



# Ireland



THIS EDITION WRITTEN AND RESEARCHED BY

Fionn Davenport, Ryan Ver Berkmoes,  
Catherine Le Nevez, Josephine Quintero, Neil Wilson

## PLAN YOUR TRIP

Welcome to Ireland .....	6
Ireland Map .....	8
Ireland's Top 21 .....	10
Need to Know .....	20
First Time Ireland .....	22
What's New .....	24
If You Like.....	25
Month by Month .....	28
Itineraries .....	32
The Great Outdoors .....	37
Eat & Drink Like a Local .....	45
Regions at a Glance .....	51

## ON THE ROAD

<b>DUBLIN</b> .....	58
Howth .....	133
<b>COUNTIES WICKLOW &amp; KILDARE</b> .....	136
<b>County Wicklow</b> .....	137
Wicklow Mountains .....	137
Western Wicklow .....	150
The Coast .....	151
Southern Wicklow .....	153
<b>County Kildare</b> .....	155
Maynooth .....	155
Straffan .....	156
Newbridge & the Curragh .....	157
Kildare Town .....	158
Donnelly's Hollow to Castledermot .....	160

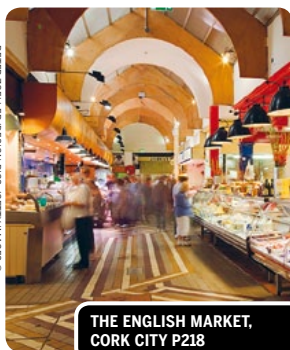
## COUNTIES WEXFORD, WATERFORD, CARLOW & KILKENNY ..... 162

<b>County Wexford</b> .....	163
Wexford Town .....	163
Rosslare Strand .....	169
Rosslare Harbour .....	170
Kilmore Quay .....	171
Saltee Islands .....	172
Hook Peninsula & Around .....	172
New Ross .....	174
Enniscorthy .....	176
Ferns .....	178
<b>County Waterford</b> .....	178
Waterford City .....	178
Curraghmore Estate .....	184
Southeast County Waterford .....	184
Dunmore East .....	184
Tramore .....	185
The Copper Coast .....	186
Dungarvan .....	187

Ring Peninsula .....	189
Ardmore .....	190
Cappoquin & Around .....	191
Lismore .....	192
Northern County Waterford .....	193
<b>County Carlow</b> .....	193
Carlow Town .....	193
Ballon .....	195
Borris & Around .....	196
St Mullins .....	197
<b>County Kilkenny</b> .....	197
Kilkenny City .....	197
Central Kilkenny .....	209
Northern Kilkenny .....	214

## COUNTY CORK .... 215

<b>Cork City</b> .....	218
Blarney Castle .....	228
Fota .....	228
Cobh .....	228
Barryscourt Castle .....	230
Midleton & Around .....	231
Youghal .....	231
<b>Kinsale &amp; West Cork</b> .....	233
Kinsale .....	233
Clonakilty .....	240
Skibbereen .....	244
Baltimore .....	245
Sherkin Island .....	246
Cape Clear Island .....	246
<b>Mizen Head Peninsula</b> .....	247
Schull .....	247
West of Schull to Mizen Head .....	248
Northside of the Peninsula .....	250
Bantry .....	250
<b>Sheep's Head Peninsula</b> .....	253



THE ENGLISH MARKET,  
CORK CITY P218



WICKLOW MOUNTAINS  
P137

# Contents

<b>Gougane Barra Forest Park</b> .....	256
<b>Beara Peninsula (Ring of Beara)</b> .....	256
Glengarriff .....	256
Castletownbere & Around .....	259
Dursey Island .....	260
Northside of the Beara .....	260
<b>Northern Cork</b> .....	261
Mallow .....	261

## COUNTY KERRY ... 263

<b>Killarney</b> .....	265
Killarney National Park .....	270
<b>Ring of Kerry</b> .....	277
Killorglin .....	277
Kerry Bog Village Museum .....	281
Rossbeigh Strand .....	281
Caherciveen .....	281
Valentia Island .....	283
Portmagee .....	283
Skellig Islands .....	284
Skellig Ring .....	285
Waterville .....	285
Caherdaniel .....	286
Sneem .....	287
Kenmare .....	288
<b>Dingle Peninsula</b> .....	290
Annascaul .....	292
Dingle Town .....	292
West of Dingle .....	299
Connor Pass .....	302
North Side of the Peninsula .....	302
<b>Northern Kerry</b> .....	303
Tralee .....	304
Listowel .....	307

## COUNTIES LIMERICK & TIPPERARY ..... 310

<b>County Limerick</b> .....	311
Limerick City .....	311
Adare & Around .....	320
<b>County Tipperary</b> .....	321
Tipperary Town .....	322
Glen of Aherlow & Galtee Mountains .....	322
Cashel .....	323
Cahir .....	328
Mitchelstown Caves .....	329
Clonmel .....	329
Fethard .....	333
Carrick-on-Suir .....	334
Roscrea .....	334
Nenagh & Around .....	335

## COUNTY CLARE ... 336

<b>Ennis &amp; Around</b> .....	338
Ennis .....	338
<b>Eastern &amp; Southeastern Clare</b> ...	343
Shannon Airport .....	343
Bunratty .....	344
Killaloe & Ballina .....	345
Mountshannon .....	347
<b>Southwestern &amp; Western Clare</b> .....	350
Kilrush .....	350
Kilkee .....	352
Kilkee to Loop Head .....	353
Kilkee to Ennistymon .....	354
Ennistymon .....	357
Liscannor & Around .....	358
Hag's Head .....	358
Cliffs of Moher .....	358
<b>The Burren</b> .....	359
Doolin .....	361
Lisdoonvarna .....	363
Kilfenora .....	364

Corofin & Around .....	365
Central Burren .....	366
Fanore .....	367
Black Head .....	368
Ballyvaughan & Around .....	368
Northern Burren .....	369

## COUNTY GALWAY ... 371

<b>Galway City</b> .....	373
<b>Aran Islands</b> .....	385
Inishmór .....	387
Inishmaan .....	391
Inisheer .....	392
<b>Connemara</b> .....	396
Oughterard & Around .....	397
Lough Corrib .....	398
Coastal Drive – Galway City to Mace Head .....	399
Lough Inagh Valley .....	400
Roundstone .....	401
Clifden & Around .....	402
Inishbofin .....	405
Letterfrack & Around .....	405
Leenane & Killary Harbour .....	407
<b>South of Galway City</b> .....	408
Clarinbridge & Kilcolgan .....	408
Kinvara .....	408
<b>Eastern Galway</b> .....	409
Athenry .....	409
Loughrea & Around .....	409
Gort & Around .....	410
Ballinasloe .....	410
<b>COUNTIES MAYO &amp; SLIGO</b> .....	412
<b>County Mayo</b> .....	413
Cong .....	413
Doolough Valley & Around .....	417

## ON THE ROAD

Clare Island .....	418
Inishturk Island .....	419
Croagh Patrick .....	419
Westport .....	420
Newport .....	423
Achill Island .....	424
Ballycroy National Park .....	427
Mullet Peninsula .....	427
Ballycastle & Around .....	428
Killala & Around .....	429
Ballina .....	430
Castlebar & Around .....	431
Knock .....	432
<b>County Sligo .....</b>	<b>433</b>
Sligo Town .....	433
South of Sligo Town .....	439
Lough Gill .....	443
North of Sligo Town .....	443

### COUNTY DONEGAL ..... 447

<b>Donegal Town .....</b>	<b>450</b>
Lough Eske .....	453
Rossnowlagh .....	453
Bundoran .....	454

### Southwestern Donegal .....

Killybegs .....	456
Kilcar, Carrick & Around .....	457
Glencolumbkille & Around .....	458
Ardara .....	460
Loughrea Peninsula .....	461
Glenties .....	461

### Northwestern Donegal .....

Dungloe .....	462
Burtonport & Kincasslagh.....	462
Arranmore Island.....	463

Gweedore & Around .....	463
Dunlewey & Around .....	466
Tory Island .....	467
Falcarragh & Gortahork .....	469
Dunfanaghy & Around .....	470
<b>Central Donegal .....</b>	<b>472</b>
Letterkenny .....	472
Glenveagh National Park .....	473
Lough Gartan .....	474

### Northeastern Donegal .....

Rosguill Peninsula . . . . .	475
Fanad Peninsula . . . . .	475
Inishowen Peninsula . . . . .	477
Buncrana . . . . .	477
Clonmany & Ballyliffin . . . . .	479
Carndonagh . . . . .	480
Malin Head . . . . .	481
Culdaff & Around . . . . .	482
Greencastle . . . . .	482
Moville & Around . . . . .	483

### THE MIDLANDS ... 484

### County Laois .....

Abbeyleix . . . . .	486
Durrow . . . . .	487
Slieve Bloom Mountains . . . . .	487
Rock of Dunamaise . . . .	489

### County Offaly .....

Birr .....	490
Kinnitty .....	493
Banagher & Around .....	493
Shannonbridge .....	494
Clonmacnoise .....	495
Tullamore .....	497
Durrow Abbey .....	498

### County Roscommon .....

Strokestown & Around . . .	498
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Boyle & Around .....	499
Roscommon Town .....	502
<b>County Leitrim .....</b>	<b>502</b>
Carrick-on-Shannon .....	503
North Leitrim .....	507

### County Longford .....

### County Westmeath .....

Athlone.....	508
Lough Ree & Around ....	510
Kilbeggan & Around.....	510
Mullingar & Around .....	510
North of Mullingar .....	512

### COUNTIES MEATH, LOUTH, CAVAN & MONAGHAN ..... 514

### County Meath .....

Brú na Bóinne . . . . .	515
The Battle of Boyne . . . . .	521
Laytown . . . . .	522
Slane . . . . .	522
Tara . . . . .	524
Dunsany Castle . . . . .	526
Trim . . . . .	526
Kells . . . . .	529
Loughcrew Cairns . . . . .	530

### County Louth .....

Drogheda.....	531
Dundalk .....	539
Cooley Peninsula .....	540

### County Cavan .....

Cavan Town.....	543
Southern Cavan .....	545
Eastern Cavan.....	546
Northwestern Cavan ...	546

### County Monaghan ... 547

Monaghan Town .....	547
Clones & Around .....	549
Carrickmacross & Around .....	549
Inniskeen .....	550

# Contents

## UNDERSTAND

**BELFAST** ..... 551

**Belfast City** ..... 553

**COUNTIES DOWN & ARMAGH** ..... 586

**County Down** ..... 588

Bangor ..... 588

Central County Down ... 589

Ards Peninsula ..... 591

Newtownards & Around ..... 594

Strangford Lough ..... 594

Killyleagh ..... 595

Downpatrick ..... 596

Lecale Peninsula ..... 598

Newcastle ..... 598

Mourne Mountains. .... 601

Mournes Coast Road. ... 605

Newry ..... 605

**County Armagh** ..... 606

South Armagh ..... 606

Armagh City ..... 608

**COUNTIES LONDONDERRY & ANTRIM** ..... 613

**County Londonderry** ..... 616

Derry/Londonderry ..... 616

Limavady & Around ..... 628

Coastal County ..... 629

Londonderry ..... 629

Portstewart ..... 629

**County Antrim** ..... 631

Portrush ..... 632

Dunluce Castle ..... 633

Bushmills ..... 633

Giant's Causeway ..... 634

Giant's Causeway to Ballycastle ..... 635

Ballycastle ..... 636

Rathlin Island ..... 638

Glens of Antrim ..... 639

Larne ..... 644

Carrickfergus ..... 644

Inland County Antrim ... 646

**COUNTIES FERMANAGH & TYRONE** ..... 647

**County Fermanagh** ..... 650

Enniskillen ..... 650

Upper Lough Erne ..... 653

Lower Lough Erne ..... 656

West of Lough Erne ..... 659

**County Tyrone** ..... 661

Omagh ..... 661

Sperrin Mountains ..... 662

East Tyrone ..... 663

**Ireland Today** ..... 666

**History** ..... 668

**The Irish Way of Life** ... 681

**Music** ..... 684

**Literary Ireland** ..... 687

**Irish Landscapes** ..... 690

**Sporting Ireland**... .... 694

## SURVIVAL GUIDE

**Directory A-Z** ..... 698

**Transport** ..... 706

**Language** ..... 713

**Index** ..... 720

**Map Legend** ..... 734

## SPECIAL FEATURES

**Great Outdoors Special Feature** ..... 37

**Eat & Drink Like A Local** ..... 45

**Trinity College 3D illustration** ..... 64

**Literary Dublin** ..... 106

**Glendalough 3D illustration** ..... 144

**Ring of Kerry** ..... 278

**Rock of Cashel 3D illustration** ..... 324

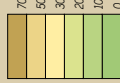
**Brú Na Bóinne 3D illustration** ..... 518



# Ireland



## ELEVATION



## Connemara

Brooding and beautiful landscape (p396)

**Derry/Londonderry**  
Walled city featuring music and art (p616)

**Black Taxi Tour**  
Explore Belfast's deeply divided past (p571)

**Causeway Coastal Walk**  
Best coastal hike in Northern Ireland (p634)

## Titanic Belfast

Museum of the world's most famous ship (p564)

## Brú na Bóinne

Outstanding Neolithic passage tombs (p515)





### Galway Festivals

City that epitomises Irish hedonism (p377)

### Clare Coastal Walk

Best coastal hike in Ireland (p336)

### Dingle

Beautiful, Irish-speaking fishing town (p292)

### Ring of Kerry

Ireland's most famous panoramic loop (p277)

**Dublin**  
Pulsating and manageable capital city (p58)

### Glendalough

Ancient monastic site in stunning setting (p142)

### Kilkenny

A regal medieval city (p199)

### Rock of Cashel

Breath-taking ancient fortress atop rock (p323)

### Cork

Superb restaurants in Ireland's second city (p218)

# Itineraries



1  
WEEK

## Ireland Highlights

This 300km-tourist trail takes you past some of Ireland's most famous attractions and through spectacular countryside. Start with a whistle-stop tour of **Dublin**, including visits to Trinity College and the Book of Kells as well as a sample of Guinness in its home town. The next day, head west to **Galway**, from where you should take a drive through stunning, brooding **Connemara** (which can be driven in a nice loop) before heading south through the moonlike landscape of **The Burren**. Take a detour to the **Cliffs of Moher**, then head to **Ennis**, a good spot to enjoy a bit of traditional Irish music. Keep going south through the **Connor Pass** into County Kerry, stopping for a half-day in **Dingle** before setting out to visit its peninsula, taking in the views and prehistoric monuments of **Slea Head**. Via the ferry, continue on to **Killarney**, the perfect base from which to explore the famous **Ring of Kerry**, a much-trafficked 179km loop around the Iveragh Peninsula.



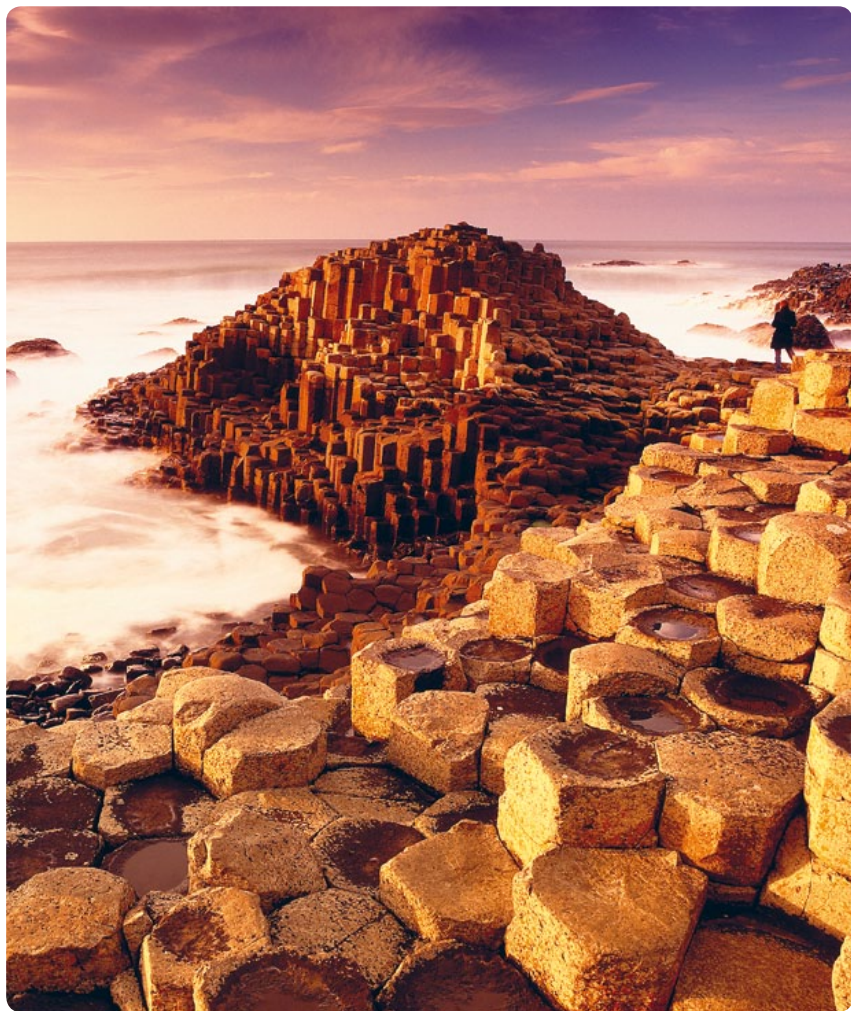


## Best of the West

The west of Ireland is rightly at the top of most people's must-visit lists. Start in County Sligo, where prehistory and panorama combine to wonderful effect at **Carrowmore Megalithic Cemetery**. Wind your way south along the coast, stopping at some of Ireland's best surf beaches like **Strandhill** and **Enniscrone**, to the pretty village of **Pollatomish**. Continue south to the pub-packed heritage town of **Westport**. Southwest of here is magnificent **Croagh Patrick**, which is worth a climb if only to feast your eyes from a height on island-studded Clew Bay. Go west to **Louisburgh**, from where you can head offshore to craggy **Clare Island** (home of the pirate queen Grace O'Malley), before turning south along the beautiful Doolough Valley to **Leenane**, situated on Ireland's only fjord. This is the northern gateway to **Connemara**, which you can explore via the beautiful coastal route, passing **Kylemore Abbey**, venturing onto Clifden's scenic Sky Road and then winding your way around the coast through pretty **Roundstone**. Alternatively, you could savour the stunning wilderness of the inland route through **Maam Cross** to **Galway**, where you should devote at least a day to exploring its colourful streets and wonderful pubs.

South of Galway, the fishing villages of **Kinvara** and **Ballyvaughan** are at the edge of the strange karst landscape of The Burren, home to all manner of flora and fauna, as well as big-ticket attractions like the ancient **Aillwee Caves** and the **Cliffs of Moher**. Going south, be sure to sample some of Ireland's exquisite traditional music by attending a session in one of the pubs of **Miltown Malbay**; beach lovers should also opt for a stop in **Kilkee**, a favourite with surfers.

The easiest way to cross into County Kerry is via the ferry at Killimer. Take a day to explore the **Dingle Peninsula**, with its rich menu of ancient sites and stunning views, before overnighting in **Dingle** – one of the prettiest towns along the entire west coast. Take another day to explore the world-famous **Ring of Kerry**, ending in **Killarney National Park**, right on the edge of **Killarney** itself. Take the scenic route across the middle of the **Beara Peninsula** and make your way to the Italianate **Garinish Island**, with its exotic flowers. Then follow the coast through **Castletownshend** and the fishing village of **Union Hall** to the city of **Cork**.



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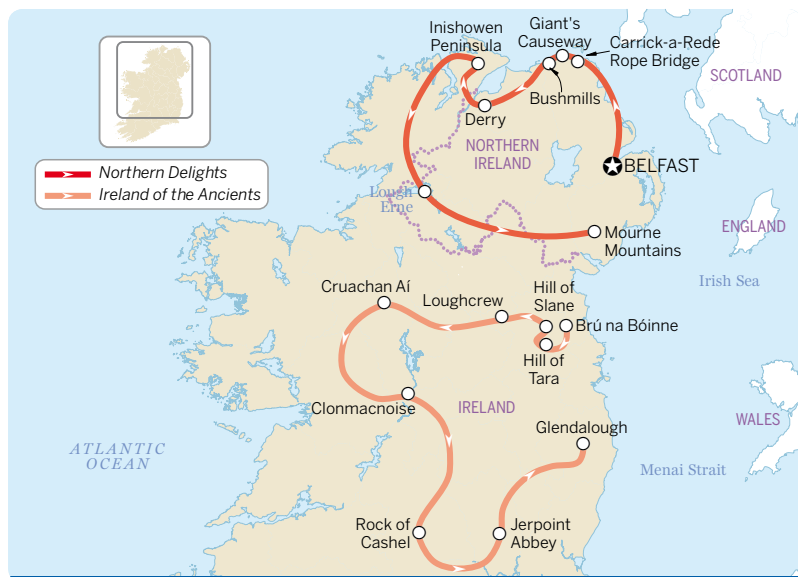


DAVID EPPERSON / GETTY IMAGES ©

Top: Giant's Causeway,  
County Antrim

Bottom: Stone circle,  
Beara Peninsula



10  
DAYS

## Northern Delights

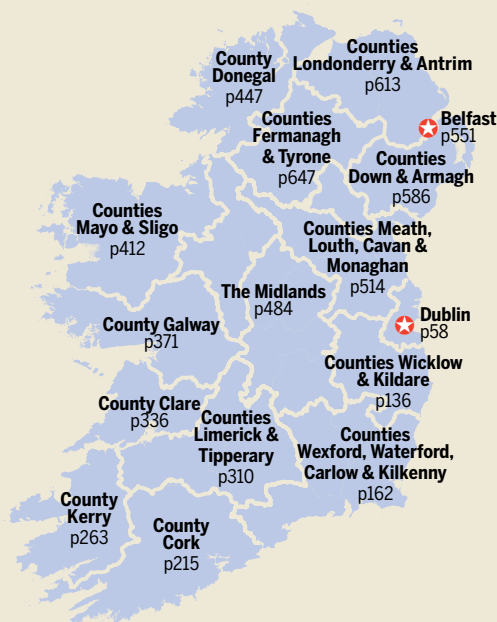
Start in **Belfast**, where you should take a black taxi tour and/or visit the docks on a boat trip, before heading north toward the Antrim coast and the **Carrick-a-Rede Rope Bridge**. Nearby is the Unesco World Heritage-listed **Giant's Causeway**, which shouldn't be missed by any visitor to Northern Ireland, and just beyond it the fascinating village of **Bushmills**, home to the famous distillery. **Derry** is worth a day – walk the city's walls and explore its more recent past in the Bogside district, and then cross the invisible border into the Republic by visiting the **Inishowen Peninsula** in County Donegal. Back in the North, go southeast to **Lough Erne**, taking in both White Island and the carved stones of Devenish Island before heading east to the famed **Mourne Mountains**, where you can hike along ancient smugglers' trails – or just admire the fabulous views before heading back to Belfast.

1  
WEEK

## Ireland of the Ancients

Begin at the stunning Neolithic tombs of Newgrange and Knowth in County Meath, in the heart of **Brú na Bóinne**. Nearby, stand at the top of the celebrated **Hill of Tara**, a site of immense folkloric significance and seat of the high kings of Ireland until the 11th century. Across the plain is the **Hill of Slane**, where St Patrick lit a fire in 433 to proclaim Christianity throughout the land. To the west is the Neolithic monument of **Loughcrew** – a quieter alternative to Brú na Bóinne. Keep going west to County Roscommon. Just outside Tulsk village is **Cruachan Aí**, the most important Celtic site in Europe. Head south to **Clonmacnoise**, the 6th-century monastic site in County Offaly, then continue through the heart of the country to the impressive **Rock of Cashel** in County Tipperary. Turn east and head through County Kilkenny, stopping at the Cistercian **Jerpoint Abbey**, at the pretty village of Thomastown. From here, travel northeast to Wicklow and magnificent **Glendalough**, where the substantial remains of a monastic settlement linger by two beautiful lakes.

# On the Road





### Neil Wilson

County Donegal; Belfast; Counties Down & Armagh; Counties Londonderry & Antrim; Counties Fermanagh & Tyrone Neil's first visit to Northern Ireland was in 1994, during the first flush of post-ceasefire optimism, and his interest in the history and politics of the place intensified when he found out that most of his mum's ancestors were from Ulster.

Working on the *Ireland* guidebook has allowed him to witness first-hand the progress being made towards a lasting peace. Neil is a full-time travel writer based in Scotland, and has written more than 50 guidebooks for half a dozen publishers.

Read more about Neil at:  
[lonelyplanet.com/members/neilwilson](https://lonelyplanet.com/members/neilwilson)





## OUR STORY

A beat-up old car, a few dollars in the pocket and a sense of adventure. In 1972 that's all Tony and Maureen Wheeler needed for the trip of a lifetime – across Europe and Asia overland to Australia. It took several months, and at the end – broke but inspired – they sat at their kitchen table writing and stapling together their first travel guide, *Across Asia on the Cheap*. Within a week they'd sold 1500 copies. Lonely Planet was born.

Today, Lonely Planet has offices in Melbourne, London and Oakland, with more than 600 staff and writers. We share Tony's belief that 'a great guidebook should do three things: inform, educate and amuse'.

## OUR WRITERS



### Fionn Davenport

**Coordinating Author; Dublin; Counties Wicklow & Kildare** A Dubliner by birth and by persuasion, Fionn has worked on at least seven editions of this guide, and more and more is reminded of Tancredi's aphorism in *The Leopard*: 'everything needs to change, so everything can stay the same.' Everything has changed in Ireland, but it has managed to hold on to its traditional strengths – beautiful landscapes, a friendly people and a general conviviality that makes a repeat trip

unavoidable. Fionn also wrote the Plan Your Trip section, the Understand Ireland section and Survival Guide chapters.



### Catherine Le Nevez

**County Cork; County Kerry; Counties Limerick & Tipperary** Catherine's wanderlust kicked in when she road-tripped across Europe aged four and she's been hitting the road at every opportunity since, completing her Doctorate of Creative Arts in Writing, Masters in Professional Writing, and post-grad qualifications in Editing and Publishing along the way. Catherine's Celtic connections include Irish and Breton heritage (and a love of Guinness!). She's travelled throughout

every county in the emerald isle, and covered the majority of them for Lonely Planet, including several editions of this book.



### Josephine Quintero

**Counties Wexford, Waterford, Carlow & Kilkenny; The Midlands; Counties Meath, Louth, Cavan & Monaghan** Exploring some of the lesser visited counties Josephine discovered such delights as mystical caves, a belief in the little people and restaurant food so retro it included jelly and cream. Throughout these counties, history reverberated in the castles, landscape and evocative ruins, while a spell in the wonderfully vibrant cities of Waterford and Kilkenny was the ideal antidote

to those more rural terrains. Josephine has contributed to more than 35 guides for Lonely Planet and her delight in Ireland increases with every trip.



### Ryan Ver Berkmoes

**County Clare; County Galway; Counties Mayo & Sligo** From Loop Head to Sligo, with plenty of pleasures in between, Ryan has delighted in the great swath of Ireland. He first visited Galway in 1985 when he remembers a grey place where the locals wandered the muddy tidal flats for fun and frolic. Times have changed! From lost rural pubs to lost memory, he's revelled in a place where his first name brings a smile and his surname brings a 'huh?'. Follow him at [ryanverberkmoes.com](http://ryanverberkmoes.com); and on Twitter @ryanvb.

Read more about Josephine at:

[lonelyplanet.com/members/JosephineQuintero](http://lonelyplanet.com/members/JosephineQuintero)

OVER MORE  
PAGE WRITERS

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