EXPLORE MORE WHILE YOU’RE HERE
YOU ARE INVITED...

Why not take advantage of your visit to Ireland during the EU Presidency and really get to the heart of the island, with an extra few days exploring the culture and scenery.

We would be happy to cover up to two nights’ accommodation and travel costs in Ireland for you to research your story. This pack contains a few ideas for inspiration.

If you would like to discuss a bespoke itinerary with us, we would be delighted to suggest options and make arrangements for you. The contact details for our European and US PR team are supplied overleaf.
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DUBLIN

As friendly as a village and as intimate as a pub, Dublin has been twice nominated by TripAdvisor as the “Friendliest City in Europe”. Extend your trip by an extra day or two and sample some of what Dublin has to offer.

See priceless pieces (absolutely free)
Dublin’s galleries and museums hold priceless treasures – and you can visit them for free. Gaze at a stunning Bronze Age gold collar in the National Museum or be moved by the incredible Iron Age bog bodies, preserved from around 400BC to 200BC.

Then there’s the National Gallery of Ireland’s own spectacular discovery – a Caravaggio masterpiece, The Taking of Christ. It’s one of the highlights in a collection that includes Van Gogh, Monet, Titian, Rubens, Van Dyck and Irish expressionist Jack B Yeats.

You can stare into the artistic chaos of Francis Bacon’s Studio at the Hugh Lane Gallery; seek out works by Dorothy Cross, Louise Bourgeois and filmmaker Neil Jordan at the Irish Museum of Modern Art; and learn about Eileen Gray – one of the world’s most influential designers – at the National Museum of Decorative Arts & History.

Pull a pint and raise a glass to the black stuff
The finest views of the city are to be had from atop Dublin’s Guinness Storehouse. The Gravity Bar is like a glass bird’s nest, with views stretching from rooftops to parkland and steeples to mountains. You’ll have to get through the Storehouse’s seven storeys first, though.

The exhibition here has the whole sensory experience of the production process of Guinness covered: you’ll touch, taste and smell what goes into the world’s most famous stout. In the advertising section, recall the toucans, ostriches, and award-winning surfers of the brand’s past iconic advertising. Finally, learn the secret to pouring the perfect pint.

See the “most beautiful book in the world”
Marvel at the detail in the renowned Book of Kells at Trinity College. This lavishly illustrated manuscript of the Gospels dates from the 9th century, and is a marvel of Early Christian art carried out by the steady hands of skilled monks. The 65-metre Long Room in the Old Library is an incredible sight, and is filled with old books, marble busts and a barrel-vaulted ceiling. This is also the room that inspired the imagery of the Jedi Archive in Star Wars Episode II.

Ask “What’s the story?”
In a city laced with literature, there’s a story around every corner. And in every pub. Toast to a few on the Dublin Literary Pub Crawl – an actor-led tour tracking Dublin’s literary luminaries.

Hear the story of WB Yeats, Ireland’s most illustrious poet, and his muse Maud Gonne at a National Library exhibition deemed “dazzling” by the New York Times. Around the corner in St Anne’s Church, see the bust of Bram Stoker – the Dubliner who wrote Dracula. He married Florence Balcombe, Oscar Wilde’s ex-girlfriend, in this hallowed place.

James Joyce is known for setting a story or two in Dublin – from his short stories collection, Dubliners, to his famous work Ulysses. Explore his life and work at the James Joyce Centre.

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A walkers’ paradise, the Wicklow Mountains are a sprawling landscape of rugged peaks, blanket bog, old military roads, deserted villages, purple heather and glacial corrie lakes. An hour’s drive from Dublin, it makes the perfect escape for a blast of authentic Irish wilderness.

**Explore an ancient refuge**
Dropped into these dramatic hills is Glendalough, a monastic settlement founded by St Kevin in the 6th century. Glendalough is Wicklow National Park’s honeypot, welcoming more visitors than anywhere else in the county. But don’t stop there – more architectural oases await including Powerscourt House and Gardens, and Russborough House, former home to art connoisseurs Lord Alfred and Lady Beit.

**Lights, camera, action**
Russborough isn’t the only Wicklow spot with star quality. For years, the county has been Hollywood’s movie location of choice in Ireland, with Powerscourt, Kilruddery House and even the mountains themselves forming the backdrop for productions such as *Braveheart*, *Excalibur*, *Michael Collins*, *The Count of Monte Cristo* and *P.S. I Love You*, starring Hilary Swank and Gerard Butler.

**Stellar stallions and prehistoric tombs**
Less than an hour north of Dublin in counties Louth and Meath lies the Boyne Valley, once Ireland’s ancient capital. A trip to the prehistoric passage tombs at the Unesco World Heritage Site of Brú na Bóinne (Newgrange, Knowth and Dowth) is highly recommended and shouldn’t be missed. The Battle of the Boyne Visitor Centre near Oldbridge is also highly recommended. The battle was fought in 1690 between William of Orange and King James III and you can visit the battle site, parklands and formal gardens here.

To the west of Dublin, County Kildare is famous for its horseracing festivals at The Curragh, Punchestown and Naas. Also in Kildare, the Irish National Stud is home to the country’s most prestigious horse breeding facility, and boasts wonderful Japanese Gardens and a Horse Museum.
KILKENNY

At once medieval and modern, Kilkenny is the full package with its artisan craft scene and intriguing architecture. Atmospheric and charming, it’s place that fuses medieval history with cosmopolitan modern city life.

Soak up the atmosphere of a historic castle
A 12th-century castle for £50? The city’s famous Norman castle was home to the Butlers of Ormonde for nearly five centuries, before the 6th Marquess of Ormonde offered it to the city of Kilkenny for a rather meagre £50 in 1967. Filled with wonderful paintings and rich with architectural detail, the castle is a one of the city’s must-visits.

Pick up a hurling stick and make like a local
The ancient Irish game of hurling has deep links with Kilkenny (whose team are known as “The Cats”). The county’s team colours – black and amber – are often seen on flags flying from windows and cars.

If you want to get under the skin of the sport, then hook up with The Ultimate Hurling Experience Tour. Rated five out of five on TripAdvisor, the tour gives a great insight into the game of hurling, which, according to tour guide Jim Croke, has been compared to a “mixture of ice hockey and murder”.

Experience spine-tingling chills at the Black Abbey
The 13th-century Black Abbey is a world of candlelit serenity, with the largest rosary window of its kind in Ireland. Depicting The Life of Christ, it contains an astonishing 10,000 pieces of ruby and sapphire glass – all taken out and beautifully restored by the Abbey Stained-Glass Company.

Discover a “city pad” with a difference
Just a short distance from the Black Abbey is the medieval jewellery box of Rothe House and Garden, a restored 16th-century Tudor home, where archaeologists recently found the remains of an earlier medieval townhouse (thought to be the “city pad” of the Abbot of nearby Duiske Abbey – a character who liked to dine on swans and drink the finest Bordeaux).

These days Rothe House is a museum, with a great collection of artefacts including a Viking sword and stone axe heads. The garden, restored in 2008, is a reconstruction of a historic garden from the 17th century.

Get crafty, Irish-style
Artists and craftspeople work in studios all around Kilkenny city. Renowned potter Nicholas Mosse creates his elegant pieces here, and the Kilkenny Design Centre anchors the city’s retail scene with a stunning collection of jewellery, knitwear, Celtic gifts, china, crystal and pottery.

And don’t miss the National Craft Gallery at Castle Yard – previously home to the stables and coach houses of Kilkenny Castle – where you can watch clay workers in action, or have a go yourself.
Foodie Heaven
Cork is one of the island’s biggest culinary hot spots. Fresh fish floods into the city from nearby towns such as Bantry and Castletownbere, while artisan producers furnish restaurant dishes and market stalls with sumptuous dairy products and meats from the surrounding pastureland. A visit to the English Market, a roofed food market that has been trading since 1788, is a must when in Cork, as is dining in one of the city’s many eateries.

Take a moonlight kayak
Atlantic Sea Kayaking’s starlight/moonlight kayak trip was voted one of the top 10 kayak trips in the world by TripAdvisor and people are continuing to rave about their experience. “It totally blew our minds”, writes one happy participant. “This was the highlight of our Ireland trip,” says another.

Culture
Whether it’s art, opera, jazz, classical music or festival fun, the tempo of Cork’s cultural side is definitely upbeat. The city was European Capital of Culture in 2005 and it didn’t stop there. Cork has many great festivals celebrating the arts, the most popular being the Cork Jazz Festival in October.

Gateway to the southwest
Cork city is the gateway to the wild beauty of West Cork, with miles of coastline, inlets, deserted beaches, lively little villages and of course, fantastic seafood. A trip to West Cork makes any trip to Ireland special.
KILLARNEY AND THE RING OF KERRY

As the name suggests, “the Ring” begins and ends at the same point: Killarney. Queen Victoria visited here in 1861 and stayed in Muckross House, a grand Victorian mansion at the core of Killarney National Park. Killarney has been a centre of Irish tourism for generations and easily blends the traditional with the modern in a spectacular setting by the world famous Killarney lakes. It is perfectly situated for those who wish to avail of its excellent golf links and ample range of outdoor activities.

Enjoy the stunning landscapes of the haunting Gap of Dunloe, a hike in the Killarney National Park and the scenic point of Ladies View, all of which are only a short journey away. Killarney itself is a lively, enjoyable town, and the perfect place to enjoy a rich slice of Irish culture.

Gems on the Ring
Tracing a chunk of Kerry coast, the Ring of Kerry is around 180 kilometres of spectacular scenery peppered with towns and villages, each with their own rich history. The Ring is generally considered to be one of the highlights of a trip to Ireland.

Visit pretty towns such as Sneem, Waterville and Killorglin, or for something more adventurous head out to the Early Christian monastic island outpost of Skellig Michael in the Atlantic – it’s a Unesco World Heritage Site, and a once-in-a-lifetime experience. If you fancy a more sedate leg-stretch, take a walk on Rossbeigh Strand and feel the invigorating rush of the Atlantic breeze.

From stone forts to medieval castles to grand manor houses, the Ring of Kerry has something from every epoch set in a spectacular backdrop.
Galway City

Known as the “City of the Tribes” because of the 14 merchant families that historically dominated it, Galway is famous for its artistic and bohemian atmosphere. With a wealth of cultural events throughout the year, notably the Galway Arts Festival, this city will make your heart beat just a little faster...

Shop for some traditional Celtic jewellery
Call in and watch Jonathan Margetts tinkering with rings in Thomas Dillon’s shop. He’s an expert on the history of the Claddagh Ring, Ireland’s most famous traditional piece of jewellery. The ring consists of two hands holding a heart that wears a crown and started life in the fishing village of Claddagh, a community of Irish-speaking families who still elect their own king.

The rings were originally made in Thomas Dillon’s shop, which dates from 1750. Today, the store sells gold and sterling silver reproductions of this much sought-after symbol of romance.

Savour the tastes
From award-winning chips at McDonagh’s to fabulous farmhouse Irish cheeses at Sheridan’s – you’ll find something to your taste in Galway. No visit is complete without calling into the family-owned Griffin’s Bakery (going strong since 1876 and now in its fifth generation) for their unbeatable breads, including bracks, rye, soda, gluten-free, multigrain and even one with an Irish whiskey kick.

Experience a musical medieval church
Packed with curious corners and ancient tombs, Ireland’s largest medieval parish church, St Nicholas’s Collegiate Church, was built in 1320. These days, traditional Irish “Tunes in the Church” features the rector on his concert flute on summer nights.

Christopher Columbus is reputed to have prayed here in 1477 before setting off on his voyage of discovery to the New World.

Explore the house of James Joyce’s wife and muse
Hidden away in the narrow Bowling Green is what looks like an unremarkable house. Now a museum, it was the tiny family home of Nora Barnacle, James Joyce’s wife and muse. The couple had their first date on 16 June 1904. This rendezvous was immortalised in Joyce’s most famous work Ulysses, and is now universally known and celebrated as Bloomsday.

Kick up your heels at Monroe’s Tavern
Take your partner’s hand for the Siege of Ennis or the Walls of Limerick traditional Irish dances. Tuesday night is set-dancing night at Monroe’s Tavern, a whitewashed pub in Galway’s West End. “It’s a great shindig,” says bartender Catriona Cormally. “And once the tourists have watched for 30 minutes there’s no stopping them getting up to dance, too.”

Don’t feel like dancing? Don’t worry. Galway has a ton of great traditional pubs, including Tigh Neachtain and The Crane Bar, where all you need to do it sit, sip and sample.
Connemara’s traditions
The smoke of the peat, the swaying bog grasses, ancient stone walls... it could only be Ireland’s traditional heartland of Connemara. Ireland unplugged, if you will. The rugged landscape and remoteness of the region has allowed Connemara to hold fast to its old stone walls, native ponies and traditional pubs. All of this and more make Connemara feel like the essence of Ireland: Irish language, song, dance and literature are all to be found in abundance here.

Bounded by the Atlantic Ocean, it’s not surprising that Connemara has a strong seafaring tradition. Bowls of seafood chowder flecked with meaty mussels are served up on pub tables every night, and the sweet local crab is legendary.

Outdoor playground
The west of Ireland also offers a great range of outdoor activities – you can canoe in a fjord, hike through on an ancient island, and cycle along the Great Western Greenway. No wonder people push themselves to the limits here with the super-tough Connemarathon race, Ironman 70.3 Galway and the Gaelforce Connemara Adventure Challenge. This is Ireland’s adventure playground.

Galway city is a gateway to the stunning scenery of Connemara and the Aran Islands. Connemara’s charms have wowed Hollywood in its time and when you get here you’ll understand why Oscar Wilde termed it a “Savage Beauty”.

Connemara
The singer Enya is being interviewed on radio. The interviewer praises her album and lets “every last note flow” from *Orinoco Flow*. Where do the songs come from? “I get very inspired by being home in Donegal,” she says.

Of course she does. Donegal’s coastline is miles of deserted white sand beaches. Along it you’ll also find the ancient stone fort Grianan of Aileach, high above the Inishowen Peninsula; its origins date back to 1700BC. Yes, that’s right, BC.

The coastline dips into the Irish-speaking seaside towns of Gweedore and Dungloe, and soars up to the Slieve League cliffs, one of the highest sea cliffs in Europe. Meanwhile, the stunning Glenveagh National Park and Castle contains the largest herd of red deer in the country.

And the area has even created its own fabric: Donegal Tweed is a unique cloth woven by hand on traditional wooden looms, and Magee’s in Donegal town is the largest stockist of Donegal tweed in the world.

Coastal playground
The waters on the Donegal coastline are a nirvana for surf-seekers. Bundoran has been championed by CNN and National Geographic as one of the world’s top surfing towns. Above the surf, rock climbers are regularly seen scrambling up Donegal’s cliffs – take it from us, they’re pretty high.

Sligo – natural born beauty
Enya wasn’t the only one to find inspiration on Ireland’s northwest coast. The wild side can be found further south, in County Sligo. Two irish men define this part of the island: artist Jack B Yeats, who painted it, and his brother, poet William B Yeats, who wrote about it.

Before delving into Yeats Country, though, dip into the beaches. Easkey, Rosses Point and Strandhill are gems on the county’s coastline. It’s at Mullaghmore Beach, though, where we get to meet the full scale of a huge Sligo icon: Ben Bulben.

Now sheltering WB Yeats’s final resting place at Drumcliff, Ben Bulben mountain is Sligo’s most impressive natural sight. The area is also home to Classiebawn Castle, which was once owned by British royalty.

Royal connections
Swing inland from Sligo town towards Knocknarea Mountain. At the top, you’ll find a pile of stones, said to be the resting place of possibly Ireland’s most infamous and legendary royal, Queen Medb. A legacy of warmongering marks this Queen of Connacht as a character ripe for storytelling. Whether her own story ends under the cairn of rock, we’re not sure, but the drama of the place suits her memory.

In his poem, *Under Ben Bulben*, WB Yeats encouraged the horseman to “pass by”. But there’s plenty around Donegal and Sligo to make you want to stay.
Titanic walk
There is nowhere in the world to uncover the fascinating story of Titanic like Belfast, where she was built. Get your Titanic experience off to a start with a Titanic Walking Tour. Journey into the past and walk in the footsteps of Titanic’s creators with a guided tour of Queen’s Island where Titanic was designed, built and launched. You can also access the hugely evocative Titanic Drawing Offices, the recently refurbished Titanic Slipways and Titanic’s Dock & Pumphouse.

Titanic Belfast
This £97m visitor attraction opened in March 2012 and is the world’s largest Titanic-themed attraction. The impressive six-floor building features nine interpretive and interactive galleries that explore the sights, sounds, smells and stories of Titanic, as well as the city and people that made her. The iconic structure is right in the heart of Titanic Quarter on the banks of the River Lagan, from where Titanic set sail on her fateful voyage 100 years ago. It’s an experience not to be missed.

Rayanne House – Titanic Menu
Now for a unique Titanic Belfast treat: dating back to 1886, the award-winning Rayanne House is the perfect setting for a unique Titanic-themed dining experience. The Titanic Menu is a recreation of the last menu served in the first class restaurant on board the iconic ship. Head Chef Conor McClelland has meticulously recreated the dishes, with nine lavish courses boasting everything from champagne-laced asparagus and watercress salad to filet mignon topped with foie gras and truffle.

The Ulster Museum
The newly renovated Ulster Museum reopened in 2010 and is the proud holder of numerous design awards. Come face to face with dinosaurs, meet an Egyptian Mummy and see modern masterpieces. As Northern Ireland’s treasure house of the past and present, the museum is home to a rich collection of art, history and natural sciences and is free to all visitors.

Lyric Theatre / Grand Opera House / MAC
Belfast is a cultural hive of activity and there is always something going on. Whether you’re a drama queen or musical buff, The Lyric and The Grand Opera House or the newly opened MAC in the Cathedral Quarter will have something to tickle your fancy. After an evening at the theatre, head to Great Victoria Street where you can enjoy a drink in two very different hoststries. First stop is the Crown Bar Liquor Saloon, one of Northern Ireland’s best known pubs. Its ornate Victorian exterior and delightful interior make it one of the National Trust’s greatest treasures. Then head next door to Robinsons, where you can see a range of unique Titanic memorabilia. And a good finish to the evening? Why not round things off with some traditional music in Fibber Magee’s.

Belfast
On 2 April 1912, RMS Titanic sailed out of Belfast Lough. The story of this magnificent ship and her tragic end has captured the hearts and imaginations of people all over the world. Belfast, the city where Titanic was designed, built and launched, celebrated and commemorated the centenary of Titanic’s maiden voyage with the opening of the world’s largest Titanic visitor experience, Titanic Belfast, in 2012. But this attraction is just the icing on this fantastic cityscape...
The Giant’s Causeway

The Causeway Coast is certainly clocking up the accolades – the Lonely Planet guide recognised the magnificent vistas along the breathtaking Antrim coastline, whilst the Guardian ranked the Causeway Coastal Route as the second most spectacular road trip in the world.

A survey by Jacob’s Creek ranked the scenic Antrim coastline as the fifth in the top ten most beautiful views in the world (just behind icons such as the Sydney Opera House and Victoria Falls). Not to miss out on the action, Michael Palin rated the train journey from Belfast to Derry-Londonderry, which at certain points travels along the Causeway Coast, as one of the most spectacular train journeys on the planet.

An undoubted highlight of this coastal odyssey is the magnificent Giant’s Causeway, a Unesco World Heritage Site. The moment your eyes fall on the 40,000 hexagonal basalt columns, sliding into the sea like dark stone steps into bubbling foamy waves, is a jaw-dropping one. Walking amongst them is even better.

Carrick-a-rede rope bridge

Enjoy the challenge of crossing the rope bridge, which spans a 24m deep and 18m wide chasm over the stormy Atlantic Ocean to Sheep Island. The stunning views stretch over the sea to the Scottish coast and once you get back onto terra firma, you can relax on coastal walks along the limestone headlands.

Ireland’s oldest licensed distillery

Visit the Old Bushmills Distillery and learn the secrets of the special water from St Columb’s Rill in Ireland’s oldest licensed whiskey distillery. Take the tour and pass by the shining copper stills and age-old oak casks before sampling the finest Irish Malt Whiskey. Make sure there is a designated driver on hand so you can fully enjoy the Bushmills experience.

Surf’s up at Portrush

You’ve spent the last few days looking at the Atlantic Ocean – now it’s time to get in it with a surfing lesson at Portrush. Don your wetsuit, grab your board and head into the bracing Atlantic waves, suitably helped by enthusiastic instructors, all former members of the Irish Surf Team. There are lessons available all year round, and instructors will be happy to recommend the hotspots in town for eating out and soaking up the nightlife after your lesson.

If surfing’s not your thing, then why not enjoy a sea safari exploring the coastline from the Atlantic Ocean. There’s no better way to discover the delights of the north coast of Ireland.

This is an area of unsurpassed beauty, a unique fusion of tangible heritage and magnificent scenery. An area whose breathtaking and rugged coastline merges into the romantic landscape of deep silent glens and lush forest parks. This region has been made famous by the Causeway Coastal Route, which is regarded as “one of the world’s great road journeys”.

It’s a voyage not to be rushed and offers a real journey of exploration, where imagination meets reality and where villages and towns, castles and rocky shores are waiting to be discovered.
DERRY-LONDONDERRY
UK CITY OF CULTURE 2013

For a small Northern Ireland city, of just 100,000 people located on the edge of Europe, the creative output from Derry-Londonderry’s sons and daughters is pretty amazing.

We’re talking Nobel Laureates (poet Seamus Heaney, peace-maker John Hume); Whitbread Prize winners (Jennifer Johnston, Maggie O’Farrell); a Tony Award winner (Brian Friel); a two-time Turner Prize nominee (Willie Doherty); Grammy Award nominee (Paul Brady); multi-Ivor Novello Award winner (Phil Coulter); multi-platinum, gold and silver disc winners and number one pop stars (Coulter, Dana, Nadine Coyle and Fergal Sharkey).

The year of 2013 will see Derry-Londonderry hosting arts events of world-class stature in what will also form the most jam-packed and biggest cultural programme ever to assemble on the island of Ireland.

The programme includes the famous Turner Prize (23 October 2013 – 5 January 2014), presented outside England for the first time. There are performances by the London Symphony Orchestra (18 March) and a new cantata, which will be performed simultaneously in London and Derry-Londonderry. Award-winning choreographer Hofesh Shechter, one of the UK’s most exciting artists, will take 20 local young musicians into his band to perform the spectacular premiere of Political Mother: Derry-Londonderry Uncut (8–9 March).

The first visit to Northern Ireland of the Royal Ballet for over 20 years (30–31 March) is causing excitement, too, as is the return of the Field Day Theatre Company, a potent theatrical and cultural-political grouping which began as an artistic collaboration between playwright Brian Friel (hailed as the Irish Chekhov) and actor Stephen Rea in the 1980s.

Field Day will present several major productions throughout the year, including Friel’s renowned Translations (13–17 March), and a new play by American playwright Sam Shepard.

When you go, remember...

Walk the Walls
Take a walking tour of the Walls and you’ll discover the fascinating history behind this city. Passing through Derry-Londonderry’s imposing gates is like entering another world. Through these cobbled streets and hilly rises you can explore a cultural capital carved out of history. The 400-year-old Walls are some of the best preserved fortifications in Europe and have never been breached. Follow the amazing story of the city, from its 6-th century founder St Columba to the present, and enjoy an exhibition about a Spanish Armada shipwreck en route. Your guide will conjure up scenes from the famous 105-day siege of 1688 when the Apprentice Boys closed the city’s gates against the forces of King James II and in doing so, irrevocably changed the course of European history.
Visit the Tower Museum
Permanent exhibitions at the museum include The Story of Derry exhibition and the Armada Shipwreck – La Trinidad Valencera exhibition, which use display and interactive techniques to really make them pop. Throughout the year the museum also plays host to a range of temporary exhibitions, so make sure to check what’s on.

Marvel at St Columb’s Cathedral
The atmospheric St Columb’s Cathedral was the first cathedral of its kind built after the Reformation. Listen out for the oldest church bells in Ireland and discover artefacts from the Siege of Derry.

You’ll also come across some famous personalities whose stories are linked with the cathedral, such as hymn-writer and poet Cecil Frances Alexander, the Earl-Bishop Frederick Harvey, and the philosopher George Berkeley.

The Cathedral has recently reopened following a significant restoration project, at a total cost of £4m.

Cross the Peace Bridge to Ebrington
Derry-Londonderry sits on the banks of the River Foyle. The recently opened Peace Bridge, the city’s newest iconic structure, is a walk and cycle bridge across the river. It is the city’s third river crossing, linking the Walled City to the new developments at Ebrington and St Columb’s Park.

Ebrington, originally built as a barracks for the British Army in the 19th century, is currently being regenerated as a major hub that includes a mixed use site for office, retail, commercial, tourist and residential purposes.

An arts and culture cluster is envisaged within the Star Fort which includes the Parade Ground and several listed buildings. The Parade Ground has been developed into a 14,000 capacity performance plaza and will be a major venue during the UK City of Culture celebrations throughout 2013.
**The G8 Summit**

This picturesque region, renowned for its numerous Lakes, will play host to the G8 Summit in 2013. The summit will take place in the 5-star Lough Erne Resort just outside Enniskillen where US Open Champion Rory McIlroy has been seen enjoying the course.

**Shift down a gear and cruise the Waterway**

Often referred to as the Lake District of Northern Ireland, Fermanagh is home to the longest navigable waterway in Europe, which has made it one of the premier destinations for a cruising holiday, as well as a haven for anglers and water sport enthusiasts.

**Culture**

The history and heritage of the county is to be seen at every turn – in the three stunning National Trust properties as well as the numerous other castles and ancient buildings. Devenish Island, with its 6th-century monastic site is truly unique to Fermanagh and accessible by a short boat trip. Once there you can view extensive ruins, including a 12th-century Round Tower, graveyard and 15th-century carved cross.
As well as hosting the Presidency of the Council of the European Union, we’ll be throwing a year-long, country-wide party. A party worth coming back for. Lasting through 2013, expect epic events and cosy parties. Reunions and homecomings. Festivals and fairs. Expect it to be the perfect excuse to give friends a flavour of Ireland. April sees the fittest and the fastest racing through Connemara amidst amazing scenery. The blooms come out in all their glory in Dublin at the end of May. West Cork says a more friendly hello to Pirates and Slaves in June; while Kilkenny gets crafty with its 40th Arts Festival. Oh, to be a redhead who is also left-handed: August is the month to head to Mulligar and Crosshaven. The Gathering will be the best reason to come to Ireland. And the best reason to come back.