


Ireland

Your Travel Magazine

 community.ireland.com
 facebook.com/DiscoverIrelandGCC
 twitter.com/GoToIrelandGCC

TOP IRELAND EXPERIENCES AMAZING PLACES YOU WON'T WANT TO MISS

IRELAND'S ANCIENT EAST
A STORY-FILLED JOURNEY
THROUGH 5,000 YEARS

STAY, SEE, DO
INSPIRING IDEAS FROM
AROUND THE ISLAND

FOOD IN IRELAND
SAVOUR THE DELICIOUS
FLAVOURS

Allihies, County Cork

 ireland.com



Ladies View, Killarney



DO SOMETHING DIFFERENT
06



IRELAND'S ANCIENT EAST
22

GET OUTSIDE
34



CITY BREAKS
12

IRELAND WELCOME

Think epic. Think exhilarating. Think enchanting. In Ireland you can expect the very best, with incredible landscapes, warm, friendly people and villages that are full of charm. Delve into Ireland's Ancient East, where compelling stories will captivate you; feel the ocean's blast and travel a coastline like no other on the Wild Atlantic Way; or see unforgettable sights along the Causeway Coastal Route. The time is right...

Jump into Ireland 

CONTENTS

- 04 PICTURE THIS**
Explore one of Ireland's most picturesque landscapes
- 06 DO SOMETHING DIFFERENT**
Enjoy these unique Ireland experiences
- 07 ROOMS WITH A VIEW**
Inspirational views from around the island
- 08 DISCOVER ALL ABOUT...**
The island of Ireland's most spectacular castles
- 09 5 THINGS YOU NEED TO KNOW ABOUT...**
Ireland's traditional music
- 10 FOOD IN IRELAND**
Feeling hungry? Get a flavour of Ireland
- 12 CITY BREAKS**
The go-to cities for an unforgettable weekend break
- 18 TOP IRELAND EXPERIENCES**
Soaring cliffs, movie-star islands, lunar landscapes
- 22 IRELAND'S ANCIENT EAST**
Where 5,000 years of history come to life
- 26 3 GREAT ROAD TRIPS IN NORTHERN IRELAND**
From legendary landscapes to vibrant villages
- 30 6 WAYS TO EXPLORE THE WILD ATLANTIC WAY**
Awesome sights along one of the world's best touring routes
- 34 GET OUTSIDE**
Discover Ireland's outdoor treasures
- 38 6 REASONS TO LOVE GOLF IN IRELAND**
Discover Ireland's outstanding courses
- 42 THE LAST WORD ON...**
Traditional culture in Ireland and how to enjoy it
- 44 THE PRACTICALS**
Everything you need to know about organising a holiday to Ireland



Copy and design:
Maxmedia Ireland Limited
Printing:
Wyndeham Group



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, Caspar Diederik, John Miskelly, Gareth McCormack, Brian Morrison, Scenic Ireland and a number of other third party sources (who have given their consent to use of image).





PICTURE THIS

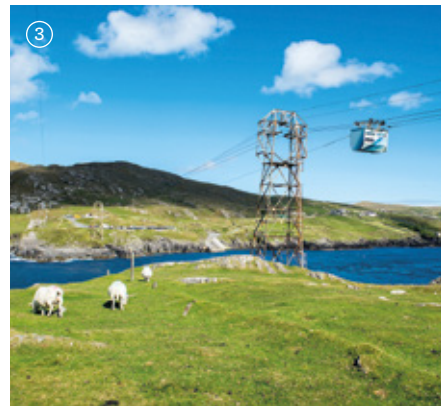
DUNLUCE CASTLE

Rising theatrically from the rugged coastal cliffs of north County Antrim, Dunluce boasts one of the most dramatic castle scenes to be found anywhere in the world. These impressive ruins are perched 30 metres above the roaring ocean and are surrounded by tales of wailing banshees, smugglers and tragic love. It's a real showstopper along the Causeway Coastal Route, a place to pause and spend a while. Visit near sunset as the sun smoulders into the ocean and the castle walls turn to silhouettes and you'll be treated to a sight you'll never forget.

DO SOMETHING DIFFERENT

Take a trip beyond the ordinary – Ireland is bursting with amazing things to do, from fascinating Viking tours to swaying rope bridges

1 Carrick-a-Rede rope bridge, County Antrim A bridge was originally built here in 1755 by salmon fishermen. 2 Reginald's Tower, Waterford The first tower on this site was built by the Vikings after 914. 3 Dursley Island, County Cork Travel like a local on Ireland's only cable car. 4 Slemish Mountain, County Antrim Thought to be the site of St Patrick's conversion. 5 Black Taxi Tour Travel like a local on a tour of Belfast.



③ TAKE A CABLE CAR

Islands around Ireland are unique with friendly locals, traditional culture and some of the wildest scenery around. And while these hidden gems are usually accessed by boat or ferry – there is one island where getting there is part of the adventure. Dursley Island, just off the tip of the Beara Peninsula in County Cork, has the only cable car ride in Ireland and crosses above the turbulent waters of Dursley Sound. With only six residents, the island offers a wealth of great outdoor experiences including bird, whale and dolphin watching. Beautiful.

① CROSS A ROPE BRIDGE

It sways, it wobbles, it swings – crossing the Carrick-a-Rede rope bridge is a phenomenal experience and don't worry, despite the fact that it looks scary, it's all perfectly safe. Traditionally used by salmon fishermen, the bridge hovers above a chasm that divides the edge of the Causeway Coast and Carrick-a-Rede Island. While you're crossing, keep your eye out for swirling sea birds above; while below in the Atlantic, you might be lucky enough to spot a basking shark, dolphin or porpoise. Truly a one-of-a-kind experience.

④ WALK WITH ST PATRICK

St Patrick's legacy looms large in Ireland, and one of the best ways of connecting with the saint is to walk in his footsteps. Head to Slemish Mountain in County Antrim, where St Patrick spent six years in slavery, tending sheep for a local chieftain. It's a steep hike to the top, but you'll be rewarded with outstanding views. To enjoy a longer experience, drive the St Patrick's Trail, which brings you from majestic cathedrals in the city of Armagh to fascinating ancient monastic sites and the saint's burial place in Downpatrick, County Down.



⑤ BLACK TAXI TOUR

There are guided tours – and then there's the Black Taxi Tour in Belfast. If you're looking for a unique and entertaining way to see the city then jump into a traditional black taxicab. Local drivers who know Belfast inside and out will guide you around some of the most interesting sights, from the grand City Hall to the famous wall murals. Tours include a Belfast Historical Buildings Tour, a Belfast Political & Mural Tour, and even a trip out to the Causeway Coast and stunning Giant's Causeway. All from the comfort of your own cab! 🚗

② TAKE A VIKING TOUR

The Vikings landed in Ireland in the 800s and we haven't stopped talking about them since. Much of the island's Viking history is concentrated in Ireland's Ancient East and the cities and towns of Dublin, Wexford, Waterford, Cork and Limerick. Make your way to Waterford city, founded by the Vikings in 914, and take a guided walk with the Epic Tour of the Viking Triangle. Or jump on a replica Viking ship in Athlone with Viking Tours Ireland and sail to the monastic site of Clonmacnoise on the River Shannon. What a way to arrive!



ROOMS WITH A VIEW

From cliff-edge hotels to beautiful B&Bs nestled into idyllic scenery, Ireland offers unique places to stay with some of the best views on the island...

1. LOUGH ERNE RESORT

There's a real sense of quality to the Lough Erne Resort: this is one of Ireland's finest golf resorts, nestled on a 600-acre peninsula with stunning views of the Fermanagh Lakelands. Home to two Championship Golf Courses, it's the perfect destination for a golfing break – every level of golfer is catered for, and there's a fine-dining restaurant, plus a beautiful spa. loughernerresort.com

2. BLACKHEAD LIGHTKEEPER'S COTTAGES

Perched on the County Antrim coast in Northern Ireland, the Blackhead Lightkeeper's Cottages offer the chance to relax in a piece of maritime history. Just 32km north of Belfast, these cliff-top self-catering properties are one of a kind with great views over Belfast Lough. Cosy and wild in winter, bright and beautiful in summer, they're a great all-year-round choice. irishlandmark.com

3. THE CLIFF HOUSE HOTEL

Clinging to the edge of a cliff in County Waterford, the Cliff House Hotel is total glamour. Each room boasts views of tranquil Ardmore Bay, while the interior mixes rugged local textures with flashes of colour. This is a place of real escape in a part of Ireland's Ancient East that's filled with great restaurants, historic country houses and hidden coves. Treat yourself to a gourmet feast in the Michelin-starred House Restaurant, take a seaweed bath in the Outdoor Summer Spa or simply lie back and enjoy the views. theciffhousehotel.com

4. AGHADOE HEIGHTS HOTEL

It's renowned for its warm Irish hospitality, impressive design and relaxed luxury, but it's the location of Aghadoe Heights that sets it apart. Rooms here overlook the famous Lakes of Killarney in County Kerry, with the lively town of Killarney right on your doorstep. Relax in the state-of-the-art spa, play a round of golf or sit back and enjoy a juice in the Terrace Lounge, which offer stunning views across the lakes. aghadoeheights.com

5. MARKREE CASTLE

Ireland is famous for its castle hotels from Ashford Castle in County Mayo to Ballygally Castle Hotel in County Antrim. A hidden gem, though, is Markree Castle in County Sligo, with views over the formal gardens or quiet woodland. Home to the Cooper family for over 370 years, the castle ripples with old-world charm and offers great food and effortless tranquillity. markreecastle.ie



“CLINGING TO THE EDGE OF A CLIFF IN COUNTY WATERFORD, THE CLIFF HOUSE HOTEL IS TOTAL GLAMOUR, WITH VIEWS OF TRANQUIL ARDMORE BAY”



1 Lough Erne Resort, County Fermanagh Regarded as one of the top golf resorts on the island of Ireland. 2 Blackhead Lightkeeper's Cottages, County Antrim Panoramic views close to the Victorian town of Whitehead. 3 Cliff House Hotel, County Waterford Stunning views of Ardmore Bay make this a great choice. 4 Aghadoe Heights Hotel, County Kerry With stunning views of the famous Lakes of Killarney. 5 Markree Castle, County Sligo Set within 500 acres of secluded countryside.



For more information on accommodation, visit: ireland.com



DISCOVER ALL ABOUT... CASTLES

There's a reason why Ireland is famous for its castles: they're everywhere. Small villages, towns, cities and even the remotest parts of the countryside boast epic reminders of Ireland's past

Arriving with the Anglo-Normans, many castles in Ireland began as earth and timber structures, but by the late 12th century, it was all about stone. Today, you'll find everything from crumbling tower houses to huge medieval hulks. Get to grips with tales of brutal sieges in Athlone Castle on the banks of the River Shannon or relax in the elegant surrounds of Ballygally Castle in County Antrim – whatever you're looking for, Ireland's castles will deliver.



1 One of Ireland's most famous castles, **Blarney Castle** in County Cork is a magnificent blend of history, beauty and fun. Kiss the famous Blarney Stone for the "gift of the gab", wander the gorgeous gardens and soak up the romantic atmosphere in the Rock Close, described by a writer in 1824 as "indeed a fairy scene".

2 Dating to the 13th century and seeming to grow out of the rock around it, **Cahir Castle** in County Tipperary is one of the biggest in Ireland. Over the years, it's been enlarged, rebuilt, besieged and has witnessed everything from treason to murder. It even starred in John Boorman's *Excalibur* – take it from us, this one's a star.

3 Built in the Scottish Baronial style, **Glenveagh Castle** sits within an area of wild beauty in Glenveagh National Park, County Donegal. The location is simply breathtaking, so it's no surprise that stars such as Marilyn Monroe, Clark Gable and Charlie Chaplin are rumoured to have holidayed here.

4 With a lovely location in the historic town of Enniskillen, County Fermanagh, **Enniskillen Castle** was built nearly 600 years ago by the ruling Gaelic Maguire family. Overlooking the River Erne, it traditionally guarded one of the few passes into Ulster and today houses the Fermanagh County Museum.

5 **Trim Castle** in County Meath has been many things: fortress, home, prison, even film set (Mel Gibson's *Braveheart* was filmed here). But throughout, it's retained its stern grandeur and height. Built in the 12th century, it boasts a 20-sided tower overlooking the River Boyne.

6 The magnificent cliff-top **Dunluce Castle** in County Antrim is one of the island's most iconic sights. Teetering on the edge of a basalt outcrop, this structure looks like something out of a fantasy film with steep drops on either side – so steep, in fact, that one stormy night in 1639 the kitchen fell into the sea!

1 Blarney, County Cork Home to the famous Blarney Stone. 2 Cahir, County Tipperary Scene of countless sieges and bombardments. 3 Glenveagh, County Donegal Built to resemble a romantic highland retreat. 4 Enniskillen, County Fermanagh Originally built in the 16th century. 5 Trim, County Meath Ireland's largest Norman castle. 6 Dunluce, County Antrim Did this place inspire Cair Paravel in CS Lewis's *The Chronicles of Narnia*?



5 THINGS YOU NEED TO KNOW ABOUT... IRISH MUSIC

There's nothing like the atmosphere of a traditional music session in Ireland. Here, you can experience the raw beat of Ireland's native instruments, feel the pulse of the island's ancient heritage and join in a unique musical experience

1. THE FESTIVALS

Irish music festivals take the great atmosphere you find at a session and spread it over a few days or even weeks. Temple Bar TradFest in Dublin (January) uses eclectic venues for gigs and concerts, many of which are a treat to visit even after the music stops. The world-famous festival of Fleadh Cheoil na hÉireann takes place every year in August. The location changes regularly, but each one promises energetic sessions, competitive events and street music. Or get into the spirit of things at the Derry International Irish Music Festival (late January), as luminaries of the traditional music scene descend on this lively city for a week of great events.

2. THE SESSION

The session (*seisiún*) is at the heart of Irish traditional music. Sessions are a bedrock of community life and take place in cities, towns and villages all over Ireland. From up-tempo tunes to mournful ballads (called *sean-nós* singing), toes are tapped, hands are clapped and the crowd is captivated. Looking to hear the real sound of the island? Try the Willie Clancy Summer School in County Clare, Ireland's largest traditional music school, and enjoy the melodies of some of the greatest pros around.

3. THE INSTRUMENTS

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

4. WHERE TO GO

You can hear traditional music all over the island, from little gems such as the Fisherman's Thatched Inn in County Laois to the Crosskeys Inn in County Antrim. But two counties in Ireland stand out as being particularly famous for their sounds: County Clare and County Donegal. Try the lively villages of Doolin, Kilfenora and Ballyvaughan in County Clare, and Gweedore, Donegal town and Letterkenny in County Donegal.

5. ULSTER-SCOTS TRADITIONS

With a history stretching back to the 17th century, the Ulster-Scots community in Northern Ireland has a rich musical heritage that makes a very different sound to traditional Irish music. Fiddles, pipes and the Lambeg drum combine to create a unique tone that can be best heard at festivals such as the Donaghadee Ulster-Scots Festival in July, featuring music and dance performances alongside Ulster-Scots food and craft demonstrations.

1 Festival fun Get into the swing of things at the Fleadh Cheoil na hÉireann. 2 A session Traditional music sessions take place all over the island. 3 Crafting a bodhrán An ancient frame drum central to Irish traditional music. 4 Doolin, County Clare Irish towns and villages are filled with great places to listen to traditional music. 5 Ulster-Scots traditions Hear the beat of the mighty Lambeg drum at an Ulster-Scots festival or parade.



English Market, Cork

FOOD IN IRELAND

With great restaurants, producers and fab farmers' markets, Ireland's food scene is on top form

TRADITIONAL TASTES

Ireland's food traditions are undergoing an exciting revival right now, and many restaurants are adding traditional flavours to their menus. Combining high-quality local ingredients with the latest techniques, the result is dishes that taste fresh, modern and delicious while still staying true to their heritage. If you're looking for the bona fide flavour of Ireland's finest, don't miss out on some fresh **Killybegs tuna** at The Woollen Mills in Dublin: a tangy taste of the North Atlantic on a plate. You can unearth Cork's food culture at The English Market, where you'll find Tom Durcan's acclaimed **spiced beef**. Try it for yourself with lunch at No 5 Fenn's Quay, where it makes a great sandwich served with cabbage pickle.

Irish stew is an enduring favourite thanks to its hearty, rustic combination of lamb, potatoes and carrots, and Gleeson's of Roscommon is reputed to serve one of the best. Popular all along the Wild Atlantic Way, **smoked fish platters** combine the best of the sea, and bring a modern edge to one of Ireland's oldest food traditions.

And that's not all – there's Irish **venison** from Waterford, freshly baked **brown soda bread** and great potato pancakes called **boxty**. If you have a spare hour in the afternoon, take a break and fill up on some traditional, fruit-packed Irish **teabrack**, slathered in creamy, golden, **Cuinneog butter** and topped off with a steaming pot of tea.

A NATURAL BOUNTY

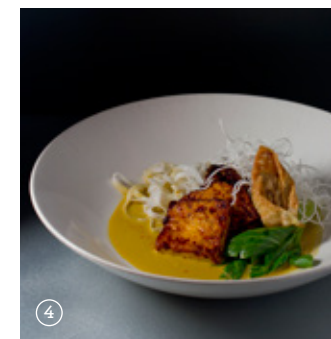
Ireland excels at producing local artisan **cheeses**, all with different styles and a distinctive creamy taste. Look out for Milleens, Kearney Blue, Cashel Blue, St Tola, Leggygowan and the first smoked brie in Europe, Ballyoak from Fivemiletown Creamery. You can expect to find them scattered across the cheese menus and throughout the dishes of the island's best eateries, from award-winning Chapter One in Dublin to Cork's Café Paradiso and Ox, Belfast.

Don't worry if you're a die-hard meat-eater – you won't be disappointed. As well as high-quality, grass-fed **beef** such as Glenarm Shorthorn Beef and herb-fed mountain **lamb** from the Comeragh Mountains, wild pheasant and rabbit are a special treat that give you an authentic taste of Ireland's bountiful and untamed countryside. And from oysters to crab claws, mussels to lobster, Ireland's **seafood** is exceptional – the panfried haddock and samphire of Cavistons of Dublin is the stuff of dreams. Our advice? Go simple with scallops at Out of the Blue, Dingle; or super-fresh fish and chips from The Dolphin, County Tyrone. It doesn't get better than that.

To wash it down, don't miss the award-winning AJ Apple Juice, made from freshly pressed Armagh apples – a taste of summer sunshine, all year round. Simply delicious! 🍏



1 Hatch & Sons, Dublin A great place in the heart of the city for local, traditional dishes. 2 Established Coffee, Belfast Delicious breads, salads and apple pies in the charming Cathedral Quarter district. 3 The Woollen Mills, Dublin Serves up tasty interpretations of traditional Irish dishes. 4 Café Paradiso, Cork Eat your vegetarian heart out at this iconic restaurant. 5 Stunning seafood at Ox, Belfast Michelin-starred dishes made with the best local ingredients.



TOP TIP

Visit a farmers' market such as The English Market in Cork, St George's Market in Belfast (pictured) and the Temple Bar Food Market in Dublin, as well as smaller local markets across the island.



CITY BREAKS

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

1



2



3

DUBLIN

Backed by mountains and on the edge of the Irish Sea, Dublin is a place that makes the most of its striking location. Breezy and easy-going, the city is surrounded by gorgeous coastal villages that ooze charm and offer a bounty of cliff walks, castles, crafts and *craic* (fun), while the Dublin Mountains are a walker's paradise.

All this right on the doorstep gives Dublin its edge, but if you're looking to discover the city's distinctive personality head straight to the centre. Creative, charismatic and cultural, Dublin buzzes with energy, from the lively cobbled streets of Temple Bar to the grand galleries of the Irish Museum of Modern Art, the Hugh Lane and the National Gallery of Ireland.

Walking the city is easy. Crossing over bridges, down small cobblestone alleys and past quirky shops, you'll find everything from secret Harry Clarke stained-glass windows on Asdill's Row to boardwalks along the River Liffey. There's Christ Church Cathedral, dating to 1030; Dublin Castle, with a history that stretches back to the first Celtic settlement in the 1st century AD; and Kilmainham Gaol, one of the largest

unoccupied prisons in Europe, and a place with a key role in modern Irish history. Step inside Trinity College to see the famous 9th century illuminated manuscript, The Book of Kells; explore a dazzling collection of prehistoric gold jewellery at the National Museum of Ireland; and get the inside track on the history of the Fair City at The Little Museum of Dublin, TripAdvisor's favourite museum in Ireland.

And if you're looking for great things to eat, there's no better place to be. Fast-paced and cutting-edge, Dublin's food scene makes the most of the island's natural bounty in a never-ending stream of hip cafés, street food and high-grade restaurants. Feast on fresh oysters at the Temple Bar Food Market on Saturdays, enjoy the five-course tasting menu at the acclaimed Forest Avenue, or grab a hearty seafood chowder at Catch 22 on South Anne Street.

To get an up-close-and-personal glimpse of the history – and the people – at the heart of so much of the island's literary and musical history, take a Literary Walking Tour and find out just why Dublin is an adventure in itself.

OUT AND ABOUT

EAT Located near the 17th century marketplace (where you'll find Ceol, the Irish Traditional Music Centre), **Fish Shop** is a delight, with delicious fish dishes in casual surroundings. Downstairs in the **Winding Stair** on Lower Ormond Quay you'll find a bookstore, but head upstairs to its restaurant and you can enjoy tasty modern Irish dishes overlooking the River Liffey. Or go for critically acclaimed cooking in charming surroundings at **Delahunt** restaurant inside a Victorian building on Lower Camden Street, with lace curtains and a stylish interior. If you want critically acclaimed cooking in cool surroundings, you must visit **Restaurant Patrick Guilbaud** on Upper Merrion Street: Ireland's only two-star Michelin restaurant more than delivers on its promise of excellence, with the salt-baked celeriac tortellini a particular treat. Finish off your culinary tour with a trip to **Queen of Tarts** tearoom and indulge in some of the most delicious cakes and pastries of your life. Try the chocolate pecan tart and thank us later.

SLEEP Redefining the term "hostel", **the Generator** in Smithfield offers quality accommodation at affordable prices in a modern environment, with private single, twin, double and shared rooms. With a great location on bustling

Camden Street, **Camden Court Hotel** boasts a restaurant and a swimming pool. To take things to another level, opt for the pure grandeur and historic pedigree of **The Shelbourne**, where the Afternoon Tea alone makes the stay special; or try old-school glamour at **The Merrion Hotel**. Comprising four Georgian townhouses, it's Irish luxury at its finest.

DO Showcasing the journey of Irish people throughout the world, **EPIC Ireland** is a new visitor centre on Custom House Quay boasting state-of-the-art galleries and an Irish Family History Centre. Or you can marvel at the ancient manuscripts on display at **Trinity College**, where the Long Room library alone houses 200,000 of the university's oldest books in stunning surroundings. For something a little more active, make your way to **Phoenix Park**, the largest enclosed park in Europe, and cycle or stroll past the fallow deer to Farmleigh House and Áras an Uachtaráin, the residence of the President of Ireland.

EXPLORE Dublin is the perfect place to mix culture with sea air. Why not go kayaking around **Dalkey Island**, walk the Victorian pier at **Dun Laoghaire**, enjoy a seafood lunch by the harbour at **Howth**, or explore historic **Malahide Castle**? You'll get the best coastal views with walks around the peninsula of **Howth Head** to the north or up **Killiney Hill** in south County Dublin; or on a stroll along the **Bray to Greystones** cliff walk.



4



5



GOOD TO KNOW

Ireland's national museums and galleries all have free entry.

Dublin is a UNESCO City of Literature – find out more at the Dublin Writers Museum on Parnell Square.

Dublin is small and walkable but Dublin Bus, the Luas tram and the DART (the railway that travels out to the north and south coasts) are great ways to get around.

WHEN TO GO: Dublin buzzes all year round. There's the St Patrick's Festival in March, great summer festivals in the city parks and on the docklands, and in autumn the Dublin Festival Season covers theatre, fashion, music and Halloween events. Come December and January, things don't go quiet, with the New Year's Festival and Temple Bar TradFest in January.

1 River Liffey Many bridges cross the River Liffey, which divides the city into north and south.
 2 Trinity College Dublin This historic university was founded in 1592.
 3 Temple Bar Mix it up with music, art, film and food in Dublin's cultural quarter.
 4 Ha'penny Bridge Dublin's iconic bridge was constructed in May 1816.
 5 The Shelbourne 5 stars and super luxury in the city centre.



1

OUT AND ABOUT

EAT At the **Mourne Seafood Bar**, you can enjoy fabulously fresh seafood that is brought in daily from the ports of Annalong and Killybeggs. Expect bowls of delicious mussels, oysters and seafood chowder – perfect as you relax at the end of a long day’s exploring. A stalwart of the restaurant scene, **James Street South** is ideal for fine dining with a touch of relaxed glamour. Its “Taste of Ulster Tasting Menu” is a good way to try out local flavours. Enjoy some of Northern Ireland’s famous beef at **Meat Locker**, which uses Hannan meats – matured in a Himalayan salt chamber and cooked over a charcoal grill. If dessert is your weakness, **Co Couture** is the ultimate luxury chocolate experience, where you can sample fondue, parfait and truffles – or even try out a chocolate-making masterclass. Delicious.

SLEEP Right in the middle of the Cathedral Quarter, the **Merchant Hotel** is set within an old 1860s bank and boasts an opulent interior. Located adjacent to the Grand Opera House, the **Europa Hotel** is an excellent central choice, or try the **Old Rectory Guesthouse** in south Belfast – a charming B&B in an old church rectory that serves award-winning breakfasts. Just down the road from the show-stopping Big Fish

sculpture, **Crescent Townhouse Hotel** is another favourite – although their celebrated coffee might keep you up all night!

DO With a beautiful Palm House and Tropical Ravine, Belfast’s **Botanic Gardens** are a 19th century horticultural wonderland and are located beside the **Queen’s University** campus, which counts Liam Neeson and Stephen Rea among its alumni. Take a tour of **City Hall**, which opened its doors during a time of real prosperity in Belfast back in 1906. The **Ulster Museum**, meanwhile, covers the art, history and natural science of Northern Ireland. For an unforgettable trip, take one of the famous **Black Taxi Tours** and have a local driver regale you with tales of the city’s history and multi-coloured murals.

EXPLORE Stroll up the slopes of Cave Hill for spectacular views from the **Belfast Castle Estate** and **Cave Hill Visitor Centre**. Great walking trails will take you past caves, an ancient fort and Belfast Castle. Around 30 minutes outside the city on the shores of Belfast Lough is **Carrickfergus Castle**. Built in the 12th century, the castle has been besieged by the Scots, Irish, English and French over the years, and is one of the best preserved medieval castles on the island of Ireland. Further on at Islandmagee is **The Gobbins**, a majestic cliff path originally opened in 1902 and restored with exhilarating bridges and tunnels.



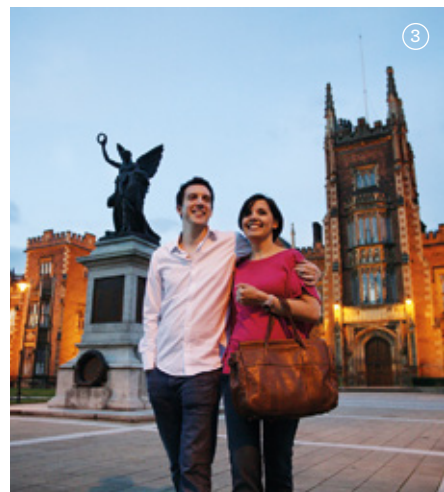
4



5



2



3

BELFAST

With its critically acclaimed modern restaurants, Titanic sightseeing and engaging cultural scene, it’s easy to see why Belfast is one of Europe’s most up-and-coming city-break destinations. Located on the island’s northeast coast, this is a place that feels cosmopolitan and international, but retains its individuality thanks to the friendly locals, beautiful architecture and sightseeing tours with a twist.

You don’t have to dig deep to uncover Belfast’s charms. From red-bricked Victorian architecture to the green open spaces of Belfast Castle Estate, there’s always somewhere different to discover. Wander along the River Lagan and you’ll get a taste of what Belfast must have been like in its shipbuilding heyday when the world’s biggest ocean liner, Titanic, was built here.

At the Titanic Quarter, Belfast’s maritime history can be enjoyed in all its glory with the SS Nomadic (the world’s last surviving White Star Line ship) and HMS Caroline, a WWI light cruiser. But it’s Titanic Belfast that’s really the star of the show. Step inside this shimmering titanium giant and you’ll find absorbing

interactive displays and compelling exhibitions.

At the heart of Belfast’s social and cultural action, the Cathedral Quarter is the place to go for an afternoon of galleries and an evening of socialising. Visit The MAC Belfast for changing exhibitions, before partaking in culture of a greener kind at the cast iron Palm House in the Botanic Gardens.

Hip, innovative and accessible, Belfast’s food scene is a flourishing mix of outstanding local ingredients and acclaimed chefs. To get a feel for all things foodie, visit the St George’s Market on a Friday or Saturday and you’ll find local producers selling everything from cheese to chocolate. Call into George’s of the Market while you’re here – it’s famed for serving an excellent Ulster Fry, Northern Ireland’s legendary cooked breakfast.

After that, get into the Belfast culinary swing of things at the Michelin-starred restaurants of Ox and Eipic, as well as more relaxed eateries including Stix & Stones and The Muddlers Club. It’s this great mix of culture, tradition, food and entertainment that makes Belfast such a memorable place to visit.



GOOD TO KNOW

Belfast’s national museums and galleries all have free entry, but Titanic Belfast charges an entry fee. It’s a good idea to book ahead at busy times.

In terms of currency, Belfast, along with the rest of Northern Ireland, uses pound sterling.

Belfast is very accessible from Dublin. Driving between the two cities will take around two hours. Dublin and Belfast are also connected by rail. Journey time is around two-and-a-half hours.

WHEN TO GO: Any time is a great time to visit Belfast, but in the autumn, in particular, you can enjoy the Belfast International Arts Festival, which runs from October through to November.

1 Belfast City Hall Public guided tours of the building’s finest rooms are available. 2 HMS Caroline The last surviving ship from the Battle of Jutland in 1916. 3 Queen’s University A red-bricked beauty dating back to 1849. 4 St George’s Market Victorian covered market built between 1890 and 1896. 5 Titanic Belfast The world’s biggest Titanic visitor attraction.



1 Elizabeth Fort Built in 1601 on a rocky outcrop overlooking the city. 2 Blackrock Castle Observatory Enjoy science and the cosmos in a 16th century castle. 3 English Market Described by Rick Stein as the "best covered market in the UK and Ireland". 4 Hayfield Manor Five-star luxury hotel just outside the city centre. 5 Cobh A pretty town near Cork city with Titanic connections.

galleries, enthralling museums and great music. Despite being a city, there's a decidedly towny feel – life is laid-back, nothing is too much hassle and the city centre is easily walkable.

A good place to start is the Crawford Art Gallery, where Irish artists such as Paul Henry, Jack B Yeats and Dorothy Cross share space with the original 5th century Athenian discus-thrower, Discobolus. The Triskel Arts Centre takes culture to the next level with everything from arthouse films to intimate gigs within a beautiful converted church, while the quirky Butter Museum offers a surprisingly interesting take on one of Cork's historic industries. And if you're looking for a uniquely Cork experience, ring church bells at St Anne's Church, take in the eerie 19th century history of the Cork City Gaol, or float under the city's bridges on an urban kayaking tour.

Foodies will discover that Cork is something of a star performer. Walk around the historic English Market and you'll find artisan cheese, smoked fish and creamy chocolate among the buzzing food stalls. Flavour, quality and innovation drive the city's vibrant restaurant scene, with favourites such as Café Paradiso and the Farmgate Café sitting alongside new hotspots such as Electric, Salt, Miyazaki and Elbow Lane.

When it comes to friendly faces, Cork is second to none: whether at your first hurling match (a traditional Irish field game) or an exhibition at the Crawford Art Gallery, Corkonians are famously more than happy to stop and have a chat.

Small, tasty, creative... once you've sampled Cork, you'll probably start agreeing with the locals.

break, the **Imperial Hotel** on South Mall at the city's heart is home to a positive pampering retreat, with the Escape Spa right on site.

DO The compelling tour of early 17th century **Elizabeth Fort** off Barrack Street – it's been used as an army barracks, female prison and a police station over the centuries. Just 2km from the centre you'll find **Blackrock Castle Observatory**, where you can explore the cosmos right here on the banks of the River Lee; or get an art fix at the elegant **Lewis Glucksman Gallery** in University College Cork.

EXPLORE One of the most popular day trips from Cork is to **Cobh**, a beautiful seaport town and the Titanic's last port of call – find out more at the **Titanic Experience Cobh**. Or head out to **Spike Island**: known as "Ireland's Alcatraz", it was used to house convicts before penal transportation. For a real treat, visit the seafood town of **Kinsale** and take a cruise around the harbour to Charles Fort and the Old Head of Kinsale.

CORK

Is Cork the best place in the world? The locals certainly think so. One thing you'll notice about this captivating city on Ireland's coast is that it inspires a devotion in those who live here that no other place can rival.

Sitting proudly on an island in the middle of the River Lee in southwest Ireland, Cork is a bustling collection of atmospheric coffee shops, vibrant art

OUT AND ABOUT

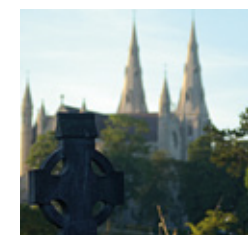
EAT **Sage Restaurant** has been garnering rave reviews for its food, which is sourced from within 12 miles/19km of its door. It's a little outside the city itself in the nearby town of Middleton. In town, try the vibrant and fresh flavours of **Orso** with an Irish take on Mediterranean fare, or nip into **The Fish Wife** for great fish and chips – they're best enjoyed alfresco along the scenic quays of the River Lee. For the coffee connoisseur, **Cork Coffee Roasters** pours the best cup in the city.

SLEEP Just outside the city, the award-winning **Hayfield Manor** is a haven of elegance, calm and five-star luxury. **The Clarion** overlooks the River Lee and is a good, modern choice that boasts a swimming pool and spa or try the **Maldron Hotel's** spacious and comfortable rooms in a central location. If you're seeking a relaxing



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 compact city, Armagh is perfect for exploring on foot. Frolic with the animals in the wide, open expanse of Gosford Forest Park; watch out for the 22 quirky bronze gargoyles and angels hidden around the city; or try stargazing at the planetarium. With a great collection of restaurants including the Moody Boar and Uluru Bistro, Armagh is a city to be savoured.



DERRY~LONDONDERRY

Ancient city walls, an eclectic mix of architecture and a rich cultural scene are making Derry~Londonderry one of the most exciting cities to visit on the island of Ireland. The gorgeous natural setting is complemented by structures that really set Derry~Londonderry apart: the Peace Bridge, the fully intact city walls and the Edwardian Guildhall. Also explore the Bogside murals, the award-winning Tower Museum and delicious restaurants, such as Browns in Town.



GALWAY

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



KILKENNY

Located in Ireland's Ancient East, Kilkenny mixes history, great food and culture to perfection. This city will wow you with medieval showpieces and keep you entertained with food, comedy and film festivals year round. Walk the Medieval Mile and be catapulted back centuries with Tudor inns, old merchant townhouses, hidden alleys and historic big hitters like Kilkenny Castle and St Canice's Cathedral. The city also boasts great shops, design studios and the National Craft Gallery.



LIMERICK

Limerick is a place with culture at its heart. Overlooking the River Shannon, this charismatic 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.



LISBURN

In terms of heritage, Lisburn goes way back, as you'll discover when you wander down the 18th century streetscapes to the Irish Linen Centre and Lisburn Museum. The city was once a large centre of linen production during the 19th century, but today it keeps things lively with a dynamic arts scene, great restaurants and excellent shops. It's also just a short drive from the city to Hillsborough Castle and Gardens, the official residence of Her Majesty the Queen in Northern Ireland.



NEWRY

Scratch the surface of this modern urban hub and you'll discover a history that stretches over 850 years. Bagenal's Castle, a 16th century fortified house with an adjoining 19th century warehouse, is a good place to start. It now houses the Newry and Mourne Museum, which traces the city's story back to prehistory. Afterwards, walk or cycle along the Newry Canal Path – a towpath that was used by the horses pulling the canal boats – and relax in buzzing clubs and restaurants.



WATERFORD

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

TOP IRELAND EXPERIENCES

The island of Ireland is packed with incredible things to see and do, from epic landscapes to fabulous festivals. Get inspired with some of the best...



THE CLIFFS OF MOHER AND THE BURREN

County Clare

1|2. Soaring to 214 metres, the Cliffs of Moher bring a real wow factor to the Wild Atlantic Way. This is the kind of place that makes the heart beat faster – sea birds swirl above, waves surge below and viewing platforms boast vast panoramas. Just north of the Cliffs of Moher, you'll find one of Ireland's most unusual geological landscapes, known as the Burren. This vast, moon-like karst limestone plateau spreads down to the ocean, with delicate arctic-alpine plants, orchids and patches of grassland. Take a walking trail, explore the history and relax in one of the wonderful surrounding towns and villages, such as pretty Ballyvaughan.

2

RING OF KERRY

County Kerry

3. Beginning and ending at Killarney, the Ring of Kerry is one of the island's most lauded spots, loved by National Geographic and Vogue magazines alike. This looped route on the Iveragh Peninsula in Ireland's southwest boasts exceptional sights, from quiet Valentia Island to the stunning mountain pass of Moll's Gap, while charming villages such as Killorglin, Kenmare, and Waterville all make lovely stops for great seafood and album-worthy snapshots. The scenery here is something else! Expect everything from powdery white beaches to green hills and bleakly beautiful bogland. And a real highlight? It's got to be Muckross House, Gardens, and Farm, a Victorian estate on the edge of one of Killarney's three lakes.



3

POWERSCOURT ESTATE

County Wicklow

4. The jewel in County Wicklow's crown, Powerscourt Estate boasts what are widely considered to be among the most majestic gardens in the world. When the house was completed in 1741 it was praised as possessing the "massive dignity of a great Italian Renaissance villa," but it is the gardens that really make this place special. You can easily spend hours wandering this lush, playful, and enchanting creation, from the pretty Japanese garden to the wooded valleys and back to the quirky pet cemetery, which sits in a quiet part of the estate surrounded by azaleas, rhododendrons, and roses in the summer. And if you're hungry after all that walking, feast on tasty dishes in the Avoca Café.



4



5

THE GOBBINS

County Antrim

5. Ancient cliffs, sparkling sea and a walk full of excitement: this is The Gobbins, a 100-year-old revitalised cliff path in County Antrim. The trail clings to the edge of Islandmagee – a small peninsula just a short drive north of Belfast – and it's about as close to walking on water as you can get on the island of Ireland. Designed in 1902 by railway engineer Berkeley Deane-Wise, The Gobbins closed to the public in 1954, but was restored and rebooted in 2015 to great acclaim. Strap on a helmet and join the guided tour and you'll be taken over dramatic bridges, down steps that snake around the edges of cliffs and through smugglers' caves. It's a perfect introduction to the glories that lie ahead on the Causeway Coastal Route.



GIANT'S CAUSEWAY

County Antrim

6. It's a moment of pure fantasy, the Giant's Causeway – the kind of place you can't quite believe exists. Here, 60-million-year-old volcanic activity and the pounding of the ocean have created 40,000 hexagonal basalt columns that tumble down to the water. Now a UNESCO World Heritage Site, the Giant's Causeway is perched on the edge of the famous Causeway Coastal Route and is a place where the facts about its formation are as compelling as the legends that surround it. Walk the coastal paths, enjoy the views from the surrounding cliffs and step inside the award-winning visitor centre to find out more about the fascinating geology and myths that surround this place. For a view with a difference, take to the water with Portrush Sea Tours.



SKELLIG MICHAEL

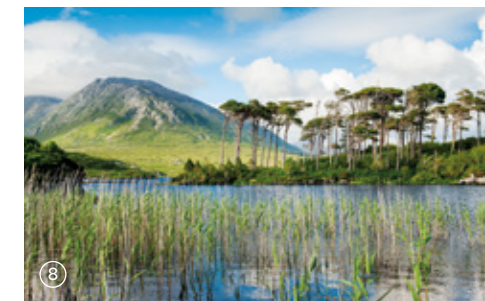
County Kerry

7. There are few words to describe the sheer magnificence of Skellig Michael, lying 11.7km off the coast of County Kerry. A birdwatcher's paradise, Skellig Michael is home to countless feathered friends, including vibrant puffins that raise their young in underground burrows. This UNESCO World Heritage Site is an extraordinary place, described by writer George Bernard Shaw as "part of our dream world". Walk up 600 stone steps and you'll encounter a small monastery, made up of six dry-stone beehive huts and two oratories. More recently, Skellig Michael hit the big screen with a starring role in Star Wars: The Force Awakens. Numbers allowed on the island are limited so book ahead, or opt for a boat trip around the island instead.

CONNEMARA

County Galway

8. Oscar Wilde was certainly onto something when he called Connemara "a savage beauty". Tobacco-coloured hills, navy lakes, and towns and villages that thrum with traditional music – this is Ireland unplugged. Famous for its raw, untamed landscapes and glorious white-sand beaches, Connemara has been a chosen destination for artists, poets and thinkers through the ages. Covering parts of Galway and edging into Mayo, this unique area covers everything from the breathtaking Killary Fjord to the ancient bogs around Roundstone. Ride a Connemara pony, walk one of the Connemara National Park trails, enjoy a picnic on the grass or take a boat trip to the island of Inishbofin.



ST PATRICK'S DAY

9. Get the party started: St Patrick's Day in Ireland is one of the highlights of the festival calendar, with a fantastic array of events taking place all over the island. In Dublin, the big day is a great excuse for a four-day festival with everything from street theatre to céilís (traditional dances); and Derry~Londonderry's St Patrick's Day Spring Carnival is a cheerful celebration with events throughout the city. There are also parades in Downpatrick and Armagh, while what's thought to be the oldest St Patrick's Day parade in Ireland takes place in Wexford town. Wherever you go, expect a flurry of green, as well as traditional song, dance, and that great celebratory atmosphere Ireland is famous for.



WALLED CITY OF DERRY~LONDONDERRY

10. There is a lot that makes Derry~Londonderry a fascinating city to visit: the vibrant cultural life, great restaurants and fabulous music for starters. But one of the city's biggest attractions is the 17th century walls that fully enclose it. Derry~Londonderry is one of the finest examples of a walled city in Europe, and these huge barricades, built between 1613 and 1618, form a historic walkway of around 1.5km. Look out for the cannons, too – Derry~Londonderry boasts Europe's largest collection of cannons, which played a starring role during two 17th century sieges. Find out more about these, as well as other aspects of the city's history, within the award-winning Tower Museum, with its open-air viewing platform.



IRELAND'S ANCIENT EAST

Stunning scenery, vivid tales and adventure with the ancients, discover the power of the past on a trip around this incredible part of the island of Ireland



Prehistoric passage tombs haunted by the past; stunning monastic sites that once drew scholars from all over Europe; dramatic castles rocked by bloody sieges. This is Ireland's Ancient East, a vast playground of fascinating history, compelling characters and beautiful green pastures. Comprising 17 counties east of the River Shannon and tracing 5,000 years, here the past comes alive with every step you take, from gracious mansions set in lush valleys to bogs that harbour secrets of Iron Age Ireland. Trace Ireland's maritime history along a coastline with Titanic connections, walk with the Vikings through one of Ireland's oldest cities and encounter the world of Stone Age man. A trip around Ireland's Ancient East brings history to life. It's time to peel back the centuries...

GETTING GOING

With so much at your fingertips in Ireland's Ancient East, it can be hard to know where to start. But there is one thing that links these amazing places, from the medieval city of Kilkenny to the mystical Hill of Tara, and that's the stories... Discover the tales behind these landmarks and you'll unearth the hopes and dreams that fuelled the lives of high kings and heroes, saints and scholars.

ANCIENT IRELAND

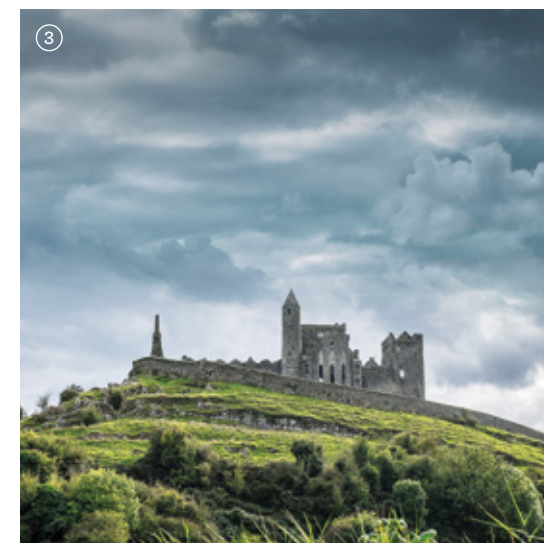
History inhabits almost every corner of County Meath, an apt place to kickstart your journey. Here, over 5,000 years ago, Neolithic people cultivated land and created farms, but what they left behind are among the world's most astonishing monuments: curving softly from the green fields of the Boyne Valley is the passage tomb of Newgrange, dating back to 3200BC. Enter the Brú na Boinne Visitor Centre and it's your key to 5,000-year-old ingenuity at Newgrange – a UNESCO World Heritage Site – the passage tomb erected to line up with the first rays of sunlight on the winter solstice, and the equally fascinating burial mounds of Knowth and Dowth. County Meath also boasts the Loughcrew Cairns (4000BC), which according to legend were made when a witch dropped an apronful of rocks as she leapt across mountains. Its 30 or so tombs make up what's said to be the world's oldest cemetery.

HIGH KINGS AND HEROES

Everyone loves a good story, and in Ireland's Ancient East you can delve into some of the most fascinating around. Ireland's ancient kings ruled the landscape 2,000 years ago, and keeping the gods happy was a driving force in their lives, with sacrificial deaths a way of appeasing their deities. The history of these kings is wrapped in fabulous legends, such as the story of King Laoghaire who was buried upright on the Hill of Tara, the ancient capital of Ireland, with a sword in hand to keep his enemies at bay. Around 142 kings reigned at Tara, crowned on a coronation stone called the Lia Fáil, which still stands today.

SACRED IRELAND

The longest Viking ship ever recorded was built from oak beams from Glendalough in 1042, but this idyllic Wicklow valley of the two lakes is best known for its early medieval monastic site. Although raided by marauding Norsemen at times, the remarkable cathedral, round tower and stone huts testify to >



1 Clonmacnoise, County Offaly This monastic site was established by St Ciarán in 544. 2 Glendalough, County Wicklow Founded by St Kevin in the 6th century. 3 Rock of Cashel, County Tipperary This glorious site is also known as St Patrick's Rock. 4 Jerpoint Park, County Kilkenny A great example of a 12th century medieval town.



5

5 **Ardmore Cathedral, County Waterford** Founded by St Declan in the 5th century. 6 **Holy Cross Abbey, County Tipperary** Legend and intrigue surround a true piece of the cross here. 6 **Newgrange, County Meath** An ancient burial mound. 7 **Castletown House, County Kildare** One of Ireland's most magnificent Palladian mansions. 8 **Rock of Dunamase, County Laois** One of the island's most unlikely wedding presents...

the life of worship enjoyed here since the 6th century, when St Kevin founded the site. Similar serenity can be found at Jerpoint Abbey, a 12th century church that was once the spiritual heart of a now vanished Irish province, the Kingdom of Osraige. In a time of saints and scholars in Ireland, women made their mark in County Kildare at the religious settlement now occupied by St Brigid's Cathedral. The resident abbess held so much sway that even the bishop of the region used to bow to her will when visiting.

ANCIENT HIGHWAY

In a similarly sacred setting, this time on the banks of the mighty River Shannon in Offaly, is Clonmacnoise. Complete with round towers, churches, cathedral and high crosses, this Early Christian site was once one of Europe's most important centres of learning and religion. Part of Clonmacnoise's importance lies in its strategic position – at the heart of the island's ancient crossroads on the Shannon, a watery highway that has been used as far back as the Iron Age. Today, it's all about pleasure, unspoilt waters and boating.

TRACING THE VIKINGS

Bearing down on an unsuspecting Ireland from Scandinavia, hordes of Vikings first arrived in the 8th century. They looted Ireland's villages, battled kings and established cities that still exist today. Waterford, which dates back to 914, is one of the oldest cities in Ireland, and one of the most important for Viking history. Take a walking tour of the Viking triangle and step inside the trio of museums called Waterford Treasures to discover more.

CASTLES AND CONQUESTS

Castles don't come more fairytale than the spellbinding Rock of Cashel in County Tipperary. Traditionally the seat of the Kings of Munster and home to a tower, cathedral and castle, this remarkable place has one of the most impressive collections of medieval architecture and Celtic art in Europe. Over at the Rock of Dunamase in County Laois, you'll find another storybook sight. If it looks like an unlikely wedding present, that's because it is. History tells of how in 1170, the castle of Dunamase once formed part of the dowry of Aoife Rua, daughter of the King of Leinster. Equally impressive is Kilkenny Castle, the pride of the Medieval Mile and an ode to the glory days of epic architecture. As you stand in the grounds and look up at the castle, it's hard to imagine that it was nearly brought to its knees during a siege in 1922.

BIG HOUSES AND HARD TIMES

Hidden within quiet valleys are some of the island's most spectacular reminders of indulgent aristocratic life, including Russborough House in County Wicklow, Beaulieu House in County Louth, and Curraghmore House in County Waterford. One of the most beautiful, though, is Castletown House in County Kildare – a Palladian Manor built by William Conolly, once the wealthiest commoner in Ireland. While in County Westmeath, seek out the scars of a family feud amid the tranquil surrounds of Belvedere House. In stark contrast, life was very different for poverty-stricken locals. You can find out about their experiences at the Dunbrody Famine Ship and Irish Emigrant Experience in New Ross, County Wexford.

MARITIME GATEWAY

Ireland's relationship with the sea stretches back millennia. At the pretty port town of Cobh in County Cork, you'll find rows of multicoloured houses and the heartbreaking stories of emigrants. It's thought that over 2.5 million people departed from here between 1848 and 1950. Cobh was also the last port of call for the Titanic. Take a ticket in the name of a real-life passenger at the Titanic Experience to see how you would have fared on that tragic night.

SPORT OF KINGS

From 3rd century kings racing their chariots to the lush landscapes ready for a countryside canter or a race for the finish line, nowhere is our love affair with the steed more clearly seen than County Kildare. Witness the spectacle of long lines of thoroughbreds training across miles of flat, rich plains at the Curragh, or visit the Curragh Military Museum and see how these grounds, in their time, were used for the Jacobites and their war horses in 1686, as well as British soldiers during WWI. Simply incredible. 🐾



6



7

ALONG THE WAY

TAKE A TOUR: One of the best ways to experience Ireland's Ancient East is with a tour guide. You'll find excellent tour guides with great stories everywhere from heritage towns such as Birr in County Offaly to mansions such as Castletown House, County Kildare.

EXPERIENCE: Ireland's Ancient East offers fantastic festivals from beach horse racing at Laytown (Sept) to the entertaining Waterford Spraoi International Street Arts Festival (July).

ENJOY: Sample award-winning food at Campagne in Kilkenny, shop for great bargains at Kildare Village Designer Outlet and discover craft from Waterford Crystal to Nicholas Mosse Pottery.



8



9

10 GREAT EXPERIENCES

HOOK LIGHTHOUSE

County Wexford
This lighthouse boasts stunning views and is the oldest operational lighthouse in the world.

CAVAN BURREN PARK

County Cavan
Walk through the world of prehistoric man in one of Ireland's most unusual landscapes.

CORLEA TRACKWAY

County Longford
Step back to 1488BC with this Iron Age bog road – the biggest of any found in Europe.

ATHLONE CASTLE

County Westmeath
Take a journey into the history of this riverside town, where a brutal siege raged in 1691.

LOUGH GUR

County Limerick
At Lough Gur in Limerick, a hoard of Viking spoils awaits. Iron knives, jet bracelets, spindle whorls and a store of Danish silver reward the visitor at this tranquil lake, along with the silent stone forts of Carraig Aille.

ROSCREA

County Tipperary
A beautiful market town, Roscrea has earned National Heritage status and is home to a 13th century castle on the grounds of Damer House, a stately Georgian mansion.

BATTLE OF THE BOYNE

County Meath
See where 60,000 troops fought in one of Ireland's most defining battles in 1690.

CARRICKMACROSS FAMINE WORKHOUSE

County Monaghan
Built in the 1840s, this Famine workhouse is one of only a few left in Ireland.

KENNEDY HOMESTEAD

County Wexford
The visitor centre showcases an exhibit examining the legacy of five generations of the famous Kennedy family.

CARLINGFORD

County Louth
Take a medieval walking tour of this pretty town, with its castle, friary and 15th century mint.

For more information on ways to explore Ireland's Ancient East, visit Ireland.com

3 GREAT NORTHERN IRELAND ROAD TRIPS

Northern Ireland is blessed with inspirational driving routes through fantasy landscapes and along one of the most dramatic coastlines in Europe



CAUSEWAY COASTAL ROUTE

Dramatic cliff-top castles, vast white-sand beaches, charming little villages – the Causeway Coastal Route delivers an incredible amount of beauty within just 314km. Starting in the vibrant city of Belfast and finishing in Derry~Londonderry (or the other way around if you prefer), the route is all about taking your time and savouring the sights, sounds and flavours of this spellbinding coastline. See show-stopping panoramas from the craggy heights of Torr Head, experience the warmth of local people in the villages of the Glens of Antrim and feel the joy of a steam locomotive trip on the Giant's Causeway and Bushmills Railway. If you're looking for memorable experiences, you're certainly going to get them here.

Frequently cited as one of the best touring routes in the world, it's no surprise that the Causeway Coastal Route is a genuine joy to drive. Each weave and turn of the car brings another gorgeous view, with the road hugging the coastline so closely at times you can taste the sea salt in the air. And it's not just the views that impress, either. Part of this route's allure is that so many great places are packed into a relatively short stretch of coastline. There's Carrickfergus, with its 12th century castle; there's The Gobbins, a restored 100-year-old cliff path that brings you through tunnels and over bridges; there's Glenarm Castle, home to the Earls of Antrim for around 400 years; and there's the fairytale beauty of Glenariff Forest Park.

But nothing can quite compare with the Carrick-a-Rede rope bridge. A bridge has been here since 1755 and was used by salmon fishermen to get

from the mainland to Carrick-a-Rede Island. Crossing is an exhilarating experience with the bridge bouncing with every step you take and the waves of the Atlantic crashing against the shore below.

If you're expecting downtime after that, think again. Next up is the UNESCO World Heritage Site of the Giant's Causeway, just a short distance away. From the Visitor Centre perched at the top of a hill, a winding road leads down to the main attraction: 40,000 hexagonal stone columns that blanket the landscape and disappear into the ocean like stepping stones to a lost world. According to science, intense volcanic activity 60 million years ago created this whimsical landscape, but the local legend of warring giants is a lot more fun.

It's typical of the Causeway Coastal Route that just when you think you've seen it all more keeps coming. Take it slow, savour it all and recharge your batteries in Bushmills village. Small, quaint and friendly, the village boasts lovely restaurants, such as The French Rooms and The Flash In The Pan, a stalwart of traditional fish and chips.

As you head along the coast, Dunluce Castle keeps drama high on the agenda. Like something out of a film, this dramatic ruined 14th century castle sits on a stark, rocky headland. And if it looks like it's about to topple into the sea, that may be because part of it already has. According to local tales, on a dark and stormy night in the 17th century, bits of the kitchen actually collapsed into the Atlantic pounding the shore below.

After all the cliff-edge cragginess, it's time to relax on the long, wide sands of Portstewart Strand. You'll find towering dunes behind the beach – some of the tallest in Ireland – with the waters of the North Atlantic lapping at the shore. More beauty awaits at Downhill Beach – but make sure to look up: on the edge of a cliff here sits Mussenden Temple built in 1785, a replica of the Temple of Vesta in Rome. As views go, it doesn't get much better – a lasting memory of what truly is one of the world's great road trips.



HIDDEN GEMS ALONG THE WAY

ENJOY THE ELEGANT SURROUNDINGS AT...

Ballygally Castle Hotel, Ballygally
A stunning 17th century castle overlooking the golden sands of Ballygally Bay with uninterrupted views towards Scotland.

CHASE A LEGEND AT...

The Sea of Moyle, Ballintoy
Trace the story of the Children of Lir as you take a moonlit stroll along the shore against the backdrop of Fair Head.

ENJOY SOME IRISH STEW AT...

The Red Door Tea Room, Ballintoy
This traditional Irish cottage tearoom in the charming village of Ballintoy is a proper delight. As well as Irish stew, you'll find fish and chowder and local mackerel.

TAKE TO THE WATER AT...

Portrush
Portrush Sea Tours offers everything from one-hour journeys to full-day boat charters to some of the big sights and tiny islands of the Causeway Coast.

ENJOY ONE OF THE WORLD'S GREAT TRAIN JOURNEYS FROM...

Coleraine to Derry~Londonderry
Described by travel journalist Michael Palin as "one of the most beautiful train journeys in the world".

1 Ballintoy Harbour, County Antrim A small shallow harbour that opens into the Atlantic. 2 Portstewart Strand, County Antrim Enjoy miles of golden sand on this stunning beach. 3 Mussenden Temple, County Londonderry Dramatic temple overlooking Downhill Beach. 4 Carrick-a-Rede rope bridge, County Antrim Fishermen first used a bridge here in 1755. 5 Glenariff, County Antrim Bluebells in spring. 6 Giant's Causeway, County Antrim UNESCO World Heritage Site. 7 Ballygally Castle Hotel, County Antrim 17th century castle that is now a hotel.

NEED TO KNOW

CAUSEWAY COASTAL ROUTE

DISTANCE
314 km.

TIME
You could drive it all in a day, but give yourself at least 2-3 days, if not longer.

PUBLIC TRANSPORT
Yes, there are buses and trains along the way. Find out more at: translink.co.uk or journeyplanner.transportforireland.ie

NEAREST AIRPORT
Belfast International Airport; George Best Belfast City; City of Derry Airport.

IMPORTANT INFO
Distances are in miles in Northern Ireland; speed limits range from 30mph/48km in built up areas to 70mph/112km on motorways.





THE MOURNE COASTAL DRIVE

Backed by the Mourne Mountains and weaving along Carlingford Lough and the Irish Sea, the Mourne Coastal Drive has all you could want from a road trip: scenery, adventure and charm.

Starting off in Newry, the route weaves through Warrenpoint, along the northern shore of pretty Carlingford Lough. This glacial fjord has seen a lot over the years, including Viking invasions and Norman conquests. It's also an outdoor wonderland, with everything from golf at the Warrenpoint Golf Club to scenic boat tours.

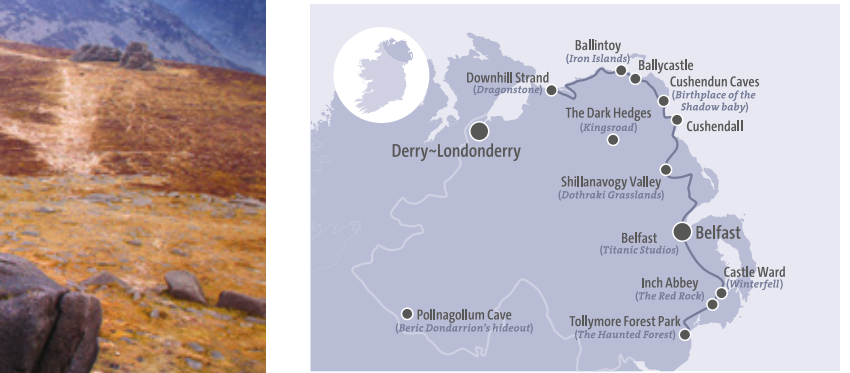
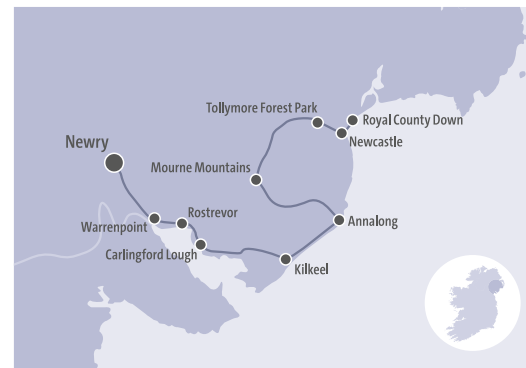
Tracking the road along the shore, you'll reach the village of Rostrevor at the foot of Slieve Martin Mountain. Stunning walking trails suitable for all abilities run through Kilbroney Park and Rostrevor Forest, while Rostrevor is also considered the best place for mountain biking on the island of Ireland.

If perfecting culinary skills is more up your street, head along to the Mourne Seafood Cookery School in Kilkeel. Overlooking the water, the cookery school specialises in local dishes.

Heading through the harbour village of Annalong, the scenery revs up with the moody blue tones of the Mourne Mountains. The Mournes were an inspiration for author CS Lewis's Narnia – see them in winter and you'll realise why.

Onwards to the scenic seaside town of Newcastle where the route draws to a close. It's a great place to finish up, with beach walks, mountain trails or a round of golf at the world-famous Royal County Down course.

EAT Enjoy delicious locally sourced produce at **Maisons** in Rostrevor. **SLEEP** **Slieve Donard Resort** in Newcastle makes a great base for exploring the area. **ENJOY** Take a **Bay and Harbour Cruise** or a **Castle Cruise** of Carlingford Lough with Carlingford Lough Cruises.



“As you pass through the harbour village of Annalong, the scenery revs up with the moody blue tones of the Mourne Mountains”

If you're looking for fantasy landscapes, mysterious woodlands and beautiful harbours, you're in the right place. Northern Ireland is Game of Thrones® territory. Welcome to real-world Westeros.

The journey begins at Tollymore Forest Park in County Down, better known as the Haunted Forest, a beautiful woodland of follies, grottos and caves, all overlooked by the Mourne Mountains. Still in Down, you might recognise 800-year-old Inch Abbey as the backdrop for some compelling moments from the series, and stunning Castle Ward on the shores of Strangford Lough. Game of Thrones® spent eight weeks here, building the set of Winterfell and today Winterfell Tours offers a Game of Thrones® experience: medieval banquets, face-to-face meetings with direwolves and a location tour.

Instantly recognisable as the Kingsroad from Game of Thrones® is the atmospheric Dark Hedges in County Antrim. It's a beautiful drive to get there through Belfast and with a detour through the Shillanavogy Valley (the Dothraki Grasslands). Turn off the quiet country road and there it is – a magical avenue of beech trees. Pictures taken, it's back on the road to Ballintoy Harbour, near the Giant's Causeway. You may recognise this stone harbour as Lordsport Harbour in Pyke, one of the Iron Islands.

Joining up with the Causeway Coastal Route is Larrybane, AKA the Stormlands, with views out towards Sheep Island. Dragonstone is next – or rather Downhill Beach. This golden stretch of sand is a suitably dramatic ending to your journey.

EAT Try **Upstairs@Joes** in Cushendall for great local food – not only that, but the area is well known for its traditional music sessions. **SLEEP** Bed, breakfast and stunning views are all part of the deal at award-winning **Whitepark House**, Ballintoy.

ENJOY Explore the huge sand dunes of **Portstewart Strand**, which featured as the coast of Dorne in season five. 🌿

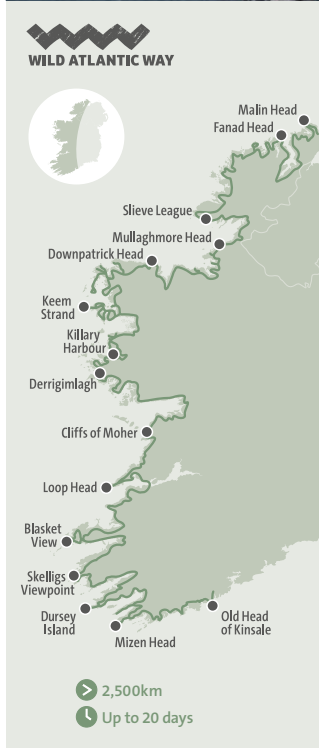


Cloughmore Stone, Mourne Mountains, County Down

6 WAYS TO EXPLORE THE WILD ATLANTIC WAY

Welcome to one of the world's most captivating coastlines – the Wild Atlantic Way. Travel writer Pól Ó Conghaile looks at six ways to travel this magnificent coastal highway

Stretching 2,500km along the coast of western Ireland from Malin Head in County Donegal to Kinsale, County Cork, the Wild Atlantic Way is a sensational journey of soaring cliffs and buzzing towns, of traditional culture and epic bays. It's a route that can be driven end to end or dipped in to as the mood strikes. And did we mention that it's the longest defined coastal driving route in the world? At that length, driving the Wild Atlantic Way would take about 20 days. But you can also take it in smaller sections highlighted here, each of which offers majestic sights and charming villages where you can listen to traditional music, eat seafood fresh from the boats and relax on deserted beaches.



NORTHERN HEADLANDS

Malin Head ➤ Donegal town

The northwest is one of the island's most unexplored areas, a rugged and remote coastline way off the beaten track. County Donegal is home to some of Europe's highest sea cliffs at Slieve League and one of Ireland's most spectacular lighthouses at Fanad Head. You might see a basking shark, learn a few words of Irish in the Gaeltacht, or even get to witness a dazzling display of the Northern Lights. Make no mistake, this is Ireland's Northern Star!

TASTE THIS

Treat yourself to the acclaimed six-course dinner at the award-winning **Mill Restaurant** in Dunfanaghy, or head to **The Village Tavern**, just outside Donegal town, for equally great seafood dishes made with the day's fresh catch from nearby Inver and Killybegs.

DON'T MISS

Take in glorious views from **Malin Head** – Ireland's most northerly point; explore **Grianán of Aileach**, a stone fort from 1700BC; and walk through beautiful **Glenveagh National Park**.

TRY THIS

Learn to play the bodhrán (a type of Irish drum) at **Oideas Gael** language and cultural centre in the beautiful surrounds of Glenn Cholm Cille.

NEAREST AIRPORT

Belfast International Airport; George Best Belfast City Airport; City of Derry Airport; Donegal Airport (flights from Dublin and Glasgow).



THE SURF COAST

Donegal town ➤ Erris, County Mayo

Stretching from southern Donegal to the wilds of western Mayo, Ireland's Surf Coast witnesses epic winter waves, but you don't have to be into surfing to get your kicks here. The landscapes offer everything from Céide Fields – a 6,000-year-old monument of stone-walled fields, houses and tombs – to Ben Bulbin, County Sligo's dramatic tabletop mountain. Little wonder Irish poet WB Yeats dubbed Sligo and Leitrim his "Land of Heart's Desire".

TASTE THIS

Head to the delightful Lyons Department Store in Sligo town for cakes, bakes and gourmet sandwiches at the **Lyons Café**. Or try some steamed mussels in the charming surrounds of Aughris, County Sligo, against the backdrop of the waters from which they were harvested.

DON'T MISS

Glencar Waterfall, County Leitrim – located slightly inland, it's so pretty WB Yeats immortalised it in a poem; **Lissadell House** in County Sligo, a beautiful Greek-Revival house in lovely countryside; **Ballycroy National Park** in County Mayo, with blanket bog and mountain terrain.

TRY THIS

Round up sheep with **Atlantic Sheep Dogs** (+353 85 740 2836), where you can meet and spend time with clever Irish sheep dogs.

NEAREST AIRPORT

Ireland West Knock Airport.

THE BAY COAST

Erris, County Mayo ➤ Galway Bay

Whether you're a walker, cyclist or motorist, the Bay Coast beckons. This is where you'll find Galway city, home to some of Ireland's most vibrant festivals and food, and Achill Island, with its beautiful beaches. The Bay Coast also cradles Connemara, a stunning sprawl of mountains, loughs, islands and bogs that makes an impression whatever the weather. At the heart of it all is Croagh Patrick, overlooking island-studded Clew Bay. The views are fit for a saint!

TASTE THIS

Mixing mountain and sea views, the thatched cottage of **Cronin's Sheebeen** overlooks Clew Bay and serves great food. Head to **Kai** in Galway city for delicious dishes using local ingredients.

DON'T MISS

Kylemore Abbey is famed for its beauty and romantic tales; **Slievemore Deserted Village** on Achill Island, County Mayo, boasts remains of almost 100 abandoned stone cottages; or head out to **Inishbofin** to enjoy coral beaches, a 17th century fort and looped walks (ferries leave from Cleggan).

TRY THIS

Take to the seas for a half-day boat trip with **Clew Bay Angling** (clewbayangling.com), catch some mackerel and cook it on board.

NEAREST AIRPORT

Ireland West Knock Airport.



THE CLIFF COAST

Galway ➤ Tralee, County Kerry

Prepare for some incredible sights here: the Cliffs of Moher and the Burren are highlights but Ireland's Cliff Coast has lots of off-the-beaten-track moments, too. Detour onto Loop Head for sky-high sea arches, crashing waves and an ends-of-the-earth lighthouse, or enjoy some of County Clare's hopping traditional music. For the bucket list, take a trip to the Aran Islands, see the Burren in wildflower season (May), or book a round of golf at Ballyunion.

TASTE THIS

The **Wild Honey Inn** on the edge of Lisdoonvarna town dates from 1860 and serves modern Irish bistro fare. With great views of Liscannor Bay, **Barrtrá Seafood Restaurant** within a traditional white cottage is a top spot for local seafood.

DON'T MISS

The **Cliffs of Moher** are a must-see – try walking to them along the cliff path (8km) from Doolin; the **Flying Boat & Maritime Museum** in Foynes, Limerick, tells the story of the golden age of transatlantic travel; or relax on **Fanore Beach**, a stretch of butter-coloured sand in the Burren.

TRY THIS

Jump on the **Dolphin Discovery** in Kilrush (discoverdolphins.ie) to see one of the island's only resident groups of bottlenose dolphins.

NEAREST AIRPORT

Shannon International Airport.

1 Malin Head, County Donegal Rocky beauty on the north coast of County Donegal. 2 Broadhaven Lighthouse, County Mayo On the northeastern tip of the Mullet Peninsula. 3 Dog's Bay Beach, County Galway A mile-long sandy white beach. 4 The Cliffs of Moher, County Clare The cliffs soar to 214 metres.

"I have been photographing the Wild Atlantic Way for over 20 years now and I still find it exciting to go out there, explore and shoot. I think that says it all"

Carsten Krieger
Photographer
This is the Burren



5 Valentia Island, County Kerry
A stunning island off the southwest coast of County Kerry, linked by bridge to the mainland. 6 Kinsale, County Cork One of Ireland's prettiest coastal towns is famed for its seafood.

"I love the Wild Atlantic Way because it taps into the primal human desires to explore, to discover, to embark on a voyage, and to see for yourself what lies around the next corner"

John McKenna
Author and food writer

SOUTHERN PENINSULAS

Tralee, County Kerry ➔ Ballydehob, County Cork

From the Ring of Kerry to Ireland's most southwesterly point at Mizen Head, this sensational stretch of the Wild Atlantic Way sees five craggy peninsulas jut out into the ocean from Kerry to Cork. These peninsulas are as far west as Ireland gets, stashing away the beautiful Bere Island, Kerry's newly accredited International Dark Sky Reserve and, of course, the iconic Skellig Islands, now famous all over the world as a Star Wars: The Force Awakens location.

TASTE THIS

Enjoy delicious seafood at the super-friendly **Moorings Restaurant** in Portmagee, County Kerry, and taste West Cork's famous flavours at **Manning's** deli, just outside Bantry.

DON'T MISS

Skellig Michael is an ancient monastic outpost 11.7km off the mainland in the Atlantic Ocean (booking ahead advised); see beautiful **Bantry House**, with its views of Bantry Bay, and **Gougane Barra**, a delightful monastic retreat set in the lush green landscapes of West Cork.

TRY THIS

Cross the stunning **Mizen Head Bridge** and enjoy the spellbinding views and perfect photo opportunities.

NEAREST AIRPORT

Kerry Airport, Cork International Airport.



THE HAVEN COAST

Ballydehob, County Cork ➔ Kinsale, County Cork

Start or finish your Wild Atlantic Way on the Haven Coast, and you're in for an unforgettable treat. Meandering from the lovely coastal village of Ballydehob to the Old Head of Kinsale, taking in offshore islands, tropical gardens and refreshing sea-kayaking, it's the route in a nutshell. Watch whales on a trip out into the Atlantic; trace centuries of history and taste the meats, fish and cheeses that have made West Cork a fabled foodie destination. It's all here for the taking.

TASTE THIS

Clonakilty is famous for its farmers' market, but it's also got high-grade seafood in lovely spots such as **An Súgán**. For more great flavours of the sea, try the acclaimed **Fishy Fishy Café** in pretty Kinsale.

DON'T MISS

A visit to either **Cape Clear Island** or **Sherkin Island**, off the coast of Cork; a round of golf at the **Old Head Golf Links**, Kinsale; or a view from on high at the **Galley Head Lighthouse**, built in 1875 near Rosscarbery, West Cork.

TRY THIS

Go **whale watching** off the coast of West Cork – it's reputed to be the best place in Europe to spot minke whales, humpback whales and basking sharks (whalewatchwestcork.com).

NEAREST AIRPORT

Cork International Airport.

6 GREAT EXPERIENCES

TORY ISLAND

County Donegal

Embark on a trip to Tory, the most remote of Ireland's inhabited islands. Tory is a place that feels unique; it even has its own elected king. Expect cliff-edge scenery, shipwrecks, monastic ruins, folklore and very friendly locals.

THE SKELLIG RING

County Kerry

This touring route, an extension of the Ring of Kerry, offers breathtaking Atlantic views, lively villages, quirky experiences and, of course, access to the Skellig Islands. Hardly surprising that it's been named one of the Top 10 Regions in Lonely Planet's Best in Travel 2017.

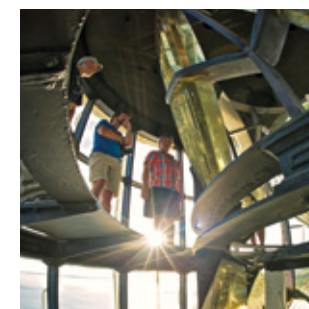


Killary Fjord

THE KILLARY FJORD BLUEWAY

County Galway

One of just three glacial fjords in Ireland, Killary offers unforgettable snorkelling and kayaking experiences along the Blueway. Take a trip to Glassilaun beach, where you can snorkel into Killary Bay Little to the north.



Exploring a lighthouse

SAMPLE THE SEAWEED

Counties Kerry, Mayo, Sligo

Seaweed is a cutting-edge health and food trend, but for communities on the Irish coast, it's been that way for centuries. Take a family foraging day with Wild Atlantic Cultural Tours in Mayo, a seaweed walk with Atlantic Irish Seaweed in Kerry, or relax with a seaweed bath in Sligo.

A LIGHTHOUSE ADVENTURE

Several lighthouses have been restored and rebooted as visitor attractions, and some even offer accommodation in cottages and lighthouses themselves. Check out Clare Island Lighthouse in Clew Bay, Fanad Lighthouse in Donegal, Loop Head in County Clare or Galley Head in West Cork.



Great Western Greenway

GREAT WESTERN GREENWAY

County Mayo

This 42km off-road cycle and walking track links Achill Island and Westport along the line of a former narrow-gauge railway. You can do it in sections or its entirety. Quiet, leisurely and traffic-free, it also boasts incredible coastal views. 🌊



GET OUTSIDE

The only real way to appreciate the island's countryside, beaches and waterways is to head outdoors. Here are some wonderful ways to breathe in that fresh air.
By Yvonne Gordon

1



2

GARDENS

With so many castles, stately homes and wild landscapes, Ireland boasts gardens of all shapes and sizes. There are grand formal lawns, tumbling terraces, Victorian walled gardens and wild natural spaces. From one of the most beautiful gardens in the world at Powerscourt Estate in County Wicklow to the stunning walled garden of Florence Court in County Fermanagh, it's time to discover a world in bloom.

GREAT PLACES TO TRY In the glorious region of Connemara in County Galway, **Kylemore Abbey** basks in beauty with a six-acre walled garden dating to the Victorian period. The historic **Lissadell House** in County Sligo has a two-acre alpine garden from 1740, and a walled kitchen garden from 1840, featuring heritage fruit and vegetables. One of Northern Ireland's most beautiful green spaces, **Rowallane Garden** in County Down has a mix of formal and informal areas; while **Glenarm Castle** in County Antrim boasts one of the island's oldest walled gardens – and gardeners who are always happy to answer visitors' questions.

INFO & TIPS Check garden opening hours before your visit – some are closed to visitors during winter months. To maximise enjoyment of Ireland's gardens, consider a garden trail, such as the **Antrim Garden Trail**, the **Carlow Garden Trail** or the **Wexford Garden Trail**.



3

GOLF

Home to over 400 golf courses, including more than a third of the world's links courses on this one island, Ireland is quite simply a golfer's paradise. It also boasts some of the most historic and scenic golf locations in the world – not to mention quite a few champions.

GREAT PLACES TO TRY The **Royal County Down Golf Club** consistently ranks among the best in the world, and is a favourite of Rory McIlroy. On the Antrim coastline, **Royal Portrush Golf Club** is another links beauty, loved by all because its Dunluce and Valley courses are just "so playable", according to Ryder Cup 2016 Captain, Darren Clarke. That's also probably why The Open is coming here in 2019. It's only a short distance from here to yet another stellar course at **Portstewart Golf Club**, which will host the 2017 Irish Open. Set on the Ring of Kerry, **Waterville Golf Links** is more than 100 years old and laden with dunes, gorse and native grasses; while **Lahinch Golf Club** in County Clare also overflows with history – the Old Course first opened in 1892.

INFO & TIPS It's always a good idea to book your tee time in advance, especially during the summer season. Different clubs have different rules on dress codes, so always check before you arrive. For more information on different courses, tee times and green fees, visit Ireland.com/golf



4



5



6

1 **Bantry House, County Cork** A delightful 18th century mansion overlooking Bantry Bay. 2 **Florence Court, County Fermanagh** This 18th century manor sits at the foothills of Cullcagh Mountain. 3 **Royal County Down** Voted number 1 golf course in the world by Golf Digest in 2016. 4 **Waterville, County Kerry** A classic links moulded by the sea. 5 **Great Blasket Island, County Kerry** This beautiful island was abandoned in 1953. 6 **Inis Oírr, County Galway** The smallest of Galway's Aran Islands.

ISLAND VISITS

Fire up the imagination on ancient monastic islands such as Devenish on Lough Erne and Valentia in County Kerry, and you'll understand why Ireland's islands are outposts of traditional culture, wildlife and folklore. Regardless of how remote they seem, some can be reached by bridge, while others are a ferry ride away.

GREAT PLACES TO TRY Take the ferry across the Sea of Moyle off the coast of County Antrim and you might spot a dolphin on your way to **Rathlin Island**. Once there, enjoy the seals basking on rocks, hear tales of ancient shipwrecks and see one of the most flourishing sea bird populations in Ireland. Off the Galway coast, travel to the **Aran Islands** and you're stepping back in time, with a beautifully stark landscape and seas that glow turquoise on sunny days. The largest, **Inis Mór**, boasts an incredible cliff-top prehistoric fort called Dún Aonghasa, while **Inis Oírr** is famed for its sandy beaches. Day-trippers and bird-watchers should make their way to the **Saltee Islands**, just 3 miles/5km away from Kilmore Quay in County Wexford. A haven for sea birds, the islands are among the most ancient in Europe and show evidence of primitive Stone Age man.

INFO & TIPS Always check sailing times. Bring food and water with you to uninhabited islands and note that many will have no facilities. Bring sunscreen, walking shoes and weather-appropriate clothing.

WALKING

With coasts, mountains, forests, National Parks and Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty, Ireland has scenic walking trails for all levels. And the really great thing about it? After exploring brooding valleys, cliff edges and green pastures, you can relax in one of the island's welcoming towns and villages where you'll find traditional music aplenty and great seafood restaurants.

GREAT PLACES TO TRY For a mix of woodland walks, lakelands and peat bogs, take to the **Sperrin Mountains** in County Tyrone for a variety of trails that let you soak up the unspoilt scenery. With over 40,000 acres, **Donegal's Glenveagh National Park** has six walking options for all levels of fitness. To make sure you get on the right track, the **Trail Walker Bus** takes walkers from the Visitor Centre on Saturdays, Sundays and Bank Holidays. For something gentler, the eight looped walks at the **Glen of Aherlow** in County Tipperary (from 2km to 10km) will take you through the forests and moorland of the Galtee Mountains.

INFO & TIPS Weather can change quickly – check the forecast, wear layers and bring a waterproof jacket, hiking boots, sunscreen and plenty of water. For details of all routes check out walkni.com and irishtrails.ie



7



Killary Fjord, County Galway



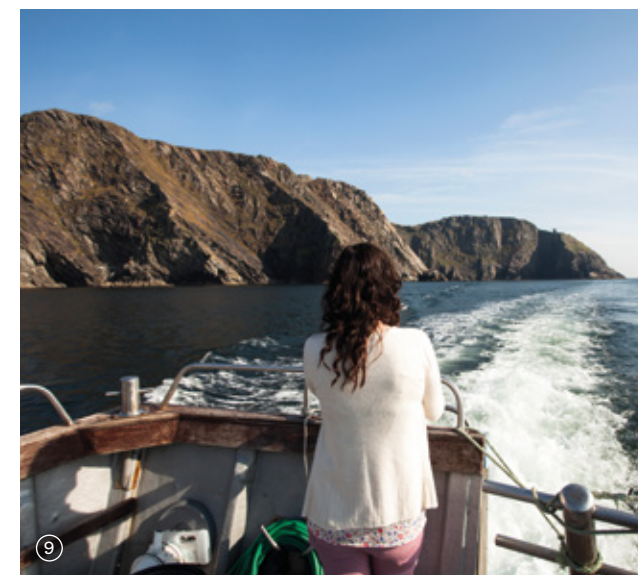
8

CITY TOURS

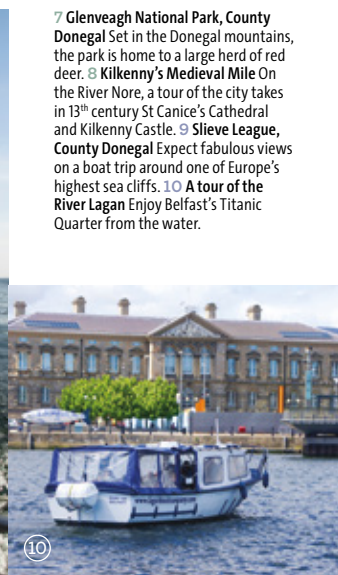
The best way to get your bearings in one of Ireland's cities is to take a guided walking or bus tour – then go back and explore the places you love in more detail.

GREAT PLACES TO TRY Kilkenny is small enough to be explored on foot, especially along the Medieval Mile. Discover its secrets and hear stories of witches and the Black Death with **Kilkenny Walking Tours**, visiting the medieval laneways, old city walls and the Black Abbey. For larger cities such as Belfast and Dublin, get your bearings with a **Hop-On Hop-Off Bus Tour**. Highlights of **Dublin Bus's** 90-minute tour include Trinity College, Kilmainham Gaol and Dublin Castle, while **Sightseeing Belfast's** tour takes in the Cathedral Quarter, Belfast City Hall and the Peace Wall. Or brave two wheels for a **Segway Guided Tour** of Belfast, gliding to the famous Titanic Quarter. In Cork, discover the city on the **Fabulous Food Trail**, which has tastings and stops at markets, cheesemongers, butchers and bakers, including The English Market.

INFO & TIPS Book walking tours in advance, especially during peak season and holiday weekends. Wear comfortable shoes and bring a raincoat, just in case...



9



10

7 **Glenveagh National Park, County Donegal** Set in the Donegal mountains, the park is home to a large herd of red deer. 8 **Kilkenny's Medieval Mile** On the River Nore, a tour of the city takes in 13th century St Canice's Cathedral and Kilkenny Castle. 9 **Slieve League, County Donegal** Expect fabulous views on a boat trip around one of Europe's highest sea cliffs. 10 **A tour of the River Lagan** Enjoy Belfast's Titanic Quarter from the water.

BOAT TOURS

The island of Ireland is surrounded by coastline and dotted with lakes, rivers and even fjords, so it's no surprise that boat trips are a great way to explore our natural waterworld. Bringing you to the mouths of caves and hidden coves, to the base of spectacular sea stacks and geological wonders, a boat tour can go from gentle and serene to utterly invigorating. It's time to enjoy Ireland from a different angle.

GREAT PLACES TO TRY The great thing about boat tours in Ireland is that you don't have to look very far to find one... Just check out Lough Neagh in Northern Ireland – the island's largest lake. Tranquil and scenic, it's the ideal place to explore historic ruins and beauty spots, with **Abhainn Cruises** offering stopovers at Ram's Island and Coney Island. Connemara's Killary Fjord is one of only three natural fjords in Ireland, and the incredible scenery is best appreciated from the water on the 90-minute **Killary Fjord Boat Tour**. Keep watch for the resident dolphins! Or take to the waters of Lough Derg, known as Ireland's "pleasure lake". **Killaloe River Cruises** will take you through the scenery, wildlife, heritage and folklore of this beautiful area in the River Shannon basin.

INFO & TIPS Always wear a lifejacket and bring a raincoat. Take boats trips with registered providers, and be advised that many sailings/tours are weather-dependent.

6 REASONS TO LOVE GOLF IN IRELAND

The island of Ireland. Home of champions. And a place where nature combines with the lie of the land to create some of the most incredible golf courses in the world

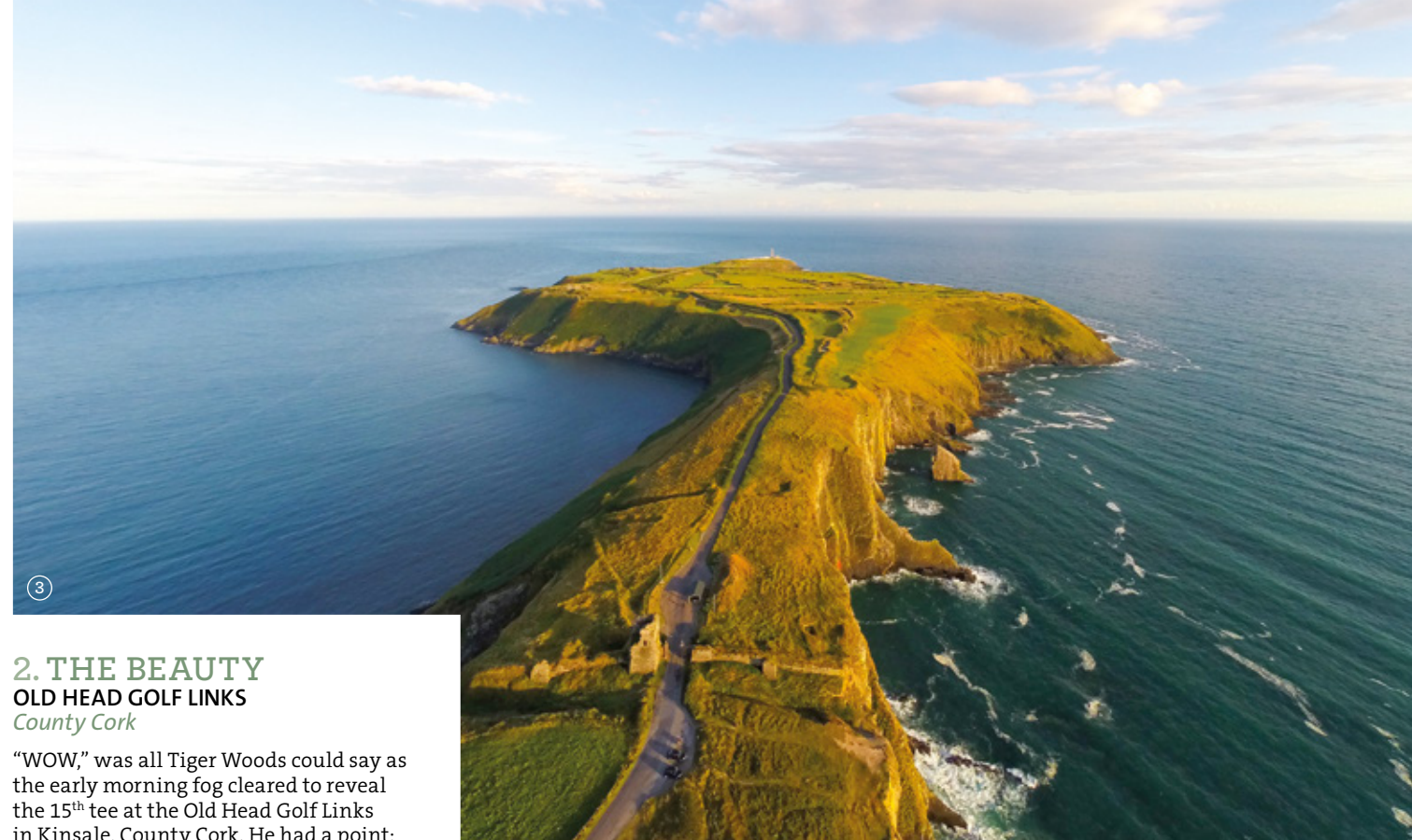


1. CHAMPION'S CHOICE ROYAL COUNTY DOWN GOLF CLUB County Down

It may look beautiful, but Royal County Down – Golf Digest’s World Number 1 course in 2016 – is one of the toughest courses on the island. Jack Nicklaus couldn’t conquer it and nor could Tom Watson. Arguably Ireland’s finest course, it’s the pride of the scenic seaside town of Newcastle, County Down. Modern equipment has left many great courses defenseless in recent years, but the links at Newcastle laughs in the face of technology, requiring intelligence and a large degree of skill to subdue its myriad blind shots, subtle run-offs and fringe-topped bunkers. Whether the wind whips in from Dundrum Bay, roars up the coast from Baltray or wafts over the Mourne Mountains and down to the sea, it makes for the perfect place to test your skills.

ANOTHER CHAMPION CHOICE

Portmarnock Golf Club, County Dublin
No longer only accessible by boat, Portmarnock has seen no less than 10 major champions lifting The Irish Open title on its course – including José María Olazábal, Bernhard Langer, Seve Ballesteros and Ben Crenshaw.

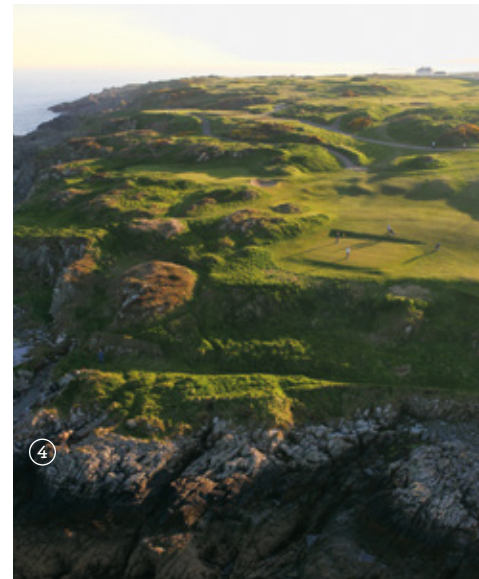


2. THE BEAUTY OLD HEAD GOLF LINKS County Cork

“WOW,” was all Tiger Woods could say as the early morning fog cleared to reveal the 15th tee at the Old Head Golf Links in Kinsale, County Cork. He had a point: humpback whales splashing in the swirling waters, swooping sea birds and scampering hares – you’re certainly at one with nature’s immense power on this beautiful links. Few courses inspire such outbursts as this beauty: sitting on 180 acres, with a rocky promontory extending 2 miles out to sea, it boasts cliff-top drops to the Atlantic Ocean for half of its 18 holes. The Old Head crew doesn’t want you to feel intimidated, though, so do make use of the professional caddies. Designed as a walking course, this is where memories will be made – just remember to keep your eyes on the ball.

ANOTHER BEAUTY

Ardglass Golf Club, County Down
Nestled next to the fishing village of Ardglass, the course has been described as “links golf as it should be”. With the magnificent Mournes as your backdrop, keep this one in your mind as a true hidden gem.



3. DESIGNER DREAM ROSAPENNA HOTEL & GOLF RESORT County Donegal

In 1891, the legendary Scot, Old Tom Morris, was a guest of Lord Leitrim at his estate. Taking a drive, Morris was quick to spot the golfing potential of the fine stretch of Donegal coastline around Rosapenna. Before returning to Scotland, he had already staked out the first links course in the village of Downings. Bounded by the Atlantic Ocean on one side, with rolling hills on the other, the views are still enjoyed by golfers over a century later, while the forces of nature continue to shape the land.

ANOTHER DESIGNER DREAM

The K Club, County Kildare
Designed by the late Arnold Palmer, the Palmer Ryder Cup Course is a favourite of champions, with the Ryder Cup 2006 and The Irish Open 2016 both paying homage to his creation. Described as an inland links, the Smurfit Course was designed so that golfers could experience something completely different side by side.



1 Royal County Down Golf Club Voted World Number 1 Course by Golf Digest in 2016. 2 Portmarnock Golf Club, County Dublin A favorite of local hero Pádraig Harrington. 3 Old Head Kinsale, County Cork Its caddies are renowned for showing you the sights and the skills as you walk the course. 4 Ardglass Golf Club, County Down Adored by Northern Ireland hero Darren Clarke. 5 Rosapenna, County Donegal A designer dream of Old Tom Morris. 6 The K Club, County Kildare Venue for The Ryder Cup 2006.



7

5. STAR ATTRACTION WATERVILLE GOLF LINKS County Kerry

Don't be surprised when you see a statue of the late US Open winner Payne Stewart at Waterville – a small piece of golfing heaven where mountains and Atlantic Ocean meet in perfect harmony. He stayed here with Tiger Woods and Mark O'Meara on a memorable trip in the late 1990s and adored the 19th hole in the town's Butler Arms Hotel. Such was his popularity that a life-sized bronze statue was erected in his memory shortly after his death in 1999. Stewart and O'Meara were regulars at Waterville before heading on to play in The Open and were often joined by Tiger Woods, Ernie Els, Jim Furyk, Stuart Appleby, David Duval and Lee Janzen – who all went on to become members, too.

ANOTHER STAR ATTRACTION

Actor Bill Murray has a bit of a soft spot for **Tralee Golf Club**, County Kerry: "It's the most beautiful golf course I've ever played... The sea and the light and the sky and the hills and the fields... It's just the prettiest one."



8

4. THE CLASSIC LAHINCH GOLF CLUB County Clare

A product of three top designers, Lahinch has undergone many changes since it was first designed in 1894. That said, two of the course's most famous holes remain in their original state: the par-5 4th hole called The Klondyke and the stunning par-3 5th, The Dell. In 1926, Dr Alister MacKenzie was called in to recreate a new links and while he would go on to build Augusta National and Royal Melbourne, golf lovers will still argue that the County Clare creation is his finest links course. And Lahinch's beautiful location adds to its appeal, with the Atlantic Ocean right on the doorstep.

ANOTHER CLASSIC

Some courses simply get finer with age, especially **The Royal Belfast Golf Club**, which saw its first holes played on Boxing Day 1881. Still retaining its original charm, it boasts local hero Rory McIlroy as a member.



9



10

7 **Waterville Golf Links, County Kerry** The golf is superb and so is the town – enjoy! 8 **Lahinch Golf Club, County Clare** On the Wild Atlantic Way, nature, Morris and MacKenzie have combined to make something beautiful. 9 **Royal Portrush Golf Club, County Antrim** Home of The Open in 2019. 10 **Carton House, County Kildare** Venue for World Amateur Team Championships in 2018.

6. THE OPEN 2019 CHOICE ROYAL PORTRUSH GOLF CLUB County Antrim

Host to over 50 national championships in its time, Royal Portrush Golf Club became the first course on the island of Ireland to stage The Open back in 1951 – and will do so again on July 18-21, 2019. "This is among my favourite places to play in Northern Ireland, one of the truly great links courses," extolled Rory McIlroy. And he's not the only one – this is the course that 2016 European Ryder Cup team captain, Darren Clarke, credits for his love of the game. And when you're done on the greens, you have nothing but beautiful views to sit back and enjoy.

OTHER BIG PLAYERS

A big one to watch is **Portstewart Golf Club**, one of the island's finest links courses and host of the 2017 Irish Open. The Irish Open has also been hosted by many other courses including **Fota Island Resort** in Cork, **Mount Juliet Estate** in Kilkenny, and **Portmarnock Golf Club** in County Dublin (along with The Walker Cup).



Portstewart Golf Club, County Londonderry



Thatched cottage, County Mayo

THE LAST WORD ON... TRADITIONAL CULTURE

Traditional culture is alive and well on the island of Ireland. Here's how to enjoy it...

THREE FESTIVALS TO ENJOY

Traditions are at the heart of festivals in Ireland

BANKS OF THE FOYLE HALLOWE'EN CARNIVAL

Derry~Londonderry city (October).
The Irish invented Halloween (31 October) so no wonder it's such a big deal in villages, town and cities around the island. Derry~Londonderry is definitely the place to go, though: the city's annual carnival is now the largest of its kind in the world.



PUCK FAIR

Killorglin, County Kerry (August).
With a history stretching back almost 400 years, Puck Fair is thought to be one of Ireland's oldest. Celebrations last three days and see a mountain goat crowned.



FESTIVAL OF THE FIRES

Uisneach Hill, County Westmeath (May).
Held in the mythological and sacred centre of Ireland, the Uisneach Festival of Fire celebrates a tradition that can be traced back to this site over 1,400 years.



LOOK OUT FOR:

Dry-stone walls in the west of Ireland, particularly along the Wild Atlantic Way. What's remarkable is that these traditional walls are held together with just stone and no mortar. In Northern Ireland, you'll find the **Mourne Wall** in County Down, which is the longest on the island and stretches for over 35km. The **Irish thatched cottage** also holds centuries of tradition within its walls and can be seen all over the island. Back in the 1800s, it's thought that half the population slept in a thatched cottage. Visit the village of **Adare** in County Limerick for a picture-postcard scene.



TRADITIONAL CRAFTS

From glassblowing to pottery, weaving to woodwork – craft in Ireland is thriving. Connected to the landscape and calling on skills passed down from generation to generation, craft is an integral part of Irish culture whether it's knitwear, basket-weaving or lace-making. In Donegal, the hills and the sheep that roam them have led to a rich tradition of handweaving. Visit **Handwoven Tweed** in Ardara for great wool blankets and tweed. Kilkenny's creative spirit can be enjoyed to the full on the **Made in Kilkenny Craft Trail**, which allows you to meet the makers of textiles, ceramics, jewellery and glass in idyllic locations. Or make your way to **Belleek** in Enniskillen, County Fermanagh, one of the oldest working potteries creating fine Parian china. A tour of the visitor centre is ideal for learning about its history.

DON'T MISS **The House of Waterford Crystal Visitor Centre**, Waterford, is where pieces of this famous crystal are created before your eyes. **The Irish Linen Centre**, Lisburn, is great for a walk-through of this historic and prestigious industry. **The Claypipe Centre**, County Roscommon, is where to discover all about the traditional craft of claypipe making, which dates back to the 1700s.

DID YOU KNOW?

THE CLADDAGH RING

One of Ireland's most famous pieces of jewellery has to be the Claddagh Ring. Believed to have originated in the village of Claddagh in Galway Bay, you wear it with the crown pointing in if you're in love or married; or pointing out if you're looking for love! **Thomas Dillon's** in Galway city has been making this iconic ring since 1750.



LISTEN OUT FOR:

The **Irish language** spoken in the **Gaeltacht** (Irish-speaking areas). You'll find Gaeltacht areas around the west coast of the island, along with parts of counties Cork, Donegal, Meath and Waterford. And in Northern Ireland, keep an ear out for **Ullans**, a variant of Scots-Irish.



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 the Gulf Cooperation Council require a valid passport and visa to enter the Island of Ireland. Visitors of other nationalities should contact their local Irish Embassy/consulate or their local embassy. The Short Stay Visa Waiver allows visitors from Bahrain, Kuwait, Oman, Qatar, Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates to enter Ireland on a British General 'C' Visa. The UK visa requires a once-off validation in the UK before it can be used directly to enter Ireland.

EMBASSIES & CONSULATES

REPUBLIC OF IRELAND

United Arab Emirates

Embassy of Ireland
Al Yasat Street off 6th Street
Al Bateen
P.O. Box 61581
Abu Dhabi
United Arab Emirates
Tel: +971 (0)2 4958200

Visa Facilitation Office, Dubai

Irish Visa Facilitation Office
4th Floor the H Hotel
Office Tower No 1
Sheikh Zayed Road
Dubai
United Arab Emirates
Tel: +971 (0)4 3298382

NORTHERN IRELAND

British Embassy Abu Dhabi,
British Embassy Abu Dhabi
Khalid bin Al Waleed St (Street 22)
PO Box 248 Abu Dhabi
United Arab Emirates
consular.UAE@fco.gov.uk
Tel: +971 2 610 1100

UK VFS Visa Application Centre

Wafi Mall, 3rd Floor, Falcon, Phase 2
Umm Hurair 2 – Dubai – UAE
P.O Box 114100
Dubai
United Arab Emirates
Tel: +971 04 205 5800

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 GCC are entitled to VAT or tax refunds. 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.



ELECTRICAL CURRENT

The standard electricity supply on the island of Ireland is 230/240 volts AC (50 cycles).

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.psnri.police.uk

EMERGENCY TELEPHONE NUMBERS

REPUBLIC OF IRELAND

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

NORTHERN IRELAND

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

SMOKING RESTRICTIONS

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



TRAVELLING TO IRELAND BY AIR FROM UNITED ARAB EMIRATES AND QATAR



GULF COOPERATION COUNCIL

DEPART	ARRIVE	AIRLINE
Dubai	Dublin	Emirates
Abu Dhabi	Dublin	Etihad
Doha	Dublin	*Qatar Airways

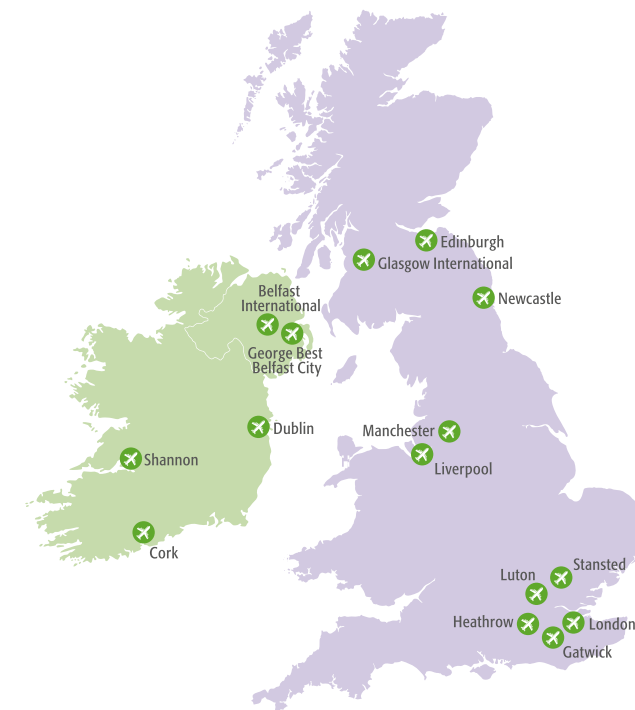
*Flight route commencing the 12th of June 2017

CONTACTS

AIRLINE	TELEPHONE	WEBSITE
Emirates	+971 6005 5555	www.emirates.com
Etihad	+971 02 599 0000	www.etihad.com
Qatar Airways	+971 4 229 2229	www.qatarairways.com



TRAVELLING TO IRELAND BY AIR FROM GREAT BRITAIN



AIRLINE CONTACT DETAILS

AIRLINE	WEBSITE
Aer Lingus	www.aerlingus.com
British Airways	www.britishairways.com
CityJet	www.cityjet.com
easyJet	www.easyjet.com
Flybe	www.flybe.com
Ryanair	www.ryanair.com

DEPART	ARRIVE	AIRLINE
Edinburgh	Belfast International	easyJet
	Cork	Aer Lingus Regional
	Dublin	Aer Lingus Regional, Flybe, Ryanair
Glasgow International	George Best Belfast City	Flybe
	Belfast International	easyJet
	Cork	Aer Lingus Regional
Liverpool	Dublin	Aer Lingus Regional, Flybe, Ryanair
	George Best Belfast City	Flybe
	Belfast International	easyJet
London City	Cork	Ryanair
	Dublin	Aer Lingus, British Airways
	George Best Belfast City	Aer Lingus, British Airways
London Heathrow	Shannon	Aer Lingus
	Belfast International	easyJet, Ryanair
	Cork	Ryanair
London Gatwick	Dublin	Aer Lingus, Ryanair
	Shannon	Ryanair
	Belfast International	easyJet
London Luton	Dublin	Ryanair
	Belfast International	easyJet
	Cork	Ryanair
London Stansted	Dublin	Ryanair
	Shannon	Ryanair
	Belfast International	easyJet
Manchester	Cork	Aer Lingus Regional
	Dublin	Aer Lingus, Ryanair
	Shannon	Ryanair
Newcastle	Belfast International	easyJet
	Cork	Aer Lingus Regional
	Dublin	Aer Lingus Regional, Ryanair



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.



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 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



MAP & ROUTE MILEAGE 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.



To view or download a copy of the 'Great Irish Road Trips' guide, visit ireland.com

Our free Great Irish Road Trips app is available on the App Store: now there really is no such thing as a wrong turn in Ireland!

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. © 2017 Tourism Ireland. Map creation by Michael Schmeling, www.maps.aridocan.com | Map data © OpenStreetMap contributors, CC BY-SA