rail link between Galway and Limerick. Rail and bus fares offer good value for the traveller, with various discount tickets available offering unlimited travel on bus and rail services.

URBAN TRANSPORT

The Dublin Bus 3-day Freedom Pass offers visitors unlimited travel on tour buses, airport links and regular bus services. Please check for offers when booking.

The Leap Visitor card offers 72 hours unlimited travel on Airlink, Dublin Bus, Luas, DART and Commuter Rail services. It is available for purchase at Dublin Airport only, and costs €19.50 for 72 hours.

The Belfast Visitor Pass includes unlimited travel on all scheduled Metro buses, NI Railways and Ulsterbus services operating within the Translink Belfast Visitor Pass Zone, as well as discounts on attractions and tours, and special offers for shopping and eating out.

visit-belfast.com

DUBLIN LUAS

The Dublin Luas tram system connects outlying suburbs to Dublin city centre with a

high-capacity, high-frequency and high-speed service. When in the Republic of Ireland call Luas on 1800 300 604 or visit luas.ie

If you do not have a validated bus ticket, you will need to keep in mind that Dublin Bus services require exact change to be given; notes will not be accepted. Bus/rail/Luas travel tickets are available from most newsagents in Dublin city centre and the surrounding suburbs.

DART

The Dublin area is served by the DART – Dublin Area Rapid Transit – from Howth to Malahide in north County Dublin via Dun Laoghaire to Greystones in County Wicklow. irishrail.ie

CYCLING

The Dublin Bike Sharing Scheme is another good option for travelling around the city. dublinbikes.ie
Cork, Galway, Limerick (bikeshare.ie) and Belfast (belfastbikes.co.uk) also have bike schemes.

REPUBLIC OF IRELAND

Irish Rail – Iarnród Éireann

Tel: +353 1 836 6222

irishrail.ie

Irish Bus – Bus Éireann

Tel: +353 1 836 6111

buseireann.ie

Dublin Bus – Bus Átha Cliath

Tel: +353 1 873 4222

dublinbus.ie

NORTHERN IRELAND

Translink (Northern Ireland Railways, Ulsterbus, Metro – Belfast's bus service)

Tel: +44 28 9066 6630

translink.co.uk

Check for discounted fares when travelling by public transport. For instance, iLink provides unlimited travel for one day, one week or one month (Northern Ireland only).

DRIVING IN IRELAND

Canadian visitors to Ireland must bring a valid Canadian driver's licence with them. Driving in Ireland is on the left-hand side of the road and

seatbelts must be worn at all times in the front and back of the vehicle. Drivers should note that they are obliged by law to carry their driver's licence at all times when driving in the Republic of Ireland. Motorcyclists and their passengers must wear helmets. There are very strict laws on drinking alcohol and driving, and the best advice is simply "don't drink and drive."

The measurement of speed limits on roads in the Republic of Ireland is kilometres per hour (km/h). The measurement of speed limits on roads in Northern Ireland is miles per hour (mph). Motorists are urged to remember the change of driving laws when crossing the border between Northern Ireland and the Republic of Ireland.

In Northern Ireland, the speed limit is 30mph in built-up areas, 60mph on the open road and 70mph on motorways unless otherwise shown. In the Republic of Ireland, the speed limit is 120km/h on motorways, 100km/h on national roads and 80km/h on non-national roads.

CAR RENTAL

Most of the major car rental companies have desks at airports, ferry terminals and cities across Ireland. Some companies do not rent cars to drivers under 21 years or over 70 years, but please check with your car rental company before making a reservation. All drivers must hold valid licences. It is advisable to book in advance, especially if you are travelling during the high season, as it is generally cheaper. The majority of rental cars are standard shift but automatic cars are available, if booked in advance, for an additional charge. Child seats should also be booked in advance.

To avoid misunderstandings, it is recommended that you always check the detailed terms and conditions of your rental booking in advance. Even if you book through a third party (broker, agent, tour operator) you will be required to sign a rental agreement with the car rental company, so spend some time in advance selecting the various insurances, waivers and other options appropriate to your needs and understand the costs involved.

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

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

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



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Temple Bar, Dublin

Skellig Michael



MAP & ROUTE PLANNER

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

Legend:

- Tourist Information (year-round)
- Tourist Information (seasonal)
- Beach

Scale: KILOMETRES (0 to 80km) and MILES (0 to 50mi).

	Dublin	Dundalk	Enniskillen	Kilbarnett	Larne	Lisburn	Londonderry	Sligo	Waterford	Wexford
Dublin	69	40	138	147	160	138	147	160	138	147
Dundalk	85	156	166	171	184	156	166	171	184	156
Enniskillen	100	163	98	98	347	100	163	98	98	347
Kilbarnett	117	237	234	234	234	117	237	234	234	234
Larne	123	120	220	219	192	123	120	220	219	192
Lisburn	100	148	136	127	139	100	148	136	127	139
Londonderry	123	120	220	219	192	123	120	220	219	192
Sligo	123	120	220	219	192	123	120	220	219	192
Waterford	123	120	220	219	192	123	120	220	219	192
Wexford	123	120	220	219	192	123	120	220	219	192



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