

Gotta love the
natural beauty
of Belfast

Destination: Belfast

Take a trip to the bright side of life with the laughing locals in Northern Ireland's foodie capital

There's one thing you'll notice upon touching town in Northern Ireland's capital city. Peeps here don't take life too seriously, and can always find something to chuckle about. Their permanent good mood might have something to do with the fact that they are so tremendously spoiled for choice when it comes to excellent places to get 'fed and watered', as the residents call it.

Check in at the luxurious Fitzwilliam Hotel, a stunning five-star hotel slap bang in the heart of the city (Gwyneth and Rihanna love it, so you know it's good!). After a soak in the huge double-ended bath, adorned with tealights (aaah!), you'll be itching to go and explore.

First stop: The Crown, Belfast's oldest bar – just a two-minute walk from The Fitzwilliam – where you can enjoy an intimate drink in an old-fashioned snug. If you're looking for something a little rowdier, Muriels, a cosy little pub in the city centre, may be decked out like your granny's living room (think bone china ornaments and floral armchairs), but your granny probably wouldn't approve of the cheeky bras suspended from the ceiling.

By now, you'll have worked up an appetite. Head straight to Mourne Seafood, a local fave for mussels, oysters and lobsters – you'll be in a food coma in no time.

Make time to check out the local sites. The Titanic Museum, situated on the site of the shipyard where the famous ship was built, is packed with tear-jerking stories of survivors and victims. The surrounding Titanic quarter and neighbouring Cathedral quarter have emerged in recent years as a bustling, cobble-stoned maze of cool bars, cafes and restaurants, so you might just have time to squeeze in another quick Guinness and a yummy lunch in delish bistro, The Potted Hen (spiced monkfish fritter anyone?) before you head to the airport. When in Rome and all that... ■

The Info

Stay: The Fitzwilliam Hotel Belfast

Pay: A studio suite for two will set you back from Dhs1,112, including breakfast.

Visit: www.fitzwilliamhotelbelfast.com

Eat: The Barking Dog www.barkingdogbelfast.com

Visit: The Titanic Museum www.titanicbelfast.com

Get there: Etihad flies to Dublin from Abu Dhabi from Dhs3,810. Coaches leave Dublin airport for Belfast every hour, and costs Dhs75. Book at www.aircoach.ie

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