

Things to do & places to see in Meath

Updated June 2020.

- 1. Walk the coastline of Meath.** Start at Maiden Tower and walk on the beach at Bettystown, through Laytown and eventually onto Gormanston. It is a long walk but if the weather is fine then you're blessed!
- 2. Hill of Tara-** (Between Navan and Dunshaughlin) This is a wide open area of a few Kms. Plenty green fields and grass. Great views of County Meath. You can see the Cooley Mountains and the Cement Factory at Platin on a very fine day. It is an historical site- The High Kings sat there, St. Patrick was brought there and there was a famous battle there in the 1798 rebellion. Also apart from the history from the Stone Age ,Bronze Age and Iron Age;The Hill of Tara is very famous for its Evie Hone stained glass window which can be seen at the church (visitor centre) .Evie Hone was an Irish painter and stained glass artist.She is considered to be an early pioneer of cubism.
- 3. Dowth-** Between Drogheda and Slane. Like Newgrange an ancient passage tomb. It is well worth a visit especially to the climb to the top of the hill for the views around East Meath. On a clear day one can see The Hill of Tara.
- 4. Newgrange/ Knowth-** Both passage tombs are closed at the moment to the public. Keep an eye on Brú na Boinne on Facebook for more updates. When they do open, they have redeveloped the interpretative centre at Brú na Boinne so that in itself is well worth a visit. There is nothing stopping people from driving to the sites and looking at them from the road but do not enter the grounds.
- 5. Francis Ledwidge Museum-** Between Slane and Drogheda on Slane side. Home place of Francis Ledwidge, a famous poet from the area who was killed in World War 1. It is now a museum based on his life. Keep an eye on their website/ Facebook page for updates as it has not reopened yet.

6. **Trim Castle**- Norman Castle in Trim. Like Newgrange, it is closed to the public at the moment but there is nothing stopping you driving to Trim and seeing the castle.
7. **Oldbridge**- Walk around Oldbridge estate. Oldbridge house is closed for now but the grounds are open for people to walk. Can also see the Boyne Canal from here.
8. **Fourknocks**- Like Newgrange, a passage tomb between Stamullen and The Naul. It is much smaller than the passage tombs in the Boyne Valley but there are wonderful views of the other side of the hill at Bellewstown.
9. **Bective Abbey**- The ruins of a medieval Cistercian monastery between Navan and Trim on the banks of the River Boyne. Open all of the time.
10. **Balrath Forest**- Just off the Slane/ Ashbourne Road. Nice walk through the woods at Balrath.
11. **Girley Bog**- A walk through the Bog. It is a nature reserve with loads of wild flowers. Located between Kells and Athboy.
12. **Hill of Slane**- St Patrick lit a fire here and got arrested. There is a statue of St. Patrick there today.
13. **Slane Castle**- An old castle in the village of Slane. Famous these days for concerts. Some of the greats like Queen, Bruce Springsteen to name a few have played there. Not opened at the moment but keep an eye out for when they do as they offer tours of the castle itself.
14. **Hill of Skryne**- Skryne- An old Monastery and castle. Views of the Hill of Tara on one side and of East Meath on the other side. Can see the cement factory Platin.

- 15. Bellewstown Racecourse** In 1780, George Tandy, a former mayor of Drogheda and brother of James Napper Tandy, persuaded King George III to sponsor a race at Bellewstown. The race was called His Majesty's Plate and was valued at £100. The tradition of summer horse racing at Bellewstown dates back centuries. The first record of racing here appears in the August edition of the *Dublin Gazette* and the *Weekly Courier* in 1726. There was originally a cricket ground in the middle of the race track. Racing continues to occur on an annual basis. This is a lovely place with wide open spaces and a tarmacadamed track ideal for scooters/buggies/bicycles and a picnic!
- 16. Kells is on the World Heritage Tentative List** - and for very good reasons. It was once known as the "**Splendour of Ireland**" and St. Columcille and his monks contributed to keeping the light of learning alive in Europe during its Dark Ages. There is so much to see in Kells that you can even download the Kells Heritage Audio app to guide you when you get there!
- 17.** A short trip from Kells will bring you to the **7th century monastery** founded by **Ciaran the Pious**, which contains High Crosses, an Ogham Stone and more. There are three sandstone high crosses with a fourth in the river - according to legend, St. Columcille was caught stealing the cross by Ciarán and quickly dumped the cross in the river!
- 18.** Further down the road you will find **St. Ciaran's Well** - where legend tells us that the wells were formed at St. Ciaran's command and have healing powers. This well was sacred long before St Ciaran arrived in the area. The waters at Ciaran's Well carry special healing powers, the water in one of the pools is said to have been the cure of headaches, toothaches and sore throats. Bathing feet in the tiny stream that flows from the well is said to preserve them from soreness during the coming year and healing of warts. Near the well there is a chair that is said to have the impression of the saint's back, and is believed to cure back ailments.

- 19.** Ireland's only inland lighthouse, **the Spire of Lloyd**, was designed by Henry Aaron Baker (designer of the King's Inn, Dublin) for the First Earl of Bective in memory of his father Sir Thomas Taylor in 1791 and provided work during the time of a local famine. At 30m (100ft) high, on the summit of the Commons of Lloyd, from 428 ft above sea level one can see magnificent views of the surrounding countryside as far as the Mourne Mountains in County Down, Northern Ireland on a clear day. The Spire is said to have been used to view horse racing and the hunt in the 19th century. Inside there is a 164-step spiral staircase, with a central protective cage.
- 20. Loughcrew-** Ancient Neolithic Burial Chambers. Situated between Kells and Oldcastle. Sliabh na Caillighe (The Hill of the Witch) is a great place to visit; from the top you can see 18 counties - a magnificent view! You can even sit on the Witch's Chair and make a wish! The Witch's Chair is actually a Mass rock which was used during Penal Times. The sun shines into Cairn T on the equinox. This passage grave is 500 years older than Newgrange. If you're feeling very energetic, you may like to walk to Cairn L too, which is located across the road from Cairn T. You can see it from the summit of Cairn T. This is an ideal place for a picnic - rest assured, when you return home, everyone will sleep well after their day's trekking!
- 21. Loughcrew Gardens** are located 2 minutes down the road and here you will find the **birthplace of St. Oliver Plunkett**.
- 22. Moynalty Village - One of the 12 most beautiful villages in Ireland**

The beautiful village of Moynalty (*Maigh nEalta*, meaning "the plain of the flocks") is about 10 minutes from Kells town on the banks of the Owenroe River. The village was built during the 19th century by the grandson of James Farrell, and it is believed to have been based on a Swiss design.

Things to do & Places to See

In Drogheda / Louth

1. **St. Laurence`s Gate**- bottom of Laurence Street. Old gate into the town.
2. **The Tholse**- West Street- Used to be the old bank. Now the tourist office.
3. **Millmount Museum**- A museum about the town of Drogheda. It has not reopened yet but when it does this is well worth a visit. There are great views of the town of Drogheda and its surrounding areas.
4. **Highlanes Gallery**- An Art Gallery of renown. Artifacts are on display there too. Again not reopened yet.
5. **St Peter's Church**- The main church on West Street. Relics of St. Oliver Plunkett are on this display here. Including his head and hip bone.
6. **Magdalene Tower**- Magdalene Street.
7. **The old Abbey**- Just off Narrow West Street
8. **Monasterboice Monastic Site** - The High Cross
9. **Mellifont Abbey**.
10. **Townley Hall** - Go for a family nature walk around Townley Hall Woods
11. **Rathescar lake**- feed the ducks and take a nature walk around Rathescar. It's just outside Dunleer.
12. **Clogherhead Pier** - Go see the trawlers come in at clogherhead pier. You can try fishing off the pier but sometimes the sea lions eat anything you catch before you can land it!!

13. **The Greenway** - Cycle or walk the greenway between Carlingford and Omeath. There's a playground and an old castle in Carlingford too!
14. Walk the beach from **Seapoint** car park and head towards **Baltray** where you will discover the shipwreck of The Irish Trader which ran aground in 1974 during storms on The Irish Sea. Take some photos . Do some research on other shipwrecks when you get home .
15. Continue along the beach until you reach **The Little Tern Conservation Project at Baltray**. The Little Tern is one of Ireland's rarest breeding seabirds. It requires protection as it nests on the beach. Do not touch or disturb the nests but do visit BirdwatchIreland when you get home to discover more of Ireland's seabirds . It might be a good idea to bring a picnic and enjoy a full day exploring the dunes around Seapoint Golf Club.
16. You could also walk over **Clogherhead** and arrive down at the pier where you will see lots of fishing vessels , seals and very hungry seabirds. When C19 restrictions are lifted you can treat yourself to the most delicious fish and chips and ice creams which are available from a cart on the pier.
17. On Big strand at **Clogherhead** you will see the **RNLI Lifeboat station** and if you are lucky you may witness the lifeboat being launched from the beach . Neptune Watersports and Celtic Adventures operate from Clogherhead. It is also a Blue Flag beach with life guards present during the Summer months . visit Neptunewatersports.ie and CelticAdventures.ie for more information. If you are interested in famous Irish people you could do some research on Albert DJ. Cashier and discover the very interesting story of Jennie Irene Rodgers born on Christmas Day 1843 from Clogherhead .

18. Termonfeckin is also a nice village to visit .There you can discover **Termonfeckin Castle** a 15th/16th Century Tower House. In the graveyard of St Fechins Church Of Ireland you will see the Termonfeckin High Cross. Bring your camera and a sketch pad . Think of the famous residents of Termonfeckin as you walk around : Evanna Lynch (Harry Potter actress) Des Smith (Irish golfer) Molesworth Phillips (who sailed with Captain Cook)Do your own research on these people .
19. **The Irish Military War Museum**, Starinagh, Collon, Co Louth 041-9819501. This is one of Europe's only interactive Hands on Military museums. Current exhibitions on WW1, WW2, 1916 Rising, Vietnam War. A great fun day out for the family irishmilitarywarmuseum.com
20. **Long Acre Alpacas**, Ardee, Co Louth 087-6339039. This is a small alpaca trekking company with four alpacas.You trek through the great bogs of Ardee with the Alpacas. Seems it could be a fun day out. Phone ahead to book . Bring a picnic
21. **Visit the website visitlouth.ie** for lots more ideas on Summer fun and adventures in Co Louth
22. **Cúl Camps** are returning. Book soon
23. **Greenhills Summer camp** is one of the longest running Summer camps in Ireland. greenhillssummercamp.ie Book soon if interested as places are limited
24. Check out **Drogheda life.com** for more ideas on Summer activities
25. Visit the **PDST** website for great ideas /resources/ web links for fun gardening/ science ideas. Click on the link to Paddy Maddens Engage with Nature where you will meet Ireland's own David Attenborough! Get busy in your own garden, plant some pumpkin seeds and bring them to school in October for our Halloween celebrations. Chase butterflies and make some pictures!
26. <https://watersafety.ie/primary-school/>. Good to teach your children water safety before heading out to the beach/rivers/farms or anywhere there is water .All age groups are covered.

Autism and Sensory Friendly/Special Needs

1. Sensory Space Drogheda

<https://www.facebook.com/SensorySpace.ie/>

Due to re-open soon this might be an ideal place to visit over the summer Holidays.

2. Dublin Zoo gives free entry to a carer visiting with a child with special needs <https://www.dublinozoo.ie/>

You do have to book in advance at the moment but there is plenty of space and fresh air.

3. The Arc cinema will be reopening soon and they run Autism friendly screenings from time to time <http://drogheda.arccinema.ie/sensory.php>

4. Adam and Friends is one of Ireland's leading supplier for sensory and soft play areas. You can visit but pre-booking is essential <http://adamandfriends.ie/>

5. Aquariums can be a very therapeutic place for some children with autism. Sea Life in Bray will be reopening at the end of the month with limited tickets available each day <https://www.visitsealife.com/bray/> They offer discounts for visitors with special needs and their carers.