



HOP ALONG FOR EASTER

Enjoy great hotel deals and fun family outings

By Brigid O'Gorman

AS THE Easter holidays roll on, everybody is on the lookout for fun family outings that both kids and adults can enjoy.

So we've done the hard work for you and rounded up some of the best hotel deals and fun-filled activities going on around the country during the coming week.

Many are free and we promise none of them will break the bank...

DUBLIN

● Star Wars fans will be excited as Invasion Dublin comes to the RDS this Easter Bank Holiday weekend.

The event, which will feature actors, props and sets from the original Stars Wars movies, will be open from 10am to 6pm Easter Saturday, Sunday and Monday. But it's not cheap, a family ticket (for two adults and two kids under 12) costs €70, save €10 if you book online at www.invasion.ie.

● Hop into Dublin city centre for some fun this Easter weekend. Children will be able to meet life-size characters from the Easter film HOP at the Jervis Shopping Centre all next week, while customers will also have the chance to win a €1000 Jervis Shopping Centre Gift Card in the Monster Egg draw. The Ilac Shopping Centre nearby will host a Kiddies Train in the central plaza of the centre all week and on Easter Saturday Barbie Bunny will visit the centre.

An Easter Eggs-travaganza will also take place in Stephens Green Shopping Centre from 12pm today, tomorrow and Saturday. Thousands of Easter eggs and shopping centre gift vouchers will be given away and shoppers will also go into a draw for a trip to Berlin. While on Easter Monday, the Easter Bunny will visit the centre.

● Farmleigh in the Phoenix Park has lots of FREE stuff going on for Easter Sunday and Monday including a plant fair, birds of prey falconry display, kids' magic shows and an Easter Egg Treasure Quiz Hunt. Log onto www.farmleigh.ie for details.

● While those looking for something cultural to do with the kids this Easter should bring them to see *The Girl Who Forgot To Sing Badly at the Peacock Theatre*. The play, starring Louis Lovett, is suitable for children aged seven and over and tells the story of a young girl who saves the day. The show is on today (Thurs 21), next Tuesday, Thursday and Friday at 2pm and 4pm, Wednesday next at 2pm and Saturday 23 and 30 at 4pm and 7pm. Tickets for a family of four (two adults and two children) cost €40. See www.abbeytheatre.ie for more details.

GALWAY

If you want a hotel break with added drama then you should head to the Renvyle House

Hotel in Connemara. Children's theatre company, Tegolin's Tales, will be providing story-telling and drama workshops as well as staging a special drama night.

Guests can also enjoy daily Easter egg hunts and supervised child-minding every evening. Three night family breaks are available over Easter with prices starting at €599. Visit www.renvyle.com or phone 095-43511.

KILKENNY

● No matter where you live in Ireland, Kilkenny is easy to get to. Families can enjoy a fun-filled break in the Marble City if they stay at Hotel Kilkenny. Just a stone's throw from the city centre, Hotel Kilkenny has great family offers over the Easter break.

Breaks including two nights bed and breakfast plus dinner on one evening start at just €125 per adult sharing. Kids prices (for kids aged 4-12 years) start at just €20 per child, while kids under-four stay free. Kids' prices include breakfast and access to the Kids Club, which is open daily. See www.hotelkilkenny.ie or call 1850 560 600.

● Fancy having a post-Lenten blowout next week? Kilkenny's newest four star boutique hotel, The Pembroke, is offering a special 'Indulge' package which includes a complimentary bottle of house wine and its signature chocolate biscuit cake on arrival, plus mini cupcakes and homemade chocolates at turndown. Just €75pps B&B or €179pps B&B for two nights at Easter Weekend. Guests will also receive a complimentary upgrade, if available. Quote 'Indulge' at time of booking. Call 056-7783500 or log onto www.pembrokekilkenny.com

KERRY

Adults and kids alike will be kept entertained at the INEC and Gleneagle Hotel, Killarney this Easter weekend. Tomorrow (Good Friday) Eurovision hopefuls Jedward

take to the INEC stage with their Bad Behaviour show, while on Saturday, more adult entertainment will come from funnyman Neil Delamare. Tickets for both shows cost €25. On Saturday, country star Mike Denver will have the crowds dancing in the Gleneagle Ballroom, with tickets from €15. And on Easter Sunday the legendary Dickie Rock will take the stage in the Gleneagle. Tickets are €20. Visit www.inec.ie or phone 064 6671555 for more information.

MAYO

● The Ice House in Ballina has some fabulous mid-week offers for families this Easter break. Two nights accommodation in a family suite (two adults and two children), with bubbles and strawberries for the adults on arrival, breakfast daily and dinner on one

evening, is available from just €225 per person sharing. Kids will be kept entertained by the games room, a picnic in Belleek Woods on one afternoon and the appearance of the Easter Bunny. See www.theicehouse.ie or phone 096-23500 for more information.

● *Whether you're a family or a couple you can enjoy a break out west this Easter. The Wyatt Hotel in Westport is offering two nights' accommodation for two adults and two children under the age of 12 for just €109 room only, per night. While couples can get two nights bed and breakfast with one evening meal for €129 per person sharing. All guests will have access to Westport Leisure Park which includes swimming pool, Jacuzzi, sauna and steam room. Log on to www.wyatt-hotel.com or FREEPHONE 1800 205270.*

WEXFORD

Head to the sunny south east and enjoy a three-night stay at the four-star Carlton Millrace Hotel in Bunclody for just €299 for a family of four. The package includes breakfast on each day, one evening meal for adults and a free kids club. All kids staying at the hotel will also have the chance to take part in an egg hunt in a Chocolate Wonderland.

Children who find a Golden Ticket in their complimentary Carlton chocolate bar will have a chance to take part in the hunt and one child will get a Golden Egg which will win their family a summer holiday in the Carlton Millrace. See www.carlton.ie of phone 053-9375100 for booking.

WICKLOW

● Russborough House and Kitchen Garden Cafe just outside Blessington has re-opened for a fun-filled Easter weekend with an Easter Themed Treasure Hunt Fun for all the family! €10 for a family of four to register at Cruthu studio (at Russborough) between 11am-4pm, April 24 and 25.

● *Meanwhile, kids who fancy themselves as budding detectives are bound to enjoy the Easter Egg Hunt at Killruddery House and Gardens, Bray, Co Wicklow on Easter Sunday. Kids will get clues and maps and will then have the run of the beautiful Killruddery Gardens to track down their egg. Cost of entry for two adults and up to three children is €25. Afterwards everyone will have the option of enjoying lunch in the Killruddery tearooms. See www.killruddery.com for more information.*



HAPPY BUNNIES: Kids will have fun in the Ilac Centre (left) and at Russborough House (below)



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EGG-CELLENT: Louis Lovett performs at the Peacock Theatre (left) and (above) Farmleigh will have a host of activities on this weekend