



The views of Lough Hyne from Knockomagh Hill are breathtaking



MY FAVOURITE VIEW...
Lough Hyne,
West Cork, Ireland

Irish chef and author Clodagh McKenna tells us why this extraordinary lake – Ireland’s first Marine Nature Reserve – and its wonderful surroundings mean so much to her

When I go back to Cork, there is nothing I love more than to visit this magical place. You walk up Knockomagh Hill through quiet, shady woods, until you reach a flat plain at the top – and from there the views just take your breath away. Lough Hyne that you see below is connected to the Atlantic via a narrow tidal channel, so you can see right out to the ocean and the West Cork coastline beyond.

Even though I’m originally from Cork, I didn’t really discover this particular area before I got involved with farmers’ markets in my late 20s. The town of Skibbereen is about a 10-minute drive from Lough Hyne, and has one of the best markets in Ireland – it’s incredibly authentic, with really knowledgeable, passionate local

farmers and artisan producers selling everything from smoked fish to meat, cheeses and bread. What I especially love is that there are other influences from people that have settled here from countries like France and Spain, and all of it has contributed to the vibrant Irish food scene here.

The Lough has a variety of plants, fish and animals, some of which are only found in this part of Ireland. I decided to organise a slow food event – I have always been passionate about Slow Food Ireland (an organisation bringing communities together for good, clean food with regular events) – at the end of the lake to showcase how important local produce is in our culture. At the end, about 100 of us all made our way up to the plateau where

a historian and a wildlife expert told us about this unique area.

The first time I took my fiancé Harry to visit, we went to Skibbereen market and ended up with the stallholders sharing a fabulous late breakfast, then Harry and I packed up a few more goodies in a backpack and climbed up Knockomagh Hill so he could take in those incredible views I’d told him about. He couldn’t believe how fantastic it was up there, and needless to say, we can’t wait for the chance to go back together again.

Clodagh McKenna’s new book is packed with flavourful, speedy recipes that you can cook from start to finish in 10, 20 or 30 minutes. *In Minutes*, £16.99, Amazon, will be available from 28 October.