

Best of Ireland – Heritage and History

June 16th – 23rd, 2024

June 15th- Heading to Ireland

This evening you board your flight for an overnight transatlantic journey to Ireland.

June 16th- Welcome to Ireland

This morning we arrive in Shannon Airport. Once you go through passport control, you collect your bags and head out into the arrivals area where your friendly Irish Tour Director will meet you. Once aboard, we'll head south on our journey towards Killarney, Co. Kerry. Upon arrival in Killarney, we will have a welcome drink together before you have a free afternoon to explore the town at your own discretion or maybe you prefer to relax at the hotel until dinner time. Killarney is famous for its vibrant streets filled with great restaurants, pubs, and hotels on every corner and brilliant night life. You may want to take a visit to the town's 19th century building St Mary's Cathedral which took just over 60 years to build and possesses impressively beautiful stained- glass windows. This evening, we will gather for dinner together at the hotel.



Dinner & Overnight: Killarney – The Lake Hotel

June 17th- Day Trip to Dingle



After a leisurely breakfast this morning, we will set out to explore more of County Kerry, famed to contain some of Ireland's most iconic scenery. We will travel to Muckross House and Gardens where we will explore the beautiful gardens surrounding the house itself. This nineteenth century Victorian mansion is set against the stunning beauty of Killarney National Park. The house stands close to the shores of Muckross Lake, one of Killarney's three lakes, famed world-wide for their splendor and beauty.

Muckross House was built for Henry Arthur Herbert and his wife, the water- colorist Mary Balfour Herbert. This was actually the fourth house that successive generations of the Herbert family had occupied at Muckross over a period of almost two hundred years. William Burn, the well- known Scottish architect, was responsible for its design. Building commenced in 1839 and was completed in 1843. We will later make a visit to Ross Castle. Ross Castle was the last place in Munster to hold out against Cromwell. Its defenders, then led by Lord Muskerry, took confidence from a prophecy holding that the castle could only be taken by a ship. Knowing of the prophecy, the Cromwellian commander, General Ludlow, launched a large boat on the lake. When the defenders saw it, this hastened the surrender – and the prophecy was fulfilled. We then return to Killarney where you are free to enjoy the evening at your own discretion.

Overnight: Killarney – The Lake Hotel

June 18th- Exploration Day with a Visit to the Beehive Huts

After breakfast in the hotel this morning, we will meet our friendly tour guide in the lobby of the hotel where we will set off on our day trip to the Beehive huts in Dingle dating back over 1000 years. The area comprises 19 souterrain and 18 standing clochans (beehive huts). There are also many inscribed stones, sculptured crosses, and earthen ring forts. If we are lucky, we may arrive at feeding time where they allow the visitors to feed and hold the baby lambs! There is also a superb sheepdog demonstration on display here where we will see a local sheep-farmer skillfully working his sheepdogs in gathering and controlling sheep movement. This skill has been handed down from generation to generation as sheep have been kept here on Mount Eagle for hundreds of years, showing the desire to keep the history strong in this area of the countryside. Later this afternoon, we will return to Killarney where you are free to explore the town for the rest of the evening at your own leisure.



Overnight: Killarney – The Lake Hotel

June 19th – Killarney – Cobh – Waterford



This morning after breakfast we will continue our journey where we will depart Killarney and head for County Waterford - Ireland's oldest city. We will take the beautiful scenic route along the coast where we will visit the historic port town of Cobh. It is from this town that over 2.5 million Irish people emigrated. Many would have attended mass at the beautiful Cathedral overlooking the port prior to their departure. Cobh was also the last port from which the Titanic left on April 11th, 1912. We will take part in a walking tour of Cobh where we will learn of the history of the people who departed on their voyage never to return. Feel free to enjoy a visit to the Cobh Heritage Museum before continuing our way to Waterford. Upon arrival in Waterford, we will check into our hotel, take some time to relax and we will have dinner here together tonight.

Overnight & Dinner: Waterford – Majestic Hotel

June 20th – Waterford – Kilkenny – Kildare

This morning, after a hearty Irish breakfast we will take a tour of Waterford Crystal, experience the very specialized process involved in the making of the Crystal when we view sights such as the mould room, blowing department, quality inspection, the physical hand making and cutting and much more aspects involved in the process. Its founders were brothers George and William Penrose's vision was to "create the finest quality crystal for drinking vessels and objects of beauty for the home." More than two hundred years later, the reputation they established for creating luxury crystal of unsurpassed beauty and quality has transcended the intervening centuries. After this we will continue our way to Malzard's in County Kilkenny. Fred Malzards offers a traditional Irish Pub experience, with traditional Irish instruments available for you to play, or sing along with the local musicians in the bar. Learn how to hurl in a relaxed, fun environment, learn all about Ireland's ancient Gaelic game of hurling with neighbors, young and old, join local pint pulling experts and learn how to pull the perfect Irish pint!



This afternoon, we will depart on our way to Kildare where we will check into our hotel and enjoy dinner together tonight.

Overnight & Dinner: Kildare – Killashee Hotel Manor House

June 21st – Kildare – Dublin's Fair City



This morning after breakfast we will head to Ireland's capital city – Dublin. Upon arrival in Dublin, we will take a panoramic tour of the city where we will drive through the main thoroughfare, we see historic buildings like the GPO (General Post Office) on O'Connell Street and Trinity College, housing the Book of Kells, we see the vast Georgian Squares, such as Merrion Square where Oscar Wilde's house can still be found (today owned by the American College). We will stop and enjoy a visit to St. Patrick's Cathedral. Built in honor of Ireland's patron saint, Saint Patrick's Cathedral

stands adjacent to the famous well where tradition has it Saint Patrick baptized converts on his visit to Dublin. Saint Patrick's Cathedral has contributed greatly to Irish life throughout its long history (it was founded in 1191). Jonathan Swift was Dean from 1713-1745 and is buried inside the Cathedral. We also see the Phoenix Park, the largest public park in Europe and home to Aras an Uachtarain (the Irish President's Residence) as well as the American Ambassador's Residence. You will have the evening to grab dinner at your leisure.

Overnight: Dublin – Trinity Hotel

June 22nd – Visit Glendalough or Free Time in Dublin City

This morning after breakfast you are free to spend your final day in Ireland as you wish. A visit to the 'Garden of Ireland' in County Wicklow is highly recommended. As with many other parts of Ireland, Wicklow is drenched in history and heritage and one of the most famous examples of that is the Monastic Settlement of Glendalough. St. Kevin founded this ancient Monastery in the 6th century, and he chose this location for its beautiful and remote setting. The settlement is set in a glaciated valley with two lakes, the remains of a superb round tower, stone churches and decorated crosses.



Also, on this site you will find a Celtic high cross, St. Mary's Church and St. Kevin's Church. For our last night we will enjoy an Irish Night and Dinner Experience in a hotel where you will get a taste of all that the Irish have to offer including music, dance and some traditional Irish food.

Overnight: Dublin – Trinity Hotel

June 23rd - Farewell to Ireland

We bid you farewell as you board your flights home. We look forward to welcoming you again soon!