

Smiths Castle

Region: County Clare Sleeps: 8

Overview

Step back in time at Smiths Castle, a 15th century Irish castle renovated for modern holidays. Here, you can find peace and quiet on almost 5 acres of mature grounds overlooking a river valley but travel easily to all that County Clare's west coast has to offer.

Just a few miles away, you can walk the longest sand beaches in Ireland, marvel at the breathtaking Cliffs of Moher, take a ferry to the rugged Aran Islands or play golf at two championship courses. Spend a day at the Lisdoonvarna spa, and make sure to explore the unique Burren landscape. Its "fertile rock," limestone, hosts rare flora and fauna as well as prehistoric monuments.

After your explorations, gather for a candlelit dinner in the large banqueting hall with a 17th century carved wooden table. With 3 cosy double bedrooms and romantic sleeping for two in the minstrels gallery overlooking the great hall, the castle sleeps 8. You'll find antique furniture in every room, but updated bathrooms and kitchen, as well as TVs in the bedrooms.

This Irish castle is 45 minutes from Shannon Airport and near the N67 and N85 roadways, 2.5 miles from Kilfenora.

AS MENTIONED IN THE



INDEPENDENT

Good news! This property is available as a Vill'otel

Yey! Wait... what is that?

It's the perfect combo of the privacy of your own personal villa, with all the luxury and convenience of a hotel.

What's included?

Breakfast, cleaning, welcome drinks and hamper, plus more! Check the Extras tab for all the details.



Facilities

Great Value • Quirky • Chateaux & Castles • Heritage Collection • Beach
Nearby • Ideal for Teens • BBQ • Satellite TV • Working Fireplace •
Heating • Fenced Grounds • Waterfront • Rural Location • Walking/Hiking
Paths • Golf Nearby • Fishing • Outstanding Landscapes • Outdoor
Pursuit & Activities • Tourist Towns & Villages • Romantic

Interior & Grounds

Interior

- Great Hall
- Fully-equipped kitchen
- Minsterels gallery overlooking the Great Hall with mezzanine sleeping area for 2
- Bedroom with double bed
- Bedroom with double bed
- Bedroom with double bed
- Family bathroom
- Two family shower rooms

Exterior Grounds

- Large grounds

Additional Facilities

- TV
- Dishwasher
- Washing machine & dryer
- Parking



Location & Local Information

There are hundreds of things to see and do in the neighbourhood, from experiencing the countryside to one of the many cultural events or extensive sports facilities.

County Clare is a land of ancient castles, prehistoric cliffs and diverse landscapes, of uncrowded byways and fascinating sightseeing, from quiet lakes to vast, sandy beaches and the eerie landscape of 'The Burren'. The wild Atlantic coast line offers a wealth of exciting and diverse adventures.

Lahinch (6 miles): This lovely seaside resort has a lot to offer. Stretching around one of the longest sand beaches in Ireland, it also has a fantastic Seaworld Aquarium and leisure centre with swimming pool and two championship golf courses.

Cliffs of Moher (6 miles): Some call it the largest tourist attraction in Europe. Rising 650ft out of the Atlantic Ocean and extending for 5 miles, the sheer rock face of the Cliffs is an awesome sight.

Doolin (6 miles): The mecca for Irish music, pubs and celtic craft is Doolin. The three Aran Islands lie in the entrance to the Galway Bay and can be reached by ferry.

Kilfenora (2.5 miles): The smallest diocesan of Ireland with its cathedral and famous highcrosses. Nearby, Lickeen Lake is an insider tip for every passionate freshwater angler. The Burren Exhibition Centre has a fabulous display, and guests should not miss the traditional Irish Dancing at Vaughan's Barn.

Liscannor (6 miles): Famous among deep-sea anglers, step on board one of the boats and explore the waters of Galway Bay. Visitors may see blue sharks, basking whales, dolphins or even killer whales.

Lisdoonvarna (3 miles): Founded at the discovery of its sulphur, iron and magnesium rich spa wells, this town is home to welcoming restaurants and some excellent traditional pubs. Guests can treat themselves to a sulphur bath, have a massage, wax treatment or sauna in old-fashioned Victorian surroundings. Don't miss the unsurpassed taste of the world famous salmon from the Burren Smoke House.

Within 10 miles, there are also many sports facilities including pony trekking, surfing, diving, abseiling, caving, pitch and putt, cycling, tennis, and of course hundreds of miles of scenic walking routes.



Shannon Airport is about 45 minutes by car. The castle is 2.5 miles from the nearest town.

The History of Smiths Castle

Only few castles in the West of Ireland have survived into our times. Ballynagowan (Smiths) Castle has played an exciting role in the history of North Clare, taking its name from 'beal-atha-an-ghobhan', meaning the 'mouth of the smith's ford'.

It was first mentioned in 1551 when the last King of Munster, Murrrough O'Brien, (also known as the Tanist, was created 1st Earl of Thomond and 1st Baron of Inchiquin in 1543), willed the Castle of Ballynagowan to his son Teige before his death.

Over the years it accommodated many famous characters of Irish history. Records show that in 1600 the legendary Irish rebel "Red" Hugh O'Donnell rested there with his men during his attack on North Clare, spreading ruin everywhere and seeking revenge on the Earl of Thomond for his being in alliance with the English.

In 1649 Oliver Cromwell's army came from England with death and destruction. The Castle was attacked with cannons when Cromwell's General, Ludlow, swept into North Clare striking terror everywhere he went.

In 1650 Conor O'Brien of Lemeneagh became heir of the castle. His death, however, came shortly afterwards in 1551, as he was fatally wounded in a skirmish with Cromwellian troops commanded by General Ludlow at Inchicronan. With him had fought his wife Maire Rua O'Brien ("The Red Mary", named after her long red hair), one of the best known characters in Irish tradition. She had lived in the castle as a young woman and it is the ferocity and cruelty attributed to her, which has kept her name alive. Legends tell that to save her children's heritage after Conor's death she married several English generals, who were killed in mysterious ways one after the other- she supposedly ended her bloody career entombed in a hollow tree.

During 1652 almost all inhabitable castles in Clare including Smiths were occupied by Cromwellian garrisons, a time of terrible uncertainty as Clare was under military rule.

Over the next decades Ballynagowan Castle was the seat of army generals, the High Sheriff of County Clare and Viscount Powerscourt, one of the most powerful aristocrats who had their main residence - a monumental neogothic palace - in Dublin.

The castle was last inhabited mid-19th century and until its recent restoration served as beloved meeting point for couples -, songs and poems about it finding their way into the local pubs.

Local Amenities

Nearest Airport	Shannon (50 km)
Nearest Ferry Port	Dublin (170 km)
Nearest Village	Kilfenora (3 km)
Nearest Town/City	Ennistymon (6 km)
Nearest Restaurant	Kilfenora (3 km)
Nearest Bar/Pub	Kilfenora (3 km)
Nearest Beach	Lahinch (7 km)

What Oliver loves...

- Guests can feel like kings and queens gathered around the Gothic fireplace in this Irish castle's hall
- Vaughan's Pub in nearby Kilfenora has the traditional Irish fare you crave
- History enthusiasts will love the original murderhole in the spiral staircase used to defend the castle using hot oil from unwelcome intruders
- The Kilfenora Music Festival happens every April, but you can dance to a ceili band on Sunday nights in Vaughan's barn

What you should know...

- Attractions and entertainment are a drive away, so a car is essential
- The characteristic features of a medieval castle, like the stone spiral staircase, make it unsuitable for the disabled, elderly and young children
- Guests have no access to the roof as there are lovely views but no barriers!

Terms & Conditions

- Security deposit: £500 credit card authorisation required. This is paid prior to arrival and will be refunded in full after departure subject to damage inspection.
- Arrival time: After 4.00 pm
- Departure time: Before 10.00 am
- Energy costs included?: All booking placed before 01/08/17 will have all utility charged by the meter and deducted from the security deposit. All bookings placed after the 01/08/17 have all utility charges included in the rental rate
- Linen & towels included?: All linen and bath towels are included in the rental price.
- Pets welcome?: No Pets allowed
- End of stay cleaning included?: Included. Please leave the property in the state that you found it.
- Smoking Allowed?: No smoking in the property
- Insurance: It is recommended that all guests take out insurance to cover against potential cancellation and any accidental damage caused during your stay at the property.
- Other Ts and Cs: Unfortunately the nature of this medieval building makes it unsuitable for the disabled, and children under 10.
- Other 2: Please note that new bookings cannot begin on the same day as another booking departs - they must instead start the following day

There is a maximum capacity of 8 guests at the castle. Groups that exceed their booking size will not be granted access to the castle.