

TASTE OF C A V A N



COUNTY CAVAN, IRELAND

Situated just south of the border with Northern Ireland, County Cavan is one of six European locations that have recently won a European Destination of Excellence (EDEN) award for accessible tourism. *Dan Burden* reports.

Cavan is off the beaten track as far as your typical tourist destinations in Ireland go. However, in 2013 the area won this prestigious award for developing an accessible tourism strategy with local disability groups. As a result, access is generally good and all of the places where we ate and stayed had the requisite accessible bathrooms, level access and lifts.

After a short and cosy flight to Dublin, we picked up our hire car and headed straight up the new M3 motorway. On the two-hour journey we were accompanied by DJ Nicky Byrne of Westlife fame (remember them?) and by the time we arrived at our destination, we were fully up to speed with all the local farming news and obituaries.

We stayed at the Farnham Estate, which proved a great base for exploring the local area. The rooms were comfortable and the three restaurants are all accessible. There are also a number of walks around the estate, although you will need a FreeWheel to negotiate even the tamest of them (or probably sink a few less Guinneses than I had).

If you're a lover of the outdoors then Cavan Burren Park, part of the wider UNESCO Marble Arch Global Geopark, has a multi-access trail winding through a landscape dotted with Neolithic tombs and glacial features. Although the trail is smooth, it can be steep in parts and even the most able para may need an occasional shove. However, it is well worth it for the elevated views of Cuilcagh Mountain and the surrounding loughs. A short scenic drive from the park will get you to the Shannon Pot, source of the Shannon River and allegedly home to the mighty Salmon of Knowledge. There is a concrete path from the car park that takes you the whole way, but if you're going in search of this fabled fish then prepare for

its habit of drowning people it doesn't like – and also liberal amounts of sheep poo.

Should you fail to track down the salmon then there are plenty more fish in the lakes. In fact, as any proud local will tell you, Cavan boasts 365 lakes – one for every day of the year. I'll have to take their word for it, but all I can say is that if your idea of a great holiday is doing battle with a wily old pike, then Cavan is the place to be.

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Personally, I prefer to have someone catch my food for me – and cook it. After all that pushing around a lovely meal in the Olde Post Inn was just the ticket. It was certainly the culinary highlight of our trip and clearly has a fine reputation in the local area as most people we spoke to had eaten there. But take heed, book an early sitting to give you enough time to scoff down the five or six courses you'll be treated to and wear a loose pair of trousers!

● **If you're planning a trip to the Emerald Isle then make sure you pay a visit to this beautiful county which has put disabled visitors at the heart of its tourism. For more information visit www.thiscavan.ie and www.irelandseden.ie**



