



*Be  
Inspired  
with Abbey*

SMALL GROUP TOURS

IRELAND | SCOTLAND | ENGLAND | WALES





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# WELCOME

Abbey Ireland & UK is a member of the Abbey Group, a collection of travel companies servicing the needs of our travel trade partners. Established in 1978, the Group is owned and managed by a team of experienced travel professionals and its core business is selling leisure individual and group travel for the destinations of Ireland and the UK to the worldwide travel trade on a B2B basis. Click for more information on the Abbey Group [www.abbeygroup.ie](http://www.abbeygroup.ie)

We are delighted to introduce you to our Small Group brochure. We have handcrafted a creative new range of touring itineraries tailored for groups of 20 passengers or fewer, with each route carefully designed to deliver an unforgettably immersive experience in Ireland and the UK. Itineraries can be tailored to both FIT and Groups, enjoyed as individual destinations or as a combination UK & Ireland tour.

Our Small Group tour itineraries are the perfect way to safely experience our beautiful islands with your friends, family or local community group. Contact our team today to create your tailor-made experience in Ireland and the UK.



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# BENEFITS



OPEN SPACES



HIDDEN GEMS



RELAXED PACE



OFF THE BEATEN PATH



MEET THE LOCALS



LIGHT ACTIVITY



FULLY CUSTOMISABLE



1 - 20 PAX





# IRELAND



### DAY 1 - FAILTE

Arrive and transfer to the north of Ireland.  
*Overnight Belfast area*

### DAY 2 - WALK IN THE FOREST AND BREAD MAKING IN TRACEY'S HOME

Enjoy a day trip in County Down starting with an exciting **walk from Tollymore Forest Park to Newcastle**, a scenic seaside town. Tollymore Forest Park is located in the foothills of the Mourne Mountains and is home to woodlands, streams, grottos and caves. The forest was used in several scenes of the popular TV series Game of Thrones. In the afternoon enjoy a **traditional bread making demonstration** with local food tasting in the family kitchen of Tracey Jeffery, located in a very scenic setting along Strangford Lough. Some of the group will help to make soda bread and this you can take away with you! Everyone gets to enjoy a feast of homemade bakes and treats.

*Overnight Belfast area*

### DAY 3 - BELFAST AND BREW

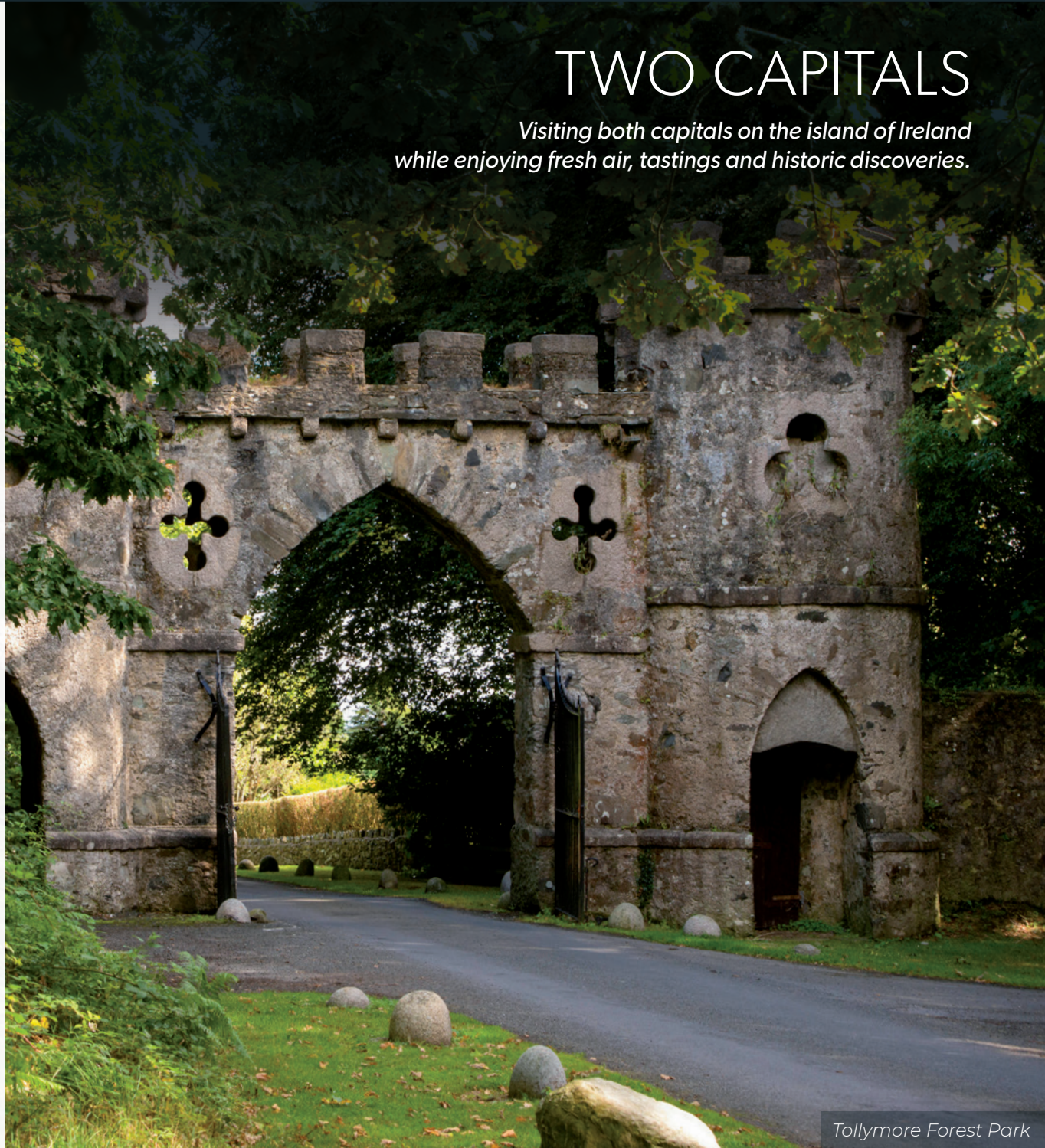
This morning enjoy a **panoramic Belfast city tour**, Northern Ireland's capital and largest city. Belfast today is a very alive and cosmopolitan city, progressive in spite of its recent unsettled past. Note its architecture, hear about the history of the city, its industrial glory and divided past. **Belfast City Hall** is one of Belfast's most iconic buildings – enjoy a visit and explore some of its finest features. Stop also at the **Botanic Gardens**, an important part of the city's Victorian heritage. Of particular note is the glasshouse made from curved iron and glass and the Palm House's tropical plants and birds of paradise. Travel southwards to County Meath with a stop at **Brehon Brewhouse** in County Monaghan. Founded by dairy farmer Seamus McMahon who wanted to diversify his homestead and this Irish craft brewery was born. This stop offers an immersive experience for craft beer enthusiasts – see where it all began with a visit to the milking parlour followed by a trip to the brewery. Round off the visit with a tasting in the old family home.

*Overnight Kells area*



# TWO CAPITALS

*Visiting both capitals on the island of Ireland while enjoying fresh air, tastings and historic discoveries.*



Tollymore Forest Park





Trim Castle

## DAY 4 - THE BOYNE VALLEY

A day of ancient history awaits you! Some of Ireland's oldest archaeological treasures - cairns built in 4000 BC as burial chambers - can be found upon the hills above **Loughcrew**. There is an energetic walk to get up the hill of Loughcrew where the cairns are located. **Fore Abbey** is located not far from Loughcrew, in a tranquil green valley in the village of Fore. Here you view the site where St Fechin founded a Christian monastery in the 7th century. In the afternoon you will have a stop in Trim, an ancient town well located on the River Boyne and so significant that a 5th century fort and an early monastery were sited here. Visit **Trim Castle**, which was built in 1172 shortly after the arrival of the Anglo-Normans in Ireland. There have been adaptations to the castle over the centuries but much of its fabric has remained unchanged since the height of the Anglo-Norman power in Ireland. The film Braveheart shot many scenes at this impressive castle.

*Overnight Kells area*

## DAY 5 - DUBLIN'S FAIR CITY AND WHISKEY

Travel to the capital city of the Republic of Ireland for a **panoramic tour of the city**. Dublin was built around the 7th century on the River Liffey and is now a small and vibrant city showcasing interesting medieval, Georgian and modern architecture. During your tour you will see some impressive cathedrals, Georgian squares, government buildings and the Phoenix Park - Europe's largest public city park. Enjoy a visit to the **National Museum of Ireland - Archaeology** on Kildare Street. From prehistoric Ireland to Ancient Egypt, visitors can see important archaeological artefacts dating from 7000 BC up to the 20th century. Highlights include Iron Age 'bog bodies' and an exhibition of prehistoric Irish gold. Enjoy free time in the city. This afternoon return to the Boyne Valley and visit **Slane Distillery**. Housed in the 250 year old stables of the iconic Slane Castle estate, privately owned by the Marquis of Conyngham, Lord Henry Mountcharles and his family. The distillery pays homage to the resilient nature of the family heritage and the surrounding lands that they call home. Enjoy the tour and whiskey tastings to follow! Slane Castle is also well known as a concert venue - Bruce Springsteen, Queen, Rolling Stones to mention just a few of the performers over the years.

*Overnight Kells area*

## DAY 6 - FAREWELL

### 💡 Did you know!

Despite being set in Scotland, Mel Gibson's Oscar-winning epic Braveheart was partly filmed in Ireland and Trim Castle played its part as the fortified English town of York, with the scenes set in London filmed inside the castle walls.



Traceys Farmhouse Kitchen



Brehon Brewhouse



### DAY 1 - FAILTE

Arrive and transfer to the north of Ireland.  
*Overnight Enniskillen area*

### DAY 2 - CAVES AND CRUISING

Today is spent touring in County Fermanagh, an area of the country which boasts a wealth of fine country estates and castles. The region is also a paradise for water activities as a third of the county is covered by lakes and waterways. You will explore the subterranean world on foot and by boat at the UNESCO **Marble Arch Caves**. Some of the most impressive show caves in Europe feature stalactites, cavernous passages and streams formed and reformed over countless millennia. During the day you will also enjoy a **Lough Erne Cruise to Devenish Island**. This cruise provides a unique way to see the beautiful island town of Enniskillen, the Lough Erne waterway and its historic islands which include the ancient monastic site at Devenish Island. The monastery was founded in the 6th century and during its dramatic history was raided by Vikings, burned and then flourished as a parish church site and St Mary's Augustine Priory.  
*Overnight Enniskillen area*

### DAY 3 - DISCOVER ARMAGH - THE ORCHARD COUNTY

Depart today for County Armagh. Raised on seven hills, it is a place where history and mythology have become intertwined. The Georgian city of Armagh is at its core and today is home to two striking cathedrals, both honouring St Patrick, the island's patron saint. Visit **St Patrick's Church of Ireland Cathedral**. St Patrick first built a stone church on the hill in 445AD and there has been a Christian church here ever since. The cathedral as it now stands was designed in 1268. Enjoy a stop at **Long Meadow Cider**, a family of 3rd generation apple growers. Owned and operated by the McKeever family, enjoy a tour of the orchards and learn about the different growing systems. Visit the cider premises and take away a bottle of your choosing! This tour also includes tea/coffee, a slice of Apple tart and cider sampling. Before reaching the north east of the island, visit the **Lough Neagh Discovery Centre** - a national nature reserve located on the southern shores of Lough Neagh. There are great woodland trails, unique boglands and wildflowers to discover plus learn about the protection and enhancement of this environment.

*Overnight Belfast area*



# DISCOVER THE NORTH

*Northern Ireland is made up of six counties lying in the north and north east of Ireland.  
Discover areas of natural beauty and historic cities on this leisurely short stay.*



Marble Arch Caves





Long Meadow Cider

#### DAY 4 - COUNTY DOWN

Enjoy a day trip in County Down. You will stop at **Castlewellan Forest Park**, an area covering 450 hectares north of the Mourne Mountains. Follow the lakeside walking trail, a relaxing walk before visiting the walled Annesley Garden, dating from 1740, with its magnificent collection of trees and shrubs set in beautiful surroundings. To understand Northern Ireland, a visit to **Hillsborough Castle** is a good place to start. This is the Queen's official Northern Ireland residence, and the site of some of the region's biggest discussions and decisions: past, present and future. At Hillsborough, you are experiencing history in the making. On tour of the elegant Georgian castle, in the charming village of Hillsborough, you follow in the footsteps of world leaders, through plush and lovingly restored State Rooms. Standing in these rooms, where pivotal decisions have been made, you get a true sense of Hillsborough Castle's importance. Hillsborough village is also very picturesque – take some time to enjoy a coffee stop in the village. *Overnight Belfast area*

#### DAY 5 - BELFAST CITY AND TITANIC

Enjoy a **tour of Belfast**, which stands proud today as a very alive and cosmopolitan city, progressive in spite of its recent unsettled past. Note its architecture, hear about the history of the city, its industrial glory and divided past. You will pass by Belfast City Hall and the Opera House – some of the city's most iconic buildings. Visit the **Titanic Experience** where you learn many fun facts and details around the tragic ship. Titanic Belfast extends over nine interactive galleries, explore the shipyard and uncover the true legend of the Titanic, in the city where the ship was built. The afternoon is free for time at leisure. *Overnight Belfast area*

#### DAY 6 - FAREWELL



Titanic Experience



Devenish Island

#### 💡 Did you know!

The RMS Titanic was the world's largest passenger ship when it entered service, measuring 269 metres (882 feet) in length, and the largest man-made moving object on Earth. She was built by the Harland and Wolff shipyard in Belfast.



### DAY 1 - FAILTÉ

Arrive and depart towards the south of Ireland.  
*Overnight Cahir area*

### DAY 2 - CORK CITY AND WALKING FOOD TOUR

Depart for West Cork via **Cork city**. Cork city – Ireland's second largest – is steeped in history and is fast gaining a reputation as one of Europe's hippest cities. Like Venice, the city is built upon water and the city centre is located on an island in the River Lee, just upstream from Cork Harbour. Discover Cork with a **panoramic tour of the city** before participating in the **Fab Food walking tour**. A relaxing but focused stroll with an engaging and experienced guide brings you to places that are off the usual food route where tastings are generous and the people engaging and proud of their food offerings. In the afternoon continue your drive westwards.  
*Overnight Bantry area*

### DAY 3 - THE ISLAND OF THE ARTS

Today enjoy a full day trip to **Sherkin Island**, known as the Island of the Arts, **with light lunch included**. Sherkin is one of the most accessible islands in Ireland – 10 minutes by ferry from the small fishing port of Baltimore. The island boasts a wonderful array of landscapes, Atlantic views from hilltops and fine sandy beaches. The island is approximately three miles long and has a population of 100 residents. It is home to many artists who live and create on the island – artists, photographers and crafters. Many of the artists open their studios to the public and during the day you will visit some of the artists in their studios – perhaps join a pottery workshop! Lunch today is a hot bowl of famous West Cork fish chowder accompanied by homemade brown bread and a glass of wine. Return to the mainland during the afternoon.  
*Overnight Bantry area*



## SOUTHWEST ADVENTURE

*A short tour in the southwest to awaken many interests – cities, foods, coasts and culture.*







## DAY 4 - BEARA AND BANTRY HOUSE AND GARDENS

Enjoy a tour on one of Ireland's most beautiful peninsulas. Stretching a distance of 48kms (30 miles), **Beara** is an unspoiled and magnificent landscape along the Wild Atlantic Way. The maritime influence allows subtropical trees and shrubs to flourish, the peninsula is also home to many Bronze Age remains – wedge tombs, stone circles and standing stones. Visit **Bantry House and Gardens** which overlook Bantry Bay. The house is the ancestral home of the Earls of Bantry and is still lived in by the direct descendants of the 1st Earl of Bantry who display an important collection of art treasures. The gardens were created in the 1850s when the land was terraced around the house.

*Overnight Bantry area*

## DAY 5 - LIMERICK AND LAOIS

This morning you travel to Limerick, Ireland's third largest city. The city showcases some of the finest examples of Georgian architecture in Western Europe. Along the River Shannon, in the medieval heart of the city, you will pass King Johns Castle and St Mary's Cathedral, to name just a few of its notable sites. Visit the **Hunt Museum** which exhibits one of Ireland's greatest private collections of art and antiquities dating from the Neolithic to the 20th century. One of the strengths of the collection is the medieval material which include statues in stone and wood, painted panels, jewellery and crucifixes. Continue to the Midlands.

*Overnight Laois area*

## DAY 6 - FAREWELL



## 💡 Did you know!

The Celts first landed in Ireland at Garnish, near the westernmost end of the Beara peninsula. The peninsula was named after a Spanish princess, Princess Beara.



### DAY 1 - FAILTE

Arrive and depart for the west of Ireland, travelling across the island from east to west. You will stay close to the heritage town of Westport, a town constructed in the Georgian style and overlooking Clew Bay and the Atlantic Ocean.

*Overnight Westport area*

### DAY 2 - CONNEMARA AND WESTPORT

Enjoy a drive today in **Connemara**, an area famed for its wild natural beauty to include sea, mountains, lakes and bog lands. With ever-changing landscapes, this region is steeped in traditions - Irish language, traditional music, song and dance thrive here. Visit one of Ireland's largest sheep farms on the Wild Atlantic Way - **Glen Keen Sheep Farm**. This farm's family history goes back to the 1700s when the owner's ancestors became tenant farmers at the site. The history of tradition and heritage is shared during the visit to this working sheep farm, a history that spans over six generations. You also see sheep herding by the friendly family border collies. Take time to visit **Westport House** and see the treasures contained in over 30 rooms. Built on the site of a 16th century castle, the current house was built in the 18th century by renowned architects Cassels and Wyatt and is set in superb parkland with terraces, gardens, a lake and great views over the Atlantic Ocean.

*Overnight Westport area*

### DAY 3 - ACHILL AND THE GREENWAY

This morning tour **Achill Island**, the largest island off the Irish mainland which is accessible by bridge. Offering magnificent sandy beaches, sea cliffs and villages, the drive takes you on a journey of scenic splendour. In the afternoon, **cycle on the Great Western Greenway**, an off-road walking and cycling trail which runs from Achill Island to Westport along the Atlantic coast and passes some of the west's most dramatic mountains. There will also be great views of Clew Bay and its many islands.

*Overnight Westport area*



# COAST TO COAST

*A leisurely journey from west to east enjoying natural landscapes, meeting the locals, and enjoying pure traditional music in a private home.*



Achill Island





Galway City



Doolin Music House



The Burren

#### DAY 4 - CITY OF TRIBES

Explore **Galway**, the only city along the Wild Atlantic Way, with free time in the city. The city is wild and bohemian yet full of culture, artistry, great food and music. A small city where the cobbled streets, colourful shop facades and cafes can easily be discovered on foot. Continue to the **Burren**, a unique region located in County Clare, where lunar-like landscapes, megalithic monuments and beautiful plants combine. The 205 square mile UNESCO Global Geopark is one of the only places in the world where arctic, alpine and Mediterranean plants grow side by side. Overnight Ballyvaughan area

#### DAY 5 - THE BURREN WITH LOCALS

Join Shane Connolly, an experienced guide and native Burren sheep and cattle farmer, for a **half day Burren Walk**. You will hear about the geology, natural history, botany, agriculture and history of this unique area. At lunch you will be welcomed into the **Doolin Music House** - the private home of Christy Barry and his partner Sheila - for a lunch time music session. The couple have entertained many musicians here over many years and today it will be your turn to experience local Irish music in the relaxed surrounds of their home. Christy tells stories on the history of traditional Irish music and plays great tunes and Sheila will provide a light lunch of local produce. The afternoon is at leisure. Overnight Ballyvaughan area

#### DAY 6 - CASTLE AND CRAFTS

This morning depart for the east coast of Ireland travelling via Bunratty with a stop at **Bunratty Castle and Folk Park**. Experience a window on Ireland's past and explore the acclaimed 15th century castle and the 19th century folk park. The castle is an authentic medieval fortress containing mainly 15th and 16th century furnishings, tapestries and works of art. Within the grounds of the castle is the folk park. Set on 26 acres, it features over 30 buildings in a 'living village' setting. See the village street, 19th century agricultural machinery, farmhouses and watermills. You can see crafts people at work - bread baking, weaving and pottery making to name a few. On to Dublin, capital city of the Republic of Ireland. Overnight Dublin area

#### DAY 7 - DUBLIN'S FAIR CITY

This morning enjoy a **panoramic tour of Dublin** - Ireland's capital city built on the River Liffey. It is a small and vibrant city with interesting landmarks spanning from medieval, through Georgian to futuristic modern architecture. During your panoramic tour you will see some impressive cathedrals, Georgian squares, government buildings and the Phoenix Park - Europe's largest public city park. Visit **EPIC**, the Irish Emigration Museum which tells the story of Irish people, their lives and influences outside of Ireland - emigrants who became presidents, poets, scientists and outlaws all over the world. This is a very engaging and interactive museum and is enjoyed by all ages. Free time in the afternoon to discover the city at your leisure. Overnight Dublin area

#### DAY 8 - FAREWELL



### DAY 1 - FAILTE

Arrive and depart for the southern half of the island  
*Overnight Clonmel area*

### DAY 2 - GRANDEUR, VIKINGS AND COAST

The first stop is a visit to **Curraghamore House and Gardens**, historic home of the Marquis of Waterford and his ancestors since around 1170. Some 2500 acres of formal gardens, woodland and grazing fields make this the largest private demesne in Ireland. On to Waterford, Ireland's oldest city and a city proud of its history. Founded by The Vikings in the 9th century and claimed by the Normans in 1170, the city retains vestiges of its Viking and Norman part in the narrow streets and town walls. Waterford is not just known for its ancient historic past – it is home to Waterford Crystal, blaas – delicious white floury bread rolls unique to the city - craft beers and more. Enjoy some free time in the city. In the afternoon drive along **The Copper Coast**, Waterford's own UNESCO Global Geopark with 15 miles of shoreline, starting near Fenor and continuing to close to Stradbally, comprising of cliffs, coves and sea stacks.

*Overnight Clonmel area*

### DAY 3 - THE BLUEWAY ON BIKE AND CHEESE TASTING

This morning **cycle on the Suir Blueway** from Clonmel to Carrick-on-Suir (21km). As you cycle along the river towpath, you have a chance to savour lovely countryside. In Carrick-on-Suir, visit **Ormond Castle**, Ireland's only surviving unfortified Tudor Manor House which contains beautiful details including decorative plasterwork portraits of Elizabeth I, daughter of Henry VIII. In the afternoon travel to the Fethard area and enjoy **Cashel Blue Tasting Experience**. Founded by the Grubb family in 1984, Cashel Blue was the very first Irish blue cheese to be produced and is today a prize winning cheese of note. During your visit you will gain an insight into the development of this rural Irish, family owned, farmhouse cheese business and enjoy a tasting of both sheep and cows milk cheeses.

*Overnight Clonmel area*



# TASTE AND DISCOVER

*An experience to awaken the senses – enjoy tastes, natural landscapes and less discovered parts of the island while preserving cultural and natural interest to the highest level.*







Kinvara



Dolphin and Nature boat trip



Sheepdog Demonstration

#### DAY 4 - BEES AND BENEDICTINES

Enjoy a visit to **Galtee Honey Farm** near Cahir, run by a well-known beekeeping family the Mac Giolla Códas. The farm has approx. 170 hives of honey bees throughout the Galtee Vee Valley and stretching across 3 counties. During your visit, sample a variety of honeys, taste honey mead, learn about honey and other products of the hive. You also learn about the history and heritage of Irish beekeeping and Ireland's unique honey bee – the native Irish Black bee. Continue towards Limerick stopping en route to visit **Glenstal Abbey and Icon Chapel**. The Abbey is home to a community of Benedictine Monks. It is also a boarding school for boys, a working farm and crafts centre. The monastery includes several notable buildings, significant woodland, farmland and gardens. In the crypt of the church is a chapel with Orthodox icons – a sacred space reminding us that monasticism has its roots in the Christian east. Finally, continue towards the Atlantic coast.

Overnight Spanish Point area

#### DAY 5 - A DAY IN NATURE

This morning enjoy a scenic drive along the **Loop Head Peninsula**, a slender finger of land pointing out to sea from the most westerly point of County Clare. With the ocean on one side and the Shannon Estuary on the other, this peninsula would be an island but for a meagre mile of land connecting it to the rest of the county. A haven for wildlife and bird watchers, this peninsula offers incredible land and seascapes. Enjoy a **Dolphin and Nature boat trip** from Carrigaholt with Dolphin Watch, a wildlife adventure at the mouth of the River Shannon, home to Europe's largest group of resident bottlenose dolphins. The dolphins in this special area of conservation are generally seen in family groups.

Overnight Spanish Point area

#### DAY 6 - THE BURREN, CHOCOLATES AND SHEEP

This morning discover the **Burren**. Located in County Clare, this is a region of unique lunar-like landscapes, megalithic monuments and beautiful plants. The 205 square mile UNESCO Global Geopark is one of the only places in the world where arctic, alpine and Mediterranean plants grow side by side. Between Kinvara and Ballyvaughan stop at **Hazel Mountain Chocolate** – a boutique bean-to-bar chocolate factory which is one of the smallest and most remote chocolate factories in the world! Meet the experts and enjoy a tour taking you through all stages of chocolate making whilst tasting some of the best single origin chocolates. During the day you will also enjoy a **Sheepdog demonstration at Caherconnell Farm** under the expertise of landowner John Davoren. See the combined skills of the Border Collie and his master who has been training dogs to work with both cattle and sheep since the age of sixteen.

Overnight Spanish Point area

#### DAY 7 - HORSES AND GARDENS

Leave the west coast of Ireland and travel eastwards to County Kildare. Ireland is known throughout the world for its quality thoroughbred horses and there's nowhere better to get up close and personal than at the **National Stud and Japanese Gardens**. This unique attraction of outstanding natural beauty is home to some of the most magnificent horses and gardens to be found anywhere in the world, including a number of stallions, mares, foals and yearlings. In the Japanese Gardens you follow the path called the 'Life of Man' tracing the passage of a soul from birth to death and beyond.

Overnight Clane area

#### DAY 8 - FAREWELL



### DAY 1 - FAILTE

Arrive and travel directly to the Atlantic Coast.  
*Overnight Mayo area*

### DAY 2 - CONNEMARA

Enjoy a tour today in Connemara, an area famed for its wild natural beauty including sea, mountains, lakes and bog lands. An area of ever changing landscapes, this region is steeped in traditions - Irish language, traditional music, song and dance thrive here. Close to the town of Clifden, **Derrigimlagh Bog** is one of the key signature points on the Wild Atlantic Way. A spectacular blanket bog, a mosaic of tiny lakes and peat rich in flora and fauna. It is also the location of 2 remarkable historic events - from here the first transatlantic message was transmitted from Marconi's wireless station to Newfoundland and close by the first non-stop flight across the Atlantic also crash landed, uninjured, into the bog in 1919. Take time to walk in this lovely landscape.

*Overnight Mayo area*

### DAY 3 - CULTURAL MAYO

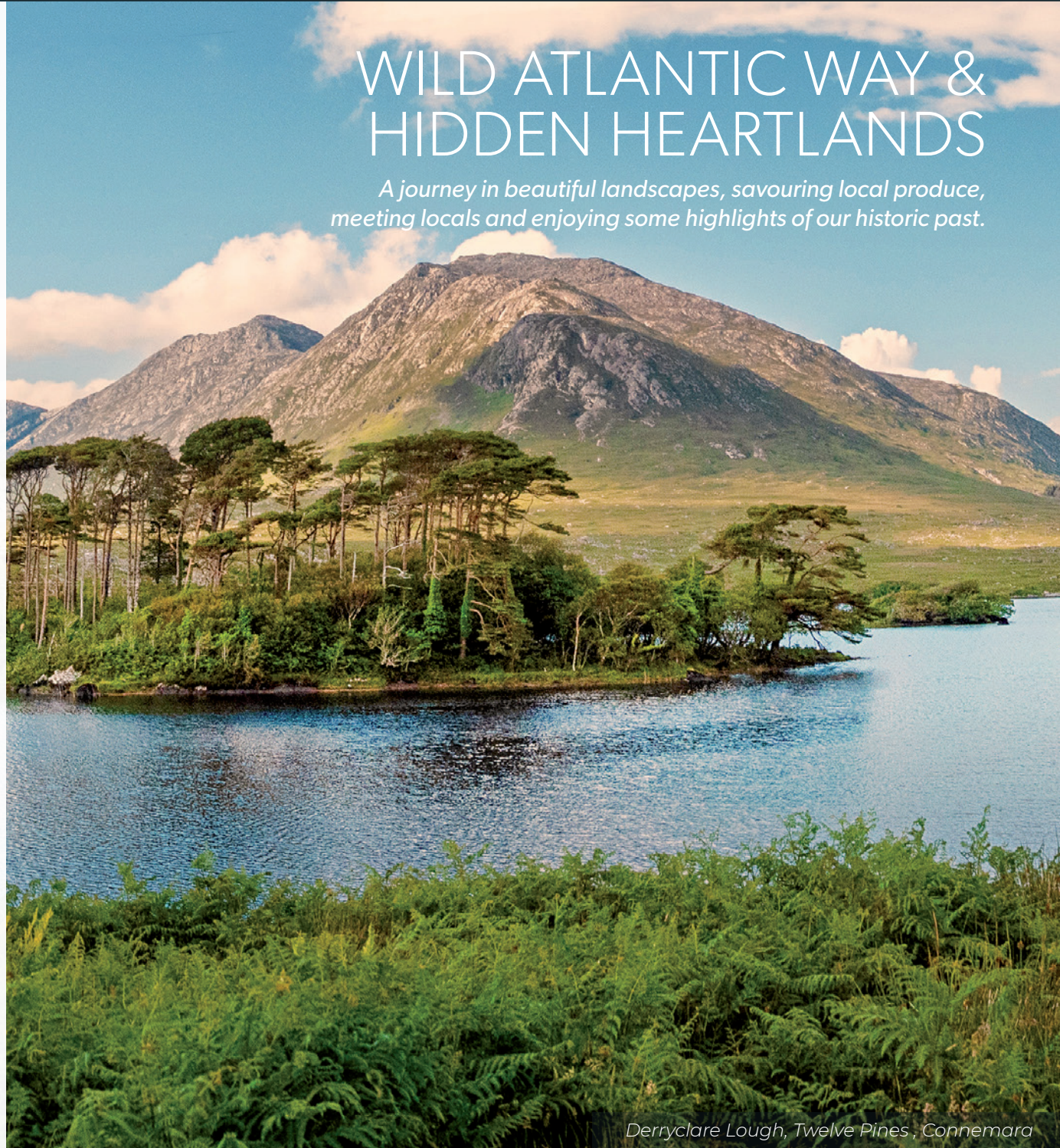
Enjoy a visit to the **National Museum of Ireland**, an award winning museum hosting a national collection of the story of Irish country life between 1850 and 1950. Located close to Castlebar, the Turlough estate is perfect for a stroll with views of the Victorian House, gardens, the lake and woodlands. Explore the monastic round tower, thatched cottage and see the many outdoor artworks located on the grounds. You will also visit **Ballintubber Abbey**. The story of the Abbey began in 441 when St Patrick baptised the people at the Druidic Well and established a church - the remains of which remain in the graveyard today. The Abbey itself is renowned for the quality of its carvings, is over 800 years old and is still in daily use. In the afternoon enjoy some time free.

*Overnight Mayo area*



# WILD ATLANTIC WAY & HIDDEN HEARTLANDS

*A journey in beautiful landscapes, savouring local produce, meeting locals and enjoying some highlights of our historic past.*



*Derryclare Lough, Twelve Pines, Connemara*





Glenveagh Castle

## DAY 4 - OYSTERS AND LISSADELL HOUSE

Depart for the North West of Ireland with a stop along the way in Sligo, known as Yeats Country. In Sligo town, enjoy the **Sligo Oyster Town Tour**. This short walk through the town is guided by Sligo Bay Oysters owner Aisling Kelly who will explain the history and current farming methods of harvesting oysters on the Wild Atlantic Way. An obligatory tasting of oysters is served with a glass of white wine! Continuing in Sligo, you visit **Lissadell House & Gardens**. The estate is home to the Walsh family and much restoration has taken place in the house and gardens since 2004. Beautifully located close to Benbulbin, Ireland's Table Mountain, the house is surrounded by mature woodlands sloping gently towards Sligo Bay. The house is famous for being home to Countess Markievicz, a key figure in Ireland's 1916 rising and the many notable guests in the years since, include Prince Charles, William Butler Yeats and Leonard Cohen who also performed there.

*Overnight Donegal area*

## DAY 5 - REFRESHING DONEGAL

Start your day with a refreshing walk along the **Slieve League Cliffs**, standing at the top of which feels as if you are at the very edge of the world. Wild, dramatic and majestic, the towering cliffs are among the highest sea cliffs in Europe. Untouched natural landscape awaits you. During the day you will enjoy a stop at **Donegal Craft Village** which is located close to Donegal town. Here you can see skilled independent handcrafters at work creating glass, hand-woven textiles, paintings, jewellery and more.

*Overnight Donegal area*

## DAY 6 - THE WILDS OF DONEGAL

Donegal is a county known for its natural beauty and great crafts people. Breath-taking scenery, golden beaches, rugged islands and a lovely array of wildlife await you in this almost untouched landscape. Enjoy a visit to **Glenveagh National Park and Castle**, a 16000 hectare park nestled in the Derryveagh Mountains where there are lovely nature walks and the Scottish baronial-style castle which in the past enjoyed visits from celebrities including Greta Garbo, Marilyn Monroe and Clark Gable!

*Overnight Donegal area*

## DAY 7 - THE HIDDEN HEARTLANDS

You leave the North West this morning and travel towards the Midlands and Ireland's Hidden Heartlands. Near Drumshambo, enjoy a visit and whiskey tasting at **The Shed Distillery**. PJ Rigney is the founder and for his distillery he sought a wild, un-manicured location in the heart of rural Ireland. Whiskey, gin and vodka are now distilled here all using wild grains, Irish flora and exotic botanicals. Enjoy a tasting as part of your distillery tour. You will also visit **Clonalis House**, a private family home of the O'Connor family who are direct descendants of the last High Kings of Ireland. Built in 1878, the house is built in Victorian Italianate style and includes a large collection of family portraits – all telling its unique and interesting story.

*Overnight Athlone area*

## DAY 8 - AT REST OR OPTIONAL TOUR

Enjoy a day at leisure at Glasheen to explore the lake, have a picnic or play golf. Located just minutes from the quaint village of Glasheen, and nestled on the shores of Lough Ree, your hotel is the ideal base for a day at leisure. Or enjoy a day trip to Athlone town. Visit **Athlone Castle**, a 13th century Norman castle museum where you learn about the history of the castle, the town and surrounding area. Close to the quayside near the castle, depart on a **Viking ship cruise** on the River Shannon. The River Shannon is a main artery through Ireland. The Vikings arrived by river at Clonmacnoise in 842, 90 minutes downstream from Athlone and by ship is the perfect approach to this famous monastic site.

**Clonmacnoise** was founded in 547 by St Ciaran and soon became a major centre of religion, craftsmanship and politics.

*Overnight Athlone area*

## DAY 9 - LOUGH DERG AND THE RIVER SHANNON

Travel southwards following the course of the River Shannon to Killaloe. Killaloe, County Clare and Ballina, County Tipperary are known as twin towns and linked by a 13 arch bridge across the River Shannon. Enjoy a walk through the town of Killaloe and take time to stop at **St Flannan's Cathedral**, unique for its stone carving inscriptions. From Killaloe travel along the shores of Lough Derg towards Tuamgraney. The panoramic views from Ogonnelloe onto Lough Derg are an essential stop. Visit and chocolate tasting at **Wilde Irish Chocolates** - an artisan factory making over 80 different handmade chocolates. See the chocolates being made and enjoy a delicious tasting! Before returning to your hotel, stop and visit **Portumna Castle and Gardens** which occupies a magnificent location on the shores of Lough Derg. Built in the early 17th century, the castle is an imposing example of Irish architecture. The approach to the castle is by way of a long avenue and formal gardens which include an old shrub rose garden and a walled kitchen garden.

*Overnight Athlone area*

## DAY 10 - FAREWELL





# SCOTLAND



### DAY 1 - WELCOME

**The Royal Burgh of Culross** is often acknowledged as one of the most picturesque villages in Scotland and has appeared many times in the hit TV series Outlander. On your guided tour of Culross step into the past and wander along charming, peaceful streets which were once full of hustle and bustle of a thriving 17th century port on the River Forth. Visit **Dunfermline Abbey**, founded by Queen Margaret in the 11th century, final resting place of King Robert Bruce and birthplace of Charles I, the last monarch born in Scotland. Continue to Highland Perthshire.

*Overnight Pitlochry area*

### DAY 2 - QUEENS VIEW & HIGHLAND CHOCOLATIER

Queens View overlooks Loch Tummel and is said to have been named after Queen Victoria, following her visit to the area in 1866. Enjoy stunning views overlooking the Loch and the Tay Forest Park where you will enjoy a **short guided walk** amongst a mosaic of woodlands which hold the stories of past lives. This afternoon visit the **Highland Chocolatier** where you will enjoy a guided chocolate tasting and learn about the world of gourmet chocolate. Award-winning Master Chocolatier Iain Burnett trained under Master Chocolatiers of the Belgian, Swiss and French schools. Iain has a small dedicated team of chocolatiers which he trains in-house to meticulously hand craft his chocolates which provide top chefs with gourmet truffles of an artisan quality unavailable elsewhere.

*Overnight Pitlochry area*



# ROYAL SCOTLAND

*Discover the Royal history of Scotland on this fascinating 8 day tour. Savour views that have taken the breath of many king and queen away and experience all that the Scottish culinary scene has to offer*



Balmoral Castle





Dunnotar Castle



Highland Cow



Queens View

## DAY 3 - HIGHLAND HIGHLIGHTS

The town of Pitlochry is one of Scotland's most beautiful and vibrant places to visit and can be enjoyed at your leisure today for those wishing to relax. The land surrounding Pitlochry has been sculptured by the elements and is steeped in nature, history and culture. For those wishing to experience some more adventure you will join your kilted Safari Ranger aboard your Land Rover on a **Highland Safari**. Armed with binoculars keep an eye out for the majestic Red Deer, the Famous Grouse, the elusive Mountain Hare or even the soaring Golden Eagle. A bothy is a basic shelter found in mountainous areas and here you will enjoy some traditional Scottish hospitality including tea, coffee, Kenmore Shortbread and a dram of whisky surrounded by inspiring mountain views.

*Overnight Pitlochry area*

## DAY 4 - ROYAL DEESIDE

Depart Highland Perthshire today and travel to Aberdeen via Royal Deeside. Today you will enjoy the breath-taking scenery and open spaces of an area that Queen Victoria once said: "all seemed to breathe freedom and peace". Along the way, visit **Balmoral Castle** which was completed for Queen Victoria in 1856 and remains a Scottish holiday home for the Royal Family today. If the Royal Family are in residence at the time you can visit **Braemar Castle**, built in 1628. If you are lucky enough to travel in early September you will witness the unique Scottish tradition of Highland Games at the **Braemar Gathering** including bagpipes, dancing and caber tossing.

*Overnight Aberdeen*

## DAY 5 - COWS & CASTLES

The Highland cow is a Scottish breed of rustic cattle and a must see on any trip to Scotland. Today you will **visit a local farm** and meet the owners who breed the famous Highland cows. This intimate tour will take you around the farm and get you up close and personal with the iconic Highland Cattle in the heart of the Scottish Countryside. Enjoy an afternoon at leisure in Aberdeen or perhaps take a short journey along the Aberdeenshire Coast to the seaside town of Stonehaven and nearby **Dunnottar Castle**, a dramatic and evocative ruined cliff top fortress and photographer's paradise.

*Overnight Aberdeen area*

## DAY 6 - UPSTAIRS DOWNSTAIRS

Today we explore what it was like to work in one of Scotland's most beautiful castles, **Brodie Castle**, a 16th century castle stuffed to the turrets with antique furniture, paintings and ceramics. Here you will experience a **Head Housekeeper tour** where you are joined by the housekeeper who spent much of her childhood at Brodie Castle, and worked there from a very young age. Enjoy a traditional Scottish lunch at a local country house hotel followed by a **whisky tasting** in their beautiful traditional bar. The Benromach Distillery is located close by and is sure to be included in your tutored tasting today. Enjoy other whiskies from the Speyside area such as Glenfiddich and Glenlivet.

*Return to Aberdeen. Overnight Aberdeen area*

## DAY 7 - ARBROATH

Enjoy a scenic drive along the Scottish East Coast to Arbroath. Upon arrival enjoy a visit to **Arbroath Abbey**, best known for the Declaration of Arbroath, arguably the most famous document in Scottish history. Here, forty Scottish nobles, barons and freemen dispatched a letter to Pope John, in April 1320, formally and eloquently setting out Scotland's case as an independent, sovereign kingdom. The Arbroath Smokie is a type of smoked haddock – a speciality of the town and can be enjoyed in many restaurants in the area. Perhaps try some for **lunch at a local restaurant**. Continue towards Edinburgh where you will stay for the night. *Overnight Edinburgh area*

## DAY 8 - FAREWELL



### DAY 1 - WELCOME

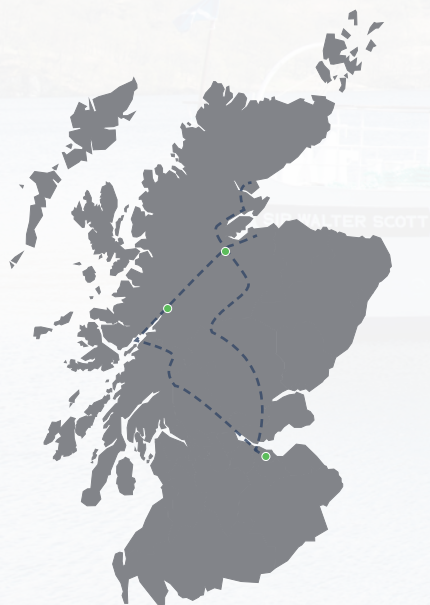
Arrive and transfer to Stirling. Early in the 14th century William Wallace led the Scottish in their first War of Independence and he can now be considered the country's greatest hero. One of the most famous battles of this war took place at Stirling Bridge in 1297, where the Scottish army defeated the English army. On arrival in Stirling you will enjoy a **guided walking tour** of the town followed by a visit to the **National Wallace Monument**, enjoying panoramic views towards Loch Lomond, The Pentland Hills, Fife, and the Firth of Forth from the crown of the Monument.

*Overnight Stirling area*

### DAY 2 - DOUNE CASTLE & DEANSTON DISTILLERY

This morning enjoy a visit to **Doone Castle**, a 14th century Courtyard Castle, built as the home of Regent Albany, 'Scotland's uncrowned King'. Doone's most striking feature is the 100ft high gatehouse, which includes the splendid Duke's Hall with its musicians' gallery, double fireplace and carved oak screen. With its impressive architecture it has become increasingly popular with production companies and has featured in Monty Python and the Holy Grail, Game of Thrones and Outlander. Scottish whisky production is spread out across five regions with each region bringing its own flavour to the whisky, through the water and peat. Today you will get to experience some of the best of Scotch whisky on offer at **Deanston Distillery** which was a cotton mill for over 180 years before being transformed into a distillery in 1960.

*Overnight Stirling area*



# SCOTTISH TREASURES

*Scottish heroes, icons, castles and walking trails are covered on an exciting tour of Scotland that will leave you refreshed*







Dunrobin Castle

## DAY 3 - LOCH KATRINE & THE FALLS OF LENY

Today travel to Loch Katrine in the Trossachs National Park. Here you will board the Steamship Sir Walter Scott which has been sailing on the Loch since 1900. The beauty of the Loch has long inspired some of Scotland's most famous writers, such as Sir Walter Scott, whose works included the 'Lady of the Lake' poem set on Loch Katrine. Enjoy a **cruise** aboard this Victorian steamship taking in the beautiful scenery and wildlife. Embrace the outdoors further as you continue to Callander for a walk to the **Falls of Leny**. You will be guided along the old railway line following the river upstream before returning through oak woodland. All that fresh air will make you hungry so tonight you will learn about the Scottish national dish, haggis. Travel to a local working sheep farm and discover all you need to know with a **haggis masterclass** led by a local expert chef followed by a beautiful meal.

*Overnight Stirling area*

## DAY 4 - THE HILL HOUSE & GLENCOE

Charles Rennie Mackintosh is one of Scotland's most celebrated architects and artists and his finest domestic creation can be found at **Hill House**, an arresting mix of arts and crafts, Art Nouveau and Scottish Baronial architecture and design. Mackintosh designed nearly everything inside the Hill House, from the decorative schemes and the furniture to the fittings and contents. The beautiful, formal gardens have also been restored in line with the early designs, using plants that would have been available at the time. On your way to the Fort William area stop at numerous viewpoints to see a landscape of majestic, sombre beauty in **Glencoe**, one of Scotland's most famous and scenic glens.

*Overnight Fort William area*

## DAY 5 - THE HOLLOW MOUNTAIN

Ben Cruachan is one of the highest mountains in the Southern Highlands and, in a dramatic setting one kilometre inside, the **Cruachan Power Station** lies at its heart. Today you will take a short journey inside to experience one of the country's most amazing engineering achievements and learn how power will be generated well into the future. On your journey pass by sub-tropical plants that grow well with the warm humid conditions inside the mountain and then onto the visitor viewing gallery. Continue to **Kilchurn Castle**, one of the most picturesque substantial ruins in Scotland with spectacular views down Loch Awe to enjoy some time in nature and the beautiful surroundings.

*Overnight Fort William area*

## DAY 6 - BAGPIPES UNCOVERED

Travel along the majestic Loch Ness today as you make your way towards Inverness. The bagpipes were played on both sides at the Battle of Culloden before being subsequently banned in the Scottish Highlands, along with kilts and much of Highland culture. Up until 1995, bagpipes were classed as a 'weapon of war', used in many conflicts around the world. But what are they made of, how are they constructed and how do you make that impressive sound? Delivered in partnership with **Burgess Bagpipes** who make traditional pipes, enjoy a presentation which includes music, as well as a history of the pipes and how they were played at Culloden. Check into your hotel in Inverness area before embarking on an evening **historic walking tour** of the city starting at Abertarff House, Inverness' oldest secular house.

*Overnight Inverness area*

## DAY 7 - DUNROBIN CASTLE & BLACK ISLE BREWERY

Explore the Highland coastline and a castle which could have come straight out of a fairy tale. **Dunrobin Castle**, with its French chateau inspired design, conical spires and enchanting gardens will not disappoint. Dunrobin Castle is one of Britain's oldest continuously inhabited houses dating back to the early 1300s and was used as a naval hospital during the First World War and as a boy's boarding school from 1965 to 1972. Scotland may be famous for whisky but its natural resources lends itself to the making of delicious beer. At the **Black Isle Brewery**, Scotland's only organic brewery, you will enjoy a tour of the brewery on the grounds of an organic farm. Nothing goes to waste here where the malt from the brewery mash is used to feed their lovely cows, who give fresh milk every day.

*Overnight Inverness area*

## DAY 8 - DUNKELD

Depart the Northern Highlands today and return to the Edinburgh area via Dunkeld. Beautifully situated beside the River Tay, **Dunkeld Cathedral** is Scotland's most romantic cathedral. The nave and bell tower, dating from the 1400s, fell into ruin at the Protestant Reformation of 1560, but the 13th-century choir became the parish church, and has remained so to the present day. There are interesting early 16th-century wall paintings in the ground floor of the bell tower, and numerous fine memorials in the choir, including the effigy of Alexander Stewart, Earl of Buchan (c.1343-1405), the notorious 'Wolf of Badenoch'.

*Overnight Edinburgh area*

## DAY 9 - FAREWELL



An aerial photograph of St Michael's Mount, a historic castle situated on a rocky island in the sea. The castle features a prominent square tower with a flag on top. The surrounding landscape is a mix of green grass and rocky terrain. The sea is a deep blue, with a few small boats visible in the distance. The word "ENGLAND" is overlaid in large, white, sans-serif capital letters across the center of the image.

ENGLAND



## DAY 1 - WELCOME

Arrive and transfer to Stratford upon Avon. Enjoy a visit to **Bletchley Park**, a place of exceptional historical importance as the home of British World War Two codebreaking. Technological innovation and human endeavour came together to make ground-breaking achievements that have helped shape the world we live in today. Bletchley Park has featured in movies such as *The Imitation Game* and in hugely popular TV dramas such as *The Bletchley Circle*.

*Overnight Stratford upon Avon area*

## DAY 2 - SHAKESPEARE'S HIDDEN HISTORY

After breakfast enjoy a **guided walking tour** around the historic streets of Stratford upon Avon taking in its history, attractions and fascinating relationship with William Shakespeare. Walk in Shakespeare's footsteps to see the Shakespeare town houses, Grammar School, Royal Shakespeare Theatres, Guild Chapel, Holy Trinity Church and much more. Hear fascinating stories of fire, flooding, plague, medieval cures, old-fashioned sayings and the history of the town, wrapped up in a little Shakespeare. Experience **Shakespeare's Hidden History** where you will learn more about Shakespeare's background, works and legacy, told through the fascinating library, archive and museum collections. This is a unique opportunity to view items that are not normally on public display including some of the 'Shakespeare documents' and early printed books. At **Shakespeare's Birthplace**, enjoy live performances in the garden with the resident acting troupe. Enjoy the balance of the day at leisure to experience this charming town or if you are feeling energetic take a **bike ride/walk** along the Stratford Greenway. The Stratford Greenway is a 5 mile, disused railway line that runs alongside the River Avon towards the nearby villages of Long Marston and Welford on Avon.

*Overnight Stratford upon Avon area*



# EXPERIENCE ENGLAND

*Discover some of England's literary heroes, university cities and areas of outstanding natural beauty on this six day one-centre stay in historic England.*



*Shakespeare's Birthplace*





Audley End House



The Cotswolds



Punting Oxford

### DAY 3 - OXFORD DAY TRIP

The importance and wealth of Oxford University is projected through the scale and grandeur of the college buildings throughout the city. Pass some of the oldest colleges such as the 13th century Exeter College, the impressive Bodleian Library and Balliol College, which is something of an assembly line for British Prime Ministers. Other Oxford highlights include the pretty Bridge of Sighs which connects two parts of Hertford College, and the Eagle and Child Pub where famous authors JRR Tolkien and CS Lewis would regularly meet. Oxford was also the perfect setting for the Harry Potter film series. Enjoy the ultimate in relaxation as you take a **chauffeured punt** along the River Cherwell passing by Oxford's famous Botanic Gardens, past Magdalen College School fields, through Christ Church Meadows, where Lewis Carroll wrote Alice Through the Looking Glass and Alice in Wonderland whilst teaching students in the mid-19th century. Enjoy some free time in Oxford for lunch before returning to Stratford upon Avon via the beautiful village of **Bampton** in the scenic **Cotswolds**. For first-time visitors Bampton may seem oddly familiar as it was used for filming the village scenes in Downton Abbey.

*Overnight Stratford upon Avon area*

### DAY 4 - THE COTSWOLDS

Today you will encounter one of England's most famous Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB). **The Cotswolds** is a region of gentle rolling hills dotted with market towns, unspoiled countryside and beautiful honey-coloured limestone villages offering the perfect haven to get away from it all. Naturally, with some of the prettiest villages in the UK, such as Bourton-on-the-Water and Stow-on-the-Wold, the Cotswolds is very popular but it's so easy to get off the beaten track. **Hailes Abbey** is one such option, where the fascinating stories of this 13th century Cistercian Abbey can be heard away from the main thoroughfares. Traditional skills such as dry-stone walling, hedge laying and woodland coppicing have played an important role in moulding the distinctive landscape you will encounter today and activities around these traditional skills can be organised for your groups also.

*Overnight Stratford upon Avon area*

### DAY 5 - UPSTAIRS DOWNSTAIRS

Today explore what relationships were really like between the upstairs and downstairs residents of Britain's big houses. One of the most opulent houses in Jacobean England, **Audley End House** is a beautiful 17th-Century country house. Many who visit are struck by the grandeur of the Great Hall which has stood in for Balmoral and Windsor on screen. To run houses of this scale required hard labour and to get a sense of the work that was needed a visit to the service wing is a must. View the coal room and the wet laundry, and learn about the specific hierarchy, not just between those who lived below and above stairs, but also between the servants, who themselves had a pecking order. Return to Stratford upon Avon with a stop at the university city of **Cambridge** where you will hear about the history of the university, famous former students like Darwin, Newton and Hawking, and the practical aspects of applying and studying there.

*Overnight Stratford upon Avon area*

### DAY 6 - FAREWELL



## DAY 1 - WELCOME

Arrive and transfer to Liverpool, a city with maritime origins and in 2008 designated as a European Capital of Culture. With a variety of world class museums and galleries as well as a wealth of stunning architecture that testifies to a time of great wealth, Liverpool does not disappoint. For many, Liverpool is The Beatles, and today you will enjoy a visit to **Strawberry Fields**, which began as a Victorian House in the 1860s before it transformed into a safe place where The Salvation Army supported and homed some of Liverpool's vulnerable youth. Later, Strawberry Fields, was a world where John Lennon played as a child, providing inspirational thoughts and music for peace, love and self-exploration. Continue to your hotel in the Lake District area for the next 3 nights.

*Overnight Lake District area*

## DAY 2 - WORKING SHEEPDOGS AND STEAM POWERED YACHTS

The Lake District is home to children's author Beatrix Potter and poet William Wordsworth and continues to inspire visitors with its breathtaking landscapes. Awe-inspiring peaks and rolling hills together with lush green valleys are an ideal base for sheep to graze peacefully. Border Collies have been bred in the Lake District since the 1700s to work the sheep and today you will get to experience them in action during a **Sheepdog Demonstration** at a local farm. Continue to **Hawkshead**, an ancient township with a collection of small houses, archways, and squares beloved by Wordsworth and Potter. Enjoy free time to explore the village which includes many pleasant inns, teashops and gift stores as well as The Grammar School, attended by William Wordsworth and The Beatrix Potter Gallery. This afternoon enjoy a **cruise** on Coniston Water aboard a Victorian steam-powered yacht. Take in the history and scenery of this special place as you relax on board.

*Overnight Lake District area*



# NORTHERN NATIONAL PARKS

*Enjoy the wide open spaces and endless views in two of England's most outstanding National Parks*







Lowther Castle



Hadrian's Wall



Lindisfarne Priory

## DAY 3 - LOWTHER CASTLE & LAKES DISTILLERY

Travel into the Northern Lake District to **Lowther Castle**, home to the Earls of Lonsdale for 130 years, from its construction in 1806. During that time, it housed a great art collection and was a magnet for artists, politicians and dignitaries. Unfortunately in the 1950s death duties forced the hand of the 7th Earl and he was forced to derook the building which remained untended and the gardens overgrown until the late 1990s. Since then, the 7th Earl's son, Jim Lowther has masterminded a restoration project and today you will enjoy the magnificent gothic castle, 130 acres of ancient gardens and stunning views together with a meet and greet with Jim Lowther. The majestic surroundings of the Lake District is home to a beautifully renovated Victorian farmstead and the working **Lakes Distillery**. Go behind the scenes and discover how The Lakes whisky, gin, and vodka are made followed by a hosted tasting.  
*Overnight Lake District area*

## DAY 4 - LIVE LIKE A ROMAN

This morning depart for Northumberland which today remains a county relatively free from crowds, boasting endless views and a shoreline dubbed the 'castle coast'. At the southern end of the Northumberland National Park we get our first view of **Hadrian's Wall**, the most important Roman monument in Britain. Today you will **live like a Roman** as you experience what it was like to march along the Roman Wall that once marked the northern boundary of The Roman Empire. Be amazed by stunning vistas and the remains of Hadrian's Wall. Experience a delicious Roman themed light lunch inside a replica tent and what life was like on this frontier 2000 years ago. Continue to your hotel to relax for the afternoon.  
*Overnight Northumberland National Park area*

## DAY 5 - THE SCOTTISH BORDERS AND STAR GAZING

Just north of Northumberland National Park lies the **Scottish Borders**, once a battlefield of the Scottish and English armies, who, for centuries fought for control of this beautiful area. Today we are going to discover some of Scotland's ruined abbeys, left devastated as the land disputes between the Scots and the English raged on. Today you can ramble among the romantic ruins of **Jedburgh Abbey**, discover the life of a monk at **Dryburgh Abbey** or see where Robert the Bruce is believed to be laid to rest at **Melrose Abbey**. Later tonight look to the skies and ignite your senses as you gaze towards the **Dark Skies** and stars of Northumberland National Park. This area has a 'Milky way' darkness rating, so you can see the Milky Way Galaxy with the naked eye. You will enjoy a beautiful meal followed by a visit to the **Battlesteads Observatory** to learn about astronomy and how to spot the Northern Lights.  
*Overnight Northumberland National Park area*

## DAY 6 - THE NORTHUMBERLAND COAST

Lying just a few miles off the Northumberland coast is the intriguing **Holy Island** which was once one of the centres of the Christian world and remains an important place of pilgrimage. The island is only accessible by a causeway and is cut off from the mainland twice a day. Upon the island, **Lindisfarne Priory** was founded in 635 AD by St Aiden who had travelled from the Scottish island of Iona but made famous by his predecessor St Cuthbert. In the preceding centuries the priory became well known for its Christian scholars and it was here that the beautiful Lindisfarne Gospels were created.  
*Overnight Northumberland National Park area*

## DAY 7 - FAREWELL



### DAY 1 - WELCOME

Arrive and transfer to Bath. Get a glimpse of prehistoric Britain with a visit to **Avebury Stone Circle** which, like its neighbour Stonehenge, is also a 'henge' monument. The site is so big that during the Middle Ages the village of Avebury sprung up inside the circle. Today walk amongst the standing stones and village buildings imagining what it was like in prehistoric Britain. Enjoy some free time for refreshments before continuing on to your home for the next three nights.

*Overnight Bath area*

### DAY 2 - BATH

The delightful UNESCO city of Bath is packed with eye-catching highlights. The half-moon shaped Royal Crescent is the epitome of Bath's Georgian architecture built from the attractive honey-coloured stone that dominates the city. Standing out on the city skyline are the towers of Bath Abbey. This historic building was founded in the 7th century, has been transformed and renovated over the centuries and now boasts an impressive gothic interior. Adjacent is the even older **Roman Baths**, one of Europe's most well-preserved ruins from the Roman period. The striking Pulteney Bridge with covered shopping arcades connects the Georgian centre to the east bank with its leafy parks and prestigious rugby club and university. Bath is also synonymous with the 18th century novelist Jane Austen whose life and works are immortalized in the Jane Austen Centre.

*Overnight Bath area*

### DAY 3 - LACOCK

No trip to England would be complete without a visit to a quintessential English village and Lacock does not disappoint. Dating back over 800 years, many of you will be familiar with this medieval market village from its appearances in *Downton Abbey*, *Pride & Prejudice* and *Harry Potter & the Half Blood Prince*. Explore the village with its superb architecture and houses or if you are feeling energetic enjoy an easy **2 mile walk along the riverside** enjoying beautiful views of the surrounding countryside and the River Avon on which stands the historic Lacock Abbey. Return to Bath via a beautiful scenic drive of the Southern Cotswolds including villages such as Castle Combe, a popular film location, and was supposedly where Oliver Cromwell came to escape the stress of life in the 17th century.

*Overnight Bath area*



# SOUTHWEST ADVENTURE

*Journey to the Southwest of England to embrace some of the breath-taking scenery on offer in England.*



*St Michael's Mount*





Port Isaac

#### DAY 4 - CATHEDRALS AND CIDER

Explore the Somerset region of England today on your way to the town of Wells, England's smallest city with a sacred history stretching back more than a millennium. Discover one of the few **chained libraries** in Britain at **Wells Cathedral**. The library is still in its current location within the cathedral and was built in the 1450s, although the current bookshelves and chains are from the 17th Century. The chaining of books was the most widespread and effective security system in European libraries from the middle Ages to the 18th century. Enjoy free time for lunch in this charming town. The Somerset region has historically been one of the largest producers of cider which has been produced in England since around the 11th century. Today, visit the **Somerset Cider Brandy Company** set amongst 180 acres of cider apple orchards. In autumn over forty varieties of apples are harvested so that in spring, Burrow Hill Cider is ready to drink. Enjoy a guided tour through the whole process from harvesting the apples to the distillation and maturation of the brandy.

*Overnight Devon/Cornwall area*

#### DAY 5 - PORT ISAAC AND CARNEWAS

Arrive at the attractive fishing village of Port Isaac, famously featured in the television series Doc Martin. Take a short **walking tour** of the narrow, winding streets lined with old white-washed cottages and traditional granite, slate-fronted Cornish houses. Learn about the village's fishing and maritime history. Lunch is at leisure and can be taken at a number of restaurants overlooking the cliffs and water. Travel via **Carnewas** boasting some of the best views along the Cornish coast. This area has a proud industrial past when iron, copper and lead were mined from the cliffs. Walk on paths along the cliff's edge and take in the rugged surroundings and sea air.

*Overnight Devon/Cornwall*

#### DAY 6 - ST. IVES & ST. MICHAEL'S MOUNT

This morning, travel to St. Ives, a town with a rich artistic heritage which is celebrated with a plethora of galleries from small to the internationally acclaimed. On arrival you will have a brief **introductory tour** then wander the cobbled streets between pretty fishermen's cottages, and uncover the legend, history and tradition of this ancient town. Enjoy free time to take in the Tate St. Ives, the Barbara Hepworth Sculpture Garden or one of the many beaches in the town. Enjoy a local speciality fish & chip lunch at leisure in St. Ives. Drive through a number of other small villages along the Cornish coast and Penwith Peninsula en-route to Marazion, across the bay from the historical **St. Michael's Mount**. Immerse yourself in history, wonder at the architecture and discover the legend of Jack the Giant Killer. Look down on the subtropical terraced garden and enjoy the breath-taking views of spectacular Mount's Bay. If the weather is favourable, take a short evocative boat trip to the island, or at low tide, enjoy the walk across the causeway.

*Overnight Devon/Cornwall area*

#### DAY 7 - STEAM RAILWAYS & HARBOUR CRUISES

Today enjoy some time at leisure to relax in your surrounding area or continue to explore the beautiful countryside. Travel to the small fishing village of Paignton which is part of the stunning English Riviera. There are plenty of superb beaches of golden sand that make for fantastic walks. Sit back and relax as you join the **steam railway to Kingswear**. Take the foot passenger ferry to Dartmouth where you will board your **harbour cruise** around the river and estuary. The cruise takes you to the mouth of the river passing Kingswear and Dartmouth Castles, Dittisham village, Britannia Royal Naval College and Greenway House – home to the late Dame Agatha Christie. Keep your eyes peeled for the varied wildlife that can be seen including dolphins, seals, herons, egrets and buzzards.

*Overnight Devon/Cornwall area*

#### DAY 8 - GREAT FULFORD

This morning enjoy a tour of **Great Fulford**, home to the same family for over 800 years. A house of this size and of this age has by definition an ongoing restoration programme and restoration only happens as and when the family can afford it. Great Fulford is seen to be an important part of the National Heritage and is therefore listed Grade I by English Heritage. Owners Francis and Kishandra Fulford are pleased to welcome guests for a behind the scenes tour of their home covering the history and evolution of the property followed by **tea, coffee and cakes** before departure. Transfer to Exeter for some free time and shopping before departing for London.

*Overnight London*

#### DAY 9 - FAREWELL





# WALES



### DAY 1 - WELCOME

Wales is known as the castle capital of the world and your adventure begins with a visit to **Caerphilly Castle**, a medieval fortification in South Wales. The castle was constructed by Gilbert de Clare in the 13th century as part of his campaign to conquer Glamorgan, and saw extensive fighting between Gilbert and his descendants and the native Welsh rulers. You might be surprised to hear that Wales has a growing reputation for excellent wine and you will experience this today at **Llanerch Vineyard**. Informal, informative and entertaining, you will be led by an expert through the vineyard as you learn about how they look after their grapes and how the local environment influences the taste that is unique to their Criad wines. Overnight South Wales area

### DAY 2 - THE GOWER PENINSULA

Sample the captivating charm of the Southern Wales shoreline and the glorious green countryside as you travel through the seaside village of **Mumbles** before taking the coastal route to the **Gower Peninsula**, the UK's first Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty. You will get lost in the views of dramatic headlands, rugged limestone cliffs and rolling countryside as you enjoy an easy guided walk on the **Gower Coast Path** at Rhossili. Back in Swansea learn about Wales's most famous son at the **Dylan Thomas Centre**. Overnight South Wales area

### DAY 3 - CALDEY ISLAND

Lying just off the Tenby coast, **Caldey Island** is home to a group of Cistercian monks who have occupied the island since the 6th Century. More than a thousand years of prayer and quiet living have made this remote and beautiful island a haven of tranquillity and peace. Experience Caldey Island famed for cheese and chocolate making, as well as its fragrances. Return to the mainland to enjoy some time in Tenby before continuing to your hotel for the night. Overnight Pembrokeshire Coast area



# DISCOVER WALES

Wales may be small but with everything from stunning coastline and mountains to ancient castles and an exciting culinary scene, it certainly won't disappoint







Harlech Castle



Llechwedd Quarry



St. David's Cathedral

## DAY 4 - PEMBROKESHIRE COAST & SEASHORE FORAGING

Explore one of the beautiful Pembrokeshire beaches and learn about the history, geography and geology of the Pembrokeshire coast. Find out about the local fauna and flora and especially about the plants and marine algae in their natural setting with an experienced guide. Discover some of the historical and strange uses of wild plants and how they are used in cooking and for promoting health and well-being. Visit a charming, period cottage in St. David's to experience a delicious selection of local dishes incorporating the wild herbs and marine algae identified and collected along your way. Sample for yourself some handmade soaps and skin care products created by your local guide from wild ingredients. This afternoon visit **St. David's Cathedral** and learn about the story of the patron saint of Wales.

Overnight Pembrokeshire Coast area

## DAY 5 - WELSH COAST

Caws Cenarth is a family business and the longest producer of Welsh farmhouse Caerffili (also known as Caerphilly), probably Wales's best known cheese. Today travel to Cenarth and visit the **Caw Cenarth Cheese Dairy** to learn more about how they use locally sourced ingredients to influence their cheese making. With over 870 miles of stunning coastline you will not be disappointed as you drive north along the Welsh Coast. Stop at **Harlech Castle**, gazing out across land and sea, keeping a watchful eye over Snowdonia National Park and the Irish Sea.

Overnight North Wales area

## DAY 6 - GARDENS AND QUARRIES

Coal mining and slate quarrying has been around in Wales since the Roman period and this way of life has helped build communities and define generations of families in North Wales. Today, discover the story of slate at **Llechwedd** on a guided walking tour through the quarry. You will follow a qualified Mountain Leader guide on an adventure around the Llechwedd site walking in the footsteps of the miners who worked this site for up to 12 hours a day – some as young as ten years old. Experience year round colour and a haven of tranquillity and relaxation at **Bodnant Gardens**. Created by five generations of one family over the past 150 years enjoy wonderful views, grand terraced lawns, a renowned collection of rhododendrons and a wonderful waterfall.

Overnight North Wales area

## DAY 7 - FAREWELL

 *Did you know!*

The existence of St David's Cathedral means that St Davids is Britain's smallest city, with a population of roughly 1,600 – compared to an estimated 358,000 in Wales's capital, Cardiff. The tenor Dewi Sant bell in the cathedral weighs 2,700lbs!



# TRAVEL WITH A DIFFERENCE



IRELAND & THE UK OFFER A RANGE OF OPTIONS FOR YOUR GROUP FROM TOUR SERIES PROGRAMS TO SPECIAL INTEREST ITINERARIES. INSPIRING IDEAS INCLUDE;

## PERFORM IN IRELAND & THE UK

Join your choir, marching band or orchestra on an exciting tour performing in some of the most beautiful venues in Europe including cathedrals, churches and castles or participating in the world famous St. Patrick's Festival. Share memorable moments with local groups and develop friendships that will last a lifetime

## PRAY & REFLECT

Trace the footsteps of St. Patrick in Ireland or learn about the Protestant Reformation in Scotland. Enjoy opportunities to visit and worship at some of the key sites associated with Irish and British Saints. Enjoy unique experiences and of course, prayer and reflection

## GET COMPETITIVE

Bring your sports group to Ireland and the UK and compete against local teams in soccer, rugby, hockey, basketball, lacrosse and much more. Why not test your skills learning some traditional Irish sports including hurling and gaelic football or take on some of the best golf courses in the world in Ireland and the UK

## CONNECT WITH FRIENDS & FAMILY

Trace your family roots across Britain and Ireland with access to some of the best genealogists. Enjoy some great outdoor activities with your kids including sheepdog herding, kayaking or a jaunting car ride in Killarney National Park





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**LOCATIONS** DUBLIN | EDINBURGH

T&C's APPLY