

Ireland

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AMAZING PLACES

TAKE THE TRIP OF A
LIFETIME ALONG STUNNING
WINDSWEPT COASTS

GREAT FOOD EXPERIENCES
FROM MARKETS TO FESTIVALS

10 TOP THINGS TO DO IN
DUBLIN AND BELFAST

 ireland.com

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Glendalough County Wicklow



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IRELAND'S
ANCIENT
EAST



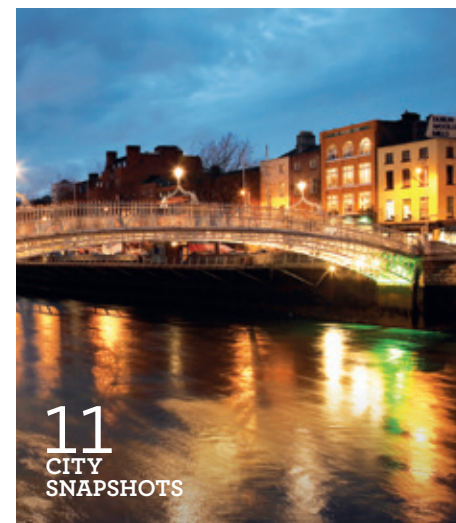
21
WILD
ATLANTIC
WAY



09
GREAT
TASTES OF
IRELAND

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...



11
CITY
SNAPSHOTS



33
OPEN
SEASON

Tourism Ireland is the marketing body for the island of Ireland, covering the Republic of Ireland and Northern Ireland. Every care has been taken to ensure accuracy in the compilation of this brochure. Tourism Ireland and its agents cannot, however, accept responsibility for errors and omissions but where such are brought to our attention, future publications will be amended accordingly. Tourism Ireland does not accept responsibility for the advertising content in this publication. Images used in this publication are sourced from the image banks of Tourism Ireland, Tourism Northern Ireland, Fáilte Ireland and a number of other third party sources (who have given their consent to use of image).



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29
EXPERIENCE
IRELAND





PICTURE THIS CuilcaghBoardwalk

County Fermanagh

Also known as the Cuilcagh Legnabrocky Trail, this 7.5km-path sweeps from the undulating foothills of Cuilcagh Mountain to just below its distinctive flat-topped summit. The meandering farm track climbs steadily to a stepped boardwalk that protects the rare blanket bog. On the way up, the rocky face of Cuilcagh looms, with its grey-toned shale and sandstone. But on the way back, the views really impress with tobacco-coloured bog, distant blue hills and the glistening waters of Lough McNea. They call this the Stairway to Heaven. Standing at the top, you'll see why. 🍀

Mussenden Temple 2.jpg



Wicklow Head Lighthouse County Wicklow



Ashford Castle County Mayo



Anna's House B&B County Down



Ballygally Castle County Antrim

UNIQUE PLACES TO STAY

A round-up of the very best places to stay on the island of Ireland, whether you want to camp beach-side under the stars, or lord it up in a fabulous castle loaded with history



Self-catering, Cnoc Suain County Galway



Glamping Portumna, County Galway

Lighthouses

Tales of shipwrecks, adventure and tragedy swirl in the waters surrounding the beacons that are Ireland's lighthouses. And staying in one of these structures is an experience to cherish. Perched on the edge of cliffs, keeping a watchful eye over the turbulent seas, these lighthouses are unique places to stay, whether you're cosying up in a lightkeeper's cottage in counties Antrim or Cork or sleeping in an actual lighthouse building itself in County Wicklow. Soak up the views, breathe in the fresh air and watch nature do its work across a seascape filled with elemental beauty.

Castles

Peat-scented whiskeys by crackling log fires, resplendent medieval architecture and an old-world ambience have made castle hotels in Ireland among the best in the world. Luxury living is beautifully displayed in rooms decked with four-poster beds, oak panelling and windows that boast peaceful views over woodland, parkland and glassy lakes. Not only that, but with many castle hotels located on vast estates, you'll often have the chance to try everything from clay-pigeon shooting, to archery, to wandering through Victorian walled gardens.

B&Bs

Tucked away in picturesque corners of the island, perfectly placed in cities and sitting at the heart of rural farms – B&Bs in Ireland are unique. You'll find cosy rooms, incredible locations and a breakfast that could sustain a whole army, but you'll also find a friendly welcome that keeps going throughout your entire stay. The really great thing about a B&B in Ireland is that they are family homes, and the people who run them are hives of local knowledge, offering cheerful inside information on the places to go, things to do and hidden gems to uncover in the local area.

Cottage holidays

Whether you're seeking an extraordinary adventure on the Wild Atlantic Way, an unforgettable tour through Northern Ireland or a farm stay in the historic pastures of Ireland's Ancient East, you're guaranteed to find a lovely little self-catering cottage to suit your needs. Cottages on the island really do spring up everywhere – on remote headlands that nudge out into the tumultuous ocean, at the edge of vast beaches and in cosmopolitan cities where everything is right on your doorstep. You can even rent a thatched cottage for a slice of traditional charm with all the modern comfort you require.

Camping

Connect with nature on a camping or glamping holiday. Breathtaking camping spots beside the crashing ocean, eco farms with spacious bell tents and bohemian glamping surrounded by ancient woods and rippling streams – camping in Ireland serves up everything from the luxurious to the wonderfully quirky. There's nothing quite like waking up in a forest or beside the beach with the sound of the sea crunching over the pebbles, the sizzle of sausages on a campfire and a sunrise that will blow your mind! ☘



Autumn at Powerscourt House and Gardens County Wicklow

IRELAND IN SEASON

Get set for four fabulous seasons on the island of Ireland, each with their own unique appeal

Spring

Bluebells blanket ancient woodland, orchards bloom with the pink flowers of apple blossom season and lambs frolic in green pastures – spring is the perfect time to make Ireland your own, as the days get longer and the weather warms up. Spring here is all about escaping into the great outdoors, with many of the island's beautiful big-house estates opening their gates after a quiet winter. Delve into a riot of colour and natural beauty at the world-renowned **Mount Stewart** in County Down, where delicate snowdrops give way to crocuses as the season progresses. Or take a walk through the subtropical wonderland of **Kells Bay Gardens** in County Kerry, amid mountain streams, birdsong and wind-rustled trees. And don't forget that in spring, Ireland really does turn 40 shades of green thanks to St Patrick's Day on 17 March – don some shamrocks, feel the vibes and join one of the most enjoyable festivals in Europe!



Bluebells, Glenariff County Antrim



Foyle Maritime Festival Derry-Londonderry

Summer

Stand on a golden beach on the stunning County Down coastline or relax in a calm, butter-coloured cove in County Wexford and you'll realise there's a good reason Ireland in summer is so popular. Busy fishing villages thrum with people enjoying fish and chips in the sunshine, valleys shimmer with shades of jade green and emerald and the days seem to last forever. Come summer, festivals erupt all over the place, and parks, rivers, harbours and beaches turn into ideal locations for celebrations of literature, food, music, art and even surfing. Try a spot of music at the **Westport Folk and Bluegrass Festival** (June) in the beautiful town of Westport, County Mayo; enjoy immersive artistic events at the **Carlow Arts Festival** (June); or soak up the summery vibes of the **Foyle Maritime Festival** (July) in Derry-Londonderry with sail boating, tall ships, kayaking, markets and music.

Autumn

The landscape flames with gold, orange and red tones, pubs are warm and cosy and if you take a walk down to a beach, you'll probably have it all to yourself. Autumn is an inspirational time to visit the island of Ireland, and you'll find a real variety of things to do, from listening to cool tunes at the acclaimed **Guinness Cork Jazz Festival** (Oct) to whale watching off the coast of **West Cork**. Dublin roars into the autumn festival season from September, with a collection of world-class festivals including the **Dublin Theatre Festival** and the Dracula-themed **Bram Stoker Festival**, as well as island-wide **Culture Night**. And keep your ears open for things that go bump in the night on 31 October with the ancient Celtic festival of **Halloween**. Head to Derry-Londonderry for the excellent **Derry Halloween** festival or keep the lights on with a night in County Antrim's **Ballygally Castle Hotel**, which is reputedly haunted by two ghosts!



Christmas in Dublin

Winter

Take it from us, when the weather turns cold there's no better place to be than on the island of Ireland, where you'll find a welcome so warm you could wrap yourself up in it. Winter in Ireland is all about traditional pubs with roaring fires, Irish music sessions, fragrant hot whiskeys and incredible coastal walks. The colder months are also an ideal time to visit some of Ireland's most popular sights, including the **Giant's Causeway**, the **Cliffs of Moher** and the **Rock of Cashel**, all of which can be surprisingly quiet. You can be sure of an authentic local atmosphere at great winter festivals, too, such as the **Temple Bar TradFest** (January) – a celebration of Irish traditional music in some of Dublin city's unique venues. And make sure not to miss an **Irish-themed Christmas**, with local Christmas markets, quirky traditions and huge New Year's Eve celebrations in both Dublin and Belfast. ☘

IRELAND GETS CINEMATIC

From Star Wars stunners along the majestic Wild Atlantic Way, to a wonderland of Westeros locations in Northern Ireland, we present Ireland's stars of the screen...



Dark Hedges County Antrim

Game of Thrones® Territory

Northern Ireland is a place of fabled castles, spectacular coastline and out-of-this-world heritage sites – and the makers of the HBO blockbuster Game of Thrones® certainly agree. This remarkable corner of Europe has been home to more Seven Kingdoms locations than anywhere else in the world since it first hit TV screens back in 2011. A good place to start? Head to County Down's **Castle Ward** (Winterfell) – a stunning, sprawling demesne that doubles as the ancestral home of the Stark family. With Clearsky Adventure at the castle, you can test your hand at archery in the same spot as Jon Snow, model some authentic Westeros costumes and take part in an opulent medieval banquet inspired by the show. The **Dark Hedges** in County Antrim is a haunting avenue of serpentine beech trees that will take your breath away, while in County Londonderry you'll find another spectacular shooting location at **Binevenagh Mountain**, which boasts panoramic views from the summit.

Star Wars on screen

Movies evoke the magic of travel, transporting viewers on an extraordinary adventure. Nowhere is this better illustrated than along Ireland's Wild Atlantic Way, where you'll discover the real-life locations that posed as a galaxy far, far away. Star Wars location scouts chose Ireland to film scenes from Episodes VII and VIII. And from the craggy coastal beauty of **Sybil Head** in County Kerry to the jagged coastline and thriving birdlife of Ireland's most northerly point at **Malin Head** in County Donegal, these landscapes are so dramatic they feel like a ready-made film set. Surround yourself with the majestic scenery of **Loop Head** in County Clare or book ahead for a journey out to **Skellig Michael** in County Kerry, a 6th century monastic settlement on a wonderfully wild island.

Lights, camera, Ireland

All over the island of Ireland you'll find stunning landscapes fit for the big screen. From the opening shot high above the **Dingle Peninsula** in County Kerry, Oscar-winning Ryan's Daughter captures the drama and romance of Ireland's southwest coast. **Slea Head** and **Dunmore Head** are two perennial standouts and one thing's for sure – love on the rocks has never looked so good! In Ireland's Ancient East, the romantic drama of P.S. I Love You is a bit like a love letter to Ireland. Featuring some of the most beautiful locations on the east coast, including **Sally Gap** and the picturesque lakeside village of **Lacken**, it's hard not to be smitten by the heather-flecked landscape and enchanting views of the Wicklow Way featured in the film. And Braveheart might be Mel Gibson's movie, but **Trim Castle** is the real star. This Norman stronghold in County Meath is a real showstopper, with its crenellated towers, medieval keep and battlements. **Dublin** isn't overlooked, either, when it comes to our cinematic legacy. And in the charming movie Once, it's not just the love story and the Oscar-winning soundtrack that sets it apart; it's the great Dublin locations that include **Grafton Street**, **Temple Bar**, **St Stephen's Green** and **Killiney Hill**. ☘

Look out for:

Bangor *Northern Ireland*
Scene of cult film, High Rise.

Curraclloe Strand *County Wexford*

This vast beach starred in both Saving Private Ryan and Brooklyn, which was also filmed in the town of Enniscorthy.



Lough Tay Sally Gap, County Wicklow



Star Wars: The Last Jedi Wild Atlantic Way



Basket Islands from Dunmore Head County Kerry

GREAT TASTES OF IRELAND

Boasting homegrown ingredients, innovative chefs and warm hospitality, the island of Ireland is an epicurean paradise. Unearth the history of Ireland's food and drink culture, meet friendly local producers and enjoy seafood at the ocean's edge with six of the best food experiences in Ireland.

By Joanna Braniff

Visit a market

Hot apple juice made from local organic apples, glistening oysters served with crisp white wine and an abundance of farmhouse cheeses and local salamis – the Irish farmers' market is a bedrock of local community life. This is where you can try authentic street food with an artisan twist, as people picnic in the sunshine and snack on the go. The two most famous markets are Cork's **English Market** and Belfast's **St George's Market**, both of which offer a tantalising range of foods from the island of Ireland in stunning 18th and 19th century surroundings. These famous covered markets certainly attract the crowds, but many towns and cities on the island also support a thriving weekly food market, where you can meet the very people who have grown the produce. Try **Kilkenny Farmers' Market** every Thursday in front of the 12th century castle, stroll through the bustling **Midleton Farmers' Market** in County Cork on Saturday mornings, or enjoy the community feel at the **Comber Farmers' Market** in the home of the unique Comber potato in County Down, which runs on the first Thursday of every month.



St George's Market Belfast

Take a tour

Food tours are an excellent way to get to know the local food culture with an expert guide. For an experience to nourish both body and soul, **The Sligo Food Trail** (sligofoodtrail.ie) is a spectacular scenic journey of fresh organic produce along an exciting slice of the Wild Atlantic Way. If your interest in food is more academic than gastronomic, try an entertaining insight into how food has shaped Irish society with a two-hour stroll through Dublin's historic quarters on **The Story of Irish Food** (historicaltours.ie). Or journey to the land of legends on the Causeway Coast in Northern Ireland for a culinary tour of artisan producers and chefs. Each trip with **Causeway Coast Foodie Tours** (causewaycoastfoodietours.com) provides exclusive tasting sessions and behind-the-scenes access to introduce you to new and exciting food experiences.

Galway Farmers' Market



Food festivals

With such a rich bounty of culinary treasures and genuine enthusiasm for the joy of food, there's hardly a week that goes by without a food festival being held somewhere on the island, from Kinsale in County Cork to the city of Belfast. Celebrating everything from seafood to craft beer, a festival is a great way to sample the unique taste of the land and sea. Such is the love of oysters and seafood in Ireland that festivals dedicated to them are a big part of the food calendar and events such as the **Portavogie Seafood Festival** in County Down (Aug) and the **Carlingford Oyster Festival** (Aug) in County Louth serve up tastings, music, demos and competitions. And for a food festival to remember, head to the beautiful town of Dingle in County Kerry during the first weekend of October for the lively **Dingle Food Festival**. Part of the festival includes a food trail that offers over 70 different local taste experiences, and you can also enjoy market stalls, wine tasting, cookery demos and more.



Carlingford Oyster Festival County Louth



Old Bushmills Distillery County Antrim



Octopussy's Seafood Tapas Howth, County Dublin

Liquid favourites

The island of Ireland has a reputation for producing quality beverages, from fine whiskeys to famous stouts, many of which run tours and classes. Ireland's gin industry is booming right now with great local gins such as Blackwater No5, Listoke and Glendalough Dillisk, but if you want to take your gin knowledge one step further then head to the **Shortcross Distillery** in County Down. At this craft gin distillery on the enchanting Rademon Estate, visitors can join a carefully curated tour that brings them through the distilling process, as well as a tutored tasting. And don't forget to raise a glass to the island's esteemed whiskey distilleries... In Dublin's Liberties area, you'll find the **Teeling Whiskey Distillery**, with a family legacy that stretches all the way back to 1782, as well as the delightful **Pearse Lyons Distillery**, set within the lovely restored St James's Church. Other great distilleries around the island include the **Walsh Whiskey Distillery** in County Carlow, and the iconic **Old Bushmills Distillery** along the Causeway Coastal Route, County Antrim.

A cooking experience

A cookery class is a fun way to learn new skills and explore local ingredients and techniques. Want to know how to craft a traditional brown Irish soda bread, how to make your very own butter, or how to cook seafood to perfection? Then check out one of the quality cookery schools that offer a range of bespoke classes to suit all tastes. Famous chef and Irish food champion **Neven Maguire** presides over a purpose-built cookery school in County Cavan, which runs small cookery classes for all experience levels. Or opt for a Fish Masterclass at the **Belfast Cookery School**, where you can prepare, fillet and cook a selection of delicious fresh fish from local waters, including succulent Strangford Lough mussels.

Great seafood

From sumptuously crafted dishes to tasty street food, Ireland is justly famous for its delectable fish and seafood. Looking for something simple, fresh and authentic? A good place to start is with fish and chips. **Leo Burdock's** famous establishments have been offering traditional fish and chips in locations around Dublin since 1913, but you'll also find local "chippers" all over the island, from the beautifully located **Saltee's Chipper** in the fishing village of Kilmore Quay, County Wexford, to the super-tasty **Quinlan's Seafood Bar** in Tralee, County Kerry. And nothing quite beats seafood in the very place where local boats unload their daily catch, so head to the scenic town of Ballycastle in County Antrim, and enjoy fish, scampi and homemade crab cakes at **Morton's Fish and Chips**.

Cheese tasting Dingle, County Kerry



Traditional tastes

On your visit, make sure you try some traditional food!

Boxty

A traditional savoury pancake made of mashed and grated potato, which is often enjoyed at breakfast.

Dulse

A dried seaweed that is eaten as a snack or added to dishes such as soups and salads.

Smoked salmon

Produced in small batches in turf smokehouses on the Burren and in Connemara, smoked wild Irish salmon is simply delicious served on brown bread with butter and a squeeze of lemon.

Cheese

West Cork is Ireland's cheese hub, but you'll find farmhouse cheese everywhere on the island of Ireland. Keep an eye out for St Tola (County Clare), Durrus (County Cork) and Young Buck (County Down).

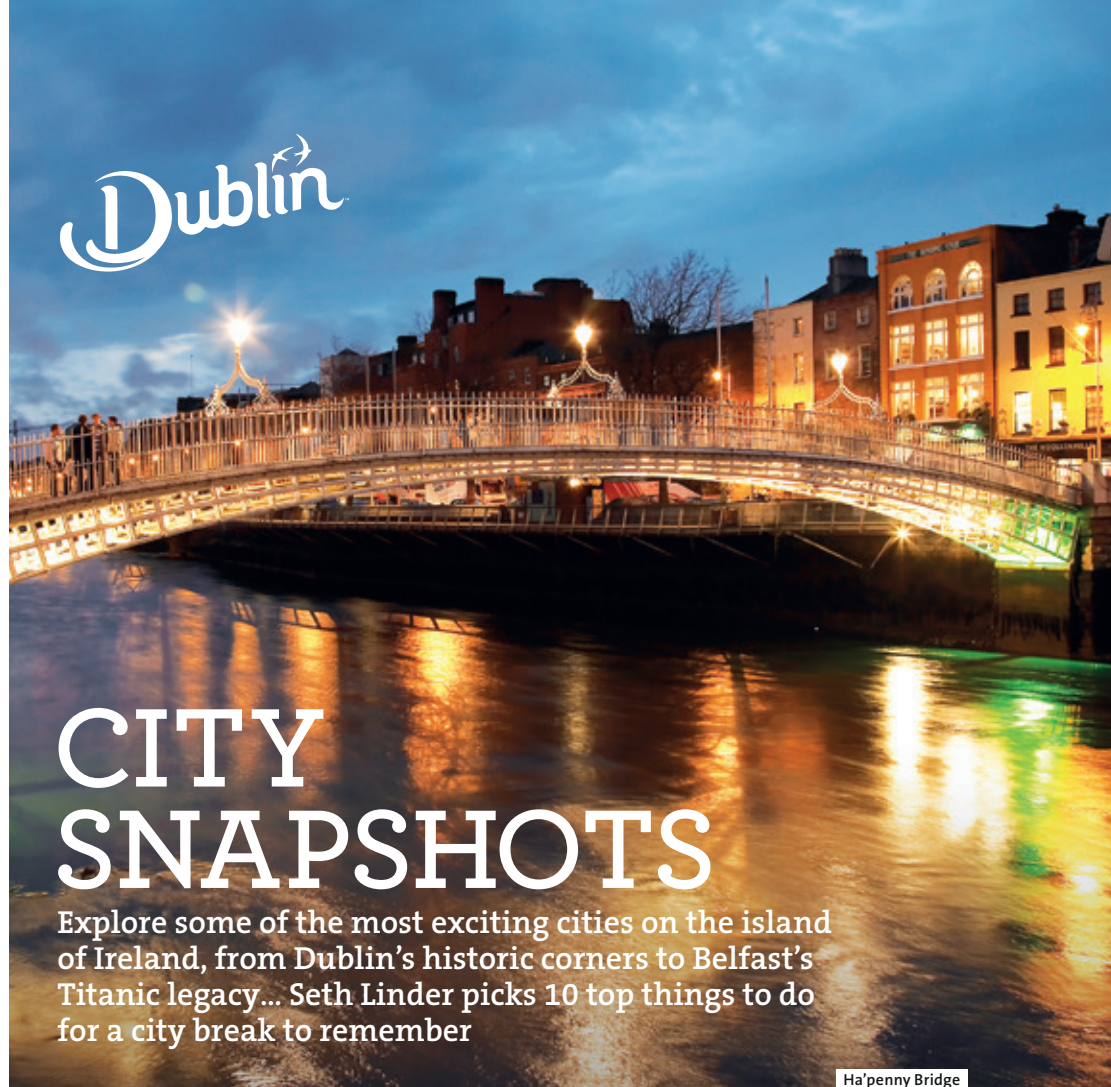
Ulster Fry

Northern Ireland's famous breakfast is a delicious combination of eggs, soda farl or potato bread, sausages, black and white pudding, and a grilled tomato.

Dublin

CITY SNAPSHOTS

Explore some of the most exciting cities on the island of Ireland, from Dublin's historic corners to Belfast's Titanic legacy... Seth Linder picks 10 top things to do for a city break to remember



Trinity College Dublin

Ha'penny Bridge

05 Iconic cathedrals

Renowned for its beautiful architecture and exquisite floor tiles, Christ Church Cathedral has been a place of pilgrimage for over 1,000 years and boasts a fascinating crypt. Afterwards, walk down to St Patrick's Cathedral, which was founded in 1191 and hosts concerts and events. christchurchcathedral.ie

06 Phoenix Park

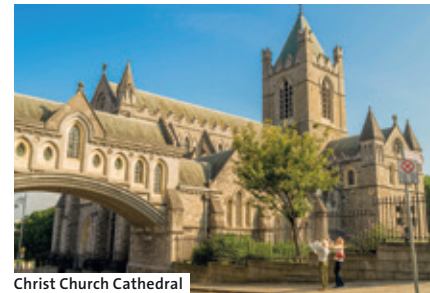
Enjoy Dublin like a local by spending an afternoon cycling through Phoenix Park, one of Europe's largest enclosed city parks. Keep an eye out for herd of fallow deer that call the park home, and take time out for a tour of either Farmleigh House, the official Irish State guesthouse, or Áras an Uachtaráin, the official residence of the President of Ireland.

07 Dublin Bay Cruises

Get a unique perspective on Dublin, sailing past seals, lighthouses, islands and coastline, with these delightful boat trips that take you on journeys around Dublin Bay. The bay is a UNESCO biosphere – a place where natural and cultural heritage connect. There are five cruises every day (seasonal) between Dún Laoghaire port, the city centre and the traditional fishing village of Howth. dublinbaycruises.com



Little Museum of Dublin



Christ Church Cathedral



Phoenix Park

08 Great Dublin pubs

Why are Dublin pubs the world's favourites? See for yourself at alluring gems such as Doheny & Nesbitt, literary McDaid's and the ancient Brazen Head. Tour the fashionable Temple Bar area, Dublin's pub hub; take in traditional music at welcoming spots such as O'Donoghue's and the Cobblestone; or soak up the beauty of the 19th century Long Hall, Stag's Head and Palace Bar.

09 Dublin day trips

Dublin boasts a magnificent setting, with the coast and mountains on the city's doorstep. Take the Dart to the seaside village of Howth and walk the beautiful Cliff Path, followed by a seafood lunch at one of the many restaurants. Or stroll around the rugged Dublin Mountains and enjoy a drink at Johnnie Fox's, one of Ireland's highest pubs.

10 Discover Dublin

Get up close and personal and experience the city in the company of an expert guide. Embark on a journey around Dublin's exciting food scene with Secret Food Tours Dublin; delve into the city's past with Historical Walking Tours of Dublin; or see the city on two (electric) wheels with Lazy Bike Tours Dublin.



National Museum



Kilmainham Gaol

DUBLIN

Step into a city where Viking history lurks beneath the surface, where modern architecture stands next to ancient buildings and where literature is written into the very fabric of the streets. Welcome to Dublin.

01 The National Museum of Ireland

You'll find three great museums under the "National Museum of Ireland" banner covering Archaeology, Natural History and Decorative Arts & History. Explore Europe's finest collection of prehistoric gold artefacts and exquisite Celtic jewellery at the Archaeology branch on Kildare Street. Discover extinct animals among the Natural History Museum's fascinating collection (Merrion Street Upper), and trace Ireland's social, design, arts and military stories at historic Collins Barracks. museum.ie

02 The Little Museum of Dublin

Friendly experts will guide you through Dublin's remarkable history at this great

little museum, voted the city's "Best Museum Experience" by the Irish Times. With over 5,000 objects – many donated by Dubliners themselves – you'll get a unique insight into subjects as diverse as James Joyce and U2! littlemuseum.ie

03 Kilmainham Gaol

A monument to the long struggle for Irish independence, the restored Kilmainham Gaol offers a hugely atmospheric glimpse into 19th century prison life. Famous movies, including Michael Collins, were filmed in the spectacular East Wing. The tour gives a dramatic insight into the history of this forbidding prison, with its overcrowding, hardships and brutal conditions. A definite don't-miss. kilmainhamgaolmuseum.ie

04 Vintage Tea Tour

Dublin is great for new and fun experiences and the Vintage Tea Tour is a perfect example of that. Explore the city in a really unique way with an afternoon tea experience boasting cakes, sandwiches and 1950s jazz in a vintage bus that brings you around the city's top sights. Great fun. vintageatours.ie



L Mulligan Grocer

Flavours of Dublin

From tempting artisan fare at the Temple Bar Market to fabulous seafood at SOLE, great food is an essential part of the Dublin experience. Enjoy Ireland's wonderful local produce at charming restaurants such as the lovely Winding Stair overlooking the River Liffey, or gastro pubs such as L Mulligan Grocer in Stoneybatter.



MAC Belfast



visit Belfast

Titanic Belfast and SS Nomadic

05 HMS Caroline

Moored in Alexandra Dock and recently restored as a visitor attraction, this survivor of the Battle of Jutland has cabins decked out as if the crew were still on board. There's a dramatic film about the ship's history and a café recreating the sailors' mess. nmrn.org.uk



HMS Caroline

06 City Hall

Sumptuous City Hall reflects the grandeur of Edwardian Belfast; its spectacular reception halls are overlaid with marble from the quarries that supplied classical Rome. Once known as the "Stone Titanic", there are lots of associations with the doomed ship, including the Titanic Memorial Gardens. The free daily tours include a history of City Hall and its finest features. belfastcity.gov.uk/leisure



City Hall

07 St George's Market

As one of Ireland's oldest covered markets, St George's Market is a foodie's paradise where you'll find all kinds of artisan fare, freshly caught fish and seafood, stalls of fine Irish cheeses, organic meats, gourmet sausages and local seaweed. Saturday is the main day for food and you might even get a bit of jazz as you wander around this late 19th century gem.



Hillsborough Castle County Down

08 Cathedral Quarter

Taking its name from beautiful St Anne's Cathedral, Belfast's cobblestoned cultural and entertainment quarter hosts some of the city's best pubs and liveliest clubs, as well as a selection of wonderful eateries. Look out for the splendid MAC (Metropolitan Arts Centre), which is home to cutting-edge drama and more.

09 Day trips from Belfast

Discover the Georgian beauty of the remarkable 18th century Hillsborough Castle, which was recently reopened to the public after extensive conservation works. For great day trips just outside Belfast, explore the seaside town of Bangor by Belfast Lough and the linen legacy of historic Lisburn city.

10 Tours with a local

Get to know the locals on black cab tours of the famous murals of West Belfast or try the visual feast of the Street Art Walking Tour of the Cathedral Quarter. The Belfast Food Tour offers specialised food and drink outings, including a Gin Jaunt and a Whiskey Walk, or jump on a Riverboat Tour and see the Titanic Quarter from the water. Blue Badge guides will take you to historic locations and there's a Hop-on/Hop-off bus, too.



St George's Market

BELFAST

Vibrant culture, gripping history and super-friendly locals are what Belfast is all about. With incredible Titanic attractions, old-world pubs and a dynamic restaurant scene, this is one city you won't want to leave.

01 Titanic Belfast and SS Nomadic

Travel to the heart of prosperous Edwardian Belfast and the legendary ship it produced at Titanic Belfast, by the slipways from which Titanic was launched. Voted the world's leading visitor attraction in 2016, it features nine interactive galleries. Nearby is the SS Nomadic, the tender that took first-class passengers to Titanic. titanicbelfast.com; nomadicbelfast.com

02 Ulster Museum

Walk through the charming Botanic Gardens to the stunningly renovated Ulster Museum and discover the first mummy to be displayed outside Egypt, and the most complete dinosaur fossil



Botanic Gardens

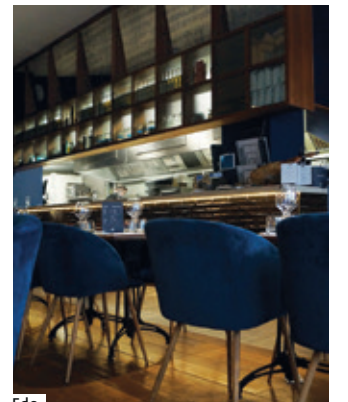
in Ireland. Stroll art galleries and get an unrivalled insight into Belfast's famous industrial history. It's free too! nmni.com

03 Crumlin Road Gaol

A guided tour around this former prison includes the condemned man's cell and the adjoining execution room. Restored cells reveal the grim prison life of the 19th century and you will discover the stories of former inhabitants, including Irish President Éamon de Valera. The gaol claims to be one of the most haunted spots in Belfast, and visitors can take the Paranormal Tour through the hotspots of spooky activity. crumlinroadgaol.com

04 Great Belfast pubs

The energy and excitement of Belfast can be fully felt within its great pubs. With exquisite tiling and delightful snugs, the Crown Liquor Saloon is surely the world's finest 19th century bar. Other venerable Belfast gems include White's Tavern and Kelly's Cellars; the Dirty Onion and Maddens are great for traditional music. Enjoy the unique triangular Bittles or live it up at the Revolución de Cuba! visitbelfast.com



Edo

Belfast flavours

Thanks to talented chefs and their use of superb local produce, Belfast has become a leading foodie destination. Restaurants such as Molly's Yard, in an old coaching house, and the Mourne Seafood Bar are famous for their produce. Join the locals at Belfast's oldest chip shop, Longs, or taste Northern Ireland's acclaimed "salt-aged" steaks at Edo.

GALWAY

Galway has a bohemian flavor that is typical of the west of Ireland psyche: laid back, relaxed, and ready to party. In 2020, the city will celebrate its year as European Capital of Culture, with a calendar that reflects the richness and diversity of this creative urban hotspot on Ireland's majestic Wild Atlantic Way.

01 European Capital of Culture 2020
Hosting hundreds of events, Galway's stint as European Capital of Culture kicks off with an ambitious opening ceremony on January 20, 2020. Expect a whirlwind program that covers arts, sport, theater, circus, film, architecture, and literature on a scale the city has never seen before. The European Capital of Culture is one of the biggest cultural events in the world, and Galway is most definitely stepping up to the mark.

02 Creative city vibes

Home to the renowned Druid Theatre Company, as well as being a permanent UNESCO City of Film, the arts scene in Galway attracts visitors from all over the world. A whirlwind calendar of annual events includes the much-lauded Galway Food Festival (April), SeaFest maritime festival (June), and the lively Galway International Oyster and Seafood Festival (September).

03 Traditional music

Galway has a reputation for the quality of its music scene, and on nearly every night of the week, there's something going on. Keep an eye out for sessions in pubs such as Monroe's, Taaffes, and Tíg Coilí.

04 Great tastes

Fresh from a stint as European Region of Gastronomy in 2018, Galway is one of the island's top food hubs. Eat at Michelin-starred Loam or Aniar; enjoy creative cooking at Ard Bia and Kai; or go for fish and chips at city favorite McDonagh's.

05 Beyond the city

For outdoor enthusiasts, Connemara – a 45-minute drive from the city – is unlike anywhere in the world and a place that Oscar Wilde once described as “a savage beauty.” Or take to the ocean on a ferry to enjoy the tranquility, serenity, and rich heritage at the heart of the Aran Islands.



Galway



Traditional music session Galway



Peace Bridge Derry~Londonderry



The Guildhall Derry~Londonderry

DERRY~LONDONDERRY

Sitting at the point where the Causeway Coastal Route meets the Wild Atlantic Way, Derry~Londonderry is cultured, cosmopolitan and characterful. Enjoy traditional music in cosy pubs, walk the 400-year-old city walls and hear stories of times past in excellent city museums.

01 Museum of Free Derry

Derry~Londonderry's fascinating history comes to life at several unique museums, and a particularly interesting choice is the Museum of Free Derry, which offers a local perspective of the Civil Rights Movement. The museum recently won an award for the most authentic visitor experience at the Tourism Northern Ireland Awards. museumoffreederry.org

02 The Guildhall

Located between the mighty city walls and the winding Foyle River, the striking red sandstone 19th century Guildhall hosts a fascinating exhibition on the Plantation. Restored as a visitor attraction, the Guildhall is famous for its exquisite stained glass windows.

03 The Walls

The magnificent city walls, which celebrate their 400th anniversary this year, were built in the early 1600s to defend newly arrived settlers. Transport yourself back to those times as you circle the atmospheric old city, its four great gates and the huge cannons! And within the walls, don't miss both the Tower Museum, for a history of the city, and the Siege Museum, which retells the story of the 1689 siege.

04 Ebrington Square and the Peace Bridge

A symbol of Derry~Londonderry's renaissance, crossing the spectacular Peace Bridge has become a rite of passage for visitors. It leads from the city centre over the River Foyle to Ebrington Square, home to sporting and cultural events.

05 The Craft Village

Wander through a recreated 18th century street and 19th century square, exploring artisan craft shops, intimate eateries and live music. A wonderful place to seek unique Irish gifts. ☘

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 Georgian Mall; watch out for the 22 quirky bronze gargoyles and angels around the city; or visit the ancient monument of Navan Fort. Armagh has some great restaurants, including Uluru Bar & Grill and 4 Vicars, making this a spot to be savoured.

Cork

Centered on the River Lee, Cork is a pleasant mix of quaint side streets, broad thoroughfares, and artistic districts. You could lose several hours to the English Market, which dates back to 1788, as you sample local cheeses, lunch at the Farmgate Café, and browse the food stalls. But keep some time for Cork's other attractions. Explore Cork City Gaol, enjoy art at the Crawford Municipal Art Gallery, or take a trip out to “Ireland's Alcatraz,” Spike Island.

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

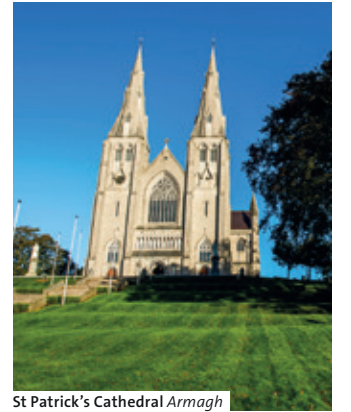
Limerick is a place with culture at its heart. Overlooking the River Shannon, this appealing medieval city is known for its festivals, galleries and museums. There's the faded Georgian elegance of the Newtown Pery district; the Hunt Museum, with its collection of precious art and antiquities; and the 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

Waterford, in Ireland's Ancient East, feels more small town than big city, with a friendly atmosphere and easy-going vibe. Founded by the Vikings, the city boasts an exciting history that can be explored within the Viking Triangle, which boasts the Medieval Museum, Bishop's Palace and Reginald's Tower. See beautiful cut glass at the House of Waterford Crystal, taste a “blaa” (bread roll) at the Granary Café or take a walk along the historic quays. ☘



The English Market Cork



St Patrick's Cathedral Armagh



Kilkenny Castle Kilkenny



King John's Castle Limerick



Reginald's Tower Waterford



IRELAND'S ANCIENT EAST

Turtle Bunbury embarks on three road trips from Dublin, Cork and Shannon and experiences exceptional history, mesmerising beauty and compelling tales, with a journey around parts of Ireland's Ancient East



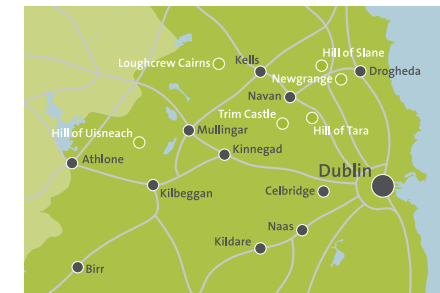
Hill of Tara County Meath



Trim Castle County Meath



Hill of Uisneach County Westmeath



Ancient wonders

Start: Dublin

Ever since I set off west across the River Liffey from **Celbridge** in County Kildare, the history of this region has been rock-solid blockbuster stuff. At **Trim** in County Meath, I march around a massive stone castle built with such precision by a Knights Templar architect that Mel Gibson used it as a location for the Braveheart movie.

Further west over the Westmeath border, I travel to the **Hill of Uisneach** where the Ail na Míreann (or "Stone of Divisions") marks the very spot where the five original kingdoms of Leinster, Munster, Connacht, Ulster and Meath met in ancient times. It's staggering how close it stands to Ireland's actual geographical centre. I close my eyes and imagine the Druid ceremonies taking place here long ago; it's said that the bonfires from



Hill of Slane County Meath



Loughcrew Cairns County Meath

Bealtaine, the ancient Celtic festival, that blazed on its summit to mark the start of summer could be seen from the **Hill of Tara**, ancient seat of Ireland's high kings, some 80km east.

Onwards, I pass through Westmeath to explore the passage graves of Loughcrew in County Meath, built over 5,000 years ago. The **Loughcrew Cairns** are aligned with the spring and autumn equinoxes; the one I see later at **Newgrange** is famously lined up with the winter solstice. How is it that the architects of these masterpieces were so incredibly in tune with the secrets of the sun and stars? I pay my respects to these wise old souls amid the grassy shadows of what was once the Royal Palace at Tara. The **Hill of Tara** was once the seat of High Kings of Ireland, but has been an important site since the Stone Age. Looking north I see the **Hill of Slane**; small wonder that is where St Patrick chose to light the Paschal fire and introduce Christianity to Pagan Ireland. With all the kings and druids around, he could be sure of a decent audience.

At my journey's end, standing by the **River Boyne**, I can see why the battle fought here in 1690 was so epic. The conflict could have gone either way, but fate fancied William of Orange. It was certainly not the first time Ireland's future was shaped by the events that took place in this historic landscape.



Ormond Castle County Tipperary



Clonmacnoise County Offaly



Rock of Cashel County Tipperary



Birr Castle County Offaly

A land of castles

Start: Shannon

Travelling east towards the **Glen of Aherlow**, I can easily see why Ireland has gained a reputation for being so green. This lush glen in County Tipperary sits between the Galtee Mountains and the hill of Slievenamuck, and makes a wonderful place for tranquil walks surrounded by verdant scenery.

I journey on through Tipperary's Golden Vale to the astounding **Rock of Cashel**, surmounted by its fairytale-like citadel. Here, the heroic Irish figure who fought the Vikings, Brian Boru, was crowned king of Munster over 1,000 years ago.

In his time, Boru must have admired the splendid high crosses that now adorn the ruined graveyards of the **Lingaun River Valley**; these ecclesiastical gems are the subject of a fabulous exhibition at **Kilkenny city's Medieval Mile Museum**.

For many long centuries, Kilkenny was the stronghold of the Butlers, an Anglo-Norman family, headed up by the Dukes and Earls of Ormond. My mother was a Butler so I feel a special affinity with Kilkenny, as well as **Ormond Castle** in **Carrick-on-Suir** in County Tipperary and the innumerable ruined churches and towers scattered throughout this former Butler dominion.

Other castles offer interesting tales

– strange and spooky ones at **Leap** in County Offaly; inspirational ones at **Birr** also in Offaly, home to a vast telescope, the world's largest for over 70 years; and architectural ones at **Emo Court**, a neoclassical mansion in County Laois.

The **River Shannon** wends into view as I behold the round tower and temples of the 6th century monastic site of **Clonmacnoise** in County Offaly, once a seat of learning to which the leading Christians of ancient war-torn Europe sent their sons to study in peace.

Further north, the castle at **Athlone** overlooks perhaps the most important crossing in Ireland, the gateway between the former kingdoms of Leinster and Connacht. I enjoy a pint in nearby **Seán's Bar**, one of the oldest pubs in the world, before spinning onwards to compare the whiskey distilleries of **Kilbeggan** in County Westmeath and **Tullamore DEW** in County Offaly.

The mighty **Rock of Dunamase** presents an exceptional site on a rocky outcrop in County Laois and was refortified when the Normans arrived to the island in the 12th century. In fairness, the Normans introduced Arabian horses to Ireland and now, entering County Kildare, there are so many stud farms, racecourses and paddocks that the horses in this serene, green landscape might even outnumber the stars in the tranquil sky above.

Take a tour

The **Waterford Greenway** is a wonderful way to discover the scenic delights of the southeast coast, and you can hire a bike or go on a tour of this 46km off-road cycling or walking trail. It may seem long, but it can also be visited in smaller parts, and the 10km section from Dungarvan to Durrow is known for its stunning scenery. Drop into O'Mahony's pub in Durrow for restorative post-cycle refreshments.

Award-winning Kilkenny ambassador **Frank Kavanagh** is the ultimate storyteller for the Kilkenny-Tipperary region, having mastered his craft during 40 years' service at Kilkenny Castle. He's a great one for really unearthing the unique stories that swirl around Kilkenny, or if you fancy something a little quirkier, try a night-time **Kilkenny Ghost Tour** with tales of witches and plagues!

A very special way to visit the 6th century monastery site of **Clonmacnoise** in County Offaly on the banks of the River Shannon is with **Viking Tours Ireland**. Captain Michael McDonnell is brilliant for bringing the area's history to life as you sail the same route the Vikings would have taken. The boat leaves from Athlone and sails down the Shannon to approach the site uniquely from the water.

A maritime adventure

Start: Cork

Laying claim to the title of second largest natural harbour in the world, **Cork Harbour** stands at the mouth of the River Lee in southwest Ireland. It's an impressive place, but just further south of here is a smaller seaport that is tied to the island's history of emigration. So many people left Ireland forever via the small town of **Cobh** that this colourful coastal spot became known as the "Town of Tears". Monuments to the Titanic and Lusitania ocean liners also serve as stark reminders of the perils of the sea.

From Cobh, I head east to **Midleton** where a beautiful sculpture honours the generosity of the Choctaw Indians of Oklahoma at the height of the Great Irish Famine. A visit to the **Jameson Distillery** sets me up for the journey to **Youghal**, home to many fine medieval buildings, including the Clock Gate Tower, a unique structure that holds many timeless stories of tragedy and rebellion.

Over 4,000 years ago, a new wave of settlers arrived in Ireland from Europe with cutting-edge copper mining technology. I think of them as I drive along the **Copper Coast** from **Dungarvan** to **Stradbally**; the sliver of land running by the sea to the south is stuffed with secret coves and sandy beaches.

At **Tramore**, I turn north for **Waterford**,



Cobh County Cork



The Waterford Greenway County Waterford



Johnstown Castle County Wexford

once the largest Viking settlement outside of Scandinavia, where today Georgian architecture and pints of stout in **Geoff's Bar** settle my soul. Next day, at **Reginald's Tower**, I learn of a wedding that sealed the deal for the Norman invaders, and marvel at the handsome medieval vestments on show at the city's excellent **Medieval Museum**.

I jump on a ferry headed east next, across the **River Suir** into County

Wexford. Stories of chivalry, crusades and castles abound from **Hook Head Lighthouse** to the town of **New Ross**.

The history of this part of the island is spliced with tales of emigration, but also with a real sense of rural life. At the **Irish Agricultural Museum** you can see recreations of trade workshops and details of the history of farming, before taking a walk through the lovely **Johnstown Castle Gardens**. There is immense coastal beauty here, too – in the whitewashed thatched cottages of **Kilmore Quay**; with the seabirds of the **Wexford Slob**s and the **Saltee Islands**; with the basking sharks who first came to these shores long before the humans arrived. 🐋

Need to Know

Ireland's Ancient East highlights the immense wealth of over 5,000 years of history in an area that stretches over 15 counties, filled with stories, festivals and fun, with great free-to-visit attractions along the way. Here, you'll find ancient passage tombs that are older than the pyramids at Giza, Celtic-era ringforts, Early Christian monasteries and medieval castles. Some of Ireland's most exceptional sights are here, including the monastic village at **Glendalough**, County Wicklow, the spectacular collection of medieval buildings that is the **Rock of Cashel** in County Tipperary, and the Neolithic passage tomb of **Newgrange**, County Meath.

The region is serviced by airports in **Dublin**, **Cork** and **Shannon**, as well as the ferry ports at **Dublin**, **Cork** and **Rosslare**. You can travel around Ireland's Ancient East by either public bus (coach) on Bus Éireann's Expressway Coach Service or local bus service. For a full map of the area's public bus transport options see buseireann.ie. Rail travel in places is an option (irishrail.ie), and guided tours are also available.

THE WILD ATLANTIC WAY

Vanessa Harriss wraps herself in the exceptional landscapes, great pubs and restaurants, and spectacular experiences along 1,500 miles/2,500km of coastal road on the Wild Atlantic Way



Slieve League County Donegal



Inishowen Peninsula County Donegal



Inishowen County Donegal



Bloody Foreland County Donegal



Mullaghmore County Sligo



Bundoran County Donegal

NORTHERN HEADLANDS AND SURF COAST

Craggy coasts contrast with quiet glens and surfers enjoy some of the world's best swells along an extraordinary stretch of the Wild Atlantic Way. **Malin Head** in County Donegal, with its rugged landscapes and beautiful beaches, is a fitting start for this windswept adventure. Watch the sun set over the rocks and sea at **Bloody Foreland** (which gets its name from the colour the evening sun turns the land) as these rocky headlands are pounded by waves. Don't miss **Nancy's Bar** in Ardara. This whitewashed traditional pub boasts a quirky interior, a chunky flagstone floor and a roaring fire. It's a real gem, with some of the best seafood around.

Stay a while – **Ardara** is a great base for exploring the countryside, hiking up into the mountains, visiting ancient sites, experiencing the land's myths and legends and rambling by lakes in quiet glens. You're spoiled for walking and hiking opportunities here, but the high grasslands of **Glengesh Pass** are something special, or head further south and stroll the gentle lanes around **Glencolmille**, with its megalithic sites.


Not to be missed are the exceptional cliffs at **Slieve League**, majestic rugged precipices that plunge into the ocean below. People have been coming here for thousands of years and you'll find Neolithic tombs along with early Christian monastic sites close to the cliffs.


Heading south towards **Bundoran** and **Mullaghmore**, look out to sea – the waves here are famous with surfers around the world. Hire a board and wetsuit from one of the many surf schools and take to the waves, or simply grab a spot on a beach and watch the surfers do their thing.

Sea air means big appetites, so stop off at **Eithna's By the Sea** restaurant in Mullaghmore, where the menu is built around seaweed and seafood. You can work it off with a bracing hike, such as the **Gleniff Horseshoe walk**, an exhilarating 6-mile/9.6km route with fantastic views, or try a looped walk around the stunning flat-topped mountain of **Ben Bulbin**. Nearby **Glencar** is a total contrast, with a pretty waterfall that inspired the poet WB Yeats. If you have an interest in Yeats you're in the right place – the poet's grave is in **Drumcliffe Cemetery**, a short

drive away. Sligo beckons with great bars and restaurants, as well as some top walks, such as **Knocknarea** just outside town. Pamper yourself afterwards with a relaxing seaweed bath at **Voya** in Strandhill, or book with **Wild Atlantic Way Cultural Tours** for a foraging course, where you'll be picking out seafood and seaweed to be cooked up into a feast.

If gathering your own dinner sounds too much like hard work and you're in the mood for a serious treat, make your way to **Coopershill House**. Once a stately home, this vast manor is now a grand country house that also welcomes dinner guests. It's a great place to end your journey through this incredible area.

 **Donegal town**
Wander around the 15th century castle and the ruins of Donegal Abbey. Take the Donegal Bay Waterbus down the calm waters of the River Eske and enjoy a night out around The Diamond in the town centre.

 **Strandhill**
This little surf village is bursting with energy. Brush up on your surfing technique or go sea kayaking, walk Strandhill Beach or take in a round of golf.



Gurteen Bay County Galway



Keem Strand Achill Island, County Mayo



Kylemore Abbey County Galway



Croagh Patrick County Mayo



Burren County Clare



The Kerry Cliffs



Dunquin Harbour County Kerry



Kinsale County Cork

BAY COAST AND CLIFF COAST

The mid-section of the Wild Atlantic Way offers sandy beaches, dizzying cliffs and the mysterious grey stone blanket of County Clare's **Burren**. Hugging close to the coastline, the road skirts around north Mayo to **Céide Fields**, an enormous prehistoric landscape and the oldest known field system in the world. Step into the award-winning visitor centre before marvelling at the lives of our Stone Age ancestors. **Achill Island** (accessible by land bridge) amps up the wild factor with a landscape that sweeps from bogland to cliffs to sparkling bays.

Watching over the island-studded **Clew Bay** is the mighty mountain of **Croagh Patrick**. Follow in the footsteps of centuries of pilgrims with a climb up to the top – the view out over the bay and its islets is definitely worth the effort.

The gentle white sand beaches of **Connemara** are perfect for strolling and paddling, and the landscape here is among the most beautiful on the island. Walk through the **National Park**; go horse riding down the beach near **Cleggan**; or visit the astounding **Kylemore Abbey** and Victorian walled garden.

Relax for a while in charming **Clifden**, or spend some time in the city of **Galway**, with traditional music, a bohemian buzz and excellent places to eat.

Heading into County Clare the scenery changes dramatically. The **Burren** is a karst limestone landscape with unique flora and fauna. Walk part of the **Burren Way**, visit the ancient megalithic tomb of **Poul nabrone Dolmen**, and drop into the **Burren Perfumery** in Carron. The company creates perfumes, soaps and cosmetics from their own herb garden. Food-wise you're in for a treat in this part of the island – take lunch in the garden at **Burren Fine Wine and Food** or drop into the award-winning **Burren Smokehouse** for some smoked salmon.

Traditional music fans should hotfoot it straight to **Doolin** and **Fitzpatrick's** and **McGann's** pubs, both of which host legendary music sessions. And after a night listening to cracking tunes, you can clear your head with a trip to the **Cliffs of Moher** for blasts of Atlantic sea air and astonishing views of the coastline.

Heading south, a good place to stop is the village of **Kilkee**, where excellent seafood is served in every pub and restaurant. While you're there, look out for the **Pollock Holes**, deep pockets left by the

outgoing tide where you can swim and dive. From here you are very close to the **Loop Head Peninsula** – fabulous walking country with wonderful views.

As you head further south, cross the River Shannon on the ferry to **Tarbert**, and on arrival visit the **Tarbert Bridewell**. This 19th century courthouse, now a museum, is a chilling reminder of how hard life could be for the poor or the criminal. To go back even further, book a day's cycling tour with **Ecotrek** and explore the myths and the megalithic monuments between **Ballybunion** and the **Bromore Cliffs**. The perfect way to end the trip? Take a seaweed bath at the **Ladies Beach** in Ballybunion. Bliss.



Westport

This strikingly pretty town will make you want to stay. Browse the art galleries, visit Clare Island in Clew Bay and enjoy dinner at Sage Restaurant or An Port Mór.



Doolin

Welcome to the traditional music capital of Ireland and gateway to the gorgeous Aran Islands. Doolin makes a great base for exploring the best the Burren region has to offer, from cliffs to cafés.

SOUTHERN PENINSULAS AND HAVEN COAST

Travel through wild terrain to gentle coves and quiet lanes. Take your time and let the region work its magic on you as the Wild Atlantic Way heads south.

It's a warm welcome you'll get in **Tralee** in County Kerry. Drop into the **County Museum** for 7,000 years of history and book a table at **Croi Restaurant** for great seafood dishes. Traditional ways live on in this region. In the summer, you might just be lucky enough to see **Irish naomhóg boats** race off the Maharees in the bay at **Castlegregory**, and you can get a taste of the past at **Tinteán Ceoil** every Monday night in Cloghane in a replica Irish cottage kitchen. Music, storytelling and dancing is fuelled by tea and scones beside the fire.

The gorgeous town of **Dingle** is packed with excellent restaurants and pubs, but make sure to leave room for a **Murphy's Ice Cream** – the queue out the door tells its own story. While here, take a boat trip out to the bay and say hello to **Fungie** the dolphin, who greets visitors and happily swims beside the boats.

On the next peninsula you'll find **St Finian's Bay**, where the monks used to

set off to the **Skelligs** back in the 6th century. Sitting 6.8 miles/11km out into the Atlantic Ocean, the dramatic outline of the islands is just visible, but if the weather is fair, you're fit and you book well in advance, a trip out to visit **Skellig Michael** is an experience not to be missed. In not so fair weather, head to the **Skellig Experience Centre** for a taste of monastic life without the climb. **Waterville** is a must for seafood, and you'll find it served in relaxed pubs and more formal settings. Or if you love a traditional pub, drop into the **Blind Piper** in **Caherdaniel** for great pints and music.

The coast of Kerry is fantastic wild walking country on what feels like the edge of the world. There are long-distance trails and circular routes, or take a stroll through the ancient oak woods of **Killarney National Park**. In this region the nights are as eventful as the days, and not just because of the lively nightlife. Kerry is designated by the **International Dark-Sky Association** – you can hire an astronomer or join a group to go out and explore the heavens. In West Cork, try kayaking by starlight on **Lough Hyne**, where the silence and the moonlight make for a magical experience.

To the south and heading east into

County Cork, the warm sea's influence softens the land. Pretty lanes are lined with fuchsia hedges, gardens bloom around elegant houses and little coves welcome explorers and kayakers.

Dining choices get tougher in this part of the world, with great places to eat around every corner. **Scannell's Bar** in **Clonakilty** has delicious lunches and music at night, or head to nearby **Ring to Deasy's Seafood Restaurant**. In beautiful **Kinsale** at the end of the Wild Atlantic Way, food is king. Fantastic restaurants and cafés work wonders with local ingredients, and there's lots to keep you here long enough to eat your way through the town! ☘



Glenbeigh

Along the famous Ring of Kerry driving route, the very pleasant village of Glenbeigh is a great base for outdoor activities such as walking, fishing, golfing and horse riding.



Kinsale

Kinsale's narrow, winding streets are lined with irresistible artsy shops (artists love the light and the views), cafés and seafood restaurants, all set around a beautiful harbour full of bobbing fishing boats.



Cushendun County Antrim



NORTHERN IRELAND'S GIANT BEAUTY



In Northern Ireland, you're never far from a memory in the making. This is a land of story-strewn cities and wave-lashed coastline, of Titanic attractions and tranquil moments surrounded by undiscovered landscapes. And with friendly locals, lots of charm and a diverse range of experiences from epic attractions to under-the-radar gems, you'll find Northern Ireland has a giant spirit of its own. *By Lynn Harding*

A majestic coastline
It's not enough to call the Causeway Coastal Route a trip, a drive, or even a discovery – this monumental stretch of coastline is more a series of adventures, with cliffs, pretty villages, sandy beaches and mysterious caves.
Starting in the energetic buzz of **Belfast** and reaching all the way to **Derry~Londonderry**, the route is on Lonely Planet's Best in Travel list 2018. No surprise either, with sights such as the UNESCO World Heritage Site of the **Giant's Causeway** – 40,000 hexagonal basalt columns that tumble down to the sea – and the **Carrick-a-Rede rope bridge**, which wobbles precipitously over the crashing ocean below.
There's the craggy ruins of **Dunluce Castle** and the elegant beauty of the clifftop **Mussenden Temple**. And how about **Rathlin Island**? Venture out by boat and you're bound to meet one of the 150 islanders lucky enough to call this nature reserve home. But amongst all these epic sights, there are quiet moments, too... a post-touring pint in cosy **Mary MacBride's** pub in Cushendun; a walk through breathtaking **Glenariff Forest Park**, near Waterfoot; a wander around the handsome Georgian village of **Glenarm**. Our advice? Go slow, and take it all in.



Rathlin Island County Antrim



Dunluce Castle County Antrim



Finn Lough Forest Domes County Fermanagh

Watery wonderlands

Whether you're visiting the underground river of the **Marble Arch Caves** or admiring **Lough MacNea**n from a distance at the top of the **Cuilcagh Legnabrocky Trail**, the waters in this part of the world give you a chance to see things from a different perspective.

This is the other side of Northern Ireland, where you can cruise into Belfast via the **River Lagan**, and where loughs contain mysterious islands, each with their own story. A good place to start is at the largest lake in both Ireland and Great Britain: **Lough Neagh**. Filled with more nooks and crannies than you could possibly hope to explore, this vast body of water borders five of Northern Ireland's six counties, and is the beating heart of a historic network of waterways.

The **Lough Neagh Canoe Trail** is perhaps the best way to get to grips with all this fantastic environment has to offer, and to discover why it's as unmissable for nature lovers as for water lovers. The lake is home to one of Europe's most significant waterfowl populations, with 10,000 birds nesting here.

Different in character yet no less beautiful are **Upper and Lower Lough Erne** in County Fermanagh – two serene, connected lakes dotted with islands. Life moves at a slow pace here. The countryside is deeply infused with rural charm and seems dominated by deep greens and navy blues. Explore the elegant beauty of **Crom Estate**, where walking trails weave through quiet forest and alongside the water; step into the 18th century glory of **Florence Court**, one of the most important Georgian houses in Ireland; or visit one of the many islands,



Strangford Village County Down

from the monastic beauty of **Devenish** to the intrigue of **White Island**, with its carved stone figures.

And for water teeming with wildlife along with history, holy wells and ancient abbeys, try **Strangford Lough**, just 20 minutes outside Belfast. Breathe in the old world glamour of **Mount Stewart House** and its spectacular gardens on the shores of the lough, before revving up the excitement with a high-speed **Strangford Sea Safari** boat tour.

Take it slow

Northern Ireland is the perfect place to get off the beaten track and into a wonderland of slow-travel experiences, where you can connect with locals and soak up authentic culture and nature. Whether you fancy wild camping, gentle kayaking and fascinating slow food tours, or you want to learn about an indigenous craft, there's something to suit.

How about a **Nature Connections**

Tour of the Sperrin Mountains in County Tyrone in the company of a local ecologist, or a visit to the **Steensons Économusée** in County Antrim, where you can watch goldsmiths at work.

Immerse yourself in local culture on walking trails around undiscovered areas such as **Lough Foyle** and the **Lower Bann**. Or head for a real hidden gem – the **Faughan Valley** in County Londonderry, where the **Beech Hill Country House** makes an elegant base for a spot of horse riding through leafy and fragrant woodland.

To keep the dream going, grab the rare chance to spend a night in an unforgettable and outstanding natural location. Waking up in a magical place, such as the remarkable **Finn Lough Forest Domes** in County Fermanagh, which boast huge transparent domed ceilings, is like nothing else. And as night falls, you can stargaze in utter comfort and silence as the stunning night sky reveals itself in all its glory.



Devenish Island County Fermanagh



Mount Stewart County Down

Captivating museums

It's impossible to visit Northern Ireland and not feel a connection to those who have gone before. Whether you can trace your family tree back to this rugged land or not, the stories, struggles and successes of the people whose lives are represented throughout its museums will strike a chord. Take **Titanic Belfast**, which was voted the world's leading tourist attraction. The harrowing tales behind the "Ship of Dreams" are brought to life in nine interactive galleries, artefacts from the White Star Line and a tour of the spot where Titanic was launched. Ask around, and the city's characteristic wit will reiterate wryly that, "She was all right when she left here!"

If you're a lover of literature, **Seamus Heaney HomePlace** is a pilgrimage worth making. One of the world's most beloved writers and Nobel laureate, Heaney was born and laid to rest right here in the Bellaghy area of County Londonderry.



Titanic Belfast

Mourne Mountains County Down



The centre's Helicon theatre hosts events year round, along with permanent exhibitions on the poet's life. The 18th century **Robinson Library** in Armagh has a similarly literary theme, and counts Jonathan Swift's very own copy of Gulliver's Travels amongst its treasures. Further west in County Tyrone, the **Ulster American Folk Park** offers an authentic look into the humble existence of countless emigrants before they made the perilous journey across the Atlantic.

Soaring beauties

There's something otherworldly about Northern Ireland's mountains, where walking and biking trails bring you to silent peaks and around moody valleys. It's a feeling that you've stumbled upon a secret that makes the **Silent Valley**, an Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty in County Down's **Mourne Mountains**, such a delight. At the heart of the valley is a massive reservoir, fringed by

mountains and surrounded by trails. To facilitate its construction in the 1920s, the picturesque village of **Watertown** sprang up.

Today, an information centre remains, complete with details on local wildlife, trail maps and abandoned artefacts of a once-bustling hub. Beauty comes easily to the Mourne Mountains, so take some time to enjoy the 28 peaks, the highest of which, **Slieve Donard**, offers stunning views out over **Murlough Bay**.

No less breathtaking, the mighty **Sperrins** reach skyward through the heather-dotted moors of counties Tyrone and Londonderry. This is true hikers' territory, with 10 summits spanning 40 miles/64km across sparse valleys that were hewn during the Ice Age; but if you're looking for a more laid-back adventure, take to the road. National Geographic also named the Sperrins one of the Top 101 Scenic Drives in the World, and driving here is thrilling.



Seamus Heaney HomePlace County Londonderry

Northern Ireland on a plate

Spectacular flavours, super-skilled chefs and a deep respect for local ingredients, when it comes to food, Northern Ireland is cooking up a storm. This is destination delicious, thanks to waters teeming with fish and shellfish, and fields full of grass-fed cattle and sheep. Although Northern Ireland's restaurant scene is anchored by the food-conscious city of Belfast, with its Michelin-starred restaurants and cutting-edge eateries, you'll find exciting and innovative places to try the very best homegrown cuisine.

Fuelled by great produce such as grass-fed salt-aged beef, succulent shellfish, artisan cheese and local butters, honeys and herbs, chefs all over Northern Ireland are creating food experiences you won't want to miss. Try the unique old-world cottage charm of **Clenaghans** in County Antrim, where innovative cooking is served against a backdrop of stone walls and low-beamed ceilings, or taste traditional baking in **Urza Minor Bakery and Café** in Ballycastle. Savour the flavours of the Mourne Mountains with a Mourne Honey Afternoon Tea at **Enniskeen House** in County Down, or step into the warm, traditional surrounds of **Chapter V** in Moy, County Tyrone, for excellent locally sourced produce. Right now, Northern Ireland tastes great! 🍷

Five more to try in Northern Ireland

01

Moonlight Kayaking

With backdrops including Binevenagh Mountain and Magilligan Fort, this enchanting night-time kayak is an experience to remember. discovernorthernireland.com

02

Belfast Traditional Music Trail

Promising "ceol agus craic" (music and fun) in equal measure, the Belfast Traditional Music Trail is a great way to get a taste of the city's trad music scene. belfasttradtrail.com

03

Newry Canal Way

This scenic towpath can be enjoyed on bicycle or on foot as it weaves along a 20-mile/32km route from Portadown to Newry. It also skirts the borders of counties Down and Armagh from Lough Neagh to Carlingford Lough. cycleni.com

04

St Patrick's Trail

Follow in the footsteps of Ireland's patron saint on this trail through Christian sites at Bangor, the Ards Peninsula, Downpatrick, Newry and Armagh. discovernorthernireland.com

05

Corralea Electric Bike Tour

Tour around beautiful Fermanagh by bike and stop at country pubs, megalithic sites and Game of Thrones® locations. ebikeni.com

EXPERIENCE IRELAND

A tour of a 13th century lighthouse, a medieval banquet, a traditional Irish music session. There are so many amazing ways to enjoy the island of Ireland, here are some to get you started...



Traditional music session

A traditional music session

County Kilkenny by Colin White

The city of Kilkenny in Ireland's Ancient East isn't just a great spot to explore medieval history, it's the perfect place to experience the undulating rhythms and lilting melodies of traditional Irish music. Music runs in the blood here, and at John Cleere's Bar & Theatre, situated within the old medieval city walls, I find something quite special. Amongst friendly faces and top-notch local brews, the next few hours pass in the blink of an eye. The music on offer is distinctively Irish, but its jigs and reels cross cultural boundaries and strike a chord with the many nationalities that are present in this charming pub. Feet stomp, fiddles romp and the good times roll. Kilkenny may be famous for its medieval history, but don't miss the opportunity to discover a side to the city that comes alive to music.



Castle Ward County Down

Game of Thrones® Winterfell Tour at Castle Ward

County Down by Emer Taaffe

I start to get in character as soon as I arrive in the courtyard of Castle Ward demesne. This is Winterfell, after all, ancestral home of the Stark family. It's where the Stark boys practised their archery skills, where Eddard Stark welcomed his old friend King Robert, and where events were set in motion that have kept the world glued to Game of Thrones® for seven years. Northern Ireland is Game of Thrones® Territory and is home to more of its filming locations than anywhere else in the world. There's nowhere better to immerse yourself in the fantasy series than right here. The people at Winterfell Tours are expert at making you feel like you've been transported into a world of drama and dragons, while also sharing some of the real history of this ancient estate on the shores of Strangford Lough.



Dunguaire Castle County Galway

Medieval magic at Dunguaire Castle Banquet

County Galway by Jane Cowen

Stepping inside the stone walls of Dunguaire Castle is akin to stepping back in time. This 16th century castle has become a popular spot for medieval banquets, and we are lured by the thought of fine wines, great food, historic surroundings and a whole host of stories. And Dunguaire doesn't disappoint. Long wooden tables illuminated by candlelight fill the room, the walls are adorned in medieval shields and a King and Queen are crowned at the top table. After a huge feast served by kitchen maids in aprons and ruffled caps, the evening is rounded off with tasty apple pie, as our goblets are filled with wine. It's great fun, and the banquet is a unique way to experience castle living on the island of Ireland from the inside. It's fair to say we were living the (medieval) dream!



Cape Clear County Cork

An island adventure

West Cork by Emily O'Sullivan

Like all of the islands scattered around Ireland's coast, Cape Clear seems wrapped in an air of mystery – remote, traditional, unique. The sense of isolation, of far-flung romance, of island secrets and maritime drama hits me as soon as I step onto the pier. As I walk around the island, I discover an undulating landscape of dry-stone walls and wildflowers, of traditional music and the Irish language, of friendly islanders and car-free country lanes. Cape Clear's relative remoteness has allowed traditions to continue unchanged, which gives it a unique atmosphere. Exploring this island makes you feel like you're in another world. Maybe it's the green hills set against the vast blue ocean, or the crystalline tones of the light, but Cape Clear's wild beauty is hypnotic. I make a promise to myself: one day, one day soon, I'll come back.

PHOTO: SHUTTERSTOCK.COM



The Gobbins County Antrim

The Gobbins Cliff Path

County Antrim by Lynn Harding

Below, the water is bubbling, seafoam visible through the latticed metal bridge, crashing against the sheer rock face. Above, the sky is teeming with birds: cormorants diving like arrows into the water; guillemots ruffling their feathers on the crowded cliffs; solemn-faced puffins huddled in their nests. And beyond – nothing but wide, open sea. This is The Gobbins: an impossibly narrow path snaking along the County Antrim coast. From your first step through Wise's Eye at the path's mouth, through the secretive smugglers' cave beyond, you can't help but marvel at the ingenuity that brought this to life more than a century ago. But it's as you cross the tubular bridge suspended above the deep green water that you really feel your heart in your mouth. Solid as the rock itself, there's still no hiding from the might of nature beneath your feet and the stunning coastal scenery all around. Are you brave enough to look down? 🦿

Hook Head Lighthouse

County Wexford by Emily O'Sullivan

"It's an amazing place to work," our tour guide smiles at us as we look out at the view. We're at Hook Head Lighthouse, on a balcony 150 feet/46 metres off the ground, being gently buffeted by a fresh sea wind. The striped black-and-white tower that stands here today dates from the 13th century, but a light has burned on this spot since St Dubhan lit one in the 5th century. Walking up through Hook's chambers is a surprisingly profound experience – the building is unadorned, but it bears the marks of soot from medieval coal and boasts the original rib vaulted ceilings under which monks would have slept, eaten and worked. As our guide explains its 800-year-old history, we start to get a sense of what an astonishing place Hook is, and how much history is contained here, in this maritime gateway to Ireland's Ancient East.

Hook Head Lighthouse County Wexford



OPEN SEASON

Major championship golf returns to Northern Ireland's iconic Royal Portrush in 2019, giving visitors from around the world the opportunity to see this beautiful part of the island and play some great golf themselves, writes Peter Ellegard



5th hole, Royal Portrush Golf Club County Antrim

Over eight spellbinding July days in 2019, a beguiling stretch of the spectacular **Causeway Coastal Route** in Northern Ireland will become the focus of attention for the sporting world. The Open will be returning to the hallowed fairways and greens of **Royal Portrush Golf Club** for the first time since 1951, when Max Faulkner lifted the famous Claret Jug aloft. It will also be only the second time that golf's most prestigious championship has been staged on the island of Ireland.

The 148th Open is set to be the biggest sporting event ever held in Northern Ireland, if not the island as a whole. At least 190,000 spectators are expected for the 2019 event, including the practice days, and the competition days are expected to attract a daily attendance of around 40,000. A park-and-ride system will be used to ferry the public from and back to nearby car parks.

As in 1951, the drama will be played out on the links of the famous Dunluce

Course at Royal Portrush, which was laid out by celebrated designer Harry Colt in 1932 and has recently been enhanced. The best golfers in the world will undoubtedly find the Dunluce Links a stern challenge at The Open. However, it is a fair test for all levels of golfer – provided you play straight and avoid the punishing marram grass rough and its deep bunkers. The wind is a constant factor as it twists and winds around the dunes. No two consecutive holes run in the same direction. Among the special qualities that make it so revered is the fact that it is a true links, enjoying an elevated position on the dunes and blending into the rugged landscape as Colt intended, rather than being below the dunes like some links.

As a result, golfers enjoy stirring views of the Atlantic Ocean and north Antrim coast, from the **Giant's Causeway** and the cliff-top ruins of **Dunluce Castle** in one direction, to the sweep of beaches that

Royal Portrush Golf Club County Antrim



Royal Portrush Golf Club County Antrim

The Irish Open 2019

Beautifully situated on the Wild Atlantic Way in County Clare, Lahinch Golf Club is gearing up for a bumper year with the hosting of the Irish Open 2019. From its opening in 1892, Lahinch has been renowned for the quality of its links course with exceptional views of the Atlantic Ocean. According to 2014's Ryder Cup Captain and Dubliner Paul McGinley, Lahinch is "embedded in the history of Irish amateur golf, as well as in the hearts of our many international visitors, and it now deservedly gets the opportunity to showcase itself on the world stage." lahinchgolf.com



Lahinch Golf Club County Clare

lie beyond neighbouring **Portstewart** and **Castlerock** courses as far as Donegal to the west. On a clear day, golfers can even see beyond the offshore **Skerries islands** to the island of Islay, the southern bastion of Scotland's Inner Hebrides. The green of the par-four 5th hole, White Rocks, sets hearts racing with its spectacular position right on a cliff edge high above a beach, as does the adjacent 6th tee box.

Royal Portrush is steeped in the success of its local heroes. Fred Daly, a one-time caddy at the club, became Northern Ireland's first Champion Golfer of the Year with his victory at Hoylake in 1947. Graeme McDowell was born and grew up in Portrush, and won the US Open >



5th Green, Royal Portrush Golf Club County Antrim

Championship courses to try

Actor Bill Murray once said, "My favourite place to play golf is in Ireland. When you come as a guest, you're treated as a king." And he's not wrong. With courses to suit all abilities, majestic locations and a very warm welcome waiting, you'll find courses on the island of Ireland to be a cut above the rest. With The 148th Open hitting our shores in 2019, we look at other championship courses around the island where you can test your skills with the best of them.



Adare Manor County Limerick

Adare Manor Golf Club County Limerick

The last major golf course design by celebrated architect Robert Trent Jones Senior and opened in 1995, Adare Manor Golf Club in the pretty village of Adare, County Limerick, has just undergone a complete revamp, which is intended to position it at the very top of Ireland's golf facilities. The course meanders through 230 acres of lush parkland and majestic mature trees, crossed at various points by the River Maigue. The closing hole demands an approach shot over water to a green adjacent to the magnificent, turreted 19th century Adare Manor. adaremanorgolfclub.com



Ballybunion County Kerry

Ballybunion County Kerry

Regarded by many as Ireland's finest course, Ballybunion's Old Course is situated on the shores of the Shannon in County Kerry, and winds through huge sand dunes. The opening hole is one of golf's most intimidating, with a cemetery bordering the right for 200 yards. Five-time Open champion, Tom Watson, first visited in 1981, and recalls that it "started his love affair with Ballybunion and links golf, side by side." He also describes it in the official course planner as "a true test of golf". ballybuniongolfclub.com



Whiterocks Beach County Antrim

in 2010, eight years after being awarded life membership of Royal Portrush.

Although the 148th Open at Royal Portrush is the biggest golfing event in Northern Ireland in 2019, it's also set to be a bumper year for the game in Northern Ireland, with the Northern Ireland Open taking place at Galgorm Castle, only 30 miles/38km from Belfast. A Ladies European Tour event will run at the same time as the European Challenge Tour.

Beyond the course

Golf may dominate Portrush, but there's plenty to keep visitors occupied off the course. The small seaside resort town makes a great base for exploring the coastline, and there are wonderful beaches, including **Whiterocks** and **Portrush Strand**.

Those with time can drive the entire 120-mile/193km Causeway Coastal Route that hugs the Atlantic coast from **Belfast** to **Derry~Londonderry**. Stay a while in Derry~Londonderry, and walk around the city's 400-year-old walls, followed by a guided tour of the auburn-brick beauty known as the **Guildhall**. At the opposite end of the route is Belfast, with its vibrant and exciting attractions including **Titanic Belfast**, the **Botanic Gardens**, the **Ulster Museum** and the excellent Michelin-starred restaurants, **OX** and **Eipic**.

For a taste of some great local traditional music, head inland to the quaint **Crosskeys Inn**, just north of Lough Neagh. This little thatched pub is one of the most famous traditional music pubs on the island, and, quite incredibly, dates back to 1654. If you're lucky you might even catch an eel supper!

Of course, a highlight for whiskey fans has to be the **Old Bushmills Distillery**, in the village of Bushmills. Here they've been producing whiskey since 1608,



Harry's Shack County Londonderry

making it the island of Ireland's oldest working distillery.

Interested in more golf? Besides Royal Portrush, other local courses to tee up on include 2017's Irish Open host **Portstewart** and **Castlerock's** 110-year-old Mussenden Links, reworked by Harry Colt in 1925, and then updated by Martin Hawtree in 2018, as well as the 18-hole Ballycastle course. Inland courses include **Lough Erne** and **Castle Roe** resorts and **Galgorm Castle Golf Club**, venue for the annual Northern Ireland Open.

Once you've worked up an appetite, Portrush harbour has the **Mermaid**, the **Neptune & Prawn** and the **Harbour Bistro**, all of which are popular dining spots with golfers. You can also head to the wonderful beachside **Harry's Shack** or Italian restaurant **Amici**, both a few minutes away in Portstewart. The Bushmills Inn also dishes up great food with a nice "wee dram" on the side.

A perfect way to toast The Open, Ireland-style, perhaps? ☘

For more information visit ireland.com/golf

The K Club

County Kildare

The Kildare Country Club, to give it its full name, memorably hosted the 2006 Ryder Cup on its Palmer Course, created by Arnold Palmer in 1991. The River Liffey is an ever-present danger and the closing holes are memorable, especially the tight fairways and risk-reward temptation of the 16th and 18th – as the Ryder Cup stars of Europe and America will recall. You can also try fly-fishing on the K Club Estate, which is situated near Dublin in Straffan, County Kildare. kclub.ie



Old Head of Kinsale County Cork

Old Head of Kinsale Golf Links

County Cork

Perhaps the most exhilarating golf course of all in Ireland, the Old Head of Kinsale Golf Links is laid out atop 300 feet/91 metres high cliffs in the shadow of the Old Head of Kinsale lighthouse along Ireland's Wild Atlantic Way in County Cork. Few courses will distract you as much as this, with its stunning coastal and ocean views – quite apart from the sheer drop down to the Atlantic waves, which crash against the rocks just beyond the edge of its fairways and greens. For golfers with cash to splash, arrive by helicopter at the heliport close to the opening hole and stay on-site in luxury suites. oldhead.com

Mount Juliet Golf Club

County Kilkenny

Its opening hosted a match featuring golfing legends Christy O'Connor Snr and Jack Nicklaus back in 1991, and the prestigious Mount Juliet has been wowing both professionals and amateurs ever since. Set amid the gorgeous County Kilkenny countryside, the painstakingly designed parkland course boasts water features, fairways and contoured greens with plenty of tests for the keen golfer. Stick around afterwards as the resort hotel here features one of the most acclaimed restaurants on the island of Ireland – the delightful Michelin-starred Lady Helen. mountjuliet.ie

Royal County Down

County Down

Royal County Down has to be one of the island's most formidable courses. Golf Digest calls it its "favourite course outside of the US" thanks to designer Tom Morris, who shaped the natural undulations of sand dunes on the edge of Dundrum Bay into a links layout that is as beautiful as it is challenging. The Mourne Mountains provide this sculptural masterpiece with a dramatic backdrop, but a word to the wise: don't get distracted by your surroundings at any of the five blind tee shots, deep pot bunkers, domed greens and narrow ribbons of hummocky fairways, or you'll rue your scorecard in the Irish 19th, the clubhouse. royalcountydown.org



Matt Molloy's Westport, County Mayo

FIVE GREAT TRADITIONAL PUBS

The traditional Irish pub will never go out of fashion because it is perfectly presented to make people happy! Conviviality, conversation, a warm fire and picture-lined walls are basic requirements, but these five pubs have something extra special that make them worth seeking out



Tigh Neachtain's Galway

Tigh Neachtain's Galway

Picture this: beautiful wood panelling, little private snugs with frosted glass and shelves stacked with old bottles. Walk into Tigh Neachtain's in the heart of bustling Galway city and it feels like you're entering a different era. Here, the city's creative types mingle and chat over slow-settled pints of Guinness, and nothing ever seems like too much effort. Opened in 1894, Neachtain's certainly feels wrapped in history but it still anchors the city social scene, with traditional music, arts and cultural events served up throughout the year.

Foxy John's Dingle

There was a time when almost every village in Ireland had a place like Foxy John's, where the pub served as general store, undertakers and post office. Foxy John's is a pub and hardware shop, with a thriving line in bike repair and rental – excellent news for visitors who ride the nearby Sleah Head Loop. After taking on the trail, you can hand the bike back and settle in for a great night's "craic" (fun). You'll be in good company, too – the Star Wars team chose Foxy John's for their wrap party after filming in County Kerry.



Foxy John's Dingle, County Kerry

Matt Molloy's Westport

There are certain things you expect from a traditional Irish pub. Ideally, you're looking for an open fire, great pints, good company – and live music. If music is at the top of your list, head to Matt Molloy's in Westport, where live traditional music happens every night. Matt himself is a professional musician who plays the flute with traditional Irish music band The Chieftains, and if he's in, he'll give the audience a taste of musical magic for the price of a pint. The pub is cosy, so the atmosphere is intimate and coloured completely by the music, whether it's a lively jig or a sorrowful lament.

The Crown Liquor Saloon Belfast



The Crown Liquor Saloon Belfast

Expect your jaw to drop when you step into The Crown Liquor Saloon. The interior is adorned with carved wood, stained glass and decorative tiling, so it's no surprise that it has gained a reputation as one of the most beautiful pubs in the world. From the marble bar and the gas lighting to the cosy little snugs (private booths), this place is pure pleasure from start to finish. Having begun life back in the 1880s, today The Crown stands as a stopped-in-time example of a traditional Victorian gin palace.

Grace Neill's County Down

This pub near the port of Donaghadee has been serving the thirsty customers of County Down since 1611. A low ceiling, dark wood counter and small windows make it easy to imagine shadowy corners where in years gone by sailors and fishermen would down ales and tell tales. Today it's a beautiful place to enjoy a quiet drink on a slow afternoon – history really does make its presence felt in here. Originally known as The Kings Arms, it was given to a certain Grace Neill as a wedding present in 1842, and Grace ran the pub for an astonishing 72 years. ☘



Valentia Island County Kerry

GENERAL INFORMATION & PLANNING YOUR TRIP

GEOGRAPHY, POPULATION AND DEMOGRAPHICS

486km long and 275km wide, the island of Ireland is divided into four historic provinces – Ulster, Munster, Leinster and Connacht – and 32 counties, of which 26 are in the Republic of Ireland and six are in Northern Ireland. The Republic of Ireland is a parliamentary democracy headed by the President of Ireland; Northern Ireland has its own regional/local government and is part of the United Kingdom. The population of the island is approximately six million, with over 4.3 million living in the Republic of Ireland and 1.7 million in Northern Ireland.

LANGUAGE

Irish (Gaelic) and English are the official languages of the Republic of Ireland: street and road signs are all bilingual. In Gaeltacht (Irish-speaking) areas, road signs may only be displayed in Irish and Irish is spoken daily, though everyone speaks English as well. In Northern Ireland, English is the official language. The Irish language is also taught in many schools and summer schools. Ulster-Scots, spoken in Northern Ireland, is also on the increase.

PASSPORT/VISA REQUIREMENTS

Visitors from Nordic countries require a valid passport to enter the island of Ireland. Visitors of other nationalities should contact their local Irish embassy/consulate or their local embassy.

EMBASSIES & CONSULATES

REPUBLIC OF IRELAND

Denmark
Østbanegade 21
2100 København Ø
Tel: 35 47 32 00
Fax: 35 43 18 58
Email: copenhagenembassy@dfa.ie
www.embassyofireland.dk

Finland
Erottajankatu 7 A
00130 Helsinki
Tel: 09 682 4240
Fax: 09 646 022
Email: helsinkiembassy@dfa.ie
www.embassyofireland.fi

Norway
Haakon VII's gate 1
0244 Oslo
Tel: 22 01 72 00
Fax: 22 01 72 01
Email: osloembassy@dfa.ie
www.embassyofireland.no

Sweden
Hovslagargatan 5
PO Box 10326
100 55 Stockholm
Tel: 08 5450 4040
Fax: 08 660 1353
Email: stockholmembassy@dfa.ie
www.embassyofireland.se

NORTHERN IRELAND

Denmark
Kastelsvej 36-40
2100 København Ø
Tel: 35 44 52 00
Fax: 35 44 52 93
Email: enquiry.copenhagen@fco.gov.uk
www.gov.uk/government/world/organisations/british-embassy-copenhagen

Finland
Itäinen Puistotie 17
00140 Helsinki
Tel: (09) 2286 5100
Fax: (09) 2286 5262
Email: info.helsinki@fco.gov.uk
www.gov.uk/government/world/organisations/british-embassy-helsinki

Norway
Thomas Heftyesgate 8
0264 Oslo
Tel: 23 13 27 00
Fax: 23 13 27 41
Email: britemb@online.no
www.gov.uk/government/world/organisations/british-embassy-oslo

Sweden
Skarpögatan 6-8
Box 27819
115 93 Stockholm
Tel: 08 671 3000
Fax 08 662 9989
Email: stockholm@fco.gov.uk
www.gov.uk/government/world/organisations/british-embassy-stockholm

MEDICAL

Vaccines are neither compulsory nor necessary unless you are travelling from an infected country. Visitors to the Republic of Ireland are covered under an agreement with the Department of Health, but some form of identification or a European Health Insurance Card is necessary. Visitors to Northern Ireland require no documentation and will receive treatment as they would in their own country. Visitors from all other EU countries travelling to Ireland should obtain a European Health Insurance Card (EHIC) prior to departure. Visit www.ehic.org.uk for further information. For visitors from non-EU countries travelling to Ireland, private medical insurance is highly recommended.

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
www.nda.ie
NORTHERN IRELAND
Disability Action
Tel: 028 9029 7880
www.disabilityaction.org

PETS

Pets entering Ireland must comply with Ireland's requirements under the EU Pet Passport System to avoid quarantine. Pets entering the UK from the EU can travel into Ireland without quarantine, provided they satisfy the requirements of the UK Pet Travel Scheme and are cleared on arrival in the UK. Tel: 0845 933 5577 or visit www.gov.uk/take-pet-abroad for more information. For further information contact:

REPUBLIC OF IRELAND
Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food
Tel: +353 (0) 1 607 2000
www.agriculture.gov.ie
NORTHERN IRELAND
Department of Agriculture and Rural Development
Tel: 028 9052 4999
www.dardni.gov.uk

CURRENCIES

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

BANKS

Banking hours are generally 09.30/10.00 to 16.30hrs Monday to Friday. Some banks are open on Saturday in Northern Ireland. ATM (cash) machines are located at most banks and accept most credit and debit cards.

CREDIT CARDS

Visa, Mastercard, and American Express are widely accepted in Ireland. Visitors with other cards should ask in advance or see if the card is on display where they wish to use it.

VAT AND TAX REFUNDS

Visitors from the EU are not entitled to any VAT or tax refunds. Norwegians are entitled to VAT or tax refund. Look for the "Tax Free Shopping" signs in shop windows. You must fill out a valid refund document and give this to the customs authorities when you travel out of the EU.

TELEPHONE

Mobile phones
Only digital phones with GSM subscriptions and a roaming agreement will work on the island of Ireland. Visitors should consult with their supplier before travelling.

Pay phones

Easy-to-use country calling cards are widely available at many outlets.

REPUBLIC OF IRELAND
If calling the Republic of Ireland, all telephone numbers must be prefixed with +353 (remove the first 0).
www.goldenpages.ie

POSTAL SERVICES

Post offices are generally open from 09.00 to 17.30hrs, Monday to Friday. Main post offices also open on Saturday between 09.00 and 12.30hrs in Northern Ireland and 09.00 and 17.00hrs in the Republic of Ireland. Please note that exact opening hours vary depending on the size and location of the branch.

SHOPPING

Shops are generally open Monday to Saturday from 09.00 to 17.30/18.00hrs with late-night shopping until 20.00hrs or 21.00hrs on Thursdays at many large stores. Sunday opening hours are generally midday until 17.00hrs or 18.00hrs (13.00 – 17.00hrs in Northern Ireland).

TIPPING

In restaurants, when a service charge is not included, 10-15% of the bill is appropriate. Taxi drivers are usually tipped by rounding up the fare to the nearest euro or pound and porters about €1.50 or £1 per bag. In pubs, tipping bar staff is at the customer's discretion.



Powerscourt House and Gardens County Wicklow

ELECTRICAL CURRENT

The standard electricity supply on the island of Ireland is 230/240 volts AC (50 cycles). Visitors will require a transformer and plug adaptor (to convert 2-pin plugs to the standard 3-pin plugs) which can be bought at airports or electrical suppliers.

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-Fri), 6-7 Hanover Street East, Dublin 2
Tel: +353 (0) 1 661 0562
Email: info@itas.ie; www.itas.ie
Store Street Garda Station
(Weekends and public holidays), Dublin 1
Tel: +353 (0) 1 666 8109
NORTHERN IRELAND
Contact the local police station where support will be available.
Tel: 101
www.psn.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

PUBS

The legal drinking age is 18 years. Some pubs will insist patrons are over 21 years and carry some form of identification. Legislation in the Republic of Ireland stipulates that children under 18 years are not allowed in premises that serve alcohol after 21.30hrs.

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.



Blackhead Lighthouse County Antrim



TRAVELLING TO IRELAND BY SEA

The island of Ireland has 5 main ferry ports – Belfast, Dublin, Dun Laoghaire, Larne and Rosslare.



SEA ROUTES

DEPART	ARRIVE	CARRIER	VESSEL	DURATION
Cairnryan	Larne	P&O Ferries	Express	1hr
			Superferry	1hr 45mins
Fishguard	Belfast	Stena Line	Superfast VII/VIII	2hrs 15mins
	Rosslare	Stena Line	Stena Express Superferry	2hrs 3hrs 30mins
Holyhead	Dublin	Irish Ferries	Cruise Ferry	3hrs 15mins
		Irish Ferries	Dublin Swift	1hr 49mins
		Stena Line	Superferry	3hrs 15mins
		Stena Line	HSS Fast Craft	2hrs
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	7hrs 30mins
Liverpool (Birkenhead)	Belfast	Stena Line	Stena Lagan	8hrs
			Stena Mersey	8hrs
Pembroke	Rosslare	Irish Ferries	Cruise Ferry	3hrs 45mins

FERRY AND COACH OPERATORS CONTACT DETAILS

FERRY COMPANY	TELEPHONE	WEBSITE
Irish Ferries	0871 730 0400	www.irishferries.com
P&O Ferries	0871 702 3477	www.poferries.com
Steam Packet Company	0872 299 2992	www.steam-packet.com
Stena Line	0844 770 7070	www.stenaline.co.uk
Eurolines	0871 781 8181	www.eurolines.co.uk

All information correct at time of going to press but may be subject to future operator changes. Calls to sea/coach operators may incur local or national call charges. Please see websites for details.



Blasket Islands County Kerry



TRAVELLING TO IRELAND BY AIR

DENMARK

DEPART	ARRIVE	AIRLINE
Copenhagen	Dublin	Norwegian Airlines
	Dublin	Ryanair
	Dublin	SAS

AIRLINE	TELEPHONE	WEBSITE
Norwegian Airlines	7080 78 80	www.norwegian.dk
Ryanair	+44 871 246 0002	www.ryanair.com
SAS – Scandinavian Airlines	7010 20 00	www.sas.dk

FINLAND

DEPART	ARRIVE	AIRLINE
Helsinki	Dublin	Finnair
	Dublin	Norwegian Airlines
	Dublin*	SAS

*via Stockholm or Copenhagen

AIRLINE	TELEPHONE	WEBSITE
Finnair	0600 140 140	www.finnair.fi
Norwegian Airlines	09 231 01 600	www.norwegian.com
SAS	06000 25 831	www.sas.fi

NORWAY

DEPART	ARRIVE	AIRLINE
Oslo	Dublin	Norwegian Airlines
	Dublin	SAS

AIRLINE	TELEPHONE	WEBSITE
Norwegian Airlines	815 21 815	www.norwegian.no
SAS – Scandinavian Airlines	05400	www.sas.no

SWEDEN

DEPART	ARRIVE	AIRLINE
Stockholm Arlanda	Dublin	Norwegian Airlines
Stockholm Arlanda	Dublin	SAS
Gothenburg Landvetter	Dublin	www.ryanair.com

AIRLINE	TELEPHONE	WEBSITE
Norwegian Airlines	0770 45 77 00	www.norwegian.com
SAS – Scandinavian Airlines	0770 727 727	www.sas.se
Ryanair	-	www.ryanair.com





Belfast City Hall

REGIONAL AIRPORTS AND FLIGHTS

The following internal flights are available within Ireland.

DEPART	ARRIVE	AIRLINE	TELEPHONE	WEBSITE
Dublin	Donegal	Aer Lingus Regional*	+44 0333 004 5000	www.aerlingus.com
	Kerry	Aer Lingus Regional*	+44 0333 004 5000	www.aerlingus.com

*Operated by Stobart Air
Please check website for details, as air routes are subject to change.



Trinity College Dublin

TRAVELLING FROM DUBLIN AND BELFAST AIRPORTS INTO CITY CENTRES

DUBLIN

Arriving in Dublin Airport, the options to get into the city centre are by bus or taxi. Buses and taxis are located just outside the arrivals hall. A taxi can cost between €20-30* depending on where you are travelling within the city. Dublin Airport is located on the north side of the city so fares to this part of Dublin will normally be cheaper than if you were taking a taxi to the south side. Direct buses to the city centre and bus and train stations are available from Dublin Bus Airlink; €6* single and €10* return. Children travel half price. Aircoach also operates coach services from the airport to the city centre and suburban areas. Fares from €6* single and €10* return.

BELFAST

Belfast International Airport
The airport is situated just 29km outside Belfast city centre and you can take a bus or taxi into the city.

Airport Express 300 now operates a 24-hour service between the airport and Belfast city centre with buses departing regularly throughout the day; €7.50* single and €10.50* return. The bus leaves from the bus stop located opposite the terminal exit. A taxi fare to the city centre is approximately €30*.

George Best Belfast City Airport
Airport Express 600 into the city centre runs on the hour (every 20 minutes during peak time); €2.60* single and €3.80* return. A taxi fare to the city is approximately €10*. Trains run from adjacent Sydenham station near the airport to Belfast and beyond.

*Prices are subject to change.

i For information on access to and from airports and ferry ports throughout the island of Ireland, log on to www.ireland.com

TRAVELLING AROUND IRELAND

TAXIS

There are metered taxis in Belfast, Dublin, Galway, Limerick and Cork. In other areas, fares should be agreed beforehand. Taxis are most commonly found at ranks in central city locations.

PUBLIC TRANSPORT

The island of Ireland has a reasonably comprehensive public transport system of rail and bus services. The rail network serves many large towns and cities across the island, including the ferry ports of Larne, Belfast, Dublin, Dun Laoghaire, Cork and Rosslare. Bus services link to the rail system as well as providing access to ferry ports and airports. Recent investment in road and rail has provided more comfort for travellers, offered greater frequency of service, improved travel times and opened up new services, including the western rail link between Galway and Limerick. Rail and bus fares offer good value for the traveller, with various discount tickets available that give unlimited travel on bus and rail services.

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

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

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

REPUBLIC OF IRELAND

Irish Rail (Iarnród Éireann)

Tel: +353 (0) 1 836 6222; www.irishrail.ie

Irish Bus (Bus Éireann)

Tel: +353 (0) 1 836 6111; www.buseireann.ie

Dublin Bus (Bus Átha Cliath)

Tel: +353 (0) 1 873 4222; www.dublinbus.ie

DART (Rapid Transit Rail)

The Dublin area is served by the "DART" rapid transit rail from Howth to Malahide in north County Dublin, and via Dun Laoghaire to Greystones in County Wicklow.

www.irishrail.ie/DART

Dublin Luas

The Dublin Luas is a state-of-the-art Light Rail Transit (LRT) system connecting outlying suburbs to Dublin city centre with a high-capacity, high-frequency, high-speed service. When in the Republic of Ireland, call Luas on 1800 300 604 or visit www.luas.ie

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

most newsagents in Dublin city centre and the surrounding suburbs.

The Dublin Bike Sharing Scheme is another good option for travelling around the city.

www.dublinbikes.ie

Cork, Galway, Limerick and Belfast (from February 2015) also have bike schemes.

www.ireland.com

NORTHERN IRELAND

Translink

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

Tel: 028 9066 6630 or visit www.translink.co.uk

Check for specially discounted fares when travelling by public transport. For instance, the iLink card provides unlimited bus/train travel for 1 day, 1 week or 1 month.

The Enterprise

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

INLAND FERRIES AND ISLAND BOAT SERVICES

When visiting any of the offshore islands around the Irish coastline, check out island boat services well in advance – and check again just before travelling as changes in the weather may affect services. Regular island boat services operate to the Aran Islands off the Galway coast, Rathlin Island off the north Antrim coast, Aranmore Island off the coast of Donegal, Clare Island off the Mayo coast, and Sherkin and Cape Clear Islands off the coast of West Cork. There are also several inland ferry services that ease travelling around Ireland and make the journey more interesting, such as the Strangford Lough ferry at Portaferry, County Down; the ferry across the Shannon Estuary between Tarbert, County Kerry and Killimer, County Clare; and the ferry link between Greencastle, County Donegal, and Magilligan Point, County Londonderry.

DRIVING IN IRELAND

Visitors to Ireland must bring a valid national driving licence with them, issued in the country of their permanent residence. Driving in Ireland is on the left and seatbelts must be worn at all times, in the front and back of the vehicle. Drivers should note that they are obliged by law to carry their driving licence at all times when driving in the Republic of Ireland. Motorcyclists and their passengers must wear helmets. There are very strict laws on drinking and driving, and the best advice is simply "don't drink and drive".

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



Conor Pass County Kerry

border between Northern Ireland and the Republic of Ireland.

In Northern Ireland, the speed limit is 30mph in built-up areas, 60mph on the open road and 70mph on motorways unless shown otherwise. In the Republic of Ireland, the speed limit is 120km/h on motorways, 100km/h on national roads and 80km/h on non-national roads. Barrier-free tolling is operational on certain motorways in the Republic of Ireland – visit www.eflow.ie for further information.

CAR RENTAL

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

To avoid misunderstandings, it is recommended that you always check the detailed terms and conditions of your rental booking in advance. Even if you book through a third party (broker, agent, tour operator), you will be required to sign a rental agreement with the car rental company, so spend some time in advance selecting the various insurances, waivers and other options appropriate to your needs and understand the costs involved. For insurance reasons you should advise the car rental company if you intend travelling between the Republic of Ireland and Northern Ireland. The trade organisation for the car rental industry in the Republic of Ireland is the Car Rental Council – email: info@carrentalcouncil.ie or visit www.carrentalcouncil.ie

In Northern Ireland, contact the British Vehicle Rental and Leasing Association. Tel: 01484 434 747 or visit www.bvrla.co.uk



Cloughoughter Castle County Cavan

THINGS TO SEE AND DO

ATTRACTIONS

For information on Ireland's attractions, check the Tourism Ireland website, www.ireland.com. We also recommend you try the following contacts to find out more about the wonderful range of historic houses and gardens, museums, castles, galleries and beautiful countryside when putting together itineraries.

ALL ISLAND

Houses, Castles and Gardens of Ireland

Tel: +353 (0) 87 777 6428

www.hcgi.ie

Heritage Island

Tel: +353 (0) 1 775 3870

www.heritageisland.com

REPUBLIC OF IRELAND

The Heritage Service

Tel: +353 (0) 1 647 6635

www.heritageireland.ie

CNCI (Council of National Cultural Institutions)

Tel: +353 (0) 64 662 7384

www.cnci.ie

NORTHERN IRELAND

NI Environment Agency

Tel: 028 9054 0540

www.doeni.gov.uk

The National Trust

Tel: 0844 800 1895

www.nationaltrust.org.uk

National Museums of Northern Ireland

Tel: 0845 608 0000

www.nmni.com

Northern Ireland Museums Council

Tel: 028 9055 0215

www.nimc.co.uk

ANGLING

In Ireland, you'll come across a huge variety of species of fish in the large network of loughs, rivers and canals and surrounding sea. There's a superb infrastructure of angling centres and fishing boat operators and beautiful surroundings, so it's not surprising that Ireland

has become one of the world's favourite destinations for game, sea and coarse angling. For more information visit www.ireland.com/angling

CRUISING & WATERSPORTS

The 3 main waterways for cruising are the River Shannon, the Grand Canal and the Erne Waterway System. At present, the most developed are the Shannon-Erne Waterway and lakes. Cabin cruisers can be hired ranging in size from 2 to 10 berths. Experience in handling a boat is helpful but not essential as training is provided. Surfing, rowing, sailing, sub-aqua diving, canoeing, snorkelling or windsurfing – if you love watersports, Ireland is your perfect destination.

For navigation advice and watersports information contact:

ALL ISLAND

Waterways Ireland

Tel: 028 6632 3004

www.waterwaysireland.org

REPUBLIC OF IRELAND

Inland Waterways Association of Ireland

Tel: 028 3832 5329

www.iwai.ie

NORTHERN IRELAND

Department of Culture, Arts and Leisure

Tel: 028 9025 8825

www.dcalni.gov.uk

Outdoor Recreation Northern Ireland

Tel: 028 9030 3930

www.outdoorrecreationni.com

Sport Northern Ireland

Tel: 028 9038 1222

www.sportni.net

CYCLING

A number of companies provide guided and self-guided cycling tours and you can hire bicycles throughout Ireland. For more information visit www.ireland.com/cycling

GAELIC GAMES

The unique Gaelic sports of football and hurling are as exciting as any sport in the world to watch and can be seen at stadiums throughout Ireland as well as at Croke Park in Dublin, home of the Gaelic Athletic Association (GAA).

For further information contact:

Tel: +353 (0) 1 836 3222; www.gaa.ie

RUGBY

All four provinces of Ireland have strong rugby teams and the national side, composed of players from each province, is one of the best in the world. For further information contact:

Tel: +353 (0) 1 647 3800; www.irishrugby.ie

FOOTBALL

Football is hugely popular throughout the island.

For further information contact:

REPUBLIC OF IRELAND

Football Association of Ireland

Tel: +353 (0) 1 899 9500; www.fai.ie

NORTHERN IRELAND

Irish Football Association

Tel: 028 9066 9458; www.irishfa.com

GENEALOGY

The following associations may be useful in assisting your search to trace your ancestors in Ireland.

ALL ISLAND

The Irish Family History Foundation;

rootsireland.ie

Accredited Genealogists Ireland; aggi.ie

REPUBLIC OF IRELAND

Genealogical Office (National Library of Ireland)

Tel: +353 (0) 1 603 0200; www.nli.ie

General Register Office

Tel: +353 (0) 90 663 2900; www.groireland.ie

National Archives Ireland

Tel: +353 (0) 1 407 2300; www.nationalarchives.ie

NORTHERN IRELAND

The Public Record Office Northern Ireland

Tel: 028 9053 4800; www.proni.gov.uk

General Register Office Northern Ireland

Tel: 028 9151 3101; www.nidirect.gov.uk/gro

GOLF

With over 400 courses around the island of Ireland, including over 30% of the world's natural links courses and championship parkland courses, Ireland is now one of the world's leading golf destinations. Playing here is an unforgettable experience.

For more information visit www.ireland.com/golfing

HORSE RIDING & HORSE RACING

Ireland is a beautiful country to explore on horseback and you'll find a large network of equestrian centres. For more information visit www.ireland.com/equestrian or www.ireland.com/equestrian **Holidays Ireland** at www.ghi.ie. Horse racing is a passion in Ireland and several of the world's most exciting and atmospheric race courses are here, from Punchestown and the Curragh in County Kildare to Down Royal in County Down, and Leopardstown and

Fairyhouse courses. There are also a number of fabulous horse racing festivals, including those at Galway and Downpatrick. That's not forgetting the unique Laytown Strand Races in County Meath; the event run on a long stretch of golden sand under the rules of racing is the only one of its kind in Europe. For further information and a full list of events, contact **Horse Racing Ireland**. Tel: +353 (0) 45 455455; www.goracing.ie

AIRE (the Association of Irish Riding Establishments) is a body that regulates standards at riding schools and equestrian centres in Ireland. Their website contains a list of approved and inspected members that offer a wide choice of riding facilities for every rider, regardless of ability or experience. Tel: +353 (0) 45 854 418; www.aire.ie



Gobbins Visitors Centre County Antrim

TOURISM ORGANISATIONS

REPUBLIC OF IRELAND

Aran Tourist Office: Tel: +353 (0) 99 61263

Cork Tourist Office: Tel: +353 (0) 21 425 5100

Dingle Tourist Office: Tel: +353 (0) 66 9151188

Donegal Tourist Office: Tel: +353 (0) 74 972 1148

Dublin Airport Tourist Office

(Terminal 1): Tel: +353 1850 230 330

Dublin Airport Tourist Office

(Terminal 2): Tel: +353 1850 230 330

Dublin O'Connell Street Tourist Office:

Tel: +353 1850 230 330

Dublin Suffolk Street Tourist Office:

Tel: +353 1850 230 330

Ennis Tourist Office: Tel: +353 (0) 65 682 8366

Galway Tourist Office: Tel: +353 (0) 91 537 700

Kilkenny Tourist Office: Tel: +353 (0) 56 775 1500

Killarney Tourist Office: Tel: +353 (0) 64 663 1633

Kinsale Tourist Office: Tel: +353 (0) 21 477 2234

Letterkenny Tourist Office: Tel: +353 (0) 74 912 1160

Limerick Tourist Office: Tel: +353 (0) 61 317 522

Mullingar Tourist Office: Tel: +353 (0) 44 934 8650

Sligo Tourist Office: Tel: +353 (0) 71 916 1201

Tralee Tourist Office: Tel: +353 (0) 66 712 1288

Waterford Tourist Office: Tel: +353 (0) 51 875 823

Westport Tourist Office: Tel: +353 (0) 98 25711

Wexford Tourist Office: Tel: +353 (0) 53 912 3111

Wicklow Tourist Office: Tel: +353 (0) 404 69117

NORTHERN IRELAND

Visit Belfast: Tel: 028 9024 6609

visit-belfast.com

Visit Derry: Tel: 028 7126 7284

visitderry.com

Fermanagh Lakelands Tourism: Tel: 028 6632 3110

fermanaghlakelands.com



Ballyvolane House County Cork

WHERE TO STAY

In a country where hospitality is second nature, Ireland has a wonderful range of places to stay from the friendliest bed and breakfasts in the world to 5-star hotels. Visit www.ireland.com/offers to see hundreds of offers on accommodation in Ireland and to check out a range of attractive inclusive packages available from many tour operators.

You will find welcoming bed and breakfasts throughout Ireland, even in the most remote areas, with a friendly personal service and delicious full Irish or Ulster fry breakfasts. To feel part of the countryside, nothing compares with a farmhouse holiday but book early as they are very popular – it's a great way to get to know local people.

Situated in lovely surroundings, Ireland's elegant country houses offer a truly unique place to stay often with access to a variety of pursuits, from angling to country cooking courses. Book in advance if possible. Inexpensive and comfortable, Ireland's large network of hostels give budget travellers great independence. Facilities vary so check in advance.

Camping and caravanning in Ireland's 200 sites, usually near the most beautiful scenery, is another way to enjoy the countryside on a budget. Self-catering holidays in traditional Irish cottages or modern apartments and chalets can be enjoyed in villages, towns and cities.

HOTELS & GUESTHOUSES

Irelandhotels.com

Tel: +353 (0) 1 293 9170; irelandhotels.com

Northern Ireland Hotels Federation

Tel: 028 9077 6635; nihf.co.uk

Manor House Hotels and Irish Country Hotels

Tel: +353 (0) 1 295 8900; manorhousehotels.com

Irish Country Hotels

irishcountryhotels.com

Ireland's Blue Book

Tel: +353 (0) 1 676 9914; irelands-blue-book.ie

Good Food Ireland

Tel: +353 (0) 53 915 8693; goodfoodireland.ie

BED & BREAKFASTS

B&B Ireland

Tel: +353 (0) 71 982 2222; bandbireland.com

COUNTRY HOUSES

The Hidden Ireland Guide

Tel: +353 (0) 1 662 7166; hiddenireland.com

CAMPING & CARAVANNING

Irish Caravan and Camping Council

camping-ireland.ie

Camping Northern Ireland

discovernorthernireland.com/A-Guide-to-Camping-and-Caravan-Parks-A30

HOSTELS

An Óige – Irish Youth Hostel Association

Tel: +353 (0) 1 830 4555; anoige.ie

Independent Holiday Hostels

Tel: +353 (0) 1862 158 786; hostels-ireland.com

Hostelling International Northern Ireland

Tel: 028 903 24733; hini.org.uk

Independent Hostels of Ireland

Tel: +353 (0) 74 973 0130

independenthostelsireland.com

SELF-CATERING

REPUBLIC OF IRELAND

Irish Self-Catering Federation

letsgoselfcatering.com

NORTHERN IRELAND

The Northern Ireland Self-Catering Holiday Association

authenticnorthernireland.com

i Visit www.ireland.com to find links and information on all approved or registered accommodation on the island of Ireland, including hotels, B&Bs, guesthouses, hostels, self-catering, camping and caravanning.



MAP & ROUTE KILOMETRE PLANNER

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.



- Motorway
- Primary road
- Secondary road
- Mainline Train
- Ferry
- Airport
- Tourist Information (Year round)
- Tourist Information (Seasonal)
- Beach

KILOMETRES
0 20 40 60 80km

MILES
0 10 20 30 40 50mils

	Armagh	Athlone	Belfast	Coleraine	Cork	Donegal	Dundalk	Dublin	Dunlisk	Enniskillen	Galway	Kilkeny	Larne	Limerick	Newry	Roscommon	Shannon	Sligo	Waterford	Wexford
Armagh	155	96																		
Athlone	96	155																		
Belfast	99	99	227																	
Coleraine	89	252	99	89																
Cork	486	424	279	390	486															
Donegal	43	250	144	153	114	43														
Dundalk	69	402	151	180	163	128	69													
Dublin	138	147	160	143	104	78	84	138												
Dunlisk	53	98	97	202	93	52	90	33	53											
Enniskillen	130	163	59	98	347	148	130	133	83	130										
Galway	177	127	101	61	215	92	81	82	52	110	177									
Kilkeny	198	193	355	304	407	446	81	404	486	237	177	198								
Larne	499	399	339	170	115	496	188	105	461	80	35	244	402							
Limerick	244	69	70	65	154	150	123	184	204	65	228	201	75	168						
Newry	392	111	113	104	248	242	193	296	328	105	367	323	121	270	392					
Roscommon	169	149	247	264	158	80	104	151	156	151	211	231	246	234	158	169				
Shannon	201	257	211	348	275	98	274	355	245	153	391	397	208	382	300	201	286			
Sligo	238	235	85	174	222	226	343	245	186	66	166	248	66	155	336	192	205	117	145	
Waterford	62	95	31	129	165	80	272	120	30	137	175	151	222	238	78	243	201	108	187	
Wexford	39	91	133	12	138	146	118	202	158	50	137	182	141	88	231	235	176	223	192	117

KILOMETRES MILES

Whilst every care has been taken to ensure accuracy in the compilation of this map, Tourism Ireland cannot accept responsibility for errors or omissions. Due to the small scale of this map, not all holiday centres can be shown. The information on this map is correct at time of going to press. © 2019 Tourism Ireland. Map creation by Michael Schmeling, www.maps.african.com | Map data © OpenStreetMap contributors, CC BY SA

