

Ireland The Gathering



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Ireland The Gathering

Ireland's Year-Long Party

Next year Ireland wants to welcome home all those who are connected to the country in any way—whether they have Irish relatives, an Irish name, love a Guinness, have visited or have always wanted to—and with New Zealand's well-documented passion for all things Irish, the opportunities are endless for Kiwi agents.

The Gathering Ireland 2013 will see the country go into Irish overdrive with a massive year-long calendar of celebrations, and you only had to look at the sea of green that took to the streets in last year's Rugby World Cup to know Kiwis will want a piece of the action.

The event is aimed at the country's Diaspora and expects to attract as many as 325,000 extra visitors, including a huge number of Kiwis—as many as a fifth of New Zealanders are thought to have Irish ancestry.

The whole of Ireland is getting involved, with communities, villages and



towns holding gatherings, festivals and events with a focus on the country's culture, heritage and people.

Many clans, businesses and organisations have planned their own gatherings, and there are a huge range of events from school reunions to film festivals, music to food, literary cel-

ebrations, sporting challenges and art extravaganzas, says local Tourism Ireland rep Darragh Walshe. Over 960 gatherings have been registered so far and this number continues to climb, Walshe adds. The festival kicks off with a New Year's Eve party in Dublin and runs for the entire year.



Packed Calendar

Whether your client is a left-hander, twin, redhead, likes to indulge in a spot of bog snorkelling or simply has a passion for all things Irish, a packed calendar of events lined up for next year is sure to have something to cater to their interests. Over the next few weeks, Tourism Ireland and *Travel Today* will highlight some of these as well as how clients can find out how to track down their clans and see what family gatherings are being organised.



Join The St Pats Parade

In a year-long party celebrating all things Irish, St Patrick's Day is always going to be a drawcard—and visitors to Dublin next 17 Mar are being offered a unique opportunity to take part in celebrations.

As part of the city's Grand Parade, the People's Parade will see 8000 people from across the world take a 2.5km route past some of Ireland's most historic landmarks, while being cheered on by the hundreds of thousands of spectators lining the streets.

"The People's Parade is a wonderful example of what The Gathering Ireland 2013 is all about: inviting our friends, families and connections from overseas to celebrate with us," says Gathering project director Jim Miley. Places in the parade are awarded on a first-come first-serve basis, see stpatsfestival.ie

Win A Trip To Ireland

Agents have the chance to experience the festive atmosphere in Ireland next year for themselves by winning a place on an Emirates famil to Dublin. The carrier, along with Tourism Ireland, will take 10 top-sellers of its Europe earlybirds on the famil. Agents can pool their sales and the famil places will be split between individual agents, larger agencies and corporates. The incentive is open for sales to 17 Dec, see emiratesagents.com/nz

Follow The Gathering

Updates and information on The Gathering Ireland 2013 can be found at sources including facebook.com/thegatheringireland; twitter.com/gatheringIRL; thegatheringireland.com; youtube.com/gathering2013; and of course discoverireland.co.nz

Dodge The APD

Northern Ireland announced this week that it is abolishing the air passenger duty on long haul flights, meaning that from next Jan clients leaving from anywhere in Ireland will avoid paying the tax which the UK increased this year. The Republic of Ireland was already proving a popular option with Kiwis looking to head home without paying the much-maligned tax, says Tourism Ireland's Darragh Walshe.



Imagine a year long party, an entire country as the venue, and the whole population as hosts...



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Ireland The Gathering

The Gathering: An Event For Everyone



From surfing to campervans, left-handers to redheads, rugby to chess, weaving to walking, and endless music and dance—the Irish have displayed their typical quirky style in thinking up hundreds of events to entertain visitors to The Gathering Ireland 2013.

It's the perfect year for clients to really get out and explore every corner of Ireland, with events on for the entire

length and breadth of the country. Ireland's roads are simple to navigate and once clients have an idea of the main events or gatherings they want to visit, it's easy to veer off and check out (or stumble upon) a few of the smaller events along the way. The party kicks off with a bang at NYE Dublin, a three-day event with street performances, theatre, art, markets, entertainment, fireworks, 3D building projections and a giant brunch on New Year's morning. From then the options are endless—whether your client is after sport, music, dance, gardening, movies or food.

Become A Specialist

With the spotlight on Ireland, now is the perfect time for agents to brush up on their Irish knowledge by becoming a Shamrock agent.

By joining up, agents can showcase their knowledge and get rewarded for their efforts, says Tourism Ireland. To sign up, see shamrockagents.co.nz

Who You Gonna Call?

Agents with Gathering related questions should start with local Tourism Ireland reps Darragh Walshe and Mary Galway—and here's proof of their credentials;

"It's THE GATHERING all of next year

Throughout Ireland!" we shout, loud and clear.

There'll be pleasures for all...

So please give us a call

And let Mary G tickle your ear.

Phone 0-9-977-2255 or e-mail mgalway@tourismireland.com

Eire In EK Kiwi Top 10

Dublin is now in Emirates' 10 top-selling destinations from New Zealand, and local airline manager Chris Lethbridge says The Gathering 2013 give Kiwis literally hundreds of reasons to visit. "Demand for Europe and Ireland is strong and next year's gathering events create the perfect opportunity for agents to sell Ireland," he says. "Europe is still popular, but travel plans are changing. Destinations such as Ireland are benefiting from those changes."



Create Your Client's Perfect Itinerary

Tourism Ireland has created an interactive map which shows where all the events in the country are on, making it easy to put together an itinerary based on exactly what a client wants to see. Once you've pinned down the main attractions, have a look around and see what other quirky festivals or family gatherings you can send them to. The map and list of gatherings is at thegatheringireland.com/attend-a-gathering.aspx



Just A Taste

With over 960 gatherings (and counting) already lined up, Tourism Ireland's Kiwi office has picked out a few of their highlights to give agents a taste of what's on. They include:

- **Left Hand Festival**, 09-13 Aug, Mullingar. This festival invites left handers from around the world for five days of fun and competition including Left Handed Golf, Left Handed Champion of Ireland and visits from a few famous lefties.
- **Irish Red Head Convention**, 24 Aug, Crosshaven. Gingers of the world unite for a day of freckle counting, carrot-tossing, ginger chef cook-offs and Best Wannabe Redhead award.
- **Irish Bog Snorkelling Competitions**, 15 Sep, Castleblaney. Bog snorkelling sees contestants swim through a peat bog in snorkels and flippers. Guaranteed to raise a chuckle.
- **Twin Fest**, 24 Aug, Keash. Twin Fest invites twins, triplets, quads and their families to meet and share stories, with competitions and entertainment.
- **Seas Sessions**, 28 Jun, Bundoran. An already popular seaside festival for music and surf lovers, the festival has big plans for 2013 and will feature top international music acts against the backdrop of Ireland's beautiful West Coast.
- **Love the Loom**, year-round, Foxford, County Mayo. Foxford Wollen Mills is inviting visitors to weave a thread on a special Gathering Ireland 2013 hand loom to create a piece of cloth—and a piece of history.

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Is Your Client's Clan Gathering?



Have you got a client named Aylward, Kilcooly O'Connor, McElwaine, O'Tierney, Coogan or McMenamin?

They're among the Irish clans seeking out their Kiwi kin and inviting them home next year for family gatherings—and what better way

to experience the country's famous hospitality (especially for first-time visitors) than being welcomed by extended family?

Over 70 million people globally claim Irish ancestry—a massive number considering there are just 5.6 million people now living in Ireland—and a key aspect of The Gathering Ireland 2013 is the opportunity to welcome home family that has scattered all over the world.

Around a fifth of Kiwis claim Irish ancestry, and a quick search for 'New Zealand' on The Gathering's website shows 133 related gatherings, so there are plenty of opportunities to get clients with an interest in their heritage excited about returning home.

Family-focused events generally take place over a day or two at a historical family property and knowing the Irish, there is sure to be plenty of music and partying as well as the chance to meet relatives clients may never have known existed.

Genealogy Event

For clients with an interest in their family history, the Back to our Past Festival of Genealogy is on in Dublin on 18-20 Oct as part of The Gathering Ireland 2013. Exhibitors range from international genealogical companies to record repositories, heritage magazines and family history societies; two streams of lectures will run throughout the three days (talks won't just cover family history) and there will be plenty of experts including Eric Knowles of BBC's *Antiques Roadshow*. See backtoourpast.com

Agents Get Rhyming

Tourism Ireland got agents into the spirit of The Gathering with a limerick contest recently—and the winning group came up with the following rhyme about the O'Toole clan;

*There's a clan by the name of
O'Toole*

*And that in itself is quite cool
So be at their Gathering*

Next year when it's happening

If you don't you're a fecking great
fool!*

*apologies to Mrs Brown

Search For Your Clan

Clients can search for their surname, or ancestor's surname, at The Gathering website. Gatherings related to their name will be listed, including information on how to contact organisers and how to get there. See thegatheringireland.com

Heritage Certificate

Anyone born overseas who has an Irish ancestor can apply for a Certificate of Irish Heritage—and Tourism Ireland has negotiated a special rate for Kiwi travel agents.

The certificate gives official recognition by the Irish Government of individuals with an ancestral link to Ireland, and shows the name of the recipient and one or two of their ancestors. A limited edition Gathering Certificate has also been created, which will be given to 300-500 'outstanding people' of Irish descent and will include the parish or town as well as the county. Recipients must be willing to be interviewed about their Irish heritage, family and any trips to Ireland. See heritagecertificate.com

Kiwi agents can apply for a regular certificate for EUR20 (usually EUR45), email mgalway@tourismireland.com



Pictured above is New Zealand Rose of Tralee Alana Marshall receiving her heritage certificate from former Irish rugby player Dick Spring on the Sky Walk platform at Croke Park.



Tracing Your Roots

A programme which looks to help Ireland's returning Diaspora find the parishes, homesteads and gravestones connected to their family has partnered with The Gathering.

Communities throughout Ireland have been actively looking to trace their descendants through the Ireland Reaching Out programme (Ireland XO).

The programme's website has a profile of every parish in the country and works with them to help connect with their Diaspora worldwide. It has been training volunteers in parishes across the country to help guide visitors to places of interest including family homesteads, grave stones or land connected to their families.

Clients can leave queries on the site which will be responded to by the volunteers, to help link them to ancestral homes.

"Most communities in Ireland have locals who are happy to answer a query from the Diaspora of their parish. By engaging with these volunteers, Ireland XO is building an invaluable national infrastructure that we hope will drive tourism and energy into every community," says Ireland XO founder Mike Feerick. See irelandxo.com

Not Just Families

Keep in mind that it isn't just families who are organising get-togethers for The Gathering—businesses are inviting back alumni, and groups like Scouting Ireland are hoping their overseas members will join them for festivities. There's a group of female veterinarians getting together in Roscommon, and the 19th Infantry Battalion FCA, which has former members in New Zealand, is attempting to get the battalion back together for the first time.



the gathering
IRELAND 2013

**Imagine a
celebration of all
things Irish and
of Ireland itself**



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Ireland The Gathering

Derry: The City For Culture In 2013



While a big focus for Ireland next year is The Gathering, there is plenty else on in the country which isn't linked to the year-long party that is sure to perk travellers interest, says Tourism Ireland.

A major for the country and one of its big achievements in recent years

was the announcement in 2010 that Derry-Londonderry would be designated the UK City of Culture in 2013. The city will put on its own year-long calendar of events and cultural activities around the core themes of Joyous Celebration and Purposeful Inquiry, with big 'cultural brands' including the London Symphony Orchestra, Royal National Ballet and Hofesh Schechter.

An International Peace conference will be held on 17 Sep, and a big one for the city is the Turner Prize, 23 Oct-05 Jan 2014. During Lumiere (28 Nov-01 Dec), artists, lighting designers and community groups will transform Derry using light installations and projections.

Music and dance will be a key theme, including Fleadh Cheoil na hÉireann in Derry City, which will attract up to 300,000 competitors and visitors in a week-long event of incredible music, 'played by musicians with a grá for the Trad, dancers to thrill and singing voices to die for', says Tourism Ireland's Mary Galway. See 2013fleadh.ie

Sporting events will incorporate everything from the paddocks to the ring and oval balls to round ones. They include Rugby Fest 01 Apr, Youth Gaelic Football 28 Jun, World GAA Congress 22-24 Mar and International Basket Ball 30 Aug.

There will also be the usual quirky Irish attractions, such as a Guinness World Record attempt on 02 Mar in Ebrington Square that will see 4,000 'Annies' attempt to take part in the largest co-ordinated song and dance routine ever.

See cityofculture2013.com

Police And Fire Games

Fire fighters and law enforcement officers from around the world will converge in Northern Ireland when it hosts the World Police and Fire Games from 01-10 Aug. Around 25,000 visitors are expected for the games, which will see 57 sports on at 40 venues. On 11 Aug County Fermanagh will hold the Blue Light Challenge incorporating golf, fishing and multi-disciplinary athletics. See 2013wpfg.com

Motorbike Festival

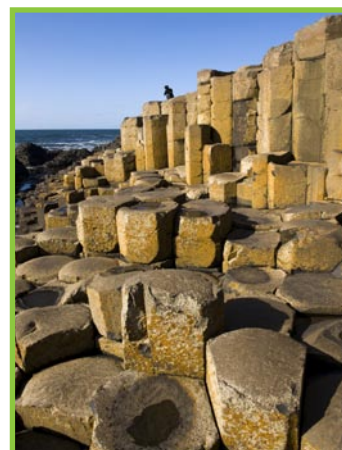
The Vauxhall International 2013 North West 200 is a week-long festival of road racing, live entertainment and music from 12-18 May, set on the Causeway Coast of Northern Ireland. See northwest200.org

New Titanic Centre

Titanic Belfast opened this year as part of commemorations for the 100th anniversary of the Titanic. Visitors to the six-floor building learn about the construction of Titanic and Northern Ireland's industrial and maritime heritage. See titanicbelfast.com


ABs Take On Ireland

The All Blacks will return to Ireland for their end of year tour in 2013, say recent media reports. "This will be a 'must' tour for any Kiwi rugby supporter," says TI's Darragh Walshe.




New At Giant's Causeway

A number of attractions around Ireland began preparing some time ago for the expected influx of extra visitors next year, including the popular Giant's Causeway on Northern Ireland's north Antrim coast. Part of a GBP18.5 million investment in the Causeway included the opening in Jul of a new visitor centre, which tells the story of the UNESCO World Heritage Site's 40,000 hexagonal basalt stones and the legend of Finn McCool and Benandonner, the giants which created it during a battle. Trails and pathways have been upgraded, exhibitions and audio guides added, and the new centre will now have longer opening hours in the summer.



**Expect dancing,
eating, singing
and laughing**



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Dublin City Of Literature

Dublin was named a UNESCO City of Literature in 2010, recognising its many literary ties, and the city has been celebrating with events and festivals ever since. Clients can visit the Book of Kells in Trinity College, a ninth century gospel manuscript, or the Dublin Writers Museum, with 300 years of books, letters and portraits belonging to famous Dublin writers. Events include the Bloomsday Festival (16 Jun) celebrating James Joyce's Ulysses; Dublin Writers Festival; Mountain to Sea Book Festival; Dalkey Book Festival; Franco Irish Literary Festival; and Dublin One City One Book Festival. For those who like their books with a brew, there is an award-winning Dublin Literary Pub Crawl which travels from pub to pub with professional actors performing the works of Dublin's most famous writers, see dublinpubcrawl.com