



DEPARTURE LOUNGE

YOUR GATEWAY TO ONLINE TRAVEL

Everything's Better **with Mayo**

By Adrienne Webb

Ireland's County Mayo is arguably one of the country's most scenic areas thanks to its pristine beaches, verdant valleys and rugged mountains. Far away from the hustle of Dublin, Mayo is home to just over 100,000 people, but its coastline and quiet back roads make it a haven for those visitors looking to kick back Irish style.

Illustration by Jerzy Kolacz/Reactor

Mayo on the Move (<http://www.mayo-ireland.ie/MotM.htm>) is the hub of dozens of area-related pages. Start here to get a feel for county towns including Cong, the village featured in the John Wayne film *The Quiet Man*, and Ballycastle, home to the remnants of an ancient tribe now buried beneath a 5,000-year-old bog. You can also find out how to experience the county by horse-drawn caravan.

Another all-purpose resource is Ireland West Tourism (<http://www.westireland.travel.ie/mayo>), a lovely site with lots of tourist-friendly listings of restaurants and accommodations to suit all budgets, from manor houses to hostels.

Sports-minded travelers can head to Achill Island (<http://www.achill-island.com>). The 97-square-kilometre playground off the coast of Mayo is Ireland's largest island. It was the site of the National Windsurfing Championships in 1995, and water sports such as surfing, diving, sailing and fishing are a huge part of the island experience. For those who prefer to stay on dry land, the island offers rock climbing and horseback riding, as well as stunning beaches. Visit Mayo Leisure Cycling Holidays (<http://www.mayocycling.ie>) to book an organized cycling tour around the island.

Discover area landmarks of spiritual, archeological and cultural note online, including Croagh Patrick (<http://www.croagh-patrick.com/faq.html>), "The Holy Mountain," where visitors can travel in the footsteps of St. Patrick, who fasted and prayed for 40 days on its summit in 441AD. Other attractions can be found at the Museums of Mayo Network (<http://www.museumsofmayo.com>). Genealogy buffs can connect with their Celtic roots with the help of GENUKI's Mayo pages (<http://www.genuki.org.uk/big/ir1/MAY>).

While you're surfing, why not get a taste of Mayo by tuning in to the archived programs of Shamrock Radio (<http://www.shamrockradio.com>), which features Irish music (think The Chieftans, not U2) and news from around the West. @

