

# Ireland in Depth

Departing  
4th June 2023

**Blue Dot Travel**

Go somewhere different





**\$12,990 pp**

Twin-share, excluding  
international flights  
Single supp \$2,450

## IRELAND IN DEPTH

From the haunting beauty of the pure, unspoiled landscapes and the drama of the coastline, to the urban buzz of the country's dynamic cities mixed with the magic of thousands of years worth of culture and history, The Emerald Isle is a country that never fails to surprise.

There are very few detailed, small group tours available in Ireland, which is why we've developed such a comprehensive tour. We'll have you drinking Guinness in a traditional pub, strolling through quaint cobblestoned villages, dancing to Celtic music and driving through stunningly beautiful rugged back roads and spectacular coastlines. Of course, you'll also take in history which might even be relevant to your own ancestry.

Ireland is home to two UNESCO World Heritage Sites, both inscribed during the 1990's. Brú na Bóinne, or 'the palace of the Boyne', in County Meath is a complex of Neolithic chamber tombs and standing stones which were built some 5,000 years ago, making them older than the pyramids. The passage tombs Newgrange, Knowth and Dowth contain the largest collection of megalithic art in Western Europe. Each year on the winter solstice in December the passage tomb at Newgrange aligns with the rising sun which spills morning light into the central tomb.

Skellig Michael is one of the most unique World Heritage Sites in the world. Located off the coast of Co. Kerry in southwest Ireland, Skellig Michael is the bigger of the Skellig Rocks, two towering sea crags rising from the Atlantic Ocean. A Gaelic Christian monastery operated on the island for over 600 years from the 7th century, home to a small group of monks keen to distance themselves from civilisation. The iconic island rock, jutting out of the Atlantic ocean is visible from the mainland and the beehive huts which formed part of the monastery are still intact on top of the island.

This beautiful and dramatic ice-carved landscape is steeped in treasures of history that go back thousands of years.



**Day 1, Sunday 4th June**  
**DEPARTURE**

Depart Australia on your flight to Dublin. All flights to be confirmed. *Meals in flight*

**Day 2, Monday 5th June**  
**ARRIVAL AND WELCOME DINNER**

Arrive in Dublin and transfer to the hotel where our stay is for two nights (subject to flight arrival times). This evening we'll enjoy a welcome dinner and opportunity to meet and greet the whole group. Our guide will take us through the plans for the next three weeks. Accommodation is at The Gresham Hotel, Dublin (or similar) for two nights. *D*

**Day 3, Tuesday 6th June**  
**DUBLIN**

Begin the day with a walking tour of Dublin with our guide. We'll be lead through the magical sights and streets of Ireland's capital and hear the stories of the city's Viking founders through to recent history. We'll also visit magnificent Trinity College and gaze upon the Book of Kells, Medieval Europe's greatest treasure. Next, it's onto the Guinness Storehouse for an unforgettable experience. Walk through the home of The Black Stuff and grab a taste. End the day in the poignant EPIC – a hugely interactive museum telling the story of Ireland's immigrants and their effect on the wider world. If you have Irish ancestry yourself, this is the place to find out more. Dinner is at leisure tonight – we suggest a typical Irish pub. *B*

**Day 4, Wednesday 7th June**  
**DUBLIN — BELFAST**

After breakfast, follow the East Coast towards Belfast. Along the way there will be plenty of stops, from Neolithic monuments to sights of religious importance. First off, the ancient temple of Newgrange (main burial chamber excluded). Over 5,000 years old, this intricate collection of chambers would have been one of the largest buildings in the world when



completed, yet the reason for its existence is still shrouded in mystery. Next, we will discover the beautiful Monasterboice High Crosses, a fascinating blend of the Celtic and Christian combined in 11th-century sculpture. We'll travel on to Belfast, where our accommodation is at the Europa Hotel (or similar) for the next two nights. *B/D*

**Day 5, Thursday 8th June**  
**BELFAST**

The rejuvenated city of Belfast harbours a turbulent past of civil war and reconciliation. Explore the streets and sights of Northern Ireland's capital – the wall murals and artwork a particularly poignant reminder of this island's recent and bloody past. Next we'll visit the Titanic Belfast Experience. This highly interactive exhibition retells the famous tale of the doomed ship, built right on this site, both enlightening and moving all at once. To finish the exploration of Belfast's

maritime history, step aboard HMS Caroline, the Royal Navy Museum ship, which played a significant role in both World Wars. Dinner at the Seahorse Hotel at the Grand Central Hotel. *B/D*



### Day 6, Friday 9th June BELFAST — DERRY

Today we will journey along the Causeway Coast Route and this wild part of Northern Ireland. We'll stop at the Giant's Causeway, the famous geological formation, with

its iconic cliffs made from unique columns of uniform basalt rock. As you meander along the coast, you'll pass the picturesque ruins of Dunluce Castle (photo stop). Perched on a cliff in Downhill Demesne, Mussenden Temple is a quirky spot. Stand and gaze over the strand below, the Atlantic Ocean washing over the sand and rocks. Continue to your accommodation The Maldron Hotel (or similar) – where we'll stay two nights. *B/D*

### Day 7, Saturday 10th June DERRY

A rather special day in Derry today. We start with a visit to the Siege Museum, a permanent display of the history of the 1689 Siege of Derry and the Associated Clubs of the Apprentice Boys of Derry, telling the story of how this monumental event shaped the history of the city, province and wider country. Next, to the Museum of Free Derry, to discover the other side of the city's complex story, its people and struggle for civil rights. For lunch, cross the river on the striking Peace Bridge and enjoy a bite and a tippale at the acclaimed Walled City Brewery. Walk off our meal with a guided tour around the ancient city walls. Your enthusiastic and informative local guide brings alive the stories of the city's founding, the building of the walls in the 17th century to protect the border city from all comers, its descent during more recent history, and new- millennium rebirth as a vibrant and welcoming visitor destination. Cap the day off with a private mayoral reception at the historic guildhall. *B/L*

### Day 8, Sunday 11th June DERRY — DONEGAL

After breakfast, we'll travel to Ireland's most northerly point. The windswept and turbulent beauty of Malin Head is unrivalled - on a clear day, the views stretch across to the Scottish Hebrides and Kintyre peninsula. Continue onwards along the Wild Atlantic Way to your Donegal accommodation, via the awe-inspiring beauty of Glenveagh National Park. Check into the Mill Park Hotel (or similar) for two nights, Donegal. *B/D*



### Day 9, Monday 12th June DONEGAL

Experience a day on the wild Atlantic Way with our driver. Travel south along the rugged coastline of Donegal to the deserted village of Port and onwards to the fabulous sea-cliffs at Slieve League, with plenty of photo opportunities along the way. We'll also start at the Glencolmcille Folk Village – a replica of Ireland's past, thatched-roof villages. Later we'll cut east along the south Donegal coast via St John's Point on the way to Donegal Town, where you'll discover the medieval castle and the charming town itself. Dinner at the Lough Eske Castle. *B/D*

### Day 10, Tuesday 13th June DONEGAL — GALWAY

Continue today along the Wild Atlantic Way. Enjoy more of Donegal's rugged beauty on the way to Sligo, where we'll discover the history of WB Yeats. One of Ireland's foremost poets, he spent childhood holidays in this quaint place. This titan of the written word was awarded the Nobel Prize in Literature – in no small part from the inspiration this wonderful part of the world had on him. Continue onwards to Galway and your accommodation for the next three nights at the Harbour Hotel or similar. *B/D*



### Day 11, Wednesday 14th June GALWAY

Today we'll take a boat trip on the bay and enjoy the beauty of this sheltered spot – hear stories of the Galway Hookers (boats, not the other type) and enjoy a morning in the company of a local expert. Next head to the harbour for a lunch of freshly caught and prepared seafood. We'll then have the afternoon free to explore this exciting city. Galway is known as the City of the Tribes, after the 14 affluent tribes who ruled during the middle-ages. This thriving city is the most westerly in Europe and enjoys a strong artistic heritage and flourishing arts, music, theatre and film scene. Once ringed by city walls, Galway has a compact centre and is a delight to stroll around. Enjoy the atmospheric pubs and restaurants perhaps trying some oysters, a great match for Guinness. It's pretty medieval streets are dotted with landmarks such as Lynch's Castle, while the quirky Latin Quarter with its charming craft, book and vintage shops is not to be missed.

*B/L*



### Day 12, Thursday 15th June ARAN ISLAND — GALWAY

After breakfast, it is a short stroll to the quayside to catch the ferry to the Aran Island of Inis Mhor. Upon arrival, you'll be met by a local who'll bring the history and landscape of this unique place to life. You'll take a 4WD tour and have time to wander, enjoying lunch at leisure and perhaps the fabulous locally made ice cream. The return ferry to Galway detours via the Cliffs of Moher, giving you the chance to see Europe's highest sea cliffs from a superb perspective. (Cameras at the ready). *B/D*



### Day 13, Friday 16th June GALWAY — DINGLE

We head this morning for a tour of Ireland's scenic West Coast beginning our day with a visit to the Burren, where a local expert will lead the way on an exploration of this bizarre landscape of limestone pavement. This intricate ecosystem is fascinating, so much so it was designated a European Priority Habitat for Wildflowers. Next, it's on to the Cliffs of Moher. This section of Irish coastline is awe inspiring, rising sharply from the sea and reaching into the distance. We'll take a memorable 20 minute car ferry and then on to Dingle

where you have the evening free to discover the quirks of this classic Irish seaside town, perhaps taking in some traditional Irish music. Check into the Dingle Skellig Hotel (or similar) for two nights. Dinner at the hotel. **B/D**

 **Day 14, Saturday 17th June**  
**DINGLE & SURROUNDS**

Enjoy a day with our guide on the stunning Sleah Head Drive. This craggy promontory represents the westernmost part of the Dingle peninsula and features some of the country's most beautiful scenery and most fascinating ancient history. We will stroll the beautiful Ventry beach; to discover 12th-century Gallarus Oratory; and the pre-historic fort and 'beehive' huts. Upon our return to Dingle, enjoy an afternoon and evening at leisure to get under the skin of this most colourful and vivacious town. **B/D**



**Day 15, Sunday 18th June**  
**DINGLE — KILLARNEY**

Checking out of Dingle this morning we head west to Killarney, the county 'capital'. Direct it's only an hour or so away, but you'll be taking the

scenic route along the world-famous Ring of Kerry. On this, one of Ireland's finest coastal roads, you'll meander on an ever-changing landscape, taking in Alpine-style switchbacks, sleepy villages and vibrant coastline with the mighty Atlantic Ocean pounding and unstoppable. Upon arrival in Killarney, your hotel – The Dromhall – is close to the bustling town centre where you'll stay for two nights. **B/D**

**Day 16, Monday 19th June**  
**KILLARNEY**

After breakfast we'll be picked up outside the hotel by the jaunting cars. Ride through the streets of Killarney on a horse and cart guided by a local 'Jarvie'. Pass by Lough Leane and Ross Castle and head out to the local national park. The jaunting car will take you back to the hotel where you will embark on a grand tour of the Ring of Kerry. Sea stacks and seaside villages, green meadows and shale splintered mountains, wend your way through the views and drama of Ireland. Hear tales of pirate queens and ambitious smugglers, rustic dangers and characters descended from the landscape, then complete the Ring and head back to Killarney. Dinner at a local pub. **B/D**

 **Day 17, Tuesday 20th June**  
**KILLARNEY — KINSALE**

Travel on with your driver-guide to Kinsale in Co Cork. Along the way, you'll rise up from Killarney across stunning Molls Gap, before the road drops before you and into colourful Kenmare, another of Kerry's most popular destinations. Carrying on, you'll spear west into wild West Cork, following the coastline on the way to your next base in the foodie-paradise town of Kinsale. We'll have lunch at "Fishy Fishy". Weather permitting there will also be an opportunity for a picnic by the sea. Check in to the Trident Hotel (or similar) for three nights. **B/D**

**Day 18, Wednesday**  
**21st June**  
**KINSALE AND SURROUNDS**

A day to explore the start/end point of the Wild Atlantic Way. From the town of Kinsale itself there



is a wealth of places to see, from the Cornish-style villages across the estuary of the River Bandon, to the unique history of 17th-century Charles Fort and, of course, many welcoming pubs in which to enjoy an hour or two. In the evening enjoy dinner at a local pub. **B/D**

**Day 19, Thursday 22nd June**  
**KINSALE – CORK — KINSALE**

Today is a day out in Ireland's second city, Cork, one of our favourites, with an atmosphere (and accent!) all its own. After a driving tour, you'll have time to explore this fun city and stroll around on your own. Get to know the stunning 19th-century English Market and its array of local food producers offering the very best cheese, meat, fish and produce in a quite gorgeous setting. Later, visit Blarney Castle and Mill Store before returning for our last night in Kinsale. Dinner at leisure tonight. **B**

 **Day 20, Friday**  
**23rd June**  
**KINSALE — TIPPERARY**

Our journey north commences this morning, heading away from Co Cork, crossing into historic Co Tipperary and to the ancient town of Cashel.



Here, we will tour the world-famous Rock of Cashel, once home to Irish Kings and a fascinating insight into ancient Irish history. Later, visit the Irish National Stud and Gardens before checking into our hotel – the K Club where we'll have a farewell dinner. **B/D**

**Day 21, Saturday 24th June**  
**TIPPERARY – DUBLIN – AIRPORT**

Tour north today via Co Wicklow and evocative Avoca for the Meetings – made famous by Thomas Moore's the Meeting of the Waters – and Glendalough, Ireland's most important monastic city, founded by St Kevin in the 6th century. We will visit Glendalough Cathedral, the round tower and visitor centre to get a true sense of the origins of Christianity on the island. After your final day of exploring, you will be dropped off at the airport and left to continue with your onward travel plans. For those interested, we can arrange for extra time in Dublin or onward travel to another destination. **B**

**Day 22, Sunday 25th June**  
**DEPART FOR HOME**

**Blue Dot can arrange an extension to any other region or on to your next destination.**



Icon indicates a day where there is **moderate physical exertion**. A basic level of fitness is required: eg. A trek over 'mostly flat' terrain or climbing several flights of steps without the support of handrails or elevators.



Icon indicates a day where there is a **particularly active section**. A good level of fitness is required: eg. A longer trek over non-groomed, uneven terrain, or ascending to reach a panorama. May also include exposure to higher altitude. **An alternate activity may be offered if you choose to sit out an active section.** Please call - we are happy to discuss each tour in more detail.