



Belfast

POP 280,900 / AREA 115 SQ KM

Includes ➔

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Best Places to Eat

- ➔ Barking Dog (p576)
- ➔ Shu (p576)
- ➔ Mourne Seafood Bar (p575)
- ➔ Molly's Yard (p576)
- ➔ Deane's Restaurant (p575)

Best Places to Stay

- ➔ Tara Lodge (p573)
- ➔ Old Rectory (p573)
- ➔ Malmaison Hotel (p572)
- ➔ Ten Square (p572)
- ➔ Vagabonds (p573)

Why Go?

Once lumped with Beirut, Baghdad and Bosnia as one of the four 'Bs' for travellers to avoid, Belfast has pulled off a remarkable transformation from bombs-and-bullets pariah to a hip-hotels-and-hedonism party town. The opening of Titanic Belfast in 2012, along with the 50th anniversary of the Belfast Festival at Queen's – the UK's second-biggest arts festival – saw visitor numbers soar by more than 40%.

Although the economic recession has slowed development, the old shipyards on the Lagan continue to give way to the luxury waterfront apartments of the Titanic Quarter, while new tourist venues keep popping up – historic Crumlin Road Gaol opened to the public in 2012, SS *Nomadic* in 2013, and there are plans for WWI warship HMS *Caroline* to become a floating museum. They all add to a list of attractions that includes Victorian architecture, a glittering waterfront lined with modern art, and foot-stomping music in packed-out pubs.

When to Go

- ➔ April can be a great time to visit Belfast, when there are spring brings flowers to the parks and the annual Titanic Belfast Festival is held.
- ➔ August brings good weather for walking and cycling, along with celebrations of Irish music and dance in West Belfast.
- ➔ October can start to get chilly, but the Festival at Queen's, the UK's second largest arts festival (after Edinburgh), warms things up.



Belfast Highlights

- 1 Learn all about the world's most famous ocean liner at the new **Titanic Belfast** (p564) attraction
- 2 Discover prehistoric treasures, an ancient Egyptian mummy and sunken Armada gold at the **Ulster Museum** (p566)
- 3 Sup on a Guinness or

three in some of Belfast's beautiful Victorian pubs, such as the **Crown Liquor Saloon** (p554)

- 4 Take a taxi tour of the powerful **political murals** in West Belfast
- 5 Hire a bike and take a spin along the **Lagan Towpath**

to the former linen town of Lisburn

- 6 Enjoy a panoramic view over the city from the top of **Cave Hill** (p553)
- 7 Check out the iconic DeLorean DMC at the **Ulster Transport Museum** (p568)