



An Irish Vacation of a Lifetime: Dublin, Western Ireland & Dromoland Castle 7 Nights



Summary

The cries of patriots and the songs of poets fill the air, the smells of delicious Irish fare and the strains of Celtic music wafts from the halls of boisterous pubs, and the dazzling landscapes will fill your eyes and brighten your heart. With all of this, and so much more, no wonder so many shout “Ireland Forever.”

Overview

Interest: solo - couple – honeymooners

Level of Comfort: 5/5

Minimum # of passengers: None

Maximum # of passengers: None

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Day 1: Dublin

Upon arrival at Dublin's international airport, meet greet and transfer to hotel. From its wide walkways to the Georgian townhouses lining the streets, Dublin is one of the best cities on Earth to explore by foot. Members of the literati will be particularly taken by the bronze plaques throughout Dublin referencing eponymous passages found in Joyce's *Ulysses*, while less high-brow perambulations can be based on nothing more than a leisurely crawl from one pub to the next. From the verdant squares at Merrion and St. Stephens Green to the hustle and bustle of shoppers on Henry and Grafton Street, Dublin has offerings for all sorts of travellers, along with warm and welcoming people that will make you feel like a true Dubliner even before your first pint.

Day 2: Dublin

More than half of the people who live in Ireland call Dublin home, and your daylong tour of this incredible capital will be sure to show you why. Start at O'Connell Street, Dublin's largest thoroughfare, and take a peak at the General Post Office sporting a bronze figure of the legendary figure Cuchulainn and bullet holes from the failed Easter Uprising of 1916 before crossing the O'Connell Bridge over the River Liffey. A short jaunt south takes you to the gates of Trinity College, home to the famous Book of Kells, a ninth century illuminated copy of the Gospels that is perhaps the most beautiful manuscript in history. Those interested in contemporary Irish society will surely be interested in Leinster House, seat of the Irish Parliament, as well as the National Gallery, both of which can be found on Kildare Street.

Further afield are monuments dedicated to Ireland's ancient and more recent past. Check out Dublin Castle, the seat of the ruling British government for more than four centuries, and the nearby Chester Beatty Library, filled with rare books and manuscripts from cultures across the globe. You can also tour Saint Patrick's Cathedral, the national church of Ireland, and Christ Church, the seat of the Bishop of Dublin and the heart of Irish Catholicism.

To the north of the river lies Phoenix Park, comprising almost two thousand acres and housing the largest obelisk in Europe, a towering 115-foot white Latin cross commemorating Pope John Paul II's visit to Ireland in 1979, and animals of all types, from those who live in the wonderful Dublin Zoo to the herd of fallow deer ranging the park grounds. And no trip to Dublin would be complete without exploring the Saint James' Gate, the former brewery and current storehouse of Dublin's most well-known export, Guinness Stout. Self-guided tours of the facility will teach you about the finer points of making Guinness and the drink's history, and admission comes with a free, perfectly poured pint you can enjoy at the top of the Storehouse, with a view over Dublin and the Wicklow Mountains that will take your breath away.

Day 3: Waterford County

This morning features a robust Irish breakfast before a scenic drive through Ireland's south and into Waterford County on the shores of the Celtic Sea. The rolling Wicklow Mountains offer a backdrop of green for your foray into the more remote areas of Ireland, and the beautiful landscape holds pleasures hundreds of years old in the folds of its topography. The valley at Glendalough is a particularly popular spot, not only for its incredible panorama, but also as the site of a sixth-century monastic settlement that was founded by St. Kevin, a hermitic priest. Walk through the only monastic gateway remaining in Ireland before touring this ancient and venerable campus, paying particular attention to the Round Tower and St. Kevin's Church, two of the oldest buildings on site. Your voyage continues south to the city of Waterford, one of the first cities in Ireland and the home to some of the finest crystal in the world. You then head west to the iconic city of Killarney in County Kerry, the undisputed heart of southwest Ireland. Kerry sports what might be termed the "greatest hits" of Irish splendor, from the pounding Atlantic waves on the shores the Dingle Peninsula, to the soaring peak of Mount Brandon that crowns the region. You'll also be impressed by the many islands just off shore, particularly Skellig Michael and the remains of the medieval

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monastery that still clings to its rocky soil, now inscribed as a UNESCO World Heritage Site. Tonight sees you back to Killarney and the luxurious accommodations that await you there.

Day 4: Ring of Kerry - Macgillycuddy's Reeks

Today will be sure to dazzle your eyes and awaken your dreams as you explore the unimaginable scene at the famous Ring of Kerry. Roam from surf to summit and everywhere in between as you follow the ridges of Macgillycuddy's Reeks, Ireland's most impressive mountain range and the home of Carruntuohill, the tallest mountain on the island. From this vantage in the clouds you can see the full expanse of the miraculous Coomloughra Valley and into the Atlantic beyond, beyond the western-most point in Ireland. Stop for a picture at the Ladies View before heading to the high-points of human's contributions to this marvelous scene, including Muckross House, the Tudor mansion that played host to Queen Victoria in 1861; Ross Castle, a stirring fifteenth century edifice that sits on the banks of the placid Lough Leane; and Derrynane House, renowned as the ancestral home of the Irish popular hero Daniel O'Connell. After passing through a series of delightful Irish towns in the area, you return to Killarney for another exciting night in this one-of-a-kind city.

Day 5: the Atlantic Coast

Today you leave southwest Ireland to venture into the rugged beauty of the ancient province of Connacht. Stop first in Adare in County Limerick, an Irish Heritage Town nestled on the River Maigue and built around the expansive Dunraven estate. Traditional Irish architecture combines with thatched-roofed houses to give the streets an enchanting juxtaposition of cultures, and the impressive Trinitarian and Franciscan Abbeys, as well as the remains of Desmond Castle, are not to be missed. Visitors will find a number of cozy and inviting cafes, restaurants and pubs that will sate their hunger and offer a chance to interact with the amiable locals.

The drive then winds through southern County Clare until reaching Ireland's most awesome geographic feature, the Cliffs of Moher. Forming the western edge of Ireland, climbing up to 700 feet above the surface of the pounding Atlantic Ocean, the Cliffs are perhaps the most iconic edge of land in the world, providing the inspiration for poems, songs, and even movies. The visitor center at the Cliffs was lauded by the Association of Heritage Interpretation as "one of the best facilities that the judges had ever seen," and a ferry service allows visitors the chance to gaze at the awesome heights from the beach below. Acrophobes will want to steer clear of O'Brien's Tower near the middle of the cliffs, as they reach their highest point near this outpost built in the nineteenth century to impress visitors of the fairer sex.

Your final destination for the day is the port town of Galway, the "City of the Tribes" and one of the centerpieces of the Irish west. Tour this dazzling city and its finer sites, including Galway Cathedral, Eyre Square, Claddagh and Galway's Long Walk. Your accommodations while in Galway are the pinnacle of luxury and are sure to leave your every want satisfied.

Day 6: Connemara

Today you witness the unparalleled handsomeness of the ancient stronghold of Connemara, the heartbeat of Ireland's Celtic past. This remote region is filled with the colors of Irish fields clothed in sunlight from over the sea and the soothing sibilance and lyrical cadence of Irish Gaelic. The legendary Twelve Bens survey the region and its rough coast, as well as the impressive edifices at Kylemore Abbey, a impeccably preserved home of Benedictine nuns who originally escaped from the besieged town of Ypres during World War I.

The Abby itself is housed in what was originally Kylemore Castle, built by a wealthy doctor from London and sold by the Duke and Duchess of Manchester as payment for their extensive gambling debts, and now exists as a largely self-sustaining estate featuring excellent tours of the impeccable Victorian Gardens, one of the finest walled complexes in Europe. Tonight sees you back in Galway, where you'll want to visit one of the local pubs for some of the best impromptu performances of traditional Irish music you could ever hope to hear.

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Day 7: Galway - Dromoland Castle

Your final evening in Ireland is sure to be one you'll never forget, as you head south from Galway to the magnificent estate at Dromoland Castle. This remarkable building, more than 500 years old and once the seat of the esteemed Earls of Thomond, now houses one of the finest hotels in Ireland and the frequent host to international embassies and leaders from around the globe. Dromoland's grounds stretch over 350 acres and includes a challenging and pristine golf course, as well as areas for traditional manor sports, including horseback riding, clay shooting, hiking, hunting and more. The Castle's interior is as elegant as one could expect, with delicately detailed wallpaper matching the luxurious bedding and furnishings in the guest rooms and common areas featuring exquisitely carved stoneworks, authentic coats of armor and timeless and tasteful statuary. Perhaps the highlight of the Castle experience, however, is the unsurpassed dining at the Earl of Thomond, featuring elegant and delicious offerings that earned the restaurant a Michelin star, the only Irish restaurant so honored outside of Dublin. Dishes include fresh Irish seafood, local game, a banana and chocolate soufflé, and a wine list that offers the perfect compliment to the perfect meal.

Day 8: Shannon

After your regal stay at Dromoland, today sees you to the airport at Shannon to return to your home country. Take in your last bit of Ireland, but try not to look too deeply: after all, if you're not careful, you might just find yourself "missing your flight" to stay an extra day or two...

This is a product sheet elaborated in order to give you a quick overview of package suggestions our destination specialists can propose. Make an appointment to order to customize it as per your needs and get a detailed quotation.

CODE: IR-2019-AN IRISH VACATION OF A LIFETIME

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