Map Legend

🚌 Bus Station
🅿 Car Park
ℹ Information
🎭 Theatre
🛒 Shopping Centre
🚍 Bus Stop

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WC Toilets
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Things to see and do in Kilkenny

1. Kilkenny Castle
2. Butler Gallery
3. Castle Yard
4. National Craft Gallery
5. Butler House & Garden
6. Shee Alms House/Tourist Information
7. Medieval Mile Museum
8. Tholsel - Town Hall
9. The Hole in the Wall
10. Butter Slip
11. Kyteler's Inn
12. Court House - Grace's Castle

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14. Rothe House & Garden
15. St. Canice's Cathedral & Round Tower
16. The Bishops Palace/Heritage Council
17. The Black Abbey
18. Black Freren Gate
19. St. Mary's Cathedral
20. Talbot Tower
21. County Hall
22. St. John's Priory
23. Magdalen Castle
24. St. Francis Abbey

Green's Bridge
St. Francis Bridge
Peace Park Walk
Nore Linear Walk

THE RIVER NORE
Lady Desart foot bridge

Dean St.
Parliament St.
Wolfe Tone St.
Michael St.
John's Quay
Maudlin St.
DUBLIN ROAD
Nore Valley Walk

THE MEDIEVAL MILE
St. Kieran's St.
High St.
James St.
William St.
John St.
John's Bridge

MEDIEVAL MILE
Black Mill St.
Parnell St.
Rose Inn St.
Canal Walk

High St.
The Parade
Friary St.
Ormonde St.
Patrick St.
Ormonde Rd.
Castle Rd
The Watershed R700

Nowlan Park GAA

Kilkenny
Living History, Loving Culture

IRELAND'S
MEDIEVAL
MILE
Kilkenny

IRELAND'S
ANCIENT EAST™
Wander Through Time

N E W S

Kilkenny

We're on the Mile
IRELAND'S MEDIEVAL MILE

Living History, Loving Culture

Welcome to Kilkenny.

Once the medieval capital of Ireland, the city has a rich medieval heritage visible through its narrow streetscapes; its historical buildings and landmarks.

The city's origins predate existing medieval landmarks. Saint Canice (who gives Kilkenny its name) founded a monastic settlement here in the 6th century. The 9th century round tower beside the wonderful stone cathedral of St Canice's, is a remaining monastic landmark. Built in the 13th century and a showcase to ornate stonemasonry skills, St Canice's is the second longest Cathedral in Ireland.

Strongbow, the legendary Norman invader, built a fort in the 12th century on the site where Kilkenny Castle stands today. William Marshall (Strongbow's son-in-law, 4th Earl of Pembroke) fortified the city walls, built a stone castle on the site and consolidated the Norman's position of power in the city.

Ireland's only witch trials took place in Kilkenny in 1324 (supposedly Europe's first witchcraft trials). Dame Alice Kyteler (Innkeeper and Moneylender) was accused of using poison and sorcery against her four husbands, having amassed a fortune from them. Before she could be tried, Alice fled to England, but her maid was flogged and burned at the stake.

The city prides itself on its lively culture and entertainment scene with a range of live music and theatre events available throughout the city's pubs and music venues. An array of festivals and event programmes are hosted annually, including the renowned Kilkenny Arts Festival (August) which features a variety of classical music events, art exhibitions, literary readings, workshops, jazz & folk sessions. Other festivals include: Tradfest (St Patrick's Day), Kilkenny Roots (Music Festival - May); Kilkenny Cat Laughs - Comedy (June); Savour Food Festival (Oct), Kilkenomics (Nov), Subtitle (Nov) and Yulefest (Dec).

Kilkenny is also renowned as a world class craft centre, which has its origins in the Design workshops of the late 1960s', the story of which can be explored in the Castle Yard site.

One of the best and unique features of Kilkenny is its compactness allowing you explore everything it has to offer on foot, just be sure to allow yourself enough time to experience it all. Enjoy our city!

1. Kilkenny Castle:
Kilkenny Castle & Park

A 12th century castle set in extensive parklands, built for William Marshall and remodeled in Victorian times. This was the principal seat of the Butler family, Marquesses and Dukes of Ormonde. The castle park and gardens are accessible free of charge while daily tours of the castle are available. Tour App available and an audio tour can be purchased at the attraction.

2. Butler Gallery:
Butler Gallery

One of Ireland's most vibrant contemporary art spaces, the Butler Gallery is central to Kilkenny's cultural life. It houses an excellent calendar of exhibitions from renowned Irish and International artists and is free of charge. It offers a year-round innovative education programme for all ages. Some of its permanent collection is based in public, civic and hotel venues throughout the city.

3. Kilkenny Castle Yard:
Kilkenny Design National Craft Gallery

Built in 1790, this unique complex of stone buildings in a courtyard setting was once the stables/coach houses of the Castle. Housing a centre of creativity and design since 1960's, attracting leading designers from Europe, it has helped Kilkenny become recognised as a centre of design excellence. Explore the courtyards and visit the National Craft Gallery, Kilkenny Design Craft Centre and some craft workshops which form part of the Kilkenny Craft Trail.

4. National Craft Gallery:

Established in 2000 by the Design Crafts Council of Ireland, this is Ireland's leading centre for contemporary craft and design.

The Gallery brings together the best and brightest of Irish and international designers, artists and makers through exhibitions exploring issues of material culture in interesting and accessible ways. It hosts an annual programme of talks, performances, children's activities, workshops and weekly free tours.

5. Butler House and Gardens:

Butler House (once a dower house to Kilkenny Castle) was home to the Earls of Ormonde, who built the stables and coach houses.

Reinstated to its former glory and operating as a guesthouse, this Georgian residence features sweeping staircases, marble fireplaces and a walled garden. The garden is free to visitors, accessible through the pedestrian gate at the rear of castle yard courtyard.

6. Shee Alms House:
Shee Alms House

Founded in 1582 by Sir Richard Shee, a wealthy city merchant, the purpose of the Alms House institutions was to take care of the poor by providing bed and board for work. It is one of the few remaining Tudor Alms houses in Ireland.

In 1978 Kilkenny Corporation purchased and restored Shee Alms House to its original condition and it is now home to our Tourist Information Office.

7. Medieval Mile Museum
Medieval Mile Museum

Unearth 800 years of Irish History at the Medieval Mile Museum. Kilkenny's newest visitor attraction is located in the heart of the city and the centre of Ireland's Medieval Mile.

Set in the 13th century St Mary's church and graveyard we tell the stories of Kilkenny's powerful patrons and inspired creators through the monuments and artefacts they left behind.

8. Tholsel Town Hall:
Tholsel

The name Tholsel comes from two old English words 'toll' meaning tax and 'sael' meaning hall and is fondly referred to as the Town Hall. Constructed in 1761 using local limestone, it served as custom house, guildhall, courthouse and today is a seat of local government and tax collection. A favourite spot for busking musicians and street art exhibitions!

9. Hole in the Wall:
The Hole in the Wall

A 16th Century tavern in Ireland's oldest surviving townhouse. To gain access from the High St to the rear of the inner house, a hole was punched in the wall, thus giving it its name.

Today this venue hosts an array of cultural events, from literature, to music, dance and other artistic forms. A 'treasure chest' of character and characters.... A truly hidden gem!

10. The Butter Slip:

With its arched entry and stone steps, the 'Butter Slip', a narrow and dark walkway connecting High St with St Kieran's St (previously called Low Lane) is the most picturesque of Kilkenny's many narrow medieval corridors. It was built in 1616 and once provided a market location for the stalls of butter vendors given its naturally cool temperatures.

11. Kyteler's Inn:
Kyteler's Inn

First established by Dame Alice Kyteler in the 13th century, Kyteler's Inn is one of Ireland's oldest inns. Alice, daughter of a Norman Banker, married four times amassing a fortune, while each husband died supposedly under suspicious circumstances. Alice was accused of witchcraft in what's understood to be Europe's first witchcraft trial and was sentenced to be burned. Her connection to local gentry ensured her escape to England.

12. Court House – Grace's Castle:
Grace's Castle

Kilkenny Courthouse formerly known as Grace's Castle is used for sittings of the Circuit and District Courts.

Originally the town house of the wealthy Grace family, it was built in 1210 and converted to a prison in 1566.

It became a courthouse at the end of the 18th century. It features as part of Kilkenny City Historic Walking Tour.

13. Smithwicks Experience Kilkenny
Smithwick's Experience Kilkenny

With over 300 years of brewing experience, let your senses come to life as you immerse yourself in the history of Ireland's favourite Ale. Go back in time to the 1300s, walk with the monks of St. Francis Abbey and discover how the beer was first born. Get a flavour for how our famous beer is made, from feeling the heat of the first malt to savouring the last drop of a refreshing pint.

14. Rothe House & Garden:
Rothe House

Built in 1594 by John Rothe, this 17th century merchant's townhouse consists of three houses with courtyards. Over 2,500 artifacts from Kilkenny's history are displayed here in its museum, while the garden is a reconstruction of a 17th century urban garden on a Burgage plot.

The Museum and Garden are open to visitors and also house an archaeological library, a gift shop & book collection and a genealogy service.

15. St Canice's Cathedral & Round Tower:
St. Canice's Cathedral & Round Tower

A site for Christian worship led by St Canice in the 6th century, the Cathedral was erected in the 13th century. One of only two medieval round towers in Ireland that can be climbed, the 9th century tower, offers the best views of the city.

Daily tours are available of both attractions, while a small scale model of 1640s Kilkenny is on display in the Cathedral.

16. The Bishop's Palace:
The Heritage Council (formally The Bishops's Palace)

In 1350, after the Black Death, construction of the original Bishop's Palace began using stone from three demolished churches in Kilkenny. The works were directed by Bishop Richard Ledred, a controversial figure, who led the first ever witchcraft trials in Europe, including the trial of Dame Alice Kyteler.

National Headquarters of The Heritage Council, visitors can enjoy the restored walled garden.

17. The Black Abbey:
Black Abbey

Founded in 1225 by Sir William Marshall (Earl of Pembroke) for the Dominican Friars, the Abbey features a tower and some magnificent windows dating from its original structure. At the Abbey's entrance, there is a series of monumental slabs and stone coffins dating from the middle ages.

In the mid 19th century, it became a place of public worship.

18. Black Freren Gate:

Black Freren Gate (also known as Black Friar's Gate) is located in close proximity to the Black Abbey.

This landmark is the sole existing remnant of the entrance gates from the Abbey to the medieval city's Hightown.

19. St Mary's Cathedral:
St. Mary's Cathedral

St Mary's Cathedral a towering 186-feet cut-limestone structure was built between 1843 and 1857 by William Deane Butler based on the design of Gloucester Cathedral.

The cathedral is accessible from the Black Abbey via Black Mill Street.

Highlights, including the massive Gothic façade, are an Italian marble high altar, relics of St Cosmos and St Damian and Benzoni's statue of Our Lady.

20. Talbot's Tower:

Talbot's Tower and its adjoining walls are the best preserved section of the city's medieval defenses. In 1989, a section of the walls collapsed. In 2006, a flagship conservation project to stabilise the building began. The fallen walls were restored and the tower updated to present as a public amenity. The restored tower and adjoining archaeological park are accessible to the public.

21. County Hall:

Dating from 1666 and serving as the offices to the Local Government, Kilkenny County Council, the building was once referred to as Kilkenny College. Former students included the renowned author Jonathan Swift and the world travelled philosopher George Berkeley (after whom, Berkeley University, USA is named).

The 1.6km riverside boardwalk from Maudlin Street to Ossory Bridge, linking to the Nore Valley Walk can be accessed from here.

22. St John's Priory:

Built in the 13th Century by the Augustinians who remained there until the mid 15th century when under the rule of Henry VIII it was handed over to the state.

The original priory is a ruin, while the Lady's Chapel which underwent renovations in the 1800s, is used today for worship. The Chapel features many spectacular windows and stained glass works.

23. Magdalen Castle:

Magdalen Castle is understood to have been one of three tower houses built by Sir William Marshall in the 13th century.

The surviving structure, 25m high, on Maudlin St is thought to date to post 1500, and formed part of the Hospital of St. Mary Magdalen.

The name 'Maudlin' or 'Magdalen' is associated with spittle hospitals built to house lepers.