Journey Through the West

11 day self-drive tour

The West of Ireland and beautiful scenery go hand in hand. From Galway to Cork you’ll find towering mountain ranges, vast beaches of golden sands and sheer cliff faces. See all this and more with our Journey Through the West 11 Day (10 nights) Self-Drive Tour.

The journey begins in Galway where you can enjoy all that the Connemara Region has to offer and of course Galway City. After that, your route will take you to see the Burren in Clare, The Ring of Kerry, Blarney Castle in Cork, Waterford City, Kilkenny Castle and the famous Rock of Cashel in Tipperary - each region just as action packed as the last.

This tour will take you off the beaten track and allow you discover for yourself the true beauty of Ireland’s west coast. Explore and experience a whole new world as you journey through the west of Ireland.

Tour Highlights
- Kylemore Abbey
- Connemara Region
- The Burren Region
- Dingle Peninsula
- Waterford City
- The Rock of Cashel

Overnights for this Tour
- Galway for 2 nights
- Clare for 1 night
- Kerry for 2 nights
- Cork for 2 nights
- Waterford for 1 night
- Kilkenny for 1 night
- Clare for 1 night

What’s included in this Tour
- 10 nights accommodation based on your chosen package
- Full Irish breakfast each morning
- Car rental (automatic compact car, insurance and all taxes)

Itinerary in Brief
Day 1: Arrival in Shannon and Galway City
Day 2: The Connemara Region or the Aran Islands
Day 3: The burren and the Cliffs of Moher
Day 4: Limerick City and Adare
Day 5: The Dingle Peninsula
Day 6: The Ring of Kerry
Day 7: Cork and the Blarney Stone
Day 8: Waterford City and Lismore
Day 9: Kilkenny City
Day 10: Tipperary and the Rock of Cashel
Day 11: Departure from Shannon
Day 1: Arrival in Shannon and Galway City

This tour will bring up along the west coast where you’ll fall for the charm of Ireland’s western regions. From arresting scenery to culturally rich cities and from ancient monuments to quaint rural villages, the west has it all and this is your chance to experience it for yourself.

Arriving in Shannon airport, your first call of action is to collect your rental car and from there it’s off north to Galway, where you’ll be spending your first two days in Ireland. Don’t worry you’ll be coming back to Clare, but not before exploring the wonderful city of Galway and the Connemara Region. Along the way you’ll have your first experience with the beautiful Irish countryside. Ireland is really quite a small place so you’ll never be on the road for too long, but even the trips from one point to another will be filled with excitement as stunning landscapes zoom by your car window, giving you a taster of what’s in store.

The rich heritage links of the west of Ireland are instantly evident and a prime example of this is the Galway Irish Crystal Heritage Centre. The master crystal craftsmen have refined their process to perfection and continue to create inspired pieces of this world-renowned brand on the shores of Galway Bay. Taking from Irish folklore and the exceptional scenery which surround their day to day lives this craft has evolved over the centuries but still maintained what makes it so special. Their entire range is on show at the heritage centre if you’re looking to own your very own piece of Galway.

Arriving at Galway City, the cultural heart of Ireland, you’ll find folklore and traditional roots in their abundance. Craft shops nestled in side streets; stunning architecture with medieval undertones and the ever-welcoming presence of the locals make any trip to Galway special.

Here you will be spoilt for choice as you try to decide which Irish music Pub to visit next. Tig Colli, Taaffes, The Quays, An Pucán, The Crane… and the list goes on. As with most areas, some sessions are scheduled, whereas others are completely impromptu, taking you off guard and putting an instant smile on your face and a spring in your step.

Galway has a whole host of other attractions as well. The Galway City Museum contains two major exhibitions. One of these takes a look at the rich heritage of Galway whilst the other displays works of art from prominent Irish artists from the second half of the 20th Century. Then there’s the Spanish Arch, Galway Cathedral, Thoor Ballylee (where the Yeats family once resided). These are just a snippet of the fantastic variety of sights and sounds in Galway City, which will leave you longing for more.

For a larger scale traditional Irish music treat, the Salthill Hotel (approx. 10 minutes drive from Galway City) regularly hosts their Trad on the Prom showcase. Featured Riverdance soloist Mairin Fahy leads the pack in this evening of authentic Irish song and dance.

Whilst in June Galway hosts its annual Galway Sessions festival. Every year a full week of events is planned with a parade, big name musicians performing and living up to its name – plenty of sessions. All this awaits you and more in this fantastic city. You’ll be spending the night in Galway, where the refreshing country air will take you quickly into a soft slumber.

Optional tours/activities/entertainment

- Eyre Square
- The Claddagh Region
Day 2: The Connemara Region or the Aran Islands

From Galway you’re in the perfect location to go on a Day Tour of the Inis Mór (meaning big Island). Inis Mór is one of three islands (Inis Mór, Inis Meann and Inis Oírr) off the coast of Galway, which are known collectively as the Aran Islands.

The islands are a haven of Irish cultures. As a result, Irish music is still as popular as ever on Inis Mór. Visitors regularly walk in on spur-of-the-moment music sessions in local pubs, and for those who arrive on the island during the summer months you can catch The Ragus International Irish Music, Song and Dance Show in Halla Rónáin. This hour long show will have you on the edge of your seats with hard shoe dancing and haunting Sean Nós airs (an old style of Irish song).

Inis Mór is also one of the last main strongholds of the Irish language and Gaeilge (Irish) is the first language on the island, but all the locals are also bi-lingual. The Inis Mór Heritage centre provides an in-depth look at the island’s history. Native tour guides, mini-buses and bicycles are available for hire, or should you prefer a more traditional trip, pony and trap hire is also available.

If taking to the water and shipping out to the Aran Islands for the day doesn’t take your fancy, there’s still plenty to see in the west. Just to the north-west of Galway you’ll find the Connemara region and some of the most spectacular scenery in Ireland. Kylemore Abbey should definitely be on the top of your list of things to see so take the Sky Road to catch some magnificent views along the way from the Inish Turk and Turbot islands just off the west coast to 12 Bens as they dominate the skyline. Around this area you’ll also find Clifden, a beautiful town, which is ideal for taking a break and just enjoying the countryside.

Kylemore Abbey is open all year round and welcomes many visitors to the estate every year. Within the grounds you’ll find The Abbey, the Gothic Church, Craft Shop, Pottery Studio, a restaurant and Victorian Walled Gardens, not to mention a selection of lake and woodland walks. The abbey dates back to 1867 and has an enthralling story behind its creation. Intended initially as a romantic gift, since its construction the Abbey has been the centre of much intrigue including: royal visits, tragedy and even acting as a safe haven in the midst of some of Ireland’s troubled years.

Connemara is also home to the Connemara National Park, a vast and scenic area, which covers some 2957 hectares. In the park you’ll find, heaths, woodlands, ancient megalithic court tombs and during the summer - a visitor centre, which hosts an exhibition on the beautiful landscapes of Connemara.

Also within the Connemara region, you’ll find the Maam Valley. This picturesque town land lies under the shadow of the Maamturk Mountains and is home to an array of sites with architectural importance and Ireland’s only Fjord – Killary Fjord. A trip to Connemara is the perfect way to see some of Ireland’s finest scenery before heading back to your accommodation in Galway or experience the city one last time before you head south.

Optional tours/activities/entertainment
- Connemara Smokehouse
- Connemara Marble Factory
- Killary Cruises
Day 3: The Burren and the Cliffs of Moher

Over the next 24 hours you will be treated to some of the grandest natural treats in the West of Ireland. Bags packed and leaving Galway behind you it’s time to explore Clare and the Burren region. From Galway, you’ll be heading back south, taking a beautiful coastal route back to Clare.

The Burren is a truly unique area of limestone rock covered mountains, valleys and streams, each as awe-inspiring as the last. There is a beautiful contrast between the natural flora and fauna and the ancient man made megalithic tombs, which predate the Roman and even Egyptian civilisations. Before you trek out into the unknown, you can visit the Burren Visitors Centre in nearby Kilfenora, where you’ll get an introduction to the many secrets of the captivating area.

The Burren Smokehouse is just a ten minute drive down the road from Kilfenora so drop in and sample some of their acclaimed smoked salmon, see the original kiln used at the smokehouse and browse their range of products, which include various crafts and delicacies from the Clare region.

From the Burren to the Cliffs of Moher your trip today is packed full of scenic eye-candy. Atop the cliff, the panoramic views of the Aran Islands, The Twelve Pins, The Maum Turk Mountains and Loop Head will take your breath away. The visitors’ centre, which has been aptly named Atlantic Edge, can be found close to the cliffs within an underground building. Various studies of the cliffs are on display here focusing on four main themes: Ocean, Rock, Nature and Man.

While you’re in the area, why not pop into Doolin Cave. Less than ten minutes drive up the coast from the Cliffs of Moher you’ll find this fascinating cave, which is home to the longest stalactite in the northern hemisphere, measuring 6.54m (20 feet).

Also along the coast is Lahinch. If you’re up for a spot of water sports or just a stroll on the beach, a visit to Lahinch is a great way to take in Clare’s beautiful coastline. Every year, budding surfers visit Lahinch’s golden sands to catch some waves, so whether you’re there to join in or just spectate, there’s definitely fun to be had. The town also boasts two golf courses (Lahinch Championship Course and Lahinch Castle Course). On both you’ll find yourself teeing off with a backdrop of stretching coastal scenery, so if you have the time a quick round is a must.

Continuing to explore Clare you’ll find Bunratty Castle – a 15th Century castle, which is the acclaimed setting for the 19th Century Bunratty Folk Park. Built in 1425 and restored to its former medieval glory in 1954, Bunratty Castle is the ultimate medieval fortress in Ireland. Within the castle hang many 15th and 16th Century tapestries, furnishings and works of art, which really create a sense of authenticity. You will feel transported as you wander around the vast castle halls and for a truly unique experience you can also attend the Medieval Banquet - a night of rich food and entertainment.

The Bunratty Folk Park will see you surrounded by 19th Century living. You’ll be interacting with all the locals - the Bean an Tí (Woman of the House), the Policeman, and Schoolteacher as you discover the ins and outs of their daily routines. As you walk from house to house you’ll be immersed in a wonderful bubble of sights sounds and senses, making this a truly enchanting experience for all ages.
Weary from your travels you may want to pop into Durty Nelly’s (just beside the castle) for a pick me up. The history and heritage surrounding Durty Nelly and her public house date back to 1620 and include: a toll bridge, an Irish wolfhound and a miracle cure. For years travellers have enjoyed the hospitality and warmth of this one of a kind pub and now with live Irish music seven days a week, you can’t help but be lured into Nelly’s cosy welcome.

As the entertainment dies down for the night it’s off to bed. You’ll be staying in Clare that night, so get rested and look forward to the trip ahead as you continue towards Kerry.

Optional tours/activities/entertainment
- Caherconnell Stone Fort
- Ailwee Cave

Day 4: Limerick City and Adare

On the way towards the southwest you’ll be passing through Limerick city and the village of Adare. Limerick City is a bustling urban delight situated at the mouth of the River Shannon (Ireland’s longest river). King John’s Castle is one of Limerick’s most famed monuments and rightfully so. Nestled in the heart of the city on its very own island home, this fantastic 13th Century structure hosts a range of exhibitions and castle tours, which breathe life into the esteemed history of the castle. King John, after whom the castle was named, was once “Lord of Ireland”. He used the building for minting his own coins and today, visitors can receive their very own souvenir coin as a reminder of their visit.

All around the city of Limerick you’ll find a fascinating combination of the old and the new. Georgian streetscapes combine with modern buildings creating a strange mix but one that really works. A stroll along the newly completed boardwalk treats visitors to stunning views of the north bank of the River Shannon, whilst walking down the marina you can stare out along its south bank.

For a glimpse at what Limerick has to offer in terms of culture, drop into the Hunt Museum. One of a kind art pieces and antiques from the Neolithic age to the 20th Century make up the exhibitions of this magnificent museum. Roman, Greek and Egyptian civilisations all make an appearance and even works of art by Yeats, Renoir and Picasso.

In Limerick you’ll find a whole host of attractions and an eclectic selection of shops and restaurants. Time will slip away as you experience the charm of this wonderful city and before you know it, it will be time to head on to Adare as you edge ever closer to Kerry.

Adare is the proud bearer of the title: “Ireland’s prettiest village”. This wonderfully picturesque rural village does its part to keep the Irish traditions alive. In Adare you’re never far from a friendly smile or a hopping music session, so even if you’re only visiting for the pleasant scenery you’ll leave with the warmth of true Irish charm.

The best place to start your visit to Adare is its heritage centre. Whatever your question, the staff are there to point you in the right direction. The heritage centre is also home to an insightful exhibition, which delves into the village’s enthralling past. Wandering around this quintessential rural village, you’ll feel magically transported into a simpler time.
The local’s up beat charm is a breath of fresh air, winning you over and willing you to extend your stay in this peaceful and beautiful village.

But Kerry still lies ahead, so it’s back on the road as you push further south, making your way towards Killarney. You’ll find your accommodation in this wonderful town, which makes a perfect base for touring both the Dingle Peninsula and the Ring of Kerry.

**Optional tours/activities/entertainment**
- Foynes Flying Boat Museum
- Frank McCourt Museum

**Day 5: The Dingle Peninsula**

Your journey through the south west of Ireland gets underway today. Enjoy your full Irish breakfast, the fresh Kerry air with a relaxing jaunt around Killarney town and think of the spectacular scenery that lies in wait, from the coastal beauty of the Dingle Peninsula to the astonishing variety and captivating landscapes, which make up the Ring of Kerry.

It’s off to Tralee first - the perfect launching pad for a coastal drive around the Dingle Peninsula and a fascinating town in its own right, which is well worth giving the time to.

Tralee is known the world over for the Rose of Tralee festival. This annual event has become a large scale celebration and culminates every year with the crowning of a new “Rose”. Beautiful women from all over the world come home to Ireland and Tralee to put their pride on display – their love of their Irish roots. Although this festival may only come once a year, the sentiment of the gathering – that of cultural pride – is kept alive all year round by Siamsa Tire. Based in Kerry, Siamsa Tire is Ireland’s National Folk Theatre. Their performances draw from every aspect of traditional Irish culture, using language, music, song and dance to tell their story.

Tara is full of heritage sights and attractions with historical significance and if you’re intent on seeing them all you can’t go wrong with the Tralee Heritage trail. Along this wonderful tour you will be brought to all the main areas of interest that the town has to offer. It’s the perfect way to enjoy Tralee to its fullest before setting off to explore the Dingle Peninsula.

Stretching out into the Atlantic Ocean, the Dingle Peninsula is a large mass of land, which measure around 48km (30 mi). The spine of the peninsula is lined with mountains, including Slieve Mish and Mount Brandon (Ireland’s second highest peak), whilst the coast is comprised of sheer cliff faces and vast beaches.

The scenery in this area is truly stunning, but you’ll also find a plethora of intriguing centuries old monuments vying for your attention along the way. On the edge of a towering cliff face stands Dunbeg Fort – an elaborate stone structure, which dates back to the Iron Age. Whilst the Gallarus Oratory provides further mystery. Comprised of precisely stacked stones, this structure is completely watertight despite the lack of mortar being used.

From here you can take the Slea Head Drive, where you’ll find even more of that rugged and natural scenery that the Peninsula is so famous for. The stunning views along this circular drive include Inishtooskert, the most northern of the Blasket Islands off the coast of Kerry.
Also known as “the Sleeping Giant” looking out at this great island, past Kerry’s Coastline is truly a magnificent experience. Following the drive will bring you around full circle and back to Dingle town.

While you’re in the vicinity, it would be a shame not to visit its most famous local – Fungi the Dingle Dolphin. Fungi has been roaming the waters near Dingle’s coast since 1984. Fungi, befriending fishermen, surfers and swimmers alike. Boat trips are available if you’re interested in getting up close and personal with the friendly dolphin or you could take a trip up Ballymacad Doyle Hill and admire the wonderful views from afar.

As you’re winding down that evening, give your taste buds a chilly albeit delicious treat with Killarney’s famous Murphy’s Ice Cream. Established by brothers Sean and Kieran in 2000 you can try some of the weird and wonderful flavours, which make their ice creams truly special. The brothers are constantly playing with flavours to come up with new and interesting combinations so you’re sure to find something new to tickle your taste buds. Dingle is a truly wondrous place and you may even find yourself staying for dinner in one of its restaurants or pottering around the streets before getting back on the road.

Arriving back at your accommodation for your second night in Kerry, with visions of your days findings still buzzing around your head, let the quiet calm of the south west lull you into a deep sleep as you dream of the Ring of Kerry and the surprises it might bring.

**Optional tours/activities/entertainment**
- Fahan Beehive Huts
- Blennerville Windmill
- Skellig Experience
- Slea Head Famine Cottages and Animal Park

**Day 6: The Ring of Kerry**

Your second day in Kerry is sure to be just as action packed as the first. It’s advisable to give up a whole day to exploring the Ring of Kerry because of the vast amount of things to do and see in the area, so luckily you have plenty of time to explore.

Simply put, the Ring of Kerry is home to some of the most amazing scenery in Ireland. Also known as the Iveragh Peninsula, this area is famed for its stunning views and the sheer amount of attractions that you’ll find located all within this single scenic drive.

All of these elements combine to make the Ring of Kerry one of the most magical and intimate places in Ireland. The more you explore the more you will come to understand why this wondrous place inspires so many. So without further adieu… the Ring of Kerry awaits.

Journey to Moll’s Gap and gaze upon the majestic MacGillycuddy’s Reeks (Ireland’s tallest mountain range). Stare out from Ladies View as the infinite horizon runs into the distance. Or make a visit to Rossbeigh’s golden sands, a beach with immersive surrounding panoramic views.

Nestled in the heart of the Gap of Dunloe you’ll stumble up a quaint cottage adorned with the name Kate Kearney. Kate Kearney’s Cottage was where the legendary Irish beauty of the same name once lived. Here you can switch to the preferred mode of transport for exploring the gap of Dunloe – a pony and trap. A traditional trip like this is always a treat and makes the magical experience of the Ring of Kerry all the more exciting. Later on in the day if you find yourself hankering for some traditional Irish food and music, you can’t go wrong with Kate’s. This fantastic venue does its very best to keep her spirit alive with dancers and musicians that compliment their superb traditional grub.
Next it's back to Killarney but this time you'll be venturing into the Killarney National Park, where you'll find even more expansive scenery and beautiful landscapes. Whether you're walking or decide to hire a bike or horse and trap the beauty of this lush demesne is truly epic. It's also a great place to have a picnic if you need to get your energy up.

From Killarney National Park you'll be able to enjoy the scenic delights that are the Lakes of Killarney. From the shores of these three lakes: Lough Leane, Muckross Lake and the Upper Lake you can enjoy views of Muckross House, Muckross Abbey and the 15th Century Ross Castle.

Muckross House and Gardens is definitely worth a peek during your visit to the park. This restored Victorian house dates back to 1843 and comprises a massive 65 rooms. A walk around the estate’s gardens will reveal a sunken garden, stream garden, Arboretum and much more. Summer visitors are in for a colourful treat as blossoming red and pink Rhododendrons accentuate the sophisticated charm of the gardens.

After a long day delving into the many treasures of the Ring of Kerry, drop by the nearby town of Kenmare ("The Jewel on the Ring of Kerry"). Strolling along the pathways of this heritage town you'll find colourful craft shops and over 30 restaurants lining the streets tempting you with their very own local produce. It's a beautiful little spot and the perfect place to wind down that evening before heading to your Cork accommodation for the night.

Optional tours/activities/entertainment
- Listowel Castle
- Derrynane House
- Tangney’s Jaunting Cars
- Muckross Friary

Day 7: Cork City and the Blarney Stone

With the break of another day comes the promise of another region to be explored. Today you will venture into the heart of Cork.

First it's time to get up close and personal with one of Ireland's most loved visitor attractions – the Blarney Stone. There are many variations as to how the stone was endowed with such power, but all agree that kissing the stone will award you with the gift of the gab. Year after year visitors come to Blarney to do just that, but once you're there you'll realise that there is so much more to Blarney that its famous stone.

The castle itself, which was built nearly six hundred years ago by Cormac Mac Carthy – one of Ireland's greatest chieftains – is home to a whole array of attractions that will really give you something to talk about with your new found gift of the gab. The Wising Steps, The Battlement View, Badgers Cave and Rock Close are just a snippet of the many wonders for you to explore at Blarney.

Blarney is also well known for its woollen mills. Now Ireland’s largest gift store, Blarney Woollen Mills stocks the best of the best in quality Irish gifts from Waterford Crystal, Belleek China and Aran Sweaters to Celtic Jewellery; and Irish linen and lace. It's the perfect one stop shop for all things Irish so if you've been looking for somewhere to stock up on souvenirs, now is your chance.
After taking in all the splendours Blarney has to offer, it’s off to Cork City – a culturally diverse city with a wealth of attractions. The history of the city can be dated back to the 7th Century when it was founded by St. Finbarr. You’ll find excellent examples of centuries old architecture around every corner including St. Anne’s Church (complete with its 300 year tower and home to the Shandon Bells) and St. Finbarr’s Cathedral.

The imposing castle like structure of Cork City Gaol is a must see for any visitor to Cork. Back in the 19th Century, this building acted as a prison and through a unique exhibition experience, visitors can peer into the past and see what life was like in Cork from both sides of the prison walls. Also within the confines of Cork City Gaol Is the Radio Museum – home to an impressive collection of archived reels from Ireland’s national broadcaster as well as a restored 6CK Radio Broadcasting Studio.

If you’d prefer to get out in the open, the Fota Wildlife Park might be just the thing for you. Located in Cork harbour and a mere fifteen minute drive outside the city, this attraction is well worth the short trip. No two trips to Fota are the same. Free roaming animals populate the park and are sure to surprise, thrill and bring a smile to your face. The park is also home to some highly endangered species such as the European bison.

Before you make the return trip to your accommodation for the night, swing by Kinsale or Cobh. These seaside towns have got just the trick whether you’re looking to eat out or just take a stroll along Cork’s golden sands. As another action packed day in Ireland comes to an end it’s back to your comfortable accommodation for a sound night's sleep.

Optional tours/activities/entertainment
- Garnish Island
- Cobh Titanic Trail
- Charles Fort

Day 8: Waterford and Lismore

It’s another new day and of course, that means another delicious Irish breakfast to fuel you on your journey around Ireland. Once you’re packed up and are ready to embark from Cork, your route will take you to the coast and to Waterford City.

The heritage town of Lismore is roughly an hour’s drive from Waterford and is the perfect midway point for a stop off on your way from Cork. Rows of welcoming shop fronts and cafes line the streets of this pleasant rural town. Here you’ll find Lismore Castle and St. Carthage’s Cathedral, two of the town’s main attractions. Back in 636 AD a monastery founded by St. Carthage once stood on this very site and today you’ll find the Cathedral, a monument to the saint who dwelt here so long ago. Set atop a hill and with stunning greenery on all sides, this majestic building is well worth the visit.

Just down the road is Lismore Castle. This recently renovated structure dates back to 1172 and was built by Prince John of England. You’ll be treated to something really special in this magnificent castle, whether you explore the expansive cultivated gardens of the estate or head inside to the west wing, which houses a contemporary gallery space.

Make sure to drop into Lismore’s heritage centre before you hit the road again. Here you’ll find a craft shop that has everything from Irish knitwear to recipes, so if you’ve been looking for a gift or souvenir, you’re bound to find something that takes your fancy here.
The friendly and knowledgeable staff who run the centre are also on hand to fill you in on the various walking trails in the area and the history of the town.

Moving on up the coast, you’ll finally reach the city of Waterford. Dating back to 941 AD, Waterford is the oldest of Ireland’s cities. Each brick is loaded with historical importance or a secret long forgotten. The city has strong links with the Vikings as well as the historical figure Strongbow, whose arranged marriage to Aoife (daughter of Dermot Mac Murrough – King of Leinster) changed the course of Irish history forever.

History aside, for any visitor to Waterford the most obvious starting point is the House of Waterford Crystal - home to the elegant crystal ware, which is known the world over for its beauty and craftsmanship. Taking the factory tour you’ll get an up close and personal look at the various stages of the process, which results in these intricate works of art. Watch the craftsmen at work as they demonstrate an art form, which they have perfected since the companies humble origins dating back to 1783.

After a short meander along Waterford’s quays, taking in the panoramic views of a port where merchant ships once unloaded their cargo, you’ll come across Reginald’s Tower. This structure is one of Waterford’s trademark buildings – a round tower, housing a Viking exhibition. The displays feature many intriguing artefacts dating back to the Viking era in Waterford’s long and celebrated past.

Jumping forward through time and into Georgian Waterford, the Bishop’s Palace covers the history of Waterford from 1700 to 1970. Here you can really get a feel for what it was like in Waterford during that time. In fact, outside of Dublin, Waterford boasts the most impressive displays of 18th Century architecture in all of Ireland. The Bishop’s Palace is also home to the oldest piece of Waterford Crystal in the world – a decanter made in the 1780’s.

That night you’ll be staying in Waterford, so make sure to check out the local restaurants and pubs for a spot of evening entertainment, before slipping under the covers dreaming about the wonders that await you on the rest of your journey.

Optional tours/activities/entertainment
- Mount Congreve Gardens
- Viking Triangle

**Day 9: Kilkenny City**

From Waterford to Kilkenny, you’ll be back on the road again. You’ll only be on the road for roughly 40 minutes, but the rolling countryside views will ensure the journey flies by. Arriving at Kilkenny you’ll find a culturally rich city that has plenty to offer and keep you entertained.

Kilkenny is often referred to as the medieval capital of Ireland and after visiting Kilkenny Castle you’ll know why. Dating back to the 18th Century this intricate structure boasts a variety of contrasting styles of architecture.

You will find the structure towering over the “high town” of Kilkenny City and a crossing on the river Nore, daring you to come and explore its many secrets. Room by room, the Castle Tour delves into the castle’s history punctuated along the way with a whole host of unique paintings and furnishings.

The Smithwick’s Brewery tour in Kilkenny invites visitors to see the working factory of this most famous ale. Smithwick’s trade secrets have been passed down over 300 years, originating with John Smithwick.

His is an inspirational story, fraught with hardship, courage and an unwavering determination. John was left an orphan after the Irish rebellion, but undeterred by his situation, he strove to make something of himself, and today what started out as a local family brewery is still going strong. Also included in the tour is a visit to St. Francis Abbey, which dates back to the 12th Century and can be found on the same site as the brewery.
If you're looking to take a break from urban Kilkenny, Kilfane Glen and Waterfall is a short drive from Kilkenny (30 minutes drive), and it's the perfect place to relax. Let the serenity of this 18th Century romantic era garden wash away your troubles. Or if you're looking for a more natural attraction Dunmore Caves are again a short trip away from Kilkenny (45 minutes drive), complete with a visitor centre to compliment the quiet beauty of the caves themselves.

Visitors to Jerpoint Park can experience estate country pursuits in a unique heritage setting from pony and trap rides, sheep dog demonstrations, fishing for salmon and trout on the River Nore, horse riding across open countryside with breath taking views, before soaking up the regal atmosphere of Belmore House Tea Rooms and sampling the delicious homemade delights.

Back in the city there is a number of walking tours and trails from the Tynan Walking tour (an adventure of all things medieval in Kilkenny) to the Castlemorris Wood Walk (just one of a whole range of scenic walks available to visitors of the area).

Marrying the idea of traditional Irish music and a walking trail is the Kilkenny Traditional Irish Music Trail. Once more, you will be hosted by local musicians as they bring you from session to session in Kilkenny's most popular and lively traditional pubs. The two hour tour will see you learning about the various traditional instruments, listening to local renditions of Kilkenny folklore and basking in the energetic atmosphere. If you prefer the D.I.Y. feel of finding sessions there are plenty of pubs to choose from in the area such as Matt the Miller's and Murphy's, which host sessions on a weekly basis.

It's your second last night in Ireland after all so why not liven things up and enjoy Kilkenny's buzzing night life before hitting the hay.

Optional tours/activities/entertainment
- Jerpoint Abbey
- Kilkenny Old Jail and Courthouse
- St. Canice’s Cathedral and Roundtower

Day 10: Tipperary and the Rock of Cashel

Day ten of your tour and the last full day before you fly back home. It's time to make your way back to Clare for your last overnight in Ireland, but that doesn't mean you can't fit in some more sightseeing before you get there.

Reaching Cashel there's really only one place to start – The Rock of Cashel. This towering structure, which was once the seat of the high kings of Munster, is truly a sight to behold. Comprised of various 12th and 13th Century buildings the Rock of Cashel boasts a mixture of both Celtic and medieval architecture and once witnessed it's really not hard to understand why this monument is the pride of the people of Cashel.

You can wander around at your own pace taking the Town Trail, ensuring you get to see every single one of Cashel's fantastic attractions.

Along the trail you'll find the 15th Century Kearney’s Castle, the extensive book collection of Bolton Library, the heart shaped medieval City Wall and a Folk Village containing an assortment of artefacts as well as reconstructed thatched cottages harking back to times gone by in Cashel.

If you're feeling peckish Cashel has a fine selection of restaurants and cafes, so whether you're just looking
for a snack or something a bit more substantial you’re sure to find somewhere that suits your taste. Chez Hans is a fantastic little spot. The restaurant is set in a converted church and the superb food and décor are perfectly matched.

Drop into the Cashel Heritage Centre for a spot of retail therapy and to pick up a reminder of your visit to Cashel. Their craft shop sells a whole variety of trinkets or pop into the Cashel Woollen Mills and snuggle up in matching sweaters.

A short trip from Cashel town will bring you to Glengarra Woods – the perfect setting for a quiet walk. Follow the Burncourt River down through the forest, admire the rich red sandstone, which speckles the earth, or gaze at the majestic Californian Redwoods in these serene surroundings.

Finally you’ll be making your way back to Clare. If you missed out on Durty Nelly’s or the Bunratty Banquet on your first visit to Clare, why not pop in on your last night in Ireland. You’ll drink up the atmosphere that night and often these nights provide some of the most stand out moments. Revel in the craic and ceol, embracing that same passion, which has been intertwined with Irish culture for eons, before a well deserved night’s rest in Clare.

Optional tours/activities/entertainment
- Roscrea Castle
- Cahir Castle

Day 11: Departure from Dublin Airport
It has been quite a journey. You came to see the west and that is just what you did. You’ve stood in awe of Kylemore Abbey, made your way around the mystifyingly beautiful Burren, explored the bustling cities of the west and taken the ring of Kerry in your stride. Eleven days may have been too short a stay, but the experiences which you will take home with you will last a lifetime.

Call us, Toll-Free today

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