



SOCIETY GOLF

NORTHWEST OF IRELAND



North & West Coast Links and Donegal Golf Clubs play for €30 per person, otherwise contact the club for the best deals.

CARNE GOLF LINKS

carnegolfinks.com

Another masterpiece of a course designed by the late Eddie Hackett as well as his last, the Carne Golf Links sits on the west coast of Ireland in North Mayo. The fairways seem to carve their way through the grassy hills and hollows. The little amount of earth moving involved in the creation of Carne produces this effect. Hackett did this to retain the natural beauty and history this land is steeped in. Watch out for the 6th hole, a par 4 that doglegs left with a narrow entrance to the green. This is the toughest hole on the course. Others to look for are the 13th and 17th holes. The first drives far out to the water with little room for error to the right and the latter is a long par 4 that rolls along leading to tricky green placement. It's no wonder Carne Links was voted 7th in the top 100 golf courses in the UK and Ireland. This is one course you can't miss. The rate isn't too bad for a course of this calibre at €45 per person.

BALLYLIFFIN GOLF CLUB (BOTH COURSES)

ballyliffingolfclub.com

Situated at the northernmost point of Ireland, Ballyliffin Golf Club features two championship courses. The Old Links course, which opened in 1973 designed primarily by Eddie Hackett and recently reworked by Nick Faldo, offers beautiful natural terrain that challenges every golfer. On one side of the course lie majestic mountains while the glistening Atlantic Ocean borders the other. Then there is the Glashedy course. Built in 1992 by Pat Ruddy and Tom Craddock, the Glashedy course follows in the footsteps of its sister course in terms of beauty and challenge. Quoted as some of the best land for a links course, this course is a sight to behold. The most infamous features being the first three holes, all difficult par 4s, and the peat crowned bunkers. Christened as the "Dornoch of Ireland", Ballyliffin Golf Course will treat your group to spectacular views and play. Groups that are members of

CONNEMARA GOLF CLUB

connemaragolfinks.com

Nestled between the Atlantic and the Twelve Ben Mountains the Connemara Golf Club

Why not add an extra day or two to your society's calendar? With courses and deals like these, you won't regret it

By this stage of the season, society calendars across the country are more than likely looking pretty full. But as the saying goes, you can't get too much of a good thing, so why not try and squeeze in a couple of extra rounds with the gang? The northwest of Ireland is home to some of the island's best kept secrets as well as some well-known and much-loved perennial favourites. Second to none in terms of beauty, the region is also famous for its warm hospitality and relaxed atmosphere. What more could you ask for? Well, how about the fact that the northwest's club's are great value right now, too.



makes for a great retreat for any golfer. Originally designed by Eddie Hackett, the main 18-hole course flows through the grassy bogs taking advantage of the landscape as much as possible. Connemara also features a 9-hole course that hugs the coastline. The club is located in the quaint town of Ballyconnelly outside Cliften. The Irish Professional Golfers Championship and the Ladies Irish Inter-provincial Championships have played here in the past. Currently the course is getting revitalisation however; it has not lost any of its charm. Group rates run at €50 per person.

COUNTY SLIGO GOLF CLUB

countysligogolfclub.ie

The County Sligo Golf Club sits in the picturesque village of Rosses Point. Redesigned by the famous Harry Colt in 1927, the course offers up some of the most challenging holes in Ireland. The most notorious ones being the 7th and 17th holes. These holes have gotten the best of many up-and-coming amateurs who flock here every Easter for the

West of Ireland Amateur Golf Championship. County Sligo is full of breath-taking views that make it even harder to concentrate on the next shot. You don't want to be caught off guard with the winding brooks, gusts from the Atlantic, and deceiving fairways that cover the course. The fees for groups are €60 per person, but contact the club to see if there any better offers.

DIAMOND COAST HOTEL

diamondcoast.ie/golf

This hotel built in Enniscrone is a golfer's paradise. It is surrounded by the likes of the Enniscrone Golf Club, Carne Golf Links, County Sligo and Ballina Golf Club. The hotel features luxury accommodation, excellent dining, gorgeous beaches, family entertainment, and, of course, amazing golf packages. Their current special offer is a two night B&B with dinner and two rounds of golf at the Enniscrone Golf Club all starting at €189. They will also create your own personal golf paradise package if you give them a ring.

DONEGAL GOLF CLUB

donegalgolfclub.ie

Donegal Golf Club, sitting right on Donegal Bay, is known to test some of the best golfers. The Hackett-designed course covers an entire peninsula, making for some great overhead

views. However, the views from ground level are just as stunning. Described at one point as "hauntingly beautiful", the holes at Donegal Golf Club are easily misjudged. The course is fairly wide open but watch where you hit it because you could be in trouble. The gem of the course has to be the fifth hole, appropriately named "The Valley of Tears". It's a short par three right at the end of the peninsula, making it highly susceptible to wind gusts and deceiving to the eye. As the club says, "Hit your best shot...and walk on". Prices run at €50 from Monday to Friday and €60 per person on the weekend. If you're a GUI or ILGU member it knocks ten quid off respectfully.

ENNISCRONE GOLF CLUB

enniscronegolf.com

Looking for some traditional links golf? Look no further than Enniscrone Golf Club. The beautifully laid out championship course, originally designed by non-other than Eddie Hackett, is filled with tight fairways, high dunes, deep bunkers and superb greens. Sitting right on Killala Bay, this course offers breathtaking views at every turn. Unless, however, you find yourself basked in the shadow of the massive dune on hole 12. Makes you wonder why they call the course The Dunes. Don't let the simplicity of the course fool you, you will need every club in the bag and every trick in your book on this course. The course was updated with six seaside holes designed by Donald Steel. And for those looking for a more serene round, there is the nine hole Scurmores Course. Call the course for the society rates.

GALWAY BAY GOLF CLUB

galwaybaygolfresort.com

The biggest hazard on the Galway Bay Golf Course is the Atlantic Ocean. Surrounding the entire course, the water is a beautiful backdrop to these Christy O'Connor Jnr designed holes. Unlike the rest of the clubs on this list, Galway Bay is a parkland-modelled course. The gently rolling fairways are dotted with mature trees and small water hazards. It's a nice twist on Irish golf. An awe-inspiring hole is number 12, with a stunning view of Galway Bay you need precise placement otherwise you may end up in it. Galway Bay Golf Club played host to the PGA West of Ireland Open in 1999. This course is truly championship-quality and it's only seven miles from Galway City. Fees run at €25 Monday through Friday and €30 on weekends.

LETTERKENNY GOLF CLUB

letterkennygolfclub.com

Recently renovated in 2006/7, the Letterkenny Golf Club offers great parkland golf. The redesign, headed by Declan Branigan, has taken the club to new levels. Membership has grown rapidly ever since. The course is reasonably flat and wide with a few tough hazards and doglegs. Letterkenny is located in the wooded hills on the shores of Lough Swilly. The town is not only bustling with golfers; shoppers and tourists flock here as well. Within an hour's drive are more than 20 other golf courses. So there will be no lack of spent away from the greens. Contact the club to set up a package perfect for your group.

NARIN & PORTNOO GOLF CLUB

narinportnoogolfclub.ie

The Narin & Portnoo Golf Club has to be one of the most picturesque courses in all



Narin and Portnoo



Portsalon



of Ireland. It opened in 1930 amongst three other clubs that have since disappeared. Narin & Portnoo survived, and that's a good thing. The course is quintessentially old fashioned. In classic links style, the greens undulate with the landscape and the fairways are burdened with bumps making for a variety of tricky shots. The ninth hole is one to behold with a pebble beach-esque green backed by the seashore. Around every corner is a piece of history. From ancient burial grounds to past shipwrecks, the area of Narin & Portnoo is full of it. This club is well worth the trip. Give them a call to find out their best group rates.

PORTSALON GOLF CLUB

portsalongolfclub.com

Portsalon opened in 1891 as one of the founding members of the Golfing Union of Ireland, the oldest golfing union in the world. It was originally designed by Portrush professional Charles Thompson but was redesigned in 2000 by the great Pat Ruddy. Lying at the tip of this golf course are the triple golden beaches of Balmastocker Bay. The course is highly exposed to the elements making it quite challenging when the wind picks up. Even with the renovation, Portsalon is still a great traditional links course. It stimulates the senses with sea air and rolling dunes. The course tests all that play. Contact the club through their website for rates.

RADISSON HOTEL SLIGO

radissonblu.ie

The Radisson Hotel Sligo is another hotel perfectly located for a golf getaway. The hotel is within driving distance of three championship clubs: Sligo County Club, Strandhill Golf Club and the Enniscrone Golf Club. Currently the hotel offers a golf package starting



Rosapenna

from €135 per person for a two-night accommodation, dinner in the AA Rosette Classibawn restaurant and a round at the County Sligo Golf Course. Hotel Sligo is beautifully appointed and the special package is an offer that should not be passed up.

ROSAPENNA GOLF LINKS (BOTH COURSES)

rosapenna.ie

Rosapenna combines the old with the new. The club features two courses each designed by legendary golf architects. The first course, built in 1891, was designed by Old Tom Morris of St. Andrews and then updated in the 1900s by Harry Vardon and James Braid. Talk about a being in good company. This course, aptly named the Old Tom Morris Links, remains the way it was when these three worked on it over a century ago. Vardon and Braid added length and bunkering without touching Morris's remarkable greens. The course rolls through the hills of the Donegal coastline. And to add to the majesty of the club, in 2003 a Pat Ruddy sculpted course was built called the Sandy Hills Links. In contrast to the Old Tom Morris Links, Sandy Hills is the ideal modern links. With narrow fairways, landing areas carved from the dunes and a length of 7,255 yards from the tips it will surely challenge even the most serious of golfers. With accommodation and dining on the premises as well, give them a call and they will be able to set up a package right for your group.



STRANDHILL GOLF CLUB

strandhillgolfclub.com

You will receive one of the warmest receptions at the Strandhill Club. Although not one of the toughest courses on this list, it is the friendliest. Everyone who plays here feels at home – it's no wonder why their tagline is 'Friendship in Sport'. The course itself is filled with superb scenery. Looking around you'll see Knocknarea Mountain, Culleenamore Strand and Strandhill Beach. All there to distract you from your shot, cause even though it's a par 70 course accuracy is at a premium. Strandhill is a wonderful course for all players. At €25 per person it is a steal too! Currently they have two special offers for societies: on Fridays you get a round of golf, a pint, and a BLT for €32 each and on Sundays its one round and one main course for €40 each.



THE 19TH HOLES

After a long day on the course, all you and your buddies want to do is sit down and have a pint. But where do you go?

The Pilot Bar – located in the heart of Enniscrone, The Pilot Bar offers up good, fresh food and beer. Its nautical theme and friendly staff make for a perfect end of the evening, whether you're coming from the surf or the turf.

The Rusty Nail – right outside Ballyliffin, The Rusty Nail is a nice place to sit and relax for a couple of pints with the gang. That's not to forget about the food – you always get a good helping here. Its a hidden gem that offers a good time after a day on the links.

Hargadon Bros. - if you're looking for a place more lively head over to Hargadon Bros in the center of Sligo. Here you'll find plenty to drink – they have their own wine shop right next door. There is also a restaurant as well as the pub. You can't go wrong here having won numerous awards.

YOU'VE PLAYED THE COURSES, NOW SEE THE SIGHTS:

The course was spectacular but you want to see more of what the area has to store?

Raphoe Castle – One of the most impressive buildings in County Donegal, Raphoe Castle was built in 1637 by John Leslie. The castle is nothing more than a shell nowadays having been destroyed in a fire in 1838.

Céide Fields Visitor Centre & Site – the shoreline is gorgeous on the links but the shoreline at Céide Fields is dramatic. The area is abounds with stone walls, field systems, enclosures and tombs, dating from about 5,000 years ago as well as remarkable flora and wildlife native to North Mayo. Take a tour around the fields, you see much but the best part are the cliffs and rock formations. heritageireland.ie/en/West/CeideFields

Galway City Museum – situated behind the famous Spanish Arch the Galway City Museum houses tons of Irish history. The museum also affords views of Galway Bay, but you've seen that already having hit a few into it at the Galway Bay Club. galwaycitymuseum.ie