

# Home



## Garden

Cutting paths through the wilderness

## Food

A Dublin pop-up restaurant that's a little bit magic



## Plus

The new Irish whiskeys worth spending on

## Interiors

How to create the bathroom of your dreams



100  
Great Places to Stay  
in Ireland this summer

## Travel

BALLYNAHINCH CASTLE, BALLYMALOE HOUSE



We've found the best spots for a getaway in Ireland in ten categories: foodies, family, luxury, spa, boutique, sustainability, groups, off the beaten track, adventure and golf. By *Patrick Hanlon, Róisín Healy, Domhnall O'Donoghue and Jennifer Stevens*

**C**hoosing only 100 great places to stay in Ireland is getting harder each year. As new hotels open, tried and true favourites renovate and innovate to an incredible standard.

It's impossible to list every great hotel on the island, so instead we chose our ten favourites in ten categories. Great places for foodies to visit, whether that's a hotel with a Michelin-starred restaurant or beautiful rooms over a wonderful place to eat. Places for groups to gather and enjoy a weekend together. Fun, exciting spots for lovers of adventure to get their adrenaline fix. The best golf courses in Ireland and the places to stay while you play the perfect round. Family breaks that are good for all the family – including the parents. The best spa hotels where you can truly relax and places so off the beaten track

that you might never have heard them of before.

A lot of these places add up to more than the sum of their parts. Find wonderful hosts and hospitality, Irish food provenance, a location that cannot be beaten and something special that you'll only experience on a great Irish holiday.

## TOP TEN

**Ballymaloe House** p17  
**The Dunloe Hotel and Gardens** p19  
**Ballyfin Demesne** p21  
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**Giles Norman Townhouse** p23  
**Drumhierny Woodland Hideaway** p25  
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**Huntington Castle and Gardens** p29  
**The Lansdowne Kenmare** p30  
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**Ballynahinch Castle in Co Galway, above. Right: Co Cork's Ballymaloe House**



# 100 Great Places to Stay



## 5 BALLYMALOE HOUSE

Myrtle Allen not only opened the doors to her family home in east Cork and earned a Michelin star but single-handedly set a place for Irish cuisine at the global table. The late matriarch's legacy of elevating Irish cuisine while respecting its humble roots is now in the hands of Dervilla O'Flynn, the head chef, with JR Ryall as pastry supremo. The kitchen team serve dishes that are the culinary equivalent of couture: unashamedly classic and elegant. **Shanagarry, Co Cork** ([ballymaloe.ie](http://ballymaloe.ie))

## 6 MOUNT JULIET ESTATE

In 500 rolling acres, Mount Juliet marries the classic and contemporary so perfectly, you'll never see the join. It has 32 rooms in the whimsical and romantic Georgian manor house and 93 more in the modern haven of Hunter's Yard. The Michelin-starred Lady Helen restaurant serves sensational seasonal modern Irish cuisine in historic surroundings that never feel staid or stuffy. Don't miss the pool and spa or the new 12-seat Manor House cinema. **Thomastown, Co Kilkenny** ([mountjuliet.ie](http://mountjuliet.ie))

## 7 CASTLEWOOD HOUSE

Dingle dangles many an attraction – not least the warm embrace of the home-from-home haven of Castlewood House. This multi-award-winning guesthouse a short walk from town, overlooking Dingle Bay, is run by the husband-and-wife team Brian and Helen Heaton. The lavish breakfast includes bread and butter pudding warm from the oven. **The Wood, Dingle, Co Kerry** ([castlewooddingle.com](http://castlewooddingle.com))

## 8 THE MUSTARD SEED

Sneaking under the radar, ten minutes from Adare, lies a special countryside hideaway. The Mustard Seed has to be one of the finest examples of a food-led country house in Ireland. Enter another world where John Edward Joyce, the proprietor, is a master of detail. Angel Pirev, the head chef, crafts intricate dishes mixing local produce and estate-grown ingredients with French finesse. **Ballingarry, Co Limerick** ([mustardseed.ie](http://mustardseed.ie))

## 9 THE TWELVE

Bold stylings, eclectic art and a dash of glitz ensure that this is a boutique bolt hole that is certainly not a dime a dozen. The Twelve's fine dining restaurant, West, continues to be one of the best places to eat along the Wild Atlantic Way. Loyal to region and season, Nathan Hindmarsh's eight-course tasting menu is unmissable – not only for the flavours but also value – while the comprehensive wine list is one of the sharpest in the country. **Barna, Co Galway** ([thetwelvehotel.ie](http://thetwelvehotel.ie))

## 10 ANANTARA THE MARKER DUBLIN

The Marker Dublin has gone from strength to strength within the luxury hotel and resort group Anantara to become a star of Silicon Docks. Forbes Street by Gareth Mullins (the executive chef) is the must-stop meal destination before a show at the Bord Gais Energy Theatre. The Marker's elemental, angular architecture stands out and, inside, the hotel has modern rooms with luxe stylings and high-tech amenities – as well as one of the city's best breakfast spreads. Floor-to-ceiling windows give canal-side views. **Grand Canal Quay, Dublin 2** ([anantara.com/en/the-marker-dublin](http://anantara.com/en/the-marker-dublin))

# Foodies follow their nose for a forkful of paradise

Whether you're a gourmet or a gourmand, you'll find the freshest ingredients and first-rate dining experiences at these top destinations

**T**hese delicious places to stay need to be on your list if your appetite for travel revolves around food. From fine dining to the best of local ingredients, they celebrate great food and will make your stay an experience to remember.

## 1 BALLYNAHINCH CASTLE

Ballynahinch Castle's magic combines the majestic Connemara landscape, the fascinating history of the property, cutting-edge fine dining and an instantly relaxing atmosphere. With the top chef Danni Barry at the helm since 2022, the Owenmore Restaurant remains one of the finest dining rooms in all the land with its collection of paintings from Irish artists and the stunning aspect overlooking the terraces and river. Breakfast is brilliant too, not least for the centrepiece of the spread: a full roast ham. **Recess, Co Galway** ([ballynahinch-castle.com](http://ballynahinch-castle.com))

## 2 K CLUB

Famed for its golfing and wine heritage, the K Club has teed up significant changes in the kitchen. Gary O'Hanlon, known for his appearances on TV shows such as *The Restaurant*, has been appointed executive head chef. He has put his own stamp on the Barton, the fine dining restaurant that nods to the hotel's history with relaxed reverence. What really sets it apart? The unmissable tour of the wine cellar before dinner with the sommelier Lisa O'Doherty. **Straffan, Co Kildare** ([kclub.ie](http://kclub.ie))

## 3 DUNMORE HOUSE

Family spirit tends to enrich the warm experience of Irish hospitality and with the fourth generation of Barretts at the helm, Dunmore House is not only the beacon but the benchmark for family-run hotels in Ireland. Overlooking Clonakilty Bay, this cliffside perch has charming service that is effortless yet casual. At

breakfast and dinner at Adrift, which is listed in the Michelin Guide, exceptional west Cork produce from land and sea (including some from its own organic kitchen garden) is found on every plate. In summer, the sea terrace takes centre stage. **Clonakilty, Co Cork** ([dunmorehousehotel.ie](http://dunmorehousehotel.ie))

## 4 MACNEAN HOUSE

We all feel we know Neven Maguire personally at this stage, right? A permanent fixture on TV screens, bookshop shelves, bestseller lists and festival stages, it's as if the chef is right there even while you do the weekly shop. But it's at MacNean House in Cavan where the man is most at home, at the stylish Blacklion restaurant where his mother taught him to cook. Service, run by his wife, Amelda, is ever-charming, warm and personal. **Blacklion, Co Cavan** ([nevenmaguire.com](http://nevenmaguire.com))

**Main photo: enjoy fine dining on the terrace at Ballynahinch Castle in Co Galway. Above: intricate dishes are de rigueur at Co Limerick's The Mustard Seed**



# 100 Great Places to Stay

## When it's all about the kids...

The best family hotels ensure children and parents alike are entertained and relaxed – this selection stands out from the crowd

**W**hether you're a bunch of nature lovers or you just want to switch off and kick back together, these hotels make for a memorable family getaway.

### 11 OCEAN SANDS

As the name suggests, Ocean Sands in Enniscrone soars above the wild Atlantic and far-reaching beaches. With family-friendly bedrooms and apartments, the hotel's nautical-inspired interior echoes the surrounding environment. The accommodation is the perfect base for a day of surfing, soaking in the town's famous seaweed baths or spying on crabs scuttling over the rocks, while a nearby playground allows children to make new friends as they grapple with the spring rockers. Ocean Sands also offers guests budget-friendly accommodation in the neighbouring Ceol na Mara Guesthouse. **Enniscrone, Co Sligo** ([theoceansandshotel.ie](http://theoceansandshotel.ie))

### 12 FOTA ISLAND RESORT

Since launching in 2006, the luxurious Fota Island Resort has proved to be a popular choice for golfers, foodies and spa lovers – not to mention wedding parties. However, this east Cork destination has also welcomed families drawn to the raft of on-site facilities, including the fairy trail and Fota Island Adventure, which provides activities such as archery, kayaking and orienteering. The resort is a stone's throw from the open-air wildlife park, where more than 1,000 magnificent animals roam freely. Memories to cherish for a lifetime. **Fota, Co Cork** ([fotaisland.ie](http://fotaisland.ie))

### 13 KELLY'S RESORT HOTEL AND SPA

It would be a task to find another Wexford property that enjoys the enduring appeal of the family-run Kelly's Resort. Standing tall over Rosslare beach, the hotel is well equipped to entertain all guests, young and old, whether they're keen on the playground, the aqua club, the crazy golf course or the padel court. Wexford might be the sunny southeast, but few hotels shine brighter than Kelly's Resort. **Rosslare, Co Wexford** ([kellys.ie](http://kellys.ie))

### 14 KILLYHEVLIN LAKESIDE LODGES AND HOTEL

Just outside Enniskillen, one of the island's most enchanting towns, is Killyhevlin Lakeside Lodges and Hotel. With its extensive selection of bedrooms, studios and self-catering lodges, this four-star destination is a firm favourite with families and their furry friends – and understandably so. From the "Killy Kids" outdoor play park to the indoor pool – not to mention the myriad activities along Lough Erne – Killyhevlin should be high on every family's travel itinerary. **Enniskillen, Co Fermanagh** ([killyhevlin.com](http://killyhevlin.com))

### 15 HODSON BAY

A country mile northwest of Athlone is Hodson Bay, one of the midlands' leading family hotels. Complementing its many on-site facilities, such as the indoor pool, is the Baysports Aqua Park, dominating the shores of Lough Ree. It's known as Ireland's largest inflatable waterpark, and adventurers here can sail, paddle, kayak, canoe, jump, splash and slide. Hotel guests also have access to Yew Point, a 140-acre peninsula of unspoilt meadowland and native woodlands, undisturbed for centuries – except by the local wildlife, of course. **Athlone, Co Roscommon** ([hodsonbayhotel.com](http://hodsonbayhotel.com))

### 16 THE DUNLOE HOTEL AND GARDENS

A sister hotel of the Europe, the Dunloe Hotel and Gardens is a dream destination for families. With beautifully designed public areas this is a luxury hotel built with children in mind. Kids' clubs in the morning and evening mean that parents can enjoy some quiet time while the children get to do fun stuff. There are stables on site where pony rides are free for guests and the pool is perfect for all the family. Food here is superb, whether you're enjoying a steak from the Jospier grill or children are ordering for themselves at the kids' buffet. One visit here will lead to many more. **Beaufort, Co Kerry** ([thedunloe.com](http://thedunloe.com))

### 17 ASHDOWN PARK HOTEL

While its sister hotel, Amber Springs,

enjoys a fine reputation with families, Gorey's award-winning Ashdown Park Hotel shouldn't be overlooked. Alongside leisure facilities, such as indoor pools and a twice-daily kids' club, its many packages include passes to some of Wexford's top attractions such as Kia Ora Mini Farm, Wexford Lavender Farm, Wells House & Gardens, Irish National Heritage Park and Johnstown Castle. Seal Rescue Ireland – dedicated to caring for sick, injured and orphaned seal pups – is also nearby and happily welcomes families to visit its VIP residents.

**Gorey, Co Wexford** ([ashdownparkhotel.com](http://ashdownparkhotel.com))

### 18 EUROPA

The world-famous Europa is often referred to as the heartbeat of Belfast. Even though well-known faces such as Brad Pitt, Julia Roberts, Bob Dylan and Victoria Beckham have previously checked in, the hotel saves its most sparkling welcome for its youngest guests. Using high-quality local produce, the children's menus appeal to the fussiest eaters and following a day exploring attractions, such as Belfast Zoo or Aunt Sandra's candy factory, everyone will enjoy sinking into the cloud

**Play parks, a pool and Lough Erne keep families coming back to the four-star Killyhevlin Lakeside Lodges and Hotel near Enniskillen**

beds in one of the dedicated family rooms. **Belfast, Co Antrim** ([europahotelbelfast.com](http://europahotelbelfast.com))

### 19 AN CREAGAN

Surrounded by the Sperrin Mountains and an array of ancient monuments, An Creagan in Co Tyrone deftly combines history with outstanding natural beauty. With a mixture of self-catering cottages, it's an excellent base for families pursuing outdoor activities such as cycling, forest walks or simply an afternoon admiring the magnificent wildlife and wildflowers. There are also on-site events and workshops celebrating local traditions. **Omagh, Co Tyrone** ([ancreagan.com](http://ancreagan.com))

### 20 KNIGHTSBROOK HOTEL SPA AND GOLF RESORT

There's good reason why Meath is known as the Royal County, thanks to its wealth of attractions, including Newgrange, the Hill of Tara and Slane Castle. This four-star resort on the edge of Trim offers family packages, which include all-access passes to the popular theme park and zoo Emerald Park, a 25-minute drive east. **Trim, Co Meath** ([knightsbrook.com](http://knightsbrook.com))



KILLYHEVLIN LAKESIDE LODGES AND HOTEL

# 100 Great Places to Stay



guests. Spoilt for choice, choose between six restaurants and three atmospheric bars to lounge in and although any amount of outdoor exploits abound around the 350-acre estate, making time for the cutting-edge spa is a must.

**Cong, Co Mayo**  
(ashfordcastle.com)

## 26 CASTLEMARTYR RESORT

This haven in east Cork continuously one-ups itself, not least of all evidenced in its fine-dining restaurant Terre ascending to two-Michelin-star level this year thanks to Vincent Crepel's visionary efforts. With an exquisite spa, an eclectic art collection, a Ron Kirby-designed golf course and beautiful rooms, Castlemartyr is a historic manor house that keeps swinging big and never seems to miss.

**Castlemartyr Resort, Co Cork**  
(castlemartyrresort.ie)

## 27 THE MERRION

It's not difficult to find five-star luxury in Dublin city centre but something hits different when it comes to the Merrion. From the curious interconnecting nature, having been renovated from a block of Georgian townhouses, to the oasis-like gardens and spa in the city centre and spectacular art collection, the Merrion has always cut a unique figure with its esteemed level of luxury and fine dining right in the belly of Baile Atha Cliath.

**Upper Merrion Street, Dublin 2**  
(merrionhotel.com)

## 28 CARTON HOUSE

Carton House ticks so many boxes. Destination dining room inching on a Michelin star? Tick: Adam Nevin has hometown hero status, having returned from London to lead the Morrison Room. Dreamy spa? Tick, plus Susanne Kaufmann and Margaret Dabbs products to boot. Championship golf course? Not one, but two, and set to host the KPMG Women's Irish Open this summer. This Fairmont-managed luxury estate continues to exceed itself.

**Maynooth, Co Kildare**  
(cartonhouse.com)

## 29 PARK HOTEL KENMARE

The Brennan brothers have departed the Park and the beloved Kenmare hotel finds itself in an exciting time of flux. Its new owner, Bryan Meehan, the uber-successful Irish businessman who recently returned to these shores after decades abroad, has begun to revitalise the address. Art has been overhauled, James O'Sullivan as head chef has had his menu, and kitchen, levelled up, and sustainability and green practices seem to underpin the renewed approach. The Park is blasting into the 21st century and its five-star reputation is coming with it.

**Kenmare, Co Kerry**  
(parkkenmare.com)

## 30 HAYFIELD MANOR

If five stars is the generally held ceiling for remarking high quality, Cork would probably bestow its finest hotels six stars, just to have one up on the countrywide competition. Such is the Cork attitude and in that hypothetical example Hayfield Manor might just inch into six-star territory for Corkonians. From the Beautique Spa to the new garden oasis Bloom bar, richly appointed rooms to a choice of two levels of dining, Hayfield Manor is perfectly placed for lavish trips to the "real" capital.

**College Road, Cork city**  
(hayfieldmanor.ie)

# It's time to go big on indulgence

Treat yourself to a luxury experience that you'll treasure for ever

**W**hen only the best will do, these luxury getaways are the crème de la crème. With excellent food, unique experiences and stellar service, you'll never want to leave.

## 21 BREAC.HOUSE

Quiet luxury has made its way to travel and Breac.House is as quietly luxurious as you can get. If you're looking for total privacy, this architecturally designed, modern house on Horn Head takes getting away from it all to a new level. Breakfast in bed is the standard at Breac.House, where a tray of local produce arrives silently each morning via a hatch. However, calling this designer house in the rugged hills of northwest Donegal a "bed and breakfast" belies the style, setting, ethos and atmosphere of this contemporary retreat. A celebration of Irish craftsmanship in every detail, the two-night minimum stay presents no issue – how could you possibly leave this peaceful hideaway after just one night?  
**Dunfanaghy, Co Donegal**  
(breac.house)

## 22 THE WESTBURY

The Westbury enjoys a prime position just off Grafton Street, but it's not just the location that makes it a favourite of visitors and locals alike. Ask any Dub about their top spots in the city and they're likely to mention a brunch in Balfes, a coffee in the Gallery or dinner at Wilde. And hands down, the Sidecar, an art deco-style bar secreted within the heart of the hotel, serves the best cocktails in town. Not only that but the bedrooms are exceptional, with great Irish design and luxurious touches throughout.

**Balfe Street, Dublin 2**  
(doylecollection.com)

## 23 CASHEL PALACE

The Rock has some serious competition. Cashel Palace is fast becoming the must-visit in this Tipperary town and threatening to overtake the historic tourist stop. Not really, but this renovated Palladian pile continues to entice from far and wide with its unparalleled grandeur. Part of the Relais & Châteaux group of luxe hospitality operators, it has an exquisite spa, intriguing art collection and newly Michelin-starred restaurant, the

Bishop's Buttery, set under a vaulted ceiling in the cellar of the manor.

**Cashel, Co Tipperary**  
(cashelpalacehotel.ie)

## 24 BALLYFIN DEMESNE

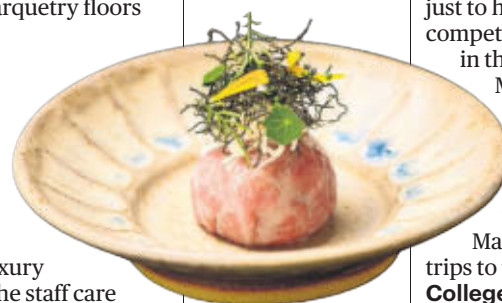
One of Ireland's most exclusive places to stay, Ballyfin is an epic Regency property promising high level luxury. With only 20 rooms and a much smaller level of guests compared to other Irish hotels of similar style or calibre, it feels like you can soak up all its majesty to yourself. During the nine-year restoration before it reopened in 2011 so many of the property's unique details were painstakingly preserved, including the intricate marquetry floors of the saloon.

**Ballyfin, Co Laois**  
(ballyfin.com)

## 25 ASHFORD CASTLE

The guest experience is unrivalled within the walls of this 800-year-old castle, where the interior marries contemporary luxury with historic charm and the staff care about making real connections with

**Above: the boathouse at Co Kildare's Carton House is thought to have been built for one of Queen Victoria's visits. Below: fine dining at Castlemartyr Resort in Co Cork**



# 100 Great Places to Stay

The best spas are attentive to every detail of the visitor experience, evoking a sense of utter relaxation the moment you walk through the door. These spa hotels continue to innovate and create something heavenly, taking their inspiration from the stunning Irish landscape.

### 31 ICE HOUSE HOTEL

Despite what its name suggests, Ballina's Ice House hotel provides guests with a very warm welcome. The older parts of this characterful riverside building date back to the 18th and 19th centuries and once stored fish on ice before it was shipped to Dublin and Liverpool markets. In 2007 it was transformed into a boutique hotel, restaurant and spa following some contemporary additions. Soaking in its outdoor seaweed baths, you'll spot herons, gulls and the other feathered inhabitants of the River Moy. Inside, the atmosphere is equally unhurried. The spa helps guests to become immersed in the surrounding environment by using many locally sourced products, such as Voya from neighbouring Sligo.  
**Ballina, Co Mayo**  
(icehousehotel.ie)

### 32 CULLODEN ESTATE AND SPA

Perched on the slopes of the Holywood Hills and overlooking Belfast Lough, the five-star Culloden is a member of Small Luxury Hotels of the World. A highlight here is the refurbished spa, a winner at last autumn's prestigious World Spa awards. With relaxation rooms, a swimming pool and a range of heat experiences and therapies, this little paradise is the perfect reward after a morning spent shopping in Belfast or exploring the nearby Ulster Folk and Transport museums.  
**Holywood, Co Down**  
(cullodenestateandspa.com)

### 33 MONART DESTINATION SPA

Hidden in Co Wexford's enchanting countryside, Monart Destination Spa needs little introduction, given the international acclaim it has received over the decades. In addition to treatments, the spa has a salt grotto, hydrotherapy pool and caldarium, along with an outdoor Finnish sauna. Echoing its commitment to the environment, Monart is powered by its solar farm, and while it's an adults-only property, you might spot a duck or two waddling along the corridors.  
**Enniscorthy, Co Wexford**  
(monart.ie)

### 34 MARYBOROUGH HOTEL

A tranquil haven, the Maryborough Hotel



combines tradition with contemporary luxuries, right down to the range of treatments at the spa. As well as blissful thermal suites, a pool and a menu of classic massages and Espa facials, the spa offers innovative treatments. These include the plasma and LED light treatment to rejuvenate the skin, and the relaxing Golden Quartz ritual with inversion gravity therapy and sound healing.  
**Douglas, Cork city**  
(maryboroughhotel.com)

### 35 KNOCKRANNY HOUSE HOTEL

Westport, often named Ireland's most beautiful town, is more than just charming shop fronts, colourful hanging baskets and a winning community spirit. Knockranny House Hotel enjoys a deserved reputation for being one of Connacht's leading health and wellbeing destinations, thanks to its Roman-inspired Spa Salveo. This elegant and classical sanctuary, with vibrant tiles and a series of distinctive columns,

**Knockranny House Hotel's Roman-inspired Spa Salveo in Co Mayo**

houses 12 treatment rooms, along with a vitality pool, thermal spa suite and mud chamber.  
**Westport, Co Mayo**  
(knockrannyhousehotel.ie)

### 36 LOUGH ERNE RESORT

Not content with hosting the 2013 G8 summit and several international golfing championships, Co Fermanagh's five-star Lough Erne Resort also excels in its health and wellbeing offering. Inspired by the surrounding water with its swaying reeds and bounty of wildlife, the spa provides head-to-toe pampering – fusing modern techniques with ancient Thai practices. Treatments range from scrubs and body wraps to massages and men's facials.  
**Enniskillen, Co Fermanagh**  
(loughernerresort.com)

### 37 GLASSON LAKEHOUSE

Following an extensive revamp, Glasson Lakehouse is now one of Westmeath's most eye-catching hotels. In a possible nod to the county's central location in Ireland, its spa, Brooks & Co, aims to centre guests by taking a holistic approach and treating the entire body, mind and soul. Many of the packages incorporate specific aromatherapy scents to enhance the experience.  
**Glasson, Co Westmeath**  
(glassonlakehouse.ie)

### 38 THE SHELBOURNE

Dublin's Shelbourne has witnessed some of Ireland's dramatic historical moments, including the drafting of our first constitution; however, there's nothing but peace and harmony in its opulent spa overlooking St Stephen's Green. Alongside the swimming pool and thermal facilities is a selection of signature treatments created in partnership with its trio of brand partners: Elemis, the cellular-therapy pioneer Swissline and the Irish-owned Ground Wellbeing, which offers 100 per cent natural aromatherapy oils and balms. An oasis in the middle of a bustling city.  
**27 St Stephen's Green, Dublin 2**  
(theshelbourne.com)

### 39 CLIFF AT LYONS

Arriving at the Cliff at Lyons, you'll be instantly charmed by the cut-stone cottages, impressive water features and idyllic landscaping. With a choice of suites and self-catering accommodation, the classic, French château-chic interiors feel luxe, as does the Orangery restaurant, housed in a Turner-style conservatory. But the renovated spa is unmissable. The Well in the Garden is set in a beautifully restored carriage house building, offering uniquely designed treatments. A highlight are the outdoor copper baths, where you can bask in the serene setting while you soak.  
**Celbridge, Co Kildare**  
(cliffatlyons.ie)

### 40 THE JOHNSTOWN ESTATE

About 40 minutes from Dublin is one of the nicest spas you'll encounter. After a huge redevelopment and investment the spa at the Johnstown Estate spans 1,300 sq m and has 15 treatment rooms, a rooftop and indoor thermal experience and rasul mud and mineral treatment chamber. This is a spa to spend a full day in and the in-spa dining makes that easy. The hotel also has lodges on site, making this the perfect spot for a girly getaway.  
**Enfield, Co Meath**  
(thejohnstownestate.com)

# Top spas for relaxation

Recharge and rejuvenate at one of these wellbeing wonders

# Pretty little pads with a lot of flair

Smart places to savour an intimate atmosphere and stylish surroundings

**S**taying somewhere with character and charm makes a getaway feel special, and these small hotels and guesthouses offer all that and more.

## 41 BLACKROCK HOUSE B&B

Petite is perfect at Portrush's premier B&B, Blackrock House. This plush guesthouse, bathed in light and luxuriously styled, is perched on the breathtaking Causeway Coastal Route and has only four rooms, which makes nabbing a night or two here all the more special. The owner Nicola Neill's Ulster breakfast is as warm and welcoming as her charming candour and she has just added a self-catering apartment in the town to her portfolio.  
**Portrush, Co Antrim**  
(blackrockbandbportrush.com)

## 42 THE STOP

For those in the know, the Stop is the secret spot no one wants to shout about too loudly for fear their Galway favourite will become inundated. Lauded for its relaxed and refined setting and service, Russ Hart and Emer Fitzpatrick's

bohemian bolt hole is designed to stoke creativity and inspiration with nods to art, music and design throughout. The breakfast spread is uncompromising in its commitment to serving quality local, Irish, organic produce and artisan coffee.  
**38 Father Griffin Road, Galway city**  
(thetopgalway.com)

## 43 BALLYVOLANE HOUSE

Ballyvolane House cleverly reinvented itself at the vanguard of the craft gin scene when the owner Justin Green built a distillery on site and created his multi-award-winning Bertha's Revenge gin, made from a whey base and named for the world's oldest cow. In the manor house, he and Jenny, his wife, provide the most royal of welcomes (King Charles and Camilla adored their stay in 2018) to their country house outside Fermoy where the food is fantastic, the grounds enchanting and the dogs loveable rogues.  
**Castlelyons, Co Cork**  
(ballyvolanehouse.ie)

## 44 THE WHITE COTTAGES

Looking for a brilliant B&B by the sea? Come rain or shine Skerries is a postcard-

**Nods to nostalgia mix with modern comforts at No 1 Pery Square in Limerick's Georgian Quarter**

pretty coastal destination and the White Cottages sit right by the water offering a vista of the moody Mournes, Skerries Harbour and Irish Sea. Expect elegant styling with nautical touches across five rooms, some with private entrances and terraces for alfresco breakfast by the sea. Cassie the border collie is the chief guest greeter with nothing less than five-star reviews to her name.  
**Skerries, north Co Dublin**  
(thewhitecottages.com)

## 45 FERNWOOD

Dive-bomb into Connemara's rugged beauty by immersing yourself in nature at the Ashe family's 150-acre organic farm, where a trio of eco-conscious options – Stilt House, the Studio or Treehouse Dome – await. At this idyllic hideaway outside Clifden, simple, functional design allows for a real sense of tranquillity and the opportunity to breathe in the crisp Connemara air. The Ashes also have a pair of lovingly kept cottages in Roundstone, right by the quay, sleeping four and six respectively – a great option for groups.  
**Clifden, Co Galway**  
(fernwood.eco)

## 46 GILES NORMAN TOWNHOUSE

Art springs to life at one of Ireland's most unique places to stay, an extension of the gallery of Ireland's leading landscape photographer. The style of each of the five rooms celebrates select pieces from Norman's portfolios, complemented by clean lines, lush textures and muted tones. "Less is more" is the approach here – except, of course, when it comes to quality. The Studio in the loft is the star suite, with beautiful views over Kinsale harbour. Seal the deal with a booking at the Michelin favourites Saint Francis Provisions or Bastion.  
**Kinsale, Co Cork**  
(gilesnormantownhouse.com)

## 47 NO 1 PERY SQUARE

Set in Limerick's Georgian Quarter, overlooking the handsome, tree-lined People's Park, No 1 Pery Square is a period property with polish. Expect wonderful nods to nostalgia in 21 rooms, with sash windows, rolltop baths, brass and gilt beds and dressing screens – without having to forgo the modern comforts of monsoon showers, superfast wi-fi and a Voya spa. Food is a significant focus here – at breakfast time, in particular – and there is a keenly curated choice of wine and cocktails.  
**Georgian Quarter, Limerick city**  
(oneperysquare.com)

## 48 TOWNHOUSE ON THE GREEN

This luxurious 18th-century townhouse turned boutique hotel is a new addition to one of Dublin's most prestigious streets. Heritage detail is elegantly paired with contemporary touches in all the rooms, on the third and fourth floors. Each set of rooms is unique – different sizes, stylings and views (some city, some park) – and named after statues in the neighbouring St Stephen's Green Park, a Victorian civic gem. Book into Cellar 22 below (dibs on the suntrap terrace when the weather comes good) for charcuterie platters and natural wines.  
**22 Stephen's Green, Dublin 2**  
(townhouseonthegreen.ie)

## 49 MARLFIELD HOUSE

With period paintings and gleaming antiques, Marlfield House is a treasure box to behold in Wexford. Set in 36 acres of woodland featuring an ornamental lake and rose gardens, it is a tranquil haven where ponies, hens, dogs and cats greet guests on garden walks – and the friendly resident peacock is the star of the show. This historic property has the future at its heart: environmentally sustainable practices are key. Fine dining is unmissable in the fabulous Turner-style Conservatory restaurant.  
**Gorey, Co Wexford**  
(marlfieldhouse.com)

## 50 MOUNT CONGREVE GATE LODGE

Bijou is too expansive a term for this two-bedroom speck in almost 70 acres of Mount Congreve Gardens. But plenty of grandeur is packed into its diminutive proportions. The decor weaves together the historic and contemporary in a captivating mix – from original Louis XVI beds and antique furniture to Smeg appliances and a Frame TV. Enjoy the "keys to the gardens" and hop on an Elops hybrid bike, or lounge on the hammock in the secluded terrace for ultimate peace and quiet.  
**Kilmeaden, Co Waterford**  
(mountcongreve.com)



NO 1 PERY SQUARE

# 100 Great Places to Stay

## Keep your eco conscience clear

A commitment to pairing sustainability with luxury takes top priority at these green getaways

If you want to bask in nature while knowing that your break isn't going to leave a harmful footprint, you're not alone. There is a plethora of accommodation options that keep the environment firmly in mind, from fun glamping facilities to luxury hotel stays.

### 51 KILLEAVY CASTLE ESTATE

In the woods within the Killeavy Castle Estate in south Armagh you might stumble across a group enjoying forest bathing – although you won't spot any swimming togs. The popular Japanese eco-therapy takes place entirely on terra firma among the sights, sounds and smells of magnificent beech trees. Facilitated by Ann Ward of Xhale in collaboration with the four-star hotel, the immune-boosting practice reconnects participants to the magic of the natural world.

Newry, Co Armagh  
(killeavycastle.com)

### 52 THE GARDEN OF REIMAGINATION

According to its creators Kloe Wood Lyndorff and Adam Carveth, the Garden of Reimagination is a "Willy Wonka-inspired paradise where everything is edible, from the topiary to the trees". With the assistance of local experts, the property and gardens have incorporated materials such as rock and timber from the surrounding Cork landscape. In addition to the botanically themed B&B and bell tents, the Garden of Reimagination organises a selection of retreats, including yoga and bushcraft.

Glengarriff, Co Cork  
(twogreenshoots.com)

### 53 DRUMHIERNY WOODLAND HIDEAWAY

With its 16 lodges and proximity to the Shannon, Drumhierny Woodland Hideaway in Co Leitrim has a clear vision: to enhance the wellbeing of its guests, employees and the community by taking an environmentally friendly approach. And it's not just lip service. This commitment to sustainability is evident across many of its practices, including the conservation of natural resources and a reduction of waste – and, most impressively, the planting of a tree on the estate for every direct booking made.

Leitrim, Co Leitrim  
(drumhiernyhideaway.ie)

### 54 THE APPLE FARM

They say an apple a day keeps the doctor away, so a trip to the family-run Apple Farm in Cahir, Co Tipperary, will surely leave guests in good rude health. Alongside its centuries-old orchards, the compact camping and caravan site is ripe with other fruits, such as pears, plums, sweet cherries, strawberries and



raspberries. Demonstrating its eco-friendly credentials, almost all the hot water is heated by a solar array. And because the site is used as a working farm off-season, prices for campers during the summer are competitive.

Cahir, Co Tipperary  
(theapplefarm.com)

### 55 CLIFDEN ECO BEACH CAMPING AND CARAVANNING PARK

The award-winning Clifden Eco Beach Camping and Caravanning Park unfolds across Connemara's rugged dunes. Used as a case study in sustainable tourism by Fáilte Ireland, it operates on a foundation of environmental responsibility and ethical principles. The campsite is in a unique ecological coastal habitat called machair – and with bottlenose dolphins providing company, be prepared to surrender to the beauty of sunsets over

the Atlantic Ocean or fall asleep under a canopy of stars.

Clifden, Co Galway  
(clifdenecocamping.ie)

### 56 GLAMPING UNDER THE STARS

If you're looking for a holiday escape that combines sustainability with delightful fairytale lodgings, check into the grass-roofed Hobbit houses in one of the two sites comprising Glamping under the Stars in Portlaoise. From wildflowers to biodiversity ponds, wild rabbits and butterflies, the acclaimed accommodation is dedicated to showcasing Mother Nature's abundance of gifts wherever possible. Many of the hand-built dwellings have incorporated upcycled windows, vintage finds and repurposed materials.

Portlaoise, Co Laois  
(glampingunderthestars.ie)

Go off-grid and reconnect with nature at Lough Mardal Lodge in Co Donegal

### 57 BLACKSTAIRS ECO TRAILS

Five kilometres outside the Georgian village of Borris is Blackstairs Eco Trails, ideal for foragers and nature enthusiasts. With the eponymous mountain range keeping a watchful eye over proceedings, the biodiverse glamping destination has been deservedly certified by the Global Sustainable Tourism Council. After swimming or canoeing on its lake, guests can accompany the diverse wildlife and explore the surrounding fields, meadows and gardens. That's if they can draw themselves away from Piper, the much-loved rescue cat.

Borris, Co Carlow  
(blackstairsecotrails.ie)

### 58 LOUGH MARDAL LODGE

Few eco-getaways are more authentic than Lough Mardal Lodge. Surrounded by swathes of unspoilt bogland and a habitat for protected wildlife species, the lodge and glamping facilities were developed to coexist with Donegal's natural riches. The sustainable policies of the off-grid accommodation include composting lavatories, low waste and no single-use plastics. It encourages guests to forge connections to the land and its many inhabitants, whether by sitting around the campfire or waking to the sound of a full-voiced cuckoo.

Ballintra, Co Donegal  
(loughmardalglamping.ie)

### 59 CLISSMANN HORSE CARAVANS

In 2022 donkeys finally received the attention they deserved thanks to Jenny in the Oscar-nominated *The Banshees of Inisherin*. If you want to holiday with these beautiful, gentle creatures book a stay at Clissmann Horse Caravans, scattered across a family farm in Cronybyrne. Guests can explore the majestic Wicklow countryside with the clip-clopping company of donkeys and horses.

Rathdrum, Co Wicklow  
(clissmannhorsecaravans.com)

### 60 GREGANS CASTLE HOTEL

Clare is affectionately known as the Banner County, so flags should be flying high outside the 18th-century Gregans Castle Hotel – the green variety. The family-run establishment is part of the esteemed Small Luxury Hotels of the World in recognition of going the extra eco mile. With its robust tree-planting initiatives and locally sourced produce, Gregans hosted nature-loving JRR Tolkien, who's said to have been influenced by the nearby Burren when writing *The Lord of the Rings*.

Gragan East, Co Clare  
(gregans.ie)

# 100 Great Places to Stay



award-winning apple brandy and artisanal ciders.

**Mallow, Co Cork**  
(longuevillehouse.ie)

## 66 DELPHI LODGE

Connemara's natural beauty knows no bounds. Jaw-dropping vistas, tumbling streams, awe-inspiring mountain stretches – every turn seems to get more spectacular, and nestled within the raw landscape is Delphi Lodge, a rustic country house. No big deal, just set on a cool 1,000 acres. Whether you book the 200-year-old lodge exclusively or spread your group across the six self-catering cottages the lakeside setting is renowned for its fishery, and Teddy Coulter's fly fishing school is a unique and unmissable experience to enhance any stay.

**Leenaun, Co Galway**  
(delphilodge.ie)

## 67 THE WICKLOW ESCAPE

Lisa Wilkinson's bijou mountain lodge in the wilds of Wicklow is prime private party territory, from corporate off-sites and extended family gatherings to intimate weddings and friends celebrating milestones. Strictly exclusive hire and sleeping 22 across the three-bedroom cottage and seven garden cabins, the woodland retreat prides itself on its gourmet food offering. After a hike or a forest walk in the Wicklow Mountains, relax in the wood-fired hot tub before an alfresco pizza party.

**Donard, Co Wicklow**  
(thewicklowescape.com)

## 68 COOLCLOGHER HOUSE

Killarney has a plethora of accommodation options as a bustling tourist town, but Coolclogher House is an unexpectedly lavish retreat hidden in plain sight. Set on 68 acres of parkland in a walled estate at the edge of town, the Italianate manor house, which dates from 1742, offers seven individually styled en suite guest rooms, and its pair of cosy, antique-appointed drawing rooms and the dining room with adjoining orangery add a regal touch to self-catering stays and group celebrations.

**Killarney, Co Kerry**  
(coolclogherhouse.com)

## 69 CABU BY THE LAKES

Hightail it to the ethereal Killykeen Forest Park in Cavan to find the ultimate woodland oasis in the form of Cabu by the Lakes. Groups can comfortably spread out across one, two and three-bedroom loft, log and lake cabins, then come together for activities such as kayaking and fishing on Lough Oughter. The sitooterie is the central space for socialising and alfresco dining, particularly primed for barbecues, while the Nature Spa experience offers outdoor hot tubs, a sauna and Japanese baths.

**Killykeen Forest Park, Co Cavan**  
(holidays.cabu.co.uk)

## 70 FIDDLE + BOW

With Homestead Cottage becoming one of Ireland's newest Michelin-starred restaurants, Doolin has become even more of a destination. The coastal village in Clare is a bit quirky, colourful and eccentric, so Fiddle + Bow is a perfect fit, with its unique collection of accommodation options, from a 13-bedroom hotel to private lofts, lodges and cottages easily catering for groups of up to 50. Seafood feasts at Russells – with its newly opened terrace – seal the deal.

**Doolin, Co Clare**  
(fiddleandbow.ie)

# Gather the gang for a top retreat

Whether you're planning a celebration with mates or taking a few days away with family, these venues will give your group an experience to remember

**T**oo often, group getaways are few and far between. If you've managed to get a date in the diary that suits everyone, you want it to be somewhere special. Here are some of our favourite places with ample space for a family gathering or a break with pals.

## 61 DUNOWEN HOUSE

A whisper beyond Clonakilty, Dunowen House offers luxury accommodation for up to 23 between the opulently styled late 18th-century country house and its adjoining cottage. It was formerly the home of Noel Redding, bass guitarist with the Jimi Hendrix Experience, and musical notes and nods are dotted throughout the property. The owners Stephen and Kela Hodgins, celebrating a decade in business in 2024, leave no detail unchecked, and any stay would be perfectly punctuated by Kela's private catering and delicious bakes.

**Ardfield, Co Cork**  
(dunowenhouse.ie)

## 62 COOPERSHILL HOUSE

Home of the O'Hara family for nigh on

250 years, this 18th-century Sligo mansion is prime for special occasions and glorious gatherings. A rural idyll on a 500-acre private estate, Coopershill is an ideal base for adventure seekers and nature lovers, with wildlife aplenty and activities from woodland walks to fly fishing and croquet to clay pigeon shooting. Grab a group and hire the whole house (it sleeps 16) for stays of two nights or more.

**Coopershill, Co Sligo**  
(coopershills.com)

## 63 GHAN HOUSE

Ghan House in the coastal village of Carlingford is a handsome listed Georgian building dating from 1727 that is ideal for group stays because it has 11 guest rooms. It's decorated for its food offering, particularly seafood and shellfish, and the Regency-styled drawing room hosts dining with the moody Mourne Mountains as the backdrop.

**Carlingford, Co Louth**  
(ghanhouse.com)

## 64 LUSTY BEG ISLAND

Sometimes you need the experience of a ferry transfer to properly feel that

**Dunowen House in Ardfield, Co Cork, can accommodate 23 people**

you're ensconced on an island – even a five-minute one to divorce the mainland from your island retreat. In the Fermanagh Lakelands, Lusty Beg is exactly that: three minutes on the Corloughoroo car ferry to reach your secluded escape. Idyllically set amid woodland and on the water, and comprising handsomely styled lodges, cabins and chalets, this Lower Lough Erne perch has a serenity that feels unmatched, while a host of activities and an island spa keeps itineraries exciting.

**Lower Lough Erne, Co Fermanagh**  
(lustybegisland.com)

## 65 LONGUEVILLE HOUSE

Longueville House has a unique character and youthful energy that belies the listed Georgian manor's 303-year age. Set outside Mallow in 400 acres of woodland, the estate is run by the owner-occupiers Aisling and William O'Callaghan, and groups of up to 28 can call this immaculately maintained country house home, with exclusive hire of 13 guest suites. William is the chef-in-residence, if a gourmet package is required, while from the orchard the family produce

# 100 Great Places to Stay

For a small island, there are still plenty of hidden treasures. Here are some of our favourite places that promise breathtaking views and restful solitude.

## 71 CASTLECOR HOUSE

The post-pandemic popularity of slow tourism has shone a spotlight on Co Longford. From Cloondara, where the Royal Canal greenway begins (or ends), you can visit many charming villages and towns along the route and explore Ireland's Hidden Heartlands. Outside Ballymahon is the 300-year-old Castlecor House, owned by the Longford native Brian Ginty and his wife, Loretta Grogan. Formerly a hunting lodge, convent and nursing home, this unique guesthouse is steeped in history

and occasionally provides a backdrop for theatre performances and fancy-dress parties.

**Ballymahon, Co Longford**  
([instagram.com/castlecor\\_house](https://www.instagram.com/castlecor_house))

## 72 THE STATION HOUSE

This award-winning boutique hotel has been on a journey of its own, beginning in 1862 when it was built at the rail junction connecting Co Dublin and Meath. In the 1980s the Slattery family turned it into a guesthouse then added the Signal restaurant and turned it into the Station House hotel. Today it is a popular wedding venue and cosy country escape in the lush Boyne Valley with the warmth of a family home. The recently refurbished property now has 19 bedrooms, including suites in the junction

There is a temple of the Egyptian goddess Isis in the basement of Huntington Castle and an ancient yew-tree walk in its glorious gardens

cabin and former station master's living quarters.

**Kilmessan, Co Meath**  
([stationhousehotel.ie](https://www.stationhousehotel.ie))

## 73 THE ROYAL HOTEL

While Ireland's west coast is sprinkled with breathtaking islands, few captivate visitors more than Valentia, known for its lighthouse, grotto, weather station and tetrapod tracks – animal footprints believed to have been created some 385 million years ago. Human visitors have not followed the trail here for quite that long but the Royal is one of many historic properties – alongside Reenglas House and Atlantic Villa – to have welcomed visitors for almost 200 years. Stargazers love Valentia for its spectacular views of the Milky Way, within southwest Kerry's International Dark Sky Reserve.

**Valentia Island, Co Kerry**  
([royalvalentia.ie](https://www.royalvalentia.ie))

## 74 BERVIE GUESTHOUSE

Unbroken views of golden sands framed by the Cathedral Cliffs of Minaun reward visitors to Achill Island's Bervie Guest Accommodation. Once a coastguard station, this tourist outpost has been welcoming Irish and international visitors to idyllic Keel Strand since 1932. A blue wicket gate leads to the beach – a stunning backdrop for its fine-dining restaurant, which has a menu rich in local produce. Bervie is run by Elizabeth Barrett, who was born here, and her husband, John. Carrying on the local tradition of warm hospitality, they welcome back many Irish or international visitors who are the children, grandchildren or even great-grandchildren of guests who passed down happy memories from holidays long ago.

**Achill, Co Mayo**  
([bervieachill.com](https://www.bervieachill.com))

## 75 THE STABLES

The Stables in Birr is a boutique guesthouse that defines old-world charm. A mecca for fashion, gourmet food and accommodation, this 19th-century property is nestled among many striking buildings on the tree-lined Oxmantown Mall – and just a whisper away from Birr Castle. The five period-style bedrooms guarantee a memorable overnight experience: each has original Georgian high ceilings while the sash windows provide views on to the mall or a charming courtyard.

**Birr, Co Offaly**  
([thestablesbirr.com](https://www.thestablesbirr.com))

## 76 HUNTINGTON CASTLE AND GARDENS

One of Carlow's best-kept secrets, Huntington Castle began as a garrison on

the strategically important Wexford-to-Dublin trade route along the River Derry before being converted into a family home in the 17th century by Lord Esmonde. Today it's owned by his descendant Alex Durdin Robertson and his wife, Clare. In the 1970s the basement was converted into a temple to the Egyptian goddess Isis to celebrate the "divine feminine" and the ancient yew-tree walk has enduring appeal for garden lovers. A family-friendly gate lodge and cottage provide an alternative to the castle bedrooms.

**Clonegal, Co Carlow**  
([huntingtoncastle.com](https://www.huntingtoncastle.com))

## 77 AN CHUIRT / CAISLEAIN OIR

It isn't just studious teenagers who flock to our heritage-rich Gaeltacht regions such as Gweedore every summer. There to welcome them to Donegal – standing tall alongside Mount Errigal – are proud members of the local hospitality industry, the living embodiment of Ireland's unofficial tagline, *Céad Míle Fáilte*. An Chuir hotel is ideal for adventurers exploring the mountains in nearby Dunlewey, while the family-run Caisleain Oir hotel, near Donegal airport, is another all-rounder – and even brews its own beer.

**Errigal, Co Donegal**  
([anchuirhotel.com](https://www.anchuirhotel.com); [donegalhotel.ie](https://www.donegalhotel.ie))

## 78 CLARE ISLAND LIGHTHOUSE

Towering over the entrance to Clew Bay, these days Clare Island Lighthouse offers a safe haven to guests instead of ships being buffeted on Ireland's Atlantic coast. This 19th-century listed building was rebuilt after a fire in 1813, becoming the only lighthouse in the country with two towers. It fulfilled a vital role providing a beacon in the mist for almost 160 years and was fully decommissioned in 1965. Offering B&B and self-catering group bookings, the uncluttered interior gives centre stage to unmatched views of a beautiful and dramatic stretch of coastline.

**Clare Island, Co Mayo**  
([clareislandlighthouse.com](https://www.clareislandlighthouse.com))

## 79 WATERFALL CAVES

An enchanting pitstop along the Causeway Coastal Route is the family-run Waterfall Caves – self-catering accommodation that's just as wonderful as it sounds. The cave dwellings are burrowed at the foot of Binevenagh Mountain – and the site has two wooden "turnaround houses" that rotate 360 degrees so guests won't miss any panoramic views. Two spring lakes provide fresh water. After some rainbow trout fishing or hiking in the forest and farm, enjoy a soak in a hot tub or some marshmallows toasted on the barbecue.

**Limavady, Co Derry**  
([waterfallcaves.com](https://www.waterfallcaves.com))

## 80 SEA CLOUD CRUISES

What better way to appreciate the majesty of the Irish coastline than aboard a legendary tall ship? Sea Cloud Cruises schedules itineraries throughout the year, including a week-long route beginning in London before touring our east coast from Belfast to Dublin. The German-based company continues a traditional approach: the three tall ships, which have distinctive white masts, use wind whenever possible while the sails are set by hand, with sailors climbing the rigging to loosen the cloth then hauling the lines on deck – a remarkable process for passengers to watch.

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



History and heritage are not hidden in these outposts off the beaten track

# Out of the way and here to stay

# 100 Great Places to Stay

# Head outside and pack in an adventure

From ziplining to falconry, these hotels offer a range of outdoor activities – as well as all the creature comforts

Insiders know that the best way to experience Irish hospitality is to get outdoors. There's nothing quite like coming in from a day of exploring and adrenaline-chasing to a warm welcome and a cosy place to rest your bones.

**81 HILLYARD HOUSE HOTEL**  
Hillyard House Hotel is a recent addition to the Northern Irish hospitality scene after this former guesthouse was renovated and relaunched as a boutique hotel and restaurant. It stands guard at the gates to Castlewellsan Forest Park, where visitors can hire paddleboards, kayaks and bicycles from the Life Adventure Centre. Also nearby are the Mourne Mountains. The outdoor company Walk the Mournes shares informative insights on the region – designated as an area of outstanding natural beauty – while also bringing thrilling mythology to life.  
**Castlewellsan, Co Down**  
(hillyard-house.co.uk)

**82 CARLINGFORD ADVENTURE CENTRE**  
The medieval town of Carlingford is understandably one of Co Louth's most beloved destinations, especially among those looking for an adrenaline rush. Carlingford Adventure Centre offers more than 30 activities on land, sea and in the sky, including abseiling, laser combat, paddleboarding and ziplining. The centre has a 250-bed hostel for groups, private rooms for families or individuals and self-contained self-catering units.  
**Carlingford, Co Louth**  
(carlingfordadventure.com)

**83 THE LANSDOWNE KENMARE**  
A much-loved hotel in Munster, the charming, 18th-century Lansdowne Kenmare was recently acquired by the local entrepreneur Patrick Hanley and his wife, Aileen. The young family is adopting many initiatives to support the environment – and rightly so, given the wealth of beauty on their doorstep. From here guests can explore the majesty of the Kingdom of Kerry, ripe with possibilities for adventure at every level. Whether you want to scale Carrauntoohil, the country's



highest mountain, or meander along the world-renowned beaches, there's an outdoor itinerary for everyone.

**Kenmare, Co Kerry**  
(lansdownekenmare.com)

**84 LYRATH ESTATE HOTEL**  
Lyrath Estate, a 17th-century property that sits alongside a modern extension, is a brief drive from Kilkenny, yet it feels a million miles from the commotion of the lively town, thanks to 170 acres of parkland. One of the estate's many charms is Hawkeye Falconry Ireland, which allows guests to fly, handle and feed trained hawks and owls. Falconry predates recorded history and is regularly described as the noblest of all field sports. Unesco lists it as an intangible cultural heritage in 24 countries, including Ireland.  
**Kilkenny, Co Kilkenny**  
(lyrath.com)

**85 CASTLE LESLIE**  
Castle Leslie Estate is one of Ulster's most noted hotels, hidden among woodland outside the picturesque village of

Glaslough – a regular victor in the prestigious Tidy Towns awards. The estate's equestrian centre is well known for being a leading provider of outdoor adventures. It's suitable for all riders over seven, and the experienced team provide expert tuition, guidance, thrilling cross-country rides and, best of all, memories to last a lifetime.  
**Glaslough, Co Monaghan**  
(castleleslie.com)

**86 GLEESONS HOTEL**  
Gleesons Hotel, a listed townhouse in the heart of Roscommon town, is a principal player in the region's hospitality industry, thanks to the delightful welcome the family guarantees its guests. Along with its delicious menus and elegant interior, the hotel is 45km from the daring exploits available in Lough Key Forest and Activity Park, which include ziplining and electric cycling. Subterranean adventure can be found in Arigna Mining Experience, which sensitively tells the story of Ireland's coalmining industry.  
**Roscommon, Co Roscommon**  
(gleesonsroscommon.ie)

Guests at Lyrath Estate near Kilkenny can fly and handle trained hawks and owls at Hawkeye Falconry

**87 BLUEBELL LANE GLAMPING**  
Amid the rushes, mountains, rocks and drumlins is Bluebell Lane Glamping, a unique facility in Mullaghbawn, Co Down, developed by Pádraig Carragher and his wife, Sharon. Across the 26 acres are tents, pods, huts, a playground and a cottage and, most impressively, an Iron Age-style roundhouse constructed during the pandemic. In his studio Carragher also oversees enjoyable wood-turning workshops – inspired by our neolithic traditions – which he describes as self-healing, energising and rejuvenating.  
**Newry, Co Down**  
(bluebell-lane.com)

**88 MOUNT FALCON**  
Loved by President Biden, Mount Falcon in Ballina is a Victorian gothic manor house designed by the celebrated architect James Franklin Fuller, who was responsible for some of Ireland's most iconic buildings, such as Ashford Castle, Kylemore Abbey and Farnleigh House. Beyond the golf driving range and indoor pool, the estate invites guests to choose from several exciting activities, including clay pigeon shooting and salmon and trout fishing on the River Moy. Falconry with the cooing residents of the on-site aviary is a definite highlight.  
**Ballina, Co Mayo**  
(mountfalcon.com)

**89 THE PARK HOTEL**  
With its Copper Coast and Comeragh Mountains, west Waterford is a wonderland of natural beauty, and the four-star Park Hotel in Dungarvan is the ideal destination for adventurers keen to explore the region by land or sea. Surrounded by the Colligan River, the property is positioned at the start of the Waterford greenway, the picturesque trail for cyclists or walkers that is dotted with charming villages and historic landmarks. However, from here, without moving a muscle, west Waterford's stunning views will surely leave your heart pounding.  
**Dungarvan, Co Waterford**  
(parkhoteldungarvan.com)

**90 BALLYHOURA MOUNTAIN LODGES**  
Ballyhoura Mountain Lodges is beautifully woven into the Limerick landscape and is a honeypot for nature and outdoor enthusiasts. The grounds are also located among Kilmallock's cycle hub routes, and there's a purpose-built mountain bike park nearby, where bikes for rent are available. Guests can also work up a sweat on the outdoor gym obstacle course before exploring the local bohoreens, hills and forests. Many reminders of our ancient past, including the neolithic and medieval periods, are scattered across the vicinity.  
**Kilfinane, Co Limerick**  
(ballyhouramountainlodges.ie)

Ireland has fantastic choice when it comes to the perfect game of golf, but nothing beats having somewhere beautiful to kick back and relax after a round. Here are some of our favourite destinations for a golfing break.

#### 91 OLD HEAD

Described as one of the world's most majestic golf courses, playing Old Head in Kinsale is a bucket-list event for many. If you're going to play you may as well make a trip out of it and stay in one of the suites on site. Each one offers stunning views over the course and out to the Old Head Lighthouse. They take wellness seriously here too and there is a luxurious thermal spa area with two treatment rooms using Bamford products. Whether you're after recovery or relaxation, you're covered.

**Kinsale, Co Cork**  
(oldhead.com)

#### 92 LAHINCH

One of the greatest links courses, Lahinch is one for golfing purists. With holes that delight and ones that test even the lowest handicap, playing Lahinch is described as an adventure. If you want to stay locally, the cosy rooms in Vaughan's Anchor Inn in Liscannor are just a few minutes away and are the perfect place to lay your head after a challenging game. It helps that the seafood downstairs is some of the best in the west, and a dozen Flaggy Shore oysters paired with a pint of Guinness will help to ease the memory of that double bogey.

**Lahinch, Co Clare**  
(lahinchgolf.com, vaughans.ie)

#### 93 PORTMARNOCK

This stretch of north Co Dublin coastline is golf heaven, but if you're looking to enjoy the game and an excellent weekend away you should book into the Portmarnock Resort, which combines a wonderful beachfront hotel with the historic Jameson Golf Links, a course designed by the famed German golfer Bernhard Langer. There are multiple dining options on site, a very good spa and 8km of pristine sandy beach to enjoy.

**Portmarnock, Co Dublin**  
(portmarnock.com)

#### 94 DRUIDS GLEN

Often referred to as the Augusta of Europe, the course at Druids Glen, originally designed by Pat Ruddy and Tom Craddock, has recently undergone extensive upgrades and a multimillion-euro investment. There are actually two courses here, Druids Glen and

Druids Heath, making a weekend of golf a distinct possibility. If you're travelling with a less enthusiastic golfer, the spa at the resort is well known for its excellent staff and the pool overlooking the verdant Co Wicklow landscape.

**Newtownmountkennedy, Co Wicklow**  
(druidsglenresort.com)

#### 95 ADARE MANOR

It would be impossible to have a list about golf breaks without mentioning Adare

**Adare Manor in Co Limerick offers the ultimate in luxury golfing weekends**

Manor. Gearing up for the Ryder Cup in 2027, this is the epitome of a golf lover's dream weekend away. If you can tear yourself away from the perfectly maintained course, where every hole could be a featured one, there's a Michelin-starred restaurant, the Oak Room, sumptuous casual dining in the Carriage House, an award-winning spa featuring products from 111Skin and possibly the nicest swimming pool in Ireland in the Padel Club. It's worth



noting that golf is reduced to nine holes from October 1 and the course closes for the winter season from October 14.

**Adare, Co Limerick**  
(adaremanor.com)

#### 96 TRUMP DOONBEG

Come here for the golf and stay for the views, the beach, the gorgeous suites and the food. There's a reason this resort is so loved by Irish and international golf enthusiasts and a big part of it is the hospitality. Everyone you meet here is proud of where they work and make it seem like a pleasure to welcome you to this special part of Co Clare. The links course is magnificent and the pints in the bar afterwards, looking out over the first, are some of the best anywhere in the country.

**Doughmore, Co Clare**  
(trumphotels.com/ireland)

#### 97 ROYAL DUBLIN

As you cross the wooden bridge from Clontarf to North Bull Island you'll arrive at one of the best golf courses in the world. The Royal Dublin has a long and illustrious history and a round here is as coveted now as it was when Seve Ballesteros won the Carroll's Irish Open here in 1983 and 1985. With no rooms on site, stay close by in the 12th-century Clontarf Castle Hotel.

**North Bull Island Nature Reserve, Dublin**  
(theroyaldublingolfclub.com, clontarfcastle.ie)

#### 98 ROYAL PORTRUSH

Located in an area of outstanding natural beauty on the Causeway Coast, the Royal Portrush Golf Club has magnificent views in every direction. The course is overlooked by the ruins of the 13th-century Dunluce Castle, which gives its name to the famous Dunluce Links – known as one of the most challenging links courses anywhere in the world. Royal Portrush is where Shane Lowry lifted the Claret Jug at the 2019 Open, which will be held at the club once again in 2025. Stay at the quietly luxurious Bushmills Inn, where you'll relax with great food and a cosy atmosphere after your winning round.

**Portrush, Co Antrim**  
(royalportrushgolfclub.com, bushmillsinn.com)

#### 99 BALLYBUNION

With two links courses, this Co Kerry club is ranked at No 18 on the world's 100 greatest golf courses by Golf Digest. Dating back to 1893, the old course has highly dramatic holes overlooking the ferocious Atlantic Ocean. Stay just across the road in the family-run Teach de Broc, where they cater to the golfer's every need – whether that's an early breakfast before a 7am tee time or a locker room specially designed with golfers in mind.

**Ballybunion, Co Kerry**  
(ballybuniongolfclub.com)

#### 100 THE EUROPEAN CLUB

Designed by Pat Ruddy and opened in 1993, the European Club in Co Wicklow remains one of the best courses in Ireland. A 20-hole links course, set in rugged dunes, it's likely to be one of the last links courses to be built in Ireland. Stay close by in the Woodenbridge Hotel and Lodge in the Vale of Avoca, where cosy charm and comforting food are the order of the day.

**Brittas Bay, Co Wicklow**  
(theeuropeanclub.com, woodenbridgehotel.com)

# Big hitters for golf lovers

Brush up on your game and tick these stunning courses off your bucket list – then take recovery and relaxation seriously with some luxury hospitality