

Landscapes and Legends

Who: Those who enjoy stunning scenery and locations

Where: Ards Peninsula **Duration:**

When: Full Day/ Overnight Stay

Set off to Millisle and start your break, exploring the stunning Ards Peninsula and some of the jewels it has to offer, discovering truly unique spots, which are picture perfect!

Scrabo Country Park, Tower & Killynether Wood, Newtownards, BT23 4SJ

Start your day with a bracing walk at Scrabo Country Park which is centred at the top of Scrabo Hill near Newtownards and boasts incredible views over Strangford Lough and the surrounding countryside. There are plenty of paths through the fine beech woodlands of Killynether Wood and around the disused quarries allowing visitors many opportunities to enjoy the quiet and peaceful countryside.

At the top of Scrabo Hill, overlooking Strangford Lough and the whole of North Down, is Scrabo Tower. The tower, which was built in 1857, is one of Northern Ireland's best-known landmarks and the views from the top are spectacular.



Ballycopeland Windmill, Millisle, BT22 2DS

(18 mins from previous)

Ballycopeland Windmill is the only remaining windmill in Northern Ireland with its original mechanism still existing. It was built in the late 18th century and was worked until 1915. It was given to the state in 1937 and has seen several periods of conservation since.

The Millers Cottage, the kiln and drying floor remain in their original positions at the site. It is also unique as the last remaining windmill in the world that retains the patented Hooper Roller Reefing gear, the system for operating the blinds on the sails on calmer days.



Eden Pottery. Millisle, BT22 2DH, 028 9186 2300

(4 mins from previous)

Set in a former schoolhouse, Eden Pottery gives you the opportunity to be creative and make your own souvenir of your trip! It is a fun immersive experience - making colourful sponge printed pottery by hand. It is also the perfect spot to enjoy a coffee and scone or a tasty lunch.



St Cooley's Wells, Tara Bay, BT22 1RF

(37 mins from previous)

South of Portaferry and towards Ballyquintin Point (signposted), stand the Holy Wells. The Wells were founded in the 7th century by St. Cooley and reopened in 1977. According to tradition, it was here that St. Cooley performed his penitential exercises in the late 7th and early 8th centuries.

The foundations of a Church, modern altar and three Holy Wells may be found. A drinking well, washing well and eye well are still visited by pilgrims and are reputed to have healing powers. On the shore a short distance from the Church a flat rock can be found with deep indentations which, according to popular belief, mark where St. Cooley placed his hands and feet whilst in prayer.



Portaferry, BT22 1PE

(10 mins from previous)

After all that fresh air and exercise, it is time to relax and kick back! Check into the charming Portaferry Hotel, which is overlooking the scenic Strangford Lough. Enjoy dinner whilst watching the Strangford Ferry negotiate the strong currents! After dinner, head to Fiddler's Green to have a few drinks and check out the "Game of Thrones" door.

Enjoy a good night's sleep and a hearty breakfast!



Echlinville Distillery, Kircubbin BT22 1AJ, 028 4273 8597

(12 mins from previous)

The Echlinville Distillery became the first newly licensed distillery in Northern Ireland for over 125 years when it began production in 2013. It has since established itself at the forefront of Ireland's spirits renaissance and is home to some of Northern Ireland's best-known spirits including Dunville's Irish Whiskey, Jawbox Gin, Echlinville Gin and Bán Poitín.

Echlinville's state-of-the-art Stillhouse stands proudly alongside the 19th century Echlinville Manor House, former seat of the Echlins who were once among the most influential families in Ireland.

Believed to be Ireland's only 'field to glass' distillery, Echlinville's new-make spirits are distilled from barley grown and harvested from their own fields and floor-malted by hand the way the whiskey forefathers would have done. Their story is one of provenance, pride in their roots in the Ards Peninsula and devotion to the ancient art of distilling. Why not pick up a bottle or two to take home?



Bangor Abbey, Bell Trail and North Down Museum, BT20 4JE

(30 mins from previous)

St Comgall founded the monastery at Bangor about 558 A.D. and it is regarded as one of the most important of the early Northern Irish monastic sites.

Follow the Bell trail from the Abbey to North Down Museum with a series of replica bells which mark St Columbanus's journey spreading Christianity. The original bell has been housed in North Down Museum, Bangor, since 1984 and was reputedly found by gravediggers at Bangor Abbey around 1780, and it is speculated that it had been hidden at the time of the Viking attacks on Irish monasteries. It was in private hands for some 150 years, and then housed in the Ulster Museum before coming to Bangor Borough Council in the 1950s. It shows the flowering of Irish Christian civilisation which was set back by the pagan Viking attacks. The bell would have been used to call the monks to prayer.



For more information on any of these places to visit and your ideal overnight accommodation call into or phone [Ards Visitor Information Centre](#) on **028 9182 6846**.