



# A Week in Ireland: Dublin, Cork & Galway

8 days | 11 days with London extension

Luck of the Irish? We prefer to call it charm. Filled with trademark emerald landscapes, loaded with intriguing history, and burnished by its people's sparkling wit, the island nation of Ireland has dazzled visitors time and again. On this tour, you'll roam its leading cities, savoring pub culture and diving into the country's past. And we couldn't forget about its natural wonders: You'll see all the heavy hitters, from the rocky Burren to the Cliffs of Moher, over the course of one magical week—and if you aren't quite ready to stow your carry-ons, tack on an extra couple of days in London.



## Your tour package includes

- 6 nights in handpicked hotels
- 6 breakfasts
- 3 dinners with beer or wine
- 5 sightseeing tours
- Expert Tour Director & local guides
- Private deluxe motor coach

## Included highlights

- St. Patrick's Cathedral
- Temple Bar district
- Cobh Heritage Centre
- Blarney Castle
- The Burren
- Cliffs of Moher
- Galway

## Tour pace

On this guided tour, you'll walk for at least 1.5 hours daily across moderately uneven terrain, including paved roads and cobblestone streets with some hills and stairs.

## Group size

15–38

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## Overnight Flight → 1 night

### Day 1: Travel day

Board your overnight flight to Dublin today.

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## County Dublin → 2 nights

### Day 2: Arrival in County Dublin

*Included meals: welcome dinner*

Fáilte! (Pronounced “FALL-cha,” this expression means “welcome” in Irish, and you might hear it a fair bit over the next few days.) Head to your hotel and settle in, then get to know your Tour Director and fellow travelers over a welcome dinner, served with beer or wine.

### Day 3: Sightseeing tour of Dublin

*Included meals: breakfast*

Settled by the Gaels and disputed over centuries by the Vikings and Anglo-Normans, Dublin traces its history back more than 1,300 years. Today, you'll peel back some of the Irish capital's layers on a comprehensive tour, led by a local expert.

- Stop in Phoenix Park, the largest enclosed public park in any European capital city. First established as a royal hunting ground by government decree in 1662, this 1,750-acre greenspace today houses Áras an Uachtaráin—the presidential residence.
- Pass by St. James's Gate Brewery, the legendary 260-year-old brewery behind Guinness dry stout. More than 50 million barrels ship out of the plant each year, making it the world's most prolific producer of stout-style beers.
- Walk through Old Dublin, then step into St. Patrick's Cathedral, the country's largest church. Founded in 1191, it serves as the national cathedral for the Church of Ireland, and its arresting Gothic architecture befits a building of its stature.
- Traverse Dublin's city center, passing 17th-century St. Stephen's Green as you go. Afterward, take some time to admire the

Georgian architecture of Merrion Square.

Another garden area in the heart of Dublin, it's been called home by some of Ireland's foremost writers—Oscar Wilde and W.B.

Yeats among them.

- See the dignified facade of Trinity College—Ireland's oldest university.

Fill your afternoon with an excursion out into County Wicklow and pay a visit to gorgeous Glendalough, the well-preserved ruins of a once-influential abbey. Or, if you'd prefer some free time, head down to the shores of the River Liffey and breathe in the ambiance of the lively Temple Bar district.

+ Glendalough

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## County Cork → 2 nights

### Day 4: County Cork via Cobh

*Included meals: breakfast, dinner*

Make your way to Ireland's largest region: County Cork. Sprawling across 2,900 square miles of the country's southern reaches, it lays claim to a number of tourist attractions. Today, you'll visit one.

- From Dublin, head southwest to Cobh, a seaport town of roughly 14,000 on the other side of massive Cork Harbor. Here, you'll enter the Cobh Heritage Centre: Learn about Irish life, emigration, and maritime tradition over the centuries. (Did you know that Cobh was the *Titanic's* final port of call before its doomed maiden voyage?)

Later, chart a course for Cork—Ireland's second city, hugging both shores of the River Lee—and settle into your hotel. Enjoy some free time, then sit down with your group for an included dinner, served with beer or wine.

### Day 5: Blarney Castle

*Included meals: breakfast*

Now one of Ireland's most famous tourist sites, Blarney Castle was first built in 1210, then rebuilt in 1446 as a stronghold of the local MacCarthy of Muskerry dynasty. Today, you'll set out into the Irish countryside and visit this famed fortress, completing a popular quest in the process: planting a peck on the Blarney Stone. Originally

added as a defensive structure, this slab of limestone supposedly grants all who kiss it “the gift of gab.” Stretch out over the parapet and give it a smooch—then let us know how you feel!

Cap your day with an evening excursion to the historic town of Kinsale and enjoy walking winding streets and tucking into a traditional Irish meal. Feeling some alone time? Spend the night in or take some free moments to explore the neighborhood around your hotel.

+ An Evening in Kinsale

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## County Galway → 2 nights

### Day 6: County Galway via the Cliffs of Moher & the Burren

*Included meals: breakfast*

Board your bus and roll north to County Galway, a beautiful lake-dotted region with a backstory to match. Before arriving in Galway proper, stop to enjoy some of the best views in all the Emerald Isle.

- Redefine “taking the scenic route” with a quick detour into County Clare and a walk along the mesmerizing Cliffs of Moher. (Sheer crags stretching into the distance, crashing waves below—you know this one!)
- Drive on through the Burren. Distinct from the lush greens that typify the rest of the Irish landscape, greys dominate this limestone plateau, punctuated by bursts of wildflowers. Botanists will surely delight in this journey: More than 70% of Ireland's flower species grow here.

Arrive in Galway, then let your Tour Director take the lead on a walking tour of the city's highlights.

- Stroll past a trio of Galwegian icons: Lynch's Castle, a castle-turned-bank that dates to the 16th century; the rustic home of “Ireland's most prestigious theatre (troupe),” the Druid Theatre Company; and John F. Kennedy Memorial Park, a popular greenspace better known to locals (and the world) as Eyre Square.
- Get a grasp of Galway's Norman history by viewing its medieval walls—12th-century

fortifications that once encircled the city—and the Spanish Arch. First erected in 1584 as an extension of Galway’s protective walls, its name alludes to the Spaniards who moored their ships and lived in the area.

- Peruse authentic Claddagh (said “CLA-da”) rings in a local shop. Steeped in legend and symbolism, these pieces of jewelry have been produced in their current guise—two hands clasping a crowned heart—since at least 1700 and are inextricably linked to Galway.

#### Day 7: Free day in County Galway

*Included meals: breakfast, farewell dinner*

For architecture and vistas plucked out of a fantasy novel, you’ll want to come along on our visit to Kylemore Abbey and Connemara National Park. If you’d rather get to know Galway a bit better, spend a free day taking The Long Walk through the seaside neighborhood of Claddagh, or see where your feet take you. (The city was named the European Capital of Culture in 2020—there’s plenty to do!)

Later, celebrate your trip with your group during a farewell dinner, served with beer or wine.

+ Kylemore Abbey & Connemara National Park

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## Flight Home

#### Day 8: Departure

*Included meals: breakfast (excluding early morning departures)*

Transfer to Dublin’s airport for your flight home, or continue to Europe’s most popular tourist destination on your trip’s extension. Can you guess where that is?

*Please note: Some airport transfers may leave very early in the morning to accommodate return flights.*

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#### + London extension

Mind the gap, get in the queue, ask for bangers with your mash—now you’re ready for London! After wrapping your stay in Ireland, fly over the Irish Sea and experience England’s bustling capital from a local’s perspective. Want to see even more of the region’s regal history, as well as a certain world-famous megalith? Our two excursions to Windsor and Stonehenge have you covered.

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## London → 3 nights

#### Day 8: Flight to London

*Included meals: breakfast*

Fly to England this morning and get comfortable at your London hotel. (If you fancy some exploration, ask your Tour Director for recommendations.)

#### Day 9: Sightseeing tour of London

*Included meals: breakfast*

Few places have influenced world history like London has: This city of roughly 8.8 million people boasts close to 2,000 years of history and four UNESCO World Heritage Sites; serves as a global financial hub; and is the most-visited place in all of Europe. Today, you’ll explore the landmarks of England’s cosmopolitan capital on a guided sightseeing tour.

- Pass grand Trafalgar Square—named in honor of the Royal Navy’s decisive triumph over Napoleon Bonaparte’s fleet—and Baroque St. Paul’s Cathedral. Perched atop Ludgate Hill, at the highest point in London’s historic center, this Anglican church is recognizable by its soaring dome.
- See Westminster Abbey, the Gothic church that has hosted 40 coronations and 16 royal weddings since 1066. A further 18 English, Scottish, and British monarchs were laid to rest within, further cementing Westminster’s place in London lore.
- Spot the Elizabeth Tower (the Palace of Westminster’s clock tower, better known as Big Ben); the 440-foot-tall London Eye observation wheel; Tower Bridge, with its stone handiwork and turquoise accents; and the notorious Tower of London.
- Stop by Buckingham Palace, the official residence and administrative headquarters of King Charles III. If you’re lucky, you might catch the Changing of the Guard.

Bask in a getaway of royal proportions on this afternoon’s excursion to Windsor Castle.

Alternatively, hang back and spend some free time in London. If you need a recommendation, the British Museum’s millions of priceless antiquities are all just a half-hour’s walk from Buckingham Palace.

+ Windsor Castle

#### Day 10: Free day in London

*Included meals: breakfast*

Add the excursion to Stonehenge and Salisbury to your itinerary. (It’s a truly monumental way to spend a day.) Or, have a day to yourself in London, and maybe visit a stadium or two:

Wembley, Twickenham, and dozens more call the city home.

This evening, enjoy a farewell drink with your group and celebrate a trip well-spent.

+ Stonehenge & Salisbury

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## Flight Home

#### Day 11: Departure

*Included meals: breakfast (excluding early morning departures)*

Transfer to the airport for your flight home.

# Customize your experience

Customize your tour by adding excursion options. Excursions offered on the same day will occur at different times, so there's no need to choose. Save \$10 when you book your excursion up to three days before your tour departs.\* Excursions requiring advance reservation only list this discounted price. Call or go online to customize your tour: [goaheadtours.com/IRL](http://goaheadtours.com/IRL) | 1-800-597-0350

## Day 3: Glendalough

\$55/\$65\* (5 hours, departure time varies)

County Wicklow has some of the wildest and most spectacular mountain scenery in Ireland, as well as many of the country's most important historic sites. Journey through Wicklow's captivating landscapes to Glendalough, which became famous throughout Europe as a center of Christian learning. Saint Laurence O'Toole became the Abbot of Glendalough in 1154 and worked to bring the Irish Church closer to the Roman Church. You'll learn more about O'Toole, who went on to become the Archbishop of Dublin, and his work in Glendalough as you visit St. Kevin's Cross, the remains of the sixth-century cathedral, and the remarkable Round Tower. Your Tour Director will lead you on a tour of the site, and then you'll enjoy free time.

## Day 5: An Evening in Kinsale

\$109/\$119\* (5 hours, departs in the evening, dinner included)

Your evening begins with a visit to the star-shaped Charles Fort, specifically designed to withstand the devastating impact of cannon fire. Uncover the fort's long history with your Tour Director before making your way to the nearby harbor town of Kinsale. A little village with a big past, this quaint community was the site of the 1601 Battle of Kinsale, a major turning point in the Nine Years' War. Take time to explore this historic town's narrow winding streets, artsy shops, and lively bars on your own before rejoining the group for dinner in a traditional Irish restaurant.

## Day 7: Kylemore Abbey & Connemara National Park

\$89/\$99\* (9 hours, departs in the morning)

Make your way to the island village of Cong, situated on the border of counties Galway and Mayo. Here, enjoy free time to stroll through the town's charming streets, catching glimpses of the nearby Ashford Castle. Then, continue on to Kylemore Abbey, a Benedictine convent founded in 1920 on the grounds of Kylemore Castle. Here, you'll have time to explore the abbey's interior and walled Victorian gardens. After free time for lunch on your own, take a scenic drive through the Irish countryside, passing Connemara National Park, one of the country's most beautiful and unspoiled places. Make photo stops in the Inagh Valley and at the Maam Cross before returning to Galway.

## Extension excursion options

### Day 9: Windsor Castle

\$125 (5 hours, departs in the afternoon)

Led by a Blue Badge Guide, you'll travel to Windsor for a guided tour of the world's largest and longest-inhabited castle. Founded by William the Conqueror in 1070, Windsor has been the British Royal Family's preferred retreat for the past 900 years. Step inside the State Apartments and St. George's Chapel, where knighting ceremonies of the Most Noble Order of the Garter take place. View the exhibit of royal treasures

within the castle. You'll then have time to stroll through the town of Windsor and have a look at Eton College, a prestigious prep school attended by Princes William and Harry. Please note: When the Windsor Castle excursion falls on a Wednesday, entrance will be replaced by an excursion to Hampton Court. For any departures where the Windsor Castle excursion falls on a Tuesday, the excursion will be moved to another day on tour or cancelled. Additionally, St. George's Chapel is closed to the public on Sundays. This excursion requires advance reservation and must be booked at least 20 days prior to departure.

### Day 10: Stonehenge & Salisbury

\$149 (7 hours, departs in the morning)

After a scenic drive through gently rolling countryside, arrive at Stonehenge, a UNESCO World Heritage Site and one of England's most recognizable icons. Get an informative overview of the its history at the visitor's center before exploring the monument. Then, head to the nearby town of Salisbury to peruse its famed Charter Market and visit Salisbury Cathedral, home to one of the four surviving original copies of the Magna Carta. This excursion requires advance reservation and must be booked at least 20 days prior to departure.

\*Optional excursions may be purchased up to three days prior to departure or while on tour. Pre-purchased optional excursions cannot be canceled within three days prior to departure or while on tour. Select optional excursions require advance booking and cannot be purchased or canceled after the advanced reservation deadline. GAT accepts payment by cash, Visa or MasterCard for optional excursions purchased on tour. Additional fees may apply for optional excursions purchased on tour. Excursions require a minimum number of participants to operate. Details and prices are subject to change. Due to seasonal hours of operation and availability, some excursions may not operate. If this occurs, you will be refunded any payments made for that excursion post-tour. Learn more at [goaheadtours.com/terms](http://goaheadtours.com/terms)