

# ITINERARY FOR IRELAND I & II

## June 24 – July 10, 2012

**Cost: \$2,500 without tuition or airfare - includes ground transportation, entry fees, and all lodging with full Irish breakfast. Tuition is \$340 for 8 hours credit.**

**Day 1 – June 24, 2012 – Sunday - Fly to Dublin – arrive the next morning**

**Day 2 – June 25, 2012 - Monday** – Pick up minibuses at Dublin – Drive to Glendalough Monastery, a Celtic Monastery that was established in the 6th century by Saint Kevin. Give a brief overview of Irish history and the history of Glendalough and walking tour. Have lunch and a tour of Avoca Woolen Mills. Stay near Bunratty for the night.

**Day 3 – June 26, 2012 - Tuesday** - - Drive to and tour Cliffs of Moher (Ailltreacha Mothair- “The Cliffs of the Ruin”) where we will have lunch - After lunch, drive to the Burrens, (An Bhoireann \_”The Stony District”) a 161 square mile expanse that is one of the Ireland’s strangest landscapes – then on through Kinvarra, a fishing village in Galway Bay and pass by Dunguaire Castle, a 7<sup>th</sup> century home of the King of Connacht, that stands on a promontory in Kinvarra Bay. (A great photo opportunity). Drive to Spiddal, where we will spend the night.

**Day 4 – June 27, 2012 - Wednesday**- Take a ferry, Aran Islands Direct (Oileain Arann Direach) to Aran Islands leaving Rossaveal Harbor at 10:30 AM. Tour the Island, Inishmore, the Aran Heritage Center and Dun Aenghus. Dun Aenghus is a 2000 year old fort on the Island. The Aran Islands is a Gaeltacht area (an area that speaks Gaelic). To tour the Island, you can rent bikes, take a horse and carriage tour, take a van tour, or you can walk. The Island is the home of the famous Aran sweaters. All participants sleep on the Island.

**Day 5 – June 28, 2012 - Thursday** - Take the 8 am ferry back to mainland. Drive south to the mouth of the Shannon River – cross the river by car ferry – Stop at Ballybunion, a resort town with a beautiful beach and the ruins of an old castle. Drive to An Daingean (Dingle) over Connor Pass – Sleep in Dingle.

**Day 6 – June 29, 2012 – Friday** --Leave by 8 AM -Tour Dingle Peninsula, the western most tip of Ireland. Scheduled tour at the Great Blasket Center at 11 AM where we will learn about the people that lived on the Blasket Islands. Take a 30 mile driving loop of the peninsula where we will see ancient archaeological wonders like beehive huts and Gallarus Oratory, visit Kilmalkedar Church, a 12<sup>th</sup> century Irish Romanesque Church. Then back to Dingle for some shopping, pub food and some great Irish music. Sleep in Dingle. Dingle is a Gaeltacht area, also. Gaeltacht means that it is a region where the government subsidizes the survival of the Irish language and culture. Signs, menus and songs are in Gaelic. Sleep in Dingle again.

**Day 7 – June 30, 2012 - Saturday** - Leave Dingle and drive to Gap of Dunloe, stopping at Inch beach on the way. Visit Moriarty's before entering the Gap for a spot of shopping. Drive through the Gap. Stop at Moll's Gap for a delicious lunch. Drive to Kenmare and spend the afternoon visiting a 3000 year old Druid Stone Circle, and have some great shopping. Sleep at in Kenmare at Lansdowne Arms Hotel in Kenmare – [www.lansdownearms.com](http://www.lansdownearms.com) - Phone 011 353 64 41368, *County Kerry*. - Sue O'Neill

**Day 8 – July 1, 2012 - Sunday** - Drive to Blarney Castle where we will kiss the Blarney Stone while touring the castle– Lunch and shopping at Blarney Woolen Mills adjacent to castle. Drive to Cashel. Tour Rock of Cashel, an awe inspiring site connected with royalty and mysticism – Sleep in Cashel at Rockside House – [www.joyrockside.com](http://www.joyrockside.com) Phone 011 353 62 63813–County Tipperary Joan & Rem Joy

**Day 9 - July 2, 2012 - Monday** -Drive to Cahir and have a guided tour of the Butler Castle, one of Ireland's largest and best-preserved, retaining its dramatic keep, tower, and much of its original defensive structure. Lunch in Cahir - Drive to Dublin and Spend the night in Navan, a small village close to Newgrange.

**Day 10- July 3, 2012 – Tuesday**- Pick up new participants at the airport. Drive to Trim Castle, which is the largest Norman Castle in Europe and was used in the film, Braveheart - learn the history of Trim Castle. Go to Monasterbolce, a ruined monastery with a round tower and two of the best carved high crossed in Ireland. Spend the night again in Navan.

**Day 11 - July 4, 2012 - Wednesday** - Drive to Newgrange Historical Passage Grave Site, which is one of the most famous prehistoric sites in the world. Newgrange is constructed with an astronomical orientation, which shows that prehistoric people understood an astronomical year. During the winter solstice, a narrow beam of light illuminates to the end of a long underground passage. Tour Newgrange - then tour the site of the Battle of the Boyne, the Hill of Tara, Slane Hill and Slane Castle. Drive to Belfast where we will spend the night.

**Day 12 - July 5, 2012 - Thursday** - Our Black Taxi drivers will take us on a tour of Catholic and Protestant neighborhoods while giving some history of the Irish Troubles from the Belfast perspective. – After the taxi tour we will do the Hop-On Hop-Off Belfast city bus tour of Belfast. . The rest of the day is a 'choose your own adventure' day. Options are: Ulster Museum, The Grand Opera House, bombed and rebuilt in 1991 – bombed and rebuilt in 1993, Fernhill House Museum, which recaptures the history and troubles of Skankill Area in Belfast. Other sights are City Hall, Linen Hall Library, Botanic Gardens, Belfast Castle, Crown Liquor Saloon, and/or walk the Golden Mile which is Belfast's liveliest dining and entertainment district stretching from the Opera House to University Road. Evening option – Attend the Grand Opera –Spend the night again in Belfast.

**Day 13 – July 6, 2012 - Friday** -Leave Belfast – Tour Carrickfergus Castle, the best-preserved Norman castle in Ireland, which was built after the Norman Invasion of the late 1100's. William of Orange landed here in 1690 when he began his Irish campaign against deposed King James II.( Battle of the Boyne). Drive up the Antrim Coast and study the fascinating geology along the way. Stop to discuss columnar jointing, plate tectonics, flora, and fauna of this fascinating area of Ireland or just to have a spot of tea and some lunch!! Stop at Bonamargie Friary, a Franciscan Friary that is one of the finest ruins along the north coast. We will then tour Old Bushmills Distillery, the world's oldest whiskey distillery (1408 so they claim) as we past through the village of Bushmills. Arrive in Portrush. Have dinner at Harbour Road Eateries – five restaurants all within 50 yards of each other with a view of the harbor. Maybe a hike after dinner along the beautiful coast?? Sleep in Portrush.

**Day 14 - July 7, 2012 - Saturday** - Hike along the Giant's Causeway and learn the geology of these 40,000 hexagonal basaltic columns. This is the same geologic strata that are on the Isle of Staffa, one of Scotland's Hebrides Islands. After a 15 minute walk along a beautiful and rugged coastline we will walk across Carrick-a-Rede Rope Bridge, an 80 foot bridge between the mainland and an island used for salmon fishing by the locals. Then off to Dunluce Castle, one of the largest castle ruins in Northern Ireland that is perched vulnerably on a steep crag. Back to Portrush where there is more hiking available along the coast line or time to explore the small town of Portrush. Sleep again in Portrush.

**Day 15 - July 8, 2012 - Sunday** - Drive back to Dublin. Check in to our hotel, walk to The Temple Bar area and the Ha' Penny Bridge. Do the hop on – hop off bus if time - Time to shop or check out Dublin's museums - Have dinner in the Temple Bar area.

**Day 16 - July 9, 2012 – Monday** - Walk to and tour Trinity College where the Ancient Book of Kells is displayed. Our tour will include the Long Room of the Old Library, which includes a copy of every book ever published in Ireland. After Trinity College take the Dublin City Hop-On Hop-Off Bus to learn more about the capital city of Ireland. The rest of the day is a 'choose your own adventure' day. Options are many: the Guinness Storehouse to learn about one of Ireland important modern products, Dublin Castle, The National Museum of Ireland, which focuses on Irish history from the Bronze Age to the present, the National Gallery of Ireland, which is the finest art collection in Ireland, the Post Office where the 1916 Easter Uprising took place, as well as O'Connell Street, where the statue of Daniel O'Connell oversees the street. There are many other options – refer to your packet and use the Hop-On Hop-Off bus to navigate the city. In the evening we will meet for a Traditional Irish Musical Pub Crawl. Sleep again in Dublin.

**Day 17 - July 10, 2012 - Tuesday.** Leave Dublin - Arrive home late afternoon.