



Ireland



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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 National Park** (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 **Sleah 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 where you'll find the best scenery and the best traditional music pubs.

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**. Continue south to the pub-packed heritage town of **Westport**. Southwest of here is magnificent **Croagh Patrick**, 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 National Park**, 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 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 karst landscape of **The Burren**, home to all manner of flora and fauna, as well as attractions such as the ancient **Aillwee Cave** and the **Cliffs of Moher**. Going south, experience some of Ireland's traditional music by attending a session in one of the pubs of **Milntown 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**.

3
WEEKS

Coastal Tour

This round-the-island tour takes in a big chunk of Ireland's major scenic and heritage highlights.

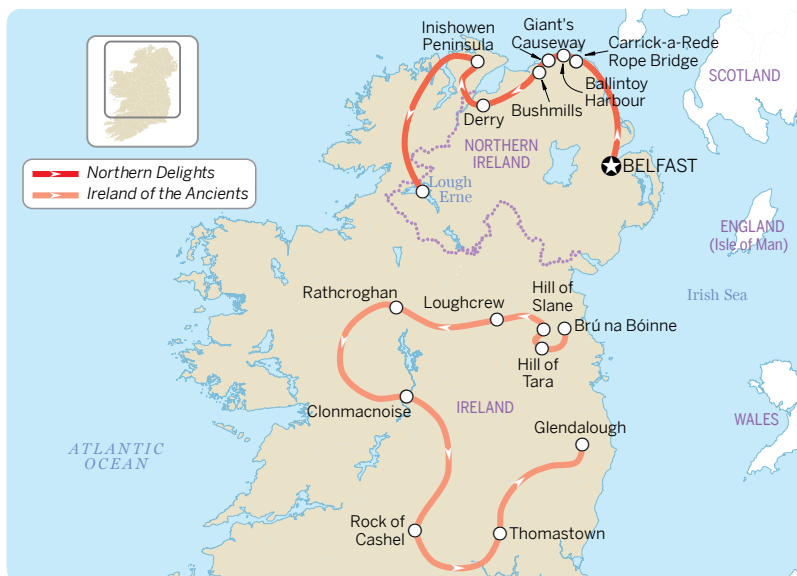
From **Dublin**, head north to the Neolithic necropolis at **Brú na Bóinne**. Continue on to the atmospheric **Old Mellifont Abbey** before crossing into Northern Ireland and heading to **Belfast**. Go northwest along the Antrim coast to the **Giant's Causeway**. Continue around the coastline and head south into Sligo to climb the Stone Age passage grave at **Carrowkeel** for views of Lough Arrow. Go southwest via **Connemara National Park**. Wonder at **The Burren** and check out traditional music in **Doolin** before crossing into County Kerry for music, scenery and heritage on the **Dingle Peninsula** and the **Ring of Kerry**. See gorgeous landscapes on the **Beara Peninsula**, then visit Ireland's second city, **Cork**. Discover County Waterford from seaside **Ardmore**, visit **Dungarvan** and its castle, and the Museum of Treasures in **Waterford**. Go north through medieval **Kilkenny** and then check out handsome **Castletown House** in County Kildare. Cut east to see the monastic site at **Glendalough**. Finally, head back to Dublin.

2
WEEKS

Tip to Toe

The full range of Ireland – from north to south – is on the menu in this itinerary.

Begin in Northern Ireland's second city, **Derry**, walking the city walls and exploring the Bogside district. Cross into County Donegal and explore the **Inishowen Peninsula** before overnighing in **Dunfanaghy**. As you move down Donegal's coastline, visit the monastic ruins of **Glencolumbkille** and the sea cliffs at **Slieve League**. Cross into County Sligo and visit the **Carrowmore Megalithic Cemetery**. The next day, play a round of golf at the County Sligo Golf Course at **Rosses Point** or a seaweed bath in **Enniscrone**. You'll skirt the eastern edge of **Connemara National Park** as you travel south to **Galway**, from where you should strike out for **Clonmacnoise**. From here, move through the heart of the Midlands to another monastic gem, the **Rock of Cashel**. Medieval **Kilkenny** is only an hour away – visit its stunning castle before exploring nearby **Thomastown** and Jerpoint Abbey. Using **Wexford** as a base, explore **Curraclloe Beach** and visit **Enniscorthy** and the excellent National 1798 Rebellion Centre. Or you could chill out and watch the fishermen draw in their lines in **Kilmore Quay**.

1
WEEK

Northern Delights

Explore the gorgeous landscapes and discover the fascinating history of this much-misunderstood province.

Start in **Belfast**, where you should visit the Titanic Experience and take a black-taxi tour, before heading north towards the Antrim Coast and on to the **Carrick-a-Rede Rope Bridge**. Head west towards the Unesco World Heritage-listed **Giant's Causeway**, a highlight of any trip to Northern Ireland; along the way, *Game of Thrones* fans can check out **Ballintoy Harbour**, which stood in for the Iron Islands' Lordsport Harbour in the TV series. The causeway coast finishes in 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, finish your visit southeast in **Lough Erne**, taking in both White Island and the carved stones of Devenish Island.

1
WEEK

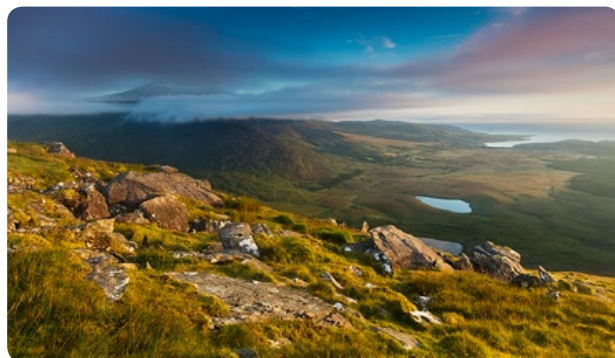
Ireland of the Ancients

Discover the majesty and mystery of Ireland's ancient history on this one-week route.

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 **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 **Rathcroghan**, 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.



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Top: Clonmacnoise
(p492), County Offaly

Bottom: Connor Pass
(p295), County Kerry

Map Legend

Sights

- Beach
- Bird Sanctuary
- Buddhist
- Castle/Palace
- Christian
- Confucian
- Hindu
- Islamic
- Jain
- Jewish
- Monument
- Museum/Gallery/Historic Building
- Ruin
- Shinto
- Sikh
- Taoist
- Winery/Vineyard
- Zoo/Wildlife Sanctuary
- Other Sight

Activities, Courses & Tours

- Body surfing
- Diving
- Canoeing/Kayaking
- Course/Tour
- Sento Hot Baths/Onsen
- Skiing
- Snorkelling
- Surfing
- Swimming/Pool
- Walking
- Windsurfing
- Other Activity

Sleeping

- Sleeping
- Camping
- Hut/Shelter

Eating

- Eating

Drinking & Nightlife

- Drinking & Nightlife
- Cafe

Entertainment

- Entertainment

Shopping

- Shopping

Information

- Bank
- Embassy/Consulate
- Hospital/Medical
- Internet
- Police
- Post Office
- Telephone
- Toilet
- Tourist Information
- Other Information

Geographic

- Beach
- Gate
- Hut/Shelter
- Lighthouse
- Lookout
- Mountain/Volcano
- Oasis
- Park
- Pass
- Picnic Area
- Waterfall

Population

- Capital (National)
- Capital (State/Province)
- City/Large Town
- Town/Village

Transport

- Airport
- Border crossing
- Bus
- Cable car/Funicular
- Cycling
- Ferry
- Metro station
- Monorail
- Parking
- Petrol station
- S-Bahn/Subway station
- Taxi
- T-bane/Tunnelbana station
- Train station/Railway
- Tram
- Tube station
- U-Bahn/Underground station
- Other Transport

Routes

- Tollway
- Freeway
- Primary
- Secondary
- Tertiary
- Lane
- Unsealed road
- Road under construction
- Plaza/Mall
- Steps
- Tunnel
- Pedestrian overpass
- Walking Tour
- Walking Tour detour
- Path/Walking Trail

Boundaries

- International
- State/Province
- Disputed
- Regional/Suburb
- Marine Park
- Cliff
- Wall

Hydrography

- River, Creek
- Intermittent River
- Canal
- Water
- Dry/Salt/Intermittent Lake
- Reef

Areas

- Airport/Runway
- Beach/Desert
- Cemetery (Christian)
- Cemetery (Other)
- Glacier
- Mudflat
- Park/Forest
- Sight (Building)
- Sportsground
- Swamp/Mangrove

Note: Not all symbols displayed above appear on the maps in this book



Damian Harper

Counties Mayo & Sligo; County Donegal; the Midlands Damian has been writing for Lonely Planet for over two decades, contributing to titles covering regions as diverse as China, Beijing, Shanghai, Vietnam, Thailand, Ireland, London, Mallorca, Malaysia, Singapore & Brunei, Hong Kong, China's Southwest and the UK. A seasoned guidebook writer, Damian has penned articles for numerous newspapers and magazines, including *The Guardian* and *The Daily Telegraph*, and currently makes Surrey, England, his home. A self-taught trumpet novice, his other hobbies include collecting modern first editions, photography and Taekwondo. Follow Damian on Instagram ([damian.harper](#)).

Read more about Damian at
lonelyplanet.com/profiles/DamianHarper



Catherine Le Nevez

County Kerry; County Clare; County Galway; Counties Meath, Louth, Cavan & Monaghan Catherine's wanderlust kicked in when she roadtripped across Europe from her Parisian base aged four, and she's been hitting the road at every opportunity since, travelling to around 60 countries and completing her Doctorate of Creative Arts in Writing, Masters in Professional Writing, and postgrad qualifications in Editing and Publishing along the way. Over the past dozen-plus

years she's written scores of Lonely Planet guides and articles covering Paris, France, Europe and far beyond. Her work has also appeared in numerous online and print publications. Topping Catherine's list of travel tips is to travel without any expectations.

Read more about Catherine at
lonelyplanet.com/profiles/CatherineLeNevez



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 Franklin, London, Melbourne, Oakland, Dublin, Beijing and Delhi, 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



Neil Wilson

Curator; Counties Wicklow & Kildare; Counties Wexford, Waterford, Carlow & Kilkenny; County Cork; Counties Limerick & Tipperary

Neil was born in Scotland and has lived there most of his life. Based in Perthshire, he has been a full-time writer since 1988, working on more than 80 guidebooks for various publishers, including the Lonely Planet guides to Scotland, England, Ireland and Prague. Like most Lonely Planet authors, Neil

fell into the guidebook-writing business by accident. Having fled the rat race of the oil industry soon after graduating as a geologist, he returned to university to do postgraduate research. But academia turned out to be just as dull as industry, so like any sane person he gave it all up to be a penniless writer. The penniless bit was easy. On the writing side, he began by producing articles for a Scottish magazine, but was soon off to photograph Corfu for a guidebook.

Read more about Neil at
lonelyplanet.com/profiles/neilwilson



Isabel Albiston

Belfast; Counties Down & Armagh; Counties Derry & Antrim; Counties Fermanagh & Tyrone; Counties London Derry & Antrim After 6 years working for the *Daily Telegraph* in London, squeezing in as many trips as annual leave would allow, Isabel left to spend more time on the road. A job as writer for a magazine in Sydney, Australia, was followed by four years living and working in Buenos Aires, Argentina. Isabel started writing for Lonely Planet in 2014,

having been back in the UK just long enough to pack a bag for a research trip to Malaysia, and has contributed to six LP guides. See her pics on instagram: [isabel_albiston](https://www.instagram.com/isabel_albiston).

Read more about Isabel at
lonelyplanet.com/profiles/IsabelAlbiston



Fionn Davenport

Dublin Irish by birth and conviction, Fionn has been writing about his native country for more than two decades. He's come and gone over the years, pulled abroad to escape Dublin's comfortable stasis and by the promise of adventure, but it has cemented his belief that Ireland remains his favourite place to visit, if not always live in. These days, he has a weekly commute home to Dublin from Manchester, where he lives with his partner Laura and their car

Trevor. In Dublin he presents *Inside Culture* on RTE Radio 1 and writes travel features for a host of publications.

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OVER MORE
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Published by Lonely Planet Global Limited

CRN 554153

13th edition – Mar 2018

ISBN 978 1 78657 445 9

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10 9 8 7 6 5 4 3 2 1

Printed in China

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