

Galway

Galway is a county, an experience to be savoured and remembered.

Medieval **Galway City** is a whirlwind of activity, bursting with things to do and people to meet. Don't miss the **Galway Arts Festival** – a vibrant visual spectacle and continually innovative.

Outside the city attractions include the **Aran Islands** with the Dún Aonghusa fort and fabled stone wall network. **Connemara** is celebrated for its ethereal beauty and has lots to see. At **Dan O'Hara's Homestead**, the Connemara history and heritage centre provides an insight into this wild and lyrical land, while nearby **Connemara National Park** and the magnificent **Kylemore Abbey** are 'must sees'.

Cooile Park & Visitor Centre was once the home of Lady Gregory (co-founder of the Abbey Theatre) and is now a nature reserve. Nearby **Thoor Ballylee**, is now a restored Norman tower and was once owned by W.B. Yeats. **Brigit's Garden** near **Oughterard** has 11 acres of native woodland and wildflower meadow - the four beautiful gardens are themed on the Celtic seasonal festivals.

Galway East a quiet, low lying landscape interlaced with stone walls, attractions such as **Athenry Castle & Heritage Centre**, hidden pearls like the pre-Christian **Turoe Stone**, **Clonfert Cathedral**, **Dartfield Horse Museum** and **Portumna Forest Park**.

While the **Galway Races**, **Galway International Oyster Festival** and the **Clarenbridge Oyster Festival** compete as the social events of the season, there's lots more on offer for you to see and do such as medieval banquets at **Dunguaire Castle**; a visit to the **Ocean & Country Visitor Centre**, **Glengowla Mines** or indeed the **Ballinasloe Horse Fair**, one of the most ancient gatherings in the region.

That's Galway – different, special and never, ever predictable.





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BALLINASLOE, HORSE FAIR

Galway towns and villages

Galway's towns and villages are the type of places, those special, magical places that everyone wants to visit; that every visitor wants to return to; and that anyone lucky enough to live in, never, ever wants to leave.

Galway City E5 is one of the fastest growing cities in Europe. It began as a small fishing village centred on the estuary of the River Corrib, a river traditionally called Abhainn Na Gaillimhe (The Galway River) after Galvia, a mythological princess said to have drowned in its waters.

There is vibrancy to the friendly University City, which many delight in, and few forget. Music, festivals, horse racing, pubs, restaurants, shops, theatres and most of all Galway people, combine to create an atmosphere you will want to return to again and again.

Athenry F5 23km east of Galway City, contains some of the finest remaining town walls in Ireland including five towers and a town entrance known as North Gate. The castle, surrounded by its own curtain wall and towers, was constructed in three phases between the 13th and 15th centuries. It fell into ruin, but has recently been restored and each year hosts a medieval festival.

Ballinasloe G5 is a prosperous and expanding town 65km east of Galway City and is the main commercial/industrial centre for east Galway. The angling centre on the River Suck, which is renowned for its pike, bream, perch fishing in its more slow-running sections and trout in its tributaries. The town is a popular stop-off point for cruisers on the River Suck and Grand Canal which terminates here.

Cleggan B4 on the southern shores of sheltered Cleggan Bay, 9km from Clifden, is both the centre of the north Connemara sea fishing industry and the ferry port for Inishbofin Island lying 9km out in the Atlantic.



Clifden B4 78km northwest of Galway City, is Connemara's largest town and regarded as its capital. With fine hotels, guesthouses and restaurants, it is the ideal base for the holiday maker whether touring Connemara or engaging in an outdoors holiday, with adventure centres, angling, walking, and stunning scenery and wildlife all on offer.

In Clifden in October 1907, a defining event in world communication took place when the first commercial transatlantic message was transmitted from Guglielmo Marconi's Station in Clifden to his North American complex in Glace Bay, Newfoundland, Canada. This message effectively launched the concept of telecommunication accessibility for all.

Clonbur D4 lies near Cong and the Mayo border and is an ideal centre for the trout angler as it nestles easily between the two great lakes Corrib and Mask. Try your hand at the excellent and exciting fishing on three of Europe's premier trout and salmon lakes, as Lough Carra is also within easy reach.

Gort E6 is located 38km from Galway City. The town was founded on the settlements of former chieftains of the district and is now a recognised heritage town. Within its hinterland you will find an amazing richness of historical sites such as the Kilmacduagh monastic settlement.

Headford E5 some 28km north of Galway City is a popular angling centre for the eastern shore of Lough Corrib and is also an area rich in archaeological monuments, ranging from prehistoric burial grounds, Iron Age stone enclosures, early Norman and later castles, to a bewildering array of monastic sites.

Kinvara E6 village is situated at the head of Kinvara Bay with Dunguaire Castle standing guard over its entrance. The village is one of Galway's well-loved tourist spots where medieval banquets are held nightly each summer in an old 16th Century tower house.

Leenane C4 is nestled snugly beneath the Maamturk Mountains on the southern inner shore of Killary Harbour - Ireland's only fjord. The village enjoys wonderfully scenic views of Mayo's Mweelrea Mountains across the dark blue waters of the harbour. The film 'The Field' was shot here and Leenane is also known for its outdoor pursuit's centres.

Letterfrack B4 is a delightful village 13km from Clifden. Today the village's old Victorian school buildings house a number of enterprises that form the nucleus of what is now Connemara National Park. A Furniture College linked to the Galway Mayo Institute of Technology is a thriving centre of activity for local and regional development.

Loughrea F6 sits on the shores of Galway's second largest limestone lake, after Lough Corrib. Loughrea's greatest jewel is its Cathedral, where you can see Irish artisan craftsmanship at its highest level – a treasure house of arts and crafts of Celtic revival.

Oughterard D5 the 'Gateway to Connemara', offers the visitor an enjoyable and unforgettable experience. This is Lough Corrib's main angling centre and its hotels, guesthouses and pubs cater for the many anglers who come for the Mayfly dapping season in early summer and for the Daddy and Harry dap in early autumn.

Portumna G6 is a well-known tourist destination for boaters, golfers and anglers thanks to its natural amenities. The town is at the junction of the River Shannon and Lough Derg and so has a number of harbours for cruisers. This historic crossing point over the Shannon River between counties Tipperary and Galway has a long history of bridges and ferry crossings.

Rossaveal C6 village is 36km west of Galway city and the county's main fishing harbour. The village is also the ferry port for the short trip to the Aran Islands.

Roundstone B5 in the heart of Connemara is one of the oldest fishing villages on the west coast, and is an area of much natural beauty, as well as being the birth place and inspiration for much of Ireland's artistic creations. The village has been described many times as a botanist's delight as many of Ireland's rare wild flowers are found in the area known as Errisbeg which rises almost to 1,000ft (west of the village). Roundstone enjoys unparalleled views of the Twelve Bens and the vast Atlantic Ocean.

Spiddal D6 is an area which still manages to value the culture and traditions of Gaeltacht heritage. Its charming stone church, traditional pubs and excellent restaurants combine with a fine sandy beach to make Spiddal a favourite tourist stop.

Tuam E4 lies 32 km north of Galway City and is one of the county's largest towns. Its skyline is dominated by two cathedrals - the marvellous chancel arch and windows, together with the restored 14th Century Synod Hall of St Mary's contrasting well with the soaring splendour of the tower and spires of the Cathedral of the Assumption.

For more information on Galway's towns and villages, visit our website
www.discoverireland.ie/west



KINVARA, CO. GALWAY