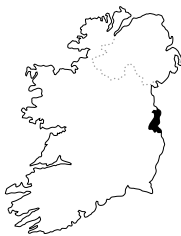


Dublin



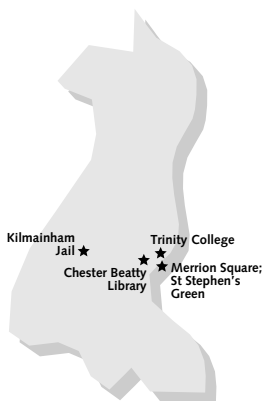
Western Europe's most intimate capital is a city bursting with confidence, which is hardly surprising considering that the last two decades have seen Dublin transformed from delightful backwater struggling to get by into a decadent metropolis that puts no limits on its ambitions. Heritage and hedonism live side by side in Dublin, reflected in the elegance of its Georgian architecture and the garrulous sociability of its citizens, both of which lend character and charm to a city that already has plenty in reserve.

The good times have been good for so long that most Dubliners take them for granted and a whole generation has grown up knowing nothing but the kind of easy prosperity that keeps fancy labels in the wardrobe and golf clubs in the boot of the car. They take it as given that Dublin is a multicultural melting pot where Russians shop for tinned caviar, Nigerian teenagers discuss the merits of hair extensions and Koreans hawk phone cards from their cars. They are confident in the knowledge that their city is so hip that travellers from all over the world can't wait to get here and indulge in the many pleasures it has to offer.

Because pleasure is something Dublin knows all about – from its music, art and literature to the legendary nightlife that has inspired those same musicians, artists and writers, Dublin knows how to have fun and does it with deadly seriousness. As you'll soon find out.

HIGHLIGHTS

- **Antiquated Scholars** Strolling the cobbled grounds of Elizabethan Trinity College (p90)
- **Book-Bound Serenity** Ancient books, bibles and other printed wonders from the world over in the Chester Beatty Library (p95)
- **Choice Addresses** Georgian gems surrounding the landscaped Merrion Square (p99) and St Stephen's Green (p98)
- **History Lesson** The past up close and personal at Kilmainham Jail (p103)
- **Mine's a Guinness** A pint or five in one of Dublin's many pubs and clubs (p130)



■ TELEPHONE CODE: 01

■ POPULATION: 1.2 MILLION

■ AREA: 921 SQ KM

HISTORY

Dublin celebrated its official millennium in 1988, but there were settlements here long before AD 988. The first early-Celtic habitation, around 500 BC, was at a ford over the River Liffey, giving rise to the city's Irish name, Baile Átha Cliath (Town of the Hurdle Ford).

The Celts went about their merry way for 1000 years or so, but it wasn't until the Vikings showed up that Dublin was urbanised in any significant way. By the 9th century, raids from the north had become a fact of Irish life, and some of the fierce Danes chose to stay rather than simply rape, pillage and depart. They intermarried with the Irish and established a vigorous trading port at the point where the River Poddle joined the Liffey in a *dubh linn* (black pool). Today there's little trace of the Poddle, which has been channelled underground and flows under St Patrick's Cathedral to dribble into the Liffey by the Capel St (Grattan) Bridge.

Fast-forward another 1000 years, past the arrival of the Normans in the 12th century and the slow process of subjugating Ireland to Anglo-Norman (then British) rule, a process in which Dublin generally played the role of bandleader. Stop at the beginning of the 18th century, when the squalid city packed with poor Catholics hardly reflected the imperial pretensions of its Anglophile burghers. The great and the good – aka the Protestant Ascendancy – wanted big improvements, and they set about transforming what was in essence still a medieval town into a modern, Anglo-Irish metropolis. Roads were widened, landscaped squares laid out and new town houses were built, all in a proto-Palladian style that soon become known as Georgian (after the kings then on the English throne). For a time, Dublin was the second-largest city in the British Empire and all was very, very good – unless you were part of the poor, mostly Catholic masses living in the city's ever developing slums. For them, things stayed pretty much as they had always been.

The Georgian boom came to a sudden and dramatic halt after the Act of Union in 1801, when Ireland was formally united with Britain and its separate parliament closed down. Dublin went from being the belle at the Imperial ball to the annoying cousin who just wouldn't take the hint, and it slid quickly into economic turmoil and social unrest. During the Potato Famine, the city's population was swollen by

the arrival of tens of thousands of starving refugees from the west, who joined the ranks of an already downtrodden working class. As Dublin entered the 20th century, it was a dispirited place plagued by poverty, disease and more social problems than anyone cared to mention. It's hardly surprising that the majority of Dublin's citizenry were pissed off and eager for change.

The first fusillade of change came during the Easter Rising of 1916, which caused considerable damage to the city centre. At first, Dubliners weren't too enamoured of the rebels, who caused more chaos and disruption than most locals were willing to put up with, but they soon changed their tune when the leaders were callously executed: Dubliners are natural defenders of the defenceless underdog.

As the whole country lurched radically towards full-scale war with Britain, Dublin was, surprisingly, not part of the main theatre of events. In fact, although there was an increased military presence, the odd shooting in the capital and the blowing up of some notable buildings – such as the Custom House in 1921 – it was business as usual for much of the War of Independence. People went to work and socialised in pretty much the same way as when there wasn't a war.

A year later, Ireland – minus its northern bit – was independent, but it then tumbled into the Civil War, which led to the burning out of more notable buildings, this time the Four Courts in 1922. Ironically the war among the Irish was more brutal than the struggle for independence – O'Connell St became sniper row and the violence left deep scars that are only today beginning to disappear.

When the new state finally started doing business, Dublin was an exhausted capital. Despite slow and steady improvements, the city – like the rest of Ireland – continued to be plagued by rising unemployment, high emigration rates and a general stagnation that hung about the place like an impenetrable cloud. Dubliners made the most of the little they had, but times were tough. Then, in the 1960s, a silver lining appeared in the shape of an economic boom: Dublin went suburban and began the outward expansion that continues unabated today.

A boom ain't a miracle, however, and Dublin trudged along for another couple of decades with pretty much the same age-old problems (high unemployment, emigration) and some



DUBLIN IN...

Two Days

Kick-start your day with a mean brunch at **Gruel** (p124) on Dame St, a stone's throw from **Trinity College** (p90), where the walking tour includes entry to the **Book of Kells** (p93). Ramble through atmospheric **George's St Arcade** (p139) to Grafton St to catch the buskers and splurge on Dublin's most exclusive shopping street. Round it off with a cocktail, dinner and outdoor movie on the terrace at **Eden** (p127), one of Dublin's trendiest restaurants, located in **Temple Bar** (p94), before falling into bed at the **Irish Landmark Trust** (p119), which you and six friends have made your home. The next day marvel at the art of the **Chester Beatty Library** (p95) before strolling up to the **Guinness Storehouse** (p102) for a tour that ends with a glass of 'plain' in the Gravity Bar, which has stunning 360-degree views of the city.

Four Days

Follow the two-day itinerary, then wander around the historic **Glasnevin Cemetery** (p110) before moseying into the peaceful **National Botanic Gardens** (p110). Back in town, browse the **designer shops** (p139) in Temple Bar and grab a bite at **Diep Noodle Bar** (p130), then take the **Dublin Literary Pub Crawl** (p115). The following day take the Dublin Area Rapid Transport (DART) along the coast to the pretty village of **Dalkey** (p142). Gather your strength with a fine meal at **L'Gueuleton** (p126) before a gig at **Vicar Street** (p137).

new ones (drug addiction, gangland criminality) before everything began to change and a terrible beauty known as the Celtic Tiger was born. Fifteen years later, Dublin is a place transformed, a capital in more than name and a city that has finally taken its rightful place as one of the most vibrant in Europe.

ORIENTATION

Greater Dublin sprawls around the arc of Dublin Bay, bounded to the north by the hills at Howth and to the south by the Dalkey headland. Small and compact, the city centre has a clear focus and is a walker's delight. It is split in two by the unremarkable River Liffey, which traditionally marks a psychological and social break between the affluent southside and the poorer northside.

South of the river, over O'Connell Bridge, is the Temple Bar area and the expanse of Trinity College. Nassau St, along the southern edge of the campus, and pedestrianised Grafton St are the main shopping streets. At the southern end of Grafton St is St Stephen's Green. About 2km west, beside the river, is Heuston Station, one of the city's two main train stations.

North of the Liffey are O'Connell St and, just off it, Henry St, the major shopping thoroughfares. Most of the northside's B&Bs are on Gardiner St, which becomes rather run-down as it continues north. At the northern end of O'Connell St is Parnell Sq. The main

bus station, Busáras, and the other main train station, Connolly Station, are near the southern end of Gardiner St.

The postcodes for central Dublin are Dublin 1 (immediately north of the river) and Dublin 2 (immediately south). The Dublin 4 postcode, covering the swanky neighbourhoods of Ballsbridge, Donnybrook and Sandymount, is synonymous with affluence and is often used as a descriptive term. A handy tip is to remember that even numbers apply to the southside and odd ones to the north.

See p140 for information on transport to/from the airport and train stations.

INFORMATION

Bookshops

Cathach Books (Map p86; ☎ 671 8676; www.rarebooks.ie; 10 Duke St) A rich and remarkable collection of secondhand Irish-interest books, including 1st editions.

Connolly Books (Map p84; ☎ 670 8707; 43 East Essex St) Left-wing bookshop beloved of Marxists and radicals.

Dubray Books (Map p86; ☎ 677 5568; 36 Grafton St) Excellent local shop with a good Irish-interest section.

Dublin Writers Museum (Map pp82-3; ☎ 872 2077; 18 North Parnell Sq)

Eason (Map p84; ☎ 873 3811; 40 Lower O'Connell St) One of the biggest magazine stockists in Ireland.

Eason - Hanna's (Map p86; ☎ 677 1255; 27-29 Nassau St) Academic tomes, bestsellers and stationery.

(Continued on page 88)



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British Council.....	3 E3
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Drugs Advisory & Treatment Centre.....	5 E3
Dublin Tourism.....	(see 6)
Fáilte Ireland head office.....	6 E3
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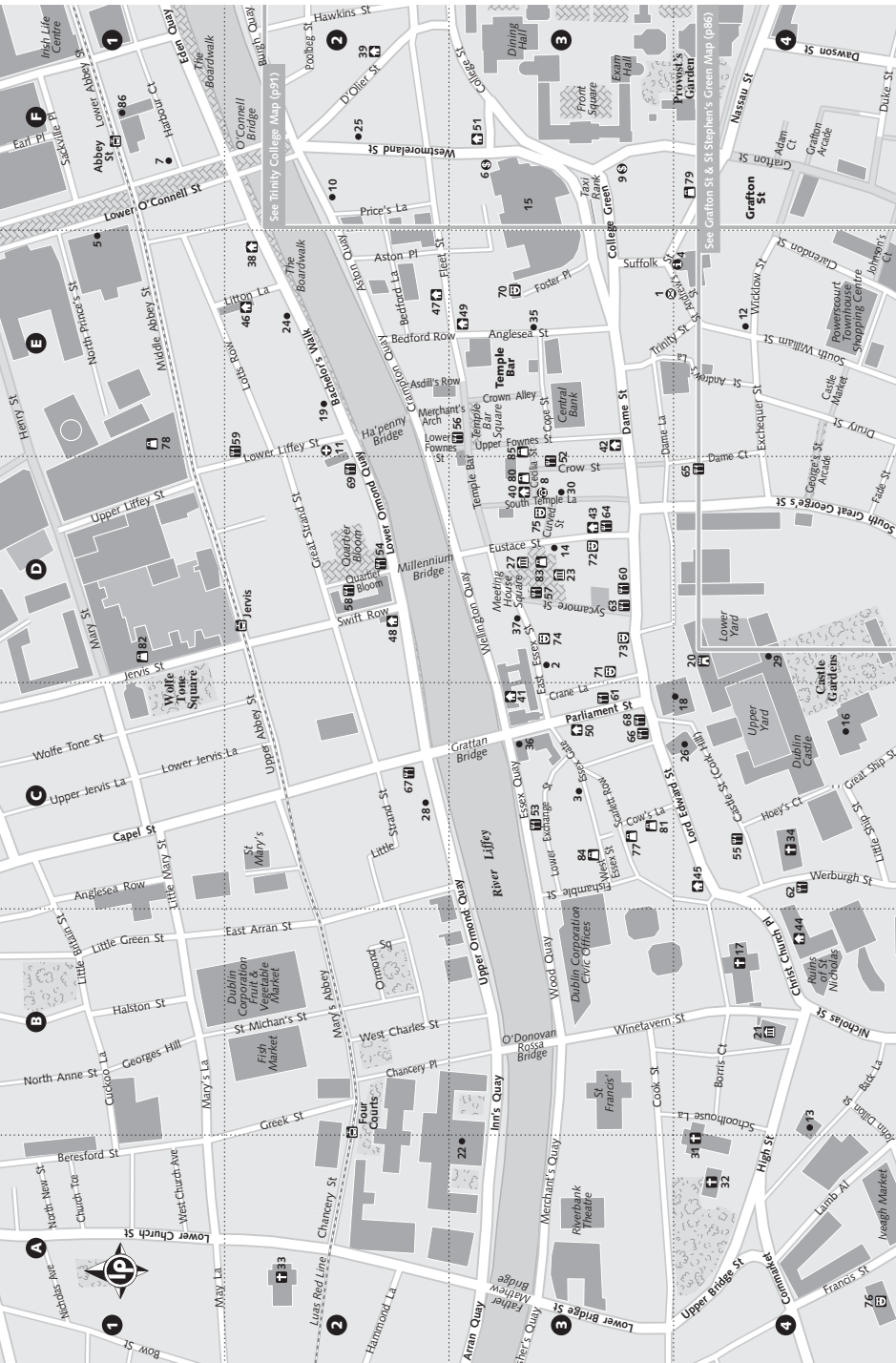
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 O'Connell's Pharmacy.....7 F1
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Greene's Bookshop (Map p86; ☎ 676 2554; www.greenebookshop.com; 16 Clare St) What all secondhand bookshops should be – packed with dusty tomes.

Hodges Figgis (Map p86; ☎ 677 4754; 56-58 Dawson St) Widest selection of titles in Dublin.

Hughes & Hughes Dublin Airport (Map p78; ☎ 814 4034); St Stephen's Green (Map p86; ☎ 478 3060; St Stephen's Green Shopping Centre) Magazines, bestsellers and new titles.

Irish Museum of Modern Art (IMMA; Map p80; ☎ 612 9900; Royal Hospital Kilmainham) Contemporary art and Irish-interest books.

Library Book Shop (Map p91; ☎ 608 1171; Trinity College) Irish-interest books, including ones on the *Book of Kells*.

Murder Ink (Map p86; ☎ 677 7570; 15 Dawson St) Mystery titles.

National Gallery (Map p86; ☎ 678 5450; Merrion Sq West) Traditional-art and Irish-interest books.

Sinn Féin Bookshop (Map pp82-3; ☎ 872 7096; 44 West Parnell Sq)

Stokes Books (Map p86; ☎ 671 3584; 19 George's St Arcade) Irish historical books, old and new.

Waterstone's Dawson St (Map p86; ☎ 679 1415; 7 Dawson St); Jervis St Centre (Map p84; ☎ 878 1311; Jervis St)

Cultural Centres

Alliance Française (Map p86; ☎ 676 1732; 1 Kildare St)

British Council (Map p80; ☎ 676 4088; Newmount House, 22-24 Lower Mount St)

Goethe Institute (Map p86; ☎ 661 1155; 37 North Merrion Sq)

Instituto Cervantes (Map p80; ☎ 668 2024; 58 Northumberland Rd)

Italian Cultural Institute (Map p80; ☎ 676 6662; 11 Fitzwilliam Sq)

Emergency

For national emergency numbers, see the inside front cover.

Confidential Line Freephone (☎ 1800 666 111) Garda confidential line to report crime.

Drugs Advisory & Treatment Centre (Map pp82-3; ☎ 677 1122; Trinity Ct, 30-31 Pearse St)

Rape Crisis Centre (Map pp82-30; ☎ 1800 778 888, 661 4911; 70 Lower Leeson St)

Samaritans (☎ 1850 609 090, 872 7700) For people who are depressed or suicidal.

Internet Access

Global Internet Café Basement (Map pp82-3; ☎ 878 0295; 8 O'Connell St Lower; per hr €5; ☎ 8am-11pm Mon-Fri, from 9am Sat, from 10am Sun)

Internet Exchange (Map p84; ☎ 670 3000; 3 Cecilia St; per hr €5; ☎ 8am-2am Mon-Fri, 10am-midnight Sat & Sun)

Internet Resources

Balcony TV (www.balconytv.com) Interviews and music from a balcony in central Dublin. **Discover Ireland** (www.ireland.ie) Official website of Discover Ireland, the public face of the Irish Tourist Board.

Dublin Tourism (www.visitdublin.com) Official website of Dublin Tourism.

Dubliners (www.thedubliners.ie) Gossip, features and other Dublin-related tidbits.

Nixers.com (www.nixers.ie) A good place to check if you're looking for casual work over the summer.

Laundry

Laundry facilities can be found quite easily in the city centre, with prices starting at about €7.50 a load; ask at your accommodation for the nearest one. Alternatively most hostels, B&Bs and hotels will provide the service. In hostels, prices start at around €6 and it is generally self-service.

All-American Laundrette (Map p86; ☎ 677 2779; Wicklow Ct, South Great George's St)

Laundry Shop (Map pp82-3; ☎ 872 3541; 191 Parnell St)

Left Luggage

Left-luggage facilities are available at all transport centres, including the airport.

Busáras (Map pp82-3; ☎ 703 2434; locker per 24hr €4-9; ☎ 7am-10.30pm) Main bus station north of the Liffey.

Connolly Station (Map pp82-3; ☎ 703 2363; bag per 24hr €2.50; ☎ 7am-10pm Mon-Sat, 8am-10pm Sun) The main train station on the northside.

Dublin Airport (Map p78; ☎ 814 4633; Greencaps Left Luggage & Porterage, Dublin airport; per bag per 24hr €4.50-12; ☎ 7am-10pm Mon-Sat, from 8am Sun)

Libraries

Dublin Corporation (Map p86; ☎ 661 9000; Cumberland House, Fenian St; ☎ 9.30am-5pm Mon-Fri) For information on public libraries.

ILAC Centre Public Library (Map pp82-3; ☎ 873 4333; ILAC Centre, Henry St; ☎ 10am-8pm Mon-Thu, to 5pm Sat) One of the city's largest public libraries.

Media

Besides the national dailies (see p694), there are a number of Dublin-specific publications and media outlets.

NEWSPAPERS & MAGAZINES

Dublin Event Guide (free) Fortnightly coverage of all things entertainment throughout the city.

Dubliner (€3.99) Monthly magazine that mixes city-related offerings with interviews and features.

Evening Herald (€1) Evening tabloid with thorough entertainment listings and a terrific flat-finder section.

In Dublin (free) A monthly ad rag.

Mongrel (free) Excellent and irreverent magazine with features and interviews.

RADIO

Phantom 105.2 Alternative music, from mod to metal.

Spin 103.8 Chart music and chat for 18 to 24 year olds.

Medical Services

Should you experience an immediate health problem, contact the casualty section of the nearest public hospital; in an emergency, call an ambulance (☎ 999). There are no 24-hour pharmacies in Dublin; the latest openings are until 10pm.

Baggot St Hospital (Map p80; ☎ 668 1577; 18 Upper Baggot St; ☎ 7.30am-4.30pm Mon-Fri) Southside city centre.

City Pharmacy (Map p84; ☎ 670 4523; 14 Dame St; ☎ 9am-10pm)

Dental Hospital (Map p86; ☎ 612 7200; 20 Lincoln Pl; ☎ 8am for pre-booked appointments) If you need to get those choppers looked at; if you don't have an appointment, head in after noon.

Doctors on Call (☎ 453 9333; ☎ 24hr) Request a doctor to come out to your accommodation at any time.

Eastern Regional Health Authority (Map pp82-3; ☎ 679 0700, 1800 520 520; www.erha.ie; Dr Stevens' Hospital, Stevens' Lane; ☎ 9.30am-5.30pm Mon-Fri) Central health authority with Choice of Doctor Scheme, which can advise you on a suitable GP from 9am to 5pm Monday to Friday. Information services for those with physical and mental disabilities.

Grafton Medical Centre (Map p86; ☎ 671 2122; www.graftonmedical.ie; 34 Grafton St; ☎ 8.30am-6.30pm Mon-Thu, to 6pm Fri) One-stop shop with male and female doctors, physiotherapists and a tropical medicine bureau.

Mater Misericordiae Hospital (Map p80; ☎ 830 1122; Eccles St) Northside city centre, off Lower Dorset St.

O'Connell's Pharmacy Grafton St (Map p86; ☎ 679 0467; 21 Grafton St; ☎ 9am-10pm); O'Connell St (Map p84; ☎ 873 0427; 55-56 O'Connell St; ☎ 9am-10pm)

St James' Hospital (Map pp82-3; ☎ 453 7941; James St) Southside.

Well Woman Centre Lower Liffey St (Map p84; ☎ 661 0083; 35 Lower Liffey St; ☎ 9.30am-7.30pm Mon & Thu-

WI-FI HOT SPOTS

Wi-fi (or wireless fidelity) is a handy mobile alternative to plugging into a local area network (LAN). Many public places offer access to wi-fi networks so that customers can use the internet on the move. Try the following hot spots for free access: Chester Beatty Library (p95), Market Bar (p125), the Globe (p133) and Aya (p127).

Fri, 8am-7.30pm Tue-Wed, 10am-4pm Sat & 1-4pm Sun); Pembroke Rd (Map p80; ☎ 660 9860; 67 Pembroke Rd; ☎ 10am-7.30pm Mon-Wed, 8am-7.30pm Thu, 10am-4pm Sat) For female health issues. Supplies contraceptives, including the morning-after pill (€52).

Money

There are currency-exchange counters at Dublin airport in the baggage-collection area, and on the arrival and departure floors. The counters are open 5.30am to 11pm.

There are numerous banks around the city centre with exchange facilities, open during regular bank hours.

American Express (Amex; Map p84; ☎ 605 7709; Dublin Tourism Centre, St Andrew's Church, 2 Suffolk St; ☎ 9am-5pm Mon-Sat)

First Rate (Map p84; ☎ 671 3233; 1 Westmoreland St; ☎ 8am-9pm Mon-Fri, 9am-9pm Sat, 10am-9pm Sun Jun-Sep, 9am-6pm Oct-May)

Thomas Cook (Map p84; ☎ 677 1721, 677 1307; 118 Grafton St; ☎ 9am-5.30pm Mon, Tue, Fri & Sat, 10am-5.30pm Wed, 9am-7pm Thu)

Post

An Post (Map p84; ☎ 705 8206; St Andrew's St)

General Post Office (Map pp82-3; ☎ 705 7000; O'Connell St; ☎ 8am-8pm Mon-Sat) Dublin's famed general post office has a free poste restante service, a philatelic counter and a bank of telephones.

Telephone

Talk Shop (☎ 9am-11pm); Temple Lane (Map p84; ☎ 672 7212; The Granary, 20 Temple Lane); Upper O'Connell St (Map pp82-3; ☎ 872 0200; 5 Upper O'Connell St) For cheap international phone calls.

Tourist Information

No tourist information offices in Dublin provide any information over the phone – they're exclusively walk-in services.

All telephone bookings and reservations are operated by Gulliver, a computerised information and reservation service that is available at all walk-in offices or from anywhere in the world. It provides up-to-date information on events, attractions and transport, and can also book accommodation. You can book via www.visitdublin.com or www.gulliver.ie, or via telephone: in Ireland call ☎ 1800 668 668; from Britain call ☎ 00800 6686 6866; from the rest of the world call ☎ 353-669 792083.

Dublin Tourism (www.visitdublin.com); Dublin Airport (arrivals hall; ☎ 8am-10pm); Dun Laoghaire (Dun Laoghaire ferry terminal; ☎ 10am-1pm & 2-6pm Mon-Sat); O'Connell St (Map pp82-3; 14 Upper O'Connell St; ☎ 9am-5pm Mon-Sat); Wilton Tce (Map p80; ☎ 9.30am-noon & 12.30-5pm Mon-Fri)

Dublin Tourism Centre (Map p84; ☎ 605 7700; www.visitdublin.com; St Andrew's Church, 2 Suffolk St; ☎ 9am-7pm Mon-Sat, 10.30am-3pm Sun Jul & Aug, 9am-5.30pm Mon-Sat Sep-Jun) Dublin's main tourist office. There is a booking fee of €4.50 for serviced accommodation or €7.50 for self-catering accommodation, and a 10% deposit which is refunded through your hotel bill.

Fáilte Ireland head office (Map p80; ☎ 1850 230 330; www.ireland.ie; Wilton Tce; ☎ 9am-5.15pm Mon-Fri)

Travel Agencies

American Express (Amex; Map p84; ☎ 605 7709; Dublin Tourism Centre, St Andrew's Church, 2 Suffolk St; ☎ 9am-5pm Mon-Sat)

Thomas Cook (Map p84; ☎ 677 1721, 677 1307; 118 Grafton St; ☎ 9am-5.30pm Mon, Tue, Fri & Sat, 10am-5.30pm Wed, 9am-7pm Thu)

USIT (Map p84; ☎ 602 1904; www.usit.ie; 19 Aston Quay; ☎ 9.30am-6.30pm Mon-Wed & Fri, 9.30am-8pm Thu, 9.30am-5pm Sat) Travel agency of the Union of Students in Ireland.

DANGERS & ANNOYANCES

Petty crime of the bag-snatching, pickpocketing and car-break-in variety is a low- to mid-level irritant. Hired and foreign-registered cars are favoured targets – they seem to have a smash-my-window sign splayed across their bonnets. Take sensible precautions; supervised car parks for overnight parking aren't a bad idea. Remember also that insurance policies often don't cover losses from cars.

The area north of Gardiner St, O'Connell St and Mountjoy Sq is not especially salubrious, and is afflicted with drug addiction, crime and occasional violence. Phoenix Park is a no-

THE DUBLIN PASS

If you're planning some heavy-duty sight-seeing, you'll save a packet by investing in the **Dublin Pass** (adult/child 1 day €31/17, 2 days €49/29, 3 days €59/34, 6 days €89/44). Not only do you gain free entry into 30 attractions, but you can skip whatever queue there is by presenting your card. The card is available from any of the Dublin Tourism offices (left).

go area after dark; camping there is not just illegal, but also an invitation to trouble.

The problem of sloppy drunkenness after closing hours is another potential hassle. Where there are pubs and clubs there are worse-for-wear revellers looking to get home and/or get laid, and sometimes the frustrations of getting neither can result in a trip to the casualty department of the nearest hospital – hospitals are clogged to bursting with drink-related cases throughout the weekend.

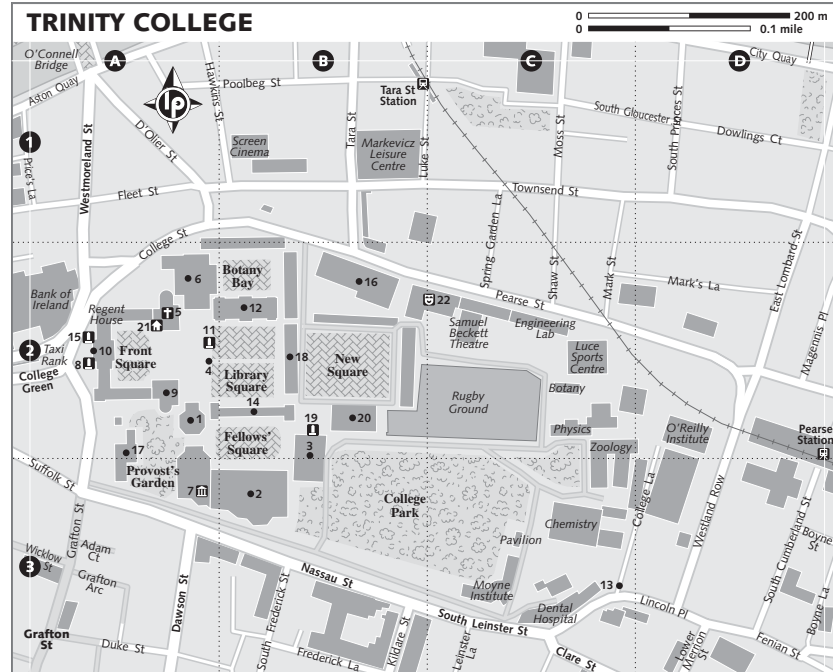
SIGHTS

Trinity College & Around

Dublin's oldest and most beautiful university stretches its leafy self across much of the south city centre's most valuable real estate. Just south of Trinity College is Grafton St, Dublin's most elegant shopping street, which runs up to the main entrance to St Stephen's Green. Surrounding and beyond Dublin's most popular green lung is the capital's exquisite Georgian heritage, a collection of galleries, museums, and private and public buildings as handsome as any you'll see in Europe. Back at Trinity College, take a few steps northwest of the main entrance to find yourself in Temple Bar, where bacchanalia and bohemia scrap it out for supremacy. When the sun sets, Bacchus is king.

TRINITY COLLEGE

On a summer's evening, when the bustling crowds have gone for the day, there's hardly a more delightful place in Dublin than the grounds of Ireland's most prestigious **university** (Map p91; ☎ 896 1000, walking tours ☎ 896 1827; tour incl Long Room €10; ☎ tours every 40min 10.15am-3.40pm Mon-Sat, 10.15am-3pm Sun mid-May-Sep), a masterpiece of architecture and landscaping beautifully preserved in Georgian aspic. Not only is it Dublin's most attractive bit of historical real estate, but it's also home to one of the world's



INFORMATION			
Dublin Experience.....	(see 2)	Printing House.....	16 B2
Library Bookshop.....	(see 14)	Provost's House.....	17 A2
Edmund Burke Statue.....	8 A2	Rubrics Building.....	18 B2
Exam Hall.....	9 A2	Sphere within Sphere.....	19 B2
Front Gate.....	10 A2	Victorian Museum Building.....	20 B2
George Salmon Statue.....	11 A2	Graduates' Memorial Building.....	12 B2
Lincoln Place Gate.....	13 C3	Long Room.....	(see 14)
Oliver Goldsmith Statue.....	15 A2	Old Library.....	14 B2
Arts & Social Science Building.....	2 B3	Oliver Goldsmith Statue.....	15 A2
Berkeley Library.....	3 B2	Provost's House.....	17 A2
Campanile.....	4 A2	Rubrics Building.....	18 B2
Chapel.....	5 A2	Sphere within Sphere.....	19 B2
Dining Hall.....	6 A2	Victorian Museum Building.....	20 B2
Douglas Hyde Gallery of Modern Art.....	7 A3	Graduates' Memorial Building.....	20 B2
		Lincoln Place Gate.....	13 C3
		Long Room.....	(see 14)
		Old Library.....	14 B2
		Oliver Goldsmith Statue.....	15 A2
		Provost's House.....	17 A2
		Rubrics Building.....	18 B2
		Sphere within Sphere.....	19 B2
		Victorian Museum Building.....	20 B2
		Graduates' Memorial Building.....	20 B2
		Lincoln Place Gate.....	13 C3
		Long Room.....	(see 14)
		Old Library.....	14 B2
		Oliver Goldsmith Statue.....	15 A2
		Provost's House.....	17 A2
		Rubrics Building.....	18 B2
		Sphere within Sphere.....	19 B2
		Victorian Museum Building.....	20 B2
		Graduates' Memorial Building.....	20 B2

most famous – and most beautiful – books, the gloriously illuminated *Book of Kells*. There is no charge to wander the gardens on your own between 8am and 10pm.

Officially, the university's name is the University of Dublin, but Trinity is its sole college. Its charter was granted by Elizabeth I in 1592 – on grounds confiscated from an Augustinian priory which was dissolved in 1537 – with the hope that young Dubliners would desist from skipping across to Continental Europe for their education and becoming 'infected with popery'. The 16-hectare site is now in the centre of the city, but when it was founded it was described as '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 most significant change, however, is the student population: the university was exclusively Protestant until 1793, but today most of its 15,000-odd students are Catholic (although until 1970 they were forbidden from attending by their own church on pain of excommunication). All of this would surely have horrified Archbishop Ussher, one of the college's founders, whose greatest scientific feat was the precise dating of the act of creation to 4004 BC. Nice work, Mr Ussher.

Facing College Green, the Front Gate (Regent House entrance) to the college grounds was built between 1752 and 1759 and is guarded by statues of the poet Oliver Goldsmith (1730–74) and the orator Edmund Burke (1729–97). The summer walking tours of the college depart from here.

The open area reached from Regent House is divided into Front Sq, Parliament Sq and Library Sq. The area is dominated by the 30m-high Campanile, designed by Edward Lanyon and erected between 1852 and 1853 on what was believed to be the centre of the monastery that preceded the college. To the left of the Campanile is a statue of George Salmon, college provost from 1888 to 1904, who fought bitterly to keep women out of the college. He carried out his threat to permit them 'over my dead body' by promptly dropping dead when the worst came to pass.

Clockwise round Front Sq from the Front Gate, the first building is the **chapel** (☎ 896 1260; Front Sq; admission free), built from 1798 to plans made in 1777 by the architect Sir William Chambers (1723–96) and, since 1972, open to all denominations. It's noted for its extremely fine plasterwork by Michael Stapleton, its Ionic columns and its painted (rather than stained-glass) windows. The main window is dedicated to Archbishop Ussher.

Next to the chapel is the **dining hall** (Parliament Sq; ☞ students only), originally designed in 1743 by Richard Cassels (aka Castle) but dismantled 15 years later because of problems caused by inadequate foundations. The replacement was completed in 1761 and may have retained some elements of the original design. It was extensively restored after a fire in 1984.

The 1892 **Graduates' Memorial Building** (Botany Bay; ☞ closed to public) forms the northern side of Library Sq. Behind it are tennis courts in the open area known as Botany Bay. The legend behind this name is that the unruly students housed around the square were suitable candidates for the British penal colony at Botany Bay in Australia.

At the eastern side of Library Sq, 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 major structural modifications in the 1970s.

To the south of the square is the **Old Library** (☎ 896 2320; Library Sq), built in a rather severe style by Thomas Burgh between 1712 and

1732. Despite Ireland's independence, the Library Act of 1801 still entitles Trinity College Library, along with four libraries in Britain, to a free copy of every book published in the UK. Housing this bounty requires nearly another 1km of shelving every year and the collection amounts to around 4.5 million books. Of course, these cannot all be kept at the college library, so there are now additional library storage facilities dotted around Dublin.

Trinity's greatest treasures are kept in the Old Library's stunning 65m **Long Room** (☎ 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), which houses about 250,000 of the library's oldest volumes, including the breathtaking *Book of Kells* (see opposite). Your entry ticket includes admission to temporary exhibitions on display in the East Pavilion. The ground-floor Colonnades was originally an open arcade, but was enclosed in 1892 to increase the storage area. A previous attempt to increase the room's storage capacity had been made in 1853, when the Long Room ceiling was raised. Other displays include a rare copy of the Proclamation of the Irish Republic, which was read out by Pádraig Pearse at the beginning of the Easter Rising in 1916. Also here is the so-called harp of Brian Ború, which was definitely not in use when the army of this early Irish hero defeated the Danes at the Battle of Clontarf in 1014. It does, however, date from around 1400, making it one of the oldest harps in Ireland.

Continuing clockwise around the Campanile there's the **1937 Reading Room** and the **Exam Hall** (Public Theatre), which dates from 1779 to 1791. Like the chapel it was the work of William Chambers and also has plasterwork by Michael Stapleton. The Exam Hall has an oak chandelier rescued from the Houses of Parliament (now the Bank of Ireland) across College Green and an organ said to have been salvaged from a Spanish ship in 1702, though evidence indicates otherwise.

Behind the Exam Hall is the 1760 **Provost's House**, a very fine Georgian house where the provost (college head) still resides. The house and its adjacent garden are not open to the public.

To one side of the Old Library is Paul Koralek's 1967 **Berkeley Library** (Fellows' Sq; ☞ closed to public). This solid, square brutalist-style building has been hailed as the best example of modern architecture in Ireland, though

it has to be admitted the competition isn't great. It's fronted by Arnaldo Pomodoro's 1982–83 sculpture **Sphere within Sphere**.

George Berkeley was born in Kilkenny in 1685, studied at Trinity when he was only 15 years old and went on to a distinguished career in many fields, particularly in philosophy. His influence spread to the new colonies in North America where, among other things, he helped to found the University of Pennsylvania. Berkeley in California, and its namesake university, are named after him.

South of the Old Library is the 1978 **Arts & Social Science Building**, which backs on to Nassau St and forms the alternative entrance to the college. Like the Berkeley Library, it was designed by Paul Koralek; it also houses the **Douglas Hyde Gallery of Modern Art** (☎ 896 1116; www.douglashydegallery.ie; admission free; ☞ 11am–6pm Mon–Wed & Fri, 11am–7pm Thu, 11am–4.45pm Sat).

After the *Book of Kells*, the college's biggest tourist attraction is the **Dublin Experience** (☎ 896 1688; Arts & Social Science Bldg; adult/student €5/4, incl Book of Kells €11/9; ☞ 10am–5pm mid-May–Sep). It's a 45-minute multimedia introduction to the city which is vaguely satisfying if it's too wet to actually walk around the subject itself. Shows take place at the back of the Arts & Social Science Building.

THE PAGE OF KELLS

More than half a million visitors stop in each year 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. Repeated looting by marauding Vikings forced the monks to flee to the temporary safety of Kells, county Meath, in AD 806, along with their masterpiece. Around 850 years later, the book was brought to the college for safekeeping and has remained here since.

The *Book of Kells* 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 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.

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-ROM showing all 800 pages for €29.95.

Behind the Rubrics Building, at the eastern end of Library Sq, is New Sq. The highly ornate **Victorian Museum Building** (☎ 896 1477; New Sq; admission free; ☞ by prior arrangement), built from 1853 to 1857, has the skeletons of two enormous giant Irish deer just inside the entrance, and the Geological Museum upstairs.

The 1734 **Printing House**, designed by Richard Cassels to resemble a Doric temple, and now used for the microelectronics and electrical engineering departments, is on the northern side of New Sq.

At the eastern end of the college grounds are the rugby ground and College Park, where cricket is played. There are a number of science buildings here also. The **Lincoln Place Gate** at this end is usually open and makes a good entrance or exit from the college, especially if you're on a bicycle.

BANK OF IRELAND

The imposing **Bank of Ireland** (Map p84; ☎ 671 1488; College Green; admission free; ☞ 10am–4pm Mon–Wed & Fri, 10am–5pm Thu), directly opposite Trinity College, was originally built in 1729 to house the Irish Parliament. When the Parliament voted itself out of existence by the Act of Union in 1801, it became a building without a role. It was sold in 1803 with instructions that the

interior be altered to prevent its being used as a debating chamber in the future; consequently, the large central House of Commons was remodelled, but the smaller chamber of the House of Lords survived. After independence the Irish government chose to make Leinster House the new parliamentary building and ignored the possibility of restoring this fine building to its original use.

Inside, the banking mall occupies what was once the House of Commons, but it offers little indication of its former role. The Irish House of Lords is a much more interesting place, with Irish-oak woodwork, a late-18th-century Dublin-crystal chandelier, tapestries and a 10kg silver-gilt chace.

Eamon MacThomás, a Dublin historian and author, runs **tours** (admission free; ☎ 10.30am, 11.30am & 1.45pm Tue) of the House of Lords, which also include an informal talk as much about Ireland, and life in general, as the building itself.

TEMPLE BAR

Dublin's top tourist precinct (Map p84) is a maze of cobbled streets sandwiched between Dame St and the Liffey, running from Trinity College to Christ Church Cathedral. In Temple Bar you can browse for vintage clothes, check out the latest art installations, get your nipples pierced and nibble on Mongolian barbecue. In good weather you can watch outdoor movies in one square or join in a pulsating drum circle in another: it's all part of Dublin's very own cultural quarter, now one of Europe's best-known entertainment districts.

In spite of the odd bit of culture, the moniker is a little bogus and the area has lost much of its authenticity in its overbearing efforts to sell the unquantifiable thing that is the 'Dublin Experience'. During the day and on weekday nights Temple Bar does have something of a bohemian bent about it – if you ignore the crappy tourist shops and dreadful restaurants serving bland, overpriced food – but at weekends, when the party really gets going, it all gets very sloppy. The huge, characterless bars crank up the sounds and throw their doors open to the tens of thousands of punters looking to drink and score like the end of the world is nigh. By 3am, the only culture on display is in the pools of vomit and urine that give the whole area the aroma of a sewer – welcome to Temple Bar.

Temple Bar Information Centre (Map p84; ☎ 677 2255; www.templebar.ie, www.visit-templebar.ie; 12 East Essex St; ☎ 9am–5.30pm Mon–Fri) publishes the *Tascq* cultural guide to Temple Bar, which gives information on attractions and restaurants in the area. It's available from the information centre or at businesses around Temple Bar. It's best to check the websites for details of events, particularly the Diversions festival (p116).

Meeting House Square (Map p84) is one of the real success stories of Temple Bar. On one side is the excellent **Gallery of Photography** (Map p84; ☎ 671 4653; admission free; ☎ 11am–6pm Mon–Sat), hosting temporary exhibitions of contemporary local and international photographers. Staying with the photography theme, the other side of the square is home to the **National Photographic Archive** (Map p84; ☎ 671 0073; admission free; ☎ 11am–6pm Mon–Sat, 2–6pm Sun), a magnificent resource for anyone interested in a photographic history of Ireland.

At the western end of Temple Bar, in the shadow of Christ Church Cathedral, is **Fishamble Street** (Map p84), the oldest street in Dublin. It dates back to Viking times – not that you'd know that to see it now.

On Parliament St, which runs south from the river to the City Hall and Dublin Castle, the **Sunlight Chambers** (Map p84) beside the river has a beautiful frieze around its façade. Sunlight was a brand of soap manufactured by the Lever Brothers, who were responsible for the late-19th-century building. The frieze shows the Lever Brothers' view of the world: men make clothes dirty, women wash them!

Buildings on interesting **Eustace Street** (Map p84) include the 1715 Presbyterian Meeting House, now the **Ark** (Map p84; ☎ 670 7788; www.ark.ie; 11A Eustace St), an excellent children's cultural centre. The Dublin branch of the Society of United Irishmen, who sought Parliamentary reform and equality for Catholics, was first convened in 1791 in the Eagle Tavern, now the **Friends Meeting House** (Map p84; Eustace St). This should not be confused with the other Eagle Tavern, which is on Cork St.

Merchant's Arch leads to the **Ha'penny Bridge** (Map p84), named after the ha'penny toll once needed to cross. The **Stock Exchange** (Map p84) is on Anglesea St, in a building dating from 1878.

DUBLIN CASTLE

The centre of British power in Ireland for the guts of 800 years, **Dublin Castle** (Map p84; ☎ 645

HANDEL WITH CARE

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

8813; www.dublincastle.ie; Cork Hill; adult/student/child €4.50/3.50/2; ☎ 10am–4.45pm Mon–Fri, 2–4.45pm Sat & Sun) was originally built on the orders of King John in 1204, but it's more higgledy-piggledy palace than castle. Only the Record Tower, completed in 1258, survives from the original Norman construction. Parts of the castle's foundations remain and a visit to the excavations is the most interesting part of the castle tour. The moats, which are now completely covered by more modern developments, were once filled by the River Poddle. The castle is also home to one of Dublin's best museums, the Chester Beatty Library (below).

The castle, which tops Cork Hill, behind the City Hall, is still used for government business, and tours (every 20 minutes) are often tailored around meetings and conferences or are sometimes cancelled altogether, so it's wise to phone beforehand.

CHESTER BEATTY LIBRARY

The world-famous **Chester Beatty Library** (Map p84; ☎ 407 0750; www.cbl.ie; Dublin Castle, Cork Hill; admission free; ☎ 10am–5pm Mon–Fri, 11am–5pm Sat, 1–5pm Sun year-round, closed Mon Oct–Apr) houses the collection of mining engineer Sir Alfred Chester Beatty (1875–1968), bequeathed to the Irish State on his death. The breathtaking collection is spread over two floors and includes more than 20,000 manuscripts, rare books, miniature paintings, clay tablets, costumes and other objects. The library runs tours at 1pm Wednesday, and 3pm and 4pm Sunday.

The **Artistic Traditions Gallery** on the 1st floor begins with memorabilia from Beatty's life, before embarking on an exploration of the art

of Mughal India, Persia, the Ottoman empire, Japan and China. Here you'll find intricately designed little medicine boxes and perhaps the finest collection of Chinese jade books in the world. The illuminated European texts are also worth examining.

The **Sacred Traditions Gallery** on the 2nd floor gives a fascinating insight into the major rituals and rites of passage of the major world religions – Judaism, Christianity, Islam, Buddhism and Hinduism. There are audiovisual explorations of the lives of Christ and the Buddha, as well as the Muslim pilgrimage to Mecca.

Head for the collection of Qurans from the 9th to the 19th centuries, considered to be among the best illuminated Islamic texts. You'll also find ancient Egyptian papyrus texts (including Egyptian love poems from around 1100 BC), scrolls and exquisite artwork from Burma, Indonesia and Tibet – as well as the second-oldest biblical fragment ever found (after the Dead Sea Scrolls).

The comprehensive **Reference Library** (☎ by appointment only), complete with a finely lacquered ceiling that Beatty himself had installed in his own London home, is a great resource for artists or students.

The library regularly holds specialist workshops, exhibitions and talks on everything from origami to calligraphy, and admission is free. It's easy to escape from the rigours of Western life on the serene rooftop **Japanese garden** or at the Silk Road Cafe (p126) on the ground floor, which serves delicious Middle Eastern cuisine.

BEDFORD & RECORD TOWERS

Directly across the Upper Yard from the main entrance to the castle is the **Bedford Tower** (Map p84; Dublin Castle, Cork Hill). In 1907 the collection known as the Irish Crown Jewels was stolen from the tower and never recovered.

The entranceway to the castle yard, beside the Bedford Tower, is topped by a statue of Justice that has always been a subject of mirth. She faces the castle and has her back to the city – seen as a sure indicator of how much justice the average Irish citizen could expect from the British. The scales of justice also had a distinct tendency to fill with rain and tilt in one direction or the other, rather than assuming the approved level position. Eventually a hole was drilled in the bottom of each pan so the rainwater could drain out.

The chunky medieval **Record Tower** (Map p84), between the lower yard and Castle Gardens, is not just the oldest bit of the whole place (built in the 13th century), but it's the last remaining medieval tower in Dublin. Today it is home to the small **Garda Museum** (☎ 666 9998; admission free; ☎ 9.30am-4.30pm Mon-Fri, weekends by prior arrangement only), which tells the story of the various Irish police forces, beginning with the Royal Irish Constabulary, founded by order of Robert Peel in 1816.

CITY HALL

Fronting Dublin Castle on Lord Edward St, **City Hall** (Map p84; ☎ 222 2204; www.dublincity.ie; Cork Hill; adult/student/child €4/2; ☎ 10am-5.15pm Mon-Sat, 2-5pm Sun) was built by Thomas Cooley between 1769 and 1779 as the Royal Exchange, and later became the offices of the Dublin Corporation (now known as the Dublin City Council). It stands on the site of the Lucas Coffee House and the Eagle Tavern, in which Dublin's infamous Hell Fire Club was established in 1735. Founded by Richard Parsons, earl of Rosse, it was one of a number of gentlemen's clubs in Dublin where less-than-gentlemanly conduct took place. It gained a reputation for debauchery and black magic, but there's no evidence that such things took place.

The Story of the Capital is a multimedia exhibition in the basement, tracing the history of Dublin from its earliest beginnings.

The 1781 **Municipal Buildings**, just west of the City Hall, were built by Thomas Ivory (1720-86), who was also responsible for Bedford Tower (p95) in Dublin Castle.

NATIONAL MUSEUM OF IRELAND – ARCHAEOLOGY & HISTORY

Designed by Sir Thomas Newenham Deane and completed in 1890, the star attraction of this branch of the **National Museum of Ireland** (Map p86; ☎ 677 7444; www.museum.ie; Kildare St; admission by donation; ☎ 10am-5pm Tue-Sat, 2-5pm Sun) is the Treasury, home to the finest collection of Bronze Age and Iron Age gold artefacts in the world, and the world's most complete collection of medieval Celtic metalwork.

The centrepieces of the Treasury's unique collection are Ireland's most famous crafted artefacts, the **Ardag Chalice** and the **Tara Brooch**. Measuring 17.8cm high and 24.2cm in diameter, the 12th-century Ardag Chalice is made of gold, silver, bronze, brass, copper and lead. Put simply, this 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.

The Treasury includes many other stunning pieces, many of which are grouped together in 'hoards', after the manner in which they were found, usually by a farmer digging up a field or a bog. Be sure not to miss the Broighter and Mooghaun hoards.

An upstairs exhibition illustrates Dublin's Viking era, with items from the excavations at Wood Quay – the area between Christ Church Cathedral and the river, where Dublin City Council plonked its new headquarters. Other exhibits focus on the 1916 Easter Rising, and the independence struggle between 1900 and 1921. Frequent short-term exhibitions are also held.

NATIONAL GALLERY

A magnificent Caravaggio and a breathtaking collection of works by Jack B Yeats – William Butler's kid brother – are the main reasons to visit the **National Gallery** (Map p86; ☎ 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), but not the only ones. Its excellent collection is strong in Irish art, but there are also high-quality collections of every major European school of painting. There are free tours at 3pm Saturday, and 2pm, 3pm and 4pm Sunday.

The gallery has four wings: the original Dargan Wing, the Milltown Rooms, the North Wing and the spectacular new Millennium Wing. On the ground floor of the Dargan Wing (named after railway magnate and art-lover William Dargan, whose statue graces the front lawn) is the imposing Shaw Room (named after writer George Bernard, another great benefactor; his bronze statue keeps Dargan company outside), lined with full-length portraits and illuminated by a series of spectacular Waterford crystal chandeliers. Upstairs, a series of rooms is dedicated to the early and high Italian Renaissance, 16th-century northern Italian art, and 17th- and 18th-century Italian art. Fra Angelico, Titian and Tintoretto are among the artists represented, but the highlight is undoubtedly Caravaggio's *The Taking of Christ* (1602), which lay for over 60 years in a Jesuit house in Leeson St and was accidentally discovered by chief curator Sergio Benedetti.

The central Milltown Rooms were added between 1899 and 1903 to hold Russborough House's art collection, which was presented to the gallery in 1902. The ground floor displays the gallery's fine Irish collection, plus a smaller British collection, with works by Reynolds, Hogarth, Gainsborough, Landseer and Turner. Absolutely unmissable is the **Yeats Collection** at the back of the gallery, displaying more than 30 works by Irish impressionist Jack B Yeats (1871-1957), Ireland's most important 20th-century painter.

Upstairs are works from Germany, the Netherlands and Spain. There are rooms full of works by Rembrandt and his circle, and by the Spanish artists of Seville. The Spanish collection also features works by El Greco, Goya and Picasso.

The North Wing was added only between 1964 and 1968, but has already undergone extensive refurbishment. It houses works by British and European artists.

The impressive new Millennium Wing, with its light-filled modern design, can also be entered from Nassau St. It houses a small collection of 20th-century Irish art, high-profile visiting collections (for which there is a charge to visit), an art reference library, a lecture theatre, a good bookshop and Fitzer's Café.

LEINSTER HOUSE

Dublin's grandest Georgian home, built by Richard Cassels between 1745 and 1748 for the very grand James Fitzgerald, earl of Kildare, is now the seat of both houses of the Oireachtas na Éireann (Irish Parliament) – the Dáil (Lower House) and Seanad (Upper House). Originally called Kildare House, it was changed to **Leinster House** (Map p86; ☎ 618 3000, tour information 618 3271; www.irlgov.ie/oireachtas; Kildare St; admission free; ☎ observation gallery 2.30-8.30pm Tue, 10.30am-8.30pm Wed, 10.30am-5.30pm Thu Nov-May) after the earl assumed the title of Duke of Leinster in 1766.

Leinster House's Kildare St frontage was designed by Richard Cassels to look like a town house, whereas the Merrion Sq frontage was made to look like a country house. Hard to imagine it now, but when Cassels built the house it was in the wild expanses south of the Liffey, far from the genteel northern neighbourhoods where Dublin's aristocracy lived. Never short of confidence, the earl dismissed his critics, declaring, 'Where I go, society will follow' There's no doubt about it: Jimmy Fitz had a nose for real estate.

The Dublin Society, later named the Royal Dublin Society, bought the building in 1814 but moved out in stages between 1922 and 1925, when the first government of independent Ireland decided to establish Parliament here. The obelisk in front of the building is dedicated to Arthur Griffith, Michael Collins and Kevin O'Higgins – the architects of independent Ireland.

The Seanad meets in the north-wing saloon, while the Dáil meets in a less interesting room, originally a lecture theatre, which was added to the original building in 1897. When Parliament is sitting, visitors are admitted to an observation gallery. You'll get an entry ticket from the Kildare St entrance on production of some identification. Bags can't be taken in, or notes or photographs taken. Prearranged guided tours (free) are available weekdays when parliament is in session.

NATURAL HISTORY MUSEUM

Very dusty, a little creepy and utterly compelling, the **Natural History Museum** (Map p86; ☎ 677 7444; www.museum.ie; Merrion St; admission free; ☎ 10am-5pm Tue-Sat, 2-5pm Sun) has scarcely changed since 1857, when Scottish explorer Dr David Livingstone delivered the opening lecture. In the face of the city's newer hi-tech museums, its Victorian charm has been beautifully preserved, making the 'dead zoo' one of Dublin's more interesting museums. The huge and well-organised collection numbers about two million items, of which about 10,000 are on display. That moth-eaten look often afflicting neglected stuffed-animal collections has been kept at bay, and children are likely to find the museum fascinating.

On the ground floor, the collection of skeletons, stuffed animals and the like covers the full range of Irish fauna. It includes three skeletons of the Irish giant deer, which became extinct about 10,000 years ago. On the 1st and 2nd floors are fauna from around the world.

GOVERNMENT BUILDINGS

On Upper Merrion St, the domed **Government Buildings** (Map p86; ☎ 662 4888; www.taoiseach.gov.ie; Upper Merrion St; admission free; ☎ tours 10.30am-3.30pm Sat) were opened for business in 1911. Architecturally, they are a rather heavy-handed Edwardian interpretation of the Georgian style. Each free 40-minute tour takes about 15 people, so you may have to wait a while for a big enough group to assemble. Tours can't be

booked in advance, but if you go in on Saturday morning you can put your name down for one later in the day. You get to see the office of the taoiseach (prime minister), 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 innumerable fine examples of modern Irish arts and crafts. Tickets for the tours are available from the ticket office of the **National Gallery** (Map p86; ☎ 661 5133; www.nationalgallery.ie; West Merrion Sq; ☞ 9.30am–5.30pm Mon–Wed, Fri & Sat, 9.30am–8.30pm Thu, noon–5.30pm Sun).

NATIONAL LIBRARY

Flanking the Kildare St entrance to Leinster House is the **National Library** (Map p86; ☎ 603 0200; www.nli.ie; Kildare St; admission free; ☞ 10am–9pm Mon–Wed, 10am–5pm Thu & Fri, 10am–1pm Sat), which was built between 1884 and 1890 by Sir Thomas Newenham Deane and his son Sir Thomas Manly Deane, at the same time and to a similar design as the National Museum. Leinster House, the library and museum were all part of the Royal Dublin Society (formed in 1731), which aimed to improve conditions for poor people and to promote the arts and sciences. The library's extensive collection has many valuable early manuscripts, 1st editions, maps and other items; its reading room featured in James Joyce's *Ulysses*. Temporary displays are often held in the entrance area.

On the 2nd floor is the **Genealogical Office** (Map p86; ☎ 603 0200; 2nd fl, National Library, Kildare St; ☞ 10am–4.30pm Mon–Fri, 10am–12.30pm Sat), where you can obtain information on how best to trace your Irish roots. A genealogist can do the trace for you (at a fee dependent on research) or simply point you in the right direction (for free).

ST STEPHEN'S GREEN & AROUND

While enjoying the nine gorgeous, landscaped hectares of Dublin's most popular square, consider that once upon a time **St Stephen's Green** (Map p86; admission free; ☞ dawn–dusk) was an open common used for public whippings, beatings and hangings. Activities in the green have quietened since then and are generally confined to the lunch-time-picnic-and-stroll variety. Still, on a summer's day it is the favourite retreat of office workers, lovers and visitors alike, who come to breathe a little fresh air, feed the ducks and cuddle on the grass.

Although a stone wall was erected in the 17th century when Dublin Corporation sold off the surrounding land to property developers, railings and locked gates were only added in 1814 when an annual fee of one guinea was charged to use the green – a great way to keep the poor out. In 1877 Arthur Edward Guinness pushed an act through Parliament that opened the green to the public once again. He also paid for the green's lakes and ponds, which were added in 1880.

The fine Georgian buildings around the square date mainly from Dublin's mid- to late-18th-century Georgian prime. At that time the northern side was known as the Beaux Walk and it's still a pretty fancy stretch of real estate; drop in for tea at the imposing 1867 **Shelbourne hotel** (p120) and you'll see what we mean. Just beyond the hotel is a small **Huguenot cemetery** (Map p86) dating from 1693, when many French Huguenots fled here from persecution under Louis XIV.

The main entrance to the green is through **Fusiliers' Arch** (Map p86) at the northwestern corner. Modelled on the Arch of Titus in Rome, the arch commemorates the 212 soldiers of the Royal Dublin Fusiliers who died in the Boer War (1899–1902).

Across the road from the western side of the green are the 1863 **Unitarian Church** (Map p86; ☞ for worship 7am–5pm) and the **Royal College of Surgeons** (Map p86), with a fine façade. During the 1916 Easter Rising, the building was occupied by the colourful Countess Markievicz (1868–1927), an Irish nationalist married to a supposed Polish count. The columns still bear bullet marks.

On the southern side of the green is **Newman House** (Map p86; ☎ 716 7422; 85–86 St Stephen's Green; adult/child €5/4; ☞ tours noon, 2pm, 3pm & 4pm Tue–Fri Jun–Aug), now part of University College Dublin. These two buildings have some of the finest plasterwork in the city. The Catholic University of Ireland, predecessor of University College Dublin, acquired No 85 in 1865, then passed it to the Jesuits. Some of the plasterwork was too detailed for Jesuit tastes, however, so cover-ups were prescribed. On the ceiling of the upstairs saloon, previously naked female figures were clothed in what can best be described as furry swimsuits. One survived the restoration process.

Attached to Newman University Church is the **Newman Chapel**, built between 1854 and 1856 with a colourful neo-Byzantine interior

that attracted a great deal of criticism at the time. Today it's one of the most fashionable churches in Dublin for weddings.

One of Dublin's most beautiful parks is the landscaped **Iveagh Gardens** (admission free; ☞ dawn–dusk year-round), directly behind Newman House and reached via Clonmel St, just off Harcourt St. The imposing walls give the impression that they are private gardens, but they are one of the nicest places to relax on a summer's day or before a show in the National Concert Hall.

MERRION SQUARE

St Stephen's Green may win the popularity contest, but tranquil **Merrion Square** (Map p86; admission free; ☞ dawn–dusk) is our choice for favourite city park. Surrounding the well-kept lawns and beautifully tended flower beds are some of Dublin's most exceptional Georgian frontages, with fine doors, peacock fanlights, ornate door knockers and foot scrapers (used by gentlemen to scrape mud from their boots before venturing indoors).

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 located 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.

That same side of Merrion Sq once continued into Lower Fitzwilliam St in the longest unbroken series of Georgian houses anywhere in Europe, but in 1961 the Electricity Supply Board (ESB), in a myopic crime against history and aesthetics, knocked down 26 of the houses in order to build an office block that is now one of the city's worst eyesores.

LITERARY ADDRESSES

Merrion Sq has long been the favoured address of Dublin's affluent intelligentsia. Oscar Wilde (1854–1900) spent much of his youth at 1 North Merrion Sq. WB Yeats (1865–1939) lived at 52 East Merrion Sq and later, between 1922 and 1928, at 82 South Merrion Sq. George (AE) Russell (1867–1935), the 'poet, mystic, painter and cooperator', worked at No 84. Daniel O'Connell (1775–1847) was a resident of No 58 in his later years. The Austrian Erwin Schrödinger (1887–1961), co-winner of the 1933 Nobel Prize for physics, lived at No 65 between 1940 and 1956. Dublin also seems to attract writers of horror stories: Joseph Sheridan Le Fanu (1814–73), who penned the vampire classic *Carmilla*, was a resident of No 70.

Just to prove that it is mindful of Dublin's priceless architectural heritage, the ESB had the decency to preserve one fine old Georgian house, **No 29 Lower Fitzwilliam St** (Map pp82–3; ☎ 702 6165; www.esb.ie/education; 29 Lower Fitzwilliam St; adult/student/child €5/2.50/free; ☞ 10am–5pm Tue–Sat, 1–5pm Sun, closed 2 weeks before Christmas) at the southeastern corner of Merrion Sq. It has been restored to give a good impression of genteel home life in Dublin between 1790 and 1820. A short film on its history is followed by a 30-minute guided tour in groups of up to nine.

OSCAR WILDE HOUSE

In 1855 the surgeon Sir William Wilde and the poet Lady 'Speranza' Wilde moved with their one-year-old son Oscar to 1 North Merrion Sq, the first Georgian residence constructed on the square (1762). They stayed here until 1878 and it is likely that Oscar's literary genius was first stimulated by the creative atmosphere of the house, where Lady Wilde hosted the city's most famous (and best frequented) literary salon.

Today it is owned by the American College Dublin, which has converted part of the house into a **museum** (Map p86; ☎ 662 0281; www.amcd.ie/oscarwildehouse/about/html; 1 North Merrion Sq; admission €5; ☞ tours 10.15am & 11.15am Mon, Wed & Thu) devoted to Oscar Wilde.

Enthusiasts should visit the **Oscar Wilde statue** at the northwestern corner of the square, as it is adorned with the witty one-liners for which Oscar Wilde became famous.

The Liberties & Kilmainham

At the top of a small hill, just west of Dublin Castle, is the most impressive monument of medieval Dublin, Christ Church Cathedral. It stood firmly inside the city walls, unlike that other great place of worship, St Patrick's, which lay just outside of them. Beneath both

of them, to the west, is the Liberties, Dublin's oldest surviving neighbourhood. The western end of the Liberties has a curious aroma in the air: it is the smell of roasting hops, used in the production of Guinness – Dublin's black gold and, for many visitors, the epitome of all things Irish. Further along James St is Kilmainham, home to the old prison that was central to the struggle for Irish independence (and a city highlight) and an ancient soldiers' hospital, now the country's most important modern art museum.

CHRIST CHURCH CATHEDRAL

The mother of all of Dublin's churches is **Christ Church Cathedral** (Church of the Holy Trinity; Map p84; ☎ 677 8099; www.cccdub.ie; Christ Church Pl; adult/student €5/2.50; ☎ 9.45am–5pm Mon–Fri, 10am–5pm Sat & Sun), just south of the river and west of Temple Bar. It was founded in 1030 on what was then the southern edge of Dublin's Viking settlement. It was later smack in the middle of medieval Dublin: Dublin Castle, the Tholsel (Town Hall; demolished in 1809) and the original Four Courts (demolished in 1796) were all close by. Nearby, on Back Lane, is the only remaining guildhall in Dublin. The 1706 Tailors Hall was due for demolition in the 1960s, but survived to become the office of An Taisce (National Trust for Ireland; Map p84).

The original wooden church in this spot wasn't really a keeper, so the Normans rebuilt the lot in stone from 1172, mostly under the impetus of Richard de Clare, earl of Pembroke (better known as Strongbow), the Anglo-Norman noble who invaded Ireland in 1170.

Throughout much of its history, Christ Church vied for supremacy with nearby St Patrick's Cathedral but, like its neighbour, it fell on hard times in the 18th and 19th centuries – earlier, the nave had been used as a market and the crypt had housed taverns – and was virtually derelict by the time restoration took place. Today, both Church of Ireland cathedrals are outsiders in a largely Catholic nation.

From the southeastern entrance to the churchyard you walk past ruins of the chapter house, which dates from 1230. The entrance to the cathedral is at the southwestern corner and as you enter you face the northern wall. This survived the collapse of its southern counterpart but has also suffered from subsiding foundations.

The southern aisle has a monument to the legendary Strongbow. The armoured figure on the tomb is unlikely to be Strongbow (it's more probably the earl of Drogheda), but his internal organs may have been buried here. A popular legend relates that the half figure beside the tomb is Strongbow's son, who was cut in two by his father when his bravery in battle was suspect.

The southern transept contains the superb baroque tomb of the 19th earl of Kildare (died 1734). His grandson, Lord Edward Fitzgerald, was a member of the United Irishmen and died in the abortive 1798 Rising.

An entrance just by the southern 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 chasing a mummified mouse, which were trapped inside an organ pipe in the 1860s! From the main entrance, a bridge, part of the 1871–78 restoration, leads to Dvblinia (below).

DVBLINIA

Inside the old Synod Hall attached to Christ Church Cathedral, **Dvblinia** (Map p84; ☎ 679 4611; www.dvblinia.ie; adult/student/child €6/5/3.50; ☎ 10am–5pm Apr–Sep, 11am–4pm Mon–Sat & 10am–4.30pm Sun Oct–Mar) is a kitschy and lively attempt to bring medieval Dublin to life. Models, streetscapes and somewhat old-fashioned interactive displays do a fairly decent job of it, at least for kids. The model of a medieval quayside and a cobbler's shop are both excellent, as is the scale model of the medieval city. The Viking World is a similar recreation of 9th and 10th-century Dublin. Finally, you can climb neighbouring St Michael's Tower for views over the city to the Dublin Hills.

Your ticket gets you into Christ Church Cathedral free (via the link bridge).

ST PATRICK'S CATHEDRAL

It was at this **cathedral** (Map pp82–3; ☎ 475 4817; www.stpatrickscathedral.ie; St Patrick's Close; adult/senior/student/child €5/4/4/free; ☎ 9am–6pm Mon–Sat, 9–11am, 12.45–3pm & 4.15–6pm Sun Mar–Oct, 9am–6pm Mon–Fri, 9am–5pm Sat, 10–11am & 12.45–3pm Sun Nov–Feb), reputedly, that St Paddy himself dunked the Irish heathens into the waters of a well, so the that bears his name stands on one of the earliest Christian sites in the city and a pretty sacred piece of turf. Although there's been a church here since the 5th century, the

present building dates from 1190 or 1225 (opinions differ) and it has been altered several times, most notably in 1864 when the flying buttresses were added, thanks to the neo-Gothic craze that swept the nation. St Patrick's Park, the expanse of green beside the cathedral, was a crowded slum until it was cleared and its residents evicted in the early 20th century.

Like Christ Church Cathedral, the building has suffered a rather dramatic history of storm and fire damage. Oliver Cromwell, during his 1649 visit to Ireland, converted St Patrick's to a stable for his army's horses, an indignity to which he also subjected numerous other Irish churches. Jonathan Swift was the dean of the cathedral from 1713 to 1745, but prior to its restoration it was very neglected.

Entering the cathedral from the southwestern porch you come almost immediately, on your right, to the graves of Swift and his long-time companion Esther Johnson, aka Stella. On the wall nearby are Swift's own Latin epitaphs to the two of them, and a bust of Swift.

The huge, dusty Boyle Monument to the left was erected in 1632 by Richard Boyle, earl of Cork, and is decorated with numerous painted figures of members of his family. The figure in the centre on the bottom level is of the earl's five-year-old son Robert Boyle (1627–91), who grew up to become a noted scientist. His contributions to physics include Boyle's Law, which relates the pressure and volume of gases.

The cathedral's choir school dates back to 1432, and the choir took part in the first performance of Handel's *Messiah* in 1742. You can hear the choir sing matins at 9.40am and evensong at 5.35pm Monday to Friday (except Wednesday evening) during the school year. The carols performed around Christmas are a real treat; call ☎ 453 9472 for details of how to obtain a hard-to-get ticket.

To get to the cathedral, take bus 50, 50A or 56A from Aston Quay, or bus 54 or 54A from Burgh Quay.

MARSH'S LIBRARY

One of the city's most beautiful open secrets is **Marsh's Library** (Map pp82–3; ☎ 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), a barely visited antique library with a look and atmosphere that has hardly changed

since it opened its doors to awkward scholars in 1707. It's just around the corner from St Patrick's Cathedral.

Crammed into its elaborately carved oak bookcases are over 25,000 books dating from the 16th to early 18th centuries, as well as maps, numerous manuscripts and a collection of incunabula (books printed before 1500). One of the oldest and finest tomes in the collection is a volume of Cicero's *Letters to His Friends* printed in Milan in 1472.

The building was commissioned by Archbishop Narcissus March (1638–1713) and designed by Sir William Robinson, the creator of the Royal Hospital Kilmainham (now the Irish Museum of Modern Art; p103); today it is one of the only 18th-century buildings in Dublin still used for the purpose for which it was built. In short, it's a bloody gorgeous place and you'd be mad not to visit.

ST WERBURGH'S CHURCH

Of undoubtedly ancient but imprecise origin, **St Werburgh's** (Map p84; ☎ 478 3710; Werburgh St; admission by donation; ☎ 10am–4pm Mon–Fri) has undergone numerous face-lifts: in 1662, 1715 and, with some elegance, in 1759 after a fire in 1754. The church's tall spire was dismantled after Robert Emmet's uprising in 1803 for fear that rebels might use it as a vantage point for snipers. The church is closely linked with the history of uprisings against British rule; interred in the vault is Lord Edward Fitzgerald, a member of the United Irishmen, the group that led the 1798 Rising. In what was a frequent theme of Irish rebellions, compatriots gave him away and he died as a result of the wounds he received during his capture. Ironically, his captor Major Henry Sirr is buried in the adjacent graveyard. In the porch you will notice two fire pumps that date from the time when Dublin's fire department was composed of church volunteers.

You will need to phone or visit the caretaker at 8 Castle St to see inside.

ST AUDOEN'S CHURCHES

St Audoen, the 7th-century bishop of Rouen and patron saint of Normandy, must have had a few friends in Dublin to have two churches named after him. Both are just west of Christ Church Cathedral. The more interesting of the two is the smaller **Church of Ireland** (Map p84; ☎ 677 0088; Cornmarket, High St; admission free; ☎ 9.30am–4.45pm Jun–Sep), the only surviving

G-FORCE GUINNESS

Ireland's new 9000-strong Nigerian community were dismayed to taste the 4.5% Irish Guinness, 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 alcohol volume in its beer harks back to the 18th century when beer was fortified to survive the ship's long journey to Africa. Guinness duly responded to the Nigerians' complaint and now produces the Dublin Guinness Foreign Extra to satisfy the Nigerian palate.

medieval parish church still in use in Dublin. It was built between 1181 and 1212, though recent excavations unearthed a 9th-century burial slab, suggesting 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 19th-century restoration.

As part of the tour, you can explore the ruins, as well as the present church and the visitor centre in **St Anne's Chapel**, which 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 houses the three oldest bells in Ireland, dating from 1423. Although the church's exhibits are hardly spectacular, the building itself is very beautiful and a genuine slice of medieval Dublin.

The church is entered from the north through an arch off High St. Part of the old city wall, this arch was built in 1240 and is the only surviving reminder of the city gates.

Joined to the older Protestant St Audoen's is the newer and larger **St Audoen's Catholic Church** (Cornmarket, High St; admission free; ☎ 9.30am-5.30pm Jun-Sep, 10am-4.30pm Oct-May), a large church whose claim to local fame is Father 'Flash' Kavanagh, who used to read Mass at high speed so that his large congregation could head off to more absorbing Sunday pursuits, such as football.

GUINNESS STOREHOUSE

Dublin's number one attraction by a stroll is this beer-lover's Disneyland, a multimedia bells-and-whistles homage to the country's most famous export and the city's most en-

during symbol. The **Guinness Storehouse** (Map pp82-3; ☎ 408 4800; www.guinness-storehouse.com; St James's Gate Brewery; adult/child/student under 18yr/student over 18yr/senior €14/5/7.50/9.50/9.50; ☎ 9.30am-5pm), the only part of the massive, 26-hectare St James's Gate Brewery open to the public, is a suitable cathedral in which to worship the black gold; shaped like a giant pint of Guinness, it rises seven impressive storeys high around a stunning central atrium. At the top is the head, represented by the Gravity Bar, with a panoramic view of Dublin.

The Gravity Bar is also the best place to get an idea of how big the brewery actually is. From the time Arthur Guinness founded the St James's Gate Brewery in 1759, the operation has expanded down to the Liffey and across both sides of the street; at one point, it had its own railroad and there was a giant gate stretching across James St, hence the brewery's proper name. At its apogee in the 1930s, it employed over 5000 workers, making it the largest employer in the city. Increased automation has reduced the workforce to around 600, but it still produces 2.5 million pints of stout *every day*.

You'll get to drink one of those pints at the end of your tour, but not before you have walked through the extravaganza that is the Guinness floor show, spread across 1.6 hectares and involving an array of audiovisual, interactive displays that cover pretty much all aspects of the brewery's history and the brewing process. It's slick and sophisticated, but you can't ignore the man behind the curtain: the extensive exhibit on the company's incredibly successful history of advertising is a reminder that for all the talk of mysticism and magic, it's all really about marketing and manipulation.

It's all a moot point, however, when you have that pint in your hand and you're surveying all below you from the vertiginous heights of the Gravity Bar. This is the best pint of Guinness you'll ever drink, the cognoscenti like to claim, but just make sure you've got good friends and conversation to enjoy it with: after all, isn't that the whole point?

Around the corner at **No 1 Thomas St** (Map pp82-3; ☎ closed to public) a plaque marks the house where Arthur Guinness (1725-1803) lived. In a yard across the road stands **St Patrick's Tower** (Map pp82-3; ☎ closed to public), Europe's tallest smock windmill (with a revolving top), which was built around 1757.

To get to the Storehouse, take bus 21A, 78 or 78A from Fleet St, or the Luas Green Line to James's Gate.

IRISH MUSEUM OF MODERN ART

Ireland's most important collection of modern and contemporary Irish art is housed in the elegant, airy expanse of the Royal Hospital at Kilmainham, which in 1991 became the **Irish Museum of Modern Art** (IMMA; Map p80; ☎ 612 9900; www.imma.ie; Military Rd; admission free; ☎ 10am-5.30pm Tue-Sat, noon-5.30pm Sun). Catch bus 24, 79 or 90 from Aston Quay.

The Royal Hospital Kilmainham was designed by William Robinson (who also designed Marsh's Library; see p101), and was built between 1680 and 1687 as a home for retired soldiers. It fulfilled this role until 1928, after which it languished for nearly 50 years until a 1980s restoration. At the time of its construction, it was one of the finest buildings in Ireland and there were mutterings that it was altogether too good a place for its residents.

The gallery's 4000-strong collection includes works by artists such as Picasso, Miró and Vasarely, as well as works by more contemporary artists, including Gilbert and George, Gillian Wearing and Damien Hirst. The gallery displays ever-changing shows from its own works, and hosts regular touring exhibitions.

Modern Irish art is always on display, and Irish and international artists live and work on site in the **converted coach houses** behind the south wing. The **New Galleries**, in the restored Deputy Master's House, should also not be missed. There are free guided tours (2.30pm Wednesday, Friday and Sunday) of the museum's exhibits throughout the year, but we strongly recommend the free seasonal heritage tours (hourly from 11am to 4pm Tuesday to Saturday, and from 1pm to 4pm Sunday) of the building itself, which run from July to September.

KILMAINHAM JAIL

If you have any desire to understand Irish history – especially the juicy bits about resistance to English rule – then a visit to **Kilmainham Jail** (Map p80; ☎ 453 5984; www.heritageireland.com; Inchicore Rd; adult/student/child €5.50/2.10/2.10; ☎ 9.30am-5pm Apr-Oct, 9.30am-4pm Mon-Sat, 10am-4pm Sun Nov-Mar) is an absolute must. This threatening grey building, built between 1792 and 1795, has played a role

in virtually every act of Ireland's painful path to independence.

The uprisings of 1798, 1803, 1848, 1867 and 1916 ended with the leaders' confinement here. Robert Emmet, Thomas Francis Meagher, Charles Stewart Parnell and the 1916 Easter Rising leaders were all visitors, but it was the executions in 1916 that most deeply etched the jail's name into the Irish consciousness. Of the 15 executions that took place between 3 May and 12 May after the rising, 14 were conducted here. As a finale, prisoners from the Civil War were held here from 1922. The jail closed in 1924.

An excellent audiovisual introduction to the building is followed by a thought-provoking tour through the eerie prison, the largest unoccupied building of its kind in Europe. 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. The tour finishes in the gloomy yard where the 1916 executions took place.

To get here, catch bus 23, 51, 51A, 78 or 79 from Aston Quay.

WAR MEMORIAL GARDENS

By our reckoning, the most beautiful patch of landscaped greenery in Dublin is the **War Memorial Gardens** (Map p80; ☎ 677 0236; www.heritageireland.ie; South Circular Rd, Islandbridge; admission free; ☎ 8am-twilight Mon-Fri, from 10am Sat & Sun), if only because they're as tranquil a spot as any you'll find in the city. Designed by Sir Edwin Lutyens, they commemorate 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.

Take bus 25, 25A, 26, 68 or 69 from the city centre to get here.

O'Connell Street & Around

After decades of playing second fiddle to Grafton St and the other byways of the southside, the northside's grandest thoroughfare is finally getting its mojo back and can once again declare itself Dublin's finest avenue. Lining and surrounding it are a bunch of fabulous buildings, fascinating museums and a fair few of the city's cultural hot spots too – just a handful of reasons to cross O'Connell Bridge and take on the northside.

O'CONNELL STREET STATUARY

Although overshadowed by the Spire, O'Connell St is lined with statues of Irish history's good and great. The big daddy of them all is the 'Liberator' himself **Daniel O'Connell** (Map pp82-3), 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.

O'Connell is rivalled for drama by the spread-armed figure of trade-union leader **Jim Larkin** (1876-1947; Map pp82-3), just outside the general post office; you can almost hear the eloquent tirade.

Looking on with a bemused air from the corner of pedestrianised North Earl St is a small statue of **James Joyce** (Map pp82-3), who wagsters like to refer to as 'the Prick with the Stick'. Joyce would have loved the vulgar rhyme.

Further north is the statue of **Father Theobald Mathew** (1790-1856; Map pp82-3), the 'Apostle of Temperance' – a hopeless role in Ireland. This quixotic task, however, also resulted in a Liffey bridge bearing his name. The northern end of the street is completed by the imposing statue of **Charles Stewart Parnell** (1846-91; Map pp82-3), Home Rule advocate and victim of Irish morality.

O'CONNELL STREET

It's amazing what a few hundred million euros and a new vision will do to a street plagued by years of neglect, a criminally blind development policy and a history as a hothouse of street trouble. It's difficult to fathom why O'Connell St (Map pp82-3), once so proud and elegant, could have been so humbled that the street's top draw was an amusement arcade. One-armed bandits and poker machines on the street that was the main stage for the Easter Rising in 1916? How could it all go so wrong?

It's a far cry from the 18th-century days of empire, when as Drogheda St (after Viscount Henry Moore, earl of Drogheda) it cut a swath through a city brimming with Georgian optimism. It became O'Connell St in 1924, but only after spending a few decades as Sackville St – a tribute to a lord lieutenant of Ireland. Whatever its name, it was always an imposing street, at least until the fast-food joints and the crappy shops started invading the retail spaces along it. Thankfully, Dublin Corporation is committed to a thorough reappraisal of the street's appearance: a lot done, more to do.

The first project was the impressive **Spire** (the Monument of Light; Map pp82-3), which graced the spot once occupied by Admiral Nelson (who disappeared in explosive fashion in 1966). Soaring 120m into the sky, it is, apparently, the world's tallest sculpture, although that hardly impresses the locals, who refer to it as the 'biggest needle around', in reference to the drug blight of the north inner city. Other (ongoing) projects have seen the

widening of the pavements and the limiting of traffic, although the street will truly be grand when the plethora of fast-food joints are given the elbow.

GENERAL POST OFFICE

Talk about going postal. The **GPO building** (Map pp82-3; ☎ 705 7000; www.anpost.ie; O'Connell St; ☎ 8am-8pm Mon-Sat) will forever be linked to the dramatic and tragic events of Easter Week 1916, when Pádraig Pearse, James Connolly and the other leaders of the Easter Rising read their proclamation from the front steps and made the building their headquarters. The building – a neoclassical masterpiece designed by Francis Johnston in 1818 – was burnt out in the subsequent siege, but that wasn't the end of it. There was bitter fighting in and around the building during the Civil War of 1922; you can still see the pockmarks of the struggle in the Doric columns. Since its re-opening in 1929 it has lived through quieter times, but its central role in the history of independent Ireland has made it a prime site for everything from official parades to personal protests.

CUSTOM HOUSE

James Gandon (1743-1823) announced his arrival on the Dublin scene with the stunning, glistening white building that is the **Custom House** (Map pp82-3), one of the city's finest Georgian monuments. It was constructed between 1781 and 1791, in spite of opposition from city merchants and dockers at the original Custom House, upriver in Temple Bar.

In 1921, during the independence struggle, the Custom House was set alight and completely gutted in a fire that burned for five days. The interior was later extensively redesigned, and a further major renovation took place between 1986 and 1988.

The best complete view of a building that stretches 114m along the Liffey is obtained from across the river, though a close-up inspection of its many fine details is also worthwhile. The building is topped by a copper dome with four clocks. On top stands a 5m-high statue of Hope.

Beneath the dome is the **Custom House Visitor Centre** (Map pp82-3; ☎ 888 2538; Custom House Quay; admission €1.30; ☎ 10am-12.30pm Mon-Fri, 2-5.30pm Sat & Sun mid-Mar-Oct, closed Sat Nov-mid-Mar), which features a small museum on Gandon himself, as well as information on the history of the building.

ST MARY'S PRO-CATHEDRAL

Dublin's most important **Catholic church** (Map pp82-3; ☎ 874 5441; Marlborough St; admission free; ☎ 8am-6.30pm) is not quite the showcase you might expect. For one, it's in a cramped street rather than on its intended spot on O'Connell St, where the GPO is now located: the city's Protestants had a fit and insisted that it be built on a less conspicuous side street. And less conspicuous it certainly was, unless you were looking for purveyors of the world's oldest profession. Then you were smack in the middle of Monto – as Marlborough St was then known – the busiest red-light district in Europe, thanks to the British army stationed here. After independence and the departure of the British, Monto became plain old Marlborough St and the only enduring evidence is in the writings of James Joyce, who referred to the area where he lost his virginity as 'Nighttown'.

The area mightn't be the hot spot it used to be, but at least you won't be distracted while admiring the six Doric columns of the cathedral, built between 1816 and 1825 and modelled on the Temple of Theseus in Athens. The best time to visit is Sunday at 11am for the Latin Mass sung by the Palestrina Choir, the very choir in which Count John McCormack, Ireland's greatest singing export (sorry Bono), began his career in 1904.

Finally, a word about the term 'pro' in the title. It roughly means 'unofficial cathedral', due to the fact that church leaders saw this

building as an interim cathedral that would do until funds were found to build a much grander one. Which has never happened, leaving this most Catholic of cities with two incredible-but-underused Protestant cathedrals and one fairly ordinary Catholic one. Irony one, piety nil.

DUBLIN CITY GALLERY – THE HUGH LANE

The splendid **Hugh Lane Gallery** (Map pp82-3; ☎ 874 1903; www.hughlane.ie; 22 North Parnell Sq; suggested donation €2; ☎ 9.30am-6pm Tue-Thu, 9.30am-5pm Fri & Sat, 11am-5pm Sun), housed in the wonderful 18th-century Charlemont House, is looking better than ever thanks to a fantastic face-lift which has seen the unveiling of a new €13 million modernist extension that more than doubles the gallery's capacity. The new building, based in the old National Ballroom, spans three floors and includes 13 bright galleries showing works from the 1950s onwards, a specialist bookshop and chic restaurant in the basement.

The gallery's remit neatly spans the gap between the old masters of the National Gallery (p96) and the contemporary works exhibited in the Irish Museum of Modern Art (p103).

All the big names of French impressionism and early-20th-century Irish art are here. Sculptures by Rodin and Degas, and paintings by Corot, Courbet, Manet and Monet sit alongside works by Irish greats Jack B Yeats, William Leech and Nathaniel Hone.

The gallery's **Francis Bacon Studio** was painstakingly moved, in all its shambolic mess, from 7 Reece Mews, London, where the Dublin-born artist lived for 31 years. Bacon, who claimed that chaos suggested art to him and famously hated Ireland, would no doubt have found it amusing that a team of conservators spent years cataloguing scraps of newspaper, horse whips, old socks, dirty rags, jars of pickle and mouse droppings, to reverently reassemble it all in Dublin.

The gallery was founded in 1908 by wealthy art dealer Sir Hugh Lane, who died on the *Lusitania* in 1915 when the ship was torpedoed by a German U-boat. Following his death, a bitter row erupted between the National Gallery in London and the Hugh Lane Gallery over the jewels of his collection; even now, after years of wrangling, half the works are displayed in Dublin and half in London on a rotating basis, but for the time being the Hugh Lane will hold

on to its most prized possession, Renoir's *Les Parapluies*.

DUBLIN WRITERS MUSEUM

A collection of memorabilia, ephemera and other stuff that's associated with the rich literary heritage of Dublin makes the **Dublin Writers Museum** (Map pp82-3; ☎ 872 2077; www.writersmuseum.com; 18 North Parnell Sq; adult/child/student €7/4.40/5.95; ☎ 10am-5pm Mon-Sat Sep-May, to 6pm Jun-Aug, 11am-5pm Sun year-round) a compelling visit for anyone interested in the city's scribblers. Unfortunately, the museum draws the line in the 1970s, so there's nothing on the new generation of pen merchants. However, if you're interested in the letters, photographs, 1st editions and other bits and bobs of Beckett, Behan and the like, you won't be disappointed.

The museum also has a bookshop and restaurant, Chapter One (p129). Admission includes taped guides with readings from relevant texts in English and other languages. If you plan to visit the James Joyce Museum (p143) and the Shaw Birthplace (p112), bear in mind that a combined ticket (adult/student/child €12/10/7.40) is cheaper than three separate ones.

While the museum concerns itself primarily with dead authors, next door at No 19, the Irish Writers' Centre provides a meeting and working place for their living successors.

JAMES JOYCE CULTURAL CENTRE

Denis Maginni, the exuberant, flamboyant dance instructor immortalised by James Joyce in *Ulysses*, taught in this **house** (Map pp82-3; ☎ 878 8547; www.jamesjoyce.ie; 35 North Great George's St; adult/child/student €5/free/4; ☎ 10am-5pm Tue-Sat). In 1982 Senator David Norris, a renowned Joycean scholar and leading gay-rights activist, bought the run-down house and restored it before opening it as a centre for the study of Joyce and his books.

Visitors can see the room where Maginni taught, and a collection of pictures that include the 17 different Dublin homes occupied by the nomadic Joyce family, and the real individuals fictionalised in the books. Some of the fine plaster ceilings are restored originals, others careful reproductions of Michael Stapleton's designs. For information on James Joyce-related walking tours departing from the centre, see p115.

Smithfield & Phoenix Park

For nearly a decade the Smithfield area has been like an urban debutante, full of promise – it *will* take over from Temple Bar as the city's hipster district, and it *will* spearhead the northside's cultural renaissance. Yet it remains very much a work in progress, and while the sexy new square and brand new buildings have undoubtedly made an impact, the real reason to visit is – ironically – to explore the remaining traces of old Dublin. Further west, however, is Dublin's grandest public park, home of the president and the zoo; on the way is one of the city's best museums.

SMITHFIELD

Earmarked in the mid-1990s for major residential and cultural development, Smithfield (Map pp82-3), bordered to the east by Church St, to the west by Blackhall Pl, to the north by North King St and to the south by Arran Quay, has progressed in fits and starts but has not quite evolved into the promised cultural quarter. At the centre of the development is the old hay, straw, cattle and horse marketplace, Smithfield Market, which has now been replaced by a new open civic space. The flagship of the Historic Area Rejuvenation Project (HARP), whose brief is to restore the northwest inner city, the space features a pedestrianised square bordered on one side by 26m-high gas-lighter masts, each with a 2m-high flame. The old cobblestones were removed, cleaned up and put back, along with new granite slabs that manage to give the whole square a modern feel without sacrificing its traditional beauty.

Bordering the eastern side of the square is the Old Jameson Distillery. In keeping with the area's traditional past, the old fruit and vegetable market still plies a healthy wholesale trade on the square's western side.

CHIMNEY

As part of the ongoing development of the Smithfield area, a distillery chimney, built by Jameson in 1895, has been converted into Dublin's first and only 360-degree **observation tower** (Map pp82-3; ☎ 817 3800; Smithfield Village; adult/child/student/family €5/3.50/3.50/10; ☎ 10am-5pm Mon-Sat, 11am-5.30pm Sun). A glass lift shuttles visitors to the top where, behind the safety of glass, you can see the entire city, the sea and the mountains to the south. On a clear day, it makes for some nice photo opportunities.

NATIONAL MUSEUM OF IRELAND – DECORATIVE ARTS & HISTORY

So much for the austere life of a soldier. Until it was decommissioned over a decade ago, Collins Barracks, built in 1704 on the orders of Queen Anne, was the largest military barracks in the world. In 1997 the early neoclassical grey stone building on the Liffey's northern bank was given a sparkling, modern makeover and now houses the decorative-arts-and-history collection of the **National Museum of Ireland** (Map pp82-3; ☎ 677 7444; www.museum.ie; Benburb St; admission free; ☎ 10am-5pm Tue-Sat, 2-5pm Sun). The exhibits are good, but the building is stunning: at its heart is the huge central square surrounded by arcaded colonnades and blocks linked by walking bridges. While wandering about the plaza, imagine it holding up to six regiments in formation. The whole shebang is the work of Thomas Burgh (1670-1730), who also designed the Old Library (p92) in Trinity College and St Michan's Church (p108).

Inside the imposing exterior lies a treasure trove of artefacts ranging from silver, ceramics and glassware to weaponry, furniture and folk-life displays. Some of the best pieces are gathered in the exhibition *Curator's Choice*, a collection of 25 objects hand-picked by different curators, displayed with an account of why they were chosen.

The museum itself offers a glimpse at 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.

Lovers of modern furniture and design will enjoy the exhibition on iconic Irish designer Eileen Gray (1878-1976), which is a museum highlight. Gray was one of the most influential designers of the 20th century, and the exhibition documents her life and work, and shows examples and models of her most famous pieces. The fascinating *Way We Wore* exhibit displays Irish clothing and jewellery from the past 250 years. An intriguing socio-cultural study, it highlights the role of jewellery and clothing 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 and Tans and of 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

Smithfield's biggest draw is the **Old Jameson Distillery** (Map pp82-3; ☎ 807 2355; www.jameson.ie; Bow St; adult/child/student €10/6/8; ☎ tours every 35min 10am-5.30pm), a huge museum devoted to *uisce beatha* (the water of life). To its more serious devotees, that is precisely what whiskey is, although they may be put off by the slickness of the museum, which shepherds visitors through a compulsory tour of the re-created factory and into the ubiquitous gift shop.

On the way, however, there's plenty to discover. Beginning with a short film, the tour runs through the whole process of distilling, from grain to bottle. There are plenty of interesting tidbits, such as what makes a single malt, where whiskey gets its colour and bouquet, and what the difference is between Irish whiskey and Scotch (other than the spelling, which prompted one Scot to comment that the Irish thought of everything: they even put an 'e' into whisky).

Then it's straight to the bar for a drop of the subject matter; eager drinkers can volunteer for the tasting tour, where you get to sample whiskies from all over the world and learn about their differences. Finally, you head to the almighty shop. If you're buying whiskey, go for the stuff you can't buy at home, such as the excellent Red Breast or the super exclusive Middleton, a very limited reserve that is appropriately expensive.

FOUR COURTS

Appellants quake and the accused may shiver, but visitors are only likely to be amazed by James Gandon's imposing **Four Courts** (Map p84; ☎ 872 5555; Inn's Quay; admission free), Ireland's uppermost courts of law. Gandon's Georgian masterpiece is a mammoth structure incorporating a 130m-long façade and a collection of statuary. The Corinthian-columned central block, connected to flanking wings with enclosed quadrangles, was begun in 1786 and not completed until 1802.

The original four courts (Exchequer, Common Pleas, King's Bench and Chancery) all branch off the central rotunda.

The Four Courts played a brief role in the 1916 Easter Rising without suffering damage, but the events of 1922 were not so kind. When anti-Treaty forces seized the building and refused to leave, it was shelled from across the river. As the occupiers retreated, the building was set on fire and many irreplaceable early records were burned – an event that sparked off the Civil War. The building wasn't restored until 1932.

Visitors are allowed to wander through the building, but not to enter 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.

ST MICHAN'S CHURCH

The macabre remains of the ancient dead are the attraction at **St Michan's Church** (Map p84; ☎ 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), near the Four Courts, founded by the Danes in 1095 and named after one of their saints. Incredibly, it was the *only* church on the north side of the Liffey until 1686. The original church has largely disappeared beneath several additions, most dating from the 17th century (except for the battlement tower, which dates from the 15th century). It was considerably restored in the early 19th century and again after the Civil War, during which it had been damaged.

The very unchurchlike interior – it looks a bit like a courtroom – contains an organ from 1724 that Handel may have played for the first performance of his *Messiah*. A skull on the floor on one side of the altar is said to represent Oliver Cromwell. On the opposite side, a penitent's chair was where 'open and notoriously naughty livers' did public penance.

The big draw is the tour of the subterranean crypt, where you'll see bodies between 400 and 800 years old, preserved not by mummification but by the constant dry atmosphere. Tours are organised on an ad hoc basis depending on how many people there are. Catch bus 134 or the Luas Red Line to Smithfield from the city centre to get here.

PHOENIX PARK

Measuring 709 glorious hectares, **Phoenix Park** (Map p80; admission free) is Europe's largest city park and a green lung that is more than double the size of New York's Central Park (a paltry 337 hectares), and larger than all of London's major parks put together. Here you'll find gardens and lakes; pitches for all kinds of British sports from soccer to cricket to polo (the dry original one, with horses); the second-oldest zoo in Europe; a castle and visitor centre; the headquarters of the Garda Síochána (police); the Ordnance Survey offices; and the homes of both the president of Ireland and the US ambassador, who live in two exquisite residences more or less opposite each other. There's even a herd of some 500 fallow deer.

The deer were first introduced by Lord Ormond in 1662, when lands once owned by the Knights of Jerusalem were turned into a royal hunting ground. In 1745 the viceroy Lord Chesterfield threw it open to the public and it has remained so ever since. (The name 'Phoenix' has nothing to do with the mythical bird; it is a corruption of the Irish *fionn uisce*, meaning 'clear water'.)

In 1882 the park played a crucial role in Irish history, when Lord Cavendish, the British chief secretary for Ireland, and his assistant were murdered outside what is now the Irish president's residence by an obscure nationalist group called the Invincibles. Lord Cavendish's home is now called Deerfield and is used as the official residence of the US ambassador.

Near the Parkgate St entrance to the park is the 63m-high **Wellington Monument**. This took from 1817 to 1861 to build, mainly because the Duke of Wellington fell from public favour during its construction. Nearby is the **People's Garden**, dating from 1864, and the **bandstand** in the Hollow.

Established in 1830, the 12-hectare **Dublin Zoo** (Map p80; ☎ 677 1425; www.dublinzoo.ie; Phoenix Park; adult/child/family €14/9.50/40; ☎ 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) is one of the oldest in the world, but is mainly of interest to children. It used to be a run-down zoo where depressed animals used to depress visitors, but a substantial face-lift has made it a much more pleasant place for animals to live and for you to stroll around.

The large Victorian building behind the zoo, on the edge of the park, is the Garda Síochána Headquarters. It was designed by

Benjamin Woodward in the 19th century. His work also includes the Old Library in Trinity College (p92).

In the centre of the park, the **Papal Cross** marks the site where Pope John Paul II preached to 1.25 million people in 1979. The **Phoenix Monument**, erected by Lord Chesterfield in 1747, looks very un-phoenix-like and is often referred to as the Eagle Monument. The southern part of the park is a 200-acre stretch (about 81 hectares) known as the Fifteen Acres (don't ask, nobody knows) which is given over to a large number of football pitches – winter Sunday mornings are the time to come and watch. To the west, the rural-looking **Glen Pond** corner of the park is extremely attractive.

Back towards the Parkgate entrance is **Mazine Fort** on Thomas' Hill. Built at snail's pace between 1734 and 1801, the fort has served as an occasional arms depot for the British and, later, the Irish armies. It was a target during the 1916 Easter Rising and again in 1940, when the IRA made off with the entire ammunition reserve of the Irish army (they retrieved it after a few weeks).

The residence of the Irish president, **Áras an Uachtaráin** (Map p80; ☎ 617 1000; Phoenix Park; admission free; ☎ guided tours hourly 10.30am-4.30pm Sat) was built in 1751 and enlarged in 1782, then again in 1816, this time by noted Irish architect Francis Johnston, who added the Ionic portico. From 1782 to 1922 it was the residence of the British viceroys or lord lieutenants. After independence it became the home of Ireland's governor general until Ireland cut ties with the British Crown and created the office of president in 1937.

Tickets for the tour can be collected from the **Phoenix Park Visitor Centre** (☎ 677 0095; adult/concession/family €2.75/1.25/1.7; ☎ 10am-6pm Apr-Sep, 10am-5pm Oct, 10am-5pm Mon-Sat Nov & Dec, 10am-5pm Sat & Sun Jan-Mar), the converted former stables of the papal nunciature, now devoted to the park's history and ecology over the last 3500 years. Next door is the restored four-storey **Ashtown Castle**, a 17th-century tower house 'discovered' inside the 18th-century nuncio's mansion when the latter was demolished in 1986 due to dry rot. You can only visit the castle on a guided tour from the visitor centre.

Take bus 10 from O'Connell St, or bus 25 or 26 from Middle Abbey St to get to Dublin's beloved playground.

Beyond the Royal Canal

These days it makes for a lovely walk, but when 'Long' John Binns put his money into the construction of the Royal Canal (Map p80) from 1790, it was an exercise in misplaced optimism and self-flagellating revenge. The usefulness of such waterways was already on the wane, and he only invested in the project because when he was a board member of the Grand Canal a colleague mocked his day job as a shoemaker. Sure enough, the canal was a massive bust; Binns lost a pile of money and became a figure of fun.

Binns' catastrophe is the stroller's good fortune and the towpath alongside the canal is perfect for a walk through the heart of the city. 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.

Beyond the Royal Canal lie the suburbs and an authentic slice of north city life. There are also some beautiful gardens, the country's biggest stadium, a historic cemetery and one of the most interesting buildings in all of Dublin.

CROKE PARK

It's a magnificent stadium – if you're impressed by them – that is Ireland's largest and the fourth-largest in Europe, but **Croke Park** (Map p80; ☎ 819 2323; Clonliffe Rd) is about much more than 82,000-plus sporting butts on plastic seats. No, Croke – as it's lovingly known in Dublin – is the fabulous fortress that protects the sanctity and spirit of Gaelic games in Ireland, as well as 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 *When History Really Matters*, p110). To get an idea of just how important the GAA is in Ireland, a visit to the **Croke Park Experience** (☎ 855 8176; www.gaa.ie; New Stand, Croke Park, Clonliffe Rd; adult/child/student museum €5.50/3.50/4, museum & tour €9.50/6/7; ☎ 9.30am-5pm Mon-Sat, noon-5pm Sun Apr-Oct, 10am-5pm Tue-Sat, noon-4pm Sun Nov-Mar) is a must, though it will

WHEN HISTORY REALLY MATTERS

At 5.31pm on 24 February 2007, history was made. It happened at Croke Park, when the band struck the first notes of 'God Save the Queen'. The English rugby team stood proudly to attention, and the 82,000 in the crowd applauded respectfully before settling down to a long-anticipated Six Nations match between Ireland and 'the old enemy'.

A quarter of a century ago, the above paragraph would have seemed the stuff of heretical fantasy, a perverse dream that would – could – never, ever come true. Before that date in February, the last official representatives of Britain to set foot inside Croke Park did so on 1 November 1920, when soldiers opened fire on the crowd in retaliation for the earlier killing of 14 British agents; 14 people, including a player and two young boys, died. In the intervening 76 years, the Republic of Ireland came into being and the Gaelic Athletic Association (GAA) admirably went about the task of establishing itself as the premier sporting and cultural association in the country, with a wide-ranging influence that included a ban on all 'foreign' (read: English) games in its holiest cathedral, Croke Park.

The Irish did play football and rugby – quite successfully in recent decades – but they did so away from GAA-controlled pitches, with internationals played at Lansdowne Road, owned by the Irish Rugby Football Union (IRFU). But Lansdowne Road began a long-overdue reconstruction in 2007, leaving the rugby crowd and the Football Association of Ireland (FAI) with a major dilemma: with no alternative stadium in Ireland to stage internationals, they were confronting the possibility of staging home games in – gasp – Britain!

The GAA had refused to even talk about it for a couple of years, but in April 2005 they voted, by the slenderest of margins, to allow temporary use of Croke Park to their rival associations. And so 24 February 2007 came, and with it history of the most momentous kind. Eighty minutes later, another bit of history: Ireland had won, 43–13, by the biggest margin ever.

A neat and fitting end to a powerful bit of history. But in the interests of (often) boring accuracy, it must be mentioned that the English were not the first team to play an English game at Croke Park: two weeks earlier, the French earned that particular honour with a hard-fought win over a spirited Irish side who were overawed by the sense of occasion. But it was the English that really mattered. As always.

help if you're any kind of sporting enthusiast. The twice-daily tours (except match days) of the impressive stadium are excellent.

To get to Croke Park, catch bus 3, 11, 11A, 16, 16A or 123 from O'Connell St.

NATIONAL BOTANIC GARDENS

Founded in 1795, the 19.5-hectare **National Botanic Gardens** (Map p78; ☎ 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) are directly north of the centre, flanked to the north by the River Tolka.

In the gardens is a series of curvilinear glasshouses dating from 1843 to 1869. The glasshouses were created by Richard Turner, who was also responsible for the glasshouse at Belfast Botanic Gardens and the Palm House in London's Kew Gardens. Within these Victorian masterpieces you will find the latest in botanical technology, including a series of computer-controlled climates reproducing environments of different parts of

the world. 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 also first grown in Europe in these gardens.

To get here, catch bus 13, 13A or 19 from O'Connell St, or bus 34 or 34A from Middle Abbey St.

GLASNEVIN CEMETERY

Ireland's largest and most historically important burial site is **Prospect Cemetery** (Map p80; ☎ 830 1133; www.glasnevin-cemetery.ie; Finglas Rd; admission free; 🕒 24hr, tours 2.30pm Wed & Fri), better known simply as Glasnevin Cemetery, after the north Dublin suburb it lies in – and an easy walk from the National Botanic Gardens. It was established in 1832 as a burial ground for Catholics, who were increasingly prohibited from conducting burials in the city's Protestant cemeteries. Not surprisingly, the cemetery's monuments and memorials have staunchly patriotic

overtones, with numerous high crosses, shamrocks, harps and other Irish symbols. The cemetery is mentioned in *Ulysses* and there are several clues for Joyce enthusiasts to follow.

The most interesting parts of the cemetery are at the southeastern Prospect Sq end. The single most imposing memorial is the colossal monument to Cardinal McCabe (1837–1921), archbishop of Dublin and primate of Ireland, while a modern replica of a round tower acts as a handy landmark for locating 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 died in 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 also a poignant 'class' memorial to the men who have starved themselves to death for the cause of Irish freedom over the century, including 10 men from the 1981 H Block hunger strikes.

The watchtowers in the cemetery were once used to keep watch for body snatchers.

To get to the cemetery, take bus 40, 40A or 40B from Parnell St.

CASINO AT MARINO

It's not the roulette-wheel kind of casino, but the original Italian kind, the one that means 'house of pleasure' or 'summer home', and this particular **casino** (Map p80; ☎ 833 1618; Malahide Rd; adult/concession/family €2.90/1.30/7.50; 🕒 10am–5pm May & Oct, 10am–6pm Jun–Sep, noon–4pm Sat & Sun Feb, Mar, Nov & Dec, noon–5pm Sat & Sun Apr) is one of the most enchanting constructions in all of Ireland. Entrance is by guided tour only; the last tour is 45 minutes before closing.

It was built in the mid-18th century for the Earl of Charlemont, who returned from his grand tour of Europe with more art than he could store in his own home, Marino House, which was on the same grounds but was demolished in the 1920s. He also came home with a big love of the Palladian style – hence the architecture of this wonderful folly.

The exterior of the building, with a huge entrance doorway, and 12 Tuscan columns forming a templelike façade, creates the expectation that its interior will be a simple single open space. But instead it is an extravagant convoluted maze: flights of fancy include chimneys for the central heating that are disguised as roof urns, downpipes hidden in columns, carved draperies, ornate fireplaces, beautiful parquet floors constructed of rare woods, and a spacious wine cellar. A variety of statuary adorns the outside but it's the amusing fakes that are most enjoyable. The towering front door is a sham – a much smaller panel opens to reveal the secret interior. The windows have blacked-out panels to hide the fact that the interior is a complex of rooms, not a single chamber.

To get to the casino, take bus 20A, 20B, 27, 27B, 42, 42C or 123 from the city centre, or travel on the Dublin Area Rapid Transport (DART) to Clontarf road.

Beyond the Grand Canal

The more attractive of Dublin's two canals is the Grand Canal (Map p80), built to connect Dublin with the River Shannon. It makes a graceful 6km loop around the south city centre and has a lovely path running alongside it which is perfect for a pleasant walk or cycle. At its eastern end the canal forms a harbour connected with 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 a major new development, including Dublin's first real skyscraper, which will be home to U2's purpose-designed recording studios.

At the northwestern corner of the dock is Misery Hill, once the site for the public execution of criminals. It was once the practice to bring the corpses of those already hung at Gallows Hill, near Upper Baggot St, to this spot, to be strung up for public display for anything from six to 12 months.

The loveliest stretch of the canal is just southwest, between Mount St Bridge and Baggot St. The grassy, tree-lined banks were a favourite haunt of the poet Patrick Kavanagh, whose difficult love affair with the city is echoed in the hauntingly beautiful 'On Raglan Road', later put to music by Van Morrison. Another Kavanagh poem requested that he be commemorated by 'a canal bank seat for

passers-by', and his friends obliged with a seat beside the lock on the southern side of the canal. A little further along on the northern side you can sit down beside Kavanagh himself, cast in bronze, comfortably lounging on a bench and watching his beloved canal.

If you absolutely must know about the construction and operation of Ireland's canals, then catch the DART to Grand Canal Dock for a visit to the **Waterways Visitor Centre** (Map p80; ☎ 677 7510; www.waterwaysireland.org; Grand Canal Quay; adult/student/child €2.50/1.20/1.20; ☎ 9.30am-5.30pm Jun-Sep, 12.30-5pm Wed-Sun Oct & May) on the Grand Canal Basin. Otherwise, admiring the 'Box on the Docks' – as this modern building is nicknamed – is plenty good enough for the average enthusiast of artificial waterways.

Just southeast of the city centre, beyond the canal, is **Ballsbridge** (Map p78), the epitome of posh Dublin and home to most of the embassies and a batch of luxurious B&Bs. The main attractions around it are the Royal Dublin Society Showground and the **Lansdowne Road rugby stadium** (Map p80), which was undergoing renovation at the time of writing, though **Herbert Park** (Map p80) is also a favourite spot for sport, walking or just sitting around.

ROYAL DUBLIN SOCIETY SHOWGROUND

The **Royal Dublin Society Showground** (RDS Showground; Map p80; ☎ 668 9878; Merrion Rd, Ballsbridge), about 15 minutes from the city centre by bus 7 from Trinity College, is used for various exhibitions throughout the year. The society was founded in 1731 and has had its headquarters in a number of well-known Dublin buildings, including Leinster House (p97) from 1814 to 1925. The society was involved in the foundation of the National Museum (p96 and p107), National Library (p98), National Gallery (p96) and National Botanic Gardens (p110). The most important annual event at the showground is the **August Dublin Horse Show** (☎ tickets 668 0866), which includes an international showjumping contest. Ask at the tourist office or consult a listings magazine for other events.

SHAW BIRTHPLACE

OK, so it's technically on the city side of the canal, but only just. Noted playwright George Bernard Shaw was born and lived until the age of 10 in what is now home to a **museum** (Map p80; ☎ 475 0854; 33 Synge St; adult/child/student €7/4.40/5.95; ☎ 10am-1pm & 2-5pm Mon-Sat year-round, plus 11am-1pm

& 2-5pm Sun Easter-Oct) dedicated to him and the times he grew up in. The museum has an audio presentation of Shaw's life, re-creating a Victorian household.

Note that it's possible to buy a combination ticket (adult/student/child €12/10/7.40) that also gives you access to the Dublin Writers' Museum and James Joyce Museum in Sandycove.

To get to the museum, take bus 16, 19 or 122 from Trinity College.

IRISH-JEWISH MUSEUM

Just around the corner from the Shaw House is the **Irish-Jewish Museum** (Map p80; ☎ 453 1797; 4 Walworth Rd; admission free; ☎ 11am-3.30pm Tue, Thu & Sun May-Sep, 10.30am-2.30pm Sun only Oct-Apr). Located in an old synagogue, the museum was opened in 1985 by the then Israeli president, Chaim Herzog, who was actually born in Belfast. Dublin's small but culturally important Jewish population is remembered through photographs, paintings, certificates, books and other memorabilia.

ACTIVITIES Beaches & Swimming

Dublin is hardly the sort of place to work on your suntan, and even a hot Irish summer day is unlikely to raise the water temperature much above freezing. However, there are some pleasant beaches. Many Joyce fans feel compelled to take a dip in **Forty Foot Pool** at Sandycove (p143). Sandy beaches to the north of Dublin include **Sutton** (11km), **Portmarnock** (11km), **Malahide** (11km), **Claremount** (14km) and **Donabate** (21km). Although the beach at **Sandymount** is nothing special, it is only 5km southeast of central Dublin. Take No 3 from Fleet St.

The **National Aquatic Centre** (Map p78; ☎ 646 4300; www.nac.ie; Snugborough Rd, Blanchardstown; adult/child & student €12/10; ☎ 2-10pm Mon-Fri, 9am-8pm Sat & Sun), built to accommodate the Special Olympics World Summer Games held in Dublin in 2003, is the largest indoor water park. Besides its Olympic-size competition pool, it has water rollercoasters, wave and surf machines, a leisure pool and all types of flumes. It's a great day out for the family but on weekends be prepared to join the line of shivering children queuing for slides. Take bus 38A from Hawkins St to Snugborough Rd.

There is a dearth of quality pools in the city centre – most are small, crowded and not

very hygienic. An excellent exception is the **Markievicz Leisure Centre** (Map pp82-3; ☎ 672 9121; nr Tara & Townsend Sts; adult/child €5.50/2.80; ☎ 7am-8.45pm Mon-Fri, 9am-5.45pm Sat, 10am-3.45pm Sun), which has a 25m pool, a workout room and a sauna. For the admission price you can swim pretty much as long as you like; children are only allowed at off-peak times (ie any time except for 7am to 9am, noon to 2pm and 5pm to 7pm Monday to Friday).

Cycling

Dublin is compact and flat, making it a cinch to get around by bike. Rust red cycle lanes throughout the city make it easier than ever, but traffic congestion, motorised maniacs and roadworks can make for a treacherous obstacle course. Nonetheless, with your wits about you, it's the fastest way to get about the increasingly congested centre.

Bike theft is a major problem, so be sure to park on busier streets, preferably at one of the myriad U-shaped parking bars. Overnight street parking is dodgy; most hostels and hotels offer secure bicycle-parking areas.

Irish Cycling Safaris (☎ 260 0749; www.cyclingsafaris.com; University College Dublin, Belfield; tour €590; ☎ end Apr-early Oct) organises eight highly recommended themed week-long tours of the countryside. Each group cycles at its own pace, with a guide following in a backup vehicle. The price also includes bike hire, and hotel and B&B accommodation.

Recommended bike shops:

Cycle-Logical (Map p84; ☎ 872 4635; 3 Bachelor's Walk) A shop for serious enthusiasts, with top-quality gear and info on cycling events throughout the country. It does not do repairs.

Square Wheel Cycleworks (Map p84; ☎ 679 0838; South Temple Lane) Quick, friendly and excellent for repairs.

Bike hire has become increasingly more difficult to find because of crippling insurance costs. Typical hire costs for a mountain bike are between €10 and €25 a day or up to €100 per week. Raleigh Rent-a-Bike agencies can be found through the following businesses:

Cycleways (Map pp82-3; ☎ 873 4748; www.cycleways.com; 185-186 Parnell St) Dublin's best bike shop, with expert staff who pepper their patter with all the technical lingo. Top-notch rentals.

Eurotrek (☎ 456 8847; www.raleigh.ie)

MacDonalds Cycles (Map p86; ☎ 475 2586; 38 Wexford St) Friendly and helpful, great for the amateur enthusiast.

WALKING TOUR

Dubliners of old would assure their 'bitter halves' that they were 'going to see a man about a dog' before beating a retreat to the nearest watering hole. Visiting barflies need no excuse to enjoy the social and cultural education – ahem – of a tour of Dublin's finest, most charming and most hard-core bars.

Start in the excellent **Anseo** (1; p132) on Camden St, which pulls a seriously hip and unpretentious crowd on the strength of its fabulous DJs. Head deep into the city centre and stop at Dublin's smallest pub, the **Dawson Lounge** (2; p131), for an appropriately diminutive tipple, before sinking a pint of plain in the snug at South Anne St's **Kehoe's** (3; p131), one of the city centre's most atmospheric bars. Discuss the merits of that unwritten master-

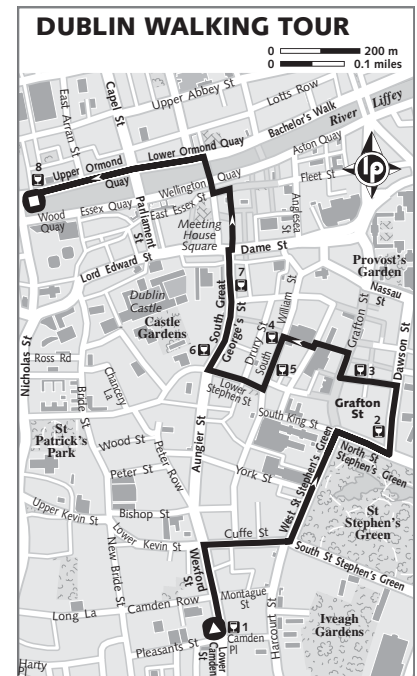
WALK FACTS

Start Camden St

Finish Ormond Quay

Distance 2.5km

Duration One hour to two days!



piece with a clutch of frustrated writers and artists in **Grogan's Castle Lounge** (4; p131) on Castle Market, a traditional haunt that admirably refuses to modernise. Just around the corner on South William St is the supertrendy **South William** (5; p133), where homemade pies, good music and the cool brigade mix to great effect; if it's more conversation you require, make your way to the **Long Hall** (6; p131), where the vicissitudes of life are discussed in a sombre Victorian setting. Shake that booty down the road at the **Globe** (7; p133). Cross the Liffey and make a beeline for Ormond Quay and **Sin É** (8; p133), a small bar with a big reputation for top-class music and a terrific night out. If you've followed the tour correctly, it's unlikely that you'd now be referring to this guide. How many fingers?

DUBLIN FOR CHILDREN

Sometimes holidaying with small children requires the organisation of an army boot camp, boundless energy and patience, boundless pockets and a sense of humour, so it really helps when the facilities and goodwill are there to back up your efforts.

All but a few hotels will provide cots and many have baby-sitting on request (normally €7 to €10 per hour). While waiters may not act like your baby is the first they've ever seen, you'll still find a warm reception for junior travellers in Dublin, at least during the day. Frustratingly, many city-centre restaurants are unwilling to accommodate diners under 12, especially babies, after 6pm. You'll need to check before making a booking. Most restaurants – even exclusive ones – have highchairs and will gladly heat bottles and baby food, but so-called kiddie menus lack imagination and rarely stretch further than the ubiquitous chicken nuggets or sausages with chips. That said, places catering specifically for families who want to eat more nutritious food are cropping up all the time, and the pizza chain Milano has resourcefully added free weekend childcare facilities to its Dublin restaurants.

Travellers will find that nappy-changing facilities and city-centre playgrounds are remarkably few and far between. Shopping centres and department stores (or a hotel if you're stuck) are good places to try for changing nappies. There's a reasonably sized playground on Gardiner St (Map pp82–3) and in St Stephen's Green (p98), where you can also feed the ducks. The Iveagh Gardens (p99)

doesn't have a playground but has a waterfall and small maze, and is a lovely quiet space to relax while your children play.

The **Ark** (Map p84; www.ark.ie; 11A Eustace St) is a children's cultural centre that organises plays, exhibitions and workshops for four to 14 year olds. You really need to book in advance for events.

Lambert Puppet Theatre (☎ 280 0974; www.lambertpuppettheatre.com; Clifton Lane, Monkstown) stages puppet shows for the over-threes in Monkstown, 10km south of Dublin.

The National Museum (p96 and p107), Natural History Museum (p97) and the Irish Museum of Modern Art (p103) run fun, educational programmes for children at weekends. A nice spot for a picnic is **Newbridge House** (Map p78; ☎ 843 6534; Donabate; adult/child €3.50/2; ☎ 10am–5pm Tue–Sat, 2–6pm Sun Apr–Sep, 2–5pm Sat & Sun Oct–Mar), with its large traditional farm, which has cows, pigs and chickens, a large park and an adventure playground. It's northeast of Swords at Donabate, 19km from the centre. You can get here on the Suburban Rail service (€2.40, 30 minutes), which departs hourly from either Connolly or Pearse Station in the city centre.

The *Irish Times* runs a column on things to do with kids in its Wednesday edition.

If your hotel doesn't have a baby-sitting service, you could try a couple of agencies that provide professional nannies. It's up to you to negotiate a fee with the nanny, but €13 per hour is the average, plus taxi fare if the nanny isn't driving. You'll need to sign a form beforehand, which the agency will fax to your hotel.

Recommended agencies:

Belgrave Agency (☎ 280 9341; 55 Mulgrave St, Dun Laoghaire; fee per hr €18)

Executive Nannies (☎ 873 1273; 43 Lower Dominick St; fee per hr €20)

TOURS

Dublin is an easy city to see on foot, so a guided walking tour is an ideal way to double up on a bit of culture and exercise. For longer tours or a cushier ride, there are numerous themed citywide bus tours, and several companies do day trips further afield.

Bus Tours

City Sightseeing (Map pp82–3; www.citysightseeing.co.uk; Dublin Tourism, 14 Upper O'Connell St; adult/child/family €16/7/38; ☎ every 8–15min 9am–6pm) City

Sightseeing's time-tested hop-on, hop-off open-top tours. Tours take 1½ hours.

Dublin Bus Tours (www.dublinbus.ie; tours €14–25; ☎ tours daily) O'Connell St (Map pp82–3; ☎ 872 0000; 59 Upper O'Connell St); Suffolk St (Map p84; Dublin Tourism Centre, St Andrew's Church, 2 Suffolk St) It offers a variety of tours, including Dublin City Tour, Ghost Bus Tour, Coast and Castles Tour, and South Coast and Gardens Tour.

Grayline Dublin Tour (☎ 872 9010; www.irishcitytours.com; adult/child/student/senior/family €15/6/12.50/12.50/36; ☎ every 15min 9.30am–5pm, to 5.30pm Jul & Aug) Bachelor's Walk (Map p84; 33 Bachelor's Walk); Suffolk St (Map p84; Dublin Tourism Centre, St Andrew's Church, 2 Suffolk St) Another hop-on, hop-off tour (1½ hours) of the city's primary attractions.

Wild Wicklow Tour (Map p84; ☎ 280 1899; www.discoverdublin.ie; Dublin Tourism Centre, St Andrew's Church, 2 Suffolk St; adult/child €28/25; ☎ 9.10am) Award winning and lots of fun, this top 8½-hour tour leaves from Dublin Tourism Centre and does a quick city tour before heading down the coast to Avoca Handweavers, Glendalough and the Sally Gap.

Walking Tours

1916 Easter Rising Walk (Map p84; ☎ 676 2493; www.1916rising.com; International Bar, 23 Wicklow St; adult/child €12/free; ☎ 11.30am Mon–Sat, 1pm Sun Mar–Oct) A recommended two-hour tour run by graduates of Trinity College that takes in parts of Dublin that were directly involved in the Easter Rising. It leaves from the International Bar.

Dublin Footsteps Walking Tours (Map p86; ☎ 496 0641; Bewley's Bldg, Grafton St; adult €9; ☎ 10.30am Mon, Wed, Fri & Sat Jun–Sep) Departing from Bewley's on Grafton St, these excellent two-hour tours weave Georgian, literary and architectural Dublin into a fascinating walk.

Dublin Literary Pub Crawl (Map p86; ☎ 454 0228; www.dublinpubcrawl.com; Duke, 9 Duke St; adult/student €12/10; ☎ 7.30pm Mon–Sat, noon & 7.30pm Sun Apr–Nov, 7.30pm Thu–Sun Dec–Mar) An award-winning 2½-hour walk-and-performance tour led by two actors around pubs with literary connections. There's plenty of drink taken, which makes it all the more popular; get to the Duke pub by 7pm to reserve a spot.

Dublin Musical Pub Crawl (Map p84; ☎ 478 0193; www.discoverdublin.com; Oliver St John Gogarty's, 58–59 Fleet St; adult/student €12/10; ☎ 7.30pm Apr–Oct, 7.30pm Thu–Sat Nov–Mar) The story of Irish traditional music and its influence on contemporary styles is explained and demonstrated by two expert musicians in a number of Temple Bar pubs. Tours meet upstairs at Oliver St John Gogarty's and take 2½ hours.

James Joyce Walking Tour (Map pp82–3; ☎ 878 8547; James Joyce Cultural Centre, 35 North Great

George's St; adult/student €10/9; ☎ 2pm Tue, Thu & Sat) Excellent 1¼-hour walking tours of northside attractions associated with James Joyce, departing from James Joyce Cultural Centre.

Pat Liddy Walking Tours (Map p84; ☎ 831 1109; www.walkingtours.ie; Dublin Tourism Centre, St Andrew's Church, 2 Suffolk St; adult/child/student €12/5/10) Award-winning themed tours of the city by well-known Dublin historian Pat Liddy, including Viking & Medieval Dublin (10.30am Tuesday, Thursday and Sunday, and 2.30pm Saturday), the Historic Northside (10.30am Wednesday and Friday), and Georgian and Victorian Splendours (10.30am Monday and 2.30pm Friday). All tours depart from the Dublin Tourism Centre.

Boat Tours

Viking Splash Tours (☎ 707 6000; www.vikingsplash.ie; adult/child/family from €20/10/60; ☎ 9am–5.30pm Mar–Oct, 10am–4pm Tue–Sun Nov, 10am–4pm Wed–Sun Feb) Patrick St (Map pp82–3; 64–65 Patrick St); St Stephen's Green (Map p86; North St Stephen's Green) It's hard not to feel a little cheesy with a plastic Viking helmet on your head, but the punters get a real kick out of these amphibious 1¼-hour tours that end up in the Grand Canal Dock.

Carriage Tours

You can pick up a horse and carriage with a driver-commentator at the junction of Grafton St and St Stephen's Green (Map p86). Half-hour tours cost up to €60 and the carriages can take four or five people. Tours of different lengths can be negotiated with the drivers.

FESTIVALS & EVENTS

It wasn't so long ago that a few trucks dressed up as floats, stilt walkers and a flat-bed lorry loaded with peat briquettes were all you'd expect of Dublin's St Patrick's Day Parade. If you wanted a bit of festive glamour, New York's famous parade was the place to go. But then came the economic boom and the realisation that the event was a tourist bonanza waiting to happen. Now 17 March is just part of St Patrick's *Festival*, a four-day extravaganza of activities ranging from street theatre to fireworks, all fuelled by lots and lots of booze.

And therein lies the secret to Dubliners' love of festive events: sure, *officially* it's all about celebrating the city's rich cultural heritage, but really it's an excuse to go a little bit mad.

DUBLIN WITH A DIFFERENCE

Check out the antique incunabula – so old they're not even called books – at Marsh's Library (p101), one of Dublin's least-visited museums, or root around for rare original manuscripts and antique maps in cramped Cathach Books (p79). Break out of the book mode with some comedy in the intimate International Bar (p137) at 9.30pm on Wednesday nights (admission €9). Take a thrillseeker's safari in a speedboat around Dublin bay and its islands from Malahide to Dalkey with **Sea Safaris** (☎ 806 1626; www.seasafari.ie; Malahide Marina; per hr €25), or don your best Edwardian garb and join in the fun on 16 June as the city celebrates Bloomsday (opposite).

The following list is by no means exhaustive; for more details check out the website run by **Dublin Tourism** (www.visitdublin.com). For information on special events in Ireland as a whole, see p706.

Temple Bar Trad Festival (☎ 677 2397; www.templebartrad.com) Traditional music festival in the bars of the cultural quarter over the last weekend in January.

Jameson Dublin International Film Festival (☎ 872 1122; www.dubliniff.com) Local flicks, arty international films and advance releases of mainstream movies make up the menu of the city's film festival, which runs over two weeks in late February.

St Patrick's Festival (☎ 676 3205; www.stpatricksfestival.ie) The mother of all festivals; hundreds of thousands gather to 'honour' St Patrick over four days around 17 March on city streets and in venues.

Heineken Green Energy Festival (☎ 1890 925 100; www.mcd.ie) Four-day rock and indie music festival based outside Dublin Castle and in adjacent venues in May.

Convergence Festival (☎ 674 6415; www.sustainable.ie; 15-19 Essex St) Ten-day green festival in late June on sustainable living, with a diverse programme of workshops, exhibitions and children's activities.

Diversions (☎ 677 2255; www.temple-bar.ie) Free outdoor music, children's and film events at weekends from June to September in Temple Bar's Meeting House Sq.

Dun Laoghaire Festival of World Cultures (☎ 271 9555; www.festivalofworldcultures.com) Colourful multicultural music, art and theatre festival on the last weekend of August.

Oxegen (www.mcd.ie) Two-day gig in mid-July at Punchestown Racecourse with heavyweight headline acts.

Liffey Swim (☎ 833 2434) Five hundred lunatics swim

2.5km from Rory O'More Bridge to the Custom House in late July – one can't but admire their steel will.

Dublin Theatre Festival (☎ 677 8439; www.dublintheatrefestival.com) Well-established international theatre festival over a fortnight in late September.

Dublin Fringe Festival (☎ 872 9016; www.fringefest.com) Comedy and alternative fringe theatre from late September to early October.

SLEEPING

Dublin is one of Europe's more expensive cities to sleep in and, unfortunately, until you reach the upper price brackets, you're not always getting great value for money. Dublin's tourism boom also means that in high season, from around May to September, getting the room you want at a reasonable price can be a challenge. Always book ahead unless you're happy to stay out in the sticks and grapple with a two-hour traffic-choked journey into town. On the upside though, new hotels are springing up all the time, thanks in part to the city's licensing laws that allow canny business folk to obtain a lucrative bar licence if a requisite number of rooms are attached.

The addition of the Luas tram line in 2004 has made the suburban hotels more accessible, so if you can't find central accommodation (the obvious choice for the short-term visitor) a suburban hotel is an option worth considering. Not surprisingly, accommodation south of the Liffey is pricier than that on the northside. While some good deals can be found on the northside, most bargains are in less than salubrious areas around Gardiner and Dorset Sts.

With prices, it's not just quality that counts, but position: for instance, a large-roomed comfortable B&B in the northside suburbs may cost you as little as €50 per person, while the owners of a small, mediocre guesthouse within walking distance of Stephen's Green won't balk at asking €100 for the box room. A quality guesthouse or midrange hotel can cost anything from €80 to €200, while the city's top accommodation doesn't get interested for less than €200. At the other end of the scale there are the ubiquitous hostels, the bedrock of cheap accommodation; the standards have uniformly gone up but so have the prices, and a bed will cost anything from €18 to as much as €34. (Note that hostel rates don't include breakfast; exceptions are noted.)

And then the good news. Many hotels have a weekend or B&B rate that can save you as

BLOOMSDAY

It's 16 June. There's a bunch of weirdos wandering around the city dressed in Edwardian gear talking nonsense in dramatic tones. They're not mad – at least not clinically – they're only Bloomsdayers committed to commemorating James Joyce's epic *Ulysses*, which anyone familiar with the book will tell you (and that doesn't necessarily mean that they've read the bloody thing) takes place over the course of one day. What they mightn't be able to tell you is that Leopold Bloom's latter-day odyssey takes place on 16 June 1904 because it was on that day that Joyce first 'stepped out' with Nora Barnacle, the woman he had met six days earlier and with whom he would spend the rest of his life. (When James' father heard about this new love he commented that with a name like that she would surely stick to him.)

Although Ireland treated Joyce like a literary pornographer while he was alive, the country (and especially Dublin) can't get enough of him today. Bloomsday is a slightly gimmicky and touristy phenomenon that appeals almost exclusively to Joyce fanatics and tourists, but it's plenty of fun and a great way to lay the groundwork for actually reading what could be the second-hardest book written in the 20th century (the hardest, of course, being Joyce's follow-up blockbuster *Finnegan's Wake*, the greatest book *never* to be read).

In general, events are designed to follow Bloom's progress around town, and in recent years festivities have expanded to continue over four days around 16 June. On Bloomsday proper you can kick things off with breakfast at the James Joyce Cultural Centre (p106), where the 'inner organs of beast and fowl' come accompanied by celebratory readings.

In the morning, guided tours of Joycean sites usually leave from the general post office (p104) and the James Joyce Cultural Centre. Lunch-time activity focuses on **Davy Byrne's** (Map p132 Duke St), Joyce's 'moral pub', where Bloom paused to dine on a glass of Burgundy and a slice of Gorgonzola. Street entertainers are likely to keep you amused through the afternoon as you take guided walks and watch animated readings from *Ulysses* and Joyce's other books; there's a reading at **Ormond Quay Hotel** (Map p84; Ormond Quay) at 4pm and **Harrisons** (Map p84; Westmoreland St) later in the day.

Events also take place in the days leading up to and following Bloomsday. The best source of information about what's on in any particular year is likely to be the James Joyce Cultural Centre or the free *Dublin Event Guide*, close to the date.

much as 40% on the rack rate; others offer similar discounts for midweek stays. There are also great savings if you book online (see Booking Services, p118). These rates are generally available year-round, but are tougher to find during the high season.

Trinity College & Around

You can't get more central than the relatively small patch of real estate just south of the Liffey, which has a good mix of options ranging from backpacker hostels to the fanciest hotels. Bear in mind that the location comes with a price.

BUDGET

Ashfield House (Map p84; ☎ 679 7734; www.ashfieldhouse.ie; 19-20 D'Olier St; dm/s/d from €13/58/102; ☑) A stone's throw from Temple Bar and O'Connell Bridge, this modern hostel in a converted church has a selection of tidy four- and six-bed rooms, one large dorm

and 25 en-suite private rooms. It is more like a small hotel but without the price tag. A continental-style breakfast is included – a rare beast indeed for hostels. Maximum stay is six nights.

Avalon House (Map p86; ☎ 475 0001; www.avalonhouse.ie; 55 Aungier St; dm/s/d €18/32/64; ☑) Before there was tourism, this hostel in a gorgeous Victorian building catered to the thin trickle of adventurers who landed in Dublin. They flood in these days – book ahead – but Avalon still takes good care of them, whether they are young backpackers or families. The lounges are great for hanging out and there's free wi-fi.

Barnacles Temple Bar House (Map p84; ☎ 671 6277; www.barnacles.ie; 19 Lower Temple Lane; dm/d from €18.50/40; ☑) Bright, spacious and set in the heart of Temple Bar, this hostel is immaculately clean, and has nicely laid-out en-suite dorms and doubles with in-room storage. Because of its location, rooms are quieter

BOOKING SERVICES

If you arrive without accommodation, staff at Dublin Tourism's walk-in booking offices will find you a room for €4 plus a 10% deposit.

If you want to book a hotel from elsewhere in Ireland or abroad, the easiest way is to go through Gulliver Info Res, Dublin Tourism's computerised reservations service, via their website www.visitdublin.com, or book directly yourself from the accommodation's own website. See p89 for a list of Dublin Tourism offices and Gulliver contact numbers.

Internet bookings made in advance are your best bet for deals on accommodation. These are just a handful of services that will get you a room at a competitive rate:

All Dublin Hotels (www.all-dublin-hotels.com)

Dublin City Centre Hotels (<http://dublin.city-centre-hotels.com>)

Dublin Hotels (www.dublinhotels.com)

Go Ireland (www.goireland.com)

Hostel Dublin (www.hosteldublin.com)

Under 99 (www.under99.com)

See p695 for more options, or try www.lonelyplanet.com/accommodation.

towards the back. Top facilities, a comfy lounge, and linen and towels are provided.

Kinlay House (Map p84; ☎ 679 6644; www.kinlayhouse.ie; 2-12 Lord Edward St; dm/d from €19/34; 📍) A former boarding house for boys, this busy hostel has some massive, 24-bed mixed dorms, as well as smaller rooms. Not for the faint hearted – the hostel has a reputation for being a bit of a party spot.

MIDRANGE

Grafton House (Map p86; ☎ 679 2041; www.graftonguesthouse.com; 26-27 South Great George's St; s/d from €55/110) Run by those hip folks down at the Globe bar (p133), this heritage-building hotel has 17 en-suite rooms that have been whipped into bright and funky shape. Expect contemporary fittings, stylish walnut furniture, retro wallpaper and all mod must-haves, including data ports and veggie breakfasts, at a fine price.

Dublin Citi Hotel (Map p84; ☎ 679 4455; www.dublin.citihotel.com; 46-49 Dame St; s/d Sun-Thu from €79/89, Fri-Sat €120/159) An unusual turreted 19th-century building is home to this cheap and cheerful hotel. Rooms aren't huge but are simply furnished and have fresh white duvets. Prices are reasonable considering it's only a stagger (literally) from Temple Bar. Hic.

Albany House (Map pp82-3; ☎ 475 1092; www.albanyhousedublin.com; 84 Harcourt St; s/d from €80/140) We don't mind that this city-centre gem is a little dog-eared in places because it feels like a genuine Georgian Dublin home. Albany House is spread over three houses and still has its origi-

nal features and incredible plasterwork intact. Opt for bright, tastefully furnished modern rooms, or bigger original rooms complete with antique furniture. Excellent value.

Drury Court Hotel (Map p86; ☎ 475 1988; www.drury.courthotel.com; 28-30 Lower Stephen St; s/d from €85/130; 📍) Centrally located with rooms primarily aimed at the business traveller, the Drury Court is a good choice if you're not looking to be inspired by your surroundings, but still fancy a good night's kip in comfort.

Mercer Hotel (Map p86; ☎ 478 2179; www.mercerhotel.ie; Lower Mercer St; s/d from €99/160) A fairly plain frontage hides a pretty decent hotel; largish rooms are dressed in antiques, giving the whole place an elegant, classic look. There is a dizzying array of room deals available; the off-peak rates are sensational.

Central Hotel (Map p86; ☎ 679 7302; www.centralhotel.ie; 1-5 Exchequer St; s/d from €100/135) The rooms are a little snug for the grand Edwardian-style décor, but it's still a classy joint – no more so than in the wonderful 1st-floor Library Bar, all leather armchairs and sofas, and nothing short of one of the finest spots for an afternoon drink in the whole city. Location-wise, the name says it all.

ourpick Number 31 (Map p80; ☎ 676 5011; www.number31.ie; 31 Leeson Close; s/d/t from €120/175/230) This place could be a set from the film *The Ice Storm*. The former home of modernist architect Sam Stephenson (of Central Bank fame) still feels like a real 1960s home, with its sunken sitting room, leather sofas, mirrored bar and Perspex lamps. Its 21 bedrooms are

TOP FIVE SLEEPS

- Best B&B – Grafton House (opposite)
- Best boutique hotel – Number 31 (opposite)
- Best budget sleep – Isaacs Hostel (p121)
- Best luxury hotel – Merrion (p120)
- Best view – Clarence Hotel (p120)

split between the chichi coach house and the more gracious Georgian house, where rooms are individually furnished with French antiques and big beds. Gourmet breakfasts are served in the conservatory. Children under 10 are not permitted.

Paramount Hotel (Map p84; ☎ 417 9900; www.paramounthotel.ie; cnr Parliament St & Essex Gate; s/d €120/240) Behind the Victorian façade, the Paramount's lobby is a faithful re-creation of a 1930s hotel, complete with dark-wood floors, leather chesterfield couches and heavy velvet drapes. The 70-odd rooms don't quite bring *The Maltese Falcon* to mind, but they're handsomely furnished and very comfortable.

Morgan Hotel (Map p84; ☎ 679 3939; www.the.morgan.com; 10 Fleet St; r from €140; 📍) Designer cool can often be designer cold, but the hypertrendy Morgan falls on the right side of the line – but only just. The look is all-cream contemporary (nothing too exceptional), but the facilities are top rate. Aromatherapy treatments and massages are extra, as is breakfast (€18).

Trinity Lodge (Map p86; ☎ 617 0900; www.trinitylodge.com; 12 South Frederick St; s/d from €140/180) Martin Sheen's grin greets you on entering this cosy, award-winning guesthouse. Not that he's ditched movies for hospitality: he just enjoyed his stay (and full Irish breakfast, presumably) at this classically refurbished Georgian pad so much that he let them take a mugshot. Room 2 has a lovely bay window.

La Stampa (Map p86; ☎ 677 4444; www.lastampa.ie; 35 Dawson St; r weekday/weekend €160/200; 📍) La Stampa is an atmospheric little hotel on trendy Dawson St, with 29 Asian-influenced white rooms decorated with rattan furniture and exotic velvet throws. It has just added an Ayurvedic spa, but to fully benefit from your restorative treatments ask for a top-floor bedroom away from the revelling at SamSara bar (p133), located below.

Irish Landmark Trust (Map p84; ☎ 670 4733; www.irishlandmark.com; 25 Eustace St; 2/3 nights from €620/820) This fabulous heritage 18th-century house has been gloriously restored to the highest standard by the Irish Landmark Trust. You can have this unique house, which sleeps up to seven in its double, twin and triple bedrooms, for two or more nights all to yourself – single nights, alas, are not available. Furnished with tasteful antiques, and authentic furniture and fittings (including a grand piano in the drawing room), this kind of period rental accommodation is unique and utterly special.

TOP END

Westin Dublin (Map p84; ☎ 645 1000; www.westin.com; Westmoreland St; s/d from €184/300; 📍) The Westin began life as an Allied Irish Bank, and now uses the old bank vaults and marble counters in its basement Mint Bar. The hotel rooms exude classic American grandeur, with an understated style that includes separate shower and bath, laptop-sized safe and Westin's trademark Heavenly Bed, which has 10 luxurious layers to envelop you. Ask to take a look at the beautiful banquetting hall, in the former banking area, with its exquisite ceiling and gold-leaf plasterwork. Breakfast will set you back €25.

Browne's Townhouse (Map p86; ☎ 638 3939; www.brownesdublin.com; 22 North St Stephen's Green; s/d from €195/250; 📍) This is an exquisite Georgian building in a perfect location. Above a reputable restaurant are 11 superb, individually styled bedrooms, each the height of comfort and elegance. It's a little bit of

UNIVERSITY ACCOMMODATION

From mid-June to late September, you can stay in accommodation provided by the city's universities. Be sure to book well in advance.

Trinity College (Map p91; ☎ 608 1177; www.tcd.ie; Accommodations Office, Trinity College; s/d from €35/70; 📍) Comfortable rooms ranging from basic to en suite in one of the most atmospheric settings in Dublin.

Mercer Court (Map p86; ☎ 478 2179; reservations@mercercourt.ie; Lower Mercer St; r from €99; 📍) Owned and run by the Royal College of Surgeons, Mercer Court has modern rooms that are up to hotel standard.

HOME AWAY FROM HOME

Self-catering apartments are a good option for visitors staying a few days, for groups of friends, or families with kids. Apartments range from one-room studios to two-bed flats with lounge areas, and include bathrooms and kitchenettes. A decent two-bedroom apartment will cost about €100 to €150 per night. Good, central places include the following:

Clarion Stephen's Hall (Map pp82-3; ☎ 638 1111; www.premierapartmentsdublin.com; 14-17 Lower Leeson St) Deluxe studios and suites, with in-room safe, fax, modem facilities and CD player.

Home From Home Apartments (Map p80; ☎ 678 1100; www.yourhomefromhome.com; The Moorings, Fitzwilliam Quay) Deluxe one- to three-bedroom apartments in the southside city centre.

Latchfords (Map p86; ☎ 676 0784; www.latchfords.ie; 99-100 Lower Baggot St) Studios and two-bedroom flats in a Georgian town house.

Oliver St John Gogarty's Penthouse Apartments (Map p84; ☎ 671 1822; www.gogartys.ie; 18-21 Anglesea St) Perched high atop the pub of the same name (p132), these one- to three-bedroom places have views of Temple Bar.

18th-century elegance updated to suit the needs of the 21st.

Westbury Hotel (Map p86; ☎ 679 1122; www.jurysdoyle.com; Grafton St; s/d/ste from €210/245/750; 📍 📺) Visiting celebs looking for some quiet time have long favoured the Westbury's elegant suites, where they can watch TV from the Jacuzzi before retiring to a four-poster bed. Mere mortals tend to make do with the standard rooms, which are comfortable enough but lack the sophisticated grandeur promised by the luxurious public spaces.

Shelbourne (Map p86; ☎ 676 6471; www.shelbourne.ie; 27 North St Stephen's Green; r from €255; 📍 📺) Two years and many millions later, a sorely missed old friend has returned and the city's most iconic hotel is once again the best address in town. The rooms have all been given a thorough going over, the public spaces have rediscovered their grandeur, and afternoon tea in the Lord Mayor's Lounge is still one of the best experiences in town.

Clarence Hotel (Map p84; ☎ 407 0800; www.clarence.ie; 6-8 Wellington Quay; r €350-380, ste €720-2600; 📍 📺) Dublin's coolest hotel is synonymous with its rock-star owners, Bono and the Edge, so it's hardly surprising that it is used to dealing with celebrity heavyweights. The 50-odd rooms aren't short on style, but they lack that grandeur you would expect from a top hotel; a top-to-bottom refurb is on the cards, though, so it may be closed by the time you get here.

Merrion (Map p86; ☎ 603 0600; www.merrionhotel.com; Upper Merrion St; r from €470; 📍 📺 📺) This is a resplendent five-star hotel set in a ter-

race of beautifully restored Georgian town houses. Try to get a room in the old house (which has the largest private art collection in the city) rather than the newer wing to sample the hotel's truly elegant comforts. Located opposite government buildings, its marble corridors are patronised by visiting dignitaries and the odd celeb. Even if you don't stay, come for the superb afternoon tea (€32), with endless cups of tea served out of silver pots near a raging fire.

The Liberties & Kilmainham

There is not that much on offer in this part of town, but the following exception is pretty convenient.

Jurys Inn Christchurch (Map p84; ☎ 454 0000; www.jurysinns.com; Christchurch Pl; r from €97) A chain hotel that's so generic you may wake up not knowing if you're in Detroit or Darmstadt, let alone Dublin, but it's the perfect choice if you a) wish to remain anonymous, b) don't want to be troubled by personal service, or c) get a fantastic deal online and just want a place to sleep it off.

O'Connell Street & Around

There are a few elegant hotels around O'Connell St, but the real draw round these parts is just to the east on Gardiner St, Dublin's B&B row. Caveat emptor, however: as well as some excellent B&Bs, there are some bad choices; here we only include ones we feel are the former. The further north you go, the dodgier the neighbourhood gets – that heady inner-city mix of drugs and crime – so stay alert, especially past Mountjoy Sq on Upper Gardiner St.

BUDGET

Marlborough Hostel (Map pp82-3; ☎ 874 7629; www.marlboroughhostel.com; 81-82 Marlborough St; dm/d from €13/58; 📍 📺) Next to the Pro-Cathedral, this well-located hostel has 76 beds and adequate facilities. High Georgian ceilings make up for small rooms, but the slightly run-down showers in the basement are a bit of a trek from the dorms.

Isaacs Hostel (Map pp82-3; ☎ 855 6215; www.isaacs.ie; 2-5 Frenchman's Lane; dm/d from €14/62; 📍 📺) Located in a 200-year-old wine vault, this popular, grungy hostel with loads of character is the place to head if you want one of the cheapest beds in town – without sacrificing the basics of health and hygiene. The lounge area is where it all happens, from summer BBQs to live music, and the easygoing staff are on hand 24/7 for advice and help. Global nomads will feel right at home.

Litton Lane Hostel (Map p84; ☎ 872 8389; www.irish-hostel.com; 2-4 Litton Lane; dm/d from €15/70) True to its origins as a dog-eared recording studio (once patronised by Van Morrison), this friendly hostel could do with a lick of paint but retains a certain grungy charm. Dorms are mixed, and so are the showers, which all kind of lends new meaning to its motto 'Don't Sleep Around; Sleep with Us'.

Abbey Court Hostel (Map p84; ☎ 878 0700; www.abbey-court.com; 29 Bachelor's Walk; dm/d €22/88; 📍 📺) Spread over two buildings on the Liffey quays, this large, well-run hostel has 33 clean dorms with good storage. En-suite doubles are in the newer building, where a light breakfast is also provided in the café Juice.

MIDRANGE & TOP END

Anchor Guesthouse (Map pp82-3; ☎ 878 6913; www.anchorguesthouse.com; 49 Lower Gardiner St; s/d from €55/75) Most B&Bs round these parts offer pretty much the same sorts of things: TVs, tea- and coffee-making facilities, a half-decent shower and clean linen. The Anchor does all of that, but it has an elegance you won't find in many of the other B&Bs along this stretch. This lovely Georgian guesthouse, with its delicious wholesome breakfasts, comes highly recommended by readers. They're dead right.

Lyndon House (Map pp82-3; ☎ 878 6950; 26 Gardiner Pl; s/d from €60/100) There are seven simple en-suite rooms and two small standard rooms in this modestly furnished but very friendly Georgian house.

Townhouse (Map pp82-3; ☎ 878 8808; www.townhouseofdublin.com; 47-48 Lower Gardiner St; s/d/tr from €70/115/132) The ghostly writing of Irish-Japanese author Lafcadio Hearn may have influenced the Gothic-style interior of his former home. A dark-walled, gilt-framed foyer with a jingling chandelier leads into 82 individually designed, comfy rooms. Some rooms in the new wing at the back are larger with balconies overlooking the small Japanese garden.

Castle Hotel (Map pp82-3; ☎ 874 6949; www.castle-hotel.ie; 3-4 Great Denmark St; s/d/tr from €75/115/145) In business since 1809, the Castle may be slightly rough around the edges but it's one of the most pleasant hotels this side of the Liffey. The fabulous *palazzo*-style grand staircase leads to the 50-odd bedrooms, whose furnishings are traditional and a tad antiquated but perfectly good; check out the original Georgian corning around the high ceilings.

Walton's Hotel (Map pp82-3; ☎ 878 3131; www.waltons-hotel.ie; 2-5 North Frederick St; s/d/tr from €80/120/160) Better known for its legendary musical instrument shop next door, this friendly hotel was opened by the Walton family in an effort to preserve the traditional Georgian heritage of the building. With the help of the Castle Hotel it's done just that. The 43 rooms are clean and spacious: with a superb location overlooking Findlater's Church and the Rotunda Hospital, Walton's is an excellent choice. Children under 12 stay for free.

Lynham's Hotel (Map pp82-3; ☎ 888 0886; www.lynhams-hotel.com; 63-64 O'Connell St; s/d/tr from €85/130/170) A midrange hotel smack in the middle of O'Connell St is almost too good to be true. Now that Dublin's premier street is halfway back to its glorious best, Lynham's becomes a rare gem indeed – a smart, friendly hotel with 42 pleasant rooms decorated in country-style pine furniture. Room 41 is a lovely dormer triple with an additional camp bed – handy for groups who want to share. Ask for discounts midweek.

Browns Hotel (Map pp82-3; ☎ 855 0034; www.dublin-hotel.net; 80-90 Lower Gardiner St; s/d €89/115) The 22 rooms fill up pretty quickly at this small hotel, whose popularity is cemented by neat and tidy rooms replete with modern furnishings. Book early.

Gresham Hotel (Map pp82-3; ☎ 874 6881; www.gresham-hotels.com; Upper O'Connell St; r €200, ste €450-2500; 📍 📺) A city landmark and one of Dublin's

oldest hotels, the Gresham shed its traditional granny's parlour look with a major overhaul some years ago. Despite its brighter, smarter, modern appearance and a fabulous open-plan foyer, its loyal clientele – elderly groups on shopping breaks to the capital and well-heeled Americans – has stuck firmly. Rooms are spacious and well serviced, though the décor is a little brash.

Smithfield & Phoenix Park

It's still an area in development, but Smithfield – especially along the quays – is a good spot to stay as it's close to all the action.

Comfort Inn Smithfield (Map pp82-3; ☎ 485 0900; www.comfortinndublincity.com; Smithfield Village; r €130-150) This modern hotel, with big bedrooms and plenty of earth tones to soften the contemporary edges, is your best bet in this part of town. We loved the floor-to-ceiling windows – great for checking out what's going on below in the square.

Morrison Hotel (Map p84; ☎ 887 2400; www.morrisonhotel.ie; Lower Ormond Quay; r €285-580, ste €1400; ☎) The Morrison recently upped the ante in the 'hip hotel' stakes with the addition of 48 new bedrooms in the adjoining former print-works. Fashion designer John Rocha's loosely Oriental style is still evident in the Zen-like furnishings, but extras such as Apple Mac plasma screens, iPod docking stations and Aveda goodies clinch it for us. For a few quid extra, nab a far superior studio den in the new wing; there's a balcony and enough space to throw a party.

Beyond the Royal Canal

The Royal Canal winds its way through the leafy suburb of Drumcondra, about 3km east of Upper O'Connell St along Dorset St. There are B&Bs aplenty here, most of which are in late-Victorian or Edwardian beauties that are generally extremely well kept and comfortable. As they're on the airport road, they tend to be full virtually all year, so advance booking is recommended. Buses 3, 11, 11A, 16 and 36A from Trinity College and O'Connell St all stop along the Drumcondra Rd.

Charleville Lodge (☎ 838 6633; www.charlevillelodge.ie; 268-272 North Circular Rd, Phibsboro; s/d from €45/64; ☎) Made up of a terraced row of houses that is the height of 19th-century Victorian elegance and luxury, Charleville is a great option just outside the city centre. The owners love old stuff (the house is full of gorgeous antiques) but are

far from old and stuffy and give proper credence to the old cliché of a 'home away from home'. Take Bus 10 from O'Connell St.

Griffith House (☎ 837 5030; www.griffithhouse.com; 125 Griffith Ave; s €50, d with/without bathroom €80/70) This elegant house, on a beautiful, tree-lined avenue, has four double rooms, three of them with en suite. Each room is tastefully appointed, with large, comfortable beds and nice furniture.

Tinode House (☎ 837 2277; www.tinodehouse.com; 170 Upper Drumcondra Rd; s/d €54/78) This comfortable Edwardian town house has four elegant bedrooms. A familial welcome and excellent breakfast are part of the package.

Beyond the Grand Canal

The south city suburb of Ballsbridge is full of quality hotels and guesthouses that generally offer more for your euro than the city centre. Bus 5, 7, 7A, 8, 18 or 45 will get you there in about 10 minutes, or it's a 30-minute walk. Also worth checking out is the increasingly gentrified suburb of Ranelagh, accessible from the city centre via the Luas, the light-rail system.

MIDRANGE

Sandford Townhouse (Map p80; ☎ 412 6880; 52 Sandford Rd, Ranelagh; s/d €50/70; ☎) An elegant Victorian home with three large and comfortable rooms, the town house is within a short walking distance of the Luas, making it a convenient hop to and from the city centre.

Waterloo House (Map p80; ☎ 660 1888; www.waterloohouse.ie; 8-10 Waterloo Rd, Ballsbridge; s/d €65/118; ☎) A short walk from St Stephen's Green, this lovely guesthouse is spread over two ivy-clad Georgian houses off Baggot St. Rooms are tastefully decorated with high-quality furnishings in authentic Farrow & Ball Georgian colours, and all have cable TV and kettles. Home-cooked breakfast is served in the conservatory or in the garden on sunny days.

Ariel House (Map p80; ☎ 668 5512; www.ariel-house.net; 52 Lansdowne Rd, Ballsbridge; r from €99; ☎) Somewhere between a boutique hotel and a luxury B&B, this highly rated Victorian-era property has 28 en-suite rooms, all individually decorated in period furniture, which lends the place an air of genuine luxury. A far better choice than most hotels.

Pembroke Townhouse (Map p80; ☎ 660 0277; www.pembroketownhouse.ie; 90 Pembroke Rd, Ballsbridge; s €90-

165, d €100-210; ☎) This superluxurious town house is a perfect example of what happens when traditional and modern combine to great effect. A classical Georgian house has been transformed into a superb boutique hotel, with each room carefully crafted and appointed to reflect the best of contemporary design and style, right down to the modern art on the walls and the handy lift to the upper floors. May we borrow your designer?

Schoolhouse Hotel (Map p80; ☎ 667 5014; www.schoolhousehotel.com; 2-8 Northumberland Rd, Ballsbridge; s/d from €169/199; ☎) This is a real beauty: a converted Victorian schoolhouse that is now a superb boutique hotel with 31 exquisite rooms, each named after an Irish writer, and stocked with luxury toiletries and all sorts of modern amenities. A place ahead of its – ahem – class.

TOP END

Herbert Park Hotel (Map p80; ☎ 667 2200; www.herbertparkhotel.ie; Merrion Rd, Ballsbridge; s/d from €230/270; ☎) This upmarket hotel, southeast of the city centre, caters mainly to business travellers. Its décor is firmly traditional, while rooms are kitted out to the highest standard and offer every modern amenity. Check the website for special offers – at the time of writing, rooms were selling for less than half the quoted rate.

Four Seasons (Map p80; ☎ 665 4000; www.fourseasons.com; Simonscourt Rd, Ballsbridge; r from €295; ☎) The muscular, no-holds-barred style of American corporate innkeeping is in full force at this huge hotel that has sought to raise the hospitality bar. Its OTT mix of styles – anyone for faux Victorian Georgian with a bit of baroque thrown in for good measure? – has its critics, but there's no denying the sheer quality of the place. The spa is superb, and the lit basement pool a treat. For many, this is the best hotel in town. We're suckers for a slightly more demure luxury, so we'll stick it in the top three. It is in the grounds of the Royal Dublin Society Showground.

EATING

A couple of decades ago, eating out was the sole preserve of the idle rich, the business lunch and the very special occasion. Which was kind of handy, as there were literally only a handful of decent restaurants to choose from. These days, Dublin has more restaurants than

it knows what to do with and a population that has made fashion out of food to the point that, for many, you aren't what you eat but *where* you eat. You can still eat French (and Irish) *haute cuisine* any night of the week, but you'll also find Nepalese, Brazilian and pretty much everything in between.

Restaurateurs have finally twigged that not every meal has to be a once-a-year splurge and that wallet-friendly menus mean more turnover. They're happy and we're happy. Cropping up all over Dublin are mid-priced restaurants that offer very good food at competitive prices and keep crimes against the palate to a minimum.

The most concentrated restaurant area is Temple Bar, but apart from a handful of good places, the bulk of eateries offer bland, unimaginative fodder and cheap set menus for tourists. Better food and service can usually be found on either side of Grafton St, while the top-end restaurants are clustered around Merrion Sq and Fitzwilliam Sq. Fast-food chains dominate the northside, though some fine cafés and eateries are finally appearing there too. The area around Parnell St, in particular, is worth checking out for the spate of new exotic restaurants – a reflection of the increasingly diverse ethnic communities that have settled in the area.

Ireland has excellent beef, pork, seafood, dairy foods and winter vegetables, and many good restaurants now source their ingredients locally from organic and artisan producers.

For many restaurants, particularly those in the centre, it's worth booking for Friday or Saturday nights to ensure a table.

Trinity College & Around

If you spent your whole time in this area you would eat pretty well; the south city centre is the hub of the best the city has to offer.

BUDGET

Listons (Map p80; ☎ 405 4779; 25 Camden St; lunch €3-8; ☎) 8.30am-7.30pm Mon-Thu, to 6.30pm Fri, 10am-6pm Sat) Lunchtime queues out the door testify that Listons is undoubtedly the best deli in Dublin. Its sandwiches with delicious fillings, roasted vegetable quiches, rosemary potato cakes and sublime salads will have you coming back again and again. The only problem is there's too much to choose from. On fine days it's great to retreat to the

solitude of the nearby Iveagh Gardens with your gourmet picnic.

Lemon (Map p86; pancakes from €3.75; ☎ 9am-7pm Mon-Sat, 10am-6pm Sun) South William St (☎ 672 9044; 66 South William St); Dawson St (☎ 672 8898; 61 Dawson St) Dublin's first (and best) pancake joint is staffed by a terrific bunch who like their music loud and their pancakes good: proper paper-thin sweet and savoury crepes smothered, stuffed and sprinkled with a variety of toppings, fillings and sauces. There's a second branch on nearby Dawson St.

Queen of Tarts (Map p84; ☎ 670 7499; Lord Edward St; goods from €4; ☎ 7am-6pm) Pocket-sized Queen of Tarts is the mother of all bakery-cafés with its mouth-watering array of savoury tarts and filled focaccias, fruit crumbles and wicked pastries. It's perfect for breakfast or lunch – if it's full you can take-away to the quiet Chester Beauty garden across the road.

Cake Café (Map p80; ☎ 633 4477; Pleasant Pl; mains €4-8; ☎ 10am-6pm) Dublin's best-kept pastry secret is this great little café in a tough-to-find lane just off Camden St. The easiest way in is through Daintree stationery shop (61 Camden St); through the back of the Daintree is the self-contained yard, which in good weather is the best spot to enjoy a coffee and a homemade cake.

our pick Gruel (Map p84; ☎ 670 7119; 68a Dame St; breakfast €4, lunch €4.50-8, brunch €5-12, dinner mains €9-15; ☎ 7am-9.30pm Mon-Fri, 10.30am-10.30pm Sat & Sun) For its ever growing list of devotees, Gruel is the best dish in town, whether it's for the superfilling, tasty lunchtime roast-in-a-roll – a rotating list of slow-roasted organic meats stuffed into a bap and flavoured with homemade relishes – or the exceptional evening menu, where pasta, fish and chicken are given an exotic once-over. Go, queue and share elbow space with the table behind you: it's worth the effort. It doesn't accept bookings.

Simon's Place (Map p86; ☎ 679 7821; George's St Arcade, South Great George's St; mains from €4.50; ☎ 9am-5.30pm Mon-Sat) Simon hasn't had to change the menu of doorstep sandwiches and wholesome vegetarian soups since he first opened shop two decades ago – and why should he? His grub is as heartening and legendary as he is. It's a great place to sip a coffee and watch life go by in the old-fashioned arcade.

Larder (Map p84; ☎ 633 5381; 8 Parliament St; mains €6; ☎ 8am-6pm) This new caff has a positively organic vibe to it, what with its wholesome porridge breakfasts, gourmet sandwiches such

TOP FIVE BITES

- Best budget eats – Gruel (left)
- Best brunch – Odessa (p127)
- Best sandwich to go – Bottega Toffoli (below)
- Best lunch – L'Gueuleton (p126)
- Best splurge – Town Bar & Grill (p128)

as *serrano* ham, gruyere and rocket, and speciality Suki teas (try the China gunpowder). It's confident about its food – we like the fact that it lists suppliers – and so are we.

Honest to Goodness (Map p86; ☎ 677 5373; George's St Arcade; mains €6; ☎ 9am-6pm Mon-Sat, noon-4pm Sun) A devastating fire kept this wonderful café under wraps for much of 2007, but it finally reopened and went back about the business of dispensing wholesome sandwiches, imaginative breakfasts and homemade soups and smoothies. Add to that delicious home-baked goodies and Fairtrade coffee, all at rock-bottom prices...niice.

Fallon & Byrne (Map p86; ☎ 472 1000; Exchequer St; deli mains €6-9, brasserie mains €17-28; ☎ deli 9am-8pm Mon-Sat, 11am-6pm Sun, brasserie noon-4.30pm & 6.30-10.30pm Mon-Wed, to 11.30pm Thu-Sat, 11am-4pm Sun) The much anticipated opening of an upmarket food hall, wine cellar and restaurant in the style of New York's Dean & DeLuca caused a great stir among Dublin's food cognoscenti mid-2006. The queues for the delicious deli counter are constant, while the chic buzzy brasserie upstairs hasn't failed to impress either, with long red banquettes, a diverse menu of creamy fish pie, beef carpaccio and roast turbot, and excellent service.

Bar Italia (Map p84; ☎ 679 5128; 4 Essex Quay; lunch €7-10; ☎ 8am-6pm Mon-Fri, 9am-6pm Sat, noon-6pm Sun) One of a new generation of eateries that's showing the more established Italian restaurants how the Old Country *really* eats, Bar Italia is a favourite with the lunchtime crowd, who come for the ever changing pasta dishes, homemade risottos and excellent Palombini coffee.

Bottega Toffoli (Map p84; ☎ 633 4022; 34 Castle St; sandwiches & salads €8-11; ☎ 10am-6pm Tue-Sat) Tucked away in the city centre (to the point that you would never find it unless you actually looked for it) is this superb Italian café, home of one of the best sandwiches you'll eat in town:

VEGGIE BUDGET BITES

Blazing Salads (Map p86; ☎ 671 9552; 42 Drury St; mains €3.50-8.50; ☎ 10am-6pm Mon-Sat, to 8pm Thu) Organic breads (many suitable for special diets), Californian-style salads, smoothies and pizza slices can all be taken away from this delicious vegetarian deli.

Fresh (Map p86; ☎ 671 9552; top fl, Powerscourt Townhouse Shopping Centre, 59 South William St; lunch €5-9; ☎ 9.30am-6pm Mon-Sat, 10am-5pm Sun) This long-standing vegetarian restaurant serves a variety of salads and filling hot daily specials. Many dishes are dairy- and gluten-free without compromising on taste. The baked potato topped with organic cheese (€5.50) comes with two salads and is a hearty meal in itself.

Cornucopia (Map p86; ☎ 677 7583; 19 Wicklow St; mains from €6; ☎ 9am-7pm Mon-Wed & Fri-Sat, to 9pm Thu) For those escaping the Irish cholesterol habit, Cornucopia is a popular wholefood café turning out healthy goodies. There's even a hot vegetarian breakfast as an alternative to muesli.

Govinda's (Map p86; ☎ 475 0309; 4 Aungier St; mains €6-11; ☎ noon-9pm) Authentic beans-and-pulses vegetarian place run by the Hare Krishna, now with branches on both sides of the river (at 83 Middle Abbey St; also open noon to 9pm). The cheap, wholesome mix of salads and Indian-influenced hot daily specials are filling and tasty.

beautifully cut prosciutto, baby tomatoes and rocket salad drizzled with imported olive oil, all on homemade *piadina* bread that is just too good to be true.

Dunne & Crescenzi (Map p86; ☎ 677 3815; 14 South Frederick St; mains €9; ☎ 9am-7pm Mon & Tue, to 10pm Wed-Sat) This exceptional Italian eatery delights its regulars with a basic menu of rustic pleasures: *panini*, a single pasta dish and a superb plate of mixed antipastos drizzled in olive oil. The shelves are stacked with wine, the coffee is perfect and the desserts are sinfully good.

MIDRANGE

Good World (Map p86; ☎ 677 2580; 18 South Great George's St; dim sum €4-6, mains €8-22; ☎ 12.30pm-2.30am) A hands-down winner of our best-Chinese-restaurant competition, the Good World has two menus, but to really get the most of this terrific spot, steer well clear of the Western menu and its unimaginative dishes. With listings in two languages, the Chinese menu is packed with dishes and delicacies that keep us coming back for more.

La Maison des Gourmets (Map p86; ☎ 672 7258; 15 Castle Market; mains €5-15; ☎ 8am-7pm Mon-Sat, to 9pm Thu) The city's Francophiles all seem to amass at this tiny French café above a bakery – and for good reason. The menu is small, but the salads, *tartines* (open sandwiches) with daily-special toppings such as roast aubergine and pesto, and plates of charcuterie are divine. It also has a fine range of pastries, baked goodies and herbal teas. You can get a traditional country breakfast of meats, cheeses and warm crusty bread for €12.

Market Bar (Map p86; ☎ 677 4835; Fade St; mains €7-14; ☎ noon-11pm) This one-time sausage factory, now a fashionable watering hole (p133), also has a super kitchen knocking out Spanish tapas and other Iberian-influenced bites. Dishes come in half and full portions, so you can mix and match your dishes and not pig out. Proof that the carvery lunch isn't the height of pub dining.

Avoca Handweavers (Map p84; ☎ 677 4215; 11-13 Suffolk St; mains €8-15) This airy 1st-floor café was one of Dublin's best-kept secrets (because of an absence of any obvious signs) until it was discovered by the Ladies who Lunch. If you can battle your way past the designer shopping bags to a table, you'll relish the simply delicious rustic delights of organic shepherd's pie, roast lamb with couscous, and sumptuous salads. There's also a take-away salad bar and hot counter in the basement. For more information on the handicrafts, see p139.

Juice (Map p86; ☎ 475 7856; 73 South Great George's St; mains €8-16; ☎ noon-10pm Mon-Thu, noon-11pm Fri & Sat, 10am-10pm Sun) A creative vegetarian restaurant, Juice puts an imaginative, California-type spin on all kinds of dishes. The real treat is the selection of fruit smoothies, a delicious and healthy alternative to soft drinks.

Café Bardeli (Map p86; www.cafebardeli.ie; mains €9-13; ☎ 7am-11pm) Grafton St (☎ 672 7720; Bewley's Bldg, Grafton St); South Great George's St (☎ 677 1646; 12-13 South Great George's St) With three branches in the city – including a spectacular one in Dublin's most beloved café, Bewley's of Grafton St – the folks behind Bardeli have hit the nail firmly on the head: great crispy pizzas with

imaginative toppings such as spicy lamb and tzatziki, fresh homemade pastas, and salads such as broccoli, feta and chickpea that you'll dream about for days. All in a buzzing atmosphere at prices that won't break the bank. No reservations, so prepare to wait on a busy night. See also p129.

Village (Map p86; ☎ 475 8555; 26 Wexford St; mains €10-15; ☎ noon-8.30pm Mon-Fri & Sun) Forget plain old pub grub: even an accomplished chef would be proud of the menu at Village (p133), one of Dublin's most popular pub venues. How about pan-fried *piri-piri* (chilli) perch with vegetable ratatouille (€14)? A great choice for lunch or early dinner.

Pizza Milano (Map p86; ☎ 670 7744; 38 Dawson St; mains €10-18; ☎ noon-11pm) Pizzas are pretty good in this large but stylish pizza emporium, but what we really like are the free on-site child minders on Sunday between noon and 4.30pm; they'll entertain your little ones while you eat.

Bistro (Map p86; ☎ 671 5430; 4-5 Castle Market; mains €10-19; ☎ noon-10pm) The real draw at this place in summer is its outdoor seating, set on a lively pedestrianised strip behind the George's St Arcade. An excellent menu of fish, pasta and meat specials, a well-stocked wine cellar and efficient service make this the warm-weather choice for alfresco dining.

Peplow's (Map p86; ☎ 676 3144; 16 North St Stephen's Green; mains €10-20; ☎ noon-11pm Mon-Sat) Lots of air kissing and comparing of shopping-bag contents take place at this sophisticated and sumptuous wine bar at one of the fanciest addresses in town. A highly ambitious menu complements the superb wine list.

Yamamori (Map p86; ☎ 475 5001; 71 South Great George's St; mains €10-28; ☎ 12.30pm-11pm) This popular Asian restaurant with long communal tables serves filling noodle- and rice-based staples, as well as sushi. Children are well catered for and service is smart, which is handy for a pre-cinema bite.

Silk Road Cafe (Map p84; ☎ 407 0770; Chester Beatty Library, Dublin Castle; mains around €11; ☎ 11am-4pm Mon-Fri) Museum cafés don't often make you salivate, but this vaguely Middle Eastern-North African-Mediterranean gem is the exception. The menu is about two-thirds veggie, with Greek moussaka and spinach lasagne house specialities complementing the deep-fried chickpeas and hummus starters. For dessert, there's Lebanese baklava and coconut *kataifi* (angel-hair pastry), or you could opt for the

juiciest dates this side of Tyre. All dishes are halal and kosher.

Clarendon Café Bar (Map p86; ☎ 679 2909; Clarendon St; mains €11-17; ☎ noon-8pm Mon-Sat, to 6pm Sun) The Stokes brothers (of Bang fame; see opposite) have given pub food a go and come up trumps at this place, spread across three stylishly designed floors. The only difference between here and a proper restaurant is that the wait staff won't flinch when you order lager to go with your meal.

Wagamama (Map p86; ☎ 478 2152; South King St; mains €11-18; ☎ 11am-11pm) Production-line rice and noodle dishes served pronto at canteen-style tables mightn't seem like the most inviting way to dine, but boy this food is good. The basement it's served in is surprisingly light and airy – for a place with absolutely no natural light.

El Bahia (Map p86; ☎ 677 0213; 1st fl, 37 Wicklow St; mains €11-20; ☎ 6-11pm Mon-Sat) Dark and sultry, the intimate atmosphere at El Bahia, reputedly Ireland's only Moroccan restaurant, is like that of a desert harem. The food is equally exotic with a range of daily *tagines* (stews), couscous and *bastillas* (pastry stuffed with chicken or fish) to tempt you. The sweet Moroccan coffee brewed with five warming spices is delicious.

Chameleon (Map p84; ☎ 671 0362; 1 Lower Fownes St; mains €12-20; ☎ 6-11pm Tue-Sat, to 10pm Sun) Friendly, characterful and draped in exotic fabrics, Chameleon serves up oodles of noodles and Indonesian classics, including satay, *gado gado* (veggies with peanut sauce), nasi goreng and *mee goreng* (spicy fried noodles). If you can't decide, try the rijsttafel – it's a selection of several dishes and rice.

Toscana (Map p84; ☎ 670 9785; www.toscana.ie; 3 Cork Hill; mains €12-24) A pleasant trattoria decorated in the style of the 'old country,' Toscana serves up Italian classics and adds a few Irish touches – how about following a killer plate of penne with Baileys cheesecake?

L'Gueuleton (Map p86; ☎ 675 3708; 1 Fade St; mains €12-25; ☎ noon-3pm & 6-11.30pm Mon-Sat) Dubliners have a devil of a time pronouncing the name (which means 'the Gluttonous Feast' in French) and have had their patience tested with the no-reservations, get-in-line-and-wait policy, but they just can't get enough of the restaurant's take on French rustic cuisine, which makes twisted tongues and sore feet a small price to pay. The steak is sensational, but the Toulouse sausages with *choucroute*

(sauerkraut) and Lyonnaise potatoes is a timely reminder that when it comes to the pleasures of the palate, the French really know what they're doing.

Locks (Map p80; ☎ 454 3391; 1 Windsor Tce; mains €16-20; ☎ noon-4pm & 6-10pm Mon-Sat) When chef Troy Maguire left the immensely popular L'Gueuleton (opposite) in early 2007 to team up with ex-Bang manager Kelvin Rynhardt to take over one of the steady stalwarts of the Dublin dining scene, the bar was suddenly set very, very high. Would Locks shake off its old-town dust? Could Maguire re-create the informal-but-superb French campagnard cooking that made his former kitchen such a huge hit? Would Locks be as cool as Bang used to be? And would the prices stay this side of decent? Thankfully, yes on all counts, and while it's still early days, Locks promises to be one of the most sought-after tables in town for years to come.

Ar Vicoletto (Map p84; ☎ 670 8662; 5 Crow St; mains €12-25; ☎ noon-10pm) When it's good, it's very, very good, with superb Italian dishes washed down with splendid local reds in a convivial atmosphere. But it can be a little inconsistent and sometimes quite disappointing. Still, it's worth the risk.

Aya (Map p86; ☎ 677 1544; Clarendon St; mains €12-28; ☎ 11.30am-11pm) Attached to the Brown Thomas department store, Aya is the best Japanese restaurant in town – which frankly isn't saying much, considering the paltry competition. There's a revolving sushi bar where you can eat your fill for €25 every night (except Thursday and Saturday), between 5pm and 9pm (maximum 55 minutes), or else you can go à la carte from the extensive menu.

Saba (Map p86; ☎ 679 2000; www.sabadublin.com; 26-28 Clarendon St; mains €12-28; ☎ noon-11pm) Southeast Asian cuisine hits Dublin with a stylish bang at this supercool eatery that seeks to impress with its extensive menu and contemporary décor. Both are good without being exceptional, but it's packed every night so what the hell do we know?

Monty's of Kathmandu (Map p84; ☎ 670 4911; 28 Eustace St; mains €13-21; ☎ 12.30-2.30pm & 6-11.30pm Mon-Sat, 6-11pm Sun) The trade of award-winning Monty's is built on people who keep returning for typical Nepalese dishes such as *gorkhali* (chicken cooked in chilli, yoghurt and ginger) or *kachila* (raw marinated meat). The Shiva beer complements these hearty, spicy

dishes. Ethnic food doesn't get much better than this.

Odessa (Map p84; ☎ 670 7634; 13 Dame Ct; mains €13-25) Odessa's lounge atmosphere, with comfy sofas and retro standard lamps, attract the city's hipsters, who flock here for homemade burgers, steaks or daily fish specials. You may not escape the sofa after you've quaffed a few of Odessa's renowned cocktails while playing a game of backgammon. Weekend brunch is extremely popular: you have been warned.

Jaipur (Map p86; ☎ 677 0999; www.jaipur.ie; 41 South Great George's St; mains €17-20; ☎ noon-10pm) Critics rave about the subtle and varied flavours produced by Jaipur's kitchen, which is down to its refusal to skimp on even the smallest dash of spice. What you get here is as close to the real deal as you'd get anywhere outside of Delhi.

TOP END

Eden (Map p84; ☎ 670 5372; Meeting House Sq; mains €15-25; ☎ noon-2.30pm & 6-10.30pm Mon-Fri, noon-3pm & 6-11pm Sat & Sun) Eden is the epitome of Temple Bar chic with its trendy wait staff, minimalist surroundings, high ceiling, hanging plants and terrace onto Meeting House Sq. But the food is the real star: Eleanor Walsh's unfussy modern Irish cuisine uses organic seasonal produce, complemented by a carefully chosen wine list. Seating on the gas-heated terrace is at a premium on summer evenings, when classic films are projected onto the nearby Gallery of Photography.

Bang (Map p86; ☎ 676 0898; www.bangrestaurant.com; 11 Merrion Row; mains €15-28; ☎ 12.30-3pm & 6.30-10.30pm Mon-Sat) The hip and handsome Stoke twins have brought a touch of Denmark to Dublin in appropriately stylish surrounds – and have created a favourite with the 30-somethings who have a little cash to burn. The modern European grub – carefully created by chef Lorcan Cribbin (ex-Ivy in London, don't you know) – is sharp, tasty and very much in demand. Thai baked sea bass, medallions of beef and melt-in-your-mouth roast scallops are just a random selection. Reservations are a must, even for lunch.

Ely Wine Bar (www.elywinebar.ie; mains €15-29; ☎ noon-3pm & 6-10pm Mon-Fri, 1-4pm & 6-10pm Sat) Ely Wine Bar (Map p86; ☎ 676 8986; 22 Ely Pl); Ely HQ (Map pp82-3; ☎ 672 0010; Custom House Quay); Ely HQ (Map p80; ☎ 633 9986; Hanover Quay) Scrummy homemade burgers, bangers and mash, and wild smoked salmon salad are some of the meals you'll find in this basement restaurant. Dishes are prepared

with organic and free-range produce from the owner's family farm in county Clare, so you can rest assured of the quality. There's a large wine list to choose from, with over 70 sold by the glass. There are now two new branches on both sides of the Liffey down near the docklands: Ely CHQ, on the northside in an atmospheric old tobacco warehouse; and the spectacular Ely HQ, on the Grand Canal Docks.

Town Bar & Grill (Map p86; ☎ 662 4724; 21 Kildare St; mains €18-28; ☎ noon-11pm Mon-Sat, to 10pm Sun) On any given night, you're likely to share this low-ceilinged basement dining room with a selection of Ireland's most affluent and influential people, who conduct their oh-so-important affairs barely above a murmur. But the slight stuffiness of the place is swept aside by the simply mouth-watering food, which ranges from lamb's liver to slow-rotated rabbit or sweet pepper-stuffed lamb. One of the best in town.

Dax (Map p80; ☎ 676 1494; 23 Upper Pembroke St; mains €18-30; ☎ noon-2.15pm & 6-11pm Tue-Fri, 6-11pm Sat) Olivier Meissonave, convivial ex-maitre d' of Thornton's, has stepped out with Irish chef Pól ÓhEannraich to open this posh-rustic restaurant named after his home town, north of Biarritz. In a bright basement, serious foodies can sate their palate on sea bass with celeriac purée, pork wrapped in *serrano* ham, and truffle risotto.

Balzac (Map p86; ☎ 677 8611; 35 Dawson St; mains €18-30; ☎ 6-11pm) It's official: Paul Flynn is one of the best chefs in Ireland. He made his name with the simply stunning Tannery Restaurant (p194) in Dungarvan, county Waterford, and his first Dublin venture will only serve to cement his growing reputation. The elegant old-world dining room is a fitting setting for the superb cuisine – how about oysters mignonette followed by champagne and truffle risotto?

Mermaid Café (Map p84; ☎ 670 8236; 22 Dame St; mains €18-31; ☎ 12.30-2.30pm & 6-11pm Mon-Sat, 12.30-3pm & 6-9pm Sun) The Mermaid is an American-style bistro with natural wood furniture and abstract canvases on its panelled walls. It caters mainly to a hip gourmand crowd, who appreciate the inventive ingredient-led organic food such as monkfish with buttered red chard or braised lamb shank with apricot couscous. Its informal atmosphere, pure food and friendly staff make it difficult to get a table without notice.

Thornton's (Map p86; ☎ 478 7000; Fitzwilliam Hotel; midweek 2-/3-course lunch €30/40, dinner mains €45; ☎ 12.30-2pm & 7-10pm Tue-Sat) Kevin Thornton lost one of his two Michelin stars in 2006, but he defiantly believes that his eatery is as good as any in town – and he has every reason to do so. His mouth-watering interpretation of new French cuisine is superb and the service is faultless, if a little too formal in this ubertrendy room overlooking St Stephen's Green. Want to watch a grown-up squirm? Ask for ketchup.

Restaurant Patrick Guilbaud (Map p86; ☎ 676 4192; 21 Upper Merrion St; 2-/3-course set lunch €33/45, dinner mains about €35; ☎ 12.30-2.30pm & 7.30-10.30pm Tue-Sat) With two Michelin stars on its résumé, this elegant restaurant is one of the best in Ireland, and head chef Guillaume Lebrun does his best to ensure that it stays that way. Next door to the Merrion Hotel, Guilbaud has French *haute cuisine* that is beautifully executed and served in delectable surroundings. The lunch menu is a steal, at least in this stratosphere.

The Liberties & Kilmainham

Fast-food outlets and greasy-spoon diners still dominate the food map in this part of the city, but there's one spot that rises out of the boiling oil and batter-in-a-bucket and takes its place among the legends.

Leo Burdock's (Map p84; ☎ 454 0306; 2 Werburgh St; cod & chips €8.50; ☎ noon-midnight Mon-Sat, 4pm-midnight Sun) You will often hear that you haven't eaten in Dublin until you've queued in the cold for a cod and chips wrapped in paper from the city's most famous chipper. Total codswallop, of course, but there's something about sitting on the street, balancing the bag on your lap and trying to eat the chips quickly before they go cold and horrible that smacks of Dublin in a bygone age. It's nice to revisit the past, especially if you don't have to get stuck there.

O'Connell Street & Around

The capital's premier street is still playing catch-up with the southside, but it's getting closer. Ignore the unfortunate plethora of fast-food joints that still plague O'Connell St itself, and seek out our selection of quality eateries that more than make the grade.

BUDGET

Epicurean Food Hall (Map p84; Lower Liffey St; lunch €3-12; ☎ 9.30am-5.30pm Mon-Sat) Need to refuel and rest

the bag-laden arms? Then this busy arcade with 20-odd food stalls is just the ticket. Quality is hit and miss, but you won't go wrong with a hot bagel with the works from Itsabagel or a finger-licking kebab from Istanbul House, rounded off with an espresso from the excellent El Corte.

Soup Dragon (Map p84; ☎ 872 3277; 168 Capel St; soups €4.50-9.50; ☎ 8am-5.30pm Mon-Fri, 11am-5pm Sat) Eat in or take away one of 12 tasty varieties of homemade soups, including shepherd's pie or spicy vegetable gumbo. Bowls come in three different sizes, and prices include fresh bread and a piece of fruit. Kick start your day (or afternoon) with a healthy all-day breakfast selection: try fresh smoothies (€3.75), poached eggs in bagels (€3.20), or generous bowls of yoghurt, fruit and muesli (€4).

Cobalt Café & Gallery (Map pp82-3; ☎ 873 0313; 16 North Great George's St; mains €5-9; ☎ 10am-4.30pm Mon-Fri) This gorgeous, elegant café in a bright and airy Georgian drawing room is a must if you're in the hood. Almost opposite the James Joyce Cultural Centre, Cobalt has a simple menu, but you can enjoy hearty soups by a roaring fire in winter, or fresh sandwiches in the garden on warmer days.

Football-mad developer Mick Wallace has managed to single-handedly create a thriving new Italian quarter, with cafés and eateries popping up all over Quartier Bloom, the new lane from Ormond Quay to Great Strand St.

La Taverna di Bacco (Map p84; ☎ 873 0040; 24 Lower Ormond Quay; mains €8-9; ☎ 12.30-10.30pm Mon-Sat, from 5pm Sun) and **Enoteca Delle Langhe** (Map p84; ☎ 888 0834; Bloom's Lane; ☎ noon-11pm), a few doors up, serve simple pastas, antipasti and Italian cheeses, along with the delicious produce of Wallace's own vineyard and others in Piemonte.

MIDRANGE

Ailang (Map pp82-3; ☎ 874 6766; 102 Parnell St; mains €7-15; ☎ noon-2.30pm & 5.30-11.30pm Mon-Thu, noon-2.30pm & 5.30pm-midnight Fri, 12.30pm-midnight Sat & Sun) With elements of Chinese, Japanese and Thai cuisine, this Korean restaurant on diverse Parnell St has plenty to whet appetites. Tasty dishes such as *padun* (seafood pancake), cod and tofu hotpot, or barbecued meats cooked at your table DIY style, with gas burner, skillet and spicy marinade, make the food a talking point. Although the bright and shiny décor may not be conducive to romantic first dates,

the atmosphere at Ailang is strangely inviting. Steer clear of the dull wine list in favour of Ailang's own Hite beer.

Bar Italia (Map p84; ☎ 874 1000; 28 Lower Ormond Quay; mains €9-16; ☎ 10.30am-11pm Mon-Sat, 1-9pm Sun) The slightly fancier younger brother of the immensely successful café just across the Liffey (see p124) is bigger and just as good; it's as if they were using the same kitchen.

TOP END

Winding Stair (Map p84; ☎ 873 3292; 40 Lower Ormond Quay; mains €15-26; ☎ noon-4pm & 6-10pm Tue-Sat, from 1pm Sun) There was much tearing of hair and gnashing of teeth when this Dublin institution closed in 2005. Thankfully it reopened in 2006 with the same simple décor and warm atmosphere, but with the addition of an excellent wine list and a wonderful Irish menu – creamy fish pie, bacon and organic cabbage, steamed mussels, and Irish farmyard cheeses – all prepared with much TLC.

Chapter One (Map pp82-3; ☎ 873 2266; 18-19 North Parnell Sq; mains €23-30; ☎ lunch Tue-Fri, dinner Tue-Sat) Savour classic French cuisine such as foie gras, duck *confit* or rabbit cassoulet to the tinkle of the grand piano in the lovely vaulted basement of the Dublin Writers Museum (p106). This place is one of the city's top 10 restaurants. Try to arrive before 7pm for the three-course pre-theatre special (€34).

Rhodes D7 (Map pp82-3; ☎ 804 4441; Mary's Abbey; mains €23-30; ☎ noon-10pm Tue-Sat, to 4pm Sun & Mon) Is Ireland ready for a truly British restaurant? Londoner and celebrity chef Gary Rhodes thinks so, opening this big, brash northside eatery. While you won't spot the Tintin-haired one sweating it out in the kitchen, he did devise the menu, and his British staples – including cheddar rarebit, roast cod with lobster champ – have been given an Irish twist.

Beyond the Grand Canal

The fancy suburbs of the south city centre have long been home to a handful of terrific restaurants, but the leading light these days is Ranelagh, which has undergone a mini revolution in recent years. Located only 10 minutes or so away from town by Luas, it is a convenient destination when town is packed to overflowing.

Café Bardeli (Map p80; ☎ 496 1886; 62 Ranelagh Rd; mains €9-15; ☎ 12.30-11pm Mon-Sat, to 10pm Sun) If it ain't broke, do it again: Café Bardeli hit Ranelagh in 2004 with the same no-fuss menu that

made its big sister such a roaring success on South Great George's St (see p125) and just hasn't looked back.

Diep Noodle Bar (Map p80; ☎ 497 6550; 19 Ranelagh Rd; mains €9-17; 🕒 2.30-11.30pm) Top-notch Thai and Vietnamese dishes such as *pad thai* (Thai fried noodles), red-snapper vermicelli or seafood rice noodles come to your table at lightning speed in this funky place. Décor is sparse, modern and clean. It's packed at weekends but you'll get a table early or late without a booking.

French Paradox (Map p80; ☎ 660 4068; 53 Shelbourne Rd; mains €10-18; 🕒 noon-3pm & 6-9.30pm Mon-Thu, noon-9.30pm Fri-Sat) This bright and airy wine bar, set over an excellent wine shop of the same name, serves fine authentic French dishes such as cassoulet, a variety of foie gras, cheese and charcuterie plates, and large green salads. All are there to complement the main attraction: a dazzling array of fine wines, mostly French (unsurprisingly), sold by the bottle, glass or even 6.25cL taste! A little slice of Paris in Dublin 4.

Mint (Map p80; ☎ 497 8655; 47 Ranelagh Rd; mains around €16; 🕒 noon-3pm & 6-10pm Tue-Sun) The people at Mint are ambitious. Chef Oliver Dunne crossed the water from Gordon Ramsay's Pied à Terre in London and his diverse menu has Michelin aspirant written all over it, the small room is sleek and low lit, the service formal but friendly. Expect exceptional classics such as veal on foie gras and mushroom risotto, and duck *confit*.

DRINKING

When they talk of Dublin being a great party town, what they're really saying is that it's a great drinking town. Which it most certainly is, and there's a pretty good chance that it's one of the main reasons you came in the first place. The pub remains the alpha and omega of all social life – a meeting point for friends and strangers alike, and where Dubliners are at their friendly and convivial best (and, it must be said, sometimes their drunken and belligerent worst!).

There are pubs for every taste and sensibility, although traditional haunts populated by flat-capped pensioners bursting with insightful anecdotes are disappearing under a modern wave of designer bars and themed locales that wouldn't seem out of place in any other city in the world. All the while, of course, the Irish-pub theme is being ex-

TOP FIVE PUBS

- Best for a decent pint and a chat – Grogan's Castle Lounge (opposite)
- Best for beats and beatniks – Anseo (p132)
- Best for fiddles and *bodhráns* – Cobblestone (opposite)
- Best for getting jiggy with it – Village (p133)
- Best to see and be seen – South William (p133)

ported throughout the world like a McPub; if the trend continues, Dublin may be the last place to come to if you're looking for a spit-and-sawdust boozier.

Dublin's infamous party zone is Temple Bar, where giant bars pump out booze and chart music to a thirsty, animated throng of revellers – Ireland's own ' Ibiza in the rain'. It's not so bad for a midweek drink, but come the weekend it's strictly for tourists and visitors with T-shirts advertising themselves as part of a hen or stag group. More discerning party animals favour the strip of supersized bars on Dawson St and – more recently – the bars along Wexford and Camden Sts, southwest of St Stephen's Green. But don't worry: you can't go too far in the city centre without finding a pub with a bit of life in it.

Last orders are at 11.30pm Monday to Thursday, 12.30am Friday and Saturday and 11pm on Sunday, with 30 minutes' drinking-up time each night. However, many central pubs have licenses to serve until 1.30am, 2.30am and – for those with a superspecial 'theatre licence' – until 3am.

Traditional Pubs

Dublin still has some good, old-style, traditional establishments.

Flowing Tide (Map p132; ☎ 874 0842; 9 Lower Abbey St) Directly opposite the Abbey Theatre, this place attracts a great mix of theatregoers and northside locals. It's loud, full of chat and a great place to drink.

Patrick Conway's (Map p132; ☎ 873 2687; 70 Parnell St) Although it's slightly out of the way, this place is a true gem of a pub. It has been operating since 1745, and no doubt new fathers

have been stopping in here for a celebratory pint since the day the Rotunda Maternity Hospital opened across the road in 1757.

Palace Bar (Map p132; ☎ 677 9290; 21 Fleet St) With its mirrors and wooden niches, Palace Bar is often said to be the perfect example of an old Dublin pub. It's within Temple Bar and is popular with journalists from the nearby *Irish Times*.

Dawson Lounge (Map p132; ☎ 677 5909; 25 Dawson St) To see the smallest bar in Dublin, go through a small doorway, down a narrow flight of steps and into two tiny rooms that always seem to be filled with a couple of bedraggled drunks who look like they're hiding. Psst, here's a secret: a certain sunglassesed lead singer of a certain ginormous Irish band is said to love unwinding in here from time to time.

John Mulligan's (Map p132; ☎ 677 5582; 8 Poolbeg St) Outside the eastern boundary of Temple Bar, John Mulligan's is another pub that has scarcely changed over the years. It featured as the local in the film *My Left Foot* and is also popular with journalists from the nearby newspaper offices. Mulligan's was established in 1782 and has long been reputed to have the best Guinness in Ireland, as well as a wonderfully varied collection of regulars.

Stag's Head (Map p132; ☎ 679 3701; 1 Dame Ct) At the intersection of Dame Ct and Dame Lane, just off Dame St, the Stag's Head was built in 1770 and remodelled in 1895. It's sufficiently picturesque to have featured in a postage-stamp series depicting Irish pubs.

Long Hall (Map p132; ☎ 475 1590; 51 South Great George's St) Luxuriating in full Victorian splendour, this is one of the city's most beautiful and best-loved pubs. Check out the elegant chandeliers and the ornate carvings in the woodwork behind the bar. The bartenders are experts at their craft – an increasingly rare experience in Dublin these days.

Kehoe's (Map p132; ☎ 877 8312; 9 South Anne St) This is one of the most atmospheric pubs in the city centre and a real favourite with all kinds of Dubliners. It has a beautiful Victorian bar, a wonderful snug, and plenty of other little nooks and crannies. Upstairs, drinks are served in what was once the publican's living room. And it looks it!

Neary's (Map p132; ☎ 677 8596; 1 Chatham St) A showy Victorian-era pub with a fine frontage, Neary's is popular with actors from the nearby Gaiety Theatre. The upstairs bar

is one of the only spots in the city centre where you stand a chance of getting a seat on a Friday or Saturday night.

Grogan's Castle Lounge (Map p132; ☎ 677 9320; 15 South William St) A city-centre institution, Grogan's has long been a favourite haunt of Dublin's writers and painters, as well as others from the bohemian, alternative set. An odd quirk of the pub is that drinks are marginally cheaper in the stone-floor bar than the carpeted lounge, even though they are served by the same bar!

James Toner's (Map p132; ☎ 676 3090; 139 Lower Baggot St) With its stone floor, Toner's is almost a country pub in the heart of the city, and the shelves and drawers are reminders that it once doubled as a grocery store. Not that its suit-wearing business crowd would ever have shopped here...

Hartigan's (Map p132; ☎ 676 2280; 100 Lower Leeson St) This is about as spartan a bar as you'll find in the city, and it's the daytime home to some serious drinkers, who appreciate the quiet, no-frills surroundings. In the evening it's popular with students from the medical faculty of University College Dublin.

Sackville Lounge (Map p132; Sackville Pl) This tiny one-room, wood-panelled 19th-century bar is discreetly located just off O'Connell St, which perhaps explains why it's so popular with actors, theatregoers and anyone who appreciates a nice pint in a gorgeous old-style bar.

Live-Music Pubs

The following places are excellent venues for catching some traditional Irish and contemporary music.

Sean O'Casey's (Map p132; ☎ 874 8675; 105 Marlborough St) This place has a weekly menu of live rock and some Irish traditional music sessions.

Hughes' Bar (Map p132; ☎ 872 6540; 19 Chancery St) Directly behind the Four Courts, this bar has nightly, if impromptu, sessions that often result in a closed door – that is, they go on long past official closing time. The pub is also a popular lunchtime spot with barristers working nearby.

Cobblestone (Map pp82-3; ☎ 872 1799; North King St) This pub is on the main square in Smithfield, an old northside marketplace. There's a great atmosphere in the cosy upstairs bar, where the nightly music sessions – both

traditional and up-and-coming folk and singer-songwriter acts – are superb.

Oliver St John Gogarty's (Map p132; ☎ 671 1822; 58-59 Fleet St) There's live traditional music nightly at this busy Temple Bar pub, catering to a mostly tourist crowd.

International Bar (Map p132; ☎ 677 9250; 23 Wicklow St) The International has live jazz and blues most nights.

Bruxelles (Map p132; ☎ 677 5362; 7-8 Harry St) This place has weekly live rock music, perhaps the only link the now trendy pub has to its heavy-metal past.

O'Donoghue's (Map p132; ☎ 661 4303; 15 Merrion Row) The most famous traditional music bar in Dublin, O'Donoghue's is where world-famous folk group the Dubliners started off in the

1960s. On summer evenings a young, international crowd spills out into the courtyard beside the pub.

Mother Redcaps (Map p132; ☎ 453 8306; Back Lane) A legendary spit-on-the-floor, no-frills folk-music venue, which reopened after a few year's respite. It's above a pub of the same name.

Bars

The following modern bars are Dublin's current hot spots.

Anseo (Map p132; ☎ 475 1321; 28 Lower Camden St) Unpretentious, unaffected and incredibly popular, this cosy alternative bar is a favourite with those who live by the credo that to try too hard is far worse than not trying at all. Wearing cool like a loose garment,

the punters thrive on the mix of chat and terrific music.

Dice Bar (Map pp82-3; ☎ 674 6710; 79 Queen St) Co-owned by singer Huey from band Fun Lovin' Criminals, the Dice Bar looks like something you'd find on New York's Lower East Side. Its black-and-red-painted interior, dripping candles and distressed seating, combined with rocking DJs most nights, make this place a magnet for Dublin's beatnik crowds.

No 4 Dame Lane (Map p132; ☎ 679 0291; 4 Dame Lane) This stylish bar across two floors is popular with clubby kids and professionals alike. They come for the modern ambience and the DJ-led entertainment, which is mellow midweek, but loud and dancy weekends.

Market Bar (Map p132; ☎ 677 4835; Fade St) This fashionable watering hole is run by the same guys as the Globe (below), around the corner. Little would you know this beautiful airy Victorian space was a sausage factory in a former life.

Globe (Map p132; ☎ 671 1220; 11 South Great George's St) One of Dublin's first proper café-bars, the Globe, with its wooden floors and plain brick walls, is as much a daytime haunt for a good latte as it is a supercool night-time watering hole. Nightly DJs, a relaxed atmosphere and friendly staff keep the place buzzing with a mix of hip young locals and clued-in visitors.

Hogan's (Map p132; ☎ 677 5904; 35 South Great George's St) Hogan's is a gigantic boozier spread across two floors. A popular hang-out for young professionals, it gets very full at the weekend with folks eager to take advantage of its late licence.

Octagon Bar (Map p132; ☎ 670 9000; Clarence Hotel, 6-8 Wellington Quay) Temple Bar's most chic watering hole is where you'll find Dublin's celebrities and their hangers-on. Drinks are more expensive than elsewhere – a flute of *bellini*

(peach and champagne) will set you back €13, but judging by the clientele who have passed the bouncer's strict entry test, this is hardly a concern.

Porterhouse (Map p132; ☎ 679 8847; 16-18 Parliament St) Dublin's first microbrewery is our favourite Temple Bar watering hole. Especially popular with foreign residents and visitors, the Porterhouse sells only its own stouts and beers – and they're all excellent.

SamSara (Map p132; ☎ 671 7723; 35-36 Dawson St) This huge Middle Eastern-themed drinking emporium packs young office types and pre-clubbers in at weekends, when the bar runs late.

Shakespeare (Map pp82-3; ☎ 878 8650; 160 Parnell St) A wonderful hybrid of traditional pub and new cosmopolitanism, this Korean-owned bar makes unlikely but successful bedfellows of a decent pint and karaoke fun.

South William (Map p132; ☎ 679 3701; South William St) Dublin's newest and coolest bar has it all behind its huge glass frontage: top-class music, great DJs, a downstairs club, and probably the best pub grub in Dublin, with delicious pies created by Troy Maguire from Lock's.

Sin É (Map p132; ☎ 878 7009; 14-15 Upper Ormond Quay) This excellent quayside bar is proof that the most important quality for any pub is ambience. There's no real décor to speak of, but this place buzzes almost nightly with a terrific mix of students and professionals, the hip and the uncool. It helps that the DJs are all uniformly excellent.

Village (Map p132; ☎ 475 8555; www.thevillagevenue.com; 26 Wexford St) Packed to overflowing every weekend, this large modern bar is where the lovely lads and gorgeous gals show off their plumage in a fun-time courting ritual that has the rest of them queuing up at the door to join in. There are excellent DJs nightly;



DRINKING ☑ ☑		ENTERTAINMENT ☑	
Anseo.....	1 B4	John Mulligan's.....	15 C2
Bruxelles.....	2 C3	Kehoe's.....	16 C3
Davy Byrne's.....	3 C3	Long Hall.....	17 B3
Dragon.....	4 B3	Market Bar.....	18 B3
Flowing Tide.....	5 C1	Mother Redcaps.....	19 A3
Front Lounge.....	6 B2	Neary's.....	20 C3
George.....	7 B3	No 4 Dame Lane.....	21 B3
Globe.....	8 B3	O'Donoghue's.....	22 D4
Grogan's Castle Lounge.....	9 B3	Octagon Bar.....	23 B2
Hartigan's.....	10 C4	Oliver St John Gogarty's.....	24 C2
Hogan's.....	11 B3	Palace Bar.....	25 C2
Hughes' Bar.....	12 A2	Porterhouse.....	26 B1
International Bar.....	13 C3	Sackville Lounge.....	28 C1
James Toner's.....	14 D4	SamSara.....	29 C3
		Sean O'Casey's.....	30 C1
		Sin É.....	31 A2
		South William.....	32 B3
		Stag's Head.....	33 B3
		Village.....	(see 40)
		Hub.....	34 B2
		Lillie's Bordello.....	35 C3
		Renard's.....	36 C3
		Rogue.....	37 B3
		Ri Rá.....	38 B3
		Underground Kennedy's.....	39 D3
		Village.....	40 B4

the nightclub bit of the venue (right) opens Thursday through Saturday.

ENTERTAINMENT

Dublin's status as an entertainment capital has been hyped out of all reality by tourist authorities and other interested parties. Fact is – for its diminutive size – it's *pretty* good, with a range of options to satisfy nearly all desires, from theatre to dog racing and most distractions in between.

For entertainment information, pick up a copy of the *Event Guide*, a bimonthly freebie available at many locations, including bars, cafés and hostels; the weekly music-review *Hot Press*; or the fortnightly freebie *In Dublin*. Friday's *Irish Times* has a pull-out entertainment section called the *Ticket*, which has comprehensive listings of clubs and gigs.

Cinemas

Ireland boasts the highest attendances in Europe of young cinemagoers. Consequently it's best to book in advance by credit card, or be prepared to queue for up to half an hour for tickets at night-time screenings. Dublin's cinemas are more heavily concentrated on the northern side of the Liffey. Admission prices are generally €6 for afternoon shows, rising to around €8 in the evening.

Irish Film Institute (Map p84; ☎ 679 5744; 6 Eustace St) The multiscreen cinema shows classics and art-house films. The complex also has a bar, a café and a bookshop. Weekly membership (€2) is required for some uncertified films, which can only be screened as part of a 'club'.

Savoy (Map pp82-3; ☎ 874 6000; Upper O'Connell St; ☎ from 2pm) A traditional four-screen first-run cinema, Savoy has late-night shows on weekends.

Screen (Map pp82-3; ☎ 671 4988; 2 Townsend St; ☎ from 2pm) Between Trinity College and O'Connell Bridge, the Screen shows new independent and smaller commercial films on its three screens.

Cineworld (Map pp82-3; ☎ 872 8400; Parnell Centre, Parnell St; ☎ from 10am) This multiscreen cinema is where you'll get all the mainstream releases.

Nightclubs

A decade-long roller-coaster ride has left Dublin's clubland a little dizzy. From crap to brilliant and then to...well, less than brilliant, clubs have had a rude awakening in the last

few years. These days, clubs have to tackle restrictive opening hours, late-night bars offering a free version of the same, and the continuing squeeze of the musical mainstream: Dublin's population may be increasingly multicultural, but they're a largely conservative bunch whose tastes range from charty stuff to a bit of alternative rock, and from R&B to commercially flavoured dance music. Still, the reputation as a party town persists, which is down to the punters themselves, for Dubliners really know how to have a good time.

The seemingly endless list of what's on is constantly changing, so check out the listings in the *Event Guide* and *In Dublin*; the listings here are by no means exhaustive. Most clubs open just after pubs close (11.30pm to midnight) and close at 2.30am or 3am. Admission to most costs between €5 and €8 Sunday to Thursday, rising to as much as €15 or €20 on Friday and Saturday. For gay and lesbian clubs, see p136.

Tripod (Map p80; ☎ 478 0025; www.pod.ie; 35 Harcourt St; admission €5-20; ☎ Mon-Sat) Launched in late 2006 on the site of former club PoD in the atmospheric old Harcourt Street station, Tripod now integrates three venues (geddit?): a state-of-the-art 1300-capacity live rock and pop venue, a smaller dance club and the intimate live venue *Crawdaddy* (opposite).

Village (Map p132; ☎ 475 8555; 26 Wexford St; www.thevillagevenue.com; admission €8-10; ☎ Thu-Sat) When the live music ends (see p133), the club kicks off, taking 600-odd groovers through a consistent mix of new and old tunes, dance-floor classics and whatever else will shake that booty. A great venue, an eager crowd and an overall top night out.

Underground@Kennedy's (Map p132; ☎ 661 1124; 31-32 Westland Row; ☎ 11.30pm-2.30am Fri & Sat) Beneath this busy pub is a suitably sweaty, darkened room that plays regular host to some top-class local and international DJs playing a variety of styles from house to hip-hop.

Lillie's Bordello (Map p132; ☎ 679 9204; www.lilliesbordello.ie; Adam Ct; admission €10-20; ☎ 11pm-3am) Lillie's is strictly for big hairs, wannabes and visiting rock stars. Don't think you'll get to rub shoulders with celebs though, as they'll be whisked out of view and into the VIP room in a flash. As you might expect, the music is mostly safe and commercial.

Renard's (Map p132; ☎ 677 5876; www.renards.ie; South Frederick St; admission free-€10; ☎ 10.30pm-2.30am) Run by Colin Farrell's godfather, this is the

actor's (and other celebs') favourite den of iniquity when in town. Renard's is an intimate club with a strict door policy when busy; music is mainly house, with soul, funk and jazz making the odd appearance.

Rogue (Map p132; ☎ 675 3971; 64 Dame St; admission €8-12; ☎ 11.30pm-3am Mon-Sat) A relative newcomer on the block, Rogue is an intimate two-floored venue that's home to the Bodytonic crew, who decamped from now defunct Wax. Expect to hear melodic and deep house and techno at the excellent *Discothon* on Saturday nights.

Hub (Map p132; ☎ 670 7655; 11 Eustace St; admission €6-15) Arctic Monkeys, We are Scientists and comedian Jimmy Carr have all graced the decks at the legendary rock-indie-electronic night *Trashed* on Tuesdays, hosted by Trev Radiator. Otherwise it's a mixed bag of indie hits and drinks promos for all and sundry.

Rí Rá (Map p132; ☎ 677 4835; Dame Ct; admission €5-11; ☎ Mon-Sat) This long-established club changed hands in 2007, but the new owners are bent on continuing the long-standing commitment to music without frenetic beats – for now, at least. The emphasis has long been on funky stuff, from soul to hip-hop, but there's plenty of rock thrown in and Monday's '80s-fest *Strictly Handbag* is now in its 16th year. Upstairs, the *Globe bar* (p133) converts into a chilled-out drink and chat area.

Live Music

Bookings can be made either directly at the venues or through **HMV** (Map p86; ☎ 679 5334; 65 Grafton St) or **Ticketmaster** (☎ 0818 719 300, 456 9569; www.ticketmaster.ie), but they charge between 9% and 12.5% service charge *per ticket*, not *per booking*, on credit-card bookings.

CLASSICAL MUSIC & OPERA VENUES

Classical music concerts and opera take place in a number of city-centre venues. There are also occasional performances in churches; check the press for details.

National Concert Hall (Map p80; ☎ 417 0000; www.nch.ie; Earlsfort Terrace) Ireland's premier orchestral hall hosts a variety of concerts year-round, including a series of lunchtime concerts from 1.05pm to 2pm on Tuesday, June to August.

Gaiety Theatre (Map p86; ☎ 677 1717; www.gaietytheatre.com; South King St) This popular Dublin theatre hosts a programme of classical concerts and opera.

Bank of Ireland Arts Centre (Map p84; ☎ 671 1488; Foster Pl) The arts centre hosts a free, regular

midweek lunchtime recital beginning at 1.15pm, as well as an occasional evening programme of concerts. Call for details.

Helix (Map p78; ☎ 700 7000; www.thehelix.ie; Collins Ave, Glasnevin) Based in Dublin City University, the Helix hosts, among other things, an impressive array of international operatic and classical recitals and performances. To get here, take bus 11, 13, 13A or 19A from O'Connell St.

Dublin City Gallery – the Hugh Lane (Map pp82-3; ☎ 874 1903; www.hughlane.ie; Charlemont House, Parnell Sq) At noon on Sunday, from September to June, the art gallery hosts up to 30 concerts of contemporary classical music.

Royal Dublin Society Showground Concert Hall (Map p80; ☎ 668 0866; www.rds.ie; Ballsbridge) The huge hall of the RDS Showground hosts a rich programme of classical music and opera throughout the year.

ROCK & POP VENUES

Ambassador Theatre (Map pp82-3; ☎ 1890 925 100; O'Connell St) The Ambassador started life as a theatre and then became a cinema. Not much has changed inside, making it a cool retro place to see visiting and local rock acts perform.

Crawdaddy (Map p80; ☎ 478 0225; www.pod.ie; 35A Harcourt St) Named after the London club where the Stones launched their professional careers in 1963, *Crawdaddy* is an intimate bar-venue that specialises in putting on rootsy performers – from African drum bands to avant-garde jazz artists and flamenco guitarists. It is attached to the nightclub *Tripod* (opposite).

Gaiety Theatre (Map p86; ☎ 677 1717; www.gaietytheatre.com; South King St; ☎ to 4am) This old Victorian theatre is an atmospheric place to come and listen to late-night jazz, rock or blues on the weekend.

Isaac Butt (Map pp82-3; ☎ 855 5884; Store St) Local garage, rock, metal and indie bands sweat it out most nights in this grungy venue opposite Busáras.

Olympia Theatre (Map p84; ☎ 677 7744; Dame St) This pleasantly tatty place features everything from disco to country on Friday night; *Midnight at the Olympia* runs from midnight to 2am on Friday.

Point Depot (Map p80; ☎ 836 3633; East Link Bridge, North Wall Quay) This is Dublin's premier indoor venue for rock and pop acts, and artists such as Diana Ross, Prince and Jamiroquai have all played here. Originally constructed as a

GAY & LESBIAN DUBLIN

Dublin's not a bad place to be gay. Most people in the city centre wouldn't bat an eyelid at cross-dressing or public displays of affection between same-sex couples, but discretion is advised in the suburbs.

Information

Gay & Lesbian Garda Liaison Officer (☎ 666 9000) If you do encounter any sort of trouble or harassment on the streets, don't hesitate to call.

Gay Community News (www.gcn.ie) A useful nationwide news- and issues-based monthly paper. The new glossy *Q-Life* and *Free!* are entertainment guides that can be found in Temple Bar businesses and the Irish Film Institute on Eustace St.

Gay Switchboard Dublin (☎ 872 1055; www.gayswitchboard.ie) A friendly and useful voluntary service that provides information ranging from where to find accommodation to legal issues.

Outhouse (Map pp82-3; ☎ 873 4932; www.outhouse.ie; 105 Capel St) Top gay, lesbian and bisexual resource centre. Great stop-off point to see what's on, check notice boards and meet people. It publishes the free *Ireland's Pink Pages*, a directory of gay-centric services, which is also accessible on the website. If you do encounter any sort of trouble or harassment on the streets, don't hesitate to call the Outhouse.

Sexual Assault Unit (Map pp82-3; ☎ 666 6000) Call or visit the Pearse St Garda station.

Festivals & Events

Pride (www.dublinpride.org) A week-long festival of theatre, performance, music, readings and – inevitably – a high-energy, colourful parade through the city centre for the city's queers, dykes, bis and fetishists.

Lesbian & Gay Film Festival (☎ 670 6377; www.irishculture.net/filmfestival) An international film and documentary festival held at the Irish Film Institute in August.

Sleeping

Frankies Guesthouse (Map pp82-3; ☎ 478 3087; www.frankiesguesthouse.com; 8 Camden Pl; s €40-60, d €90-110) Although most of the city's hotels wouldn't think twice about checking in same-sex couples, the same cannot be said of many of the city's B&Bs. One central option is this comfortable, exclusively gay and lesbian B&B with pleasant rooms equipped with TV, and tea and coffee facilities.

Drinking

Dragon (Map p132; ☎ 478 1590; 64-65 South Great George's St) The latest addition to Dublin's scene, this big disco-bar with colourful Asian décor, comfy booths and small dance floor attracts young pre-George revellers.

George (Map p132; ☎ 478 2983; 89 South Great George's St) You can't miss the bright purple George, Temple Bar's only overtly gay bar, which has a reputation for becoming ever more wild and wacky as the night progresses. At 6.30pm on Sunday it is packed for an enormously popular bingo night, while Thursday night is the Missing Link game show hosted by Annie Balls.

Front Lounge (Map p132; ☎ 670 4112; 33 Parliament St) A lavish lounge attracting a mixed upmarket clientele. Drag queen Panti runs the cabaret and karaoke night, Casting Couch, on Tuesday.

Entertainment

There are plenty of clubs that run gay and lesbian nights. The scene is constantly changing, however, and while the nights listed are pretty steady, we recommend that you call ahead to confirm that they're still on. Check www.gay-ireland.com for other entertainment venues.

Boilerhouse Sauna (Map p84; ☎ 677 3130; 12 Crane Lane; admission €20; ☎ 1pm-6am Sun-Thu, 24hr Fri & Sat) This is a popular late-night destination for people looking to sweat it out after partying at George (see above), just around the corner. It's big and very clean, and is reputed to be the best-run of Dublin's saunas.

Rí Rá (Map p132; ☎ 677 4835; Dame Ct) Strictly Handbag is a long-running Monday night at one of Dublin's friendlier clubs. It's not exclusively gay, but it is popular with the gay community.

rail terminus in 1878, it has a capacity of around 6000.

Sugar Club (Map p80; ☎ 678 7188; 8 Lower Leeson St) There's live jazz, cabaret and soul music at weekends in this comfortable new theatre-style venue on the corner of St Stephen's Green.

Temple Bar Music Centre (Map p84; ☎ 670 0533; Curved St) The centre hosts all kinds of gigs, from Irish traditional to drum and bass, for a non-image-conscious crowd.

Vicar Street (Map pp82-3; ☎ 454 5533; www.vicarstreet.com; 58-59 Thomas St) Smaller performances take place at this intimate venue, near Christ Church Cathedral. It has a capacity of 1000 spread between table-serviced group seating downstairs and a theatre-style balcony. It has a varied programme of performers, with a strong emphasis on folk and jazz.

Village (Map p86; ☎ 475 8555; www.thevillagevenue.com; 26 Wexford St) An attractive midsize venue that is a popular stop for acts on the way up and down, the Village has gigs virtually every night of the week, featuring a diverse range of rock bands and solo performers. It is also a good showcase for local singer-songwriters.

Whelan's (Map p86; ☎ 478 0766; www.whelanslive.com; 25 Wexford St;) Whelan's is such an institution with Irish singer-songwriters and other lo-fi performers that the press often refer to them as the 'Whelan's clique'. They include the likes of Glen Hansard & The Frames, Paddy Casey, Mark Geary, Damien Rice and Mundy.

Sport

Croke Park Stadium (Map p80; ☎ 836 3222; www.gaa.ie; Conliffe Rd) Hurling and Gaelic football games are held from February to November at this stadium, north of the Royal Canal in Drumcondra. From late 2006 until the redevelopment of the Lansdowne Road stadium is completed, rugby and football internationals are played here too. Catch bus 19 or 19A to get here. For more on the stadium, see *When History Really Matters*, p110.

Harold's Cross Park (Map p80; ☎ 497 1081; 151 Harold's Cross Rd; adult/child €7/2; ☎ 6.30-10.30pm Mon, Tue & Fri) Greyhound racing takes place near Rathmines in this newly revamped venue. Take bus 16 or 16A from the city centre.

Leopardstown Race Course (Map p78; ☎ 289 3607; Foxrock) The Irish love of horse racing can be observed about 10km south of the city centre in Foxrock. Special buses depart from the

city centre on race days; call the racecourse for details.

Shelbourne Park Greyhound Stadium (Map p80; ☎ 668 3502, on race nights ☎ 202 6601; Bridge Town Rd, Ringsend; adult/child €8/4; ☎ 6.30-10.30pm Wed, Thu & Sat) A top-class dog track with terrific vantage points from the glassed-in restaurant, where you can eat, bet and watch without leaving your seat. Take bus 3 from D'Olier St.

Theatre

Dublin's theatre scene is small but busy. Bookings can usually be made by quoting a credit-card number over the phone, and the tickets can then be collected just before the performance.

Abbey Theatre (Map pp82-3; ☎ 878 7222; www.abbeytheatre.ie; Lower Abbey St) The famous Abbey Theatre, near the river, is Ireland's national theatre. It puts on new Irish works, as well as revivals of classic Irish plays by writers such as WB Yeats, JM Synge, Sean O'Casey, Brendan Behan and Samuel Beckett. Tickets for evening performances cost up to €25, except on Monday, when they are cheaper. The smaller and less expensive Peacock Theatre (Map pp82-3; ☎ 878 7222) is part of the same complex.

Ark (Map p84; ☎ 670 7788; 11A Eustace St) A 150-seater venue that stages shows for kids aged between five and 13.

Gaiety Theatre (Map p86; ☎ 677 1717; www.gaietytheatre.com; South King St) Opened in 1871, this theatre is used for modern plays, TV shows, musical comedies and revues.

Gate Theatre (Map pp82-3; ☎ 874 4045; www.gatetheatre.ie; 1 Cavendish Row) To the north of the Liffey, the Gate Theatre specialises in international classics and older Irish works with a touch of comedy by playwrights such as Oscar Wilde, George Bernard Shaw and Oliver Goldsmith, although newer plays are sometimes staged too. Prices vary according to what's on, but they're usually around €20.

Helix (Map p78; ☎ 700 7000; www.thehelix.ie; Collins Ave, Glasnevin) The Helix, Dublin City University's new theatre venue, has already established its reputation as a serious theatre with its mix of accessible and challenging productions. To get here, take bus 11, 13, 13A or 19A from O'Connell St.

International Bar (Map p86; ☎ 677 9250; 23 Wicklow St) This is one of several pubs that host theatrical performances; it also hosts

comedy on Wednesday evening at 9.30pm (admission €9).

Olympia Theatre (Map p84; ☎ 677 7744; 72 Dame St) This theatre specialises in light plays and, at Christmastime, pantomimes.

Players' Theatre (Map p91; ☎ 677 2941, ext 1239; Regent House, Trinity College) The Trinity College Players' Theatre hosts student productions throughout the academic year, as well as the most prestigious plays from the Dublin Theatre Festival in October.

Project Arts Centre (Map p84; ☎ 1850 260 027; www.project.ie; 39 East Essex St) This centre puts on excellent productions of experimental plays by up-and-coming Irish and foreign writers.

Tivoli Theatre (Map p84; ☎ 454 4472; 135-136 Francis St) Experimental and less commercial performances take place here.

SHOPPING

Dubliners only recently acquired the kind of disposable income required for retail therapy, but a Saturday stroll would make you think that they're making up for lost time and that the shops were in danger of running out of goods. Weekends are the worst: the main shopping districts are chock-a-block with gaggles of teenagers, pram-pushing families, serious consumer couples, tourists and the odd elderly lady bravely making her way through the chaos.

Unless you enjoy the hustle and bustle, save your shopping for weekdays – the earlier the better.

British and US chains dominate the high street and major shopping centres but there are also numerous small, independent shops selling high-quality, locally made goods. Irish designer clothing and streetwear, handmade jewellery, unusual homewares and crafts, and cheeses to die for are readily available if you know where to look.

While souvenir hunters can still buy toy sheep, Guinness magnets and shamrock tea towels, a new breed of craft shop offers one-off or limited-edition crafts and art. Traditional Irish products such as crystal and knitwear remain popular choices, and you can increasingly find innovative modern takes on the classics.

Grafton St is the city's most prestigious shopping thoroughfare, but it's largely the domain of the British-style high-street shop, as is busy Henry St, just off O'Connell St. In

the warren of streets between Grafton St and South Great George's St, you'll find a plethora of Irish-owned fashion outlets, jewellers and secondhand stores. Francis St in the Liberties is great for antiques and art.

Citizens of non-EU countries can reclaim the VAT (value-added tax) paid on purchases made at stores displaying a cash-back sticker; ask for details.

Most department stores and shopping centres are open from 9am to 6pm Monday to Saturday (open to 8pm Thursday) and noon to 6pm Sunday.

Department Stores & Shopping Centres

Powerscourt Townhouse Shopping Centre (Map p86; ☎ 679 4144; 59 South William St) The wonderful Powerscourt Townhouse Shopping Centre, just to the west of Grafton St, is a big, modern shopping centre in a fine old building. There are some decent restaurants on all its floors, and the Irish Design Centre sells the work of up-and-coming Irish fashion designers.

Arnott's (Map p84; ☎ 805 0400; 12 Henry St) Occupying a huge block with entrances on Henry, Liffey and Abbey Sts, this formerly mediocre department store has been completely overhauled and is now probably Dublin's best. It stocks virtually everything you could possibly want to buy, from garden furniture to high fashion, and everything is relatively affordable.

Brown Thomas (Map p86; ☎ 605 6666; 92 Grafton St) This is Dublin's most expensive department store, suitably stocked to cater for the city's more moneyed shoppers. You'll find every top label represented here.

Dundrum Town Centre (Map p78; ☎ 299 1700; Sandyford Rd, Dundrum; ☎ 9am-9pm Mon-Fri, 8.30am-7pm Sat, 10am-7pm Sun) Modern Ireland's grandest cathedral is this huge shopping and entertainment complex in the southern suburb of Dundrum. Over 100 retail outlets are represented. To get here, take the Luas to Ballaly, or catch bus 17, 44C, 48A or 75 from the city centre.

St Stephen's Green Shopping Centre (Map p86; ☎ 478 0888; St Stephen's Green) Inside this flash shopping centre you will discover a diverse mixture of chain stores and individual shops.

Jervis St Centre (Map p84; ☎ 878 1323; Jervis St) Just north of the Capel St Bridge, this is an ultramodern mall with dozens of outlets.

DUBLIN MARKETS

Blackberry Fair (Map p80; Lower Rathmines Rd; ☎ 10am-5pm Sat-Sun) You'll have to rummage through a lot of junk to find a gem in this charmingly run-down weekend market that stocks furniture, records and a few clothes stalls. It's cheap though.

Blackrock Market (Main St, Blackrock; ☎ 11am-5.30pm Sat & Sun) This long-running market, in an old merchant house and yard in the seaside village of Blackrock, south of Dublin, has all manner of stalls selling everything from New Age crystals to futons.

George's St Arcade (Map p86; George's St Arcade; ☎ 9am-6pm Mon-Sat, 10am-6pm Sun) This excellent covered market between South Great George's and Drury Sts has some great secondhand clothes shops, and stalls selling Mediterranean food, jewellery and records.

Meeting House Square Market (Map p84; Meeting House Sq; ☎ 8am-5pm Sat) This open-air food market in Temple Bar takes place every Saturday, but get here early for the best pickings and to avoid the huge crowds. With a multitude of stalls selling top organic produce from around the country, you can also buy diverse snacks such as sushi, waffles, tapas, oysters and handmade cheeses.

Clery's & Co (Map pp82-3; ☎ 878 6000; O'Connell St) This graceful shop is a Dublin classic. Recently restored to its elegant best, it caters to the more conservative Dublin shopper.

Debenham's (Map pp82-3; ☎ 873 0044; Henry St) This UK giant hit these shores in 2006; it's bold and glass-fronted on the outside and holds street-smart fashion labels such as Zara, Warehouse and G-Star on the inside, as well as the obligatory homewares and electrical sections.

ILAC Centre (Map pp82-3; ☎ 704 1460) Off Henry St near O'Connell St, the ILAC Centre is a little dilapidated but has some interesting outlets with goods at affordable prices.

Clothing

Temple Bar and the area around Grafton St are the best places for all kinds of designer gear, both new and secondhand.

Costume (Map p86; ☎ 679 5200; 10 Castle Market) From casuals to sparkly full-length dresses, Costume specialises in stylish contemporary women's wear from young European designers. Its own Costume label sits alongside pieces by Temperley, Anna Sui, newcomer Jonathan Saunders and Irish label Leighlee.

Smock (Map p84; ☎ 613 9000; Smock Alley Ct, West Essex St) This tiny designer shop on the edge of Temple Bar sells cutting-edge international women's wear from classy 'investment labels' Easton Pearson, Veronique Branquinho and AF Vandevorft, as well as a small range of interesting jewellery and lingerie.

5 Scarlet Row (Map p84; ☎ 672 9534; 5 Scarlet Row) Beautiful, modern, exclusive, minimalist. If that's what you're after, try the creations of

Eley Kishimoto, Zero, Irish designer Sharon Wauchob and mens' wear label Unis at 5 Scarlet Row. Co-owner Eileen Shields worked with Donna Karan in New York before returning to found her own gorgeous shoe label, which retails here.

BT2 (Map p86; ☎ 679 5666; 88 Grafton St) This is Brown Thomas' young and funky offshoot, with high-end casuals for men and women and a juice bar upstairs overlooking Grafton St. Brands include DKNY, Custom, Diesel, Ted Baker and Tommy Hilfiger.

Jenny Vander (Map p86; ☎ 677 0406; 50 Drury St) A visit to Jenny Vander is like walking into an exotic 1940s boudoir. The selection of antique clothing, hats and jewellery is pretty wild, although you won't find many bargains.

Urban Outfitters (Map p86; ☎ 670 6202; 4 Cecilia St) Its loyal clientele think it's the funkiest shop in town, and they're not far wrong, with the latest styles complemented by the coolest gift items and even a trendy record store.

Irish Crafts & Souvenirs

Avoca Handweavers (Map p84; ☎ 677 4215; 11-13 Suffolk St) This contemporary craft shop is a treasure trove of interesting Irish and foreign products. The colourful shop is chock-a-block with woollen knits, ceramics, handcrafted gadgets and a wonderful toy selection – and not a tweed cap in sight.

Claddagh Records (Map p84; ☎ 677 0262; 2 Cecilia St) This shop sells a wide range of Irish traditional and folk music.

DesignYard (Map p84; ☎ 474 1011; Cow's Lane) A high-end craft-as-art shop where everything you see – be it glass, batik, sculpture,

painting – is one-off and handmade in Ireland. It also showcases contemporary jewellery from young international designers.

Kilkenny Shop (Map p86; ☎ 677 7066; 6 Nassau St) This shop has a wonderful selection of finely made Irish crafts, featuring clothing, glassware, pottery, jewellery, crystal and silver from some of Ireland's best designers.

GETTING THERE & AWAY

Air

Dublin Airport (Map p78; ☎ 814 1111; www.dublinair.com), 13km north of the centre, is Ireland's major international gateway airport, with direct flights from Europe, North America and Asia. For information on who flies in and out of here, see p716 and p720.

Boat

Dublin has two ferry ports: the **Dun Laoghaire ferry terminal** (☎ 280 1905; Dun Laoghaire), 13km southeast of the city, serves Holyhead in Wales and can be reached by DART to Dun Laoghaire, or bus 7, 7A or 8 from Burgh Quay or bus 46A from Trinity College; and the **Dublin Port terminal** (Map p78; ☎ 855 2222; Alexandra Rd), 3km northeast of the city centre, serves Holyhead, Mostyn and Liverpool.

Buses from Busáras are timed to coincide with arrivals and departures: for the 9.45am ferry departure from Dublin Port, buses leave Busáras at 8.30am. For the 9.45pm departure, buses depart from Busáras at 8.30pm. For the 1am sailing to Liverpool, the bus departs from Busáras at 11.45pm. All bus trips cost €2.

See p719 for details of ferry journeys.

Bus

Busáras (Map pp82-3; ☎ 836 6111; www.buseireann.ie; Store St) is just north of the river behind Custom House.

For information on fares, frequencies and durations to various destinations in the Republic and Northern Ireland, see p721.

Car & Motorcycle

A number of hire companies have desks at the airport, and other operators are based close to the airport and deliver cars for airport collection. Listed are some of the main hire companies in Dublin:

Avis (www.avis.com) City (Map pp82-3; ☎ 605 7500; 1 East Hanover St); Dublin Airport (☎ 844 5204)

Budget (www.budgetcarrental.ie) City (Map p80; ☎ 837 9802; 151 Lower Drumcondra Rd); Dublin Airport (☎ 844 5150)

Dan Dooley Car Hire (www.dan-dooley.ie) City (Map p86; ☎ 677 2723; 42-43 Westland Row); Dublin Airport (☎ 844 5156)

Europcar (www.europcar.com) City (Map p80; ☎ 614 2800; Baggot St Bridge); Dublin Airport (☎ 844 4179)

Hertz (www.hertz.com) City (Map p80; ☎ 660 2255; 149 Upper Leeson St); Dublin Airport (☎ 844 5466)

Sixt Rent-a-Car (www.icr.ie) City (☎ 862 2715; Old Airport Rd, Santry); Dublin Airport (☎ 844 4199)

Thrifty (www.thrifty.ie) City (Map p80; ☎ 1800 515 800; 125 Herberton Bridge, just off South Circular Rd); Dublin Airport (☎ 840 0800)

Train

For general train information, contact **Iarnród Éireann Travel Centre** (Map p84; ☎ 836 6222; www.irishrail.ie; 35 Lower Abbey St; ☎ 9am-5pm Mon-Fri, 9am-1pm Sat). **Connolly Station** (Map pp82-3; ☎ 836 3333), just north of the Liffey and the city centre, is the station for Belfast, Derry, Sligo and other northern destinations. **Heuston Station** (Map pp82-3; ☎ 836 5421), just south of the Liffey and well west of the centre, is the station for Cork, Galway, Killarney, Limerick, Wexford, Waterford and other destinations west, south and southwest of Dublin. See p725 for more information.

GETTING AROUND To/From the Airport

There is no train service to/from the airport, but there are bus and taxi options.

BUS

Aircoach (☎ 844 7118; www.aircoach.ie; one way/return €7/12) Private coach service with two routes from the airport to 18 destinations throughout the city, including the main streets of the city centre. Coaches run every 10 to 15 minutes between 6am and midnight, then hourly from midnight until 6am.

Airlink Express Coach (☎ 872 0000, 873 4222; www.dublinbus.ie; adult/child €5/2) Bus 747 runs every 10 to 20 minutes from 5.45am to 11.30pm between the airport, central bus station (Busáras) and Dublin Bus office on Upper O'Connell St; bus 748 runs every 15 to 30 minutes from 6.50am to 10.05pm between the airport, and Heuston and Connolly Stations.

Dublin Bus (☎ 872 0000; www.dublinbus.ie; 59 Upper O'Connell St; adult/child €2/0.75) A number of buses serve the airport from various points in Dublin, including buses 16A (Rathfarnham), 746 (Dun Laoghaire) and 230 (Portmarnock); all cross the city centre on their way to the airport.

TAXI

There is a taxi rank directly outside the arrivals concourse. A taxi should cost about €20 from the airport to the city centre, including a supplementary charge of €2.50 (not applied going to the airport). Make sure the meter is switched on.

Car & Motorcycle

Traffic in Dublin is a nightmare and parking is an expensive headache. There are no free spots to park anywhere in the city centre during business hours (7am to 7pm Monday to Saturday), but there are plenty of parking meters, 'pay and display' spots (€2.50 to €4.80 per hour), and over a dozen sheltered and supervised car parks (around €5 per hour).

Clamping of illegally parked cars is thoroughly enforced, with a €80 charge for removal. Parking is free after 7pm Monday to Saturday and all day Sunday in all metered spots and on single yellow lines.

Car theft and break-ins are a problem, and the police advise visitors to park in a supervised car park. Cars with foreign number plates are prime targets; never leave your valuables behind. When you are booking accommodation, check on parking facilities.

Public Transport BUS

The office of **Dublin Bus** (Map pp82-3; ☎ 872 0000; www.dublinbus.ie; 59 Upper O'Connell St; ☎ 9am-5.30pm Mon-Fri, 9am-2pm Sat) has free single-route timetables of all its services.

Buses run from around 6am (some start at 5.30am) to 11.30pm. Fares are calculated according to stages: one to three stages costs €1, four to seven stages €1.40, eight to 13 stages €1.60, and 14 to 23 stages €1.90. You must tender exact change for tickets when boarding buses; anything more and you

will be given a receipt for reimbursement, which is only possible at the Dublin Bus main office.

LUAS

The **Luas** (www.luas.ie; ☎ 5.30am-12.30am Mon-Fri, from 6.30am Sat, 7am-11.30pm Sun) light-rail system has two lines: the Green Line (trains every five to 15 minutes), which connects St Stephen's Green with Sandyford in south Dublin via Ranelagh and Dundrum; and the Red Line (trains every 20 minutes), which runs from Lower Abbey St to Tallaght via the north quays and Heuston Station. There are ticket machines at every stop or you can buy tickets from newsagencies throughout the city centre; a typical short-hop fare will cost you €1.70.

NITELINK

These late-night buses run from the College St, Westmoreland St and D'Olier St triangle, covering most of Dublin's suburbs. Buses leave at 12.30am and 2am Monday to Wednesday, and every 20 minutes between 12.30am and 3.30am Thursday to Saturday. Tickets start at €4.

TRAIN

The **Dublin Area Rapid Transport** (DART; ☎ 836 6222; www.irishrail.ie) provides quick train access to the coast as far north as Howth (about 30 minutes) and as far south as Greystones in county Wicklow. Pearse Station (Map p86) is convenient for central Dublin south of the Liffey, and Connolly Station for north of the Liffey. There are services every 10 to 20 minutes, sometimes even more frequently, from around 6.30am to midnight Monday to Saturday. Services are less frequent on Sunday. Dublin to Dun Laoghaire takes about 15 to 20 minutes. A one-way DART ticket

FARE-SAVER PASSES:

- **Adult Short Hop** (€8.80) Valid for unlimited one-day travel on Dublin Bus, DART and suburban rail travel, but not Nitelink or Airlink.
- **Bus/Luas Pass** (adult/child €6.50/3.10) One day unlimited travel on both bus and Luas.
- **Family Bus & Rail Short Hop** (€13.50) Valid for travel for one day for a family of two adults and two children aged under 16 on all bus and rail services except for Nitelink, Airlink, ferry services and tours.
- **Rambler Pass** (1/2/5/7 days €6/11/17.30/21) Valid for unlimited travel on all Dublin Bus and Airlink services, but not Nitelink.

from Dublin to Dun Laoghaire or Howth costs €2.20; to Bray it's €2.50.

There are also suburban rail services north as far as Dundalk, inland to Mullingar and south past Bray to Arklow.

Some DART passes:

Adult Weekly Inner Rail Pass (€23) Valid on all DART and suburban train services between Bray to the south and Rush and Lusk to the north.

All Day Ticket (€7.20) One-day unlimited travel on DART and suburban rail services.

Taxi

All taxi fares begin with a flagfall fare of €3.80, followed by €1.50 per kilometre thereafter from 8am to 10pm. In addition there are a number of extra charges – €1 for each extra passenger and €2 for telephone bookings; there is no charge for luggage.

Taxis can be hailed on the street and found at taxi ranks around the city, including O'Connell St, College Green in front of Trinity College and St Stephen's Green at the end of Grafton St. There are numerous taxi companies that will dispatch taxis by radio. Some options:

City Cabs (☎ 872 2688)

National Radio Cabs (☎ 677 2222)

Phone the **Garda Carriage Office** (☎ 475 5888) if you have any complaints about taxis or queries regarding lost property.

AROUND DUBLIN

At the first sight of the sun – or any kind of tolerable weather – Dubliners like to get out of the city, and for many the destination is one of the small seaside villages that surround the capital. To the north are the lovely villages of Howth and Malahide, slowly and reluctantly being sucked into the Dublin conglomeration, while to the south is Dalkey, which has long since given up the fight but has managed to retain that village vibe.

DALKEY

South of Dun Laoghaire is Dalkey (Deilginis), which has the remains of a number of old castles. On Castle St, the main street, two 16th-century castles face each other: **Archibald's Castle** and **Goat Castle**. Next to the latter is the ancient **St Begnet's Church**, dating from the 9th century. **Bullock Castle**, overlook-

ing Bullock Harbour, north of town, was built by the monks of St Mary's Abbey in Dublin in the 12th century.

Goat Castle and St Begnet's Church have recently been converted into the **Dalkey Castle & Heritage Centre** (☎ 285 8366; www.dalkeycastle.com; Castle St; adult/child/student €6/4/5; ☎ 9.30am-5pm Mon-Fri, 11am-5pm Sat & Sun). Models, displays and exhibitions form a pretty interesting history of Dalkey and give an insight into the area during medieval times.

Dalkey has several holy wells, including **St Begnet's Holy Well**, next to the ruins of another church dedicated to St Begnet on the 9-hectare **Dalkey Island**, a few hundred metres offshore from Coliemore Harbour. Reputed to cure rheumatism, the well is a popular destination for tourists and the faithful alike. To get here, you can hire a boat with a small outboard engine in Coliemore Harbour. To get one, simply show up (you can't book them in advance); they cost around €25 per hour.

To the south there are good views from the small park at Sorrento Point and from Killiney Hill. **Dalkey Quarry** is a popular site for rock climbers, and originally provided most of the granite for the gigantic piers at Dun Laoghaire Harbour. A number of rocky **swimming pools** are found along the Dalkey coast.

Queen's (☎ 285 4569; 12 Castle St; lunch €8-10; ☎ noon-4pm & 5-7.30pm Mon-Fri, noon-4pm Sat & Sun) is a Dalkey institution offering a great pub lunch of meat and fish dishes.

The Dalkey branch of **Jaipur** (☎ 285 0552; 23 Castle St; mains €15-20; ☎ noon-11pm), an excellent city-centre Indian restaurant (see p127), does more of the same here.

OK, so it's not strictly Dalkey, but all self-respecting crustacean-lovers should make the 1km trip to **Caviston's Seafood Restaurant** (☎ 280 9245; Glashule Rd, Sandycove; mains €14-28; ☎ noon-6pm Tue-Sat) for a meal to remember. Local fish and seafood are cooked simply with imaginative ingredients that enhance rather than overpower their flavour.

Dalkey is on the DART suburban train line or, for a slower journey, you can catch bus 8 from Burgh Quay in Dublin. Both cost €2.

HOWTH

The pretty fishing village of Howth (Binn Éadair), built on steep steps that run down to the waterfront, is a popular excursion from Dublin and has developed as a residential suburb of the city. The most desirable properties

are on the hill above the village, located on a bulbous head that juts into the northern edge of Dublin Bay. The views from the top are magnificent. Although the harbour's role as a shipping port has long gone, Howth is a major fishing centre and yachting harbour.

Howth is only 15km from central Dublin and easily reached by DART or by simply following the Clontarf Rd out around the northern bay shoreline. En route you pass Clontarf, site of the pivotal clash between Celtic and Viking forces at the Battle of Clontarf in 1014. Further along is North Bull Island, a wildlife sanctuary where many migratory birds pause in winter.

History

Howth's name (which rhymes with 'both') has Viking origins and comes from the Danish word *hoved* (head). Howth Harbour was built from 1807 and was at that time the main Dublin harbour for the packet boats from England. Howth Rd was built to ensure rapid transfer of incoming mail and dispatches from the harbour to the city. The replacement of sailing packets with steam packets in 1818 reduced the transit time from Holyhead to seven hours, but Howth's period of importance was short – by 1813 the harbour was already showing signs of silting up, and it was superseded by Dun Laoghaire in 1833. The most famous arrival to Howth was King George IV, who visited Ireland in 1821 and

is chiefly remembered because he staggered off the boat in a highly inebriated state. He did manage to leave his footprint at the point where he stepped ashore on the West Pier.

In 1914 Robert Erskine Childers' yacht, *Asgard*, brought a cargo of 900 rifles into the port to arm the nationalists. During the Civil War, Childers was court-martialled by his former comrades and executed by firing squad for illegal possession of a revolver. The *Asgard* is now on display at Kilmainham Jail (p103) in Dublin.

Sights

AROUND THE PENINSULA

Most of the town backs onto the extensive grounds of **Howth Castle**, built in 1564 but much changed over the years, most recently in 1910 when Sir Edwin Lutyens gave it a modernist make-over. Today the castle is divided into four very posh and private residences. The original estate was acquired in 1177 by the Norman noble Sir Almeric Tristram, who changed his surname to St Lawrence after winning a battle at the behest (or so he believed) of his favourite saint. The family has owned the land ever since, though the unbroken chain of male succession came to an end in 1909.

On the grounds are the ruins of the 16th-century **Corr Castle** and an ancient dolmen (tomb chamber or portal tomb made of vertical stones topped by a huge capstone) known as **Aideen's Grave**. Legend has it that Aideen

DETOUR: SANDYCOVE & JAMES JOYCE MUSEUM

About 1km north of Dalkey is Sandycove, with a pretty little beach and the **Martello tower** – built by British forces to keep an eye out for a Napoleonic invasion – which now houses the **James Joyce Museum** (☎ 280 9265; Sandycove; adult/child/student €7/4.20/6; ☎ 10am-1pm & 2-5pm Mon-Sat, 2-6pm Sun Apr-Oct, by arrangement only Nov-Mar). This is where the action begins in James Joyce's epic novel *Ulysses*. The museum was opened in 1962 by Sylvia Beach – the Paris-based publisher who first dared to put *Ulysses* into print – and has photographs, letters, documents, various editions of Joyce's work and two death masks of Joyce on display. A combined ticket for the James Joyce Museum, the Shaw Birthplace and the Writers Museum is adult/student/child €12/10/7.40.

Below the Martello tower is the **Forty Foot Pool**, an open-air sea-water bathing pool that took its name from the Fortieth Foot, an army regiment that was stationed at the tower until the regiment was disbanded in 1904. At the close of the first chapter of *Ulysses*, Buck Mulligan heads off to the Forty Foot Pool for a morning swim. A morning wake-up here is still a local tradition, winter or summer. In fact, a winter dip isn't much braver than a summer one since the water temperature varies by only about 5°C. Basically, it's always bloody cold.

Pressure from female bathers eventually opened this public stretch of water, originally nudist and for men only, to both sexes despite strong opposition from the 'forty foot gentlemen'. They eventually compromised with the ruling that a Togs Must Be Worn sign would now apply after 9am. Prior to that time nudity prevails and swimmers are still predominantly male.

died of a broken heart after her husband was killed at the Battle of Gavra near Tara in AD 184, but the legend is rubbish because the dolmen is at least 300 years older than that.

The **castle gardens** (admission free; ☞ 24hr) are worth visiting, as they're noted for their rhododendrons (which bloom in May and June), azaleas and a long, 10m-high beech hedge planted in 1710.

Also within the grounds are the ruins of **St Mary's Abbey** (Abbey St, Howth Castle; admission free), originally founded in 1042 by the Viking King Sitric, who also founded the original church on the site of Christ Church Cathedral. The abbey was amalgamated with the monastery on Ireland's Eye (right) in 1235. Some parts of the ruins date from that time, but most are from the 15th and 16th centuries. The tomb of Christopher St Lawrence (Lord Howth), in the southeastern corner, dates from around 1470. See the caretaker or read instructions on the gate for opening times.

A more recent addition is the rather ramshackle **National Transport Museum** (☞ 832 0427; www.nationaltransportmuseum.org; Howth Castle; adult/child/student €3.50/2/2; ☞ 10am-5pm Mon-Sat Jun-Aug, 2-5pm Sat, Sun & bank holidays Sep-May), which has a range of exhibits, including double-decker buses, a bakery van, fire engines and trams – most notably a Hill of Howth electric tram that operated from 1901 to 1959. To reach the museum, go through the castle gates and turn right just before the castle.

The allure of history and public transport aside, most visitors set foot in the demesne armed with golf clubs, as here you'll find **Deer Park Golf Course** (☞ 832 2624; Howth Castle; 18 holes Mon-Fri €17.50, Sat & Sun €25, club rental €16; ☞ 8am-dusk Mon-Fri, 6.30am-dusk Sat & Sun), a public facility attached to a hotel. An 18-hole course, two nine-hole courses and a par-3 course, all with splendid views of Dublin Bay and the surrounding countryside – once described by HG Wells as the best view west of Naples – are the big draw.

Howth is essentially a very large hill surrounded by cliffs, and **Howth Summit** (171m) has excellent views across Dublin Bay right down to Wicklow. From the Summit you can walk to the top of the Ben of Howth, which has a cairn said to mark a 2000-year-old Celtic **royal grave**. The 1814 **Baily Lighthouse** at the southeastern corner is on the site of an old stone fort and can be reached by a dramatic cliff-top walk. There was an earlier hilltop beacon here in 1670.

IRELAND'S EYE

A short distance offshore from Howth is Ireland's Eye (Map p78), a rocky sea-bird sanctuary with the ruins of a 6th-century monastery. There's a Martello tower at the northwestern end of the island, where boats from Howth land, while a spectacularly sheer rock face plummets into the sea at the eastern end. As well as the sea birds overhead, you can see young birds on the ground during the nesting season. Seals can also be spotted around the island.

Doyle & Sons (☞ 831 4200; return €12) takes boats out to the island from the East Pier of Howth Harbour during the summer, usually on weekend afternoons. Don't wear shorts if you're planning to visit the monastery ruins because they're surrounded by a thicket of stinging nettles. And bring your rubbish back with you – far too many island visitors don't.

Further north from Ireland's Eye is **Lambay Island**, an important sea-bird sanctuary that cannot be visited.

Sleeping & Eating

Wright's Findlater (☞ 832 4488; www.wrightsfindlater.howth.com; Harbour Rd; mains €10-21) A modern all-in restaurant, bar and lounge, Wright's Findlater's has an Asian-influenced restaurant, Lemongrass, on the 1st floor, above a stylish bar that does terrific grub with an emphasis on fish.

Abbey Tavern (☞ 839 0307; www.abbeytavern.ie; Abbey St; mains €22-26, 3-course dinner €38) This atmospheric 16th-century tavern serves better-than-average pub grub, with an emphasis on seafood and meat. There's a bar menu all day.

King Sitric (☞ 832 5235; www.kingsitric.ie; East Pier; mains €35-48, 5-course dinner €55; ☞ lunch & dinner Mon-Fri, dinner only Sat) Howth's most famous restaurant, praised for its superb seafood and prize-winning wine list, has added eight marvellous rooms (€145 to €205) to its premises right on the port. Each is named after a lighthouse, and all are extremely well decorated, with wonderful views of the port.

If you want to buy food and prepare it yourself, Howth has fine seafood that you can buy fresh from the string of shops on West Pier.

Getting There & Away

The easiest and quickest way to get to Howth from Dublin is on the DART, which whisks you there in just over 20 minutes for a fare

of €2. For the same fare, buses 31 and 31A from Lower Abbey St in the city centre run as far as the Summit, 5km to the southeast of Howth.

MALAHIDE

Malahide (Mullach Ide) was once a small village with its own harbour, a long way from the urban jungle of Dublin. The only thing protecting it from the northwards expansion of Dublin's suburbs is Malahide Demesne, 101 well-tended hectares of parkland dominated by a castle once owned by the powerful Talbot family. The handsome village remains relatively intact, but the once quiet marina has been massively developed and is now a bustling centre with a pleasant promenade and plenty of restaurants and shops. A great way to Dublin from the sea is by boarding a speedboat run by **Sea Safaris** (☞ 806 1626; www.seasafaris.ie; Malahide Marina; per hr €25) and going for an hour-long trip around Dublin Bay.

Sights

MALAHIDE CASTLE

Despite the vicissitudes of Irish history, the Talbot family managed to keep **Malahide Castle** (☞ 846 2184; www.malahidecastle.com; adult/child/student/family €7/4.40/6/20, incl Fry Model Railway €12/7.50/10/34; ☞ 10am-5pm Mon-Sat, 11am-6pm Sun Apr-Oct, 11am-5pm Sat & Sun Nov-Mar) under its control from 1185 to 1976, apart from when Cromwell was around (1649-60). It's now owned by Dublin County Council. The castle is the usual hotchpotch of additions and renovations; the oldest part is a three-storey 12th-century tower house. The

façade is flanked by circular towers that were tacked on in 1765.

The castle is packed with furniture and paintings. Highlights are a 16th-century oak room with decorative carvings, and the medieval Great Hall, which has family portraits, a minstrel's gallery and a painting of the Battle of the Boyne. Puck, the Talbot family ghost, is said to have last appeared in 1975.

The **parkland** (admission free; ☞ 10am-9pm Apr-Oct, 10am-5pm Nov-Mar) around the castle is a good place for a picnic.

FRY MODEL RAILWAY

Ireland's biggest **model railway** (☞ 846 3779; Malahide Castle; adult/child/student/family €7/4.40/6/20; ☞ 10am-1pm & 2-5pm Mon-Sat, 2-6pm Sun Apr-Sep, 2-5pm Sat, Sun & holidays Oct-Mar) is 240 sq metres, and authentically displays much of Ireland's rail and public transport system, including the DART line and Irish Sea ferry services, in O-gauge (32mm track width). A separate room features model trains and other memorabilia. Unfortunately the operators suffer from the overseriousness of some grown men with complicated toys; rather than let you simply look and admire, they herd you into the control room in groups for demonstrations.

Getting There & Away

Malahide is 13km north of Dublin. Bus 42 (€2) from Talbot St takes around 45 minutes. The DART stops in Malahide (€2.35), but be sure to get on the right train (it's marked at the front of the train) as the line splits at Howth Junction.

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