



UNIVERSITY OF
NOTRE DAME

Notre Dame Centre at Kylemore Abbey, Connemara

Guest Activity Guide

Accommodation

The ND Centre has 16 rooms - 12 triple rooms, 2 quad rooms, & 2 staff single rooms

Getting Around

Private Coach Hire

The ND Centre at Kylemore can arrange for private coach hires of varying sizes for visiting groups. These hires are arranged with Spirit of Ireland Executive Travel

Taxis

Chris O'Neill – C&P Hackney, Tel: 095-21444 or 086-8593939

Robert's Taxi, Tel: 087-4161796

Sky Taxi, Tel: 095-22299 or 087-6664048

The Taxi Company, Tel: 095-30000

**when booking any taxi ensure to also book return journey, taxis are not available 24/7*

Minibus Hire

Joyce's Cabs and Minibus Hire, Tel: 095 21076

McHugh's Bus Hire Ltd, Tel: 087 2379702

Meals at Kylemore

- Chef & Housekeeper onsite
- Stocked kitchen for DIY food
- Caterer can provide services for special events
- Breakfast Buffet provided each morning

**if guests require hot breakfast must let us know in advance of arrival*

Cultural Activities

Aran Islands

The Aran Islands offer a unique educational experience that immerses visitors into Irish language, culture, history, geology, and archaeology. Three islands comprise the Aran Islands: Inis Mór, Inis Meáin, and Inis Oírr. The Aran Islands are an official Gaeltacht region, meaning that Irish is the primary language spoken in the area. Those interested in the Irish language can have

an immersive experience speaking with native Irish speakers on the island, and receiving tours in Irish rather than English. The area is steeped in history, owing to the rich archaeological heritage that is on display on the islands. Ancient stone walls, early-Christian beehive huts, Bronze Age and Iron Age forts, and monastic churches dot the landscape, and offer superb points of instruction about the history and archaeology of ancient Ireland. The unique geology, flora and fauna of the islands facilitate instruction in geology and ecology, through individual study or guided tours. Tours are available both in English and in Irish, on foot, via coach, or by bicycle.

Visit to AranLife Project

EU funded LIFE project working with farmers improve the conservation value of the unique species rich grasslands and develop future policy for these High Nature Value areas. Further details can be found at www.aranlife.ie or on facebook at <https://www.facebook.com/AranLIFE/>.

Contact: Dr Patrick McGurn

Inishbofin

Inishbofin is an island located off the west coast of County Galway, and is an ideal location for visitors to learn more about Irish history, ecology, archaeology, traditional fishing, and Irish music. The island features several looped walks that showcase the local ecology and wildlife, and is a haven for birdwatchers, as it is one of the only areas where the endangered corncrake flourishes. The island hosts several important historical sites, such as barracks built during the Cromwellian regime in the 17th century, monastic settlements, and early Christian sites. Extensive archaeological research has been undertaken on this island and the neighboring Inishark by the Cultural Landscapes of the Irish Coast field project, headed by Dr. Ian Kuijt from the anthropology department at the University of Notre Dame. Both Dr. Kuijt and Tommy Burke, an island native and member of the archaeological team, are available in the summer months to provide archaeological tours of both the island sites as well as the archaeological digs being undertaken by the university project.

Joyce Country Sheepdogs

Joyce Country Sheepdogs is a family-run farm in Connemara, which offers visitors the opportunity to visit a working hill sheep farm and watch sheepdogs herd Connemara Blackface sheep. Visitors will learn about Irish agricultural heritage during their visit, as the Joyce family will teach them about historical farming practices, the importance of sheep farming to Irish culture, and the place that farming has in Irish rural life today. This experience would be of academic interest to those curious about Irish history, agriculture, ecology, and rural life.

Mamean Hike

The pilgrimage up Mamean mountain is a beautiful setting in Connemara, hiking amongst the Twelve Ben mountains and overlooking the Inagh Valley, which ultimately culminates in a visit to St. Patrick's bed, a tiny cave-like area that is said to be where St. Patrick blessed all of Connemara. The site features a chapel, Stations of the Cross, and a holy well. This ancient pilgrimage site is

still visited by pilgrims today, during the thrice yearly annual pilgrimages, as well as throughout the year. This pilgrimage is appeals to those looking for a spiritual experience in the West of Ireland landscape, as well as those interested in Irish history, theology, and folklore.

Diamond Hill

Diamond Hill is located in Connemara National Park in County Galway, and features four well-marked looped trails of varying difficulty. It presents spectacular views of Connemara as well as the Atlantic Ocean, and allows visitors to experience the flora and fauna of the area in an active and engaging manner. The Park features native Connemara ponies, and is a fascinating area for those interested in ecology and geology to explore western blanket bog, heathlands, and metamorphic rocks that comprise the landscape. For those interested in history and archaeology, the area has megalithic court tombs and an early 19th century graveyard.

Croagh Patrick

Croagh Patrick is the site of one of the most famous pilgrimages in Ireland, and is a 2,507 ft mountain located in County Mayo. It is climbed by thousands of pilgrims on the last Sunday of each July, as well as on individual pilgrimages throughout the year. It is a Christian pilgrimage site associated with Saint Patrick, who fasted on the top of the mountain for 40 days in the fifth century A.D. There is a chapel at the summit of the mountain, as well as specific 'pattern' ritual paths that visitors circulate while saying a specific sequence of prayers. Climbing Croagh Patrick is a significant spiritual experience that appeals to those interested in furthering their Faith, as well as those wanting to learn more about Irish theology, folklore, and history.

Glengowla Mines

Glengowla Mines is a heritage site dedicated to the lead and silver mining history of Glengowla and the surrounding area of Oughterard in County Galway. Visitors have access to the remains of a 19th century lead and silver mine, as well as a heritage centre, a blacksmith's shop, and a circular powder house. The mine was in operation until 1865. This would be of particular interest to those wanting to learn about geology, Irish rural history, and the industrial heritage of Ireland.

Day trip to Cliffs of Moher/The Burren

The Cliffs of Moher and the Burren are two areas in County Clare that are stellar examples of the unique character of the Irish landscape. The Cliffs of Moher are one of the most popular tourist destinations in Ireland, due to the striking landscape of the cliffs. The extensive visitors centre provides historical, geological, and ecological information about the area, making a well-rounded academic experience for visitors. The Burren features some of the most important archaeological areas in the country of Ireland, and also an utterly unique landscape. The Burren is comprised of rolling hills of limestone pavements, and features some of the most varied ecology in the world due to the unusual glacio-karst environment. The Burren has a remarkable assemblage of flora and fauna, making it a must-visit for those interested in ecology, geology, and botany.

Michael Gibbons Walking Tour

Michael Gibbons is one of Ireland's leading field archaeologists, and specializes in academic and cultural tourism to the Boyne Valley and the West of Ireland. With a degree in history and archaeology from National University of Ireland Galway and over 25 years of experience leading archaeological tours, Michael Gibbons has a unique breadth and depth of knowledge which he utilizes to craft tours to participants' needs. Michael Gibbons has extensive experience on archaeological projects throughout Ireland and abroad, and uses his vast knowledge to provide in-depth walking tours that teach visitors about archaeology, history, historical geography, and folklore.

Food Foraging with Cliodhna Prendergast

Food foraging expeditions are a highly engaging activity in which visitors are brought out into the Connemara landscape and shown how to forage for edible foods, both on land and in the sea. Foraging expeditions are led by Cliodhna Prendergast, an experienced local chef trained at the world-renowned Ballymaloe Cookery School. Cliodhna will show visitors how to find their food 'in the wild', while teaching about the foods native to Connemara. Visitors will then learn how to cook the food they have foraged, thereby making this an educational as well as 'eco-friendly' activity.

Golfing -- Connemara Golf Links

Connemara Championship Golf Links is located in Ballyconneely, County Galway, and was voted the Best Links Course in Connacht 2016 by the Golfers Guide to Ireland. The 27 holes course is situated next to the Atlantic Ocean with views of the 12 Bens Mountains, and was designed by Eddie Hackett. The course is set within a rich historical area, which the staff at the Links are happy to discuss with the players. Players can also experience fresh local produce by dining at the Course Restaurant after finishing their round.

Killary Boat Tours

Killary Boat Tours offer a 90 minute cruise around the Killary Fjord, which offers spectacular views of the 12 Bens and Maam Turk Mountains to the South, the Mweelrea Mountains to the North, and the surrounding bog. The Fjord is also host to mussel farms and circular salmon farms, which are included on the tour. The area is rich in history, as it is on the 'famine trail' which residents used to travel to large towns to receive food aid during the famine. The landscape featured on the tour is also of interest to geologists, as the fjord is the result of glaciation which also formed the surrounding mountains. This tour covers multiple fields of academic interest, including history, geology, ecology, and marine farming practices.

Delphi Adventure Centre

Delphi Adventure Centre offers several interactive ways in which visitors can become familiar with the Connemara landscape. The Centre is located in the heart of the Delphi Valley near Leenane, County Galway. The Centre offers several activities that allow visitors to get outside and experience the land and sea, and to learn about their surroundings in the process. Courses such as bushcraft survival teach participants how to use their surroundings to survive in the wild, while other courses such as kayaking, canoeing and stand up paddle boarding let participants

experience the Irish sea in a new way. The Bog Challenge gives participants a unique experience with the Connemara bog, by getting up close and personal with the boggy landscape. The Adventure Centre would be a fantastic and fun learning experience for those who would like to know more about Connemara ecology, botany, oceanography, and forestry.

Available Activities

Zip N Trek
Tunneling
Bog Challenge
Rock Climbing
Abseiling
Archery
Bushcraft Survival
Mountain Bike & Trail Ride
Kayaking
Surfing
Coasteering
Sea Kayaking Tour
Stand up paddle boarding
Canoeing

Killary Adventure Centre

Killary Adventure Centre overlooks the beautiful Killary Fjord, and offers a wide variety of outdoor activities that immerse visitors into the landscape of Connemara. Activities such as hill walking, orienteering, and gorge walking help visitors to familiarize themselves with the Connemara landscape in a hands-on fashion, rather than only engaging with it from a car. Sea activities such as kayaking and wakeboarding allow participants to engage with the fjord in a dynamic atmosphere. The Centre also offers powerboat tours of the fjord, that feature mussel farming and chats with the mussel farmers. This unique experience introduces participants to Irish maritime culture, and gives them information on the history of mussel farming in the area. The hill walking paths also include the Famine Trail, which allows visitors to gain a visceral understanding of what life was like for those hiking the trail in the 19th century. The Killary Adventure Centre offers a unique opportunity for visitors to 'learn through the soles of their feet' while exploring Connemara.

Available Activities

Abseiling Tower
Hill Walking
Archery
Orienteering
Killary Challenge
Zip Wire
Rock Climbing & Abseiling
Giant Swing
Laser Combat Games

Turf Challenge
Clay Pigeon Shooting
Paintball
Kayaking
Gorge Walking
Raft Build
Waterskiing
Wakeboarding
Speed boat trip

Places To Eat

Clifden

Abbeyglen Castle Hotel

€€€ High-quality three-course meals served in the beautiful hotel dining room. The Abbeyglen is known for top-notch service, providing an elegant dining experience complete with live music. Booking is essential.

DerryClare Restaurant

€€ Excellent food in a cozy setting of dark wood and stone. Fantastic pizza and pasta options, as well as other seafood, meat and vegetarian choices. Takeaway pizza is also available.

-- Can take up to 30 diners in upstairs section of restaurant. Can take up to 36 diners downstairs, but they will be spread out across the restaurant. Pre-arrange 2 or 3 course dinner menus. Email derryclarelive@gmail.com

Guys Bar & Snug

€€ One of the most popular dining establishments in town, for good reason. Offers high quality pub grub with homemade soups, beef and guinness stew, and daily roast dinner specials, as well as pizzas and fresh seafood. Very busy in the summer months!

Mannion's Pub

€€ Wonderful pub food in a newly refurbished dining area with an open fire. Offers pub fare such as fish and chips, Irish stew, and Connemara mussels, at good value and a high standard.

Marconi's

€€€ Lovely two and three-course meals, with a variety of seafood, meat, and vegetarian offerings. Seafood is locally sourced, as is the Connemara lamb on the menu. Consistently great food, and don't skip dessert! Reservations are advised.

-- Can take up to 50 diners in private room. Pre-arrange 2 or 3 course dinner menus. Email info@foyleshotel.com

Mitchell's Seafood Restaurant

€€€ Widely known as having some of the best seafood in town. Serves fresh locally caught seafood, as well as meat and vegetarian main course options. Offer two and three-course menus as well as a la carte. Reservations are advised.

-- Can take up to 35 diners in upstairs section of restaurant. Order off of standard menu.

Station House Hotel

€€€ Wonderful three-course meal options, with gorgeous presentation and attentive service. Features fresh seafood, meat, and vegetarian options. There is also a large function room available for bigger groups. Reservations are advised.

Music in Clifden

**Most pubs feature live music in Clifden, but some of our favorites are below

Griffin's Bar

Features wonderful nightly traditional Irish music sessions in a cozy setting next to the fire in the front room, and hosts the town's only disco in the back room on the weekends.

Lowry's Pub

Features some of the best traditional Irish music sessions in town. Always a lively, buzzing atmosphere, so arrive early to get a good seat! Try a new whiskey from their extensive whiskey selection.

Mullarkey's Bar

Located in the basement of Foyle's Hotel, Mullarkey's has fantastic live music including acoustic singer-songwriter, rock, blues/soul, bluegrass, in a cozy comfortable setting.

Near Glengowla Mines

Powers Thatched Pub

€€ Fabulous food in a friendly setting. Rory and his staff will make you feel right at home. Ideally situated on the main road between Galway city and Connemara

The Boat Inn

€€ The Boat Inn is situated in the main town square of Oughterard, although the town is very small so everywhere is central. Yet again you'll find great food and friendly staff here. It does very good pub grub as well as lovely sandwiches and salads

The Greenway Cafe

€€ This is a hugely popular cafe with both tourists and locals due to the great quality of food. Almost all of the ingredients are locally sourced and the desserts are all homemade

Inisbofin

The Beach (Day's Bar)

€€ High quality pub grub, in a gorgeous setting right next to the pier. Features fresh local seafood, well-accompanied by Irish craft cider and beers from the extensive drinks menu. Also hosts a lovely outdoor seating area for sunny days.

The Dolphin Hotel

€€€ Delicious three-course meals served in the hotel restaurant, known for fresh seafood and homemade desserts. Freshly caught lobster and Connemara lamb are highlights of the menu, enjoyed with a panoramic view of the sea.

Murray's Pub (The Doonmoor Hotel)

€€ Great pub food, with massive portions, so nobody leaves hungry. Features fresh local seafood; when crab is on the menu, it was in the sea the same day. Wonderful homemade brown bread, and home baked desserts.

Inishbofin House Hotel Restaurant

€€€ Truly high quality three-course meals, showcasing local seafood, fresh steaks, and homemade desserts. Offers fresh and interesting menus in a fine dining setting. The hotel pub also serves lovely food at lower prices.

Music on Inishbofin

The Beach (Day's Bar)

Features both traditional Irish music as well as rock bands, with a high quality sound system. A great spot for music, always lively crowds and tunes going late into the night. Day's is handy for those visitors staying on the East end of the island.

Murray's Pub

Features fantastic traditional Irish music, from local musicians as well as bands that are brought in from the mainland. Sessions in Murray's are some of the best in the West, where dancing and singing from the crowd are common events. Live music is on most nights during the summer season.

Aran Islands

-Inis Mór

Aran Islands Hotel

Teach Nan Phaidi

Ti Joe Wattys

-Inis Meáin

Inis Meáin Restaurant

An Dun

-Inis Oirr

Teach an Tae

Tigh Ned

Rorys

Near Cliffs of Moher

Stonecutters Kitchen

Cullinans Seafood Restaurant