

KINSALE, OUR HERITAGE TOWN



Kinsale is best known for the **Battle of 1601**, a major turning point in Irish and World History which marked the end of Spanish domination of the New World and the decline of the Gaelic way of life with the Flight of the Earls to Rome. Also of world importance was **the sinking of the Lusitania** off the Old Head of Kinsale in May 1915, a major factor in bringing the U.S. into World War One after the inquest in the Old Courthouse returned a verdict of murder against the Kaiser and the German forces.

However, there is much more to this unique town, located in a safe harbour, and in a strategic location on the **trade route between Europe and North America**. It was a base for earliest settlers, the Celts, and the Vikings, who called it the *Place of the Inner Fjord*, followed by the Normans and the English. Saint Multose (also known as Eltin) established the first church and is reputed to have cursed the fortunes of the local residents, while another legend claims that **Carraig Oisín** on the World's End dates back to the Fianna who watched for Roman invaders at the Old Head. Eight hundred years ago the Normans built **Saint Multose Church**, and the DeCourcey castles at the Old Head and Ringrone as **Kinsale became a walled town**.

Their English descendants held Kinsale as a market centre, building an important commercial and naval harbour which became a haven for local and visiting fishing fleets. **Cromwell's forces** destroyed the Carmelite Abbey in 1649, when many died and women and children sent to work as slaves on the sugar plantations in the West Indies; Kinsale saw the landing of **James II** in his attempt to regain the English throne with the aid of Louis XIV and his flight to France after his defeat at the **Battle of the Boyne** by William of Orange in 1690; the Penal Laws are recalled by Mass Rocks and the Catholic Walk; the County Council office was part of the Workhouse used during **the Famine** when relief schemes included the World's End Road and the area near the Tourist Office.

As ships grew bigger the harbour declined and was partly filled in to create the centre of the town, which now depended on the military and fishing for survival. The **Civil War** of 1922 saw the destruction of Charles Fort, the Army and Police Barracks and the fishing industry declined so Kinsale became a poor derelict town with many young people forced to emigrate.

Investment from Germany, France and, especially, the U.S. (Eli Lilly), helped economic recovery and Kinsale became **a world tourist centre**, famous for food, golf, angling and sailing as well as being acclaimed as a special Heritage Town. The Norman **Saint Multose Church, Desmond Castle and Wine Museum**, the Courthouse and the star-shaped **Charles Fort** and **James Fort** are the focus of the **Heritage Town Walks** that brings the past to life and show how the history of Kinsale is the history of Ireland. The town has had a number of famous residents, Privy Councillor, Robert Southwell donor of the Gift (Alms) Houses, Alexander "**Robinson Crusoe**" Selkirk, The **Irish Giant**, Patrick Cotter O'Brien, **writers** Lennox Robinson and Robert Gibbings, the **Arctic explorers**, Mortimer and Timothy McCarthy who sailed with Scott and Shackleton, and **politicians** Tom Johnson, first leader of the Irish Labour Party and Tommy Mullins, founder member of Fianna Fail.

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Kinsale Heritage Town Walks, daily at 10.30 a.m. and 4.30 p.m.
Departs Tourist Office: Adults 5 euro and Children free.