



**GET IN LADS,
WE'RE GOING
ON AN
ADVENTURE**

KAREN BENNETT & SHANNON THOMAS-ZIEMNIK

Cliff Notes

To be Irish is to stand as tall as the cliffs with a soul as deep as the ocean. ~ Irish Proverb

If you get the chance to visit Ireland, try to include a drive along the Wild Atlantic Way. This long coastal road that winds and stretches 1,600 miles along the west coast of Ireland provides ever-changing views of landscape; rocky cliffs, crashing waves, blowing tall grasses, and calm coves to describe a few. There are so many points of interest along the way, and many websites can help you plan your drive should you make your way there.

Karen Relates:

“When I stepped out of the van and onto the cliffside, the view took my breath away, quite literally, with the super strong winds whipping through. If you enjoy beautiful landscapes, you can relate when I say my eyes welled up just taking everything in.”

Kilkee Cliffs

To stand on the edge of the Kilkee Cliffs is not for the faint of heart or weak in the knees! And maybe this is what I found so captivating; to stand so close to the edge and feel the sea spray on my face from the crashing waves, the high winds whipping every loose tendril of hair, and watching the sun and clouds sharpening and softening the landscape, with no handrail to keep a safe distance. It is wild it is beautiful, and I took it all in, having a moment of solitude between me and the cliff's edge, not another soul in sight.

Aside from the Kilkee Cliffs being a wonderful site to visit, it is not as popular as other well-known areas along the Wild Atlantic Way. During our time there, we were the only

people around until we drove away and passed a group of locals on a hike.

If you are looking for less congested areas to visit, this is the place. Wherever you start or end when visiting the Kilkee Cliffs, be sure to visit the seaside town of Kilkee for a bite to eat and more outdoor adventure.

Shannon Relates:

“I have always liked cliffs. Growing up on Lakeshore Boulevard, the coastline of Lake Erie was my backyard. It was probably 50 steps to the edge of the world I use to think. Standing on the bluff and peering over it as a young child evoked many feelings.

Some days I would stand from a distance in our neighbor Sandy's yard. There was no barrier between us and the lake. There was soft, green grass until there wasn't.”

The Cliffs of Moher does not need advertising from me. Winner of the 2023 “Ireland's Best Visitor Attraction” award from a poll in *The Irish Dependent*, this County Clare gem deserves the praise of being one of nature's masterpieces.



With several access points of viewing, the cliffs span a 5-mile radius and stand at an impressive 702 feet. The cliffs jut out in staggered masses of earth.

They are a force to be reckoned with and seeing them in person will only confirm why so much mythology derives from this place. Tales of unrequited love and



mermaids all add to the mystery and romance this destination invites.

It is on a crisp, October day that my suspicions of being out-of-shape are confirmed when our tour guide, Philip, walks up the path to the higher views of the cliffs backwards, regaling facts without losing his breath once. Not ONCE.

Don't fret though! There are trail options set alongside stairs that lead to the cliffs most optimal views. Two roads diverged into a path and I, I took the one with stairs.

Once you ascend, it almost feels like you are in another world due to the diverse landscape and animal life that is buzzing all around. There are farmers that own parts of the Cliffs of Moher, so it is perfectly normal to see cows grazing about. You want to see sheep? They are scampering about.

You have hit middle age and finally want to lean into being an ornithophile? There are over 20 different species of seabirds.

Cliffs of Moher Visitor Experience

Want to know more about what you just looked at? The Cliffs of Moher Visitor Experience is a state-of-the-art center that provides interactive exhibits, a virtual reality experience, and educational displays about the cliffs' geology, flora, fauna, and history.

Nature enthusiasts will marvel at the cliff's UNESCO Global Geopark Status. UNESCO stands for United Nations Educational, Scientific and

Cultural Organization. UNESCO was created after World War II with the goal to develop peace through international cooperation in [education](#), the sciences and culture.

The Cliffs of Moher showcase an extraordinary geological history that dates back over 300 million years. The layers of sedimentary rock visible in the cliffs, including shale, sandstone, and siltstone, tell the story of ancient environments. This geological diversity makes the cliffs an invaluable site for studying Earth's history.

I break away from the group to find a place of my own. The Atlantic sparkles and the soft, green grass blows in the wind like feathers. Wordsworth was right—“Nature never did betray the heart that loved her.”

Karen Bennett and Shannon Thomas-Ziemnik are two old friends who share a passion for all things Irish. You can find them at PJ's on Tuesday nights with a Jameson and ginger in hand attending the Speak Irish Cleveland class. As far as their column-writing abilities, this is, in fact, their first rodeo. They can be reached at kziirish@gmail.com.

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