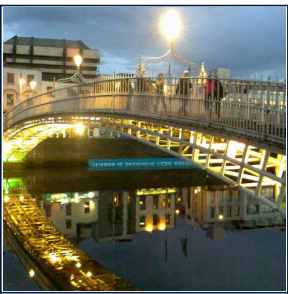




COACH TOUR - IRISH EXPLORER - 8N/9D



ITINERARY

Irish Explorer:
9 day tour from Dublin to Dublin (Cosmos)

Vacation Overview



Explore Ireland in depth and hear exciting stories of its rich history, legends, and myths. Begin your trip in Dublin, Ireland's capital, with an orientation drive that introduces you to the major attractions. Head north through the Boyne Valley and the Mountains of Mourne to Downpatrick, and on to Belfast, the vibrant capital of Northern Ireland. Take the scenic route along the Antrim coast to dramatic Giant's Causeway, a UNESCO World Heritage Site. Visit Derry and Donegal, then drive along Donegal Bay on your way to Sligo. Via Knock, where pilgrims from around the world flock to the Marian Shrine, and vibrant coastal Galway, you reach the breathtaking 668-foot Cliffs of Moher. Take photographs of the thatched cottages in Adare, then spectacular vistas await during the coastal drive along the beautiful "Ring of Kerry," where you'll see sparkling seascapes, mountains dotted with brightly colored farmhouses, winding lanes bordered with verdant vegetation, and the Lakes of Killarney. An excursion to the Dingle Peninsula allows you to drink in the breathtaking scenery. Next, stop in Blarney, famous for its castle and "Stone of Eloquence"; also enjoy a guided tour of the House of Waterford Crystal. Heading north, visit Ireland's oldest handweaving mill at Avoca, and Glendalough with its ruins of St. Kevin's Centre of Irish Christianity. Back in Dublin, your vacation ends with an exciting optional tour.



Itinerary:

Day 1 : Arrive in Dublin, Ireland

Check into your hotel. At 3 pm, meet your traveling companions for an afternoon orientation drive through statue-lined O'Connell Street and elegant Georgian squares to St. Patrick's Cathedral and Trinity College. End the day with an optional Irish cabaret evening including dinner, dance, song, and laughter.

Day 2 : Dublin-Downpatrick, Northern Ireland-Belfast



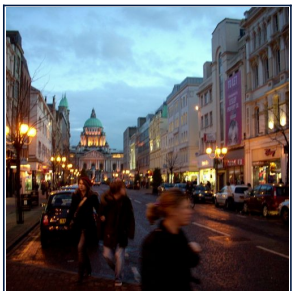
On your northbound route today, pass Drogheda, scene of the Battle of the Boyne in 1690, then through the fertile landscape of the Boyne Valley, known for its prehistoric passage graves. Cross the border into Northern Ireland and drive past the Mountains of Mourne to Downpatrick, the burial place of Patrick, Ireland's Patron Saint, and on to the vibrant city of Belfast, where the Titanic was built. Later, why not join a Local Guide on a "living history" tour including a visit to the fascinating Titanic Exhibition? (B)

Day 3 : Belfast-Giant's Causeway-Derry-Donegal, Ireland-Sligo
First stop this morning is GIANT'S CAUSEWAY, a UNESCO World Heritage Site. Let the province's story unfold as you head for the city of Derry before returning to the Republic to visit Donegal, the ancient town founded by Danish Vikings and home of the O'Donnell Clan. Drive along Donegal Bay with its small fishing ports and hidden beaches before arriving in Sligo, tonight's destination. (B,D)



Day 4 : Sligo-Knock-Galway-Cliffs of Moher-Ennis

South to Knock, a village that has attracted pilgrims from all over the world since the townsfolk saw apparitions. Then, to Galway, a popular seaside destination and a buzzing cosmopolitan center with colorful shops and a busy café and bar culture. Cross the limestone plateau of The Burren to visit the spectacular 668-foot CLIFFS OF MOHER. Tonight's optional opportunity: a medieval banquet at Bunratty Castle. (B)



Day 5 : Ennis-Adare-Ring of Kerry-Killarney

Skirting the city of Limerick, head to Adare, a village known for its prize-winning thatched cottages. At Killorglin, join the road known as the RING OF KERRY for a 100-mile coastal panoramic drive: sparkling seascapes, mountains dotted with brightly colored farmhouses, winding lanes bordered with subtropical vegetation, and spectacular views of the Lakes of Killarney from Ladies View. The next two nights are spent in the popular resort of Killarney. (B,D)



Day 6 : Killarney. Dingle Peninsula Excursion

Breathtaking scenery this morning on the Dingle Peninsula, where the 32-mile Sleat Head drive affords magnificent vistas of the Atlantic Ocean. See the Blasket Islands and hear about the way of life and unique literary achievements of its inhabitants prior to their evacuation in 1953. Back in Killarney, a special optional adventure: take a horse-drawn jaunting car along the national park lakeshore for pictures of Ross Castle. Tonight, enjoy the optional outing to Tralee for dinner and a performance at Siamsa Tire, Ireland's National Folk Theatre. (B)



Day 7 : Killarney-Blarney-Waterford-Tramore

More scenic splendor as you head over the Kerry Mountains into County Cork. Stop in Blarney, famous for its Stone of Eloquence, with time at your leisure to see the castle and shop for Irish crafts and handmade crystal. After lunch, drive past Cork, the country's second-largest city on the way to Waterford, where a guided tour of the HOUSE OF WATERFORD CRYSTAL is included. Spend the night at the nearby seaside resort of Tramore. An optional pub tour might be fun this evening. (B,D)



Day 8 : Tramore-Enniscorthy-Avoca-Glendalough-Dublin

Highlights on your northbound journey: Enniscorthy, site of the final battle of the Great Rebellion of 1798; a visit to Ireland's oldest HANDWEAVING MILL at Avoca; views of the Wicklow Mountains; and Glendalough with its ruins of a center of Irish Christianity, founded by St. Kevin. Back in Dublin tonight, celebrate the success of your tour with an optional dinner evening at the Guinness Storehouse. (B)

Day 9 : Dublin

Your vacation ends with breakfast this morning. (B)



Transportation:

Private, first-class, air-conditioned motorcoach

Accommodation:

DUBLIN Regency (ST)
BELFAST Jurys Inn (F)
SLIGO Southern (F)
ENNIS Auburn Lodge (ST)
KILLARNEY Killarney Court (F)
TRAMORE Majestic (ST)
DUBLIN Jurys Inn Custom House (F)

