



# **Belarusian and Irish castles: far by distance, close in spirit**

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# **Belarusian castles**

In Belarus there are 26 castles. This manual describes top 10 Belarusian castles. The most popular Belarusian castles are in Grodno, Brest and Minsk regions.

List of Belarusian castles [\[27\]](#)<sup>[38]</sup>

1. Babruysk fortress
2. Brest Fortress, also known as Brest-Litovsk fortress
3. Hajciunishki
4. [Halshany Castle](#)<sup>[11]</sup>
5. Hieraniony Castle
6. [Hrodna Old Castle](#)<sup>[13]</sup>
7. [Hrodna New Castle](#)<sup>[13]</sup>
8. Tower of Kamyanyets
9. Kletsk Castle
10. Kopys
11. [Kosava castle](#)<sup>[15]</sup>
12. [Kreva Castle](#)<sup>[12]</sup>
13. Liahavichy
14. [Lida Castle](#)<sup>[8]</sup>
15. [Lubcha Castle](#)<sup>[10]</sup>
16. [Mir Castle Complex](#)<sup>[7]</sup>
17. Muravanka Church
18. [Navahrudak Castle](#)<sup>[9]</sup>
19. [Niasvizh Castle](#)<sup>[5]</sup>
20. Pischalauski
21. [Ruzhany Palace](#)<sup>[14]</sup>
22. Smalyany Castle
23. Slutsk Castle
24. Shklow Castle
25. Synkavichy Church
26. Svislach Castle

### Castles of Minsk region

In Minsk region there are 4 castles. They are:

1. Kletsk Castle
2. [Niasvizh Castle](#)<sup>[5]</sup>
3. Pischalauski
4. Slutsk Castle

## Nesvizh Castle



The most famous castle of Belarus named by all the respondents (100 %) was Nesvizh castle. Maybe because students had learnt some information about it at different lessons: English, history, Man and the World. 68 % of the respondents visited it with the family (14 %) and with the class during an excursion (54 %).

The Castle of Nesvizh was founded by Mikolay Krzystof Radziwill the Orphan in 1583. It was constructed to a design by Gian Maria Bernardoni. Belarusian magnates surrounded themselves with luxury, inviting from abroad the best architects and artist whose works there were used then for decorating new palaces.

The Radziwill magnate dynasty was one of the wealthiest in Europe. Their annual revenues were almost double the income of King of Poland. One of the largest art collections had been collected by the Radiwills for centuries and was preserved in their main residence in Nesvizh.

Of special pride for the Radziwill treasury were twelve gold and silver apostles. However, during the numerous military conflicts enormous treasures of Belarusian magnate dynasties families were taken to Russia, Poland and Lithuania [1, p.280- 284]<sup>38</sup>.

Nesvizh itself was an unassailable town-fortress: the high earth mound with bastions was raised over the whole its perimeter. The mound was surrounded by the ditch with water (used by the enterprising master for breeding fishes. The Slutsk Brama was intended for admitting the people inside the town surrounded by the mound. The stone cloister complexes were built at the place of the town fortifications, which had the most significant role in the defence of Nesvich. This is evidenced by the fact that the Swedes having seized the town and castles in 1706, had not succeeded in breaking down the resistance of the Jesuits' Collegium defenders. For the time of siege, the castle itself became an artificial island surrounded by numerous man-made ponds and canals and had the most advanced for that time fortification system. For the first almost two centuries of its existence, it was never taken by storm. The castle got a number of annexes and acquired many architectural

styles so that it became ultimately a high-society palace, whose halls kept one of the largest in Europe collections of historical, cultural and artistic values as well as legendary Radziwill's treasures, over seeking which the treasures hunters puzzle heretofore. At the end of 19<sup>th</sup> century, the castle lost its defence significance. On the wide fields surrounding the castle (from which the trees were formerly fallen for facilitating the observation of the enemies' approach) the park was laid out by the initiative of the new mistress Maria de Castellan de Talerian, duchess Radziwill who started actively restoring the family nest. In the course of time, the park became, in a sense, a large meadow of tales numerous legends about the Radziwills embodied in various park sculptures, eminent busts and memorable marks [9, p.13]<sup>[38]</sup>.

The Nesvizh Palace and Castle Complex became the second architectural monument of Belarus after the Mir one, which was included into the UNESCO register of the World Heritage.

### Castles of Grodno region

The majority of Belarusian castles are situated in Grodno region:

1. Hajciunishki
2. Halshany Castle
3. Hieraniony Castle
4. [Hrodna Old Castle](#)<sup>[13]</sup>
5. [Hrodna New Castle](#)<sup>[13]</sup>
6. [Kreva Castle](#)<sup>[12]</sup>
7. [Lida Castle](#)<sup>[8]</sup>
8. [Lubcha Castle](#)<sup>[10]</sup>
9. [Mir Castle Complex](#)<sup>[7]</sup>
10. Muravanka Church
11. [Navahrudak Castle](#)<sup>[9]</sup>
12. Synkavichy Church

## Mir Castle



The main architectural symbol of Belarus is undoubtedly the medieval martial castle in the borough with the peaceful name of Mir. All the respondents (100 %) also named this famous castle. 62 % of the respondents visited it with the family (8 %) and with the class during an excursion (54 %).

The town of Mir was inherited in 1486 by Yury Illinich, a member of an old Belarusian feudal dynasty. Probably, the first walls of the castle under the new owner were constructed in the 1520s, but the Castle of Mir as a completed structure was first mentioned in 1527 after the death of its founder in a document on division of property between the sons of the late Yury Illinich.

Since 1555, Mir became the centre of the Mir Earldom. Mir belonged to the Ilyiniches' family till 1568 [\[8, p.7\]](#)<sup>[38]</sup>.

In 1568 the Castle of Mir passed into the ownership of Radziwill Princes. The rich external décor of the Castle of Mir had to give to the unassailable fortress a look of a luxurious palace. According to one of the versions, the decorations adorning the castle pursued the same goal as the adornments on a country folk costume-keeping the evil spirits away and protecting the owners against misfortunes. The stone ram head embedded into the southern wall was to provide additional protection. According to a popular belief as long as the ram head is in its place, the Castle will remain indestructible [\[1, p.149\]](#)<sup>[38]</sup>.



Many loopholes in the walls were replaced with coloured glazed windows, a portion of the earth mound was razed and at its place a pond with swans and artificial island was arranged, the larger portion of the internal yard was occupied by the effuse out-of-town residence-palace of the Dukes Radziwills, which was decorated better than the palaces of some kings. Generally, the Radziwills paid more attention to the luxury and comfort of its apartments than to the defence power of the citadel

Its strong walls and towers have withstood the rushes of the conquerors with honour and present the sole monument of the Gothic - Renaissance castle architecture in Belarus, which has remained to our days in actually original form.

This outstanding monument of defence architecture was entered into the UNESCO World Heritage List in 2000.

### Lida Castle



Since olden times our country was called a country of castles. The castle of Lida was one of the most powerful in the Grand Duchy of Lithuania. There in 1380 King Jagiello signed a statement on christening of pagan Lithuania. 96 % of our respondents named Lida castle in their list.



The construction of the Castle of Lida started in 1323. At that time Gedymis was the Grand Duke of Lithuania who went down in history as a talented warrior against the crusaders [\[1, p.183\]](#)<sup>[38]</sup>.

So the castle was built by his order for protection against the Teutonic Knights' assaults. The stone foundations of the castle were laid in 1323. Parts of the trapezium-shaped fortress were added on up through the 15th century. Famously built on sand, Lida castle has withstood 7 centuries of battles and occupations of the surrounding land.

Lida castle was built by the order of the Grand Duke of Lithuania Gediminas. In the mid-17th century, an army of 30000 sent by Prince Nikita Khovansky of Moscow to destroy it, and in the Great Northern War (1700-1721), Swedes came and blew-up the castle's towers, therefore permanently diminishing its military purpose. It has since been restored and tourists come to view its red walls.

Lida castle today is an all-season tourist attraction, drawing thousands of visitors every year. Two months ago I visited this castle with my classmates and my class teacher.

During summer, knights' tournaments are regularly held in the castle. In winter time the inner yard of the castle, an area of 80 m by 80 m, is converted into an ice-skating rink [\[13, p.6-7\]](#)<sup>[38]</sup>.

### Novogrudok Castle



Novogrudok castle was built in the middle of the XIIIth century. It played the main role in the defense of the ancient city Novogrudok, which was the first capital of the Grand Duchy of Lithuania. In 1422 there was a wedding of 73-year-old Polish king Jagiello and 16-year-old Princess Sophia Golshanskaya [\[1, p.213\]](#)<sup>[38]</sup>.

Novogrudok castle-fortress was the largest in the Belarusian lands: it consisted of seven towers, was built on the top of a high hill. According to one version, Mindovg was crowned in Novogrudok in 1253. According to some reports, Novogrudok was the residence of Mindovg.

This stone castle, so called Zamak Midouga, is now in ruins; as it was burnt down by the Swedes in 1710 [\[1, p.8\]](#)<sup>[38]</sup>.

Nowadays there is a high tourist attraction . Every year jousting festivals take place in Novogrudok. Local people can tell a lot of legends about Novogrudok castle, which they heard from their grandfathers . Once, when the Teutonic Knights attacked the Novogrudok castle, Prince Litavor, fearing for his life , wanted to make a union with the enemies. Despite the suasion of his wife Grazyna and his best friend Rymvidy, he stood his ground.

Then Grazyna dressed in prince's armor in secret of her husband and led the army to meet for the Teutons. The Teutons were defeated, but Grazyna was killed in battle. when Litavor saw a slain knight, he saw his wife . In honor of her heroism, the lake near the castle called Litovka [\[30\]](#)<sup>[38]</sup>.

### Lubcha Castle



Lubcha castle was a residential castle of the Radzivill family on the left bank of the Neman River at Lubcha near Novogrudok.

The castle began its life in 1581 as a fortified residence of Jan Kiszka, a powerful Calvinist magnate. It had timber walls, a single stone tower, and was surrounded by moats on three sides, the fourth side protected by the river.

Lubcha later passed to JanuszRadzivill, Great Herman of Lithuania, who expanded the castle by adding three stone towers. In 1655 it was taken and devastated by the rebellious Cossacks under Ivan Zoloterenko.

Only the barbican and one other tower were left standing after the Cossack invasion. The deserted estate changed owners several times, remaining untenanted until the mid 19th century, when a Gothic Revival palace was built on the grounds.

The Lubcha estate suffered much damage during both world wars. The palace was reduced to a shell in 1914 and was remodeled into a school building in 1947.

Currently, the castle is being restored by a team of volunteers.

There's an interesting story about the name "Lubcha". It is associated with the word "love". One of the legends says that Mindaugas saw a beautiful girl in the settlement on the bank of the Neman. He fell in love with her at first sight and took her with him to make her his Queen. He called the palace Lubcha in order to commemorate their love [\[13, p.9-10\]](#)<sup>[38]</sup>. This legend is so positive and romantic.

There's one more interesting fact about Lubcha castle. It housed one of the first museums on the territory of Belarus, which was set up by the Radzivills and exhibited a saber of Ivan the Terrible and the swords that used to belong to the Tatar khans who failed to seize the castle.

### **Golshany Castle**



The monument of baroque palace and castle in Golshany was the most beautiful on the territory of Belarus and Lithuania.

This castle-and-palace ensemble was built in the 17th century as Pavel Stephan Sapega's residence.

The castle looks much like the castle of Mir. The front view of the Castle of Golshany resembles some Dutch castles near Antwerp.

The interior of the Castle of Golshany featured numerous frescos, stained-glass windows, moulded fireplaces, floors paved with terracotta ceramic tiles. There was a labyrinth of stone cellars under the castle, which used to be jocularly called a stone flower of mannerism.

The Northern War and the Swedish troops had no mercy on one of Belarus' most beautiful castles. However, the devastation was fully accomplished in 1880 when the last owner of the castle would opt to blow up the towers and the walls in order to use the bricks for building a tavern.

The place gave Belarusian literature classic Vladimir Korotkevich the inspiration to write a bestseller book "The Black Castle of Golshany" [13, p.11-12]<sup>[38]</sup>. During the Northern War of the years 1700-1721, it was demolished by Swedes. However, even the ruins of Golshany Castle look very picturesquely. At present, they are the most photogenetic ruins in Belarus.

### Krevo Castle



Krevo, a small Belarusian village, played important historical role. On hilly terrain at the point where the River Krevyanka and the River Shlyachtenka join, they built the first all-stone fortress intended to restrain inroads by the knights of the Teutonic Order against the lands of the Great Duchy of Lithuania.

Decorated from inside with frescoes, the stone walls of the castle were 2,5metres thick and 13 metres high. The central tower of the castle was in fact sitting on a dungeon that served as prison where Count Keistut, Olgerd's brother was strangled by his nephew Jagiello. Keistut's son fled from the castle dressed up a woman.

In the summer of 1385 the castle saw the signing of the Krevo Treaty – a dynastical union between the Great Duchy of Lithuania and the Kingdom of Poland, which resulted in Jagiello marrying Poland throne heiress 14-year-old Jagiello.



It was behind the walls of the castle of Krevo, where runaway AdreiKurbiski was hiding from Russian tsar Ivan the Terrible and kept mail correspondence with the tyrant of Moscow.

The hard times for the castle began in the early 16th century when the Tatars and then the troops of Moscow laid siege to the citadel.

By the early 19th the castle totally lost its former prominence and stood abandoned. World War I left the citadel lying in ruins. However, the walls surrounding the principal fortress have remained intact, except for the towers.

Today there is a thick air of legends around the castle ruins. The local people would tell tourists about a church that fell through the ground and vanished along with the parish because of the deadly sins they had committed; about an underground passage leading from the castle dungeons straight to Vilnius; a beautiful princess that was bricked up alive in the castle wall. Legend has it that after dusk one can hear the sound of a chain-bridge being lowered, the clatter of horse-shoes, horses neighing and swords clinking.

Krevo gathers masses of tourists as it is located only one kilometer away from Minsk – Vilnius highway [\[13, p.16-17\]](#)<sup>[38]</sup>.

### The Old and New Grodno Castles



Grodno was planned to be dominated by the Old Grodno castle, first built in stone by Grand Duke Vytautas who became the owner of Harodnia in 1376. The stone-made Lower Castle was constructed at that time. It became a fort on the approaches to the existing Upper Castle. After the fire of 1398, the Upper Castle went through major reconstruction and acquired Gothic features. One could get into the territory of the castle only through an entrance tower on the bridge over 50 metre long dry moat.

In 1540 Queen Bona Sforza granted Harodnia a coat of arms depicting St. Hubert's deer jumping over a hedge against the blue background. The deer is a symbol of steadfast movement forward, overcoming any obstacle. New reconstruction of the Upper Castle was started in 1579 by architect Sanzi Gucci by the order of King Stefan Batory, who had chosen Harodnia to be his residence [\[13, p.160\]](#)<sup>[38]</sup>.

Immediately after the events of the Northern War, devastating for Harodnia, when the Upper Castle was badly damaged, a decision was taken to construct a new royal residence. The author of a plan of the castle was a Saxon architect Karl Fridrich Pepelman. In 1742 the residence was ready to receive the royalty. The main gate was adorned with sculptures of mythical creatures sphinxes.

The last Sejm of the Rzeczpospolita was held in the Hrodna Place in 1793, during which the second partition of the country between Russia and Prussia was approved. There on 25 November 1795 King Stanislaw August Poniatowski signed the abdication act [\[1, p.164\]](#)<sup>[38]</sup>.

Now tourists can see what has become of the citadel and the palaces it nested: assorted fragments of the fortifications walls, the ruins of the upper and lower churches, the bridge and the castle site. At the moment, the place is part of the Grodno History and Archeology Museum [\[13, p.4-5\]](#)<sup>[38]</sup>.

## Castles of Brest region

In Brest region there are 5 castles:

1. Brest Fortress, also known as Brest-Litovsk fortress
2. Tower of Kamyanyets
3. [Kosava castle](#)<sup>[15]</sup>
4. Liahavichy
5. [Ruzhany Palace](#)<sup>[14]</sup>

## Ruzhany palace-castle ensemble



The palace-castle complex in Ruzhany is one of the unique places in Belarus. For centuries this magnificent architectural ensemble, nicknamed the Belarusian Versailles, was owned by the mighty Sapieha dynasty. The first written record of Ruzhany (today's Pruzhany District in Brest region) dates back to the late 15th century. It is known that before 1552 it had belonged to the Tyshkevichs. In 1598 the Ruzhany estate was bought by Lew Sapega, the famous magnate and politician, the chancellor and one of the authors of the



unique code of laws, the Statute of the Grand Duchy of Lithuania. He ordered a major construction of the estate in the early 17th century. A castle with three towers soon appeared in Ruzhany which combined the traits of a defensive fortress and a ceremonial palace [\[24\]](#)<sup>[38]</sup>.

In 1698, it was demolished due to the war with Swedes. In 1876, it was restored and turned into a representative palace ensemble harmonizing marvelously with the surrounding landscape. After the First and Second World Wars, only ruins remained from the castle, which continue to impart a unique colouring to the Ruzhany landscape [\[7, p.27\]](#)<sup>[38]</sup>.

### Kossovo palace-castle ensemble



This unique monument of neo-gothic architecture of the 19th century is situated in the Belarusian town of Kossovo. The Palace of the Puslovskys, or Kossovo Castle, has been nicknamed "knights' dream" for its fairy-tale-like appearance and splendor.

Kossovo palace-castle ensemble is the brightest in Belarus example of the style of romanticism, which was fashionable in the first half of 19th century. The architecture of Kossovo Palace is saturated utterly with numerous neo-gothic elements of defence and decorative purpose that gave the Palace very martial look corresponding rather to a medieval castle. The passion for romanticism has been also reflected in the selection of the place of construction: near the country, where Tadeusz Kosciuszko, one is most famous representative of Belarusian people, was born. This fact has also added historical and romantic tinge [\[10, p.3\]](#)<sup>[38]</sup>.

In 2004 the Kosciuszko manor house was fully renovated [\[1, p.66\]](#)<sup>[38]</sup>.

During the Second World War the palace suffered the worst damage. For many days a fire blazed through its rooms in 1944 and destroyed the decoration of the chambers and left only the magnificent walls.

Lots of legends are connected with Kossovo Palace. Locals said that the owners kept a lion to guard the palace. At night the lion was released from the cage to roam about the corridors.

The palace also had its special “musical” feature. If someone stands on the windowsill of the first floor in the eastern side of the building and clapped loudly the dome of the building will start emitting musical sounds.

One of the most beautiful legends says that there was an underground tunnel which linked the palace of Kossovo and the residence of the Sapieha family in Ruzhany.

Since 2008 the site has been undergoing restoration which is set to finish in 2018.

# **Irish castles**

Ireland has no shortage of castles – there are approximately a thousand castles spread throughout the island, though no complete and accurate list exists.

This manual proposes information about top 10 Irish castles in [County Galway](#)<sup>[18]</sup>.

## Castles in County Galway

List of Irish Castles in County Galway [\[16\]](#)<sup>[38]</sup>:

1. Abbeyglen Castle
2. Anbally Castle
3. Annaghdown Castle
4. Ardamullivan Castle
5. Ardrahan Castle
6. [Ashford Castle](#)<sup>[20]</sup>
7. Athenry Castle
8. [Aughnanure Castle](#)<sup>[22]</sup>
9. Ballinderry Castle
10. Ballindoooley Castle
11. Ballinduff Castle
12. Ballybrit Castle
13. Ballybroder Castle
14. Ballykine Castle
15. Ballylee Castle
16. Ballylin Castle
17. Ballymore Castle
18. [Ballynahinch Castle](#)<sup>[23]</sup>
19. Barnaderg Castle
20. Blakes Castle
21. [Brackloon Castle](#)<sup>[24]</sup>
22. Bunowen Castle
23. Caherdangan Castle
24. Cahererillan
25. Caisleanna Circe
26. [Carrigín Castle](#)<sup>[25]</sup>
27. Cashlaundarragh
28. Castledaly
29. Castlegar Castle
30. Castlehackett

31. Castle Taylor
32. Castletown Castle
33. Claregalway Castle
34. Clooneen Castle
35. [Cloonacauneen Castle](#)<sup>[26]</sup>
36. Clifden Castle
37. Cloghan Castle
38. Clondegoff Castle
39. Cloughballymore
40. Corofin Castle
41. Creagh Castle
42. Cregg Castle
43. Creganna Castle
44. Derrydonnel
45. Derryhivenny Castle
46. Derrymaccloughna Castle
47. Drumharsna Castle
48. [Dunamon Castle](#)<sup>[27]</sup>
49. Dunguaire Castle
50. Dunmore Castle
51. Dunsandle Castle
52. Feartagar Castle
53. Fiddaun Castle
54. Garbally Castle
55. [Glinsk Castle](#)<sup>[28]</sup>
56. Grange Castle
57. Headford Castle
58. Iserrkelly Castle
59. Kilcolgan Castle
60. Kilcornan House
61. Killeen Castle
62. Kilmacduagh
63. Kilrogue Castle
64. Kinlough Castle
65. Kylemore Castle
66. Lackagh Castle
67. Lackafinna Castle
68. Lismore Castle
69. Longford Castle
70. [Lough Cutra Castle-Gort](#)<sup>[29]</sup>

71. Lydacan Castle
72. [Lynch's Castle](#)<sup>30</sup>
73. Mannin Castle
74. Menlo Castle
75. Merlin Park
76. Monivea Castle
77. Moyveela
78. Moylough Castle
79. Moyne Castle
80. Moyode Castle
81. Newtown Castle
82. O'Brien's Castle
83. Oranmore Castle
84. Pallas Castle
85. Parkbaun Castle
86. Portumna Castle
87. Renville Castle
88. Renvyle Castle
89. Riverville Castle
90. Shrile Castle
91. Tullira Castle
92. Turloughcartron Castle

### Ashford Castle



Ashford Castle is a medieval castle that has been expanded over the centuries and turned into a five star luxury hotel on the Galway-Mayo border. It is a member of the Leading Hotels of the World organisation and was previously owned by the Guinness family.

The magnificent five star Ashford Castle is set in 350 acres, on the picturesque shores of Lough Corrib. Dating back to 1228, the castle now enters a new chapter in its history, as part of The Red Carnation Hotel



Collection. With 82 spectacular rooms, suites and the Hideaway Cottage, a wealth of activities and plenty of thoughtful touches, guests will enjoy acclaimed Irish hospitality on a grand scale.

For centuries Ashford Castle has overlooked the shores of Lough Corrib, as one of Ireland's most magnificent castles and one of the most luxurious resort hotels in the world.

Ashford Castle's long and distinguished history dates back to 1228 when the Anglo Norman de Burgos family founded it. The castle changed hands throughout the years whose owners including the Guinness Family adapted its appearance from defensive castle, to French Chateaux to Victorian Neo Gothic. During its time Ashford Castle has hosted Presidents and Princes, Ronald Reagan in 1985 and Prince of Wales George V in 1905. The then future King of England was so enamoured with Ashford that he extended his original stay of a few days to 3 months.

Ashford Castle has stood the test of time well, inside the castle's imposing structure, Ashford's richly decorated interior speaks of centuries of care and excellent craftsmanship. Wonderful oak panelling, exquisite antiques and fine antique furnishings adorn the many nooks and crannies, and the leisurely drawing room and refined Prince of Wales Cocktail Bar.

Ashford Castle's luxury accommodations are hugely spacious and all individually designed, with elegant period furnishings, sumptuous marble bathrooms and all the comforts of gracious living. Each bedroom commands fantastic views either across the graceful gardens, the flowing river or the wide waters of Lough Corrib.

Dining at Ashford Castle is a world-renowned culinary experience. The George V Room offers elegant dining amid period decor with a world-class menu of modern Irish and International cuisine. From May to September, the Connaught Room, a more intimate venue, offers the utmost in gourmet cuisine specialising in French à la Carte. All of which is prepared to the highest standards, from a Michelin Star Chef.

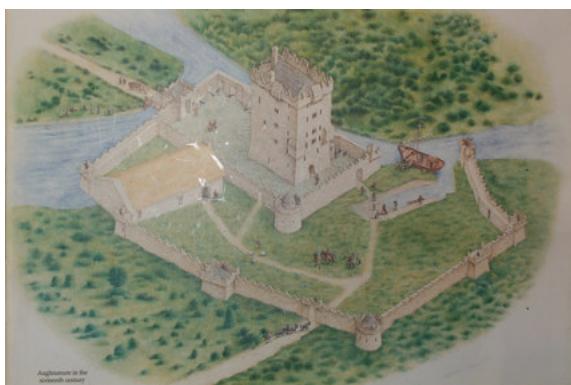
For a more traditional and casual dining experience, Cullen's Cottage is located on the grounds, less than a 2 minute walk from the castle.

Evening entertainment is provided in the atmospheric Dungeon Bar with resident entertainers providing traditional Irish music, ballads, poetry and storytelling.

Ashford Castle offers a huge range of activities, from walks within the 350 acre estate, golfing on Ashford's 9-hole course, to fishing for trout and salmon on Lough Corrib and lake cruises. Ashford Castle also has one of the most advanced Equestrian Centres in the country and has Ireland's first Falconry School offering the rare opportunity to handle birds of prey. For

rainy days, Ashford has a health and beauty centre equipped with whirlpool, steamroom and sauna and a full range of beauty treatments using exclusive Yonka products. Or you could pass the time in the castle with the daily showings John Ford's 1950's classic "The Quiet Man" filmed in and around the nearby village of Cong [\[18\]](#)<sup>[38]</sup>.

### Aughnanure Castle



Aughnanure Castle was built by the O'Flaherties (one of Connacht's most notable lord families) in the early sixteenth century, possibly on the site of a thirteenth-century Norman fortification.

In 1572 it was captured by Sir Edward Fitton, President of Connaught, and granted to a junior member of the clan who had been enticed over to the Crown. It was used to blockade Galway during the Cromwellian invasion. Soon after, it was granted to the Earl of Clanrickard, and then reclaimed by the O'Flahertys. It later fell into the hands of Lord St George as the foreclosure of a mortgage. It is now managed by Dúchas, the Irish State body responsible for national monuments and historic properties.

Nowadays it lies in picturesque surroundings close to the shores of Lough Corrib. Standing on what is virtually a rocky island, the Castle is a particularly well-preserved example of an Irish tower house. In addition, visitors will find the remains of a banqueting hall, a watch tower, an unusual double bawn and bastions and a dry harbour. Access to Castle grounds is restricted for wheelchair users [\[15\]](#)<sup>[38]</sup>.

A natural bridge of rock gives access to the inner bawn and tower house on the west, while an extensive outer bawn lies to the east and south. The well-built six-storey tower has a gracefully battered base and two flanking bartizans at mid-height, which impart to the castle a very picturesque appearance. It has a vault over the fourth storey with the hall on the fifth storey, where there is a large fireplace and wide mullioned windows. A good fire place on the third storey indicates that this was the lord's suite, while the

second, fourth and sixth storeys formed sleeping accommodation for the family and servants. In the thickness of the east-end wall there is a tier of mural chambers and a spiral stair giving access to all floors. An unusual defensive feature are the internal loopholes on the two walls of each landing of the stair. At the top a door leads to the wall walk and a modern hipped roof, whose parapets have machicolations on all four sides and command a wonderful view over Lough Corrib [25]<sup>[38]</sup>.

### Ballynahinch Castle



Nowadays Ballynahinch Castle is a popular 4 star luxury hotel in Ireland. It is listed number one in Ireland and of course it is private. It was built in 1684 for one of the famous family – the Martins. The representative of this family Richard Martin was a well-known Irish politician who was born in this castle. Thanks to his love to animals an important document “Cruel Treatment of Cattle Act in 1822” was signed in England.

Ballynahinch has a rich history. It has seen many changes. The castle has been the home to many great and generous people such as former president of America, Mr. Gerard Ford, and his wife Betty, former British Prime Minister James Callaghan.

It has seen hardship. In 1946 the castle was turned into a hotel. But during the Great Famine of 1847 it was shelter for many starving people.

Now it is set in a private 450 acre estate of woodland, rivers and walks in the heart of Connemara. There are 40 wonderful rooms with rich furniture and fabulous decorations. Visiting and staying at the Ballynahinch Castle Hotel provides a wonderful opportunity to enjoy the heritage of this beautiful country and find a hobby to any taste. You can go fishing or hunting there, play tennis or golf, climb a mountain, go on a hike, ride a bike and even ride a pony. Maybe one day I'll have a chance to stay in this magnificent Irish castle when I come to this country on my vacation because the Emerald Island is in my soul forever [16]<sup>[38]</sup>.

### Brackloon Castle



Brackloon Castle is situated near Clonfert. It was a typical Irish tower castle house built in the 15 century by the O'Maddens. It was a scene of slaughter the Harrison were thrown off the battlements in 1651. Now this castle is in ruins. It's free to come there and have a look at it.

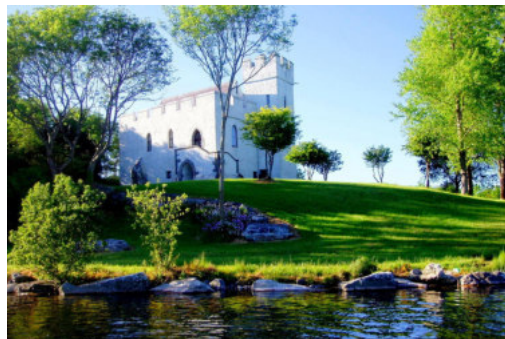
At 74 Hectares (183 acres) the relatively unknown gem that is Brackloon Wood is one of the largest surviving remnants in the west of the original wooded landscape that covered much of Ireland in ancient times. Formerly part of Lord Sligo's Westport House estate, this area was acquired by the Irish Land Commission in the 1940s. It lies along the Owenwee River, beside the Westport to Leenane Road (N59), with its southerly entrance around 6km (3.7 miles) south of Westport. The gentle 4km (2.5 miles) Brackloon Wood loop walk begins there.

Native oak trees, 150-200 years old, descendants of the oaks that the O'Malleys would have seen hundreds of years ago, tower above a landscape under restoration. Coillte, the state-owned company that manages Ireland's forests, felled the coniferous trees planted under the oak canopy in the sixties, as part of the restoration process. In place of the non-native conifers, Coillte planted oaks and other native trees raised from local seedstock. Brackloon wood is now classified as a semi-natural Atlantic oak woodland.

Apart from the woodland trees, other notable plant-life includes an extremely rare white orchid, the narrow-leaved or sword-leaved helleborine. If you see it, please don't pick it – it is an extremely threatened species and is protected by law. Brackloon wood is also home to wood sorrel, hard fern and bilberry.

Animals common to the area include badgers, foxes and pine martens  
[\[16\]](#)<sup>[38]</sup>.

### Carraigin Castle



Surrounded by seven acres of lawns, park and woodland, Carraigin Castle is an idyllic holiday home in a beautiful setting on the shores of Lough Corrib, one of Ireland's biggest lakes, famous for its brown trout and its multitude of picturesque islands. From the Castle one can enjoy boating and fishing on the lake, walking, riding and sightseeing all over Galway and Mayo, or just relax by the open hearth and contemplate the charm and simple grandeur of this ancient dwelling, a rare and beautiful example of a fortified, medieval "hall house".

Family groups or close friends will love the relaxed atmosphere of this authentic 13th-century manor house, which has been restored by the present owner after languishing for more than two centuries as a crumbling, roofless ruin.

You can rent this castle for a day, a few days, a week or a month. You can plan a wedding or any other special event there. This castle comes with the staff, so ask when'll you book [\[19\]](#)<sup>[38]</sup>.



### Cloonacauneen Castle



Cloonacauneen Castle is one of Galway's best known Tower Houses rising up to over fifty feet in ivy splendour above the lonely peaty plains of the Curraghline, its floor plan of thirty-one feet sets it regally among its limestone peers, although many have crumbled away with the passage of time.

Its stony spiral staircase leads up from the former storage room at ground level to the ancient kitchen area, above again the master bedroom, and higher up to the main banqueting hall, where guests such as Gernon were wine and dined.

The majority of the castle owners have been recorded since 1574 when Richard Beag Burke lived there. The building next came into the possession of the Blakes with Martin Blake the last of the family in occupation. Shortly after 1835, he sold it to a Mr. Fair of Ballinasloe, sold both buildings to the estates commissioners. In 1914 the complex came into the possession of Mr. James Malley, but by then, it seems, it had become a dilapidated ruin.

All was not lost, however, because when the Lenihan family from Eyre Square occupied the site in 1963, they immediately set about restoring both buildings to their former prime. Castle and house were re-roofed and the battlements raised to their original height. A lord of the manor took up residence again.

Subsequent owners such as the Hanleys, Monaghans, and Heffernans, went much further, of course, and Cloonacauneen has become a centre of joviality again. A house, while an adjoining function room has transformed the ancient complex into a centre of recreation. With accommodation also provided, the castle has twined the ancient charms of the past with the recreational demands of today.



While one may sup in style in the castle's famous restaurant, drink to the sound of melody in its cosy bar, or dance the night away on the boards of its function room after a hearty meal (not swelled mutton from a shorn ram!), one can also share overnight accommodation with the ghosts of time itself. There is more.

While the upper banqueting hall is used as a special private party room, most will sip brandy with the past in an entrance hall unique. As you enter through the twice-recessed stone doorway, where overhead the murder hole once greeted the uninvited, the storage room is now a place of genteel repose. As you sink into the carved and cushioned oak wood chairs of the past, the once wickered arches of window cells urge you to guess what lies behind the doors of this ancient place [\[17\]](#)<sup>[38]</sup>.

### **Dunamon Castle**



Donamon, or more correctly, Dunamon Castle is one of the oldest inhabited buildings in Ireland and stands on raised ground overlooking the River Suck. There was a fort here from early times. The first recorded reference to this place was for the year 1154.

It was the seat of the Ó Fionnachta chief of Clann Chonnmhaigh, one of the two main branches of this Connacht family. In 1232, Adam de Staunton fortified the site further as part of the Norman conquest, but this were retaken and demolished by the native O'Connors the following year. The rebuilt castle was occupied in 1294 by de Oddingseles. He died the following year. The de Birminghams then took over but it was again destroyed by the O'Connors and 1307 they were supplanted by a branch of the Burkes, the head of which was

known as MacDavid. The MacDavid Burkes occupied it for the next 300 years. During the seventeenth century wars of conquest and dispossession a junior branch of the Caulfeild family came to own the castle and surrounding territory. They continued to own it throughout the Protestant Ascendancy. In 1939 the Divine Word Missionaries came to Ireland and purchased the castle from the Irish Land Commission. It is still their home in Ireland and the site of the Holiday Centre, a leisure and conference resort as well as being the Irish Wheelchair Association's National Holiday Centre.

In late 1932, an IRA unit, under the command of Seán McCool and Mick Price, took over Donamon Castle to set up an IRA training camp[16]<sup>[38]</sup>.

### Glinsk Castle



Glinsk (Irish: Gleann Uisce, meaning "glen of the water") is a small village in County Galway, Ireland, between Creggs and Ballymoe. Glinsk is located approximately 68 km from Galway city and approximately 30 km from Roscommon. It is located in valley of the River Suck, which has a 60-mile hiking trail. Nearby is the Glinsk Castle ruin, built by Ulick Burke in the early 17th century. Also in the area is the ruins of Ballinakill Abbey, which dates from the early 18th century. See Burke Baronets.

The services found in Glinsk include a church, a shop, a pub and a GAA pitch. The community centre also houses the new Childcare centre which opened in 2009. The church is called St. Michael's Church and is ideally situated beside the local primary school, Glinsk National School. The local shop is Dowds and the pub next door is called The Glencastle Lounge [26]<sup>[38]</sup>.

## Lough Cutra Castle



You can rent this castle for a day, a few days, a week or a month. You can plan a wedding or any other special event there. This castle comes with the staff.

Lough Cutra Castle is a self catering private family home that can accommodate up to 17 guests in 9 luxurious bedrooms, with an additional 23 in the courtyard homes for a total of 40 guests on the estate. An exclusive but central location on Ireland's Western seaboard in Gort, Co. Galway, Lough Cutra was designed by John Nash who worked on Buckingham Palace. The estate has been privileged to host discerning guests such as His Royal Highness Prince Charles and Duchess of Cornwall Camilla, Irish President Michael D Higgins, Bob Geldof, Lady Augusta Gregory and WB Yeats. The countryside surrounding Lough Cutra holds many a story, dating back centuries.

So Lough Cutra is very privately situated, in a glorious position at the heart of the private 1600 acre estate, perched above Europe's largest privately held lake and surrounded by manicured lawns, mature woodland and parkland scenery.

Lough Cutra is ideal for family gatherings, friendly weekends away or summer holidays. Guests have freedom to have many outdoor activities: boating and fishing on Europe's largest privately held lake, private biking and walking trails, horse riding, shooting and hunting.

Lough Cutra Castle is a private, one of a kind location for unique wedding celebrations. The setting is majestic for romantic wedding day photographs. As magnificent as the exterior of the castle is, the interior is stunning and well suited to wedding parties of varied sizes.

You can rent this castle for a day, a few days, a week or a month. You can plan a wedding or any other special event there. This castle comes with the staff, so ask when'll you book [\[21\]](#)<sup>38</sup>.

### Lynch's Castle



Lynch's Castle was once the home to the most powerful family in Galway. This incredible limestone building is a fine example of an Irish gothic style.

Considered the finest town castle in Ireland, this old stone town house – now part of AIB Bank – was built in the 14th century, though much of what you see today dates from around 1600. Stonework on the facade includes ghoulish gargoyles and the coats of arms of Henry VII, the Lynches (the most powerful of the 14 ruling Galway 'tribes') and the Fitzgeralds of Kildare.

Spanish decorative motifs are visible on its stones, along with decorative windows.

Lynch's castle can clearly be seen on the famous map of 1651, and still stands to this day. It is actually the oldest commercial building in Ireland - in that it is used by a business. The forerunner to the AIB bank bought the place in the 1930's, and in their infinite wisdom ripped out all the interiors. The only exception to that was the magnificent fireplace that stands in the entrance lobby [\[16\]](#)<sup>[38]</sup>.

# **The comparison of Belarusian and Irish castles**

## Common features of Belarusian and Irish castles

Get acquainted with some common features between Belarusian and Irish castles:

1. Most castles in both countries were built in the XIII-XVII centuries. So they are considered to be medieval.
2. The functions of the castles in Belarus and in Ireland were the same: defensive, residential, administrative and public. But the main characteristic of medieval castles was not to invite expected guests, but to send the unexpected ones away. So the main function was defensive.
3. Castles were built in convenient places for the defense – mainly on the highlands, or sometimes in the lowlands and nearby the best natural defense, usually next to a river or any water formation, for an easy escape route in case the castle was destroyed and the people had nowhere else to go.
4. Wooden and stone castles were spread on both territories but only stone castles have been preserved until today because of different sieges and wars.
5. Most castles of the XV-XVI centuries had typical features of Gothic and Renaissance. Baroque elements were observed in the XVII century.
6. The castles of the XVI-XVIII centuries consisted of separate fortifications and the palace which had a main role in the architectural composition.
7. Since the end of the XVI century the castle construction was gradually transformed into the Palace and Castle ensemble or complex ([Nesvizh](#)<sup>[5]</sup>, [Golshany](#)<sup>[11]</sup>, [Ruzhany](#)<sup>[14]</sup>, [Kossovo](#)<sup>[15]</sup> in Belarus). That style was called Elizabeth's style and it had typical features of French Renaissance.
8. All the castles had the surrounding parks.
9. Interior symmetrical blocks were grouped around a central 2-floor lobby in many Belarusian and Irish castles.
10. There was a luxury interior with Gothic and Renaissance ornaments in all the castles. Moldings, murals, carved oak wall panels, rich ceilings and fireplaces made of coloured marble were widely used.
11. Many castles were reconstructed in both countries and are open to the public now.



12. Castles were very important during the Middle Ages. From the castles people can learn much about the daily life of those that worked and lived in and the advantages of having a castle during a time of war.
13. There was the inner yard of the castles. Here you could find many different sections. There were apartments, barracks for the soldiers, stables for the animals, a chapel for the worship of God, and the most important, the Great Hall. The Great Hall was the place where the owner and his people congregated, ate, and socialized.
14. The living quarters of the castles were for the owner, his family and other important people of the castle. The owner and the family got the best rooms, of course. They were spacious, comfortable, and high up in the castle, which made it least prone to attack.
15. The windows in the rooms of the castles were bigger and wider than those at the bottom of the castle, which were small and very thin in diameter. This was so because the windows at the bottom of the castle were more easily prone to attack from enemies. Those at the top were too far up and so the enemies would not be able to reach them.
16. Many Belarusian and Irish castles lie in ruins nowadays because of numerous sieges and wars on the territories of both countries. Castle ruins have their own, abandoned, ivy-covered charm, and some ruins are tremendously more impressive than others. Nevertheless, if you're visiting Belarus or Ireland, you'll probably want to see at least one beautiful medieval castle. No problem. Welcome to Belarus and Ireland! And you'll enjoy the beauty of the castles.

### **Different features of Belarusian and Irish castles**

There are more common than different features between the castles in two countries. The differences are the following:

1. In the 16<sup>th</sup>-17<sup>th</sup> centuries, Belarus was a true land of castles, the number of which reached 115. Nowadays there are only [26 castles](#)<sup>[4]</sup> including towers, fortified churches and the fortress (Brest fortress). Castles in Ireland are plentiful even nowadays. In county Galway there are [92 castles](#)<sup>[18]</sup> even now. So modern Ireland can be called the country of castles and we can't say the same about Belarus.
2. Have you dreamed of owning a castle? It's impossible to do it in our native country. All the Belarusian castles are state nowadays.

You can't buy a castle or a land with a castle, even the ruins, in Belarus. And the castles in Ireland are private. You can buy a castle, the ruins and the land there. Not all of them are expensive, beautifully-restored five-star castle hotels, but there are countless ones in various conditions and many castle ruins in disrepair. Different castles appear on the real estate market from time to time. Everything depends on the sum of money you would like to spend and your ambition.

3. Some castles in Belarus are being reconstructed by the state nowadays ([Ruzhany](#)<sup>[14]</sup>, [Kossovo](#)<sup>[15]</sup>). These two castles are promised to be opened to the public in 2017. I'm looking forward to visiting them.
4. The building of the castles in Belarus had an influence on the architecture of defensive churches, houses, city gates (Muravankovskaya fortified church, Synkovichi fortified church, Kamaysky church) [\[4, p. 93\]](#)<sup>[38]</sup>.
5. Have you ever dreamed of living like a lord or a lady in your own castle? How about gourmet dining, servants to cater to your every wish, hunting, horseback riding or playing golf? Your dream can come true by staying in a castle hotel in Ireland. So there are hotels and restaurants in some Irish castles nowadays. It's typical for Ireland. And we can't observe the same situation in Belarus.
6. All the Irish castles were built as private in the past. [Novogrudok](#)<sup>[9]</sup> and [Krevo](#)<sup>[12]</sup> castles in Belarus were built as state. The first Belarusian private castle was [Mir castle](#)<sup>[7]</sup> [\[29, p. 15-18\]](#)<sup>[38]</sup>.
7. At the end of the XVIII century medieval fortifications in Belarus were replaced by the fortress with many kilometers of lines of defense and the elements of modern fortification (Brest fortress).

### The comparative table

	The name of the castle	Counry	Region/county	Built	Condition now	Type	Built by
1	<a href="#">Nesvizh</a> <sup>[5]</sup>	Belarus	Minsk	1583	museum, entered into the UNESCO list	Palace- castle	Mikolay Krzystof Radziwill the Orphan
2	<a href="#">Mir</a> <sup>[7]</sup>	Belarus	Grodno	1520	museum, entered into	Castle- fortress	Yury Illinich

	The name of the castle	Counry	Region/ county	Built	Condition now	Type	Built by
					the UNESCO list in 2000		
3	<a href="#">Lida</a> <sup>[8]</sup>	Belarus	Grodno	13th c	museum	Castle-fortress	Grand Duke of Lithuania Gedymin
4	<a href="#">Novogrudok</a> <sup>[9]</sup>	Belarus	Grodno	13th c	ruined	Castle-fortress	Mindovg
5	<a href="#">Lubcha</a> <sup>[10]</sup>	Belarus	Grodno	1581	partially ruined, being reconstructed	Fortified residence	Jan Kiszka
6	<a href="#">Golshany</a> <sup>[11]</sup>	Belarus	Grodno	1 <sup>st</sup> half of the 17 <sup>th</sup> c	ruined	Palace- castle	Pavel Stephan Sapega
7	<a href="#">Krevo</a> <sup>[12]</sup>	Belarus	Grodno	mid 14th c	ruined	Castle fortress	Grand Duke of Lithuania Gedymin
8	<a href="#">The Old and New Grodno Castles</a> <sup>[13]</sup>	Belarus	Grodno	1376	Grodno History and Archeology Museum	Castle fortified residence	Grand Duke Vytautas
9	<a href="#">Ruzhany</a> <sup>[14]</sup>	Belarus	Brest	16th c	partially ruined, being reconstructed	Palace ensemble, fortified residence	the Polish magnate Lew Sapega
10	<a href="#">Kossovo</a> <sup>[15]</sup>	Belarus	Brest	1838	partially ruined, being reconstructed	Palace complex	the earls Puslowskis
11	<a href="#">Ashford</a> <sup>[20]</sup>	Ireland	Galway	1228	5 star luxury hotel	Victorian Castle House	De Burgo family
12	<a href="#">Aughnanure</a> <sup>[22]</sup>	Ireland	Galway	16th c	ruined	Tower House	O'Flaherty
13	<a href="#">Ballynahinch</a> <sup>[23]</sup>	Ireland	Galway	1684	4 star luxury hotel	Tower- Hall House	Richard Martyn
14	<a href="#">Brackloon</a> <sup>[24]</sup>	Ireland	Galway	15th c	ruined	Tower House	O'Madden
15	<a href="#">Carraigin</a> <sup>[25]</sup>	Ireland	Galway	13th c	Manor House	Tower- Hall House	Adam Gaynard
16	<a href="#">Cloonacauneen</a> <sup>[26]</sup>	Ireland	Galway	16th c	Hotel bar-restaurant	Tower- Hall House	Richard Beag Burke

	The name of the castle	Counry	Region/county	Built	Condition now	Type	Built by
17	<a href="#">Dunamon</a> <sup>[27]</sup>	Ireland	Galway	12th c	Holiday Centre	Tower House	Ó Fionnachta chief of Clann Chonnmhaigh
18	<a href="#">Glinsk</a> <sup>[28]</sup>	Ireland	Galway	17th c	ruined	Tower House	Ulick Burke
19	<a href="#">Lough Cutra</a> <sup>[29]</sup>	Ireland	Galway	18th c	hotel	Tower- Hall House	the Pain brothers
20	<a href="#">Lynch's</a> <sup>[30]</sup>	Ireland	Galway	14th c	AIR Bank, museum	Town House	the Lynches

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