

# Best of Belfast





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Mussenden Temple,  
North Coast an Area of  
Outstanding Natural  
Beauty north of Belfast

**haymarket**

Haymarket is certified by BSI to  
environmental standard ISO14001 and  
energy management standard ISO15001



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# WELCOME

Belfast is swiftly emerging as a destination of choice for C&I planners, with record numbers of events confirmed in the past 12 months. The city very proudly won the double at the C&IT Awards 2018, bringing home accolades for Best Events



Destination and Best Events Venue, for ICC Belfast. After landmark investment and the biggest hotel expansion in its history, the visitor economy is set to double in value by 2030.

The city boasts an impressive 55 conference and meeting venues, from the state-of-the-art riverside convention centre, ICC Belfast, and

historic Queen's University Belfast to the unique and architecturally striking Titanic Belfast.

Northern Ireland and Belfast have 'destination appeal' in abundance, too. From the birthplace of Titanic and film location for mega-hit TV series *Game of Thrones*® to world-class golf courses, breathtaking natural scenery and a cool colourful mix of history, culture and art – the region is undoubtedly a must-visit destination. Delegates will certainly be charmed by an award-winning food scene and legendary Irish hospitality, too.



## GETTING THERE AND AROUND

More than 194 UK and International destinations service Belfast and Dublin. The Northern Irish capital is only a one-hour flight from the UK with air fares comparable to, or often cheaper than, mainland rail travel. **George Best Belfast**

**City Airport** is only a ten-minute journey into the city centre. The city is compact and walkable. Its venues, hotels and attractions are all within ten minutes' walk, making it easy for delegates to get around and explore.



## Here to support your event

Visit Belfast offers free and impartial advice and support on all aspects of organising a conference, meeting or event in the city. For planners, it also provides a single point of contact as Team Belfast, representing venues, hotels and local suppliers involved in your event to ensure the city delivers an exceptional delegate experience.

- Advice on local organisations that may be interested in partnering you to support delegate attendance, exhibition or sponsorship of your event
- Free online accommodation-booking service for eligible conferences
- Conference financial support scheme for eligible, not-for-profit associations, subject to application
- Civic hospitality and securing city leaders to welcome your delegates
- Official tourist information support and welcome branding options

### KEY SUPPORT INCLUDES

- Free venue and accommodation search with preferential rates
- Funded site inspections and familiarisation trips to Belfast
- Sourcing a local business, academic or medical leader who can act as a local ambassador
- Sourcing event services such as AV and transport
- Destination marketing support for your conference to maximise delegate attendance

**For a free proposal and advice, contact: [conference@visitbelfast.com](mailto:conference@visitbelfast.com) or call +44 (0) 28 9023 9026**

**visit  
Belfast**

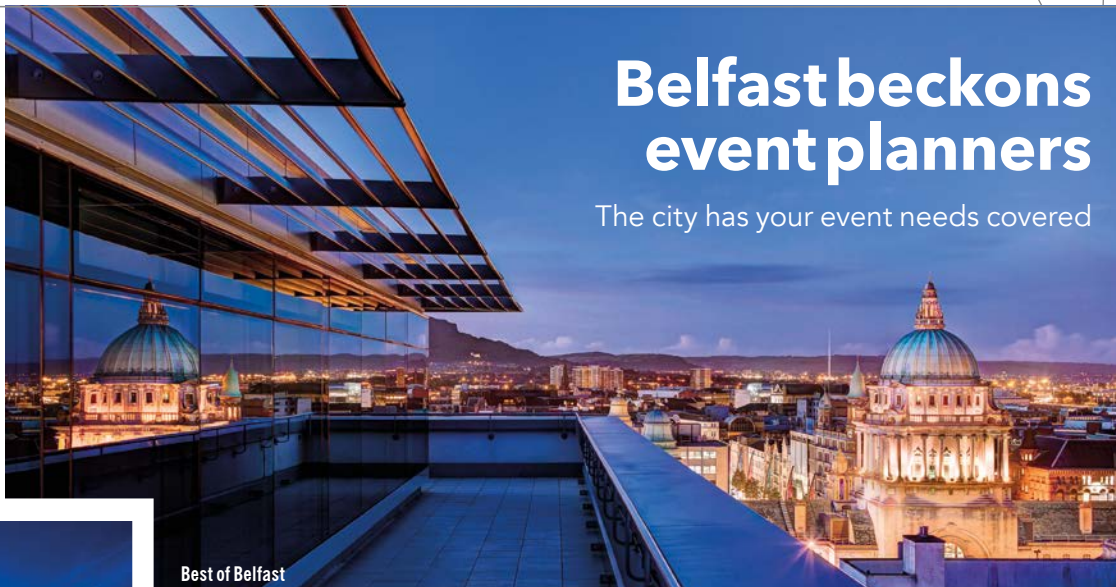




Fans of *Game of Thrones*® can explore 27 key film locations used in the hit HBO series as well as the new *Game of Thrones*®: The Touring Exhibition at TEC Belfast



**Royal County Down Golf Club** - this spectacular coastal links course is home to The Open Championship in 2019



# Belfast beckons event planners

The city has your event needs covered

**Best of Belfast**  
Crowned Best Events Destination at the 2018 C&IT Awards, the city is enjoying major investment in venues and hotels

**Arts and Culture**  
Belfast is bursting with a vibrant culture and arts scene from historic museums, contemporary street art and a fascinating history to explore



**International Travel and Tourism Awards - Best Food Destination 2018**  
Restaurant critics have plated up praise for Belfast's thriving food scene, offering everything from Michelin star dining to the award-winning St. George's Market

# Striking venues

Distinctive, versatile facilities for all types of event

## THE CONVENTION CENTRE ICC BELFAST

At the centre of Belfast's business events offering, on the banks of the River Lagan, is ICC Belfast, a newly extended 7,000m<sup>2</sup> conference and exhibition centre for up to 5,000 delegates. Winner of Best Venue at the 2018 C&IT Awards, it has an impressive, flexible and acoustically sophisticated auditorium that seats 2,200. The more intimate Studio has 360 (removable) tiered seats. Two exhibition halls, 20 meeting rooms for ten to 100 delegates and two outdoor terraces with charming views are also available. Recent clients include Coca-Cola, HBO and KPMG. The site is a five-minute drive from George Best Belfast City Airport and only a two-minute stroll to the nearest railway station.

ICC Belfast the waterfront complex offers an array of flexible spaces, including a stunning auditorium that seats 2,200 (below)



## HISTORICAL QUEEN'S UNIVERSITY BELFAST

Striking Victorian architecture, tree-lined avenues, peaceful green spaces and unusual conference facilities can be found at Queen's University. The Gothic Lanyon Building is an impressive backdrop to a reception on the quadrangle, followed by a gala dinner for up to 170 in the magnificent Great Hall.

The biggest space on campus is Whitla Hall, an Art Deco-style auditorium seating 1,250. Ideal for plenary sessions, it works well with The Sir Peter Froggatt Teaching Centre's lecture theatres, seminar and breakout spaces, which can hold 12-300 delegates. The stunning Elmwood Hall, a former church building with balcony seating, can take 478 people theatre-style.

The self-contained, Grade-II listed, Riddell Hall conference centre, a red-brick building with a modern feel and adaptable rooms, is available year-round.

Queen's University Belfast (above) the wood-panelled Great Hall; (below) the Gothic Lanyon Building, overlooking the quadrangle







### UNIQUE TITANIC BELFAST, SS NOMADIC, AND TEC BELFAST

Titanic Belfast, an unmissable museum, stands on the spot where the ill-fated liner was built in 1912, and brims with experiences that bring the stories, sights and sounds of the vessel to life. For events, The Titanic Suite has a replica of the ship's Grand Staircase – a centre-piece for a banquet for 800. The soaring five-storey Giant Atrium's high ceiling allows for aerial acrobatics, while a dinner for 110 guests can be held in The Bridge, with its waterfront vista.

Or why not welcome your guests to dinner aboard the SS Nomadic? Once a support boat to the Titanic, the restored ship is berthed next to the museum, and can host dinners and receptions for 200 people.

Nearby TEC Belfast is a 6,000m<sup>2</sup> exhibition venue with space for banquets for 3,000 delegates.



**Spectacular** (top) TEC Belfast; (above) the SS Nomadic, a restored Titanic support vessel berthed alongside Titanic Belfast

### SPOILED FOR CHOICE

#### QUIRKY CRUMLIN ROAD GAOL

This nineteenth century listed building opened as a jail in 1846 and imprisoned 25,000 criminals over 150 years. The jailhouse is now open for historical guided tours and events. Expert guides take guests on a journey back in time to 'The Crums' gruesome past. Its conference centre has 30 rooms and capacity for 350 delegates.

#### HMS CAROLINE

HMS Caroline, a First World War-era warship, has been revived as an interactive floating museum in the Titanic Quarter. Planners can hire the ship for a 500-person drinks reception or dinner for 320.

#### MODERN MAC

The Metropolitan Arts Centre opened in 2012 as a creative and cultural hub. Eight different blank canvas-style event spaces range from a 12-person boardroom to a theatre space for 350. A takeover of the venue in its entirety is also available.

#### ULSTER MUSEUM

Dinosaurs, Egyptian mummies, fine art masterpieces, botanical gardens and artefacts from the Spanish Armada make Ulster Museum



(pictured above) a must-see. The venue has four conference rooms with space for 1,500 delegates. The Atrium rises four storeys through the museum's core creating a modern area for a 400-person reception or banquet for 160.

#### HISTORICAL BELFAST CATHEDRAL

For jaw-dropping Romanesque architecture, mosaics and elaborate stone carvings, check out Belfast Cathedral, which has room for 500 dinner guests. The chapel and the main hall cater for 50 people each, while 30 guests seated theatre-style will fill the crypt.

#### ASSEMBLY BUILDINGS CONFERENCE CENTRE

Built in 1905 as the Presbyterian Church's Irish HQ, the Assembly Buildings Conference Centre is a grand place for events. Following an £8m refurbishment in 2010, the conference centre has 10 high-tech meeting rooms and can accommodate 1,150 people.



## LOOKERS ANNUAL CONFERENCE

Venue ICC Belfast

Date February 2019 Delegates 700

Car dealership chain Lookers, which represents manufacturers including BMW, Ford, Volkswagen and Land Rover, welcomed 700 senior figures from across the UK and Ireland to its one-day annual conference and dinner at the ICC in the centre of Belfast, home to the group's Charles Hurst division.



ICC Belfast venue chosen for location, catering facilities and its state-of-the-art auditorium

Working with agency SB Events, the conference aimed to share key messages and company results, as well as celebrate its talent, successes and Charles Hurst's huge contribution. It also gave colleagues the chance to network and share ideas.

ICC Belfast was chosen for its central location, catering facilities, state-of-the-art auditorium and capacity to host large events.

A gala dinner at ICC Belfast was followed by drinks in the Cathedral Quarter at The Harp, The Dark Horse, The New Orpheus and The Duke of York.

**Post-event** Lookers group events manager Christine Lindon said: "The city was fantastic. ICC Belfast is an amazing venue and staff were excellent. The hotels were first class – we couldn't fault anything."

Lookers group chief executive Andy Bruce commented: "We had our best ever conference and everyone was so impressed. I'm sure we'll be back."



Titanic Belfast the waterfront venue provided a stunning setting for the ABO awards ceremony

## ASSOCIATION OF BRITISH ORCHESTRAS' ANNUAL CONFERENCE

Venue ICC Belfast and Titanic Belfast

Date January 2019 Delegates 350

The UK body for professional orchestras and the classical music industry, the Association of British Orchestras (ABO), returned to Belfast for the first time in 20 years for myriad reasons, including value for money, delegate experience, high service levels and quality of venues and hotels.

**Post-event** ABO executive director Mark Pemberton praised ICC Belfast's location, as well as the food experience, facilities and service at Titanic Belfast. "Titanic Belfast provided a stunning setting for our awards," he added. Budgets also went further in the destination, allowing ABO "to invest in a strong conference programme and delivering an affordable event without compromising on quality".

## ASGBI INTERNATIONAL SURGICAL CONFERENCE

Venue ICC Belfast

Date May 2016 Delegates 1,100

The Association of Surgeons of Great Britain and Ireland's (ASGBI) conference was the first held in the ICC Belfast. Bhavnita Patel, general manager of ASGBI, said: "Belfast is strong in a number of medical fields relevant to ASGBI. We had excellent support from the local medical community and Queen's University Belfast, which helped with delegate attendance, exhibitors and sponsors."

**Post-event** The congress attracted the highest number of delegates for a decade. Patel said: "Belfast is an incredibly cost-effective destination, compact and well-connected. The Team Belfast welcome was incredible. You will struggle to find a team like Visit Belfast."



ASGBI International Surgical Conference the highest number of delegates for a decade

# "The city was fantastic"

How Belfast made a success of three major events



# Where to stay, host and meet

Five-star luxe or simple style? Whatever your needs, Belfast has it

## BEST CONFERENCE AND MEETING HOTELS

### HASTINGS HOTELS GRAND CENTRAL

The grand, glam, hotly anticipated 304-room Grand Central Hotel opened in June 2018, with marble interiors and Art Deco influences, as well as bragging rights to the city's tallest bar. The 23rd-floor Observatory serves excellent cocktails with sweeping city views, while the light and airy Seahorse



**Culloden Estate & Spa** (above) a palatial, five-star retreat just a few miles from the city centre; **Grand Central** (L) the Art Deco-influenced hotel offers 304 rooms

restaurant provides a fine dining option. There are four event spaces and an 80-seat reception room.

### CULLODEN ESTATE & SPA

The palatial five-star Culloden Estate & Spa, located six miles from the city in the Holywood hills, completed a £4.8m makeover in 2017. The 98-room retreat has seven conference rooms with a maximum capacity for 590 people. Team-building activities range from archery, laser clay pigeon shooting and mini-highland games to It's a Knockout. For evening entertainment, the hotel is adept at hosting race nights, a



**Crowne Plaza** (inset) with 21 event spaces and capacity for 900 delegates; **Hampton by Hilton** (R) for city-centre meetings

Millionaire Quiz Show and murder mystery dinners.

### STORMONT AND EUROPA

In the leafy suburbs of Belfast sits the four-star Stormont Hotel, which received a £1m revamp in 2018. The property has 106 bedrooms and 14 flexible conference suites, with the scope to host events of 500 people.

The cosmopolitan 272-room Europa Hotel has 17 conference spaces, including a 515m<sup>2</sup> exhibition centre and ballroom that accommodates 500 delegates. The Piano Bar is a perfect meeting spot for coffee or cocktails.

### ANDRAS HOTELS CROWNE PLAZA

The Crowne Plaza's 156 rooms have been treated to a £5m investment.

This follows a make-over of its conference hub and the creation of The Great Oak Conference Centre,





which has 12 modern meeting spaces – all of them equipped with the latest technology and stylish fittings. In total, there are 21 event spaces and capacity for 900 delegates. Situated in the Lagan Valley Regional Park, the property is a ten-minute drive from Belfast city centre.

### HAMPTON BY HILTON

The new mid-market Hampton by Hilton opened in June 2018. Located near Great Victoria Street railway station, it provides easy access around town. The hotel has a small meeting room for 12 people.

### HOLIDAY INN EXPRESS

The University Quarter's Holiday Inn Express completed a £5m, 60-bedroom extension in mid-2018. The three-star property has 171 rooms, five conference suites and space for 120 conference-goers.

Two additional properties from Andras hotels are Holiday Inn and Ibis. Close to SSE Arena and Victoria Square shopping centre, the

**Clayton Hotel** (inset) nine conference suites can host up to 550 delegates; **Maldron Hotel** (R) four meeting areas can accommodate 80

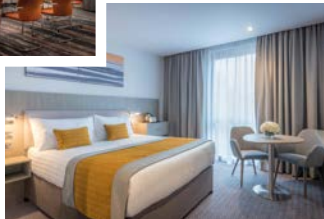
freshly renovated Holiday Inn has accommodation for 250 people and a naturally lit conference room for 50. The 124-room Ibis Belfast City Centre is a centrally located and economical option.

### DALATA GROUP HOTELS MALDRON AND CLAYTON HOTELS

The Linen Quarter welcomed the four-star Maldron Belfast City Centre Hotel in May 2018. There are 237 contemporary rooms and four meeting areas for gatherings of 80 people, while its Grain & Grill restaurant can accommodate around 90.

A few minutes' walk away is the Clayton Hotel, with 170 rooms. The second floor contains nine conference suites, which will be revitalised in July 2019. The

Olympic Suite can seat 550 theatre-style, but can also be divided into three separate rooms of varying sizes.



### BEST NEW AND REFURBISHED HOTELS

#### TITANIC HOTEL

RMS Titanic's design offices were restored and reopened in 2017 as the 119-room Titanic Hotel, just metres from Titanic Belfast. Inside, stunning Victorian and Edwardian architecture has been beautifully restored and there are hints of Art Deco design and an abundance of natural daylight. The impressive Drawing Office One is the biggest of seven meeting rooms. Its domed roof creates a bright, spacious area for 300 guests. The office of Titanic chief designer Thomas Andrews has been revived as a boardroom for ten, while the grand Chairman's Office accommodates 50 people and can be combined with the adjoining boardroom.



#### TEN SQUARE

After an £18m investment, Ten Square has become one of Belfast's chicest hotels. A 131-room boutique property, the former 19th-century linen warehouse has light grey walls



**Titanic Hotel** impeccably restored facilities can accommodate groups of ten to 300; **Ten Square** (below) chic boutique hotel six minutes from ICC

and lime-washed floors that are both welcoming and soothing. The Linen Bar has a decent menu of craft beers and local gins, while rooftop lounge The Loft is a cool nighttime spot. The Linen Hall Suite has room for 240 people. ICC Belfast is only six minutes' walk away.

#### HILTON BELFAST

A flagship for Belfast for the past 20 years, the Hilton is undergoing refurbishment in 2019. Set on private grounds on the River Lagan, the hotel has 198 rooms and the entirety of the mezzanine floor is dedicated to meetings and events.



# The best possible taste

From fry-ups to lobster, Belfast is foodie heaven

**B**elfast's culinary credentials are soaring. Expect fresh, local artisanal ingredients, superlative seafood and a thriving fine-dining scene.

## FINE DINING

The much-lauded **Ox**, a 40-seat, Michelin-starred restaurant, is admired for its Irish beef and seafood creations. Book in advance for Michelin-starred **Eipic**, the flagship dining room from revered Belfast chef Michael Deane.

**The Muddlers Club** is popular with corporate groups. Its theatrical open kitchen, industrial decor, irresistible rustic dishes and tasting menus make it one of the city's best establishments.

A new arrival this Spring is **Six by Nico**. Every six weeks renowned Scottish-Italian chef Nico Simeone

introduces a six-course tasting menu themed upon a different place, memory or idea.

Fine-dining restaurant James St. South seats 94 guests and has two private dining areas for up to 44 seated or 60 standing. On the second floor is James St. South Cookery School, which welcomes groups of 12.

## DINE-A-ROUND DEANES

Hop on to **Deanes** double-decker bus for a fun, sociable restaurant tour from Michael Deane. It kicks off with a glass of Prosecco and small dishes at **Deane and Decano**, followed by a cocktail masterclass and starter at Deanes at Queens. Next stop is **Deanes Howard Street** for a main course before finishing with dessert and live music at **Deanes Deli**. **Dine Around Deanes** can accommodate 56; however, additional tour routes can be organised for larger groups.

## TASTING TOURS

**Taste and Tour** creates bespoke food-and-drink walking tours for groups of 12 to 200. For a recent corporate event, the firm organised

**Savour** (from top) The Muddlers Club offers rustic dishes and tasting menus; Deanes Deli is one stop on a double-decker restaurant tour; the Cookery School at James Street South offers private classes for groups of 10 or more



a pop-up mini market where guests could sample top Northern Irish artisan produce and locally distilled spirits at 'stalls' in a private area at a hotel. Brewery and distillery tours, pub crawls, cocktail-making and market tours are also available.

## MARKET CHARM

For breakfast, head to the award-winning **St George's Market**. This bustling market draws the crowds for its oysters, sweet treats, breads and cheeses. Nab balcony seats overlooking the scene at the first-floor George's of the Market, famed for its 'Best of the Market' Ulster fry breakfast. The market zone can be hired for receptions for up to 2,000 people or dinners for 1,200 from Monday to Thursday.

## CASUAL DINING

For something rather less formal, **Howard Street** serves up delicious fusion fare, while **Coppi** is a haven for Italian tapas.

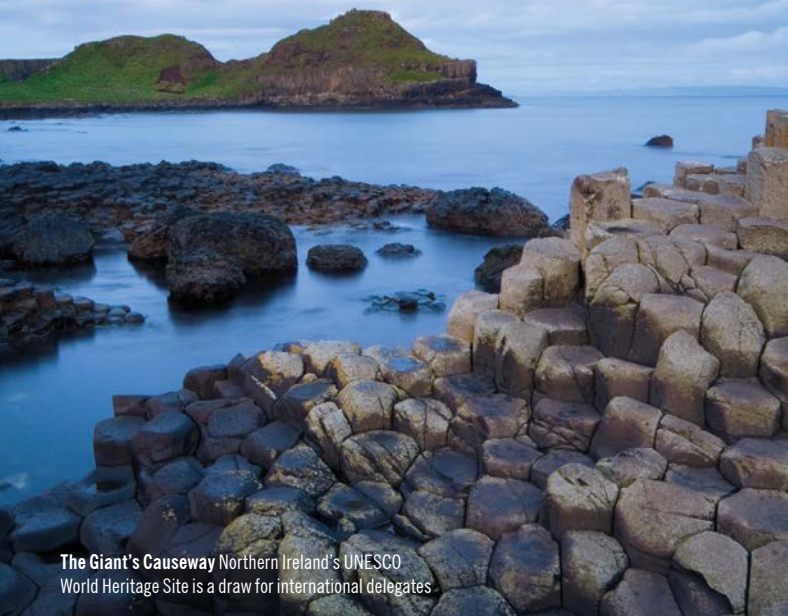
## LET THE FUN BE-GIN

The historic **Rademon Estate** in County Down, 30 minutes from the heart of Belfast, runs 90-minute tasting tours of its gin distillery. It can organise cocktail and canapé receptions for 150 people or a less formal terrace BBQ. Private dining for 80 and cocktail masterclasses for smaller parties are available too.



# Planners' perceptions

Two event planners share their experiences of Belfast as a C&I destination



**The Giant's Causeway** Northern Ireland's UNESCO World Heritage Site is a draw for international delegates

## ROBERTA ODEBRECHT ACCOUNT DIRECTOR, K.I.T. GROUP



"We organised a five-day international medical congress at ICC Belfast for 900 attendees. The [base] hotel was the adjacent **Hilton Belfast**. Social events were at **City Hall** and **Titanic Belfast**; delegates could visit the exhibition before dinner. The main suite has a replica of Titanic's grand staircase, which our delegates loved. The catering and entertainment were excellent. The city's culinary variety is superb – we enjoyed high-end restaurants, award-winning markets, rooftop bars and pubs. Many guests stayed on for a *Game of Thrones*® tour, The Giant's Causeway and Carrick-a-Rede Rope Bridge. I highly recommend Belfast as a congress destination – it offers great value and a great delegate experience."



**Titanic Belfast** the venue's main banquet suite has a replica of the ship's grand staircase



**ICC Belfast** the auditorium is one of an array of spaces in this highly versatile waterfront venue

## CRAIG CUSACK SENIOR ACCOUNT MANAGER, VERVE



"We organised a *Game of Thrones*® Production Wrap Party for HBO at **ICC Belfast** recently. It was a massive success, in no small part due to the team at the venue. It was a challenging event with lots of moving parts, but the flexibility of the team made things immeasurably easier. With its numerous spaces and in-house technical equipment, the venue is extremely versatile and provides a huge blank canvas for a wide range of events. **St. George's Market** is another unique venue we've worked in. It is steeped in history and, if you have the right kind of event, a brilliant space to use. Everything from its shape and architecture to its central location makes it a special venue."





# In the pipeline

Belfast's future developments for event planners

## GAME OF THRONES® EXHIBITION AND LEGACY PROJECTS

An interactive *Game of Thrones*® exhibition on a worldwide tour will be at TEC Belfast from 11 April until 1 September. Fans will explore immersive environments such as the wintry landscapes of the North, Castle Black and the House of Black and White, and view props, costumes and set decorations. The Iron Throne Room will be an Instagram-worthy centrepiece.

HBO has been filming the show around Northern Ireland for the past decade and, as part of a series of

multimillion-pound legacy projects, there are plans to convert key filming locations into tourist attractions. Winterfell, Castle Black and other iconic sets will be permanently preserved with displays of costumes, weapons, models and other production materials. Linen Mill Studios, a 30-minute drive from Belfast, is primed as the future home to a formal tour and visitor experience.

## HILLSBOROUGH CASTLE AND GARDENS

Historic Royal Palaces' Hillsborough Castle and Gardens – one of the Queen's official residences – reopens in April 2019 following a major five-year £20m investment project.

**Hillsborough Castle**  
£20m investment



**Worth a visit** Hillsborough Castle's South Terrace and garden; the *Game of Thrones*® exhibit includes costume, props and more; the city centre **Hilton Belfast** is getting a new look

Located 20 minutes from Belfast, the repurposed event spaces include the Throne Room, the castle's biggest space, which can cater for 120 guests theatre-style. The crimson walls and oak floors of Red Room create a more intimate space for small gatherings of around 30 delegates. Bring a day of meetings to a close with a private tour and dinner in the State Dining Room, which can seat 40. The idyllic lawns can accommodate 200 to 350 guests for dinners and receptions. Groups of 250 or more can hire all the state rooms on the ground floor.

## HILTON BELFAST

Throughout 2019 the riverside Hilton Belfast will undergo a total refurbishment. In the heart of the city, with a connecting corridor to

ICC Belfast, the 198-room hotel has a mezzanine floor for events, with ten rooms and maximum capacity for dinners of 350, or 450 seated theatre-style. All meeting areas were refitted with LCD projectors, screens and built-in sound in 2018. There are three floors of executive rooms with access to a business lounge. A 160-seat restaurant overlooking the River Lagan can be exclusively hired for events.

## NEW £100M VISITOR ATTRACTION

An architectural landmark is in the planning stages that will tell the story of Belfast through an immersive, multi-gallery, multimedia experience, revealing the city's history, secrets and fascinating facts. A large-scale space for events is part of the plans, plus cafés, restaurants, shops and covered outdoor areas.



# City, coast and country

From Titanic Quarter to The Giant's Causeway

## COAST

### THE GIANT'S CAUSEWAY

Northern Ireland's star attraction is UNESCO World Heritage site The Giant's Causeway. Marvel at 40,000 hexagonal columns left by volcanic eruptions 60 million years ago on the Causeway Coastal Route. Spoil delegates with a breathtaking tour with Cutting Edge Helicopters.

### OLD BUSHMILLS DISTILLERY

A 90-minute drive from the capital, this distillery makes a perfect lunch

**Royal Portrush** the golf course will play host to host the 148th Open Championship in July 2019

stop after The Giant's Causeway. Ireland's oldest working whiskey distillery, it dates back to 1608 when King James I granted a royal licence. Groups of up to 30 can enjoy an hour-long tour and tasting.

### TOAST THE COAST

Take a tour of food discovery along the Antrim Coast, stopping at cafés, restaurants and hotels. Visits to a brewery, farm, blacksmith and the Causeway Coastal Route can be added to the itinerary.

## GOLFERS' HAVEN

Avid golfers will be keen to hit the fairways in a country acclaimed for its world-class golf courses. An hour outside Belfast, near The Giant's Causeway, is the famous links course Royal Portrush Golf Club – a Rory McIlroy favourite and home to The Open Championship in 2019. Lessons with a pro are available. Closer to the city is Royal Belfast Golf Club, which lays claim to be the oldest in Ireland. Founded in 1881, it offers scenic views.

## COUNTRY

### FINN LOUGH

Escape to the forest for a digital detox at Finn Lough, a luxury lakeside hideaway with a spa and outdoor activity facilities including watersports, fishing, cycling and walking trails. Forest bubble domes are the stand-out accommodation here. These transparent globes come with a four-poster bed, en suite bathroom and unlimited stargazing. The perfect venue for product launches, incentives and informal conferences, in April 2019, Finn Lough launches a 160m<sup>2</sup> bubble dome events space beside the lake. A fine-dining restaurant can seat 100, while a theatre space suits intimate meetings of 25. The resort sleeps up to 82 guests.

## ULSTER FOLK AND TRANSPORT MUSEUM

Immerse yourself in Ireland's past at the Ulster Folk and Transport Museum. Set in 170 acres of rolling landscape, a whole village has been reconstructed with farmhouses, mills, churches and animals. Feed hens, visit a blacksmith or watch demonstrations of thatching and ploughing. An Edwardian mansion, Cultra Manor, provides a grand setting for a 200-person conference. Dinner for 300 can be served beside the magnificent steam trains at the adjacent Transport Museum.

## GALGORM SPA AND GOLF RESORT

This 122-room retreat has an extensive Thermal Village spa with



**Finn Lough** accommodation in luxurious forest 'bubble domes' offers unlimited stargazing



**Titanic Belfast** many themed experiences are available in the city beyond the museum

riverside hot tubs, hydrotherapy pools, snow cabin, steam rooms and orangery. There is even a daily Celtic sauna meditation ritual led by the sauna master. For events, the plush Grand Hall can take up to 300 people. The Renaissance Suite has Art Deco features, a 1920s Champagne bar, fireplace and space for 152 guests, while the Four Seasons Suite can accommodate 100.

### BALLYWALTER ESTATE

The Italianate Palazzo-style historic home, set in 1,200 acres, has been owned by Lord Dunleath's family for more than 170 years. There are 11 bedrooms and a formal dining room can seat 80 for dinner with all catering provided under Lady

Dunleath's supervision. Tours of the house and garden are available too.

### CITY

#### STREET PARTY

Stage a shindig along the Cathedral Quarter's cobbled streets with wristband access to participating bars, such as The Dark Horse. Street parties can combine pint-pouring competitions, Irish dancing, whiskey tastings and a treasure hunt with food provided by a wide choice of caterers.

#### TITANIC AND MARITIME-THEMED EXPERIENCES

Trace the Titanic story beyond the museum with a one-hour Discovery Tour ending with a Guinness in an authentic 1900s pub at Hickson's Point. A Titanic-themed history lesson is available by riverboat from Lagan Boat Company, or explore the Titanic Quarter by Segway.

#### WE ARE VERTIGO

For adrenaline-pumping action, look no further than We Are Vertigo. For big kids, Inflata-Park is a gigantic inflatable playground with a travelator. Learn to ski or snowboard at the indoor ski slope or tackle a nine-metre climbing wall in the adventure centre. Daring delegates can try indoor skydiving.

## 3 of the best Game of Thrones activities

### GAME OF THRONES® – THE TOURING EXHIBITION

The biggest-ever *Game of Thrones*® exhibition makes its first visit to the UK and Ireland with a residency at TEC Belfast between 11 April and 1 September. The vast, interactive experience gives visitors a close-up look at the artistry behind the show.

### MOVIE SET EXPERIENCE AT WINTERFELL

Fans of *Game of Thrones*® can explore 20 key film locations used in the HBO series, including Old Castleward, AKA 'Winterfell', 40 minutes from Belfast. Try archery at a Winterfell Archery Range and dress in Stark family costumes.

### DIREWOLF TOUR

A filming location tour for hardcore 'Throners' where you can meet the direwolves, Summer and Grey Wind, from the series. All guides working for Direwolf Tours have featured as extras, doubles or support actors in the show.



**Old Castleward** guests test their skill with a bow and arrow at the replica Winterfell Archery Range





**B**elfast's buzzing nightlife delivers everything you would expect and more. From traditional Irish pubs and swingin' live music venues to funky rooftop bars and chic cocktail lounges, delegates will be sure to find plenty of Irish craic, friendly banter and sophistication.

### IRISH INNS

To experience Irish culture at its best, head to **Kelly's Cellars** – one of the capital's oldest pubs. Dating back to 1720, this is the place to savour Irish beef stew and a pint of Guinness by an open fire. Or opt for the **Duke of York**, home to one of the widest selections of Irish whiskeys in the country.

Pineapples, fairies, fleurs-de-lis and clowns adorn the flamboyant Victoriana interior of **The Crown Liquor Saloon**. Atmospheric gas lamps, stained-glass windows, mosaic floors and ornate features make this a must-visit. Built in 1826, the venue now belongs to the National Trust and welcomes visitors with an eclectic selection of ales and hearty pub grub.

In the trendy Cathedral Quarter, **McHughs** is housed in one of the city's oldest buildings, dating from 1711. The basement bar hosts live bands, from traditional to alt-rock, and the 100-seat restaurant serves traditional Irish food with a twist.



## Belfast's nightlife highlights

From award-winning  
rooftop bars to music  
halls and pubs

### LIVE MUSIC

Named after the late poet and socialist, **The John Hewitt** is a legendary bar with a busy calendar of live folk, blues and rock sessions. **The Empire**, a converted Victorian church, presents a diverse mix of live music and comedy nights. The music hall can be hired for dinners for 100 people and parties for 400.

Laid-back **Cutters Wharf** is one of the few restaurant-bars with a riverside terrace. Overlooking the Lagan, **River Grill** dishes up steak, burgers and seafood and can host private events up to 75 guests.



**Nightlife** from historic and cosy pubs that host music sessions to sophisticated cocktail bars and 'gin dens', Belfast venues can suit all needs

### SOMETHING STYLISH

A historic building – Henry Joy McCracken was held there before his execution in 1798 – underwent a £1m redevelopment, opening in June 2018 as **The Jailhouse** restaurant and **Henry's** bar. Its gin den can be hired for tasting sessions or receptions of up to 50 people.

For night-time cityscape views, head to Bullitt hotel's classy rooftop bar and garden, **Babel**. The 25-seat venue has a 'living wall' of edible flowers and herbs used to garnish and flavour cocktails. Or try the swanky **Alibi** bar, where the focus is on gin, cocktails and craft beers.

Travel back in time to 1930s New York at **Berts Jazz Bar**, an elegant Art Deco venue in **The Merchant Hotel** with live jazz, French cuisine, superb cocktails and an Irish gin menu. Don your dancing shoes for **Ollies** basement bar, located in the old bank vaults of the property.

# Belfast by numbers

**Best Events Destination**  
C&IT Awards  
2018-19

**Best Events Venue - ICC Belfast**  
C&IT Awards  
2018-19



**55,000**  
**delegates in the city**  
in 2018 – a **77%**  
increase year on year

**8,500** maximum  
delegate capacity



**£52m**  
Economic impact of  
MICE events in 2018  
– a **20%** rise on the  
previous year



**1**  
**Number one region**  
in the world to visit  
Lonely Planet 2018



**£150m**  
Landmark investment  
in hotel development in  
the past 12 months

**Greater Belfast**  
**5,506** hotel rooms  
**48** hotels

**Northern Ireland**  
**141** hotels  
**9,221** bedrooms



**10**

**minutes** from the city  
centre to **George Best**  
**Belfast City Airport**

**16** UK destinations  
**50** flights a day to  
George Best Belfast  
City Airport, Northern  
Ireland's London  
Heathrow Hub (BA)

**194** UK and global  
destinations serviced  
by Belfast and Dublin  
**1 hr** flight from London  
**90 mins** transfer  
from Dublin

**RISE** landmark steel sculpture,  
standing 37.5m tall, symbolises  
hope for the future of Belfast





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