

101

Reasons Why

CORK

is Better than

DUBLIN



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MERCIER PRESS

INTRODUCTION

Coming up with 101 ways that Cork beats Dublin isn't as easy as you might think.

First of all, whittling it down from 1,001 took the best part of a year.

Secondly, you have to juggle with the great conundrum – Cork has both a superiority and an inferiority complex when it comes to Dublin. We can be a bit funny that way.

Speaking of funny, Dublin readers should remember that most of what follows is supposed to be a joke. Also, don't forget to move your finger along under the words as you read and there's no shame in taking a guess at the bigger ones.

SECTION I

TOURIST ATTRACTIONS

THE ENGLISH MARKET

Four of the five most visited tourist attractions in the country are currently in Dublin. Top of the list is of course the Guinness Storehouse, where tourists can escape from the heroin addicts for a moment and enjoy an unobstructed view of Bargaintown on the other side of the Liffey. No wonder it's so popular.

The *Book of Kells* is a big draw in Trinity College. The book was stolen from the people of Meath and taken to Dublin, in the same way that the Parthenon Marbles were stolen from the Greeks by the Earl of Elgin and put on display in London. Acting like an English aristocrat is

taboo in many parts of Ireland, but not so much in Trinity.

Of course none of these places can compare to the English Market in Cork. You can walk in for free and stare at Pat O'Connell, the fishmonger who has laughed at more royals than the guy who worked the guillotine during the French Revolution. Enjoy some authentic sights and smells, safe in the knowledge that you won't have to exit through a gift shop. And if food isn't really your thing, keep your eyes peeled for something you'll never see in a Dublin tourist attraction: locals. (Some say that's a plus when it comes to Dublin tourist attractions, but we'll stay nice.)

FITZGERALD PARK

Who cares that the Phoenix Park is the largest enclosed city park in Europe? It's a bit like boasting about the tallest mountain in Longford. The ideal city park is a quiet, central space where people from all over town can get together and eyeball each other. The Phoenix Park, on the other hand, is a giant field full of nervous deer, bad football and urban dogging. (You're never more than 400 metres away from a small crowd peering into a Kia Sportage.) Meanwhile, Dublin's smaller city parks like Stephen's Green and Merrion Square are for people who like listening to traffic.

Fitzgerald Park suffers from none of the above. Instead, it offers one of the great pleasures

in life: looking across the Lee and wondering where Sunday's Well people get their money. And where else in the world would you get a Shakey Bridge that doesn't shake, a Hanging Garden that doesn't hang, and a museum with a photograph of Roy Keane?

Here's what you need to know about a decent park. Size doesn't matter. What you need is atmosphere, tranquillity, swans and the overwhelming smell of fake tan when families come in to take their Communion photos. Let's put it another way – you need Fitzgerald Park.

KINSALE

Some people reckon Kinsale is all about promiscuity. I can't comment because I'm from the town and still have relations living there, which could make it awkward the next time I meet them (at a swingers' party).

Sex aside, Dubliners reckon Kinsale isn't a patch on Dalkey or Howth, because their heads would explode with the notion that an off-DART town could be amazing. But the only area where Kinsale lags behind those two towns is in property prices (though there's not much in it, to be fair).

It boasts a drop-dead gorgeous harbour, the river, a couple of historic forts, and the Kinsale Rugby 7s event, which is popular with people

who like drinking beer from a glass boot with a South Seas giant called Jasper. (Don't mock it until you've tried it!) That's before you sit down to have a drink in the sun outside The Bulman, or to eat at Fishy Fishy or The Black Pig or one of the other outstanding restaurants in town. Follow that with a guided walking tour and hear how much Irish (and American) history is stuffed into this one little town.

Dalkey and Howth can't compete. There's something for everyone in Kinsale – and no, that isn't a swingers' party reference, but I see where you're going and I like it.

THE BLARNEY STONE

Yanks. They bring out the worst in us. Of course you can't blame them for coming here in droves – after all, it's never a bad idea to put an ocean between yourself and Donald Trump. But all it takes is one sniff of a dollar and we're riverdancing like mad in front of them, trying to flog a CD of rebel songs and an authentic shillelagh fresh off the boat from Shanghai. If you doubt this, try to walk from Westmoreland Street through Temple Bar without passing a single begorrah. You can hardly blame the Dubs for cashing in, but it makes the centre of the capital feel like BallyMcPaddyLand.

If only Dublin had a castle in a nearby village

which would attract every visiting American within a radius of 100 kilometres, so they could pay to effectively snog every other American tourist that has ever visited the place, before popping into a large shop that sells quality Irish goods, so that when they come back into the city they are done with all the Paddy stuff.

That's Dublin's greatest tragedy – it doesn't have a Blarney Stone to suck the Paddy madness out of the Yanks, while also allowing us to keep our shillelagh flogging out of town.

It's time for a new take on the Cork vs Dublin rivalry.

Cork is more kefir cocktails than Tanora these days; Dublin reckons it's like Berlin because it has two intersecting tram lines.

This book takes a twenty-first-century look at the two places, asking who's got the better statues, food, airport, characters, pubs, views and more, answering Cork every time.

The second city gets a roasting too, though. Because if there's one thing funnier than Dubs with delusions of grandeur, it's Cork people convinced they live in paradise, boy.

