

1 - Bastion at Kilkenny

Irish: Cill Chainnigh 'Cell or church of [Cainnech](#)/Canice'

Was first founded as an early 6th Century church. It was a monastic site for several hundred years. The Norman's invaded the area in the 12th century and invader Richard Strongbow built a castle. The town itself was developed by William Marshall who built a series of walls to protect the wealthy. The original church area was known as Irishtown while the Anglo-Normans typically lived inside the protective walls. In 1609 King James I of England granted Kilkenny a Royal Charter officially making it a city. The bastion is part of the fortification of the walls.



2- Clonmore Village

Clonmore, is a small village in County Longford, located in the midlands of Ireland. Its name means “big meadow.” But it began declining in the early 20th Century, like so many other villages, as people moved away from the rural areas and into the cities. Today, Clonmore is a quiet village with a population of only about 150 people.

3- Curraghmore

Curraghmore, meaning “great bog” in Irish, is a historic estate established in the 12th century by the De La Poer family, as a land grant by Henry II in 1177. It is located near the village of Portlaw (which was established in the early 1800’s) in County Waterford, Ireland. The De La Poer family has owned the land since and is the oldest family home in Ireland. In 1704 the male line of the De La Poers died out so it went to the female line.

The estate has continuously been remodeled and updated. Since the 18th century, Curraghmore has been the property of the Marquis of Waterford and is now the private home of the 9th Marquis. Private tours can be booked through their website.

4 - Gougane Barra

Gougane Barra, meaning ‘the rock-cleft of barra,’ is located in the Shehy Mountains, County Cork, Ireland. It is the source of the River Lee. Gougane Barra was named after St. Finbarr, who established an early monastic site on the island in the lake in the 6th Century. Its remoteness was the attraction and during the Penal Laws this same remoteness provided a place for local Irish to attend Catholic Mass in secret.

In 1938, a small forest park (1.42 sq kilometers) was established in the valley. Today, there are remains of an old hermitage (remains from the 1700’s) on the island along with a tiny church, built in the 19th Century, used as a wedding chapel.

5 - Inishturk

A small island off the west coast of Ireland about nine miles off the coast, Inishturk shows evidence of human settlement back to the Neolithic period, around 4000 BC. In the 6th Century AD a monastery was built on the island. Many Irish islands had monasteries due to their isolation from the mainland which reduced distractions and brought peace. The peace was shattered when the Vikings began raiding the coasts and islands of Ireland at the end of the 8th century before moving inland and eventually settling and creating many of the cities of modern Ireland including Dublin, Cork, Limerick, Wexford and Waterford. The island has been permanently inhabited since the late 17th century.

Today Inishturk is home to about 60 people who cater to fishing and tourism.

6 - Lough Inagh

Lough Inagh, meaning “lake of the place of ivy” in Irish, is located ~14 miles east of Clifden in the Inagh Valley. It is nestled in the heart of the Connemara region in County Galway in the west of Ireland. Mountain ranges are to the west (The Twelve Bens) and east (Maumturks range). Mainly fed from Gleninagh and Tooreennacoona rivers, the Lough eventually flows out to sea from Bertraghboy Bay.

Lough Inagh is a little over a square mile of water, and has eight islands within it. Their names tell the story of the fauna in the area like: Deer Island, Eagle Islands, Crow’s island, and Otter Island.

The Connemara region of Ireland is noted for a high concentration of Gaelic speakers, beautiful and harsh rugged landscape, and is the origin of the Connemara pony (believed to be descendants of Icelandic ponies from the Vikings and/or the extinct Irish Hobby). Small and hardy, these ponies were able to thrive in the harsh environment and enabled the people to as well, pulling plows, carrying turf from the boglands and hauling seaweed to fertilize.

7 - Lower Lough Erne

Named after ancient population group called Érainn or the goddess Érainn: lake of (the goddess) Éirne; anglicized to Erne. Similar to Éire, from which Ireland is named.

Lower Lough Erne is one of two lakes that make up Lough Erne, located in County Fermanagh, Northern Ireland. The lakes are part of River Erne where it widens. The two lakes have over 150 islands within. The River Erne is about 80 miles long and drains into Assaroe Lake at Ballyshannon before emptying into the Atlantic Ocean. Crannogs (manmade islands), have been found in Lower Lough Erne suggesting humans may have lived in Lower Lough Erne as early as the Mesolithic period between 4500-8000 BC. Ptolemy's map of Ireland (c. 150 AD) show a Celtic tribe (Menapii) living in the area before evolving into Irish, Scottish, and Manx tribes/clans.

It is the setting of a several legends and folklore the most famous: "The Golden Apples of Lough Erne, where a young prince must go on a quest to secure his future crown or perish. It ends with Conn-eda, the prince, interacting with Lough Erne's under-water ruler, a King of the FirBolg. Conn-eda went on to become king and the land prospered under his rule.

8 - River Erriff

The River Erriff flows through County Mayo. It begins in Maumtrasna mountain with Aasleagh Falls near its mouth (meaning grey waterfall). The River Erriff runs 21 miles before emptying into the sea at Killarney harbor in the west. The Vikings used the river delta to gain access inland. The area, specifically the river, is designated as a Special Area of Conservation by the European Union's Habitat Directive due to it's Atlantic salmon habitat.

Among many species that make the River Erriff their home, two in particular stand out: The European Eel and the freshwater pearl Mussel. Both are critically endangered. The River Erriff is known for fishing, specifically salmon and trout, with deep pools for the fish.

Legend of the Salmon of Knowledge: Once a man, Fintan turned into a fish during the great flood and was able to survive for over a thousand years gaining all the knowledge of the world. His knowledge would transfer, if caught, to whomever ate him. One day Fionn Macumhail caught the magical fish and while cooking the salmon for his master, the fish slipped burning Fionn who stuck his thumb in his mouth to cool the burn. He gained all the knowledge in the world.

9 - Torc Mountain

Torc Mountain is 1755 ft high and means "wild boar" in Irish. Part of the Mangerton Mountain Group, it is made of 400-million-year-old Devonian Old Red Sandstone. Just down from the mountain, the base of Muckross lake, is made of only 100-million-year old carboniferous limestone. At some point, a tectonic-plate collision occurred and the land under Torc was lifted, exposing the ancient red sandstone we see today.

The first inhabitants of Torc mountain and the surrounding area were the Beaker Folk, named for their distinctive bell-shaped beakers. Arriving around 2000 BC, they were copper miners and metal workers

who traded with the continent. Beaten gold collars have been found in the Mangerton mountains and can now be seen at the Dublin National Museum.

Fast forward 4000 years, and the beauty of the area remains much like it was, mostly because it is one of the few places that has been continuously covered by woodland for over 10,000 years. In 1932 the land was donated to the Irish Free State and became the first national park in Ireland. In 1981 the park was designated a UNESCO Biosphere Reserve.

It has a hiking path from Torc Waterfall to the top of the mountain with views of the Lakes of Killarney, MacGillycuddy's Reeks and Muckross House/grounds.

10 - Torc Cascades

Torc Cascades (waterfall), within Killarney National Park, County Cork, its name in Irish meaning 'cascade of the wild boar' is about 66 feet high with a 360-foot cascade. It is formed by the Owengarriff River as it drains from Devils Punchbowl lough in Mangerton Mountain. Torc waterfall is located on a fault line (Muckross to Millstreet Fault Line – see Torc Mountain). It is the start of a hike (hill-walking in Ireland) to the top of Torc Mountain.

It's name comes from a legend: A man was cursed by the devil to turn into a boar every night. When his secret is discovered by a nearby farmer, he burst into flames. The boar flung himself into Devil's Punchbowl Lough to distinguish the flames and the lough overflowed its banks creating Torc waterfall and hiding the boar's cave.