
EXECUTIVE TOUR SUMMARY

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Arrive and Depart from Shannon Airport

Day 1 - Touring Cliffs of Moher & Burren (Shannon to Cong)

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

Day 2 - Touring Galway City of Tribes & Ashford Estate (Cong)

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

Day 3 - Touring Connemara National Park (Cong to Westport)

Touring Quiet Man Museum, Kylemore Abbey, Connemara National Park, Killary Fjord, Leenane & Croagh Patrick.

Day 4 - Touring Mayo (Westport to Mount Falcon)

Touring Achill Island, Ballycroy National Park & Foxford Woolen Mills

Day 5 - Touring Sligo & Lake District (Mount Falcon to Lough Rynn Castle)

Touring Céide Fields, W.B Yeats Grave, Benbulbin, Strandhill & The Lake District

Day 6 - Touring Strokestown, Clonmacnoise & Bunratty (Lough Rynn to Clare)

Touring Strokestown House, National Famine Museum, Clonmacnoise & Bunratty Castle and Folk Park.

Day 7 - Depart Shannon Airport

TRANSPORT

7 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.

ACCOMMODATION

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

4 STAR ACCOMMODATION

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 @ Westport Plaza Hotel, Westport, Co. Mayo. The Westport Plaza Hotel Mayo is a fusion of contemporary chic and classic elegance where you can relax and unwind in ultimate luxury. The perfect 4 star venue for a luxury break. Indulge at the Restaurant Merlot, a delightful mix of European and classical Irish flavours, choose from the exciting table d'hote menu or the sophisticated a la carte menu.

1 x Night @ Mount Falcon Resort, Ballina, Co. Mayo. Famous for luxurious accommodation and award winning food, Mount Falcon Estate offers rest and relaxation in many forms: indulge in the fabulous Spa & leisure centre, learn to fish on the Estate lake, take flight with the Falcons, walk with the Hawks and learn about the nature of the wise Owls, take aim with archery or hit a flying target on the Clay Shooting range or fine tune your drive on the 9 bay golf driving range. Option of staying in the self catering Lodges at Mount Falcon.

1 x Nights @ Lough Rynn Castle, Co. Leitrim. This magical castle has been transformed from an incredible ancestral home, into a place where old-world elegance mixes seamlessly with unimaginable modern luxury. At its southern tip, on the banks of the most scenic lough in the country lies a very special place, eating, sleeping and exploring in an Irish castle is a once-in-a-lifetime experience

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.

5 STAR ACCOMMODATION

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.

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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.

TOUR ITINERARY

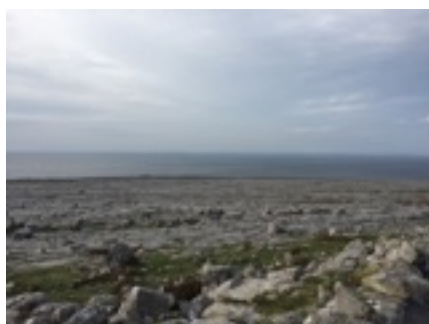
Day 1 - Touring Cliffs of Moher & Burren (Shannon to Cong)

Arrive at Shannon 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 Cliffs of Moher, traditional music town of Doolin, The Burren Centre & Perfumery, Poul nabrone Portal Dolmen Tomb.



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 **Poul nabrone 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

Day 2 - Touring Galway City of Tribes & Ashford Estate (Cong)

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



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.

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

Day 3 - Touring Connemara National Park (Cong to Westport)

Touring Quiet Man Museum, Kylemore Abbey, Connemara National Park, Killary Fjord, Leenane & Croagh Patrick.

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 **Kylemore Abbey** and Victorian Walled Garden in majestic Connemara which is the ideal destination for a day out and will 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 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.



Travel onwards to tour 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.

Visit **Croagh Patrick** Visitor Centre is sited in Murrisk, on the Pilgrim's Path, at the base of the 762 metre high Croagh Patrick, Ireland's holy mountain. The distinctive cone shaped Croagh Patrick towers majestically above the surrounding countryside and provides magnificent views of Clew Bay, Connemara, Clare Island, Achill Island and south Mayo. A video and photo gallery of Croagh Patrick and its ever changing landscapes can be seen at the visitor centre, which is opposite the National Famine Monument. The Pilgrim's Path is a 7km route winding through this rich archaeological area. It is said that Saint Patrick fasted for 40 days on the mountain's summit in 441 AD. climbing the mountain is a custom which has been faithfully handed down from generation to generation.



Accommodation: Westport Plaza Hotel, Westport, Co. Mayo

Day 4 - Touring Mayo (Westport to Mount Falcon)

Touring Achill Island, Ballycroy National Park & Foxford Woolen Mills.

Travel to **Achill Island** which is home to five picture postcard Blue Flag beaches, some of Europe's highest cliffs and large tracts of blanket bog sweeping over the island's two peaks and down to the shore. Achill

Island, or as it is known by its Gaelic name Oilean Acaill, has a long history of human settlement with megalithic tombs and promontory forts dating back 5,000 years.

There is also a 15th century fortified tower house, Kildamhnait Castle, the 19th century Acaill Mission and the poignant deserted villages at Slievemore and Ailt. This windswept Island, the largest of Ireland's offshore Islands, has attracted people to its shores for generations and now you can drive across to it. Once on the Island there is spectacular Atlantic Drive which takes one along a 40km drive that includes the best of the Islands scenery.



Travel to **Ballycroy National Park**, which is Ireland's sixth National Park and is located on the Western seaboard in northwest Mayo. It comprises of 11,000 hectares of Atlantic blanket bog and mountainous terrain,

covering a vast uninhabited and unspoilt wilderness. It is dominated by the Nephin Beg mountain range and the Owenduff bog. This is one of the last intact active blanket bog systems in Ireland and Western Europe. The Ballycroy National Park Visitor Centre, located in Ballycroy village between Mulranny and Bangor, houses an interpretative exhibition of the landscape, habitats and species found in the National Park, as well as information on the surrounding area. There is a short nature trail with a viewing point which offers great scenic views of Achill Island to the west, and the Nephin Beg mountain range to the east.



Before arriving a Mount Falcon Estate visit **Foxford Woolen Mills** Visitor Centre, is where master craftsman meets modern Irish design. Originally founded by an Irish Sister of Charity in 1892, the fledgling business overcame many challenges down through the years in order to survive. The area around Foxford was considered to be one of the poorest in the west of Ireland in the late nineteenth century. Mother Agnes Morrogh-Bernard felt the best way to combat these poor economic conditions was to establish viable



local industries. Foxford was built on the banks of River Moy and this inspired the idea for building a woollen mill. The River Moy provided the power, the sheep farmed locally provided the wool and the locals provided the labour. Today, it is a thriving mill with master craftspeople creating beautiful pieces for sale worldwide. The Visitor Centre tells the story of Mother Agnes Morrogh-Bernard (1842-1932), who founded the Mills and made Foxford synonymous throughout the world with high-quality tweeds, rugs and blankets. Visitors are taken through parts of the working mill as it is run today, where they can watch the tradition, design and craftsmanship entailed in creating each distinctive Foxford product.

Accommodation: Mount Falcon Estate, Co. Mayo

Day 5 - Touring Sligo & Lake District (Mount Falcon to Lough Rynn Castle)

Touring Céide Fields, W.B Yeats Grave, Benbulbin, Strandhill & The Lake District.

The amazing geology, archaeology, botany and wildlife of this North Mayo region is interpreted at the **Céide Fields** Visitor Centre, with the aid of an audio-visual presentation and exhibitions. The Centre, at Ballycastle, is an unusual part limestone, part peat-clad, pyramid-shaped building, with a glazed lantern apex, and was opened in 1993 by the Office of Public Works. It was joint winner of the inaugural Irish Building of the Year Award, organised by The Sunday Times with the Royal Institute of Architects of Ireland (RIAI). Céide Fields contain a 1,500 hectare archaeological site of stone walls, field systems, enclosures and tombs, dating from about 5,000 years ago, which have been preserved beneath the bog. It is the most extensive stone age site in the world. The wild flora of the bog is of international importance and is bounded by some of the most spectacular rock formations and cliffs in Ireland.



Travel to Drumcliffe, County Sligo is set against the striking backdrop of the Benbulbin Mountains and is best known as the final resting place of **W.B. Yeats**. Found in the churchyard, his grave is marked with a simple headstone with the inscription, "cast a cold eye on life, on death, horseman, pass by." This was Yeats' self penned epitaph together with the instructions that the grave consist of "no marble, no conventional phrase". The graveyard also contains a high cross and nearby is the

site of a 6th Century Columbian monastery. **Benbulbin** is known as County Sligo's 'Table Mountain' and is part of the Dartry Mountains. Benbulbin was formed as a result of the different responses to erosion of the limestone and shale of which the mountain is formed. A hard and resistant limestone forms the upper cliffs and precipices. Benbulbin was



formed during the Ice age, when large parts of the Earth were under glaciers. It was originally merely a large ridge, however the moving glaciers cut into the earth, leaving a distinct formation, now called Benbulbin.

Travel to **Strandhill Beach** which is an area of great natural beauty located 5 miles west of Sligo town with panoramic views of Knocknarea and Benbulbin. Option of hiking Knocknarea Hill along the Queen Maeve Hiking Trail to the summit where lies a mound of stones believed to be a neolithic passage tomb to the final resting place of Queen Maeve. As well as being an extremely popular surfing spot, Strandhill has a number of amazing walks taken from Strandhill Beach to Culleenamore Strand and also to Killaspubrone. Partake in a surfing lesson or walk one of the scenic routes. For a pure luxury unique experience, pay a visit to Voya Seaweed Baths in Strandhill. Patrons have the luxury of private rooms, each with its own Victorian cast iron bath and steam unit. Imagine relaxing back into a bath full of hot seawater and steamed seaweed. The heat releases all the seaweed's rich, silky, essential oils so the body feels smooth, buoyant and luxurious.



The River Shannon is the largest river in Ireland and Great Britain combined. Its upper **Lake District** offers spectacular scenery as well activities. Travel along the great river by Lough Arrow, Lough Key and onto Lough Key Forrest Park. Comprising some 350 hectares of mixed woodland, a lake and a number of islands, Lough Key Forest Park is one of Ireland's most extensive and picturesque forest parks in Ireland. The visitor centre is the gateway to the parkland and forest at Lough Key. Environmental sustainability and energy efficiency are at the heart of its design and facilities including the tree canopy trail, Boda Borg Challenge and the adventure play kingdom. Travel onto the picturesque Carrick on Shannon which as its name suggests is on the river Shannon before arriving at your destination at Lough Lynn Castle on Lough Lynn lake.



Accommodation: Lough Lynn Castle, Leitrim

Day 6 - Touring Strokestown, Clonmacnoise & Bunratty (Lough Rynn to Clare)

Touring Strokestown House, National Famine Museum, Clonmacnoise & Bunratty Castle and Folk Park.

Travel to the magnificent **Strokestown Park House**, a Georgian Palladian mansion preserved with its original furnishings and fabrics, which can be seen daily by guided tour. The House was the family home of the Pakenham Mahon family and is built on the site of the 16th century castle, home of The O Conor Roe Gaelic Chieftains. The Landlord Major Denis Mahon was assassinated in November 1847 at the height of The Great Famine of Ireland and it is fitting that The **Irish National Famine Museum** was established at Strokestown Park in 1994 using the unique original documents which came to light during the restoration of The House. The six acre walled pleasure gardens have been restored to their original splendour and give an insight into horticultural design and architecture from the 1740's to the present day. The Irish National Famine Museum located in the Stable Yards tells a different story and highlights the parallels between a tragic chapter of Irish History and contemporary global hunger. The Great Irish famine of the 1840's is now regarded as the single greatest social disaster of 19th century Europe. Between 1845 and 1850, when blight devastated the potato crop, in excess of two million people – almost one-quarter of the entire population – either died or emigrated. Within a short time the visitor has been brought on a journey through Irish History, the good and the bad, from Ireland in the 1600's, right up to the present day.



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.

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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 populations 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.



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

Day 7 - Depart Shannon Airport

Depart Shannon 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.
