

A young child with brown hair, wearing a red puffy jacket with a floral pattern, light-colored pants, and red and blue boots, is climbing a rocky, grassy hillside. The child is wearing sunglasses and looking down. The background shows a vast, rolling green landscape under a clear blue sky. In the distance, there are green hills, a few trees, and a small dark building. The overall scene is bright and sunny.

laois

You're Welcome To

# Discover

[www.laoistourism.ie](http://www.laoistourism.ie)

## YOU'RE ALWAYS WELCOME IN LAOIS

Adventure awaits, stories of intrigue abound, and all against the backdrop of the warmest welcome you can imagine. Don't just visit our proud county. Soak up our rich Viking, Quaker, Anglo-Norman, Huguenot, native, and mythical legacies.

Celebrate with us like there's no tomorrow. And when tomorrow comes, taste our incredible local foods and enjoy real Irish hospitality, as it should be. Immerse yourself in all things Laois. For just a day, a week, or more, be one of us.

Download the Laois Heritage Trail Audio Guide for free now and have all the facts, figures you need at your fingertips.





## EMO COURT & PARKLANDS

Almost halfway between the towns of Portlaoise and Portarlington, take a leisurely step back in time and imagine life as a lord or lady of the manor. The stunning neo-classical mansion at Emo Court and Parklands simply hums with stories of debutante balls, society weddings, and war stories from the 1800s. Today, wonderful tour guides take you through beautifully furnished rooms, immersing you in tales belonging to a truly bygone era.

Impeccably cultivated grounds proudly surround the main building. Woodland walks meander around a 20-acre lake to create a refined atmosphere, inviting leisurely picnics and offering plenty of room for the young and old to roam free.



53.107355  
-7.196832



**OPENING HOURS:** Open all year  
**ADMISSION FEE:** House tours are €8 adult,  
€6 senior €4 Child. Family tickets available.

## ROCK OF DUNAMASE

Perched on a hill-top, halfway between Portlaoise and Stradbally, historic stories of bloody vengeance, kidnapping, and intrigue await you. For well over a thousand years, the iconic Rock of Dunamase has seen Vikings, Normans, native tribes, and even Cromwell himself fight tooth-and-nail to seize control of this commanding site.

Today, you can wander to the very top and soak in the history, before taking in the most incredible views of our rich Laois landscape. While you're there... listen closely, for you might still hear the battle cry of a Viking warrior, or even the ominous thunder of approaching raiders on horseback.



53.031758  
-7.210163



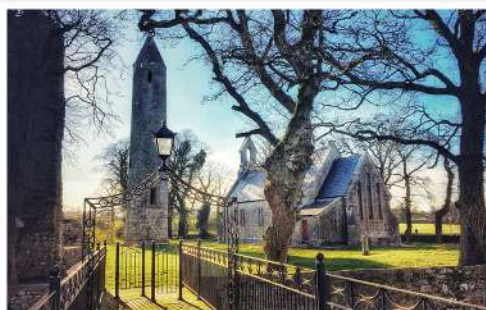
**OPENING HOURS:** During daylight hours  
**ADMISSION FEE:** Free



## TIMAHOE ROUND TOWER

Only fifteen minute's drive southeast of Portlaoise, you'll uncover a story of redemption and faith at the medieval masterpiece that is Timahoe Round Tower, and Heritage Centre. A Christian icon for the ages, the tower was a beacon for a once-thriving monastic community and now proudly overlooks a peaceful village green.

Founded by soldier-turned-saint Mochua, the tower's bells would both summon for prayer and sound the alarm following an era of regular Viking plunder. Haunting bells toll no more, and the serenity of this picture-postcard setting is broken now only by the laughter of children across the road in the village playground.



**OPENING HOURS:** April to September

11am to 4pm

**ADMISSION FEE:** Free



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-7.200062



## HEYWOOD GARDENS & ESTATE

Nestled in south Laois, a gem of garden design awaits you. Designed by eminent architect Sir Edwin Luytens, most likely in collaboration with renowned landscaper Gertrude Jekyll, the wondrous Heywood Gardens and Estate stand still in time.

As well as being home to quirky folly pieces including a sham castle, and gothic ruins, the surrounding lakes and woodland all contribute to a surreal and mythical atmosphere. One of only three Luytens' gardens in Ireland, the centrepiece boasts a characteristic circular water feature. And along with Jekyll's soft planting, it beautifully brings this unique landscape to life.



52.884320  
-7.300514



**OPENING HOURS:** Open all year at 08:30am  
**CLOSES:** 5pm Oct-Mar, 7pm April & Sept,  
9pm May-August. **ADMISSION FEE:** Free



## DONAGHAMORE WORKHOUSE & AGRICULTURAL MUSEUM

Not far from the town of Rathdowney in southwest Laois, the stark reality of a tragic era in Ireland's past unfolds before your very eyes. The Donaghmore Workhouse and Agricultural Museum paints a vivid picture of life during and after Ireland's great potato famine in the mid 1800s.

Resilient families sought refuge in the workhouse throughout this period, and their stories of determination and courage can be felt through every wall, floor, and ceiling. From the moment you walk through the gates, you are taken back in time to what was truly a place of last resort.



**OPENING HOURS:** Mon-Fri. 11am-5pm  
Summer Weekends: 2pm-5pm  
**ADMISSION FEE:** Adult €5/€3

📍 52.877196 -7.612601

## MOUNTMELICK EMBROIDERY MUSEUM

Wander off the beaten track and find out how the Quakers left their mark on a small town in north Laois. Mountmellick Embroidery Museum invites you to travel back in time. A captivating experience is led by generous tour guides who bring to life the magical art of Mountmellick Embroidery, a specialist craft unique to the town and entirely Irish in origin and design.

Once the site of a bustling craft industry employing more than 50 ladies in the late 1800s, today it stands strong but silent as a dignified memorial to an art almost lost in time.



**OPENING HOURS:** Open all year. Mon-Fri:  
9.15am – 5.00pm. Last tour 4.15pm  
**ADMISSION FEE:** Adult €5



53.115427  
-7.329330



## YOU'RE WELCOME TO OUR OUTDOORS

By bike, foot, or on the water, Laois has a treasure trove of natural beauty waiting to be discovered. Our unspoilt environment is both a bountiful habitat for local wildlife and a scenic delight for all to enjoy. With nearly 500km of routes, including 30 looped walks all around the county, walkers and hikers are in for a treat. For cyclists and mountain-bikers, Laois is a push-bike paradise, offering everything from gentle spins to challenging trails.

Anglers, kayakers, cruisers, and more have explored our rivers, canals, and lakes for years. And remember...there'll always be car parking close by and you're never more than a few miles from a country pub with a warm welcome. No mention of our outdoors would be complete without acknowledging our wonderful golf courses.



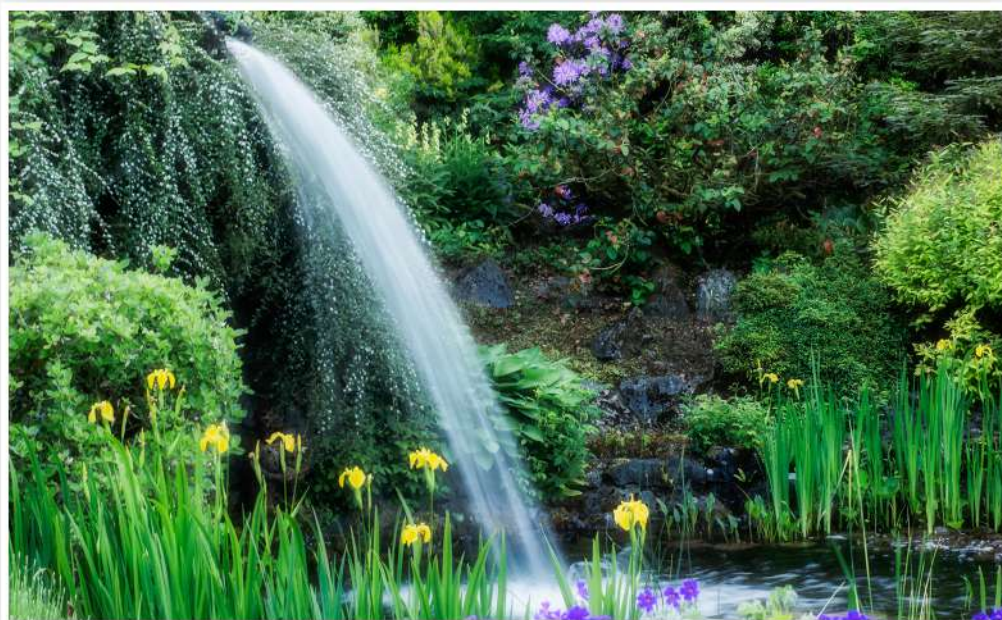
TO PLAN your activities in Laois, please  
visit [www.laoistourism.ie](http://www.laoistourism.ie)



## YOU'RE WELCOME TO OUR GARDENS

Home to a rich and fertile landscape, Laois has always been a garden-go-to destination. And today, green-fingered enthusiasts from all over the world flock to our county for unique garden tours, advice, and inspiration. Our plantation history recounts the stories of many famous garden architects of yesteryear who took advantage of our natural heritage to create visions of stunning serenity, precision, and beauty.

Attracting visitors all year round, these established works-of-art are now complemented by garden creations by some of Ireland's leading contemporary designers. Be inspired by both maestros from a golden era of garden design, and our modern landscape architects who now build a legacy for the next generation.



**FIND OUT MORE** about our beautiful gardens by visiting [www.laoistourism.ie](http://www.laoistourism.ie)



## YOU'RE WELCOME TO CELEBRATE WITH US



From ancient festivals in the Slieve Bloom Mountains to modern day merry-making, Laois has enjoyed a party more than most for thousands of years.

With over 25 festivals held throughout the county every year, you are most definitely invited to celebrate with us. And from major international music weekends to local fiestas covering everything from scarecrows and storytelling to drama and literature, you're sure to find your tribe. Come join us as we celebrate the length and breadth of the county - morning, noon, and night...

## YOU'RE WELCOME TO THE ARTS

An idyllic rural landscape has inspired local artists, musicians, and poets for generations. A vibrant arts programme lives and breathes through our three arts centres, libraries, and galleries, all hosting cultural events of all types - all year round. From internationally-acclaimed movie screenings, writers' workshops, and drama festivals, to local photography exhibits, and much more in between, artistic tastes are covered for all.

With something on every night of the week, our live music knows no limits. Artists from the worlds of traditional Irish, jazz, blues, rock, and more play and sing the night away in a choice of venues. All the while, sculptors, painters, and writers continuously showcase their work right across the county, illustrating Laois as a hive of artistic life.



**FIND OUT MORE** about our Festivals and Arts by visiting [www.laoistourism.ie](http://www.laoistourism.ie)



## YOU'RE WELCOME TO STAY

Wherever you lay your head in Laois, you're sure of a warm welcome and a great night's sleep. Fabulous hotels are on hand to give you a taste of the high life while rustic guesthouses will relax the busiest tourist in the heart of the countryside. Closer to the action, our towns and villages are packed with accommodation options of all shapes and sizes, with warm hosts ready to receive you.

One thing's for sure. The longer you hang around, the more you'll love about Laois. And even our short-term stays will tempt you into making longer-term plans...



**FIND OUT MORE** about where to stay,  
and dine, at [www.laoistourism.ie](http://www.laoistourism.ie)



## YOU'RE WELCOME TO DINE

With a bounty of wonderful fare on offer, Laois is home to so many sumptuous, locally-produced foods, loved by tourists and natives alike. Matching every budget and palate, five star dining stands shoulder-to-shoulder with award-winning gastro-pubs, cafes, and restaurants.

And thanks to some of Ireland's most fertile land, our food culture is thriving. For generations, Laois has also been home to legions of committed growers, farmers, makers, bakers, and brewers of only the finest products.

All of which are nurtured, grown, and crafted for farmers' markets, kitchen tables, and homes all over Ireland.





From guided tours to self-directed discovery, we're ready and waiting for you. And now that you've enjoyed our whistle-stop tour of Laois, why not visit [laoistourism.ie](http://laoistourism.ie) and plan your trip in a little more detail...

**FIND OUT MORE: [WWW.LAOISTOURISM.IE](http://WWW.LAOISTOURISM.IE) - Follow us on Facebook, Twitter, Instagram**



This booklet was only made possible by the generosity and commitment of the Laois Tourism Board of Management. Thank you for all your help to the wonderful photographers Kyra Fingleton, Lorraine Strang, Dominic Reddin, Michael Scully, Caragh Burns Sharma and Catherine Casey who have day jobs that don't involve cameras.



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