

All-Ireland itinerary



In association with Moloney & Kelly Travel
and Randall Baron Bridge Travel

29th June to 13th July 2018

Day 1: 29th June 2018

Arrive at Dublin Airport, where you will meet with your private driver, and transfer to the Davenport Hotel. No other arrangements made for today...

The Davenport hotel:

Your hotel is located next to the very fashionable Merrion Square, in the heart of Dublin's historic Georgian Quarter; within walking distance of shops, and a wide selection of restaurants.

The façade of the hotel dates from 1863 and was once a non-denominational church, named Merrion Hall. The church was a victim of the many dwindling Protestant congregations across the city and finally closed its doors in the early 1990's. It re-opened as a 4-star boutique hotel in 1993.



Overnight Accommodation: The Davenport Hotel, (or similar) Dublin City Centre

Day 2: 30th June 2018

After breakfast, you will enjoy a private guided walking tour of Dublin City; lasting up to 4 hours. You will be accompanied by an accredited professional tour guide, who will take you around Dublin's historic Georgian Quarter; much of which is within walking distance of your hotel.

About Dublin:

With a population of about 1.2 million people, Dublin is the largest city in Ireland, and was established in 988AD by Viking settlers, who settled near [what was then known as] the Black Pool. These Norse settlers referred to the Black Pool in their mother tongue as Dyfflin, and -by the time the English arrived on our shores in 1169AD -Dyfflin was gradually anglicised as Dublin. Whilst the English Crown exerted power over Ireland from this time onwards, it was not until the Act of Union of 1800 that Ireland formally became part of the United Kingdom of Great Britain & Ireland. In the years leading up to, and during this period, Dublin was transformed from a medieval city to a modern European Capital. It would later become known as the Georgian Period; when Dublin was known as the Second City of the Empire -second only to London!

About Georgian Dublin:

Much of Dublin's inner-city architecture was built during the Georgian period (1714 to 1830) and remains largely intact; particularly around the south side of the inner city. The name, Georgian, comes from the 4 King Georges who reigned during this period. Modern Dublin began with the construction of Henrietta Street in the mid 1720's and the four-storey townhouses [built there] became a template for the rest of the city, which was constructed in phases over the next century.

Below: FitzWilliam Square -the smallest but most exclusive of Dublin's Georgian Squares.

Dublin's Georgian Squares:

During the mid-18th century, a total of 5 "squares" were added to enhance the newly developed streetscapes. In each case, a park formed the centre-piece of the Square; surrounded on each side by 4-storey townhouses. St. Stephen's Green is the largest of these squares, and perhaps the most beautiful. It is known colloquially as Stephen's Green, and is without doubt the most fashionable part of Dublin due to the array of high-end shops and restaurants. Merrion Square - literally a stone's throw from the



Merrion Hotel -was laid out in 1762 and is considered one of the city's finest surviving squares; owing to the fact that the 18th century streetscape remains largely intact. It is noted for its most famous one-time resident and playwright, Oscar Wilde, who lived at No. 1 Merrion Square. His statue can be seen in the park at the north-western corner of the park. FitzWilliam Square is the smallest and the last of the five Georgian squares in to be laid out. It was a popular place for the Irish Social Season of aristocrats entertaining in Dublin between January and Saint Patrick's Day each year. The other 2 Georgian squares are located on the less-fashionable side of the city -just north of the River Liffey.

Trinity College:

Trinity College was established by Royal Charter in 1592; during the reign of Queen Elizabeth I of England. The present buildings date from c1750. It is Ireland's oldest and indeed prestigious university. Ireland's largest collection of books and manuscripts are housed in the Trinity College Library. Its principle treasure is the 8th century hand-illuminated Book of Kells, which is generally considered to be the most striking manuscript ever produced in



the Western world, and one of the greatest masterpieces of early Christian art. Trinity College was the first university in these islands to admit women -the first enrolment being in 1904. Largely seen

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by the Catholic Church in Ireland as a 'Protestant' university, it forbade its members from attending. The 'Ban' was lifted in 1970. Notable students at Trinity College were Oliver Goldsmith, Oscar Wilde and Bram Stoker -writer of Dracula.

Government Buildings:

Originally completed in 1911, this was the last major classical building to be constructed before Southern Ireland gained independence from Britain. It was originally shared between the Dublin Castle administration and the Royal College of Science for Ireland. The foundation stone was laid in 1904 by King Edward VII; and was subsequently opened to pomp and ceremony by his son, King George V in 1911. His insignia and initials can still be seen on each of the pediments. Today it houses the offices of the Attorney General, the Department of Finance and the Department of the Taoiseach (Prime Minister). Although it contains the Council Chamber or cabinet room, the official seat of government is the nearby Leinster House, which contains the two houses the Oireachtas -Dáil Éireann and Seanad Éireann -the lower and upper houses of parliament respectively.



Leinster House:

Built in neo-classical style, it was originally built in 1745-48 by James FitzGerald, Earl of Kildare. It was located on the unfashionable and isolated south side of the city, far from the main locations of aristocratic residences, namely Rutland Square(now Parnell Square) and Mountjoy Square. The Earl predicted that others would follow. In succeeding decades,



Merrion Square and Fitzwilliam Square became the primary location of residences of the aristocracy, with many of their Northside residences being sold (many subsequently deteriorating and ending up as slums). You will enjoy a brief photo-stop here -the public gallery is only open to Irish citizens.

St. Patrick's Cathedral:

St Patrick's Cathedral is the largest church building in Ireland and is also the National Cathedral of Ireland. It belongs to the Church of Ireland, which is the largest Protestant denomination on the island of Ireland. The present building was erected between 1200 and 1270 and is named in honour of St. Patrick -the Patron Saint of Ireland. It is one of two Anglican cathedrals in Dublin -the other being Christ Church Cathedral. Such an arrangement is to be found nowhere else in Christendom.



Christ Church Cathedral:

The Anglo-Normans (The English) arrived in Ireland in 1169; an event which simultaneously extended the Holy See of Rome to our shores. Christ Church Cathedral was built inside the city walls for the English; while St. Patrick's Cathedral (a short distance away) was built outside the city walls for the native Irish population. At the time of the Reformation both cathedrals were passed to the Anglican Church of Ireland. While cathedrals in Europe are traditionally the seat of a bishop, St. Patrick's Cathedral has a Dean -the most famous of all being Dean Jonathan Swift (1713-45) writer of *Gulliver's Travels*. Christ Church Cathedral is the seat of the Archbishop of Dublin.



Spend the rest of the afternoon/evening at leisure.

Overnight Accommodation: The Davenport Hotel, (or similar) Dublin City Centre

Day 3: 1st July 2018

After breakfast, meet with your private driver guide, and enjoy a day-tour to Powerscourt House & Gardens and Glendalough National Park.

History of Powerscourt House & Gardens:

The 3rd Viscount Powerscourt, Richard Wingfield, was keen to leave his mark on society. So, in 1730 he commissioned the German-born architect, Richard Cassels, to build Powerscourt House (below) -a 68-room mansion, which was completed in 1741. Considered one of the most beautiful mansions in Ireland, it was frequented by many other high-ranking aristocrats, including King George IV of

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Great Britain & Ireland, who visited in August 1821. The extensive gardens were commissioned by the 6th Viscount, and completed in 1880 after 20 years. They remain largely intact today.

By the early to mid-20th century the political landscape had changed; so too had the Wingfield's economic fortunes. In 1961, the 9th Viscount sold Powerscourt Estate to Ralph and Gwen Slazenger, who are the present owners. However, as the 10th Viscount had married their daughter Wendy Slazenger; the estate retains some the Wingfield family lineage through their children. Tragedy hit in 1974 when fire destroyed the central part of the house. It was restored in 1996 and remains one of Ireland's most popular visitor attractions. Enjoy stunning views over homemade food in the Terrace Café or visit the Avoca Store; renowned for superior Irish-designed homewares, giftware, clothing and furniture, as well as an extensive range of high-quality artisan foods.



Above: the award-winning gardens; as seen from the upper levels of Powerscourt House.

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About Glendalough National Park:

Glendalough is part of the much bigger Wicklow Mountains National Park, and the name comes from the Irish language, *Gleann Dá Loch*, which literally means Valley of Two Lakes. It is also the location of several ancient church buildings connected with St. Kevin, who established a monastery there in the 6th century. The present buildings probably date from the coming of the Anglo Normans in 1169AD -



an event which simultaneously saw the "Holy See" of Rome extend to Ireland, for the first time. The ruins of this monastic site probably date from the "Dissolution of the Monasteries" under the reign of King Henry VII in 1536. There is plenty to see, including the ruins of the main church, and other smaller church ruins, as well as the 30 metre monastic round tower - the best preserved example in Ireland. *Afterwards, return to Dublin and enjoy the remainder of the evening at leisure.*

Overnight Accommodation: The Davenport Hotel, (or similar) Dublin City Centre

Day 4: 2nd July 2018

After breakfast, check out of The Davenport Hotel, meet with your private driver guide, and depart for Belfast. En route, enjoy a visit to Newgrange...



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About Newgrange:

Newgrange is Ireland's best-known prehistoric monument, and is one of the archaeological wonders of Western Europe. Built as a burial mound more than 5,000 years ago; it is classified as a World Heritage Site by UNESCO and predates the Great Pyramids and Stonehenge. Fascination with Newgrange reaches its peak at the winter solstice, when sunlight pierces the inner chamber with an orange-toned glow for about 17 minutes after sunrise. Such is the extent of national interest in Newgrange at the winter solstice; that admission on 21st December by lottery only.

Continue to Belfast and check in to your hotel...

The Europa Hotel:

Originally opened in 1971 on the site of the Great Northern Railway's Belfast terminus, the Europa Hotel is a landmark building on the very fashionable Great Victoria Street next to Belfast's Grand Opera House.



The hotel was acquired by the family-owned Hastings Hotel Group in 1993 and are its current owners. It is widely regarded as one of the places to be seen in Belfast and has hosted many celebrities and political figures, such as President Bill Clinton in 1995 -the Clinton Suite is named in his honour. Casual dining is available at The Causerie Restaurant, or for pre and post-dinner drinks at The Piano Lounge. Or, choose from a wide choice of nearby restaurants as well as traditional-style Irish pubs.

About Belfast: (and the partition of Ireland):

There are just under half a million people living in Belfast today, and one of the city's principal landmarks can be seen upon arrival -the two Harland & Wolfe Cranes -nicknamed Samson and Goliath. It was here that many great ships were built -most notably for White Star Line, whose ships included the Olympic, Britannic and -perhaps the most famous ship of all -RMS Titanic. At its peak in the early 20th century, Harland & Wolfe boasted a workforce of 35,000 and reflected the industrial nature of Ulster - Ireland's Northern Province. However, the rest of Ireland remained predominantly agricultural and economically less well off than their northern counterparts. Coupled with religious differences; when Ireland sought independence from Britain in 1922, the six counties of Ulster "opted out" and to this day remain within the UK.



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The partition of Ireland was challenged by violent means from the late 1960's onwards, and a peace process followed the 'ceasefire' in 1994. Today political differences are discussed at Stormont -the Northern Ireland Assembly -in the local capital, Belfast. Meanwhile in Southern Ireland, Irish unity remains government policy and is enshrined in the constitution.

Below: Parliament Buildings at Stormont; just outside of Belfast, which were completed in 1932. Enjoy a photo-stop here.



Overnight Accommodation: The Europa Hotel, Belfast City Centre

Day 5: 3rd July 2018

After breakfast, meet with your private driver guide, and enjoy touring in Belfast City and environs... enjoy a visit to the Titanic Museum -better known as Titanic Belfast.

About Titanic Belfast:

The Titanic Museum is an iconic landmark building; located at Titanic's original construction site. Opened in 2012 to mark the centenary of the ship's sinking, it is the world's largest Titanic visitor experience and the most popular visitor attraction in Belfast. It is a self-guided multimedia visitor experience charting the history of the city, and of course the world's most famous ocean liner through a range of interactive exhibits. The Titanic Museum also explores the political history of the city and the role it played in shipbuilding. We recommend between one and two hours for your visit here.



After your visit to the Titanic Museum and Stormont, you may wish to explore the political divide in West Belfast, where you will have a chance to see lots of religious and political murals, from the dark days of the 'troubles' in West Belfast.



Above left: Protestant Loyalist Mural at the Shankill Road. **Above Right:** Catholic Republican Mural near the Falls Road. Both murals are remnants of the "armed struggle" between 1969 and 1994, when Loyalists fought to keep Ulster within the United Kingdom, and Republicans fought for a United Ireland.

Queen's University Belfast:

Established in 1845 during the reign of Queen Victoria, Belfast's most prestigious university is simply known as "Queens". The university was first chartered as "Queen's College, Belfast", along with Queen's College, Cork, and Queen's College, Galway, as part of the Queen's University of Ireland - founded to encourage higher education for Catholics and Presbyterians, as a



counterpart to Trinity College, Dublin, then an Anglican institution. The main building, the Lanyon Building, was designed by the English architect, Sir Charles Lanyon and at its opening in 1849, it had 23 professors and 343 students. The subsequent *Irish Universities Act, 1908* dissolved the Royal University of Ireland, which had replaced the Queen's University of Ireland in 1879, and created two separate universities: the current National University of Ireland -in what is now Southern Ireland -and Queen's University of Belfast.

Belfast City Hall:

Belfast City Hall is the seat of Belfast City Council, which is presided over by the Lord Mayor. The building is considered by many to be the focal point of the city.



Plans for the City Hall began in 1888 when Belfast was awarded city status by Queen Victoria. This was in recognition of Belfast's rapid expansion and thriving linen, rope-making, shipbuilding and engineering industries. During this period Belfast briefly overtook Dublin as the most populous city on the island of Ireland. Construction began in 1898 and was completed in 1906.

Overnight Accommodation: The Europa Hotel, Belfast City Centre

Day 6: 4th July 2018

After breakfast, check out of your hotel, meet with your private driver guide, and depart for Derry City via the Giant's Causeway and North Antrim Coast.

Left: the Giant's Causeway and **right:** the Carrick-a-Rede Rope Bridge on the North Antrim Coast.



About the Giant's Causeway:

At the Giant's Causeway, there are about 40,000 interlocking basalt columns resulting from a volcanic eruption. However, legend has it that the Irish giant **Fionn Mac Cumhail** (Phon: Fyun Ma Cool) built the causeway to walk to Scotland to fight **Benandonner**. Legend tells that Fionn fell asleep before he got to Scotland. When he didn't arrive, the much larger Benandonner crossed the bridge looking for him. To protect Fionn, his wife **Úna** (Phon: oo-na) laid a blanket over Fionn and pretended he was Fionn's baby son. When Benandonner saw the size of the 'infant', he assumed that Fionn must be gigantic indeed! He fled home in terror, ripping up the Causeway in case he was followed by Fionn. The Scottish side of the causeway on the **Isle of Staffa** has similar basalt

formations at the site of Fingal's Cave. The Giant's Causeway was declared a World Heritage Site by UNESCO in 1986 and is owned and managed by the National Trust.

Carrick-a-Rede Rope Bridge is a famous rope bridge near Ballintoy on the North Irish Coast. The bridge links the mainland to the tiny island of Carrick-a-Rede (from Irish: *Carraig a' Ráid*, meaning "rock of the casting"). It spans 20 metres and is 30 metres above the rocks below. The bridge is open to visitors all year round (subject to weather and a local fee).

Your drive up from Belfast will take you along the coast road (known as the Causeway Coastal Route) via the Glens of Antrim. There are stunning views of the sea to the left and the mountains -or the Glens of Antrim -to the right. Most impressive are the spectacular views of Mull of Kintyre, Scotland -clearly visible on a fine day. Along the coast road you will pass the quaint coastal villages of Glenariff, Cushendall and Cushendun. You will also pass the fishing village of Carnlough, where we recommend stopping for tea at the Londonderry Arms Hotel, if the time is appropriate. The Hotel was once owned by Winston Churchill.

Continue to Derry City and check in to the Everglades Hotel; a little outside of town... **Below:** The Guild Hall, Derry City; overlooked by the historic Derry City Walls.

About Derry:

In Derry City (also known, rather controversially as Londonderry) there are opportunities for guided walking tours of the city. The city is historically famous for the Siege of Derry, which took place in 1689 -an event still celebrated annually by the city's Apprentice Boys - and more recently it is known as the home of the Civil Rights movement, which eventually led to the 'Troubles'. Derry City is the only city in Ireland, whose medieval city walls are fully intact, and the walls are incorporated into the tours.



Overnight Accommodation: The Everglades Hotel, Derry City

Day 7: 5th July 2018

After breakfast, check out of your hotel, meet with your private driver and depart for Westport. Your route will take you via Donegal Town and Sligo Town.

Donegal Town is situated at the mouth, where the River Eske flows into Donegal Bay. The centre of the town is "The Diamond", a big triangular place, where the traffic road from Sligo, Derry and

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West Donegal meet. From here, you can do a signed walking tour through Donegal Town. The town is famous for its castle, which was built in the 15th century.

Donegal Castle:

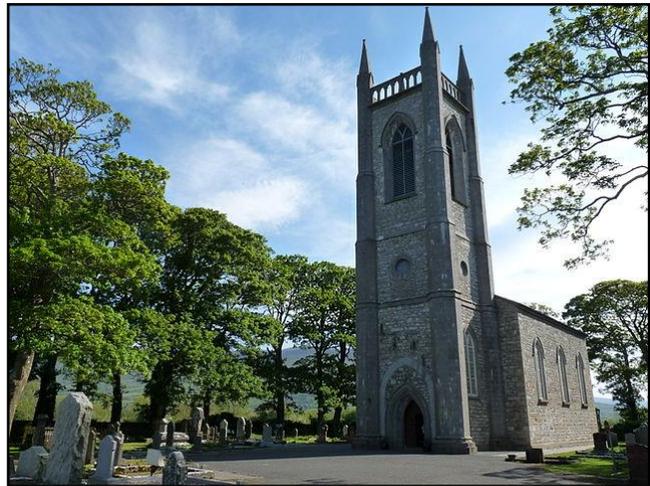
The town's main historic attraction is Donegal Castle. Standing on a rocky outcrop in the centre of Donegal Town, the 17th Century castle is linked to the powerful dynasties of Ulster and a fine surviving example of a Scots Planter fortified home. Donegal Castle was once the principle



residence of the O' Donnell's, one of the leading Gaelic Clans who trace their ancestry back to the 5th Century. With this as their centre of power the O'Donnell's ruled the area of Tír Connell, much of Donegal and were renowned mariners and fishermen. However following their defeat in the Battle of Kinsale by the English in the early 17th Century, the O'Donnell's left Ireland along with the O' Neill's and other Gaelic chiefs, in what is known as "the Flight of the Earls".

Drumcliffe Church:

Irish poet William Butler Yeats chose this peaceful churchyard at Drumcliffe in County Sligo as his final resting place, with its stunning location at the foot of Ben Bulbin Mountain, and attracts many visitors each year; including Prince Charles and his wife, Camilla; who visited during 2015 as part of much-improved Anglo-Irish relations. The graveyard has the remains of a round tower and a high cross constructed in the 11th century, when there was a Christian monastery on site. The monastery was founded by Saint Columille (Columba) in 574.



For refreshments, Drumcliffe Tea House and Craft Shop offer good wholesome food together. There is a selection of Yeats and Irish Interest Books to browse through, complimented by a distinctive selection of original quality Crafts.

The seaport **Sligo Town** is the centre of the north-west of Ireland. County Sligo is a region full of mountains, lakes, forests and rivers. It is also the home of the famous poet W.B. Yeats. Everywhere in Sligo Town, you will find buildings and inscriptions that remember you of Yeats. There is the Yeats International Summer School Festival every August, where more than 200 students and professors from all over the world come to join it. Besides that, Sligo Town offers many cozy pubs.

One of the oldest and most beautiful is the Hargadon's. Worth to visit is also the Sligo Abbey, Sligo County Museum and the Yeats Memorial Building.



Sligo Abbey



Yeats Memorial Building

Continue to Westport and check in to Knockranny House Hotel...

Family owned and run, Knockranny House Hotel & Spa, is one of Ireland's finest 4 star hotels in Westport. Set in secluded grounds on a hillside, this luxury hotel stands proudly overlooking the picturesque town of Westport and enjoys breathtaking views of Croagh Patrick and Clew Bay's islands to the west and the Nephin Mountains to the north. **Below:** The stunning views of Croagh Patrick from Knockranny's dining room.



Overnight Accommodation: Knockranny House Hotel, Westport, Co. Mayo

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Day 8: 6th July 2018

After breakfast, spend your day at leisure.

Westport:

Westport was voted "Best Place to Live in Ireland" by The Irish Times in 2012 and has been a recurring winner of the annual Irish Tidy Towns Competition. It is one of the few towns in Ireland that has resisted pressure to permit an out-of-town shopping centre; resulting in a thriving and charming town centre that has retained much of the charm and elegance of a bygone era.

Its layout follows the medieval principles of urban design introduced by the Anglo-Normans in the 13th century, and the current town centre was designed in 1780 in the Georgian architectural style. It is a charming miscellany of boutique



shops, fashionable cafés and restaurants and a tree-lined river promenade. Traditional-style pubs serve food all day, and complement the vibrancy of Westport's night life with live traditional Irish music. Enjoy a walk down The Mall, a tree-lined promenade on the Carrowbeg River, which features several stone bridges; including the one pictured above.

Alternatively, meet with your private driver guide and drive out to **Achill Island** -Ireland's largest off-shore island; with its majestic mountain views and stunning seascapes, as well as its many coves and beaches and rugged Atlantic shoreline.



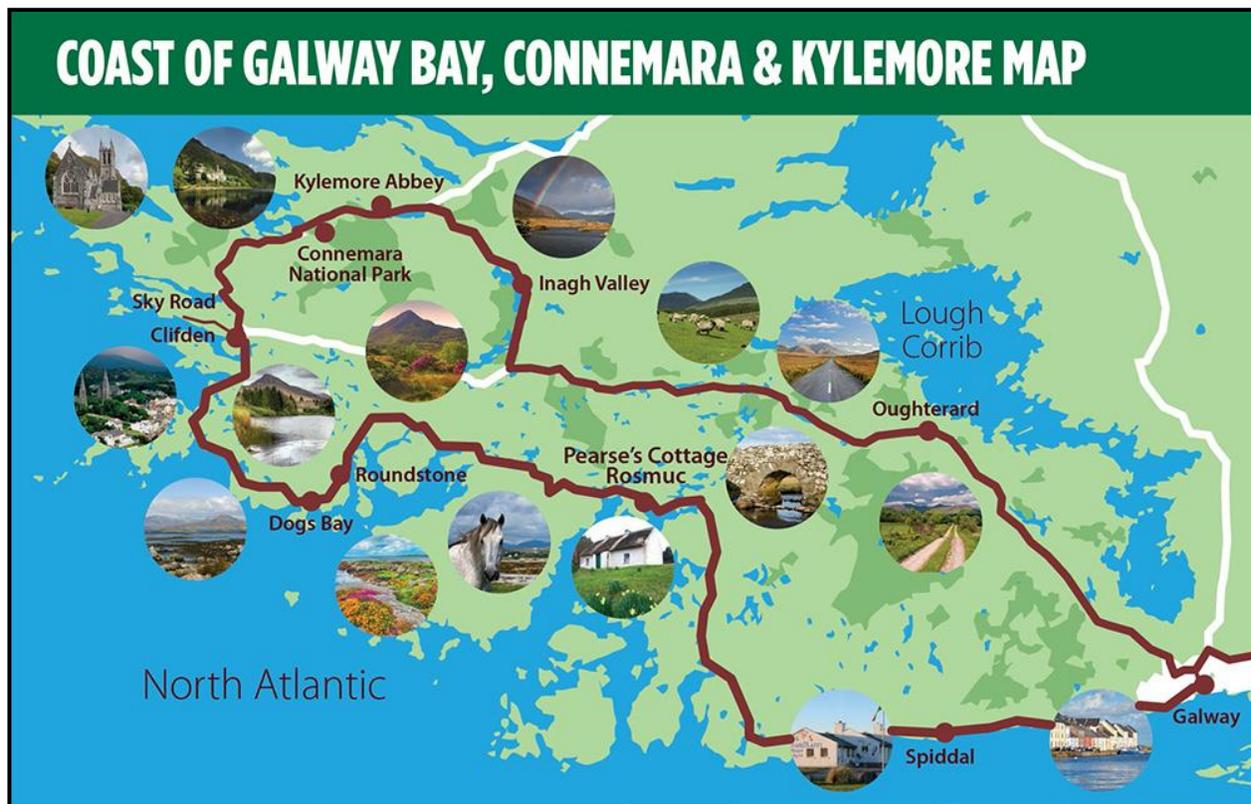
Overnight Accommodation: Knockranny House Hotel, Westport, Co. Mayo

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Day 9: 7th July 2018

After breakfast, check out of your hotel, meet with your private driver and depart for Galway, via Connemara National Park.



About Connemara:

Connemara is a region of western Co. Galway, which is known for its rugged mountain scenery; blended on the western seaboard by stunning seascapes. It is loosely bordered on the north and east by Lough Corrib (Ireland's 2nd largest lake) and reaches the Atlantic Ocean on the western seaboard. It is also home to Ireland's only fjord at Killary Harbour, as well as the largest Gaeltacht in Ireland (Irish-speaking region). A tour of Connemara would not be complete without a visit to Kylemore Abbey (pictured on previous page), home of the Benedictine nuns, who settled there after fleeing Belgium during the First World War. Prior to that, it had been a home of Mitchel Henry - a wealthy doctor and politician - who had it built in 1871. The principle town in Connemara is Clifden.

Clifden:

There is also time to visit the charming town of Clifden made famous by British aviators Alcock & Brown who made the first non-stop transatlantic flight in 1919 and landed just outside of Clifden. Clifden had already gained prominence after 1905 when Guglielmo Marconi decided to build his first high-power transatlantic long-wave wireless telegraphy station near the town, to minimize the distance to its sister station in Glace Bay, Nova Scotia. The first point-to-point fixed wireless service connecting Europe with North America opened for public service in October 1907. At peak times, over 400 people were employed by the Clifden Wireless Station; among them Jack Phillips,

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who later died as chief Radio Operator on the Titanic. On 19 June 1919 the transatlantic flight by Alcock & Brown crash-landed in Derrygimlagh bog, close to Marconi's transatlantic wireless station.

We recommend that you have lunch at Kylemore Abbey (below) or -if you wish to get away from the crowds -try Ballynahinch Castle; though a more limited snack menu is available here.



Continue to Galway and check in to the Park House Hotel...

About Galway City:

With a population of about 75,000 people, Galway is the 6th most populous city on our island. It is the most westerly city in Ireland and was built at the mouth of the River Corrib, which flows into Galway Bay. However, compared to larger cities, such as Belfast, Dublin and Cork; it feels more like a large town rather than a city, and is easy to explore on foot. It is known as Ireland's Cultural Heart and is renowned for its vibrant lifestyle and numerous festivals, celebrations and events. The cultural highlight each year is the Galway Arts Festival, which takes place in July. Galway -more than any other Irish city -is also synonymous with the Irish language; and the Irish-speaking television channel, TG4, is broadcast from just outside the city.

Whilst it is not quite clear when Galway was first founded, the oldest records about a fort at the mouth of the River Corrib date back to 1124, when it was a walled city. During the middle ages it was the principle trading port with France and Spain, and at this time the city was ruled by 14 merchant families or tribes -it is still known colloquially as the City of the Tribes. Over the following centuries the city declined economically, and remained largely insignificant until the Queen's University of Ireland was established in 1845 -six years later the railway line from Dublin had been completed. Both the university and the railway facilitated economic growth; with the latter facilitating tourism.

Today, Galway is a vibrant city, and is a very popular city-break destination for both domestic and overseas visitors. It is the ideal base for touring to Connemara National Park, the Cliffs of Moher, and the Aran Islands, which are located off the Galway Coast. No visit to Galway City would be

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complete with a stroll down Shop Street -a charming pedestrianised street, which is the cultural heartbeat of Galway City. The main squares in the city are Eyre Square (containing John F. Kennedy Park) in the centre of the city, and Spanish Parade next to the Spanish Arch -the latter paying homage to the historic trade with Spain, and the only remaining section of the old city walls. St. Nicholas Church of Ireland -located off Shop Street -is the largest medieval parish church in Ireland in continuous use as a place of worship. The early sections of the church date from 1320. Christopher Columbus prayed here in 1477 before sailing away on one of his attempts to reach the New World.

About the Park House Hotel:

Situated in the very heart of Galway City centre -adjacent to Eyre Square - the 4-star Park House Hotel is one of Galway's best-known hotels, and is within a short walking distance of a wide selection of traditional bars and award-winning restaurants. Since its opening in 1975, The Park House Hotel has earned a reputation for the excellence of its food and the quality of its service.



Overnight Accommodation: The Park House Hotel, Galway City Centre

Day 10: 8th July 2018

After breakfast, check out of your hotel and depart for Killarney, via Adare and Bunnratty Castle & Folk Park in Co. Clare.

About the Burren National Park:

The Burren is the smallest of Ireland's national parks and has been described as a lunar landscape; mirrored nowhere else in Ireland or Western Europe! Often described as a natural landscape, it is most likely that in pre-historic times, removal of the natural woodland induced soil erosion, enlarging the exposure of the underlying limestone. More than 700 different flowering plants and ferns have been recorded in the Burren. Thus, although the Burren represents only 1% of the land-mass of



Ireland, 75% of the Irish native species are contained in the area. In the Burren, plants from northern ("Arctic") regions reach their southern limits, those from southern ("subtropical") regions

attain their northern limits, while plants from high mountains ("alpines") can be found growing at sea-level; all three groups grow side by side - and in profusion - in the Burren.

About the Cliffs of Moher:

The Cliffs of Moher are the most popular tourist attraction outside of Dublin; attracting over 1 million visitors in 2015. Rising to over 200 metres in places, they are among the highest sea cliffs in Western Europe, and stretch for about for 8km along the Atlantic coast. From its exceptional vantage position, you will enjoy spending views over Galway Bay; including the Aran Islands -a group of three small islands,



where the Irish language is the primary means of communication. You will also enjoy stunning views of the mountains in Connemara, Co. Galway, which you have visited during your stay in Galway City.

Bunnratty Castle & Folk Park:

At the folk park at Bunnratty, you can experience life in 19th century rural Ireland. Here you will find a replica 19th century village, complete with shops, a church, pub and school. Some of the historic buildings were actually dismantled brick-by-brick from their original, and rebuilt at Bunnratty Folk Park.



The stunning castle was built for the Mc Namara Family in 1425. By around 1500, Bunnratty Castle took on a more prominent role and came into the hands of the O'Brien's; the most powerful clan in Munster -and kings of Thomond. Under their kingship, there was peace and political stability in this part of Ireland.

However that all changed when the English King Henry VIII assumed control of Ireland in the mid 1500's and the O'Brien's were forced to submit to the English King. The Irish King of Thomond was reduced in status to the Earl of Thomond, and the political landscape of Ireland had changed forever! Bunnratty Castle eventually went into ruin, and the O'Brien's subsequently built the nearby Dromoland Castle, which is now a luxury 5-star hotel. However, Bunnratty Castle was returned to its former glory before it opened to the public in 1960, and tours of the castle are self-guided.

About Adare:

Adare is noted for its 19th century thatched cottages, first and foremost, and is regarded as being Ireland's prettiest and most picturesque village. Some of these cottages are kept by local restaurants and Arts & Crafts shops, as well as private homes. It has been designated as a Heritage Town by the Irish Government. However, Adare history can be traced back to the early 1200's and is noted particularly for its ecclesiastic history. This small town contains no fewer than 3 historic churches



-the ruins of the 13th century Franciscan Friary, the Trinitarian Priory -still in use as a Catholic Church -and the Augustinian Priory, which serves the small Protestant community in Adare. It is a stunning example of Irish medieval church architecture. The ruins of the 13th century Desmond Castle are also located with the town's boundaries, where public tours are available. Right: traditional thatched cottage in Adare.

Continue to Killarney, and check-in to the Brehon Hotel ...a luxurious hotel of unique grace and elegance set amidst Killarney's breathtaking landscape, overlooking Killarney National Park. Each of their 125 bedrooms and suites reflects a contemporary blend of style and space.



About Killarney

Killarney is the number one tourism destination in Ireland; outside of Dublin. It is set against the backdrop of the Kerry Mountains and Killarney Lakes, and has [arguably] the best scenery in Ireland. In addition, as Ireland's only 'established' tourism destination, it has a whole host of world-class visitor attractions and amenities, such as Muckross House in Killarney National Park, as well as a whole host of traditional Irish pubs, with live entertainment. Not forgetting a number of scenic tours, including the Ring of Kerry and The Dingle Peninsula.



About Killarney National Park:

Killarney National Park was the first national park established in Ireland when the entire Muckross Estate was donated to the Irish Free State in 1932. The park has since been substantially expanded and encompasses over 103 km² (25,425 acres) of diverse ecology, including the Lakes of Killarney, oak and yew woodlands of international importance, and of course the highest mountain peaks on the island of Ireland. It has Ireland's only native herd of Red Deer and the most extensive covering of native forest remaining in Ireland. The park is of high ecological value because of the quality, diversity, and extensiveness of many of its habitats and the wide variety of species that they accommodate, some of which are rare. The park was designated a UNESCO Biosphere Reserve in 1981 and forms part of a Special Area of Conservation.

Overnight Accommodation: The Brehon Hotel, Killarney, Co. Kerry

Day 11: 9th July 2018

After breakfast, enjoy a tour of the Ring of Kerry, after your guided tour of Muckross House in Killarney National Park.

Muckross House:

Muckross House was built in 1843 for Henry Arthur Herbert and his wife, Mary Balfour Herbert. It is considered to one of the finest stately homes in Ireland; not least because of its location in the very heart of Killarney National Park.



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Herbert himself was a senior politician and member of parliament for Kerry. During the 1850s, the Herbert's undertook extensive garden works in preparation for Queen Victoria's visit in 1861 –an event which all but bankrupt the Herbert's. As with most stately homes in Britain and Ireland, the cost of the upkeep of this fine house was too much to bear for its owners. In 1932 it was decided to present Muckross House and its 11,000 acres estate to the Irish nation. It thus became Ireland's first National Park and formed the basis of present day Killarney National Park. Today the principal rooms in the house are furnished in period-style and portray the elegant lifestyle of the nineteenth century landowning class. Tours are guided throughout the day.

The Ring of Kerry:

This is one of the most breath-taking coastal tours in Europe, encircling the Iveragh Peninsula; starting and finishing in Killarney –route map below; showing the 160km Ring of Kerry. From Killarney, we recommend taking the tour in an anti-clockwise direction; heading in the direction of Killorglin and to Glenbeigh, where the coastal scenery of Dingle Bay comes into view. Every turn in the road seems to offer a unique vista, and the Ring of Kerry provides many unforgettable memories as it passes through the many picturesque villages such as Waterville and Sneem and returns via Ladies View, the famous Lakes of Killarney and through the Oakwood's of Killarney's magnificent National Park. There are also many opportunities to enjoy remote walks in the mountains on one of the many nature trails.

Below: route map of the 160km (100 mile) Ring of Kerry.



Overnight Accommodation: The Brehon Hotel, Killarney, Co. Kerry

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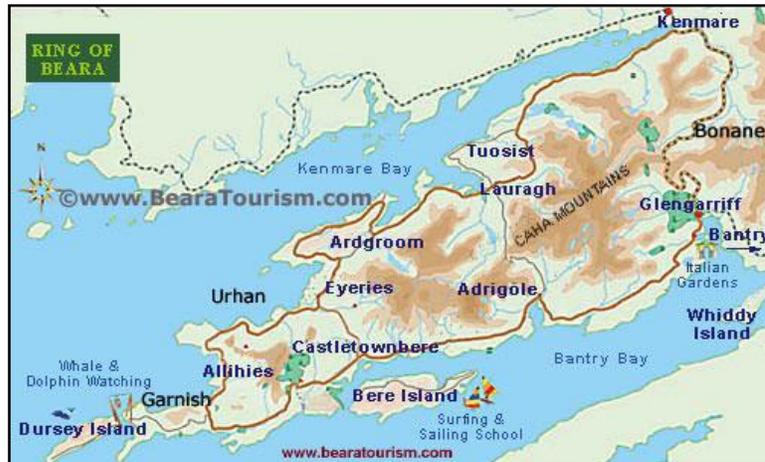
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Day 12: 10th July 2018

After breakfast, meet with your private driver guide, and enjoy a day-tour around the Dingle Peninsula, or the Beara Peninsula. Alternatively enjoy touring on the road less travelled -the Beara Peninsula; to the south west of Killarney.

The Beara Peninsula

The Beara Peninsula lies to the southwest of Kenmare, and the 92-mile circuit of the peninsula begins and ends in Kenmare. The main tourist attractions on the peninsula are the ruins of Dunboy Castle, The Copper Mines Museum in the village of Allihies of course, Garnish. The "Ring of Beara" is a tourist trail for cars which follows the roads for about 148 km (92 miles) circumnavigating the peninsula. The main towns on the route are Castletownbere, Kenmare and Glengarriff -the latter is the starting point for your cruise around Bantry Bay and to Garnish Island.



Below: Garnish Island. As desired, you may board a cruise around Bantry Bay at Glengarriff and enjoy a picnic on Garnish Island (subject to availability).



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Garnish Island:

A cruise includes a wonderful visit to seal island where you will visit the very tame seal colony. Garnish Island renowned for its gardens which are laid out in beautiful walks and it has some stunning specimen plants which are rare in this climate. The island was bequeathed to the Irish people in 1953, and was subsequently entrusted to the care of the Commissioners of Public Works. Dating from the Napoleonic Wars, the island also boasts a Martello Tower on its southern shores, which has been restored by the Office of Public Works. There is an amazing view of the bay from the battlements of the tower.

OR...

The Dingle Peninsula:

The Dingle Peninsula contains some of the most dramatic coastal scenery in Ireland, particularly to the western extremity, where stunning views of the Blasket Islands are enjoyed. (below).



The Dingle Peninsula -immortalised by the 1970 movie, Ryan's Daughter -is one of the most beautiful peninsulas on the Irish coastline. It thrusts out into the Atlantic Ocean to claim Ireland's most westerly point. Dingle is the chief town of the peninsula and is a thriving, colourful fishing port. The town is a jumble of attractive streets tumbling down a hillside and coming to a halt at the handsome pier. It is also home to the South-western Gaeltacht (Irish-speaking area), and you should have no problem meeting some native Irish speakers. The name Dingle comes from the Irish name, An Daingean or Daingean Uí Chúis, meaning "Ó Cúis' fort". There was recent controversy when the national government tried to change the town's name to its original form. This is evident from the road signs. Historically, Dingle was Kerry's leading port and later became a centre for smuggling. However, the town of Dingle is probably best known for its resident dolphin, Fungie.

Drive around by Sleah Head (following page) located at the south-western extremity of the peninsula -the staggering splinter-slatted mass of rocks defines this extraordinary coastline. It's a place of pristine beaches and fascinating archaeological remains. The village of Dunquin, stunningly situated between Sleah Head and Clogher Head, is home to the Blasket Centre which celebrates the story of the Blasket Islanders, the unique literary achievements of the island writers and their native

language, culture and tradition. The islands were abandoned by the last permanent residents in 1953. The Blasket Islands are located just offshore.



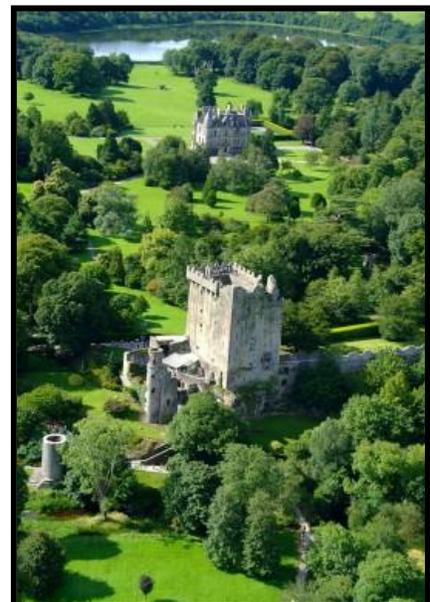
Overnight Accommodation: The Brehon Hotel, Killarney, Co. Kerry

Day 13: 11th July 2018

After breakfast, check out of your hotel, meet with your private driver guide, and depart for Malahide via Blarney Castle...

Blarney Castle:

Though the original castle was built sometime around 1200 AD, construction on the present castle or "Keep" began in 1446 under Cormac Mc Carthy; King of Munster -one of the 4 historic provinces of Ireland. Though there are several legends of the stone's origin, an early story involves the goddess Clíodhna (Phon: Clee-on-ah). Mc Carthy -being involved in a lawsuit - appealed to Clíodhna for her assistance. She told Mc Carthy to kiss the first stone he found in the morning on his way to court [and he did so] with the result that he pleaded his case with great eloquence; and won. Thus the Blarney Stone is said to impart "the ability to deceive without offending." Mc Carthy then incorporated it into the parapet of the castle during its construction.



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The ritual of kissing the Blarney Stone, according to the castle's proprietors, has been performed by millions of people, including statesmen, rock stars, and legends of the silver screen. The kiss, however, is not casually achieved. To touch the stone with one's lips, the participant must ascend to the castle's peak, and then lean over backwards on the parapet's edge. This, of course, is achieved with the help of an assistant. We recommend arriving as early as possible, as queues can form at peak times.

Continue to Malahide just a little north of Dublin City and check-in to the *Grand Hotel*...

Grand Hotel, Malahide:

The 4-star Grand Hotel is centrally located in the fashionable seaside town of Malahide, North County Dublin. It is located near to Dublin Airport and within 5 minutes' walk of the railway station, where there are fast and frequent services into Dublin City. Malahide is regarded as one of the most attractive towns in Dublin's suburbs and is certainly one of the most sought after places to live in Dublin. Your hotel is located next to the marina, and is within a very short walking distance of the village centre; with its boutique shops, traditional pubs, and fashionable restaurants.



Brief History:

Originally built in 1835 as the Royal Hotel, the name was subsequently changed to the Grand Hotel with the rise of nationalism that prevailed toward the close of the 19th century. The First World War disrupted the Grand Hotel's tourist business for a period of time as the hotel was chosen as the Irish headquarters for the British Army in the event of a German invasion.

In more recent years, the Grand Hotel was re-constructed and modernised. Having grown from an original staff of 12 persons; today the hotel now employs almost 200 people and is fully equipped

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with modern conveniences, as well as a gymnasium and swimming pool. Informal dining is offered in the Palm Court and the Matt Ryan Bar, as well as the Griffon Bar, which is located in the original Victorian building. The Coast Restaurant and the Sea View Rooms overlook the Marina and Broadmeadow Estuary, where it flows into the Irish Sea.

Overnight Accommodation: The Grand Hotel, Malahide, Co. Dublin

Day 14: 12th July 2018

After breakfast, enjoy a leisurely day in Malahide.



Malahide Castle:

Malahide Castle and Demesne was home to the Talbot family, who settled in Ireland as part of the Anglo Norman invasion, which had begun in 1169. Richard de Talbot accompanied King Henry II to Ireland in 1174 and he was subsequently given lands at Malahide, and the title of Lord Talbot de Malahide. The Talbots remained there for the next 791 years, when -in 1976 -the castle was sold to the Irish State to fund inheritance taxes. Many of the contents -notably furnishings of the castle -had been sold in advance; leading to public controversy. However, public and private intervention led to a considerable number of paintings and furniture being retained in its proper place. It is open for both public and private tours -the latter by prior arrangement.



Overnight Accommodation: The Grand Hotel, Malahide, Co. Dublin

Day 15: 13th July 2018

After breakfast, check out of the Grand Hotel, meet with your private driver guide one last time and depart for Dublin Airport, where you will bid farewell to Ireland.

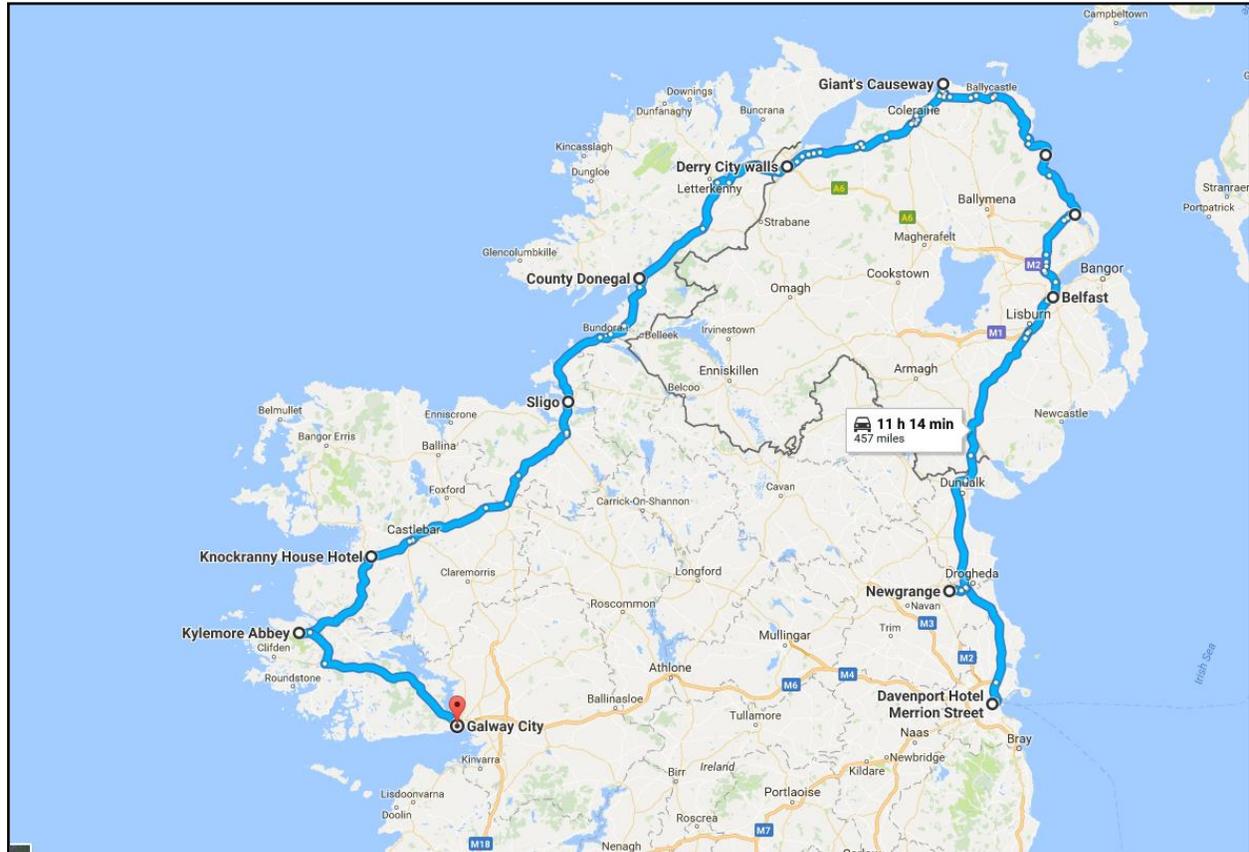
This is a suggested itinerary, which can be refined, as required; where there are no pre-booked reservations made.

Every effort will be made to ensure that clients arriving on early morning flights will be accommodated for prompt check-in at their hotel. However this is subject to your room being ready and/or not occupied on the night before your arrival. Normal check-in time is otherwise at 3pm approx.

Please note that due to the temperate Irish climate, air-conditioning does not feature in most Irish homes or public buildings, as it is generally not necessary; even in mid-summer. By that same token, it is not provided as standard in most hotels across Ireland.

Please note that day-touring with your private driver guide is up to a maximum of 8 consecutive hours per day with little room for flexibility -as set down by government legislation. Your private driver guide will be delighted to make any suggestions for lunch stops, as appropriate.

Following pages: Parts 1 & 2 of the route map



Leaving Dublin, we depart for Belfast via Newgrange and enjoy two nights at the Europa Hotel. From Belfast we continue to Derry City for one night via our second UNESCO World Heritage Site, the Giant's Causeway. We then spend 2 nights at Knockranny House Hotel in the charming town of Westport before heading to Galway City via Connemara National Park.

Please scroll down to the following page for Part Two of your itinerary.

After your one-night-stay in Galway City, you will enjoy three nights at the Brehon Hotel in Killarney; not before stopping at the majestic Cliffs of Moher. There will be an optional route to Killarney via the Killimer to Tarbet Ferry across the Shannon Estuary. Enjoy touring around the Dingle Peninsula and the Ring of Kerry before leaving Killarney for Dublin. En route, there will be one last stop at the world-famous Blarney Castle before reaching Malahide -your final stop on this itinerary. Dublin Airport is only 10-15 minutes from Malahide.

