Brú na Bóinne Co. Meath

Brú na Bóinne is about 8km inland from Drogheda and describes an area between the towns of Slane and Drogheda where the River Boyne meanders into a dramatic loop or bend. Brú na Bóinne – the palace or the mansion of the Boyne – is the name given to one of the world’s most important archaeological landscapes, dominated by the spectacular prehistoric passage tombs of Newgrange, Knowth and Dowth.

In recognition of the international importance of these monuments and the many other archaeological features in the area, the United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organisation (UNESCO) has designated the Brú na Bóinne area a World Heritage Site. Sites selected for World Heritage listing are deemed to be of outstanding universal value to humanity and are approved on the basis of their merits as the best possible examples of cultural or natural heritage.

Other Irish sites included on the World Heritage List are Skellig Michael, Co. Kerry and the Giant’s Causeway Co. Antrim. Worldwide the list includes Stonehenge and Avebury, the Neolithic (New Stone Age) monuments of Orkney, The Pyramids of Giza and the Acropolis of Athens.

Today at Brú na Bóinne the remains of about forty mounds which are the oldest surviving traces of human activity in the area can be seen. They remained the focus for activity and tradition long after their formal use as burial places ended.

The passage tombs and associated monuments are in the care of the Office of Public Works.

Openings Arrangements of Brú Na Bóinne Visitor Centre

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<tr>
<td>November - January</td>
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Brú na Bóinne Visitor Centre and Newgrange are open all year round except: December 24th, December 25th, December 26th and December 27th. Brú na Bóinne Visitor Centre and Newgrange are open all year round except for December 24th, December 25th, December 26th and December 27th. Brú na Bóinne Visitor Centre and Newgrange are open all year round except for December 24th, December 25th, December 26th and December 27th.
The passage tomb complex at Knowth is at the western end of Brú Na Bóinne. The great mound of this most spectacular site is outlined by 127 massive kerbstones. Arranged around this are at least eighteen smaller or satellite tombs, at least two of which were built before the great mound. In 1967 and 1968, Professor George Eogan and his team of archaeologists discovered two tombs within the large central mound, one of the features of which is the great wealth of decoration on the structural stones. The central mound, one of the two tombs within the large mound of Knowth, explains the many phases of Knowth’s complicated history. It highlights tremendous examples of Neolithic art and explores possible interpretations of their meaning. There are also standing stones and settings of exotic stones outside the entrances of the tombs. A reconstruction of a Timber Circle, which was originally built about 2,500 BC, dominates the eastern side of the site. Within the mound, a specially designed room allows visitors to see down the eastern passage. The room’s main focus is a huge ditch built in the Early Christian era. Elsewhere on the site are the surviving foundations of an Early Christian house as well as many souterrains.

Newgrange

Newgrange, the best known Irish passage tomb, is surrounded by a kerb of 97 stones, the most impressive of which is the highly decorated Entrance Stone. The mound covers a single tomb consisting of a long passage and a cross-shaped chamber. There are the remains of two smaller tombs immediately to the west of Newgrange and at least one and probably two to the east.

The guided tour of Newgrange orientates visitors within the ancient landscape. Dowth and some of the smaller mounds are pointed out as well as the course of the River Boyne. Before going inside the 5,000-year-old passage and chamber, the significance of the famous Entrance Stone as well as the Roof Box are described. Inside the chamber, the winter solstice phenomenon is explained as well as the burial ritual.

Dowth

Dowth is the least well known of the three great tombs of Brú Na Bóinne although it compares in size with Knowth and Newgrange. The mound is surrounded by a kerb of 115 stones and has two tombs facing westwards. The smaller south tomb has a short passage and a circular chamber with a recess; the north tomb is cruciform in plan containing a large stone basin. There are smaller satellite tombs to the east and south-west of the large mound.

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The Visitor Centre

Brú na Bóinne Visitor Centre, situated on the south side of the River Boyne, overlooking the core of the archaeological landscape, was opened in 1997. It contains exhibitions that describe the society that created the Neolithic tombs, their homes, dress, food, tools and weapons. Great emphasis is placed throughout the exhibition on the building of the monuments; why they were built; how they were used; where the building stones were found and how these were moved to the site. One complete room is dedicated to megalithic art. The audio-visual display deals primarily with the solar alignments in the Boyne Valley. The extensive exhibition also contains a partial full-size replica of the chamber at Newgrange as well as a replica of one of the smaller sites at Knowth.

The Centre provides other facilities such as tourist information, tea room, toilets, picnic areas and parking. The Visitor Centre is the starting point for all visits to Newgrange and Knowth and a shuttle bus service runs to these monuments from the bus stop situated 300m from the Centre on the north side of the River Boyne.

You can help

- Please respect the Monuments and follow the instruction of Brú na Bóinne staff.
- Please arrive at the bus stop at your allotted time.
- Please place your litter in bins provided.
- Please don’t enter private land.
- Remember that both Newgrange and Knowth are outdoor sites and that there is no shelter. Wear appropriate clothing and bring umbrellas.
- Ask staff on duty for any information or help you require.