Fáilte Ireland
National Tourism Development Authority

Development Guidelines for
Tourism Destination Towns

Basic Assessment Checklist

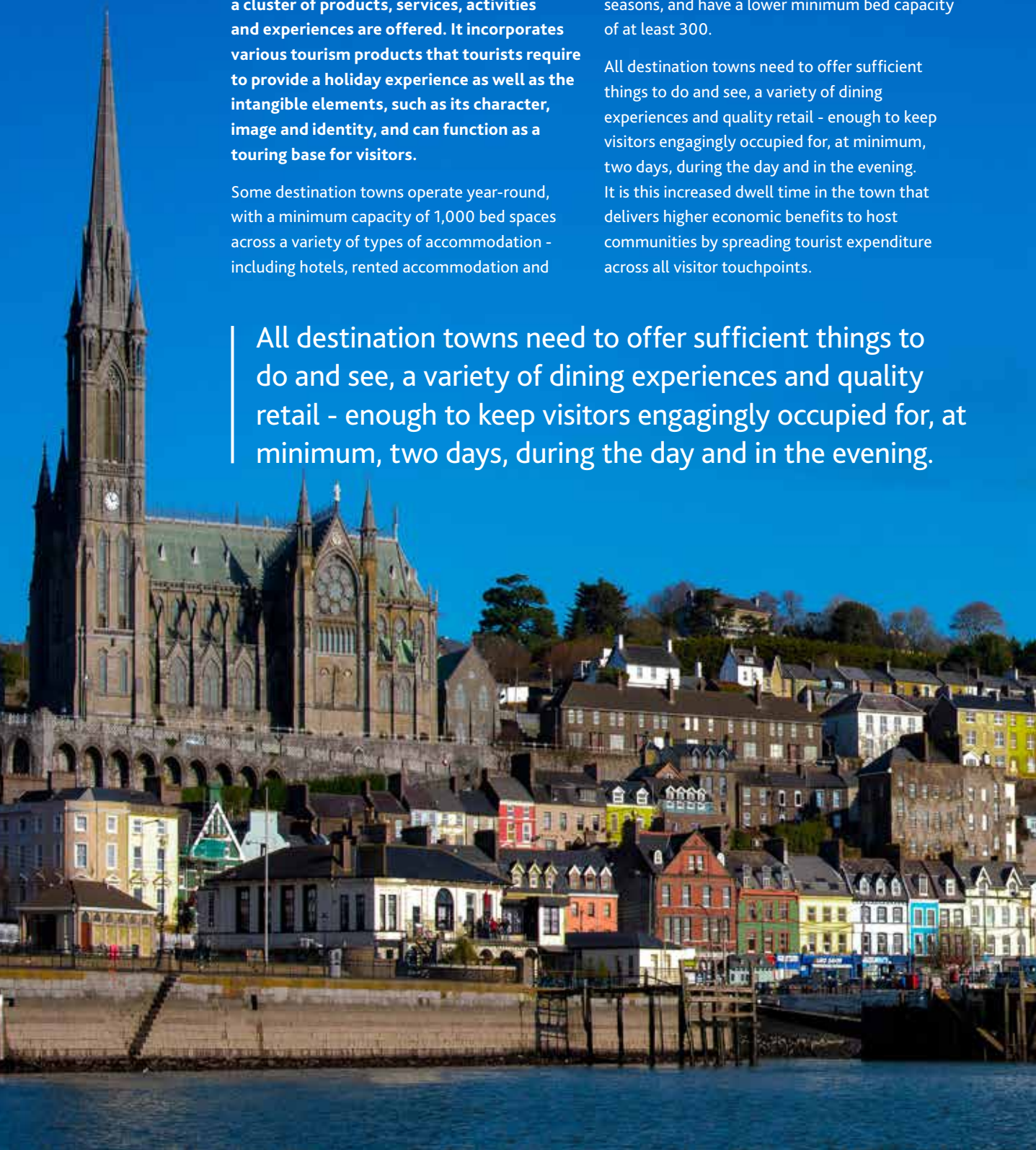# What is a Tourism Destination Town?

A tourism destination town is a town in which a tourist can spend an overnight, and in which a cluster of products, services, activities and experiences are offered. It incorporates various tourism products that tourists require to provide a holiday experience as well as the intangible elements, such as its character, image and identity, and can function as a touring base for visitors.

Some destination towns operate year-round, with a minimum capacity of 1,000 bed spaces across a variety of types of accommodation - including hotels, rented accommodation and guesthouses/B&Bs. Seasonal destination towns operate mainly during the peak and shoulder seasons, and have a lower minimum bed capacity of at least 300.

All destination towns need to offer sufficient things to do and see, a variety of dining experiences and quality retail - enough to keep visitors engagingly occupied for, at minimum, two days, during the day and in the evening. It is this increased dwell time in the town that delivers higher economic benefits to host communities by spreading tourist expenditure across all visitor touchpoints.

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Key Criteria

1	Access, Orientation & Signage	**2**	Attractiveness of Town
3	Public Realm	**4**	Interpretation, Storytelling & Animation
5	Things to Do and See in the Daytime	**6**	Things to Do and See in the Evening
7	Accommodation	**8**	Food & Drink
9	Retail	**10**	Festivals and Events
11	Sustainability	**12**	Basic Services & Safety
13	Awareness (Marketing)		

	Rating: 1=poor, 5=excellent	Strengths/ Opportunities	Weaknesses/ Threats
1 **Access, Orientation & Signage**			
A wayfinding plan has been established.			
The needs of key user groups have been considered in developing orientation, including those with limited mobility.			
There are a variety of marked trails through the town, integrating key attractions.			
Public realm design is used to support orientation and wayfinding.			
Key buildings, sites and attractions within the town are used in orientation and wayfinding.			
Night time exploration by visitors has been considered in developing orientation.			
The role of the town as a gateway to the surrounding area has been included in orientation.			
There is well-maintained, consistent and legible signposting **to** the town centre from all main entry routes.			
There is a consistent and appropriate approach to signage **around** the town.			
Defunct signs have been removed and essential ones are in good condition.			
Pedestrian or non-motorised traffic is prioritised in key town centre areas.			
There is ample and convenient parking for coaches and cars.			
There is good servicing of access points (clean, tidy, litter bins, toilets, orientation signage).			
Comments			

	Rating: 1=poor, 5=excellent	Strengths/ Opportunities	Weaknesses/ Threats
2 Attractiveness of Town			
The unique features of the town have been identified and are protected.			
The town has a pleasant atmosphere for visitors to immerse themselves in.			
Tourism is integrated into existing town plans and regional strategies.			
Tourism is integrated into community and arts structures/ activities.			
There is an active Tidy Towns committee.			
There is a multi-party/multi-sector approach to tourism development and promotion.			
Comments			

3 Public Realm			
Elements of public realm have been reviewed for tourism opportunities.			
Tourism has been integrated into Public Realm Plan.			
Other immediate opportunities for tourism have been integrated into current public realm work.			
The heritage and character of the streetscape has been protected and enhanced.			
There is no unnecessary street clutter, e.g. defunct signage, broken street furniture.			
Public spaces have been maximised for tourism.			
Tourism has been considered in the development of public realm and public spaces.			
Comments			

	Rating: 1=poor, 5=excellent	Strengths/ Opportunities	Weaknesses/ Threats
4 **Interpretation, Storytelling & Animation**			
The core stories of the town have been identified for interpretation by an external expert.			
Interpretation is easy to find and engage with.			
Media used in interpreting and animating the town is appropriate to the character and scale of the town.			
Human guides are in use at key locations/sites in the town.			
Comments			

5 **Things to Do and See in the Daytime**			
The key attractors for the town have been identified.			
Transport linkages have been created to key attractors outside the town.			
The town can offer at least a 2 day itinerary for visitors that includes a variety of things to do and see within twenty minutes drive. This can include heritage buildings, visitor attractions, greenway, blueway, town trails, arts/ culture experiences, food/drink experiences, guided tours, etc.			
The content of attractions fits with visitor needs and is of high quality, as confirmed through a 'mystery shop' exercise or other review.			
Opening hours of attractions and activities meet visitor needs, i.e. open seven days and into evening time during peak season.			
For year-round destination towns, attractions and activities are available all year.			
Comments			

6 Things to Do and See in the Evening

	Rating: 1=poor, 5=excellent	Strengths/ Opportunities	Weaknesses/ Threats
The town offers sufficient attractive early evening (5:00pm-8:00pm) and night-time activities and attractions for visitors to stay 2 nights, e.g. early music sessions, cultural events, evening activities at visitor attractions/heritage sites, evening guided tours.			
Evening opening of retail and attractions during peak season, seven days a week.			
There is an evening and night time economy plan in place, e.g. Purple Flag.			
For year-round destination towns, attractions and activities are available all year.			
Comments			

7 Accommodation

There are a variety of accommodation types available, including hotels, B&B/guesthouses and rentals.			
There is sufficient capacity to meet tourism demand year-round, based on study of occupancy rates.			
Any gap in capacity is being planned for.			
Comments			

	Rating: 1=poor, 5=excellent	Strengths/ Opportunities	Weaknesses/ Threats
8 Food & Drink			
There are at least three good quality day time and evening restaurants available, catering to different budgets and dietary requirements.			
There is at least one non-hotel dining experience that can cater for groups of 30+.			
There are pop-up/mobile artisan food units available in popular locations.			
The town's food offering is integrated into regional/national trails and networks.			
Comments			
9 Retail			
There are a wide variety of attractive retail opportunities for visitors, including local arts and crafts.			
Opening times cater for visitor needs, including being open seven days a week and some evenings during peak season.			
Craft producers are integrated into regional/national trails and networks.			
Comments			

	Rating: 1=poor, 5=excellent	Strengths/ Opportunities	Weaknesses/ Threats

10 Festivals/Events

	Rating: 1=poor, 5=excellent	Strengths/ Opportunities	Weaknesses/ Threats
There is a defined calendar of festivals and events that stretches beyond peak season.			
The content of festivals and events is of high quality, and is attractive and accessible for visitors.			
There is a well-planned approach to festivals and events.			
Festivals and events operate on a sustainable basis.			
Comments			

11 Sustainability

The local community is involved in, and benefits from, tourism activities.			
There is an active volunteer programme.			
Tourism carrying capacity assessment and visitor management have been integrated into town planning.			
Protected structures, areas of architectural significance and other unique features have been identified for protection and interpretation.			
There is an active litter management plan in place.			
Comments			

	Rating: 1=poor, 5=excellent	Strengths/ Opportunities	Weaknesses/ Threats
12 Basic Services & Safety			
Basic services are signed, available and accessible to visitors (ATM, fuel, medical, toilets, tourist information).			
There is access to tourist information that is easily and centrally available.			
Public toilets are available and well-maintained.			
All front-facing staff are trained in customer service and knowledgeable about the area.			
The safety of tourists has been planned for.			
The town has/is applying for a Purple Flag.			
Comments			

	Rating: 1=poor, 5=excellent	Strengths/ Opportunities	Weaknesses/ Threats
13 Visitor Awareness (Marketing)			
The town is part of a county or regional marketing plan.			
The town has a collaborative tourism vision and plan that is based on visitor needs.			
The town has its own web presence, with clear ownership and regular updates.			
The main tourism providers in the town have availed of tourism training.			
Comments			

Notes