

Unique Experiences



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Office of Public Works



Dublin Castle, Dublin City

Meet the Curator

Once the centre of British rule in Ireland, from 1204 to 1922, Dublin Castle is now the setting for some of the Irish nation's most important state ceremonies.

Ascend the Castle's grand Battleaxe Staircase and follow in the footsteps of world-famous figures, from Benjamin Franklin, Queen Victoria and Charles Dickens to Nelson Mandela, John F. Kennedy and Pope Francis. Experience the beautiful architecture and collections of this former palace, hear about the making of modern, independent Ireland, and see the grand hall where our head of State, the President of Ireland, is sworn into office.

Private
Guided
Tour

The Dublin Castle Curator.

William Derham is our Buildings Curator and is responsible for researching, presenting, interpreting and supporting the conservation of the Castle's buildings and interiors. He has a particular interest in the life of the Castle during the twentieth century, from the theft of the Irish Crown Jewels and the last days of the Viceregal Court, through the revolutionary period of 1916–23, to the rehabilitation and use of the Castle in post-independent Ireland. He is a graduate of the Dublin School of Architecture, T.U. Dublin, and studied Building Repair and Conservation at Trinity College Dublin. His most recent publication, *Splendour & Scandal*, examined the colourful history of the Office of Arms at Dublin Castle.



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Contact: Elizabeth Willms/Cormac Molloy

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Dublin Castle, Dame Street, Dublin 2, D02 XN27.

Luxury Experience

Meet the Curator and explore the collection of Dublin Castle

Highlights and hidden gems await you on this special visit to the Castle, in the company of one of our two expert curators. Beginning in the palatial State Apartments, you will go behind the ropes for a private view of key artworks and architectural features, including a portrait by the renowned master Sir Anthony van Dyck, and the most important painted ceiling to survive in Ireland from the eighteenth century. Along the way, you will hear first-hand from the curator about the detailed research and conservation work that helps to safeguard these national treasures and bring their stories to life.

Moving to the soaring interior of the Chapel Royal, you will be brought behind closed doors for an exclusive visit to the gallery, with its velvet furnishings, jewel-like stained glass windows and array of sculptural ornament. As a memento of your time with us, you will be invited to choose a personally signed and dedicated copy of one of the curator's Dublin Castle publications.

Contact: Elizabeth Willms/Cormac Molloy

Tel: +353 1 645 8813 **Email:** elizabeth.willms@opw.ie or cormac.molloy@opw.ie

Booking Conditions: Bookings must be confirmed by email 2 weeks in advance.

Payment: Payment is required in full in advance. Refunds will only be given with 48 hours notification of cancellation.

Availability: Mondays – Fridays and some weekends.

Due to the nature of this site, it may close at short notice due to government business and this is out of control of Dublin Castle staff, who will notify the buyer as soon as possible to arrange cancellation/rescheduling if possible.

Inclusions:

- Private Curator Experience – 45 minutes with the Dublin Castle Curator.
- Expert introduction to Dublin Castle and its collections.
- Exclusive access to the gallery of the Chapel Royal and to roped-off areas in the State Apartments.
- Let the Curator know in advance if you are interested in a particular period in history and they can select appropriate items for you to view.
- Drop off and collection at front door of Dublin Castle Upper Yard.

Group size: Min. 1 – Max. 10

Duration: 45 minutes

Mobility: Universal access to State Apartments and Chapel Royal, but not to Chapel gallery. Drop off and collect to front door of Castle.

Pricing: 1 person €200, 1-3 €150 per person, 4-10 €100 per person. Suitable for children from 10 years and above, €50 per child.

Languages: English only.

Facilities on site: Exhibitions, toilets, disabled toilet, gardens. Guest toilet available for Unique Experience Visitors.

Access & Parking: Dublin Castle is accessed by Foot via: Dame Street and by Car via: Little Ship Street, Dublin 2.

Nearby: Dublin City Centre, Book of Kells, Guinness Storehouse, Kilmainham Gaol, Royal Hospital Kilmainham, Irish Museum of Modern Art, Phoenix Park Visitor Centre and Walled Victorian Gardens, Dublin Zoo, Farmleigh House, Castletown House.





Unique Experiences

Kilkenny Castle

The Ormonde Collection

Private
Guided
Tour

Few buildings in Ireland can boast a longer history of continuous occupation than Kilkenny Castle. Founded soon after the Norman conquest of Ireland, the Castle has been rebuilt, extended and adapted to suit changing circumstances and uses over a period of 800 years.

Once home to the very powerful and influential Butler Family (Dukes, Marquesses and Earls of Ormonde), Kilkenny Castle is today one of the most prestigious National Historic Properties in Ireland. It stands on a strategic height above the River Nore, in 21 hectares of magnificent rolling parkland and formal gardens at the heart of Kilkenny City.



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IRELAND'S
ANCIENT EAST™
Islander Through Time

Contact: Anne Teehan

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Address: Kilkenny Castle, Office of Public Works, The Parade, Kilkenny R95 YRK1.



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Luxury Experience

The Ormonde Collection

Step back in time and enjoy the wonder and history of this prestigious stately home. You will be warmly greeted and accompanied throughout your visit by one of our most experienced guides, who will enthrall you with wonderful stories of the very powerful and influential Butler Family.

This magnificent Castle has many hidden gems, which will be exclusively available to our Unique Experience guests. Some very special pieces from the Ormonde Collection will be available for viewing in the Duchess Closet of the west wing. Our guests will have the opportunity to handle some of these pieces, which may include weaponry, family photographs and special family pieces.

Contact: Anne Teehan

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Email: anne.teehan@opw.ie

Booking Conditions: Bookings must be confirmed by email 2 weeks in advance.

Payment: Payment is required in full in advance. Refunds will only be given with 48 hours notification of cancellation.

Availability: Monday to Friday throughout the year.

Languages: English and French.

Facilities on site: Exhibitions, tearooms, stunning parkland walks, the formal Rose Garden with its feature fountain.

Inclusions:

- A warm welcome and introduction to Kilkenny Castle.
- A themed guided visit to the magnificent rooms by one of the Castle's most experienced guides, which will include access to wonderful exhibitions. The visit can be personalised to the specific interests of our guests with advance notice.
- Exclusive viewing of some very special pieces from the Ormonde Collection in the Duchess Closet of the west wing.
- Exclusive car parking on the grounds of the Castle for one car or mini-van.

Group size: Min. 1 – Max. 8 guests

Duration: 90 minutes

Mobility: Universal access is available in the west wing only.

Pricing: 1 person €200, 1-3 €150 per person, 4-8 €100 per person. Suitable for children from 10 years of age, €50 per child.

Access & Parking: Kilkenny Castle is situated on the Castle Road in the very heart of Kilkenny City. Exclusive parking will be available to our Unique Experience guests within the grounds for one car or mini-van, with drop off and collection at the main door of the Castle in the courtyard.

Nearby: Kilkenny's 'Medieval Mile' meanders from the Castle to St Canice's Cathedral with Rothe House, Medieval Mile Museum and Butler Gallery of Contemporary Art at 'Evan's Home' situated on the route. Kilkenny Design Centre, which was the formal stables and coach house area of the Castle is located immediately across the street.



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Unique Experiences



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Farmleigh House, Dublin

Meet the Librarian and explore the collection of Benjamin Guinness

A historic house holding important collections, an art gallery, a working farm, and the official Irish State guesthouse, Farmleigh House and Estate, located in an estate of seventy-eight acres situated to the north-west of Dublin's Phoenix Park. Farmleigh provides accommodation for visiting dignitaries and guests of the nation, most notably: Queen Elizabeth II in 2011, Emperor of Japan 2005, Prince William and the Duchess of Cambridge, in 2020.

Built by the famous Guinness brewing family, Farmleigh remains a unique representation of its heyday, the Edwardian period, and houses important artworks and furnishings, as well as the Benjamin Iveagh collection of rare books, bindings, and manuscripts, which is held in the Library. The collection is owned by Marsh's Library and the collection was donated to Marsh's Library in 2009 by the Guinness family.

The extensive pleasure grounds feature walled and sunken gardens, and scenic lakeside walks.

Private
Guided
Tour

Nuala Canny, OPW Librarian Bio:

BA in History and English (UCD), Masters in Library and Information Studies (UCD). 30 years experience as a librarian. Worked in the Law Society Library, Irish Management Institute, A&L Goodbody Solicitors and Portobello College before joining OPW main library in 2003, based in St Stephen's Green and was assigned to Benjamin Iveagh Library 5 years ago. Took over collections management in Farmleigh 4 years ago. She also oversees the Cholmeley Harrison Archive and Library in Emo Court.



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IRELAND'S
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Contact: Maria O'Hanlon

Tel: +353 1 815 5914 Email: maria.ohanlon@opw.ie

Address: Farmleigh House and Estate, OPW, Phoenix Park, Dublin, D15 TD50.

Luxury Experience

Meet the Librarian and explore the collection of Benjamin Guinness

Enjoy the unique sense of history in the beautiful library of Farmleigh House, once home to the famous Irish brewing family – the Guinnesses.

Soak up the smell of leather and old books while our expert librarian guides you through the world-class collection of rare manuscripts and books. Gain insight into the binding process that created these beautiful books.

The Benjamin Iveagh Library was amassed by Benjamin Guinness (1937-1992), 3rd Earl of Iveagh, a keen and astute collector of rare books, manuscripts and fine bindings. The collection amounts to more than 5,000 items and includes mostly rare Irish books and manuscripts. Among the historical manuscripts in the collection is a 13th century description of Ireland, an Irish-language primer prepared for Queen Elizabeth I. All major Irish writers are represented in the collection, including James Joyce, Seamus Heaney, Samuel Beckett, Jonathan Swift, and includes first editions of Ulysses and Gulliver's Travels.

A particular strength of the collection is in fine Irish bindings from the 18th, 19th and 20th centuries. Together with a large number of 'Livres d'Art' – books with beautiful illustrations by famous artists. This collection is as truly beautiful as it is educational and entertaining.

Contact: Maria O'Hanlon

Tel: +353 1 815 5914 **Email:** maria.ohanlon@opw.ie

Booking Conditions: Bookings must be confirmed by email 2 weeks in advance. Availability Mondays to Fridays and some weekends April to December.

Payment: Payment is required in full in advance. Refunds will only be given with 48 hours notification of cancellation.

Availability: 1st April – 11th December approx.

Languages: English.

Facilities on site: Exhibitions, toilets, disabled toilet, coach park, gardens.

Inclusions:

- Introduction to Farmleigh – 15 minutes.
- Private Library Experience – 45 minutes with OPW Librarian, Nuala Canny.
- Exclusive introduction to the Farmleigh House and the world famous collection Benjamin Iveagh Collection.
- Let Nuala know in advance if you are interested in a particular writer or period in history and she can select an appropriate manuscript for you to view.
- Drop off and collection to the main door of Farmleigh House.

Supplementary Options:

- Full private guided tour (including Presidential Suite and other floors), exclusive access to important Irish art. (45 - 60 minutes)
- Library and house tours are suitable for children aged 10 years and above.

Group size: Min. 1 – Max. 10

Duration: 60 to 90 minutes

Mobility: Universal Access. Library Experience is on ground floor of house. Ramp at front of house south side of house. Drop off and collect to front of house for Unique Experience visitors.

Pricing: 1 person €200, 1-3 €150 per person, 4-10 €100 per person. Suitable for children from 10 years and above, €50 per child.

Access & Parking: Farmleigh is accessed via the Phoenix Park, Dublin. Drop off and collection at front door of Farmleigh House for Unique Experience visitors.

Nearby: Dublin City Centre, Dublin Zoo, Phoenix Park Visitor Centre and Walled Victorian Gardens, Kilmainham Gaol, Royal Hospital Kilmainham, Irish Museum of Modern Art, Castletown House, Dublin Castle.

Information on Public Tours: Public tours take place daily at various times throughout the day. These take place in parts of the house.

