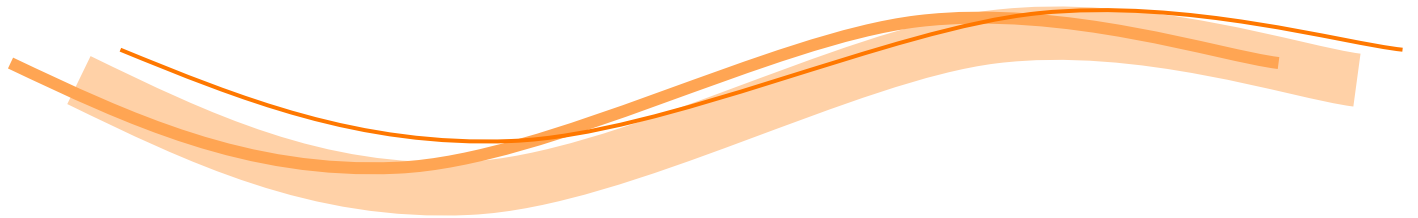




GO AHEAD TOURS & IRELAND





EF GO AHEAD TOURS

Go Ahead Tours made its big push into Canada with a brand-new office in downtown Toronto in the summer of 2017. In fact, Go Ahead has been serving Canadian travellers for many years and, as the company continued to grow, being on the ground in Canada was a natural next step.

So even though the name may be relatively new to Canadians, Go Ahead Tours are backed by a company with 52 years' experience and over 500 offices in more than 50 countries. All of which means you can rely upon their global presence and legacy of expertise.

Go Ahead Tours now offer some 175 tours in 7 continents - and if you are thinking of exploring Ireland, Go Ahead Tours have lots to offer with 12 different tours that include the Emerald Isle.

Go Ahead Tours' philosophy is that the best way to learn about the world is to experience it - and they pride themselves on helping you discover the heart of a destination. Their local operations teams visit and handpick all hotels and excursions. They have a rich network of local Tour Directors, historians, and experts who really bring the destination to life and enrich your understanding. And their group sizes are smaller than the average tour, to give you more meaningful experiences.

An important part of Go Ahead Tour's focus is to provide that perfect balance of sightseeing and free time to find your own adventure. As well as carefully curated itineraries and well-located accommodation, tours with Go Ahead will also allow for free time in the program. With this open schedule you can either decide to do your own thing or choose to customize your trip with an optional excursion. If you can stay longer in the destination you will also be able to add on extra days if you wish, and some tours offer additional sightseeing days as an optional extension.

Go Ahead Tours can be purchased without flights as you may decide to use your points or to book your own flights. However, the expert advisors at Go Ahead Tours can also book your flights, and they work with a wide selection of airlines to meet your specific needs.

Despite their many years of experience, Go Ahead Tours do not rest on their laurels. They also believe in continuous improvement. They read every traveller review to constantly fine tune their tours and 95% of Go Ahead Tours travellers say they'd recommend Go Ahead Tours to a friend. And friendship is often an important part of travelling as a group.

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	<p>Solo travellers will feel right at home as you meet and share experiences with like-minded people. Group members may be going abroad for the first time, or they might be experienced globetrotters. But what unites them all is their curiosity about the world – it’s not about age, it’s about attitude.</p>
<p>Trip Showcase</p>	<p>This is an invitation to join Chris on a fabulous “Ireland: The Wild Atlantic Way” with Go Ahead Tours. The Tour runs September 22 – October 1, 2018, and Chris will bring his boundless passion for travel that is also part of his weekly broadcasts on Zoomer and CJAD 800. Share in his enthusiasm on this amazing voyage of discovery in Ireland as you fly into Belfast, explore the amazing coastal scenery of the West of Ireland, and return from Shannon.</p> <p>There are many wonderful highlights on this tour, starting in Northern Ireland with a guided tour of historic Belfast. You will see where the legendary Titanic was built and learn the emotional story of the ship’s ill-fated journey at the Titanic Belfast Museum.</p> <p>Then follow the North Antrim Coast to the world-famous Giants Causeway and on to the historic city of Derry – the only walled city in Ireland.</p> <p>Then you will set out to discover the highlights of the Wild Atlantic Way, from Donegal to the Cliffs of Moher. Between breathtaking views of stunning seascapes and green landscapes, you will step off the beaten path to get a feel for Ireland’s quieter side in its small towns and villages.</p> <p>The scenery on this tour is so spectacular it should come as no surprise that it has been chosen as the backdrop to some of the most acclaimed TV and movie productions. The North Antrim coast has featured in Game of Thrones and the extraordinary beauty of The Wild Atlantic Way was scouted for Star Wars.</p> <p>Visit www.goaheadtours.ca/irelandwithchris for all the details.</p>
<p>Message from Chris</p>	<p>This ten day tour of the western coast of Ireland has been created by Go Ahead Tours to encompass some of the Emerald Isle’s most magnificent coastal scenery.</p> <p>The price includes: eight nights in handpicked hotels with breakfasts, four dinners, a private deluxe motor coach, guided sightseeing tours, a Tour Director and local guides who live and breathe local culture and customs.....and me!</p>

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The tour is called “Ireland: The Wild Atlantic Way” and departs September 22nd, returning ten days later on October 1st. Best of all, the price is just \$2,839. The experts at Go Ahead Tours can help you add on your flights and also customize your trip with, for example, an optional 4 day extension to include the Ring of Kerry.

We will fly into Belfast and return from Shannon – and rugged natural beauty awaits us along Ireland’s western shores. First we will explore historic Belfast on a guided tour of Northern Ireland’s capital, including the copper-domed City Hall, the Grand Opera House and Parliament Buildings. We will see where the legendary Titanic was built and learn the emotional story of the ship’s ill-fated journey at the Titanic Belfast Museum.

We will follow the North Antrim Coast to the world famous Giants Causeway and on to the historic city of Derry – the only walled city in Ireland.

Then we will set out to discover the highlights of the Wild Atlantic Way, from Donegal to the Cliffs of Moher. Between the breathtaking views of stunning seascapes and green landscapes, we will step off the beaten path to get a feel for Ireland’s quieter side in its small towns and villages.

Some of the highlights will be the waterfalls, lakes, and mountains of Glenveagh National Park, Slieve League cliffs, ancient Carrowmore Megalithic Cemetery, Kylemore Abbey, the towering Cliffs of Moher and perhaps the one I am personally most looking forward to: Achill Island.

This is a romantic, wind-swept island off the west coast with one of the world’s most celebrated beaches at Keem Bay. We will take a gentle walk through the landscapes surrounding the bay and visit Keem Beach itself.

There are only 33 places available on this trip, so don’t delay if you want to join me and a group of like-minded travellers on this exciting adventure. And even more reason to book early – the first 10 travellers will also get a \$150 discount!

It will be a magnificent, sociable and unforgettable trip. So please join me, Chris Robinson, as we experience Western Ireland with Go Ahead Tours from September 22nd to October 1st later this year. Visit [goaheadtours.ca/Ireland with Chris](http://goaheadtours.ca/Ireland%20with%20Chris) to find out more. I really look forward to travelling with you in the Emerald Isle in September!

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Itinerary	<p>Day 1: Travel day Overnight Flight Board your overnight flight to Belfast today. County Antrim</p> <p>Day 2: Arrival in Belfast Included meals: Dinner Welcome to the Emerald Isle! Settle in, then gather with your Tour Director and fellow travellers at tonight's welcome dinner.</p> <p>Day 3: Sightseeing tour of Belfast Included meals: Breakfast Start your day with a guided tour of Northern Ireland's capital.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Glimpse the copper-domed City Hall• View the Grand Opera House and Parliament Buildings• Pass the shipbuilding docks where the Titanic was constructed and learn about the ship's ill-fated journey at the Titanic Belfast Museum <p>Enjoy a free evening in County Antrim or add an excursion. Excursions Castles of Northern Ireland & Afternoon Tea+\$119/pp County Donegal</p> <p>Day 4: Donegal via Giant's Causeway & Glenveagh National Park Included meals: Breakfast, Dinner Depart Northern Ireland and cross into the Republic of Ireland, where you'll travel through the dramatic scenery along a portion of the Wild Atlantic Way.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Pay a visit to the rugged Giant's Causeway, a series of naturally formed basalt columns that are 60 million years old• Stop in the city of Derry, where you'll enjoy free time for lunch• Visit Glenveagh National Park, where you'll enter Glenveagh Castle and admire the park's waterfalls, lakes, and mountains• Continue through the beautiful Irish countryside to Donegal <p>Day 5: Slieve League Included meals: Breakfast Head west to see the highest cliffs in Europe today.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Pay a visit to the Slieve League Cultural Centre• Continue on to the Slieve League cliffs for incredible panoramic views from nearly 2,000 feet above sea level• Visit the village of Glencolmille and stop to enjoy free time in the picturesque village of Ardara on your way back to Donegal <p>County Mayo</p>
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Day 6: County Mayo via Drumcliffe & Sligo

Included meals: Breakfast, Dinner

Journey south along the Wild Atlantic Way and through the landscapes immortalized by the poetry of William Butler Yeats.

- Stop at Mullaghmore Head to snap photos of Classiebawn Castle, an estate built during the 19th century
- Pay your respects at Yeats' grave in the Drumcliffe churchyard
- Enjoy free time for lunch in the town of Sligo
- Step back in time during a visit to the Carrowmore Megalithic Cemetery
- Arrive in the village of Westport in County Mayo

Day 7: Achill Island

Included meals: Breakfast

Make your way to Achill Island, an idyllic destination along the Wild Atlantic Way.

- Pass by many blanket bogs en route to the charming village of Dooagh
 - Walk through the landscapes surrounding Keem Bay and visit Keem Beach
 - Cross the Michael Davitt Bridge on your way back to Westport
- Enjoy a free afternoon in County Mayo or add an excursion.
Excursions Glen Keen Farm & Dinner +\$155/pp
County Clare

Day 8: County Clare via Connemara National Park & Galway

Included meals: Breakfast

Venture down the coast to County Clare, making several scenic stops en route.

- Visit the charming village of Leenane
- Spot Ireland's only fjord in Killary Harbour, then soak in views of the Maumturk mountain range en route to Connemara National Park
- Enter Kylemore Abbey and take time to explore its Victorian walled garden
- Drive through the picture-perfect landscapes of Connemara, stopping at the Inagh Valley and Maam Cross
- Arrive in Galway, where you'll follow your Tour Director on a guided walking tour
- Continue on to your hotel in County Clare

Day 9: The Cliffs of Moher

Included meals: Breakfast

Walk along the mesmerizing coastline of the Cliffs of Moher, which rise 700 feet above the Atlantic Ocean.

Spend the afternoon exploring County Clare on your own or add an

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excursion.

This evening, celebrate your trip with your group at a farewell dinner.
Excursions - Bunratty Castle & Folk Park +\$49/pp

Day 10: Departure

Included meals: Breakfast (excluding early morning departures)

Transfer to the Shannon airport for your flight home or continue on to County Kerry.

Add an extension to County Kerry & Limerick from \$749 for 4 nights

Day 10: Sightseeing tour of County Kerry

Included meals: Breakfast

Make your way from County Clare to County Kerry today, then spend the afternoon exploring Killarney National Park. Take a walk through the park, stopping for a photo at Ross Castle. Then, step inside Muckross House and stroll through its beautifully manicured gardens.

Day 11: Free day in County Kerry

Included meals: Breakfast

Enjoy a free day in County Kerry or add an excursion.

Excursions - The Ring of Kerry +\$59/pp

Day 12: Free day in County Kerry

Included meals: Breakfast

Spend another free day exploring County Kerry on your own or add an excursion.

Excursions - Dingle Peninsula +\$59/pp

County Limerick

Day 13: Transfer to County Limerick

Included meals: Breakfast

Travel from County Kerry to County Limerick for a series of guided visits today.

- Tour of the 13th-century King John's Castle, located on King's Island in Limerick's city centre
- Head to the Foynes Flying Boat & Maritime Museum, where you'll learn about the history of aviation and passenger travel in the region
- Get a taste of Irish coffee, a traditional local treat

This evening, enjoy a farewell drink as you celebrate your trip with your fellow group members.

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	<p>Day 14: Departure Included meals: Breakfast (excluding early morning departures) Transfer to the Shannon airport for your flight home.</p>
Tour Directors	<p>Your Tour Director lives and breathes local culture and customs. Truly citizens of the world, Tour Directors are local insiders with years of experience in sharing knowledge of regional culture and history with travellers. He or she will be the smiling face you meet on your first day, and the new friend that guides you every step of the way as you explore your destination.</p> <p>You can trust your Tour Director to handle all the logistics and give you tons of background on each place you visit on tour. From knowing where to get the best cup of coffee to giving a dramatic retelling of the history behind an iconic landmark, your Tour Director will be your go-to expert.</p>
Local Guides	<p>In addition to your Tour Director, who knows his or her region inside and out, your local guides will be true experts on their specific cities, whether that is a rustic village in the Italian countryside or a bustling cultural capital. Thanks to our global EF network, they are able to use the best of the best and most experienced guides, adding another level of expertise and hospitality to your sightseeing.</p>
Hotels and Meals	<p>The excitement of exploring the world can really tire you out. That's why they select each of their hotels based on comfort and location to ensure you can rest easy each night of your trip. The team on the ground visits every single property to find the best accommodations for you. That could mean anything from a charming casita in Peru to a romantic boutique hotel in Assisi. Plus, mornings are a bit easier with breakfast waiting for you just downstairs each day.</p> <p>The rest of your included meals will feature local staples and specialties. You'll get to know your fellow travellers at your welcome dinner and come together throughout your tour to celebrate and share stories.</p> <p>You'll also have free time to choose your own meals—from late-night tapas in Barcelona to sushi fresh from the Tokyo fish market, traditional cuisine is one of the best ways to (literally) get a taste of another culture. Don't forget to ask your Tour Director to recommend some favorite local eateries.</p> <p>Have a food allergy or restricted diet? Just let them know before your tour and they'll make sure there are meal options available to you.</p>
Flights	<p>Go Ahead can get you where you want to go—it's that simple. Thanks to the global Go Ahead network and relationships with carriers, they are able to offer a wide range of round-trip flight options that can get you to and from your destination comfortably and at a great value. Since they are able to fly you into one airport at the beginning of your tour and out of another at the end, they create itineraries that make the most of your</p>

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	<p>time. You won't waste travel days backtracking to where you started. Once you're on tour, they will handle everything from private deluxe motor coaches to flights between destination cities and so much more. You'll zip through the canals of Bangkok on a longtail boat, journey through the Serengeti in an upgraded land cruiser and shoot under the English Channel on the Eurostar train from Paris to London. Looking to go abroad early or stay past the end of your tour? The team can create a personalized flight itinerary just for you and your travel companions.</p>
The Go Ahead Team	<p>Planning the best travel experiences from start to finish is what their team is specially trained to do. They will help you find your tour, show you how to customize it with excursions that fit your travel style and even share tips for packing and preparing to go. Once you're on tour, you can get in touch at any time thanks to their team of 24/7 Emergency Support Specialists.</p> <p>Quality is of the utmost importance, so they have a dedicated team that reads every single review received and makes updates as needed to give you more of what you've loved and create ways for you to explore new areas.</p> <p>Each time they craft a new itinerary, their global Operations Team visits each destination to find the best experiences. They meet with restaurant owners, test out hotels, sip samples at local wineries, follow scenic paths for future walking tours and more—to ensure that each moment of your tour meets the Go Ahead standard of exceptional quality.</p>
Where to go?	<p>That's the tough choice! With 175 tours to choose from, all the regions of the travel world are covered:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Europe US & Canada Latin America Asia Australia & NZ Africa Middle East Antarctica
Contact Info	<p>Phone: 1888-986-1907</p> <p>Website: https://www.goaheadtours.ca</p> <p>Facebook: https://www.facebook.com/goaheadtoursCanada/</p> <p>Pinterest: https://www.pinterest.ca/goaheadtours/</p> <p>Twitter: https://twitter.com/goaheadtours</p> <p>YouTube: https://www.youtube.com/goaheadtours</p>

IRELAND	Ireland is one of the top destinations for Canadians. The last few years have seen huge growth in travel to the Emerald Isle - and for good
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reason! Ireland is just a short 6-hour flight from Ontario and Quebec - not that different to a flight to Vancouver, for example - and Ireland is the closest point to Canada in Europe.

Getting to Ireland has never been easier with year-round direct access and direct flights in 2018 from Toronto to Shannon and Montreal to Dublin. Once you arrive in Ireland there is no language barrier, and you will find the warmest welcome on the planet from the friendly, laid back people.

Ireland's popularity also springs from the wide variety of experiences on offer - visitors delight in the spectacular scenic landscape, off the beaten path destinations, vibrant cities, a wealth of heritage, cultural attractions and an exciting festival and events calendar that entertains 365 days a year! Any time is a great time to visit as festivals and attractions are open year round. Savvy travelers may want to consider the Spring and Fall as they are often less crowded, great value and the mild Irish climate can be lovely at these times of year.

Fall is a particularly lovely time. Did you know that the average temperature in Ireland in September ranges between 10 and 18 degrees? In September there is an average of over 4 hours sunshine per day and less rainfall than in the peak month of August. Compare the mild winter temperatures in Ireland to Canada and it's a no brainer!

Not only is the weather in the Fall often very pleasant – Ireland is less crowded and better value in the off peak months. It is a good time to enjoy a city break in Dublin or Belfast and Ireland's excellent restaurants, accommodations and tours are open all year round. It is safe, English-speaking and with great tourism infrastructure that makes it easy to see the sights. And the fabulous history, culture, festivals, stunning scenery - and golf - are waiting for you 12 months of the year.

In Ireland you can discover history that goes back earlier than the pyramids, and marvel at some of the most stunning coastal scenery you will find anywhere.

The awe-inspiring Wild Atlantic Way

The Wild Atlantic Way, stretching all the way from the Inishowen Peninsula in Co. Donegal to Kinsale in Co. Cork is amongst the world's best driving tours. It stretches along 2,500 km of the wildest, most captivating scenery found anywhere - with lots to do and see along the way. Go whale watching and then enjoy an amazing seafood dinner in

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County Cork; take a walk along the dramatic Cliffs of Moher and stop for homemade ice cream. Or see the Northern Lights along the Donegal coastline.

Northern Ireland's Causeway Coastal Route

As well as the Wild Atlantic Way, Ireland has more than its fair share of stunning coastal scenery. In Northern Ireland the majestic Causeway Coastal Route, famed for its dramatic landscapes, is counted as one of the world's great road journeys. Not to be missed is the famous Giant's Causeway, but there is also a new addition to the coastal experience that allows you to walk along the very edge of the Irish Sea.

The Gobbins coastal path was originally created as a tourist attraction for the Belfast and Northern Counties Railway Company in 1902, with visitors paying 6d to enjoy a 'perfect marvel of engineering'. Now the path has been reopened to provide an unexpected white-knuckle walk which will thrill those with a sense of adventure and delight those who are looking to experience the coast up close.

Ireland's Ancient East

Ireland's Ancient East represents a wonderful opportunity to experience 5,000 years of European history in a compact area. The Ancient East area allows visitors to get off the beaten track to see, hear, touch and feel the imprints made over millennia by the settlers in this beautiful landscape.

Ancient Man, Early Christians, Medieval Lords, Colonial Settlers and their descendants have all been seduced by Ireland's lush, green and fertile lands. And it's easy to explore as visitors can go at their own pace to discover tombs older than the pyramids, a Viking settlement or castles and fortresses. And, as everywhere else you go in Ireland, there are stories from the friendly locals who are some of the best story tellers in the world.

Not to be missed is the UNESCO World Heritage Site at Newgrange - a Stone Age monument in the Boyne Valley, County Meath. Newgrange was constructed about 3,200 B.C., which makes it older than both Stonehenge and the Great Pyramids of Giza. It is a large circular mound with a stone passageway and chambers inside. The mound is ringed by 97 large kerbstones, some of which are richly decorated with megalithic art.

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Setting for Films and TV Series

The Irish countryside is so beautiful that it is becoming a movie star in its own right!

Much of the Fantasy blockbuster TV series “Game of Thrones” is filmed on location in Northern Ireland. If you are a fan – Northern Ireland is the epicentre of all things Game of Thrones. Aside from the landscapes that evoke true fantasy - there’s a good reason why Northern Ireland was picked by Game of Thrones location scouts. There are castles everywhere; incredible structures that catapult you right to the heart of the mythical land of Westeros.

Northern Ireland offers fans a self-drive tour through scene-stealing locations along the Causeway Coast and Glens. And the Titanic Studios in Belfast are also frequently used for filming.

Star Wars: The Force Awakens sent the global box-office into hyper drive. Since 1977, the record-breaking movie franchise has travelled through more than a few galaxies. This time around the cast and crew jetted into a little town called Portmagee, County Kerry, on Ireland's Wild Atlantic Way, to discover a dream filming location. The heart stopping scenery of Skellig Michael was depicted as the hideout of Luke Skywalker in the movie. Skellig Michael, a remote island in Co Kerry, housed a monastery from around the 6th to the 12th century, and is now a UNESCO World Heritage Site.

In addition the popular TV series “Vikings” on the History Channel is filmed in Co Wicklow. This is a very appropriate setting as Viking heritage runs deep in Ireland’s Ancient East.

Location	Western Europe, between the UK and the Atlantic Ocean
Geography	Ireland is divided into 4 provinces: Ulster, Connacht, Leinster, and Munster With a landmass of approximately 84,434 sq. km, it is at most 484km north to south, and 274km east to west. No point in Ireland is farther than 113km from one of its encircling waters: the Atlantic Ocean, the Irish Sea, or the St. George and North channels.
Name	From Irlanda, meaning the land of Ir, who was the son of Mile, the first man of that clan to be buried on the island
Population	6.4 million, with 4.6 in Eire and 1.8 in Northern Ireland.
Language	English and Gaelic; road signs are bilingual. One of the most important elements in Irish culture is the Irish language. Ireland’s West is fortunate to have Gaeltachts, or Irish-speaking areas,

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	in both Galway and Mayo. In these areas, you will notice the Irish language on signs and shop-fronts as well as in everyday speech. Here, people still play music, sing and dance in the old traditional manner.
Currency	In the Republic of Ireland the currency is the Euro; one Euro = \$1.54 Cdn (Feb 2018) In Northern Ireland, the British Pound is the currency; one Pound = \$1.75 (Feb 2018).
Tipping	Most hotels and guesthouses add a service charge to the bill, usually 12.5% to 15%, although some smaller places add only 10% or nothing at all. Always check to see what amount, if any, has been added to your bill. For porters or bellhops, tip around \$1.50 per piece of luggage. For taxi drivers, hairdressers, and other providers of service, tip as you would at home, an average of 10% to 15%.
Government	Republic of Ireland is a parliamentary democracy headed by President; Northern Ireland is part of United Kingdom
Documentation	A valid Canadian passport is needed to visit the island of Ireland. If travelling on a Canadian passport, no visa is required, but ensure that your Passport expiry date is a minimum of three months beyond your planned stay in Ireland.
Time zone	5 hours ahead of EST
Health	No health documents or vaccinations are required to enter Ireland or Northern Ireland from Canada, but you should ensure that you have adequate travel insurance for your trip
Safety tips	Advice is standard for travel anywhere: don't leave cars unlocked or cameras, binoculars, or other expensive equipment unattended. Be alert and aware of your surroundings, and do not wander in lonely areas alone at night. Other than that, Ireland is one of the safest destinations for visitors to Europe.

CLIMATE	
General climate	Ireland's climate is influenced most by the Atlantic Ocean. As a result, it doesn't have the extreme temperatures that other countries at similar latitude would have. The average temperature is a mild 10°C.
Today's weather	Dublin: 12 degrees Centigrade with a sun and cloud mix (10 th February)
Best time to visit	Perhaps the best time to visit is in spring and fall, when weather falls somewhere in between bad and good, and you still get winter prices and no crowds. And of course, St Patrick's Day in March is always special!

GETTING THERE	
Flights	First and foremost - getting to Ireland has never been easier. Aer Lingus and Air Canada route are now flying year-round from Toronto to Dublin, and Air Transat will continue their seasonal service from Toronto and

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	<p>Montreal to both Dublin and Shannon. WestJet will also fly seasonally from Toronto/St. John's to Dublin. And ASL airlines, formerly Europe Airpost also provide seasonal service Toronto to Dublin.</p>
<p>Cities</p>	<p>Dublin Elegant, sophisticated, historic and hip, Dublin is one of Europe's brightest capitals, with a youthful vibe and infectious energy. From its origins as a prosperous, multi-cultural modern city, Dublin's history spans more than 1,000 years. Explore its many historical and cultural hot-spots, lounge in cool bars or traditional pubs, enjoy the breathtaking scenery of the Dublin Mountains and the rugged Atlantic coastline, or transport yourself into the lively arts, music, theater and dance scene. Visit Dublin and make the city your own.</p> <p>Be enchanted by Dublin, a city of elegant Georgian boulevards and pulsating night life that is both cosmopolitan and intensely Celtic. Take in the Book of Kells at Trinity College, learn about the City's great literary tradition at the Dublin Writers Museum, enjoy a whiskey tasting at the Old Jameson Distillery, or sip a free pint of "Ireland's national drink" at the Guinness Storehouse which boasts one of the best panoramas of the bright city lights.</p> <p>Dublin attractions: Trinity College, Phoenix Park, Dublin Castle, Old Jameson Distillery, James Joyce Tower and Museum, Dublin Zoo, The Guinness Storehouse (in 1759 original brewery, Ireland's no 1 visitor attraction)</p> <p>With 40% of the Republic's population living within 100km of Dublin, the capital is the centre of the profound, high-speed changes that have been transforming Ireland into an increasingly European country, and it has been changed the most. Within an hour's drive of Dublin are Dalkey, Dún Laoghaire, and many other engaging coastal towns, the rural beauty of the Wicklow Mountains, and the prehistoric ruins in County Meath.</p> <p>Belfast is the capital of Northern Ireland and the north's major city. Start your travel research at the city website: www.GoToBelfast.com Belfast is now a must-see destination and has experienced a large growth in visitor numbers over the last few years; it's been voted as 'city on the rise' by Lonely Planet</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • New Luxury Belfast hotels and restaurants • New Ulster Scots attractions • Exciting times for Belfast – historic past with a vibrant new future • New CS Lewis trail • The new Titanic Quarter is ready to receive visitors • The range and quality of accommodation, food, place to see and

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	<p>things to do (festivals and events each month throughout the year) is now amazing.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The two yellow Harland & Wolff cranes that dominate the Belfast skyline are nicknamed 'Samson (1974) and Goliath (1969) after the two Biblical figures – each crane has a span of 140 metres and can lift loads of up to 840 tonnes to a height of 70 metres, making a combined lifting capacity of over 1,600 tonnes, one of the largest in the world.
City Breaks	<p>Dublin and Belfast City Breaks are always in season! The shoulder season is a great time for city breaks. Whether in the vibrant city of Dublin taking in the Temple Bar Tradfest in January, visiting Trinity College and the Book of Kells, touring the Jameson Distillery or discovering a hidden gem – the Little Museum of Dublin...</p> <p>In just a two hour drive you can experience Belfast with a visit to Titanic Belfast Visitor Centre– recently named the best group visitor attraction in Europe. And you can always extend your golf season at one of the many beautiful courses in Northern Ireland. Ireland is a great year-round destination.</p>
Distances	<p>Cork to Dublin: 256km Belfast to Dublin: 165km</p>
Ferries	<p>Fishguard in Wales to Rosslare in Ireland is just 1hr 39min on Stena Lynx Fast Craft across the Irish Sea. Aran Islands, County Galway: Crossing the choppy waters to the remote Aran Islands by ferry is an experience in itself. Once you get there you're free to explore the island's patchwork fields, quiet pace of life, ancient monuments, awesome cliffs and crystal-clear waters. Or you can marvel at the storytellers in the local pubs!</p>
Trains	<p>8 trains daily Belfast to Dublin; express in 2 hours; Irish Rover Rail Pass - 5 out of 15 days rail travel throughout Ireland Cost: €143. Children are discounted.</p>
Car Rental	<p>All major car rental companies are represented; renting is fairly expensive as is gas. Driving is on the left and most cars are manual.</p>
Buses	<p>Buses link towns and cities by convenient frequent service all across Ireland north & south. The Dublin - Belfast Express coach service operates 7 times daily Monday - Saturday</p>
Passes	<p>Dublin Pass: provides discounts at over 30 attractions plus Aircoach from Dublin Airport; go to http://www.dublinpass.ie</p>

ACCOMMODATION TYPES	<p>Castles and manor houses; hotels and guesthouses; B&B; Farmhouses; Hostels; Cottages and holiday homes; castle hotel such as: Ashford Castle, co Mayo; Dromoland Castle, Co Clare</p>
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	<p>One personal favourite of mine: Malmaison Hotel in Belfast was originally two seed warehouses belonging to two rival firms, McCausland and Lytle. Look at Lytle’s (on the left) for its fantastic stonework friezes of nut-crunching squirrels, exotic birds and plants; and at McCausland’s for heads illustrating five continents, Africa, America, Asia, Europe and Oceania. Now one of Belfast’s most prestigious hotels, with an inviting bar and superb French Brasserie Restaurant.</p> <p>Castle Hotels Imagine having an entire castle just for yourself and your family and friends, without having the bother of marrying into royalty. Ireland's castles can offer such an experience in sumptuously decorated places. Some even with a few ghosts roaming the corridors. Mingle with nobility at Crom Castle, which has self-catering apartments in its West Wing and an actual Lord (Erne) living in the other wing. Lovingly restored Cloghan Castle will transport you back 800 years for a party your friends and family will never forget. What better way to spend an evening than to be wined and dined in a magical castle? Throw on an apron and cook for your guests or be treated like royalty with a helping hand. Crack open the mead (or red wine) in Killiane Castle and party like it's 1699! Glin Castle, County Limerick Glin Castle, home of the Knight of Glin and his wife Madam FitzGerald, stands on the banks of the River Shannon amidst a 500-acre demesne. The castle is open to visitors from March to November and is a spectacular place to stay with seriously luxurious rooms and an authentic castle atmosphere. Kinnitty Castle Hotel, County Offaly Kinnitty Castle offers old world elegance, luxury and comfort. On top of that, you can enjoy friendly ghosts, a dungeon bar, hot stone massage at the first-rate spa and a spot of clay pigeon shooting.</p>
<p>Bed and Breakfast</p>	<p>Consider a B&B for some or your entire trip, to connect with the real Irish people and experience Irish family life. B&B Ireland has over forty years’ experience in the promotion of bed and breakfast properties in Ireland and represent over nine hundred B&Bs throughout Ireland in urban, coastal, farm and countryside locations. Guests will enjoy comfortable surroundings, wonderful hearty home-cooked breakfasts and the opportunity to see inside an Irish home and meet the locals – your hosts. All B&B’s offer “The Welcome “– guests staying in all family homes are greeted by their host on arrival. They are offered hospitality in the form of a cup of tea or coffee and home-baking. Their host will take time to enquire about their trip and offer tips, advice and assistance with their plans during their stay.</p>

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	<p>You can also find Pet-Friendly B&Bs throughout Ireland - ensuring a warm welcome for your four-legged best friend as well.</p> <p>www.bandbireland.com</p>
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TARGET GROUPS	
Kids	<p>The Irish love kids, and Ireland is a wonderfully welcoming place to visit for families with children. Most public places and visitor attractions cater for those children, with changing facilities, children’s menus, high chairs and ramps for strollers. Child-friendly activities available in Ireland’s West include pony trekking, sandcastles, swimming, sailing, adventure centres, boat rides, canoeing, learning music.</p> <p>The Odyssey Complex in Belfast is great for kids and is home to W5 Interactive Discovery Centre, the IMAX Cinema, Hard Rock Café and the Odyssey Arena – home of the Belfast Giants Ice Hockey Team. Experience exotic animals at close range in Belfast Zoo, built into towering Cave Hill, or get a more ‘hands-on’ experience at Streamvale Open Farm.</p> <p>Here’s some suggestions for Western Ireland:</p> <p>Aillwee Caves, County Clare Spooky and atmospheric, the Aillwee Caves make a great place to bring kids who aren’t afraid of the dark. Formed by the melt-waters of a prehistoric ice age, the caves are labyrinthine and dramatic.</p> <p>Ards Forest Park, County Donegal This 1,200-acre park is the perfect spot for a family outing. Situated on the shores of Sheephaven Bay on the rugged Donegal coastline, it’s filled with woodland, rivers, picnic areas, sandy beaches, and play areas.</p> <p>Atlantiquaria, County Galway Kids can explore the deep with Ireland’s largest aquarium, which houses 170 species of marine and freshwater life including stingrays, seahorses and the angel shark. There are sleepy starfish to hold, a load of fish to feed and a lot to learn about Bradán, the salmon, King of Fish!</p> <p>Birr Castle Demesne and Ireland’s Historic Science Centre Birr Castle is the private home of the Parsons family and the stunning demesne has become famous for its exotic collection of trees and plants. The Science Centre is filled with 19th-century astronomical instruments, cameras, photographs and photographic equipment.</p> <p>The Blue Flag Beaches The West enjoys a dramatic Atlantic coastline dotted with gorgeous villages and stunning beaches. The Blue Flag Award confirms good environmental standards, good sanitation and safety facilities of these beaches.</p> <p>Boat cruises on Lough Corrib, County Galway Relax with a wonderful boat cruise on the pretty Lough Corrib.</p>

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	<p>Bunratty Castle and Folk Park, County Clare This 15th-century castle has been restored to its full glory and is one of the finest surviving examples of an Irish tower house. The Folk Park is a living museum that aims to show what life was like in rural Ireland 100 years ago, with authentic reconstructions of farmhouses, cottages and shops.</p>
Teens	<p>Lots of outdoor activities; the Clarence Hotel in Dublin – owned by U2; castles galore; and the music scene is fabulous.</p> <p>The 'Belfast Eye'. Belfast has its own 'Belfast Eye' giving panoramic views of the city. Operated by World Tourist Attractions (www.worldtouristattractions.co.uk) the 60m high 365 tonne observation wheel has 42 capsules seating up to 6 adults and it gives unique 360 degree views of the city, its hills and the lough. The 'big wheel' is situated in the grounds of City Hall and reaches over the height of its dome.</p> <p>Carrick-a-Rede Rope Bridge: a scary swinging rope bridge to a sea stack off the North Antrim coast.</p>
Romance	<p>A lovely people and country to spend time together...How about a horse-drawn Romany caravan along the country lanes of Ireland?</p>
Honeymoons & Weddings	<p>Great venues – including castle hotels and dramatic scenery – help make Ireland a good destination to make these arrangements</p>
Genealogy	<p>There are approx. 70 million people around the world who claim Irish ancestry and close to 5 million of them are right here in Canada - so it's no surprise many Canadians look to explore their Irish ancestry. There are many resources in place to help explore.</p> <p>Tracing your Roots To begin your research here are three useful websites:</p> <p>A useful first step is the Irish Government website Irish Genealogy: www.irishgenealogy.ie</p> <p>Early 20th-century census returns can be perused at the National Archives website: www.nationalarchives.ie</p> <p>The Irish Family History Foundation has a website run on behalf of county-based genealogy centres: www.familysearch.org</p> <p>Once you get to Ireland there is lots of help is available to trace your roots. Throughout Ireland there are numerous centres for genealogical research. Every county in Ireland has a genealogy centre manned by professional genealogists and many churches have records too. So if you find out which town your ancestors come from, be sure to visit the local parish.</p>

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	<p>In Dublin, the National Library, National Archives and General Register Office are all key sources, with the National Library and National Archives both providing free advice from trained staff. In Belfast, the Public Record Office of Northern Ireland holds a treasure trove of records, returns and registers from the province of Ulster. The General Register Office and Ulster Historical Foundation are also great resources.</p> <p>An additional option is to commission a member of the Association of Professional Genealogists in Ireland to help speed things up. They can help find ancestors and living relatives.</p> <p>Heritage Attractions</p> <p>It's no surprise that there are people all around the world with Irish heritage because there has been such a history of emigration from Ireland. And now there is a new attraction in Dublin that charts some of this powerful history. EPIC Ireland is Dublin's dramatic new visitor attraction, telling the stories of 10 million journeys and the Irish roots of 70 million people. It explains how this small Island has profoundly influenced and changed the world. This world-class exhibition tells the story of the Irish people around the world using state-of-the-art technology with incredible visual stories and lots of interactivity.</p> <p>As well as the high tech interactive exhibition, Epic Ireland will also offer a state-of-the-art Irish Family History Centre genealogy centre. Here you can sit with a genealogy expert for a 15-minute consultation or purchase a Family Tree DNA Kit. Workstations allow you to sign up to the Irish Family History Centre website and join the online community at www.FindMyPast.ie where you will be able to search through the largest number of Irish family history records such as: Birth, Marriage and Death records, Census records, Parish records, travel and migration records</p>
Zoomers	The gentle pace of the countryside and the easy availability of coach touring options make Ireland a good choice for seniors.

UNIQUES	<p>Strangely, Ireland is the only country in the world where windmills turn clockwise!</p> <p>“Craic”, pronounced “Kraik” means good music, good story telling, conversation and drink in Gaelic.</p> <p>Here are some very Irish blessings: “May the roof above us never fall in. And may the friends gathered below it never fall out”.</p>
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	<p>“May the saddest day of your future be no worse than the happiest day of your past”.</p> <p>“May you live as long as you want. And never want as long as you live”.</p>
<p>Surprising</p>	<p>There are several haunted castles in Ireland – here is a list for those who do not fear a spooky experience:</p> <p>Ballygally Castle is 32 kms from Belfast on the Antrim coast</p> <p>Charleville Castle in Tullamore, County Offaly</p> <p>Clonony Castle in Birr, County Offaly</p> <p>Carrickfergus Castle is just east of Belfast in County Antrim</p> <p>Huntington Castle in Clonegal, County Carlow</p> <p>Killua Castle, located in County Westmeath</p> <p>Castle Leslie in County Monaghan, Northern Ireland</p> <p>Gormanston Castle in County Meath</p> <p>Kinnitty Castle in Country Offaly</p> <p>Wilton Castle in County Wexford, is in Ireland's Southeast Region.</p> <p>Leap Castle in County Offaly</p>
<p>History</p>	<p>Ireland is thought to have been inhabited from around 8,000BC by people of a mid-Stone Age culture.</p> <p>And about 4,000 years later, tribes from Southern Europe arrived and established a high Neolithic culture.</p> <p>The best-known Neolithic sites in Ireland are the megalithic passage tombs of Newgrange and Knowth in County Meath.</p> <p>Both were built around 3,200BC, making them older than Stonehenge in England, and the Pyramids of Giza in Egypt.</p> <p>The Vikings first launched their attack on Ireland in 795AD.</p> <p>And in 837AD, 60 Viking Dragon warships appeared at the mouth of the River Liffey.</p> <p>Five years later, Dublin was taken under force, but the Vikings were attacked by the local Irish and fled.</p> <p>They returned 17 years later under Olaf the White and made a</p>

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	<p>permanent settlement at Dyflinn (later to be Dublin). The King's Palace stood on the present Dublin Castle site and part of the town's defenses can still be seen at the Undercroft in Dublin Castle. The latter half of the 19th century was a period of tragedy in Irish history. Ireland was struck by the Great Famine caused by a potato blight that struck crops over a four-year period from 1845-49. Over a million of the population died from starvation, with many more falling prey to diseases such as typhus. Over two million people emigrated to countries including the United States, the United Kingdom, Canada and Australia, and from 1848-1950 over six million Irish fled the land. Now the Irish diaspora is thought to contain over 80 million people scattered all over the globe.</p>
Books	<p>"Ireland" by Dervla Murphy, photos by Klaus Franke</p> <p>"The Princes of Ireland" The Dublin Saga by Edward Rutherford</p> <p>Lonely Planet's Ireland is an excellent guide book</p>
1000 Places to see before you die	<p>Dromoland Castle Hotel; Cork Jazz Festival; Kinsale; Assolas Country House; Longueville House, CorkGlenveagh National Park, Donegal Bloomsday in Dublin; The Book of Kells, Dublin; St Patrick's Festival; Aran Islands; Connemara, Galway; Galway; Dingle Peninsula; The Ring of Kerry; Killarney National Park, Kerry; Ashford Castle Hotel, Mayo; Waterford Castle Hotel; Giant's Causeway; Mourne Mountains</p>
Must Sees	<p>Giant's Causeway on the North Antrim Coast in 1986 became Ireland's first UNESCO World Heritage Site. It was likely molten lava, cooled during the early Tertiary period some 62 - 65 million years ago. into some 40,000 hexagonals of dark stone steps, a few million years ago, which produced the famous basalt columns. But some prefer the other version of events: the one about a Celtic warrior who got too big for his boots and went a-knockin' on the</p>

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	<p>wrong giant's island. Legend goes that Finn MacCool built the basalt highway to Scotland to challenge rival giant, Benandonner, to a fight. But Finn's wide-eyed glimpse of the enormous Scot sent him scurrying back to Ireland and to his quick-witted wife, Oonagh. As Benandonner thundered down the highway after him, Oonagh disguised the quavering Finn as an infant. "Don't wake the baby" she scolded the giant Scot as he burst in the door. "If that's the kid, I don't want to meet the father", thinks Benandonner, turning tail for Scotland and ripping up the basalt paving stones behind him.</p> <p>Ireland's West is a region known as 'The Cultural Heart of Ireland'. Magical, romantic, dramatic and utterly memorable, the West of Ireland has landscapes that will be etched in your memory forever. People flock to Galway City to experience a slice of its magic and its festivals – including the world-famous Oyster Festival at Clarenbridge. For the finest gourmet sea food, live music and the best Guinness in town it has to be the Galway Oyster Festival! This thriving city enjoys a strong artistic heritage and a flourishing arts, music, theatre and film scene. It also plays host to the renowned Galway Arts Festival. Relax in Galway's atmospheric pubs, stroll through its pretty medieval streets and soak up its lively weekend markets.</p> <p>Mayo has the dramatic splendour of the Atlantic Ocean, and boasts the glorious Island of Achill, the award-winning town of Westport and Ireland's holy mountain Croagh Patrick among its many sights. Unchanged for millennia the landscape of the Cliffs of Moher in County Clare will leave you awestruck. Towering 214 metres over the waters of the Atlantic Ocean - let your senses be arrested with the sheer drop of these imposing sea cliffs.</p> <p>The Ring of Kerry It may not fit on your finger or come in gold or silver, but this Ring is studded with gems. Skirting Ireland's most western point, hogging an obscene amount of beauty and cute-as-can-be villages – The Ring (as it's known down there) is just a bit special. The circular loop starts and ends in Killarney (they could have called it 'The Circle of Kerry' but it wouldn't have had the same 'ring' to it!) Undisputedly one of Ireland's most scenic drives, it also provides the backdrop to the renowned Kerry Way walking trail. Pedal power will get you around the 216km too, on a wind-in-your-hair cycle route. However you travel, keep your camera handy every step of the way.</p>
<p>UNESCO World Heritage</p>	<p>There are three World Heritage Sites on the island: the Brú na Boinne, Skellig Michael and the Giant's Causeway.</p> <p>Brú na Bóinne in County Meath, is the largest and one of the most</p>

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	<p>important prehistoric megalithic sites in Europe. The site is a complex of Neolithic chamber tombs, standing stones, henges and other prehistoric enclosures, some dating from as early as 35th century BC - 32nd century BC. The site predates the Egyptian pyramids and was built with sophistication and a knowledge of science and astronomy, which is most evident in the passage grave of Newgrange. The site is often referred to as the "Bend of the Boyne".</p> <p>Skellig Michael (from Sceilig Mhichíl in the Irish language, meaning Michael's rock), also known as Great Skellig, is a steep rocky island in the Atlantic Ocean about 14.5 kilometres from the coast of County Kerry, Ireland. It is the larger of the two Skellig Islands. After probably being founded in the 7th century, for 600 years the island was a centre of monastic life for Irish Christian monks. The Gaelic monastery, which is situated almost at the summit of the 230-metre-high rock became a UNESCO World Heritage Site in 1996. It is one of Europe's better known but least accessible monasteries. Since the extreme remoteness of Skellig Michael has until recently discouraged visitors, the site is exceptionally well preserved. The very spartan conditions inside the monastery illustrate the ascetic lifestyle practiced by early Irish Christians. The monks lived in stone 'beehive' huts (clochans), perched above nearly vertical cliff walls. The latest Star Wars movies feature scenes from here.</p>
<p>Titanic Belfast Experience</p>	<p>Belfast's notable ship-building heritage includes the design, building and launch of the most famous ship ever built – the Titanic. The new Titanic Belfast experience is the world's largest Titanic visitor attraction and is twice the size of Belfast's City Hall. The six-storey attraction is filled with exhibitions uncovering the story of Titanic – its origins, construction, launch and history. It is quite simply, superb.</p>
<p>South East Ireland</p>	<p>Occasionally overshadowed by its popular South Western cousin, don't neglect the region of Ireland in the South East - comprising the five counties of Carlow, Kilkenny, Tipperary, Waterford and Wexford. It is often called the hidden treasure of Ireland, with an evocative patchwork of fertile valleys and plains contrasted by extended beaches and rugged coastlines. Down through the centuries the Celts, Vikings, Anglo-Saxons and Normans have landed and passed through these valleys, leaving behind a landscape rich in history. Countless castles, abbeys, fortresses and ancient settlements remain to mark their passage. And large rivers criss-cross the area, meandering under old stone bridges, around magical mountains, through picturesque villages and past neatly thatched cottages before finally entering the sea at scenic and peaceful seaside towns. The region not only boasts old favourites such as Waterford Crystal, Kilkenny Castle and Rock of Cashel, but also the Dunbrody Emigration</p>

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	Centre, Irish National Heritage Park, Kilkenny's Medieval Miles and Waterford's Viking Triangles. http://www.southeastirelandhotels.ie
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SPORTS ACTIVITIES	
Outdoors Ireland	Ireland offers many outdoor experiences that will plug you right into the most beautiful scenery, history and culture. From heavenly hikes and adventurous cycling routes, to horse riding trails and stunning golf courses, Ireland has something to please every traveller. As the old Irish saying goes, "Your feet will bring you to where your heart is".
Boating	Shannon-erne System, Europe's longest leisure waterway at 800 kms, takes 12 days, self-skipped cabin cruise; also the Grand Canal from Dublin to Waterford.
Golf	<p>With over 400 golf clubs including a third of the world's natural links courses, and a selection of exceptional championships courses in pretty amazing locations, over 240,000 golfers from all over the world come to our greens to experience our impressive but unforgiving fairways. Ireland is a natural golfing country and is recognized as a world-class golfing destination. The island of Ireland offers the Canadian golfer a challenging and memorable golfing experience. Home to more than one-third of the world's true links courses, Ireland offers four distinct golfing regions which can be explored individually or as part of a more extended itinerary. All around the island, world-famous championship links courses rub shoulders with lesser-known yet spectacular hidden gems. What's more, tee times can be booked easily and green fees are moderate.</p> <p>The following list highlights some of the 'must play' courses in each region:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Dublin area - Portmarnock, the European, the K Club (venue of the 2006 Ryder Cup) - Northern Ireland - Royal County Down, Royal Portrush, Ardglass, Portstewart, Royal Belfast - The West - Ballyliffin, Carne, Enniscrone, Rosses Point/Sligo - The South West - Ballybunion, Doonbeg, Lahinch, Waterville, Old Head - The South East - Mount Juliet, Druids Glen <p>The 19th hole - Part of the pleasure of golfing in Ireland is the warm welcome and the good "craic" (fun) after a round. From a trad music session in a rural pub to top gourmet grub in a gastropub, you'll find the "if only" shots take on a life of their own when retold. The clubhouse itself (or the nearest watering hole) is a great place to trade victories or horror stories about tricky dog legs and high winds with other players.</p>

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<p>Fishing</p>	<p>Salmon, brown, rainbow and sea trout in Cork/Kerry – State license and day permits; Coarse: roach, dace perch, pike, rudd, bream; deep sea: Pollock, skate, ray, turbot, blue shark</p> <p>The great Western lakes of Galway and Mayo are recognised as the greatest wild brown trout fisheries in the world, while Lough Corrib in Galway is a mecca for game fishermen and is famous for its exciting Mayfly season.</p> <p>The rivers of Ireland’s West offer everything from big salmon to wild browns and, in Roscommon and Galway East, some of the best coarse fish stocks in Ireland. Shore fishing from rock, pier or beach is second to none, and deep-sea fishing around the Galway and Mayo coasts is nothing short of spectacular.</p>
<p>Horse riding</p>	<p>Ireland is often called “The Land of the Horse”. Companies offering riding vacations include Bonaventure tours.com; HiddenTrails.com. There are 40 equestrian centres in Cork/Kerry alone; horse racing is part of Irish life e.g. Mallow, 35km north of Cork</p> <p>Equestrian Holidays Ireland is a selection of Ireland’s top horseback riding establishments, each with its own individual character and style. Every centre is Irish Tourist Board listed and Association of Irish Riding Establishments approved.</p> <p>I recently visited the Irish National Stud near Kildare where Queen Elizabeth spent some time on her historic tour in 2011. An Irish mist made the blossoms smell more fragrantly as we met mares and their foals, the highly prized stallions and learnt about Irish Bloodstock Industry. All the horses and foals appeared to be in seventh heaven in their verdant pastures.</p> <p>Here also is a delightful surprise: the Japanese Gardens where the paths lead through grottoes besides streams and lakes to tea houses and arched bridges.</p>
<p>Hiking</p>	<p>Hill-walking: waymarked ways, Ulster Way – Europe’s longest marked footpath at 560 miles, Wicklow Way, Dingle Way 179km – Ring of Kerry; Hollywood Hills – inspiration for CS Lewis’ Narnia; Hidden Trails, Active Journeys, Bonaventure Tours.</p> <p>Long distance trails include the Foxford Way in Mayo, the Galway section of The Western Way, The Suck Valley Way in Roscommon and Galway, and the Arigna Miners Way and Historical Trail in Roscommon and Leitrim.</p> <p>Croagh Patrick, County Mayo: St Patrick spent 40 days and nights fasting on this 765-metre high sacred mountain near Westport, and banishing dragons, snakes and demonic forces from the site. Today, pilgrims follow in the footsteps of the saint and on “Reek Sunday”, the last Sunday in July, over 25,000 people ascend towards the summit.</p> <p>There is a new addition to the spectacular Causeway Coastal Route</p>

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	<p>that glories in the name of the Gobbins. The Gobbins was originally created by an Irish railway engineer called Berkeley Deane Wise. He designed and built the path as a tourist attraction for the Belfast and Northern Counties Railway Company. The path first opened to the public in 1902, with visitors paying 6d to enjoy a 'perfect marvel of engineering'. The Gobbins drew worldwide acclaim, with newspapers declaring that 'the varied beauty of this cliff path baffles all description'. Now the path has been reopened after being closed for over a half a century and it is a spectacular new adventure—a Cliff Path walk along the very edge of the Irish Sea, located about 30 km's north of Belfast. The modern cliff path is sure to be an unexpected white-knuckle walk which will thrill those with a sense of adventure and delight those who are looking to experience the coast up close.</p>
<p>Cycling</p>	<p>715 kms cycling routes in Cork and Kerry e.g. The Sheeps Head Way; Connemara Trail, Donegal Trail – rugged coastline and mountains. Cycle the River Lagan towpath in Belfast or the Kingfisher Cycle Trail – 370 kms through the lakes of County Fermanagh; Cycling companies – check out G Adventures, Randonnee Tours, Butterfield and Robinson.</p>
<p>CULTURE</p>	<p>There's a new and particularly exciting development on the other side of the country called Ireland's Ancient East. Ireland's Ancient East offers a wonderful opportunity to experience 5,000 years of European history in a compact area. The Ancient East area allows visitors to get off the beaten track to see, hear, touch and feel the imprints of the millennia of settlers in this land.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Ancient Man, Early Christians, Medieval Lords, Colonial Settlers and their descendants have all been seduced by these most lush, green and fertile lands. - It's easy to take it all in.....and visitors can go at their own pace to discover tombs older than the pyramids, explore a Viking settlement or castles and fortresses. Plus hear stories from the friendly locals who are some of the best story tellers in the world. You can take in a festival or try tasty local specialties many of which trace their roots to ancient times. <p>The UNESCO World Heritage Site at Newgrange stirs the imagination...</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Newgrange is a Stone Age monument in the Boyne Valley, County Meath.. It was constructed over 5,000 years ago (about 3,200 B.C.) during the Neolithic period, which makes it older than Stonehenge and Great Pyramids of Giza. It is a large circular mound with a stone passageway and chambers inside. The mound is ringed by 97 large kerbstones, some of which are richly decorated with megalithic art.

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	<p>Newgrange was built by a farming community that prospered on the rich lands of the Boyne Valley. The 19 metre long inner passage leads to a cruciform chamber with a corbelled roof. The amount of time and labour invested in construction of Newgrange suggests a well-organized society with specialised groups responsible for different aspects of construction.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Knowth and Dowth are similar mounds that together with Newgrange have been designated a World Heritage Site by UNESCO. But throughout the region there are as many as 35 smaller mounds. - Archaeologists classified Newgrange as a passage tomb, however Newgrange is now recognised to be much more than a passage tomb. Ancient Temple is a more fitting classification, a place of astrological, spiritual, religious and ceremonial importance, much as present day cathedrals are places of prestige and worship where dignitaries may be laid to rest.
<p>Arts</p>	<p>Literary Ireland abounds in famous names: Joyce, GB Shaw, Oscar Wilde, WB Yeats, Walter Scott, Anthony Trollope, Seamus Heaney.</p> <p>Dublin – City of Living Culture Home to some of the world’s best known authors, playwrights and musicians, Dublin truly is a city of living culture. Recently voted one of the world’s top literary destinations, Dublin has so much to offer the culture-seeking visitor. With its Viking remains, atmospheric cobbled alleys and Georgian squares, it’s easy to absorb Dublin’s thousand years of history. Step back in time in this city full of literary landmarks, from the James Joyce Tower and the Writers Museum to the famous Gate and Abbey theatres and historic Trinity College, alma mater of many of Ireland’s greatest writers.</p> <p>The Saint Patrick Centre is in Downpatrick, just 30 minutes from Belfast: Ego Patricius Exhibition: new 21st century interactive experience telling story of patron saint. There is a Cathedral Garden Restaurant and Art Gallery Craft Shop.</p>
<p>Music</p>	<p>Traditional Irish Music- Trad Session Traditional Irish music is a full body experience: the upbeat tempos compel you to dance a jig, clap your hands and join in. And that's what trad music is all about, joining in and having the craic (fun). A trad music seisún (pronounced: seh-shoon) can best be described as an informal gathering of musicians. Often, it'll kick off with just a guitar. But before long you've got a whole group of fiddlers, flutists, banjos and bodhrán (drum) or Lambeg drum players belting out the tunes. You can expect a bit of dancing at seisúns, too. People clap along to the beat as dancers twirl and skip around. Don't be afraid to join in, no one minds if you don't know the steps. And before you know it, you'll be a</p>

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	<p>jigging pro. There are five traditional music instruments in Ireland:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> o Bodhrán o Uilleann pipes o Celtic Harp o Fiddle o Irish Bouzouki <p>http://www.ireland.com/en-us/ireland-stories/unique-and-alternative-accommodation/articles/traditional-irish-music-instruments/</p> <p>Temple Bar TradFest – January TradFest offers concert goers unique opportunities to experience live music in some of Dublin’s most historic places. From the breathtaking nave of St. Patrick’s Cathedral to the grandeur of City Hall, this is the difference between memorable and unforgettable. January 24-28, 2018.</p> <p>Belfast – Van Morrison Belfast isn’t just a place to listen to great music; it’s a place that’s creates it too. Van Morrison is arguably the city’s biggest star but Belfast natives Ash and Snow Patrol have made it on the international stage.</p>
<p>Films</p>	<p>Game of Thrones – HBO’s award-winning hit series is filmed at Paint Hall Studios in Belfast in the Titanic Quarter, and on location elsewhere in Northern Ireland including Sandy Brae in the Mourne Mountains (standing in for Vaes Dothrak), Castle Ward and Doune Castle (Winterfell), Saintfield Estates (the Winterfell godswood), Tollymore Forest (outdoor scenes), Cairncastle (the execution site), the Magheramorne quarry (Castle Black) and at Shane’s Castle (the tourney grounds). Its cast is mainly British and Irish.</p> <p>Michael Collins (Neil Jordan, 1996) is a fine biopic about the Irish rebel, filmed largely on location. Nora (Pat Murphy, 2000) is a good biographical film about James Joyce’s fascinating and long-suffering wife.</p> <p>Veronica Guerin (Joel Schumacher, 2003) is a dark, fact-based film with Cate Blanchett about a troubled investigative reporter.</p> <p>Bloom (Sean Walsh, 2004) is a brave adaptation of Ulysses, with Stephen Rea.</p> <p>Intermission (John Crowley, 2003) has Colin Farrell talking in his real accent, in this Irish romance.</p>
<p>Museums</p>	<p>The Writers Museum and Natural History Museum in Dublin are two of my favourites in the capital. The Dublin Pass is great value (see above for details)</p> <p>Ulster Museum: a truly great museum and art gallery that deserves a full day. Rich displays of archaeology, ethnography, art, history and natural sciences. Award-winning Early Ireland gallery and the Made in</p>

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	<p>Belfast exhibits are outstanding. Don't miss Treasures of the Armada, featuring intriguing and spectacular items recovered from the Spanish galleass Girona.</p> <p>Ulster Folk and Transport Museum at Cultra brings history to life, with exhibit buildings including furnished houses, mills, shops, schools and churches which illustrate how people in Northern Ireland lived in the past.</p>
<p>Festivals</p>	<p>Some countries have seasons dedicated to festivals. Ireland has an entire calendar. Kicking off in January and packing the months until December, festivals in Ireland are in the hundreds, and know exactly how to catch our attention. Below are just a few examples:</p> <p>Temple Bar TradFest – January A festival of mostly free events showcasing the entire spectrum of traditional and folk music in iconic locations around Dublin.</p> <p>Lisdoonvarna Matchmaking Festival Matchmaking is one of Ireland's oldest traditions and, for the last couple of hundred years; a good deal of it has taken place in Lisdoonvarna during September and early October. The Lisdoonvarna Matchmaking Festival is one of the world's biggest singles festivals and attracts up to 60,000 people every year. At 160 years old and 5 weeks long, it is one of Ireland's longest and most traditional festivals.</p> <p>New Year's Eve Festival Dublin A 3-day city wide festival celebrating the best of contemporary Irish talent in Arts, Music, Culture and Live Entertainment. Spanning the New Year period from December 30th – January 1st, NYF celebrates a multi-platform experience inspired by the diversity and complexity of Ireland's contemporary culture. NYF showcases the evolution of its shining talent in music, dance, design, art, and spoken word.</p> <p>Electric Picnic - September An annual music and arts circus that is big on imagination</p> <p>Galway Oyster and Seafood Festival – September The Galway International Oyster & Seafood Festival is held on the very last weekend in September to celebrate Galway's rich annual oyster harvest (in season from September – April). Deemed one of Europe's longest-running food extravaganzas, the Galway International Oyster & Seafood Festival was launched in September 1954.</p> <p>The Banks of the Foyle Halloween Carnival – October Halloween originated in Ireland from the ancient Celtic festival of Samhain. Towns and cities across Ireland celebrate Halloween, but it's</p>

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Derry~Londonderry that really does it in style. The Banks of the Foyle Halloween Carnival is the largest Halloween celebration in Europe, attracting up to 25,000 enthusiasts from across the globe who flock to the city to take part. USA Today named it the Best Halloween destination in the world

<http://www.ireland.com/en-ca/articles/events/festivals/>

And let's not forget:

St. Patrick's Festival: March

www.stpatricksfestival.ie

Celebrated all over Ireland but especially in Dublin, this festival has to be experienced to be believed – and I talk from personal experience!

Galway Arts Festival: July

www.galwayartsfestival.com

Galway, the most westerly city in Europe enjoys a strong artistic heritage and a flourishing arts, music, theatre, and film scene. Move to the beat of the Galway Arts Festival – an eclectic mixture of theatre, spectacle, dance, visual arts, music, literature & comedy involving hundreds of artists and performers.

Wexford Opera Festival: October

www.wexfordopera.com

From its early Celtic and Nordic beginnings Wexford has become a thriving cosmopolitan hub, excellent for shopping and dining out, yet steeped in heritage and history. Re-live nine thousand years of history at the Irish National Heritage Park or experience the World-famous Wexford Festival Opera this fall. Enjoy much-loved operas including Rimsky-Korsakov's 'The Snow Maiden' and Pedrotti's 'Tutti in Maschera' in one of Ireland's most picturesque coastal settings.

Belfast Festival at Queens: October /November

www.belfastfestival.com

Belfast, Northern Ireland's capital city is steeped in culture. Find out where great ships like the Titanic were built, marvel at the architecturally impressive City Hall or take a trip around its historic pubs by joining a Baileys Historical Pub Walking Tour. Be enthralled by The Belfast Festival at Queens and immerse yourself in the best of Irish theatre, dance, music, visual arts, and literature.

Dublin Events:

Dublin's famous spirit of fun infuses over one hundred wonderful

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festivals and events throughout the year, from the spectacular St. Patrick's Festival to the colourful Street Performance World Championships. Events such as Bloomsday, Bloom and Festival of World Cultures are excellent events.

Dracula and Halloween Festivals

Believe it or not – Ireland is the home of Dracula! Bram Stoker, the author of "Dracula" was an Irishman who was born on in 1847 in Clontarf, on the north side of Dublin. Some historians have suggested that Stoker did not receive the inspiration for his dark and twisted tale of Dracula from the brutal life of Vlad the Impaler, but rather developed his ideas from Irish folklore. Irish fables tell the story of Abhartach, a 5th century chieftain known for his bloodsucking habits. After they killed him he rose from the grave and demanded a bowl of blood from the wrists of his subjects to sustain his energy.

The Irish have embraced the author and his ghoulish creation and also Halloween – which is said to have originated in Ireland from the ancient Celtic festival of Samhain.

Bram Stoker Festival (October)

The festival celebrates the Dublin-man behind Dracula with films, talks, readings, and a scare or three. It takes place every year during Dublin Festival Season (1 September - 31 October), when the city hosts more festivals than any other time of the year.

Banks of the Foyle Halloween Carnival (October)

Towns and cities across Ireland celebrate Halloween, but it's Derry-Londonderry that really does it in style. The Banks of the Foyle Halloween Carnival is the largest Halloween celebration in Europe, attracting up to 25,000 enthusiasts from across the globe who flock to the city to take part in the festival each October.

Food Festivals

The food and craft beer scene alone is a great reason to visit Ireland. It is blossoming right now with new microbreweries, gastro-pubs, craft distilleries and artisan eateries serving the freshest local ingredients. And what better experience than to sit by a turf fire in a traditional pub, where you'll eat the freshest seafood and hear the Irish language, songs and stories. Plus there are many festivals celebrating Irish cuisine.

The Irish Craft Beer & Cider Festival (September)

Ireland's largest and best craft beer festival takes place in Dublin with

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over 50 Brewers featuring 300+ beers. Cidermakers and Distillers also form part of this festival.

Galway Oyster and Seafood Festival (September)

The Galway International Oyster & Seafood Festival is held on the very last weekend in September to celebrate Galway's rich annual oyster harvest (in season from September – April). Deemed one of Europe's longest-running food extravaganzas, the Galway International Oyster & Seafood Festival was launched in September 1954!

Balmoral Show (16-19 May, 2018)

The Balmoral Show in association with Ulster Bank is Ireland's largest agri food event that entertains and educates the entire family. NI's largest agricultural event.

Taste of Dublin (14-17 June, 2018)

Over four indulgent days the city's latest, greatest and hottest restaurants will each fashion together exquisite signature dishes, allowing you to create your dream tasting menu at the ultimate foodie festival.

Christmas Markets

Belfast Christmas Market

This award-winning market in the grounds of Belfast Hall. Local producers make up over 40% of the market, selling a variety of tasty treats and products.

Galway Christmas Market

Ireland's longest running Christmas Market with over fifty traders from all over Ireland and Europe selling a host of crafts, festive food, treats and Christmas gift ideas

Waterford Winterval Christmas Festival

Ireland's premier Christmas Festival and now in its 6th year Winterval attracts around 500,000 people to Ireland's oldest city over the 6 weeks of the festival.

Other Festivals

Over the next few months alone there are an incredible variety of exciting festivals.

Lisdoonvarna Matchmaking Festival (September/October)

Matchmaking is one of Ireland's oldest traditions and, for the last couple

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	<p>of hundred years; a good deal of it has taken place in Lisdoonvarna during September and early October. The Lisdoonvarna Matchmaking Festival is one of the world's biggest singles festivals and attracts up to 60,000 people every year. At 160 years old and 5 weeks long, it is one of Ireland's longest and most traditional festivals</p> <p>Electric Picnic (September) An annual music and arts circus that is big on imagination!</p> <p>Wexford Festival Opera (October) Since the first 'Festival of Music and the Arts' took place in October 1951, Wexford Festival Opera has grown into one of the world's leading opera festivals. Right from the beginning, the Festival made a name for itself by introducing audiences to unjustly neglected works. For 64 years the Festival has breathed new life into forgotten masterpieces, establishing a reputation for high-quality productions that, every year, bring thousands of opera-lovers flocking to Wexford from all over the world.</p> <p>New Year's Eve Festival Dublin A 3 day city wide festival celebrates the best of contemporary Irish talent in Arts, Music, Culture and Live Entertainment. NYF celebrates a multi-platform experience inspired by the diversity and complexity of Ireland's contemporary culture. NYF showcases the evolution of Ireland's shining talent in music, dance, design, art, and spoken word.</p> <p>Temple Bar TradFest (January) A festival of mostly free events showcasing the entire spectrum of traditional and folk music in iconic locations around Dublin.</p>
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ATTRACTIONS	<p>Blarney Castle, Cork, bestows the gift of eloquence to those willing to bend over backwards from the battlements.</p> <p>The Waterford Crystal Factory and Gallery. The tour of the factory is fascinating and yes – I fell for the gorgeous work and purchased a set of wine glasses which I keep for prized guests!</p>
Beaches	Beaches abound on this island – from long glorious deserted strands to the popular beaches close to Dublin and Belfast; there's a beach for everyone...even if the sea temperature may be a little chilly!
Wildlife	Bird watching is wonderful and in the National Parks you can see deer...but there are no snakes, thanks to St Patrick!
Parks	<p>Ireland has 6 national parks:</p> <p>The Burren NP in Co Clare;</p> <p>Connemara NP in Galway;</p>

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	<p>Glenveagh NP in Co Donegal; Killarney NP in Co Kerry; Mayo NP; Wicklow Mountains NP. There are also 12 Forest Parks and 71 National Nature Reserves</p>
Gardens	<p>National Trust gardens in Northern Ireland: Gosford, Castlewellan; roses, daffodils, wild bluebells, primroses. Also: Mount Stewart (agapanthus display) and Rowallane (blue Himalayan poppies) Ardnamona Gardens, Lough Eske, County Donegal A wilderness until the 19th century, Ardnamona Gardens is now thriving with an exceptional collection of trees, shrubs and rhododendrons. In 1991, Ardnamona was declared a National Heritage Garden.</p>
Historical Buildings	<p>The GPO in Dublin GPO Witness History is a brand new permanent visitor attraction in the iconic GPO building on O'Connell Street, Dublin. This highly immersive and engaging exhibition puts you right inside the GPO during Easter Week in 1916. History will come to life as you experience events from both sides of the conflict and through the eyes of bystanders caught in the crossfire through electronic touch screens, video, audio visual booths, sound and authentic artefacts – many previously unseen. You'll be immersed in the action as you compose newspaper reports, examine the original copy of the Proclamation and send Morse code to declare the Irish Republic by radio. After the exhibition, you can relax and reflect in the café and retail store overlooking the courtyard. The courtyard is also home to a commissioned sculpture called 'They are of us all', commemorating the forty children who died during the Easter Rising. http://www.gpowitnesshistory.ie/the-gpo-building/</p> <p>Dunluce, 16th century stronghold of MacDonnells, teeters on a cliff edge and has a secret entrance through a sea cave.</p> <p>Ennislillen was the medieval home of the Maguires of Fermanagh.</p> <p>Navan Centre and Fort: Armagh in Northern Ireland. This was the royal seat of the Kings of Ulster and the province's ancient capital. Start your tour in the 'Vanished World' of lost myths, travel into the 'Real World' of archaeology and then enter the 'Other World' to hear the legends of the Ulster Cycle. Visit the Iron Age/Early Christian period dwelling and, through Living History interpretation, learn about that way of life. Finally, walk the path of history to the great Ancient Seat of Kings, Navan Fort.</p> <p>Derry is the only walled city in Ireland and the walls date from 1613-18, with 4 original gates and bastions intact; the Tower Museum presents the city's history; St Columb's Cathedral is 17th century.</p>

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OTHER ACTIVITIES	
Shopping	In the west, traditional knitwear (and not so traditional high fashion knitwear too), pottery, decorative items, handmade bellows, trendy fleece-wear, musical instruments, jewellery and basketry. And of course Waterford Crystal.
Markets	St Georges Market in Belfast is an over 100 years old covered market with over 230 stalls ranging from zips to shark meat. It was recently voted one of the top three markets in the UK.
Arts and Crafts in Dublin	If you're after modern Irish design, then try Whichcraft (5 Castlegate) in Old City, Temple Bar for a mix of Irish art and jewellery. Kilkenny (Nassau Street) shop is also a fantastic spot for Irish homeware and design, with pottery and glassware alongside jewellery and clothing. Blarney Woollen Mills (Nassau Street) and Dublin Woollen Mills (41 Lower Ormond Quay) are good for traditional sweaters, scarves, cardigans and gloves. Avoca Handweavers (Suffolk Street) is a good spot for designer and children's clothing with a quirk, and you can also pick up renowned cookbooks from the much-loved Avoca café.
Nightlife	<p>Everything under the sun – but perhaps the quintessential evening is spent in a warm Irish pub with the locals experiencing the camaraderie and craic that is so unique to the Irish people.</p> <p>Here's a quote from the Tourism Ireland website that eloquently pens a picture:</p> <p><i>“So you're sitting on a stool, swishing your whiskey and watching the syrupy liquid run down the glass in little delicious rivulets. But suddenly, you're jerked out of your daydream by a bearded fellow in an Aran sweater sitting beside you with a guitar followed by a young woman with a fiddle and an elderly man holding a flute. Within seconds, you're front row at your first traditional music session and you didn't even buy a ticket! Hours later as you wave goodbye and shut the pub door behind you, you say to yourself – ‘I'm not sure what just happened, but I liked it'. And whether your session occurred in a shibeen in Dingle, County Kerry or the Feakle Festival, County Clare, it is totally acceptable to dance all the way back to your hotel. In fact, that's kind of the point!”</i></p> <p>In Belfast, the Crown Liquor Saloon is my favourite pub: Great Victoria St. 1839-1840; The Crown is owned by the National Trust. Drinkers of the city know well its opulent marble, brilliant Italian tilework, fine glass engraving, embossed ceiling, and cosy booths bedecked with gryphons and lions. Panels in the restaurant on the first floor were meant for the Brittanic, Titanic's sister ship.</p>

CUISINE	Food in Ireland is fresh, tasty and served with a contemporary twist. The
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	<p>cuisine and craft beer scene in Ireland is going from strength to strength, and are a great reason to visit. It is blossoming right now with new microbreweries, gastro-pubs, craft distilleries and artisan eateries serving the freshest local ingredients. Awaiting you are artisan cheese, exceptional beef and lamb and fresh-off-the-boat seafood, sublime smoked salmon and the creamiest butter imaginable!</p> <p>When it comes to food on the island of Ireland, you need to start at the very beginning with the purity of the natural produce. The green pastures, deep valleys and abundant waters surrounding the island have helped create outstanding natural flavours that you won't get everywhere else. Ireland's food boasts an impeccable provenance and can be best enjoyed here – in the very place it comes from.</p> <p>There's nothing quite like following a food journey from producer to plate – and Ireland is peppered with opportunities to get more involved with your food. What better experience than to sit by a turf fire in a traditional pub, where you'll eat the freshest seafood and hear the Irish language, songs and stories. Plus look at some of the excellent markets such as The English Market in Cork, the Temple Bar Food Market in Dublin and the St George's Market in Belfast.</p> <p>And for the chance to get your hands on raw ingredients and craft some magic of your own, you can take your pick of working farms, cosy cookery schools, and food festivals.</p> <p>Festivals can be a great way to find out about that fantastic food and drink...</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Irish Craft Beer & Cider Festival in Dublin - Galway Oyster and Seafood Festival in September - It has been described by the Sunday Times as "one of the 12 greatest shows on earth" and was listed in the AA Travel Guide one of Europe's Seven Best Festivals. - National Oyster Opening Championship, international food village, live music and celebrity guests, Masquerade 'Mardi Gras' as a carnival of masked revellers are led by a lively band through the pedestrian streets of Galway.
Food	<p>Ulster Fry: potato bread fried with local-cure bacon, Moira pork and apple sausages, free-range eggs, Almargh mushrooms, bunch of dulse (edible seaweed); breads: afternoon tea: soda farls, treacle farls; pubs: locally harvested oysters with glass of Guinness; beef fillet flamed in Bushmills whiskey</p>
Wine and spirits	<p>Irish whiskey and Guinness are justifiably world famous!</p> <p>Guinness: During the middle ages, St. James's Gate was western</p>

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	<p>entrance into the city of Dublin. Later, the brewery was built at the site, and it was here at the St. James's Gate Brewery in 1759, that Arthur Guinness began brewing ale. Arthur's result is what is now known all over the world as Guinness Stout. The production of Guinness was moved to London between the 1930's to 2005, but has returned to its original site at St. James's Gate Brewery, which is also called the Guinness Storehouse and is Dublin's most visited attraction.</p> <p>Bushmills Distillery: At the top of the village you will find what Bushmills has become known worldwide for - the famous Old Bushmills Whiskey Distillery. The Victorian architecture of the Distillery dates from 1885 when it was rebuilt due to a fire. It is located on the on the banks of St. Columb's Rill and reputed to be the oldest licensed Distillery in the world - being given legal status in 1608 when King James 1st granted a license to local landowner Sir Thomas Phillips. The process of illegal distillation in the village goes back even further than 1608. Local folklore tells of whiskey being made illegally in the 1400's, there are also records of a Sir Robert Savage enjoying the 'aqua vitae' (whiskey) with his troops in 1276 and the drink is even mentioned in the Book of Leinster. The company itself was founded in 1783 and in 1800's we find records of the S.S. Bushmills, a large sailing ship own by company which transported whiskey across the Atlantic.</p>
<p>Restaurants</p>	<p>Ireland has an admirable range of restaurants in all price categories. The settings range from old-world hotel dining rooms, country mansions, and castles to sky-lit terraces, shop-front bistros, riverside cottages, thatched-roof pubs, and converted houses.</p> <p>The Merchant Restaurant in Belfast is a wonderful example of the resurgence of top notch cuisine in Belfast.</p>

<p>MORE INFO</p>	
<p>Brochures</p>	<p>Call 1-800-SHAMROCK for Tourism Ireland to request brochures</p>
<p>Websites</p>	<p>For everything Irish: www.ireland.com Newsletter Sign Up: https://www.ireland.com/en-ca/core/ezine/?utm_source=chrisrobinson&utm_medium=link&utm_campaign=crshow Facebook: https://www.facebook.com/Ireland Twitter: https://twitter.com/search?q=Tourism%20ireland&src=typd</p>

<p>PERSONAL EXPERIENCES</p>	<p>Here are a couple of Travel Show Magic Moments from recent trips to Ireland:</p> <p><i>"We are walking through verdant landscaped grounds laced with</i></p>
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sparkling streams towards a sturdy square tower rising 25 meters above the gardens and woodland. Ahead of us is the famous Blarney Castle and of course we have come to kiss the Blarney Stone! To do so, we have to climb up a claustrophobic circular stone tower to the top of the tower, walk nervously along the tower's edge and then lean over the parapet backwards to kiss the stone of eloquence. A local holds on to you, so it's perfectly safe and as you regain your feet you can feel the gift of the gab giving voice to your experience! As one notable said: "Baloney is flattery laid on with a trowel. Blarney is flattery laid on with the lips – that's why you have to kiss a stone to get it!" "

"I am in the heart of Dublin City. I have walked through the cobbled stones of Trinity College...back in time to the 18th century, when the magnificent Old Library building was constructed. Now I am inside, waiting my turn to see one of the great cultural icons of Europe: the Book of Kells. Around the year 800 AD the four Gospels were written in Latin on calf skin and decorated lavishly to create a work of art that has no peer. Shortly afterwards, the Vikings raided the monastery on the remote Scottish island of Iona where it was likely created and the surviving monks fled with the Book of Kells to a monastery at Kells in County Meath. It has been on display here in the Old Library at Trinity College Dublin from the mid-19th century, and attracts over 500,000 visitors a year. And now it my turn to stand beside this resplendent echo of the Dark Ages in Europe, an echo that proves civilization still flickered here in Ireland. It's important, it is beautiful and it is essential viewing on any Dublin visit."

See my Pinterest board of my photos of Ireland at:

<http://www.pinterest.com/TravelShow/ireland>

Southern Ireland - March

Dublin: Burlington Hotel; St Patrick's Day Parade; Ceili Mor; Luminarium; Donal Shiel interview; Literary Pub Walking Tour; Trinity College and the Book of Kells; The Writers Museum; Temple Bar Area and the Clarence Hotel (U2); St Stephen's Green and the Georgian Squares;

The Guinness Storehouse (1759); St Patricks Cathedral; The Dublin Pass.com; double decker bus tour; Kilmainham Gaol; Natural History Museum; Custom House; Phoenix Park; O'Connell Street

South to Rock of Cashel; Old Jameson Distillery in Midelton (world's largest pot still) 1796; Gresham Hotel in Cork; Cork walking tour; covered market; Blarney Castle (1446), kissing the Blarney Stone

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Killarney: Randles Court Clarion Hotel; Ring of Kerry (166km or 5hr route), MacGillycuddy Reeks, Irelands highest peak, mountain passes, beaches, hikes

Northern Ireland - April

Belfast: Belfast City Hall, St Georges Market (over 100-year-old covered market);

Giant's Causeway: North Antrim Coast, 40,000 stone columns

Carrick-a-Rede: rope bridge across scary gap to fishermen's island "rock of the casting"

Derry: walls of Derry, 1613-18, 4 original gates and bastions intact; Tower Museum, history; St Columb's Cathedral

Bushmills Distillery

Dunluce Castle

Ireland Tour and Belfast – April

Dublin, Kildare, Kilkenny, Waterford, Youghal, Cork, Killarney, Ring of Kerry

Belfast: Titanic Belfast

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