

**Tom Comerford
Presents
The Ireland Festival of Friendship
April 20th to April 28th, 2024**



Sunday Apr 21: Dublin Arrival & Kilkenny

This morning we will arrive in Dublin Airport. Once you have passed through passport control and collected your bags, proceed to the arrivals where you will be met by your **Cara Group Travel** representative. Once aboard the coach, we begin our Irish Festival of Friendship by making our way to our first destination – beautiful Kilkenny. On route, we visit **Glendalough** one of Ireland’s most important monastic sites, located in the stunning **Wicklow Mountains**. St. Kevin founded this ancient settlement in the 6th century, and he chose this location because of its beauty and remote setting. It is set in a glaciated valley with two lakes, the remains of a superb round tower, stone churches and decorated crosses. We will enjoy some refreshments before a leisurely walk through the site. Then we make our way to Kilkenny to check into our hotel where we will spend **5 nights**. You are free until later when we gather for a welcome reception and dinner at the hotel. During the week, we will have many fun musical evenings and afternoons.

Dinner & Overnight: River Court Hotel (D)

Monday Apr 22: Legendary Curragh

Today we take a day trip to beautiful Kildare County where you will have up-close and personal access to just what drives the legendary Irish passion for horse racing at **The Curragh Racecourse**. We will



experience the scenic views of this open grassy plain, in an area of historical and ecological importance. It is also home of the world-famous Irish Derby, which first began in 1866 with the first recorded race dating back to 1727. We’ll take a tour of this stunning facility and take a “behind the scenes” tour inside the life of a jockey. Then we will make our way back south towards Kilkenny for a visit to **Kells Priory**. There is a little bit of walking to be done here, but the terrain is flat – please don’t let this dissuade you from experiencing

this historical gem, which was founded by Geoffrey FitzRobert in 1193. Medieval Kells sits quite comfortably beside modern Kells, and both are a joy to behold. To top off the day, we head to **Malzards pub** for some refreshments, local culture and a session of music and storytelling. Join your fellow travelers for dinner this evening.

Overnight: River Court Hotel (B, D)

Tuesday Apr 23: Free Day

Today you are free to explore Kilkenny as you wish.

Here are some suggestions of ways to explore:

- Check out a local festival
- Enjoy local music
- Take a ride on the Kilkenny hydro bikes
- Grab some drinks at Biddy Early's
- Visit Kilkenny Castle
- Jerpoint Glass Studio
- For many more recommendations, check out visitkilkenny.ie

Overnight: River Court Hotel (B)



Wednesday Apr 24: Copper Coast UNESCO Global Geopark



This morning, following a delicious Irish breakfast, we venture on to the southern coast of Ireland to **Copper Coast Geopark**. We will visit the natural beauty of the Irish coastline through various geo sites and view the effects of millions of years of geological erosion and formation, and the stories behind Irish copper mining. We stop for lunch at a country, family-owned pub -namely, O'Donnachas of Kilmeadan, and after that we make our way to the **Waterford Suir Valley Railway** for a narrow-gauge train ride along the old Waterford to Dungarvan line - today our route will also allow us to view the famed Waterford Greenway, the River Suir, and Mount Congreve Gardens. Tea/coffee and scones afterwards, before continuing to **Portlaw**, the historical, planned, former-industrial, Quaker village that is home to Tom Comerford. Enjoy dinner on your own tonight.

Overnight: River Court Hotel (B, L)

Thursday Apr 25: Ballykilcavan Farm and Brewery



Today, even though we've just had breakfast, there's always room for a little extra. Okay then...how about the artisan food tour with David Walsh at their **family farm and brewery in Ballykilcavan?** We will take a walk around the old farmyards with David telling his family stories, then go onto the farm to see the barley and hops that they use to make their beers. We then visit the champion black walnut tree of Ireland and go through the 200-year-old gardener's tunnel to the remains of the walled garden. After that, we will explore the brewery to see the kit and learn the process of their brewing. We finish in the newly refurbished 19th century mill building with a food and beer pairing session with local and Irish cheeses, bread, and charcuterie, all paired with one of their beers. We then head back to the hotel for dinner.

Overnight: River Court Hotel (B, D)

Friday April 26: Howth School of Fish

After breakfast, we are heading up north to Dublin, to the village of Howth. Upon arriving at **Howth School of Fish**, we will meet Sean Doran, whose family has been involved in all aspects of the fishing industry for 60 years. Take in the authentic and educational Irish fishing experience through a guided Harbour tour, exclusive access behind the scenes, learn all about rope tying and splicing, and savor a private seafood lunch with Sean, did we mention that his family also successfully operates three seafood restaurants? Check in to the hotel and have some free time to relax and enjoy Dublin.



Overnight: Grand Malahide (B, L)

Saturday Apr 27: Sightseeing Dublin

This morning we will enjoy some free time exploring **Dublin City**. Perhaps you want to visit The Guinness Storehouse, see the ancient Book of Kells housed in the Trinity City Library or enjoy a lovely cup of tea at Dublin's most popular meeting place – Bewley's on Grafton Street. Following this, we will take a visit to **EPIC The Irish Emigration Museum**, where we will explore, engage, and connect with Irish history and culture in 20 interactive galleries. In the afternoon, we have some free time in Dublin city before we make our way back to the hotel and enjoy a farewell dinner for the final night on the Emerald Isle.

Dinner & Overnight: Grand Malahide (B, D)

Sunday Apr 28: Homeward Bound...

With bags packed, enjoy breakfast and head for the airport where you will board your flight for home. Carry on your photos and memories and bring a bit of the Emerald Isle home with you.