

THE \_\_\_\_\_  
**IRISH TOURISM**  
\_\_\_\_\_ GROUP

**Celebrating the Magic of Ireland**

**Day 1: Sunday 9<sup>th</sup> September 2018**

Arrive in Dublin and make your own way to the Dublin city centre hotel that you will be staying in. Alternatively, for those who arrive on previous days, enjoy some free time today. Enjoy an optional welcome meeting this evening at your hotel. Overnight *Maldron Hotel Parnell Square*, Dublin BB

**Day 2: Monday 10<sup>th</sup> September 2018**

Check out of your hotel after breakfast and travel through the Garden of Ireland, Wicklow, to the early Christian ecclesiastical settlement founded by St. Kevin in the 6th century at Glendalough. Set in a glaciated valley with two lakes, the monastic remains include a superb round tower, stone churches and decorated crosses. After the visit, travel to Kildare and visit St. Brigid's Fire Temple before continuing to Cashel where you will visit two Sheelagh na Gigs. Lunch included today. Overnight *Cahir House Hotel*, Cahir LDBB



**Day 3: Tuesday 11<sup>th</sup> September 2018**

After breakfast travel to Blarney Castle where you will be able to kiss the famous Blarney Stone which is said to grant the "Gift of Eloquence" and enjoy the beautiful surroundings. There will be time to visit Blarney Woollen Mills which stocks many fine Irish made goods. Continue to Ballyvourney where you will visit the healing well of St. Gobnait before enjoying lunch at the Mills Inn in the town. After lunch travel to the Paps of Anu, a pair of breast shaped mountains believed to be named after the ancient goddess Anu. Finally for today enjoy the scenery as you travel to the popular town of Killarney. Overnight *Dromhall Hotel*, Killarney LBB

**Day 4: Wednesday 12<sup>th</sup> September 2018**

Leave Killarney and head north to Lough Gur and the largest stone circle in Ireland at Grange. It is 150 feet in diameter and enclosed by 113 standing stones, the largest of which is *Rannach Chruim Duibh* (Crom Dubh's Division) and is over 13 feet high and weighs 40 tons. Your local guide will help you discover the local monuments and sites, from the Grange Stone Circle built in the Bronze Age to the more recent Bouchiers Castle built in the early 1600s. Lunch will be in a nearby pub. Overnight *Oakwood Hotel*, Shannon LBB

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### Day 5: Thursday 13<sup>th</sup> September 2018

Leave your hotel after breakfast and travel through the wonderful countryside to the majestic Cliffs of Moher. The cliffs rise to 214 meters (702 feet) and the views from the visitor center are breathtaking. Then travel through the Burren, a limestone landscape, to the Poulnabrone Dolmen. Situated on the high Burren limestone plateau, Poulnabrone Dolmen is one of Ireland's most iconic archaeological monuments and is the second most visited location in the Burren after the Cliffs of Moher. It is the oldest dated megalithic monument in Ireland. Overnight *Hotel Doolin*, Doolin DBB

### Day 6: Friday 14<sup>th</sup> September 2018

Continue through the Burren to the vibrant city of Galway where there will be time for you to explore and shop. Continue then travelling around the Connemara National Park, stopping in Oughterard at the Aughnanure Castle before visiting the home of Ireland's Benedictine Nuns – Kylemore Abbey. Kylemore has been renowned as a place of spirituality and education and whilst visiting you will learn of the tales of tragedy and romance, engineering initiatives, model farms and Royal visits. Enjoy the Victorian atmosphere in the Abbey before visiting the beautiful Gothic Church and exploring the magical Victorian Walled Garden, along with extensive lakeside walks and tree-lined avenues. Lunch will be at Kylemore's own café which uses mainly home-grown ingredients. Overnight *Station House Hotel*, Clifden LBB



### Day 7: Saturday 15<sup>th</sup> September 2018

Following breakfast, travel to Roonagh Pier where you will catch a ferry to Clare Island. Clare Island is the largest (5 miles long and 3 miles wide) of the 365 islands in Clew Bay and is famous as the ancestral home of the legendary Pirate Queen Grace O'Malley. Clare Island is rich in history, geological and biological landscape and a tour will be arranged for you. Return to the mainland early afternoon and visit Croagh Patrick. Croagh Patrick's history as a place of worship reaches back in time as far as 3,000 BC. The mountain's popularity among religious pilgrims dates to the time of St. Patrick, who is said to have completed a forty-day Lenten ritual of fasting and penance here. Legend also has it that Croagh Patrick is the mount from which he banished snakes from Ireland forever! Overnight *Cill Aodain Hotel*, Kiltimagh DBB

### Day 8: Sunday 16<sup>th</sup> September 2018

Travel to Knocknarea which is well known for its huge flat topped cairn which is believed to be the resting place of the legendary Queen Maeve of Connacht. The tomb has been classified as a Neolithic passage tomb and is estimated to be the largest in Ireland outside of the Boyne Valley, measuring some 55 meters across and 10 meters in height. Then continue to Carrowmore, the largest cemetery of megalithic tombs in Ireland and is also among the country's oldest, with monuments ranging from five thousand to five thousand eight hundred years old. Next is the short journey to the Holy Well at Tobernalt which goes back before the dawn of Irish Christianity to the arrival of the Celts sometime around 400 – 300 BC. Originally it was a place of the worship of the Celtic sun-god, Lugh. Another short drive to Lough Gill, which inspired the poem by W. B. Yeats – The Lake Isle of Innisfree before visiting his final resting place at Drumcliffe. Overnight *Radisson Blu Hotel*, Sligo DBB

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**Day 9: Monday 17<sup>th</sup> September 2018**

This morning, travel to Rathcroghan Visitor Centre where you can explore the Rathcroghan complex and medieval Tusk through the brand new interpretive exhibition rooms. These enable you to walk into the stories, archaeology and history of Connacht's Royal Capital. Rathcroghan boasts a multitude of monument types, from the majestic and enigmatic Rathcroghan Mound, which in the Iron Age was impressively topped by wooden ramparts and ceremonial henges, and whose secret heart remains an untouched mystery. It is also home to the legendary Cave of Cruachan – Oweynagat (Cave of the Cats) which was described as the Hellsmouth of Ireland by fearful Christian scribes. Then visit the Hill of Uisneach, one of the most sacred and historic sanctuaries in the world. It is the burial site of the Earth Goddess Ériu & the Sun God Lugh and as such was regarded as sacred ground. Uisneach was seen as a gate to the mythical fifth province, Mide, which held the four more familiar provinces together. Overnight *Creggan Court Hotel*, Athlone BB

**Day 10: Tuesday 18<sup>th</sup> September 2018**

This morning travel to Loughcrew Megalithic Tombs and then continue to the Hill of Ward, a very special and sacred ancient site where the Samhain Celebrations were inaugurated and the Winter Fires first lit thousands of years ago. Continue to the Hill of Tara, known as the seat of the High Kings of Ireland. However it is claimed Tara was not so much a true seat of kingship, but a sacral site associated with kingship rituals. Finally travel to Monasterboice which dates back to the 6th century when it was founded by St Buite. Nothing remains of the original monastery but there are remains of two 10th century churches, consisting of an old graveyard, two churches, three sculptured crosses, two early grave slabs and a sundial. Of particular interest here are the 3 Celtic Crosses and the Round Tower. Overnight *Boyne Valley Hotel*, Drogheda DBB



**Day 11: Wednesday 19<sup>th</sup> September 2018**

Today enjoy the Boyne Valley and the 5000 year old passage tombs at Newgrange, Knowth and Dowth. Lunch will be at a nearby pub or restaurant today. Return to Dublin where the remainder of the day will be free for independent sightseeing, shopping and dining. Overnight *Maldron Hotel Parnell Square*, Dublin LBB

**Day 12: Thursday 20<sup>th</sup> September 2018**

Make your own way to Dublin Airport for your return flight.

*BB = Bed & Irish Breakfast  
DBB = Dinner, Bed & Irish Breakfast*

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### Included in the cost of your tour

- Sightseeing as per itinerary in a luxury coach with an experienced Irish driver/guide
- Accommodation in rooms with private facilities for 11 nights
- Irish breakfast daily
- 5 hotel table d'hote dinners
- 5 two course lunches
- Return ferry to Clare Island
- Tour of Clare Island
- Entrance fees to the following attractions and sites: Glendalough, Blarney Castle, Lough Gur, Cliffs of Moher, Aughnanure Castle, Kylemore Abbey, Carrowmore, Rathcroghan Visitor Centre, Hill of Uisneach, Loughcrew Megalithic Tomb, Hill of Tara, Bru na Boinne Visitor Centre and Newgrange or Knowth Passage Tomb (subject to availability)
- Hotel service charges and tax (at current rate)

### Not included in the cost of the tour

- Travel to or from Ireland
- Items of a personal nature such as wines, drinks, phone calls etc.
- Meals not specified in the itinerary
- Tips & Gratuities

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