CONTENTS

Welcome to Laois 4
A Brief History of Laois 5
Getting Here 6
Laois Heritage 8
Day Trips from County Laois 13
Slieve Bloom Mountains 17
Golf 20
Equestrian & Trekking 24
Walking & Cycling 25
Angling 28
Activities & Adventure 30
Shopping & Crafts 36
Arts & Entertainment 42
Pubs 46
Eating Out 50
Festivals & Events 52
Twinning 55
Health & Beauty 56
Accommodation 60
Guides, Taxis & Coach Hire 73

MAPS
Map of Laois 74
Town Map of Portlaoise 75

Passport to Laois
Tourist Office: +353 (0)57 862 1178  www.laoistourism.ie
WELCOME TO LAOIS

Ancient Celtic sites, serene country villages, monastic round towers, windswept valley landscapes, rugged desolate bog lands, tumbling waterfalls – Laois is steeped in myth and legend.

Today, Laois’s captivating heritage is supported by breath-taking landscapes where you can enjoy peaceful moments of rejuvenation. Take a drive through the Slieve Bloom Mountains and its quaint mountain villages, or visit the charming towns and magnificent gardens around the county. You can choose from a number of picturesque riverside villages along the Grand Canal where fishing and water activities are popular. This diversity of landscape offers the visitor a wide variety of activities from horse-riding to fishing in any of Laois’s renowned rivers and lakes.

Take a barge on the Grand Canal or a horse-drawn caravan holiday break, where you can view this magnificent scenery and so much more! Laois also offers some of the most competitive green fees in Ireland and easy access to many quality parkland golf courses.

The visitor is offered a myriad of unique reasonably priced places to stay, superb award-winning restaurants, great entertainment, exhilarating outdoor adventure, excellent shopping and welcoming people – all within an hour of Ireland’s capital. With its central location and excellent road and rail infrastructure, Laois is the perfect place to stay and discover attractions in other nearby counties – Kilkenny, Carlow, Kildare, Offaly, Wicklow, Tipperary and Dublin. We look forward to welcoming you to Laois and we wish you an enjoyable visit.

For more details on county Laois or where to book accommodation, contact the Tourist Office, Lyster Square, Portlaoise, Co. Laois.
T: +353 (0)57 862 1178, or visit www.laoistourism.ie
For any specific queries, contact Laois Tourism Officer:
T: +353 (0)57 866 4132  E: info@laoistourism.ie

Did you know that the Slieve Blooms are the oldest mountains in Europe and were once 12,000 feet high?

Take a barge on the Grand Canal or a horse-drawn caravan holiday break, where you can view this magnificent scenery and so much more! Laois also offers some of the most competitive green fees in Ireland and easy access to many quality parkland golf courses.

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A BRIEF HISTORY OF LAOIS

We can trace the first people in Laois to small bands of hunters and gatherers who passed through the county about 8,500 years ago. They were followed by Ireland’s first farmers, who left behind burial mounds in Clonaslee and Cuffshborough. Next came the people of the Bronze Age, who produced metal weapons and tools as well as golden objects. They were followed by those of the pre-Christian Celtic Iron Age, whose ring barrows and forts still mark the landscape.

By the first century A.D., Laois was part of the Kingdom of Ossory. Its lands were divided among the Seven Septs (Families) of Laois - O’More (O’Moore), O’Lalor, O’Doran, O’Dowling, O’Devoy (O’Deevy), O’Kelly and Mc Evoy. Dermot Mc Murragh, King of Leinster, was instrumental in bringing the Normans to Ireland. He married his daughter Aoife to the Norman Knight Strongbow, and included the fortress on the Rock of Dunamaise as part of her dowry. By 1175, the Normans controlled the best land in the county. However, the early 1300s saw a surge in the power of the Irish chieftains. The Dempseys seized Lea Castle, while Dunamaise was recovered by the O’Mores. The Normans withdrew and the re-established Gaelic lords built tower houses, often decorating them with the ancient symbol of the Sheela-na-Gig.

By the 1500s, the English again dominated the county. When Mary Tudor assumed the English Throne, she ordered the plantation of Laois with English settlers. This was the first of many plantations that were to follow. A great fortress was erected at Maryborough which was named in honour of the Queen and the county was named Queen’s County. Although Irish chieftains fought to defend their land, after the Battle of Kinsale (1601), their power was shattered.

During the English Civil War, Cromwell’s forces raged through Laois, destroying some tower houses and attacking the fortress at Dunamaise. After Cromwell’s death, Laois became a refuge for outcasts and political refugees – Quakers in Mountmellick and Huguenots in Portarlington. What followed was a period of relative calm. Anglo-Irish landowners enclosed the land and built fine houses such as Emo Court and Castle Durrow. In 1836, the Grand Canal linked Portarlington and Mountmellick further stimulating industry in those bustling towns. With the foundation of the Irish State, the county got its name back. ‘Queen’s County’ was once again County Laois.

GETTING HERE

Apart from its own many attractions, Laois is ideally situated for visits to other places of interest that Ireland has to offer. Its county town, Portlaoise has a superb road, rail and bus infrastructure – one of the best in the country. Its network extends to Dublin, Cork, Kerry, Limerick, Shannon, Waterford, Kilkenny and other Midland counties. Laois is extremely convenient to all the entry points into Ireland and is in easy access to Dublin airport and Dun Laoghaire, Dublin and Rosslare ferry ports.

BY AIR: All international Flights to Ireland arrive to cork, Shannon and Dublin Airport, all of which are within 2 hours of Co.Laois.

BY FERRY: Both Irish Ferries and Stena Line operate routes from France to Ireland and the U.K. to Ireland. (Dublin/Rosslare).

BY RAIL: Portlaoise Railway Station operates a daily service on the Dublin – Cork/Tralee and Dublin – Limerick lines. T: +353 (0)57 862 1303 Portarlington Railway Station is situated on the main rail route from Dublin to Galway in the west of Ireland. T: +353 (0)57 862 3128

BY COACH: Bus Éireann: operate buses from Portlaoise at regular intervals daily on Dublin – Portlaoise – Cork; Dublin – Portlaoise – Limerick; Dublin – Portlaoise – Tralee and Waterford – Portlaoise – Athlone routes. Contact Bus Éireann for more details at +353 (0)90 647 8792.

J.J. Kavanaghs: run bus services on Portlaoise at regular intervals daily on Dublin – Portlaoise – Cork; Dublin – Portlaoise – Limerick; Dublin – Portlaoise – Tralee and Waterford – Portlaoise – Athlone routes. Contact Bus Éireann for more details at +353 (0)90 647 8792.

Aircoach: run regular bus services between Dublin Airport and Abbeyleix. For more details on timetables, contact +353 (0)1 844 71 18 or www.aircoach.ie

BY CAR: From Portlaoise to:
- Limerick 105km (1 hour 30 mins)
- Cork 170km (2 hours 15 mins)
- Dublin 80km (1 hour)
- Galway 148km (2 hours)
- Kilkenny 49km (45 mins)
- Rosslare 125 km (2 hours)

Times listed are approximate
Like the pieces of a jigsaw, more than 1,000 different heritage sites tell the story of County Laois. To help you find your way, the attractions below are listed in alphabetical order. We’ve used icons to help you find the places that most interest you.

**SENSORY GARDENS, ABBEYLEIX 🌿**
T: +353 (0)57 873 1325
Located in the old walled garden of the Brigidine Convent (founded in 1842), the Abbey Sense Garden is organised around the five senses. Plantings include a herb garden, a scent garden and many water features. All plants are propagated and maintained by people with learning disabilities. Open year round, Monday to Thursday from 9am to 5pm, and on Fridays from 9am to 4pm. From 1 June until 30 September, the gardens are also open on Saturdays, Sundays and Bank Holidays from 2pm to 6pm. There is an Open Day and Garden Fete in the second week of June.

**ABBREYLEIX**
In the late 1700s, the Viscounts de Vesci moved the planned estate town of Abbeyleix to its present location. Today, Abbeyleix is one of Ireland’s prettiest towns, featuring interesting architecture, mature plantings and five carefully restored fountains. Visit the Abbeyleix Heritage House Interpretative Centre and the picturesque Sexton’s Cottage.

**ABBREYLEIX HERITAGE HOUSE, ABBEYLEIX 🏡**
T: +353 (0)57 873 1653  E: abbeyleixlaois@eircom.net  www.heritagehousemuseum.com
Located in the old Patrician North School, this museum tells the history of County Laois, as well as Abbeyleix. Panels and artefacts address pre-Christian tribes, monastic Laois, plantation and the influence of landlords, among other topics. An entire room is dedicated to the factory that made fine carpets that covered the floorboards of the Titanic.

**AGHABOE ABBEY 🌿**
Founded by St. Canice in the 6th Century, Aghaboe Abbey is the site of four different phases of Christian life in Ireland. Today the ruins of a Dominican friary survive. A plaque at the monastic ruins tells of the turbulent and bloody history of the site. Visitors can also view the tree-covered remains of a Norman motte nearby. Admission free.

**BALLAGHMORE CASTLE (BORRIS-IN-OSSORY) 🏡**
T: +353 (0)505 21453  E: gracepym@eircom.net  www.castleballaghmore.com
Once the chief seat of the Mac Giolla Phadraiga, Lords of Upper Ossory, Ballaghmore Castle is strategically placed on the Bealach Mór, the great road to Munster. Visitors are given a guided tour of the castle’s many interesting features, which include a Sheela-na-Gig.
BALLYFIN HOUSE
Ballyfin House is possibly the finest Neo-Classical house in Ireland. Built in 1821 – 1826 in Slieve Bloom sandstone by Sir Charles Coote, it includes a superb Richard Turner conservatory. Private ownership.

CASTLETOWN
Located on the banks of the Nore, Castletown won ‘Ireland’s Tidiest Village 2001’.

DONAGHMORE WORKHOUSE MUSEUM
T: +353 (0)505 46315   M: +353 (0)86 829 6685
Visitors to the Donaghmore Workhouse Museum can walk through the virtually unchanged rooms of a 19th century workhouse. The workhouse, which opened in 1853, housed families immediately after the Great Famine and during the Land War. Restricted opening – please ring in advance. Guided tours only.

DURROW
The planned estate village of Durrow developed under the patronage of the Viscounts of Ashbrook, who also built Castle Durrow, one of the last large pre-Palladian houses built in Ireland. The town features fine Georgian and Victorian buildings. The Leafy Loop – a 14-mile series of way-marked walking routes around the town – includes riverside paths, leafy forest tracks, numerous historic sites and a rich variety of flora and fauna.

EMO COURT
T: +353 (0)57 862 6573   www.heritageireland.ie
One of the finest stately homes in these islands. Emo Court was designed by James Gandon in 1790 for the Earls of Portarlington. It is a magnificent example of the neo-classical style. Guided tours of the house are available. House open June to September and by appointment. Gardens open all year round. Tearooms are also available in Emo Court for refreshments.

EMO COURT GARDENS
Laid out in the late 1700s, the gardens of Emo Court are known for sweeping formal lawns, statuary, exotic shrubs and fine trees. Visitors can enjoy a variety of walking routes through the woodlands, including the Beech Walk, Margaret’s Walk, Via Davida, the Apiary Walk and the Clucker Walk. Admission free.

GASH GARDENS, CASTLETOWN
T: +353 (0)57 873 2247   M: +353 (0)87 272 8337   E: gashgardens@eircom.net
An enchanting oasis packed with interesting and unusual plants to lure and inspire both the keen plantsperson and the garden novice. Colourful borders, a large rock garden and a well-established collection of trees, shrubs and roses combine to present a succession of colour through all the seasons. Open May 1 – September 30. Monday – Saturday from 10am to 5pm. The gardens may be viewed on Sundays strictly by appointment only. Admission €5.00. Groups welcome by prior arrangement. Adjacent plant nursery open all year.

GREAT HEATH
The Great Heath of Maryborough is one of the most important archeological sites in Ireland. It was the site of the battle of Caintin: in the third century, the stone called Leac Reta where the seven cantreds of ancient Laois met, iron-age ring barrows, bronze-age cultivated ridges and many other historic features.
HEYWOOD GARDENS, BALLINAKIL
T: +353 (0)56 772 1450   E: heywoodgardens@dugas.ie   www.heritageireland.ie
One of the finest gardens in Ireland, this site contains two types of garden. The first is an
elegant 18th century park with fine trees and lakes. The second is a series of small, inter-
linked gardens designed by Sir Edward Lutyens and Gertrude Jekyll in the early 20th century.
Both can be enjoyed during daylight hours. Admission free.

IRISH FLY-FISHING & GAME SHOOTING MUSEUM, ATTANAGH
T: +353 (0)57 873 6112   Walter Phelan E: irishflycraft@hotmail.com   www.irishflycraft.com
The only museum of its kind in Europe, the Irish Fly Fishing and Game Shooting Museum
explores 300 years of fishing and hunting in Ireland. The collection includes rare fly, vintage
rods, reels and firearms, and specimens of fish and fowl. Fishing guide Jimmy Tyrrell is on site
to tie flies and frame them to order.

LEA CASTLE
Situated midway between Portarlington and Monasterevin, Lea Castle was built in 1260 by
William de Vesey. It changed hands many times during its turbulent history. Remains include
part of the keep, a fairly complete corner tower, a walled courtyard, wards and a double-
towered gate building.

KILLESIN ROMANESQUE DOORWAY
The most striking and colourful Romanesque doorway in Ireland can be found among the
ruins of the monastery at Killeshin. Some scholars believe that this elegantly decorated church
may have been commissioned by Dermot McMurragh, King of Leinster (c 1133–1171), on
the site of an earlier monastery.

MOUNTMELLICK
In 1659, a small group of Quakers settled in Mountmellick. Over the next century, they
were instrumental in transforming a sleepy village in the bend of the Oweness River into ‘the
Manchester of Ireland’. By the early 1800s, the town was a centre of textile production, and
its factories also produced glue, starch, snuff and candles, among other goods. Canal barges
took Mountmellick’s wares throughout Ireland and brought shoppers back to its fine streets.
Today Mountmellick’s fine buildings and historical sites are identified on its Heritage Trail, which
is signposted through the town.

MOUNTMELLICK MUSEUM
T: +353 (0)57 862 4525   E: themuse@mdasilt.ie   www.mountmellickdevelopment.com
This museum tells the story of Mountmellick’s rich Quaker and industrial history. It also
showcases Mountmellick Work, a uniquely Irish form of embroidery that was developed in
the 1800s to enable local women to support themselves.

POET’S COTTAGE, CAMROSS
This replica of a traditional thatched cottage allows visitors to experience what life was like for
most rural people in the 1800s. The cottage is named for Patrick Ryan, a local poet who
wrote about life in this area.

PORTARLINGTON
Founded in 1666 by Sir Henry Bennett, Lord Arlington, the town features exceptional
Huguenot, Georgian and Victorian buildings. After the Jacobite wars, the lands were given
to General Rouvigney, Earl of Galway, who offered refuge to French and Flemish Huguenots
forced to leave their homelands. Portarlington became known for its 16 Classical schools,
which educated well-to-do children in the ‘French’ manners considered desirable by the
gentry. It also became a financial centre, and the skill of its silversmiths was renowned throughout Ireland.

RATHDOWNEY
Rathdowney has an abundance of historical sites, castles, moats, tower houses and the
croppy grave. Rathdowney is the birthplace of the late Thomas Prior, founder of the Royal
Dublin Society (RDS). Rathdowney was also home to the only brewery making non-deposit
ale in Ireland in 1902 and had the distinction of holding the Royal Warrant as brewers to
Queen Victoria.

ROCK OF DUNAMAISE
One of the great monuments and fortresses of Ireland towers over the Portlaoise/Stradbally
road, offering breathtaking views of the county. Inspired by this great vantage point, people
built fortresses here as early as 140AD. In the mid-800s, Vikings pillaged an early Christian
settlement on this spot. A later fortress was part of the dowry of Aoife, daughter of the
Leinster king Dermot McMurragh, when she was given in marriage to the Norman conqueror
Strongbow in 1170.

ROUND TOWER, TIMAHOE
A beautifully carved doorway makes this one of the most interesting round towers in Ireland.
If you look carefully, you can make out carved heads, with long moustaches and twining hair,
on the sides of the doorway. This tower was probably built in the 1100s on the site of an earlier
monastery. Beside the tower is the Church of Ireland now used as a library.

STRADBALLY STEAM MUSEUM
T: +353 (0)57 862 5154   www.irishsteam.ie
The Stradbally Steam Museum tells the story of the steam engines that pulled trains, built
roads and drove factory machinery in Ireland until the 1920s. Restricted Opening. Call ahead
to confirm opening times of museum.

On Bank Holiday Sundays and Mondays from Easter to October, the Steam Museum also
offers rides on a narrow gauge Heritage Railway that takes passengers through the grounds of
the picturesque Stradbally Hall estate.

VICARSTOWN
This picturesque village on the Grand Canal is a useful base for walking, cycling, boating and
fishing in the county. Buildings of interest include the 1860s Grattan School and Grattan
Lodge, both of which were built in 1882 by Henry Grattan’s grand-daughter Lady Pauline
Grattan Belieu.

These other renowned Heritage Sites are close to Laois:
- Kilkenny Castle and the medieval city of Kilkenny (about 45 minutes drive from Portlaoise)
- Irish National Stud & Japanese Gardens, Kildare (about 30 minutes drive from Portlaoise)
- Clonmacnoise (about 50 minutes drive from Portlaoise)
- Glendalough (about 90 minutes drive from Portlaoise)
- Newgrange, Co. Meath (about 75 minutes drive from Portlaoise)
- Birr Castle and Gardens, Offaly (45 minutes drive from Portlaoise)
- Rock of Cashel, Co. Tipperary (about 45 minutes drive from Portlaoise)
**DAY TRIPS FROM COUNTY LAOIS**

**KILKENNY CASTLE** is situated in the medieval city of Kilkenny. A 12th Century Castle, there are extensive grounds and guided tours of the Castle daily. Other historic buildings are Saint Canice’s Cathedral and Rothe House. Kilkenny is located only 45 minutes drive from Portlaoise and 30 minutes from Durrow.

**IRISH NATIONAL STUD & JAPANESE GARDENS** The National Stud is home to some of Ireland’s finest thoroughbreds. The Japanese Gardens are the finest Japanese Gardens in Europe. Both are located in Co. Kildare, approx 30 minutes drive from Laois.

**CLONMACNOISE** This ancient monastic site is situated in neighbouring County Offaly and dates back almost 1,500 years.

**BIRR CASTLE DEMENSE** is famous for its exotic tree and plant collections, rivers and lakes, formal gardens, terraces and wildflower meadows. It is also home to the Science Centre. Birr is located approx 40 minutes from Portlaoise.

**ROCK OF CASHEL** is one of the most spectacular archeological sites in Ireland. It sits on the outskirts of Cashel on a large mound of limestone bristling with ancient fortifications. Mighty stone walls encircle a complete round tower, a roofless abbey, a 12th century Romanesque chapel, and numerous other buildings and high crosses. Cashel is located approx 1 hour from Portlaoise.

**NEWGRANGE** is most famous of all Irish prehistoric monuments, Newgrange is one of the finest European passage-tombs. It is more than 5000 years old and thus older than the pyramids in Egypt! This building, which is a big mound of some 80 meters in diameter, stands in the Boyne Valley in County Meath. Newgrange is located approx 1 hour 30 minutes drive from Portlaoise.

**GLENDALOUGH** ‘the glen of the two lakes’, is an ancient monastic settlement and two clear water lakes beneath the sheer cliffs of a deep valley which was carved out by glaciers during the Ice Age. The monastic settlement has been a centre for pilgrims and visitors since its foundation by St. Kevin in the 6th century. Glendalough in County Wicklow is located approx 1 hour 30 minutes from Portlaoise.
Discover the charm of Kildare Village

Find previous seasons’ collections from the world’s leading European and international luxury fashion and lifestyle brands, reduced by up to 60% every day, all year round. Treat yourself to some time well spent. Over 45 boutiques just waiting to be discovered...

THOMAS PINK, L.K. BENNETT, WOLFORD, KAREN MILLEN, BALLY, REISS TSE, VILLEROY & BOCH, SAVOY TAYLORS GUILD and many more.

Facilities
- Free Parking
- Children’s Play Area
- Wheelchair and Buggy Loan
- Tourist Information Centre
- Global Refund/Tax Free Shopping

Getting here
- M7 Motorway to Exit 13 for Kildare town.
- Regular Irish Rail train service to Kildare town station.
- Complimentary shuttle bus service to Village.

Open 7 days per week (closed Christmas Day)

Monday to Wednesday 10am to 6pm  Thursday 10am to 8pm
Friday 10am to 7pm  Saturday 10am to 6pm
Sunday & Bank Holidays 11am to 6pm

Kildare Village, Nurney Road, Kildare Town, Co Kildare.
T: +353 (0)45 520 501  E: KildareVillage@Valueretail.com
www.KildareVillage.com

*off RRP
Did you know, legend has it, that Fionn MacCumhaill and the Fianna of old dwelled in the Slieve Blooms towering over County Laois?

SLIEVE BLOOM MOUNTAINS

Follow a mountain stream into a deep glen, trek through a lush forest or explore the blanket bog that covers a mountain summit. Anyone who loves the outdoors will enjoy a visit to the Slieve Bloom Mountains, whether on foot, bicycle, horseback or in the comfort of the family car. The mountains offer stunning views of the surrounding countryside. On a clear day, you can see the highest points of each of Ireland’s four provinces. The Slieve Blooms are rich in wildlife. More than 65 bird species have been sighted there, and it is not unusual to glimpse fallow deer or wild goats, not to mention foxes, hares and stoats. Much may be visited by car. Three roads cross the mountain top, including the road from Mountrath, Co. Laois to Kinnitty, Co. Offaly; the Glendine Gap, and the “Cut” above Clonaslee. Other drives are signposted.

Picnic areas abound along the way. Particularly recommended are Monicknew, which has a nature trail, and Glenbarrow, source of the River Barrow, which features the Glenbarrow Waterfall. For walkers, the Slieve Bloom Way offers a circular trail through rolling hills and deep valleys (see page 25 & 26 for more details). The annual Walking Festival is popular among local people and visitors alike. The Slieve Bloom Mountains are also the home of storytelling, music, dance and song.

- For more information on the Slieve Bloom Mountains, contact Portlaoise Tourist Office at +353 (0)57 862 1178 or +353 (0)57 866 4132.
- The Slieve Bloom Heritage and Driving Map is available from Portlaoise Tourist Office or on www.slievebloom.ie.
- Guided tours may be arranged through the Slieve Bloom Rural Development Society, Kinnitty, Co. Offaly. T: +353 (0)57 913 7299.
- Cyclists can obtain route suggestions from the numbers above.
- Equestrian trails are serviced by a number of operators, including the Slieve Bloom Equestrian Centre, Borris-in-Ossory. T: +353 (0)505 41298.
Golf has been played in Co. Laois since the 1890’s and the Seven 18 hole parkland courses will suit all levels of golfers. Offering some of the most competitive green fees in Ireland. Each year the Laois International Golf Challenge takes place in May. This competition played over all 6 courses over 3 days, with the final being played at the Seve Ballesteroses designed Heritage Golf & Spa Resort in Killenard.

For information see www.golfirelandmidlands.ie or contact the Laois Tourism Officer +353 (0)57 866 4132 or email: info@laoistourism.ie

Group Bookings can also be arranged. Golf Packages can be arranged by your accommodation providers or contact the Tourist Office at +353 (0)57 862 1178.
THE HEATH GOLF CLUB

Golf has been played on the Heath since the 1890s and the present club dates from 1930. A trophy which has come into the possession of the club was played for in 1891 and bears the inscription 'Queens County Heath Golf Club.' The course is laid out on open heathland, incorporating three natural lakes and was the first Laois Club to extend to 18 holes over thirty years ago. Facilities available include a 10-bay driving range, lake-side putting green and two practice areas as well as a magnificent clubhouse opened 10 years ago. Often described as an 'inland links' the Heath offers a unique challenge to all levels of golfer.

T: +353 (0)57 864 6533
E: info@theheathgc.ie  www.theheathgc.ie

PORTARLINGTON GOLF CLUB

Portarlington Golf Club situated on the Laois/Offaly border, on the Portarlington to Mountmellick road, was founded in 1908 as part of the Warburton Demesne. It is a beautiful 18 hole parkland course with some magnificent old trees, woodlands, and is a sanctuary to wildlife such as ducks, deer, and swans. The River Barrow which borders the course provides a very challenging finish and no card is safe until the 16th & 17th holes have been played. Our new clubhouse opened in 2001 has full bar and catering facilities.

T: +353 (0)57 864 2916
E: portarlingtongc@eircom.net  www.portarlingtongolf.com

THE HERITAGE GOLF & SPA RESORT

Killenard, Co. Laois

• 18 hole Championship Course, co-designed by Seve Ballesteros & Jeff Howes
• Magnificently appointed Clubhouse overlooking the 9th & 18th Greens
• The Seve Ballesteros Natural Golf School
• Resort Spa & Health Club
• Exclusive Housing
• 5 star Hotel & Conference Centre
• Exhibition Centre
• Floodlit walking track
• Commercial/Service Outlets
• A variety of bars and restaurants to choose from

T: +353 (0)57 864 5500   E: info@theheritage.com  www.theheritage.com

Did you know that Laois has some of the most competitive green fees in Ireland?
EQUESTRIAN & TREKKING

There is no better way to see the Irish countryside and the people, than by touring on horseback. For the experienced rider to the beginner, Laois offers excellent equine facilities. The breathtaking landscape is ideal for horse riding or trekking. The Slieve Bloom Mountains provides the perfect location to take a trail ride. The Slieve Bloom Trail offers 3 and 6 day trails through the Slieve Bloom Mountains in Laois. You can also experience a unique holiday by touring the heart of Ireland in a horse-drawn caravan at Tullibards Stud in Coolrain. Equestrian packages can be arranged with accommodation providers in the area.

KILLEIGH EQUESTRIAN CENTRE
Killeigh, Co. Laois.
T: +353 (0)57 934 4393

POINT-TO-POINT RACING
Located at Stradbally in the Cosby Estate.

KILVAHAN HORSE DRAWN CARAVANS
Tullibards Stud, Coolrain, Co. Laois.
T: +353 (0)57 873 5178
E: kilvahan@eircom.net
www.horsedrawncaravans.com

HORSE RACING
Available at the following locations all within an hour of Portlaoise:
The Curragh Racecourse, Co. Kildare.
Gowran Park Racecourse, Co. Kilkenny.

Ring the Portlaoise Tourist Office for more details at (057) 862 1178.

Did you know the most famous builder of Irish Railways in the 19th century was Laoisman, James Dargan – father of the Irish railway system?
WALKING & CYCLING

Walking is truly the best way to fully absorb the beauty of the county. A network of quiet country roads and lanes will take you into the heart of County Laois where you are offered some of Ireland’s most beautiful and extraordinary landscapes. Laois is a walker’s paradise and boasts a total of approximately 480 kilometres of ‘off-road’ walking routes, encompassing areas of Sli Dala (Fisherstown area) Cullahill, Stradbally, Durrow, Timahoe, Whitehorse, Grantstown, Clonaslee, Portarlington, Spink and Slieve Margy (Rossmore – Killeshin). Escape to the Slieve Bloom Mountains, one of most popular attractions for visitors, with the villages of Rosenallis and Clonaslee being the most favoured starting and finishing points. You could also take the Slieve Margy Walking route, which is located in the south eastern corner of the county. Walkers can join at any point and features highlighted are the Glosha Waterfall, Oisin Park and the Grace Mausoleum in Arles. There are picturesque way marked walks around the renowned Grand

Canal from either the scenic areas of Fisherstown, Vicarstown or the Derries Wood and other beautiful sites such as the Rathadaire Lake, the Vicarstown canals, Courtwood Bridge and the remains of a mudhouse. There are also a number of Sli na Slainte (Healthy Walks) routes. For details on the Laois Walks Festival, guided walks on scenic way-marked routes in Laois day and evening, contact Laois Leader at +353 (0)57 866 1900. A list of guides can be found on page 73.

For maps and grades of difficulty of all walking routes, a Laois Walks Pack is available from Portlaoise tourist office at +353 (0)57 862 1178.
Angling is one of the main attractions for visitors to County Laois as there are so many scenic locations for those who wish to get away from it all. Two of the main rivers in Ireland run through Laois – the Nore and the Barrow (which rises in the Slieve Blooms) among other rivers. Laois is also renowned for the Grand Canal and its many well-stocked lakes.

The game and coarse angler are well catered for in this hidden haven in the heart of Ireland. The river Barrow is well known as a game and coarse angling river for salmon, brown trout, roach, rudd, perch and tench. The river Nore provides excellent fishing and has good pike and salmon stocks. Coarse anglers are spoilt for choice between canals, rivers and a vast number of scenic lakes.

There are over 10 lakes in Laois situated in the most scenic of surroundings – Rathadaire Lake, near Vicarstown, Ballinakill Lakes on the Laois/Kilkenny border and Stradbally Lake to name but a few. Little Bog Lake is situated at The Heath, one of the most historic sites in Ireland. The angler will enjoy excellent fishing at the very picturesque locations at Vicarstown and Fisherstown, situated on the Grand Canal. One can also enjoy some refreshment in the local pubs nearby! Permits can be obtained locally, in shops and pubs or by contacting your accommodation provider. There is an abundance of local or regular visiting fellow devotees to advise on the best places to fish in Laois. The following are some contacts in relation to angling and permits in Laois.

**LAOIS ANGLING CENTRE**

Located at Coolrain, less than 3 miles from the N7, the Laois Angling Centre combines the peace and tranquillity of the Irish country side with exceptional game and coarse fishing. The 4 large spring fed lakes, surrounded by mature woodlands, Clonoghil House and farmlands provide the perfect natural conditions for both the fish and fisherman.

The lakes are stocked regularly with brown and rainbow trout, carp and tench ensuring a varied and interesting experience. The modern facilities include large parking area, wheelchair access, tackle hire and light refreshments with picnic and bar be que areas ideal for family and corporate events.

Whether a beginner or an expert, the Laois Angling Centre provides the complete fishing experience. T: +353 (0)57 873 5091  M: +353 (0)87 996 2864  E: info@laoisanglingcentre.ie

**Directions: From Roscrea, on N7 to Dublin.**

Travel 3 miles from Roscrea. Take second left turn after Racket Hall Hotel and Roscrea Golf Club signed for Laois Angling Centre. The entrance is approximately 3 miles from the N7 on this road.

**Directions: From Mountrath, on N7 to Limerick.**

Travel 1 mile from Mountrath, take first right turn signed for Coolrain and Camross. Continue straight for 5 miles arriving at a T-junction. Take left and entrance is about 150 metres from junction.

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**The fully comprehensive Angling Guide to Laois is available from Portlaoise Tourism Office or by phoning +353 (0)57 866 4132**
ACTIVITY & ADVENTURE

Mountains, lakes, woods and the rolling rural landscape provide the natural terrain for an exciting range of activities for adventure seekers. Paintballing in the Stradbally woods, four wheel drive jeeps in the Slieve Bloom Mountains, touring Laois in a horse-drawn caravan or taking a barge on the historic Grand Canal are just a taste of the activities on offer for children and adults alike!

A Laois Activity Brochure is available from Portlaoise Tourist Office or from Laois Tourism on T: +353 (0)57 866 4132 or E: info@laoistourism.ie or www.laoistourism.ie

Did you know that the first ever motor car race in Ireland and the U.K. – The Gordon Bennett Race – ran through County Laois?

Other sports which are available in County Laois are tennis, snooker, hill-walking, archery, cricket to name but a few! Contact Portlaoise Tourist Office for more details.

STEAM TRAIN
There is a Narrow Gauge Railway in Stradbally where a rare steam train runs every bank holiday weekend.
T: +353 (0)57 862 5154
www.irishsteam.ie

SWIMMING
Ballinakill Open Air Swimming Pool (open summer season only)
T: +353 (0)57 873 3347 / 873 1037
M: +353 (0)87 418 5291

FOUR WHEEL DRIVE JEEPS
Wheelbase Ltd.
Off-Road Driver Training, Monasterevin.
T: +353 (0)45 525 488
M: +353 (0)87 273 5985

GAEILC FOOTBALL & HURLING
(IRISH NATIONAL SPORTS)
See the national sports at O’Moore Park, Portlaoise and at regular venues.

HEALTH & LEISURE CLUB/GYM
Portlaoise Leisure Centre, Ridge Road, Portlaoise, Co. Laois.
T: +353 (0)57 868 1200

Portarlington Leisure Centre, Link Road, Portarlington, Co. Laois.
T: +353 (0)57 864 5800
www.portarlingtonleisurecentre.ie

PAINTBALLING
Supershot Paintball Mission
Cork Road, Stradbally, Co. Laois.
T: +353 (0)86 377 7499
E: info@supershot.ie
www.supershot.ie

BARGE HIRE/BOAT HIRE
Barrowline Cruisers
Vicarstown, Co. Laois.
T: +353 (0)57 862 5189
E: barrowline@eircom.net
www.barrowline.com
Barges on Grand Canal from Vicarstown.

TOWN PARKS & CHILDREN’S PLAYGROUNDS
Portlaoise: Timahoe Road, Portlaoise, Co. Laois.
Abbeyfeix: Heritage House, Abbeyfeix, Co. Laois.
Portarlington: Link Road, Portarlington, Co. Laois.
Mountrath: Amenity Park, Mountrath, Co. Laois.

ROLL’N BOWL
Bowling & Children’s Adventure Centre
Connmac Industrial Centre, Portlaoise, Co. Laois.
T: +353 (0)57 867 0005
E: rollnbowl@eircom.net
www.bowlingireland.com

HORSE-DRAWN CARAVANS
Kilvahan Horse Drawn Caravans
Tullibards Stud, Coolrain, Co. Laois.
T: +353 (0)57 873 5178
E: kilvahan@eircom.net
www.horsedrawncaravans.com

Roll’n Bowl has activities for all ages:
- Ten Pin Bowling
- Ice Skating
- Crazy Golf
- Soft Play Centre
- Indoor Soccer
- Pottery Painting

Our cosmic glow-in-the-dark bowling features pinball wizard for kids. The Soft Play Centre has three separate areas over four levels catering for toddlers up to 12 years.

New to Roll’n Bowl, is a pottery painting studio. All paints and equipment are provided.

Clonminam Business Park, Portlaoise, Co. Laois.
T: +353 (0)57 867 0005
www.bowlingireland.com

Tearaways is a unique and unforgettable adventure play centre for kids. We’re the biggest and the best play centre in the region, and the kids Number One favourite.

With 6,000 square feet of high energy fun, from slides to tunnels, bridges to ball pools, activity towers, cargo nets, cannon shooters and more, your kids will love Tearaways.

Located at Rathdowney Shopping Outlet.

Tearaways Adventure Play Centre, Rathdowney Shopping Outlet, Co. Laois.
T: +353 (0)505 48711  www.tearaways.ie  E: info@tearaways.ie
PORTLAOISE PET FARM
A FANTASTIC FUN DAY FOR ALL THE FAMILY

At this beautiful countryside location you will find over 40 different species including chipmunks, tassel-eared squirrels, tamarin monkeys, Indian blue & white peacocks, Richardson ground squirrels, miniature ponies, goats, sheep, ducks, chickens, red deers and their fawns, wallabies, rabbits, ferrets and iguanas. Come meet Jeffery the Parrot, Larry & Lucy the Llamas, Simon the Snake, Dancer the baby deer, Oscar & Stumpy the Emus and much more.

Our facilities include, a beautiful all-weather walkway around the farm, stables, large playground and sand pit, coffee shop, indoor/outdoor picnic area (you can bring your own food), toilets & baby changing and indoor play area. The site is fully wheelchair accessible, including the walkway.

We also take bookings for school tours, birthday parties or any group days out. Special group rates apply.

How to find us?
We are located off the Portlaoise to Mountrath road just after the M7 motorway to Limerick. Look out for the large sign on your left. You can also come off the Portlaoise to Abbeyleix (Cork) road through the village of Raheen.

Opening Times
March, April & May: Open weekends 12.00pm – 6.00pm
June, July & August: Open Tuesday to Sunday 12.00pm – 6.00pm
September & October: Open weekends 12.00pm – 6.00pm (weather permitting)

Visit Santa at Christmas
Look out for special events throughout the year.

Rates
€7.00 per person  |  Family and group rates also available

For more information
T: +353 (0)86 858 1776  or  E: portlaoisepetfarm@gmail.com

KILVAHAN ADVENTURE FARM
ENJOY AN OUTING ON A WORKING FARM WITH A BIG PET ZOO, EXOTIC ANIMALS AND BIRDS FROM ALL OVER THE WORLD

We offer pony and horse riding, carriage driving and other sorts of fun activities. We also have a nice playground with picnic and BBQ area and a cafeteria (soft drinks, sweets, tea/coffee). You also can stay over night in one of our horse drawn caravans and enjoy the evening at the campfire. Different packages available with endless possibilities.

Kilvahan Adventure Farm  |  Tullibards Stud  |  Coolrain  |  Co. Laois
T: +353 (0)57 873 5178 / +353 (0)86 275 0260  www.adventure-farm.com
CRAFTS & SHOPPING

Portlaoise’s compact town centre is a shoppers paradise. The town is packed with an eclectic and cosmopolitan mix of interiors shops, gift stores, specialist designer boutiques and much more. These friendly shops ensure the best of attention, making shopping in Portlaoise a pleasant and personal experience. While shopping here, enjoy a break in its many traditional pubs and coffee shops. Portlaoise regularly has craft and food fairs which are very colourful affairs.

In the county, there are other smaller towns with excellent shopping outlets – Mountrath, Mountmellick, Abbeyleix, Portarlington and Stradbally to name a few. The Rathdowney Discount Designer Outlet is a popular destination for shoppers throughout Ireland and has a children’s play area.

Did you know that the Duke of Wellington went to school in Portarlington and that Churchill spent summer holidays in Emo Court?

ABBYELEIX POTTERY
Upr. Main Street, Abbeyleix. T: +353 (0)57 873 0769
E: sueryderfoundation@eircom.net

SMOAINTÉ
61 Main Street, Portlaoise. T: +353 (0)57 866 3643
Gifts, crafts and curios

TREASURES
72 Main Street, Portlaoise.
T: +353 (0)57 8621293 Gifts, crafts and curios

EASONS
Coliseum Lane, Portlaoise.
T: +353 (0)57 862 0466 E: laoised@eircom.net
General books, history & children’s books and magazines. Coffee shop on the top floor. Specialists in school supplies. Amazing range of arts & crafts
www.eason.ie

OLD MILLRACE GALLERY
Main Street, Stradbally, Portlaoise.
T: +353 (0)57 862 5188
Old Millrace Gallery – a special place to shop for Irish Crafts. An extensive range of arts, crafts & curios. Open May to October 09.30am to 6.30pm Fri, Sat, Sun and Mon.

From pottery, ceramics, traditional and contemporary art to designer woollen hats and wooden carvings, Laois is a mecca for highly skilled craftspeople. Mountmellick’s renowned embroidery can be seen at the Mountmellick Museum and symbolises the town’s rich Quaker past. Craft Training Workshops available. T: +353 (0)57 862 4525

For the Laois Craft Trail Brochure or other information on crafts in Laois contact Laois Leader on +353 (0)57 866 1900 or Portlaoise Tourist Office at +353 (0)57 862 1178 or view www.laoistourism.ie
Coupling vibrant towns with lush unspoilt landscape, the inland counties of Laois, located in Ireland’s Lakelands and Inland Waterways is the perfect place for you to take a break without spending hours in the car. Boasting a packed events calendar, superb accommodation, spa packages, gourmet restaurants and activities ranging from power-boating to bog treks.

Family Friendly
Family fun is paramount with many hotels featuring specialised activity programmes to keep children of all ages amused. This region is sure to evoke nostalgic feelings of childhood holidays as the unspoilt terrain allows visitors to enjoy simple pleasures such as bike rides, boat trips, angling, walking and hiking. More energetic activities include horse riding, cruising, golf and even parachuting.

Explore your Culture & Heritage
This region is brimming with culture and heritage sites. Explore the well-known sites of Clonmacnoise or the Rock of Dunamase. Enjoy breathtaking views along the Windy Gap. Visit the Great House and gardens of Emo Court and take time explore the Steam Museum in Stradbally. Explore Ireland’s unique culture and history, abundant in this often overlooked part of Ireland.

For further information on Ireland’s Lakelands and Inland Waterways please visit [www.discoverireland.ie/lakelands](http://www.discoverireland.ie/lakelands).
Helena Malone
Goldsmith

Helena Malone is a local award-winning local Goldsmith and Designer.

‘My aim is to achieve a reputation for high quality & uniquely designed jewellery that will be treasured forever. Designing and working to commission with clients is my passion. My style is elegant and simple accentuated with high quality diamonds, gemstones and unusual pearls using gold, silver and platinum.’

helena.malone@ireland.com
T: +353 (0)87 698 7988
Crafts Council of Ireland Trained & Accredited

Bramleys is a new smart modern concept store with furniture and accessories...

Exclusive tabletop linens and centrepieces with a difference that will appeal to the most discerning eye with design, texture and finish that is sure to impress. Glassware with different design and style that is contemporary yet functional and fun. Handmade jewellery by a well known Dutch make-up artist. Boutique with Northern European brands of clothes that offer quality and style at affordable prices. Chew and Chat in The Lunchroom at Bramleys. Bramleys is the Perfect Gift Store for all occasions.

A Whole Lot More, For Less...

Rathdowney Shopping Outlet has been in existence for over 7 years and going from strength to strength with new retail stores opening on a regular basis. Originally developed as Ireland’s only designer outlet, we offer great bargains and genuine “value for money” for brand-conscious buyers every day. Prices are constantly reduced all year round on a range of world famous brands and fashion labels with discounts ranging up to 70% off every day prices. The goods on sale are mainly excess stock and end of season lines from the high street or special buys, and are often sold through stores run by the brands themselves. You will, in fact, find stores and brands here that are not on sale anywhere else in Ireland.

Do All Your Shopping in One Place – With the recent addition of Dunnes Stores to the development, not only can you get great value on fashion, clothing and footwear but ‘Always Better Value’ on your daily groceries from this purpose built, new format superstore.

Relax & Enjoy Your Visit! But we’ve got more than just shopping. So that you can relax and enjoy your visit we have BB’s Coffee & Muffins, a superb 100-seater all-day restaurant, and free all-day parking.

…and for the Kids Our younger visitors will love our state-of-the-art indoor play centre called Tearaways. One of the largest of its type in the country, Tearaways is Ireland’s Number One for Indoor Fun, great for kids parties and special family events. Book on-line at www.tearaways.ie

Rathdowney Shopping Outlet – Now, Even More Choice, For Less!
ARTS & ENTERTAINMENT

Entertainment and being entertained, are part of the culture of Ireland. Social life is centred on enjoyment and County Laois is full of lively entertainment for people of all ages. Traditional Irish music sessions, classical music concerts, theatre, poetry readings, storytelling, pantomime and contemporary music are all to be found in the county. There are a number of festivals and events that run throughout the year – see page 52 for more details.

STORM MULTIPLEX CINEMA
Portlaoise, Co. Laois. T: +353 (0)57 866 2626

INTERNET CAFÉ
T: +353 (0)57 866 3355 E: info@dunamaise.ie www.dunamaise.ie
There is an internet café available in the Dunamaise Arts Centre, Church Street Portlaoise.

DUNAMAISE ARTS CENTRE
Church Street, Portlaoise, Co. Laois.
T: +353 (0)57 866 3355 E: info@dunamaise.ie www.dunamaise.ie
The Dunamaise Arts Centre is situated in the centre of Portlaoise in the historic building of the old town gaol. This multi-arts venue, with a visual arts gallery space and a 238 seat theatre, provides a year round programme of both local and touring arts. The centre, which was opened in 1999, is regarded as one of the leading regional arts centres in the country and has received accolades for both its design and management. Situated in the heart of the town it also has a busy coffee shop, which opens daily, and also incorporates an internet café.

MUSIC & DANCE
There are music and dance sessions in numerous pubs throughout Laois – see page 47 for a more detailed list.

LAOIS COUNTY COUNCIL’S ARTS
The purpose of Laois County Council’s Arts Section is to plan a comprehensive arts programme for the people of County Laois. E: arts@laoiscoco.ie T: + 353 (0)57 867 4342/44. www.laois.ie/LeisureandCulture/Arts/
We are happy to give advise on all matters relating to the arts and all areas of the arts including; theatre, music, art, publications, festivals & craftworkers.
LIBRARIES

The Library Service is a vital part of the social structure of the county. It aims to meet the library needs and aspirations of the people of Laois, and to provide information for the community. Libraries provide a wide range of facilities including adult learning, children and young adult sections, reference, foreign language novels, audio books, large print fiction, language learning resources, internet access, photocopying, access to ordnance survey historic maps, printing, music, CDs, DVDs and adult and children magazines.

Find out more information about your local library visit www.laois.ie/LeisureandCulture/Libraries

ABBEYLEIX LIBRARY
T: +353 (0)57 873 0020
Tuesday 10.00am – 7.30pm
Wednesday 10.00am – 5.00pm
Thursday 10.00am – 7.30pm
Friday 10.00am – 5.00pm
Saturday 10.00am – 4.00pm

BALLYLINAN LIBRARY
T: +353 (0)57 867 4315
Thursday 3.00pm – 4.00pm
& 7.00pm – 9.00pm

BORRIS-IN-OSSORY LIBRARY
T: +353 (0)57 867 4315
Monday 3.00pm – 5.00pm

CLONASLEE LIBRARY
T: +353 (0)57 864 8437
Tuesday 3.00pm – 5.00pm & 6.00pm – 8.00pm
Thursday 3.00pm – 5.00pm & 6.00pm – 8.00pm
Saturday 11.00am – 1.00pm

DURROW LIBRARY
T: +353 (0)57 873 6090
Monday 1.00pm – 4.00pm & 6.00pm – 8.00pm
Wednesday 1.00pm – 4.00pm & 6.00pm – 8.00pm
Friday 10.30am – 12.30pm
Saturday 11.00am – 1.00pm

MOUNTMELlick LIBRARY
T: +353 (0)57 862 4733
Tuesday 3.00pm – 5.30pm & 6.00pm – 8.00pm
Wednesday & Friday 3.00pm – 5.30pm
Thursday 3.00pm – 5.30pm & 6.00pm – 8.00pm
Saturday 10.00am – 1.00pm

MOUNTRATH LIBRARY
T: +353 (0)57 873 6378
Tuesday 10.00am – 7.30pm
Wednesday & Friday 10.00am – 5.00pm
Thursday 10.00am – 7.30pm
Saturday 10.00am – 4.00pm

PORTCLAISE LIBRARY
T: +353 (0)57 862 2333
Monday & Tuesday 10.00am – 5.00pm
Wednesday & Thursday 10.00am – 7.30pm
Friday 10.00am – 5.00pm
Saturday 10.00am – 4.00pm

PORTARLINGTON LIBRARY
T: +353 (0)57 864 3751
Tuesday & Thursday 12.00pm – 8.00pm
Wednesday & Friday 12.00pm – 5.30pm
Saturday 10.00am – 1.00pm
Closed Saturdays of Bank Holiday Weekends

RATHDOWNEY LIBRARY
T: +353 (0)505 46852
Monday 2.30pm – 5.00pm & 7.00pm – 9.00pm
Wednesday & Friday 12.30pm – 1.30pm & 2.30pm – 5.30pm
Thursday 7.00pm – 9.00pm
Friday 2.30pm – 5.00pm

STRADBALLY LIBRARY
T: +353 (0)57 862 5005
Tuesday 3.00pm – 5.30pm & 6.00pm – 8.00pm
Wednesday & Friday 3.00pm – 5.30pm
Thursday 3.00pm – 5.30pm & 6.00pm – 8.00pm
Saturday 10.00am – 1.00pm

TIMAOHE LIBRARY
T: +353 (0)57 862 7231
Monday 2.30pm – 4.30pm & 5.30pm – 7.30pm
Thursday 5.30pm – 7.30pm
Ireland is renowned all over the world for its pubs and for its music and dance. In the towns and villages throughout the county, you will find a variety of pubs from old world style to the trendy bar, which offer a combination of lively entertainment and friendly people. Laois is home to one of the oldest pubs in Ireland – Morrissey’s – in the heritage town of Abbeyleix and is a major attraction for locals and visitors alike. Many of these pubs are situated in very scenic settings – by the Grand Canal in Fisherstown or Vicastrown, in the villages of Clonaslee and Rosenallis at the gateway to the Slieve Bloom Mountains and in every picturesque town and village throughout Laois. Many feature storytelling, music and dance sessions, particularly traditional Irish music. Contact Portlaoise Tourist Office at +353 (0)57 862 1178 for more details.

Did you know that his equally famous brother, James Fintan Lalor was a noted political writer and agrarian reformer?

Did you know that the leader of the miners’ revolt at Eureka Stockade in Victoria, Australia was Laoisman Peter Lalor?
Please ensure to contact pub directly as music nights can vary.

– PUBS WITH MUSIC –

PORTLAISE
Sally Gardens 66 Main Street, Portlaoise. T: +353 (0)57 862 1658 Music – Thurs & Sun
Egan’s Bar 24 Main Street, Portlaoise. T: +353 (0)57 862 1101
O’Gorman’s Pub Kilminchy, Portlaoise, T: +353 (0)57 868 2921
Ramsbottom’s Pub 101 Main Street, Portlaoise. T: +353 (0)57 862 1531 / 862 1015
Music every Thursday night – contact pub.

BALLACOLLA
Foxrock Inn Clough, Ballacolla, Portlaoise. T: +353 (0)57 873 8637
Traditional music available every Tuesday night from April to October.

ERRILL
Dowling’s Bar Errill T: +353 (0)505 44183 Olde World Irish Pub – Award winner.

COOLRAIN
The Village Inn Coolrain, Portlaoise. T: +353 (0)57 873 5145 Music at the drop of a hat. Thursdays -Irish night.

Kavanagh’s Pub ‘The Wren’s Nest’
28 Main Street, Portlaoise. T: +353 (0)57 862 1744
E: pjkavanagh@hotmail.com
Music and Comedy Club available
Kavanagh’s Pub has just received another face lift which have elevated this pub to one of the leading live venues in the country. The bar in Kavanagh’s is a traditional local bar, which serves tasty food during the day and covers all sporting events. Upstairs in Kavanagh’s is the live venue and home of Kavanagh’s Comedy Club www.kavanaghscomedyclub.com and Êistmusic www.myspace.com/êistmusic. The beer garden at the back of the bar caters for all those smokers and the street terrace at the front of the pub caters for all those who like to sit back and watch the town pass them by. Live entertainment takes place every weekend in a purpose built venue.

Kavanagh’s Comedy Club is one of the longest running Comedy Clubs in the country and is also the home of The Halloween Howls Comedy Festival which takes place in Portlaoise every October Bank Holiday Weekend.

Êistmusic is a hugely popular music club that has seen almost all of the top Irish acts perform at this intimate venue. Early booking is advisable for all gigs at Kavanaghs. Contact the pub on 057 862 1744 or email pjkavanaghjr@gmail.com for further details.

FISHERSTOWN
Fisherman’s Inn Fisherstown, Ballybrittas. T: +353 (0)57 862 6488
300 year old thatched pub. Irish nights Thursday & Sunday. Set-dancing Thursday nights.

STRADBALLY
Dunne’s Bar & Lounge Court Square, Stradbally. T: +353 (0)57 862 5114 E: dickdunne@02.ie www.vfi.ie
Old World Bar situated in scenic Stradbally. Live music at weekends.

VICARSTOWN
Vicarstown Inn Vicarstown, Co. Laois. T: +353 (0)57 862 5189
Turley’s Pub Vicarstown, Co. Laois. T: +353 (0)57 862 5252
Irish Night – Monday.

RATHDOWNEY
Tuohy’s Pub Pound Street, Rathdowney. M: +353 (0)87 967 5752
Music sessions and sing songs regularly. Old Style Pub owned by musician.

BALLYLYNAN
Pedigree Corner The Pike, Ballylynan, Co. Laois. T: +353 (0)59 862 5120
Music every Saturday night.
EATING OUT

Relaxing over a well cooked and well presented meal is a very important part of a successful break or holiday. There is a wide range of restaurants in County Laois that will tempt even the most discerning of palates. Laois offers a cosmopolitan outlook offering many award-winning restaurants from Irish to exotic world cuisine. Some of the restaurants offer cookery classes so you learn about the local delicacies. The restaurants below range from casual gourmet to elegant dining. For more details on dining in Laois, please contact the Tourist Office in Portlaoise at +353 (0)57 862 1178.

Did you know that Col. James Fitzmaurice, lived in Portlaoise until he was 16 and received all his formal education at the local Christian Brothers’ School.
There are numerous other festivals in towns and villages throughout the county including agricultural shows, boat rallies on the Grand Canal, equestrian events etc. For information: www.laoistourism.ie

FESTIVALS & EVENTS

It is the unique mix of festivals and events from storytelling and music to walking and heritage that make Laois a superb venue to visit. There are festivals throughout the year and the following are a taste of festivals that take place annually. For further information on what’s going on at other times during the year contact Portlaoise Tourist Office for more details or view our website at www.laoistourism.ie

MARCH

St. Patrick’s Day: Celebrate our Patron Saints Day with fun for all the family. Visit the parades in Portlaoise, Portarlington and Mountmellick.

MAY

International Golf Challenge: The Laois International Golf Challenge takes place each May. It is a 4 day event played over 7 courses. The Challenge is open to all golfers affiliated to a club or with a GUI handicap (or equivalent). The Laois International Golf Challenge attracts golfers and golfing societies from Ireland, Northern Ireland, England, Wales and all over Europe. The Challenge is run on a four ball, betterball basis and guarantees four days of golf with competitions and prizes each day. The best accumulated scores over the first three days are entered into the final at the Seve Ballesteros designed Heritage course at Killenard, County Laois (20 teams). Those who do not make it to the final play a separate competition on the final day. Contact Laois Tourism Officer for further information +353 (0)57 866 4132

MAY/JUNE

Irish Traditional Music & Set Dance Festival: Workshops for all levels. Contact +353 (0)86 344 0388 or +353 (0)86 260 7658

JUNE


Contact +353 (0)57 866 1978 / 862 6622 / 866 4000 for more details.
E: cdlewis@eircom.net www.laoistourism.ie
Rose of Tralee Regional Finals: Each year 6 lucky Irish girls are selected to represent Ireland in the International Rose of Tralee Finals in August. Co. Laois was extremely lucky to play host to the Regional Finals in 2008 and will look forward to welcoming all 32 counties back again in 2009. The new International Centres also send their Roses to be selected. During the 5 day event, there is lots to see and do, with two selection nights, a vintage car parade, entertainment in local venues and chances to meet the Roses around town. This festival takes place in June.

JUNE

Slieve Bloom Walking Festival: Guided Walking Festival in the Slieve Bloom Mountains. Guided walks all year. For information contact Slieve Bloom Rural Development Society at +353 (0)509 37299. www.slievebloom.ie

JULY

Laois Walks Festival: Guided Walks on scenic way-marked routes in Laois, day and evening. For information: contact Laois Leader at +353 (0)57 866 1900.

Erkina Festival, Rathdowney: Pageants and heritage festival. For further information contact T: +353 (0)57 866 0977 M: +353 (0)86 838 9590 / +353 (0)87 125 1669 / +353 (0)86 815 6944 www.erkinafestival.com

AUGUST

Stradbally Steam Rally: Running for forty years, takes place every August Bank Holiday weekend. The location is the scenic Stradbally Hall Estate and the famous narrow-gauge railway is in operation every bank holiday weekend throughout the year. Contact +353 (0)57 862 5444 / 862 5154 www.irishsteam.ie


The World Fleadh is also a family event with and street entertainment for families a priority, this year’s event saw a French Market, a kids activity area with bouncy castles and street performers and a charity pig race.

OCTOBER

Storytelling Festival: The Slieve Blooms, a landscape of mountains, valleys, glens, waterfalls, ancient raths and medieval castles, in the heart of Ireland, rich in music and folklore, is an ideal setting for a new festival of oral storytelling, music, dance and song.

The stories that have been told for generations by the people who live on and around these mountains are bound up with the landscape, place names and the history of the area which stretches back to before the time of the druids. There are stories of invasions, plantations and rebellions, fairy lore and ghost stories, as well as the necessary yarns and tall tales which Irish people love.

Halloween Howls Comedy Festival: The Halloween Howls Comedy Festival is an annual 4-day comedy festival over the October Bank Holiday Weekend of each year. A whole host of entertainment will be provided including live comedy, music, television production, festival club and street entertainment, it will be held at 8-9 venues in the Portlaoise town centre. Please see www.halloweenhowls.ie for more information.
HEALTH & BEAUTY

Laois is the ideal place to relax and take time out – so treat yourself to one of the many soothing and revitalising relaxation techniques on offer. Pamper yourself with a visit to one of the following Beauty Spas available. Therapies include reflexology, aromatherapy, body massages and all can be enjoyed in a tranquil setting.

EALU SPA THERAPY
The Heritage Hotel, Jessop Street, Portlaoise, Co. Laois.
T:+353 (0)57 867 8848   E: ealu@iolfree.ie   www.ealu.ie

This day spa treatment centre provides a full range of treatment packages for both men and women, also includes holistic treatments such as reflexology, Indian massage and hot stone massage. Product range – Dermalogica Skin Care. Open to residents and general public.
COOLANOWLE COUNTRY HOUSE & HEALTH SPA BREAKS & SELF-CATERING COTTAGES

Coolanowle, Ballickmoyler, Carlow, Co. Laois
T: +353 (0)59 862 5176  F: +353 (0)59 862 5176
E: info@coolanowle.com  www.coolanowle.com
Contact: Bernadine Mulhall

A tranquil rural retreat on a working organic farm. A warm welcome awaits you at Coolanowle Country House and Self-catering Cottages. A range of health and beauty treatments available by request. Spacious individually styled bedrooms with antique furnishings. Organic and local foods are served in the house. Coolanowle House can accommodate up to 30 guests. Ideal for family function, small private wedding, anniversary or birthday party. Self-catering cottages adjacent to the house. Bord Failte approved 4 star cottages have everything you need to fully enjoy getting away from it all.

Awards: Bridgestone Best in Ireland 2007, 2008 Member of Good Food, Ireland Member of Slow Food Movement Tourism award winner.

THE SPA AT THE HERITAGE GOLF & SPA RESORT

Killenard, Co. Laois
T: +353 (0)57 864 5500
E: info@theheritage.com
www.theheritage.com

The Spa at The Heritage Golf & Spa resort offers a touch of tranquillity in a contemporary and luxurious setting. With 20 treatment rooms set in an oasis of calm, a selection of over 70 treatments and packages will allow you to indulge in a truly world class spa experience.

We believe in results. Through the use of leading Pevonia Botanica products range, we are able to deliver the highest quality professional treatments tailored to your individual needs.
ACCOMMODATION

County Laois has a wide variety of accommodation choices from international standard hotels to privately owned historic houses, guesthouses, bed and breakfasts, country houses and a farm hostel. An excellent range of self-catering houses and cottages are available which range from the quaint thatched cottage to the more modern self-catering house. All accommodation listed here is Fáilte Ireland approved and priced very competitively. With its strategic central location and its diverse range of good value accommodation, Laois can offer packages and choices to suit all circumstances and requirements. With its close proximity to the capital but in the rural heartland of Ireland, Laois is the ideal base for the visitor.

CONFERENCING IN LAOIS

As a business person, you know the value of time. Laois, only an hour from Dublin, is located at the heart of an excellent national road and rail network ensuring easy access for you and your delegates to our wealth of conferencing facilities.

Here in Laois we are keenly aware of the commercial benefits of our central location. Because of this, we are rapidly becoming known as the conference centre of Ireland. As well as offering convenient access, Laois has a variety of state-of-the-art conference facilities. These venues are supported by a wide range of quality leisure activities offering championship golf, theatre, luxurious spa treatments, fine dining and a lively nightlife allowing for the extended stays and the perfect opportunity to network with business colleagues, entertain prospective clients or simply treat yourself.

Serviced by Irish Rail with direct daily schedules from Dublin, Cork and Limerick to Portlaoise, take the stress out of travelling to your conference.

For more information please contact anyone of our consultants listed on the coming pages or the Laois Tourism Officer, +353 (0)57 866 4132.
THE HERITAGE GOLF & SPA RESORT
Killenard, Co. Laois.

The luxurious 5 star Heritage Golf & Spa Resort is nestled in the quaint village of Killenard in the heart of Ireland. It is a dream that has been realised in truly remarkable detail. This unique resort comprises of a luxury 5 star hotel, conference and exhibition centre, the Seve Ballesteros & Jeff Howes co-designed 18 hole championship golf course combined with the Seve Ballesteros ‘Natural’ golf school, a luxury spa featuring Pevonia Botanica products, floodlit walking track, health club, tennis court, and a variety of bars and restaurants to choose from.

T: +353 (0)57 864 5500  E: info@theheritage.com  www.theheritage.com

ABBEYLEIX MANOR HOTEL
Cork Road, Abbeyleix, Co. Laois.

Having completed a major extension and refurbishment in June 2007, the privately owned Abbeyleix Manor Hotel is well worth a visit. We have 46 beautifully appointed ensuite bedrooms, delightful bar and restaurant and a magnificent ballroom. The new Conference Centre offers state-of-the-art technology with meeting rooms which are fully air conditioned, have natural light and not to mention free car-parking too.

Discover the warmth of our hospitality, taste the difference in our cuisine and enjoy the craic in our bar with live music every Saturday night. For delicious, freshly cooked food with an Irish Mediterranean twist the Manor Bar/Bistro is the place to be. Caters for all tastes. Stuck in traffic in Abbeyleix? Try our new gourmet ‘food to go’ section ‘Rocket & Thyme’.

T:  +353 (0)57 873 0111  E: info@abbeyleixmanorhotel.com

www.abbeyleixmanorhotel.com
THE GANDON INN
Emo, Co. Laois.
The Gandon Inn, is a ten bedroom family-run inn. This prestigious premises dates back to 1750. Whether you are looking for a short break, business conference, party or a wedding, The Gandon Inn will look after your needs in a friendly and hospitable manner.
Food served all day.
T: +353 (0)57 862 6622
E: gandoninn@eircom.net
info@gandoninn.ie
www.gandoninn.com

TREACY’S RESTAURANT
The Heath, Portlaoise, Co. Laois.
This family-run thatched roof premises is renowned for its quality of service and excellent value. Whether its a creamy pint of Guinness in the old style bar or a hearty meal in the restaurant you are after, Treacy’s will not disappoint.

T: +353 (0)57 864 6539
E: treacysbar@eircom.net
www.gandoninn.com

THE PORTLAOISE HERITAGE HOTEL
Town Centre, Portlaoise, Co. Laois.
Designed to reflect style, planned with meticulous care to deliver service excellence, the 4 star Portlaoise Heritage Hotel has earned itself the reputation of being the most sought after hotel in Ireland. Nestled in the heart of Portlaoise town, this sophisticated urban setting is perfect for business or pleasure. From the moment you arrive, its striking entrance creates an impressive sense of space and classic modern elegance. Featuring 110 bedrooms, a choice of unique dining experiences, 3 bars, a White Flag 5 star Health & Leisure Club, with Ealu Spa Therapy, we know you will appreciate being somewhere special.
Kelly’s Foundry – +353 (0)57 867 8588
T: +353 (0)57 867 8588  E: info@theheritagehotel.com
www.theheritagehotel.com
CASTLE DURROW COUNTRY HOUSE HOTEL
Durrow, Co. Laois.

Shelley and Peter have filled this stunning house with so much informal warmth that it feels more family home than hotel. This lovingly restored 300 year old mansion overlooks its beautiful terraced gardens to the south and the River Erkina to the north.

This contemporary Country House Hotel welcomes you from the minute you arrive and engulfs you with its eclectic mix of furniture and style. Shelly and Peter have brought their many years restaurants experience to the Castle. Lots of ingredients for the fabulous food are supplied by the Castle’s own organic kitchen garden along with locally sourced produce. Set in the middle of Ireland, a short distance from busy, cultural Kilkenny, most of Ireland is within easy reach.

T: +353 (0)57 873 6555  E: info@castledurrow.com
www.castledurrow.com

THE MALDRON HOTEL PORTLAOISE - (formerly Comfort Inn Portlaoise)
Value is what business & leisure travellers’ alike look for and value is what the Maldron Hotel Portlaoise delivers. Comfortable bedrooms, efficient and friendly service along with a product that is value for money. Maldron Hotel Portlaoise offers all of this and a little bit more – a unique place where common sense prevails. For the Leisure guest this central location is ideal for exploring the beautiful sights & surrounds of the midlands of Ireland from the picturesque Slieve Bloom Mountains to monastic round tower at Timahoe there is something for both young and old alike. Facilities at a glance:

- Superior 3 star property, 2km from Portlaoise on N7 & N8.
- 90 well appointed guestrooms including crisp white Duvet, broadband, power shower.
- Stir Bar and Restaurant
- 8 state-of-the-art Meeting Suites. All meeting rooms are inclusive of complimentary broadband
- Club Vitae Health and Fitness Club
- Body & Soul Beauty Treatment Rooms
- Complimentary car parking

T: +353 (0)57 869 5900  E: Info.portlaoise@maldronhotels.com
www.maldronhotels.com
THE KILLESHIN HOTEL
Dublin Road, Portlaoise, Co. Laois.

Sink into the comfort of crisp white linen, and relax in the soothing colour tones of your room. Each one of our 87 bedrooms has dedicated work space, complimentary broadband and generous in room facilities.

Cedarooms, our fashionable bar and restaurant, features two open floors of bars with a neighbourhood atmosphere whilst our restaurant, with its open kitchen feature, offers contemporary Irish cuisine.

Zest, our healthclub, offers extensive facilities including 18 metre swimming pool, jacuzzi, sauna and steam room. For the energetic we offer fully equipped cybex gymnasium.

Forum, our dedicated meeting and events area, boasts six dedicated boardrooms and five multi dimensional rooms. The Walnut Room caters for the larger conference or workshop.

T: +353 (0)57 863 1200   E: info@thekilleshin.com   www.thekilleshin.com

O’LOUGHLINS HOTEL
O’Loughlins is a family run hotel in the centre of Portlaoise. Home cooked locally sourced food is available from 7.30am to 8.00pm by our head chef Paul Conroy. Relax and enjoy a pint in one of our cosy bars. Each of our 24 en-suite bedrooms are unique and have recently been fully refurbished. There is monitored parking at the rear of the hotel. We have a Wi-Fi system in operation throughout the hotel for all your wireless internet needs. Also the exclusive Club 23 night club is the happening club in town and no visit to Portlaoise is complete without experiencing the atmosphere in the newly themed late night venue! Whether for business or pleasure, let us make your stay in Portlaoise an enjoyable one!

Main Street, Portlaoise, Co. Laois, Ireland. T: +353 (0)57 86 21305
www.oloughlinshotel.ie

CASTLE ARMS HOTEL
Durrow, Co. Laois.

The Castle Arms Hotel is located in the beautiful Georgian village of Durrow. Owned and managed by the Murphy family it is a haven for the discerning guest who will appreciate its relaxed friendly atmosphere. Comfortable bedrooms, including family rooms and excellent food, combine to make your stay a pleasant and memorable one. Traditional music is a regular feature of the hotel at weekends and is as popular with the locals as with the guests.

T: +353 (0)57 873 6117
E: castlearmshotel@hotmail.com   www.castlearmshotel.ie
BeD & BReAKFAST in Laois
Tourist Office: +353 (0)57 862 1178  www.laoistourism.ie

BALLAGHMORE COUNTRY HOUSE
Ballaghmore, Borris-in-Ossory, Co. Laois.
T: +353 (0)57 862 1366  E: ballaghmorehse@eircom.net
www.ballaghmorecountryhse.com
Relax and unwind at Ballaghmore Country House and Spa. Set on an organic farm just 1.5hrs from Dublin at the foothills of the Slieve Bloom Mountains. We can offer you time out to relax and enjoy your stay which can include spa treatments or use of the thermal suite. Golf, fishing, walking and candlelight supper… the perfect getaway.

FOXROCK INN
Clough, Ballacolla, Portlaoise, Co. Laois.
T: +353 (0)57 873 8637  E: marian@foxrockinn.com
www.foxrockinn.com
A warm welcome awaits you at this charming old house opposite the County Hall car park, 50 metres from Tourist Office in Portlaoise town centre. Private car park. Close proximity to bus stop (80 metres). All rooms en-suite.

LAOIS COUNTY LODGE
Dublin Road, Portlaoise, Co. Laois.
T: +353 (0)57 862 0472  E: colodge@hotmail.com
www.laoiscountylodge.com
Charming old house set in peaceful surroundings. Regular bus service from Dublin airport to our door.

BIANCONI RED LION
Sean & Rosezita Murphy
The Square, Durrow, Laois.
T: +353 (0)57 874 0989  E: info@bianconi-redlion.com
www.bianconi-redlion.com
A warm welcome awaits you at this beautifully restored Georgian House, 8 rooms ensuite, located across the road from Castle Durrow. Restaurant opening December ’08.

COOLANOWLE HOUSE
Ballickmoyler, Carlow, Co. Laois.
T: +353 (0)59 862 5176  E: coolanowle@eircom.net
www.coolanowle.com
A 4 star Georgian House. A warm welcome awaits you at Coolanowle Country House and self catering cottages. Health and beauty treatments available. See page 57 for details. Awards: Bridgestone’s Best in Ireland 2007, 2008 Member of Good Food. Ireland Member of Slow Food Movement tourism award winner. Bord Failte approved 4 star cottages have everything you need to fully enjoy getting away from it all.

ROSDENE B&B
Limerick Road, Portlaoise, Co. Laois.
T: +353 (0)57 862 2345  E: rosedenebb@eircom.net
www.rosdeneb&b.com

O’SULLIVAN’S B&B
8 Kellyville Park, Portlaoise, Co. Laois.
T: +353 (0)57 862 2774
Charming old house set in peaceful surroundings. Regular bus service from Dublin airport to our door.

TULLAMOY HOUSE
Tullamoy, Stradbally, Co. Laois.
T: +353 (0)59 862 7111  E: tullamoy@indigo.ie
www.tullamoyhouse.com
Luxurious listed Georgian accommodation, excellent service and award winning breakfast, two minutes walk from town centre, antique furnishings, log fires and home baking, superior rooms with individual themes and private parking. Recommended by Frommer’s, Karen Brown, Foders, Georgina Campbell’s Guide, Bridgestone’s 100 Best Places to Stay in Ireland.

THE COURT
Main Street, Stradbally, Co. Laois.
T: +353 (0)57 862 5519  E: jfmc@iol.ie
www.thecourtstradbally.com
A country house hotel in a delightful location at the foot of the Slieve Bloom mountains. The house and outbuildings are almost 300 years old and have immense charm and character. Guests come to relax, explore many local sites and for genuine Irish hospitality in a homely atmosphere.
ABBEYVIEW THATCHED COTTAGE
Jamestown, Ballybrittas, Co. Laois.
T: +353 (0)86 821 9430
E: abbeyviewcottage@barrowvale.com
www.barrowvale.com/abbeyview

Abbeviev is said to be Ireland’s oldest thatched cottage, and has recently been renovated to the highest standard. Facilities include broadband internet access, satellite TV, DVD & video players, 3 bedrooms (1 Double /1 Twin /1 Single bedroom). A large garden with patio and raised flower beds. Bed linen & towels supplied.

APPLE COTTAGE
Emo, Co. Laois.
Contact: Olive Donohoe
T: +353 (0)57 862 4143
E: revol@elive.net

A recently restored 3 bedroom Victorian cottage in a lovely rural setting next to Emo Court. Fully equipped kitchen & utility room. Open fires, cable TV and DVD. Large garden. Parking available. Ideally situated for exploring the surrounding countryside. Within 10km of 3 excellent golf courses. There is plenty of opportunity for walks in nearby Emo Park (5min) and Slieve Bloom (25min).

ARAS ORAIN
Shracullen, Clonaslee, Co. Laois.
T: +353 (0)59 862 4230
M: 087 293 2732 E: sclyr@eircom.net

Recently restored 3 bedroom Victorian cottage situated on a private cul-de-sac 0.7 miles from the picturesque village of Stradbally. Situated on a working organic farm. The cottage, set in an isolated woodland, also sleeps 2.

BRIONNAC HOUSE
Clonaslee, Co. Laois.
T: +353 (0)59 862 4230
M: 087 293 2732 E: sclyr@eircom.net

An old stone cottage extended & renovated to the highest standards. Situated at the foot of the Slieve Bloom Mountains. The cottage has 3 bedrooms with accommodation for 6-8 people. Proprietors: Mary Woulfe & Tony Dunne.

BRIELE HOUSE
Irishtown, Mountmellick, Co. Laois.
T: +353 (0)57 864 4329
E: brieliehouse@eircom.net

Spacious 2 bedroom bungalow. 5min walk from town centre. 10min drive to Heritage Golf & Spa Resort at Killenard. Hill walking, fishing, forests, pet farm, museum and gardens, all closeby. Ideal touring base. Athlone & Kilkenny a 45min drive. Only 1 hour to Dublin. Family-friendly premises.

COOLANOWLE HOUSE
Ballickmoyler, Carlow, Co. Laois.
T: +353 (0)57 862 5176
E: coolanowle@eircom.net
www.coolanowle.com


COOLBALLY, COOLBANAGHER COTTAGE
Clonaslee, Co. Laois.
T: +353 (0)59 862 4230
M: 087 293 2732 E: sclyr@eircom.net

An old stone cottage extended & renovated to the highest standards. Situated at the foothills of the Slieve Bloom Mountains. 3 bedrooms with accommodation for 6-8 people. Proprietors: Mary Woulfe & Tony Dunne.

HILLVIEW FARM
Coolbanagher, Emo, Portolaiose, Co. Laois.
T: +353 (0)57 864 6530
E: hillview22@hotmail.com
www.hillviewselfcatering.com
‘The Stables’ beautiful stone building (sleeps 2+4) converted to cosy 4 star accommodation. 3km from N7, Dublin side of Portlaoise. Also 3 star 18th century refurbished cottage (sleeps 7). Warm welcome assured, village closeby.

HILLVIEW COTTAGE
Killeshin, Co. Laois.
T: +353 (0)86 375 1120
E: info@hillsidecottage.org
www.hillsidecottage.org

Relaxing in ‘the walled-in garden’ sleeps 4-6. Mid-week screenings in ‘the walled-in garden’. Sleeps 4-6. Mid-week screenings in ‘the walled-in garden’.

FITZPATRICK’S COTTAGE
Ballacolla, Co. Laois.
T: +353 (0)57 873 8985
M: +353 (0)86 814 0221
E: brennanscottages@yahoo.com

Charming thatched cottage. Well located for day trips to Dublin, Waterford & Limerick. Has been lovingly renovated into a cozy retreat. 2 bathrooms, timber ceilings & a woodburning stove. 23 miles from Kilkenny Castle. 40 miles from the Rock of Cashel, both world heritage sites.

FARREN HOUSE HOSTEL
Ballacolla, Co. Laois.
T: +353 (0)57 873 4032
E: info@farmhostel.com
www.farmhostel.com

3 self-catering cottages on the grounds of charming 18th century Roundwood House. The original stone buildings have been restored & furnished to a high standard. The 2-bedroom Coach House is very spacious & sleeps up to 7. The Forge, a split level apartment, sleeps 2. The cottage, set in an isolated woodland, also sleeps 2.

ROUNDWOOD HOUSE
Mountrath, Co. Laois.
Frank & Rosemarie Kennan
T: +353 (0)57 873 2120
E: roundwood@eircom.net
www.roundwoodhouse.com

Situated on a private cul-de-sac 0.7 miles from the picturesque village of Stradbally. Ideally located for golfing, fishing, boating, hill walking and touring the Midlands. Irish Tourist Board rated four star catering country house. Only 30min drive from the medieval city of Kilkenny and 1 hour from Dublin.

THE SPIRES
Stradbally, Co. Laois.
T: +353 (0)57 862 5833
E: kevin@thespires.com
www.thespires.com

Situated on a private cul-de-sac 0.7 miles from the picturesque village of Stradbally. Ideally located for golfing, fishing, boating, hill walking and touring the Midlands. Irish Tourist Board rated four star catering country house. Only 30min drive from the medieval city of Kilkenny and 1 hour from Dublin.

OLD RECTORY COACHHOUSES
Coolbanagher, Emo, Co. Laois.
T: +353 (0)57 864 6538
E: info@oldrectoryemo.com
www.oldrectoryemo.com

Stay somewhere different in the spacious self-catering Coach-houses at Dawson House, situated around the courtyard of ‘The Old Rectory’ – located on the outskirts of picturesque Emo village. An ideal place to stay for touring, golfing, walking, fishing or just relaxing in ‘the walled-in garden’. Sleeps 4-6. Prices €350 – €600 per week. Mid-week bookings available.

Tourist Office: +353 (0)57 862 178 www.laoistourism.ie
COACH HIRE
The following contacts for private coach hire are very useful whether you need to hire a minibus or have a larger group.

Horan’s Coaches
Irishtown, Mountmellick, Co. Laois.
T: +353 (0)57 862 4124
Air-conditioned coaches.
Mini-buses from 12 seaters available.

Slieve Bloom Coach Tours Ltd.
Forest View, Killeen, Mountmellick, Co. Laois.
T: +353 (0)57 862 4416 / 862 4820
E: info@slievebloomcoaches.ie
www.slievebloomcoaches.ie
Air-conditioned coaches with microphones, T.V. video, DVD and toilet facilities.

Martleys Coaches Portlaoise
Kilminchy, Dublin Road, Portlaoise, Co. Laois.
T: +353 (0)57 862 0888
E: mmartleytransport@eircom.net

GUIDES
Maurice Murphy
Oakville, Mountrath Road, Portlaoise, Co. Laois.
T: +353 (0)57 866 1970
E: oakvillebandb@eircom.net
Specialist in history.

Margaret Mullins
Brittas, Clonaslee, Co. Laois.
T: +353 (0)57 866 4149
M: +353 (0)87 238 6946
Specialise: Tour Guide for County Laois and Slieve Bloom Mountains.
Laois Tourism Adviser for East Coast and Midlands Regional Tourism Authority.

Mick Dowling
Bus and Boat Tours
T: +353 (0)87 410 6493
Leader of walks in Slieve Bloom Mountains
Guide – Specialist in geology, folklore and history of Slieve Blooms area.

TAXIS
The following are useful contact numbers for taxis in the county.

Portlaoise Taxi Service Co-Op
Portlaoise, Co. Laois.
T: +353 (0)57 862 2417

Pat Byrnes
29 Beechfield, Portlaoise, Co. Laois.
T: +353 (0)57 866 7777
M: +353 (0)87 285 7264

BUS & RAIL SERVICES TO & FROM DUBLIN
For more information on bus and rail services see page 6.