

Lisdoonvarna springs and spa wells, County Clare, Ireland

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Abstract

Lisdoonvarna is a small town with a resident population of ca. 700, which is seasonally increased several-fold by tourists. It is located in the northwest of County Clare, western Ireland about 10 km from the Atlantic seaboard and adjacent to the karstic Burren plateau. Lisdoonvarna has two claims to fame: it is the only currently operative spa in Ireland, and it is the center for a long-established match-making festival held each September (postharvest) at which bachelor farmers are found partners by skilled match-makers. These two features of Lisdoonvarna are not wholly unconnected even though the September festival now attracts many young people from outside of the area who may not patronize the spa waters.