IRELAND walking & backpacking



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www.hostelworld.com



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If you have any questions, queries or suggestions we'd be delighted to hear your contributions for the next edition. Please send to info@selectmedialtd.com

Every effort has been made to ensure that all the information in this guide is accurate. However, the author and the publishers cannot accept responsibility for any loss, injury or inconvenience sustained by any traveller as a result of information or advice contained in this guide. 4

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- Glen of Aherlow
- Slieve Bloom
- The Burren
- Wicklow
- West Cork/Kerry

WAYMARKED WAYS

CITY GUIDES/WALKS

- Dublin
- Belfast
- Cork
- Limerick
- Galway
- Waterford



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Archaeology

Kildare Street Dublin 2 Natural History

Merrion Street Dublin 2

Decorative Arts & History

Collins Barracks Benburb Street Dublin 7 Country Life

Turlough Park Castlebar County Mayo

TRAVEL TIPS & INFORMATION

Currency and Banking

The currency in Ireland is the **Euro** (\bigcirc), There are 7 euro notes, \bigcirc 500, \bigcirc 200, \bigcirc 100, \bigcirc 50, \bigcirc 20, \bigcirc 10 and \bigcirc 5, although the larger notes (500, 200 & 100 are uncommon). 100 cents make up \bigcirc 1 and coins come in \bigcirc 2, \bigcirc 1, 50c, 20c, 10c, 5c, 2c and 1c.

Using your bank or visa card at an ATM is the best way of managing your money during your stay. You will find ATMs dotted everywhere in towns and cities but they may be somewhat scarce in rural areas. Banking hours are generally 10am to 4pm. Post offices will change foreign currency and, like the banks, offer better exchange rates than **bureaux de change**.

International credit cards are widely accepted in larger establishments throughout the country but some smaller businesses such as local shops and pubs may accept cash only or a minimum credit card payment.

Iarnróid Éireann



Trains and buses larnróid Éireann (Irish Rail) is the national rail network. Trains run to and from Dublin frequently to most towns in the country but if you are looking to travel the south to west route your best bet is to take the bus.

ADVICE & TIPS

Bus Éireann will take you almost anywhere you want to go. Look out for special fares and discounts that may be available. You can also hire a private coach if you wish to travel with a group and devise your own itinerary. See www.buseireann.ie for details.

Citylink offer competitive deals with direct routes from Galway to Dublin Airport, Galway to Shannon Airport and Cork-Limerick to Galway. You can purchase tickets on the bus but fares are cheaper when bought online. Their latest route serves Galway to rural Clifden, Connemara.

Aircoach is another option offering similar city to Dublin airport routes at budget prices. Log onto www.aircoach.ie to see what's on offer.



ADVICE & TIPS

Advice & Tips

Hostels are the least expensive form of accommodation for walkers and backpackers. Visit www.hostelworld.com for a full and comprehensive selection. Some hostels will offer tours and most will have information on the leisure activities available in the local region. Hostels typically supply a fully equipped kitchen allowing visitors to prepare their own meals and enjoy the company of other tourists. Practically all hostels provide internet access so you can book your next hostel in advance rather than scrambling for last minute accommodation.

Renting a car is a great way of travelling across Ireland, allowing you to reach the more remote corners of the country that can be difficult to access via bus and rail. Improvement to Irish roads in the last few years has made driving a smoother experience. Budget Car Rental Ireland offers a reasonable and friendly service with rental locations including Dublin, Cork and Shannon airports. Other options include Thrifty and Avis. Shop around for the best deal.

Old Road Signs County Mayo



HilltopTreks provide 1 to 13 day guided walking tours throughout Ireland, and guided or self guided hiking tours with maps, accommodation and suggested walks. They also arrange airport transfers, customised walks to help you explore new areas and gentle walks or more demanding hill walking. In short they cater for everyone.

If you like to eat out and sample local cuisine you should note that most restaurants and pubs are offering low-cost and delicious meals to suit any budget during this challenging economic period. Many places will offer set menus during certain hours giving you value for your money without having to compromise on quality. You will



be spoiled for choice at the local farmers' markets and street stalls which sell a variety of home-grown fare.

The Irish weather can be extremely changeable. Expect plenty of rain, even in summer so bring water-proof clothes or at the very least a raincoat or a jacket with a hood. For day-time wear stick to casual clothes; jeans and t-shirts are the norm while people tend to dress a little more formally at night when visiting restaurants, bars and other entertainment venues.

DOS AND DON'TS

DO

- Plan ahead
- Book accommodation in advance whenever possible
- Look after your money, phone, camera and other valuables.
- Do not keep a lot of cash on you
- Have your passport and wallet on your person at all times

LISTINGS

ALL WAYS OUTDOORS Cloncollig Ind Est, Church Rd, Tullamore Tel/Fax: 057 9329919 Inish Carraig, Golden Island, Athlone Tel/fax 090 6470785 info@allways-outdoors.com www.allways-outdoors.com We are the largest Outdoor Retailer in the Midlands, stocking Ireland's leading brands. Columbia, Berghaus, Highlander, Vango, and Sealskinz plus many more. For all your walking, hiking, trekking, and camping needs. Choice, Quality, Value, and the personal touch are what we are all about. • Ensure you have plenty of water, fuel and food, warm clothing, medicine, a map and sufficient knowledge of the area.

• Carry a mobile (cell) phone

DON'T

• Go anywhere alone with a stranger on your travels

• Leave your luggage unguarded at train stations and airports

• Change travel routes without letting someone know your new plan

Travel alone

General Backpacking Checklist

 \bullet Visa, passport, money, European health card, credit cards

• Medicine (pack a small First Aid kit with the basics such as plasters, insect repellent, aspirin...)

• For hiking, ensure you go with a compass, map, extra food and water, suitable clothing, a sleeping bag, sun protection, matches or a lighter

- Notebook and camera to document the journey
- Plug adaptors
- Sunglasses and hat
- Raincoat
- Torch
- Chargers for phone and camera
- Plastic rubbish bags
- Prescription glasses/contacts
- Hiking boots
- Basic hygiene essentials: toothbrush, toothpaste,
- towel, toilet paper, comb
- Watch

Be sensible with your money and plan ahead. Ireland can be an expensive country so keep an eye out for any special offers when it comes to accommodation, travel, shopping and eating.



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BOOKING YOUR HOSTEL

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HOSTELWORLD.COM - Find the best affordable accommodation in Ireland that's right for you.

Hostelworld.com is a leading provider of online reservations to the budget, independent and youth travel market. With over 23,000 hostels, low-cost hotels, bed and breakfasts and camping villages in over 180 countries world wide, Hostelworld.com is the perfect solution for all your travel needs in Ireland and beyond.

Since the first booking was made back in 1999, Hostelworld.com has helped more than 15 million people sleep easy everywhere from Dublin to Honolulu and over the past 10 years has grown to become an essential travel resource for anyone planning a break away.

Hostelworld.com also offers over 2.7 million user reviews, free award winning travel videos, podcasts, customized city guides, a travel social network, amazing tours, travel store and more to help you on your way!

How to book online:

Booking online with Hostelworld.com is easy!

- Visit www.hostelworld.com
- Choose your accommodation, ranging from hostels, low-cost hotels, bed and breakfast and camping villages.

• Pay a 10% deposit online by credit card to secure your booking.

• Bring your booking confirmation to the hostel and pay the balance (90%) on arrival.

Using our secure online reservations service guarantees your bookings and provides immediate confirmation. It couldn't be easier!

WHY YOU CAN "SLEEP EASY" WITH HOSTELWORLD.COM

Hostelworld.com helps you sleep easy right across Ireland with an extensive range of accommodation, tours, reviews, videos, podcasts, guides and much, much more! Check out some of these great reasons to book with Hostelworld.com here:



Accommodation

Hostelworld.com offers you a fantastic range of affordable and quality accommodation in Ireland that will be sure to take you to every corner of the country! Hostelworld.com's extensive range of accommodation in Ireland makes the site an essential resource for any of you backpacking through Ireland this year. All bookings are made securely, in real-time, and are guaranteed for you. Whether you are planning a visit to one of Ireland's top cities, an activity break in the mountains, or a quieter stay in the countryside taking in some of Ireland's breathtaking landscape, Hostelworld.com has the accommodation that's right and affordable for you.



Tours section

You'll be amazed with the choice of things to do when you backpacking in Ireland. From breathtaking scenery and landscapes, to matchmaking festivals, music sessions and whiskey tasting – there is something for everyone! So make sure you visit Hostelworld.com's tours section and book yourself onto some of Irelands most interesting tours!



Travel network

As soon as you make a reservation on Hostelworld.com you have the added bonus of also becoming a member of Hostelworld.com's Travel Network – MyWorld. Through MyWorld, you can meet other travellers, upload blogs and photos of your travels, plan future trips, keep a track of all your bookings, share travel tips, travel experiences, and add reviews.



Travel Videos

Presented by Hostelworld's Colm Hanratty, our new award winning travel videos give you the chance to have a look at everything some of Ireland's top cities have to offer before you leave home!



Free Pocket Guides

Get the most out of your travels with our Free Pocket Guides for many major cities including Dublin, Cork, Galway and Belfast, which are packed with tips on how to save money and information on places to see, eat, drink, and much more.



Podcasts

In our podcasts, Hostelworld's Editor Colm Hanratty, gives you the lowdown on what to see and do in some of Ireland's top cities and beyond. He also interviews some locals about things unique to their city giving you a true feel for the place you are planning to visit.



Travel Store

Check out Hostelworld's new Travel Store where you can avail of great offers and exclusive discounts across the globe on travel SIM cards, travel insurance, guide books, language courses, event tickets and much more.



Over 2 Million Reviews

Read 'up to the minute' hostel reviews for destinations in Ireland to help you decide which hostel is right for you! All reviews and ratings are from customers who have booked and stayed at the hostels.



23 languages

You can now check out Hostelworld.com in 23 different languages making it easier then ever to find and book accommodation for your trip.

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Secure and Guaranteed online reservations

Hostelworld.com has been processing online hostel reservations since 1999 and has always placed the security of internet transactions and customer's credit card details as top priority. Hostelworld.com will continue to offer customers the highest level of security available for online transactions to reassure you when you make your reservations.

• UNICEF - Make a difference when backpacking

Hostelworld.com support UNICEF in their global fight against HIV/AIDS and world poverty among young people, children and their families by donation a portion of profits made from bookings to UNICEF each month. Your booking makes all this possible, remember every time you book through Hostelworld.com you are helping make a difference.

• and more...

There are many more great reasons to book your accommodation through Hostelworld.com which you will find out as soon as you visit the site. So all that's left to do is get onto www.hostelworld.com, load up your backpack and get set for an unforgettable trip around the wonderful island of Ireland!

HOSTELWORLD.COM – IRELAND'S TOP HOSTELS

Hostelworld.com's accommodation has been rated and reviewed by 1000's of Hostelworld.com customers who have booked and stayed at the properties. This guarantees that you will be reading genuine reviews online. The ratings are based on six criteria – character, security, location, staff, fun and cleanliness. Reading 'up to the minute' hostel reviews for destinations right across Ireland will help you choose the right accommodation and let you know what to expect before you go.

The Top 10 Irish Hostels for 2009 as voted for by Hostelworld.com customers online will take you right across Ireland - from East to West - with Dublin city in the East and Galway and Clare in the west taking the top spots:

1. Rowan Tree Hostel, Ennis, Co. Clare

Rowan Tree Hostel is a brand new facility in the centre of the town of Ennis offering quality budget accommodation in a fully restored 17th century Georgian building. Rowan Tree has a relaxed and friendly atmosphere and is a real favourite with the many musicians that come to play in Ennis. All of the facilities are brand new and include a licensed Café Bar, coffee shop, fully equipped kitchen and dining room, plus TV Lounges and free WIFI and Internet access. Rates from €12.00 per person per night



Rowan Tree Hostel, Ennis, Co. Clare

2. Aille River Hostel, Doolin, Co. Clare

If your visit to Irelands takes in a trip to Clare, you should check out this 300 year old renovated cottage is situated on a quiet road at the bank of the Aille River, right in the centre of Doolin. The Aille River Hostel is the gateway to majestic 700 ft high Cliffs of Moher, the world famous Aran Islands and the unique Burren landscape, home to thousands of rare wild flowers and archeological Celtic sites. Rates from €16.00 per person per night

Aille River Hostel, Doolin. Co. Clare



3. Kinlay House Hostel Galway, Galway City

Galway City is a must for any of you planning a trip to Ireland this year. The award winning Kinlay House Hostel is ideally located on Eyre Square in the heart Galway's vibrant City Center. It is the perfect base from which to explore one of Ireland's major cities while also being a great base to explore some of the West's breathtaking landscape. Rates from \in 10.99 per person per night



Sleepzone - The Burren, exterior

4. Sleepzone The Burren, Cliffs of Moher, Co. Clare

The magnificent Cliffs of Moher is top of many visitors' lists of places to see and things to do in Ireland. Sleepzone The Burren boasts close proximity to the Cliffs and also The Burren region, one of Ireland's most famous areas of natural beauty. They offer affordable rates, based in a great location - a combination hard to beat.

Rates from €14.99 per person per night

5. Sleepzone Connemara, Connemara, Co. Galway

Overlooking The Killary - Ireland's only fjord - and surrounded by the peaks of The Twelve Bens, Maumturk and Mweelrea mountains in the centre of Connemara, Sleepzone Connemara is definitely a contender for one of the most spectacularly situated hostels anywhere in Western Europe. Rates from €14.99 per person per night

6. Barnacles Temple Bar House, Dublin City

Taking you into Ireland's Capital is Barnacles Temple Bar House. Barnacles has a perfect location situated on the cobbled streets of Dublin's Cultural District - Temple Bar, two doors away from the famous 'Temple Bar' pub, and a minutes walk from everywhere else - cafes, pubs and Dublin's most famous attractions.

Rates from €10.00 per person per night



Globetrotters/ The Townhouse, Dublin City

7. Globetrotters/The Townhouse, Dublin City

Ideally situated just a 2 minute walk from the main street in Dublin (O'Connell Street) Globetrotters/The Townhouse is perfect for your city break in Dublin. The building itself is 200 years old and the owners have gone to great lengths to restore the buildings. The hostel still maintains the character of years gone by ensuring you a historic stay in the city. Rates from €18.00 per person per night

8. Sleepzone Galway City, Galway City

Taking you back to Galway, Sleepzone is situated in the centre of Galway City - 100 meters from Eyre Square, only



three minutes from the bus & rail terminal and coach station, and close to all the city's amenities, including pubs, clubs, cafes, and restaurants. Sleepzone is spacious, and offers

Sleepzone Galway City

a beautiful, fully equipped self-catering kitchen and outdoor terrace. The hostel serves as the perfect gateway to the beautiful West of Ireland.

Rates from €9.99 per person per night

9. Kinlay House Dublin, Dublin City

In the famous Temple Bar district, Kinlay House is only minutes from the best selection of Dublin's bars, cafes, restaurants and within easy walking distance to all Dublin's top attractions. The hostel have a great team of staff that go out of their way to make sure you enjoy the 'Irish craic' and we have all of the facilities you would expect from a leading hostel, including free internet access, free breakfast, cooking facilities and luggage lockers to name but a few. Rates from $\leq_{10,00}$ per person per night



Kinlay House Hostel, Dublin

10. Marlborough Hostel, Dublin City

Situated on Marlborough Street in the heart of the city centre, the hostel is directly beside the pro-Cathedral, one of Dublin's finest cathedrals and within walking distance of all the cities main attractions. The hostel is located in two restored Georgian buildings, full of their original character. Marlborough Hostel boasts free 24hr internet access, bbq area, rear gardens, games room, vending machines, as well as 24 hour opening hours and no curfew. Rates from €10.00 per person per night **All hostels can be booked on www.hostelworld.com**

DISCOVER IRELAND'S CITIES NORTH AND SOUTH

We have already taken you through some of Dublin and Galway's best hostels and now it's time Belfast and Cork to shine! During your trip to Ireland you are bound to find vourself visiting one of these major cities and both Belfast in the North and Cork in the South boast some excellent hostels all available to be booked on www.hostelworld.com.

BELFAST -

Vagabonds, Belfast City, Northern Ireland

Ideally located in the heart of Oueens Ouarter, just minutes walk from the city centre, tourist attractions and bus/train stations in a beautifully renovated listed building. Vagabonds is Belfast's most recent hostel to the city oozing with character and perfect for exploring the city.

Rates from €15.63/ £13.00 per person per night

Vagabonds Belfast International Youth Hostel, Belfast City, Northern Ireland

Hostel, Belfast Belfast International Youth Hostel is ideally situated in Belfast; just minutes walk from the bus and train station. It is also a perfect base for exploring cities attractions - museums, galleries, music venues, shops and pubs and clubs. They also offer freshly 'cooked to order' food in their Causeway Café. Rates from €15.63/£13.00 per person per night

CORK -

Bru Bar & Hostel, Cork City, Ireland

Bru Bar & Hostel is one of Cork City's newest hostels, located just a 2 minute walk from the bus and train stations right in the city centre. They have their own residents bar where you can enjoy a few late drinks following a days sightseeing, the perfect way to unwind in the center of Cork! Rates from €13.00 per person per night

Sheila's Hostel Sheila's Hostel, Cork City, Ireland in Cork



Sheila's Hostel Cork is a cosy, family-owned hostel only 3 minutes walk from bus, train, shops, pubs and restaurants. The location, friendly atmosphere and excellent facilities make Sheila's Hostel a great place to stay in Cork. If you need time to chill out after a night partying in one of the cities many night clubs. you can do so in the hostels recently opened a



new cinema room with 42 inch plasma screen, comfy beanbags with movies screened daily. Rates from €13.00 per person per night

DISCOVER SOME OF IRELANDS HIDDEN GEMS

For those of you venturing outside the major cities to explore some of Ireland quaintest villages, towns and breathtaking landscape Hostelworld.com has the accommodation for you! Ranging from eco hostel to beach hostel you are spoilt for choice when it comes to finding a place to stay.

The Eco Friendly Hostel

Gyreum, Corlisheen, Riverstown, Co. Sligo, Ireland

The Gyreum is a mammoth round structure with 360 degree views of Sligo's famed cairned mountains with spectacular views of lakes and mountains across 5 counties. It was one of 4 finalists in the prestigious LAMA awards for 2007 for Best Ecological Building in Ireland and is also Ireland's first Ecolodge to be award the E.U. Flower for environmental and ecological standards. With its indoor camping area, one can sit by the fire or sleep in a tent without having to worry about the weather outside.

Rates from €17.00 per person per night



The Eco Friendly

The Guinness Lovers Hostel Hostel, Gyreum, Hideout Hostel, Dingle, Co. Kerry, Ireland

Riverstown. The Hideout Hostel is located in Dingle, a lively town buzzing Co. Sligo with a great Irish music scene and is well known for its high spirited traditional Irish pubs where you will find some of the best Guinness in Ireland. With a mixture of private and dormitory rooms and all the facilities you could need as a backpacker, Hideout Hostel is the perfect place to stay while you are visiting the South coast. Rates from €18.00 per person per night

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The Island Hostel

Valley House Holiday Hostel, Achill, Co. Mayo, Ireland

Achill Island is the largest island off the west coast of Ireland. It is accessible from the mainland by bridge and its magnificent sandy beaches and sea cliffs will blow you away! Valley House Holiday Hostel is a historic Victorian house that sits on the former estate of the Earl of Cavan and is located on scenic wooded grounds close to Blue Flag beaches. With a courtyard for BBQ-ing, a 9 hold pitch and putt course and a lake stocked with trout on the grounds there's no time to sit idle here!

Rates from €19.00 per person per night

The Farm Hostel

Slane Farm Hostel, Newgrange, Co. Meath, Ireland

Situated on a working farm with suckler cows, sheep and some horses Slane Farm Hostel is most definitely a unique place to stay. The hostel is housed in old stone farm buildings beautifully restored with a TV room, games room and fully equipped kitchen available for guests. Camping is also available here. The hostel is also the perfect base from which to explore the Boyne Valley. The Boyne Valley is Ireland's most historic area containing some of the Europe's most significant prehistoric sites. The area is now a World Heritage Site. Rates from \in 20.00 per night

• The "Room with a View" Hostel

Rick's Causeway Coastal Hostel, Portstewart, Co. Derry, Northern Ireland

This is a small cosy hostel in the pleasant sea-side town of Portstewart, and since the hostel is only 50 metres from the ocean many of the rooms have incredible sea views. The Surf Lodge hostel has good bus connections with Belfast, Derry and all Bundoran, the sights of the Causeway Coast, so it is an excellent base



for exploring the Northern Coast. Rates from €14.43 /£12.00 per person per night

The Beach Hostel

Bundoran Surf Lodge, Bundoran, Co. Donegal, Ireland

Bundoran Surf Lodge is ideally located in Co. Donegal on the North West coast of Ireland,

close to the beaches and also to the town centre. The beaches in the area boast some of Ireland's best waves and Bundoran Surf Lodge is definitely the perfect place to unwind after a day on the surf.

Rates from €20.00 per person per night



The Adventure Hostel Knockree Hostel (Hostelling International), Wicklow, Co. Wicklow, Ireland

Set at the bottom of Knockree, overlooking Glencree Mountains, this hostel reopened in April 2008. The Wicklow Way passes through the hostel grounds and so the ideal location for hill

Knockree Hostel, walkers. Knockree hostel boasts all the usual characteristics

of a top rated 5 star property including en-suite rooms, family rooms, meeting room, self catering kitchen, full car & coach parking and internet access. All rooms have a spectacular view of the amazing scenery that surrounds this hostel. Especially amazing is their Double Deluxe Room also dubbed our 'Honeymoon Suite'

Rates from €15.50 per person per night

• The Remote Hostel

Dun Chaoin Hostel, Ballyferriter, Co. Kerry, Ireland

Situated on the Dingle Way, this hostel is located in Kerry's Gaeltacht area and boasts panoramic views. From the hostel you can enjoy views of the Blasket Islands and the Atlantic Ocean. But what makes this hostel unique is that it is the most westerly hostel in Europe.

Rates from €15.50 per person per night

• The "Sunny South East" Hostel Kirwan House, Wexford, Co. Wexford, Ireland

Kirwan House is perfectly located in the heart of Old Viking Town Wexford. Wexford and its environs offer loads of variety of activities and attractions for the guest with time to spare. It is the perfect base from which you can visit Curracloe Beach, the location for the 'D-DAY' landing scenes in 'Saving Private Ryan', the Irish National Heritage Park, Johnstown Castle gardens, Kilmore Quay, Tintern Abbey and much more. Rates from €21.00 per person per night

All hostels can be booked on www.hostelworld.com

HOSTELWORLD.com

COMMERCIAL FEATURES - HOSTELS IN IRELAND

HOSTELS IN IRELAND

Bundoran Surf Lodge

Bundoran Surf Lodge is the perfect retreat in the northwest. We are centrally located in the seaside town of Bundoran and offer quality accommodation at budget rates, all with breakfast. The Surf Lodge has private parking, internet and Wi-Fi, movie collection, kitchen and dining room facilities. Most of our rooms have en-suite bathroom and TV. There are great coastal walks in the immediate area and plenty of great hill walking opportunities close by. We also provide surf lessons for all ages and abilities. We are open all year. P: 071 9841968

M: 087 9572924 E: info@bundoransurfco.com www.bundoransurfco.com.

The Rainbow Hostel

The Rainbow Hostel is situated less than one mile from Dingle Town. It is a family owned and operated business renowned for its Irish hospitality. Formerly a family home, the Rainbow Hostel has been lovingly transformed into quality budget accommodation with all

the modern conveniences. Nestled in the rugged Irish countryside in Co. Kerry, the Rainbow Hostel offers camping and both private and dormitory style accommodation. An ideal base for nature lovers and outdoor enthusiasts, visitors can enjoy surfing, fishing, archaeology, music and much more. www.rainbowhosteldingle.com



SURF CO.





Telephone: +353 (0)66 915 1044 info@rainbowhosteldingle.com www.rainbowhosteldingle.com



Kirwan House Hostel

Kirwan House Hostel is ideally located just minutes from Wexford Town's shops, restaurants, pubs and tourist attractions. We're an easy walk from the bus & train station

and only a half hour drive to Rosslare Ferry Terminal. The hostel offers en suite dormitories, private rooms, a full kitchen, two comfortable common rooms and a lovely courtyard garden. There's free tea, coffee, wifi and friendly staff to make sure you have a great stay. Contact +353(0) 5391-21208.



Evergreen House Holiday Hostel

Evergreen House Holiday Hostel situated by the beach in the historic seaside town of Youghal, within easy reach of Cork City (30 Mins. by car or a bus every hour from the bus station which will drop you a minutes walk from our door) but far enough away to

relax in a family run hostel that offers quality accommodation, in a homely atmosphere at budget prices. Offering ensuite dorm, double or family rooms, s/c kitchen, TV lounge and BBQ patio garden. Come along and unwind! Family friendly accommodation Contact:- 00 353 (0) 24 92877. Email: info@evergreenireland.com







HOSTELS



Kirwan House Holiday Hostel

3 Mary Street WEXFORD TOWN Ph: +353 (0)5391–21208 kirwanhostel@eircom.net www.wexfordhostel.com

Fäilte Ireland

Evergreen House Holiday Hostel

The Strand, Youghal, Co. Cork, Ireland Family friendly accommodation



Tel: +353 (0)24 92877 email:info@evergreenireland.com www.evergreenireland.com

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Slane Farm Hostel

Situated on this working farm our visitors can take a stroll through the farm and visit the newly established Dairy Enterprise that is still a work in progress or visit the old ruins of **Gemonstown Abbey** or take a hike to the famous **Hill of Slane** where St. Patrick lit the Pascal fire. **Slane Farm Hostel** is



next door to Slane Castle and only 40 minutes from Dublin City & Airport.

Nearby are the famous monuments of **Newgrange**, **Knowth** and **Dowth** which date back over 5,000 year old and the **Battle of the Boyne Centre**. Slane Farm Hostel also has a camp site. Showers Toilets and a kitchen are provided and are open all year round. Joanne the owner and her family are always around to give a helping hand on local information and planning advice for a day's activity. This year the hostel celebrates 10 years since it opened and we are always delighted to welcome back our many visitors that return to us during the year and welcome all new comers.

Slane farm Hostel has won many awards during its 10 years and continues to improve the service it provides on a yearly basis.

A Chead Mile Failte is always at hand.



Slane Farm Hostel is situated in the Heart of the Boyne Valley on a working farm of hundreds of acres. The buildings that have been renovated from old coach house and stables have been lovingly restored to provide luxury accommodation in a rural setting.

Guests will enjoy the friendly atmosphere of the dormitories, private rooms and private suites, all fully equipped for our everyday needs. The hostel boasts a modern kitchen, fully equipped, dining area, living room and a TV/games room. There is free internet access for all our visitors. Breakfast can be included on request. All bed linen provided and each room has its own ensuite.

> Harlinstown, Slane, Co. Meath Contact: www.slanefarmhostel.ie Phone: 00353 41 9884985/9824390 Fax: 00 353 41 9884985 Email: info@slanefarmhostel.ie

<u>NATIONAL PARKS</u>

The Owengarriff River Cascades, Killarney National Park, Co. Kerry



Killarney National Park

Killarney National Park in Kerry is Ireland's first National Park and was designated as a **Biosphere Reserve** in 1981 by the **United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation (UNESCO)**. It is situated in the south west of Ireland and the most westerly point in Europe, encompassing over 10,000 hectares of natural beauty and historical sites. The most visited feature of the park is **Muckross House and Gardens,** lying near the shores of **Muckross Lake**. This 19th century mansion is open to the public all year round, who are invited to explore the grounds around this lavish building and come inside to view this Victorian building up close. Admission to Muckross House and Traditional Farms for an adult is €12.

The Park itself is teeming with wildlife, most notably the Sika Deer and the Red Deer. Other prominent features of the grounds include Torc Waterfall, **Muckross Abbey** and the three lakes, **Lough Leane**, **Muckross Lake** and the **Upper Lake**. At Ross Castle, built in the early 15th century by the O' Donoghue Chieftains, you may be interested in the one hour tour of this site. From this vantage point you can see **Purple Mountain, Innisfallen Island** and Ross Island. Next take a lake boat to Innisfallen Island where the well preserved monastic ruins of Innisfallen Abbey lie, founded in the 7th century. Walk or cycle throughout the National Park to enjoy the scenery on a personal level. For those of you who wish to adopt a more relaxing approach there are horse driven carts alongside the lake at Muckross House.

Wicklow Mountains National Park

Situated in the east of the country, Wicklow Mountains National Park covers over 20,000 hectares of virtually

untouched mountain scenery. The primary purpose of the Park is to conserve the natural flora and fauna of the Wicklow Mountains which includes woodlands, blanket bog, deer, bats, hares, birds, the common lizard and a variety of plants. The most visited area of the Park is Glendalough Valley, where visitors can view the monastic settlement founded by St. Kevin. Glendalough translates to "Valley of two lakes". The Valley was carved out by glaciers during the Ice Age and the two lakes were formed when the ice eventually thawed. On site you will find a cathedral, an impressive stone round tower. and St. Kevin's Church. Other features of historical interest are The Caher, a stone wall monument, the small church of Temple na Skellig and St. Marv's Church, one of the earliest built churches in Ireland. It is best to explore this breathtaking wilderness on foot: Footfalls Walking Holidays offer guided nature walks.

Glenveagh National Park

Encompassing over 16,000 hectares, **Glenveagh National Park** lies in the heart of the **Derryveagh Mountains** in the north west of County Donegal and features a host of plant and animal life, lakes, hills, rugged clifftops and peat bogs. A new self guided Tree Trail, the Lakeshore Walk, has been established from the Visitor Centre to the Castle. This walk is suitable for children and wheelchair users. The Visitor Centre offers a thrilling audio-visual experience as well as housing exhibitions and restaurant facilities. All maps and information on the various features of the Park can be found here before you embark on your day out.

The **Glen Walk** is a popular trail taking visitors through the Derryveagh Mountains where they can enjoy the woodland scenery, old settlement sites and views of **Lough Veagh** and the mountains. **Glenveagh Castle**, built in the 19th century, consists of a four storey rectangular keep. Guided tours are the only means by which you may access and explore this heritage centre. The **Glenveagh Gardens** is a major and stunning focal point of the Park. Here you will see an abundance of exotic plants and rhododendron. Animal species include badgers, foxes and hares, and The Golden Eagle which was reintroduced to the Park in 2000.

Ballycroy

Ballycroy National Park is located on the western seaboard in northwest Mayo. It is one of the last intact active blanket bog systems in Ireland and Western Europe and is home to a large variety of habitats and species. Badgers, otters, mink, bats, non-native red deer, bog-cotton, deer-grass, heather and orchids are just some of the wildlife to be found here. Covering 11,000 hectares, the park is an impressive mix of Atlantic blanket bog and mountainous terrain dominated by the **Nephin Beg** mountain range. There are a number of corrie lakes including **Corryloughaphuill Lough**. The **Ballycroy National Park Visitor Centre** displays interactive exhibitions explaining the history and diversity of this national parkland. There is a short nature trail culminating in a spectacular viewing point, offering great scenic views of Achill Island to the west, and the Nephin Beg Mountain Range to the east.

Connemara National Park

Located in the west of Ireland in County Galway, Connemara National Park covers more than 2,000 hectares of natural, wild terrain. **The Twelve Bens** mountain range, huge expanses of bogs, woodlands and heaths make Connemara a nature lover's paradise. **The Visitor Centre in Letterfrack** includes an exhibition on the boglands of the West of Ireland, an audio-visual introduction to the Park and its habitats, and a guide to the Park's nature trails. At the heart of the Park is **Big Glen (Gleann Mór)**, through which flows the **River Polladirk**. Evidence of past human civilizations exist within the park in the form of a 19th century graveyard as well as 4,000 year old megalithic tombs. The Connemara landscape is rough, wet and rugged so hikers should dress and pack accordingly. For the more leisurely visitors, it may be best to opt for a guided tour and avail of the many picnic areas scattered through-out the park. Pony and horse riding are popular activities.

The Burren National Park

The Burren in north county Clare is a huge area of karstic limestone, virtually untouched since the lce Age. This nature conservation has long fascinated historians, botanists, geologists and archaeologists. The landscape is rich in heritage sites, flora and fauna and attracts thousands of curious visitors each year.

LISTINGS

GLENVEAGH NATIONAL PARK Churchill, Donegal Tel: 00353 74 9137090 www.glenveaghnationalpark.ie Glenveagh National Park is open all year round. Castle, Visitor Centre and Gardens open every day apart from Good Friday and the Christmas period. The Glenveagh Visitor Centre is located on the northern end of Lough Veagh, near the edge of the National Park.

GLENVEAGH NATIONAL PARK

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COMMERCIAL FEATURE

Glenveagh National Park

Lying in the heart of the **Deryveagh Mountains** in North West Donegal, this remote and beautiful wilderness offers simply the best in walking and hiking. With rugged mountains, pristine lakes, miles of unspoilt tracks and opportunities to glimpse rare wildlife, the park is renowned for its spectacular setting.

There are a number of trails and routes sign posted to follow, varying in length, as well as countless points from which to enter the hills for the more experienced walkers and climbers.

The Nature Education Team and Park Rangers also host a full programme of guided walks for all ages and levels of ability throughout the year, all listed on the web site.

Whether you're coming for the first time or a regular, coming back for the space and peace you crave, you can be assured of a walking experience never to be forgotten in Glenveagh...



WALKING HUBS

Connemara, Connemara

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the 12 Bens Connemara, on the west coast of Ireland is a haven from the busy modern world. In this lonely wilderness, it is easy to imagine what life was like for the first Irish settlers thousands of years ago. It is a place of tranquillity and solitude. Walkers, hikers and cyclists can roam the seemingly endless wilderness at their leisure. Dress for the weather, which often means plenty of rain and cold temperatures.

The 5 or 6 day **Connemara Walking Trail** begins at the **Connemara National Park**. At **Maam Cross**, the walker is taken across bogland where you can see the unique and beautiful flora and fauna of this rugged, wild landscape.



The walk follows the shores of **Lough Shannawinnia** and **Lough Invernagleragh** and onto **Willie's mountain**. At **Shannadonnell Mountain** you will find historical ruins including an old farmhouse, farm walls and a cottage. On the fifth day the tour begins back at **Maam Cross** and moves towards **Lough Corrib**. Your walk will bring you along the old, disused railway line linking Galway and Clifden.

Town Centre, Clifden, Connemara Killary Harbour or the Famine Walk can be done with Sleepzone Connemara. On the walk you will learn how the Great Famine of 1845-1849 affected this area. The Relief Road dating back to 1846 was built to give some employment to locals in return for food. Leenane Village is situated at the head of Killary Harbour, Ireland's only fjord. This village is often referred to as the 'gateway to Connemara'. Here you will find Doolough Valley, the location of the famine walk. Jim Sheridan's film adaptation of "The Field" was shot in Leenane in 1989.

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Connemara National Park is a haven for outdoor enthusiasts with the magnificent **Twelve Bens** mountain range in the north dominating the landscape. The terrain is a mix of blanket bog and rough heathland with a diverse range of flora and fauna including purple moor grass, carnivorous plants, orchids, an abundance of birdlife and now an attempt is being made to re-introduce Red Deer to the area. A relatively easy walk is the **Diamond Hill Loop,** named after its glittering quartzite top that glistens in the sun. A well defined path leads gradually upwards to 1600 feet.

Croagh Patrick, overlooking Clew Bay in County Mayo, is the holv mountain of St. Patrick, and has been a sacred place of worship for some 5000 years, from the Megalithic Age. This is where Patrick, the patron saint, spent 40 days and nights praying and fasting in 441AD when it is said he banished all the snakes from Ireland. There is a strenuous ascent to the summit where a small church area lies. There is an annual pilgrimage up this mountain on the last Sunday in July when thousands of walkers converge on the mountain. For an even more challenging walk, there is the Maumturk Mountains, an arduous trek over rough terrain for experienced hikers. The walk begins at Maam Cross and travels across the central ridge of the Maumturks. Along this route you will pass St. Patrick's bed and holy well, and enjoy splendid views of the Twelve Bens and the distant shores of Lough Corrib.

Croagh Patrick



Donegal

Donegal in the North-West of Ireland is a county rich in natural beauty. Some of the many spectacular attractions include **Errigal**, Donegal's highest mountain at 751 metres, **Slieve League**, one of Europe's highest sea cliffs at 595 metres on the edge of the Atlantic Ocean, and the **Bluestack Mountains**. Donegal boasts the northernmost point in Ireland, **Malin Head** on the **Inishowen Peninsula**.

Surfing at Bundoran



There are numerous walking trails and tour operators to choose from. With **www.hillwalkers.com** you can take on a leisurely three hour walk, approaching Errigal from the south side. This mountain, overlooking the tiny village of **Dunlewy** is famous for its glittering quartzite peak often giving off a pinkish glow at sunset that never fails to mesmerise. Following a boggy path by the river and then upwards along the well-worn route, you will enjoy stunning views of the surrounding mountains and islands, depending on cloud cover. Care is advised on windy and rainy days.

In Co. Donegal for your accommodation needs the **Bundoran Surf Lodge** is ideally located close to the beaches and also to the town centre. The lodge is a perfect place to chill out after surfing. There is a spacious lounge area with wide screen TV, DVD player and X-Box and movie library.

Walking & Talking in Donegal Tours vary from leisurely to more difficult walks. Forest Park consists of 481 hectares of woodlands, sand dunes, seashore, historical sites and lakes. Here you will find trails to suit the entire family. Their longest tour is along the coast of the Fanad Peninsula, which juts into the Atlantic between Lough Swilly and Mulroy Bay. The walk finishes at the Fanad **Lighthouse.** erected in 1818 which watches over the entrance to Lough Swilly and the wild Atlantic. While in this area you may like to visit the guiet heritage towns of Ramelton and Rathumullen.

Slieve League, meaning 'stone mountain' is covered in a blanket of peat and heather. Leave your car in the carpark and see the area on foot. On the walk to the summit you will be rewarded with breathtaking views of the Sligo Mountains and Donegal Bay. One Man's Pass takes you to the summit but be warned; this is not a path for anyone afraid of heights. The Tower Walk brings you by the ruins of an early 19th century watchtower of the deserted village of Port at the end of Carrigan Head; the tower was built in preparation for an attack by Napoleon.

For those of you interested in a longer trek there is **The** Bluestack Way, a popular waymarked trail, running 47 km which can be completed in 2 to 3 days. Beginning in Donegal Town, the walker follows the Eske River, trekking along country lanes to Lough Eske. At the foothills of the Bluestack Mountains, pause to take in the landscape of the high peaks of the Bluestacks, the Sligo Mountains and Donegal Bay. Next is a hike to the **Glenties** where you will stay overnight in this





Highlands.

The town of Ardara is the end point of the Way. Rest up in this designated Heritage Town and enjoy the surrounding scenery which includes unspoiled beaches, waterfalls and archaeological attractions such as **Doon Fort** and the Dolmen Stone at Kilclooney.

The Glen Of Aherlow



The Glen of Aherlow

The Glen of Aherlow encompasses sixteen miles of untouched countryside and is nestled between the **Galtee Mountains** to the south and the wooden **Slievenamuck Ridge** to the north, in County Tipperary. The Glen boasts spectacular scenery including five corrie lakes, monuments of historical interest, woodlands and cascading mountain streams. The **River Aherlow** runs through this breathtaking U-Shaped valley. In the past, the Glen was a major pass between Limerick and Tipperary and a notorious hideout for fugitives given its isolated location. The name **'Aherlow'** comes from the Irish, 'eathralach' meaning between two highlands. **Slievenamuck** (mountain of the pig), is said to be named after a great pig slain there by the legendary Irish leader **Fionn Mac Cumhail**.

At the centre of the Glen is the Statue of **Christ the King** overlooking the valley with his hand stretched outwards in what is said to be his blessing to visitors. This was erected in 1950 but was damaged beyond repair in 1975 and had to be replaced. The entrance to the **Glen of Aherlow Nature Park** is adjacent to Christ the King. The Park is suitable for families and the casual walker interested in a leisurely stroll. **St Berrihert's Well & Kyle** is another monument of interest, located close to the village of Ardane. Seventy-two early medieval inscribed stone slabs and crosses dating from the 7th up to the 9th century are
located here. The Kyle of today, the oval enclosure was built in 1946 as a safe keep for the slabs and crossed inside. Many people leave gifts at the Kyle such as images of saints and rosarie beads.

A favourite site amongst visitors and locals is **St Sedna's Well** in Clonbeg Churchyard in the heart of the Glen where you can see the remains of an old church wall completely covered with ivy. You can find information on all the family names in the graveyard in the Tourist Office. The water from the well is said to have magical healing properties. Many of the gravestones date back to early 1700's.

There are many walking loops to suit all levels of fitness. Lough Curra and Lake Muskry are for the seasoned walker and can take up to four hours to complete leading you into the rugged Galtees and these trails guarantee the hiker stunning views of open moorland, flowing streams and woodland. The Galtees are Ireland's highest inland mountain range. Following the Lake Muskry forest trail you will see Lake Farbreaga. On the Lough Curra route you will come across Saunders Lodge, a ruin in the forest. Follow the Old Ice Road path all the way to Lough Curra which is the highest lake in the Galtee Mountains.

The annual **Glen of Aherlow walking festival** takes place over 3 days, in early summer, usually during the June bank holiday weekend. Guided walks showcase the beauty of the natural landscape. Michael Moroney is a local, experienced guide. You may opt for the **Dolmen Loop** with Michael which involves climbing up Slievenamuck to

Galtee Mountains



the top of the mountain to a massive portal tomb at **Shrough**, built 5,000 years ago, commonly referred to as **Diarmuid & Grainne's bed.**

Slieve Bloom

The **Slieve Bloom Mountains** lie between County Offaly and Laois; they are at the cross-roads of Ireland, half-way between Dublin and Galway. These majestic mountains have changed very little in the past five thousand years and are filled with deep glens, rocky mountains and ancient magic and folklore. Standing on any of the numerous walking trails you will find yourself transported back to the ancient lrish past, and you can imagine how life was like for the first Irish settlers. Material dating from the Stone and Bronze Ages have been found which include a cist burial chamber, passage graves and standing stones. The presence of Ring Forts date back to the Iron Age. There is also evidence of ecclesiastical settlements.

Slieve Bloom is also well-known for its history of storytelling, music and dancing. The mountains were the childhood home of the legendary **Fionn mac Cumhaill** and are reputed to be where he found the **Salmon of Knowledge**. The wildlife in the mountains is to be marvelled at with the abundance of thick woodland, bog landscape and animal life including birds, deer, badgers and foxes, not to mention the variety of plant life to be seen. Today these mountains have been declared a National Nature Reserve.

LISTINGS

BIRR CASTLE DEMESNE Birr, Co Offaly Tel: 057 9120336 Email: bookings@birrcastle.com Web: www.birrcastle.com Ireland's Award Winning Gardens spanning 120 acres of beauty and tranquillity, including formal gardens, waterfalls and lake. Together with a magnificent Telescope, and Historic Science Centre provide a day of relaxation and discovery. Open everyday of the year.

DOOLY'S HOTEL Emmet Square, Birr, Co. Offaly T: 00353(0)5791 20032 F: 00353 (0)5791 21332 E: reservations@doolyshotel.ie W:www.doolyshotel.com 10 minute drive from Slieve Bloom Mountains. 3* 18th Century Hotel, Centrally located in Birr, 18 en-suite bedrooms, Free parking, Walking distance to Birr Castle & Theatre, Food served all day in Coffee Shop and Lounge Bar.



2010 Special Offer: €55.00pps (incl full Irish breakfast and packed lunch) Mon-Thurs all year.

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While in the Slieve Bloom Region, we suggest you pay a visit to **All Ways Outdoors** in Tullamore, Co. Offaly which is the biggest multi-brand outdoor store in the Midlands. Another store is located in Athlone. They carry many of Ireland's leading brands including **Columbia, Berghaus** and **Trespass.** Choice, Quality, Value, and the personal touch is what they are all about.

The Slieve Bloom Way is a 77 kilometre circular walking trail, much loved by nature enthusiasts and those with an interest in history. You can walk, cycle or horse ride across this beautiful, virtually untouched landscape stopping at the numerous heritage sites or at a picnic table for lunch. Some of the most popular attractions in this region are **Birr Castle** with its famous **Giant Telescope** and Gardens, Ireland's most haunted castle, **Leap Castle** (this was recently featured on the UK television series 'Most Haunted'), and **Kinnitty Castle**. There is an annual **Slieve Bloom Walking Festival** and several organised walks if you prefer some company and the expertise of an experienced guide.

BIRR CASTLE DEMESNE Birr, Co.Offaly

Award Winning Gardens, Great Telescope & Historic Science Centre

Spend a day full of relaxation, enlightenment and discovery.

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At **Birr Castle** Demense you can enjoy guided tours of the grounds which include its beautiful gardens and Ireland's Historic Science Centre and Great Telescope. This museum houses astronomical instruments and photographic and engineering equipment from the 1800s. Facilities include the Discovery Gift Shop and the Courtyard Cafe.

The route takes in Glenbarrow, Monicknew, Glendine East, Forelacka and Glenkeen. Glenbarrow is the source of the River Barrow and on this route will you find a spectacular waterfall. A recommended walk is **Kinnitty Forest trailhead & Kinnitty Castle**, located close to the charming village of **Kinnitty** at the foot of the Slieve Bloom Mountains. The castle has now been restored and is run as a luxurious hotel. Visitors are welcome to explore the grounds and can see the **High Cross of Kinnitty**, which dates back to the 9th century.

Dooly's Hotel stands in Emmet Square, the very centre of Georgian Birr. The hotel is one of the oldest coaching inns in the country dating back to 1747 and now enjoys the status of being a 3 star hotel. The hotel runs a bar, lounge, coffee shop and restaurant.



Emmet Square, Birr, Co. Offaly T: 00353(0)5791 20032 F: 00353 (0)5791 21332 E: reservations@doolyshotel.ie W: www.doolyshotel.com 10 minute drive from Slieve Bloom Mountains



• 3* 18th Century Hotel
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• 18 en-suite bedrooms
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• Walking distance to Birr Castle & Theatre
• Food served all day in Coffee Shop and

Lounge Bar

2010 Special Offer: €55.00pps (incl full Irish breakfast and packed lunch) Mon-Thurs all year The Mountmellick Heritage Trail is a looped walk of the historical town known as The Manchester of Ireland owing to its industrial nature in the 18th century. O'Connell Square is the focal point of the trail where walkers learn of the rick Quaker and Industrial history of the town. The first Quaker families arrived in Mountmellick from England in the mid 1600's.

At Graigue cemetery, where St. Peter's Roman Catholic Church and graveyard once stood, your trail guide will detail the history of burial grounds in Mountmellick. The Rosenallis Quaker Burial Ground is known locally as the Friends Sleeping Place.

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The Burren

The Burren in County Clare has a unique karst landscape as exposed limestone pavements cover much of the park. The Burren National Park is located in the southeastern corner of the Burren and is approximately 1500 hectares in size. The word "Burren" comes from the Irish word "Boireann" meaning a stony or rocky place. It is bounded in the north by Galway Bay and in the west by the Atlantic Ocean. The Burren Centre at Kilfenora introduces visitors to the area, giving them a taste of the beauty they should expect on their journey through the Park.

A film by environmentalist Eamon de Buitlear explains the formation of the Burren some 320 million years ago. The exhibition "A Walk Through Time," traces the history of man and animals on the land and visitors can browse in the local craft shop. This is one of Europe's richest botanical areas. There are no marked trails in the Park so visitors are advised to take caution when exploring and to protect and conserve this natural terrain.

The Clare Museum in Ennis, is located in a beautifully restored former convent built by the Sisters of Mercy congregation in 1861. The museum exhibition "The Riches of Clare: its people, place and treasures," occupies two galleries. The museum is open all year round and there is no admission fee.

The Burren landscape, as seemingly remote and harsh as it may appear to us was settled thousands of years ago, as evident by the burial chambers and dolmens scattered throughout the Park, and continued to attract settlers as proven by the Celtic crosses and the presence of a ruined **Cistercian Abbey**.

Flora and fauna flourish here despite what we might consider to be a



Website ... www.burrenpeakswalkingfestival.com



hostile environment; just some species you will find include: ash, hazel scrub, blackthorn, ivy, bats, goats and lizards. There are several lakes, both permanent and semipermanent such as **Lough Gealáin**, **Travaun Lough** and **Coolorta Lough**. Today the Burren is uninhabited by people.

For any caving enthusiasts, there is **Aillwee Cave**, near Ballyvaughan on the shores of Galway Bay, one of the oldest caves in the country.

Dolmen, The Burren

A more difficult cave to explore is Doolin Cave, sometimes known as **Poll-an-Ionain** but you may take an hour long tour with a guide, donning your hard cap and torch. Here you will find the **Great Stalactite**, often cited as the largest stalactite in the world at 7.3 metres (23 feet) in length. The **Burren Wild Walks** provide expertly guided tours of the Burren and reveal the archaeology of the landscape, its mythology, story-telling and history of this remote land. John. A. Connolly, the founder, offers tours to suit all group sizes and physical ability.

LISTINGS

BALLYVAUGHAN FANORE WALKING CLUB Co. Clare Web: www.ballyvaughanfanorewalkingclub.com

Email: info@ballyvaughanfanorewalkingclub.com Tel: 087 7779714 Visitors are welcome to enjoy expertly guided walks in the unique Burren region of Co. Clare, visit islands off the coast of Ireland, or climb some of the country's most majestic mountains.

CLARE MUSEUM

Arthur's Row, Ennis, County Clare Tel: 065-6823382 Email: claremuseum@clarecoco.ie Website: www.clarelibrary.ie Tuesday to Saturday 9.30-13.00 and 14.00-16.30 (all year round except Bank Holiday Saturdays) See 6,000 years of the history of County Clare excitingly captured using authentic artifacts, audio-visual presentations and computer Interactives in the Riches of Clare exhibition. Tourist Information/ Shop is incorporated into the building and admission is FREE.

WALKING HUBS - THE BURREN

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Heart of Burren Walks run by Tony Kirby, is based in the east of the Burren. Half day and day long walks are available. Their Atlantic Walk takes you up to a rugged plateau where you can enjoy amazing views of the Aran Islands, Galway Bay and Connemara.

Along this walk you will come across numerous ring forts and holy wells. **Burren Hill Walks** offer a variety of trails to suit all tastes including botany & nature tours, archaeology & history tours and wilderness treks which take you off the beaten track into the most isolated and beautiful places of the Burren.

Ballyvaughan Fanore Walking Club was founded in March 2006 and is based in the heart of the Burren. Members are affiliated to Mountaineering Ireland (MI). Visitors are welcome to walk any of the walks with club members and a fee of \in 10 will be payable on the day. The club also travels for weekends away to some of Ireland's majestic mountains and islands off the coast.



Opening Hours: Tuesday to Saturday (all year round except Bank Holiday Saturdays) - 9.30hrs - 13.00hrs and 14.00 to 16.30hrs. Wicklow, often referred to as the **Garden of Ireland** is just south of Dublin and is a walker's paradise with miles of unspoiled countryside. **The Wicklow Way**, designed for serious hikers, takes you through steep mountains, deep forests and by glacial lakes. It is a 127km long self-guided walk, and ascends some 3,200 meters.

Beginning in **Marlay Park**, Rathfarnham and finishing at Clonegal in County Carlow, this walk can take up to ten days to complete. The walk can be broken down into easier, more leisurely stretches if a full trek isn't for you. The usual route goes from north to south but for those walkers looking for a less difficult journey, it may be best to start in the south and work your way to the more rugged, strenuous terrain of the north.



Glendalough, Co Wicklow

J.B. Malone, an experienced walker, oversaw the official signposting and opening of The Wicklow Way as Ireland's first waymarked long distance walking route. The Wicklow Way passes through the U-Shaped valleys of **Glendalough** and Glenmalure. Glendalough is a treasured heritage centre and numerous long and short walking routes begin from this valley. **Glenmalure** is another large, beautiful glacial valley in the Wicklow Mountains National Park. The Wicklow Way passes close to Roundwood, the highest village in Ireland. Walkers can rest up in one of the many

pubs or eateries and enjoy a session of traditional Irish music. Cycling and horse riding are popular activities in and around Roundwood.

A popular short walk is the **Spinc** and **Glenealo Valley Trail**. overlooking the Upper Lake of Glendalough. This walk takes approximately three and a half hours. The name Spinc comes from the Irish 'An Spinc,' meaning 'pointed hill'. You will begin this trail by climbing steeply up by the Poulanass Waterfall before reaching the boardwalk. Following more than 600 wooden steps upwards, will lead you to a viewing point overlooking the Upper Lake. Another common route is St. Kevin's Way, a 30 km trek from Hollywood to Glendalough tracing the ancient journey of St. Kevin all the way to his well-preserved monastic site. The walker climbs towards the Wicklow Gap, the highest point on the route. St. Kevin was searching for a place of solitude and standing in this valley, you can sense the isolation and lonely beauty of Glendalough as it must have been more than a thousand years ago.

Luggala or Fancy Hill enables you to walk over rugged clifftops for a stunning view of Lough Tay. The walk starts at the entrance to the Guinness Estate of Lord Iveagh and typically takes a few hours to complete. Tinahely, south of the Wicklow Mountains is a haven for walking enthusiasts with so many trails to choose from. The **Tinahely Railway Trail** and **Tomnafinnogue Walk** is a short woodland and riverside walk along the **Ballycreen Brook**, suitable for the casual walker and families. **The Kyle Loop** also in Tinahely is a 20 km walk for experienced hikers. For expert advice

Wicklow Mountains



& planning, look into booking a tour guide; there are several tours and trails available in Wicklow. Hilltoptreks, Footfalls Walking Holidays and Walking Holidays in Ireland are just a few of the many guided tour operators. Tours can be designed to meet specific requirements.

West Cork & Kerry

Cork is the largest county in Ireland, taking up to four hours to drive from one side of the county to the other. There are several towns and villages in **West Cork** that attract thousands of visitors annually.

Macroom on the Cork to Killamey road is a busy market town. The walls and gateway of **Macroom Castle** are a dominant feature of the town. The nearby **Millstreet Country Park** is ideal for a family day out. Here you can enjoy the visual centre, walking trails, lakeside views, music and picnic areas.

Evergreen House Hostel in Youghal is a family run hostel that offers quality accommodation, in a homely atmosphere at budget prices. Facilities include: double, family and dorm rooms (most with tvs), video collection, lounge, dining room, self-catering kitchen, BBQ patio and free wi-fi.

Kinsale is just a short drive from Cork city. Here you will discover many heritage trails, taking you around sites of archaeological and historical interest, including Charles Fort, a 17th century star shaped fort and Desmond Castle, which was built in the early 16th century. Over the centuries it has been used as an arsenal, a wine port, a prison and now houses the International Museum of Wine which opened in 1997. There is also a fun and spooky Ghost tour available.
Kinsale. West Cork Kinsale is easily negotiable by foot.



WALKING HUBS - WICKLOW

Clonakilty is the birthplace of Michael Collins and today the town is home to the **National Michael Collins Memorial Statue**, which was unveiled by Liam Neeson on August 22nd, 2002. The town's railway model village allows you to step back in time to the 1940's. There are numerous walking tours available taking you through rural countryside, old churches and graveyards and along the quays.

Baltimore is synonymous with the sea and all the activities that go with it, sailing, fishing, angling and diving. From Baltimore you can take a ferry to the beautiful island of **Cape Clear**, Ireland's most southerly island, population 150 (approximately) where the first language is Irish. You can walk around the island taking in cliff top views and megalithic stones and tombs and stop for lunch in one of the friendly pubs.

The **Beara Peninsula's** rugged coastline draws visitors to explore this wild terrain. **The Beara Way** is a walking trail that enables you to explore historical sites, boreens, bog





Stone Cross, Great Skellig Island

tracks and forest land around the charming fishing port town of **Castletownbere** where Colin Farrell's film Ondine was shot. At the top you will be rewarded with panoramic views of **Bantry Bay** and the **Caha Mountains.**

Crossing into Kerry, you will find the scenery is just as spectacular. **The Kerry Way** at over 200km is Ireland's longest signposted walking trail and takes over a week to complete. Starting and finishing in Killarney, this is the best way to experience the **Ring of Kerry**. Your journey will take you under the **Macgillycuddy's Reeks**, the highest mountains in County Kerry and around the **Iveragh Peninsula**. If the sheer length doesn't appeal to you the walk can be broken down into shorter stretches.

The **Blind Piper Bar & Restaurant** on the Kerryway in the heart of Caherdaniel, is a friendly and hospitable venue guaranteed to provide you with the finest food and drink

Che Blind Diper Caherdamiet, Co. Kerry. Tet: 066 9475126 Email: ofarrell.sandraøgmail.com Check our Blind Diper on Facebook



Located on the Kerryway in the heart of Caherdaniel, the Blind Piper Bar is renowned for mighty food and drinks. Traditional music, open fires and hearty home cooking make this centuries old gem a favourite with locals and visitors alike.

in relaxed, comfortable surroundings. This is a tradititonal Irish pub at its best, providing you with a warm and sincere welcome.

> The Skellig Islands, south of Valentia Island are visible from any high point on the Ring of Kerry, rising out of the Atlantic Ocean. Skellig Michael is a UNESCO world heritage site owing to the early Christian monastic settlement to be found here 700 metres on a clifftop above the Ocean. The Skellig Ring walking and cycling route enables you to take in the magnificent scenery including the Coomanaspig Pass, and breathtaking views of Valentia Island, Caherciveen, the Atlantic Ocean, the Blasket Islands and St. Finan's Bay. There are several boat trips available

Kate Kearney's Cottage, Gap of Dunloe, County Kerry



during the summer months where you can listen to the history of the islands and learn about the wildlife from your experienced guide.

The **Dingle Peninsula** has received numerous accolades for being one of the most beautiful places on earth. Stretching 30 miles into the Atlantic Ocean, it is dominated by a range of mountains running from the **Slieve Mish** range to **Mount Brandon**. There are almost 2,000 archaeological sites to be seen in this region. The Dingle Way walking trail is circular loop of the Peninsula starting and finishing in Tralee. Taking over a week to complete, the walker will take in sandy beaches, rugged coastline, wild mountains, tranquil countryside and friendly towns and villages.

KILLARNEY - AN OUTDOOR PARADISE - EXPLORE THE TRAILS & WATERWAYS!

Whether on two wheels, on horseback or by foot, the beautiful, diverse but surprisingly compact **Killarney Valley** is waiting to be explored and discovered. Also, for those that are receptive to the call of the ocean wave, Killarney is but a 30-minute leisurely drive from the beautiful Atlantic Gulf-Stream coasts of West and South Kerry. Walking in Killarney is one of the great

joys you must experience. Employ the services of a professional guide or just head out and explore on your own. You can also join the Walk Killarney programme of guided walks around Killarney and throughout Kerry.

Details on www.killarney.ie/walkkillarney

Cycling has been one of the most popular ways to see Killarney since the bike was invented. Killarney has its fair share of bike-hire outlets so there's no excuse not to get pedaling! **Horse Trekking** predates most other forms of land travel through the Killarney Valley and the town's relationship with the horse has continued uninterrupted for centuries. For further details visit **www.killarney.ie/activities**

Boating and Fishing - a popular escape for many, with miles of lakes and rivers to choose from. Boat trips to suit your itinerary or for Brown Trout and Salmon fishing can be arranged from Ross Castle pier or by logging on to **www.killarney.ie/activities**

Wildlife - Keep your eyes peeled and your camera at the ready for the White Tailed Eagle- often seen soaring over the Killarney lakes. Don't forget to cast your eyes to ground level also where Killarney has some other unique and important residents including the magnificent Killarney Red Deer, and their much smaller companions, the Japanese Sika Deer. Accommodation and Dining options can all be found on **www.killarney.ie**

LISTINGS

THE BLIND PIPER BAR & RESTAURANT Caherdaniel Co Kerry Tel: 066 9475126 Email: ofarrell.sandra@gmail.com Check out Blind Piper on Facebook

WALK KILLARNEY & KERRY PROGRAMME Killarney Chamber of Tourism Tel;+353(0)646637928 LowCall: 1850 566466 walk@killarney.ie www.killarney.ie



Located on the Kerryway in the heart of Caherdaniel, the Blind Piper Bar is renowned for mighty food and drinks. Traditional music, open fires and hearty home cooking make this centuries old gem a favourite with locals and visitors alike.

KILLARNEY - A WALKER'S PARADISE Killarney's National Park surrounded by high mountain wilderness, nearby golden "blue flag" beaches, great accommodation, dining and entertainment options, few places elsewhere on this earth offer the outdoor enthusiast such wonderful choice within such an intimate and hospitable location.



outlet stores

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the leading outdoor shop in Kerry and the south west of Ireland...

Clothing, Equipment & Footwear - 'from walking the dog to climbing Everest!'

- servicing Ireland's outdoor community with products of exceptional quality and value from the leading outdoor brands of the world!

Located at: - Killarney Outlet Centre (Adjacent to Killarney Bus & Rail Station)

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<u>WAYMARKED WAYS</u>

There are over 30 **National Waymarked Ways** in Ireland. Below you will find a brief guide to the trails.

The North Kerry Way, starting at the tourist office in Tralee and ending in Ballyheigue is 48km long. The way follows the coastline through **Spa, Banna** and **Ballyheigue** providing the walker with beautiful scenery along the walk including views of the **River Shannon, Banna Beach**, steep mountainside on **Kerry Head** and rural countryside. This route can be completed in as little as 2 days at a leisurely pace. At **Blennerville**, Ireland's largest working Windmill still stands and now is home to a museum describing the plight of the Great Famine for the ordinary Irish people. During the Famine, Blennerville was the main port of emigration from County Kery.

Spórt Corrán Tuathail is located in the southwest of Ireland in County Kerry providing people with the finest outdoor clothing, equipment and footwear available. Founded and owned by Con Moriarty, a guide, outdoor enthusiast and environmental activist whose distinctive reputation in the outdoor industry has been earned over three decades.

The Kerry Way is over 200km long and starts and finishes in Killarney. This is one of the longest waymarked ways in the country and can take up to 9 days to complete. The walker will see many places of beauty along the way including Black Valley, Glencar, Glenbeigh, Caherciveen and Waterville. The Way traverses Killarney National Park. Glenbeigh at the foot of the Neragh Peninsula Mountains on the Ring of Kerry is a charming seaside village offering sandy beaches and good old Irish hospitality. The Iveragh Peninsula juts out 60km into the Atlantic Ocean.

Dingle, Co. Kerry



The Dingle Way is a circular walking route of 153 km that starts and ends in Tralee. Like the Kerry Way, this route can take over a week to complete. This route is a wonderful way to explore the rugged beauty of the Iveragh peninsula. Walkers are led through the bogland of the **Slieve Mish Mountains** along the route and are rewarded with

WAYMARKED WAYS

breathtaking views of **Tralee Bay.** You can stop at the small, Irish speaking town of Dingle and enjoy the traditional Irish craft shops and pubs or relax by the sea. **Castlegregory** is the only village on the north shore of the Dingle Peninsula to have survived the Famine.

For accommodation, **The Rainbow Hostel** in Dingle is a friendly, family owned business. Individual, family and group rooms are all available and every room is spacious and bright with stunning views of the Kerry landscape. Facilities include: camping, self-catering kitchen, bicycle hire and storage, and internet access.

Enjoy the rugged coastline of West Cork and Kerry by opting to do **The Beara Way**, a 196 km walking circuit of the Beara peninsula overlooking the wild Atlantic. Walking along quiet, country roads you will encounter a number of impressive archaeological and historical sites including Ogham Stones, wedge graves, stone circles and ancient church sites, all the while listening to the crashing waves of the turbulent Atlantic Ocean.

The Sheep's Head Way in Bantry, South-West Ireland is 88km long, and was officially opened by the former President of Ireland Mary Robinson. The trail begins in the **Square of Bantry** town in Cork and heads west towards the Northern side of the peninsula taking in Bantry Bay and going all the way to **Sheep's Head**. Walkers move through old boreens and woodlands and across grazing pasture, passing many archaeological monuments such as an old burial site, ring forts and an altar stone.

The Blackwater Way at 168km, starts in Clogheen at the foot of the Knockmealdown Mountains and ends in Shrone. It has been formed by combining two separate routes, the Avondhu Way and the Duhallow Way. The walk includes stunning scenery such as mountains, forests, bogland, lakes, and the historical monuments and heritage sites of North Cork. There are numerous towns and villages to take your rest in along the way including Fermoy, Ballyhooly and Millstreet. From the slopes of



Nagle Hills you can look out across the quiet Munster Plains.

The Lough Derg Way is a 64km route, beginning at the Limerick City Tourist Information Office

Lough Derg and ending in **Dromineer.** Lough Derg is a small island on the **River Shannon** and a favourite pilgrimage among travellers. The route crosses the River Shannon and visits the villages of **Clonlara** and **Killaloe**, the latter of which is known locally as the home of Brian Boru, the High King of Ireland some one thousand years ago. Along the way you will see the Falls of Doonass, encounter forest walks along the shoreline and may like to stop at the heritage town of Killaloe to visit St Flannan's Cathedral.

> The Slieve Felim Way is a 30km walk, stretching from Murroe in County Limerick to Silvermines Village in County Tipperary. The walk moves from Murrow to Tooreenbrien Bridge and onto to Silvermines, passing through the **Slieve Felim** mountains and winding its way through Keeper Hill Forest. The landscape is dominated by hills and woodland and splendid views of Lough Derg and the River Shannon can be enjoyed from the vantage point of Silvermines Mountains.

The Tipperary Heritage Trail is 56km long and offers a glimpse into the rich heritage of South Tipperary as seen by the

Welcome to **Ballyhoura Forest Luxury Homes,** Co. Limerick, Ireland

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castles, monuments and ancient Christian sites all dotted along the way as well as offering spectacular views of the **Knockmealdown Mountains.** The route travels by **Vee, Ardfinnan, Cahir, Golden** and onto **Cashel** where you will find the **Rock of Cashel,** an imposing Castle perched high above the heritage town. This was the seat of the High Kings of Munster from the 4th to 9th Centuries. Cahir and Golden offer picturesque landscapes along the River Suir. **Cahir Castle** is one of Ireland's largest and best preserved castles.

The East Munster Way in Tipperary is a 70km walk from Carrick-on-Suir to Clogheen. Attractions include the Comeragh and Knockmealdown Mountains, the charming village of Newcastle and the historical monuments that can be found along The Tipperary Heritage Trail. The route descends into the picturesque Nire and Suir Valleys.

The Ballyhoura Way is an 80km walk suitable for less experienced walkers. It begins at St. John's Bridge in County Limerick and ends at Limerick Junction Railway Station in County Tipperary. Along the route, walkers will enjoy views of the Slievenamuck and Galtee Mountains, the Golden Vale, as well as the heritage site of the Glen of Aherlow. At the village of Liscarroll, walkers can pause to admire the Norman Castle.

Ballyhoura Forest Luxury Homes are set in the **Ballyhoura Mountains,** the perfect getaway location. These are 6 stunning, luxury self-catering holiday homes built in a forest and fitted to the highest standards. These holiday homes are located halfway between the cities of Limerick and Cork. Both Cork and Shannon Airports are less than an hour's drive away.

LISTINGS

BALLYHOURA FOREST LUXURY HOMES Ballyhoura Mountains, Ballyorgan, Co.Limerick, Ireland. Web:www.ballyhouraforestluxuryhomes.com Email: ballyhouraforestluxuryhomes@gmail.com Phone: +353 (0) 87 941 2165 Our luxurious holiday homes are the ideal place to unwind and explore the Ballyhoura, Shannon Regions. These self-catering, holiday homes are architecturally designed to reflect the Irish forest environment with the warmth of natural timber throughout the homes.



Slieve Bloom The East Clare Way is a 180km circular route starting in Mountains Killaloe on Lough Derg. The walk crosses the Slieve Bernagh mountains, affording the walker beautiful views of the surrounding countryside including the **Slieve Aughty** mountains and oak woodlands. This region is renowned for its rich heritage of traditional Irish music and folklore and there are numerous historical monuments to be found here including Fermovle Hill Fort, dating from the Bronze Age and Megalithic remains from 5000 years ago.

> The Mid Clare Way is a 130km route starting and ending in Newmarket-on-Fergus, circling Ennis town. In the first section of the route you will find the largest archaeological site in Ireland, Mooghaun Ring Fort, Mooghaun Woods flank this section of the walk. There are many other sites of historical interest along the way such as Doon Fort and Castle and Meelick famine village. Spectacular views of Mullaghmore. the Burren and Galway Bay, the River Shannon and the Twelve Pins in Connemara are guaranteed.

> The Burren Way is a 45km walk starting in Lahinch and ending in **Ballvaughan.** Along the walk there are inspiring views of the Altanic Ocean, the lonely Aran Islands, Galway Bay and The Cliffs of Moher which rise 660 feet up from the Atlantic Ocean. You can take your rest at the village of Doolin on the coast. For further details on what the Burren has to offer see page 41.

The Wicklow Way is 127 km long and stretches from Marlav Park in the Dublin suburbs to Clonegal. Co. Carlow. See our Wicklow section on page 44 for more details.

The Offaly Way in the midlands of Ireland, is a 29km walk linking the Slieve Bloom Way to the Grand Canal Way. **Cadamstown** village is the starting point of this route and it finishes in Lemanaghan. Points of interest along this route include the Sculpture Trail, Boora Mesolithic Site and St. Managhan's Shrine. Walkers can enjoy the scenic Silver River and Esker River.

The Slieve Bloom Way takes in the counties of Offaly and Laois along its 77km circular walk. Turn to page 38 for further details.

The Royal Canal Way is a low lying 77km trail, starting at Ashtown and ending in Mullingar. It links the River Liffey in Dublin to the River Shannon. The grounds of St.Patrick's College, Maynooth run parallel to the Royal Canal. The towns of Leixlip and Maynooth are found along the banks of the Canal. This is an easy-going route for those who wish to enjoy a pleasant stroll through flat, tranquil countryside.

The Grand Canal Way is a flat 114km walk, linking Dublin to Shannon. Work began on the Grand Canal in 1756. The trail starts at the Lucan Road Bridge and ends at Shannon Harbour. This route passes through many towns and villages including Clondalkin, Oughterard and Tullamore.

The Barrow Way in Kildare is a 114km walk, starting in Robertstown and ending at St. Mullins. The River Barrow is the second longest river in the country after the River Shannon and rises in the Slieve Bloom Mountains. The landscape ranges from bogland to forests and quiet, canalside villages and towns. The Barrow Way is the intersection of the River Barrow and the Grand Canal at Athy. The routeway allows



Killary Harbour

the walker to admire the local animal life such as sheep, cattle, swans and a variety of bird species.

The Tain Way is a 40 km walk named after the legendary "Tain Bo Cuailgne" (The Cattle Raid of Cooley), which tells of the exciting stories of Cuchulain, the mythical Ulster warrior known as "The Hound of Ulster." The trail starts and ends in Carlingford, Co. Louth. Highlights on the route include Slieve Foye forest, the Cooley Mountains, Carlingford Lough, Clermont Carn a neolithic burial cairn, and views over Dundalk Bay. This is a region of solitude steeped in myths and legends.

The Westmeath Way in the Midlands is a 33km walking route from Kilbeggan to Mullingar in County Westmeath. The walk can be completed at a leisurely pace within 2 days. The trail starts at Locke's Distillery Museum in Kilbeggan and ends at Harbour Bridge. The route moves northwards to the town of Lilliput where Jonathan Swift is said to have visited and been inspired to base his fantasy island on, in his novel Gulliver's Travels. Lilliput became the area's name in honour of Swift.

The South Leinster Way is a 100km walking trail starting in Kildavin, County Carlow and ending in Carrick-on-Suir, County Tipperary. Features of interest include Mount Leinster, Brandon Hill, the Blackstairs Mountains and the river valleys of the Barrow, the Nore and the Suir. Nine Stones is a prehistoric stone alignment said to have been built to honour the loss of nine shepherds lost on Mount Leinster.

The Western Way (Galway) is 50km long. The trail starts in Oughterard, following the shore of Lough Corrib and ends in Leenane, on the Galway-Mayo border. The route takes the walker through the breathtaking beauty of Connemara which includes thick woodland, the rugged mountains of the Twelve Bens and Maumturks and spectacular views of the **Atlantic Coast. Maam** was the location for the 1952 film "The Quiet Man" starring John Wayne and Maureen O'Hara. The remains of the Quiet Mans Cottage are to be found here.

The Western Way (Mayo) is a longer walk at 170km than Galway beginning at the fjord of Killary Harbour in Leenane and ending at the base of the Ox Mountains. Towns along the route include Westport, Newport and Ballina. The landscape consists of forest, bogland and steep mountains. At Croagh Patrick, Ireland's holy mountain you can enjoy panoramic views over the many islands of Clew Bay.

The Suck Valley Way is a 90km circular walk starting and ending in Ballygar. The way passes through the "Nine Friendly Villages" of Ballygar, Creggs, Glinsk, Ballymoe, Ballintubber, Dunamon, Castlecoote, Athleague and Castlecoote of the Suck River basin. The River Suck flows along the border of Counties Galway and Roscommon. There are many historical monuments and places to be seen along this route such as a Railway Museum, Clonalis House and the town of Castlerea, the birthplace of Sir William Wilde (Father of Oscar Wilde), Ballintubber Castle and old Christian sites.

The Sligo Way is 74km walk starting at Lough Talt in the Ox Mountains and ending at Drumahair, County Leitrim. The route roughly follows the line of the Ox Mountains. Attractions include views over Sligo Bay, a crannoge (early lake dwelling) on Lough Talt, megalithic tombs and WB Yeat's Lake Isle of Inishfree on Lough Gil. Towns passed along the way are Collooney, Coolaney and Ballygawley. Walkers can admire Slish Wood on the shores of Lough Gil.

The Miner's Way & Historical Trail is a 118km walk that starts in Arigna and ends in Drumshanbo, crossing the three counties of Leitrim, Sligo and Roscommon. The route follows the old path used by miners going to work in the coal mining area of the Arigna Mountains. This walk passes through Keadue, Lough Key Forest Park, Ballyfarnon, Corrie Mountain and Boyle town. The Leitrim Way is a 48km walk from Drumshanbo to Manorhamilton, leading you along the low-lying Lough Allen and the Barlear wilderness. This walk also links up with The Arigna Miners Way and The Cavan Way.

The Cavan Way is a 26km walk that starts in Dowra and makes its way to the Shannon Pot. The trail ends in Blacklion. From the highest summits, you will see across the Counties of Leitrim, Sligo and Fermanagh. There are several significant monuments along this route such as the ruined cottages on the Cashelbene road and megalithic tombs. There are amazing views over Lough MacNean and of the cliff-face called Hanging Rock.

The Bluestack Way begins in Donegal Town leading the walker towards **Lough Eske**, and ends in **Ardara**. See the Donegal Section on page 34 for further information.

The Donegal Way is approximately 280 km long and consists of four circular routes. Points along the route include Gweedore, Altawinny Bay, Derrybeg, Annagarry and Lough Shore. Donegal is the most remote county in Ireland and as such hasn't been encroached much by tourism. Donegal is a haven for outdoor enthusiasts, and for the avid hiker, The Donegal Way offers a tough challenge. The Way starts in Donegal Town and follows the route of the Bluestack Way through mountain scenery to Ardara. The trail then uses the routes of the Bealach na Gaeltachta (the Gaeltacht Way) to Donegal Town explore the rest of the county.



CITY WALKS

Dublin

As the capital of Ireland on the east coast, Dublin is the vibrant, cosmopolitan mecca one would expect. Built on the banks of the River Liffey, the city is a thriving and sophisticated hotpot of culture. Originally settled by the Vikings, today's city displays a mix of Old Georgian architecture intertwining effortlessly with a modern landscape. Dublin was the home place of many great literary figures such as Oscar Wilde and James Joyce. You can get around the city easily on foot, by bus or using the tramline Luas.

Dublin is a shopper's paradise with so many shopping centres and high street fashion retailers. St. Stephen's Green shopping centre is centrally located in the heart of the city and has one hundred shops all under one roof. lervis shopping centre on Henry/Mary Street is a modern, vibrant shopping location offering the best in Irish, UK & European retail stores as well as several eateries including Bagel Factory. Costa and KFC. The **llac Centre** on Henry Street is another centrally located complex where you will find the huge department store **Debenhams** for all your clothing and cosmetic needs as well as smaller fashion shops and food outlets. Powerscourt Centre on South William Street is a speciality shopping centre. The Georgian house built in 1774 offers a look into Dublin's architectural past as well as a unique setting for enthusiastic shoppers. Boutiques, art galleries, restaurants, a bar and much more guarantee the visitor a shopping experience with a difference.

Powerscourt Grafton Street on the South Side is lined with jewellers Town Centre and fashion boutiques and is probably the city's most



fashionable shopping area. **Brown Thomas** is popular with locals and visitors alike. North of the River Liffey you will find **Henry Street** teeming with avid shoppers. The historic **Clerys Department Store** operates from the always busy O' Connell Street. It was founded as one of the world's first purpose built department stores on Dublin's main street in 1853. In 2006, the store was awarded the 'Best Independent Department Store' award in Britain and Ireland by Drapers magazine. DUBLIN

For those who prefer an old world shopping experience there is **George's Street Arcade**, just a short stroll from Grafton Street. This is an old indoor market area ranging in stalls selling food, jewellery, fortune telling and clothes. For shoppers who like a vintage feel to their purchases this market is a treasure collection of goodies.

The Kilkenny Store houses the largest collection of Irish products in the world. The Dublin store on Nassau Street carries a wide selection of Irish crystal and china, hand crafted ladies and gents contemporary clothing, jewellery and linen. Trinity Sweaters on the same street offers quality value, Irish knitwear. The Woollen Mills on Lower Ormond Quay is a family run business selling Irish craft supplies and clothing.

Continuing the trend of Irish themed products is **The Celtic Whiskey Shop** on Dawson Street, displaying a selection of whiskeys, wines, Irish liqueurs and handmade Irish chocolate. In store tastings are offered daily by the knowledgeable staff and the shop is managed by Ally Alpine who has 25 years of experience in the trade.

For a relaxing break from the shops, take your ease in one of the city's open parks. **Stephen's Green** at the end of Grafton Street is Ireland's best-known Victorian city park. Set on 9 hectares, the park has many statues including memorials to W.B. Yeats and James Joyce. Lunchtime concerts are performed during the summer months. The peaceful landscape includes a lake, fountains, flowerbeds, a centrally located bandstand and seating benches.

Molly Malone statue at the end of Grafton Street



On the north side of the city, set on 1,760 hectares is **Phoenix Park**, providing a relaxing, stress free environment when you may be in need of some quiet time. **Dublin Zoo** is located directly behind the Park for a fun family day out. Also in the Park is Áras an Uachtaráin, the lavish residence of the President of Ireland, which is open on Saturdays only. Collect your free admission tickets at the **Phoenix Park Visitor Centre.**

For all those who wish to journey back into the history of Dublin there are enough visitor attractions to keep you occupied for weeks on end. Read on below to find out about the most popular tourist activities.



Dublin Castle, the seat of English power in Ireland for seven centuries can be found in the heart of the city. Today visitors can delve into the past by taking a guided tour of the castle grounds which include the State Apartments in the Great Courtyard, the Chapel Royal, the Undercroft and the **Chester Beatty Library,** which won European Museum of the Year 2002 and Irish Museum of the Year 2000. Today the

Dublin Castle is used for important State conferences and Presidential inaugurations.

Christ Church Cathedral is Dublin's oldest building and was founded by the Norse King Sitric around 1030. The entrance fee is \in 6.00 for adults. Visitors can view The Treasury which is housed in the 12th century crypt, and displays magnificent examples of cathedral and parish silver and treasures.

The National Museum of Ireland is Ireland's premier cultural institution and home to the greatest collections of Irish material heritage, culture and natural history in the world. The Archaeology museum is located on Kildare Street and takes you 7000 years back into the past. The museum of Decorative Arts & History is located at Collins Barracks and the Natural History museum can be found on Merrion Street; Opening hours are Tuesday to Saturday from 10.00-17.00 and Sunday 14.00 to 17.00.

For art lovers, **The National Gallery** on Merrion Street West first opened its doors to the public in January 1864. The gallery's highlights include the Yeats Museum, and works by Vermeer, Caravaggio, Picasso, Van Gogh and Monet. Admission to the permanent collections is free but there may be a small charge to temporary exhibitions. The 17th century Royal Hospital Building on Military Road, which now houses **The Irish Museum of Modern Art (IMMA)** is Ireland's leading national institution for the collection and presentation of modern and contemporary art. The grounds include a formal garden, meadow and medieval burial grounds.

The Dublin City Gallery **The Hugh Lane** houses a permanent collection consisting of Irish and International modern and

contemporary art representing artists such as Dorothy Agnes, Jack B.Yeats, Louis le Brocquy and Sean Scully. As well as hosting temporary exhibitions, the most exciting event was the recent acquisition of the entire contents of the artist, Francis Bacon's studio.

Trinity College is the oldest University in Ireland, having been founded in 1592 by Queen Elizabeth 1. Today visitors flock daily to see The Old Library and the Book of Kells, a 9th century illuminated manuscript, the Books of Durrow and Armagh and an early Irish harp, the Brian Bóru harp which dates back to the 15th century. The Long Room houses 200,000 of the Library's oldest books. Opening hours vary but visitors are generally welcome seven days a week. Admission to the Old Library and Book of Kells costs \in 9.

The **Molly Malone** and wheelbarrow statue at the end of Grafton Street and opposite Trinity College is a major tourist attraction. Molly's anthem 'Cockles & Mussels' is famous all over the world. Molly is reputed to have been a fishmonger who died tragically from cholera. Have your cameras at the ready but be prepared to battle with other enthusiastic photographers.

You cannot visit the city without strolling across **The Ha'penny Bridge**. Built in 1816 it is Dublin's oldest pedestrian crossing over the River Liffey. It was originally named the Liffey Bridge but is now called the Ha'penny because until 1919 there was a half-penny charge to cross.

Dublinia & the Viking World is a popular tourist attraction **The Long Room,** in the heart of Dublin's medieval city offering three exciting



exhibitions: Viking Dublin, Medieval Dublin and History Hunters. Another Viking must see attraction are the Viking Splash Tours, which take you on a tour of Viking Dublin by land and water by travelling on board the vintage, amphibious, military World War II vehicles (DUKWS). These funny, fun filled tours, suitable for all the family, end with your vehicle splashing into the water at the Grand Canal Docklands.



At the Guinness Storehouse in the heart of St. lames' Gate Brewery, you will learn everything there is to know about the history and making of Guinness in Ireland. This is Ireland's No. 1 International visitor attraction and 2009 marked the 250th anniversary of Arthur Guinness signing the 9000 year lease. At the end of your tour you will be treated to a pint of the black stuff in the Gravity Bar.

Guinness Storehouse

the highest bar in Dublin.

The **Old Jameson Distillery** enables you to explore the history and the legend that is John Jameson. This Scotsman offen mistakenly believed to be an Irishman insisted on triple distillation and won the nickname 'Glorious'. The tour is open 7 days a week from 9.00am to 6.30.pm and ends with a visit to the lameson Bar for an Irish whiskey tasting.

One of the most architecturally renowned buildings in the city is The Four Courts on Inns Quay, designed by James Gandon, Dublin's best know 18th century architect. The dome of the Four Courts courthouse is a prominent feature of Dublin's skyline. The building suffered extensive shell damage during the Civil War. The Custom House was also designed by Gandon and is considered to be one of the city's finest Georgian buildings. It opened in 1791 but was destroyed by fire in 1921 during the War of Independence before being painstakingly restored in the 1980s.

The General Post Office (GPO) on O' Connell Street is the headquarters of the Irish postal service and today a major symbol of the Easter Rising in 1916 when Padraig Pearse read out the Proclamation of Independence from its steps. Rising above O' Connell Street, is the Dublin Spire, a 120 foot monument, which was erected between December 2002 and lanuary 2003 to much heated debate. It was built as a replacement for Nelson's Pillar which was blown up in 1966.

For lovers of literature, there is The Oscar Wilde House on Merrion Square, which was the childhood home of this

James Joyce famous the world over for **'Ulysses'** is one of Ireland's best known and respected literary talents. Today fans can visit the **James Joyce Cultural Centre** on North Great Georges Street. Bloomsday celebrates the day on which the action of James Joyce's novel Ulysses takes place, 16 June 1904 when Joyce first went out with his future wife Nora Barnacle, and Bloomsday refers to Leopold Bloom, the central character in Ulysses. The centre displays exhibitions on the life and works of Joyce and their gift shop sells works by Joyce including hard to find editions as well as other memorabilia.

The Dublin Docklands has become a focus of interest. The Famine Memorial and the World Poverty Stone are dominant features of this area. The sculpture Famine is a commemorative work dedicated to those Irish people forced to emigrate during the 19th century Irish Famine while the stone marks the United Nations International Day for the Eradication of World Poverty. Another significant attraction is the Jeanie Johnston, a famine replica ship. The Liffey Voyage enables you to tour the history of the Docklands by water departing from Bachelor's Walk or you can opt for The Docklands Trail which begins at O' Connell Bridge.

James Joyce Copper Statue, North Earl Street



If you prefer to walk along the banks of the river at your own leisurely pace you will find **The Liffey Boardwalk**, an attractive riverside promenade between the Ha'penny Bridge and O'Connell Bridge. Wooden benches provide seating along the way.

Dublin has a long history of sport. Founded in 1884, the **Gaelic Athletic Association (GAA)** is Ireland's largest sporting and cultural organisation. **The Croke Park Experience** at the GAA Museum on St. Joseph's Avenue will teach you all you need to know about the history and development of Ireland's



The Gaiety Theatre

national games of hurling and Gaelic football. Visitors can test their own skills at these games in the speciallydesigned interactive games area as well as enjoying a tour of **Croke Park Stadium.** A tour of the stadium and entrance to the museum costs \in 11.00 for adults.

For lovers of music and theatre Dublin is the place to be. The **National Concert Hall** on Earlsfort Terrace is Ireland's most prestigious concert hall. Jazz, ballet, musicals, operas and classical orchestras play to sold out audiences all year round. **The Terrace Cafe** set in lavish surroundings allows you to dine before or after the concert.

The Gaiety Theatre on South King Street opened in 1871. Today audiences continue to flock here to see lavish productions including musicals, operas, pantomimes and plays. Ice-cream sellers afford the theatre an old world, traditional atmosphere. The Gaiety also serves as a popular nightclub on Friday and Saturday nights. **The Abbey Theatre** was founded in 1903 by W. B. Yeats and Lady Augusta Gregory. To this day its focus remains on presenting and sharing Irish stories and plays. **The Abbey Lounge** on the first floor offers refreshments and a wide range of wines, beers and so on before and after the shows. For those who prefer a coffee and cake, the **Abbey Coffee Bar** is located on the foyer of the ground floor.

There are so many great bars and restaurants in the city it is difficult to know where to begin. Officially described as **'Dublin's Cultural Quarter', Temple Bar** on the south bank of the River Liffey is a centre of outdoor entertainment, busy shopping district and home to many stylish pubs and restaurants as well as the **Temple Bar Markets.** The narrow, cobblestone streets bring you back to the past.

Fitzsimon's in Temple Bar is a lively meeting place. All major sporting events are shown on the big screens and with five floors, popular DJs and live music this is a great place to chill out with a pint or sample a cocktail. **Bobs** is one of the most popular, contemporary pubs in Temple Bar. With a late night bar every night and 3 floors, this is the place for people who like their music loud, staff friendly and reasonable priced drinks.

Established in 1779, **McDaids** is a traditional Dublin pub just off Grafton Street with a distinctive Victorian exterior. Brendan Behan, Patrick Kavanagh, Flann O' Brien and Liam O' Flaherty have all enjoyed pints in the dimly lit bar. Also off Grafton Street is **The Bailey Bar**, a warm and comfortable place to relax and unwind with a quiet drink and tasty lunch. Their heated terrace is an ideal retreat for the colder nights. The lunch menu includes some homemade pies using 100% Irish meat such as steak & stout pie, lamb & rosemary pie and chicken chardonnay pie all served with a side salad for €10.50.

Dublin's gay, social scene is well catered for by **The Front Lounge** on Parliament Street which is a relaxed bar welcoming a diverse range of clientele. Gay and straight alike are welcomed freely. **The Dragon** on Georges Street is one of Dublin's newest and most vibrant gay bars. Decorated inside in a trendy, Asian style, this modern bar is always busy and lively.

For a taste of true Irishness, try **The Blarney Inn**, which is a traditional Irish bar and food restaurant, using locally sourced Irish produce such as seafood, bacon, cabbage and potatoes and famous for their dish, The Auld Irish Stew. Located minutes away from all the main attractions in Dublin, pop in and enjoy live Irish music and dancing sessions.

For late night fun, **The Laughter Lounge** on Eden Quay is the premier venue for live entertainment when it comes to the best of Irish and international comedians every Thursday, Friday and Saturday nights. The cocktail bar and DJs will have you dancing into the early hours of the morning. There is also **Club Nassau** on Nassau Street, Dublin's only 80s nightclub every Friday and Saturday night and home of the slow set. With two floors and four bars this is a night of nostalgia that will keep all ages happy with an upbeat 8os soundtrack and plenty of dancing.

When it comes to food **The Hard Rock Cafe** in Temple Bar is another popular American style restaurant. Enjoy burgers and buffalo wings amidst stylish rock n' roll decor which includes rock star memorabilia of some of Ireland's greatest musical talents like U2 as well as some oddities from international stars like Jimi Hendrix's rug.

The Epicurean Food Hall on Lower Liffey Street seats over 200 people and is home to 12 different restaurants, many of them ethnic eateries, offering the diner a unique cultural experience for fair prices. The seating area is in the centre allowing you to choose food from any of the surrounding restaurants, more than one if you like. If you wish to sample Irish fast food, then go to **Beshoffs** on O' Connell Street. This is a big hit with Dubliners so get your taste of the real Irish chipper food here. Their fish and chips must be sampled.

For something a little more exotic, there is **East**, Dublin's only **Korean BBQ** restaurant. Located in Temple Bar, East serves authentic Korean food. The South Korean chef Moon Lee has years of experience in the restaurant business. **Ristorante Botticelli** in the heart of Temple Bar is an authentic Italian restaurant. Staff are always friendly and courteous and on hand to recommend their favourites from the diverse menu which includes: pizza, pasta, fish and their delicious homemade 'Gelato' ice-cream. Their extensive wine list focuses on wine only from Italy.

For hostel accommodation, we recommend **The Four Courts Hostel** in Dublin's city centre which offers cheap, clean accommodation in a fun & relaxed atmosphere. The hostel is housed in three beautifully refurbished Georgian buildings at a riverside location. Extra facilities include free international phonecalls, free continental breakfast, free Nintendo Wii and Wi-fi and much more.

LISTINGS

DUBLIN

BESHOFF RESTAURANT 6 Upper O'Connell Street, Dublin 1 01-8724400 www.beshoffrestaurant.com Relax and enjoy a light lunch or a long dinner in our newly refurbished Restaurant looking over Dublin's main thoroughfair, unwind and let the world go by. Great for lone diners or groups...

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National Museum of Ireland - Archaeology, Kildare St., Dublin 2, Natural History, Merrion St, Dublin 2 Decorative Arts & History, Collins Baracks, Benburb St., Dublin 7, Country Life, Turlough Park, Castlebar, Co. Mayo. Admission Free. Opening Hours: Tues-Sat 10am-5pm, Sun 2pm-5pm. Closed Mondays (incl. bank holidays)

THE JAMESON EXPERIENCE The Old Jameson Distillery,

Dublin:reservations@ojd.ie Tel: 00353 (0) 18072355. Midleton:bookings@omd.ie Tel: 00353 (0) 21 4613594 Join us for a guided tour through the romantic past of Irish Whiskey making, learn about the Angels Share, Triple Distillation and above all the smooth taste of Jameson Irish Whiskey. Visit us in either Dublin or Cork, Open 7 days a week. www.jamesonwhiskey.com





CITY WALKS

Belfast

Belfast city, the capital of Northern Ireland is situated at the head of Belfast Lough. Its compact size means the city is easily negotiable by foot. As the birthplace of the **Titanic**, Belfast's historical past draws thousands of visitors each year to discover the city's vibrant culture. The currency in Northern Ireland is the British pound. At the moment \in_1 will give you approximately £0.90. The people of Belfast have long been known for their friendliness and warmth.

For an eclectic shopping experience be sure to visit **St. George's Market**, one of Belfast's oldest attractions at over one hundred years old. The weekly Friday **Variety Market** and the **City Food and Garden Market** on Saturdays draw huge crowds. **Victoria Square** with its domed, glass ceiling is a modern shopping complex complete with cinema, restaurants and clothes shops. There is something for everyone at this city's major focal point.

For those of you interested in theatre, Belfast abounds with wonderful venues such as the **Grand Opera House** which was designed by the most prolific theatre architect of the period, Frank Matcham and opened in 1895. Badly damaged by bomb blasts in 1991 and 1993, the building has undergone extensive renovation and today continues to attract avid fans of all genres of theatre. **The Ulster Hall** is another popular venue for concerts, theatres, art collections and conferences. In World War II it was used as a dance hall providing entertainment for the US troops based in the province. The most modern of all these venues is the **Belfast Waterfront Hall** which has attracted many famous artists over the years including Dolly Parton, Tom Jones and the Dalia Lama.



Belfast is a city steeped in history. **The Ulster Museum** is a leisurely 20 to 30 minute walk from the heart of Belfast city. With free admission, the museum invites visitors to come and view one of the many displays and exhibitions on offer such as Ancient Egyptian mummy Takabuti, the Armada Collection and the History Department which holds material evidence on Ulster from 1600 and Northern Ireland from 1921.

The RMS Titanic was built in Belfast and today the Titanic Memorial in the grounds of Belfast City Hall attracts visitors all vear round. Take a stroll through the waterfront Titanic Ouarter and explore the fact and fiction that surrounds this great ship on this unique heritage trail. Many guided walking tours are available.

Aunt Sandra's Candy Factory: specialising in hand-made chocolate fudge and candies, began in 1953 when Aunt Sandra opened her doors on the Castlereagh Road. Today it is run by her nephew David. A tour guarantees fun for the whole family as you step into the past and witness the old candy making process from the fifties. It is a small, family owned business with reasonable admission prices and a souvenir shop offering shamrock sweets and leprechaun's gold.

When it comes to enjoying a tipple. Bittles Bar at Victoria Square is top of the list, exuding a traditional ambience. Portraits of great Irish literary figures line the walls of this small but popular establishment. For lovers of draught beers and lagers and those with an interest in sampling whiskey look no further than this unusual, triangular shaped haunt. The Ronnie Drew, a traditional Irish, hospitable pub in the city centre is next door to St George's Arcade, Good old fashioned food served in a relaxed environment offers the weary traveller a respite.

Bourbon on Great Victoria Street presents an elegant taste of New Orleans with its sweeping, theatrical interior decor. The restaurant is split over two floors. Look out for the early bird menu Friday to Saturday between 5 and 7.00pm; 3 courses cost a mere £15.50. Alternatively you may choose to avail of the set menu at f20 which includes a starter, main course and dessert served with tea or coffee. Some menu items include Irish stew. roast salmon and sweet potato and pavlova with berries. The **Empire Bar** on Botanic Avenue should be your go to place for





Belfast Zoo live entertainment while in Belfast. Delicious food is served by day in the basement bar and live music and comedy shows take place upstairs at night. Every Friday evening Empire holds the Havana Nights Salsa music and dancing session.

> If you wish to escape the busy city centre for a day then **Belfast** Zoo, a fifteen minute drive away would be your next stop. The zoo's 55 acre site is home to more than 1.200 animals and 140 species. Many of the animals housed here are endangered species and the zoo takes great pride in its conservation projects.
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Winthrop Street, Cork City

Cork

Corcaigh, Irish for Cork is the second largest city in Ireland and is often referred to as the "real capital of Ireland" by the people of Cork themselves, Corkonians. In 2009 Cork was featured as one of the **Top 10 cities** of the world to visit in Lonely Planet. Built on the banks of the **River Lee** and founded by St. Finbarr, today's city is a lively hub of activity.

Patrick Street or "Pana" as it is affectionately known by the locals, is the main shopping district. It was revamped in 2004 and as recently as 2009 the newly named **Opera Lane** off Patrick Street was designed as a shopping complex holding all the most important retailers of High Street Fashion.

For those who just want to sit back and relax, you can enjoy a pint or an Irish Coffee in Cork's oldest pub, **Le Chateaux**, established in 1793 which is situated in the middle of Patrick Street. It is a famous landmark in Cork City for holding the unique accolade of being the only bar on the main street. The pub's outdoor street seating area allows you to indulge in a favourite Irish past time, people watching.

Fitzgerald's Park is one of the oldest parks in Cork. It's a short stroll from the city centre to this park but for those who are less mobile you can take the number 8 bus from the city. Enjoy a leisurely walk through the park or relax in the lovely open green area or by the pond. There is also a children's playground to keep the young ones amused. You can also pay a visit to the **Cork Public Museum** which is situated in a two storey Georgian house on the grounds of the park and is open to the public daily. **Daly's Bridge** or "The Shaky Bridge" as it is more commonly referred to, is just off the park; take a walk across it for yourself and see why it has this famous nickname. **Shandon Church** is one of the most recognisable buildings in Cork, towering as it does over the buildings to the North of the City. This 17th century chapel is most famous for its four clocks which never tell the same time, affording it the nickname **"The Four Liars"**. You can also ring the bells for a small fee and from this height you have an amazing view of Cork city. Under these famous bells is the Four Liars Bistro which is owned by Brendan Walsh who has worked in restaurants throughout the world and has cooked for Liz Taylor, George Bush and Elton John to name a few and has now brought his flair for award winning dishes to the people of Cork. You can enjoy a charming atmosphere in this 80 seater restaurant with views of the cobbled streets of Old Cork.

For art lovers, **The Crawford Art Gallery** at Emmet Place, which sits beside the Opera House, is located in an important historic building, parts of which date back to the early 18th century. Admission is free and visitors can absorb the extraordinary permanent collections of 20th century and contemporary Irish art in peaceful surroundings. There is an onsite cafe and gift shop to visit at the end of your tour. Temporary exhibitions are a constant feature of the gallery attracting tourists and locals weekly.

Cork Opera House is Southern Ireland's premier venue for the best in Irish and international concerts, plays, the annual Christmas pantomime and operas. In addition to the main stage, the 100-seat Half Moon Theatre is home to a busy programme of live music gigs and small scale drama. No visit to Cork would be complete without venturing inside the **English Market**, which has been trading in the city since 1788 and has managed to retain its old world feel. Clothes stalls, fruit and vegetable corners, chocolate shops, jewellers, butchers and much more all trade

LISTINGS

THE TITANIC TRAIL Cobh (Queenstown)Cork Michael Martin Tel 021 48 15211 Email: info@titanic.ie Web www.titanic.ie The Titanic Trail provides an incredible insight into the fascinating historical legacy of the town of Cobh and Cork Harbour. Visitors finish the walk feeling enriched and informed. It is truly a journey through the mists of time.

CORK

under one roof. For a respite from your shopping take the weight off your feet upstairs in the **FarmGate** restaurant. This is home style cooking at its best; here you will find the most delicious, traditional, Irish breakfasts, a wide range of local produce (depending on what the traders of the market are selling on any particular day) and steaming cups of coffee.

Outside of the City, there is another **Jameson Distillery** located in Midleton in East Cork. Here you can enjoy an audio-visual presentation of the story of Irish whiskey making.

The Titanic Trail has been operating since 1998. It was established by Michael Martin, a history scholar of University College Cork. What is unique about this tour is the fact that Michael and his personally trained guides relate an amazing series of historical events associated with the town and harbour in a fascinating but lighthearted manner.

As a result the town of Cobh outside Cork city and its associations with the Titanic, Lusitania, emigration and transportation are brought alive in such a way as to enrich the visitors experience not just of Cobh but of Ireland too.

Michael himself and his perspectives on Titanic and the harbour have featured on dozens of documentaries by corporations such as 20th Century Fox, the BBC, Irish National Television. He has frequently been a guest speaker at many events in the US the UK and elsewhere. He is the author of Spike Island, saints felons and famine, a fascinating book exploring the use of Cork's Alcatraz and its use during the great famine as a place of detention.



Titanic Trail



One of Ireland's very best town guided walking tours. Departs every Day from the Commodore Hotel in Cobh. See all the real buildings, streets and piers where Titanic passengers embarked. Learn the dark history of Spike Island and convict transportation. Enjoy spectacular views of one of the world's largest natural harbours. An engrossing historical walk through Cobh exploring its fascinating diversity of military, maritime and social heritage.

Duration approx. 60 minutes. Cost 9.50 Euro per person book online at www.titanic.ie

Departure Times: 11am every day all year. June, July and August extra tours at 2pm.

Booking recommended for summer afternoon tours and winter months. (Oct-Mar)

Contact Michael Martin for any further info at 021 48 15211 or info@titanic.ie CORK

Limerick

Limerick is a thriving university and commercial city built on the banks of the **River Shannon** in the Southwest of Ireland. Shannon airport, Ireland's second international airport is only a short distance away. Rich in Viking and Medieval history, Limerick's ancient heritage is in abundance and a newly renovated waterfront adds a touch of modern glamour to this vivacious city.

Begin your trek through Limerick's history at **The Hunt Museum** located in the old Custom House on Rutland Street, which displays artefacts ranging from Greece, Rome and Egypt to Irish archaeological works from the Bronze Age and upwards, as well as housing works by Renoir, Picasso and Yeats. Admission is \in 8 for adults, \in 4.25 for children and discounts are given for students and seniors. You may opt for a guided tour or explore the collection alone. A **Hunt Museum Treasure Trail** is available for families.

The Limerick Museum on Nicholas Street opened to the public in 1916. The museum has changed location down through the years and can now be found in Castle Lane. Everything you could wish to learn about the history and growth of the city can be found here. Some periods covered in the collection include Tudor, Bronze, Neolithic, Viking and Iron ages.

Located in the area known as Englishtown, the 800 year old **King John's Castle** is to be found in the heart of Limerick city and overlooks the River Shannon. Built as a strong royal fortress around 1200AD following the Norman conquest, the castle has suffered severe damage over time, particularly during the Great Siege of 1642. It has been restored and now hosts exhibitions documenting the history of the castle as

River Shannon, Limerick City



well as an audio-visual show. The courtyard and the Castle display some of the trades and traditions of the 16th Century.

The University of Limerick is a young university situated on a riverside campus of over 133

hectares with the River Shannon at its focal point. The University Concert Hall is the first purpose built concert hall in Ireland, and is a perfect venue for hosting concerts, operas, theatre productions and comedy shows. Keep an eye on the Concert Hall website for upcoming events.

Angela's Ashes Walking Tour has been conducted for over ten years by Michael O' Donnell, a big fan of the late **Frank McCourt's** work. The tour takes you through the locations featured in McCourt's gritty novel about life in an impoverished Limerick some 70 years ago. Tours depart daily from the Tourist Office.

For a break from sightseeing, make your way to the **Crescent Shopping Centre**, which is the biggest shopping complex outside of Dublin and just a couple of miles outside Limerick city. It is well worth a visit for the sheer variety of retail shops, food joints and its 12 screen cinema. You could easily spend a whole day here and the drop in crèche service means you can enjoy a little down time while your children play.

When it comes to looking for that special pub in which you can enjoy a slow pint, your best bet is **Castle Lane Tavern**, the popular pub across from **St. John's Castle**. Entertainment in the form of Irish music and dancing is a regular evening occurrence. If the weather is fine then you may consider taking your meal and drinks to the outside lawn.

Flannery's bar on Denmark Street, the city's main entertainment area consists of 3 bars located over two floors, with a first floor outdoor deck overlooking a spacious courtyard. This bar is always full of activity, particularly during the late bar nights every Thursday, Friday and Saturday and also provides a busy lunch service from Monday to Friday.

The Locke Bar and restaurant is the definition of 'Old World' charm dating back to 1824. It prides itself as being a 'gastro' pub, meaning it is a pub which specialises in high quality food served in a relaxed atmosphere. The Bar provides open mic sessions and live traditional Irish music and sign along nights and has won numerous awards including: Black & White Pub of the Year, Irish Pubs of Distinction and the James

Joyce Pub Award. The Locke Bar & Oyster House serves quality seafood as well as traditional Irish favourites.

For some late night fun, venture to the **Trinity Rooms**, a three room entertainment venue housed in the vaults of the 300 year old landmark Granary Building, overlooking the River Shannon. As one of Ireland's best night clubs, Trinity Rooms plays hosts to a wide variety of popular musical acts. With a spacious courtyard, impressive waterfall feature and 3 separate music rooms to choose from, a visit to this club is always a night to remember.

Galway

Galway is Ireland's second largest county and is situated in the west of Ireland at the mouth of Galway Bay. Known as the '**city of the tribes'** it is small and lively, and filled with character. Galway is a thriving university town and as such the lifestyle is fun and fast-paced.

River Corrib and Quays, Galway City



Eyre Square located beside the bus station offers the visitor a picnic area from which one can engage in a spot of people watching. New copper art replicas of the sails of a **Galway Hooker**, a fishing boat, and water features have given the square a modern feel. **Eyre Square Shopping Centre** is a hub of activity with its supermarkets, cafes and assortment of eateries. The North Eastern corner of the old city wall dating from the 14th century is clearly visible inside the centre offering the visitor a look into the medieval past of Galway. Shop Street is an old cobblestone road and is where many of Galway's finest retail stores, pubs and restaurants lie. Musicians and street performances play to avid audiences daily. **Charlie Byrne's book shop** on Middle Street, behind Shop Street offers a unique browsing experience. The shop has an old fashioned charm and is a treasure trove of both new and second hand books. Poetry and book readings are a frequent treat which can be enjoyed by both natives and visitors.

Claddagh was once a fishing village on the edge of the city and home of the famous **Claddagh ring**. Galway was famous for its trade in Spanish wines some 500 years ago, and today the **Spanish Arch** which stands on the left bank of the Corrib is a favourite spot for both tourists and locals alike, drawing crowds who like to sit at the water's edge, picnic and feed the swans. **Galway City Museum** is located behind the Spanish Arch and here you will discover the history and heritage of Galway. Admission is free and opening hours are Tuesday to Saturday 10.00am- 5.00pm.

Every Saturday you will find a busy market by **St. Nicholas' church**. Here traders sell an assortment of both home-grown and exotic food, arts and crafts, Celtic jewellery and clothes. Be sure to haggle for the best deal possible. Visiting this market is always an enjoyable experience where strangers chat openly. There isn't a friendlier place in Galway.

Galway's Town Hall Theatre at Courthouse Square presents an eclectic mix of plays, concerts, comedy shows and films. This venue plays hosts to many of Galway's famous yearly festivals such as the **Galway Arts Festival** and **Cúirt International Festival of Literature.**

Street Performer, High Street, Galway City



Galway Cathedral is an imposing, stone wall cathedral situated on the banks of the River Corrib. Visitors are welcome between the hours of 8.30am to 18.30pm. The cathedral hosts an annual series of summer concerts on Thursday evenings.

The National University of Ireland, established in the nineteenth century is a five minute walk from the centre, situated near the cathedral. The beautiful stone quadrangle is the oldest part of the university. Built in Tudor Gothic architectural style, it opened its doors to students in 1849. The design is a replica of Christ Church, one of the colleges at the University of Oxford.

No matter the season, you will always find people walking or jogging the promenade at **Salthill** or simply sitting and watching the sun go down over **Galway Bay**. This traditional, sandy beach resort attracts thousands of locals and tourists each summer. The leisure centre, amusement park and arcades and casinos are focal points of interests.

A lunch such as soup and a sandwich will cost up to \in 10 a head in most places in the city. Keep an eye out for pubs offering lunch menus as these will often be cheaper than restaurants. **The Róisín Dubh** is a hot spot on the western side of city. With the feel of a traditional Irish pub this venue offers live music several nights a week and a friendly atmosphere. Christy Moore, The Frames and Snow Patrol are just some of the Irish bands to have played here.

The Skeff Bar on Eyre Square offers tasty food during the day and traditional pints of the black stuff as well as cocktails by night. With 6 bars including a Cocktail bar and surround sound for those all important sporting events, The Skeff caters to every taste.

Fat Freddy's Bistro is a homely restaurant in the heart of the city on Quay Street in an area known as Galway's Latin Quarter. Pizza, nachos, lasagne and a variety of salad options are just some items on the extensive menu. Whether it's a candlelight dinner for two or a family feast, Fat Freddy's guarantees a relaxed dining experience.

Street Scene, Galway City



Waterford

Waterford, built on the **River Suir** in the south east, is the oldest city in Ireland. This small walled, port town of Viking origin is a vibrant mix of historic sites and modern life. This is a town famous worldwide for its Crystal. **Waterford Crystal** is renowned as a quality, hand crafted, cut-glass product and from June 2010 visitors can call at the new Waterford Crystal Visitor Centre on the mall.

The People's Park at the junction of William Street and Park Road, offers a refuge from the hustle of the busy town. This 19th century park has seating areas allowing tired travellers to rest amidst tranquil scenery and children can roam the recently erected play area. The bandstand is used occasionally for concerts and the water feature adds a certain ambience to the peaceful surroundings.



Waterford on the banks of the river Suir The main shopping area can be found at the **City Square shopping centre**, which is open 7 days a week and includes two major Irish department stores, a supermarket and a myriad of fashion shops as well as hair salons, a pharmacy and eateries.

For a full history of the town, pencil in a trip to the **Waterford Museum of Treasures**, Merchant's Quay in the historic Granary building. Here you can enjoy a unique exhibition and audio visual tour of the development of the town from a Viking stronghold up to the present day. The museum is open 7 days a week and the soundguide is available in 6 languages. Admission is \in 7.50 for adults while students and groups may receive discounts.

Reginald's Tower, Ireland's most historic urban monument which has stood on its Waterford quay site for a thousand years, now houses the city's **Civic and Maritime Museum**. Originally thought to be a Viking fortification, the tower had served as a royal castle and a store for munitions, as well as a prison in the 19th century.

Christ Church Cathedral in the heart of the city is a major architectural feature in Waterford. Visitors can view the tombs of a warrior and the mayor of Waterford in the 15th century James Rice, as well as enjoying the neo classical Georgian architecture.

When choosing your entertainment, food and drink venues, look no further than **Jack Meades Pub** 'Under the Bridge' on the outskirts of the city, which dates back to 1705. Set on 4.5 acres, this is an old fashioned, family run Irish pub at its best. Children can roam the playground and visit the animals, while adults relax in the large beer garden. Food is served daily from 12.00pm-9.00pm.

Chez K's on the groundfloor of the Fitzwilton Hotel has been listed among some of Irelands Top Places to eat in the latest edition of The Bridgestone Irish Food Guide. This is an excellent steak & seafood restaurant. Dishes include roast lamb steak, fillet of hake, duck and Irish sirloin steak.

Geoff's cafe bar at 8/9 St. John's street offers delicious food in a warm atmosphere and is a favourite among the locals. While away the lazy summer evenings in the beer garden at the back of the establishment. Geoff's exudes a laid back vibe so dress casually and relax after a hard day's sightseeing.

For an entertaining night out, try **Revolution Gastro Bar**, located near the new Waterford Crystal Site. Revolution offers comedy clubs, a night club, race nights and quiz events.

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IRELAND



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