

# Overseas Adventure Travel<sup>®</sup>

THE LEADER IN PERSONALIZED SMALL GROUP ADVENTURES SINCE 1978

Your O.A.T. Adventure Travel Planning Guide<sup>®</sup>



Irish Adventure: Belfast, Dublin & the  
Northwest Counties

2025

# Overseas Adventure Travel®

347 Congress Street, Boston, MA 02210

Dear Traveler,

I am thrilled that you are considering exploring the world with O.A.T. There are so many wonderful destinations to discover, and the itinerary described inside is a perfect way to fulfill a travel dream.

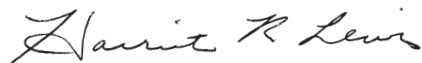
When you join us, you will slip seamlessly into local life as you explore off the beaten path in your small group. Like all our itineraries, this one is designed to give you an intimate understanding of your destination, not just a superficial view. You will get to know community leaders and try your hand at local trades during your *A Day in the Life* experience, share traditional fare and lively conversation during a Home-Hosted Visit, discuss the Controversial Topics impacting everyday life, and visit sites supported by Grand Circle Foundation. And if you choose to travel solo, you will enjoy all these cultural experiences at an unmatched value, with our FREE Single Supplements—just one of the reasons we continue to be the leader in solo travel.

To ensure you experience the true culture and feel supported every step of the way, we provide the services of a local Trip Experience Leader from the beginning of your adventure to the end. Along with introducing you to the history and culture of their homeland, these friendly experts will gladly help you out with any special requests to make your trip even more special. You can also rely on the seasoned team at our regional office, who are ready to help 24/7 in case any unexpected circumstances arise.

Plus, you can put your own personal stamp on your trip, like the **87% of our travelers who personalize their experience**. Perhaps you will choose to see more of your destination by adding an optional trip extension to your itinerary. You can also arrive a few days early to explore independently and get acclimated, customize your air itinerary, and more.

I hope you find this Travel Planning Guide helpful. If you have any further questions, do not hesitate to contact one of our Travel Counselors at **1-800-955-1925**.

Warm regards,



Harriet R. Lewis  
Chair  
Overseas Adventure Travel

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Connemara, Ireland

## Irish Adventure: Dublin, Belfast & the Northwest Counties

### Small Group Adventure

**Ireland:** Dublin, Donegal, Connemara, County Clare | **Northern Ireland:** Belfast, Derry

Small groups of no more than 16 travelers, guaranteed

**17 days starting from \$5,595**

including international airfare

Single Supplement: **FREE**

For departure dates & prices, visit [www.oattravel.com/bia2025pricing](http://www.oattravel.com/bia2025pricing)

Discover the Emerald Isle's legendary wonders and tumultuous past as you explore thousands of years of history throughout the island. Trace the influence of the infamous Troubles across Northern Ireland through exclusive experiences and local interactions in Belfast and Derry, which have emerged with a newfound commitment to peace and unity.

### IT'S INCLUDED

- 15 nights accommodation
- International airfare, airport transfers, government taxes, fees, and airline fuel surcharges unless you choose to make your own air arrangements
- All land transportation
- 29 meals—15 breakfasts, 8 lunches, and 7 dinners (including 1 Home-Hosted Dinner)
- 12 small group activities
- Services of a local O.A.T. Trip Experience Leader
- Gratuities for local guides, drivers, and luggage porters
- 5% Frequent Traveler Credit toward your next O.A.T. adventure

*Prices are accurate as of the date of this publishing and are subject to change.*

Irish Adventure: Dublin, Belfast & the Northwest Counties





## ITINERARY SUMMARY

DAYS	DESTINATION
1	Depart U.S.
2-4	Dublin
5-8	Belfast, Northern Ireland
9-11	Donegal, Ireland
12-13	Connemara • Galway
14-16	County Clare
17	Return to U.S.

## PERSONALIZE YOUR ADVENTURE

### OPTIONAL EXTENSIONS

Scottish Highlands and Lowlands: Edinburgh, St. Andrews, National Parks & Glasgow

PRE-TRIP: 7 nights from **\$3,495**

Dingle & Killarney: County Kerry's Rugged Coastline

POST-TRIP: 5 nights from **\$2,695**

### ARRIVE EARLY

We recommend that you relax after a long flight or explore more in depth before your trip. Prices shown include accommodations and private airport transfer.

- Arrive early in **Edinburgh** before your Scotland pre-trip extension from **\$330** per room, per night
- Arrive early in **Dublin** before your main adventure from **\$390** per room, per night

## WHAT TO EXPECT

① ② ③ ④ ⑤ Moderately Easy

**Pacing:** 6 locations in 16 days

**Physical requirements:** Hike over uneven, unpaved, or cobbled surfaces. The weather can also be unpredictable, quickly switching from sun to showers.

**Flight time:** Travel time will be 6-17 hours and will most likely have one connection

View all physical requirements at [www.oattravel.com/bia](http://www.oattravel.com/bia)

## IRELAND: THE O.A.T. DIFFERENCE

**Unbeatable Value:** Travel at the lowest price and per diems in the industry.

**People-to-People Experiences:** Discover our ***A Day in the Life*** experience and get to know a tweed weaver in St. John's Point, a tight-knit rural community in southwest Donegal, then travel to Ballyshannon to visit Aodh Ruadh, a community Gaelic games club dating back to 1906. Plus, we'll connect closely with Irish culture during a **Home-Hosted Dinner** in Belfast.

**O.A.T. Exclusives:** Participate in conversations with local experts about the Bloody Sunday Massacre and the fight for justice that is still ongoing. Plus, learn about a **Controversial Topic** and confront uncomfortable truths facing the region as you learn about the violence of the Troubles from three men who fought on opposite sides. We'll also talk with local experts about the Bloody Sunday Massacre and the fight for justice that is still ongoing.

# Irish Adventure: Dublin, Belfast & the Northwest Counties

## YOUR DETAILED ITINERARY

### BEGIN YOUR ADVENTURE WITH AN OPTIONAL PRE-TRIP EXTENSION

#### **7 nights in *Scottish Highlands and Lowlands: Edinburgh, St. Andrews, National Parks & Glasgow***

**Day 1** Depart U.S.

**Day 2** Arrive Edinburgh, Scotland

**Day 3** Edinburgh • *Invisible Edinburgh* walking tour with local homeless guide

**Day 4** Edinburgh • Visit Stirling Castle

**Day 5** Visit St. Andrews • Discover the Birnam Oak & River Tay • Overland to Pitlochry

**Day 6** Visit Dalwhinnie Distillery

**Day 7** Explore Loch Lomond • Glasgow

**Day 8** Explore Glasgow

**Day 9** Glasgow • Join main trip

#### **Day 1** Depart U.S.

Depart the U.S. today on an overnight flight to Dublin, Ireland.

#### **Day 2** Arrive Dublin, Ireland

- Destination: Dublin
- Included Meals: Dinner
- Accommodations: Hotel 7 or similar

**Morning/Afternoon:** You'll arrive in Dublin in the morning or afternoon. An O.A.T. representative will meet you at the airport and assist with the transfer to your hotel.

There, we'll meet our Trip Experience Leader, as well as travelers who took our optional *Scottish Highlands and Lowlands: Edinburgh, St. Andrews, National Parks &*

*Glasgow* pre-trip extension and those who arrived early in Dublin before the main adventure. Throughout the day, our Trip Experience Leader will lead travelers on orientation walks of the neighborhood surrounding our hotel as they arrive.

Enjoy the remainder of your afternoon to rest or explore at your leisure. Ask your Trip Experience Leader for recommendations.

**Lunch:** On your own. Your Trip Experience Leader will be happy to provide you with recommendations.

**Afternoon:** At your leisure. Perhaps you'll explore Grafton Street, Dublin's main shopping center.

**Dinner:** We'll gather at the hotel to enjoy a Welcome Dinner, featuring a selection of local dishes.

### **Day 3 Explore Dublin • Discover 14 Henrietta Street Museum**

- Destination: Dublin
- Included Meals: Breakfast
- Accommodations: Hotel 7 or similar

**Activity Note:** Because the 14 Henrietta Street Museum is sometimes closed for private government functions, select departures will alternatively visit Christ Church Cathedral today.

**Breakfast:** At the hotel.

**Morning:** We'll meet for a Welcome Briefing with our Trip Experience Leader at the hotel.

After our briefing, set off to discover Dublin's rich history on a panoramic tour, followed by a visit to 14 Henrietta Street Museum, a hidden gem that unravels Dublin's turbulent past through time. Formerly a tenement house to over 100 impoverished civilians, the renovated museum has transformed into a captivating space. It welcomes visitors with immersive exhibitions that vividly portray over 300 years of tumultuous history, seamlessly intertwining the power of storytelling with a sense of community. We'll delve into the intimate stories of those who lived and worked here when we join a guided tour.

The rest of the day is yours to explore independently.

**Lunch:** On your own. Perhaps you'll stop by a local pub such as the Oval Bar, located in a Victorian building in the city center, serving up local specialties like traditional Irish stew, a hearty meal of beef or mutton flavored with vegetables and a splash of Guinness.

**Afternoon:** You'll have the rest of the day free to explore Dublin on your own. Perhaps you'll visit St. Stephen's Green, the campus at Trinity College, or visit one of the local museums.

**Dinner:** On your own.

**Evening:** Get acquainted with Dublin on your own this evening. Perhaps you'll use your free time to walk its cobbled streets, enjoy a pint of Guinness in a pub, or view some of its most famous sights by night.

### **Day 4 Cider farm visit • Explore Belfast, Northern Ireland**

- Destination: Belfast
- Included Meals: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner
- Accommodations: Ten Square Hotel or similar

**Breakfast:** At the hotel.

**Morning:** We'll depart Dublin and drive to Belfast, the capital of Northern Ireland. As we make our transfer, we'll cross the border into the United Kingdom and stop along the way at a local cider farm. Upon arrival at the family-owned company, we'll be greeted by the farm's owners, who will be our hosts for our visit.

**Lunch:** We'll enjoy a traditional lunch at the cider farm, featuring a menu of savory dishes selected by our hosts. This is a great opportunity to share stories, ask questions, and get a better sense of what life is like on a rural farm in Northern Ireland.

**Afternoon:** After lunch, our hosts will lead us through an apple orchard on a guided tour, where we'll get to taste fresh apple cider. Plus, our small group will have opportunities to interact with the family members—be sure to ask about how their family history led them to this profession. Following our tour, we'll bid our hosts farewell and continue our

drive to Belfast. Although Northern Ireland's history is often overshadowed by the Troubles, it has a rich culture and artistic tradition. The countryside surrounding the city inspired stories like the Chronicles of Narnia and Gulliver's Travels. The city itself, as an industrial center in the 19th century, was a hub of Northern Ireland's booming linen industry and is the birthplace of the Titanic—which was designed, built, and launched in Belfast.

A local guide will introduce us to the area with an orientation walk. We'll catch a glimpse of Belfast's grand city hall and the manicured gardens that surround it.

**Dinner:** At a local restaurant.

**Evening:** Enjoy free time to explore this historic city. Perhaps you'll wander the streets admiring the murals or enjoy a nightcap with fellow travelers at the hotel.

**Day 5 Black taxi tour with local Belfast drivers • Controversial Topic: The violence of the Troubles with ex-political prisoners and a British veteran, who fought on opposite sides**

- Destination: Belfast
- Included Meals: Breakfast
- Accommodations: Ten Square Hotel or similar

**Breakfast:** At the hotel.

**Morning:** Belfast is a city with a turbulent history and rich culture. We'll get acquainted with it this morning during an exclusive experience when we explore Belfast like a local: in one of the city's iconic black taxi cabs. During the height of the Troubles in the 1970s, public buses stopped serving West Belfast's Catholic neighborhoods, and these taxis stepped up to offer their services.

Today's cabs are driven by Catholics and Protestants alike. We'll break into even smaller groups for our taxi ride, where we'll get a very personal view of the city through our drivers' eyes. They'll share their perspectives on the city's historic political turmoil and religious divides, as well as their views on how old controversies cast a shadow over Belfast today. As long-term residents of the neighborhoods you'll be exploring, your driver will be able to offer a personal perspective of this dangerous period of Belfast's history, when a wrong turn might have taken you across the dividing line between the Catholic and Protestant section of the city, putting drivers and passengers at risk of physical abuse or even death.

As we ride through the city, we'll hear firsthand accounts about how the Belfast of the 1970s was a war zone. Fighters belonging to the militant faction of the Irish Republican Army (IRA) committed bombings, shootings, and other acts of terror to pressure the British government into recognizing Irish sovereignty over the north. In response, extremists sympathetic to the crown formed paramilitary groups like the UVF, clashing with IRA rebels and unleashing their own acts of terror on Belfast's Catholic population, while armed British soldiers patrolled the streets, fingers resting lightly on the trigger. The Troubles rocked Northern Ireland for three decades, and when the dust settled, more than 3,500 people—civilians and combatants alike—were killed, and more than 47,000 wounded.

Our drivers will take us by the boundary between West Belfast's Protestant and Catholic neighborhoods, where murals on each side depict contrasting sentiments about the deep-rooted conflict. We'll stop to see famous murals—such as the Irish Language Mural, the Tribute to Frederick Douglass, and the Nelson Mandela Mural—and our driver will help to explain each one's significance. You'll also have



the opportunity to make your mark on a peace wall—one of the still-standing barricades that physically separates the city, now adorned with messages of hope and peace from locals and visitors alike.

After our taxi ride, we'll participate in an intimate account of the violence that once gripped this city at the Felons Club, established as a meeting place for Irish Republicans who had been imprisoned for their political or militant activities. Only former prisoners may achieve full membership, and honorary membership has been extended to other famous revolutionaries.

Here, we will have a chance to hear about a **Controversial Topic** during a conversation with three individuals who fought in the Troubles—on opposing sides. We'll meet two ex-political prisoners—a Republican who fought for Irish independence, and a loyalist who fought with the Ulster Volunteer Force (UVF)—as well as an ex-British army serviceman (or, if these men are unavailable, we'll meet alternative individuals who fought during these times). During the violence of the Troubles it would have been inconceivable to gather men such as these in the same room. Today, they have put aside their differences and will share their stories about the dark deeds they took part in during the fighting; their experiences while incarcerated; and their shared hopes for a better future.

While the violence may be over, modern Belfast is still a divided city, and the road to harmony is a long one. Belfast's religious population is roughly equally split, with 48% hailing from a Protestant background, and 45% raised Catholic. To this day, the two factions live in entirely segregated neighborhoods, divided physically by "peace lines"—walled barriers that separate the two sections of the city which are sealed off by locked gates each

night. While the brightly colored murals along the walls illustrate the city's hope for peace and reconciliation, the fact that the walls still stand demonstrate the progress that still needs to be made.

**Lunch:** On your own.

**Afternoon:** You are free to continue making your own discoveries. You may choose to visit Titanic Belfast, a memorial to the famed ship and museum chronicling Belfast's maritime heritage, or pay a visit to the Crumlin Road Jail. Maybe you'll stroll through the regal campus at Queen's University. Or, you could always choose to enjoy a pint of the famous Guinness in one of the city's pubs, mingling with locals and listening to traditional music.

**Dinner:** On your own.

**Evening:** You're free to explore Belfast by night at your own pace this evening, or take some time to rest after your long day of cultural discovery.

## **Day 6 Explore Belfast • Optional Ards Peninsula & Mount Stewart House and Gardens tour**

- Destination: Belfast
- Included Meals: Breakfast
- Accommodations: Ten Square Hotel or similar

**Breakfast:** At the hotel.

**Morning:** You are welcome to enjoy a free day in Belfast as you wish, seeking out independent discoveries and enjoying meals on your own. You may stay at the hotel to relax and reflect, or soak up more of the city's history and culture. Perhaps you'll explore Belfast's Titanic quarter, home to one of the world's greatest urban waterfront regeneration efforts.

Or, you may choose to join a full-day optional tour to Northern Ireland's northeast coast, the Ards Peninsula, which protrudes out into the Irish Sea east of Belfast. This is a less well known area of Northern Ireland and takes us off the beaten track. We'll travel along the shores of the Strangford Lough for our tour of the Mount Stewart House and Garden. The Stewart family, also known as the Marquesses of Londonderry, were well known for their successful coal mining business in London. On holidays, Lady Londonderry and her husband, the seventh Marquess, spent time their time away in their Irish home, Mount Stewart. Today, the 19th-century house features a vast collection of art and furniture that reflects the history of the Stewart family. From the main room, also called the Drawing Room, you can see the ever-changing gardens, as well as Mount Lake Stewart.

After, we'll drive to the small town of Greyabbey.

**Lunch:** On your own for those who didn't take the optional tour. Those who joined the optional tour will enjoy lunch at a local restaurant in Greyabbey.

**Afternoon:** Those who joined the optional tour will return to Belfast. The rest of your afternoon is free.

**Dinner:** On your own. Ask your Trip Experience Leader for a local recommendation.

**Evening:** The remainder of the evening is on your own. You can gather with fellow travelers at the hotel bar, take an evening stroll, or return to your room.

## **Day 7 Overland to Derry • The Antrim Coast • Giant's Causeway**

- Destination: Derry
- Included Meals: Breakfast, Lunch
- Accommodations: The Ebrington Hotel or similar

**Breakfast:** At the hotel.

**Morning:** This morning, we'll drive to Derry, also known as Londonderry, depending on where you are in Ireland. Divided by the River Foyle, which runs through the city's heart, Derry is one of Europe's last walled cities, and the only one in Ireland whose walls are still fully intact. Along the way, we'll stop in Carnlough, a small village in Antrim, to stretch our legs and take in views of the harbor town. As we continue our transfer, we'll take a scenic drive through the glens of the Antrim, taking in the diverse landscapes which include glacial valleys, grassy cliffs, dense woods, and quaint villages before stopping at a scenic viewing point overlooking the Antrim Coast.

From here, we'll drive to visit the Giant's Causeway, one of Northern Ireland's most popular sites, stopping along the way for lunch.

**Lunch:** At a local restaurant.

**Afternoon:** We'll arrive at the Giant's Causeway and begin exploring this natural wonder. A UNESCO World Heritage Site since 1986, the Giant's Causeway is an unforgettable landscape formed by volcanic eruptions dating back millions of years. Here, hexagonal basalt columns line the coast, forming natural stairs leading from igneous rock cliffs into the sea. As we explore this iconic site, we may even walk across the Causeway's basalt columns.

The rest of your evening is free in Derry to explore at your own pace.

**Dinner:** On your own.

**Evening:** Enjoy a nightcap with fellow travelers at the hotel, or explore on your own.

### **Day 8 Visit Museum of Free Derry**

- Destination: Derry
- Included Meals: Breakfast, Dinner
- Accommodations: The Ebrington Hotel or similar

**Breakfast:** At the hotel.

**Morning:** Our first visit of the day begins at the Museum of Free Derry, which documents the history and events surrounding the especially turbulent period between 1968 and 1972.

Following our museum visit, we'll be joined by a local guide who will lead us on a tour around the city walls, where we will view the many murals inspired by the Troubles, which spanned nearly three decades. Our guide lived through this era and will be able to provide insight into the challenges of daily life during this period of time, and about their hopes for the future.

**Lunch:** On your own in Derry.

**Afternoon:** The afternoon is free to continue exploring Derry independently. Your Trip Experience Leader can offer discovery suggestions.

**Dinner:** At a local restaurant.

**Evening:** You may spend the evening at your leisure.

### **Day 9 Overland to Donegal, Ireland • Discover the Marble Arch Caves**

- Destination: Donegal
- Included Meals: Breakfast, Dinner
- Accommodations: Mill Park Hotel or similar

**Breakfast:** At the hotel.

**Morning:** Today, we'll drive to Donegal by traversing the quaint town of Omagh. Our transfer will take us along the shores of Lake Erne and Enniskillen to our first destination: The Marble Arch Caves.

Upon arrival, we'll embark on a guided tour of the caves. Although named "Marble," these caves are actually 95% calcium carbonate and were eroded by water more than 6,000 years ago, resulting in their unique formation. As our tour concludes, you'll have time to explore the gift shop.

**Lunch:** On your own at one of the local cafés near the caves.

**Afternoon:** We depart the Marble Arch Caves and continue our drive to Donegal, crossing back over the border from Northern Ireland to the Republic of Ireland.

Once we arrive, we'll check in to our hotel. Afterwards, your Trip Experience Leader will lead an orientation walk around the hotel's vicinity.

**Dinner:** At a local restaurant.

**Evening:** You may spend the evening as you choose—perhaps you'll stay in town to enjoy traditional Irish music, or head back to relax at the hotel.

### **Day 10 Donegal • A Day in the Life of a Donegal tweed weaver • Gaelic Games**

- Destination: Donegal
- Included Meals: Breakfast, Lunch
- Accommodations: Mill Park Hotel or similar

**Breakfast:** At the hotel.

**Morning:** This morning, we'll depart for St. John's Point, a rustic peninsula jutting out into the Atlantic Ocean. We'll arrive in the small village of Dunkineely, where we'll begin our **A**



**Day in the Life** experience and get to know some of the local people who live and work in this tranquil setting.

We'll meet a local hand weaver who runs a weaving business with her mother in a small thatch-roof cottage near her home. We'll watch as the weaver works on her 150-year-old loom, crafting her tweed goods by hand according to long-standing Donegal traditions. You'll even have the opportunity to take a turn on the loom yourself, for a deeper appreciation of the finesse and skill that she and her mother pour into their work every day. We'll also enjoy a conversation about what it's like to be one of the only women to participate in the male-dominated Donegal tweed industry, as well as the tight-knit community that exists in St. John's Point, one of the most sparsely-populated places in Ireland—Dunkineely has a population of just 300 people.

We bid the family farewell and our **A Day in the Life** experience continues as we drive to Ballyshannon to visit the local Gaelic Athletic Association (GAA) club, Aodh Ruadh, founded in 1909. Here, we'll meet with members of the club to hear about the importance of Gaelic games in everyday life in this small town. We'll learn about the skills involved and how these games have served these rural communities. We'll also hear about the generations of families that have been involved in this 100-year-old club, and we may even get to experience what it like to *puc the sliothar* "kick the ball" on the club's grounds.

**Lunch:** At the GAA Club with the local members.

**Afternoon:** We'll drive back to Donegal and spend the rest of the day at leisure. Perhaps you will visit Donegal Castle for a tour or wander through the ruins of the Donegal Friary.

**Dinner:** On your own in Donegal. You might choose to enjoy a dish of lamb or seafood at a local restaurant based on recommendations from your Trip Experience Leader.

**Evening:** You are free to explore more of the area this evening. You may choose to join your fellow travelers at the bar where you can grab a drink and reminisce about your discoveries thus far. Or, you may retire to your room to get some sleep.

### **Day 11 Donegal • Optional Glenveagh National Park tour**

- Destination: Donegal
- Included Meals: Breakfast, Dinner
- Accommodations: Mill Park Hotel or similar

**Breakfast:** At the hotel.

**Morning:** Today, you have a full day to explore Donegal. Your Trip Experience Leader will be happy to provide suggestions for activities to fill your free time.

Or, join us on our optional Glenveagh National Park tour, during which we'll explore the legacy left behind by the infamous John Adair with a local guide. Today's optional tour features a guided walk through the park, witnessing the surrounding mountains and lakes, as well as views of Glenveagh Castle. As a member of a local mountain rescue team, our local guide is well-versed in the region's flora and fauna. In our conversations during the tour, we'll get great insight into the park's history, current conservation efforts, and more.

**Lunch:** On your own. Perhaps you'll enjoy a seafood chowder with the fresh catch of the day. Travelers who joined the optional tour can enjoy lunch at a local pub on the road back to Donegal.

**Afternoon:** The afternoon is free for independent discovery—travelers on our optional tour will enjoy free time to explore the national park at their own pace before returning to the hotel. You will then have free time to explore independently or relax before dinner.

**Dinner:** At the hotel.

**Evening:** You are free to indulge in more local favorites, sit with locals and enjoy Irish dancing at one of the many locally-owned pubs, simply relax at the hotel, or write down your impressions in a travel journal.

## **Day 12 Discover Creevykeel Court Tomb**

### **• Discover National Museum of Ireland Country Life • Visit National Famine Memorial • Connemara**

- Destination: Connemara
- Included Meals: Breakfast, Lunch
- Accommodations: Clifden Station House or similar

**Activity Note:** Today will be a particularly long travel day. Our transfer from Donegal to Connemara will take approximately eight hours, with several included short stops and a 2-hour stop along the way.

On select departures, we will stay in a hotel in Westport instead of Connemara. Your Trip Experience Leader will provide alternate options for free time.

**Breakfast:** At the hotel.

**Morning:** We'll set off for Connemara this morning. Along the way, we can enjoy views of classic stone walls, sprawling greenery, and the Atlantic coast. Our first destination is Creevykeel Court Tomb. The building of the tomb dates back to the Neolithic Period and is one of the five megalithic monuments in the area. Long, trapezoid-shaped cairns of stone make up the monument, which you'll have the

option to enter. As we continue our transfer, we'll stop along the way at the Classiebawn Castle viewing point.

We then drive to Connemara, where the stunning landscapes unfold and captivate with every mile traveled.

**Lunch:** At a garden center in the town of Castlebar.

**Afternoon:** We'll depart for the National Museum of Ireland's Country Life branch, located in Turlough Park near Castlebar. The museum is the permanent home of the National Folklife Collection, a series of exhibits spread across four floors that tell the story of everyday life in rural Ireland, focusing specifically on the period between 1850 and 1950.

The exhibits focus on how Irish farmers were affected by historic events such as the Famine, the Land War, and other oppressive acts from Great Britain during this time. The museum also examines the ordinary lives of the people of this era with artifacts and exhibits that demonstrate how farmers worked the land, established communities, and passed the time both at home and in the fields.

After some time to explore the museum, we'll continue our drive to our hotel. Along the way, we can enjoy views of classic stone walls, sprawling greenery, and the Atlantic coast. The hotel is located close to one of the six great national parks in Ireland. Upon settling in, we'll stroll through the village with our Trip Experience Leader to acquaint ourselves with the neighborhood around our hotel.

**Dinner:** On your own.

**Evening:** At your leisure—check with your Trip Experience Leader for suggestions.

### **Day 13 Connemara • Sheep farm visit • Kylemore Estate & Abbey**

- Destination: Connemara
- Included Meals: Breakfast, Dinner
- Accommodations: Clifden Station House or similar

**Breakfast:** At the hotel.

**Morning:** Today we'll explore Connemara. Referred to as a "savage beauty" by Oscar Wilde, sparsely populated Connemara offers plenty of natural scenery. We'll see a patchwork of bogs, lakes, and mountains adorning the interior peninsula, while secluded beaches, coves, and seaside villages hug the coastline.

We begin our discoveries with a visit to a sheep farm. With a group as small as ours, we'll have the unique opportunity to enjoy a conversation with a local farmer about life in rural Ireland, including the struggles that modern farming families are facing. With little support from the government, and the industry becoming less lucrative than past years, many farmers now have to diversify their skills and rely on professions outside of just their farms. In addition to getting firsthand insight into these issues, we'll also get to witness a sheep dog demonstration. We'll observe as a trained dog acts as a nimble shepherd, working in harmony with its human master.

After, we'll continue on to the Kylemore Abbey. Built in 1868 as the private country estate of a wealthy family, then gifted to the local monastic order in 1920, this Benedictine monastery sits on a 1,000-acre estate, adjacent to a 6-acre, walled Victorian garden.

**Lunch:** On your own at the Kylemore Estate café.

**Afternoon:** We'll have free time to explore the estate's expansive gardens, winding our way through trails flanked by woods and water on

either side. Then, enjoy some time to explore the castle house, whose restored rooms reveal tales both romantic and tragic, and whose rich, complex history predates its use as a spiritual and educational center by half a century. Then we'll drive back to our hotel.

The rest of your afternoon can be spent relaxing in your room or exploring the area. Perhaps you will visit the Blaithin de Sachy Art Gallery, which celebrates Ireland through the visual arts.

**Dinner:** At a local restaurant.

**Evening:** Your evening is free to spend as you please. Perhaps you'll seek out some traditional live music at a local pub, or return to the hotel to enjoy a nightcap at the bar or retire early in anticipation of tomorrow's discoveries.

### **Day 14 Overland to County Clare • Discover Galway • Wild Atlantic Way coastal drive • Visit Ballyvaughan Village**

- Destination: County Clare
- Included Meals: Breakfast
- Accommodations: Falls Hotel & Spa or similar

**Breakfast:** At the hotel.

**Morning:** Today we begin our transfer to County Clare.

To break up our drive, we'll stop in Galway, the unofficial capital of the west of Ireland. Upon arrival, we'll set out on a 1-hour walk around the city with our Trip Experience Leader. Afterwards, enjoy some free time for you to explore on your own. The city's compact center spans both sides of the River Corrib. In the center of Eyre Square stands the Quincentennial Fountain, constructed in 1984 to mark the 500th anniversary of the Royal Charter granted by King Richard III that created Galway as an independent city-state.



Nearby are some of the oldest streets in Galway, narrow winding lanes that curve in and around old wooden buildings, often meandering off toward the Corrib and the docks. Yet turn a corner and you will find modern Galway—certainly one of the liveliest cities in Europe. Artists and musicians crowd the sidewalks and almost every pub seems to offer live music.

**Lunch:** On your own in Galway. Your Trip Experience Leader can recommend some of his or her favorite local restaurants.

**Afternoon:** We'll continue our drive along the Wild Atlantic Way to County Clare. This picturesque road is one of the world's longest coastal drives, rich with views of the crystal-blue Atlantic and towering, jagged cliffs—make sure you have your camera at the ready.

We'll make one final stop in Ballyvaughan, a village surrounded by unspoiled landscapes overlooking Galway Bay. We'll spend some time here to use the restroom, purchase any refreshments, and capture any last minute photos before continuing to our hotel.

After checking in, we'll join our Trip Experience Leader for a short orientation walk around our hotel's vicinity. Then, you'll have the rest of the day at leisure.

**Dinner:** On your own.

**Evening:** You have the freedom to explore on your own this evening. Perhaps you'll take advantage of the hotel's amenities, or stop at a local pub to hear some live music.

## **Day 15 County Clare • Optional Aran Islands tour • Home-Hosted Dinner**

- Destination: County Clare
- Included Meals: Breakfast, Dinner
- Accommodations: Falls Hotel & Spa or similar

**Activity Note:** Today's optional Aran Islands tour may be cancelled if weather conditions prohibit a visit to the islands. If this tour is not possible, your Trip Experience Leader will organize an alternate activity.

**Breakfast:** At the hotel.

**Morning:** Today, you'll enjoy a full free day to explore County Clare.

Or, perhaps you'll join us for our optional Aran Islands tour. We'll drive to Doolin, where we board a ferry to cross the water to Inis Oirr, the smallest of the islands. The 260 permanent residents of Inis Oirr are very friendly and welcoming and still speak Gaelic and practice Celtic customs in their daily lives. Upon arrival, we'll take a guided tour of the island with a local guide who is a resident here. We'll ride over limestone pavements and explore the rich and diverse landscape.

**Lunch:** On your own. Those who took our optional tour will gather for lunch in a local café.

**Afternoon:** For travelers who remained in County Clare, free time continues into the afternoon. Those who took the optional tour will have some free time to explore the island before taking the ferry back to Doolin and arriving back at the hotel, where the rest of the afternoon is free.

**Dinner:** We will get a taste of Irish cuisine and hospitality during a **Home-Hosted Dinner**. We'll enter a local home to join a family at their dinner table and see how they

go through their daily lives—where they live, what they cook, how they eat, and how they feel about their homeland.

We're afforded this special privilege by our small group size; by dining in even smaller groups, we're given the chance to enter local homes and connect on a one-to-one level, and to even share a little with our hosts about who we are and what has brought us to Ireland.

**Evening:** We'll bid our hosts farewell, and return to our hotel, where the remainder of the evening is on your own. You can gather with fellow travelers at the hotel bar, take an evening stroll, or return early to your room.

### **Day 16 Discover the Cliffs of Moher • Visit Caherconnell Fort**

- Destination: County Clare
- Included Meals: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner
- Accommodations: Falls Hotel & Spa or similar

**Activity Note:** Typical Irish weather offers low visibility year-round, and it is not uncommon for coastal views, including the Cliffs of Moher, to be shrouded in fog. Be sure to wear comfortable boots/footwear for hiking this terrain.

**Breakfast:** At the hotel.

**Morning:** We begin our day driving to one of Ireland's most iconic landscapes: the Cliffs of Moher. Estimated at about 300 million years old, the cliffs have been incorporated into local folklore since the Celtic Age. For five miles, the cliffs outline the Atlantic, rising 702 feet at their highest point. Irish weather can be fickle, but on the rare cloudless day, you can see the Aran Islands, Galway Bay, and the mountains of Connemara from here. We'll spend some time here, including a guided walk with our Trip Experience Leader, and time to stroll the cliffs and stop by the visitor's center on our own.

Next, we'll visit Caherconnell Fort, a well-preserved stone fort situated in the region known as the Burren. Archaeological excavations of Caherconnell have yielded significant findings—jewelry and glass from Venice, amber from the Baltic, and fragments of the earliest pen found in the British Isles—that suggest the fort was not only inhabited up to the 16th century, but also indicates that the inhabitants were educated and well-cultured. Here in the heart of the Burren, we'll set off by foot with a local guide to explore the archaeological remains of this impressive stone fort and to learn about the history of the land.

**Lunch:** We'll enjoy a light lunch in the Caherconnell Visitor Center.

**Afternoon:** We'll return to our hotel where you'll have the rest of the afternoon to relax or explore independently. Before dinner, our Trip Experience Leader will join us at the hotel for a Farewell Briefing.

**Dinner:** We'll meet for our Farewell Dinner at the hotel. You'll raise a glass and say *slainte*, the Gaelic word for "cheers!" to toast to the discoveries you've made.

**Evening:** After dinner, we'll be joined by a local family who will regale us with traditional music and Irish stories.

### **Day 17 Return to the U.S. or begin post-trip extension**

- Included Meals: Breakfast

**Breakfast:** At the hotel. For those departing early, a boxed breakfast will be available.

**Morning:** Transfer to the airport for your flight home. Or, begin your *Dingle & Killarney: County Kerry's Rugged Coastline* post-trip extension this morning.

## END YOUR ADVENTURE WITH AN OPTIONAL POST-TRIP EXTENSION

### 5 nights in *Dingle & Killarney: County Kerry's Rugged Coastline*

**Day 1** Overland to Dingle via Listowel

**Day 2** Dingle Peninsula

**Day 3** Dingle • Optional *Evening at Kate Kearny's Cottage* • Overland to Killarney

**Day 4** Killarney • The Ring of Kerry

**Day 5** Killarney Lakes & House

**Day 6** Killarney • Return to the U.S.



## OPTIONAL TOURS

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During your trip you will be able to book optional tours directly with your Trip Experience Leader. He or she will ask you to confirm the payment for these tours by filling out a payment form. Optional tours can only be purchased with a credit or debit card. We accept Visa, MasterCard, and Discover credit cards. We also accept Visa and MasterCard debit cards, but it must be a debit card that allows you to sign for purchases.

In order to correctly process these charges, there can be a delay of 2–3 months from the date of your return for the charges to be posted to your account. Therefore we ask that you use a card that will not expire in the 2–3 months following your return.

**Please note:** Optional tour prices are listed in U.S. dollar estimates determined at the time of publication and are subject to change. Optional tours may vary.

### The Ards Peninsula and Mount Stewart House

(Day 6 \$105 per person)

This full-day optional tour of the Ards Peninsula begins at the Mount Stewart House and Garden, a 19th-century house and garden tucked in County Down of Northern Ireland. Here, you'll discover a vast collection of art and history preserved by the Stewart family, the Marquesses of Londonderry. After our tour, we'll board a motorcoach for the small town of Greyabbey for lunch at a local restaurant.

### Glenveagh National Park

(Day 11 \$125 per person)

This optional tour takes us to the enchanting Glenveagh National Park, where we'll explore the park's gardens, surrounding mountains, and lakes; and we'll be able to view the exterior of the magnificent Glenveagh Castle. Because of the circumstances surrounding its inception—namely that John Adair forcefully evicted hundreds of residents in order to build his own personal hunting estate—Glenveagh Park was shrouded in a veil of infamy for quite some time. And though the castle was

built under his watch, Adair would never live to see his pipe dream fully realized, as he died suddenly in 1885 before completing his estate. Today the castle still stands, and its well-preserved, lavish architecture—and the idyllic beauty throughout the entire park grounds—evoke images in visitors' minds of the Victorian retreats that inspired its design. The cost of this optional tour includes lunch.

### Aran Islands

(Day 15 \$135 per person)

At the mouth of Galway Bay, the Aran Islands enchant visitors with reminders of a way of life from long ago. Today, we board a ferry to cross the water to Inis Oirr, the smallest of the islands, but still large enough to be home to a three-story 16th-century castle and monuments from the Bronze age. After we explore the island on a guided tour, we'll lunch together before our return to the mainland. If weather conditions prohibit a visit to the islands, we will instead give you the option to visit Bunratty Castle, where you will enjoy a short tour and get insight into life in an old Irish village.

**Please Note:** This tour is weather-dependent.

## PRE-TRIP

### Scottish Highlands and Lowlands: Edinburgh, St. Andrews, National Parks & Glasgow

## INCLUDED IN YOUR PRICE

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- » 7 nights accommodation
- » 12 meals—7 breakfasts, 2 lunches, and 3 dinners
- » 9 small group activities
- » Services of a local O.A.T. Trip Experience Leader
- » Gratuities for local guides, drivers, and luggage porters
- » All transfers

## PRE-TRIP EXTENSION ITINERARY

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*Add another country to your adventure and discover the breadth and beauty of Scotland on this comprehensive journey through Britain's rugged and wild north. Discover urban culture in the bustling cities of Edinburgh and Glasgow; immerse yourself in scenic beauty at the volcanic slopes of the Nevis Mountains and the gentle shores of Loch Lomond; and wander the halls of medieval castles and towering cathedrals. Join us and experience the charming people and stunning beauty that makes Scotland a destination like no other.*

### Day 1 Depart U.S.

Fly from the U.S. to Edinburgh, Scotland.

**Evening:** You are free to relax this evening, retire early after your flight or make use of the hotel's amenities.

### Day 2 Arrive Edinburgh, Scotland

- Destination: Edinburgh
- Accommodations: Market Street Hotel

**Afternoon:** Arrive in Edinburgh this afternoon, where an O.A.T. representative will greet you and help you transfer to our hotel. Upon arrival, enjoy some free time to explore the city.

Throughout the day, your Trip Experience Leader will offer orientation walks of the area around your hotel.

**Dinner:** On your own.

### Day 3 Edinburgh • *Invisible Edinburgh* walking tour with local homeless guide

- Destination: Edinburgh
- Included Meals: Breakfast, Dinner
- Accommodations: Market Street Hotel

**Breakfast:** At the hotel.

**Morning:** Today we discover Scotland's capital, Edinburgh, the historic center of Scottish culture, commerce, and education. We'll begin by meeting our local guide—a member of the city's homeless population—as we share a coffee and spend some time getting to know

each other, and hearing their firsthand account of what it's like to live on the margins of Scottish society.

Our guide will then offer us a window into the lives of Edinburgh's homeless during our *Invisible Edinburgh* walking tour. As someone who has lived on the streets of the city, our guide knows them like the back of their hand. They'll take us far off the beaten path to discover a side of Edinburgh that most travelers miss, and tune us in to the myths and urban legends from the city's long history and the modern day.

**Lunch:** On your own. Your Trip Experience Leader can offer their recommendations.

**Afternoon:** Free to relax or continue exploring Edinburgh independently. You might choose to visit Edinburgh Castle, which overlooks the city from a perch atop a long-extinct volcano. A royal dwelling has been located here since the twelfth century, and the castle's St. Margaret's Chapel—the oldest surviving building in the city—dates to this time.

Perhaps you'll browse the shops and pubs of the Royal Mile, the city's main thoroughfare. Or, pay a visit to Holyrood Palace, whose carefully designed additions over the centuries have made it one of the most admired buildings in the British Isles. The palace was completed in 1501 and was the site of the marriage of Mary, Queen of Scots and Lord Darnley in 1565, and of much subsequent intrigue.

**Dinner:** Enjoy a Welcome Dinner at a local restaurant.

**Evening:** You are free to spend the evening as you wish. You may join your fellow travelers for a nightcap at the hotel bar, or you can retire to your room to get some sleep.

## Day 4 Edinburgh • Visit Stirling Castle

- Destination: Edinburgh
- Included Meals: Breakfast, Lunch
- Accommodations: Market Street Hotel

**Breakfast:** At the hotel.

**Morning:** We'll drive to Stirling Castle, where we'll enjoy a tour with a local guide. A castle has stood on this craggy hilltop position overlooking the River Forth since the 13th century, although much of the construction we'll see today dates back to around the 16th century. With its dominant strategic position between the highlands and the lowlands, Stirling Castle has been the setting of much historical drama over the years, and traded hands between the Scottish and the English several times during the Wars of Independence. The castle has also served as a popular royal residence and a venue for entertaining lords and dignitaries, and today stands as a proud symbol of Scottish national pride.

During our included tour, we'll explore the castle's walls and storied halls, and get better acquainted with the cast of characters who waged war and plotted their intrigues here over the centuries, including William Wallace, Robert the Bruce, and Mary Queen of Scots.

**Lunch:** At a local garden center.

**Afternoon:** After lunch, we'll drive to the National Wallace Monument, a 220-foot stone tower situated on a hill overlooking the medieval town of Stirling. The monument commemorates William Wallace's victory over the English army at the Battle of Stirling Bridge in 1297 (depicted with generous artistic liberties in the film *Braveheart*). Each floor of the tower tells part of the story of William Wallace—in the Hall of Heroes, you'll even find his sword—and those who reach the crown are rewarded with a panoramic view of the Scottish landscape below.



We'll then depart the monument and drive back to our hotel, stopping along the way to discover the Kelpies. This dynamic 100-foot-high sculpture depicts two horse heads situated near a new extension to the Forth and Clyde Canal and near River Carron. This massive sculpture is part of The Helix, an initiative to connect the 16 communities in the Falkirk Council Area with a focus on art and nature. Our Trip Experience Leader will provide more detail on the project and the striking sculpture.

**Dinner:** On your own—your Trip Experience Leader can recommend a restaurant.

**Evening:** You are free to spend the evening at your leisure.

### **Day 5 Visit St. Andrews • Discover the Birnam Oak & River Tay • Overland to Pitlochry**

- Destination: Pitlochry
- Included Meals: Breakfast
- Accommodations: Westlands Hotel

**Breakfast:** At the hotel.

**Morning:** This morning we'll transfer to Pitlochry, stopping along the way in the city of St. Andrews for a walking tour with our Trip Experience Leader.

Quaint stone buildings, cobbled streets, and crumbling ruins instantly transport you back to the old days of this history-rich city. Considered to be Scotland's ecclesiastical capital, St. Andrews was the first location to feel the stark changes of the Protestant Reformation in the 16th century. The introduction of the new ideas of Protestantism and the traditional beliefs of Christianity ignited conflict within Scotland and the country's ruling parties. We'll take a deep dive into this period of Scotland's history as we explore St. Andrews with our Trip Experience Leader.

St. Andrews is also home to Scotland's oldest university and one of the oldest colleges in the world, the University of St. Andrews. The school was founded in 1413 because of Scotland's lack of higher education opportunities. Notable alumni include Kate Middleton and Prince William.

**Lunch:** On your own in St. Andrews.

**Afternoon:** After lunch, we'll drive to Dunkeld, with a stop to stretch our legs in the city of Dundee.

Upon arrival in Dunkeld, we'll walk to the banks of the River Tay to meet a local arboriculturalist—an expert who specializes in the growth and maintenance of trees—for a look at another piece of proud Scottish history: the Birnam Oak. This 600-year-old tree, and its neighbor, the Birnam Sycamore, are the last standing survivors of Birnam Wood, the medieval forest made famous by Shakespeare in *Macbeth*. Local legend holds that the Bard was inspired to write the woods into the Scottish play—a trio of witches foretells that the titular anti-hero will meet his doom when Birnam Wood marches on his castle in Dunsinane—after a visit to Birnam arranged by King James VI in 1599.

Our green-thumbed guide will tell us more about the pride that local Scots have in this medieval tree, and about the delicate work that goes in to keeping it healthy today. They will then join us on a walk along the River Tay, where we'll take in the lush, modern foliage that lines the waters today, and enjoy the peaceful ambiance of this quaint Scottish town.

After our stroll, we'll continue our transfer to Pitlochry.

**Dinner:** On your own in Pitlochry.

**Evening:** You are free to make your own discoveries in Pitlochry.

## Day 6 Visit Dalwhinnie Distillery

- Destination: Pitlochry
- Included Meals: Breakfast, Dinner
- Accommodations: Westlands Hotel

**Breakfast:** At the hotel.

**Morning:** Today's discoveries begin with a drive to Cairngorms National Park, located in the Cairngorms mountain range of northeast Scotland. Along the way, we'll stop at Dalwhinnie Distillery, where a local guide and multi-generational distiller will show us around and explain the distilling process. We might even get to sample a tippie of whisky here, which gets a unique flavor from the atmosphere surrounding the property: it is the highest and coldest distillery in Scotland.

After our tour, we drive to the town of Aviemore for lunch.

**Lunch:** On your own in Aviemore. Your Trip Experience Leader can recommend a café or restaurant.

**Afternoon:** We'll continue our discoveries this afternoon with our Trip Experience Leader this afternoon.

**Dinner:** At a local restaurant.

**Evening:** You are free to spend the evening as you wish. You may join your fellow travelers for a nightcap at the hotel bar.

## Day 7 Explore Loch Lomond • Glasgow

- Destination: Glasgow
- Included Meals: Breakfast, Lunch
- Accommodations: DoubleTree by Hilton Glasgow

**Breakfast:** At the hotel.

**Morning:** We begin our full-day discoveries with a drive to Loch Lomond and the Trossachs National Park. Along the way, we'll pass

through the town of Fort William in the Scottish Highlands, set upon the shores of Loch Linnhe in the shadow of the Nevis mountain range.

Our journey continues as we traverse the valley of Glen Coe. This scenic wonder is recognized as a National Nature Reserve, and we'll have the opportunity to admire its natural beauty as we pass by its steep walls and lush foliage.

We'll stop at the Glen Coe visitor center, where we'll learn more about how this verdant landscape was formed, and about the various legends and stories that have transpired here. Famously, this was the site of the Glencoe Massacre, in which dozens of members of the local MacDonald clan were duplicitously murdered by agents of the Scottish government in 1692—an event which reshaped the relationship between the Highlands and the crown.

**Lunch:** Enjoy an included lunch at the visitor center.

**Afternoon:** We'll continue our journey through the mountain and lakeland terrain of Glen Coe, where we'll take in scenic views of lush valleys, volcanic peaks, and tumbling waterfalls as we drive.

We'll stop at the village of Luss, on the western shore of Loch Lomond, where we'll step out for a walking tour of the “bonnie banks and bonnie braes” of this Scottish natural wonder, the largest loch in Scotland. This scenic body of water, located in the heart of the country's first national park, is a tranquil space where Scots go to get away from it all.

The loch features a diverse array of geological features to catch the eye. In the north, the water narrows into a glacial trench, flanked by towering snowcapped peaks. In the south, the lake broadens, its shores fringed by lush woods, carpeted with a layer of bluebells in the spring.

We'll embark on a guided walk with our Trip Experience Leader, as well as some time to take in the scenery independently.

We then continue our drive to Glasgow, arriving at our hotel to settle in. Your Trip Experience Leader will lead a walking tour around the vicinity of your hotel.

**Dinner:** On your own in Glasgow.

**Evening:** At your leisure—perhaps you'll take a stroll down the cobbled streets of Ashton Lane to experience one of the unique pubs or dive-bars.

## Day 8 Explore Glasgow

- Destination: Glasgow
- Included Meals: Breakfast, Dinner
- Accommodations: DoubleTree by Hilton Glasgow

**Breakfast:** At the hotel.

**Morning:** We'll discover Glasgow this morning on an included city tour. The tour will feature panoramic discoveries aboard our private motorcoach as well as a stroll along the city streets with our Trip Experience Leader.

As we'll see during our tour, Glasgow gives off an old-world feel with its commanding cathedral and Victorian buildings, while still retaining the buzzing atmosphere of a major city—it is, after all, the largest city in Scotland. While parts of Glasgow have made strides toward modernity, it still takes pride in its past, which will be on full display as we explore this morning. We'll pass the medieval Glasgow Cathedral, an architectural treasure that remained intact throughout the Scottish Reformation. We'll also drive by the 18th-century People's Palace and the sprawling George Square.

**Lunch:** On your own.

**Afternoon:** The rest of the day is free to explore independently. You might choose to visit the Kelvingrove Art Gallery and Museum, featuring a fantastic display of around 8000 pieces spread out in 22 galleries. The museum showcases artifacts, war remnants, and paintings like Salvador Dali's "Christ of St John of the Cross." Or, you can soak up the natural splendors of the Glasgow Botanic Gardens: Stroll around the 50-acre property to see an abundance of plants and flowers, and venture into Kibble Palace—the ground's greenhouse—to get a glimpse of tropical rain forest flora.

**Dinner:** At a local pub. Enjoy a taste of Glaswegian cuisine and an opportunity to mingle with the locals.

**Evening:** You are free to spend the evening as you wish.

## Day 9 Glasgow • Join main trip

- Included Meals: Breakfast

**Breakfast:** At the hotel.

**Morning:** Transfer to the airport this morning for your flight to Dublin, where you'll begin your *Irish Adventure: Dublin, Belfast & the Northwest Counties* adventure.

## POST-TRIP

### Dingle & Killarney: County Kerry's Rugged Coastline

#### INCLUDED IN YOUR PRICE

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- » 5 nights accommodation
- » 10 meals—5 breakfasts, 3 lunches, and 2 dinners
- » 5 small group activities
- » Services of a local O.A.T. Trip Experience Leader
- » Gratuities for local guides, drivers, and luggage porters
- » All transfers

#### POST-TRIP EXTENSION ITINERARY

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*Scenic mountain passes give way to lakeside castles ... centuries-old cottages and stone monuments breathe life into Ireland's history and legend ... lively music emanates from charming coastal towns ... discover the allure of southwest Ireland on this adventure through County Kerry, including visits to Killarney and Dingle.*

##### **Day 1 Overland to Dingle via Listowel**

- Destination: Dingle
- Included Meals: Breakfast, Lunch
- Accommodations: Dingle Benners Hotel or similar

**Activity Note:** Today's transfer from County Clare to Dingle will take approximately four hours, with a few included short stops and a 2-hour stop along the way.

**Breakfast:** At the hotel.

**Morning:** We'll drive to Dingle, driving along the River Shannon. We'll first stop in the village of Adare, a traditional Irish village of thatched-roof cottages, for a short rest stop and to stretch our legs. Then we'll drive to Listowel. Upon arrival, we'll enjoy a guided tour of the Kerry Writers Museum. Here we'll immerse ourselves in the worlds of some of the best writers the country has ever produced, such as John B. Keane and Bryan MacMahon, both of whom are native to Listowel.

**Lunch:** We'll enjoy an included lunch at the museum.

**Afternoon:** After another transfer, we'll arrive in Dingle. We'll then check in to our centrally-located hotel.

Your Trip Experience Leader will invite you to join a discovery walk of the area. Traditional Irish music seeps out the doors of local pubs that line the streets of this charming coastal town. Well-preserved ancient stone structures—including oratories, burial grounds, and more—reveal an almost mythical heritage surrounding the peninsula. The remainder of your day is free. Perhaps you'll relax and enjoy the amenities of your hotel, or take this time to visit the Dingle distillery and sample some Irish whiskey.

**Dinner:** On your own. Your Trip Experience Leader can recommend their favorite local restaurant.



**Evening:** You are free to explore this evening. Perhaps you'll walk along the pier, grab a beer in a local pub where you may enjoy some live music, or enjoy a sweet treat at Murphy's Ice Cream.

## Day 2 Dingle Peninsula

- Destination: Dingle
- Included Meals: Breakfast, Dinner
- Accommodations: Dingle Benzers Hotel or similar

**Breakfast:** At the hotel.

**Morning:** Our discoveries in Dingle today continue at Sleah Head, the westernmost point in all of Ireland. We'll drive to the home of a local farm where we will discover Ireland's famous beehive huts—ancient, well-preserved *clocháns* (dry-stone huts). Beehive huts are conical structures made using rings of dry stone meticulously stacked one on top of the other, positioning each layer a little further inward until a snug, pointed roof is formed to cap the structure. This corbelling method is part of the reason why the huts are so difficult to date, as it doesn't belong to any one time period and has been used in Ireland for thousands of years.

Then, we visit the Blasket Centre museum, where we'll learn about the unique heritage of these now-uninhabited islands that, until a forceful evacuation in 1953, were home to a small, Gaelic-speaking community. Enjoy free time after.

**Lunch:** On your own around at the Blasket Centre, where you can easily find café fare.

**Afternoon:** We will continue our drive around Sleah Head to take in the scenery.

**Dinner:** At the hotel.

**Evening:** During your free evening, perhaps you'll retire early before tomorrow's departure or seek out a traditional Irish folk music performance.

## Day 3 Dingle • Optional Evening at Kate Kearney's Cottage • Overland to Killarney

- Destination: Killarney
- Included Meals: Breakfast, Lunch
- Accommodations: Arbutus Hotel or similar

**Breakfast:** At the hotel.

**Morning:** We'll begin our day with a walk along Inch Beach where locals enjoy walks, collect shells, and even surf. Then, we'll step back in time at the Kerry Creamery Experience for a guided tour. This unique experience allows us the chance to discover what creameries were like before the rise of modern technology in Ireland.

**Lunch:** We'll enjoy a light lunch at the creamery, with an assortment that may include cheese, crackers, fruit, and locally made ice cream.

**Afternoon:** After lunch, you'll have free time to explore some of the town's historic homes or parks. Then, continue on to Killarney where we'll check in to our hotel. Your Trip Experience Leader will lead an orientation walk to showcase the many pubs and restaurants the city has to offer.

**Dinner:** On your own. You may want to try the local seafood, straight from Dingle's corner of the great Atlantic Ocean such as chowder, seabass, or sole.

Or, join our optional tour to Kate Kearney's Cottage, a charming seventh generation family-run pub and restaurant located at the entrance to The Gap of Dunloe.

For travelers who join our optional tour, dinner will include a three-course dinner, followed by an evening of traditional Irish entertainment: *craic*, *ceol*, and *agus bia* (fun, music and food).

**Evening:** For those on the optional tour, enjoy some traditional music and songs, and learn about traditional Irish musical instruments. Otherwise, you are free to explore on your own this evening or enjoy a nightcap at the hotel with fellow travelers.

#### Day 4 Killarney • The Ring of Kerry

- Destination: Killarney
- Included Meals: Breakfast, Lunch
- Accommodations: Arbutus Hotel or similar

**Breakfast:** At the hotel.

**Morning:** We'll drive to the Ring of Kerry for a scenic tour, taking in views of Ireland's southwest coast (weather permitting). This green region is marked by winding roads, craggy cliffs, sloping valleys, and rolling hills dotted with sheep. As we drive through the scenery, each turn along the road will reveal a new perspective of the seaside cliffs and ocean. At times, we may also need to pause on the road as flocks of sheep cross in front of us. We'll stop at the Coomakesta viewpoint, which overlooks Derrynane Bay and the three islands of Abbey, Deenish, and Scariff.

We'll then drive to Sneem, a village of colorful cottages, abundant pubs, and live music. The villages in this area are often considered some of the most traditional in Ireland, preserving the quaint small-town feel that is associated with this country.

**Lunch:** At a local restaurant.

**Afternoon:** We'll continue our scenic drive by taking in the breathtaking scenery from Ladies View, a viewpoint named after Queen Victoria's

court ladies who discovered this awe-inspiring spot during their visit in 1861. The crown jewel of this area is Killarney National Park, which protects this natural beauty as well as an expansive area of oak trees. It is also home to the Victorian Muckross House and Gardens, the ruins of the 15th-century Ross Castle, and Torc Waterfall. During our tour, we'll visit the falls, which rush over moss-covered stones hidden within the park's woodlands.

Later, enjoy a free afternoon to explore Killarney on our own. Perhaps you'll choose to further explore the national park, browse the town's shops, or grab a pint in a local pub featuring a live band.

**Dinner:** On your own—you may ask your Trip Experience Leader for some recommendations on their favorite places. Perhaps you'll seek out a traditional Irish stew of lamb, potatoes, and onions at one of the local gastropubs.

**Evening:** You're free to indulge in more local favorites this evening, or enjoy familiar American standards. Your Trip Experience Leader is happy to provide you recommendations.

#### Day 5 Killarney Lakes & House

- Destination: Killarney
- Included Meals: Breakfast, Dinner
- Accommodations: Arbutus Hotel or similar

**Activity Note:** If you choose to participate in today's activities, you must take a boat ride and a carriage ride. Once you set off on the carriage ride, be prepared to commit to the full journey. And don't forget your rain jacket because we may get wet with rain or ocean spray during our boat ride.

**Breakfast:** At the hotel.

**Morning:** We'll board jaunting cars (two-wheeled carriages pulled by a horse) and have a chance to introduce ourselves to the driver and get comfortable. We'll ride to a boat pier, where we'll board a small boat for a scenic ride over the Killarney Lakes, known for their reflective, blue waters and the hilly, green landscapes surrounding them on all sides. We'll ride to the Ross Castle pier, where we'll transfer to the Killarney House.

Once a lavish, French-style estate that was only paralleled in places like Normandy and Brittany, and originally known as Kenmare House, Killarney House and Gardens was commissioned by an 18th-century earl. The mansion was destroyed by fire in 1913. The owner at the time, the 5th Earl of Kenmare, converted the nearby stable block on the grounds for use by his family, and thus Kenmare House was born. Now known as Killarney House, it was sold to the Irish State in 1978 and has been recently restored. The house and gardens have been carefully preserved,

which you'll notice while walking the grounds. You'll stroll its historic rooms and manicured landscapes. At the end of our visit, we'll have free time to further explore the estate.

**Lunch:** On your own. Your Trip Experience Leader can suggest the best places to enjoy hearty Irish fare.

**Afternoon:** The rest of the afternoon is yours in Killarney.

**Dinner:** Enjoy a Farewell Dinner at a local restaurant.

**Evening:** Tonight, you may want to stroll through the town by night, visit a local pub, or relax at the hotel before tomorrow's departure.

## **Day 6 Killarney • Return to the U.S.**

• Included Meals: Breakfast

**Breakfast:** At the hotel.

**Morning:** We will say goodbye to Ireland and transfer to the airport for our flights home.

## **OPTIONAL TOUR**

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### **An Evening At Kate Kearny's Cottage**

(Day 3 \$130 per person)

Enjoy an evening at Kate Kearney's Cottage with dinner and traditional Irish entertainment: *craic*, *ceol*, and *agus bia* (fun, music and food). Kate Kearney's is a charming seventh generation family-run pub and restaurant located at the entrance to The Gap of Dunloe. Here we'll enjoy some traditional music and songs, learn about traditional Irish musical instruments, and learn some dance steps.

# TRAVEL DOCUMENTS & ENTRY REQUIREMENTS

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## Your Passport

- Must be in good condition
- Must be valid for at least 6 months after your scheduled return to the U.S.
- Must have the required number of blank pages (details below)
- The blank pages must be labeled “Visas” at the top. Pages labeled “Amendments and Endorsements” are not acceptable

## Need to Renew Your Passport?

Contact the National Passport Information Center (NPIC) at **1-877-487-2778**, or visit the U.S. Department of State’s official website at **www.travel.state.gov** for information on obtaining a new passport or renewing your existing passport. The U.S. Department of State allows for passport renewal by mail or, for applicable citizens, renewal online. We advise you review the process and requirements for online passport renewal on the official website.

You may also contact our recommended visa service company, PVS International, at **1-800-556-9990** for help with your passport.

## Recommended Blank Pages

Please confirm that your passport has enough blank pages for this adventure.

- **Main trip only:** You will need 4 blank passport pages.
- **Pre- and/or post-trip extensions:** No additional pages are needed.
- **Stopover in Amsterdam, Helsinki, Munich, or Rome:** You will need to add 2 additional pages to the applicable total listed above.
- **Stopover in Barcelona, Copenhagen, Istanbul, London, Madrid, or Paris:** You will need to add an additional page to the applicable total listed above.

## Entry Requirements

**A detailed instruction packet and fees will be available on your My Planner about 100 days prior to your departure.** In the meantime, we’re providing the information below as a guideline on what to expect. This info is for U.S. citizens only. All visas and fees are subject to change.

- **United Kingdom:** The United Kingdom requires an Electronic Travel Authorization (ETA) for entry. This includes entry to England, Scotland, Wales, and Northern Ireland. You will need an ETA if the UK is your final destination. The ETA will be valid for 2 years.



## **Traveling Without a U.S. Passport?**

If you are not a U.S. citizen, or if your passport is from any country other than the U.S., it is your responsibility to check with your local consulate, embassy, or a visa services company about visa requirements. We recommend the services of PVS International, a national visa service located in Washington D.C.; they can be reached at **1-800-556-9990** or **[www.pvsinternational.org](http://www.pvsinternational.org)**.

## **Traveling With a Minor?**

Some governments may require certain documentation for minors to enter and depart the country or to obtain a visa (if applicable). For further detail on the required documentation, please contact your local embassy or consulate.

## **Emergency Photocopies of Key Documents**

We recommend you carry color photocopies of key documents including the photo page of your passport plus any applicable visas, air itinerary, credit cards (front and back), and an alternative form of ID. Add emergency phone numbers like your credit card company and the number for your travel protection plan. Store copies separate from the originals.

If you plan to email this information to yourself, please keep in mind that email is not always secure; consider using password protection or encryption. Also email is not always available worldwide. As an alternative, you could load these documents onto a flash drive instead, which can do double-duty as a place to backup photos during your trip.

## **Overseas Taxes & Fees**

This tour may have taxes and fees that cannot be included in your airline ticket price because you are required to pay them in person onsite. All taxes are subject to change without notice and can be paid in cash (either U.S. or local currency). If applicable, you will receive a list of these fees with your Final Documents.

## RIGORS, VACCINES & GENERAL HEALTH

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### Is This Adventure Right for You?

**Please review the information below prior to departing on this adventure.** We reserve the right for our Trip Experience Leaders to modify participation, or in some circumstances send travelers home, if their condition would adversely affect the health, safety, or enjoyment of themselves or of other travelers.

#### PACING

- 6 locations in 16 days

#### PHYSICAL REQUIREMENTS

- Not appropriate for travelers using wheelchairs or other mobility aids
- Must be able to walk approximately 3 miles unassisted each day and participate in 6–8 hours of daily physical activities
- We reserve the right for Trip Experience Leaders to restrict participation, or in some circumstances send travelers home, if their limitations impact the group's experience

#### CLIMATE

- Irish weather is traditionally fickle, but summer temperatures usually range from the low 50s to the low 70s
- Autumn generally brings mist, showers, and brisk weather in the 40s
- Most of the country receives some rain at least 200 days a year

#### TERRAIN

- There is a fair amount of hiking, and walking over uneven, unpaved, or cobbled surfaces

#### TRANSPORTATION

- Travel by motorcoach, traditional horse-and-carriage, and Belfast's famous taxis
- There are several 1–3 hour drives (sometimes with around 2 hours between stops)

#### ACCOMMODATIONS & FACILITIES

- Hotel rooms are smaller than U.S. and offer basic amenities
- All accommodations feature private bathrooms

### Steps to Take Before Your Trip

Before you leave on this adventure, we recommend the following:

- Check with the CDC for their recommendations for the countries you'll be visiting. You can contact them online at **www.cdc.gov/travel** or by phone at **1-800-232-4636**.
- Have a medical checkup with your doctor at least 6 weeks before your trip.
- Pick up any necessary medications, both prescription and over-the-counter.
- Have a dental and/or eye checkup. (Recommended, but less urgent)

## No Vaccines Required

### Recommended Vaccines

At the time of writing there were no required vaccines for this trip. The CDC recommends that all travelers be up to date on their routine vaccinations and on basic travel vaccines like Hepatitis A and Typhoid, but these are suggestions only. However, this could change in future so we encourage you to check with the CDC yourself before meeting with your doctor.

### Traveling with Medications

- **Pack medications in your carry-on bag** to avoid loss and to have them handy.
- **Keep medicines in their original, labeled containers** for a quicker security screen at the airport and a better experience if you get stopped by customs while overseas.
- **Bring copies of your prescriptions**, written using the generic drug name rather than a brand name to be prepared for any unforeseen loss of your medications.

We recommend checking with the State Department for medication restrictions by country: **travel.state.gov** (Go to “Find International Travel Information”, select “Country Information”, then enter the country into the search bar; if you don't see any medications specifically mentioned under the “Health” section, then you can presume major U.S. brands should be OK).

## Staying Healthy on Your Trip

### Jet Lag Tips

- Start your trip well-rested.
- Begin a gradual transition to your new time zone before you leave or switch to your destination time zone when you get on the plane.
- Attempt to sleep and eat according to the new schedule.
- Avoid heavy eating and drinking caffeine or alcoholic beverages right before—and during—your flight.
- Drink plenty of water and/or fruit juice while flying
- Stretch your legs, neck, and back periodically while seated on the plane.

- After arrival, avoid the temptation to nap.
- Don't push yourself to see a lot on your first day.
- Try to stay awake your first day until after dinner.

### **Allergies**

If you have any serious allergies or dietary restrictions, we advise you to notify us at least 30 days prior to your departure. Please call our Travel Counselors at **1-800-221-0814**, and we will communicate them to our regional office. Every effort will be made to accommodate you.

### **Water**

- Tap water is safe to drink on this trip; however, it may be processed differently than your tap water at home, so you might not like the taste or it may feel "heavy" in your stomach.
- Bottled water is widely available for sale.



# MONEY MATTERS: LOCAL CURRENCY & TIPPING GUIDELINES

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## Top Three Tips

- **Carry a mix of different types of payments**, such as local currency, an ATM card, and a credit card.
- **Traveler's checks are not accepted in Ireland.**
- **You will not be able to pay with U.S. dollars on this trip;** you will need local currency.

## Local Currency

For current exchange rates, please refer to an online converter tool like [www.xe.com/currencyconverter](http://www.xe.com/currencyconverter), your bank, or the financial section of your newspaper.

**Republic of Ireland:** European Euro (€)

**Northern Ireland:** Pound Sterling (GBP)

**Scotland:** Pound Sterling (GBP)

## How to Exchange Money

If you want to exchange money before your trip, you can usually do so through your bank or at an exchange office. Your departure airport in the U.S., a travel agent, or an AAA office are also possible outlets.

In the Republic of Ireland, exchange services are not available at hotels or post offices and you must be an account holder in order to exchange money at a bank. Therefore, we recommend that you exchange euros in advance of your trip or withdraw euros from an ATM upon your arrival. The ATM will give you local money and your bank at home will convert that into U.S. dollars. All exchange methods involve fees, which may be built into the conversion rate; ask beforehand.

## ATMs

When using the ATM, keep in mind that it may only accept cards from local banks, and may not allow cash advances on credit cards; you might need to try more than one ATM or more than one card.

Many banks charge a fee of \$1–\$10 each time you use a foreign ATM. Others may charge you a percentage of the amount you withdraw. We recommend that you check with your bank before you depart.

Lastly, don't forget to memorize the actual digits of your card's PIN number (many keypads at foreign ATMs do not include letters on their keys—they only display numbers.)

In most countries, ATMs are widely available in major cities. If you are in a rural location, it will likely be harder to find an ATM.

**Northern Ireland:** ATMS are common throughout Northern Ireland so ATM cards will give you a reliable payment method and ready access to local currency.

## Credit & Debit Cards

While traveling, most countries and major cities will accept credit cards. Even if you don't plan on using a credit card during your trip, we still suggest that you bring one or two as a backup, especially if you are planning a large purchase (artwork, jewelry). We also suggest that you bring more than one brand of card (i.e. Visa, MasterCard, American Express) if possible, because not every shop will take every card. For example, although Discover and American Express cards are accepted in some countries outside the U.S., they are not widely adopted, so other brands will work at a much larger range of stores, restaurants, etc.

If you are visiting a country that does not commonly accept credit cards, they will be listed below.

**Northern Ireland:** Credit cards are readily accepted in most hotels and restaurants, but you should always inquire if your type of credit card is accepted before deciding on your purchase.

## Chip Cards

Many countries have adopted credit cards that have an embedded computer chip. These cards are inserted into the reader instead of swiped. The card owner then authorizes the purchase using a PIN instead of signing.

Though this technology is common in the U.S., occasionally there are machines in other countries that can't read U.S. cards or the machine can read the card, but asks for a PIN. This doesn't happen often, and is nothing to worry about. You can usually resolve the situation by asking the cashier to let you sign. (If you don't speak the language, just mime signing on your hand.) If you are not able to sign for a purchase, such as at an automated ticket booth, you can use another form of payment, such as a debit card that has a PIN.

## Notify Card Providers of Upcoming Travel

Many credit card companies and banks have fraud alert departments that will freeze your card if they see suspicious charges—such as charges or withdrawals from another country. To avoid an accidental security block, it is a good idea to notify your credit card company and/or bank you will be using your cards abroad. You can do this by calling their customer service number a week or two before your departure. Some banks or credit card companies will also let you do this online.

You should also double-check what phone number you could call if you have a problem with a card while you are abroad. Don't assume you can use the 1-800 number printed on the back of your card—most 1 800 numbers don't work outside of the U.S.!

## Tipping Guidelines

Of course, whether you tip, and how much, is always at your own discretion. But for those of you who have asked for tipping suggestions, we offer these guidelines:

- **O.A.T. Trip Experience Leader:** It is customary to express a personal “thank you” to your Trip Experience Leader at the end of your trip. As a guideline, many travelers give \$10–\$14 USD (or equivalent in local currency) per person for each day their Trip Experience Leader is with them. *Please note that these tips can only be in cash. If you are taking any of the optional extensions, your Trip Experience Leader during the extension(s) may not be the same as the one on your main trip.*
- **Hotel Housekeeping:** Many travelers will leave the equivalent of \$1–\$2 per day, per room for the hotel housekeeping staff. *Please note: Because of the difficulty in exchanging a small amount of dollars, it would be easier for the housekeeping staff if you left their tips in local currency.*
- **Waiters:** When dining on your own, a tip of 10%–15% of the bill is standard for good service. Some establishments will add a service charge—in which case you do not need to tip—so check your bill.
- **Taxi:** Tipping isn’t expected, but if you want to give something you can round up your bill to the nearest 5 or 10 euro mark. For example, if your fare was 8 euros, you’d give the driver 10 euros and let them keep the change.
- **Included in Your Trip Price:** Gratuities are included for local guides, drivers, and luggage porters on your main trip, extensions, and all optional tours.

*Please note: For your convenience, tips to O.A.T. staff can be paid in U.S. dollars or local currency. Please do not use personal or traveler’s checks for tips.*

## AIR, OPTIONAL TOURS & STAYING IN TOUCH

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### Land Only Travelers & Personalized Air

#### Quick Definitions

- **Land Only:** You will be booking your own international flights. Airport transfers are not included.
- **Air-Inclusive:** You booked international air with us. Airport transfers are included as long as you didn't customize your trip's dates (see next bullet).
- **Arrive Early or Stopover (select adventures only):** If you chose one of these Personalization options and purchased air through O.A.T, accommodations and airport transfers are included. However, if you chose one of our Personalization options, but did not purchase air through O.A.T., accommodations are included, but airport transfers are not. If you chose one of our Personalization options, and purchase air through O.A.T. but not the accommodations, the airport transfers are not included. We have included transfer options below.
- **Personalization on Your Own:** If you have not purchased air through O.A.T. and decided to arrive early, stay longer, or stop in a connecting city on your own, you are responsible for airport transfers and accommodations. For your convenience, a preliminary list of your included hotels is available on your My Planner at [www.oattravel.com/myplanner](http://www.oattravel.com/myplanner) under "My Reservations" to help you with selecting a hotel for your additional time.

### Air Inclusive Travelers

If you have purchased international air with us, there are some points that may be helpful for you to know.

- **U.S. Departure:** If you are among a group of ten or more travelers who depart the U.S. from your international gateway city, it is our goal to have an O.A.T. Representative assist you at the U.S. airport with the check-in of your flight. Unless there are extenuating circumstances beyond our control, the Representative will be at the check-in counter three hours before your departure time. If you are flying domestically before your international flight, the representative will be stationed at the check-in counter for your departing international flight, not at the domestic arrival gate.
- **U.S. Return:** If you are among a group of ten or more travelers who return to the same U.S. gateway city, an O.A.T. Representative will meet you as you exit Customs and help you find taxis, buses, hotel accommodations, or connecting flights. Again, it is our goal to have our Representative waiting to assist your group. In rare instances, unforeseen circumstances may prevent this service.



- **Flying with a Travel Companion:** If you're traveling with a companion from a different household, and both of you are beginning and ending your trip at the same airport on the same dates, let us know you'd like to travel together and we'll make every effort to arrange this (please note, however, that this is not always possible). If you request any changes to your flights, please be sure that both you and your companion tell us that you still want to fly together.
- **Selecting Your Seats:** If your airline allows pre-assigned seats, you will be able to select and view them directly from the airline's website after booking. Some airlines will not allow seat confirmation until your reservation is ticketed 45–30 days prior to departure, and/or they may charge a nominal fee. You may locate your itinerary on an airline's website utilizing the Record Locator Number found on the Air Itinerary in your My Planner.

### **Airport Transfers Can Be Purchased**

For eligible flights, airport transfers may be purchased separately as an optional add-on, subject to availability. To be eligible, your flight(s) must meet the following requirements:

- You must fly into or fly home from the same airport as O.A.T. travelers who purchased included airfare.
- Your flight(s) must arrive/depart on the same day that the group arrives or departs.
- If you are arriving early, you must have arranged the hotels through our Arrive Early personalization option

Airport transfers can be purchased up to 45 days prior to your departure; they are not available for purchase onsite. To learn more, or purchase airport transfers, please call our Travel Counselors at **1-800-221-0814**.

If you don't meet the requirements above, you'll need to make your own transfer arrangements. We suggest the Rome to Rio website as a handy resource: [www.rome2rio.com](http://www.rome2rio.com)

### **Optional Tours**

Optional tours are additional add-on tours that allow you to personalize your adventure by tailoring it to your tastes and needs. And if you decide not to join an optional tour? Then you'll have free time to relax or explore on your own—it's about options, not obligations.

### **What You Need to Know**

- All optional tours are subject to change and availability.
- Optional tours that are reserved with your Trip Experience Leader can be paid for using credit/debit cards only. We accept MasterCard, Visa, and Discover credit cards; we can also take MasterCard or Visa debit cards as long as the card allows you to sign for purchases. (You won't be able to enter a PIN.)

- To ensure that you are charged in U.S. dollars, your payment will be processed by our U.S. headquarters in Boston. This process can take up to three months, so we ask that you only use a card that will still be valid three months after your trip is over. The charge may appear on your credit card statement as being from Boston, MA or may be labeled as “OPT Boston”.
- Your Trip Experience Leader will give you details on the optional tours while you’re on the trip. But if you’d like to look over descriptions of them earlier, you can do so at any time by referring to your Day-to-Day Itinerary (available online by signing into My Planner at [www.oattravel.com/myplanner](http://www.oattravel.com/myplanner)).

## **Communicating with Home from Abroad**

### **Cell Phones**

If you want to use your cell phone on the trip, check with your phone provider to see if your phone and service will work outside of the U.S. It may turn out to be cheaper to rent an international phone or buy a SIM card onsite. If you want to use a local SIM, just make certain your phone can accept one.

### **Calling Apps**

Another option is to use a smartphone app like Skype or FaceTime. These services are usually less expensive than making a traditional call, but you’ll need a Wi-Fi connection and the calls may count towards your phone plan’s data allowance. Many smartphones—and some tablets or laptops—come with one of these apps pre-installed or you can download them for free from the appropriate apps store.

### **Calling Cards and 1-800 Numbers**

When calling the U.S. from a foreign country, a prepaid calling card can be useful because it circumvents unexpected charges from the hotel. Calling cards purchased locally are typically the best (less expensive, more likely to work with the local phones, etc.).

One reminder: Do not call U.S. 1-800 numbers outside the continental United States. This can result in costly long distance fees, since 1-800 numbers do not work outside the country.

### **How to Call Overseas**

When calling overseas from the U.S., dial 011 for international exchange, then the country code (indicated by a plus sign: +), and then the number. Note that foreign phone numbers may not have the same number of digits as U.S. numbers; even within a country the number of digits can vary depending on the city and if the phone is a land line or cell phone.

**Ireland:** +353

**Scotland:** +44

**Northern Ireland:** +44

## PACKING: WHAT TO BRING & LUGGAGE LIMITS

### Luggage Limits

MAIN TRIP LIMITS	
Pieces per person	One checked bag and one carry-on bag per person.
Weight restrictions	Varies by airline. The current standard is 50 lbs for checked bags and 15 lbs for carry-on bags.
Size Restrictions	Varies by airline. Measured in linear inches (length+width+depth). Generally, 62 linear inches is the checked bag limit; carry-on limit is 45 linear inches.
Luggage Type	A sturdy, fabric-sided suitcase with built-in wheels and lockable zippers is recommended.
TRIP EXTENSION(S) LIMITS	
Same as the main trip.	
REMARKS/SUGGESTIONS	
<p><b>Luggage rules:</b> Luggage rules and limits are set by governmental and airline policy. Enforcement of the rules may include spot checks or may be inconsistent. However one thing is the same across the board: If you are found to have oversized or overweight luggage, you will be subject to additional fees, to be assessed by—and paid to—the airline in question.</p>	

#### Don't Forget:

- **These luggage limits may change.** If the airline(s) notify us of any changes, we will include an update in your Final Documents booklet.
- It's a good idea to reconfirm baggage restrictions and fees directly with the airline a week or so prior to departure. For your convenience, we maintain a list of the toll-free numbers for the most common airlines on our website in the FAQ section.
- **Baggage fees are not included in your trip price;** they are payable directly to the airlines.

## Your Luggage

- **Checked Luggage:** Consider a duffel bag or soft-sided suitcase. Look for one with heavy nylon fabric, wrap-around handles, built-in wheels, and a heavy duty lockable zipper. Due to space limitations on our motorcoaches, you are allowed one piece of checked luggage per person. Portage at airports and hotels is provided for **one** bag per person. All bags should have luggage tags.
- **Carry-on Bag:** You are allowed one carry-on bag per person. We suggest a tote or small backpack that can be used as both a carry-on bag for your flight and to carry your daily necessities—water bottle, camera, etc—during your daily activities.
- **Locks:** For flights that originate in the U.S., you can either use a TSA-approved lock or leave your luggage unlocked. Outside of the U.S. we strongly recommend locking your luggage as a theft-prevention measure.

## Clothing Suggestions: Functional Tips

- **Travel light:** A good rule of thumb is to gather together everything you want to bring; then take half of that. To have a varied travel wardrobe, yet keep your luggage light, we recommend you select a color scheme and pack color-coordinated clothing items that can be mixed to create different outfits.
- **Pack casual clothes:** Comfortable, informal apparel is acceptable at each of your destinations. At dinner, you will not need to wear “dressy” clothing; men do not need jackets or ties and women do not need fancy dresses. You may want one or two “smart casual” outfits for the Welcome Reception or Farewell Dinner, but it’s completely up to you.
- **Consider clothing designed for travel, sports, or camping:** With modern fabrics, lightweight packing for comfort and protection through a wide range of weather is easy.
- **Plan to dress in layers.** Weather in Ireland is unpredictable, and can feature warm and cold temperatures at any time of the year. The most practical travel wardrobe consists of items that you can wear in layers. Then you can easily add or remove a layer according to any fluctuations in temperatures.
- **Bring rain gear:** Regardless of your month of travel, rainfall and heavy fog is certainly a possibility. We suggest you bring a folding umbrella and waterproof shell (including rain pants). Water-resistant walking shoes are advantageous in case heavy downpours pass through. This will be particularly helpful during some of your outdoor activities, such as open-air boat rides.
- **Good walking shoes are critical.** This program features many included tours that follow steep, unpaved or cobbled routes; and even an average day of light sightseeing or shopping can put great demands on your feet. If you prefer more ankle support, take light hiking boots. In case you get caught in the rain, we suggest you bring an extra pair of walking shoes, and rain boots or galoshes. Aboard ship, you’ll want non-slip shoes with rubber soles.



## Suggested Packing Lists

We have included suggestions from Trip Experience Leaders and former travelers to help you pack. These packing lists are only jumping-off points—they offer recommendations based on experience, but not requirements. We recommend using [www.weather.com](http://www.weather.com) and consulting the “Climate” chapter of this handbook.

**And don’t forget a reusable water bottle**—you’ll need it to take advantage of any refills we offer as we are working to eliminate single-use plastic bottles on all of our trips.

**What not to pack:** Do not pack aerosol cans, as they tend to leak during air travel. Leave behind any credit cards that are not essential for your trip, valuable jewelry, and anything that you would hate to lose.

## Recommended Clothing

- ☐ Shirts: A mixture of short and long-sleeved shirts to layer
- ☐ Trousers, jeans, or skirts
- ☐ Comfortable walking shoes and/or water resistant shoes
- ☐ Rain jacket/windbreaker with hood and rain pants: At any time of year, you’ll encounter the heavy rains, wind, and fog associated with the lush green landscapes of Ireland. Since you’ll be exposed to the elements during several activities (such as open-air boat rides and hikes), we strongly suggest that you bring rain gear.
- ☐ Sleepwear
- ☐ Socks and undergarments
- ☐ A jacket or sweater, depending on the time of year

## Essential Items

- ☐ Daily essentials: toothbrush, toothpaste, floss, hairbrush or comb, shaving items, deodorant, sunscreen, shampoo/conditioner, shower cap, body soap, etc.
- ☐ Spare eyeglasses/contact lenses and your prescription
- ☐ Sunglasses with a neck strap
- ☐ Wide-brim sun hat or visor
- ☐ Compact umbrella
- ☐ Photocopies of passport, air ticket, credit cards

- ☐ Travel money bag or money belt
- ☐ Camera, spare batteries, and memory cards

### Medicines

- ☐ Your own prescription medicines
- ☐ Vitamins
- ☐ Cold remedies: Sudafed/Dristan
- ☐ Pain relievers: Ibuprofen/naproxen/aspirin
- ☐ Laxatives: Senokot/Ex-Lax
- ☐ Stomach upset: Pepto-Bismol/Mylanta
- ☐ Anti-diarrheal: Imodium
- ☐ Band-Aids, Moleskin foot pads
- ☐ Antibiotics: Neosporin/Bacitracin

### Home-Hosted Visits

Many of our adventures feature a visit with a local family, often as part of the *A Day in the Life* experience. It is customary, though not necessary, to return your hosts' generosity with a small gift. If you do bring a gift, we recommend that you bring something the whole family can enjoy, or something that represents your region, state, or hometown. Get creative and keep it small—peach jelly from Georgia, maple sugar candy from New England, orange blossom soap from California; something that can be used or used up is best. When choosing a gift, be certain to consider the local culture as well. For example, we do not recommend alcohol in Muslim communities because it is forbidden in Islam, and your hosts may be religious. Not all O.A.T. adventures include a Home-Hosted Visit; please check your final itinerary before you depart.

### Electricity Abroad

When traveling overseas, the voltage is usually different and the plugs might not be the same shape.

### Voltage

Electricity at hotels in Ireland and Northern Ireland is 220–240 volts. In the U.S. it is 110 volts. Most of the things a traveler will want to plug in—battery chargers, smart phones, tablets or computers—can run off both 110 and 220–240. But you should check the item or the owner's guide first to confirm this before you plug it in. Plugging a 110V U.S. appliance into 220/240V

50/60Hz service will ruin the motor. If you have something that needs 110 volts—like a shaver or a hairdryer—you can bring a transformer to change the current. (But transformers tend to burn out, so it might be better to leave whatever it is at home.)

## Plugs

The shape of plugs will vary from country to country, and sometimes even within a country depending on when that building was built. To plug something from the U.S. into a local socket you'll need an adapter that fits between the plug and the socket. Although you are only traveling in one country on this trip, it may be easier to purchase an all-in-one, universal adapter/converter combo. Versatile and lightweight, these can usually be found at your local electronics goods or hardware stores. Sometimes you can buy them at large retailers too, like Target or Walmart. If you forget to bring an adapter, you might also find them for sale at the airport when you arrive at your destination.

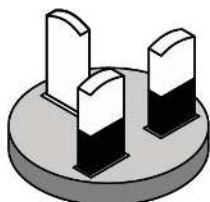
Different plug shapes are named by letters of the alphabet. Standard U.S. plugs are Type A and Type B. Here is the list of plugs for the countries on this trip:

**Ireland:** G

**Northern Ireland:** G

**Scotland:** G

### Type G



## CLIMATE & AVERAGE TEMPERATURES

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**Ireland:** Irish weather is traditionally fickle, even in summer—when temperatures usually range from the low 50s to the upper 60s, though over the last decade, the spring and summer seasons were often glorious with many sunny days in the 70s. Nonetheless, chilly east winds may blow through, so come prepared for anything. Except for a strip along the east coast, the country receives some rain at least 200 days a year. This wet climate is responsible for Ireland’s verdant beauty.

**Northern Ireland:** With the Atlantic front sweeping over Northern Ireland, weather in the region tends to be unstable, with frequent winds and near constant clouds. A completely clear sky is a rarity, a grey sky a more common sight. Winters are cold and rainy, with an average of mid 40s during the day and a chance of a wind storm. Snow is rare. Summers are cool and rainy, with an average of mid 60s during the season. The mild weather and frequent rain has led to Northern Ireland’s picturesque green scenery.

**NOTE:** If you are taking one of our optional stopovers before or after your OAT adventure, please be aware the climate and temperatures might be different from what you experienced during your tour. To prepare for weather differences and pack appropriate clothing, we recommend the following world weather sites:

- [www.intellicast.com](http://www.intellicast.com)
- [www.weather.com](http://www.weather.com)
- [www.wunderground.com](http://www.wunderground.com)

### Climate Averages & Online Forecast

The following charts reflect the **average** climate as opposed to exact weather conditions. This means they serve only as general indicators of what can reasonably be expected. An extreme heat wave or cold snap could fall outside these ranges. As your departure approaches, we encourage you to use **[www.weather.com](http://www.weather.com)** for a more accurate forecast of the locations you visit.

## Average Daily High/Low Temperatures (°F), Humidity & Monthly Rainfall

MONTH	DUBLIN, IRELAND			BELFAST, NORTHERN IRELAND		
	Temp. High-Low	% Relative Humidity (am-pm)	Monthly Rainfall (inches)	Temp. High-Low	% Relative Humidity (am-pm)	Average # of Days with Rainfall
JAN	47 to 36	87 to 81	2.5	46 to 36	84	14.7
FEB	47 to 36	87 to 76	1.9	47 to 36	81	11.4
MAR	50 to 38	84 to 71	2.1	50 to 38	78	13.8
APR	54 to 40	80 to 68	2.1	54 to 41	75	11.4
MAY	59 to 44	77 to 68	2.3	60 to 44	73	11.8
JUN	64 to 49	77 to 68	2.6	64 to 50	74	11.2
JUL	67 to 53	79 to 69	2.2	68 to 53	76	12.1
AUG	67 to 53	81 to 69	2.9	67 to 53	77	13.4
SEP	63 to 50	83 to 72	2.3	63 to 49	79	12.3
OCT	57 to 45	86 to 75	3.1	57 to 45	82	14.4
NOV	51 to 40	89 to 80	2.9	51 to 40	84	14.5
DEC	47 to 37	88 to 83	2.9	47 to 36	86	14.4

MONTH	DONEGAL, IRELAND			KILLARNEY, IRELAND		
	Temp. High-Low	% Relative Humidity (am-pm)	Monthly Rainfall (inches)	Temp. High-Low	% Relative Humidity (am-pm)	Monthly Rainfall (inches)
JAN	46 to 38	-	4.5	48 to 41	-	5.0
FEB	46 to 37	-	3.0	50 to 41	-	4.1
MAR	48 to 39	-	3.4	52 to 43	-	3.3
APR	51 to 41	-	2.3	54 to 43	-	3.2
MAY	55 to 45	-	2.3	59 to 46	-	2.3
JUN	59 to 49	-	2.5	61 to 52	-	2.8
JUL	61 to 53	-	2.8	64 to 55	-	3.0
AUG	62 to 53	-	3.6	64 to 55	-	3.0
SEP	60 to 50	-	4.0	63 to 52	-	3.4
OCT	55 to 47	-	4.7	57 to 48	-	5.2
NOV	50 to 41	-	4.5	54 to 45	-	4.8
DEC	47 to 40	-	4.1	50 to 43	-	4.4



MONTH	GALWAY, IRELAND			EDINBURGH, SCOTLAND		
	Temp. High-Low	% Relative Humidity (am-pm)	Average # of Days with Rainfall	Temp. High-Low	% Relative Humidity (am-pm)	Average # of Days with Rainfall
<b>JAN</b>	45 to 37	89 to 83	25	44 to 34	86 to 80	14
<b>FEB</b>	46 to 37	88 to 77	22	45 to 34	86 to 75	10
<b>MAR</b>	49 to 39	89 to 75	27	48 to 37	86 to 68	12
<b>APR</b>	53 to 41	90 to 68	21	53 to 39	87 to 65	10
<b>MAY</b>	58 to 46	89 to 68	23	58 to 44	87 to 65	11
<b>JUN</b>	61 to 51	90 to 73	24	63 to 48	86 to 64	10
<b>JUL</b>	65 to 55	91 to 72	24	67 to 52	88 to 66	10
<b>AUG</b>	64 to 54	91 to 75	26	66 to 51	90 to 66	11
<b>SEP</b>	61 to 51	90 to 76	26	62 to 49	89 to 69	10
<b>OCT</b>	56 to 46	90 to 79	26	55 to 43	88 to 74	13
<b>NOV</b>	50 to 41	90 to 82	23	49 to 39	87 to 79	13
<b>DEC</b>	47 to 40	90 to 86	27	44 to 34	87 to 82	13

## ABOUT YOUR DESTINATIONS: CULTURE, ETIQUETTE & MORE

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### O.A.T. Trip Experience Leaders: A World of Difference

During your adventure, you'll be accompanied by one of our local, Trip Experience Leaders. All are fluent in English and possess the skills, certification, and experience necessary to ensure an enriching adventure. As locals of the regions you'll explore with them, our Trip Experience Leaders provide the kind of firsthand knowledge and insight that make local history, culture, and wildlife come alive. Coupled with their unbridled enthusiasm, caring personalities, and ability to bring diverse groups of travelers together, our Trip Experience Leaders ensure that your experience with O.A.T. is one you'll remember for a lifetime.

### Irish Culture

Even if you are not Irish, you probably know someone who is: More than 10% of Americans claim Irish ethnicity. That's about 33 million people—more than actually live on the island of Ireland (6.8 million). And while you are likely familiar with some of the common cultural markers of Irish identity, the richness of Irish culture can only be fully appreciated when you experience it back on the “auld sod,” as some Irish like to call their homeland.

Ireland has been inhabited for at least 9,000 years, by dozens of different tribes that were Celtic or Gaelic in origin. About 1,200 years ago, Viking, Norman, Scottish, Flemish, Welsh and English people began settling here, mixing in with the original population and influencing the culture. Today, most people consider themselves to be ethnically Irish, but in Northern Ireland especially, those who claim some British descent may refer to themselves as “Anglo-Irish” or “West Britons.” Another distinct ethnic minority are the semi-nomadic “Travellers”. For hundreds of years, they have been itinerant metal workers, horse traders, artisans, and entertainers. Much like the Roma of southern and eastern Europe, Travellers have historically suffered discrimination and ostracization. Though they are of Irish extraction, they are genetically distinct from the settled Irish population, due to years of separation.

The friendliness of the Irish people is not just a stereotype, it has been borne out in survey after survey. For instance, in a 2019 Conde Nast Traveler Readers' Choice survey, Dublin and Galway ranked among the world's top ten most friendly cities. Strangers on the street will look you in the eye and say “good day,” drivers will wave at you, and shopkeepers will engage you in conversation. In general, Irish culture is relaxed, informal, and open. Geniality, literacy, and eloquence are valued, and if a person commits a social faux pas, the usual correction would be sarcasm and good-humored teasing. A popular saying explains the rationale: “to make a friend, you must be a friend.”

Nowhere is this more apparent than in the pubs. The pub is not just a place for drinking, it's where the village meets to socialize. In the Republic of Ireland alone, in 2019 there were 7,193 pubs—and that figure does not even include the bars in hotels and restaurants, or any drinking establishments in Northern Ireland. That would make for a very, very long pub crawl. If you are standing at the bar, you will likely be engaged in conversation, and may even be treated to a round of drinks (and also expected to reciprocate). What would you be drinking? Irish whiskey or a pint

of Guinness, first brewed in 1859 and now a symbol of Irish culture. Based on statistics around consumption, the Irish do like to drink, but they describe that penchant with another saying: *galor gan náire*, which means, “an affliction without shame.”

The Irish are said to have the “gift of gab,” and their eloquence is reflected in the disproportionate number of world-class writers Ireland and Northern Ireland have produced compared to their small populations. Four Irishmen have won the Nobel Prize in Literature (William Butler Yeats, George Bernard Shaw, Samuel Beckett, and Séamus Heaney), and other literary giants include James Joyce, Oscar Wilde, Bram Stoker, Jonathan Swift, C.S. Lewis, Maeve Binchy, Frank O’Connor, Flann O’Brien, Roddy Doyle, and John Banville.

Ireland is also known for its long musical heritage. Even prior to medieval times, early Gaelic culture had ten known musical instruments. Modern performers such as The Chieftains, The Clancy Brothers, Tommy Makem, and the Irish Rovers revitalized the form in the 1960s. Today, traditional music is wildly popular and you will hear it played in local pubs and musical *seisún* (“sessions”). But the Irish have had a major impact in other musical genres, including classical music and popular music, with notable rock performers that include Van Morrison, Sinéad O’Connor, U2, The Cranberries, The Boomtown Rats, Hozier and many, many more. With so much talent and conviviality gracing Ireland’s cultural scene, your visit will surely include plenty of *craic* (fun).

## **Religion and Religious Observances**

It is virtually impossible to separate the role of religion from Ireland’s historic, political and cultural development. The Irish were not only early adopters of Christianity, which arrived here around 400 AD, they were early missionaries whose monks helped to spread the religion throughout the British Isles and even continental Europe. The best known of these is Ireland’s patron, Saint Patrick, who was said to have taught the Irish about the holy trinity using a shamrock. There are many other folk tales involving Patrick, who is a symbol of national identity in the Republic of Ireland.

The Anglo-Norman King Henry II first sent Englishmen to conquer the island of Ireland in 1169. His intent was to acquire valuable (and taxable) lands, and to justify this he asserted the primacy of the state above the church. As the island became increasingly colonized over the next centuries, the population remained Catholic until King Henry VIII broke with the Rome and declared himself head of the Church in England (and Ireland). Monasteries were dissolved and churches were plundered, and those loyal to the Roman Catholic establishment were persecuted.

Protestantism took hold here when the Reformation swept England during the Elizabethan era. An influx of British Protestant colonists continued for the next several centuries, and they were protected and favored by the crown. By 1630, nearly a quarter of all lands in Ireland were owned by Protestants, and many Catholics were dispossessed or forced into tenancy. Right up till the 21st century, Ireland was wracked by frequent rebellions in which fights for religious and political freedom were entwined. With the partition of the island in 1921, the Protestant majority was largely settled in Northern Ireland which remained as part of the United Kingdom.

Interestingly, today the religious divisions of Northern (Protestant) and Republican (Catholic) Ireland are no longer as clear cut. In Northern Ireland, the last census (in 2011) put the Protestant population at 48%, just 3% more than Catholics at 45%. But the Protestant majority here may now be a thing of the past: a 2016 survey showed that among those of working age, 44% in Northern Ireland identified as Catholic and 40% as Protestant. What's more, there is a growing sector of Northern Irish Protestants who favor reunification with Ireland. This has gained traction from an entirely non-religious event: Brexit, which most Northern Irish opposed.

As in other Catholic countries, the rates of church attendance have declined here, and the numbers of those entering the priesthood is at an all-time low. However, Ireland overall still has one of the highest rates of church attendance in Europe, and in general, people are still devout. While many claim to have been disillusioned about the Church after recent scandals, their faith remains strong.

### **Accommodations**

As is common with hotels in Ireland, none of our hotels feature air conditioning, though all feature heating. In general you'll also find that most European hotel rooms are smaller than what you may be used to in the U.S.

### **Ice Machines**

Please note that Ice machines may not be available at the hotels, but ice is usually available at the bar.

### **Laundry Service**

Your Trip Experience Leader can advise you with making arrangements for this service.

### **Language in Ireland**

English is the official language in both Northern Ireland and the Republic of Ireland, and is spoken by nearly everyone. Additionally, in parts of Northern Ireland, Ulster Scots, a dialect of Scots, is sometimes spoken as a second language. In Ireland, a second official language is Irish or *Gaelige*. It is a Gaelic language but is separate and distinct from Scots Gaelic. Though most people know some Irish phrases and some signs are translated into this ancient tongue, it is very rarely spoken conversationally.

### **Useful Phrases**

Since everyone speaks English you should have no trouble communicating with your Irish hosts. And in a land where the spoken word is so highly valued, there is a rich and colorful catalog of vernacular and slang phrases. Here are few to help you get started:

- *Craic* is a catch-all word that means any manner of fun. It is social in nature something you'd enjoy at parties, in the pubs and anywhere people gather together.

- When something is on the tip of your tongue but you can't quite muster the actual word you need, *yoke* is a common Irish substitute (like *thingamajig* in English). "Would you hand me that yoke over there?"
- You may know it as the restroom or toilet, but in Ireland the bathroom facilities are called "the jacks". If you need to use one, ask someone "Where are the jacks?" and they'll point you in the right direction.
- The official name for the police is the *Gardai*, and an individual police officer is a *Gard*. But most often they are referred to as the "guards," as in "Slow down your driving, or the guards will be on us."
- "Aw, sure look it" is very widely used, with different connotations. It can be an answer to a rhetorical question, as in "Isn't it a rotten day out there? Ah, sure, look it." It is also used to tack onto the end of a sentence for emphasis, or in response to something when you don't know what to say.
- "Was it any use?" is an inquiry that means, "was it any good?"
- The national drink, Guinness, is sometimes called "the black stuff" or "a pint of Gat."
- If you are out and about exploring, you may be walking along a footpath (sidewalk), and you may be wearing runners (sneakers). If it's cool, you may be wearing a jumper (sweater). You might also be carrying your belongings in a bum bag. Do not call it by its American name, fanny pack, because here, "fanny" is something altogether different (and crude).

## Taking Photographs

The etiquette of photographing people in most countries is about the same as it would be on the streets of your hometown. You need permission to take a close-up, but not for a crowd scene. Be especially polite if you want to photograph children or older women. If you want to shoot a great portrait, show interest in your subject and try to have a bit of social interaction first. Then use sign language to inquire if a picture is OK.

Please do not take photographs of military personnel, military compounds, or other official institutions/personnel (such as police). This may result in the confiscation of your camera.

In museums or at archaeological sites, there may be restrictions on using your flash. Please obey any signs or directions by staff; the no-flash rule protects the fragile artifacts and artwork from damage by repeated exposure to light. Occasionally, there may also be a small fee levied by the museum or site for the privilege of taking photos.

## Safety & Security

As you travel, exercise the same caution and awareness that you would in a large American city. Don't be overly nervous or suspicious, but keep your eyes open. If you are venturing out after dark, go with one or two other people.



Carry a one-day supply of cash, and your passport, in a travel pouch. Don't leave valuables unattended in your hotel room. Most hotels will offer use of a hotel safe at the front desk or an electronic in-room safe (for which you can set your own personal number). Please utilize this.

Pickpockets may create a sudden distraction. In any sort of puzzling street situation, try to keep one hand on your wallet or money belt. If an encounter with a local turns out to be long and complicated and involves money or your valuables, be very careful.

## Irish Cuisine

If you come to Ireland expecting mostly mundane meat and potatoes, you will be surprised. Talented chefs have inspired a burgeoning food culture that continues to reinvent itself all over the island, fed by a steady supply of local ingredients fresh from the farms, fields and sea. There are also plenty of options for international fare, thanks to the growing immigrant population. Start your day right with **an Irish breakfast**. Hearty doesn't begin to describe it, a plateful of some or all of the following: baked beans, broiled tomatoes, eggs, bacon, sausages, kippers, toast (made with soda bread and butter and marmalade), a potato dish, and tea. In Northern Ireland, this breakfast banquet goes by the name of an "**Ulster fry**." But if it is traditional you're after, look for these dishes:

- **Black and white pudding:** What the sausages in your breakfast are made of. This is not puddings in the American sense but casings filled with a mixture of pork, oats, seasonings and pig's blood. They are then sliced and fried—and said to be very tasty. (The white pudding omits the blood.)
- **Colcannon:** A mix of mashed potatoes with cabbage or kale, butter, and scallions.
- **Champ:** The North Ireland variant of *colcannon* is made with just scallions and creamy potatoes.
- **Bubble and squeak:** A fritter of mashed potatoes mixed with vegetables and beef.
- **Irish stew:** This is comfort food at its best. Inexpensive ingredients such as mutton, potatoes, and carrots are slow-cooked with herbs such as bay, parsley and thyme create the Irish stew. Nowadays, you are more likely to have your stew made with lamb or even beef. Carnivores might also try **Dexter beef**, which is native to the island and known for its sweet, nutty flavor.
- **Dubliner cheddar, Cashel Blue cheese, and Wicklow Farmhouse (a type of brie):** A variety of fine cheeses that come from Irish cows who produce some of the finest milk in the world and the richest butter.
- **Cockles and mussels:** This Dublin specialty (immortalized in the song Molly Malone) can be enjoyed all over the island.
- **Blaa:** A soft, puffy yeast roll that is a specialty of Waterford and a popular bread used for sandwiches or breakfast.
- **Soda farl:** A type of quick flat bread from Ulster.

- **Barmbrack:** This special bread is made with raisins and candied peel (often steeped in tea and whiskey).
- **Irish trifle:** A layered dessert of cream, custard, fruits, jam and sponge cake soaked in juice or sherry.

## Scottish Cuisine

Scotland has some of the most creative chefs in the United Kingdom and considering the fantastic pantry they have to work with—with world-class seafood, game and produce—it's no wonder that the country boasts eleven Michelin-starred restaurants. Sixteen products of Scottish origin qualify for the European Union's PGI (Protected Geographical Indication) designation, including Shetland lamb, Orkney Island Scottish cheddar, Scottish salmon, and Scottish whisky. The daily Scottish diet tends to consist of meat, carbohydrates, and fried food. Here are some delicacies that you can sample all over the country:

- **Salt 'n Sauce:** A tangy, brown condiment unique to Edinburgh that's a cross between malt vinegar, brown gravy, and ketchup. This can be found at local fish and chip shops often referred to as **chippies**.
- **Cullen Skink:** A fish soup of smoked haddock, potatoes and leeks. Traditionally, it's made from **finnan haddie**, a cold-smoked haddock from Aberdeen; or **Arbroath smokie**, a hot-smoked haddock.
- **Angus Aberdeen beef:** Rich marbled beef often used in roast, stew, or steak.
- **Black Pudding:** A sausage made from congealed pig's blood mixed with oats, fat, and seasonings. It may not sound appetizing, but because it's loaded with protein, potassium, calcium and iron, it's considered a "superfood."
- **Bangers and Mash:** Sausage and mashed potatoes. Sometimes served with something besides pork, such as venison or apples.
- **Lorne sausage:** Square sausages made with beef.
- **Haggis:** Scotland's national dish. It's made from minced sheep's liver, lungs, and heart; mixed with spices and oatmeal; and served inside the stomach lining. It is usually served with **neeps and tatties** (mashed swede or rutabaga and potatoes.)
- **Cranachan:** A rich parfait of cream, raspberries and oats.

Whatever your meal includes, you can toast it with a wee dram of **Scottish whisky**. If you order it in a pub, please don't call it "Scotch." If you ask for it on the rocks, you may get a pitying look along with your ice. To impress your bartender, order a single malt and specify one of the six official Scottish whisky regions: Lowlands, Speyside, Highlands, Campbeltown, Islay and Islands. Then raise your glass and say *slainte-mhath* (pronounced "slange var")—to your health!

## Shopping: What to Buy, Customs, Shipping & More

There may be scheduled visits to local shops during your adventure. There is no requirement to make a purchase during these stops, and any purchase made is a direct transaction with the shop in question, subject to the vendor's terms of purchase. O.A.T. is not responsible for purchases you make on your trip or for the shipment of your purchases.

### Returns

If you discover an issue with an item, you should contact the vendor directly and expect that any resolution will take longer than it would in the U.S. We recommend that you keep a copy of all your receipts, invoices, or contracts, along with the shop's contact information. Keep in mind, local practice may vary from U.S. standards, so don't assume that you have a certain number of days after the purchase to speak up or that you are guaranteed a refund.

### Crafts & Souvenirs

#### Ireland

One of the most popular Irish souvenirs is the highly prized white wool Aran sweaters and hats. Other commonly sought items include hand-woven Tweeds, knitwear, linen, earthenware and pottery, porcelain, glass and handmade jewelry (often in Celtic motifs), pearly Belleek china, luminous Waterford crystal, and Irish lace.

#### Scotland

Scotland has many fine local products to choose from, including shortbread, handmade soaps, Celtic jewelry, and bagpipes. There are plenty of items emblazoned with the Scottish flag, Nessie the Loch Ness monster, and golf imagery (since the game was invented here.) If there's a dog lover on your gift list, consider a memento of Greyfriar's Bobby. He was a 19th-century Skye Terrier who supposedly stood by his master's grave in Edinburgh's Greyfriar's churchyard—every day for 14 years.

Many of the best souvenirs are wearable, like Scottish cashmere, Harris tweed, quality woolens, Balmoral caps, tams, and tartans (which found on everything from umbrellas to scarves and pajamas.) While the kilt is the quintessential Scottish garment, there are also special accessories that complete the look: a *sporrán* (pouch), *sgian-dubh* (a small ceremonial knife—which might be hard to get back to the U.S. in your luggage), and jaunty knee-high socks. Although women don't wear kilts, they do wear tartan skirts and special shoes known as *ghillie boots*.

And of course, there's whisky (without an "e"), which is so synonymous with Scotland that many Americans call it "Scotch." Not a whisky fan? Scotland is also known for high-quality gin.

### U.S. Customs Regulations & Shipping Charges

For all things related to U.S. Customs, the ultimate authority is the U.S. Bureau of Customs & Border Protection. Their website, [www.cbp.gov](http://www.cbp.gov) has the answers to the most frequently asked questions. Or you can call them at **1-877-227-5511**.

The top three points to know are:

- At time of writing, your personal duty-free allowance is \$800 for items brought with you. Items totaling more than \$800 are subject to duty fees.
- **Items shipped home are always subject to duty when received in the U.S.** Even when the shop has offered to include shipping and duties in the price, this typically means shipping to the nearest customs facility and payment of the export duties—not door-to-door shipping or payment of the import duties. All additional duties or shipping charges would be your responsibility. Unless an item is small enough to send by parcel service (like FedEx), chances are you will need to arrange shipping or pick-up once the item is in the U.S. and will need to pay customs duties.
- It is illegal to import products made from endangered animal species. U.S. Customs & Border Protection will seize these items, as well as most furs, coral, tortoise shell, reptile skins, feathers, plants, and items made from animal skins.

## DEMOGRAPHICS & HISTORY

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### Ireland

#### Facts, Figures & National Holidays

- **Area:** 27,136 square miles
- **Capital:** Dublin
- **Location:** Ireland is situated in the Atlantic Ocean and separated from Great Britain by the Irish Sea. Half the size of Arkansas, it occupies the entire island except for the six counties that make up Northern Ireland.
- **Geography:** The ocean is responsible for the rugged western coastline, along which are many islands, peninsulas, and headlands. The main geographical features of Ireland are low central plains surrounded by a ring of coastal mountains. The highest peak is Carrauntuohill (Irish: Corrán Tuathail), which is 1041 m (3414 ft). There are a number of sizable lakes along Ireland's rivers, with Lough Neagh the largest in Ireland and Great Britain. The island is bisected by the River Shannon, at 259 km (161 miles) with a 113 km (70 miles) estuary the longest river in Ireland (and the longest in the British Isles if the estuary is included), which flows south from County Cavan in the north to meet the Atlantic just south of Limerick.
- **Languages:** English, Irish Gaelic
- **Population:** 5,068,050
- **Religions:** Roman Catholicism 78.3%, Church of Ireland 2.7%, other Christian 1.6%, Orthodox 1.3%, Muslim 1.3%, other 2.4%, none 9.8%, unspecified 2.6%
- **Time zone:** Ireland is five hours ahead of Eastern Time: when it is 6 am in New York, it is 11 am in Ireland.



## National Holidays: Ireland

In addition to the holidays listed below, Ireland celebrates a number of national holidays that follow a lunar calendar, such as Easter and the June, August, and October Bank holidays. To find out if you will be traveling during these holidays, please visit [www.timeanddate.com/holidays](http://www.timeanddate.com/holidays).

01/01 New Year's Day  
03/17 St. Patrick's Day  
05/01 May Day  
12/25 Christmas Day  
12/26 St. Stephen's Day

## Ireland: A Brief History

Human history in Ireland dates back 10,500 years, but the first identifiable people to settle here were the Celts, who came in waves between the 8th and 1st centuries BC. They were organized in various groups, the last of which, the Gaels, conquered the island and divided it into five tribes. The language they spoke, Q-Celtic, was the precursor of the Irish language, *Gaelige*.

Contrary to popular belief, St. Patrick did not introduce Christianity to Ireland's pagan people. The religion was already present here. But Patrick and other priests spread the faith even beyond Ireland's shores, and built great monasteries that became bastions of Latin learning. The monks created illuminated manuscripts such as the *Book of Kells*, and were engaged in sculpture and metalwork. This heritage has led to Ireland being called the "island of scholars and saints."

By the 8th century AD, Vikings began raiding Irish settlements. Though often depicted as violent marauders, in some cases the Vikings arrived as traders and intermingled with the Irish. They established many towns, including Dublin, Cork, Limerick and Waterford. By 1014, Viking power was in decline when the Irish king Brian Bóru defeated the Vikings at the Battle of Clontarf.

New raiders came in 1172 with the Norman King Henry II of England. This began England's 800-year struggle to dominate Ireland. English law was introduced, but the Irish did not accept it. The Normans were able to control four "obedient shires," including the area around Dublin known as the Pale. Anything "beyond the Pale" was said to be savage and lawless. The Tudors brought systematic repression, encouraging Scottish Protestant colonization, and taking farms from Irish landowners and giving them to English nobles. In 1649 Oliver Cromwell launched a violent anti-Catholic campaign that bordered on genocide. By 1801 the Act of Union merged Ireland with Britain as the United Kingdom, with direct rule by Parliament in London.

What Cromwell was unable to accomplish, the Great Famine of 1845-49 nearly did. A blight infecting Ireland's potato crops caused starvation and reduced the population by a third. The term "famine" is a misnomer: There was plenty of food, but it was exported by the English or used by Irish tenants to pay exorbitant rents to British landlords. Failure to pay meant eviction, and eviction meant death. The population further declined with mass emigration.

The late 19th and early 20th century saw vigorous but doomed campaigns for Irish home rule. After many brutal repressions, their moderate nationalism became militant separatism. In 1922, following the Irish Rising of 1916 and the bloody Anglo-Irish War, twenty-six counties of Ireland won freedom from the United Kingdom as the Irish Free State. The remaining six, in the province

of Ulster, remained within the United Kingdom as Northern Ireland. The struggle continued throughout the 1990s with “the Troubles” of Northern Ireland, where those who favored a united Ireland fought with unionists who wanted to stay within the United Kingdom.

For Ireland, the 1990’s ushered in an era of prosperity known as the “Celtic Tiger.” By the early 2000’s, Ireland was one of the richest countries in the EU, moving from being a net recipient to being a net contributor. Ireland rode the Celtic Tiger until the worldwide recession of 2008. In 2010 Ireland’s banks required bailouts from the European Union and the International Monetary Fund (IMF). Since then, Ireland has repaid its IMF loan ahead of schedule, in 2017.

The country’s difficult history proves that there is no such thing as “the luck of the Irish.” But there is pluck, endurance, and hope.

## Northern Ireland

### Facts, Figures & National Holidays

- **Area:** 5,450 square miles
- **Capital:** Belfast (regional); Northern Ireland is part of the United Kingdom, whose national capital is London
- **Location:** Consists of the six counties of Ulster, occupying the northeastern corner of the island of Ireland.
- **Languages:** English
- **Population:** 1,862,100
- **Religions:** Roman Catholic 40.8%, Presbyterian 19.1%, Church of Ireland 13.7%, Methodist 3%, none or unknown 23.5%
- **Time Zone:** Same as the rest of Ireland, five hours ahead of Eastern Time

### National Holidays: Northern Ireland

In addition to the holidays listed below, Northern Ireland celebrates a number of national holidays that follow a lunar calendar, such as Easter and the Spring and Summer Bank holidays. To find out if you will be traveling during these holidays, please visit [www.timeanddate.com/holidays](http://www.timeanddate.com/holidays).

01/01 New Year’s Day  
03/17 St. Patrick’s Day  
07/12 Battle of the Boyne  
12/25 Christmas Day  
12/26 Boxing Day

### Northern Ireland: A Brief History

The arc of history followed a similar curve in Northern Ireland as it did in the southern island until the 20th century. In the 1600s, northern Ireland (which lies in the province of Ulster) was a bastion of resistance against the forces of King Henry VII, who was instituting widespread

programs of colonization by taking Irish lands and giving them to English and Scottish Protestant settlers. Key leaders of the anti-British forces were from the Ulster county of Tyrone, but many of them fled to Europe after being defeated at the Battle of Kinsale in 1601.

The Protestant colonization program, called the “Ulster Plantation,” continued until another rebellion broke out in 1641. Many Protestant settlers were massacred, but when the New Model Army of Oliver Cromwell arrived from England in 1649, four years of bloody anti-Catholic reprisals followed and land ownership reverted to the Protestants. Over the next several hundred years, there were Irish revolts, but the Protestant population grew into a majority.

Fast forward to 1921, after the island had been ripped by three years of guerilla warfare. A truce was reached between Irish republican and British forces, which resulted in the Anglo-Irish Treaty creating the Irish Free State. Under its terms Northern Ireland would be part of the Free State unless its parliament opted out. The parliament was controlled by the (Protestant) Ulster Unionist party and as expected, it chose to remain as part of the United Kingdom.

For the next 50 years, Northern Ireland enjoyed limited self-government within the UK. But since its parliament was controlled by the Ulster Unionist Party, the large Catholic minority had little participation in the government, which at times openly encouraged discrimination against Catholics. This led to large civil rights protests in the 1960s, which the government brutally suppressed, most notably on “Bloody Sunday.” During this time the paramilitary Provisional IRA, who favored the reunification of Ireland, began its campaign against what it called the British occupation of the six counties. Other splinter groups began to participate in the violence.

The Northern Irish government’s inability to manage the conflict prompted the British government to suspend home rule in 1972 and impose direct rule. The British tried to portray themselves as neutral peacekeepers, but British officers often colluded with illegal loyalist paramilitaries, were involved in murders, and obstructed justice when their crimes were investigated. Irish nationalist and republican groups further fragmented and also committed violence against civilians, as the so-called “Troubles” rolled on for 30 years.

In 1998, following a Provisional IRA cease-fire, the Good Friday Agreement restored self-government to Northern Ireland on the basis of power sharing between the two communities. Violence greatly decreased since the signing of the accord. In 2001, the police force in Northern Ireland, the Royal Ulster Constabulary, was replaced by the Police Service of Northern Ireland. On July 28, 2005, the Provisional IRA (PIRA) announced the end of its armed campaign and that September, international weapons inspectors supervised the full disarmament of the PIRA.

The elections of 2017 marked the first time since partition that the Unionists did not win a majority of seats. The opposing Sinn Féin party has stated its main goal is the reunification of Ireland. After three years of political deadlock, a power-sharing deal was reached in 2020. In 2024, the Sinn Féin party became the largest party in representing Northern Ireland in Westminster. Considering shifting demographics and the fact that the majority of voters in Northern Ireland were opposed to Brexit and wanted to remain within the European Union, maybe reunification with the Republic of Ireland (which is an EU member state) is not a far-off dream.

# Scotland

## Facts, Figures & National Holidays

- **Area:** 30,918 square miles
- **Capital:** Edinburgh (regional); Scotland is part of the United Kingdom, whose national capital is London
- **Location:** Consists of 32 council areas, occupying the northern part of Great Britain and islands
- **Languages:** English, Scots, Scottish Gaelic
- **Population:** 5,404,700
- **Religions:** None 49.4%, Church of Scotland 24.1%, Roman Catholic 14.5%, other Christian 7.8%, Other 2.3%, Muslim 1.6%, Unknown 0.3%
- **Time Zone:** Same as the rest of the United Kingdom, five hours ahead of Eastern Time

## National Holidays: Scotland

In addition to the holidays listed below, Scotland celebrates a number of national holidays that follow a lunar calendar, such as Easter. To find out if you will be traveling during these holidays, please visit **www.timeanddate.com/holidays**.

01/01 New Year's Day

01/02 2nd January Holiday

1st Monday in May Early May Bank Holiday

Last Monday in May Spring Bank Holiday

First Monday in August Summer Bank Holiday

11/30 St. Andrew's Day

12/25 Christmas Day

12/26 Boxing Day

## Scotland: A Brief History

We know that various hunter-gatherer tribes inhabited Scotland as far back as 9,600 BC. By 3,000 BC, they used tools, established farming and scattered standing stones all over. You can see some of these Neolithic monoliths on the Isle of Lewis, Shetland, Orkney, and beyond.

The Romans arrived in Great Britain 43 AD, but when they attempted to occupy Scotland, they met fierce resistance from the native tribes, who they referred to as Caledonians. The Romans built several fortifications, including Hadrian's Wall and the Antonine Wall. But they were never able to conquer the Caledonians and by 212 AD, they left.

In the wake of the Romans, Scotland was divided into four main kingdoms. The Picts held the northeast, the Scots (from Ireland) established Dal Riata in the west, the Britons occupied the southwest, and the Angles had Bernicia, which eventually morphed into Northumbria and stretched into England. Their rivalries were set aside in the face of a new threat: by 793 AD, Viking marauders arrived, ferociously attacking the monasteries at Iona and Lindisfarne, taking over

villages and establishing trading posts. In 843 AD, the various kingdoms united under Kenneth MacAlpin, the first King of Alba. Eventually, his domain became known as Scotland. A nation was born.

When the Normans took over England in 1066, many Anglo-Saxons moved north into the Scottish Lowlands. This is when the Scots began adopting English cultural ways. But when a succession dispute arose, the English King Edward I seized the opportunity to invade and name himself king. This led to the first War of Scottish Independence in which William Wallace, of *Braveheart* fame, routed the English at Stirling Bridge in 1297. The victory was short lived, as the English returned in 1298, captured Wallace and executed him in 1305. But Robert the Bruce picked up the baton (and the crown), and defeated the English at Bannockburn in 1314. Scotland's independence was assured, but peace was not.

Centuries of conflict with England ensued, often fueled by religion and marked not just by physical violence, but by various English attempts to suppress Scottish culture. The connections between clans were broken, and the chieftains became feudal lords whose rapacity often forced their own people off lands in evictions known as "clearances." In 1707, the two nations signed onto the Act of Union, which united England and Scotland under the same flag and Parliament, but allowed Scotland to keep its own church and legal system. The United Kingdom was born, but again, the bloodshed did not die as years of rebellion continued. The last one, led by Bonnie Prince Charlie, culminated with the Battle of Culloden in 1746.

Despite tensions, Scotland's economy was supercharged by the Industrial Revolution. The 18th century saw the Scottish Enlightenment, and Glasgow became a great trading port. Scotland's educational system flourished, and its inventors exported their genius around the world. During World Wars I and II, the Scots' warrior legacy made huge contributions to the Allied War effort.

Following deindustrialization in the 20th century, the Scottish economy hit a wall. Tensions with England continue, manifesting as periodic calls for independence. In 2014, voters rejected a referendum for independence by a slim margin. They may well be reconsidering that decision: only 38% of Scots were in favor of Brexit, and a 2020 poll showed that 52% of voters support leaving the UK, post-Brexit.



## RESOURCES

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### Suggested Reading

#### Ireland

***Malachy McCourt's History of Ireland*** by Malachy McCourt (2008, History) If you like your history with a dose of wry humor, this New York Times best seller may be for you. It is more a series of biographical vignettes than an academic history, but it weaves together myth, folklore, culture, music, cuisine and more from the country's past and present.

***Normal People*** by Sally Rooney (2018, Fiction) This popular best seller (long-listed for the Man Booker Prize) explores the intense love between two west Ireland teens who end up at college in Dublin, and move on to navigate adulthood. It's a witty look at contemporary Irish life, and a love that is muddled by secrecy, social class, and the characters' own complicated personalities.

***Angela's Ashes*** by Frank McCourt (1996, Autobiography) This Pulitzer Prize-winning book recounts the author's youth in Depression-era Limerick. Through harrowing poverty, punishing schools, his father's alcoholism, searing loss, and the casual cruelty of friends and relatives, the author still manages to retain his love for storytelling, for humor, for the mother who could not protect him, and for life itself.

***TransAtlantic*** by Colum McCann (2014, Historical Fiction) Three iconic crossings between Ireland and New World are retold—the 1845 visit to Ireland by Frederick Douglass; the first non-stop transatlantic flight in 1919; and a senator's involvement in the 1998 Good Friday Agreement.

***Circle of Friends*** by Maeve Binchley (1990, Fiction) A coming-of-age novel set in 1950s rural Ireland. Most of the book centers on the lives of three friends—gentle Benny, bravely honest Eve, and class-conscious Nan—as they grow up and enter college. The book was made into a film starring Chris O'Donnell and Minnie Driver.

#### Northern Ireland

***Say Nothing: A True Story of Murder and Memory in Northern Ireland*** by Patrick Radden Keefe (2019, Nonfiction) In 1972, 38-year old Jean McConville, a widowed mother of eight, was abducted from her Belfast home and murdered. What would otherwise be a gripping true crime story is revealed to be part of a web of other stories, which altogether provide an epic portrait of the Troubles in Northern Ireland.

#### Scotland

***Complete Poems and Songs of Robert Burns*** by Robert Burns (2012, Poetry) A collection by the famous Scottish poet who is known for writing in the Scots language, including the famous *Auld Lang Syne*.

**Corrag** by Susan Fletcher (2010, Historical Fiction) In Glencoe in 1692, 38 members of the Macdonald clan are killed by the redcoats of William III—after they’d enjoyed the family’s hospitality for a week. This real-life incident is told from the perspective of Corrag, a young woman who is accused of witchcraft after the event, and imprisoned in Inverary.

**44 Scotland Street series** by Alexander McCall Smith (2004, Fiction) Alexander McCall Smith, also known for the bestselling No. 1 Ladies Detective Agency series, depicts the lives of colorful residents in an Edinburgh apartment building

**The Crow Road** by Iain Banks (1992, Fiction) Set in the west Highlands (in a town reminiscent of Oban), this darkly comic tale from one of Scotland’s most acclaimed writers touches on themes of love, death, sex, addiction, family and the power of the Scottish landscape. In it, Prentice, a bumbling student, attempts to unravel the disappearance of his Uncle Rory, just one of the eccentric characters in the sprawling McHoan family. The Crow Road is a real road in Glasgow, but the expression “to take the crow road” means you are dead.

**The Scottish World: History and Culture of Scotland** by Harold Orel, et al (1981, Culture) Ten essays seek to show that Scottish culture is distinctly different from English in its art, architecture, literature, music, and history.

## Suggested Films & Videos

### Ireland

**The Commitments** (1991, Comedy/Drama) Based on a novel by Roddy Doyle, this musical follows the travails of working-class youth in 1980s Dublin, who think their ticket to fame lies in forming a band dedicated to American soul music. A cast of young, inexperienced actors play the musicians with heart and passion (and offer up a truly knockout version of Mustang Sally).

**Ryan’s Daughter** (1970, Drama) Imagine Madame Bovary—set against the sweeping beauty of the Dingle Peninsula. This David Lean epic tells the story of an young, unfulfilled married woman’s affair with a traumatized British officer during World War I. The all-star cast includes Sarah Miles, John Miles, Robert Mitchum, Trevor Howard, and Leo McKern.

**Michael Collins** (1996, Drama) Directed by Neil Jordan, this fine biopic stars Liam Neeson as the hero of the Irish Civil War, who helped negotiate the creation of the Irish Free State.

**Brooklyn** (2015, Drama) is a touching drama about a young Irish woman who emigrates to New York in the 1950s. Though much of it takes place in Brooklyn, the heroine Eilis (Saoirse Ronan) returns to Ireland to make an important choice. Nominated for three Academy Awards in 2016.

**Waking Ned Devine** (1998, Comedy). Set in a rural Irish town, this is the tale of lottery winner Ned Devine—who is found dead, with a winning ticket in his hand. The townsfolk try to fool the authorities into thinking Ned is still alive so they can cash the ticket in and share the prize.

## Northern Ireland

**'71** (2014, Drama) During the height of The Troubles, a British soldier becomes separated from his unit after a riot breaks out in a mixed Belfast neighborhood. Suspense and compassion mix as the film explores the humanity of all the characters, regardless of their sectarian roles.

**Derry Girls** (2018, TV Show). This acclaimed sitcom follows the lives of high school girls in Northern Ireland during the end of the Troubles in the 1990s. Enjoy the dark humor, raw writing and irrepressible cast.

**In the Name of the Father** (1994, Biopic) The true-life story of Gerry Conlon, one of the “Guildford Four” — four Irish youths who were falsely convicted of blowing up an English pub in the 1970s. Although only partly set in Northern Ireland (the trial and jail time are in England), the film does a good job at exploring the tensions between the Catholics and Protestants at the time.

## Scotland

**Mary Queen of Scots** (2018, Historical Drama) History has cast Queen Elizabeth I (Margot Robbie) and her cousin Mary (Saoirse Ronan) as enemies. This film imagines them as both power brokers and pawns whose mutual admiration is crushed by the misogyny, nationalism and treachery of their courts.

**Macbeth** (2015, Drama) Evocative Scottish settings, outstanding production values and the timeless themes of Shakespeare’s tragedy make this a must-see. Stars Michael Fassbender and Marion Cotillard bring intensity and depth as Scotland’s most famous power couple.

**Trainspotting** (1997, Dark Comedy/Drama) Danny Boyle’s electrifying breakthrough film follows a young heroin addict (Ewan MacGregor) and his outrageous friends as they struggle to score in the underside of Edinburgh. Plenty of black humor and provocative social commentary.

## Scottish TV Shows

**Outlander** (2014–present, Drama) Based on the novels of Diana Gabaldon, this wildly popular, historical time-travel series begins when a WWII nurse visits Inverness, Scotland, where she is mysteriously carried from the standing stones at Craigh na Dun back in time to 1743. She falls in love with a rebel Highlander, whose Jacobite cause, she knows, is doomed.

**Shetland** (2013–present, Mystery) Small town life is more complicated than it seems in this acclaimed BBC series. Follow detective Jimmy Pérez as he investigates crime amidst the elemental landscapes of the Shetlands.

## Useful Websites

### **Overseas Adventure Travel**

[www.oattravel.com](http://www.oattravel.com)

### **Overseas Adventure Travel Frequently Asked Questions**

[www.oattravel.com/faq](http://www.oattravel.com/faq)

### **International Health Information/CDC (Centers for Disease Control)**

[www.cdc.gov/travel](http://www.cdc.gov/travel)

### **Electricity & Plugs**

[www.worldstandards.eu/electricity/plugs-and-sockets](http://www.worldstandards.eu/electricity/plugs-and-sockets)

### **Foreign Exchange Rates**

[www.xe.com/currencyconverter](http://www.xe.com/currencyconverter)  
[www.oanda.com/converter/classic](http://www.oanda.com/converter/classic)

### **ATM Locators**

[www.mastercard.com/atm](http://www.mastercard.com/atm)  
[www.visa.com/atmlocator](http://www.visa.com/atmlocator)

### **World Weather**

[www.intellicast.com](http://www.intellicast.com)  
[www.weather.com](http://www.weather.com)  
[www.wunderground.com](http://www.wunderground.com)

### **Basic Travel Phrases (80 languages)**

[www.travlang.com/languages](http://www.travlang.com/languages)

### **Packing Tips**

[www.travelite.org](http://www.travelite.org)

### **U.S. Customs & Border Protection**

[www.cbp.gov/travel](http://www.cbp.gov/travel)

### **Transportation Security**

#### **Administration (TSA)**

[www.tsa.gov](http://www.tsa.gov)

### **National Passport Information Center**

[www.travel.state.gov](http://www.travel.state.gov)

### **Holidays Worldwide**

[www.timeanddate.com/holidays](http://www.timeanddate.com/holidays)

### **History & Culture**

[en.wikipedia.org](http://en.wikipedia.org)

## Useful Apps

### **Flight Stats**

Track departures, arrivals, and flight status

### **LoungeBuddy**

Get access to premium airport lounges around the world

### **Timeshifter**

Personalized tips for avoiding jetlag, based on neuroscience and your own data

### **GoogleMaps**

Maps and directions anywhere in the world

### **Triposo**

City guides, walking maps, and more – and it works offline

### **Rome2rio**

Where to go, what to see, and what to do in more than 160 countries

### **Flush or Sit or Squat**

Find a clean toilet anywhere

### **Uber**

Ride sharing around the world

### **Visa Plus and Mastercard Cirrus**

#### **ATM locations**

Shows the location of the nearest ATM in your network

### **TunnelBear**

Provides a secure VPN (virtual private network) that will encrypt your browsing data when you use a public WiFi network

### **What's App, Skype, or Signal**

WiFi calling anywhere in the world

### **Duolingo, FLuentU, or Babbel**

Learn dozens of foreign languages

### **Google Translate**

Fast and simple translations

### **XE**

Currency conversions

### **SizeGuide**

Clothing and shoe sizes in all countries

### **Best Units Converter**

Converts currency, mileage, weights, and many other units of measurement

### **Tourlina**

For women only, it connects you with other female travelers

### **Happy Cow**

Locate vegan and vegetarian eateries in 195 countries

### **Eatwith**

Dine with locals all over the world

### **Meetup**

Connects you with locals who share your interests

### **Skyview**

Identifies constellations and heavenly bodies

### **Travello**

Find travel friends on the road

### **ALIX for One**

Created by and for women, it identifies solo-friendly dining spots in major international cities

### **TripWhistle**

Maps your location and provides emergency numbers for police, medics, and more

### **GeoSure**

Safely navigate neighborhoods around the world

### **Chirpey**

For women only, connect with other women, find out what's safe, meet up, and more







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8-time travelers from Stevensville, MI



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5-time traveler from Pinellas Park, FL



Submitted by Martin Schwartzman,  
30-time traveler from Woodbury, NY



Submitted by Paul Stark, 17-time traveler  
from Edina, MN



Submitted by David Fong, 16-time traveler  
from Foster City, CA



Submitted by Steven dos Remedios,  
23-time traveler from Oakland, CA



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