

The Magical Beauty of Ireland

September 5th-19th, 2017



Day 1- September 5th

ARRIVE IN BELFAST

Meet with driver and transfer into city center for a **panoramic sightseeing tour** of Belfast. The route covers breathtaking architecture and feats of engineering, including the renowned Queen's University, the giant H&W cranes, Titanic's birthplace, Cathedral Quarter and Queen's Quarter. The tour takes in the dark Crumlin Road Gaol and the world-famous Belfast murals on the republican Falls road and the loyalist Shankill road.

Visit **Titanic Belfast** which extends over nine galleries, with multiple dimensions to the exhibition, drawing together special effects, dark rides, full-scale reconstructions and innovative interactive features to explore the Titanic story in a fresh and insightful way; from her conception in Belfast in the early 1900s, through her construction and launch, to her infamous maiden voyage and catastrophic demise. The journey goes beyond the aftermath of the sinking, to the discovery of the wreck and continues into the present day with a live undersea exploration center.

D

Overnight in Belfast

Day 2- September 6th

PICTURESQUE ANTRIM COAST

Visit **Dunluce Castle** one of Northern Ireland's most iconic historic monuments, perched on the north Antrim coastline, on a dramatic rocky promontory. This strong defensive location has seen occupation for over 1000 years.

Construction of the castle started around 1500 and the dramatic history of Dunluce is matched by tales of banshees, mermaids and the story of how the castle kitchens fell into the sea one stormy night in 1639.



Visit the **Giant's Causeway** renowned for its hexagonal columns of layered basalt, the Giant's Causeway is the only World Heritage site in Northern Ireland. Resulting from a volcanic eruption 60 million years ago, this is the focal point of a designated Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty and has attracted visitors for centuries.

Visit the **Old Bushmills Distillery** the oldest working distillery in Ireland in the small village of Bushmills. In the company of an experienced tour guide, we will be taken right through the heart of the distillery to view the whiskey making process as it happens.

BL

Overnight Belfast

Day 3- September 7th

DONEGAL VIA DERRY

Today we have a walking tour of the **walls of Derry** with a local guide. Derry is the only remaining completely walled city in Ireland. The walls were built during the period 1613-1618 as defences for early 17th century settlers from England and Scotland. The history of Derry city goes back to the 6th century.

Continue to **Glenveagh National Park** and visit **Glenveagh Castle**.

Built from 1870-1873, the castle consists of a four-story rectangular keep. The National Park is home to over 40,000 acres of mountains, lakes, glens and woods, with a herd of red deer. **BD**

Overnight Donegal

Day 4- September 8th

GALWAY VIA SLIGO

Depart for **Galway via Sligo** and visit the **grave of W.B. Yeats** at Drumcliffe churchyard. Irish poet William Butler Yeats chose this peaceful churchyard at Drumcliffe as his final resting place with its stunning location at the foot of Benbulbin mountain. The graveyard has the remains of a round tower and a high cross constructed in the 11th when there was a Christian monastery on site. The monastery was founded by Saint Columcille (Columba) in 574.

Afternoon Tea at **Ashford Castle**. This beautiful castle was first constructed in 1228 and later became home to the famous Guinness family. It is now one of the best hotels in the world. **BT**

Overnight in Galway

Day 5- September 9th

CONNEMARA

Depart for a day tour of **Connemara**. Visit **Roundstone Musical Instruments**. This music and craft shop is owned and managed by Malachy Kearns, Ireland's only full-time Bodhrán maker.

Visit **Kylemore Abbey & Gardens**, *including a meeting with the Head Gardener*. The Castle, built in 1868 is one of the great neo-Gothic castles of this period remaining in Ireland. It became an Abbey in 1920 when taken over by the Irish Benedictine nuns and houses an international girls' boarding school. The garden was one of the last walled gardens to be built during the



Victorian period in Ireland. Huge engineering feats were employed to heat the 21 glasshouses that were originally built to house exotic fruit and plants. The garden was restored in the late 1990s. Currently there is also a vinery, banana trees, vegetables and herbs that are used in the restaurant.

Visit **Brigit's Garden** in Galway, including **Cream Tea** - *Tea/Coffee with Apple Pie*. Brigit's Garden takes you on a magical journey into the heart of Celtic heritage and mythology, making it one of the truly outstanding places to visit in the West of Ireland. The award-winning Celtic Gardens are widely regarded as one of the most spectacular in Ireland set within 11 acres of native woodland & wildflower meadows. In addition to the Celtic Gardens, visitors enjoy the nature trail, an ancient ring fort, thatched roundhouse and crannog, and the sundial, the largest in Ireland. **BT**

Overnight in Galway

Day 6- September 10th **INISHMORE**

Travel to Rossaveel then **ferry crossing** to **Inishmore**. We'll have a **minibus tour** of the island and visit **Dun Aenghus**. Perched spectacularly on a cliff overlooking the Atlantic Ocean, this is the largest of the prehistoric stone forts of the Aran Islands. It is enclosed by three massive dry-stone walls and a "chevaux-de-frise" consisting of tall blocks of limestone set vertically into the ground to deter attackers. Return ferry to Rossaveel. **Evening – Trad on the Prom Show** – the best of Irish song and dance in Galway and possibly all of Ireland! **BD**

Overnight in Galway



Day 7- September 11th **THE BURREN & CLIFFS OF MOHER**

Visit **Caher Bridge Garden**, Fanore, near the Burren. The karst limestone region of the Burren is a natural wonder, with a lunar-like landscape and mysterious vanishing lakes and underground rivers. It is an inspiring area to garden with nature. This is a plantsman's garden, with collections of unusual varieties of bulbs and plants, over 200 types of snowdrops, 150 varieties of hosta, daffodils, crocosmia and day lilies. A river runs through this 9-year-old, one acre garden, a perfect place to discover the possibilities of gardening in the wild. Travel through the **Burren** famous for its lunar-like limestone landscape and its unique flora. About 20 species of orchids grow wild here!

Visit the **Cliffs of Moher** one of Ireland's top visitor attractions and a designated UNESCO Geo Park. The Cliffs are 214m high at the highest point and range for 8 kilometers over the Atlantic Ocean on the western seaboard of County Clare. From the Cliffs, one can see the Aran Islands, Galway Bay, as well as The Twelve Pins, the Maum Turk Mountains in Connemara and Loop Head to the South.

Shannon Ferry crossing en route to Dingle. **BD**

Overnight in Dingle

Day 8- September 12th**DINGLE PENINSULA**

Tour the **Dingle peninsula**, the **Slea Head drive**, **Gallarus Oratory** believed to be an early Romanesque church, possibly dating back as far as the 6th century. Afternoon free in Dingle. **BL**

Overnight in Dingle

Day 9- September 13th**ILNACULLIN TO BANTRY**

Tour via Killarney and Kenmare to Glengarriff. Visit **Ilnacullin (Garnish Island)**, a garden Island about 20 minutes by ferry from Glengarriff Pier. A unique collection of plants thrives in the warm, frost free, moist environment of the island. All the sea waters along the South coast are warmed by the Gulf Stream. This Italian garden designed by Harold Peto includes the Martello Tower, a Grecian Temple overlooking the sea, flights of steps and

magnificent pedimented gateways, all these superb architectural features are brilliantly integrated with a plant collection of worldwide renown. **BL**

Overnight in Bantry

Day 10- September 14th**BANTRY HOUSE & GARDENS TO CORK**

Visit **Bantry House & Gardens** In 1796, a French invasion fleet sailed into Bantry Bay to join forces with Wolfe Tone and the United Irishmen. But a storm changed the course of history, forcing the French to turn back to Brest. Richard White must have blessed that so-called "Protestant Wind" as he watched their retreat from Bantry House. White bought the property in 1765, which was enlarged by his son Richard, the 2nd Earl of Bantry. The house is filled with a unique collection of tapestries, furniture, carpets and art treasures. The magnificent gardens and grounds (under restoration) are home to many sub-tropical plants and shrubs – reflecting the best in European design and style. Work on the restoration has been assisted by an ERDF grant through Bord Failte under the Great Gardens of Ireland Restoration Scheme. Other features within the 45 acre grounds include the renowned 100-stepped "stairway to the sky", the Italian garden and the largest wisteria circle in the country.

En route to **Cork**, visit a **garden center** near Dripsey (Griffins).

The garden center started as a greenfield site about 26 years ago in a scenic location on the River Dripsey. More than 80% of the plants are grown in their own nursery by one of Ireland's top breeders, John Fehily. John has made sure that he chooses the right plants that will thrive in the Irish environment. Using a combination of proven traditional techniques and modern technology, it has a system to ensure that these plants are current air conditioned before they are developed to reach the garden center. **BD**

Overnight Cork

Day 11- September 15th CORK FREE DAY

Today is a free day to explore Cork city on your own **OR 2 optional tours** are offered to **Beechwood Garden** in Glanmire-a National Garden Association award winning "garden for all seasons", set on a sloping one acre site with panoramic views of rolling countryside. This garden has been developed over the past 25 years and includes a large natural water feature and interesting use of herbaceous/grasses in planting scheme with imaginative use of old stone. This garden is included in the publication "The 100 Best Gardens in Ireland" by Shirley Lanigan. Optional tour to **Blarney Castle**. One is offered in the morning and one in the afternoon so both can be combined. **B Overnight Cork**

Day 12- September 16th ROCK OF CASHEL TO DUBLIN

Visit the **Rock of Cashel** -a spectacular group of Medieval buildings set on an outcrop of limestone, including a round tower, Romanesque chapel, cathedral and restored hall of the Vicar's Choral. Visit **June Blake's Garden**, Tinode, Blessington. Over the last 15 years, June Blake has created a garden of great character out of what was effectively a blank canvas: a garden that blends the familiar with the new, is inventive, dynamic, and resonates with garden fans of all ages and backgrounds. The appeal lies in its size (just over 1.2 Hectares), design, variety, and the fact that it is continually being tweaked. The garden can be experienced on different levels, whether by close examination of the exquisite planting, by wandering through the meadow to the shady borders and on to the vibrant flowerbeds, or just enjoying the scene from a garden seat. **BD**



Day 13- September 17th DUBLIN

Panoramic sightseeing tour of Dublin, including O'Connell Street, Phoenix Park, Leinster House. Visit the Library at **Trinity College**, one of the world's great research libraries, holding the largest collection of manuscripts and printed books in Ireland. Since 1801 it has had the right to claim a free copy of all British and Irish publications and has a stock of nearly 3 million volumes housed in a total of eight buildings. Visit the Treasury and see a display of Irish medieval gospel manuscripts, principally the **Book of Kells** which contains a Latin text of the four gospels copied and decorated by Irish monks around the year 800 AD. Visit the **Guinness Storehouse** the Storehouse was originally built in 1904 to house the Guinness fermentation process. The core of the building is modelled on a giant pint glass. The tour takes you step by step through the brewing process, finishing at the Gravity Bar where you will receive a complimentary pint of Guinness whilst enjoying the panoramic views over Dublin city.

Visit the **National Botanical Gardens** Ireland's premier botanical and horticultural institution. The role of the Gardens includes conservation, education and research as well as demonstrations. There is a rock garden, alpine yard, rose garden and other beds, seasonal displays, herb and vegetable gardens, pond, herbaceous and shrub borders, wall plants and an arboretum. **Traditional pub crawl** included this evening!

BL

Overnight Dublin



Day 14- September 18th

WICKLOW MTNS, POWERSCOURT GARDENS

Visit **Powerscourt Gardens**. Situated in the foothills of the Wicklow mountains, it is a sublime blend of formal gardens, sweeping terraces, sanctuary and ornamental lakes with secret hollows, rambling walks, walled gardens and over 200 variations of trees and shrubs. The newly renovated 18th century house was opened last summer.



Stop in **Avoca village** and visit the **Mill**. The mill itself dates from 1723, and is said to be the oldest extant manufacturer in Ireland. Many of the throws, rugs and scarves you'll find in our stores are woven here at our family mill. Initially the mill took the raw wool from the sheep of the surrounding valleys and through a process of carding, spinning, dyeing and weaving transformed it into clothing and blankets for barter and sale. Visitors are welcome to see the whole weaving process at first hand with a tour.

Visit **Glendalough**. Famed for its beautiful scenery and historic monuments, Glendalough has been a center for pilgrims and visitors from the time of the founding of its monastery by St. Kevin in the 6th Century. The present remains tell only a small part of the monastic story. The buildings which survived, probably date from between the 8th and 12th Centuries, the most notable being a superb Round-Tower, Cathedral, Stone churches and decorated crosses.

BLD

Overnight Dublin

Day 15- September 19th

JOURNEY'S END OR NEW BEGINNING

For those of you continuing to Wales and Cornwall, transfer to Dublin Port Ferry crossing to Holyhead in Wales.

B

B= Breakfast, L=Lunch, D=Dinner, T=Tea

Please note that gardens and visits included in this itinerary are subject to availability. If a visit is not available, a suitable alternative will be found and will be finalized closer to departure. At each visit, the group will be hosted as specified.

Inclusions:

- 14 nights' accommodation 3-4 star hotels centrally located (2 nights Belfast, 1 night Donegal, 3 nights Galway, 2 nights Dingle, 1 night Bantry, 2 nights Cork, 3 nights Dublin)
- full Irish breakfast daily and other meals where specified
- 4-star air-conditioned coach with professional driver/guide
- all sightseeing and garden visits entry fees per itinerary
- 2 evening shows: Trad on the Prom and Musical Pub Crawl
- tour manager, Dee Montpetit travelling with group at all times and local guides per itinerary
- all taxes

Costs:

Tour is priced in Euros and final payment will reflect the true cost.

Land based on double occupancy and a minimum of 15 participants. If 20 or more participants, deduct EUROS 250 from price below. 25 maximum.

Ireland only: **EUROS 3,195**

Euros based on today's rate of exchange: \$3,388

Single supplement: EUROS 695...approximately \$737

Airfare: TBD

Payment schedule and cancellation policy:

A \$500 per person deposit is due at time of reservation. The deposit is non-refundable.

Final payment is due June 1st and is non-refundable.

A check is the required method of payment for the deposit. For final payment, a 4% surcharge will be added for credit card use.

Please make **checks payable to Travel Leaders** and along with your reservation form, mail to the address below:

Travel Leaders
Attn: Dee Montpetit
5611 196th ST SW
Lynnwood, WA. 98036

Insurance:

Insurance is highly recommended and is an additional TBA per person. This covers cancellation penalties for medical reasons. To insure any pre-existing illness, it must be purchased at time of deposit.

Documentation:

You will need a valid US Passport with at least 6 months' validity to enter Ireland. If you are not a US citizen, please let me know and I will advise you on the required documentation.

Please complete the attached reservation form and send your deposit to secure your reservation.

For more information, contact:

Dee Montpetit at **425-208-6515** or email: **dee@mapetitegardens.com**

Reservation Form

Name: _____

Address: _____

Phone numbers: _____

Email: _____

Emergency contact person and phone: _____

Passport Information:

Passenger One: _____

Legal name as it appears: _____

Passport number: _____

Expiration date: _____

Date of Birth: _____

Passenger Two: _____

Legal name as it appears: _____

Passport number: _____

Expiration date: _____

Date of Birth: _____

Special requests:

Single requesting share: _____

Dietary restrictions: _____

Allergies: _____

Medical: _____

Seat requests: _____

Frequent flyer number: _____

Either Alaska Airlines, Iceland Air or Finnair