

# Ireland Travel Guide

The best things to see and do



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## 1. Why you should visit Ireland

Ireland is a beautiful country with stunning scenery like green rolling hills and rugged seaside cliffs, including the Cliffs of Moher. Inspired by Ireland's lush green landscapes, Johnny Cash wrote the song called "Forty Shades of Green".

Ireland is also known for its rich history of nearly 10,000 years, and many castles...apparently 30,000 of them! With a population of a bit over 5 mio people, which is one castle for every 170 people.

In addition to the castles, Ireland has an uncounted large number of abbeys, priories, friaries, and other monastic religious sites.



In this Ireland Purple Travel Guide, we will tell you what you need to know to visit Ireland and we help you find your perfect vacation spot.

To help you find out what best fits you, we have added lots of photos and links to google maps locations and additional reviews. Join us to explore the best things to see and do in Ireland.

This is not an in-depth Ireland guide. You can buy in-depth Ireland guides from the big travel guide companies. Our goal is to help you Make Memorable Moments on a relaxing Ireland trip and help you build the perfect itinerary for your trip. For that purpose, we have added lots of photos so that you see what you will experience and make an educated decision if these places are for you.

Please also check out the other exciting destinations and travel guides on our **Backpack and Snorkel [website](#)**.



## 2.1 Disclaimer

In this guide we are doing our best to give you the most accurate information. Over time, however, prices, times, and even attractions are subject to change. Therefore, I and [backpackandsnorkel.com](http://backpackandsnorkel.com) cannot be held responsible for the experiences of users while traveling. I strongly suggest that you write or call the attractions you plan to visit for confirmation when you make your travel plans.

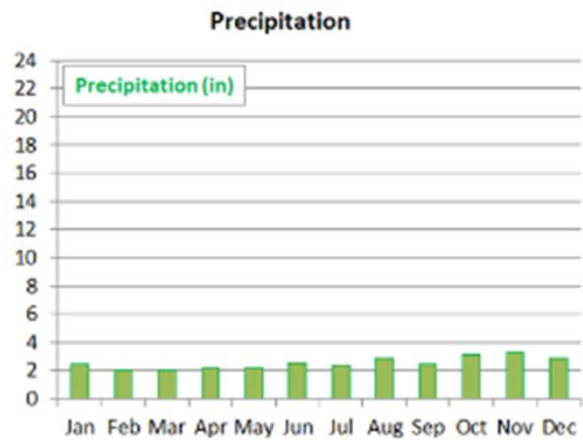
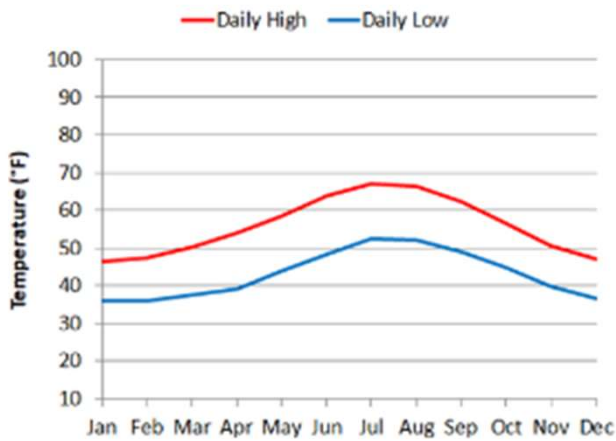
Also, please stay alert, be aware of your surroundings and keep an eye on your belongings. Pickpockets and other criminals can easily ruin even the best planned vacation.

## 2.2 Copyright

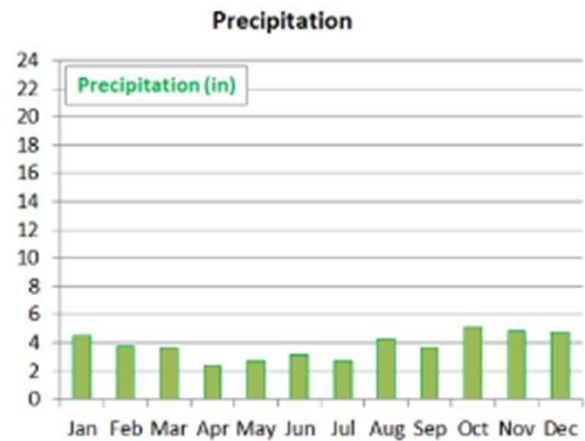
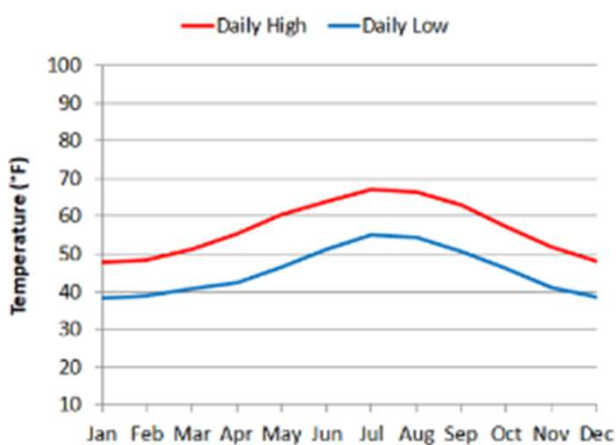
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# Ireland Travel Guide

Below is the climate that you can expect on your trip to Dublin in Ireland:



Below is the climate that you can expect on your trip to Galway in Ireland:





## 3.3 The highlights of the history of Ireland

- 31,000 BC: humans live in Ireland -> one reindeer bone with chop marks consistent with butchering with a flint or stone tool has been found in a cave 22 miles (36 km) north of Cork
- 115,000 - 16,000 BC: Ireland is periodically covered with ice that is more than 10,000 ft (3 km) thick, resulting in an ice bridge between Ireland and Great Britain
- 14,000 BC: the ice bridge only exists between Northern Ireland and Scotland
- 12,000 BC: the ice bridge is gone - Ireland and Great Britain are completely separated
- 8,000 BC: middle stone age communities are present in Ireland
- 4350 BC: farming of crops and domesticated animals (cattle and sheep) in multiple locations in Ireland. People start building megalithic monuments - more than 1,200 are known today
- 3,500 BC and 3,000 BC: the oldest field system with dry-stone walls in the world is operated and the main crops are wheat and barley
- 2,500 BC: the bronze age starts and some notable inventions are: the wheel, brewing alcohol, textile weaving, skillful metalworking, oxen harnessing
- Sometime around 2,500 BC: The Bell Beaker culture expands to Ireland. The Celtic language is being brought to Ireland either during the Bronze Age or the later Iron Age
- 500 BC: the population is somewhere between 100,000 and 200,000 people

- 500 BC: The iron age starts in Ireland and written records are being created by Greco-Roman geographers
- 2nd century AD: Ptolemy calls Ireland Mikra Brettania (Little Britain) and Great Britain: Megale Brettania (Great Britain). He later uses the word Iouernia for Ireland and calls Great Britain Albion. The Romans call Ireland Hibernia and later Scotia
- 150 BC: Before 150 BC, items like vases, etc. have mostly European styles and afterwards, mostly show influence from Great Britain
- 100 BC – 300 AD: The Irish Dark Age leads to economic and cultural stagnation. Ireland is a patchwork of many rival kingdoms
- 432 AD: Romano-British Christian missionary Patrick arrives in Ireland. His work and the work of other Christian missionaries eventually leads to a collapse of the druid tradition
- 840s: The first High King of Ireland appears. A High King of Ireland is a king who claims to have or actually has, lordship over all of Ireland.
- 9th century: Viking raiders start plundering Irish monasteries and towns
- 1169: Anglo-Normans invade the Kingdom of Leinster with 40 knights, 60 men-at-arms and 360 archers
- 1170: More landings by Anglo-Norman nobleman Richard de Clare, known as 'Strongbow', with at least 200 knights and 1,000 soldiers to invade other parts of Ireland – the military interventions were sanctioned by King Henry II of England

## 3.5 Public Transportation in Ireland for rail and bus

Some cities, like Dublin, have excellent and frequent bus transportation. Dublin, as the only town in Ireland, even has a tram.

To travel between cities, you can either fly, take a bus or train.

- **Trains:** Many of the larger cities in Ireland have train stations. Trains in Ireland are operated by **Iarnród Éireann (Irish Rail)** ([network\\_maps](#), [website](#)) and their trains are clean and reliable.

Belfast in Northern Ireland can be reached by train from the Dublin Connolly station.

Tickets can be bought online and at the railway stations.

- **Buses:** Many Irish cities have excellent bus networks. In some cases, they connect one city to a neighboring town, but are generally not used for overland travel. The overland buses that you see in Ireland are operated by private companies for guided tours.

Buses in Ireland are operated by **Dublin Bus** ([website](#)) in the Dublin area and by **Bus Éireann** ([website](#)) in the rest of the country. The buses of both companies are clean and reliable. Bus stations often have electronic boards that show the arrival times and destinations of the next buses that will arrive.

You can buy tickets online or pay the fare inside the bus – exact change only as no change is given!



**TFI LEAP Card:** Instead of paying cash, you can buy a **TFI LEAP Card** online or from a TFI Leap agent and preload it with the money you expect to need and you can top it off if your balance runs low. **TFI LEAP Cards** are also available for Cork, Drogheda, Galway, Kilkenny, Limerick, Sligo, Waterford, and Westmeath.

- **LEAP Visitor Card:** If you are planning to do a lot of traveling by bus in Dublin, then the **LEAP Visitor Card** ([website](#)) may be for you. LEAP Visitor Cards are available for periods of 1, 3 or 7 days and they permit unlimited travel during the selected period on Dublin Bus buses.

If you plan to buy the LEAP Visitor Card online, be aware that it will be mailed to your home address – for international destinations, which may take several weeks!

Alternatively, there are a few agents in Dublin where you can buy one.

## 3.6 Money and Credit Cards in Ireland

The currency used in Ireland is the Euro. You can find the current exchange rate [here](#).

Credit cards (MasterCard and VISA) are widely accepted, except on buses.

## 3.7 Tap water in Ireland

Tap water is safe to drink in Ireland, but it has a more or less strong chlorine taste and therefore we preferred to filter it to remove the chlorine taste.

## 3.8 Telephone

The country code for Ireland is: +353

## 3.9 In which Time Zone is Ireland

Ireland is on Ireland Time: UTC/GMT +1 h and observes Daylight saving time (DST).

You can find the current local time [here](#).

## 3.10 Visa requirements for Ireland

As a part of the European Union, Ireland has the same entry regulations as the rest of the Schengen area. You can check if you need a visa to enter Ireland [here](#).

## 4. Itinerary for your Ireland and Northern Ireland visit

The best way to experience this part of the world is by combining Ireland, and Northern Ireland. This can easily be done on a 2-week or 3-week trip.

The itinerary in this travel guide is a 2 1/2-week itinerary that will allow you to see the highlights of both countries.

You can use this itinerary as it is or modify it to fit your interests and travel style.

Please be advised that it can rain at any point on the island, so adding a few buffer days in the areas that you are most interested in can be a good idea.

	Day	Night
<a href="#">Day 1</a>	Flight to Dublin; <a href="#">Dublin</a> ( <a href="#">Phoenix Park</a> )	<a href="#">Dublin</a>
<a href="#">Day 2</a>	<a href="#">St. Patrick's Cathedral</a> ; <a href="#">St. Patrick's Park</a> ; <a href="#">Dublinia</a> ; <a href="#">Christ Church Cathedral</a> ; <a href="#">Dublin Castle</a> ; <a href="#">Dubh Linn Garden</a> ; <a href="#">Coach House Gallery</a> ; <a href="#">Chester Beatty</a> ; <a href="#">Temple Bar Pub</a>	<a href="#">Dublin</a>
<a href="#">Day 3</a>	<a href="#">Parnell Monument</a> ; <a href="#">James Joyce Statue</a> ; <a href="#">The Spire of Dublin</a> ; <a href="#">General Post Office</a> ; <a href="#">O'Connell Monument</a> ; <a href="#">O'Connell Bridge</a> ; <a href="#">Mulligan's</a> ; <a href="#">Merchants Arch</a> ; <a href="#">City Hall</a> ; <a href="#">Ha'penny Bridge</a> ; <a href="#">Liffey Boardwalk</a> ; <a href="#">National Leprechaun Museum of Ireland</a> ; <a href="#">Guinness Storehouse</a> ; <a href="#">Pearse Lyons Whiskey Distillery</a>	<a href="#">Dublin</a>

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<a href="#"><u>Day 4</u></a>	<a href="#"><u>Trinity College Dublin</u></a> ; <a href="#"><u>Sweny's Pharmacy</u></a> ; <a href="#"><u>Merrion Square Park</u></a> ; <a href="#"><u>National Museum of Ireland</u></a> ; <a href="#"><u>Leinster House</u></a> ; <a href="#"><u>The Little Museum of Dublin</u></a> ; <a href="#"><u>St Stephen's Green</u></a> ; <a href="#"><u>St Stephen's Shopping Centre</u></a> ; <a href="#"><u>Grafton Street</u></a> ; <a href="#"><u>Molly Malone Statue</u></a>	<a href="#"><u>Dublin</u></a>
<a href="#"><u>Day 5</u></a>	<a href="#"><u>Powerscourt House &amp; Gardens</u></a> ; <a href="#"><u>Glendalough monastic site</u></a> ; <a href="#"><u>Rock of Cashel</u></a> ; <a href="#"><u>Hore Abbey</u></a> , <a href="#"><u>self-guided tour of downtown Kilkenny</u></a>	<a href="#"><u>Kilkenny</u></a>
<a href="#"><u>Day 6</u></a>	<a href="#"><u>Kilkenny Castle</u></a> ; Waterford: <a href="#"><u>Waterford Treasures Museums</u></a> ( <a href="#"><u>Walking tour of Viking triangle</u></a> , <a href="#"><u>Silver Museum</u></a> , <a href="#"><u>Museum of Time</u></a> , <a href="#"><u>Bishop's Palace</u></a> , <a href="#"><u>Reginald's Tower</u></a> , <a href="#"><u>Irish Wake Museum</u></a> , <a href="#"><u>King of the Vikings</u></a> ); <a href="#"><u>House of Waterford Crystal</u></a>	<a href="#"><u>Killarney</u></a>
<a href="#"><u>Day 7</u></a>	Ring of Kerry: <a href="#"><u>Ross Castle</u></a> ; <a href="#"><u>Muckross House</u></a> ; <a href="#"><u>Torc Waterfall</u></a> ; <a href="#"><u>Ladies View</u></a> ; <a href="#"><u>Moll's Gap</u></a> ; <a href="#"><u>Derrynane Beach</u></a>	<a href="#"><u>Bunratty</u></a>
<a href="#"><u>Day 8</u></a>	<a href="#"><u>Bunratty Castle</u></a> ; <a href="#"><u>Cliffs of Moher</u></a> ; <a href="#"><u>Burren National Park</u></a>	<a href="#"><u>Galway</u></a>
<a href="#"><u>Day 9</u></a>	<a href="#"><u>Clonmacnoise</u></a> ; <a href="#"><u>Athlone</u></a> ( <a href="#"><u>Church of Saints Peter &amp; Paul</u></a> , <a href="#"><u>Athlone Castle</u></a> , <a href="#"><u>Sean's Bar</u></a> , <a href="#"><u>Athlone Lock</u></a> , <a href="#"><u>Viking Tour</u></a> ); <a href="#"><u>Galway</u></a> ( <a href="#"><u>Salthill Prom &amp; Famine Ship Memorial</u></a> )	<a href="#"><u>Galway</u></a>
<a href="#"><u>Day 10</u></a>	<a href="#"><u>Self-guided tour of Galway</u></a> ( <a href="#"><u>Eyre Square</u></a> , <a href="#"><u>The Hardiman</u></a> , <a href="#"><u>Spanish Arch</u></a> , <a href="#"><u>Quay Street</u></a> , <a href="#"><u>Kirwan's Lane</u></a> , <a href="#"><u>Saint Nicholas' Collegiate Church</u></a> , <a href="#"><u>Lynch Memorial Window</u></a> , <a href="#"><u>Shop Street</u></a> , <a href="#"><u>Lynch's Castle</u></a> , <a href="#"><u>Courthouse Square</u></a> , <a href="#"><u>Salmon Weir Bridge</u></a> , <a href="#"><u>Galway Cathedral</u></a> , <a href="#"><u>Quadrangle</u></a> ); <a href="#"><u>Rossaveel Harbour</u></a> ; <a href="#"><u>ferry to Inis Mór</u></a> ( <a href="#"><u>Aran Islands</u></a> ); <a href="#"><u>Sunset in Inis Mór</u></a>	<a href="#"><u>Aran Islands</u></a>

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<a href="#"><u>Day 11</u></a>	<a href="#"><u>Poll na bPéist - The Wormhole</u></a> ; <a href="#"><u>Dún Aonghasa – Cliff Fort</u></a> ; <a href="#"><u>Teach Nan Phaidi – Restaurant</u></a> ; <a href="#"><u>Dún Eoghanachta – Ring Fort</u></a> ; <a href="#"><u>Na Seacht dTeampaill – The Seven Churches</u></a> ; <a href="#"><u>Scenic Beach</u></a> ; <a href="#"><u>Kilmurvey Beach</u></a>	<a href="#"><u>Aran Islands</u></a>
<a href="#"><u>Day 12</u></a>	ferry to Rossaveel Harbour; <a href="#"><u>Connemara National Park</u></a>	<a href="#"><u>Sligo</u></a>
<a href="#"><u>Day 13</u></a>	<a href="#"><u>Carrowmore</u></a> ; <a href="#"><u>Mullaghmore Peninsula</u></a> ; Derry (City Wall, Murals walking tour)	(London) Derry
<a href="#"><u>Day 14</u></a>	Giant’s Causeway; Dunluce Castle; Bushmills Distillery; Carrick-a-Rede Rope Bridge; Dark Hedges	Belfast
<a href="#"><u>Day 15</u></a>	Belfast (Grand Opera House, Belfast City Hall, Corn Market, Street Art Walk, Belfast Central Library, St Anne’s Cathedral, The Merchant Hotel, Albert Memorial Clock, The Big Fish, Nuala with the Hula, Victoria Square, Old Town Hall, St. George's Market)	Belfast
<a href="#"><u>Day 16</u></a>	Belfast (Titanic Belfast; Crumlin Road Gaol; Bobby Sands Mural; Botanic Gardens)	Dublin
<a href="#"><u>Day 17</u></a>	Flight home	



## 5. Self-guided tour of Ireland

### 5.1 Dublin

Established by the Gaels during or before the 7th century, Dublin is the capital and largest city of Ireland with a population of 1.26 mio in the greater metropolitan area.

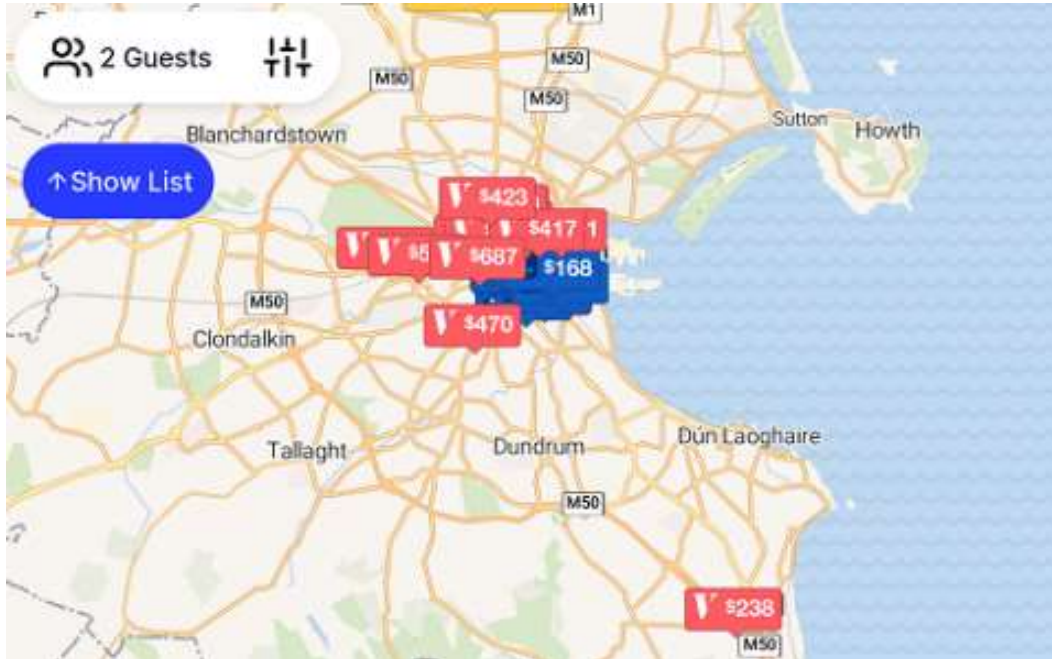
The word Dublin comes from the Irish word Duibhlinn, with 'dubh' meaning 'black, dark', and 'linn' meaning 'pool'. 'Dark Pool' refers to a dark tidal pool at [castle gardens](#) near of [Dublin Castle](#) that was located where River Poddle flowed into River Liffey.

Due to its long history, Dublin has lots of interesting sights and museums.



## 5.1.1 Where to stay in Dublin

Many of the touristic highlights of Dublin are located in downtown Dublin. Much of the downtown area, however, is closed private cars. We recommend staying near a bus station, as Dublin has excellent public transportation.



## 5.1.2 Self-guided tour of Dublin – Day 1

On your first day in Dublin, there is a good chance that you will be tired and exhausted from your flight and your experience driving in Dublin. Our suggestion is to take it slow and have a relaxing afternoon in one of Dublin's most beautiful parks.



1 = [Phoenix Park](#)

2 = Dublin Airport

3 = downtown Dublin

## 5.1.3 Phoenix Park

([map](#), [reviews](#), [website](#))

Phoenix Park is a 1,750 acre (707 hectare) recreational park with large grassland areas and tree-lined roads outside of Dublin's busy downtown area.

The name Phoenix Park comes from the Irish word fhionnuisce, which means clear or still water.

In 1662, the Duke of Ormond built a royal hunting park with pheasants and wild deer in what is now Phoenix Park. Some of the deer that you may see in the park are said to be descendants of the original herd of wild fallow deer.

The park is home to some notable sights:

- **Áras an Uachtaráin** ([map](#), [reviews](#), [website](#)) is the official and private residence of the President of Ireland. The property is open for free 75 min tours almost every Saturday and is first-come-first-served. At the time of writing, tours depart the nearby Phoenix Park Visitor Centre ([map](#)) at 10am, 11:15am, 12:30pm, 1:45pm and 3pm.

Built sometime between 1751 and 1757 by park ranger and amateur architect, the house was purchased in the 1780s by the British Crown and used as a summer residence of the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland. In 1911, the building was extended and used until 1932 and then stood empty for six years. In 1938, plans were made to build new presidential palace and the first President of Ireland moved in with the goal to later move into the new palace. History, however, had other plans. World War II broke out and the plans were put on hold.



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In 1945, the building had become synonymous with the residency of the President of Ireland and thus, plans for the new presidential palace were scrapped. The existing building was renovated and since then Ireland's Presidents have resided either in the original house or the 1911 addition.

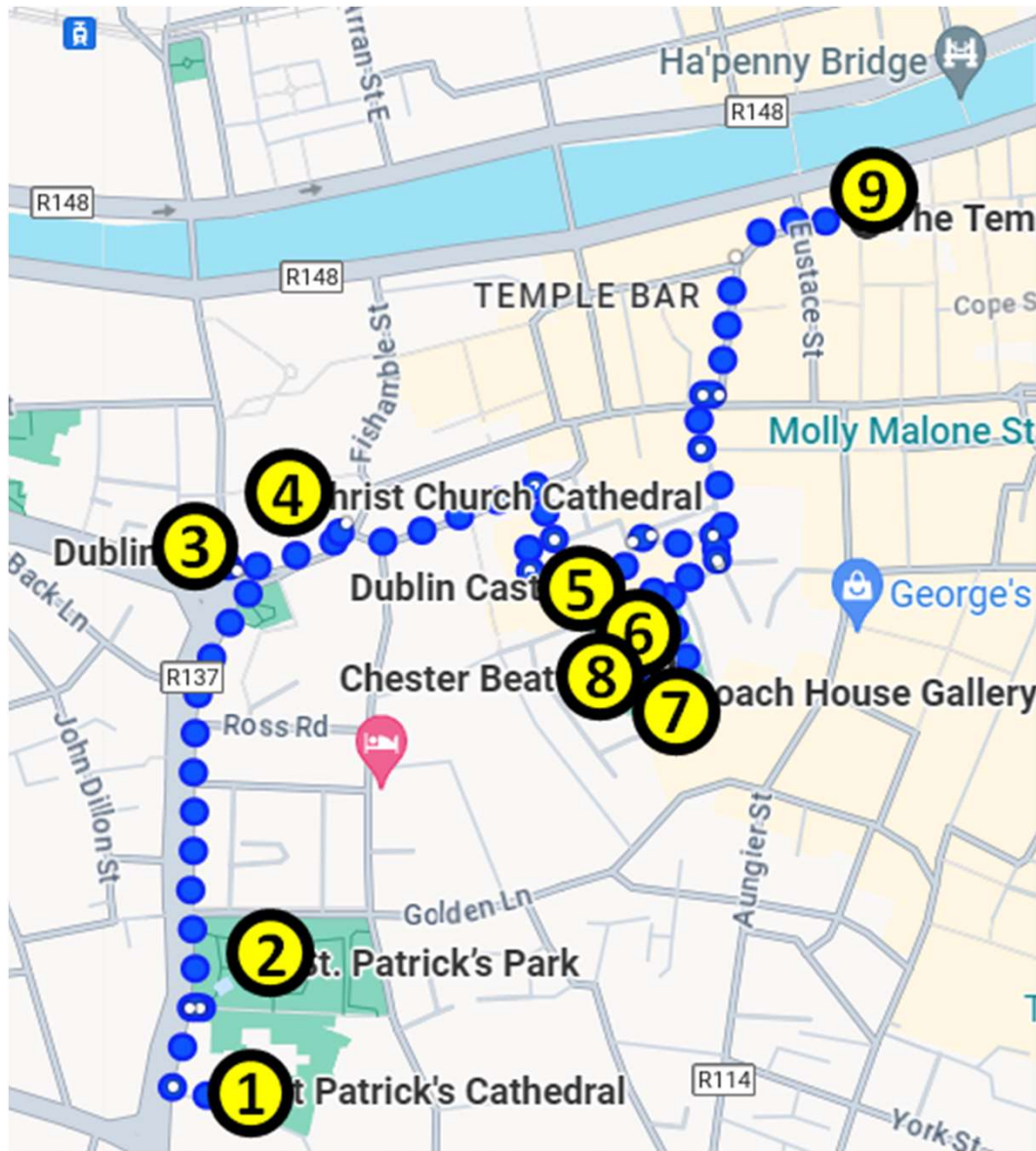


- **Dublin Zoo** ([map](#), [reviews](#), [website](#), [zoo\\_map](#)) is one of the top attractions in Dublin. Its mission is to ‘work in partnership with zoos worldwide to make a significant contribution to the conservation of the endangered species on Earth’. The zoo opened in 1831, covers 69 acres (28 hectares) and welcomes over 1 million visitors per year. In 1840, the park housed 46 mammals, and 72 birds and today it has more than 600 animals in different habitats like the Himalayan Hills, Wolves in the Woods, the African Savanna, Kaziranga Forest Trail, South American House, Zoorassic World, Gorilla Rainforest, Orangutan Forest, Sea Lion Cove, and Family Farm. At the time of writing, the zoo is open daily from 9.30am – 5.30pm and admission is €22.50 per adult or €19 per adult when the ticket is purchased on their website. Discounts for children and families are available.



## 5.2 Self-guided tour of Dublin – Day 2

Today is your first full day in Dublin. Get on a bus and ride it to downtown Dublin, preferably Patrick's Cathedral station, or a stop nearby to begin your self-guided walking tour of Dublin.



- 1 = [St. Patrick's Cathedral](#)
- 2 = [St. Patrick's Park](#)
- 3 = [Dublinia](#)
- 4 = [Christ Church Cathedral](#)
- 5 = [Dublin Castle](#)

- 6 = [Dubh Linn Garden](#)
- 7 = [Coach House Gallery](#)
- 8 = [Chester Beatty](#)
- 9 = [Temple Bar Pub](#)

## 5.2.1 St. Patrick's Cathedral

([map](#), [reviews](#), [website](#))

Founded in 1191 as a Roman Catholic cathedral, St. Patrick's Cathedral is the national cathedral of the Church of Ireland since 1870, but not the seat of a bishop. The Archbishop of Dublin has his seat in nearby [Christ Church Cathedral](#). The fact that Dublin has two cathedrals is almost without precedent and had been a source of considerable tension until a six-point agreement was signed in 1300 that governed their peaceful coexistence.

St. Patrick's Cathedral is the largest church in Ireland. The basis of the church was built from 1191 – 1270 on a plot outside of the town of Dublin. Significant expansions were made in the 1200s and repair work was done in the 1300s, which includes rebuilding the tower between 1362 – 1370.

The cathedral was flooded numerous times and thus, no crypt was ever built.

During the English Reformation in 1537, St Patrick's became an Anglican church. After 1547 it was denoted to a parish church, and in 1555, it reverted back to Roman Catholicism and became a cathedral again until 1559, when it became Anglican again.

In the 1620s, the cathedral was in disrepair and it took until 1660 before significant repairs, including a new roof from 1668 - 1670 were started.

From 1666 until 1816, Lady Chapel of St. Partick's was leased to French-speaking Huguenots who fled from France to Ireland.

During the Williamite War in Ireland St. Patrick's became Catholic from 1688 – 1690, but reverted back to the Anglican church after the war.

From 1713 – 1745, writer and satirist Jonathan Swift, the author of Gulliver's Travels, was dean of the cathedral – his grave and epitaph are in the cathedral.

In 1805, much of the cathedral was in poor condition and repairs were done throughout the 1800s, including significant repairs and reconstruction from 1860 – 1865 (paid for by the founder of the Guinness brewery, Benjamin Guinness, in which much of the medieval structure and decorations were changed to Victorian style).

In 1871, after the disestablishment of the Church of Ireland, the two cathedrals issue was resolved by making St Patrick's the national cathedral and Christ Church the cathedral of the Dublin diocese, superseding the six-point agreement from 1300.

At the time of writing, admission is €9 per adult and the cathedral is open from 9am or 9:30 and last admission is at 5pm or 6pm, depending on the day. Free guided tours are offered Mondays through Saturdays. Check the website for more details.





# Ireland Travel Guide



## 5.2.2 St. Patrick's Park

([map](#), [reviews](#))

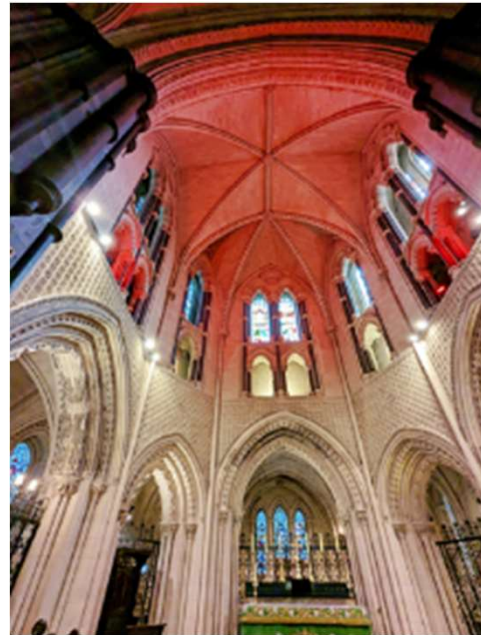
In 1901 Edward Guinness, the son of Arthur Guinness who founded the Guinness Brewery, created St. Patrick's Park near the cathedral.

The park is well maintained and a good place to relax and for people watching.





# Ireland Travel Guide





## 5.2.5 Dublin Castle

([map](#), [reviews](#), [website](#))

The first structures of Dublin Castle were built in 1204 after the Norman invasion of Ireland 1169 as a defensive fort in Dublin with strong walls and round towers on each corner. It formed one corner of the city wall and had the River Poddle as a natural means of defense along two of its sides.

The fort was mostly completed in 1230 and stood strong until a great fire broke out in 1684 and caused severe damage.

Through extensive rebuilding, the fort was transformed into a Georgian palace. The only traces of the original medieval buildings are buried underground, except for the great Record Tower (built from 1228 – 1230), which is still standing.



In 1907, the Irish Crown Jewels were stolen and have yet to be found.

The castle was the seat of the English and then British government's administration in Ireland until 1922, when the Irish Free State was announced.

It was then used as temporary Courts of Justice, and later for state ceremonies.

In 1938, a tradition was started with the inauguration of the President of Ireland at Dublin Castle. Since then, all inaugurations of Irish presidents have taken place here.

Admission to the courtyard is free, but you will need to observe opening hours and buy a ticket if you want to tour the buildings. At the time of writing, Dublin Castle is open daily from 9.45am to 5.45pm with the last admission taking place at 5.15pm.

Tickets are available for self-guided tours of the State Apartments (€8 per adult) and for guided tours of the State Apartments, Medieval Section and/or Chapel Royal (€12 per adult).

Photography is allowed and you should plan on spending 30-60min.



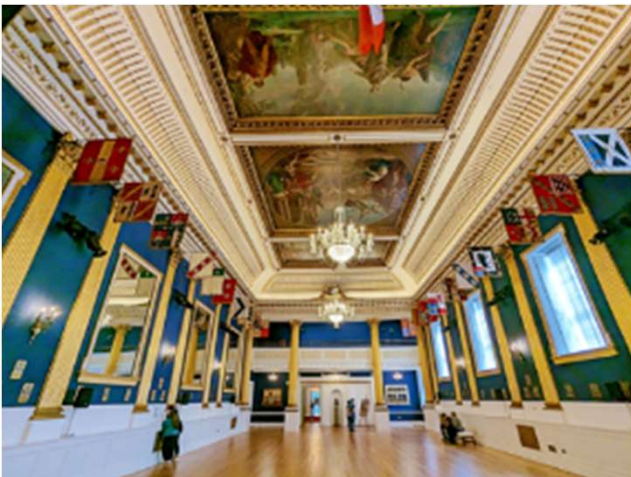


# Ireland Travel Guide





# Ireland Travel Guide



## 5.2.6 Dubh Linn Garden

([map](#), [reviews](#), [website](#))

Dubh Linn Garden is located on or very close to the Black Pool (dubh linn) that gave the city its name and where the Vikings built a trading base and anchored their ships.

The garden is enclosed by a stone wall and lies directly south of the Chapel Royal and the State Apartments, where it can be accessed through wrought-iron gates with Celtic-inspired spirals. The majority of the garden is a grassy area that has patterns that represent sea serpents cut into the lawn. On each corner are smaller gardens with special meanings and sculptures. These gardens are:

- The first is dedicated to the memory of Irish investigative journalist Veronica Guerin who reported on organized crime in the Republic of Ireland and was assassinated in 1996 likely by a South Dublin-based drug cartel
- The second garden commemorates the Special Olympics that were held in Ireland in 2003 and contains plaques with the names of the 30,000 volunteers who contributed to the games
- The third garden is the Garda Memorial Garden in which the names of all members of the Garda (Irish Police) killed in the line of duty are inscribed on a roll of honor
- The fourth garden is a four seasons garden

In the southern wall is the entrance to the [Coach House Gallery](#) and in the western wall is the access to the [Chester Beatty Library](#).



# Ireland Travel Guide

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## 5.3.9 Dublin City Hall

([map](#), [reviews](#), [website](#))

Dublin's City Hall is located on Dame Street right next to Dublin Castle. Dame Street got its name from the church of St. Mary del Dam, which originally sat at the site where the Dublin City Hall building stands.

In the 1600s, the church was torn down and replaced by the home of the Earl of Cork, which gave the hill it stands on the name Cork Hill.

In the 18<sup>th</sup> century, merchants in Dublin successfully lobbied the government to build a stock exchange on the site. Construction began in 1769, and the building was inaugurated as the Royal Exchange in 1779.

In 1850 or 1851, the building was purchased by the Dublin Corporation, and converted for the use of the city government as a town hall. In 1852, the building was officially renamed City Hall and the first Dublin City Council meeting was held here.

Dublin City Hall is a neoclassical building whose exterior is mostly made from white Portland stone which was quarried in Dorset. It has a central entrance hall (Rotunda) under a large dome which is supported by twelve 32 ft (9.8 m) tall columns.

The columns are surrounded by an ambulatory that was used by merchants for business discussions and meetings.

The Rotunda has a large floor mosaic which shows the city arms and motto 'Obedientia civium urbis felicitas' = 'The obedience of the citizens makes us a happy city'.

# Ireland Travel Guide

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Only the Rotunda is accessible to the public.



## 5.3.10 Ha'penny Bridge

([map](#), [reviews](#), [website](#))

Ha'penny Bridge is a pedestrian bridge over the River Liffey that was built of cast iron from Shropshire, England 1816. The bridge was shipped as 18 pieces to Dublin where it was then assembled. The bridge was originally called the Wellington Bridge, but was changed to Liffey Bridge after the Irish War of Independence in 1922. While Liffey Bridge is still the official name, the bridge is most commonly called the Ha'penny Bridge.

Before the bridge was built, there were seven ferries that were used to shuttle people from one side of the River Liffey to the other. The ferries were in such a bad condition that their owner, William Walsh, was given a choice: either fix the ferries or build a bridge. Walsh chose to build a bridge and was allowed to charge a toll of a ha'penny (= halfpenny =  $\frac{1}{480}$  of a Pound =  $\frac{1}{24}$  of a Shilling =  $\frac{1}{2}$  of a Penny) from anyone crossing the bridge for the next 100 years. This was the same toll that he charged for the ferry rides.

Over time, the toll increased to penny-ha'penny (1.5 Pence) and some started calling the bridge the penny-ha'penny bridge. In 1919 the toll was abolished.

The bridge underwent extensive renovation to ensure its safety for the 27,000 people that were crossing it daily.

# Ireland Travel Guide

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Unfortunately, people developed a bad habit that has led to extensive damage to many bridges worldwide and that is to apply love locks. In 2012 and 2013, lots of those locks were removed, in 2013 alone, 660 lbs (300 kg) were removed. Signs were posted asking people to refrain from doing this.





## 5.3.11 Liffey Boardwalk

([map](#), [reviews](#))

Built in 2000 and extended in 2005, the Liffey Boardwalk is located on the northern side of the River Liffey. New boardwalks are currently being constructed.

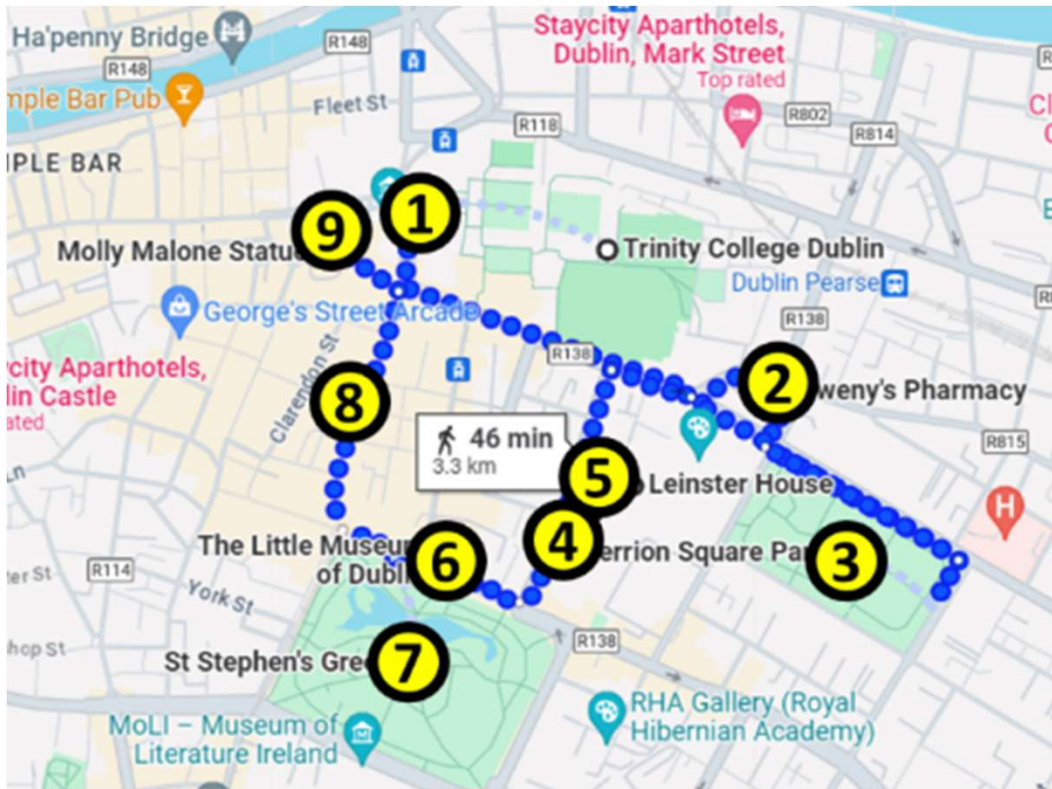
The south-facing boardwalk with its wooden benches offers a great opportunity to relax from all the walking that you do in downtown Dublin and to soak up the sun, maybe eat something and watch people.

Sitting there, I found it interesting to see the many Guinness tanker trucks drive by or deliver their beer to pubs and stores north and south of the river.



## 5.4 Self-guided tour of Dublin – Day 4

Today is your last full day in Dublin. You can either take the same bus as yesterday and walk to Trinity College, or take a bus that brings you to the entrance.



- 1 = [Trinity College Dublin](#)
- 2 = [Sweny's Pharmacy](#)
- 3 = [Merrion Square Park](#)
- 4 = [National Museum of Ireland](#)
- 5 = [Leinster House](#)
- 6 = [The Little Museum of Dublin](#)
- 7 = [St Stephen's Green](#) & [St. Stephen's Green Shopping Centre](#)
- 8 = [Grafton Street](#)
- 9 = [Molly Malone Statue](#)



## 5.4.1 Trinity College Dublin and the Book of Kelts

([map](#), [reviews](#), [website](#), [campus\\_map](#))

Trinity College is the only college in the University of Dublin. Founded in 1592 by Queen Elizabeth I and modelled after the universities of Oxford and Cambridge, Trinity College is Ireland's oldest university.

Former graduates include famous authors like Oscar Wilde, Jonathan Swift, Bram Stoker (e.g. Dracula), William Trevor, and several Nobel Laureates, Presidents of Ireland, and others.

The main college grounds cover approx. 47 acres (190,000 m<sup>2</sup>), including approx. 2.2 mio sqft (200,000 m<sup>2</sup>) for the buildings in downtown Dublin.

You can enter the campus grounds through the gate on Grafton Street.



When you visit the campus, enjoy the historic buildings and sculptures (like the Sphere Within Sphere which some call The Death Star).

# Ireland Travel Guide

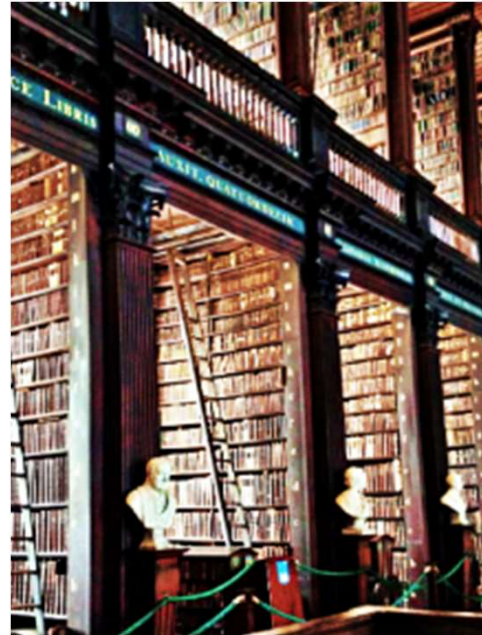
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One of the few buildings that you can enter is The Old Library. It was built between 1712 and 1732 and expanded in 1860, and is home to the **Long Room** and the **Book of Kells**.

The Long Room is 213 ft (almost 65 m) long and houses about 200,000 of the library's oldest books.

**Remark:** In 2023, all 200,000 books, including one of the few remaining copies of the 1916 Proclamation of the Irish Republic, which was read outside the General Post Office, were removed in an effort to prevent further degradation, and conserve them. It is not clear when they will be returned.

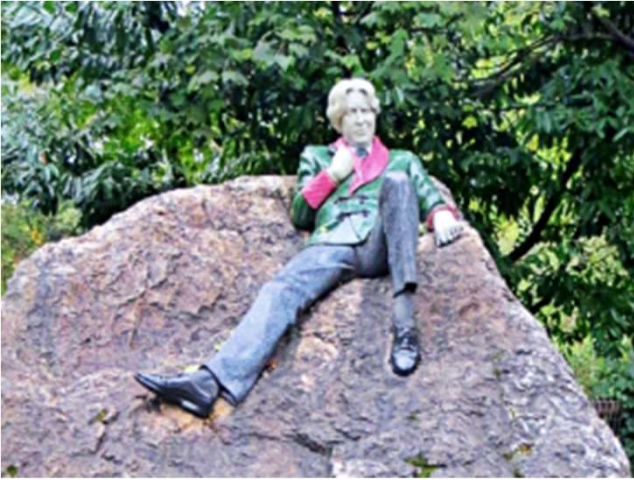


The major highlight, however, is **The Book of Kells** ([map](#), [reviews](#), [website](#), [view\\_online](#)). The Book of Kells was created in a Columban monastery in either Ireland or Scotland likely at around 800 AD.

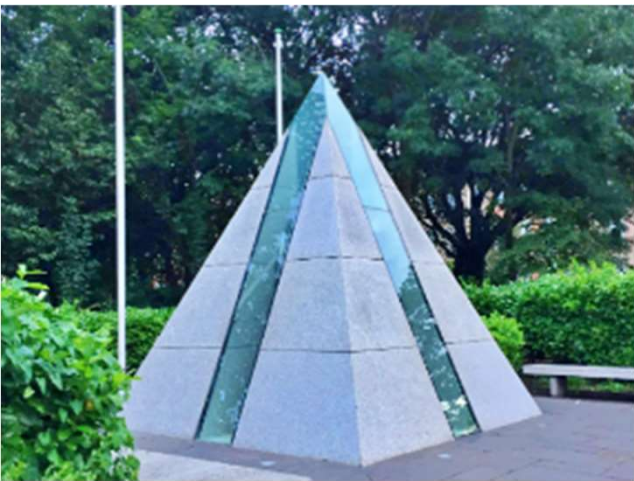
It contains the four Gospels of the New Testament on 340 leaves (680 pages) and is regarded as a masterwork of Western calligraphy – its illustrations and ornamentation surpasses comparable gospel books in extravagance and complexity. When you visit, you can only see 2 pages – no photography or videography is allowed. The pages are rotated every 12 weeks. You can view the whole book online.



## (2) Oscar Wilde Memorial



## (3) War Memorial



## (6) The Victims





## 5.4.4 National Museum of Ireland - Archaeology

([map](#), [reviews](#), [website](#))

Established in 1877, the National Museum of Ireland was formed by combining existing collections primarily of the Royal Dublin Society and the Royal Irish Academy, the National Museum is Ireland's leading museum institution.

The National Museum of Ireland has three branches in Dublin, the archaeology branch, the natural history branch, and a newer Decorative Arts and History branch. The fourth branch, Country Life, is located in Castlebar.

The National Museum of Ireland - Archaeology moved into the current building in 1890 after its collection outgrew its old building. Its collection contains artifacts from:

- prehistoric Ireland including bog bodies, Iron and Bronze Age objects (e.g. axe-heads, swords and shields made of bronze, silver, and gold). The oldest artefacts date back to 7,000 BC
- the world's most substantial collection of post-Roman era Irish medieval art
- a substantial collection of medieval metalwork, Viking artefacts like swords and coins
- objects from Ancient Egypt, Cyprus, and the Roman empire

What draws the most visitors, however, is the extensive collection of historic artefacts made of gold.

# Ireland Travel Guide

Admission to the museum is free and, at the time of writing, the museum is open Tuesdays through Saturdays from 10am until 5pm, from July through October until 8pm and on Sundays from 1-5pm.



# Ireland Travel Guide





# Ireland Travel Guide





## 5.5 From Dublin to Kilkenny – Day 5

Today is a long day and you need to make sure to arrive at the Rock of Cashel before it closes. So, please get up early so that you arrive at your first destination, Powerscourt House & Gardens, at 9:30am.



- 1 = [Dublin](#)
- 2 = [Powerscourt House & Gardens](#)
- 3 = [Glendalough monastic site](#)
- 4 = [Rock of Cashel](#)
- 5 = [Hore Abbey](#)
- 6 = [Kilkenny](#)

Kilkenny is a small town with a population of a little over 27,000 and a popular tourist attraction. The name comes from the Irish 'Cill Chainnigh', meaning 'church of Cainnech', from Saint Canice or Cainnech of Aghaboe.

A Christian church and settlement here (now St. Canice's Cathedral) dates back to early 6<sup>th</sup> century during the Kingdom of Ossory.

After the Normans conquered Ireland in the 12<sup>th</sup> century, they built Kilkenny Castle, several other fortifications, and gave Kilkenny a charter as a town in 1207.

In 1609, King James I of England granted Kilkenny the Royal Charter, making it officially a city.

Starting in the late 17<sup>th</sup> century, Kilkenny became a center of brewing beer. Even nowadays, there are still a number of breweries in the area.

## 5.5.A Where to stay in Kilkenny

Finding parking in Kilkenny is not easy. We propose to stay within walking distance of Kilkenny Castle and the old town, so that you can enjoy the beautiful old town in the evening and have a local beer or two.

Here is the accommodation that is available when you visit:



## 5.5.B Langtons Hotel Kilkenny

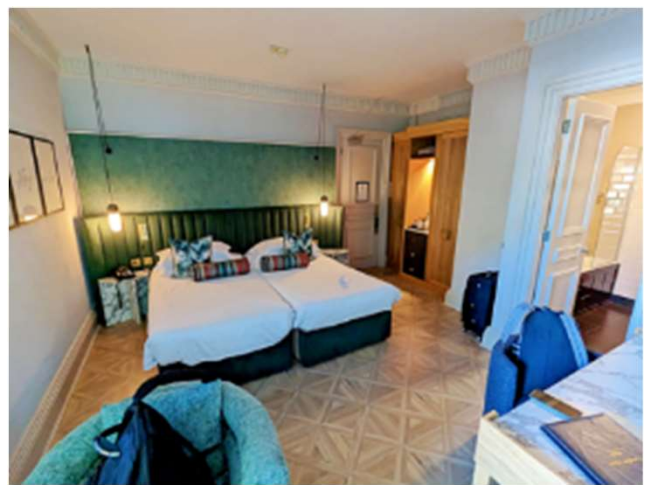
([map](#), [reviews](#), [website](#), [book](#))

Langtons Hotel Kilkenny is an award winning four-star hotel located across the River Nore from historic downtown Kilkenny and the Kilkenny Castle.

The hotel originally started as Langtons Bar. It is now spread out over multiple buildings and features a restaurant, hotel, music venue/theater, wedding venue, shop/bakery, tea rooms and three connected parking lots in the back ([map](#)). The bar has traditional Irish live music daily during the summer and the wedding venue is marketed as the best wedding Hotel in Kilkenny.

The hotel and the guest rooms are clean, in very good condition and beautifully decorated and comfortable, the staff is friendly, and wifi was strong and fast.

This was one of the nicest hotels we stayed in in Ireland and definitely recommend it.





# Ireland Travel Guide



## 1. The Gateway ([map](#))

The double gateway is the entrance to the Glendalough monastic site.

The two granite arches were originally likely part of a two-story building that was built between 900 and 1200. It likely had a timber roof and looked like a tower. On the west wall between the two arches you can see is a cross carved into a stone.

The arches were part of a wall encircling the monastic site, but very little is left of it.



## 2. Glendalough Cathedral or St. Peter and St. Pauls' Cathedral ([map](#))

The cathedral, St. Peter and St. Pauls, is the largest church at the Glendalough site and one of the largest known early Christian churches in Ireland.

It ceased to be a cathedral in 1214, when the diocese of Glendalough was integrated into the diocese of Dublin.

The earliest part of the church is the nave which may date back to the 10<sup>th</sup> century. The finely decorated chancel is likely from the 12th century and it contains a mediaeval and early Christian gravestones. The date of the large monolithic St. Kevin's Cross is uncertain.





## 3. The Priest's House ([map](#))

The original Priest's House was likely an oratory or shrine that was built in the 12<sup>th</sup> century. It gets its name because priests were interred here in the 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> centuries.

What you see today is a reconstruction from a 1779 sketch using the original stones.





## 4. St. Kevin's Church ([map](#))

St. Kevin's Church originally only had a nave, an entrance in the western wall, and a small round-headed window in the east gable. The chancel and the sacristy were added later. The steep roof is made of overlapping stones and supported internally by a semi-circular vault.

The roof chamber could be accessed through a rectangular opening in the western end of the vault.

Its round tower on the western end is the bell tower. With its conical cap and four small windows it resembles a kitchen chimney and sometimes called St. Kevin's Kitchen, but no food was cooked here.



The sandstone that was primarily used for the construction of the chapel has been significantly damaged by moisture. To save its frescoes, extensive restoration and preservation work is being done and dehumidifiers are installed to dry out the stone. The chapel is only open for limited guided tours and you should call ahead to understand when those tours are.

In 1647 during the Irish Confederate Wars, English troops looted and destroyed Cashel and massacred the Irish Confederate troops and Catholic clergy.

The cathedral roof was destroyed during or after the mid-1730s.

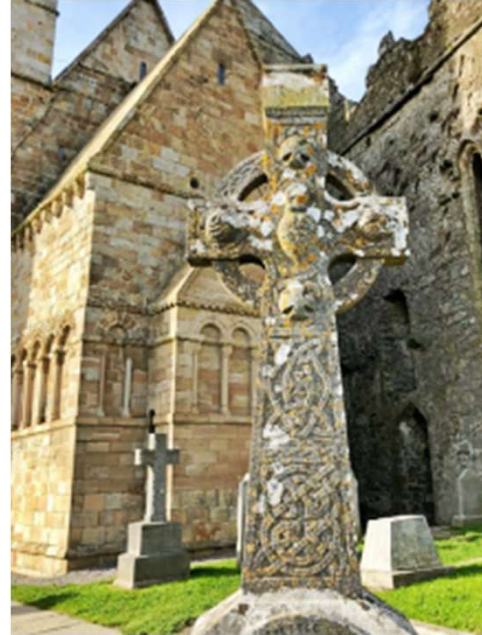
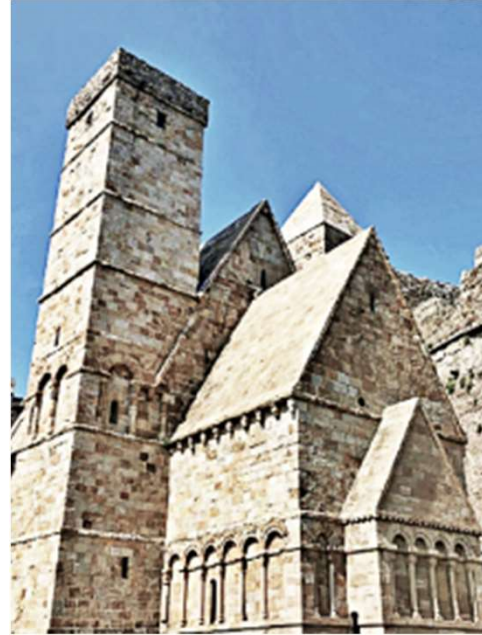
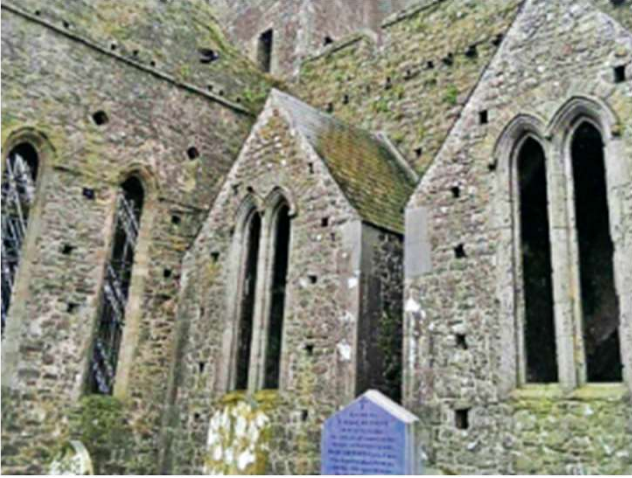
At the time of writing, admission into the buildings is from 9am until 4:45pm (mid-March – mid-October) and 3:45pm (mid-October – mid-March) and the last admission for guided tours of Cormac's Chapel is 2:30pm.

Admission is €8 per adult.





# Ireland Travel Guide



## 5.5.4 Hore Abbey

([map](#), [reviews](#))

From the Rock of Cashel, you can either walk to Hore Abbey or take a short drive. Please be advised that there is no designated parking spot at Hore Abbey. You can squeeze your car into the small spot by the entrance ([map](#)), if there is no other car doing that already.

Hore Abbey are the ruins of a monastery that was given to the Order of Cistercians in 1270 by Archbishop David Mac Cerbaill, who is buried here, after evicting the Benedictines that originally built Hore Abbey.

The Cistercians are an order that branched off from the Benedictines, but still follows the Rule of Saint Benedict. In 1540 the monastery was dissolved and given to the Butler family, who also owned [Kilkenny Castle](#).

Hore Abbey is the only Irish Cistercian monastery that has the cloister in the north of the structure.

It is believed that the word Hore comes from the word Iubhair, which means yew tree (a slow-growing and very long-lived needle tree).

Hore Abbey is open 24/7 and there is no admission fee. Chances are that you will be there all by yourself or maybe share the place with 2 or 3 other visitors.



# Ireland Travel Guide

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## 7. St Kieran's Street ([map](#))

Now walk back to High Street and take the pedestrian street St Kieran's St that branches off High Street.

The street has several murals and pubs and stores.



## 5.6.1 Kilkenny Castle

([map](#), [reviews](#), [website](#))

Anglo-Norman nobleman Strongbow built likely wooden castle on this site in 1173, probably on the site of an earlier residence.

In 1260, the wooden structure was replaced with a square-shaped stone castle that had a tower in each corner. Three of the four towers have survived.

After the death of its owner in 1381, the British Crown seized the building and sold it to the powerful Butler family in 1391.

In 1650, during the siege of Kilkenny by Oliver Cromwell, the east wall and the northeast tower of the Castle were damaged and later torn down.

In 1661, the Butler family converted the castle into a château.

In the 19<sup>th</sup> century, more remodeling was done and additions were added to the building.

During the Irish Civil War in 1922, Republicans were besieged in the castle by Irish Free State forces and the castle was badly damaged.

In 1935, the Butler family moved out of the castle, sold everything in it, and abandoned it. It took until 1967, until the castle and the land in front of it were sold to the Castle Restoration Committee for a ceremonial £50.

The castle is beautifully restored and definitely worth a tour.



At the time of writing, the castle was open daily with opening hours:

- October to March: 09:30 – 17:00
- April to September: 09:15 – 17:30
- Shorter hours on December 24-26 and 31

Self-guided tours are €8 per adult and guided tours are €12 per adult at the time of writing.

There is free admission to the park and garden - its opening hours vary from those of the castle.

Reserve 2h for the castle and the park and then drive to Waterford.





# Ireland Travel Guide





# Ireland Travel Guide





# Ireland Travel Guide



## 5.6.6 Bishop's Palace ([map](#), [reviews](#), [website](#))

The Bishop's Palace Museum is located in a Georgian building that was built in 1741 for the Bishop of Waterford.

The Museum covers Waterford's history and notable people from 1700 to 1970.

You will find 18th-century Irish glass, silver, furniture, and paintings. Topics that are covered include the struggle for Irish independence, the early Irish State, World War I and II, life in Ireland through the 1940s and 1950s, the Showband years, and Waterford Sporting Heroes. The most notable exhibit is a Penrose Decanter from 1789, which is the oldest surviving piece of Waterford Crystal.

While you can visit some of the exhibits on the ground floor by yourself, you will need to join a guided tour with a re-enactor to visit the upper floors.

The tour includes a video and, towards the end, celebrates local celebrities in music, sports, and media.





# Ireland Travel Guide





# Ireland Travel Guide



## 5.7.3 Torc Waterfall

([map](#), [reviews](#))

Torc Waterfall in Irish is Easach Toirc, which means Cascade of the Wild Boar.

The waterfall is 66 ft (20 m) tall, and forms a 360 ft (110 m) long cascade. From the parking lot, there is a short trail that brings you fairly close to the waterfall.

The waterfall is formed by the Owengarriff River, which originates at Devil's Punchbowl lake which lies 1.8 miles (2.9 km) to the south-south-east.

According to legend, the devil put a curse on a local man damning him to transform every night into a wild boar. To hide his shame, the man secretly in a cave and the entrance is where Torc Waterfall is now. At that time, however, there was no waterfall. One night, a local farmer was looking for some missing animals and he found out about the curse. The man offered the farmer lots of money to not reveal the secret, but the farmer revealed it anyway. Furious, and full of anger, the man burst into a ball of flames and disappeared into the Devils Punchbowl lake. Shortly after that, the Owengarriff River emerged and flew towards the cave, creating a waterfall that is hiding the entrance to the cave forever.



# Ireland Travel Guide

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## 5.7.6 Derrynane Beach

([map](#), [reviews](#), [tides](#))

Derrynane Beach is one of the best beaches in Ireland. You can stop here to relax.

During low tide, you can walk along the beach to the west to Derrynane Island, where you can visit the ruins of Derrynane Abbey (Ahamore Abbey) and its partly overgrown graveyard. In the graveyard, you may find the graves of Mary O'Connell (wife of Daniel O'Connell) and the 18th century Gaelic poet Tomás Rua Ó Suilleabháin.

If you love Irish history, then you can explore **Derrynane House** ([map](#), [reviews](#), [website](#)), which is located about 0.5 miles (800 m) from the parking lot. Derrynane House was the home of Irish politician and statesman Daniel O'Connell, whose [monument](#) you have seen in Dublin, and next to it, the [bridge](#) that was named after him.

Derrynane Beach is good for relaxing and sunbathing, and good for swimming in summer. The rest of the year, the water is too cold. Just make sure to only swim in the designated swimming areas because there can be dangerous undercurrents in the other areas.

There are no restaurants or food stalls at the beach, but there is a public restroom.

# Ireland Travel Guide

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## 5.8 Visiting Bunratty Castle, Cliffs of Moher, Burren National Park, and drive to Galway – Day 8

Your timing for today is determined by your entry ticket to the Cliffs of Moher. You need to buy a ticket to the cliffs in advance and it allows you to enter at a certain time. You can stay as long as you want, until they close, but you cannot enter outside of your time slot. Our advice is to go select a time slot in the early afternoon if you are OK with sharing the place with lots of other people. Otherwise, select an early morning time slot and go there first thing in the morning.



1 = [Bunratty](#)

2 = [Bunratty Castle](#)

3 = [Cliffs of Moher](#)

4 = [Burren National Park](#)

5 = [Galway](#)



## 5.8.A Where to stay in Galway

With a population of 86,000 people, Galway is the largest city in Ireland's Connacht province.

The city grew around a fortification that was built here in 1124. Today, the city is home to historic buildings, churches, city gates and cemeteries that can be visited.

Here is the accommodation that is available when you visit:



## 5.8.1 Bunratty Castle

([map](#), [reviews](#), [website](#))

The castle that you see today is the 4<sup>th</sup> castle on this site, and was built in or shortly after 1425. The first castle was likely built here in 1251 out of wood.

Over time, Bunratty Castle developed into one of the most important strongholds of the kingdom of Limerick and it changed owners several times.

In the early 1800s, the owners moved out and let the castle fall into disrepair.

It took until 1956, until the castle was purchased and much needed repairs were made to prevent it from falling into ruins. In 1960, the castle was opened to the public.

Today, Bunratty Castle is the centerpiece of the larger Bunratty Castle and Folk Park which includes over 26 restored historic buildings with educational displays on 26 acres and is a popular tourist attraction.

The Folk Park village is built in 19<sup>th</sup> century style, and includes a school, doctor's house, pawnbrokers, pub, drapery, printworks, grocery store, hardware shop, pottery shop, and a post office.



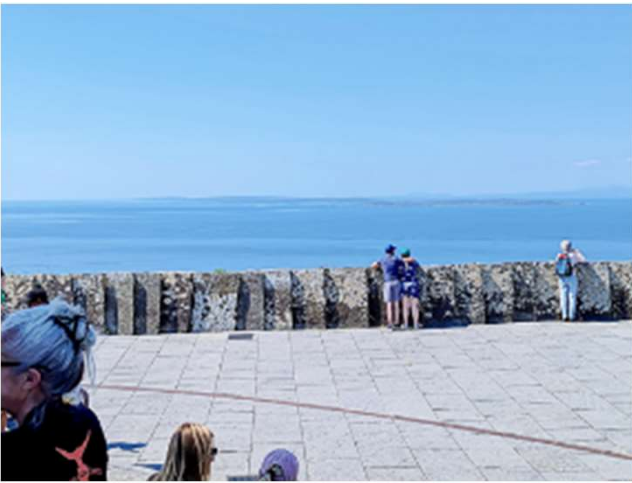


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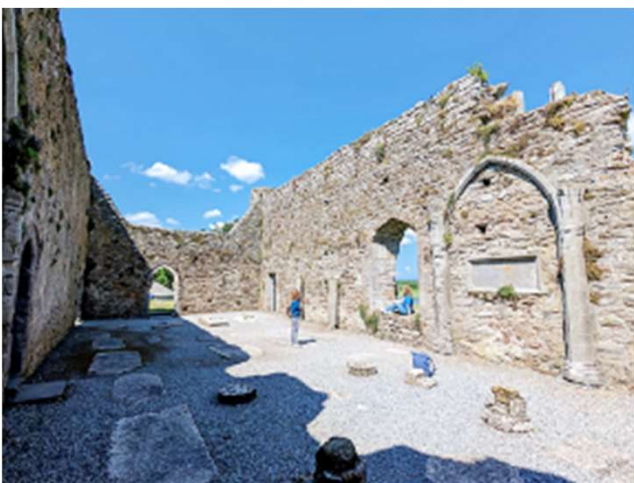
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- **South Cross:** Created in the 9<sup>th</sup> century, this high cross shows an image of the Crucifixion of Christ on its west face

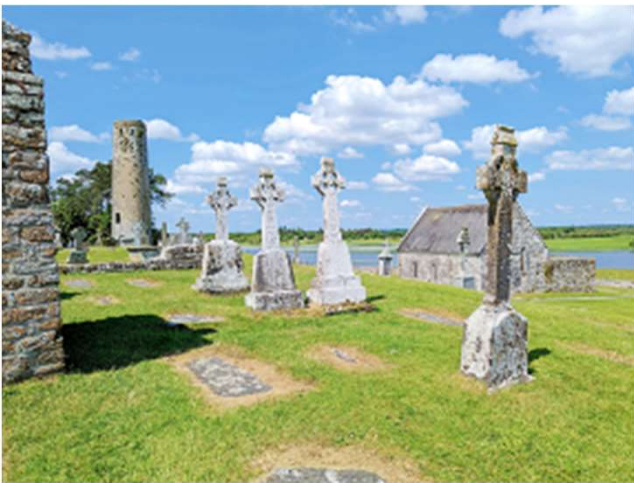
Clonmacnoise is open year-round, except December 24-26.  
At the time of writing, the opening hours were:

November 1 – January 31:	Daily 10am – 5pm
February 1 – March 12:	Daily 10am – 5:30pm
March 13 – May 31:	Daily 10am – 6pm
June 1 – August 31:	Daily 9am – 6:30pm
September 1 – October 31:	Daily 10am – 6pm





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- 1 = [Eyre Square](#)
- 2 = [The Hardiman](#)
- 3 = [Spanish Arch](#)
- 4 = [Quay St](#)
- A = [Kirwan's Ln](#)
- B = [Saint Nicholas' Collegiate Church](#)
- 5 = [Lynch Memorial Window](#)
- 6 = [Shop St](#)
- 7 = [Lynch's Castle](#)
- 8 = [Courthouse Square](#)
- 9 = [Salmon Weir Bridge](#)
- 10 = [Galway Cathedral](#)
- C = [Quadrangle](#)

## 5.10.1.1 Eyre Square

([map](#), [reviews](#), [website](#))

Located close to the Galway train station, next to busy bus stops, and surrounded on three sides by busy streets and a pedestrian street on the 4th side, the rectangular Eyre Square is located in a busy place in Galway.

Luckily, you can escape all the hectic by walking closer to the much more serene grass and tree-covered center of the park.

What is now Eyre Square was an open space in front of a town gate in medieval times. It was called the Green and part of it was used as a market space.

In 1631, a wooden fence was built around it and some ash trees were planted. In 1710, the city under Mayor Edward Eyre took it over.

Over the years, the park was redesigned several times within its original borders – the last redevelopment took place from 2004 – 2006.

In 1965, US President John F. Kennedy became the first sitting US president to give a speech here and the square was renamed John F. Kennedy Memorial Park in his honor.

The name, however, has not stuck.

In the northern part of the park you can find the Browne Doorway and the Quincentennial Fountain.

The Browne Doorway is the former entrance to the Browne house of 1627, a wealthy merchant family of Galway in the 16th and 17th centuries, and one of the Tribes of Galway. The Tribes of Galway were a group of 14 Anglo-Norman families that dominated the political, economic, and social life in Galway for over two centuries.

The doorway is a fine example of Italian influenced Renaissance architecture.

Below the window is a Latin inscription from Psalm 127:1. It reads: Nisi Dominus aedificaverit domum, in vanum laboraverunt, qui aedificant eam - If the Lord does not build a house, then those who build it work in vain.

The Quincentennial Fountain takes its shape from the sails of the traditional hooker boats that were used for fishing in Galway Bay.





## 5.10.1.2 The Hardiman ([map](#), [reviews](#), [website](#))

The Hardiman is a 4-star hotel that opened 1852 under the name Railway Hotel, making it the oldest hotel in Galway.

Peek into this hotel for its elegant design and then continue on your self-guided walking tour of Galway.



## 5.10.1.4 Quay Street

([map](#), [reviews](#))

Starting at the Seattle Stone and ending at High Street, Quay Street is Galway's very popular amusement street with lots of pubs and souvenir stores.





# Ireland Travel Guide

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## 5.11 Exploring Inis Mór in the Aran Islands – Day 11

### ([Island\\_map](#))

We will start today with a self-guided walking tour of Galway and then drive to Rossaveel Harbour where we will take the ferry to Inis Mór in the Aran Islands.

On the island, we will watch the meadows change colors during sunset over the ocean.



- 1 = [Aran Walkers Lodge](#)
- 2 = [Poll na bPéist - The Wormhole](#)
- 3 = [Dún Aonghasa – Cliff Fort](#)
- 4 = [Teach Nan Phaidi - Restaurant](#)
- 5 = [Dún Eoghanachta – Ring Fort](#)
- 6 = [Na Seacht dTeampaill – The Seven Churches](#)
- 7 = [Scenic Beach](#)
- 8 = [Kilmurvey Beach](#)

## 5.11.2 Poll na bPéist - The Wormhole

([map](#), [reviews](#), [website](#))

The Wormhole is sometimes also called Serpents Lair. It is an almost perfectly rectangular natural tidal pool in the limestone rock landscape. Yes, you read that correctly, the rectangular shape occurred naturally and is not manmade. It is connected to the ocean by underwater cave channels that regulate the water level.

Even though you may see people jump into the pool, official recommendations are to not swim in it.

The Red Bull Diving Series that was held here in 2012, 2014, and 2017 made the Wormhole a popular tourist attraction.

Google maps is not very helpful when it comes to telling you how to get there – but we do.

First, ride your bicycles to this location ([map](#)) and then turn right (westbound) into the side street and follow it almost to the end. Park your bikes at the fence where the entrance to trail ([map](#)) is. There was, and hopefully still is, a covered wagon near the opening in the fence to your right.

The trail is visible in the beginning, but soon ends and you will need to follow the red arrows, which is sometimes difficult. Luckily, you will likely see lots of other people who you can follow or people who return and whom you can ask if needed. The whole hike is only about 2,800 ft (850 m), but it is over uneven terrain that has, at times, sharp rocks, and will likely take you 20 - 30 min.

The following three maps provide more details.

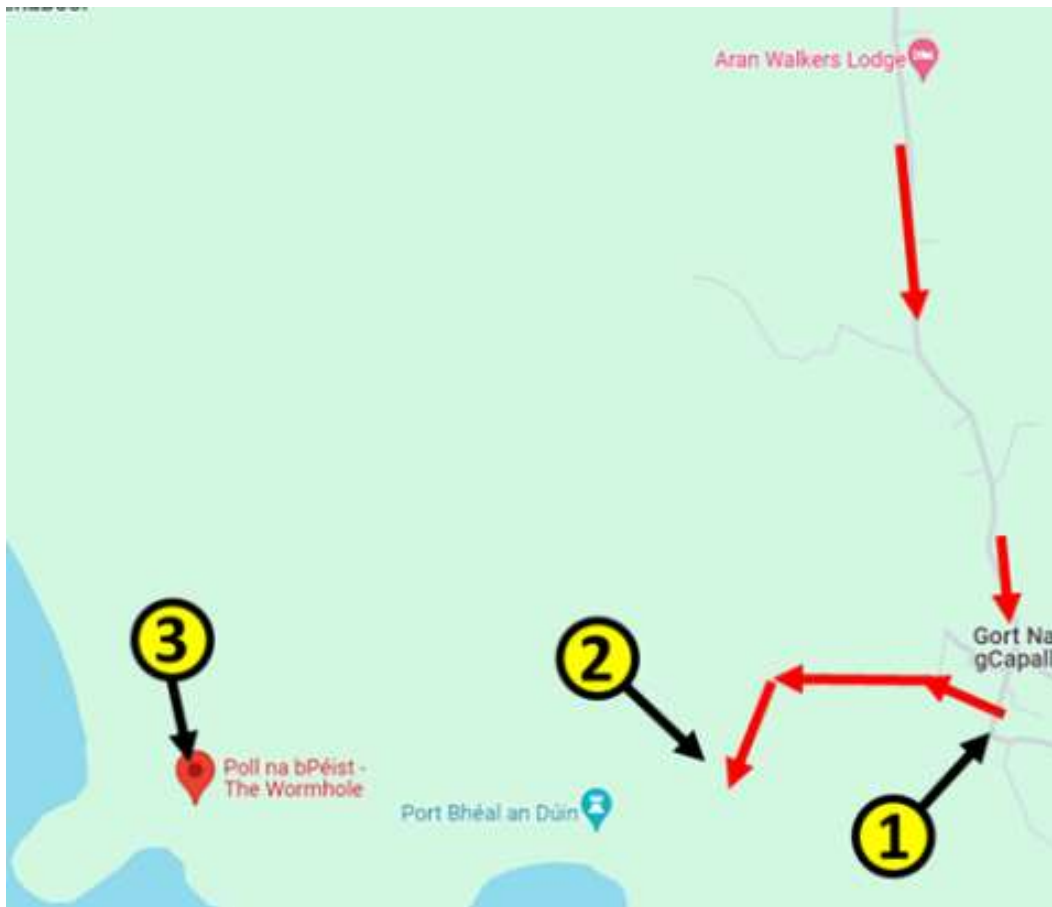
1 = right head turn into side street

2 = trailhead

3 = Poll na bPéist - The Wormhole

Red arrows = bicycle route

Dotted yellow line = trail





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## 5.11.3 Dún Aonghasa – Cliff Fort

([map](#), [visitor\\_center\\_map](#), [reviews](#), [website](#))

Ride your bike towards the Dún Aonghasa Visitor Centre. Park your bicycle at the large bicycle parking lot right before the first building and enter the visitor center.

If you stay at the [Aran Walkers Lodge](#), then you may qualify for free admission.

Inside the visitor center is a small, but interesting museum in which you may want to spend 10-15 min before you exit through the back of the visitor center and follow the path up to the fort. At the fort, PLEASE stay away from the edge, as it goes straight down at the edge for 330 ft (100 m) and there is zero chance of survival should you fall and chances of stumbling due to uneven footing are high.

Dún Aonghasa, the cliff fort, is the one of the two top attractions in Inis Mór. It is a semi-circular fort that has walls around the land-facing side and steep vertical cliffs that go down 330 ft (100 m) to the ocean.

Dún Aonghasa means Fort of Aonghas and likely either refers to the pre-Christian god Aonghasa from Irish mythology, or the mythical king, Aonghus mac Úmhór.



The construction date of Dún Aonghasa is not known, but archeological dating has shown that most of the structures date back to the Bronze Age (2500 - 500 BC) and Iron Age (500 BC - 400 AD). This area was inhabited since at least 1500 BC. At that time, sea levels were lower and it is estimated that the ocean was about 0.6 miles (1 km) from the ocean.

The fort has four concentric walls and is up to 13 ft (4 m) thick. The walls that you see today are 10 ft (6 m) tall and mostly reconstructions. The reconstructed wall parts can easily be distinguished from the original walls as they use mortar. The shape of the original walls was likely oval or D-shaped, but we may never know as parts of the cliff section have likely collapsed into the sea.



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- **Tomb 56:** Wood-Martin excavated this monument in the 1800's and removed large quantities of cremated bone. Its partial excavation in 1994 revealed evidence of fire, and items such as stone beads, an arrowhead and a hollow scraper made of white Antrim flint.
- **Tomb 57** is beside Tomb 56. It consists of a circle with 33 very large boulders. No evidence of a chamber exists, but a hollow in the center of this monument may indicate that a structure was present at some stage. Monument pairings, like Tombs 57 & 56, occur regularly at the Carrowmore and Carrowkeel passage tomb complexes.





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## 6. Closing Remarks

### ABOUT RUDY FROM BACKPACK & SNORKEL

I was born in Germany and emigrated to the US in 2003. My wife and I are a truly multinational couple: I, with my German background, and she with her Chinese heritage. Both of us live in the USA.

Sadly, working in the US means we have much fewer vacation days compared to other countries like e.g. Germany and thus we cannot travel very frequently.

Through a lot of trial and error, we have found our ideal travel and vacation style. **Making Memorable Moments** by focusing on important destinations, planning time for meeting the locals and, of course, for relaxation are our priorities.

We have also learned to appreciate local foods and try to eat as many local dishes as possible. Just for fun, we try to eat at one Chinese restaurant in each country we visit. It is absolutely amazing how different Chinese food is all over the planet.





## MAKING MEMORABLE MOMENTS

You may take 10,000 photos during your vacation, rush from one attraction to the next, but what you will remember in your heart is how you were **Making Memorable Moments**.

For me, that was e.g. Spider Rock in Canyon de Chelly (ever heard of this US National Park?). When I first saw it, I was blown away by this majestic natural obelisk and the beautiful canyon that it sits in. I have been there two more times and still feel the same.

Or think of Isla Mujeres, a small island outside Cancun, Mexico. On the surface, Playa Norte is supposedly Mexico's most beautiful beach and it is always crowded and the boats that anchor there play loud music. Below the surface, Isla Mujeres is very relaxed, quite walkable and it has friendly locals, good authentic Mexican food and good international cuisine and is often very affordable.

**Isla Mujeres is our personal paradise!**





## PACK YOUR BACKPACK & SNORKEL AND LET'S GO

Our travel style has evolved over the years. We are packing light these days when we travel and typically only need a small backpack per person - see our [Traveling Light Guide](#).

With this guide, I want to provide value to you and help you plan your own relaxing vacations with the goal of **Making Memorable Moments!**

Please contact me if you have any questions or comments.