

## FALL IN IRELAND

**September 21 – October 5, 2022**

### Proposed Itinerary

Day 1 - Wednesday, September 21: Evening departure from Toronto to Dublin on Aer Lingus.

Day 2 - Thursday, September 22: Arrival in Dublin, and transfer to the historic town of Drogheda. Visit to the site of the fateful 1690 Battle of the Boyne, a dramatic turning point in the history of the island. Then we check into the centrally located first-class/4-star Hotel – yes, that's its name! ([www.thedhotel.com](http://www.thedhotel.com)). Afternoon free. Dinner in the hotel.

Day 3 – Friday, September 23 : Morning visit to Brú na Bóinne (“Palace of the Boyne”), a UNESCO World Heritage Site featuring Europe’s largest collection of prehistoric megalithic monuments, much older than the Pyramids of Egypt! On across the now virtually invisible border between the Republic and Northern Ireland to the small town of Downpatrick, for a visit to the tomb of Saint Patrick, located within the grounds of Down Cathedral, and the adjoining Saint Patrick Visitor Centre. Afternoon arrival in the capital, Belfast. Dinner and overnight in a centrally-located hotel.

Day 4 – Saturday, September 24 : Morning sightseeing tour of Belfast, with sights such as City Hall, Saint Anne's Cathedral, Royal Avenue, the main shopping street, Belfast Castle, Stormont Parliament Buildings, and the Political Murals of the nationalist Falls and the unionist Shankill city districts. Also visit to “Titanic Belfast,” a new, world-class exhibition on the famous liner that was built in a local shipyard ([www.titanicbelfast.com/Home.aspx](http://www.titanicbelfast.com/Home.aspx)). Rest of the day at leisure. No group dinner this evening.

Day 5 - Sunday, September 25 : After breakfast, we drive from Belfast to the most popular tourist attraction in Northern Ireland, the Giants’ Causeway, tens of thousands of interlocking basalt columns, created by an ancient volcanic eruption, starting at the base of a cliff and gradually disappearing in the sea ([http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Giant%27s\\_Causeway](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Giant%27s_Causeway)). Afterwards we head for Bushmills, established in 1609, the world’s oldest licensed whiskey distillery, for a tasting of their famous product. On to the historical town of Derry (or, as some prefer, Londonderry) for some free time to explore the ancient fortifications, shopping and overnight in the 4-star Maldron Derry Hotel ([www.maldronhotelderry.com](http://www.maldronhotelderry.com)).

Day 6 - Monday, September 26: This morning we cross back into the Republic and explore Ireland’s rugged northwestern coastline in the vicinity of towns such as Ardara and Killybeg. Visit to the spectacular Slieve League sea cliffs, among the highest in Europe with an altitude of 600 m! Depending on circumstances, we make our way along the coast or across the majestic Glengesh Pass to Donegal, a picturesque town situated at the mouth of the River Eske and at the base of the Bluestack Mountains. Dinner and overnight in the excellent traditional Abbey Hotel ([www.abbeyhoteldonegal.com](http://www.abbeyhoteldonegal.com)).

Day 7 - Tuesday, September 27: Departure from Donegal after breakfast. We motor south to Sligo through scenery that inspired much of the poetry of the famous Noble Prize-winning Irish poet, W. B. Yeats, whose grave we visit in the village of Drumcliffe. On to Turlough for a visit to the excellent Museum of Country Life, and to the very picturesque village of Cong, where we explore the ruins of an ancient monastery. Arrival in Galway, the most important city in West Ireland, and a very popular tourist destination full of historical buildings, museums, interesting shops...and lively pubs! Did you know that Columbus visited here prior to his famous crossing of the Atlantic? Dinner and overnight in the first-class/4-star Connacht Hotel ([www.theconnacht.ie](http://www.theconnacht.ie)).

Day 8 - Wednesday, September 28: Today we explore the Connemara Peninsula, barren and windswept but considered to be one of the most beautiful landscapes anywhere in the world, with mountains, lakes, bogs, heaths, and forests. The inhabitants of this region still speak Gaelic, the original, Celtic language of the island. Our tour includes stops in quaint coastal communities such as Clifden and Letterfrack as well as a visit to Kylemore Abbey, Ireland's most romantic Castle, surrounded by magnificent Victorian gardens. Return to Galway in late afternoon and free time to check out the historical city centre, including the monument to Columbus, shop, have a pint in a pub! No group dinner this evening.

Day 9 - Thursday, September 29: Our excursion today is to the rocky Aran Islands, featuring what some claim to be the most beautiful scenery in the world, including absolutely spectacular cliffs! ([http://wikitravel.org/en/Aran\\_Islands](http://wikitravel.org/en/Aran_Islands)). Return to our hotel and evening free

Day 10 - Friday, September 30: We leave Galway and drive around Galway Bay to explore the Burren National Park, a fascinating karst landscape ([http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/The\\_Burren](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/The_Burren)), and pause to admire the Cliffs of Moher, an impressive wall of rock rising as high as 200 m above the waters of the Atlantic Ocean! On to the quaint village of Bunratty in County Clare for visits to its authentic medieval castle and the neighbouring Folk Park, where reconstructed old cottages and historical buildings recreate the atmosphere of 19<sup>th</sup> century rural Ireland. In the afternoon we stop in Foynes, where Pan Am Clippers used to land in the 1930s and 1940s, and visit the Flying Boat Museum. Dinner and overnight in the 4-star Hotel Arbutus ([www.arbutuskillarney.com](http://www.arbutuskillarney.com)) in Killarney, a popular tourist town in Southwestern Ireland's County Kerry.

Day 11 - Saturday, October 1: Today we drive the Ring of Kerry, 150 km of breathtaking scenery and arguably the most beautiful coastal road in Europe! We stop frequently for photos, of course. Also visits to a farm for a sheepdog demonstration and to the Skellig Experience, a series of displays about the lives of the hermits who lived in total isolation on the offshore Skellig Islands during the Middle Ages, and about the wildlife along the coast. Return to Killarney in late afternoon. No group dinner this evening.

Day 12 - Sunday, October 2: Departure from Killarney after breakfast. We motor to Cork and visit nearby Blarney Castle, famous for the Blarney stone that supposedly gives the gift of eloquence to all those who kiss it! Also time for some shopping at the Blarney Woollen Mills,

the world's largest Irish gift shop. In the afternoon we visit the Rock of Cashel, "Ireland's Acropolis", with the ruins of its 12<sup>th</sup> century church on our way to Dublin. Transfer to our superior tourist-category located in the heart of the Irish capital. Group dinner this evening.

Day 13 - Monday, October 3: After breakfast, panoramic coach tour of the Irish capital, with O'Connell Street and the Spire as well as the General Post Office, which served as headquarters of the Irish Rebels during the 1916 Easter Rising; Ha'penny Bridge and the scenic banks of the Liffey River; historic Dublin Castle; Christchurch Cathedral; Merrion Square with its memories of Oscar Wilde; the renovated harbour district with the imposing old Customs House; and Phoenix Park, the largest urban park in Europe, with the residence of the President of Ireland and the US Embassy. In the afternoon, excursion to Glendalough, an idyllic valley associated with one of Ireland's famous saints, St Kevin, and visit to the romantic ruins of St. Kevin's Monastery with its typical round tower and Celtic crosses. Return to Dublin. Evening free.

Day 14 - Tuesday, October 4: Morning visit to Trinity College's Old Library to view the famous Book of Kells, an illuminated manuscript dating back to approximately 800 AD, and the Old Library with its famous Long Hall. On to the impressive National Museum of Ireland, featuring artifacts of Prehistory, the Celts, Vikings, etc., for an open-ended visit. The rest of the day is free to shop along nearby pedestrian Grafton Street (where you will undoubtedly notice the famous statue of Molly Malone selling cockles and mussels!) or explore Dublin on your own. This evening, our farewell dinner will be accompanied by traditional Irish music and dance!

Day 15 - Wednesday, October 5: After breakfast, short transfer to the airport in time for the return flight to Toronto.

*Included in the tour price are:*

- Accommodation based on double occupancy in a combination of superior tourist-class (3-star) and first-class (4-star) hotels; the single room supplement is \$
- Breakfast daily and a total of seven 3-course dinners;
- Overland transportation by private coach;
- All visits and sightseeing as outlined in the itinerary, including admission to museums and monuments mentioned;
- Hotel taxes and gratuities.

*Not included:*

- Airfare;
- Items of a personal nature;
- Travel insurance. It's available from the office.