

IRELAND

For amazing holidays....

County Clare

32 Reasons to Visit and Experience
the Home of Great Times



Welcome to County Clare – the Home of Great Times

County Clare is less than 130 km from end to end and yet, within it, you will find all the components of a magical holiday. Our seascapes and landscapes combine to form a natural backdrop to a wide range of exciting experiences, all wrapped up in the warmest of warm welcomes.

Read on and we will highlight just some of the reasons why you should holiday in Clare this year. The welcome awaits.





32 Reasons to Visit Clare

Reasons

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'plan your visit' on page 30

32 Reasons to Experience County Clare

Carved out by nature, County Clare is an amazing place of great beauty, tranquillity, and visual contrast. In this compact area you will find all the ingredients for a magical holiday that can be as active or as relaxing as you choose. In the following pages we have selected 32 of the many reasons why you should plan to holiday in Clare this year. We look forward to welcoming you!



The Warmth of the Welcome

One of the most remarked-upon features by visitors to Clare is the warmth of the welcome. In Clare, first and foremost, you are spending time among friends.



Stress-Free Breaks

County Clare provides you with the opportunity to get away from it all, to chill-out away from crowded places and a more frenetic pace of life. In Clare, if you choose, you can get to hear the sounds of nature and wildlife. Or, you can face into an Atlantic breeze and listen to the sea crashing, the rivers flowing, or lake-waters lapping. Holidays in Clare can be as relaxing, or as active, as you decide.



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Romantic Breaks

Clare is perfect for couples. You have a choice of excellent accommodation options in beautiful settings from top-rated hotels to holiday homes and B&B's by lake, river, or sea. The back-drop of the Atlantic Ocean, cliffs, forests, rivers and lakes is idyllic. Clare also boasts many wonderful restaurants and great entertainment options for romantic nights out.



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Families and Children

Children are welcomed and are well-catered for. Most hotels and serviced accommodations cater to families with younger children. Rented, self-catering cottages and houses are also a great family favourite. Children particularly like the beaches, forests, castles, showcaves, parks, playgrounds, visitor farms, wildlife watching, boat trips and fun activities.

Did you know...



There are over 7,500 known archaeological sites in Clare. The County has a rich cultural heritage, and dramatic and millennia-old monuments dot the landscape from castles and round towers to iron-age forts and ancient tombs. These connect you through thousands of years – back to the beginning of human history in Ireland. When you visit Clare, go history hunting!

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Great Scenic Beauty

Clare is a small compact area, less than 130 km from end to end. Yet, within it, there is great scenic diversity. You can enjoy the freshness of Clare's Wild Atlantic Coastline; the magnificent River Shannon; The Shannon Estuary Way; Loop Head Peninsula; Lough Derg - Ireland's Pleasure Lake; The East Clare Lakelands and the amazing Burren.

The Burren

Fanore

Lough Derg



Mountshannon Harbour

Doonagore Castle



Doughmore Beach, Doonbeg



Inis Cealtra (Holy Island)



06

Cliff Road, Kilkee

Spanish Point

Clare's Dramatic Atlantic Coastline

Clare boasts some of the most stunning coastal scenery you will find anywhere. The Atlantic has carved out giant natural sculpture formations and spectacular cliffs alternating with sweeping sandy beaches, many marking the origins of fine seaside resorts like Kilkee, Lahinch and Spanish Point.

Black Head



The Famous Cliffs of Moher

The world-famous Cliffs of Moher have featured in almost every pictorial guide to Ireland. However, no re-creation can substitute for direct experience of their grandeur and sheer visual force. The Cliffs are Ireland's top scenic visitor attraction. They stretch for 8km as the crow flies and reach 214m at their highest point. O'Brien's Tower (built in 1835), located on the highest cliff, is an exceptional viewing point.



The Spectacular Loop Head Peninsula

Loop Head is spectacular. This slender finger of land points out to sea from the most westerly point of County Clare, on the Wild Atlantic Way. Sitting between the ocean on one side and the Shannon Estuary on the other, it epitomises what the Wild Atlantic Way is about: panoramic cliff views, local seafood, great aquatic activities, and quiet beauty spots where you can pause and reflect on the wonders of this unique area.

Did you know...



There are many areas of special geological significance in the Burren and Cliffs of Moher UNESCO Global Geopark. These Geosites include Flaggy Shore – stretching from the village of New Quay to Finavarra Point, Fanore Beach, Doolin Pier, Doolin Cave, Aillwee Cave, Cliffs of Moher, Lisdoonvarna Spa Wells, Burren National Park, Slieve Carran, Carron Polje & Turlough, and Poul nabrone - the oldest dated megalithic monument in Ireland. A visit to these sites will confirm that there is nowhere in the world quite like the Burren.

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The Burren and Cliffs of Moher UNESCO Global Geopark

The Burren (from "Boíreann" meaning a rocky place) is a remarkable limestone area that is unique in Europe. Its geology, flora, caves, archaeology, history and farming traditions set it apart as a place of great mystery and beauty. Visitors will discover ancient tombs, brooding castles, tranquil lakes, towering cliffs, golden beaches, ice age valleys, rock mountains, fascinating flowers, and wonderful green road walks – and everywhere relics of Clare's ancient civilisation.



Lough Derg and East Clare

East Clare preserves the best of everything in a fresh environment. Dotted with almost 40 lakes, Lough Derg and the Lough Derg Blueway provide water activities of all kinds, including kayaking, paddle boarding, windsurfing, cruising, boat trips, and game and coarse angling. Walking and cycling, horse riding and golf are some of the other activity options. Inis Cealtra (Holy Island) and Saint Cronan's Church are among its historical treasures.

Inis Cealtra (Holy Island)

Killaloe/Ballina

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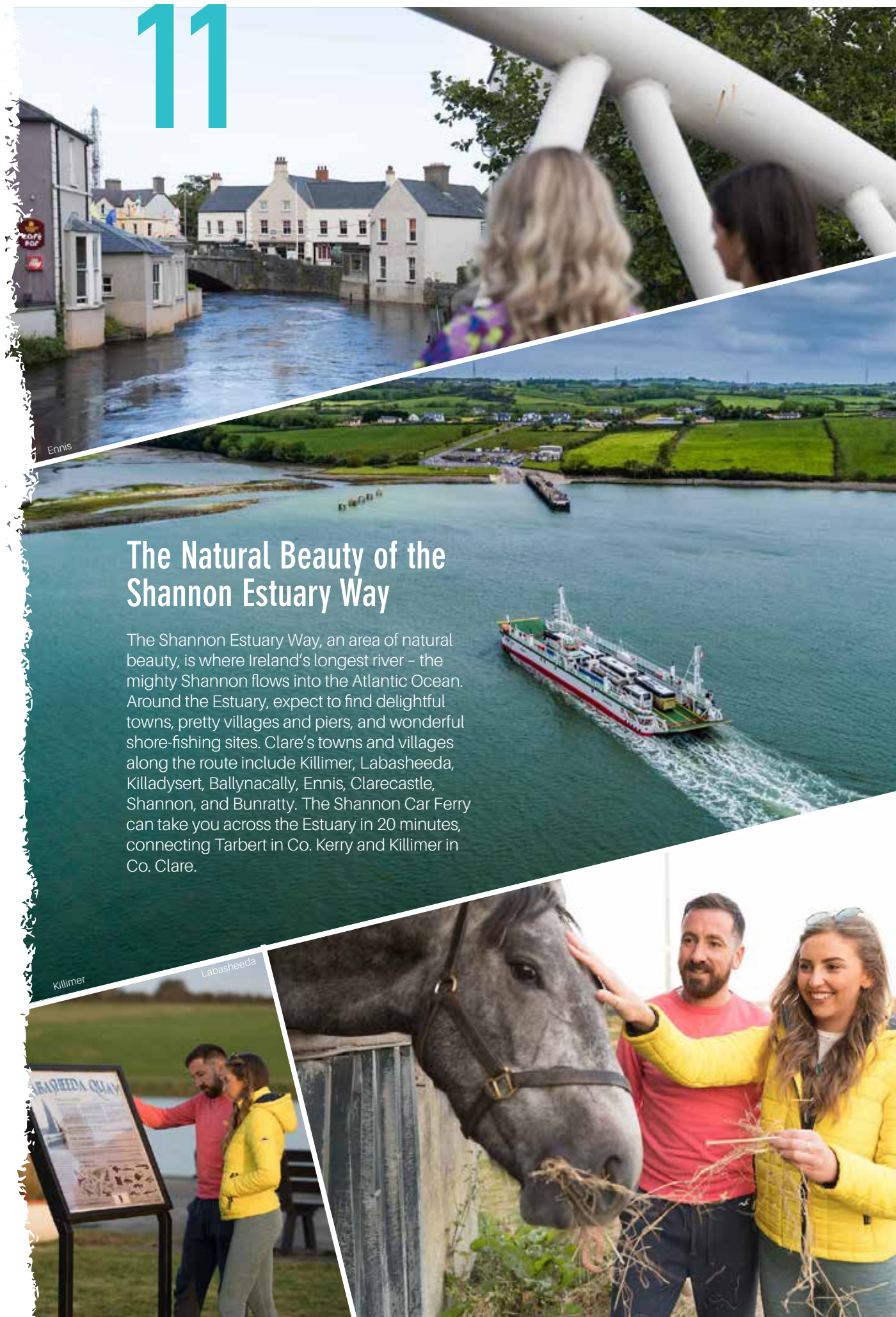
Ennis

The Natural Beauty of the Shannon Estuary Way

The Shannon Estuary Way, an area of natural beauty, is where Ireland's longest river – the mighty Shannon flows into the Atlantic Ocean. Around the Estuary, expect to find delightful towns, pretty villages and piers, and wonderful shore-fishing sites. Clare's towns and villages along the route include Killimer, Labasheeda, Killadysert, Ballynacally, Ennis, Clarecastle, Shannon, and Bunratty. The Shannon Car Ferry can take you across the Estuary in 20 minutes, connecting Tarbert in Co. Kerry and Killimer in Co. Clare.

Killimer

Labasheeda



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Ennis — the County's Capital

The medieval town of Ennis, the Capital of Clare, is one of Ireland's most picturesque towns. Its history, combined with its famous narrow streets, bow-ways, and character buildings, tells you this is somewhere special. Visitors particularly enjoy exploring its history, enjoying great music and entertainment, unique and diverse boutiques and shops, cosy cafes and top-class restaurants. Ennis has an excellent range of accommodation options and is also a great base from which to explore all of Clare's wonderful attractions.





Cosy Towns and Villages of Character

Clare's towns and villages have an inviting cosiness and are full of character. Most can trace their origins back centuries. Some have their roots in Celtic monasteries, while others began and grew close to the water's edge - near lakes, rivers, or along Clare's Atlantic coastline. Ennis, the county capital, was developed around the Franciscan Abbey, which was founded in 1240.

Clare's Flora and Fauna

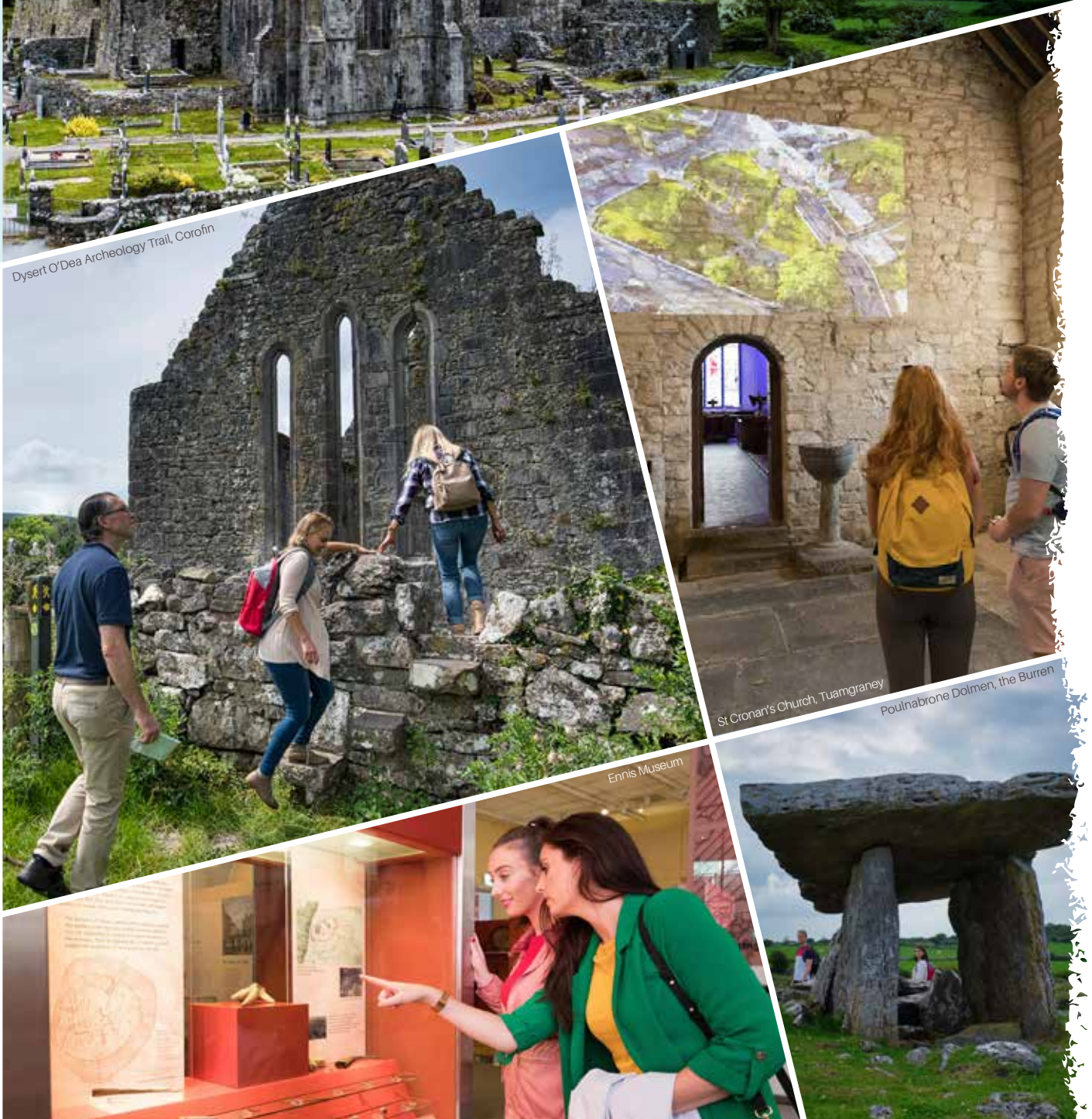
The natural countryside of Clare is the perfect habitat for a wide range of flora and fauna. There is such an abundance of areas that it is difficult to single them out. However, a few worthy of special mention include the Burren - with its unmistakable limestone pavement landscape; the sea cliffs of Clare, including the Cliffs of Moher; the Shannon Estuary; Lough Derg and the mosaics of blanket bogs and wetlands on Slieve Bearnagh and Slieve Aughy in east Clare.

The Burren



Discover our Ancient Past

Clare is steeped in history. Dramatic and millennia-old monuments dot the landscape and signal an historic past that is palpable. Throughout Clare there are hundreds of castles, megalithic tombs, round towers, cathedrals and abbeys - all prized gifts of an epic past. These are easy to discover and visit. Many of Clare's visitor attractions eagerly present and interpret our colourful and turbulent history.



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Top Visitor Attractions

Clare has a diverse range of top visitor attractions including castles, folk parks, showcaves, museums, gardens, heritage centres, pet-farms, boat-trips, chocolate makers, and much more. They make for wonderful days out.



Bunratty Castle and Folk Park

The Flying Alpacas, Kilkee





Vandeleur Gardens, Kilrush



Inis Cealtra (Holy Island)

Ennis Friary



Aillwee Cave, Birds of Prey Centre, Ballyvaughan



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Ballycuggeran

Lahinch

Spanish Point

Nine Blue-Flag Beaches

Clare has nine blue-flag beaches. Each has a unique charm and offers varied activities and experiences at different times of the year. The coastal beaches are at Cappa Pier, Kilrush; Fanore; Lahinch; Spanish Point; White Strand, Doonbeg; and White Strand, Miltown Malbay. Clare also has two inland blue-flag beaches on the shores of Lough Derg at Mountshannon and at Ballycuggeran, near Killaloe. Take them all in!



Kilkee



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Head to the Islands!

On your visit to Clare, take a trip to an island. Scattery Island, where St Senan founded a monastic settlement in the 6th century, is just a 20-minute boat trip from Kilrush's blue-flag marina. Holy Island (Inis Cealtra) is on Shannon's Lough Derg - its history as a monastic settlement dates to the 7th century. The Aran Islands, with its stunningly beautiful cliffs, rugged landscapes and ancient forts can be reached on ferries from Doolin and Liscannor.

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Go Dolphin Watching

Clare has a resident population of bottlenose dolphins living in the Shannon Estuary. Over 140 of these magnificent mammals can be observed, on most days, feeding, travelling or playing in the Estuary. The dolphins can be best viewed from the boats that undertake special tours, and each encounter is different, determined by the dolphins themselves. The boats are licensed and operate to a strict code of standards designed to allow you to appreciate these animals while ensuring they continue to live relatively undisturbed.

Did you know



Ennis, the Capital town of Clare, takes its name from "Inis", meaning an island. It was formed between two streams of the River Fergus and on which the foundations of the Franciscan Abbey were laid in 1240. The town developed around the Abbey to become the hub of the County. Ennis, one of Ireland's most picturesque towns, treasures its history. Its monuments and landmarks, narrow streets, lanes and bow-ways, add to the great character of this popular and vibrant town.



Clare for the Adrenaline Rush

Clare can be enjoyed as leisurely or as actively as you choose. You can enjoy a quiet picnic in a forest, or you take it to your limits. Our mountains, seas, rivers, and lakes provide the 'playground' to take on adrenaline-rushing activities from sailboarding and surfing to horse-riding and cliff-top and mountain walks and cycles. Take a deep breath - you're in Clare!



Take to the Water!

Experience stimulating water activities, centred on the Atlantic Ocean, The River Shannon and Lough Derg. Enjoy surfing, kayaking, paddleboarding, angling, or diving. Chill-out with the family on any of Clare's nine Blue Flag beaches. Or, enjoy a cruise, dolphin-watching, or a boat trip to our islands.

Did you know...



From the year 1002 to 1014, **Brian Ború, Ireland's great High King** and a giant of Irish history, ruled over Ireland from his birthplace at Killaloe, on the Banks of the River Shannon, in County Clare. His spirit still lives on. As author Morgan Llywelyn wrote, *"The rolling hills of East Clare are the hills Brian knew as a boy, where he first polished his battle skills against the Vikings. One can almost catch a glimpse of a tall young man striding boldly forward... heading for glory."*

Visit East Clare and you can follow in his footsteps!

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An Angling Paradise

Some of the best sea-angling locations in Ireland are off the Clare coast and in the Shannon Estuary. Your fishing powers will be truly tested along this beautiful coastline. Well-equipped boats, with experienced skippers, are available. In our rivers and lakes, anglers can expect to catch pike, bream, roach, rudd, perch, and dace.

Horse Riding

Clare is horse riding country, and throughout the county you'll find horse riding centres offering a wide range of indoor and outdoor facilities, catering for every rider, whether novice or experienced and regardless of age. Holiday options include trail riding using a variety of accommodation, based trails using fixed accommodation, extended stays, short stays, daily treks, and horse riding lessons. On trails, your horse can carry you through scenic Clare with a wide variety of landscapes in view from forest, river and lake to the coast, overlooking the Atlantic Ocean.



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East Clare



Shannon

Links, Coastal and Parkland Golf

Thanks to nature and investment, Clare has eleven top-quality golf courses from world-rated championship links to mature parkland courses. Each course offers a great challenge and experience. The courses are at:

Lahinch (two 18-hole links);

Doonbeg (18-hole links);

Spanish Point (9-hole links);

Kilkee (18-hole coastal);

Kilrush (18-hole parkland);

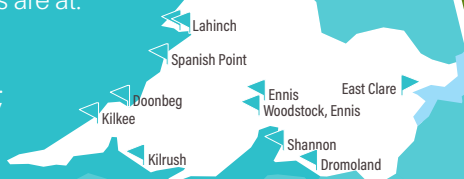
Shannon (18-hole parkland);

Dromoland (18-hole parkland);

Woodstock, Ennis (18-hole parkland);

Ennis (18-hole parkland);

and **East Clare** (18-hole parkland).



Ennis

Woodstock Ennis



Lahinch



Loop Head

Walk our Ways... and our Loops

Walking is the best way to fully absorb the beauty of Clare. A network of quiet country roads, forest paths, mountain and coastal trails traverse the county. For the serious walker, there are many well-organised routes, including national trails that are well sign-posted. There are also great loop walks suited to walkers of different levels of fitness. Our cliff-top, mountain-top, and hill-top walks are spectacular.

Ennis Town Walks

Flagmount Mass Walk

The Burren





Get on yer Bikes!

International, national and regional cycle routes traverse Clare, and the variety of scenery is diverse. Lowlands include rural villages and towns, castles, piers and harbours, and historical sites. Highlands offer spectacular scenery, including the magical Wild Atlantic Way coastline. Worthy of special mention is the European EuroVelo cycle route – which takes in Clare's amazing coastline. As you cycle through Clare, you'll discover excellent stop-off spots to rest or enjoy refreshments. You can rent traditional bikes or electric bikes – ideal for assisted cycling on steep ascents.

Great Shopping

Towns and villages throughout Clare have stores featuring the best of Irish products, including stylish, contemporary fashions. Ennis merits special mention, and is often referred to as the 'boutique capital of Ireland'. Throughout the county, you can also discover crafted products made on-site - from cheese and chocolates to pottery, woven fabrics, and perfumes.





Festivals and Events

There are hundreds of festival and sporting events throughout the year ranging from Irish music and match-making festivals to summer schools and diverse sporting challenges. Take in a club or inter-county Gaelic football or hurling match to understand how passionate we are about sports!



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Entertainment

Clare is brimful of entertainment for all ages and ranges from traditional Irish music through to medieval banquets, concerts, and theatre. Clare is particularly renowned for traditional music, song and dance. Throughout the year it can be experienced in our pubs, music venues, community centres and on our streets, particularly during festivals.

Did you know...



County Clare is considered by most to be the traditional Irish music capital of world. Irish Music is the heartbeat of Clare, with traditional music, song and dance enlivening life in the county through festivals and céilis, informal get-togethers and great 'sessions'. Musicians and singers from all corners of the world visit Clare to swap tunes, and to establish harmony in the common bond of music.

When you holiday in Clare, check out where you can get to hear the best of Irish Music.

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Eats and Treats

The Atlantic Ocean, our rivers, lakes and green pasturelands provide Clare with a rich harvest of fine food ingredients. These ingredients are creatively used, and great food is available in casual and formal dining establishments from hotels and restaurants, to cafés and pubs.





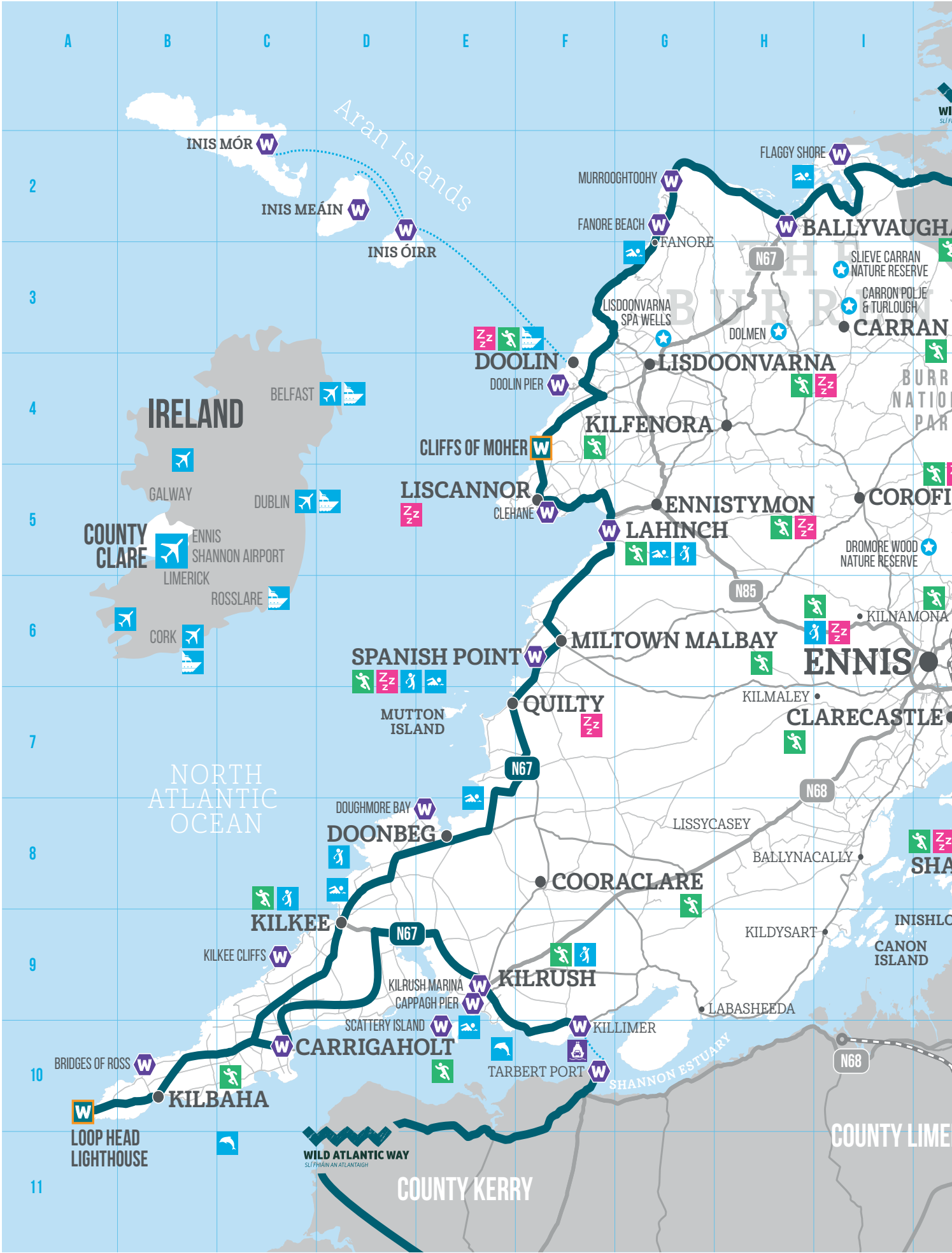
Accommodation to Suit All

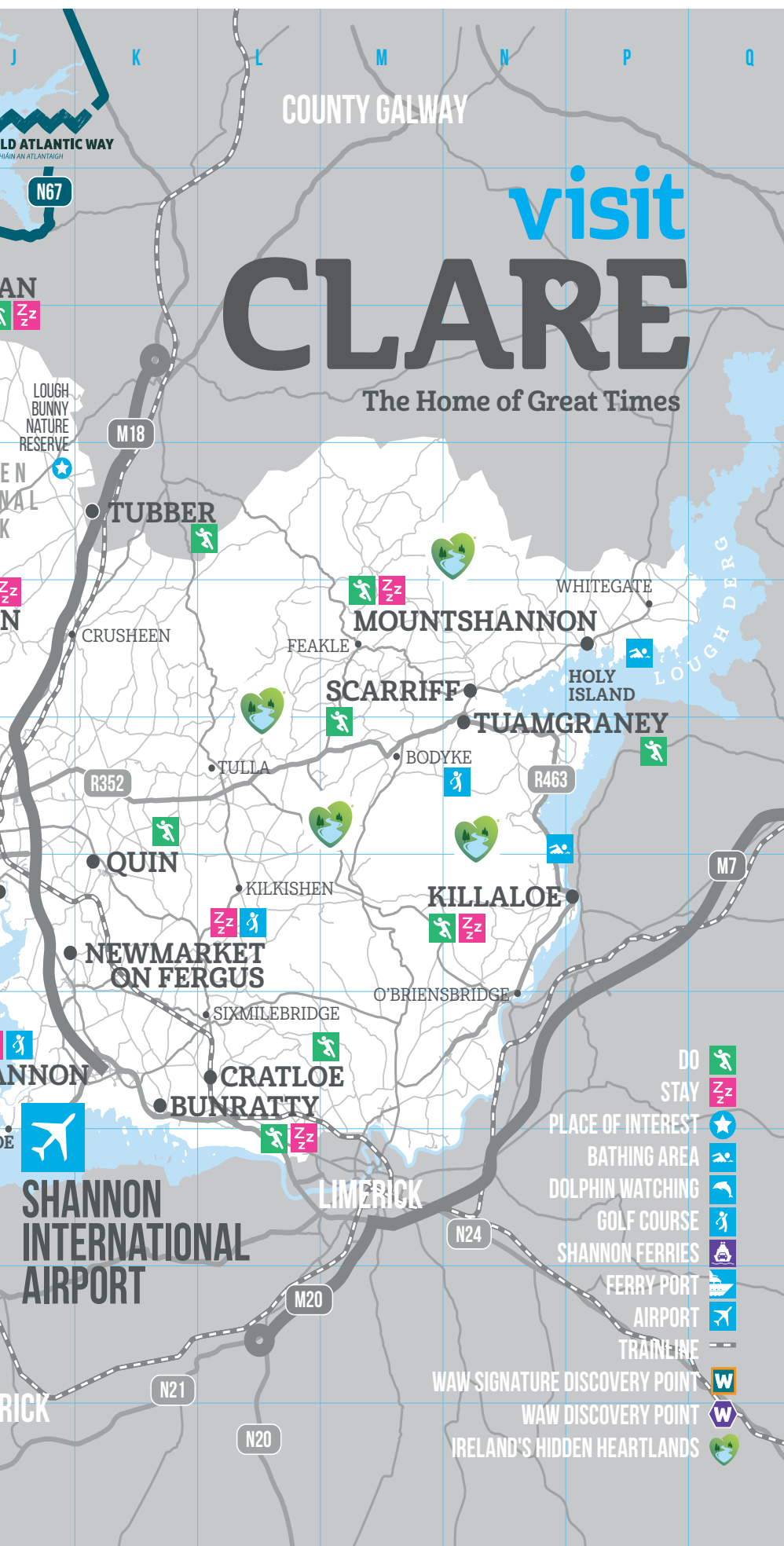
Accommodation is available to suit all tastes and budgets, ranging from luxury castles and top quality hotels and guesthouses to farmhouses, town and country homes, caravan and camping, glamping, self-catering holiday homes, and hostels.

Clare Always Surprises

Clare is full of surprises and special experiences from health holidays and seaweed baths, to virtual flying lessons, painting and cookery courses. You can also 'learn to' do almost any activity in Clare from surfing and sailing to sub-aqua diving and horse-riding. Come and visit us for a short break or a longer stay to discover more. Clare is a breath of fresh air, in every sense. Check out VisitClare.ie for all your options.







County Clare - Take it ALL in!

ENNIS



NORTH CLARE



SOUTH CLARE



EAST CLARE



WEST CLARE



PLAN YOUR VISIT TO CLARE



For all the reasons featured in this guide, County Clare is one of Ireland's top visitor destinations. It's also easy to reach from any part of Ireland.

Arriving by air or sea

By air, the easiest way to reach County Clare is via Shannon International Airport, which is located in the County and is close to the mid-point of Ireland's Wild Atlantic Way. There are direct flights to Shannon from the U.K., Europe, and North America and most car rental companies are based there. See www.ShannonAirport.ie

If you plan to arrive in Ireland by sea or by air through gateways other than Shannon, you can be in Clare within two to four hours by car, bus, or rail. See selected distances and estimated travel times by car on the grid below.

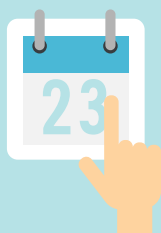
To Ennis, from	Kms	Est. Drive Time
Dublin	244	2 hrs 35 mins
Belfast	407	4 hrs
Cork	139	1 hr 50 mins
Galway	66	58 mins
Limerick	42	36 mins
Shannon	26	22 mins
Rosslare	236	3 hrs 10 mins

By road or rail

County Clare is easily reached by road or rail from any part of Ireland. Drive time from Dublin City to Ennis, the capital town of Clare, is less than 2.5 hours, or from Dublin to the centre of Clare's Wild Atlantic Way coastline takes 3 hours. Cork City to Ennis is less than a two-hour drive. Galway City to Ennis takes less than 60 minutes, and Limerick City to Ennis is 36 minutes. The County is well serviced by a network of bus routes, and Ennis is on the National train grid.

Travel distances in Clare

The County is less than 130 km (80 miles) from end-to-end. Everything can be quickly reached. Driving from Ennis, the County Capital, to Clare's Wild Atlantic Way coastline takes less than 30 minutes. Driving from Lough Derg, the River Shannon's largest lake, to the coast takes approximately 70 minutes. See map on page 28.



The best time to visit Clare?

There is never a wrong time to visit County Clare. The Summer months (June/July/August) are considered high season for visitors. The weather is warmer, the evenings are brighter, and there are more activity options. Autumn and Spring are a little quieter. The weather is mild, and nature presents the County in all its beautiful colours. Most visitor attractions are open, and there are plenty of activities to experience. Winters are cooler, and this is the 'best-value' season for savvy travellers! You also can get to see nature at its most impressive. Walk a beach or watch the waves crash against Clare's Wild Atlantic Way cliffs and coast. Exhilarating! Enjoy cosy restaurants and warm, luxury accommodation.



What's the weather like?

Ireland has a temperate climate with warm summers and mild winters. Our weather can change from warm to cold or dry to wet within any given day. Therefore, pack for all weather, and bring layered clothing.



Don't rush Ireland; spend time in Clare

Just because Ireland is a relatively small island doesn't mean you can "do Ireland" in a hurry. If you want to enjoy the magic of Clare, you should stay a while and spend some time exploring the County.



Enjoy a Workcation in Clare

Clare is one of the best places in Europe to enjoy a workcation. The County has a network of digital hubs that visitors can pre-book as needed. You simply bring and plug in your mobile device at your workstation and start working using high-speed broadband.

See www.DigiClare.ie



CHECK OUT OUR WEBSITE

If you want to find out all there is to do, see and enjoy in County Clare and places to stay, check out our website at www.VisitClare.ie



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UNMISSABLE!

IRELAND'S COUNTY CLARE is AMAZING

Refresh your Spirits in a Special Part of Ireland

Pause. Unwind. Refresh.

Ireland's County Clare offers all the ingredients for a special holiday. Towering cliffs and wonderful beaches along the rugged Wild Atlantic Way coastline. The enigmatic rockscapes of the Burren National Park. The mighty River Shannon and Lough Derg in our hidden heartlands. These form a natural backdrop to a wide range of exciting activity, cultural, and heritage experiences a universe away from frenetic and crowded places. It's a breath of fresh air!



For great experiences,
check out **VisitClare.ie**



SCAN ME