

# Ireland

## HIGHLIGHTS

- **Dublin** Gallivanting through frenetic pubs, museums and literary haunts (p595), and asking a local, 'Where's the *craic* (fun)?'
- **Galway** Enjoying the bohemian lifestyle in hip cafés and watching live music (p614)
- **Derry** Walking along the city walls and learning about the volatile history of Northern Ireland (p621)
- **Off-the-beaten track** Driving or hitching to haunting Kells Priory and hanging out among the ruins and the sheep (p606)

## FAST FACTS

- **Area** 84,421 sq km (slightly smaller than Portugal)
- **ATMs** Available everywhere
- **Budget** €65 per day
- **Capitals** Dublin (Ireland), Belfast (Northern Ireland)
- **Country codes** ☎ 353 (Ireland), 44 28 (Northern Ireland)
- **Famous for** U2, St Patrick, Guinness
- **Head of State** President Mary McAleese (Ireland), Queen Elizabeth II (Northern Ireland)
- **Languages** English, Irish Gaelic
- **Money** euro (€) Republic/pound sterling (£) NI; €1 = £0.68; £1 = €1.47; A\$1 = €0.60/£0.40; ¥100 = €0.66/£0.45; NZ\$1 = €0.51/£0.35; US\$1 = €0.78/£0.53; CA\$1 = €0.68/£0.46

- **Phrases** *Sláinte!* (cheers!), *día duit* (hello), *go raibh* (thank you)
- **Populations** 3.9 million (Ireland), 1.7 million (Northern Ireland)
- **Time** GMT/UTC + 0
- **Visas** Not necessary for citizens of the EU, Australia, Canada, New Zealand or the USA.

## TRAVEL HINTS

Keep an umbrella with you at all times, dress in layers and always stop to chat.

## ROAMING IRELAND

Take in Dublin before swinging through Kilkenny and Cork. Hike around the West Coast on your way to Galway, then head North to Derry and Belfast.

'It's about time...' reads a recent Dublin Tourism tag line, and nothing could be truer. Sure, at face value it's just another tourism bureau slogan, but looking deeper you realise that these words illuminate much of what it means to be Ireland in the 21st century. Thanks to a sky-rocketing economy, the 'Celtic Tiger' has burst from the fog and rain of its battered history to become one of Europe's most prosperous countries. The land of Stone Age tombs, rolling green hills, medieval castles and towering cliffs that the word 'Ireland' conjures, still exists, but today it shares space with things of this century such as beach-front vacation homes and the M1 motorway.



The slogan is also indicative of the Irish as a people. Centuries of conquest, famine and emigration have left them surprisingly friendly yet expectedly cynical, a combination making for a wickedly dark sense of humour. If you ask the fellow sitting next to you at the pub what he thinks of the Celtic Tiger, or the staggering rate of new immigrants or the declining power of the Catholic church, he might just say, 'It's about feckin time!'

This sentiment rings just as true for Northern Ireland, which remains part of the UK. If you ask a person up North what she thinks about the new climate of peace, chances are she'll tell you...well, you know what she'll say.

## HISTORY

Celtic warriors reached Ireland around 300 BC. Christian monks, including St Patrick, arrived in Ireland around the 5th century AD. From the end of the 8th century the rich monasteries were targets of raids by Vikings, who were followed by Anglo-Norman forces in 1169.

Catholic oppression got serious in the 1500s when Elizabeth I gave loads of Irish land to Protestant settlers, sowing the seeds of today's divided Ireland.

By the 18th century, Ireland's Catholics held less than 15% of the land and suffered brutal civil restrictions. Irish movements for civil rights alarmed the Protestant gentry, and in 1800 the Act of Union joined Ireland with Britain.

Successive failures of potato crops between 1845 and 1851 brought about mass starvation, while British and Irish ruling classes profited from inflated food prices. About one million people died from disease or starvation, and another million emigrated. This tragedy was called the Great Famine.

The bungled 1916 Easter Rising was heavy with rhetoric and light on planning while the response of the British was just as poor; a series of trials and executions transformed the ringleaders into martyrs, rousing international support for Irish independence.

In the 1918 election, Irish republicans stood under the banner of Sinn Féin ('We Ourselves' or 'Ourselves Alone') and won a majority of the Irish seats. Ignoring London's Parliament, the newly elected, declared Ireland independent and formed the first Dáil Eireann (Irish assembly), led by Eamon de Valera. The resulting Anglo-Irish War (1919–21) pitted Sinn Féin and its military wing, the Irish Republican Army (IRA), against the British. During this period Michael Collins masterminded the IRA's campaign of violence (while serving as finance minister in the new Dáil). After months of negotiations, he and Arthur Griffith led the delegation that signed the

Anglo-Irish Treaty in 1921, giving 26 counties of Ireland independence, while allowing six largely Protestant counties in the North (Ulster) the choice to opt out.

Under the Anglo-Irish Treaty, the British monarch remained the (nominal) head of the new Irish Free State. To de Valera and many Irish Catholics, the compromise was a betrayal of republican principles and a brief civil war ensued. A new 1937 constitution abolished fealty to Britain and claimed sovereignty over the six counties of Ulster. In 1948 the Irish government declared the country a republic.

In Ulster, the Protestant majority had systematically excluded Catholics from power. In January 1969 civil rights marchers walking from Belfast to Derry were attacked by a Protestant mob outside Derry. British troops were sent to Derry and Belfast in August to maintain law and order. The peaceful civil rights movement foundered and an armed independence struggle under the IRA took flight.

Thus the so-called Troubles rolled throughout the 1970s and 1980s. Passions exploded in 1972 when 13 unarmed Catholics were shot dead by British troops in Derry on 'Bloody Sunday' (30 January), then again in 1981 when 10 IRA prisoners fasted to death.

In August 1994 a 'permanent cessation of violence' by the IRA was announced by Sinn Féin, to be matched by a Protestant cease-fire two months later. After setbacks, the peace process regained momentum with the May 1997 victory of Britain's Labour Party, and in July 1997, the IRA declared another cease-fire.

In April 1998 all-party talks produced the Good Friday Agreement, which allows the people of Northern Ireland to decide their future by majority vote; in May 1998 the agreement was approved by 71% of voters in the North and 94% in the South. After the Good Friday Agreement, though, the peace process often stopped and started, largely

## READING UP

Interested in Irish history? Check out *A Traveller's History of Ireland* by Peter Neville. While Frank McCourt's *Angela's Ashes* and Seamus Heaney's *The Spirit Level* are good glimpses into Irish culture. Another must read is the hilarious *McCarthy's Bar* by Pete McCarthy.

over acts of violence, and wrangles about how and when the IRA should 'decommission' its weapons.

Positive steps were made in 2003 when the IRA destroyed some of its weapons, but these steps were derailed by the 2004 £26m Northern Bank robbery and the murder of Robert McCartney, both of which were pinned on the IRA. Then suddenly on 28 July 2005 the IRA had big news; they announced the official end to the armed campaign. Two months later the independent arms decommissioning body verified that the IRA had destroyed all its weapons.

Today, optimism prevails and although it often seems bickering of one sort or another will continue forever, most agree that the 'war' is finally over.

## THE CULTURE

Prior to the 1845–51 Great Famine, the population was around eight million; death and emigration reduced it to around six million, and emigration continued at a high level for the next 100 years. It wasn't until the 1960s that Ireland's population began to recover.

Thanks to the EU and a strong economy, Ireland has seen a modest influx of immigrants, mostly from Eastern Europe, within the past five years.

## RELIGION

Religion has always played a pivotal role in Ireland. About 90% of residents in the Republic are Roman Catholic, followed by 3% Protestant, 0.1% Jewish and the rest with no professed religious belief. In the North the breakdown is about 53% Protestant and 44% Catholic.

## ARTS Literature

The Irish have made an enormous impact on world literature. Important writers include

Jonathan Swift, Oscar Wilde, WB Yeats, George Bernard Shaw, James Joyce, Sean O'Casey, Samuel Beckett and Roddy Doyle, whose *Paddy Clarke Ha Ha Ha* won the Booker Prize in 1993. The Ulster-born poet Seamus Heaney was awarded the Nobel Prize for Literature in 1995. Earlier Irish Nobel laureates include Shaw (1925), Yeats (1938) and Beckett (1969). Frank McCourt became a world favourite with his autobiographical, Pulitzer Prize-winning *Angela's Ashes*.

## Music

Traditional Irish music – played on instruments such as the *bodhrán* (a flat, goat-skin drum), *uilleann* (elbow) pipes, flute and fiddle – is an aspect of Irish culture that's impossible to miss. Of the Irish music groups, perhaps the best-known are the Chieftains, the Dubliners and the Pogues. Among popular Irish singers and musicians who have made it on the international stage are Van Morrison, Enya, Sinéad O'Connor, Bob Geldof, U2, the Cranberries and more recently pop groups such as The Corrs and Westlife.

## ENVIRONMENT

Ireland is divided into 32 counties: 26 in the Republic and six in Northern Ireland. The island measures 84,421 sq km (about 83% is the Republic) and stretches 486km north to south and 275km east to west. The jagged coastline extends for 5631km. The midlands of Ireland are flat, rich farmland with huge swaths of peat (which is rapidly being depleted for fuel).

Carrantuohill (1038m) on the Iveragh Peninsula, County Kerry, is the highest mountain on the island. At 259km, the Shannon River is the longest in Ireland and empties into the Atlantic west of Limerick.

Ireland's rivers and lakes are well stocked with fish, and the island is home to some three dozen mammal species. The Office of Public Works (OPW) maintains five national parks and 76 nature reserves in the Republic; the Department of the Environment owns or leases more than 40 nature reserves in Northern Ireland.

## EMERGENCY NUMBERS

■ Ambulance, fire & police ☎ 999

# TRANSPORT

## GETTING THERE & AWAY

### Air

The Fáilte Ireland **online tourist office** ([www.ireland.ie](http://www.ireland.ie)) has information on getting to Ireland from a number of countries. International departure tax is normally included in your ticket price.

There are scheduled nonstop flights from Britain, Continental Europe and North America to Dublin and Shannon, and good nonstop connections from Britain and continental Europe to Cork.

International airports in the Republic include the following:

**Cork** (code ORK; ☎ 021-431 3131; [www.corkairport.com](http://www.corkairport.com))

**Dublin** (code DUB; ☎ 01-814 1111;

[www.dublinairport.com](http://www.dublinairport.com))

**Kerry** (code KIR; ☎ 066-976 4644;

[www.kerryairport.ie](http://www.kerryairport.ie); Farranfore)

**Knock** (code NOC; ☎ 094-67222;

[www.knockairport.com](http://www.knockairport.com))

**Shannon** (code SNN; ☎ 061-712 000; [www.shannonairport.com](http://www.shannonairport.com))

**Waterford** (code WAT; ☎ 051-875 589; [www.waterford.com](http://www.waterford.com))

International airports in Northern Ireland include the following:

**Belfast City** (code BHD; ☎ 028-9093 9093; [www.belfastcityairport.com](http://www.belfastcityairport.com))

**Belfast International** (code BFS; ☎ 028-9448 4848;

[www.belfastairport.com](http://www.belfastairport.com))

**Derry** (code LDY; ☎ 028-7181 0784; [www.cityofderryairport.com](http://www.cityofderryairport.com))

See p1202 for details of air travel from outside Western Europe. Airlines, including budget airlines, flying to and from Ireland from within Western Europe include the following:

**Aer Arann** (☎ 01-814 5240; [www.aerarann.ie](http://www.aerarann.ie)) A small carrier that operates flights within Ireland and also to Britain.

**Aer Lingus** (☎ 01-886 8844; [www.aerlingus.com](http://www.aerlingus.com)) The Irish national airline, with direct flights to Britain, continental Europe and the USA.

**BMI British Midland** (UK ☎ 01332-854 854;

[www.flybmi.com](http://www.flybmi.com))

**easyJet** (☎ 048-9448 4929; [www.easyjet.com](http://www.easyjet.com))

**Flybe** (UK ☎ 0870-567 6676; [www.flybe.com](http://www.flybe.com))

**Iberia** (☎ 01-407 3017; [www.iberia.com](http://www.iberia.com), in Spanish)

**Jet2** (☎ 0818 200017; [www.jet2.com](http://www.jet2.com))

### PASSES & DISCOUNTS

Eurail passes are valid for train travel in the Republic of Ireland, but not in Northern Ireland, and will get you a 50% discount on Irish Ferries crossings to France. InterRail passes give you a 50% reduction on train travel within Ireland and on Irish Ferries and Stena Line services. Both Bus Éireann and Iarnród Éireann offer discounts to International Student Identity Card (ISIC) holders.

Bus Éireann and Iarnród Éireann and their northern counterparts, Ulsterbus and Northern Ireland Railways, offer various flavours of unlimited-travel tickets. For more information, contact **Bus Éireann** (☎ 01-836 6111; [www.buseireann.ie](http://www.buseireann.ie)) or **Iarnród Éireann** (☎ 1850-360 222, 01-836 6222; [www.irishrail.ie](http://www.irishrail.ie)).

**Ryanair** (☎ 01-609 7800; [www.ryanair.com](http://www.ryanair.com)) Ireland's budget carrier, flying to Britain and continental Europe.

### Boat

Ferry services from Britain and France are plentiful. Prices vary depending on season, time of day, day of the week and length of stay. One-way fares for an adult foot passenger can be as little as £20, but can exceed £60 in summer.

Keep an eye out for special deals, discounted return fares and other money savers. And plan ahead – some ferry services are often booked up to several months in advance.

### BRITAIN

Regular ferry services run to ports in the Republic and Northern Ireland from Scotland (Cairnryan–Larne, Stranraer–Belfast, Troon–Belfast and Troon–Larne), England (Heysham–Belfast, Liverpool–Belfast and Liverpool–Dublin), Wales (Fishguard–Rosslare Harbour, Holyhead–Dublin, Holyhead–Dun Laoghaire, Pembroke–Rosslare Harbour and Swansea–Cork) and from the Isle of Man (Douglas–Dublin, Douglas–Belfast).

**Irish Ferries** (☎ 0818-300 400, 01-638 3333, in UK 0870-517 1717; [www.irishferries.com](http://www.irishferries.com)) For ferry and fast-boat services from Holyhead to Dublin (two or 3¼ hours), and ferry services from Pembroke to Rosslare Harbour (3¼ hours).

### Isle of Man Steam Packet Company/Sea Cat

(☎ 1800-805 055, in UK 0870-552 3523; [www.steam-packet.com](http://www.steam-packet.com)) Ferry and fast-boat services from Douglas (Isle of Man) to Belfast (2¼ hours, Easter to September) and Dublin (2¼ hours, Easter to September); Liverpool to Dublin (3¼ hours, February to October); and Troon to Belfast (2½ hours).

**Norse Merchant Ferries** (☎ 028-9077 9090, in UK 0870-600 4321; [www.norsemerchant.com](http://www.norsemerchant.com)) Ferries from Liverpool to Belfast (8½ hours).

**P&O European Ferries** (☎ 01-407 3434, in UK 0870-242 4777; [www.poirishsea.com](http://www.poirishsea.com)) Ferry and fast-boat services from Cairnryan to Larne (one or 1¼ hours), Troon to Larne (two hours, April to September), and Liverpool to Dublin (eight hours).

**Stena Line** (☎ 01-204 7777, in UK 0870-570 7070; [www.stenaline.co.uk](http://www.stenaline.co.uk)) Ferry and fast-boat services from Holyhead to Dublin (three hours) and Holyhead to Dun Laoghaire (1¼ hours); Fishguard to Rosslare Harbour (1¼ or 3½ hours); and Stranraer to Belfast (1¼ or 3¼ hours).

**Swansea Cork Ferries** (☎ 021-427 6000, in UK 01792-456116; [www.swansea-cork-ferries.com](http://www.swansea-cork-ferries.com)) Ferry services from Swansea to Cork (10 hours).

### FRANCE

Ferries run between Roscoff and Cherbourg to Rosslare Harbour and Cork.

**Brittany Ferries** (☎ in France 021-427 7801, 02-9829 2800; [www.brittanyferries.com](http://www.brittanyferries.com)) Services from Roscoff to Cork once weekly (11 hours, April to September).

**Irish Ferries** (☎ in France 01-4394 4694) Ferries from Roscoff/Cherbourg to Rosslare Harbour (17½/20½ hours, April to December).

**P&O European Ferries** Services from Cherbourg to Rosslare Harbour (19 hours).

## GETTING AROUND

In Ireland public transport can be expensive (particularly trains), infrequent or both. For these reasons having your own transport – car or bicycle – can be a major advantage.

### Bicycle

Ireland is great for cycling, despite inconsistent roads and weather. Typical rental costs for bicycles are €10 to €20 a day or around €50 to €100 a week. Raleigh Rent-a-Bike agencies are all over Ireland. Contact them at **Eurotrek** (☎ 01-465 9659; [www.eurotrekraleighgroup.com](http://www.eurotrekraleighgroup.com)). Like many local bike shops, they offer one-way rentals for an extra charge.

Bicycles can be transported by bus if there's enough room; it usually costs €10 per trip. By train, costs start at €2.50 for a one-way journey.

### Bus

**Bus Éireann** (☎ 01-836 6111; [www.buseireann.ie](http://www.buseireann.ie)) operates services all over the Republic and into Northern Ireland. Fares are much cheaper than rail fares. Returns are only slightly more expensive than one-way fares and special deals are often available. Most intercity buses in Northern Ireland are operated by **Ulsterbus** (☎ 028-9066 6630; [www.translink.co.uk](http://www.translink.co.uk)).

### Car & Motorcycle

People under 21 cannot hire a car; for most rental companies you must be at least 23 and have had a valid driving licence for one year. Some companies will not rent to those aged over 70 or 75. Your own local licence is usually sufficient to hire a car for up to three months.

### Train

**Iarnród Éireann** (☎ 1850-360 222, 01-836 6222; [www.irishrail.ie](http://www.irishrail.ie)) has routes fanning out from Dublin. Tickets can be twice as expensive as the bus, but travel times may be dramatically reduced. A midweek return ticket sometimes costs just a bit more than the single fare but fares may be significantly higher on Friday or Sunday. **Northern Ireland Railways** (☎ in Dublin 028-9066 6630, 01-679 1977; [www.translink.co.uk](http://www.translink.co.uk)) has four routes from Belfast, one of which links up with the Republic's rail system.

# DUBLIN

☎ 01 / pop 1.2 million

Sitting in a tapas restaurant on Great Georges St, nursing a Guinness, you contemplate what your favourite thing has been about Dublin. Was it drinking in Temple Bar with people from dozens of countries or was it buying fresh veggies at the Asian market? Was it admiring Georgian houses along St Stephen's Green or was it wandering around Trinity College? You never come to an answer, but you do realise that, just as the waters on the banks of the Liffey River seem to rise every day, so does your affection for this city.

The roar of prosperity and the advent of the EU have made it so that all roads lead to Dublin. Visitors swarm like moths to a light bulb – for the historic museums, top-class attractions and Georgian architecture, while immigrants from Eastern Europe, Asia and Africa set up lives for their families, adding

more depth and complexity to an already rich cultural tapestry. Add a hard partying night-life to this mixture and you get a city that's constantly changing, and having a splendid time doing it.

## ORIENTATION

Dublin is divided by the Liffey River into the more affluent 'south side' and the less prosperous 'north side'.

North of the river important landmarks are O'Connell St, the major shopping thoroughfare, and Gardiner St, with its many B&Bs and guesthouses. Pedestrianised Henry St, running west off O'Connell St, is the main shopping precinct. The main bus station, Busáras, and Connolly station, one of the city's two main train stations, are near the southern end of Gardiner St.

Immediately south of the river is the raucous Temple Bar district, Dame St, Trinity College, and just below it, the lovely St Stephen's Green. The pedestrianised Grafton St and its surroundings are crammed with shops and are always busy. About 2km west is Heuston station, the city's other main train station.

## INFORMATION

### Bookshops

**Eason's** (Map p602; ☎ 873 3811; 40 O'Connell St) One of the biggest magazine stockists in Ireland.

**Hodges Figgis** (Map p602; ☎ 677 4754; 56-58 Dawson St) With a large selection of books on things Irish.

**Sinn Féin Bookshop** (Map pp598-9; ☎ 872 7096; West 44 Parnell Sq)

### Discount Cards

**Dublin Pass** ([www.dublinpass.ie](http://www.dublinpass.ie)) Allows entrance into over 30 of Dublin's attractions as well as tours and special offers.

### Internet Access

Dublin has more internet cafés than you can shake a stick at; Talbot St and Crampton Quay are lined with them. These are some of the better ones.

**Cyborg** (Map pp598-9; ☎ 855 3163; 44 Talbot St; per hr €1; ☎ 9am-11pm)

**Surf Centre One** (Map pp598-9; ☎ 855 2560; 43 Lower Gardiner St; per hr €1.50)

### Medical Services

**Eastern Regional Health Authority** (Map pp598-9; ☎ 679 0700; [www.erha.ie](http://www.erha.ie); Dr Steevens' Hospital, 138 Thomas St; ☎ 9am-5pm Mon-Fri) Opposite Heuston station; can advise you on a suitable doctor.

**Doctors on Call** (☎ 453 9333; ☎ 24hr) Request a doctor to come to your accommodation (€60 to €75).

**O'Connell's Pharmacy** (Map p602; ☎ 873 0427; 55-56 O'Connell St; ☎ 7:30am-10pm Mon-Fri, 8am-10pm Sat, 10am-10pm Sun)

**Well Women Clinic** (Map p602; ☎ 872 8051, 688 3714; [www.wellwomenclinic.ie](http://www.wellwomenclinic.ie); 35 Lower Liffey St) Handles women's health issues and can supply contraception.

## Money

The Dublin airport and Dublin Tourism Centre have currency-exchange counters, and numerous banks around the city centre have exchange facilities. The central bank offers the best exchange rates, while airport and ferry terminal bureaux offer the worst. ATMs are everywhere.

## Post

Dublin's famous **General Post Office** (GPO; Map p602; ☎ 705 7000; O'Connell St; ☎ 8am-8pm Mon-Sat) is north of the river. South of the river there are post offices on South Anne St and St Andrew's St.

## Tourist Information

All Dublin tourist offices provide walk-in services only.

**Dublin Tourism** City Centre (Map pp598-9; 14 O'Connell St; ☎ 9am-5pm Mon-Sat); Dun Laoghaire (Dun Laoghaire Ferryport; ☎ 10am-1pm & 2-6pm)

**Dublin Tourism Centre** (Map p602; ☎ 605 7700; [www.visitdublin.com](http://www.visitdublin.com); St Andrew's Church, 2 Suffolk St; ☎ 9am-7pm Mon-Sat, 10.30am-3pm Sun Jul & Aug, 9am-5.30pm Mon-Sat, 10.30-3pm Sun Sep-Jun) A sort of tourist information complex. Services include accommodation bookings, car rentals, maps, tickets for tours and Dublin Pass sales.

**Fáilte Ireland** (☎ 1850-230 330; [www.ireland.ie](http://www.ireland.ie); Baginbun St; ☎ 9am-5pm Mon-Fri) Less conveniently situated about 500m southeast of town, but much less crowded than the other centres.

**Northern Ireland Tourist Board** (NITB; Map p602; ☎ 679 1977; [www.discovernorthernireland.com](http://www.discovernorthernireland.com); 16 Nassau St; ☎ 9.15am-5.30pm Mon-Fri, 10am-5pm Sat) Information and free booking services.

## SIGHTS

### Trinity College & Book of Kells

In summer, **walking tours** (per person €9; ☎ 10.45am-3.40pm Mon-Sat, 10.15am-3pm Sun mid-May-Sep) depart every 40 minutes from College St (inside the main gate on College Green). The tour includes the fee to see the *Book of Kells*, an elaborately illuminated manuscript dating

## GETTING INTO TOWN

Dublin Bus runs a frequent Airlink Express service to/from the airport, Busáras bus station, Heuston train station and various points around the city for €5 (30 to 40 minutes). Buses 41, 41B, 16 and 746 ply the airport route more slowly and cost €1.80. A taxi from the airport should cost around €22. Buses 53 and 53A go to Busáras from the Dublin Ferryport terminal after all ferry arrivals (€2.50). From Dun Laoghaire's ferry terminal, take bus 46A to Fleet St in Temple Bar, bus 7 to Eden Quay or the Dublin Area Rapid Transport (DART) rail service to Pearse station (for south Dublin) or Connolly station (for north Dublin).

from around AD 800 and one of Dublin's prime attractions. It's displayed in the East Pavilion of the **Colonnades** (Map p602; adult/concession €8/7; ☎ 9.30am-5pm Mon-Sat year-round, to 4.30pm Sun Jun-Sep, noon-4.30pm Sun Oct-May) together with the 9th-century *Book of Armagh*, the even older *Book of Durrow* (AD 675) and the harp of Brian Ború, who led the Irish against the Vikings.

Ireland's premier university was founded by Elizabeth I in 1592. Its full name is the University of Dublin, but Trinity is the institution's sole college. Until 1793 its students were all Protestants, but today most of its 9500 students are Catholic.

## Museums

Among the highlights of the **National Museum** (Map pp598-9; ☎ 667 7444; [www.museum.ie](http://www.museum.ie); Kildare St; admission by donation; ☎ 10am-5pm Tue-Sat, 2-5pm Sun) are the Bronze Age, Iron Age and medieval gold objects in the treasury, the skeleton of a once tall, mighty Viking and the incredibly well-preserved 'Bog Body'. Other exhibits focus on the Viking period, the 1916 Easter Rising and the struggle for Irish independence.

The **Chester Beatty Library** (Map p602; ☎ 407 0750; [www.cbl.ie](http://www.cbl.ie); Dublin Castle; admission free; ☎ 10am-5pm Mon-Fri, to 11am Sat, to 1pm Sun, closed Mon Oct-Apr) houses a breathtaking collection of more than 20,000 manuscripts, rare books, miniature paintings, clay tablets, costumes and other objects spread across two floors. The 270 illuminated Qur'ans are just one draw.

**Dublin Writers Museum** (Map pp598-9; ☎ 872 2077; 18-19 Parnell Sq; adult/child €6.70/4.20; ☎ 10am-5pm Mon-

Sat, to 6pm Jun-Aug, 11am-5pm Sun year-round), north of the river, celebrates the city's long role as a literary centre, with displays on Joyce, Swift, Yeats, Wilde, Beckett and others.

## Galleries

The **National Gallery** (Map pp598-9; ☎ 661 5133; [www.nationalgallery.ie](http://www.nationalgallery.ie); West Merrion Sq; admission & guided tours free; ☎ 9.30am-5.30pm Mon-Wed, Fri & Sat, to 8.30pm Thu, noon-5.30pm Sun, guided tours at 2pm Sat & 2pm, 3pm & 4pm Sun) has a fine collection that's strong in Irish art. The new Millennium wing has a small collection of contemporary Irish works.

On Parnell Sq, north of the river, **Dublin City Gallery, The Hugh Lane** (Map pp598-9; ☎ 222 5550; [www.hughlane.ie](http://www.hughlane.ie); admission free; ☎ 9.30am-6pm Tue-Thu, to 5pm Fri & Sat, 11am-5pm Sun), has works by French Impressionists and 20th-century Irish artists.

In Temple Bar, around Meeting House Sq, are the **National Photographic Archives** (Map p602; ☎ 603 0374; [www.nli.ie](http://www.nli.ie); admission free; ☎ 10am-5pm Mon-Fri, to 2pm Sat) and the **Gallery of Photography** (Map p602; ☎ 671 4654; [www.irish-photography.com](http://www.irish-photography.com); admission free; ☎ 11am-6pm Tue-Sat, 1-6pm Sun).

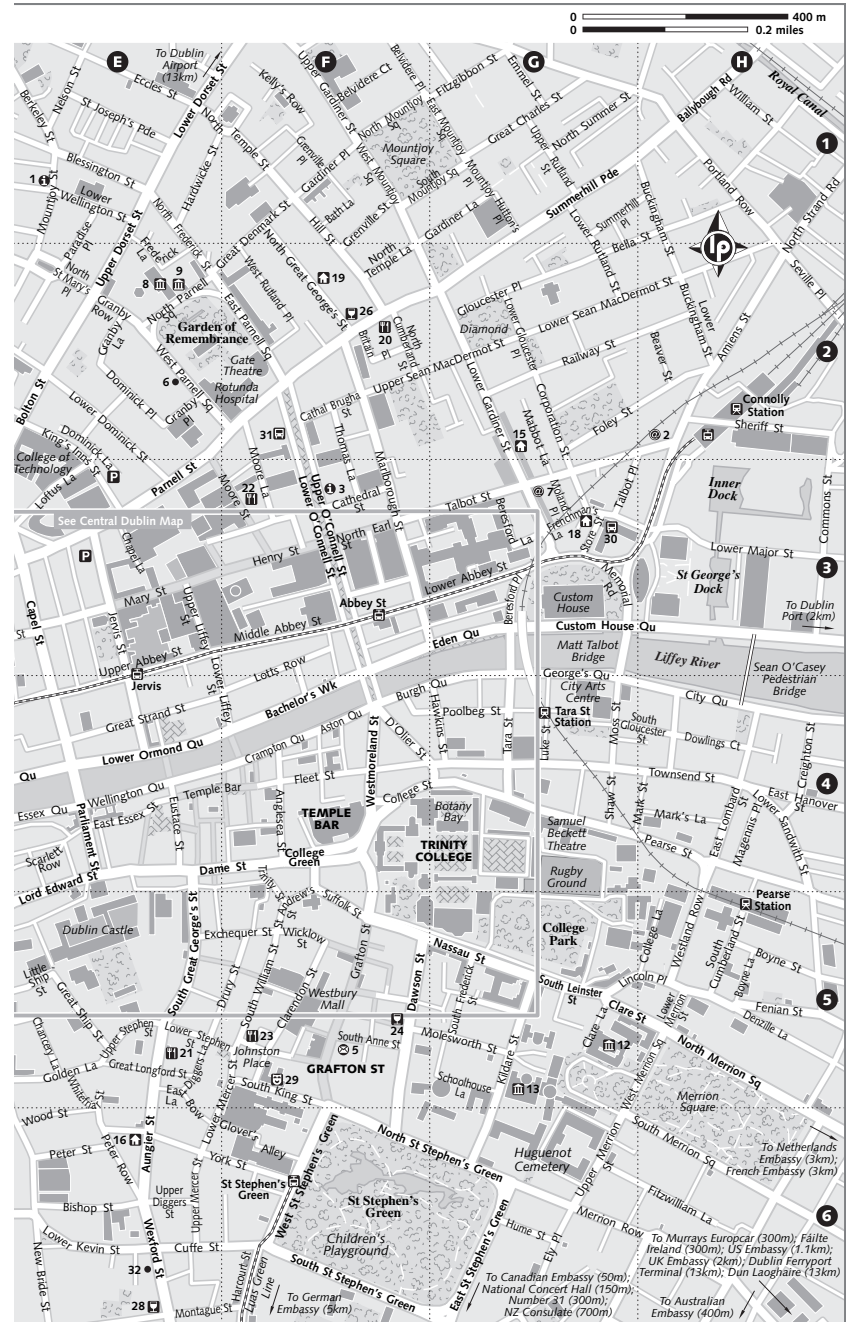
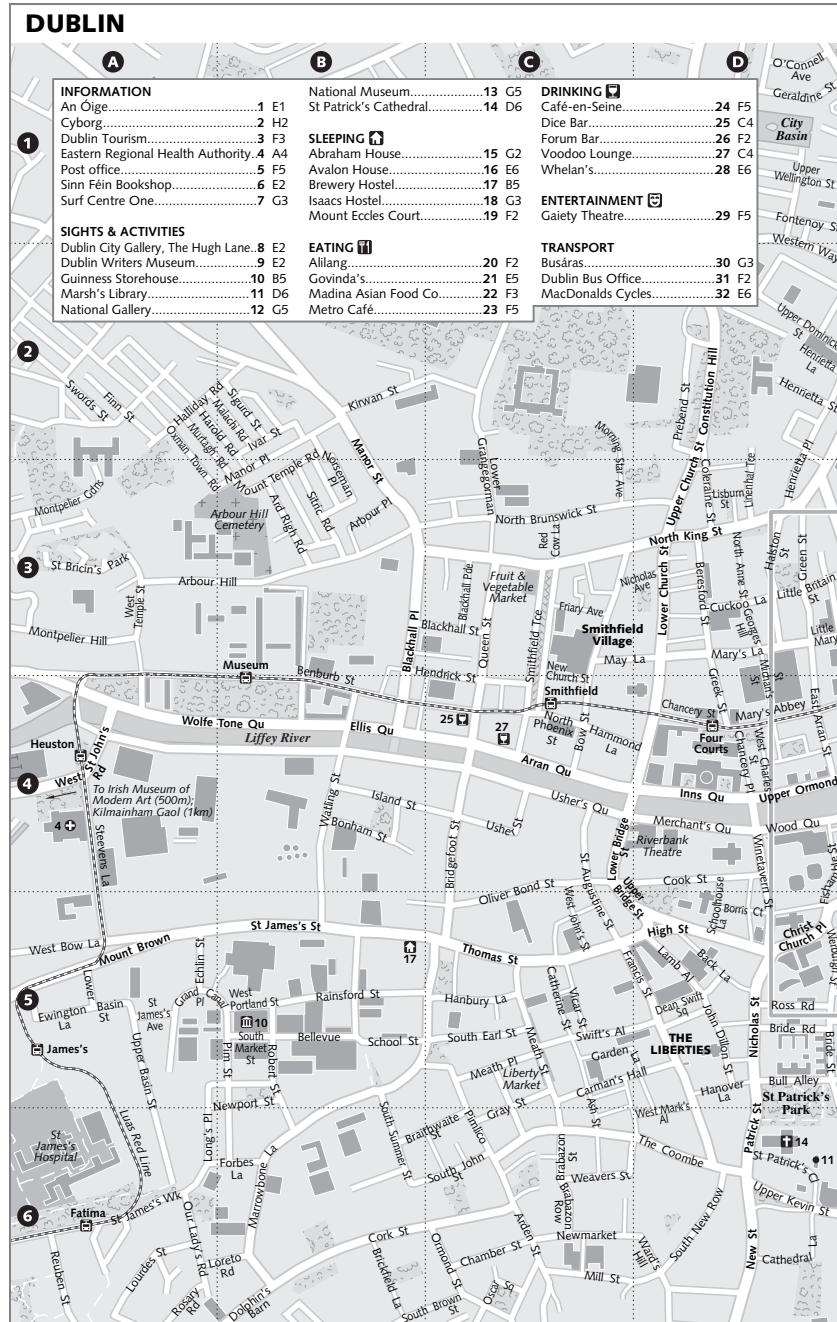
## Christ Church Cathedral & Around

**Christ Church Cathedral** (Map p602; ☎ 677 8099; [www.cccub.ie](http://www.cccub.ie); Christ Church Pl; adult/concession €5/2.50; ☎ 9.45am-5pm Mon-Fri, from 9am Jun-Aug, 10am-6.30pm Sat, 12.45-2.45pm Sun) was a simple structure of wood until 1169, when the present stone church was built. In the southern aisle is a monument to the 12th-century Norman warrior Strongbow. Note the church's precariously leaning northern wall (it's been that way since 1562).

## St Patrick's Cathedral & Around

A church was on the site of **St Patrick's Cathedral** (Map pp598-9; ☎ 475 4817; [www.stpatrickscathedral.ie](http://www.stpatrickscathedral.ie); St Patrick's Close; adult/concession €5/4; ☎ 9am-6pm Mon-Sat, to 5pm Sat Nov-Feb, 9-11am & 12.45-3pm & 4.15-6pm Sun Mar-Oct, 10-11am & 12.45-3 Nov-Feb, closed during times of worship) as early as the 5th century, but the present building dates from 1191. St Patrick's choir was part of the first group to perform Handel's *Messiah* in 1742, and you can hear their successors sing the 5.45pm evensong most weeknights.

Nearby **Marsh's Library** (Map pp598-9; ☎ 454 3511; [www.marshlibrary.ie](http://www.marshlibrary.ie); adult/concession €2.50/1.25; ☎ 10am-1pm & 2-5pm Mon & Wed-Fri, 10.30am-1pm Sat), contains 25,000 books dating from the 16th to early 18th century, as well as numerous maps and manuscripts.



## Kilmainham Gaol

The threatening **Kilmainham Gaol** (☎ 453 5984; Inchicore Rd; adult/child €5/2; 🕒 9.30am-5pm Apr-Sep, 9.30am-4pm Oct-Mar, 10am-5pm Sun) played a key role in Ireland's struggle for independence and was the site of mass executions following the 1916 Easter Rising. An excellent audiovisual introduction to the building is followed by a thought-provoking tour. Catch bus 79, 78A, 51B and 51C from Aston Quay.

## O'Connell St

During the 1916 Easter Rising, the Irish Volunteers used the **General Post Office** (GPO; Map p602; ☎ 705 7000; O'Connell St; 🕒 8am-8pm Mon-Sat) as a base for attacks against the British. Upon surrendering, the leaders of the Irish rebellion and 13 others were taken to Kilmainham Gaol and executed.

The nearby **Monument of Light** (Map p602), better known as 'The Spire', soars 120m over O'Connell St. The gigantic knitting needle was erected here in 2003 in a flashy homage to that most humble of exports, the Aran sweater. The 15cm tip is a beam of light.

## Guinness Brewery

The **Guinness Storehouse** (Map pp598-9; ☎ 408 4800; www.guinness-storehouse.com; Market St; adult/child €14/5; 🕒 9.30am-8pm Jul-Aug, to 5pm Sep-Jun) sits in the malty fug of the mighty Guinness brewery. The tour is overpriced but at the end you get the best-tasting Guinness of your life for free. Take bus 51B or 78A from Aston Quay, or bus 123 from O'Connell St.

## SLEEPING

Dublin is ALWAYS bustling, so call ahead to book accommodation. Dublin Tourism

offices can book accommodation for €4 plus a 10% deposit for the first night.

## North of the Liffey

**Isaacs Hostel** (Map pp598-9; ☎ 855 6215; www.isaacs.ie; 2-5 Frenchman's Lane; dm from €18-25, s/d from €39/36; 📺 📶) This busy, grungy hostel in a 200-year-old wine vault has loads of character. Summer barbecues and live music in the foyer are added features. A recent face-lift added a hang-out area and internet facilities.

**Abbey Court Hostel** (Map p602; ☎ 878 0700; www.abbey-court.com; 29 Bachelor's Walk; dm €21-29, d €88) What this place lacks in physical beauty, it makes up for in *craic*. Many of its residents are long-termers, giving the joint a community feel, plus its two large common rooms and fantastic staff make this one of our favourite hostels in Dublin.

**Townhouse** (Map p602; ☎ 878 8808; www.townhouseofdublin.com; 47-48 Lower Gardiner St; s/d from €67/110) The Lower Gardiner St area is loaded with B&B options including this elegant place.

Other hostel recommendations:  
**Mount Eccles Court** (Map pp598-9; ☎ 873 0826; www.eccleshostel.com; 42 North Great George's St; dm €13.50-26, d €33.50-35.50; 📺) A pristine place on a beautiful street.

**Abraham House** (Map pp598-9; ☎ 855 0600; www.abraham-house.ie; 83 Lower Gardiner St; dm €13-34, d €38-46) Friendly is an understatement about this large hostel.

## South of the Liffey

**Avalon House** (Map pp598-9; ☎ 475 0001; www.avalon-house.ie; 55 Aungier St; dm/s/d from €17/37/70; 📺) A megahostel near St Stephen's Green with four-, 12- and 20-bed mixed dorms. There's a large kitchen, several lounges and a pool room.

## PORTRAIT OF THE WRITER

Anyone who tells you that James Joyce (1882-1941) is an easy and enjoyable read is a rotten liar and should not be trusted. That said, no-one can doubt that Joyce's dense, often incomprehensible, work revolutionised the way stories are told. Beginning with *A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man*, Joyce used stream-of-consciousness narratives to wander within a story's timeline, instead of telling it chronologically. Consider him an earlier, more Catholic Quentin Tarantino.

Joyce perfected this technique in his masterpiece, *Ulysses*, which focusses on a day in the life of two Irishmen – one a Catholic, the other a Jew – and in his last major work, *Finnegans Wake*, Joyce went a step further, often using entirely nonsensical terms and disregarding plot completely.

While understanding Joyce's work may be out of the question, understanding his inspirational environment isn't. Next time you see a pub displaying a 'James Joyce Authentic Irish Pub Award' stop in, have a pint, and if anyone asks, tell them that *yer man* James is an easy and enjoyable read.

## SPLURGE

**Morgan Hotel** (Map p602; ☎ 643 7000; www.themorgan.com; 10 Fleet St; s/d from €140/295; 📺) Falling somewhere between *Alice in Wonderland* and a cocaine-and-hooker-fuelled rock'n'roll fantasy, the Morgan is absolutely über-cool. The sexy colour scheme of white floors and walls with dark blue and pink lighting extends into the bar, the rooms and even the cigar patio, while the bathrooms in the newer rooms are encased in a smoky glass box instead of having walls. This is the hippest luxury that money can buy in Dublin.

**Barnades Temple Bar House** (Map p602; ☎ 671 6277; www.barnades.ie; 19 Temple Lane; dm/d from €17.50/78; 📺) Plenty bright and immaculately clean, Barnacles' heart of Temple Bar location is a great place to stay if you don't mind the sound of drunken revellers vomiting outside your window.

**Grafton House** (Map p602; ☎ 679 2041; www.graftonguesthouse.com; 26-27 South Great George's St; s/d incl breakfast €75/120) An absolute find, this gorgeous guesthouse has 16 individually decorated rooms and is perfect for a couple of nights with that special someone...wink, wink.

Other hostel recommendations:

**Brewery Hostel** (Map pp598-9; ☎ 453 8600; www.irish-hostel.com; 22-23 Thomas St; dm/d from €20/78; 📺) Small and family-run, with a patio out back.

**Kinlay House** (Map p602; ☎ 679 6644; www.kinlay-house.ie; 2-12 Lord Edward St; dm/d from €20/70; 📺) Huge, mixed 24-bed dorms and smaller rooms. Not for the faint-hearted.

## EATING

Dubliners' new spending power has encouraged many excellent restaurants to take root, while the city's influx of immigrants has created a market for ethnically diverse eateries.

## North of the Liffey

**Madina Asian Food Co** (Map pp598-9; ☎ 087-925 2485; 20-21 Moore St; 🕒 9.30am-8pm Mon-Sat, 11.30am-7pm Sun) Located on diverse Moore St, this great little market is perfect if you're in the mood to cook food from India, Turkey, the Philippines or beyond. It even has a halal butcher.

**Epicurean Food Hall** (Map p602; Lower Liffey St; mains €4-15; 🕒 9.30am-5.30pm Mon-Sat) You'll be spoilt for choice in this refurbished arcade that has

almost every imaginable type of food stall. The quality varies, but good choices include Itsabagel, Kaffe Moka and Istanbul House.

**Allilang** (Map pp598-9; ☎ 874 6766; 102 Parnell St; mains €6-15; 🕒 noon-2.30pm Mon-Fri, 5.30-11.30pm Mon-Thu, 5.30-midnight Sat & Sun) Allilang's delicious mix of Chinese, Japanese and Korean cuisine gives it a leg up on the Parnell St competition. Tasty dishes such as *padun* (a seafood pancake), cod and tofu hotpot, and barbecued meats brought to your table with gas burner, skillet and spicy marinade, make the food a talking piece.

## South of the Liffey

**Metro Café** (Map pp598-9; ☎ 679 4515; 43 South William St; mains €4-8; 🕒 8am-8pm Mon, Tue, Fri & Sat, 8am-9pm Wed, 8am-10pm Thu, 10.15am-7pm Sun) Funky music and cartoonish art make this bright café seem like it snuck out of Paris. The fresh food and the daily quote board are enough to warrant an everyday visit, as is the beautiful international staff.

**Lunch!** (Map p602; ☎ 677 1546; 63 South William St; mains €5.80-6.15; 🕒 8am-7pm Mon-Wed, to 9pm Thu-Sat, 9am-9pm Sun) If you can handle the sea-green colour scheme, then this 'calzone café' has a tasty menu, including a create-your-own sandwich option. Note the neat little fish tank above the door.

**Govinda's** (Map pp598-9; ☎ 475 0309; 4 Aungier St; mains €5-9; 🕒 noon-9pm Mon-Sat) The soup at this branch of the Hare Krishna chain is so subtle and flavourful you'll think Krishna himself cooked it. The place is totally vegetarian, with a wholesome mix of salads and Indian-influenced hot daily specials.

**Cornucopia** (Map p602; ☎ 677 7583; 19 Wicklow St; mains €9.50-11; 🕒 8.30am-8pm Mon-Wed, Fri & Sat, to 9pm Thu) For those escaping the Irish cholesterol habit, Cornucopia is a popular, mostly vegan, café turning out scrumptious healthy goodies. There's even a hot vegetarian breakfast as an alternative to muesli.

**Havana** (Map p602; ☎ 400 5990; South Great George's St; tapas €6.50-12.50; 🕒 11.30am-10.30pm Mon-Wed, 11.30am-11.30pm Thu & Fri, 1-11.30pm Sat, 3-10.30pm Sun) It always feels like a party in this lively tapas place across from Café Bar Deli. Stop in Monday, Tuesday or Wednesday when any two tapas are just €12.

Other recommendations:  
**Asia Market** (Map p602; ☎ 677 9764; 18 Drury St; 🕒 10am-7pm) Fresh produce, dried goods and stir-fry sauces for self-caterers.

### CENTRAL DUBLIN

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**Nude** (Map p602; ☎ 677 4804; 21 Suffolk St; snacks €5-8; ☎ 7.30am-9pm Mon-Wed & Fri, 7.30am-10pm Thu, 8am-9pm Sat, 10am-8pm Sun) Tasty wraps with all kinds of Asian fillings.

**Café Bar Deli** (Map p602; ☎ 677 1646; 12-13 South Great George's St; mains €9-13; ☎ 12.30-11pm Mon-Sat, 2-10pm Sun) Fresh salads, giant bowls of pasta and pizza with imaginative toppings such as crab and buttered leek.

## DRINKING & CLUBBING

Temple Bar, Dublin's 'party district', is always packed with stag/hen parties, girls in little clothing, and loud guys wearing Guinness T-shirts. If you're looking to get smashed and snog someone from another country, there is nowhere better in Ireland. If that's not your style, there's plenty to do beyond Temple

Bar; most of the best old-fashioned pubs are outside the district.

**Café en-Seine** (Map pp598-9; ☎ 677 4567; 40 Dawson St) The best way to describe Café en-Seine is faux-Parisian Left Bank Victorian decadence...seriously. The only thing missing is absinthe. Rumour has it that this posh, four-level nightclub cost around €17 million to renovate; it looks it too.

**Stag's Head** (Map p602; ☎ 679 3701; 1 Dame Ct) Built in 1770, remodelled in 1895, the Stag's Head is possibly the best traditional pub in Dublin (and therefore the world). You may find yourself philosophising in the ecclesiastical atmosphere, as James Joyce did. Some of the fitters that worked on this pub probably also worked on churches in the area, so the stained-wood-and-polished-brass similarities are no accident.

**Whelan's** (Map pp598-9; ☎ 478 0766; www.whelanlive.com; 25 Wexford St) A Dublin institution; there is almost no better place to see live music, especially singer-songwriters, than Whelan's.

**Spirit** (Map p602; ☎ 877 9999; www.spiritdublin.com; 57 Middle Abbey St) Spanning three floors, this club-kid fantasy covers all the bases. One floor pounds out house music while another bumps funky soul and yet another acts as a chill-out room with a classical cellist and massage therapists.

**George** (Map p602; ☎ 478 2983; 89 South Great George St) An excellent cruising spot and the patriarch of Dublin's gay and lesbian clubs, the venerable George has different themes, including bingo and karaoke, most nights of the week.

Hipster spots include **Dice Bar** (Map pp598-9; ☎ 674 6710; 79 Queen St), the decadent **Voodoo Lounge** (Map pp598-9; ☎ 873 6013; 37 Arran Quay), and the hip-hop **Forum Bar** (Map pp598-9; ☎ 878 7084; 144 Parnell St).

## ENTERTAINMENT

For events, reviews and club listings, pick up a copy of the bimonthly freebie *Event Guide* (www.eventguide.ie) or the weekly *In Dublin*, available at cafés and hostels. Thursday's *Irish Times* has a great pull-out section called *The Ticket*.

## Cinema

**Irish Film Institute** (IFI; Map p602; ☎ 679 5744; www.irishfilm.ie; 6 Eustace St; ☎) The fantastic IFI has two screens showing classic and art-house films.

## Theatre & Classical Music

**Abbey Theatre** (Map p602; ☎ 878 7222; www.abbeytheatre.ie; Lower Abbey St) The famous Abbey Theatre is Ireland's national theatre.

**Peacock Theatre** (Map p602; ☎ 878 7222) This smaller theatre is part of the Abbey Theatre complex.

**Gaiety Theatre** (Map pp598-9; ☎ 677 1717; www.gaietytheatre.com; South King St) This popular theatre hosts, among other things, a programme of classical concerts and opera as well as musicals.

**National Concert Hall** (☎ 417 0000; www.nchi.ie; Earlsfort Ice) Ireland's premier orchestral hall hosts a variety of concerts, including a series of lunchtime concerts from 1.05pm to 2pm on Tuesday, June to August.

## GETTING THERE & AWAY

### Air

**Dublin airport** (☎ 814 1111; www.dublinairport.com), about 13km north of the city centre, is Ireland's major international gateway airport, with direct flights from Europe, North America and Asia. Budget airlines like Ryanair and Flybe land here. See p594 for more details.

### Boat

There are two direct services from Holyhead on the northwestern tip of Wales – one to Dublin Port and the other to Dun Laoghaire at the southern end of Dublin Bay. Boats also sail direct to Dublin Port from Liverpool and from Douglas, on the Isle of Man. See p594 for more details.

### Bus

At Bus Éireann's central bus station, just north of the Liffey on Store St, is **Busáras** (Map pp598-9; ☎ 836 6111; www.buseireann.ie). Standard one-way fares from Dublin include Belfast (€12, three hours, 16 daily), Cork (€10, 3½ hours, six daily), Galway (€14, 3¾ hours, 16 daily), and Rosslare Harbour (€15.50, three hours, 13 daily).

The private company **Citylink** (☎ 626 6888) has slightly cheaper daily services to Galway; see p614.

**Aircoach** (☎ 844 7118) can be caught at the airport and will take you to Belfast for €7 to €12, depending on the day. It can also be caught from in front of Boyle Sports on Westmorland St and will take you to Cork, for the same price.

## Train

Just north of the Liffey is **Connolly station** (Map pp598-9; ☎ 703 2358), for trains to Belfast, Derry, Sligo, other points north and Wexford. **Heuston station** (Map pp598-9; ☎ 703 3299), south of the Liffey and well west of the centre, is the station for Cork, Galway, Killarney, Limerick, Waterford and most other points to the south and west. For travel information and tickets, contact the **Iarnród Éireann Travel Centre** (Map p602; ☎ 836 6222, bookings 703 4070; www.irishrail.ie; 35 Abbey St Lower). Regular services go from Dublin to Belfast (€34.50 one-way, two hours, up to eight daily), Cork (€54.50, three hours, up to nine daily) and Galway (€29, three hours, five daily).

## GETTING AROUND Bicycle

Most rental places open during high season only, and rental costs can reach €25 per day. Try **MacDonalds Cycles** (Map pp598-9; ☎ 475 2586; 38 Wexford St).

## Public Transport

Dublin Bus local buses cost €0.95 for one to three stages, up to a maximum of €1.90 (23 or more stages). You must tender exact change when boarding as drivers are not able to give change.

One-day passes cost €5 for bus (including Airlink), or €8.50 for bus and DART. Late-night Nitelink buses (€4) operate from the College St–Westmoreland St–D'Olier St triangle, south of the Liffey, until 4.30am in the morning on Thursday, Friday and Saturday night.

DART (www.dart.ie) provides quick rail access to the coast as far north as Howth (€1.95) and south to Bray (€2.30). Pearse station is handy for central Dublin. Bicycles cannot be taken on the DART, but may travel on suburban trains.

**Luas** (www.luas.ie) is a light rail system that is currently running on two lines; the green line runs from the eastern side of St Stephen's Green southeast to Sandyford, and the red line runs from Tallaght to Connolly station, with stops at Heuston station, the National Museum and Busáras. Single fares range from €1.25 to €1.90 depending on how many zones you travel.

Taxis in Dublin are expensive, and flag fall costs €3.70. Call **National Radio Cabs** (☎ 677 2222).

## AROUND DUBLIN Brú na Bóinne

☎ 041

A thousand years older than Stonehenge, the Neolithic necropolis known as Brú na Bóinne (the Boyne Palace) is an extraordinary site. Its tombs date from about 3200 BC, roughly six centuries before Egypt's great pyramids. The complex, including the Newgrange and Knowth passage tombs can only be visited on a tour run by the **Brú na Bóinne visitor centre** (☎ 988 0300; Donore; adult/student visitor centre only €2.75/1.50, centre & Newgrange €5.50/2.75, centre & Knowth €4.25/1.50; ☎ 9.30am–7pm May–Sep, to 5.30pm Oct, Mar & Apr, to 5pm Nov–Feb). At 8.20am during the winter solstice, the rising sun's rays shine directly down Newgrange's passage and illuminate the chamber for a magical 17 minutes. Arrive early in summer as tours tend to fill it up.

Day tours run by **Mary Gibbons** (☎ 01-283 9973; www.newgrange-tours.com; tour & admission fees €35; ☎ Mon–Fri) are stellar.

Bus Éireann's service to Donore (via Drogheda, €16 return, 1½ hours, five daily) stops at the gates of the visitor centre.

## THE SOUTHEAST

### WEXFORD

☎ 053 / pop 8931

A fine example of Ireland's new prosperity, Wexford's tiny streets sit with a mixture of old-time pubs, modern boutiques and an increasing number of upscale restaurants. The town's rich and bloody history includes being founded by the Vikings and being nearly obliterated by Oliver Cromwell. Wexford is a convenient stopover for those travelling to France or Wales via the nearby Rosslare Harbour ferry port.

### Orientation & Information

The train and bus stations are at the northern end of town, on Redmond Pl. Follow the Slaney River 700m south along the waterfront quays to reach the **tourist office** (☎ 23111; www.southeastireland.com; The Crescent; ☎ 9am–6pm Mon–Sat May–Sep, to 5pm Oct–Apr). The curiously tight North Main and South Main Sts are a block inland and parallel to the quays. The main post office is northwest of the tourist office on Anne St. Internet access is available in the youth centre at the **Megabytes** (☎ 23262; Francis St; per hr €3; ☎ 9am–9.30pm Mon–Thu, to 5pm Fri, noon–4pm Sat).

## Sights

Of the six original town gates, only the 14th-century **West Gate** (Slaney St) survives. Nearby is **Selskar Abbey**, founded by Alexander de la Roche in 1190 after a crusade to the Holy Land. Its present ruinous state is a result of Cromwell's 1649 visit. The **Bullring** (nr Cornmarket & Nth Main St) was the site of one of Cromwell's massacres, but it gets its name from the now-defunct sport of bull-baiting. Today a market is held here on weekends.

## Sleeping & Eating

**Ferrybank Camping & Caravan Park** (☎ 42611; nfo@wexfordcorp.ie; camp sites €12; ☎ May–Oct; ☎ ) Location and luxury, right across the river from the town centre.

**Kirwan House** (☎ 21208; kirwanhostel@eircom.net; 3 Mary St; dm/tr €16/22) This excessively narrow hostel is the only one in town. Though recently renovated, it could stand a bit more work.

**Cappuccino's** (☎ 23669; 25 Nth Main St; mains €5–12; ☎ 8am–6pm Mon–Fri, to 6.30pm Sat, 10am–6.30pm Sun) The hot food at this three-level eatery with exposed bricks is mouthwatering.

**South 51** (☎ 74559; 52 S Main St; mains €10–19; ☎ 10.30am–9pm Mon–Fri, to 7pm Sat, 12.30–6pm Sun) A California-style bistro, South 51 has enough different menus to please any person with an appetite.

## Drinking & Entertainment

**Sky & the Ground** (☎ 21273; 112–113 S Main St) A popular place to eat and drink, this family establishment has traditional music almost nightly.

**Thomas Moore Tavern** (☎ 24348; Cornmarket) Locals call this an 'old man's pub', meaning it's good for a quiet drink and a chat.

**Wexford Arts Centre** (☎ 23764; www.wexfordartscentre.ie; Cornmarket) Theatre and dance productions are put on year-round here.

## Getting There & Away

On the Dublin–Rosslare line is Wexford's **O'Hanrahan train station** (☎ 22522), which is served by three trains daily in each direction. The three-hour trip to Dublin costs €21 (more at weekends); to Rosslare Harbour (30 minutes) it's €5.50. **Bus Éireann** (☎ 23939, 051-879 000) runs from the train station to Rosslare Harbour (€4.30, 30 minutes, about every hour Monday to Saturday, 10 on Sunday), Dublin (€12, 2¼ hours, 13 Monday to Saturday, 10 Sunday) and beyond.

## KILKENNY

☎ 056 / pop 8625

Medieval Kilkenny (Cill Chainnigh) is impossible to forget. Nestled in lush grounds overlooking the river, Kilkenny Castle stains itself upon your mind, while the town's excellent selection of pubs and eateries makes you wish your tastebuds had a memory as well. Kilkenny is also renowned for its devotion to the arts, and hosts several world-class festivals throughout the year.

Most places of interest can be found on or close to Parliament St and its continuation (High St), which runs parallel to the Nore River, and along Rose Inn St, which becomes John St as it leads away from the river to the northeast.

## Information

**Tourist office** (☎ 775 1500; www.southeastireland.com; Rose Inn St; ☎ 9am–6pm Mon–Fri, 10am–6pm Sat May–Sep, 11am–5pm Sun Jul & Aug, 9.15am–5pm Mon–Sat Oct–Apr) Near the castle.

**Kilkenny ecentre** (26 Rose St; per hr €5; ☎ 10am–8pm Mon–Sat, 11am–7pm Sun) Internet access, comfy and central.

## Sights

### KILKENNY CASTLE

Stronghold of the Butler family, **Kilkenny Castle** (☎ 772 1450; adult/child ind tour €5/2; ☎ 9.30am–7pm Jun–Aug, 10am–6.30pm Sep, 10.30am–5pm Apr–May, to 12.45pm Oct–Mar) has a history dating back to 1172, when legendary Anglo-Norman Strongbow erected a wooden tower on the site. The **Long Gallery**, with its vividly painted ceiling and extensive portrait collection of Butler family members, is quite remarkable.

The approach on foot to **St Canice's Cathedral** (☎ 776 4971; www.cashel.anglican.org; adult/concession €3/2; ☎ 9am–6pm Mon–Sat & 2–6pm Sun Jun–Aug, 10am–1pm & 2–5pm Mon–Sat & 2–6pm Sun Apr, May & Sep, 10am–1pm & 2–4pm Mon–Sat, 2–4pm Sun Oct–Mar) from Parliament St leads over Irishtown Bridge and up **St Canice's Steps**, which date from 1614. Although the present cathedral dates from 1251, it has a much lengthier history.

## Sleeping

**Tree Grove Caravan & Camping Park** (☎ 777 0302; www.camping-ireland.ie; camp sites €15; ☎ Mar–mid-Nov) You can walk into town along the river from this full-facilities park. By car, it's 1.5km south of Kilkenny on the New Ross road (R700).



**Kilkenny Tourist Hostel** (☎ 776 3541; kilkennyhostel@eircom.net; 35 Parliament St; dm/tw €16/40) This central, creaky hostel has loads of character and a turf fire. Check the information board for happenings.

**Bregagh Guesthouse** (☎ 772 2315; www.bregagh.com; Dean St; s/d €45/90) Funky bedspreads and a hearty breakfast are two of the many enjoyable things about this centrally located guesthouse.

## Eating

**Halal Center** (☎ 778 6389; 6 Irishtown; mains €5.50-12; 10am-11pm Sun-Wed, to midnight Thu-Sat) Boasting a menu of more than 100 items including veggie options, this tandoori takeaway-delivery joint is one of the best and unnoticed places in town. It also doubles as a newsagent and corner store.

**Marble City Bar** (☎ 776 1143; 66 High St; lunch €6.50-9.50, dinner €10.50-14.50; ☎ 10am-9pm) The food is impeccably presented at this slick Gotham-esque bar that looks more expensive than it is.

**Gourmet Store** (☎ 777 1727; 56 High St; ☎ 9am-6pm Mon-Sat) A good option for classy picnickers and hostellers.

## Drinking & Entertainment

**John Cleere's** (☎ 776 2573; 22 Parliament St) Cleere's often has good alternative bands, and the occasional poetry reading, in its theatre out the back.

**Kyteler's Inn** (☎ 772 1064; 27 St Kieran's St) The old house of Dame Kyteler (aka the Witch of Kilkenny) is a tourist magnet but atmospheric all the same.

**Watergate Theatre** (☎ 776 1674; www.watergatekilkenny.com; Parliament St) The Watergate hosts musical and theatrical productions throughout the year.

## Getting There

**McDonagh train station** (☎ 772 2024; Dublin Rd) is east of the town centre via John St. At least four trains a day link Dublin's Heuston station to Kilkenny (€21.50) and then on to Waterford (€9). Fares are higher on Friday and Saturday.

**Bus Éireann** (☎ 776 4933, 051-879 000) operates services out of the train station. There are six buses a day to Dublin (€10.50, 2¼ hours), three to Cork (two on Sunday, €16), and a couple to Wexford, Waterford and Rosslare Harbour.

## AROUND KILKENNY Kells Priory

Kells Priory is one of the neatest off-the-beaten path places in Ireland. Only 13km south of Kilkenny, this awe-inspiring monastic site sits among rolling fields and beside a babbling brook. Since these 12th- and 15th-century ruins have no admission fee and there aren't set opening hours, you may find yourself completely alone here (except for the sheep), making it a fine place for howling at the moon. The site is difficult to get to, so unless you have a car, you'll have to take a taxi (about €20) or thumb it.

# THE SOUTHWEST

## CORK

☎ 021 / pop 119,143

There's a reason the locals call Cork (Corcaigh) 'The Real Capital' or 'The People's Republic of Cork'; something special is going on here. The Irish Republic's second biggest city has become a place humming with the type of cultural currency found only in cities with art and music scenes as vibrant as this one. While Dublin might be the actual capital of the Republic, at least Cork spent all of 2005 as Europe's Capital of Culture.

Cork has long been a significant city in Ireland, not least during the Anglo-Irish War and the civil war that followed independence. Irish leader Michael Collins was ambushed and killed nearby.

## Orientation

The city centre is an island between two channels of the Lee River. Oliver Plunkett and St Patrick's Sts are the main shopping, eating and

## GETTING INTO TOWN

To get to the centre from the bus station, walk west along the water or south to Oliver Plunkett St. The train station, about 1.5km northeast of town, is further, but you can walk it via MacCurtain St, if you're staying on Wellington Rd. Frequent buses head from the airport (€3.70, 25 minutes), where there are direct budget flights to major cities all over Europe. See p594 for more details. Buses run from the ferry terminal (€5.50, 40 minutes) to the bus station.

drinking areas. The train station and several hostels are north of the river; MacCurtain St and Glanmire Rd Lower are the main thoroughfares there.

## Information

**Main post office** (Oliver Plunkett St)

**Tourist office** (☎ 425 5100; www.corkkerry.ie; Grand Pde; ☎ 9.15am-5pm Sep-May, 9am-6pm Mon-Sat Sun, 9am-7pm Mon-Sat 10am-3.40pm Sun Jul & Aug)

**Webworkhouse.com** (☎ 427 3090; www.webworkhouse.com; 8a Winthrop St; per hr €1.50-5; ☎ 24hr).

There are also plenty of other internet cafés all over Cork.

## Sights

Combining the 18th-century Cork Customs House with 21st-century Dutch design, the **Crawford Municipal Art Gallery** (☎ 490 7855; www.crawfordartgallery.com; Emmet Pl; admission free; ☎ 10am-5pm Mon-Sat) is a must see for anyone who enjoys art, architecture or both. It contains pieces by Irish artists such as Jack Yeats and Cork's James Barry as well as artists from Continental Europe.

Built in 1879, the Protestant **St Fin Barre's Cathedral** (☎ 496 3387; www.cathedral.cork.anglican.org; Bishop St; adult/child €3/1.50; ☎ 9.30am-5.30pm Mon-Fri Apr-Sep, 10am-12.45pm & 2-5pm Mon-Fri Oct-Mar) is a Gothic Revival structure whose notable features include a Golden Angel, whose job is to blow her horn at the onset of the Apocalypse.

Serving as a jail from 1824 to 1923, the **Cork City Gaol** (☎ 430 5022; www.corkcitygaol.com; adult/child €6/3.50; ☎ 9.30am-6pm Mar-Oct, 10am-5pm Nov-Feb) is now a terrific museum about a terrifying subject. Restored cells, mannequins representing both prisoners and guards and an impressive 35-minute taped tour make this attraction intriguing.

## Sleeping

**Kinlay House** (☎ 450 8966; www.kinlayhouse.ie; Bob & Joan's Walk; dm €13-17, s/d with shared bathroom incl breakfast €38/48, d €52; ☎) This solid hostel has loads of personality. The kitchen and dining room are both big, and on sunny days it has great BBQs.

**Sheila's Hostel** (☎ 450 5562; www.sheilashostel.ie; 4 Belgrave Pl; dm €15-17, s €30-32, d €46-52; ☎) Sheila's sauna, cinema room and super friendly staff make up for its occasional dinginess. It's also a great place to meet travellers from all over.

**Brú Bar & Hostel** (☎ 455 9667; www.brushostel.com; 57 MacCurtain St; 6-14-bed dm €16.50/21, d €50; ☎) (♿)

**our pick** **Garnish House** (☎ 427 5111; www.garnish.ie; Western Rd; s €60-80, d €90-140) With charming rooms (think flowers and fresh fruit), gourmet breakfasts and hosts who are eager to please, Garnish House is possibly the perfect B&B. From the moment you arrive and are greeted with tea and goodies, until the moment you leave, you will experience nothing short of absolute attentiveness. There is no mistaking that the secret ingredient here is love.

Cork's newest and funkiest hostel is also a bar and an internet café. This clean and friendly triple treat can be a rocking good time, but be sure to make reservations as the place gets packed.

Close to the train station at the northeastern end of town there's a handful of perfectly fine B&Bs, including **Auburn House** (☎ 450 8555; auburnhouse@eircom.net; Wellington Rd; s with/without bathroom €50/40, d €74/66).

## Eating

**Wildways** (☎ 427 2199; 21 Princes St; snacks €3-7.50; ☎ 8am-5pm Mon-Fri, 9am-4.30 Sat & Sun) Cork's first organic soup and sandwich bar serves such a variety of delicious, healthy food that even the pickiest eaters can find something scrumptious. If you're around at breakfast time, try the awesome chocolate-chip pancakes.

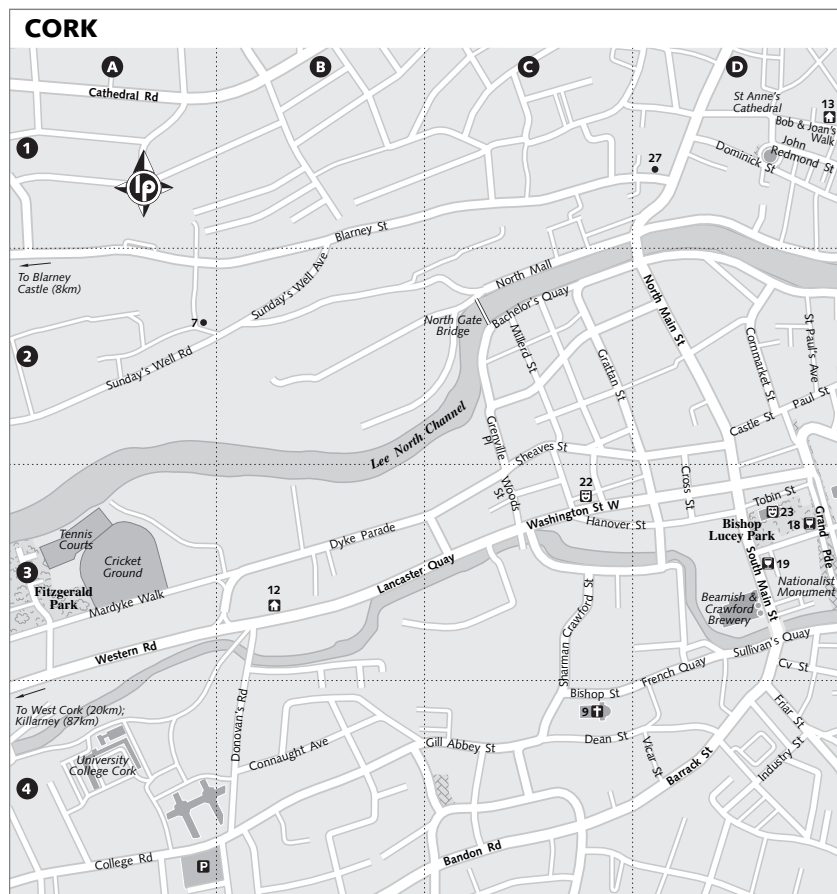
**Farmgate Restaurant** (☎ 427 8134; English Market; mains €8.50-12; ☎ 8.30am-5pm Mon-Sat) An unmissable experience at the heart of the English Market. Filling breakfasts, coffee and lunches draw a regular Cork clientele to the Farmgate's balcony, which overlooks the market below – the source of the food on your plate.

**Indian Palace** (☎ 427 3690; 31 Princes St; mains €8.50-18.50; ☎ 12.30-2.30pm & 5pm-midnight Mon-Sat, 4pm-midnight Sun) If you like incredible Indian food, superb service and interesting ambience, then Indian Palace isn't for you... just kidding! This place is excellent, especially for a romantic candle-lit dinner.

For self-catering, head for the well-stocked food stalls inside the English Market.

## Drinking

Cork's pub life is brimming. Locally brewed Murphy's is the stout of choice here, not Guinness.



**Mutton Lane Inn** (☎ 427 3471; 3 Mutton Lane) With Victorian wallpaper, rock'n'roll posters and a covered outdoor area for smoking, Cork's oldest pub is the type of place that you wish existed in your town.

**An Spailín Fánach** (☎ 427 7949; 28 S Main St) The 'wandering labourer' hosts trad sessions almost every night.

**An Bróg** (☎ 427 0074; 72 Oliver Plunkett St) This is the spot for Cork's 20-something crowd. Excellent live indie music and/or DJs every night of the week.

### Entertainment

*WhazOn?* and *Totally Cork* are free monthly publications available all over town and list everything happening in Cork. The Cork In-

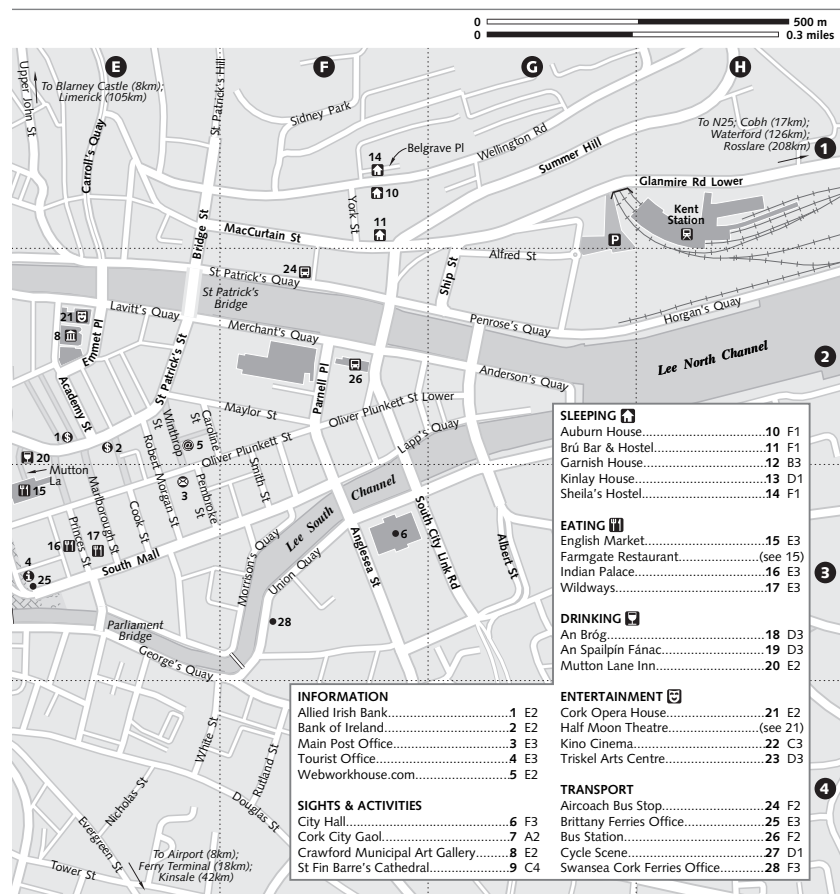
ternational Jazz Festival and the International Film Festival both take place in October.

**Cork Opera House** (☎ 427 0022; www.corkoperahouse.ie; Emmet Pl) Staging everything from opera to stand-up comedy, the Opera House has seen performances as varied as *Carmen*, Oumou Sangaré and the *Vagina Monologues*.

**Half Moon Theatre** (☎ 427 0022) Behind the Cork Opera House, the Half Moon hosts live bands and DJs.

**Triskel Arts Centre** (☎ 427 2022; www.triskelartscentre.com; Tobin St) This is an important venue for contemporary art, film, theatre, music and other media arts.

**Kino Cinema** (☎ 427 1571; Washington St; www.kinocinema.net) The very cool Kino is Cork's only independent art-house cinema.



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### Getting There & Around

The **bus station** (☎ 450 8188; cnr Merchants Quay & Parnell Pl) is east of the centre. You can get to almost anywhere in Ireland by bus from Cork: Dublin (€10, 4¼ hours, six daily), Killarney (€14.50, two hours, 15 daily), Waterford, Wexford and more. For direct service to Dublin, catch **Aircoach** (☎ Belfast 0870 225 7555, Dublin 01 844 7118) from St Patrick Quay, right behind the Metropole Hotel (€15 return Monday to Thursday, €18 return Friday to Sunday, four hours, eight daily).

Cork's **Kent train station** (☎ 450 4777; Glanmire Rd lower) is across the river. Trains go to Dublin (€50, three hours, nine daily), Limerick (€22, 1½ hours, seven daily) and Killarney (€20, 1½ hours, five daily).

Cork's ferry terminal, with regular boats to Swansea and Roscoff, is at Ringaskiddy, about 15 minutes by car southeast of the city centre along the N28. **Swansea Cork Ferries** (☎ 483 6000; 14 Union Quay) and **Brittany Ferries** (☎ 427 7801; 42 Grand Pde) both have offices in town. See p594 for more details.

Hire a bike for €16/80 per day/week from **Cycle Scene** (☎ 430 1183; 396 Blarney St). Return it almost anywhere in the country for another €25.

### AROUND CORK

#### Blarney

Lying northwest of Cork, the village of Blarney (An Bhlarna) receives a bazillion visitors a year for one sole reason: **Blarney Castle**

(☎ 438 5252; www.blarneycastle.ie; adult/child €8/2.50; ☎ 9am-7pm Mon-Sat, 9.30am-5.30pm Sun Jun-Aug, to 6.30pm Mon-Sat May & Sep, 9am-6pm or to sunset Mon-Sun Oct-Apr). If you're not germaphobic and don't mind putting your lips where millions of others have (and where locals are rumoured to urinate), you can kiss the castle's legendary **Blarney Stone** and get the 'gift of the gab'.

Busen run regularly from the Cork bus station (€4.90 return, 30 minutes).

## KILLARNEY

☎ 064 / pop 13,426

Though its tourist trade is healthy all year, Killarney becomes an orgy of hyper-tourism and over-the-top 'Irishness' during the summer. Killarney's popularity is justly deserved though; not only is it a lovely town, but it also has a national park and three lakes at its doorstep, providing endless escapes for walkers and cyclists. It's also a convenient base for touring the Ring of Kerry (opposite).

## Information

**Tourist office** (☎ 31633; www.corkkerry.ie; Beech Rd; ☎ 9am-8pm Mon-Sat & 10am-6pm Sun Jul & Aug, 9am-6pm Mon-Sat & 10am-6pm Sun Sep & Jun, 9.15am-5.00pm Mon-Sat Oct-May)

**Main post office** (☎ 31461; New St)

**Ri Rá** (☎ 38729; 3 Plunkett St; per hr €2.95; ☎ 10am-10pm Mon-Sat Mar-Oct, 9am-9pm Mon-Sat Nov-Feb, 12-9pm Sun year-round) Cheapest internet in town.

## Sights & Activities

Most of Killarney's attractions are just outside the town, not actually in it. The 1855 **St Mary's Cathedral** (☎ 31014; Port Rd) is worth a look.

The backdrop of mountains (well, big hills) beyond town are part of the huge 10,236-hectare **Killarney National Park**. Within the park are beautiful Lough Leane, Muckross Lake and Upper Lake. Besides ruins and ex-gentry housing, the park also has much to explore by foot, bike or boat. The *Killarney Area Guide* (€1.90 at the tourist office) has some ideas.

In summer the **Gap of Dunloe**, a heather-clad valley at the foot of Purple Mountain (832m), is Killarney tourism at its ugliest. Skip the horse-and-trap rides through the Gap (about €50) and cycle to Ross Castle. From here take a boat across to **Lord Brandon's Cottage** and cycle through the Gap and back into town via the N72. Including bike hire, this should cost about €25.

## Sleeping

Book ahead from June to August. Hostels often rent out bikes and offer discounted tours. The tourist office books rooms for €4.

**Sú gán Hostel** (☎ 33104; www.killarneysuganhostel.com; Lewis Rd; dm/d €16/35) Resembling a hobbit hole, this homey hostel has warm hosts and an equally warm fire. The atmosphere here is nothing short of familial, which makes leaving a hard task. Bicycle hire is €12 a day.

**Killarney Railway Hostel** (☎ 35299; railwayhostel@eircom.net; Fair Hill; dm/s/d €16/30/38; ☎ ☎) This big, bright and clean hostel is conveniently positioned near the train and bus stations. It's also equipped with a good kitchen and a lounge full of leather-chair comfy-ness.

**Rathmore House** (☎ 32829; rathmorehousekly@iol.ie; Rock Rd; s/d €42/70) There's a real Irish welcome at this long-established, annually repainted, family-run B&B.

Camping options:

**Fleming's White Bridge Caravan & Camping Park** (☎ 31590; www.killarneycamping.com; White Bridge, Ballycasheen Rd; camp sites €19; ☎ Apr-Oct)

**Fleek Muckross Caravan Park** (☎ 31704; www.campingkillarney.com; Muckross Rd; camp sites €19; ☎ mid-Apr-Sep)

## Eating

**Busy B's Bistro** (☎ 31972; 15 New St; mains €3.50-11; ☎ 11am-10.30pm) Feeling more like a country diner than a bistro; this refreshingly unhip eatery serves breakfast all day, alongside veggie burgers, spaghetti and pita sandwiches. It also boasts a calorie-counter menu.

**Revive Café & Wine Bar** (☎ 266519; New St; snacks €4-8; ☎ 9.30am-6pm) This well-lit bistro serving Illy-brand Italian espresso and unique sandwiches may be an indicator that café culture is taking root in Killarney.

**Scéal Eile** (☎ 35066; 73 High St; mains €3.50-11; ☎ 9.30am-10pm Jun-Sep, 9.30am-6pm Oct-May) A busy and super-friendly two storey establishment, Scéal Eile serves a wide variety of food including homemade baked goods. If you happen to fall in love while in Killarney, it makes darling wedding cakes too!

For self-catering there is a **Tesco** (☎ 28530; New St; ☎ 8.30am-9pm Mon-Fri, to 7pm Sat, 10am-6pm Sun) across from the tourist office.

## Drinking & Entertainment

**Killarney Grand** (☎ 31159; Main St) A great place for music, if you can hear it over the boisterous crowd, the Grand has interesting takes on the

traditional thing from 9pm. At 11pm, modern bands take over (€6 cover).

**O'Connor's** (☎ 30200; 7 High St) Reliable O'Connor's puts on a mix of trad, stand-up-comedy, readings and pub theatre.

**Courtney's** (☎ 32689; Plunkett St) Having a couple of nice fireplaces, barrels used as tables and nearly everything made from wood, Courtney's has the ultimate Irish-pub atmosphere.

## Getting There & Around

**Bus Éireann** (☎ 30011) operates from the **train station** (☎ 31067), with regular services to Cork (€14.50, two hours, four daily), Dingle via Tralee (€13, 2½ hours, five daily), Galway via Limerick (€20.50, five hours, eight daily), Dublin (€22, six hours, five daily) and Rosslare Harbour (€22, seven hours, one to two daily). Travelling by train to Cork (€24, 2¼ hours, three daily) or Dublin (€57, six hours, three daily) usually involves changing at Mallow.

**O'Sullivan's** (☎ 22389; Bishop's Lane) rents bikes for €12/70 per day/week.

## THE RING OF KERRY

☎ 066

The Ring of Kerry, a 179km circuit around the Iveragh Peninsula with dramatic coastal scenery, is one of Ireland's premier tourist attractions. Most travellers tackle the Ring by bus on guided day trips from Killarney but you could spend days here.

## Sights

The **Ballaghbeama Pass** cuts across the peninsula's central highlands and has spectacular views and little traffic, while the shorter **Ring of Skellig**, at the end of the peninsula, has fine views of the Skellig Rocks and is less touristy. You can forgo roads completely by walking the **Kerry Way**, which winds through the Macgillycuddy's Reeks mountains past Carrantuohill (1038m), Ireland's highest mountain.

Political hero Daniel O'Connell was born near **Cahirveen**, one of the Ring's larger towns. The excellent **Barracks Heritage Centre** (☎ 947 2777; adult/student €4/3; ☎ 10am-5pm Mon-Sat & 1-5pm Sun May-Sep) has exhibits on Daniel O'Connell and moving material on the famine's local impact.

South of Cahirciveen the R565 branches west to the 11km-long **Valentia Island**, a jumping-off point for the unforgettable

**Skellig Rocks**, two tiny islands 12km off the coast. The vertiginous climb up uninhabited Skellig Michael inspires an awe that monks could have clung to life in the meagre beehive-shaped stone huts that stand on the only flat strip of land on top.

Calm seas permitting, boats run from spring to late summer from Portmagee, just before the bridge to Valentia, to Skellig Michael. The standard fare is around €35 return. Advance booking is essential; contact **Joe Roddy & Sons** (☎ 947 4268; www.skelligtrips.com) or **Des Lavelle** (☎ 947 6124; lavelles@indigo.ie).

## Sleeping

There are scores of hostels and B&Bs along the Ring. It's wise to book your next night as you make your way around.

Travelling around the Ring at your own pace there's the no-frills **Cáitín Hostel** (☎ 947 7614; dm €13) in Kells; friendly **O'Shea's B&B** (☎ 947 2402; osheasbnb@eircom.net; Church St; s/d €35/70) in the centre of Cahersiveen; the regal hostel-totel **Royal Pier** (☎ 947 6144; dm €18-25, d €45-50) on Valentia Island, and the **Travellers' Rest Hostel** (☎ 947 5175; www.caherdanielhostel.com; dm/d €14/34) in Caherdaniel.

## Getting There & Around

If you're not up to cycling, **Bus Éireann** (☎ 064-30011) has a Ring of Kerry bus service daily from late May to mid-September. In June, buses leave Killarney at 8.30am and 1.45pm, and stop at Killorglin, Glenbeigh, Kells, Cahirciveen, Waterville, Caherdaniel and Sneem, before returning to Killarney (the 3.45pm service terminates at Waterville).

Travel agencies in Killarney, including **Destination Killarney Tours** (☎ 064-32638; Scott's Gardens), offer daily tours of the Ring for about €20. Hostels in Killarney arrange tours for around €18.

# THE WEST COAST

## THE BURREN

The harsh and haunting Burren stretches across west County Clare like something from another planet. Upon entering it, the at-first unwelcoming Burren transforms into a complex landscape littered with ring forts, round towers, high crosses and a surprisingly diverse range of flora, while rocky foreshores and cliffs line its coast.

If you're stuck for transport, multiple bus tours leave the Galway tourist office every morning for the Burren and Cliffs of Moher, including **O'Neachtain Tours** (☎ 091-553188; www.oneachtaintours.com). They all cost around €25. **Burren Hill Walks** (☎ 065-707 7168) offers half-day guided walks for €20 per person.

### Cliffs of Moher

The towering 203m Cliffs of Moher are one of Ireland's most famous features. In summer the cliffs are overrun by day-trippers, so consider staying in nearby Doolin and hiking or biking along the Burren's quiet country lanes, where the views are superb and crowds are never a problem. Be careful along these cliffs, especially in wet or windy weather.

Near the **Cliffs of Moher tourist centre** (☎ 065-708 1171; ☎ 9.30am-5.30pm May-Sep) is **O'Brien's Tower**, which you can climb for €1. Apparently local landlord Cornelius O'Brien (1801-57) raised it to impress 'lady visitors'. From the tower walk south or north and the crowds disappear.

### GALWAY

☎ 091 / pop 71,983

Hip and happening, Galway glows with a bohemian energy so unexpected that it sweeps most visitors off their feet. As you creep through cobbled medieval streets, bouncing between pubs, shops, restaurants and cafés, don't be surprised at the thought that you could see yourself living here forever. Most people think the same thing. Galway is also a gateway for the Aran Islands.

Galway's tightly packed town centre is spread evenly on both sides of the Corrib River. The bus and train stations are within a stone's throw of Eyre Sq.

### Information

**Tourist office** (☎ 537700; www.irelandwest.ie; Forster St; ☎ 9am-5.45pm Jun-Oct, 9am-5.45pm Mon-Fri, to 12.45pm Sun Jan-May, Nov & Dec) Just off Eyre Sq.

**Main post office** (Eglinton St)

**net@ccss** (☎ 569 772; Old Malt Shopping Arcade, High St; per hr €2.50; ☎ 9am-11pm) Internet access.

### Signs

Due to be completely restored by 2007, **Eyre Sq**, the city centre's eastern focal point, will be a fine place for people watching. In the centre of the square is **Kennedy Park**, honouring a visit by John F Kennedy in 1963. Southwest

of the square, the **Collegiate Church of St Nicholas of Myra** (Shop St) dates from 1320 and has several tombs.

Also on Shop St, parts of **Lynch's Castle**, now a bank, date back to the 14th century. Lynch, so the story goes, was a mayor of Galway in the 15th century, who, when his son was condemned for murder, personally acted as hangman. The stone façade that is the **Lynch Memorial Window** (Market St) marks the spot of the deed.

The **Nora Barnacle House Museum** (☎ 564743; www.norabarnacle.com; 8 Bowling Green; admission €2.50; ☎ 10am-5pm mid-May-mid-Sep or by appointment) is in the former home of the wife and lifelong muse of James Joyce.

### Festivals

**Galway Arts Festival** (www.galwayartsfestival.com)

A huge event held in July.

**Galway Oyster Festival** (www.galwayoysterfest.com) Has been going strong for over 50 years and draws thousands every autumn.

### Sleeping

**Salthill Caravan Park** (☎ 523972; www.salthillcaravanpark.com; camp site €8 per person; ☎ Apr-Sep) West of Salthill, off Salthill Rd, is this scenic spot on the water. A bus runs the 4km into town every half hour.

**Barnacle's Quay Street House** (☎ 568644; www.barnacles.ie; 10 Quay St; dm €16.50-23, d €56; ☎) In a repurposed 16th-century town house, Barnacle's is at the heart of the action, surrounded by all the pubs, cafés and restaurants you came to Galway for. Unfortunately this also makes it very loud.

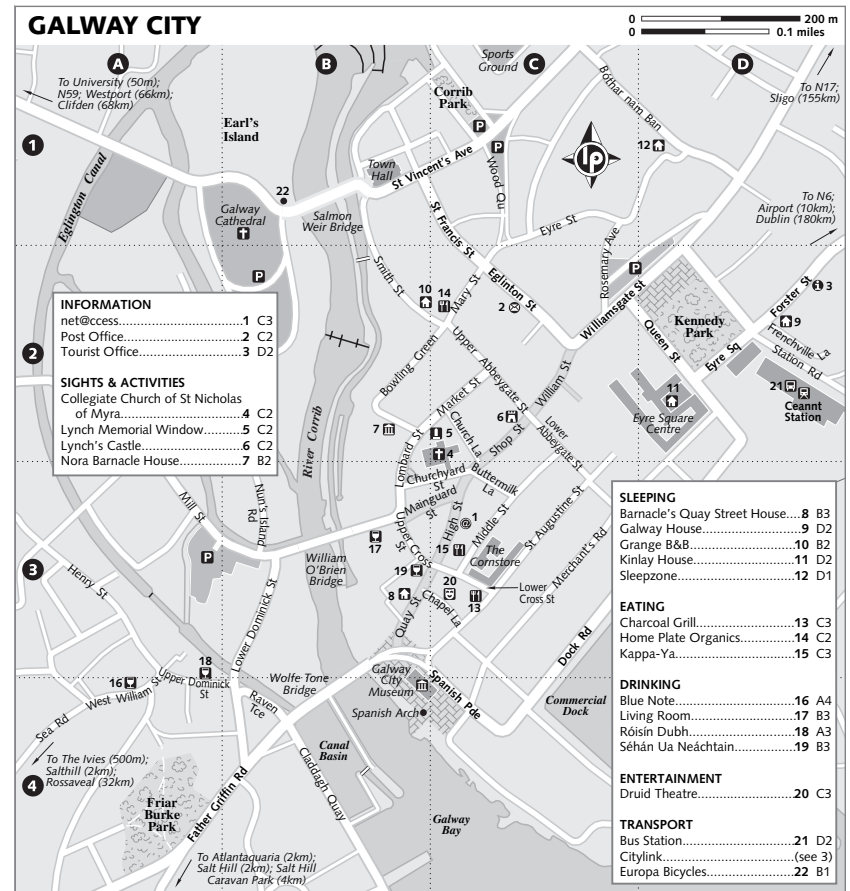
**Kinlay House** (☎ 565244; www.kinlayhouse.ie; Merchant's Rd; dm €17.50-26, d €52-57; ☎) Located half a block off Eyre Sq Centre, Kinlay House has clean, spacious rooms and a humungous eating-lounge area, which sometimes sees all night revelry. You can book discounted bus tours and Aran Islands ferries at the reception.

**Grange B&B** (☎ 530160; Smith St; s/d €43/65) Nestled nicely above a Mexican food joint and just two minutes from both Shop St and Eyre Sq, Grange is a prime location for anyone who plans on cavorting around Galway.

Other hostel recommendations:

**Galway Hostel** (☎ 566959; www.galwaycityhostel.com; Frenchville Lane; dm €18-23, s/d €60/62)

**Sleepzone** (☎ 566999; www.sleepzone.ie; Bóthar nam Ban, Wood Quay; dm €19.50-25, s/d €50/64; ☎)



### Eating & Drinking

**Charcoal Grill** (☎ 087 683 8367; Lower Cross St; €1.70-10; ☎ noon-3am, to 4am Fri & Sat) This addictive and excellent late-night chipper serves a creamy garlic sauce that you'll taste halfway through the next day.

**Home Plate Organics** (☎ 561475; 13 Mary St; mains €5-10; ☎ noon-8pm) Home Plate is quaint and serves up high-quality meals in heaping quantities. It's the best deal in town, whether you crave roasted meat, a ciabatta sandwich or a veggie omelette.

**Kappa-Ya** (☎ 086 354 3616; 4 Middle St; mains €5-15; ☎ 11am-5pm) A welcome addition to a fine culinary scene, Kappa-Ya is Galway's first sushi restaurant. The service here is as friendly as the food is good.

**Blue Note** (☎ 589116; 3 West William St) Do you like soul music? How about funk or Afro-beat? Do you like music so good, you can't help but move? Thought so. The Blue Note has different DJs playing excellent music every night of the week. If that weren't enough, it also has an outside heated smoking area and gives out free hotdogs Tuesday, Wednesday and Sunday.

**Róisín Dubh** (☎ 586540; www.roisindubh.net; Upper Dominick St) Looking like a reliable local boozier, Róisín Dubh is better known as *the* place to see new rock-and-roll talents before they get too big.

**Séhan Ua Neachtain** (☎ 568820; 17 Upper Cross St) Known simply as Neachtains, this dusty old pub has a truly fabulous atmosphere and attracts an eccentric, mixed crowd.

**Living Room** (☎ 563804; www.thelivingroom.ie; Bridge St) Hip, cool and funky, if this place could walk, it would swagger. The '70s-style wallpaper, couches and coloured lighting make the Living Room virtually irresistible.

### Entertainment

The free *Galway Advertiser* includes listings of what's on in the city. It's available on Thursday at the tourist office and newsstands around town.

The long-established **Druid Theatre** (☎ 568660; Chapel Lane) is famed for its experimental works by young Irish playwrights.

### Getting There & Around

The **bus station** (☎ 562000) is just behind the Great Southern Hotel, off Eyre Sq, and next to the **Ceannt train station** (☎ 561444). Bus Éireann operates services to Doolin (€13, 1½ hours, seven daily Monday to Saturday in summer, two on Sunday), Dublin (€14, 3¾ hours, 15 daily), Killarney (€20.50, 4¾ hours, three daily), Limerick, Sligo and beyond.

Private bus companies, generally a bit cheaper than Bus Éireann, also operate from Galway. **Citylink** (☎ 564163; www.citylink.ie) runs 17 buses a day to Dublin airport (€18) via the city centre (€13).

Four or more trains run to/from Dublin (€40.50 on Friday and Sunday, 2¾ hours, six daily). You can connect with other trains at Athlone.

**Europa Bicycles** (☎ 563355), on Earl's Island opposite Galway Cathedral, charges €10/50 per day/week.

## ARAN ISLANDS

☎ 099

In recent years the rocky Aran Islands have become one of Ireland's major attractions. Apart from natural beauty, the Irish-speaking islands have some of the country's oldest Christian and pre-Christian ruins.

There are three main islands, all inhabited year-round. Most visitors head for long and narrow (14.5km by a maximum 4km) **Inishmór** (Inishmore). The land slopes up from the relatively sheltered northern shores of the island, plummeting on the southern side into the Atlantic. **Inishmaan** and **Inisheer** are much smaller and receive fewer visitors. Though seemingly inhospitable, the islands were actually settled much earlier than the mainland, since agriculture was easier to

pursue here than in the forested Ireland of the pre-Christian era.

The islands get crowded at holiday times (St Patrick's Day, Easter) and in July and August, when accommodation is at a premium and advance reservations are advised.

The **tourist office** (☎ 61263; ☎ 10am-5pm Easter-1 Jun & Oct, 10am-6pm Jun & Sep, 10am-7pm Jul & Aug, 11am-5pm Mon-Thu, 10am-5pm Fri-Sun Nov-Easter) operates year-round on the waterfront at Kilronan, the arrival point and major village of Inishmór. An ATM is just around the corner at Spar Supermarket and about 150m to the north is a small post office.

The Ionad Árann heritage centre has internet access.

### Inishmór

The 'Big Island' has four impressive stone forts thought to be 2000 years old. Halfway down the island and about 8km west of Kilronan, semicircular **Dún Aengus** (☎ 61008; adult/child €2.10/1.10; ☎ 10am-6pm Mar-Oct, to 4pm Nov-Feb), perched on the edge of the sheer cliffs, is the best known.

About 1.5km north is **Dún Eoghanachta**, while halfway back to Kilronan is **Dún Eochla**; both are smaller, perfectly circular ring forts. Directly south of Kilronan and dramatically perched on a promontory is **Dún Dúchathair**, which is surrounded on three sides by cliffs.

### SLEEPING & EATING

**An Aharla** (☎ 61305; dm/d €12/34) In a laid-back former farmhouse, positioned in a rare grove of trees, An Aharla has three four-bed dorms and great vibes.

**Mainistir House** (☎ 61169; www.mainistirhousearan.com; dm/s/d incl breakfast €15/20/35; 📺) This colourful 60-bed hostel is in a scenic spot on the main road north of Kilronan. The shuttle from the pier is €2.50.

**Lios Aengus** (☎ 61030; snacks €5-8; ☎ 9.30am-5pm) A simple coffee shop with OK soups and sandwiches.

**Mainistir House Hostel** (☎ 61169; buffet €15; ☎ 8pm-late May-Sep, 7pm-late Oct-Apr) Book ahead for the great-value organic, largely vegetarian buffet dinners here.

**Man of Aran Cottage** (☎ 61301; lunch from €6, set dinner €35, bookings only; ☎ 11.30am-7.30pm Mar-Oct) This place serves fresh fish and organic vegetables and herbs straight from the owners' garden.

### Inishmaan & Inisheer

The least visited of the three islands is Inishmaan (Inis Meáin, or 'Middle Island'). High stone walls border its fields and it's a delight to wander the lanes, taking in some of the tranquillity. The main archaeological site is **Dún Chonchúir**, a massive stone fort built on a high point and offering views of the island. The smallest island, only 8km off the coast from Doolin, is Inisheer (Inis Oírr, or 'Eastern Island'). The 15th-century **O'Brien Castle** (Caislea'n Uí Bhriain) overlooks the beach and harbour.

### Getting There & Away

All three islands are served year-round by **Islan Ferries** (☎ 091-568903; www.aranislandferries.com; adult/child return €25/13) and the trip takes around 40 minutes. Unfortunately the boat leaves from Rossaveal, 37km west of Galway. It's an extra €6 to catch an Island Ferries bus from outside the tourist office in Galway. Buses leave 1½ hours before ferry departure time and meet arriving ferries. With a car you can go straight to Rossaveal and leave it free in the car park.

**InisMór Ferries** (☎ 091-566535; www.queenofaran2.com), billed as the islanders' ferry company, runs a nearly identical operation.

**Doolin Ferries** (☎ 065-707 4455, 091-567676; www.doolinferries.com) leaves from County Clare's Doolin and runs to Inishmór (55 minutes) and Inisheer (40 minutes) for €35.

Inisheer and Inishmaan are small enough to explore on foot, but on larger Inishmór bikes are definitely the way to go. **Aran Cycle Hire** (☎ 61132), just up from Kilronan's pier, is one of many bike shops that charge €10 per day.

Small operators offer island bus tours for around €10.

## THE NORTHWEST

### SLIGO

☎ 071 / pop 17,894

William Butler Yeats (1865-1939) was born in Dublin and educated in London, but his poetry is infused with the landscapes, history and folklore of his mother's native Sligo (Sligeach). He returned many times and reminders of his presence in this lovely town are plentiful.

The **North West Regional Tourism office** (☎ 916 1201; www.irelandnorthwest.ie; Temple St; ☎ 9am-5pm Mon-

Sat Jun-Aug, 9am-5pm Mon-Fri Sep-May) is just south of the centre. The **main post office** (Wine St) is east of the train and bus station. **Café Online** (☎ 914 4892; Stephen St; ☎ 10am-11pm Mon-Sat, noon-1pm Sun), across from the library, has internet access for €3 per hour.

Sligo's two major attractions are outside town. **Carrowmore**, 5km to the southwest, is the site of a **megalithic cemetery** (☎ 916 1534; carrowmoretomb@duchas.ie; adult/child €2/1; ☎ 10am-6pm Easter-Oct), which is one of the largest Stone Age necropolises in Europe.

Don't miss the hill-top cairn-grave **Knocknarea**, just northwest of Carrowmore. About 1000 years younger than Carrowmore, it's said to be the grave of the legendary Maeve, 1st century AD Queen of Connaught. Trails lead to the 328m summit, with commanding views over the surrounding country and shore.

Shabby but convenient Independent Holiday Hostels (IHH) **White House Hostel** (☎ 914 5160; Markievicz Rd; dm €14) is north of the town centre. The excellent **Eden Hill Holiday Hostel** (☎ 914 3204; http://homepage.eircom.net/~edenhill; Perse Rd; dm €13-15, d €36-40) is about 1.5km from the station and is the best hostel in Sligo.

**Café Bar Deli** (☎ 914 0100; 15-16 rear Stephen St; mains €6.50-15; ☎ 6-10pm, closed Mon & Tue), a popular pasta-and-pizza place, is upstairs from the music venue, **Left Bank** (www.leftbank.ie; mains €4-10; ☎ food served noon-5pm), which serves food from upstairs.

### Getting There & Around

Flights to Dublin run out of **Sligo airport** (☎ 916 8280). **Bus Éireann** (☎ 916 0066) has six services a day to/from Dublin (€17, four hours). The Galway-Sligo-Donegal-Derry service runs five times daily; it's €14 and 2½ hours to Galway and €16.50 and 2½ hours to Derry. Buses operate from below the **train station** (☎ 916 9888), which is just west of the centre along Lord Edward St. Trains to Dublin (€25, three hours, three daily) pass by Boyle, Carrick-on-Shannon and Mullingar.

### DONEGAL

☎ 074 / pop 3756

Donegal Town (Dún na nGall) isn't the major centre in County Donegal, but is pleasant and worth a visit. The Diamond is the centre of Donegal; a few steps south along the Eske River is the **tourist office** (☎ 972 1148; www.irelandnorthwest.ie; Quay St; 9am-5pm Mon-Sat Jun-Aug, 9am-5pm Mon-Fri Sep-May).

**Donegal Castle** (☎ 972 2405; donegalcastle@duchas.ie; adult/child €3.50/1.25; ☎ 10am-6pm mid-Mar–Oct, 9.30am-4.30pm Fri-Sun Nov-Dec, closed Jan–mid-Mar), on an outcrop over the Eske River, stands in ruins but remains impressive. About 2.5 kilometres out of town is the **Donegal Craft Village** (☎ 972 2225; donegalcraftvillage@eircom.net; Ballyshannon Rd; ☎ 9am-6pm Mon-Sat, 11am-6pm Sun) where you can purchase everything from metalwork to hand-blown glass, all made on the premises.

The comfortable **Donegal Town Independent Hostel** (☎ 972 2805; www.donegalhostel.com; dm/d €13/31), a member of IHH and the Independent Hostel Owners in Ireland (IHO), is 1km northwest of town on the Killybegs road (N56).

Busy **Blueberry Tearoom** (☎ 972 2933; The Diamond; mains €6.50-9; ☎ 9am-7pm) has substantial sandwiches, excellent baked goods and homemade jams. The **Famous Donegal Chipper** (☎ 972 1428; Upper Main St; fish & chips from €7; ☎ 12.30-11pm Mon-Tue, to 11.30pm Thu-Sun) is well known throughout the area for its fish and chips.

**Bus Éireann** (☎ 972 1101) goes to Derry (€12.50, 1½ hours, seven daily), Enniskillen (€9.70, 1¼ hours, six daily), Sligo (€12, one hour, five daily), Galway (€18, four hours, five daily) and Dublin (€17.50, 4¼ hours, five daily). The bus stop is on the Diamond, outside the Abbey Hotel.

## NORTHERN IRELAND

☎ 028

Crossing from the Republic into Northern Ireland you immediately notice two differences: the street signs are in miles and the roads are well maintained. Soon enough, you find that these aren't the only differences; the accent here is distinctly different, the currency is pounds sterling and you remark again about how nicely maintained the roads are. You are now (although historically not everyone would be happy about it) in the UK.

From the looming city walls of Derry to the breathtaking scenery along the Causeway Coast to Belfast's glorious Victorian architecture, Northern Ireland has always had a bevy of things to attract visitors. Unfortunately decades of guerrilla warfare deterred tourism and it wasn't until within the past 10 years that it finally returned.

Today Northern Ireland seems rejuvenated. Belfast is a happening place with a stellar

nightlife and an excellent culinary scene while Derry appears to be coming into its own as a cool, artistic city. The stunning Causeway Coast and its namesake, the geologically anomalous Giant's Causeway, get more and more visitors each year, while lesser known towns are finding that they have a tourist trade too.

That's not to say that the scars of the Troubles have healed, but at least people are getting along, which at this point is all that anyone can ask for.

### Dangers & Annoyances

July 12th marks the 1690 victory of Protestant William of Orange over Catholic James II at the Battle of the Boyne. Although the Marching Season is technically from Easter until September, the months surrounding July 12th have historically seen some violent clashes between Protestant and Catholic groups. Just to be safe, keep a far distance from any Orange Marches.

### BELFAST

pop 274,678

It's a new era in Belfast. Optimism floats through this marvellous Victorian city like a virus you can't help but catch; the peace process has borne fruit and the war is officially over.

Each time you hit the university pubs on Botanic Ave, the posh shops along Donegall Sq or the fine restaurants on Great Victoria St, you feel the exuberance of a city on the rise, literally. Just look east towards the river and you can see all the new structures, built or being built, that suggest a cultural reawakening of a city long in slumber.

That said, Belfast's harsh past isn't one that can be forgotten; reminders like the 'Peace Wall' that divides the city, are everywhere. But maybe it's these reminders of the past that will keep the people of the present pushing towards a very bright future.

### Orientation

The city centre is compact, with imposing City Hall in Donegall Sq as the central landmark. Belfast's principal shopping district is north of the square. North of that, around Donegall St and St Anne's Cathedral, is the bohemian Cathedral Quarter.

South of the square lies the Golden Mile, a restaurant and pub-filled stretch of Dublin

Rd, Shaftesbury Sq, Bradbury Pl and Botanic Ave. To the east, most of Belfast's smart new hotel, leisure and arts developments line the banks of the Lagan. East of the river rise the huge yellow cranes of the Harland & Wolff shipyards.

### Information

**Belfast Welcome Centre** (☎ 9023 9026; www.gotobelfast.com; 47 Donegall Pl; ☎ 9am-7pm Mon-Sat, 11am-4pm Sun Jun-Sep, 9am-5pm Mon-Sat, 11am-4pm Sun Oct-May) Efficient and extremely helpful.

**Fáilte Ireland** (☎ 9026 5500; www.ireland.ie; 53 Castle St; ☎ 9am-5pm Mon-Fri year-round, to 12.30pm Sat Jun-Aug) Has information on the Irish Republic.

**Hostelling International Northern Ireland** (HINI; ☎ 9032 4733; www.hini.org.uk; 22-32 Donegall Rd) Has its offices at the Belfast International Youth Hostel.

**Internet café** (☎ 9043 4058; per hr £3) Send email and have a coffee; next to the Belfast Welcome Centre. It's open when the centre is.

**Main post office** (Castle Pl) There is a smaller branch at the top end of Botanic Ave by Shaftesbury Sq.

### Sights

Renaissance-style **City Hall** (☎ 9027 0456; admission free; ☎ guided tours at 11am, 2pm & 3pm Mon-Fri & 2.30pm Sat Jun-Sep, 11am & 2.30pm Mon-Fri & 2.30pm Sat Oct-May), completed in 1906, is a testament to the city's Industrial Revolution success. It's fronted by an especially dour statue of Queen Victoria. To the northeast – between High St and Queen's Sq – the queen's consort, Prince Albert, also makes his Belfast appearance at the slightly leaning **Albert Memorial Clocktower** (1867).

The famed **Crown Liquor Saloon** (p618) was built in 1885 and displays Victorian architecture at its most extravagant. Don't miss it. The Crown was lucky to survive a 1993 bomb that devastated the (now fully restored) **Grand Opera House** (☎ 9024 1919; www.goh.co.uk) across the road.

Belfast's biggest tourist attraction, the **Ulster Folk & Transport Museums** (☎ 9042 8428; www.magni.org.uk; adult/child 1 museum £5/3, both museums £6.50/3.50; ☎ 10am-5pm Mon-Fri, to 6pm Sat, 11am-6pm Sun Mar-Jun, 10am-6pm Mon-Sat, 11am-6pm Sun Jul-Sep, 10am-4pm Mon-Fri, to 5pm Sat, 11am-5pm Sun Oct-Feb), one of Northern Ireland's finest museums, is 11km northeast of the centre beside the Bangor road (A2) near Holywood. The 30 buildings on the 60-hectare site range from urban terrace homes to thatched farm cottages. A bridge crosses the A2 to the Transport Museum, a sort of auto-

motive zoo, which contains various Ulster-related vehicles, including a prototype of the vertical take-off and landing (VTOL) aircraft. From Belfast take Ulsterbus 1 or any Bangor-bound train that stops at Cultra station.

The **Botanic Gardens** (☎ 9032 4902; admission free; ☎ 8am-sunset) near the university are an absolute pleasure to wander through.

### FALLS & SHANKILL RDS

Catholic Falls Rd and Protestant Shankill Rd have been battlefronts since the 1970s. Even so, they are quite safe and worth venturing into, if only to see the impressively large murals expressing political and religious passions.

The best way to visit the sectarian zones of the Falls and Shankill Rds is by what is known locally as the 'people's taxi'. These black former London cabs run a buslike service up and down their respective roads from terminuses in the city. **Black Taxi Tours** (☎ 9064 2264; www.belfasttours.com) and **Original Belfast Black Taxi Tours** (☎ 0800 032 2003), running daily, are organised 'people taxi' tours. An even-sided account of the Troubles is given in a down-to-earth way. Prices are £8 per person based on four sharing and pick-up can be arranged.

### Festivals

For three weeks in late October and early November, Belfast hosts the UK's second-largest arts festival, the **Festival at Queen's** (☎ 9066 7687; www.belfastfestival.com), in and around Queen's University. Also worth checking out is the fantastic **Cathedral Quarter Arts Festival** (☎ 9023 2403; www.cqaf.com) in early May, which attracts pioneering writers, comedians, musicians, artists and theatre productions.

### Sleeping

**Jordanstown Lough Shore Park** (☎ 9034 0000; camp sites £9) 8km north of town on Shore Rd (A2) This great camping option is in Newtownabbey.

**Linen House** (Paddy's Backpackers; ☎ 9058 6400; www.belfasthostel.com; 18-20 Kent St; dm €6.50-10, tw £24; ☎ ☎ ☎) In a former linen factory in the Cathedral Quarter, the slightly dingy Linen House lacks the cosy feel of Arnie's.

**Arnie's Backpackers** (☎ 9024 2867; www.arniesbackpackers.co.uk; 63 Fitzwilliam St; dm £7-9.50; ☎) Upon entering Arnie's you realise that you've made the right choice. The small hostel has a relaxed, down-home vibe and Arnie manages to have a kindly disposition even when faced with an

## GETTING INTO TOWN

Belfast's two bus stations, Laganside Bus Centre, near the river, and the bigger Europa Bus Centre, next to Great Victoria St train station, are both central. Centrelink buses (travel free with your bus or train ticket) ply a circular route linking Belfast Central, Great Victoria St Station and Europa and Laganside stations to Donegall Square in the city centre; they run every 10 minutes. Local trains also connect Belfast Central with Great Victoria St station via Botanic station. Most local bus services depart from Donegall Sq, near the City Hall, where there's a ticket kiosk.

AirBus buses link Belfast international airport with the Europa Bus Centre every 30 minutes (£6, 30 minutes). A taxi costs about £25. See p620 for details on getting into town from ferry ports.

Estonian football fan club who's been drinking vodka for 12 hours straight.

**Belfast International Youth Hostel** (☎ 9032 4733, 9031 5435; www.hini.org.uk; 22-32 Donegall Rd; dm £9.50-12.75, s £18-24, d £26-34; ☒ ☒) HINI's sterile 112-bed Belfast International is conveniently sited on the Golden Mile, meaning it can be a bit noisy at night when the pubs and clubs empty. It has a billiards room, TV lounge and café.

**Botanic Lodge Guesthouse** (☎ 9032 7682; 87 Botanic Ave; s/d £30/50) The rooms are quirky in this university-district guesthouse; rooms 7 and 13 don't exist but 2b does, and the décor is a mix of Victorian era furniture and wallpaper and 1940s water fixtures. Most bathrooms are shared.

**Jury's Inn** (☎ 9053 3500; www.bookajuryinn.com; College Sq; r £75-85; ☒ ☒) Jury's bland modernity is more than made up for by its location (three minutes from City Hall) and excellent value – room rates include anything up to three adults or two adults and two kids.

## Eating

**Clements** (☎ 9033 1827; 62 Botanic Ave; snacks £1.50-5, drinks £1.50-3; ☒ ☒ 7.30am-10.30pm) With long rows of couch seating and excellent cappuccinos, Clements is the beginning of true café culture in Belfast. Other branches are on Donegall Sq West, Rosemary St and Stranmillis Rd.

**Café Paul Rankin** (☎ 9031 5090; 27-29 Fountain St; snacks £2.30-6.00; ☒ ☒ 7.30am-5.30pm Mon-Sat, to 7.30pm Thu; ☒) Owned by Northern Ireland's top celebrity chef, this café serves quality cakes, focaccia, soups and salads, with comfy benches and sofas for lounging on. There's a branch at 12 Upper Arthur St and at Castle Court Centre.

**Thai-Tanic** (☎ 9066 8811; 2 Eglantine Ave; mains £6.50-8.50; ☒ ☒ 5-11pm Tue-Sun) Despite the cheesy name, tiny Thai-Tanic serves up killer food and does deliveries within a 5km radius.

**Pizza Express** (☎ 9032 9050; 25-27 Bedford St; mains £5.15-8; ☒ ☒ noon-11pm Mon-Wed, to 11.30pm Thu-Sat, to 10.30pm Sun) With flowers on the tables and a wide open kitchen, Pizza Express looks more expensive than it actually is. The food here is very good and the staff is exceptionally accommodating.

**Archana** (☎ 9032 3713; 53 Dublin Rd; mains £6-11; ☒ ☒ noon-2pm & 5.30-11pm Mon-Fri, 5-11pm Sat & Sun) It's disturbing how good Archana is. There is plenty to choose from, whether you eat meat or not, and the lunch special is unbeatable since it only costs £5 to £7.50. Seriously, do yourself a favour and eat here.

## Drinking & Clubbing

As of April 2007 smoking will no longer be allowed inside pubs.

**Crown Liquor Saloon** (☎ 9024 9476; 46 Great Victoria St) Beautiful enough to bring a drunk from any era to tears, Belfast's most famous bar has a wonderfully ornate Victorian interior with discreet panelled snugs.

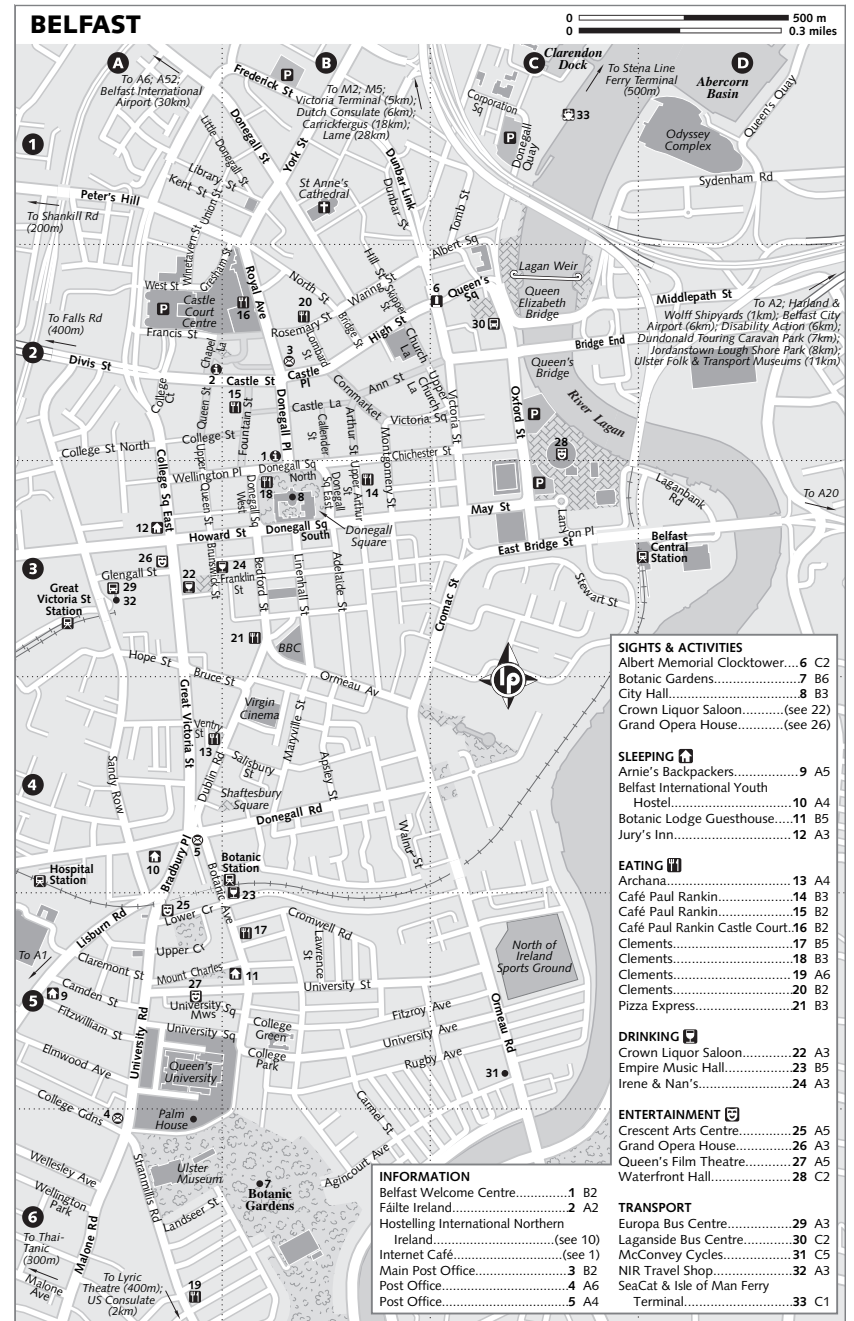
**Irene & Nan's** (☎ 9023 9123; 12 Brunswick St) Although no-one is certain where the name came from, there's no mistake that Irene & Nan's 1950s retro theme is dripping with designer chic. It's a laid-back place though, and its in-bar bistro will tempt your taste buds.

**Empire Music Hall** (☎ 9024 9276; 42 Botanic Ave) Residing in a converted Victorian church, the epic Empire has three floors of entertainment, including a basement jazz club, and has a weekly stand-up comedy night.

## Entertainment

*Whatabout?* is a free monthly guide to Belfast events issued by the Belfast Welcome Centre. The website www.wheretotnight.com is another useful guide.

**Queen's Film Theatre** (QFT; ☎ 9097 1097; www.queensfilmtheatre.com; 20 University Sq) The QFT is a two-screen art-house cinema close to the



university and a major venue for the Belfast Film Festival in March.

**Crescent Arts Centre** (☎ 9024 2338; www.crescentarts.org; 2 University Rd) The Crescent puts on fine concerts, from New York jazz to top-rate Irish music. It also stages a literary festival, called Between the Lines, each March and a dance festival, City Dance, in June.

**Waterfront Hall** (☎ 9033 4455; www.waterfront.co.uk; Lanyon Pl) The impressive 2235-seat Waterfront is Belfast's flagship concert venue, hosting local, national and international performers from pop stars to symphony orchestras.

**Grand Opera House** (☎ 9024 1919; www.goh.co.uk; 2-4 Great Victoria St) This grand old venue plays host to a mixture of opera, popular musicals and comedy shows.

### Getting There & Around

For all Ulsterbus, Northern Ireland Railways (NIR) and local bus information call **Translink** (☎ 9066 6630; www.translink.co.uk). The **NIR Travel Shop** (☎ 9024 2420; Great Victoria St station; ☹: 9am-5pm Mon-Fri, to 12.30pm Sat) can book and provide information on trains, buses and ferries.

### AIR

There are flights from some regional airports in Britain to the convenient **Belfast City Airport** (☎ 9093 9093; www.belfastcityairport.com; Airport Rd), but everything else, including flights from the Republic, Britain, Amsterdam, Brussels and New York, goes to **Belfast International Airport** (☎ 9448 4848; www.belfastairport.com), 30km north of the city in Aldergrove by the M2. Some of the budget airlines that land at these airports are Ryanair and Flybe. For more information, see p594.

### BOAT

See p594 for more details on ferries to/from Northern Ireland. Four main ferry routes connect Belfast to Stranraer, Liverpool and the Isle of Man.

**Steam Packet/SeaCat** (☎ 0870 552 3523; www.steam-packet.com) catamaran car-ferries dock at Donegall Quay, a short walk north of the city centre. **P&O European** (☎ 0870 242 4777; www.poirishsea.com) ferries to/from Scotland dock at Larne, 30km north of Belfast.

**Norse Merchant Ferries** (☎ 0870 600 4321) to Liverpool leave from Victoria terminal, 5km north of central Belfast; take a bus from Europa Bus Centre or catch a taxi (€6). **Stena Line** (☎ 0870 570 7070; www.stenaline.co.uk) services to Stranraer leave from nearby Corry Rd.

### BUS

Belfast has two separate bus stations. The smaller of the two is the **Laganside Bus Centre** (Oxford St), near the river, with bus connections to counties Antrim, Down and Derry. Buses to everywhere else in Northern Ireland, the Republic, the international airport and the Larne ferries, leave from the bigger **Europa Bus Centre** (Glengall St). Regional bus timetables are free at the bus stations.

Ulsterbus has hourly Belfast-Dublin buses that take about three hours and start at £8.30 one-way. The service to Derry (£9.40, 1¼ hours) is even more frequent.

Depending on the day, **Aircoach** (☎ 0870 225 7555; www.aircoach.ie) costs £7 to £12 and leaves Jury's Inn every hour making a drop off at Dublin Airport 2½ hours later. At the airport you can catch a local bus into town.

### TRAIN

Belfast has two main train stations: Great Victoria St, next to the Europa Bus Centre, and the **Belfast Central** (East Bridge St), east of the city centre.

Destinations served from Belfast Central include Derry and Dublin. Belfast-Dublin trains (£24/35 one-way/return, two hours) run up to eight times a day (five on Sunday). From Belfast Central a free (with your bus or train ticket) Centrelink bus to Donegall Sq in the city centre leaves every 10 minutes. A local train also connects with Great Victoria St.

Great Victoria St station has services to Derry (£9.80, 2¼ hours, about every two hours) and Larne Harbour (£4.70, one hour, hourly).

### Getting Around

A short trip on a bus costs £1 to £1.60. Most local bus services depart from Donegall Sq, near the City Hall, where there's a ticket kiosk. If driving, be fastidious about where you park; car theft is a serious problem.

**McConvey Cycles** (☎ 9033 0322; www.mcconveycycles.com; 182 Ormeau Rd) rents bikes for £15 a day or £60 a week. A deposit is required.

### THE BELFAST-DERRY COASTAL ROAD

Ireland isn't short of fine stretches of coast, but the Causeway Coast stretching from Portstewart in County Derry to Ballycastle in County Antrim, and the Antrim Coast stretching from Ballycastle to Belfast, are as magnificent as they come.

From late May to late September, Ulsterbus' Antrim Coaster bus 252 operates twice daily (except Sunday) between Belfast and Coleraine (four hours), stopping at all the main tourist sights. An open-topped Bushmills bus (177) runs from the Giant's Causeway to Coleraine seven times daily in July and August. It takes about an hour. Bus 172 runs year-round along the coast between Ballycastle and Portrush.

### Carrickfergus

Only 13km northeast of Belfast is Carrickfergus and its Norman **castle** (☎ 9335 1273; adult/child £3/1.50; ☹: 10am-6pm Mon-Sat, 2-6pm Sun Jun-Aug, 10am-6pm Mon-Sat, 2-6pm Sun Apr, May & Sep, 10am-4pm Mon-Fri, 2-4pm Sun Oct-Mar), which was built in 1180 and overlooks the harbour where William III landed in 1690. A small museum documents the castle's long history (it was occupied until 1928).

### Carrick-a-Rede Island

The 20m **rope bridge** (☎ 2076 9839; adult/child £2/1; ☹: 10am-6pm Mar-Sep), connecting Carrick-a-Rede Island to the mainland and swaying some 25m above pounding waves, is fun to stagger across. The island is the site of a salmon fishery and a nesting ground for gulls and fulmars. It's a scenic 1.25km walk from the car park to the bridge. The bridge is closed in high winds.

### Giant's Causeway

You've probably seen pictures of Northern Ireland's main tourist attraction. The hexagonal basalt columns, all 38,000 of them (counting the ones under the water) are amazingly uniform. Legend has it that the giant in question, Finn McCool, built the Causeway to get to Scottish rival giant Benandonner on the Scottish island of Staffa (which has similar rock formations). The more prosaic explanation is that lava erupted from an underground fissure and crystallised some 60 million years ago. It costs nothing to visit the site but car parking is an exorbitant £5.

Try to visit the Causeway midweek or out of season to avoid the crowds.

### Portstewart & Downhill

These seaside resorts are only a few kilometres apart. Portstewart has a slightly decayed, early-20th-century feel to it, while Downhill has a lovely stretch of beach.

Portstewart's friendly **Causeway Coast Hostel** (☎ 7083 3789; 4 Victoria Tce; dm/d £9/28; ☹: ☑ ☒ ☓) is at the eastern end of town. Belfast-Portrush bus 218 stops 100m away.

Harder to get to, but well worth the effort, is the **Downhill Hostel** (☎ 7084 9077; www.downhillhostel.com; 12 Mussenden Rd; dm/d £9/30; ☹: ☑), a lovely converted period house on the beach with open fires. Pick-ups can be arranged from Castle-rock train station. The Coleraine-Limavady bus (134) also passes nearby.

### DERRY

#### pop 107,000

Derry. Londonderry. In practice it's better known as Derry, whatever your politics. The 'London' prefix was added after settlers from London were granted much of the land in the area by James I.

In the 1960s, resentment at Protestant domination of the city council boiled over in the civil rights marches of 1968. The UK government sent British troops into Derry a year later, following fighting between police and local youths in the poor Catholic Bogside district. This tension came to a head in January 1972, when the British army killed 13 unarmed Catholic civil rights marchers in Derry, and 'Bloody Sunday' marked the beginning of the Troubles in earnest.

Today Derry is as safe to visit as anywhere in Northern Ireland. Its dramatic history is still palpable – in the 17th-century city walls, in the captivating Bogside murals – but it's also a laid-back place with a reputation for musical excellence and a lively arts scene.

### Orientation

The old centre of Derry is the small, walled city on the western bank of the Foyle River. The heart of the walled city is The Diamond, intersected by four main roads: Shipquay St, Ferryquay St, Bishop St Within and Butcher St. The Catholic Bogside area is below the walls to the northwest. To the south is a Protestant estate known as The Fountain. The Waterside district across the river is mostly Protestant.

### Information

**Claude's Café** (☎ 7127 9379; 4 Shipquay St; per hr £5; ☹: 9am-5.30pm) Internet access.

**Derry Visitor & Convention Bureau** (☎ 7126 7284; www.derryvisitor.com; ☹: 9am-5pm Mon-Fri, 10am-5pm Sat mid-Mar-Jun & Oct, 9am-7pm Mon-Fri, 10am-6pm



Sat, to 5pm Sun Jul-Sep, 9am-5pm Nov-mid-Mar) Handles Northern Ireland and the Republic as well as Derry. The office may be relocated in the next couple of years.

**Main post office** (Custom House St) Just north of the Tower Museum.

## Sights

Derry's magnificent **city walls**, built between 1613 and 1618, encircle the old city for 1.5km and make for a fantastic walk; the gates give an excellent view of Bogside (itself worth a closer look) and its defiant **murals**, one notably proclaiming 'You Are Now Entering Free Derry'.

Inside Coward's Bastion to the north, O'Doherty's Tower is home to the **Tower Museum** (☎ 7137 2411; tower.museum@derrycity.gov.uk; admission £3; ☎ 10am-4.30pm Mon-Sat), which traces the story of Derry from the days of St Columbcille to the present. The deeply moving **Museum of Free Derry** (☎ 7136 0880; www.museumoffreederry.org; 55-61 Glenfada Park; ☎ 9.30am-4pm Mon-Thu, to 3pm Fri, 1-4pm Sat) exhibits all things related to The Troubles and Civil Rights, and shows an excellent 45-minute film about Bloody Sunday. At the time of research no fees had been set.

The red-brick **Guildhall** (☎ 7137 7335; admission free; ☎ 9am-5pm Mon-Fri), just outside the city walls, was originally built in 1890 and is noted for its stained-glass windows.

Austere **St Columb's Cathedral** (☎ 7126 7313; requested donation £1; ☎ 9am-5pm Mon-Sat Apr-Oct, to 4pm Nov-Mar) dates from 1628 and stands at the southern end of the walled city, off Bishop St Within.

## Sleeping

**Derry City Independent Hostel** (☎ 7128 0542; www.derryhostel.com; 44 Great James St; dm/d incl breakfast £11/32; ☎ ☒) Every hostel should strive to engender the warm vibe that Steve and Kylie have created here. It's a little cramped but funky and fun, with an eating nook covered in Indian paintings and pillows. There's free internet access, no checkout time and the fifth night is free.

**Saddler's House** (☎ 7126 9691; www.thesaddlershouse.com; 36 Great James St; s/d £30/45; ☎) Everything in this centrally located Victorian townhouse, from the sharp-witted hosts to their bulldog Bertie, is absolutely lovable. It's almost worth visiting Derry just to stay here.

**Merchant's House** (16 Queen St; s £20-30, d £45-50) The same could be said for Saddler's sister

## GETTING INTO TOWN

A free Linkline shuttle bus connects Derry's Waterside train station, across the Foyle River from the centre, with the bus station. From there, follow Foyle St towards the Guildhall and edge along the outside of the town walls towards pedestrianised Waterloo Pl. Continue down Strand Rd; the hostels and B&Bs all have their check-in points on Great James St, off Strand Rd.

B&B, a Georgian-style townhouse around the corner. Both places are comfortably decorated with antiques and interesting objets d'art.

## Eating

**An BÁCÚS** (☎ 7126 4678; 37 Great James St; snacks £2-4; ☎ 7.30am-5pm Mon-Fri, 9am-5pm Sat) The bilingual menu at this Irish-language café is confusing to read, but you'll learn the Irish words for egg (*ubh*) and Coke (*Cóca*). It's a cute place for a coffee and a pastry or sandwich.

**Lloyd's No 1 Bar/Ice Wharf** (☎ 7127 6610; 22 Strand St; mains £4-8) While the food here ranges from nachos to curries to steaks, the real treat is that it has a two-for-one menu every day. Crafty diners will order one for lunch and have the other boxed up for dinner.

**Flaming Jacks** (☎ 7126 6400; 29-35 Strand Rd; lunch £5-6, dinner £7-14; ☎ noon-2.30pm & 5-10.30pm Mon-Thu, from 4.30pm Fri & Sat, from 4pm Sun) It could be the sultry modern interior or the extensive wine list, that brings droves of people to Flaming Jacks, or it could be the fact that it's probably the only place in Ireland that gives free refills on soda. You be the judge.

Tesco has a large supermarket in the Quay-side Shopping Centre on Strand Rd.

## Drinking & Clubbing

**Peadar O'Donnell's** (☎ 7126 2318; 63 Waterloo St) Peadar's goes for traditional music sessions every night starting around 11pm.

**Sandino's** (☎ 7130 9297; 1 Water St) This alternative Latin American-themed venue (named after Nicaraguan guerrilla leader Augusto Sandino) is popular with up-and-coming bands and visiting musicians. It hosts regular theme nights, fundraising and political events.

**Nerve Centre** (☎ 7126 0562; www.nerve-centre.org.uk; 7-8 Magazine St) The ever-expanding Nerve Centre is a multimedia venue with music,

art-house cinema and café, and bar. It also has workshops and studios for animation, film and music.

## Getting There & Away

The **bus station** (☎ 7126 2261) is just outside the city walls, on Foyle St near the Guildhall. Ulsterbus's 212, the *Maiden City Flyer*, is the fastest service between Belfast and Derry (£9.40, 1¼ hours, every half-hour, less on Sunday). Bus 234 runs to Portrush and Portstewart in July and August (£6.50, 1½ hours, four daily). There are five bus services daily (four on Sunday) to Dublin (£12.80, 4¼ hours).

**Lough Swilly Bus Service** (☎ 7126 2017), with an office upstairs at the Ulsterbus station, serves County Donegal across the border.

**Air Porter Buses** (☎ 7126 9996; www.airporter.co.uk) runs 13 daily services (six at weekends) between Belfast airport and Derry's Quayside Shopping Centre for £15.

Derry's **Waterside train station** (☎ 7134 2228) lies across the Foyle River from the centre, but is connected to it by a free Linkline bus that leaves the bus station 15 minutes before each train departure. Nine trains run daily (four on Sunday) to Belfast (£9.40, three hours) via Portrush.

# IRELAND DIRECTORY

## ACCOMMODATION

Sleeping reviews in this chapter include the high-season price. Off season, rates are 15% to 25% lower.

Book ahead in peak season. Fáilte Ireland (Irish Tourist Board) books accommodation for a 10% room deposit and a fee of €4. The **Northern Ireland Tourist Board** (NITB; www.discovernorthernireland.com) books accommodation for free with a 10% room deposit. Accommodation for the Republic and the North may also be booked online, via the **Gulliver booking service** (www.gulliver.ie). A deposit of 10% and a €4 fee is payable.

Commercial camping grounds typically charge €12 to €18 for a tent and two people, and some hostels have space for tents. Unless indicated otherwise prices given in this chapter for 'camp sites' are for a tent plus two people.

Hostels in Ireland can be heavily booked in summer, although there are hundreds of back-

packers hostels and about 40 official youth hostels. From June to September most hostels cost from €15 to €20 a night, except for the more expensive hostels in Dublin, Belfast and a few other places.

Typical B&Bs cost around €35 per person a night, though more-luxurious B&Bs can cost upwards of €55 per person. Most B&Bs fill up quickly in summer.

The following contacts are useful:

**An Óige** (Map pp598-9; ☎ 01-830 4555; www.anoige.ie) Official Republic of Ireland youth hostels.

**Hostelling International Northern Ireland** (HINI; ☎ 028-9032 4733; www.hini.org.uk) Official Northern Ireland youth hostels.

**Independent Holiday Hostels** (IHH; ☎ 01-836 4700; www.hostels-ireland.com) Backpackers hostels across Ireland.

**Independent Hostel Owners in Ireland** (IHO; ☎ 074-973 0130; www.holidayhound.com/ih) Another independent hostels group.

**Irish Caravan and Camping Council** (www.camping-ireland.ie)

## ACTIVITIES

Ireland is great for outdoor activities and tourist boards put out a wide selection of information sheets covering bird-watching (County Donegal, p615, and County Wexford, p604), surfing (great along the west coast, p611), rock climbing, fishing, horse riding, sailing, canoeing and many other activities.

Walking is particularly popular although, of course, you must come prepared for wet weather. There are now well over 20 way-marked trails throughout Ireland, one of the most popular being the 132km Wicklow Way.

## BUSINESS HOURS

Offices are open 9am to 5pm Monday to Friday, shops a little later. Thursday and/or Friday shops stay open later. Many also open on Saturday. In winter, some tourist attractions open less often or may be shut completely. In Northern Ireland some tourist attractions are closed on Sunday morning.

Restaurants north and south tend to close around 9pm or 10pm. In the Republic, pubs close at 11.30pm Monday to Thursday, 12.30am Friday and Saturday and 11pm on Sunday; some pubs have licences allowing them to stay open till 2.30am Thursday to Saturday. In the North, pubs close at 11pm Monday to Saturday and 10pm on Sunday,

those with late licences stay open until 1am Monday to Friday and to midnight on Sunday.

## EMBASSIES & CONSULATES

### Embassies & Consulates in Ireland

The following countries have diplomatic offices in Dublin:

**Australia** (☎ 01-676 1517; www.australianembassy.ie; 2nd fl, Fitzwilton House, Wilton Tce, Dublin 2)

**Canada** (☎ 01-478 1988; www.canada.ie; 4th fl, 65-68 St Stephen's Green, Dublin 2)

**France** (☎ 01-277 5000; www.ambafrance.ie; 36 Ailesbury Rd, Dublin 4)

**Germany** (☎ 01-269 3011; www.germanembassy.ie; 31 Trimleston Ave, Booterstown, Co Dublin)

**The Netherlands** (☎ 01-269 3444; www.netherlandsembassy.ie; 160 Merrion Rd, Dublin 4)

**New Zealand** (☎ 01-660 4233; 37 Leeson Park, Dublin 6)

**UK** (☎ 01-205 3700; www.britishembassy.ie; 29 Merrion Rd, Ballsbridge, Dublin 4)

**USA** (☎ 01-668 7122; www.dublin.usembassy.gov;

42 Elgin Rd, Ballsbridge, Dublin 4)

In Northern Ireland, nationals of most countries should contact their embassy in London. Consulates in the North:

**Germany** (☎ 028-7034 0403; Hillman's Way, Ballycastle Rd, Coleraine)

**The Netherlands** (☎ 028-9037 0223, fax 028-9037 1104; 14-16 West Bank Rd, Belfast, BT3 9JL)

**New Zealand** (☎ 028-9264 8098; The Ballance House, 118A Lisburn Rd, Glenavy BT29 4NY)

**USA** (☎ 028-9038 6100; www.americanembassy.org.uk; Danesfort House, 223 Stranmillis Rd, Belfast BT9 5GR)

### Irish Embassies & Consulates Abroad

Irish diplomatic missions overseas include the following:

**Australia** (☎ 02-6273 3022; irishemb@cyberone.com.au; 20 Arkana St, Yarralumla, ACT 2600) There is also a consulate in Sydney.

**Canada** (☎ 613-233 6281; embassyofireland@rogers.com; 130 Albert St, Suite 1105, Ottawa, Ontario K1P 5G4)

**France** (☎ 01 44 17 67 00; paris@iveagh.irlgov.ie; 4 rue de Paris, 75116 Paris)

**Germany** (☎ 030-220 720; Friedrichstrasse 200, D-10117 Berlin)

**The Netherlands** (☎ 070-363 09 93; www.irishembassy.nl; Dr Kuyperstraat 9, 2514 BA The Hague)

**New Zealand** (☎ 09-977 2252; consul@ireland.co.nz; 6th fl, 18 Shortland St, 1001 Auckland)

**UK** (☎ 020-7235 2171; 17 Grosvenor Pl, London SW1X 7HR) There are consulates in Edinburgh and Cardiff.

**USA** (☎ 202-462-3939; 2234 Massachusetts Ave NW,

Washington, DC 20008-2849) Boston, Chicago, New York and San Francisco have consulates.

## FESTIVALS & EVENTS

**St Patrick's Day** A cacophony of parades, fireworks and light shows for three days around 17 March in Dublin; Cork, Armagh and Belfast also have parades.

**Dublin International Film Festival** In April; also a highlight.

**Bloomsday** In Dublin, Leopold Bloom's Joycean journey around the city is marked by various events on 16 June.

**Marching month** In Northern Ireland every Orangeman in the country hits the streets on the 'glorious 12th' (in July).

**Galway Arts Festival** (p612) A great regional cultural event in late July

**Kilkenny Arts Festival** In late August.

**All-Ireland hurling** In Dublin in September.

**Football finals** In Dublin in September.

**Galway Oyster Festival** In September

**Belfast Festival** At Queen's in November.

## HOLIDAYS

Public holidays in the Republic and/or Northern Ireland:

**New Year's Day** 1 January

**St Patrick's Day** 17 March

**Easter** (Good Friday to Easter Monday inclusive) March/April

**May Holiday** 1 May

**Christmas Day** 25 December

**St Stephen's Day** (Boxing Day) 26 December

### Northern Ireland

**Spring Bank Holiday** Last Monday in May

**Orangemen's Day** 12 July

**August Bank Holiday** 1st Monday in August

### Republic

**June Holiday** 1st Monday in June

**August Holiday** 1st Monday in August

**October Holiday** Last Monday in October

## INTERNET RESOURCES

**CIE Group** (www.cie.ie) Handy for planning transport in the republic.

**Entertainment Ireland** (www.entertainmentireland.ie) Countrywide listings for clubs, theatres, festivals, cinemas, museums and much more.

**Irish Tourist Board** (www.ireland.ie) The Republic's tourist information site has heaps of practical info. It features a huge accommodation database with photos.

**Northern Ireland Tourism** (www.discovernorthernireland.com) Northern Ireland's official tourism information site is particularly strong on activities and accommodation.

**Translink** (www.translink.co.uk) Handy for planning transport in the North.

## MONEY

The Republic uses the euro, while Northern Ireland uses the British pound sterling (£). Banks offer the best exchange rates; exchange bureaux, open longer, have worse rates and higher commissions. Post offices generally have exchange facilities and open on Saturday morning.

In Northern Ireland several banks issue their own Northern Irish pound notes, which are equivalent to sterling but not readily accepted in Britain. At the time of research ATMs in Northern Ireland were not accepting certain debit/credit cards from the USA.

Fancy hotels and restaurants usually add 10% or 15% service charge onto bills. Simpler places usually don't add service; if you decide to tip, just round up the bill (or add 10% at most). Taxi drivers do not have to be tipped.

## POST

The post offices (An Post) throughout the Republic are generally open from 9am to 5.30pm Monday to Friday, and from 9am to 1pm Saturday; smaller offices close for lunch.

Letters weighing less than 50g cost €0.60 to Britain, and €0.65 to continental Europe and the rest of the world.

Post-office hours and postal rates in Northern Ireland are the same as in Britain.

## TELEPHONE

To call Northern Ireland from the Republic, you do not use ☎ 0044 as for the rest of the UK. Instead, you dial ☎ 048 and then the local number.

Local calls from a public phone in the Republic cost €0.50 for around three minutes (around €0.60 to a mobile). In Northern Ireland a local call costs a minimum of €0.30. Some payphones in the North take euros. Prepaid phonecards work from all payphones.

You can dial direct to your home country operator and then reverse charges (collect) or charge the call to a local phone-credit card. From the Republic, dial the following codes, then the area code and number you want. Your home-country operator will come on the line before the call goes through.

**Australia** ☎ 1800 550061

**France** ☎ 1800 551033

**New Zealand** ☎ 1800 550064

**UK (BT)** ☎ 1800 550044

**USA (AT&T)** ☎ 1800 550000

**USA (MCI)** ☎ 1800 551001

**USA (Sprint)** ☎ 1800 552001

Reverse-charge calls can also be made from the North using the same numbers as from the UK.

## VISAS

Citizens of the EU and most other Western countries don't need a visa to visit either the Republic or Northern Ireland. EU nationals are allowed to stay indefinitely, while other visitors can usually remain for three to six months.

UK nationals born in Britain or Northern Ireland don't need a passport, but should carry some identification.

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