



THIS WEEK'S TOP 5

VISIT

Ireland's newest Christmas Experience at the City West Arena this December. Magical Wonderland has got Christmas all wrapped up with a unique Santa Experience complete with reindeer, fun-fair rides, Bavarian-style food stalls, and Christmas crafts market – all surrounding a glistening 800 square meter ice rink. Running until 3 January, this experience not only involves meeting Santa, getting a present and a framed photograph taken with the man himself, but also the chance to share a hot chocolate with Mrs Claus and meet Santa's reindeer. The Santa Experience is €15 for kids and €10 for adults. Ice-skating prices are separate.

Tickets can be booked online at www.magicalwonderland.ie.

DANCE

The night away to a Christmas cabaret with Michael English as he takes to the stage of the Gleneagle Hotel Ballroom in Killarney on 27 December. Michael was an overnight sensation when he arrived on the Irish country music scene from his home in Co Kildare, learning his trade from the Royal Irish Academy of Music in Dublin. Since then, he has gone on to produce three albums. Tickets cost €20. Purchase online at www.inec.ie, or contact the Box Office on +353 64 667 1555. The Gleneagle Hotel is offering one night's bed and breakfast plus

a ticket from €69.50 per person sharing.

Contact The Gleaneage Hotel separately at +353 064 66 36000 for more.

WATCH

A Simply Delicious Christmas with Darina Allen and Rory O'Connell, a two-part programme on RTÉ One this week. The pair bring 30 years of teaching experience to our screens, with a style and substance that is unique to Ballymaloe – and of course some sibling rivalry.

VISIT

Newgrange in Co Meath to celebrate the winter solstice 2015. People gather from dawn at Newgrange from 18 to 23 December to watch the sunrise. All access to the chamber is decided by lottery, but everyone else is welcome to come and stand outside the monument to celebrate. Five thousand years ago, the Neolithic farmers ingeniously engineered it so that sunlight could enter the vaulted chamber at dawn on the winter solstice. On clear solstice mornings, the chamber at the end of the passage is fully illuminated and bathed in a wonderful golden glow. To enter the 2016 lottery, send your postal address, a contact telephone number and an indication of whether or not you have visited Newgrange before by email to brunaboinne@opw.ie.

TRAVEL

During the Holy Year of Mercy, as declared by Pope Francis. It officially started on 8 December and finishes on 20 November 2016. Thousands are expected to travel to Rome and Santiago de Compostela during the event, which usually only occurs every 25 years. Individual jubilee celebrations are scheduled, including one for consecrated men and women on 2 February to close the year of consecrated life, and others for teenagers and the sick and disabled. CaminoWays.com advises those travelling to Rome

or Santiago de Compostela over Easter and other important religious periods to secure accommodation well in advance. The agency will offer a number of packages during the year, with tours from March to of October. Visit www.caminoways.com, www.francigenaways.com or www.irelandways.com, or email info@camino-ways.com or call +353 1 5252886.





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