

# IRELAND

June 3, 2020 - 16 Days



## a world to experience



### Fares Per Person:

**\$6930** double/twin

**\$8535** single



**tour**  
25  
a more intimate travel experience

- > Please add 0.1% GST.
- > **Early Bookers:** \$250 discount on first 8 seats; \$125 on next 4
- > **Experience Points:** Earn 154 points from this tour.  
Redeem **154 points** if you book by **March 2.**

### Includes

- Transportation to/from Victoria Airport
- Westjet flight from Victoria to Dublin
- Current air taxes, security fees and surcharges
- 14 nights accommodation and hotel taxes
- Coach transportation in Ireland for 14 days
- Irish driver-guide for 14 days of touring
- Locally guided tour of Belfast
- Titanic Belfast Exhibition
- Black Taxis tour of Belfast
- Giant's Causeway
- Visit with a local farmer
- Bushmills Distillery and tasting
- Derry City Walls walking tour with local guide
- Belleek Pottery & Fine China
- Killary Fjord catamaran cruise
- Kylemore Abbey and Gardens
- Ferry to/from Inis Mór Island (Aran Islands)
- Hop on hop off transportation on island
- Dún Aonghasa fort
- Cliffs of Moher
- Shannon River ferry crossing
- Ring of Kerry
- Sheep dog demonstration at Kissane Farm
- Muckross Park and Gardens
- Dinner and Irish show in Killarney
- Blarney Castle and kissing the Blarney Stone
- Cobh Heritage Centre
- Old Jameson Distillery tour and tasting
- Rock of Cashel
- Locally guided tour of Dublin
- Trinity College and the Book of Kells
- Christ Church Cathedral
- Guinness Brewery tour and tasting
- Merry Ploughboys Pub Traditional Irish Night
- Transfer from hotel to Dublin Airport
- Westjet flight from Dublin to Victoria
- Knowledgeable Wells Gray tour director
- Gratuities to Irish driver-guide and local guides
- Luggage handling at hotels and airline
- **28 meals:** 14 breakfasts, 4 lunches, 10 dinners

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## The Emerald Isle

With the known history of Ireland dating back over 6,000 years, the past has truly paved the way for the island's buoyant present and future. The culture is vibrant, evolving and global, for there are an estimated 80 million people who claim Irish ancestry. The island of almost 6 million has two political entities — the Republic of Ireland which is a sovereign nation with Dublin as its capital, and Northern Ireland which is part of the United Kingdom with the capital at Belfast. The people take pride in their Celtic, Norse, and Anglo heritages. Irish is the first official language, with signs posted in Gaelic in places where the language is dominant, and English is the second official language, of course accented by a lyrical lilt that changes throughout the island. But to keep it interesting, in Northern Ireland, Ullens is spoken, a beautiful form of Scots/Irish, and in the Republic of Ireland, mid-Ulster English and Hiberno-English is common. The Irish are fond of folklore and traditions, particularly expressed through music and dance. In fact, the pub lies at the heart of the cultural life of Ireland, a place where friends gather to philosophize on life and politics, listen to stories and poems, enjoy traditional music, and share a feast.

This is the 6<sup>th</sup> time that Wells Gray Tours has offered a tour to Ireland and our travellers have been thrilled with the experience. We have partnered again with Discover Ireland Tours, a company based in Cork that is committed to connecting groups to the real people of Ireland. Our tour circles the island and includes not only the major cities and iconic sights of Ireland, such as Giant's Causeway, Ring of Kerry, and Blarney Castle, but also those personal experiences that put you in touch with the people, such as a horse-drawn cart trip through Muckross Park, Irish entertainment at Kate Kearney's Cottage, and an overnight stay in a castle. So don your richest green, pocket your lucky shamrock, and go where Ireland takes you.

### Itinerary

#### Wednesday, June 3:

Transfers are provided to Victoria Airport. We fly to Calgary and connect to an evening flight to Dublin, both on Westjet.

#### Thursday, June 4:

*Meals: D*

We arrive in Dublin in mid-morning (8 hours ahead of Pacific Time). **Céad Míle Fáilte!** Our driver-guide from Discover Ireland Tours meets us at the airport. It is a two-hour drive to **Belfast**, the capital of Northern Ireland, where we stay three nights at Europa Hotel. Once a safe haven from sea storms, Belfast developed a large boat building industry and now is known for its vibrant nightlife, and arts scene. An orientation tour with a local guide is provided, then the rest of the afternoon is time to rest, nap, and adjust to the new time. A Welcome to Ireland dinner is at the hotel.

#### Friday, June 5:

*Meals: B,D*

During the morning, we visit **Titanic Belfast** where exhibits explain the conception and building of *RMS Titanic* in Belfast, the discovery of the wreck, and modern exploration. This afternoon, we ride in a **Black Taxi** with a local guide for a Belfast highlights tour that takes us along Loyalist Shankhill Road to see the republican and loyalist murals of these now peaceful and prosperous areas. These smaller vehicles allow us to enter some narrow streets where a coach cannot go.

#### Saturday, June 6:

*Meals: B,L*

We drive along the **North Antrim Coast** through quaint villages that hug the coast such as Carnlough, Cushendun, and Cushendall. Next we explore **Giant's Causeway**, the subject of many

legends. A unique geological structure, some 37,000 basalt columns extend from cliffs into the sea. Lunch is at a local farmhouse, with a chance to chat to the farmer. Passing by the ruins of Dunluce Castle, we stop at **Bushmills Distillery** for a tour and sample of its famous whiskey.

#### Sunday, June 7:

*Meals: B,D*

Londonderry is the only completely walled city in the United Kingdom. A local guide takes us on a walking tour of the **Walls of Derry** and shares the unique version of the history of the once infamous Bogside area. After crossing the border into Eire, our accommodation for two nights is a very unique experience – **Lough Eske Castle**. It is located on a secluded lakeside estate just outside Donegal Town. Its history, associated with the O'Donnell Clan, the founding fathers of Donegal, dates to the 15<sup>th</sup> century. A manor was built in 1621, then rebuilt in 1868 and named Lough Eske Castle. It was in ruins by the mid-20<sup>th</sup> century, then restored in 2007 to become a five star hotel.

#### Monday, June 8:

*Meals: B,L*

The morning is spent touring in the **Donegal** area with lunch arranged in a west coast fishing port. The afternoon is at leisure at Lough Eske to enjoy the castle's beautiful setting or stroll in Donegal.

#### Tuesday, June 9:

*Meals: B,D*

We visit the lovely **Belleek Fine China Factory** whose unique pottery and porcelain have been renowned since the 1860s. (They will ship items home for you, so you don't have to carry them for the rest of the tour.) We drive along the North

Mayo Coast, then past Lough Conn and Mask. We stay three nights in **Galway** at Park House Hotel. Dinner is at a local pub with Irish music.

**Wednesday, June 10:** *Meals: B,L*

We skirt Lough Corrib, the second largest lake in Ireland with 365 islands. St. Patrick spent 40 days and 40 nights fasting on top of **Croagh Patrick** and praying for the conversion of Pagan Ireland to Catholicism. In **Connemara National Park**, we admire the bleak bog landscape and rugged ocean cliffs. We visit **Kylemore Abbey** where the Benedictine nuns have run a school for girls since 1920. There is time to wander through the gardens, abbey, and shops. Next we take a cruise past the dramatic scenery of **Killary Fjord** and have a close view of some mussel farms.

**Thursday, June 11:** *Meals: B,L*

We board a high-speed ferry near Galway which takes us to **Inis Mór**, the largest of the three Aran Islands. It is known for ancient sites, like the clifftop fort Dún Aonghasa which may date to the 2nd century BC. Nearby is the Worm Hole, a rectangular natural pool. The medieval Christian ruins of the Seven Churches are in the northwest. Clochán na Carrage is a stone structure with a beehive roof. Kilmurvey Beach is known for birdlife and a nearby seal colony. A hop on hop off mini-bus service operates on the island, allowing you to access some of these sites, depending on time.

**Friday, June 12:** *Meals: B,D*

Today's spectacular coastal scenery takes us along the south coast of Galway Bay. **The Burren** is Gaelic for 'rocky land' and this vast limestone plateau is bleak and devoid of water, trees, and soil, yet it holds a unique beauty. A stop is made at the Poul nabrone Dolmen, a portal tomb with three standing stones that may be 6,000 years old. A highlight is the **Cliffs of Moher**, an eight-km stretch of cliffs that plunge 212 metres into the Atlantic Ocean — one of the most photographed sites in Ireland. After crossing the estuary of the Shannon River by ferry, we arrive in **Killarney** for a two-night stay at the Dromhall Hotel.

**Saturday, June 13:** *Meals: B,D*

The **Ring of Kerry** is one of the most awesome drives in Ireland and is full of magical and mystical places and sites. We travel through Killorglin, Glenbeigh, Cahersiveen, and the Coomakesta Pass with magnificent views over Derrynane. Afterwards, we visit Kissane Farm for a demonstration of **sheep dog skills**. The afternoon takes us through Sneem, Moll's Gap, and Ladies View into Killarney National Park. We board horse-drawn carts, locally known as **jaunting carts**, for a jaunt through Muckross Park. Tonight, we go to Kate

Kearney's Cottage at the Gap of Dunloe to enjoy dinner along with traditional entertainment with musicians playing the guitar, fiddle, mandola, Irish bouzouki, banjo, bodhrán, uilleann pipes, and tin whistles. Costumed Irish dancers perform reels, jigs and the almost forgotten 'Brush Dance'.

**Sunday, June 14:** *Meals: B,D*

We drive to Freshford in Kilkenny, then over the Cork and Kerry Mountains, and through the Irish speaking villages of Ballymakeery and Ballyvourney. We pass the ruins of Macroom Castle, once the home of Sir William Penn whose son founded Pennsylvania. Our destination is Blarney Castle where you can kiss the **Blarney Stone** and become endowed with the Gift of the Gab. There is also a shopping opportunity at Blarney Woollen Mills. At the Cobh Heritage Centre, we learn about life in Ireland through the 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> centuries, mass emigration, the Great Famine, and the sinking of the RMS Lusitania. Cobh was the last port of call for the Titanic. Next, enjoy a tour and whiskey tasting at the Old Jameson Distillery. We stay overnight at the Maldron Hotel in **Cork**.

**Monday, June 15:** *Meals: B,D*

The morning is free time in Cork. At **Rock of Cashel**, we see an impressive group of medieval buildings set on an outcrop of limestone. These include the 12<sup>th</sup> century round tower, Romanesque Chapel, 13<sup>th</sup> century Gothic cathedral, and the restored Hall of the Vicars Choral. Arriving in Dublin, we settle into the Clayton Hotel for a three-night stay right in the centre of the city.

**Tuesday, June 16:** *Meals: B,D*

**Dublin** is Ireland's largest city, a historical and contemporary cultural centre. A local guide takes us on a city tour. We visit Trinity College, founded by Queen Elizabeth I in 1592 and home of the **Book of Kells**, the most richly decorated of Ireland's medieval illuminated manuscripts of the four gospels. Another stop is the imposing Christ Church Cathedral, founded in 1163. We round out the day at the famous **Guinness Brewery** for a tour and to sample its iconic beer.

**Wednesday, June 17:** *Meals: B,D*

The day is leisure time and your driver-guide can assist you with ideas, since there is so much to do in Dublin. Tonight, we celebrate our tour of Ireland at the **Merry Ploughboys Pub** with a traditional Irish dinner and cabaret. Don't expect an early night!

**Thursday, June 18:** *Meals: B*

A transfer is provided to Dublin airport. Our early afternoon flight is on Westjet via Calgary to Victoria, then transportation is provided to your pickup point.

## Tour Notes

**Currency & Expenses:** The Euro is used in Ireland and, as of August 2019, a Canadian dollar is worth about €0.68. The British Pound is used in Northern Ireland and a Canadian dollar is worth about £0.62. The Pound and Euro exchange rates have been quite volatile through 2019 due to Brexit. You should order Pounds and Euros from your bank 1-2 weeks before departure, or plan to use ATMs. Credit cards are accepted almost everywhere. Gratuities are included for all group meals, drivers and guides.

**Fare Changes:** As this tour has been planned and priced 10 months before departure, exchange fluctuations between the Canadian dollar and the Euro or Pound could affect the fare, in which case you will be notified of the increase or decrease. The flight has been priced based on current taxes and fuel prices, and there could be changes to these amounts.

**Flight:** The round trip flight is on Westjet conveniently from Victoria via Calgary to Dublin. Other airlines have a connection in London Heathrow which is huge and extremely busy.

**Documentation:** A valid passport is required. There are no border controls between Ireland and Northern Ireland. A visa is not required.

**Rooms for singles** are often a different style or smaller size than twin rooms. Many hotels limit the number of single rooms allocated to a group. There are only three singles confirmed for this tour, at the advertised price, then a few more singles are available for \$100 per person extra. Please book early if you prefer to travel single.

**Triples** are not available on this tour.

**Beverages:** Although most meals are included, it is not common practice to include beverages with meals. Bottled water is served, but any other beverage will probably be at your expense.



**Activity Level:** Due to the historic nature of some attractions, it will be necessary to climb stairs, walk on uneven surfaces, and walk up to one kilometre at a time. Rooms in some hotels may be reached by some stairs after riding the elevator. Sometimes the coach cannot drive all the way to an attraction. There are many stops during this tour and you must be able to get on and off the coach by yourself without delaying your fellow travellers. There can be longer walks in the airports while travelling to/from Dublin; request a cart or wheelchair at check-in if needed. Please consider these mobility issues prior to booking this tour. The coach cannot carry a scooter. If you are not able to participate in Activity Level 2, Wells Gray Tours recommends that you bring a companion to assist you. The tour director, driver-guide, and local guides have many responsibilities, so please do not expect them, or your fellow travellers, to provide ongoing assistance. If you are not capable of keeping up with the group or require frequent assistance, the tour director may stop you from participating in some activities or some days of the tour. In extreme situations, you may be required to leave the tour and travel home at your own expense; travel insurance will probably not cover you.

## Tour Policies

**Payments:** A deposit of \$800 per person is requested at the time of booking and the balance is due March 2, 2020. By paying the deposit, you agree to the Terms & Conditions, Activity Level and Cancellation Policy outlined.

**Discounts:** Early bookers receive \$250 discount on first 8 seats and \$125 on next 4 seats for booking early with deposit. The discount is not offered after March 2.

**Cancellation Policy:** Up to January 31, 2020, your tour payments will be refunded less an administrative charge of \$100 per person. From February 1 to March 2, the cancellation charge is \$400 per person. From March 3 to April 2, the cancellation charge is 40% of the tour fare. From April 3 to May 1, the cancellation charge is 80% of the tour fare. After May 1, there is no refund.

**Travel Insurance:** A Comprehensive Insurance policy is available through Wells Gray Tours and coverage is provided by Travel Guard. Policies purchased at deposit include a waiver of the pre-existing condition clause for medical and cancellation claims, otherwise policies can be purchased no later than at final payment. Please contact us for details.

**Tour 25:** This is a Tour 25 departure, meaning capacity of tour is limited to 25 participants or less, a more intimate travel experience.

**Photo credit:** Wikimedia by Bjorn Torrissen (Cliffs of Moher)

**E-points:** This tour earns 154 e-points. Each time you travel on a Wells Gray tour, you earn Experience Points, or e-points. One point equals \$1. Redeem your points on select tours or accumulate enough points to earn a free tour! Redemptions offered until March 2.

**Consumer Protection BC Licences:** Kamloops 178, Vernon 655, Kelowna 588, Penticton 924, Victoria 65842