



Fun is right around the corner

*Family-friendly break
within reach of a
number of attractions*

BY
**YVONNE
REDDIN**

I OFTEN travel long distances to hotels around Ireland in different counties to find out what is available for families like

me who travel solo with children.

But sometimes you don't need to travel over four hours to find a hotel that has it all. My Google Maps

came up at 27 minutes to my destination – the Carlton Hotel in Blanchardstown. The kids were happy with a short distance for an overnight stay and so was I. This four-star Dublin



hotel is in a brilliant location, just 15 minutes from the airport and right by the M50, M2 and M3, so it's super handy no matter where you're coming from. It's also really close to the city centre, making it a great base for exploring.

If you don't want to go too far for adventures, within a short distance is the National Sports Campus and Aquatic Centre, Phoenix Park, Blanchardstown Shopping Centre, Fairyhouse Racecourse, Emerald Park and Dublin Zoo.

For me, it's a necessity for a hotel to have a good size family room or inter-connecting rooms so we all have our own space. Another tick is a pool or somewhere close by that has water activities – we are an aqua family.

The Carlton Hotel Blanchardstown ticks all our boxes and more. There are inter-connecting rooms for families and it's so nice to have your own room and the kids with theirs.

The rooms are classic, cosy and chic and I love heavy blackout curtains in a hotel, guaranteeing a good night's sleep. The children's room had two single beds and plenty of space to chill – but not for long, we had an aquatic centre to visit.

A nine-minute drive from the hotel and we were in the National Aquatic Centre. Part of the hotel's Little Adventurer's Family Break

Package is a choice of a visit to the Aquatic Centre, Dublin Zoo or Emerald Park, so we opted for some water fun.

The centre has slides, a wave pool, children's water play place and a lazy river, and was perfect to while away a couple of hours.

That evening, we dined at the recently-renovated Sundial Restaurant, which overlooks the hotel's lush garden and has a real sundial and water feature as a centrepiece. The food and menu is superb and we tried a bit of everything,

bringing a leftover tray to the room for later – the portions are big.

The rooms have full wall mirrors with plugs for hair-dryers beside them and I always love a nice fluffy bathrobe to lounge in.

The executive suites are extremely spacious if you were looking for a weekend city break or a girly overnight stay.

The sister hotel at Dublin Airport has just launched Sleepless in Dublin, a late-night package made for those difficult early or late flights. There is a flexible 24-hour check-in, late 2pm checkout, midnight snacks, 24hr shuttle and Netflix. It means you can have a comfortable stopover that actually works around your flight times.

Inspired by Sleepless in Seattle, it's all about bringing comfort and stress-free ease to your journey and

you will receive a Carlton bespoke sleep gift of an eye mask and ear plugs – just make sure to set your alarm to make your flight.

So, if you're like me and don't always fancy a long drive with kids in the back asking, 'are we there yet?', the Carlton Hotel in Blanchardstown is a perfect alternative. It ticked all the boxes – easy to get to, loads nearby to do and great food. From the moment we arrived, I didn't need to overthink anything and the kids were happy.

Sometimes you don't need a big, faraway adventure, just a comfortable hotel and a few fun things close by. This little trip reminded me that a great family break can be just around the corner.

TRAVEL FACTS

Midterm Little Adventurers executive triple room with an extra bed for two adults and two children B&B and tickets to attractions from €249. Interconnecting family rooms for two adults and up to three children from €419, carltonhotelblanchardstown.com. Sleepless In Dublin Package for two guests from €239, carltondublinairport.com.





Something for everyone: The Carlton Hotel Blanchardstown and, below, Sundial Restaurant

