

IRELAND

May 2024



Green pastures of Ireland

A tour all around the Emerald Isle

This is the 8th time since 2010 that Wells Gray Tours has offered a tour to Ireland and our travellers have always 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 cities and iconic sights of Ireland and Northern Ireland such as Blarney Castle, Ring of Kerry, Cliffs of Moher, and Giant's Causeway, but also those personal experiences that put you in touch with the people, such as a jaunting cart ride, a sheepdog demonstration, a stay in a castle, a Black Taxi ride around Belfast, and Irish entertainment at Kate Kearney's Cottage and the Merry Plough Boys Pub. So don your richest green, pocket your lucky shamrock, and go where Ireland takes you.



INTERNATIONAL



GROUP SIZE



ACTIVITY LEVEL

► Fares per person

from **\$10,210** double/twin, **\$12,185** single*

*pricing details for all departures provided on page 2

► Earn 177 Experience Points

► Departure from:

BC Interior, Victoria & Lower Mainland



Providing Quality Packaged Travel Since 1972

DEPARTURE POINTS & DATES

- I BC Interior:** May 12, 2024 - 18 Days
- V Vancouver Island:** May 12, 2024 - 18 Days
- L Lower Mainland:** May 12, 2024 - 18 Days



Your specific departure point will be confirmed at time of booking.
Passengers travelling from the BC Interior, Vancouver Island & Lower Mainland regions will begin and end the tour as follows:

- I BC Interior:** We depart on Sunday, May 12 and fly from Kelowna to Dublin via Calgary. Transfers are provided to Kelowna Airport. We return to Kelowna from Dublin via Calgary on Wednesday, May 29. Transportation is provided to your pickup point.
- V Vancouver Island:** We depart on Sunday, May 12 and fly from Victoria to Dublin via Calgary. Transfers are provided to Victoria Airport. We return to Victoria from Dublin via Calgary on Wednesday, May 29. Transportation is provided to your pickup point. **Up-Island passengers,** we may be able to fly you from Nanaimo or Comox airport.
Note: Depending on the number of people booked and coach size, home pickups may be offered in the Greater Victoria area. The decision is made about 2 weeks before departure and you will be contacted about your pickup point and time.
- L Lower Mainland:** We depart on Sunday, May 12 and fly from Vancouver to Dublin via Calgary. Transfers are provided to Vancouver Airport for passengers in the greater Vancouver area. We return to Vancouver from Dublin via Calgary on Wednesday, May 29.
Note: Home pickup may be arranged at time of booking for passengers in the greater Vancouver area. Passengers from Abbotsford or Chilliwack may fly from Abbotsford. Transfers to Abbotsford airport are not included.

FARES PER PERSON

	Departure Point	Fares per Person	Notes
I	BC Interior	\$10,210 double/twin \$12,185 single	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Tour exempt from GST• Singles - list price for first 3 bookings only.
V	Vancouver Island	\$10,310 double/twin \$12,285 single	
L	Lower Mainland	\$10,240 double/twin \$12,215 single	



Londonderry, Northern Ireland

WHAT'S INCLUDED

► Meals

- **29 total:** 16 breakfasts, 2 lunches & 11 dinners

► Transportation

- Transportation to/from Kelowna, Vancouver or Victoria airports from departure points in BC Interior, greater Vancouver & Victoria areas
- Flights to Dublin & return (from Kelowna, Victoria, Vancouver, Abbotsford, Nanaimo or Comox)
- Current air taxes, security fees & fuel surcharges
- 1 checked bag
- Coach transportation in Ireland for 16 days
- Transfer from hotel to Dublin Airport

► Accommodation

- 16 nights accommodation & hotel taxes
- Luggage handling at hotels

► Guides & Gratuities

- Irish driver-guide for 16 days of touring
- Gratuities to Irish driver-guide & local guides

► Key Highlights

- Kilkenny Castle
- Guided walking tour of Kilkenny
- Rock of Cashel
- Old Jameson Distillery tour & tasting
- Blarney Castle & kissing the Blarney Stone
- Ring of Kerry

- Jaunting cart ride
- Dinner & Irish show at Kate Kearney's Cottage
- Shannon River ferry crossing
- Cliffs of Moher
- Kylemore Abbey & Gardens
- Killary Fjord catamaran cruise
- Sheepdog demonstration at Glengowla Farm
- Belleek Pottery & Fine China
- Lough Eske Castle
- Slieve League Cliffs
- Glencolumbkille Folk Village
- Tour of Donegal
- Triona Donegal Tweed Centre
- Lough Erne Resort
- Derry City Walls walking tour with local guide
- Bushmills Distillery and tasting
- Visit with a local farmer
- Giant's Causeway
- Black Taxis tour of Belfast
- Titanic Belfast Exhibition
- Hillsborough Castle & Gardens
- Monasterboice High Crosses
- Locally guided tour of Dublin
- Trinity College & the Book of Kells
- Christ Church Cathedral
- Guinness Brewery tour & tasting
- Merry Ploughboys Pub Traditional Irish Night

► Knowledgeable Wells Gray tour director



Activity Level 2

Moderate Activity: As a traveller you like a variety of activities and walking up to 2 km over the course of a day with breaks such as a guided walking tour is very doable for you without assistance. You can stand for prolonged periods, negotiate a variety of terrain from cobblestone streets to moderate hills comfortably and can climb two flights of stairs without assistance. Please be aware that on tours with flights you will be required to handle your own luggage and walk longer distances in airports.

You may bring a cane if needed. The coaches cannot carry a scooter or motorized wheelchair. The tour director and driver 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 Size 25

This tour is limited to 25 participants, making it a more intimate travel experience.



Cliffs of Moher

ITINERARY

Sunday, May 12

We fly to Calgary and connect to an evening flight to Dublin, both on WestJet.

Monday, May 13

We arrive in Dublin in late morning and local time is 8 hours ahead of Pacific Time.

Céad Mí-le Fáilte (Welcome to Ireland)! Our driver-guide from Discover Ireland Tours meets us at the airport and we head to Kilkenny, about two hours away. Along the way, we stop at the **Rock of Cashel** to see an impressive group of medieval buildings set on an outcrop of limestone. These include the 12th century round tower, Romanesque Chapel, 13th century Gothic cathedral, and the restored Hall of the Vicars Choral. We stay two nights in Kilkenny. A get-acquainted dinner is arranged.

Meals included: Dinner

Accommodation: Pembroke Hotel, Kilkenny

Tuesday, May 14

The morning is leisure time, followed by a visit to **Kilkenny Castle**. It has been an important site since William the Earl Marshall built the first stone castle in 1260. A walking tour of Kilkenny town is offered by a local guide.

Meals included: Breakfast

Accommodation: Pembroke Hotel, Kilkenny

Wednesday, May 15

Near Cork, we enjoy a tour and whiskey tasting at Old Jameson Distillery. **Blarney Castle** is one of the most famous of Ireland's icons. Climb to the castle ramparts to **kiss the Blarney Stone** and become endowed with the Gift of the Gab. There is also a shopping opportunity at Blarney Woollen Mills. This afternoon, we drive 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.

Meals included: Breakfast, Dinner

Accommodation: Killarney Plaza Hotel

Thursday, May 16

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. The afternoon takes us through Sneem, Moll's Gap, and Ladies View into **Killarney National Park**. We return to the hotel riding on horse-drawn carts, locally known as jaunting carts. 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'.

Meals included: Breakfast, Dinner

Accommodation: Killarney Plaza Hotel

ITINERARY continued

Friday, May 17

After crossing the estuary of the Shannon River by ferry, a highlight is the **Cliffs of Moher**, an 8 km stretch of cliffs that plunge 212 metres into the Atlantic Ocean — one of the most photographed sites in Ireland. Today's spectacular drive hugs the coast, then takes us across **The Burren**, an extensive limestone plateau that is bleak and devoid of water, trees, and soil, yet it holds a unique beauty. A stop is made at the Poulnabrone Dolmen, a portal tomb with three standing stones that may be 6,000 years old. Then we follow the south coast of Galway Bay and stay two nights in **Galway**.

Meals included: Breakfast, Dinner

Accommodation: Park House Hotel, Galway

Saturday, May 18

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. A demonstration of **sheep dog skills** is offered at Glengowla Mines and Farm.

Meals included: Breakfast

Accommodation: Park House Hotel, Galway

Sunday, May 19

After driving along Lough Mask, 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.) Continuing along the North Mayo Coast, our accommodation for two nights is a truly memorable 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 15th century. A manor was built in 1621, then rebuilt in 1868 and named Lough Eske Castle. It was in ruins by the mid-20th century, then restored in 2007 to be a 5-star hotel.

Meals included: Breakfast, Dinner

Accommodation: Lough Eske Castle

Monday, May 20

We drive on our coach and a shuttle bus to the awesome **Slieve League Cliffs**, the highest sea cliffs in Europe at 600 metres. We continue to **Glencolmille Folk Village**, a thatched-roof replica of a rural village that offers a glimpse into daily life during past centuries. The cluster of small cottages, called a 'clachan', is perched on a hillside overlooking the sandy curve of Glen Bay Beach and is considered one of Ireland's best living-history museums.

Meals included: Breakfast

Accommodation: Lough Eske Castle

Tuesday, May 21

The morning is spent touring in the **Donegal** area with lunch arranged in a traditional pub. A shopping stop is made at Triona Tweed Centre where you may wish to buy some fine Irish fashions for cooler climates. We stay two nights at **Lough Erne Resort**, majestically tucked away on a private 600-acre property beside the lake.

Meals included: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

Accommodation: Lough Erne Resort

ITINERARY continued

Wednesday, May 22

Hotel buggies take us to the dock to board *The Lady of the Lake* for a **cruise on Lough Erne** to Enniskillen town. There is free time for lunch, then we go to **Castle Coole**, one of Ireland's finest Neo-classical houses, to glimpse what life was like for the Earls of Belmore from 1790 onwards.

Meals included: Breakfast, Dinner

Accommodation: Lough Erne Resort

Thursday, May 23

We cross the border into **Northern Ireland** which requires a stop for a passport check since Brexit. Soon we are in **Londonderry**, 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. We continue to **Belfast**, the capital of Northern Ireland, where we stay three nights. Once a haven from storms, Belfast developed a boat building industry and now is known for its vibrant nightlife and arts scene.

Meals included: Breakfast, Dinner

Accommodation: Europa Hotel, Belfast

Friday, May 24

Our first stop is at **Bushmills Distillery** for a tour and to sample its famous whiskey. Lunch is at a local farmhouse with a chance to chat to the farmer. Then we drive along the **North Antrim Coast** through quaint villages that hug the shoreline such as Carnlough, Cushendun, and Cushendall. Next, we explore **Giant's Causeway**, a World Heritage Site that is the subject of many legends. A unique geological structure dating to 60 million years ago, some 37,000 basalt columns extend from the cliffs into the sea.

Meals included: Breakfast, Lunch

Accommodation: Europa Hotel, Belfast

Saturday, May 25

During the morning, we ride in a **Black Taxi** with a local guide for a Belfast highlights tour. This is no ordinary taxi ride, it is a tour of the sites where the troubles in Belfast occurred between the late 1960s and 1990s. Your guide is a taxi driver and entrepreneur who lived through the conflicts and now makes a living educating his passengers about those distant dark times in Northern Ireland's history. See the peace wall and the Republican and Loyalist murals, and hear a unique perspective on those challenging decades. The small taxis allow us to enter some narrow streets where a coach cannot go. Later, we visit **Titanic Belfast** where nine galleries explain the conception and building of *RMS Titanic* in Belfast, the discovery of the wreck, and modern exploration. There are special effects, dark rides, full-scale reconstructions, and innovative interactive features to explore the Titanic story.

Meals included: Breakfast

Accommodation: Europa Hotel, Belfast

Sunday, May 26

Leaving Belfast, we visit **Hillsborough Castle and Gardens**, best known as the official residence of the Royal Family in Northern Ireland. Later, we stop at Monasterboice High Crosses, an important centre of religion and learning. The site houses two 14th century churches and an earlier round tower, but is most famous for its 10th century high crosses. Then, we drive through the beautiful Boyne Valley where the Battle of the Boyne took place in 1690 between the deposed King James II and King William III. Arriving in Dublin, we settle into the Riu Plaza Hotel for a three-night stay in the centre of the city on re-nowned O'Connell Street.

Meals included: Breakfast, Dinner

Accommodation: Riu Plaza The Gresham Hotel

ITINERARY continued

Monday, May 27

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. (Note: Trinity Library is expected to close sometime in 2024 for a major renovation, so this visit may be cancelled.) Another stop is the imposing Christ Church Cathedral, founded in 1163. We round out the day at famous **Guinness Brewery** for a tour and to sample its iconic beer.

Meals included: Breakfast, Dinner

Accommodation: Riu Plaza The Gresham Hotel

Tuesday, May 28

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

Meals included: Breakfast, Dinner

Accommodation: Riu Plaza The Gresham Hotel

Wednesday, May 29

A transfer is provided to Dublin Airport in late morning. Our flight is on WestJet via Calgary to departure cities.

Meals included: Breakfast



Rock of Cashel



TOUR NOTES

Coast of Northern Ireland

Book early! The first departure of this tour in June 2024 was released in late August 2023 and sold out in just two days.

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.

Currency & Expenses: The Euro is used in Ireland and, as of October 2023, one Euro costs C\$1.45. The British Pound is used in Northern Ireland and costs C\$1.67. 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, Irish drivers, and guides.

Documentation: A valid passport is required with expiry after you leave Ireland. A visa is not required.

Itinerary and Fare Changes: Due to continuing after effects of the pandemic, sometimes we are notified about changes to the itinerary prior to departure and sometimes during the tour. We do our best to substitute a similar service if something cancels, but occasionally the only alternative is to provide a refund for the missed activity. Please note that if we are forced to cancel a component of an extensive tour due to an issue beyond our control, the current penalties still apply if you choose to cancel the entire tour. Fuel surcharges and changes to taxes, currency exchange rates, or other tour costs can occur at any time, therefore Wells Gray Tours reserves the right to increase fares due to such changes up to departure.

Flight seating: We are unable to take requests for window or aisle seating on the planes. The airline will not accept them, as group seating is assigned as a block. If this is important to you, we suggest you take the "No Flight" option with a fare reduction of \$1,400 and book your own flight which allows seat selection.

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. Please book early if you prefer to travel single. The price quoted for single on page 2 is available for the first 3 bookings, then a higher rate is in effect.

Triples are not available on this tour.

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



TOUR POLICIES

Lough Eske Castle

Payments: A deposit of \$800 per person is requested at time of booking and balance is due February 8, 2024. By paying the deposit, you agree to the Terms & Conditions, Activity Level and Cancellation Policy outlined. Payments can be made by online banking or cheque (1.5% discount on tour fare), or by Visa or Mastercard (\$5,000 limit per person on credit cards).

Cancellation Policy: Up to January 8, 2024, your tour payments will be refunded less an administrative charge of \$100 per person. From January 9 to February 8, the cancellation charge is \$400 per person. From February 9 to March 8, the cancellation charge is 40% of the tour fare. From March 9 to April 8, the cancellation charge is 80% of the tour fare. After April 8, there is no refund.

Food Allergies: You must notify us no later than at final payment if you have a food allergy. This tour goes to some remote places where restaurants may not be able to satisfy all food allergies (an allergy causes medical distress, a preference does not). For some allergies, please consider bringing your own snacks or food items so you are not dependent on what restaurants are able to serve.

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.

Flight delays due to weather: In the event flights are delayed or cancelled by airlines due to weather, there may be additional costs to you. Wells Gray Tours Ltd. will not pay for hotel rooms and meals during the delay.

Photo Credits: Adobe Stock (Coast of Northern Ireland, Londonderry, Cliffs of Moher, Rock of Cashel, sheep in green pastures) and Lough Este Castle.

Experience Points or E-points: This tour earns 177 e-points. Each time you travel on a Wells Gray tour, you earn e-points that are added to your account after the tour returns. One e-point equals \$1. Redeem your earned points on select tours or accumulate enough points to earn a free tour! Redemptions offered until February 8, 2024.

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

WE PLAN.
YOU PACK.
NO WORRIES!

www.wellsgraytours.com
1-800-667-9552



Our offices are open for walk-in traffic or by appointment

KAMLOOPS	KELOWNA	VERNON	PENTICTON	VICTORIA
Head Office				
250 Lansdowne St.	2575 Richter St.	3206 35th St.	100 -159 Wade Ave East	102-736 Broughton St.
Kamloops, BC	Kelowna, BC	Vernon, BC	Penticton, BC	Victoria, BC
V2C 1X7	V1Y 2R1	V1T 6B7	V2A 8B6	V8W 1E1
250-374-0831	250-762-3435	250-545-9197	250-493-1255	250-590-7889