

Cork

Overview

Cork is the largest of the Irish counties, located on the south western coast of Ireland near the counties of Kerry and Waterford and possesses some of Ireland's most stunning scenery. A major seaport, the city of Cork is the third largest city in Ireland after Dublin and Belfast, born in approximately 606 AD when St. Finbarr, (patron saint and founder of Cork) founded a monastery here. Today the triple-spined French Gothic St Finbarre's Cathedral, designed by William Burgess, now stands on the spot. The center of Cork lies on an island, formed by two channels of the River Lee. The river is spanned by several bridges, which alongside the narrow alleys and the Georgian architecture of the old quays give the city a continental character.

From its origins as a monastic settlement, Cork is the only Irish city that has undergone all the steps of urban development in Ireland. Enlargement by the Anglo-Normans and again by English colonists in the 1500's and 1600's gave way to wider streets and delicate town houses were during its remodeling by the Georgians and Victorians, and the industrial revolution has left its mark in the docks and warehouses. Even now it is undergoing suburban growth and inner-city renewal.

The villages of Cork are most welcoming and the whole area is almost completely untouched. Known predominantly for riding, fishing and historic architecture the Blackwater River Valley dominates the landscape in North Cork. East Cork is known for having some of the best food in Ireland as well as some amazing golf courses.

Among Cork's attractions are the Crawford Municipal Art Gallery, one of Cork's finest building, and Fitzgerald Park, home to the Cork Public Museum and St. Anne's Church with the famous Bells of Shandon. Others include the 17th century English Market Bishop Lucey Park, St. Francis Church, the South Mall and Cork City Gaol. Blarney Castle

A short distance from Cork you'll find the world famous Blarney Castle. Legend has it that by kissing the Blarney Stone, the kisser will acquire a magical eloquence. Whiskey lovers will be thrilled by the Old Midleton Distillery and if food is your thing, a visit to Kinsale, a quaint seaside town renowned for its gourmet cuisine, is a must.

Cork has also a variety of art centers and is home to numerous Festivals. Among its other riches is the spectacular surrounding countryside, especially along the valley of the River Lee