IRELAND

SIGHTSEEING

FOR YOUR TRIP

SGH GOLF INC

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Ireland Sightseeing
The Emerald Isle, as Ireland is often called is only the size of Maine and yet within this small island there are many things to see and do. Each corner of the country has something to offer visitors ranging from picturesque landscapes to history and culture laden cities, towns and villages. This guide does not encompass everything there is to see in the country, we have tried to highlight sightseeing close to the areas you will visit for golf.
West Coast

County Clare is located in the mid west section of Ireland and is known for its unspoiled natural beauty and spectacular coastline. The area was home to a Neolithic civilization, whose name is unknown but have left archeological evidence of their existence in the form of single-chamber megalithic tombs- some of which contains the remains of people dating back to 3800 BC. The area has a rich history and many opportunities for sightseeing, dining, shopping, and relaxing.

Local Attractions

The Cliffs of Moher are the most visited attraction in Ireland. They are located close to the village of Liscannor near Doolin. The cliffs reach a maximum height of 702 feet and boast some of the most spectacular views in Ireland for almost five miles. The cliffs are also home to O’Brien’s Tower, which is a round stone tower at the midpoint of the cliffs. The visitors centre is located midway along the cliffs. Another way to see the cliffs would be on a cruise from the village of Doolin.

Open: 9am-7pm May,Jun,Sep
9am- 9m Jul & Aug
Cost: €6pp for Visitors center. €2pp O’ Brien’s Tower
T +353 65 708 6141
Address: Cliffs of Moher Visitor Center, Liscannor, Co Clare
GPS: Lat 52.97146  Long -9.42472

The Village of Doolin is located on the northwest coast of County Clare about 5 miles from the Cliffs of Moher. Set against the rugged Atlantic Ocean and surrounded by the spectacular bare limestone landscape of the Burren, Doolin is a place of breathtaking beauty. Traditionally a fishing village, Doolin is now renowned world-wide as the traditional music capital of Ireland. From Doolin you can visit the Aran Islands or take a cruise along the coast to view the Cliffs of Moher.

The Aran Islands are a group of three islands located at the mouth of Galway Bay, on the west coast of Ireland. The largest island is Inishmore; the middle and second-largest is Inishmaan and the smallest and most eastern is Inisheer. Irish is a spoken language on all three islands, and is the language used naming the islands and their villages and townlands. The islands can be reached from Doolin in or Clifden in Galway.
The Burren & Aillwee Caves are a 10 mile square limestone plateau and the series of underground caves beneath it. The Burren is a fascinating limestone landscape where you will find prehistoric remains, ruined churches and abbeys, and a unique range of alpine and mediterranean plants growing side by side in the rocky crevices. Strange as it seems, this corner of Clare once lay at the bottom of a tropical ocean. The Burren’s limestone dates back some 340 million years — it was formed from the skeletal remains of marine organisms in those warm, shallow waters. Millions of years of geological, glacial, human and other influences went on to shape the landscape into what we see today, with the wildflowers arriving courtesy of seeds borne over the centuries from Alpine, Arctic and Mediterranean climes.

Aillwee Cave is located on the Burren and allows visitors to descend below the earth and view the effect of the landscape from beneath. The Burren Centre (info left) is a good place to start your tour of the Burren. There are audio visual displays where you can learn the history, flora and fauna of this region.

The Town of Ennis is a bustling market town (pop 24,000) situated on the River Fergus a mere 12 miles from Shannon. The town has a long history; it became the capital of County Clare when it fell under the rule of Elizabeth I. The town was allowed to hold fairs and markets beginning in 1610 beginning the making of the market economy. The market square has a large collection of market stalls every Saturday throughout the year. Ennis is not a typical tourist destination however Muhammad Ali visited the town in 2008 when he learned that his grandfather was born here.

Limerick is located on the banks of the River Shannon and is very urban area. Conquered by the Vikings in the ninth century, this bustling modern city has a rich medieval past, which resounds around its ancient streets. There is always something to do in Limerick which is virtually bursting with fascinating historic sights, wonderful old pubs, fashionable bars, glossy shops, and smart restaurants. It is the home of the internationally renowned Hunt Museum with its exceptional art collection including works from Picasso, da Vinci and Renoir. Limerick also boasts a wonderful medieval precinct with the famous 800-year-old King John’s Castle (see opening times left) and St Mary’s Cathedral. This makes Limerick a busy city centre with plenty of sightseeing and shopping for visitors to enjoy.
Bunratty Castle & Folk Park was constructed in 1425 by the McNamara family on what was an earlier Viking settlement. The castle is one of the finest examples of Irish Tower House in all of Ireland. Visitors to the interior of the castle are able to view a spectacular collection of Medieval furniture, and can have the pleasure of experiencing a Medieval banquet each night. The Folk Park is actually a living reconstruction of the homes and environment of Ireland over a century ago. Rural farmhouses, village shops and streets are recreated and furnished as they would have been at that time.

Adare is considered to be one of Ireland’s prettiest villages. It is not typically Irish having been constructed by the Dunraven Family in the early 19th century. Among the many gems in the village are Desmond Castle (tours available from the Heritage Center). The Franciscan Priory, the Trinitarian Priory and Augustinian Priory Why not step back in time and take a journey through the historical exhibition (based in the Adare Heritage Centre), a reconstruction of Adare’s unique past from the arrival of the Normans to the ancient abbeys of the middle-ages.

Town of Ballybunion is a coastal village 9 miles from Listowel. The town is most notable for the world famous Ballybunion Golf Club. Outside of the golf, however, the town is home to a castle ruins, beautiful sandy beaches, and ocean cliffs. Within the village visitors can find plenty of pubs and local restaurants, as well as smaller locally owned shops. The town is perfect for families and has plenty of activities to keep its visitors busy.

Loop Head Peninsula is a remote Peninsula, which protects the Shannon estuary from the open ocean. The area is truly one of the most beautiful and remote places in Ireland. At the tip of the head stands a whitewashed lighthouse, which is the only sign of habitation around. Visitors can truly enjoy nature at Loop Head Peninsula where the only distractions from the scenic ocean views are the beautiful birds and wild flowers on the cliffs.
Co Kerry and The Killarney Area

Co Kerry is located in the south west of Ireland. Uniquely, it is bordered by only two other counties: County Limerick to the east and County Cork to the south-east. The county town is Tralee, although the most famous tourist destination in the county is the town of Killarney, surrounded by three breathtaking lakes. Kerry faces the Atlantic Ocean and features many peninsulas and inlets, principally the Dingle Peninsula, the Iveragh Peninsula, and the Beara Peninsula. Kerry is one of the most mountainous regions of Ireland and contains two of its three highest mountains. Just off the coast are a number of islands, including the Blasket Islands, Valentia Island and the Skelligs. Skellig Michael is a World Heritage Site, famous for the medieval monastery clinging to the island's cliffs.

The town of Killarney is situated in the south of County Kerry, and is world-famous due to its exquisite location beside lakes and mountains. It has charming architecture and style reminiscent of the late nineteenth century. Enjoy wandering the town's narrow lanes, down which are hidden many restaurants and craft shops.

Jaunting Car Tours should be a mandatory experience for all those visiting Killarney or Killarney National Park. There are many people offering tours so prices are reasonable and most operators are knowledgeable. The jaunting car is a lighter passenger wagon, which is drawn by a single horse. This type of tour provides visitors with a traditional tour of Killarney in an old-fashioned way of traveling.

Killarney National Park Ireland's first National Park lies to the south and west of Killarney town at the foot of Ireland's highest mountain range, MacGillycuddy's Reeks. The park today covers an area of over 26,000 acres. The park boasts the three world famous Lakes of Killarney where the lower wood clad mountain slopes fall to meet the lake shores as well as Muckross House and gardens, Ross Castle and Torc Waterfalls.
Muckross House is the centerpiece of Killarney National Park. Muckross was built in 1843 and presented to the nation in 1932, allowing the creation of Ireland’s first national park. The Mansion was designed by the Scottish architect William Burn in the Tudor style, and is one of the best preserved stately homes in Ireland. The elegantly furnished family rooms in the upper floors and the spartan servants quarters in the basement, clearly depict the ‘upstairs - downstairs’ divide of that era. The gardens are renowned world-wide for their beauty and, in particular they are noted for their fine collection of Azaleas, Rhododendrons, extensive water garden and an outstanding rock garden hewn out of natural limestone.

Ross Castle is located within Killarney National Park and was originally the ancestral home of the O'Donoghue clan in the 15th century and, believed to be the last significant fortress to fall to Cromwell's armies in Ireland, Ross Castle has been magnificently restored to its former glory. Standing on the shore of Lough Leane, this castle is open to visitors (Guided Tours only) from April to October inclusive. You can get to Ross Castle by car by picking up the roadway from the N71 just outside the town or by walking or cycling from the Killarney House and Knockreer sections of the National Park. Jaunting cars also make the journey and are available at the jaunting car stand in the town. Boat trips are available at Ross Castle and at Dundag in Muckross. There are trips to Innisfallen Island on the Lower Lake and to Dinis Cottage on the Middle Lake. Two covered waterbuses operate from Ross Castle on the Lower Lake. Times are available at the Piers.

Dinis Cottage is a former hunting lodge which dates back to the 1700s. It is located on the shore of Muckross Lake, close to the Meeting of the Waters - where the three Lakes of Killarney meet - So it is a natural meeting place which is accessible by boat, and can be reached on foot by following the Dinis track c.1 mile from the Kenmare Road entrance and approximately 3 miles from Muckross House. Dinis Cottage is located at two of Killarney's most famed beauty spots: The Meeting of The Waters and The Old Weir Bridge. The cottage has been described as a hunting lodge and a woodcutter’s hut and dates back to the 1700s. It has been beautifully restored in recent years and just as it has for 200 years it operates as a tea room. Boat trips operate to the Cottage from Muckross Boathouse close to Muckross House/Ross Castle.
The Ring of Kerry is the most renowned Day Tour in Ireland. Throughout its 110 miles, the visitor will travel around the MacGillicuddy Reeks and the Iveragh Peninsula, along the breathtaking Atlantic Coast, Dingle Bay and Kenmare Bay, returning to Killarney through the famed Molls Gap, Ladies View and Killarney National Park. En route, are the lovely coastal villages of Glenbeigh, Waterville and Sneem and the thriving market towns of Killorglin and Cahersiveen. The "original Ring of Kerry" (and still the best option) takes you from Sneem to Kenmare and then back to Killarney. If time is pressing the route may be shortened by going directly from Sneem to Killarney. The Ring embraces many points of historic and archaeological interest such as, Cahersiveen Heritage Centre, The Skellig Experience (Valentia Island), Derrynane House, prehistoric Staigue Fort and Kenmare Heritage Centre.

Ladies View is located along the Ring of Kerry, within Killarney National Park. The name comes from a ladies-in-waiting admiration of the scenic point during a visit with Queen Victoria in 1861. Visitors to this breathtaking site can relax at the Ladies View Industries café while taking in the view.

Gap of Dunloe is the narrow pass the runs between Macgillicuddy’s Reeks and the Purple Mountains. The gap begins at Kate Kearney’s Cottage and ends at The Black Valley, the distance between the two is about 7 miles. This is a very popular tourist attraction and because the road is not wide enough for most cars the most used form of transportation is the horse drawn jaunting car, providing visitors with a slower pace at which to enjoy the countryside.
The Dingle Peninsula is the most westerly point in all of Ireland. It is smaller than its more famous cousin The Ring of Kerry, just 30 miles around making it an easy day trip. Dingle feels so traditionally Irish because it’s part of a Gaeltacht, a region where the government subsidizes the survival of the Irish language and culture. While English is everywhere, the signs, chitchat, and songs come in Gaelic. Fishing once dominated Dingle is home to 10,000 people with 1500 of them living in Dingle town. Once a thriving seaport in the middle ages, today the town has an active fishing harbor. Near Dingle, the Great Blasket Center offers insights into the storytelling traditions and simple lives of the hardy fishermen who until 60 years ago lived just off the tip of the Dingle Peninsula. Located on the peninsula are a number of prehistoric and early medieval remains, which are worth seeing.

Valentia Island (pop 665) is one of Ireland’s most westerly points and is linked to the mainland by the bridge at Portmagee. A car ferry also departs from Reenard Point to Knightstown, the island’s main settlement, from April to October. The island houses the Skellig Experience where you can experience many aspects of those offshore Skellig islands while remaining on dry land. Through re-creations and models you can study the works and lives of the Skellig monks of the early Christian period, their activities, their endurance and their dedication in gaining a foothold on a tiny, inhospitable, offshore island and creating a community there that survived for some 600 years.

The Skellig Islands lie 8 miles off the coast of Portmagee in South West Kerry. Rising majestically from the sea, Skellig Michael towers 714ft. above sea level. On the summit is a remarkably well preserved sixth century monastic settlement. On the Small Skelligs 23,000 pairs of gannet nest on every available ledge making it the second largest gannet colony in the world. To visit the islands you can sail around the islands from the Skellig Visitor Centre in Valentia. If you wish to land on the islands you will need to hire the services of private boat services, (use this link: http://www.skelligexperience.com/other-sea-tours/). The trip is about 5 hours to land and there are no toilet facilities on the islands and you must take food and water with you. To reach the monastery on Skellig Michael you will need to climb 600 steps. This is an arduous trip, and should be booked well in advance. Cost is approx €60pp.

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North West Area

To the north west, lying between the lake and the Atlantic, is Connemara and County Mayo - a region of superb scenic grandeur dominated by the rocky mountain range known as the Twelve Bens. A great many of the inhabitants are Irish speakers, and much of the ancient Gaelic culture is preserved. Galway East, or East of Lough Corrib, is a fertile limestone plain extends to Roscommon

Local Attractions

City of Galway is currently the fastest growing and third largest city in the Republic of Ireland. It is known as the city of Tribes after 14 merchant families who controlled and managed the city in medieval times. It is situated along the River Corrib at the mouth of Galway Bay. Today the city of Galway has plenty to offer visitors. They host the Galway Arts Festival every July, which is famous for its Macnas parade. The city has been ranked one of the top 8 tourist destinations in the world, above cities such as Edinburgh, in Scotland, and Venice, in Italy. While here we would suggest visiting the Galway Irish Crystal Heritage Centre. Here you will learn of the history of the 14 tribes as well as that of Claddagh Village the famous claddagh ring.

The City of Sligo is located in the north west of the county, close the border with Northern Ireland and is probably best known as for the famed Irish Poet Yeats who summered here as a child. The county of Sligo is one of the most picturesque places in Ireland. It's rugged landscapes rival those of tourist destinations like Killarney and Wicklow, but have gone largely un-noticed and therefore, provide the beauty without the crowds. The city itself has plenty to offer visitors, such as the Sligo Museum, which displays the archaeological history of Sligo with such artifacts as the personal belongings of W.B Yeats. The Sligo Abbey, which is a Dominican monastery, built in the 13th century. The Abbey is home to a Gothic tomb, many sculptures, and a tomb of the Resurrection carved from a furnace bridge of the 15th century. The Art Gallery, which is located in the Yeats Commemorative building was founded in 1977, and has between 15 and 20 exhibitions every year.

A Boat Trip to Inishmurray Island (Aran Islands) is an experience that should be had by all visitors to Ireland. The very remote island is about 4 miles off the coast of Sligo, and is the home to an early Christian site and a wildlife sanctuary. The island was originally founded as a Christian monastery in the 6th century by St. Molaise. Today the island is not the home to any permanent inhabitants, however, it is so well preserved that visitors can easily imagine monks living in the monastery. The island also houses the many pre-Christian artifacts, which have their origins in both pagan and Christian beliefs. The rich history of this island coupled with the scenery makes it a must see.
North West Area Continued...

Ashford Castle and The Village of Cong. The castle, originally the summer home of the wealthy Guiness Family is now a 5 star hotel. The Victorian Gardens are worth a visit and you can pay to enter them during the summer season. Many scenes from “The Quiet Man” were filmed on the castle grounds, and President Reagan stayed here in 1984. The village of Cong is situated between 2 lakes and is best known for it’s ties to The Quier Man Movie, you can visit the cottage used in the movie. While here we would also suggest a visit to the ruins of Cong Abby.

The Town of Westport is known as ‘The Venice of the West.’ This engagingly old-fashioned town, has an octagonal 18th-century market square and a quayside (on Clew Bay) that has spectacular sunsets. One of the few planned towns in the Country, Westport was designed in the 18th Century by James Wyatt. It has become one of Ireland's established tourism centres, with many outstanding features, most notably the beautiful tree lined boulevard known as The Mall, running parallel to the Carrowbeg River. There is much to do and see in the town. We would recommend Westport House, an 18th century stately home which is located within the town. For those who are a little more adventurous

Croagh Patrick, which overlooks Clew Bay in County Mayo, is considered the holiest mountain in Ireland. The tradition of pilgrimage to this holy mountain stretches back over 5,000 years from the Stone Age to the present day without interruption. Its religious significance dates back to the time of the pagans, when people are thought to have gathered here to celebrate the beginning of harvest season. Croagh Patrick is however most known for its Pilgrimage in honour of Saint Patrick, Ireland's patron saint. It was on the summit of the mountain that Saint Patrick fasted for forty days in 441 AD and the custom has been faithfully handed down from generation to generation. There is a visitors center located at the base of the mountain.
County Donegal Area

County Donegal is a very unique area within Ireland. It borders only one other county in the Republic of Ireland, the majority of its land border is shared with three counties of Northern Ireland. This geographic isolation from the rest of the Republic has led Donegal to maintain a distinct cultural identity. The county is considered the stronghold for the continuation of the Irish language and Gaelic games within Ireland in the modern era.

Local Attractions

**Donegal Castle** stood in ruins for most of the last two centuries, however, in the 1990s the castle was fully restored as it would have been in the 15th century. The castle was originally built with a 15th century rectangular keep and later a wing was added in the Jacobean style. The O’Donnell clan was the owners of the castle from the 5th to the 16th century, when it fell into ruins. The castle is not only open to the public but the host of many cultural events, such as Gaelic cultural evenings.

**Kilclooney dolmen** is an amazingly well preserved dolmen displaying the classical features expected of this type of structure. Dolmen’s can be found all over Europe and Asia and are a single chamber megalithic tomb. They generally date to between 4000 and 3000 BC. The Kilclooney dolmen in addition to being well preserved also has fragments of undecorated Neolithic pottery. It is an astonishing archaeological site that should definitely be visited.

**The Slieve League cliffs** are located along the coast of County Donegal. They rise to 1972 feet making them the second highest in Ireland. These cliffs provide a breathtaking and rather scary view out over the steep drop into the ocean. Walking to the peak of the cliffs will take you past the ruins of an early Christian church as well as the ruins of a watchtower from the early 19th century. The scenery is well worth the trip.

**Grianan an Aileach** is an Iron Age stone fortress, generally known as the seat of the Kingdom of Aileach. The early history of the fortress is unknown, however, it was definitely the historical center of culture and politics for the early Irish chieftains from 800 BC- 1200 AD. In the 12th century the Normans invaded and took over much of the lands of Aileach. There are many theories over the function of the circular fortress throughout history. Today the fortress stands mostly intact due to several great restoration efforts making it a must see tourist destination.
Mount Errigal is the tallest peak in the Derryveagh Mountains reaching a height of 2,457 feet. The peak is a cone of quartzite giving it the gleaming white color. The two peaks are linked by a ridge known as One Man’s Path which offers great scope for rock climbers. The Mount also offers visitors a variety of hiking, walking and climbing, which provide stunning scenic views.

Glenveagh National Park is located in Donegal and covers almost 10,000 hectares of beautiful mountains, woods, lakes and glens. Within the Park are two of the highest peaks in Donegal- Slieve Snacht and Errigal. The park because of its dense woods has become home to a number of animal species, including stoats, badgers, foxes and a wide array of birdlife. In addition the park has a large herd of Red Deer, however, they are not native to the park. This national park is well worth the visit if you are in the area.

Glenveagh Castle is located within Glenveagh National Park and is a large castellated Mansion house constructed in the Scottish Baronial style. The caste was built between 1870 and 1873 by Captain John George Adair. The Captain made his money doing land speculation in the United States and then returned to Ireland with his fortune and new bride, Cornelia Wadsworth Ritchie- daughter of James S. Wadsworth, a Union General in the American Civil War. He constructed this castle and invited tenants onto his land. He ran into much trouble with his tenants, once evicting 224 of them to increase the aesthetic aspect of the castle. Therefore, he is remembered somewhat bitterly within Donegal.
Southwest : Cork Area

The city of Cork is the second largest city in Ireland. The city is a major Irish seaport with many quays and docks. It was originally founded in the 6th century as a monastic settlement by St. Finbarr. Between 915 and 922 AD, however, it became a trading port for Viking settlers, which set it on the path to become a trading seaport. Today the city has become a region immersed in trade and commerce.

Local Attractions

Blarney Castle originally dates before 1200 AD but was destroyed in 1446 and rebuilt by Cormac MacCarthy. Today the castle is partially in ruins but still has accessible rooms and the battlements. It is most famous as the home of the Stone of Eloquence, also known as the Blarney Stone. The stone is said to give the gift of eloquence when kissed. Visitors to this destination are invited to hang upside down over a sheer drop to kiss the stone. The castle is surrounded by extensive gardens with walking paths for visitors.

The Old Midleton Distillery is the home of the world class Irish Whiskies; Jameson, Paddy, and Powers. The distillery was founded in the early 19th century by the Murphy Brothers and has been in production for over 150 years. Visitors are welcome to take a tour through the distillery with starts with an informative audio-visual presentation. The tour is then guided by a knowledgeable guide who relates the history of the distillery and ends in a tasting.

St. Fin Barre’s Cathedral has been a place of worship since the 7th century. Few traces remain of the medieval cathedral that occupied the site until the 18th century. The Siege of Cork caused significant damage to the cathedral when it came under fire from the Elizabeth Fort. In 1865 it was demolished and the present cathedral was constructed. The cathedral you see today was constructed by William Burges in the Gothic Revival style. The Resurrection Angel that is located on the pinnacle is surrounded by a legend that if it ever falls, it would signify the end of the world. This church houses a long history and should be visited for its stunning architecture.

The Town of Kinsale can easily claim its place amongst Ireland’s most historic locations for this has been a centre of population, commerce, trade and fishing for centuries. The Town nestles between the hills and the shoreline, a maze of narrow streets, never far from the water and little has changed in many hundreds of years. Today it is popular for sailing and gourmet food.

Dean Street, Cork
T: (+353) (0)21 4963387
Admission €5pp
Southeast Ireland: Waterford Area

The city of Waterford was founded in 914 by the Vikings, and is Ireland’s oldest city. The city offers a wide array of museums, art galleries, theaters, restaurants, and events for its visitors. Visitors to the city can expect to be submerged in a rich history dating back thousands of years, while simultaneously being swept away in the hustle and bustle of a modern city.

Local Attractions

**Waterford Museum of Treasures** is actually three museums located on the original triangular shaped Viking Fort section of town. The Viking Museum is housed in Reginald’s Tower. Reginald’s Tower is the oldest building in civic use in Ireland and is said to date from 1003 A.D. The Medieval Museum includes two medieval chambers, the 13th century Choristers’ Hall and the 15th century Mayor’s Wine Vault. It also contains the only surviving piece of clothing worn by Henry VIII, a cap of maintenance. The Bishop's Palace Museum is a 250-year-old Georgian structure and contains artifacts dating from 17th century Waterford to the present day.

Open Mon-Sat 9.15-6pm Sun 11am
Combined ticket €10pp
Viking Triangle, The Mall, Waterford
T +353 51 304500

**Waterford Crystal Factory** is a world famous brand of crystal glassware. The business was originally founded in 1783 by George and William Penrose. In the years that followed the brand became world-renowned and grew in size. The factory offers tours to visitors where you can see the crystal in production.

Open Apr-Oct 9-4.15pm
Cost €13.00pp
T 353 (0) 51 317000
The Mall, Waterford

**Lismore Castle** was originally established in the early 17th century, however by was rebuilt in the mid-19th century. Adele Astaire, Fred Astaire’s sister - and indeed his original dance partner - married Lord Charles Cavendish, second son of the 9th Duke, and lived in the Castle between 1932 and 1944. Kathleen Kennedy was wife to the subsequent duke and indeed her brother President John F Kennedy stayed here while researching their ancestral roots. The Castle is not open to the public but the gardens are. Visitors are invited to wander in the historic gardens, arranged over seven acres within the 17th century outer defensive walls. There is a wide variety of beautifully maintained plants and trees to enjoy as well as a permanent sculpture collection, access to Lismore Castle Arts and spectacular views of the Castle and surrounding countryside. Please note that the gardens are hilly.

Open daily 10.30am-5.30pm
Cost €8pp
Lismore, County Waterford
Kilkenny Area

Kilkenny is located on both banks of the River Nore in south-east Ireland. It is Ireland’s loveliest inland city has many great tourist attractions, including its castle and cathedral.

Local Attractions

Kilkenny Castle is located in the heart of the town. A 12th century castle remodelled in Victorian times and set in extensive parklands. Over the eight centuries of its existence, many additions and alterations have been made to the fabric of the building, making Kilkenny Castle today a complex structure of various architectural styles. The original Anglo-Norman stone castle was built for William Marshal, 4th Earl of Pembroke (c.1146-1219) during the first decade of the thirteenth century. Kilkenny Castle later became the principal Irish residence of the powerful Butler family for almost 600 years. The Butler ownership began when James (c.1360-1405), 3rd Earl of Ormond, purchased the castle in c.1391, and lasted until 1967 when Arthur, 6th Marquess of Ormonde (1893-1971), presented it to the people of Kilkenny in return for a token payment of £50. Much has been done in the last few decades to return the castle to some of its former glory.

Saint Canice’s Cathedral: The present building dates from the 13th century, although it stands on an ancient site which has been used for christian worship since the 6th century. Beside the cathedral stands a 100 ft 9th-century round tower. St Canice’s tower is an example of a well-preserved 9th-century “Celtic Christian” round tower. It is dedicated to St Canice. It is one of only two such medieval round towers in Ireland where you can climb to the top.

A City Tour of Kilkenny is an excellent way to enjoy Ireland’s medieval capital. A bus tour can provide visitors with experienced local guides who will ensure that you are both educated and entertained throughout your tour. A bus tour provides visitors with the best mode of seeing all the tourist attractions Kilkenny has to offer.
St. Mary’s Church is a Roman Catholic church that began construction in 1843. William Deane Butler designed the church out of cut-limestone in the Early English Gothic style. Today the cathedral is still in use and remained a significant local landmark within Kilkenny.

Rothe House & Garden is a 17th century Irish merchant house that was built between 1594 and 1610 by John Rother Fitzpiers. Today the house and garden are owned by the Kilkenny Archaeological Society and are the home to Genealogical research on Kilkenny ancestry. In addition the house has a vast collection of artifacts and a library of local newspapers dating back to 1784. The garden is an authentic reconstruction of an early 17th century Irish town garden. The combination of the house and the garden makes this a site well worth seeing.

Cushendale Woollen Mills is one of the oldest woolen mills in Ireland. Ireland is famous for it’s production of 100% wool products. Visitors to the Cushendale Woollen Milles can visit the mill shop and see the process of making the products, as well as getting the opportunity to purchase products directly from the mill.

Wexford Area

Wexford is situated near the south-eastern tip of Ireland. The town was founded by Vikings in 800 AD, and remained a Viking town for approximately 300 years. The town today has received some major developments in both residential areas and retail areas. Some of the major shops within Wexford are the Wexford creamery, Celtic Linen, Wexford Viking Glass, and many other local tourist shops.

Local Attractions

Wexford Arts Center is situated within an 18th century building that houses local, national, and international artists within its exhibitions. These exhibitions range from theatre, music, comedy dance, and literature performances. The Wexford Arts Center is a must for all those interested in the arts.
**Ferns Castle** was originally built in the 13th century by William, Earl Marshall. The structure formed a large square with corner towers. Today only about half of the castle remains, within those remains is an almost complete tower with original fireplaces and the vaulted ceiling. This site is well worth the visit for the opportunity to view the original architecture and interior of this historical castle.

**Slade Castle** was constructed in two different stages. The first taking place in the late 15th or early 16th century and included the tower at the northern end. This construction was most likely at the hands of the Laffan family. The second stage of construction took place in the late 16th or early 17th century, and included the addition of a house. Today this magnificent castle remains mostly intact making it a must see.

**Dunbrody Abbey** is a former Cisterian monastery built in the 13th century. The abbey was constructed in a cross-shape, with a tower added in the 15th century. Under Henry VIII the abbey was dissolved and today stands as a historical landmark.

**Newtownbarry House** is along the Wexford Arts Trail. The house is considered historical, but is also used to accommodate guests and visitors. The surrounding gardens are immensely popular containing approximately 5 acres. This site is a must see for the beauty of the surrounding gardens.
East Coast

Dublin Area

Dublin is Ireland's largest city as well as its capital. As many other cities in Ireland, it was founded as a Viking settlement, and today has one of the fastest growing populations in Europe. The city is most famous around the world for its literary history, with writers such as William Butler Yeats, Samuel Beckett, Oscar Wilde, Jonathan Swift, and James Joyce. Due to its large size and busy commercial atmosphere Dublin has become a very popular shopping district for both Irish people and tourists. The shopping districts include Grafton Street, Henry Street, Stephen's Green Shopping Centre and Jervis Shopping Centre.

Local Attractions

A City Tour of Dublin is one of the most enjoyable ways for visitors to catch all the sights of Dublin in an afternoon. The local tour guides provide educational and entertaining information on the major tourist attractions around Dublin.

Trinity College and the Book of Kells, the college was founded by Queen Elizabeth I and is Ireland's oldest and most famous college. The college is also the home to the Book of Kells, which is an illuminated version of the Christian Gospels that dates from the 9th century. There is plenty of history surrounding Trinity College, however, the Book of Kells is definitely the must see of the site.

The Guinness Storehouse is the number one must see for visitors to Dublin. For many Guinness is the very heart of Ireland itself, and the opportunity to tour the factory is not to be passed by. The storehouse educates visitors on everything there is to know about the beer that began 250 years ago. The tour ends with a complimentary pint of the world's most famous beer, and is well worth the time.
Dublin Area Continued…

**Dublin Writers Museum.** The Irish literary tradition is one of the most illustrious in the world, famous for four Nobel Prize winners and for an abundance of other writers of international renown. In 1991 the Dublin Writers Museum was opened to house a history and celebration of literary Dublin. Situated in a magnificent eighteenth century mansion in the north city centre, the collection features the lives and works of Dublin’s literary celebrities over the past three hundred years. Swift and Sheridan, Shaw and Wilde, Yeats, Joyce and Beckett are among those presented through their books, letters, portraits and personal items.

The splendidly restored Georgian house is a pleasure in itself with its sumptuous plasterwork and decorative stained glass windows. The museum holds exhibitions and readings and has a special room devoted to children’s literature.

**St. Patrick’s Cathedral** was founded in 1191 and is the largest church in Ireland. Much of the original structure is no longer visible due to the reconstruction of King Henry III in 1225, in the Early English Gothic style. Today the cathedral is used for many public nation ceremonies and is a prominent landmark within Ireland. The cathedral’s history is not only religious, but also political and social and should be visited by all who travel to Ireland, and are interested in its history. Please note: The Cathedral operates primarily as a place of worship, and daily services occur in the Cathedral throughout the year. Occasionally the Cathedral closes at short notice for events.

**Dublin Castle** is located on a high ridge at the junction of the River Liffey and the Poddle. Until 1922 the castle was the fortified seat of British rule in Ireland, and is now a major Irish government complex. Historically most of the castle dates from the 18th century, however, a castle has been on the site since the days of King John. This castle should be on every tourists list of places to go, as it offers insight into architectural history, along with the social and political history of modern Ireland.

**St. Stephen’s Green** is a public park within the city centre on Grafton Street. The area was a marshy common used for grazing until 1663. It was not until 1877 that the park became open to the public. The park is a welcome retreat from the hustle and bustle of the city, providing visitors with acres of sprawling gardens and paths.
Dublin Area Continued…

Ha’Penny Bridge is often said to be the symbol of Dublin, it opened in 1816. The bridge was the only pedestrian bridge until the new Millennium Bridge was built in 2000. The bridge underwent major restoration in 2001 and has since been reopened to the public. The unique engineering of this bridge makes it worth a visit.

Temple Bar Cultural Trust works to support culture in Temple Bar, which spans 28 acres with more than 50 arts and cultural buildings. The Temple Bar Cultural Trust offers over 250 free outdoor events during the year. There is something for everyone in the events of this trust.

James Joyce Center is a museum within Dublin that is entirely dedicated to the life and works of the famous author James Joyce. The Centre is situated in a restore 18th century Georgian townhouse that houses both permanent and temporary exhibitions devoted to Joyce.

Drimnagh Castle is located close to Dublin. It is the only castle within Ireland that has a flooded moat. The last occupants of the castle were the Hatch family, who were dairy farmers. By the 1980s the castle was in a state of ruins. In 1986 a committee was set up as a conservation and restoration effort for the castle, which took place entirely by hand. Today the castle has tours for the public and visitors can even take part in dry stone walling courses.
Northern Ireland

Is located in the north east sector of the island. Politically Northern Ireland is composed of 4 counties which are part of the United Kingdom and not the Republic of Ireland. When you cross from one country to another you are actually crossing an international border although you do not have to stop and show a passport. In the north the currency used is the pound sterling like the U.K. and the international telephone exchange is +44 and not +353 like the Republic.

Local Attractions

Giant's Causeway is one of the most unique and breathtaking sights in Ireland. The area is made out of 40,000 interlocking basalt columns, which resulted from an ancient volcanic eruption. The Giant's Causeway is surrounded by a legend that an Irish warrior built it to walk to Scotland to fight his counterpart, but fell asleep on the way. The Scottish warrior came looking for him and to protect her sleeping husband the Irish warrior’s wife hid him under a blanket, and pretended he was her baby. Assuming that with the size of the baby the father was also a giant the Scottish warrior fled and tore up the Causeway on his way back to Scotland.

Dunluce Castle is one of the most extensive ruins of a medieval castle in all of Ireland. The first castle was constructed on this site in the 1200s by Richard de Burgh, Earl of Ulster. The castle changed hands many times throughout its history until it finally found itself into the hands of the Northern Ireland Environmental Agency. Today the dramatic landscape surrounding the castle making it a sight to behold.

Carrickfergus Castle was originally constructed in the style of traditional Norman architecture. The castle was besieged in turn by the Scots, Irish, English and French. The amount of conflict surrounding the castle kept it in a prominent military role until 1928. Today it remains one of Ireland’s most completely preserved medieval ruins, and is truly spectacular.

Malahide Castle is set in the pretty seaside town of Malahide. The castle is especially unique within Ireland due to the fact that the Talbot family held control of the castle for 791 years, from 1185-1976. The history of the family can be seen within the Great Hall in the form of portraits that extend back many years. Over the years the castle has undergone many reconstructions and additions, however, the integrity of the original structure remains. The castle was sold in 1976 to the State by the last remaining member of the family. Much of the furnishing however had already been sold off causing a public outcry, fortunately many of the pieces were located and brought back to the castle where you can see them today.

Open: 9.30am- 5.30pm Last guided tours of castle at 4.30pm
Cost: €12pp
T:+353 1 816 9538
Address: Back Road, Malahide, Co Dublin GPS: 53°26′41″N 6°9′54″W
Northern Ireland Continued…

**Inishowen Peninsula** is the largest peninsula in Ireland, which predates the formation of Donegal by centuries. The peninsula is home to many historical monuments that date back to very early settlements. Located on the peninsula is the stone fort Grianan of Aileach. Visitors should check out this region for its interesting geological features and numbers ancient monuments.

**Carrick-a-Rede Rope Bridge** is the link between the small Carrick Island and the mainland. The bridge would have originally been constructed over 350 years ago as a passageway for salmon fishermen to cross from the mainland to the island. The most recent construction of the bridge was completed in 2008 by Heyn Construction and includes wire rope and Douglas fir. This is a unique experience that should be enjoyed by all visitors to Northern Ireland.

**Bushmills Distillery** is the world’s oldest distillery, celebrating 400 years in 2008. The distillery is located a mere 2 miles from Giant’s Causeway, within a scenic landscape. Visitors to Bushmills can witness the process of making Irish whiskey and enjoy a complimentary glass of the whiskey.

**Antrim Round Tower** was most likely built around 900AD and is all the remains of a 6th century Monastery, which was abandoned in 1147. The building was typical of those constructed and used during the Viking raids of the 10th century. The tower is rich in history and well worth the time to visit.
Northern Ireland Continued…

Belfast Castle was originally built in the late 12th century by the Normans. It became the home of Sir Arthur Chichester, however, it was burned to the ground in 1708. When the family rebuilt the castle they moved it from the original location to its current location. Today the castle has an antique shop, restaurant, and a visitors centre.

The City of Belfast was granted city status in 1888 and has historically been the centre for the Irish linen industry, tobacco production, rope-making and shipbuilding. The city is home to the famous shipbuilders Harland and Wolff who built the RMS Titanic. There are plenty of cultural events taking place within the city to be enjoyed by visitors. As well as a good deal of opportunities to shop and explore the city.

Mountains of Mourne are a granite mountain range among the most famous in the country. One of the most famous features within the mountain range is the Mourne Wall. This dry-stone wall crosses fifteen different summits as a means of defining boundaries within the mountains. The mountains are said to be the inspiration for the world of Narnia in the novel’s by C.S. Lewis. The picturesque beauty of the region makes it a must see for visitors.

Greencastle Royal Castle was built in the 13th century. In 1316 it suffered an attack by Edward Bruce, who took the castle. Later it was attacked by the Irish twice in the 14th century, and used as an English garrison in the 1590s. The castle is a major tourist attraction for its well preserved architecture and rich history.

Ulster Folk & Transport Museum is made up of two separate museums. The Folk Museum illustrates the ways of life of the people of Northern Ireland throughout history. And the Transport Museum shows the methods of transportation by land, sea, and air throughout history. The museum is one of the most popular visitor attractions within Northern Ireland and should definitely be visited.