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A rain hat, sturdy boots and a raincoat are mandatory garb for exploring the Western part of Ireland. With the exception of Dublin, international flights into Shannon Airport make this the most accessible part of Ireland. The Cliffs of Moher, Galway, Limerick, Co Connemara and my personal favorite, the Burren, are all a short drive from Shannon and all worth exploring.

The Cliffs of Moher: Standing 230 metres above the ground at their highest point and 8km long, the Cliffs boast one of the most amazing views in Ireland. Just 60 km from Shannon Airport, the Cliffs are easily accessible and a big tourist attraction. Arriving jet lagged off an international flight, thereâ€™s food for your soul and a chance to blow off the cobwebs if you drive to the Cliffs of moher for a bracing hike. Dress warmly to fight the wind and take a take a walk along the cliffs. On a clear day, you might see the Aran Islands or even the hills and valleys of Connemara.

The Aran Islands: Take a ferry from Doolin in County Clare, or Galway to these special island with an abundance of protected plant species and birds. The best way to tour the islands is by walking or bicycling, and Inishmore is the larger island, holding Dun aengus, a ring fort well worth a visit.

The Burren is derived from â€œBhoireannâ€• in Gaelic, which means â€˜a stony placeâ€•. , filled with fasc limestone formations that seem reminiscent of a moonscape, as well as rare wild plants and dolmens, or ancient tombs. You can cover as much distance as you want, depending on your energy level but no matter how long you spend, itâ€™s easy to feel that you are among the last people left on the planet. This should be on everyoneâ€™s list of not to be missed sights.

Ballyvaughn is a wonderful,little town to base your stay. Or for a more luxurious retreat,stop at the Adare Manor, clearly one of Irelandâ€™s best hotels. A Gothic Revival mansion built in 1720,this luxurious retreat offers resort services to its guest, including clay pigeon shooting, fishing, archery, golf and more. A hike or a bike ride through its extensive manicured grounds, as well as spa services, all provide sufficient amusement for a fun weekend

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