



# Great Drives

## West of Ireland

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**Get into your Avis rental car and take the sky road.**

Brightly coloured villages, rugged cliffs and rolling green fields, the west coast of Ireland has a unique and spectacular landscape just waiting to be explored.

**Test drive this two-day tour for the best of the West of Ireland.**

Pick up your Avis hire car from [Shannon Airport](#) and head north up the N18 road to nearby **Dromoland Castle**, with its championship golf course. Continue via **Ennis** to seaside **Kilkee** and down to **Loop Head Peninsula**, teeming with bird life. Follow the winding N67 up the coast, past the mighty **Cliffs of Moher**, through **Galway** and on to **Clifden**, with its shops in distinctive colours. Follow the coast road west past almost-white beaches with aquamarine seas, then loop back along the N59 to the film-set village of Cong and sleep at 800-year old **Ashford Castle**. After a good night's sleep, go back down through Galway, on to the N18 and back to Shannon.

### High Points en route

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#### **Kilrush – Meet the dolphins**

Surrounded on three sides by the Shannon Estuary, this colourful Heritage Town is a haven for marine life. Watch out for the school of over 100 bottlenose dolphins, and take a guided trip to go and see them from the water.

#### **Cliffs of Moher– High and mighty**

Gargantuan is the word for these magnificent black craggy cliffs, rising 700ft above the sea, with the R479 winding along the top. If stopping and staring is not enough for you, take a walk on one of the windswept paths that meander along the top.

#### **Ashford Castle – Lap of luxury**

With its four-poster beds and ornate fireplaces, this is one of Ireland's finest hotels. It has been attracting the well-to-do since 1228 and is a hit with modern movers and shakers from Brad Pitt to Barbra Streisand.

#### **The Sky Road – View from above**

This seven-kilometre loop near **Clifden** – a memorable drive west of Galway – is famous for its watercolour views of the indented cliffs. You'll want to do more than one lap; the light changes with the weather, offering a different view every time.

#### **Cashel House Hotel – Hide away**

This gracious mid-19th-century house, with an award-winning garden, was a favourite with former Prime Minister Harold Macmillan. Take tea outside among the magnolias or stroll down to the private beach for a breath of sea air.

# AVIS

We try harder.

## High Points en route - Free time on your hands? Take your pick from the following gems:

### 1/ Banna Strand – Pleasure beach

This huge remote beach with its butterscotch sand is where David Lean filmed scenes for his epic, *Ryan's Daughter*. A walk along here will blow more than a few cobwebs away.

### 2/ Kilcolgan – Oyster catcher

Blue skies, white walls, thatched roof, fresh Galway oysters. What more could you possibly need? It's a short drive south of Galway. Make sure you visit Moran's Oyster Cottage when the sun's out.

### 3/ Connemara – Head for the hills

Pack a picnic and explore the trails through the Twelve Bens Mountains, beside deep blue lakes, higgledy-piggledy dry-stone walls and lush green hills. Air doesn't get any fresher.

### 4/ Mount Juliet, County Kilkenny – Your manor

This magnificent Georgian mansion is surrounded by 1500 acres of rolling fields and woodland. As well as a championship golf course, there's an excellent spa here. Book yourself in for a hot stone massage.



## Need to know

### Round trip

342 miles (550 km)  
approx 9 hours 30 minutes  
driving time

### Best time to come

June-August for blue skies,  
December-February for stormy  
winter cloudscapes.

### Soundtrack

Dreams by The Cranberries

### Essential item

Binoculars

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