

BLUE SAIL ▶

VISITORS PLACES DESTINATIONS

CORK CITY AND HARBOUR STORY

A REPORT FOR FÁILTE IRELAND

OCTOBER 2012

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1 THE THINKING BEHIND THE IDEA OF A SHARED STORY

The most successful places have a simple Shared Story to tell.

It's a commonly agreed way of describing the place, that everyone uses when they're planning how to invest in improvements or new experiences for visitors, and when they're talking to potential visitors.

It's a very short and simple story that makes it clear what is special and different about the place. It should avoid tourism and marketing cliches and be in straightforward language. It mustn't overpromise. It must go with the grain of the place, and be authentic and true.

The Shared Story tries **to capture and distill the essence of the place** by focusing on that place's distinctive qualities: **it *isn't* a comprehensive list** of everything that's on offer.

If everyone uses the same broad ideas to develop the tourism product, and then 'sings from the same song sheet', the image of Cork City and Harbour will be much stronger and more positive. And that will mean more impact, and more visitors.

We're not suggesting that everyone's marketing has to be the same – far from it. Some people may want to use the Shared Story verbatim in their marketing. Others will draw on it for themes, ideas and inspiration.

We hope everyone will use components from it to bring out what is special and different about Cork City and Harbour – both in what they offer to visitors, and in their marketing. This will help to build a stronger, clearer picture in a very competitive marketplace.

3 CORK CITY & HARBOUR STORY

[See next page for annotated version.](#)

Ireland's southernmost city – capital of the beautiful south west – is high on the Lonely Planet's list of favourite cities in the world.

It's a spirited, independent place. Cosmopolitan and creative too. And that's hardly surprising. For Cork is an ancient maritime port that's spent centuries trading with – and being influenced by – the wider world. And it's a place of learning, with one of Ireland's oldest universities at its heart.

Cork's got the depth you'd expect from a European Capital of Culture – the galleries, museums and live performances, plus a packed events calendar, with more than 20 major festivals each year. And there's a lively city buzz ... But there's also a no-nonsense warmth and an unpressured pace that makes you feel time is on your side here.

Nature has a hand in that. Cork was founded 14 centuries ago, on islands in an estuary, where the River Lee joins the world's second-largest natural harbour. Waterways circle the city-centre, crossed by 22 bridges. Hilly neighbourhoods climb the river banks, stacked with colourful houses – and the University's historic campus seamlessly connects to the city centre ...

Between the grand Georgian parades and medieval alleyways of the central island is the centrepiece 18th century English Market. It's loud, lively, and packed with flavour: Cork in a nutshell ... The star of this indoor casbah – and of Cork's great eating-out scene – is the local produce from this fertile region's fields and seas ...

To the south the deep bowl of Cork Harbour, with its sailing races and regattas, is circled by some of Ireland's iconic places. At the harbour's edge is Cork's port of Cobh, departure point for millions of emigrants, and the last calling point of the Titanic ... It's a place with a poignant history beneath its cheerful seaside feel ...

East of the Harbour is Jameson's distillery at Midleton: a pure taste of Ireland for millions around the world. To the North West lies Blarney and its castle, legendary home of Irish eloquence ...

Just south again, on the Atlantic coast, is picture-perfect, smart Kinsale with its yachts, its pretty quayside, its narrow 18th century streets, its festivals and its gourmet cuisine.

Grounded, witty and irreverent, "The People's Republic of Cork" likes to set itself apart from the rest of the country ... Yet for all that, it's an intensely *Irish* place to visit.

THE SHARED STORY + ANNOTATIONS

Ireland's **southernmost** city – **capital** of the **beautiful south west** – is high on the **Lonely Planet's** list of favourite cities in the world.

It's a **spirited, independent** place. **Cosmopolitan** and **creative** too. And that's hardly surprising. For Cork is an **ancient maritime port** that's spent centuries trading with – and being influenced by – the wider world. And it's a place of learning, with one of Ireland's oldest universities at its heart.

Cork's got the **depth** you'd expect from a **European Capital of Culture** – the galleries, museums and live performances, plus a packed events calendar, with **more than 20 major festivals** each year. And there's a **lively city buzz**. But there's also a **no-nonsense warmth** and an **unpressured pace** that makes you feel **time is on your side** here.

Nature has a hand in that. Cork was founded **14 centuries ago**, on **islands** in an estuary, where the River Lee joins the **world's second-largest natural harbour**. Waterways circle the city-centre, crossed by **22 bridges**. Hilly neighbourhoods climb the river banks, stacked with colourful houses – and the University's historic campus seamlessly connects to the city centre.

Between the grand **Georgian** parades and **medieval** alleyways of the central island is the centrepiece **18th century English Market**. It's loud, lively, and packed with flavour: Cork in a nutshell. The star of this **indoor casbah** – and of **Cork's great eating-out scene** – is the **local produce** from this fertile region's fields and seas.

To the south, the **deep bowl** of Cork Harbour, with its sailing races and regattas, is **circled** by some **Ireland's iconic places**. At the harbour's edge Cork's port of Cobh, departure point for millions of emigrants, and the last calling point of the **Titanic**, is a place with a poignant history beneath its **cheerful seaside** feel.

East of the Harbour is **Jameson's** distillery at Midleton: a pure taste of Ireland for millions around the world. To the North West lies **Blarney** and its castle, legendary home of Irish eloquence ...

Just south again, on the **Atlantic** coast, is **picture-perfect, smart** Kinsale with its yachts, its **pretty** quayside, its narrow **18th century** streets, its festivals and its **gourmet** cuisine.

Grounded, witty and irreverent, "**The People's Republic of Cork**" likes to set itself **apart from the rest** of the country. Yet for all that, it's an **intensely Irish** place to visit.

Para 1 Immediately locates Cork geographically, with all the positive connotations of the **south**, and in the **beautiful south west**, to connect it with the popular SW Ireland tourism offer, and gives it the status of **capital**. This opening para puts the **Lonely Planet's** accolade upfront: an important 3rd party endorsement for international visitors.

Para 2 Introduces the all-important Cork **spirit** and **independent** nature right at the beginning of the story. We explain its origins, linking it to the powerful maritime trading history. This paragraph contains attractive attributes for a city visitor – the **cosmopolitan** nature, long history, **creativity**, the international vibe, the students at the heart of the city.

Paras 3-5 The **Capital of Culture** endorsement gives the city European cultural status, and ticks boxes for people looking for a city break, as a city of this status will have **the depth you'd expect**, including **more than 20 major festivals**.

We contrast the **lively city buzz** with the **no-nonsense warmth** – a reminder that this is a working city with a down-to-earth community. The idea of an **unpressured pace** and **time on your side** is so appealing to people on a leisure break.

This section reassures that this is a place to visit with plenty to do and explore. It links city and beyond – the idea that **nature** plays a strong part in the city's feel and unhurried pace (and this links to the concepts in the West Cork Story too).

It's clear this is a place with layers of history – founded **14 centuries ago**, **Georgian**, **medieval**, **18th century**. It also paints a picture of the distinct topography of the place – the **waterways** and hills. The closeness and beauty of the UCC grounds brings nature into the city.

There are specific claims that set Cork apart: the **bridges** and **islands**, the **world's second-largest natural harbour**, the **English Market** (with references to both the loud, lively Cork voices and the local produce – linking it to the surrounding fertile region, and back to eating-out too). **Indoor casbah** suggests the excitement, aroma and colour of an exotic market – it captures the vibrancy and recalls the city's international trading past.

Paras 6-8 This section starts with the extraordinary shape of the Harbour – the **deep bowl** is **circled**. It moves the reader outwards, and flags up some **iconic** 'brands' which will be known in international markets: **Titanic**, **Blarney**, **Jameson's**. It associates these special places with the city – all only just outside, so part of a visit to the city, in effect. There's a deliberate contrast between the **cheerful seaside** feel of Cobh, the **smart, picture-perfect, pretty** and **gourmet** Kinsale and the non-nonsense city. It's important to mention the **Atlantic** here – to locate the city again, and to tie it to the positive Wild Atlantic imagery.

Para 9 Returns to the idea of the authentic, independent, chippy Corconians. **The People's Republic of Cork** typifies the strong sense of self and independent thinking. The notion that this is a place **apart from the rest of Ireland**, with its own distinct character, is intriguing for the visitor – makes you feel you will only experience this in this particular city. Yet it reassures that you will have a very **Irish** experience