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The Best of Ireland – 11 Days (9Nights)

Package Inclusions:

- Airport transfers at start and end of tour
- Sightseeing by luxury coach
- Professional tour director
- 9 nights in hotels listed below
- Full breakfast daily except on day 1 (B)
- 8 dinners (D) including - Dinner and traditional entertainment at the Merry Ploughboy Pub - Farewell dinner at Clontarf Castle Hotel - 6 table d'hote dinners
- Welcome get-together drink
- Tour of Dublin with a local guide
- Slieve League sea cliffs followed by home-baked scones with coffee or tea
- Catamaran cruise of Killary Fjord
- Sheepdog trials on Ring of Kerry
- Dublin open-top bus tour with a visit and drink at Guinness Storehouse or Old Jameson Distillery
- Visits and admissions to Book of Kells at Trinity College, Glendalough Visitor Centre, Boyne Valley Visitor Centre & Newgrange or Knowth Tomb, Triona Design, Belleek Pottery Factory, W. B. Yeats' Grave, Museum of Country Life, Kylemore Abbey Visitor Centre, Connemara Celtic Crystal Factory, Cliffs of Moher, Foynes Flying Boat Museum, Skellig Experience, Blarney Woollen Mills and Rock of Cashel
- Deluxe carry-on backpack, ticket wallet, luggage tags & strap
All local taxes, hotel service charges & portorage for one suitcase per person

Superior First Class Hotels used:

- Herbert Park Hotel, Dublin (2 nights)
- Mill Park Hotel, Donegal (2 nights)
- Hotel Meyrick, Galway (2 nights)
- Killarney Avenue Hotel, Killarney (2 nights)
- Clontarf Castle Hotel, Dublin (1 night)

Land only from \$1637 net per person double occupancy. 1 Free with every 20

Tour Itinerary



Day 1 - Dublin Touring & Book of Kells

Start your tour at Dublin Airport with a group transfer to your hotel between 7:00 am and 12:00 noon. If your flight arrives later than noon, transfer to the hotel at your own expense. At 2:00 pm tour the city with a local guide to see elegant Georgian squares, public buildings and monuments such as the Famine Memorial. Visit Trinity College's Old Library to view the priceless 8th century Book of Kells. Enjoy a welcome drink with

your tour director and talk about your trip.

Day 2 - Glendalough Monastic Site & Merry Ploughboy Irish Night

Drive south from Dublin across the delightful Wicklow Mountains. Visit the Glendalough Visitor Centre to learn about St. Kevin's 6th century monastery and walk through the site to see its round tower, church ruins and Celtic crosses. Return to Dublin where the afternoon is free for you to take an open-top bus tour all around the city. Use your voucher for the Guinness Storehouse and sip a creamy pint of stout or visit the Old Jameson Distillery to see how whiskey is distilled and sample the finished product. In the evening head to the Merry Ploughboy Pub for Irish cuisine and a lively session of traditional songs. (B, D)

Day 3 - Boyne Valley Neolithic Tombs & Donegal

This morning visit the Boyne Valley Visitor Centre to learn about the passage burial tombs of Newgrange and Knowth, both of which are over 5,000 years old. Visit one of the tombs to see how primitive people managed to align these buildings precisely with the sun or the moon. Drive through the lakeland region of County Cavan and along the scenic shores of Lower Lough Erne to your hotel on the outskirts of Donegal town where you will have time to relax or use the leisure facilities before dinner. (B, D)

Day 4 - Slieve League Cliffs & Glengesh Pass

Head to the fishing port of Killybegs and on to Teelin to view Slieve League sea cliffs, where the highest point reaches 1,972 feet making them the highest in Europe. Enjoy breathtaking vistas as they drop to the wild Atlantic waves below. Sample home-baked scones with coffee or tea before continuing through the majestic Glengesh Pass. In Ardara visit Triona Design to see demonstrations of spinning, weaving and knitting as Donegal is renowned for wool production. Drive to Donegal town for free time before returning to your nearby hotel. (B, D)

Day 5 - Belleek & Museum of Country Life

Visit the Belleek Pottery Factory to see how the craftspeople shape and decorate clay, creating the world-famous fine china. Pause at Drumcliffe Churchyard to view the grave of W. B. Yeats, the Nobel prize-winning poet, who based many poems on the delightful countryside around Sligo. Continue through County Mayo to Castlebar to visit the Museum of Country Life. See collections of domestic goods in daily use from 1850 to 1950. Exhibits and a movie explain how rural people made a living from the soil. Drive to Galway and check in to your hotel. (B, D)

Day 6 - Catamaran Cruise & Kylemore Abbey

Explore the heart of Connemara, passing granite hills and sparkling lakes on the way to Leenane for a short cruise of Killary Harbour, a 9-mile fjord. Enjoy views of hills where

traces of pre-Famine “lazy beds” of potato ridges can still be seen. Rejoin your coach and stop for photos at the Kylemore Abbey Visitor Centre. Drive through lovely countryside where sheep graze freely and stop in Clifden, the principal town of the region. In Moycullen visit the Connemara Celtic Crystal Factory, which creates intricate designs in crystal, and return to Galway. (B, D)

Day 7 - Cliffs of Moher & Flying Boat Museum

Travel around Galway Bay to view the Cliffs of Moher, an impressive wall of rock that plunges to the Atlantic Ocean. Continue to Bunratty for a brief stop at Durty Nelly's Pub or the Bunratty Woollen Mills before driving through Limerick and along the Shannon Estuary. Visit the Foynes Flying Boat Museum, which recalls the early days of air travel, during the 1930's and early 1940's. Arrive in Killarney, check in to your hotel and relax before dinner. (B, D)

Day 8 - Ring of Kerry & Skellig Experience

Take a drive around the Ring of Kerry where every bend in 100 miles of road reveals breathtaking views. Meet a local farmer, Brendan Ferris, for a taste of farm life with a sheepdog demonstration of herding flocks. At the tip of the peninsula visit the Skellig Experience, which explains the history, flora and fauna on the nearby rocky islands. Return through the attractive village of Sneem and pause at Moll's Gap for panoramic views of Killarney and its lakes. (B, D)

Day 9 - Blarney & Clontarf Castle Hotel

Drive through County Cork to the Blarney Woollen Mills where quality Irish-made products are gathered under one roof. If you wish, you may climb Blarney Castle independently to kiss the famous stone. Drive north to visit the stately Rock of Cashel, a limestone outcrop containing 12th century church ruins. Continue to Dublin once more and check in to luxurious Clontarf Castle, which traces its origins to 1172. Enjoy a special farewell dinner in the hotel's old-world dining room. (B, D)

Day 10 - Tour Ends Dublin Airport

Group transfers are provided to Dublin Airport to arrive at 6:00 am, 9:00 am or 12:00 noon to check in for your flight home. (B)

B: Breakfast; D: Dinner; L: Lunch