



Pack up and go...

Home or abroad, our weekly travel pages have all the best deals

Scenically perched on the Mayo Atlantic coast, Westport prides itself as a coastal gem with an all-year-round welcome, writes **CONOR MCCAFFREY**

ON YER' BIKE — Enjoy a bike ride along Mayo's Great Western Greenway



Gearred up for WESTPORT

Westport doesn't pull up the shutters after bucket and spade season.

As expected, high season is summer, with thousands passing through, to chill on blue flag beaches, brush up on local history or visit the islands around the spectacular Clew Bay.

But on a recent visit, I discovered that Westport doesn't really have much down-time — especially if you're feeling slightly adventurous.

If you would prefer to unwind, you can zone out for the weekend in the luxury Westport Coast, Westport Plaza or Castle Court hotels, all with excellent spa facilities.

Then again, you could go on adventure activities weekend and recuperate in style afterwards.

I reckon the latter is the better option — there's only so much saunas, aromatherapy, jacuzzis and steam rooms a person can take. OK, maybe some people will need a little more convincing.

Westport has long led the way as a hotspot for outdoor activities — and if you visit www.destinationwestport.com you can plan your weekend, choosing from watersports like kayaking, coasteering, paddle boarding, surfing, snorkelling and more.

If you don't fancy getting

wet, you can try horse-riding, zip-wiring, zorbing, rock climbing, archery, for starters.

First up though, you need a base, and the four-star Westport Coast Hotel (westportcoasthotel.ie) gets a double thumbs-up for location alone.

It's Westport's only waterfront hotel — with magnificent views of Clew Bay and the iconic shadow of Croagh Patrick to the

west. We weren't quite adventurous enough to tackle The Reek this time, shoes or no, but it's not going anywhere and we'll be back.

After an early morning drive from Dublin, including a near blow-out and a pitstop at a tyre centre in Mullingar, we refuel in the hotel's Coast Bar with comfort food of the gods — the creamy chowder with Guinness bread, washed down with pint of stout.

The quality of the bar food proved an accurate indication that the top floor Waterfront restaurant would be a winner as well. When we enjoyed a meal there later, it had a relaxed buzz including kids, families, young couples and a group of OAPs on tour, yet its menu was fine dining, with locally sourced dishes such as tian of West of Ireland crab, chive creme fraiche with apple and salmon, and McCormacks of Westport chicken liver pate.

Our hotel room had some nice luxury touches, including the beds with divine memory foam

There are lots of fun activities to choose from



COMFORT — A luxurious room in the Westport Coast Hotel