

WEST COAST

GALWAY



Galway or 'Gaillimh', as it's known in the native Irish language, is situated on the picturesque west coast of Ireland. It is one of the five counties in the province of Connacht. It gets its name from the River Corrib that formed the western boundary of the earliest settlement, which was called Dún Bhun na Gaillimhe.

With its reputation, association and close links with the Irish culture, language, music, song and dance traditions, Galway has become fondly known as Ireland's Cultural Heart. The county is well known for its "Irishness", due to its designated Gaeltacht regions throughout the county. A Gaeltacht region is an area where its inhabitants largely speak the native Gaelic Irish as their first language. Galway has the largest population of remaining native Irish speakers in Ireland.

Apart from often being termed Ireland's Cultural Heart, Galway also bears the nickname of 'The City of the Tribes'. The nickname derives from the '14 tribes' of merchant families who came to positions of authority and led the city in its Hiberno-Norman period after c.1450. The most prominent of these 14 tribes was the Lynch family, who provided 84 mayors to the city. The other families included; Athy, Blake, Bodkin, Browne, D'Arcy, Deane,

Ffont, Ffrench, Joyce, Martin, Morris and Skerritt. The crests of these prominent Galway families can be seen below. It is understood that the first inhabitants in the Galway region arrived over 7000 years ago. Studies of shell middens highlight the existence of people in the area as early as 5000 BC. Before County Galway became an official entity around 1569 AD, the county was made up of several kingdoms and territories. The kingdoms included Aidhne, Uí Maine, Maigh Seóla, Conmhaícne Mara, Soghain and Máenmaige.

CLIFFS OF MOHER



At the westernmost edge of Ireland, the rugged Cliffs of Moher tower almost 702 feet above sea level. Considered by many to be the absolute best place to visit in Ireland, this jagged coastline stretches for five miles along the ocean. There are surely few places in Ireland more dramatic than the striated limestone cliffs, which are constantly being lashed by the Atlantic waves and winds.

When not shrouded by thick, gray fog and sheets of rain, it's possible to see as far west as the Aran Islands (the view from the top is one of the most iconic in the world). For many, Ireland's unmanicured western coast is something of a dream trip – and the Cliffs of Moher are often a highlight.

Cliffs of Moher Safety Tips

Regardless of when you plan your vacation, be sure to pack a rain jacket and sturdy, weatherproof walking shoes. At best the path is

paved with gravel, and welcoming weather conditions can give way quite suddenly to rain and wind.

Strong winds are often experienced on trips to the Cliffs of Moher, but visitors will be notified of particularly hazardous conditions. If you see a "Status Yellow" sign, continue on your visit with extra caution. If the site has posted a "Status Orange" or "Status Red," it is unsafe to approach the cliff's edge.

Typically, however, visitors are asked to remember the old Irish saying, "there is a lot of weather in a March day." Bouts of fog and rain can quickly be replaced by clear skies and sunshine, as weather rolls quickly across this island.

Visitors with small children are encouraged to stay in the designated viewing areas, behind the waist-high walls, and on the gravel-paved pathways.