

LOUGH **esKe** CASTLE

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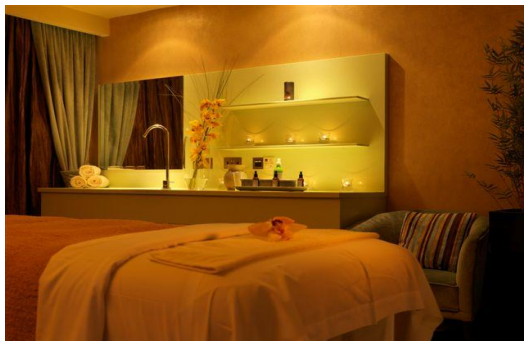
A SOLÍS HOTEL & SPA

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**Lough Eske Castle - a Solis Hotel & Spa**  
Luxury Spa Hotel  
Donegal, Ireland



<b>Name</b>	Lough Eske Castle, a Solis Hotel & Spa
<b>Category</b>	Five Star Castle Hotel
<b>Address</b>	Lough Eske Castle Donegal Town, County Donegal, Ireland
<b>Hotel contact:</b>	+ 353 (0) 749 725 100 <a href="http://www.solislougheskecastle.com">www.solislougheskecastle.com</a>



**Owner**

The owners of the property are Harcourt developments, one of the most successful privately owned property companies in Ireland who also own properties in Belfast, Dublin, London and the Bahamas.

**Opening**

A castle has been located on the hotel site dating back as far as the 1400s. The current castle was built in the 1860s and was completely destroyed by fire in 1939. The castle, as a focal point of the hotel, has now been completely renovated and enhanced to create the Lough Eske Castle which opened in December 2007.

**Location**

Located beside Lough Eske, the magnificent Lough Eske Castle is a mere 5 minutes from the thriving Donegal Town, in County Donegal on the north western tip of Ireland. The hotel is situated amongst breathtaking scenery and is surrounded by a plethora of tourist attractions. Guests can experience authentic Irish arts and crafts at the local heritage centre, go scuba diving to shipwrecks in a nearby fishing village, enjoy the local 'craic' in any of the many friendly pubs in the region, or golf on one of the breathtakingly beautiful championship links golf courses. FYI - The IGTOA (Irish golf Tour operators association) has voted the golf courses of the North West Region of Ireland including Donegal Golf Club (Murvagh) European Golf Destination 2011. <http://www.iagto.com/public/awards/default.aspx>

Europe's highest peak, Slieve League, is less than an hours' drive away; with spectacular views and walking routes for any ability. Just across the border, in County Fermanagh, lies the famed Belleek Pottery factory and St. Angelo's airport which offers private flying lessons and air-tours of the local region.

**Region**

Lough Eske Castle is idyllically located in North West of Ireland in County Donegal. Donegal is the nearest town and sits at the mouth of Donegal Bay at the foot of the Bluestack Mountains. As the northernmost county in the Republic of Ireland, Donegal shares a border with Northern Ireland. The area is well known for its sandy beaches, rugged mountains, access to fishing, and a deep indented coastline that formed natural Loughs (lakes).

County Donegal, by the very nature of its location, coupled with limited rail, air, and road access, has allowed itself to maintain a unique identity, culture and charm. The climate is greatly influenced by the Gulf Stream and is pleasantly mild and temperate. These attributes along with the natural beauty of the area will provide visitors with an authentic Irish Experience in an area of unparalleled beauty.

## **History**

The Lough Eske area is closely identified with the O'Donnell's, and the turbulent times of the Middle Ages including the Flight of the Earls and the Treaty of Mellifont. In a woodland to the northern side of the Castle, ruins of one of the O'Donnell's castles can be seen, as well as at Murvagh. They would have lived here prior to moving to Donegal Town, Murvagh being the main residence. The Annals of the Four Masters tells us that the earliest mention of the O'Donnells in Donegal Town was 1474 with both the abbey and castle being built around that time. The flight of the Earls from Rathmullen on the 14th of September 1607 saw the end of the O'Donnell power and it is assumed the family left that year on a small ship for Spain. On board were the chieftains of some of the leading Gaelic families of Ulster. Those chieftains who could not live with the new English order sought refuge with England's main enemy, with the hope either of making a new life for themselves, or of living to fight another day.

In 1861 the new Lough Eske Castle was built on the site of an old Brooke mansion which itself was a rebuilding of the original Jacobean House. A date stone of 1621 with initials W.H. and I.M. remain in the castle yard. Mr. Brooke's ancestors had come to own the Lough Eske property in 1717 through a marriage with the Lough Eske Knox's. Thomas Brooke who built the castle was not a Brooke by birth. He was born Thomas Young, but changed his name to inherit the property.

## **Architecture and Design**

Lough Eske Castle was built in Elizabethan style, the Architect was Mr. Fitzgibbon Louch C.E of Sackville Street Derry, and the contractor was Mr. Albert Williams. All the ornamental stonework came from the mines of Monaghan's Quarry in Drimkeelan near Frosses and the road was built to transport the sandstone or freestone to Lough Eske Castle. A road in Drimkeelan was built where in parts it measured 16 feet in depth and to this day is called the Lough Eske road. Thomas Brooke brought two Clydesdale horses with cockney drivers from England to draw the stone.

The Brooke coat of arms stands over the door on the east and main entrances. The tower is an impressive part of the castle Architecture and dominates the whole building and adjoining countryside. The tower held the flagstaff; beneath the battlements all along the front of the castle were a line of finely carved gargoyles, no two alike, to throw the water off the roof through their mouths well out on the castle street.

## **Rooms in the Hotel**

The hotel features 96 guest rooms including:

- 1 x 2 bedroom Presidential Suite
- 7 Garden Suites
- 8 Solis Junior Suites
- 14 Courtyard Rooms
- 65 Deluxe Rooms

## **Restaurants and Bars**

**Cedars Grill** combines easygoing elegance with a very contemporary sense of style. The dining room itself is quite stunning with its floor-to-ceiling, button-back upholstery and modern crystal light fixtures. The Executive Chef Philipp Ferber has created a tantalizing menu that features fresh, local ingredients, masterfully prepared. There are organic selections and local beef, superb Irish stew and fresh catches from nearby Killybegs, Ireland's premier fishing port. And, of course, a wonderful collection of fine wines from around Europe and the world.

The **Gallery Bar** is the perfect place to meet fellow guests for a pint of Guinness, glass of wine and an informal bite to eat from the Bistro menu. Guests may choose from a classic list of cocktails, aperitifs, after dinner drinks and Irish coffees along with a wide variety of European and International wines, as well as a collection of over 60 fine whiskies. The comprehensive bistro menu uses the freshest and finest local produce available, so guests can enjoy Donegal bay oysters with a glass of champagne or the 100% Hereford beef burger and Solis triple cooked chips.

The **Oak Bar** is a cozy getaway with stone floors, heavy leather couches, historical black and white photographs and a clubby oak ambiance. Here, you can join in a game of billiards, or simply sit back and enjoy the sounds of our traditional Irish music sessions whilst enjoying a pint of Guinness or one of the many fine whiskies.

## **The Spa**

Spa Solis features five single treatment rooms, two couple suites with a jet bath and steam room, a pedicure/manicure room and a Thermal Suite with an ice fountain, sauna, steam room, sanarium, tropical experience showers, heated bench and an infinity pool. The relaxation area is equipped with six designer beds that face into the gardens. Aromatherapy Associates has been at the forefront of aromatherapy for over 30 years, and is the brand which features in Spa Solis. Using the healing powers of natural plant extracts, the experienced therapists use essential oils to enhance physical, mental and emotional wellbeing. Guests can also choose to work out in the fully equipped fitness center which includes high-tech treadmills, exercise bikes and other equipment, as well as taking a dip in the spacious 17m indoor swimming pool with its beautiful glass atrium.

## **Extras**

- Wine Cellar, featuring an extensive collection of international fine wines
- Exclusive Solis brand of Coffee and Tea selection
- Library
- Free Parking

## **Facilities and Services**

### ***In rooms:***

- All guest rooms and function rooms have free of charge wireless internet access.

### ***In the Hotel:***

- Stunning Spa with 8 treatment rooms including 2 couples' suites, jet bath, steam rooms, ice fountain, an infinity pool and fitness center featuring extensive health, beauty and massage indulgences.
- Over 600 sq. meters (6,400 sq. ft.) of event space offering a variety of choices of indoor and outdoor venues.
- 5 Meeting rooms with seating capacities ranging from 10 to 400.
- A Ballroom which seats up to 250 for a sit-down banquet and 400 for a meeting with theatre set up. It has an adjacent terrace, overlooking the spectacular Bluestack Mountains and is the perfect venue for pre-dinner cocktails or coffee breaks

## **MICE Facilities**

Whether it's a board meeting, executive roundtable event, product launch conference or corporate retreat, Lough Eske Castle has the facilities and team to create the perfect setting for any important meeting.

- Ballroom (640 m<sup>2</sup>): this suite can be subdivided into three units (Ballroom I and Ballroom II are 208 m<sup>2</sup> and Ballroom III is 224 m<sup>2</sup>). The main ballroom seats up to 400 theatre style or can be modified to seat 280 guests for a banquet.
- Glencar 1 & 2 (56 m<sup>2</sup>) Each room seats up to 30 guests theatre style
- Glencar Suite (132 m<sup>2</sup>) Seats up to 60 guests theatre style
- Oak Room (56 m<sup>2</sup>) Seats up to 15 boardroom style

## **Technology**

- Wired or wireless Internet access in meeting rooms (and guestrooms)
- Modern technology and event presentation services
- 24- hour business centre with technical support
- Other services include: secretarial and experienced media specialists to help with the presentations

## **Activities**

Guests at the Lough Eske Castle enjoy easy, close access to golf, fishing, lakeside strolls, horseback riding on the beach or forest trails, and the slower paced charms of Irish village life. Other activities in close proximity to the castle include hiking and biking, Coastal sailing and day trips to Slieve League (the highest sea cliff in Europe), Glenveagh National Park and the castles, ruins and other historic sites nearby.

### **Awards & Accolades**

- World's Best Luxury Country Hotel 2009, 2010 & 2011 (World Luxury Hotel Awards)
- Wedding Venue of the Year 2009
- Castle Venue of the Year 2009 (2010 award winners not announced until Feb 14, 2011)
- My Guide Ireland's No 1 Hotel in Ireland 2010
- World's Top New Hotels – Condé Nast Traveller
- 2010 Top Castle Hotel – US Travel Expert, Stephanie Abrams

### **Festivals & Events**

There are many festivals which run throughout the year in Donegal. Highlights include the 'Sea Sessions Surf and Music Festival'; an annual sports and music festival which takes place in June on Bundoran Beach and the 'Donegal Bay and Blue Stacks Festival' in South West Donegal, which takes place in late September and presents a programme of music, theatre, carnival, literary and children's events. Donegal Town hosts the Taste of Donegal Food Festival on the last weekend in August and the Donegal Summer Festival takes place the first weekend in July and the Mary from Dungloe the last weekend in July / 1<sup>st</sup> weekend August.

### **Management Team**

Lough Eske Castle, a Solis Hotel & Spa is managed by the West Paces Hotel Group.

General Manager: Jeroen Quint / Director of Sales & Marketing: Michele Mc Conalogue

Sales Manager: Sinead McGowan / Spa Manager: Loretta Friel / Executive Chef: Philipp Ferber

### **Getting there**

#### **Airports**

Derry Airport – 85km (1 hour 15 min drive to Hotel)

Sligo Regional Airport – 65km (1 hour drive to Hotel)

Knock International Airport – 115 km (1 hour 45 min drive to Hotel)

Belfast Airport – 130km (2 hour drive to Hotel)

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Lough Eske Castle, near Donegal town in County Donegal is surrounded by a huge nature reserve in the foothills of the Bluestack Mountains. The Hotel offers a variety of activities to suit all outdoor types and adventure seekers. Many are on the Hotel's door step, while others are a short drive away.

## ON-SITE ADVENTURES

### **Activity: Spa Solis**

*Best time of year: All year round. | Where: within Hotel grounds.*

Our Spa sits in the footprint of the old glasshouse of the original castle and overlooks the gardens. It has 7 treatment rooms including 2 double treatment rooms, a thermal suite with an ice fountain, sauna, steam-room, samarium, tropical experience showers, heated bench and an infinity pool, and we also have a 17m swimming pool and fitness centre. We work with Aromatherapy Associates Product Range to promote relaxation and the healing powers of natural plant extracts.

**Priced per treatment | Negotiated treatments rates are available for large groups.**

### **Activity: Historic Tour of Estate Grounds**

*Best time of year: All year round. | Where: From Doorstep of the hotel.*

This guided tour of the estate gives an in-depth background into the estate's history and highlights the famine pot, the high cross and burial ground along with unique flora and fauna to the estate.

**Price for tour guide €10 per person. | 1 hour.**

### **Activity: Experience the Art of Weaving**

*Best time of year: All year round. | Where: within Hotel.*

Experience an in-depth look into the tradition of weaving, the textile craft which two distinct sets of yarns or threads are interlaced to form a fabric or cloth, covering all aspects to waving including Carding, Spinning, and Warp preparation. Get a hands-on experience of the process to the traditional craft of hand made Donegal Tweed. Spin your own yarn and weave your own piece of cloth to take away as a souvenir.

**Price €25 per person. Based on 10 people | 3 hour.**

### **Activity: Archery and Target Shooting**

Best time of year: All year round. | Where: Onsite

Archery and Target Shooting at inanimate objects or targets. Tuition is available for beginners also.

**Price - €250 for AM or PM event – Max 10 pax per session.**

### **Activity: The Eske Quest**

Best time of year: All year round. | Where: within the Hotel grounds

This high energy teambuilding event will challenge your delegates with brain teasers, observations and general knowledge. It takes in various areas of the hotel and grounds using specially programmed mobile phones and includes photos, video, time questions, free text, multiple choice formats.

**Price €60 per person. Based on 20 people | 3 hour.**

### **Activity: Cycling Tour of Estate Grounds and Beyond**

Best time of year: All year round. | Where: From Doorstep of the hotel.

This cycle tour brings delegates further beyond the estate into the surrounding countryside.

Delegates are advised to work with a guide to highlight their surroundings but also to navigate the journey. Bicycles are available at the hotel along with helmets.

**Price for tour guide €100 per hike. | 1 – 3 hours.**

### **Activity: Smoke your own Fish**

Best time of year: All year round. | Where: the woods and lake surrounding the castle.

We will teach you everything you need to know and demonstrate about smoking your own fish. From gutting and cleaning the fish to basic preparation in advance of smoking to detailed discussions of various curing & smoking methods (hot or cold smoking). Either bring your fresh catch or we will supply you with fresh trout and mackerel or salmon to demonstrate the smoking process. Smoking is an additional, but not essential means of preserving food which has already been brined. The purpose of smoking is, firstly to remove the moisture from the fish very slowly, like drying and secondly unlike drying to give additional flavor and preservation. The most common type of cure is a wet cure using water, salt, sugar and spices. Dry curing is accomplished by rubbing salt (and spices) into the fish. This critical step allows a pellicle, or glaze, to form on the skin to keep moisture in and contaminants out. We will also tell you how to build your own smoker and provide you with a good list of smoked salmon recipes. The timber we use in our smoking is carefully selected for us to burn in our smoking house by our resident grounds man who can also give talks on local flora and edible wild herbs and plants. Any fish can be smoked, but species high in fat like salmon and trout are recommended because they absorb smoke faster and are less likely to become dried out after smoking.

**Price €30 per person. Based on 10 people | 3 hour.**

### **Activity: Angling / Fishing**

Best time of year: Spring for salmon and char; late July onwards for Sea trout angling. | Where: Lough Eske (next to the Hotel) or Lough Anna (42 minutes drive from the Hotel).

Game, Pike, Coarse and Sea Angling are all popular in Donegal. The Lough at Lough Eske is 900 acres and lies a few miles north of Donegal town. Lough Anna has a good stock of brown trout averaging 0.5 lb and it can be coarse fished from the shore. Permission to fish is not usually required.

**Boat Hire €20.00 per two man boat | Fishing license €20.00 per person | Fishing Permit €30.00 per person**

### **Activity: Walk / Hike of low lying Bluestack Mountain Trail and Ard Na Mona Woods**

Best time of year: All year round. | Where: From Doorstep or from South Donegal (12 minutes drive from the Hotel) These walk ways lead you through landscapes of mountain, moorlands, mature woodland, rivers, lakes and sea, whether you navigate the route yourself or avail of a local walking guide.

**Price for tour guide €100 per day. Max 10 pax per guide. | 2 – 6 hours depending on chosen route.**

### **Team Building (3 hours) Option 1**

Saint Patrick's Team Challenge – Explore the amazing life and legend of Ireland's Patron Saint, through this fun light-hearted team challenge. Your adventure will include taking part in a number of Saint Patrick themed events on the stunning grounds of Lough Eske Estate.

- ***Canoe Challenge*** - Completing Saint Patrick's course on Lough Eske
- ***Archery Challenge*** - Ridding Ireland of snakes using a bow and arrow on Lough Eske Estate! (a well known Irish Legend)
- ***Wheelbarrow Wellington Boot Throwing Challenge*** on Lough Eske Estate (A local Irish Tradition)
- ***Orienteering Challenge*** - Locating Saint Patrick's Celtic Cross on Lough Eske Estate
- ***Human Sheep Herding Challenge*** on Lough Eske estate! (Saint Patrick originally worked as a shepherd)

**Priced at €120.00 per person, based on 20pax**

### **Team Building (1.5 hours ) Option 2**

Mini Saint Patrick's Team Challenge

- ***Archery Challenge*** - Ridding Ireland of snakes using a bow and arrow on Lough Eske Estate! (a well known Irish Legend)
- ***Wheelbarrow Wellington Boot Throwing Challenge*** on Lough Eske Estate (A local Irish Tradition)
- ***Human Sheep Herding Challenge*** on Lough Eske estate! (Saint Patrick originally worked as a shepherd)

**Priced at €75.00 per person, based on 20pax**

We work in partnership with professional companies who arrange team-building activities on-site. Simply let us know the level of activity you require and we can suggest some additional ideas.

### The Virtus Semper Vincit challenge

This challenge is unique to Lough Eske and based in the woods of the castle grounds. The group will be blindfolded at the edge of the woods. They will then follow a line through the woodland, under and over objects, passing back information at relevant areas. At the end of the line, and in the middle of the forest the group will take off their blindfolds. There they will find equipment and instructions for the survival task. They must build a shelter for their group, light a fire using a flint, prove they can hunt with an archery challenge and boil an egg on a stove. Group members must then build a protective casing for the egg using natural materials and carry it safely through their following tasks and scenarios.

Without revealing too much about the tasks other than a few names:

- Minefield, Toxic waste disposal, Viaduct, One person, one way, one time.
- Notre dame, Crevasse, Way out west.

For each task that is completed the group will receive a letter. If they have not passed all the tasks and have limited letters they can gamble with "The Great Egg Drop" (Their egg in its protective basket, will be dropped from a tree) if it survives they will receive all the letters to solve the riddle if it does not, they will lose a further three letters.

This activity is designed to build morale, communication, and team spirit.

**Castle grounds Price €35pp time from 2hrs to 3hrs 30minutes.**

### Beware In Time

This is a team event in which groups have to complete eight different team challenges with each challenge having a fifteen minute time frame, and point scoring system.

These tasks will be mentally and physically challenging, great fun, and take place around the Castle grounds.

**Price €20 per person. On the Castle grounds. 2hrs**

### Col. De Vere Brooke Bushcraft

Each group will receive a forty-five minute talk in the comfort of the hotel regarding bush-craft skills and techniques. They will then be set a task of building a shelter from natural resources, starting a fire using a flint, (gut and cook a trout over the open fire or skin a rabbit and make a spicy stew). They must show at least two different types of trapping techniques and unique ways of collecting and storing water. They must at all times keep morale high and look after every individual in the group. The instructor will assess the winning team on their manor and execution of the tasks, their team spirit and innovative ideas.

**Price €25 per person. On the Castle grounds. 2hrs – 3hrs.**

### **Cathleen falls (in the woods)**

The group will be brought together in the castle. They will be given the scenario that someone has been reported injured and lost in the woods. They will have to draw up a plan of action appoint roles to group members, decide on what equipment they should take and use from an equipment bank. The group must locate the injured party, treat their condition to the best of their ability, and safely evacuate the injured party and group members.

The instructor in this scenario will watch the planning of the group, and will then be the injured party. Followed by debrief and discussion.

**Price €20 per person. On the Castle grounds. 1.30hrs – 2.30hrs.**

### **A Curragh race and not a horse in sight.**

Each team will be given a drawing board, plastic piping, a roll of black plastic, and tape.

They must design and build a traditional Irish Curragh styled boat at their designated shipyard transport their craft to the lake. Once at the lake a relay race will commence with two members of each group paddling their boats to a marker on the lake and back and swapping over with two other members of the group until the full team has completed the task. They must then run back with their craft to the shipyard where they built it. Whichever boat wins the task will receive a “Solis & Wolff” ship building certificate and a bottle of champagne.

**Price €25 per person. On the Castle grounds- Lake. 2hrs – 3hrs.**

### **The Brooke plan (plan B)**

This is an indoor challenge and bad weather alternative based inside the castle. The Brooke plan will consist of various indoor teambuilding exercises which will be more mentally stimulating than physical. There is also an indoor wet alternative which involves the glorious heated pool.

**Price €15 per person. On the Castle grounds. 1hrs – 2.30hrs.**

### **Major Henry’s Solis Team Challenge**

The group will start off with a treasure trail that will enable them to find equipment for their following tasks. It will involve a biking relay, canoe relay race, swim, rope and obstacle course and mentally challenging mini tasks. The winning team will receive a trophy and bottle of champagne. A very physical task (not for the faint hearted).

**Price €30 per person. On the Castle grounds- Lake. 2hrs – 3hrs.**

**The Eske activity buffet.**

**Choose any 4 teambuilding activities from our list for an hour's duration.**

Activities would include:

Minefield	Spiders web
Group Skip	Diminishing circles
A-Frame	Nightline
Waterfall	Blind circle
Stepping Stones	Splat
Ravine	The porcupine
Suspension	

**Price €16 per person (Group of 10+).**

**Price €20 per person. (Group of 4-9 people)**

**On the Castle grounds. 1hr.**

## OFF SITE ADVENTURES

### Activity: Horse Riding

Best time of year: All year round | Where: 25 mins to 1 hr drive depending on the riding centre. There are 13 A.I.R.E approved equestrian centres throughout the County where you can ride in indoor arenas or trek along country lanes and white sandy beaches. Lenamore stables is situated high in the hills of Donegal and overlooks the beautiful city of Derry, while there are also several schools closer to the Hotel in the nearby towns of Bruckless, Ballyshannon and Bundoran (All 25-35 min drive from the Hotel).

**Transfer €70 return for 1 person. €10 per person thereafter. | Horse-riding €35 per hour**

### Activity: Golf

Best time of year: March to November | Where: Four Championship links golf courses between 10 and 45 minutes drive from the Hotel and a further 13 golf courses throughout Donegal. Donegal Golf Course (Murvagh) is an outstanding championship links course, designed by Eddie Hackett, and continually featured in Golf World's Top 100 Courses in Ireland and Great Britain. It is located within a 10 minute drive of Lough Eske Castle.

Narin / Portnoo Golf Course offers golfers magnificent scenery with stunning views of Gwebarra Bay. This links course is located about 45 minutes drive from Lough Eske Castle.

There are also several golfing events in Donegal from June to September. These include the Erne Waterway Gold Championship, Mid Summer Seniors Golf Challenge and Irish Seniors Open in June, the E.C.G.P International Inishowen Masters in August and the Donegal Bay / Fermanagh Lakeland Amateur Seniors competition in September.

**From €40 per person green fee. | Transfer €60 return for 1 person. €10 per person thereafter.**

### Activity: Walking to the WWII Crash site in the Bluestacks Mountains

Best time of year: All year round | Where: South Donegal (12 minutes drive from the Hotel) During World War II the Atlantic Ocean was regularly patrolled by the Royal Air Force. One of these patrols, a Flying Boat no. DW-110, Squadron 228, set out on patrol from Pembroke Dock, Wales, at 10.46pm on the 31st of January, 1944. It was instructed to divert to the R.A.F. base at Castle Archdale due to poor weather conditions. At 11.45pm on the January 31st 1944 flight no DW-110 crashed into the Bluestack Mountains in South Donegal. At the crash site you will find two engines, small pieces of wreckage and if you look carefully, bullets, forks, depth charges and many tiny pieces of the Sunderland flying boat. A magnificent walk approx. 5 hours duration.

**Price for tour guide €100. Maximum 10 guests per guide. | Transfer from the hotel €30 for one person and €10 per person thereafter return journey.**

### **Activity: Donegal Bay Drive**

Best time of year: All year round | Where: Donegal Bay (30 minutes drive from the Hotel)  
The wild scenery of the central highlands are a feature of this spectacular drive which includes the Slieve League, the highest marine cliffs in Europe rising over 606m above the ocean, bustling market towns and historic glens, and is a detour to the ancient pilgrimage centre on Lough Derg. It is a journey which can easily occupy a full day. From 2 hours to 4 hours depending on chosen route

**€35 per hour for a car and driver up to 4 people / Coach 50 people €500.**

## **WATER BASED ACTIVITIES / ADVENTURES**

### **Activity: Donegal Bay Seafari**

Best time of year: Summer months |Where: Donegal Town (7 minutes drive from the Hotel)  
From its base in picturesque Donegal Town and Killybegs, a 12-seater all weather R.I.B. (rigid inflatable boat) will take you on a high speed close-up tour of the many beauty spots and stunning views in Donegal Bay. The duration of the regular trip is 1 hour, but a group charter can be arranged for a longer duration for a visit to any destination in Donegal Bay.

**Transfer from hotel €25 return up to 4 people | Cost of activity €25 per person.**

### **Activity: Surfing**

Best time of year: Summer |Where: Rosstownlough (20 min drive), Bundoran (30 min drive)  
South Donegal has probably two of the best known locations for surfing in Ireland, Rosstownlough (home to one of Ireland's first surf clubs) and Bundoran where there are seven surfing centres.  
**Surfing Lesson duration 2 ½ to 3 hours, price €30 per person. |Transfer €70 return up to 4 pax.**

### **Activity: Dolphin and Whale Watching**

Best time of year: Irish whale and dolphin watching is an all “season affair” | Where: St John’s Point, 35km (35 minutes from the Hotel) Malinmore, 62km (1 hour drive from the Hotel) Dawros Hd. 7km (50 minutes drive from the Hotel). The Atlantic waters off the coast of Donegal offer some excellent opportunities to see whales, dolphins, sharks, seals and other species of marine life. In 1991 Ireland became the first country in Europe to declare their waters a whale and dolphin sanctuary. You can see dolphins generally all year round but for whales, the sightings are better from Oct to May.

**€35 per hour for a car and driver up to 4 people / Coach 50 people €500.**

### **Activity: Sail to Aranmore Island**

Best time of year: All year round | Where: Aranmore Island lies 5 kilometers off west Donegal (1 hour drive and 15 minute ferry ride from the Hotel)

This Gaeltacht Island in Donegal offers a kind of holiday that ignites the senses – one of peace and tranquillity, soul – nourishing fresh air, a range of activities and an insight into Ireland's heritage and culture. Whether you are interested in walking, hiking, diving, bird watching, rock-climbing, angling, cycling or just listening to a good story or old – time singer, there's something for you on Aranmore Island. Savour the beautiful and untamed landscape, Gaelic culture, quiet country roads with abundant wildlife, turf fires and lively pubs.

**Ferry departs Burtonport, one hour from Lough Eske Castle (transfer €180 return up to 4 people/ 50 seater coach and ferry costs €15 for an adult return ticket.**

### **Activity: Sail to Tory Island**

Best time of year: All year round | Where: Tory Island lies 12 kilometers off north Donegal (1 ½ hours drive and ferry ride from the Hotel)

The most remote of Ireland's inhabited islands, this is a timeless place where people still talk of 'travelling to Ireland'. Toraigh's remoteness has led to the preservation of the traditions and way of life of its resilient and independent people. Their music, dance, song and stories are living expressions of an ancient Gaelic culture. Interesting historical sites include a round tower that once protected monks from Viking raids, the ruins of St. Colmcille's 6th century monastery and the intriguing Tau Cross that suggests early seafaring links to the Coptic Christians of Egypt. The island also boasts an abundance of activities such as Scuba diving, cycling, sea angling, rock climbing, bird watching, traditional music & dance, dolphin and whale watching. There is also an annual film festival which takes place on the Island in June as well as a Traditional Music Festival in August.

**Ferry departs Magheroarty, 1 ½ hour from Lough Eske Castle, transfer €300 return up to 4 people/ 50 seater coach €600 and ferry costs €20 for an adult return ticket.**

## **CULTURE / HISTORICAL ADVENTURES**

### **Activity: Doon Fort Visit**

Best time of year: Summer | Where: Lough Doon (48 minutes drive from the Hotel)  
Lough Doon Ring Fort is located on a small island in Lough Doon off the Portnoo to Rosbeg Road. It is an impressive 4.8m high walled enclosure, encircling the small island completely, traditionally built in 1000BC. During summer there are small boats available for hire to allow access to the island for a closer look. This ancient ruin is evidence that this area has been inhabited for many centuries. In recent years the gold Lunula (a fine piece of decorative jewellery), dating from 1600BC, was found in this area and is displayed in the National Museum of Ireland. A replica of this can be seen in the Local Dolmen Centre.

**€35 per hour for a car and driver up to 4 people Coach 50 people €500. No admission to the well.**

### **Activity: Co. Donegal Heritage - Lifford Old Courthouse**

Best time of year: All year round | Where: Lifford (40 minutes drive from the Hotel)  
The role of the County Donegal Heritage Office is to raise awareness of the natural, built and cultural heritage of County Donegal and to promote best practice in Heritage Management including archaeological objects, architectural heritage, fauna, flora, geology, heritage gardens and parks, inland waterways, landscapes, monuments, wildlife habitats and wrecks. Many free events take place for 'Heritage Week' throughout the county in late August.

**€35 per hour for a car and driver up to 4 people Coach 50 people €500. No admission to the well.**

### **Activity: Visit to Glenveagh National Park**

Best time of year: All year round | Where: The Derryveagh mountains in the northwest of County Donegal (1 hour drive from the Hotel)

The 16,958 hectares of mountain, lakes and woods is cut in two by the spectacular valley of Glenveagh which gives the Park its name. The Park includes the peaks of the two highest mountains in Donegal, Errigal and Slieve Snacht as well as other hills, notably Dooish and Leahanmore. Towards the southwest end of the Park are the ice-carved cliffs of the Poisoned Glen and Bingorm. The aim of the National Park is to conserve this wilderness in such a way that people may visit and appreciate it and yet leave it unspoilt for generations to come.

Glenveagh Castle boasts the largest herd of Red Deer in Ireland and has also seen the recent re-introduction of the Golden Eagle to Irish shores.

**Transfer from the hotel €120 return up to 4 people. Admission to the National Park and Visitor Centre is free. Cars are not allowed beyond the visitor centre however a shuttle bus service is available to take visitors to the castle and gardens this is priced at €3. A tour of the castle is €5 per adult.**