

Ireland Self Catering Holiday

# County Donegal Tourist Guide

Perfect for self catering holidays

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## County Donegal



**Donegals'** supreme appeal lies in the natural beauty of its coast, with spectacular views to rival any in Europe - though the warmth of its welcome and the sheer sense of relaxation and tranquility it exudes come a close second. Donegal is located in the north west of the country, and hosts some of the most spectacular scenery in Ireland ranging from high mountains, rivers, lakes, to precipitous coastal cliffs and a host of unspoilt golden beaches. Every conceivable outdoor activity can be pursued with enthusiasm while the county is rich in thousands of years of history and culture- it is the home of the native Irish speaking Gaeltacht region- and blessed with fine restaurants, cosy pubs characterised by their blazing open turf fires and impromptu traditional music sessions, and traditional craft shops to explore and take home a quality souvenir of what will, we promise, be a memorable holiday.

### **Donegal Town, Killybegs, Letterkenny to Tory Island**

A visit to the County town of Donegal should include a visit to **Donegal Castle**, seat of the O'Donnells, and to the **Donegal County Museum**. For specialist shopping, it's easy to spend an hour in the

Four Masters Bookshop, or selecting tweeds at **Magee's**. Browse the **Donegal Craft Village**, a mile to the south of the town, and watch the most gifted of the North West's potters, weavers and jewellers at work before succumbing to the lure of their exquisite gifts.

French and Spanish trawlers are moored in the harbour at **Killybegs** which is home to the **Maritime and Heritage Centre**. The shopping town of **Letterkenny** merits a stop, perhaps en route to the marvellous **Glenveagh National Park** - 24 thousand acres of wild moorland, forest, lakes and woods rolling down into the Valley of the **River Veagh**, Tour Glenveagh Castle, and its splendid grounds, or take the **Derrylahan Nature Trail** to watch red deer graze freely in this wild and unfettered corner of Ireland.



A sense of serenity dwells around the astonishingly beautiful **Gartan Lough**. Visit **Glebe House and Gallery**, bequeathed to the nation by the artist Derek Hill, and the **Colmcille Heritage Centre** which offers a wealth of information about the Saint and his legacy. The **Folk History Museum** in Glencolmcille in the heart of the Gaeltach region is another must-see. Weather permitting, take the ferry from **Burtonport** to **Tory Island** and discover a unique way of life.

## **Self Catering Donegal - Bundoran & Inishowen Peninsula**

The traditional seaside resorts of **Bundoran** offers world class surfing at Tullan Strand, a short distance from the clusters of amusement arcades and souvenir shops which characterise this busy family centre. Waterworld is a haven for excited children;

**Rathmullan** has an altogether more genteel air, and a marvellous beach; the nearby picturesque village of **Ramelton** is also worth a look. The **Inishowen Peninsula** comprises charming beaches dotted around the scenic Inishowen 100 drive - take in the seaside



town of **Buncrana**, charming **Fahan** with its international class marina, visit **Dunree Fort** with its outstanding cliff views for a family-friendly guide to the history of the Guns of Dunree, and stand at **Malin Head** and gaze into the windswept and rugged distance

towards the next land mass - America. For history as old as time itself, visit Grianan Fort.

## Self Catering Donegal - Golf

A little known fact is that the county of Donegal has the largest number of Links Courses in Ireland - no matter where you go in the county, you'll only be a short stroll from the best that Ireland has to offer. Donegal Town's **Murvagh Course** is a real gem, boasting an incredible situation on an exposed peninsula. The course is only accessible by the single road that leads out to the outcrop, and affords amazing views of the surrounding sandy beaches and the sea beyond. The signature hole is known as 'The Valley of Tears', a treacherous par 5.

**Bundoran Golf Club** dates back to 1894 and is a **Championship 18 hole Golf Course**. Presenting a challenging par 70, the course sweeps along the coastline with a mixture of dunes and undulating terrain. **Rosapenna Golf Links** at Downings boasts the **Old School**



**Links** where the first ten holes are classics and the last 8 play inland and uphill over high meadow. The recent addition of the testing and tantalising **Sandy Hills Links** has made this an attractive proposition for a return visit.

## Self Catering Donegal - Pubs & Restaurants

At the end of the day, there's no better way to unwind than in front of an open turf fire, dining on the finest of fresh produce - locally made cheeses, creamy butter, farls of wheaten and soda bread warm from the over, and seafood is a speciality. **Brennans** in Bundoran is as fine an example as you'll get of a traditional Irish pub with grub as is the **Singing Pub** in Downings and **McGrorys** in Culdaff. For a grander dining experience, try **Lough Eske** or **Harvey's Point**, with its breathtaking location at the foot of the **Blue Stack Mountains** and award-winning restaurant, or **Saint Ernan's Country House** overlooking Donegal Bay which offers sumptuous gourmet cooking with a local twist. **The Mill** in Dunfanaghy is an indulgent gem. Drama enthusiasts will enjoy performances at **An Grianan** and the smaller Balor Theatres.

More than just a wonderful destination, County Donegal is an experience, an atmosphere and way way of life. Spend time in the county and you'll carry home with you a sense of having experienced that elusive concept - the Real Ireland.

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