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## **County town of antrim**

County Antrim is a perfect snapshot of Northern Ireland. Not only is it home to the dynamic city of Belfast, it is the playground of giants that walk its nine glens and sit on the banks of the magnificent Lough Neagh. Here you'll be offered spectacular cliff top walks and dramatic sea views, all just a stone's throw from fine seafood restaurants. From castles to gardens Adventurers with a love of the past will find this county thoroughly bewitching. Whether it's the grounds of the 400-year-old Antrim Castle and Gardens on Lough Neagh, the bastion of Carrickfergus Castle guarding Belfast Lough or the wondrous walled garden of Glenarm Castle, there is plenty here for the history buff to fill their boots with. Horticulturalists might need to bring theirs too. The Antrim Garden Trail, which includes Glenarm Castle, offers visits to some of the most distinguished public and private gardens in the UK or Ireland. If you've never heard of Game of Thrones®, get ready... Every fan of Game of Thrones® will want to make their way to the worldfamous Dark Hedges in Ballymoney. If it's more unique beauty you're after, then a day exploring the wonders of the Glens of Antrim is an absolute must. These are the glens through which the giants of this land roamed. Indeed, locals say that some of the hills are those very same giants asleep. When you see what they put together at the nearby Giant's Causeway, you might agree that they deserve their break. Meeting houses and meeting people You'll be needing one or two breaks yourself along the way and luckily, County Antrim is full of great spots to eat and drink. Just north of Belfast, Sleepy Hollow in Newtownabbey is something of a bistro bolthole. Both it and its sister restaurant, Billy Andy's, are highly regarded and the fact that they produce much of what you'll eat on their own farm only adds to their reputation. Sleep under the stars - and in starred places too After all this adventure, food and fun, you'll be needing a good night's rest. For those who want to snuggle down in more conventional digs, a B&B like the comfortable and welcoming Ballyharvey House (3\*) in the County Antrim countryside is ideal. This spot has great views across to Lough Neagh and as far as the Sperrin Mountains to the west. If your eyes are fixed on something a little more luxurious, then give the Thermal Village, relaxation pods, hot tubs and mini-jacuzzis at Galgorm Spa and Golf Resort (4\*) a whirl. Whatever you try and wherever you go in County Antrim, a giant spirit awaits you. Be sure to embrace it. It will most surely embrace you travel to your intended destination to ensure its open and book tickets if applicable. Antrim (Irish: Aontroim, "lone ridge") is the historic county town of County Antrim and Newtownabbey. It's 22 miles northwest of Belfast and is a commuter town for the city, with a population in 2011 of 23,375. For many visitors it's the place they arrive but don't stop to explore, as the International Airport is here. But it has several historic sites, a pleasant setting on Lough Neagh, and is a good base for visiting around the lough and further north. There's tourist information at the airport but the town TIC is in the Old Courthouse, open M-F 08:30-17:00. Get in[edit] 54.662-6.2181 Belfast International Airport (BFS IATA, aka Aldergrove) is 20 miles west of Belfast but only 4 miles south of Antrim town. It's Northern Ireland. It has buses to Belfast, City Airport and Derry, but these don't serve Antrim. See below for Bus 109A between Lisburn, airport and Antrim. Car hire and taxis are also available. See Belfast for other long-range travel options, which include Belfast Great Victoria Street via Lanyon Place and other Belfast stations, taking 40 min to Antrim. They continue to Ballymena, Coleraine, Castlerock and Derry. Change at Coleraine for Ulster University and Portrush. 54.718-6.2122 Antrim bus & rail centre is quarter of a mile northeast of town centre. Goldline Bus 218 / 219 runs every two hours from Belfast Europa station, taking 30 min to Antrim, and continuing to Ballymena, Cloughmills, Ballymoney and Coleraine. Bus 109A runs hourly M-Sa from Lisburn via Crumlin and International Airport to Antrim. Air travellers with a rail ticket to / from stations north of Antrim for a discount £2 single fare - show your rail ticket when you board the bus. Bus 110 / 120 runs four times M-Sa from Magherafelt (with connecting buses from Cookstown) via Castledawson and Randalstown to Antrim. By car from Belfast follow M2 west. Get around[edit] Map of Antrim (town) The town is compact enough to walk. The most reliable taxi firm is SML, +44 7999 083131. See[edit] 54.722-6.2311 Antrim Castle Gardens, off High St. F-M, W 09:30 - 17:00, Tu Th 09:30-21:30. The castle was built in the 17th century, rebuilt in 1813, burnt down in 1922, and the ruins were cleared away in the 1970s. The buildings that remain illustrate its late Georgian concept of Tudor-Gothic: there's an Italianate stair tower, a Barbican gatehouse and a stable block this has been renamed Clotworthy House and now hosts weddings, conferences and the like. The chief attraction is the 17th century Anglo-Dutch water gardens, restored 2011-15. The main entrance is from Randalstown Rd to the north, but from town centre it's easier to enter through the Barbican from High St. Limited parking here, use one of the other town car parks. Free. The Courthouse or Market House, built in 1726, is at the head of High St by the Barbican. It now houses the TIC and theatre. 54.724-6.2092 The Round Tower or "Steeple" is to the north on Steeple Rd. It's a well-preserved example from the 10th century, 92 ft / 28 m tall with a conical cap; such towers were church belfries but nothing remains of the church / monastery. A Celtic cross is carved over the tower doorway (no entry, it's 2.5 m above ground level and barred by a metal grille). Nearby is the "Witches Stone" and two bullauns - stones with hollows that collected rainwater, of supposed healing properties. 54.729-6.2173 Springfarm Rath was a fortified farmstead circa 1000 AD, with earthworks and palisades. You'll have to use your imagination with trees hemmed in by The Meadows housing estate. From Stiles Way B518, turn onto Fort Green (perhaps a clue?) then follow The Meadows housing estate. From Stiles Way B518, turn onto Fort Green (perhaps a clue?) then follow The Meadows housing estate. Rd BT41 4ND (3 miles west of town), 88 +44 28 9442 8216. The first castle of 1345 was called Eden-duff-carrick; it was replaced in the 17th century Plantation era. This second castle grew and grew, and was still incomplete when it burnt down in 1816. That's the shell that you see today. The grounds are a working farm plus event space - society wedding or steam traction rally, take your pick - and not otherwise open. But it was a location for Game of Thrones so it's on the circuit for GoT tours. 54.586-6.3035 Ram's Island on Lough Neagh, about a mile long by a quarter mile wide, and a mile out from the eastern lake shore. There's the ruins of a monastery with a Round Tower, and of a 19th century summer house. Boat trips from Antrim may visit, and in summer there's a ferry from Sandy Bay Marina - none of these sailed in 2020. 54.706-6.0956 Templetown Mausoleum was built in 1789 in neo-classical style by Robert Adam. It's within the grounds of Castle Upton, which isn't open to the public. 54.701-6.0437 Patterson's Spade Mill off A6 Antrim Road is a water-powered mill for making spades and shovels, still in working order and maintained by the National Trust. Do[edit] Old Courthouse Theatre is within the Courthouse on High St. Omniplex Cinema is on Junction retail park a mile north of town centre. Antrim Forum is the council-run leisure centre, south bank of the river. Golf: there are two lakeside courses, Massereene and the council-run Allen Park. Boat trips usually sail in summer from Antrim Marina: they might visit Slane's Castle, or Ram's Island to the south. They didn't sail in summer from Antrim Marina: they might visit Slane's Castle, or Ram's Island to the south. They didn't sail in summer from Antrim Marina: they might visit Slane's Castle, or Ram's Island to the south. too soon. The Irish Game Fair and Fine Food Festival has been an all-Ireland event at Shane's Castle since 2018. The next is on 26-27 June 2021. Buy[edit] Barbican gate to the gardens Castle Mall is the ugly shopping centre that erased much of the historic town. It's one block back from High Street, enter from north side. The Junction is the retail park a mile north of the centre, junction of A26 and B518 towards the M2. Asda is open M-F 07:00-00:00, Sa 07:00-22:00, Su 13:00-18:00. Dunsilly Bootsale is on Saturday morning in the P&R car park north side of the A26 / A52 junction. It still has stalls, but since May 2020 the carboot sale is suspended. Eat[edit] 54.713-6.2081 Top Of The Town, 77 Fountain St BT41 4BG, 88 +44 28 9442 8146. M-Th 12:00-23:30, F Sa 12:00-01:00, Su 12:00-00:00. Good bar and grill, some teething problems with Covid. Boathouse is on the lakeside by the caravan site. Good views and food, but customer service is erratic. Ruby's bar and restaurant at 19 Bridge St just south of the river is a solid family-oriented place. 54.762-6.2432 McLarnon's Ramble Inn, 236 Lisnevenagh Rd BT41 2JT (A26 four miles north of town), 8 +44 28 9442 8888. M-F 11:00-21:30, Su 12:00-20:30. Good old-school pub grub and bar, in Coaching Inn established 1852. Drink[edit] Bars along High Street include Steeple Inn, Anchor Bar, Massereene House, Madden's (see Eat) and Barneys. Sleep[edit] The shell of Shane's Castle 54.727954-6.2253281 Holiday Inn Express Antrim, Ballymena Road BT41 4LL (on A26 north side of town), 80 +44 28 9442 5500. Smart can-do hotel, well placed for travellers, free parking. B&B double £60. 54.74315-6.2333742 Dunsilly Hotel, 20 Dunsilly Rd BT41 2JH (junction A26 / M2), 🚳 +44 28 9446 2929. Simple friendly hotel at motorway jcn two miles north of town.) Re +44 28 9446 4963. Clean well-run site open Apr-Oct, with 37 tourer hook-ups and 8 tent pitches. Tent £15, caravan £26. Maldron Hotel, 200 Airport Rd, International Airport terminal. B&B double £70. 54.67-6.2464 Glendaloch B&B, 23 Dungonnell Rd, Crumlin BT29 4DF (half a mile west of airport), ### +44 7814 944146. Clean cosy B&B near airport, free transfers. B&B double £70. 54.645-6.1615 Keef Halla, 20 Tully Rd, Crumlin BT29 4SW (A26 three miles east of airport), #### +44 28 9082 5491. Lovely welcoming B&B at Nutts Corner. Its name of course means "How are you?" in Arabic. B&B double £70. Connect[edit] Antrim town, the airport and connecting highways have 4G from all UK carriers. As of Jan 2021, 5G has not reached this area. Go next[edit] Belfast is a must-see for its reinvigorated city centre, don't just hurry through its transport hub. Lisburn was birthplace of the Irish linen industry. A few miles southwest is imposing Hillsborough castle. Cookstown on the opposite side of Lough Neagh is where Kings of Tyrone were crowned, and the area is studded with prehistoric sites. County Antrim is one of the six counties of Northern Ireland. It is in the province of Ulster. It is named after its former county town, Antrim. The name comes from the Irish Aontroim which means "lone ridge".[5] The largest part of the capital city of Northern Ireland, Belfast, is also in County Antrim. The rest of Belfast is in County Down. Geography A large part of Antrim is very hilly. The highest points are Knocklayd 514 m (1,690 ft), Slieveanorra 508 m (1,670 ft), Trostan 550 m (1,800 ft), Slemish 437 m (1,430 ft), Agnew's Hill 474 m (1,560 ft) and Divis 478 m (1,570 ft).[6] Along the coast there are a lot of cliffs in the north. Some of the most remarkable cliffs are those formed of vertical basaltic columns, like at the Giant's Causeway. The only large island of County Antrim is L-shaped Rathlin Island, off Ballycastle, 11 km (6.8 mi) in total length by 2 km (1.2 mi) maximum breadth, 7 km (4.3 mi) from the county borders Lough Neagh (especially for salmon and eels) are of value both commercially and to sportsmen. The county borders Lough Neagh. basalt columns at Giant's Causeway Belfast International Airport Transport County Antrim has a number of air, rail and sea links. Air Belfast International Airport is in County Antrim. It is Northern Ireland's main airport. There are regular flights to Great Britain, Europe and North America. The other airport in the area, George Best Belfast City Airport, lies a mile east of Belfast city centre on the County Down side of the city. Rail The main Translink Northern Ireland Railways routes are the major line between Belfast, Antrim, Ballymena, Coleraine and Londonderry, Belfast to Carrickfergus and Larne, the port for Stranraer in Scotland and Coleraine to Portrush. Sea Two of Northern Ireland's main ports are in County Antrim, Larne and Belfast. Ferries sail from Larne Harbour to destinations including Cairnryan and Troon in Scotland, and Fleetwood in England. The Port of Belfast is Northern Ireland's main port. It is a major centre of industry and commerce and has become established as the focus of logistics activity for Northern Ireland. Around two thirds of Northern Ireland's seaborne trade, and a quarter of that for Ireland as a whole, is handled at the port which receives over 6,000 vessels each year.[7] Irish language Statistics for 2009-2010 show 1,832 students attending the 12 Gaelscoileanna (Irish language primary schools) and 1 Gaelcholáiste (Irish language secondary school).[8] Religion The Presbyterian Church in Ireland is the largest religious denomination, followed by the Catholic Church and the Church of Ireland. County Antrim is one of two counties in Ireland in which most of people are Protestant, according to the 2001 census, the other being Down. The strong Presbyterian presence in the county is mostly because of the county's historical links with lowland Scotland. History Royal Avenue, Belfast. Photochrom print circa 1890-1900. It is unknown when the county of Antrim was formed. It was the name of a district in the early 14th century, before Edward II was king. The earliest known people to live here were Mesolithic huntergatherers of pre-Celtic origin, [9] In ancient times, a Celtic people called the Darini lived in Antrim (10] In the early Middle Ages, southern County Antrim was part of the Kingdom of Ulidia. It was ruled by the Dál Riada, which stretched into what is now western Scotland over the Irish Sea. Dál Riada was ruled by the O'Lynch clan. The Dál nAraide and the Cruthin, who were pre-Gaelic Celts and probably related to the Picts of Britain[11] lived in lower County Antrim became part of the Earldom of Ulster, won by Anglo-Norman invaders. Edward Bruce fought to restore local, Gaelic, government in 1315. It left Carrickfergus as the only significant English stronghold. In the late Middle Ages, Antrim was divided into three parts: northern Clandeboye, the Glynnes and the Route. The Cambro-Norman MacQuillans were powerful in the Route. A branch of the O'Neills of Tyrone migrated to Clandeboye in the 14th century, and ruled it for a time. Their family was called O'Neill Clannaboy. A Gallowglass sept, the MacDonnells, became the most powerful in the Glynnes in the 15th century. During the Tudor era (16th century) numerous adventurers from Britain wanted to come and live in the region. Many Scots settled in Antrim around this time.[12] In 1588 the Antrim coast was the scene of one of the 24 wrecks of the Spanish Armada in Ireland. The Spanish vessel La Girona was wrecked off Lacana Point, Giant's Causeway in 1588 with the loss of nearly 1,300 lives.[13] Historic monuments Carrickferrgus Castle (1177) The historical monuments of the county consist of cairns, mounts or forts, remains of religious and military structures, and round towers. The principal cairns are: one on Colin mountain, near Lisburn; one on Slieve True, near Carrickfergus; and two on Colinward. The cromlechs most worthy of notice are: one near Cairngrainey, to the north-east of the old road from Belfast to Templepatrick; the large cromlech at Mount Druid, near Ballintoy; and one at the northern extremity of Islandmagee. The mounts, forts and entrenchments are very numerous. There are some remains of the religious establishments at Bonamargy, where the earls of Antrim are buried, Kells, Glenarm, Glynn, Muckamore and Whiteabbey. Carrickfergus Castle, dating from the Norman invasion of Ireland is a well preserved medieval structure. There are, however, remains of other ancient castles, as Olderfleet, Cam's, Shane's, Glenarm, Glynn, Muckamore and Whiteabbey. Carrickfergus Castle, notable for its dramatic location on a rocky hill. Saint Patrick Slemish, about eight miles (13 km) east of Ballymena, is where St Patrick's lived when he was young. According to tradition Saint Patrick was a slave for seven years, near the hill of Slemish, until he escaped back to Great Britain. Linen Linen manufacturing was previously an important industry in the County. At the time Ireland produced a large amount of flax. Cotton-spinning by jennies was first introduced to Belfast by industrialists Robert Joy and Thomas M'Cabe in 1777; and twenty-three years later it was estimated that more than 27,000 people were employed in the industry within ten miles (16 km) of Belfast. Famous people from County Antrim James Adair, (1709-1783), born in County Antrim, explorer, trader, and historian[14] John Bodkin Adams, (1899-1983), general practitioner born in Randalstown and suspected of killing 163 patients while practising in Eastbourne, England.[15] William Arthur, (1797-1875), born in Ballymena, noted antiquitarian and Baptist clergyman in the United States.[14] Joey Dunlop, OBE, (1952-2000), from Ballymoney, five time World Motorcycle Champion. Sir John Jamison, (1776-1844), physician and naval surgeon from Carrickfergus who became an important pioneering landowner and constitutional reformer in New South Wales, Australia. George Macartney, 1st Earl Macartney (1737-1806), from Ballymoney, first British Ambassador to China in 1772. Eva McGown, (1883-1972), chorister, pioneer, and hostess in Alaska. John O'Kane Murray, (1847-1885), born in Antrim, physician and noted author.[14] James Nesbitt, (1965—), from Broughshane (though he lived near Coleraine for most of his teenage and adult life), notable actor. Liam Neeson, (1952—), from Ballymena, notable actor. Tony McCoy, (1974-), from Moneyglass, notable jockey. Government The traditional county government. In Northern Ireland the county structure is no longer used in local government. Northern Ireland is split into districts. The majority of County Antrim residents are administered by the following nine councils: Small portions of the county are administered by the following nine councils: Small portions of the county are administered by the following nine councils: Small portions of the county are administered by councils that are based in neighbouring counties, notably the village of Aghagallon in the Craigavon Borough and the town of Portrush in the Coleraine Borough. The county constituencies are also in County Antrim: Belfast South East Londonderry Lagan Valley Upper Bann Main towns and villages References ↑ Bonamargy Friary Guide Department of the Environment. ↑ North-South Ministerial Council: 2004 Annual Report in Ulster-Scots Tourism Ireland. ↑ The Ulster-Scots T Belfast. Retrieved 8 March 2012. ↑ "Mountain Views". Simon Stewart. . Retrieved 2010-08-30. ↑ Port of Belfast ↑ Statistics from the national Gaelscoil management body, accessed at C3%AD-Mhe%C3%A1n-na-Gaeilge-in-%C3%89irinn-sa-Ghalltacht-09\_101.doc, January 2012 ↑ Waddell, John (1998). The Prehistoric Archaeology of Ireland. Galway: Galway University Press Limited. pp. 11-24. ↑ O'Rahilly, Thomas F. (1946). Early Irish History and Mythology. Dublin: Dublin Institute for Advanced Studies. pp. 341-352. ↑ Benn, George (1877). A History of the Town of Belfast. Belfast: Marcus Ward & Company. pp. 21 ff..; Encyclopaedia Britannica (14th edition), Antrim. ↑ "La Girona" (PDF). # Annual Report of the Advisory Committee on Historic Wrecks, 2005. Advisory Committee Marquis Who's Who. 1967. ↑ Cullen, Pamela V., "A Stranger in Blood: The Case Files on Dr John Bodkin Adams", London, Elliott & Thompson, 2006, Template-specific style sheet: ISBN 1-904027-19-9 Other websites

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