



MY HOLIDAYS

NEVEN MAGUIRE

What's your earliest holiday memory? With my family on holidays in the west of Ireland, to Salthill. There was a big family - nine of us, five boys and four girls. We had such fun, but sometimes it was difficult enough to find a car big enough. We'd also go to the Giant's Causeway and Portrush. My twin brother and I would also stay with my auntie in Bundoran, in Co Donegal.

What was your worst holiday? My first holiday with Imelda, my wife, was a week in Lanzarote. I was disappointed with the food, and the sand on the beaches was black. I might go back, because it has year-round sunshine, but it is no comparison to other places.

What was your best holiday? Last year I went to Vietnam. I'd been to Thailand four times before, but I loved how uncommercial Vietnam was. We went all through Vietnam, including Hoi An and Ho Chi Minh City. It's got amazing, food, culture and people.

If budget or work were not a restriction, what would be your dream holiday? I'd love to take six months or a year off to travel the world. There is so much to be seen. A lot of my holidays revolve around experiencing different food and culture.

If you had your pick, who would you bring on holiday with you? It would have to be Imelda. She is my best friend. We love travelling and experiencing different cultures and food. She is as passionate as I am about food, so it is great to share with her. She runs the front of house in the restaurant, so we work together, too.

What's your favourite place in Ireland? Since I met Imelda I have seen more of Ireland than ever before. It is the most amazing and unique country, especially the people and the spectacular unspoilt scenery. I've spent many a lovely day in Killybegs, in Co Donegal, and I love west Cork if I can get a couple of days off.

Your recommended holiday reading? On my last holiday I read Raymond Blanc's *A Taste of My Life*. It was inspiring. The man is completely self-taught. He started as a waiter and became a chef. He has such regard for his mum, like me; that's where I got my love of food.

Where will you go to next? I would love to go to Sri Lanka this year. Unfortunately, there's trouble there at the moment. The Maldives look fascinating, a chill-out holiday. I'd like to go back to Vietnam in the next year or two. It's one of the greatest holidays I've ever had.

■ **Neven Maguire** is chef-owner of **MacNean House & Restaurant**, in Co Cavan (071-9853022, www.macneanrestaurant.com). *Neven's Food from the Sun* is on RTÉ1 on Wednesdays at 7.30pm. An accompanying book is published by Collins, £20

■ In conversation with Genevieve Carbery



Getting away from it all: **Neven Maguire** on holiday on the Malaysian island of Langkawi