

IRELAND'S ANCIENT EAST

Explore Medieval Ireland



Kilkenny Castle, Co. Kilkenny



IRELAND'S
ANCIENT EAST®



Fáilte Ireland
National Tourism Development Authority

Day 1 | Co. Carlow

1 day / 1 overnight

1 **Blackstairs Eco-Trail Glamping – Shepard's Huts** The Old Rectory, Killedmond, Borris, Co.Carlow | R95 N1K7

There are 4 beautiful Shepard's Huts located on the grounds of the Old Rectory, a Victorian home just 3 miles from Borris, Co. Carlow. Each hut is decorated in a rustic style & fitted with a double bed and vintage furniture, with a delightful view across the meadows and woods. The 4 huts – situated 20 metres apart from each other are available to let together or separately.

The huts are fitted with lights and heating & WI-FI. In addition, guests have access to a communal barn space which has been converted into a contemporary area complete with wet room, bathroom, and toilets as well as an open plan kitchen space with long dining table and magnificent views out into the water garden. If you don't fancy using the cooking facilities – breakfast is provided!

- One of the 100 best places to stay in Ireland (Irish Times Magazine June 3rd, 2017).
- One of the fabulous 50 Best Places to stay in Ireland (Irish Independent, 2019).
- Gold accredited Eco Centre certified to G.S.T.C. standard (Global Sustainable Tourism Council).



Next Destination: 9.9km

2 **Walk @ Borris Viaduct** Borris Viaduct, Co. Carlow

Borris viaduct County Carlow is a sixteen-arch limestone built former railway viaduct, c. 1860. A new greenway over the viaduct was opened in 2020 and offers spectacular views over the Barrow River, historic Borris house and the surrounding countryside.

Allow 1 hour



Next destination: 4.8 km

3 Lunch: Cellar Restaurant / Brasserie 1808 @ Step-House Hotel Borris, Co. Carlow | R95V2CR

Dining at the Step House Hotel is perfect for those seeking top quality local produce and organic foods. Quality food sourcing using local, seasonal and artisan products – this is the ideal location for some pre-activity fuel for the next stop on the itinerary, which is just 7 minutes away.

Allow 1 hour



Next destination: 5.5 km

4 Go with the Flow River Adventures Borris, Co. Carlow

Discover Carlow on the River Barrow with the award winning, Go with the Flow team. Choose from Canadian canoes, kayaks or new river surfers and take trails and eco-safaris with qualified guides to help you along the way. Guided river treks, canoe hire and courses are provided for every capability.

Options include the discovery river adventure, guided river treks, canoe hire and multi day trips. You are sure to have an outstanding journey of discovery and a renewed sense of what a magnificent countryside Ireland's waterway provides.

Allow 2 hours



Next Destination: (Sha-Roe Bistro): 32.1 km

If you are seeking something less active

5 Huntington Castle & Gardens Clonegal, Co. Carlow, Ireland | Y21K23

As part of this fascinating experience, visitors are guided around this genuine 17th-century Irish castle located within the charming rural village of Clonegal. Originally constructed as a plantation castle for defensive purposes, Huntington is the ancient seat of the Esmonde family since 1625.

As a treasure trove of historic architecture, art and objects, this is a special opportunity to view the castle's downstairs and upstairs interior and to learn about the colourful people (from servants to aristocrats) who have inhabited its walls.

Allow 2 hours



Next Destination: (Sha-Roe Bistro): 400m

6 Dinner: Sha-Roe Bistro, Clonegal, Co. Carlow

Sha-Roe Bistro, Clonegal, Co. Carlow | Y21KH61

Sha-Roe is described as a treasure of gastronomy, nestled in the picturesque village of Clonegal, in an 18th century house. Run by Henry Stone and his Swiss wife, Stephanie Barrillier, the multi-award-winning bistro continues to wow visitors with its simple, yet elegant approach to food. The ultimate location for winding down after an activity packed day.

- 2007 winners of The Georgina Campbell 'Best Newcomer of the Year' based on the food & wine experience, front of house charm and the immaculate setting of the beautifully restored restaurant.
- Winners of 'Best Atmospheric Restaurant of the Year 2010'
- Winners of 'Best Chef of the Year 2011' with the Georgina Campbell's Guide.

Allow 2 hours



Distance back to accommodation: 21.8 km

If you have more time:

Outdoor / Dining | Mullichain Café at St. Mullins
Outdoor / Activity | Altamont Gardens
Discover Carlow Town

Accommodation Suggestion:
Huntington Castle & Gardens

Day 2 & 3 | Co. Kilkenny

2 days / 2 overnights

Travel from Carlow Accommodation to Woodstock Gardens and Arboretum Instioge: 28.1 km

1 Woodstock Gardens and Arboretum

Instioge, Co. Kilkenny

Located just outside the picturesque village of Instioge in south-east Kilkenny, Woodstock Gardens and Arboretum offers a relaxing outdoor experience in a beautiful setting. Explore the restored Victorian gardens, the arboretum, walled garden, terraced garden, yew walk, rose garden, the Monkey Puzzle Avenue & Noble Fir Avenue.

Enjoy the rustic summer house, constructed from materials from the gardens and fountain to replace the original which was sold from the gardens in c.1930. Take a walk through time and discover fine specimen trees from Asia to South America, in the heart of the Irish countryside.

Allow 1 hour



Next destination: 19.8km

2 Nicholas Mosse

Bennettsbridge, Kilkenny, Co. Kilkenny | R95 CK71

Dating back to 1503, the old mill at Bennettsbridge, Co. Kilkenny is home to the internationally recognised Nicholas Mosse pottery. Acquired and restored by Nick and his wife Susan in 1983, the mill is steeped in history and heritage. A visit to Nicholas Mosse pottery is more than just a visit – it is a unique experience.

Old Irish tradition lives on in the pottery and each individual piece of pottery inside the mill is handcrafted and hand painted before being shipped to locations all over the world. Nick now trains and employs local people to produce his pottery. Enjoy a guided tour or some retail therapy and take home a little piece of Ireland with you.



Lunch

Enjoy a delicious lunch made from local ingredients at the Nicholas Mosse Café, the perfect place to enjoy the peaceful surroundings.

Allow 2 hours

Next destination: 8.7 km

3 Medieval Mile Museum

2 St Mary's Lane, High Street, Kilkenny | R95 K276

Take a guided tour of Kilkenny's 800-year story at the 13th century St Mary's church and graveyard. Designed to enrich the cultural life of the city and provide a new international standard attraction for visitors, the museum has several functions - as the starting point for understanding Kilkenny's medieval history; to display Kilkenny's civic treasures and replicas of some of the Ossory High Crosses; to provide a space for temporary exhibitions and cultural events and to illustrate the local Gaelic monastic heritage and the ancient city's historic role in Ireland.

Allow 1 hour



Next destination: 550 m

4 Cakeface Patisserie

16 Irishtown, Kilkenny | R95 W634

Grab a post-tour coffee and sumptuous snack at Cakeface Patisserie, the creation of pastry chef duo Laura and Rory Gannon. Returning home after years' experience with some of the best pastry teams in France and London, namely The Savoy and Café Royal, Laura and Rory have created their own special brand in Ireland. A little slice of heaven in the heart of Kilkenny.

Allow 30 mins

5 Dwell time

Walk around city centre

Take some leisure time and walk around Ireland's best preserved medieval city at your own pace. Explore the cobbled street and alleys, take a stroll along the river, visit the artisan workshops in the Castle Yard or simply enjoy a spot of retail therapy.

Allow 1 hour



6 Dinner @ Zuni Kilkenny

26 Patrick Street, Kilkenny | R95 A897

Centrally located and renowned for its menu, savour the food at the award-winning Zuni Restaurant to finish your day of discovery. Enjoy a pre-dinner cocktail in the bar and then wind down with a delicious meal using only the finest local ingredients that create modern Irish flavours and tastes with hints and influences from around the globe.

Allow 2 hours

Next destination: 5.3 km

7 Accommodation: Lyrath Estate

Paulstown Road, Kilkenny | R95 F685

The luxurious five-star Lyrath Estate in Kilkenny is a unique accommodation experience spread across 170 acres of Irish countryside, complete with lakes, gardens and woodlands.

The historic 17th century estate house sits elegantly alongside its modern-day extension and visitors can enjoy luxurious bedrooms, fine dining and the award-winning Oasis Spa.

Day 3 | Co. Kilkenny

Distance from accommodation: 4.1 km

1 **Butler Gallery** John's Quay, Kilkenny | R95 YX3F

Butler Gallery at Evans Home is Kilkenny's new flagship cultural attraction. Previously located in a smaller space at Kilkenny Castle, the gallery opened in its new home in August 2020. Evan's Home is a protected structure and former Alms House, which was disused, derelict and largely forgotten behind high walls for decades.

This historic building has now been beautifully restored for visitors to enjoy. Explore the extensive Butler Permanent Collection, the Tony O'Malley collection and sit and relax in the beautiful outdoor spaces.

Coffee / Snack: Post-tour coffee and snack at Muse Coffee + Food at Butler Gallery

Allow 2 hours



Next Destination: 94 m

2 **Outdoor / Activity: Kilkenny Cycling Tours** 16 John Street, Kilkenny City | R95 CC8N

Discover Kilkenny's medieval city while having fun, getting exercise and fresh air. Kilkenny Cycling Tours offers a variety of guided and self-guided tours. Choose from bike hire and roam the city in your own time or take a guided bike tour to find out about Kilkenny's most famous characters like the witch Dame Alice Kyteler and William Earl Marshal, the greatest knight that ever lived.

Bikes suitable for all ages are available and riverbank paths and backstreets are used to stay away from heavy traffic.

Allow 2 hours



Next Destination: 500 m

3 **Lunch @ Kilkenny Design Centre** The Castle Yard, The Parade, Gardens, Kilkenny | R95 CAA6

Built in the 1760s as a grain store for the Earl of Ormonde's horses, the Kilkenny Design Centre was originally part of a large complex of building attached to the castle that housed a dairy, stables, coach houses and accommodation for grooms. Enjoy a freshly prepared, homemade lunch in the restaurant or food hall. All menus have been inspired by a wealth of local artisan producers such as Mileeven honey, Second Nature Oils, Taste the View and Highbank Orchards.

Allow 1 hour



Next destination: 1 min / 13 m

4 Tour of Kilkenny Castle

The Parade, Kilkenny | R95 YRK1

There are few buildings in Ireland that can boast a longer history of continuous occupation than Kilkenny Castle. Founded soon after the Norman conquest of Ireland, the castle has been rebuilt, extended and adapted to suit changing circumstances.

Today, Kilkenny Castle is open to visitors all year round and is largely a Victorian remodelling of the thirteenth century defensive castle. Enjoy a tour of the castle and explore its fifty acres of rolling parkland with mature trees and an abundance of wildlife.

Allow 2 hours



Next destination: 270 m

5 Dinner @ Paris Texas Restaurant

92 High Street, Kilkenny City

Enjoy a delicious meal at the award-winning Paris Texas Bar and Restaurant, home to an in-house wood smoking oven offering a fusion of traditional American South West favourites with the sophistication of New Orleans French Quarter.

Second overnight stay @ Lyrath Estate

Accommodation Suggestion:
Mount Juliet Estate

Day 4 | Co. Laois

1 day / 1 overnight

Travel from Kilkenny Accommodation to Ballintubbert Gardens & House: 46 min / 50.0 km

1 Ballintubbert Gardens & House

Ballintubbert, Co. Laois | R14E954

First built in 1725, Ballintubbert House is a fine example of early Georgian domestic architecture. Previous residents include C. Day Lewis (Poet Laureate) as well as actors Sebastian Shaw and John Hurt. The gardens at Ballintubbert are a series of Garden Rooms.

Enjoy a guided tour with Ballintubbert's Head Gardener with insights into the history and development of the gardens as they work towards becoming Ireland's First Organically Certified Ornamental Garden.

Allow 2 hours



2 Coffee @ Ballintubbert Gardens & House

Ballintubbert Gardens & House

After your guided tour of the gardens, re-fuel with a choice of tea/coffee, herbal tea, with home-made scones, cream, jams, pastries served in 'The Tabernacle'.

Allow 2 hours

Next destination: 22.6 km

3 Overnight stay @ The Heritage Hotel

The Heritage Killenard, Portarlinton, Co. Laois | R32PW10

Check in at your overnight accommodation, The Heritage Hotel. A location where one can relax, unwind, and get away from it all in the heart of Co. Laois. The Heritage is a place to re-charge and relax with family, friends & loved ones; a perfect getaway.

Check into your room and drop your bags before moving to your next location which is just 12 minutes away.



Next destination: 6.1 km

4 Emo Court Parklands Tour & Lunch

Emo, Co. Laois | R32 C44V

Once the largest country estate in Ireland, Emo Court was commissioned and built by the earls of Portarlinton and designed by the eminent architect James Gandon. Emo has been the home of distinguished Jesuit photographer Fr. Frank Browne, and of author Benedict Kiely, among others. The estate is currently in the care of the OPW.

Take an immersive guided tour of the house & gardens, followed by lunch at The Emo Court Tearoom in the historic Dower House.

Allow 2 hours



Next destination: 34.6 km

5 Slieve Bloom Mountains Walk and Bike Trails

Slieve Bloom, Co. Laois

Explore the Slieve Blooms, the land of Fionn McCumhail. Choose between walking or mountain bike trails and delve into the gentle rolling hills of the Slieve Bloom Mountains, rising from the central plains of Ireland. Forming a natural link between counties Laois and Offaly, the picturesque area is one of the least explored and exclusive parts of Ireland.

The Slieve Blooms is a haven for outdoor lovers. Move at your own pace in the great outdoors and take in the surroundings of Ireland's Ancient East.

Allow 2 hours



Next destination: 29.5 km

6 Dinner @ The Heritage Hotel

The Heritage Killenard, Portarlington, Co. Laois | R32PW10

A memorable dining experience awaits at the Heritage Hotel. The Executive head-chef, Ian Clifford is passionate about offering guest an unforgettable dining experience, using only the finest, locally sourced ingredients to ensure the fullest flavours. The menus focus on flavour and balance to create exciting and modern dishes.

Allow 2 hours



If you have more time:

Indulge in a holistic treatment at **The Heritage Hotel Spa** | https://www.theheritage.com/spa_and_health.html

Take in an incredible sunrise or sunset from **The Rock of Dunamase**. This iconic fortress has a rich history from Vikings to Strongbow and Cromwell. Climb to the top and be rewarded with incredible views.

For craft beer enthusiasts, sample the brew at **Ballykilcavan Brewery** | www.ballykilcavan.com
This working craft brewery with its home-grown barley is based on the 13th Generation Walsh Family Farm.

Accommodation Suggestions:

Castle Durrow | <https://www.castledurrow.com/>

Ballyfin | <https://ballyfin.com/>

Day 5 | Co. Tipperary

1 day / 1 overnight

Travel from Laois Accommodation to Tipperary Accommodation: 119 km

1 Overnight stay @ Hotel Minella, Clonmel Coleville Rd, Croan Lower, Clonmel, Co. Tipperary | E91 FY97

Hotel Minella Clonmel is nestled between the Comeragh Mountains and the River Suir in Clonmel, Co. Tipperary. The original Georgian house was built by the Malcomsoms in 1863, and the Minella was opened as a hotel by Mr & Mrs Jack Nallen in 1963. The 4 Star Hotel Minella offers a range of accommodation from standard en-suite bedrooms to private lodges and family rooms. Hotel Minella is home to bedroom views overlooking the gardens, the River Suir and stunning mountains.



Next Destination: 25.9 km

2 The Rock of Cashel Cashel, Co. Tipperary | E25 KX44

The Rock of Cashel is one of Ireland's most spectacular and most visited tourist attractions. Originally the seat of the kings of Munster, the Rock of Cashel is set on a dramatic outcrop of limestone in the Golden Vale, is iconic in its historic significance and possesses the most impressive cluster of medieval buildings in Ireland.

Among the monuments to be found there is a round tower, a high cross, a Romanesque chapel, a Gothic cathedral, an abbey, the Hall of the Vicars Choral and a fifteenth-century Tower House.

Allow 1 hour



Next destination: 850 m

3 Lunch: Mikey Ryan's Bar & Kitchen 76 Main Street, Cashel, Co Tipperary | E25NY58

Mikey Ryan's Bar & Kitchen is a distinctively Irish gastropub with a cooking from scratch ethos. Focus on local, seasonal, and high-quality organic ingredients is at the core of the restaurant. Working directly with local farmers and artisan producers, Mikey Ryan's offers its local and visiting guests a true 'Taste of Tipperary'. Expect food that conjures up a feeling of home, nostalgia, and comfort.

Allow 1 hour



Next destination: 41.7 km

4 Munster Vales Walking Trail

Ballingarrane House Cahir Rd, Clonmel Co. Tipperary

Explore the history and heritage of the Munster province in the great outdoors. Hike to the five highest points of the Munster Vales to experience unrivalled vistas - lush valleys, surging rivers, cascading waterfalls, rugged coastline - a millennia-old landscape, the origin of Ireland's great legends and folklore. Discover deep cut gorges, gaze on shimmering lakes, breathe the pure air and immerse mind and body in the natural, unspoiled beauty of our lands.

Allow 2 hours



Next destination: 5.8 km

5 Dinner @ Ballinacourty House

Glen of Aherlow, Lisvernane, Tipperary | E34DF43

With the natural beauty of the Galtee Mountains and the Glen of Aherlow as a natural backdrop combined with the wonderful courtyard, Ballinacourty House is more than just a restaurant.

Ballinacourty House Restaurant is the ideal location for a well-earned meal and beverages after walking in the Munster Vales. Suitable for an intimate dinner for two, to a large group.

Allow 2 hours

If you have more time:

For horse & thoroughbred fanatics visit:

Fethard horse county museum | <http://fhcexperience.ie/>

For more history & heritage:

Ormond castle | <https://heritageireland.ie/places-to-visit/ormond-castle/>

Accommodation Suggestion:

Cashel Palace Hotel | <https://www.cashelpalacehotel.ie/>