

Westport – Ballintubber Abbey

Leave Westport on the N5 to Castlebar taking the N84 towards Galway. After about 11 kms. There is a signpost for Ballintubber Abbey.

In 1216, Ballintubber Abbey was founded by king Cathal O'Connor, king of Connaught and like other Abbeys in Ireland, was suppressed by Henry VIII. After the destruction by Cromwell in 1653 the Abbey was left roofless, but for 250 years the people of Ballintubber attended Mass in the wind, rain and snow. The Abbey once again suffered under the Penal Laws, but still after its traumatic history it refused to die, and now has the unique status of being Ireland's only Abbey that has been in continuous use for 780 years. Some refurbishment works took place at the Abbey in 1846 and 1889. However the final restoration was carried out in 1962 and was completed in 1966, just in time for the 750th anniversary of its foundation. There is an **interpretative centre** located by the Abbey and here, there are tours of the Abbey and an Audio Visual presentation available to guests all year round.

From Ballintubber Abbey take the N84 back to **Castlebar** and then on to N60 for **Claremorris**. In Balla, we see the early monastic site and round tower. Continue on to **Claremorris** and take the N17 to Knock.