



BALLYFIN

Activities at Ballyfin

Personalising your Travel Experience

We would be delighted to arrange transportation of your choice in advance of your arrival at Ballyfin.

Helicopter

Ballyfin is only 20 minutes flying time from Dublin or Shannon by helicopter.

VIP Airport Transfers

Guests will be met at the aircraft and driven in a private limousine to the VIP suite.

Immigration and customs procedures will be expedited through dedicated channels and luggage will be collected and brought to your car.

On departure a luxury car will collect you from Ballyfin and transfer you to the Airport VIP suite for you to relax while any check-in procedures are undertaken on your behalf. When the aircraft is ready for departure, you will use a private security screening facility before being transferred by luxury car to the steps of the aircraft.

Chauffer Driven Car

Arrange a car and driver to collect you and transfer you to Ballyfin. Departure day transfers can be arranged also to your destination.

Luxury Mini Coach

Group transfers can be arranged in luxury mini coaches.

Guided Tour

During your stay at Ballyfin we can arrange a tour in a vintage car, a helicopter tour, walking tours of the Slieve Bloom mountains, historical tours, personalised shopping trips and lots more... (pre-booking essential).

Estate Activities

Open to residents only, it is very easy to get away from everything as you explore the demesne and in just a short distance from the house you can truly feel "lost in nature".

During your stay at Ballyfin we invite you to enjoy the following, most of which are complimentary to all of our guests:

Demesne

Within the demesne there are several miles of hard surfaced paths as well as several miles of mown grass paths so whether you prefer a gentle stroll or the exhilaration of biking or exploring by golf cart there is something for you.

Garden Walks

Exploring the demesne is a delight – from the walled gardens; the fernery and the restored Edwardian rock garden; a stroll around the lake; discovering quiet bluebell glades and special areas of conservation; foraging for mushrooms and Autumn berries, or simply marvelling at century-old trees and climbing the path to the tower, which is located at the highest point of the estate to enjoy stunning views.

Please pick up a map from the Butlers desk and enjoy your journey. Our gardeners would be delighted to chat with you if you have any questions.

And in the middle of any excursion, we can offer a picnic, perfectly laid and made to vanish when you leave – just ask our butler who will make the arrangements for you.

Nature Walk – from 7 km

Take a walk with our guide and explore deep into the ancient woodlands of the demesne passing the winter waterfall, visiting the gate lodges, the church and graveyard. This guided tour explores the history and development of the demesne.

Coarse Fishing on the lake which has a large stock of roach and pike. We are happy to arrange a ghillie for you.

Tennis

Please ask our Butler for balls and rackets.

Croquet

Please ask one of our butlers to set up the croquet set.

Biking

Our bikes are available for you to enjoy the trails around the demesne. Why not join together and take out the tandem bike or alternatively go back in time and try our Penny-farthing, a great photo opportunity. Please be careful when riding the bikes on the gravel drives.

Boating on the lake

Enjoy a leisurely boat trip on the 28 acre lake or why not let our Butler take you out while you relax and enjoy the scenery. Arrange a Ballyfin picnic and this will be ready for you at a beautiful private location close to the lake.

Archery

Despite its medieval origins, archery has now been developed into a high-tech and highly competitive sport. Using the very latest equipment guests are taught the skills required to strike gold on the competition shoot.

Falconry

An exhilarating experience with amazing birds of prey. We offer Falconry demonstrations and hands-on experience using trained Harris Hawks, Peregrines, Eagle Owls and other birds of prey. Enjoy the up-close and intimate relationship between man and bird which has existed for centuries.

Bird Watching

Ballyfin is home to a wide variety of birds including peregrine falcons, buzzards, jays, pheasants, ospreys. Binoculars and guide books are available from the butler.

Pony & Carriage

Step back in time and take a guided tour on a pony & carriage which awaits you at the front door. The tour will take you around the pathways of the demesne with your guide highlighting the history of the demesne.

Clay Pigeon Shooting

Clay Pigeon shooting is a thrilling experience. Whether you are a beginner or expert you will enjoy this sport. Perfect your aim, time your shots and let the competitive streak in you shine.

Air Rifle Target Shooting

Using the most advanced pre-charged air rifles on our 50m range, your instructor will guide you in the skill of precision shooting

Horse Riding & Riding Lessons

With 600 acres to explore, horse riding around the demesne is a wonderful experience. Our experienced riders will guide you around the demesne, trekking by the tower and lake, deep into the demesne. Horse riding lessons in the paddock can also be arranged with our experienced instructors.

Gaelic Games

Our butlers would be delighted to give you an introduction to two of our Gaelic Games – Football and Hurling and teach you some of the basic skills and rules of these very exciting and uniquely Irish sports.

The Gaelic Athletic Association / Cumann Lúthchleas Gael is a 32 county sporting and cultural organisation that has a presence on all five continents. It is Ireland's largest sporting organisation and is celebrated as one of the great amateur sporting associations in the world today. There are a range of sports among the Gaelic Games family including Football, Hurling, Ladies Football, Camogie, Handball and Rounders.

Hurling is believed to be the world's oldest field game. It features in Irish folklore to illustrate the deeds of heroic mystical figures and it is chronicled as a distinct Irish pastime for at least 2,000 years. The stick, or "hurley" (called camán in Irish) is curved outwards at the end, to provide the striking surface. The ball or "sliotar" is similar in size to a hockey ball but has raised ridges.

Gaelic Football is a field game which has developed as a distinct game similar to the progression of Australian Rules.

Ballyfin Picnic Experience

Arrange a Ballyfin picnic in a place of your choice on the demesne. You are spoilt for choice with some excellent locations to choose from, the grotto, temple, by the water cascade, top of the tower, by the lake or in our custom built picnic house.

Booking & Cancellation Policy

Falconry, horse riding, riding lesson, pony & carriage, archery, shooting, personal trainer, ghillie and treatments require pre-booking in advance and all incur a charge. Our Butler will confirm price for each activity. The following cancellation fee applies:-

- Within 24 hours – 50% of activity booked
- Within 12 hours or failure to show – Full charge of activity booked
- If late for an appointment the time will be deducted from the length of the scheduled activity

Price List

Pony & Carriage Tour	€130 per carriage ride
Archery	€30 per half hour session per person (groups of four or more €20 per person)
Clay Pigeon Shooting	€100.00 per 50 clays, additional clays €25 for 25 clays
Air Rifle Shooting	€80.00 for 60 shots, additional shots €20 euro for 20
Falconry	€700 per session (€800 for groups above 10)
Horse Trekking	€130 per person
Horse Riding Lesson	€140 per person
Fishing with Ghillie	€50 per hour
Slieve Bloom Hike with guide	€80 euro per hour for guide – groups of six or more €120 per hour
Ballyfin Hike	€50 euro per hour for guide – groups of six or more €80 per hour

House Activities

Modelled on the tradition of the Irish county house, Ballyfin is designed for travellers who want to enjoy a few days of absolute tranquillity and to experience the noble tradition of Irish hospitality. Guests are encouraged to enjoy Ballyfin after their own fashion, it is a place of urbane leisure and refined relaxation.

There are six reception rooms including an 80-foot library with roaring log fires and collections of rare books. Wine and whiskey tastings, music recitals and art and architectural tours of the house are among the activities offered, but we can also provide tailor-made activities to suit our guests' requirements.

Costume Department

Have you dreamed in starring in your own period drama? With the backdrop of Ballyfin and a stunning collection of period costumes (from the Lyric Opera company in Chicago – one of the best opera companies in the world) – you now have the opportunity. Visit our costume department – it is frockage heaven – where you will find a wonderful selection of costumes along with matching accessories.

Costume Accessories & Afternoon Tea

Choose from a selection of hats and accessories from our costume department and dress up for a full traditional afternoon tea.

Cookery Class (Advance notice required and subject to availability of chef)

Wine & Whiskey Tasting

A highlight for many guests is a trip to Ballyfin's well-stocked Cellar. Guided by our expert sommelier, enjoy an evening of wine or whiskey tasting and you can personally select your wine so that it is perfectly decanted and ready for you at dinner.

Story Telling

Join us on a magical journey through Ireland's past. Through the art of unique Irish storytelling you will discover Ireland's rich history, a history that is so inextricably linked with its mythology! Listen to stories of a time gone by when Pookas, fairies and giants roamed this land. Our local story teller – Frances will personalize the session to particular interested.

Price List House Activities

Costumes

Ladies €50.00

Gentlemen €30.00

Children €20.00

Hats & Accessories €25.00
with afternoon tea

Whiskey & Wine Tasting from €55.00 depending
on tasting selected

Story Telling €75.00 per hour

Days out

We have full directories of many local attractions in the Whispering room – our team will gladly put together itineraries for you according to your interests and time available.

Golf:

Championship golf is nearby with some of the finest golf courses in Ireland within driving distance of Ballyfin.

The K Club (80 kms / 50 miles)

Designed by Arnold Palmer, The Palmer Ryder Cup Course is ranked regularly in the top 3 parkland golf courses in Ireland. This Palmer-designed golf haven is a must-play 'badge of honour' that has hosted the top golf players in the world. The Ryder Cup in 2006 and 11 European Opens testify to the importance of The Palmer Ryder Cup Course to European Golf.

Mount Juliet (78 kms / 48 miles)

The beautiful and challenging Mount Juliet golf course has established itself as a premier golfing venue for professionals and leisure golfers worldwide. Chosen as the first and only Jack Nicklaus signature golf course in Ireland. The par 72, 7300 yard layout boasts rolling fairways, many featuring water hazards and contoured greens, all superbly blended into the spectacular setting of this famous old Irish estate.

The Heritage (30 kms / 17 miles)

A 72 par Championship golf course designed by Seve Ballesteros and Jeff Howes is located nearby in County Laois, with the Slieve Bloom Mountains as a backdrop. Five lakes and a stream meander through the course and bring water into play on 10 holes. 98 beautifully shaped bunkers and 7,000 trees adorn the landscape which is very gently undulating without any climbing involved.

Excursions:

Kilkenny – Irelands finest medieval city (58 km / 35 miles)

The past echoes in every footstep as you walk through the medieval city of Kilkenny. Explore its ancient laneways, wonder at the majestic halls of Kilkenny Castle or experience the glory of thirteenth-century St Canice's Cathedral. Once you have finished sightseeing browse the famous craft gallery opposite the castle or enjoy lunch in one of Kilkenny's many fine restaurants.

Birr Castle Demesne – a glorious centre of science and horticulture

The gardens at Birr are set in a landscape of 50 hectares and contain some of the largest and rarest tree species found in Ireland. The gardens have a rich history attached to them. They were originally landscaped around the lake in the eighteenth century by Sir William Parsons, and over the generations of the Parsons family the demesne has increased in beauty and interest. The demesne is also home to Ireland's Historic Science Centre, where visitors may travel back to when Birr Castle was a hub of scientific discovery and innovation. Birr Castle can be reached via a spectacular drive over the Slieve Bloom mountains.

Emo court – eighteenth-century mansion and landscaped gardens

Emo Court was designed by the architect James Gandon in 1790 for the Earls of Portarlington and is a magnificent example of the neo-classical style. During the middle of this century it was owned by the Jesuits, it was then acquired and extensively restored by Mr. Cholmeley-Harrison in the 1960s. The house is surrounded by beautiful gardens and parkland which were first laid out in the eighteenth century and contain formal lawns, a lake and woodland walks with many fine trees and shrubs. The house and gardens were taken into State ownership in 1994.

Heywood Gardens

Colonel William Hutchinson Poe commissioned the leading architect, Sir Edwin Lutyens, to plan the gardens at Heywood. Known as "The Italian Gardens", they are the only Irish example of Lutyens' work outside of Dublin. The gardens were completed in 1912. They consist of formal gardens, lakes, woodland and architectural features, such as gothic gates and artificial ruins, embellished with medieval pieces such as the window taken from Aghaboe Abbey.

The gardens in Heywood remained as structurally intact as they were when they were completed at the turn of the century.

Dublin (95 km / 60 miles)

The Irish capital offers a wonderful selection of activities – whether it is visiting the Georgian centre, Dublin Castle, galleries and museums or the Guinness Storehouse and the Old Jameson Distillery.

The Slieve Bloom Mountains

The gentle rolling hills of the Slieve Bloom Mountains rise from the central plains of Ireland, very near to Ballyfin. The area is made up of forests and blanket bog of a type unique to Ireland, interspersed with hidden valleys of great character and interest to the nature lover. The natural colours of the landscape are remarkable in any season. Much of the higher reaches of the mountains have been designated as an Environmentally Protected Area, as an amenity for generations to come. The mountains also provide a paradise for walkers of all levels.

Guides can be arranged for walks of a couple of hours to a full day with a picnic lunch or a stop in a friendly pub, or visitors to Birr can enjoy a spectacular drive over the mountains.

Kevin O' Dwyer and Sacred Landscapes of County Offaly

Kevin O'Dwyer is an artist who creates in silver. Kevin will create a personal tour that will take you "off the beaten track" to visit some of the hidden treasures of Co. Offaly. Tours are flexible and can explore monastic Offaly with visits to Clonmacnoise, St. Manchans Shrine, Seirkieran and Lemanaghan, which incorporate stunning views of the River Shannon and intimate glimpses into our cultural heritage. Or discover our rich environmental heritage with walks through the boglands and wetlands of West Offaly with an opportunity to visit the environmental sculpture park - Sculpture in the Parklands and the wetlands of Lough Boora Parklands.

National Stud & Japanese Gardens

Nowhere better symbolizes all that is great about County Kildare, the beating heart of Ireland's thoroughbred industry, than the stud. A unique attraction of outstanding natural beauty that is home to some of the most magnificent horses and sumptuous gardens to be found anywhere in the world. The Japanese Gardens, renowned throughout the world and the finest of their kind in Europe were created between 1906 and 1910. From horses to horticulture, the Irish National Stud & Japanese Gardens offers you a unique experience.

Kildare Village & Newbridge Silverware

For a great day out, nestled within landscaped grounds and presented in an authentic village environment, Kildare Village Outlet Shopping is label heaven. You will find it difficult to resist temptation with 60 brands such as Louise Kennedy, DKNY, Juicy Couture, Anya Hindmarch, Aquascutum and Hugo Boss. A morning or afternoon spent browsing 60 exclusive brands offering luxury for less in a chic and casual open-air environment and only 40 minute's drive from Ballyfin. The Newbridge

Silverware Visitor Centre showcases quality silver jewellery and accessories and a museum of style icons. Enjoy a personalised tour of the centre and a personal shopper to help you choose a perfect piece of Irish silver.

Local Information

Ballyfin Catholic Church, Ballyfin

Mass Times Sat: 8.00pm,

Sun: 10am, Fri: 7.30pm

St. Peters and Pauls Catholic Church, Portlaoise

Mass Times Portlaoise

Monday to Friday: 7.30am, 10am

Saturday: 10am

Sunday: 6.30pm (Vigil Sat evening), 8.30am,

10am, 11.15am and 12.30pm

The Church of St. John the Baptist, Ballyfin Demesne (Church of Ireland)

Service each Sunday at 12 noon

Local Pub

The Deadman's Inn is located just outside the walls of Ballyfin and is open from 6pm daily. Our Butler will be happy to drive you if you would like to experience a local pub.



Ballyfin Demesne, Ballyfin, County Laois, Ireland

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