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FRIDAY, JANUARY 24, 2014 ■ SECTION 2

ICING ON THE CAKE



■ Walking tours and
sumptuous treats a
couple's recipe for success

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Couple walk the walk as venture hits the heights

Judy Murphy meets a creative couple who delved into their family histories to produce a novel business model

Johanna and Kasia Connolly have created the perfect recipe for success in their farmhouse a few miles south of Keshvara in the beautiful Burren landscape. John offers walking tours of the hilly family farm which leave visitors feeling virtuous, pink cheeked and very well informed about this unique karst landscape - and once that emotion is out of the way, people can return to the soft-spoken Connolly home-stead for some of Kasha's home-made cakes or chocolates.

It's a long way from the South of Poland to the West coast of Ireland, but Kasha felt at home in the Burren the minute she set foot there.

"She initially moved to Ireland in 2007, working as account manager with a corporate company in Dublin. Her intention was to stay for a while, then travel around the world. Her sister lives in London and Kasha planned to visit her and then go to Australia.

But before doing that, she decided to explore Ireland - and plans changed! She was on a trip to the Cliffs of Moher three years ago when the group detoured and took in one of John's walks. In the early 2000s, he had returned to Ireland after several years abroad. Rather than wait for someone else to employ him, he did a degree in heritage studies at CMPT and established Burren Wild Walks, offering tours of the 150-acre farm which is run by his parents, as well as the broader Burren area.

Kasha was smitten.

"I fell in love with the landscape and the Burren - everything was magical," she recalls.

She didn't fall for her own guide instantly, but she liked him.

"I thought he was lovely," she says with a laugh. "I sent him photos from the walk and then we got talking."

It took just a few months for them to re-evaluate their relationship was serious enough for her to move to Keshvara, where the couple now live, commencing to the family farm in Oughmamma, Belfahara, every day.

"This is his grandparents', Mico's and Aggie's home, and John and his brother were always here when they were young," Kasha says, sitting beside the stove in the

old farmhouse. "Then he started using it for tours. People never got into someone's home as part of a tour, so it was different. People are more participants than spectators."

The walls of the house are covered in photos, including one of his mother's cousin, the film star Gregory Peck, John and his siblings also feature, as do his grandparents and parents, and there are lovely scenic photos as well as some from Kasha's new cookbook, *Wild Burren Baker*.

This book was partly her response to moving West, she says.

"In the beginning the transition was all very exciting. There were people around, lots of tourists and there was always something happening."

But after the initial excitement cooled, she missed elements of her old life and realised she would have to find a job that would keep her busy and happy. There had been a move towards home cooking and baking in Ireland in recent times, she says, and she realised she could be part of that.

Kasha's grandfather had been a baker who ran his own small business back in Poland. Although he died before she was born, she knew all about him through family lore. His daughter, Kasha's mother, Rozena, was also a brilliant baker and she, in turn, taught her daughter.

"I realised I could do this, combining the Irish ways and the Polish ways of baking," explains Kasha.

For instance, when it comes to making fruit cake, the Irish traditionally soak the raisins in whiskey. However, her mother used to soak fruit in home-made orange liqueur.

So when Kasha makes a fruit cake she follows the Irish recipe, except there'll be an orange liqueur twist. Similarly, with fruit tarts she'll add a Polish touch to create something unique. Likewise with brownies - there's no tradition of making brownies in Poland, she explains, so she combines elements of a chocolate recipe from home with a more usual Irish one.

Not only are Kasha's cakes unusual, they are also really good and on a sunny Saturday morning some 50 visitors demolished a full selection following their hill walk on John's family farm. These people had



Kasha and John Connolly: "We are focusing on food that can be made here," they say, adding that that



The Burren Walking Centre.

available, handy items for the stonewallers' ground. The sun was shining and the views across Corcomroe Abbey to Galway Bay were picture perfect. With no wind, it was a pet day and John and fellow tour guide, Darragh - his cousin - reminded participants that they were really lucky. But even



they are constantly "plotting and planning". PHOTO: JOE O'SHEA/NEWSBY

on wet days, the walks are held - a deal with clothing company Holly Hansen means there is protective gear for everybody.

Walkers get a chance to meet the family's pet, Billy, as well as to see John's father at work feeding cattle in the slatted fields. Other animals were out in the fields, which were remarkably dry given the recent storms. John and Darragh informed people about the unique landscape and farming patterns locally and it's obvious they know and love the area well.

Back at 'Granma's House' Kasha was at the ready with cakes, coffee, tea and Irish coffee. While people enjoyed the cakes, which included a raspberry gâteau meringue, baked cheesecake and a variation on chocolate brownies, Darragh sang a verse of a local sean-nós song. It could have been twice, but it wasn't.

Kasha's cookbook, *Burren Wild Baker*, published just before Christmas, is displayed throughout the house and features a broad selection of her recipes.

It came about because visitors continually asked her for recipes which she would email to them. In addition, John was constantly encouraging her to fill her notes in a folder so that she wouldn't lose them. So she had some collected. After her mother, Rozena passed away over a year ago Kasha

embarked on the project. It helped her feel closer to her mother and also helped her deal with the grief, she says.

Burren Wild Baker is gorgeously produced, with professional photographs which are quirky to say the least and which highlight the local landscape.

"I realised the book to be about the Burren as well as being a cookbook. It follows the cycle of the year, with four sections containing information about what each season entails locally.

"I took my armchair up the mountain and created a fairytale photo section," she says with a laugh. "I really wanted it to be different and I refused to pose with a cake in front of me. I wanted to show the Burren."

Some of the recipes are ideal for families while others are more difficult, but people can contact her for advice and she is always willing to help.

Kasha and John aren't resting on their laurels and are continuing to develop their livelihood.

In a new timber building to the rear of the house, with a grass roof - the first in the area to hundreds of years - they have a purpose-built kitchen where Kasha is opening a chocolate-making business, Hazel Mountain

Recipe to make you drool from the pages of Burren Wild Baker

Rum & Raisin Baked Cheesecake

Ingredients
For the base:
40 g dark chocolate (70% cocoa)
75 g butter
60 g dark raisins
75 g dark macerated sugar
1 medium egg
20 g plain flour
1/2 teaspoon baking powder

For the filling
50 g salt butter
70 ml dark rum
30 ml hot water
Note: soak the salt butter, rum and water together - at least 30 minutes
250 g mascarpone cheese
250 g cream cheese
400 ml sweetened condensed milk, chilled
3 medium eggs

For the topping
150 g white chocolate
70 ml fresh cream
2 tablespoons rum
100 ml heavy cream
fluid (from soaked salt butter)

You will need 23 cm springform, base lined with baking paper. Preheat the oven to 160°C.

METHOD

Base

Melt butter and chocolate together on a

very low heat, then take off the heat and stir vigorously until smooth. In a separate bowl cream the egg and macerated sugar together until light and fluffy. Then add flour and baking powder and fold in the melted chocolate.

Press the mixture onto the cooled buttered base. Loosely cover with kitchen foil to prevent browning.

Fill the case temperature to 100°C. With an electric mixer combine the cream for a few minutes, reduce the speed and gradually add sweetened milk, mixing well after each addition.

Add in the egg one at a time. Stir in the drained salt butter (retain the rum fluid).

Pour the mixture onto the cooled baked base. Loosely cover with kitchen foil to prevent browning.

Bake in the oven with the oven door open for 35 minutes. Remove and allow to cool.

Topping

Melt the white chocolate with cream on a very low heat. When the chocolate softens remove from the heat and stir continuously until the chocolate has melted, add rum fluid, stir well, remove.

To serve

Place topping over cool cheesecake, and decorate with whipped cream.



Kasha Connolly displays some of her cakes and chocolates.

Chocolates. She has done several chocolate courses in Belgium in Ireland and is looking forward to getting things up and running.

"There's a shop attached to the kitchen, where a glass window allows people to see Kasha at work. She intends to incorporate ingredients such as hazelnuts and juniper berries into the chocolates, maximising local resources.

"The chocolate moulds feature a mountain goat in honor of their popular pet, Billy."

Kasha and John will get Hazel Mountain Chocolates off the ground, but down the line, they envisage having to employ someone.

"We are focusing on food that can be made here," they say, adding that that they are constantly "plotting and planning".

As their business to far shows they are able to bring those plans to fruition. They are a hard-working, smart pair, who are

lovely and gradually welcoming to visitors.

"We get lots of tourists so you are talking to people from all over the world every day, and that's very exciting," says Kasha.

"I love this house and I'm glad it's being used. And when John mentions his grand parents to tourists, it means it's all being kept alive."

John's morning walks kick off at 10.50am and cost €10 a head. That takes place every day, whatever the weather and everybody is welcome. The afternoon walk is more strenuous and must be pre-booked.

On the baking front, they are part of the Burren Food Trail established by the Burren & Cliffs of Moher Geopark and the Burren Ecotourism Network, while Kasha's book, *Burren Wild Baker* is available online, at Avoca shops and the Cliffs of Moher Visitor Centre as well as Kivvara Pharmacy.

More information at www.wildbaker.com



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Friday, July 18th, 2014

The Burren: taste beauty and the feast

For centuries, people have flocked to see the stark beauty of the Burren on the Emerald Isle's western edge, a landscape so unique that the Burren and Cliffs of Moher have UNESCO Global Geopark status.

Now twenty-first century visitors are being encouraged to do more than just sightsee – by taking part in the Burren Food Trail and Weekly Food Series, whose motto is 'Don't just visit the Burren – taste it!' The Burren Food Trail is an opportunity to uncover the secrets behind the region's superb, award-winning artisan food products.

The trail features 23 establishments and producers including growers, restaurants, cafés, pubs, farmers' markets, cheese makers, chocolatiers, bakers and ice-cream makers.

But the Burren Food Trail is more than just a listing of quality food establishments and producers in the region, it is opportunity to meet and engage with the people who grow, rear and prepare some of the area's most savoured food. Each member of the trail has created a signature dish using traditional local produce. Follow the trail stopping at every point or dip in and out, along the way sampling some of these exceptional signature dishes.

From April to October the Burren Weekly Food Series provides another reason to linger a while in this beautiful region.

Run by members of the Burren Food Trail, the Monday events offer the chance to discover the history and traditional methods behind food production in the region. This year's series begins on 21 April with a chocolate adventure, demonstrating how chocolates and pralines are made in a traditional way, followed by the pleasure of tasting the mouth-watering results.

Other events on the calendar include artisan cheese and wine pairing followed by an evening with a local storyteller, a walk on an organic farm, harvesting vegetables along the way to be used in the evening's meal, and a sea kayaking adventure, paddling right up to an ice-cream producer for a sweet treat and an evening of live music.

The Burren is a key location on Ireland's Wild Atlantic Way, a 2,500km fully sign-posted coastal driving route that stretches from Donegal to Cork.

The route is designed to let you experience Ireland like a local, visiting off the beaten track places that are not traditionally tourist areas.

It presents a huge array of potential stopping-off points – not least the Burren.

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www.burrenecotourism.com

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THE SUNDAY TIMES

IRISH FOOD GUIDE



Sunday Times
6th April 2014

FEAST ON SEABOARD

The delights of the
Wild Atlantic Way | p4

BLESSED ARE THE MAKERS

Meet the characters behind some of
our great artisanal foods | p10

ALE AND HEARTY

Microbreweries are showing there's
more to beer than the black stuff | p12



www.burren.ie

IRISH FOOD GUIDE

This 2,500km route offers the food trip of a lifetime, packed with seafood restaurants, pubs and stunning scenery. Don't forget to indulge in a spot of foraging

The Wild Atlantic Way is a holiday recipe that will tickle your taste buds and satisfy your thirst for adventure. Follow it for some of the wildest and freshest experiences on offer. Ireland's first long-distance touring route, and the world's longest defined coastal drive, is a 2,500km culinary road map that takes you to some of the country's finest pubs, restaurants and artisanal producers. Whether you break it into bite-size chunks or swallow it whole in one adventure, the Wild Atlantic Way is the food trip of a lifetime. Sit back, loosen your belt and enjoy the ride.

Here we have rustled up some choice morsels to whet your appetite. For more information about the Wild Atlantic Way, go to discoverireland.ie.

HARRY'S BAR AND RESTAURANT, BRIDGENO, INISHOWEN, CO DONEGAL

Don't miss this family-run business, which has promoted the finest and freshest local produce for 20 years.

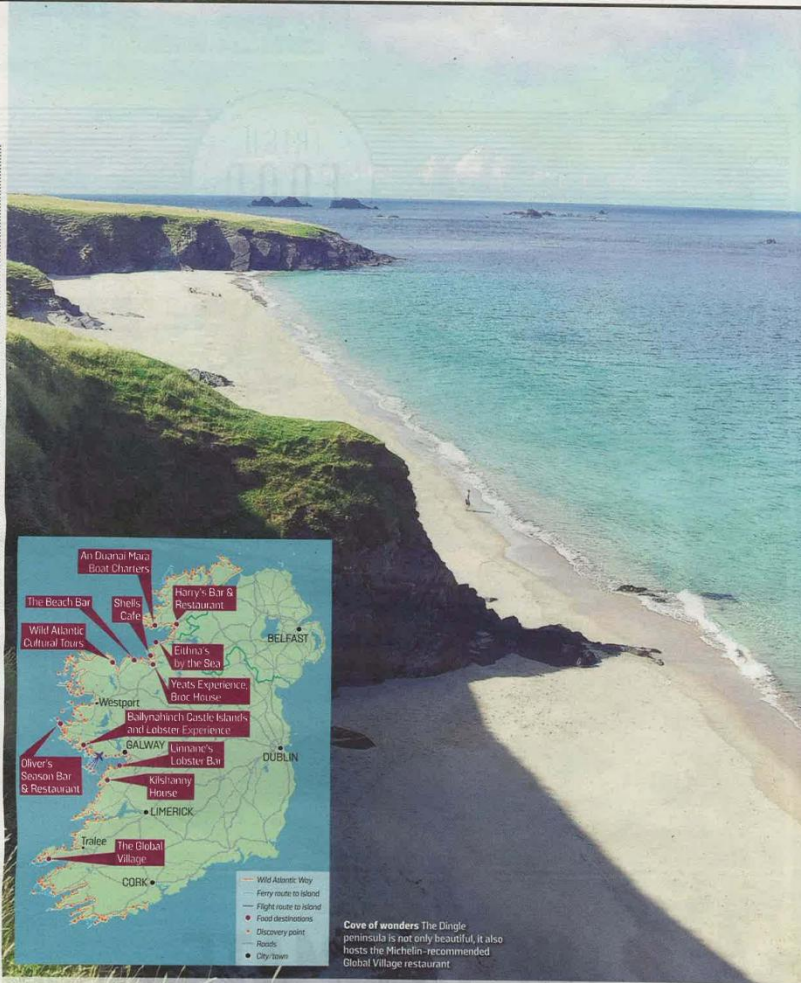
The fish is straight from the Greencastle auctions, and the meat directly from local farms, while all the vegetables on the menu at this award-winning restaurant are sourced from its own walled garden and farms in Inishowen.

You'll be in culinary heaven and will soon see how Harry's has helped put this beautiful but remote region on the food map.

AN DUANAI MARA BOAT CHARTERS, KILLYBEGS, CO DONEGAL

Catch and cook your dinner with An Duanaí Mara in the fishing town of Killybegs. Deep-sea angling and shark fishing are available, as well as sightseeing trips around Donegal Bay, one of Ireland's most picturesque stretches of coastline.

Skipper Colin Campbell has years of experience and is a member of Killybegs Sea Angling Club, so he knows where the best fish hide; cod, ling and turbot are among the 21 species to choose from. Campbell will help fillet your fish of the day for cooking at Kitty Kelly's restaurant. duanaimaracharters.com.



Cave of wonders The Dingle peninsula is not only beautiful, it also hosts the Michelin-recommended Global Village restaurant

WILD ATLANTIC WAY

Sunday Times 6th April 2014



www.burren.ie



Whether it's cakes, cheese and chicken or berries, beer and beef, your favourites can be sampled in this part of Ireland – all alongside some stunning landscape



TASTE OF THE BURREN

Amid the landscape of the Burren flourishes a crop of foodie delight, from artisan food producers to great restaurants and wonderful food trails. Between this month and October, check out the Burren Food Series: a perfect recipe for those who enjoy food, formed of weekly food-related initiatives designed to get you close to the cream of the region's crop.

Events include kayaking, a decadent picnic on the Finavarra Peninsula and afternoon tea at Burren Fine Wine & Food, with a guided stroll for dessert. Each event highlights not only the sumptuous fare of the region but also the landscape that produces it; a double helping, if you like. It's a great opportunity to combine good food with interaction from the people who created it.

Check out discoverireland.ie/food for more information

WILD FOOD COOKERY DEMO WITH WILD KITCHEN, LAHINCH

Sign up for this demo and supper by the sea at Lahinch promenade with Onagh O'Dwyer from Wild Kitchen. Wild food is seasonal and nutritious, and so ticks all the boxes of the food lover. You get an introduction to the abundant wild food of the region and learn to use nature's larder in everyday cooking. Enjoy an alfresco cookery demonstration followed by a wild-food supper overlooking the Atlantic. Find out about the health benefits of seaweed, with recipes to take home.

AN EVENING OF BEES AT BURREN PERFUMERY

Buzz around the Burren on May 12, when you will learn about the life of the



Insects. It starts with an introduction by Sadie Chowen-Doyle, owner of the perfumery, and is followed by a guided walk and talk by beekeeper Robin Sheen.

Round off the evening with a honey-tasting session and a chance to share a freshly prepared light supper, inspired by honey and local herbs. Visitors are welcome at the perfumery, which offers a free audiovisual presentation and a wander through the garden. In the summer, the organic tea rooms serve lunches and cakes.

ENJOY A TRADITIONAL FEAST WITH HOTEL DOOLIN

Travel back in time with Hotel Doolin and take part in a falachtaí, a traditional cooking technique in which large pieces of meat are cooked in a pit dug into the Burren's limestone beds. Savour the atmosphere and taste of ancestors' feasts as you recreate this field kitchen. The event on May 19 includes insights from local historians about how the pits were created and how the stones were selected to heat the water.



Right route Members of the Burren Food Trail enjoy their produce on the coast

THE MOUNTAIN GOATS' CHEESE WALK

Take this guided walk with Marie McGarron on May 26 to hear how ancient Burren dwellers farmed the land. Starting at Clare Heritage Centre Museum in Corofin, you will learn about the history of the area before following the trail to a goat farm to see how the owner tends to her animals and makes cheese. There is an opportunity to try your hand at milking. Afterwards, relax in the tea house with bread and cheese.

ELECTRIC BIKE FOOD EXPERIENCE

Discover the food and scenery of the Burren without the stress of hills and headwinds. The Electric Bike Food Experience on June 16 involves tasting food from Burren food producers that include Burren Smokehouse, Burren Free Range Pork and St Tola Organic Goat Cheese, using an electric bike.

The locations are close to each other, with access by quiet back-roads. The experience starts at the Burren Centre in Killynora and has local guides. Vehicle support is provided.

PICNIC ON THE CLIFFS OF MOHER

Combine the dramatic pleasure of a guided tour of the Cliffs of Moher with a picnic at Liscannor. With the help of your cliffs ranger, find out about viewing seabirds, how the cliffs were formed, the history of O'Brien's Tower and early

Follow the Burren Food Trail and enjoy a signature dish at each participating restaurant to be assured of good food

tourism, including local legends. Sit back and digest it all while enjoying a picnic featuring the best of Co Clare produce, with spectacular views of the cliffs and Liscannor Bay to wash it all down.

ENJOY A FARM FOOD SAFARI AND BARBECUE AT BURREN FREE RANGE PORK

Eva and Stephen Hegarty of Burren Free

Range Pork in Killynora, Co Clare, have a small herd of rare-breed free-range saddleback pigs, beef cattle, chickens, ducks and donkeys. They do not use chemicals, hormones or growth promoters, and keep everything as natural as possible, "healthy animals and healthy eating" is their motto.

The farm is next to an Iron Age ring fort, making it perfectly placed to give you a sense of how people once farmed. Walk around the farm and see how the animals thrive in today's green fields. Join them for a visit and a barbecue on August 4.

SMOKE FOOD AT BURREN SMOKEHOUSE

Find out about smoking food with a guided tour and tasting session at Burren Smokehouse in Lidoonvarna. See a demo of its small kiln and the oak shavings used, and get an understanding of the centre's patented smoking process.

Visit the large kilns and compare the tastes and textures of Burren smoked Irish organic salmons: hot-smoked, cold-smoked and some with marinades.

BIKE WITH BURREN WAY MOUNTAIN BIKE TOURS

This is a free-wheeling way to explore Doolin and the Cliffs of Moher, finishing with dinner at the Stonecutters Kitchen. It's known for local produce including barley-fed organic pig on a spit. There is also organic chicken and local Angus beef, with fresh salads and freshly baked breads – the perfect recipe for tired but happy legs.

FORAGE FOR EDIBLE WILD FOODS

Deborah Evers of Clareville House Kitchen Garden uses organic methods to grow produce including herbs, vegetables, fruits and cutting flowers for the table. In season, you'll find garden workshops and foraging walks. Check out her sweet and savoury preserves including jams, jellies, chutneys, relishes, dressings and sauces. Then join Evers, a member of Slow Food Clare, for events such as a guided foraging walk with a tasting of winter jelly made from edible wild fruit. Explore the Burren with her to discover wildflowers and edible plants such as hips and berries.

BURREN BREWERY, ROADSIDE TAVERN, LIDDONVARNA

Try the taster menu of beers that includes Burren Gold, a delicious and colourful lager, Burren Red, a spicy, slightly sweet ale with a hint of smoke, and Burren Black stout. Look out for master brewer Peter Carrin and delve deeper into the history of the brewery and the brewing process. Try food pairing of your own with a meal in Kieran's Kitchen at the tavern, with the best of traditional music.

TAKE THE BURREN FOOD TRAIL

Food producers in the Burren are passionate about what they produce, so follow their trail and enjoy a signature dish at each participating restaurant. As well as great food, you'll be assured of staff who are knowledgeable about the regional food. Menus state the source of local produce, and there is information about local food events, plus a commitment to maximise the use of Burren ingredients.

Sources for good Deborah Evers specialises in dressings, chutneys, jams and jellies from Clareville House Kitchen Garden, left

Sunday Times 6th April 2014



www.burren.ie

IRISH FOOD GUIDE

Savour an ice cream sundae with exotic flavours or watch dark chocolate being created from scratch by a master chocolatier on a sweet tour of Ireland. Meet artisans who will churn out a fresh cone, or roll up your sleeves and learn about handmade chocolate.

You can go behind the doors of ice cream and chocolate factories to unlock their secrets. Start in Dublin with Butlers Chocolate Experience at Clonsilla Business and Technology Park. Discover how Butlers creates its handcrafted assortments including fudge, toffee and hot chocolate.

Ireland is full of mouth-watering surprises, so make your way around the country and discover its delights.

• LORGE CHOCOLATIER, KENMARE, CO KERRY

Enter chocolate heaven and see how a master creates his sweets from the finest ingredients sourced from all over the world. Benoit Lorge, a native of the Lorraine region of France, draws inspiration for his creations from the Cahu mountains, lakes and bays that surround him in this part of Kerry.

Why not indulge in a one-day beginners' course and learn the basics of chocolate-making and its history? A family workshop is being held from April 21-24, and a more advanced one takes place on May 19 and 20.

Check out Lorge's Adam and Eve handmade chocolate range, with seven centres chosen for their popularity and appeal. lorge.ie

• CAFE LINNALLA, NEW QUAY, CO CLARE

Take a trip through the Burren and reward yourself with pure and fresh Irish ice cream. Bird and Roger Fahy, the owners of Linnalla Irish Ice Cream, make their product from the milk of their shorthorn cows. They serve up to 16 flavours, with many ingredients sourced locally or picked in the Burren. The ice cream is free from artificial colouring and is gluten free.

The cafe also serves coffee, milkshakes and smoothies, as well as light snacks, desserts and cakes. Tours of the premises are available at the farm, which got its name from *linn* - 'gala' ('swan lake'). linnallacecream.ie

• MARLENE'S CHOCOLATE HAVEN, WESTPORT, CO MAYO

Stroll into this paradise and try to choose between 30 varieties of chocolates and truffles with names such as love potion and rose cream. As well as the old favourites, there are sensual, exotic flavours that include white cherry, dark



If you've got a sweet tooth, there's a plethora of places to satisfy your need for chocolate and ice cream. How about a sweet made from seawater, or an edible stiletto?

pinapple, toffee turtle, mille caramel and sweet nut. Check out the novel creations such as chocolate animals, a champagne bottle and letters of the alphabet, all beautifully decorated and wrapped. There are also chocolates for diabetics.

After shopping, visit the tea rooms where hot chocolate and Marlene's mocha are a speciality. All the chocolates, made on the premises by Marlene, are gluten free and have no additives or preservatives.

• THE CHOCOLATE GARDEN OF IRELAND, TULLOW, CO CARLOW

Not only will your taste buds drool at the irresistible creations on offer, but you can also indulge in a mouth-watering ice cream experience. Owned by the husband and wife team of Jim and Mary Healy, the Chocolate Garden used fresh cream in its chocolates, which include a feast of fillings in the delightful shapes.

Try bananafee, an almond-shaped sweet coated in pure white chocolate, or

KITTY KELLY'S, LARGY, KILLYBEGS, CO DONEGAL

This well-known restaurant is in a beautifully restored 200-year-old, plum-coloured farmhouse. It has hosted Hollywood stars and celebrities from Ireland and the UK alongside loyal locals.

Situated on the route to Slieve League, Europe's highest sea cliffs, Kitty Kelly's has daytime culinary delights of fresh seafood and locally sourced foods – the Killybegs seafood chowder is especially popular. In the evening, the upstairs rooms come alive with diners savouring the à la carte dinner menu, which has a wide choice to suit all tastes and budgets.

Try the seafood platter, pan-roasted rib-eye steak or three bites: caramelised duck, Irish free-range chicken and roast quail served with an orange and cranberry sauce. After dinner, there is Donegal step-dancing. kittykellys.com

• YEATS EXPERIENCE, BROO HOUSE, LOUGH GILL, CO SLIGO

Feed your cultural appetite with the Yeats Experience, a private dinner in a home owned by Damien Brennan and Paula Gilvary. The couple share a passion for fine food and entertaining, as well as the poetry, culture and heritage of Sligo – all of which they combine with a chef's flair to make a wonderful evening. Gilvary sources the best local and organic produce while Brennan feeds the soul between courses with references to Yeats's poetry. yeatsligoireland.com

• THE BEACH BAR, AUGHRISHADE, SLIGO BAY

For a steaming bowl of seafood chowder washed down with a creamy pint of Guinness, look no further than the Beach Bar. Don't let the name deceive you – this is a traditional thatched cottage on an unspoilt stretch of quiet beach, with the Ox mountains behind.

One of Ireland's truly old-style pub restaurants, the Beach is ideal for unwinding with a cool beer on a summer's day, to warm up with an Irish coffee in front of an open fire on a chilly night, or to relax and revive over a freshly cooked meal after a day's surfing. thebeachbarsligo.com

• EITHNA'S BY THE SEA, MULLAGHMORE, CO SLIGO

You'll have to wait until Easter for Eithna's by the Sea to reopen in popular Mullaghmore, but it'll be worth the wait. The restaurant is described by food critic Georgina Campbell as offering "the best of local seafood, cooked simply and skilfully", with lobster a speciality.

Eithna's specialises in freshly baked breads, organic leaves and salad dressing. About 10 minutes from Buncrana, this family-run seafood restaurant works with local farmers, growers and fishermen to produce delicious home-cooked seasonal food. Eithna's healthy pestos, made from local and seasonal land and sea veg, are a perfect souvenir. bythesea.ie

• SHELLS CAFE, STRANHILL, CO SLIGO

This is a great pit stop for breakfast, lunch or dinner – or for homemade cakes and a chilled glass of wine while looking out at the sea. Shells is on the seafront in Strandhill, a surfer's paradise. The owners, Myles from Cape Town and Jane from Dublin, have created a place that looks great (he studied fine art) and tastes even better (she has a restaurant



Feed your body and sate your curiosity on one of Denis Quinn's foraging forays in Killala Bay, all of which culminate in a seafood feast

background). Breads are baked on the premises and ingredients including free-range eggs and cured bacon are sourced locally where possible. Coffee is organic and Fairtrade, prepared by baristas, while herbs are grown in the back garden. The cafe specialises in cakes and sweet treats such as wheat-free breads and chocolate cake. shellscafe.com

WILD ATLANTIC CULTURAL TOURS, KILLALA BAY, CO MAYO

Forage for food along the Killala Bay shoreline on owner Denis Quinn's guided tours. They include foraging

for wild food, sharing recipes and outdoor feasting, all in one of the most scenic parts of Ireland. Denis is a guide approved by Fáilte Ireland and has a degree in heritage studies. He is happiest outdoors, sharing his knowledge and love of the stunning north Mayo coast. Feed your body and sate your curiosity on one of his foraging forays, all of which culminate in a seafood feast. wildatlanticculturaltours.com

• OLLIVER'S SEAFOOD BAR AND RESTAURANT, CLEGGAN, CO GALWAY

Feast your eyes on the wonders of Connemara and feed your stomach with fresh seafood at this spot in the unspoiled fishing village of Cleggan on the edge of the Atlantic. It's the perfect base for a holiday, with a ferry running to Inishbofin – a must-see for visitors. You can also stay put and enjoy this seasonal restaurant, which



Scene it, done it Travellers along the Wild Atlantic Way can stop off to forage for their own food, left – seaweed is a fine accompaniment to crab, below left – while kayaking off Co Kerry is a good way to burn off the pounds, below inset

specialises in seafood straight off the boat, locally produced foods, cheeses, fine Connemara lamb and prime beef. Olliver's also has fine line in homemade desserts and Irish coffees. olliversbar.com

• BALLYHAUGH CASTLE ISLANDS AND LOBSTER EXPERIENCE, ROUNDSTONE, CO GALWAY

Rest up in style at the castle and book the services of fisherman John O'Sullivan to take you on a half-day boat trip around Roundstone Harbour, Inishnee island and the seal colony. O'Sullivan will lift lobster pots as he passes and, if the mackerel are running, will have rods for you to try your hand. Stop at the deserted island of Inishlackan and walk along the track that loops the island before returning to Roundstone village for lunch in one of its pubs. ballyhaugh-castle.com

• LINNANE'S LOBSTER BAR, NEW QUAY, CO CLARE

Situated on New Quay pier and overlooking the sea, with Anglish island to the rear and the stunning landscape of the Burren to the fore, Linnane's was built more than 300 years ago. It's the place to go if you want to explore the Burren and relax over fresh seafood. Sit outside on a sunny day or inside by the fire when it's cold. The menu is packed with local produce, offering shellfish as a speciality. linnanesbar.com

• KILSHANNY HOUSE, KILSHANNY, CO CLARE

Sample delicious Burren béilín ("little snacks") in this magnificent house – think of it as tapas with a Celtic twist. Béilín are dickered by what is available locally and what is in season. Ingredients include Burren Smokehouse salmon, St Iola cheese, seasonal greens, seaweed, Burren beef and lamb from local farmers, and food from Burren Free Range Pork. To complement this, there are preserves from Clareville House Kitchen Garden, organic eggs, hedgerow berries, hazelnuts, wild garlic and home-grown herbs. kilshannyhouse.ie

• THE GLOBAL VILLAGE, DINGLE, CO KERRY

Martin Bealin and Nuala Cassidy's restaurant opened in 1997 and has won rave reviews since. Bealin visited 40 countries to broaden his palate and perfect his art. The restaurant has a garden on the southeast slopes of Mount Eagle at the western tip of the Dingle Peninsula, where seasonal vegetables are grown using biodynamic principles.

This Michelin-recommended eatery was ranked the best in Kerry at the Irish Restaurant Awards, and supports local produce: fresh fish from local fishermen; fresh meat from farmers who operate a sustainable farming policy; and its home-grown veg. An extensive wine list is complemented by a range of craft beers. globalvillage.dingle.ie

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www.burren.ie