

# MY LIST OF DO NOT MISS PLACES IN IRELAND!



## **Brú na Bóinne Visitor Center (Newgrange and Knowth), Co. Meath, 30 miles NE of Dublin.**

The Brú na Bóinne Visitor Center is designed to present the archaeological heritage of the Boyne Valley, which includes the megalithic passage tombs of Newgrange and Knowth. The Boyne Valley Mounds at Newgrange, Knowth and Dowth were built around 3200BC making them older than Stonehenge in England and the Pyramids of Giza in Egypt. The Center contains extensive interpretative displays and viewing areas. For more detailed information, go to [www.knowth.com](http://www.knowth.com)



## **Kilmainham Jail, Dublin**

[http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Kilmainham\\_Gaol](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Kilmainham_Gaol)

One of the largest unoccupied jails in Europe, covering some of the most heroic and tragic events in Ireland's emergence as a modern nation from 1780s to the 1920s. Attractions include a major exhibition detailing the political and penal history of the prison and its restoration. The tour of the prison includes an audio-visual show.



## **National Museum of Ireland, Kildare Street, Dublin**

[www.museum.ie](http://www.museum.ie)

Opened in 1890, the National Museum of Ireland, Kildare Street contains artifacts dating from 7000 BC to the 20th century. The archaeological collections consist of *The Treasury*, featuring outstanding examples of Celtic and Medieval art such as the famous Ardagh Chalice, Tara Brooch and the Derrynaflan Hoard. *Ór - Ireland's Gold* features the finest collection of prehistoric gold artifacts in Europe. *Prehistoric Ireland* introduces the visitor to the everyday culture of prehistory. *Viking Age Ireland* focuses on Irish Archaeology from 800-1200 AD. *The Road To Independence* is a fascinating exhibition which deals with Irish history at the time of independence, 1916-1921. *Ancient Egypt*, the most recent addition to the range of exhibitions, gives visitors a glimpse of a multifaceted civilisation. You can also hop on the Museumlink bus to visit any of the locations of the National Museum of Ireland at Collins Barracks, Kildare Street or Merrion Street.



## **Glendalough, Co. Wicklow**

[www.sacred-destinations.com/ireland/glendalough](http://www.sacred-destinations.com/ireland/glendalough)

With its famous round tower, the name Glendalough comes from the Irish Gleann Dá Locha which translates to "The valley of the two lakes". It was here that St. Kevin founded a monastery in the sixth century. From this beginning the site grew to become famous as a centre of learning throughout Europe. The settlement continued to expand for 600 years and was destroyed in 1398. The buildings which survive date from the 8th and 12th centuries. The most famous is, of course, the round tower which survived along with a cathedral, stone churches and decorated crosses.



## **National Library of Ireland, Dublin**

[www.nli.ie](http://www.nli.ie)

The National Library of Ireland was founded in 1877 based on collections from The Royal Dublin Society. The National Library holds an estimated 5 million items. There are collections of printed books, manuscripts, prints and drawings, photos, maps, newspapers, microfilms and ephemera. The library's research facilities are open to all those with genuine research needs. In addition to research facilities, services include a regular program of exhibitions open to the public and a Genealogy Service. The Genealogy Service assists those who wish to carry out family history research in Ireland but who are not familiar with the relevant records and procedures. It is a deposit library under The Copyright Act and a deposit center for the publications of many international organizations. The library aims to acquire all printed material and manuscripts by Irish people, or relating to Ireland. It is the recognized Irish bibliographic center.

The library incorporates the Genealogical Office and the Heraldic Museum, and is located on Kildare Street in the centre of Dublin, near Trinity College.



## **Trinity College Library, Dublin**

**Book of Kells - [www.bookofkells.ie](http://www.bookofkells.ie)**

The Book of Kells was written around the year 800 AD and is one of the most beautifully illuminated manuscripts in the world. It contains the four gospels, preceded by prefaces, summaries, and canon tables or concordances of gospel passages. It is written on vellum and contains a Latin text of the Gospels in insular majuscule script accompanied by magnificent and intricate whole pages of decoration with smaller painted decorations appearing throughout the text. The manuscript was given to Trinity College in the 17th century and since 1953 has been bound in four volumes. It has been on display in the Old Library since the 19th century. Two volumes can normally be seen, one opened to display a major decorated page, and one to show two pages of script.



## **Cliffs of Moher, Co. Clare**

[www.cliffs-moher.com/](http://www.cliffs-moher.com/)

The Cliffs are 9 miles long and 700 feet high. It is here that one can most easily get a feel for the wildness of the terrain over which the Celts wandered, for although they built imposing castles, very often they preferred the outdoor nomadic life and enjoyed the hunt. O'Brien's Tower is the best location from which to view the Cliffs. The tower was built in 1835 as an observation point for the hundreds of tourists who even then visited the Cliffs. It was built by Cornelius

O'Brien, a descendant of Brian Boru (the High King of Ireland at the turn of the 1<sup>st</sup> Millennium), and for the O'Brien's of Bunratty Castle, Kings of Thomond.



### **Dun Aonghasa, Aran Islands, Galway**

[www.galway.net/galwayguide/visit/aran/about/](http://www.galway.net/galwayguide/visit/aran/about/)

Perched spectacularly on a cliff overlooking the Atlantic ocean, this is the largest of the prehistoric stone forts of the Aran Islands. It is enclosed by three massive dry-stone walls and a "chevaux-de-frise" consisting of tall blocks of limestone set vertically into the ground to deter attackers.

The fort is about 900m from the Visitor Center and is approached over rising ground.



### **Clonmacnoise**

(just off the main Dublin-Galway road), in Co. Offaly

[www.sacred-destinations.com/ireland/clonmacnoise](http://www.sacred-destinations.com/ireland/clonmacnoise)

An early Christian site founded by Saint Ciaran in the 6th century on the banks of the River Shannon. The site includes the ruins of a cathedral, eight churches (10th-13th century), two round towers, three high crosses and a large collection of early Christian grave slabs. The original high crosses and grave slabs are on display in the Visitor Center. There is an audio-visual show as well as a number of exhibitions.

**Clonmacnoise was the one site that Pope John Paul II requested be on his itinerary on his 1978 visit to Ireland.**



### **Rock of Cashel, Tipperary**

[www.cashel.ie](http://www.cashel.ie)

A spectacular group of Medieval buildings set on an outcrop of limestone in the Golden Vale including the 12th century round tower, High Cross and Romanesque Chapel, 13th century Gothic cathedral, 15th century Castle and the restored Hall of the Vicars Choral. Attractions include an audio-visual show and exhibitions.



### **Kylemore Abbey, Co. Galway.**

[www.kylemoreabbey.com](http://www.kylemoreabbey.com)

The only Irish home of the Benedictine Nuns, Kylemore Abbey is in a spectacular setting and was built originally as a Castle in 1868. It is one of the best examples of Irish neo-gothic architecture, and the estate features include a Victorian Walled Garden, restored Abbey reception rooms, Gothic Church, tranquil walks, craft shop, pottery, and restaurant.



### **Céide Fields, Mayo -**

[www.museumsofmayo.com/ceide.htm](http://www.museumsofmayo.com/ceide.htm)

Beneath the wild boglands of North Mayo lies Céide Fields, the most extensive stone age monument in the world; field systems, dwelling areas and megalithic tombs of 10,000 years ago. In addition, the wild flora of the bog is of international importance and is bounded by some of the most spectacular rock formations and cliffs in Ireland. The Visitor Center houses displays and exhibitions in English and Irish.



### **Strokestown House, The Irish National Famine Museum, Strokestown, Co. Roscommon**

[www.strokestownpark.ie](http://www.strokestownpark.ie)

Strokestown Park House is an 18th century Georgian Palladian mansion which has been faithfully restored. It is unique in that it retains its original furnishings and fabrics from the 19<sup>th</sup> century. The House was the family home of the Pakenham Mahon family and is built on the site of the 16<sup>th</sup> century castle, home of The O Conor Roe Gaelic Chieftains. The Landlord Major Denis Mahon was assassinated in November 1847 at the height of The Great Famine and it is fitting that The Irish National Famine Museum was established at Strokestown Park in 1994 using the unique original documents which came to light during the restoration of The House. The experience also includes access to the Strokestown Park Walled Gardens.



### **The Giant's Causeway**

[www.giantscausewayireland.com](http://www.giantscausewayireland.com)

The Giant's Causeway, declared a World Heritage Site by UNESCO in 1986, is located in north Co. Antrim on the northeast coast of Ireland, about two miles from Bushmills, home of the famous whiskey. The Giant's Causeway is an area with about 40,000 interlocking basalt columns, the result of an ancient volcanic eruption. The tops of the columns form stepping stones that lead from the cliff foot and disappear under the sea. Most of the columns are hexagonal, although there are also some with four, five, seven and eight sides. The tallest are about 39 ft high. The Giant's Causeway is the most popular tourist attraction in Northern Ireland.