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# EXECUTIVE TOUR SUMMARY

## SUGGESTED EXECUTIVE TOUR SUMMARY

### Arrive and Depart from Dublin Airport

Combining Private Guided Tours with rail transport between the regions of the East and South West of Ireland, these tours allow flexibility to pick and choose from our day tour options with a minimum requirement of 2 day tours in each region (minimum 4 in total). See suggested Itinerary below.

### Day 1 - Touring Newgrange and Trim & Malahide Castles

Touring Newgrange, Trim Castle, Malahide Castle & Howth Head

### Day 2 - Wicklow Tour

Touring Powerscourt House and Gardens, Wicklow Mountains, Sallys Gap, Glendalough & Avoca Woolen Mills

### Day 3 - Unguided Touring Day

Suggest touring Dublin City Sights and Attractions

### Day 4 - Rail Transport Dublin to Killarney

Depart Aisling Hotel and walk to nearby Heuston Train Station for train to Killarney Train Station. On arrival walk short distance to Great Southern / Royal Hotel.

### Day 5 - Touring Ring of Kerry

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 6 - Touring Dingle Peninsula (Killarney to Dingle)

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

### Day 7 - Unguided Touring Day

Explore Killarney National Park further by foot, bike or jaunting cart. Enjoy a Muckross Lake boat cruise.

### Day 8 - Rail Transport back to Dublin

Depart Great Southern / Royal Hotel and walk to nearby Killarney Train Station for train to Heuston Train Station in Dublin. On arrival walk short distance to Aisling Hotel.

### Day 9 - Depart Dublin Airport

Transfer to Dublin Airport for flight departure

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## **Additional Touring Options**

### **Irelands Ancient East Tour Leg**

#### **Dublin City Day Tour**

Touring Trinity College, St Patricks Cathedral, National Museum of Archaeological & History, National Gallery of Ireland, Killiney & Dalkey.

#### **Studs & Castle Tour**

Touring National Stud & Japanese Gardens, Rock of Cashel, Kilkenny Medieval City & Kilkenny Castle.

#### **Belfast Day Tour**

Touring Titanic Experience & Black Taxi Political Tour.

#### **Whiskey & Brewery Road-trip, Kilbeggan, Tullamore, Jameson & Guinness Storehouse**

Touring Kilbeggan Distillery, Tullamore D.E.W. Distillery, Jameson Distillery and Guinness Storehouse.

### **South West Tour Leg**

#### **Touring Ring of North Kerry**

Touring Ardfert Cathedral, Rattoo Round Tower, Ballybunion by the Sea, Carrigafoyle Castle & Literary Listowel.

#### **Touring Ring of Beara Peninsula**

Touring Derreen Gardens, Gleninchaquin Park, Allihies Copper Mine Museum, Derreenataggart Stone Circle, Glengarriff Woods Nature Reserve & Kenmare.

## **TRANSPORT**

4 x Days Chauffeured Guided Tour (Minimum Tour Requirement of 4 days) & Airport 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.

Return Rail Journey between Dublin Heuston Station and Killarney on Irish Rails Intercity Express Service. Fast, reliable and comfortable with complimentary onboard Wi-Fi, you can send e-mails etc and you don't have to worry about losing power with 220V power point sockets at every seat. Hot snacks are available from the buffet bar carriage and stewards will pass through the train with the trolley offering a range of snacks such as sandwiches, hot and cold beverages, cakes & pastries and confectionery.

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## ACCOMMODATION

### 4 STAR ACCOMMODATION

**4 x Nights @ Aisling Hotel,** Dublin. The Aisling Hotel is in excellent locations for both seeing the city and its close proximity to Huestion Rail Station. The Luas tram passes right by the door of the hotel bringing you to the city centre in just 5 minutes. Dublin Zoo, Kilmainham Gaol, the Guinness Storehouse and Jameson Distillery are all a short walk from hotel. Flexibility is at the heart of what we do to ensure you get the very best service from our team. Get the real Irish experience through staying in a family-owned business with years of experience allowing for extraordinary service.



**4 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. The Great Southern (formerly Malton Hotel) is less than 100 yards from Train Station and the Killarney Royal is just around the corner from the station with both of the hotels less than 2 minutes walk from the Train Station.



## TOUR ITINERARY

### Day 1 - Touring Newgrange and Trim & Malahide Castles

Touring Newgrange, Trim Castle, Malahide Castle & Howth Head.



Travel to The Brú na Bóinne Visitor Centre in Donore, County Meath, which is an information hub for the thousands of visitors eager to explore Ireland's mysterious Neolithic monuments, **Newgrange**, Knowth and Dowth. An extensive exhibition includes a full scale replica of the chamber at Newgrange (a World Heritage site), as well as a model of one of the smaller tombs at Knowth. Located on the south side of the River Boyne, the Brú na Bóinne Visitor Centre is the only access point to Newgrange and Knowth, which lie north of the river. All tours of Newgrange start at the centre, before visitors cross the river via a footbridge and are brought by shuttle bus to the monuments.

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Travel to **Trim Castle** which is Ireland's largest Anglo-Norman castle, set in the historically rich Boyne Valley. It was constructed over a thirty year period by Hugh de Lacy and his son Walter as the home of the Lordship of Meath. Trim Castle is a stunning Norman castle on the south bank of the River Boyne in Trim. The largest Anglo-Norman castle in Ireland, it was constructed in Trim over a thirty-year period by Hugh de Lacy and his son Walter. Hugh de Lacy was granted the liberty of Meath by King Henry II in 1172 in an attempt to curb the expansionist policies of Richard de Clare (Strongbow). Construction of the massive three storied keep, the central stronghold of the castle, was begun circa 1176 on the site of an earlier wooden fortress. This massive twenty sided tower, which is cruciform in shape, was protected by a ditch, curtain wall and moat.



Travel to **Malahide Castle**, which is set on 250 acres of park land in the pretty seaside town of Malahide, was both a fortress and a private home for nearly 800 years and is an interesting mix of architectural styles. A feature of Demense is the Talbot Botanic Garden. The Talbot family lived here from 1185 to 1973, when the last Talbot died. The house is furnished with beautiful period furniture together with an extensive collection of Irish portrait paintings, mainly from the National Gallery. The history of the Talbot family is recorded in the Great



Hall, where portraits of generations of the family tell their own story of Ireland's stormy history. Many additions and alterations have been made to this romantic and beautiful structure, but the contours of the surrounding parklands have changed little in 800 years, retaining a sense of the past. A major feature of Malahide Castle Demesne is the beautiful Talbot Botanic Gardens. The gardens, as they exist today, were largely created by Lord Milo Talbot between 1948 and 1973. Within the visitor centre in the courtyard, an interpretation & exhibition area tells visitors the story of the walled gardens as seen through the eyes of 'Lord Milo Talbot', the creator of the gardens and grounds as seen today.

Travel up the road to **Howth Head**, a peninsula 15km northeast of Dublin City, that has been immortalised in James Joyce's Ulysses. Howth is a bustling village that offers visitors a myriad of attractions – such as Lambay Island, Ireland's Eye, Howth Castle, The National Transport Museum, the Martello Tower and the Baily Lighthouse. Wildlife enthusiasts will adore this area, particularly Ireland's Eye and its bird sanctuary which boasts guillemots, razorbills, fulmars, gulls and gannets. If you're lucky, you may even see grey seals diving for fish just offshore. There is an option of four different walking loops to suit all levels that take in stunning views from the magnificent clifftop walk while being overwhelmed by the heady scent of coconut from the bright yellow gorse on the heath.



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## **Day 2 - Touring Glendalough & Wicklow Mountains**

Touring Powerscourt House & Gardens, Wicklow Mountains, Sallys Gap, Glendalough & Avoca Woolen Mills.

Travel through the picturesque village of Enniskerry to **Powerscourt House & Gardens** which is one of Europe's great treasures and Ireland's most famous estates. Gracing the Wicklow Mountains, 20 kilometres from Dublin city centre, 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. 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 onwards to **Glendalough** Visitor Centre 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.

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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.



### **Day 3 - Unguided Touring Day**

Free Day to explore the many sights and attraction in Dublin City. Take a walk from the Aisling Hotel to the nearby Kilmainham Gaol, Dublin Zoo, Old Jameson Distillery and Guinness Storehouse. With the Luas tram passing outside your hotel be in the city centre in less than 5 minutes to explore Dublins main thoroughfare O'Connell street and the GPO or its many shops. If you want to learn the history of Ireland head south across the river Liffey to the National Museums of Ireland (Archeology & Natural History) as well as checking out the famous Book of Kells at Trinity College. Its all on your doorstep, you have the freedom to see as much or as little as you wan't. If you wan't a guided tour instead than add that option and we will include it in the package.

### **Day 4 - Rail Transport Dublin to Killarney**

Depart Aisling Hotel and walk to nearby Heuston Train Station (Midday / Early Afternoon Departure) for train to Killarney Train Station with approximate 3 and a half hour journey. On arrival walk short distance to Great Southern / Royal Hotel.



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## Day 5 - 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.

### **Day 6 - 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 Aquirium**. 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 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.

## **Day 7 - Unguided Touring Day**

Free Day to explore the many sights and attraction in Killarney. Further explore Killarney National Park by walking, cycling or jaunting cart.

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## **Day 8 - Rail Transport Killarney to Dublin**

Depart Great Southern / Royal Hotel and walk to nearby Killarney Train Station (Midday / Early Afternoon Departure) for train to Heuston Train Station with approximate 3 and a half hour journey time. On arrival walk short distance to Aisling Hotel.



## **Day 9 - Depart Dublin Airport**

Transfer to Dublin Airport for departure.

## **ADDITIONAL TOURING OPTIONS**

### **Dublin Option 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.



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Travel along the scenic coastal drive of **Dun Laoighaire** to **Dalkey**, with stunning views of Dun Laoighaire Harbour, Bray Head, Dalkey Island and Sorrento Terrace. Travel to tour **Dalkey Castle** in Dublin which includes many living history actors who show visitors skills and cultural features from the 1500s in Ireland – such as an archer shooting a longbow, a cook making hedgehog pie and a barber surgeon offering haircuts. Panoramic views of sea and mountains can be seen from the castle battlements. Visitors can also explore the early Christian church and graveyard, dedicated to St. Begnet. An interactive timeline in the Heritage Centre is available, beginning from early Christian through Viking, Medieval, Victorian and modern times in Dalkey (available in 12 languages). The area also features a Writers' Gallery with literary and creative connections to Joyce, Beckett, Bono and Maeve Binchy.



Travel to **Killiney** one of Dublin and Ireland's richest suburbs. View the homes at the most exclusive address in Dublin, Vico Road, including Ireland's most famous celebrities Enya, U2's Bono and The Edge. Killiney Hill and Dalkey Hill form part of Killiney Hill Park, a small public park overlooking both Dalkey and Killiney villages. The Park was dedicated to public use in 1887 by Prince Albert Victor of Wales, in memory of Queen Victoria's Jubilee, and called Victoria Hill. Killiney Hill is a popular destination for walkers and hikers availing of the spectacular views, over the surrounding areas.



## **Dublin Option 2 - Studs & Castle Tour**

Touring National Stud & Japanese Gardens, Rock of Cashel, Kilkenny Medieval City & Kilkenny Castle.

The **Irish National Stud** and Gardens symbolises all that is great about County Kildare, the beating heart of Ireland's thoroughbred horse industry. It is the home of equine royalty, immaculately-bred stallions who can be seen and admired alongside protective mares, frolicking foals and athletic yearlings. The Irish National Stud and Gardens in Tully is the only stud farm in Ireland open to the public and offering daily tours. Within the grounds are the world-famous



**Japanese Gardens**, the Horse Museum and St Fiachra's Garden, created to

celebrate the Millennium. Visit the Japanese Gardens for a relaxing stroll—created between the years 1906 and 1910, they were laid out by Japanese craftsman Tassa Eida and his son Minoru. The gardens trace the passage of a soul from birth to death and beyond, at the same time providing a meeting place for the cultures of East and West. The Horse Museum brings the nation's love affair with horses to life and displays the skeleton of Arkle, a famous Irish Thoroughbred racehorse. The beautifully designed St Fiachra's Garden, it commemorates the patron saint of gardeners St Fiachra.





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.

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.



### **Dublin Option 3 - Belfast Day Tour**

Touring Titanic Experience, & Black Taxi Political Tour.

Travel to onwards to Belfast. The **Titanic Experience** is a 'must see' on any trip to Belfast and has become the most popular tourist attraction in Northern Ireland and one of the top attractions in Ireland. Housed in an iconic, six-floor building, Titanic Belfast is located in the heart of Belfast, right beside the historic site of this world-famous ship's construction. The Titanic experience takes you through nine galleries, telling the story of RMS Titanic, from her conception in Belfast in the early 1900s, through her construction and launch, to her famous maiden voyage and tragic end. The galleries are innovative and interactive with many features including diving to the depth of the ocean to explore where RMS Titanic now rests. The Titanic story is told at Titanic Belfast in a fresh and insightful way. Visitors can now also experience three new galleries, which capture the excitement of launch day, as well as The Maiden Voyage gallery, which transports visitors from four embarkation ports, Belfast, Southampton, Cherbourg and Queenstown (now known as Cobh) to Titanic's deck promenade. Guests can not only see and hear the ocean and feel the ships engines rumbling on board at the Palm Court Café but can also meet Fredrick Dent Ray, a dining room steward and survivor, utilising technology used in Disneyland's Haunted Mansion and Universal Studios Florida's Hogwarts Express attraction. The



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Maiden Voyage gallery also includes an original first class luncheon menu dated April 14, 1912, as well as the last letter ever to be written on board the Titanic.

On a special Black Taxi **Political Tour** you will visit the Falls Road and Shankill Road where you will learn of the history of conflict between the two communities and witness the Peaceline wall which divides the two.



Described by the Independent Newspaper as 'the world's greatest open air art gallery' where they use the political wall murals to relate events from a historical perspective and where you can add your message to the peace wall. The enthusiastic and knowledgeable guides will explain the many murals which are to be seen on the tours as well as many sites which have played important roles in the political history of Belfast. The guides are happy to cater the tour to your specification and will answer any question you may have for them.

#### **Dublin Option 4 - Irish Whiskey & Brewery Tours**

Touring Kilbeggan Distillery, Tullamore D.E.W. Distillery, Jameson Distillery and Guinness Storehouse.

Travel to the **Kilbeggan Distillery** in County Westmeath, which is the oldest distillery in the world, dating back to 1757. A trip to this well-known County Westmeath attraction will enable you to discover the history of authentic artisan Irish whiskey, as well as sample it for yourself. Start your guided tour back in 1757 and find



out how Irish whiskey was made in decades past. Discover the families that owned the distillery and the importance the local community had on the brand you see today. Visitors to the Kilbeggan Distillery Experience will learn about the traditional methods of mashing in oak mash tuns, fermenting in Oregon pine vats and see the new Kilbeggan malt spirit flowing from ancient pot stills. The original waterwheel which once powered the whole distillery is still on show today. A stroll across the courtyard takes you to the present day, where whiskey is still being produced using ancient traditions, passed on from generation to generation. The Kilbeggan Whiskey Bar is worth a visit to browse the complete range of whiskeys.

Travel to see one of County Offaly's most famous exports is **Tullamore D.E.W.**, a blended Irish whiskey originally produced by William Grant & Sons in Tullamore. While production was moved to Midleton, County Cork in the 1950s, Tullamore has recently seen the establishment of a new Tullamore distillery and state-of-the-art visitor centre. For anyone interested in Irish whiskey, a tour of Tullamore D.E.W. Visitor Centre takes in every step of the artisan craft of whiskey making, illustrated with audiovisual media and the know-how of expert guides. Visitors on the tour through Distillery House will meet the Tullamore D.E.W. Distillery





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Ambassador, explore the production process from still house to warehouse and even create their own unique blend of whiskey in the blending room. After distillery tour return to Dublin.

Since John Jameson's brave first steps into this building in 1780, Jameson have been focused on his ambition to create unforgettable experiences (along with great whiskey, of course). The new look **Jameson Distillery**



Bow St. carries on this ambition through three fully guided experiences: Bow St. Experience, The Whiskey Makers, and The Whiskey Shakers - all of which have a firm focus on immersive storytelling. You'll be invited to touch, smell, and most importantly, taste Jameson in the original Bow St. Distillery buildings. An exciting part of their Whiskey Makers & Whiskey Shakers experiences is a visit to their live Maturation Warehouse, where you'll get to taste Jameson straight from the barrel. The only way to get closer to the source would be to have John Jameson guide you through the distillery himself.

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.



## **Killarney Option 1 - Touring Ring of North Kerry**

Touring Ardfert Cathedral, Rattoo Round Tower, Ballybunion by the Sea, Carrigfoile Castle & Literary Listowel.



Travel to **Ardfert Cathedral**. In the 6th century, St Brendan The Navigator founded a monastery at this site near Tralee in County Kerry. Today, visitors can see three medieval churches, an ogham stone, and a number of early Christian and medieval grave slabs. The oldest building is the cathedral, which dates from the 12th to the 17th centuries. It has a Romanesque west doorway, a magnificent 13th-century east window and a spectacular row of nine lancets in the south wall. One of the two smaller churches is a fine example of the late Romanesque style and the other is a plain 15th-century structure with interesting carvings.

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Found near the village of Ballyduff, the **Rattoo Round Tower** stands on the grounds of an ancient monastery. It's thought to have been founded by Bishop Lughach, one of the first Christian evangelists in County Kerry. The round tower, which dates from about 1100, is very well preserved and features unique moulding with a curvilinear design. There is also a fascinating sheela-na-gig, an ugly, explicit carving used as a protective symbol. It is the only example found in an Irish round tower. Additionally, the site boasts the ruins of a 15th-century church, whose structure includes stones from an earlier house of worship.



Travel onwards to **Ballybunion by the Sea** on the Wild Atlantic Way. Take a stroll on the Golden Mile Beach which is a beautiful stretch of golden sand, surrounded by rocky headlands and high cliffs overlooked by a picture perfect castle, Fitzmaurice Castle. The striking 30 foot wall of this 16th century castle stands proudly in the enclosure of a promontory fort, the Castle Green and has prime location with magnificent views the main beach, cliffs and Atlantic Ocean in its home at Ballybunion. Walk the famous Cliffs of Doonen with the Nine Daughters Hole, Pookeen Ruins, Virgin Rock and view of the Shannon Estuaries Dolphins bathing.

Travel onwards to Ballylongford and **Carrigafoyle Castle**. Carrigafoyle Castle is a very fine example of 15th century building. The illustration in Pacata Hiberna shows the unique features of this castle. The castle was strongly built and ingeniously situated. Standing on the edge of the Shannon estuary on what was originally an island, Carrigafoyle Castle rises to five storeys with vaults over the second and fourth storeys. Carrigafoyle Castle was the main stronghold of the O Connor Kerry, the principal chieftain of this barony named after him. For 400 years they were an important part of the ever changing political and military jigsaw of those times.



Travel onwards to **Literary Listowel**. Tour the beautifully restored 19th century Georgian Seanchaí – Kerry Literary & Cultural Centre which portrays the lives of North Kerry's famous writers in a unique audio-visual experience. Writers featured include John B. Keane, Bryan MacMahon, Brendan Kennelly, George Fitzmaurice and Maurice Walsh. Learn about the places, people, traditions and customs that influenced the writers in their works. Listen to Ireland's master 'Seanchaí' Eamon Kelly tell of the great oral tradition that influences the writers and experience the memories of Writers' Week Literary Festival that nurtures the talent of many great Irish Writers. Tour Listowel Castle which dates

to the 13th century but the present castle was probably built in the 15th century by the FitzMaurices. The castle stands on an elevation on a steep bank, overlooking the river Feale, above the location of a strategic ford. A substantial part of the front of the castle survives consisting of two large, square towers of four storeys, standing almost to the original height of 15.3 metres, connected by a wall of the same height and linked together by an arch on one side. the Lartigue Monorail offers visitors of all ages the opportunity to experience a unique form of rail travel. The original steam-powered monorail (designed by Frenchman Charles Lartigue) ran for nine miles between Listowel and the seaside resort of Ballybunion. Operating from 1888 to 1924, it carried

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passengers, livestock and freight along a rail supported on A-shaped trestles. It occupies a special place in railway history as the only monorail of its type to operate successfully on a commercial basis. During its lifetime the original Lartigue Monorail was an object of much interest, curiosity and amusement. Nowadays, your visit includes a short demonstration journey on a full scale diesel powered replica of the original monorail.



## **Killarney Option 2 - Beara Peninsula Tour**

Touring Derreen Gardens, Gleninchaquin Park, Allihies Copper Mine Museum, Derreenataggart Stone Circle, Glengarriff Woods Nature Reserve & Kenmare

**Derreen Gardens**, beside Kilmakilloge Harbour in Lauragh, were planted 100 years ago by the fifth Lord Lansdowne. The woodland gardens contain many azaleas and rhododendrons. There is also a grove of New Zealand Tree ferns. Cloonee Loughs are very popular for salmon and white trout fishing. **Gleninchaquin** is an award-winning family owned park and farm. It is a long narrow coombe valley on the North West side of the



Beara Peninsula, formed by glaciation approximately 70,000 years ago, and changed little since. The back wall of the coombe contains a spectacular waterfall which in turn feeds the succession of lakes along the valley floor: Loughs Inchaquin, Uragh and Cloonee. Further lakes, Cummeenaloughaun and Cummeenadillure are contained in smaller hanging coombes around the waterfall with Lough Napeasta further out along the valley.

Gleninchaquin Park provides breath-taking landscapes and scenery in which it is a sheer delight to wander around.

**Allihies Copper Mine Museum** is housed in the old Methodist church, which served the Cornish miners who were drafted in to work the mines in the 1800's. The history of copper mining in the Allihies region began in the Bronze Age and ended in the twentieth century. The Museum tells the story of the lives of the miners and the technologies they employed, using interactive media as well as original exhibits. Various nineteenth century machines powered by steam and water are depicted in detail, along with pumping equipment and an ingenious 'Man Engine' which carried the miners a long way down to the depths of the mines. From maps of the various underground workings one can gain an idea of the enormous extent of their endeavours. Information on the geology unique to the area is accompanied by some excellent geological exhibits.



The Beara Peninsula has many stone circles one of which is **Derreenataggart Stone Circle** is close to fishing harbour of Castletownbere. These stone circle are megalithic burial grounds used to worship the dead and were also used for measuring the time of day and seasons of the year.

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The **Glengarriff Woods Nature Reserve** is a magnificent area in the heart of old Glengarriff Valley, once the property of Lord Bantry, and is made of ancient woodlands and new plantations. The property contains Lady Bantry's Lookout and different riverside and mountain walks. Glengarriff Woods Nature Reserve covers some 300ha, with the dominant habitats being old oak woodland and young woodland which is regenerating in areas which have been cleared of non-native conifers over the last few years. The woods form one of the best examples of oceanic sessile oak woodland in Ireland.



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 McGillicuddy 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.

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### **Terms & Conditions**

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

Tour package covers all transport costs (private guided day tours, airport transfers & rail tickets)

It is a requirement that there is a minimum of 2 days private guided touring at each region (4 in total for the tour).

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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