Do you like food?

Do you know that when you visit the Ards Peninsula you can also enjoy a great food experience?

One of the most fertile areas in the country, providing healthy fresh produce to our many local cafes, restaurants and hotels. Freshly-caught fish from Portavogie, meat reared and supplied by local butchers, and locally-grown vegetables from our rolling fertile fields: just some of the food awaiting you on the Ards Peninsula. The Best Restaurant 2016, and Best Seafood Restaurant 2016 are both located on the Ards Peninsula.

We also have a wide variety of cafes, restaurants and pubs in the villages, you are never far from an excellent snack, lunch or evening meal. Among the wide range of locally produced food available on the peninsula, you can enjoy award-winning ice cream, chutneys and preserves, cheese, and deliciously aromatic honey from local beehives.

The Ards Peninsula is also home to an award-winning distillery and a brewery; so if you are looking for a special tipple, you can savour a local beer, or take pleasure in an excellent whiskey, gin or poitín at the local distillery.

History Buffs

Retrace the steps of Bronze Age settlers, St Patrick, Normans, Vikings, and Early Ulster Scots planters.

There are Historic Houses, Tower Houses, Windmills, Castles, Abbeys, Churches, Holy Wells, and not forgetting the jewel of National Trust properties at Mount Stewart, and Kearney Village, all just waiting for you to explore.
Experience the breathtaking views and captivating scenery of award-winning sandy beaches; enjoy a rich heritage dating back to Neolithic times, with striking buildings and ruins; revel in the fabulous flora and fauna of this unique micro-climate created by the surrounding North Channel, Irish Sea and Strangford Lough.

Visit the recently restored Ballycopeland Windmill near Millisle with its unique Hooper Roller Reeling System – the only surviving member of the famous Auden Group of poets of the 1930s.

In Greyabbey, take a walk back in time in the 12th century Abbey ruins; discover how monks and medieval man produced herbal medicines; follow the heritage trail and browse the eclectic selection of antique and gift shops; enjoy a wide choice of refreshments in the heart of this historic village.

Overlooked by a 17th century castle, Cloughhey is a seaside village geared up to relaxation and recreation. Its award-winning beach and bay are popular for strolls through extensive sand dunes and water sports and family fun. For the more energetic there are two scenic golf courses and tennis courts.

Portavogie has a wealth of fishing history and two outstanding beaches with enchanting little coves and bays to explore. East Shore has a wonderful promenade with magnificent views to Isle of Man and Scotland. Portavogie’s South Shore enjoys commanding views to Kilwarlin Lighthouse, Green Isle and Strangford Lough. West Shore has a wonderful promenade and a wide choice of refreshments.

Visit picturesque Portaferry with its rich maritime heritage. Explore the fish, otters and seals at Exploris Aquarium; enjoy a concert at Portico Heritage Centre, or stroll up Windmill Hill and reward yourself with the breathtaking panoramic views over Strangford Lough. A regular ferry service provides a southern gateway to the peninsula.

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Explore Northern Ireland’s most easterly coastline, including Burr Point. Travel along the Ards Peninsula following the North Channel, Irish Sea and Strangford Lough coastlines through the charming villages of Millisle, Carrowdore, Greyabbey, Kirkcubbin, Portaferry, Cloughhey, Portavogie, Ballyhalbert and Ballywalter.

Carrowdore is a small village with excellent amenities set in the historic barony of Ards. Lower. It has a magnificent privately owned 18th century castle at the end of the main street; while the beautifully peaceful grayward of Christ Church is the final resting place of poet and playwright Louis MacNiece, a member of the famous Auden Group of poets of the 1930s.

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Create your own itinerary on this Creative Peninsula

Located less than 15 miles from central Belfast, with over 50 miles of coastal road and a wide range of activities available, it is not surprising that the Ards Peninsula has long been a popular playground and holiday destination. There are a wide variety of activities to suit all ages of visitors.

Culture

The Ards Peninsula has a rich culture of creative arts, thanks to its high concentration of local artisans and craft people, inspired by the natural beauty of the area. The Creative Peninsula Festival held every August showcases many of these talents. The area boasts a rich blend of literature and music, largely inspired by its history and the unique cultural mix of its people; the Ulster Scots influence is particularly evident on the Ards Peninsula. Numerous seasonal community festivals are held across the Ards Peninsula, particularly in the summer months.

Activities

Get on the water - There are plenty of access points for power boats, jet skis, dinghies, water skiers, kite surfers, rowers, and canoists; there are outstanding canoe trails right around the Ards Peninsula, and three sailing clubs and a marina.

Beaches - The string of glorious award-winning sandy beaches allow endless opportunities for traditional family seaside fun and recreation.

Walking - Coastal paths with stunning views allow walkers to access wild beaches and explore unspoilt natural environments.

Nature Watching - All around the Ards Peninsula there are exceptional opportunities to observe a wide range of wildlife. The area is designated an Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty and an Area of Special Scientific Interest.

Cycling - Increasingly popular with cyclists for touring and racing, the National Cycle Route 99 runs the full length of the Ards peninsula.

Golf - There are two popular golf courses in the Cloughhey area.

And more... Sea fishing, trout fishing, horse riding, tennis, bowls, motor racing at Kirkistown, shooting, field sports and opportunities for pleasure flights from Ards Flying Club.