

ecotourism in the
BOYNE VALLEY



1DAY | 9STOPS

Where better to enjoy the beauty of Ireland's natural landscape than in the beautiful Boyne Valley, in the **heart of Ireland's Ancient East**. A 90 sq km designated *Special Area of Conservation*, the River Boyne is surrounded by **rich woodland habitats** & is home to a wide variety of **protected wildlife species** such as the Red Squirrel, Atlantic Salmon & River Lamprey.





Morning

To experience the **best eco-tourism offerings** of the valley, start in the village of **Laytown** on County Meath's coastline where you will find **Sonairte Eco Centre & Gardens**. Promoting ecological awareness and sustainable living, the centre is open to the public on Fridays, Saturdays, Sundays and Bank Holiday Mondays from 10am to 5pm and offers a **wide variety of activities and experiences for environmentally-conscious visitors** to enjoy.

Take a peek at what's growing in the **organic garden** or stretch your legs along the beautiful nature trail and river walk. Sonairte Café offers a range of **delicious vegan and vegetarian food** while the **Eco Shop** sells a selection of fresh fruit and vegetables from the organic garden, along with a range of sustainable food and household products. The charming **Bee Museum** tells the wonderful story of the former **18th century farm** in which Sonairte is located today.

Next, head *20 minutes east* to **Boyne Boats** which is situated close to the site of the Battle of the Boyne at Oldbridge House. Their fantastic river tour won '**Best Boyne Valley Tourism Experience 2018**' and features the handcrafted, traditional Kerry Naomhóg currachs which star in the hit TV show, **Game of Thrones!** Young and old can paddle together as they are guided through **5,000 years of history in the heart of Ireland's Ancient East** while enjoying the splendour of this special place.

Just a five minute journey west along the river will bring you to **Boyne Valley Wools** where Alison Fullam creates a wonderful selection of wool products from her own flock of Jacob sheep!

Alternatively a *40 minute journey south west* will bring you to **Boyne Valley Activities**, located in the heritage town of **Trim**, they are dedicated to promoting **responsible tourism** in the Boyne Valley, providing all their experiences in an **environmentally-friendly manner** and having a **minimal impact** on their surroundings.

All river tours, kayaking and rafting tours offered by the company bring visitors into the **most remote parts of the meandering River Boyne** which are difficult to access from the land, offering a unique perspective and very special experience of this **beautiful habitat**.

Boyne Valley Garden Trail

The region has an abundance of wonderful gardens which can be explored through the **Boyne Valley Garden Trail**. The trail encompasses a rich diversity of gardens - historic and modern, large and small, country and village gardens, in private and public ownership, all lovingly tended and waiting to be explored. Three **award-winning designers' garden centres** are listed on the trail along with cafes, garden shops, galleries and information about guided tours and **summer outdoor events**.

Afternoon

In the afternoon, head *15 minutes west* along the River Boyne to **Rock Farm**, a great **ecotourism, glamping, activity centre and organic farm** situated on the **Slane Castle** estate. Surrounded by **fields of barley, agri-forestry, cows, horses and wildlife**, Rock Farm offers a variety of activities including **electric bike hire, kayaking and farm tours**.

They also have a selection of fantastic accommodation - from **yurts and shepherds huts set within an old wooded glade** to their recently-constructed **Limehouse Ecolodge** which was built using straw bales produced from the surrounding barley. The small shop on site sells meat and eggs produced on the farm as well as some local treats such as ice-cream, cheese and vegetables from **Slane Food Circle** and other local producers.

A *30 minute journey south* in to the countryside will bring you to **Beewise** in Kilmessan. Beewise aims to educate young and old about the **importance of biodiversity** through hands on learning, nature walks and interactive play.

A 1.5km path meanders through **five acres of young woodland**, planted with a variety of bee-loving trees and flowering hedgerows with information points and fun facts to peruse as you stroll through the natural environment. Visitors can also learn about the **inner workings of a honey bee hive** and see honey bees at work in an 'observation hive'.

Don't forget that the Boyne Valley is also a world-class **foodie destination** and home to a bountiful supply of **passionate farmers, skilled food and drinks producers, chefs and eateries** devoted to bringing the rich flavours of this beautiful landscape to your table. Check out **boynevalleyflavours.ie** for more info!

Spiritual Retreat

For a **spiritual retreat** visit **An Tobar Retreat & Spirituality Centre** which sits nestled within the townland of Ardbraccan approximately *3km from Navan town*. The centre welcomes both groups and individuals to a healing and hopeful environment set amongst woodlands & walkways all year-round.

Hands-On Archaeology

Or for those interested in finding out more about the **history and archaeology** of the area, visit **Blackfriary Archaeology Fieldschool** in Trim which offers hands-on archaeology courses to those with no experience. A visit to the friary's **Medieval garden** currently under restoration is also worth the trip!

Walking & Cycling

The heritage towns and landscapes of the Boyne Valley are some of the most beautiful in Ireland and there are plenty of **way-marked trails**, such as those at the beautiful **Girley Bog**, to guide you. The 2km **Boyne Greenway** will take you on a scenic journey from historic **Drogheda** to the **Battle of the Boyne Visitor Centre**.

Passing through the south of Co. Meath, the **Royal Canal Greenway** offers 145km of world-class cycling and walking opportunities through the heart of **Ireland's Ancient East**.