



Destination WEDDINGS

FROM CELEBRITY COUPLES TO THOSE WITH IRISH ROOTS, WHEN IT COMES TO WEDDINGS, LOCATION IS EVERYTHING AND WHEN IT COMES TO LOCATION, IRELAND HAS IT ALL.

Weddings are full of customs and traditions but one thing that always stands out is the venue; this sets the tone for the entire celebration and apart from the dress, is the most important choice that any couple will make.

Since Ireland is a relatively small country, there are vast open spaces and endless castles and country homes with large swathes of land to fit the bill perfectly. If your dream is to be lord and lady of the manor, no problem; it's just a question of which stately home, how big and how many guests you intend to bring. Maybe you want to hire your own castle in its entirety for a few days, or do you want it all done for you by an in-house team? Whatever you choose there are an abundance of options – sometimes too many, so get expert help in the form of the wedding organizer at your choice of venue. They will already have all of the answers – including answers to questions you may not even have thought to ask.

Modern couples want a unique location as well as the opportunity to vacation with family and friends. Couples from the USA are finding that they can

spend several days celebrating with guests in Ireland for less than the cost of the average celebration back home. And when it comes to fairy-tale settings, they don't get much better than Ireland, not to mention, you get to visit a dream destination in the company of family and friends.

Some worry that the weather in the Emerald Isle might be a bit off-putting, but contrary to what you might think, it doesn't rain all of the time. Ireland's climate is temperate, which makes for an enjoyable visit at any time of the year. Therefore, you don't need to be over influenced by selecting a particular time of the year. Focus instead on what aspect of Ireland you want to enjoy and let this determine the timing. For instance, there are many people who prefer Ireland in the Fall when log fires are burning with warm food created by award winning chefs tasting particularly good as nature puts on spectacular color shows.

Regardless of the timing of your visit, the Irish welcome is always waiting and always warm. Your guests will be blown away with the beauty of Ireland and the unique identity of its people.



A Dream Destination

Castle Leslie Estate is home to some of the most unique and enchanting accommodation on one of Ireland's most breath-taking estates. Nestled on 1,000 acres of undulating Irish countryside, dotted with ancient woodlands and glittering lakes, this is a stunningly beautiful and secluded setting for a wedding.

Still in the hands of its founding family, it is steeped in history and full of character and charm. A truly private rural escape, and one of the most renowned luxury hotels in Ireland, Castle Leslie is a magical setting. Located in the picturesque village of Glaslough, Co. Monaghan, the Estate is only 80 minutes from Dublin, 60 minutes from Belfast and a million miles from anywhere.

At Castle Leslie Estate, expect individuality. Here, no two rooms are the same and attached to

each room is its own riveting story. One of the last great houses of Ireland still in the hands of the founders, the Leslie family arrived in Ireland in the 16th Century and can trace their ancestors back to Attila the Hun so when it comes to authentic, it doesn't get much better than this!

Filled with beautiful furniture, antiques and heirlooms, the castle has 20 original, uniquely decorated bedrooms and bathrooms. Which bedroom will be yours in this sumptuous castle hotel? Perhaps the Mauve Room where an Earl hid in the big white wardrobe in order to surprise a Queen or the Nursery where the giant dollhouse has been ingeniously turned into a bathroom. The Red Room, with its magnificent four poster bed and blessed with the most stunning views of Glaslough lake and the pleasure gardens, the huge paneled bath in the bathroom is the first bath ever installed in Ireland. This room



has accommodated numerous famous guests, including W.B. Yeats, the Irish poet. Whether your idea of heaven is a romantic boudoir designed with relaxation and privacy in mind or flamboyant room decorated with rich deep colors, there's a room to suit all tastes.

Additional accommodation is available in the boutique on-site country house style hotel called The Lodge, a restored stone stable-courtyard within the ancient woods and lakes that form the Castle Leslie Estate. With its 29 bedrooms and cut-stone stable courtyard, The Lodge has been lovingly restored and imaginatively decorated, retaining period features and original character throughout. For summer 2019 there'll be more rooms at The Lodge with the addition of 21 bedrooms bringing the total capacity at this property to 50 bedrooms. As an additional option or for families who want to stay together there are luxury home rental properties in the form of 2-bedroomed Old Stable Mews and 4 and 5-bedroom Village Cottages.

Castle Leslie Estate has a dedicated wedding team devoted to catering for your every need who appreciate that this is your special day and they are dedicated to providing the discreet personal attention and service that you deserve. Turning your dream into a reality is their heart's desire at one of the best hotels Ireland has to offer.

Having looked after bespoke weddings for couples from all over the world - including celebrity weddings for the likes of Paul McCarthy

and Heather Mills and most recently Pretty Little Liars' Sasha Pieterse and Hudson Sheaffer - the wedding team can take care of absolutely everything right down to the finest detail to surpass even your wildest dreams.

Renowned for superb food and tantalizing menus, the Estate offers a variety of sumptuous courses to make every celebration exceptionally special.

Executive Head Chef, Philip Brazil combines years of Michelin experience and personal passion with some tried-and-tested recipes of the past to create delectable menus. He and his team cater for all guests' needs with style and a smile!

Castle Leslie Estate has several unique locations where you can host your celebration. The magnificent Castle can accommodate wedding parties with up to 70 guests and for larger wedding parties, the Pavilion is a delightful space overlooking the glistening Glaslough Lake which can accommodate up to 260 guests. Wedding ceremonies can be also performed in the picturesque surroundings of St. Salvator's Church on the Estate or there are a number of beautiful ceremony venues in the area from St. Mary's Church in Glaslough to the magnificent St Patrick's Cathedral in Armagh and many in-between.

The Estate has the facilities to host wedding ceremonies, civil ceremonies and partnerships and there are some enchanting locations in which to host a ceremony or blessing. This might be inside the Castle or in the Castle

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Pavilion or for an even more unique experience, ceremonies can be held in the grounds of the Estate. Think leafy woodlands, shimmering lakes and stunning gardens that can be dressed and tailored to your requests. The grounds and woodlands also provide an exceptional background for wedding photography.

ACTIVITIES

Wedding parties can look forward to a huge array of on-site activities. There is pike fishing for the nature enthusiast, a sumptuous private cinema for movie buffs, exceptional walking trails for those who want to breathe in fresh country air, archery and clay target shooting for the more adventurous, falconry for those who like to experience nature up close, a Victorian spa for rejuvenation and of course the famous world-class equestrian center!

For something extra special a hot air balloon ride is a wonderful way to glide over the Estate – or to hold a private aerial ceremony! The Estate

is ideal for fireworks displays and for something to warm things up inside there are personalized cocktails and a gin bar serving over 100 gins from around the world, including Castle Leslie Estate's very own Fighting Bishop Gin. Bishop John Leslie was the first of the Leslies in Ireland and the Bishop of the Isles of Scotland. Known as the 'Fighting Bishop', he was involved in the battle of Raphoe against Cromwell. He bought Glaslough Castle Demesne in 1665. He died aged 100 in 1671. This gin is an earthy style of gin incorporating the Bishop's beech leaves and botanicals handpicked from the trees planted by the Bishop in the 1600's on the Estate.

Castle Leslie Estate's uniqueness, character and charm can only be felt, not described. Therefore, the team at Castle Leslie Estate invite you to come and experience it for yourself and look forward to welcoming you to the Estate so you can sample their renowned hospitality. Contact the events team on +353 47 88100 or email events@castleleslie.com for further details.



Celtic Traditions

No matter where you host your wedding you should try to include some Celtic traditions into the big day.

Ever wondered where the expression ‘tying the knot’ came from? It harks back to the Celtic tradition of Handfasting which involved tying the hands of the betrothed together in advance of their actual wedding day. At the time Ireland was ruled by Brehon Law and handfasting was recognized as a proper form of marriage – some would say a pretty good one, in that you got to ‘try out’ the marriage for a year and if it didn’t work out, you found somebody else the next year.

The expression ‘his goose is cooked’ is still in use in Ireland and especially in Dublin. The phrase originated from the tradition of cooking a goose for the groom in the bride’s house the night before the wedding. Once the goose was cooked there was no going back!

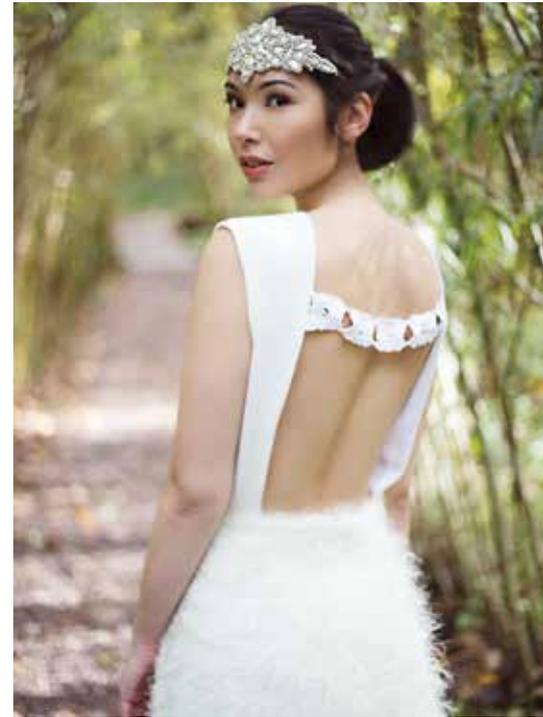
Traditionally in Ireland brides wore blue dresses as it was seen as the color of love and purity. However, over time this tradition faded and the white dress became popular (dress shown by Hazel Comyn Designs). The “something blue” is still incorporated into the brides’ accessories however – be it on a garter, tied around the bouquet or sewn into

the underneath of the dress.

The tradition of wedding flowers goes back to the day when it was customary to decorate the house that the wedding celebration was held in with locally grown flowers and plants. Some plants have become associated with Ireland, not least the now readily available ‘Bells of Ireland’, used in modern times for its symbolism.

No Irish wedding would be complete without the traditional toast. These days it is often done with champagne but traditionally it would have been with Poteen - a strong brew made from potatoes. Mead was the more palatable alternative. An Anglo-Saxon drink made of white wine mixed with honey and herbs it was said to possess powers of fertility. It therefore became customary for the bride and groom to drink it for one full moon after their wedding, giving rise to the word ‘honeymoon’.

The tradition of a horseshoe is well known throughout the world. By placing the horseshoe upright over a door or in a room the ‘luck of the house’ was kept intact. The Greeks associated the horseshoe with the crescent moon and its symbolism of fertility. The tradition was popular throughout Ireland and England too with the readily available horseshoe being carried by the bride as she walked down the



aisle. It was then affixed securely by the groom in the matrimonial home. Today, glass and ceramic horseshoes are symbolically used at Irish wedding ceremonies.

Remember when your mom would tell you to always have a hanky in your pocket? Well so it was for brides and the tradition is alive and well today. The bride carries a hanky on her wedding day and it is kept and later converted to a christening hat or bonnet for her first child. The hanky would be passed on from generation to generation to be re-used in a similar manner.

Dowry-giving was well established in rural Ireland and was a source of pride for the family of the bride. Modernity has relegated this tradition to the history books however it is still common for a bride’s parents to pay for the wedding – in effect paying to ‘give her away’.