

### **Tourism in the West of Ireland**

Tourism is one of the main sources of income in the west of Ireland. Approximately 65% of people work in the tertiary industry. In 2009, 2.6 million people visited the west of Ireland. The West of Ireland is a place of natural beauty which attracts many tourists. Galway city is a cultural town and hosts many festivals such as the Galway Arts Festival. The Galway races also attract tourists every summer. This brings business to the hotels and restaurants. Galway has many beaches such as Salthill. Croagh Patrick is a religious tourist attraction and each year many pilgrims climb up to the top.

Gaeltachts are also an important source of income for Ban an Tis. Connacht has the highest percentage of Irish speaking people in Ireland. Many students visit the the Gaeltacht each year to improve their Irish. Parents and families come to visit spending money in the local economy. Udaras na Gaeltacht is a government Agency that has responsibility for the economic social and cultural development of the Gaeltacht. The Ceide Fields is also a popular historic site in west Mayo.

The Great Western Greenway is a walking and cycling track built on disused railway and clear Bay and mayo. The Volvo ocean race stopover in Galway brought 55.8 million Euro to the economy. Transport is a major part of tourism in the West as it allows tourists to access the area. In 2009 Dublin was connected to Galway by toll motorway the M6. This greatly reduced journey times and it now takes approximately 2 and half hours to get from Dublin to Galway. Westport and Castlebar are connected to Dublin by the N5. There are also rail routes from Galway to Dublin and buses go regularly. Knock airport flies More Than 600,000 passengers a year to 25 European destinations.