



County Cork

POPULATION: 518.000 / AREA: 7508 SQ KM

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Why Go?

Everything good about Ireland can be found in County Cork. Surrounding the country's second city – a thriving metropolis made glorious by location and its almost Rabelaisian devotion to the finer things of life – is a lush landscape dotted with villages that offer up days of languor and idyll.

Cork City's understated confidence is easily understood given its plethora of markets and ever-changing cast of creative eateries, while its selection of pubs, entertainment and cultural pursuits provide a depth of fun.

Further afield, you'll want to do just that: go further afield, past the inlets of the eroded coasts and its multitude of perfectly charming old fishing towns and villages, such as Kinsale, Clonakilty and Baltimore.

And don't forget the scenery: in West Cork, it's every bit as enchanting as the best bits of Ireland. The thumb of the bunch, the Beara Peninsula, is the place to settle in. Tackle mountain passes and touch Ireland's ancient past.

Best Places to Eat

- » Fishy Fishy Cafe (p242)
- » Jim Edwards (p242)
- » Market Lane (p228)
- » Cafe Paradiso (p228)
- » Farmgate Café (p230)

When to Go

Although the summer months promise the best weather, the shoulder seasons are festival times – in May, there's the seafood and jazz festival in Baltimore, while autumn sees the rest of West Cork go food crazy. This is especially so in the gourmet capital of Kinsale, which has two excellent gourmet festivals in October. Late October is the perennially popular jazz festival in Cork City.

Best Places to Stay

- » Garnish House (p228)
- » Ballymaloe House (p236)
- » Bridge House (p253)
- » Blair's Cove House (p260)
- » Imperial Hotel (p225)

County Cork Highlights

- 1 Revel in buzzing Cork city (p223), with its intriguing selection of restaurants, pubs, music and theatres
- 2 Drive or cycle along the stunning Beara Peninsula coastal road around **Allihies** (p267)
- 3 Explore the medieval streets, mammoth forts, shoreline walks and lovely seafood pubs in **Kinsale** (p239)
- 4 Re-live the age of ocean liners, good and bad, in **Cobh** (p234)
- 5 Discover unspoilt fishing villages, including **Union Hall** and **Glandore** (p251), **Castletownshend** (p252), **Castletownbere** (p266) and **Baltimore** (p254)

