

Listings



Accommodation

Belfast Welcome Centre
Whatever kind of accommodation you are after, you should make your first port of call the one-stop visitor information centre, the Belfast Welcome Centre at 47 Donegall Place (tel: 028 9024 6609 or visit www.gotobelfast.com). They can advise and book on your behalf.

Hotel Tips
Check online for special offers, such as weekend rates and combined dinner and room rates (most hotels have their own websites). Unlike many other countries, hotels in Northern Ireland do include breakfast in their rates. Many hotels cater to the budget market. Belfast's famous bed and breakfasts offer a friendly and modestly priced alternative to hotels and all the facilities you need. Belfast also has several modern, well-equipped hostels, largely around the city centre and Queen's Quarter, where you can stay for a small fee in a dormitory room (they have single and double rooms too). The Queen's University and Stranmillis University College student complex offers great value accommodation during the summer (enquire at the Belfast Welcome Centre) and self-catering options are also worth exploring.

Tours

There are many great value tours of Belfast, ranging from bus and boat, to foot and black taxi. For a full list and more information on all tours contact the Belfast Welcome Centre, 47 Donegall Square (tel: 028 9024 6609 or visit www.gotobelfast.com). Here is just a small selection:

Behind the Scenes Tours

Get beneath the skin of some of Belfast's most iconic buildings (or free or very little), such as St Anne's Cathedral, the Grand Opera House, Belfast Waterfront Hall and the Linen Hall Library.

Literary Walking Tours

Discover locations and writers associated with Belfast's thriving literary scene, past and present, ending with a free pint of Guinness at the Kitchen Bar, all for just £5, every Monday evening at 5pm.

Historical Pub Tours

Leaving on Thursday at 7pm and Saturday at 4pm from the Crown Dining Room, upstairs from the famous Crown Liquor Saloon in Great Victoria Street, this is the best introduction to Belfast's atmospheric traditional pubs you could want. The two-hour tour takes in at least six pubs. There is a £1 reduction per person for groups of 12 or more. Groups can also arrange specially tailored tours at other times too, subject to availability. Call 028 9268 3665 or visit www.belfastpubtours.com for more information. Tours are from May to October inclusive.

Walking Tours

Easy-to-follow self-guided tour brochures of the Queen's Quarter, Gaeltacht Quarter and Cathedral Quarter are available at the Belfast Welcome Centre. You can also enjoy expert guided tours of Historic Belfast, which take you from the 17th century to the present day, and the Blackstaff Way tour of Belfast's historic locations.

Paddywagon Tours

Run by the owners of the Belfast Palace Hostel, these excellent value three and six-day tours of Ireland leave from Belfast, and stay at hostels throughout Ireland. They also organise tours of Belfast. Call Belfast (Paddy's) Palace Hostel on 028 9033 3367 or visit www.paddywagonstours.com.

Belfast Safari

A not-for-profit organisation, Belfast Safaris was set up to give visitors a unique insight into local Belfast communities. For instance, their Meet the People tour includes a chance to chat with locals about life in Belfast. You can also follow in the footsteps of Belfast Boy George Best, track Belfast's famous maritime history and much more. Call 028 9031 0610 or visit www.belfastsafaris.com for details.

Political Tours

Explore the political history of west Belfast on tours led by Republican ex-prisoners. If booked ahead large group tours and tours of the Shankill area by Loyalist ex-prisoners can be arranged. Pre-booking essential for all tours. Contact Coiste (10 Beechmount Avenue, tel: 028 9020 0770. Web: www.coiste.ie/politicaltours) for details.

Student Tips

When you want to find out the best places to go with the least expensive prices, ask a student. That's what we did. So here are some suggestions from students at Queen's University.

Theatre

Old Museum Arts Centre (OMAC)
7 College Square North, tel: 028 9023 3332. www.oldmuseumartscentre.org. Cutting-edge drama, comedy and arts-related events that won't cost a fortune.

Whiterock Theatre
Whiterock Road, tel: 028 9020 2222
The home of Dubbeljoint, the theatre company that spawned Stones in his Pockets and which helped pioneer Belfast's famous community theatre.

Music

An Culterlann McAdam Ó Fiaich
216 Falls Road, tel: 028 9096 4180. Web: www.culterlann.com. Great traditional Irish music sessions on Friday evenings and Saturday lunchtimes take place in the café/restaurant here.

Auntie Annie's Porterhouse
44 Dublin Road, tel: 028 9032 5968. Web: www.the-limelight.co.uk. Often has free acoustic music in the downstairs bar. Good value local and visiting rock bands too.

Black Box
18 22 Hill St, tel: 028 9024 4400. Web: www.blackboxbelfast.com
This dedicated performance space in the Cathedral Quarter presents all kinds of live music plus comedy, drama and more at prices that won't break the bank.

Errigle Inn
312 320 Ormeau Road, tel: 028 9064 1410. Web: www.errigle.com
This multi-faceted pub is home to the Real Music Club, one of the most important promoters of acoustic music in Northern Ireland, having worked with everyone from Roger McGuinn and Steve Earle to Janis Ian. A great place to see local talent too. Check out their website on www.realmusicclub.com

The Front Page
110 Donegall Street, tel: 028 9032 4924. Web: www.thefrontpagebar.com. A hub of alternative music and homegrown talent.

Katy Dallys
17 Ormeau Avenue, tel: 028 9032 5968. Web: www.the-limelight.co.uk. Free live music and good cheap pub grub at lunchtime.

Kelly's Cellars
30-32 Bank St, tel: 028 9024 6058. Web: www.kellyscellars.com
There are free Irish traditional sessions each day of the week except Mondays at the oldest continually run pub in Belfast. Sessions start at 9.30pm weekdays and between 5pm and 6pm weekends.

The Limelight
17 Ormeau Avenue, tel: 028 9032 5942. Web: www.the-limelight.co.uk
One of Belfast's top venues for upcoming bands, the Limelight has hosted Oasis and the Manic Street Preachers in the past and has good value club nights. Connected to it is the popular Spring and Airbrake which features quality acts covering everything from rock to acoustic.

John Hewitt
51 Donegall Street, tel: 028 9023 3768. Web: www.thejohnhewitt.com. Mostly free live music, including jazz, folk, traditional and blues, six nights a week.

Lavery's Gin Palace
Bradbury Place, tel: 028 9087 1106. Web: www.laverysbelfast.com. Punk, indie and dance nights.

Maddens Bar
74 Berry Street, tel: 028 9024 4114. Famous for Irish music session downstairs on Monday, Tuesday and Saturday nights and upstairs on Friday evenings.

M-Club
23 Bradbury Place, tel: 028 9023 3131. Web: www.mclub.co.uk. You can join the biggest party in Belfast either at dance nights or their Groovetrain 70s tribute night. Free admission for over-18s.

Milk
10 14 Tomb Street, tel: 028 9027 8876. Web: www.clubmilk.com. Admission can be as little as £5 for nights of R&B, Hip Hop, Funky House and more at one of Belfast's top dance clubs.

Mynt

2-16 Dunbar Street, tel: 028 9023 4520. Web: www.myntbelfast.com. Award-winning gay bar has packed club nights with free admission for early arrivals.

Queen's University Students Union Building

79 University Road, tel: 028 9097 1062. Web: www.qubsu-ents.com. Queen's University is itself a great source of low-cost entertainment. Their famous Shine Dance Club is on the first Saturday of the month in their Student Union building. There are free or inexpensive nights at the two bars right through the week, including DJ sounds, quizzes, live music and top comedy.

Rosetta

73 Rosetta Rd, tel: 028 9064 9297
Acoustic music and rock downstairs in the pleasant public bar of this south Belfast pub with tribute and Goth bands in the purpose-built music venue upstairs.

Rotterdam Bar

52-54 Pilot St, tel: 028 9074 6021. Web: www.rotterdambar.com
A live music bar of the year, this historic pub presents fabulous free sessions of all kinds of music, including blues and Irish traditional music.

Stiff Kitten

1 Bankmore Square, off Dublin Road, tel: 028 9023 8700. Web: www.thestiffkitten.com. Free DJ's at their bar at this popular bar/nightclub.

Markets

St George's Market

May Street and Oxford Street, tel: 028 9043 5704
There are great bargains at the Friday Variety Market (6am - 1pm) at the historic St George's Market, near the waterfront, with over 200 stalls selling books, clothes, antiques, bric-a-brac etc as well as various foods. Get there early for bargains! The award-winning St George's Market has many stalls selling superb locally produced food, including cheeses, organic meats and fish and seafood, at reasonable prices at the Friday Variety Market (6am to 1pm) and Saturday Food and Garden Market (9am to 3pm).

Smithfield Market

West Street and Winetavern Street, tel: 028 9032 3248
Opposite CastleCourt shopping centre, this covered market contains many fascinating and good value shops.

Book Shops

Bookenders Café

47 University Road, tel: 028 9032 8269
Down the road from Queen's this atmospheric second hand bookshop/café has a good choice of Irish interest books (as well as poetry readings on the last Friday in the month). Good hearty homemade food as well.

Harry Hall's Bookshop

39 Gresham Street, tel: 028 9043 8474
Northern Ireland's most famous second hand bookshop has a great range of books.

No Alibis

83 Botanic Avenue, tel: 028 9031 9607. Web: www.noalibis.com
A favourite of local authors such as Colin Bateman, Northern Ireland's only specialist crime bookshop hosts loads of special events, including book signings, readings and jazz and folk performances.

Belfast Literary Guide

From CS Lewis and Anthony Trollope to Seamus Heaney and Samuel Beckett, Belfast has connections to many great writers, poets and playwrights. Literary Belfast, available free from the Belfast Welcome Centre, is the definitive guide to Belfast's fascinating literary landscape.

Record Shops

Backbeat

Haymarket Arcade, off Royal Avenue, tel: 028 9033 3131
A centre for alternative, indie and dance music, Backbeat sell second hand records, while many local bands release records through them.

Hector's House

5 North St, tel: 028 9023 4040
Rare and collectible records. Good for roots music.

Phoenix Records

Royal Avenue, tel: 028 9023 9308
Run by the legendary Terri Hooley (founder of the Undertones), this has everything from country to punk.

Clothes

Fresh Garbage

24 Rosemary Street, tel: 028 9024 2350
A Mecca for Goths, hippies, punks and other with all kinds of well-priced alternative clothes, posters, T-shirts and jewellery.

Liberty Blue

19-21 Lombard Street, tel: 028 9043 7745
Funky and affordable independent boutique with great range of dresses. Some vintage clothes and jewellery too.

Oxfam Fair Trade Shop

16, Rosemary Street, tel: 028 9024 7168
Ethical shopping on a budget with great gift ideas.

Rusty Zip

28 Botanic Ave, tel: 9024 9700
A great place to find unusual clothes, with lots of second hand retro clothes and an emphasis on 70s fashion.

Tip

Lot of High Street shops offer student discounts, usually 10 per cent, if you present a valid student card.

Food

Student areas, such as Botanic Avenue and Bradbury Place, are filled with good value restaurants. Try Maggie Mays for filling meals at under a quid, the famous Ulster Fry at The Other Place (before 11am) and Belfast's best, and most famous, traditional fish and chips, Longs in the city centre. The Bonatee Bar in the Queen's Student's Union Building has good value food, such as pizzas. There are authentic Chinese restaurants in Donegall Pass too. Belfast's bakeries are famous for delicious, filling buns, Belfast Baps, soda, potato bread and wheaten breads and much more.

Internet access

Revelations (tel: 028 9032 0337. Web: www.revelations.co.uk) in Shaftesbury Square are good value. Great milkshakes too! Other internet cafés include Surf City Café, 207 Woodstock Rd. tel: 028 9046 1717 and No Geeks, CastleCourt Shopping Centre, Royal Avenue, tel: 028 9031 9607. You can also surf at the Belfast Welcome Centre, the one-stop visitor information centre at 47 Donegall Place, across from City Hall.

Festivals

Belfast has a packed calendar of cultural events and festivals throughout the year, most of which are free to the public. Here is just a small selection. Check the Belfast Welcome Centre at 47 Donegall Place, tel: 028 9024 6609, or visit www.gotobelfast.com for up-to-date information.

January

Out to Lunch

A recent addition, this offshoot of the acclaimed Cathedral Quarter Arts Festival, offers superb theatre, comedy, music and talks with lunch for just a very irresistible.

February

The Belfast Nashville Songwriters Festival

Belfast celebrates the art of songwriting with a series of superb concerts from top American and Irish artists at reasonable prices plus fascinating free talks.

March

St Patrick's Day Carnival

Celebrate Ireland's patron saint with a colourful carnival winding through the streets of Belfast, ending with free live music at Custom House Square.

April

Titanic Made in Belfast

The world's biggest and best Titanic Festival brings exhibitions, tours, film shows, talks and more to the city where the world's most famous ship was designed, built and launched. Most events are free. Belfast Ulster Scots Festival
A celebration of the unique Ulster Scots culture that has been so influential in Northern Irish life includes dance, music, history, literature, food and song at venues throughout Belfast.

April/May

The Cathedral Quarter Arts Festival

Out to Lunch's big brother has the next alternative arts performers in the world at venues around Belfast's cultural heartland. All events are reasonably priced, some free.

May

The Lord Mayor's Parade

A free carnival procession through the city celebrates the end of the Lord Mayor's term.

June

Belfast Maritime Festival

A chance to see some of the world's most spectacular tall ships and enjoy some great events down by the docks.

June/July

Opera in the Gardens

Enjoy world-class opera and live music for free at the lovely Botanic Gardens.

July

Orangefest

There are street entertainers, kids' events, dancing and drumming displays and lots more to accompany the largest Orange Order parade in Northern Ireland through the city on July 12th. Ends at Barnett Demesne in south Belfast.

August

Fóile an Phobail (West Belfast Festival)

Many reasonably priced, and some free, events from drama and comedy to international food fairs and political discussions at Europe's largest community-led festival.

September

Proms in the Park

Tickets for this popular relay of the BBC Proms plus live music are free but book as early as you can.

Open House

Fantastic roots music from the US and Ireland at venues throughout the Cathedral Quarter. Some free, all good value. Talks and workshops too.

October/November

Belfast Festival at Queen's

There are lots of fascinating events which won't cost the earth at venues throughout Belfast at one of Europe's biggest arts festivals.

December

Christmas

The festive season comes to Belfast with carol singing, lantern processions, the traditional switching on of the Christmas lights by a visiting celebrity and much more.

CS Lewis Festival

The author of the Chronicles of Narnia, CS Lewis, was born and brought up in east Belfast and this popular festival celebrates his work with tours, workshops, screenings and much more.

New Year's Eve

The Belfast year ends with a spectacular free outdoor concert.

There are a multitude of attractions in Belfast which are free or very reasonable, from groundbreaking arts centres and museums to atmospheric buildings that radiate history and even castles with spectacular hilltop locations. They are also easy to get to, many, especially in the city centre, are accessible by foot, others are just a short bus ride away. You should also check the various Quarter guides which are available at the Belfast Welcome Centre.

In 2007 the prestigious Lonely Planet travel guide listed Belfast as one of its top ten Cities on the Rise. Hundreds of thousands of people are now taking advantage of the many low-cost direct flights to Belfast from the UK, Europe and even the US and Canada. When they get here they find a city transformed by millions of pounds of investment in visitor attractions, clubs, pubs, restaurants and hotels. They find something else too. A city where you don't need to break the budget to have the time of your life.

A true People's City, Belfast grew quickly, from an oversized village in the 18th century to a thriving city of 450,000 by the time RMS Titanic was launched in 1911. In that time, it had become one of the world's leading ports, one of its greatest shipbuilders and was famous for its linen, tobacco and rope-making industries. Much of Belfast's most impressive architecture dates from these vibrant Victorian and Edwardian eras. The ready wit and warmth for which Belfast people are famous is one of the city's most distinct features and a great attraction for visitors today.

Welcome to Belfast

This guide will help you enjoy Belfast to the utmost without stretching your budget, whether it's getting around, finding good value accommodation, sightseeing, enjoying our thriving arts, cultural and entertainment scenes, shopping, eating or drinking.

We hope this guide will add to your enjoyment of Belfast.



Belfast Welcome Centre

For up to the minute information or to book your accommodation online, visit our website on www.gotobelfast.com or call the Belfast Welcome Centre on +44(0)28 9024 6609. Here you will find great offers on all types of accommodation, travel, transport and restaurants.

This guide is one of a series of publications produced by the Tourism Development Unit at Belfast City Council to detail the best of Belfast's cultural, entertainment and tourist pursuits. For more information visit:

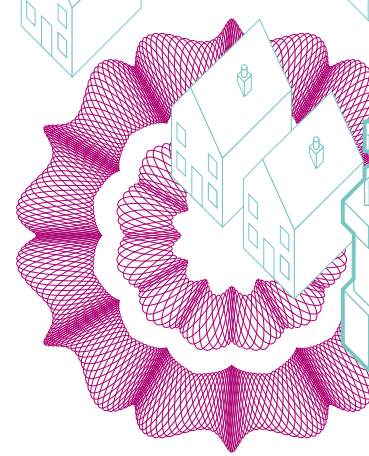
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