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THE BEST OF IRELAND

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ON THE WILD ATLANTIC WAY

UNCOVER THE SECRETS
OF IRELAND'S ANCIENT EAST

ESCAPE INTO THE EXTRAORDINARY
BEAUTY OF NORTHERN IRELAND

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24th – 28th April

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Spring Festival
13th – 15th May

CURRAGH
Guineas Festival
26th – 27th May

DOWN ROYAL
Ulster Derby
22nd – 23rd June

CURRAGH
Irish Derby Festival
29th June – 1st July

BELLEWSTOWN
Summer Festival
4th – 7th July
(now 4 days)

KILLARNEY
July Festival
15th – 19th July
(now 5 days)

CURRAGH
Irish Oaks Weekend
21st – 22nd July

GALWAY
Summer Festival
30th July – 5th August

TRAMORE
August Festival
16th – 19th August

KILLARNEY
August Festival
22nd – 25th August

LAYTOWN
Beach Racing Festival
6th September

LISTOWEL
Harvest Festival
9th – 15th September

LEOPARDSTOWN & CURRAGH
Longines Irish
Champions Weekend
15th – 16th September

GALWAY
October Festival
27th – 29th October
(now 3 days)

DOWN ROYAL
Festival of Racing
2nd – 3rd November

PUNCESTOWN
November Winter
Racing
17th – 18th November

FAIRYHOUSE
Winter Festival
1st – 2nd December

LEOPARDSTOWN
Christmas Festival
26th – 29th December

LIMERICK
Christmas Festival
26th – 29th December



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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...

Jump into
Ireland

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Tourism Ireland
Marketing the island of Ireland



PICTURE THIS
Tranarossan Bay
County Donegal

Hypnotically beautiful beaches, soaring cliffs and dramatic coastal headlands – Donegal is elemental Ireland at its very best. Uncover the hidden treasures of this northern star, and you’ll find incredible landscapes sculpted over millennia by powerful Atlantic waves and lively winds. No wonder it made National Geographic’s Cool List in 2017... But as wild as it may feel, Donegal is also defined by its warmth – with friendly villages, legendary traditional music sessions and some of the cosiest places to stay on the island. It’s one of a kind. 🍀

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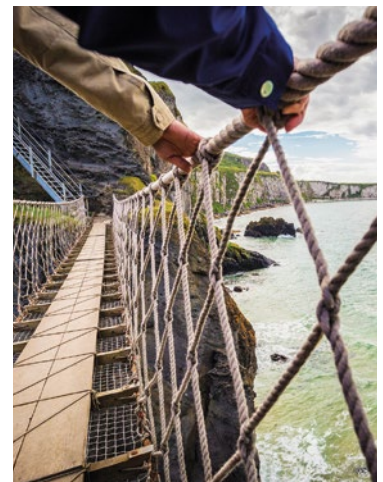
THIS IS IRELAND

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.

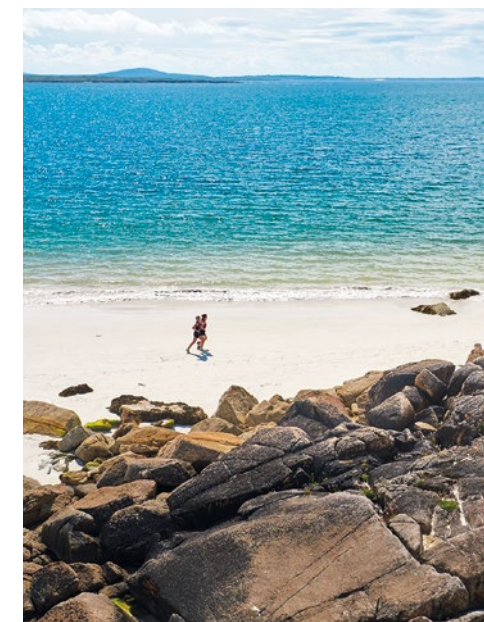
So make your way to a special place that pulses with toe-tapping music, to traditional pubs where chatter and laughter ring in your ears, and to ancient tombs where you can connect with Stone Age man. Whether you're travelling along the windswept Wild Atlantic Way, uncovering primitive history and intriguing tales in Ireland's Ancient East, or taking it to the edge on the Causeway Coastal Route, you'll encounter an island 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. 🍷



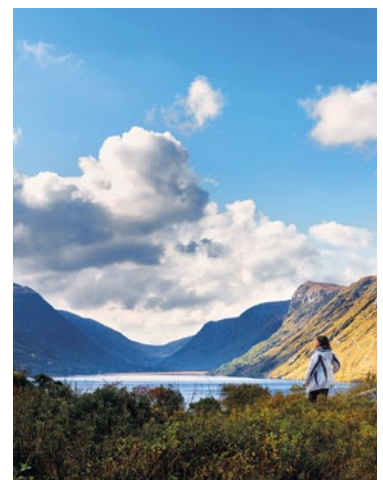
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- 01 Giant's Causeway County Antrim
- 02 Dunquin Harbour County Kerry
- 03 Passing time in the local pub
- 04 Carrick-a-Rede rope bridge County Antrim
- 05 Seafood fresh from the sea
- 06 Gurteen Beach County Galway
- 07 Glenveagh National Park County 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 Clew Bay, Clare Island is all about getting back to nature. This thrilling 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

Belle Isle Estate County Fermanagh

County Fermanagh is perfect for a relaxing holiday, with its mix of undulating green fields, glassy lakes, and charming towns and villages. In the heart of this idyllic beauty is Belle Isle, a magnificent castle estate set over eight islands and inhabited since the 12th century. The castle is rented out in its entirety and sleeps up to 26, but there are attractive self-catering apartments and coach-house cottages to choose from, too. belle-isle.com

Killiane Castle County Wexford

Located in a delightfully tranquil part of the southeast, Killiane Castle was named Farmhouse of the Year in 2017 by the Georgina Campbell Guide for good reason. Set on a narrow, leafy road in County Wexford only 3 miles/4.8km from Wexford town, this 17th century house offers beautiful accommodation next to a 15th century castle. Play croquet on the lawn, read by the fire or ramble through the peaceful grounds. killianecastle.com

The Bushmills Inn County Antrim

If you like the idea of a warming whiskey beside an open fire after a day exploring the Causeway Coastal Route, then The Bushmills Inn could be for you. In days of old, saddle-sore 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

Clonalis House County Roscommon

In County Roscommon sits a historic Irish manor house that has been home to generations of the O'Connor family, traditional high kings of the province of Connacht. Step through the gates, and you'll find a beautiful avenue that winds through woodland and fields to the 19th century house. With picture-lined walls and a library stocked with fascinating old books, Clonalis charms guests with the spirit of a bygone era. clonalis.com



01



Ireland Accommodation

02

- 01 Clare Island Lighthouse
Clare Island, County Mayo
- 02 Belle Isle Estate
County Fermanagh
- 03 Killiane Castle
County Wexford
- 04 Bushmills Inn
County Antrim
- 05 Clonalis House
County Roscommon



03

AT KILLIANE IN COUNTY WEXFORD, YOU CAN PLAY CROQUET ON THE LAWN, READ BY THE FIRE OR RAMBLE THROUGH THE PEACEFUL GROUNDS



04



05

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DISCOVER ALL ABOUT... IRELAND ON SCREEN

Lights, camera, action! There's a good reason that Ireland is a star of the screen – from romantic 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 island 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 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 mesmerising 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; Slemish Mountain in County Antrim, where St Patrick once served as a shepherd; and the twisting, haunting beauty of the Dark Hedges, a captivating avenue of beech trees, also in Antrim.

Famous for its bohemian vibes, artistic outlook and dynamic 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 throughout the city during festival time give it a unique ambience. Beyond the city, the county of Galway has featured in numerous films, including **Marley & Me**, **The Guard** and **The Field**.



01



02



03

- 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



04

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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.



02

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. There's a real buzz about restaurants right now, which plays out in creative, authentic cooking everywhere from the big cities to the smallest coastal villages. You'll find wonderful dishes using the best ingredients at great spots such as **Canteen**, a simple, modern eatery in Celbridge, County Kildare, specialising in local, seasonal Irish and European food. **Idás** in Dingle, County Kerry, also turns the best local and foraged produce into amazing tasting menus that celebrate West Kerry's flavours, while **Wine & Brine** in Moira, County Armagh, uses age-old techniques to create exceptional dishes including black pudding sausage rolls, slow-cooked pork shoulder, and cured and torched mackerel.

- 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



Ireland Food

01

A taste of the sea

With oysters and crab claws, mussels and lobster, Ireland's seafood is nothing short of exceptional. All around the island, you'll find enticing places to enjoy super-fresh flavours, from plates of oysters at the **Temple Bar Food Market** to cosy **Klaw** in Dublin's Crown Alley – and from the famous **Mourne Seafood Bar** in Dundrum, County Down, to **Love Fish** in Belfast. Fancy some top-notch seafood right by the water? Then check out **Harry's Shack** on Portstewart Strand, County Londonderry, **Moran's Oyster Cottage** in Kilcolgan, County Galway, and **Trá Bán** in Strandhill, County Sligo.



03



04

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!



05

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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THREE AMAZING ROAD TRIPS

Ireland is famous for the fabulous road trips of the Wild Atlantic Way and Causeway Coastal Route, but the island also boasts an incredible array of lesser-known routes that are just as thrilling. Here are three to get you going...

Conor Pass, County Kerry



01

NORTHERN IRELAND
Mourne Coastal Scenic Drive
Distance: 100 miles/161km

Backed by the Mourne Mountains and stretching along Carlingford Lough and the Irish Sea, the Mourne Coastal Drive has all you could want from a road trip: scenery, adventure and charm. Heading from **Newry** along the northern shore of the magnificent **Carlingford Lough** and up to the scenic seaside town of **Newcastle**, the route takes in enigmatic forest parks, mountain peaks, and seaside towns and villages. Take time out to explore the exciting mountain bike trails and appealing walks through **Kilbroney Forest Park** and **Rostrevor Forest**; cook up a storm at the **Mourne Seafood Cookery School** in Kilkeel, which overlooks the harbour and specialises in local dishes; and head off into nature on a trek through the **Mourne Mountains**. This is the very landscape that is thought to have inspired author CS Lewis to create the magical kingdom of Narnia in *The Lion, The Witch and The Wardrobe*. Mountain, sea, forest and fantasy – the Mourne Coastal Scenic Drive has it all.



02

IRELAND'S ANCIENT EAST
Copper Coast and Comeragh Mountains
Distance: 103 miles/166km

The Copper Coast runs along a small but stunning stretch of coastline in County Waterford – a UNESCO Global Geopark fringed by the rocky Comeragh Mountains. Named after the 19th century copper mines that dot the landscape here, this route offers everything from thrilling medieval history in the city of **Waterford**, to glorious seaside towns such as **Tramore**, which has been attracting holidaymakers since the 1850s. Following the coastal road, you'll come upon lovely places to stop, such as **Guillamene Cove**, where deep clear waters invite you in for a swim. From the town of **Newtown**, the route passes through photogenic villages such as **Fenor**, **Annestown** and **Stradbally**, with hidden beaches overlooked by dramatic sea stacks. There are craggy cliffs, little coves and abundant wildlife, as well as a wealth of places to enjoy great food including the stylish **Tannery** in Dungarvan, **The Copper Hen** in Fenor and **The Victoria House** in Tramore. Coastal magic.



03

WILD ATLANTIC WAY
Sheep's Head Peninsula
Distance: 44 miles/71km

Want to feel like you're driving to the edge of the world? Then venture onto Sheep's Head Peninsula where pale grasses meet cliff edges, and crashing Atlantic waves provide fantastic panoramas at every turn. Wild landscapes cradle small villages, with friendly locals and attractive little pubs and restaurants such as **Arundels by the Pier** in Ahakista. This is a seriously invigorating part of the island, and a road trip here encourages you to park up, get out and explore. Starting at the lively town of **Bantry**, the route creeps along this exceptional peninsula past holy wells, standing stones and incredible scenery. At the very end of Sheep's Head, walk out to the lighthouse and enjoy views that stretch across the Atlantic Ocean. Head back to the charming village of **Durrus** for lunch or dinner at the **Good Things Café** before the short drive back to Bantry. ☘

- 01 Cloughmore Stone Rostrevor, County Down
- 02 Dunabratton Pier County Waterford
- 03 Sheep's Head Peninsula County Cork



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

01

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 centre. 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 dating 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.



04



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06



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 the Grafton Street institution of **Bewley's**.



02



03

Dublin

Dublin charms the visitor 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 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". 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



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 with 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 walls.



01

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

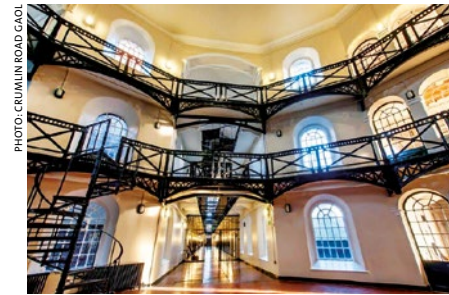
Set within the delightful Botanic Gardens, the Ulster Museum has exhibitions that trace the history and prehistory of Ireland and map out the rise of Belfast's crafts and trades. There are marvels wherever you turn, so give yourself enough time to enjoy it all.

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

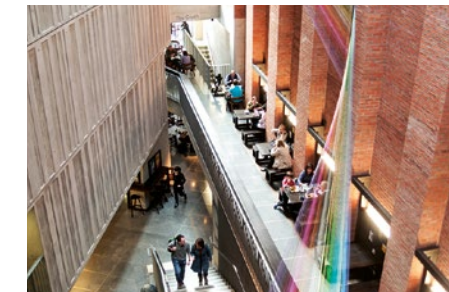
Belfast's award-winning cultural centre in the heart of the Cathedral Quarter occupies a beautiful modern building with three art galleries. It hosts a variety of exhibitions, theatrical performances, music and comedy.



04



05



06



07

Food and drink

With 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 recognised 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 historic establishments such as **White's Tavern** and **The Morning Star Bar**. Or check out the beautiful 19th century **Crown Liquor Saloon** on Great Victoria Street.



02



03

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.

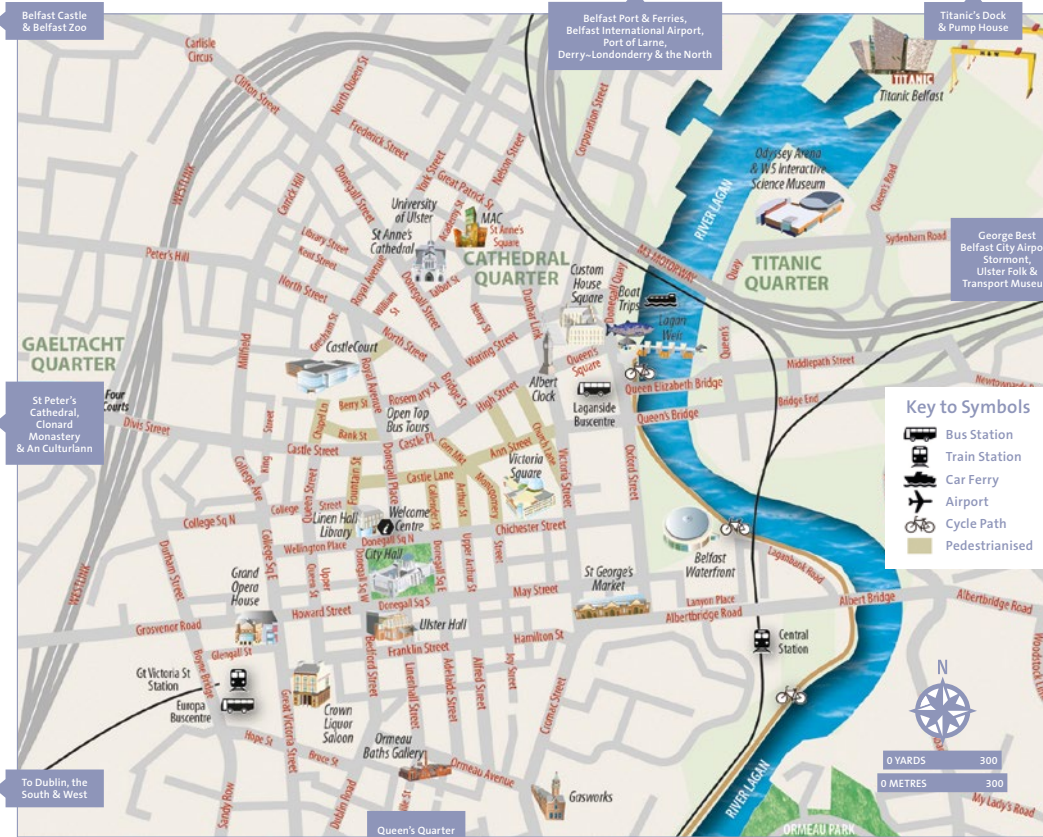
To soak up Belfast's unique atmosphere, it's best to explore it on foot, walking the compact centre to absorb the pulsating mix of music venues, traditional pubs, critically acclaimed restaurants and art galleries. The **Cathedral Quarter**, set around St Anne's Cathedral, contains some of the city's 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



Belfast tips

Almost hidden away on Donegall Square, the handsome **Linen Hall Library** is Belfast's oldest library and was founded in 1788. A general tour of the building takes place each day 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 great views over the city and Belfast Lough.

The **Chronicles of Narnia** writer **CS Lewis** 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 author's early life that may have inspired his later writings.

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 along the stunning **Causeway Coastal Route**, dropping in at the **Giant's Causeway** and then on to beautiful **Ballintoy Harbour**, otherwise known as the **Iron Islands**.



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



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.

01



02



05

Cork

Cork is resolutely charismatic, with warm, friendly people who are fiercely proud of their city. And why wouldn't they be? With a beautiful location on an island at the mouth of the River Lee, the city serves up a bustling blend of cafés and restaurants, vibrant art galleries, absorbing museums and old pubs.

Walking through the streets you can weave from the working hustle and bustle of the 19th century **English Market** to the elegant **Crawford Art Gallery**, where Irish artists such as Paul Henry, Jack B Yeats and Dorothy Cross share space with the original 5th century Athenian discus-thrower, Discobolus. You can lunch on oysters overlooking the River Lee at the **Electric Fish Bar**, and dine alfresco by a waterfall in the pretty courtyard at **Greenes Restaurant**, housed within an old warehouse.

Best explored on foot, Cork is the kind of city that has a little bit of everything, including artsy enclaves and the historic Huguenot district. Attractions here often come with a pleasing quirk, whether it's the fascinating **Butter Museum** or a chance to ring the church bells at **St Anne's Church**. Creative, cultured and cool, Cork is a charmer.



07

What to see

Two Cork attractions allow a 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



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, and you'll get wonderful salads at **The Rocket Man** on Princes Street. 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, toasted 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 **4 Vicars**, 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

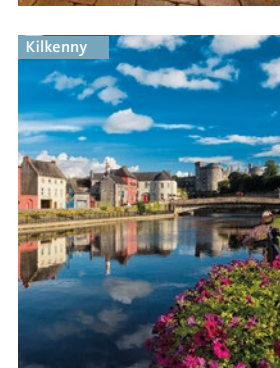
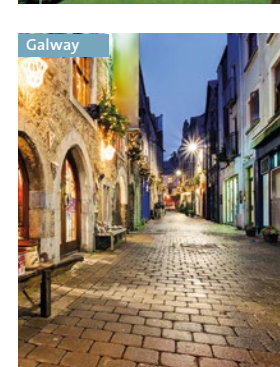
Located in Ireland's Ancient East, Kilkenny mixes nightlife, great food and culture to perfection. This city will wow you with medieval showpieces by day, and keep you entertained in traditional pubs by night. Walk the **Medieval Mile** and be catapulted back centuries amid Tudor inns, merchant townhouses,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

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 this mini medieval metropolis in Ireland's Ancient East. Waterford was founded by the Vikings and the city's history is explained within 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" (bread roll) at the **Granary Café** or take a walk along the historic quays. ☘



06



ONLY IN IRELAND

Whether you're seeking adventures in spectacular coastal locations, exciting city escapes or some of the finest music in the world, the island of Ireland is ready to take your breath away

Walk in the footsteps of giants

The Causeway Coastal Route stretches from Belfast to Derry~Londonderry and is one of the island 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. It's what dreams are made of.

01



02

See the Burren in wildflower season

The moon-like limestone plateau of the Burren in County Clare is one of Ireland's most intriguing natural wonders. Cool grey rock etched with crevices and cracks tumbles down to the Atlantic Ocean creating a dramatic windswept space. It may seem like a hostile environment for nature to bloom, but in May, this stark stretch of County Clare is splashed with exceptional colour as Arctic, alpine, Mediterranean and local plants and flowers burst through the stone. To enjoy the Burren and its environment to the full, walk it with experts such as **Heart of Burren Walks**; visit the **Burren Nature Sanctuary** on a 50-acre organic farm; and soak up the **Burren in Bloom Festival** (May), which features garden visits, demonstrations and cultural events.



03



04

Traditional music

Picture this: a cosy 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 Cobblestone** 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, meanwhile, embark on a thrilling programme of events in the **Home of St Patrick Festival**. Special performances feature local and international acts with music, art and theatre all inspired by the life and work of St Patrick. Wherever you go, whether it's the oldest parade on the island in Wexford town, or a family concert in Galway, you'll find a celebratory atmosphere like no other.



05

Cross a swinging, swaying rope bridge

The creak of wooden slats in the rushing wind. The waves swirling below. The salty sea-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 more than 250 years as it was used by local salmon fishermen. Back in the 1970s, it comprised just a single handrail and a handful of gapped wooden planks. Today, thankfully, things are a little sturdier, but it's still utterly exhilarating and truly spectacular, as all who cross it can testify! The Carrick-a-Rede rope bridge is operated as a timed ticket attraction by The National Trust.

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



06

Explore one of the world's most beautiful gardens

The jewel in County Wicklow's crown, **Powerscourt Estate** contains what are widely considered to be the most majestic gardens in the world. When the house was completed in 1741, it was praised as possessing the "massive dignity of a great Italian Renaissance villa", but it is the gardens that really make this place special. Lush, playful and enchanting, it's easy to spend hours wandering from the pretty Japanese gardens to the wooded valleys and back to the quirky pet cemetery, which sits in a quiet part of the estate surrounded by roses and rhododendrons in summer. And if you're hungry after all that, feast on cakes, salads and soups served up in the Avoca Restaurant and Café with views across the gardens to the Sugar Loaf Mountain.

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 26 mile/42km Greenway is a wonderful off-road walking and cycling trail. It wanders 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 famous Dooagh beach, which reappeared after a 30-year absence and caused a sensation worldwide!



07



08

See the Northern Lights, Irish-style

Think of the Northern Lights, and you might imagine having to set your compass for Scandinavia, Iceland or Greenland. But in Ireland, the Aurora Borealis sets the skies over County Donegal's Inishowen Peninsula alight with heavenly waves of pink, green and blue. This remote and unspoiled headland is Ireland's most northerly point (next stop – the Arctic Circle) and it's well known for its clear skies and lack of light pollution, making it a perfect place to spot the Northern Lights. And while this glorious natural light-show is predictable in its unpredictability, on the Inishowen Peninsula there are some things you can be sure of: ruggedly beautiful landscapes, attractive Atlantic vistas and warm and friendly villages.

PHOTO: RITA WILSON



09

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 20 miles/32km from Belfast, lies a stunning 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 Powerscourt Estate County Wicklow
- 07 Great Western Greenway County Mayo
- 08 Inishowen Peninsula County Donegal
- 09 The Gobbins County Antrim

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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

01 Newgrange County Meath

In a quiet part of County Meath is one of the most important prehistoric landscapes in the world. At Newgrange, 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 and illuminates 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**.



02



02 The Rock of Cashel County Tipperary

Nothing can quite beat the spectacle of the iconic Rock of Cashel, which looms over 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 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 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 around 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 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.

PHOTO: LOLA AKINMADE AKERSTROM



03

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

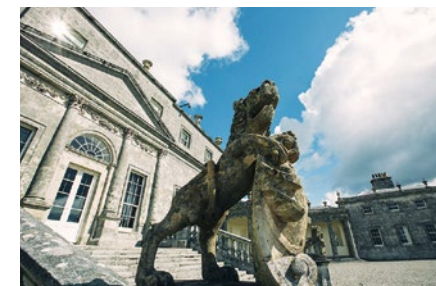
Russborough sits on the edge of the **Wicklow Mountains National Park**, with its abundance of walking trails. The monastic site of **Glendalough** is nearby, while the **Blessington Lakes** are only a stone's throw away.

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.



04



05

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 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 Midleton for dinner at **Sage Restaurant**, a whiskey tour of the **Jameson Distillery Midleton** and the excellent **Midleton 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 gardens at **Mount Usher** in Ashford are perfect for an 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**.



06



07

07 Viking Triangle

Waterford

The Vikings 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 for which the city is famed; 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 **Waterford Greenway** to walk or cycle all or some of the 28 mile/46km off-road trail.



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08 Irish National Stud

County Kildare

Surrounded by the 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 amid the beautiful green fields of County Offaly and next to the River Shannon, there are churches, two round towers, high crosses and a cathedral, as well as 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 Glasson; 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 195 miles/314km. Starting in the vibrant city of **Belfast** and finishing in **Derry~Londonderry** (or the other way around), the route is all about slowing down, taking your time and savouring the sights, sounds and flavours of this spellbinding coastline.

Frequently cited as one of the best touring routes in the world, the Causeway Coastal Route is a genuine joy to drive. And it's not just the views that impress, either. Part of the route's allure is the sheer amount of great places 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 cliff above the churning ocean.

Catch the ferry from **Ballycastle** to **Rathlin Island** and you'll discover a haven for 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.

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 pounding waves far below.

The route ends in **Derry~Londonderry**. With its beautiful 400-year-old walls, this lovely city will invite you to linger... And if the Causeway Coastal Route has whetted your appetite for spectacular seascapes and memorable experiences, why not continue your adventure on the Wild Atlantic Way?



Royal Portrush

Royal Portrush Golf Club is a County Antrim gem that stands proudly on the sand dunes of Portrush's beaches along the Causeway Coastal Route. Boasting majestic ocean views, it holds a special place in the heart of all those who play here. Some of its more famous fans include Northern Ireland major winner Rory McIlroy, who hails the Dunluce course as "among my favourite places to play in Northern Ireland, and one of the truly great links". Royal Portrush is the only club in Ireland to have hosted the Open Championship, and in 2019, it will host The Open once more, marking a historic return to Northern Ireland after nearly 70 years.

Royal Portrush also benefits from being close to **Old Bushmills Distillery**, only 4 miles/6.5km down the road. So when you've packed away your clubs on the 18th, make time for the 19th hole and a splash of the good stuff!



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 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 different food and drink themes.

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

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. It also makes a great base for discovering the local highlights of 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



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- 01 Whiterocks County Antrim
- 02 Royal Portrush County Antrim
- 03 Balloo House County Down
- 04 Ox Belfast
- 05 St George's Market Belfast
- 06 General Merchants Café Belfast

Reserve across the lagoon to work up an appetite before enjoying a feast of tasty crab claws.

The Mourne Mountains area is known for excellent produce, from artisan honey to creamy Abernethy Butter, used in top restaurants around the world. **NI Food Tours** offers 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, make sure and take a gourmet pit stop in the small city of Lisburn, where the **Yellow Door Deli** serves up home-cooked breads, rustic stews and pastries.



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Destination Fermanagh

Swaying reeds. Rippling waters. Fields blanketed in vivid green. The **Fermanagh Lakelands** are a place of profound tranquillity, offering a continuous stream of quiet moments and hidden gems, from ancient statues to forest trails. Rent a small day boat, stay on a canal boat or paddle a kayak through this liquid maze and you'll discover islands, ruined castles, isolated towers and great manor houses, each with a story to tell. Travelling by water is the perfect way to soak up the languorous charm of County Fermanagh, which recently hosted a G8 summit, but there are plenty of land-based adventures to experience along the way.

Set in picturesque locations, Fermanagh's magnificent National Trust mansions and gardens bask in beauty. There's **Crom Estate**, a vast demesne on the shores of Upper Lough Erne; there's **Castle Coole**, one of Ireland's finest neo-classical houses with sumptuous Regency interiors; and there's **Florence Court**, the former home to the Earls of Enniskillen, with walks through native woodland.

Back on the water, you'll find an abundance of gentle bends and creaking locks with more waterside curiosities that will entice you to moor up for a few hours. One spot is the award-winning **Watermill Restaurant at Kilmore Quay**, a charming spot on the edge of Upper Lough Erne. This delightful restaurant treats guests to fine dining with great local produce and views over the lough.

You'll notice that the Lakelands are studded with islands – in fact, there are 154 of them and **Devenish** is one of the most famous. A monastery was established here in the 6th century, before being raided by Vikings, but the oratory of St Molaise and the 12th century round tower have survived, painting a vivid picture of the island's monastic past.



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Keep an eye out, too, for **Boa Island**, with its 1,500-year-old Janus Man statue; **White Island**, boasting ancient stone figures; and **Lusty Beg**, a 74-acre resort with comfortable self-catering and B&B accommodation, featuring activities including archery and kayaking.

Of course, it's not just islands that Fermanagh has to offer. The **Marble Arch Caves Global Geopark** is home to one of the finest show caves in Europe. Situated at the foothills of Cuilcagh Mountain, this subterranean world is filled with rivers, waterfalls, winding passages and lofty chambers. It's an amazing experience that blends an underground boat journey with a short guided walk.

Arriving in the town of **Enniskillen**, it's hard to miss the vast stone castle, originally built in the 16th century. Now housing two museums, along with a genealogy and ancestry-research facility, it's an impressive introduction to this County Fermanagh island town, which pulsates with a great range of pubs, cafés and restaurants.

With surprises around every corner, Fermanagh never fails to enchant, whether you're enjoying the natural charm of the **Bubble Dome** accommodation at **Finn Lough** or the traditions of the beautifully crafted **Belleek Pottery** just outside Enniskillen. Beauty, tranquillity, forests and lakes – it's all in a day's play in Fermanagh.



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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 Lower Lough Erne County Fermanagh
- 09 Marble Arch Caves County Fermanagh
- 10 Florence Court County Fermanagh
- 11 Boa Island County Fermanagh
- 12 Seamus Heaney HomePlace County Londonderry

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01

01 The Islands

Where are they?
All along the Wild Atlantic Way.

Why are they a wonder?
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 Dursley Island, where the resident population is said to be just three. Clear blue waters meet secluded beaches on Inishturk, County Mayo; culture



02

PHOTO: @STORTRAVELERS



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vultures can try a few words of Irish on Tory, County Donegal; and Inis Mór in County Galway is perfect for families.

Where to eat?
Enjoy fine dining at Inis Meáin Restaurant & Suites on the Aran Islands, County Galway; break your adventure on Achill, County Mayo, at the Achill Cliff House Hotel; or relax at Seán Rua's restaurant on Cape Clear, County Cork.

02 The Cliffs of Moher County Clare

Where is it?
The Cliff Coast.

Why is it a wonder?
Towering 702ft/214 metres 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.

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 awe-inspiring

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 for great seafood in the old fishing village of Liscannor, and sample local Burren ingredients at the Wild Honey Inn or the Burren Storehouse in Lisdoonvarna. If you're looking for a cosy spot with its own turf fire, then call into the Riverside Bistro in Doolin, which has a lovely cottage setting and friendly atmosphere.

03 Skellig Michael County Kerry

Where is it?
The southern Peninsulas.

Why is it a wonder?
Skellig Michael lies over 7 miles/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 water (there are no facilities). Boats, both to the island and around the island, run from May to



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

October, and are 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, or try the Dingle Peninsula 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 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 wildest, 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 a holy well and stone cross perched above the mighty 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 south 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 nearly 2 miles/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 4 mile/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/30-metre lighthouse guides ships to Kinsale Harbour.

What is there to do nearby?

Explore the foodie town of Kinsale (bring an appetite), which is packed with 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 guest house; 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 wilderness of Connemara, Killary Harbour stretches 10 miles/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 waters of the fjord and is a leap into breathtaking scenery.



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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. This Benedictine abbey, which casts a breathtaking 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 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 rock formations, ancient ruins and some of Europe's largest sand dunes. Crowning the Inishowen Peninsula, Malin Head's natural wonders include basking sharks and exotic birdlife.

- 05 Old Head of Kinsale County Cork
- 06 Killary Harbour County Galway
- 07 Malin Head County Donegal

You might even see the Northern Lights, which are known to make an appearance in the skies above the peninsula. Steeped in myth and history, the area also boasts Banba's Crown, a cliff-top tower dating from 1805, and the ominously titled Hell's Hole, where the Atlantic waves dramatically 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 come across amazing experiences all the way to Belfast.

Where to eat?

The convivial 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 Caffè 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 scenic 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 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



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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 on 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. It is also the starting-point for embarking on 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 while the Connemara National Park is a short drive away, with some splendid walks amongst 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 perfectly placed for exploring the surrounding karstic limestone plateau of the Burren, with a unique array of flora and fauna, as well as being one of the best places on the island for a night of traditional music in lively 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 dolphin, who has been charming visitors since he moved here in 1983 (there are lots of boat trips available) and when you return, enjoy 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

- 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

about from Dingle – 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 curves around Sleah Head taking in sights such as the Early Christian stone church of Gallarus Oratory, views of the deserted 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 beside the River Boyne is one of the most impressive in Ireland, with its long curtain wall and 10 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 off into the tranquil gardens, 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 lively 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 – it's 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 from Dunmore East, and you can access other small and charming villages, 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, enjoy a music show at the Ardhowen theatre, or jump on a boat tour with Erne Tours at the Round O Jetty. The trip is the perfect way to take in some of County Fermanagh's natural landscapes.

In the charming 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 the atmospheric Grace Neill's pub – established in 1611, it's one



11



12

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

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's a wonderful base for visiting the Glenariff Forest Park, which is about 5 miles/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 5 miles/8km to the north. Managed by the National Trust, it has a picturesque harbour and the caves near to here were used as a location in HBO's fantasy series, *Game of Thrones*®. Pop into the Corner House Tearoom for tea and 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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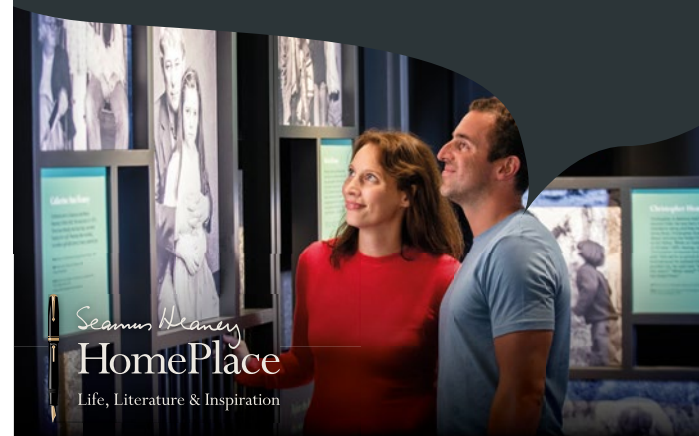
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01

THE LAST WORD ON... TRADITIONAL MUSIC

Enjoy the captivating sounds and pulse-racing pace of traditional music on the island of Ireland

All about the music

Irish traditional music is legendary throughout the world for good reason – from the infectious beats of fast-paced tunes to the haunting beauty of *sean-nós* (unaccompanied) ballads, this is music with a very emotional heart. The two places you're most likely to experience traditional music in Ireland are at a *seisiún* and a *céili* – and there's a difference between the two. A *seisiún* (trad music session) can be best described as an informal gathering of musicians. Often it'll kick off with just one or two instruments, but before long you've a whole group of fiddlers, flautists, banjos and *bodhráns* (drum) playing together to create a phenomenal sound. You'll find a *seisiún* in every village, town and city on the island, especially at weekends, and usually in a pub. A *céili* (dance), meanwhile is all about dancing to the music and there's a huge emphasis on joining in with the locals, so prepare to get on your feet! Céilis can take place at Irish cultural centres or at pubs with larger dancing spaces, such as **Vaughan's** in Kilfenora, County Clare. To get to grips with the steps, pop into the Céili by the Lee at **Crane Lane** in Cork every Monday night, where you'll be guided through the basics. It's great fun!

The festivals

Irish music festivals take the great atmosphere you find at a *seisiún* and spread it over a few days or even weeks. **Temple Bar TradFest** in Dublin (January) uses eclectic venues for gigs and concerts, and local pubs keep the sounds going after dark. The world-famous festival of **Fleadh Cheoil na hÉireann** takes place every year in August and is the biggest celebration of Irish music on the planet. In 2018, the location is Drogheda, County Louth, featuring sessions, competitive events and street music. Or get into the spirit of things at the **Derry International Irish Music Festival** (late January), a week-long event featuring the best musicians of the trad scene.



02



03

- 01 Fleadh Cheoil na hÉireann
- 02 Temple Bar TradFest Dublin
- 03 Belfast Tattoo
- 04 Duke of York Belfast
- 05 Bodhrán maker Roundstone, County Galway



04

Three great music experiences

An Droichead: Belfast Traditional Music Trail Belfast

Experience the best of traditional music in Belfast led by two professional musicians. This great trail winds around the **Cathedral Quarter**, stopping at pubs including The Dirty Onion, Duke of York and McHugh's.

Tig Cóili Galway

It may have a city location, but this lively pub in Galway city's **Latin Quarter** has a real country atmosphere. Local and visiting musicians mean there are 14 sessions a week, all year round.

McGann's Doolin, County Clare

The softly worn wooden interior of this lovely pub in the music hub of **Doolin**, County Clare, makes the perfect backdrop for impromptu music sessions.



05

Listen out for

Possibly the most famous of all Ireland's instruments, the *bodhrán* is a one-sided frame drum, played with a *cipín* (wooden stick). At a *seisiún*, you're also likely to notice a *tin whistle* (a simple wind instrument) and the *fiddle* (basically a violin played in a different way). Keep your eyes out, too, for the *uilleann pipes*, often regarded as the most melodic pipes in the world.

Ulster-Scots traditions

With a history stretching back to the 17th century, the Ulster-Scots community in Northern Ireland has a rich musical heritage with a very distinct sound. **Fiddles, pipes and drums** can be best heard at festivals such as the **Belfast Tattoo** in September in the SSE Arena on the banks of the River Lagan. It features marching bands, musicians and dancers from all over Ulster and beyond.

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GENERAL INFORMATION

LANGUAGE

Irish (Gaelic) and English are the official languages of the Republic of Ireland; street and road signs are bilingual. In Gaeltacht (Irish-speaking) areas, road signs may only be displayed in Irish and Irish is spoken daily, although everyone speaks English, too. In Northern Ireland, English is the official language. Irish is also taught in many schools and summer schools. Ulster-Scots is also spoken by some in Northern Ireland.

PASSPORT/VISA REQUIREMENTS

While UK citizens do not require a passport or visa to enter Ireland, most air and sea carriers require photographic identification (ID), such as a passport or driving licence. Visitors are advised to check which form of ID is required with the individual airline, ferry company, tour operator or travel agent before travelling. Non-UK nationals must have a valid passport or national ID card as appropriate. Visitors of other nationalities should contact their local Irish Embassy/Consulate or their local British Embassy, High Commission or Consular Office in Northern Ireland with any queries.

EMBASSIES & CONSULATES

REPUBLIC OF IRELAND
For further information contact:
The Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade
Tel: +353 (0) 1 408 2000
Passport and Visa Office
114a Cromwell Road, London SW7 4ES
Tel: 020 7373 4339
For a list of Irish Embassies, visit dfa.ie and dfa.ie/irish-embassy/great-britain
NORTHERN IRELAND
Further information is available from your local British Embassy or Consulate.
For details contact:
The Foreign and Commonwealth Office
gov.uk

VISITORS WITH DISABILITIES

Ireland extends a warm welcome to visitors with disabilities. Many public places and visitor attractions are accessible to wheelchair users, and an increasing number of hotels and restaurants are well equipped to accommodate guests with disabilities.

REPUBLIC OF IRELAND

National Disability Authority
Tel: +353 (0) 1 608 0400
nda.ie

NORTHERN IRELAND

Disability Action
Tel: 028 9029 7880
disabilityaction.org

CURRENCIES

In the Republic of Ireland the currency used is the euro (€) and in Northern Ireland the currency used is the pound sterling (£).

PERSONAL SAFETY

Though the general level of personal safety is high, should you be unfortunate enough to be a victim of crime, contact:

REPUBLIC OF IRELAND

Irish Tourist Assistance Service
Mon–Sun: ITAS, Pearse Street Garda Station, Pearse Street, Dublin 2
Tel: +353 (0) 1 666 9354/1890 365 700 (local number)
Mon–Fri: ITAS, 6-7 Hanover Street East, Dublin 2
Tel: +353 (0) 1 661 0562

Opening hours:
Monday–Saturday 10am–6pm;
Sundays; public holidays 12pm–6pm
Email: info@itas.ie
itas.ie

Store Street Garda Station
Weekends and public holidays, Dublin 1
Tel: +353 (0) 1 666 8000

NORTHERN IRELAND

Contact the local police station where support will be available. Tel: 101
psni.police.uk

EMERGENCY TELEPHONE NUMBERS

REPUBLIC OF IRELAND

Emergency Services (Police, Fire, Ambulance, Coastal & Mountain Rescue)
Tel: 112 or 999

NORTHERN IRELAND

Emergency Services (Police, Fire, Ambulance, Coastal & Mountain Rescue)
Tel: 999

SMOKING RESTRICTIONS

Smoking is not allowed in public areas and workplaces including pubs, restaurants, hotels and taxis, in both the Republic of Ireland and Northern Ireland.

PUBLIC HOLIDAYS 2018

New Year's Day	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.

TRAVELLING AROUND IRELAND

The island of Ireland is well serviced with bus, coach and train operators. You can plan your trip using public transport by using Journey Planner and Translink.

journeyplanner.transportforireland.ie and translink.co.uk

If you're travelling in your own car, or renting a vehicle, it's important to know the following: cars drive on the left-hand side of the road; signposts in Gaeltacht (Irish-speaking) areas are written in Irish (Gaelic); you will need either a full valid national driving licence or an international driving permit to drive on the roads; Northern Ireland uses miles per hour, while the Republic of Ireland uses kilometres; and passengers are required by law to wear seat belts at all times in the front and back of the vehicle. There are no tolled roads in Northern Ireland but you'll find tolls on a number of roads in the Republic of Ireland (disabled drivers are not charged). These are managed by the National Roads Authority and Dublin City Council. Generally tolls are paid at the barrier of the toll booth, however, there is one exception: M50 eFlow Barrier System. For more information visit: etoll.ie



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TRAVELLING TO IRELAND BY AIR

AIR ACCESS & ROUTES TO IRELAND

DEPART	ARRIVE	AIRLINE
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	George Best Belfast City	Flybe
	Ireland West Airport Knock	Flybe
Birmingham	Belfast International	easyJet
	Cork	Aer Lingus Regional
	Dublin	Aer Lingus, Ryanair
	George Best Belfast City	Flybe
	Ireland West Airport Knock	Flybe
Bristol	Belfast International	easyJet
	Cork	Aer Lingus Regional
	Dublin	Aer Lingus Regional, Ryanair
	Ireland West Airport Knock	Ryanair
Cardiff	Cork	Flybe
	Dublin	Aer Lingus Regional, Flybe
	George Best Belfast City	Flybe
Doncaster Sheffield	Dublin	Flybe
East Midlands Nottingham	Dublin	Aer Lingus Regional, Ryanair
	George Best Belfast City	Flybe
	Ireland West Airport Knock	Ryanair

DEPART	ARRIVE	AIRLINE
Edinburgh	Belfast International	easyJet
	Cork	Aer Lingus Regional
	Dublin	Aer Lingus Regional, Ryanair
	George Best Belfast City	Flybe
	Ireland West Airport Knock	Flybe
Exeter	Dublin	Flybe
	George Best Belfast City	Flybe
Glasgow International	Belfast International	easyJet
	City of Derry	Ryanair
	Cork	Aer Lingus Regional
	Donegal	Aer Lingus Regional
	Dublin	Aer Lingus Regional, Ryanair
	George Best Belfast City	Flybe
Inverness	Dublin	Loganair
Isle of Man	George Best Belfast City	Loganair
	Dublin	Aer Lingus Regional
Jersey	Belfast International	EasyJet
	Dublin	Aer Lingus Regional
	George Best Belfast City	Flybe
Leeds Bradford	Dublin	Aer Lingus Regional, Ryanair
	George Best Belfast City	Flybe
	Belfast International	easyJet
	City of Derry	Ryanair
Liverpool	Cork	Ryanair
	Dublin	Aer Lingus Regional, Ryanair
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	Ireland West Airport Knock	Ryanair



DEPART	ARRIVE	AIRLINE
London City	Dublin	Aer Lingus, British Airways, CityJet
	George Best Belfast City	Flybe
London Gatwick	Belfast International	easyJet, Ryanair
	Cork	Ryanair
	Dublin	Aer Lingus, Ryanair
	Ireland West Airport Knock	Aer Lingus
London Heathrow	Shannon	Ryanair
	Cork	Aer Lingus
	Dublin	Aer Lingus, British Airways
London Luton	George Best Belfast City	Aer Lingus, British Airways
	Shannon	Aer Lingus
	Belfast International	easyJet
	Dublin	Ryanair
London Southend	Ireland West Airport Knock	Ryanair
	Kerry	Ryanair
	Dublin	Ryanair

DEPART	ARRIVE	AIRLINE
London Southend	Dublin	Flybe
London Stansted	Belfast International	easyJet
	City of Derry	BMI
	Cork	Ryanair
	Dublin	Ryanair
	Ireland West Airport Knock	Ryanair
	Kerry	Ryanair
	Shannon	Ryanair
Manchester	Belfast International	easyJet
	Cork	Aer Lingus Regional
	Dublin	Aer Lingus, Ryanair
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Newcastle	Belfast International	easyJet
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All direct routes/information correct at time of going to press but may be subject to future operator changes. Airlines may also operate connecting/change code sharing and operator franchise agreements. Please see websites for details. Calls to airlines may incur local or national call charges.

AIRLINE CONTACT DETAILS

AIRLINE	WEBSITE	TELEPHONE
Aer Lingus	aerlingus.com	0333 004 5000
BMI Regional	flybmi.com	0330 333 7998
British Airways	britishairways.com	0344 493 0787
CityJet	cityjet.com	0203 481 1259
easyJet	easyjet.com	0330 365 5000
Flybe	flybe.com	0371 700 2000
Loganair	loganair.co.uk	0344 800 2855
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SEA ROUTES

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	Larne	P&O Ferries	Express Superferry	1hr 1hr 45mins
Fishguard	Rosslare	Stena Line	Stena Line Europe Superferry	2hrs 3hrs 30mins
	Holyhead	Dublin	Irish Ferries	Ulysses Cruise Ferry
Irish Ferries			Dublin Swift	1hr 49mins
Stena Line			Adventurer	3hrs 15mins
Isle of Man	Belfast	Steam Packet Company	Fastcraft	2hrs 55mins
	Dublin	Steam Packet Company	Fastcraft	2hrs 55mins
Liverpool	Dublin	P&O Ferries	Irish Sea Ferry	8hrs
Liverpool (Birkenhead)	Belfast	Stena Line	Stena Lagan	8hrs
			Stena Mersey	8hrs
Pembroke	Rosslare	Irish Ferries	Cruise Ferry	3hrs 45mins

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FERRY AND COACH OPERATORS CONTACT DETAILS

FERRY COMPANY	WEBSITE	TELEPHONE
Eurolines	eurolines.co.uk	0871 781 8177
Irish Ferries	irishferries.com	0871 730 0400
P&O Ferries	poferries.com	0871 702 3477
Steam Packet Company	steam-packet.com	0872 299 2992
Stena Line	stenaline.co.uk	0844 770 7070



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Bennetts of Kilwinning	0129 455 1112	bennettskilwinning.com
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CIE Tours	+353 (0) 1703 8888	cietours.com
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Golf Par Excellence	0173 721 1818	golfparexcellence.com
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Great Rail Journeys	0190 452 1936	greatrail.com
Harry Shaw Travel	0247 645 5544	harryshaw.co.uk
HF Holidays	0345 470 8558	hfholidays.co.uk
Hogans Cottages	0124 450 0501	hogansirishcottages.com
Hostelbookers.com	-	hostelbookers.com
Hostelworld	-	hostelworld.com
Hotel Connexions	0141 212 5053	hotelconnexions.com
Hotel Direct	0800 633 8000	hoteldirect.co.uk
Hotelpia	0871 711 9494	hotelpia.com

COMPANY	TELEPHONE	WEBSITE
Hotel Reservation Service (HRS)	0800 328 4328	hrs.com
Hotels.com	0203 024 8216	hotels.com
Imagine Ireland	0175 670 7720	imagineireland.com
In the Saddle	0129 927 2997	inthesaddle.com
Irish Ferries Holidays	0871 730 0400	irishferries.com
Just Go! Holidays	0843 224 4222	justgoholidays.com
Kings Angling and Activity Holidays	0793 946 0802	kingsanglingholidays.co.uk
Kirker Holidays	0207 593 1899	kirkerholidays.com
Lastminute.com	0203 499 8517	lastminute.com
Laterooms	0333 014 6269	laterooms.com
Leger Holidays	0170 978 7463	leger.co.uk
Leisure Link Golf Holidays	0170 833 9229	leisurelinkgolf.com
Links Golf St Andrews	0133 447 8639	linksgolfstandrews.com
McKinlay Kidd Ltd	0141 308 8009	mckinlaykidd.com
National Holidays	0844 477 9990	nationalholidays.com
Newmarket Holidays	0330 160 7701	newmarketholidays.co.uk
On Course Travel	0137 245 1910	ireland-oncourse.co.uk
Opodo	0800 026 1626	opodo.co.uk
Osprey Holidays Ltd	0131 243 8098	ospreyholidays.com
PAB Coach Holidays	+353 (0) 1 871 9819	pabtours.com
Parrys International Tours	0192 241 4576	parrys-international.co.uk
Pitchup.com	-	pitchup.com
Rabbi's Small Group Tours	0131 226 3133	rabbies.com/en/tour-ireland
Rambler's Worldwide Holidays	0170 733 1133	ramblersholidays.co.uk
Responsible Travel.com	0127 382 3700	responsibletravel.com
Saga Holidays Ltd	0800 096 0085	saga.co.uk
Shearings Holidays	0844 824 6351	shearings.com/ireland
Spabreaks.com	0800 043 6600	spabreaks.com
Stena Line Holidays	0844 770 7070	stenaline.co.uk
Superbreak	0190 471 7362	superbreak.com
Take the Family	0203 633 0653	takefamily.com
Tangney Tours	0173 288 6666	tangney-tours.com
Tayleur Mayde Golf Tours	0131 524 9554	tayleurmayde.com
The Camping & Caravanning Club	0247 642 2024	campingandcaravanningclub.co.uk
The Caravan and Motorhome Club	0134 231 6101	caravanclub.co.uk
Thomas Cook	0173 322 4808	thomascook.com
Titan Travel Ltd	0800 988 5823	titantravel.co.uk
Travel Republic	0208 974 7200	travelrepublic.co.uk
Travelling the Fairways	0133 446 0789	ttfgolf.com
Travelzoo	-	travelzoo.co.uk
Wilkinson Golf & Leisure	01383 629 940	wilkinsongolf.com
Your Golf Travel	0800 193 6630	yourgolftravel.com

Driving to Dublin?

Don't forget that the M50 toll is barrier-free



Pay your toll on the go with the M50 Quick Pay app



Visiting the Cliffs of Moher, Powerscourt Waterfall or Dublin Zoo? There's a good chance you'll pass through the M50 barrier-free toll. Look out for the big purple signs between Junctions 6 and 7. You can't miss it!

More importantly, don't forget to pay before 8pm the next day, otherwise you'll be subject to a fine.

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



VISIT SOUTH EAST IRELAND



WEXFORD

SO OLD, SO NEW

With a spectacular coastline, a wealth of historic sites and attractive towns and villages, it's little wonder that Wexford is a favourite holiday destination for visitors and locals alike. The county offers a mix of mountainous scenery, river valleys with fine fishing, spectacular parks and gardens, scenic walking trails and mile upon mile of fine unspoiled beaches such as Rosslare and Curracloe. And not forgetting the many fascinating visitor attractions to choose from... Wexford has it all!

WATERFORD

Where Ireland Begins

Waterford is Ireland's oldest city. It's a buzzy, picturesque place, full of atmospheric streets, historic architecture as well as a variety of craft studios, galleries, cafes, restaurants and traditional style pubs. A great base to explore the Copper Coast, Comeragh Mountains and the historic towns and villages of Waterford.



Kilkenny

Living History, Loving Culture

Kilkenny is a cosmopolitan city, - an ancient city with contemporary appeal - steeped in medieval history and heritage, a jewel in the crown of Ireland's Ancient East. It's a place which inspires great design and where ancient crafts are practiced and perfected, and given a modern twist! Friendly people, festivals all year round, restaurants, boutique shopping, and a vibrant night life all combine to make Kilkenny a fantastic place to visit.



www.VisitSouthEastIreland.com

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