

www.govisitdonegal.com



## **COUNTY DONEGAL**

CRUISE TOURISM DESTINATION OF EXCELLENCE
ON THE WILD ATLANTIC WAY

# **F**oreword

02

Our Location

04

#### Cruise Destinations

Rathmullan

Greencastle

Killybegs

Tory Island

Burtonport/Arranmore Island

12

**Excursion Inspiration** 





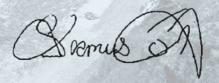
## **Foreword**

It gives me great pleasure and pride to pen a foreword for this cruise tourism brochure which outlines the magic and mystery of one of Ireland's jewels on the North West Coast of County Donegal on the Wild Atlantic Way. County Donegal has over 1134 km of the longest mainland coastline of Ireland where the coastal scenery is rugged, unspoiled and simply breathtaking. Harbours such as Killybegs and Greencastle are well equipped to welcome cruise ships along with new cruise destinations in Donegal such as Rathmullan and the Donegal Islands; there has never been a better time to put County Donegal on a cruise ship itinerary. County Donegal was voted the 'coolest place on the planet' by National Geographic and Ireland's 'hidden gem' by Independent Travel in recent years. Donegal Airport at Carrickfinn has been named 'most scenic landing in the world' for 2018 and 2019. With a myriad of accolades, an abundance of scenic beauty spots, wonderful attractions and of course the connection with the people make County Donegal a new and unique cruise destination waiting to be discovered.

Cruise operators can choose from a host of excursions to suit all passenger tastes and timescales. Experience a taste of history and heritage at Glencolmcille Folk Village. Enjoy a walk in the gardens and a tour of the famous Glenveagh National Park. Sample locally produced whiskey at Sliabh Liag Distillery. Take a trip to Donegal Town for a weaving demonstration of traditional tweeds at Magee 1866 or a visit to Hanna Hats. Enjoy the sights and sounds of the Inishowen Peninsula. For those who want to get outdoors, there are many places where passengers can enjoy maritime activities, wildlife watching, photography, local crafts, music and dance and much more. Donegal is home to three of the Signature Discovery Points of the Wild Atlantic Way and a myriad of other hidden gems of the route.

Sliabh Liag cliffs close to Killybegs are amongst the highest in Europe and offer many walking routes with panoramic coastal views that are truly stunning. Fanad Head Lighthouse has been guiding sailors to safety for over 200 years and now has a Visitor Centre offering tours to the top of the lighthouse tower. Malin Head was a film location for the Star Wars franchise and is a must for visitors. Since cruise ships began visiting County Donegal, the local community groups in the ports and harbours where they berth along with the Donegal County Council and Donegal Tourism CLG have gone to extraordinary lengths to give visitors a special and heartfelt Donegal welcome. I am confident that each and every visitor, both passengers and crew arriving in any port or harbour in Donegal will remember the authentic experience of visiting Donegal. Cruise ships will have the pleasure of dropping anchor in areas rich in culture and heritage, peppered with historic castles and scenic national parks where modern urban towns are juxtaposed with picturesque villages with a relaxed pace of life. Donegal is a place to connect with nature and has a wide variety of experiences on offer with something for everyone. We look forward to welcoming cruise ships to County Donegal and will do our utmost to ensure a positive and unforgettable experience here in Donegal.

Cllr. Seamus O'Domhnaill Cathaoirleach Donegal County Council





## Rathmullan

Rathmullan is situated on the western shores of Lough Swilly and is a renowned seaside resort with 2.5 kilometres of unspoilt beach stretching North from the pier to the end of the Kinnegar strand. A wide range of outdoor activities is available with some of the finest Sailing, Golfing, Fishing and Sightseeing opportunities in the vicinity. Located on the Wild Atlantic Way between Malin Head to the Northeast and Fanad Head to the Northwest it is a fast-developing heritage, adventure and activities destination.

The village of Rathmullan has a permanent population of approximately 500 (Census 2016) which has remained relatively static over the past 10 years. However, with the large number of holiday homes in the area the population increases considerably during holiday and summer periods.

Lough Swilly covers 154 square kilometres and is 40 kilometres long down its main channel and reaches a width of over 5 kilometres near its mouth. The depth at the entrance between Fanad Head and Dunaff Head is from 30 to 40 metres but much of the lough South of Dunree Head is 15 to 20 metres depth. Tides run strongly between 1 and 2 knots and the tidal range can reach 4.5 meters at its peak. The dominant wind direction in the Lough is West to Southwest which is also the general direction of waves within the Lough. For many centuries Lough Swilly was an important refuge for shipping from the North Atlantic and much of Rathmullan's history and heritage relates to its maritime location. A modern "Shannon Class" RNLI lifeboat is located at Buncrana which provides search and rescue capability in the Lough and off the North Donegal Coast.

Rathmullan is a place that will capture the imagination and create lasting memories.

Today the pier at Rathmullan is one of the few deep-water, 24-hour accessible harbours on the north coast of Ireland. The pier can accommodate vessels up to 90 meters in length and has a minimum depth of 8 meters. Users of the pier include the Irish Navy, Irish Lights, Cruise Vessels, commercial fishing boats and fish farm operators. The adjoining 90 metre long pontoon is used by charter boats and leisure craft. During the summer months a roro car ferry uses the slipway to provide a ferry link across the Lough to Buncrana and onwards to Inishowen.

### Harbour Information.....

NAVIGATION - ENTRANCE- Lough Swilly Entrance WPT 55° 17′.00N 07° 34′.2W 3.5NM wide at entrance. Deep buoyed navigable channel with no restrictions

NAVIGATION - PIER HEAD 15NM from entrance FI G 3s 5M, vis: 206° - 345°, 55° 05′.70N 07° 31′.66W

**PIER HEAD LENGTH** 50 meters. Bollards and Fully fendered. Suitable for vessels up to 90 mts LOA

**DEPTH AT PIER HEAD - TIDAL** 8.0 meters at LAT – Stream 0.5 – 2 knots

AIR DRAFT No restriction

MAXIMUM BEAM No restriction

#### ANCHORAGE AND LANDING PONTOON

Anchor in 17 meters water depth Northeast of pier head.90 meters sheltered landing pontoon available for tenders. Controlled access to pontoon.

**ACCESS TO PIER HEAD** Security gate with controlled personnel and vehicular access

**DISTANCE FROM TOWN CENTER** 70 meters to town center. Direct walking access to local facilities, beaches, heritage sites and coach parking

**HARBOR MASTER** David McGloin - +353 (86) 832 8302 Patrick Ward - +353 (87) 961 9252

## Greencastle

Y reencastle in Inishowen is an important fishing harbour on the banks of the beautiful Lough Foyle and takes its name from the castle, built in 1305 by Richard de Burgo, the Earl of Ulster, to guard the entrance to Lough Foyle. The castle was originally known as North Burg, it then became Newcastle and finally Greencastle, this was because of the greenish stone from which it was built. Inishowen Maritime Museum & Planetarium is located at the Old Coast Guard station in Greencastle and is a fantastic day out for cruise ship passengers. Inishowen Maritime Museum is an absolute gem. This wonderful museum and planetarium houses extensive nautical exhibits, photographs and ancient maritime equipment. The state of the art planetarium has its own theatre and stages regular shows.

ry a round of golf at Greencastle Golf Club a beautiful 18 hole Inks course which nestles in the idyllic surrounds of the Inishowen Peninsula. Inishowen Head Loop Walk is an 8km walk starting at Inishowen Head. This moderate walk takes about 3 hours to complete and provides great views of Lough Foyle, the North Coast and the Inishowen Peninsula. On a fine day, the West of Scotland is visible. Greencastle is the only place in Ireland that you can get a boat and travel south to Northern Ireland! The basking shark is commonly found off the coast of Donegal is the second-largest fish in the ocean, after the whale shark growing to at least 32 feet long! You may also see the Northern Lights, Aurora Borealis in Donegal.

#### Harbour Information.....

NAVIGATION - ENTRANCE - FOYLE BUOY Latitude: 55°15.322'N (WGS 84) Longitude: 006°52.616′W

**NAVIGATION - PIER HEAD** - 55° 12.089′ N. 006° 59.134'WThis is the position of the east pier head at the harbour entrance where a light stands Fl. G3s 5M.

PIER HEAD LENGTH - 11 mts

#### **ANCHORAGE AND LANDING PONTOON -**

Anchorage: 55° 11.928'N 6° 59.105W (WGS 84)

Depth: 12m

MAXIMUM BEAM 15 mts on pier head by arrangement and 30 inside harbour

ACCESS TO PIER HEAD - Open, Marina restricted

**DISTANCE FROM TOWN CENTER** - 300 mts



## Killybegs

on the famous Wild Atlantic Way and within touring distance of the Slieve League cliffs and Donegal Town & Castle, passengers are free to walk from the ship to the town centre which is 1.2km from the quayside. The Killybegs Tourist Information Centre is located along the way and representatives will be present on the quayside with maps and advice to assist any passengers or crew interested in exploring the town or surrounding area.

I / illybegs is Ireland's largest fishing port and also a popular cruise ship destination. Also known as the gateway to Sliabh Liag, Killybegs is a lively fishing town with a great selection of pubs and restaurants serving the freshest catch of the day. Killybegs now has been welcoming cruise ships for a number of years and has all the facilities and services visiting cruise ships require. Take the coast road from Killybegs to visit Muckross Head and on to Sliabh Liag, the highest accessible sea cliffs in Europe and travel into the heart of the Gaeltacht stopping off at Glen Folk Village to catch a glimpse of what life was like in the rural coastal town of Glencolmcille many years ago. Visit the Killybegs International Carpet Making & Fishing Centre. See the largest hand-knotted loom in the world, view live demonstrations of how hand-knotting is done, and also have the opportunity to test your own skills at the loom. View the largest fishing fleet in Ireland in its natural harbour or take a walk on the beautiful Fintra beach located nearby.

## Harbour Information.....

MAXIMUM OVERALL LENGTH AT BERTH: 345m

DRAFT AT MAIN BERTH: Min 12m Water at MLWS (and on approaches)

MAXIMUM BEAM - No restriction

AIR DRAFT - No restriction

HARBOUR MASTER- Fergal Hegarty +353 (0) 74 973 1032

ches)

Plan Your Cruise Itinerary on www.govisitdonegal.com

berth has it all. A rich maritime heritage, a vibrant coastal culture where old meets new and a warm welcome awaits.

## Tory Island

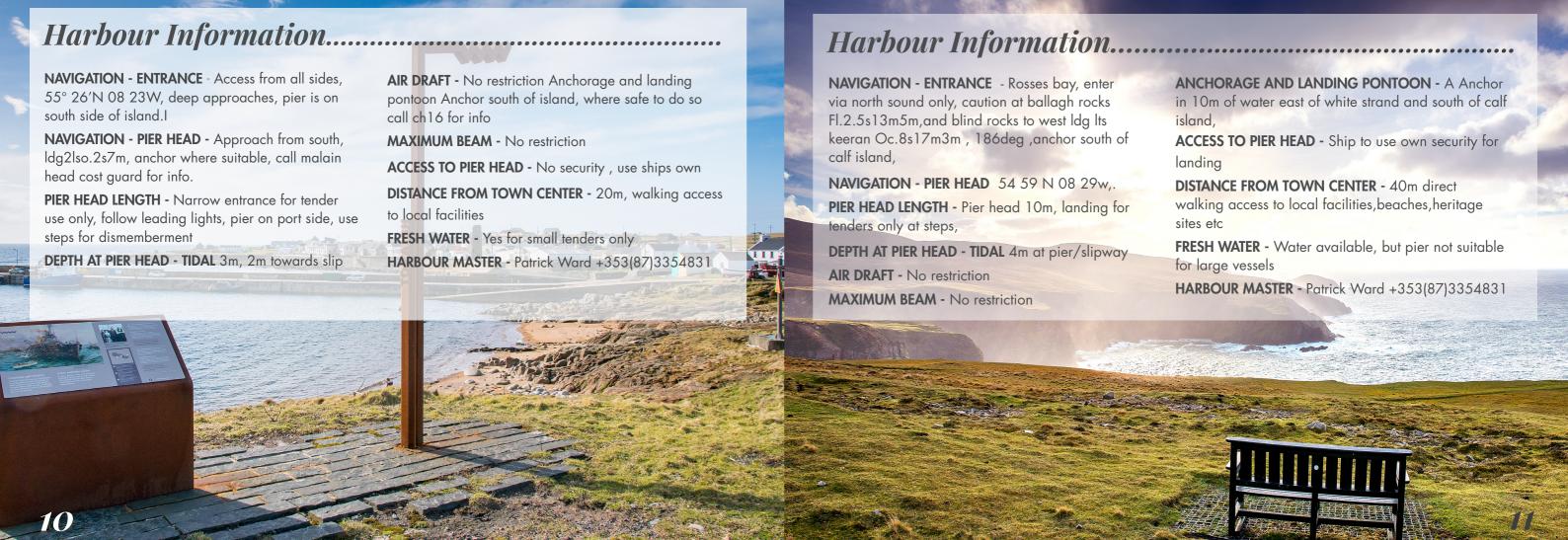
Tory Island's name conjures up images of majesty and beauty and is the northernmost outpost of Donegal's thriving Gaeltacht culture. Rare birdlife and wild flowers find shelter on the Island. The finest musicians, storytellers and dancers host sessions that linger into the early hours. Tory & spectacular cliff scenery is complemented by a rich and varied history which is related in the islanders distinctive Gaelic. Colm Cille figures prominently in the history of this sacred island. Take in the rugged attractions on the Tory Island Loop walk. This gentle walk will allow you to explore a range of interesting historical sites including a round tower that once protected monks from Viking raids, the ruins of St. Colmcille's 6 th Century monastery and the intriguing Tau Cross.

Experience Tory lifestyle first hand by spending a night in one on the Island and attending one of the regular Céilí's and experience the rich traditional culture of the Island that is expressed through music and dance. Tory's Wishing Stone, Leac na Leannán in Gaeilge, is a flat-topped rock jutting out over the northern cliff-face of Balor's Fort. It invites visitors to make a wish. A wish can also be granted to she or he who succeeds in throwing three stones in a row on to the stone.

## Burtonport/Arranmore Island

There is a feeling of enchantment from the moment you step off the cruise ship tender at Burtonport. Arranmore Island or Árainn Mhór in Irish is wild and untamed and has a rich and vibrant heritage and culture. The Gaelic traditions are still thriving here so experience a real taste of Gaeltacht island life. The Sli Arainn Mhor (Arranmore Loop Walk) is part of the Bealach na Gaeltachta, a National Waymarked Way with stunning views in all directions. Highlights include bird watching along the cliffs, Arranmore Lighthouse and the historical 'cave of slaughter'. Check out the dramatic sea caves and golden sandy beaches of Arranmore Island.

The clear waters of the surrounding ocean of Arranmore Island provide the perfect marine leisure destination for those who love to get outdoors and try activities such as diving, sea angling, sailing, kayaking and many more wet and wild adventures. Freshwater lakes on the island are an angler's paradise offering brown and rainbow trout catches. Take a Sea Safari trip around Arranmore Island visit the numerous offshore islands which are havens of peacefulness and tranquillity where nature and wildlife prosper without interruption. Cliffs, beaches, rocky outcrops, sea stacks, sea caves provide perfect habitats for marine life as well as superb photographic opportunities for cruise ship visitors.



### **Excursion Inspiration**

When planning excursions, cruise operators have plenty of choice in Donegal, where you will find a range of high quality attractions for your passengers to enjoy. Across Donegal you will find a everything from historic castles to national parks & gardens, great shopping opportunities and world class visitor centres. Cruise operators will find attractions to suit a variety of cruise passengers and it is possible to plan excursions that vary in terms of time and distance from your chosen port or harbour. Here are some examples of Donegal's most popular cruise ship excursions:

Get Inspired on www.govisitdonegal.com



#### **Donegal Castle**

Located in Donegal Town, this historic castle was built by the O'Donnell chieftains in the 15th century, beside the River Eske. The Castle has extensive 17th century additions by Sir Basil Brooke and is furnished throughout with Persian rugs and French tapestries. Learn about the history of the Castle owners from the O'Donnell chieftains to the Brooke family on a guided tour. Donegal Town is a popular retail town and home to Magee 1866, a department store which was founded on handwoven tweed over 150 years ago. Tweed was handwoven in Donegal by fishermen/farmers and weavers in the late 1800's/early 1900's and the store offers demonstrations of traditional hand weaving.



#### Grianán of Aileach

Perched 800ft above sea level on a spectacular hilltop, the Grianán of Aileach fort is a former home of Irish High Kings.

The origins of this ancient circular site are believed to date from around 1700 BC. It has connections with Irish monasteries but it's history stretches far beyond Christianity and the place is steeped in myth and legend. The terraced fort is well preserved and the sweeping views take in patchwork fields and lakes as well as the winder hilly countryside. It is a historic landmark that will dazzle cruise visitors.



#### Glencolmcille Folk Village

There are few better places to delve into the past than Glencolmcille Folk Village. Located on the West Coast of Donegal in the Gaeltacht, the Folk Village will definitely make for an unforgettable cruise ship excursion. The clachan, or village comprises eight thatched whitewashed Irish cottages showcasing the various years of Irish culture. Exhibitions include a fisherman's cottage, a traditional pub and a shoemakers shop. Passengers can step off the cruise ship and step into the past with a visit to Glencolmcille Folk Village.





#### Malin Head

Malin Head on the Inishowen Peninsula, is a signature discovery point on the Wild Atlantic Way. Inishowen is a 100 mile circuit along the coast where cruise excursions are popular as there are many attractions on the journey towards Malin Head, Ireland's most northerly point. Malin Head was a film location for the Star Wars franchise in 2016 and is renowned for its rugged coastal landscape and attractive beaches. The circuit of the head will take you past the radio station, built in 1910, and round the coast to Banba's Crown, the northern tip of Ireland. Here, a tall derelict building known locally as The Tower, was constructed in 1805 by the Admiralty and later used as a Lloyds signal station which served as a most important news link connecting America and Europe.

#### **Donegal Islands**

Donegal's islands offer something special, a place to get away from it all and a feeling of being somewhere unlike anywhere else in the world. The inhabited islands have ferry services from various ports on the mainland, so they are ideal for cruise ship excursions. Visits to the islands can include wildlife watching as they are habitats for many birds and animals. This is the perfect way to connect with nature and to experience island life and culture in some of Ireland's unrivalled beauty spots.





#### **Glenveagh National Park**

Glenveagh National Park is a remote and hauntingly beautiful wilderness of rugged mountains, pristine lakes, tumbling waterfalls and enchanted native oak woodland in the heart of the Derryveagh Mountains in the north west of County Donegal. At the centre of the Park on the edge of Lough Veagh is Glenveagh Castle, a late 19th century castellated mansion, built as a hunting lodge. Cruise passengers can enjoy delicious lunch in the castle tea rooms, a stroll in the magnificent gardens and a historic tour of the castle with a local guide.

Get Inspired on www.govisitdonegal.com

12



#### Oakfield Park

Oakfield Park is an eighteenth century Georgian Deanery, which has won several National awards for the restoration of its gardens and buildings. Sitting in a lush landscape of parklands and mature woodlands, overlooking the distant Croaghan Mountain, the grounds include a traditional walled garden and kitchen garden. Cruise ship excursions to Oakfield Park offer a relaxed day out with a walk in the gardens, sampling home baking in the tearooms or a short train ride around the estate.

#### **Errigal Mountain**

The distinctive white conical peak of Errigal is the highest point in County Donegal. Errigal Mountain is an iconic landmark in Donegal, as is the Poisoned Glen close by where views over Dunlewey capture the imagination. For cruise ship excursions there are a number of points of interest here including traditional Irish pubs such as Leo's Tavern home place of Irish musicians Enya and Clannad, the Dunlewey Centre and a hike on Errigal Mountain itself is also possible.

#### **Beltany Stone Circle**

For thousands of years the landscape of Donegal has been an important centre of ritual practise, a place of worship, to where pre-Christian ancestors came to pay homage to their spiritual rulers - the Sun and the Moon. Beltany Stone Circle is a pre-historic Bronze Age stone circle just south of Raphoe town dating from circa 2100-700 BC. The name of this solitary hill recalls the Celtic springtime festival of Bealtaine (the ancient equivalent of May Day). It originally comprised of 80 upright stones of which 64 still stand. A place of myth and legend, for the curious cruise ship passenger, this is a must see.



#### Sliabh Liag

Sliabh Liag is Ireland's ultimate sea cliff experience and a signature point on the Wild Atlantic Way coastal touring route. Sliabh Liag is a place of sacred Christian pilgrimage and a rich Irish heritage and culture. Sliabh Liag is the highest accessible sea cliffs in Europe where the cliff face of Bunglas rises over 600m above the ocean below. Prepare to be dazzled by the panoramic view across Donegal Bay, which is simply breathtaking. Experience the unique wonders of the natural biodiversity of marine flora and fauna found here. Sliabh Liag is a walker's paradise and offers various trails for different skill and fitness levels. The famous One Man's Path loops around onto the Pilgrim's Path and is not for the faint hearted. Whether passengers just want to enjoy the view or take a brisk walk in the fresh air, Sliabh Liag is a highlight of any cruise ship excursion.



#### Cycling.....

Bike hire is available locally and if you wish to arrange a cycling excursion then bike hire can be arranged along with transport and there are a variety of routes available of varying durations taking in both tranquil countryside and villages. The Donegal Cycle Route starts in Donegal Town and the North West Cycle Trail is also available. The Inis Eoghain Cycleway is a 55km circular cycle route, connecting Lough Swilly and the River Foyle.



#### Culture.....

Culture is part of who we are in Donegal. Through our culture we express and celebrate who we are as a diverse, traditional and modern people. Donegal culture strikes a unique beat which can be heard across the mountains and lakes of Donegal, Ireland and the world. Donegal also boasts a year round programme of unique and exciting festivals and events with something to suit every taste. Many of these festivals and events take place during the visit of cruise ships.



#### Nature & Wildlife.....

The landscape in Donegal is rugged and unspoiled. Donegal is the perfect place for nature lovers to reconnect with the great outdoors and unwind in beautiful natural countryside. Enjoy a sea safari with a local charter boat and guide where passengers can spot local wildlife such as dolphins and seals. Visit some of the world's best bird sanctuaries. Enjoy the Donegal Garden Trail. There are many opportunities for photography in stunning locations.



#### Local Crafts.....

Crafts people in Donegal have taken inspiration from the landscape of Donegal for centuries. From Donegal tweed to sculptures made of bog oak, the land has literally made its way into the crafts of Donegal. But that's not all that Donegal crafts have to offer. Experience them for yourself in all their inspirational beauty. Local crafts people have come together to put on special craft fair events to coincide with the visit of cruise ships to Donegal.

#### Adventure.....

For passengers who want to try something totally new activities. Choose from sea-stack climbing, coasteering, SUP (Stand Up Paddle) boarding or windsurfing, there is something for everyone and these excursions are facilitated by trained approved guides. Passengers can also try horse riding, which is a very popular activity available in our many equestrian centres. What better way to see Donegal than on horseback along a gorgeous beach or quiet country road.





#### Angling.....

Clean rivers, famous for their prolific runs of salmon, numerous sea trout and wild game fisheries entice anglers from many parts of the world. The Wild Atlantic Way coastline offers shore angling while deep sea fishing is also available. With an abundance of wild and plentiful fish stocks, fully equipped sea angling licensed charter boats and a huge choice of stunning locations, Donegal is the ideal place for an angling excursion where cruise passengers aim for that catch of a lifetime.



#### Islands & the Gaeltacht.....

For cruise ship passengers who wish to immerse themselves in the local traditions and way of life, the Donegal Gaeltacht is a must visit experience on any cruise ship excursion. Hear the local Gaelic language spoken fluently where it thrives alongside the traditions of Irish song, dance and folklore. A visit to the Donegal Islands which is possible by day trip is a great way to see a vibrancy of Irish culture and Island life that is both inspiring and engaging. The wild and beautiful islands have captured the imagination of visitors for thousands of years and provided stimulus for artists and writers alike.



#### Watersports.....

For the watersports enthusiasts on board, Donegal offers a range of exciting watersports activities. Surfing all year round on one of our blue flag beaches is amazing. Kayaking along the coast through sea caves in crystal clear water is unforgettable. There are many diving locations to suit both the leisure and technical divers on board; Donegal is famous for the large number of shipwrecks and underwater history.



#### Golf.....

There are only 150 links golf courses in the world and Donegal boasts 14 of these. A golf excursion in Donegal is a very popular excursion with cruise passengers who can tee-off at one of the numerous Championship Links and Parkland courses all over the county for example world-famous Ballyliffin where the Dubai Duty Free Irish Open was hosted in 2018 or the beach view golf course at Murvagh, there are many golf courses to choose from in Donegal. The challenging terrain and stunning scenery makes playing golf in Donegal unforgettable.



Whether passengers are interested in serious mountain hiking or a gentle traffic free stroll along the shore, then you will have a range of path and trail options to include on a walking & hiking excursion. Passengers can enjoy the fresh coastal air of Donegal and discover an incredible landscape of towering peaks, the natural coastal beauty, stunning peninsulas and golden beaches.





# Cruise to a unique and unforgettable destination, County Donegal has it all!

