



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 Guinnesses 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

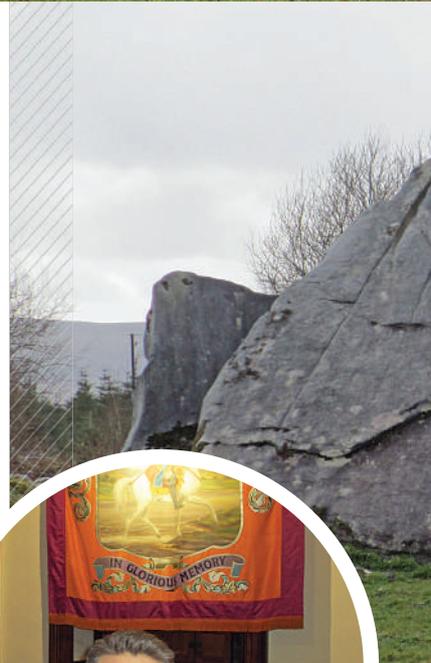
its habit of drowning people it doesn't like – and also liberal amounts of sheep poo.

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





THE GREAT OUTDOORS

Cavan Burren Park is part of the wider Marble Arch Caves Global Geopark and has a wheelchair accessible visitor centre and multi-access trail. www.cavanburren.ie
Guided tours:
T: +353 71 985 3299



Whilst you are in the area make sure you visit **The Shannon Pot**, which is signposted from the Blacklion to Glangevlin Road (R206)

⇒ FISHING

If you fancy trying to net yourself a monster Bream then Rene can show you the best spots, or show you the ropes (or should that be lines?) if you fancy giving it a go for the first time.
T: +353 49 433 9354

...AND ON A RAINY DAY

Situated in an old Georgian nunnery **Cavan Museum** hosts a wide range of exhibitions from the history of the troubles and Sinn Fein to a fully-accessible World War One trench experience. Top it off with a scone and a cup of tea in the museum's tea rooms. www.cavanmuseum.ie
T: +353 49 854 4070



Kids of all abilities will enjoy making their own teddy bear at **Bear Essentials**. See their website for events and

other craft classes such as traditional basket weaving. Booking is essential. www.beaessentials.ie
T: +353 49 952 3461



WHERE TO EAT:

If you're staying in Cavan then eating at **The Olde Post Inn** is a must. Prepare for fine dining and a friendly welcome in this converted 19th century Post Office. www.theoldepostinn.com
T: +353 47 55555

For a civilised Sunday lunch, look no further than the beautiful **Slieve Russell Hotel** where you can expect a side order of live piano with your roast beef. www.slieverussell.ie
T: +353 49 9526444



WHERE TO STAY:

Ancestral home of Lord Farnham for more than 300 years, the **Radisson Blu Farnham Estate Hotel** is set in beautiful grounds, has accessible rooms and a very good restaurant. www.farnhamestate.ie
T: +353 49 437 7700

