

Machiavelli Group

Tour Itinerary and Highlights

Tuesday: Arrival in Dublin, Ireland

Welcome to Ireland! You arrive in Dublin and check in to your first night's accommodation*. If you have time, sample some of Dublin's unique bars and restaurants. Then off to bed with you for a good night's sleep, for tomorrow begins what we hope will be one of your best experiences yielding a lifetime of happy memories!

* We will contact you prior to your departure date with your Dublin hotel details.

Wednesday: Day 1 – Dublin City

Your free day to experience the wealth of culture in Ireland's capital city with over a thousands years of history. Check out some of the excellent tours of the city and get oriented to Dublin's ancient streets. Visit some of the many historical places and the inspiration for literary giants like Joyce, Yeats, Shaw and Becket. Lounge in the parks, walk the streets, shop, and dine!

Thursday: Day 2 – Dublin to Dunmore East

Meet your guide and begin your wonderful and exciting travels in Ireland. Leaving Dublin and heading south, we drive through the enchanting "Wicklow Mountains." Early rebels evaded British troops and monks founded centers learning and worship over a thousand years ago. See hidden lakes, mountainous peat bogs and beautiful, charming towns along the way.

After a mid-day break for lunch, we head further south through Counties Carlow and Kilkenny with a chance to see an ancient stone dolmen (~6000 years old) and stone crosses from the 7th Century! Onwards to our final stop for the night in the lovely fishing town of Dunmore East, along the coast of County Waterford. The night is yours to relax, eat, drink, and be merry!

Day 2 Highlights: Beautiful Wicklow Mountains, Ancient Stone Dolmen, 7th Century Stone Crosses, Dunmore East

Friday: Day 3 – Dunmore East to Kinsale

Leaving Dunmore East, our trip takes us along Ireland's southern shores. The "copper coastline" known for its winding roads and tranquil inlets is flanked by lush pastureland and distant mountains. Moving further west lays the seaside town of Ardmore and one of the finest examples of an Irish Round Tower. Built by pious monks, medieval towers like this were constructed over a thousand years ago.

We then move onto the culinary coastal town of Kinsale and for our overnight stay. Known for its many restaurants and excellent cuisine, this colorful town is also a popular sailing destination as well as an important historic center. After checking into our night's accommodation, you have time to lunch and explore the town. Later you'll have the option to discover the town some more or head out to the star-shaped "Charles Fort" to see its impressive 17th Century ramparts and bastions. Enjoy the lively bars, try one of the many excellent restaurants, and perhaps sing along to a song or two.

Day 3 Highlights: 9th Century Round Tower, Charles Fort, Kinsale

Saturday: Day 4 – Kinsale to Dingle

A magnificent day as we drive through some of the most visually stunning parts of Ireland. In the morning, we set out to see an ancient stone circle. Continuing on northwards, we take in views of Bantry Bay, and the unusually tropical town of Glengarriff. We then follow an amazing route to County Kerry over the rugged Healy Mountains, and down to Kenmare, a lovely town filled with colorful buildings and plenty of good places to eat.

After lunch, the route takes us to the MacGillycuddy's Reeks, the largest mountains in Ireland, and home to the spectacular Killarney National Park. A photographer's dream...you may well wish for an extra pair of eyes! While in Killarney we'll visit Muckross House, a stately manor set amidst the beauty of the park. Today the principal rooms are furnished in period style and portray the elegant lifestyle of the 19th Century landowning class.

The views keep coming along coastal roads and sandy beaches flanked by green hills as we make our way to the Dingle peninsula and tonight's stop in Dingle town. This magical and festive town is full of quaint shops, lively bars, and great traditional music. It also features a host of good restaurants, and you'll have fun discovering bars that double as cobblers or hardware stores. We stay here for a second night so cozy in and relax.

Day 4 Highlights: Stunning Counties Cork and Kerry, Drombeg Stone Circle, Killarney National Park, Muckross House, Dingle Town

Sunday: Day 5 – Dingle

Your free day! There are many fun and interesting things do in and around the town such as biking, golfing, shopping, fishing, horseback riding, and hill walking. Take a walk to see Dingle's wild mascot, "Fungi the Dolphin" who is almost always to be found in the mouth of the harbor making new friends and showing off.

Alternatively you could simply find a nice bar or coffee shop to while away the hours and strike up a conversation with some of the interesting and friendly characters to be found in Dingle. Enjoy another great night in this enchanting and fun town!

Day 5 Highlights: Gaelic Culture, Dingle Peninsula...Free Time to Explore!

Monday: Day 6 – Dingle

After a nice easy morning, we head out for a leisurely drive around the end of the Dingle peninsula. The Sleah Head Drive is renowned for its stunning beauty and many fascinating archaeological sites. The allure of the coastal route has attracted people from far and wide with several well known movies shot on location here including "Ryan's Daughter" and "Far and Away." Back in Dingle you can see the star's names immortalized on Dingle's walk of fame outside Dick Mack's bar and shoe repair store. One more great night out and another chance to mingle with Dingle's many local characters!

Day 6 Highlights: Sleah Head Drive...Free Time to Explore!

Tuesday: Day 7 – Dingle to Ballyvaughan

We depart Dingle and head north toward Ireland's largest river, the Shannon. We'll take a fun ferry ride across the river to County Clare, and head for sea side town of Lahinch for lunch. While there you can watch surfers and horse riders mingle on Lahinch's beautiful beach where an American bomber had a forced landing in WWII. After some tasty food we'll head on to one Europe's most spectacular sights, the "Cliffs of Moher." Looming over 700 feet above the smashing force of the Atlantic Ocean, these awe inspiring cliffs are simply not to be missed!

After the cliffs, a short tour of the Burren to explain its unique geology and botanical diversity. Then onto Ballyvaughan for this evening's overnight stay. This small and tranquil town is surrounded by the solemn beauty of the exposed limestone hills of the Burren. Relax for the evening or take a walk along the sea or the many quiet country roads.

Day 7 Highlights: The River Shannon, Cliffs of Moher, The Burren

Wednesday: Day 8 – Ballyvaughan to Inis Mor

We depart Ballyvaughan and make our way northwards passing Dunguaire Castle. Surrounded by a moat this fifteenth century stronghold fires the imagination of times past and romantic ideals.

We then take a ferry to our stop for the night on the island of "Inis Mor." The largest in a group of three known as the Aran Islands, its people go about their day with a determination needed to thrive in the harsh Atlantic conditions. These people speak primarily Gaelic and you can pick up some Gaelic phrases during your stay.

The island's beautiful scenery and solitude have attracted some of Ireland's finest writers whose works have immortalized its way of life. See its labyrinth of high stone walls stretching all over the island, and the amazing Dún Aengus; an ancient stone fort, dating to pre-Christian times. Perched atop a sheer cliff edge above the crashing Atlantic Ocean this is a truly memorable experience!

Day 8 Highlights: Dun Aengus, Overnight on Inis Mor

Thursday: Day 9 – Inis Mor to Westport

We catch the midday ferry to Rossaveel in County Galway and make our way to Connemara National Park, an area of outstanding natural beauty. Along the way we'll visit Kylemore Abbey a magnificent 19th Century mansion in a fairytale setting. We then head to County Mayo and Ireland's famous fjord, "Killary Harbor." This dark and tranquil inlet was the setting for several movies over the years, set mainly in the small town of Leenaun.

Continuing on we come to Clew Bay at the base of "Croagh Patrick," the mountain where Saint Patrick is said to have cast the snakes out of Ireland! Our overnight town is charming Westport. Have a great meal and enjoy the spirit of this wonderful town.

Day 9 Highlights: Connemara, Kylemore Abbey, Croagh Patrick, Westport

Friday: Day 10 – Westport

Your free day, perhaps a hike up Croagh Patrick for astonishing views or kick back and relax in Westport. You can even take a stroll to the splendid Westport House and its extensive grounds. Either way, your evening can be filled with great shopping, pubs, restaurants, and traditional music.

Day 10 Highlights: Westport town...free time to explore!

Saturday: Day 11 – Westport to Dublin

Leaving Westport our route takes us through Ireland's north midlands full of rolling pastureland and drumlins left over from the last Ice Age. We'll lunch in the bustling town of Carrick-on-Shannon set along the banks of Ireland's longest river body, the River Shannon.

Moving further east and onto one of Ireland's best kept secrets...the Loughcrew Cairns--a range of ancient tombs rarely visited by foreigners. These are some of the oldest structures on the face of the Earth and have fascinating carvings showing alignments to the sun. These ancient passage tombs were spiritual centers for the ancient Irish and are older than the Egyptian pyramids.

Alas we head back to Dublin and your last night in the Emerald Isle. Enjoy a meal in one of the many fine restaurants, walk the busy streets and savor your final hours and enjoy a lifetime of memories. Slan Beo!! (Gaelic for "Goodbye, live life!")

Day 7 Highlights: Loughcrew Cairns, Dublin

** While it is our intention to adhere to the route described above, there is a certain amount of flexibility built into the itinerary and on occasion, it may be necessary, or desirable, to make alterations. The information in the itinerary has been compiled with care and is provided in good faith. However, it is subject to change, and does not form part of the contract between the client and Inroads Ireland.

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