

destinations : wellbeing tourism



Audit of Wellbeing Tourism - Ireland

Momentum

This project has been funded with support from the European Commission. This publication [communication] reflects the views only of the author, and the Commission cannot be held responsible for any use, which may be made of the information contained therein 2019-1-UK01-KA202-061904

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Co-funded by the
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Introduction to The Irish Wellbeing Tourism Sector

Holidays once meant excesses of food, drink and sleep, but more and more people want experiences that deliver on physical, emotional and spiritual levels. Wellness holidays are no longer reserved for spa breaks but have expanded to include everything from walking and yoga to extreme fitness boot camps, hot springs, skiing, cycling, cooking classes, and personal discovery. Wellness tourism is now worth an estimated €600bn globally, growing twice as fast as general tourism.

The wellness economy is alive and kicking in Ireland too. According to a recent report by research firm Euromonitor, it is worth around €2bn a year and this is likely to rise to around €2.3bn by 2020. The biggest chunk of this - €700m - was attributable to natural and healthy products while €685m was spent on functional and fortified foodstuffs. The wellness revolution in Ireland like most of the world is largely being driven by consumers and their quest for healthier lifestyles and habits, some of which have been triggered by bettering their minds, bodies and souls.

In response, Irish travel companies are increasingly catering to the demand for wellness holidays, offering new programmes which seek to alleviate stress by focusing on mindfulness and nutrition, allied with physical and mental wellbeing.

- [Macalla Farm](#), Clare Island is a retreat center and organic farm that run several retreats combining yoga with vegetarian cooking, meditation and horse riding.
- [New Wave Adventure](#) is an award-winning therapeutic intervention grounded in the disciplines of psychotherapy, counselling or social work which uses outdoor activities.
- [Mental Health and Wellbeing Summit](#), Dublin is a one-day event that focuses solely on providing practical advice, tools and information managing mental health.

Ireland has easily climbed up the wellbeing tourism ladder as the definition and understanding of 'wellbeing tourism' has extended from the traditional 'spa' and 'retreat' break to recently engaging in the outdoors, nature, adventure activities, alternative therapies, alternative retreats, nutrition and education. Top of the Irish list of wellbeing breaks appeals to any age group from families taking a 3 day cycling holiday around Connemara and the Great Western Greenway in Mayo or a couple going on a 3-day yoga and meditation retreat on the Cliffs of Moher. Both equally transforming and engaging holistic wellness, mindfulness and sustainable when the activity is continued to be practised in the home environment. Wellbeing Tourism holidays whether domestic or international are changing our holiday and living habits for the better.



Victoria Bacon, ABTA's director of brand and business development, notes how travel companies are increasingly catering to people who want to focus on their wellbeing when away — either incorporating it into their holiday or taking a dedicated wellness trip.

*“From adventure to youth to cruise brands, we have a wide range of members who can ensure holidaymakers get exactly what they want from their trips, such as offering accommodation that has **specific facilities or comprehensive wellbeing programmes...**”*
(Victoria Bacon)

Wellbeing Tourism is becoming a primary choice for travel and a near majority a second priority. Anne Dimon, president of Wellness Tourism Association, says that as more consumers are making healthier decisions in their day-to-day lives, they want to take these new practices and habits with them when they travel.

*“Because of our **newfound emphasis on ‘self-care’**, millennials to boomers are looking to take their **wellness lifestyles with them when they travel for business or pleasure**. Additionally, in smaller but growing numbers, consumers are looking to use their vacation or holiday time to plan quick or extended getaways with a **specific wellness-focus in mind**”* (Anne Dimon)

By 2022 it is predicted that 1.2 billion wellness trips will be taken globally each year. Physical fitness is an important draw for Irish holidaymakers who want to focus on wellness, with two-thirds of people planning activities such as yoga, pilates and nature hikes.

While the global adventure travel market is estimated at €80bn, the sector's value to the Irish economy is valued at €850m and growing. And it is no longer aimed at only the very fit, said the Adventure Travel Trade Association's director Russell Walters.

*“Ten years ago, adventure travel was defined as risky, exciting and might have focused on real hardcore, energetic activities. Today, there's been a maturing of the market, which, in and of itself, helps to broaden the appeal and broaden the **growth of the market through mental and physical wellbeing,**”* (Russel Walters)



National Wellbeing Government Support

Failte Ireland Supports the Potential of Wellbeing Tourism

In 2008, Fáilte Ireland, recognised the potential of the wellness sector, by developing a categorisation system and platform for health and wellness

offerings in Ireland (<http://www.discoverireland.ie/wellness>). Since then, the health and wellness sector has developed into a highly significant area of both domestic and international tourism trade. Since then the sector has largely broadened in scope from spa weekends and yoga retreats to activity-based and fitness-orientated holidays, providing increasing appeal to the emerging health-conscious consumer market.



As a result, demand for nutritionally balanced meal options has increased, thereby offering hotel, guesthouse, and local restaurant owners a unique opportunity to "Nutri-market" their menu offerings. Key to this process is the use of fresh, wholesome and locally sourced ingredients, prepared and presented with care, but also, as leaders in the sector are demonstrating, the provision of accurate nutritional and allergen menu labelling.

Failte Ireland has supported the nutrition and dietetic team at **Healthpro** Menu Mentoring®, to help a diverse range of Irish businesses to capitalise on the health and wellness market for almost a decade. Via their precise nutritional and allergen analyses, sophisticated menu and website labelling infrastructure, and dietitian-led menu advice, clients have been successfully attracting and maintaining a demographic of customers previously unattainable. For example, patrons with specific nutritional requirements, such as those engaged in sports or heavy exercise regimes, or those subject to clinically prescribed dietary intake or specific food allergies, are expertly catered for.

Failte Ireland launches 9th European Destination of Excellence EDEN Awards with the Theme Health and Wellbeing Tourism

Failte Ireland launched the 9th European Destination of Excellence EDEN to find and investigate Irish destinations offering sustainable and well developed 'health and wellbeing', tourist experiences in their regions as a potential to grow visitor numbers.



Regions and businesses included those along the **Wild Atlantic Way**, **Ireland's Ancient East**, **Ireland's Hidden Heartlands**, and **Dublin** that offer a variety of health and well-being tourism activities, including yoga and meditation, sport and fitness, and nutritional programs provided by various services and facilities from spa resorts to activity providers.

They identified highly valuable wellbeing tourism regions with different offerings to further develop and add to the Irish wellbeing portfolio. Two of the wellbeing regions are in County Sligo (one focusing on adventure and the other lifestyle wellbeing), Meath (adventure festival and event), and Leitrim (slow adventure)

Eligible destinations were those where the visitor density is low; where the tourism product has been developed using local and regional health and well-being tourism while protecting the environment and meeting the needs of visitors and residents; and where the tourism offer is managed in such a way as to ensure its social, cultural and environmental sustainability.

*“Visitors are increasingly looking to **connect with destinations and communities** which offer **authentic experiences** through nature and **local traditions** and communities across Ireland are participating in many ways to harness these assets through tourism to deliver impactful social and economic benefits for their local areas. This year's theme of health and wellbeing tourism experiences will give those destinations offering an **authentic health and well-being offering linked with their local culture and natural assets** a chance to gain recognition for their experiences on the European stage and we encourage those eligible to apply.”*

Fiona Monaghan, Fáilte Ireland's Head of Activities

The EDEN initiative aims not only to bring greater visibility to lesser-known but excellent tourist destinations, but also to help professionals and interesting localities to maximise their potential and develop tourism services in line with sustainable development principles.

Eligible destinations were those:

1. That is **“small”** or **“emerging”**, **“off the beaten track”** and **“nontraditional”** (the visitor numbers rating from low to very low in comparison with the national average). The national average is estimated to be 16,000 overnights by overseas visitors per annum.
2. The specific offer should have been **implemented at least since 2017**.
3. That offers **authentic tourism experiences**.
4. That is represented by a Management Destination Organisation that has a capacity in **sustainable tourism management**.
5. That has **local authorities** with a capacity in managing their own destination in a way to ensure social, cultural, and environmental sustainability.
6. That shall have agencies, NGO's or authorities in charge to **protect and promote the natural and cultural heritage** with a capacity in adopting sustainable tourism practices.



- Destinations that have a well-developed Health & Well-Being Tourism offering that is characteristic of the regulations

The four Irish Health and Wellbeing Destination finalists were:

- Adventure Sligo & Northwest Wellness (Sligo)
- Strandhill Community Development Association (Sligo) (overall winner)
- Slow Adventure Leitrim (Leitrim)
- Trim Tourism Network (Meath)

*“We are delighted to announce the four Irish finalists shortlisted in this year’s EDEN competition. These destinations offer a **variety of health and well-being tourism activities**, including yoga and meditation, sport and fitness, and nutritional programmes.*

Fiona Monaghan, Fáilte Ireland’s Head of Activities

*“The EDEN competition not only draws attention to emerging tourist destinations, but it also shines a light on businesses **using sustainable practices** to provide unique tourist experiences that extend the traditional tourist season’*

Fiona Monaghan, Fáilte Ireland’s Head of Activities



Strandhill European Award Winner for Best Health and Wellbeing Tourism Destination

also integrate sustainable and climate change principles into all its well-being experiences such as the amazing local producer's food market ([Strandhill Airport Hanger](#)), the delicious eateries ([Shells](#)), sea trails ([Seatrails](#)) along Killaspugbrone route, surfing ([Perfect Day Surf School](#)), yoga ([Soul Yoga Studio](#)), its thriving cultural scene, and its iconic heritage sites into its wellbeing destination.

Association for Adventure Tourism (IAAT)

[Ireland’s Association for Adventure Tourism](#) represents the outdoor activity sector and is considered a key driver to the recovery of Irish tourism, a point highlighted in the [Tourism Recovery Taskforce \(TRT\)](#) report that Activity Tourism contributes significantly to the physical and mental well-being of Irish people and our tourists.

Coillte - National State Land and Forestry Management

Coillte manages Irelands forests and recreation sites for public use for exercise, recreation and business. They link forests, rivers, lakes, canals, Blueways, national parks, nature reserves across the entire country while simultaneously, providing major public good benefits in terms of health, well-being, environment, heritage and conservation. It will also underpin the country’s



reputation for outdoor activity, allowing Ireland to compete with other destinations and attract high-profile international outdoor recreation events. According to ***their Outdoor Recreation Plan for Public Lands and Waters In Ireland 2017-2021 Report*** their goal is to focus on health and wellbeing by using public lands, trails and facilities for free, and that

‘Outdoor recreation provides very considerable benefits in terms of health and well-being generally. In addition to the direct health benefits, user quality of life is enhanced in a variety of ways by the experience of being outdoors. The utility value or economic value of ‘well-being’ associated with access to the existing public landowning is estimated to be at least €500 million per year. Indeed, this amount represents just a portion of the real benefits people realise from public lands and waterways. These benefits apply particularly to places used by local people, for example, forests or canals, and to familiar or iconic landscapes and destinations in Ireland. The ORP will contribute to the overall well-being of users and will strengthen the economic value attributed to it’.

Mindfulness Ireland is a network of people that was set up for those in Ireland who aspire to practise mindful living and mindfulness meditation according to the teachings of Thich Nhat Hanh. Mindfulness helps people to become more aware of their thoughts, feelings, and body sensations so that instead of being overwhelmed by them, they're better able to manage them. Practising mindfulness can give more insight into emotions, boost attention and concentration, and improve relationships.

[Well-being Matters: A Social Report for Ireland 2009](#)

Unique Wellbeing Location Characteristics

Ireland is an ideal wellbeing destination known for its gorgeous landscapes, rugged coastlines, epic waves, invigorating natural resources, pristine countryside and world-class amenities make it a seriously award-winning relaxation. Here are some wellbeing escapes that are destination and location-based. From luxury hotels in Galway to cycling trails in Mayo and beach yoga in Sligo, the Wild Atlantic Way Ireland has inspiring destinations that can get under your skin, such as:

Connemara, Galway for example with its endless green or golden hills, buttery bogland and scatterings of glassy lakes, a place of splendid isolation.

Yeats' Country, Sligo home to the famous Table Mountain Benbulbin is one of Ireland's most impressive natural sights. Irish poet and playwright WB Yeats felt its presence keenly,



so much so that it moved him to write the poem Under Ben Bulbin.

[*Benbulbin*](#), Yeats Country, Sligo

Cliffs of Moher, Clare The Cliffs of Moher are iconic as they pop out of the landscape and rush towards the Irish Sea creating a multifaceted experience, a historical landmark and geographical and geological wonder, a conservation hotspot and area of immense popularity

Burren, Galway. Dave Brocklebank, owner of the **Burren Yoga & Meditation Centre** explains: *“there is something natural and grounding about being in Ireland.”* The Burren Center incorporates yoga by the sea, in the Burren Hills, with vegetarian food and showcases the destination (boat trips to the Cliffs of Moher, guided hill climbs, guided walkways by the sea...) Videos [here](#).

Dave knew that location is key for the experience, which is why he set up in the west of Ireland; *“the pace of life is so unrushed – almost like stepping back 40 years in time”*. His centre uses the *“spectacular scenery”* of the Burren landscape to breathe fresh air into yoga practice with classes on a cliff overlooking the sea. He includes boat trips to the Cliffs of Moher, hill-walking, surfing, kayaking, high-quality vegetarian food and the very best teachers. Located in the Burren Geopark it has is surrounded by outstanding geological and inspiring geological heritage, vibrant villages and thriving communities.

Unusual and Different Wellbeing Places to Escape

Majestic castles, cliff-top lighthouses and country homes surrounded by lakes and forest are stunning to look at and amazing places to stay in Ireland to rejuvenate, escape and calm the mind.

Castles, of course, are most people’s dream escape. Jeremy Irons even bought his Irish castle. US presidents have visited **Dromoland Castle** in County Clare, and David Beckham married Victoria at **Luttrellstown**, County Dublin. But the pleasure is not restricted to celebrities and royalty. **Lisheen Castle** in County Tipperary is an isolated luxury and with classic interiors. Limerick’s **Fanningstown Castle** has ivy over medieval features and **Lough Rynn Castle**, Leitrim is a luxury castle with breathtaking scenery and gardens overlooking a lake.



Dromoland, Castle, Clare

Ireland has numerous other memorable accommodation escapes from glamping on manor estates, tipis by the sea, horse-drawn caravans, and yurts on [Teapot Lane](#). Anyone who wants to escape to an idyllic haven will be greeted with comfort and knowledge that they will be part of sustaining the environment.

Lisheen Castle, Tipperary*Teapot Lane, Leitrim*

[Gyreum Ecolodge](#) awarded EU Eco-label for tourist accommodation looks like something from another world: like a temple rising from the ground powered by wind turbines and solar panels. With an organic garden, organic duck eggs and homemade jams, even your morning coffee is fair trade. Chef Finn Ní Fhalaoín heads up the kitchen and the inspired vegan menu, with much of the produce from the garden. This retreat includes hikes to Carrawkeel and Queen Maeve's tomb and picnics in the wilds of Sligo. Their three-day Fit Food Retreats combine yoga, wellness workshops and cooking demos, with SUP and surfing.

Relax in a quaint, quirky traditional pub in a sleepy village go to any of the village pubs for a chat with the locals. Ireland is covered in little traditional friendly pubs and many have cosy little corner rooms beside the bar counters. Put your feed up with a hot whiskey or Guinness beside a turf fire.

Wellbeing Nutrition and Food Experiences

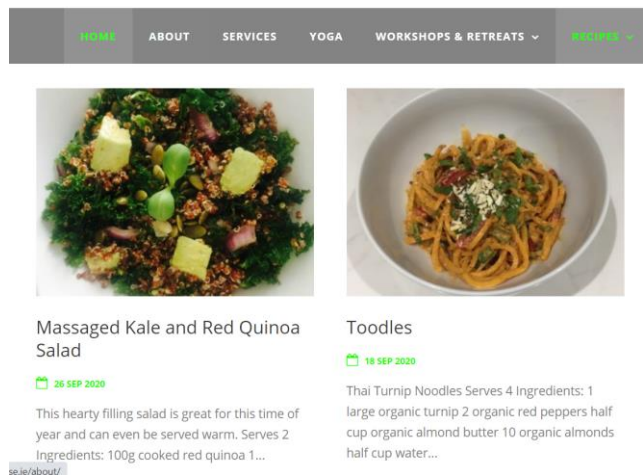
Global Wellness Institute (GWI) examined 10 sectors with the healthy eating and nutrition market in the top list which was worth another \$647bn. Especially when often combined with the growing fitness and mind-body market which was worth \$542bn. More and more people are rediscovering food as more than sustenance but as central to your own health and conversations with those around you. Nutrition wellbeing experiences options in Ireland are freshly prepared, nourishing and a range of dietary requirements can be catered for. Many include courses, fitness, detoxing, yoga and other outdoor activities for a holistic wellbeing experience. How encompassing food wellbeing can increase the benefits to your body, mind and soul.

[Creacon Wellness Retreat](#), Wexford set in the rolling green hills is an award-winning destination for yoga and meditation breaks as well as general self-care, relaxation and rejuvenation. It offers all sorts of services to revitalize mind, body and spirit, from facials to massage, acupuncture, psychotherapy or daily yoga and mindfulness classes. It has a café is open daily, offering cold-



pressed juices and healthy meals and has a famous three-day juice cleanse. The Overnight Escape package includes meals from its Food is Medicine menu.

LifeCleanse, Dublin detox and nutrition retreats by the sea at Brittas Bay. LifeCleanse provides a mix of yoga, mindfulness, vegan wholefood meals and beach walks. It includes a hands-on demonstration of founder Maria Donlon's LifeCleanse recipes, including how to make your own guilt-free treats and take-home tips to help you carry on the benefits when you go home.



LifeCleanse, [Sample Lunches](#)

Deluxe Detox: Monart, Wexford is a popular five-day detox programme, which strictly forbids alcohol, caffeine and sugar. Days are filled with a mix of high-octane classes such as piloxing and boxercise, luxurious treatments such as mud wraps and reflexology, and delicious calorie-counted menus. The programme, tailor-made to each individual, is designed to reach your ideal weight and improve fitness backed up with Caroline Monart's personal encouragements. Known as one of the world's leading destination spas, this is the ultimate five-star detox.

Irish Natural Unique Wellbeing Resources

Ireland combines its pampering with the nourishment of the island's natural resources, such as mineral-rich seaweeds, with cutting-edge treatments from around the world. Seaweed is renowned for its therapeutic qualities; marine cure therapy is one of Ireland's most famous indigenous therapies. The handpicked seaweed contains vital nutrients which are released during bathing, thus enriching, revitalising, nourishing, soothing and smoothing tired and damaged skin. Seaweed baths re-hydrate and moisturise skin, relieve psoriasis, acne and dry skin, aid back and muscular pain, ease rheumatism and arthritis and assist circulation. Seaweed is full of natural organic oils, therefore providing anti-ageing and anti-cellulite compounds making your skin vibrant as well as softened. Tiredness, tension, aches and pains slip away.



[Voya](#), Strandhill, County Sligo is responsible for bringing the therapy to international attention with a cosmetics line, this day spa attracts 40,000 visitors every year. Voya's products and treatments are based around their famed organic seaweed oil, which is harvested by hand along the pristine Atlantic coast. There are facials and seaweed body-wraps, but the simple 50-minute steep in a tub full of seaweed in one of their private or shared rooms can be summed up in one word: blissful. There are other seaweed baths all over the island, including the



Connemara Seaweed Baths in County Galway

[Connemara Seaweed Baths](#) in County Galway

[Bundoran Seaweed Baths](#), overlooking Bundoran Beach, Donegal

[Kilkee Thalassotherapy Centre](#) is a seaweed spa and guest house in Clare

[Kellys Resort Hotel Spa](#), Wexford is a hotel and spa resort

Luxury Spa Breaks

The settings for these blissful breaks are pretty special and unique. It can range from an opulent castle dating back centuries to a very modern, super-glam boutique hotel. Ireland's specialised retreats have dedicated spa experiences, such as Thalassotherapy, health spas, and seaweed baths. Guests can slide into some nourishing seaweed, steam in a sauna and let crisp clean air soak into every pore. Ireland's spas have been gaining attention worldwide.

Spas Ireland has several types of spas that bring immediate health benefits, improving blood circulation, delivering oxygen and nutrients to the cells and get you fully relaxed. Resort Spas in Ireland typically offer relaxation with a side of recreation. It is usually an estate or mountain lodge, with a picture-perfect rural or seaside backdrop. Enjoy a spot of golf, fishing, horse riding, tennis, cycling, archery or walking, before your spa treatments. Hotel Spas offer a full spa facility on top of the usual famous Irish hospitality.

The five-star [Solis Lough Eske Castle](#) spa in County Donegal is nestled into woodland along a lakeshore overlooked by a mountain range. *The Spa on the water's edge* provides pampering and natural restorative therapies, mindfulness, breathing and visualization techniques.

The [G Hotel](#) is a five-star feast luxurious hotel in Galway city, designed by milliner Philip Treacy. [ESPA](#) spa situated over two floors with hydro pool, rain showers, rock sauna...

[Monart](#) in County Wexford, experts in Condé Nast Traveller named it as one of the *top three spa*



retreats in the world both in 2010 and 2011, and it was selected as among the top 10 destinations in the world by Forbes magazine. This is a child-free, party-free destination spa, with meditation and t'ai chi taught by a Shaolin master brought over from China, and Shaolin Warrior massages. Decorated with fantasy scenery, experience deep-tissue massages with a side order of seaweed...

Cloisters Spa in Kerry's Muckross Park Hotel was anointed "*Luxury Hotel Spa of the Year*" by World Luxury Hotel Awards. Situated amongst 25,000 acres of pristine national park offers some unforgettable walks and bike rides through unbelievably beautiful scenery. A Gothic-inspired spa with monastic elegance, an extensive list of exclusive treatments and the Vitality Suite to activate muscles and stimulate the nervous system...



Cloisters Spa, Kerry



ESPA, G-Hotel, Galway

Spas Ireland

Digital Detox (*Focusing on Accommodation*)

More people are asking 'black-hole-resorts' to unplug, stand still, be present and just do nothing at all. The negative psychological and social impact of digital sensory overload and the impact it has on our brain and body is clear. Breaking free from devices by going on a digital detox helps us to become balanced and create healthy relationships and get the best out of our holiday relaxation by connecting with each other and disconnect from technology for a brief time. Here are some accommodation providers in Ireland who give you the chance to fully relax and enjoy the sights, scenery, fresh air and get the benefits of your well-earned break. You will return to work and home feeling invigorated and refreshed.

Harvey's Point, Donegal runs a 'Donegal De-stress and Digital Detox Weekend' with a meditation class, healthy cooking demo, woodland walks, breathing techniques and group discussions. Monart House, Wexford, guests can hand over their phones for safekeeping on arrival or store them in the privacy of their room if they fear going cold turkey. The spa is a "technology-free zone".




Silver Strand, Wicklow has a stunning little cove via Wolohan's campsite by the time you drive across the fields and descend the stone steps onto the sands, you will be out of reach of everybody...!

Specialised Wellbeing Retreats & Activities

Ireland has retreats covered with some of the best international leaders and venues. Learn yoga and life skills, practice meditation, learn how to make soups as medicine, bread baking, a walk to a sacred healing well in the Burren, how to fast for health, spend time in healthy silence and rejuvenate yourself. Transformation, wellness, healing, inspiration, rejuvenation, and ecotourism are concepts that are becoming more and more important in our daily lives. Ireland has places that enable visitors to feel empowered and spend time in nature or reconnect and recharge in a quaint fairy light-lit off-grid soul cabin. These retreats offer plenty of time and space to reflect, renew and get to know the true you.


Unplug and unwind at the **Creacon and Wellness Retreat** in New Ross, Wexford. The award-winning wellness centre offers a slew of therapies and workshops to soothe your mind, body and spirit in tranquil surroundings. The centre offers massage, reiki, hypnotherapy, reflexology, acupuncture, auricular acupuncture, cranio sacral reflexology, organic natural facials, daily yoga, meditation and mindfulness classes...and more. It has specialised workshops hosted by local, national and international facilitators on all aspects of wellbeing. Food is considered medicine and all food is prepared with seasonal ingredients from their garden.

CURRENT EVENTS	
11 Feb 10:00 am	Mastering the Mind Additional Info
11 Feb 04:00 pm	Zoom Mastering The Mind Additional Info
11 Feb 07:00 pm	Crystal Bowls Meditation Additional Info
11 Feb 07:30 pm	Zoom Gentle Contemporary Yoga Additional Info
See All Events ➔	



Book Now!

BLOG



THE POTENTIAL TO HEAL

The Struggle Is Real Struggle, and potential struggles, are all around us. Nations struggle over boundaries, religious groups struggle for identity, politicians struggle for power. These are the struggles of the greater world that we as individuals...

Privacy

Meditation In Cork, the Tibetan Buddhist centre **Dzogchen Beara** is off the beaten track and like nothing else in Ireland, a spiritual retreat with breathtaking views out over the Atlantic Ocean. Offers yoga, mindfulness and many other retreat types.



*Dzogceh Beara, Cork*

Monastic Pilgrimage In St Kevin's idyllic lake valley of Glendalough, the [Glendalough Hermitage](#) is a pilgrimage retreat that offers people the opportunity to experience the hermit way of life. Experience quiet, reflective restful days or silence and prayer.

Detox & Cleansing, [Cloona](#), Westport, Mayo is a health retreat for the mind, body and spirit. It is famous for its detox program and was recently recommended by the Irish Times to "help kick-start a new health and fitness regime... and detoxify from modern life." Cloona is dedicated to cleansing & detox retreats which involve yoga, mindfulness, meditation, treatments (deep tissue massage, reflexology, Sei-Ki Shiatsu, Tuina Chinese massotherapy, Tibetan (Himalayan) sound therapy, daily guided walking & diet to make you feel yourself again. Situated in a woollen mill restored by Tibetan Monks in the 1960s. Cloona is close to the sea, halfway between Croagh Patrick and the Heritage town of Westport in a varied landscape of woods, hills, valleys and breathtaking views.

*Ard Nahoo, Leitrim*

Eco Retreat, [Ard Nahoo](#). A little multi-award-winning yoga haven in the peaceful and hidden countryside of Leitrim. The Sunday Times London named Ard Nahoo in their top five retreats. This eco-retreat in the North Leitrim Glens mixes gorgeous surroundings with therapies and yoga.

Mental Wellbeing Focus, [Castlemartyr's](#) three-day Wellness Weekend in Cork is part of its launch of a new series of health and wellbeing packages at the five-star resort's spa and includes a motivational talk with broadcaster and former All-Ireland camogie star Anna Geary, a sunrise swim on Garryvoe Beach and a morning pilates class with Milena Byrne, founder of Platinum Pilates. Also, have a day pass to the event.



Connecting to Your Chakras, Burren Yoga, Clare uses Kundalini Yoga to help you relieve its clients from addictions, depression, insomnia, sexual dysfunction, neurosis, strengthen the immune system, digestion, balance metabolism, increase circulation and muscle strength...and more. This form of yoga is powerful at connecting our Chakras so we can live and work healthier and happier and be more connected to ourselves and the world.

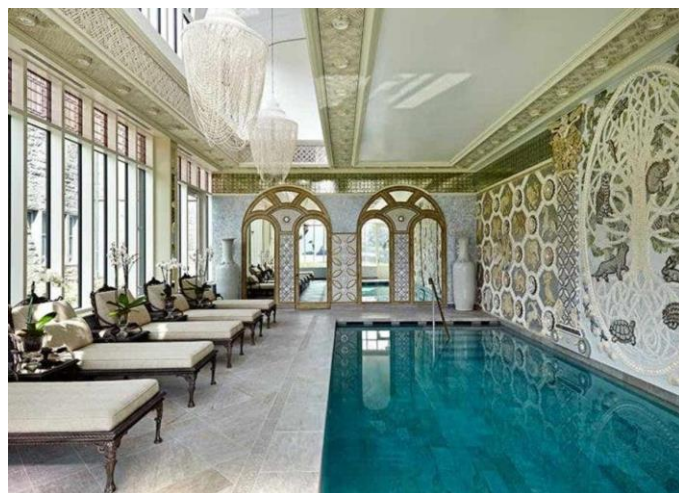
Burren Yoga, Galway



Mummy Bootcamp is for mums toning up and trying to get back into pre-baby shape after having a baby. Mums can bring their baby so they don't need a sitter, swap tips and stories with other women and restore their energy together. Mummy Bootcamps take place in public parks such as Cabinteely, Phoenix Park and Raheny.

Wellness with an Adrenaline Rush & Movement, Delphi Resort, Galway is a four-star adventure resort with outdoor activities and complimentary thermal suite jacuzzi, steam room and sauna. It has what you need to give a shock to your system, there are zip lines and high ropes, mountain biking and orienteering as well as water-based activities such as kayaking and stand-up paddleboarding

Rose Quartz, the Stone of Love
Ashford Castle B Africa B Together Swedish massage use Rose Quartz to add positive energy to relationships, enhance compassion and forgiveness and balance the upper four Chakras easing emotional imbalance. where rose quartz crystals are used to help release tense muscles and promote circulation.



Ashford Castle Spa, Galway

Fitness and Fatigue Recovery at Johnstown Estate, Meath, has a full schedule of fitness, fatigue, relaxation and healthy eating programmes. They include a one-to-one with a personal fitness trainer, to provide you with a tailored fitness programme and escort you around the gym as you get to grips with it. After that, it's off to the hotel spa for its Elemis Hot Mineral Body Boost, conditioning and reinvigorating body treatment which stimulates cells and helps alleviate muscular pain. Then get ready for a healthy lunch.



Parkruns for Free an active free 5km [Parkrun](#) anywhere in Ireland is a great way to get your mental health and fitness in check. These are free, weekly, 5km timed runs that are open to everyone and are safe and easy to take part in.

Tailored Yoga Escapes in [Ballynahinch Castle](#) in Galway holds a famous high-end three-day yoga escape hosted by Yoga Mara. Sisters Rachel and Hannah Healy aim to bring balance and calm back into hectic lives through yoga, mindfulness, good food, and great company in some of the most beautiful venues in Ireland. Different yoga styles, including Vinyasa Flow Yoga, Yin Yoga & Yoga Nidra over the three days.

Bootcamp with a Celebrity for Weight loss and Fitness, Kathryn Thomas' [Pure Results](#) is a hugely popular retreat packed with hikes, fitness classes, and talks, all designed to set you off on the best path to wellness in mind. The retreats have taken place in the [Seafield Hotel](#) in Wexford, [The Avon](#) in Wicklow, and [Parknasilla Hotel](#) in Kerry. You eat food prepared by some of the country's top cooks — all dairy, wheat, and sugar-free, and you have plenty of time to relax at a yoga or relaxation class each evening.

[Wild Atlantic Fitness](#), Donegal cater for all areas of health and wellbeing with daily boot camps, resistance training, beach yoga, beach runs, yoga, hot yoga, weight lifting, surfing lessons and beautiful spa and outdoor hot tub, or take part in stress management and mindfulness workshops.

[Cycle Great Western Greenway](#), Mayo is one of Ireland's famous cycle trails starting in the buzzing Westport and finishes 42km away on the beautiful Achill Island. An off-road route has breathtaking scenery of Mulranny overlooking the beautiful Clew Bay. There are many food and entertainment options along the stretch to stop for seafood chowder or some music.

[Cliffs of Moher Retreat](#), Clare is a luxury destination venue set against the backdrop of Ireland's most stunning coastline, and it redefines the word tranquillity. Its yoga studio looks over the Wild Atlantic Way and the Cliffs of Moher and the beautiful countryside of Clare. It has luxury yoga retreats, deep healing retreats along with beautiful bedrooms and reception rooms and contemporary vegetarian cuisine is grown onsite in their organic gardens.



Cliffs of Moher Retreat, Clare



Forest Bathing, West Cork originated in Japan is Shinrin-yoku – forest medicine. It is all about restoring the self through mindful contact with trees. Make a connection with nature on a contemplative guided walk through the Allshire-Howe's family farm where you walk through trees of mostly native species that were planted between 1995 and 2018, as the light and atmosphere change. After your walk, enjoy a tasty sandwich from the very West Cork local produce!



Forest Bathing, West Cork

Beach Yoga Your Wellbeing Warrior, Sligo with Blaithin Sweeney combines wellbeing sessions and the great outdoors! Trained in the therapeutic arts of Yoga, Reiki and Massage, she offers group and individual sessions. Her beach yoga sessions are extremely popular.

Other Healing and Wellbeing Retreats in Ireland providing therapies and courses in practices such as Shamanic, Reiki, Psychic Clairvoyant, Meditation, Ayahuasca Healing, Emotional Healing...and more.



3 Day Yoga and Mindfulness, Wexford



4 Day Couples Yoga and Nature Retreat, Galway



7 Day Transformational Retreat, Galway



3 Day Juice Cleanse and Yoga, Wexford



Wellbeing Innovation

There are traditional therapies and cutting-edge treatments, such as a hot stone massage with local basalt followed by the latest in steam showers, ice fountains and dry flotation tanks.

- Out on [Cork's Fota Island Resort](#), the spa boasts a “walking river” and a unique range of treatments, including a chocolate body wrap, milk and honey bath, and gold body polish made with 24-carat gold.
- Victorian Treatment Rooms at [Castle Leslie](#), Monaghan offer specially designed Victorian steam boxes
- [Ritz Carlton Powerscourt](#), County Wicklow, the spa boasts a 20-metre Swarovski crystal-lit pool.



Fota Island, Cork 'Walking River'



Ritz Hotel, Wicklow, Swarovski Pool

Irish Online Wellbeing Retreats

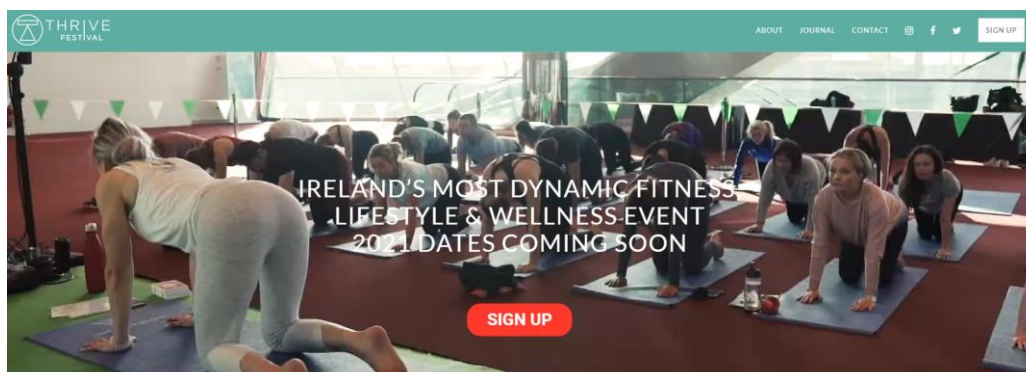
- [Mindfulness and Yoga Meditation Retreat](#)
- [Kriya Yoga](#)
- [Healing Hypnotherapy Retreat](#)
- [Vibrance Yoga Therapy](#)
- [Osho Meditation Training](#)
- [Transforming Emotions](#)
- [Sufi Nights, Breathwork, Osho Meditation](#)
- [Self Hypnosis and Open Sessions](#)
- [OJAYA Deep Meditation Course](#)
- [Yoga and Theta Healing](#)
- [Hypnotherapy to Harmonize Relationships](#)

[...and more](#)

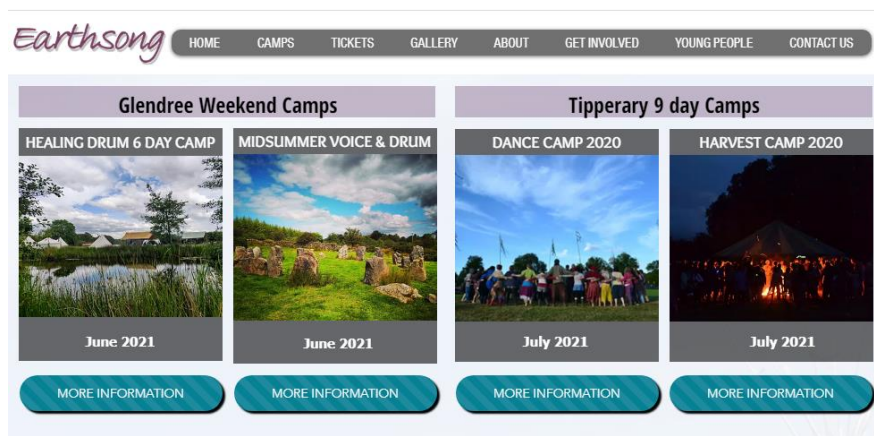


Wellbeing Festivals and Events

Thrive Festival Dublin Set in the heart of Dublin City over multiple floors and multiple days. Thrive Festival is a fitness and lifestyle festival rocked onto the Irish wellness scene in 2019 and it's gone from strength to strength. There's a packed timetable of workout classes from CrossFit to meditation plus a special spot with Gym+Coffee pal, Julie B. Yoga!



EarthSong Co.Clare Earthsong is a unique type of music festival that is much like a summer camp for adults. There is no alcohol, late-night noise or electric music. Earthsong is held in the secluded fields of Glendree and was created to help its attendees reconnect with nature. The festival was developed by drum teacher John Bowker and is unlike anything else in Ireland. Attendees can enjoy days full of yoga, chanting, drum circles, dancing, indigenous songs from foreign cultures and more. It is something a little different that will introduce you to a whole new way of thinking and living.

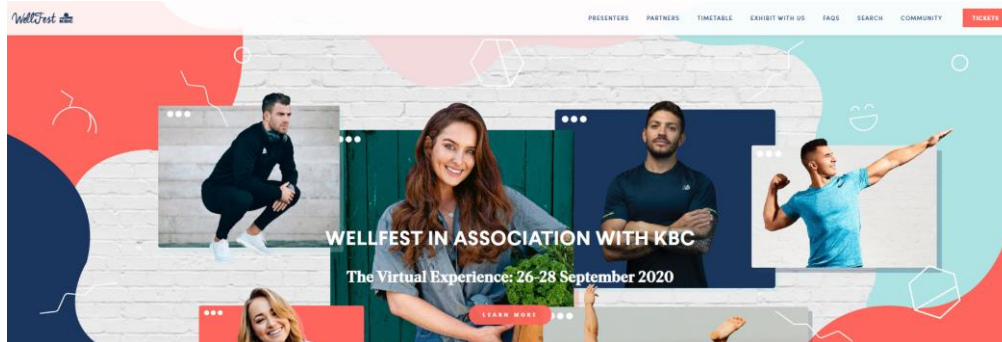


Wellfest Dublin is an absolute favourite wellbeing event in the summer season. Covering pilates, yoga, dance, cooking, gut health to Meditation. For **their Virtual Festival Experience 2021** Event Activities they covered four main wellbeing sections or categories.

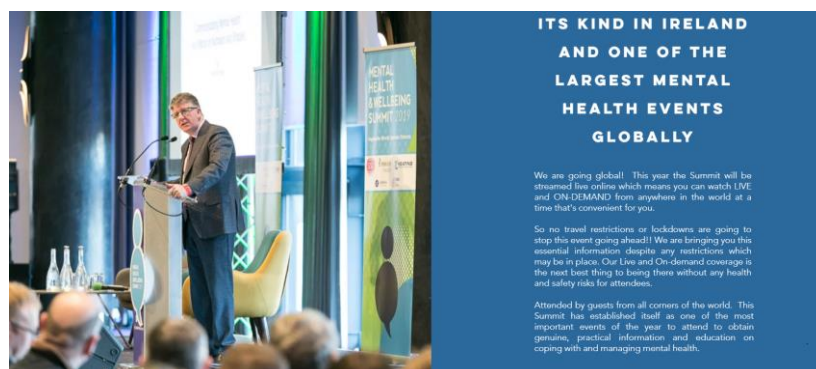
- Event Main Stage: Bodyweight Workout, HIIT Sweat with Mr PMA, This is Yoga, Rockout, Workout, Awakening Yoga, Guided Meditation.
- Wellbeing Talks included The Basics of Nutrition; Vegan Cookery Demo; Sleep for Tired Parents; Rise Thrive in Change; Skin Immunity and Self Care.



- Wellfit; Conditioning, Pre and Post Natal Fitness, FlyFit, Vinyasa Flow
- Wellflow; Breathwork, Full Body Pilates, Mandala Power Flow, Stretch and Flow, Ashtanga Flow, Immune System Flow, Hatha Healing



Mental Health and Wellbeing Summit Dublin As the only event of its kind in Ireland, this is a one-day event that focuses solely on providing practical advice, tools and information on managing your (or other's) mental health. This Mental Health and Wellbeing Summit feature talks, seminars and an exhibition hall plus uplifting, live performances! A little different from some of the other events in this post, this is more summit than a festival, but we think the focus on mental health is an important one and the range of speakers and exhibitors means there is something for everyone.



Mourne International Walking Festival Co Down This festival celebrates the regional beautiful surroundings of the Mourne Mountains with a focus on a plethora of hikes. The event lasts three days and attendees can take in some amazing scenery while mingling with fellow hiking enthusiasts. The festival is internationally recognized and a real highlight for the walking community. Another bonus is this is the land of the Game of Thrones!





Adventure Sports & Wellbeing Events

In recent years, the adventure sports sector in Ireland has successfully carved out a growing niche for thousands of participants keen to test their stamina in a variety of endurance events tailored to all ages and fitness levels. Set over courses that encompass cycling, mountain running, trail hiking and kayaking, they dot the entire country and operate on a year-round basis. Throughout the year, fitness options of varying degrees are available at events such as the below to name but a few from the constantly growing list of activity events.

- [BAR Boyne Adventure Race](#), Trim 2 different races over 2 days, cycling, walking, kayaking.
- [Moonlight Challenge](#), Wicklow walking, entertainment, food and fundraiser for Mountain Rescue Team.
- [Emerald Enduro Series](#) 3-day festival, expo and biking event.
- [Race2Glory](#) multi-sport adventure race involving cycling, running and a river run.
- [Tough Mudder](#) endurance event series in which participants attempt 10–12-mile-long obstacle courses.
- [Gaelforce West](#) adventure race with running, kayaking, cycling across the rugged west coast.

One of the most demanding of these events, the Beast Adventure Race was initially a local 24-hour event set around the varied landscape of Blackwater Castle. Capturing the imaginations of endurance runners across Ireland and the EU, it continued to grow year on year, eventually joining the Adventure Racing European Series.

*“Now the Beast has grown too big to contain and has broken free. Free to roam the entire island of Ireland as it seeks the **best locations and best challenges** to push our competitors to their limits. Who knows where the Beast will take us next.” Beast Adventure Race*



Tough Mudder is set over courses engineered so that teamwork isn't just encouraged — it's required to overcome best-in-class obstacles and adrenaline-packed challenges. Set over two days at Loughcrew, Co Meath, it attracted 5,000 participants in 2019 to navigate their way through mud infused obstacles such as the Mudderhorn, the Block Ness Monster and the Devils Beard in a teamwork endeavour.

"We tackled all the obstacles as a team, helping our colleagues over and under, through water baths and mud pits, encouraging them on while also trying not to laugh at the epic fails of others attempting them," says Stephen Keating of Pallas Foods.

Adventure Therapy

Adventure therapy is a powerful Adventure therapy (also known as wilderness therapy, outdoor experiential therapy) that uses outdoor activities involving risk and physical and emotional challenges. It is a form of psychotherapy, it is experiential education reporting positive outcomes in improving self-concept and self-esteem, help-seeking behaviour, increased mutual aid, pro-social behaviour, trust behaviour, and more.

- **Wilderness therapy** usually refers to the use of **primitive methods** in wilderness contexts requiring adaptation or the **ability to cope**.
- **Outdoor experiential therapy** is an outdoor treatment to promote "rehabilitation, growth, development, and enhancement of an individual's **physical, social, and psychological well-being** through the application of **structured activities** involving direct experience".

Adventure therapy can help

- ✓ Improve **self-confidence, self-esteem** and **self-worth** through competency-based tasks and a person-centred approach.
- ✓ Provide a new or **renewed sense of self**, by **building and recognising capabilities** and transferable skills for the future.
- ✓ Bring a new and **fresh perspective** to a challenging situation in the client's life.
- ✓ Learn and practice new practical and **social approaches** in a safe, non-judgmental environment.
- ✓ Build strategies for **resilience** and **coping skills** through a strengths-based intervention.
- ✓ Introduce new and exciting adventure activities that may become **personal hobbies**.
- ✓ Overcome fears and **physical, social and emotional limitations**.
- ✓ Begin habits of reflection and action in **response to issues** identified.



New Wave Adventure (*Self Reflection, Intervention, Recovery*) is a therapeutic intervention grounded in the disciplines of psychotherapy, counselling or social work. Adventure therapy uses outdoor adventure activities and the backdrop of refreshing natural environments to create opportunities to develop new skills and competencies, for self-reflection and therapeutic discussion. Their programs are strengths-based, uniquely designed, and delivered on a one-to-one basis to maximise the opportunity for meaningful and lasting change and personal development. In 2019 New Wave Adventure won the 2019 European Business Award.



Watch Video

Digital Detox (*Focus on Outdoor Activities*)

An important part of staying healthy in Ireland is looking after our mental health and wellbeing is getting active but particularly without any distractions, which means 'no or restricted phone access'. Our bodies and minds work together better when we focus on our physical and mental health without distractions. Digital Detox Activities can help us to get the best out of our experiences and encourage us to make positive healthy choices in our lives. Research also shows that staying active can improve our mood, well-being energy levels and confidence.

Living Wilderness Bushcraft School in Co. Meath provides an inspiring learning platform for outdoor craftsmanship while living in the wood (for a weekend or a week!), provide expert instructors in bushcraft and backcountry living.



Kippure Estate in Co. Wicklow covers 240 acres of wild and beautiful forest and parkland and borders into the spectacular Wicklow Mountains. It also has 20 spacious, bright cottages, each with a wood-burning stove. Activities include fire-lighting techniques, navigation, shelter-building, foraging and trap-making as well as the chance to sleep under the stars.

Lough Allen Adventure Centre in Leitrim is an award-winning adventure centre offering outdoor recreation in watersports, golf, horse riding and outdoor recreation on beautiful lakes, river Shannon and Blueway



Living Wilderness, Bushcraft, Meath

"We suggest leaving the mobile phones behind. They complain at first, but they come back loving it." Lough Allen Adventure Center



Kippure Estate, Wicklow

Walks to Wellbeing Mental Health Ireland has teamed up with partners at getting Ireland Walking, Sport Ireland and Healthy Ireland, as part of the 'Keep Well' campaign on the launch of the new Get Ireland Walking App. The '21 Day Walking Challenge' feature on the App will bring you information and resources on how to mind your mental health and support you on your walks to better physical, mental and emotional wellbeing. The Challenge invites people to walk for at least 30 minutes each day for 21 consecutive days.

The Mood Tracker feature on the App will guide you to check in with yourself and how you're feeling that day. If you're feeling low, the supports on this page can help you manage and improve your wellbeing in the short and long term. The app is available for download now on the App Store and Google Play



Spotlight on Irish Wellbeing Regions

Sligo's Wellbeing and Adventure Tourism Network, Wild Atlantic Way

Ireland's wellbeing destinations and regions are dedicated to health, fitness and relaxation. They include scheduled activities such as yoga, Pilates and relaxation classes, and plenty of wet spa experiences. The next section puts a spotlight on some of the more popular, unusual and interesting healthy and well-being holidays to restore your mind, body and soul.

[Adventure Sligo](#) is a Wellbeing & Adventure Tourism Network located on the famous Wild Atlantic Way renowned for its beaches from Mullaghmore, Strandhill, Easkey to Enniscrone. The Network has multiple stakeholders which have developed Sligo as a Wellbeing Tourism Destination. The network primary stakeholders are the Wellbeing and Adventure Tourism SMEs from the network (7 in total), hotels, walking tour providers, organic café, wellbeing classes and treatments, Sligo Tidy Towns, Wellness Hub, Volunteer Centre Sligo Business...

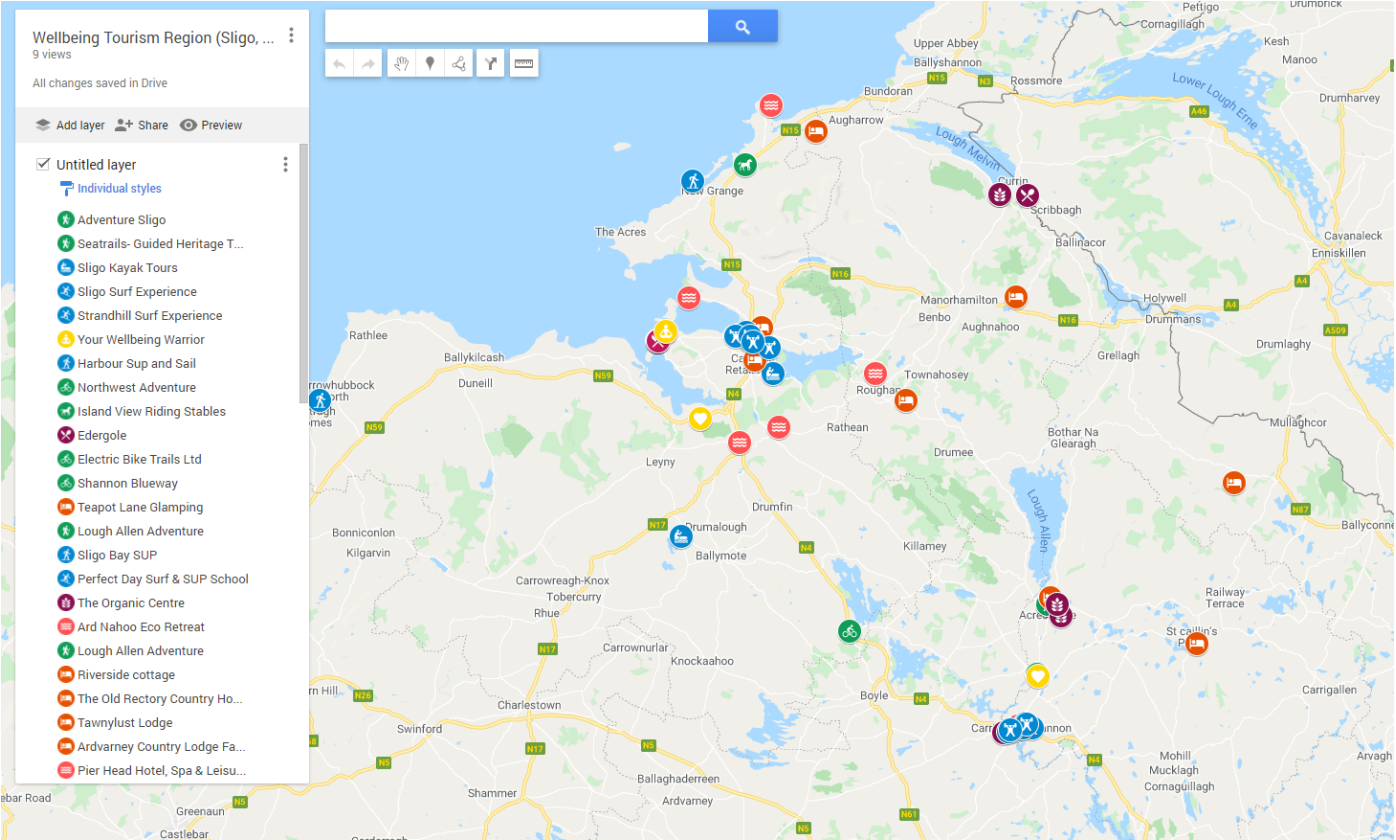
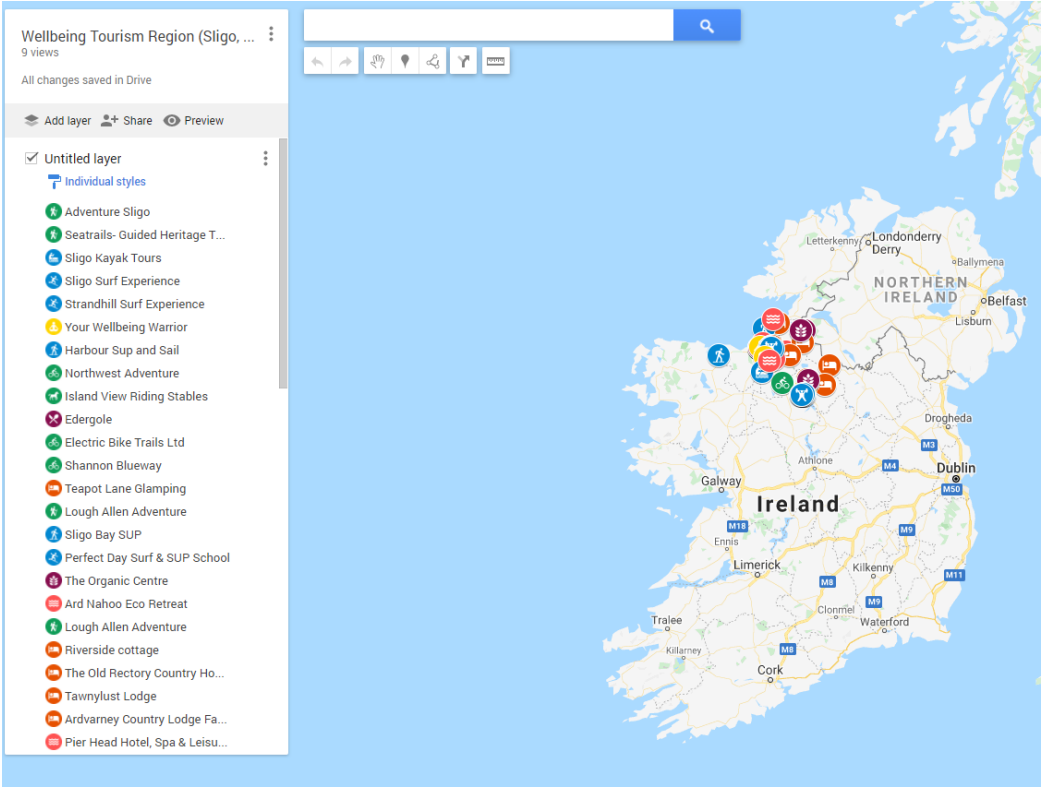
Wellbeing Experiences include Surf incredible waves, go on relaxing walks, see secluded beaches, go sailing, angling, kayaking, yoga, SUP, climbing, or horse riding. The well-being experiences go from high adrenalin, thrill-seeking adventure sports to more leisurely and relaxing. The focus is on the Great Outdoors with experienced guides and teachers providing specialist expertise and equipment. For beginners, improvers, and serious sportspeople.

*'Any genuine health and wellbeing offering has to start in the community first, the services, landscapes, and amenities that are needed to provide for a community are the same services landscapes and amenities required to provide an **exceptional experience** to the visitor.'* (Adventure Sligo Wellbeing Network)



Beach Horse-riding, [Seatrails](#), Sligo





1. [Carraig Climbing](#); rock climbing, hiking tours, guided mountain walks, families/groups, educational experience, off the beaten track, mountains and rock
2. [Sligo Surf Experience](#); bodyboarding, surfing, professional surfer, Wild Atlantic Way, 2.5 hours guided experience, surfing equipment, facilities at Strandhill beach
3. [Strandhill Surf Experience](#); surf coach, summer surf camps, ocean safety, beach games, eco walks, surf lessons/groups/individuals, yoga to surf, and packages.
4. [Wellbeing Warrior](#); yoga, fun, and uplifting excursions, adventure, and mindful practices, adventure activities (hiking, SUP, surfing), and meditation
5. [Wild West Sailing](#); Wild Atlantic Way, half/full/multi-day voyages, Mullaghmore, Rosses Point, Lough Gill, Slieve League Cliffs, Tory Island, Broadhaven, Inisboffin, France and Scotland, powerboat and navigation training.
6. [Sligo Kayak Tours](#); kayak tours of coastal estuaries, inland lakes, untouched nature, and world landmarks.
7. [Wild Wet Adventures](#); kayaking, canoeing, SUP, hillwalking, walking, bushcraft, archery, orienteering, trail runs, team building, water tuition, and guided walks.
8. [Harbour SUP n'Sail](#); Enniscrone, Quay Ballina, SUP tuition, hire, and adventure tours.
9. [North West Tour Adventures](#); guided biking, hiking, walks SUP, cycling, and freediving
10. [Horse Riding](#); scenic beach rides, 5 hours a day trail or 30 mins for children
11. [Angling](#); charter boats, catch fish, eco-tourism tour
12. [Seatrails](#); guided heritage walking tours

Full details of [all packages](#)

County Leitrim, Ireland's Slow Adventure Capital

Slow adventure is all about creating inspiring connections with the outdoors.

A chance to explore and engage with wild, open, and natural places. To Journey through breath-taking landscapes at a slower immersive pace. Creating memories through meaningful experiences as you invest time in a place, in its traditions and community. Surrendering to the natural forces of the environment as you reflect, reconnect, and become closer to nature.

County Leitrim is Ireland's Slow Adventure Capital set up by a group of rural tourism SMEs who invite their target markets to immerse themselves in stunning peaceful Leitrim. The visitor experience is about reflection, reconnection, learning something new, enjoying spellbinding storytelling, and indulging in its food, culture, and heritage via guided tours through the landscapes and rivers. They like Sligo integrate and interconnect the destination, food, natural resources and existing adventure and wellbeing activities to make up its Slow Adventure Wellbeing Region.




The visitor's well-being experiences motivations are focused on activities (craft sessions, cooking, courses, local knowledge and storytelling, educating traditional local skills), food (organic, foraging, kitchen dining experiences, picnics) **outdoors** (guided walks, cycling, surfing, canoeing and even a Canadian canoe tour, SUP, sailing, organic garden centre), **alternative and rural accommodation** (spa retreat, B&B, guest/host accommodation, river cottage, eco-cabin, quaint, authentic, self-catering, all-inclusive). There are 10 different unique wellbeing experience packages focused on everyone in the family, quality, attention-to-detail, and environmentally friendly credentials.

1. [Edergole Kitchen \(vegan and vegetarian dining experience\)](#)
2. [Landscape Walks](#)
3. [Leitrim Cycling](#)
4. [Teapot Lane \(alternative accommodation\)](#)
5. [Way to Go Adventures \(canoeing, SUP, and cycling\)](#)
6. [Leitrim Surf](#)
7. [Organic Garden Centre](#)
8. [Ard Nahoo Spa Retreat](#)
9. [Lough Allen Adventure](#)
10. [Adventure Gently \(Canadian Canoe trip\)](#)


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Our selected Slow Adventure Experiences


[ALL](#)
[DAY TRIPS](#)
[OVERNIGHT STAYS](#)



RELAXED SLOW ADVENTURE



BY THE RIVER SLOW ADVENTURE



BACK IN TIME SLOW ADVENTURE

There is something for everyone to explore the North West of Ireland at a slow pace, immerse in nature, and reconnect with the environment at a more reflective pace. Guests can choose to float down the Shannon, walk in the wilderness, picnic in the shadow of ancient trees, forage for food on the earthy riverbanks. Leitrim is the perfect regional wellbeing destination, it is a calm, friendly green environment, peaceful haven, strong friendly communities, great storytellers, experts in wellbeing, education and sustainability as people learn about bushcraft in the wilds of Lough Allen, forage for food when paddling the waterways of Leitrim.

Slow Adventure Leitrim strive to continue to bring wellbeing to all its experiences in food, foraging, friendship, and nature in a responsible, environmentally friendly way.

