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Craig
travel

BEST OF IRELAND

MAXIMUM

26

SMALL GROUP

NORTH AND SOUTH
MAY 01- 16, 2024 | 16 DAYS | 23 MEALS
JOURNEY LEADER: MICHELE BUYS

Incredible rugged shorelines of Ireland

Ireland, Eire, the Emerald Isle; each of these names brings to mind a fair green island with rolling fields, friendly people, dramatic coastlines, and a history as long as any in the world.

Come with us as we explore this delightful island discovering the history and architecture of Dublin, the magnificent scenery of the Ring of Kerry, Dingle Peninsula and Connemara, and the natural treasures of the north, including one of the world's truly unique features, the Giant's Causeway.

To ensure a leisurely pace and a rich Irish experience, we will stay multiple nights in most cities, allowing you ample opportunity to enjoy a visit to the local pub and to absorb the easy going lifestyles of the Irish.

Tour Highlights

- Magnificent scenery - Glens of Antrim, Connemara, Cliffs of Moher, Dingle Peninsula, Ring of Kerry
- The Giant's Causeway, the incredible result of an ancient volcanic eruption
- Visit the Aran Islands off Ireland's West Coast
- Banquet at a Medieval Castle with wine
- Experience Epic Ireland in Dublin
- Visit the National Museum of Country Life
- Performance of Celtic Roots in Killarney
- Visit the Ulster American Folk Park
- Farewell dinner with traditional Irish entertainment

Inclusive Features

- Return economy group airfare from Canada to Dublin
- Comfortable centrally located hotels as indicated or similar
- 23 meals included as noted in the itinerary (shown as B - 14 Irish breakfasts, D - 9 dinners)
- All gratuities, surcharges, taxes and fees for included services
- Airport transfers in Canada or equivalent value with purchase of group airfare
- Services of your journey leader and professional local driver / guide throughout Ireland

Journey Leader

Michele Buys recently retired from nursing after over 37 years of service in the medical field. She has extensive travel experience and, having parents who immigrated to Canada from Holland, was bitten by the travel bug at a very young age. She did a backpacking trip throughout Europe, including venturing into Morocco and Turkey, followed by a solo backpacking trip around the world where she had the opportunity to work as a nurse for a short time in Australia, giving her a chance to really absorb the culture. During this trip one of her most memorable experiences was climbing up the Annapurna Mountain range in Nepal to a height of 5400 meters. She continues to travel through Europe any chance that she can, her latest destination being Croatia. Her outgoing personality and sense of humour will make for a memorable travel experience.



Book With Confidence

For peace of mind, your deposit for this journey is fully refundable until: **January 30, 2024**

MAY 1, Wednesday

Depart Canada

Intrepid travellers gather in Toronto for our flight to Dublin.

MAY 2, Thursday

Dublin / Mourne / Belfast

We are met on arrival by our driver / guide. Heading north, we enjoy a picturesque drive via Dundalk and Newry, sitting snugly amidst the natural splendour of the Mourne Mountains before reaching Belfast to check in to our hotel. This evening, gather with your fellow group members to enjoy your welcome dinner. **Holiday Inn** (2 nights) D

MAY 3, Friday

Belfast

Explore Belfast, the capital of Northern Ireland and birthplace of the epic Titanic. Enjoy the sights of this friendly city, with views of the Grand Opera House, Linen Hall Library, Stormont Buildings and the world famous murals. Pass through the Queen's Quarter whose namesake houses the renowned university along with the stunning Botanic Gardens. Take advantage of free time to explore on our own and perhaps to visit the Titanic Quarter. B

MAY 4, Saturday

Glens of Antrim / Giant's Causeway / Letterkenny

Departing Belfast, we follow the Marine Drive, passing the *Green Glens of Antrim* via Cushendall and Ballycastle all the way to the Giant's Causeway, one of Ireland's most famous and dramatic sites. Marvel at this remarkable natural rock formation, a virtual cascade of geometric basaltic columns descending into the sea. We venture on to Northern Donegal, passing the eerie ruins of Dunluce Castle and the walls of Derry, before arriving in Letterkenny. **Radisson Letterkenny** (2 nights) BD

MAY 5, Sunday

Omagh / Londonderry

The Ulster American Folk Park tells the story of emigration from Ulster to America in the 18th and 19th Centuries. Visit this iconic site in Omagh, then return to the historic city of Derry with some free time for lunch. This afternoon, take a guided walking tour along Derry's Walls to learn about its history, followed by a visit to the award-winning Tower

Museum. Time permitting we may also visit Derry's historic Guildhall and the new Heritage Centre dedicated to St. Columba. BD

MAY 6, Mon Sligo / Yeats / Turlough Park / Westport

We travel via Bundoran to the picturesque county of Sligo. Enter the romantic domain of poet W.B. Yeats as we travel through areas associated with his life and works, including Drumcliffe. We pass through the charming towns of Collooney and Tobercurry. Visiting the magnificent Turlough Park we discover what life was like in rural Ireland in the 1800 and 1900s at the National Museum of Country Life. Continue on to Westport on Clew Bay.

Westport Plaza Hotel (2 nights)

BD

MAY 7, Tuesday

Connemara

Connemara remains the wildest and most romantic place in Ireland. We round the Murrisk Peninsula to Killary Harbour, Ireland's only true fjord. Enjoy a break at Kylemore Abbey on the shores of Kylemore Lough before circling Connemara and crossing the picturesque Maam Valley where black-headed sheep make up a large part of the population. There will be time to explore the lovely town of Westport later today. B

MAY 8, Wednesday

Galway / Medieval Banquet

Travelling southwards through the ever-changing countryside of County Galway, we arrive at Galway city. Known as "the City of the Tribes", it has a unique atmosphere and a charm all of its own. The bustling streets leading down from Eyre Square to the busy harbour and the Latin Quarter where portions of the medieval city walls still remain, offer great areas to explore in your free time. A visit to St. Nicholas' Cathedral is also well worthwhile. Be sure to hit up a local pub for lunch before we continue towards Limerick, our hotel located just outside of the city. This evening we join in on the fun of a medieval banquet at a 15th century castle.

Radisson Blu (2 nights)

BD

MAY 9, Thursday

Aran Islands / Cliffs of Moher

Travel along the Wild Atlantic Way to nearby Doolin where we board a ferry for Inis Oirr, the smallest of the Aran Islands. Explore this beautiful little island with its stunning beaches and vistas. Enjoy a guided walking tour, and perhaps visit the arts and cultural centre to meet the islanders. On our return cruise, view the Cliffs of Moher from a unique perspective. This spectacular journey breathtakingly highlights the sheer majesty of the Cliffs and gives an insight into the remarkable wildlife of the area. BD

MAY 10, Friday

Killimer / Tarbert / Tralee / Killarney

Arriving at seaside Killimer, we take a short ferry trip across to the quaint town of Tarbert in the Kingdom of Kerry. We continue to colourful Listowel, then on to the county town of Tralee. As we travel west to the town of Dingle and Sleah Head, we enjoy the picturesque towns of Anascaul and Inch and explore the wild, rugged scenery, vividly captured in the film *Ryan's Daughter*. We retire for the day in the delightful resort town of Killarney, close by Lough Leane and Muckross House. Later, we enjoy an evening of Irish song, music, and dance at the Celtic Roots Show.

Dromhall Hotel Killarney (2 nights)

B

MAY 11, Saturday

Ring of Kerry / Irish Evening

Enjoy Ireland's most scenic drive today as we travel via Killorglin and Glenbeigh with views of Dingle Bay and onto the fishing village of Cahirciveen. As we reach the outer end of the Ring, we have views of the Atlantic and the



Dingle Peninsula, a stunning natural wonder



The colourful doors of Dublin



The amazing rock formation of Giant's Causeway



A hearty and delicious serving of clam chowder - credit Margaret Smith

isolated Skellig Islands, 12 km off the coast. The larger of the islands was a monastic settlement for over 600 years starting in the 6th century. Enjoy the Skellig Experience, offering an introduction to life on the islands. Rocky headlands, isolated island clusters, and spectacular seascapes, each compete for attention whilst journeying to the scenic town of Sneem. Turning inland, we descend through the heart of the Kerry Mountains, through Molls Gap, to view the legendary Lakes of Killarney en route back to our hotel. BD

MAY 12, Sunday Blarney / Waterford / Kilkenny
We travel via delightful Macroom to Blarney where we stop for handicrafts and an opportunity to kiss the famous "Stone of Eloquence". This afternoon we visit the historic city of Waterford, founded by the Vikings some 1,100 years ago and the exceptional Waterford House of Crystal with free time in the gift shop. We overnight in the medieval city of Kilkenny. **Newpark Hotel** (1 night) BD

MAY 13, Monday Kilkenny / National Stud / Dublin
Only a town in size, Kilkenny has the status of a city having vied with Dublin to become the capital in the 17th Century. Explore the quaint city centre and visit the Castle at your leisure, the principal seat of the Butler Family since the 12th century. En route to Dublin we travel through the Curragh of Kildare with a guided tour of the Irish National Stud, home to some of Ireland's finest thoroughbred horses. Visit the Horse Museum and both the Japanese and Saint Fiachra's Gardens. We end our day in the capital city of Dublin. **Camden Court Hotel** (3 nights) B

MAY 14, Tuesday Dublin's Fair City
We will enjoy a tour of "Dublin Town" today. Our first stop this morning is the imposing St. Patrick's Cathedral, where Swift, author of Gulliver's Travels, was once the Dean. A highlight of our visit will be the beautifully restored Lady's Chapel, the original of which dates from 1270. Relive the history of the city and enjoy the elegant architecture of Dublin's Georgian Squares. Later, we move to Epic Ireland in Dublin's Docklands, which tells the stories of Irish emigrants and their influence globally. Perhaps trace your ancestry at the Irish Family History Centre. In the afternoon we are free to explore and enjoy Dublin's "Fair City", an ancient city that is as intimate as a village and as friendly as a pub. This evening you might want to attend a theatre performance or a musical evening at the National Concert Hall or the Abbey Theatre. B

MAY 15, Wednesday Dublin, a Day of Discovery
While today has been left completely free, those interested may join a guided walking tour of Dublin's medieval streets this morning. Consider a visit to the National Art Gallery, the National Museum, or even the impressive City Hall. Other options that you might consider include Trinity College, historic Kilmainham Jail, GPO Witness History or enjoy some last minute shopping. Our special farewell dinner with traditional Irish entertainment will be at the Merry Ploughboy Pub (or similar) tonight. BD

MAY 16, Thursday Dublin / Canada
Regretfully our Irish journey must draw to a close as we say farewell to our Irish friends and fly home to Canada. B

CT Rating 3/5 - Moderately Challenging: This coach tour is designed as a leisurely, in depth experience with two or three nights at most hotels. Members should be aware that the journey includes a number of longer walks, some over uneven terrain and with changes in elevation.



Kylemore Abbey, founded in 1920



**Book and deposit by December 20, 2023
and save \$200 per person**



Tour Cost in Canadian Dollars per person

Land Only (Join Belfast hotel / Leave Dublin hotel) ..	\$7,095
Toronto	\$8,195
Ottawa / Montreal	\$8,325
Halifax	\$8,425
St. John's / Winnipeg	\$8,475
Saskatoon / Regina	\$8,585
Calgary / Edmonton / Vancouver	\$8,495
Victoria	\$8,585
Single Supplement	\$1,545
Airlines from other gateways are available on request. Refer to inclusive features for details. Land only clients join at the hotel in Belfast and leave at the hotel in Dublin. Tour price is based on sharing a twin-bedded room. Prices are based on a minimum 15 members and on rates, taxes, and fees effective August 2023. Prices are subject to change due to factors beyond our control.	

Small group size for a more intimate experience.

Maximum 26 travellers.

Insurance is NOT INCLUDED but is highly recommended. Premiums are calculated based on the individual's age, destination (country), trip length, and trip booking window – please contact our staff to receive a quote. Your coverage starts on the effective date of your confirmation of coverage. Please discuss your insurance coverage prior to booking. Check our website for the most current information. Refer to the enrollment form for terms and conditions.

Final payment will be due January 30, 2024

Deposit is \$500 per person

To reserve your spot on this tour, complete the enclosed enrollment form, indicating the tour you wish to join and your home city, and forward it with your deposit to:



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