



# Review: Catriona Doherty visits The Johnstown Estate Hotel and Spa, Meath

I am a massive fan of nights and weekends away, and I love going somewhere new I have not visited before. The Johnstown Estate Hotel and Spa is not a new hotel, the 'Country Gentleman's Style' house was built back in the 1700s and the property has undergone a €10 million refurb recently.

When I heard about the hotel, and a quick Google search showed its location to be only two hours and 15 minutes away from Belfast, I booked in for a girlie weekend. Here's why you should check it out for your next staycation:

## The Spa

I had one of best massages of my life (and I'm not exaggerating), under the soothing hands of therapist Kasia. Despite the firm pressure I even drifted off to sleep towards

the end, I was that relaxed.

The price of a 30-minute massage starts from €55 and that includes the use of the spa facilities; steam rooms, outdoor hot tub, pool, Jacuzzi, caldarium (heated seats), and the relaxation room. "You could spend all day in there," my friend remarked and we certainly gave it a good go.

Judging from all the groups of ladies using the spa, it's clearly a popular spot for girlie getaways.

## Kids' entertainment

Children will love exploring the newly-opened forest fairy walk.

Fairy-hunters follow the signs through the woods, passing miniature wooden houses hidden amongst the trees, toadstools, and brightly-coloured stones leading to a giant pink fairy door.

We made our way through the woodland



on a bright, sunny autumnal afternoon and the only sound was of the crunch of the crisp fallen leaves underfoot. Despite not spotting any fairies, it felt magical.

For family-friendly accommodation, see the self-catering lodges, and the hotel's family bedrooms which are ideal for two adults and two children.

## Location

Located just 35 minutes from Dublin city centre, the hotel is ideal for exploring Ireland's capital. You can avail of public transport from the nearby village of Enfield in to the city.

The Guinness Storehouse, Chocolate Warehouse, Dublin Zoo, Tayto Park and Kildare Village are all nearby.

## The dining experience

Foodies will love The Johnstown Estate. Fire & Salt restaurant specialise in steak and the signature dish is beef - 'dry-aged in Himalayan sea-salt, seared, sealed and



Ginger Bread Village will be installed with its network of model trains and twinkling Christmas trees.

## Friendly staff

The team at Johnstown Estate are diligent and attentive. Our friendly waiter, Aziz, took the time to make food and wine recommendations ensuring we had everything we needed, despite it being a busy night with a wedding taking place in one of the function rooms.

## Christmas deals

You can avail of a number of deals such as the Festive Shopping Experience. The cost is €155 for two, which includes an overnight stay in an executive king room with breakfast, afternoon tea, and a 10% discount for Kildare Village (25 miles away). Or gift a loved one 'The Christmas Gift Box' experience, which includes dinner, accommodation, breakfast, and Prosecco and chocolate strawberries in-room on arrival. **NW**

caramelized over embers in the custom-made charcoal grill oven! Served with triple-cooked chips and creamy peppercorn sauce, it tastes every bit as good as it sounds.

The Coach House bar offer pub grub classics. You can also book in for afternoon tea, and from November 30th the kids'



# MEATH TOP THREE

**1** Tayto Park is home to a theme park with a roller coaster, 5D cinema, extreme wall climbing frame and sky walking trail. It also has a zoo featuring big cats, monkeys, birds of prey and more. It closes for winter from 23rd December to April 6th, but before it shuts Tayto Park is hosting The Christmas Experience. Visitors will have an opportunity to visit Santa's Grotto, meet the elves and the man himself.

**2** Newgrange World Heritage Site is home to an ancient passage tomb that was built 5,200 years ago (3,200BC) which makes it older than Stonehenge and the Great Pyramids of Giza. Newgrange is known for the illumination of its passage and chamber by the winter solstice sun. People gather at Newgrange for the winter solstice dawn on each of the mornings from December 18th to December 23rd. Sunrise is at 8.58am and guests are welcome to stand on the outside of the monument.

**3** You may have visited Slane Castle in the past to party to Robbie Williams, The Verve or U2 (memories, memories), but there are other reasons to visit in addition to the open-air concerts. Take a guided historical tour through the castle, dine in The Gandon Room Restaurant, or enjoy a drink and light bite in Browne's Bar.