Small Group escorted tour exploring Historic Ireland

21 Apr 20 to 08 May 20

Tour exploring Historic Ireland

This small group tour of Ireland explores the country’s history and culture. Nowhere else in the world is so much tragedy, exaltation, hope, and disappointment quite so compressed as they are in Ireland. Nowhere else are these historic trials, tribulations, and triumphs such a part of contemporary events and so integrated via
song and words into daily life. In Ireland, the past is the present and the present is the past. In this small group tour, Treasures of Ireland, we step out into the evocative land itself, and absorb the poignant history and culture that the country has to offer.

This small group escorted tour exploring historic Ireland is a popular program for the couple or the single traveller. It is designed especially for seniors travellers seeking to move beyond the tourist track. In this escorted tour, our experienced local guides share their own stories and knowledge of Ireland with you.

This tour begins in Dublin and then travels clockwise around Ireland to finish in Northern Ireland’s city of Belfast.

**Fabulous scenery**

The fabulous landscape and the visit to the Arran Isles will create memories that will last well beyond your trip. These memories are paired with the locals stories heard and enjoyed over a meal or drink. Senior travellers joining us on this tour will enjoy the opportunity to spend time at each destination. This time is spent learning and sharing in a country that has experienced one of the largest historic migrations of people, and one that touches so many today.

**Highlights of the Small Group escorted tour exploring Historic Ireland.**

Highlights of our tour of Ireland include a stop in Belfast to learn the history of the area, including a visit to the famous political murals. We also visit the Harland Wolff shipyard. During the tour, we also enjoy performances at the Abbey Theatre in Dublin and the National
Folk Theatre (Siamsa Tire) in Tralee. We experience a walking tour of Powerscourt Manor in the Wicklow Mountains, taking in its glorious gardens and grounds.

This small group escorted tour exploring historic Ireland is an 18 day program. This tour is paired with our Scottish Isles program, should you wish to continue your travels with us afterwards. We also offer a short tour version of Historic Ireland.

If you are a senior traveller with a thirst for knowledge and an open inquisitive mind, we would love to have you on board for our next departure. For more details, click the 'Top 5' or 'Itinerary' buttons above! If you’re keen to experience this tour, please call or send an email. Or, to book, simply fill in the form on the right hand side of this page.

We also have an article on the History of Ireland and Ireland’s Gems, which you may find helpful.

**Tour Notes**

- Group size limited to 16.
- Itineraries may change if flight schedules, site availability, and other inclusions have to be amended prior to departure.

**Top 5**

1. Tour a country so steeped in history that relics from its antiquity are part of the everyday landscape.
2. Visit Powerscourt Manor in the Wicklow Mountains to see its glorious gardens and the picturesque house of Kylemore in Connemara.
3. Enjoy performances at the Abbey Theatre in Dublin and the National Folk Theatre (Siamsa Tire) in Tralee.

4. Spend 2 nights on the Aran Island of Inis M’hor with its ancient pilgrimage churches and the prehistoric promontory fort of Dun Aonghus.

5. Visit Belfast to learn the history of the area and see the famous political murals, as well as the Harland Wolff shipyard.

**Itinerary**

**Day 1**

**Locations:** Dublin

**Overview:** Upon arrival in Dublin, the capital of Ireland, we will arrive individually at the Camden Court Hotel and meet for an introductory welcome dinner. (D)

**Accommodation:** 4 nights at Camden Court Hotel or similar

**Day 2**

**Locations:** Dublin

**Overview:** During the next 2 days we will enjoy guided tours of the city of poets, playwrights, and brewing. At Trinity College we will meet a Trinity graduate for a tour of the grounds and explanation of the university. Here we will also view the ancient Book of Kells, one of Ireland’s most treasured works. In the afternoon we are treated to an expert-led literary walking tour of Tara, site of the High Kings of Ireland. After dinner, we will experience a lecture on the history of the country at the hotel. (B,D)

**Accommodation:** Camden Court Hotel or similar
Day 3

Locations: Dublin

Overview: After breakfast, we will enjoy a guided tour of Dublin. Highlights include St. Patrick’s Cathedral and Dublin Castle. After some free time for lunch, we will take a literary walking tour of the city, then enjoy dinner at a local restaurant, before seeing a performance at the Abbey Theatre. (B,D)

Accommodation: Camden Court Hotel or similar

Day 4

Locations: Dublin

Overview: Today we will drive south to County Wicklow to visit Powerscourt House and Demesne (domain) at Enniskerry. Where Powerscourt House stands today there was once a 13th century medieval castle, owned by the Le Power Family from which "Powerscourt" takes its name. Powerful Irish families including the O’Tooles and the Fitzgeralds battled for possession of the castle and its lands over the succeeding centuries. Powerscourt remains the archetypical example of the “Big House” of Ireland. The Palladian-style manor overlooks immense terraced gardens which are also in the Italianate style. The estate now belongs to the Slazenger family of tennis racquet fame. Light lunch is included today. Our excursion continues to Glendalough, or the “Glen of Two Lakes.” Founded in the 7th century AD by St. Kevin, this site is regarded as one of the most important monastic sites in Ireland. The evening is at leisure to explore the local fare. (B,L)

Accommodation: Camden Court Hotel or similar
Day 5

Locations: Cork

Overview: En route to Cork in County Kerry, we visit the famous Rock of Cashel - an outcrop of limestone dominated by a group of buildings: the 12th century round tower, a Romanesque chapel, the 13th century cathedral, the 15th century castle and a restored Hall of Vicars Choral. We then continue to Blarney Castle in County Cork where we can (should you wish!) kiss the world-renowned Blarney Stone at the top of the Castle. Tradition dictates that the gift of eloquence will be bestowed on all those who kiss the Stone! Dinner tonight is at our hotel. (B,D)

Accommodation: Jurys Inn Hotel or similar

Day 6

Locations: Co.Kerry

Overview: Accompanied by a local guide and storyteller, we depart on an excursion around the Ring of Kerry, often considered the world’s single most picturesque drive. Running through an area of outstanding natural beauty, the circuit takes in the towns of Killorglin, Glenbeigh, Cahersiveen, Waterville, Caherdaniel and Sneem. We return to the hotel for an early dinner before attending a performance of Celtic Steps, a spectacular evening of Irish song and dance, at the Killarney Racecourse. (B,D)

Accommodation: Ballyroe Heights Hotel or similar

Day 7

Locations: Co.Kerry

Overview: Today we continue our journey to the picturesque town
of Dingle and the Dingle Peninsula, exploring the area’s rich archaeological heritage and unique culture, including the beehive huts, Celtic ‘Ringforts’ which have stood for over 4,000 years, and the tiny Gallarus Oratory. In Dunquin (Dun Chaoin) we stop for free time and a visit to the Blasket Centre where we discover the history, culture, language and unique literary achievements of the island writers. We return to the hotel for dinner. (B,D)

**Accommodation:** Ballyroe Heights Hotel or similar

**Day 8**

**Locations:** Galway

**Overview:** En route to County Galway we experience a guided visit to Bunratty Castle followed by free time for lunch and exploration of the Castle’s Folk Park to learn about rural life in Ireland during the last century. Our transfer continues via The Burren, a vast limestone plateau featuring the “Poulnabrone Dolmen” and the Cliffs of Moher, one of Ireland’s West Coast’s most dramatic landforms. Dinner is included tonight in the hotel. (B,D)

**Accommodation:** Loughrea Hotel & Spa or similar

**Day 9**

**Locations:** Inishmore

**Overview:** Early morning we will transfer to Rossaveal for our ferry to Inis Mor, the largest of the Aran Islands, to enjoy an overnight stay. A local hisatorian will welcome us to this unique place – a remnant of authentic Gaelic civilisation, where Christian ruins stand side by side with remarkable Pagan relics, and where the Irish language and Irish traditions live on in daily life. The afternoon and evening is free
Day 10

Locations: Inishmore

Overview: After breakfast we meet our local guide and tour Inishmore, as well as exploring the spectacular Bronze Age promontory fort of Dun Aengus. The afternoon is at leisure and dinner will be at the a local pub this evening. (B,D)

Accommodation: Kilronan Hotel or similar

Day 11

Locations: Galway

Overview: After breakfast, we return to the mainland. On arrival we make our way to Galway. On our way we stop to we visit Kylemore Abbey and its delightful, extensive gardens where lunch is included. Nestled on the lake shore in the heart of the Connemara Mountains, and originally built in 1867 as a romantic gift, Kylemore Abbey is regarded as one of Ireland’s most romantic buildings. We then continue travelling to Connemara National Park. A broad peninsula between Killary Harbour and Kilkieran Bay in the west of County Galway, Connemara has long been regarded as the real emerald of Ireland. Connemara National Park covers some 2,957 hectares of scenic mountains, expanses of bogs, heaths, grasslands and woodlands. Much of the present National Park lands formed part of the Kylemore Abbey Estate and the Letterfrack Industrial School, the remainder having been owned by private individuals. The southern part of the Park was at one time owned by Richard (Humanity Dick) Martin who helped to form the Society for the Prevention of Cruelty
to Animals during the early 19th century. (B,L)

**Accommodation:** Connacht Hotel or similar

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**Day 12**

**Locations:** Galway

**Overview:** We begin our day with an expert led walk of Galway city during which we will see Galway Cathedral, the Spanish Arch and part of the original city wall. Later, there will be free time for lunch and to explore Galway city in the afternoon. Dinner this evening will be at the hotel (B,D)

**Accommodation:** Connacht Hotel or similar

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**Day 13**

**Locations:** Donegal

**Overview:** We depart for County Donegal, undoubtedly one of Ireland’s most untouched and ruggedly beautiful counties. Donegal’s striking landscape has remained relatively unaffected by the passage of time. In Sligo, we will be joined by a local expert, for a lecture at the Yeats Society in Sligo. We continue our journey to Drumcliffe, the final resting place of the famed Irish poet, WB Yeats, under the majestic mountain of Ben Bulben. We arrive in Donegal late afternoon. (B)

**Accommodation:** White Hotel Group or similar

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**Day 14**

**Locations:** Donegal

**Overview:** Today, we enjoy a heritage walk of Donegal town and a guided visit of the 15th century Donegal Castle. We also visit Magee
Tweed where we witness a weaving demonstration. We then travel to Slieve League, home to the tallest sea cliffs in Europe and then drive back to our hotel via the spectacular Glengesh Pass. (B)

**Accommodation:** White Hotel Group or similar

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**Day 15**

**Locations:** Derry

**Overview:** We transfer to Derry and enjoy an expertly-led historical guided walking tour of Derry’s walls. There will be some free time for our own exploration this afternoon. Derry-Londonderry made history in July 2010 when it was awarded the inaugural UK City of Culture designation for 2013. The journey towards City of Culture is both compelling and ambitious and will help unlock creativity and generate new connections to shape the new story of our city’s vibrant future. The City has been rapidly developing its tourism offer and its exceptional assets include the most complete walled city in Europe, its peace making history and the lively youth culture make it a “cultural powerhouse.” (B)

**Accommodation:** Ramada DaVincis Hotel or similar

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**Day 16**

**Locations:** Belfast

**Overview:** En route to Belfast via the North Coast, we will visit the famous Bushmills Whisky Distillery, the world’s oldest licensed whisky distillery and then continue on to the spectacular formations of the Giant’s Causeway, a UNESCO World Heritage site. A natural amphitheatre made up of hexagonal shaped basalt rocks. We learn about this sight during a guided tour by a National Trust expert. Our
final destination is Belfast where we stay 2 nights. (B)

**Accommodation:** Ramada Encore Hotel or similar

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**Day 17**

**Locations:** Belfast

**Overview:** After breakfast we enjoy a lecture from a local expert followed by some free time. In the afternoon we depart for our Black Taxi tour of Belfast, visiting the colourful and evocative murals of West Belfast. It has been said that a city can be defined by its taxi drivers and nowhere is this truer than in Belfast. We visit the Titanic Quarter of Belfast & the Titanic Experience Exhibition. We will enjoy a farewell dinner at a local restaurant. (B,D)

**Accommodation:** Ramada Encore Hotel or similar

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**Day 18**

**Locations:** Belfast

**Overview:** Our tour will conclude today after breakfast. (B)

**Accommodation:**

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**Inclusions / Exclusions**

**What’s included in our Tour**

- 17 nights of hotel accommodation.
- 17 breakfasts, 2 lunches, and 10 dinners.
- Transport in comfortable and modern coaches.
- Services of a tour leader for the duration of tour.
- Ferry services.
- All excursions, entrance fees, and local guides.
- Service charges and gratuities.

**What’s not included in our Tour**
• Comprehensive travel insurance.
• International airfares and departure taxes.
• Items of a personal nature such as telephone calls and laundry.

Please do not hesitate to contact us with any requests for further information about this tour or any others offered by Odyssey Travel.