The ancient landscape of Fermanagh is shaped by ice and water, with rugged hills rising above quilted plains of half-drowned drumlins and shimmering, reed-fringed lakes. A glance at the map shows the county is around one-third water – as the locals will tell you, the lakes are in Fermanagh for six months of the year; for the other six, Fermanagh is in the lakes.

This watery maze is a natural playground for anglers – the loughs and rivers are stuffed with trout and pike – and for boaters. You can hire a motor cruiser and spend a week or two navigating the scenic waterways of Lough Erne and the River Shannon, which together form a 750km network of rivers, lakes and canals. If you prefer your boats without engines, the 50km Lough Erne Canoe Trail is a paddler’s paradise.

The limestone ridges to the south of Lough Erne are riddled with caves – at Marble Arch you can explore an underground river – while the higher hills are swathed with blanket bog, a rare and endangered habitat. This is all grand walking country, but there are also rainy-day attractions, such as the contrasting stately homes of Florence Court and Castle Coole, and the world-famous pottery at Belleek.

County Tyrone – from Tír Eoghain (Land of Owen, a legendary chieftain) – is the homeland of the O’Neill clan, and is dominated by the tweed-tinted moorlands of the Sperrin Mountains, whose southern flanks are dotted with prehistoric sites. Apart from the hiking opportunities offered by these heather-clad hills, the county’s main attraction is the Ulster American Folk Park, a fascinating outdoor museum celebrating Ulster’s historic links with the USA.

**HIGHLIGHTS**

- **Climb to the Lost World** Hike over rare blanket bog to the remote summit of Cuilcagh Mountain (p691)
- **Faces from the Past** Ponder the meaning of the strange stone figures on White Island (p686) and Boa Island (p686)
- **River of Adventure** Follow the course of an underground river as it flows through the Marble Arch Caves (p689)
- **Blazing Paddles** Hire a canoe and explore the reed-fringed backwaters of Lough Erne (p688)
- **The American Connection** Learn about the historical links between Ireland and the USA at the Ulster American Folk Park (p690)
COUNTY FERMANAGH

ENNISKILLEN
pop 13,600
Perched amid the web of waterways that link Upper and Lower Lough Erne, Enniskillen (Inis Ceithleann, meaning Ceithleann’s Island, after a legendary woman warrior) is an appealing town with a mile-long main street that rides the roller-coaster spine of the island’s drumlin. (The locals say you’re only a true Enniskilliner if you were born ‘between the bridges’; that is, on the town’s central island.) Its attractive waterside setting, bustling with boats in summer, plus a range of lively pubs and restaurants, make Enniskillen a good base for exploring Upper and Lower Lough Erne, Florence Court and the Marble Arch Caves.

Though neither was born here, both Oscar Wilde and Samuel Beckett were pupils at Enniskillen’s Portora Royal School (Wilde from 1864 to 1871, Beckett from 1919 to 1923); it was here that Beckett first studied French, a language he would later write in. The town’s name is also prominent in the history of the Troubles – on Poppy Day (11 November) in 1987 an IRA bomb killed 11 people during a service at Enniskillen’s war memorial.

Orientation
The main street changes name half a dozen times between the bridges at either end; the prominent clock tower marks the town centre.