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Tour Dates:

11th August 2018

8th September 2018

7 Night Donegal & Galway Irish Knitting & Craft Tour

Tour Overview

Begin your knitting tour of Ireland in Dublin where you will see the sights and sounds of our capital city. Explore the Boyne Valley, once the ancient capital of Ireland and visit the famous Trim Castle. Visit the Ulster American Folk Park and learn how wool production and processing was once an important part of Irish family life. In Donegal meet Edel MacBride and her team and enjoy a knitting workshop including yarn pack, working the best of Irish moss, cable and Edel's favourite Aran stitches. In Donegal we will spend a few days exploring the landscape and visiting the main textile related industries including Handmade Irish Sweaters, a traditional Cottage industry where Kathleen and her small team of knitters operate from her home producing quality handknit Aran sweaters which are sold at home and abroad and Studio Donegal a hand-weaving and clothing manufacturing business. At Glencolmcille we will spend some time knitting with the locals learning about a Fair Isle pattern that has been handed down from one generation to the next in a particular Glencolmcille family. On our way to Galway we will meet Mary from Markree Woolcraft and visit the Museum of Country Life, an essential stop on any craft tour of Ireland! In Galway we will take you to a traditional basket maker for a demonstration and you will have plenty of time to explore the city of Galway on your own. On your return to Dublin we will visit the famous Tullamore D.E.W. Heritage Centre and discover how Daniel E. Williams went from stable boy to distillery manager to creating the whiskey which still bears his initials today.

Included in This Tour

- Transfers on arrival and departure by private coach (for arrivals prior to 11am)
- Sightseeing as per itinerary in a luxury coach with an experienced driver and accredited guide, entrance fees included if applicable.
- Accommodation in rooms with private facilities for 7 nights
- Irish breakfast daily
- 3 hotel table d'hote dinners
- 2 lunches
- 1 Farewell Meal in Dublin
- Entrance to the following attractions: Trim Castle, The Ulster American Folk Park, Glencolmcille Folk Village, The National Museum of Country Life
- Tullamore Dew Whiskey Distillery Tour
- Basket weaving demonstration with Ciaran Hogan

Workshops/Knitting Activities Included in This Tour

- Studio Donegal Weaving Demonstration
- Spinning Demonstration with Mary from Markree Wool Craft
- Visit Handmade Irish Sweaters in Donegal
- Knitting Workshop with Edel MacBride from Knitfield
- Fair Isle Knitting Workshop at Glencolmcille

Overnights for this Tour

- Camden Court Hotel (or similar), Dublin, 1 Night
- Kees Hotel (or similar), Ballyofey, Donegal, 1 Night
- Bayview Hotel (or similar), Killybegs, Donegal, 2 Nights
- Salthill Hotel (or similar), Galway, 2 Nights
- Camden Court Hotel (or similar), Dublin, 1 Night

Itinerary

Important Note: *Attractions, Workshops and Demonstrations May Change According to Availability and Scheduling*

Day 1: Dublin Sightseeing

Begin your knitting tour of Ireland with a transfer to your hotel (for arrivals prior to 11am). At 2pm enjoy a panoramic guided tour of Dublin and visit The Constant Knitter where you will meet a local craftsperson for a demonstration and informal chat about their craft topic. The remainder of the evening will be free for you to explore the city at your leisure before meeting back at the hotel for your welcome dinner. Overnight in Dublin, Dinner, Bed & Breakfast included.

Day 2: The Boyne Valley & The Ulster American Folk Park

The Boyne Valley was once the ancient capital of Ireland. The abundance of historic monuments here testifies to the ancient significance of this area and some Ireland's most important monuments can be found here. We will take you on a tour of this historic region and you will visit the famous Trim Castle. Built in 1173, Trim Castle is the largest Anglo-Norman castle in Ireland and it remains a strong focal point of the town today. Return to your coach and travel to the Ulster American Folk Park in Omagh. The Park explores the historical link between Ulster and America, focusing particularly on the lifestyle and experiences of those immigrants who sailed from Ulster to America in the 18th and 19th centuries. Of particular interest to you may be the weaver's cottage where you will see an authentic handloom which would have been used to weave tweed or linen by the man of the house while his wife spun the flax fibres into yarn and the children carded and combed the flax in preparation for the spinning wheel. Staff here will give you a demonstration on the spinning wheel and tell you all about traditional yarn dyeing methods. Onward to Donegal and check into your hotel. Overnight in Ballybofey, Donegal, Bed & Breakfast included.

Day 3: Edel MacBride Knitting Workshop & Handmade Irish Sweaters

Check out of your hotel and travel to Knitfield, a studio owned and run by one of Ireland's finest knitwear designers, Edel MacBride. Here meet Edel and her team and enjoy a core workshop including yarn pack, working the best of Irish moss, cable and Edel's favourite Aran stitches. Continue to Donegal Craft Village where time will be allowed for you to have lunch on your own or simply walk around the craft shops, of particular interest to you may be the Weaving and Felting studios. After lunch we will pay a visit to Kathleen Meehan at her home on the beautiful Muckross peninsula. Here you will see a traditional Cottage industry, Handmade Irish Sweaters in action as you meet Kathleen and her small team of knitters that operate from her home producing quality handknit Aran sweaters which are sold at home and abroad. Continue to your hotel in Killybegs town and check into your hotel where the remainder of the evening is at your leisure. Overnight in Killybegs, Donegal, Dinner, Bed & Breakfast included.

Day 4: Donegal Sightseeing: Studio Donegal, Slieve League Cliffs and Glencolmcille Fair Isle Knitting Workshop

Your first stop today is Studio Donegal, a hand-weaving and clothing manufacturing business committed to preserving and promoting traditional Irish hand-weaving. Here you will see the process of hand-weaving from start to finish including the spinning, warping and weaving of the wool. Next, visit Slieve League Cliffs, one of the highest cliffs in Europe to enjoy some amazing views. After lunch (included) at the cliffs travel to Glencolmcille, an area famous for its wealth of traditional Irish culture, music and prehistoric settlements. Take a tour of Glencolmcille Folk Village, a collection of several small cottages, called a 'clachan', resting on a hillside that overlooks the stunning Glen Bay Beach. Designed, constructed and conserved by local people, the Folk Village is one of Ireland's longest running living-history museums. At Glencolmcille we will Spend Some Time Knitting with The Locals. Knitting was an integral part of the income of families in Glencolmcille. Spinning, weaving and dying of wool also played a huge part in the lives and culture of the locals. Glencolmcille was very much a fishing community and the Aran sweater was both a necessity and second nature to the people. Rita Cunningham grew up in Glencolmcille, her father Francie fished out of the now deserted fishing village of Port. Rita as a child remembers the woman gathered around a quilting frame in an old thatched cottage in Port, stitching a special naturally dyed red flannel onto a quilt. One of the women in this village passed on a Fair Isle pattern to Rita that would pass down the generations through her own family. Immerse yourself in this unique pattern and stories from the ancient coastal Geltacht parish of Glencolmcille with Rita and other local knitters. Overnight in Killybegs, Donegal, Bed & Breakfast included.

Day 5: Travel to Galway, Markree Woolcraft Spinning Demonstration & The Museum of Country Life

Leaving Donegal our first stop is the Crafter's Basket in nearby Sligo. Here meet with Mary from Markree Woolcraft who will demonstrate traditional Irish spinning techniques on a Donegal Spinning Wheel and talk to you about how she dyes her yarns using

hedgerow plants and lichens. Next, travel to Castlebar where you will visit the National Museum of Country Life, an essential stop on any craft tour of Ireland. This fascinating museum houses collections of domestic goods, once used as part of daily life from 1850 to 1950. Exhibits and an informative movie explain how Irish people made a living from the soil before the machine age. After ample time to enjoy this extensive museum and grounds, travel to Galway where the evening is your own. You might decide to head into town and catch a traditional Irish Music session in any one of Galway's many pubs or simply relax in your hotel. Overnight in Galway, Dinner, Bed & Breakfast included.

Day 6: Galway City Tour & Spiddal Basket Weaving Demonstration

After breakfast take the short journey to Spiddal Craft & Design Centre where you will enjoy a demonstration of traditional Irish willow basket weaving techniques and an introduction to modern basket designs with traditional basket maker, Ciaran Hogan. You might also enjoy visiting other craftspeople at the centre including traditional hand weaver, Máire Ní Thaidhg. Return to Galway where after a panoramic tour of the city, the remainder of the day is free for your own personal sightseeing. Places of interest include Galway City Museum or Galway Cathedral to name but a few. Situated behind the famous Spanish Arch, Galway City Museum houses exhibitions which explore aspects of the history and heritage of Galway City, focusing on the medieval town, the Claddagh Village & Galway. Galway City is also a great shopping location with many shops selling traditional Irish craft and other souvenirs. You might have a look at some Claddagh Rings, The Claddagh Ring is a typical souvenir from Galway. It comes in a gold or silver band made of two hands clasping a crowned heart and symbolizes friendship, fidelity, and love. Overnight in Galway, Bed & Breakfast included.

Day 7: Return to Dublin via Tullamore Dew

After breakfast board your touring coach and travel to Tullamore D.E.W. Heritage Centre where you will discover how Daniel E. Williams went from stable boy to distillery manager to creating the whiskey which still bears his initials today. There will be time for some refreshments before continuing to Dublin where the afternoon is free for your personal sightseeing or shopping. This evening meet back at the hotel and we will travel together to a local restaurant for a final farewell dinner. Overnight in Dublin, Bed & Breakfast included.

Day 8: Tour Ends

After your final Irish breakfast depart the hotel for Dublin airport arriving in time to complete check-in formalities and that last minute duty free shopping.

Prices

11th August 2018:

€1699 (\$2531 CAD) per person sharing/€359 (\$534 CAD) supplement if single room required

8th September 2018:

€1699 (\$2531 CAD) per person sharing/€359 (\$534 CAD) supplement if single room required

Note: The CAD Dollar rate is an indication only and is based on the rate of exchange Euro 1.00 = CAD Dollar 1.49. All payments will be taken in Euro.

Booking Requirements & Cancellation Information

A deposit of 20% of the total tour price is required to hold your booking. The balance of the tour is due 60 days before arrival. Mastercard and Visa accepted with no additional charges.

Cancellation Policy:

- 29 days or longer deposit will be forfeit and non-refundable.
- 28 days to 15 days 50% is forfeit
- 14 days or less 100% of all money paid is forfeit.