

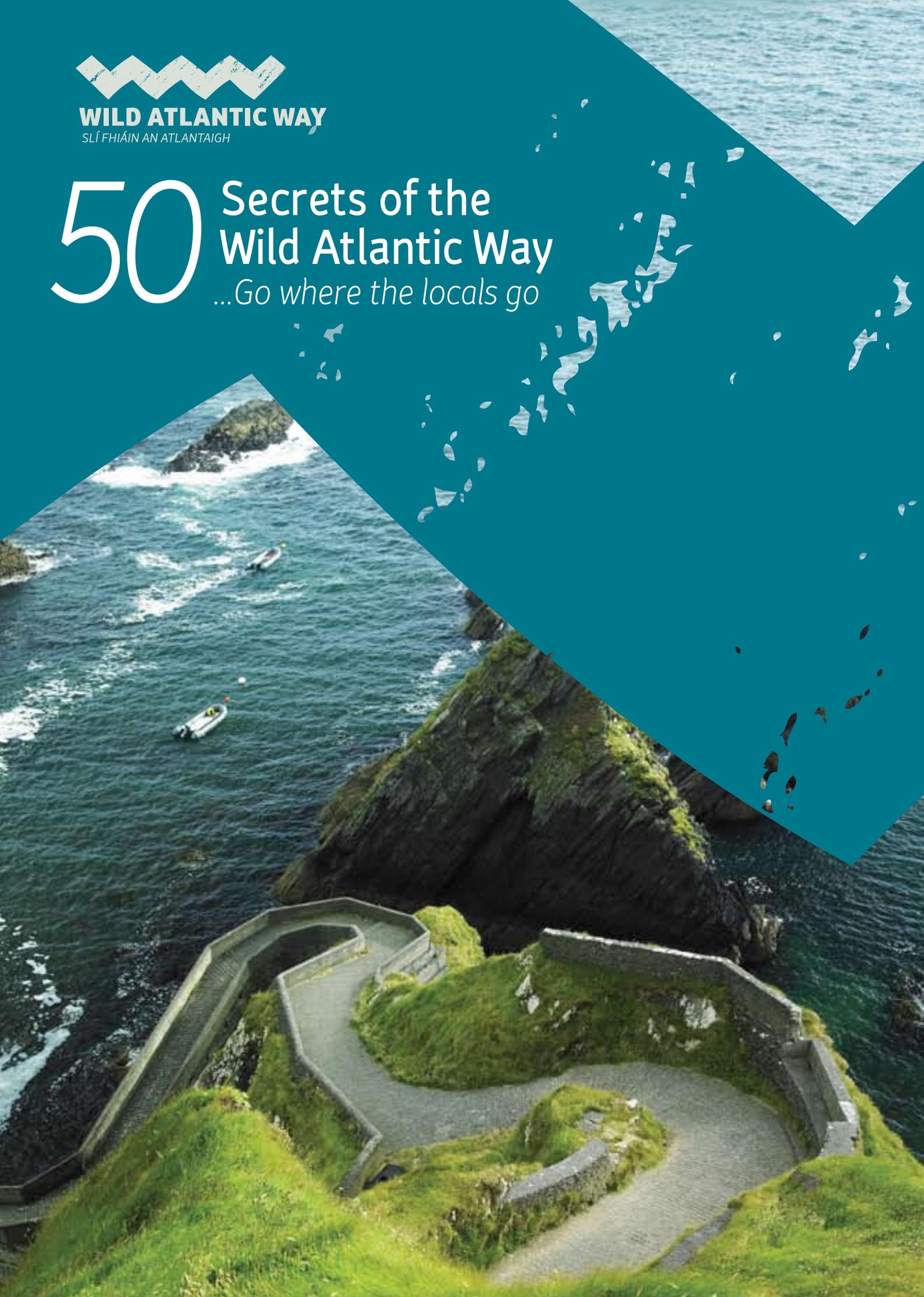


WILD ATLANTIC WAY

SLÍ FHIÁIN AN ATLANTAIGH

50 Secrets of the Wild Atlantic Way

...Go where the locals go





CONTENTS

1	Introduction	1
2	Map of the Wild Atlantic Way Route and Discovery Points	3
3	Signature Experiences	4
4	North West Map	15
5	North West Secrets	16
6	West Map	23
7	West Secrets	24
8	Midwest Map	27
9	Midwest Secrets	28
10	South West Map	31
11	South West Secrets	32
12	Contact Information	(Back Cover)



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INTRODUCTION

Have you ever dreamed of embarking on a journey of discovery, to hidden places and secret worlds where all kinds of enchantments lie waiting for you? Well now you can, along the wildest, most captivating, coastal driving route in the world – Ireland’s Wild Atlantic Way! Tucked away in little villages and towns that snuggle into the coastline are delightful cafes and restaurants, where you can indulge in your passion for good food and great wine. Maybe you will hear a few words of Irish spoken along the way in Ireland’s Gaeltacht (Irish speaking regions) or reignite your passion for life while surfing on magnificent waves off the coast of Donegal and Sligo. Or you might take time to reflect on times past with a visit to the ruins of a sixth century monastic settlement on the stunning Skellig Michael in Kerry. You may roam through the romantic beauty of scenic Ards Forest Park in Donegal. Or you might watch the weather change from the historic Clare Island Lighthouse in Mayo. Wherever you go along the Wild Atlantic Way, you will encounter moments of magic, moments to treasure and experiences that you will want to return to again and again.

If you’re looking for something that little bit special, take in one of our ‘Signature Experiences’ at some of the breath-taking Discovery Points along the Way. Here, at these points of outstanding scenic beauty, are experiences that every visitor will savour – from celebrating the summer solstice at Féile Grianán Áiligh in Donegal to trekking across the sands on a Connemara Pony in Galway to experiencing the lush vegetation and sub-tropical shrubs of Garinish Island in Cork. This Manual provides some examples of the many treasures hidden along the Wild Atlantic Way that lie off the beaten track and are therefore generally more suited to independent travellers. This breath –taking coastal route will intrigue and remain in your heart and mind long after you have returned home to the everyday world.

WHEREVER YOU GO ALONG THE WILD ATLANTIC WAY, YOU WILL ENCOUNTER MOMENTS OF MAGIC, MOMENTS TO TREASURE AND EXPERIENCES THAT YOU WILL WANT TO RETURN TO AGAIN AND AGAIN.



VIEW FROM MOLLS GAP, KERRY

WILD ATLANTIC WAY SIGNATURE EXPERIENCES

Signature Discovery Point 1 – Malin Head

CIRCLE IRELAND'S FAR NORTH AT MALIN HEAD

There's drama out at Malin Head – Cionn Mhálanna. The tip of the Inishowen Peninsula is mainland Ireland's farthest northerly point. The wild Atlantic has carved deep crevices into the rugged headland, like Hell's Hole – a dramatic long, deep and narrow chasm where the swells roar and churn. Birds flock here, blown in on the Atlantic winds: regular visitors from Iceland, Greenland and North America; and rarer exotic creatures from further afield. Mythical Queen Banba has given her name to the peninsula's tip – Banba's Crown. It's here that guides from Cycle Inishowen will meet you with an Irish-made bike, for a 45-minute ride to stretch your legs in the fresh sea air, and learn about the area's wildlife, geology and history.

Or visit...

AN GRIANAN AILIGH WONDER TO BEHOLD

An Grianán Ailigh, is a stone ringfort mapped by Ptolomey in his second-century AD map of the world. The ancient site – said to date back nearly 4,000 years – was the base of northern Irish chieftains and known as the Palace of the Northern Princes. It stands 245 metres (800 ft) with spectacular views across heather-covered hills to the vast estuaries that define Ireland's most northerly peninsula – the ruggedly beautiful Inishowen – and across to the walled city of Derry. The fort is used once a year for the The Féile Grianán Áiligh Chieftains Feast which is an ancient-style banquet within the walls of An Grianán Áiligh. - well worth a visit. Or you may prefer to visit at a quieter time, to walk inside the tranquil and deserted hillfort's walls, with only the wind for company.

Signature Discovery Point 2 – Fanad Head

TAKE IN ONE OF THE MOST BEAUTIFUL BEACHES IN THE WORLD

From Portsalon continue along the coastal road up as far as Fanad Head and the Fanad lighthouse. Fanad Lighthouse is the second most Northerly lighthouse in the republic of Ireland and locals say that Fanad Head lighthouse is slightly higher than the Eiffel Tower. A 20 minute Ferry crossing will take you from Rathmullan to Inishowen cuts down the road journey and gives the driver the chance to sit, relax and soak in the views.

A route you will remember on the Wild Atlantic Way is the Knockalla Coast Road with its panoramic views across the estuary looking towards the Inishowen Peninsula and the Atlantic Ocean. As the road ascends you are greeted at the top by one of the most splendid views in Ireland. Looking down on Portsalon and Ballymastocker Bay it is no surprise that this beach was voted 2nd most beautiful beach in the world a few years ago. A haven for water sport enthusiasts, golfers and walkers alike it offers it all.

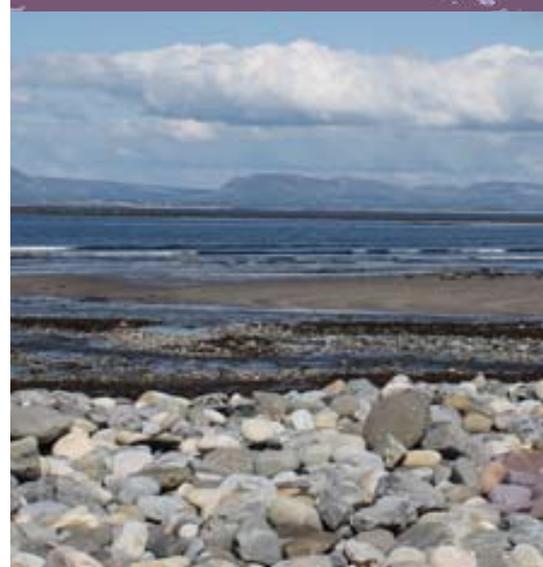
And for some relaxation ...

MEET AN ARTIST KING

On the Donegal Gaeltacht outpost of Tory Island – a remote & rugged crag 12km (7.5 miles) offshore in the wild Atlantic – traditional Irish culture is the way of life and these independent people have elected their own King since the 6th century. Today's



TORY ISLAND IS KNOWN FOR ITS
STRONG FOLKLORE AND MUSICAL
TRADITIONS, AND FOR ITS OWN
SCHOOL OF NATIVE ART –
ESTABLISHED IN THE 1950S.





DUN BRISTE AT DOWNPATRICK HEAD, MAYO



King of Tory is painter Patsaí Dan Mac Ruaidhrí, whose royal duties include meeting the ferries on the quayside to welcome visitors to the island. Tory Island is known for its strong folklore and musical traditions, and for its own school of native art – established in the 1950s. It's still home to many painters today, and their work is shown at the island's Gallery, where you'll probably meet some of them too. Who knows, you may even be inspired to paint!

Signature Discovery Point 3 – Sliabh Liag

SLIABH LIAG – THE HIGHEST ACCESSIBLE SEA CLIFFS IN EUROPE

Sliabh Liag are Ireland's highest accessible sea cliffs and the huge panoramas presented to you from these cliffs can look different in every segment. Bright azure skies appear next to blue grey shafts of rain which bolt sea and sky together. Still further across this ever changing canvas, beams of light, diffused by wisps of thin cloud, warm the cool grey water into pools of liquid gold.

Donegal Bay majestically swoops towards you, while to the right; there is a lake at eye level as you walk upwards to see the jagged tops of Sliabh Liag cutting the scudding clouds. For the experienced walker One Man's pass will take you to the summit of Sliabh Liag for the leisure visitor the viewing platform will be all you need. Continue on to Glencolumbkille and visit the folk village where they have managed to freeze-frame traditional folk life for posterity. Trabane Strand is a spectacular hidden gem of a beach at Malin Beg and 7km south of Glencolumbkille. The beach is accessible only from the sea or on foot via a series of steps, your challenge here is to count the steps down to the beach... be assured you will take get the same number, its one of life's little mysteries.

and why not ...

WATCH THEM WEAVE MAGIC INTO DONEGAL TWEED

They've been making handwoven tweed in Donegal for centuries. Nature provides the raw materials: wool from the sheep that thrive in the hills and bogs, and dyes from the hedgerows and fields ... blackberries, fuchsia, gorse and moss. Visit Studio Donegal at Kilcar – a business committed to preserving and promoting the original skills passed down from generation to generation – watch the handweavers and spinners at work ... and take a piece of Ireland away with you, inspired by the rugged landscape of Donegal.



AUGHRIS HEAD, SLIGO

Signature Discovery Point 4 – Mullaghmore Head

SEE GIANT SWELLS OFF MULLAGHMORE HEAD

Huge Atlantic rollers crash onto surfing strands all the way up Ireland's wild western seaboard. But it's off the coast of Sligo that they've discovered 'Prowlers' – a wave like no other with swells said to be up to 100ft. That's why Sligo's Mullaghmore Head hosted Ireland's first Big Wave contest in 2011, drawing surfers from across the globe. Tow-in surfing – involving jetskis as well as surfers – is a highly skilled sport and exciting to watch from the headland. But it's best in the winter months, so you'll want to wrap up warm and then hurry back to that seat by a turf fire in a cosy Sligo pub.

WILD ATLANTIC WAY: SIGNATURE EXPERIENCES *(continued)*

And when you're ready to give it a go yourself, there are several surf schools in the nearby seaside town of Bundoran, which hosts Ireland's International Surfing Festival in June.

And for some relaxation ...

TAKE A TRADITIONAL SEAWEED BATH

Take a deep, oily soak, floating in a bath of hot Atlantic-seawater and hand-harvested, freshly gathered seaweed, followed by a bracing walk on a beautiful beach at the ocean's edge. This traditional organic cure for stresses and strains is having a resurgence along the Sligo coast as people rediscover natural remedies and are drawn by the simpler lifestyle of Ireland's unspoilt western seaboard. The therapeutic properties of wild seaweed – put down to the high concentrations of iodine in the seaweed fronds – have long been recognised in Ireland. And there's a remarkable variety of seaweed growing in the gloriously unspoilt Atlantic waters off the west coast. At the beginning of the 20th century there were an estimated 300 seaweed bath houses in Ireland and nine in the small town of Strandhill alone. Traditional seaweed baths are available at award-winning Voya Seaweed Baths at Strandhill, and Edwardian Kilcullen's Seaweed Baths at Enniscrone.

Signature Discovery Point 5 – Downpatrick Head

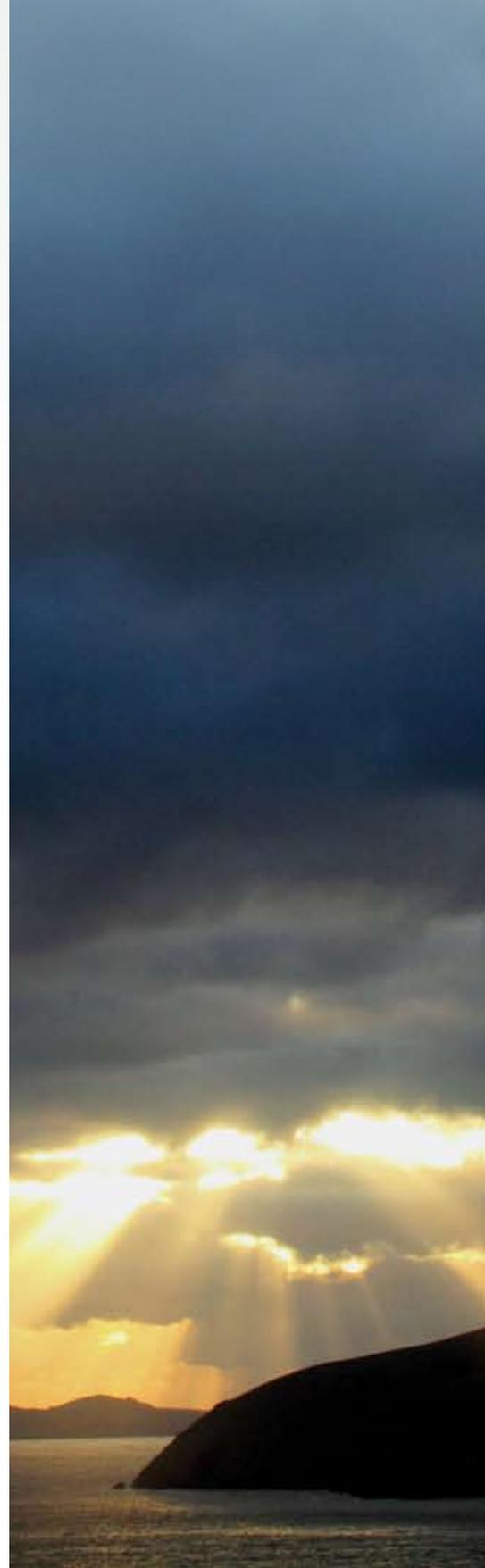
FORAGE FOR WILD FOOD ALONG THE KILLALA SHORELINE

Spend an afternoon with Denis Quinn of Wild Atlantic Cultural Tours – foraging for food out along the shoreline under the huge skies of north Mayo. As the wild Atlantic booms and seabirds swirl and swoop, Denis will guide you expertly across Killala Bay, crossing mudflats, scrambling over rocks, gathering edible seaweeds, rooting around in rockpools and spooning cockles, mussels, clams and winkles from the vast expanse of soft sand uncovered at low tide. Later he'll help you dry your seaweed, and prepare a feast from what you've found. Cockle soup for anyone?

Signature Discovery Point 6 – Keem Strand

WANDER THROUGH A DESERTED VILLAGE ON IRELAND'S LARGEST ISLAND

Cross the road bridge to Ireland's largest island – Achill Island – with its tall seacliffs, bare mountains and sweeping sandy beaches, and follow the Atlantic Drive before turning north towards the Golden Strand. Sheltering under Slievemore Mountain, you can wander through a strange unnamed linear settlement, known simply as the Deserted Village. No-one knows exactly why it was finally abandoned in the early 20th century, but they do know it was one of the last places in Europe to be used as a booley – a place where people lived in summer to graze cattle on the mountainside. You can book a guided tour with expert archaeologists from the Achill Archaeological Field School who work on a dig here every summer. Or simply walk alone from cottage to cottage, imagining life here through the centuries in this remote and poignant spot.





Signature Discovery Point 7– Killary Harbour

TREK ACROSS SANDS ON A CONNEMARA PONY

The sure-footed Connemara pony – the only horse breed native to Ireland – is the perfect form of transport across the region’s blanket bogs and dazzling beaches. At low tide, Connemara ponies (with their riders) wade or swim across the shallow channel to peaceful islands like Finish, Mweenish and Omey – part of the archipelago off the coast of Connemara. Legend has it that the ponies are descended from Arab stallions that swam ashore when the Spanish Armada sank off the Connemara coast in the 16th century.

Signature Discovery Point 8 – Derrigimalagh

LISTEN TO THE ECHOES OF HISTORY IN A SEA-SWEPT BLANKET BOG

You can hire a bike in Connemara’s ‘capital’ Clifden, and strike out across the starkly strange blanket bog – a mosaic of tiny lakes and peat, crossed by a single narrow road – to uncover two remarkable events of 20th century history. Stick to the Bog Road, and soon you’ll pass the scattered remnants of the world’s first permanent trans-Atlantic radio station - built by Marconi more than a century ago, and burned to the ground during the Irish War of Independence. At its peak it employed several hundred people, transmitting world news across the ocean. Close-by is a white aeroplane-wing-shaped memorial to Alcock and Brown, who crash-landed – uninjured – into Derrigimalagh Bog in 1919 at the end of the first non-stop flight across the Atlantic. In this lonely spot, two resonant examples of the western seaboard’s trans-Atlantic ties. “Next parish, Manhattan”, as they say in these parts.

Signature Discovery Point 9 – Cliffs of Moher

EXPLORE INIS OIRR BY PONY AND TRAP

It’s perfectly possible to explore the smallest and nearest of the Gaeltacht Aran Islands – Inis Oirr – in a day by bicycle ... or even better by pony and trap. Under huge open skies, you’ll trot along the narrowest of lanes, between stone walls, beside wide white-sand beaches, passing clover-covered hills and tiny fields. The islands’ population is growing once again, as exiles return and new arrivals blow in. Aran welcomes visitors year-round, on regular daily ferries that take commuters to the mainland or between the islands. Catch your ferry back to the West Clare music-hub of Doolin for the night: if you time it right you’ll be passing beneath the spectacular Cliffs of Moher just as they’re lit by the rays of the setting sun – arguably the best-ever view of this famous landmark.

And why not ...

WILD ATLANTIC WAY: SIGNATURE EXPERIENCES *(continued)*

COMMUNE WITH NATURE IN THE BURREN

Mary Howard lives in Fanore “with the Atlantic as my ‘front garden’”. She’s one of the local guides who’ll give you a sense of the Burren. In Irish it’s Boireann, or ‘rocky country’ – a vast limestone landscape stretching across northern Clare and southern Galway, then out to sea, where it appears again in the form of the Gaeltacht Aran Islands. Mary calls it “Europe’s largest rock garden”, for it is rich with rare flora, as well as megalithic tombs and monuments older than Egypt’s pyramids. She will meet you at Fanore’s community pub on the shore – O’Donoghue’s – and take you walking along ancient ‘green roads’, crossing the open limestone pavements, climbing the terraced hills and walking the Burren shoreline. Deposited back at O’Donoghue’s, you can sit at a table outside, order a plate of wholesome local food, listen to some Irish songs, and watch the sun sink into the sea.

Signature Discovery Point 10 – Loop Head

CATCH RAINBOWS ON THE LOOP HEAD DRIVE

At the western tip of County Clare, peaceful roads and deserted beaches stretch out along the Loop Head Drive – an off-the-beaten-track alternative to the popular Cliffs of Moher. This narrow peninsula at the mouth of the Shannon offers an elemental experience: huge Atlantic swells smash into miles of sheer granite cliffs, kicking surf high into the air. Then comes the sun – catching the airborne spray and forming countless rainbows. Out at the very end of the peninsula, the white letters E-I-R-E are cut into the grassy clifftop, a relic from WW2, to be seen from the air. You can climb the Loop Head Lighthouse for panoramic views – from Kerry to the Cliffs of Moher; there has been a lighthouse here since 1690. And, if you can’t get enough of this wild and watery windswept world, you can even stay in the 19th century lightkeepers’ accommodation, courtesy of the Irish Landmark Trust.

And while there ...

SEE AND HEAR THE SHANNON DOLPHINS

There are around 160 bottlenose dolphins living in the mouth of the Shannon River, where it joins the wild Atlantic off County Clare’s Loop Head Peninsula. You can follow the road from Kilrush to Aylevarro Point, to see them playing just offshore. Or, for close-up views, you can take a Dolphinwatch boat trip from Carrigaholt, to see dolphins – and hear hydrophone recordings of them too. Geoff, skipper of the custom-built dolphin-watching boat the Craíocht, will introduce you to them: he’s familiar with many of the individual adults, which can be distinguished by their dorsal fin marks. Dolphin calves are born every year and you may also spot grey seals, wild mountain goats and thousands of seabirds on the colossal cliffs. The Mouth of the Shannon is an EU Special Area of Conservation, and Loop Head was designated Ireland’s Aquatic Destination of Excellence, 2010.





DURSEY CABLE CAR, CORK



Signature Discovery Point 11 – Blasket Sound

TAKE A BOAT TO THE HOME OF IRELAND'S BORN-STORYTELLERS

Out on the very edge of Europe, as far west as you can go in Ireland, lies a deserted village with a poignant past. These are the mystical Blasket Islands – an archipelago off the Dingle Peninsula – famous in Ireland for its storytellers. At the beginning of the 20th century, J M Synge was the first of many writers to visit in search of the undiluted traditional culture that could be found in this isolated, far-flung community, living simply and frugally off the land and sea. Their stories were transcribed, and the islanders themselves were encouraged to record their own lives. These became the first written works to be published from an oral Gaelic culture, revealing a lyrical, poetic style. After many years of hardship and emigration, the last inhabitants left the islands in 1953, when there were no longer enough strong arms left to row their traditional naomhóga (canoes) across the dangerous Blasket Sound. Today you can take a boat to visit the mountainous main island – Great Blasket – to wander among the ruined cottages, then climb An Blascard Mór, spy dolphins and whales, and look west to America, as so many have done before. It's a moving experience, and the natural beauty and poignant echoes of the past will stay with you. Back on the mainland, a visit to the Blasket Centre to meet with its director Mícheál de Mordha – a former presenter and producer for RTE Raidió na Gaeltachta – provides moving insights into the islanders' hard lives, the sorrows of emigration, and the literary heritage of the Blaskets.

and ...

WILD ATLANTIC WAY: SIGNATURE EXPERIENCES *(continued)*

THROW A POT INSPIRED BY THE WILD ATLANTIC

At the far end of the Dingle Peninsula, on the scenic Slea Head Drive, is the workshop of one of Ireland's leading potters – the renowned Louis Mulcahy. The low building – with its studio, factory, shop and café – folds into the fields, mountains at its back and the tumultuous waters of the Blasket Sound below. Right opposite, the nearest less than a mile (1.5km) off shore, are the mystical deserted Blasket Islands – a mountainous archipelago with a poignant past, that gave birth to Ireland's greatest born-storytellers. This is the setting that inspires Louis' wonderful work: he talks of the rapid changing colours of the light and the sea – from greys to blues to light greens ... the purple and browns of the heather and shadows on the mountains ... and the roaring red sunsets. Come in the summer months, and you can try your hand at throwing a pot, inspired by the wild Atlantic on the doorstep.

Signature Discovery Point 12 – Skellig Michael

VISIT AN EXTRAORDINARY, FAR-FLUNG PLACE OF PILGRIMAGE

Eight miles off Kerry's magnificent Iveragh Peninsula – where Ireland's highest mountain range sweeps down to the wild Atlantic coast – is one of the wonders of the world: Skellig Michael. 1300 years ago, early Christian monks built a remarkable hermitage at the top of this jagged ocean crag – then at the furthest limits of the known world. Steep steps are carved into the rock. Near the 213 metres (700ft) summit is a collection of 'beehive' monastic cells: solitary places for contemplation and prayer, as far from the distractions of civilisation as it was possible to be. This extraordinary, far-flung place of pilgrimage – described by George Bernard Shaw as "part of our dream world" – is now a UNESCO World Heritage Site. It can be reached by the adventurous – for a sometimes life-changing visit – on a small boat from Portmagee or Ballinskelligs ... but only when the weather allows, and only for those with good sea legs and a head for heights.

And if you're feeling adventurous..

TRY A TASTE OF HEAVEN ON THE SKELLIG COAST

Halfway round the Iveragh Peninsula, narrow byways lead off the main Ring of Kerry towards Ballinskelligs. Signs change to Irish and 9 miles offshore two jagged crags – Oileáin na Scealaga – rise out of the Atlantic: Little Skellig, ghostly white, is home to one of the largest seabird colonies in the world, and Skellig Michael. The coastal route, the Skellig Ring, takes you along narrow lanes on clifftops dotted with sheep, with wild Atlantic waves crashing below. At St Finian's Bay – down at the shoreline where the monks embarked en route for Skellig Michael – a very earthly pleasure awaits: a cup of hot chocolate at Europe's most westerly chocolate factory. While surf crashes onto the tiny beach outside, you are enveloped in the warm smells of chocolate-making, inside ebullient Colm Healy's family-run Skelligs Chocolate factory, at the edge of the world. Heavenly!



DUN MORAN BEACH



Signature Discovery Point 13 – Dursey Island

TAKE THE CABLE CAR FOR ‘EUROPE’S LAST SUNSET’

It’s a dramatic drive along the north edge of the remote Beara Peninsula, with views north and west across the mussel rafts and seal colonies in Kenmare Bay, to Ireland’s highest mountains, and the ghostly outline of the Skelligs out at sea. The land ends at the Dursey Sound – where strong tides make travelling by boat hazardous. Yet out to sea is Dursey Island, one of over 100 islands off West Cork – seven of which, including this one, are inhabited. Three families live and farm on this tiny island, and you can take a 10-minute ride – above the waves, on Ireland’s only cable car – to explore it on foot. There’s a lighthouse, castle ruins, a signal tower, standing stones, and stunning sunsets – known locally as “Europe’s last”. But do take note of the cable-car etiquette in this corner of the world: the residents – with or without their sheep – take priority over visitors in the queue for a crossing.

and ...

LET NATURE SET THE PACE IN TIMELESS WEST CORK

There’s a timeless air to the area around Bantry and Glengarriff, at the base of the Beara Peninsula. Nature sets the pace in this beautiful south west corner of Ireland. And the Atlantic coastline here is blessed by the warmth of the Gulf Stream. The area’s got something of a microclimate, with lush vegetation and sub-tropical shrubs. And the almost-Mediterranean feel is underlined by the Italianate gardens on Garinish Island, in the sheltered harbour of Bantry Bay. These gardens were created by Harold Peto in the 1920s, and visited by celebrities throughout the 20th century, including George Bernard Shaw while writing *St Joan*. The gentle, relaxing climate here seems to have rubbed off on the wildlife too. The three Harbour Queens, waterbuses taking visitors from Glengarriff Pier to Garinish, detour around Seal Island, whose inhabitants – up to 250 seals, well used to the ferries – laze on the rocks as if posing for photographs. It’s a singular sight.

Signature Discovery Point 14 – Mizen Head

LOOK OUT TO SEA FOR IRELAND’S LAST TEARDROP

When you can go no further to the south and west in the whole of Ireland, you’re at the dramatic Mizen Head. Out here, early 20th-century engineering provides a thrilling experience: climb down the steps at the very end of the peninsula and onto a high arched suspension bridge connecting the mainland to a rocky crag that points its long finger out into the roaring seas. Far below you the surf foams and crashes, and you may find you have your heart in your mouth. But don’t worry, this bridge is built to withstand the full force of nature. On the far side is the exposed Fog Signal Station, with its exhibition about the keepers’ lives in the early 20th century. And out on the horizon the imposing Fastnet Lighthouse stands on a rock known as Ireland’s tear drop: for millions of emigrants to the new world, this was their last sight of their native land.

And while there...

WILD ATLANTIC WAY: SIGNATURE EXPERIENCES *(continued)*

SEE STARS SPARKLE ABOVE AND BELOW YOU

Tidal currents rush in from the Atlantic to feed Lough Hyne, a marine lake whose warm salt waters support a rich habitat of plants and creatures. On summer nights, Jim Kennedy, Atlantic Sea Kayaking takes small groups on a special journey, kayaking across the sea lake. As dusk falls, Jim tells stories about this magical place, the birds settling for the night on the shoreline, the seals surfacing alongside, and the nocturnal creatures stirring in the surrounding waters and along the banks of the Lough. With darkness, the magic begins. First, flickers of light on the front of the kayaks, and shining ripples spread out from the paddle blades. A hand dipped into the warm water sparkles. Microscopic marine life erupts into ghostly phosphorescence. And the surface of the water seems to mirror the starry skies.

Signature Discovery Point 15 – Old Head

FEEL THE SPIRIT OF KINSALE

They say the best way to see Kinsale is from the sea. And perhaps the best way to understand Kinsale is with a former fisherman at the helm. One who's studied Archaeology & Celtic Civilisations at UCC, and got a Masters in Local History, that is. Jerome was born and grew up on the Old Head of Kinsale, and worked as a fisherman in these waters for 28 years. He'll share his local knowledge with you on a tour in his boat *The Spirit of Kinsale* – taking you out across the Harbour, past the Charles Fort and right to the Atlantic's edge. It'll only take an hour, but there's freshly brewed coffee (after all, Kinsale is the gourmet capital of Ireland), blankets to keep you warm, and – best of all – stories that will stay with you. Stories about this Viking trading post that played a key role in Irish history. About the network of fortified towers, signal stations built to ward off invasion. About the Siege of Kinsale in 1601. And about the night in 1915 when a trans-Atlantic liner – the *Lusitania* – was sunk by a German U-Boat right off the Old Head: 1200 passengers and crew lost their lives, drawing the US into World War I.

and ...

SEA-KAYAK THROUGH CAVES BENEATH KINSALE'S OLD HEAD

You don't have to have kayaked before to explore the coves and caves of Cork's crenellated Atlantic coastline under your own paddle-power. H2O Sea Kayaking in Kinsale runs beginners' expeditions out to the Old Head – where you can paddle under the headland itself through sunlit sea arches. Shoals of small fish swim below you in the clear shallow water, and a seal pops its head up to take a look. Out in the open again, cormorants line the cliffs and you may spot a basking shark. Lunch is a picnic on a tiny beach you can only reach from the sea. That's when you realise it: you're as hooked as that fish you'll eat for tonight's supper in smart, foodie Kinsale.



KAYAKING ON INCH BEACH





WALKING ALONG THE WILD ATLANTIC WAY IN KERRY

VIEW OF COUMENOLE BEACH





AERIAL VIEW OF BEACH RIDING ON BERTRA BEACH, MAYO

NORTH WEST



NORTH WEST

SECRETS



DONEGAL

Secret	Description
<p>Inishowen Maritime Museum and Planetarium Greencastle, Co Donegal Tel: +353 74 9381363 Email: greencastlemaritime@eircom.net Web: www.inishowenmaritime.com</p>	<p><i>Inishowen Maritime Museum and Planetarium is located in the old Coast Guard Station, only 100 yards from the Lough Foyle Ferry, landing at Greencastle Harbour, County Donegal. Attractions include extensive nautical exhibits, memorabilia, photographs, models, modern and ancient maritime equipment and Irish boats from (1.8m - 15.2m) six to fifty feet in size.</i></p>
<p>Bird Watching at Inch Island Address: Inch Levels , Burt , Inishowen , County Donegal Tel: +353 (0)74 913 7090 Email: nature.conservation@ahg.gov.ie</p>	<p><i>Ireland's premier Wetland Site. Inch Wildfowl Reserve is an internationally significant destination and staging ground for migrating from three continents. This global importance is recognised by the area's designation as a Special Protected Area (SPA) under the EU birds directive. Whether you are a serious wildfowl enthusiast or a novice bird watcher the Inch Levels Wildfowl reserve provides excellent winter viewing opportunities for the Whooper Swan and Greenland Whitefronted Goose and Greylag Goose. If you want to get away from the hustle and bustle of everyday life, you can take advantage of over 8km of idyllic country walks, surrounding the perimeter of Inch Lake.</i></p>
<p>Doe Castle Creeslough, Co Donegal Tel: +353 74 9138445</p>	<p><i>This MacSuibhne castle is protected on three sides by the sea, while on the landward side a moat has been hewn from the rock. The castle changed ownership many times in the 17th century before settling into English hands. A Church of Ireland minister was the last occupant. When he left, the castle fell into disrepair and eventually fell into ruin. The Landlord, Stewart-bam of Ards, sold the property to the Irish Land Commission in 1922. It is now a National Monument.</i></p>
<p>Tory Island Co. Donegal Tory Island Ferry Tel: +353 74 9531320/9531340</p>	<p><i>From the moment you see it for the first time from Magheroarty, your eyes are drawn to the magnificent island of Tory - home to the mythical Balar of the Evil Eye, the last place in Ireland with its own monarch, the incomparable Patsy Dan Rogers. This is a place where locals have been cut off from the mainland for weeks at a time due to Atlantic storms and where the special clay ensures that no rat can survive on the island. Yes indeed, you are truly on hallowed ground.</i></p>
<p>Leo's Tavern Crolley, Co Donegal Contact: Bartley Brennan, Tel: +353 74 9548143 Email: info@leostavern.com Web: www.leostavern.com</p>	<p><i>Leo's Tavern is the home of world renowned singer Enya, the internationally acclaimed Clannad and Moya Brennan. Managed by brother Bartley Leo's is a must-see location for visitors to Donegal. Its eclectic mix of personal photos of international artists from Bono to Glen Hansard along with an array of platinum discs featuring the successes of Enya and Clannad line the walls of this unassuming bar, where traditional song and dance are part of the fabric of both the building and the people who work there. A visit to Leo's is your chance to visit the homestead where creative talent has flourished to build international success, from a small remote location in County Donegal on Ireland's West Coast. You will be greeted with a warm welcome and treated to the story of how Máire (Baba) and Leo brought up their musical family around the bar, where each family member took their musical turn. This is still the case today as the bar staff step away from their duties to perform lilting airs and solo traditional dances. While you sit and relax you will be treated to a video celebrating the talents of the Brennan family and the history of Leo's. Irish hospitality abounds at Leo's.</i></p>
<p>Oideas Gael Glencolumbkille, Co. Donegal Contact: Liam O'Cuinnegan Tel: +353 74 9730248; Email: oideasgael@eircom.net; Web: www.oideas-gael.com</p>	<p><i>Learn Irish in the Gaeltacht for a weekend. Oideas Gael language courses are specially designed to cater for the needs of adults at all learning stages, including those who are more advanced but in need of practice.</i></p>



DONEGAL

Secret	Description
Silver Strand Malinbeg Silver Strand Malin Beg Co. Donegal	<i>Sliver Strand beach is a spectacular hidden gem of a beach at Malin Beg and 7km south of Glencolumbkille. The beach is accessible only from the sea or on foot via a series of steps. Your challenge here is to count the steps down to the beach – 155 going down and 154 going up!! The bay is called “The Doon” and both the bay and beach are surrounded by high cliffs which act as giant wind breakers making the beach a natural sun trap. Trabane Strand is popular with hikers as a starting / finishing point for a walk that crosses the notorious “One Man’s Pass,” a narrow ridge with steep drops on both sides, people who suffer vertigo beware.</i>
Nuala Star Teelin Teelin, Co Donegal; Contact: Paddy Byrne Tel: +353 74 9739365; Email: 66pbyrne@gmail.com; Web: www.sliabhleagueboattrips.com	<i>Enjoy the spectacular sight of the Slieve League sea cliffs on the Nuala Star, a 36ft passenger boat. If you are lucky enough, you may even be joined by wild life including dolphins, whales and seals. In May and June there are often basking sharks to be seen feeding on the plankton. There is also a wide range of bird life, which can be seen nesting and hunting. Nuala Star also offer enjoyable angling trips.</i>
Kitty Kelly’s – Irish Coffee Demo Largy, Killybegs, Cop Donegal Contact: Hugh O’Donnell Tel: +353 74 9731925; Email: info@kittykellys.com Web: www.kittykellys.com	<i>World famous Kitty Kelly’s is a unique experience based in a beautifully restored 200 year old farmhouse. En route to Sliabh Liag on the WAW drive to Europe’s highest sea cliffs, Kitty Kellys offer Irish coffee demonstrations, offers Day Time Bistro Menu and A la Carte Evening Menu which contains some of the finest seafood dishes in Donegal.</i>
Surfing the Peak Bundoran. Bundoran, Co Donegal . Contact: Richie Fitzgerald Surf World Tel: +353 71 9841223 Email: info@surfworld.ie Web: www.surfworld.ie	<i>Possibly the best surfing waves in the West Coast of Ireland. For experienced surfers only.</i>
Studio Donegal Contact: Tristan Donaghy Email: info@studiodonegal.ie Web: www.studiodonegal.ie	<i>Visit Studio Donegal in Kilcar and see the Handweavers at work. It is fascinating to watch the cloths emerging on the loom and if you are lucky, you may see traditional Donegal yarns being spun on the Spinning Mule.</i>
Cyndi Graham Hand Weaving, St. John’s Point Dunkineely, Co Donegal Contact: Cyndi Graham Tel: +353 86 4019307 Email: cyndigraham@ymail.com	<i>Hand-woven hats, scarves, waistcoats, cushions & throws. In a small cottage overlooking the wilds of the Atlantic Ocean.</i>
Creevy Experience Rosnowlagh Co. Donegal Contact: Margaret Storey Email: info@creevyexperience.com Web: creevyexperience.com	<i>Creevy experience offers Deep Sea Fishing, Shark Angling and Sightseeing trips in Donegal Bay, along one of the most picturesque stretches of coastline in Ireland!</i>

NORTH WEST

SECRETS





DONEGAL	
Secret	Description
<p>Castle Murray House (St John's Point) Fintra Bay & Mountcharles Pier Co. Donegal Contact: Marguerite Howley Email: marguerite@castlemurray.com Web: www.castlemurray.com</p>	<p>As you drive along the coastal road towards Castle Murray your senses are awakened by the beauty of St. John's Point. Castle Murray with its vantage point overlooking McSwyne's Bay, where the waves crash against the ruins of McSwyne's Castle, instantly give you a feeling of relaxation and rejuvenation. Specialises in local Sea Food.</p>
<p>Sandhouse Hotel Rosnowlagh Co. Donegal Web: www.sandhouse.ie</p>	<p>Located on the edge of the Atlantic Ocean at a Discovery Point this Hotel and Spa, the hotel offers the visitor spectacular view of the Atlantic Ocean. Many of the staff have worked in the hotel for over 40 years providing a local and personal knowledge of the area. The drive to the hotel is a beautiful coastal trip and ensures not to disappoint.</p>
<p>Ireland by Bike Contact: Seamus Gallagher Email: info@irelandbybike.com Web: www.irelandbybike.com</p>	<p>Experience the best of both world's on a memorable Irish bike tour that allows you to combine health and fitness with a rural outdoor adventure experience that takes you on a largely undiscovered journey of Ireland's North west culture, landscape and people</p>
<p>Walk Talk Ireland Sliabh Liag/Malinbeg/Glengesh Pass Co. Donegal Contact: Sean Mullan Email: info@walktalkireland.com Web: www.walktalkireland.ie</p>	<p>Sean provides Walking trips all along the WAW to include sites such as Sliabh Liag, Malinbeg and Silver Strand. Each trip can be a week long or weekend trip. You will meet locals along the way and enjoy events as they happen.</p>
<p>Donegal Bay Waterbus Contact: Sean Quinn Email: info@donegalbaywaterbus.com Web: www.donegalbaywaterbus.com</p>	<p>Donegal Bay Waterbus Cruise around Donegal Bay, view the seal colony on Seal Island, The Bluestack Mountains and Donegal Bays many islands with full commentary.</p>
<p>Unique Ascent (Donegal) Contact: Ian Miller Email: uniqueascent@gmail.com Web: www.uniqueascent.ie</p>	<p>Unique Ascent explores the WAW through Sea Stack Climbing, Mountain and Coastal walks, Abseiling, Coasteering, Sea Kayaking and Wild Camping. All taking in the stunning landscape and seascape along the Wild Atlantic Way</p>

NORTH WEST

SECRETS



SLIGO

Secret	Description
Gleniff Horseshoe Valley Cliffoney, Sligo	<i>Spectacular valley about a mile north of Cliffoney on the N15. Getting there is easy. Just drive north from Sligo on N15 to Cliffoney (22km). From Cliffoney, continue north 2km to the first crossroads. Turn right as the sign indicates for a straight shot of 6km. Now, you're primed for formidable masses of rock in the form of precipitous cliffs that have been in place for thousands of years. It doesn't matter which way you go around the loop. Like many, you may have the urge to do it both ways. You'll see more if you do! Either way feel, not just see, the presence of the giants: TieveBaun, Trushmore, King's, Benbulbin and Benwiskin (the bar at the Radisson, Rosses Point, borrows its name from the latter).</i>
Cantering on the beach with Island View Riding Stables Grange, Co. Sligo Ursula Schweiger, Tel: +353 71-9166156 +353 86-1956615 Email: islandviewridingstables@gmail.com Web: www.islandviewridingstables.com	<i>Toying with the idea of picking up the reins yourself? Driving is a wonderful sport suitable for all ages. Instruction involves all aspects of driving: knowledge of horsemanship, harness and vehicle safety. You will learn to get an independent seat in the vehicle, the use of voice, whip, hands and reins, and develop spatial awareness and clear intent in steering. You will be taught all the important aspects of road safety.</i>
Visit the site of the Spanish Armada ship wreck at Streedagh Beach Streedagh Beach, Streedagh Road, Grange, Sligo	<i>This linear coastal route takes the walker along a narrow strip of Atlantic coastline and provides access to various rocks embedded with fossils as well as the famous Spanish Armada shipwreck site..</i>
Yeats' Dining Experience Broc House, Tobernalt, Holy Well Lane, Aughamore Near Carraroe, Sligo Contact: Damien Brennan, Tel: +353 87 2320820; Email: info@yeatssligoireland.com Web: www.yeatssligoireland.com	<i>Dine at the heart of the Yeats Country, Sligo, Ireland at a family table while enjoying the best of Irish food and the poetry of William Butler Yeats. Typically the evening begins with a series of tasty snacks as you sit near the log stove and are introduced to the location, the countryside around and then where the Yeats' family and the poet William Butler Yeats fits in! Dinner, at tables of 10, is available for up to 50 persons per group. The menu comprises a seasonal starter, a soup or sorbet, a meat or fish dish, as chosen by your host, followed by desserts, petit fours and coffee. You bring your own wines at no charge so that your personal taste can be easily and affordably met.</i>
Private Beach at Coney Island Rosses Point, Sligo Contact: Daryl Ewing, Sligo Boat Charters Tel: +353 86 891 3618; Email: info@sligoboatcharters.com Web: www.sligoboatcharters.com	<i>Take a water taxi to Coney Island with Sligo Boat Charters and get up close and personal with the metal man on your way. It is said he is the only man in Sligo never to have told a lie! The island is approximately 400 acres and is so named because of the vast quantity of rabbits which can be spotted on the island at any time. It is said Coney Island in New York is named after its Sligo counterpart. Take a picnic and explore the secluded private beach. Or call into the local pub for a taste of island life. The owner and his family have lived on the island since the 1700s.</i>
Catch 'n Cook with Sligo Boat Charters Rosses Point, Sligo Daryl Ewing, Sligo Boat Charters Tel: +353 86 891 3618; Email: info@sligoboatcharters.com Web: www.sligoboatcharters.com	<i>Hop on board with Sligo Boat Charters for a full day, half day or evening trip to track down and catch your dinner! Trips depart Rosses Point. The skipper will take you out to the local fishing grounds where you will catch some fresh fish to either have cooked for you at the nearby restaurant of Austies in Rosses Point, or learn to cook it yourself in Source Sligo Cookery School. You can get up close to the seal colonies and watch them duck and dive as they paddle towards the boat.</i>

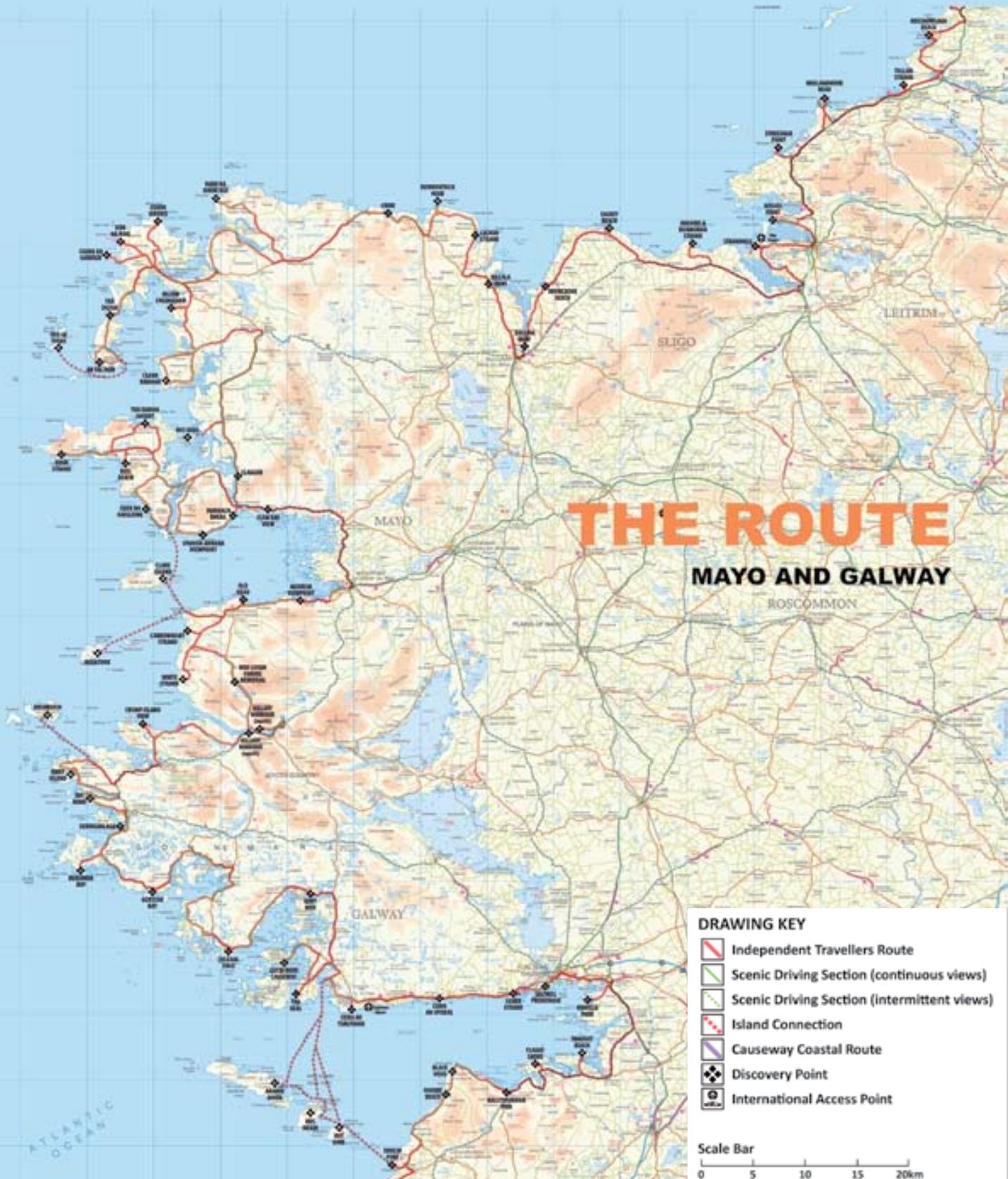
SLIGO

Secret	Description
<p>Surf & SUP along Sligo's rivers and beaches Shore Road, Strandhill, Sligo Contact: Tom Hickey Tel: +353 87 202 9399 / +353 87 289 7462 Email: info@perfectdaysurfing.ie Web: www.perfectdaysurfing.ie</p>	<p><i>Perfect Day Surf School, Strandhill; Stand up Paddle boarding is the fastest growing water sport in the world. Here at Perfect Day we offer, Flatwater paddle lessons, Exposed water paddle lessons, Coastal exploration, River and Lake tours.</i></p>
<p>A steaming Seafood Chowder with a pint of Guinness Templeboy, Sligo Tel: +353 71 9176465 Email: info@thebeachbarsligo.com Web: www.beachbarsligo.com</p>	<p><i>This old world traditional thatched Irish pub sits peacefully on the unspoiled Aughris beach in Sligo bay, with the Atlantic waves rolling in outside the front door and the Ox mountains overlooking behind. The majestic peaks of Knocknarea and Benbulbin compete for your attention to the east. Ten steps from the front door and your toes are in the Atlantic!</i></p>
<p>Secret Gardens of Sligo Various Contact: Rosemary Kitchin Tel: +353 86 3375741 Email: kitchin.rosemary@gmail.com Web: www.secretgardensofsligo.com</p>	<p><i>Many of Sligo's Secret Gardens have seaside locations with breathtaking views. Collection of private gardens open to the public from May to September. Admission by voluntary donation, all proceeds go to charity. All gardens are happy to welcome visitors outside of advertised visiting times by arrangement. The owners of some gardens may provide light refreshments and plants for sale.</i></p>
<p>Breeogue Pottery Studio and Gallery, Breeogue, Knocknahur, County Sligo Contact: Grainne MacLaughlin Tel: +353 71 9168929 Mobile: +353 86 3782580 Email: info@breeoguepottery.ie Web: www.breeoguepottery.ie</p>	<p><i>Breeogue Pottery is nestled in beautiful landscape, between Knocknarea mountain and the shores of Ballisodare Bay. The megalithic site of Carrowmore, one of the oldest in Europe is close by. Here in a converted 18th Century stone building, potter Grainne produces a high-fired stoneware table-top range and also contemporary lighting. She applies various layers of different coloured glazes over her simple and uncomplicated vessels. In the final firing (1280 °C), the glazes react with each other, resulting in exciting swirling patterns, reminiscent of images found in nature.</i></p>



SURFING NEAR LOUISBURGH, MAYO

WEST



WEST SECRETS



MAYO

Secret	Description
Kick the Wall on the Prom in Salthill Belmullet, Co. Mayo Salthill, Galway	<i>The 'Prom' is Ireland's longest seaside promenade. Situated in Salthill, on the outskirts of Galway city, it overlooks Galway Bay. A favourite pastime for Galwegians is walking along the Prom and 'kicking the wall' across from the Blackrock diving boards before turning around. No one knows where the tradition of kicking the Prom wall started, but it is now considered to give good luck and fortune to those who kick it.</i>
McDonnell's Pub Belmullet, Co. Mayo	<i>Taste the best pint of Guinness in Belmullet and mix with the locals at this traditional and authentic bar with live music from Thursday - Sunday.</i>
Clare Island Lighthouse Clare Island, Co. Mayo Web: www.clareislandlighthouse.com	<i>Newly refurbished and reopened accommodation with small visitor attraction opening 2014.</i>
Clapper Bridge, Louisburgh West of Louisburgh at Burrehinch near Killeen, Co. Mayo	<i>Thought to date from medieval times and one of last remaining clapper bridges in the world. Known locally as the Colony Bridge, after the Church of Ireland settlement in that area. Of similar construction to bridges found in Devon and Cornwall, this clapper bridge, built for pedestrians, was made at a place on the river where the water depth was generally low. It is the largest complete clapper bridge in Ireland, stretching 50 m (164 ft) across the river. Its 37 arches are superbly constructed in the primitive clapper style, each made of a clapper or flat limestone slab resting on a pier of about 0.6 m (2 ft) above the river bed.</i>
Clew Bay Cruises Westport, Co Mayo Web: www.clewbaycruises.com	<i>Cruise on Clew Bay and see the thriving seal colony, beautiful secluded beaches, and breathtaking views of Croagh Patrick, Murrisk Abbey and Bertraw Beach. You'll enjoy sailing past the many sheltered islands, Inishgort lighthouse and the shore of Dorinish Island, formerly owned by John Lennon, who spent some time there. The remains of the huts and dwellings used by the 'hippies' that called the island home can be clearly seen. The onboard commentary will guide you through the history of Clew Bay, from battles to tragedies, from the Ice Age to modern day.</i>
Rolling Sun Spectacle Bohea, Westport, Co. Mayo	<i>Every year, on April 18 and August 24, the sun appears to roll down north face of Croagh Patrick at dusk – a phenomenon that is best viewed from the Neolithic Rock of Boheh (or Bohea). The rock bears one of the finest examples of Neolithic rock art in Ireland and Britain, and its carved 'cup and ring' motifs are the only known such examples west of the Shannon. It is almost entirely covered in carvings, which also include several unusual patterns known as keyhole motifs. The stone is the only fixed place in the landscape from which the Rolling Sun spectacle can be seen, and this appears to be the reason that it was chosen by the Neolithic artists.</i>



GALWAY

Secret	Description
<p>Curragh Beach at Renvyle Point Located on the Renvyle Peninsula, Connemara, Co. Galway</p>	<p><i>The waves at this beach are legendary in size. Safe only for experienced surfers, the biggest waves are found between November and March!</i></p>
<p>Oliver's Seafood Bar & Restaurant, Cleggan, Co. Galway Web: www.oliversbar.com</p>	<p><i>Taste some of the best seafood in the west of Ireland including famous Cleggan crab claws. Oliver's is a casual bar/restaurant where you can mix with the locals of this tiny Connemara fishing village. Live music every Wednesday.</i></p>
<p>Teach Ceoil Traditional Arts Centre Tully, Connemara, Co. Galway Web: http://goconnemara.com/directory/details/405/</p>	<p><i>Situated on the Renvyle Peninsula, the Teach Ceoil (meaning House of Music) operates as a centre for the Traditional Arts with classes in Irish music and dance. Seisún, a night of Irish traditional music, song and dance featuring top Connemara talent, takes place each Tuesday night at 9 pm during July and August. The program is popular with the local community and has been running for 30 years. Bookings are not taken, so arrive early and experience this authentic Connemara experience in a country kitchen setting.</i></p>
<p>Doonloughan Beach Roundstone, Connemara, Co. Galway</p>	<p><i>Known mainly to the locals, this is a great beach for surfing the Atlantic Waves. There is good surf at all stages of the tide.</i></p>
<p>Islands and Lobster Experience Roundstone Co. Galway</p>	<p><i>Take a half day boat trip around Roundstone Harbour, Inishnee Island and see the seal colony along the way. John O'Sullivan is a local fisherman who will lift lobster pots, and if the mackerel are running, he will have rods on board. Stop off at the deserted Inishlacken island and walk the track that loops the island. Return to Roundstone village in time for lunch in one of its lovely pubs.</i></p>
<p>Walk the islands of Finish or Mweenish Carna, Connemara Gaeltacht, Co. Galway</p>	<p><i>Take the road to the coast about half way between the villages of Kilkieran and Carna and walk to the tidal island of Finish. But be careful not to get trapped on the island by the incoming tide! You can also walk or cycle Mweenish Island, accessible by road, just outside Carna. It is actually a series of islands joined by causeways and is full of lovely little beaches and interesting swimming spots.</i></p>
<p>Linnane's Lobster Bar New Quay, Co. Galway Web: www.linnanesbar.com</p>	<p><i>Set on New Quay pier overlooking the Burren landscape, Linnane's is a 300 year old bar & restaurant. It specialises in local produce and the emphasis is on fresh seafood in a relaxed welcoming atmosphere. Nearby you can walk the Flaggy shore, stop at the beach, or fish for mackerel off the pier.</i></p>



MULLAGHMORE HEAD, VIEWS OF CASSIBAWN CASTLE

MID WEST



MID WEST

SECRETS



CLARE / LIMERICK

Secret	Description
<p>The Linnalla Icecream experience relaxing by Flaggy Shore New Quay, The Burren, Co.Clare Contact: Brid & Roger Fahy Tel: +353 65 707 8167 or +353 87 785 7569 Email: info@linnallaicecream.ie Web: www.linnallaicecream.ie</p>	<p>The swans that gather on the Flaggy Shore (made famous in the Seamus Heaney poem 'Spirit Level') whose water laps beside the grazing cows of Brid & Roger Fahy give Linnalla Pure Irish Ice cream its name "Linn-éalla" - meaning Swan Lake. Traditionally a dairy farm from the mid 1800's Brid & Roger started making ice cream in 2006 using the milk from their shorthorn cows which are native to the Burren. With fresh cream and wonderful fruits and nuts, as many as possible sourced in the Burren, they produce a beautiful artisan ice cream. A visit to the Ice Cream Parlour and Dessert House is a must where you can sit, relax and enjoy one of the many ice creams on offer. Feeling a little more energetic? Then why not stroll around the farm to view the animals and walk to the seashore where you can enjoy the wonderful views.</p>
<p>Eco Walk or Cycle in the Burren Burren Fine Wine & Food Corkscrew Hill Road, Ballyvaughan, Co Clare Contact: Cathleen Connole Tel: + 353 65 707 7046 Email: info@burrenwine.ie Web: www.burrenwine.ie</p>	<p>Nestled between the enchanted Hills of the Burren is the century old stone coach house that houses Burren Fine Wine & Food situated on the grounds of the former parochial house of Glenaragh Church about two miles past the centre of Ballyvaughan. Here you can enjoy an early morning guided cycling tour through the heart of the Burren followed by a delicious mouth-watering breakfast at Burren Fine Wine & Food. Prefer to step out in style and eat without guilt as you make a very light footprint on the planet? Then a guided walking tour of the majestic, rocky Burren in North Clare with expert local guide Tony Kirby (author of The Burren and the Aran islands A Walking Guide) followed by a two-course lunch in Cathleen Connole's Burren Fine Wine & Food highlighting the best of local produce, is for you. Burren Fine Wine & Food also specialise in Summer Lunches, Afternoon Tea, and the now famous organic Galway Bay Wine produced in the Languedoc area of France by Cathleen's brother Noel O'Loughlen.</p>
<p>Cliff Walk at Doolin Doonagore Farmhouse Cliffs of Moher Road, Doonagore, Doolin, Co. Clare Contact: Pat Sweeney Tel: +353 65 7074170 Email: doonagore@eircom.net Web: www.doolincliffwalk.com</p>	<p>Doolin Cliff Walk provides a guided walk from Fisherstreet in the Doolin Village of County Clare, along the sea cliffs leading to the Cliffs of Moher. Guided by local farmer, walking enthusiast and historian, Pat Sweeney, you will follow a trail route along the coast and above the Doolin cliffs. With the green fields of cows and sheep of the local farms on one side and the pounding waves of the Atlantic Ocean on the other, this is a unique way to experience the stunning views and breath-taking rural beauty of this part of Clare. Your guide, Pat, is an expert on local history and folklore and is passionate about the preservation of a rural lifestyle enjoyed by five generations of his family, who have farmed in this area. This spectacular 3 hour walk along a paved path is an easy walk, always with the sound of the ocean in your ears. The visitor will have the privilege of seeing the natural beauty of the area and hearing the interpretation of past and present life from the perspective of a guide who has an enthusiasm and passion for the local area.</p>
<p>Cliffs of Moher Cruise www.doolinferry.com, Tel: +353 65 7075555 www.doolin2aranferries.com, Tel: +353 65 7075949</p>	<p>Take a 1 hour trip from Doolin to experience the mighty Cliffs of Moher from sea level. The Cliffs rise 214m (702ft) from the sea and the scale of this natural phenomenon from the sea is truly awe-inspiring. Learn about the many seabirds of the area, which is home to approximately 30,000 seabirds living in or around the Cliffs. The cruise also passes the giant sea stack, the 70m (230ft) high 'An Bhreannan Mor', an important colony for a number of species.</p>
<p>Cliffs, caves and island-hopping by kayak North Clare Sea Kayaking Tel: +353 85 1195489 or +353 86 7233649 Email: northclarekayaking@gmail.com Web: www.northclareseakayaking.com</p>	<p>North Clare Sea Kayaking offers a number of tours to suit paddlers of all ages and levels of experience. Try an adventurous day of exploring secret areas, and delve into hidden caves that dot the coastline of Liscannor Bay. Or try the Island Exploration Tour, as experienced guides take you to Mutton Island, where you will have a chance to explore all the island's hidden treasures, including beautiful rare sea birds, a colony of Grey Seals as well as many warm rock pools, perfect for swimming!</p>

KAYAKING ON INCH BEACH, KERRY



CLARE / LIMERICK

Secret	Description
<p>The Music Makers of West Clare Miltown Malbay, Co. Clare Tel: +353 65 7085785 Email: eolas@oac.ie Web: www.themusicmakers.ie</p>	<p>Situated in the home of the famous Willie Clancy, The Music Makers of West Clare invite you to immerse yourself in this story of traditional music, song and dance. At the Visitor Centre you can read first-hand accounts about the renowned musicians from the locality. View "The Session", a specially commissioned 14-minute film featuring some of our most talented local musicians, playing the music most loved by the great musical masters of County Clare. This attraction brings together scholarship and fun and will provide an additional stop on the road between the scenic glories of Loophead and the Cliffs of Moher.</p>
<p>Coasteering in Kilkee Bay Contact: Nevsail Watersports, Kilkee, Co. Clare Tel: +353 86 330 8236 Email: info@nevsailwatersports.com Web: www.nevsailwatersports.com</p>	<p>Coasteering involves climbing, jumping, scrambling and swimming around the rock pools, cliffs and caves of the intertidal zone. The Loop Head coastline might have been made for this sport, with its rocky cliffs and imposing marine geology. Wearing a full-body wetsuit, buoyancy aid, helmet and appropriate footwear, and under the supervision of an experienced guide, you'll explore caverns, gullies, coves and rock formations, moving both on foot and on the water.</p>
<p>Birdwatching at the Bridges of Ross Birdwatching at the Bridges of Ross Web: www.clarebirdwatching.com Co. Clare</p>	<p>The Bridges of Ross were formerly a trio of sea-arches but they have been worn away over the years by the fierce Atlantic, leaving one remarkable 'bridge' still to be seen. This low-lying area has the ideal orientation that marks it out as an internationally renowned seabird-watching site. In the late summer and early autumn sea birds such as shearwaters, skuas and petrels pass by close to shore, sometimes overhead, as they follow Ireland's western shore on their southern migration.</p>
<p>RIB Tours of the Shannon Estuary Pre-Book Tours by contacting: Clark Clifford, Shannon Estuary RIB Tours Tel: +353 86 8140833 Email: info@ribtours.ie Web: www.ribtours.ie</p>	<p>Available from Tarbert or Foynes, take a RIB Tour to explore Ireland's largest estuary. The Foynes Island Tour (30 min) takes in Foynes Island and then into parts of the Fergus Estuary, which offers almost totally unspoiled coastline and ever-changing scenery, along with some birdlife which is almost impossible to observe from the shore. The Estuary Historical and Wildlife Tour (60 min) explores the outer Estuary, its wildlife and brings visitors out to historic Scatterry Island, which contains the ruins of a 6th Century Monastery, several medieval churches and a unique 10th Century Round Tower.</p>



RUGGED COAST OF DINGLE, KERRY

SOUTH WEST



DRAWING KEY

- Independent Travellers Route
- Scenic Driving Section (continuous views)
- Scenic Driving Section (intermittent views)
- Island Connection
- Causeway Coastal Route
- Discovery Point
- International Access Point

Scale Bar



SOUTH WEST

SECRETS



KERRY

Secret	Description
<p>North Kerry Heritage Trails, Ballyduff, Co. Kerry, Contact Samantha Jones & Sean Lyons, Email: info@northkerryheritagetrails.ie; Web: www.northkerryheritagetrails.ie</p>	<p><i>Experience authentic Irish heritage on these trails, with castle visits, round towers, manor homes, abbeys, St Brendan's the Voyager Birthplace and much more – can be self guided or a local guide can facilitate as per below options.</i></p>
<p>Discover the Story of St. Brendan, Discover the story of St. Brendan Fenit Island Co. Kerry</p>	<p><i>The Story of St Brendan begins at Fenit Island where St Brendan is said to have been born. There is also a beautiful boardwalk along the coast in Fenit that goes along out by the lighthouse. Follow this with a visit to Ardfert Cathedral (monastery founded by St Brendan in 520 AD) to learn more of the Brendan Story, and a hike to Mount Brandon, the pilgrims route.</i></p>
<p>Dingle Dolphin Tours, Dingle pier, Dingle, Co. Kerry. Contact ; Bridget Flannery - Manager Tel: +353 66 91526 26 /+353 86 1937304 or Email info@dingleddolphin.com; Web: www.dingleddolphin.com</p>	<p><i>Dingle Dolphin Boats tours are a company of 8 fully licensed passenger vessels in operation for over 25 yrs , captained by 8 local and experienced owners . They offer 1 hour Boat tours departing From Dingle pier, all year round. Just for youthey can arrange a specialized champagne trip for you and your group - minimum 10 pax. The beautiful scenery of Dingle Bay is in abundance on this tour which guarantees seeing 'Fungie The Famous Dingle Dolphin' up close or your money back! For a real experience not to be missed, why not enjoy a pre arranged trip to swim or dive with Fungie? Must be pre- booked.</i></p>
<p>Catch and Cook - Dingle Bay Charters, Dingle, Co. Kerry; Tel: +353 66 915 1344; Web: www.dinglebaycharters.com</p>	<p><i>Dingle Bay Charters provide a range of boat trips and activities around the peninsula's coastline and islands for visitors to participate in – you can even catch your own dinner.</i></p>
<p>Throw a bowl - Louis Mulcahy Pottery / Caifé na Caolóige, Slea Head, Dingle Peninsula, Co. Kerry; Tel: + 353 66 915 6229; Email: cafe@louismulcahy.com Web:www.louismulcahy.com</p>	<p><i>There are numerous reasons to visit Louis Mulcahy's Pottery Shop and Caifé Caolóige, among them, the beautiful Clogher beach nearby and the wild Atlantic waves beating against the coastline. The building itself contains the famous pottery by Louis Mulcahy, including his workshop where visitors can throw a bowl and learn the basics of pottery making and ceramic techniques. Pots can then be glazed and your very own creation, inspired by this beautiful journey and location, can then be sent back to your home. New for 2013 is a self-guided tour also of the factory. Groups must be booked in advance.</i></p>
<p>Learn to Speak Irish Classes, Dingle, Co. Kerry Contact: Bernie Ni Mhuirteagh; Email cdagcaint@gmail.com</p>	<p><i>Dingle is Ireland's largest Gaeltacht town and thousands speak Gaelige – Irish – as their first language. But you won't feel out of place. The people of Kerry welcome you: they'll tell you "Fáilte romhat isteach – you're most welcome here". Meeting the locals in the pub you learn your very own cúpla focáil (couple of words) in Irish to take home. Spend an enjoyable hour learning to speak a couple of Irish phrases, 'cúpla focail', with a native speaker in the heart of Dingle Gaeltacht at the Disearth Cultural centre. Must be prebooked.</i></p>
<p>Diving in the Maharees, Maharees, Dingle, Co. Kerry Contact: Sandra and Phillip Fitzgibbon; Tel: +353 66-7139292; Web: www.waterworld.com</p>	<p><i>Situated only 30m (98ft) from the waters edge in the spectacular scenery of the Maharees, on the Dingle Peninsula, County Kerry, Waterworld is Ireland's largest diving and leisure centre. Take a dive or a snorkel, and enjoy some of the most spectacular scenery and coral off the wild Atlantic shores. Why not enjoy a magnificent home cooked and locally sourced meal later that evening back at the Harbour Guesthouse? The Harbour Guesthouse is located right at the edge of the Maharees on the Northern tip of the Dingle Peninsula. Watch the sunset over the Atlantic ocean, after an exhilarating day at sea.</i></p>
<p>Follow in the footsteps of Ryans daughter, Inch Beach, Dingle, Co. Kerry, Contact: Hidden Ireland Tours, Ann Curran Email:ann@hiddenirelandtours.com and Tel: +353 872581966</p>	<p><i>Before arriving in Dingle town, you will pass Inch Beach, home to where the infamous "Ryan's Daughter" was filmed. Dusting off those cobwebs and taking a walk on this beautiful sandy beach, the same spot where Sarah Miles as Rosy Ryan met Robert Mitchum as Charles Shaughnessy, come here and share in their love story.</i></p>



KERRY

Secret	Description
<p>Kayak Trip on Dingle Bay or at Inch Beach – daytime or at sunset, Inch Beach or Dingle Harbour, Dingle, Co. Kerry Contact: Noel O’ Leary; Tel: +353 87 4190318 Web: www.irishadventures.net</p>	<p><i>Enjoy a spectacular trip at sunset or early morning out on Dingle Bay and experiences the calmness and serenity of the area on the edge of the Atlantic shores.</i></p>
<p>The Blasket Islands, Dunquin, Dingle, Co. Kerry Contact: Michéal De Mordha; Tel: 066-9156444; Web: www.heritageisland.com</p> <p>Blasket Island Boat Trips and Eco Tours around the Islands, Contact Dingle Bay Charters, Contact: Mary O’Neill , Tel +353 87 6726100 and Web: www.dinglebaycharters.com; Email is info@dinglebaycharters.com Blasket Islands Ferry, Contact: Mick Sheerin, Tel: +353 863353805/ +353 87 2316131; Email: ferryandtours@blasketislands.ie Web: www.blasketislands.ie</p>	<p><i>There are a number of Islands off the coast of Kerry that offer remote wildernesses to explore. And off Sleah Head – the most westerly tip of the Dingle Peninsula – lies a deserted village with a poignant past, on an archipelago that gave birth to Ireland’s greatest born storytellers: the mystical Blasket Islands; now an emblem of the Irish story of emigration. Anchor a boat in the Blasket Sound on the edge of Europe. Climb to the top of An Blascaod Mór and look west. Imagine you can touch America, you can feel the past and history of the people who went before you, There is an aura there, a feeling, it’s mystical. And visit the Blasket Centre a wonderful interpretive centre in a long, white hall ending in a wall-to-ceiling window overlooking the islands. Great Blasket’s rich community of storytellers and musicians are profiled along with its literary visitors like John Millington Synge, writer of The Playboy of the Western World. The more prosaic practicalities of island life are covered by exhibits on shipbuilding and fishing.</i></p>
<p>Dingle Cookery School, Dingle, Co. Kerry. Contact: Martin Bealin & Muireann Nic Giolla Ruaidh; Tel: +353 87 9177700; +353 86 8723521; Email: martinbealin@hotmail.com; muireannngr@gmail.com;</p>	<p><i>‘Dingle Cookery School offers exciting lessons in the Art of Irish Cookery which include amongst others, “Eat like an Irishman”, a lesson in the making and tasting of Traditional Pork Sausages and Colecannon. Tastings and recipe ideas provided. You could also “Warm your senses”, and bake your own homemade traditional brown soda bread, smell it baking and taste with a slab of local butter. You will learn a few Gaelic Phrases and a local rhyme along the way! Or you could learn how to make the perfect scone and homemade jam to go with it. There’s nothing like a tender, steaming scone smothered in homemade jam. This lesson is the key to making your own scones just right and the added bonus is that you get to take home your own pot of jam!</i></p>
<p>Horse Riding on Rossbeigh Beach, Rossbeigh (Near Glenbeigh on the Ring of Kerry); Tel: +353 87 2379110; Web: www.beachtrek.ie</p>	<p><i>This is an experience not to be missed! Galloping on horseback along the 7 miles of Rossbeigh beach, close to the waters edge with the spray from the Wild Atlantic Ocean in your face. This is an experience riders of all levels will never forget. Rossbeigh is also a beautiful, European designated Blue Flag Beach.</i></p>
<p>Geokaun Mountain, Valentia Island, Co. Kerry; Contact: Bernie or Muiris Tel: +353 87-6493728; Web: www.geokaun.com</p>	<p><i>Walk or drive to the top of Geokaun Mountain, one of the Ring of Kerry’s highest points. Located on Valentia Island, one of the most westerly parts of Ireland and indeed Europe. See the fantastic cliffs and enjoy the fantastic vistas of the Wild Atlantic Ocean. Familiarise yourself with the social and cultural history of the area while enjoying the spectacular views. At the peak there are three viewing areas - The Miner’s view, The Shepherd’s View and Carraig na Circe. There are 34 information plaques relating to the views - Skelligs Rocks, Blasket Islands, The Lighthouse, Bray Tower, Tetrapod Trackway, Church Island, Beginish, Portmagee, Valentia, Whale Watching, Cable Station, Flora and Fauna, Wildlife - Cough, Puffin etc.</i></p>

SOUTH WEST

SECRETS

KERRY

Secret	Description
Portmagee Village, Co. Kerry. Portmagee, The Ring of Kerry, Co. Kerry. Web: www.ireland.com ; www.moorings.ie	<i>This beautiful little fishing village was the winner of Ireland's first ever Tourism Town in 2012, and once you arrive here it's easy to see why. You can really get to know people here. There are small family-run businesses, local food producers, artists and craftspeople. Pubs with peat fires and traditional music sessions, artisan chocolate, and some of the best seafood in Ireland.</i>
Kayak on Kenmare Bay, Kenmare, Co. Kerry Tel: +353 64 6641222 Email: info@staroutdoors.ie ; Web: www.staroutdoors.ie	<i>One of the best experiences on offer in the South West is the experience of kayaking in a double kayak (two people) on the Kenmare River. This is a fantastic way to get up close to the water and wildlife that abounds in this area. See the Seabirds, Herons, and the flora and fauna of Kenmare Bay. This is a fantastic hour of entertainment, self-guided. Following the trip pop into Con's Marina Bar and Restaurant beside the pier and taste some of the locally caught smoked salmon from Star Seafoods next door!</i>
The Skellig Experience Visitor Centre Valentia Island, Co. Kerry Tel: +353 66 9476306 Email: skelligexperience@live.com www.skelligexperience.com	<p><i>In The Skellig Experience Visitor Centre you can experience many aspects of those offshore Skellig islands while remaining on the dry land, in a custom built, stone clad, grass roofed, prize winning building located right on the waterfront beside the Valentia Island bridge on Valentia Island opposite Portmagee.</i></p> <p><i>Here, through re-creations and models you can study the works and lives of the Skellig monks of the early Christian period, their activities, their endurance and their dedication in gaining a foothold on a tiny, inhospitable, offshore island and creating a community there that survived for some 600 years. In The Skellig Experience's 80-seat auditorium, through a 14-minute film presentation you can follow the footsteps of those Skellig monks, and wonder at the legacy of architecture that they left behind.</i></p> <p><i>The Skellig Experience Centre also includes a restaurant and craft shop.</i></p>

KERRY

Secret

Description

Hidden Ireland Tours

Kerry

Tel: +353 87 2581966

Email: ann@hiddenirelandtours.com

Web: www.hiddenirelandadventures.com

Enjoy the McGillicuddy Reeks and Corrán Tuathail (Carrauntoohil) Ireland highest mountain provides the finest mountain walking, scrambling and climbing in Ireland, high, rugged outings on a spectacular peak flanked by deep and steep corries and airy ridges. There are regular guided ascents by various routes on Ireland's highest peak throughout the year. These ascents provide a rare insight into the rich nature and culture of the region and offer an intimate experience over walking, scrambling or climbing routes. Other options include, Rock climbing, history and archaeology tours, canoeing trips, trips to the Skelligs and the Blaskets.

Mór Active

Murreigh, Waterville

County Kerry

Tel: 086 389 0171

Email: info@moractive.com

Web: www.activityireland.ie

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- Carrauntoohil Guided Hikes
- Canoe River & Lake Tours
- Sea Eagle Hiking Tours

SWING

South West Ireland Golf Ltd.

24 Denny St

Tralee,

Co. Kerry.

Tel: +353 (0)66 7125733

Email: reservations@swinggolfireland.com

Web: <http://swinggolfireland.com>

SWING GOLF IRELAND, is the pioneer of golf vacations to Ireland and has established itself as a popular brand name in the golfing holidays market where it represents the premier golf clubs of Ireland including Ballybunion Golf Club, Tralee Golf Club, and Dooks Golf Club, amongst all other premier golf resorts in one of the world's most popular golf destinations. The Wild Atlantic Way forms a backdrop for many of our most spectacular courses.

The beauty of Dingle Golf Club, Ring of Kerry, Killarney Golf Club. Contact SWING to plan your golf trip.

SOUTH WEST

SECRETS



CORK

Secret

Description

Wanderlust Glengarriff-Botany / Garden package,

Glengarriff, Co. Cork ;

Contact: Markus Baeuchle ;

Tel: +353 87-4181001 /+353 27-63609

Email: info@wanderlust.ie ;

Web: www.wanderlust.ie

Learn more about the abundant flora and the history of one of the world's favourite garden spots. Enjoy a few hours with Aroma Botanist, Eliane Zimmermann in the Gardens of Garnish Island or the old demesnes of Bantry Bay. They specialise in the world of trees, plants and aroma botany. A 'must- see' for the Garden Enthusiast!

Dursey Island Cable Car,

Dursey Island, Co. Cork

Contact: Beara Tourism and Development Association;

Tel: +353 27 70054,

Web: www.bearatourism.com/bwdursey.html,

www.discoverireland.ie/islands;

www.westcorkislands.com

Fancy beating the rat race for a little while? Dursey Island is the place to do it. Lying across a narrow sound off the tip of the Beara Peninsula, this is the dictionary definition of escape – no business, no traffic, no hassle. Just rugged nature and the awe-inspiring Atlantic Ocean. There is one sign of civilisation, of course – Dursey's unique and charismatic cable car. Hitched to the mainland above dolphin-strewn Dursey sound, this is Ireland's only cable car, running 250m (820ft) above the sea. With a capacity of carrying just six people at a time, the cable car is a lifeline for the few inhabitants, living in three small villages on the island. Stepping onto the island, visitors can continue on foot along a stretch of the Beara Way. Highlights on Dursey include the ruins of O'Sullivan Beara's castle, a 200-year-old signal tower with views stretching to the Skelligs and Mizen Head, and several standing stones. The indented coastline, open bog and wild winds leave you in no doubt – you're far from the madding crowd.

Walking the Sheep's Head,

Sheep's Head Co. Cork

Web: www.thesheepshead.com

Head for the Sheep's Head Way, a 200km walking route- but with plenty of shorter options! The Light house loop on the most southerly tip of the peninsula offers breathtaking views. Stop at Bernie's cafe on the way back for a well-deserved slice of her delicious apple tart!

Seven Heads Loop,

Timoleague, Co Cork

Tel: +353 87 1366373

Email: info@willandaway.ie;

Web: www.sevenheads Peninsula.ie;

www.willandaway.ie

The Seven Heads Walk extends from Timoleague Village through Courtmacsherry, around the rugged cliffs and shore line to Dunworley and on through Barryscove and Ardgehane to Aghafore and Barry's Hall and then back to Timoleague. The walk embraces a very interesting and varied territory in the course of its entire distance of approx. 42.5km (26.5 miles) around the peninsula. As there are several routes and circular walks, one can choose a route to suit the time and energy available. As well as the breathtaking and rugged scenery which the route embraces, there are also historical sites and a wide variety of interesting flora and fauna which varies with the time of year. The walkway leads through a variety of different types of scenery, rocky coastlines with magnificent marine life, sandy beaches, extensive rich farm land, picturesque villages and farm yards. The route also is home to some prolific bird life with rare birds such as the Choughs and the Little Egret, as well as having old woodland and hedge rows with fuchsia in abundance. Or why not try rock climbing? You won't find a better coastal adventure!

CORK

Secret	Description
<p>Island Hopping on the WAW , West Cork Islands; Contact: Markus Baeuchle: Tel: +353 87-4181001 / +353 27-63609; Web: www.wanderlust.ie / www.westcorkislands.com</p>	<p><i>In April and August 2013 Wanderlust and the West Cork Islands launched a new experience: Walk Ireland's Islands in West Cork. Visit and walk 6 islands in one week. Meet the people, the animals & the culture of West Corks Islands. Walk Bere Island, Cape Clear, Dursey, Garnish, Sherkin and Whiddy Island and you'll return home with some very special memories!</i></p>
<p>The Fire House Bread and Bakery School Contact: Patrick Ryan Email: info@firehouse.ie Web: www.thefirehouse.ie</p>	<p><i>"Where Bread is King..." What could possibly be nicer than a one-day bread course that sees you setting off on the boat with your very own bag of delicious breads. The Firehouse is a West Cork icon in the baking" - The Irish Food Guide 2012 Run by chef and baker Patrick Ryan, co-author of 'Bread Revolution' and as seen on BBC 2's Big Bread Experiment.</i></p>
<p>Whale Watch West Cork Contact: Nic Slocum Email: nic@whale.ie Web: www.whalewatchwestcork.com</p>	<p><i>The clear unpolluted waters off West Cork provide a feeding ground for Risso Dolphins, Minke Wales, Basking Sharks or Humpback Whales to name but a few. Enjoy a sunset tours leaving at 7pm and early morning sunrise tours with a qualified zoologist who is an outspoken advocate for marine conservation and sustainable tourism. Tour are scheduled according to demand</i></p>
<p>Ocean Addicts Contact: Anne Ferguson Tel: +353 87 7903211 Email: anne@oceanaddicts.ie Web: www.oceanaddicts.ie</p>	<p><i>The Wild Atlantic Way by sea with amazing scenic diving all along the south west coast of Ireland, from the Ling Rocks near Kinsale to the 78 rock near Glandore. Pass the Fastnet Rock before rounding the Mizen, past Dunmanus and Bantry Bay and sites like the Bullig and South Bullig. Sheer walls and wonderful reefs covered in life and colour and home to a wide variety of marine life. Offered by the only dive centre in Southern Ireland offering liveaboard and day boat diving, snorkelling trips and sea thrills</i></p>
<p>Allihies Copper Mines Contact: Tadhg O'Sullivan Email: inf@acmm.ie Web: www.new.acmm.ie</p>	<p><i>The Museum tells the story of copper mining in Allihies in the 19th & 20th centuries and the Industrial revolution took this small remote community by storm. There is a section devoted to the Cornish community, and another to those Allihies miners who left to work in Butte, Montana, where substantial mining operations evolved. Many of today's Butte residents bear the same surnames as Allihies families. Daphne du Maurier based her book 'Hungry Hill' on the Puxley family, who owned the Allihies mines in the nineteenth century and the story of the real people is no less fascinating.</i></p>
<p>Island Hopping on the WAW , West Cork Islands; Contact: Markus Baeuchle: Tel: +353 87-4181001 / +353 27-63609; Web: www.wanderlust.ie / www.westcorkislands.com</p>	<p><i>In April and August 2013 Wanderlust and the West Cork Islands launched a new experience: Walk Ireland's Islands in West Cork. Visit and walk 6 islands in one week. Meet the people, the animals & the culture of West Corks Islands. Walk Bere Island, Cape Clear, Dursey, Garnish, Sherkin and Whiddy Island and you'll return home with some very special memories!</i></p>

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PO Box 262746,

Free Zone South - Jebel Ali Free Zone,

Dubai, UAE.

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Website: www.ireland.com