

## Go South Tour Itinerary

### Monday: Arrival in Dublin, Ireland

Welcome to Ireland! You arrive in Dublin and check in to your city center hotel overlooking the River Liffey. Nothing is planned for this day so you can relax and explore Dublin as you'd like. Then off to bed with you for a good night's sleep, for tomorrow begins what we hope will be one of your best experiences yielding a lifetime of happy memories!

### Tuesday: Day 1 – Dublin to Dungarvan

**Highlights:** 8<sup>th</sup> Century Celtic High Cross, Medieval Norman Monastery, 6,000 year-old Ancient Tomb, Harbor Town of Dungarvan

Meet your guide and trip participants and begin your exciting travels in Ireland. Leaving Dublin and heading south, you'll discover an incredible 17-foot Celtic High Cross, standing watch since the 8<sup>th</sup> Century. High crosses like this one and their intricately carved designs have inspired the faithful through the ages and became integral to Irish culture, history and art.

You'll then journey further south to one of the largest medieval churches in Ireland. Built in the 13<sup>th</sup> Century, this beautifully restored Cistercian Monastery was founded by the Normans at one of the most strategic points in the country along the River Barrow. This serene waterway has enabled passage inland for thousand of years and is still used today by colorful barges and river cruisers.

Lost among a maze of small farm roads in bucolic southern County Kilkenny, you'll find a 6,000 year-old megalithic tomb. This precariously, balanced structure will boggle your mind as to how the Stone Age Irish erected such large stones at this impressive site.

Onto County Waterford where your overnight stop is the lovely harbor town of Dungarvan on Ireland's southern Atlantic shore. Your beautiful Georgian guesthouse is owned and operated by one of Ireland's renowned chefs and around the corner is his fantastic restaurant. The night is yours to relax and enjoy.

### Wednesday: Day 2 – Dungarvan to Clonakilty

**Highlights:** 9<sup>th</sup> Century Round Tower, Kinsale, Ancient Stone Circle, Town of Clonakilty

Amazing views as you travel along the scenic southern coast to see Ireland's finest example of a medieval Round Tower. Multi-story stone towers like this were built over a thousand years ago by pious monks and endured a long and turbulent history. Founded by Saint Declan, this site is one of Ireland's earliest Christian settlements. Explore the church ruins and discover incredible stone carvings and ancient standing stones.

Enjoy free time and a lunch break in the town of Kinsale. Known for its excellent cafes, you'll have fun meandering streets of colorful stores and walking along its beautiful harbor.

Continuing on, you find a tranquil Stone Circle with a mystifying solar alignment. This secluded site was of great importance to the early Irish who aligned its axis to the setting sun of the winter solstice.

You then head to your overnight town of Clonakilty, famously linked to Michael Collins who was instrumental in Ireland's uprising and subsequent independence from Britain. In addition, Clonakilty has lively music scene. Stop by the legendary DeBarras Pub for a pint, music, and to admire the Jimi Hendrix Experience memorabilia donated by their bass player, Noel Redding, who regularly performed at DeBarras on Friday nights. Kick back, relax, and tap your toes in this colorful and fun town!

**\*\* For 2019 tour dates**, your overnight town is Skibbereen, where the local O'Donovan brothers brought home Silver medals for rowing at the 2016 Olympics. Enjoy this wonderful small town and check out one of the local pubs. With luck, there'll be music happening at Cahalane's just a short stroll from your comfortable hotel.

### **Thursday: Day 3 – Clonakilty to Kenmare**

**Highlights:** Mizen Head Signal Station, Bantry, The Beara Peninsula, Town of Kenmare

A magnificent day as you travel through some of the most visually stunning parts of Ireland. First, you head to the Mizen Head Signal Station perched on Ireland's most southerly point. Stroll this rugged headland, learn about lighthouses along the coast, and visit the keeper's quarters via a beautiful arched bridge spanning a deep ravine.

Moving northwards leads you to the town of Bantry. Wander its old streets and gaze upon a statue of 6th Century Saint Brendan, possibly the first European to find America! As you leave, you'll have fine views of the beautiful bay and can spot palm trees in this unusually tropical region.

You then follow an amazing route through the Beara Peninsula over countless switchbacks and a high mountain pass for inspiring views and down to your overnight town of Kenmare. This magical Kerry town is full of quaint shops, lively bars, and great traditional Irish music, all close to your beautiful local B&B.

### **Friday: Day 4 – Kenmare to Dingle**

**Highlights:** Killarney National Park, Muckross Abbey, Sleah Head Drive, Gallarus Oratory, Dingle Town

Saying goodbye to Kenmare, your route takes you to the MacGillycuddy's Reeks, the largest mountains in Ireland, and home to the spectacular Killarney National Park. A photographer's dream...you may well wish for an extra pair of eyes! You'll make your way over the pass at Moll's Gap and work your way down by Killarney's captivating lakes, waterfalls, and panoramic vistas.

You next take a gentle stroll by beautiful fields and grazing deer as you come to the 15<sup>th</sup> Century Muckross Abbey. Walk beneath the vaulted cloisters and gaze upon the centuries old yew tree in the central courtyard and imagine life in an abbey 500 years ago.

The views keep coming along coastal roads and sandy beaches flanked by green hills as you make your way to the Dingle Peninsula. You take a trip around the dramatic landscape of the Sleah Headland. This Gaeltacht (or Irish speaking) area is rich in archeological sites including the Gallarus Oratory and is Ireland's most westerly shore.

You'll then make your way back to Dingle town. This charismatic fishing town is filled with colorful buildings and many fine places to dine or shop. Have fun discovering pubs that double as hardware or shoe stores and you'll be staying for two nights in Dingle's finest boutique guesthouse!

### **Saturday: Day 5 – Free Day in Dingle**

There are many interesting things to do such as shopping, biking, golfing, fishing, or horseback riding. Take a walk to see Dingle's wild mascot, "Fungi the Dolphin" who is almost always found in the mouth of the harbor making new friends and showing off. Or you could find a nice pub or coffee shop to while away the hours and strike up a conversation with some of the friendly characters to be found in Dingle. Enjoy another wonderful night in this enchanting town!

### **Sunday: Day 6 – Dingle to Killaloe/Ballina**

**Highlights:** Ferry Across the River Shannon, Cliffs of Moher, 15<sup>th</sup> Century Irish Tower House Castle

You depart Dingle heading over the Slieve Mish Mountains through northern County Kerry and on to Ireland's longest river, the Shannon. This ancient river has moved trade for thousands of years and boarding a ferry, you'll feel its gentle flow and cross to the geological wonders of County Clare.

Passing through seaside towns, where surfers and horses stride grand beaches, you'll head north to one of the world's most spectacular sights, the Cliffs of Moher. Looming over 700 feet above the smashing force of the Atlantic Ocean, these sheer and majestic cliffs are simply not to be missed!

From the cliffs, you'll head east to a fantastic 15<sup>th</sup> Century Irish Tower House Castle. Explore what it was like to live here in the 1400s by wandering the rooms of its four floors and survey their lands from the stunning roof top vista.

Your overnight town is Ballina (in County Tipperary) along the River Shannon. With its sister town across the river, Killaloe (in County Clare), you have two picture perfect Irish riverside towns with pubs, great restaurants, walkways along the river's edge, and a beautiful 18<sup>th</sup> Century stone bridge with 13 arches. Your hotel overlooks the river and you can stroll into town for delicious food and stop by Liam O'Riain's pub for a pint and traditional Irish music.

### **Monday: Day 7 – Ballina/Killaloe to Dublin**

**Highlights:** Cruise on the River Shannon, Heritage Town of Birr, Ireland's Oldest Whiskey Distillery, Vibrant Dublin City

Start your day with a relaxing cruise on Ireland's finest waterway, the River Shannon. Hop aboard your privately chartered boat, learn about the history of the area, and explore serene Lough Derg and enjoy breathtaking views of Counties Clare and Tipperary.

You'll then head east to enjoy lunch in the picturesque heritage town of Birr, which was developed around Birr Castle, home of the Earls of Rosse.

A fitting way to wrap up your tour is with a visit to Ireland's oldest licensed whiskey distillery. Take a fascinating tour through over 250 years of production, see its innovative old workings, and get a chance to sample their fine whiskey from the new wing.

You'll then head back to Dublin and your last night on the Emerald Isle. Enjoy a meal in one of the many fine restaurants, savor the final hours of your Go South tour, and cherish a lifetime of incredible memories!

## **Slan Beo!! Irish for "Goodbye, live life!"**

While it is our intention to adhere to the route described above, there is a certain amount of flexibility built into the itinerary and on occasion, it may be necessary, or desirable, to make alterations. The information in the itinerary has been compiled with care and is provided in good faith. However, it is subject to change, and does not form part of the contract between the client and Inroads Ireland.

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