

## 2024 Go South Tour Itinerary

### **Monday: Day 1 - Arrival in Dublin, Ireland**

Welcome to Ireland! You arrive in Dublin and check in to your city center hotel. 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 2 – 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 thousands 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. Sample some fish and chips from a food truck the Irish Times named "Takeaway of the Year" or find a pub with music on Grattan Square or Davitt's Quay. The night is yours to relax and enjoy.

### **Wednesday: Day 3 – 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 lively 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!

#### **Thursday: Day 4 – 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. Look for seals who love to swim by the rocks!

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. Your lovely B&B is situated in the heart of this magical Kerry town, full of quaint shops, lively bars, and great traditional Irish music.

#### **Friday: Day 5 – Kenmare to Dingle**

**Highlights:** Killarney National Park, Ross Castle, 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 visit a 15<sup>th</sup> Century tower house of an Irish Chieftain in the heart of Killarney National Park. See how the O'Donoghue clan lived and defended against Cromwell's forces. Sitting on the edge of Lough Leane, this majestic castle and surrounding grounds is both dramatic and bucolic.

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 6 – Free Day in Dingle**

There are many interesting things to do such as shopping, biking, golfing, fishing, falconry or horseback riding. Take a walk through lively Dingle town and enjoy a sea safari. 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 7 – Dingle to Killaloe/Ballina**

**Highlights:** Ferry Across the River Shannon, Cliffs of Moher, Portal Tomb and Burren

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 to Ireland's UNESCO Geopark with the oldest dated megalithic monument in Ireland. Walk across the vast, moonlike landscape of the Burren and see the awesome beauty and history of this part of Ireland.

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 the Washer Woman's Pub for a pint and great traditional Irish music.

## **Monday: Day 8 – Ballina/Killaloe to Dublin**

**Highlights:** Cruise on the River Shannon, Bog Walk, Ancient Ruins, 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 stretch your legs and learn more about how Ireland is investing in bog preservation as a means of conservation of the land (and the occasional human body)! Venture out into the bog to enjoy the lovely landscapes and hidden vistas within the bog walk.

You will then finish your tour by exploring the ruins of a fortress with stunning views of the surrounding patchwork countryside. Perched on top of an outcrop, it is said to have appeared on the early maps of the Greek cartographer Ptolemy and plundered by the Vikings. This is the perfect way to take a last 360 degree view of the beauty of Ireland's landscape.

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! Your tour ends after breakfast the next morning.

## **Slán 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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