
Principal residence of one of the most powerful families in Ireland, Kilkenny Castle is of exceptional historical significance for its role in Irish political and cultural history.

Standing on a strategic height, Kilkenny Castle was built by William Marshal, 4th Earl of Pembroke in the 12th Century to command the crossing of the River Nore.

In the 14th Century, Kilkenny Castle became the principal Irish residence of the powerful Butler Family, Earl, Marquess & Dukes of Ormonde for almost 600 years.

Today visitors can experience the exuberant spirit of the Victorian age, faithfully brought back to life in the restored Period Rooms of Kilkenny Castle.

The Castle Park includes a 21 hectares walled demesne parkland to the south and a formal terraced Rose Garden to the north. The estate overlooks the Nore River and features mature trees and shrubs with an ornamental lake and a children's playground.

Kilkenny is a vibrant and compact city, which hosts a number of renowned festivals each year. A variety of events such as concerts, art exhibitions, talks, workshops and street theatre are held throughout the year in the Castle & Park.

Highlights include:

- ❖ Spectacular suite of 17th Century Decius Mus Tapestries
- ❖ Stunning Picture Gallery with its hand painted hammer beam roof
- ❖ Events calendar: talks, family events, music events, festivals
- ❖ Magnificent Moorish Staircase with its carved foliage & animals
- ❖ Splendid parkland & formal Rose Garden
- ❖ Striking exhibition of the embroidered panels of the Ros Tapestry project

Kilkenny Castle: Visitor Experiences

The Kilkenny Castle Guiding Team is delighted to offer the following experiences. Each experience is an interactive discovery of the Castle led by enthusiastic and knowledgeable members of the guiding team.

Experience	Description	Fitness Level	Min / Max numbers	Duration (approx.)	Price per person
Kilkenny Castle Non-Guided Visit (All Year)	Pre-booked non-guided visit of the Period Rooms and exhibition rooms of Kilkenny Castle. Staggered entry for groups of 25 and more	4 levels accessible by staircase. Ground floor only Wheelchair accessible	Min 11. Max. 45	35 minutes	€ 6.00 adult €4 Student*
Kilkenny Castle Guided Tours (All Year)	Pre-booked guided tour of the Period Rooms of Kilkenny Castle with an experienced tour guide with exclusive access to the Medieval Foundations, the West Tower and the Ducal Palace room.	4 levels accessible by staircase. Ground floor only Wheelchair accessible	Min. 10. Max. 20	45 minutes	€7.50 adult €6 Student*
Kilkenny Castle Unique Experience (Monday to Friday during the months of April to October inclusive)	Pre-booked personalised guided visit of Kilkenny Castle with exclusive access to the Medieval Foundations, the West Tower, the Ducal Palace room and the Duchess Boardroom and private viewing of pieces from the Ormonde Collection. Suitable for children from 10 years of age,	4 levels accessible by staircase. Ground floor and Duchess Boardroom only Wheelchair accessible	Min. 1 Max.6	90 minutes	1 person €200, 1-3 €150 per person, 4-8 €100 Per person. €50 per Child.

*group rate for all groups paying with OPW approved voucher is €6 for non-guided entry and €7.50 for guided tour

Kilkenny Castle : Experience Descriptions

Kilkenny Castle Non-Guided Visit | 30-45 minutes

Groups are invited to explore the magnificent Period rooms and exhibition rooms of Kilkenny Castle with a non-guided visit. Information leaflets in various languages are made available to groups at the start of their visits. A number of caption panels, display stands and QR codes are positioned along the tour route to provide further information. Free audio guides in various languages can be downloaded free of charge from our website: <https://soundcloud.com/opwireland/sets/kilkenny-castle-2022>.

Visitors must use their own earphones / headphones.

NOTE: group leaders are not permitted to gather and formally address their groups in the period / exhibition rooms

Kilkenny Castle Guided Tour | 45-50 minutes

One of our experienced guide will lead you throughout the restored Period Rooms of Kilkenny Castle and will put the spotlight on fascinating characters and hidden gems. The guided tours give a unique opportunity to learn more about Kilkenny Castle and its Collections with exclusive access to the Medieval Foundations, the West Tower and the Ducal Palace Exhibition. All guided tours are in English only,

NOTE: Please allow more time if your leader/courier is translating.

Kilkenny Castle Unique Experience | 90 minutes

Step back in time and enjoy the wonder and history of this very prestigious stately home.

You will be warmly greeted and accompanied throughout your visit by one of our most experienced Guides, who will enthral you with wonderful stories of the very powerful and influential Butler Family. This magnificent Castle has many hidden gems, which will be exclusively available to our Unique Experience guests.

Some very special pieces from the **Ormonde Collection** will be available for viewing in the Duchess Closet of the west wing. Our guests will have the opportunity to handle some of these pieces, which may include weaponry, family photographs and special family pieces.

Available in English only

Kilkenny Castle: General Information

Opening Hours

- ❖ Daily: 09.30 – 17.00 01st October to 31st March
 - ❖ Daily: 09.15 – 17.30 01st April to 30th September
- Last admission 30 minutes before closing

Location

- ❖ The Parade, Kilkenny, R95 YRK1
- ❖ GPS 52.65000512443783 : -7.249482497622694
- ❖ 15 minutes' walk from McDonagh Raily Station

Onsite facilities include:

Toilets, baby-changing facilities

Languages:

Information Leaflets available in Irish, English, Arabic, Chinese, Dutch, French, German, Hebrew, Italian, Ukrainian, Japanese, Polish, Portuguese, Russian & Spanish.

Audio guide available in Irish, English, French, German, Polish and Ukrainian. Italian & Spanish version available in early 2024

Free optional 12 minutes audio-visual presentation in English.

Parkland

Self-guiding walks through the 21 hectares of Parkland & Rose Garden, Children's playground, Outdoor Café.

Tea Room

The Tea Room is located in Victorian Kitchen: Open daily, Castle opening hours. Groups must pre-book.

Email nostalgiacafe@eircom.net or nostalgiacafe65@gmail.com.

Kilkenny Castle, Co. Kilkenny Parking for Coach / Car



Coach parking is available on the eastern side of the Castle Road leading up to the Castle. At peak times, there is an overflow coach parking area located at the south side of Larchfield. Coach Parking is also available at the Abbey Quarter. Coach parking is currently free of charge.

Limited on street, short term parking is within a 1 minute walk and carparks are located from 2 to 14 minutes away. Parking fees apply.

Public Transport Links

Kilkenny City is serviced by national daily bus and rail services. There is a public bus stop 6 minute walk away that serves: Dublin, Cork and Waterford with links to various other locations. The train station is located a 14 minute walk for Kilkenny Castle and there is daily service to Dublin and Waterford.

Biodiversity

There are various biodiversity areas within Kilkenny Castle Park. There are 15 acres of native woodland, 3 acres of Native wildflower meadows and stonewalls on all perimeters. Bird and bat boxes will be found in various locations with the 52 acres. There is a dedicated Bee area with two beehives and two floating duck houses can be found on our lake located within our woodland.

Sustainability

Bike hire is available in Kilkenny City from <https://kilkennycyclingtours.com/> and people can cycle to Kilkenny Castle. Kilkenny Castle is located in the heart of Kilkenny City and is within walking and cycling distance of all the local city attractions.

Backpack Policy

In order to protect our collection we kindly ask visitors to not bring backpacks and large bags to Kilkenny Castle, only small bags no bigger than A4 (8.27in/21cm x 11.7in/29.7cm) will be permitted. Visitors will be asked to carry small bags to the front or in their hands while visiting the period rooms of Kilkenny Castle.

*Please note there are no storage facilities on site for groups.