



Counties Mayo & Sligo

POPULATION: 195,000 / AREA: 7234 SQ KM

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Best Places to Eat

- » Source (p449)
- » Pier (p444)
- » Rua (p446)
- » An Port Mór (p435)

Best Places to Stay

- » Delphi Lodge (p430)
- » Newport House (p436)
- » Ice House (p444)
- » Mount Falcon Country House Hotel (p444)
- » Temple House (p453)

Why Go?

Despite their natural wonders and languid charm, the counties Mayo and Sligo remain a well-kept secret offering all of Ireland's wild, romantic beauty but without the crowds. Mayo is the more rugged of the two with scraggy peaks, sheer cliffs, heather-covered moors and beautiful offshore islands where life is dictated by the elements. Sligo is more pastoral and its lush fields, fish-filled lakes and flat-topped mountains inspired William Butler Yeats to compose some of Ireland's most ardent verse. Both counties boast grand stretches of golden sands and legendary breaks that lure the surfing cognoscenti from around the globe. Visit and you'll find all this plus an improbable bounty of prehistoric sites, elegant Georgian towns, little fishing villages and good old-fashioned warm-hearted country hospitality.

When to Go

The weather-beaten shores of Mayo and Sligo can be whipped by brutal winds and rain in winter when only the hardiest tourists and surfers make it here. If you're interested in catching a swell, spring and autumn are your best shot with September and October favoured by those in the know. In summer the region bursts into life with a plethora of festivals and in August you'll get the pick of the crop with the Yeats Festival in Sligo and a variety of small traditional music festivals elsewhere.



ATLANTIC
OCEAN



Counties Mayo & Sligo Highlights

1 Follow in St Patrick's footsteps up the conical peak of **Croagh Patrick** (p432)

2 Hit the waves year-round at **Easkey** (p454)

3 Sink into the soft water and coiling seaweed of a **homeopathic bath** at Enniscrone (see boxed text, p455)

4 Walk along the starkly beautiful and poignantly desolate **Doolough Valley** (p430)