

Hidden Gems of Ireland

Full of new things even Declan hasn't done!

April 18-28, 2027

As many of you might already know, it's been nearly 20 years since Declan flew to St Louis for a job interview with Dea to plan an Ireland tour. Over the years we have brought hundreds of people to Ireland (not at the same time!), some have gone more than once (and one traveler has come with us to Ireland 3 times!)

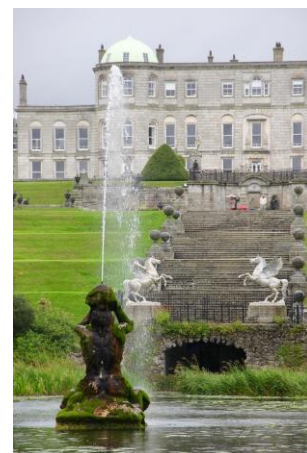
Sun, April 18, 2027 – Off to Paddy's Green Shamrock Shores!

Meet your tour directors Dea and Declan at the Saint Louis Airport for our flight to Dublin, the capital city of Ireland. We fly on Delta with one connection, then fly through the night, so try to get some sleep. We wake up in Ireland! **(Meals on Plane)**

Mon, April 19, 2027 – Powerscourt Garden and Glendalough

Céad míle fáilte roimh Éirinn, meaning "A hundred thousand welcomes to Ireland!"

We arrive at the Dublin airport and meet our driver who will help us discover the hidden gems of the Emerald Isle. We depart the airport and head deep into Co. Wicklow, with our first stop at **Powerscourt Garden**. NatGeo listed it as the world's 3rd best garden, so make sure your cameras are ready! There are over 47 acres of immaculate gardens, water features, and statuary dating back to 1731. The gardens themselves range from Italian to Japanese as well as an ecological sanctuary for native flora – they even have a pet cemetery (which also includes 'Eugenie' the Jersey cow who had 17 calves and produced over 100,000 gallons of milk!) This afternoon we head to a different kind of sanctuary, **Saint Kevin's monastery in Glendalough**. He set out into the wilderness in the 6th century to be closer to God, but eventually others followed him and founded a monastery, the ruins of which still remain. Tonight we stay in Co. Tipperary, known as the heart of horse racing country – you might even see some training! Dinner is included at our hotel this evening. **(Meals on Plane, D)**



Tues, April 20, 2027 – See a different kind of bars at Cork City Gaol

We bid farewell to Clonmel and head to Co. Cork, where we stop in the capital, **Cork City**, and tour the historic **gaol** (the old spelling of jail). Many famous and infamous prisoners were once held here, including Countess Markievicz, an Irish noblewoman who was major figure in the fight for a free Ireland - in addition to being the first female government cabinet member, she also led an all-female sniper team under her command in the 1916 uprising! We continue our journey across the Southwest of Ireland to the **Dingle Peninsula**, one of the top-rated scenic drives in the world! We stay in Dingle this evening. **(B)**



Are We There Yet? Tours

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Wed, April 21, 2027 – Blasket Centre and Dingle Distillery

This morning after breakfast, we head out on a scenic drive on the Dingle Peninsula. We've driven by the



Blasket Centre and the **Dingle Distillery** on past tours, but staying farther out means we've never been able to stop. But staying in Dingle means this time we can! We start with *Ionad an Bhlascaoid*, the Blasket Centre, preserving the stories of the hardy Irish speaking community living 29 km off the coast of Dingle. Recently reopened in 2022 after a €2.9 million renovation, the centre blends history with amazing views of the Wild Atlantic Ocean and the islands that dot the coastline. Learn about the traditional island life, from subsistence fishing and farming, as well as the tragic events that lead

to the community having to abandon the island and settle on the mainland in 1953.

But the Irish culture is still alive and well on Dingle, which is designated as a **Gaeltacht** or Irish speaking region. Irish is its own language, related to but distinct from the Scottish Gaelic or Welsh languages, and in the *Gaeltacht* people still speak it daily – even the signs are in Irish! And what would Irish culture be without a drop of the *uisge beatha*, the “water of life” that we now call Whiskey? Dingle Distillery is an award-winning distillery that is also famous for Gin and Vodka. Learn about the process that goes into making these spirits and what makes them special (we'll also do a tasting!) After our ramble we'll head back to our hotel. **(B)**

Thurs, April 22, 2027 – Flying High in Foynes (with a little help from some Irish Coffee!)

After breakfast we drive through the countryside to the **Co. Kerry Museum in Tralee**. The capital of the county, Tralee is famous for their annual *Rose of Tralee* festival. The festival is named after the tragic 19th century ballad, written by a heartbroken man whose true love was tragically lost before he could ask her to marry him. Young women from Ireland, or who are part of the Irish diaspora, compete to be the *Rose of Tralee* and serve as the international ambassador of Co. Kerry. Learn more about this festival as well as the other wonderful secrets of Ireland's southwestern most county. And speaking of international travel, did you know Ireland was once a key part of the first trans-Atlantic passenger flights? We learn more about it at **Foynes Flying Boat Museum**, discovering how Ireland was selected to receive the planes which took off from Long Island Sound in New York, as well as its surprising connection to Maureen O'Hara. Foynes is also famous for being the birthplace of the **Irish Coffee**, where we'll not only learn about the history, but we'll also learn how to make one the perfect way (and get to taste one!) Afterwards we take the ferry across the Shannon River and head to Lahinch, our home for the evening. **(B, D)**



Fri, April 23, 2027 – Cliffs of Moher and the Doonmore Hotel

After breakfast we start our day with the majestic **Cliffs of Moher**. If you have seen the movie *The Princess Bride*, these sheer cliffs were featured as The Cliffs of Insanity, rising 702 feet above the ocean. We've typically been here in the late afternoon, so this is a chance to see the cliffs lit up in a different way. On a clear day, you can even see the Aran Islands! After our time at the cliffs, we continue to the ferry to travel to Inishbofin, the Isle of the White Cow. This has been a favorite place of ourselves and our travelers – even one of our drivers said it reminded him of the Ireland of his youth. With two nights on the island, set your watch to “island time” – we'll explore the island tomorrow! **(B, D)**



Want to hear live Traditional Irish Music? A former musician himself, the owner of the hotel, has many musician friends who live on the island or on the mainland, so enjoy some traditional music in the cozy pub either tonight or tomorrow – it all depends on who's around and available!

Sat, April 24, 2027 – The Best of Inishbofin

After breakfast, we have a day to explore this amazing island. Home to many species of birds (and many,



many sheep), **Inishbofin** also has evidence of a stone-age fort, burred under the turf, the stone walls creating ridges you can see. We'll have a local guide who is knowledgeable about so many topics, both about the island and in general, so feel free to ask him any questions you might have. Along the tour we also see the memorial to the three men who were lost at sea sailing back to their home on the nearby

island of Inishark, which was the primary reason for the islanders to leave their homes and resettle on the mainland. Tonight we have another wonderful meal at the Doonmore hotel. **(B, D)**

Sun, April 25, 2027 – Kylemore Abbey and Sheepdog Demo!

After breakfast we head back to the mainland this morning, where we travel to **Kylemore Abbey**, a stately home that was given to the Benedictine Nuns as a place for them to live and to host a girl's school. The school is closed, but there are still a few nuns who live there. In addition to the house, there is an amazing garden you can explore – there are shuttles to bring you up the hillside to see it.

We then travel through **the Burren**. The Burren is a harsh landscape in the province of Connacht, full of scrubland and lots of rocks, and was the region where many Irish families were forced to settle after Oliver Cromwell invaded Ireland. After putting two towns completely to the sword, he told the surviving Irish they had a choice, "To Connacht or Hell." But the Irish managed to make do, and many of the families are still there, raising sheep on the mountainside. We'll stop at one of the family sheep farms and see a sheep dog demonstration. One of the shepherds will show you how he and his dogs work in tandem to maneuver the sheep around the field, separating them then bringing them back together and into the paddock. Next we'll enjoy some tea and scones before the owner of the farm and her husband describe the highs and lows of living in such an isolated place. If we're lucky, their son might play a tune as well! We then arrive in Westport, where we stay in the **Grace Hotel**, named after the pirate queen herself, Grace O'Malley. It officially opened June 2026. Learn about her incredible life as she went toe-to-toe against not only other chieftains but also Queen Elizabeth herself! **(B)**



Mon, April 26, 2027 – Amazing Achill Island



Enjoy breakfast at the hotel before we head to **Achill Island**. Known for its rugged beauty, we travel along the **Wild Atlantic Way**, a scenic drive along the west coast of Ireland where the surf crashes upon the cliff side. Achill Island is the largest offshore island, and the views are breathtaking. We will have a photo stop at the deserted village of **Slievemore**, consisting of 80 - 100 stone cottages known as booley homes, perched on the southern slopes of the mountain. After lunch at one of our favorite places to eat, we return to

Westport where you have free time to explore the town, listen to live music, or just enjoy the grounds of the hotel. **(B)**

Tues, April 27, 2027 – Strokestown Park and National Famine Museum

We depart Westport after breakfast and head East towards Dublin. Along the way we visit **Strokestown Park**, a massive Georgian home built by the Mahon family who once owned over 11,000 acres and were the worst of the landlords - they forcibly evicted over 3,000 families during the worst year of the famine, and the head of the Mahon family was the first landlord to be murdered during that time. Purchased in the 1980s by a local man whose family



were one of the tenants, it is now home to the **National Famine Museum**, a repository of the historical records and artifacts from the estate, both from the Irish farmers and the landlords. The home has recently been restored, so you will see it at its peak condition! We continue onward to our hotel on the outskirts of Dublin to make our departure tomorrow as painless as possible – Dublin was a busy city when Declan attended the program at UCD in 2002, and back then the Dublin metro area had a population of around 1.1 million – now it's approaching 1.6 million, and while the roads haven't gotten any bigger, they've gotten busier! We enjoy our farewell dinner tonight at the hotel. **(B, D)**

Wed, April 28, 2027 – Depart for home

After breakfast, we check out of our hotel before heading to the airport for our flight back to Saint Louis, arriving back in the US on the same day. Thank you for traveling with us! **(B)**

Tour Price includes:

- ✓ Round trip airfare from St. Louis to Dublin on Delta Airlines
- ✓ Wonderful accommodations across the Republic of Ireland, including the new The Grace Hotel
- ✓ **Spend 2 nights on Inishbofin Island**, a place that feels like Ireland of days gone by
- ✓ Visits to many “new to us” attractions (yes even Declan!) such as the Powerscourt Garden, Cork City Gaol, the Blasket Centre, Dingle Distillery, Co. Kerry Museum, and Strokestown Park and National Famine Museum
- ✓ Visits to attractions we've not done recently like Glendalough, Foynes Flying Boat Museum and Irish Coffee Demo,
- ✓ And some perennial favs like Scenic drives of Achill Island and Dingle Peninsula and Cliffs of Moher
- ✓ Special music session at Murray's Pub in Inishbofin
- ✓ 14 Meals (9 Breakfasts and 5 Dinners) + meals on plane
- ✓ All other Activities as indicated
- ✓ Baggage Handling
- ✓ Professional Tour Directors Dea Hoover and Declan Rutan
- ✓ All gratuities including step-on guides, waitstaff at included meals, driver and director

\$5,207 pp double occ \$6,030 single occ

Discover the hidden gems of the Emerald Isle for just **\$4,999 per person** when you pay by check or money order!

\$4,999 pp double occ \$5,789 single occ

Make your reservation with \$1,000 per person to reserve your space. Due to airline ticketing rules, the deposit is non-refundable after Oct 18th, 2026.

Once this tour is filled, a wait list will be formed. The number of single occ may be limited due to the small number of rooms at the boutique hotel on Inishbofin.

Please send a check or call with a credit card along with your name, address, phone number, and all roommates' names if you are sharing a room and any dietary or walking restrictions. **Balance on base tour price is due Jan 11, 2027**, and no refunds will be given after that time. We encourage you to purchase trip cancellation and interruption insurance. Please email or call us for details and options - we will provide you with a quote at the time of reservation. Both standard and enhanced plans are available – both protect you if you have to cancel for a covered reason or need assistance on the tour, while the enhanced provides you a Cancel for Any Reason Clause which returns you 80% of the cost of your tour if you cancel for a non-covered reason. More information will be provided to you if you purchase the insurance.

Please note: Any notice of fuel surcharges imposed by carriers and/or attractions will be disclosed at least 30 days prior to tour departure.

Itinerary is subject to change, with substitutions made of equal or greater value.