

Burren Life

Welcome to the Burren

By Brigid Barry
Burrenbeo Trust
www.burrenbeo.com

The Burren stretches between Counties Clare and Galway and is around 700km² in size. The Burren is like a magical kingdom. It is unique and amazing, and it is known as the land of the fertile rock because from flora to fauna, geology to archaeology, it is rich in so many ways.



Images courtesy of Burrenbeo Trust

So what do people think about when they think of the Burren?



Cinnabar moths on tufted vetch.

Flowers

For many it has to be the flowers. No surprise there, as the region hosts a spectacular array of over 70% of Ireland's native flora in just 0.5% of our national land mass. If you came to the Burren between May and September, you would see blankets of flowers covering the landscape that you are unlikely see anywhere else. These flowers may have originated as far from each other as the Arctic and the Mediterranean but in this landscape they grow alongside each other. This extraordinary flora supports an equally diverse fauna - from feral goats to pine martens, elegant butterflies to snake-like slow worms.

Archaeology

For others it is the archaeology that is of most interest in the Burren; with over 500 ring forts and another 80 known Neolithic tombs. There is a huge amount available to see in the region. It is like stepping into a time machine and being given the opportunity to see how communities lived over the ages - a living museum.



A Burren wedge tomb.



The rugged landscape of the Burren.

Image courtesy of Robbie Murphy

Landscape

Other people think of the unusual landscape of the Burren, both above and below the ground. The unique rolling hills of grey provide a stark contrast to Ireland's 'forty shades of green'. The Burren hills are teeming with such geological oddities such as labyrinthine cave systems, disappearing streams and lakes, tiered hillsides and oddly dissected pavements.

All of these and more make exploring this kingdom an endless journey of discovery.

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