

Donegal

Killybegs

A Cruise Destination of Excellence




Ireland



It gives me a great deal of pleasure and pride to be asked to pen a foreword to this brochure which outlines the magic and mystery of one of Ireland's jewels, the North West coast and specifically, Killybegs.

The name Killybegs comes from the Gaelic or Irish – Na Cealla Beaga (The Little Cells) referring to a group of monastic cells. It is believed that the monks, who inhabited these cells, were the first settlers to grace these lands and it was they who dedicated a well in honour of St. Catherine of Alexandria. St Catherine is the patron saint of Killybegs and also the patron of all seafarers, confirming the rich seagoing tradition for which the town and the surrounding region are famous.

I have had the pleasure of representing this area in the national parliament or “Dáil” since 1987. In that time, Killybegs has seen many changes but aspects of the town which remain unchanged are its legendary hospitality as well as the wonderful, unspoiled natural hinterland of the area.

Since cruise ships started berthing in the town in the recent past, the community in Killybegs along with the local tourism authority have gone to extraordinary lengths to give visitors a special and heartfelt Donegal welcome. I am confident that each and every visitor arriving in Killybegs will remember the authentic experience for all the right reasons.

You will have the pleasure of dropping anchor in an area rich in culture and heritage, peppered with wonderful historic castles and scenic national parks where bustling modern urban centres are juxtaposed with picturesque villages where the pace of life isn't quite what city dwellers are used to....

The traditional “céad míle fáilte” (one hundred thousand welcomes) is par for the course here while the highest sea-cliffs in Europe located at Sliabh Liag - within a modest drive of Killybegs - are a breath-taking spectacular sight and a must see for one and all.

Do enjoy your time with us, I extend you the warmest of Donegal welcomes and please feel free to return and tell everybody about us.

Sincerely,

Mary Coughlan TD

Tánaiste and Minister for Enterprise, Trade and Employment



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St. Johns Point



KILLYBEGS HARBOUR CENTRE

The New Killybegs Harbour Centre opened for business in May 2004
The Harbour centre is located in County Donegal on the North West Coast of Ireland

Its position, at the tip of a deep fjord-like inlet, makes it one of the safest, most sheltered, deep-water harbours on the Irish coast.

- The harbour operates at ISPS Level One
- There are no tidal, beam or draught restrictions
- It is an all weather port with perhaps only 1-2 days of fog per year
- Access to the Harbour is extremely safe (minimum of 20m water along approaches)
- The port is open for business 365 days a year
- Tugs available on request

VESSEL RESTRICTIONS

- > **No gross tonnage restrictions**
- > **Max Draft: 12m**
- > **Max length: 300m**




BERTHAGE

- In total there is in excess of 1km of berthage at the pier
- 300 meter of berthage at 12m water MLWS
 - 150 meter of berthage at 9m water MLWS

Killybegs is the primary fishing port in Ireland with ever increasing commercial traffic e.g. Cruise Liners. As such excellent support industries exist. General ship supplies, ship chandlery and ship repairs are available locally e.g. boatyard facilities, electronics, hydraulic, engine repairs etc.

HALF DAY AND FULL DAY TOUR OPTIONS

Half Day Sample Itinerary

Delightful Donegal Town	Donegal Bay By Waterbus	Wild Donegal & Glencolmcille
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Donegal Castle ◆ Franciscan Abbey Ruins ◆ The Diamond Donegal Town 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Donegal Bay Waterbus ◆ Donegal Town 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Glencolmcille Folk Village ◆ Scenic Drive – Malin Beg to include Sliabh Liag some of the highest sea cliffs in Europe
		



Leisurely Landscapes

- ◆ Scenic drive – Dungloe
- ◆ Scenic drive – Crolly
- ◆ Irish Pub & Traditional Music



Belleek Pottery & Donegal Town

- ◆ Belleek Pottery Factory & Showrooms
- ◆ Donegal Town



Full Day Sample Itinerary

Gracious Glenveagh	A Day In Yeats Country	Maritime Tours Coastline
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Glenveagh Castle ◆ Glenveagh National Park ◆ Picturesque Devils Glen 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Enjoy The Yeats Trail including Drumcliffe Cemetery ◆ Sligo Town 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Tailor made tours along the Donegal Coast Line
		



Killybegs - Suggested Looped Walks

- (4kms): **i** ★ Mass Rock & Countryside
- (3.5kms): **ii** ★ Megalithic Tomb, Stone Fort.
- (8kms): **iii** ★ Scenic Costal Walk (Some Hills To Climb)
- (8kms): **iv** ★ Windmills, Thatch Cottages (Steep)
River, Lake & Forest (Off-Road In Parts)
- (3.5kms): **v** ★ Small Bridge, River And Countryside
- (7kms): **vi** ★ Countryside, Views Of Town, Boats & Piers, Tomb (Steep In Parts)

* The above walks are unmarked and are essentially self-guided. We advise people that the routes are shared with traffic and to take appropriate care when walking and to be seen/wear high visable clothes etc. We also remind people to take particular care especially where they cross national primary routes/busy roads.

★ Starting Point A - Town Centre ★ Starting Point B - Cornmons School

- 1** Well
- 2** Tombs
- 3** Fort
- 4** Tomb
- 5** Megalithic Tomb
- 6** Fort
- 7** Mass Rock
- 8** Old Church
- 9** Kit's Castle
- 10** St. Catherine Well
- 11** Megalithic Tomb



TOP ATTRACTIONS

BELLEEK POTTERY VISITOR CENTRE

www.belleek.ie

Established in 1857 Belleek Pottery is one of Ireland's oldest and most historical potteries. The building features a museum, tea room, video theatre, showroom and a guided tour of this unique craft in production. It is also home to the world famous Belleek Fine Parian china.

DONEGAL CASTLE, Donegal Town

The centrepiece of Donegal Town is without a doubt O'Donnell's Castle better known as Donegal Castle by the banks of the river Eske. The castle was built by Hugh Roe O'Donnell in 1474 when he also built the Franciscan Friary further down the river Eske.



DONEGAL GARDEN TRAIL

www.donealgardentrail.com

Enjoy over 20 spectacular gardens throughout Co. Donegal. The visitor shall see a broad selection of gardens, large and small, old and new, and all successfully coping with the changing climate and the natural topography of this county.



DONEGAL BAY WATERBUS. THE PIER, Donegal Town

www.donegalbaywaterbus.com

Enjoy a trip around Donegal Bay with lively commentary from skipper Billy Bustard taking in the sights of Donegal.

DONEGAL TOWN

Donegal Town is of great historical interest. Situated at the point where the River Eske flows into Donegal Bay, this bustling small town is still very popular and an ideal base from which to explore the south and west of county Donegal.



FATHER MCDYER'S FOLK VILLAGE MUSEUM, Glencolmcille, Co Donegal

www.glenfolkvillage.com

Several thatched cottages represent the way people in this southwest corner of Donegal lived during the 18th and 19th centuries.

GLENVEAGH NATIONAL PARK AND GARDENS, Churchill, Letterkenny, Co Donegal

www.glenveaghnationalpark.ie

The atmospheric Scottish castle overlooking Lough Beagh lures visitors to this top attraction with its mountains, lakes, glens, woods and herd of red deer and much more.



KILLYBEGS LOOPED WALKS

- see map centre pages

Explore any of the six looped walks around Killybegs discovering the beautiful area and deep history it has to offer. The walks vary in length from 3.5kms - 8kms.

KILLYBEGS MARITIME AND HERITAGE CENTRE

www.visitkillybegs.com

Situated within what was once the famous Killybegs Carpet Factory, the heritage centre is home to the largest hand-knotted loom in the world. The Centre offers a unique experience in the Fishing and Carpet making history for visitors who venture to the shores of this picturesque town.

MASS ROCKS & NEOLITHIC TOMBS

The area around Killybegs abounds in archaeological and historic sites including Mass rocks and Neolithic tombs.

SLIABH LIAG (SLIEVE LEAGUE), Teelin, Co Donegal

Some of the highest sea cliffs in Europe situated on the southwest coast of Donegal. The marine cliffs are one of the most thrilling sights in the whole country. Listen to the story of the Giant's table and chair from local award winning story tellers (by arrangement).

SLIABH LEAGUE CULTURAL CENTRE (VISITOR CENTRE)

Ionad Cultúrach Sliabh Liag, Teelin, County Donegal

www.sliabhleague.com

The Cultural / Visitors Centre featuring Ti Linn, a unique Coffee shop and Craft Gallery Tourist Information Centre. Car and Coach parking. Bus service to Slieve League viewing point. Archaeological Resource Unit. Craft Workshops, conference & seminar rooms. Hill walking, Archaeological Tours, Tourist Guide providers.

THE FOUR MASTERS, Donegal Town

The Four Masters are commemorated in Donegal town by a 25ft monument of local stone. This monument celebrates the names of the Four Masters who began work on the Annals of the Kingdom of Ireland in the early 1600's.

MALIN HEAD

Malin Head on the Inishowen Peninsula is the most northerly point of Ireland.



YEATS TRAIL

"Come away, O human child!
To the waters and the wild..."
W.B. Yeats was born in 1865 in Dublin. His life was devoted to writing and to raising the consciousness of the Irish nation through his art. Those of us who love grand old houses, magnificent scenery, a fine flavour of Irish culture and great stories, simply should not miss this tour.

ENJOY SOME TIME AT THE CAPTAINS TABLE

"As we approached the pilot station at Killybegs, I always recall the first time I brought the Saga Ruby here back in 2006. At the time we were the biggest cruise ship to use the pier and the whole town turned out to see us. So I am always warmed by the local hospitality and friendliness and I always enjoy Killybegs, as I know we are going to be looked after well. As we sailed away, I gave three long blasts on the ships whistle to say farewell to the port until the next time and thank you for all their help. I took the ship close to Slieve League Cliffs at the western extremities of the coast line. Impressive cliffs to say the least and this was an area where the Sunderland and Catalina flying boats would practice their target bombings in readiness for U boat hunting. In fact the cliffs are called "The Targets" by the locals."

Captain Alistair McLundie, Rose

"The same warm welcome I received some three years ago was delivered by the local Killybegs tourist office. I was apparently recognised quite easily as they have my picture in their office, accepting a presentation on behalf of the ship during my last call on Saga Rose, but one did say I looked older with my beard. I guess I would have looked a little older anyway, didn't really need reminding though. The small town, just a stone throw away, is Ireland's premier fishing port and there were many boats, large and small, tied up alongside in front of us. In fact they (Killybegs) seem to have it just right, a good deep water berth, friendly people and good tours. When chatting to a few passengers later they all had a wonderful day. Dancing and music performed by a local junior band on the quayside suitably rounded off the call and there was much waving as we slipped away, sounding a final three long blasts on the ships whistle"

Captain Philip Rentell, Ruby



Killybegs Cruise Committee



KILLYBEGS TOWN WALK

Enjoy the colourful story of Killybegs from medieval times to modern day with a leisurely walk around this historic town

- The town walks takes about ninety minutes and you will be accompanied by a qualified entertaining and informative guide.
- Gradients are gentle and on footpaths.
- You will visit a holy well, churches and the home of the world famous Donegal Carpets
- You will hear about the towns association with the Spanish Armada and the long history of fishing.
- You will be literally walking on water!

St Catherines Well

St Catherine's Well is situated on the west side of the town. November 25th is designated as St Catherine's Day and pilgrims from far and wide visit the well; there is a strong belief in the curative properties of its water. The well retains its special air of prayerful solitude for all who make a visit.

St Catherine's Old Church & Burial Grounds

Near to St Catherine's well are the ruins of St Catherine's Church, thought to go back to the 12th Century. On the hill above is the Tower of Kit's Castle, the manor house built by Bishop Patrick McMonagle around 1355. Several Bishops of the Raphoe Diocese lived there.

Bruach na Mara

This Philadelphia type town house on St Catherine's Road was built in the early 1900's. Today it is the headquarters of the Killybegs Fishermen's Organisation. The building was once the retirement home of Bishop John Bernard Mac Ginley of Killybegs.

Memorial Garden

The Memorial Garden was created as a millennium project to honour the memory of all those who lost their lives at sea. At the side of Tara Hotel is the site known as Dodd's Garden and was used as a public hanging area.

Midway refreshment stop:

A relaxing Irish Coffee in one of the hotels and check out the Craft Fair

Or Sit and enjoy the full view of the Harbour with tea and homemade scones

Or Check out the Catch of the Day

Murray Lodge

This building was erected in 1860 as male and female schools to replace the earlier Lady Anne Murray's Charity

School for girls, built in 1842. Lady Anne was the wife of Alexander Murray, the then landlord of Killybegs, who also provided the site for St Mary's R. C. Church.

Coastguard Station

This large cut stone military-style building looking out over the harbour is the former Coastguard Station. This building was erected in 1867

Hang Mans Lane

The route taken by people hanged for petty crime

St John's Church of Ireland

The building of St John's Church commenced in 1825 and it was consecrated and dedicated to St John on June 6th 1828

The Mc Swyne Grave Slab

This 16th Century style carved stone slab was brought from the Friary at Ballysaggart, St John's Point.

St Mary of the Visitation RC Church

The foundation stone of this church was laid on February 2nd, 1842. The first mass celebrated was Midnight Mass on Christmas Eve 1844. When the Church was nearly ready the community had no money for the stained glass windows. The women of the parish went together and made lace, which was sent to America and sold and this is how the windows were paid for.

Old Niall Mór School

Originally this building was St Catherine's Church until the present St. Mary of the Visitation Church opened. It then reopened as the Niall Mór School and was the original town school until the new Niall Mór School was built.

Bridge Street

Before the main street was built this was the main street in the town and housed most of the important buildings such as the church, school, courthouse, a hotel, shops and boarding houses. This street holds the record of having the smallest houses in the whole of County Donegal

Corn Store (Fawltys Bar)

This building was originally a corn and grain store dating from the late 18th Century. Ships delivered cargoes of grain directly to the store at high tide, and this was before the present main street was built. The store was used by the Government to hold Indian meal for distribution during the Great Famine. End your walking tour by enjoying an Exhibition of traditional Irish Dancing which is usually held at 3.00pm in the Bay View Hotel.



ACTIVITIES AND SPECIAL INTEREST

FOOD TO SAVOUR

Savour the hidden paradise of Donegal's high quality contemporary restaurants and enjoy some of the finest seafood and natural produce that can be sourced on the Atlantic seaboard. Sample good food, authentic dishes and cuisine that is truly delicious. It is a place where the rich wilderness and rugged landscape provide only the freshest of local produce.

GOLF

There are a variety of golf courses throughout Co Donegal. You are never more than a short drive from a fine golf course. The magnificent links courses along the Atlantic seaboard exploit the spectacular coastal scenery and beaches to the full and provide some of the most challenging and exhilarating golf in the world. Some of the parklands play over fairways adorned with ancient mature trees. Others encompass natural water features and all enjoy the spectacular views of Co Donegal.

WALKING

Get your walking boots on Donegal has something for everyone! There are a series of looped and way marked trails walks around the county to enjoy. Explore any of the six looped walks around Killybegs suitable for all types of walkers. Experience the Blue Stack Waymarked way located on the doorstep of Donegal Town. Embrace the magnificent unspoilt scenery of the glens, quiet valleys and the spectacular sea cliffs along your journey.

THE GAELTACHT

Donegal is home to Ireland's largest Gaeltacht (Gaelic speaking area), where Ireland's social and cultural traditions are safeguarded and eagerly promoted. Irish is still widely spoken in everyday life and traditional music and traditions are very strong. The colourful areas in Donegal's north west and south west form Ireland's second largest Gaeltacht region.

TRADITIONAL CULTURE

For the best of traditional Irish culture visit County Donegal. You won't have any difficulty in tracking down a music event, be it a traditional music and dance show, concert or pub session. Why not spend the perfect afternoon or evening in a local music venue or lively pub? If you're feeling energetic, get your dancing shoes on and join in - you can learn the steps as you go. There's something to suit all ages.

DID YOU KNOW?

- ◆ 16 out of 41 American Presidents have come from this small regional area (We wonder is it something in the drinking water!)
- ◆ George W Bush can trace roots back to the region. Mr Bush's ancestor on his mother's side was William Gault, who was first citizen of Tennessee in 1796, and came from the region.
- ◆ Did you know that 8 of the 56 signatories of the American Declaration of Independence on July 4th 1776 were from this small region.
- ◆ The great Seal of America was designed by Charles Thomson from Derry, who was Secretary of the American Continental Congress between 1744 and 1789. He was also despatched to inform George Washington that he was to be the first American President.
- ◆ Enya grew up in this area, her parents still live here, and the unique environment and landscapes have inspired much of her mystical Irish compositions.





Sliabh Liag: courtesy of Matt Britton

Contact Details

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Disclaimer

Every care has been taken in the compilation of this guide to ensure accuracy at the time of publication. The publisher cannot accept responsibility for printed errors or omissions, or alterations occurring after the guidebook has been published.

Map of Killybegs

Courtesy of Colourstorm & Killybegs Maritime & Heritage Centre

