

The Northern Ireland SEAFOOD Trails

Rathlin Island

Venture across the Sea of Moyle and land on Rathlin island, a craggy, wild island that has three lighthouses, and is famous for its birdlife. If you're visiting in summer, explore by bike or hop on the Puffin bus and head to the RSPB station. The small kelp farm, Islander Kelp, is based here – and you can pick up some seaweed pesto from the Rathlin Co-operative grocery store. Check ferry times online and book in advance during peak season.

RATHLIN ISLAND



Boathouse Visitor Centre

The Centre is a short walk from the harbour. Here you can discover the exciting maritime history of Rathlin and Ballycastle, learn about island life and look through old artefacts that have been recovered from shipwrecks. The Centre is only open seasonally.



BALLYCASTLE

There is so much to see and do in Ballycastle! Take the ferry out to Rathlin Island, home of the Rathlin Sound Maritime Festival and a sea-loving community, or explore the shores of Ballycastle beach and watch the spectacular waves roll in. Ballycastle is an important port for fishermen catching lobster, brown crab and scallops, and is home to some incredible seafood restaurants.

Ballycastle Harbour

Walk behind Morton's Fish and Chips shop to find the harbour where fishing boats are docked. The smaller boats target lobster and brown crab using pots, while the large boats target scallops or travel further out to sea to trawl for fish.



The Cellar

A unique dining experience. The Cellar is known for its local lobster – a special treat for those who've never tried it.

Morton's Fishmongers

Morton's overlooks the harbour and is run by a family that has been fishing for generations, so they know their fish! The fish and shellfish sold by Morton's is caught locally by fishing boats in and around Ballycastle. Pop in to take a look, and chat to the friendly fishmonger about the seafood on display. Check online for opening hours.



Morton's Fish & Chips

Head next door from the fishmongers to grab takeaway fish and chips. Morton's is not your usual fish and chip shop, with lobster and chips, brown crab cakes and seafood chowder on offer!

Ballycastle Beach

Stretching for 1.2 kilometres from Ballycastle Harbour to Pans Rock, there is plenty of space to play and explore on these golden sands. Watch the fishing boats travel in and out of the harbour, or go beachcombing for shells, seaweed and driftwood.



O'Connor's Bar

THE place to try local crab – and there are lots of other seafood 'pub grub' dishes to choose from. Cosy and lively, and great for young families.

Map key



Food



Nature



Industry



Fishmonger



Activity



SEASONALITY

Just like most wild foods, fish are seasonal. This means that their abundance in local waters changes with the seasons, as they migrate and reproduce. It's important to eat with the seasons, as it means you're eating what's locally available and you'll get the best quality seafood. Scallops are caught in Northern Ireland from late autumn, through the winter months until late spring.

JAN FEB MAR APR MAY JUN JUL AUG SEP OCT NOV DEC

Can you match the **FISHING GEAR** WITH THE **TYPE OF FISH OR SHELLFISH** it catches?



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Have you tried... SCALLOPS?

Scallop fishing boats catch King and Queen scallops on areas of sandy seabed off the coast of Ballycastle. King scallops are large and flat, whilst Queen scallops (known as 'Queenies'!) are smaller and rounder. Scallops are a delicacy. For this recipe, you can use just one or two per person, and save pennies on the other ingredients. Scallops have a sweet, delicate texture and flavour.

Zesty SCALLOPS WITH PEA RISOTTO

PREP TIME: 5 MINS
SKILL LEVEL: MEDIUM

COOK TIME: 30 MINS
SERVES: 4



INGREDIENTS

350g risotto rice
8 fresh scallops (x2 per person)
750ml low sodium vegetable stock
125g frozen peas
100g parmesan, grated and a little extra to garnish
100ml dry white wine

2 shallots, finely chopped
1 lemon, zested
1/2 lemon, juiced
salt and pepper
olive oil
1 tbsp butter
mixed leaves to serve

- For the risotto, heat 1 tbsp olive oil in a pan on a medium heat. Add the chopped shallots and cook for a few minutes until translucent.
- Add the risotto rice and toast for a minute or two, continuously moving around the pan, before adding the white wine.
- Stir well and then add the stock, one ladleful at a time, stirring until the risotto is a nice creamy consistency and the rice still has a good bite.
- Mix in the frozen peas and parmesan and gently heat until the peas are cooked through and the cheese has melted. Season to taste with salt and pepper and keep covered on a low heat until ready to serve.
- Just before serving, stir the lemon zest through the risotto (you can add a splash of stock to loosen the rice off if needed).
- To cook the scallops, heat the butter and 1 tbsp olive oil in a large pan on a high heat. Add the scallops to the pan, season with salt and pepper and cook for 2-3 minutes (depending on size) on each side, or until golden brown.
- Serve seared scallops on a bed of the risotto, along with the mixed salad leaves, dressed with a squeeze of lemon juice.

EXPLORE BALLYCASTLE

