



Angling
Ireland



PIKE ANGLING
IN IRELAND



INTRODUCTION

So, it's not a secret... Ireland is one of the top pike angling destinations in Europe, and every year predator anglers come to the Emerald Isle from around the world to try and catch one of those famous, hard fighting, Irish pike. And it's not only anglers that come, as some top international pike angling guides from countries such as the UK, France, the Netherlands, and Germany have chosen to come to Ireland to work, helping anglers to catch Irish pike.

So, what makes pike fishing in Ireland so good? Firstly, there is water...lots of rain means lots of water. Ireland has 144,000 hectares of lakes and 70,000 km of rivers and canals, and much of this water is superb pike habitat containing the large shoals of baitfish that help those pike grow big. Next is variety; with a number of large loughs, thousands of small lakes, numerous rivers and over 300km of canals, Ireland has a diverse range of angling venues that will suit most anglers' needs. Ireland also has a mild climate, it is neither too cold in winter nor too hot in summer so you can fish for pike

all year round. Irish pike are also famed for their fighting qualities, which are world renowned, and which sets them apart from their European cousins. To see and feel an Irish pike as it takes to the air on the end of your line must be one of the greatest thrills for the predator angler...

Finally, but importantly, angling pressure in Ireland is low. Even the best fisheries are not overcrowded and it is quite possible to spend a day fishing in Ireland without meeting another angler.

Of course, it's not all about the fishing. Ireland is a beautiful country and the scenery of the Irish countryside can be breath-taking, making it a fantastic place to spend some time enjoying the natural environment. Then, after a long day fishing (and maybe even a 100cm pike), where better to go to celebrate than to a genuine Irish pub where you can share your fishing stories over a pint or two...

This brochure contains some basic information to help you get started on your Irish pike angling adventure. There is a short description of pike fishing in Ireland and a brief introduction to some of the fisheries that consistently produce quality fish. The map on the flip side of this brochure highlights these fisheries and the key towns in which you could base yourself.



There is much more detailed information on the www.fishinginireland.info website and on the accompanying Google map: <https://goo.gl/17J4YN>

SEASONS

Ireland has no closed season for pike fishing, and, due to its mild climate, you can expect to catch pike all year round. However, for best results, your approach will have to change from season to season. During the colder months (November to February), pike will often move from the shallows to deeper water and getting down deep with sinking lures, trolling or deadbaits usually produces the best returns. Irish pike will move into the shallows to spawn sometime during the February to April period and fishing during these months can be patchy but can also be rewarding, as some of the bigger pike of the year are caught at this time. From April through to June, fishing steps up a gear, as pike begin to feed more avidly and are actively chasing prey into the shallows. This is a prime time for Irish piking and top water methods such as shallow diving lures or fly fishing can be very productive.

During July and August, higher water temperatures and increased weed growth can make pike fishing a bit more difficult on some fisheries but pike will continue to feed and often the cooler evening period can be the most productive. As we move into September and October, the lower temperatures again lead to increased pike activity and some of the best fishing of the year can be had in these months as pike feed up before winter.

We must also remember that pike are very opportunistic predators and will respond to local changes in their environment such as seasonal movements of bait fish and changing weather/water conditions. The angler who is aware of these localised impacts will catch more fish and often the best way to learn about the waters you want to fish is to hire an angling guide, who will have that local knowledge that can make the difference between a bumper day and a blank.

GUIDING & BOAT HIRE

There are a number of guides specialising in pike fishing operating in Ireland and it is usually advisable for an angler visiting a venue for the first time to hire a guide for a day or two. This is particularly the case with the larger lakes, as a guide will have local knowledge of the water and the fish holding areas which will greatly increase your chances of hooking up. You will need to contact and make your own arrangements with guides and to help with this, there is a list of angling guides available at:

www.fishinginireland.info/guides/index.htm

Fishing on most of the mid to large sized loughs in Ireland is usually more productive by boat and there is a list of boat hire locations available here:

www.fishinginireland.info/boathire/lakes.htm

REGULATIONS

In most of Ireland, pike anglers do not need a licence to fish and only rarely need a local permit. There is no closed season so you can fish for pike all year round. It is prohibited to use live baits. There are restrictions as to the size and number of pike an angler may take. As these regulations are subject to change, we advise all anglers to consult the latest regulations using the following link prior to fishing: <http://fishinginireland.info/regulations.htm>

CATCH & RELEASE

We all have a responsibility to protect and conserve our fisheries so that they can be enjoyed by future generations. Most fisheries face multiple threats including pollution, water abstraction and illegal fishing, all of which have a negative impact on fish stocks. For that reason, we would ask that all anglers consider practicing Catch & Release for the majority of fish they catch. Record any trophy fish with a quick photo and then carefully return to the water. Remember: [#CPRsavesfish](https://twitter.com/CPRsavesfish)

PERCH

Perch are widespread around the country in rivers with a slow to medium flow, canals, ponds and lakes, being absent only from very acid or very fast water. They are extremely obliging, and more often than not, are the young angler's first predator encounter. Very big perch are rare, with fish seldom reaching 0.75kg (specimen weight 1.2 kg). However, with increased popularity in "drop-shotting" and "vertical jigging", greater numbers of big perch are being reported. This is an excellent method for targeting larger perch and will also tempt the odd pike. Perch are taken all year through, but larger specimens tend to show early in the season and again towards the tail end of the season. Some of the best perch waters in Ireland include the River Barrow and Lower Lough Erne for the bigger specimens, with lakes such as Lough Gill also producing quality fish on a regular basis.



FURTHER INFORMATION

Angling Information

This guide provides a basic introduction to pike fishing in Ireland and gives a summary of some of the key pike fisheries. However, there are a number of resources where you can find more detailed and up-to-date angling information. Firstly, there is a dedicated angling website which has more detailed information on individual fisheries and service providers at: www.fishinginireland.info

If you are planning on fishing in Northern Ireland or on the Foyle and Carlingford catchments on either side of the border you should consult:

www.nidirect.gov.uk/information-and-services/outdoor-recreation-and-sport/angling

and

www.ufishireland.org/

IFI also produces a weekly Angling Update which provides up-to-date reports on what anglers are catching and where. You can sign up to be emailed the weekly Angling Update by emailing contact@fisheriesireland.ie

General Tourism

Ireland also has a general tourism website www.ireland.com that will help you plan your trip to Ireland. It provides a wealth of information on travel and accommodation as well as information on things to do and see while visiting the island.

Leave No Trace

Please adhere to the seven principles of Leave No Trace Ireland:

Plan ahead and prepare; Travel and camp on durable surfaces; Dispose of waste properly; Leave what you find; Minimise campfire impacts (be careful with fire); Respect wildlife;

Be considerate of other visitors.

Vehicles should be parked in designated areas and in such a manner that they do not cause obstruction.



Anglers should fish responsibly and sustainably – where possible use single barbless hooks and practice no-weight, “in the water” catch and release.

www.leavenotraceireland.org/



Biosecurity

Aquatic Invasive Species and fish pathogens are readily transferred from one watercourse to another on angling tackle, boats and protective clothing. These can be very damaging to resident fish stocks, the aquatic habitat and the general environment. We would ask that all anglers inspect and clean their gear prior to travelling to Ireland to fish.

Full information on prevention of invasive species is available on our website at:

www.fisheriesireland.ie/Research/invasive-species.html

Or via Invasive Species Ireland at

<http://invasivespeciesireland.com/cops/water-users/anglers/>

Disclaimer

Every effort has been taken to ensure accuracy in the compilation of this publication and associated maps and web pages. Inland Fisheries Ireland cannot accept responsibility for errors or omissions therein. Some sporting activities may by their nature be hazardous and involve risk. It is recommended in such cases to take out personal accident insurance. While many operators would have public liability insurance it is always advisable to check with the establishment or operator concerned as to the level of cover carried.

Acknowledgements

© Published by Inland Fisheries Ireland 2018, P/N: IFI/2018/1-0451 - 001

Photos courtesy of: IFI, Shane O'Reilly, Kevin Lyons, Markus Müller & Christin Breuker.

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Large Irish Loughs

The larger loughs are probably Ireland's most famous pike fisheries as they consistently produce those 'fish of a lifetime' sized pike. If you want the best chance of catching really big pike in Ireland, then you should plan your trip around fishing on one of these larger loughs. On the Shannon system, the three big loughs (Allen, Ree and Derg) are all top-quality fisheries with well-developed angling facilities and they produce numerous 100cm+ fish every year. Further north, Lough Erne, which straddles the border with Northern Ireland is another exceptional pike fishery, particularly the Upper section of the lough which has the better pike holding features. The western loughs of Corrib, Mask, Conn and Cullin which are noted brown trout fisheries, are also renowned for consistently producing quality pike. Slightly smaller than the above loughs, but still producing pike of a large average size, Lough Macnean in Co. Fermanagh, Loughs Gara and Key in Leitrim/Roscommon, Loughs Ennell and Derrocvorragh in the Westmeath area, Loughs Gowra, Ramor and Oughter in the Cavan area and Lough Allua/Annacarra system in Co. Cork can all be included on the list of Ireland's top pike fisheries.

To fish these loughs most effectively you need to hire a boat which will allow you to cover a greater area in search of fish. Using a fish finder will also be very useful to identify fish holding features and find the concentrations of bass/fish that attract pike. Because these lakes are large, it can be difficult to find the areas where pike are concentrated, and it is particularly on these large loughs that the local knowledge of an angling guide will make a huge difference to your results.

Small Irish Loughs

Ireland has thousands of smaller loughs that offer the angler a different pike angling experience to that experienced on the larger loughs. These loughs can be fished from shore, boat or belly boat and are often fishable when adverse weather conditions make it dangerous to go offshore on the larger loughs. Angling pressure is typically low on these loughs and you will often have the water to yourself. Because they are smaller, it is usually easier to find fish too, making them a good choice for those that prefer not to hire a guide. While the average size of pike may not be as big as the larger loughs, most of these lakes will contain a number of 100cm+ fish, so you can still have some superb fishing, while enjoying the more intimate angling experience these loughs have to offer.

There are many different destinations where you can base yourself and it is often possible to fish a number of different lakes from a single base. The greatest concentrations of these smaller loughs are found in the northern midlands area (Counties Monaghan, Cavan, Leitrim, Longford & Roscommon) and also in Co. Clare near the towns of Corofin and Tulla. You can choose to stay in any of the towns in these areas and you will have more than enough lakes within 20km of your base.

Rivers

While Ireland is famous for its many loughs, it does not have quite as much to offer in terms of river pike angling. While most Irish rivers contain some pike, there are not many that produce enough pike to offer a consistent level of fishing. Of those that do, the River Shannon, Ireland's longest river, stands out as one of the key pike angling fisheries on the island. The Shannon flows from Cavan down to Limerick and contains good stocks of pike, both in the main channel and in some of its tributaries. Shore access is good around bridges and towns and (with permission) across the farmland it flows through for most of its course. The River Suck, which is a major tributary of the Shannon is also a noted pike fishery in its own right, being well known for producing good quality pike. The Shannon is liable to flood in winter making shore access difficult in many areas at this time of year. Both the River Barrow and the River Erne are also capable of producing good pike fishing and throw up some decent sized fish every year. The River Erne can be an alternative option for anglers if weather makes fishing on Lough Erne difficult.

Canals

Ireland also has a small number of canals that contain pike and these can be worth fishing, particularly when flood conditions mean that rivers have become difficult to fish. Canals are also good venues for those that are less mobile as the access is generally good along the adjacent towpaths. The Shannon - Erne waterway is a 60km route that joins the Shannon and Erne river systems, and it has good stocks of pike in the canal sections. The Royal and Grand canals run from the River Shannon to Dublin and contain lots of coarse fish and reasonable numbers of small to medium sized pike, but the water is very clear and fish can be wary and difficult to catch. There are also canal sections along the River Barrow that can hold pike, especially when the main river is in flood.

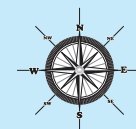
IRELAND/NORTHERN IRELAND

The island of Ireland consists of two separate countries: The Republic of Ireland (also known as Eire or Southern Ireland) and Northern Ireland, which is part of the UK. As a result of this, there are three separate agencies that control fishing on the island of Ireland: Inland Fisheries Ireland (IFI) which controls the majority of the fishing in the Republic of Ireland, the Department of Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs (DAERA) which controls most of the fishing in Northern Ireland, and the Loughs Agency, which controls the fishing on the Foyle and Carrigford systems that span the border between Northern Ireland and Ireland. These areas are marked on the adjacent map.

This brochure only provides information on fishing in IFI controlled waters in Ireland. Anglers wishing to fish in Loughs Agency or DAERA controlled waters should check the relevant website for information before fishing.

DAERA: www.nidirect.gov.uk/information-and-services/outdoor-recreation-and-sport/angling

Loughs Agency: www.lfishireland.org/



For a more detailed Google map scan the QR code or use the following web link: <https://goo.gl/1714YN>

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A green four-leaf clover is positioned to the left of the word "Ireland". A thin, curved green line starts from the bottom of the clover and sweeps under the word "Ireland".