NEIGHBOURHOODS

top picks

- **Chester Beatty Library** (p70)
  A stunning collection of books and *objets d'art*.
- **Trinity College** (p64)
  Ireland's foremost university and most beautiful campus.
- **Dublin City Gallery – The Hugh Lane** (p101)
  Modern art at its finest, including Francis Bacon's studio.
- **Kilmainham Gaol** (p95)
  Irish history in all its bloody gore and horror.
- **Irish Museum of Modern Art (IMMA;** p96)
  The country's foremost collection of contemporary art.
- **Marsh's Library** (p93)
  Ireland's oldest library is a well-kept secret wonder.
- **St Patrick's Cathedral** (p90)
  Elegance, piety and a tempestuous history.
- **National Museum** (p80)
  Cultural identity in thousands of artefacts.
- **National Gallery** (p79)
  Renaissance masters, Irish masterpieces and more.
- **Old Jameson Distillery** (p106)
  The nuts and bolts of Irish whiskey, plus a taster.

NEIGHBOURHOODS

Dublin may be bulging round its ever-expanding edges, but the city centre – defined by the bits within the two canals that create an almost perfect ring around it – remains very compact, lending it the atmosphere of a busy provincial town rather than an alienating metropolis. Not that you can't get confused here though: the geographic area of the city centre may be small but it's a somewhat haphazard mix of medieval street arrangements and 18th-century town planning, which sought to make some sense of the spider's web of streets and alleys that spread their way on both sides of the river.

The River Liffey – that pea-brown stretch of barely moving water that bisects the city into neat halves – serves as the handiest way of determining your whereabouts: you're either north or south of it, presented simply as north-side and southside. The river also serves as the traditional social divide of Dublin: working class and poor north of the Liffey, posh and wealthy south of it. Spend enough time in Dublin and you'll hear the jokes.

'at the heart of it all is the pedestrianised shopping mecca that is Grafton St, bookended by the beautiful expanses of Elizabethan Trinity College and Georgian St Stephen's Green'

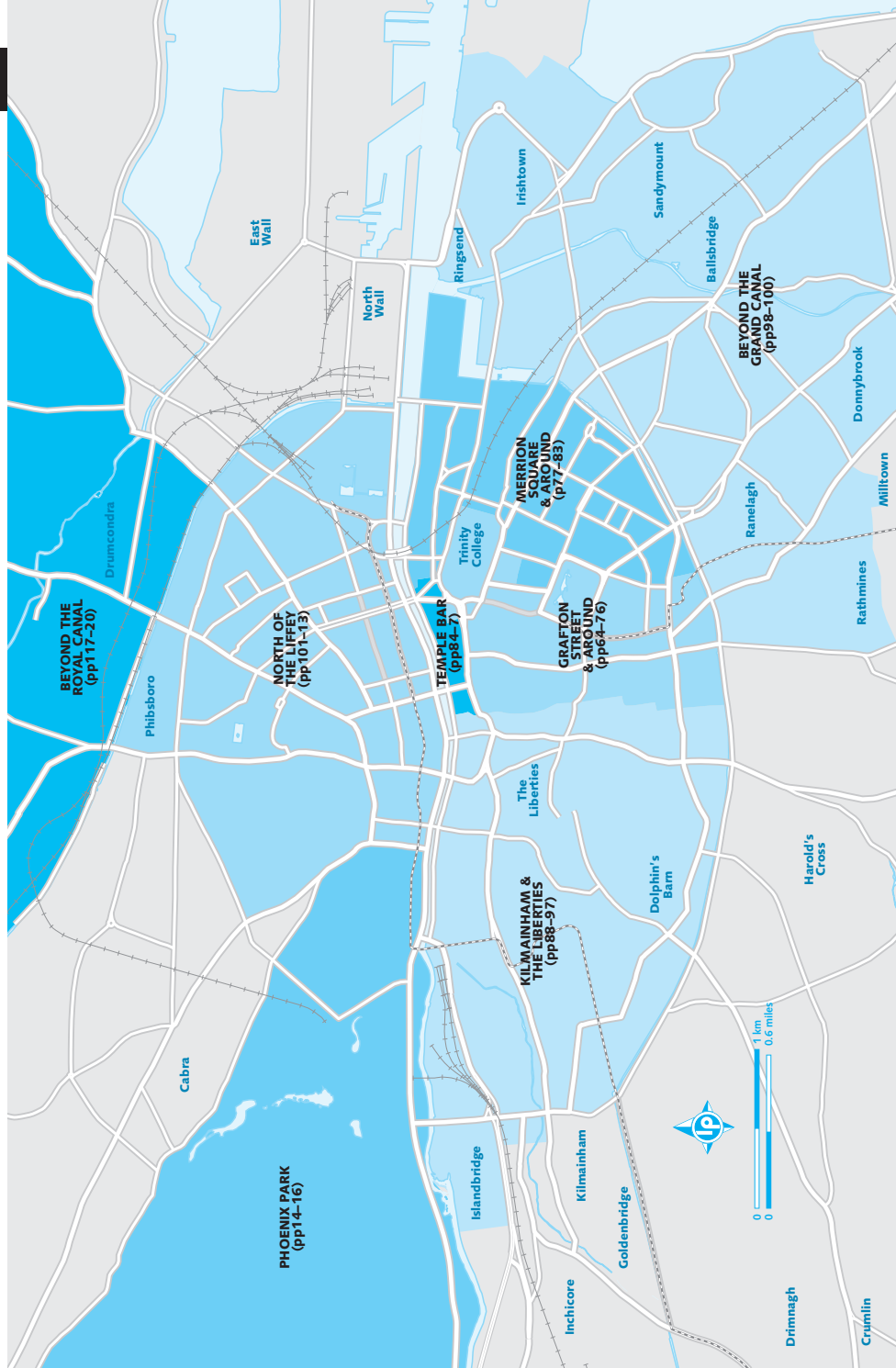
Although most of the city centre is in the grip of an overwhelming process of gentrification, the southside remains the most salubrious part of the city and probably the focus of most of your visit here. At the heart of it all is the pedestrianised shopping mecca that is Grafton St, bookended by the beautiful expanses of Elizabethan Trinity College to the north and Georgian St Stephen's Green to the south, as pretty a city square as you're likely to see anywhere in Europe. This is where you'll find the bulk of the city's main attractions, the best bars and most of the nightlife.

To the east, the equally elegant Merrion Sq provides the link between the Georgian heart of the older city and the exciting new developments that are transforming the area around the southern docks into Dublin's very own Docklands development. To the west, past the oldest bits of the city (the medieval Liberties) and the two Norman cathedrals, is the world-famous Guinness factory and museum, as well as Kilmainham Gaol and the Irish Museum of Modern Art, two outstanding attractions that should be a part of every itinerary.

North of the river, the graceful avenue that is O'Connell St introduces visitors to what many Dubliners believe is the 'real' Dublin, where salt-of-the-earth locals traditionally suspicious of their southside counterparts are now mixing it with whole new communities of non-nationals, creating genuinely multicultural neighbourhoods where old-style fish-and-fowl vendors of the Molly Malone variety and entrepreneurs from Nigeria, Korea, Poland and elsewhere are all looking to make a buck.

West of here is the old market section of Smithfield, which has a couple of interesting night-time distractions, and beyond it, the pride of all Dubliners, Phoenix Park – the city's gigantic green lung, which is twice the size of New York's Central Park.

Beyond the canals – the Royal to the north, the Grand to the south – are the suburbs, where you'll find a handful of interesting attractions, including a botanic garden, a superb sports museum and some lovely little seaside villages privileged Dubliners expensively call 'home'.



ITINERARY BUILDER

Dublin is small, but it's not that small, so you'll need to plan your days somewhat lest you end up lost with sore feet and shopping bags that are just getting heavier. The south central neighbourhoods all run into one another, but the northside is an expanse that runs the width of the city itself. The two neighbourhoods beyond the canal are best reached by public transport or taxi.

HOW TO USE THIS TABLE

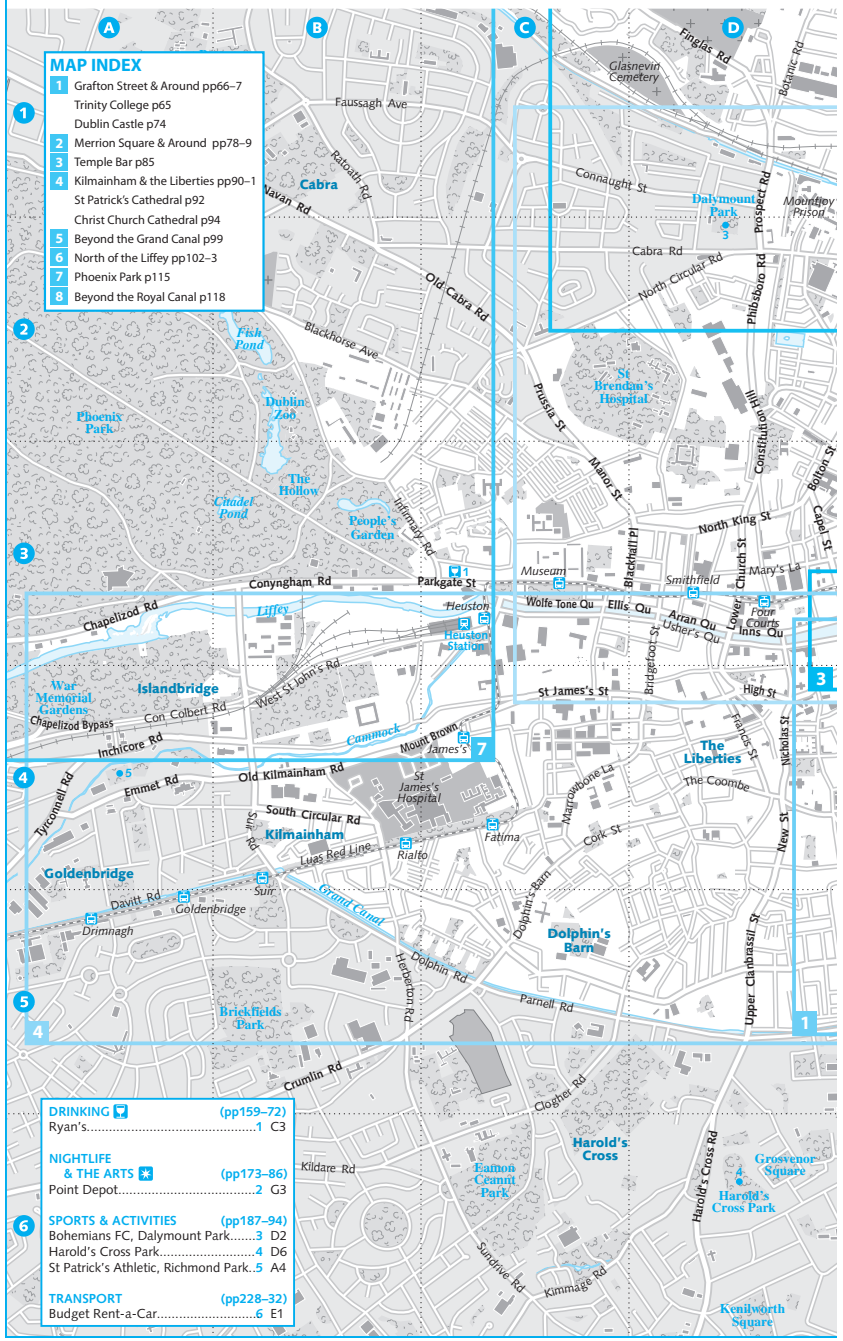
The table below allows you to plan a day's worth of activities in any area of the city. Simply select which area you wish to explore, and then mix and match from the corresponding listings to build your day. The first item in each cell represents a well-known highlight of the area, while the other items are more off-the-beaten-track gems.

AREA	Sights	Eating	Drinking	Shopping	Nightlife, Arts & Activities
Grafton Street & Around	Trinity College (p64) Chester Beatty Library (p70) St Stephen's Green (p71)	L'Gueuleton (p147) Lock's (p147) Bottega Toffoli (p150)	Anseo (p163) South William (p164) Kehoe's (p165)	Costume (p133) Barry Doyle Design Jewellers (p134) Avoca Handweavers (p132)	Tripod (p177 & p183)
Merrion Square & Around	National Gallery (p79) Natural History Museum (p81) National Museum (p80)	L'Ecrivain (p152) Bang Café (p152)	Hartigan's (p167) Doheny & Nesbitt's (p167) James Toner's (p167)		National Concert Hall (p180) Sugar Club (p183)
Temple Bar	Gallery of Photography (p86) Temple Bar Gallery (p86) Ark Children's Cultural Centre (p86)	Gruel (p154) Eden (p153) Mermaid Café (p153)	Porterhouse Brewing Company (p168) Kennedy's (p167) Mulligan's (p167)	5 Scarlett Row (p137) Smock (p137) Urban Outfitters (p137)	Irish Film Institute (p179) Button Factory (p175 & p182)
Kilmainham & the Liberties	Guinness Storehouse (p88) Kilmainham Gaol (p95) Irish Museum of Modern Art (p96)	Leo Burdock's (p155)	Fallon's (p169)	Oxfam Home (p138) Fleury Antiques (p138)	Vicar Street (p183)
Beyond the Grand Canal	National Print Museum (p98)	Mash (p156) La Peniche (p155) Jo'Burger (p156)	Kiely's (p170)	Havana (p138)	Civic Theatre (p185) Marlay Park (p182)
North of the Liffey & Phoenix Park	Dublin City Gallery – The Hugh Lane (p101) National Museum of Ireland (p105) Phoenix Park (p114)	Chapter One (p156) Winding Stair (p157) Alilang (p157)	Shakespeare (p171) Dice Bar (p171) Sin É (p171)	Winding Stair (p139)	Abbey Theatre (p184) Gate Theatre (p186) Cobblestone (p183)
Beyond the Royal Canal	Croke Park & GAA Museum (p117) National Botanic Gardens (p119) Casino at Marino (p119)	Wongs (p158)	Gravediggers (p172)		Croke Park (p192)

lonelyplanet.com

CHAPTER TITLE ITINERARY BUILDEER

DUBLIN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Dublin Castle p74
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3 Temple Bar p85
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Christ Church Cathedral p94
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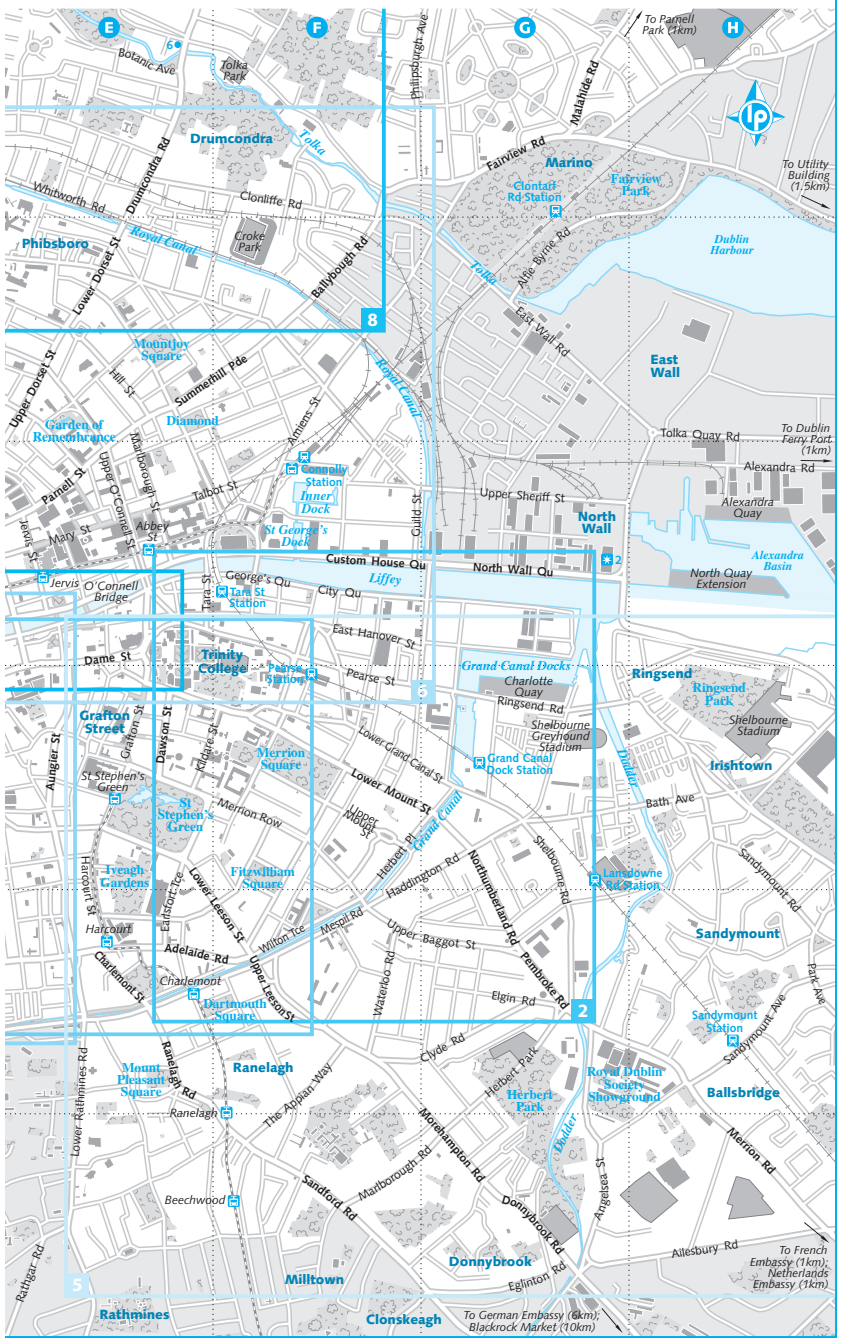
Botanic Rd
Faussagh Ave
Ratoath Rd
Navan Rd
Cabra
Connaught St
Dalymount Park
Prospect Rd
Mountjoy Prison
Cabra Rd
North Circular Rd
Phibsboro Rd
Old Cabra Rd
Blackhorse Ave
Fish Pond
Dublin Zoo
Phoenix Park
The Hollow
Citadel Pond
People's Garden
Infirmary Rd
St Brendan's Hospital
Prussia St
Manor St
Hill
Constitution Hill
Bolton St
Capel St
North King St
Smithfield
Church St
Mary's La
Four Courts
Inns Qu
Museum
Blackhall Pl
Conyngham Rd
Parkgate St
Heuston
Heuston Station
Wolfe Tone Qu
Ellis Qu
Aran Qu
Usher's Qu
Bridgefoot St
Liffey
Chapelizod Rd
War Memorial Gardens
Islandbridge
Chapelizod Bypass
Con Colbert Rd
West St John's Rd
Inchicore Rd
Camnock
Mount Brown
St James's
St James's St
High St
Francis St
Nicholas St
The Liberties
The Coombe
Old Kilmainham Rd
Emmet Rd
Tyrconnell Rd
South Circular Rd
Kilmainham
Luas Red Line
Rialto
St James's Hospital
Fatima
Marrowbone La
Cork St
New St
Goldenbridge
Davitt Rd
Goldenbridge
Drimnagh
Sun
Grand Canal
Dolphin's Barn
Dolphin Rd
Herberton Rd
Brickfields Park
Parnell Rd
Upper Clanbrassil St
Crumlin Rd
Cloghet Rd
Kildare Rd
Eamon Ceannt Park
Harold's Cross
Harold's Cross Park
Grosvenor Square
Sundrive Rd
Kimmage Rd
Kenilworth Square


0 1 km
0 0.6 miles
To Parnell Park (1km)
Botanic Ave
Tolka Park
Drumcondra
Tolka
Drumcondra Rd
Whitworth Rd
Clonliffe Rd
Croke Park
Phibsboro
Lower Dorset St
Royal Canal
Ballybough Rd
Phibsborough Ave
Malahide Rd
Fairview Rd
Marino
Clontarf Rd Station
Fairview Park
To Utility Building (1.5km)
Dublin Harbour
Annie Byrne Rd
East Wall Rd
East Wall
Monntjoy Square
Upper Dorset St
Hill St
Summerhill Pde
Garden of Remembrance
Diamond
Marlborough St
Upper O'Connell St
Amiens St
Connolly Station
Inner Dock
Tolka Quay Rd
To Dublin Ferry Port (1km)
Alexandra Rd
Alexandra Quay
Parnell St
Talbot St
Abbey St
St George's Dock
Upper Sheriff St
North Wall
Alexandra Basin
Jervis St
Mary St
Jervis
O'Connell Bridge
George's Qu
Tara St Station
City Qu
Custom House Qu
North Wall Qu
North Quay Extension
Liffey
Dame St
Trinity College
Pearse Station
East Hanover St
Grand Canal Docks
Charlotte Quay
Ringsend
Ringsend Rd
Ringsend Park
Shelbourne Greyhound Stadium
Shelbourne Stadium
Grafton Street
Grafton St
Dawson St
Wicklow St
Merrion Square
Lower Grand Canal St
Grand Canal Dock Station
Irishtown
Aungier St
St Stephen's Green
Lower Mount St
Merrion Row
Upper Mount St
Bath Ave
Sandymount Rd
Herbert Pl
Haddington Rd
Northumberland Rd
Pembroke Rd
Shelbourne Rd
Lansdowne Rd Station
Iveagh Gardens
Fitzwilliam Square
Earlsfort Ter
Lower Leeson St
Hatch St
Harcourt
Adelaide Rd
Charlemont
Charlemont St
Dartmouth Square
Wilton Ter
Mespil Rd
Upper Baggot St
Waterloo Rd
Upper Leeson St
Elgin Rd
Sandymount
Sandymount Station
Sandymount Ave
Park Ave
Ranelagh
Ranelagh Rd
Mount Pleasant Square
Lower Rathmines Rd
The Appian Way
Clyde Rd
Herbert Park
Royal Dublin Society Showground
Ballsbridge
Merrion Rd
Beechwood
Sandford Rd
Marlborough Rd
Morehampton Rd
Donnybrook Rd
Donnybrook
Milltown
Rathgar Rd
Rathmines
Clonskeagh
Eglinton Rd
Allesbury Rd
To French Embassy (1km); Netherlands Embassy (1km)
To German Embassy (6km); Blackrock Market (10km)

GRAFTON STREET & AROUND

Eating p145; Drinking p162; Shopping p130; Sleeping p198

Less neighbourhood and more pulsating heart of the city, the swathe of supremely elegant streets and landscaped green spaces that fill out the area around Grafton St, directly south of the river, is what most visitors and not an insignificant number of Dubliners themselves are talking about when they refer to the 'city centre'. Bordered to the north by the Johnny-come-lately upstart that is Temple Bar, to the west by the medieval boundaries of the Liberties, to the south by the meandering Grand Canal, and to the east by the green edge of St Stephen's Green, this compact district is the focus of most visits to the city.

Running roughly through the middle of it is pedestrianised Grafton St, lined with four-storey Georgian buildings that are home to a mix of familiar international stores and chi-chi local retailers. The jewel in the retail crown remains Brown Thomas (p132), the swankiest department store in town. Its window displays in December are as important to a Dubliner's idea of Christmas as an old man with a white beard.

Named after the 17th-century Duke of Grafton, who owned much of these parts, Grafton St proper starts from the area known as College Green, directly in front of the elegant façades of Elizabethan Trinity College (Map pp66–7) and the Bank of Ireland (Map pp66–7; built to house Ireland's first parliament). An unremarkable statue of Molly Malone (Map pp66–7) leads us, bosoms first, to the pedestrianised street that is Grafton St.

The street has been a fashionable precinct for more than 200 years but only really took off in 1982 when the cars were driven out and the pedestrians paraded in on a newly cobbled surface. The Grafton St amble has been *de rigueur* ever since, for shoppers, walkers and people-watchers alike. Along its length an assortment of street performers set the mood, providing the soundtrack for a memorable stroll. On any given day, you can listen to a guitarist knock out some electrifying bluegrass, applaud young conservatory students putting Mozart through his paces or laugh your ass off at the brilliant comedian working an audience with his well-timed routine.

But to really get the most of the neighbourhood, you'll need to get off Grafton St and into the warren of narrow lanes and streets to the west of it – here you'll find a great mix of funky shops and boutiques, some of our favourite eateries and a handful of the best bars in the city.

Just south of Grafton St is the centrepiece of Georgian Dublin, St Stephen's Green, beautifully landscaped and dotted with statuary that provides a veritable who's who of Irish history.

Thankfully, Dublin's compact size doesn't mean you have to stay here to have it all at your doorstep, but if you do, you *absolutely* must be aware that most of the lodgings are pretty pricey – with the outstanding exception of the neighbourhood's western edge, home to one of the better hostels in town and one of our favourite B&Bs, Grafton House (Map pp66–7).

All cross-city buses make their way to - or through, at least - this part of the city; the Luas Green Line has its terminus at the top of Grafton St, on St Stephen's Green.

top picks

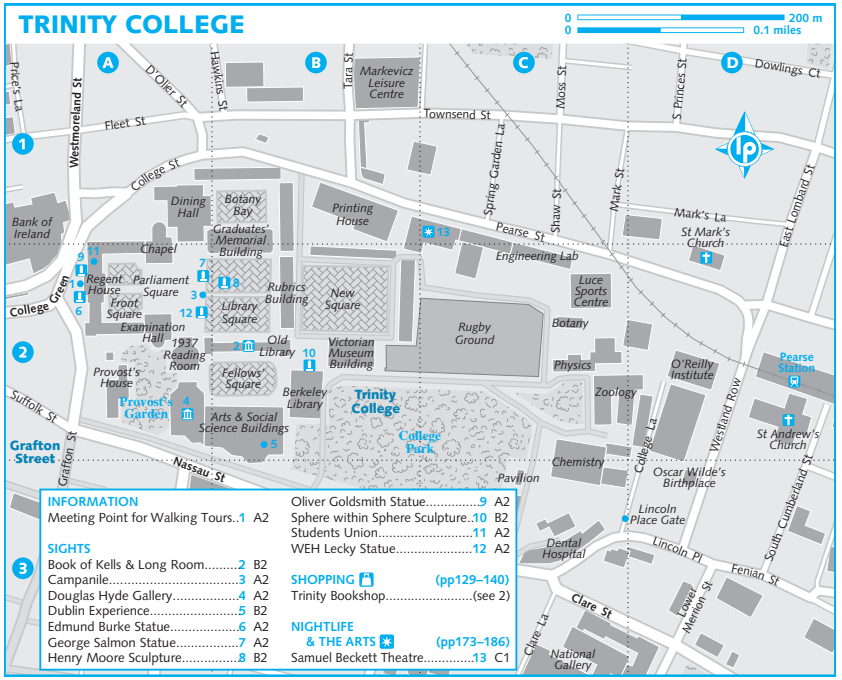
GRAFTON STREET & AROUND

- The elaborate and expansive collection at Chester Beatty Library (p70)
- The magnificent, book-lined Long Room (p69) at Trinity College
- Trinity College (below), great for a wander
- Retail madness on and around Grafton Street (p130)
- Pub Life (p162), in the streets west and east of Grafton St
- A touch of graceful greenery in St Stephen's Green (p71), presenting work from around the world

TRINITY COLLEGE Map p65

☎ 896 1000; admission free; 🕒 8am-10pm

Don your gown and dust off that tome on elocution, for this calm and cordial retreat from the bustle of contemporary Dublin is not just Ireland's most prestigious university (and the home of the blockbuster hit that is the *Book of Kells*) but a throwback to those far-off days when a university education was the preserve of a very small elite who spoke passionately of the importance of philosophy and the need for empire.



Today's alumni are an altogether different bunch, but Trinity still *looks* the part, and on a summer's evening, when the crowds thin and the chatter subsides, there are few more delightful places in the world to be.

A great way to see Trinity's grounds is on a walking tour (☎ 896 1827; admission incl Book of Kells €10; 🕒 tours every 40min 10.15am-3.40pm Mon-Sat, 10.15am-3pm Sun mid-May–Sep), which depart from the College Green entrance.

The college was established by Elizabeth I in 1592 on land confiscated from an Augustinian priory in an effort to stop the brain drain of young Protestant Dubliners, who were skipping across to continental Europe for an education and were becoming 'infected with popery'. With bigotry as a base, Trinity went on to become one of Europe's outstanding universities, producing a host of notable graduates – how about Jonathan Swift, Oscar Wilde and Samuel Beckett at the same alumni dinner?

It remained completely Protestant until 1793, but even when the university relented and began to admit Catholics, the Church forbade it; until 1970, any Catholic who enrolled here could consider themselves excommunicated. Although hardly the bastion of British Protestantism that it once was – most of its 15,000 students are Catholic – it is still a popular choice for British students. Women were first admitted to the college in 1903, earlier than at most British universities.

The 16-hectare site is now in the centre of the city, but when founded, it was described as being 'near Dublin' and was bordered on two sides by the estuary of the Liffey. Nothing now remains of the original Elizabethan college, which was replaced in the Georgian building frenzy of the 18th century. The elegant Regent House entrance on College Green was built between 1752 and 1759, and is guarded by statues of the writer Oliver Goldsmith (1730–74) and the orator Edmund Burke (1729–97). The railings outside the entrance are a popular meeting spot.

Through the entrance, past the Students Union, are Front Sq and Parliament Sq, the latter dominated by the 30m-high Campanile, designed by Edward Lanyon and erected from 1852 to 1853 on what was believed to be the centre of the monastery that preceded the college. Students who pass beneath it when the bells toll will fail

GRAFTON STREET & AROUND

GRAFTON STREET & AROUND

their exams, according to superstition. To the north of the *Campanile* is a statue of George Salmon, the college provost from 1886 to 1904, who fought bitterly to keep women out of the college. He carried out his threat to permit them in 'over his dead body' by dropping dead when the worst happened. To the south of the *Campanile* is a statue of historian WEH Lecky (1838–1903).

North of Parliament Sq is the **Chapel** (☎ 896 1260; admission free), designed by William Chambers and completed in 1799. It has some fine plasterwork by Michael Stapleton, Ionic columns and painted glass windows, and has been open to all denominations since 1972. It's only accessible by organised tour. Next is the **Dining Hall**, originally built by Richard Cassels in the mid-18th century. The great architect must have had an off day because the vault collapsed twice and the entire structure was dismantled 15 years later. The replacement was completed in 1761, but extensively restored after a fire in 1984.

On the grassy expanse of Library Sq is a 1969 sculpture by British sculptor Henry Moore (1898–1986), and two large Oregon maples. On the north side is the 1892 Graduates' Memorial Building, and an area known as Botany Bay.

On the far east of the square, the red-brick **Rubrics Building** dates from around 1690, making it the oldest building in the college. It was extensively altered in an 1894 restoration, and then underwent serious structural modification in the 1970s. Behind this is New Sq, featuring the highly ornate **Victorian Museum Building** (☎ 608 1477; admission free), which houses a Geological Museum. It's open by prior arrangement only. The Doric-fronted **Printing House**, on the other side of the square, was also designed by Richard Cassels.

If you are following the less studious-looking throng, however, you'll find yourself magnetically drawn south of Library Sq to the **Old Library** (☎ 896 2320; East Pavilion, Library Colonnades; adult/student/child €8/7/free; 🕘 9.30am-5pm Mon-Sat year round, noon-4.30pm Sun Oct-Apr, 9.30am-4.30pm Sun May-Sep), home to Trinity's prize possession and biggest crowd-puller, the astonishingly beautiful **Book of Kells** (see the boxed text, p71).

Upstairs from the star attraction is the highlight of Thomas Burgh's building, the magnificent 65m **Long Room** with its barrel-vaulted ceiling. It's lined with shelves containing 200,000 of the library's oldest books and manuscripts, along with busts of eminent scholars, a 14th-century harp and an original copy of the *Proclamation of the Irish Republic*, read out by Pádraig Pearse at the beginning of the 1916 Easter Rising.

THE CLONING OF THE LONG ROOM

The Long Room has a few screen credits to its name (*Educating Rita* for instance) but its unlikeliest appearance was in *Star Wars Episode II: The Attack of the Clones*, when it showed up in CGI form as the Jedi Archive, complete with the same barrel-vaulted ceiling and similar statuary down the length of it. If nothing else, it makes for a good trivia question.

Despite Ireland's independence, the 1801 Library Act entitles Trinity College Library to a free copy of every book published in Britain. Housing this bounty requires nearly 1km of extra shelving every year and the collection amounts to about five million titles, which are stored at various facilities around town.

In Fellows' Sq is the brutalist and brilliant Berkeley Library, designed by Paul Koralek in 1967. It has been hailed by the Architectural Association of Ireland as the best example of modern architecture in the country. It's fronted by Arnaldo Pomodoro's sculpture *Sphere Within Sphere* (1982–83). George Berkeley (1685–1753), the distinguished Irish philosopher, studied at Trinity when he was only 15 years old. His influence spread to North America, where Berkeley (California) and its university are named after him.

Next around the square is the Arts & Social Science Building, which houses the underwhelming Dublin Experience (☎ 608 1688; adult/student €4.20/3.50; 🕒 shows hourly 10am-5pm mid-May–Oct), a 45-minute audiovisual introduction to the city that is saccharine, clichéd, historically skewed, amateurish, takes itself too seriously and features exceedingly annoying actors trying to sound like Dublin taxi drivers.

West of this is another of Trinity's top treats for the discerning tourist, the Douglas Hyde Gallery (☎ 608 1116; Arts & Social Sciences Bldg, Trinity College; admission free; 🕒 11am-6pm Mon-Wed & Fri, 11am-7pm Thu, 11am-4.45pm Sat); its entrance is on Nassau St. This is one of the country's leading contemporary galleries, and hosts regularly rotating shows presenting the works of top-class Irish and international artists across a wide range of media. It's well worth checking out.

On the way back towards the main entrance, past the Reading Room, is the late-18th-century Palladian Examination Hall, which closely resembles the chapel opposite because it too was the work of William Chambers, and also features plasterwork by Michael Stapleton. It contains an oak chandelier rescued from the Irish parliament (now the Bank of Ireland – see p73).

Towards the eastern end of the complex, College Park is a lovely place to lounge around on a sunny day and occasionally you'll catch a game of cricket, a bizarre sight in Ireland. Keep in mind that Lincoln Place Gate is located in the southeast corner of the grounds, providing a handy shortcut to Merrion Sq (p77).

CHESTER BEATTY LIBRARY Map pp66–7

☎ 407 0750; www.cbl.ie; Dublin Castle; admission free; 🕒 10am-5pm Mon-Fri, 11am-5pm Sat, 1-5pm Sun, tours 1pm Wed, 3pm & 4pm Sun May-Sep, closed Sat-Mon Oct-Apr

Book of Kells, shmells…the world-famous Chester Beatty Library, housed in the Clock Tower at the back of Dublin Castle, is not just the best museum in Ireland but one of the best in Europe. This extraordinary collection, so lovingly and expertly gathered by New York mining magnate Alfred Chester Beatty (1875–1968) – a man of exceedingly good taste – is breathtakingly beautiful and virtually guaranteed to impress. How's that for a build-up?

An avid traveller and collector, Beatty was fascinated by different cultures, and amassed more than 20,000 manuscripts, rare books, miniature paintings, clay tablets, costumes and any other *objets d'art* that caught his fancy and could tell him something about the world. Fortunately for Dublin, he also happened to take quite a shine to the city and made it his adopted home. In return, the Irish made him their first honorary citizen in 1957.

The collection is spread over two levels. On the ground floor you'll find a compact but stunning collection of artworks from the Western, Islamic and East Asian worlds. Highlights include the finest collection of Chinese jade books in the world and illuminated European texts featuring exquisite calligraphy that stand up in comparison with the *Book of Kells*. Audiovisual displays explain the process of bookbinding, papermaking and printing.

The 2nd floor is a wonderful exploration of the world's major religions through decorative and religious art, enlightening text and a cool cultural-pastiche video at the entrance. The collection of Korans dating from the 9th to the 19th centuries (the library has more than 270 of them) is considered by experts to be the best example of illuminated Islamic texts in the world. There are also outstanding examples of ancient papyri, including renowned Egyptian love poems from the 12th century, and some of the earliest illuminated gospels in the world, dating from around AD 200.

THE PAGE OF KELLS

More than half a million yearly visitors queue up to see Trinity's top show-stopper, the world-famous *Book of Kells*. This illuminated manuscript, dating from around AD 800 and thus one of the oldest books in the world, was probably produced by monks at St Colmcille's Monastery on the remote island of Iona, off the western coast of Scotland. It contains the four gospels of the New Testament, written in Latin, as well as prefaces, summaries and other text. If it were merely words, the *Book of Kells* would simply be a very old book – it's the extensive and amazingly complex illustrations (the illuminations) that make it so wonderful. The superbly decorated opening initials are only part of the story, for the book has smaller illustrations between the lines.

Repeated looting by marauding Vikings forced the monks to flee to the temporary safety of Kells, County Meath, in Ireland in AD 806, along with their masterpiece. It was stolen in 1007, then rediscovered three months later buried underground. Some time before the dissolution of the monastery, the *cumdach* (metal shrine) was lost, possibly taken by looting Vikings who wouldn't have valued the text itself. About 30 of the beginning and ending folios (double-page spreads) are also missing. It was brought to the college for safekeeping in 1654. The 680-page (340-folio) book was rebound in four calfskin volumes in 1953.

And here the problems begin. Of the 680 pages, only two are on display – one showing an illumination, the other showing text – which has led to it being dubbed the *page* of Kells. No getting around that one, though: you can hardly expect the right to thumb through a priceless treasure at random. No, the real problem is its immense popularity, which makes viewing it a rather unsatisfactory pleasure. Punters are herded through the specially constructed viewing room at near lightning pace, making for a there-you-see-it, there-you-don't kind of experience.

To really appreciate the book, you can get your own reproduction copy for a mere €22,000. Failing that, the library bookshop stocks a plethora of souvenirs and other memorabilia, including Otto Simm's excellent *Exploring the Book of Kells* (€10.95), a thorough guide with attractive colour plates, and a popular DVD showing all 800 pages for €29.95.

The collection is rounded off with some exquisite scrolls and artwork from China, Japan, Tibet and Southeast Asia, including the two-volume Japanese *Chogonka Scroll*, painted in the 17th century by Kano Sansetu.

As if all of this wasn't enough for one visit, the library also hosts temporary exhibits that are usually too good to be missed. Not only are the contents of the museum outstanding, but the layout, design and location are also unparalleled, from the ubiquitous café and gift shop to the Zen rooftop terrace and the beautiful landscaped garden out the front. These features alone would make this an absolute Dublin must-do. Tours of the museum take place at 1pm Wednesday and 3pm and 4pm Sunday.

ST STEPHEN'S GREEN Map pp66–7

As you watch the assorted groups of friends, lovers and individuals escaping the confines of the office, splaying themselves across the nine elegantly landscaped hectares of St Stephen's Green and looking to catch a few rays of precious sun, consider that those same hectares once formed a common for public whippings, burnings and hanging. These days, the harshest treatment you'll get at Dublin's favourite lunchtime escape is the warden chucking you off the green for playing football or Frisbee.

The buildings around the square date mainly from the mid-18th century, when the green was landscaped and became the centrepiece of Georgian Dublin. The northern side was known as the Beaux Walk and it's still one of Dublin's most esteemed stretches, home to Dublin's original society hotel, the Shelbourne (p198). Nearby is the tiny Huguenot Cemetery (Map pp66–7), established in 1693 by French Protestant refugees.

Railings and locked gates were erected in 1814 when an annual fee of one guinea was charged to use the green. This private use continued until 1877 when Sir Arthur Edward Guinness pushed an act through parliament opening the green to the public once again. He also financed the central park's gardens and ponds, which date from 1880.

The main entrance to the green today is beneath Fusiliers' Arch (Map pp66–7), at the top of Grafton St. Modelled to look like a smaller version of the Arch of Titus in Rome, the arch commemorates the 212 soldiers of the Royal Dublin Fusiliers who were killed fighting for the British in the Boer War (1899–1902).

Across the road from the western side of the green is the 1863 Unitarian Church

GEORGE HOOK, BROADCASTER

We love Dublin – warts and all – but is it possible that the dramatic transformation of Dublin hasn't been an unqualified success for everyone? Absolutely, says radio host and TV rugby pundit George Hook, who doesn't like the new Dublin at all and declares ruefully that his view of Dublin 'is quite depressing'. The Cork native has made Dublin his home since 1960 but despairs that this one-time friendliest of cities, which had all the attributes of a capital and the intrinsic feel of small-town Ireland, has now become too frenetic and unfriendly.

Hook's reputation as a straight talker, who is unafraid of expressing his deeply held views even if they fly in the face of conventional opinion, has made him one of the country's most outspoken personalities and no stranger to a bit of controversy. His views of the capital are no different.

'We've lost the spirit of the old song "Dublin Saunter", whose lyrics were "For Dublin can be heaven with coffee at eleven and a stroll in Stephen's Green. There's no need to hurry, there's no need to worry,"' says Hook with a sigh. 'When I first came to Dublin and for a long time thereafter you didn't need money to have a good time. Now Dublin worships at the altar of Mammon and it seems that its primary role is to relieve you of your cash in the least amount of time for as little return as possible.'

Hook isn't at all impressed with the developers' imprint on his adopted city. He thinks the city is a monument to money and avarice, where everything is fair game. The houses, shops, streets and even the people have a plastic quality that makes them indistinguishable from any other city in the world, and that extends to the unique core of great Dublin institutions: the pub.

'Once upon a time,' he says, 'in the days of Kavanagh and Behan, virtually every pub had its own genuine characters, but they've been subsumed and the pub has been turned into a plastic commodity that is exported throughout the world. Twenty years ago, the Irish pub abroad wasn't anything like the real thing, but nowadays they're exactly the same because the local version has changed and become just like the ones you find abroad.'

And with that sobering thought he was on his way to the studio to prepare for yet another edition of *The Right Hook*, his immensely popular drive-time radio programme, which doles out the same kind of frank opinions to a nation of avid listeners every weekday from 4.30pm to 7pm on Newstalk 106–108FM.

(Map pp66–7; ☎ 478 0638; admission free; 🕒 12.30-2.30pm Mon-Fri) and the early-19th-century **Royal College of Surgeons** (Map pp66–7), which has one of the finest façades on St Stephen's Green. During the 1916 Easter Rising, the building was occupied by rebel forces led by Countess Markievicz (1868–1927; see the boxed text, p24). The columns are scarred from the bullet holes.

Among the statues and memorials dotting the green, there's one of the Countess in the southeast corner. Since it was Guinness money that created the park you see today, it's only right that Sir Arthur should be present, and there's an 1892 statue of him on the western side of the park. Just north of here, outside the railings, is a statue of Irish patriot Robert Emmet (1778–1803), who was born across the road where Nos 124 and 125 stand; his actual birthplace has been demolished. The statue was placed here in 1966 and is a replica of an Emmet statue in Washington, DC. There is also a bust of poet James Clarence Mangan (1803–49) and a curious 1967 statue of WB Yeats by Henry Moore. The centre of the park has a **garden for the blind**, complete with signs in Braille and plants that can be handled. There is also a statue of the Three Fates, presented to Dublin in 1956 by West Germany in gratitude for Irish aid after WWII. In the corner closest to the Shelbourne Hotel is a monument to Wolfe Tone, the leader of the abortive 1798 invasion; the vertical slabs serving as a backdrop to Wolfe Tone's statue have been dubbed 'Tonehenge'. At this entrance is a memorial to all those who died in the Famine.

On the eastern side of the green is a **children's playground** and to the south there's a fine old bandstand, erected to celebrate Queen Victoria's jubilee in 1887. Musical performances often take place here in summer. Near the bandstand is a bust of James Joyce, facing **Newman House** (opposite), part of University College Dublin, where Joyce was once a student. Also on this side is **Iveagh House** (Map pp66–7). Originally designed by Richard Cassels in 1730 as two separate houses, they were bought by Benjamin Guinness in 1862 and combined to create the family's city residence. After independence the house was donated to the Irish State and is now home to the Department of Foreign Affairs.

Of the many illustrious streets fanning from the green, the elegant Georgian Harcourt St has the most notable addresses. Edward Carson was born at No 4 in 1854. As the architect of Northern Irish unionism, he was never going to be the most popular figure in Dublin but he did himself no favours acting as the prosecuting attorney during Oscar Wilde's trial for homosexuality. George Bernard Shaw lived at No 61.

NEWMAN HOUSE Map pp66–7

☎ 716 7422; 85-86 St Stephen's Green

Cardinal Newman established the Catholic University of Ireland here in 1865. To see one of the finest examples of Georgian architecture currently open to the public, you'll need to take one of the guided tours (adult/concession €5/4), which leave at noon, 2pm, 3pm and 4pm Tuesday to Friday from June to August (the house isn't open to general admission). The school provided education to the likes of James Joyce, Pádraig Pearse and Eamon de Valera, who would otherwise have had to submit to the Protestant hegemony of Trinity College if they wanted to receive higher education in Ireland. Newman House is still part of the college, which later decamped to the suburb of Belfield and changed its name to University College Dublin (UCD).

The house comprises two exquisitely restored town houses; No 85, the granite-faced original, was designed by Richard Cassels in 1738 for parliamentarian Hugh Montgomery, who sold it to Richard Chapel Whaley, MP, in 1765. Whaley wanted a grander home, so he commissioned another house next door at No 86.

Aside from Cassels' wonderful design, the highlight of the building is the plasterwork, perhaps the finest in the city. For No 85, the artists were the Italian stuccodores Paolo and Filipo LaFranchini, whose work is best appreciated in the wonderfully detailed Apollo Room on the ground floor. The plasterwork in No 86 was done by Robert West, but it is not quite up to the high standard of next door.

When the newly founded, Jesuit-run Catholic University of Ireland took possession of the house in 1865, alterations were made to some of the more graphic plasterwork, supplying the nude figures with 'modesty vests'.

During Whaley's residency, the house developed certain notoriety, largely due to the activities of his son, Buck, a notorious gambler and hell-raiser who once walked all the way to Jerusalem for a bet and somehow connived to have himself elected to parliament at the tender age of 17. During the university's tenure, however, the residents were a far more temperate lot. The Jesuit priest and wonderful poet Gerard Manley Hopkins lived here during his time as professor of classics, from 1884 until his death in 1889. Hopkins' bedroom is preserved as it would have been during his residence, as is the classroom where the young James Joyce studied while obtaining his Bachelor of Arts degree between 1899 and 1902.

NEWMAN UNIVERSITY CHURCH Map pp66–7

☎ 478 0616; 83 St Stephen's Green; admission free; 🕒 8am-6pm

Next to Newman House, this neo-Byzantine charmer was built in the mid-18th century (Cardinal Newman didn't care too much for the Gothic style of the day). Its richly decorated interior was mocked at first but has since become the preferred surroundings for Dublin's most fashionable weddings.

BANK OF IRELAND Map pp66–7

☎ 671 1488; College Green; 🕒 10am-4pm Mon-Fri, 10am-5pm Thu

Facing Trinity College across College Green, this sweeping Palladian pile was built to house the Irish parliament and was the first purpose-built Parliament House in the world. The original building, the central colonnaded section that distinguishes the present-day structure, was designed by Sir

COLLEGE GREEN STATUARY

The imposing grey sculptures adorning College Green (Map pp66–7) – that area between the Bank of Ireland and Trinity College that has nary a blade of grass left – are monuments to two of Ireland's most notable patriots. In front of the bank is Henry Grattan (1746–1820), a distinguished parliamentary orator, while nearby is a modern memorial to the patriot Thomas Davis (1814–45). Where College St meets Pearse St, another traffic island is topped by a 1986 sculpted copy of the *Steyne* (the Viking word for 'stone'), which was erected on the riverbank in the 9th century to stop ships from grounding and removed in 1720.

Edward Lovett Pearce in the first half of the 18th century.

When the parliament voted itself out of existence through the 1801 Act of Union, the building was sold under the condition that the interior would be altered to prevent it ever again being used as a debating chamber. It was a spiteful strike at Irish parliamentary aspirations, but while the central House of Commons was remodelled and offers little hint of its former role, the smaller House of Lords (admission free) chamber survived and is much more interesting (see p50). It has Irish oak woodwork, a mahogany longcase parliament clock and a late-18th-century Dublin crystal chandelier. The tapestries date from the 1730s and depict the Siege of Derry (1689) and the Battle of the Boyne (1690), the two Protestant victories over Catholic Ireland. In the niches are busts of George III, George IV, Lord Nelson and the Duke of Wellington. There are tours of the House of Lords (10.30am, 11.30am and 1.45pm Tuesday), which include a talk, as much about Ireland and life in general as the building itself.

Also part of the complex, and reached via the sedate Foster Place, is the Bank of Ireland Arts Centre (p180), which hosts a variety of cultural events, including classical concerts and regular free lunchtime recitals and poetry readings. It also screens an eight-minute film about banking and Irish history, called the Story of Banking (☎ 671 2261; adult/concession €1.50/1; 🕒 screenings hourly 10am-3pm Tue-Fri). An exhibition features a 10kg silver-gilt mace that was made for the House of Commons and retained by the Speaker of the House when the parliament was dissolved. It was later sold by his descendants and bought back from Christies in London by the Bank of Ireland in 1937.

DUBLIN CASTLE Map p74

☎ 677 7129; www.dublincastle.ie; Cork Hill; adult/concession €4/3; 🕒 10am-5pm Mon-Fri, 2-5pm Sat & Sun

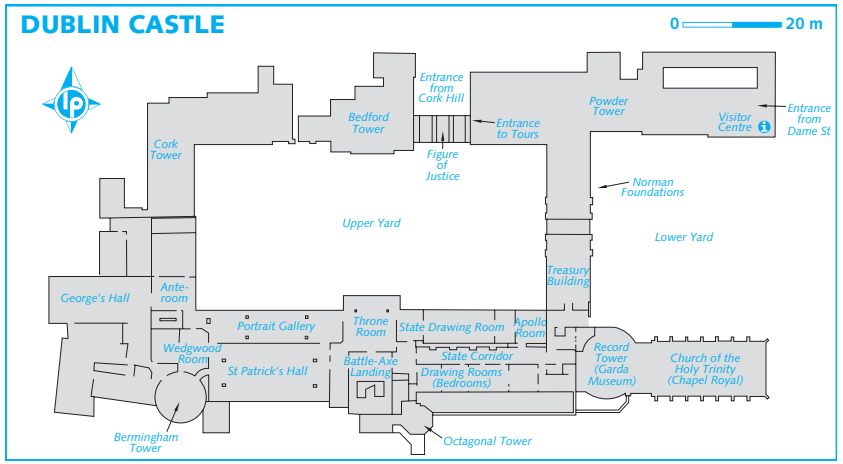
If you're looking for a medieval castle straight out of central casting you'll be disappointed; the stronghold of British power here for 700 years is principally an 18th-century creation that is more hotchpotch palace than turreted castle. Only the Record Tower survives from the original Anglo-Norman fortress built in the early 13th century. It was subject to a siege by 'Silken' Thomas Fitzgerald in 1534, virtually destroyed by a fire in 1684 and provided the setting for some momentous scenes during Ireland's battle for independence. It was officially handed over to Michael Collins on behalf of the Irish Free State in 1922, when the British viceroy is reported to have rebuked Collins on being seven minutes late. Collins replied, 'We've been waiting 700 years, you can wait seven minutes.' The castle is now used by the Irish government for meetings and functions, and can only be visited on a guided tour of the State Apartments and excavations of the former Powder Tower.

As you walk in to the grounds from the main Dame St entrance, there's a good example of the evolution of Irish architecture. On your left is the Victorian Chapel Royal (occasionally part of the Dublin Castle tours), decorated with more than 90 heads of various Irish personages and saints carved out of Tullamore limestone. The interior is wildly exuberant, with fan vaulting alongside quadripartite vaulting, wooden galleries, stained glass and lots of lively looking sculpted angels. Beside this is the Norman Record Tower, which has 5m-thick walls and now houses the Garda Museum (☎ 668 9998; admission free), which follows the history of the Irish police force. It doesn't have all that much worth protecting, but the views are fab (ring the bell for entry). On your right is the Georgian Treasury Building, the oldest office block in Dublin, and behind you, yikes, is the uglier-than-sin Revenue Commissioners Building of 1960.

Heading away from that eyesore, you ascend to the Upper Yard. On your right is a figure of Justice with her back turned to the city, an appropriate symbol for British justice, reckoned Dubliners. Next to it is the 18th-century Bedford Tower, from which the Irish Crown Jewels were stolen in 1907 and never recovered. Opposite is the entrance to the tours.

The 45-minute guided tours (departing every 20 to 30 minutes, depending on numbers) are pretty dry, seemingly pitched at tourists more likely to ooh and aah over period furniture than historical anecdotes, but they're included in the entry fee. You get to visit the State Apartments, many of which are decorated in dubious taste. There are beautiful chandeliers (ooh!), plush Irish carpets (aah!), splendid rococo ceilings, a Van Dyck portrait and the throne of King George V. You also get to see St Patrick's Hall, where Irish presidents are inaugurated and foreign dignitaries toasted, and the room in which the wounded James Connolly was tied to a chair while convalescing after the 1916 Easter Rising – brought back to health to be executed by firing squad.

The highlight is a visit to the subterranean excavations of the old castle, discovered by accident in 1986. They include foundations built by the Vikings (whose long-lasting mortar was made of ox blood, egg shells and horse hair), the hand-polished exterior of the castle walls that prevented attackers from climbing them, the steps leading down to the moat and the trickle of the historic River Poddle, which once filled the moat on its way to join the Liffey.



top picks

IT'S FREE

- Chester Beatty Library (p70)
- National Museum – Archaeology & History (p80) & National Museum – Decorative Arts & History (p105)
- National Gallery (p79)
- Natural History Museum (p81)
- Glasnevin Cemetery tour (p118)

IVEAGH GARDENS Map pp66–7

🕒 8.15am-6pm Mon-Sat, 10am-6pm Sun May-Sep, 8.15am-dusk Oct-Apr

Our favourite gardens in Dublin may not have the sculpted elegance of the other city parks, but they never get too crowded and the warden won't bark at you if you walk on the grass. They were designed by Ninian Niven in 1863 as the private grounds of Iveagh House, and include a rustic grotto, cascade, fountain, maze and rosarium.

MANSION HOUSE Map pp66–7

Dawson St

Built in 1710 by Joshua Dawson – after whom the street is named – this has been the official residence of Dublin's mayor since 1715, and was the site of the 1919 Declaration of Independence and the meeting of the first parliament. The building's original brick Queen-Anne style has all but disappeared behind a stucco façade added in the Victorian era.

ROYAL IRISH ACADEMY Map pp66–7

☎ 676 2570; 19 Dawson St; admission free; 🕒 10am-5.30pm Mon-Thu, 10am-5pm Fri

Next door to Mansion House is the seat of Ireland's pre-eminent society of letters, whose 18th-century library houses many important documents, including an extensive collection of ancient manuscripts such as the *Book of Dun Cow*, the oldest surviving Irish manuscript; the *Cathach of St Columba*; and the entire collection of 19th-century poet Thomas Moore (1779–1852).

POWERSCOURT TOWNHOUSE SHOPPING CENTRE Map pp66–7

☎ 679 4144; 59 South William St

This elegant Richard Cassels–designed town house was built between 1771 and 1774, and boasts some fine plasterwork by Michael Stapleton among its features. These days it struts its stuff as Dublin's most stylish shopping centre as well as one of the more pleasant spots to get a bite of lunch. See Eating (p145) and Shopping (p136) for more.

CITY HALL Map pp66–7

☎ 672 2204; www.dublincorp.ie/cityhall; Cork Hill; building admission free, exhibition adult/concession €4/2; 🕒 10am-5.15pm Mon-Sat, 2-5pm Sun

One of the architectural triumphs of the Dublin boom was the magnificent restoration of City Hall, originally built by Thomas Cooley as the Royal Exchange between 1769 and 1779, and botched in the mid-19th century when it became the offices of the local government. In the 2000 restoration, the internal walls were cleared and the building was returned to all its gleaming Georgian glory. The rotunda and its ambulatory form a breathtaking interior, bathed in natural light from enormous windows to the east. A vast marble statue of former mayor and Catholic emancipator Daniel O'Connell stands here as a reminder of the building's links with Irish nationalism (the funerals of both Charles Stewart Parnell and Michael Collins were held here). Dublin City Council still meets here on the first Monday of the month, gathering to discuss the city's business in the Council Chamber, which was the original building's coffee room.

There was a sordid precursor to City Hall in the shape of the Lucas Coffee House and the adjoining Eagle Tavern, in which the notorious Hellfire Club was founded by Richard Parsons, Earl of Rosse, in 1735. Although the city abounded with gentlemen's clubs, this particular one gained a reputation for messing about in the arenas of sex and Satan, two topics that were guaranteed to fire the lurid imaginings of the city's gossipmongers.

The striking vaulted basement hosts a multimedia exhibition **The Story of the Capital**, which traces the history of the city from its earliest beginnings to its rosy future – with ne'er a mention of sex, Satan or sex with Satan. There's more info here than even the most nostalgic expat could take in, and exhibits are a little text heavy, but it's all slickly presented and the audiovisual displays are informative and easy to absorb.

IRISH-JEWISH MUSEUM Map pp66–7

☎ 453 1797; 4 Walworth Rd; admission free; 🕒 11am-3.30pm Tue, Thu & Sun May-Sep, 10.30am-2.30pm Sun Oct-Apr; 🚌 16, 19 or 122 from Trinity College

Housed in an old synagogue, this museum recounts the history and cultural heritage of Ireland's small but prolific Jewish community. It was opened in 1985 by the Belfast-born, then-Israeli president, Chaim Herzog. The various memorabilia includes photographs, paintings, certificates, books and other artefacts.

SHAW BIRTHPLACE Map pp66–7

☎ 475 0854; 33 Synge St; adult/child/student €7/4.40/5.95; 🕒 10am-1pm & 2-5pm Mon-Sat, from 11am Sun Easter-Oct; 🚌 16, 19 or 122 from Trinity College

Close to the Grand Canal, the birthplace of playwright George Bernard Shaw is now a restored Victorian home that is interesting even to nonliterary buffs because it provides an insight into the domestic life of the 19th century's middle classes. Shaw's mother held musical evenings in the drawing room, and it is likely that her son's store of fabulous characters was inspired by those who attended.

WHITEFRIARS STREET CARMELITE CHURCH Map pp66–7

☎ 475 8821; 56 Aungier St; admission free; 🕒 8am-6.30pm Mon & Wed-Fri, 8am-9.30pm Tue, 8am-7pm Sat, 8am-7.30pm Sun

If you find yourself mulling over the timing of a certain proposal – or know someone who needs some prompting – walk through the automated glass doors of this church and head for the remains of none other than St Valentine, donated by Pope Gregory XVI in 1835. The Carmelites returned to this site in 1827, when they re-established their former church, which had been seized from them by Henry VIII in the 16th century. In the northeastern corner is a 16th-century Flemish oak statue of the Virgin and Child, which is believed to be the only wooden statue in Ireland to have escaped destruction during the Reformation.

MERRION SQUARE & AROUND

Eating p151; Drinking p167; Shopping p136; Sleeping p201

Genteel, sophisticated and elegant, the exquisite Georgian architecture spread around handsome Merrion Sq is a near-perfect mix of imposing public buildings, museums, and private offices and residences. It is round these parts that much of moneyed Dublin works and plays, amid the neoclassical beauties thrown up during Dublin's 18th-century prime. When James Fitzgerald, the earl of Kildare, built his mansion south of the Liffey, he was mocked for his foolhardy move into the wilds. But Jimmy Fitz had a nose for real estate: 'Where I go society will follow,' he confidently predicted and he was soon proved right. Today, Leinster House is used as the Irish parliament and is in the epicentre of Georgian Dublin.

The area around Kildare St is the administrative core of the country as well as a repository for its treasures, housed in places like the National Museum, National Gallery and Natural History Museum. The most celebrated emblems of the time are the magnificent Merrion and Fitzwilliam Sqs, surrounded by buildings that still retain their period features. This was the original stomping ground of Ireland's Protestant ascendancy, and the many plaques on the buildings remind us that it was behind these brightly coloured doors that the likes of Oscar Wilde and William Butler Yeats hung their hats.

The streets running off these squares house the offices of some of the country's most important businesses. When there's even a hint of sunshine, workers pour out into the various parks, or follow the lead of poet Patrick Kavanagh and lounge along the banks of the Grand Canal. When they clock off, these same workers head to the wonderfully atmospheric and historical pubs of Baggot St and Merrion Row for a couple of scoops of chips and some unwinding banter. There are also plenty of smart restaurants, including several of Dublin's best.

Most cross-city buses will get you here (or near enough); the most convenient DART stop is Pearse St, with the station entrance on Westland Row.

MERRION SQUARE Map pp78–9

St Stephen's Green may win the popularity contest, but elegant Merrion Sq snubs its nose at such easy praise and remains the most prestigious of Dublin's squares. Its well-kept lawns and beautifully tended flower beds are flanked on three sides by gorgeous Georgian houses with colourful doors, peacock fanlights, ornate door knockers and, occasionally, foot-scrapers, used to remove mud from shoes before venturing indoors. The square, laid out in 1762, is bordered on its remaining side by the **National Gallery** (p79) and **Leinster House** (p82) – all of which, apparently, isn't enough for some. One former resident, WB Yeats (1865–1939), was less than impressed and described the architecture as 'grey 18th century'; there's just no pleasing some people.

Despite the air of affluent calm, life around here hasn't always been a well-pruned bed of roses. During the Famine, the lawns of the square teemed with destitute rural refugees who lived off the soup kitchen organised here. The British Embassy was at 39 Merrion Sq East until 1972, when it was burnt out in protest against the killing of 13 innocent civilians on Bloody Sunday in Derry.

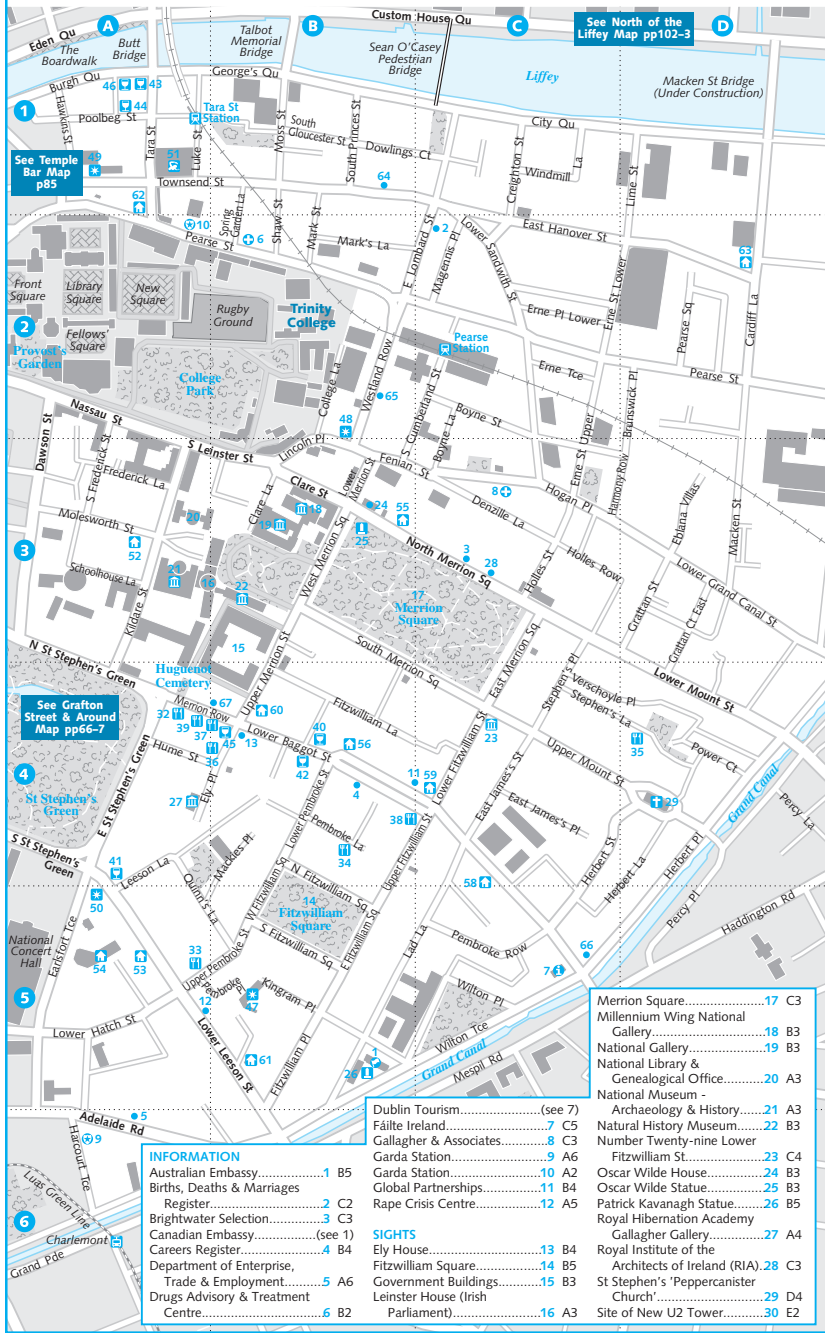
Damage to fine Dublin buildings hasn't always been the prerogative of vandals, terrorists or protesters. East Merrion Sq once continued into Lower Fitzwilliam St in the longest unbroken series of Georgian houses in Europe. Despite this, in 1961 the Electricity Supply Board (ESB) knocked down 26 of them to build an office block (see p82) – just another in a long list of crimes against architectural aesthetics that plagued the city in the latter half of the 20th century. The **Royal Institute of the Architects of Ireland**

top picks

MERRION SQUARE & AROUND

- **Merrion Square** (left), an oasis of calm steeped in Irish history
- The impressive collection at the **National Gallery** (p79)
- Antiquated **Natural History Museum** (p81), which will captivate young and old
- **National Museum** (p80), full of fascinating treasures
- Serene and inviting **Iveagh Gardens** (p75)

MERRION SQUARE & AROUND



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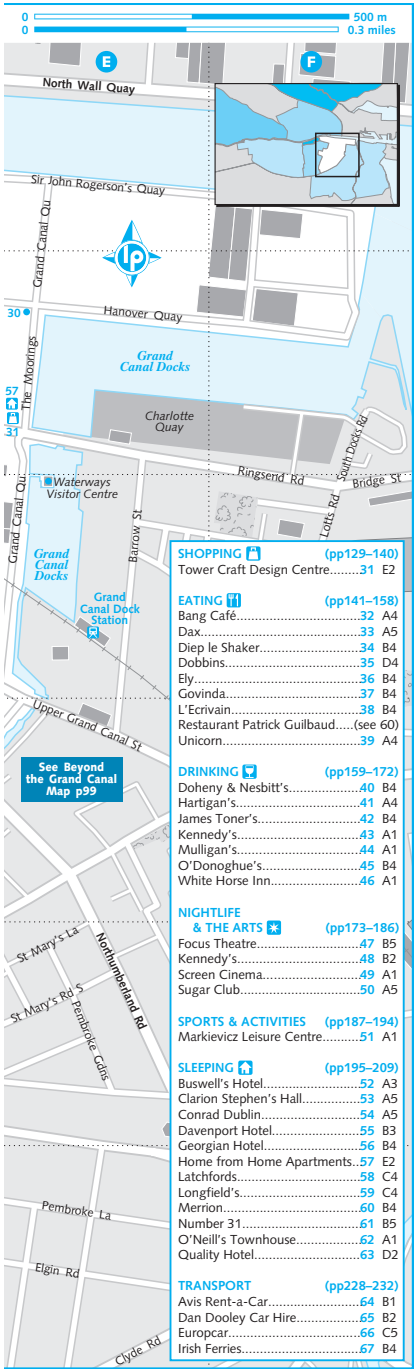

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(☎ 676 1703; www.riai.ie; 8 North Merrion Sq; admission free; 🕒 9am-5pm Mon-Fri) is rather more respectful of its Georgian address and hosts regular exhibitions.

NATIONAL GALLERY Map pp78–9

☎ 661 5133; www.nationalgallery.ie; West Merrion Sq; admission free; 🕒 9.30am-5.30pm Mon-Wed, Fri & Sat, 9.30am-8.30pm Thu, noon-5.30pm Sun, free tours 3pm Sat, 2pm, 3pm & 4pm Sun

A stunning Caravaggio and a whole room full of Ireland's pre-eminent artist, Jack B Yeats, are just a couple of stand-out highlights from this fine collection, amassed by the State since 1854. Its original collection of 125 paintings has grown, mainly through bequests, to over 12,500 artworks, including oils, watercolours, sketches, prints and sculptures.

The building itself was designed by Francis Fowke (1823–65), whose architectural credits also include London's Victoria & Albert Museum. On the lawn in front of the main entrance is a statue of the Irish railways magnate William Dargan, who organised the 1853 Dublin Industrial Exhibition on this spot; the profits from the exhibition were used to found the gallery. Next to him is George Bernard Shaw, another great benefactor of the gallery.

The entire building comprises 54 galleries; works are divided by history, school, geography and theme. There are four wings: the original Dargan Wing, the Milltown Wing (1899–1903), the Beit Wing (1964–68) and the spectacular Millennium Wing, added in 2002. The new section – also accessible via a second entrance on Clare St – provides two floors of galleries for visiting exhibitions, a centre for the study of Irish art and a multimedia room that lets you track down any painting in the gallery.

The collection spans works from the 14th to the 20th centuries and includes all the major continental schools. Obviously there is an emphasis on Irish art, and among the works to look out for are William Orpen's *Sunlight*, Roderic O'Conor's *Reclining Nude* and *Young Breton Girl*, and Paul Henry's *The Potato Diggers*. But the highlight, and one you should definitely take time to explore, is the Yeats Museum, devoted to and containing more than 30 paintings by Jack B Yeats, a uniquely Irish impressionist and arguably the country's greatest artist (see p46). Some of his finest

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NEIGHBOURHOODS MERION SQUARE & AROUND

LITERARY ADDRESSES

Merrion Sq has long been the favoured address of Dublin's affluent intelligentsia. Oscar Wilde spent much of his youth at 1 North Merrion Sq, and his house is now a museum (p82). Grumpy WB Yeats (1865–1939) lived at 52 East Merrion Sq and later, from 1922 to 1928, at 82 South Merrion Sq. George (AE) Russell (1867–1935), the self-described 'poet, mystic, painter and cooperator', worked at No 84. The great Liberator, Daniel O'Connell (1775–1847) was a resident of No 58 in his later years. Austrian Erwin Schrödinger (1887–1961), cowinner of the 1933 Nobel Prize for physics, lived at No 65 from 1940 to 1956. Dublin seems to attract writers of horror stories and Joseph Sheridan Le Fanu (1814–73), who penned the vampire classic *Camilla*, was a resident of No 70.

moments are *The Liffey Swim, Men of Destiny* and *Above the Fair*.

The absolute star exhibit from a pupil of the European schools is Caravaggio's sublime *The Taking of Christ,* in which the troubled Italian genius attempts to light the scene figuratively and metaphorically (the artist himself is portrayed holding the lantern on the far right). The masterpiece lay undiscovered for more than 60 years in a Jesuit house in nearby Leeson St, and was found accidentally by the chief curator of the gallery, Sergio Benedetti, in 1992. Fra Angelico, Titian and Tintoretto are all in this neighbourhood. Facing Caravaggio, way down the opposite end of the gallery, is *A Genovese Boy Standing on a Terrace* by Van Dyck. Old Dutch and Flemish masters line up in between, but all defer to Vermeer's *Lady Writing a Letter*, which is lucky to be here at all, having been stolen by Dublin gangster Martin Cahill in 1992, as featured in the film *The General* (see p43).

The French section contains Jules Breton's famous 19th-century *The Gleaners,* along with works by Monet, Degas, Pisarro and Delacroix, while Spain chips in with an unusually scruffy *Still Life with Mandolin* by Picasso, as well as paintings by El Greco and Goya, and an early Velázquez. There is a small British collection with works by Reynolds, Hogarth, Gainsborough and Turner. One of the most popular exhibitions occurs only in January, when the gallery hosts its annual display of watercolours by Joseph Turner. The 35 works in the collection are best viewed at this time due to the particular quality of the winter light.

NATIONAL MUSEUM – ARCHAEOLOGY & HISTORY Map pp78–9

☎ 677 7444; www.museum.ie; Kildare St; admission free; 🕒 10am-5pm Tue-Sat, 2-5pm Sun

The mother of Irish museums and the country's most important cultural institution was established in 1977 as the primary repository of the nation's archaeological treasures. The collection is so big, however, that it has expanded beyond the walls of this superb purpose-built building next to the Irish parliament into three other separate museums – the stuffed beasts of the Natural History Museum (opposite), the decorative arts section at Collins Barracks (p105) and a country life museum in County Mayo, on Ireland's west coast. They're all fascinating, but the star attractions are all here, mixed up in Europe's finest collection of Bronze- and Iron-Age gold artefacts, the most complete collection of medieval Celtic metalwork in the world, fascinating prehistoric and Viking artefacts, and a few interesting items relating to Ireland's fight for independence. If you don't mind groups, the themed guided tours (€1.50; 🕒 11am, 12.30pm, 2pm & 3pm Tue-Sat, 2pm & 3pm Sun) will help you wade through the myriad exhibits.

The Treasury is perhaps the most famous part of the collection, and its centrepieces are Ireland's two most famous crafted artefacts, the Ardagh Chalice and the Tara Brooch. The 12th-century Ardagh Chalice is made of gold, silver, bronze, brass, copper and lead; it measures 17.8cm high and 24.2cm in diameter and, put simply, is the finest example of Celtic art ever found. The equally renowned Tara Brooch was crafted around AD 700, primarily in white bronze, but with traces of gold, silver, glass, copper, enamel and wire beading, and was used as a clasp for a cloak. It was discovered on a beach in Bettystown, County Meath, in 1850, but later came into the hands of an art dealer who named it after the hill of Tara, the historic seat of the ancient high kings. It doesn't have quite the same ring to it, but it was the Bettystown Brooch that sparked a revival of interest in Celtic jewellery that hasn't let up to this day. There are many other pieces that testify to Ireland's history as the land of saints and scholars.

Virtually all of the treasures are named after the location in which they were found. It's interesting to note that most of them were discovered not by archaeologists' trowels but by bemused farmers out ploughing their fields, cutting peat or, in the case of the Ardagh Chalice, digging for spuds.

Elsewhere in the Treasury is the exhibition Ór-Ireland's Gold, featuring stunning jewellery and decorative objects created by Celtic artisans in the Bronze and Iron Ages. Among them are the Broighter Hoard, which includes a 1st-century-BC large gold collar, unsurpassed anywhere in Europe, and an extraordinarily delicate gold boat. There's also the wonderful Loughnasade bronze war trumpet, which dates from the 1st century BC. It is 1.86m long and made of sheets of bronze, riveted together, with an intricately designed disc at the mouth. It produces a sound similar to the Australian didgeridoo, though you'll have to take our word for it. Running alongside the wall is a 15m log boat, which was dropped into the water to soften, abandoned and then pulled out 4000 years later, almost perfectly preserved in the peat bog.

On the same level is the Road to Independence exhibition, which features the army coat worn by Michael Collins on the day he was assassinated (there's still mud on the sleeve). In the same case is the cap purportedly also worn by Collins on that fateful day, complete with a bullet hole in its side – somehow, however, we think if the authorities had any confidence in this claim, the exhibit wouldn't be on the floor of the cabinet without even a note.

If you can cope with any more history, upstairs are Medieval Ireland 1150–1550, Viking Age Ireland – which features exhibits from the excavations at Wood Quay, the area between Christ Church Cathedral and the river (Map pp90–1) – and our own favourite, the aptly named Clothes from Bogs in Ireland, a collection of 16th- and 17th-century woollen garments recovered from the bog. Enthralling stuff!

NATURAL HISTORY MUSEUM Map pp78–9

☎ 677 7444; www.museum.ie; Merrion St; admission free; 🕒 10am-5pm Tue-Sat, 2-5pm Sun

Dusty, weird and utterly compelling, this window into Victorian times has barely changed since Scottish explorer Dr David Livingstone opened it in 1857 – before disappearing off into the African jungle for a meeting with Henry Stanley. The creaking interior is crammed with some two million stuffed animals, skeletons and other specimens from around the world, ranging from West African apes to pickled insects in jars. Some are freestanding, others behind glass, but everywhere you turn the animals of the 'dead zoo' are still and staring.

Compared to the multimedia, interactive this and that of virtually every modern museum, this is a beautifully preserved example of Victorian charm. It is usually full of fascinated kids, but it's the adults who seem to make most noise as they ricochet like pinballs between displays. The Irish Room on the ground floor is filled with mammals, sea creatures, birds and butterflies all found in Ireland at some

TRACING YOUR ANCESTORS

Go on, you're dying to see if you've got a bit of Irish in you, and maybe tracking down your roots is the main reason for your visit. It will have made things much easier if you did some preliminary research in your home country – particularly finding out the precise date and point of entry of your ancestors – but you might still be able to plot your family tree even if you're acting on impulse.

The Genealogical Office (p83) will advise you on how to trace your ancestry, which is a good way to begin your research if you have no other experience. For information on commercial agencies that will do the research for you, contact the Association of Professional Genealogists in Ireland (APGI, c/o the Genealogical Office, Kildare St). The Births, Deaths & Marriages Register (Map pp78–9; ☎ 671 1863; Joyce House, East Lombard St; 🕒 9.30am-12.30pm & 2.15-4.30pm Mon-Fri) and the files of the National Library and the National Archives (Map pp66–7; ☎ 407 2300; Bishop St, Dublin 8; 🕒 10am-5pm Mon-Fri) are all potential sources of genealogical information.

There are also lots of books on the subject, with *Irish Roots Guide,* by Tony McCarthy, serving as a useful introduction. Other publications include *Tracing Your Irish Roots* by Christine Kineally and *Tracing Your Irish Ancestors: A Comprehensive Guide* by John Grenham. All these, and other items of genealogical concern, can be obtained from the Genealogy Bookshop (Map pp66–7; 3 Nassau St).

point, including the skeletons of three 10,000-year-old Irish elk that greet you as you enter. The World Animals Collection, spread across three levels, has the skeleton of a 20m-long fin whale found beached in County Sligo as its centrepiece. Evolutionists will love the line-up of orang-utan, chimpanzee, gorilla and human skeletons on the 1st floor. Other notables include the extinct Australian marsupial the Tasmanian tiger (mislabelled as a Tasmanian wolf), a giant panda from China, and several African and Asian rhinoceroses. The wonderful Blaschka Collection comprises finely detailed glass models of marine creatures whose zoological accuracy is incomparable.

LEINSTER HOUSE – IRISH PARLIAMENT Map pp78–9

☎ 618 3000; www.oireachtas.ie; Kildare St

All the big decisions are made – or rubber-stamped – at Oireachtas na Éireann (Irish parliament). It was built by Richard Cassels in the Palladian style between 1745 and 1748, and was considered the forerunner of the Georgian fashion that became the norm for Dublin's finer residences. Its Kildare St façade looks like a town house (which inspired Irish architect James Hoban's designs for the US White House), whereas the Merrion Sq frontage was made to resemble a country mansion.

The first government of the Irish Free State moved in from 1922, and both the Dáil (lower house) and Seanad (senate) still meet here to discuss the affairs of the nation and gossip at the exclusive members bar. The 60-member Seanad meets for fairly low-key sessions in the north-wing saloon, while there are usually more sparks and tantrums when the 166-member Dáil bangs heads in a less-interesting room, formerly a lecture theatre, which was added to the original building in 1897. Parliament sits for 90 days a year. You get an entry ticket to the lower- or upper-house observation galleries (🕑 2.30-8.30pm Tue, 10.30am-8.30pm Wed, 10.30am-5.30pm Thu Nov-May) from the Kildare St entrance on production of photo identification. Free, pre-arranged guided tours (☎ 618 3271) are available weekdays when parliament is in session.

The obelisk in front of the building is dedicated to Arthur Griffith, Michael Collins and Kevin O'Higgins, the architects of independent Ireland.

NUMBER TWENTY-NINE Map pp78–9

☎ 702 6165; www.esb.ie/numbertwentynine; 29 Lwr Fitzwilliam St; adult/child/student €5/free/2.50; 🕑 10am-5pm Tue-Sat, 1-5pm Sun, closed 2 weeks at Christmas

In an effort to atone at least partly for its sins against Dublin's Georgian heritage – it broke up Europe's most perfect Georgian row to build its headquarters (see p77) – the ESB restored this home to give an impression of genteel family life at the beginning of the 18th century. From rat-traps in the kitchen basement to handmade wallpaper and Georgian cabinets, the attention to detail is impressive, but the regular tours (dependent on numbers) are disappointingly dry.

OSCAR WILDE HOUSE Map pp78–9

☎ 662 0281; www.amcd.ie/oscarwildehouse; 1 North Merrion Sq; admission €5; 🕑 tours 10.15am & 11.15am Mon, Wed & Thu

In 1855 the surgeon William Wilde and his wife 'Speranza' Wilde moved into 1 North Merrion Sq – the first residence built on the square (1762) – with their one-year-old son Oscar. They lived here until 1878 and we imagine that the young Oscar's genius was stimulated by the famous literary salon hosted here by his mother. The family lived here right through Oscar's education at Trinity. In 1994 the house was taken over by the American College Dublin. The first two floors have been restored to an approximate version of their appearance in Oscar's day and can only be visited on a guided tour.

Across the road, just inside the railings of Merrion Sq, is a flamboyant statue of the man himself. Crafted from a variety of precious stones, it is an aptly colourful depiction of Wilde wearing his customary smoking jacket and reclining on a rock. Wilde may well be sneering at Dublin and his old home, although the expression may have more to do with the artist's attempt to depict the deeply divided nature of the man: from one side he looks to be smiling and happy; from the other, gloomy and preoccupied. Atop one of the plinths, daubed with witty one-liners and Wildean throwaways, is a small green statue of Oscar's pregnant mother.

GOVERNMENT BUILDINGS Map pp78–9

☎ 662 4888, ticket office ☎ 661 5133; www.taoiseach.gov.ie; Upper Merrion St

This gleaming Edwardian pile was the last building (almost) completed by the British before they were booted out; it opened as the Royal College of Science in 1911. When the college vacated in 1989, Taoiseach Charlie Haughey and his government moved in and spent a fortune refurbishing the complex. Among Haughey's needs, apparently, was a private lift from his office that went up to a rooftop helipad and down to a limo in the basement.

Free 40-minute guided tours (10.30am to 3.30pm Saturday only, tickets from National Gallery ticket office) take you through the Taoiseach's office, the Cabinet Room, the ceremonial staircase with a stunning stained-glass window – designed by Evie Hone (1894–1955) for the 1939 New York Trade Fair – and many fine examples of modern Irish arts and crafts.

Directly across the road from here, and now part of the Merrion Hotel, 24 Upper Merrion St is thought to be the birthplace of Arthur Wellesley (1769–1852), the first Duke of Wellington, who downplayed his Irish origins and once said 'being born in a stable does not make one a horse'. It is also possible that the cheeky bugger was born in Trim, County Meath.

FITZWILLIAM SQUARE Map pp78–9

South of St Merrion Sq, the smallest and the last of Dublin's great Georgian squares was completed in 1825. It's also the only one where the central garden is still the private domain of the square's residents. William Dargan (1799–1867), the railway pioneer and founder of the National Gallery, lived at No 2, and the artist Jack B Yeats (1871–1957; see p46) lived at No 18. Look out for the attractive 18th- and 19th-century metal coal-hole covers. The square is now a centre for the medical profession by day and a notorious beat for prostitutes at night.

ROYAL HIBERNIAN ACADEMY (RHA) GALLAGHER GALLERY Map pp78–9

☎ 661 2558; www.royalhibernianacademy.com; 25 Ely Pl; admission free; 🕑 11am-5pm Mon-Wed, Fri & Sat, 11am-9pm Thu, 2-5pm Sun

This large, well-lit gallery at the end of a serene Georgian street has a grand name to fit its exalted reputation as one of the most prestigious exhibition spaces for modern and contemporary art in Ireland. Indeed, if your name is affixed to any of the works on ever-changing display you must be doing something right in the artistic world, especially as the gallery is working hard to shrug off its reputation for having conservative tastes and these days plays host to an increasingly challenging array of work. The big event is the RHA Annual Exhibition, held in May, which shows the work of those artists deemed worthy enough by the selection committee, made up of members of the academy (easily identified amid the huge throng that attends the opening by the scholar's gowns). The show is a mix of technically proficient artists, Sunday painters and the odd outstanding talent.

NATIONAL LIBRARY & GENEALOGICAL OFFICE Map pp78–9

☎ 603 0200; www.nli.ie; Kildare St; admission free; 🕑 10am-9pm Mon-Wed, 10am-5pm Thu & Fri, 10am-1pm Sat

Next door to Leinster House, the suitably sedate National Library was built from 1884 to 1890, at the same time and to a similar design as the National Museum, by Sir Thomas Newenham Deane. Its extensive collection has many valuable early manuscripts, first editions, maps and other items of interest. Parts of the library are open to the public, including the domed reading room where Stephen Dedalus expounded his views on Shakespeare in *Ulysses*. Check in your bags at security for a look-see, although *you* won't expound anything at all in the stiflingly hushed atmosphere.

There's a Genealogical Office (☎ 603 0200; 🕑 10am-4.45pm Mon-Fri, 10am-12.30pm Sat) on the 2nd floor, where you can obtain information on how best to trace your Irish roots (see the boxed text, p81).

ST STEPHEN'S 'PEPPER-CANISTER' CHURCH Map pp78–9

☎ 288 0663; Upper Mount St; admission free

Built in 1825 in Greek Revival style and commonly known as the 'pepper-canister' on account of its appearance, St Stephen's is one of Dublin's most attractive and distinctive churches, and looks particularly fetching at twilight when its exterior lights have just come on. It occasionally hosts classical concerts, but don't go out of your way to see the interior. It's only open during services, usually held at 11am Sunday and 11.30am Wednesday, with an extra one at 11am Friday July and August.

TEMPLE BAR

Eating p153; Drinking p168; Shopping p136; Sleeping p203

It is the city's party district, packed with brash bars and pubs that stand cheek to jowl with restaurants, cutesy little boutiques, funky shops…and more bars. For the legions of revellers who don their themed T-shirts and reveal-all outfits ready for a night of drinking, laughing and scoring, Temple Bar is the best part of the Dublin experience; for those looking for a more cultural, authentic insight into the capital, Temple Bar is a high-octane cheesefest, artificially manufactured to clean out unsuspecting wallets. It's all a far cry from the high-falutin' hyperbole spun by developers in the early 1990s about Dublin's cultural renaissance being centred on this maze of cobbled streets slotted between Dame St and the river, running roughly from Trinity College to the shadow of Christ Church Cathedral.

Fishamble St, the oldest street in Dublin, dates back to Viking times and marks the western boundary of Temple Bar. Brass symbols in the pavement direct you towards a mosaic, just southwest of the overpass between Christ Church Cathedral and Dvblinia, laid out to show the ground plan of the sort of Viking dwelling excavated here in the early 1980s. The land was acquired by William Temple (1554–1628) sometime after Henry VIII dissolved the monasteries in 1537 and turfed out the Augustinian friars. The narrow lanes and alleys date from the early 18th century, when Temple Bar became a disreputable area of pubs and prostitution.

In 1742 Handel conducted the first performance of his *Messiah* in Neal's Music Hall on Fishamble St (see the boxed text, p17), now part of a hotel that bears the composer's name – it's behind Kinlay House (on Lord Edward St). In the 19th century the area developed a commercial character, attracting small craft and trade businesses. On Parliament St, which runs down to the quays from Dublin Castle (p74), the Sunlight Chambers (named after a brand of soap; Map p85) has a beautiful frieze showing the Lever Brothers' view of the world and soap: men make clothes dirty, women wash them.

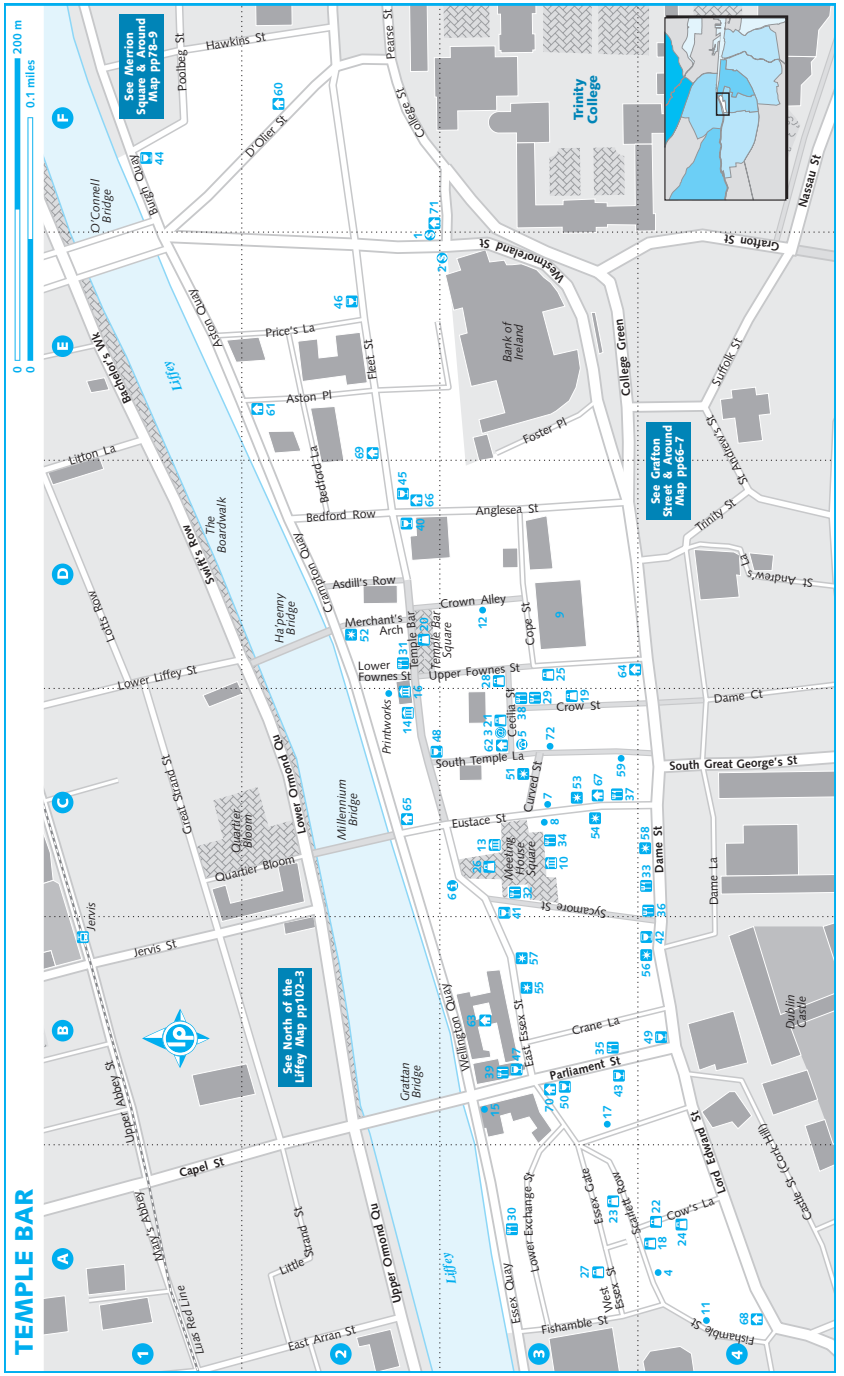
Despite the history, there's no denying that Temple Bar's attempts to create a sophisticated Left Bank atmosphere have not been altogether successful. It is an overly commercialised quarter, full of overpriced restaurants serving indifferent food, tacky souvenir shops and – with one or two exceptions – characterless bars that are more like meat markets than decent Dublin hostelries. Weekend nights are alcopop- and lager-fuelled mayhem; the whole area overflows with drunks doing their level best to justify the nickname 'Temple Barf'. Although there are plenty of hotels, they're generally cramped, packed and noisy as hell.

All of which sounds just right for anyone looking for a party, but Temple Bar *does* have more going on than stag parties from Nottingham begging a group of girls on a hen weekend to get their kit off for the lads – or the same hens daring the same lads to show them what they're made of.

OK, so the area isn't quite the new stomping ground for the radical philosophy crowd, but there are a host of slightly more brain-friendly offerings that don't make an abject mockery of the cultural quarter moniker. A handful of art galleries, a museum or two, some interesting shops and an entertaining daytime streetscape of young and old wandering about, stopping perhaps to listen to a busker or a comic, make Temple Bar well worth the effort, even if you make a point of escaping by sundown.

And it nearly didn't happen at all. It spent most of the 20th century languishing in dereliction (along with much of the city centre) and in the 1960s the government earmarked it as the perfect spot to build a gigantic bus depot. While it went about the slow business of acquiring the remaining properties, many of the condemned buildings were leased on short-term contracts to artists, artisans and community groups. Then, just as the 1990s and the Celtic Tiger first began to growl, a group of enlightened developers with close ties to the government had a brainwave and set about transforming the area into Dublin's very own cultural quarter. Its rundown buildings and streets were revitalised, derelict buildings demolished and new squares built. Among the cultural gems of the quarter are the progressive Project Arts Centre (p186), Temple Bar Gallery & Studios (p86) and the Irish Film Institute (IFI; p179). The Millennium Bridge opens up a fetching vista of Eustace St, to match Crown Alley and the atmospheric Merchant's Arch, which opens splendidly onto the Ha'penny Bridge.

As Temple Bar is right in the heart of the city, all cross-city buses will deposit you by the cobbled streets, making access – and escape – that bit easier.



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NEIGHBOURHOODS TEMPLE BAR

TEMPLE BAR

GALLERY OF PHOTOGRAPHY Map p85

☎ 671 4653; www.irish-photography.com; Meeting House Sq, Temple Bar; admission free; 🕒 11am-6pm Mon-Sat

This small gallery devoted to the photograph is set in a light and airy three-level space overlooking Meeting House Sq in the heart of Temple Bar. It features a constantly changing menu of local and international work, and while it's a little too small to be considered a really good gallery, the downstairs shop is well stocked with all manner of photographic tomes and manuals.

HANDEL WITH CARE

In 1742 the nearly broke GF Handel conducted the very first performance of his epic work *Messiah* in the since-demolished Neal's Music Hall, on the city's oldest street, Fishamble St. Ironically, Dean Swift – author of *Gulliver's Travels* and dean of St Patrick's Cathedral – suggested the choirs of St Patrick's and Christchurch participate, but then he revoked his invitation, vowing to 'punish such vicars for their rebellion, disobedience and perfidy'. The concert went ahead nonetheless, and the celebrated work is now performed in Dublin annually at the original spot – now a hotel that bears the composer's name (Map p85).

TEMPLE BAR GALLERY & STUDIOS Map p85

☎ 671 0073; 5 Temple Bar; admission free; 10am-6pm Mon-Sat, 2-6pm Sun

This huge gallery showcases the works of dozens of up-and-coming Irish artists at a time, and is the best place to see cutting-edge Irish art across a range of media. Artist's studios are also part of the complex, but these are off limits to casual visitors.

ARK CHILDREN'S CULTURAL CENTRE Map p85

☎ 670 7788; www.ark.ie; 11a Eustace St; admission free; 🕒 9.30am-4pm Tue-Fri, 10am-4pm Sat

Aimed at youngsters between the ages of three and 14, the Ark is enormously popular – and perpetually booked out. The centre runs activities aimed at stimulating children's interests in science, the environment and the arts, and has an open-air stage for summer events.

READ ALL ABOUT IT

The Temple Bar Information Centre (Map p85; ☎ 677 2255; www.templebar.ie; 12 East Essex St; 🕒 9am-5.30pm Mon-Fri) publishes a guide to Temple Bar's attractions and restaurants, available from its office or in businesses around Temple Bar. The website also has details of the excellent Diversions Festival (p18) and other events.

HEY DOODLE, DOODLE Map p85

☎ 672 7382; 14 Crown Alley; admission €8; 🕒 11am-6pm Tue-Sat, 1-6pm Sun

Budding young ceramicists get their chance to display their talents at one of the city's more interesting kids' venues. Children pick a piece of pottery, paint it whatever way they like, and collect it a week later after it's been fired and glazed. The odd adult has been spotted with a paintbrush in hand too. It gets busy at weekends, and group bookings must be made in advance.

ORIGINAL PRINT GALLERY Map p85

☎ 677 3657; www.originalprint.ie; Black Church Studio, 4 Temple Bar; admission free; 🕒 10.30am-5.30pm Mon-Sat, 2-5pm Sun

This gallery specialises in original, limited-edition prints, including etchings, lithographs and silk-screens, mostly by Irish artists.

NATIONAL PHOTOGRAPHIC ARCHIVES Map p85

☎ 671 0073; Meeting House Sq, Temple Bar; admission free; 🕒 11am-6pm Mon-Sat, 2-6pm Sun

What should be a wonderful resource putting a face on all facets of Irish history is actually a sadly disappointing archive of photographs taken from the 19th century onwards. Its visitor-friendly catalogue is computer accessible and the eager staff are always willing to help with queries, but the available material is not nearly as extensive as we'd hoped.

KILMAINHAM & THE LIBERTIES

Eating p155; Drinking p169; Shopping p138

West of most of the action, Dublin's most traditional neighbourhoods are a little light on entertainment but they offer an insight into a bygone era and are home to three outstanding sights, including the most visited attraction in the whole city.

Coming from the heart of the city centre, you'll first stumble into the Liberties, so-called because in medieval times, when Dublin was but a mere twinkle in a developer's eye, this sprawling area outside the city walls was self-governing and free of many of the tithes and taxes of Dublin proper.

That the two major cathedrals of Christ Church and St Patrick's were built here is testament to its medieval importance. In some ways it became the engine room for Dublin's growth, a centre of industry, into which migrants flocked looking for employment. Around 10,000 Huguenot refugees from France flooded into the area from the mid-17th century, introducing silk and linen weaving, which transformed the place and had a profound effect on the city as a whole. The Liberties prospered, standards of living increased and a fierce community pride emerged. The boom busted when Britain imposed high levies on Irish produce from the late 18th century and Irish manufacturers lost out to cheaper imports. Tens of thousands of weavers were put out of work, gangs went about attacking people wearing foreign fabrics and the Liberties descended into squalor.

The Liberties has never really recovered and is still one of the inner city's most deprived areas, racked by unemployment and drug abuse. Yet it retains the passionate pride of a community that has been knitted together over many centuries, and many Dubliners are increasingly looking nostalgically towards the area as an example of their city 'in the rare auld times'.

Their nostalgia is usually expressed over a few pints, and the western border of the Liberties is where you'll find the source of their favourite nectar, the Guinness brewery at St James' Gate, where an old storehouse has been converted into the city's most visited museum (thanks in part to the promise of the best Guinness on the planet at the end of the visit). Further west again, just as the Liffey becomes more of a pastoral river in the riverside burg of Kilmainham, you'll come across the country's greatest modern art museum and Kilmainham Gaol, which has played a key role in the tormented history of a country's slow struggle to gain its freedom. Both are well worth the westward trek (which can be made easier by bus). This is strictly day-trip territory – there's almost nothing in the way of accommodation and decent eating options.

GUINNESS STOREHOUSE & ST JAMES'S GATE BREWERY Map pp90–1

☎ 408 4800; www.guinness-storehouse.com; St James's Gate Brewery; adult/child/student under 18/student over 18 & senior €14/5/7.50/9.50; 🕘 9.30am-5pm; 🚌 21A, 78 or 78A from Fleet St, 🚊 Luas Green Line to James's Gate

More than any beer produced anywhere in the world, Guinness has transcended its own brand and is not just the best-known symbol of the city but a substance with near spiritual qualities, according to its legions of devotees the world over. The mythology of Guinness is remarkably durable: it doesn't travel well; its distinctive flavour comes from Liffey water; it is good for you – not to mention the generally held belief that you will never understand the Irish until you develop a taste for the black stuff. All absolutely true, of course, so it should be no surprise that the Guinness Storehouse, in the heart of the St James's Gate Brewery, is the city's most visited tourist attraction, an all-singing, all-dancing extravaganza combining sophisticated exhibits, spectacular design and a thick, creamy head of marketing hype.

To get here, head westwards beyond Christ Church, and you'll end up in the area known as the Liberties, home of the historic 26-hectare St James's Gate Brewery, which stretches along St James's St and down to the Liffey. On your way you'll pass No 1 Thomas St, where Arthur Guinness used to live, across the road from the 40m-tall St Patrick's Tower (Map pp90–1), built around 1757 and the tallest surviving windmill tower outside the Netherlands.

When Arthur started brewing in Dublin in 1759, he couldn't have had any idea that his name would become synonymous with Dublin around the world. Or could he? Showing extraordinary foresight, he had just signed a lease for a small disused brewery under the terms that he would pay just £45 annually for the next 9000 years, with the additional condition that he'd never have to pay for the water used.

G-FORCE GUINNESS

Ireland's new 9000-strong Nigerian community were dismayed to taste the 4.5% Guinness they discovered on arrival in Ireland, a limp and 'watery' version compared to the potent (and sweeter) 7.5% version at home. Nigeria is Guinness' third-largest market (after Ireland and Britain) and the increased volume harks back to the 18th century when fortified beer was produced to survive the ship's long journey to Africa. Guinness duly responded to the complaint and now the famous Dublin Guinness Foreign Extra satisfies the discerning Nigerian palate.

In the 1770s, while other Dublin brewers fretted about the popularity of a new English beer known as porter – which was first created when a London brewer accidentally burnt his hops – Arthur started making his own version. By 1799 he decided to concentrate all his efforts on this single brew. He died four years later, aged 83, but the foundations for world domination were already in place.

At one time a Grand Canal tributary was cut into the brewery to enable special Guinness barges to carry consignments out onto the Irish canal system or to the Dublin port. When the brewery extensions reached the Liffey in 1872, the fleet of Guinness barges became a familiar sight. Pretty soon Guinness was being exported as far afield as Africa and the West Indies. As the barges chugged their way along the Liffey towards the port, boys used to lean over the wall and shout 'bring us back a parrot'. Dubliners still say the same thing to each other when they're going off on holiday.

The company was once the city's biggest employer – in the 1930s up to 5000 people made their living at the brewery. Today, however, the brewery is no longer the prominent employer it once was; a gradual shift to greater automatisation has reduced the workforce to around 600.

One link with the past that hasn't been broken is the yeast used to make Guinness, essentially the same living organism that has been used since 1770. Another vital ingredient is a hop by the name of fuggles, which used to be grown exclusively around Dublin but is now imported from Britain, the US and Australia (everyone take a bow).

The brewery is far more than just a place where beer is manufactured. It is an intrinsic part of Dublin's history and a key element of the city's identity. Accordingly, the quasi-mythical stature of Guinness is the central theme of the brewery's museum, the Guinness Storehouse, which opened in 2000 and is the only part of the brewery open to visitors.

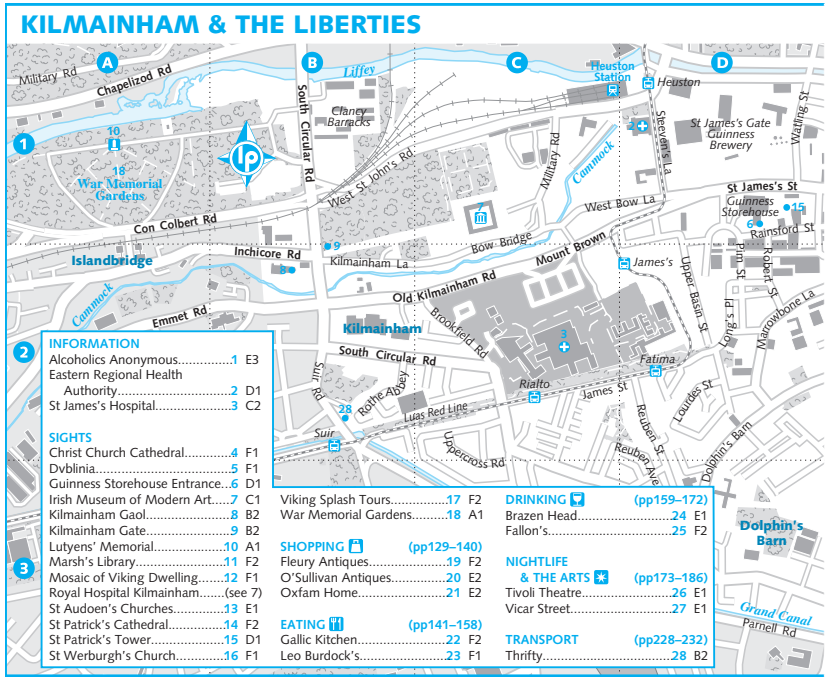
While inevitably overpriced and overhyped, this paean to the black gold is done exceptionally well. It occupies the old Fermentation House, built in 1904. As it's a listed building the designers could only adapt and add to the structure without taking anything away. The result is a stunning central atrium that rises seven storeys and takes the shape of a pint of Guinness. The head is represented by the glassed Gravity Bar, which provides panoramic views of Dublin to savour with your complimentary pint.

Before you race up to the top, however, you might want to check out the museum

THINKING THE UNTHINKABLE

Guinness and Dublin, Dublin and Guinness. The two sides of the same coin, united by history, tradition, symbolism and smell – the odour of roasting hops is one of the great olfactory sensations in the dirty aul' town. So when Diageo, the brewery's parent company, announced in June 2007 that they were 'considering a number of important investment decisions on upgrading and renewing its brewing facilities in Ireland in the coming years', the first ripples of panic spread throughout the city.

According to the company's own statistics, sales of the black stuff have fallen steadily in Ireland, with a 7% drop in the second half of 2006. In addition, the brewery sits on real estate currently worth in excess of €3 billion, and what successful business doesn't know how to put two and two together and come up with a staggering chunk of change? Diageo has assured us that it'll be 2008 before they make any decisions regarding the brewery, but rumours persist that the company will take the money and move to a Greenfield site on the outskirts of the city. Guinness, Grangegorman? Good God, no.



for which you've paid so handsomely. Actually, it's designed as more of an 'experience' than a museum. It has nearly four acres of floor space, featuring a dazzling array of audiovisual, interactive exhibits that cover most aspects of the brewery's story and explain the brewing process in overwhelming detail.

On the ground floor, a copy of Arthur Guinness' original lease lies embedded beneath a pane of glass in the floor. Wandering up through the various exhibits, including 70-odd years of advertising, you can't help feeling that the now wholly foreign-owned company has hijacked the mythology Dubliners attached to the drink, and it has all become more about marketing and manipulation than mingling and magic.

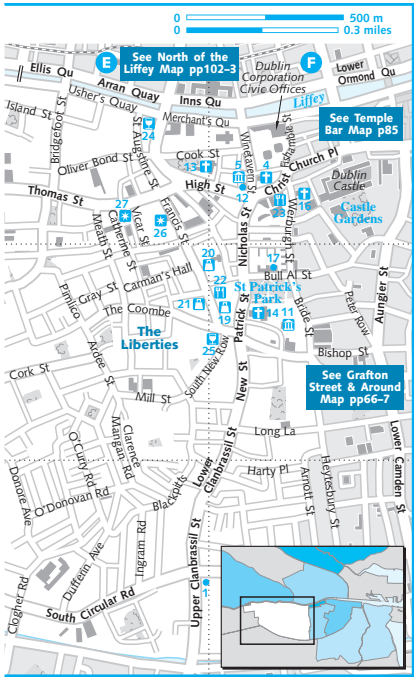
The climax, of course, comes when you emerge onto the circular Gravity Bar for your complimentary Guinness. It may well be the most technically perfect pint of Guinness you'll ever have – and the views are breathtaking – but if you're like us, you'll probably be more excited about getting back down to earth and having a pint with some real Dubliners.

ST PATRICK'S CATHEDRAL Map pp90–1

☎ 475 4817; www.stpatrickscathedral.ie; St Patrick's Close; adult/child/senior & student €5/free/4; 🕒 9am-6pm Mon-Sat, 9-11am, 12.45-3pm & 4.15-6pm Sun Mar-Oct, 9am-6pm Mon-Fri, to 5pm Sat, 10-11am & 12.45-3pm Sun Nov-Feb; 🚌 50, 50A or 56A from Aston Quay or 54 or 54A from Burgh Quay

Situated on the very spot that St Paddy himself rolled up his sleeves and dunked the heathen Irish into a well and thereby gave them a fair to middling shot at salvation, this is one of Dublin's earliest Christian sites and a most hallowed chunk of real estate. Although a church has stood here since the 5th century, this building dates from the turn of the 12th century and has been altered several times, most notably in 1864 when it was saved from ruin and, some might say, overenthusiastically restored. The interior is as calm and soothing as the exterior is sombre, and it's crammed with interesting curios, monuments and memorials. The picturesque St Patrick's Park, adjoining, was a crowded slum until it was cleared in the early 20th century.

It's likely that St Patrick's was intended to replace Christ Church as the city's cathedral



but the older church's stubborn refusal to be usurped resulted in the two cathedrals being virtually a stone's throw from one another. Separated only by the city walls (with St Patrick's outside), each possessed the rights of cathedral of the diocese. While St Pat's isn't as photogenic as its neighbour (it doesn't get the clicks, if you like), it probably one-ups its sexier-looking rival in historical terms.

It was built on unstable ground, with the subterranean River Poddle flowing beneath its foundations, and, because of the high water table, it does not have a crypt. The cathedral had been built twice by 1254 but succumbed to a series of natural disasters over the following century. Its spire was taken out in a 1316 storm, while the original tower and part of the nave were destroyed by fire in 1362 and rebuilt immediately after.

Its troubles were to be more than structural, however. Following Henry VIII's 16th-century hissy fit and the dissolution of the monasteries, St Patrick's was ordered to hand over all of its estates, revenues and possessions. The chapter (bureaucratic head of the church) was imprisoned until they 'agreed' to the handover, the cathedral's privileges were revoked and it was demoted to the rank of parish church. It was not restored to its previous position until 1560.

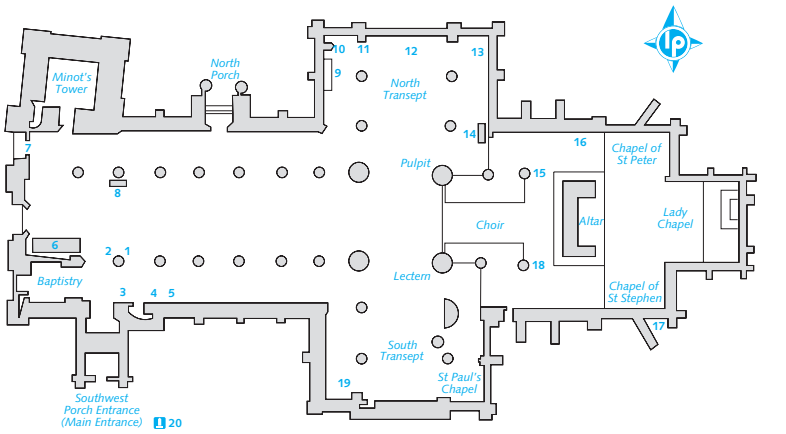
Further indignity arrived with Cromwell in 1649, when the nave was used as a stable for his horses. In 1666 the Lady Chapel was given to the newly arrived Huguenots and became known as the French Church of St Patrick. It remained in Huguenot hands until 1816. The northern transept was known as the parish church of St Nicholas Without (meaning outside the city), essentially dividing the cathedral into two distinct churches.

Such confusion led to the building falling into disrepair as the influence of the deanery and chapter – previously charged with the church's maintenance – waned. Although the church's most famous dean, Jonathan Swift (author of *Gulliver's Travels*, who served here from 1713 to 1745), did his utmost to preserve the integrity of the building, by the end of the 18th century it was close to collapse. It was just standing when the benevolent Guinness family stepped in to begin massive restoration in 1864.

Fittingly, the first Guinness to show an interest in preserving the church, Benjamin, is commemorated with a statue at the main entrance to the cathedral. Immediately inside to your left is the oldest part of the building, the baptistry, which was probably the entrance to the original building. It contains the original 12th-century floor tiles and medieval stone font, which is still in use. Inside the cathedral proper, you come almost immediately to the graves of Jonathan Swift and his long-term companion Esther Johnson, better known as Stella. The Latin epitaphs are both written by Swift, and assorted Swift memorabilia lies all over the cathedral, including a pulpit and a death mask.

Beginning clockwise around the cathedral, you can't miss the huge Boyle Monument, erected in 1632 by Richard Boyle, earl of Cork. It stood briefly beside the altar until, in 1633, Dublin's viceroy, Thomas Wentworth, earl of Strafford, had it shifted from its prominent position because he felt he shouldn't have to kneel to a Corkman. Boyle took his revenge in later years by orchestrating Wentworth's impeachment and execution. A figure in a niche at the

ST PATRICK'S CATHEDRAL



bottom left of the monument is the earl's son Robert who went on to become a noted scientist and discovered Boyle's Law, which sets out the relationship between the pressure and the volume of a gas.

In the opposite corner, there is a cross on a stone slab that once marked the position of St Patrick's original well, where the patron saint of Ireland rolled up his sleeves and got to baptising the natives.

Towards the north transept is displayed a door that has become a symbol of peace and reconciliation since it helped resolve a scrap between the earls of Kildare and Ormond in 1492. After a feud, supporters of the squabbling nobles ended up in a pitched battle inside the cathedral, during which Ormond's nephew – one Black James – barricaded himself into the chapterhouse. Kildare, having taken a deep breath and calmed down, cut a hole in the door between them and stuck his arm through it to either shake his opponent's hand, or lose a limb in his attempt to smooth things over. Luckily for him, James chose mediation over amputation and took his hand. The term 'to chance your arm' entered the English lexicon, the door, complete with hole, was preserved for posterity and everyone lived happily ever after – except Black James, who was murdered by Kildare's son-in-law four years later.

The north transept contains various military memorials to Royal Irish Regiments, while the northern choir aisle has a tablet marking the grave of the duke of Schomberg, a prominent casualty of the Battle of the Boyne in 1690. Swift provided the duke's epitaph, caustically noting on it that the duke's own relatives couldn't be bothered to provide a suitable memorial. On the opposite side of the choir is a chair that was used by William of Orange when he came to the cathedral to give thanks to God for his victory over the Catholic James II during the same battle.

Passing through the south transept, which was once the chapterhouse where the earl of Kildare chanced his arm, you'll see magnificent stained-glass windows above the funerary monuments. The south aisle is lined with memorials to prominent 20th-century Irish Protestants, including Erskine Childers, president of Ireland from 1973 to 1974, whose father was executed

EVENSONG AT THE CATHEDRALS

In a rare coming together, the choirs of St Patrick's Cathedral and Christ Church Cathedral both participated in the first-ever performance of Handel's *Messiah* in nearby Fishamble St in 1742, conducted by the great composer himself. Both houses of worship carry on their proud choral traditions, and visits to the cathedrals during evensong will provide enchanting and atmospheric memories. The choir performs evensong in St Patrick's at 5.45pm Monday to Friday (not on Wednesday in July and August), while the Christ Church choir competes at 5.30pm on Sunday, 6pm on Wednesday and Thursday, and 5pm Saturday. If you're going to be in Dublin around Christmas, do not miss the carols at St Patrick's; call ahead for the hard-to-get tickets on ☎ 453 9472.

by the Free State during the Civil War. The son never spoke of the struggle for Irish independence because, on the eve of his death, his father made him promise never to do anything that might promote bitterness among Irish people.

On your way around the church, you will also take in the four sections of the relatively new permanent exhibition, **Living Stones**, which explores the cathedral's history and the contribution it has made to the culture of Dublin. The cathedral managers are also hoping to provide tours of Minot's tower (approximately €7, limited to groups of eight) some time in the future, so it will be worth phoning ahead if you're interested.

MARSH'S LIBRARY Map pp90–1

☎ 454 3511; www.marshlibrary.ie; St Patrick's Close; adult/child/student €2.50/free/1.50; 🕑 10am-1pm & 2-5pm Mon & Wed-Fri, 10.30am-1pm Sat; 🚌 50, 50A or 56A from Aston Quay, or 54 or 54A from Burgh Quay

It mightn't have the immediate appeal of a brewery or a big old church, but this magnificently preserved scholars' library, virtually unchanged in three centuries, is one of Dublin's most beautiful open secrets, and an absolute highlight of any visit. Few think to scale its ancient stairs to see its beautiful, dark oak bookcases, each topped with elaborately carved and gilded gables, and crammed with books. Here you can savour the atmosphere of three centuries of learning, slow into synch with the tick-tocking of the 19th-century grandfather clock, listen to the squeaky boards and record the scent of leather and learning. It's amazing how many people visit St Patrick's Cathedral next door and overlook this gem – they're mad, they don't deserve a holiday.

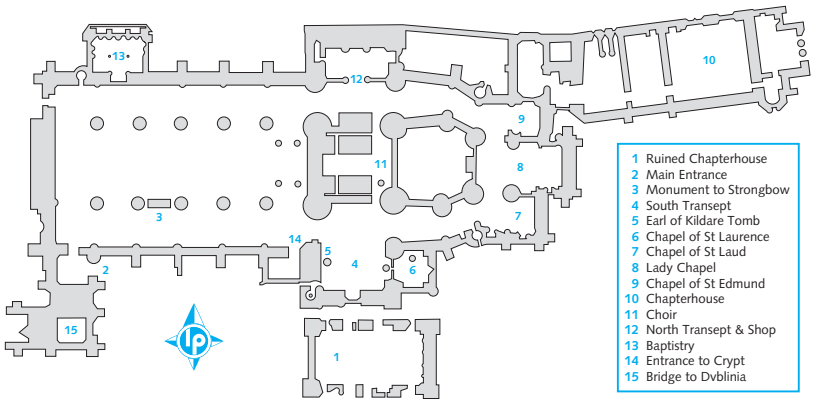
Founded in 1701 by Archbishop Narcissus Marsh (1638–1713) and opened in 1707, the library was designed by Sir William Robinson, the man also responsible for the **Royal Hospital Kilmainham** (p96). It's the oldest public library in the country, and contains 25,000 books dating from the 16th to the early 18th century, as well as maps, manuscripts (including one in Latin dating back to 1400) and a collection of incunabula (books printed before 1500). In its one nod to the 21st century, the library's current 'keeper', Dr Muriel McCarthy, is the first woman to hold the post.

Apart from theological books and bibles in dozens of languages, there are tomes on medicine, law, travel, literature, science, navigation, music and mathematics. One of the oldest and finest books is a volume of *Cicero's Letters to His Friends*, printed in Milan in 1472. The most important of the four main collections is the 10,000-strong library of Edward Stillingfleet, bishop of Worcester.

Most of Marsh's own extensive collection is also here, and there are various items that used to belong to Jonathan Swift (Dean of St Patrick's Cathedral), including his copy of *History of the Great Rebellion*. His margin notes include a number of comments vilifying Scots, of whom he seemed to have a low opinion. He also held a low opinion of Archbishop Marsh, whom he blamed for holding him back in the church. When Swift died in 1745, he was buried in St Patrick's Cathedral, near his former enemy.

Like the rest of the library, the three alcoves, in which scholars were once locked to peruse rare volumes, have remained virtually unchanged for three centuries. Don't worry though: the skull in the furthest one doesn't belong to some poor forgotten scholar, it's a cast of the head of Stella, Swift's other half. The library's also home to Delmas Conservation Bindery, which repairs and restores rare old books, and makes an appearance in Joyce's *Ulysses*.

CHRIST CHURCH CATHEDRAL



CHRIST CHURCH CATHEDRAL Map pp90–1

Church of the Holy Trinity; ☎ 677 8099; www.cccdub.ie; Christ Church Pl; adult/concession €5/2.50; 🕒 9.45am-5pm Mon-Fri, 10am-5pm Sat & Sun; 🚌 50, 50A or 56A from Aston Quay or 54 or 54A from Burgh Quay

Its hilltop location and eye-catching flying buttresses make this the most photogenic by far of Dublin's three cathedrals as well as one of the capital's most recognisable symbols.

A wooden church was first erected here by Dunán, the first bishop of Dublin, and Sitric, the Viking king, around 1030, at the southern edge of Dublin's Viking settlement. In 1163, however, the secular clergy were replaced by a group of Augustinian monks installed by the patron saint of Dublin, Archbishop Laurence O'Toole. Six years later, Strongbow's Normans blew into town and got themselves into the church-building business, arranging with O'Toole (and his successor John Cumin) for the construction of a new stone cathedral that would symbolise Anglo-Norman glory. The new cathedral opened its doors late in the 12th century, by which time Strongbow, O'Toole and Cumin were long dead.

Above ground, the north wall, the transepts and the western part of the choir are almost all that remain from the original. It has been restored several times over the centuries and, despite its apparent uniformity, is a hotchpotch of different styles, ranging from Romanesque to English Gothic.

Until the disestablishment of the Church of Ireland in 1869, senior representatives of the Crown all swore their allegiance here. The church's fortunes, however, were not guaranteed. By the turn of the 18th century its popularity waned along with the district as the upper echelons of Dublin society fled north, where they attended a new favourite, St Mary's Abbey. Through much of its history, Christ Church vied for supremacy with nearby St Patrick's Cathedral, but both fell on hard times in the 18th and 19th centuries. Christ Church was virtually derelict – the nave had been used as a market and the crypt had earlier housed taverns – by the time restoration took place. Whiskey distiller Henry Roe (see p30) donated the equivalent of €30 million to save the church, which was substantially rebuilt from 1871 to 1878. Ironically, both of the great Church of Ireland cathedrals are essentially outsiders in a Catholic nation today, dependent on tourist donations for their very survival.

From its inception, Christ Church was the State Church of Ireland, and when Henry VIII dissolved the monasteries in the 16th century, the Augustinian priory that managed the church was replaced with a new Anglican clergy, which still runs the church today.

From the southeastern entrance to the churchyard you walk past ruins of the chapterhouse, which dates from 1230. The main entrance to the cathedral is at the southwestern corner and as you enter you face the ancient northern wall. This survived the collapse of its southern counterpart but has also suffered from subsiding foundations (much of the church was built on a peat bog) and, from its eastern end, it leans visibly.

The southern aisle has a monument to the legendary Strongbow. The armoured figure on the tomb is unlikely to be of Strongbow (it's more probably the earl of Drogheda), but his internal organs may have been buried here. A popular legend relates an especially visceral version of the daddy-didn't-love-me tale: the half-figure beside the tomb is supposed to be Strongbow's son, who was cut in two by his loving father when his bravery in battle was suspect – an act that surely would have saved the kid a fortune in therapist's bills.

The southern transept contains the superb baroque tomb of the 19th earl of Kildare, who died in 1734. His grandson, Lord Edward Fitzgerald, was a member of the United Irishmen and died in the abortive 1798 Rising. The entrance to the Chapel of St Laurence is off the south transept and contains two effigies, one of them reputed to be of either Strongbow's wife or sister.

An entrance by the south transept descends to the unusually large arched crypt, which dates back to the original Viking church. Curiosities in the crypt include a glass display-case housing a mummified cat in the act of chasing a mummified mouse, frozen midpursuit inside an organ pipe in the 1860s. Also on display are the stocks from the old 'liberty' of Christ Church, used when church authorities meted out civil punishments to wrongdoers. The Treasury exhibit includes rare coins, the Stuart coat of arms and gold given to the church by William of Orange after the Battle of the Boyne. From the main entrance, a bridge, part of the 1871–78 restoration, leads to Dvblinia.

DVBLINIA Map pp90–1

☎ 679 4611; www.dublinia.ie; main entrance St Michael's Hill; adult/child/student €6.25/3.75/5.25; 🕒 10am-5pm Apr-Sep, 11am-4pm Mon-Sat, 10am-4pm Sun Oct-Mar; 🚌 50, 50A or 56A from Aston Quay or 54 or 54A from Burgh Quay

Inside what was once the Synod Hall, added to Christ Church Cathedral during its late-19th-century restoration, this is a lively and kitschy attempt to bring medieval Dublin to life using models, music, streetscapes and interactive displays. The ground floor has wax models depicting 10 episodes in Dublin's history, explained in a choice of five languages through headsets. Up one floor is Viking World, which has a large selection of objects recovered from Wood Quay, the world's largest Viking archaeological site. There's also a huge model of 11th-century Dublin and a bunch of interactive exhibits such as a longboat that you can sit in and pretend to be a slave. There are also models of the medieval quayside and of a cobbler's shop. On the top floor is the Medieval Fayre, featuring merchants' wares, a medicine stall, an armourer's pavilion, a confessional booth and a bank. Finally, you can climb neighbouring St Michael's Tower and peek through its grubby windows for views over the city to the Dublin hills. There is also a pleasant café and the inevitable souvenir shop. Your ticket gets you into Christ Church Cathedral free, via the link bridge.

KILMAINHAM GAOL Map pp90–1

☎ 453 5984; www.heritageireland.ie; Inchicore Rd; adult/child €5/2; 🕒 9.30am-5pm Apr-Oct, 9.30am-4pm Mon-Sat, 10am-5pm Sun Nov-Mar; 🚌 23, 51, 51A, 78 or 79 from Aston Quay

If you have *any* interest in Irish history, especially the juicy bits about resistance to English rule, you will be shaken and stirred by a visit to this infamous prison. It was the stage for many of the most tragic and heroic episodes in Ireland's recent past, and the list of its inmates reads like a who's who of Irish nationalism. Solid and sombre, its walls absorbed the barbarism of British occupation and recount them in whispers to visitors.

It took four years to build, and the prison opened – or rather closed – its doors in 1796, when the first reluctant guests were led in. The Irish were locked up for all sorts of misdemeanours, some more serious than others. A six-year-old boy spent a month here in 1839 because his father couldn't pay his train fare, and during the Famine it was crammed with the destitute who had been imprisoned for stealing food and begging. But it is most famous for incarcerating 120 years of Irish nationalists, from Robert Emmet in 1803 to Eamon de Valera in 1923. All of Ireland's botched uprisings ended with the leaders' confinement here, usually before their execution.

It was the treatment of the leaders of the 1916 Easter Rising that most deeply etched the gaol into the Irish consciousness (also see p22). Fourteen of the rebel commanders were executed in the exercise yard, including James Connolly who was so badly injured at the time of his execution that he

was strapped to a chair at the opposite end of the yard, just inside the gate. The places where they were shot are marked by two simple black crosses. The executions turned an apathetic nation on a course towards violent rebellion.

The gaol's final function was as a prison for the newly formed Irish Free State, an irony best summed up with the story of Ernie O'Malley, who managed to escape from the gaol when incarcerated by the British but was locked up again by his erstwhile comrades during the Civil War. This chapter is somewhat played down on the tour, and even the passing comment that Kilmainham's final prisoner was the future president, Eamon de Valera, doesn't reveal that he had been imprisoned by his fellow Irish citizens. The gaol was finally decommissioned in 1924.

Visits are by guided tour and start with a stirring audiovisual introduction, screened in the former chapel where 1916 leader Joseph Plunkett was wed to his beloved just 10 minutes before his execution. The lively, thought-provoking (but too crowded) tour takes you through the old and new wings of the prison, where you can see former cells of famous inmates, read graffiti on the walls and immerse yourself in the atmosphere of the execution yards.

Incongruously sitting outside in the yard is the *Asgard*, the ship that successfully ran the British blockade to deliver arms to nationalist forces in 1914. It belonged to, and was skippered by, Erskine Childers, father of the future president of Ireland. He was executed by Michael Collins' Free State army in 1922 for carrying a revolver, which had been a gift from Collins himself. There is also an outstanding museum dedicated to Irish nationalism and prison life. On a lighter, more musical note, *real* U2 fans will be chuffed to recognise the prison as the setting for the video to their 1982 single *A Celebration*; now that's a slice of history. Buffs of the other kind of history should allow at least half a day for a visit.

ROYAL HOSPITAL KILMAINHAM & IRISH MUSEUM OF MODERN ART

Map pp90–1

IMMA; ☎ 612 9900; www.imma.ie; Military Rd; admission free; 🕒 10am-5.30pm Tue-Sat, noon-5.30pm Sun; 🚌 24, 79 or 90 from Aston Quay

IMMA is the country's foremost gallery for contemporary Irish art, although it takes second billing to the majestic building in which it is housed. The Royal Hospital Kilmainham was built between 1680 and 1684 as a retirement home for veteran soldiers, a function it fulfilled until 1928, after which it was left to languish for half a century before being saved in a 1980s restoration.

The inspiration for the design came from James Butler, duke of Ormonde and Charles II's viceroy, who had been so impressed by Les Invalides on a trip to Paris that he commissioned William Robinson to knock up a Dublin version. What the architect designed was Dublin's finest 17th-century building and the highpoint of the Anglo-Dutch style of the day. It consists of an unbroken range enclosing a vast, peaceful courtyard with arcaded walks. A chapel in the centre of the northern flank has an elegant clock tower and spire. This was the first truly classical building in Dublin and marked the beginning of the Georgian boom. Christopher Wren began building London's Chelsea Royal Hospital two years after work commenced here.

The spectacularly restored hospital was unveiled in 1984, on the 300th anniversary of its construction. The next year it received the prestigious Europa Nostra award for 'distinguished contribution to the conservation of Europe's architectural heritage'. There are free guided tours of the museum's exhibits at 2.30pm on Wednesday, Friday and Sunday throughout the year, but we strongly recommend the free, seasonal heritage itinerary tour (50 minutes; 10am to 5.30pm Tuesday to Saturday, noon to 5.30pm Sunday July to September). It shows off some of the building's treasures, including the Banqueting Hall, with 22 specially commissioned portraits, and the stunning baroque chapel, with papier-mâché ceilings and a set of exquisite Queen Anne gates. Also worth seeing are the fully restored formal gardens.

In 1991 it became home to IMMA and the best of modern and contemporary Irish art. The blend of old and new works wonderfully, and you'll find contemporary Irish artists such as Louis Le Brocquy, Sean Scully, Richard Deacon, Richard Gorman and Dorothy Cross featured here. The permanent exhibition also features paintings from heavy hitters Pablo Picasso and Joan Miró, and is topped up by regular temporary exhibitions. There's a good café and bookshop on the grounds.

KILMAINHAM GATE

Map pp90–1

🚌 23, 51, 51A, 78 or 79 from Aston Quay

The Kilmainham Gate was designed by Francis Johnston (1760–1829) in 1812 and originally stood at the Watling St junction with Victoria Quay, near the Guinness Brewery, where it was known as the Richmond Tower. It was moved to its current position opposite the prison in 1846 as it obstructed the increasingly heavy traffic to the new Kingsbridge Station (now Heuston Station), which opened in 1844.

ST AUDOEN'S CHURCHES

Map pp90–1

☎ 677 0088; Cornmarket, High St; adult/concession €2/1; 🕒 9.30am-5pm Jun-Sep; 🚌 50, 50A or 56A from Aston Quay or 54 or 54A from Burgh Quay

It was only right that the newly arrived Normans would name a church after their patron saint Audoen (the 7th-century bishop of Rouen, aka Ouen), but they didn't quite figure on two virtually adjacent churches bearing his name, just west of Christ Church Cathedral. The more interesting of the two is the Church of Ireland, the only medieval parish church in the city that's still in use. It was built between 1181 and 1212, although a 9th-century burial slab in the porch suggests that it was built on top of an even older church. Its tower and door date from the 12th century and the aisle from the 15th century, but the church today is mainly a product of a 19th-century restoration.

As part of the tour you can explore the ruins as well as the present church, which has funerary monuments that were beheaded by Cromwell's purists. Through the heavily moulded Romanesque Norman door you can also touch the 9th-century 'lucky stone' that was believed to bring good luck to business.

St Anne's Chapel, the visitors centre, houses a number of tombstones of leading members of Dublin society from the 16th to the 18th centuries. At the top of the chapel is the tower, which holds the three oldest bells in Ireland, dating from 1423. Although the church's exhibits are hardly spectacular, the building itself is beautiful and a genuine slice of medieval Dublin.

The church is entered from the south off High St through St Audoen's Arch, which was built in 1240 and is the only surviving reminder of the city gates. The adjoining park is pretty but attracts many unsavoury characters, particularly at night.

Joined onto the Protestant church is the newer, bigger, 19th-century Catholic St Audoen's, an expansive church in which Father 'Flash' Kavanagh used to read Mass at high speed so that his large congregation could head off to more absorbing Sunday pursuits, such as football matches.

ST WERBURGH'S CHURCH

Map pp90–1

☎ 478 3710; Werburgh St; 🕒 10am-4pm Mon-Fri; 🚌 50, 50A or 56A from Aston Quay or 54 or 54A from Burgh Quay

Lying west of Dublin Castle, St Werburgh's Church stands upon ancient foundations (probably from the 12th century), but was rebuilt several times during the 17th and 18th centuries. The church's tall spire was dismantled after Robert Emmet's rising in 1803, for fear that future rebels might use it as a vantage point for snipers. Interred in the vault is Lord Edward Fitzgerald, who turned against Britain, joined the United Irishmen and was a leader of the 1798 Rising. In what was a frequent theme of Irish uprisings, compatriots gave him away and his death resulted from the wounds he received when captured. Coincidentally, Major Henry Sirr, the man who captured him, is buried out in the graveyard. On the porch you will notice two fire pumps that date from the time when Dublin's fire department was composed of church volunteers. The interior is rather more cheerful than the exterior, although the church is rarely used today. Phone, or see the caretaker at 8 Castle St, to see inside. Donations are welcome.

WAR MEMORIAL GARDENS

Map pp90–1

☎ 677 0236; www.heritageireland.ie; South Circular Rd, Islandbridge; admission free; 🕒 8am-twilight Mon-Fri, from 10am Sat & Sun; 🚌 25, 25A, 26, 68 or 69 from city centre, 🚊 Luas Red Line to Heuston

Hardly anyone ever ventures this far west, but they're missing a lovely bit of landscaping in the shape of the War Memorial Gardens, by our reckoning as pleasant a patch of greenery as any you'll find in the heart of the Georgian centre. Designed by Sir Edwin Lutyens, the memorial commemorates the 49,400 Irish soldiers who died during WWI – their names are inscribed in the two huge granite bookrooms that stand at one end. A beautiful spot and a bit of history to boot.

BEYOND THE GRAND CANAL

Eating p155; Drinking p169; Shopping p138; Sleeping p204

It has long been said that a 'real' Dubliner is born within the confines of the two canals that encircle the city centre – the older Grand Canal to the south and the newer Royal Canal to the north – but the rapid expansion of the city, coupled with the shockingly high price of central real estate makes it more a case of *older* Dubliners being born within the canal boundaries.

Built to connect Dublin with the River Shannon in the centre of Ireland, the Grand Canal makes a graceful 6km loop around south Dublin and enters the Liffey at Ringsend, through locks that were built in 1796. The large Grand Canal Dock, flanked by Hanover and Charlotte Quays, is now used by windsurfers and canoeists and is the site of major new development. Here you'll find the Waterways Visitor Centre, which illustrates the gleaming new development of the area that, for now, sits side by side with the workaday, historical and even quaint auld Dublin of Ringsend and Irishtown. At the northwestern corner of the dock is Misery Hill, once a very macabre place where it was the practice to bring the corpses of those already hanged at Gallows Hill, near Upper Baggot St, to be strung up for public display for anything from six to 12 months.

The canal hasn't been used commercially since 1960, but some stretches are attractive and enjoyable to stroll or cycle along. The poet Patrick Kavanagh was particularly enamoured with the 2km stretch from Mount St Bridge west to Richmond St, which has grassy, tree-lined banks and – as you might have guessed – a cluster of pubs. Among Kavanagh's compositions is the hauntingly beautiful *On Raglan Road*, which was put to music and sung most memorably by Luke Kelly of The Dubliners. In another, he requested that he be commemorated by 'a canal bank seat for passers-by'. His friends obliged with a seat beside the lock on the northern side of the canal. A little further along on the northern side you can sit down by Kavanagh himself, cast in bronze, comfortably lounging on a bench and staring at his beloved canal.

Beyond the Grand Canal and into the southern outer reaches of Dublin are inner suburbs that have developed along the main roads into the city. Lively Rathmines – for generations the favoured stomping ground of students and migrants from the rest of the country – has seen its stock rise higher and higher as gentrification marches ever onwards, converting student digs into chic studio apartments and cheap cafés into tapas bars. Barely half a mile away is Ranelagh, which makes Rathmines seem distinctly dowdy – its cosy village atmosphere barely disguises the elegance and sophistication of its bars, restaurants and wonderful Victorian and Edwardian architecture. For cashed-up Dubliners, this is definitely the place to live…unless they already reside in 'Dublin 4' further east, a postal address that is synonymous with money and affectation. Elegant and embassy-laden Ballsbridge is a great place to base yourself, especially if you don't mind being a 30-minute stroll or 10-minute bus ride from the city centre: it has some wonderful restaurants, a host of great bars and some of the most beautiful town-house hotels in the city.

NATIONAL PRINT MUSEUM Map p99

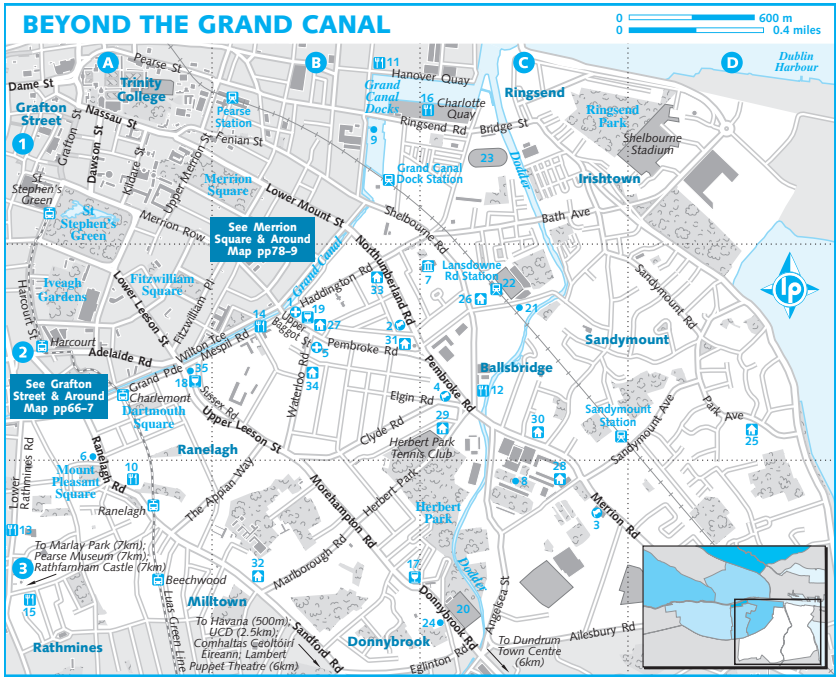
☎ 660 3770; www.iol.ie/~npmuseum; Garrison Chapel, Haddington Rd, Beggar's Bush; adult/concession €3.50/2; 🕘 9am-5pm Mon-Fri, 2-5pm Sat & Sun; 🚉 DART to Grand Canal Dock, 🚌 7, 8 or 45 from city centre

You don't have to be into printing to enjoy this quirky little museum, where personalised guided tours are offered in a delightfully casual and compelling way. First watch a video relating to printing and its place in Irish history, then take a wander amid the smell of ink and metal, and through the various antique presses that are still worked for small jobs by a couple of retired printers doing it for the love of the craft. The guides are excellent and can tailor the tours to suit your special interests – for example, anyone interested in history can get a detailed account of the difficulties encountered by the rebels of 1916 when they tried to get the proclamation printed. Upstairs, there are lots of old newspaper pages recording important episodes in Irish history over the last century.

RATHFARNHAM CASTLE Off Map p99

☎ 493 9462; www.heritageireland.ie; Rathfarnham Rd, Rathfarnham; adult/concession €2/1; 🕘 9.30am-5.30pm May-Oct; 🚌 16, 17 from O'Connell St

Less castle and more fortified house, this was originally built by Adam Loftus, the archbishop of Dublin, around 1583 and is most interesting as a restoration in progress. Several of the rooms – including 18th-century interiors by William Chambers – have been returned to their original splendour, while others are clearly struggling under the ravages of time. The guides have an infectious enthusiasm for the project. It's 6km south of the city centre.



BEYOND THE GRAND CANAL

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ROYAL DUBLIN SOCIETY SHOWGROUND Map p99

☎ 668 9878; Merrion Rd, Ballsbridge; 🚌 7 from Trinity College

Founded in 1731, the Royal Dublin Society (RDS) was involved in the establishment of the National Museum, Library, Gallery and Botanic Gardens. The showground is used for various exhibitions throughout the year, but the main event is the Dublin Horse Show

WORTH THE TRIP

One of the city's most rewarding walks is a stroll along the south wall to the Poolbeg Lighthouse (that red tower visible in the middle of Dublin Bay). To get there, you'll have to make your own way from Ringsend (which is reachable by buses 1, 2 or 3 from the city centre), past the power station to the start of the wall (it's about 1km). It's not an especially long walk – about 800m or so – but it will give you a stunning view of the bay and the city behind you, a view best enjoyed just before sunset.

(p18), which reflects the society's agricultural background. It takes place in the first week of August and includes a prestigious international showjumping contest among other events.

WATERWAYS VISITOR CENTRE Map p99

☎ 677 7510; Grand Canal Quay; adult/concession €2.50/1.20; 🕒 9.30am-5.30pm Jun-Sep, 12.30-5.30pm Wed-Sun Oct & May; 🚊 DART to Grand Canal Dock

If you absolutely must know about the construction and operation of Ireland's canals, then you'll dig a visit to this interpretive centre upstream from the Grand Canal Docks, which explores the history and personality of Ireland's canals and waterways through models (if they're working), audiovisual displays and panels. Otherwise, admiring the 'box on the docks' – as this modern building is nicknamed – is plenty good enough for the average enthusiast of artificial waterways.

If you are here in summer and are wondering why it needs to employ a security guard, it's to keep local kids from storming up to the centre's roof and using it as a diving platform into the basin. Sometimes the kids content themselves with diving off the shed on the bridge, terrorising those on board the Viking Splash Tour boats that pass beneath.

PEARSE MUSEUM

☎ 493 4208; www.heritageireland.ie; St Enda's, Grange Rd, Rathfarnham; admission free; 🕒 St Enda's Park 10am-8pm May-Aug, 10am-7pm Apr & Sep-Oct, 10am-5.30pm Feb-Mar, 10am-4.30pm Nov-Dec; 🚌 16 from O'Connell St

This handsome Palladian mansion was home to St Enda's, an experimental Gaelic school established by nationalist poet and 1916 martyr Pádraig Pearse (for more on Pádraig Pearse, see the boxed text, p23). The fascinating exhibition focusing on Pearse's life and works was under the refurbisher's tarpaulin at the time of writing but due to reopen in mid-2008. The beautiful grounds, gardens and grottos surrounding the house are still open, but you'd want to be a big greenery fan to make the trek out here while the house is still closed.

NORTH OF THE LIFFEY

Eating p156; Drinking p170; Shopping p139; Sleeping p206

What does a northsider use for protection? A bus shelter. Boom boom. Northsider/southsider jokes are a permanent fixture of the city's canon of humour, mostly because they highlight the perceived gap between the city's two halves, with the north side generally coming off second-best in all things save social ills and – as northsiders will happily tell you – true Dublin character. What does a southsider use for protection? Personality.

As gritty as the south side is glitzy, the north side is not just where Dubliners are at their most authentic, but where the great multicultural experiment is having its greatest success. A stroll through the street market on Moore St, once the epitome of auld Dublin, will reveal a weather-beaten street trader intoning 'five bananas for a euro' while young Koreans hawk phonecards from their shop hatches. On Parnell St, Nigerian teenagers rustle through beaded curtains into African salons for hair extensions while upstairs, their parents belt out gospel hymns in makeshift churches. Next door, Russians leave the supermarket laden with tinned caviar and *prianik* cookies.

This is the new Dublin, and it is slotting in comfortably alongside the older version of the north city centre, which radiates away from the grand dame of Dublin thoroughfares, the imperially wide O'Connell St. This famous street has played host to key episodes of Dublin's – and the nation's – history, none more so than the 1916 Easter Rising, when the proclamation announcing Ireland's independence was read out to a slightly bemused crowd from the steps of the General Post Office before the British Army pounded the building and its occupants into submission.

O'Connell St became Dublin's main street in 1794, when O'Connell Bridge was built and the city's axis shifted east. The north side was the residential area of choice at the start of the Georgian period, but when the hoi polloi got too close, the aristocracy doubled back over the Liffey and settled the new areas surrounding Leinster House. The Georgian squares named after Parnell and Mountjoy fell into rapid decline and were partly converted into slum dwellings. Although neglected, they still display a certain dishevelled charm and are gradually being restored. O'Connell St leads north to the large Parnell Sq, which is flanked by museums, public buildings and some fine, if rather run-down, Georgian residences.

West of O'Connell St along the refurbished river quays is the small but sterling Quartier Bloom, a little slice of genuine Italy in the heart of the city. Further along is the cobbled neighbourhood of Smithfield, an up-and-coming *quartier* of office blocks and residential apartments built around a main square that has been synonymous with markets since the 17th century and, in recent decades, was the scene of a bustling horse fair where deals were sealed with a spit in your hand. All gone now, we're afraid, hurriedly moved on because fruit 'n' veg and hoof inspections didn't quite fit the planned aesthetic. The 400,000-odd antique cobblestones that saw their fair share of horse manure over the decades were carefully removed, hand-cleaned and relaid alongside new granite slabs, giving the whole square a look that got an enthusiastic thumbs-up from pretty much everyone – except, we're guessing, the traditional traders themselves. Smithfield has yet to deliver the 21st-century neighbourhood of cool bars, restaurants and shops it was intended to be: instead, there are some great old-style pubs to hear great traditional music in, a couple of fabulous museums and a paeon to Irish whiskey. Don't forget to make your way further west again to the superb Collins Barracks (now a national museum).

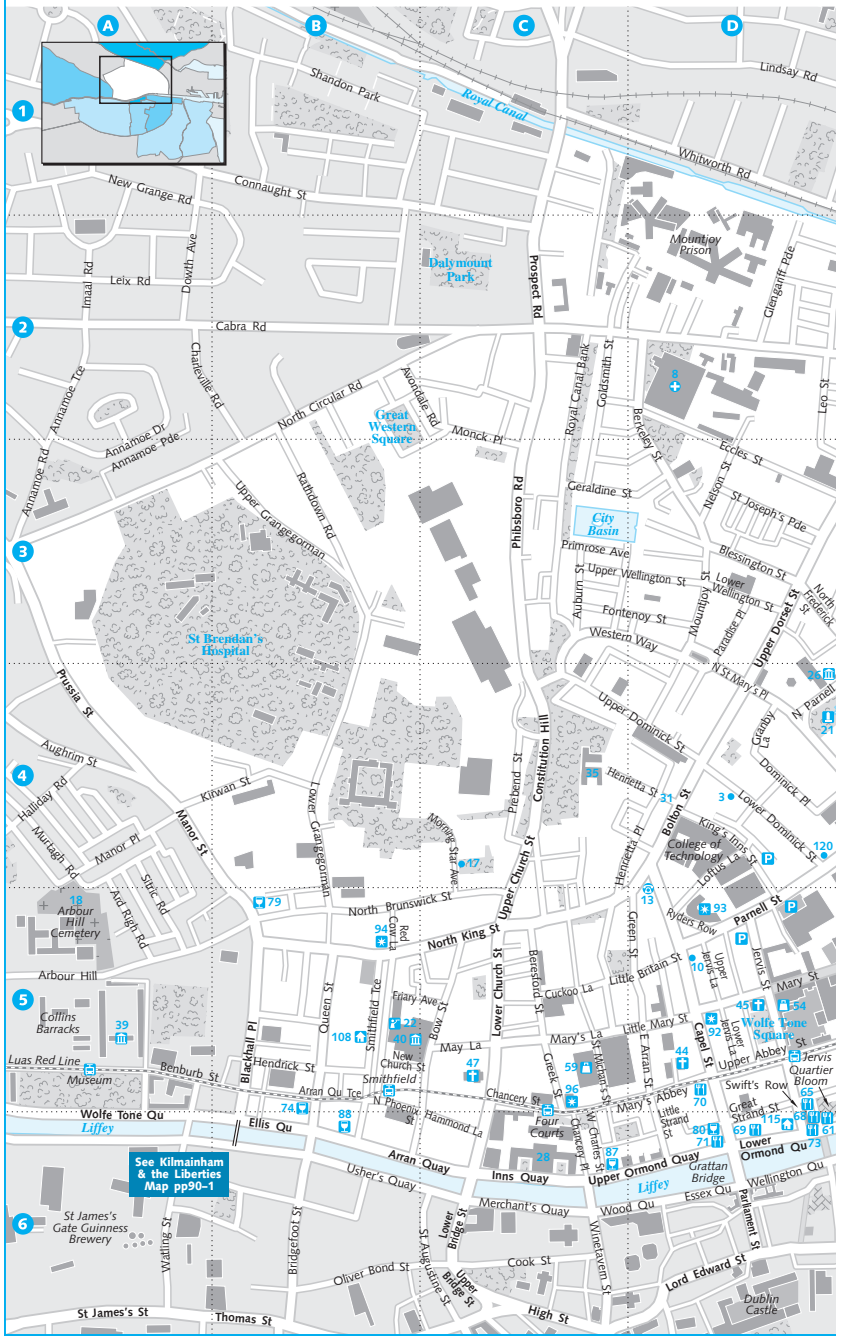
If you're looking to base yourself on the north side, chances are you'll find yourself bedding down on or around B&B Row – Gardiner St, east of O'Connell St. This street has long been the preferred spot for those happy to trade luxury for an affordable bed, but even here the standards (and prices) have been raised, especially towards the southern end of the street; the options up toward Mountjoy Sq aren't recommended, if only because they're in a part of the 'hood that gets a little iffy after dark.

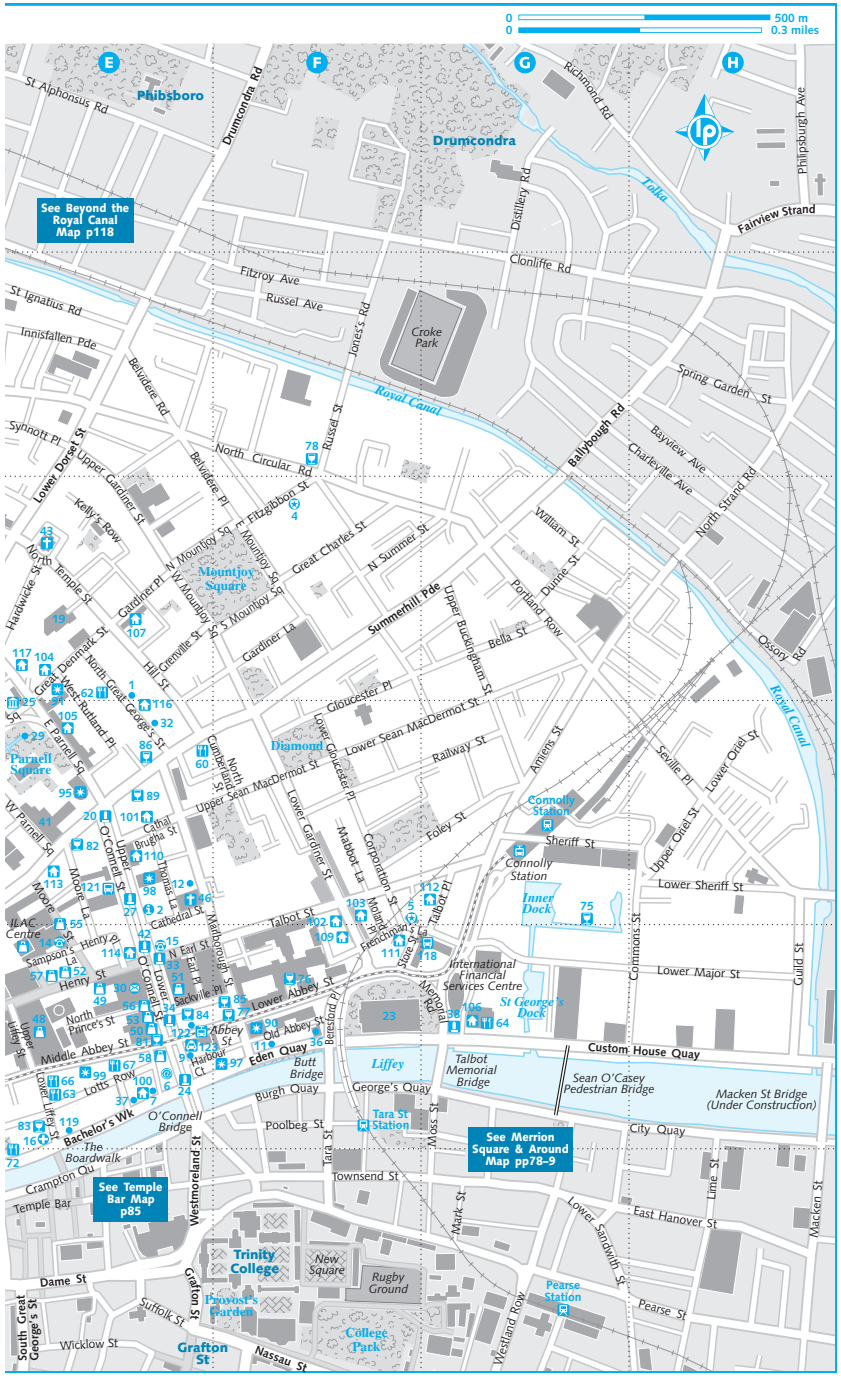
DUBLIN CITY GALLERY – THE HUGH LANE Map pp102–3

Municipal Gallery of Ireland; ☎ 874 1903; www.hughlane.ie; 22 North Parnell Sq; admission free; 🕒 9.30am-6pm Tue-Thu, 9.30am-5pm Fri & Sat, 11am-5pm Sun; 🚌 3, 10, 11, 13, 16, 19 or 22 from city centre

Whatever reputation Dublin may have as a repository of top-class art is in large part due to the collection at this magnificent

NORTH OF THE LIFFEY





NORTH OF THE LIFFEY

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gallery, which is not only home to works by some of the supernovas in the impressionist firmament, but where you'll find one of the most singular exhibitions to be seen anywhere: the *actual* studio of one of the 20th century's most famous artists, Francis Bacon. And if that wasn't art to keep you interested, a new modernist extension has seen the addition of 13 bright galleries spread across three floors of the old National Ballroom to show work from the 1950s onwards. Oh, and we should mention that the gallery has resided in the simply stunning Charlemont House since 1933, which was designed by Georgian superstar architect William Chambers in 1763.

The gallery owes its 1908 origins to one Hugh Lane, whose failure to get any funding from an uninterested government and other commercial interests prompted WB Yeats to really have a go at the authorities and mercenary materialism in one of his most vitriolic poems, *September 1913*. Yeats was very annoyed, and while his disgust with those who 'fumble in a greasy till/and add the halfpence to the pence' was certainly justified, we wonder if his ire had anything to do with the fact that the very,

HUGH LANE

It's hardly surprising that wealthy Sir Hugh Lane (1875–1915) was miffed by the Irish and decided to bequeath his paintings to some other nation, as he was treated with less respect than he felt he deserved in his own land. Born in County Cork, he began to work in London art galleries from 1893, and five years later set up his own gallery in Dublin. He had a connoisseur's eye and a good nose for the directions of the market, which enabled him to build up a superb and valuable collection, particularly strong in impressionists.

Unfortunately for Ireland, neither his talents nor his collection were much appreciated, and in exasperation he turned his attention to opportunities in London and South Africa. Irish rejection led him to rewrite his will and bequeath some of the finest works in his collection to the National Gallery in London. Later he relented and added a rider to his will leaving the collection to Dublin but failed to have it witnessed, thus causing a long legal squabble over which gallery had rightful ownership. He was just 40 years old when he went down with the ill-fated *Lusitania* in 1915, after it was torpedoed by a German U-boat off the southern coast of Ireland.

very rich Lane was the nephew of Lady Gregory, Yeats' own patron?

Poor old Hugh Lane didn't get to enjoy his wealth or his art collection for too much longer, however, as he was a passenger on the ill-fated *Lusitania* and died in 1915 (see the boxed text, above). There followed a bitter wrangle over Lane's bequest, between the gallery he founded and the National Gallery in London. The collection was eventually split in a complicated 1959 settlement that sees some of the paintings moving back and forth. The conditions of the exchanges are in the midst of a convoluted negotiation, but for the time being the gallery has Manet's *Eva Gonzales*, Pissarro's *Printemps*, Berthe Morisot's *Jour d'Eté* and the most important painting of the entire collection (and one of our favourites of all time), Renoir's *Les Parapluies*.

Impressionist masterpieces notwithstanding, the gallery's most popular exhibit is the Francis Bacon Studio, which was painstakingly moved, in all its shambolic mess, from 7 Reece Mews, South Kensington, London, where the Dublin-born artist (1909–92) lived for 31 years. The display features some 80,000 items madly strewn about the place, including slashed canvasses, the last painting he was working on, tables piled with materials, walls daubed with colour samples, portraits with heads cut out, favourite bits of furniture and many assorted piles of crap. It's a teasing and tantalising, riveting and ridiculous masterpiece that provides the viewer – peering in at the chaos through thick Perspex – no real sense of the artist himself. Far more revealing is the 10-minute profile of him with Melvyn Bragg and the immensely sad photographs of Bacon's immaculately tidy bachelor pad, which suggest a deep, personal loneliness.

You can round off a (hopefully) satisfying visit with lunch in the superb café (p157) in the basement of the new extension, before making a stop in the well-stocked gift shop.

NATIONAL MUSEUM OF IRELAND – DECORATIVE ARTS & HISTORY

Map pp102–3

☎ 677 7444; www.museum.ie; Benburb St; admission free; 🕐 10am-5pm Tue-Sat, 2-5pm Sun; 🚊 Luas Red Line to Museum, 🚌 25, 25A, 66, 67 or 90 from city centre

No wonder the British army were so reluctant to pull out of Ireland, when they were occupying this magnificent space, the oldest army barracks in Europe. The building – the museum bit can wait – was completed in 1704 according to the design of Thomas Burgh, whose CV also includes the Old Library (p69) in Trinity College and St Michan's Church (p110). Its central square held six entire regiments and is a truly awesome space, surrounded by arcaded colonnades and blocks linked by walking bridges. Following the handover to the new Irish government in 1922, the barracks was renamed to honour Michael Collins, a hero of the struggle for independence, who was killed that year in the Civil War; to this day most Dubliners refer to the museum as the Collins Barracks.

Any city would be hard-pressed to come up with a museum to match these surroundings, and the decorative arts don't exactly get the heart pumping. That said, the museum has done an exceptional job of presenting an impressive, if hardly remarkable, collection, featuring fashion, furniture, weaponry, folk life, silver, ceramics and glassware. Some of the best pieces are gathered in the *Curator's Choice* exhibition, a collection of 25 objects hand-picked

lonelyplanet.com
NEIGHBOURHOODS NORTH OF THE LIFFEY

by different curators, displayed with an account of why they were chosen.

The exhibitions are designed to offer a bird's-eye view of Ireland's social, economic and military history over the last millennium. It's a big ask – too big, say its critics – but well-designed displays, interactive multimedia and a dizzying array of disparate artefacts make for an interesting and valiant effort. On the 1st floor is the museum's Irish silver collection, one of the largest collections of silver in the world; on the 2nd floor you'll find Irish period furniture and scientific instruments, while the 3rd floor has simple and sturdy Irish country furniture. Modern-furniture-and-design lovers will enjoy the exhibition on iconic Irish designer Eileen Gray (1878–1976), one of the museum's highlights. One of the most influential designers of the 20th century, Gray's life and work are documented in the exhibit, which shows examples of her most famous pieces. The fascinating *Way We Wore* exhibit displays Irish clothing and jewellery from the past 250 years. An intriguing sociocultural study, it highlights the symbolism jewellery and clothing had in bestowing messages of mourning, love and identity.

A new exhibition chronicling Ireland's Easter 1916 Rising is on the ground floor. Visceral memorabilia, such as first-hand accounts of the violence of the Black & Tans and post-Rising hunger strikes, the handwritten death certificates of the republican prisoners and their postcards from Holloway prison, bring to life this poignant period of Irish history.

OLD JAMESON DISTILLERY Map pp102–3

☎ 807 2355; www.jameson.ie; Bow St; adult/child/student €9.75/6/8; 🕒 tours every 35min 10am-5.30pm; 🚊 Luas Red Line to Smithfield, 🚌 67, 67A, 68, 69, 79 or 134 from city centre

Smithfield's biggest draw is devoted to *uisce beatha* (*ish*-kuh ba-ha, 'the water of life'). The whowhatnow? It's whiskey, the essential Irish spirit, which doesn't quite bestow life, but, if drunk enough, will undoubtedly take it away. Here, in the original home of one of its most famous and renowned distillers, you can get an excellent introduction to the history and culture of this most potent of drinks. Serious fans might be put off by the slickness of the tour and museum, which shepherds visitors through a compulsory tour of the re-created factory and into the ubiquitous gift shop.

The museum occupies a section of the old distillery, which kept the capital in whiskey from 1780 to 1971 (after which the remaining distillers moved to a new ultramodern distillery in Middleton, County Cork). The museum can only be visited on guided tours, which run every 35 minutes. They start with a short film and then, with the aid of models and exhibitions, explain everything you ever wanted to know about Irish whiskey, from its fascinating history to how it's made and why it differs from Scotch – ex-footballer (and Scot) Ally McCoist once joked that the Irish thought of everything, including putting an 'e' in whiskey. At the end of the tour you'll be invited into the Jameson Bar for a dram of complimentary whiskey. Stay alert and make sure to volunteer for the tasting tour, where you get to sample whiskeys from all around the world and train your palate to identify and appreciate the differences between each.

At the end of the tour, you're deposited in the shop, which was kinda the whole point of the tour in the first place you might reckon. If you do want to bring a bottle or two home, make sure you buy one that you can't get in your local. There are some 100 brands of Irish whiskey (not all sold here) but only three – Jameson, Bushmills and Tullamore Dew – are widely available. Our tip is Red Breast, pure pot still, the way all Irish whiskey used to be made, although the swashbuckling Power's is numero uno in Ireland and difficult to get elsewhere. You can also get a rare distillery reserve with your name printed on the label – kind of tacky, but neat, the way we like our whiskey.

There's also a good café and restaurant on the premises.

FOUR COURTS Map pp102–3

☎ 872 5555; Inns Quay; admission free; 🚊 Luas Red Line to Four Courts, 🚌 25, 25A, 66, 67, 90 or 134 from city centre

Impossible to miss if you're up this end of town, James Gandon's (1743–1823) masterpiece is a mammoth complex stretching 130m along Inns Quay. Construction on the Four Courts began in 1786, soon engulfing the Public Offices (built a short time previously at the western end of the same site), and continued until 1802. By then it included a Corinthian-columned central block connected to flanking wings with enclosed quadrangles. The ensemble is topped by a diverse collection of statuary. The original four courts – Exchequer, Common Pleas, King's Bench and Chancery – branch off the central rotunda.

The Four Courts played a brief role in the 1916 Easter Rising without suffering damage, but it wasn't so lucky during the Civil War. When anti-Treaty forces seized the building and refused to leave, Free State forces led by Michael Collins shelled it from across the river. As the occupiers retreated, the building was set on fire and many irreplaceable early records were burned. These were the opening salvos in the Irish Civil War. The building wasn't restored until 1932.

Visitors are allowed to wander through, but not to enter the courts or other restricted areas. In the lobby of the central rotunda you'll see bewigged barristers conferring and police officers handcuffed to their charges waiting to enter court.

DA NORT'SOYID & THE SOUTHSYDE

It is commonly assumed that the southside is totally posh and the northside a derelict slum – it makes the jokes easier to make and the prejudices easier to maintain. But the truth is a little more complex. The 'southside' generally refers to Dublin 4 and the fancy suburbs immediately west and south – conveniently ignoring the traditionally working class neighbourhoods in southwestern Dublin like Bluebell and Tallaght. North Dublin is huge, but the northside tag is usually applied to the inner suburbs, where incomes are lower, accents are more pronouncedly Dublin and – most recently – the influx of foreign nationals is more in evidence. All Dubliners are familiar with the posh twit stereotype born and raised on the southside, but there's another kind of Dubliner, usually from the middle-class districts of northern Dublin, who affects a salt-of-the-earth accent while talking about the 'gee-gees' and says things like 'tis far from sushi we was rared' while tucking into a *maki* roll.

GENERAL POST OFFICE (GPO) Map pp102–3

☎ 705 7000; www.anpost.ie; O'Connell St; 🕒 8am-8pm Mon-Sat; 🚊 Luas Red Line to Abbey St, 🚌 all cross-city buses

Imagine trying to post a letter at the country's main post office, only for a bunch of armed and most serious men interrupting your chore by declaring an Irish republic from the doorways before barricading themselves inside in anticipation of a week-long bombardment by the British Army. On Easter Monday 1916, the leaders of the Rising made the GPO their operational HQ, thus ensuring that this huge neoclassical building (designed by Francis Johnston in 1818) would become the focal point for all kinds of protests, parades and remembrances of the struggle for Irish independence.

It's not as if the GPO didn't earn it either: along with much of Lower O'Connell St, the building was left a smouldering wreck. You can still see pockmarks and bullet holes in the huge pillars supporting the Ionic portico, which spans the five central bays and is topped by three statues representing Fidelity, Hibernia and Mercury. The damage was so bad that it didn't reopen until 1929. For more on the Easter Rising, see p22.

In the spacious and light-filled interior there's a beautiful bronze statue, the *Death of Cuchulainn* (1935), depicting the legendary hero of Ulster, whose spirit was evoked in the poetry of Pádraig Pearse. He was an awesome warrior slain at the age of 27 after being tricked into an unfair fight. Even as he lay dead, nobody dared approach the body for fear of attack and it wasn't until ravens landed on him that they were convinced he was dead. The statue is dedicated to those who died in the Rising. Also inside is a series of communist noble-worker-style paintings depicting scenes from the Easter Rising. There are also lots of people going about the everyday business of buying stamps and posting letters. Finally, among all the flags hanging in here, notice that the Union Jack is hung behind the counter and out of reach; it had to be moved there because people kept setting it alight.

CUSTOM HOUSE Map pp102–3

☎ 888 2538; Visitor Centre, Custom House Quay; admission €1.30; 🕒 10am-12.30pm & 2-5pm Mon-Fri, 2-5pm Sat & Sun, closed Mon, Tue & Sat Nov–mid-Mar; 🚌 all cross-city buses

Georgian genius James Gandon (1743–1823) announced his arrival on the Dublin scene with this magnificent building (1781–91), constructed just past Eden Quay at a wide stretch in the River Liffey. When it was

being built, angry city merchants and dockers from the original Custom House further upriver in Temple Bar were so menacing that Gandon often came to work wielding a broadsword. He was supported by the era's foremost property developer, Luke Gardiner, who saw the new Custom House as a major part of his scheme to shift the axis of the city eastwards from medieval Capel St to what was then Gardiner's Mall (now O'Connell St).

It's a colossal, neoclassical pile that stretches for 114m along the River Liffey. It can only be taken in and admired from the south side of the river, although its fine detail deserves closer inspection. Arcades, each with seven arches, join the centre to the end pavilions and the columns along the front have harps carved in their capitals. Motifs alluding to transport and trade include the four rooftop statues of Neptune, Mercury, Plenty and Industry, destroyed when the building was gutted in a five-day fire during the independence struggle in 1921, but replaced in 1991. The interior was extensively redesigned after 1921 and again in the 1980s. Below the frieze are heads representing the gods of Ireland's 13 principal rivers, and the sole female head, above the main door, represents the River Liffey. The cattle heads honour Dublin's beef trade, and the statues behind the building represent Africa, America, Asia and Europe. The building is topped by a copper dome with four clocks and, above that, a 5m-high statue of Hope.

Beneath the dome, the **Visitor Centre** features a small museum on Gandon and the history of the building.

Just outside the Custom House, on Custom House Quay, is a remarkable set of life-size bronze figures by Rowan Gillespie (1997), a **memorial to the victims of the Famine** (1845–49). The sullen, haunted figures are a powerful reminder of the worst tragedy in Irish history.

JAMES JOYCE CENTRE Map pp102–3

☎ 878 8547; www.jamesjoyce.ie; 35 North Great George's St; adult/child/student €5/free/4; 🕒 9.30am-5pm Mon-Sat, 12.30-5pm Sun; 🚌 3, 10, 11, 13, 16, 16A, 19, 19A or 22 from city centre

Denis Maginni, the exuberant, flamboyant dance instructor and 'confirmed bachelor' immortalised by James Joyce in *Ulysses*, taught the finer points of dance out of this beautifully restored Georgian house, now a centre devoted to promoting and preserving the Joycean heritage. Although Jimmy probably never set foot in the house, he lived in the 'hood for a time, went to a local school and lost his virginity a stone's throw away in what was once Europe's largest red-light district. We couldn't imagine a more fitting location for the centre.

The centre owes its existence to the sterling efforts of Senator David Norris, a charismatic Joycean scholar and gay-rights activist who bought the house in 1982 and oversaw its restoration and conversion into the centre that it is today.

What it is today is more of a study centre than a museum, although there are a handful of exhibits that will pique the interest of a Joyce enthusiast. These include some of the furniture from Joyce's Paris apartment, which was rescued from falling into German hands in 1940 by Joyce's friend Paul Léon; a life-size re-creation of a typical Edwardian bedroom (not Joyce's, but one similar to what James and Nora would have used); and the original door of 7 Eccles St, the home of Leopold and Molly Bloom in *Ulysses*, which was demolished in real life to make way for a private hospital.

It's not much, but the absence of period stuff is more than made up for by the superb interactive displays, which include three short documentary films on various aspects of Joyce's life and work, and – the highlight of the whole place – computers that allow you to explore the content of *Ulysses* episode by episode and trace Joyce's life year by year. It's enough to demolish the myth that Joyce's works are an impenetrable mystery and render him as he should be to the contemporary reader: a writer of enormous talent who sought to challenge and entertain his audience with his breathtaking wit and use of language.

While here, you can also admire the fine plastered ceilings, some of which are restored originals while others are meticulous reproductions of Michael Stapleton's designs. Senator Norris fought a long, unrewarding battle for the preservation of Georgian Dublin, and it's wonderful to see others have followed his example – the street has been given a much needed face-lift and now boasts some of the finest Georgian doorways and fanlights in the city.

For information on James Joyce–related walking tours departing from the centre, see p241.

DUBLIN WRITERS MUSEUM Map pp102–3

☎ 872 2077; www.writersmuseum.com; 18 North Parnell Sq; adult/child/student €7/4.40/5.95; 🕒 10am-5pm Mon-Sat, 11am-5pm Sun, to 6pm Mon-Fri Jun-Aug; 🚌 3, 10, 11, 13, 16, 19 or 22 from city centre

Memorabilia aplenty and lots of literary ephemera line the walls and display cabinets of this elegant museum devoted to preserving the city's rich literary tradition. Although the busts and portraits of the greats in the gallery upstairs are worth more than a cursory peek, the real draw are the ground-floor displays, which include Samuel Beckett's phone (with a button for excluding incoming calls, of course), a letter from the 'tenement aristocrat' Brendan Behan to his brother, and a first edition of Bram Stoker's *Dracula*. The exhibits stop some three decades ago and the flat cabinet displays can literally become a pain in the neck, while we can't help thinking that a city with such a rich heritage of great writers deserves a more thorough and fitting tribute. Admission includes taped guides in English and other languages, which have the annoying habit of repeating quotes with actor's voices.

The building, comprising two 18th-century houses, is worth exploring on its own. Dublin stuccodore Michael Stapleton decorated the upstairs gallery. The **Gorham Library** next door is worth a peek and there's also a calming **Zen garden**. The museum café is a pleasant place to linger, while the basement restaurant, **Chapter One** (p156), is one of the city's best.

While the museum focuses on the dearly departed, the **Irish Writers Centre** (☎ 872 1302; 19 North Parnell Sq) next door provides a meeting and working place for their living successors.

SPIRE Map pp102–3

Soaring 120m over O'Connell St – and the rest of the city – this gigantic needle is impossible to miss, a risqué homage to the fight against one of Dublin's greatest social ills, heroin addiction. Yeah, right. Dubs excel at gallows humour, but the Spire is neither a joke nor a commemoration of anything in particular, except maybe the notion that for a spell in the 1990s the sky was the limit. But it's not just an ornament; it *is* apparently the highest sculpture in the world and, sarcasm aside, it's a hugely impressive feat of architectural engineering.

From a base of only 3m in diameter, it soars more than 120m into the sky and tapers into a 15cm-wide beam of light. It was the brainchild of London-based architect Ian Ritchie and is meant to be the centrepiece in a programme aimed at regenerating O'Connell St. And, for no reason other than it's tall and shiny, it actually does the trick rather nicely. Which doesn't stop Dubs making fun of it, calling it – among other names – the 'erection in the intersection', the 'stiletto in the ghetto' and the altogether brilliant 'eyeful tower'. When

O'CONNELL STREET STATUARY

Although overshadowed by the Spire, O'Connell St is lined with statues of Irish history's good and great (see Map p85). The big daddy of them all is the 'Liberator' himself, **Daniel O'Connell** (1775–1847), completed in 1880, whose massive bronze bulk soars high above the street at the bridge end. The four winged figures at his feet represent O'Connell's supposed virtues: patriotism, courage, fidelity and eloquence. Dubs began to refer to the street as O'Connell St soon after the monument was erected, but its name was only officially changed after independence.

Heading away from the river, past a monument to **William Smith O'Brien** (1803–64), leader of the Young Irelanders, is a statue that easily rivals O'Connell's for drama: just outside the GPO is the spread-armed figure of trade union leader **Jim Larkin** (1876–1947). His big moment came when he helped organise the general strike in 1913 – the pose catches him in full flow, urging workers to rise up for their rights. We're with you, comrade.

Next up and difficult to miss is the **Spire** (above), but just below it, on pedestrianised North Earl St, is the detached figure of **James Joyce**, looking on the fast and shiny version of 21st-century O'Connell St with a bemused air. Dubs have lovingly dubbed him the 'prick with the stick' and we're sure Joyce would have loved the vulgar rhyme.

Further on is the statue of **Father Theobald Mathew** (1790–1856), the 'apostle of temperance'. There can't have been a tougher gig in Ireland, but he led a spirited campaign against 'the demon drink' in the 1840s and converted hundreds of thousands to teetotalism.

The top of the street is completed by the imposing statue of **Charles Stewart Parnell** (1846–91), the 'uncrowned king of Ireland', who was an advocate of Home Rule and became a political victim of Irish intolerance. Despite his fall from grace, it's Parnell who gets the most imposing monument.

indicating that something isn't likely, some locals have taken to suggesting there was a better chance of 'Bertie Ahern shimmying bollock-naked up the Spire'.

CHIMNEY Map pp102–3

☎ 817 3820; Smithfield Village; adult/student & child/family €5/3.50/10; 🕒 10am-5pm Mon-Sat, 11am-5.30pm Sun; 🚊 Luas Red Line to Smithfield, 🚌 67, 67A, 68, 69, 79 or 134 from city centre

As part of the ongoing development of the Smithfield area, an old distillery chimney (nicknamed 'the flue with the view'), built by Jameson's in 1895, has been converted into Dublin's first and only 360-degree observation tower. A glass lift shuttles you to the top, where you get unique views of historic north Dublin. The commentary from the knowledgeable and humorous guide is excellent, which is a good job because Dublin's no oil painting.

ST MICHAN'S CHURCH Map pp102–3

☎ 872 4154; Lower Church St; adult/child/student €3.50/2.50/3; 🕒 10am-12.45pm & 2-4.45pm Mon-Fri, 10am-12.45pm Sat May-Oct, 12.30-3.30pm Mon-Fri Nov-Apr; 🚊 Luas Red Line to Four Courts, 🚌 134 from city centre

Macabre remains are the main attraction at this church, which was founded by the Danes in 1096 and named after one of their saints. The oldest architectural feature is the 15th-century battlement tower; otherwise the church was rebuilt in the late 17th century, considerably restored in the early 19th century and again after the Civil War.

The interior of the church, which feels more like a courtroom, is worth a quick look as you wait for your guide. It contains an organ from 1724, which Handel may have played for the first-ever performance of his *Messiah*. The organ case is distinguished by the fine oak carving of 17 entwined musical instruments on its front. A skull on the floor on one side of the altar is said to represent Oliver Cromwell. On the opposite side is the Stool of Repentance, where 'open and notoriously naughty livers' did public penance.

The tours of the underground vaults are the real draw, however. The bodies within are aged between 400 and 800 years, and have been preserved by a combination of methane gas coming from rotting vegetation beneath the church, the magnesium limestone of the masonry (which absorbs moisture from the air), and the perfectly constant temperature. The corpses have been exposed because the coffins in the vaults were stacked on top of one another and some toppled over and opened when the wood rotted. Among the 'attractions' is an 800-year-old Norman crusader who was so tall that his feet were lopped off so he could fit in a coffin. The guide sounds like he's been delivering the same, albeit fascinating, spiel for too long, but you'll definitely be glad you're not alone down there.

ARBOUR HILL CEMETERY Map pp102–3

Arbour Hill; admission free; 🕒 9am-4.30pm Mon-Sat, 9.30am-noon Sun; 🚊 Luas Red Line to Museum, 🚌 25, 25A, 66, 67 or 90 from city centre

Just north of Collins Barracks, this small cemetery is the final resting place of all 14 of the executed leaders of the 1916 Easter Rising (see p22). The burial ground is plain, with the 14 names inscribed in stone. Beside the graves is a cenotaph bearing the Easter Proclamation, a focal point for official and national commemorations. The front of the cemetery incongruously, but poignantly, contains the graves of British personnel killed in the War of Independence. Here, in the oldest part of the cemetery, as the gravestones toppled, they were lined up against the boundary walls where they still stand solemnly today.

HENRIETTA STREET Map pp102–3

🚌 25, 25A, 66, 67, 90 or 134 from city centre

Henrietta St dates from the 1720s and was the first project of Dublin's pre-eminent Georgian developer, Luke Gardiner. It was designed as an enclave of prestigious addresses (Gardiner himself lived at No 10), and remained one of Dublin's most fashionable streets until the Act of Union (1801). It's looking a little forlorn these days after spending much of the 20th century as tenement housing, where up to 70 tenants were crammed into each four-storey house. Some of the residences are in disrepair, yet it's still a wonderful insight into the evolution of Georgian residential architecture, and features mansions of varying size and style.

KING'S INNS Map pp102–3

☎ 874 4840; www.kingsinns.ie; Henrietta St; 🚌 25, 25A, 66, 67, 90 or 134 from city centre

Home to Dublin's legal profession, King's Inns occupies a classical building on Constitution Hill, which was built by James Gandon between 1795 and 1817, with Francis Johnston chipping in with the cupola. In 1541, when Henry VIII staked his claim to be King of Ireland as well as England, the country's lawyers took the title the Honourable Society of King's Inns and moved into a Dominican Monastery on the site of the modern-day Four Courts. When that building was erected they relocated here, where Irish barristers are still trained. It's only open to members and their guests.

GARDEN OF REMEMBRANCE Map pp102–3

☎ 874 3074; Parnell Sq; 🕒 8.30am-6pm Apr-Sep, 9.30am-4pm Oct-Mar; 🚌 3, 10, 11, 13, 16, 19 or 22 from city centre

This rather austere little park was opened by President Eamon de Valera in 1966 for the 50th anniversary of the Easter Rising. It is still known to some Dubs as the 'Garden of Mature Recollection', mocking the linguistic gymnastics employed by former favourite for president Brian Lenihan, who was caught out lying in a minor political scandal and used the phrase to try and wiggle his way out of it.

The most interesting feature in the garden is a bronze statue of the Children of Lir by Oisin Kelly, who according to Irish legend were turned into swans by their wicked stepmother. It was probably intended to evoke the famous lines penned by WB Yeats in his poem *Easter 1916*: 'All changed, changed utterly:/A terrible beauty is born.'

BELVEDERE HOUSE Map pp102–3

6 Great Denmark St; 🚌 3, 10, 11, 13, 16, 19 or 22 from city centre

Great Denmark St runs northeast towards Mountjoy Sq and passes the 18th-century Belvedere House at No 6. This has been used as the Jesuit Belvedere College since 1841, and one James Joyce studied here between 1893 and 1898, describing it later in *A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man*. The building is renowned for its magnificent plasterwork by the master stuccodore Michael Stapleton and for its fireplaces by the Venetian artisan Bossi, but the only chance you'll get to admire these features is if you enrol for a class at this secondary school as the building is closed to the public. The plasterwork isn't *that* special.

ROTUNDA HOSPITAL Map pp102–3

☎ 873 0700; Parnell Sq; 🕒 visiting hours 6-8pm; 🚌 3, 10, 11, 13, 16, 19 or 22 from city centre

Irish public hospitals aren't usually attractions, by any stretch of the imagination, but this one makes for an interesting walk-by or an unofficial wander inside if you're interested in Victorian plasterwork. It was the first maternity hospital in the British Isles – and once the world's largest – and was established by Dr Bartholomew Mosse in 1748, at a time when the burgeoning urban population was enduring shocking infant mortality rates.

It shares its basic design with Leinster House (p82) because the architect of both, Richard Cassels, used the same floor plan to economise. He added a three-storey tower, which Mosse intended to use for fundraising purposes (charging visitors an entry fee). He also laid out pleasure gardens, which were fashionable among Dublin's high society for a time, and built the Rotunda Assembly Hall to raise money. The hall is now occupied by the Ambassador Theatre, and the Supper Rooms house the Gate Theatre (p186).

Inside, the public rooms and staircases give some idea of how beautiful the hospital once was, and they lead to one of Dublin's largely hidden gems, the sumptuous Rotunda Chapel, built in 1758, and featuring superb coloured plasterwork by German stuccodore Bartholomew Cramillion. The Italian artist Giovanni Battista Capriani was supposed to supplement the work but his paintings were never installed, which is probably just as well because you can't imagine how this little space would have looked with even more decoration. If you intend visiting, you have to bear in mind that this is still a functioning hospital and you must be very quiet when coming to see the chapel. It's not terribly well signposted inside and is often locked outside visiting hours (although if you ask kindly or look like you're in desperate need of a prayer, somebody will let you in).

ST MARY'S ABBEY Map pp102–3

☎ 872 1490; Meeting House Lane; 🚌 11, 16 or 41 from city centre

Where now the glories of Babylon? All that remains of what was once Ireland's wealthiest and most powerful monastery is the chapterhouse, so forgotten that most Dubliners are unaware of its existence. In its

medieval day, this Cistercian abbey ran the show when it came to Irish church politics, although its reputation with the authorities was somewhat sullied when it became a favourite meeting place for rebels against the crown. On 11 June 1534, 'Silken' Thomas Fitzgerald, the most important of Leinster's Anglo-Norman lords, entered the chapterhouse and flung his Sword of State on the ground in front of the awaiting King's Council – a ceremonial two-fingered salute to King Henry VIII and his authority. Visitors today are slightly less dramatic, but they can enjoy a small exhibition and view a model of what the abbey looked like in the good old days. The easiest way to visit is by going to the City Hall (Map pp66–7) on Dame St and joining a free walking tour (10.30am, 1pm and 3.30pm Wednesday and Saturday). Otherwise, call to arrange a visit.

ST MARY'S CHURCH Map pp102–3

Mary St; 🚌 11, 16 or 41 from city centre

Designed by William Robinson in 1697, this is the most important church to survive from that period (although it's no longer in use and is closed to the public). John Wesley, founder of Methodism, delivered his first Irish sermon here in 1747 and it was the preferred church of Dublin's 18th-century social elite. Many famous Dubliners were baptised in its font, and Arthur Guinness was married here in 1793.

ST MARY'S PRO-CATHEDRAL Map pp102–3

☎ 874 5441; Marlborough St; admission free; 🕒 8am-6.30pm; 🚌 3, 10, 11, 13, 16, 19 or 22 from city centre

Dublin's most important Catholic church is not quite the showcase you'd expect. It's in the wrong place for starters. This large neoclassical building, constructed from 1816 to 1825, was supposed to be on O'Connell St where the GPO now stands, but the local Protestant community – who pretty much ran the show back then – went nuts about the idea of it having such a prominent position. So it was built in a much less conspicuous side street, away from the main thoroughfare and smack in the middle of Monto, where purveyors of the world's oldest profession plied their trade (see the boxed text, below). In fact, it's so cramped for space around here that you'd hardly notice the church's six Doric columns, which were modelled on the Temple of Theseus in Athens, much less be able to admire them. The interior is fairly functional, and its few highlights include a carved altar by Peter Turnerelli and the alto relief representation of the Ascension by John Smyth. The best time to visit is 11am on Sunday when the Latin Mass is sung by the Palestrina Choir, with whom Ireland's most celebrated tenor, John McCormack, began his career in 1904.

The design of the church is shrouded in some mystery. In 1814 John Sweetman won a competition held to find the best design for the church, a competition that had actually been organised by his brother William. It's not certain whether John actually designed the building, since he was living in Paris at the time and may have bought the plans from the French architect Auguste Gauthier, who designed the similar Notre Dame de Lorette in northern France. The only clue as to the church's architect is in the ledger, which lists the builder as 'Mr P'.

Finally, a word about the term 'pro' in the title. It implies, roughly, that it is an 'unofficial cathedral'. More accurately it was built as a sort of interim cathedral to be replaced when sufficient funds were available. Church leaders never actually got around to it, leaving the capital of this most Catholic of countries with two incredible-but-under-used Protestant cathedrals and one fairly ordinary Catholic one. Irony one, piety nil.

ST GEORGE'S CHURCH Map pp102–3

Hardwicke Pl; 🚌 11, 16 or 41 from city centre

If you're on the north side, the steeple of this deconsecrated church may catch your eye. The church was built by Francis Johnston from 1802 in Greek Ionic style, and the 60m-high steeple was modelled on that of St Martin-in-the-Fields in London. Although this was one of Johnston's finest works, and the Duke of Wellington was married here, the church has been sorely neglected – probably because it's Church of Ireland and not Roman Catholic, it has to be said. The bells that Leopold Bloom heard in *that* book were removed, the ornate pulpit was carved up and used to decorate the pub Thomas Read's (p168), and the spire is in danger of crumbling, which has resulted in it being sheathed in scaffolding pending a patch-up job. The church is not open to the public.

MEETIN' IN MONTO

If you're listening to folk legends The Dubliners, you might come across a sing-along ditty called 'Monto (Take Her Up to Monto)', which is a playful reference to what was once Dublin's most notorious red-light district and the favoured destination of off-duty soldiers looking for a little night-time action. The name comes from Mountgomery St, which was just east of O'Connell St and where the light shone reddest. James Joyce lost his virginity here (as did many others) within spitting distance of the city's Catholic cathedral. A couple of years after independence the new, ultra-Catholic authorities decided to take action and closed all of the brothels. Catholic girls from the Legion of Mary marched through the streets attaching holy pictures to the doors of former dens of disrepute, and Mountgomery St, whose name was synonymous with pleasures of the flesh, was renamed the suitably chaste Cathedral St.

We'll leave you with the most scabrous verse of the whole song, which was never sung by The Dubliners – by the way, Póg mo thoin (pronounced 'pogue ma hone') means 'kiss my arse…'

The Queen she came to call on us,
She wanted to see all of us
I'm glad she didn't fall on us, she's eighteen stone.
"Mister Me Lord Mayor," says she,
"Is this all you've got to show me?"
"Why, no ma'am there's some more to see, Póg mo thoin!"

And he took her up Monto, Monto, Monto
Take her up to Monto, Ian-ge-roo,
To you!

PHOENIX PARK

Dubliners are rightly proud of this humungous patch of greenery at the northwestern edge of the city centre, a short skip from Heuston Station and the Liffey quays. The hugely impressive 709 hectares that comprise the park make up one of the largest set of inner-city green lungs in the world. To put it into perspective, it dwarfs the measly 337 hectares of New York's Central Park and is larger than all of the major London parks put together. The park is a magnificent playground for all kinds of activities, from running to polo, and it's a fitting home to the president of Ireland, the American ambassador and a shy herd of fallow deer who are best observed – from a distance – during the summer months. It is also where you'll find Europe's oldest zoo, not to mention dozens of playing fields for all kinds of sport. How's that for a place to stretch your legs?

From the Anglo-Norman invasion up to 1537, the park – whose name is a corruption of *fionn uisce* (clear water), rather than anything to do with the legendary bird – was part of the lands owned by the Knights of Jerusalem, keepers of an important priory on what is now the site of the Royal Hospital Kilmainham (p96). After King Henry VIII dissolved the monasteries, the lands passed into the hands of the king's viceroys. In 1671 the duke of Ormonde, James Butler, introduced a herd of fallow deer, 1000 pheasants and some partridge, and turned it into a royal deer park, soon enclosed by a wall. It remained the preserve of the British Crown and its Irish court until 1745, when the viceroy, Lord Chesterfield, threw it open to the public.

In an episode that set back the cause of Irish Home Rule, the British chief secretary for Ireland, Lord Cavendish, and his assistant were murdered in 1882 outside what is now the Irish president's residence, by an obscure Irish nationalist group called the Invincibles. Lord Cavendish's home is now called Deerfield, and is used as the US ambassador's residence.

Needless to say, this is very much a visit-only kind of neighbourhood – besides a tea-house in the park there are virtually no places to eat and absolutely no places to stay.

DUBLIN ZOO Map p115

☎ 677 1425; www.dublinzoo.ie; adult/concession/family €13/8.50/36; 🕑 9.30am-6pm Mon-Sat, 10.30am-6pm Sun Mar-Sep, 9.30am-dusk Mon-Fri, 9.30am-dusk Sat, 10.30am-dusk Sun Oct-Feb; 🚌 10 from O'Connell St, or 25 or 26 from Middle Abbey St

Established in 1830, the 12-hectare Dublin Zoo just north of the Hollow is one of the oldest in the world, and as thrilling or depressing as any other old zoo trying to drag itself into the 21st century. The zoo is well known for its lion-breeding programme, which dates back to 1857, and includes among its offspring the lion that roars at the start of MGM films. You'll see these tough cats, from a distance, on the 'African Plains', which were added a few years ago, doubling the size of the zoo and making it a much nicer place to stroll around in.

The zoo has several hundred different species, ranging from owls to hippos, most of which are housed in the old-fashioned part of the complex, which includes a 'World of Primates' section and 'Fringes of the Arctic', where similar animals have been grouped together as part of the zoo's modern restructuring. The one thing they haven't managed to fix, however, is the depression that seemingly afflicts the polar bears, who seem rightly incapable of coming to terms with the narrow confines of their world, a far cry from the northern tundra.

Still, the zoo has gone to great lengths to make itself visitor-friendly, and the presence of new babies or animals on breeding loans from other zoos will surely generate a couple of 'oohs' and 'aahs' from the kids. There are also plenty of children's activities, including a Meet the Keeper programme, which has events approximately every half-hour from 11am to 3.30pm, where children get to feed the animals and participate in other activities. Our favourite section is the City Farm, which brings you within touching distance of chickens, cows, goats and pigs, the luckiest animals here. There's also a zoo train and a nursery for infants.

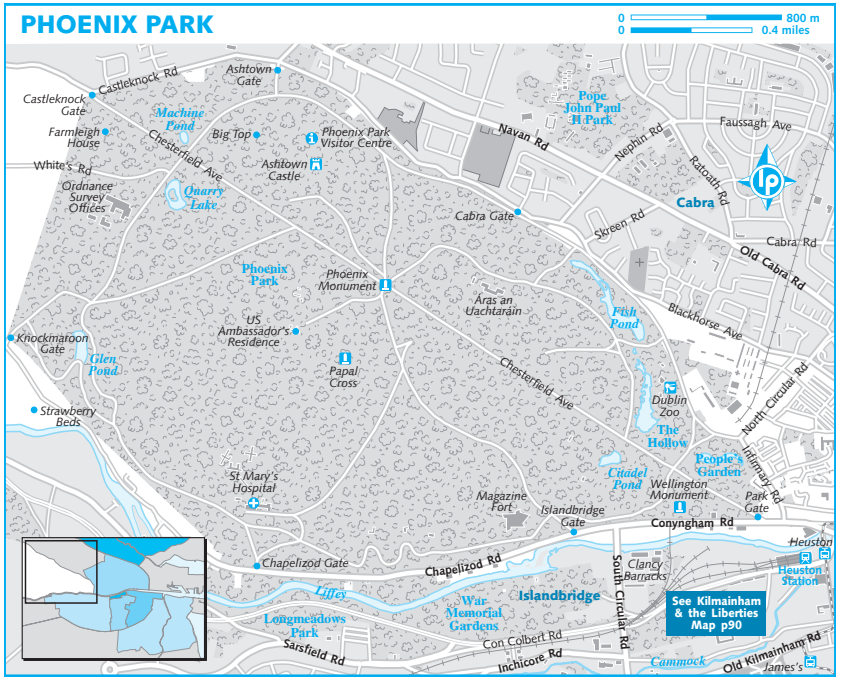
Although there are places to eat, they're not very good and you'd be much better off bringing a picnic but, for God's sake, don't feed the animals.

ÁRAS AN UACHTARÁIN Map p115

☎ 617 1000; www.president.ie; admission by tour only; 🚌 10 from O'Connell St, or 25 or 26 from Middle Abbey St

The residence of the Irish president is a Palladian lodge that was built in 1751 and enlarged a couple of times since, most recently in 1816. It was home to the British viceroys from 1782 to 1922, and then to the governors general until Ireland cut ties with the British Crown and created the office of president in 1937. Queen Victoria stayed here during her visit in 1849, when she appeared not to even notice the Famine. The candle burning in the window is an old Irish tradition, to guide 'the Irish diaspora' home.

Tickets for the free one-hour tours (9.40am until 4.20pm on Saturdays only) can be collected from the Phoenix Park Visitor Centre (p116), where you'll see a 10-minute introductory video before being shuttled to the Áras itself to inspect five state rooms and the president's study. If you can't make it on a Saturday, just become elected president of your own country or become a Nobel laureate or something, and then wrangle a personal invite.



WORTH THE TRIP: STRAWBERRY BEDS

Running alongside the northern banks of the Liffey between the villages of Chapelizod and Lucan, roughly along the western edge of the Phoenix Park, are the Strawberry Beds, so-called on account of the fruits once grown here and sold along the side of the road. Before the days of flight, it was a popular honeymoon destination for Dubliners; the Chapelizod end was Joyce's favourite spot for contemplating the Liffey.

Only 6km west of the city centre, the Strawberry Beds are a totally unspoilt bit of countryside and one of the city's most beautiful getaway spots – in a time of unfettered development, it's a minor miracle that the entire area was declared a protected amenity.

To get here without your own wheels, take bus 25, 26 or 57 to Chapelizod village and then walk – or take a taxi – over the steep Knockmaroon Hill and down towards the beds. You can refuel at the Angler's Rest (☎ 820 4351; www.theanglersrest.ie; Knockmaroon; mains €9-12; 🕑 11am-midnight Mon-Fri, from noon Sat & Sun), which specialises in seafood, or, further on, just have drinks at the utterly wonderful Strawberry Hall (☎ 821 0634; Strawberry Beds), reputedly Dublin's second-oldest pub and one of the best-kept secrets in town. This place alone makes it worth the trek.

PHOENIX PARK MISCELLANY

Chesterfield Ave runs northwest through the entire length of the park from the Parkgate St entrance to the Castleknock Gate. Near the Parkgate St entrance is the 63m-high Wellington Monument obelisk, which took almost 50 years to build because the duke fell from favour during its construction. It was finally completed in 1861. Nearby is the People's Garden, dating from 1864, and the bandstand in the Hollow. Across Chesterfield Ave from the Áras an Uachtaráin – and easily visible from the road – is the massive Papal Cross, which marks the site where Pope John Paul II preached to 1¼ million people in 1979 and drove around waving to the crowds in what was best described as a Tic-Tac box with wheels. In the centre of the park the Phoenix Monument, erected by Lord Chesterfield in 1747, looks so unlike a phoenix that it's often referred to as the Eagle Monument.

The southern part of the park has many football and hurling pitches; although they actually occupy about 80 hectares (200 acres), the area is known as the Fifteen Acres. To the west, the rural-looking Glen Pond corner of the park is extremely attractive.

At the northwestern end of the park near the White's Gate entrance are the offices of Ordnance Survey Ireland (OSI; ☎ 802 5300; www.osi.ie), the government mapping department. This building was originally built in 1728 by Luke Gardiner, who was responsible for the architecture in O'Connell St and Mountjoy Sq in north Dublin. In the building's map shop (☎ 802 5349; 🕒 9am-4.45pm Mon-Fri) you can buy all of the OSI maps for any of the 26 counties of Ireland.

Back towards the Parkgate St entrance is the Magazine Fort (closed to the public) on Thomas's Hill. Like the nearby Wellington Monument, the fort was no quick construction, the process taking from 1734 to 1801. It provided useful target practice during the 1916 Easter Rising, and was raided by the Irish Republican Army (IRA) in 1940 when the entire ammunition reserve of the Irish army was nabbed, but recovered a few weeks later.

PHOENIX PARK VISITOR CENTRE

Map p115

☎ 677 0095; adult/concession/family €2.75/1.25/7; 🕒 10am-6pm Apr-Sep, 10am-5pm Oct, 10am-5pm Mon-Sat Nov & Dec, 10am-5pm Sat & Sun Jan-Mar; 🚌 37 or 29 from Middle Abbey St

In the north of the park, near the Ashtown Gate, this visitor centre occupies what were the stables of the papal nunciature, and explores the wildlife and history of the park through film and two floors of exhibits. Visitors are also taken on a tour of the adjacent four-storey Ashtown Castle, a 17th-century tower-house that was concealed inside the later building of the papal nunciature and was only 'discovered' when the latter was demolished in 1986. Box hedges surrounding the tower trace the ground plan of the lost building. Children keen on all things furry will love the Great Slumber Party exhibition upstairs, a walk-through tunnel that looks at the sleeping habits of animals such as foxes and badgers.

FARMLEIGH HOUSE

Map p115

☎ 815 5900; www.farmleigh.ie; admission free; 🕒 10.45am-5pm Sat, Sun & bank holidays Easter-Oct; 🚌 10 from O'Connell St, or 25 or 26 from Middle Abbey St

Situated in the northwest corner of Phoenix Park, this opulent house is the state's official B&B, where visiting dignitaries rest their very important heads – at least in theory. The truth is that after spending more than €52 million on purchasing and restoring the house, it was used to provide accommodation for just three weeks in the first two years after it opened in mid-2001. It has drawn savage criticism from some commentators who consider it money wasted on an already ugly house. It can only be visited by joining one of the 30-minute house tours.

The open days have been hugely popular with locals who, as tax payers, reckon it's as much their pad as anyone else's. The estate takes up 79 acres and there are many beautiful features. The main house is a bit blowsy and overblown but it's a pleasant enough example of Georgian–Victorian architecture. The real highlight is the garden, where regular shows are held. There is also an extensive programme of cultural events in summer, ranging from food fairs to classical concerts. Because the property is used for state business, schedules may change and you should telephone in advance.

BEYOND THE ROYAL CANAL

Eating p158; Drinking p172; Sleeping p208

Constructed from 1790, when the usefulness of such waterways was already on the wane, the Royal Canal was a total commercial flop. It was founded by Long John Binns, a director of the Grand Canal who quit the board in a huff after condescending remarks were made over his profession as a shoemaker. He established the Royal Canal principally for revenge, but it never made money and he became a bit of a laughing stock. Adding insult to injury, his waterway came to be known as the 'Shoemaker's Canal'. In 1840 the canal was sold to a railway company, and rail tracks still run alongside much of the canal's route.

Beyond the Royal Canal, which provides the northern boundary of the city centre, lie the down-to-earth Dublin suburbs of Glasnevin, Marino and Drumcondra, which is still the stomping ground of the Taoiseach Bertie Ahern. Although traditionally working- and lower-middle class suburbs, in recent years property prices have soared, transforming most of these 'burbs into some pretty choice postal districts.

Unless you have a particular interest in how Dubliners decorate their semidetached suburban houses, there are only a handful of sights to drag you beyond the Royal Canal's boundaries, but they're well worth the effort – and they're quite easy to get to by bus, unless of course you fancy a walk along the towpath that runs along the canal. You can join it beside Newcomen Bridge at North Strand Rd, just north of Connolly Station, and follow it to the suburb of Clonsilla and beyond, more than 10km away. The walk is particularly pleasant beyond Binns Bridge in Drumcondra. At the top of Blessington St, a large pond, used when the canal also supplied drinking water to the city, attracts water birds.

The mighty Croke Park, HQ of Gaelic games and home to a terrific museum of the association, offers a unique and compelling insight into the history and passion of these most Irish pastimes, while the architecturally magnificent Casino at Marino, the historic Glasnevin Cemetery and the soothing National Botanic Gardens are among the best attractions the city has to offer.

You can also crash in these neighbourhoods, most notably Drumcondra – which is on the road to the airport and has dozens of B&Bs in well-maintained Victorian and Edwardian houses – and Clontarf, which stretches out along the northern edge of Dublin Bay, offering the compelling prospect of waking with the scent of brine in your nostrils.

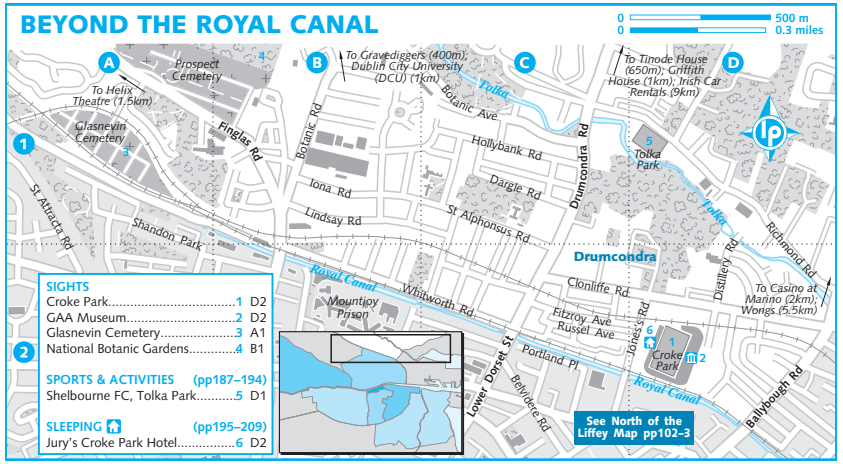
CROKE PARK & GAA MUSEUM

Map p118

☎ 855 8176; www.gaa.ie; New Stand, Croke Park, Clonliffe Rd; museum only adult/child/student €5.50/3.50/4, museum & tour adult/child/student €9.50/6/7; 🕒 9.30am-5pm Mon-Sat & noon-5pm Sun Apr-Oct, 10am-5pm Tue-Sat & noon-4pm Sun Nov-Mar; 🚌 3, 11, 11A, 16, 16A or 123 from O'Connell St

Uniquely important in Irish culture, the magnificent stadium at 'Croker' is the fabulous fortress that protects the sanctity and spirit of Gaelic games in Ireland, as well as being the administrative HQ of the Gaelic Athletic Association (GAA), the body that governs them. Sound a little hyperbolic? Well, the GAA considers itself not just the governing body of a bunch of Irish games, but the stout defender of a cultural identity that is ingrained in Ireland's sense of self (see the boxed text, p192). It goes without saying that this is the country's largest stadium; after being virtually rebuilt in recent years, it's actually the fourth-largest stadium in Europe, with a capacity of some 82,000 people, and all for sports that are only played in this tiny little country! There are stadium tours available twice a day, although these are largely for hard-core GAA and sports stadia fans and are not available on match days. It's much better to get a ticket for a match, when you can watch these brilliant games, soak up the unique atmosphere and have a squiz at the arena. Hogan Stand ticket holders can visit the museum on match days.

In the 1870s, the site was developed as the 'City & Suburban Racecourse', but was bought by the GAA in 1913 and immediately renamed Croke Park in honour of the association's first patron, Archbishop Croke of Cashel. Since its foundation it has been entwined with Irish nationalism. The famous Hill 16, which is traditionally where the hardcore Dublin fans stand during matches, was so-called because its foundations were built with rubble taken from O'Connell St after the Easter Rising



of 1916. This was also the site of the first Bloody Sunday in Irish history, the greatest single atrocity of the War of Independence.

Bloody Sunday is one of the episodes recounted in the outstanding GAA Museum, where the history and culture of these most Irish of games is explored in fascinating, interactive style. As well as going into exhaustive detail about Gaelic games, the exhibitions feature audiovisual displays that are sure to get the hairs on the back of any GAA fan's neck to stand up, and many relics from other sports and episodes that have captured the mood of the nation. There are terminals set up where you can watch highlights from any All-Ireland football or hurling final that has been recorded, but the highlight, for us at least, is the opportunity to test one's skills with a football or a hurley and *sliothar* (small leather ball), and imagine the glories that might have been.

GLASNEVIN CEMETERY Map p118

☎ 830 1133; Finglas Rd; admission free; ⏲ 24hr; 🚌 40, 40A or 40B from Parnell St

Make sure your visit coincides with one of the free tours (2.30pm Wednesday and Friday), which are provided by Dublin's most entertaining, informative and irreverent tour guide, the inimitable Lorcan Collins (also of the 1916 Rebellion tours, see p240), who'll bring you around all the most interesting sights in Ireland's largest cemetery – sometimes referred to as 'Croak Park'.

It was established in 1832 as a cemetery for Roman Catholics, who faced opposition when they conducted burials in the city's Protestant cemeteries. Many monuments and memorials have staunchly patriotic overtones, with numerous high crosses, shamrocks, harps and other Irish symbols. The single most imposing memorial is the colossal monument to Cardinal McCabe (1837–1921), archbishop of Dublin and primate of Ireland.

A modern replica of a round tower holds the tomb of Daniel O'Connell, who died in 1847 and was reinterred here in 1869, when the tower was completed. Charles Stewart Parnell's tomb is topped with a huge granite rock. Other notable people buried here include Sir Roger Casement, who was executed for treason by the British in 1916 and whose remains weren't returned to Ireland until 1964; the republican leader Michael Collins, who was assassinated during the Civil War; the docker and trade unionist Jim Larkin, a prime force in the 1913 general strike; and the poet Gerard Manley Hopkins.

There's a poignant 'class' memorial to the men who starved themselves to death for the cause of Irish freedom over the last century, including 10 men in the 1981 H Block hunger strikes. The most interesting parts of the cemetery are at the southeastern Prospect Sq end. The towers were once used to keep watch for body snatchers. The cemetery is mentioned in *Ulysses* and there are several clues for Joyce enthusiasts to follow.

NATIONAL BOTANIC GARDENS Map p118

☎ 837 7596; Botanic Rd, Glasnevin; admission free; ⏲ 9am-6pm Mon-Sat & 11am-6pm Sun Apr-Oct, 10am-4.30pm Mon-Sat & 11am-4.30pm Sun Nov-Mar; 🚌 13, 13A or 19 from O'Connell St, or bus 34 or 34A from Middle Abbey St

This 19.5-hectare treasure is a delightful blend of exoticism and tousled gentility. Although only established in 1795, the area was used as a garden long before it was christened so, and the area of Yew Walk (Addison's Walk) features trees dating back to the first half of the 18th century.

The architectural highlight in the gardens is a series of curvilinear glasshouses that date from 1843 to 1869. They were created by Dubliner Richard Turner, who was also responsible for creating the Palm House at London's Kew Gardens. Within these Victorian masterpieces you will find the latest in botanical technology, including a series of computer-controlled climates that reproduce environments from different parts of the world.

The gardens also have a palm house, which was built in 1884. Among the pioneering botanical work conducted here was the first attempt to raise orchids from seed, back in 1844. Pampas grass and the giant lily were first grown in Europe in these gardens.

CASINO AT MARINO Off Map p118

☎ 833 1618; Marino; adult/concession/family €2.90/1.30/7.40; ⏲ by guided tour only 10am-5pm May & Oct, 10am-6pm Jun-Sep, noon-4pm Sat & Sun Feb-Apr, Nov & Dec, noon-5pm Apr, closed Jan, last tour 45min before closing; 🚌 20A, 20B, 27, 27B, 42, 42C or 123 from city centre, 🚆 DART to Clontarf Rd

No, not that kind of casino; perhaps it's the images of blackjack and slot machines that make so many visitors overlook this bewitching 18th-century architectural folly, which is a *casino* in the Italian sense of the word, as in a 'house of pleasure' or summer home. Off Malahide Rd, it was built for the Earl of Charlemont (1728–99), who returned from his grand European tour with a huge art collection and a burning passion for the Italian Palladian style of architecture. He appointed the architect Sir William Chambers to build the casino, a process that spanned three decades and was never really concluded because the earl frittered away his fortune.

Externally, the building's 12 Tuscan columns, forming a templelike façade, and huge entrance doorway suggest that it encloses a simple single open space. Only when you go inside do you realise what a wonderful extravagance it is. The interior is a convoluted maze, planned as a bachelor's retreat, but eventually put to quite a different use. Flights of fancy include carved draperies, ornate fireplaces, chimneys for central heating disguised as roof urns, downpipes hidden in columns, beautiful parquet floors built of rare woods and a spacious wine cellar. All sorts of statuary adorn the outside, the amusing fakes being the most enjoyable. The towering front door is a sham, and a much smaller panel opens to reveal the interior. The windows have blacked-out panels to disguise the fact that the interior is a complex of rooms rather than a single chamber. Entry is by guided tour only, and the last tour departs 45 minutes before closing.

When the earl married, the casino became a garden retreat rather than a bachelor's quarters. The casino was designed to accompany another building where he intended to house the art and antiquities he had acquired during his European tour, so it's perhaps fitting that his town house on Parnell Sq, also designed by Sir William Chambers, is now the Dublin City Gallery (p101).

Despite his wealth, Charlemont was a comparatively liberal and free-thinking aristocrat. He never enclosed his demesne and allowed the public to use it as an open park. Nor was he the only eccentric in the area at that time. In 1792 a painter named Folliot took a dislike to the earl and built Marino Crescent at the bottom of Malahide Rd purely to block his view of the sea.

After Charlemont's death his estate, crippled by his debts, quickly collapsed. The art collection was dispersed and in 1870 the town house was sold to the government. The Marino estate followed in 1881 and the casino in 1930, though it was in a decrepit condition when the government acquired it. Not until the mid-1970s did serious restoration begin, and it still continues. Although the current casino grounds are a tiny fragment of the original Marino estate, trees around the building help to hide the fact that it's now surrounded by a housing estate.

BRAM STOKER DRACULA EXPERIENCE

☎ 805 7824; www.thebramstokerdraculaexperience.com; Bar Code, Westwood Club, Clontarf Rd; adult/child/student €7/4/5; 4-10pm Fri, noon-10pm Sat & Sun; DART to Clontarf Rd, 20, 20B, 27, 27B, 29A, 31, 31A, 32, 32A, 32B, 42, 42A, 42B, 43, 127, 129 or 130 from Lower Abbey St

Abraham (Bram) Stoker (1847–1912) was born and raised at 15 Marino Cres, in the pretty seaside suburb of Clontarf, so it makes perfect sense that the local fitness club should be home to a museum dedicated to the author's life and, particularly, to his most memorable creation. The sight of Dublin's suburbanites struggling to fend off the effects of age and gravity on a Stairmaster may be scary enough, but Bram Stoker's imagination was just that little bit more extreme. The tour through his fictional world mightn't keep you awake at night, but it's pretty effective nonetheless, as each of the various rooms have been created to stimulate maximum discomfort and fear. The journey begins in a 'Time Tunnel to Transylvania', and transports unsuspecting visitors to such delightful destinations as Renfield's lunatic asylum and the bowels of Castle Dracula, where a meeting with the sharp-toothed one awaits. We won't ruin the fun by telling you how it was all put together; suffice to say that technology and the warped imagination of the designers have combined to startling effect. There is also an exhibit dedicated to the life of Bram Stoker.

If you present a same-day DART ticket, you'll get a 25% discount on the entry charge.

WALKING TOURS

The walks included here take on three of the city's major themes, beginning with Dublin's well-earned reputation as a hive of literary genius, followed by a traipse through the city's faded Viking and medieval past. There's also the staggered walk that most people come to Dublin for – the pub crawl. Finally, we want you to explore the northern half of the city before straddling the southern boundary of the city centre and the suburbs.

LITERARY DUBLIN

1 Shaw Birthplace Start your walk just north of the Grand Canal at the Shaw Birthplace (p76). Barely visited, this elegant Victorian home was where Nobel Prize–winner George Bernard Shaw (1856–1950), author of *Pygmalion* (later hammed up and turned into the stage musical and film *My Fair Lady*), spent his early years.

2 Cornelius Ryan Birthplace Walk north along Synge St, take a left along Grantham St and at the very end, you can see Ryan's birthplace. There's not much to see, save the frontage of the house at 32 Heytesbury St where the author (1920–74) of *The Longest Day*, *The Last Battle* and *A Bridge Too Far* was born.

3 Bleeding Horse Retrace your steps along Grantham St and keep going along until you get to the intersection with Lower Camden St. Across Camden St is this popular watering hole, where a certain Captain Bligh, of *Mutiny on the Bounty* fame, lived upstairs for a time.

4 Sir Edward Carson Birthplace Walk along Charlotte St, take a left onto Harcourt St and head up to No 4. This is the birthplace of the founder of Northern Irish Unionism, who was a barrister in Dublin before going all political. Carson (1854–1935) made his legal bones by prosecuting Oscar Wilde in 1898, which ultimately resulted in the writer going to prison for homosexuality (which was illegal).

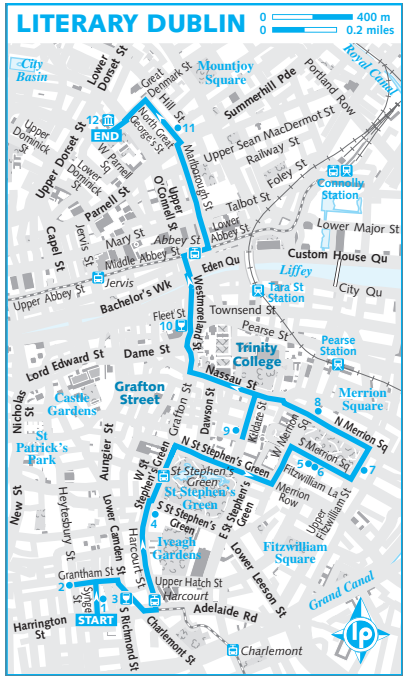
5 George (AE) Russell Residence Continue walking straight along West St Stephen's Green and onto North St Stephen's Green. Take a left onto Merrion Row and continue to Merrion Sq. The former residence of self-proclaimed poet, mystic, painter and co-operator George Russell (1867–1935) is at 84 Merrion Sq South.

6 WB Yeats Residence (Part One) The great poet, dramatist and nationalist agitator WB Yeats (1865–1939) answered the door at 82 Merrion Sq South…

7 WB Yeats Residence (Part Two) … Before moving around the square to 52 Merrion Sq East, although he later claimed not to like living on the square.

WALK FACTS

Start Shaw Birthplace, 33 Synge St
End Dublin Writers Museum, North Parnell Sq
Distance 3.5km
Duration 2½ to three hours
Fuel Stop Palace Bar
Transport Luas to Harcourt St, 11, 11A, 13B or 48A from Trinity College.



8 Oscar Wilde House The self-professed genius (1854–1900) was born and raised at 1 Merrion Sq North (p82); fortunately, he grew up to prove himself right.

9 Bram Stoker House From the square's northern corner, walk straight down Nassau St. Kildare St runs off to your left, and No 36 was once the home of Bram Stoker (1847–1912), the creator of the greatest vampire of them all (er, *Dracula*).

10 Palace Bar Head back up Nassau St, past the main entrance to Trinity College and then down Westmoreland St. Off the street to your left, on Fleet St, is the Palace Bar (p169), traditionally a favourite haunt of journos and scribblers, including one Brendan Behan, who was regularly barred from here.

11 James Joyce Centre Cross the Liffey onto O'Connell St, take a right onto Lower Abbey St, then left into Marlborough St and head north until you reach North Great George's St. On your right, at No 35, in this lovingly restored period home, is the James Joyce Centre (p108), which is the home of all things Joycean.

12 Dublin Writers Museum Walk to the end of North Great George's St, head left into Great Denmark St and finish your literary walk at this interesting literary centre (p109) on the northern flank of Parnell Sq.

VIKING & MEDIEVAL DUBLIN

1 Essex Gate Begin your walk at the corner of Parliament St and Essex Gate, once a main entrance gate to the city. A bronze plaque on a pillar marks the spot where the gate once stood. Further along, you can see the original foundations of Isolde's Tower through a grill in the pavement, in front of the pub of the same name.

2 Church of St Francis Head west down Essex Gate and West Essex St until you reach Fishamble St; turn right towards the quays and left into Wood Quay. Cross Winetavern St and proceed along Merchant's Quay. To your left is the Church of St Francis, aka Adam & Eve's, after a tavern through which worshippers gained access to a secret chapel during Penal Law times in the 17th and 18th centuries.

3 Father Mathew Bridge Further down Merchant's Quay you'll spot this bridge, built in 1818 on the spot of the fordable crossing that gave Dublin its Irish name, Baile Átha Cliath (Town of the Hurdle Ford).

4 Brazen Head Take a left onto Bridge St and stop for a drink at Dublin's oldest pub (p169), dating from 1198 (although the present building dates from 1668).

5 St Audoen's Arch Take the next left onto Cook St, where you'll find one of the only remaining gates of 32 that were built into the medieval city walls, dating from 1240.

6 St Audoen's Church Climb through the arch up to the ramparts to see one of the city's oldest existing churches (p97). It was built around 1190, and is not to be confused with the newer Catholic church next door.

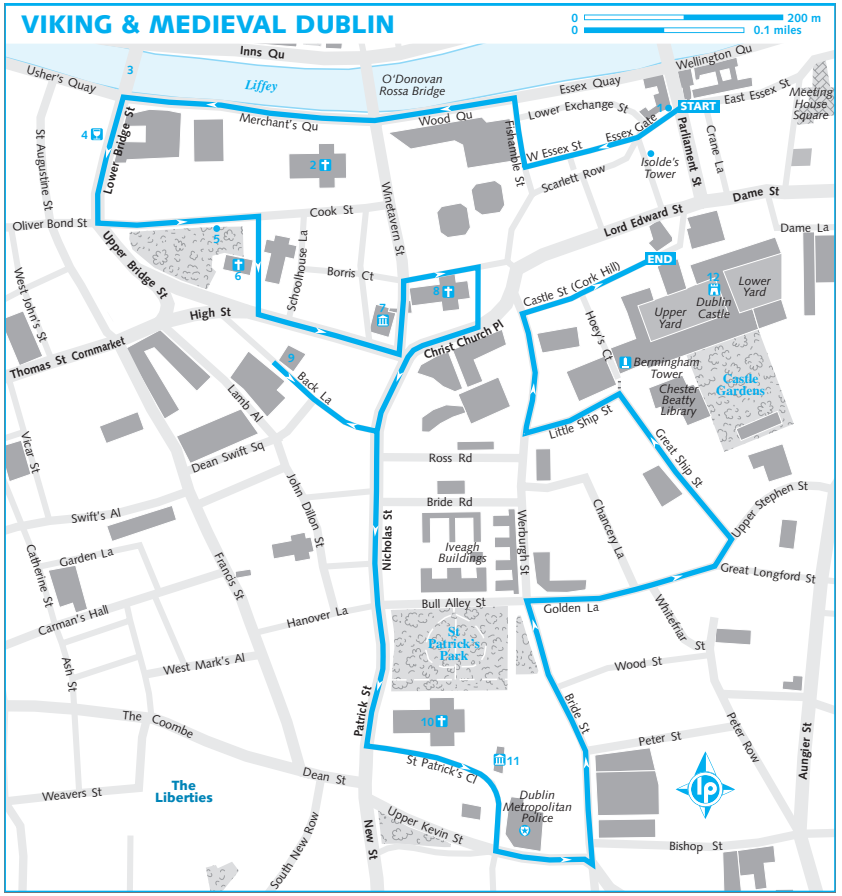
7 Dvblinia Leave the little park, join High St and head east until you reach the first corner. Here on your left is the former Synod Hall, now a museum (p95), where medieval Dublin has been interactively re-created.

8 Christ Church Cathedral Turn left and walk under the Synod Hall Bridge, which links it to one of the city's most important landmarks and, in medieval times, the most important church (p94) inside the city walls.

9 Tailors' Hall Exit the cathedral onto Christ Church Pl, cross over onto Nicholas St and turn right onto Back Lane. Proceed to Dublin's oldest surviving guild hall, built between 1703 and 1707 (though it says 1770 on the plaque) for the Tailors Guild. It's now the headquarters of An Taisce, the National Trust for Ireland.

10 St Patrick's Cathedral Do an about turn, head back along the lane and turn right into Nicholas St, which becomes Patrick St. To your left you'll see Dublin's most important cathedral (p90), which stood outside the city walls.

11 Marsh's Library Along St Patrick's Close, beyond the bend on the left, is this stunningly beautiful library (p93), named after Archbishop Narcissus Marsh, dean of St Patrick's. Further along again on your left is the Dublin Metropolitan Police building, once the Episcopal Palace of St Sepulchre.



WALK FACTS

Start Essex Gate, Parliament St
End Dublin Castle
Distance 2.5km
Duration At least two hours
Fuel Stop Brazen Head

12 Dublin Castle Finally, follow our route up Bride St, Golden Lane and Great Ship St, and finish up with a long wander around **Dublin Castle** (p74). Be sure not to miss the striking powder-blue **Bermingham Tower** and the nearby **Chester Beatty Library** (p70), south of the castle, which houses one of Dublin's most fascinating collections of rare books and manuscripts.

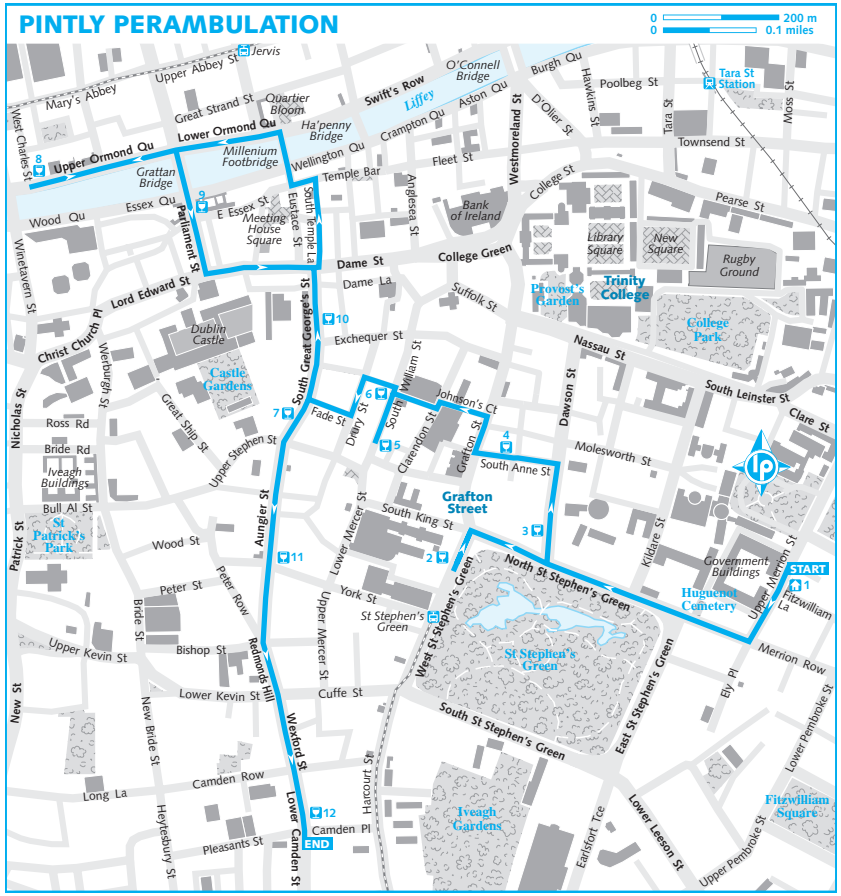
PINTLY PERAMBULATION

1 Merrion Hotel Before your walk, start with an elegant afternoon tea, complete with scones and cucumber sandwiches at this hotel (p201); it's the perfect lining for the road ahead.

2 Fitzwilliam Leave the Merrion Hotel, turn left and then right along Merrion Row. Walk around St Stephen's Green until you get to the Fitzwilliam (p198), which is the perfect place to kick off the boozing with a killer cocktail in hoity-toity style.

3 Dawson Lounge Retrace your steps back around the Green, take a left down Dawson St, then stop for a diminutive tipple in Dublin's smallest pub (p165).

lonelyplanet.com
NEIGHBOURHOODS WALKING TOURS



WALK FACTS

Start Merrion Hotel, Upper Merrion St
End Anseo, Camden St
Distance 4km
Duration There's booze involved, so how long is a piece of string?

4 Kehoe's Head north up Dawson St, take a left onto South Anne St and sink a pint of plain in one of the city centre's most atmospheric bars, Kehoe's (p165).

5 South William Turn right onto Grafton St, take a left onto Johnson's Ct and then another left into South William St. Head down to No 52 and order a drink in one of Dublin's coolest bars, South William (p164), the place to be seen.

6 Grogan's Castle Lounge Backtrack up South William St to No 15 to enjoy this pub (p165), favoured haunt of artists, frustrated writers and other bohemian types.

7 Long Hall Take a left onto Castle Market, left down Drury St and right onto Fade St. Cross South Great George's St and nip into the Long Hall (p165) to discuss the vicissitudes of life in a sombre Victorian setting.

8 Sin É Head up South Great George's St, and into South Temple Lane, cross the Millennium footbridge and turn left along the pleasant waterside boardwalk. Nearby is this narrow, deep bar (p171) with a big reputation for top-class music and a terrific night out.

9 Porterhouse Cross the Liffey at Grattan Bridge and stop for a tipple at our favourite of the quarter's drinking establishments (p168), which serves a range of great microbrews.

10 Globe Head south down Parliament St, turn left onto Dame St and then right onto South Great George's St. Stop off at the granddaddy of Dublin's cool bars, the Globe (p164), still going strong.

11 Swan Stroll down South Great George's St, into Aungier St and pull up at the Swan (p166). Usually quiet and always beautiful, this terrific bar is very popular with locals and students from the nearby College of Surgeons.

12 Anseo Make the final push southwards, walking the length of the street until you get to Camden St and this seriously hip and totally unpretentious bar (p163) with fabulous DJs. If you've followed the tour correctly, you should no longer be referring to this guide. How many fingers?

TAKE A WALK ON THE NORTH SIDE

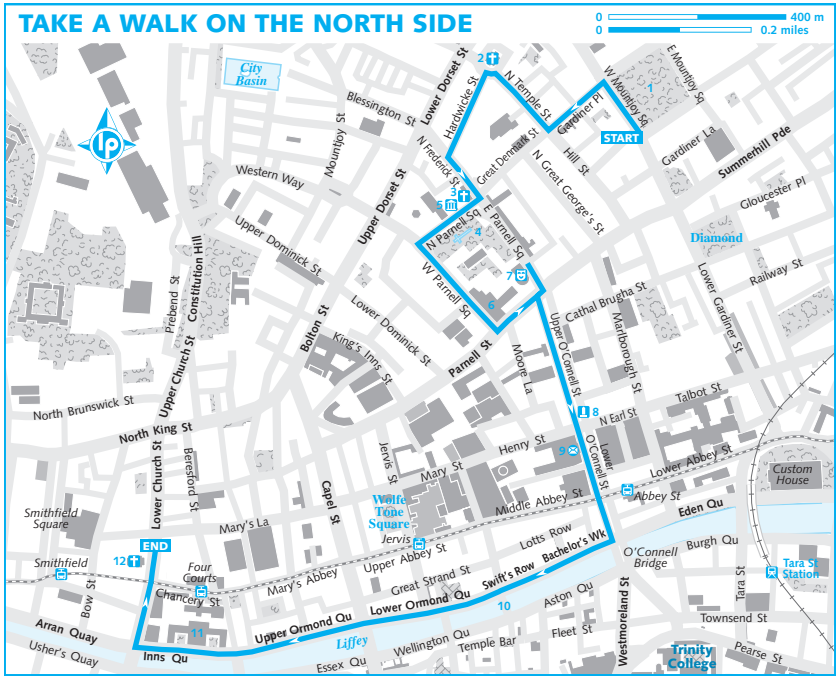
1 Mountjoy Square Start your walk in slightly dilapidated, yet elegant Mountjoy Sq, formerly one of Dublin's most beautiful and prestigious addresses.

2 St George's Church Take a left at the northwestern corner of the square and walk down Gardiner Pl, turning right onto North Temple St. Up ahead is this fine, but now deconsecrated Georgian church, designed by architect Francis Johnston (who lived close by in a now-demolished house at 64 Eccles St).

3 Abbey Presbyterian Church Take a left onto Hardwicke St and left again onto North Frederick St. On your right you'll spot this

WALK FACTS

Start Mountjoy Sq
End St Michan's Church, Church St
Distance 2.5km
Duration Two hours



distinctive building. Built in 1864, it's often referred to as Findlater's Church after the grocery magnate who financed the building's construction.

4 Garden of Remembrance The northern slice of Parnell Sq houses this garden (p111), opened in 1966 to commemorate the 50th anniversary of the 1916 Easter Rising.

5 Dublin City Gallery – The Hugh Lane North of the square, facing the park, is this excellent gallery (p101). Next door to the Dublin Writers Museum (p109), this is home to some of the best modern art in Europe as well as Francis Bacon's recreated studio.

6 Rotunda Hospital The southern part of Parnell Sq is occupied by this hospital (p111), a wonderful example of public architecture in the Georgian style, which was built in 1757.

7 Gate Theatre In the southeastern corner of the square is the Gate Theatre (p186). Part of the old Rotunda complex, it's now a major theatre for top-end drama.

8 Spire Head south down O'Connell St, passing by this 120m-high monument (p109). Erected in 2001, it has already become an iconic symbol of the city.

9 General Post Office On the other side of O'Connell St, this stunning neoclassical building (p107) towers over the street. Its role as HQ for the Easter Rising (p22) makes it an important historical site.

10 Ha'penny Bridge Head south until you hit the river, turn right and walk along the handsome boardwalk until you reach the city's most distinctive bridge (it got its name from the charge that was levied on those who used it).

11 Four Courts Continue west along Ormond Quay to one of James Gandon's Georgian masterpieces (p106), home to the most important law courts in Ireland.

12 St Michan's Church Finally take a right onto Church St to admire this beautiful Georgian church (p110), with grisly vaults populated by the remains of the long departed.

I'LL MEET YOU IN...

There's a famous story that tells of a meeting along the canal between Patrick Kavanagh and the hell-raising writer Brendan Behan. They chatted for a while, then Kavanagh suggested they go for a drink. He suggested a pub, to which Behan said 'no'. He was barred from that particular establishment, he explained, 'how about somewhere else?' Kavanagh asked Behan to recommend a spot, but when Behan did, Kavanagh demurely explained that *he* was barred from *that* pub. They shook hands and each went on their merry way.

ALONG THE GRAND CANAL

1 Portobello (☎ 475 2715; 33 South Richmond St) Begin at this popular watering hole, which was built to service the solid (and liquid) hungers of workers building the canal.

2 Portobello College Across the street is this technical college. Painter Jack B Yeats (1871–1957) – brother to William Butler – lived here in the years leading up to his death (see p45).

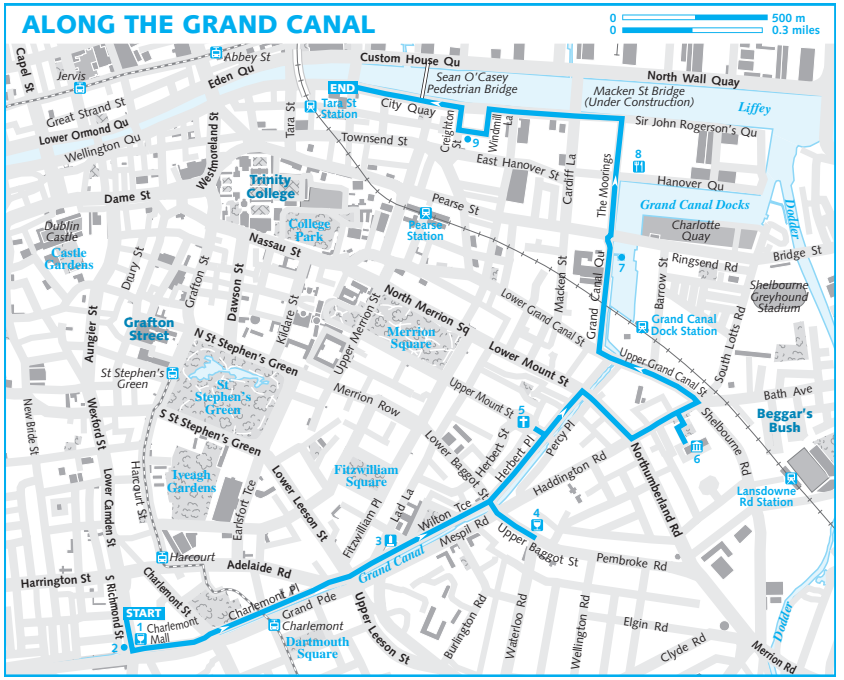
3 Patrick Kavanagh Statue Turn left at the Grand Canal and begin your stroll along the towpath. About 300m past Leeson St Bridge is the Kavanagh statue, relaxing on a bench. The Monaghan-born poet is immortalised in the spot he loved most in Dublin – where he couldn't get barred (see boxed text, left).

4 Searson's (☎ 660 0330; 42 Upper Baggot St) When you get to Baggot St Bridge take a right onto Baggot St and refuel at this popular bar.

5 St Stephen's Church Return to the canal and continue eastwards, diverting left at Mount St for St Stephen's Church (p83), a Greek Revival structure known as the 'Pepper Canister' on account of its curious shape.

6 National Print Museum Back on the towpath, turn right at Northumberland Rd and left onto Haddington Rd for this museum (p98). Housed in an old barracks, this is a surprisingly interesting museum, especially if you're a fan of old books.

7 Waterways Visitor Centre Turn left onto Upper Grand Canal St, then right into Grand Canal Quay for this centre (p100), where you can find out everything you could possibly want to know on the construction of the country's canals and waterways.



8 Ely HQ Before heading back to the city, stop for brunch or a drink at this supertrendy wine bar and restaurant (p155), which overlooks the Grand Canal Docks.

9 Windmill Lane Studios Walk north to Sir John Rogerson's Quay, turn left and left again at Windmill Lane. Here you'll find Dublin's very own Abbey Road Studios, where U2 have their offices and recorded all of their early records up to *The Unforgettable Fire*. Back on Rogerson's Quay, walk west along the quays and back into the city.

WALK FACTS

Start Portobello Pub, South Richmond St
End City Quay
Distance 5km
Duration Two to 2½ hours
Fuel Stop Searson's
Transport Luas to Harcourt St, 16, 16A, 19, 19A, 65 or 83 from Trinity College & South Great George's St.