

***Incredible Ireland Tour
May 17 – 27, 2018***

Exceptionally beautiful, friendly, and welcoming Ireland is a land of incredible history. Saddled with the popular belief that its food is lacking, we've encountered the complete opposite experience. Over the last decade Ireland underwent a bit of a food revolution, and now, among foodies, is considered a 'must eat' destination.

Travel Day – Thursday May 17th

Travel Day

Some of our guests prefer to incorporate extra travel before or after the planned itinerary. If travelling only for this tour you should plan your departure for Thursday May 17th to arrive in Shannon in time for the transfer to our hotel in Kenmare and our first group dinner on Friday May 18th.

Day One – Friday May 18th

Arrival in Kenmare

Upon arrival in Shannon we will transfer to Kenmare and settle into Shelburne Lodge, our home for the next six nights. Shelburne Lodge is the original home of Lord Shelburne who commissioned the design of Kenmare in 1775. After some time to relax and freshen up we will host a welcome reception and tour briefing at the hotel followed by group dinner in a local restaurant.

Day Two – Saturday May 19th

Kenmare, Ruins and Ringfortes

Kenmare is a small town of only 2,200 inhabitants. Its Irish name, *An Neidin*, translates to “the little nest” – a fitting label for our home in this part of Ireland. During a morning orientation walk we will explore the ‘X’ shaped layout of this small town. In the late 19th to early 20th century the town became world renowned for its artisan lace making – a trade taught by the Poor Clare Convent in town.

In the afternoon, we will venture to a nearby castle ruin and ringfort complex and enjoy a group lunch at an excellent café in Cahersiveen. The evening is free for further exploration and music in Kenmare.

Day Three – Sunday May 20th

Cork and Kinsale

Viking settlers founded a trading port in Cork during the early tenth century however it was originally a monastic settlement dating to the sixth century. Now a foodie haven Cork is considered the *Capital of Food* in Ireland. A relatively compact city almost everything is within walking distance from the city center. A local guide will provide an overview of the city and its rich history. Free time is available for deeper exploration of its churches, museums, galleries, shops and pubs before we have our first cooking lesson (*read competition*) of the tour. Lunch is on our own in Cork.

In the afternoon, we will move to Kinsale and a cookery competition at Ballinacurra House. After a 40-minute demonstration covering 3 dishes our group will form teams. The first team to recreate the dishes to perfection wins! Our meal is what we prepare.

We pride ourselves on building unique travel adventures and seek to take advantage of serendipitous events. As such, all activities are subject to change and will be adapted to conditions and availability.

Day Four - Monday May 21st

Day in Dingle

Today we visit Dingle and enjoy a much slower pace than Cork. This is a town to immerse oneself in and enjoy its warmth and character. A foodie destination filled with artists and writers, and home to fishing trawlers focused on mackerel and herring. We will take in a cooking lesson at an outstanding local restaurant, visit the Dingle Distillery to learn about small batch artisan distillation of whiskey, gin, and vodka. Then finish our day with a lesson in crystal cutting with a master craftsman who originally apprenticed at Waterford.

After this full day, dinner is on our own upon return to Kenmare.

Day Five - Tuesday May 22nd

Killarney National Park

Killarney National Park is one of the crown jewels of the Emerald Isle. The distinctive combination of mountains, lakes, woods, and waterfalls give the area a special scenic beauty. With an abundance of oaks, yews, evergreens and a profusion of mosses and lichens this is where one would expect to see fairies and gnomes. The native red deer are unique in Ireland with a presence in the country since the last ice age.

Hikes of varying degrees of difficulty are available to suit guest preferences. Following a tour of the Muckross House and Gardens we will visit the nearby Kissane Sheep Farm for a fascinating demonstration of how sheep dogs help shepherds marshal the flocks where they need to go.

We will finish the day with a group dinner on the way back to our hotel in Kenmare.

Day Six - Wednesday May 23rd

Beautiful Bountiful Bantry

Today we venture to Bantry and the surrounding area. The warm Gulf Stream and mild, moist Atlantic breeze means semi-tropical plants flourish among the many private and public gardens in the area. Our first visit will be to Garnish Island, located in a sheltered harbor in Bantry Bay, world renowned for its gardens laid out in beautiful walks with stunning specimens of plants.

Next we'll visit the formal gardens of Bantry House. Developed by the second Earl of Bantry and his wife Mary, the gardens contain seven terraces and a set of one hundred steps built to appear to rise out of a fountain. The gardens are constantly tended and maintained and the family are in residence at the House.

There will be some free time to explore Bantry on our own before heading into the hills of picturesque Gougane Barra and a cooking lesson on the shores of a glacial lake. Lunch will be the product of our toil in the dining room of the quaint restaurant.

Day Seven - Thursday May 24th

Transfer to Dublin

Today we transfer to Dublin and enjoy a bit of the Irish countryside along the way. We will stop at the Rock of Cashel - The traditional seat of Munster Kings for several centuries before the Norman invasion. From there we will venture on to the medieval city of Kilkenny for lunch on our own and time for quick shopping or site seeing.

Upon arrival in Dublin we will settle into Number 31 - an architecturally designed boutique hotel centrally located within walking distance to the Temple Bar district, Dublin Castle, Trinity College, and St. Stephen's Green. After some time to relax and freshen up we will host a welcome reception and tour briefing at the hotel followed by group dinner in a local restaurant.

Day Eight - Friday May 25th

Dublin Exploration

Dublin is such an easy destination to explore we are limiting planned group activity to allow everyone time to discover the parts of city that best fit their interests. In the morning, we will visit Kilmainham Gaol. A jail may be an odd place to start a city tour, but it really distills the turbulent history of relations between Ireland and Great Britain and captures the major events that shaped the modern character of Ireland and its people.

Next a visit to the Guinness Brewery will begin in the original brewery (dating from 1876) where we will learn the process of making the iconic draught. The tour finishes in the stunning Gravity Bar where guests will enjoy a pint while taking in the 360° panoramic views of Dublin. Use this as an opportunity to plan your route to explore the city.

Free time is available all afternoon with lunch on our own. A group dinner is planned for the evening in a local restaurant.

Day Nine - Saturday May 26th

Dublin Free Time, Farewell

The morning of our final full day in Ireland will be free to explore and to complete some last-minute shopping or site seeing. In the afternoon, the group will attend a literary pub crawl - A two-hour walking tour led by a team of professional actors who follow in the footsteps of Joyce, Beckett, Wilde, and others as they sharpened their wit in the pubs of Dublin.

Be sure to take some time to pack and prep for a Sunday morning departure to the Dublin airport. In the evening, we will have our farewell dinner of traditional Irish fare.

Day Ten - Sunday May 27th

Return

Arrive at the Dublin airport with enough time to catch flights departing at 11:00am and later. If you prefer, you may make individual plans to extend your stay in Ireland.

The cost of this tour is \$3,495 per person double occupancy. Nonrefundable deposits of \$1,050 per person (checks payable to Domani Travel) are due by January 1st with balance due no later than March 15th.

There is a limit of twelve guests on this tour with slots filled on first come first serve basis.

Additional Information

The cost of the tour includes:

- Nine nights at our hotels (6 in Kenmare, 3 in Dublin)
- Breakfast and either Lunch or Dinner daily
- Entrance fees to garden tours, historic sites and activities listed in the itinerary
- Three cooking lessons
- Entrance fee to Muckross House and Gardens in Killarney National Park
- Guide in the historic city of Cork
- Crystal etching and lace-making demonstrations
- Group transfer to / from hotels and airports on days listed in itinerary
- Distillery and brewery visits
- Transportation for all activities listed in the itinerary

Travelers are responsible for making their own flight arrangements. While some or many of us may find ourselves on the same flights, the expectation is that we will all meet at the hotel in Kenmare around 6:00pm on May 18th. Further details will be available as our date of departure draws closer.

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