



Counties Fermanagh & Tyrone

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Best Places to Eat

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Best Places to Stay

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Why Go?

The ancient landscape of Fermanagh is shaped by ice and water, with rugged hills rising above quilted plains of half-drowned drumlins (rounded hills formed by retreating glaciers) and shimmering, reed-fringed lakes. A glance at the map shows the county is around one-third water – as the locals will tell you, the lakes are in Fermanagh for six months of the year; for the other six, Fermanagh is in the lakes. This watery maze is a natural playground for boaters, kayakers and anglers. The surrounding landscape is laced with good walks.

County Tyrone – from Tír Eoghain (Land of Owen, a legendary chieftain) – is dominated by the tweed-tinted moorlands of the Sperrin Mountains, whose southern flanks are dotted with prehistoric sites. Apart from hiking these heather-clad hills, visitors can enjoy several excellent sites that celebrate the county's heritage, including the historic ties to the USA.

When to Go

- ➔ May marks the start of the mayfly season, the most exciting time for trout fishing on Lough Erne, while June is the ideal month for cruising the lakes.
- ➔ If hiking is more to your taste, July is ideal for hill walking in the Sperrins. You can join a mass pilgrimage to the summit of Mullaghcarn, above Gortin, on Cairn Sunday, the last Sunday in the month.
- ➔ The tail end of summer is enlivened by the Ulster American Folk Park's annual Appalachian and Bluegrass Music Festival.

COUNTY FERMANAGH

POP 61,810 / AREA 1691 SQ KM

Enniskillen & Around

POP 13,800


Perched amid the web of waterways that link Upper and Lower Lough Erne, Enniskillen (Inis Ceithleann, meaning Ceithleann's Island, after a legendary female warrior) is an appealing town with a mile-long main street that rides the roller-coaster spine of an island drumlin. Its attractive waterside setting, bustling with boats in summer, plus a range of lively pubs and restaurants, make Enniskillen a good base for exploring Upper and Lower Lough Erne, Florence Court and the Marble Arch Caves.

Though neither was born here, both Oscar Wilde and Samuel Beckett were pupils at Enniskillen's Portora Royal School (Wilde from 1864 to 1871, Beckett from 1919 to 1923); it was here that Beckett first studied French, a language he would later write in. The town's name is also prominent in the history of the Troubles – on Poppy Day (11 November) in 1987 an IRA bomb killed 11 people during a service at Enniskillen's war memorial.

Sights & Activities

Enniskillen Castle


MUSEUM

( 028-6632 5000; www.enniskillencastle.co.uk; Castle Barracks; adult/child £4/3; ☺ 2-5pm Mon, 10am-5pm Tue-Fri year-round, 2-5pm Sat May-Sep, 2-5pm Sun Jul & Aug) Enniskillen Castle, a former stronghold of the 16th-century Maguire chieftains, guards the western end of the town's central island, its twin-turreted **Watergate** looming over passing fleets of cabin cruisers. Within the walls you'll find the **Fermanagh County Museum**, which has displays on the county's history, archaeology, landscape and wildlife.

The 15th-century keep contains the **Royal Inniskilling Fusiliers Regimental Museum**, full of guns, uniforms and medals, including eight Victoria Crosses awarded in WWI; it's dedicated to the regiment that was raised at the castle in 1689 to support the army of William I. Much of this facility was refurbished in 2015.

St Michael's Church

CHURCH

( 028-6632 2075; www.saintmichaels-parish.com; 4 Darling St; ☺ 8am-5pm) Dominating the centre, this soaring church dates from only 1875, having replaced an early church that was collapsing. There's lavish artwork

and ornamentation, including paintings by Charles Russell.

Castle Coole

HISTORIC BUILDING

( 028-6632 2690; www.nationaltrust.org.uk; off A4; house tour adult/child £5/2, grounds £2.50/1.50; ☺ house 11am-5pm daily Jul & Aug, Fri-Wed Jun, Sat, Sun & public holidays mid-Mar-May & Sep, grounds 10am-7pm Mar-Oct, to 4pm Nov-Feb) The 600 hectares of landscaped **grounds** contain a lake that is home to the UK's only nonmigratory colony of greylag geese. You can also join a tour of the grand 18th-century **house**.

The estate is 2.5km southeast of Enniskillen. You can easily walk there from Enniskillen town centre in 30 minutes – beyond Dunnes Stores, fork left on Tempo Rd and keep going straight along Castlecoole Rd.


When King George IV visited Ireland in 1821, the second Earl of Belmore had a state bedroom specially prepared at Castle Coole in anticipation of the monarch's visit. The king, however, was more interested in dallying with his mistress at Slane Castle and never turned up. The bedroom, draped in red silk and decorated with paintings depicting *A Rake's Progress* (the earl's snuffy riposte to the king's extramarital shenanigans), is one of the highlights of the one-hour guided tour.

Designed by James Wyatt, this Palladian mansion was built between 1789 and 1795 for Armar Lowry-Corry, the first Earl of Belmore, and is probably the purest expression of late-18th-century neoclassical architecture in Ireland.

It's said that if the geese ever leave, the earls of Belmore will lose Castle Coole.

Sheelin Antique Irish Lace Shop

SHOP

( 028-6634 8052; www.antiqueirishlace.co.uk; off A509, Bellanaleck; ☺ 10am-6pm Mon-Sat) This shop also houses a small collection of Irish lace dating from 1850 to 1900. Lace-making was an important cottage industry in the region both before and after the Famine – prior to WWI there were at least 10 lace schools in County Fermanagh. The shop is just over 6km southwest of Enniskillen.

Kingfisher Trail

CYCLING

(www.cycleni.com) The Kingfisher Trail is a waymarked, long-distance cycling trail that starts in Enniskillen and wends its way through the back roads of Counties Fermanagh, Leitrim, Cavan and Monaghan. You can get a trail map from the Enniskillen tourist office or online.

The full route is around 370km long, but a shorter loop, starting and finishing in