



Let's Go to Ireland

April 14-29, 2012



SMALL GROUP - 12 PERSON MAXIMUM
 14 SIGHTSEEING DAYS – ALL INCLUSIVE
 Lodging in Guesthouses & Hotels
 Several 2-Night Stays, and one 3-Night Stay
 All Meals - Full Irish Breakfasts – Lunch & Dinner Daily
 Several Wine/Cheese Evening Receptions – Pub Grub
 Luxurious Motor Coach & Failte-Certified Guide
 DART train and Hop-On-Hop-Off Dublin Day Pass
 Ferry Tickets and Entrance to All Attractions listed in Itinerary
 Trad Music – Castles – Town Tours – Ring of Kerry – Gap of Dunloe
 Dublin – Kilkenny – Cobh – Killarney – Doolin – Connemara
 Aran Island – Burren – Boyne Valley – New Grange

SAT APR 14 – Arrive Dublin, shuttle from airport to Glenogra Guesthouse, check in, and freshen up. As soon as we're ready, we walk around the corner to the DART station and take a train ride down the coast to **Greystone** for light lunch, or north to Howth to visit the Abbey ruins. Enjoy the town, or take a walk along the coast, before getting back on the train heading north to **Howth**, where we will enjoy our **welcome seafood dinner** at Ivan's, one of their nicest restaurants. This will be a long day, but it is best to stay up as long as we can to minimize jet lag and get into the routine of the new time zone.



Accommodation: Glenogra Guesthouse - L, D

SUN APR 15 – DUBLIN

Full day in Dublin. Hop-On-Hop-Off (HOHO) bus pass included. We'll catch the shuttle (right across the street) and spend the morning riding the bus, getting oriented, and choosing from the many options that we will want to go back to this afternoon, disembark at the Trinity College stop, and visit the **Book of Kells** display (tickets included). From here we walk the short distance to **O'Neill's Pub** for lunch (our first pub meal – known for fish & chips and Guinness Irish Stew). After lunch we're free to get back on the HOHO bus and visit the optional attraction(s) of our choice – Guinness Brewery, St. Patrick's Cathedral, Museum of Modern Art, etc. When ready, return to Glenogra house by taxi or bus. This evening, ~7pm, we'll have an informal **reception** in the sitting room for dinner.



Located in the Trinity College Library, the **Book of Kells** is one of Dublin's most popular and significant visitor attractions. Dating back to around 800 AD, it is considered to be one of the most beautiful religious manuscripts in the world. Written on vellum, it contains a Latin text of the four gospels in script accompanied by whole pages of detailed illustration. The book has been on display since the 19th century and has the dubious honor of having been defaced by Queen Victoria. A decorated page and a page of script can normally be seen on a visit.

Accommodation: Glenogra Guesthouse - B, L, D

MON APR 16 – KILKENNY via Glendalough & Kildare

This morning we meet Tim Hickey, our **Failte Certified** guide, and board our luxurious little motorcoach to head out on our adventure through Ireland. Driving south out of Dublin, we enjoy the lovely countryside (including darling baby lambs) to our first stop, **Glendalough**. Continuing south to Kilkenny, we stop for a visit at the **national horse stud farm** in Kildare (time permitting). After a late lunch at **Nicholas Mosse Pottery Factory**, we check into our hotel. Tim will lead us on a **tour of the famous Kilkenny Castle**, and we can visit the craft center across the street or take a nice walk along the river and castle grounds. Dinner is at **Kytler's Pub** where, beginning at 8pm, we have our first opportunity to enjoy **trad music**.

Glendalough monastery (situated about thirty kilometers from Dublin) was founded by St Kevin in the 6th century. It is difficult not to be profoundly affected by the dramatic beauty of the saint's chosen retreat. The monastic remains - including a superb round tower, stone churches and decorated crosses - sit in a glaciated valley with two lakes.

Accommodation: Pembroke Hotel - B, L, D



TUES APR 17 – DUNGARVAN - Rock of Cashel



Today we continue south through the lovely countryside. In the morning we will stop at the **Rock of Cashel**, for an extensive tour lead by Tim. After lunch at the Rock House, we continue on to Dungarvan – either through Vee Mountain Pass and Lismore, or another scenic route chosen by Tim – arriving at our lovely guesthouse in the afternoon with time to enjoy the ambience and view of Dungarvan Harbour. At 6pm we will meet in Seaview's charming sunroom for a light reception provided by our host (including wine, a local apple cider, and chips), after which we head out to dinner at a nearby pub.

It's huge, it's complex, it's iconic, there is nothing like it anywhere else in the world and it's right here in Cashel at the heart of Tipperary. The **Rock of Cashel** (Carraig Phádraig), more formally St. Patrick's Rock, it is also known as Cashel of the Kings. Reputedly the site of the conversion of Aengus the King of Munster by St. Patrick in the 5th century AD. Most of the buildings on the current site date from the 12th and 13th centuries when the rock was gifted to the Church.

Accommodation: Seaview Guesthouse- B, L, D

WED APR 18 – KILLARNEY via Cobh & Kinsale



This morning we head out bright and early, with a fun first stop at **Jamieson Distillery**, to enjoy a special Irish Coffee morning pick-me-up, and then continue on to **Cobh** (pronounced Cove), the port through which most of the emigrants departed for America, and which turned out to be the final port visited by the Titanic before its fateful demise. After a thorough and fascinating self-guided visit to the **Titanic Museum**, we head west to **Kinsale** for a mouth-watering seafood lunch at *Fishy, Fishy* restaurant. There will be time to explore

this sweet little sea town before heading on. Upon arrival into Killarney this evening, we will check into our rooms at the Killarney Hotel, looking forward to settling in for three nights. Those that are hungry will head around the corner for an informal meal at a nearby pub.



Accommodation: Killarney Hotel - B, L, D

THUR APR 19 – KILLARNEY - Ring of Kerry

Today, Tim picks us up at 9:00, and off we go to enjoy a scenic journey around the **Ring of Kerry**, including a fascinating **sheep dog demonstration**, scenic overviews, and lunch at the *Blind Piper*, a very local pub in Catherdaniel. Back to Killarney by 4pm, with time to check out the local shops and galleries before 6pm closing, meeting at 6:45 to walk across the street to early dinner at Lord Kenmores.



This 179km circuit of the Iveragh Peninsula is on every self-respecting tourist itinerary for a good reason. The secondary road winds past pristine beaches, the island-dotted Atlantic, medieval ruins, mountains, and loughs (lakes). Even locals stop their cars to gawk at the rugged coastline – particularly between Waterville and Caherdaniel in the southwest of the peninsula, where the beauty dial is turned up to 11.

Accommodation: Killarney Hotel - B, L, D

FRI APR 20 – KILLARNEY – Gap of Dunloe or Golf



Weather permitting, the treat today will be a **journey through the Gap of Dunloe**. Tim picks us up 10:30 and whisks us to the boat launch for a lovely ride across the mystical lake, at the end of which we enjoy a picnic lunch at Muckross House, where we are met by our trap (cart) drivers, who will lead us through the actual Gap of Dunloe. Time for a little walkaround (and maybe an ice cream), before Tim drives us the short distance back to our Hotel. A little R&R or more exploration of the interesting shops of Killarney, before another fine dinner.

NOTES: 1. Depending on weather, Ring of Kerry and Gap of Dunloe may be switched. 2. Option to play golf instead of Gap of Dunloe (included). 3. You might be able to ride a horse through the Gap, instead of riding in a trap.

Accommodation: Killarney Hotel - B, L, D

SAT APR 21 – DOOLIN - Cliffs of Moher



Today, the drive is the thing – along the coast and just beautiful. 10:00am sharp, we're on the road, in order to catch the 11:30 **ferry across River Shannon**. This afternoon, on our drive to the Cliffs of Moher, Tim will take us on a scenic drive through Kilkee and along a grassy seaview cliff area where, weather permitting, we will stop for a picnic lunch. As we continue along the coast, we soon arrive at the **Cliffs of Moher**. We can take our time to enjoy this natural wonder, after which we travel the short distance to the tiny, peaceful town of Doolin, arriving ~5pm. After check-in we enjoy an early dinner in our lodging's lovely dining room. Later we'll walk to O'Connors pub for some trad music (which starts at 9pm).

One of Ireland's most visited tourist attractions, the **Cliffs of Moher** are 214m high at the highest point and range for 8 kilometres over the Atlantic Ocean on the western seaboard of County Clare. From the Cliffs one can see the Aran Islands, Galway Bay, as well as the mountains in Connemara and Loop Head to the South. The name was from a ruined promontory fort "Mother" which was demolished during the Napoleonic wars to make room for a signal tower.



Accommodation: Cullinan's Guesthouse - B, L, D

SUN APR 22 – DOOLIN – Burren

Today we explore the **Burren**, stopping along the way to visit an ancient church, a perfumery, enjoy a **Birds of Prey Demonstration**, and visit a local cheese shop, before driving along the coast back to Doolin.



Tonight you have a choice of either enjoying an early meal at Fitzpatrick's, the restaurant across the way, take a later dinner at the 'other' famous pub in Doolin for more wonderful trad music, or both (early dinner and later walk to pub).

The Burren. Where there are no trees to hang a man. Where there is not enough water to drown him. And if you finally succeeded in killing him, it's too rocky to bury him. The landscape of the Burren is special. The limestone is split and weathered. Everywhere are traces of Megalithic Tombs, ring forts, souterrains, cairns, holy wells and stone rows.

Accommodation: Cullinan's Guesthouse - B, L, D



MON APR 23 – INISHMORE, ARAN ISLAND

Here is something you won't find on other tours. We're going to **spend the night on Inishmore**, the largest of the Aran Islands. It's like going back in time, and you can't get closer to the real local Irish culture than this. We'll take the 9:30am ferry out of Doolin, and spend the entire day exploring the island, with plenty of time to wander around and take photos of the famous **Dun Aengus** fortress ruins. To facilitate your individual exploration of the rest of the island, bikes are available for rent if desired. It is said that there are 10,000 miles of rock walls on this island. After you spend the day here, you will become a believer! Tonight, after dinner at the guesthouse, we'll visit one of the pubs in town where, if we're lucky, we'll catch some **local Irish step-dancing**.



Dún Aengus is the most famous of several prehistoric forts on the Aran Islands, of Co. Galway. Ireland. It is located on Inishmore at the edge of a 100-metre high cliff. Dún Aengus is an important archaeological site that also offers a spectacular view. It was built during the Bronze Age and dates from 1,000 B.C. or before. It has been called "the most magnificent barbaric monument in Europe." The name "Dún Aengus," meaning "Fort of Aengus," refers to the pre-Christian god of the same name described in Irish mythology.

Accommodation: Kilmurvey Guesthouse - B, L, D

TUES APR 24 – CLIFDEN, CONNEMARA - Quiet Man Country

This morning after breakfast we board the ferry to Rossaveal. Tim will pick us up and take us downtown **Galway** for a short visit in the historic district before continuing on to Clifden, a sweet little town on the coast, and a good jumping off point to explore Connemara. On the way we will stretch our legs on the grounds of **Ashford Castle in Cong** where, time permitting, we may enjoy a boat ride, or take a short walk along the river. After lunch at the Hungry Monk in Cong, we continue our haunting and scenic ride along the **Connemara Lakes** to Round Stone Beach Village for a visit at the **Drum Store** before arriving in Clifden ~5:00. After a little wine & cheese reception at 7:00 in the sitting room, we'll walk the short distance to Mitchell's for a scrumptious seafood dinner.



Ashford Castle's long and distinguished history dates back to 1228 when the Anglo Norman de Burgos family founded it. The castle changed hands throughout the years and owners, including the Guinness Family, adapted its appearance from defensive castle, to French Chateaux to Victorian Neo Gothic. During its time Ashford Castle has hosted Presidents and Princes, Ronald Reagan in 1985 and Prince of Wales George V in 1905. For centuries, Ashford Castle has overlooked the shores of Lough Corrib, as one of Ireland's most magnificent castles and one of the most luxurious resort hotels in the world.

Accommodation: Dun Ri Guesthouse – B, L, D

WED APR 25 – CLIFDEN, CONNEMARA – Kylemore Abbey



Today we leave at 9:00 for **Kylemore Abbey**, and spend the morning visiting the building, gardens and restored neo-gothic chapel. A leisurely lunch will be taken at the attraction's highly acclaimed cafeteria-style restaurant, returning to Clifden ~3:00, allowing time for relaxation, a walkaround, or a thorough visit to the shops and galleries. We meet at 8:00 at Derrymore's for dinner.

Accommodation: Dun Ri Guesthouse – B, L, D



This extraordinary Gothic abbey sits at the base of a heavily wooded hill overlooking the mirrorlike waters of Kylemore Lake. The exterior of the main building is a splendid example of neo-Gothic architecture. In 1920, its owners donated it to the Benedictine nuns, and the sisters have run a convent boarding school here ever since. Only the grounds and a tiny section of the house are open to the public, but the grounds are attraction enough. The highlight is the recently restored Gothic chapel, an exquisite cathedral in miniature with a small cemetery to one side; a lavish Victorian walled garden; and the breathtaking views of it all from across the lake. The complex includes a decent restaurant that serves produce grown on the nuns' farm, as well as tea and good scones, a working pottery studio, and a visitor center.

THUR APR 26 – TRIM (including Castle)

After an early morning departure, our first stop is at the Connemara Marble Jewelry Factory, and then continue on for a visit to a distillery and light lunch, before heading onto the motorway, on our way east across the country, to Trim. After checking in to our charming guesthouse, across the street from famous **Trim Castle** (location used for the movie *Brave Heart*), we take a tour of the castle (last tour 5:00), after which we enjoy our farewell dinner and say our reluctant, but official good-bye to Tim.



Trim Castle is the largest and one of the most important Norman military constructions in Ireland. Its well-deserved reputation as the king of Irish castles rests upon its imposing curtain walls enclosing over three acres, its fine gatehouses, and its enormous isolated keep - all of which project a visually striking image of foreboding might and great power.

Accommodation: Highfield Guesthouse – B, L, D

FRI APR 27 – NEW GRANGE (Last, but certainly not least)

After a leisurely breakfast, we drive the short distance to our final, and truly special sightseeing location, the **ancient archeological site of New Grange**. After our tour of the site, we'll lunch at a tea room in Meath, before heading south to Dublin, completing the circle, and our intimate visit to Ireland. There will be time to organize and prepare for our flight home tomorrow, and relax with a drink in the gracious hotel lobby and sitting area, before dinner in the hotel's informal restaurant.



Newgrange is a passage tomb in the Boyne valley, 20 miles north-west of Dublin. It was constructed 5000 years ago and pre-dates both the Pyramids and Stonehenge. For centuries, Newgrange was the heart of an advanced Bronze Age civilization inhabiting the valley of the Boyne. The tomb was constructed in alignment with the night sky and the heavens: on the morning of the winter solstice, the first rays of the sun flood the inner chamber of the tomb for several minutes.

Accommodation: Bewley's near the airport – B, L, D

SAT APR 28 – DEPART FOR HOME ☺

Time to say farewell to the magical **Shamrock Isle**. The complimentary hotel shuttle takes you to the airport for your flight home.

The Cost of this 14-Day Tour is \$4,800 per person double occupancy, plus airfare

- Travel Insurance is highly recommended, and supplied by Drifter Sister

Payment Schedule:

(Make checks out to **DRIFTER SISTER**)

Deposit: \$500 per person is due October 1, 2011, or upon sign-up after this date

Balance: Due February 15, 2012 (a separate invoice will be sent for this payment)

The Tour is ALL INCLUSIVE:

- All lodging as stipulated in the Itinerary*
- Entrance to All Activities as stipulated in the Itinerary*
- 3 Meals Daily, plus several wine/cheese receptions
- 1 glass wine (or other drink) with dinners
- Transportation in Luxury Mini Motor Coach
- Tim, our extra-special Failte-Certified Guide
- All Gratuities
- Transfers to/from Airport
- Catch The Wind cap and/or luggage strap

Extras, and Excluded

- Airfare to/from Dublin
- Optional Activities not on itinerary
- Between Meal Snacks, Irish Coffees, etc.
- Alcoholic Beverages that are not included with receptions and dinners
- Any personal expenses (i.e. telephone calls, laundry, etc.)
- Travel Insurance (highly recommended)

***NOTE:** Although every effort will be made to adhere to this itinerary, it is subject to tweaking as conditions dictate.

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