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# EXECUTIVE TOUR SUMMARY

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### Arrive and Depart from Dublin Airport

#### Day 1 - Dublin City Day Tour (Dublin)

Touring Trinity College, St Patricks Cathedral, National Museum of Archaeological & History, National Gallery of Ireland, Kilmainham Gaol and Guinness Storehouse.

#### Day 2 - South Dublin & Wicklow (Dublin to Kilkenny)

Touring Powerscourt, Sallys Gap, Glendalough, Avoca Woolen Mills & Kennedy Ancestral Home

#### Day 3 - Castle Day Tour (Kilkenny to Ardmore/Castlemartyr)

Touring Kilkenny Castle, Rock of Cashel, Swiss Cottage & Waterford Crystal

#### Day 4 - Touring East Cork & Cork City (Ardmore/Castlemartyr to Kinsale)

Touring Middleton Distillery, Cobh, Blarney Castle (Kiss the Blarney Stone), Cork Jail & English Market.

#### Day 5 - Touring West Cork & Killarney National Park (Kinsale to Killarney)

Touring Charles Fort, Franciscan friary of Timoleague, Clonakilty, Drombeg Stone Circle, Glandore, Union Hall, Bantry House & Gardens, Kenmare, Killarney National Park and Ladies View.

#### Day 6 - Touring Ring of Kerry (Killarney)

Touring Sheep-dog demonstration at Caitins, off the beaten track tour to Valentia Island, Kerry Cliffs and Skellig Michael, Waterville, Staigue Fort, Derrynane House, Sneem, Molls Gap, Killarney National Park, Muckcross House & Gardens and Ross Castle.

#### Day 7 - Touring Dingle Peninsula (Killarney to Adare)

Touring Dingle Town (Dingle Crystal, Dingle Aquarium/Fungi & Dingle Distillery), Sleah Head Ring (Dunbeg Fort, Beehive Huts, The Blasket Centre, Gallarus Oratory & Kilmalkedar Church) and Conor Pass.

#### Day 8 - Touring Bunratty, Cliffs of Moher & Burren (Adare to Cong)

Touring Desmond Castle, Bunratty Castle, Cliffs of Moher, traditional music town of Doolin, The Burren Centre & Perfumery and Poul nabrone Portal Dolmen Tomb.

#### Day 9 - Touring Galway City & Clonmacnoise (Galway to Dublin)

Partake in Ashford Castle activities in the morning. Tour Galway City of Tribes (Shop Street, Quay Street and the Spanish Arch) and Clonmacnoise.

#### Day 10 - Depart Dublin Airport

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## ACCOMMODATION

Accommodation can be mixed and matched between 4 and 5 Star if need be.

### **4 STAR ACCOMMODATION**

**1 x Night @ O' Callaghan Hotels (Davenport, St. Stephens Green, Alexander or Mont Clare Hotels),** Dublin. O'Callaghan Hotels are all in excellent locations for both leisure and business travellers. Each hotel is distinctive and distinguished by excellence. Flexibility is at the heart of what we do to ensure you get the very best service from our team. Years of experience allow for extraordinary service. Get the real Irish experience through staying in a family-owned business that has been running the hotel business in Dublin for 25 years.

**1 x Night @ Pembroke Hotel,** Kilkenny. Offering 4 star accommodation in Kilkenny city centre, with fantastic business facilities in the Business Centre and delicious food and drink in Statham's Bar and Restaurant. The Pembroke Hotel is ideally situated in the heart of the city with views of the historic Kilkenny Castle.

**1 x Night @ Garryvoe Hotel,** Castlemartyr, Co. Cork. There has been a hotel on the beach at Garryvoe since the early 1900s and while the world has changed beyond recognition, some things have thankfully remained the same – the golden, sandy, five-mile beach; the view of Ballycotton and its lighthouse, and the smiling faces at the Garryvoe Hotel - a family-owned, independent four-star hotel.

**1 x Night @ Trident Hotel,** Kinsale Co. Cork. A four star hotel, spectacularly located on the water's edge overlooking Kinsale Harbour, with the Pier One Restaurant, the only waterfront restaurant in the Gourmet Capital of Ireland, and the new Foredeck bar area, where you are closer to the sea than you would be on board a boat. The Wharf Tavern and Terrace which has been a welcoming meeting place for golfers, sailors, locals and holidaymakers for decades. The Trident Hotel has it all from quality, location, service and vistas.

**2 x Nights @ Great Southern / Royal Hotel,** Killarney Co. Kerry. Enjoy your stay at one of these luxurious old world elegance hotels that is truly unique for quality, location, service and elegance. All centrally located in Killarney makes them easy access for Killarney's many traditional pubs and international cuisine restaurants.

**1 x Night @ Dunraven Arms,** Adare, Co. Limerick. The Dunraven Arms Hotel is a stylish, luxury, family-run business situated in the heart of Adare, a picturesque and world renowned village in Co. Limerick. For those who are willing to relax and unwind, a perfect treat after a long day of activities is a spa treatment or the Maigue Restaurant offers deliciously cooked Irish cuisine and an extensive wine list.

**1 x Night @ Ashford Castle Lodge,** Cong, Co. Mayo. Sitting within the magnificent 350 acre estate of Ashford Castle, the Lodge overlooks the magical Lough Corrib. It offers country house charm, fine dining in Wilde's Restaurant and an unrivalled range of activities on the 350 acre estate such as Equestrian, Clay shooting, Archery, Boat Cruising, Kayaking, Zip lining Golf and Fishing activities.

**1 x Night @ Clayton Dublin Airport Hotel,** Dublin. Conveniently located near Dublin Airports Terminal 1 and 2 and on the periphery of Dublin city, Clayton Hotel Dublin Airport is the ideal stopover choice for visitors flying into or out of Dublin.

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## **5 STAR ACCOMMODATION**

**1 x Night @ The Merrion Hotel**, Dublin. The Merrion, located in the heart of Dublin city centre, is the capital's most luxurious five star hotel, and a proud member of The Leading Hotels of the World. The Merrion is home to the 2-star Michelin Restaurant Patrick Guilbaud, The Cellar Bar, The Garden Room and the intimate No. 23 Cocktail Bar and has the second largest art collection in Ireland outside of the National Gallery of Ireland.

**1 x Night @ Butler House**, Kilkenny. Butler House is the Dower House of Kilkenny Castle, and was home to the Earls of Ormonde who also built the Kilkenny Castle, stables and coach house at the rear. Sweeping staircases, magnificent plastered ceilings, marble fireplaces and a charming walled garden are all features of this notable Georgian residence. The Internationally renowned Butler House Walled Garden. this Georgian garden was restored to its former glory in 1999 and boasts its own private entrance to the Castle yard and Kilkenny Castle.

**1 x Night @ Cliff House Hotel**, Ardmore, Co. Waterford. This five-star luxury hotel in Waterford perched on a cliff above the Wild Atlantic Ocean, has got charming elegance with a magnificent ocean backdrop. The Cliff House Hotel has contributed to the reputation of Waterford being a gourmet cornucopia, with its fantastic House Restaurant holding a Michelin Star and Four AA Rosettes.

**1 x Night @ Perryville House**, Kinsale, Co. Cork. Perryville House, right in the heart of picturesque Kinsale, in the Gourmet Capital of Ireland. This 200 year old town house provides a touch of luxury combined with a homely charm. Decorated in tasteful muted shades it has evolved into a beautiful Guest House, overlooking Kinsale Harbour. Perryville House evokes the sense of old world elegance and relaxed intimacy you cannot help but fall in love with.

**2 x Nights @ The Park Hotel**, Killarney, Co. Kerry. The Killarney Park Hotel is one of the finest luxury hotels Ireland has to offer, perfectly located in the very heart of Killarney town centre, set in mature grounds and framed by the legendary surroundings of Killarney National Park. A Condé Nast Traveller Award Winner, this proud family-owned Leading Hotel of the World offers a warm and welcoming retreat for guests in search of exceptional comfort with all of those little extra touches.

**1 x Night @ Adare Manor Resort**, Adare, Co. Limerick. Enjoy your stay at one of the most luxurious 5 Star hotels in Ireland. Newly refurbished be taken back in time by the opulence that is truly unique for quality, location, service and elegance at Adare Manor set in a 400 acre estate.

**1 x Night @ Ashford Castle**, Cong, Co. Mayo. Enjoy your stay at one of the most luxurious 5 Star Castle hotels in Ireland and the world. Discover the exquisite interiors, delicious cuisine, passionate team, wealth of estate activities and state-of-the-art spa. As Ireland's top hotel destination and former home of the Guinness family, enjoy the activities of the 350 acre estate such as Equestrian, Clay shooting, Archery, Boat Cruising, Kayaking, Zip lining Golf and Fishing activities.

**1 x Night @ The Merrion Hotel**, Dublin. The Merrion, located in the heart of Dublin city centre, is the capital's most luxurious five star hotel, and a proud member of The Leading Hotels of the World. The Merrion is home to the 2-star Michelin Restaurant Patrick Guilbaud, The Cellar Bar, The Garden Room and the intimate No. 23 Cocktail Bar and has the second largest art collection in Ireland outside of the National Gallery of Ireland.

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## TRANSPORT

10 x Days Chauffeured Guided Tour & Transfers in Deluxe Mercedes Vehicle with leather trim, wifi and air con. Fuel, Tolls, Ferry crossings and driver/guide expenses all included. Your knowledgeable chauffeur will guide you to the best restaurants and local bars as well as informing you on all the historical facts and fables.

## TOUR ITINERARY

### Day 1 - Dublin City Day Tour

Arrive at Dublin Airport on morning flight arrival to be greeted by your chauffeured tour guide at arrivals in Airport. After a quick freshening up embark on a tour of Dublin City including Trinity College, St Patricks Cathedral, National Museum of Archaeological & History, National Gallery of Ireland, Kilmainham Jail and Guinness Storehouse.



Tour of **Trinity College** which is widely considered to be the most prestigious University in Ireland and amongst the most elite in Europe. It houses The Library and the Book of Kells. Trinity College boasts the most extensive Library in Ireland which is a legal deposit Library for Ireland and The United Kingdom containing over 6.2 million printed volumes and significant quantities of manuscripts. The Book of Kells is the centrepiece of an exhibition which attracts over 500,000 visitors to Trinity College in Dublin City each year. It is Ireland's greatest cultural treasure and the world's most famous medieval manuscript. Written around the year 800 AD, the Book of Kells contains a richly decorated copy of the four gospels in a Latin text.



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Tour of the **National Museum of Ireland-Natural History**, on Merrion Street in Dublin, has galleries of animals from Ireland and overseas, as well as geological exhibits from a total collection of about two million scientific specimens. Just two years before Charles Darwin published his famous work, 'The Origin of Species', the Natural History Museum in Merrion Street was opened to the public for the first time in 1857. Now, as then, it educates and inspires, leaving us feeling small and humbled amidst the vast and wondrous diversity of life on display. Tour of the **National Museum of Ireland - Archaeology**, on Kildare Street in Dublin, which first opened its doors in 1890 and since then it has been filling in the blanks for us through its extensive archaeological collections. Take time at The Treasury which features outstanding examples of Celtic and Medieval art, such as the famous Ardagh Chalice, the Tara Brooch and the Derrynaflan Hoard. Gaze in wonder at the finest collection of prehistoric gold artefacts in Europe, which is to be found in Or, Ireland's Gold. Ramble through prehistoric Ireland and experience life at the same time of the Vikings in Viking Age Ireland. Medieval Ireland 1150-1550, documents life in Ireland in the age of cathedrals, monasteries and castles.



Tour of **Saint Patrick's Cathedral** which has been part of Ireland's history for over 800 years and today is one of the most popular visitor attractions in Dublin. Built in honour of Ireland's patron saint between 1220 and 1260 Saint Patrick's Cathedral offers visitors a rich and compelling cultural experience and is one of the few buildings left from medieval Dublin. It is the National Cathedral of the Church of Ireland and is the largest Cathedral in the country. Guided tours of the Cathedral happen regularly throughout the day or a free App can be used for self-guide purpose.

Tour of the **National Gallery of Ireland** in Dublin boasts some 2,500 paintings and approximately 10,000 other works in different media including water-colours, drawings, prints and sculpture. Every major European school of painting is extensively represented. It also houses a renowned collection of Irish paintings, the majority of which are on permanent display. The gallery was established by an Act of Parliament in 1854 and first opened its doors to the public in January 1864.



Tour of **Kilmainham Gaol**, which is the Irish word for Jail. Before it's closure in 1924, Dublin's Kilmainham Gaol held some of the most famous political and military leaders in Irish history such as Robert Emmet, Charles Stewart Parnell, the 1916 Rising leaders and Eamon de Valera. Leaders of the rebellions of 1798, 1803, 1848, 1867 and 1916 were detained here. The visit includes a guided tour and exhibition, it gives the visitor a dramatic and realistic insight into what it was like to have been confined in one of these forbidding bastions of punishment and correction between 1796 when it opened and 1924 when it closed.

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Tour of the **Guinness Storehouse** located in the heart of the St James's Gate Brewery, which has been home to the world famous stout since 1759. Ireland's number one International Visitor Attraction, the Guinness Storehouse is the Home of Guinness, where you will discover what goes into the making of each and every pint, and learn about the incredible brand history stretching over 250 years. The highlight for many visitors is the Gravity Bar, symbolically the 'Head of the Pint", where visitors can enjoy unparalleled panoramic views of Dublin city – views that are all the better with a complimentary pint in hand.

**Accommodation:** O' Callaghan Hotels (Davenport, St Stephans Green, Alexander or Mont Clare Hotels), / Merrion Hotel

## Day 2 - South Dublin & Wicklow (Dublin to Kilkenny)

Touring Powerscourt, Sallys Gap, Glendalough, Avoca Woolen Mills & Kennedy Ancestral Home



Travel to **Powerscourt** which is one of Europe's great treasures and Ireland's most famous estates. Gracing the Wicklow Mountains, Powerscourt is a heritage property with a surprising difference and a great family attraction. Powerscourt House was once a beautiful Palladian mansion, home to Lord Powerscourt and his family for over 350 years. Powerscourt offers visitors a sublime blend of formal gardens, sweeping terraces, statues and ornamental lakes with secret hollows, rambling walks and beautiful walled gardens. The winding pathways feel like a

secret garden at times, revealing new treasures such as fountains from Paris, gates from Venice and statues from Rome. There are hundreds of different types of plants, flowers and trees in the gardens. Tara's Palace, a museum for children is located in Powerscourt House and is a favourite among visitors.

Travel to **Sallys Gap** which is one of the two east to west passes across the Wicklow Mountains. Passing over the Luggula Estate and over Lough Tay and Lough Dan, the Sally Gap offers spectacular views of the Wicklow mountains. The Wicklow Mountains National Park, one of the six national parks in Ireland. The mountains are the highest area of upland in Ireland and are home to some of the highest peaks in the country. The central spine of the Wicklow Mountains is built on a granite base that runs in a line of fine peaks. Otherwise gentle slopes are greatly diversified by expansive corries gouged out of the flanks of the higher summits. South of the Lugnaquilla the range descends into lower, forested hills.



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Special features in the area to the east of the spine are the glacial valleys that penetrate the mountain range. These valleys contain spectacular waterfalls, stern corries and remnants of primeval woods that once covered most of Ireland.



Travel to **Glendalough** Visitor Centre which is dedicated to showcasing the Glendalough monastic site, one of Ireland's most famous tourist attractions. Positioned in a glaciated valley with two lakes, the Glendalough monastic site is a fascinating early Christian settlement in a spectacular natural location, founded by Saint Kevin in the 6th century. The extensive ruins of Glendalough include several early churches, and an impressive 30-metre high round tower. The valley stretches for approximately 3km and contains several areas of great historical interest and beauty. The Upper Lake area was the original site of the monastic settlement and features Reefert Church, Temple-na-Skellig, Saint Kevin's Cell, Saint Kevin's Bed, the Caher and various high crosses.

Built on the banks of the Avoca River from where it used to draw its power, you'll find a large **Avoca Woolen Mill** Store and Café, and a working hand weaving mill. The Avoca Mill itself dates from 1723, and is said to be Ireland's oldest working mill, and indeed one of the world's oldest. The Avoca throws, rugs and scarves you will find at Avoca's 12 locations around Ireland and shipped all over the world are all woven in the original mill. Initially it took the raw wool from the sheep of the surrounding hills and valleys and through a process of carding, spinning, dyeing and weaving transformed it into clothing and blankets for barter and sale. Visitors are welcome to view the whole weaving process at first hand with a Tour of the Mill. The picturesque village of Avoca itself was the fictional home of BBC TV's Ballykissangel. Overall, the warm and friendly atmosphere in this charming and historical location makes the visit to Avoca a wonderful experience.



Travel to the **Kennedy Ancestral Home**, birthplace of President John F. Kennedy's great-grandfather Patrick Kennedy, which celebrates the story of five generations of the Kennedy dynasty and is still today farmed by his descendants. The Kennedy Homestead, a unique cultural museum is dedicated to "the Kennedys who went



away and the Kennedys who stayed behind" and plays a vital part in the continued preservation of the Kennedy legacy in Ireland. In 1963 President John F. Kennedy visited the Kennedy Homestead only a few months before being assassinated. The curators of the Kennedy Homestead Visitor Centre, using the Kennedy Library archival collection in Boston, have created a state of the art interpretative exhibit which explores the circumstances of Patrick Kennedy's departure from Ireland in 1848 and pieces together the story of the most famous Irish-American family through the 20th century to the present day.

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**Accommodation:** Pembroke Hotel / Butler Guesthouse, Kilkenny

### **Day 3 - Castle Day Tour (Kilkenny to Ardmore/Castlemartyr)**

Touring Kilkenny Castle, Rock of Cashel, Swiss Cottage & Waterford Crystal.



The magnificent **Kilkenny Castle** overlooks the River Nore and has guarded this important river crossing for more than 900 years. The gardens, with extensive woodland paths, rose garden and ornamental lake, create the setting for a beautiful stroll. Two wings of the castle have been restored to their 19th Century splendour and include a library, drawing room and the noted Long Gallery. A suite of former servants rooms now houses the Butler Art Gallery, which mounts frequently changing exhibitions of contemporary art. The Parade Tower is the Castle's conference venue.

Depart Kilkenny and travel to the **Rock of Cashel** for a tour. The Rock of Cashel is one of Ireland's most visited sites, and is a spectacular and archaeological site. A collection of medieval ecclesiastical buildings set on an outcrop of limestone in the Golden Vale. The 12th-century round tower is of the oldest surviving building on the Rock, also include a high cross, and the ruins Romanesque chapel - Cormac's Chapel is one of the earliest, and finest churches built in the Romanesque style. The 13th-century Gothic cathedral is a large cruciform Gothic church without aisles built between 1230 and 1270. Also a 15th-century castle and the Hall of the Vicars is the entry point to the ecclesiastical enclosure. The Hall houses the museum where the original Cross of St. Patrick can be found.



Travel to the **Swiss Cottage**, a delightful ornamental cottage, which was built in the early 1800s by Richard Butler, first Earl of Glengall. It remains an enduring local attraction in South Tipperary and an iconic image of the Ireland of yore. Based on a design by the famous English Regency architect John Nash and inspired by nature, the cottage's unusual and rustic features include a distinctive thatched roof while its external woodwork resembles branched trees. The nature theme continues throughout the former guest cottage's internal furnishings and wallpaper. Situated on an elevated site with access by stone steps, the Swiss Cottage interior contains a graceful spiral staircase and some elegantly decorated rooms. The wallpaper in the salon, manufactured by the Dufour factory, is one of the first commercially produced Parisian wallpapers.





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Travel to Waterford to visit the **House of Waterford Crystal** and watch the craftsmen at work followed by a visit to the opulent retail store, all located in the centre of the Viking city of Waterford. A unique highlight of a visit is the factory tour which gives an up close insight into the centuries old tradition of Waterford Crystal making. Feel the heat of the furnace and marvel at the skills of the craftsmen. The factory tour includes the following traditional production areas; wooden mould making, crystal blowing and furnace, crystal cutting and quality inspection and finishing. Yet more stages to creating this beautiful product include crystal sculpting, engraving and design inspiration. After the tour indulge your passion for the world's most famous crystal in a lavish retail store, which houses the largest collection of Waterford Crystal found anywhere in the world. An exhibition of sporting trophies and statement pieces is an absolute must see attraction.



**Accommodation:** Garryvoe Hotel, Castlemartyr / Cliff House Hotel, Ardmore

#### **Day 4 - Touring East Cork & Cork City (Ardmore/Castlemartyr to Kinsale)**

Touring Middleton Distillery, Cobh, Blarney Castle (Kiss the Blarney Stone), Cork Gael & English Market.

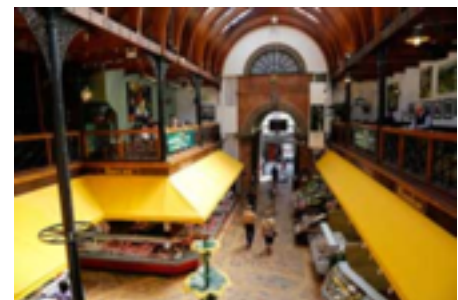
To visit the **Jameson Experience in Midleton**, East Cork is to take a leap through history. Step through the doors and you'll step back in time—carts are piled high with sacks of grain and you can smell the malted barley drying in closed kilns. Thousands of casks housing ageing whiskey are on show, as well as original kilns and the largest pot still in the world. You'll learn about "the angel's share" (the amount of alcohol that evaporates from the cask during maturation) and the fascinating story behind the creation of one of the most well-known Irish whiskeys in the world. Visitors are guided through the distillery scene, while selected volunteers are offered the chance to take part in a whiskey tasting that will demonstrate the differences between Scotch, American and Irish whiskey. After the tasting, guests are rewarded with a much coveted Irish Whiskey Taster Certificate, as well as a complimentary glass of Jameson with a mixer of their choice.



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Travel onwards and visit the harbour town of **Cobh**. Cobh Heritage Centre presents the Emigration & Maritime Story a dramatic exhibition of the origins, history and legacy of Cobh. Retrace the steps of the two and a half million adults and children who emigrated from Ireland via Cobh on coffin ships, early steamers and finally on the great ocean liners. Explore the conditions on board the early emigrant vessels, including the dreaded coffin ship and experience life on board a convict ship leaving Cobh for Australia in 1801. You can also learn of Cobh's special connections with the ill fated Titanic, which sank on her maiden voyage, located in the original White Star Line Ticket Office in the centre of Cobh town (formally known as Queenstown), in what was the departure point for the final 123 passengers who boarded the Titanic. You can also relive the horror of World War I and the sinking of the Lusitania off Cork Harbour with the loss of 1,198 lives. Another attraction to visit in Cobh is the grandiose neo-Gothic building of St Colman's Cathedral. It took 47 years to build and finally opened in 1911. Its spire stands 100m tall and the tower houses 42 bells, comprising the largest carillon in Ireland.

Travel onwards to Blarney to tour **Blarney Castle and Gardens**. The historic Blarney Castle near Cork City is perhaps most famous for the Blarney Stone but it's also a great destination for the whole family. According to legend, the stone has the power to give anyone who kisses it the 'gift of the gab' (or the ability to be a smooth talker), so for those who dare, a climb to the battlements to reach the famous stone could be well worth it. For a more relaxing experience, take a stroll through the Blarney Castle Gardens and Rock Close—an attractive destination in their own right.



Travel to Cork City to experience bygone days in Cork, both inside and outside prison walls, and also discover the impact radio has had since its invention at the **Cork City Gaol** and **Radio Museum Experience**. Located within earshot of the famous Bells of Shandon. Step back in time to see what 19th and early 20th century life was like in Cork, both inside and outside prison walls. The exhibition shows amazingly lifelike figures, furnished cells and sound effects that allow the visitor to experience the day-to-day life of prisoners and gaolers. Situated in the former Governor's House, the Radio Museum Experience incorporates the restored 6CK Radio Broadcasting Studio. The experience is complemented by an audio-visual presentation on Marconi, particularly his Irish connections, and a wonderfully nostalgic collection of artefacts from the early days of radio. The **English Market** is an indoor food market offering a Victorian wonderland of exotic imported goods and delicious local produce. The origins of the English Market trace back to the times of King James I in 1610, some four hundred years previously and has been officially trading since 1788. A mix of traditional Cork fare and exciting new foods from afar, combined with long standing family-run stalls contribute to the unique appeal and atmosphere of this market. Famously visited by Queen Elizabeth on her historic visit to Ireland in 2013 following the footsteps of royalty at this ancient market place.

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Travel onwards to final destination of Kinsale and sample the culinary and scenic delights of this harbour town.

**Accommodation:** 4 Star Trident Hotel / 5 Star Perryville Guesthouse, Kinsale

## **Day 5 - Touring West Cork & Killarney National Park**

Depart Kinsale and touring of Charles Fort, Franciscan friary of Timoleague, Clonakilty, Drombeg Stone Circle, Glandore, Union Hall, Bantry House & Gardens, Kenmare and Ladies View.

Before arrival in Kinsale take a tour of **Charles Fort**. This star-shaped military fortress was constructed between 1677 and 1682, during the reign of King Charles II, to protect the town and harbour of Kinsale in County Cork. William Robinson, architect of the Royal Hospital in Kilmainham Dublin, and Superintendent of Fortifications, is credited with designing the fort. As one of the largest military forts in the country, Charles Fort has been associated with some of the most momentous events in Irish history. These include the Williamite War in 1690 and the Irish Civil War of 1922 - 23. Charles Fort remained garrisoned by the British army until 1922.



Tour of the **Franciscan friary of Timoleague** which was founded in the late-13th or early-14th century and today, extensive ruins remain in the village, which is located in County Cork, just 10km east of Clonakilty. Visitors can explore the long church, nave, transept, cloister and tower. They can also find a bullaun stone and fine windows. It's believed that either Donal Glas MacCarthy or William Barry founded the friary, which survived until it was burnt by English soldiers in 1642. Travel onwards to Clonakilty for a quick stop in this harbour town.

Travel to **Drombeg Stone Circle**, or as it is locally known as the Druid's Altar, which is located on the edge of a rocky terrace overlooking the sea about a kilometre away, in Glandore County Cork. This is a circle of 17 standing stones which on excavation showed that there had been an urn burial in the centre. It has been dated to between 153 BC and 127AD. Excavations in 1957 and 1958 revealed cremated bones in a deliberately broken pot wrapped with thick cloth and buried near the centre of the circle along with 80 other smashed sherds, four bits of a shale and a collection of sweepings from a pyre. After Drombeg travel onwards via the spectacular picturesque fishing villages of Glandore and Union League.





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Travel onwards to tour **Bantry House & Gardens**, which is the ancestral home of the Earls of Bantry which is situated overlooking Bantry Bay in West Cork. The title lapsed in 1891 but the house is still owned and lived in by the direct descendants of the 1st Earl of Bantry. Since 1946 the House and Garden has been open to the public. The House has an important collection of art treasures mainly collected by the 2nd Earl of Bantry on his Grand Tour. The garden was inspired by travels of the 2nd Earl. It is laid out in the Italian style over seven terraces, with the house sitting on the third terrace. A Parterre facing south surrounding a wisteria circle which again surrounds a fountain was also created. From there rise the famous Hundred Steps, a monumental staircase built of local stone, set amidst azaleas and rhododendron.



Travel onwards to the beautiful town of **Kenmare** on the Ring of Kerry. Nestling peacefully at the mouth of the Kenmare Bay is Kenmare one of Ireland's loveliest Heritage Towns. From its origins in 1678 the town of Kenmare, Co Kerry, was special. Kenmare is a haven of tranquillity, gourmet food, superb accommodation and breathtaking scenery, in one of the most natural, unspoilt environments in Europe. Tour Kenmare Art Gallery to see how this innovative gallery focuses on contemporary Irish art and, in particular, on the artists of the Beara Peninsula. Visit the Kenmare Lace and Design Centre which hosts an antique lace exhibition, lacemaking demonstrations, lace for sale, lacemaking materials and general haberdashery. Depart Kenmare and travel over the McGillycuddy Reeks Mountains and into **Killarney National Park**, with its 25,000 acres of woodland and magical mountains, with spectacular views of the Lakes of Killarney. Travel to **Ladies' View**, made famous by Queen Victoria's ladies in waiting in 1831, which has spectacular views of Killarney national park from its perch on the Ring of Kerry. Travel onwards to your final destination in Killarney.

**Accommodation:** Great Southern or Royal Hotel / Park Hotel, Killarney

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## Day 6 - Touring Ring of Kerry

Tour of the Ring of Kerry including sheep-dog demonstration at Caitins, including off the beaten track tour to Valentia Island, Kerry Cliffs and Skellig Michael, Waterville, Staigue Fort, Derrynane House, Sneem, Molls Gap, Killarney National Park, Muckross House & Gardens and Ross Castle.

The **sheep-dog demonstration at Caitins** is one of the most unusual – and popular – sights on the Ring of Kerry. Local farmer Brendan Ferris will introduce you to his sheep dogs. In the distance, a flock of sheep can



be seen widely dispersed on the side of the mountain behind him. Brendan then gives a fascinating demonstration of how sheep dogs are used to bring in the sheep on real farms. Responding to Brendan's whistled commands, the dogs guide the sheep downwards. Miraculously, by the end of the demonstration all the sheep are calmly gathered in a pen beside you.

Travel onwards off the beaten track of the Ring of Kerry to **Valentia Island**. The western part of the island is dominated by the barren, dramatic cliffs of Bray Head which command spectacular views of the Kerry coastline while the mild effect of the Gulf Stream results in Valentia's balmy climate and lush, colourful vegetation. Valentia was the eastern terminus of the first commercially viable transatlantic telegraph cable. This vast endeavour resulted in commercially viable transatlantic telegraph communications from Foilhommerum



Bay to Heart's Content, Newfoundland in 1866. Transatlantic telegraph cables operated from Valentia Island for one hundred years. The Tetra pod footprints were found on the northern part of the island. These magnificent imprints of history are thought to date from Devonian times between some 350 to 370 million years ago. An important quarry on the northern part of the island which opened in 1816 still flourishes today. The famous Valentia Slate has been used in many prominent buildings including the British House of Commons in London. View one of the Great Lighthouses of Ireland, Valentia Island Lighthouse on Cromwell Point was built on the site of a 17th century fort and has stood against sea and invader for hundreds of years.

Travel onwards via the spectacular **Kerry Cliffs**. The Kerry Cliffs offer spectacular views of the Skellig Islands and Puffin Island, over 1,000 feet (305 meters) high. The cliffs were formed over 400 million years ago. Located just 3km from Portmagee village, high above the wave lashed cliffs of Kerry Head at the most westerly point of the headland once stood two stone build forts, today all that survives is a stone wall a few feet high is with sheer 60ft cliffs behind them and acres of wild wind blow bog land in front. The Skelligs are world



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famous, each in its own right and recently were made even more famous on the big screen by the Star Wars Movie. **Skellig Michael** is known throughout the world of archaeology as the site of a well preserved monastic outpost of the early Christian period, now designated as a UNESCO World Heritage Site. Small Skellig is equally renowned in matters of ornithology as the home of some 27,000 pairs of gannets, the second largest colony of such sea birds in the world.

Travel onwards via **Waterville** to **Staigue Fort**. This one of the largest and finest ring forts you are likely to see in Ireland. The fort consists of a massive circular rampart surrounded by an external bank. The wall is up to



5.5m (18ft) high and 4m (13ft) thick, surrounding a circular area of 27.4m (90ft) in diameter. Staigue fort shows great skill and craftsmanship in the area of stone building. The technique of dry-walling so well demonstrated here has a long tradition in Ireland. The survival of so many early structures throughout the Irish countryside is partly due to the mastery of the craft of interlocking stones to achieve total stability, even in large building works like Staigue fort.

Travel onwards via the photographic Wild Atlantic way coastline to **Derrynane House**. This was the ancestral home of one of Ireland's most famous historical figures, Daniel O'Connell, lawyer, politician and statesman. Situated on 120 hectares of parklands on the scenic Kerry coast, the House displays many relics of O'Connell's life and career as a museum in his honour. The main street in Dublin, O'Connell Street is called after him. Derrynane National Historic Park, plantations and garden walks were laid out in the 18th and 19th Centuries, principally north and west of the house. Some features of the demesne are strongly associated with Daniel O'Connell, including the old summer house.



Travel onwards to the quaint little village of **Sneem** famously the home of the Casey Family of 7 brothers considered to have been the strongest and toughest family on earth. In 1982 the seven Casey brothers were inducted into the Irish Sports Hall of Fame, the only family ever to receive that honour. The list of Casey sporting achievements are many and varied. Paddy Casey was undefeated light and heavyweight wrestling champion of Ireland and also won many long-distance cycling races in Ireland. Dan Casey was a contractor, champion oarsman, and a tug-of-war champion. Jack Casey had remained in Ireland, married and had taken up farming and fishing. A superb oarsman in his own right, he helped the Caseys win the Salter cup in the Killarney Regatta. Tom Casey

became British amateur champion in 1937 after only nine days' training. Jim Casey won the Canadian and South American wrestling titles. Mick Casey in a career that lasted over twenty years, had 200 wrestling bouts

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and, of course, probably the greatest of them all, Steve 'Crusher' Casey became the supreme wrestler in the world and he retired undefeated as world wrestling champion. A statue stands in Sneem in his honour. Travel onwards over the Macgillycuddy's Reeks to **Molls gap**, an area and its shop is a panoramic spot visited by thousands of tourists each year. Moll's Gap is named for Moll Kissane who ran a shebeen, a small pub, on a rocky breach during the construction of the original Kenmare Killarney road in the 1820s. She became popular for selling home brewed poitin, whiskey, to the hardy men who worked on the road.



Travel to Killarney National Park on the shores of Muckross Lake is the 15th century tower house **Ross Castle**. It is a typical example of the stronghold of an Irish chieftain in the Middle Ages and is fully restored and furnished with period oak furniture. It is typical of its style, with square bartizans on diagonally opposite corners and a thick end wall containing a tier of chambers and winding stairs. **Muckross House & Gardens**, once visited by Queen Victoria, is situated on the shores of Muckross Lake within the stunning surroundings of Killarney National Park. This magnificent Victorian mansion is one of Ireland's leading stately homes. The elegantly furnished rooms portray the lifestyles of the landed gentry, while downstairs in the basement you can experience the working conditions of the servants employed in the House back in the day. Muckross House is also home to a number of skilled craftworkers, who can be seen using skills in the crafts of weaving, pottery and bookbinding. Many exotic trees and shrubs flourish in the mild climate and sheltered location of the Muckross gardens. Attractive features include a fine collection of rhododendrons and azaleas, an outstanding rock garden on a natural rock outcrop and beautiful tree-fringed lawns. Depart Killarney and travel onwards to the picturesque village of Adare.

**Accommodation:** 4 Star Great Southern or Royal Hotel / 5 Star Park Hotel, Killarney

### **Day 7 - Touring Dingle Peninsula (Killarney to Adare)**

Touring Dingle Town (Dingle Crystal, Dingle Aquarium & Dingle Distillery), Sleah Head Ring (Dunbeg Fort, Beehive Huts, The Blasket Centre, Gallurus Oratory & Kilmalkedar Church) and Conor Pass.

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Travel to Dingle to firstly tour **Dingle Aquarium**. Gaze in wonder as you get up close and personal with the magnificent marine life inhabitants. Submerge yourself in the wonderful enchanted underwater world! Come face-to-face with the most fearsome creatures of the sea: sharks. Gain exclusive access to Sandtiger Sharks! Meet the delightful Polar Penguins and gets hands-on experience at the Touch Tank where you can stroke the friendly Rays and even hold a Starfish. Time allowing why not get up and close with the natural wildlife in Dingle Bay by going on a boat cruise to see the famous **Fungie the Dolphin**. In 1983, an extraordinary and curious visitor decided to visit Dingle Harbour. This amazing Dolphin befriended the local fishermen while they were fishing in Dingle harbour and Bay. They named him "Fungie" the Dingle Dolphin. This wild bottlenosed dolphin has remained and has become Dingles most famous resident. Fungie has never been fed by humans in order to induce him to stay or to perform. He thrives on playing around with the Boats that go out on tours to see him, or with any other small craft that comes his way to play. He is approximately 13ft in length and weighs over 250lbs.



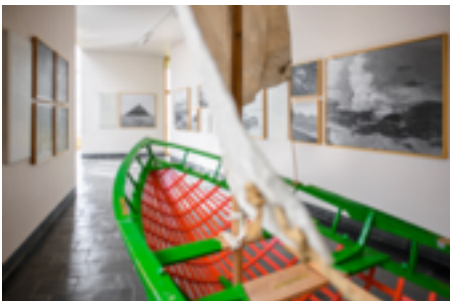
**Dingle Crystal** are a family business specialising in hand-cut Irish crystal. Each piece is handmade by master craftsman Sean Daly at his workshop in Dingle, Co. Kerry. Sean's unique celtic designs are inspired by the rich heritage and breathtaking landscape of Ireland's west coast. All of our crystalware is designed, cut and polished by hand, using traditional techniques. With every step of the production process being carried out in Ireland, Dingle Crystal is a true embodiment of Irish craft. No two pieces are exactly the same and each piece is personally signed by Sean. This is how Sean guarantees a unique and individual piece of Irish crystal to each of his customers. The **Dingle Whiskey Distillery** is not in the business of creating megabrands, nor do they distil for anyone else. Their scale is modest, their approach to what they make is essentially artisan and they have rekindled the tradition of independent distilling in Ireland. Two hundred years ago, this small island had over a hundred officially recognised distilleries; by the turn of this century there were two. The Dingle Distillery welcomes visitors to enjoy a tour of their facility where the entire production process, for all their products, are explained and a gin/vodka sample is provided. The distillery tour will give you an introduction into Irish whiskey and into the Dingle Distillery.

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Depart Dingle and travel to Mount Eagle on the Dingle peninsula to view **Dunbeg Fort** which is an impressive promontory stone fort. The fort has suffered a lot of damage due to erosion but is still very impressive. Inside the fort is a circular Beehive hut or Clochan with a square interior. The fort has four outer defensive banks and a souterrain about 16 metres long, leading from the front of the outer defenses to the interior. Travel onwards via the Wild Atlantic Way along the Sleah Head Drive. Stop to tour the **Beehive Huts**, the most common surviving house type in Corca Dhuibhne during the Early Medieval period was the clochán (or Beehive Hut as known locally), a round house built using local stone, and roofed either in stone, using the corbelling technique. Many examples can be found in the Ceann Trá area, particularly near Sleah Head and they date from the 6th to the 10th or 11th centuries AD. These structures are found either singly, conjoined or three together. These were the houses in which people lived, be they of moderate or even high status, or monks within monasteries. Sometimes underground passages known as souterrains are found associated with them.



Travel onwards to the **Blasket Centre**. This is a fascinating heritage & cultural centre/museum honouring the unique community who lived on the remote Blasket Islands until their evacuation in 1953. The Centre details the community's struggle for existence, their language and culture, folklore & customs, and their extraordinary literary legacy – with classics such as 'The Islandman', 'Twenty Years A-Growing' and 'Peig'.



Travel onwards to **Gallarus Oratory**, which is the best preserved early Christian church in Ireland. Gallarus Oratory, was built between the seventh and eighth century and is the best preserved early Christian church in

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Ireland. It represents the apogee of dry-stone corbelling, using techniques first developed by Neolithic tomb makers. The stones were laid at a slight angle, lower on the outside than the inside to allow water to run off. Travel onwards to tour **Kilmalkedar**. Kilmalkedar is a spectacular early-Christian and medieval ecclesiastical site. The ruins are spread across an area of 10 acres. Among them, visitors will enjoy examining the fine 12th-century Hiberno-Romanesque church and several fascinating artefacts, such as an alphabet stone, holed Ogham stone, sundial and large stone cross.

Travel over the spectacular Conor Pass and travel onwards to the picturesque town of Adare.

**Accommodation:** 4 Star Dunraven Arms Hotel / 5 Star Adare Manor Resort

## **Day 8 - Touring Cliffs of Moher & Burren**

Depart Adare touring Desmond Castle, Bunratty Castle, Cliffs of Moher, traditional music town Doolin, The Burren Centre & Perfumery, Poulnbroone Portal Dolmen Tomb.



**Desmond Castle** was erected with an ancient ring-fort, around the early part of the 13th century. It became a strategic fortress during the following turbulent years. It was the property of the Earls of Kildare for nearly 300 years until the rebellion in 1536, when it was forfeited and granted to the Earls of Desmond who gave the castle its present name. Travel onwards to **Bunratty castle & Folk Park**, which was built in 1425, and restored in 1954 to its former Medieval splendour and houses the Bunratty Collection, 450 pieces of Medieval furniture and artefacts. At nighttime, the castle is the impressive setting for its popular Medieval banquets, held year round. The site on which Bunratty Castle stands was in origin a Viking trading camp in 970. The present structure is the last of four castles to be built on the site. Robert De Muscegros, a Norman, built the first defensive fortress (an earthen mound with a strong wooden tower on top) in 1250. At this time Bunratty became a large town and had a population of about 1,000. Within the grounds is the folk park, where 19th Century life is vividly recreated. Set on 26 acres, the impressive park features over 30 buildings, including a schoolhouse, post office and doctor's house in a living village setting.

Travel onwards to Ireland's most visited natural attraction, the **Cliffs of Moher**. They stretch for 8km (5miles), as the crow flies, along the Atlantic coast of County Clare in the west of Ireland and reach 214m (702feet) at their highest point at Knockardakin just north of O'Brien's Tower. At the southern end of the Cliffs of Moher stands Hags Head a natural rocky promontory that resembles a seated woman when viewed from the north. In the ancient Gaelic language, the word Mothar means "ruined fort" and a 1st century BC fort stood where

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Moher tower now stands. Therefore the Cliffs of Moher means the cliffs of the ruined fort and although there is no trace remaining of this two thousand year old fort it has given name to the cliffs which are visited annually by almost one million visitors. The Cliffs of Moher Visitor Experience is located almost midway along these spectacular cliffs and is home to; an environmentally friendly visitor centre set into the hillside, O'Brien's Tower – a 19th century viewing tower, and 800metres of protected cliff side pathways, viewing areas and steps. Travel onwards to **Doolin Village** for lunch in one of the many traditional Irish musical pubs. Sample the great atmosphere in this village that is steeped in the history of traditional Irish music.



Discover the unique magic of this 'Bhoireann' or 'stony place' region in the **Burren Centre**. This visitor centre lies at the heart of the historic village of Kilfenora. It boasts a fantastic exhibition, an audio-visual theatre, local crafts shop and tea room. The audio visual film, narrated by famous environmentalist Eamon de Buitlear, traces the formation of the Burren 320 million years ago and explains why Alpine, Artic and Mediterranean plants grow side by side in this unique limestone world. Understand how ancient man left his mark on the landscape in the form of the Dolmen Tombs and burial chambers, which still stand today as stone sentinels to the Burren's heritage. Travel onwards to visit the famous **Poulnabrone Portel Dolmen Tomb**. Travel through the rugged Burren landscape towards Galway and onto your final destination today of the magnificent Ashford Castle Estate.

**Accommodation:** 4 Star Lodge @ Ashford Castle / 5 Star Ashford Castle, Cong, Co. Mayo

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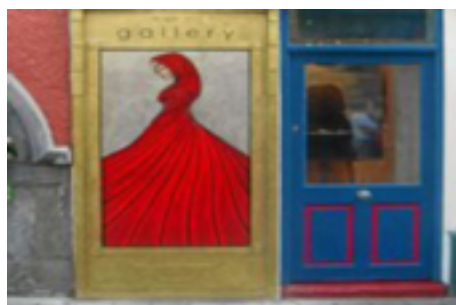
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## **Day 9 - Touring Galway City & Clonmacnoise**



Partake in Ashford Castle activities in the morning. Travel onwards to Galway City of Tribes for walking tour after dinner. Tour Shop Street, Quay Street and the Spanish Arch. Depart Galway and travel via Clonmacnoise to Dublin.

For hundreds of years, the grounds of Ashford Castle have provided a vast playground for its owners and their friends. Successive generations of the de Burgo, Bingham, Browne and Guinness families have created one of the finest sporting estates in all of Ireland, if not the world – which is proudly continued to this day. The expansive 350 acre Ashford Estate lends itself perfectly to a range of activities, from country classic pastimes such as horse riding, fishing, falconry and shooting, to more modern activities such as golf, cycling and kayaking. So whether you are the active type or prefer to relax and soak up the scenery, make use of this morning to engage in an activity at Ashford Castle.



Travel to Galway City of Tribes for a Tour of the City. Strolling **Shop Street and Quay Street** is part of the Galway experience. Entertaining talented buskers and mimics, shops of all types, restaurants, cafes, pubs and people watching galore. Art and entertainment surround you as you explore these streets. The **Spanish Arch** was built in 1584, and is located on the banks of the river Corrib, and on the site more commonly known as Ceann na Bhalla (The Head of the Wall). It was originally an extension of the famous city walls, designed to protect the quays. In the past, it was known as The Blind Arch. Situated behind the famous **Spanish Arch**, Galway City Museum houses exhibitions which explore aspects of the history and heritage of Galway City. Ongoing exhibitions included Routes to the Past (Prehistoric Galway); Galway Within the Walls (Medieval Galway); Pádraic Ó Conaire: the Man and the Statue, The Galway Hooker and SeaScience. Among the Museum highlights are the Galway Civic Sword and Great Mace. The Civic Sword dates from the Charter of King James I in 1610, which granted authority for the carrying of such a weapon before the Mayor. The Great Mace, a massive piece of ornamental silverwork crafted in Dublin in 1710, was presented to the town by Edward Eyre, Mayor of Galway, in 1712.

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## COMPANY NAME: IRELAND TRAVEL LINKS

Travel to one of the most famous monastic sites in Ireland, **Clonmacnoise** located along the River Shannon near the village of Shannonbridge, Co Offaly. It became a world-renowned centre for learning in the 9th century and was visited by Pope John Paul II. A walk amongst the peaceful stone ruins of this famous place will conjure images of the saints and scholars of Ireland's renowned Golden Age of learning. Founded by St Ciaran in the mid-6th century, it became a great centre of religion and learning, visited by scholars from all over the world. Many historical manuscripts, including the 11th century Annals of Tighernach and the 12th century Book of the Dun Cow, were written here. The beautifully preserved structures of Clonmacnoise Cathedral, Temple Doolin, Temple Hurpan and Temple Melaghlin will impress and leave those who visit Clonmacnoise with an authentic sense of the history of Ireland. Travel onwards to Dublin City.



**Accommodation:** 4 Star Maldron Dublin Airport / 5 Star Merrion Hotel

### **Day 10 - Depart Dublin Airport**

Depart from Dublin Airport

### **Terms & Conditions**

Costs may fluctuate upon the time of year and availability cannot be guaranteed on all accommodations.

**25% Deposit required to secure the booking of Accommodation and Transport. Non refundable upon payment.**

**Full payment of tour required 1 month in advance of the tour date. Non refundable upon payment.**

**Please note Accommodation includes Bed & Breakfast only.**

**All lunch and evening meals are not included, but the finalised itinerary will have suggested local restaurants.**

**Activity costs are not included unless requested.**

**It is advised to take out travel insurance to cover every eventuality.**

**Tips are not included but encouraged.**

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