



IRELAND

51 AMAZING THINGS
TO DO IN
IRELAND

Ireland Travel Guide

51 Amazing Things to Do in Ireland

By 51 Amazing Things

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Introduction

This book is a guide when you visit Ireland. The best way to experience a place is to be open to side trips, to be willing to try new things and go to off-beaten paths. Hidden gems are always around the corner.

Despite that, it is always a good idea to start your visit with a plan, a guidebook, so you know where to start.

This is the book for you.

This travel guide will give you the top places to visit, important sights to see and experiences you should not miss when you are Ireland. This will serve as your starting point in your romps throughout the island.

This book lists the top sights, castles, nature, pubs, restaurants and shopping areas you must visit. This book also lists the traditional Irish foods that you should try during your stay.

Chapter 1 - Top Cities & Places to Visit

Ireland is composed of counties and cities. There are five major cities in the country- Dublin, Cork, Limerick, Galway, and Waterford. Each has its own charm and unique characteristic.

In this section, learn the top places you should visit in the country. This includes the more modern sections and the most popular tourist areas such as the St. Stephen's Green in Dublin and the Aran Islands.

Dublin



This is the country's capital and home to over one-third of the entire population of Ireland. Dublin is a large city but has a more laid-back vibe compared to the rest of major European cities. The city feels more like a small town (even with the large population) than a metropolis.

There are many sights to see and activities to try in the city. There also some opportunities for unplanned forays around the city that may prove rewarding as well.

Numerous museums, old buildings, churches and archeological finds are scattered all throughout the city. Good restaurants, cafes, and pubs draw crowds of visitors and locals alike. Even the gardens and parks are worth visiting as well.

#1: Grafton Street Area

This area is a known shopping district in Dublin. It offers numerous wares,

souvenirs and other things popular among tourists. On top of that, the area itself is a sight to see. The area is filled with different kinds of entertainment such as several buskers and street performers. Flower stalls give the place a nice scattering of bright colored, fresh flowers. Along the streets are cafes and restaurants, with a menu worth trying. This is the spot to experience how locals go about their day. Do not be surprised if some of the locals would stop by to chat, as the locals are very warm and friendly.

When in the area, take advantage of the chance to enjoy a legendary Irish breakfast. Look for Bewley's Oriental Café.

The many side streets and alleys are worth exploring. Visitors may find some delightful surprises and unique finds.

#2: Kilmainham Gaol

Ireland has a dark past that helped shape the country and the culture, as well as the outlook of the people. One place to see part of Ireland's dark history is Kilmainham Gaol. This is a prison that held numerous prominent detainees, such as the leaders of the 1916 Uprising. All the leaders were executed in the prison's yard, except for Eamon De Valera. He was the only leader spared because of his American citizenship. Later, he became president of Ireland.

The prison dates back to 1796. It was witness to oppression and cruelty for hundreds of years. The poor and the hungry were kept in this place during the famine. Even those with minor misdemeanors such as the inability to pay train fare were thrown into this vile place. Rebels and those accused of trying to overthrow the government were thrown in Kilmainham Gaol. No wonder the name is often included in many rebel songs.

Address: Inchicore Road, Dublin 8

Open: Mondays to Saturdays 9.30AM to 5.30PM, Sundays 10AM to 6PM

Admission rates: Adults €6, child or student €2, seniors €4

#3: Trinity College

This is the country's oldest university. Trinity College was founded by Queen Elizabeth I in 1592.

Apart from its rich history, Trinity College is also home to Ireland's ancient

and most prized treasure- the Book of Kells. This book is an illuminated manuscript that contains the four books of the Gospel. Several prefatory texts, as well as tables, are interspersed in the manuscript. It is written in Latin. The Book is based on Vulgate texts completed by St. Jerome in 384 AD. Aside from the writings, the pages are also a work of art. Ornate decorations are drawn along the pages of the manuscript.

This cherished artifact is on permanent display in the university. A different page is opened for display each day.

Another attraction worth visiting at the university is the Long Room. Potter heads would recognize this as this was the Hogwarts library in the first *Harry Potter* movie was patterned from this remarkable room.

Address: Trinity College, College Green, Dublin 2

Open: Monday to Saturday 9.30AM to 5PM, Sundays of May through September 9.30AM to 4.30PM, Sunday of October through April noon to 4.30PM

Admission rates: Adults €9, students & senior citizens €8, children (under 12 years old) free

#4: The Little Museum

This charming museum started as a spot for a meet-and-greet and eventually grew into an important establishment it is today. It is one of the recent additions to the list of must-see places in Dublin.

This museum celebrates the quirky nature of Ireland. It houses items that represent Ireland's recent history. Permanent exhibitions include mementos from U2, donated by the band members themselves. The lectern used by US President John F. Kennedy when he visited in 1963 is also on permanent display.

Tours are available for visitors to sign up for. Examples are The Green Mile Walking Tour and Dublin by Land & Sea.

Address: 15 St. Stephen's Green, Dublin 2

Open: Monday to Sunday 9.30 AM to 5 PM, Thursdays 9.30 AM to 8 PM

Admission rates: Adults €7, students/child under 18 years old €4.50, family

(up to 2 adults with three children) €14, children under three years old free, senior citizens (over 65 years old) €5.50

#5: St. Stephen's Green



This is a beloved spot by Dubliners and a favorite spot for visitors. People come here to relax and enjoy the tranquility, have a picnic or simply wind down and feed the ducks.

St. Stephen's Green has a colorful history. It used to be a common marshy ground. William Sheppard designed this iconic park in the heart of Dublin. It officially opened to the public on July 27, 1880.

Many interesting stories are associated with this 9-hectare city park. One is during the 1916 Uprising. The park keepers were given special dispensations to keep the park operational. Every day, both sides of the Uprising would cease their hostilities just to allow the park keepers to feed the ducks. Only in Ireland.

Never miss a visit to The Green, as the locals fondly call it. Enjoy the manicured gardens, the recreation grounds, charming bridge, playground and the lovely Duck Pond.

Bordering The Green is a magnificent line of Georgian buildings. One notable building is the Shelbourne Hotel. It was founded in 1824 and still in operation today. Experience elegance by having an afternoon tea in the hotel's Lord Mayor's Lounge.

Address: (Shelbourne Hotel: 27 St. Stephen's Green, Dublin)

#6: Dalkey/Killiney

Want to get out of Dublin but wish to stay within striking distance of the metropolitan? Hop on Dublin's light rail system (DART) and head south to Dalkey/Killiney. This charming town is just 25 minutes away from Dublin's center.

This small town looks like it belongs to a postcard. It is small but attracts a huge crowd of visitors from all over the world. This popularity can be attributed to the population of the town.

Some famous people chose to live here, such as two members of the band U2, Bono, and The Edge. This is also where other popular figures in the creative world chose to live, such as Enya (singer/songwriter), Neil Jordan (filmmaker), Ryan Tubridy (host of *The Late Late Night Show*), and many others. Some notable figures were born in Dalkey, such as Major William Leet (recipient of Victoria Cross) and Rees Ringrose (one of Dropbox founders).

Aside from the popular residents and picturesque views, there is the annual Dalkey Book Festival to look forward to in Dalkey. It happens around the middle of June. Many of the literary giants join in this festival.

The Heritage Center is the place to go to when in Dalkey to get a general idea of Dalkey's history. This is found in Dalkey Castle.

Address: Castle Street, Dalkey, Co. Dublin

Open: Monday to Friday 10AM to 5PM, weekends 11AM to 5PM, closed on Tuesdays

Admission: Adults €8.50, students & seniors €7.50, under four years old free, under 12 years old €6.50

#7: Dingle Peninsula

This comprises the westernmost portion of Ireland. Dingle Peninsula offers the feel of being in a remote destination but with the amenities and convenience of a nearby small town.

The entire peninsula has a scattering of prehistoric settlements, dating back to the Bronze Age. There are also numerous prehistoric stone markers and over 500 monastic stone huts (clochans or beehive huts). These huts were believed to have served as a refuge to the monks during the Dark Ages.

Today, the peninsula offers numerous exciting outdoor adventures. Visitors can surf the waves or windsurf if the wind is good.

In the town of Dingle, numerous entertainment and good accommodations are also available. The pub scene is lively, with many fine restaurants to satisfy one's hunger at the end of the day.

#8: Aran Islands



These islands have been popular destinations for centuries. It gained worldwide attention when it became the setting for the fictional documentary *Man of Aran*.

Aran Islands are found off Ireland's west coast, by the mouth of the Galway Bay. There are actually three islands- Inisheer, Inishmaan, and Inishmore. The main language used on the island is Gaelic. The islands are somehow isolated from mainland Ireland, allowing the locals to maintain much of their traditional lifestyles. Setting foot on these islands is like stepping back in time.

The scenery is rugged, windswept and wild- an experience like no other.

The largest island is Inishmore. This island does not allow more than 100 vehicles to ply its area. Main transport is horse-drawn buggies. Visitors can enjoy buggy rides to stone farm cottages. They can enjoy the breathtaking views from the tops of the limestone cliffs. Visitors can also explore the 2,000-year-old stone fort, the Dun Aonghasa, built on top of a 300-foot (90-meter) cliff.

#9: Galway

This is the largest city in west Ireland. This is also known as Gaillimh. The main interesting point of Galway is the abundance of art galleries and shops. Most of these are along the charming medieval quarter. The cobblestone streets and winding pathways lend a romantic, old-world vibe.

It has that bohemian flair, with all the artsy vibe on every street corner. The streets are covered with different forms of art. Storefronts and pubs are typical blank canvasses for the artistic populace.

The pub scene is also worth going to Galway for. There are many venues for some nice live music all over the city. Galway is widely considered as the hub for traditional Irish music. This is also one of the few areas where the Irish language is still widely spoken in the streets.

Galway is a must visit city for a true Irish experience.

Chapter 2 – Amazing Scenic Views in Ireland

Ireland offers many natural scenic views. The country is teeming with wonders unspoiled nature can offer.

#10: The Cliffs of Moher



Words are not enough to give an apt description of these cliffs. It needs to be seen with your own eyes to understand and appreciate these magnificent rock formations fully. One thing for sure, these cliffs will surely take your breath away.

It's rugged, untouched form is wondrous and majestic. No wonder these cliffs have grazed so many guidebooks and postcards that feature Ireland's wild magnificence. Almost a million visitors pay homage to these majestic cliffs each year.

The cliffs span around 8 kilometers along the country's Atlantic coastline, rising at 214 meters from the shoreline at the highest point.

The cliffs are off-limits during windy weather, for safety reasons. In this case, tourists can still enjoy the cliffs but from a different perspective. Boat tours are available to experience the majesty of the cliffs without trekking the vertigo-inducing trails.

Address: Liscannor, Co. Clare

Open: 9AM, with seasonal closing, visitor center is closed from December 24th to 26th

Admission: Adults €6, students & seniors €4, under 16 years old free

#11: Ring of Kerry

Fancy a drive through Ireland? Do not forget to take the most popular picturesque drive- the Ring of Kelly. This highway stretches for over 160 kilometers (100 miles). It runs along the breathtaking Iveragh Peninsula.

Along the road are several towns worth stopping or staying at. One is Killarney. This busy town is a popular town for beginning and ending their adventure along the Ring of Kerry.

Some travelers opt to set up base at the charming but less-crowded town of Kenmare.

Treats for the senses while driving along the Ring include a fantastic view of the Atlantic Ocean, wild and grandiose mountains, pristine lakes, and many charming villages. The drive gives a majestic view of the tallest mountain in Ireland, the Carrantuohill.

Along the way is the prehistoric Staigue Fort, with thick stone walls built without using mortar. The Ogham Stones are also along this scenic route. There is also a medieval monastery worth stopping for.

The entire drive can take about 3 hours or less. It can take longer if you fancy a stop to any of the several outdoor activities available such as different water sports along the immaculate beaches, golf, cycling, horse-riding, deep water angling and freshwater fishing.

Address: Ring of Kerry, Killarney, Co. Kerry, Ireland

#12: Bru na Boinne



Remnants of Ancient Ireland are scattered all over the country. One of these that should not be missed on a visit to the country is the Bru na Boinne mounds. This is found in the Boyne Valley. These are burial mounds that date back to about 5,000 years ago. Three of these ancient mounds are fully excavated and open for the public to explore. These are called Dowth, Knowth, and Newgrange.

The most notable of these mounds is the Newgrange. The boulders are carved granite, with the façade of white quartz. The vaulted chambers can be entered by visitors via a central passage to gain access to the grave goods of at least five ancient people. The Knowth mound is also well known for the 250 decorated stones. Some of these stones are believed to resemble local maps. The mound of Dowth has no access for the public, but it can be climbed over to enjoy a great view.

Address: Glebe, Co. Meath, Ireland

Open:

- February to April 9.30AM to 5.30PM
- May daily 9AM to 6.30PM
- June to mid-September daily 9AM to 7PM
- Mid to end of September daily 9AM to 6.30PM
- October daily 9.30AM to 5.30PM
- November to January daily 9AM to 5PM

Admission rates:

- A (Exhibition, 1 hour) Adult €4, group/seniors €3, student/child €3, family €10
- B (Exhibition, Newgrange, 2 hours) Adult €7, group/seniors €6, student/child €4, family €16
- C (Exhibition, Knowth 2 hours) Adult €6, group/seniors €4, student/child €4, family €14
- D (Exhibition, Newgrange, Knowth, 3 hours) Adult €13, group/seniors €10, student/child €8, family €30

#13: Killarney National Park

This is found in County Kerry, southwest of Ireland. The area was recognized and established in 1932 after the Muckross Estate was given to the Irish government as a donation. The mansion now serves as a visitor center and the surrounding gardens as popular attractions.

The park's three lakes draw most of the crowd. These are very picturesque, like something straight out of a postcard. Graceful swans dominate the pristine lakes, along with cute otters. Equally picturesque forests surround the lakes. Here, people can find the only native herd of red deer in the entire island.

Visitors can go on available boat trips to get a close encounter with the wildlife. They may also go on foot or ride bicycles to explore the many rugged paths in the forests. There are also some horse-drawn carriages available for those wanting a leisurely, romantic ride across the park for a truly elegant Victorian experience.

Address: Muckross House, Killarney National Park, Muckross, Killarney

Open: Mid-March to October open daily 10AM to 6PM, October to mid-March, on request

Admission rates: Free

#14: Muckross House & Gardens

Visiting Kerry is not complete without stopping by this 19th century home.

This is inside the magnificent Killarney National Park.

Queen Victoria once visited in this stately mansion. This elegant former mansion stands close to one of the three wonderful Killarney lakes. The lake is a captivating beauty in itself.

Visitors can tour the ground with the Jaunting Cars. These are the famous horse and traps of Killarney.

Address: Killarney National Park, Muckross, Killarney, Co. Kerry

Open: Daily, from July to August: 9AM to 7PM; September to June: 9AM to 5:30PM

Admission rates: Adults: €7.50; students & children: €4; seniors: €6

Near the mansion is the Traditional Farms. Visitors can enjoy simple ordinary folk life after experiencing the grandeur of the mansion.

Address: Killarney National Park, Muckross, Killarney, Co. Kerry

Open: Daily, from June to August: 10AM to 6PM; September to May: 1AM to 6PM; low season, bank holidays, Saturdays & Sundays: 1PM to 6PM

Admission rates: Adults: €7.50; students & children: €4; seniors: €6

#15: Giant's Causeway



This is found at the foot of the steep cliffs along Ireland's northeast coast.

This natural rock formation looks as if giants molded it in ancient times.

The Giant's Causeway has a honeycomb formation. The over 37,000 hexagonal basalt columns look almost too geometrically perfect to be naturally formed.

Experts believe that the rock formation is a result of more than 60 million years of movements of the tectonic plates, erosion and lava flows.

The views can be enjoyed via the trails along the top of the cliffs. A flight of steps will bring visitors down to the level of the sea. Trips by van and walking tours are available. Just check with the visitor center nearby.

Address: 44 Causeway Rd, Bushmills BT57 8SU

Open:

- January 9AM to 5PM
- February, March 9AM to 6PM
- April to June 9AM to 7PM
- July to August 9AM to 9PM
- September 9AM to 7PM
- October 9AM to 6PM
- November, December 9AM to 5PM

Admission rates: Adult €9.67, child €4.83, family €23.89, group adult €7.39, group child €3.70

#16: Glengarriff

This is one of the top destinations in Ireland. Visitors flock to this nature's wonder since the 1700s. The Glengarriff is at the heart of West Cork, boasting of an enthralling view of the sea and the mountains meet.

This place offers a mild temperature for most of the year, mainly from its proximity to the Bantry Bay (another world famous destination) and the Atlantic Ocean. This makes a spot for adventure.

Activities in the area include treks through the rugged plains and hikes along

the foothills of Cahra Mountains. Visitors may choose just to enjoy the view and mingle with the friendly, laid-back locals. The community in this area only has a population of 800.

Address: [N71](#) national secondary road in the Beara Peninsula of [County Cork](#), Ireland

Admission Rates: Free

#17: Doolin

This is an adorable small coastal village along County Clare's northwestern coast. This is popular as a jump-off point for those wanting to explore Ireland's Shannon region.

The village is set on a backdrop of a captivating, rugged Atlantic Ocean. This is also the unofficial capital of traditional Irish music. The locals encourage visitors to take part in the dynamic music scene and immerse in the local culture. The pubs are friendly and an experience worth having.

Visitors can have a quick stop-over in this quaint town or spend a weekend getaway. The town is centered on Fisher Street- the only street present, actually.

Address: Doolin, Co. Clare, Ireland

Chapter 3 – Amazing Historical Locations

Ireland has a rich past, and the island is spread with ruins and remnants of historic structures. Some have been preserved or restored, such as some of the monasteries, castles, and forts. Taking a trip to these places will give a sense of awe and admiration for the rich heritage of the Irish people.

#18: Glendalough



This mysterious spot houses one of Ireland's most important monastic sites. St. Kevin built this settlement in the 6th century. Over the years, the place evolved into a bigger site, eventually becoming known as Monastic City.

Visitors will love the view and the experience of the valley nestled in between 2 lakes. This is a popular spot for over the past two centuries. The scenery is magnificent, rich in history, with abundant wildlife and a few interesting archeological finds.

The site of the monastery is excellently preserved. The most striking site is the Round Tower. It rises to 30 meters (110 feet) and served as last-resort shelter during raids by the Vikings.

Address: Glendalough, Co. Wicklow

Open: Glendalough Visitor Centre open daily during mid-October to mid-March from 9:30AM to 5PM, during mid-March to mid-October from 9:30AM to 6PM

Admission rates: Adults €3; child/student €1; seniors or group €2; family €8

#19: Powerscourt House & Gardens

Serene lakeside walks, the magnificent Sugarloaf Mountain in the background, an impressive stately home and sprawling manicured gardens—that's what Powerscourt House and Gardens has to offer.

This majestic place is only 20 kilometers away from Dublin. The impressive house is surrounded by 47 acres of well-tended greenery.

Make sure to take a leisurely stroll along the Kitchen and Rose Gardens, as well as the splendid Italian Gardens. Over 200 varieties of flowers, shrubs, and trees can be found in the gardens.

There is a section that serves as a burial ground for the much-loved pets of the past owners. These burial grounds are complete with lovely tombstones and tender inscriptions.

The impressive gardens were fashioned over 150 years. These were constructed carefully and artistically to create a harmonious blending with the wild nature surrounding the estate.

Inside the Palladian house are design and craft shops. There is also an excellent restaurant/café to refresh after exploring the expansive estate.

Address: Enniskerry, Co. Wicklow

Open: Daily from 9:30AM to 5:30PM (dusk during winter)

Admission rates: Adult €8.50; family (with 2 adults & up to 3 children) €25; child (5-16 years old) €5, under 4 years old- free; students & seniors €7.50

#20: St. Michan's Mummies

The church is not that impressive compared to most of the old, imposing cathedrals all over Europe. However, it is rich in history. The mummies found inside the St. Michan Church is one of its most popular attractions. The church itself has a remarkable history apart from the mummies.

The original building was built in 1095. Catholics ran it until the Reformation. It was originally for the Vikings who remained in Ireland even after Wolf the Quarrelsome killed or kicked out most of the Vikings.

In 16886, the church was rebuilt and served as a Protestant church. It is now known as the Church of Ireland, serving parishioners for over 300 years.

The church organ is worth mentioning. It was installed in 1732. What makes this pipe organ remarkable is that the popular composer Handel is said to have used this organ to compose and play his work of genius called the Messiah.

The mummies are inside the vaults. The limestone walls created the perfect conditions to preserve the bodies buried in the vaults of the church. Among the notable mummies is that of a 400-year old nun, the popular “The Crusader” (a 6-feet-and-a-half tall man believed to have been part of the 4th crusade) and the Sheares brothers who were part of the 1798 rebellion.

It is also worth noting that these vaults were believed to have inspired Bram Stoker.

Address: Church St, Arran Quay, Dublin 7, Ireland

Open:

1 Mar - 31 Oct

Monday to Friday 10AM – 4.45PM, closed 12:45 – 2PM

Saturday 10AM – 4PM

Sunday Closed

1 Nov - 31 Mar

Monday to Friday 12.30 – 3.30PM

Saturday 10.30AM – 4PM

Sunday Closed

Admission rates: general admission €6.50

#21: Rock of Cashel



This destination is also called St. Patrick's Rock and Cashel of the Kings. It is a striking scene of an imposing group of Medieval buildings set atop limestone rock formations, surrounded by lush greenery.

The group of buildings in the Rock of Cashel includes the Romanesque Chapel and the High Cross. Worth noting are the 12th century round tower, the 13th century Gothic cathedral and the 15th century castle. It is believed that the High Kings of Munster used the Rock of Cashel as the seat of their power before the Norman invasions.

Visitors can also see the Hall of the Vicars Choral, which was recently restored. There are exhibitions on display and an audio-visual show for visitors to enjoy.

Address: Cashel, Co. Tipperary

Open: open from mid-June to mid-September 9AM to 7PM (with seasonal variations)

Admission rates: Adults €5.30, students €2.10, seniors €3.70, family €11.50

Chapter 4 – Amazing Castles to Visit

Ireland has so many castles worth looking at. Some are still in good condition. Some have been rebuilt, but most are in ruins. Some, even in ruins, are still majestic and worth visiting.

#22: Blarney Castle

When in Ireland, one must kiss the Blarney Stone. This “Stone of Eloquence” is found in Blarney Castle- but that’s not all that the castle has to offer. Blarney Castle is one of the loveliest castles in the country.

It is a well-preserved ruin. The interior still holds that majestic charm, even with a crumbling façade. The original building was built in 1210 by Muskerry’s MacCarthys. This was a cadet branch that belonged to the Kings of Desmond.

Address: Monacnapa, Blarney, Co. Cork, Ireland

Open: (last admission 1 hour before closing)

- January to February 9AM to 5PM
- March to April 9AM to 6PM
- May 9AM to 6.30PM
- June to August 9AM to 7PM
- September 9AM to 6.30PM
- October 9AM to 6PM
- November to December 9AM to 5PM

Admission rates: Adult €14-15, student/seniors €11.50 -12, children (8 to 14 years old) €6, family (2 adults & 2 children) €35-37

#23: Malahide Castle



This is one of the castles that have been beautifully restored inside. This place is only a half hour train ride from the center of Dublin. The castle has a park adjacent to it where visitors can stroll, relax or have a picnic. There is also a playground, café and gift shop.

The Malahide Castle is an imposing structure within a romantic seaside village. This site is one good destination for an afternoon trip.

Address: on the coast, 10 km away from Dublin Airport, near the M50 motorway

Open: Open all year round (except 24th to 27th of December) Monday to Sunday 9.30AM to 5.30PM

Admission rates: Adults €12, Student €8, child (under 12 years old) €6, Family €26

#24: Bunratty Castle

This is among the fully restored castles in Ireland. The restoration was done in the 1950s. The castle is one of the medieval fortresses in Ireland that have been preserved well.

The castle was built in 1425. It now showcases a magnificent collection of 15th and 16th century tapestries and furnishings. Visitors will be inspired by the interior, which transports them back to the elegant medieval period.

Near the castle is the remarkable Folk Park. It brings to life the views and experience of Ireland in the last century. The park has over 30 buildings to

simulate a traditional Irish village, complete with farmhouses, streets and village shops that guests can explore.

Address: Bunratty, Co. Clare

Open: Daily from 9.30AM to 5.30PM

Admission rates: Adults €10, under 6 years old free, under 16 years old €8, seniors €9.45

#25: Ross Castle

This picture-perfect castle is located along the equally breathtaking lake. For more than a hundred years, the Ross Castle has been drawing crowds for its breathtaking views. The castle is a ruin, with the exterior walls well preserved.

Address: Ross Island, Killarney, County Kerry

Open: 3rd March to 31st October 9.30AM to 5.45PM

Admission rates: Adult €5.00, Student/Child €3.00, Family €13.00, Group/Senior €4.00,

#26: Parke's Castle

The castle rises majestically from the shores of the equally magnificent Lough Gill, close to the town of Sligo. This is a hidden gem worth stopping for. Guided tours are available to enjoy a few hours marveling at the fully restored interior of this castle. What's more, accommodations are available in the castle.

Address: Kilmore, Fivemilebourne, County Leitrim F91 FP71

Open: 6th April to 4th October, open daily 10AM to 6PM

Admission rates: Adult €5.00, Student/Child €3.00, Group/Senior €4.00, Family €13.00

#27: Kilkenny Castle



This is one of the country's largest castles. It serves as a stately center of the medieval town. Many of the castle rooms are open for the public to visit, with the interiors fully restored. Visitors can sign up for the available guided tours.

Address: The Parade, Kilkenny City, R95 YRK1

Open: October to February 9.30AM to 4.30PM, March 9.30AM to 2PM, April and May, 9.30AM to 5.30PM, June to August 9AM to 5.30PM, September 9.30AM to 5.30PM

Admission rates: Adult €8.00, Group (more than 20 participants)/Senior €6.00, Child (more than 6 years of age)/Student €4.00, Family €20.00

#28: Donegal Castle

Along the pretty shores of River Eske is an imposing Donegal Castle. Its distinctive towers make it stand out from the many castles all over the country.

The interior of the castle is partially restored. The rooms in the main tower are furnished. The main tower's banquet hall is also restored and furnished well

Address: Castle Street, Donegal, Co. Donegal, F94 P996

Open: Easter to mid-September, Daily, 10AM to 6PM; Mid-September to Easter, Thursday to Monday, 9.30AM to 4.30PM

Admission rates: Adult €5.00, Student/Child €3.00, Group/Senior €4.00, Family €13.00

#29: Dublin Castle



This stately castle rises right in the center of the city of Dublin. This was used as the seat of British power for many centuries.

Visitors can join the several guided tours to explore the castle's historic vaults. On the grounds of the castle is one of Dublin's premier museums, the Chester Beatty Library.

The interior of the castle is fully restored. It is also currently being used by the Irish Government. Hence, security measures are implemented, even with guided tours. Changes in schedules and tours may change on short notice depending on government activities and discretion.

Address: Dame Street, Dublin 2

Open: Open all Year Round; Monday to Sunday & Public Holidays, 9.45AM to 5.45PM, Last admission at 5.15PM

**Note:* Closed on 25th, 26th & 27th of December and on 1st of January

Admission rates:

- Guided tour (around 1 hour and 10 minutes, includes medieval undercroft, state apartments, exhibitions and chapel royal)

Adult €10.00, Student (requires photo ID) €8.00, Child (6 to 17 years old) €4, Senior (60+ years old) €8.00, Family (2 adults, maximum of 5 children) €24

- Self-Guide (approximately 30 minutes) (includes Exhibitions and

State Apartments)

Adult €7.00, Student (requires photo ID) €6.00, Child (6-17) €3, Senior (60+ years old) €6.00, Family (2 adults, maximum of 5 children) €17.00

#30: Birr Castle

This castle is among the few that are still inhabited. The sprawling grounds are well-manicured. It also has a unique modern play area where kids can play for a fee. Visitors can only enjoy the grounds but cannot enter the castle.

The castle is a family home from 1620 until today. The estate has the Great Birr telescope, which used to be the world's largest telescope.

The ground is an expansive 120 acres. It contains and impressively large collection of rare species of plants from all over the world. This includes 40 of the British Isles' champion trees.

Address: Birr Castle Gardens & Science Centre, Rosse Row, Birr, County Offaly, R42 VO27

Open:

Gardens & Science Centre

- Jan. 2 to March 16, 10AM to 4PM
- March 17 to Oct. 31, 9AM to 6PM
- Nov. 1 to Dec. 24, 10AM to 4PM
- Dec. 27 to Dec. 31, 10AM to 4PM

Admission rates: Adult €9, Student/Senior €7.50 (Students required to show a valid student ID), Children 4 and under free, Children (5-12 years old) €5.00, family (2 adults with 2 children) €25

Chapter 5 – Amazing Nightlife Attractions

To visitors, the Irish tend to get into loud, bragging talk over a few mugs of beer amid loud music and dancing. This is what Irish craic is all about.

There is no shortage of bars, clubs, and pubs all over Ireland. Even the smallest town has its own pub. These are open all week. Most pubs are open as early as 10:30AM to 11:30PM from Mondays to Thursdays. On Fridays and Saturdays, open hours are from 10:30AM to 12:30AM. On Sundays, these stay open from 12:30PM to 11PM.

A stay in Ireland must include getting into the nightlife. There's dancing, lots of drinking, clubbing and pub crawling- all in the company of good-natured, fun-loving and very friendly locals. Craic is everywhere in the Ireland. The best place to experience craic is going to the best pubs, lounges, bars or night clubs.

#31: Best Pubs and Bars in Dublin

- Temple Bar

Right in the city is the Temple Bar Square, where the best of the best Irish pubs are found. The place offers drinks and a few bites at reasonable prices. Locals and visitors can enjoy a few bottles of Guinness (or some stout) and have great conversation with some fantastic live music in the background. It is often crowded, but there are multiple bars inside so waiting for drinks won't be that long.

Address: 47/48 Temple Bar, Dublin

Open: 11:30AM to 1:00AM

- Alchemy

Located in Fleet Street, the Alchemy attracts a mixed crowd of young adults and teenagers. This is one of the hot spots for the locals in Dublin. Lots of craic can be found here, with its great atmosphere. Be informed that its popularity makes it more crowded than most other pubs. The place is surely packed on Friday nights, with its €5 cocktail special drawing in more crowds. Call in advance to reserve a table, even in the middle of the week. Every night, different music genres are played by top-notch DJs.

Address: 13-17 Fleet Street, Temple Bar, Dublin, Ireland Dublin 2

Admission rates: around €5 to €8

- Club M

This popular spot can be found in the heart of the culture and arts center in Dublin. Club M is also among the oldest nightclubs in the capital.

The venue is a huge, multi-level establishment (2 floors). It looks like a high-end club yet very friendly accommodating. Cocktails are great, and service is very welcoming. Music varies from rock to mainstream pop. People can enjoy great music and mingle inside or enjoy the view of the city at night at the club's balcony galleries.

Address: 2 Cope St., Temple Bar, Dublin 2

Entry fee: €10-€15 (Saturday nights), complimentary admission for guests of Blooms Hotel

- The New Bucks Townhouse

This is a large venue- a 2-story spot with 4 bars and a terrace. Membership is required for the use of the VIP boudoir. It also has a piano bar that plays live music several nights per week. Music is often fun, cheesy pop like Madonna and Britney Spears.

The master room, the club's main room, has a cool dance floor. It has a retro checkered design, complete with multicolored lighting from beneath, coming from its fitted LED lights.

Address: 67 Lower Leeson St., Dublin 2, South Inner City

Entry fee: €15

#32: Best Pubs and Bars in Galway

Galway may not be as large as Dublin, but its nightlife is still vibrant. In fact, this city can be considered as having too many pubs for its size. The large student population of the city and the locals' love for their Guinness are reasons enough for such a large number of pubs. Nightlife is very much alive in Galway.

Pubs come in various types. There are traditional pubs, nightclubs, and super-pubs spanning several stories. There are enough choices for everyone, even for hard party-goers.

- Tig Coili

Want to experience traditional craic? The Tig Coili offers great ambiance, with traditional Irish pub music sessions twice a day. This family-owned local bar knows how best to serve craic.

The staff is friendly, and prices are good. Pints are served deliciously cold.

The building is hard to miss within the Latin Quarter of Galway. The facade is a hard-to-miss bright red. The interior is decorated with posters and pictures of Irish musicians and bands that played in the pub sometime in the pub's rich past.

Address: 24 Mainguard Street, Galway

- McDonagh's Restaurant

This seafood restaurant is a must-try to sample fresh seafood. If you do not have time to explore Galway, see to it that you make a stop at this restaurant or you will miss out on a huge part of your Irish adventure.

The restaurant has that unique, authentic atmosphere of a maritime food hub. The family who owns and runs the restaurant buys their ingredients straight from the local fishermen every day.

The restaurant gets crowded, especially around dinnertime. It's best to reserve a table before enjoying some delicious dinner.

Upon entering, visitors can choose from the three distinct sections of the restaurant. There's the self-cater, fish & chips bar, and seafood restaurant. Self-cater section is at the on-site fish market. Fish & Chips bar cooks to order, with the potatoes peeled and sliced right on site. The seafood restaurant has a more elaborate menu, offering whatever the fresh catch of the day is such as lemon sole, oysters, salmon, and prawns.

Address: 22 Quay Street, Galway, Co. Galway

- Crane Bar

This is a household name in the city. This traditional pub's main attraction is the music. It features several of the best traditional Irish music artists.

This pub is divided into two sections. The downstairs (first level) is called the "local." It offers a traditional Irish bar. It has a more intimate space for enjoying some live music sessions happening every night. The second level (upstairs) is called "The Listener's Club." This can hold up to 70 people. This is often where programs and concerts are held on a regular basis.

Music starts at 9:30 PM. Come earlier to ensure seating. Showing up early also gives visitors a chance to try Crane Bar's local stout.

Address: Small Crane Square, Sea Road, Galway, Co. Galway

- O'Connell's

This bar is located on the east side of Eyre Square. O'Connell's is among the most stylish pubs. The historic atmosphere is very refined. Historic photographs adorn its walls, complemented by artful old tiles, stained glass windows, and dramatic lighting.

O'Connell's also has one of Galway's best beer gardens. It is partially covered and heated during the summer season.

Address: 8 Eyre Square, Galway

- Murphy's

This is locally known as an old man's pub. This is the place for those who want a traditional pub experience. Expect, however, to have a much older crowd and not very many young adults in Murphy's.

Enjoy a pint of beer quietly or get into a lively, friendly conversation with the locals.

Address: 9 High Street, Galway

#33: Best Pubs and Bars in Cork

This is the second largest city in Ireland. It is also one of the premier spots to

enjoy Irish nightlife. One of the recommended activities in Cork is the Barrack Street Challenge. It's a pub crawl activity where you drink a pint from every pub along Barrack Street and still walk straight by the end of the street.

Barrack Street is popular but not the only spot for some serious craic in Cork. Craic is everywhere. It is best experienced in pubs rather than in discos or clubs in Cork.

- Nancy Spains

This is the starting point of the Barrack Street Challenge (ends at the Brewery). Nancy Spains is also well loved by the student population. This is a traditional old pub, complete with a bit of roughness around its edges. The atmosphere is great and very friendly.

Address: 48 Barrack Street, Cork

- An Spailpin Fanach

Live music is the strongest attraction of this pub. A band plays almost every night. The atmosphere starts to get really interesting after 9PM. The pub is traditional and hosts people from all age groups. Both young and old, local and visitors come and enjoy their pint while chatting or watching whatever game is on the TV.

Address: South Main Street, Cork

- An Realt Dearg

Another of the bars along Barrack Street, An Realt Dearg claims to be the oldest pub in the entire country (Note: the Brazen Head pub in Dublin disagrees). Despite the claim of being the oldest pub, the place is nowhere near run-down. In fact, it looks great. It was recently renovated, giving it a classy look while preserving its traditional charm. The pub plays live traditional Irish music every Wednesday nights.

Address: 139 Barrack Street, Cork

- Long Valley

This pub along Winthrop Street has more than just its pint to offer. People come in flocks to Long Valley for its delicious sandwiches. It's so good the locals are practically addicted to it. The interior looks very inviting that one can't just pass by and not have a pint (or two).

Address: Winthrop St, Cork

- Costigans

This pub along Washington Street is another favorite among the locals. The staff is very friendly, and the drinks are more affordable compared to other pubs and clubs. It is a good idea to get to the bar earlier, start the night at the Costigans. Leave when the crowds start to come in to avoid getting squished as it the place can get really crowded, especially on the weekends. Despite that, going to the Costigans is a real treat.

Address: 11 Washington Street West, Centre, Cork

#34: Best Pubs & Bars in Waterford

Waterford is Ireland's oldest city. This little town has narrow streets and scenic houses. It looks very charming and laid-back. At night, this place turns into a haven for pub goers and clubbers.

The town has many large nightclubs. These offer modern and traditional nightlife that visitors can choose from. There is the Forum, as well as the Foundary and Oxegen for some modern music. Traditional pubs include T&H Doolans, Geoff's, the Tavern, and Kazbar. The town may be small, but nightlife is big.

- Geoff's

This is from an alternative crowd in the city. Geoff's is an artsy pub playing good, loud music. Food is also good. The pub's décor is eccentric and homey, making everyone feel at ease. The pub has a heated, sheltered area for smokers.

Evenings are usually packed. Seats are hard to find after 8PM.

Address: 9 John's Street, Waterford

- T&H Doolans

This is an authentic traditional Irish pub. Listen to traditional music played on traditional instruments such as traditional drums and fiddles. Eat some shepherd's pie and drink strong Irish draught at T&H Doolans. This place may look too touristy, but it's a nice break from the usual nightlife of blaring modern music and rowdy young crowds.

Address: 31-32 Great George's Street, Waterford

Chapter 6 - Must Try Foods in Ireland and Where to Find Them

When in Ireland, take advantage of the opportunity to sample authentic Irish fare at its best. From the huge range of foods and drinks to try, start with this list to get the most out of your trip to this magnificent country.

#35: Farmhouse cheese

Cheese-making has been around on the island for centuries, dating as far back as the period of the monasteries. However, the tradition nearly died out for many reasons, such as famine and continuous civil and political unrest. It was re-established during the artisanal food movement in the mid-1970s. The movement was spearheaded by the makers of Milleens & Coolea cheese.

- Sheridans Cheesemongers

Authentic, good quality Irish farmhouse cheese can be purchased at Sheridans Cheesemongers. Shops are present in Dublin, Kells, and Galway. The shop offers more than 50 different types of Irish cheeses. The shop carries more than 30 artisan cheese producers. The shop also carries their own 15 fields-matured cheddar.

Address: 11 South Anne Street, Dublin 2

Open: Closed Bank Holidays

Monday to Friday 10AM to 6PM, Saturday 9.30AM to 6PM, Sunday Closed

- The Wine Cellar (Fallon & Byrne)

This shop in Dublin has platters of cheese and charcuterie for sharing. These are from Fallon & Byrne's own stocks. Make it a point to try a splash of white wine with baked Mont d'Or cheese.

Address: 11 -17 Exchequer Street, Dublin 2

- Dromoland Castle

This is found in Newmarket-on-Fergus. The castle's Earl of Thomond Restaurant has an Irish cheeseboard available for breakfast. A double-sized cheeseboard is available at dinner, as a delicious way to wind up a marvelous feast.

Address: Newmarket - On - Fergus, Co. Clare, Ireland

#36: Seafood

The western portion of the island has the best oysters. The place to get the best seafood in Ireland is in Galway. This city hosts one of Ireland's biggest seafood festivals, the Galway International Oyster and Seafood Festival. This is held in September. The bivalves harvested from Clarinbridge, County Galway has a worldwide reputation for having superior taste.

Great places for sampling seafood all over Ireland include:

- The Saddle Room (The Shelbourne Dublin) and Mourne Seafood Bar (Belfast and Dundrum)
 - Great oyster bar for sampling Irish bivalves from different regions
- Fitzpatrick's Bar and Restaurant (Dundalk)
 - Award-winning seafood restaurant, holding the title All-Ireland Chowder Champion
- Fish City
 - Finalist in the 2017 National Fish and Chip Awards

Address: 33 Ann St, Belfast BT1 4EB

- Eithna's by the Sea
 - Sample signature dishes such as the Goan lobster curry and several entrees, pesto sauce and bread made with local seaweed

Address: Harbour View Apartments, Bunduff, Mullaghmore, Sligo

- Bridge Bar
 - Dine with a background of traditional Irish music, enjoying seafood tasting platters that contain local Kerry shellfish, Cromane mussels, smoked mackerel,

Portmagee crab claws and three types of salmon

Address: Moorings, Main Street, Portmagee

- The Winding Way

This is one of the top spots in Dublin for the classic dish of cockles. This restaurant is next to the Ha'penny Bridge. The menu boasts of steamed cockles with Roaring Bay mussels harvested from County Cork, served with Clogherhead crab, chips and brown shrimp mayo toast.

Address: The Winding Stair, 40 Lower Ormond Quay, Dublin 1, Ireland

#37: Smoked Salmon

Salmon is one of the oldest foods eaten on the island. People in prehistoric times ate this fish. Up to this day, this fish remains to be a staple in Irish diet. This fish has a very important spot in Irish life, both in nutrition and in culture. Salmon even has ties to Celtic traditions, through the mythical Salmon of Knowledge. This was considered in Celtic beliefs to be the wisest of all creatures.

This fish is typically smoked. There are many smokehouses all over the island, each with their own unique way of smoking this esteemed fish. The fish is typically smoked with turf, beech or oak. Smoked salmon is commonly served with brown bread as an appetizer.

Great places to try smoked salmon include:

- The Haven Smokehouse

Salmon is smoked with peat in a thatched cottage located in Donegal. The smoked salmon is available at the Oysters restaurant, best paired with treacle bread and Guinness.

Address: Claggan, Carrigart, Co. Donegal

- Ummera Irish Smokehouse

The smoked salmon is certified organic, produced using eco-friendly practices. The fish is first cured with a blend of raw Costa Rican cane sugar

and artisanal Portuguese sea salt. The fish is then smoked over flaming oak.

Address: Timoleague, Cork

- Connemara Smokehouse

The smoked salmon is also certified organic. Smoking is done via a very slow process to produce excellent texture and flavor. The place offers a smokehouse tour on Wednesdays during the summer, allowing visitors to see fish filleted, salted, smoked then sliced.

Address: The Pier, Ballyconneely, Co. Galway

#38: Lamb

The locals are proud of their local lamb. Each region has a unique characteristic for their lamb.

- The *Connemara Hill lamb* is of excellent quality that the European Union even imposed geographical protection on their pastures.
- The *Roscommon Lamb* is another meat Ireland is proud of. The lamb was raised on pure grass. The meat has a sweet, tasty flavor. The locale is proud of their lamb that they even have an annual festival that showcases it, the Roscommon Lamb Festival. Visitors can attend and taste the prized lamb cooked in several ways.

Address: Roscommon Town. Co. Roscommon. Ireland

- The *Wicklow lamb shank* is served with pride at the Merry Ploughboy (Irish music pub located in Rathfarnham). It is cooked in rosemary and red wine, served while being entertained by Irish dancers and musical merriment. This holds the title “Best Traditional Dinner/Entertainment Event in the country for three consecutive years

Address: Merry Ploughboy

16 Edmondstown Rd, Rathfarnham, Dublin 16, Ireland

- Hannan Meats based in Moira, County Down gets their top quality lamb meat from Glenarm Castle Estate. The lamb is free range and

organic. The meat is dried for two weeks in a Himalayan salt block chamber for enhancing and sealing in the flavor.

Address: 9, Moira Industrial Estate, 34 Old Kilmore Rd, Moira, Craigavon BT67 0LZ

- McGeough's Artisan Butcher based in Oughterard, Galway offers air-dried lamb meat. The meat is marinated in spices and herbs then air-dried for eight months or so, and smoked using beech chippings. To serve, the smoked meat is sliced thinly, much like a prosciutto.

Address: Camp St, Fough East, Oughterard, Co. Galway

#39: Traditional breads

Bread is a staple in Ireland. The most noteworthy are the soda bread. It has that characteristic cross cut on top of the bread. This is a kind of quick bread. It is leavened but does not use yeast. Instead, it uses baking soda. Soda bread is available in brown or white varieties.

- Country Choice

The leading maker of excellent soda bread is Peter Ward. He makes soda bread for Country Choice based in Nenagh. Before the day ends, heaps of Ward's crusty round loaves are all gone, so it's recommended to get to the store very early.

Address: 25 Kenyon St, Nenagh South, Nenagh, Co. Tipperary, Ireland

- Ballymaloe House

This is a fine-dining restaurant with a modern Irish kitchen style. Soda bread is typically served as part of their Irish breakfast, along with brown yeast bread and Irish scones.

Address: Ballymaloe Café, Ballymaloe House, Shanagarry, Midleton, County Cork, Ireland

Blaa, more popularly called as "Waterford blaa," is the traditional Irish soft white rolls. This bread has been around since the 17th century. It is an

important part of Irish culture, and the European Commission has given *blaa* a protected status. In Waterford, the best place to taste *bla* is Walsh's Bakehouse. These are made by Michael and Dermot Walsh, third-generation bakers for the bakehouse. Try the rolls served warm with some butter. The stuffed breakfast *blaa* is worth trying as well.

Artisanal bread should be sampled, as well. Good places to get these delicious breads include The English Market (in Cork), The St. George's Market (in Belfast) and The Limerick Milk Market. These artisanal breads are lovely to pair with home preserves or small-batch butter.

#40: Tea

Ireland is the second largest tea drinker in the world, next to Turkey. There are many cozy tea rooms all over the island. Luxury hotels also offer elegant afternoon tea.

Some great places to enjoy tea are:

- The Old Post Office

This is a charming 19th century cottage, with a fetching thatched roof. Must-tries are the hot cinnamon scones, tarts, and pies enjoyed by a comfy peat fire.

Address: Lisbane, County Down

- Queen of Tarts

One of the must-tries in this cozy tearoom is their signature Baileys cheesecake, which was made with Baileys Irish Cream and Tipperary cream cheese. There are many other choices available in the shop to eat with their delicious tea, such as the strawberry rhubarb crumble.

Address: Cow's Ln, Dame St, Temple Bar, Dublin 2, Ireland

- Vintage Tea Tours

Take afternoon tea to another level by signing up for this tea tour. Drink warm tea while passing along Dublin and enjoying the city's iconic sites. The tour happens while on a vintage handsome double-decker bus, with a 1950s jazz in the background and white tablecloth furnishings.

- Lough Erne Resort

This is the place to be if looking for a formal afternoon tea. The three-tiered presentation is made even more elegant by a pleasant table by the fireplace and a magnificent view over the Castle Hume Lough. Celebrity chef Noel McMeel prepares the wonderful eats.

The menu also offers more than the traditional afternoon tea. Choices include Champagne, Sparkling, Chocolate Afternoon Tea, and Gin.

Address: Enniskillen, County Fermanagh

#41: Hard cider and craft apple juice

Ireland has popular gourmet drinks (both non-alcoholic and alcoholic) made with apples. These are available in small batches. These drinks are not overly sweet. Rather, these are crisp and dry. Some variants are infused with other flavors such as berries. Hard cider is usually a lightly carbonated drink.

Good places to sample this Irish beverage are:

- The Apple Farm

The farm shop offers fresh apples, hard cider, and sparkling apple juice. Some unique variants are also available such as apple juice blended with blackcurrant, raspberry or strawberry juice.

Address: Cahir, County Tipperary

- Kilmegan Cider

This shop creates quite a good selection of award-winning blends. It's dry Real Cider received the Reserve Supreme British Champion Cider in 2016. It's Wild Elderflower Infused Cider garnered the top award for the International Cider Challenge in 2016.

Address: Dundrum, County Down

- Longueville House

This apple lover's paradise is set in the Georgian mansion hotel. On the estate are apple orchards worth walking through. The owner himself makes apple

brandy and hard cider using copper pot stills for double distillation. The beverages are aged for four years in oak barrels. Aside from these signature beverages, guests can enjoy dishes that include apples. Examples are home-reared pork loin served with cider sauce, and the decadent dessert apple tart served with apple brandy ice cream drizzled with caramel sauce.

Address: Mallow, Cork

#42: Irish gin

Hard drinks are also essential in Irish life. The Irish gin is made with native, wild plants to bring countryside flavors to the drink.

Exceptional Irish gin to try while in the country includes:

- Shortcross gin

This is crafted by Rademon Estate Distillery. The gin is blended with elderberries, wild clover, and apples, along with classic botanicals like juniper. This drink has a complex, aromatic flavor with a lingering peppery finish. This is completely handcrafted, even with the hand-labeled batch and bottle number.

This blend won silver in the International Wine & Spirits Competition in 2016.

Address: (of distiller) Downpatrick, County Down

- The Exiles Irish Gin

This spirit is traditionally distilled in pots. What makes this Irish gin even more unique is that this is the only gin blended with shamrocks. This gin is also blended with red clover flowers, honeysuckle flowers, bog myrtle and rowan berries. It has delicious citrus and floral notes.

- Dingle Original Gin

This is crafted by Dingle Distillery. The gin incorporates the flavors and aroma of bog myrtle, heather, rowan berries, hawthorn and fuchsia and 11 other botanicals. Most of these are locally sourced. These botanicals were infused into the gin to bring the Kerry landscape's essence into the drink.

Dingle Original Gin won gold during the World Gin Awards in 2016 held at London.

#43: Microbrews

Guinness is the most popular drink in the country, and every single pub has it. Despite that, there are a growing number of microbreweries all over Ireland. There are many choices for microbrews. Enthusiasts will surely enjoy the over 300 craft brews available during the Irish Craft

A table at the L. Mulligan Grocer in Dublin is another good way to sample and enjoy a few craft brews. Each menu offering comes with recommended craft beer. For dessert, the pairing recommendation is often whiskey. This shop has more than 200 whiskeys and 200 craft beers available.

Address: 18 Stoneybatter, Arran Quay, Dublin 7, Ireland

Some microbreweries offer tours. Visitors can see how the brews are made. Tasting sessions are also included. Some microbreweries open for tours include:

- Hilden Brewing Company
 - The oldest independent brewery in Ireland

Address: Hilden House, Grand St, Hilden, Lisburn

- Franciscan Well Brewery
 - Weekday tours available, with tastings available for their award-winning brews; must-try is the Jameson-Aged Stout, Gold medal winner of an International Beer Challenge
 - Beer gardens, brewpub, and brewery are located in an ancient monastery

Address: 14 N Mall, Sunday's Well, Cork, Ireland

- Brewery Hops of Ireland
 - Includes tours of 8 breweries with tastings not usually open to the public; trip is a 5-day package

- Also has Wicklow day tour, comprised of tours to 2 breweries with a beer-paired, 5-course lunch

#44: Irish Whiskey

While in Ireland, take advantage of sampling one of the world's fastest growing spirits- the Irish Whiskey. Iconic brands include Jameson and Bushmills. Start-ups also offer excellent Irish whiskeys, such as Teeling Whiskey (Dublin) and Dingle Distillery (County Kerry). Teeling Whiskey had their 24-year-old Single Malt win World's Best Irish Single Malt in 2016 at the World Whiskies Awards. Dingle Distillery Single Malt Cask Strength got gold in the Irish Whiskey Awards in 2016.

#45: Irish breakfast

This was originally invented in England, but the Irish gave it a flair that was all their own. The traditional Irish breakfast is a combination of sausages, bacon, eggs, hash browns, baked beans, mushrooms, fried tomatoes and black pudding (pork with oatmeal and some blood sausage). Not only that. There is also the indispensable sides- tea and toast. Some claim that this Irish breakfast is a fast cure to a hangover from a night of some serious Guinness drinking.

One of the best places to get an Irish breakfast is The Woolen Mills. The breakfast plate has Offaly-reared sausages and bacon, fried egg, toast, O'Doherty's black pudding and beef tomato.

Address: 42 Ormond Quay Lower, Dublin 1

#46: Barm brack

Locally known as simple "brack," this is a type of sweet bread. It has raisins and sultanas. Brack is traditionally served alongside tea. This is also a traditional dessert, especially during Halloween. Brack is easy to find in Ireland, available in many shops, cafes, and restaurants.

#47: Colcannon

This is an entrée that champions the humble potato, one of Ireland's major crops. Colcannon refers to a dish composed of mashed potatoes, milk, salt, butter and kale or cabbage. This is typically a side dish with some boiled

ham.

- Oliver St. John Gogarty Restaurant

This serves one of the best colcannon in the country as part of all of the main courses on their menu.

Address: Oliver St. John Gogarty, 18-21 Anglesea Street, Dublin 2, Ireland

#48: Guinness Cake

The Irish apparently can't seem to get enough of Guinness as a drink. They had to use it in food as well.

The Guinness cake is simply a cake with the dark stout the Irish are so fond of. This is the ultimate dessert that must be tasted.

The chocolate cake is rich and moist, frosted with some cream cheese. It is made to look like a pint of Guinness ("black stuff").

- Cake Café

This serves the best Guinness cake in Dublin. This is located in Pleasants Place. The cake has a deep chocolate flavor complemented by some maltiness.

Address: The Cake Café, The Daintree Building, 8 Pleasants Place, Saint Kevin's, Dublin, Ireland

#49: Boxty

This is another traditional Irish fare. It is a kind of pancake made with some finely grated fried potatoes. This is a staple in County Leitrim. In Dublin, the Gallagher's Boxty House offers the best boxty in Dublin. This restaurant is dedicated to showcasing this unique Irish dish.

The signature dish is called the Gaelic Boxty. It is served with sides of Irish beef served with mushroom cream and whiskey sauce. The Boxty House also offers boxty with mixed beans, chili, smoked bacon and chicken, sometimes with Corleggy Drumlin Cheese and roasted walnuts.

Gallagher's Boxty House

Address: 20 Temple Bar, Dublin 2, Ireland

Chapter 7 - Places for Fancy & Themed Dining

Ireland is brimming with old castles, forts, prehistoric ruins and other historical sites and ruins. All these against a backdrop of magnificent mountains, lakes, seas, cliffs and other natural wonders. These are the perfect ingredients to let the imagination run wild. A few groups in Ireland have made it possible to live in fantasy. They renovated or restored castles and/or forts and orchestrated events to allow people to turn fantasy into reality.

#50 Places to get a unique experience are:

- Castle Ward

Do not just visit a castle. Take the chance to experience medieval life. One such place is Castle Ward. This is recognizable as the setting for some of the episodes in the TV series *Game of Thrones*.

The castle has been the Ward family's home since the 16th century. It was originally the *Carrick na Sheannagh*, home to the Earls of Kildare. It was bought by Bernard Ward, the father of Ireland's Surveyor-General Sir Robert Ward. Through the years, the castle flourished then fell. In 1950, the 6th Viscount died, and the estate was turned over to the Government of Ireland. In 1952, the government presented it to the National Trust.

Castle Ward rises majestically on a hill that overlooks Strangford Lough. Its style is unique and peculiar, having two distinct architectural styles. The castle is a blend of Classic Palladian and Georgian Gothic styles. This was a result of the widely differing taste of the former tenants, Lord Bangor and his wife, the Lady Ann Bligh. The castle's entrance side is done in Classic Palladian while the opposite side is Gothic. Even the castle's interior is divided into these styles right down its middle.

Inside the castle is a walled demesne, which spans 820 acres. It has a sunken garden with many pretty paths winding through woodland, opening into the serene shores of the Lough.

Aside from the view, Castle Ward offers guests a chance to dine medieval style. Upon entering, guests are greeted by the castle's *Maester*. Guests are ushered into a room, the armory, where they will change into party attire-Victorian period clothes. They will then be escorted into the grand dining hall

to feast like kings and queens of old. The feast consists of roasted hog and numerous medieval-inspired fare. Everything is washed down with a good serving of the finest ale in Winterfell. Guests are entertained all throughout dinner with live medieval-style music and a few reenactments.

The experience is truly one of a kind. No wonder the castle won the NI Tourism Awards for the Highly Commended Best Visitor Experience in 2014. Both the Castle Ward House and Demesne received the Silver Award for the Green Tourism Business Scheme.

Address: Downpatrick Road, Strangford, County Down, BT30 7BA

Open: Open on Mondays, Bank holidays and all other public holidays; Barn is open throughout the year; cornmill operates on Sundays starting on Easter through September, 2PM to 5PM

Admission rates: Timed tickets available only for guided house tours;

- Standard Admission: Adult: £7.27, Family: £18.00, Child: £3.45, Group: £6 per person
- Grounds and House Gift Aid Admission: Adult: £8.00, Family: £19.80, Child: £3.80

Note: Late admission for house tour is 1 hour before the castle closes for the day.

Chapter 8 - Amazing Places to Shop in Ireland

Sightseeing, drinking and sampling the many wonderful flavors are not the only things you can do in Ireland. This is also a great place to do some shopping. The country has many large malls that carry local and international brands. There are also quite a good number of small local shops for some unique, interesting finds.

#51:

Avoca

In the last decade, Avoca has carved itself as a powerful brand. It specializes in offering top quality Irish food and crafts. One of the most well-known offers is its line of excellent quality blankets and throws. The patterns and the colors are simply magnificent. Avoca has also created its own line of clothing. The flagship store is on Suffolk Street, Dublin. The store looks massively cluttered from all stocks available. It is still worth a stop for their fine goods.

Fresh, excellent quality food is also available in Avoca. It has excellent baked goods. Downstairs is a nice café and upstairs is a magnificent restaurant with a menu that offers magnificent dining experience.

Address: 11-13 Suffolk Street, Dublin

Open: Monday to Wednesday 9.30AM to 6PM; Thursday and Friday 9.30AM to 7PM; Saturday 9.30AM to 6PM; Sunday 1AM to 6PM

Payments: accepts credit cards

Cocoa Atelier

This is one of the must-go places to look for something to bring back home. Every chocolate lover will adore this small yet elegant shop. It has a massive collection of chocolates, Florentines, truffles, candied fruits and practically every sweet confection.

All chocolates in this store are handmade, right in Dublin. It has cream and Irish butter for that smooth, rich taste.

The star in the store is the macaroons. A box of four costs around €8. These are on display, sparkling like precious jewels and enticing everyone who

enters the store. It comes in practically every color and flavor possible. Popular flavors are pear, coconut, and lemon. These macaroons are delicate and when these crack while being packaged, the store assistant will replace them and hand the cracked ones over free.

Coffee-to-go is also available in this store.

Address: 30 Drury Street, Dublin

Open: Tuesday, Wednesday, Friday and Saturday, 10.30AM to 6PM; Thursday, 10.30AM to 7PM; Sunday, noon to 6PM
Payment options: accepts credit cards

Francis Street

This street leads upward along a long hill, starting from Coombe and reaching the top, which is Thomas Street. This is one of the important historical areas in Dublin.

This place is well-known for the antiques available on stores on both sides of the street. The many emporia sell many kinds of stuff, from Regency chandeliers and furniture to different oriental rugs, paintings, and brass items.

The line of fine shops is interspersed with interesting knitting shops and a few café. One example is the Cross Café (at 59 Francis Street). It is known for its delicious lemon squares served with a good cup of coffee.

This street is filled with tempting wares, but visitors tend to just wander about, soaking in the tranquility of the place.

Address: Francis Street, Dublin 8

Open: varies but usually Mondays to Saturdays from 10AM to 5.30PM

Payment options: shops accept credit cards

Irish Design Shop

More than 50 magnificent kinds of contemporary Irish designs are available in this store. It started as a pop-p shop in Temple Bar and has recently opened its storefront on Drury Street.

Items in the shop include hand-blown vases and lampshades in various bold, artsy colors. These are made by the Irish Handmade Glass Company based in

Waterford. Exquisite woolen throws created by Kilkenny's Cushendale are also available.

The store highlights products that are handmade and use top quality materials.

The shop itself is magnificently decorated. The shelving is birch and ash, complemented tastefully with salvaged Georgian timber.

Weekend workshops for jewelry and craft are available, catering mostly to beginners.

Address: 41 Drury Street, Dublin 2

Open: Monday to Wednesday, Friday & Saturday, 10AM to 6PM; Thursday, 10AM to 7PM Sunday, 1Pm to 5PM

Payment options: accepts credit cards

The Gutter Bookshop

Fancy some Irish literature to bring back home? The Gutter Bookshop is one on the places to get excellent choices for books.

The shop offers a large collection of titles, with carefully chosen staff picks. It is an advocate of Irish writing, offering the latest in the field. Stylish stationery is also available in the shop.

Address: Cow's Lane, Temple Bar, Dublin 8

Open: Monday to Wednesday, Friday & Saturday, 10AM to 6.30PM; Thursday, 10AM to 7PM; Sunday, 11AM to 6PM

Payment options: accepts credit cards

Donegal Craft Village

This is a small assembly of craft studios. Visitors can marvel at amazing crafts featuring ironwork, glasswork, pottery, jewelry, handwoven fabrics and much more.

Just go to the south of Donegal town. Follow the signpost to the village. It is a nice walk towards the village, with scenic views along the way. In the village, try to visit the winning café at the 2016 Best Café in Donegal during

the Irish Restaurant Awards- the Aroma Café. It serves food freshly made every day.

Café open: Mondays to Saturdays, 9.30AM to 5.30PM

Village open: 10AM to 5PM Monday to Saturday from April to September, Tuesdays to Saturdays in October

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