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MUMMYPAGES MUM'S
TOP EDUCATIONAL BUT
FUN PLACES TO VISIT

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THE CLIFFS OF MOHER

The Cliffs of Moher one of Ireland's most visited natural attractions. They stretch for 8km (5miles), as the crow flies, along the Atlantic coast of County Clare in the west of Ireland and reach 214m (702 feet) at their highest point at Knockardakin just north of O'Brien's Tower.

At the southern end of the Cliffs of Moher stands Hags Head a natural rocky promontory that resembles a seated woman when viewed from the north. The Cliffs of Moher Visitor Experience is located almost midway along these spectacular cliffs and the site is home to an environmentally friendly visitor centre set into the hillside, O'Brien's Tower – a 19th century viewing tower, and 800 metres of protected cliff side pathways, viewing areas and steps.

MummyPages Mum's Say:

"The Cliffs are stunning and well worth a visit, the kids were even taken aback by the beautiful scenery (and that take a lot!) There is a visitor centre, built into the hillside so as not to detract from the natural environment. It houses an interesting exhibition and virtual reality display. A really great fun but educational day out for all the family."

DINGLE OCEANWORLD

Gaze in wonder as you get up close and personal with the magnificent marine life inhabitants. Submerge yourself in the wonderful enchanted underwater world! Come face-to-face with the most fearsome creatures of the sea: sharks. Gain exclusive access to Sandtiger Sharks! Meet the delightful Polar Penguins and gets hands-on experience at the Touch Tank where you can stroke the friendly Rays and even hold a Starfish.

Located in Dingle town in Co Kerry on the Wild Atlantic Way, Dingle Oceanworld Aquarium has the WOW factor! It leaves guests in awe and is yours to be explored and enjoyed all year long.

MummyPages Mum's Say:

"Our little ones loved it here, there was face painting and a short science experiment show. Lots of feeding times listed for each hour and good informative talks. Guides and staff dotted throughout to help with any questions. Great day out!"

CHARLES FORT

This star-shaped military fortress was constructed between 1677 and 1682, during the reign of King Charles II, to protect the town and harbour of Kinsale in County Cork. William Robinson, architect of the Royal Hospital in Kilmainham Dublin, and Superintendent of Fortifications, is credited with designing the fort.

As one of the largest military forts in the country, Charles Fort has been associated with some of the most momentous events in Irish history. These include the Williamite War in 1690 and the Irish Civil War of 1922 - 23. Charles Fort remained garrisoned by the British army until 1922. Visitors are advised to wear suitable footwear due to the uneven terrain and children must be accompanied at all times.

MummyPages Mum's Say:

"We visited Charles Fort with our kids and they absolutely loved it. The grounds are kept so well and the views just stunning. The introductory talk is very helpful but was really enjoyable then to go off and explore ourselves! The exhibition centre was very impressive with informational videos - I could have stayed there all day! They have a lovely coffee shop run by a very friendly lady with a nice selection of snacks & drinks too. A lovely day out for the family!"

THE NATURAL SEA LIFE CENTRE, BRAY

The National Sea Life Centre in Bray, County Wicklow invites visitors to enjoy a journey through the magical world of underwater wildlife without getting wet! Featuring over 24 spectacular displays, the centre offers an unforgettable insight into the marvels of Ireland's freshwater and marine world, as well as the opportunity to view, at close quarters, sea creatures from the world's oceans.

Amazing creatures await you at every turn, from ferocious red bellied piranhas, to cuckoo wrasses who change sex, to seahorses whose males give birth. With over 70 different species on view, the visit culminates at a breath taking tropical shark lagoon, home to shark species such as the black tip reef and leopard varieties.

An interactive, hands-on visit for schools, groups and birthday parties. The helpful and knowledgeable staff will be on hand to answer questions and offer amazing facts about the creatures that you'll see, this is an inspiring visit for all.

MummyPages Mum's Say:

"The aquarium has lots to look at. We found the staff extremely helpful talking to all of the children explaining what was in the tanks and describing the fish. The knowledgeable staff made all the difference and all the children had a great time."

DUBLIN NATURAL HISTORY MUSEUM

Just two years before Charles Darwin published his famous work, 'The Origin of Species', the Natural History Museum in Merrion Street was opened to the public for the first time in 1857. Now, as then, it educates and inspires, leaving us feeling small and humbled amidst the vast and wondrous diversity of life on display.

This museum of museums is famous for its Victorian cabinet style, which houses one of the world's finest and fullest collections still to be seen today. Two million species, of which roughly half are insects, live side by side with, appropriately for a natural history museum, decorated and sculptured panels depicting mythological figures. This zoological museum encompasses outstanding examples of wildlife from Ireland and the far corners of the globe, some to be seen today and others long extinct.

MummyPages Mum's Say:

"As a child, I loved putting my nose up to the glass display cases & taking in as much as I could. Now, bringing my children, it's equally satisfy to see the same wonder in their eyes as they take everything in. The oohs & aahs start upon entry as the giant Irish Deers greet them.

This museum is a great way to pass a couple of hours & the museum provides a booklet that can be filled in by the kids, asking them to talk about their favourite animal of the exhibit or follow a trail to find certain shells or sharks etc."

CASTLECOMER DISCOVERY PARK, CO KILKENNY

The grounds consist of mixed woodland, on the banks of the River Deen, which was once part of the old Wandesforde Estate. There are numerous activities and attractions including the tree top adventure walk, a 140 metre walk through the beautiful riverside trees 10 metres above ground level. Discover the richness and diversity of the areas local history and science through exploration of the intriguing indoor multi-media experience 'footprints in coal' and engaging outdoor activities.

The woodlands also play host to 6 kilometres of themed woodland walks and a number of wooden sculptures. Twelve sculptures were created within the woodland, each designed to blend in with surroundings and five of the sculptures can be found scattered throughout the woodlands. The park itself is free to visit and perfect for a family day out, with its walking trails, woodland sculptures and many things to see and do throughout the year in our extensive events calendar.

MummyPages Mum's Say:

"Educational, fun and very good value for money! The children loved the play area. We particularly enjoyed the film show."

THE AILWEE CAVES

Explore a cave, watch eagles in flight and sample delicious local food products at Aillwee Cave, Ireland's premier show cave in Ballyvaughan County Clare.

Visitors to this popular County Clare attraction are escorted on a 35 minute stroll through caverns, over bridged chasms, beneath unusual rock formations and ending beside a thunderous waterfall. This stunning creation of nature was gradually formed by prehistoric Ice Age melt waters carving paths through this limestone mountain.

Burren Birds of Prey Centre, located at the foot of Aillwee Cave, features the largest display of falcons, harris hawks, owls, American kestrels and white tailed sea eagles in the country. During the breeding season visitors will be able to see young birds of prey being hand reared, learn about falconry as an ancient sport and become more aware of these magnificent indigenous species and the environmental issues involved in their protection and conservation.

MummyPages Mum's Say:

"We visited the Aillwee Caves and Burren Birds of Prey Centre on a day trip with the family seeing the sights of Clare. The kids truly loved their visit. The caves are so interesting and a very good guide takes you through the caves for the tour. They point out all the sights and interests of the caves and it is well worth a visit. We also went to the birds of prey show and needless to say the kiddies loved it! My youngest was even brave enough to get up have one of the birds on her arm!"



'SURE WHO CARES IF IT RAINS' THINGS TO DO

TUROE PET FARM

Turoe Pet Farm & Leisure Park offers hours of fun for families and young visitors, regardless of the Irish weather! Take a stroll around the 14-acre park and enjoy the tranquil countryside setting or pack the picnic hamper for an idyllic outdoor meal. A host of friendly animals await feeding and cuddling by young visitors who have a choice of two outdoor playgrounds and football pitch or the indoor play-area, complete with bouncing castles and rope ladder, for more weather-independent fun.

Over the years Turoe Farm has gained a reputation for offering an excellent 'value for money' facility and the staff always provide a first class customer service. The farm offers a unique experience for families, groups and individual outings. The latest addition to Turoe Farm is the Inflatable City which features an indoor play maze and bouncing castles, live music, light lunches and delicious home-baked refreshments served in the Country Kitchen.

MummyPages Mum's Say:

"They have an enormous inflatable play area and slide in one large building and a smaller version in another. Supervision by staff is excellent. Fast food is available. A nice walk around the farm and you can see a variety of animals and feed them. Great for kids parties. "

BUNDORAN

Bundoran has something for everyone – beautiful scenery, bustling shops and great pubs and restaurants to make this the perfect holiday destination.

With a stunning coastline and sandy beach, a wealth of activities for children, and thrilling outdoor adventure options, this jewel in the crown of the North West has something to suit all ages whatever the weather.

MummyPages Mum's Say:

"Bundoran is a great spot for all the family! There are loads of activities for all of the family to enjoy and sure if it's raining, why not go surfing? You'll be getting wet anyway."

DUBLIN ZOO

Dublin Zoo, located in the Phoenix Park in the heart of Dublin city, is Ireland's most popular family attraction and welcomed over one million visitors last year. As one of the world's oldest and most popular zoos, the 70 acre park is home to some 600 animals in an environment where education and conservation combine for an exciting and unforgettable experience.

Roam the African Savanna and spot giraffes, rhinos and zebras as you go. Hang out with the gorillas at the new Gorilla Rainforest, proudly sponsored by Freddy Fyffes, then travel through the Kaziranga Forest Trail to see the magnificent herd of Asian elephants. The Asian Forests is the newest development to open at Dublin Zoo where visitors can see Asian lion cubs, Sumatran tigers and Sulawesi crested macaques!

MummyPages Mum's Say:

"My family visited Dublin Zoo recently. We had a super day. I hadn't been in a few years but we were very impressed with the overall experience. It was clean, well laid out and the animal enclosures were large and clean. My little ones really enjoyed watching the hippo peep up out of his swimming pool and we got to see the Giraffes and Seals being fed.

I love the giraffes and was delighted to be able to get so close to hear the zoo keeper speak about the giraffes and see them being fed. We also got to see the elephants being washed and even met one of the zoo keepers that stars on the zoo programme on rte. It makes a really great day out whatever the weather"

FUNTASIA WATERPARK

A visit to Funtasia Waterpark, Drogheda will enchant small children, thrill teenagers, delight mum and dad and even keep granny happy! Only 60 minutes north of Dublin Airport on the M1, Funtasia specialises in adding the extra wow factor to all of its attractions.

Funtasia's pirates cove water park, all 35,000 sq feet of it, is heaps of fun with over 200 different activities including the spectacular superbowl. Adventure seekers will love Funtasia's extraordinary aerial assault course, the ultimate sky climb. Harnessed 15 metres above ground they can finish it off with a simulated parachute jump -if they dare. Enjoy bowling in Funtasia's Egyptian fantasy bowling alley, tackle a game of crazy golf or whiz around the roller disco while the younger ones discover the fun to be had in the Atlantis multi-storey play area with surprises around every corner.

MummyPages Mum's Say:

"The children had an absolute ball. It was really busy but completely manageable even with the queues for the water slides. After the waterpark the boys did the "sky walk" while myself and my daughter use some of the amusement arcades. After this was the bowling. All in all a fantastic day out for all the family!"

PICNIC SPOTS

MALAHIDE CASTLE

Visitors can expect an enhanced visitor experience on entering the castle, including a new Talbot Family Exhibition and interpretation area on the ground floor of the castle, friendly & experienced guides -offering guided tours in different languages. The stunning walled gardens will also be opened to the public for the first time- allowing visitors to ramble around at their own pace!

Within the visitor centre in the courtyard, a new interpretation & exhibition area tells visitors the story of the walled gardens as seen through the eyes of 'Lord Milo Talbot', the creator of the gardens and grounds as seen today. Malahide Castle, set on 250 acres of park land in the pretty seaside town of Malahide, was both a fortress and a private home for nearly 800 years and is an interesting mix of architectural styles.

MummyPages Mum's Say:

"Beautiful castle and the guide was excellent, so knowledgeable and funny. The surroundings greenery is also lovely and fantastic for a picnic and the kids got to let off some steam on the playground. Great day out!"

GLENDALOUGH

The early Christian Monastic site of Glendalough, in County Wicklow, was founded by St Kevin in the 6th century.

Set in a glaciated valley with two lakes, the monastic remains include a superb round tower, stone churches and decorated crosses. There are beautiful walks through the valley and around the lakes. The Visitor Centre, which is also within the National Park, has an interesting exhibition and an audio-visual show. Maps, guides and information on the area's cultural and natural heritage is available to visitors at the Visitor Centre.

MummyPages Mum's Say:

"We visited Glendalough with friends and the kids. It's such a great place for families to spend time together and picnic. The lakes and views are awesome. The Monastic settlement is well worth a visit. We loved it."

NEW BRIDGE HOUSE AND FARM

Newbridge Farm is home to a vast array of animals ranging from the Shetland and Connemara ponies of the paddock, to the piglets, goats and chickens of the farmyard. Access to the farm is through a cobbled courtyard designed by Robert Mack in the late 18th Century.

It is one of the few working farms where children can see pigs, and many other animals, reared in an environment where they can move about freely and express normal patterns of behaviour. Newbridge is very committed to the highest standards of animal welfare and to the preservation of many rare breeds of animals, such as the Gloucester Old Spot, which have all but disappeared due to intensive methods of farming.

Newbridge House and Farm is a terrific day out for all the family, both fun and educational. People all ages enjoy the Farm, from the piglets to Summer the Connemara foal and the gorgeous chicks of the Hatchery. Guided tours are available of the House and delicious treats are baked daily in the Tearooms open daily all year round. There are a range of seasonally themed events throughout the year such as at Halloween and Christmas.

MummyPages Mum's Say:

"Great place for walking and picnics but most of all for the animal farm. Kids just love it. Ample parking and facilities."

GLENROE FARM

This family run farm opens its gates to visitors from March to October each year. The farm offers close and easy access to a wide selection of animals and fowl, such as horses, deer, goats, sheep, pigs, cattle, donkeys, ducks, geese and hens. Pets' Corner is where young and curious visitors can find their favourite furry animal to hold including rabbits, gerbils, guinea pigs and hamsters.

A 300 year old thatched cottage on the farm has a large collection of farmhouse utensils and offers a nostalgic look at the way our ancestors lived. Children will have lots to do in the fabulous outdoor playground situated on the farm. While you relax in the coffee shop sampling a wide selection of home-made produce. Or bring a packed lunch to enjoy in the indoor picnic area known as The Piggery or outside at one of the many picnic areas throughout the farm.

MummyPages Mum's Say:

"There are lots of animals to see and all close together which is good for small children, there is also a nature walk and a pretty cool playground. The atmosphere is very relaxed and unhurried and you can bring a picnic. They have indoor and outdoor picnic tables. We really enjoyed the visit and will return again and again."

ARDGILLAN CASTLE

Ardgillan is situated on the elevated coastline between Balbriggan and Skerries and is unique among Dublin's Regional Parks for the magnificent views it enjoys.

The park consists of 194 acres of rolling pastureland, mixed woodland and gardens, overlooking the bay of Drogheda. Ardgillan, meaning high-wooded area, is a sanctuary for many species of mammals and birds.

MummyPages Mum's Say:

"We spent a delightful afternoon in the grounds of Ardgillan Castle. Beautiful place and, most importantly, it's not too crowded. The playground is fantastic, and the views over the water are just lovely – the perfect place for a picnic."

SALLY GAP

It is one of the two east to west passes across the Wicklow Mountains. Passing over the Luggula Estate and over Lough Tay and Lough Dan, the Sally Gap offers the auto tourist and the walker spectacular views of the Wicklow Mountain

MummyPages Mum's Say:

"Our favourite picnic spot is along the road from Sally's Gap overlooking Lough Tay. Beautiful scenery, so peaceful with just the occasional sheep for company."

IMAGINOSITY

The numerous exhibits at Imaginosity Dublin's Children's Museum, in Sandyford, are educationally designed to inspire life-long learning through play, celebrating children's imaginations on the journey from curiosity to discovery. Imaginosity is a unique child centred creative space for children up to nine years of age and their families.

Why not become a mechanic in The Garage, examine an x-ray in Dr Apple-a-Day's Surgery, choose the evening meal in the Village Market and cook it up at the Dublin Diner. Sing, dance and dress-up in costumes in The Theatre or present the News at the TV Station or become an engineer in the construction zone and much, much more. Weather depending, you can meet the Eco Badger in the roof top garden, and learn all about our green building and how it works.

Imaginosity champions the 'hands-on; minds-on' philosophy that encourages and enables all visitors to get involved, have some fun and create positive and lasting experiences for all the family.

MummyPages Mum's Say:

"We brought our 4 and 7 year olds to Imaginosity and we had a brilliant time. The kids loved exploring the different exhibits and the interactive play was like having a play room at home but on a much bigger scale, it was hard to get my daughter out of the market ... she loved doing the shopping. They went along to an art workshop and brought their wonderful creations home. Staff were very helpful especially since it was our first visit and we didn't know what to expect. All in all a wonderful experience."

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