

## **“IRISH PUB WEEKEND TOUR” SUGGESTED TOURING ITINERARY FOR WINTER PROGRAM**

Ireland is a country known for its stunning landscapes, vibrant colourful villages, ancient Celtic relics, lush green valleys and abandoned castles. As an ocean ‘outpost’ at the western edge of Europe, Ireland has a natural character quite different to the Continental landmass. Its geology is remarkably varied, with rocks that range back over 2,500 million years. Once, long ago, Ireland was covered by ice, and the track of the glaciers can be read in the dramatic shapes of the mountains and the little drumlins hills of the countryside.

### **DAY 1: ARRIVE DUBLIN TO GALWAY *Cead Mile Failte - Welcome to Ireland!***

Arrive into Dublin Airport where you will be met by your private driver and escorted to your luxury motor coach.

Commence your journey to the west of Ireland. En route you will stop in **County Westmeath** & visit **Kilbeggan Locke’s Distillery**. Established in 1757 Locke’s is the last remaining example of a small pot distillery in Ireland. The distillery made pot still Irish Malt Whiskey for almost 200 years. Locke’s Distillery is now open as a museum of Industrial Archaeology showing how whiskey was produced in times past. Guided tours bring you through the original distillery buildings. Over 90% of the original machinery has now been restored and can be seen working daily. Follow the process from the grinding of the grain to the casking of the final product.

Your final destination today is **Galway City**. Galway nestles at the neck of Galway Bay and is reputed to have been Columbus’ final point of departure on his epoch-making voyage of discovery. The city was founded on the east bank of the river late in the 12th century by the Anglo-Norman family de Burgo. It attracted many Welsh and Norman merchants who enclosed the city within a defensive wall. Under the control of the fourteen leading families, known as the ‘tribes’ an extensive trade developed, not only with the continent, importing French and Spanish wine, but also with the West Indies. Before checking into your accommodation your driver will give you a short orientation tour of the city, highlights of the city include Eyre Square, Lynch’s Castle, St. Nicholas’ Church, O’Brien’s Bridge, Spanish Arch, the Famous Claddagh, beautiful Galway Bay, Salthill Promenade, University College, Salmon Weir Bridge, Court House and the Municipal Theatre.

Check into a three star city center hotel, Forster Court/Oranmore Lodge Hotel and enjoy dinner at your hotel this evening.

**DAY 2: CLIFFS OF MOHER & GALWAY** This morning after a hearty Irish breakfast at your hotel, you can travel south to Co Clare to visit the world renowned **Cliffs of Moher**, the cliffs are great dark sandstone cliffs (600ft) that rise sheer from the Atlantic for nearly 5 miles. Screaming sea birds throng the ledges or wheel and swoop about the waves. The best views are from

O'Brien's Tower, built in 1853 by Cornelius O'Brien.

In the afternoon travel north to Connemara and visit **Celtic Crystal**. Celtic Crystal is situated in the Connemara Gaeltacht (an Irish language speaking area) in the village of Moycullen, 12 km from Galway City. Located on the site of the 'old railway station' which formed part of the famous Clifden line, this family run business has been pioneering the incorporation of Celtic Designs and Gaelic Motifs on its ornate, exquisitely crafted Irish Crystal for over 35 years. Today this traditional Irish craft is continued by a creative team of young Irish artisans, who reproduce symbols of Ireland's proud Culture and History on exceptional Crystal pieces. Visitors to the factory are invited to join in a personally conducted tour of the Showroom which includes an informative and entertaining talk on the Historical and Cultural background of the uniquely crafted designs, such as the "Claddagh Ring", Celtic designs, the "Brian Boru Harp", and the "Tara Brooch" will be given. This will be followed by a demonstration of all that is best in the Art of Glass Cutting where visitors can witness the creation of a unique piece of crystal by the master craftsmen.

Visit **Connemara Marble** before returning to Galway City. For three generations, the Walsh family have worked the beautiful, green marble that is unique to Connemara in the West of Ireland. Their quarry at Lissoughter in the Connemara mountains first opened in the 19th century. In 1903, King Edward VII and Queen Alexandra visited it during the Royal Tour of Connemara. Today, the marble of Connemara can be found in the world's great monuments. In the halls of Trinity College Dublin, on the Victoria and Albert Museum in London, in Kensington Palace and in some of America's finest buildings.

Return to Galway City tonight and enjoy one of the liveliest entertainment scenes in the World. The Pubs in Galway City are themselves one of the City's greatest attractions. There is somewhere to cater for everyone. Galway is a 7 night a week City, famous for its live music scene and relaxed atmosphere.

Overnight again in Galway City.

**DAY 3: FREE DAY IN GALWAY -OPTIONAL TOUR TO KYLEMORE ABBEY** Enjoy your day at leisure in Galway City, or take an optional tour out to **Kylemore Abbey [additional \$37.00 Per Person]**. The spectacular Kylemore Abbey was originally a private residence. This castellated house overlooking Kylemore Lake is a splendid example of neo-Gothic architecture. In 1920 it was turned over to the Benedictine nuns, who have since opened the grounds and part of the house to the public. The highlight is the recently restored Gothic chapel, considered a miniature cathedral.

Return to Galway for overnight.

**DAY 4: GALWAY TO DUBLIN** Bid farewell to the city of the Tribes and travel east to **Dublin City**. Dublin is one of Europe's most vibrant cities. Over a thousand

years old, the turbulent history and rich traditions of the city have inspired writers, artists and musicians down the ages. Today, artists are still attracted by Dublin's youthful enthusiasms and easy-going lifestyle and the city has become a thriving center of culture and enjoyment. The new wave of cafes and restaurants are meeting places for all ages while traditional Dublin pubs are rightly world-famous for their informal atmosphere and lively conversation. The city oozes atmosphere, not least in the heady scents that cling to it - the rich aroma of the hops being roasted in the Guinness brewery and the salty tang of the sea. Nighttime entertainment is a rich mix of world-class theater, concerts from classical to rock, jazz clubs, traditional music sessions and old-style cabaret. Dublin gets much of its energy from its young people and enjoys one of the best clubbing scenes in Europe. Above all, Dublin is a small city, where visitors can feel at home after even the shortest stay.

In Dublin the group will visit the **Guinness Storehouse**; the guided tour ends, as it should, with a pint of 'plain' in the **Gravity Bar** with its bird's-eye views of the city.

Overnight at the Trinity Capital Hotel in Dublin City with dinner in your hotel this evening.

**DAY 5: DEPART** Return to Dublin Airport for your return flight to the US -**Slan Abhaile -Safe Home!**