

GUIDE TO COUNTY WICKLOW

- "The Garden of Ireland"



GENERAL ORIENTATION

The scenery and attractions of Wicklow lie between the main N11 route that runs north-south to the east of the county and the N81 that also runs north-south to the west.

To the east of the N11 is the coast with a number of historic towns and several excellent beaches.



Wicklow is a large county just south of the Greater Dublin area. Its boundaries can loosely be described as being from the seaside town of Bray to the northeast, Blessington and the splendid Blessington Lakes to the northwest, Arklow town to the southeast and the town of Tullow (Co. Carlow) to the southwest.

Wicklow, 'The Garden of Ireland', is a natural scenic wonderland, a landscape rich in breathtaking scenery. Renowned as a land of majestic mountains and spectacular valleys like Glenmalur, Glencrea and Glenmacnass and the magnificent Glen of Imaal.

But famous worldwide is the beautiful Glendalough, the valley of the two lakes, a monastic settlement built in the 6th century and still exuding a sense of peace and tranquility.

County Wicklow is a land of domed granite mountains and purple glens, of soft rolling hills and silvery streams.

As well as the natural beauty, Wicklow is famed for its many manor houses and gardens, many open to the public. The Wicklow Gardens Festival runs each May & June where many private gardens also open for a few weeks.

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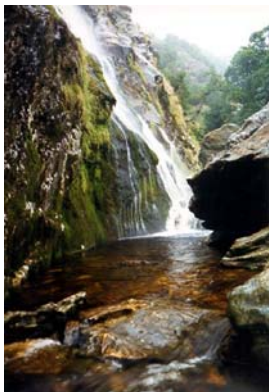


WICKLOW HIGHLIGHTS

Glendalough
Glen of Imaal
Vale of Avoca
Powerscourt
Blessington Lakes
Sally Gap
Glemalure Waterfall
Glenmacnass



Glendalough Round Tower (7th Century)



Powerscourt Falls

▶ GLENDALOUGH

The most visited location in County Wicklow is **Glendalough** (Valley of the Two Lakes), the home of ancient Ireland's monastic settlements. Founded in the 6th Century by St. Kevin, Glendalough exudes a sense of peace and tranquility despite the large number of visitors.



There is an excellent visitor centre as well as the Round Tower and Monastic sites.

Glendalough is 2 miles west of the village of Laragh.

▶ GLEN OF IMAAL

To the south of Blessington is the wonderful **Glen of Imaal**, a valley that is surrounded by a ring of high mountain peaks.

These peaks provide a haven for mountaineers and climbers but otherwise are as unspoilt and peaceful as you could wish for.

Nearby is the Dwyer McAllister Cottage, a monument to Irish rebel leader Michael Dwyer who escaped from British troops in 1799.

▶ SALLY GAP

Sally Gap is a crossroads high in the mountains from where there are spectacular views over the Wicklow Mountains towards Dublin Bay.

Nearby is Glenmacnass Waterfall, not as visually striking as Powerscourt, but with impressive views from the top as it cascades 300-feet to the valley below.



The Meeting of the Waters are just north of Avoca where the Rivers Avonmore and Avonbeg form the River Avoca

▶ AVOCA VALLEY

From Arklow to Rathdrum, through the picturesque villages of Woodenbridge and Avoca lies the Avoca Valley, an area of outstanding natural beauty.

The Meeting of the Waters, Avoca Village and the Motte Stone are the principal attractions.

Avoca village is famous for crafts and has a gift shop. Check out Fitzgeralds Pub and see if the local traditional band are in session.

Avondale House is situated to the south of Rathdrum.

There is a beautifully set and very pleasant golf course at Woodenbridge.

The Avoca River flows into the Irish Sea through the maritime town of Arklow, famous for its shipbuilding as well as for its pottery.



One of the Peaks Surrounding the Glen of Imaal is Lugnaquilla, known by climbers as "The Lug"

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Glenmalure Valley



Avoca River



Wicklow Gardens

► POWERSCOURT

Powerscourt House boasts one of the worlds great gardens, with 47 acres of formal gardens on a beautiful estate that also features sweeping terraces, statuary and ornamental lakes, rambling walks and over 200 species of trees and shrubs.



The 18th Century Palladian House now has an exhibition telling the story of the estate as well as incorporating a mini-shopping centre and a terrace café.

The Powerscourt Waterfall tumbles 400 feet over a granite escarpment about 3 miles from Powerscourt Gardens.

► BLESSINGTON LAKES

Set in the foothills of the Wicklow Mountains, the Blessington Lakes were formed 50 years ago by the building of the Poulaphuca Dam and hydro-electric power station.



Accessible via the Wicklow Gap from Laragh, it is worth taking a detour along the eastern side of the lakes through the remote village of Ballyknockan.

► GLEMALURE

Glenmalure is Ireland's longest glacial valley located to the south of the village of Laragh. There are many spectacular walks here with the Avonbeg River the only sound breaking the silence is this majestic and peaceful valley.



► HOUSES AND GARDENS

Russborough House, near Blessington, is the finest Palladian House in Ireland and contains collections of paintings, antiques, silver and porcelain.

Kilruddery House and Gardens, south of Bray, is a fine Elizabethan mansion, home to the Brabazon family (Earls of Meath) since 1618. The formal gardens, laid out in 1680, are the oldest in Ireland

Mount Usher Gardens, near Ashford, are set in 20 acres of beautiful woodland by the Varty River. The gardens boast over 5,000 species of trees.



Avondale House, near Rathdrum, was the birthplace of Charles Stewart Parnell in 1846. Set in a magnificent forest park of over 500 acres along the banks of the Avonmore River with a variety of walks.