



County Galway

POP 251,000 / AREA 3760 SQ KM

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Best Places to Eat

- ➔ Aniar (p366)
- ➔ Kai Cafe (p366)
- ➔ Mitchell's (p389)
- ➔ Moran's Oyster Cottage (p393)

Best Places to Stay

- ➔ Stop (p364)
- ➔ Kilmurvey House (p375)
- ➔ Currareagh House (p383)
- ➔ Dolphin Beach (p388)

Why Go?

County Galway is a problem: its namesake city is such a charmer that you might not manage to tear yourself away to the countryside. Conversely, the wild and beautiful Aran Islands and Connemara Peninsula might keep you captive such that you'll never have time for the city. What to do? Both, of course!

Galway city is a swirl of enticing old pubs that hum with trad music sessions throughout the year. More importantly, there's an addictive vibe of culture, fun and frolic.

Offshore, the eroded, sheer swathes of land known as the Aran Islands possess a desolate and windswept yet entrancing aura. Tiny villages cling to the rocks while soft-hearted locals welcome their modern lifeblood: visitors.

In the west, the Wild Atlantic Way and the Connemara Peninsula match the beauty of other Atlantic outcrops such as Dingle. Tiny roads wander along a coastline studded with islands, unexpectedly white beaches and intriguing old villages.

When to Go

- ➔ Galway city, with its excellent restaurants, roaring pubs and student culture, is a year-round destination.
- ➔ Elsewhere in rural parts of the county, you'll be rewarded for visits during the more moderate months.
- ➔ Moody in the depths of winter, the Aran Islands may be unreachable during storms.
- ➔ In scenic Connemara country, many country inns close during December and January and even February.
- ➔ June is a great month across the county as all the seasonal attractions are open, but crowds are still low.

County Galway Highlights

- 1** Sample atmospheric pubs and high-energy trad sessions in **Galway city** (p359).
- 2** Ponder the sublime wind-buffed ruins of **Dún Aengus** (p373) on Inishmór.
- 3** Visit ancient holy sites and springs, crawl over a famous shipwreck and commune with the rocks on **Inisheer** (p380).
- 4** Catch the sun dipping into the Atlantic from the **Sky Road** (p387) outside Clifden.
- 5** Climb to the roof of **Dunguaire Castle** (p393).
- 6** Escape to the sparsely inhabited island of **Inishbofin** (p390) and get the wild Atlantic wind in your hair.
- 7** Explore the delightful dreamlike landscape of the walled gardens at **Kylemore Abbey** (p392).

