

*** Fall Tour of Ireland / October 11 - 22, 2023 ***
**The Sights and Sounds of Western Ireland –
Dingle, Kinsale and Ennistymon**

*The Irish Cultural Center's John Tabb, Ellen Redman
and David Clopp host this musical trip. Please join us!*

Tour the wild and beautiful West Coast of Ireland! Embrace Ireland's distinctive culture, music and dance in County Kerry, County Cork and County Clare, on a leisurely paced fall tour through gorgeous countryside, charming towns, and bustling cities. Multiple night stays in Dingle, Kinsale and Ennistymon allow you to immerse yourself in the beauty, hospitality, music and culture of Ireland's Historic West Coast Towns.

The ICC reserves the right to make changes to the itinerary as needed, due to weather or other circumstances.



Trip Details and Itinerary

- Day 1:
Wednesday, Oct 11 Depart by coach from ICC in West Springfield to Boston's Logan Airport. Leave Logan at 7:05 pm aboard Aer Lingus Flight EI 134.
- Day 2:
Thursday, Oct 12 Arrive at Shannon Airport at 6:20 am local Irish time. Board bus coach for land transportation. Stop at Temple Gate Hotel in Ennis, Co. Kerry for tour-sponsored full Irish breakfast. While in Ennis we will conduct a short walking tour of the city. You can tour the Clare County Museum and visit the ATM to get your Euros. We will then leave for Dingle, arriving at Dingle Skellig Hotel around 2:00 pm. We will conduct a short walk to familiarize you with the town upon our arrival. Unpack and relax or freshen up before a welcome get-together drink in the Blasket Bar along with traditional music at 6:00 pm followed by dinner at 7 pm in the Coast Guard restaurant. Ellen, David and John will be participating in a traditional music session this evening if you (or they) have any energy left.
- Day 3:
Friday, Oct 13 After Dingle Skellig Hotel breakfast, depart at 9:00 am for tour around the scenic Dingle Peninsula. We will drive past little harbors and wide stretches of sandy beaches, leading southward to Sleat Head. This is the most westerly point in Europe, "Next Parish America", and off this coast many an Armada was lost. The awe-inspiring beauty of this particular area is unmatched. We will make a stop (weather permitting) to visit an ancient Celtic settlement

dating back to 500 B.C. along the Sleah Head drive. Then we are off to see how the locals lived during the years of the Famine and also observe sheep herding techniques by a local herder. We will also enjoy a visit to the Blasket Centre where you will learn about life on the Blasket Islands, inhabited until 1953, and about the families who immigrated directly to Springfield, MA. You are on your own for lunch at the Blasket Centre. We will also visit Kilmalkedar Church, a spectacular early-Christian and medieval ecclesiastical site. See if you can fit through the eye of the needle and guarantee your entry into heaven. Dinner will be at the Dingle Skellig tonight. Check out the local traditional music scene tonight, we will let you know where we are headed.

Day 4:
Saturday, Oct 14
FREE DAY!

After Dingle Skellig Hotel breakfast, the day is free to relax or explore Dingle and the surrounding area. Tour hosts will provide suggestions to make sure you experience the best of Dingle. You can catch a boat to the Great Blasket, visit the penguins and otters at the local Aquarium or stroll around town and enjoy one or more of Dingle's 52 pubs. If you are interested in crystal, go to Sean Daly's crystal store across from St. Mary's Church on Green Street. Sean is a former Waterford Master Cutter who does beautiful work. Your choices are many as you savor your time in this colorful and charming harbor town. Dinner is on your own tonight. Enjoy one of the many fine restaurants in Dingle and sample the local fare. We will be glad to make recommendations. Nelligan's Pub, O'Sullivan's Courthouse, or the Little Bridge are great music venues as well as the Dingle Pub owned by world champion dancer David Geaney.

Day 5:
Sunday, Oct 15

After Dingle Skellig Hotel breakfast, the morning is yours to relax and enjoy the town. This afternoon the group we will take a bus ride to Conor Pass which provides a breathtaking view of Dingle on one side and the Northern side of the peninsula from the other. This has always proven to be a great photo sight and we will probably take a group photo as well. This evening the bus will depart the Hotel at 6:30 pm for dinner at John Benny's Pub followed by a musical session with the proprietors and your hosts John and Ellen.

Day 6:
Monday, Oct 16

After our hotel breakfast we are off to County Cork. The ride will take us along some of the most beautiful scenery available on the Wild Atlantic Way. We will stop in Kenmare, the jewel of the Ring of Kerry. Kenmare is a small town in the south of County Kerry, Ireland. The name Kenmare is the anglicised form of Ceann Mara, meaning "head of the sea", referring to the head of Kenmare Bay. This is a great place to stretch your legs and get some lunch and a pint. We will then continue with a drive by the small market town of Bantry along the famous Bantry Bay. We will arrive in Kinsale and check into the Trident Hotel. Unpack and enjoy some quiet time or a short familiarization walk before we enjoy dinner at the hotel. Walk around town tonight and find some music and enjoy the craic.

Day 7:
Tuesday, Oct 17

After the hotel breakfast we are on our way north. Our first stop will be the picturesque town of Cobh where we will visit the Cathedral and then we are on our way to the Titanic Experience Cobh, located in the original White Star Line Ticket Office in the centre of Cobh town (formally known as Queenstown) in what was the departure point for the final 123 passengers who boarded the Titanic. Experience their anticipation of the long journey ahead and their new life waiting in America. With Fourth Officer Boxall as your virtual guide and using innovative audio-visual technology and replica set designs, 'passengers' will experience what life would have been like on board for those 123 Queenstown Passengers. Passengers will share the excitement of boarding the most Luxurious liner of her time and feel the horror of the tragedy on that fateful night on the 15th April 1912. Then we are off to Cork City, this island city is the second largest city in the Republic of Ireland with a population of 222,000. The city centre is an island positioned between two channels of the River Lee which meet downstream at the eastern end of the city centre, where the quays and docks along the river lead outwards towards Cork Harbour, one of the

largest natural harbors in the world. We will park near Cork's iconic English market which has been trading since 1788. One of the oldest and certainly the best covered market in Europe, it has survived famine, flood, war, fires, and multiple recessions to remain a strong part of Cork's retail environment. Enjoy lunch and a pint and do some shopping. On the way back to our hotel we will stop at the Ringfinnan Garden of Remembrance dedicated to the memory of the 343 firefighters who lost their lives in the 9/11 terrorist attacks in New York and was created by a local woman who served as a nurse in NYC.

Day 8:
Wednesday,
Oct 18

After the hotel breakfast we are headed south today to enjoy the history and scenery of southwest Cork. Our first stop will be the Michael Collins Center in the town of Clonakilty. Michael Collins was an Irish revolutionary, soldier and politician who was a leading figure in the early-20th century struggle for Irish independence. During the War of Independence he was Director of Intelligence of the Irish Republican Army and a government minister of the self-declared Irish Republic. He was assassinated in Cork County in August 1922 during the Irish Civil War. The center will provide a show covering life in Cork including a demonstration of traditional baking methods. A cake mixture will be prepared which is then placed in a bastable on the open fire. The talk will devolve into old superstitions, a session of stories, humorous songs and tunes including your hosts Ellen, John and David, and finally the history of West Cork from the Bronze Age through to the time of the Irish Civil War. It explores the history of local monasteries, castles, the 1798 Rebellion, the Famine, the 1916 Rising and the story of Michael Collins. We are then off to lunch in the town of Baltimore (Baile an Tí Mhóir meaning "town of the big house"). Enjoy the spectacular views as we enjoy the southernmost parish in Ireland. After lunch we head to the town of Skibbereen, famous in song and story. In 1841 the population of Ireland was over 8.5 million people. By 1850, at least one million people had died in terrible conditions while more than 1.25 million emigrated as refugees. It is estimated that a further c. 400,000 births did not take place as a direct result of an Gorta Mór (the Great Hunger). Skibbereen played a very important role during the Great Hunger as reports from the area focused worldwide attention on the disaster. Skibbereen became synonymous with the Famine and many sites in the town have direct links to this tragic time, each with its own story to tell. This evening we take dinner in the Hotel.

Day 9:
Thursday, Oct 19
FREE DAY!

After the hotel breakfast you are on your own today. Relax at the hotel spa, go shopping, take a foodie tour, walk the Scilly walk to Charles Fort, learn how mead is made, go shopping or take a day trip to Cobh or Blarney Castle. Be sure and enjoy a meal and a pint in the foodie capitol of Ireland. We will make recommendations.

Day 10:
Friday, Oct 20

After the hotel breakfast we are on our way back to County Clare. Enjoy the view on our journey through counties Cork and Limerick. We will be stopping for a short while at Bunratty where you can enjoy lunch at several locations including the famous Durty Nelly's pub. Not only the sight of a castle but, also the location of the Bunratty Woolen Mills which is a great place to shop for that last souvenir. We will continue into the heartland of county Clare and arrive in Ennistymon, the largest town in North Clare. The Cascades' are among the most photographed natural attractions in Clare and are best viewed from the grounds of The Falls Hotel, which overlook the churning waters of the Inagh River as they make their way over an extensive ridge of rocks and onwards to Liscannor Bay and the Atlantic Ocean. Such churning waters are a source of the Falls Hotel recently being certified as carbon neutral. The hotel runs almost entirely off its own hydroelectric turbine. The Falls Hotel will be our home for the next two nights. Unpack, visit the local donkeys and get ready for dinner. Tonight we have arranged a concert of Traditional music at the hotel for your enjoyment.

Day 11:
Saturday, Oct 21

After the hotel breakfast we are off to see a little more of Clare. We will drive through the Burren. the vast, moon-like Burren in County Clare is one of Ireland's most compelling landscapes. Here, cool grey rock etched with crevices and cracks tumbles down to the wild blue Atlantic Ocean. The result is one of nature's most extraordinary phenomena: a huge rocky pavement dotted with rock formations, caves and fossils, as well as an incredible array of flowers, from native species to arctic, alpine and Mediterranean plants. We may visit the Burren Center and see Kilfenora or stop by the Cliffs of Mohr and St Bridget's well. We will let your interest and the weather dictate the activities; we will be having lunch in the quaint town of Doolin for sure. We will be back in time to let you wander around the hotel grounds and visit the town. Dinner at the hotel tonight and then there is packing to be done for the trip back home. Don't forget to fill out your tax free paperwork tonight. If you have any more energy head out to Cooley House for the last bit of craic.

Day 12:
Sunday, Oct 22

After breakfast at the Falls Hotel, we depart at 930am for Shannon Airport. Enjoy last minute shopping at Shannon's Duty-Free Shop. Our Aer Lingus Flight EI 135 departs at 1:40 pm, arriving in Boston's Logan Airport at 3pm local time. We will arrive by coach back at the ICC in West Springfield around 6:00 pm.