

IRISH TREASURES

CORK CITY — A TOP 25 DESTINATION

National Geographic has named Cork City one of the 25 best places in the world to travel to in 2025. The much anticipated announcement comes out annually each year and is a point of pride for destinations making the competitive list, which is handpicked by *National Geographic's* explorers, photographers, and editors.

National Geographic notes Cork City is undergoing “an emerging urban renaissance,” thanks to support from the \$128 billion Project Ireland initiative. The plan “will redevelop the port and docklands, refurbish Crawford Art Gallery and enhance the Cork Event Centre to host concerts, festivals and exhibitions. In September 2025, Ireland’s second city shines during Sounds from a Safe Harbour, a biennial festival of music, dance, and conversation cofounded by Oscar-winning Oppenheimer actor and Cork native Cillian Murphy.”

Other destinations making the top 25 include Tunisia, Indonesia’s Raja Ampat archipelago, Cenobitic monasteries in Italy and the medieval city of Brasov in Romania.

purecork.ie



IRISH CHRISTMAS MARKETS

Christmas markets are part of Ireland’s holiday traditions, as local farmers, artisans and retail shops bring their wares to the public square to create an intimate and friendly ambience. Here are five favorites.

Belfast Christmas Market turns Belfast City Hall into an international village with exotic foods and gift ideas from around the world. Solas in Cork City features stalls of local produce, vats of hot chocolate, a merry-go-round and a party atmosphere. Winterval Festival in Waterford City features Glenveagh

Christmas Market, with craft and food stalls spread throughout Georges, Gladstone and O’Connell Streets in the heart of the city. Ulster American Folk Park in Co. Tyrone offers a fascinating glimpse into how Christmas was celebrated in rural Ulster and Pioneer America in the 19th and 20th centuries. Galway Christmas Market is a festive wonderland of local food, live music, lighted gardens, puppet shows, storytelling and even a Ferris wheel.

ireland.com



TRADFEST — TWO DECADES OF DIFFERENT

TradFest, Ireland’s largest gathering of traditional and folk music, celebrates its 20th anniversary in 2025. This extraordinary feast of sound, song and dance honors musical traditions while also pushing their boundaries, as evidenced by this year’s theme, ‘Two Decades of Different.’ TradFest runs January 22-26, 2025 throughout Dublin, in venues ranging from iconic St. Patrick’s Cathedral, Dublin Castle and National Museum of Ireland to dozens of smaller venues in central Dublin, Fingal and South Dublin.

This year’s line-up includes veteran traditional ensembles such as DeDannan and Scullion and individual legends Ralph McTell, Tom Paxton, Mairéad Ní Mhaonaigh and Maura O’Connell. A new generation of stars on the horizon include accordion player and sean nos singer Diarmuid Ó Meachair, fiddler Sinéad McKenna, and BIIRD, an eleven piece all-female ensemble featuring Ireland’s best traditional Irish musicians and dancers who are changing the narrative around the image of women in traditional music.

tradfest.com

