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DINGLE PENINSULA BRINGS IRELAND'S CULTURE, HISTORY, LANGUAGE TO MASSACHUSETTS' FAMOUS BIG E

Big E Visitors Can Throw Irish Pottery; Learn a Crystal Designer's Inspiration for a Bowl Presented to the White House; Hear which Stars Wear a Renown Irish Jeweler's Creations; Learn Irish; Subscribe To Get Irish Goods Monthly; Buy Linen, Clothing, Musical Instruments; and Sample Some Spirits

North America's fourth largest fair, The Big E kicks off Sept. 15 until Oct. 1

WEST SPRINGFIELD, Mass. – A weekend-long “Halfway to Saint Patrick’s Day” celebration, sponsored by Aer Lingus, kicks off Sept. 15 to open The Big E, where Ireland’s Dingle Peninsula has brought a variety of vendors, artisans, heritage experts and educators to North America’s fourth largest fair for 23 years.

“Our crafters, vendors, and education and tourism representatives representing the Dingle Peninsula’s culture, language and artistry will again join The Big E to celebrate our Sister City relationship and historical ties with West Springfield and the Western Massachusetts region,” said Caroline Boland of [Dingle Peninsula Tourism Alliance](#), which will reside in the Fair’s Young Building from Sept. 15 until Oct. 1.

Irish music performers will also be on stages during the Fair's first week, including the Dingle Peninsula's famous singer/songwriter/recording artist Éilís Kennedy at the Irish Cultural Center on Tuesday, Sept. 19, while the Saturday, Sept. 16, parade will feature a performance by the Massachusetts State Police Pipe Band.

Meanwhile, Ireland Minister of State Patrick O'Donovan, whose responsibilities include the Office of Public Works and the Gaeltacht, will visit The Big E, underscoring the Irish government's view of the diaspora's importance and the connections with Western Massachusetts. In addition, members of Ireland's Kerry County Council (KCC) will participate in a number of official cultural, educational, trade and tourism events culminating in the Saturday parade, further demonstrating commitment to the cultural and heritage connectivity and exchanges.

"Given the large number of diaspora from County Kerry who live in the Greater Springfield area, we remain fully dedicated to our Sister City relationship with West Springfield and are pleased to visit the region and The Big E for the first time since we established our cherished relationship just prior to the pandemic," said Councilor Robert Timothy O'Connell, Mayor of Castleisland – Corca Dhuibhne (Dingle Peninsula). "We are excited to be part of the Halfway to Saint Patrick's Day celebrations and parade, and to be able to support the businesses from the Dingle Peninsula who will be in The Big E's Young Building."

Holyoke and Springfield, Mass., also have Sister City relationships with Tralee, which lies at the eastern end of the Dingle Peninsula in County Kerry, Ireland, with Mayor of Tralee, Councilor John Michael Wall also participating in this official visit to the Greater Springfield area.

In addition, four-time Emmy Award winner Mickela Mallozzi, host of the television travel series *Bare Feet with Mickela Mallozzi* that airs on PBS, will appear at the Dingle Pavilion and other related Big E stages throughout Saturday, Sept. 16, for a series of dance and cultural presentations with the Dingle Peninsula's cultural artist and Irish dancer [Jamie O'Flannúra](#).

Dingle Peninsula businesses comprise the Fair's [Dingle Peninsula Cultural, Educational, Trade and Tourism Showcase](#) and include some of the west of Ireland's most famous pottery, jewelry, linen / woolen and crystal artisans, distillers, leading educational institutions, an award-winning distillery, cultural and heritage leaders, and tourism executives.

The Showcase's daily 30-minute **Meet the Makers Program** at 2 p.m., 4 p.m. and 6 p.m. offers demonstrations of crafts, spirits tastings, a chance to buy hand-made Irish merchandise and memorabilia, as well as offer information on visiting the Dingle Peninsula. Those attending The Big E can find out more by visiting the Fair's [website](#) or [social platforms](#). Video presentations throughout the day offer Fair-goers a view of what experiences lie ahead across the Dingle Peninsula's spectacular scenery, villages, the literary heritage of the Great Blasket Islands, and 'muintir na tíre' – the people of the place.

"Our research shows more than 55 percent of those who attend the Dingle Peninsula Showcase plan a trip to Ireland within the next three years, with 66 percent saying that culture and heritage was a key reason for their visit to Ireland, reinforcing the very strong connection the New England region has for the country," Boland said. "Our vendors can provide the information they need to heighten

their Irish experience, or visitors can pick up a gift or memento of the Emerald Isle, and U.S. corporate businesses can visit the showcase to commission work done by any of the artisans.”

Businesses, craftsman and organizations representing the Dingle Peninsula at The Big E include:

- [Brian de Staic Jewellery](#), which has crafted distinctive jewelry for over 40 years. One of Ireland’s leading goldsmiths, Brian and his wife, Máiread, opened in 1981, and celebrities including Tom Cruise, Julia Roberts, Saoirse Ronan and Laura Dern own Brian de Staic creations.
- [Celtic Gift House, \[musichouse6@hotmail.com\]\(mailto:musichouse6@hotmail.com\)](#), returns to The Big E for a 21st year, offering a range of Celtic jackets, hoodies, tee shirts and baseball caps, as well as a variety of musical instruments and accessories, including tin whistles, bodhrans and guitar straps. Also available will be ELFIS and the full range of “Craic House Chopper” products that have proved a hit with The Big E Fairgoers.
- [Dingle Crystal](#) is a family-run company founded by Sean Daly, who apprenticed in Waterford Crystal and studied for 15 years to become a master cutter. When Waterford Crystal moved production out of Ireland, Sean established Dingle Crystal, which designed and created the St. Patrick’s Day Shamrock Bowls presented to President Joe Biden in The White House in 2022 and in 2023.
- [Sacred Heart University in Dingle](#) campus offers study-abroad programs through two-week sessions in January, May and June, as well as full Fall and Spring semesters with courses in history, literature, music, language, religion, the sciences and ecology, health and nursing, social sciences, communications, media, the performing arts, marketing, economics and tourism. SHU in Dingle actively collaborates with Munster Technological University in Tralee, University College Cork and Queen’s University Belfast, University Hospital Kerry and Bon Secours Hospital in Tralee, and the Dingle Oceanworld Aquarium/Mara Beo Teo.
- [Dingle Linens](#) presents natural-fiber knitwear for men, women and children, including apparel made from Donegal tweed, gents’ caps and waistcoats, ladies’ caps and hats, capes, wraps and throws, as well as accessories such as Irish tweed and leather bags.
- [Dingle Distillery’s](#) spirits will be the Dingle Distillery Bar’s exclusive offerings for three daily tastings to celebrate its 11th anniversary as Ireland’s first independent, family-owned, purpose-built artisan spirits distillery in more than a century. The award-winning distillery, built on the outskirts of Dingle, County Kerry, makes its own small batch Dingle Distillery Whiskey Single Malt and Pot Still Whiskey, Dingle Original Gin (chosen the World’s Best Gin and the World’s Best London Dry Gin 2019), and Dingle Distillery Vodka. Its spirits are available in the United States through Hotaling & Co. importers.
- [Louis Mulcahy Pottery](#) has been crafting pottery in the heart of the Kerry Gaeltacht since 1975. Mulcahy, his son Lasse and a team of craftspeople hand-make everything from dainty posy jars, dinner sets and elegant lamp bases to ovenware and towering urns at their

workshop located west of Dingle town on the Sleah Head drive. Drop by the stand to see an expert potter at work.

- [Lisbeth Mulcahy](#) opened Siopa na bhFhíodóirí in Dingle in 1986 to showcase her personally designed, handwoven tapestries and wall hangings, as well as her range of seasonal scarves, stoles and throws woven by a small team of weavers, including her daughter Sally. Lisbeth Mulcahy's designs are sold exclusively from Siopa na bhFhíodóirí and Louis Mulcahy Pottery shop.
- [MyIrelandBox](#), created by Katharine Keane and Thomas Barrett, returns to The Big E, celebrating its 10th anniversary of delivering monthly subscription packages of curated Irish-themed surprise boxes to those who have an Irish connection. Each box provides a unique way to learn, taste and experience Ireland's vibrant culture, traditions and craft from the comfort of one's home. Irish-themed MyIrelandBoxes arrive in America with Irish treasures based on themes, such as The Irish Sheep, An Irish Christmas, An Irish Thanksgiving and more. Items range from Katharine's booklet of Irish information and stories and sweet Irish confections to books, homeware, Irish-made accessories and more from local Irish artisans.
- Corca Dhuibhne Cultural Ambassador [Jamie Ó Flannúra](#) will serve as the Dingle Peninsula Tourism Alliance team's "Irish Language and Cultural Ambassador / Ambasadóir Cultúrtha agus Gaolainne Chorca Dhuibhne." A renowned Irish dancer, Jamie will perform frequently and also teach cúpla focail -- "a few words" -- in the Irish language.
- The [Irish Cultural Center of Western New England](#) cultivates a connection with Ireland and generations of local Irish diaspora -- many of whose ancestors left the Blasket Islands just off the Dingle Peninsula's Atlantic coast. The ICC provides access to Irish-oriented lectures, concerts, exhibitions of art, artifacts and memorabilia, political discussions, international relations, GAA sports, Irish language classes, student international exchange and genealogical research. It also serves as a bridge between the Irish government and the Western New England region.
- [Western Mass Tourism / Greater Springfield Convention and Visitors Bureau](#), an affiliate of the Economic Development Council of Western Mass and a private non-profit destination marketing organization, promotes Western Massachusetts for meetings and conventions, group tours, sports and leisure travel. Irish immigration to New England peaked in the mid-19th century when countless families sought new opportunity and landed in Western Massachusetts, which still celebrates Irish culture and heritage -- from one of the largest and most-cherished annual St. Patrick's Day parades in Holyoke to The Dingle Peninsula Pavilion at The Big E.
- [Dingle Peninsula Tourism Alliance](#) is a sustainability-focused organization encompassing a community tourism destination management co-operative, owned and managed by its family-run businesses and community development members across Ireland's Dingle Peninsula. Their [website](#) offers visitors the most up-to-date information to plan and enjoy a visit to the peninsula. The Alliance also offers a virtual concierge desk to answer questions or help tailor a vacation just for you. The DPTA's Sustainability Charter can be found [here](#).

- Others involved in the Dingle Peninsula Showcase and the organization and sponsorships of the 'Halfway to Saint Patrick's Day' celebration include in Ireland - Kerry County Council, Údarás na Gaeltachta, NEWKD, Fáilte Ireland, and in Western Massachusetts - West Springfield City Council, West Springfield Sister City Committee, Congressman Richard Neal's Office, Irish Cultural Center of Western New England, West Springfield High School, Western Mass Tourism Organization and the Eastern States Exposition.

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Comhaontas Turasóireachta Chorca Dhuibhne / Dingle Peninsula Tourism Alliance is a voluntary not for profit organization, dedicated to the sustainable development and responsible promotion of tourism on the Dingle Peninsula. It is the umbrella tourism organization for the Dingle Peninsula supporting the immense work of local tourism and community groups, businesses, festivals and events committees and local communities. Visit www.dingle-peninsula.ie or like us on Facebook at www.facebook.com/dingle.official and follow us on Instagram and Twitter using handle @DinglePeninsula. Engage with us using #DinglePeninsula #StayALittleLonger.

The Greater Springfield Convention and Visitors Bureau, an affiliate of the Economic Development Council of Western Mass, is a private non-profit destination marketing organization dedicated to promoting Western Mass for meetings and conventions, group tours, sports and leisure travel. For more information on the GSCVB, visit www.ExploreWesternMass.com or like us on Facebook at www.facebook.com/explorewesternmass and follow us on Twitter using handle @XploreWesternMA. Engage with us using #westernmass.

*Eastern States Exposition (ESE) is a 175-acre show facility located at the crossroads of New England in western Massachusetts. Founded in 1916 by Joshua L. Brooks, the Exposition is a treasured New England tradition. ESE is home to **The Big E**, the nation's fourth largest fair, attracting 1.5 million visitors during its 17-day run in mid-September. The largest event of its kind on the eastern seaboard, The Big E attracts visitors from all of New England, New York and beyond, who flock to West Springfield for musical entertainment, foods from around the world, a circus, agricultural animals, rides, shopping and more. The Big E is the only fair in the United States that represents more than one state; representing all six of the New England States. Eastern States Exposition's expansive and versatile facilities are also home to 120 shows and events between Septembers. The Exposition's current annual economic impact is more than half a billion dollars. Visit Eastern States Exposition, 1305 Memorial Avenue, West Springfield, Mass. 01089. E: info@TheBigE.com TheBigE.com #BigEMoments*

Buy Big E tickets [here](#).

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