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HOME TRAVEL GUIDES IRELAND **Ballyfin**



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## BALLYFIN

For people who lament that they weren't born into Downton Abbey-style gentility, Ballyfin, which opened in 2010 after nearly a decade-long restoration, is a fast track to 1820s-era refinement from the moment guests pull up to the front drive. A team of butlers and maids line up on the stone estate's front steps to unload bags and whisk visitors into the lobby, and from there the Ballyfin experience is a dreamy blur: drinking tea out of antique china while wrapped in an Irish-wool blanket by the fire; being lulled to sleep during a massage in the basement spa; soaking in a clawfoot tub and surveying the meticulously sourced antiques in one of 15 rooms.

Guests are basically lords or ladies for a night or two at this neoclassical home an hour west of Dublin in the county of Laois (pronounced "Leash"). For those who bore of pure leisure, there's a stone tower to climb, horses to ride, 600 acres to explore, and a lake to walk laps around or row through. The pricey room rates can (almost) be rationalized by the inclusive evening champagne receptions, fancy three-course dinners, snacks, picnic lunches, and Irish breakfasts.

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BY EIMEAR LYNCH  
AFAR Contributor

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## Ballyfin

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