

Irish Independent 

Autumn breaks



INSIDE:

Autumn escapes and hidden gems

Fun mid-term break ideas

Plan your trip around an autumn festivals or spooky adventure

Top hotel stays and travel offers

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Aerial View, Glendalough Lakes, Co Wicklow. Image: Fáilte Ireland.

Your autumn escape plan

Editor Shauna McCrudden on where to go and what to do this season

Autumn is here, and after the back-to-school rush, you might be ready for a little adventure! With mid-term breaks and long weekends on the horizon, it's the perfect season to plan a little trip. Whether you want to get outdoors, eat your way through a food festival, or just curl up by a fire with a hot drink, we have some ideas to make the most of your autumn escape.

Leafy walks

Nothing beats a good autumn walk. Wicklow's Glendalough is a showstopper in autumn, with its lakes, oak forests, and ancient monastic site all lit up in autumn colours. Take on the Spinc Walk for stunning views or pack a picnic for a woodland break. Down in Kerry, Killarney National Park is just as beautiful with 10,000 hectares of lakes, mountains, and roaming red deer. For a bit of a gentler day out, Carlow's Altamont Gardens or Westmeath's Belvedere House are perfect for easy strolls and a sprinkle of history.

Cavan, the 'Lake County', is a brilliant spot for an autumn outing too. Killykeen Forest Park, situated around Lough Oughter, is a true hidden gem offering easy walking loops, cycle trails, and stunning lakeshore views. The 3km Nature Trail takes just an hour and is perfect for families, with plenty of spots for a picnic or even a swim.

→ Turn to page 19 for more hiking trails.



Waterford adventures

Autumn adventures

This autumn, there's no better time to dig into Waterford and experience the magic of Ireland's oldest city and county. Wander the medieval streets of Waterford City, steeped in history and heritage, or head to the spectacular Copper Coast, where dramatic cliffs meet golden beaches. Discover charming seaside villages, indulge in delicious local food, and take in breathtaking views along the world-class Waterford Greenway.

Venture inland to the Comeragh Mountains or lose yourself in Waterford's enchanting woodlands, where autumn transforms the landscape with spectacular changing colours, perfect for scenic hikes and peaceful escapes. From vibrant festivals to wild coastal drives, this season invites you to slow down and soak up the magic of Waterford.

Whether you're a culture lover, foodie, history



Savour Kilkenny Food Festival. Image: Fáilte Ireland

enthusiast, or nature seeker, Waterford offers experiences you won't forget.

→ Plan your perfect autumn escape now at visitwaterford.com

Cosy escapes

This is the season for crackling fires and big, hearty dinners. Across Ireland, there are so many luxury hotels and cosy B&Bs, with lower off-peak rates making them more affordable. Even one night away feels special when it comes with a warm welcome, a delicious dinner, the comfiest bed imaginable and maybe a few spa treatments and a round of golf to top it all off!

→ Turn to page 12 for our top hotel picks.

Festival season

Autumn is packed with festivals, and there's something for everyone. Foodies will love Savour Kilkenny, where more than 100 market stalls, cookery demos, and street food take over the medieval city. In Kerry, Samhain Chiarraí brings folklore to life with music, storytelling, and street spectacles celebrating the Celtic New Year. Families can dive into spooky fun at the Púca Festival in Meath or Dublin's Bram Stoker Festival, while seafood fans head for the Howth Maritime & Seafood Festival!

→ Turn to page 10 for more fun festivals.

Rainy-day plans

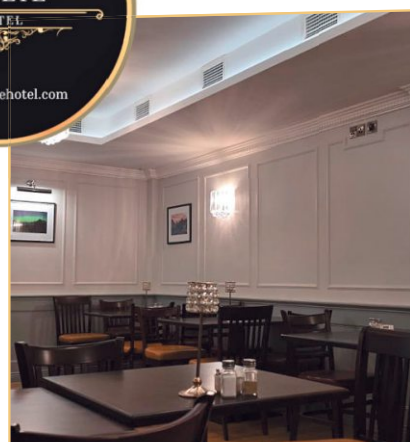
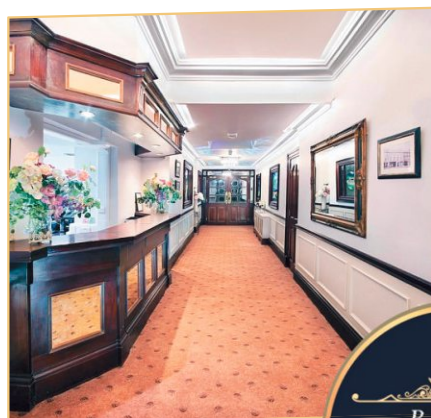
If (or when) the rain comes, Ireland has plenty of indoor options to keep spirits high. Take a distillery tour in Tullamore or Midleton, or dive into history at Waterford's Medieval Museum. Art fans can explore galleries in Dublin, Cork, or Belfast, while families might enjoy an aquarium or science centre. There are so many museums to explore, but don't just stick to the big names; the smaller ones can sometimes hide real hidden gems waiting to be discovered with fascinating exhibits and experiences. Or you could just embrace the weather and relax in a spa, enjoy a swim, or curl up with a book by the fire.

→ Turn to page 8 for more ideas.

Autumn breaks don't have to be complicated. Pick a spot, wrap up warm, and decide if you fancy forests, festivals, food, or a mix of everything. From peaceful lakes to wild coastlines and lots of exciting family fun and festivals, there's no shortage of autumn adventures.

So go on and make this autumn one to remember!

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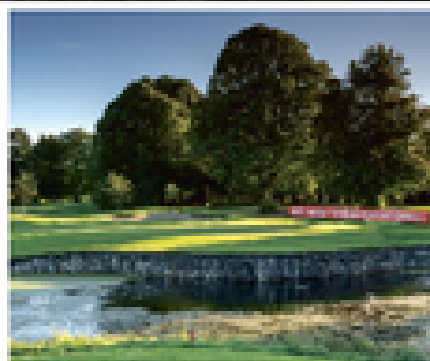
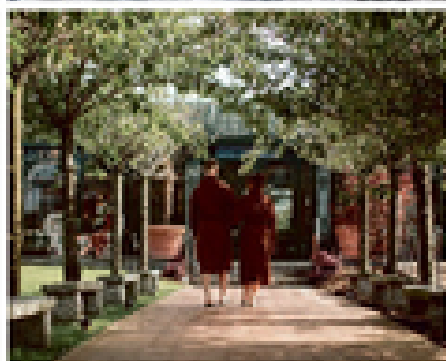


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Chic escapes

Why not indulge in some luxury this season? Travel editor Shauna McCrudden rounds up Ireland's most relaxing getaways

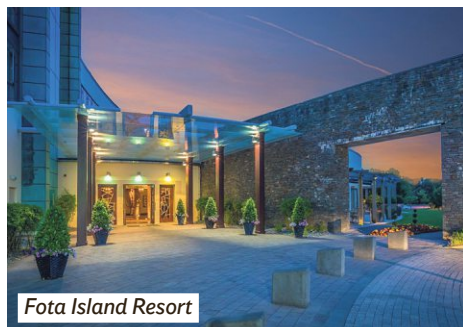
Wellness, woods and wildlife

Experience the beauty of autumn at 5-Star Fota Island Resort, nestled on a private island just minutes from Cork.

An Autumn Calling stay at Fota Island Resort includes a rejuvenating Joy of Beauty facial in the award-winning Fota Island Spa, a luxurious treatment designed to rejuvenate and refresh your skin, leaving you radiant and glowing.

Choose between one of the hotel's luxury guest rooms or, for families, Fota Island Resort's cosy and comfortable residential Lodges are fantastic. There is plenty to keep everyone entertained, from enjoying Blue Flag beaches to exploring the nearby forests and walks together, before memorable dinners in the hotel's restaurants and bars.

Fota Island Resort is also home to championship golf courses, scenic cycling trails, and neighbouring attractions on the island like Fota Wildlife Park and Fota House



Fota Island Resort

and Gardens, making it the perfect autumn retreat for all ages.

Autumn Calling includes an overnight stay with breakfast and a Joy of Beauty facial. Rates start at €374.

→ **For bookings and more information, visit fotaisland.ie**



Castlemartyr Estate

A little spa-rkle

Nestled amidst 180 acres of the breathtaking Kerry countryside, Ballygarry Estate Hotel & Spa has been in the McGillicuddy family for three generations. This esteemed 4-Star property, rated as one of TripAdvisor's finest, offers an unparalleled escape. Guests can indulge in the award-winning Nádúr Spa, renowned for its award-winning treatments. Culinary delights await at Restaurant 58 and The Brasserie, offering guests a diverse range of options to suit their individual dining preferences.

Complementing the hotel's traditional luxury are the newly launched, adult-only Estate Cabins at Ballygarry. These Nordic-style cabins offer a unique 'off-grid' experience, combining comfort and conscious luxury. Each cabin, thoughtfully designed with locally sourced materials, boasts a large feature window framing magnificent views of the Slieve Mish Mountains.

Guests enjoy the peaceful solitude of their private haven, coupled with full access to the hotel's extensive amenities, just a short

walk away. Whether you choose the classic hotel stay or the Estate Cabins, it promises a memorable trip where luxury and nature blend perfectly.

→ **Discover more at ballygarry.com**

Leaf it all behind

Experience the perfect blend of luxury and adventure at Castlemartyr Estate with a two-night escape. Your stay includes elegant accommodation, a sumptuous full Irish breakfast each morning, and a memorable dinner for two at the acclaimed Canopy Restaurant on the evening of your choice.

Immerse yourself in the beauty of the 220-acre estate, offering golf, a rejuvenating spa, and complimentary access to the state-of-the-art health club, complete with a 20-metre pool, fully equipped gym, and thermal suite. Situated in beautiful Cork, you'll also be surrounded by the region's most captivating attractions. Families are also welcome, with child rates including bed and breakfast only.

To make your autumn retreat even more special, the Autumn Leaves Package includes:

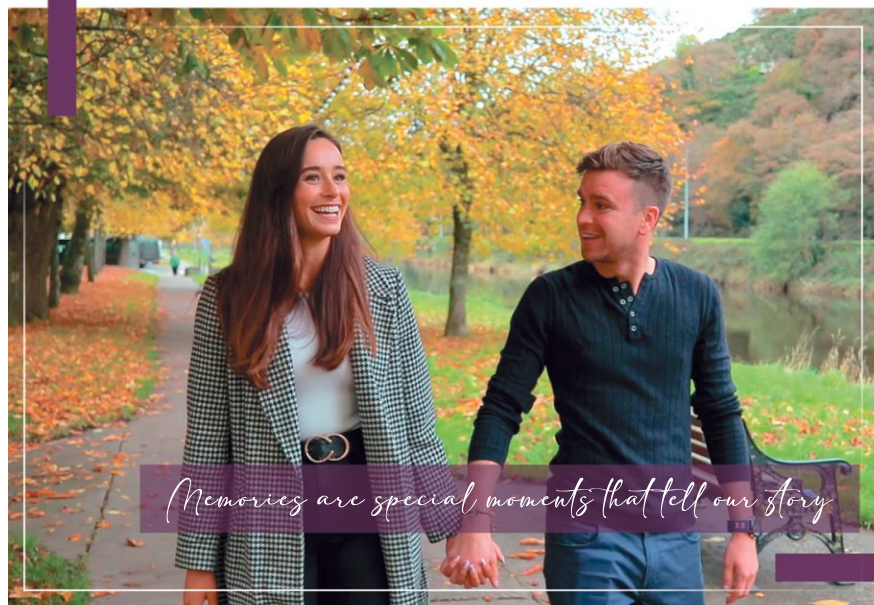


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Autumn Breaks

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- Whether you're strolling through autumnal scenery or unwinding in the spa, Castlemartyr Resort offers the perfect seasonal escape.
- ➔ Visit castlemartyrresort.ie/offers/autumn-breaks

Double the escape
If you like your getaways with a mix of style, sport, and lots of relaxation, Fitzpatrick Castle Hotel in Killiney ticks all the boxes. Sip cocktails



and tuck into fresh pizza out on the terrace, then grab a racket for a game on one of their three Padel courts, no experience needed, just bring your enthusiasm! Afterward, indulge in



a classic afternoon tea before settling into the chic Library Bar with an Old Fashioned in hand.

Their sister property, The Woodenbridge Hotel & Lodge in Avoca, Co Wicklow, is full of charm in the heart of the Garden of Ireland. With their special package, you can stay in both hotels and enjoy the best of both worlds. Woodenbridge is all about comfort and old Irish charm. The Smokehouse restaurant sits right beside the river so you can soak up the view while you dine. Go for the Tasting Board or the Seafood Board, both are packed with perfectly cooked meats and fish and don't skip a cocktail since they're just as good as the scenery!

Golf fans will love the Woodenbridge Golf Club right across the road, and even non-golfers will adore the friendly, family-run feel of the place. Having visited years ago, I can safely say it's only gotten better, so much so, I'm already planning my return.

➔ For more information please visit, fitzpatrickcastle.com and woodenbridgehotel.com

Glow with the flow
It's the perfect season to pause, reset, and embrace life's cosier comforts. From crisp countryside walks to the crunch of leaves underfoot, autumn invites us to slow down and the Galgorm Collection offers the ideal retreat.

Set within 450 acres of parkland where the River Maine flows, this award-winning resort is just 30 minutes from Belfast. Guests can

immerse themselves in nature's beauty while enjoying the renowned Thermal Spa Village, complete with riverside hot tubs, open-air pools, and crackling fire bowls. Indoors, plush interiors, roaring fires, and warm ambient lighting cocoon you from the chill.

The Autumn Awaken with Private Spa Experience (from €368.47 for two guests) makes the season even more special. Choose a Deluxe guestroom or Suite and enhance your stay with a private spa ritual, from the grounding Mud Rasul to Sound & Soul Therapy or a rejuvenating Detox. A two-course dinner, full spa access, and a hearty breakfast complete the experience.

This autumn, indulge in the restorative rhythm of the season and hibernate in luxury at Galgorm.

➔ Discover more at galgorm.com

Making waves
The Lake Hotel, Killarney is nestled on the shores of Lough Lein, the largest of Killarney's famous lakes. The 4-Star family-owned property is surrounded by nature and yet, only 2kms from Killarney town centre. The Lake Hotel boasts 131 beautifully decorated and spacious bedrooms and the hotel's dining facilities offer lake-facing views and serve exquisite dishes daily.

Enjoy lunch or dinner in the Lakeside Bistro, or an evening meal in the multi-award-winning Castlough Restaurant with superb menu choices and exemplary dining standards.

The hotel also boasts a stylish Thermal Suite, a space which has been carefully designed, in harmony with its surroundings, to restore and calm the senses. The Lake Thermal Suite is for residents use only and is fully equipped with both indoor and outdoor facilities including, steam room, sauna, salt sauna, heated loungers, outdoor hot tub and outdoor infinity pool.

➔ For reservations and special offers, visit lakehotel.com email info@lakehotel.com or phone (064) 6631035



The **Tralee-Fenit** Greenway offers a 13.6km journey along the Wild Atlantic Way, starting in Tralee and finishing in the coastal village of Fenit.

The **Listowel to Limerick** Greenway unfolds 16 kilometres of scenic countryside and historic tunnels. Starting in literary Listowel and stretching through lush woodlands to Abbeyfeale where it connects to the Limerick Greenway. Visit www.discoverkerry.com/greenways



48 hours in... Kerry, Wexford, Cork

Short on time but want a proper getaway? A 48-hour break is all you need. Three weekends, three vibes, one perfect autumn break

48 Hours in Kerry

Day One

Start your Kerry adventure in Killarney National Park. Visit the stunning Muckross House, Gardens and Traditional Farms (muckross-house.ie), one of Kerry's must-see spots. The Victorian mansion is filled with period rooms upstairs and servant quarters downstairs. Outside, the gardens are filled with rhododendrons and azaleas and an impressive rock garden.

Step back in time at the Traditional Farms, where you can see what rural life was like in the 1930s and 1940s. Don't miss the craft workshops, and watch weavers, potters and bookbinders at work.

From there, take a spin on part of the Ring of Kerry. Even a short drive gives you those postcard-perfect views, including pretty villages like Sneem.

In the evening, head to Dingle. This harbour town has fishing boats bobbing in the water, colourful shopfronts, and more than enough cosy pubs to keep you entertained. For dinner, make it seafood, chowder, mussels, or whatever's freshest that day.

Day Two

Hit the road for the Sleat Head Drive. This circular route is one of Ireland's most beautiful coastal drives, winding past beaches, cliffs, and ancient sites like the beehive huts. On a clear day, you'll spot the Blasket Islands offshore and even distant views of the Skelligs on the horizon.

The drive starts and ends in Dingle, looping through villages where Irish is still spoken on a daily basis. Expect plenty of photo stops:



Gap of Dunloe, Co Kerry

Ventry Beach, Coumeenoole Strand (a Ryan's Daughter film location), and the iconic pier at Dún Chaoin, where ferries cross to the Great Blasket. You'll also pass historic gems like Dunbeg Fort and the tiny stone Gallarus Oratory, which has stood for over a thousand years.

Before you leave, don't miss the Gap of Dunloe, a mountain pass straight out of a movie scene. With stone bridges, glassy lakes, and peaks rising all around, it feels like you are stepping into another world. You can walk, cycle, drive, or take a traditional jaunting car through the gap. For an extra adventure, book a boat trip that links the Gap with the Lakes of Killarney (gapofdunloetours.com).



Slea Head, Co Kerry

for walking and wildlife watching.

Next stop is the Irish National Heritage Park (irishheritage.ie) in Ferrycarrig, just outside town. This outdoor museum is like stepping into a time machine, taking you through 9,000 years of history. Walk through Stone Age settlements, Viking huts, ringforts, and medieval sites. You can even book a guided tour with costumed guides or, for the really adventurous, stay overnight in a reconstructed ringfort!

In the evening, Wexford's restaurants are famous for serving the freshest catch!

48 Hours in Wexford

Day One

Start your day with a walk on the 11km Curraclloe Beach, with soft white sand, rolling dunes, and plenty of space to clear your head. It's also famous as the opening scenes of *Saving Private Ryan* were filmed here, with local Wexford extras. In autumn, the beach feels even more dramatic (and much quieter!).

Curraclloe is also perfect for nature lovers. Stroll the Raven Nature Reserve trail through dunes and woodlands, where you might spot red squirrels, grey seals, and birdlife. Lifeguards are on duty in the summer, but year-round, this Blue Flag beach is a safe spot

Day Two

Start your morning with a peek inside the National Opera House (nationaloperahouse.ie) in Wexford town, Ireland's first custom-built opera house. Coming up are family favourites like comedy from Mario Rosenstock's Gift Grub Live 25 (8th November), and Ballet Ireland's Cinderella (29th November). Big concerts are also on the calendar, from Nathan Carter (4th December) to Phil Coulter's Tranquility by Candlelight (19th December). And the world-famous Wexford Festival Opera runs 17th October-1st November, with rare operas, recitals and pop-up performances. Next, head south to the Hook Peninsula. Standing at the tip is Hook Lighthouse



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Wexford Festival, Co Wexford

(hookheritage.ie), often called the oldest operational lighthouse in the world. Built more than 800 years ago, this medieval tower has been guiding ships for centuries. Brave the 115 steps to the balcony for incredible views, or just linger with a coffee at the visitor centre and watch the sea roll in.

If you're lucky, you might even spot whales offshore!

48 Hours in Cork

Day One
Start in Cork City, Ireland's culinary capital. First stop is the English Market. This covered Victorian market has been feeding Cork for over 230 years. Look through the stalls, sample local cheese, and fresh bread, and soak up the atmosphere. Try some of Cork's more traditional fare like drisheen or spiced beef. Once you're fuelled up, it's time to get your bearings on the water. Head to Custom House Quay and hop on a Cork Harbour Cruise (corkharbourcruises.com). The two-hour



Curraclloe Beach, Co Wexford

guided tour takes you down the River Lee, past Blackrock Castle with its turreted towers, and all the way out to Cobh. From the boat you'll see pastel-coloured houses in Passage West, Monkstown Castle (built in 1636 as a surprise gift from Anastacia Archdeacon to her husband), and even Spike Island. With 360° views from the top deck, it's the perfect



English Market, Co Cork

way to appreciate Cork's maritime history and scenery.

Back in the city, it's all about food. Cork has a well-earned reputation as Ireland's foodie hub, with everything from high-end dining to street food. Best of all, pop into Sin É in Cork city with live trad nearly every night!

Day Two
Just 30 minutes from Cork City sits Kinsale, a harbour town so colourful it feels like walking through a postcard. Known as Ireland's gourmet capital, it's packed with award-winning restaurants and cafés, so lunch here is a must. Afterwards, head up to Charles Fort (heritageireland.ie). This massive star-shaped fortress has guarded the harbour for over 300 years, and the sea views from its ramparts are especially beautiful in autumn.

If you'd rather head further west, West Cork is calling. This stretch of coastline has foodie favourites, craft markets, or a tiny village pub that serves seafood straight off the boat (lifeboatinn.ie).

Back in the city, end your trip with a stroll through Fitzgerald Park, 18-acres on the banks of the River Lee. Once the site of Cork's 1902 International Exhibition, today it's home to lawns, sculptures, a lily-dotted pond, and even the 'Shakey Bridge', the pedestrian bridge that has wobbled its way into Cork folklore.

48 hours might seem short, but you don't need weeks to make autumn unforgettable.



Kinsale Town, Co Cork

All images courtesy of Fáilte Ireland

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Art for autumn afternoons

Exploring galleries, sculptures, and the creativity of Ireland

→ Galway

The Galway Arts Centre (galwayartscentre.ie) is a must-visit, with ever-changing shows of Irish and international art. This autumn, look out for *The Air We Share* (until 21st September), exploring air quality and climate action, plus free late-night gallery events every Thursday. There's even a performance symposium at Nun's Island Theatre on 30th August.

Just around the corner, the 126 Artist-Run Gallery keeps things fresh with experimental work from up-and-coming artists. It's run by artists themselves, so you never quite know what you'll walk into, and that's the fun of it. Recent exhibitions include *Manner-isms* (until 7th September), which brings together stone, textiles, and print to explore memory, time, and the materials that shape our world.

And for art outdoors, head to Eyre Square to see the copper sails of the Galway Hooker monument, a tribute to the county's iconic fishing boats. Add in colourful murals and the whole city feels like one big open-air gallery!

→ Kerry

In Tralee, the Siamsa Tíre Arts Centre (siamsatire.com), the National Folk Theatre of Ireland, mixes theatre, music, and exhibitions in one space. Coming up are treats like *How to Be a Dancer in Seventy-Two Thousand Easy Lessons* (11-12th September), plus gigs from Eddi Reader and The Alan Kelly Gang (17th September) and George Murphy and The Rising Sons (20th September).

Further west, the Cill Rialaig Arts Centre (cillrialaigartscentre.com) near Ballinskelligs is perched on a cliff over the Atlantic. It's part gallery, part artist retreat, with exhibitions like Raphael Llewellyn's *In My Beginning Is My End* and regular Saturday art workshops for kids.



National Gallery of Ireland

In Killarney, the Killarney Art Gallery (killarneyartgallery.com) shows both contemporary Irish artists and classics like Jack B Yeats, with plenty of fresh new work to discover.

→ Cork

The Crawford Art Gallery (crawfordartgallery.ie), normally housed in a gorgeous 18th-century building, is currently closed for redevelopment until 2027. But you don't have to miss out because its collection is touring across Ireland. Right now, highlights can be seen in *Grá at Uillinn*: West Cork Arts Centre in Skibbereen (until 20th September), an exhibition selected by the Salt & Pepper LGBTQI+ Collective

with artist Toma McCullim. There's also a free lunchtime tour with curator Dr Michael Waldron on 18th September.

Back in the city, the Lewis Glucksman Gallery (glucksman.org) at UCC is a must-visit, and the building is as striking as the shows inside. This autumn's highlight is *RINN: An Ireland and Japan Dialogue on Making, Place and Time* (until 2nd November), which explores creativity across cultures.

And don't miss the Ardú Street Art Trail (corkcity.ie), which has turned Cork into an open-air gallery. 11 of Ireland's top street artists have splashed the city's walls with colourful murals, from Bishop Lucey Park to South Main Street. The name Ardú means 'rise', inspired by



Crawford Art Gallery



An Ghaioth Aniar

the city's resilience after the 1920 Burning of Cork. You can take a self-guided audio tour or just stumble across the works while exploring the city.

→ Dublin

The capital is home to some of Ireland's most famous collections. The National Gallery of Ireland (nationalgallery.ie) showcases works by Caravaggio, Vermeer, and Jack B Yeats, but it's not just about standing in front of paintings. The Gallery runs a packed programme of free tours and events, from LGBTQIA+ highlights and family-friendly tours to conservation talks and even yoga in the Grand Gallery!

For something completely different, head to the Irish Museum of Modern Art (imma.ie) in Kilmainham. IMMA's current programme includes contemporary shows like *Staying with the Trouble* and *Kith & Kin: The Quilts of Gee's Bend*. The museum's grounds are also worth exploring, dotted with outdoor art and perfect for a stroll.

All images courtesy of Fáilte Ireland



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Festival season

From oysters to Halloween parades, Ireland's autumn festivals keep the good times rolling

Howth Maritime & Seafood Festival 6-7th September 2025

There's no better way to kick off autumn than by a visit to the sea. The fishing village of Howth has a weekend packed with seafood tastings, live music, and family fun. Walk the harbour, sample the catch of the day, and browse local craft stalls. Kids will love the circus tent, kite workshops, face painting, and sea-life displays, while grown-ups can try coastal foraging walks, angling talks, and cooking demos.

There's plenty more too: take in a sea

angling exhibition, pop into a sensory-friendly quiet space, or hear folklore stories about the coast. With fishing boats bobbing in the harbour, music drifting through the streets, and the smell of chowder in the air, this festival serves up autumn by the sea.

→ [Visit eventsinfingal.ie](#)

Samhain Chiarraí

17th October-9th November

Building on the success of 2024's Kerry Homecoming Festival at Halloween, Samhain Chiarraí invites locals and visitors alike to step

into an enchanted world where the ancient traditions of Samhain come to life. At the heart of the festival lies the story of An Cailleach Chiarraí, the wise and wild Hag of Winter, who returns each year to mark the end of the harvest and the beginning of the dark half of the year. Her arrival signals the turning of the Celtic year, a time traditionally considered the Celtic New Year. The festival will run from 17th October to 9th November, taking place across key towns, alongside county-wide satellite events.

Far more than just a festival, Samhain Chiarraí aims to rekindle dúchas, Kerry's deep-rooted sense of belonging, heritage and place, while honouring the true spirit of Samhain/Halloween. Through fire, folklore, music, food and community celebration, the event offers an immersive experience that connects people with their ancestors and the arrival of winter.

→ [Visit discoverkerry.com](#)

Savour Kilkenny

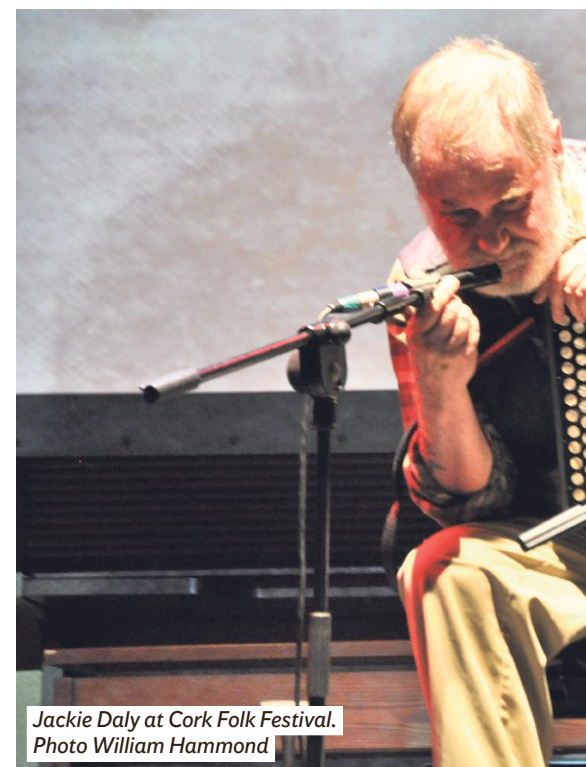
24-27th October

This October Bank Holiday, Kilkenny becomes Ireland's ultimate foodie playground with over 100 market stalls, artisan treats, and street food set against the backdrop of Kilkenny Castle. Expect live cookery demos from some of Ireland's best-known chefs, including Kevin Dundon, Rachel Allen, Paul Flynn, Rory O'Connell, and TikTok star Daniel Lambert.

But it's not just about food, it's about the atmosphere. With spooky Samhain vibes, comedy dining nights, haunted whiskey tastings, circus shows, and live music in the castle grounds, there's something for every taste. Try cake decorating, make your own box of chocolates, join foodie walking tours, or let the kids roll up their sleeves at a pizza-making class. For something different, explore art-inspired tastings at Butler Gallery or sustainable living talks and fashion swaps at Mountain View.

With 68,000 people flocking here last year, Savour Kilkenny 2025 promises to be even bigger and tastier!

→ [Visit savourkilkenny.com](#)



Jackie Daly at Cork Folk Festival.
Photo William Hammond

Armagh Food & Cider Weekend

4-7th September

Kick off September with a bite of autumn in Orchard County. The Armagh Food & Cider Weekend is four days of orchard adventures, foodie fun, and celebrations filled with cider. Walk through the apple orchards, sip some craft ciders, and tuck into everything from pop-up dining to farm-to-fork suppers and tasty street food.

The programme is bursting with events. Take a behind-the-scenes Tayto Castle Tour, enjoy a woodland supper, or get creative at Cocktails & Canvas. Families can join in at the Big Apple Fun Day, try apple doughnut-making, or visit the artisan street market. For



Samhain Chiarraí



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something indulgent, book a luxury afternoon tea, a seafood supper club, or a chocolate-making workshop.

It's not just for grown-ups either, as there's a paw-friendly brunch, foodie trails, live music, and even a murder mystery supper. Add cider masterclasses, sweet treat demos, coffee tastings, and foraging experiences, and you've got a weekend that's filled with fun!

→ [Check out visitarmagh.com](https://www.visitarmagh.com)

Imagine Arts Festival

21st-26th October

Back for its 24th edition, Imagine Arts Festival turns Waterford into a world of creativity every October. This year's theme, Create, invites you



Armagh Food and Cider Weekend.
Image: Fáilte Ireland.

into a mix of music, theatre, dance, literature, visual arts, and heritage events spread right across the city.

Over the years, Imagine has welcomed an incredible lineup of talent, from musicians like Camille O'Sullivan, Billy Bragg, Wallis Bird, and the Irish Chamber Orchestra to writers such as John Banville, Joseph O'Connor, and Rita Ann Higgins. Comedy legends including Rich Hall, David O'Doherty, and Jason Byrne have also graced its stages, alongside visual artists like Robert Ballagh, Amanda Coogan, and Pat O'Brien.

For 2025, headline acts include the incomparable Camille O'Sullivan, returning to wow audiences once again, along with thought-provoking exhibitions from artists such as Pat O'Brien and Gillian O'Shea. Expect powerful performances, storytelling sessions, workshops, and new work from local and international talent.

→ [Visit imagineartsfestival.com](https://www.visitimagineartsfestival.com)

Cork Folk Festival

2nd-5th October

Cork comes alive this October with the 46th Cork Folk Festival, a four-day celebration of music, dance, song, and storytelling across the city. From céilís to concerts, pub sessions to workshops, this long-running festival shines a light on the very best of traditional and folk music in Ireland and beyond.

This year's line-up is one of the biggest yet. Legendary flautist Matt Molloy will join fiddler John Carty as part of the headline acts, while Flook, with Brian Finnegan, Sarah Allen, Ed Boyd, and John Joe Kelly, mark an incredible 30 years on the road. Tom Cussen's Shaskeen are also set to perform as they celebrate an impressive 50 years of making music together. A major highlight will be the Irish Concertina and MGCE Orchestras conducted by Cormac McCarthy, featuring NOTIFY with Pádraig Rynne and Tara Breen.

A very special moment of the festival will see Matt Cranitch perform alongside Jackie Daly in an all-star concert celebrating Jackie's 80th birthday at the Triskel. Also at the Triskel, acclaimed artists Lisa Knapp and Gerry Diver bring their unique blend of Irish and English folk traditions to Cork.

Whether you're a seasoned trad fan or a newcomer looking to experience Ireland's folk traditions, Cork Folk Festival promises an unforgettable four days of music and culture in the heart of the city.

→ [Visit corkfolkfestival.com](https://www.corkfolkfestival.com). For those planning to immerse themselves fully, the Spáilpín Season Ticket (€55) covers all An Spáilpín Fánach concerts, offering incredible value across the weekend

Púca Festival

30th October-2nd November

If Halloween is your season, this is the place to be. Set in the birthplace of Samhain, Púca lights up Trim and Athboy with fire shows, parades, music, markets, folklore, and lots of mischief. By day, it's family-friendly, with heritage tours, craft markets, foraging walks and circus workshops. By night, it becomes eerie, with fire processions, projections on Trim Castle, and the Lighting of the Samhain Fire at the Hill of Ward.

The 2025 lineup includes: The High Kings, The 2 Johnnies, Block Rockin' Beats with Groove Armada DJ set, Blindboy, Qween, Emma Doran, and Jason Byrne, who will all keep crowds buzzing across four nights. Add in banquets, storytelling sessions, cabaret, comedy, and even a Samhain Circus, and you've got a festival that mixes Ireland's ancient roots with modern fun.

→ [Visit pucafestival.com](https://www.visitpucafestival.com)

DIG INTO WATERFORD
Where Ireland Begins

[visitwaterford.com](https://www.visitwaterford.com)



Killashee Hotel



Check in for autumn

Your guide to Ireland's best hotels and offers this season

The Kingsley, Co Cork

Experience the excitement of the city and the relaxation of a luxury spa, with an autumn break at The Kingsley, Co Cork. Ideally located along the banks of the River Lee, you can enjoy relaxing spa therapies at The Spa at The Kingsley, which features an outdoor hydrotherapy pool overlooking the river, heated loungers, and holistic wellness treatments. Whether you're strolling the nearby Shandon Mile walk under trees full of golden leaves, exploring Cork's cultural gems, or simply unwinding in your deluxe river-view room, The Kingsley offers an elegant way to embrace autumn.

With cosy bedrooms, a bistro-style restaurant, and Perch, a coffee and wine bar with views out over the River Lee, a luxury award-winning spa, and pet-friendly rooms, The Kingsley has everything you need for an urban retreat in Cork city.

Autumn breaks start from €229 per night, with options that include spa access and breakfast.

→ To find out more, visit thekingsley.ie



Lawlor's of Naas

Lawlor's of Naas, Co Kildare

As the leaves turn, there's no better time to uncover Kildare's hidden gems with an autumn break at Lawlor's of Naas, the 4-Star destination hotel for cosy escapes, race day adventures, and unforgettable memories.

From woodland walks at Donadea Forest Park to canal-side strolls along the Royal Canal Greenway, autumn in Kildare is a nature-lover's dream. Guests can also explore nearby KillinThomas Woods or take in sweeping views

from Cupidstown Hill.

Lawlor's is perfectly located for autumn race days at Curragh, Naas, and Punchestown, and golf enthusiasts can tee off at Palmerstown House, Craddockstown, or the historic Royal Curragh. Afterward, return to stylish interiors and savour seasonal dining at Vi's Restaurant or Afternoon Tea surrounded by heritage charm.

Autumn Escape Packages include a two-night break with dinner from €422 or an overnight stay with breakfast from €189 for two sharing.

"We often say that life's best moments happen off the beaten track, and that's exactly what an autumn break at Lawlor's offers," says Dee Nix, CEO of Lawlor's of Naas.

→ Book at lawlors.ie



The Bailie Hotel

The Bailie Hotel, Co Cavan

The Bailie Hotel, proudly recognised with a recent tourism award, is the perfect base for an autumn escape in the heart of Bailieborough. With warm hospitality, modern comforts, and a central location, it's ideal for couples, families, or solo travellers looking to explore the season's colours and charm.

September rates offer excellent value at €120 per night Sunday to Friday and €140 on Saturdays, including a full Irish breakfast. Whether you're enjoying a walk through nearby Castle Lake Forest or winding down with dinner in the hotel, The Bailie makes every stay feel special.

For those seeking a bit of local history, the Bailieborough Bridewell Museum is well worth a visit, entry is just €7.50 per adult, with more details at bailieboroughbridewell.com.

→ To book your autumn break or find out more, visit bailiehotel.ie

The Clybaun Hotel, Co Galway

Looking for an autumn escape? The Clybaun Hotel, Galway, is ideally situated between Salthill and Galway City and is located on the



The Clybaun Hotel

doorstep to Connemara, The Aran Islands and the Wild Atlantic Way. There are plenty of places to visit and activities to enjoy.

Choose from a selection of superior double, twin and family rooms. Bring the swimming gear and enjoy the well-equipped leisure centre, with a gym, Canadian hot tub and swimming pool.

The Clybaun Midweek Autumn Offer includes welcome chocolates in your room on arrival, a main course and glass of wine or beer in the evening and a sumptuous breakfast in the morning. No need to leave too early as late check-out until 1pm is also included. With prices from €115 per person sharing, it is available on selected dates this autumn.

→ Discover this and more great offers at The Clybaun Hotel by visiting clybaunhotel.ie



Kenmare Bay Hotel

Kenmare Bay Hotel, Co Kerry

As autumn settles over the picturesque town of Kenmare, and the landscape transforms into rich hues of red and gold, there's no better time to retreat to the comfort and charm of the Kenmare Bay Hotel & Resort. Nestled in the heart of Kerry, the hotel offers the perfect balance of relaxation and adventure.

Whether you're looking to unwind or explore, they have something for everyone. Savour exquisite dining at The Bay Bistro, relax in one of their deluxe bedrooms or luxury self-catering lodges, or recharge at The Bay Health Club, complete with a heated pool, jacuzzi, sauna, and gym. Plus, guests who book directly enjoy complimentary EV charging, making your jour-



The Kingsley



ney as effortless as your stay.

Step outside and discover Kenmare's quaint shops, art galleries, award-winning restaurants, and scenic walking trails, all just a few minutes' walk from their doorstep.

With exclusive Autumn Break packages available, this is the perfect season to experience the beauty of Kerry and the warmth of Irish hospitality.

→ **Escape. Relax. Indulge. Your autumn adventure begins at Kenmare Bay Hotel & Resort. Visit kenmarebayhotel.com**

Riverside Park Hotel, Co Wexford

As the leaves turn golden this autumn, escape to the Riverside Park Hotel in the picturesque town of Enniscorthy, Co Wexford. Starting from €139 in total, their Autumn Break package includes luxurious overnight accommodation, delicious full Irish breakfast plus prosecco and chocolates in your room on arrival.

Nestled along the banks of the River Slaney, the Riverside Park Hotel offers a blend of comfort and luxury. Guests can enjoy their extensive facilities, including state-of-the-art leisure club, swimming pool and gymnasium. Choose from three dining outlets, Prom Bar, Alamo Steakhouse, and Moorings Restaurant for a delicious meal and sip cocktails while overlooking the stunning river views.

Get out and explore the local area during your stay. Take a stroll on the beautiful Curracloe Beach, discover the historic gardens of Johnstown Castle or delve into history at the Irish National Heritage Park.

This autumn, let them look after you. Book now to experience the perfect blend of luxury, relaxation and local charm.

→ **Visit riversideparkhotel.com**

The Metropole Hotel, Co Cork

For a memorable city escape brimming with charm, elegance, and indulgence, look no further than The Metropole Hotel's Sip, Stay & Savour package. Priced at just €199 for two guests, this exceptional offer is ideal for couples or friends seeking a relaxing break in the heart of Cork.

Enjoy overnight accommodation in one of the hotel's beautifully appointed bedrooms, complete with a full Irish breakfast the next morning. Upon arrival, savour a delicious artisan charcuterie board paired with a bottle of wine - the perfect way to unwind.

Located in the city centre, The Metropole Hotel is just a short stroll from both the train and bus stations, making it a convenient and luxurious retreat. This offer represents superb value and a taste of Cork's warm hospitality in one of its most iconic hotels.

→ **Visit themetropolehotel.ie**



Killashee Hotel, Co Kildare

Get immersed in nature in the beautiful setting of the 4-Star Killashee Hotel outside Naas in Co Kildare with the 'Timeless Discovery' stay. Located on 55 acres of gardens and woodlands, the hotel and grounds will create a memorable and relaxing experience for friends and family to enjoy this autumn.

Stay two nights in a luxurious room and enjoy the award-winning breakfast each morning, a charming two course lunch in the Oak & Anvil one day and a delightful three course dinner in The Pippin Tree restaurant on an evening of your choice. Immerse yourself in the beauty of the estate with its autumnal woodland trails and garden walks.

Guests also have complimentary use of the leisure centre's sauna, steam room, jacuzzi and 25m swimming pool. Explore the surrounding visitor attractions that include some of the country's most important historical and monastic sites. There are also the destination locations such as Craddockstown Golf Course, Kildare Village and Newbridge Silverware, all with a 10pc special discount. Killashee is located close to the National Stud and Japanese Garden and Russborough House and 15 minutes from The Curragh and Punchestown racecourses.

Total price for two people sharing for two nights stay from €460.

→ **Visit killasheehotel.com**



The Talbot Hotel, Co Wexford

Embrace the charm of the South East this

autumn with a cosy getaway in the heart of Wexford Town. Whether you're planning a relaxing retreat, a scenic golfing break, or a laid-back shopping weekend, Talbot Hotel Wexford and Talbot Suites at Stonebridge offer the perfect base for your seasonal escape.

Just a two-minute walk from the bustling town centre, Talbot Hotel Wexford blends comfort and convenience with 107 stylishly appointed rooms, a vibrant bar, a newly refurbished restaurant, and a state-of-the-art leisure centre complete with a heated swimming pool, ideal for unwinding after crisp autumn days. Guests can enjoy complimentary car parking, Wi-Fi, and live music three nights a week, making it a favourite for both leisure and business stays.

For those in search of extra space and flexibility, Talbot Suites at Stonebridge offers 69 luxurious self-catering apartments, perfect for family breaks, romantic getaways, or longer executive stays. All guests at the Suites enjoy secure complimentary parking and full access to the leisure centre at Talbot Hotel Wexford, just 100 yards away.

Experience the colours and flavours of autumn in Wexford, explore historic sites, stroll along golden beaches, or cosy up in comfort as the season turns. Your perfect autumn break awaits.

→ **Visit talbotcollection.ie**



Cork International Hotel, Co Cork

Travelling through Cork Airport? The Cork International Hotel offers the ideal solution for stress-free travel with its Stay, Park & Fly package. Whether you have an early morning departure or a late-night arrival, this convenient offer allows you to relax in style just minutes from the terminal.

The package includes an overnight stay either before or after your flight, secure parking for the duration of your trip (from 2 to 21 days),

and a complimentary shuttle bus to and from the airport.

Guests departing early can avail of a 'Grab & Go' breakfast from 4am to 7am, featuring pastries, fruit, yoghurt, juices, and freshly brewed tea and coffee. A hot breakfast option is also available for later flights.

With modern, spacious rooms and exceptional service, the Cork International Hotel ensures your journey begins and ends in comfort. The perfect start to any getaway.

→ **Visit corkinternationalairporthotel.com**



The Gleneagle, Co Kerry

This October, return to where the memories were made with the brand-new Gleneagle Reunion Breaks, designed especially for returning guests who know and love the Gleneagle way. Join the Gleneagle Reunion Experience from 5th-8th October.

Enjoy three or four nights of warm hospitality, great food, lively entertainment, and the chance to catch up with old friends in the welcoming surrounds of the Gleneagle Hotel, Killarney.

Your break includes:

- Full Irish breakfast and three-course dinner daily
- Nightly dancing in the Gleneagle Ballroom
- Afternoon sing-alongs and social dancing
- Welcome reception and farewell coffee gathering
- Memory Wall, guest-led song and story sessions
- Daily leisure activities and optional day tours
- Complimentary leisure centre access and shuttle transfers

Your exclusive 2025 Gleneagle Reunion Pin Spaces are limited so don't miss this chance to return, reunite and relive the good times.

→ **Book now at gleneaglehotel.com or call (064) 667 1550**



Family fun

Your guide to adventures everyone will love

Surf's up!

For families looking to make the most of the seaside this autumn, Freedom Surf School in Tramore, Co Waterford is the place to go. This award-winning surf centre has been teaching people to ride the waves safely for decades. Located on Tramore's 5km Blue Flag beach, Freedom offers lessons for everyone, from complete beginners to adventurous teens and parents who fancy giving it a go. There are junior surf lessons, adult classes, and even special family surf sessions where you can all learn together. If you want to dive deeper, there are surf camps and 'surf & stay' packages too.

Freedom Surf School also runs stand-up paddleboarding, coastal hikes, ecology walks, and even unique Irish-language surf programmes. The team at Freedom, led by founder Billy Butler, are locals who know Tramore inside-out. They'll share stories about the coastline, keep everyone safe in the water, and make sure kids and adults alike head home with sandy toes and windswept hair.

From approx. €35 for a group surf lesson (all gear included). Family and group packages available. Pre-booking is essential, especially during weekends and school holidays.

→ Call 051 386773 / 086 3914908 or visit freedomsurfschool.com

A-maze-ing adventures

Get ready to get lost on purpose at The Kildare Maze!

As Leinster's largest hedge maze, it covers 1.5 acres with over 2km of winding paths leading to a viewing tower at the centre. Designed in the shape of St Brigid's cross, it's a challenge the whole family will love.

There's also a wooden maze (with routes that change regularly), an adventure trail, crazy golf, a zip wire, and even a toddler's play area. Adults enter for €9, children/students €7 (includes all activities). Make sure to check opening times on their website as they are subject to change.

→ Visit kildaremaze.com



Pumpkin to talk about

Just outside Killarney town in Headford, the family-run Killarney Pumpkin Farm has become one of the best Halloween days out.

Children can pick their very own pumpkin, run through the corn maze, and pop by the witch's haunted cottage. There's also a Pumpkin Pixie Village, the spooky Farmer's Ruin, and even a haunted ghost bus with live storytelling, but don't worry, it's more fun than frightening!

When you need a break from the adventures, say hello to the alpacas or tuck into tasty treats at Eleven77 at The Farm. The farm is open throughout October, with both daytime and 'After Dark' sessions, but tickets sell out quickly, so make sure to book ahead. Bring wellies, a warm coat, and maybe even a change of clothes for the kids. Mud, pumpkins and happy faces are all part of the fun!

→ Visit killarneypumpkinfarm.ie

Woolly good walks

What's cooler than hiking at Ireland's most northerly point? Doing it with a fluffy alpaca by your side!

Founded in 2019 by local farmer John McGonagle, Wild Alpaca Way was created to protect the land and share the breathtaking beauty of Malin Head in a sustainable way. Today, John and his three sons welcome visitors for daily guided treks at 11am, 1pm, and 3pm, where each person is paired with one of

their 37 alpacas.

The gentle animals lead you along a private trail on the Knockamany Bens, with sweeping views over Malin Head, the Atlantic Ocean, and the golden sands of Five Finger Strand. It's the kind of scenery that stops you in your tracks, though your alpaca might tug you along if he spots a patch of tasty grass!

Perfect for families, couples, or solo explorers. This year, the family launched Wild Alpaca Wool, spinning the super-soft fleece from their alpacas into a range of beautiful keepsakes. It means you can take home a little piece of Donegal too.

Book in advance because these alpacas are starting to become very popular!

→ Visit wildalpacaway.com



Dome Family Entertainment Centre

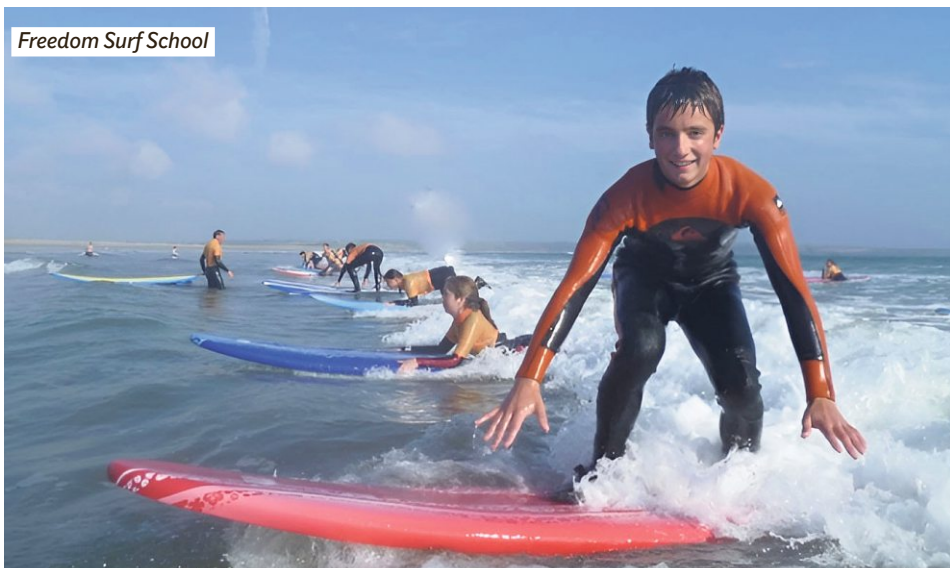
Under the dome

If it's autumn time, then there might be some rainy days, and Carlow's biggest indoor play zone, the Dome Family Entertainment Centre, has everything you need to keep kids (and parents!) entertained.

From bowling and laser tag to arcade games, pool and a sports simulator, there's something for every age group. The star of the show is Congo Quest, a jungle-themed soft play area covering a whopping 8,000 square feet. Kids under 12 can clamber through ball pools, crawl through tubes, slides, and even a mini soccer court, while parents relax with a coffee at the Congo Café. You'll be heading home with happy (and tired!) faces.

→ Admission: Bowling €36 per lane per hour; Congo Quest €6 midweek/€8 weekends (€5.50pp for 3+ kids); Laser Zone €7 all week. Visit dome.ie

Freedom Surf School



Beyond the guidebooks

Our top picks of Ireland's hidden gems prove you don't need to travel far to find something unforgettable

History at work

Take a step back in time at the Donaghmore Famine Workhouse Museum in Co Laois. Once a 19th-century workhouse, this restored site near Portlaoise tells the story of the families who lived and struggled within its walls during and after the Great Famine. Between 1845 and 1849, around 1,200 people sought refuge here, leaving behind stories of hardship and survival.

Walking through the dormitories, kitchen, and waiting hall, you'll get a real sense of what life was like inside. Guided tours and exhibits bring these stories to life, showing not only the suffering but also the resilience of local people. In the 1920s, the British Army used it as a barracks, and later it became home to the Donaghmore Co-Operative Society, serving local farmers. Today, the museum brings these stories together and keeps the history alive.

This isn't your usual tourist spot, but it's one you won't forget!

→ For opening hours, call 086 8296685 or email info@donaghmoremuseum.com



Donaghmore Famine Workhouse Museum

Mining the past

In north Roscommon, the Arigna Mining Experience is a real hidden gem for history lovers. Here, you can head underground into Ireland's last working coal mine!

But before you put on your hard hat, walk through the exhibition space where old mining tools, photographs, and even original video footage tell the story of 400 years of mining in the valley. Then it's time to descend below ground. With sound and light effects, and guided by former miners, you'll see exactly what life was like for miners who spent long days deep in the rock. If you've still got energy,

follow part of the Miner's Way and Historical Trail, which traces the paths miners once walked through Roscommon, Leitrim, and Sligo.

With a café, a gift shop full of local crafts, and free parking, it's easy to spend a few fruitful hours here.

→ Open daily, 10am-5pm. Tours last approx. 45 minutes-1 hour. Visit arignaminingexperience.ie

Frozen in time

Reopening in October after major renovations, the Shackleton Experience is set to be one of the world's leading polar museums, and

you'll find it in Athy, Co Kildare. Housed in a beautifully restored 300-year-old building on the town square, this immersive attraction celebrates the life and adventures of Sir Ernest Shackleton, the legendary Antarctic explorer born just a few miles away in Kilkea.

Inside, you'll find artefacts from Shackleton's expeditions, from an original sledge and harness to a model of the Endurance, and even the cabin where he spent his final days. A 30-seater audio room brings his journeys to life with film footage, and on the October Bank Holiday, the Shackleton Autumn School brings experts and enthusiasts



Blasket Centre

from around the world to Athy to share stories, ideas, and inspiration about exploration and leadership. Reopening just in time for autumn, it's a day out you won't want to miss.

→ Visit shackletonmuseum.com for more updates

The 'write' side of the Atlantic

On the Dingle Peninsula, the Blasket Centre tells the story of the islands and the Irish-speaking community who once lived there.

Through interactive exhibitions and displays, you'll step into the world of the islanders who faced wild weather, isolation, and emigration before the last families left the Great Blasket in 1953. The Centre also shines a light on their literary tradition, with classics like Peig, The Islandman, and Twenty Years A-Growing capturing island life in detail.

As a Wild Atlantic Way Signature Discovery Point, the Blasket Centre also has stunning clifftop views of the islands and coastline, which are worth the trip alone! Inside, you'll also find a café, bookshop, and plenty of space to stop and take it all in.

→ Visit heritageireland.ie

All images courtesy of Fáilte Ireland



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Haunted history

Autumn is also spooky season! With Halloween just around the corner, there are lots of ghostly legends and scary activities around the country. Here are some of the spookiest spots to check out this season

Family frights

If you want a spooky day out with something for everyone, head to the Halloween Fall Festival at Secret Valley Wildlife Park in Clonroche (4th October-2nd November). By day, families can enjoy tractor rides, an expanded pumpkin patch, a witches' village, woodland trails, bouncy castles and, of course, meeting the park's rescued animals. Every ticket even includes a pumpkin to take home. It's a full day of autumn adventure with just the right amount of spooky fun.

But when the sun goes down, the real terror begins. 'The Cornmaze Massacre', Wexford's scariest adult scare night, turns the park into a living nightmare with 10+ themed scare zones, including The Asylum, Riot Night, and Car-NEVIL. Live actors, immersive sets, and the eerie countryside setting make this a horror experience like no other. It's so intense you'll need to sign a waiver before entering, and refunds aren't given if you can't make it out (you probably will, though!).

→ Visit secretvalley.ie and cornmazemassacre.ie

Spooktacular stays in the Boyne Valley

Looking for a break with a little magic this Halloween? The Boyne Valley has you covered! Trim Castle Hotel is serving up family feasts and tickets to Emerald Park, while The Johnstown Estate mixes luxury with fun thanks to its

Halloween Kids Club, fairy trail, and a relaxing spa for the grown-ups. In Kells, Headfort Arms Hotel turns history into adventure with a Mystery Trail full of Celtic crosses and ancient secrets. Over at Knightsbrook Hotel, families can dive into the Púca Festival, Emerald Park thrills, and even a spooky day at Causey Farm.

Castle Arch Hotel is right in the middle of Trim's Púca celebrations, while Loughcrew Estate has room for up to 17 guests and a Halloween garden event to match. If you prefer the seaside, then the Cottages are offering 15pc off coastal stays. For something cosy, both the Ardboyne Hotel and Newgrange Hotel make autumn getaways extra snug with their seasonal packages.

And if that's not enough, the region is packed with options, from boutique B&Bs like Caravogue House to elegant escapes like Bellinter House, Tankardstown, and Rock Farm Slane. Whether you want thrills, chills, or just a cosy



autumn getaway, the Boyne Valley has it all. → For all the details, and plenty more to see and do, visit discoverboynevalley.ie

A bloody good time

Leap Castle is Ireland's most haunted castle. Built back in the 1200s, it was home to the O'Carroll clan, who were not exactly peaceful neighbours. Their feuds were brutal, and

the castle walls seemed to have soaked up the drama. The scariest spot is the Bloody Chapel, where ghostly figures are said to appear and icy cold patches stop visitors in their tracks!

Visitors are welcome and current owner, Sean Ryan, loves to tell visitors stories of Leap's history of massacres, murders, and probable occult practices as well as the legends of its resident ghosts such as the Red Lady, thought to

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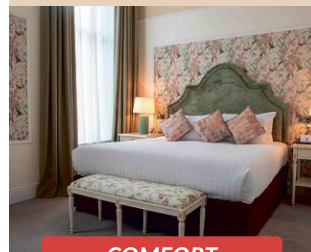
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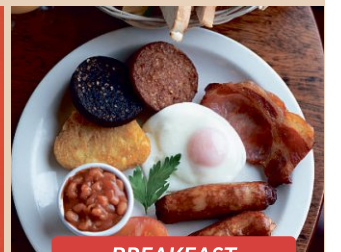
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Sean Ryan, Leap Castle.
Image: Fáilte Ireland.

be a Darby family member who once owned the castle; the spirit of a governess who only appears to blonde visitors; and two little girls, Emily and Charlotte, whose laughter you might hear in the halls. Sean even talks of the mysterious 'elemental', a sinister presence believed to have been born out of centuries of suffering within the walls.

Guests are handed torches and invited to climb the narrow steps up to the Bloody Chapel itself. Here, one O'Carroll brother is said to have murdered another as he said Mass at the altar. You'll leave feeling as if the ghosts of the

past are very much still alive!
→ **The castle is open to visitors on request. Open Monday-Saturday, 10am-5pm. Contact Sean Ryan at 086 8690547 or email seanfryan@outlook.com. Visit leapcastle.net**

Jurassic larks
For a Halloween break with some real frights, Jurassic Newpark in Kilkenny has you covered. Running from 25th October to 2nd November, this family-friendly festival is packed with themed activities. Kids can get involved in a Harry Potter Halloween experience, get sort-



Jurassic Newpark

ed into Hogwarts houses, decorate chocolate apples, or test their bravery in Aragog's spider tunnel.

There's also a Haunted Castle, a spooky cabin filled with creepy surprises, a Wicked Walk among lurking dinosaurs, and a Halloween Express train that chugs through the park with some ghostly commentary. Younger visitors can join a Wizard Class or explore the Dino Den, while the whole family can enjoy the scare room, scavenger hunts, and plenty of photo ops.

→ **Tickets are €18.50 per person and include all Halloween activities. Families staying at the Newpark Hotel also get complimentary access to Jurassic Newpark, along with hotel perks like the outdoor infinity pool and family rooms. Book at bookings@jurassicnewpark.com or call +353 87 176 9826**

Dracula's Dublin
Dublin has its fair share of ghost stories, but it also has a direct link to one of the greatest horror stories ever written, Dracula. Bram Stoker, the city's most famous Gothic author, was born here, and from 24th to 27th October, Pat Liddy's Dark Dublin Walking Tour will guide visitors through the city's darker side. Expect tales of bodysnatchers, rebellions, executions, and hauntings together with the stories of Stoker and his gothic predecessors, including Sheridan Le Fanu and Charles Maturin. Stops include Dublin Castle, Christ Church Cathedral, St Patrick's Cathedral, and the haunted Marsh's Library.

It's a chilling walk through Dublin's grim past!
→ **Tickets €27 adult (€22 seniors/students). Book at walkingtours.ie or call (01) 832 9406**

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Active autumn

Adventures to keep the whole family moving

Offaly good adventures

Lough Boora Discovery Park in Co Offaly is like a playground for families who love mixing the outdoors with lots of creativity. The flat trails are perfect for cycling (bikes are available to hire on site) or for strolls with little legs in tow.

One of the highlights is the Sculpture Park, where giant works of art rise from the bog landscape. Here, you'll spot spirals, steel towers and even a 'Sky Train' that seems straight out of a storybook. Families can also wander the fairy trail, go bird-watching, or try a spot of angling at Loch an Dochais, which is accessible for all abilities. Afterwards, warm up in the eco-friendly café or book a guided tour to discover the park's history, wildlife, and even its ancient Mesolithic sites.

→ **Trails are open seven days a week, with bike hire, maps, and visitor facilities all available on-site. Visit loughboora.com, call 057 9340010, or email info@loughboora.com**

A shore thing

If your crew wants some thrills and stunning scenery, head to Kerry's Skellig Coast. AquaTerra Boat Tours, based on Valentia Island, run trips past the cliffs, puffin-dotted islands, and the UNESCO-listed Skellig



Skellig Michael

Michael, instantly recognisable as Luke Skywalker's hideaway in Star Wars: The Last Jedi.

For families with older kids, the Ultimate Skellig Coast Tour (ages 10+) is two hours of maritime fun, with seabird spotting, dolphin sightings, and tales of monks who carved a life out of the Atlantic's edge. Those with younger adventurers can opt for the Valentia Island Harbour Experience, a gentler trip suitable for ages two and up, where you'll see seals lounging on rocks and learn the island's seafaring stories. Either way, it's an unforgettable day out!

→ **Visit kerryaquaterra.ie**

Canoe believe it?

In Monaghan, the Tanagh Outdoor Education & Training Centre is the perfect spot for families who love a little mud on their boots. This place has lots of activities ranging from raft building and kayaking to banana boating, archery, and the legendary mudslide (a 40-metre slippery slope that kids and even bigger kids can't resist).

Water lovers are spoiled here too. The calm Dromore River is here for canoeing, kayaking, and stand-on-top kayaks, so it's perfect for beginners and younger adventurers. For the less water-inclined, there are plenty of land-based challenges too, from orienteering through leafy trails to testing your aim with archery or tackling the indoor climbing wall up to 40ft.

Everything is run by experienced instructors who hold Canoeing Ireland and British Canoe Union qualifications, so parents can relax knowing safety is top priority. Plus, all the gear, such as wetsuits, helmets, and buoyancy aids, is provided, so all you need to bring is your sense of adventure (and maybe a spare change of



Lough Borra Discovery Park

clothes for those muddy landings!).

→ **Visit tanaghoutdooreducation.com**

Big adventures in little Lilliput

If you're after an action-packed autumn adventure, head for the shores of scenic Lough Ennell in Mullingar, Co Westmeath. The Lilliput Adventure Centre is set in 50 acres of forest and parkland, making it the perfect playground for anyone who loves the outdoors. You can spend the day paddling across the calm lake in a kayak or canoe, trying your hand at archery, or teaming up for a round of laser tag. There are also challenges like raft building, capture the flag, and even rock climbing for those who want to test their limits.

It's a brilliant spot for families, school groups, or just friends looking to swap a day indoors for a day of laughs, splashes, and fresh air. The centre also runs camps, activity weekends, and even has accommodation and camping on site if you want to turn it into a mini-break!

→ **Visit lilliputadventure.com**

Tree-mendous fun

If the autumn leaves make you want to climb trees, then why not do it in style? At Zipit Lough Key in Co Roscommon, you can scale rope ladders, balance across wobbly bridges, leap into cargo nets and fly through the treetops on zip lines. It's like a giant playground in the forest, but for all ages.

Set in the Lough Key Forest Park, the courses range from beginner-friendly circuits to adrenaline-packed challenges. Safety gear and trained instructors mean you can relax and focus on the fun, or on summoning some courage for that big jump!

After your three-hour treetop adventure, you can catch your breath over a hot drink and snack at the café, or head off to explore more of the park. There are lakeside walks, the canopy walk and a maze at the visitor centre, so there's plenty to fill the rest of your day.

→ **Pre-booking is advised, especially if you're bringing a group of children. Visit zipit.ie**

All images courtesy of Fáilte Ireland



Lilliput Adventure Centre



Zipit Lough Key





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Hikes and bikes

Autumn adventures on two feet or two wheels

Once upon a trail

For families who love a long ramble, the Blackwater Way – Avondhu is a pretty varied hiking experience through counties Tipperary and Cork. Following the valley of the River Blackwater, this trail stretches over 126km and usually takes six days to complete, but don't worry, you don't need to walk the whole thing to enjoy it!

Starting in the village of Clogheen, the trail passes through mountain flanks, bog roads, and forest tracks. One of the most scenic sections takes you up to the famous Vee Gap, with sweeping views over the Knockmealdown Mountains. Along the way, you'll find ancient standing stones, stone circles, and cairns, turning your walk into a history lesson!

For families looking for a day trip rather than a week-long trek, it's easy to choose shorter sections, such as Clogheen to the Vee Gap or the river walk near Fermoy. The trail links villages like Kilworth and Ballynamona, where you can stop for tea, while Fermoy offers plenty of family-friendly cafes. Just don't forget sturdy boots; the off-road sections can get muddy after rain.

Wheele good fun

If you're looking for an easy family adventure this autumn, then Kerry's Greenways are just the ticket! These traffic-free trails are perfect for walking or cycling, with stunning views, fun stop-offs and plenty of fresh air. The Tralee to Fenit Greenway is a gentle 13.6km coastal route with amazing views of Fenit Harbour, while the longer 53km Listowel to Limerick Greenway winds through rivers, woods and charming towns.

It's a brilliant way to stretch your legs, enjoy the outdoors and make the most of the mid-term break. Pack a picnic, bring the bikes or



Tralee to Fenit Greenway

just go for a wander because there's something for everyone, from little explorers to grown-up adventurers.

You'll also find great places to eat, cosy spots to stay and loads of nearby attractions to round out your trip. Keep an eye out for wildlife, local art and fun signage along the way. It's a day out everyone will remember.

→ Visit discoverkerry.com

Go with the flow

Not every adventure needs steep climbs or mountain gear. Sometimes the best journeys

are the ones that take it slow, and the Grand Canal Way is exactly that. Stretching 117km from Lucan in Co Dublin through Kildare and to Shannon Harbour in Offaly, this linear trail is flat and leafy.

Following old grassy towpaths and quiet canal-side roads, the route goes past restored lock-keepers' cottages, centuries-old bridges, and still-functioning canal locks.

Of course, you don't need to tackle the whole five-day trek. Shorter sections are perfect for autumn walks or bike rides, with towns and villages along the way for coffee stops, pints, or



Cuilcagh Boardwalk Trail.
Image: Fáilte Ireland.

overnight stays. The stretch through Kildare is especially beautiful in autumn!

This is an easy-going route, making it ideal for families, casual walkers, or cyclists who just want a relaxed spin in the fresh air.

The Stairway to Heaven

If there's one Irish walk that deserves a place on every hiker's bucket list, it's the Cuilcagh Boardwalk Trail, better known as the 'Stairway to Heaven'.

The trail is around 11km in total, beginning with a gravel path that leads into the wooden boardwalk. From there, the challenge really begins. The final ascent involves more than 400 steep steps that carry you up to a viewing platform. Standing here feels like you're on top of the world, with sweeping views over Fermanagh and across into Donegal.

While the walk can be tough, it is achievable for anyone with a reasonable level of fitness. Good boots, warm layers and a bottle of water are essentials, as the mountain weather changes quickly and can catch people off guard. Facilities are limited, but toilets and parking can be found at Killykeegan Nature Reserve, a short distance away, or at the paid car park closer to the start of the trail. After the climb, many walkers stop at the nearby Marble Arch Caves visitor centre for a well-earned coffee and a slice of something sweet.

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Picture perfect

Ireland has Instagram-worthy spots, and if you're looking for the best backdrops for your feed, here's where to point your camera

The Cliffs of Moher, Co Clare

This is the star of Irish Instagram, because the Cliffs of Moher are jaw-droppingly beautiful. They tower above the Atlantic and have views that change with the light and weather. Although here's a bit of a warning: the wild Atlantic winds will give you that 'windswept chic' look, whether you want it or not!

→ **Photo tip:** Head to the main entrance, then turn right and follow the cliff walk for a few minutes to reach the Goat's Path, one of the best spots for an iconic photo. For an alternative angle, take the hiking route to the left of O'Brien's Tower, where you'll capture stunning views towards Hag's Head. Early risers win here because arriving before 9am means fewer tour buses, softer light, and plenty of space to frame your shot.

Blarney Castle & Gardens, Co Cork

Everyone knows about kissing the Blarney Stone, but the real Insta gold is in the gardens. Beyond the castle ruins lie 60 acres of fern-



Blarney Castle & Gardens

lined walkways and arboretums, the quirky Poison Garden and the magical Rock Close. Did you know that Blarney Castle & Gardens was the first estate in Ireland to be awarded the title of 'Wildlife Estate' by the European Landowners' Organisation, thanks to its conservation work and biodiversity?

Check out the Through the Artist's Eye exhibition in the Stable Yard, where artists have captured the gardens in paint, sculpture, and photography.

→ **Photo tip:** For that fairytale shot, head towards the Woodland Walk in the morning when it's misty, or time your visit to the lake walk around sunset when the swans glide by.

Glendalough, Co Wicklow

In the Wicklow Mountains National Park, this 6th-century monastic site, founded by St Kevin, is a mix of history and natural beauty. Wander through the ruins, stroll along the lakes, or just soak up the peace of this glacial valley.

Take a reflective shot by the Upper Lake, capture the ruins against the mountains, or hike up the Spinc and Glenealo Valley Walk for a panoramic view! If you've still got energy, the Green Road Walk has gentler trails and more angles of this extraordinary valley.

→ **Photo tip:** Go early morning or late afternoon for the best light (and fewer crowds). The Spinc Ridge is amazing for wide shots, but don't forget the little details too, such as the mossy stones, the woodland paths, and the autumn leaves.

Dunquin Pier, Co Kerry

This zig-zagging pier on the Dingle Peninsula



Cliffs of Moher

once served as the lifeline between the mainland and Great Blasket Island, earning it the nickname 'Sheep Highway' when farmers herded livestock down the steep path to the boats. The Irish-speaking village of Dunquin (Dhún Chaoin) even had its Hollywood moment in Ryan's Daughter, and the local pub, Kruger's, still proudly shows off photos from the shoot.

Today, Dunquin is the gateway to the Blasket Islands, with ferries running from April to September. The area is steeped in Blasket heritage and folklore and the famous writings of Peig Sayers and Thomas O'Crohan.

→ **Photo tip:** Head up the hill at sunset when there's plenty of golden light. Just don't stand too close to the edge as the cliffs are steep, and the winds can get wild.

The Dark Hedges, Co Antrim

Thanks to Game of Thrones, this twisted avenue of beech trees is now world-famous. The trees were first planted in the 1770s, and over the centuries, their branches grew together to form one of the most atmospheric natural tunnels in the world.

You'll find the Dark Hedges on Bregagh Road, an hour's drive from Belfast. The road



Castletown House

itself is closed to traffic to protect the roots, so visitors park nearby and stroll in. On screen, it became the Kingsroad where Arya Stark fled King's Landing, but in real life, misty mornings make it even more beautiful. Once you've taken your shots, explore the nearby Giant's Causeway, Carrick-a-Rede, and Dunluce Castle.

→ **Photo tip:** Go before 8am if you can. Not only is the light softer and more atmospheric, but you'll also beat the bus tours.

Castletown House & Parklands, Co Kildare

If you like your Instagram with some grandeur, Castletown House is a must. Ireland's finest Palladian mansion, it was built in the 1720s for William Conolly, the Speaker of the Irish House of Commons. Today, it's just as impressive, with sweeping 18th-century parklands on the banks of the River Liffey, elegant drawing rooms, and one of the only intact 18th-century print rooms in the country.

The parklands are free to enter and open daily from 7am to 10pm. House tours run at 11am and 2pm on select days, with highlights like sparkling Murano-glass chandeliers and the grand Long Gallery.

→ **Photo tip:** Don't miss the Lady Louisa walk by the river or the meadow with its temple ruins for backdrops that look like they're out of a period drama.

All images courtesy of Fáilte Ireland



Glendalough



The Dark Hedges



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Creative escapes

Discover the autumn getaways that inspire art, culture, and imagination!

A stroke of inspiration

As autumn colours sweep across the Fermanagh Lakelands, immerse yourself in a weekend of creativity, inspiration, and relaxation. In association with Hambly & Hambly, Lough Erne Resort presents a unique 'Sketch & Stay' retreat with acclaimed artist Eamon Colman.

This three-day escape blends the tranquillity of Lough Erne with hands-on masterclasses. Whether a beginner or seasoned artist, guests will enjoy guided workshops on sketching, colour, handmade milk paints, and plein air technique.

The weekend begins with a welcome art tour led by curator Ciara Hambly before meeting Eamon Colman. Highlights include morning workshops, an exclusive visit to Hambly & Hambly at Dunbar House with prosecco reception, and fine dining at the Catalina.

Guests will leave with a finished canvas and renewed creative confidence. The package includes a two-night luxury stay with breakfast,

Sunday lunch, Thai Spa access, and lakeside walks. From £565pp sharing.

→ **Book at +44(0)28 6632 3230 quoting "Hambly"**

Through the looking glass

If you're in Waterford, don't miss the city's most sparkling attraction, the House of Waterford. House of Waterford's esteemed factory is the beating heart of Waterford's crystal manufacture and is where their intricate, authentic, and masterful crystal pieces come



to life. Located in the heart of Waterford City's historic Viking Triangle, the factory tour gives visitors a glimpse into the wonderful world of Waterford and the astounding craftsmanship behind the iconic brand.

Develop a new-found appreciation for crystal by journeying through the factory and watch as vivid orange molten crystal is transformed into glistening works of art. Encounter Master Craftspeople who have been honing their craft for over 40 years.

Following the tour, explore the House of Waterford Retail Experience which holds the world's largest display of Waterford and a selection of some of the world's most prestigious sporting trophies like the Irish Open Trophy and the Solheim Cup.

→ **Visit houseofwaterford.com**

Dock and unwind

If you're heading off on the ferry from Rosslare, The Dock Boutique Hotel is a stylish stopover that makes your journey feel like a holiday from the very start. Just steps from the port, it's perfect for travellers sailing with Brittany Ferries to Bilbao or Cherbourg, especially if you're coming from far away and want to skip the mad early-morning dash.

With 24 beautiful rooms and suites, plus a chic restaurant to enjoy before you set sail, it's the perfect place to unwind, recharge, and get



in the travel mood. Why start your trip stressed when you can start it well-rested?
→ **Visit thedockboutiquehotel.com**

Fall into art

Nestled in the heart of Kenmare Bay, Sheen Falls Lodge is recognised as one of the world's first Two MICHELIN Key Hotels. The lodge serves as the perfect gateway to the Ring of Kerry, Beara Peninsula and the Wild Atlantic Way. Choose from elegant Lodge Rooms and Suites all boasting tranquil water views. For the ultimate secluded escape, retreat to one of the exclusive thatched cottages.

Enhance your stay by teeing off at the Ring of Kerry Golf Course, savour exquisite fine dining at The Falls Restaurant or enjoy a more relaxed affair at The Stables Brasserie.

From 14th September to 12th October, the 5-Star country estate Sheen Falls Lodge will transform into an extraordinary open-air and indoor gallery. Wander 300 acres of gardens and woodland adorned with striking life-size sculptures and iconic works by Warhol, Dalí, Rubinstein and Ireland's finest artists including Kerry native Liam O'Neill. On September 16th, join them for an exclusive Art of Conversation evening at Sheen Falls Lodge, where creativity, conversation and culinary excellence come together. Acclaimed artists Liam O'Neill, John Redmond, Jenny Belton and Patrick O'Reilly will share insights into their work, followed by a bespoke three-course dinner.

→ **For more details, please visit sheenfallslodge.ie**

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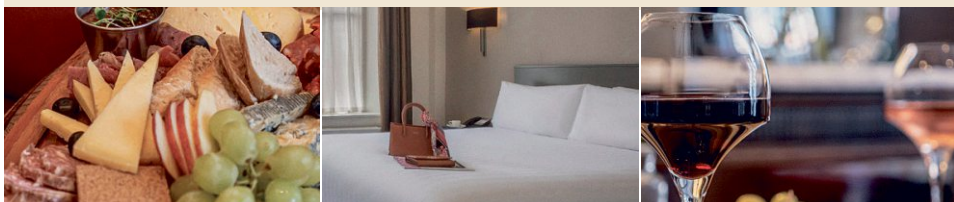
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The leaves are crunching on the ground, the air is getting colder, and your hands are just itching to wrap around a giant mug of something hot and frothy. Throw in a slice of cake or a scone, and suddenly the drizzle outside doesn't matter one bit. Across Ireland, there are so many snug little cafés, restaurants, food trails and experiences that dish up everything from creamy cheeses and fresh seafood to handmade chocolates that look almost too pretty to eat (almost!). These choices are guaranteed to keep you warm and well-fed.

Kerry

In the town of Dingle, Bean in Dingle has become something of a pilgrimage point for coffee lovers. Frothy cappuccinos, rich hot chocolates, and cakes so pretty you'll want a photo before digging in, all make it a destination spot. It's also home to Dingle Coffee Roasters, the first on the peninsula. Beans from Colombia, Brazil, and Ethiopia are roasted right here, and you can even book a tour or grab a bag to brew at home.

Down the road in Killarney, LUNA coffee + wine (lunakillarney.ie) is run by brother-and-sister team Killian and Emily Treacy. It's a stylish spot for specialty coffee, house-baked pastries, artisan sandwiches and even natural wines.

Cork

Heading into West Cork, The Stuffed Olive (thestuffedolivebantry.com) in Bantry is a family affair, run by Patricia Messom with daughters Sarah and Grace. It's tiny but mighty, and filled with the scent of freshly baked goods. Locals flock for lemon polenta cake, pies, and new specials dreamed up whenever inspiration strikes. Stocked with the best local produce, from quiches to chocolates, you'll pop in for coffee, but leave with armfuls of goodies.

Over in Cork City, Good Day Deli (gooddaydeli.ie) in the gardens of Nano Nagle Place, is a sustainable café where every dish has a conscience. They have organic veggies, fair-trade coffee, and menus that mix Irish produce with South Pacific flavours. From smoked beetroot 'Benny' to huevos rancheros, brunch here is a treat, with fresh bakes and garden views in a glassy, garden-surrounded space. There's a reason it's award-winning!

Cavan

Up in Cavan, the well-named Latte Da (latteda.ie) is a perfect pause point on your lakeland journey. They have oversized mugs and traybakes that melt in your mouth, along with daily specials from hot meals to small bites, all made with organic produce. Everything is made using healthy, organic produce, so whether you're popping in for breakfast, grabbing lunch after exploring the lakes, or just need a mid-afternoon pick-me-up, Latte Da is the place to be.

Leitrim

Over in Leitrim, The Courthouse (thecourthouse.ie) in Kinlough is set in the village's old courthouse, and is known for excellent coffee and seasonal treats. By evening, it transforms into a contemporary restaurant with lots of fresh, creative dishes that celebrate the best of Irish produce. The dishes here show off serious imagination. From Silver Hill sous vide duck breast to venison bolognese and Madras spiced lamb, you've got plenty to tempt every taste.

Mayo

Mayo, of course, has its own hidden gems. In Castlebar, Café Rua (caferua.com) is something of a local legend. Upstairs is a café filled with chatter, while downstairs the deli's shelves are stacked with seasonal goodies,



Latte Da, Co Cavan



wines, and artisan produce. Expect mugs you can barely wrap your hands around, soups hearty enough to count as dinner, and cakes that guarantee you'll sneak back for seconds.

Sligo
Following the coast, WB's Coffee House (wbcoffeehouse.ie) in nearby Sligo makes a natural stop for Wild Atlantic Way explorers. Sitting opposite the WB Yeats statue, this independent café serves rich Italian coffee, gourmet sandwiches, and sweet treats. It's also home to the Sligo Oyster Experience, where you can sample some of Ireland's freshest oysters right at the counter.

Best foodie experiences

These foodie events are definitely worth the journey

Cork Culinary Tours, Co Cork

Cork isn't called Ireland's culinary heart for nothing. Alongside the famous English Market, you'll find guided tours and trails that bring the city's food culture to life, and the Cork Culinary Tour is one of the best. Led by local guides, it's a three-hour walk through Cork's streets and legendary food halls, with plenty of tastings along the way. Expect farmhouse cheeses like Durrus and Cashel Blue, oak-smoked salmon fresh from Castletownbere, handmade Irish breads, and even a creamy pint or sip of local whiskey to finish. It's a delicious deep dive! → [Check out discoverireland.ie/cork/cork-culinary-tour](https://discoverireland.ie/cork/cork-culinary-tour)

The Chocolate Garden of Ireland, Co Carlow

Sitting on the Carlow-Wicklow border, this is paradise for anyone with a sweet tooth. Handmade chocolates and artisan ice cream are created on site, and you can even join a hands-on chocolate moulding workshop. For something extra indulgent, book in for a chocolate-themed afternoon tea. Families love it too, thanks to a playground and cosy café where you can sip a hot chocolate while taking in the countryside. → [Visit chocolategarden.ie](https://chocolategarden.ie)

Kenmare Foodie Tours, Co Kerry

Alongside Dingle's famous tasting trail, Kerry has another gem for food lovers. Kenmare Foodie Tours are led by food blogger and TV



chef Karen Coakley, who brings her passion and insider knowledge to this three-and-a-half-hour walking tour. You'll meet artisan producers, taste everything from spicy sausages and black pudding to homemade ice cream and freshly baked breads, and sip local wines along the way. Located between the Ring of Kerry and the Ring of Beara, Kenmare is already known for its food scene, but this tour offers the ultimate behind-the-scenes taste of what makes it so special. → [Visit kenmarefoodies.com](https://kenmarefoodies.com)

Brehon Brewhouse, Co Monaghan

For something a little different, head off the beaten track to Brehon Brewhouse in Inniskeen. In among Monaghan's rolling drumlins, just a few miles from poet Patrick Kavanagh's birthplace, this family-run brewery has so much history. Founder Seamus McMahon, a dairy farmer with 10 generations behind him, diversified his farm into a craft brewery and now, visitors can see the herd that supplies cream for Baileys, peek into the milking parlour, then move through to the brewhouse to watch the master brewer at work.

The experience ends in the original family home, where tastings are paired with Seamus's entertaining stories about the land, the people, and the brews that now win awards far beyond Monaghan.

→ [Visit brehonbrewhouse.ie](https://brehonbrewhouse.ie)

Ultimate Dublin Food Tour

Irish food has often been underrated, but Dublin is changing that fast. The Ultimate Dublin Food Tour takes you through the city's food scene, with old favourites and exciting new openings. Over three hours, you'll go from bakeries to seafood spots, steak restaurants to ice cream shops, tasting everything from flaky sausage rolls and farmhouse cheeses to Guinness ice cream and freshly caught fish. Guided by locals, the focus is on provenance and creativity, with every stop highlighting small, independent producers and young chefs who are redefining Irish food. It's Dublin at its most delicious.

→ [Visit devourtours.com/tours/dublin-ultimate-food-tour](https://visitdevourtours.com/tours/dublin-ultimate-food-tour)

All images courtesy of Fáilte Ireland



16TH OCTOBER - 9TH NOVEMBER

MORE WILL BE REVEALED AS THE VEIL THINS

[Discoverkerry.com/samhain-chiarrai](https://discoverkerry.com/samhain-chiarrai)

THE KINGDOM, THE SOUL OF SAMHAIN,
WHERE MYTH WALKS AND HALLOWEEN IS REBORN!



discoverkerry.com



Comhairle Contae Chiarraí
Kerry County Council





The Spirits of Meath Festival is back for 2025



■ The Spirits of Meath Festival is back for 2025.

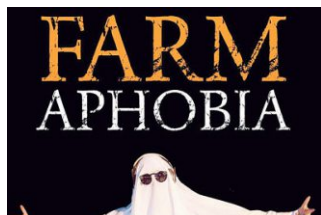
Halloween isn't just a night, it's a season – an awakening of ancient spirits and timeless tales. Here, the air grows heavy with mystery, the landscapes shift into something more, and the line between the living and the other world dissolves. The Boyne Valley is the global birthplace of Halloween, where the traditions of Samhain echo through the centuries. Bonfires once lit on the Ancient Hill of Tlachtga (Hill of Ward, Athboy) to guide spirits now illuminate vibrant festivals including Lú The Festival of Light, Púca, Spirits of Meath and Samhain Festival of Food & Culture Ancient grounds become stages for storytelling, and every shadowed corner holds a secret waiting to be discovered. Start planning your journey here where there will be more **fun by day and frights by night!**
All date, times and cost available www.spiritsofmeath.ie



■ Farmaphobia at Causey Farm IRELAND'S BIGGEST HALLOWEEN EVENT

Our tormented and twisted minds have been working overtime to ensure that Farmaphobia will return from the 3rd October with various dates to 1st November.

Now with 6 Terrifying Haunts spread over 100 Acres of Fear, Farmaphobia is **strictly 13+ and all 13-16-year old's must be accompanied on site by an adult.** Tickets must be booked in advance on the Causey farm website www.farmaphobia.com - Farmaphobia (Causey) open 3rd, 4th, 10th, 11th, 12th, 16th, 17th, 18th, 19th, 22nd of Oct- 1st of November



■ Pumpkin and Fun at Navan Adventure Centre

Get Ready for Spooky Fun and Lasting Memories Navan Adventure Centre where magic, adventure, and delightful scares await. Secure your tickets soon for October 2025! Designed especially for families, our festival promises to create unforgettable spooky memories for children ages 3 to 12yrs Tickets on sale NOW! Open 18th 19th 25th -27th Oct Sensory Session: Available October 18th 10:30 and 11.30 <https://navanadventure.ie/halloween-fun/>



■ Halloween at Funtasia Theme Park!

Pumpkin Patch Festival -for Children and families of all ages. As the leaves turn and the air grows crisp, Halloween is just around the corner! Funtasia Theme Park in Drogheda, Co. Louth, is ready to make this spooky season unforgettable with two fantastic events for the whole family: The Pumpkin Patch Festival and an exciting Halloween Waterpark Party. Open 12th 13th, 19th 20th, 26th to 30th Oct <https://www.funtasia.ie/halloween-family-fun-at-funtasia>



■ Pooka Spooka at Causey Farm 2025



Enjoy traditional games and crafts, scarecrow corn maze, mirror maze, magician lots more in

Causey Farm's popular Halloween family event. Suitable for families with children aged 2-12. Open October 11th 12th 18th 19th & 25th – 30th

www.causey.ie - Pooka Spooka. Tickets Now

■ Ghost of the Manor at Causey Farm

A Haunting Halloween Experience for older children (9+ years) This ancient mansion was home to many souls who have long since passed on ... but as Halloween approaches, their peaceful rest is disturbed... wandering through the house. . www.causey.ie - Ghosts of The Manor (Rockfield) open 24th – 30th Oct



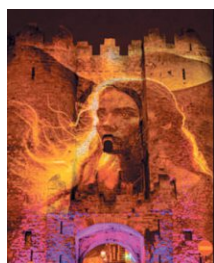
■ Púca Festival 30th October to 2nd November

Featuring a variety of events, including music, comedy, storytelling, and spectacle, with performances by artists such as The 2 Johnnies, Blindboy, Kíla, and Groove Armada, and many more. There will also be immersive experiences like Beyond The Veil: The Puca Trail the Samhain Circus, and heritage tours of Tlachtga (Hill of Ward) The festival will take place across County Meath with festival hubs of Athboy and Trim Tickets for all the events are now available on their website **Home - Puca (pucafestival.com)**



■ Lú Festival of Light

The much-anticipated Lú Festival of Light returns for its fourth spectacular year, lighting up Drogheda from 24th to 27th October. A vibrant celebration of ancient mythology, this year's festival promises an unforgettable experience for all ages. Lú Festival of Light 2025 is set to be the premier urban animation and lighting event in Ireland this year and will deliver dazzling displays, rich storytelling, extraordinary street performance and immersive atmosphere within the town.



■ Emerald Park Howl-o-ween is calling as After Dark Returns

Their thrilling night event is back and waiting for frightful fun. Dare to take on the most thrilling of attractions, such as the legendary Cú Chulainn coaster, beware of twists and turns and roar your way through our thrill-seeking attractions this Halloween. It's guaranteed to be a ghoulish affair! Please be aware After Dark is a no scare event open October 17th, 18th, 24th, 25th, 26th, 28th, 29th, and 30th.

■ Trick or Treat Trails on the Loughcrew Estate

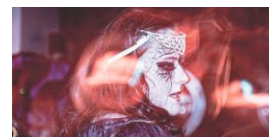
Get ready for a Spooktacular Halloween at the Loughcrew Trick or Treat Trail! Join us for a hair-raising adventure through the enchanted grounds of Loughcrew Estate, where spooky surprises, wicked fun, and plenty of treats await all ghouls and goblins! October 26th to 30th at 12 pm - 6 pm Loughcrew Estate and Gardens, Oldcastle, Co. Meath



■ Tlachtga Abhaile Walking Tour of Athboy by Tlachtga Abhaile

Delve deep inside the history and the folklore of the origins of Halloween and its links to Tlachtga.

All dates time and costs are available on the website: <https://www.discoverireland.ie/meath/living-history-walking-tour-of-athboy>



■ Samhain Festival of Food & Culture 2025

Celebrate Ireland's rich culinary and cultural heritage at Samhain Festival of Food & Culture, running from 6th to 9th November 2025 in Kells, County Meath. This unmissable festival brings together the best of Irish food and drink, featuring a packed programme of events, including the renowned Sheridans Irish Food Fair. **Follow @samhainfestivalkells** - tickets will be available to book online soon at www.foodcultureireland.ie.



■ Pumpkins in the Pines at G'N'R Café.

Along the Boyne Valley to Lakelands Greenway Families can visit G'N'R Café, which is also home to our Christmas tree farm, where pumpkins will be displayed throughout the trees. Visitors can wander among them, soak up the autumn atmosphere, and pick their perfect pumpkin to take home. Runs throughout the day. www.eventbrite.ie



■ Trim Castle Hotel

This Halloween mid-term, escape to the heart of Ireland's Ancient East with a family break at Trim Castle Hotel. Enjoy an overnight stay in a spacious Family Room, a hearty breakfast, and a relaxed evening meal with handcrafted pizzas and sides. The package includes tickets to Emerald Park (2 adults + 2 kids) . Link- <https://www.trimcastlehotel.com/promotions/halloween-getaway/>



■ The Johnstown Estate

This Halloween, treat your family to a luxury getaway at The Johnstown Estate. Enjoy a two-night stay in our spacious family rooms or self-catering lodges, Little guests will be spellbound by the Halloween Kids Club, with spooky storytelling and creative arts and crafts, while the fairy trail brings extra magic for all ages. Parents can relax in our award-winning Elemis Spa or explore the leisure centre with swimming pools, Jacuzzi, and hot tub. Book now: <https://thejohnstownestate.com/experience/halloween/>



■ Headfort Arms Hotel

Enjoy an overnight with Mystery Trails in Kells and a delicious full Boyne Valley Breakfast! Highlights include a face-to-face with the real knight of the round tower. Solving this murder should take approximately 1.5 hours and cover four kilometres distance. It is suitable for all ages and is appropriate for detectives in wheelchairs and pushchairs. https://secure.headfortarms.ie/bookings/grouped_specials



■ Knightsbrook Hotel, Golf & Spa Resort

The Home of Halloween - At Knightsbrook Hotel, Spa & Golf Resort we've got everything for the perfect family getaway this Halloween. Two Nights Bed & Breakfast 2 Course Evening Meal for all on One Evening Trick or Treat Goodie Bag for each Child Free Cancellation up to 48 hours **Link: Packages - Knightsbrook Hotel**



■ Loughcrew Estate

Lovely family stay available at Loughcrew Estate for up to 17 guests, from 25th–29th October, including complimentary access to our spooktacular Halloween event in Loughcrew Gardens. **Link - Stay – Loughcrew**



Dates, times and costs available at www.spiritsofmeath.ie