



The West and North Tour

8 DAY TOUR PROGRAM

DAY 1 – Sunday 30th July 2023

Depart from outside the Convention Centre Dublin at 8.30am with your driver and guide. Visit the **Irish National Stud** in County Kildare, the beating heart of Ireland's thoroughbred horse industry. It is the home of equine royalty, immaculately bred stallions who can be seen and admired alongside protective mares, frolicking foals, and athletic yearlings. Proceed to **The Japanese Gardens**, these gardens were laid out by the celebrated gardener Eida in 1906. Through the use of trees, shrubs, rock and water it tells the story of man's progress through life. Continue to Galway - Overnight on Dinner, Bed & Breakfast basis in your hotel in Galway.

DAY 2 - Monday 31st July 2023

Enjoy a full Irish Breakfast at your hotel. Today enjoy a full day excursion of Connemara, located in the northwest corner of County Galway where you can experience the wild and desolate beauty of Connemara – the ancient Gaelic Kingdom where it is still possible, in the present, to “touch” the Irish Past. They say when you visit Connemara you “experience the real beauty of Ireland”. Visit **Kylemore Abbey**: the convent of the Benedictine Nuns of Ypres, beautifully set on Lake Kylemore. Visit the picturesque Abbey (reception rooms, video and exhibition), and enjoy a stroll to the beautifully restored Gothic Church; browse in the craft shop and sample our home cooked food. Return to your hotel in Galway. Dinner is at leisure.

DAY 3 – Tuesday 1st August 2023

Enjoy a Full Irish Breakfast at your hotel. Leaving Galway this morning travel to Sligo. Upon arrival enjoy a panoramic tour including a visit to **Drumcliff Graveyard** the final resting place of W.B. Yeats. Found in the churchyard, his grave is marked with a simple headstone with the inscription, "cast a cold eye on life, on death, horseman, pass by." This was Yeats' self-penned epitaph together with the instructions that the grave consist of "no marble, no conventional phrase". The graveyard also contains a high cross and nearby is the site of a 6th Century Columbian monastery of Columban monastery founded in the 6th Century. Travel onwards through the picturesque Irish countryside to Donegal. Overnight on Dinner, Bed & Breakfast basis in your hotel in Donegal.

DAY 4 – Wednesday 2nd August 2023

Enjoy a Full Irish Breakfast at your hotel. Visit **Slieve League Cultural Centre** - Slieve League cliffs are the highest sea cliffs in Europe, sheering out of the Atlantic to a height of 600m. The Slieve League Cultural Centre explores the history and archeology of the area, which is dotted with monuments, ranging from Neolithic tombs to 16th-century ruins. The Centre also has a craft gallery, which showcases jewelry, rustic furniture and the knitwear for which Donegal is famous. A café claims to serve the best coffee in Donegal. Other treats include homemade cakes and bread. Travel to **Leo's Tavern**, renowned for its music being the birthplace of world-famous musical talents Enya, Clannad and Moya Brennan. Return to your hotel. Dinner is at leisure.

DAY 5 – Thursday 3rd August 2023

Enjoy Full Irish Breakfast at your hotel. Travel to **Glenveagh National Park**. Some 16,540 hectares of mountains, lakes, glens and woods with a herd of red deer. A Scottish style castle surrounded by one of the finest gardens in Ireland, which contrast with the rugged surroundings. Then after soaking in so much fresh air travel to Derry City for a Guided Walking Tour of the Walls of Derry. **Derry City Tours** operated by Sharon McCrossan the wife of the late Martin McCrossan who both hail from Derry and from different cultural and religious backgrounds, is able to offer a balanced overview of the social, cultural and religious history, past and present, of this beautiful and ancient country. The River Foyle curves picturesquely around the old walled town of Derry, creating a cosy setting, which jars horribly with the reality of this city's recent troubled history. The old centre of Derry is the small walled city on the west bank of the river, with the square called the Diamond at its heart. Barbed-wire barriers detract from the magnificence of the city walls, though also giving resonance to their history. From the top there are good views of the Bogside and its defiant murals and the Free Derry monument. Overnight on Dinner, Bed & Breakfast basis in your hotel in Derry.

DAY 6 – Friday 4th August 2023

Enjoy Full Irish Breakfast at your hotel. Today is dedicated to travelling along the Antrim Coast to visit Glens of Antrim and the towns of Cushendall, Cushendun, Ballycastle and Bushmills. First stop is **Old Bushmills Distillery**. In 1608 Sir Thomas Phillips was granted a license to distil whiskey by James 1 of England, however, mentions of distilling traditions in the surrounding environs date back to 1276. The brand portfolio includes five award-winning whiskeys: Bushmills, Black Bush, Bushmills 10-year Malt, 16-year Malt and 21 year Malt. Bushmills is the only distillery in Ireland to make triple-distilled malt whiskey. This is at the heart of all Bushmills whiskeys and creates a unique combination of smoothness and richness. Then visit **Giants Causeway**. Volcanic activity 60 million years ago led to the formation of the 38,000 basalt columns that make up the Giant's Causeway. Hexagonal in shape, the stones stretch far out into sea and some stand as tall as 36ft (12m). Continue to Belfast to check-in to your hotel. Overnight on Dinner, Bed & Breakfast basis in your hotel in Belfast.

DAY 7 – Saturday 5th August 2023

Enjoy a full Irish Breakfast at your hotel. Follow this with the **Belfast City Tour**: Belfast is an enchanting and welcoming city with something to offer even the most diverse and demanding of visitors. Recently voted "Europe's Friendliest Regional Capital" it is a compact and charming city of contrasts, in addition to being an epicentre for political, cultural and historical intrigue. Visit the **Titanic Centre**, located in the heart of Belfast, right beside the historic site of this world-famous ship's construction. Housed in an iconic, 6-floor building, this state-of-the-art visitor experience tells the story of the Titanic, from her conception in Belfast in the early 1900s, through her construction and launch, to her famous maiden voyage and tragic end. Dinner is at leisure.

DAY 8 – Sunday 6th August 2023

Enjoy a final full Irish breakfast in your hotel. Transfer to Dublin via the Boyne Valley: For thousands of years, the Boyne Valley was the centre of civilisation in Ireland and today hundreds of thousands of visitors are still captivated by the surviving monuments to past glories. You will travel to the **Newgrange / Brú na Bóinne Visitors Centre** World Heritage Site by UNESCO. Here you will see an extensive exhibition including a full-scale replica of the chamber at Newgrange as well as a full model of one of the smaller tombs at Knowth. Your next and final stop is in the medieval town of **Drogheda**. Founded by the Vikings in 911, the town received its Charter from the Norman King John of England in the 12thC. After a walking tour with the Drogheda Soroptimists and some refreshment, travel on to Dublin/Dublin Airport for the termination of our tour. Travel onwards to a meeting point in Dublin or an Airport Hotel circa 6.30pm.