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SAINT PATRICK'S COUNTRY

NORTHERN IRELAND



Northern Ireland
Tourist Board

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St. Patrick's
Country

Strangford Lough, County Down



If Ireland really is the land of Saints and Scholars then the cradle of Irish Christianity lies in Northern Ireland within the ancient capitals of Counties Armagh and Down.

It was here where Saint Patrick began his mission to Ireland, established his first church, created Armagh as the Spiritual Centre of the island and where he later died and was buried. Indeed in a part of the world where every stoney acre has a name, this largely undiscovered landscape is absolutely littered with ancient monuments which had a personal connection to Patrick. Many of the legends which are told around the

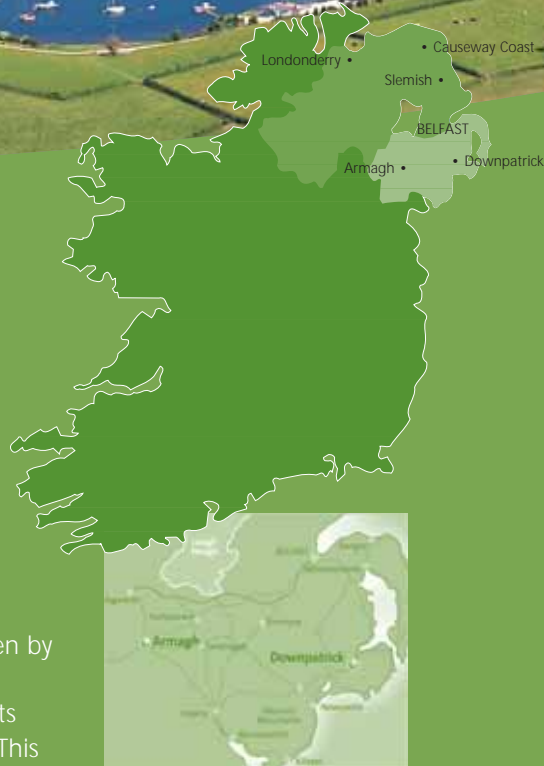
world every March were written by the monks of this region who followed Patrick in ancient texts such as the Book of Armagh. This leaflet will outline for you the wonderful sites, sounds and landscapes you can experience when visiting St. Patrick's Country.



St. Patrick's Day - Down Cathedral



Interior - St. Patrick's Catholic Cathedral, Armagh City



St. Patrick's Story

After six years, Patrick dreamed of a message from an angel called Victoricus, who urged him to escape his master. Patrick travelled nearly 200 miles, probably to Waterford, where he completed his escape.

Patrick was almost certainly born before the end of Roman rule in Britain (around 400AD), probably in the southwest of England, though the north of England, as well as Wales and Scotland, have all made claims. There have been various suggestions from biographers of his given name, including Succat. All we know for sure is that he refers to himself as Patricius, a Roman name of which Patrick is the anglicised version and this may have been his baptismal name too.

Patrick's father, Calpurnius, was a deacon who was also involved in the raising of taxes and Patrick's childhood, growing up in a large Roman villa, would have been very comfortable. 'According to the world's reckoning I was a gentleman', he writes in his confession.

Then, at the age of 15, disaster struck. With the Roman influence fading, raiders from Ireland were able to develop a thriving slave trade, often demanding ransoms for those they kidnapped. Patrick was taken by such a group to Ireland, where he was forced to work as a shepherd.

Though his writings are not precise, many biographers believe it was on the slopes of the imposing Slemish Mountain in County Antrim, where Patrick tended sheep. Today, many make the pilgrimage to Slemish Mountain (near Ballymena), visiting the interpretative centre in its foothills and walking to the top to enjoy some of the most spectacular views in Ireland.

After six years, Patrick dreamed of a message from an angel called Victoricus, who urged him to escape from his master. Patrick travelled nearly 200 miles, probably to Waterford, where he completed his escape.

Back at home, he trained as a priest and within a decade had become a bishop. Then, he had another vision of Victoricus, this time the angel was carrying letters. One of these, titled 'the voice of the Irish', begged him to come to Ireland.

In 431, generally believed to be the year before Patrick arrived in Ireland, Pope Celestine had sent Palladius, 'as the first bishop to the Irish believing in Christ'. While Palladius, who may have died soon after arriving, left no trace behind him, Patrick was to make an indelible impact on his country of adoption.

Patrick landed where the Slaney River flows into Strangford Lough (now one of the most important maritime sites in the world) in Co Down. Clearly politically astute, as well as charismatic, Patrick knew the importance of making influential friends. His first conversion was Dichu, the local chieftain and brother of the High King of Ulster. In a barn donated by Dichu, Patrick preached his first sermon in Ireland. Today on this site at Saul (Sabhal, pronounced Saul, is the Irish for barn), stands a much-visited stone replica of an early church with a round tower.



Slemish Mountain

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St. Patrick's Grave at Down Cathedral



How far Patrick travelled in Ireland and how many souls he converted can only be guessed at. In his confessions, he claims to have baptised many thousands. But Ulster was the real base of Patrick's work. And even here, it was the lovely countryside around Downpatrick, including the holy wells at Struell, plus what is now the ecclesiastical city of Armagh which seems to have been particularly important to him.

Outside of Rome, Armagh is the oldest Episcopal See in the world with an unbroken line to its foundation. At one time, the Papacy had considered moving to Armagh from Rome, due to the consistent attacks on Rome from marauding vandals. However far he travelled, Patrick's was an extraordinary achievement and one fraught with danger. 'I expect daily,' he wrote, 'to be killed, betrayed, or brought back into slavery, or something of the kind.' Survival depended on his political skills and his ability to make influential friends who were often called upon to help free him from ransom-demanding robbers.

But what about the Saint Patrick of legend, who turned enemies into animals, rid Ireland of snakes and used the shamrock to explain the concept of the holy trinity? Ireland certainly still has the shamrock, so there may be a germ of truth in the story. As for the snakes, Ireland never had any, though possibly this refers to his banishment of Satan, perceived as a serpent by Christians of the time. As far as we can tell, none of his enemies ever took animal form either!

It is difficult to be precise about the exact year of Patrick's death, though March 17th is given as the date, but it was most probably between 460 and 490 AD. Patrick received the last rites from his friend, Tassach, at Raholp near Saul and he was buried at a monastery near the site of what is now Down Cathedral.

The legend of Saint Patrick grew quickly after his death. In 688AD, the Book of Armagh placed that city at the centre of the growing cult of Patrick and he was elevated to the status of national apostle,

to intercede in heaven on behalf of the Irish. The Book of Armagh directed all monasteries and churches in Ireland to honour his memory on March 17 in what was then a largely spiritual ceremony. By 1607, the day was marked on the Irish legal calendar. Now, it had become officially Saint Patrick's Day.

It was the Norman Lord of Ulster, John De Courcy, who did most to accelerate the cult of Patrick, re-burying what were said to be his remains in the graveyard of Down Cathedral, the cathedral he built in Downpatrick (traditionally along with the relics of the two other Irish Patron saints, Columba, who brought Christianity to Scotland, and Brigid). It was De Courcy who renamed the town Downpatrick, 'the fort of Patrick.'

St Patrick's Country Locator Map



St Patrick's Country



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Saint Patrick's City

Main image:
St. Patrick's Cathedral
- Church of Ireland

Images from top to bottom:
- St. Patrick's Cathedral - Catholic
- Saint Patrick's Trian Visitor Complex.
- Armagh Public Library
- Navan Centre and Fort
- Primate's Palace (former)

Tell me more...

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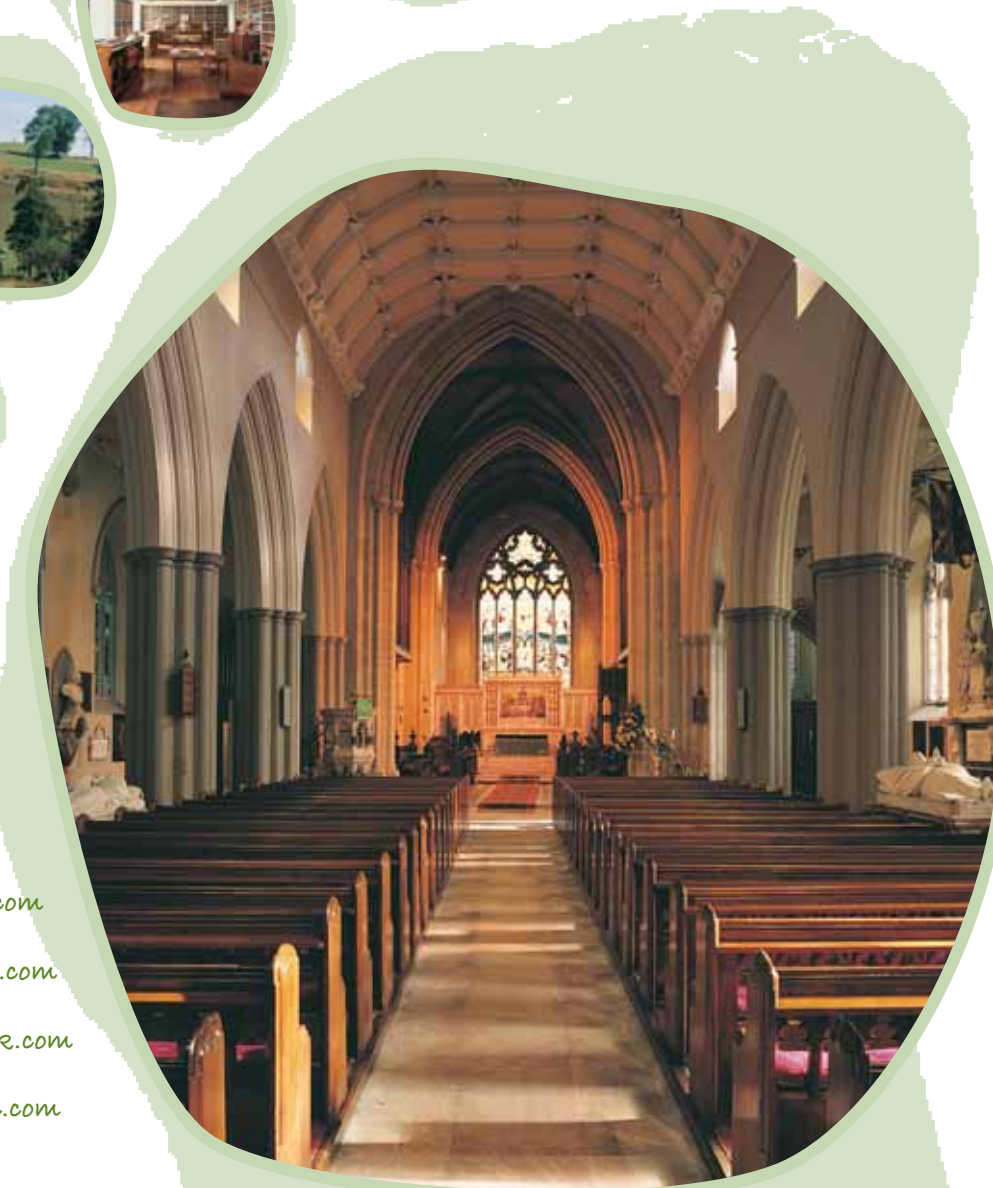
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www.saintpatrickstrian.com

www.ntni.org.uk
(The National Trust)



The spiritual Capital of Ireland for 1500 years and the seat of both Church of Ireland and Catholic archbishops, Armagh is the oldest and most venerated of Irish Cities and has a long Christian heritage. In Pagan times Armagh was the seat of the High Kings of Ulster who built the Royal mound at Navan which is an important stop on any local tour. Saint Patrick founded his chief church on the Hill of Armagh where the Church of Ireland Cathedral now stands on a site where there was a church as early as 445 AD. On the opposite hill, two large marble archbishops, who gaze across the town, flank the twin-spired Catholic Cathedral.

No visit to Armagh is complete without a visit to both Saint Patrick's Cathedrals and Saint Patrick's Trian Visitor Complex, a major visitor centre which tells the story of the city and the Patron Saint's work here. The Palace Stables Heritage Centre exhibition with its living history characters shows what life would have been like in the household of the Archbishop of Armagh in the Georgian city and Armagh County Museum provides fascinating exhibitions and archaeological finds from the Early Christian period. Anyone with a research interest in the Irish church should visit both the Armagh Public Library and the Ó Fiaich Memorial Library and Archive.

Armagh County Museum 1

Located in the centre of St Patrick's Cathedral city, a visit to Armagh County Museum is an ideal way to experience a flavour of the Orchard County. The collections include archaeological material from the tombs of Ireland's first farming communities, as well as a selection of artefacts reflecting Armagh's leading role in early Christian Ireland. The Museum also has an extensive reference library, rich in local archive material, along with photographic and map collections. With a range of changing exhibitions throughout the year, it is an ideal place to see and explore the fair County of Armagh. Admission is free.

Saint Patrick's (Catholic) Cathedral 2

After an absence of centuries the Roman Catholic Church through Archbishop William Croll (1835-49) took up residence in Armagh and the erection of St Patrick's Cathedral began on the 17th March, 1840. Work was suspended during the Great Famine (1845-48) and

recommenced in 1854. It was dedicated for worship in 1873 but the magnificent interior decoration was not completed until early in the 20th Century. The site of the Cathedral is on Tealach na Licci (Sandy Hill), where Patrick is said to have brought a young deer for sanctuary after rescuing it from hunters.

Armagh Public Library 3

One of the oldest libraries in Ireland, Armagh Public Library was established in 1771 by Archbishop Robinson. In addition to the Archbishop's personal library of 17th and 18th century books, particularly in history and theology, there is archival material relating to Christian heritage in Ireland and Europe. Also a registered museum, the Library holds ancient Irish artefacts such as stone axes, flint arrowheads and bronze implements. Of more recent provenance is a collection of William Conor drawings, depicting costumes used in the pageant to commemorate the 1,500th anniversary of Patrick's arrival in Ireland.

Saint Patrick's (Church of Ireland) Cathedral 4

St. Patrick built a church on the hill known as Druim Saileach (Sallow Ridge) in 445, so beginning the story of Armagh Cathedral. The site of one of the most celebrated of the great Irish Monastic Schools, students came here from all over Europe. Here in 1014, on the 'north side of the great church' Brian Boru, High King of Ireland was buried. The plan of the Cathedral, as it now stands, is the enlarged design of Archbishop O'Scanlain in 1268. Although the Church on this hallowed site suffered destruction on at least 17 occasions it was always restored

maintaining an unbroken link back to Patrick himself.

Ó Fiaich Memorial Library & Archive 5

A unique cultural and historical resource, the Library is a free, independent public reference library, which houses important collections relating to Irish history, the Irish language, ecclesiastical history, the Irish abroad, and Irish sport.

Saint Patrick's Trian Visitor Complex 6

This exciting visitor complex is located in the heart of Armagh city, incorporating three major exhibitions - The Armagh story: traces the story of Armagh's historic Pagan monuments through to the coming of Saint Patrick and Celtic Christianity to the modern day city. Patrick's Testament: takes a closer look at our patron Saint through the writings found in the ancient manuscript "The Book of Armagh". Touch screen technology is available in French and German. The Land of Lilliput: Jonathan Swift's most famous book, "Gulliver's Travels" is narrated by a 20-ft giant.

Navan Centre and Fort 7

Visit the Navan Centre, which interprets one of Ireland's most important ancient monuments, Navan Fort!

This was the royal seat of the Kings of Ulster and the province's ancient capital. Start your tour in the 'Vanished World' of lost myths, travel into the 'Real World' of archaeology and then enter the 'Other World' to hear the legends of the Ulster Cycle. Visit the Iron Age/Early Christian period dwelling and, through Living History interpretation, learn about that way of life. An audio visual presentation is available in Irish, German, French, Italian and Spanish.

Finally, walk the path of history to the great Ancient Seat of Kings, Navan Fort.

Saint Patrick's Town

The later seat of the High Kings of Ulster, burial site of the patron saint and medieval capital of County Down, Downpatrick is an essential stop for those are interested in saints, scholars and Irish Christian heritage. Spend some time at the St Patrick Centre, a major multimedia exhibition and learn about Patrick's life. Visit the ancient Down Cathedral beside St Patrick's Grave and then walk down the historic Georgian Mall to Down Museum which displays artefacts from Patrick's time. Take a train ride on the only narrow gauge steam railway in Ireland through St. Patrick's Country with the Down Railway Museum to Inch Abbey where many of the legends of Patrick were written down in Medieval times.

You can visit the first church in Ireland at Saul and the holy wells at Struell with their healing waters, all within a mile of the town. Or you can climb nearby Slieve Patrick and see the largest statue of the Patron Saint in the world and trace his footsteps on Saint Patrick's Trail to the River Slaney where he began his mission in Ireland. Whatever you choose to do you will be rewarded with this hidden world which is Saint Patrick's town.

Down Cathedral and Saint Patrick's Grave 8

Down Cathedral was built on the ancient hill of Down in the 12th Century and has become a place of pilgrimage for 1500 years. The massive granite stone marks Saint Patrick's Grave and it is here that people from all traditions leave wreaths on the grave every March. Traditionally emigrants leaving Ireland took a handful of 'old sod' with them from Patrick's Grave.

Saul Old Church 9

The first ecclesiastical site in Ireland was given to Patrick by the local ruler Dichu, one of his first converts when he landed at Inbher Slane (the Slaney River). The word Sabhall means barn in Irish and the site developed into a monastery which was restored by Saint Malachy around 1140. The two stone buildings beside the church, each with a stone

roof, are from this period. The current Church and Round Tower were built in 1932 at the same time as the massive statue on nearby Slieve Patrick to commemorate 1500 years since Patrick's arrival in Ireland.

Saint Patrick Centre 10

This is the only permanent exhibition in the world dedicated to telling the story of St Patrick is in Downpatrick and includes an interactive exhibition and Imax presentation. The Centre offers a cafe, art gallery, craft shop, toilets, terraced gardens and Tourist Information Centre. It is a must-see stop for travellers with an interest in Christian Ireland. Guided tours of Saint Patrick's Country can be organised with the Centre.

Struell Wells 11

Among the first Holy wells in Ireland, and blessed by Patrick when he arrived in Down, the Wells have attracted pilgrims since at least the Middle Ages. Pilgrims have wandered down the secluded valley among the wells and have taken the waters which are claimed to have healing powers. The site also contains a ruined church and ancient Bath Houses which are unique in Ireland.

Down County Museum 12

Situated in the Georgian County Gaol, Down Museum holds an important collection of Early Christian objects and artefacts from Saint Patrick's Country, including carved stone crosses. It also provides works of art, commemorative material and publications relating to the Patron Saint. Facilities include a shop, café and permanent exhibitions about the gaol and life in County Down, as well as regular temporary exhibitions.

Inch Abbey 13

Having destroyed the nearby Cistercian Abbey of Erenagh in 1177 on the grounds that it was fortified against him, John de Courcy rebuilt a monastery at Inch for this order as an act of atonement in the 1180s, inviting over Cistercians from Furness in Lancashire. It became the centre of English influence in east Ulster. Attempting to impress the local populace, de Courcy commissioned one of these monks, called Jocelin to write a life of Saint Patrick.



Tell me more...

Tourist Information

downpatrick.tic@downdc.gov.uk

Tell me more...

www.discovernorthernireland.com

www.armaghanddown.com

www.culturenorthernireland.org

www.ehsni.gov.uk

www.ntni.org.uk

www.saintpatrickcentre.com

www.magni.org.uk

Main image:
St. Patrick's Grave
Images from top to bottom:
- St. Patrick's Centre
- Saul Church
- Struell Wells
- Down County Museum
- Inch Abbey

Saints and Scholars

Bangor Abbey ¹⁴

Saint Comgall founded Bangor Abbey in 559 and it grew to become one of the most important seats of learning in Ireland, with almost 3,000 monks at the time of Comgall's death in 601.

Two of its most famous students, Columbanus and Gall, travelled throughout Europe setting up monasteries following an Irish rule in Luxeuil, Bobbio and Breganz. Relics from the earliest period of the monastery are held in North Down Heritage Centre.

Because of its vulnerability to attack from the sea, the Abbey fell into disrepair, following many Viking raids. It was partially restored by Saint Malachy in the 12th Century, when he was Abbot in Bangor. His work can be seen at what is known locally as Malachy's Wall.

Craigavon Museum ¹⁵

The Philip B. Wilson Library includes a collection of Methodist tracts, letters from John Wesley, hymnals and general information on the history of Methodism in the area and further afield.

Also included in the Museum collections are papers relating to the Meetings of the Society of Friends, from their first meetings in Lurgan, their Quarterly meetings and information about those who left the area, following William Penn to colonise Pennsylvania and settle towns like Lurgan in Franklin County and Menallen in Fayette County in Pennsylvania.

These collections are of great interest to genealogists and are about to be housed in a new home: Waterside House at the Oxford Island complex.

Dromore Cathedral ¹⁶

The Cathedral stands on the site where Saint Colman built his first church of 'daub and wattle' around 514. The current building, known as the Cathedral Church of Christ the Redeemer, is an interesting mixture of various architectural periods, all clearly visible in its structure. Inset in one of the internal walls is an ancient stone, marked with a simple cross and known as Saint Colman's Pillow, suggesting perhaps the strict rule of Colman's monastic life.

Dromore High Cross ¹⁷

Like so many High Crosses, Dromore Cross stood in the town marketplace and was a gathering point for people to listen to travelling preachers until it was broken during the 17th century. It was repaired and moved to its present position near the Cathedral in 1887.

The repair is very obvious and it may in fact be the remains of two separate ruined Crosses.

Greyabbey ¹⁸

These splendid ruins of a Cistercian Abbey are the finest example of Anglo-Norman ecclesiastical architecture in Northern Ireland.

Affreca, daughter of the King of Man and wife of John de Courcy, Anglo-Norman invader of East Ulster, founded the Abbey in 1193. The Abbey was colonised by Cistercian Monks from Cumbria. The French background of the Cistercian Order and the English origins of the builders of Greyabbey resulted in a Gothic building with tall pointed lancet windows, the first truly Gothic structure in Ireland.

The monks had great knowledge of plants and made use of them in their practice of medicine. One of the great features of Greyabbey today is a carefully recreated Herb Garden, containing over fifty varieties of medicinal plants and herbs that you are free to stroll through and purchase.

Kilbroney ¹⁹

Cill Bhronaigh - Bronagh's Church, is located in the graveyard just outside Rostrevor on the Hilltown Road.

The graveyard contains Saint Bronagh's Cross, dating from the late 8th century and a ruined 15th century building. There is also a 'healing well' said to cure eye and throat ailments. Saint Bronagh's Bell, from the 6th century is displayed in the local Catholic Church in Rostrevor. Local folklore has it that if you pray to Bronagh and ring the bell 3 times, your prayer will be answered.

Nendrum ²⁰

This fine example of an island monastery was founded in the 5th Century making it one of the earliest known monastic sites in Ireland. There are references from 7th Century through until 976 when the Abbot was burned in his house, likely in a Viking raid.

The monastery which was founded by Saint Machaoi was abandoned for a mainland site at Tullynakill during the 15th century.

The site was 'lost' until the mid-19th century when the eminent ecclesiastical historian William Reeves, visited the island, looking at a 'lime kiln', which he recognised as the remains of a Round Tower.

The site comprises three concentric dry-stone walled enclosures with evidence of industrial work outside, including a tidal mill and landing places. It is obvious that the Monastery was approached from the sea.

The central enclosure has a church ruin with sundial, the remains of a round tower and a graveyard.

The interpretive centre gives a useful look at the site and its role in the development of early Christianity in Ireland.

North Down Heritage Centre ²¹

Located at Bangor Town Hall, the Centre has a number of very strong connections with the early Christian period in Ireland. The First Gallery highlights the period 550-950A.D. when Bangor Abbey was flourishing and missionaries spread throughout Europe and students flocked to Bangor to study.

The centrepiece is a model of the abbey as it was in its heyday. Also included in the collection, is the Bangor Bell, a bronze bell over 1200 years old. There is also a copy of the 7th Century Antiphony, a Book of Service written in Bangor and carried to the monastery in Bobbio, founded by Columbanus from Bangor. The original text is now housed in the Ambrosian Library in Milan. Many pilgrims from Europe visit the site from whence Columbanus set out to rekindle Christianity during the Dark Ages.

Saint Patrick's Church of Ireland, High Street, Newry ²²

During his missionary travels in Ulster, Patrick travelled to a place called Glen Righe - the original name for Clanrye, the river which flows through Newry. He decided to establish himself here and planted a yew tree as a symbol of living faith. This place became known as "lubhair Cinn Tragh", or 'yew tree at the head of the strand'. Over the years the name altered until finally it became what it is known as today, Newry.

The oldest Reformed Church in Ireland, built in 1578, Saint Patrick's, stands in Newry till this day and the figure of Saint Patrick seated on his chair between yew trees graces the City's coat of arms.

Seagoe ²³

The townland and parish of Seagoe derive their name from Suidhe Gobhan, the seat of Gobhan. Gobhan was a saintly man, who according to tradition had set up a monastery on the banks of the River Bann in Iveagh in Ulster and was leader of a thousand monks.

There has been a Christian tradition in the area since the 6th century. The remains of a 15th century church can be seen in the peaceful oasis, that is Seagoe Cemetery.

The 'Seagoe Bell', originally found in Scarva Parish, was used for many years during funeral services at Seagoe. It is now held in Dublin Museum. The inscription, 'Oro Tarchun Mascacham Ailello' 'Pray for Cumascach, the son of Aillill, places the bell circa 904 AD, another telling reminder of the pervasive history of Christianity in the area.

St. Monnina of Killevey ²⁴

Her real name was Darerca and it would appear that she came from the Donaghmore area of County Down. As there were no convents in the area, Monnina went to the west of Ireland to join St. Ibar. When Ibar moved to Wexford, Monnina followed him, but stopped off with St. Brigid in Kildare.

This may have been the turning point in her life, as Monnina returned to Faughart, Brigid's birthplace, where she lived for some time. She then moved to Killevey, where she founded her main monastery, Cill Sleibhe Cuillinn, The Church of Slieve Gullion or Killevey, in the mountainous country of south Armagh.

Images from top to bottom:
 - Bangor Abbey
 - Dromore Cathedral
 - Greyabbey Pageant
 - (Cutout) Dromore High Cross

The church ruins now on the site comprise two distinct churches joined lengthwise. The smaller and older is characterised by a most impressive, low lintel doorway built of three massive shaped granite stones. The more recent building, an Augustinian Convent, has a very impressive arched window with angel carvings still visible on its outside.

Closeby is a large granite slab which is reputed to mark Monnina's grave with a holy well further up the hill which is still visited by pilgrims on her feast day, July 6th.



A calendar of world class events... arts & culture... old & new.



Destinations around the world celebrate Saint Patrick's Day but where better to celebrate the life and times of the Saint than in Saint Patrick's Country. St Patrick's Festival, jointly staged in Armagh and Downpatrick throughout the week in which Saint Patrick's Day falls, sparks off an exhilarating events calendar organised for visitors and locals alike.

Main image:
Traditional Music Session
Images from top to bottom:
- Irish Step Dancing
- Magnus Barelegs Viking Festival
- Castle Ward Opera Festival - County Down
- Road Bowls Festival - County Armagh
- Apple Blossom Festival - County Armagh

Celts had a well-developed system for dividing up the year, linked to the farming practices on which the whole society relied. There were four main festivals. Samhain, (October 31st), was the night when all souls of the dead were free to roam the earth. It has become our Hallowe'en. All Souls Day is the next day; November 1st.

Imbolg/Imbolc was Celebrated on February 1st and it heralded the start of spring and lambing season. It has become St.Brigid's Day in Ireland, Brigid shares her name with a pre-Christian deity. After Imbolc came Beltaine, May 1st, now

our May Day. The Celts would light fires and drive their cattle through them in a 'cleansing process' to increase fertility. The end of July and August was the time to celebrate Lughnasa, in honour of the god Lugh. Harvest festivals and horse fairs still celebrate this festival today.

The early Christians adopted these great pagan festivals and gave them Christian themes. We can still trace the pre-Christian roots of many of our current festivals.

Tell me more...

Apple Blossom Festival, Armagh
www.visitarmagh.com

Armagh Comedy Festival
www.visitarmagh.com

Armagh Festival of Traditional Song and Dance
www.visitarmagh.com

Bard of Armagh
www.visitarmagh.com

Castle Ward Opera
www.castlewardopera.com

Celtic Fusion
www.celticofusion.co.uk

Easter Festival, Armagh
www.visitarmagh.com

Feast of Fish, Kilkeel and Ardglass
www.downdc.gov.uk

Opera Fringe, Down
www.operafringe.com

Road Bowls Festival, Armagh
www.visitarmagh.com

Royal Ascot Downpatrick
www.downdc.gov.uk

Saint Patrick's Festival, Armagh
www.visitarmagh.com

St Patrick's Day Festival, Downpatrick
www.st-patricksfestival.com

St Patrick's Day Festival, Newry
www.visitnewryandmourne.gov.uk

The Magnus Barelegs Viking Festival
www.magnusbarelegs.co.uk

William Kennedy Piping Festival
www.visitarmagh.com

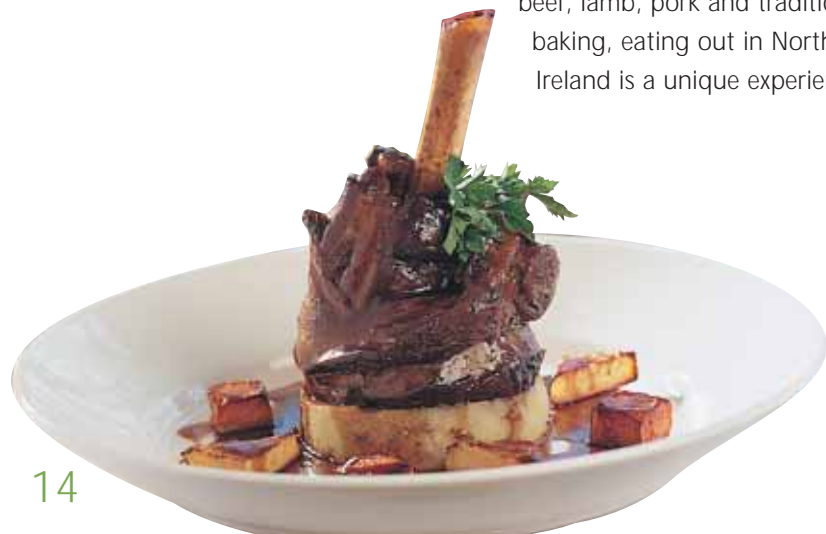


St. Brigid's Cross - traditionally made from rushes on St. Brigid's day.



food for the body and for the soul...

Along with its breathtaking scenery and its warm hospitality Northern Ireland also has some of the freshest, finest food available. Celebrated for its seafood, tasty root vegetables, prime beef, lamb, pork and traditional baking, eating out in Northern Ireland is a unique experience.



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www.armaghanddown.com

Saint Patrick's Country offers a choice of dining in top class restaurants, traditional pubs and atmospheric coaching inns. Local menus feature Strangford Oysters, Dundrum Bay Prawns, Mourne Lamb and a selection of home made breads - soda, wheaten and potato.

Armagh City may be the Ecclesiastical Capital of Ireland, but Armagh County is 'The Orchard of Ireland', coming alive with colour as the pink flowers of apple trees blanket much of the deep green landscape. The history books tell us that apples have been grown in Armagh for over 3000 years - Saint Patrick himself is said to have planted an apple tree at Ceangoba, an ancient settlement east of Armagh City and Saint Malachy of Armagh is represented with an apple in his hand.

superb value and variety in our accommodation.

Having explored Saint Patrick's Country and tasted the local produce, there is a variety of accommodation to rest your body and soul. Farmhouse bed and breakfast accommodation, coach inns, four and five star luxury hotel accommodation provides the welcome of all welcomes to individuals and groups alike.

Accommodation across Northern Ireland is rigorously quality assured and you can be confident that when you reach your overnight destination, you will be more than happy with what you find.

Expect to pay a minimum of £18 B&B per person to £30 or more in a top guest house. Hotels are more expensive, however special offers and group rates are often available.

You can easily book accommodation directly through:

www.armaghanddown.com

www.discovernorthernireland.com

However, a fully inclusive holiday or specially tailored programme to suit your personal taste can easily be organised by contacting your local Tourist Information Centre or any of the many Irish holiday specialists. Full details are available from Tourism Ireland, www.tourismireland.com

Tell me more...

To view & book your

accommodation online visit:

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Further information visit:

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www.downdc.gov.uk

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Heritage!

DUNDRUM CASTLE



NENDRUM TOWER



NEWTOWNARDS PRIORY



ST PATRICK'S ABBEY

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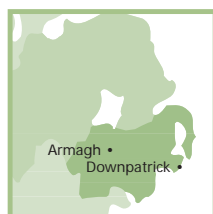


**Armagh
& Down**



**Environment &
Heritage Service**
www.ehsni.gov.uk

Getting to Northern Ireland



Northern Ireland is easy to get to, easy to get around. Excellent fast ferry links from England and Scotland to Belfast and Larne, 3 airports with frequent, low-cost flights from the UK and USA, plus good roads, buses and trains to take you where you want to go. Check out www.discovernorthernireland.com for ferry and airline operator details.

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