



County Clare

POP 117,000 / AREA 3147 SQ KM

Includes ➔

Ennis	324
Eastern & Southeastern Clare	331
Bunratty	332
Killaloe & Ballina	333
Mountshannon	335
Southwestern & Western Clare	335
Kilrush	336
Kilkee	337
Ennistymon	342
Cliffs of Moher	344
The Burren	345
Doolin	347
Kilfenora	350

Best Places to Eat

- ➔ Linnane's Lobster Bar (p356)
- ➔ Naughton's Bar (p338)
- ➔ Vaughan's Anchor Inn (p344)
- ➔ Wooden Spoon (p334)

Best Places to Sleep

- ➔ Rowan Tree Hostel (p324)
- ➔ Old Ground Hotel (p326)
- ➔ Sheedy's Country House Hotel & Restaurant (p350)

Why Go?

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

Rugged nature and the timeless ocean meet on the county's coast. The Atlantic relentlessly pounds year-round, eroding rock into fantastic formations, and fashioning sheer cliffs like those at the iconic Cliffs of Moher, and intriguing 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 certainly isn't: traditional Irish culture and music flourish here. 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 lively sessions of trad music.

When to Go

- ➔ County Clare's pubs hum to trad beats year-round, so even in winter you'll find the craic – often warmed in the countryside by a peat fire.
- ➔ While the unsettled seas of winter have a drama that will fill your days with a raw intensity, the county literally shines during the more temperate months when long walks along the spectacular soaring cliffs of the coast and among 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** (p340).
- 2 Catch the last warming rays of the setting sun at **Spanish Point** (p341).
- 3 Drive round the coast to the dramatic offshore rocky outcrops of **Loop Head** (p339).
- 4 Discover lost dolmens and abandoned abbeys among the rocky expanses of the Burren at **Carron** (p353).
- 5 Embark on a green-fingered exploration of the **Vandeleur Walled Garden** (p336) in Kilrush.
- 6 Catch the cascades in full flood in the charming town of **Ennistymon** (p342).
- 7 Follow the **Wild Atlantic Way** (p335) and take in all the sights along the coast.
- 8 Jump aboard a late-afternoon boat from Doolin to see the soaring **Cliffs of Moher** (p344) in all their radiance.