

# The Most Beautiful Towns in Northern Ireland, UK

Take the scenic route by driving along the Causeway Coastal Route in Northern Ireland



Famed for its beautiful coastline and natural wonders, Northern Ireland has some of the most beautiful towns in Europe. With long sandy beaches, historic buildings and spectacular mountains, here are the top towns every traveller must visit.

## Bangor

Historical Landmark



steeped \_\_\_\_\_ history, with artefacts such \_\_\_\_\_ swords that date back to the Bronze Age. During the 19th century, the town became a popular seaside resort for Victorian \_\_\_\_\_, with much of the architecture of the town dating from this period. With its sandy beaches and scenic \_\_\_\_\_, you'll want to make sure to experience the beauty of Bangor.



Located in County Down, the beautiful town of Bangor is situated \_\_\_\_\_ the southern side of Belfast Lough. It is close to Belfast city and a popular seaside \_\_\_\_\_, meaning it is the perfect location for tourists. The name Bangor is \_\_\_\_\_ from the Irish, meaning "horned curve", which perhaps refers to the shape of Bangor Bay. Landmarks in the town include the Old Custom House, the Clandeboye Estate, the marina and the Royal Ulster and Ballyholme Yacht Clubs. The town is

## Carrickfergus

Historical Landmark

Situated in County Antrim, Carrickfergus is \_\_\_\_\_ on the northern \_\_\_\_\_ of Belfast Lough. The town's name comes \_\_\_\_\_ the Irish, meaning "rock of Fergus", which pays reference to Fergus Mór mac Eirc, the sixth-century king of Dál Riata. It is one of the oldest towns in both Northern Ireland and Ireland. Evidence of the original town can be seen \_\_\_\_\_ the various segments of wall dotted around the locale. Several artefacts \_\_\_\_\_ been found dating back to the 12th and 13th century, when the walls \_\_\_\_\_ excavated and preserved. Well-known landmarks and tourist attractions in the town



include Carrickfergus Castle, one of the best-preserved Norman castles in Ireland. Carrickfergus also has the longest-surviving coal gasworks in Ireland. Celebrating its history is the Flame Gasworks museum. Other \_\_\_\_\_ sites include the spectacular marina, the mill ponds with their variety of wildlife and the Carrickfergus Museum and Civic Centre.

## Coleraine

Historical Landmark



A picturesque town with spectacular waterside views, Coleraine is a popular destination for visitors to Northern Ireland. Located near the \_\_\_\_\_ of the River Bann in County Derry, the town has a \_\_\_\_\_ history, and it has evidence of one of the \_\_\_\_\_ human settlements in Ireland. Its name derives from the Irish for "nook of the ferns". This relates to the legend of Saint Patrick and how, when he arrived

\_\_\_\_\_ the town, the local chieftain offered him a piece of land \_\_\_\_\_ which to build a church. The land was situated next to the river and dense with ferns, and, thus, the Irish name for the town was created. This later became anglicised as "Coleraine". The town is renowned \_\_\_\_\_ its beauty and has won various accolades, such as Best Kept Town and Ulster in Bloom awards in 2002. It was also named the Best Kept Large Urban Centre in Northern Ireland in the Tidy Towns competition. The town is also one of the main \_\_\_\_\_ points on the way to the Giant's Causeway. The distillery village of Bushmills is also located nearby.

## Kilkeel

Architectural Landmark

On the coast of County Down, and \_\_\_\_\_ the historical barony of Mourne, is the \_\_\_\_\_ town of Kilkeel. Now one of the main fishing ports in Ireland, Kilkeel's charm comes from its \_\_\_\_\_ of ancient ruins, terraced shops and winding streets waiting to be explored. The name of the town comes from the Irish, meaning "church of the narrow" and refers \_\_\_\_\_ the 14th-century church and fort overlooking the town of Kilkeel. The



church was constructed in 1388 and dedicated to St Colman del Mourne. Kilkeel was \_\_\_\_\_ the capital of the ancient Kingdom of Mourne and \_\_\_\_\_ to the south of the picturesque Mourne Mountains. There are many \_\_\_\_\_ through the mountains, ideal for hillwalkers and sightseers. Other must-see cultural sites are the Mourne Maritime Visitor Centre for Kilkeel's heritage and history and the Silent Valley Reservoir for landscapes and wildlife.

## Portstewart

Historical Landmark



A must-visit for any beach \_\_\_\_\_, Portstewart is located in County Derry. A popular seaside resort, the town of Portstewart contains a harbour, coastal paths and 2mi (3.2km) of sandy beaches known \_\_\_\_\_ the Strand. The main activities in the town are sea-based, such as surfing and swimming, but there are also many cliff walks and trails that attract visitors who like to explore. The \_\_\_\_\_ town was founded by John Cromie in 1791 and named

\_\_\_\_\_ his maternal ancestors, the

Stewarts of Ballylesse. However, there's also evidence \_\_\_\_\_ settlement in the area dating as far \_\_\_\_\_ as the Neolithic era. Key heritage landmarks in the town include the Dominican College, built \_\_\_\_\_ the former site of O'Hara's Castle, and Saint Patrick's Well at the top of the Strand – once used for horse racing.

## Newcastle

Historical Landmark

For golf enthusiasts and beach lovers, Newcastle in County Down is \_\_\_\_\_ a trip. The town \_\_\_\_\_ on the coast of the Irish Sea, at the base of one of the Mourne Mountains, known as Slieve Donard. The name of the town comes from a castle that once \_\_\_\_\_ at the mouth of the



Shimna River and was referred to as "New Castle" in the *Annals of the Four Masters*. The history of the town is filled with folklore and myth, and many of the names of \_\_\_\_\_ places are derived from local legends. One \_\_\_\_\_ place is Saint Patrick's Stream – where Saint Patrick supposedly banished all the snakes in Ireland. Famous visitors to Newcastle include George V and Queen Mary, grandparents to Elizabeth II, who came to open the then \_\_\_\_\_ built Slieve Donard Hotel. For nature lovers, Tollymore Forest Park, Donard Park and the Murlough National Nature Reserve provide \_\_\_\_\_ views and varied wildlife. At the front of the reserve is an ancient Neolithic portal tomb, called Slidderford Dolmen or Wateresk.

## Ballymena

Historical Landmark



many ringforts located in the vicinity that reflect this. During the 19th century, a gravedigger uncovered a large stone that bore the inscription "ord do degen", \_\_\_\_\_ refers to a seventh-century bishop in Ireland. The stone can be observed on the porch of

Located in County Antrim, the current town of Ballymena was built by the Adair family in 1626. It was constructed on land \_\_\_\_\_ by King Charles I on the condition that there be two annual fairs and a free market on Saturdays. The market still \_\_\_\_\_ place today. The town is sometimes known as the "City of the Seven Towers". Evidence of settlement in the town \_\_\_\_\_ back to as early as the fifth century, and there are

St Patrick's Church located in the town. Sites to visit include the People's Park and the Braid – Ballymena Town Hall & Museum Arts

Centre. Famous locals from the town include the Hollywood actor Liam Neeson. The town is also located near Slemish Mountain,

Saint Patrick is said to have worked as a shepherd for six years. It is \_\_\_\_\_ that his time on the mountain led to him praying frequently and, \_\_\_\_\_, converting to Christianity. Patrick returned to Ireland after he was freed from slavery and converted people on the island. The mountain draws numerous pilgrims and hillwalkers every year, particularly on March 17, Saint Patrick's Day.

## Portrush

### Historical Landmark

Situated in County Antrim, and on the \_\_\_\_\_ of County Derry, is the seaside town of Portrush. Translated from the Irish and meaning "promontory port", Portrush is known for its many hotels, restaurants and bars. It is also

\_\_\_\_\_ to the Royal Portrush Golf Club – the only golf club outside of mainland Britain to \_\_\_\_\_ played host to the Open Championship. Other visitors to the town come for its sandy beaches known as the West Strand, the East Strand, Curran Strand and White Rocks. On the East Strand is a 13ft-high (4m) sculpture created by sculptor Holger Lönze, called *To the People of the Sea*. A collection of rocks \_\_\_\_\_ the coast, known as the Skerries, is a \_\_\_\_\_ for species of wildlife. The town has ancient \_\_\_\_\_ that date back to the Larnian or late Mesolithic period. The town is located near the Giant's Causeway and was once connected to it by the Giant's Causeway Tramway, which no \_\_\_\_\_ operates. Popular destinations for tourists also include the Portrush Coastal Zone.



## Holywood

### Historical Landmark



Found on the shore of Belfast Lough, \_\_\_\_\_ Belfast and Bangor, is the town of Holywood. Pronounced the same as Hollywood, this town in County Down is known for its \_\_\_\_\_ jazz and blues festival, many fashion boutiques and arts and crafts creations as well as a popular destination for sea bathers. The town's name comes from the Latin "Sanctus Boscus", which means "holy wood" and \_\_\_\_\_ to the woodland surrounding the monastery of Saint Laiseran, the son of Nasca. Another ancient connection is the Old Priory, \_\_\_\_\_ ruins date back to the early 13th century. A number of

distinguished people are \_\_\_\_\_ in the graveyard at the Priory, such as Robert Lloyd Praeger, the famous botanist, and his sister Rosamond Praeger, the sculptor and writer. One of her sculptures is located in the town. The town is also known for its maypole in the centre at the crossroads. Its origins are not known, but it is said to have been \_\_\_\_\_ around 1700, following the running aground of a Dutch ship on the nearby coast. Visitors should also \_\_\_\_\_ into the Maypole Bar, known locally as Carty's or Ned's. Also recommended is travelling a short distance to the Ulster Folk and Transport Museum.

# Ballycastle

Historical Landmark

With its name meaning "town of the castle", Ballycastle in County Antrim is situated on the northeastern most tip of Northern Ireland, on the Antrim Coast and Glens Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty. The town provides spectacular views of the coastline as well as the Rathlin Island and the Mull of Kintyre in Scotland. The town's headland, Fair Head,

196m (643ft) out of the bay. Visitors to the town often walk the trail known as the Grey Man's Path, which its way around the coastline. Goats can often be seen along

the cliff's edge and between the rocks. Other scenic views are provided by Knocklayde, a heather-covered mountain overlooking the town. Travellers to the town can also on Ballycastle Beach, a designated Blue Flag beach and a popular for fishing. A cycling route from Ballycastle to Torr Head and Cushendun, offering spectacular views and scenery. Additionally, the town is known for its many historic churches. Popular events include the Ould Lammas Fair, held annually on the last Monday and Tuesday in August.



**Rewrite the second sentence so that it has a similar meaning to the first sentence, using the word given. Do not change the word given. Use between 2 and 5 words, including the word given.**

1. The name Bangor is derived from the Irish, meaning "horned curve". **WHICH**

The name Bangor is derived from the Irish, \_\_\_\_\_.

2. Carrickfergus is one of the oldest towns in both Northern Ireland and Ireland. **AS**

There are few \_\_\_\_\_ Carrickfergus.

3. The local chieftain offered Saint Patrick some land on which to build a church. **BY**

Saint Patrick \_\_\_\_\_ the local chieftain, on which to build a church.

4. Kilkeel is now one of the main fishing ports in Ireland. **USE**

Kilkeel \_\_\_\_\_ one of the main fishing ports in Ireland,

5. Saint Patrick's Well was once used for horse racing. **HELD**

Horse races used \_\_\_\_\_ at Saint Patrick's Well.

6. Saint Patrick supposedly banished all the snakes from Ireland. **HAVE**

Saint Patrick is \_\_\_\_\_ all the snakes from Ireland.

7. King Charles I gave land for the construction of Ballymena on the condition that there be two

annual fairs and a free market on Saturdays. **LONG**

King Charles I gave land for the construction of Ballymena \_\_\_\_\_ were two annual fairs and a free market on Saturdays.

8. Popular destinations for tourists in Portrush include the Portrush Coastal Zone. **NOT**

If you \_\_\_\_\_ miss the Portrush Coastal Zone.

9. Visitors to Holywood should pop into the Maypole bar. **RECOMMEND**

We \_\_\_\_\_ the Maypole bar in Holywood.

10. Ballycastle provides spectacular views of the coastline as well as the Rathlin Island and the Mull of Kintyre in Scotland. **ONLY**

Not \_\_\_\_\_ spectacular views of the coastline, but of the Rathlin Island and the Mull of Kintyre in Scotland, as well.

