



1

The Hill of Tara
The past is visibly engraved in the undulating landscape at Tara, where the hillside is marked by ancient earthworks, mound formations and the ruins of royal enclosures.

Location
15 mins south of Navan off the N3

Open
Access all year
Guided tours mid May-mid September
Admission Charge

Contact
+353 (0) 46 902 5903
+ 353 (0) 41 988 0300
or www.meathtourism.ie

Other Attractions
Hill of Tara Visitor Centre
"Tara - Meeting Place of Heros" - Audio visual presentation

Meath's Royal Past

At the Hill of Tara, Irish myth, legend and history are one - this magical site has been home to gods and goddesses, to druids and warriors, and to Ireland's High Kings. Tara is imbued with a magical, mythical atmosphere. It is the stuff of legends, the home of gods and heroes, not mere mortals. The Hill of Tara has a strange effect on people. From up here on the heights one sees not only into the distance, but into Tara's past. Tara has more than its share of heady stories to tell - tales of intoxicating drinks, chariot-driving High Kings and old hags who transformed themselves into beautiful women. Listen out for the Lia Fáil - singing stones which announce the presence of future kings.



2

Bective Abbey
The substantial remains of Ireland's second Cistercian monastery founded, in 1147.

Location
15min from Trim off the R161 (Navan Road)

Open
All year
Admission free

Contact
+353 (0) 46 943 7227
or www.meathtourism.ie

Bacons in the Dark

The medieval world of monks and abbeyes brings to mind an ascetic life of isolation, prayer and scholarly study. This tells only part of the story. Irish monasteries were often thriving and highly sought out enclaves of cultural creativity, quite literally beacons in the dark, responsible for preserving and passing on precious texts and for the creation of some of the world's most imaginative and fanciful Christian art.

Trim Castle
Built by Hugh de Lacy in 1173, this is the largest Anglo-Norman castle in Europe.

Location
Trim Town

Open
Easter-End October
Weekends in Winter
Admission Charge
Access to Keep/castle building by guided tour only

Contact
046 943 8619

Other Attractions
Trim Visitor Centre
"The Power and the Glory" - AV presentation
+353 (0) 46 943 7227
or www.meathtourism.ie

The Newtown Monuments
Cathedral of SS Peter & Paul
Friary of St. John the Baptist
Talbot Castle (St. Mary's Abbey) and the Yellow Steeple

The Power and The Glory

This is the stuff movies are made of. It's no wonder that the makers of the movie 'Braveheart' chose Trim in County Meath as the shooting location for their epic thriller. One look at Trim Castle's stony outline against a dramatic Irish sky and storybook images of knights and warriors spring to life.

In Medieval times, Trim Castle stood like an imposing stone sentinel and powerful symbol of Norman strength at the edge of the Pale, the small area of Anglo-Norman influence on Ireland's eastern coast. To go beyond the Pale was to enter the hostile world of the Gaelic Irish. Here at the edge, the two sides would have met - in conflict and in battle.



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Rathcairn
The village of Rathcairn is home to a lively Gaelic speaking community, where visitors interested in Irish language, music and song will find much enjoyment.

Other Attractions
Hill of Ward
2 miles outside Athboy

Contact
+353 (0) 46 943 2381
or
www.meathtourism.ie

The Medieval Town of the Yellow Ford

Athboy (Town of the Yellow Ford) is a medieval town with some of its original wall still intact. The Church of Ireland boasts an interesting medieval table tomb. Two miles from Athboy is the Hill of Ward - an Iron Age Fort which was once seat of the High Kings and a meeting place for the Celtic Festival of 'Samhain' held on 1st November, heralding the start of Winter. The last recorded celebration was 1168.

Kells, Heritage Town
The High Crosses, with biblical scenes and Celtic patterns, represent decorative artifacts of Celtic Christianity. Five premier examples can be found in Kells including the famous Market Cross.

Kells Heritage Centre
"Golden Age" - AV presentation.
Exhibition of stone and metal work plus a facsimile of the Book of Kells.

Location
Kells Courthouse

Open
All year
Admission charge

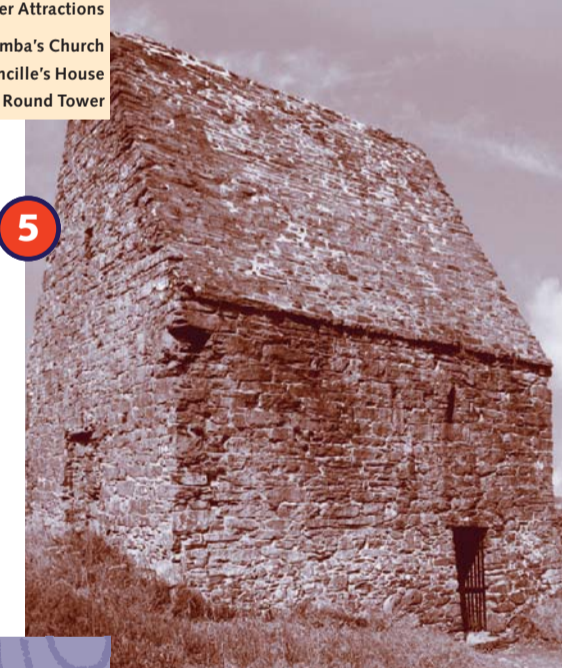
Contact
+353 (0) 46 924 7840
www.meathtourism.ie

Other Attractions
St. Columba's Church
St. Columcille's House
Round Tower

The Monastic World of Saints and Scholars

Kells or Ceanannas Mór, meaning Great Fort, a designated Irish Heritage Town, is one of the finest examples of a monastic settlement. Retracing the footsteps of the monks, one is drawn into a story of survival, of pluck and wit pitted against brawn and belligerence. Medieval monks were certainly pious, some reclusive, but most led colourful and imaginative lives. It was a question of survival in troubled times, of escaping the raids of plundering Vikings and keeping the flame of knowledge and culture alive in an age of darkness.

Columcille's name became associated with Kells after the brethren of the Iona monastery moved there to seek refuge from the hit-and-run attacks of the Vikings.



5

St Columcille's House
This 10th century oratory building in Kells is believed to have housed the much-loved saint's relics.



6

Loughcrew Cairns
Loughcrew, tells of Ireland's neolithic cultures, shrouded in myth and mystery. One legend has it that the burial mounds were created by a witch jumping from one hill to the next dropping stones from her apron to form the cairns.

Location
East of Oldcastle off the R163

Open
Access all year

Contact
+353 (0) 46 924 7840
www.meathtourism.ie

Life, Death and the Hereafter

Not all inhabitants of Loughcrew rest peacefully in the ancient soil of the area. St Oliver Plunkett, a heroic 17th century archbishop who was born in the area, was convicted of treason and hanged, drawn and quartered in the Tower of London after refusing to submit to the fiercely anti-Catholic laws of his time.

The Loughcrew Cairns are a group of passage tombs dating around 3000BC. They may have been a focal point for the community, a place to honour the dead, a symbol of the community's wealth and a territorial marker.



7

Dunmoe Castle
Two facades of this stone giant survive to stand guard over the passing Boyne.

Location
10 mins east of Navan, off the N51

Open
All year
Admission free

Other Attractions
Athlumney Castle
Built near the site of an earlier motte and bailey structure. 5 mins from Navan. Access by permission only.

Draughty Old Castles

Symbolically etched in the ruins of Meath's castles are stories of lords and ladies, of battles and struggles, of power and glory. The draughty walls of these stony fortresses provided their Norman Lords with an important stronghold in a then hostile land. They were a place of refuge in times of danger and a strategic base from which to attack, conquer and rule. Today, these draughty old symbols of Norman military and political strength lend the Meath countryside an air of romantic fantasy.



8

Hill of Slane
Home to 15th century Slane Abbey. St. Patrick lit his Pascal Fire on the Hill of Slane, in direct opposition to the pagan beliefs of the High King.

Location
Just north of Slane off the N2

Open
All year
Admission free

Other Attractions
Slane Castle
Open from May to August, Sunday to Thursday. Access by guided tour only.

The Pagan vs. Patrick

St. Patrick has become synonymous with things Irish; from shamrocks to the shortage of snakes on this Isle, but there was a time when he was viewed as a foreign Christian missionary come to convert Ireland's Celtic pagans. This he did with great symbolic flare. As the Druids celebrated their feast day on the Hill of Tara, Patrick prepared the Easter feast on the Hill of Slane. He lit his paschal fire at Slane, before the Druids could kindle their sacred fire at Tara. Seeing the flames at Slane, the Druids, warned Laegaire, the High King, that if Patrick's fire was not put out immediately, it would burn forever in Ireland. The rest is history.



9

Brú na Bóinne
The spectacular passage grave at Newgrange is the jewel in the crown of Brú na Bóinne. The site houses over 90 monuments and earthworks. Newgrange and Knowth are open to the public. Visitors can view Dowth from the outside.

Location
2km west of Donore Village on the L21

Open
Newgrange - All year
Knowth - Easter to October
Admission charge

Access to Newgrange and Knowth from Brú na Bóinne Visitor Centre only.

Pre-booking for tour groups (note that this site is extremely busy during summer months). Individuals are advised to go early in the day.

Contact
+ 353 (0) 41 988 0300
www.meathtourism.ie

Neolithic Vision

The visual artistry of Ireland's ancient civilisations remains to this day strikingly fresh and modern. Knowth's burial chambers and satellite tombs boast the richest and largest collection of megalithic art in Europe. Whorls and diamonds, lines and dots are gathered together into compositions of startling sophistication. Looking at these images with modern eyes one is struck by their surprisingly abstract decorative beauty. And when seen with the eyes of the ancients in the world of the passage tomb? Are they maps of the heavens, tracking the soul's lost loved ones? Quite possibly.

Newgrange, Brú na Bóinne, has been designated by UNESCO as a World Heritage Site.



10

Battle of the Boyne Site
Where William of Orange defeated James II in 1690.

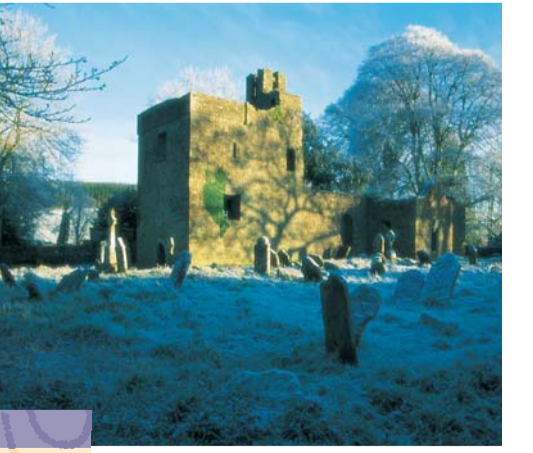
Location
On the south bank of the Boyne, 3km north of Donore Village off the L21. The site is signposted from off N51 (Slane-Drogheda Road, access for cars only this route is not suitable for coaches), off M1 (Dublin-Belfast), off N1 (Drogheda and off N2 (Slane-Ashbourne).

Open
May-September
Guided tours and self guiding walks. Group Tours can be arranged.

Contact
+353 (0) 41 988 4343
www.meathtourism.ie

Emotional Memories

Looking at the site one wouldn't expect that the Battle of the Boyne, in 1690, could have such a lasting and central impact on people's lives. 300 years after the battle, passions in Ireland still run high when the subject of James II's defeat by William of Orange comes up. It's not so much the battle as what it stands for - continuing differences between Catholics and Protestants - and the difficulty of overcoming memories of the past in search of a common future.



St Oliver's Church
This quiet graveyard is on the grounds of the Plunkett Family in Loughcrew.



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