WELCOME TO WEXFORD

The beautiful, historic and diverse county of Wexford is located on the most southeasterly corner of the island of Ireland. Wexford is one of Ireland’s top places to visit and holiday boasting 275 kilometres of coastline with golden sandy beaches, rocky headlands, cliffs and nature preserves plus vibrant towns and a calendar filled with festivals.

Heritage runs deep in Wexford; exploring this Cornerstone of Ireland’s Ancient East and journeying through the unspoiled landscape, hearing first hand the stories that built Ireland is a ‘must’.

Vikings certainly made their mark in Wexford, bearing down from Scandinavia, hordes of wild wayfarers first arrived in the 8th century to loot and pillage. But we’ve a lot to thank them for, they also laid the foundations of many Irish towns – including Wexford, which was founded by the Vikings in about 800 AD. They named it Veisafjuror, inlet of the mud flats and it remained a Viking town for about 300 years!

In 1169 the Normans arrived in Ireland onto the shores of Wexford at the request of the recently ousted High King of Leinster whose seat was located in the village of Ferns, Wexford; they arrived to help Diarmait Mac Murchada battle for his kingdom.

Today, Norse and Norman influences combine in Wexford, a town that has retained its compact, medieval feel – though the only invading hordes you are likely to encounter these days are the opera buffs descending on the town for the annual international Wexford Festival Opera.

The Norman town of Enniscorthy, heritage town of New Ross and bustling Gorey all combine to provide a jam packed county with fascinating visitor attractions, beautiful coastline and everything you need to enjoy your visit.

Presuming you are travelling by car rather than longboat, routes connecting the highlights of the Cornerstone of Ireland make for some great driving trips, ranging from the towns themselves to all the rivers, beaches, festivals, castles, forts, abbeys and cafés in-between.

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Wexford Tourist Office
Wexford Town
(053) 912 3111
Wexford town is a lively place, where you can experience a wonderful café culture and fine dining, along with a vibrant arts and culture calendar with something for all. A visit to the famous National Opera House of Ireland is a must along with taking a walking tour to enjoy the town's rich heritage and visitor attractions. If you're looking for some spectacular coastal vistas take a short trip out of town to Rosslare strand or the famous sands of beautiful Curracloe beach... if it looks familiar, it is, as it served as the spectacular Omaha Beach in the film Saving Private Ryan aswell as featuring in the film Brooklyn.

Locals and visitors love to visit the beautiful and peaceful fishing village of Kilmore Quay. The village is noted for its whitewashed thatched cottages and friendly atmosphere. A favourite with anglers, wildlife lovers and families; fishing boats ferry day-trippers out to the famous Saltee Islands from the quay taking in the sea life and gain an alternate view of the rugged coastline.

Take in the expansive coastal view the tip of the Hook Peninsula affords from the top of the world's oldest operational lighthouse ‘Hook Lighthouse’. Travelling inland to the quayside of nearby New Ross town, shake hands with the life-size statue of President Kennedy along the ‘The Emigrant Trail’. Experience the smells and sounds of a 1840’s emigrant vessel aboard The Dunbrody and visit the Ros Tapestry for an insight into our Norman history. From New Ross head inland to Enniscorthy town, described in Ulysses as ‘the finest place in the world’, an early Norman town dating back 1,500 years. Straddling the River Slaney, Enniscorthy played a key role in Ireland’s struggle for independence. A visit to the battlefield at Vinegar Hill, the Norman Enniscorthy Castle and the National 1798 Centre is a must! The towns streets are picture perfect, a feature which saw Enniscorthy used as the town for all of the Irish street scenes in the much acclaimed Brooklyn movie.

Making your way north to the market town of Gorey you happen upon the historical village of Ferns, featuring prominently on Ireland’s Ancient East and boasting the 13th century Ferns Castle. The whole history of modern Ireland stems from Ferns – Diarmait Mac Murchada, King of Leinster invited the Normans in 1169 to help him fight his battles. This significant Norman connection has earned Ferns the title ‘Gateway to Norman Wexford’. Also in the north of the county the picturesque town of Buncloody is snuggled in the breathtaking parkland of Mount Leinster. Buncloody is a pretty town where the Slaney and Clody Rivers meet in the valley of the Blackstairs Mountains, this is an outdoor enthusiasts paradise.

The most northerly located town of Wexford is the bustling market Town of Gorey, its Market House and Square sets the tone of a town just 6 minutes from the blue flag Courtown beach & Ballymoney beach and minutes from hill and woodland walks. Nearby are some must-see sites including the stunning Victorian Wells House with its expansive gardens and Wexford Lavender farm, two of a myriad of nearby attractions and activities.
Heritage of Wexford
An age-old gateway into Ireland, County Wexford is steeped in history dating back to the Stone Age, over 6,000 years ago. Journey through time and meet our ancestors - Celts, Christians, Vikings, Normans, French, Welsh and English - who have left us a remarkable heritage, unrivalled anywhere else in Ireland. Wexford’s history, culture and magnificent landscape is presented to you in a very special way, on the Wexford Heritage Trail.

Visit castles, churches and abbeys, battlefields, historic towns and villages, great houses and gardens, windmills and forts. Explore the world’s oldest lighthouse, Ireland’s biggest open-air museum, and it’s most famous Famine Ship! Discover a landscape rich in biodiversity, from unique coastal habitats to the famous Wexford Wildfowl Reserve, a haven for wildlife and one of the most important wildbird reserves in the world.

True Irish Craft
Design and craft in Wexford is ever-growing; a wonderful craft trail enables locals and visitors to ‘meet the makers’ offering an insight into 19 different craft makers on a driving route right across the county featuring galleries, craft workshops and exhibition spaces. Milliners, potters, weavers, wood turners, sculptors and jewellers all feature across the trail, offering visitors an opportunity to view a broad variety of traditional crafting skills.

The Norman Way
In 1166, Diarmait Mac Murchada was ousted as King of Leinster, fled Ireland and sought help from Henry II. Henry gave Diarmait permission to recruit mercenaries and authorised his subjects to help Diarmait. In May 1169 the Normans first arrived to Ireland at Bannow Bay in Wexford. They set about conquering Leinster and the territories Diarmait had claimed sovereignty over.

This intriguing tale of the journey from invaders to becoming ‘More Irish than the Irish themselves’, can be rediscovered along the gems on the Norman Way of Wexford - it will win you over as we did the Normans all those years ago.

What better way to begin your discovery of our beautiful county than by exploring some of Ireland's most popular and iconic landmarks on Ireland's Ancient East and journey the expansive Heritage Trail, Norman Way, Emigrant Trail, Garden Trail and Craft Trail or hike off the beaten track on one of Wexford's Walking Trails.
GARDENS GALORE
The Wexford Garden Trail features over 15 beautiful gardens; some originally laid out in the 18th and 19th century while others were begun just 10 years ago. The larger public gardens provide an ideal outing for all the family, while the smaller private gardens will give you not only an enjoyable and relaxing afternoon, they will also introduce you to the large range of plants grown in this temperate region.

THE EMIGRANT TRAIL & THE KENNEDY STORY
Wexford has unique Irish American links being the ancestral home to President John F. Kennedy. Visitors can explore this connection through the ‘Emigrant Trail’ visiting the Kennedy Homestead, the JFK Memorial Park and the Emigrant Flame and Dunbrody Famine Ship, a replica of the famine ship which his great grandfather left Ireland aboard.

GOLF
From traditional links to parkland, country club to heart-of-town, golf in Wexford offers a choice and variety that is hard to match anywhere. Even in Ireland, which has carved out a reputation over the last decade or so as a “golfer’s paradise”, it is hard to trump the offering that Wexford can come up with.

CYCLING
Wexford is a beautiful county full of breathtaking coastlines, stunning countryside and historic sites. A number of wonderful looped cycling routes are already in place across Wexford and for cross-country and downhill mountain bike riders a visit to Kilbrannish just outside Buncloidy is a must. The trails are forever evolving and contain loads of exciting single track.

WALKING TRAILS
A selection of beautiful walks through varied countryside awaits you in Wexford Walking Trails - wooded walks, historic walks, coastal walks, and mountain walks. You can choose a different walk each day and savour the varied beauty of Europe’s most western isle. A selection of 20 different walking trails are on offer across Wexford.

A guide to activities in Wexford, cycling routes, trail walks and golf courses can all be found on visitwexford.ie

BEACHES
Wexford boasts golden sands stretching across 275km of spectacular coastline. If it’s surfing, kite-surfing, a sand castle making session or a secluded coastal walk Wexford has a beach for all enthusiasts. For a fun filled family beach day a visit to Courtown, Kilmore or Rosslare Strand is a must or enjoy the almost exotic white soft sands of Morriscastle Strand or Curracloe Beach, for a surfing adventure take a trip to Carnivan or for a secluded picnic discover Dollar Bay and many more ‘not so secret’ spots!
THE CORNERSTONE OF IRELAND’S ANCIENT EAST

HOOK HEAD LIGHTHOUSE
Experience 800 years of light keeping at one of the oldest lighthouses in the world. Take a tour of the Medieval lighthouse tower, built in the 13th Century by William Marshal, the Earl of Pembroke, known as the Greatest Knight that ever lived. Still fully operational today, Hook Lighthouse truly is one of a kind! Guided tours take you through the lighthouse with fascinating insights, stories and facts of this unique building & enjoy the spectacular view from the Lighthouse balcony; keep an eye out for seals, dolphins and even whales!

KENNEDY HOMESTEAD
The Kennedy Homestead, birthplace of President John F. Kennedy’s great grandfather, celebrates the story of this famous Irish American family. The visitor experience is set in the original farmyard incorporating a unique guided tour; audio-visual display and photographic exhibition.

THE DUNBRODY FAMINE SHIP
The Dunbrody Experience and replica Emigrant Ship is situated on the Quays of New Ross Town. The characters of the ship bring the story of the Irish Famine and emigration to the ‘New World’ (America) to life in a gripping tale taken from the annals of the ship reflecting on the experiences of real passengers.

JOHN F KENNEDY MEMORIAL PARK
Dedicated to the memory of John Fitzgerald Kennedy, President of the United States from 1960 to 1963, the Arboretum contains over 4,500 types of trees and shrubs covering 623 acres.

IRISH NATIONAL HERITAGE PARK
A visit to the Irish National Heritage Park is like no other you can imagine. Surprises await around every turn from campsite to Ringfort, from mill to Fulacht Fiadh, from Crannog to Viking house and more. Take an incredible journey through 9,000 years of Ireland’s past! Build a house of wattle, pan for gold or even shoot a Viking bow or just relax with a coffee beside the lake. With entertaining guided tours available, the world you enter is an authentic recreation of Ireland’s heritage.

DUNBRODY ABBEY AND VISITOR CENTRE
Dunbrody Abbey was founded on the instructions of Strongbow, the 2nd Earl of Pembroke, Dunbrody Abbey was built in the late 12th Century; the largest of its kind and it is one of the finest examples of a Cistercian abbey still standing in Ireland today. It flourished as a Cistercian monastery until the Dissolution of the Monasteries under Henry VIII. The visitor centre hosts a Hedge Maze, a Craft Gallery with the Dunbrody Castle Dolls House, tea rooms and a pitch & putt course.

JOHNSTOWN CASTLE
The harmony between great Victorian revival castles and their surrounding ornamental grounds is rarely seen to such perfection as at Johnstown Castle. The full gothic glory from the 19th century has to be seen. It flourished as a Cistercian monastery until the Dissolution of the Monasteries under Henry VIII. The visitor centre hosts a Hedge Maze, a Craft Gallery with the Dunbrody Castle Dolls House, tea rooms and a pitch & putt course.

WELLS HOUSE & GARDENS
Wells House & Gardens is a great Victorian house and gardens offering something for all generations of visitors from a living Victorian house tour, garden tours, falconry, archery, two enchanted woodland walks, craft courtyard, animal farm or enjoy an adventure in the playground. Open daily with a great calendar of events to choose from throughout the year! Enjoy lunch or desserts from their on site restaurant as part of your visit.

HERITAGE TOWN OF ENNISCORTHY
The heritage town of Enniscorthy features a number of prominent sites in Ireland’s history including Enniscorthy Castle, which explores the development of the castle and town from its earliest 12th Century Anglo-Norman origins, through the 16th century.

THE NATIONAL 1798 VISITOR CENTRE
The National 1798 Visitor Centre in the shadow of the historic battlefield on Vinegar Hill tells the heroic tale of the 1798 Rebellion and its aftermath using the latest multi-media and interactive exhibits.

THE HISTORICAL VILLAGE OF FERNS
Ferns Castle and Tapestry, a 13th century castle and although a shadow of its former glory now, features a uniquely intact fine circular chapel with original cornices and features. A guided tour will reveal amongst others the story of the resident King of Leinster ‘Dermot McMurrough’ who brought the first Normans to Ireland.

LOFTUS HALL
Experience an interactive tour and insight to Loftus Hall, the most haunted house in Ireland. The 1870’s abandoned mansion on the Hook Peninsula with a dark and troubled history is a must visit. Take the guided tour of the ground floor and hear the history and Legend of Loftus Hall!

TINTERN ABBEY
Founded by the greatest knight that ever lived ‘William Marshal’ Tintern Abbey is a magnificent example of a 17th century abbey and was one of the most powerful Cistercian foundations in the South East of Ireland. It is also home to the wonderful Colclough Walled gardens and a variety of walking trails.
A calendar full of festivals, events and cultural activities are on offer year round, so there is always something fun to see and do in Wexford.

The International Wexford Festival Opera takes place in Wexford town annually during October and November coinciding with the annual Wexford Fringe Festival – offering a variety of entertainment and cultural events.

In the summer season a series of fun-filled festivals take to the streets including the Wexford Strawberry Culture and Food Festival in Enniscorthy and the Wexford Food and Wine Festival in Wexford town. Wexford’s unique U.S. links are celebrated during Irish America Day in New Ross each July fourth. Enjoy an open-air fashion show, live music and Family Fun Day at the Market House Festival in Gorey during the August Bank Holiday Weekend.

The Maritime Festival celebrates the life of Commodore John Barry, a Wexford-man and founder of the American Navy and offers a variety of maritime activities.

Enjoy a fun-filled weekend for all the family at Jest Fest with a host of street theatre and comedy on offer across Wexford town or take to the streets of Enniscorthy for the Rockin’ Food Festival with beats and eats for all rhythms and tastes.

At the world’s oldest working lighthouse ‘Hook Lighthouse’ enjoy a celebration of all things maritime from great local seafood to seaside crafts to heritage and sea life!

Each mid-summer the quaint fishing village of Kilmore Quay celebrates the Kilmore Quay Seafood Festival: with its famous seafood platters, entertainment and family fun days!

The Art in the Open Festival celebrates ‘Plein Air’ painting, with a host of paint outs, workshops with international artists, and culminating in a giant art exhibition.

The Wexford Spiegeltent Festival on Wexford town quayside hosts a variety of marvels and wonders, the best in music, comedy, opera, theatre, film and kids’ shows in a giant Victorian style circus tent – it is a festival like no other!

Wexford Winterland sees a joyous celebration of the festive season with ice-skating, festive movies and a wonderful traditional Christmas market in Wexford Town. Fun filled festive events also take place in New Ross, Enniscorthy and Gorey towns with lots of fun on offer for all the family.

For a full list of Wexfords vibrant festival and events calendar see visitwexford.ie
From surfing to sailing and fishing to quad biking and archery there is a fun challenge for all enthusiasts in Wexford.

_Sailing Ireland_ offer yacht charter and sailing training, sight-seeing trips to the magnificent Saltee Islands, family group sailing holidays and radio and navigation courses.

Enjoy a spot of trout fishing at the tranquil _Loch Mahon Lakes_, which offer a variety of three spring fed lakes, with two lakes dedicated to fly-fishing.

Take a trip to the seas with _Kilmore Angling_, and enjoy a six-hour trip, eventing trip, a short evening fishing trip or a boat trip around the Saltee Islands, spotting whales and dolphins.

_Off the Hook_ with Martin Colfer offer brilliant whale-watching tours aboard the Rebecca C off the Southeast coast. When the whales have left our shores, angling trips are on offer aboard the vessel.

Try out some kitesurfing or stand-up paddle boarding in Duncannon with _Hooked Kitesurfing_. Year round the KiteSurfing Centre offers lessons in the safe and shallow waters of Duncannon Beach.

_Kilmokea Gardens_ has something for all the family. Take a stroll through the 7 acres of unspoilt woodland gardens, where you will find a Tree Fairy Village, a Viking Settlement & Norman Motte, 3D Archery and much more.

_Wells House and Gardens_ offer a variety of fun adventure activities on the grounds of the estate like a 3D archery course in a separate woodland, have a Go archery, falconry, individual Hawk Walks, woodland walks and clay pigeon shooting every Saturday.

_Saltee Cruises_ offer wonderful sightseeing trips around the famous islands; enjoy birdwatching and nature watching.

Looking for an adrenalin rush? Then head to _Shielbaggan Outdoor Education Centre_ to enjoy some outdoor education, rock climbing, high ropes, caving, coasteering, surfing, kayaking, canoeing, archery, team building, orienteering and hillwalking.

_The Irish National Heritage Park_ have a fun-filled activity list on offer; try your hand at archery, spear throwing, coracle boats, viking shield making, guided tours, stay in a ringfort or pan for some gold!

_Quad Attack_ offer an all-weather adventurous cross country driving course plus an indoor activity crazy corral, sumo wrestling in a bouncy castle, bungee run and a rodeo bull.

_At Leisure Max_ try out some bowling, zorbing, bungee run, sumo, table tennis, climbing wall, gladiator, football pitch, play centre and pillow basher.

For some fun in the surf head to _The Surf Shack_ at Curraclcloe beach, with experienced instructors, you will be surfing in the sunny southeast in no time!

Your extreme adventure high ropes course starts at _Courtown Adventure & Leisure Centre_, take to the heights of the Gravity Forest Park and zip through the treetops. Also enjoy laser tag, archery and a swimming pool with 65-meter giant water slide.
New Ross Coarse Angling at Oaklands Lake is a magnificent 4.5-acre man-made lake situated just outside the town of New Ross in the beautiful County Wexford.

Rosslare Watersports Centre at Rosslare Strand offers group and individual lessons in windsurfing, kayaking and sailing plus a variety of summer camps.

Wexford Wildfowl Reserve is one of Ireland’s premier nature reserves run by National Parks & Wildlife services. The visitor centre offers unique views of wild geese and other birds from the tower.

For a wonderful afternoon visiting animals and enjoying rural life take a trip to the wonderful opens farms of Kia Ora Mini Farm near Gorey or enjoy the fun zone and adventures at Blackwater Open Farm just outside Enniscorthy or meet the Meerkats and many more animals at the Secret Valley Wildlife Park near Enniscorthy.

Wexford Lavender Farm - a working arable farm in the family since the 1950’s, you can take a tour at your leisure and enjoy the wonderful fields of lavender.

The beautiful Kilmore Quay, a small fishing, village is noted for its white- washed thatched cottages and relaxed and friendly atmosphere. A favourite with anglers, wildlife lovers and families, fishing boats ferry day-trippers out to the famous Saltees Islands from the quay.

Wexford offers a wonderful variety of accommodation and dining. Visitors can enjoy a selection of accommodation from pretty cottage rentals, bed and breakfasts, camping to luxury hotels, a five- star destination spa and everything in between.

The tales of hospitality are legendary, the county is home to several wonderful traditional Irish pubs the type that will draw you in and encompass you in an atmosphere that will make you feel more Irish then the Irish themselves. The ‘craic and the ceol’ will ensure that you leave Wexford with a warm, welcoming feeling ensuring a return visit.

The café culture of Wexford is abundant, offering many ideal spots to take a street-side chair and enjoy the hustle and bustle and friendly atmosphere. From a street side cuppa to Michelin dining, there’s a variety on offer for all tastes.

The entire county is renowned for its local produce. Combined Gorey, Wexford Town, New Ross district and Enniscorthy and in-between offer a complete dining experience for all tastes. Whether it is a local “farm to fork” feel you are looking for or perhaps a fusion of European or Asian cuisine there are plenty of restaurants to cater for all palettes.

For details on the variety of accommodation, restaurants and cafes in Wexford see visitwexford.ie
Getting to Wexford

Wexford is ideally positioned in the most southeast and the sunniest corner of Ireland! Dublin is a 1 hour 30 minute drive with full motorway access the nearby City’s of Waterford and Kilkenny are within an hour’s drive of Wexford town.

By Road:
Wexford is just over 1 hour 30 minutes from Dublin. Simply follow the N11 all the way, plan your route from anywhere in Ireland on aaireland.ie

By Rail:
There are multiple rail connections between and Dublin with multiple daily services to five trains stations across wexford, for ticketing and timetables see irishrail.ie

By Bus:
Wexford Bus is the ideal way to travel around County Wexford operating up to 29 daily services between Dublin Airport, Dublin City, Arklow, Gorey, Enniscorthy and Wexford Town and has regular services to New Ross and Waterford City. The Wexford Bus connect service operates around Wexford town every 30 minutes and additional services go to the picturesque villages of Kilmore Quay, Rosslare Strand and Castlebridge. For timetables and fares see wexfordbus.com

By Sea:
Just a 10 minute drive from Wexford Town, the ferry port of Rosslare in County Wexford has daily services to and from the UK and the continent. See rosslareeuroport.ie

By Air:
Waterford Airport is 40 minutes drive from Wexford. Dublin Airport is one hour and thirty minutes drive. See waterfordairport.ie and dublinairport.com

For all of the local knowledge and everything you need to know about holidaying in Wexford, Ireland see visitwexford.ie

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WEXFORD 500 OLD, 500 NEW IRISHLAND'S ANCIENT EAST™ Wander Through Time

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