



ADVENTURES
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IRELAND: CASTLES, CULTURE, AND HIKING

Trip Summary

HIGHLIGHTS

- Touring Kylemore Abbey and several castles, in various states of repair
- Delving into Ireland's past along the famous Famine Walk on Killary Fjord
- Walking the Cliffs of Mohr and exploring one of the Aarons islands in the Bay of Galway
- Hiking in Connemara National Park at the foot of Diamond Hill
- Learning about and experiencing the food and culture of Ireland
- Spending time in the lively city of Dublin

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TRIP AT A GLANCE

Location: Ireland

Activities: Hiking

Arrive: Arrive at the Shannon International Airport (SNN) in Shannon Ireland by 12 P.M. on Day 1. **Please note:** This trip begins in Shannon, Ireland and ends in Dublin, Ireland

Depart: You can leave anytime on the last day (Day 9).

Trip Overview

Ireland, appropriately known as the Emerald Isle, is a country steeped in history and rugged vistas. We'll encounter these vistas firsthand as we hike to high cliffs, remote islands, coastal areas, and the lunar landscape of the Burren. We'll learn about Ireland's turbulent past, including the Great Famine, and the centuries of conflict between the British and Irish. We'll visit sites including Caherconnell Fort, Bunratty Castle, and the famous Kylemore Abbey. This trip offers a mix of hiking and culture, and of course, plenty of opportunities to enjoy some local Irish music!

Rating

This trip is designed for active women in good physical condition who want to combine walking, hiking and sightseeing with immersion in the rich history and culture of Ireland. This trip is rated a 2 with one option for a longer hike. Preparation for this trip will require about 40 minutes of brisk walking 4 times a week (on hills if possible), or some type of aerobic conditioning 3 times a week. **Rating:** 1 **2** 3 4 5.

What's Included

- An AGC guide and a local guide (There will be an AGC guide with 8 or more participants, below 8 there will not be an AGC guide)
- All transport within Ireland other than the Dublin airport transfer
- 8 nights double occupancy lodging
- Meals as noted in the itinerary
- Entrance to the castles on our itinerary as well as Kylemore Abbey House & Gardens

Not Included: Travel to Shannon and from Dublin, meals excluded from the itinerary, alcoholic beverages, guide gratuities, and trip insurance

OUR ITINERARY

Below is the itinerary we have planned for the trip. As is true on any adventure travel trip, plans for any specific day may be modified due to weather considerations, unforeseen circumstances, new opportunities, and group interests.

DAY 1

Arrive in Shannon airport by 12 p.m. today where we'll meet our Irish guide and be whisked away to Doolin and the Cliffs of Moher! Along the way, we'll visit Caherconnell Fort. If energy allows, we'll take a short walk to breathe in that wonderful Irish air before checking into our hotel for the evening. Next on the agenda - a delicious Irish dinner, the first of many, and perhaps even a visit to a local Irish bar with a bit of music and a good night's sleep!

Driving: 1 hour. Overnight: County Clare. (D)

DAY 2

We'll spend today in an area of Ireland known for its limestone, the karst limestone landscape of the Burren, one of the largest in Europe. The Burren is truly an amazing place: in these 100 square miles of jagged limestone, Arctic, Mediterranean, and Alpine plants all live side by side. In fact, 70% of all of Ireland's flora can be found here. After a morning hike in the Burren, we'll explore a different part of Ireland, its past, and its culture, with a visit to Bunratty Castle and Folk Park. We'll conclude the evening tasting medieval foods with a four-course meal at the Bunratty Medieval Banquet. The setting will be in an historical castle whilst being entertained by world famous Bunratty Castle Singers.

Driving: 1 hour. Hiking: 2 - 3 hours. Overnight: County Clare. (B, D)

DAY 3

Morning brings a fabulous Irish breakfast - black pudding anyone? Our morning stretches ahead of us, filled with ocean breezes and wonderful vistas. We're hiking today from Doolin to the Cliffs of Mohr. Our trail traverses one of the most outstanding landscapes of Ireland, running along top the cliffs from Doolin to the Cliffs of Moher visitor center. The path closely follows the edge of the cliffs offering incredible views of both the rocks and surrounding sea.

Once reaching the Visitors Center, we'll take full advantage of their exhibits before boarding our shuttle and finding lunch. Our afternoon adventure offers us a glimpse into one of Ireland's well-known family run businesses: The Burren Perfumery. The Burren Perfumery is a family company that is run on a small scale with local staff. You'll have a chance to visit and enjoy their blending rooms, herb garden and their tearoom and perhaps you'll choose to sample their wonderful organic cakes.

Overnight: County Clare. (B)

DAY 4

After another hearty Irish breakfast, we'll catch a ferry in Doolin to Inis Mor, one of the Aran Islands. These islands are also made of karst limestone where people have eked out a living from fishing and farming their rocky fields for 5000 years. The islands are a Gaeltacht region, where Irish (which is different from Gaelic) is spoken as a first language. The ferry ride over is about 45 minutes and once here you can rent a bike and ride around the island or see the island by foot, walking out to an old shipwreck, a Medieval church ruin, and a three-story tower house built within a Stone Fort. And of course, the local pub offers an Irish welcome of food and drink. After a few hours enjoying the island and relishing the remoteness, we take a highspeed ferry to the town of Rossaveal, where once again we meet up with our Irish guide and vehicle, and anyone who decided not to go to the island. We'll continue to Clifden and if arriving in time can enjoy a pleasant walk around this quaint little village. Driving: 2 hours. Hiking: varied depending on activity choices on island. Overnight: Clifden (B, D)

DAY 5

We're in for a treat today with a visit to Connemara National Park at the foot of Diamond Hill. Connemara is the home of the Twelve Bens, a mountain range of rocky peaks. We will have a few options today but one we love is a walk up Diamond Hill. It has 2 loops so those who want a rewarding challenge can tackle the upper, steeper loop and enjoy the 360-degree views at the top, looking over the ocean to nearby Inishturk and Inishbofin and across the dramatic Connemara landscape to the iconic Twelve Bens. Others can take the shorter, less strenuous lower loop and enjoy the nature walk and the tearoom in the lovely Visitor Center. After our walk followed by a short drive, we will visit Kylemore Abbey, known as one of the most romantic places in all of Ireland. The chapel on the grounds is a miniature replica of Norwich Cathedral and the gardens are immaculately kept. Driving: 2 hours. Hiking: 3 hours Overnight: Clifden (B, D)

DAY 6

Today, we start the day with a sheepdog herding demonstration on a working sheep farm. These highly intelligent dogs are trained from birth and we'll have a chance to see them in action in a picturesque setting.

Next, we'll delve into the history of this magnificent landscape as we follow the Famine Walk that runs along the shores of Killary Harbour. Part of our walk will be along a famine relief road, constructed by the starving Irish during the great famine of 1845-1849 in return for food. Along the way we'll clearly see the ruins of famine villages and old 'Lazy Beds', an ancient practice of building ridges for planting potato crops. While the potato blight that was the immediate cause of the great famine ravaged crops throughout Europe, its most devastating impact was in Ireland where the impoverished population was heavily dependent on potato crops for survival. The severe economic conditions were inherently interwoven with the policies of British governance at the time and soured the already strained relations between these countries. The magnitude of the famine indelibly changed Ireland and became a rallying cause for the Home Rule movements that eventually led to independence.

We'll end today's memorable walk with a cruise through the Killary Fjord where we'll see dramatic sweep of the landscape, as you pass between the Twelve Bens and the Maam Turk mountains to the South, in County Galway and the Mweelrea mountains to the North in County Mayo. The shelter of the fjord is home to both mussel and salmon farming and toward the mouth of the fjord is a small island where dolphins traditionally like to make an appearance!

Driving: 1.5 hours. Hiking: 2 - 4 hours. Overnight: Clifden (B)

DAY 7

Leaving Clifden, we'll make our way to Cong. We will visit Cong abbey and take a walk through the forest on Ashford castle grounds. After our walk group will have time to explore the town and have some lunch in one of the local pubs or cafes.

After lunch, we will continue to Clonmacnoise, an ancient monastic site founded by St Ciaran in the mid-6th century that includes a cathedral and 7 churches. It was a great center of religion and learning, visited by scholars from all over the ancient world. Afterwards, we'll have a bit of free time before meeting back up for dinner.

Driving: 2 hours. Hiking: 1- 2 hours. Overnight: Athlone (B, D)

DAY 8

This is the day everyone dreads, the finish of our trip as we return to Dublin - but before we go, let's do a bit more hiking and sightseeing! Yes, we have to pack up and leave Athlone but one last walk before returning to the city still awaits and our guide will surprise us with her choice! Once arriving in Dublin, our Irish guide will bid us farewell and we'll check into our hotel. The rest of the afternoon is free to enjoy Dublin - your AGC guide will help you figure out what you want to do and get you oriented to the city. We'll meet back at our hotel in the evening and head out for our last dinner together in Ireland.

Driving: 1 hour. Hiking 2 hours. Overnight: Mullingar (B, D)

DAY 9

This morning it's time to say goodbye to Ireland as we depart for the airport or on to our next adventure. You are free to make your return flight arrangements any time for today. Or if you think another day in Dublin is a good idea, there is so much to see and do. (B)

ADDITIONAL TRIP INFORMATION

Getting There

Fly into the Shannon International Airport (SNN) in Shannon, Ireland on the first day of the trip (Day 1) by 12 P.M. Getting Home: You are free to make your flight arrangements out of the Dublin, Ireland airport (DUB) anytime on the last day of the trip (Day 9).

If you would like assistance with airfare, we recommend contacting our AirDesk Partner, [Exito Travel](#). Start by submitting this [form](#). Just fill in your dates and destinations, including any additional notes about preferred carriers, class of service, possible stopovers, etc., and an agent will typically respond via email within a few hours. If you prefer to call, the number is 800-655-4053; be sure to tell them you are traveling with Adventures in Good Company.

Please note: Exito charges a one-time, non-refundable processing fees of \$35 per passenger.

Accommodations

Our nights will be spent in high quality lodges and/or guesthouses with ensuite bathrooms.

Travel Insurance

We recommend that you purchase a travel protection plan to help protect you and your travel investment against the unexpected. For your convenience, we offer travel protection through Travelex Insurance Services. For more information on the available plans or to enroll, visit www.travelexinsurance.com or call 1-800-228-9792 and reference location number 06-0331.

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CANCELLATION POLICY

Cancellation charges reflect the many expenses Adventures in Good Company cannot recover if you cancel, even if you must do so due to illness, injury, or personal emergencies. These fees are not meant to be punitive. The charges made reflect the expenses Adventures in Good Company has incurred in administering your reservation and planning for your participation. We recognize that the majority of those who cancel their reservations do so out of necessity. Please note that we do not make any refunds for any unused portion of your trip, not arriving, arriving late, or leaving the trip early.

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