

# LIKE A LOCAL GALWAY



The largest city on Ireland's rugged Atlantic seaboard—and one of our picks for this year's Best Trips list—Galway is the Emerald Isle's cultural heart. Year-round festivals celebrate literature, jazz, theater, and even oysters. Embracing the spirit of

*meitheal*, an ancient Irish term meaning “cooperation for social need,” Galwegians don't hesitate banding together to improve the community's quality of life. Efforts are underway to reduce car traffic and create a “cycling city,” one of many

environmental initiatives that contributed to a 2017 Green Leaf award—the first in Ireland. An emerging innovation district is currently home to dozens of high-tech start-ups, and next year Galway will shine as a European Capital of Culture. “Our symbiotic

relationship with past and present will be on full display,” says Galway 2020 head of programming Marilyn Gaughan Reddan. “We're very good at celebrating the old in the newest of ways.”  
—Gerry O'Shea



The Claddagh area of Galway, once a separate fishing village, sits where the River Corrib empties into the bay.

## Eat

### SLÁINTE BY THE SEA

The tiny Westend neighborhood punches above its weight when it comes to award-winning restaurants. **Dela's** popular brunch menu is enriched by chard, kale, and other vegetables grown by owners Joe and Mags Bohan. **Tartare** and **Kai Café + Restaurant** source organic ingredients from nearby villages, and **Oscar's Seafood Bistro** serves local specialties like Galway rock oysters. Across the river, the mushroom and chicken pie from **The Pie Maker** pairs well with stout, and for mornings after, **McCambridge's** full Irish breakfast should do the trick.

## Stay

### GOOD NIGHTS

An “album of the week” plays as guests arrive at **The Stop B&B**, a homey spot where vinyl records line the walls. Co-owner Russell Hart says the music “serves as a great cross-generational conversation starter,” especially over breakfast. The cherry-red Georgian door on the **Corrib House** may seem more fitting in Dublin or London, but the nearly 200-year-old building echoes with Galway lore. Looking for more modern lodgings? Find sleek style at the **Harbour Hotel**, and claim a seat at its restaurant, Dillisk on the Docks, for seafood and sips from the cocktail menu listing some 30 whiskeys.

**Clockwise from top: David Bowie eyeing diners at Tartare, which features organic ingredients and wines; relaxation by the Spanish Arch; a city busker**

MICHELLE MCMAHON/GETTY IMAGES (BOAT); BOYD CHALLENGER (CAFÉ); ANITA MURPHY (FOOD); PAUL LINDSAY/ALAMY (ARCH); KEVIN BYRNE (BUSKER); NG MAPS



## Play

### RAIN OR SHINE

Alleyway buskers and street entertainers are in no short supply in Galway, but head indoors to enjoy some of the best performance spaces in Ireland. Near the 13th-century remains of the city's first municipal building, the critically acclaimed Druid company stages both classic and original plays at **The Mick Lally Theatre**. Catch chart toppers such as Hozier, Ellie Goulding, and Frank Turner at the **Róisín Dubh** or a traditional Irish music session (*seisiún*) at **Tig Cóilí**. If the fresh sea air is calling, take a cue from the lyrics of Steve Earle's “Galway Girl” and go for “a whirl” along the **Saltil Promenade**.

## Shop

### RINGS AND THINGS

Claddagh rings originated here, and **Thomas Dillon's Claddagh Gold** is a shop and museum for this jewelry celebrating love, friendship, and loyalty. At the bottom of Quay Street, the **Aran Sweater Market** offers knitwear named after the rocky islands off Galway's coast. Browse handicrafts (and refuel with potato curry) in the weekend market held at **St. Nicholas' Collegiate Church**. A few steps away, **Charlie Byrne's Bookshop** draws bibliophiles with its floor-to-ceiling selections, many by local authors.

