

# BrackTours.com

We Didn't Invent Ireland,  
We Just Made it Fun.

## *Suggested Itinerary* *9 night Self-Drive Tour of Ireland*



### **Day 1 – Sunday – Dublin to Armagh via Carlingford & Newry**

Cead Mile Failte! One hundred thousand welcomes! Upon clearing customs, you may make your way to Hertz car rental office where you will collect your keys and documents. You may wish to make your first stop in Carlingford, Co. Louth. It is a magical village, full of character and is one of the best preserved medieval villages in Ireland. With its history and narrow medieval streets, lanes that lead to the harbour, the majestic Slieve Foye Mountain and the famous mountains of Mourne across the lough, all combine to make Carlingford a unique location in Ireland. You will continue on to Newry where you can take some time to explore this city and maybe enjoy a lunch stop. Travel North to Armagh in the afternoon and after check in why not visit St Patrick's Cathedral in the heart of the city.

**Overnight & Breakfast: Armagh City Hotel, Armagh**

### **Day 2 – Monday – Armagh to Sligo via Dungannon & Enniskillen**

After breakfast, depart Armagh City and travel west to County Sligo. Your drive will take you through Dungannon in County Tyrone, home of **Hill of the O'Neill**. From the thirteenth century until modern times, this highland rampart above the town of Dungannon has been one of the most strategically important sites in the history of Ireland. Stronghold of the famous O'Neill dynasty its view of all nine counties of Ulster enabled its occupants to command the surrounding area. The inauguration site of the O'Neill's is a short distance away to the North East at Tullahogue Fort. In modern times the Hill, known locally as 'Castle Hill' was a base for the Territorial Army and during the Troubles, the British Army. In 2006 the site was handed back to Dungannon and South Tyrone Borough Council, who, respecting the enormous historical, cultural and political significance of the site, have restored it as a people's park with an adjoining exhibition that puts the Hill's history into the context of important historical episodes, latterly the Flight of the Earls and the Plantation of Ulster. From Dungannon, continue West through the beautiful town of Enniskillen in the Lakeland County of Fermanagh and on to Sligo. You may stop along the way at Drumcliff, County Sligo, where you will have the opportunity to visit the **burial place of W.B Yeats** set at the foothills of Ben Bulbin Mountain

**Overnight & Breakfast: Sligo City Hotel, Sligo**

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### Day 3 – Tuesday - Sligo to Galway via Westport & Cong

This morning after breakfast you set out for Galway via County Mayo. Your drive today takes you through **Westport** in County Mayo. This vibrant, colourful traditional Irish town is set at the foothill of Croagh Patrick. Westport is a very popular spot and famous for its traditional Irish music culture where many famous musicians play in the array of wonderful pubs. Why not travel to **Croagh Patrick**, which overlooks Clew Bay in County Mayo and is considered to be the holiest mountain in Ireland. Croagh Patrick is renowned for its Patrician Pilgrimage in honour of Saint Patrick, Ireland's patron saint. It was on the summit of the mountain that Saint Patrick fasted for forty days in 441 AD. Your next stop today could be the beautiful town of Cong, famous for the movie "The Quiet Man". Travel on to Galway which will be your base for the next two nights.

**Overnight & Breakfast: Connacht Hotel, Galway**

### Day 4 – Wednesday – Galway & Connemara

Today after a relaxed breakfast depart Galway city and travel into the very scenic and rugged Connemara region where you will witness the Irish Language in use. Travel through the towns of Moycullen, Maam Cross, Oughterard and Spiddal where you could stop at Standun's shop and look for that special item. Why not travel back to Galway in the early evening to give yourselves enough time to explore this extraordinary "City of Tribes"? Although Ireland's third largest city, Galway feels like a big town, and is pedestrian friendly.

Among Galway's attractions are:

**The Spanish Arch** - thought to be an extension of Galway's medieval city walls, it was designed to protect ships moored at the nearby quay while they unloaded goods such as wine and brandy from Spain.

**Eyre Square** - Galway's central public square is a welcome open green space with sculptures and pathways. Its lawns are formally named Kennedy Park in commemoration of JFK's visit to Galway, though you'll never hear locals refer to it as anything but Eyre Square.

**Galway Cathedral** - Lording over the River Corrib, the Cathedral was dedicated by the late Cardinal Richard Cushing of Boston in 1965. Its high, curved arches and central dome have a simple, solid elegance even if the greater whole feels rather sterile (although a side chapel with a mosaic of the Resurrection does include a praying JFK in the tableau).

**Salthill Prom** – If you're in need of some fresh, sea air consider a walk on the Salthill Prom. A favourite pastime for Galwegians and visitors, is walking along the seaside promenade running from the edge of the city along Salthill. Local tradition dictates 'kicking the wall' across from the diving boards (a 30- to 45-minute stroll from town) before turning around.

Galway is also a great place to get a dose of traditional Irish music. Some of the pubs almost sure to have a seisún - Tig Cóilí, Monroe's, Naughton's or Crane Bar.

**Overnight & Breakfast: Connacht Hotel, Galway**

### Day 5 – Thursday – Galway to Killarney via the Cliffs of Moher & Adare Village

Today's touring has you saying farewell to Galway as you travel to Killarney. Your journey takes you through a region known as The Burren. The word "Burren" comes from an Irish word "Boíreann" meaning a rocky place. This is an extremely appropriate name when you consider the lack of soil cover and the extent of exposed limestone pavement. However it has been referred to in the past as "Fertile rock" due to the mixture of nutrient rich herb and floral species. For a truly unique perspective of The Burren, you may opt to hike with local historian, John Connolly, of **Wild Burren Tours**. John is the only walking guide in Ireland that gives tours on his own land. Burren Wild Walks is located in Oughtmama, Bellharbour, Co. Clare. Hikes depart at 10:40 a.m. daily. If you wish to reserve a place on the hike, although not necessary, phone +353 87 8779565.

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From here you may travel to the majestic **Cliffs of Moher**. Enjoy one of the most outstanding coastal features of Ireland and biggest tourist attraction. The cliffs rise sheer above the sea to nearly 700 feet and extend along the coast for nearly five miles. If you choose, from here travel to the picturesque village of Adare in the afternoon & then continue on to Killarney which will be your base for the next 3 nights.

**Overnight & Breakfast: Killarney Royal Hotel, Killarney**

#### **Day 6 – Friday – Dingle Peninsula**

This morning after a leisurely breakfast, you begin your day's touring around the Dingle Peninsula. The **Slea Head Drive** is a circular route, beginning and ending in Dingle, which takes in a large number of attractions and stunning views on the western end of the peninsula. Take in the woodlands at Burnham, the seaside village of Ventry, as well as Slea Head itself, marked by a stone crucifixion scene. In the distance you will see the Blasket Islands, which were inhabited up until 1953. In the 1920s and 1930s, Blasket Island writers produced books which are deemed classics in the world of literature. They wrote of Island people living on the very edge of Europe, and brought to life the topography, life and times of their island. If time allows (average visit is 1.5 hours), you may wish to visit the **Blasket Island Visitor Centre** (open April – October) where artifacts, exhibits and interactive displays tell the story of island life. You will also come across **Gallarus Oratory**. With its distinctive appearance, resembling an upturned boat, the church is now a well-known tourist attraction, constructed entirely out of locally sourced stone and no other materials. The exact placement of the stones prevents rain from falling within the structure. You will then arrive back into Killarney for the evening.

**Overnight & Breakfast: Killarney Royal Hotel, Killarney**

#### **Day 7 – Saturday – Killarney & the Ring of Kerry**

This morning after a hearty Irish breakfast explore the beautiful town of Killarney, here you can visit Muckross House or take a jaunting cart ride through the scenic Killarney National Park. Travel to the **Ring of Kerry** -- 100 miles of marvelous scenery consisting of the highest peaks in Ireland on one side and a coastline scattered with golden beaches and rocky headlands on the other. Travel through Glenbeigh and Cahirciveen and on to Waterville and the colorful village of Sneem. Stop at **Moll's Gap** for a view of the three Lakes of Killarney with the mountains and the town in the background.

**Overnight & Breakfast: Killarney Royal Hotel, Killarney**

#### **Day 8 – Sunday – Killarney to Dublin via Cork, Cashel & Kilkenny City**

After breakfast, depart Killarney and travel eastward towards Cork. Drive through the market town of Macroom and on to the village of Blarney. **Blarney Castle**, one of the oldest landmarks in County Cork, is best known for the famous "**Blarney Stone**" which as tradition dictates confers the gift of eloquence upon all those who kiss it. **Blarney Woollen Mills** flagship store – a true shopper's paradise - is located in this picturesque village and is housed in one of Ireland's oldest and most authentic Woollen Mills. Here you will find everything from Waterford to Belleek, wool sweaters to pottery. Continue on to the town of Cashel in County Tipperary for a tour of the mighty '**Rock of Cashel**' formally known as 'St Patrick's Rock'. The Rock was the seat of the High Kings of Munster. With its well-preserved ecclesiastical remains, it is one of Ireland's spectacular landmarks. From Cashel you continue onward to Kilkenny. The rich medieval heritage is evident in the city's treasure trove of historical buildings and landmarks, exemplified by the magnificent **Kilkenny Castle**. Kilkenny is arguably the pre-eminent medieval city in Ireland, with the current layout of the city clearly grounded in the city's medieval roots.

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Drive on up to Dublin Airport where you can drop off your rental car and journey into the city for your final two nights in Dublin's "Fair City".

**Overnight & Breakfast: Mont Clare Hotel, Dublin**

**Day 9 – Monday – Dublin City**

After a leisurely breakfast this morning why not enjoy a relaxed panoramic tour of Dublin on one of the many Dublin City bus "hop-on/hop-off" tours? These tours point out highlights such as Trinity College, O'Connell Street, Molly Malone, Kilmainham Gaol, The River Liffey, Ha'Penny Bridge, Christchurch Cathedral and St Patrick's Cathedral. Explore everything Dublin has to offer at your own pace and visit the sights you want to see. This evening you may wish to take in some entertainment with your dinner, Taylor's Three Rock or The House Party are two options. These venues provide fun-filled evenings featuring Irish music, step-dancing, and story-telling.

**Further suggested visits: -**

- Dublin Castle
- Kilmainham Gaol
- Jameson Distillery
- Guinness Storehouse

**Overnight & Breakfast: Mont Clare Hotel, Dublin**

**Day 10 – Tuesday – Dublin – Return to U.S.**

After a leisurely breakfast and hotel check out, you will make your way to Dublin Airport for your flight home. Be sure to allow enough time to handle any VAT refunds and last minute shopping in the duty-free shop. Also, passengers on all U.S. bound flights clear immigration, customs and agriculture inspections at Dublin Airport, making for a smooth re-entry in the U.S. Then, it's on board, leaving behind the "land of a thousand welcomes", sparkling in a setting of a silver coastline and decorated with a patchwork of emerald fields.

***Slainte!***

***A few things to remember***

- Please check that you hold a valid passport for travel to Ireland.
- Recommended check-in for international flights is 3 hours, Baggage allowance – Please check with your airline and re-confirm your flight times before day of departure.
- Passengers please be advised - all hotel taxes, and service charges are included
- Some banks will not accept \$100 bills

**NOT INCLUDED**

- Ferry crossings, attraction entrance fees, parking or tolls.
- Portage at hotels.

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