

The Aran Islands

Arans (na hÁrainneacha – The Aran Islands are located in Galway Bay. They are the last remnants of a ridge that separated Galway Bay from the Atlantic Ocean. At one time Galway Bay was a freshwater lake. The remains of Early Christian monuments are scattered throughout the islands. It is to these island that monks such as St Brendan the navigator or St Colm Cille(Columba) of Iona came to study. This monastic movement which owes some of its origins to the Aran islands led to Ireland’s fame as ‘**The island of saints and scholars**’.

Getting there:

Aer Arann Aer Arann Islands’s airport is located at Connemara Regional Airport in the town of Inverin, just 19 miles west of Galway city. The scenic drive along the coast road (R336) features breathtaking views of Galway Bay, and brings you through the Irish speaking Gaeltacht.

TICKET TYPE FARE

€ Adult Return 45 Student Return 37 Child Return (12 or under) 25 Free Travel Scheme

Prices subject to change

Aran Island Ferries While the South - West coast of the island battles with the Atlantic, the North - East coast offers smooth passage for visitors between the mainland at Ros a' Mhíl and the Islands. Aran Island Ferries depart from Ros a' Mhíl a port 23 miles west of Galway City centre Passengers are advised to allow **one hour** driving time from the City to the Port and must check in ½ an hour prior to sailing time.

Prices

	Return Ferry Fare	Return Coach Fare	Single Ferry Fare	Single Coach Fare
Adult	€25.00	€7.00	€13.00	€4.00
Children	€13.00	€4.00	€7.50	€2.50
OAPs	€20.00	€6.00	€11.00	€3.50
Students	€20.00	€6.00	€11.00	€3.50

Prices subject to change

The Islands:

Inishmore Árainn Mhór/Inis Mór

Inishmaan Inis Meáin/Inis Meadhóin .

Inisheer Inis Thiar/Inis Oírr/Inis Oirthir

Visitors come in large numbers, particularly in the summer time. There are several Early Christian, Iron Age forts and attractions on the islands, including:

Teampull Bheanáin is considered the smallest church in the world .

Teaghlach Éinne(St. Enda's Household)

One of the earliest monasteries in Ireland was established on Inis Mór in the 5th century by St Enda. The remains of an 8th century church known as Teaghlach Éinne(Enda's Household) can be seen in the graveyard at Cill Éinne. It is said that Enda and 120 other saints are buried in this graveyard

Teampall Chiaráin is in the village of Mainistir (meaning monastery). It is said to have been founded by St Ciarán of Clonmacnoise who studied here under St Enda before sailing up the Shannon to establish his foundation at Clonmacnoise

Round Tower

Just south of the cottages in Cill Éinne is the remains of a round tower which dates from about the 10th century. It is here that St Enda's monks are said to have taken refuge. A well dedicated to St Enda ' Dabhach Éinne' and a small stone altar is closeby.

Teampall Mac Duach and Teampall na Naomh

Both of these early churches are in the heart of the village of Cill Mhuirbhígh. It is an early possibly 8th -9th century church dedicated to St Colmán Mac Duach who founded one of the most important monastic sites of Connacht, Cill Mac Duach(Kilmacduagh), Co. Galway.

Altóir Cholmcille

This is a stone altar with an early inscribed cross on it along the shore between Cill Rónáin and Cill Éinne. It is not sign posted and one would need to ask directions. It seems to have been erected on an old mound possibly a Megalithic site. The traditional pilgrimage or *turas* is made at this site each year on St Colm Cille's feast day- June 9th. Seven stones are picked by each pilgrim from the stone vat on the altar and seven rounds are made sunwise(*turas deiseal*) of the grassy knoll. The water from the nearby overhanging cliff is collected and believed to hold curative powers.

Dun Aengus Dún Aonghasa, is an Iron Age fort situated on the edge of a cliff at a height of 300 feet overlooking the Atlantic Ocean on Inishmore.

Black Fort (Dún Dúchathair) O'Brien's Castle on Inis Oírr in the Aran Islands was built in the 14th century. The castle was taken from the O'Briens by the O'Flaherty clan of Connemara in 1582.

Island crafts

Aran Island sweater

The **Aran** is a style of sweater that takes its name from the Aran Islands. It is sometimes known as a fisherman sweater. A classical fisherman's sweater is a bulky garment with prominent cable patterns on the chest, often cream-colored. Originally the sweaters were knitted using unscoured wool that retained its natural oils . lanolin which made the garments water-resistant and meant they remained wearable even when wet. It was primarily the wives of island fishermen who knitted the sweaters. Some stitch patterns have a traditional interpretation. The honeycomb is a symbol of the hard-working bee. The cable, an integral part of the fisherman's daily life, is said to be a wish for safety and good luck when fishing. The diamond is a wish of success, wealth

Aran currach

The (modern) Aran version of the lightweight boat called the currach is made from canvas stretched over a sparse skeleton of thin laths, then covered in tar. It is designed to withstand the very rough seas of the open Atlantic. In calmer weather the Currachs would go out and spend the night fishing under the Cliffs of Moher , returning after dawn full with fish. Conventional shoes cannot be worn, so the fishermen wear soft calf-skin moccasins called pampooties, made of goatskin or cowskin.