

Irish Interlude

08 nights / 09 Days

Day 1: Shannon Arrival & Cliffs of Moher

Your Irish trip starts at 2:30 pm when you meet your tour director at your hotel in Ennis, which is 16 miles from Shannon Airport. Take a short ride to the Atlantic Coast to view the Cliffs of Moher, which are about five miles in length and rise to heights of 700 feet above the foaming Atlantic breakers. Meet your tour director and your fellow travelers over a welcome drink to discuss your trip before sitting down to dinner in your hotel.

Day 2: Galway & Connemara

Head to Galway for a gentle walking tour to see remains of the medieval city walls, Lynch's Castle and the narrow streets of the city center. Journey through the scenic region of Connemara with its hills, lakes and open country where mountain sheep roam freely. Stop in Leenane, where the movie, "The Field" was made. Continue to Westport, an attractive estate town built in 1780, with lots of interesting shops and traditional pubs, many with live music. Check in to your hotel where dinner is served.

Day 3: Westport House & Achill Island

Visit Westport House, an 18th century mansion, set in superb parkland with magnificent views. See stunning rooms with priceless furnishings and paintings. Cross by bridge to Achill Island and follow the Atlantic Drive for great mountain and ocean scenery. See the Deserted Village, 100 stone cottages abandoned around the time of the 1840's Famine. Enjoy a casual lunch before returning to Westport where the evening is free for independent dining in one of the fine restaurants or cozy pubs within easy walking distance of your hotel.

Day 4: Country Life & Donegal Bay Cruise

Visit the Museum of Country Life which features exhibits of domestic goods in daily use during the 19th and early 20th centuries. In Sligo view the grave of one of Ireland's Nobel Prize-winning writers, W. B. Yeats. Continue to Donegal town and embark on a fun cruise of Donegal Bay. See the seal colony and perhaps other wild life as well as the interesting coastline. Drive through the Bluestack Mountains to your next hotel in Stranorlar.

Day 5: Glenveagh Castle & Grand Atlantic Drive

Travel into the heart of Donegal to Glenveagh National Park where in 1870 Captain Adair evicted 225 tenants to build Glenveagh Castle on the shoreline of Lough Beagh. Learn about the history of the mansion as you tour the rooms and walk around the extensive gardens filled with exotic plants. Then experience the glorious natural beauty of the Grand Atlantic Drive, which winds around the coastline through Downings and Rosapenna. Return to Stranorlar in time for dinner.

Day 6: Derry & Giant's Causeway

In Derry join a local guide for a walking tour to see medieval city walls, the Diamond and St. Columb's Cathedral. Learn about the development of the city and also 20th century history. Drive along the north coast, pausing for photos at Dunluce Castle. Explore the Giant's Causeway, enormous hexagonal columns formed by volcanic activity over 60 million years ago. Experience wonderful scenery along the coastal Nine Glens of Antrim route as you drive south to Belfast and check in to your hotel in time for dinner.

Day 7: Titanic Belfast & Dublin's Abbey Tavern

Take a panoramic tour around central Belfast followed by some time at Titanic Belfast to learn about the famous liner through state-of-the-art displays. Visit Down Cathedral to see the reputed burial place of St. Patrick, Ireland's patron saint, and learn about his life and times at the St. Patrick Centre. Travel to Dublin and check in to your hotel. Head to the popular Abbey Tavern for a hearty dinner and a lively show of traditional music, songs and step-dancing.

Day 8: Dublin Tour & Book of Kells

Tour Dublin city to see elegant Georgian squares with brightly-painted doorways; pass St. Stephen's Green and shopping areas around Nassau Street; cross the River Liffey to O'Connell Street and see the General Post Office where the 1916 Rebellion started. Take a guided walking tour through the campus of Trinity College to view the 8th century manuscript of the Book of Kells. In the afternoon use your independent vouchers for an open-top bus tour all around central Dublin and a visit to Guinness or Jameson.

Day 9: Depart Dublin for Home

Your tour ends after breakfast.