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# EXECUTIVE TOUR SUMMARY

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### Arrive and Depart from Shannon Airport

#### Day 1 - Castle Day Tour (Shannon to Kinsale)

Touring Rock of Cashel, Blarney Castle, Jameson Experience at Middleton Distillery & Charles Fort.

#### Day 2 - Touring West Cork & Killarney National Park (Kinsale to Killarney)

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

#### Day 3 - Touring Ring of Kerry (Killarney)

Touring Sheep-dog demonstration at Caitins, off the beaten track Skellig Ring 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.

#### Day 4 - Touring Dingle Peninsula (Killarney to Dingle)

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

#### Day 5 - Touring Cliffs of Moher & Burren (Dingle to Cong)

Touring Conor Pass, Cliffs of Moher, traditional music town of Doolin, The Burren Centre & Perfumery, Poulnabrone Portal Dolmen Tomb.

#### Day 6 - Touring Connemara National Park (Cong)

Touring Quiet Man Museum, Killary Fjord, Kylemore Abbey & Connemara National Park

#### Day 7 - Touring Galway City of Tribes (Cong to Clare)

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

#### Day 8 - Depart Shannon 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 @ 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 @ Benners Hotel**, Dingle, Co. Kerry. Situated in the centre of Dingle Town, its old world charm and elegance will captivate you from the moment you arrive. Dingle's Benners Hotel is one of the most luxurious Dingle hotels, offering you the best of both worlds - traditional Irish warmth and comfort coupled with the best of modern facilities.

**2 x Nights @ 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 @ Old Ground Hotel**, Ennis, Co. Clare. A beautifully restored 18th century manor house hotel in Ennis town centre, this is a unique 4 star Co Clare property. A warm welcome, a highly acclaimed culinary experience using local produce and luxurious accommodation awaits you. The Old Ground Hotel is situated just a mere 15 minute drive from Shannon International Airport.

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## **5 STAR ACCOMMODATION**

**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 @ Pax House**, Dingle, Co. Kerry. Set against an idyllic sea view backdrop, life at Pax House enjoys a pace, rhythm and calmness of its own, that embodies the serenity and physical beauty of Dingle. The smallest of pampering touches, thoughtful service and stunning art, creating the warmth, cosyness and friendliness of a bed and breakfast but also the professionalism of a boutique hotel.

**2 x Nights @ 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 @ Dromoland Castle**, Co. Clare. Savour your first glimpse of this majestic castle that was the ancestral home of the O'Briens of Dromoland who were the Kings of Thomond and whose lineage goes back 1,000 years to Brian Boru, the only High King of Ireland. Under glittering antique chandeliers descend grand staircases and meander through elegant hallways and beautifully furnished rooms. Relax as the unsurpassed, experienced and friendly staff takes special care of you.

## **TRANSPORT**

8 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.

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## TOUR ITINERARY

### Day 1 - Castle Day Tour

Arrive at Shannon Airport to be greeted by your Chauffeur Guide at arrivals and travel via the Rock of Cashel for a tour. Travel onwards to Blarney Castle (to kiss the famous Blarney Stone). Tour of Middleton Distillery before travelling onwards to tour Charles Fort outside Kinsale before travelling onwards to final destination of Kinsale to sample the culinary and scenic delights of this harbour town.



Depart Dublin and travel via 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 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 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

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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.



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.

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

**Accommodation:** Trident Hotel / Perryville Guesthouse, Kinsale

## **Day 2 - Touring West Cork & Killarney National Park**

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



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





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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.

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 3 - 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 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



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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 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 the shores of Muckross Lake in Killarney and visit 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.

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

#### **Day 4 - 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, Gallarus Oratory & Kilmalkedar Church) and Conor Pass



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Travel to Dingle and 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.

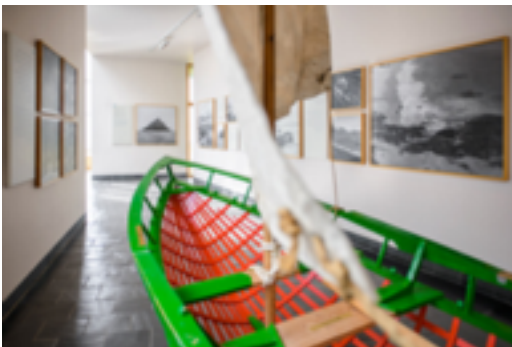


**Dingle Crystal** are a family business specialising in hand-cut Irish crystal. Each piece is handmade by master craftsman Sean Daly at his workshop in Dingle, Co. Kerry. Sean's unique celtic designs are inspired by the rich heritage and breathtaking landscape of Ireland's west coast. All of our crystalware 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 Sleat 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 Sleat 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 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.

**Accommodation:** Benners Hotel / Pax Guesthouse

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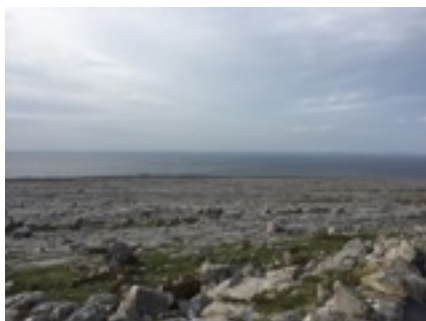
## **Day 5 - Touring Cliffs of Moher & Burren**

Depart Dingle and travel over the dramatic Conor Pass and onwards via Tarbert-Kilimer Ferry to the Cliffs of Moher. Stop in the traditional music town of Doolin for lunch. Travel onwards to tour The Burren Centre & Perfumery and Poulnabrone Portal Dolmen Tomb. Travel onwards via Galway to Ashford Castle.



Travel 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 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 on the way to Galway and your final destination today of the magnificent Ashford Castle Estate.

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

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## Day 6 - Touring Connemara National Park (Cong)

Tour of Quiet Man Museum, Killary Fjord, Leenane, Kylemore Abbey & Connemara National Park.

In 1951 John Ford's greatest movie '**The Quiet Man**' starring John Wayne, Maureen O'Hara and Barry Fitzgerald was made in the west of Ireland. Much of the film centred around the village of Cong on the Mayo-Galway border. Located by the river at Circular Road, Cong, between actual locations used for the filming, the



thatched cottage's ground floor has been designed as an exact replica of 'White-o-Morn' Cottage. Painstaking effort has ensured that all the furnishings, artifacts, costumes etc are authentic reproductions. The four poster bed, tables and chairs, treasured by Mary Kate Danaher, thatched roof, emerald green half-door and whitewashed front combine to charm visitors. The Quiet Man Cottage Museum is a novel concept which will give the visitor a total Quiet Man experience as if they were actually on the movie set.

Travel to the glacial fjord of **Killary**, which acts as a natural border between the two bastions of traditional Ireland County Galway and Mayo. It is 16 kilometres long and in the centre over 45 metres deep. It is one of three glacial fjords that exist in Ireland, the others being Lough Swilly and Carlingford Lough. On its northern shore lies the mountain of Mweelrea, Connacht's highest mountain, rising to 814 metres. To the south rise the



Maumturk Mountains and the Twelve Bens. The area contains some of Ireland's most awe-inspiring and dramatic scenery. The picturesque village of **Leenane** (Leenaun on Irish signposts) sits at the mouth of Killary harbour, almost dwarfed by the Connemara Mountains surrounding it. Leenane became famous in 1989 when it starred in the film adaption of John B Keane's play The Field. Gaynor's pub was the spot where much of the action took place.

Travel onwards to **Kylemore Abbey** and Victorian Walled Garden which is a great destination for a day out in majestic Connemara to rank as an unforgettable memory. The dramatic landscape and iconic image of a gothic castle reflected in a Connemara lake has made Kylemore Abbey world-famous and it is now the largest tourist attraction in the west of Ireland. The Benedictine nuns invite visitors to experience the Victorian atmosphere of the Abbey's restored rooms, miniature gothic church, head gardener's house and garden boy's house. Learn of the



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tales of tragedy and romance, the engineering initiatives, model farms, royal visits and the Abbey's former role as a girls boarding school.

**Connemara National Park** covers some 2,957 hectares of scenic mountains, expanses of bogs, heaths, grasslands and woodlands. Some of the Park's mountains, namely Benbaun, Bencullagh, Benbrack and Muckanaght, are part of the famous Twelve Bens or Beanna Beola range. A number of walking trails beginning at the Visitor Centre offer walkers a variety of scenic routes and nature trails through the park. Stunning vistas from the 400-metre high Diamond Hill include the distant islands of Inishbofin, Inishturk and Inishshark, and the turreted Kylemore Abbey. The park is also home to Connemara ponies, red deer and an enormous variety of birdlife, including skylarks, stonechats and peregrine falcons. The Visitor Centre features include exhibitions, the 'Man and the landscape' multi-lingual audio visual show and tea room (seasonal). Entrance to the Visitor Centre is free of charge. A summer programme of guided walks and special events for younger visitors are also available at the Visitor Centre.



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

## Day 7 - Touring Galway City of Tribes (Cong to Clare)

Partake in Ashford Castle activities in the morning. Depart Ashford and travel to Galway City of Tribes to tour Shop Street, Quay Street and the Spanish Arch. Travel onwards to Co. Clare accommodation.



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

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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.

**Accommodation:** Old Ground Hotel, Ennis / Dromoland Castle, Co. Clare

## Day 8 - Depart Shannon Airport

Travel to the nearby Shannon Airport for departure flight.

## 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.**

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**COMPANY NAME: IRELAND TRAVEL LINKS**

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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