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# Five Ways to Visit Ireland Like the Queen of England or President of the United States

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There may be no bagpipes, parades, bands and cheering crowds upon your arrival, but even mere mortals can get treatment like royals on the Emerald Isle:

### Where to Stay:

1. [Dromoland Castle](#) in Newmarket-on-Fergus in County Clare, was originally home to the O'Brien clan, one of a few Gaelic royal families, direct descendants of Brian Boromhe, High King of Ireland in the 11th century. Today, the 5 Star 410-acre resort hosts American "royalty" like presidents Bill Clinton and George W. Bush, rock royalty U2's Bono and Hollywood royalty, John Travolta. With handsome turrets and fascinating rabbit-warren corridors, the castle features 99 enormous rooms and suites, each individually decorated, and a plethora of outdoor activities including an award-winning parkland golf course, falconry, clay shooting, archery and tennis.
2. [Castlemartyr](#) in East Cork is a manor home located near the ruins of an 800-year old castle, once home to the Knights Templar (think Dan Brown's "DaVinci Code"). A new contemporary wing with a spa and indoor pool makes Castlemartyr a perfect year-round location. With a champion inland links-style golf course, fly fishing, archery, laser clay shooting and pony and trap outings, the resort is especially appealing for families.
3. Romantic Knappoque Castle, better known as [The K Club](#) in Straffan, County Kildare, is Ireland's first AA Red Star Property. Set on 550-acres of parkland on a mile-long private stretch of River Liffrey, the restored 19th Century Georgian mansion estate was modeled after a French chateau. It is home to two championship golf courses, including the Palmer Course, a venue for the 2006 Ryder Cup and the K Club Spa. Spectacular gardens and outdoor activities that include fishing, clay target shooting and horseback riding, make it a hotel fit for royalty. Added bonus: a collection of Irish Master paintings and antiques dating from the 16th century to the present, including those of Ireland's greatest painter, Jack B. Yeats, brother of famed poet William Butler Yeats.
4. The 5 Star [Fitzwilliam](#) in Dublin is located in the heart of the city across from the tranquil St. Stephen's Green and Grafton Street, the city's finest shopping area. It's an easy stroll to the cities leading cultural, historical and leisure attractions and near fine dining and lively cafes.
5. **Old Head** of Kinsale, a dramatic slice of Ireland that protrudes over two miles into the Atlantic Ocean, offers luxurious rooms and an unmatched golfing experience. The clubhouse features 15 posh suites, along with a spa, fitness suite and beauty treatment rooms. Golf royalty like Tiger Woods who call Old Head their home away from home, chose the ultra-lux Presidential Suite with a separate living room, master bedroom and dressing room. The five star de Courcey Restaurant provides dining par excellence and spectacular views.

### What to do:

1. Take a driving or walking tour through [The Burren](#), a remarkable 100-mile limestone plateau resembling a moonscape that seems incongruous on this lush Emerald Isle. Unspoiled since the Ice Age, The Burren is the largest area of karstic limestone in Western Europe and home to many unusual rare plants. So tempting are examples that botanists have to keep reminding themselves to "take nothing and leave only footprints behind." Like Stonehenge, megalithic tombs offer proof positive of human habitation dating back 6,000 years.
2. Continue to the [Cliffs of Moher](#) that soar 1,220 feet above the sea and stretch more than 12 miles. So spectacular, the cliffs are Ireland's nominee as one of the new Seven Wonders of the World. Breathtakingly beautiful, the vertical cliffs are home to Ireland's largest seabird colony - some 30,000 pairs -- including many protected species. Dolphins and seals also cavort nearby, seen best from O'Brien's Tower, built in 1835 so visitors could get a bird's eye view of the Cliffs and surrounds.

3. Don't miss the [Irish National Stud](#) and Japanese Gardens in Kildare where the country's most outstanding stallions await their fillies-fair in the hope that world class thoroughbreds will come of the unions. Originally known as the British National Stud Company, it was famous for its success in breeding racing winners. In 1915, the property was given to the British Crown, then handed over to the Irish government in 1945. The adjacent Japanese Gardens provide a sanctuary for all who come, fed by water from Tully Lake, said to be high in calcium-carbonite, which is as healthy for horses as it is for plants.

4. The managers may not close the 250-year old [Guinness Storehouse](#) for you as they do for the Queen and Presidents, but you can watch the brewing process and even learn how to pour the perfect glass (yes, it is an art). One of the highlights is a free pint atop the mammoth structure while enjoying a 365-degree view of Dublin.

5. No trip to Ireland is complete without marveling at The Book of Kells at Trinity College in Dublin, regarded as Ireland's finest national treasure. This magnificently illustrated manuscript was created by Celtic monks (c. 800) and contains the four Gospels of the New Testament.

#### Where to dine:

1. Dromoland Castle's Earl of Thomond Restaurant presided over by Chef David McCann.
2. [Pat Shortt's](#) pub near Castlemartyr for typical Irish fare and entertainment provided by an impromptu group of talented musicians who show up nightly.
3. [Gregans Castle](#) (a charming inn) in Ballyvaughan, County Clare in the heart of the Burren and just 20-minutes from the Cliffs of Moher.
4. K Club's River Room with fare masterfully created by Chef Finbar Higgin.
5. [The Cliff House Townhouse](#) on St. Stephens Green in Dublin.

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