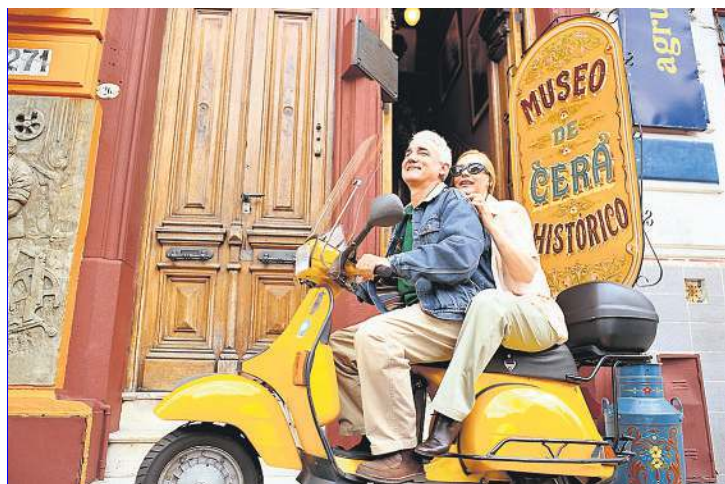


# Travel

**Gemma O'Doherty**  
**TRAVEL EDITOR**  
YOUR SIX-PAGE GUIDE TO THE BEST  
PLACES TO GO AND TOP THINGS TO DO



## Time to give the Mona Lisa a miss

### INSIDE TRACK Roman Krznaric

**W**hy do we spend so much of our precious holiday time queuing up to see famous paintings such as the 'Mona Lisa', even if we're not that interested in art?

Why do we drag ourselves to all those cathedrals and museums in our guidebooks when, let's be honest, they usually turn out to be a bit boring, and we can't wait to get to the café for a cup of the local brew?

The answer lies in history. Modern-day travel is rooted in the Grand Tour of the 18th century, when upper-class gents, and the occasional lucky lady, set off with their servants on a high-brow jaunt around Europe to round off a classical education.

But maybe the time has come to shake off this outdated mode of travel and reclaim it for what it really should be: an exciting, life-changing event.

Here are some ways to reinvent the art of travel.

■ **Remember real monuments are people:** When travelling abroad, don't waste your days ticking off sites and visiting stone monuments. Seek out local people and discover how they live.

Why not stay with a family? I recently had a holiday with a family in Palermo and my hostess even gave me Sicilian cooking lessons.

My kids were thrilled when I came home with great recipes rather than a great tan.

■ **Make a personal pilgrimage:** History's earliest travellers were

religious pilgrims who embarked on arduous, uplifting journeys to Mecca, the Ganges, or St Peter's in Rome.

Why not adapt the idea of pilgrimage to the modern age? Make one to somewhere meaningful to you. How about the village where your grandmother was born?

You might even bump into some of her old neighbours and learn things about her you never knew.

■ **Holiday on your doorstep:** Globalisation and immigration have brought the world's cultures to our doorsteps. Become a backyard anthropologist and cultivate a curiosity about your neighbours from different nations.

Have a conversation with a stranger once a week, such as the woman who sells you a newspaper every morning, and find out about the world she has left behind.

■ **Try sensory travel:** Tourism has become an incredibly visual experience: we see the sights, snap photos and film everything that moves.

But why not use our other senses for a change? Put the map away and allow yourself to get lost in a new city.

Follow the medieval scent of smoked fish and you might find yourself in a colourful food market. Pursue the sound of birdsong and discover a park.

In the 21st century, there's no need for us to slavishly collect landmarks on our travels. Surely it's better to collect experiences that change the way we look at the world and our own lives? **W**

Roman Krznaric's new book, 'The Wonderbox: Curious Histories of How to Live', is published by Profile Books

### SUITE TALK Rathmullan House, Donegal

Donegal's lovely Rathmullan House is open again for the season with a line-up of quirky themed weekends planned, from Shakespeare in the garden to marmalade tasting.

Just steps from a sandy beach on gorgeous Lough Swilly, the 32-room country house boasts an indoor heated pool, roaring turf fires and homemade scones.

Rooms come in all shapes and sizes with great beds and generous bathrooms, and many have private patios and balconies.

There's a pet-friendly room, storytelling for the kids, and a relaxing adult-only lounge.

At this time of year, the walled garden is coming into

bloom, and next weekend, the hotel, which celebrates 50 years in business in 2012, will pay tribute to the noble spud.

Green-fingered guests can join Joe in the garden where 50 varieties of potato, such as Ulster Sovereign, Salad Blue and Shetland Black, will be planted.

Head chef Kelan McMichael will conjure up all manner of tuberc thrills in the kitchen.

Walk them off along the coastal path at Horn Head, the pretty seaside town of Rathmullan, and Slieve League, the highest sea cliffs in Europe.

Two nights' B&B plus one night's dinner costs €180pp.

Tel: 074 91 58 188; rathmullanhouse.com



### DON'T FORGET TO PACK

**Rowena Walsh** independenttravelshop@gmail.com



#### SleepPhones €45 plus P&P

So you've turned the dial on your MP3 player to Miles Davis and you're doing your very best to drift away to dreamland, but those pesky earphones are just too uncomfortable.

You won't have that problem with this nifty device. It's an ultra-comfy fleece headband that contains thin removable speakers and is accessorised with a standard headphone jack, enabling you to connect it to most audio devices, including iPods and CD players.

Sweet dreams!  
Order online at relax-uk.com

#### Wheellie bag €49

When it comes to packing, there's no way your little darling is going to leave home without her favourite dolls.

So she's bound to love these new wheellie bags from LittleLife, which come in fantastic turtle and ladybird designs.

Made from hard-wearing nylon, they have a toddler-sized and easy-to-grip telescopic handle. Each case boasts a 20L compartment.

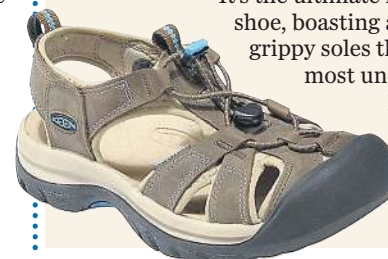
From the Great Outdoors in Dublin



#### Keen Venice €89

You've made sure to pack your strappy stilettos so you're sorted for night-time fun. But you're looking forward to making the most of your days, too, and here's where the Keen Venice comes in.

It's the ultimate hybrid outdoor shoe, boasting a toe guard and grippy soles that love even the most uneven terrain.



From Radar Store in Limerick, Landers in Tralee and Mountain High in Galway

### APP OF THE WEEK



Forgotten to check-in online before leaving home for the airport?

With the **Aer Lingus app**, you can do it on the way with your iPhone or iPad.

Your boarding pass is then delivered to your device, which you simply scan at departures without having to print it.

You can also choose seats and monitor flight delays with the free app.

The service is available on all UK and European routes from Dublin and Shannon, but not yet from Cork (apart from Brussels), or on flights to the US.

Make sure you take a screen grab of your boarding pass and save it to your photo library, in case your signal drops when you're away — and to avoid pricey roaming charges.