

Eating places for nomads in Ireland

It will have become heart-breakingly apparent to readers of the *Nomads* text that I'm not made of money. Feeding myself while fishing for sea-trout in Ireland is often a matter of making liberal use of Ireland's tremendous garage culture: most things are available at petrol stations, including sandwiches (which will often be made to order for you), sweets and chocolate, cold drinks and coffee. But one can't live off sandwiches forever (I know – I've tried) and usually it's sensible to try and find somewhere to have an evening meal. Because my wallet has suffered from the effects of an almost mis-spent life together with a global recession I can't usually, or even at all, sit down in the evening to monkfish tail, devilled Hokkaido crab or shrimp tempura with hand-tooled asparagus. Typically, I go in search of fish and chips or Indian food. The following are some of the best fish and chip shops in Ireland, together with one excellent Indian restaurant in Tralee and one splendid Chinese establishment in Belmullet, Co. Mayo.

Fish and chips

East

L'Isle de France
65 Clanbrassil Street, Dundalk.
Telephone +353 (0)42 933 3756

Closed Wednesdays, opening times rest of the week 1200-1400, 1700, midnight.

Macari's
Strand Road
Laytown (near Mornington, on the Boyne estuary)

No phone number listed, but the establishment is on the sea-front in Laytown.

North-west

Donegal's Famous Chipper
Upper Main Street, Donegal Town
Telephone +353 (0)74 972 1428

Opening times 1630-around 2300.

South-west

The Lobster Bar
Waterville, Co. Kerry
Telephone +353 (0)66 947 4255
Opening times: after around 1800 for food.

I also like the fish and chips at the back bar of the Butler Arms:

The Butler Arms
Waterville, Co. Kerry
+353 66 947 4144
<http://www.butlerarms.com/>

Photographs of local man Charlie Chaplin fishing Currane. Wicked chocolate puddings.
Opening times for bar food from around 1800.

The Poacher's Inn
Clonakilty Road
Bandon, Co. Cork
Telephone +353 (0)23 884 1159

Opening hours: 12 noon- 1930 for bar food, restaurant open till 2200.

Excellent menu but the fish and chips are the stars of the piece. Because the Poacher's is a restaurant (as is the bar of the Butler Arms or indeed the Lobster Bar in Waterville), expect to pay slightly more than you would in the inspirationally-named L'isle de France in Dundalk or Donegal's Famous Chipper, where eating is a stand-up-or-if-you're-lucky-perch-on-a-stool job.

Indian food (south-west)

Indian Castle restaurant
21, Upper Castle Street
Tralee, Co. Kerry

Telephone +353 (0)66 710 3929 or 710 3930

This restaurant not only does some of the best Indian food I've eaten in Ireland. It does some of the best Indian food I've eaten anywhere. Opening times: generous. Open 7 days.

Chinese food (west)

Phoenix Chinese restaurant
Barrack Street Lower
Belmullet
Co. Mayo

Telephone +353 (0)97 82933

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While we're thinking about angling food, a story from Currane....

The McCully-Sadler Diet

There may be those who are misguided enough to imagine that the life of a peripatetic angling hack is glamorous. Perhaps those souls imagine the hack is accommodated in castles, sleeps in feather beds and eats selected Irish monkfish tail nightly while sipping throughout on the most exclusive Chateau Kylemore. The following story is a corrective.

When I came back from the 2009 Currane trip I shared with James I talked to my sister, Jane. Jane has always been far more concerned about my health and well-being than I've ever been. She took a great interest in what James and I had been doing on our nomadic angling adventures.

'And what do you eat on these trips?' she asked.

'It's great,' I said. 'We always have a full, cooked breakfast, including black and white pudding.'

'You mean – every day?'

'Oh yes,' I said.

There was a short but meaningful silence.

'What do you have for lunch, then?'

'It's great,' I said. 'Chocolate bars. Cans of something fizzy. We drink tea, mind you, if we've taken the volcano with us and have remembered the milk and sugar.'

'Every day?'

'Every day,' I nodded.

There was another silence, slightly more meaningful than the first.

'And what do you eat for your evening meal?'

'It's great,' I said. 'We always – and I mean always – try to find some fish and chips.'

There was a third silence, this one not only meaningful but slightly terrifying.

'And do you mean.... I mean.... Do you *really* mean you actually do this *every day*?'

I confessed that we did this *every day*, though admitted that we sometimes supplemented our diet with sandwiches bought at garages, with Rowntree's Fruit Pastilles and with as much chocolate cake as we could manage for dessert. And perhaps, here and there, a banana.

There was another silence. This one raised the hairs on the back of my neck.

'Chris,' said Jane, with entire, loving but somehow apocalyptic reasonableness, 'have you had your cholesterol checked recently?'