



IRISH RED
The Ashford Castle lobby, decorated with crystal chandeliers and historical portraits

FIVE REASONS TO CHECK IN

ASHFORD CASTLE

This Irish fortress has stood on the banks of County Mayo's Lough Corrib for eight centuries. Last year, Red Carnation Hotels completed a \$75 million refurbishment to restore its glory.

1 Built in 1228 as the stronghold of a marauding Anglo-Saxon clan, Ashford Castle was bought and extended by the famed Guinness family in 1852, after which it played host to exclusive hunting parties for the upper echelon of Irish society.

2 The 82 rooms and suites, all individually designed, recall the castle's regal past with antique furnishings, hand-carved fireplaces, crystal chandeliers, and walls hung with numerous oil portraits of nobles, including Lady Ardilaun, the wife of Sir Arthur Edward Guinness.

3 A nourishing Atlantic seaweed body wrap incorporating organic Irish skincare brand Voya is among the therapies on offer at the Castle's new spa, which looks like a bronze conservatory and features a hammam, an ozone-filtered swimming pool, and five treatment rooms (including a couple's suite). Also on tap: Ireland's first Pure Flow Fitness, an oxygen-infusing regimen that improves athletic endurance.

4 At Wilde's Restaurant, in the cottage that once housed the estate manager, chef Jonathan Keane offers his take on contemporary Celtic dishes, including

a succulent feather blade of beef marinated in Guinness for 10 hours.

5 The property's countryside activities include on-site falconry, archery, and clay shooting, as well as a nine-hole golf course. Or take a day trip to the islands on Lough Corrib, Ireland's second-largest lake, in a traditional, handcrafted Irish sailboat. —**SAHAR KHAN**

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Want to check into Ashford Castle? Check out United's flights to Dublin or Shannon from Chicago or New York/Newark, or to Dublin from Washington/Dulles.

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