

## Mykidstime Family Guide to Laois



Welcome to the Mykidstime Guide to Laois. We have put together some suggestions to make your family's visit to Laois as enjoyable as possible. As parents ourselves, we are delighted to share with you some of the family friendly spots in Laois.

The Mykidstime Team

### Top Ten Things to do in Laois

1. Visit **Emo Court, Park and Gardens**. This is owned by the Office of Public Works and as well as the Gandon designed historic house there are gardens, parkland, wooded walks and a lake. There is deer and red squirrels in the park and swans and ducks in the lake. There are tours of the house in summer. Emo tea rooms are child friendly, have wheelchair and buggy access.
2. Visit the **Slieve Bloom Mountains**. There are lovely walks and views in many parts of the mountains. **Glen Monicknew** is very popular - short walks, picnic benches and a stream for paddling. Enjoy the view over Offaly from **the Cut**. Visit the waterfalls on the **Barrow in Glenbarrow**. Take a walk around **Brittas Lake** in Clonaslee. You might be lucky enough to see deer or wild goats.
3. Climb the **Rock of Dunamase**. This is a historic site and the views from the top make the climb very worthwhile. While it is not for buggies, children love checking out the



views through the various parts of the ruin. Be warned, the children will want to run up and you might be slightly out of breath as a result!

4. Visit **Heywood Gardens** in Ballinakill. This is an OPW heritage site and the gardens were designed by Lutyens. There is free entry.
5. Laois is the only county in Ireland that is surrounded by counties that do not touch the sea! So we have a long trek to a beach. However as far as I know Laois is one of few counties that has an **outdoor heated swimming pool**. This is in Ballinakill, near Abbeyleix. It is open from June to September and is fully supervised, has changing rooms, toilets, picnic benches, a kids' pool and an adult pool.
6. Visit **Portlaoise Leisure Centre**. There is a toddler's pool, a kid's pool and a 25-metre swimming pool, steam room and sauna. The outdoor playground is new, is always busy and has good equipment as well as an area for toddlers. The centre has many attractions such as family swim time, camps during holiday times and inflatable play times at weekends. There is a Leisure Centre in Portarlinton also.
7. If the weather is wet and miserable take the kids to an indoor Play Centre - **Roll n'Bowl** in Clonminam Business Park in Portlaoise which also has a Bowling Alley, **Clown Around** in Portarlinton or **Tearaways** in Rathdowney Outlet Shopping Centre.
8. Visit the **Dunamaise Arts Centre**. There is an art gallery, art workshops for kids, theatre performances and a cafe.
9. Ride a Steam Train and visit **Stradbally Steam Museum**. The Steam Train runs all Bank Holiday weekends through the grounds of Stradbally Hall estate.
10. Visit the scenic village of **Vicarstown**, take a walk down by the canal or go on a **barge cruise** on the Grand Canal.



## Indoor Things to Do in Laois



- Dunamaise Theatre and Arts Centre, Church Ave, Portlaoise. Theatre & Art Gallery.
- Soft Play Centres: **Roll n'Bowl** in Portlaoise also has Bowling and Crazy Golf. **Clown Around** in Portarlington.
- Visit one of our great swimming pools: Portlaoise Leisure Centre, Portarlington Leisure Centre.
- **Mountmellick Library** is a beautiful building that has an Art Gallery and children's activities. The award-winning **Abbeyleix Library and art gallery** on the Main Street is worth a visit. The Art House and Library in Stradbally is a new facility.
- Cinema: Storm Cinema in Portlaoise
- Donaghmore Agricultural Museum and Workhouse. The tour takes about an hour and is probably more suitable for older children.

## Outdoor Things to Do

- Playgrounds – see our favourites list below (**FREE**)
- **Ballinakill Outdoor Heated Swimming Pool** - open during summer months only.
- **Heywood Gardens**, Ballinakill - heritage gardens designed by Lutyens, ponds and walks. Entry is free.
- **Kilvahan Pet Farm** – pet farm in Coolrain near Mountrath, nestled at the foot of the Slieve Blooms.
- **Glenbarrow Waterfalls** on the river Barrow, near Rosenallis - scenic walks, views and picnic benches
- **Glen Monicknew Bridge area** - walks, views, picnic benches beside a stream. Popular spot on a sunny Sunday.



## Where to Stay



*Please mention Mykidstime when Booking*

### **The Heritage Hotel 4\***

Jessop St  
Portlaoise  
Tel: +353 05786 78 588  
Email: [info@theheritagehotel.com](mailto:info@theheritagehotel.com)  
Web: [www.theheritagehotel.com](http://www.theheritagehotel.com)

Located in the centre of the town The Heritage Hotel has family rooms and a leisure centre. It also has three restaurants with children's menus and a coffee shop. The leisure centre has a kid's pool and there is a kid's playroom beside the lobby.

### **The Heritage Golf and Spa Resort**

Killenard  
Co Laois  
Tel: +353 0578645500  
Email: [info@theheritage.com](mailto:info@theheritage.com)  
Web: [www.theheritage.com](http://www.theheritage.com)

This is a 5\* hotel with a golf course and leisure centre. It is located near Portarlinton. From beginning of June to end of August a wide variety of children's activities is available including arts & crafts, tennis, table tennis, outdoor bowls, rounders etc. As well as family accommodation there are self-catering homes and apartments.

### **The Maldron Hotel**

Togher Roundabout  
Portlaoise  
Tel: +353 57 8695960  
Email: [info@themaldron](mailto:info@themaldron)  
Web: [www.maldronhotels.com/hotel-portlaoise](http://www.maldronhotels.com/hotel-portlaoise)

3\* Hotel is located on Exit 17 of M7/8 Motorway just 2 km from Portlaoise town centre. It has family rooms, a leisure centre, a restaurant and the Midway Food Court is adjacent to the hotel

### **The Killeshin Hotel**

**Dublin Rd**  
Portlaoise  
Tel: +353 578631200  
Email: [info@thekilleshin.com](mailto:info@thekilleshin.com)  
Web: [www.thekilleshin.com](http://www.thekilleshin.com)

4 \* Hotel located approx 2kms from the centre of town. The hotel has a leisure centre and a restaurant.



## Where to Eat



All the hotels mentioned above have restaurants with children's menus and there is a food court at the Midway beside the Maldron Hotel that is casual and has lots of choice. Popular local choices include:

- The CaToCa Cafe – Emo – open 7 days during Summer months
- Cafe Latte – Dunamais Arts Centre, Portlaoise – open 6 days, has an art table and high chairs
- The Streat – Parkside Shopping Centre, Abbeyleix Rd, Portlaoise – open 6 days has books and arts & crafts materials.

## Playgrounds



### Portlaoise

- [Dún Spraioi](#) - **Portlaoise Leisure Centre** - Only a few years old, this playground beside the new swimming pool is very colourful and has lots of swinging and climbing equipment to keep kids of all ages busy. It has an area with sand especially for the little ones. It is right beside the swimming pool which also has a cafe and baby changing facilities.
- [Solas na Gréine](#) - The People's Park - Timahoe Road. This caters for children up to age 8. This is well equipped and also has a sand pit. It is in the People's Park which has a pond with lots of ducks, wild life and picnic benches.

### Portarlinton

- **Páirc Spraioi na hAbhann, Link Road.** This is also only a few years old, is close to the new swimming pool and has lots of equipment. It caters for children up to 14 years old.



### Abbeyleix

- [Sult na Mara](#), People's Park, Heritage House, Abbeyleix. (1- 12 years). This is on the Portlaoise road side of town to the rear of Heritage House which has a cafe and toilet facilities. It is in a lovely setting and has good equipment and an area for little ones.

### Mountrath

- [Slí na bPaistí, Amenity Park](#). Caters for 1 - 12 year olds.

### Stradbally

- [Full Steam Ahead](#), The Green, Stradbally. Caters for 1 - 12 year olds

### Durrow

- Daru na n'Og, Playground situated beside the Community Centre on the Derrywood Rd/ Kilkenny Rd. It is new, and well equipped. Caters for up to 12 yr olds.

## Shopping



Many of the large chains are represented in Portlaoise; Dunnes Stores, Penneys, Tesco, Superquinn, Lidl and Aldi.

[Ken Black Toy Store](#) is one of the largest toy stores in Ireland. [Mothercare](#) including an Early Learning Centre and a Pixi Photo has a branch in the Retail Park. [Easons](#) Book Shop has a branch in Lyster Square and there is also [All Books and News](#) in Lyster Square. Shaws Department Store has Name It children's clothes and D-Kids in Lyster Sq has baby to teen fashion.



## Other Useful Information

### ***Where can we park?***

- There is a town car park at Millview/ Ridge Rd, Portlaoise.
- There is a multi-storey car park in Church St, Portlaoise near the Storm Cinema
- There is free car parking at the shopping centres with a 2 hr limit.

There is meter parking on most town streets with the exception of Abbeyleix where street parking is free.

### ***Where can we change baby?***

You can change baby in these places:

- Laois Shopping Centre - Portlaoise
- Kyle Dunnes Stores Shopping Centre - Portlaoise
- Rathdowney Outlet Shopping Centre.
- Cupcake Cafe in Emo Park.
- Supervalu Supermarkets in Portarlinton, Abbeyleix, Mountmellick and Rathdowney are open 7 days per week.

### ***Where are public toilets located?***

- Lyster Square in Portlaoise,
- in the car park just off Main St, Mountrath
- main car park at Emo Court.

There are toilets in the above shopping centres, and Supervalu supermarkets. All towns have pubs and most are accommodating.

### ***Tourist Information***

The tourist Information Office is located in Lyster Square, Portlaoise. There is also information boards located in Lyster Sq, Portlaoise, the Square in Mountmellick, Emo Park and Gardens, at the Cut in the Slieve Blooms, at Delta Sensory Gardens in Abbeyleix to name a few.