

TOP 7 TOURIST DESTINATIONS IN IRELAND



The Emerald Isle offers much more than just pubs and sheep; it features ancient megaliths, Anglo-Norman cities, ultra-modern museums, and breathtaking cliffs. Here are the best tourist destinations that should not be missed on any trip to Ireland. Brought to you by Tourism Review.

Cliffs of Moher and Burren

The Cliffs of Moher, Ireland's most photographed attraction, is breathtaking. These cliffs rise almost vertically from the Atlantic Ocean, stretching over eight kilometers and creating a spectacular view. It is no surprise that the site attracts many visitors. However, the crowds begin to thin out once you move away from the parking lot. Some people are drawn to Hag's Head, while others prefer O'Brien's Tower, where the cliffs drop 214 meters into the sea. Hiding trails also lead toward Doolin, the center of traditional Irish music.

Beneath a grassy hill lies the interactive visitor center, which features a fantastic 4D film about seals, puffins, peregrine falcons, and other wildlife that inhabit the cliffs. The award-winning building has architecture that is reminiscent of Middle-earth. The stunning landscapes in the region are believed to have inspired J.R.R. Tolkien while writing "The Lord of the Rings," particularly the nearby treeless Burren karst landscape, which includes the Pollnagollum cave. The unique limestone formations spark the imagination, enhanced by the area's exotic and vibrant flora.

The Cliffs of Moher Visitor Experience attracts over 1.1 million visitors annually, making it one of Ireland's most popular natural attractions.

Trinity College

Trinity College, located in the heart of Dublin, is a must-visit tourist destination, especially those with Ireland's literature. As Ireland's oldest university, it boasts a stunning library that houses over three million books and 5,000 manuscripts. The most renowned piece in its collection is the "Book of Kells," a Latin manuscript from the 8th century. Many regard it as the most beautiful book in the world, and it is featured in an engaging and immersive exhibition called the "Book of Kells experience," which is worth exploring.

Another highlight is the Long Room of the Old Library, an impressive 60-meter-long space. Although it is undergoing restoration, it remains a worthwhile stop, especially seeing the large artificial globe named Gaia.

Trinity College attracts over one million visitors annually, most of whom come to view the Book of Kells Exhibition and the Long Room, which are among Ireland's most popular cultural attractions.

Kylemore Abbey

Situated in the western Irish region of Connemara, which is already a feast for the eyes with its wild moors, mountains, lakes, and coastline, Kylemore Abbey is the most visited monastery on the island. Originally built as a castle, it was handed over to Benedictine nuns in 1920, and they still reside

there today. However, visitors are primarily interested in the restored Victorian rooms dating back to the Henry family's time at the abbey, featuring highlights like the ballroom, grand staircase, and 33 bedrooms.

One of the site's unique features is the Walled Garden, which visitors can explore along a scenic riverside walk. Along the way, they will encounter two reconstructed greenhouses, where they can admire a variety of herbs in the herb garden and an array of flowers in the flower garden.

The number of travelers visiting Kylemore Abbey annually has varied over the years. In 2023, 547,120 visitors were recorded; in 2024, the number dropped to 328,272.

EPIC - The Irish Emigration Museum

How is it that such a small island, with about five million inhabitants, has a significant global presence, including Irish pubs, St. Patrick's Day parades, and the Celtic sports of Gaelic football and hurling? The comprehensive and ultra-modern EPIC museum—an "acronym for "Every Person Is Connected"—effectively explains this phenomenon.

The exhibition in Dublin's center highlights the reasons for mass emigration, particularly during the 19th century, known as "The Great Famine," and the strong connections within the Irish community. The museum presents this information in an engaging and informative manner. Visitors can immerse themselves in the experience by trying on disguises, stamping passports, and exploring personal stories through short films across 20 diverse themed rooms.

EPIC typically attracts over 300,000 visitors each year. It's no surprise that EPIC has been recognized as "Europe's Leading Tourist Attraction" three times—in 2019, 2020, and 2021.

Newgrange

The 5000-year-old burial chamber of Newgrange, located 50 kilometers north of Dublin, is an early miracle of architecture and a popular tourist destination. The interior of the megalithic burial mound, which is about 75 meters long and 13 meters high, can only be entered through a narrow passageway. It is worth overcoming, especially around the winter solstice on December 21. Finally, there is an opening above the entrance through which the sun reaches the burial chamber for a quarter of an hour on those five days and bathes it in light. Then, they say, the stones look like gold.

Newgrange typically attracts around 200,000 to 250,000 visitors annually, but this number varies depending on weather and special events.

Slieve League Cliffs

Is there too much hype surrounding the Cliffs of Moher? There are many quieter alternatives on the Emerald Isle regarding dramatic cliff scenery. One such option is the Slieve League Cliffs in County Donegal, northwest of Ireland. Although getting there requires a longer drive, the journey is well worth it. Not only are these cliffs less crowded, but they also offer a natural spectacle that is free to access.

Moreover, the Slieve League Cliffs are almost three times higher than the Cliffs of Moher, boasting a height of up to 601 meters. They rank among the highest sea cliffs in Europe. For the adventurous, there's a narrow ridge known as "One Man's Path," which can be reversed, but caution is advised as it is suitable only for experienced hikers.

According to available data, over 160,000 people visit the Slieve League Cliffs yearly. This number highlights that while Slieve League sees significantly fewer visitors than more popular tourist destinations, its remote location and less developed tourist infrastructure contribute to this. Despite the lower visitor numbers, Slieve League is gaining popularity among hikers, photographers, and those seeking a more tranquil, rugged experience than the often-crowded Cliffs of Moher.

Achill Island

The Wild Atlantic Way stretches along the entire west coast of Ireland, covering 2,600 kilometers and offering plenty of opportunities for Ireland. Prioritizing stops along this scenic route is essential. Achill Island's modest claim of being "the jewels in the crown of Wild Atlantic Way" deserves recognition. As Ireland's largest island, it is "easily accessible and truly captivating.

In contrast, the resort town of Keel buzzes with activity. Here, divers speak of dolphins, porpoises, and even colossal yet harmless basking sharks spotted in the waters. Keel is also known for its excellent surf waves, scenic beach saunas, and lively island pubs. Not to be missed are the impressive 668-meter-high Cliffs of Croaghnaun, which are challenging to access. Nature enthusiasts can only reach these cliffs by boat or on foot, with Keem Beach as the starting point. Recently, Lonely Planet recognized Keem Beach as one of the 100 most beautiful beaches in the world.

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