

A Friendly Guide To



SALTHILL

#BLUE&GREENSPACES

**SOMETHING BLUE,
SOMETHING GREEN,
SOMETHING YOU
WILL LOVE TO DO!**



BLUE AND GREEN SPACES OF SALTHILL

Welcome Traveler, welcome to our Coastal Village.

We would like to share some of our favorite Blue and Green Spaces with you. While Salthill has lots of attractions and amenities, there are so many benefits to understanding the impact of these places for our wellbeing.

It is no secret that our health is impacted by the air we breathe, the water we drink, the noise levels we experience, the food we eat, the spaces we spend time in, and our sense of wellbeing.

So, with this in mind we would like to focus on the health benefits of Coastal life in our Village.

These benefits are quantifiable through years of research into the value of walking and visiting these areas of nature.

“Access to nature, specifically to green and blue spaces, contributes significantly to our physical health (playful places), our mental wellbeing (as restive or restorative places) and reconnects us with nature while helping to future-proof society in the face of wider environmental risks.”

<https://www.epa.ie/publications/research/environment>

These Blue & Green Spaces in Salthill offer the visitor a unique experience while enjoying our attractions. There is a lot of walking ahead, but we promise that you will have plenty of time to take a break during the ‘Prom’.

Thank you for visiting Salthill.



Galway  **Atlantaquaria**® 

This guide is
designed
by Galway
Atlantaquaria.

BLUE & GREEN SPACES MAP



Keep Salthill
LITTER FREE.

WALK TO MUTTON ISLAND!

Let's Take a DEEP BREATHE or 'swig' of the sea!

Do you know it was the Victorians who helped develop Salthill into the modern Coastal Village we enjoy today?

Years ago, the benefits of Salty air were a cure for TB and other ailments, while science has moved on there are some amazing studies about the sea air that actually make sense.

Dr Rachel Taylor, a leading neuroscientist, explains: 'When people breathe in sea air, the ions contained in it help [boost] the electrical functionality of the brain by 47 per cent as well as creating new neural pathways, which - simply put - allows you to think with more clarity.'

A well-known cure for colds is to take a mouthful gargle, 'swish & spit' of seawater every day to kill off bacteria and virus in the mouth.

If you don't feel the 'gargle idea is for you', we can guarantee that the air in Salthill is the 'freshest in the Whest'.

So now we know something of the value of sea air, let's go walking!

Walking for health

Walking is simple, free and one of the easiest ways to get more active, lose weight and become healthier.

Sometimes overlooked as a form of exercise, walking briskly can help you build stamina, burn excess calories, and make your heart healthier.

The walk to Mutton Island is a challenge, but a great start to your adventure in Salthill.



REFLECTION & REST.

Celia Griffin Famine Memorial Park -REFLECTION, PEACE

While it is a beautiful spot to reflect, walk, and just enjoy the view of Galway Bay there is a deeper story, one quite sad. Before you enter the park there is a monolith that tells the story of a young girl, called Celia Griffin (6 years old) who was a victim of the Great Famine (where close to one million people died). She had to walk over thirty miles to seek help, yet there was very little the nuns could do, and she succumbed to starvation.

While this story is quite sad, we do need to reflect on the plight of others and be grateful for what we have.

This area is one where you can sit and reflect, practice mindfulness as you watch the sun rise or set over Galway Bay.

The Famine Memorial, a place to reflect

Self-reflection enables you to move from just experiencing, into understanding.

Self-reflection: Encourages a level of self-awareness and consciousness about practice. Enables you to identify areas for improvement and areas where you are strong.

After the walk to Mutton Island, this is a great spot for a break.



EXPLORE GRATTAN BEACH 'A LIVING LAB'.

THE RECOMMENDED STARTING POINT

GRATTAN BEACH 'Living Lab' & Nature Based Solution Project & Celia Griffin Famine Memorial Park

When a Beach Becomes an Outdoor Classroom

In June 2023, Galway City Council, in conjunction with the University of Galway and the Atlantic Seaboard North Climate Action Regional Office (CARO), developed a pilot project to install sand fencing at Grattan Beach. The pilot project will help us develop nature-based solutions to manage Grattan Beach and sand dunes, as a 'Living Lab' for Galway City.

A 'Living Lab' is where scientists move from the laboratory to the real world to find solutions to problems, working with other experts and the public.

This project extends the work of the community led 'I Like Beaches' project (since 2012), where local groups have been contributing their ideas to develop a Living Lab that would make space for nature and visitors on Grattan Beach.

Sand dunes provide natural protection from coastal flooding and winds during storms. They also provide a vital habitat for wildlife and act as a natural buffer that can absorb the impact of erosion, protecting areas and communities behind them.

This project was a HUGE success in 2023 and we hope it will continue to become the 'Gold Standard' for Dune Restoration and Practice in how we can work with nature to protect it. The Aquarium has officially recorded over 87 species that live in this area.

Grattan beach is a beautiful place to explore at low tide, for its rock pools and large area to explore at low tide. One can find many biofacts like Shark & Ray egg cases on the shore.

It is also home to the Living Lab Project, so great for education, photographers, and biodiversity hunters.



TIME TO EXERCISE! THE GOLDEN MILE WALK THE 'PROM'!

TOFT PARK - Great For Families

Named after Claude Toft who was a former Lord Mayor of Galway.

As you begin the 'Prom' Walk, some enjoy to stall the experience by bringing kids into the playground, or just having a gentle stroll in the park.

This park has free parking, a children's Playground, exercise Park, and large green space.

Close to Toft Park there is a rather strange Anchor, left on the 'Prom', but it makes a lovely space to relax and enjoy Galway Bay.

After leaving Toft Park, you can continue along the 'Prom' walk until you reach...



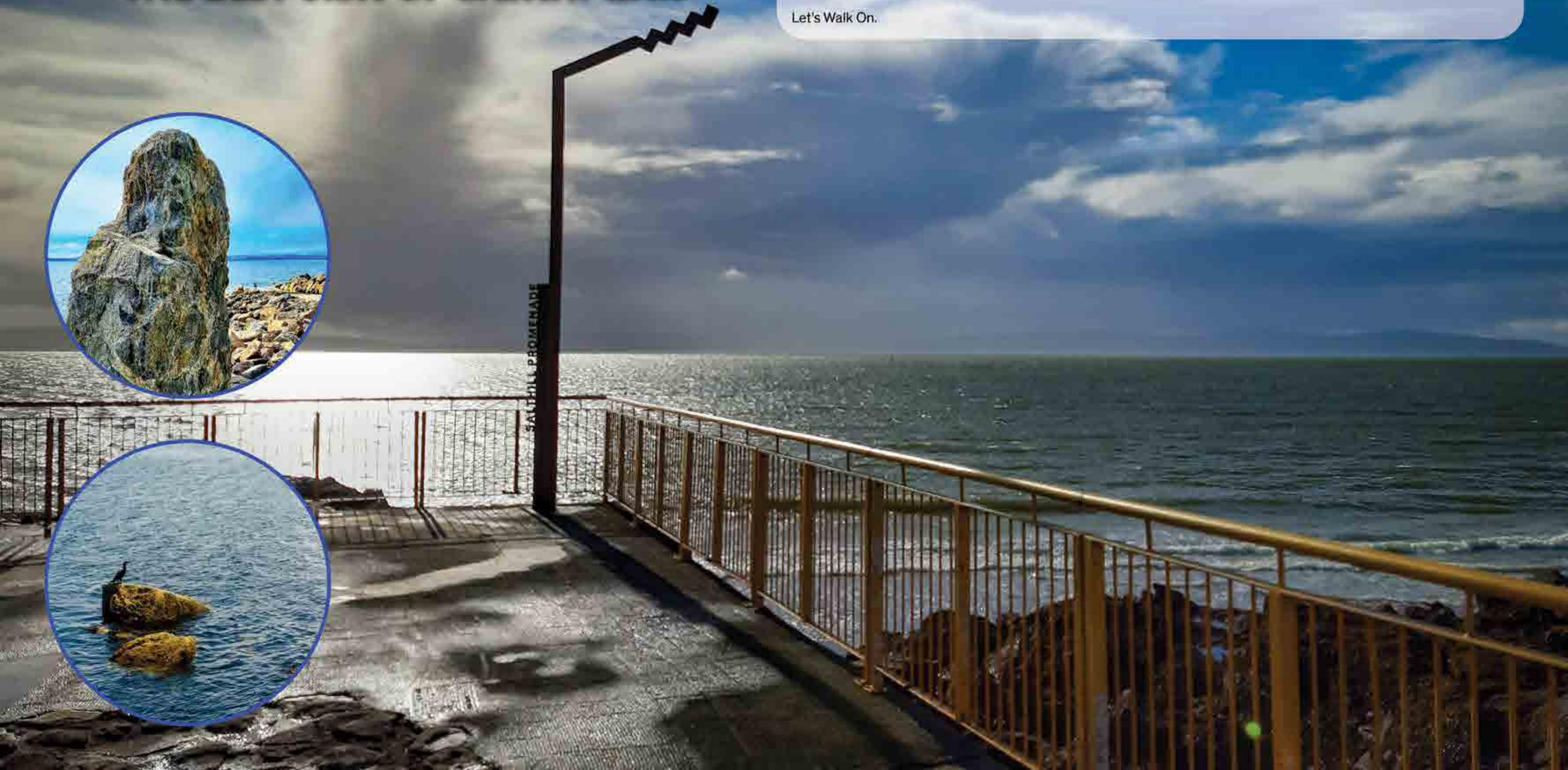
TAKE A BREAK AT THE WILD ATLANTIC WAY MIDPOINT. THE BEST VIEW OF GALWAY BAY.

WILD ATLANTIC WAY - Midway Point

After walking along the 'Prom' this is a center point where you can finally rest and take some epic photos of Galway Bay. The WAW sign is a unique marker for those who want to photograph all the Wild Atlantic Way Signs along the Coast. You might notice a large standing Rock, and that is called Palmers Rock (it is a metamorphic rock that makes up a large part of the Earth's crust and forms 12% of the Earth's land surface).

As the WAW Sign is central to Salthill, it offers a great opportunity to take a break. We recommend a Snack & Treat at any of the local Cafes. Or check out Salthill Park across the road, for a nice green space to enjoy each other's company.

Let's Walk On.



GEOLOGY ROCKS!

Geology Rocks

Beside Ladies Beach, you can find fantastic and ANCIENT Rock formations. These formations known as Murvey Banded Granite are truly ancient.

Geology Of Salthill

When walking along our wonderful 'Prom', you would be forgiven for missing the wonderful geology of Salthill. In our limited understanding of rocks, we often miss the role they play in connecting us to our past. Do you know that Galway is famous for our geology, as we have many ancient rock types that are visible, and you do not need to dig deep into the ground to find rocks that are millions of years old? "We have nice Rocks" a geologist would laugh at this joke! or Gneiss would be the better term.

Along the 'Prom' we go from embedded limestone to Granite and in this landscape, we have many examples of Metamorphic Rock, as well as Murvey Banded Granite, Murvey Granite, and Metagabbros.

Read More: https://gsi.geodata.gov.ie/downloads/Geoheritage/Reports/GC008_Salthill_Promenade.pdf

The metagabbros formed during Jurassic oceanisation in the Piedmont-Ligurian realm and show local evidence of rodin-gitisation during ocean-floor metamorphism.

This evidence shows that the rocks of the planet are alive and constantly moving, where we see life in the limited time of 100 years, well rocks forming over millions of years shows a new way of thinking. How life began on the planet, and how these huge formations move and change the planet.

Knowing the age of these rocks and just sitting down and enjoying the view of the Bay is something truly reflective and healthy. **Like they say everyone needs a ROCK.**



COMMEMORATION, HEALING, HOPE & THANKSGIVING.

Quincentennial Park / Circle of Life Memorial Garden (A Must Visit)

The Circle of Life is a national organ donor commemorative garden located in the beautifully sited seafront Quincentennial Park in Salthill overlooking Galway Bay and reflects the spirit of giving, the enduring legacy which defines the lives of organ donors. It was developed by the Strange Boat Donor Foundation in partnership with Galway City Council and was formally opened on May 6th, 2014.

The title of the garden, "Circle of Life", derives from the five 2 metre tall stones surrounding the garden's centre, and each has a carving and inscription symbolising the connectivity and interdependence of man at the different stages of his journey through life. These, and the garden's many other stone features, sculpture and inscriptions, are designed to create an inclusive place of beauty, inspiration and welcome to all. It is very hard to describe this park, but it is so beautiful and even though you are beside the sea, you feel taken away into a magical forest of peace and beauty!

This is a place to relax, and take it all in.



YOUR FIRST DIP INTO THE SEA! LADIES BEACH.



LADIES BEACH - Let The Sea Heal You

The beach at Salthill is actually several small beaches separated by outcrops. Some of the beaches are sandy and some pebbly, with the main bathing areas located at Blackrock and Ladies Beach. For facilities and amenities, Ladies Beach is the place for you.

So you have your towel and trunks ready...will I just swim?

Yes, but before you do, here are some interesting things about swimming in the sea.

Enjoy a GENTLE Sand Wash!

Sand acts as a natural exfoliant, helping the old skin to shed more quickly and improving its natural regeneration. Before you dip in you can clean your hands and feet with the seawater and sand, which makes for an excellent cleanser!

Feet Health

Don't swim yet! Have a gentle stroll in the sand, you can get a free massage from all the bits of loose sand as they surround your feet.

Some of the many benefits barefoot walking on sand can have on your body and mind are:

- Improved blood circulation**
- Building up muscles and strengthening joints**
- Good exercise without too much effort**
- Mindful connection with nature for stress relief**

"Stepping through sand — especially if done barefoot — is an opportunity to activate even more muscles throughout the body, stimulate and strengthen the nerves and muscles in your feet and improve your gait," Jessica Smith.

Not only that, but Dr Taylor says feeling the sand beneath your feet and between your toes has been scientifically proven to reduce inflammation in the brain and body, plus it helps connect the earth with the 7,000 nerve endings you have in your feet.

Once again, walking through sand is so good for you.

Healthy Air, Why Is Sea Air So Good For You

Before you go for a swim, what not do some healthy breathing exercises right by the shore? Because sea air has high salt content, it is quite thick. This means that as you breathe it in, it's clearing your throat and respiratory system, allowing clearer breathing and better-quality sleep.

Sea air is also known to keep you awake and energetic during the day because it is much cooler.

SWIMMING IN THE SEA, WHY IS THIS SO GOOD FOR YOU?

To see the health benefits, just look around you. There are always people of all ages going in for a dip. MARIA O'DONNELL has written a fantastic article on her own experience of sea swimming and it's well worth a read!
<https://nuasan.com/blogs/education/everyone-is-obsessed-with-sea-swimming-whats-that-about>

'this is a no ambition swim day', local anecdote

FYI. Swimming through Seaweed can transfer the healthy chemicals and Seaweed oils onto your own skin. So, if you see some seaweed at low tide, swim through it.

Have you ever seen seaweed at low tide and wonder how it survives?

Many seaweeds (intertidal) have adapted a rhythm to the sea, and they know during the low tide cycle that they could dry out. To survive until the high tide comes back they go into a fugue state or Homeostasis, Homeostasis is defined as a self-regulating process by which a living organism can maintain internal stability while adjusting to changing external conditions.

The Science Bit!

The natural adaptation of Ulva species to submergence and desiccation therefore represents the existence of a unique homeostasis regulation.

The survival of wetland plant species largely relies on physiological adaptations essential for submergence and desiccation. Intertidal seaweeds, unlike terrestrial plants, have unique adaptations to submergence and can also sustain desiccation arising from tidal rhythms.

What is Fucus extract?

Fucus Serratus extract is a type of brown algae (seaweed) that is edible. Its nutrient profile benefits the body when consumed, but it can also benefit skin when applied topically.

Fucus Serratus extract benefits for the skin:

Organic Seaweed Massage oil contains Algaran Fucus Serratus extract, filled with active ingredients and it is a powerful weapon against skin-ageing, it can also help fight damaging free radicals, reduces inflammation, helps to improve skin elasticity, and provides hydration to the skin.

When added to skincare products Fucus Vesiculosus extract reduces wrinkle depth, corrects small imperfections, and improves skin texture. Scientists believe that Fucus vesiculosus extract blocks certain enzymes that cause skin damage.

I found this interesting article and it lays out 6 benefits of swimming in the sea.

[\(https://www.careplus.ie/\)](https://www.careplus.ie/)

Skin

Seawater is rich in vitamins and minerals such as magnesium, sodium, calcium, chloride, and sulphate that work as natural cosmetics for our skin. Those with issues such as psoriasis and eczema may see particular benefit. The magnesium in seawater also lowers cortisol levels in the body, calming the nervous system and reducing the likelihood of stress-induced skin breakouts.

Immune System

By immersing yourself both in nature and the cold water, you will naturally encounter more germs. This is not necessarily a bad thing, provided you have got your flu vaccine and make sure to warm up quickly after getting out. Regular dips in cold water helps regulate your antioxidant processes in the body, helping to reduce the risk of heart disease and cancer. Trace elements and micro-organisms found in seawater also have anti-bacterial properties and can therefore act as natural antibiotics. These components are absorbed by the skin, helping to enhance the body's health & well-being.

Probably the main benefit of sea-swimming is to do with mental health.

Hydrotherapy – typically known to help people with chronic joint pain and arthritis – has also been known to reduce levels of anxiety and depression. Studies have also shown that water therapy helps increase the production of beta-endorphins (the 'feel good' molecules). Research has shown that those who consistently swim have made less frequent visits to a mental health professional.

Immersing yourself in deep, cold water shocks the body and makes you think about only what you are doing in that moment. For this reason, it is the ultimate form of mindfulness and almost like a calming meditation, as you only have the space to focus on your breath. The breathing control involved in swimming in fact slows down the mind and body and reduces stress.

A study commissioned by Swim England to coincide with 'World Mental Health Day' found that when queried about the impact swimming has on their day-to-day life, 43% of people who swim regularly said it makes them feel happier, 26% are more motivated to complete daily tasks while 15% believe life feels more manageable.

Time spent in nature proven to reduce stress levels as well as your risk of developing depression and other mental illnesses, so taking your swimming to the sea instead of an indoor pool is a great way to help both your body and mind.

Rich in magnesium, seawater can also relax your muscles and promote deep sleep.

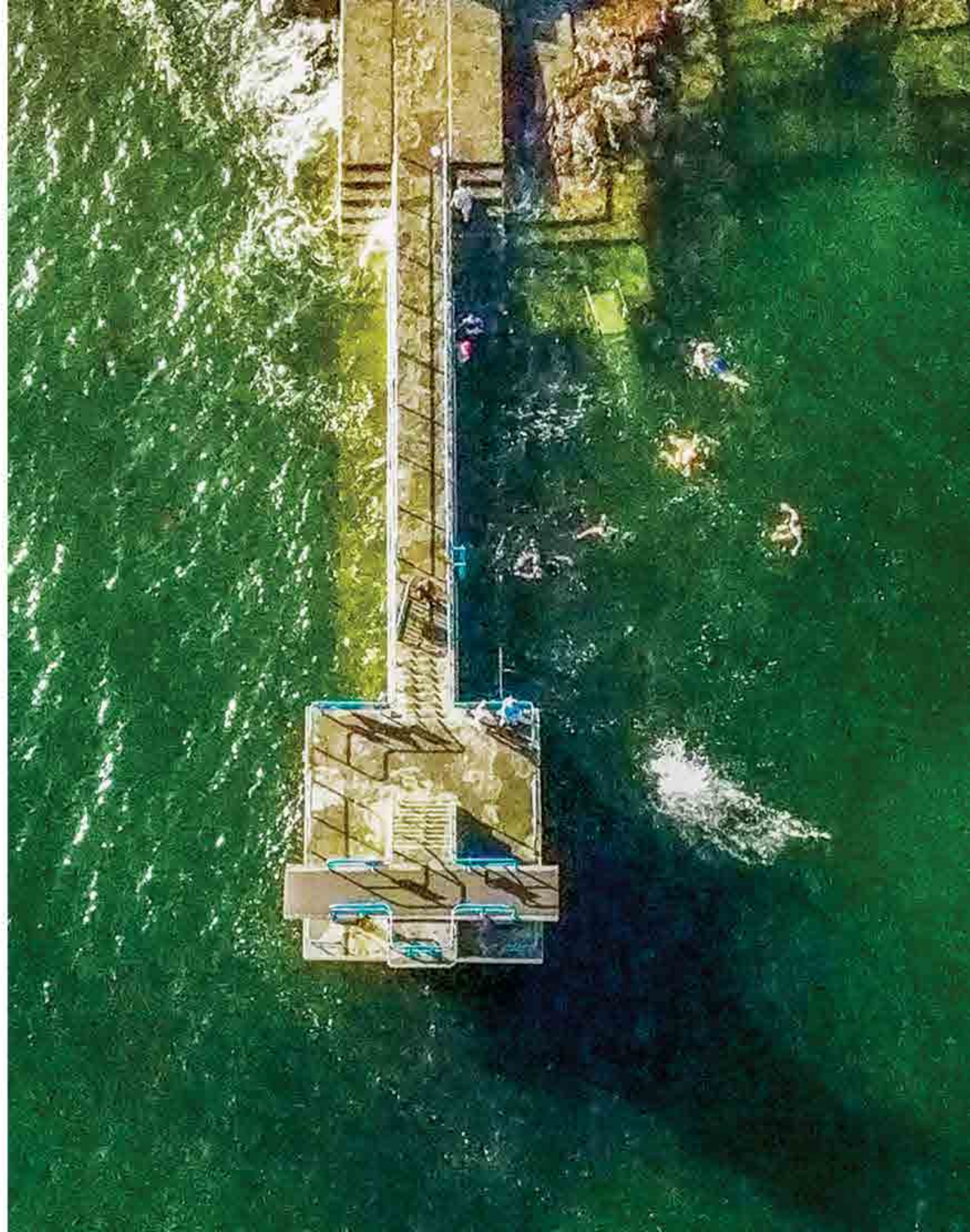
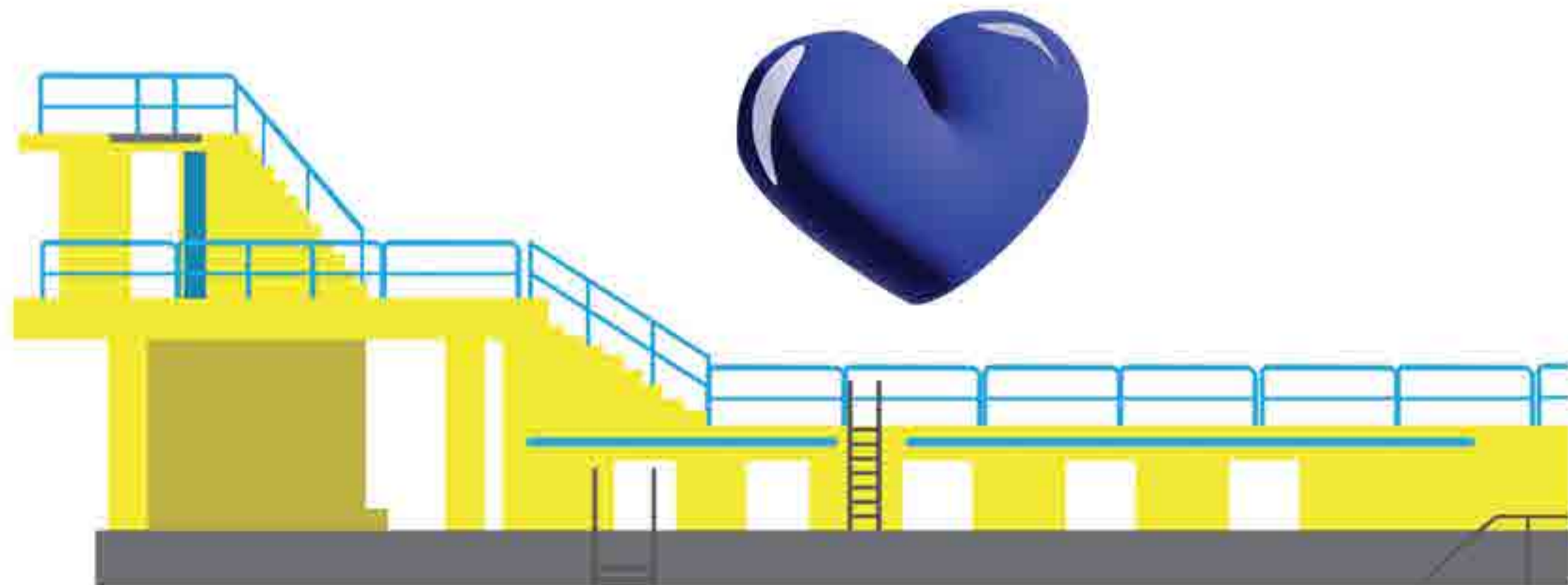
That is a fantastic list, and shows that the more you know about the sea, the more you can reap the rewards.

Blackrock Diving Tower

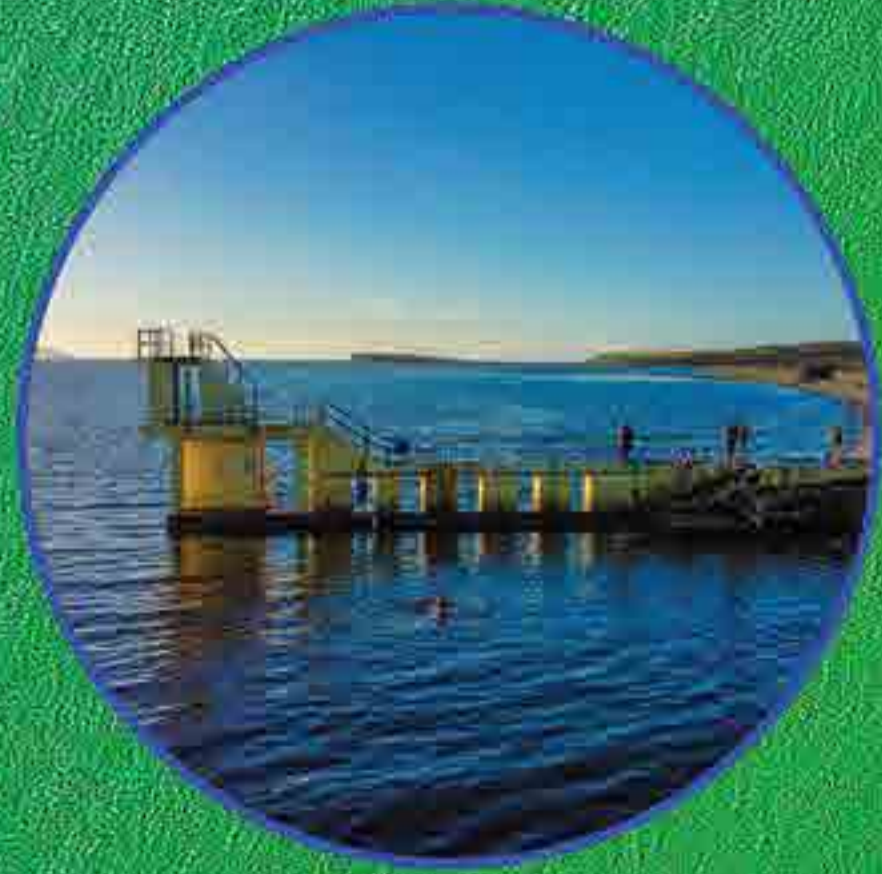
Blackrock Diving Tower is an iconic landmark of Galway, situated along the picturesque Salthill promenade, and overlooking the Atlantic Ocean. The tower has three diving boards at different heights, allowing swimmers to plunge into the water below.

The Diving Tower 'leap of faith', has become a 'must do' for most visitors to Galway.

It is a very popular space for the swimming community of Galway and beyond, it is almost the same as Ladies Beach in community and welcome. .



'KICK THE WALL' OR DIVE INTO THE SEA!



Summary Of The Blue & Green Spaces

Thanks for taking the time to learn more about the Blue & Green Spaces in Salthill.

While there is some conceptual ambiguity of terms such as 'Green Space', 'blue space', 'health' and 'wellbeing', there is no doubt that after a walk or dip in the sea you do feel better. And isn't that the most important thing?

We added so many notes from sources, bloggers, and even anecdotal tips from swimmers too. We hope you use these as a template for your own understanding and development of Ocean Literacy.

We could not in a million years recreate the conditions, but Salthill has a good mix of Blue and Green Spaces for people of all ages to enjoy.

In designing the trail, we like the mix of Blue and Green, it gives the sense of breathing in and out. We do allow breaks, so you don't miss anything in Salthill.

So, welcome to Salthill, we hope you enjoy your stay.

