



Irish Culture | Rich Early & Modern History | Beautiful Island | Cork Harbour | Cobh Views

Welcome to the immense Spike Island that has played an integral role within the fabric of Ireland's rich cultural, social, political, religious and historic past over multiple centuries. Scenically stunning, this is a vast, green island of 104 acres, with a vast history and story to match.

In the company of a local Cork crew, the adventure begins from Kennedy Pier amidst the multi-coloured houses and shop fronts of the Victorian heritage town of Cobh. From there, on a brief 15 minutes journey, the ferry weaves its way through work boats and ships on Cork Harbour, surrounded by wildlife from seals to birds, as views of the island draw closer and closer.



Once on the island, visitors are treated to 360 degree views of silver-blue waters, open skies and rolling hills. During an action-packed, fun-filled and immersive experience, visitors learn about this island's varied past as a home, fortress and a prison at the heart of the second largest harbour in the world!

Learn about the diverse roles Spike Island has played as a 7th century monastic site, as a fortress during the periods of the Napoleonic and American revolutions and as a prison for master and petty criminals from Victorian times, until 2004.

Prepare to be intrigued by the true stories of real people who lived on this island for more than 200 years; from the navy, military, prison guards and their families, to the prisoners, whose thwarted lives are shared with both stark honesty and compassion. Prices include ferry, guided tour, full island access and return ferry. Cafe and gift shop on site.

Spike Island HIGHLIGHTS

Island Fortress | Island Prison | Island Home | Cork Harbour

<p>Fortress</p>	<p>Fact!</p> <p>In today's money, it would cost a billion Euros to build!</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ 24 acre fortress built in a stunning harbour setting ❖ Built to defend an empire, it could garrison 3000 men and held the British and Irish army. ❖ Explore the long tunnels to the harbour defence artillery that could fire a shell 12 miles.
<p>Prison</p>	<p>Fact!</p> <p>Spike Island is 4 times larger than Alcatraz island and held 8 times as many prisoners!</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ The largest ever prison in Ireland and Britain with 2300 inmates during the famine years. ❖ An island prison on 4 separate occasions, in the 1600's, 1800's, 1921 and 1985 to 2004. ❖ Discover famous inmates like Jack in the Box, Dubliner, Martin Cahill, and the dark cells of the 1850s Punishment block.
<p>Home</p>	<p>Fact!</p> <p>Spike Island was home to Ellen Organ, globally known as "Little Nellie of Holy God", and Percy Fawcett, the British explorer who inspired Indianan Jones!</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ An island home for centuries with pretty island homes at every turn. ❖ Meet the former residents and hear their stories in our social history exhibition. ❖ Hear about former resident, Little Nellie, the little Irish girl who influenced a Pope to lower the age of Holy Communion
<p>Cork Harbour</p>	<p>Fact!</p> <p>In the world ranking of natural harbours, Cork Harbour is second only to Port Jackson in Sydney!</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ The world's second largest natural harbour; coveted by many but tackled by none. ❖ Cork harbour was home to the British Navy, a WW1 American destroyer fleet and the Irish Navy ❖ Spot seals, birds and even occasional whales & dolphins!



HIGHLIGHTS: Political & Historic Highlights

The world's largest prison!

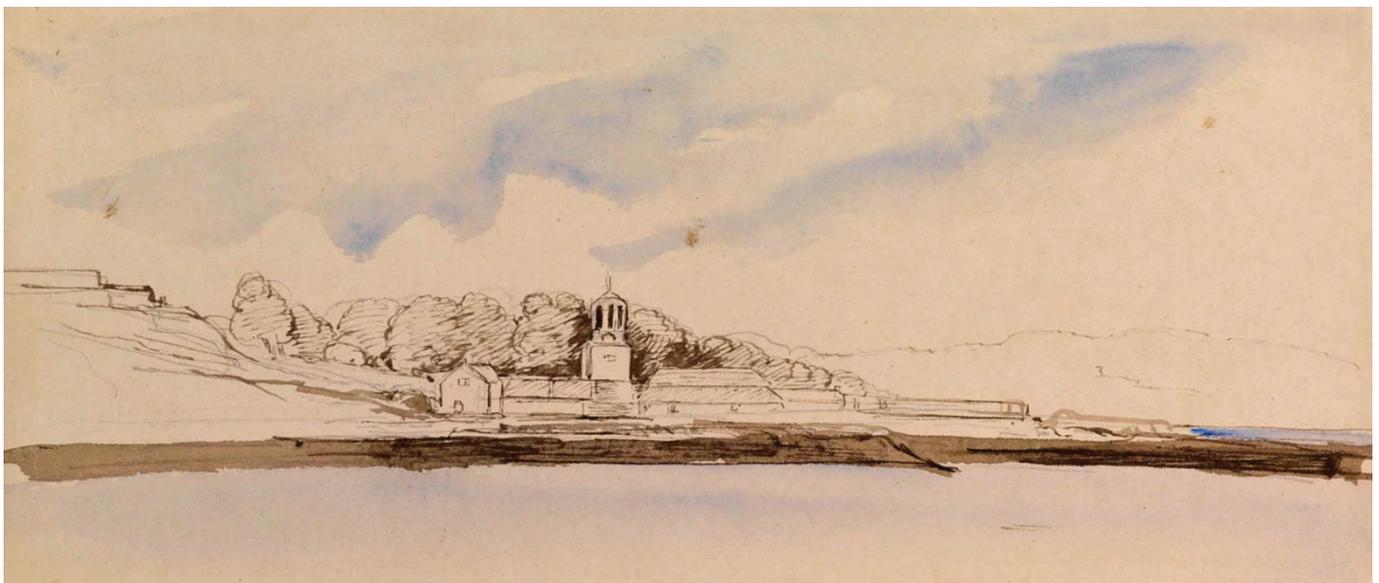
- ❖ In the 1850's as the famine raged, Spike Island held the world's largest prison with 2300 inmates.
- ❖ There has never been a larger prison in Ireland or Britain
- ❖ Visitors can still see the 1850's and 1980's cells.

The Fortress built to defend an empire!

- ❖ It took thousands of men and millions of tonnes of earth and stone to carve out the island fortress.
- ❖ Its walls are over 50 feet thick in places and the fort was the pinnacle of 300 years of military technology.
- ❖ Today it is possible to scale its high walls, stand among its cannons and tanks and defend Cork harbour!

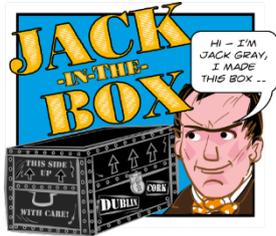
Royal and Political Visitors

- ❖ Queen Victoria sketched the island during a visit to Cobh in 1849
 - a copy of the sketch (see below) is available to view on the island.
- ❖ Winston Churchill visited in 1911 as the then head of the Admiralty, inspecting this jewel in the British military.
- ❖ Irish President Eamon De Valera attended the island handover from Britain to Ireland in 1938.



(Sketch of Spike island by Queen Victoria, 1849)

HIGHLIGHTS: Cultural, Social & Ecological Highlights

<p>Meet ‘Jack in the box’</p> <hr/> <p>the famous Victorian thief</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ James Grey would hide in a especially rigged luggage trunk and post himself from Liverpool to Ireland, jumping out mid-journey to rob the other luggage on the train carriage, earning the nickname ‘Jack in the box’. ❖ His clever crimes baffled the train company for years as valuables went missing. ❖ Eventually, he was discovered by a housemate who spotted stolen goods. He served 4 years on Spike Island 	
<p>Meet ‘Little Nellie’</p> <hr/> <p>The little Irish girl who might be Ireland’s next saint!</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ Ellen Organ lived on the island in the early 1900’s <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ she displayed miraculous qualities by wanting to take Holy Communion at a young age ○ hearing this story, the Pope lowered the age of Communion from age 12 to 7 for all Catholics ❖ See Nellie’s house and a recreation of her room on Spike Island. 	
<p>The Irish freedom fighters</p> <hr/> <p>who fought for Ireland</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ Learn how freedom fighters from the 1600’s to 1921 were held here for their struggles. ❖ Hear the story of John Mitchel, the man who inspired the revolutionaries who freed island. ❖ Discover the fate of the 1400 men held here in 1921, many simply lifted off the streets, for fighting a war of independence against an unbeatable Empire. 	
<p>Spike Island Residents</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ Learn the stories of the multiple residents who called Spike Island home over a 200 year period ❖ See and hear recorded interviews with former residents which bring island living to life, many of whom lived on the island as recently as the 1980’s. 	
<p>Walk the beautiful outer island nature trails</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ There are 80 acres outside the fortress of beautiful nature, grassland and walking trails. ❖ Choose from a 1.4km or 2.4 kms loop, each with information boards and incredible harbour views. ❖ Spot seals, birds, wildlife and abandoned villages as you explore. 	

Spike Island: General Experiences

Spike Island: Standard Scheduled Guided Visit

Experience	Short Description	Duration	Public Price:
Guided tour of Spike Island Cafe and gift shop on site.	Transfer to/from Spike Island by Ferry including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 1 hour optional guided visit with an experienced guide sharing insights into the island's social, political, military and cultural history. Free map and app. Extensive time to explore the island on a self-guided basis on the day of the visit. 	Minimum duration: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Standard visit is 3.5 hours. Shorter or longer durations are available on request. Group rate €16pp for 15 or more on scheduled boat. 	€20 adult €11 child €49 family of 2 adults and 2 children

NOTE:

- Scheduled tours are available
 - 7 days a week, April to October. Contact us for sailing times or see www.spikeislandcork.ie
 - Weekends and Irish school half terms holidays during November and Feb/March.
 - Open to private group visits year around, minimum spend €600 for up to 30 persons & group rate €16pp thereafter apply from there, December / January and mid-week November to March.
- Spike Island operates two ferry boats:
 - one with a maximum capacity for 126 people
 - another with a maximum capacity for 78 people



Spike Island, via Kennedy pier, Cobh, Cork.

T: +353 021 2373455 E: admin@spikeislandcork.ie W: www.spikeislandcork.ie

Schedule of Visitor Experiences: Premium Services

Spike Island: Private Guided Visit with Private Ferry Transfer

Experience	Short Description	Min-Max Numbers	Duration	Public Price:
Guided tour of Spike Island <hr/> including private ferry transfer for your group	Transfer to/from Spike Island by Ferry including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 1 hour optional guided visit with an experienced guide sharing insights into the island's social, political, military and cultural history • Extensive time to explore the island on a self-guided basis on the day of the visit, as little or as long as required. • Available September to May. During June / July / August space may be shared with paying public. 		Standard visit 3.5 hours. Minimum suggested 2 hours Maximum: 4.5 hours	Minimum spend for private boat and tour €600 for up to 30 people <hr/> Additional charge of €16 per each additional person applies thereafter

NOTE:

- Spike Island operates two ferry boats:
 - one with a maximum capacity for 126 people
 - another with a maximum capacity for 78 people
 - additional ferries can be arranged, subject to request
- Customised tours can be arranged according to a specific theme (e.g. political, historic, cultural)
- Private visits requested outside of schedule tour times (8am – 8pm) may be subject to an additional charge

Spike Island: Bespoke private 'behind the scenes' tour with 'Spike Island rum' tasting.

Experience	Short Description	Min-Max Numbers	Duration	Public Price:
Smaller group size <hr/> Access areas off limits to the public	A premium private small number guided tour with an expert guide. Includes; <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 1 hour 30 minute tour length plus self explore time, 3.5 hours total. • Access to areas off limits to the public. • Finished off with a taste of 'Spike Island rum', exclusive to the island. 	4 – 15 persons	3.5 hours to include 1.5 guided, 30 mins ferry, 90 minutes to self guide	€69pp (on scheduled boat, contact us for private access)

NOTE: Suitable for people of 18 years old and older ONLY. Check sailing times directly or via website.



Spike Island: ‘Taste the island’ Tour & drinks tasting.

Experience	Short Description	Min-Max Numbers	Duration	Trade Price:
Finish your tour with a taste of ‘Spike Island rum’ Served by trained Irish expert	A premium private guided tour with an expert guide to include; <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • One hour guided tour experience with an expert guide. • Finished off with a tasting of ‘Spike Island rum’, premium product with links to the former island convicts sent to Barbados. • Add another Irish drink like Irish whiskey or Bailey’s Irish cream on request. • Time to self explore before exit. 	15 – 100 persons	Typical visit 3.5 hours. Minimum suggested 2 hours Maximum suggested 4.5 hours. Longer shorter on request.	€22 for tour and one drink. €26 for tour and 2 drinks.
NOTE: Suitable for people of 18 years old and older ONLY.				

Spike Island: After Dark Tour

Experience	Short Description	Min-Max Numbers	Duration	Public Price:
Experience the prison at night time including private ferry transfer	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Walk an abandoned prison, sit in a solitary cell. • Experience a place of Punishment, once called ‘Ireland’s hell’. • Hear the gruesome stories that cannot be shared on a day tour • See areas off limits to the public as visitors journey through 400 years of incarceration. • Add a tasting of ‘Spike Island rum’ - €5pp 	15-200	Minimum 2 hours (begins 60 minutes before sunset) Maximum: 4.5 hours Tour length.	€22pp. Minimum spend for private boat and tour €600 Trade rate - €20pp – minimum spend €600
NOTE: Suitable for people of 16 years old and older ONLY.				

What do
they say?

Award winning 5 star
TripAdvisor experience



“Very interesting place.
Tour Guides are great...”

“Not to be missed!”

“So scenic with amazing views.”

“Highly recommended.”

“Scenic and historic!”



SPIKE
ISLAND
CORK HARBOUR



General Information:

❖ **Scheduled Tours take place**

- February / March / November – Weekends and Irish half term holidays, minimum sailings 12pm and 1pm.
- April / October – Open 7 days, minimum 1pm sailing Mon – Friday and 12pm and 2pm weekends.
- May / September – 7 days a week, minimum 12pm and 2pm.
- June / July / August – 7 days a week, minimum 10am to 2pm hourly.
- During the months of December and January, only pre-booked group requests can be accepted subject to availability

❖ **Private visits can be arranged according to request 363 days a year – Minimum spend €600 for 30 visitors and €16pp thereafter.**

❖ **While there are several indoor museums and exhibitions, there is a short 10 minute walk from ferry to fort.**

- For a comfortable visit, please dress accordingly, with comfortable foot wear

❖ **There is a complimentary bus on site if required**

- Maximum capacity: 8 people

❖ **There is a cafe and gift shop on site.**

❖ **There are several toilet locations.**



Spike Island, via Kennedy pier, Cobh, Cork.

T: +353 021 2373455 **E:** admin@spikeislandcork.ie **W:** www.spikeislandcork.ie

Spike island accessibility:

PONTOONS - Kennedy pier in Cobh has a ramp pontoon allowing easy roll on access, as does Spike Island and its ferries. There are no steps to board the boats or island. There are very few steps on the island.

ISLAND – There is a mini-bus on site. Just 2 of 12 main buildings have stairs.

The island operates two ferries –

The **'SPIKE ISLAND'**, a 126 capacity vessel with internal and external areas and seating for all passengers.

The **'BRYAN J'**, a 78 capacity vessel with internal and external areas and seating for all passengers.

