



County Clare

POPULATION 117,000 / AREA 3147 SQ KM

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Best Places to Eat

- » Crotty's (p361)
- » Naughton's Bar (p363)
- » Morrissey's (p365)
- » Vaughan's Anchor Inn (p368)

Best Places to Stay

- » Rowan Tree Hostel (p347)
- » Cullinan's Guesthouse (p372)
- » Sheedy's Country House Hotel & Restaurant (p375)
- » Gregan's Castle Hotel (p380)

Why Go?

Clare combines the stunning natural beauty of its long and meandering coastline with unique windswept landscapes and dollops of Irish culture.

Rugged nature and the timeless ocean meet on the county's coast. The Atlantic relentlessly pounds year-round, eroding the rocks into fantastic landscapes, and forming sheer cliffs like those at the iconic Cliffs of Moher and strange little islands like those near Loop Head. There are even stretches of beach where surfers flock to the (chilly) waves. The Burren, an ancient region of tortured stone and alien vistas, stretches down to the coast and right out to the Aran Islands.

But if the land is hard, Clare's soul is not: traditional Irish culture and music flourish. And it's not just a show for tourists, either. In little villages like Miltown Malbay, Ennistymon, Doolin and Kilfenora you'll find pubs with year-round sessions of trad music.

When to Go

County Clare's pubs hum to the beats of trad sessions year-round, so even in winter you'll find the craic (good times) – often warmed in the countryside by a turf fire. And while the unsettled seas of winter have a drama that will fill your days with moody idylls, the county literally shines during the more temperate months when long walks along the spectacular soaring cliffs of the coast and the desolate rocks of the Burren don't require full foul weather gear.

County Clare Highlights

- 1 Swoon to the music in the traditional pubs of **Miltown Malbay** (p365)
- 2 Lose yourself on the vast sweep of powdery sandy beach at **White Strand** (p365)
- 3 Delight in the amazing drives, walks and improbable offshore rocky outcrops of **Loop Head** (p363)
- 4 Find lost dolmens and abandoned abbeys among the rocky expanse of the Burren at **Carron** (p378)
- 5 Become part of the scene in the artful, tuneful town of **Ennistymon** (p367)
- 6 Go pub-hopping in musical **Ennis** (p347), where you can find nightly trad sessions on street after street
- 7 Catch a late-afternoon boat from **Doolin** (p371) to see the soaring **Cliffs of Moher** (p368) in all their radiant glory

