

**ULTIMATE IRELAND**

Style: Signature | Dates: July 4-16, 2017 | Duration: 13 Days/ 12 Nights | Start Dublin – End Dublin

Visit the jewels of the Irish countryside with castles, landmarks and traditional pubs!
See all the highlights of Ireland – from North to south, East to West, ranging from the big cities of Dublin and Belfast to quaint coastal towns and stunning landscapes.

**Day 1 | July 4, Tuesday****DUBLIN ARRIVAL & BELFAST SIGHTSEEING**

Welcome to Ireland! On arrival into Dublin Airport, you will be met by your transfer driver in the Arrivals Terminal to begin the trip of a lifetime. Leaving Dublin, travel north along the coast to Drogheda; continue driving through the towns of Dundalk and Newry and past the scenic Mourne Mountains. Drive into Belfast, which is situated on the deep inlet of Belfast Lough. In the city center see the Albert Memorial and the ornate Victorian buildings of the Opera House and the Crown Liquor Saloon. In Donegall Square view the imposing City Hall, completed in 1906. The richly decorated interior contains stained glass portraying Belfast's principal industries. You will visit to the 'must see' Titanic Center. The newly built center is located on the slipways where RMS Titanic was built. Titanic Belfast is the world's largest Titanic visitor experience, exploring the Titanic story in a fresh and insightful way. It tells the stories of the ill-fated Titanic, which hit an iceberg and sank during her maiden voyage in 1912, and her sister ships RMS Olympic and HMHS Britannic. You will make your way through the 9 interactive galleries of the Titanic Experience, explore the symbolism of this iconic building with The Discovery Tour, dine in Bistro 401 or browse for an exclusive gift in the Titanic Store. Walk the decks of the last remaining White Star vessel - SS Nomadic or immerse yourself in the historic Slipways as you uncover the true legend of Titanic, in the city where it all began. Return to your hotel for a gorgeous, traditional Irish meal and some much-needed rest.

Day 2 | July 5, Wednesday**DERRY & GIANT'S CAUSEWAY**

Depart Belfast and tour along the Antrim coast to the Giant's Causeway. This impressive area of hexagonal columns was formed over 60 million years ago by cooling lava and has given rise to many legends as the basalt resembles giant steps. The legend has it that Finn McCool, the mythical giant, built this bridge to Scotland to reach his beloved. The hexagonal shaped stone pilings and pillar are a geological marvel. Perhaps try the Carrick-a-Rede rope challenge if you feel brave enough! View Dunluce Castle, the main fort of the Irish MacDonnells, chiefs of Antrim.

Tour on to Derry City – a 6th century walled city founded by St. Columcille. Enjoy exploring the city, see the massive City Walls and Gates and the Guild Hall where the City Council sits. Tour on to Donegal, to your hotel for a nice hot dinner and some peace.

Day 3 | July 6, Thursday**UNIQUE COASTAL EXPERIENCE**

Discover the History and the People of the Causeway Coast with a unique experience which will bring alive and enhance your trip along the Causeway Coastal Route helping you to understand its history and the people, while discovering the locations of castles, glens and rugged coastline on this route. You will horse-ride for an hour and afterwards enjoy tea and scones! This experience will cover peat cutting out on the hillside which enjoys stunning views. Out here you can cut rushes like

was traditionally done and make St Bridget's crosses back at the centre, where you will also learn some Irish language and Ulster Scots dialect. After all of this, you will finish the experience by feeding some of the sheep! Be one with the gorgeous nature surrounding you before returning to your accommodation for a home cooked meal.

Day 4 | July 7, Friday

CONNEMARA

Tour along past Donegal. Nearby is Slieve League with the highest sea cliffs in Europe – the cliffs of Bungle. Drive along through Sligo, and stop for a look at the beautiful mountain ranges and beaches surrounding the area. You would even have time for an ice-cream or a spot of lunch. Continue on to the shores of Galway Bay, with views of the Aran Islands in the distance. Continue to the unique heritage town of Westport which is nestled at the foot of the mountain Croagh Patrick and overlooking Clew Bay.

Day 5 | July 8, Saturday

GALWAY, CLIFFS OF MOHER & THE BURREN

This morning, enjoy exploring Galway city and view Eyre Square, Spanish Arch, the Claddagh District and Galway Cathedral, built on an island in the River Corrib on the site of an old prison. Explore the pedestrianized streets of this vibrant city. Travel along the west coast towards the Cliffs of Moher. The Cliffs of Moher rise 700 feet above the sea and extend five miles along the coast. You will pass through a region called the Burren (Gaelic word “Boireann” meaning Rocky Place). The Burren is a very distinctive landscape extending over 200 sq km of completely exposed carboniferous limestone rock. The Burren was scraped bare by the mechanical erosion of the ice sheets during the Ice Age and is a fine example of a “Karst Landscape”. Its unusually temperate climate, soil deposits and rock formations create a unique environment that supports the growth of many rare and varied plant species from Arctic, Mediterranean and Alpine climates. With a bleak but beautiful appearance often described as lunar, the Burren holds many delightful secrets – such as underground caves, rivers and lakes. Travel on to Bunratty Castle Hotel for some well-deserved rest in a beautiful castle setting.

Day 6 | July 9, Sunday

BUNRATTY & LIMERICK

Next visit Bunratty Folk Park, a living reconstruction of the homes and environment of Ireland of over a century ago. Roam through the park and see the rural farmhouses, village shops and streets which have been recreated and furnished to a time that once was. Visit Bunratty Woollen Shop for your last chance to pick up some gifts. Afterwards explore Limerick and view King John's Castle. Join the Earl of Thomond for a glorious banquet at this majestic 15th century Bunratty Castle. The Earl's Butler welcomes guests from the four corners of the world toasting an era of great Irish taste with excellent food, fine wine and honey mead.

Day 7 | July 10, Monday

CORK

This morning you will venture on to Cork. Take a visit to the fantastic Donkey Sanctuary. The Donkey Sanctuary is set in the beautiful rolling country side of County Cork just outside the village of Lisacrol near Mallow. The Donkey Sanctuary has taken in over 5,200 donkeys rescued from all parts of the country. You are very welcome to come and visit and meet all the beautiful donkeys, foals and mules. There are stunning walkways to enjoy. Tour north through Moll's Gap and stop at Ladies View for a panoramic view over the Lakes of Killarney and Killarney town. Travel through the national park and take in the stunning scenery of mountains, lakes and woodlands. You will pass the stunning Torc Waterfall where there will be an opportunity to make a brief photo stop. The park is also home to Ross Castle, a 15th century tower house and the historic Muckross House, a 19th century mansion. Continue into Killarney town to enjoy your evening. Perhaps you could visit the The Danny Man, Killarney's “famous singing pub” and enjoy some traditional Irish Music this evening.

Day 8 | July 11, Tuesday

RING OF KERRY

Journey on to Ross Castle today. This Castle may be considered a typical example of the stronghold of an Irish Chieftain during the Middle Ages. The date of its foundation is uncertain but it was probably built in the late 15th century by one of the ODonoghue Ross chieftains. It is surrounded by a fortified bawn, its curtain walls defended by circular flanking towers, two of which remain. Today take on The Ring of Kerry is the most renowned Day Tour in Ireland. Throughout its 110 miles, you will travel around the MacGillicuddy Reeks and the Iveragh Peninsula, along the breathtaking

Atlantic Coast, Dingle Bay and Kenmare Bay, returning to Killarney through the famed Molls Gap, Ladies View and Killarney National Park. En route are the lovely coastal villages of Glenbeigh, Waterville and Sneem and the thriving market towns of Killorglin and Caherciveen. The Ring embraces many points of historic and archaeological interest.

Day 9 | July 12, Wednesday

KILKENNY

Continue to the beautiful, historic town of Kilkenny. From wealthy tradesmen to bishops and witches, Kilkenny has seen it all: A Witch who murdered her four husbands, a Mayor who fathered 25 children, a pass time involving Kilkenny Cats, a spinning cage outside the Tholsel for troublemakers, a public burning of Petronella the maid in 1324, roaming pigs in graveyards and the town centre, and so much more. Learn all about this historic town on a walking tour of Kilkenny, with a personal guide. Next visit the Dominican Black Abbey in Kilkenny, founded in 1225 by William Marshall, Earl of Pembroke. The church has since been beautifully restored to its original splendour with a spectacular coloured stained glass window. The Black Abbey was part of the Dominican Priory and derived its name from the Black Friars, as the Dominicans were called. The Black Abbey is the longest established of all Irish foundations. Enjoy dinner in Kyleter's Inn before returning to your accommodation.

Day 10 | July 13, Thursday

CASTLECOMER

Explore Castlecomer Discovery Park, set in a spectacular 80 acre woodland. The Discovery Park boasts an exciting range of recreational and educational activities. Nibble on delicious treats in the award-winning café, visit the fascinating multi-media mining museum and splash about in the pedal boats while taking in the beautiful scenery and natural settings of the park. Find yourself vanishing into the world of creative arts and craft workshops and experience first-hand the detailed craftsmanship that goes into each and every piece, while fighting the temptation to purchase 1, 2 or 10 pieces!! Conquer your fear and discover your inner climber in a series of complicated rope walkways. Walk high above the Sycamore tree tops, 10 metres above the ground as you grapple with each new challenge while also catching a glimpse of the spectacular birds-eye view of the park. Castlecomer Discovery Park offers the perfect place to get fit, experience nature and enjoy the great outdoors. Whether it's a quick stroll or something a little more challenging, they have got it all!

Day 11 | July 14, Friday

DUBLIN

Explore the sights of Dublin City and enjoy commentary using the Dublin City Hop on Hop off Bus service. Relax on a 90-minute city tour and then use the bus to transfer you between attractions. A visit to the Guinness Storehouse is included where you can learn about the famous 'Black stuff' and enjoy a complimentary pint of Guinness in the Gravity Bar which enjoys panoramic views of the City. This evening, participate in Dublin's Traditional Musical Pub Crawl. The tour begins at 7.30pm and typically finishes between 9.30pm and 10.00pm. Experience the vibrancy of Dublin's traditional drink and Irish music scene on this evening pub crawl through Temple Bar – the city's cultural quarter! Accompany two friendly musicians on a fun and educational tour through the hip yet historic district, where you'll visit classic pubs and bars, witness local drinking culture, and encounter Irish storytelling and music at its best.

Day 12 | July 15, Saturday

DUBLIN

After a good nights' rest continue touring the rest of Dublin City on board the Hop on Hop off Bus. The bus will be your mode of transport around the city and will transfer you between attractions. Dublin Castle, Christchurch Cathedral and St. Patrick's Cathedral are all within a short walking distance of each other. You will visit to Trinity College with its cobbled courtyards where you will see the famous 'Book of Kells.' This evening you will be attending a lively mix of pulsating traditional Irish dance rhythms, jaw-dropping footwork and legendary Irish Songs. Located in the heart of Dublin City Centre, next to the famous O'Connell Bridge, Celtic Nights is choreographed for maximum audience participation and fun entertainment. It includes world championship dancers and All Ireland winning musicians showcasing the very best in Irish dance including the famous brush dance, 'sean nós' (Old Style) and you will even have the opportunity to share the stage with the Irish dancers for a Céilí. Nowhere else in Dublin city will you find an experience like the Celtic Nights 3 Course feast at the Arlington Hotel featuring traditional home style cooking in a charming Irish atmosphere.

Day 13 | July 16, Sunday

RETURN TO CANADA

Transfer to Dublin Airport in good time to check in for your flight. You may do some last minute shopping at the duty free stores before boarding your aircraft and flying across the Atlantic Ocean back to Canada.

*Unforeseen events and new discoveries may result in changes to this itinerary, but only for the better! None of the activities listed are guaranteed at this point. You will receive a more detailed itinerary closer to departure dates.

TOUR DETAILS:



INCLUSIONS:

- Escorted tour from beginning to the end
- Exclusive transport by luxury motorcoach with driver/guide
- 12 nights in comfortable character rich hotels. Room type - Twin
- Internet in hotels when possible
- Full time tour leader
- Special events exclusively for Cobblestone travellers

MEALS:

- All breakfasts
- Dinner each evening, except Day 5 and 10

VISITS & ADMISSION FEES TO:

Titanic Centre
Carrick a Rede Rope Bridge Visit
Giant's Causeway Visitor Center
Mountsandel Activities
Bunratty Folk Park
Bunratty Banquet
Ross Castle
Kilkenny Walking Tour
Black Abbey
Guinness Storehouse
Musical Pub Crawl
Celtic Nights

NOT INCLUDED:

- Extra days before/after the tour
- Events and Services not included in the itinerary or marked Optional
- Some meals & Alcoholic beverages
- Airport transfers if you're NOT travelling with a group
- Travel Insurance
- Telephone services
- Laundry services

OPTIONAL ADD-ONS:

- Extend your trip
- Upgrade your room / Get a single room
- Do a side trip – visit Family, have your Family History researched (Ukraine)

MORE QUESTIONS

If you have any question or requests regarding your trip – big, small or downright quirky – please call or e-mail us. We are happy to help!

ACCOMMODATIONS

Belfast:

Malone Lodge Hotel

<http://www.malonelodgehotelbelfast.com/en/>

Derry:

Central Hotel

<http://www.cityhotelderry.com/>

Westport:

Westport Hotel:

<http://www.hotelwestport.ie/>

Bunratty:

Bunratty Castle Hotel

www.bunrattycastlehotel.com

Tralee:

Fels Point Hotel

www.felspointhotel.com

Kilkenny:

River Court Hotel

www.rivercourthotel.com

Dublin:

Ashling Hotel

<http://www.ashlinghotel.ie/>

TOUR HOST

Vincent Rees

vincent@cobblestonefreeway.ca