

WELCOME

FOR OVER 5,000 years, the landscapes of Ireland's Hidden Heartlands have been shaped by ancient ritual, mythology and storytelling. From sacred hills and ceremonial sites to medieval monasteries, castles and lakes, this is a place where Ireland's past remains woven into the landscape. At the heart of this story is **Samhain** (*pronounced Sow-in*), the ancient Celtic festival that marked the end of the harvest and the beginning of winter. Celebrated more than 2,000 years ago, **Samhain** was believed to be a time when the veil between our world and the Otherworld became thin. Many of the customs associated with Halloween today can be traced back to these ancient traditions. When you visit for Samhain in the Heartlands, you'll discover remarkable heritage sites, scenic walking trails, artisan food and drink, family attractions and unforgettable experiences across Longford, Westmeath and the surrounding region. Every stop reveals another chapter in the story of the land where Halloween began.

● The numbers in red circles refer to the map overleaf.



WHERE SAMHAIN BEGAN

- 1 Rathcroghan & Oweynagat**
From the cave of *Uaimh na gCat* (Oweynagat) or Ireland's Gate to Hell, came unworldly beasts upon the feast of Samhain to ravage the landscape over winter. This royal palace was the ancient capital of Connacht and the seat of the famous Queen Medb.
- 10 Corn Hill**
A site at the highest point in Longford may also be the oldest, dating back to the Neolithic period. Take in spectacular views of ancient landscapes where Queen Medb's killer rests.
- 29 Hill of Uisneach**
Walk in the footsteps of Irish High-Kings, Gods and Goddesses at the sacred centre of Ireland, where ceremonial fires and great gatherings celebrated the turning of the seasons.
- 14 Corlea Trackway Visitor Centre**
Explore Europe's largest Iron Age road specimen, where the regenerated bog hides 5,000 years of history beneath your feet.



SACRED PLACES & FORGOTTEN STORIES

- 17 Rathcline Church & Síle-na-Gig**
Late medieval church with a remarkable Síle-na-Gig carved on the external face of the window jamb in the west gable.
- 9 St Mel's Cathedral | Longford Town**
A magnificent cathedral at the heart of Longford Town, renowned for its beautiful architecture and impressive restoration.
- 12 Maria Edgeworth Centre**
Celebrate the life and legacy of one of Ireland's most influential writers in her home town of Edgeworthstown.
- 23 Franciscan Abbey Graveyard | Athlone**
Explore the peaceful ruins of the Franciscan Abbey and uncover centuries of history through an immersive self-guided audio tour in the heart of Athlone.



FAMILY ADVENTURES

- 36 Derrymore Springs Adventure Centre | Killucan**
Enjoy kayaking, paddleboarding and outdoor adventures in beautiful surroundings.
- 4 Lough Ree Boat Trips | Lanesborough/Ballyleague**
Experience the beauty of Lough Ree aboard an accessible boat tour, offering everyone the chance to enjoy this legendary lake's islands, wildlife and rich history from the water.
- 25 Viking Tours | Athlone and Hodson Bay**
Step aboard a Viking longship and hear tales of Ireland's Norse past on the River Shannon.
- 31 Mollie Moo's Pet Farm | Mullingar**
A family favourite with friendly animals, indoor and outdoor play areas.
- 26 Dún na Sí Amenity & Heritage Park | Moate**
Step into Ireland's past as you explore traditional thatched cottages, heritage buildings and beautiful woodland trails that bring centuries of rural history to life.



CASTLES, LEGENDS & HAUNTED PLACES

- 42 Tullynally Castle | Castlepollard**
One of Ireland's finest privately-owned castles, with spectacular woodland walks and gardens.
- 30 Belvedere House & Gardens | Mullingar**
Explore elegant Georgian architecture, Victorian walled gardens and the famous Jealous Wall overlooking Lough Ennell.
- 39 Killua Castle | Clonmellon**
A striking Gothic Revival castle with a rich history and beautifully restored estate.
- 41 Fore Abbey | Castlepollard**
Explore the remarkable medieval monastery and uncover the famous Seven Wonders of Fore in one of Ireland's most atmospheric heritage sites.
- 3 National Famine Museum, Strokestown Park**
Journey through one of Ireland's most significant heritage sites, where a beautifully restored Palladian house, Victorian gardens and the National Famine Museum tell a powerful story of Ireland's past.



TASTE OF THE MIDLANDS

- 19 Lough Ree Distillery | Lanesborough**
Award-winning spirits inspired by the rich heritage and waters of Lough Ree.
- 13 Cloughan Farm | Abbeyshrule**
Experience authentic farm-to-table cooking at this family-run Longford farm, where seasonal ingredients, hands-on cookery classes and genuine Irish hospitality come together in a beautiful rural setting.
- 24 Sean's Bar | Athlone**
Step inside Ireland's oldest pub, by Athlone Castle and enjoy a unique piece of living history.
- 40 Fore Distillery | Castlepollard**
Crafting premium Irish spirits in the heart of Westmeath, blending tradition with innovation.

Markets, Cafés, Pubs & Restaurants
Savour the harvest of the midlands, with markets at Ballymahon, Clonmellon, Collinstown and Longford Town. You'll find an array of excellent cafés, restaurants and pubs across the region. Go to—
visitlongford.ie or visitwestmeath.ie



NEEMOTVH HALLOWEEN HOME OF IRELAND'S HIDDEN HEARTLANDS



SAMHAIN IN THE HEARTLANDS LONGFORD | WESTMEATH



PLAN YOUR SAMHAIN ADVENTURE

Join us to celebrate SAMHAIN. Use the map to explore the region and find the full programme of seasonal events on samhainheartlands.ie

VISIT
Longford



WESTMEATH
Discover your next adventure

**Ireland's Hidden
HEARTLANDS**



COUNTY ROSCOMMON

- 1 Rathcroghan Iron Age Royal Site (*including Oweynagat Cave*)
- 2 Rathcroghan Royal Site Visitor Centre
- 3 National Famine Museum & Strokestown Park
- 4 Lough Ree Boat Trips
- 5 Roscommon Castle
- 6 Castlestrange Scribed Stone
- 7 Clonmacnoise Early Christian Monastic Site

COUNTY LONGFORD

- 8 Longford Tourist Office
- 9 St Mel's Cathedral
- 10 Corn Hill
- 11 Knights & Conquests Heritage Centre
- 12 Maria Edgeworth Centre
- 13 Cloughan Farm & Cookery School
- 14 Corlea Trackway Visitor Centre (*Iron Age Road*)
- 15 Saint's Island
- 16 Inchcleraun
- 17 Rathcline Church & Síle-na-Gig
- 18 Rathcline Castle
- 19 Lough Ree Distillery Gin School
- 44 Retail Therapy Museum

COUNTY WESTMEATH

- 20 Athlone Tourist Information Centre
- 21 Athlone Castle
- 22 Luan Gallery
- 23 Franciscan Abbey Graveyard & Audio Tour
- 24 Sean's Bar
- 25 Viking Tours
- 26 Dún na Sí Amenity & Heritage Park
- 27 Kilbeggan Distillery Experience
- 28 Jack's Stop, Streamstown (Old Rail Trail)
- 29 Hill of Uisneach
- 30 Belvedere House, Gardens & Park
- 31 Mollie Moo's Pet Farm

- 32** Mullingar Tourist Information Centre
- 33** Mullingar Cathedral of Christ the King
- 34** Andean Alpacas
- 35** Mullingar Pewter
- 36** Derrymore Springs Water Adventure Centre
- 37** Murtagh's Organic Farm
- 38** Multyfarnham Franciscan Abbey
- 39** Killua Castle
- 40** Fore Distillery
- 41** Fore Abbey
- 42** Tullynally Castle & Gardens
- 43** Coolamber House

TÁIN BULL

 Indicating locations of significance relating to the famous Iron Age epic *Táin Bó Cúailnge*, (The Cattle Raid of Cooley), the epic tale outlines a total 585km route taken by Queen Medb and her army in an effort to secure a prize bull.

TRAILS

-  **Royal Canal Greenway**—70km of the total 138km level towpath from Clondra to Dublin.
 -  **Rebel Trail**—71km driving trail highlighting the rebel history of North County Longford.
 -  **Literary Trail**—73km driving trail highlighting the literary history of County Longford.
 -  **National Famine Way**—165km walking trail, via the Royal Canal, taken by 1,490 famine emigrants from Strokestown to Dublin in 1847.
 -  **Old Rail Trail**—43km greenway following the old railway line between Athlone and Mullingar.

SAMHAIN
IN THE
HEARTLANDS

IRELAND
HOME of
HALLOWEEN

Join us to celebrate SAMHAIN. Use the map to explore the region and find the full programme of seasonal events on samhainheartlands.ie

GALWAY 
HOME of
HALLOWEEN

GALWAY



**Ireland's Hidden
HEARTLANDS**

VISIT
Longford



Longford
LOCAL COMMUNITY
SAFETY PARTNERSHIP

WESTMEATH
Discover your next adventure



Clár Éire Ildánach
Creative Ireland
Programme

