Overnatings for this Tour

- Dublin for 1 night
- Galway for 2 nights
- Killarney for 2 nights
- Cork for 1 night
- Dublin for 1 night

What’s included in this Tour

- 7 nights accommodation
- Full Irish breakfast each morning
- Car rental (automatic compact car, insurance and all taxes)
Day 1: Arrival in Dublin and Dublin City Tour

You’re in the capital of Ireland and this veritable melting pot of culture and tradition is a joy to explore. Busy streets packed with Dubliners from all over the world show that the “Céad Míle Fáilte” (“a hundred thousand welcomes”) is still strong here.

After collecting your car at the airport it’s off to your hotel to check in. You can leave your car here as you’ll be ideally located to start touring the city. It can be hard to know where to start, but luckily there are plenty of ways to see the best of Dublin. The Dublin Bus Hop On Hop Off tours are the perfect way to make sure you fit in as much of this bustling city as possible. They’ll bring you to all the major attractions and you can come and go as you please.

One attraction on the Hop On Hop Off route and something, which you definitely can’t miss is Trinity College Dublin. This is one of Dublin’s premier visitor attractions and not without reason. Within the grounds of Ireland’s first ever college (established in 1592) you’ll find stunning architecture, The Douglas Hyde Gallery, The Oscar Wilde centre, “The Book of Kells” and arguably the “greenest grass in Ireland”.

For the art lover Dublin has a whole host of museums and art galleries from the Chester Beatty Library in Dublin Castle to the National Gallery or the Irish Museum of Modern Art. What’s more, entry is free, so there’s no excuse not to sample some of the more artistic delights our “Fair City” has to offer. As the day draws on you might find yourself hankering for that pint of Guinness, but fear not because the Guinness Storehouse has got you covered, and also featured on the Hop On Hop Off Bus tour if you opt for that route. During the tour you’ll discover all the history behind this famous brand and get an insight into the magic behind the “black stuff”.

Taking a break from sight-seeing, Grafton St. (Dublin’s favourite shopping district) has everything you need to relax. Visit Bewley’s Café and enjoy an Irish coffee in a favourite venue of many of Dublin’s literary greats or Venture down Wicklow St. to find quaint bistros and the Powerscourt Shopping Centre - with the perfect combination of a stunning setting and a wide range of boutiques.

The sun may begin to dim as it tucks in for the night, but that doesn’t mean your fun has to end there. In fact for the full Dublin experience you have to witness the thrilling ambience of its nightlife. So it’s off to Temple Bar - often referred to as Dublin’s cultural hub. As you walk around the narrow cobbled streets (a feature which has been preserved from medieval times), lilting Irish melodies will waft through the air beckoning you into one of the many Irish pubs with regular sessions.

One of our favourite Dublin pubs is the Brazen Head (Ireland’s oldest pub), where there are regular traditional Irish nights as well as a Food, Fairies and Folktale evening, which combines a delicious meal with a truly Irish storytelling session. There’s so much to do within this thriving city that your day here will fly by and before you know it, it will be time to set out on the road west to discover Galway City.

Optional tours/activities/entertainment
- The Phoenix Park
- Croke Park and the GAA Museum
Day 2: Galway via Clonmacnoise

Your full Irish breakfast will have you fuelled and ready to go in the morning. If you missed anything on your first day you may decide to prolong your departure from Dublin. Heading to Galway directly may only take you a couple of hours, but travelling along the scenic route there’s a number of different attractions to stop off at, not to mention the added bonus of luscious landscapes, vast rolling pastures and warm country villages along the route.

Clonmacnoise, located in county Offaly is an early Christian site which was founded by St. Ciarán in the mid 6th Century. Here you’ll walk through the ruins of a cathedral and seven churches (10th – 13th Century), gaze up at two imposing round towers; and admire the intricate stone sculptures that are high crosses.

Just a short 35 minutes drive away you’ll find Kilbeggan Distillery in Westmeath. This is Ireland’s last remaining example of a small pot distillery. It may have shut down in 1957, but today visitors are invited to watch the restored machinery at work and learn the secrets behind Kilbeggan Distillery’s 200 years of triple distilled whiskey.

The west of Ireland is steeped with rich heritage and for proof of this you need only visit the Galway Irish Crystal Heritage Centre. On the shores of Galway Bay, the master craftsmen of Galway Crystal continue to produce beautifully detailed crystal, which has been long known as one of the world’s favourite Irish brands. Gathering inspiration from the lush countryside that surrounds them and the folklore and traditions passed down through generations in Galway. At the heritage centre the whole range of crystal ware is available if you want a reminder to bring home.

Finally you’ll arrive at Galway City and the cultural heart of Ireland. This charming city is brimming with heritage, culture and folklore. Weaving through the side streets browsing the hand crafted wares on offer, you’ll be in awe of the rich architecture and medieval nuances. Friendly faces greet you around every corner and a magical spirit lingers in the air. Within the City you can check out the Galway City Museum, which contains two major exhibitions. One explores the rich heritage of Galway and the other displays works of art from Irish artists from the second half of the 20th Century. Add to this the Spanish Arch, Galway Cathedral and you’ll start to get an idea of just how varied a place Galway City is.

If you fancy some evening entertainment, you’ll be pleased to discover Galway’s strong ties with traditional Irish music. There must be something in the water, because there are an uncanny number of extremely talented musicians, dancers and singers roaming the Connemara/Galway region. The Tig Colli pub in Galway City is one of many favourites for impromptu sessions or Trad on the Prom, which is just a stones throw away in Salthill, provides the traditional Irish experience on a larger scale, with veteran Riverdance performers lending their talents. While you’re there take a walk along the promenade, enjoy the views, and don’t forget to kick the wall once you get to the end – a tradition, which some say brings good luck.

For now it’s back to your accommodation for the night.

Optional tours/activities/entertainment
- Eyre Square
Day 3: The Connemara Region

Now that you’ve seen Galway City, it’s time to get yourself acquainted with some of Ireland’s most spectacular scenery and the Connemara region. Take the Sky Road as you cruise towards Kylemore Abbey and you’ll be astounded by your exquisite natural surroundings – breath taking views of the islands Inishturk and Turbot along the coastline; the moss covered walls of the Old D’Arcy Castle and the towering twelve Bens jutting into the skyline behind the town of Clifden. Clifden is itself a jewel in the scenic delight that is Connemara. You’ll find it nestled amidst rugged peaks and elegant coastlines making it well worth the visit, if only for a jaunt or a spot of lunch in a picturesque setting.

Continuing on your expedition around Connemara, at the foot of the Druchruach Mountain (529m/1,736ft), in the very heart of the Connemara Mountains, you’ll find Kylemore Abbey & Walled Gardens. An aura of romance surrounds the estate. Explore the illustrious and spectacular grounds, which were originally built in 1867 by Mitchell and Margaret Henry as a means to fulfil their wish to someday live in Connemara (which they visited numerous times after their honeymoon there). Ramble through the same beautiful grounds, which stand as a testament to the couples’ love for each other and the beauty of the region; and discover its rich history involving tragedy, gambling debts, royal visits and engineering initiatives.

In the Connemara region you’ll also find Connemara National Park – a captivating expanse that covers some 2957 hectares (that’s roughly the same surface area as 7,304 American football fields). You’ll find mountains, heaths and woodlands in this scenic domain, alongside megalithic court tombs, a 19th Century graveyard and Tobar Mweelin - a well which was Kylemore Castles main source of water in the 1800’s.

Discover the flora and fauna of this spectacular park or venture up to the heights of the mountains with the four walking trails on offer. Learn about this vast and beautiful area in the Connemara Landscape exhibition or just breathe in the nature and relax in one of the parks many picnic areas. Time will stand still as you enjoy this immersive expanse.

From here you can visit Maam Valley. In the shadow of the Maamturk Mountains, Maam is a quaint wooded townland which is beside some great fishing lakes. Dotted around the area you’ll find many pre-historic and early historic sites and Killary Fjord – the only one in existence in Ireland. The Western Way is the prefect way to soak up all the area has to offer as this walking trail takes you from the southern end of the Maam Valley right up to the ancient site of Mámean. Around this area you’ll also find “Leaba Pháirc” (Patrick’s bed), a rock recess and “Tobar Pháraic” (Patrick’s well), which mark a place of pilgrimage.

It’s back to Galway again for the night. If you haven’t already enjoyed the traditional Irish music this City has to offer, now will be your last chance or maybe stop in one of the numerous seafood restaurants and find out why Galway is the host to the Annual Oyster Festival. As the sun sets on your third day in Ireland, approaching the halfway point of your adventure, have a thought back to all you’ve experienced in such a short time as you rest up in your hotel once again.

Optional tours/activities/entertainment
• Connemara Smokehouse
Day 4: The Cliffs of Moher and the Burren Region

Today begins your journey south towards Kerry, but as always there’s plenty to see and do along the way. Passing through Clare you can stop and visit the Burren Region - a truly unique area of limestone rock covers mountains, valleys and stream, 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. 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 Burren.

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 ft).

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).

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.

As you make your way towards Killarney the quaint village of Adare is definitely worth a visit. Hailed as “Ireland’s prettiest village” you will be astounded at how much there is to do in this most picturesque of rural settings. The locals have a strong tradition of Irish music and live music can be found in the various pubs around the village on different nights of the week and during the summer months. Back on the road, you’ll be settling down in Killarney, in Kerry for the night. The Ring of Kerry with all its secrets and beauty awaits you after a good night of sleep.

Optional tours/activities/entertainment
- Caherconnell Stone Fort
Day 5: The Ring of Kerry

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.

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 talent 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 tradition Irish food and music, you can’t go wrong with Kate’s.

With your accommodation in the heart of Killarney it would be a shame not to explore the town itself - a fine example of a rural Irish town land with cheerful locals going about their day to day. From here you’ll also be a short trip from 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 this beauty of this lush demesne is truly epic.

From Killarney National Park you’ll also 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.

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 is the perfect way to wind down after a long days touring. Once again that night, it’s back to your accommodation for another sound night’s sleep before your get back on the road again.

Optional tours/activities/entertainment
- Listowel Castle
- Tangney’s Jaunting Cars
Day 6: Cork City and the Blarney Stone

Cork is next up on your route and if you find yourself in the “Rebel County” you can’t not give Blarney Castle a visit and while you’re there, get up close and personal with one of Ireland’s most loved visitor attractions – the Blarney Stone. There are many variations on the story of how the stone was endowed with such power, but all agree that kissing the stone will award you with the gift of the gab.

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 newfound gift of the gab. The Wishing 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.

The Titanic Trail Cobh (Queenstown) in Cork, is a fascinating guided tour that explores the town of Cobh in Cork Harbour, which was the last port of call of the RMS Titanic. This Irish heritage walking tour takes visitors through the historic town of Cobh where the buildings, streets and piers have not changed since the Titanic’s sinking nearly 100 years ago.

Once you’re happy you’ve explored all that Cork has to offer you can retire to your overnight accommodation. Tomorrow you will set out on the final leg of your journey taking in Cashel and Kilkenny before finally arriving back in Dublin.

Optional tours/activities/entertainment

- The Jameson Experience
Day 7: Dublin via Cashel and Kilkenny

Dublin may not be far off, but there's still much more to see before you arrive back in the Capital. The town of Cashel in Co. Tipperary is your next port of call - home to the iconic Rock of Cashel and bursting with historical sites.

The Rock of Cashel is a towering complex of 12th and 13th Century buildings featuring a combination of Celtic and medieval architecture. Formally known as St. Patrick's Rock or The Rock of Kings, this was a site long held in revere as the seat of the High Kings of Munster. In the town of Cashel you’ll also find a Georgian Cathedral, a 21st Century library and the Bolton Library, which holds the quirky claim to fame of housing the smallest book in Ireland.

With the Rock of Cashel fading in the distance you’ll be on your way to Kilkenny (the medieval capital of Ireland). Historic buildings lie in wait around every corner and culture thrives through the many artisans’ workshops operating from the city. If you missed out on the Blarney Woollen Mills in Cork, fear not, because the Kilkenny Design Craft Centre stocks an equally impressive array of Irish handcrafted gifts. The centre also prides itself on showcasing emerging talent from the Irish craft world, proving that the creativeness of the Irish nation has never waned.

You'll find the centre right beside Kilkenny Castle, in the building which once acted as the stables for this medieval monument. Kilkenny Castle has over eighteen centuries worth of history encased in its walls, all of which will be divulged to you over the course of the castle tour. The Smithwick’s Brewery Tour in St. Francis Abbey Brewery is another highlight in this exciting and varied city, where you can enjoy the perfect blend of historical wonders and new age creativity.

Another possible stop off along the route back to Dublin is the Irish National Stud in Kildare. The National Stud was established in 1946 and holds a key role in the development and promotion of Irish bloodstock. This is the only stud farm in Ireland, which is open to the public and here you’ll also find the Japanese Gardens (famed as one of the most famous Japanese Gardens in Europe), Saint Fiachra’s Garden (complete with lakeside and woodland walks) and the Horse Museum (a modern art exhibition, which breathes life into the Sport of Kings). Swing by the Kildare Village boutique outlet centre if there are any last minute gifts you want to pick up and grab a bite to eat while you’re at it.

Arriving back in Dublin that evening, you may even have time to do another spot of sight-seeing and fit in anything you might have missed on your first day in the city. And of course, if you're looking to kick back, there's an endless list of pubs that have regular live music sessions. If you missed it on your first night in Dublin you could check your The Arlington Hotel's Irish night. This dinner and show offer serves up a combination of excellent food, top class hospitality and traditional entertainment. It's sure to leave an impression with lilting Irish tunes floating around your head that night and easing you to sleep.

Optional tours/activities/entertainment
- Kilfane Glen and Waterfall
- Kilkenny Traditional Irish Music Trail
Day 8: Departure from Dublin Airport

Unfortunately the time will eventually come to say goodbye to the Emerald Isle. From west to east you’ll have seen some of the most spectacular scenery that Ireland has to offer, explored charming cities and quaint town lands. The experiences you’ve gathered over the last 8 days will stay with you for a lifetime – a constant reminder of your home away from home, always a mere thought away, ready to put a smile on your face.

It’s back to Dublin Airport to drop off your rental car and catch your departing flight back home. Make sure you leave yourself with plenty of time to get to Dublin Airport and make your way through security. It never hurts to spend a few minutes the night before planning out exactly how you’re going to get there. And just like that you’ll be winging your way back home. Every trip to Ireland is an adventure in its own right, and you’re sure to have plenty of stories to regale your friends and family with when you arrive back.

And remember, we’re always here to lend a hand, so if you have any question, no matter how big or small, get in touch and one of our Ireland experts will be on hand to help.

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