

# Ireland Multisport Tour

## **An Inn-to-Inn Hiking, Biking, Horseback Riding and Sea Kayaking Adventure on the West Coast of the Emerald Isle**

*Ireland—with “40 shades of green” and weather the locals call “fresh”—is calling. Come join us for this active adventure to hike seaside cliffs and lake-studded peat lands, bike charming rural back roads, sea kayak in a fjord, and horseback ride through forest and field. Add in strolls through the quaint streets, visits to historic mansions and opportunities to share a pint at the village pub with new Gaelic friends...and you’ve got all the makings for a tour of discovery extraordinaire.*

**Day 1. Arrive in Shannon, Tour of Muckross House and Hiking in Killarney National Park, Victoria House Hotel** (011-353-64-35430 <http://www.victoriahousehotelkillarney.com/index.html> / private bath)

After introductions and a brief orientation, we depart from Shannon Airport bound for Killarney. Following lunch we visit the Muckross House, Gardens & Farm. Perhaps the best stately Victorian home in all of Ireland, Muckross House (built in 1843) is magnificently set on Lough Leane in Killarney National Park. The house has fine Victorian furniture, Waterford Crystal chandeliers and lots of antlers (from its days as a hunting lodge for the wealthy). See Queen Victoria’s bedroom designed especially for her one night visit in 1861. Particularly fascinating is the house’s early “intercom”—a series of cables and bells to let the servants in the basement know which room they were being summoned to. The estate also includes lovely gardens and a set of farms depicting rural Irish life in the 1930s. Traditional crafts and farming practices are carried out in the various cottages.

A short hike through an enchanted forest of yew trees takes us to cascading Torc Waterfall just two kilometers from the Muckross Estate. We conclude the day with dinner in a Killarney restaurant and our first night at the homey Victoria House Hotel.

- Tour of Muckross House, Gardens and Traditional Farms [3 hours]
- Hike to Torc Waterfall [less than a mile, 1 hour]

**Day 2. Horseback Riding in Killarney National Park and Hiking the Kerry Way, Victoria House Hotel**

This morning we ride horseback through Killarney National Park along Lough Leane (the largest of the three lakes in Killarney), taking in panoramic views of Ross and Innisfallen Islands.

We hike part of the Kerry Way in the afternoon on the Old Kenmare Road, the old coach path used

during the time of the famine in Ireland. The hike is rewarded with more stunning views from Ladies View and Moll’s Gap (a mountain pass with sheep grazing all around us). This evening you are free to explore the town of Killarney with its many restaurants and bars.

- Horseback ride in Killarney National Park [2 hours]
- Hike the Old Kenmare Road [8 miles, 4 hours]

**Day 3. Biking in Killarney National Park and Gap of Dunloe, The Lodge, Kenmare** (011-353-64-41512 <http://www.thelodgekenmare.com/index.html> / private bath)

We begin a day of biking with a ride to Ross Castle, dating back to the 14<sup>th</sup> Century. Here we put our bikes on the boat for a cruise through the three lakes of Killarney, stopping at Lord Brandon’s Cottage for lunch. The boat ride alone justifies the day, with lovely views of the surrounding granite mountains and of the Meeting of the Waters and Ladies View, which was much enjoyed by Queen Victoria’s ladies-in-waiting, who gave it its name.

We continue the bike ride through the Black Valley and the dramatic Gap of Dunloe and enjoy a stop at Kate Kearney’s Cottage for an “Irish Coffee” or a drop of Guinness.

We then transfer to the charming little town of Kenmare, Ireland’s “Tidy Town” winner in 2000. Ablaze with vivid yellow, red, green and blue storefronts, Kenmare has a go-for-a-stroll atmosphere. We have dinner tonight at one of Kenmare’s gourmet restaurants and settle into the comforts of our luxury guesthouse.

- Bike ride and boat trip through the lakes of Killarney and the Gap of Dunloe [18 miles of biking, 5-6 hours]

**Day 4. Tours of Staigue Fort and Derrynane House and Hiking Kerry Way, Beach Cove B&B** (011-353-66-9479301 <http://www.stayatbeachcove.com> / private bath)

A shuttle along the coast of Kenmare Bay on the Ring of Kerry takes us through the little village of Sneem en route to Caherdaniel. Staigue Fort, 2000 years old and one of Ireland's finest dry-stone structures, makes for an interesting break in the drive. With a pastoral setting and sweeping views of the coast and Kenmare Bay, Staigue Fort has 15-foot high rock walls that are 12-feet thick...all without a bit of mortar. It may have been a communal place of refuge or a royal residence as the sophisticated staircases incorporated into the walls suggest.

We next visit the home of Daniel O'Connell, the campaigner for Catholic emancipation in the 1840s. Most amazing is the restored triumphal chariot in which O'Connell rode around Dublin after his release from prison.

A walk on the Mass Path goes from the liberator's home along the sandy beaches of Derrynane Harbour and joins the Kerry Way to walk over Coomakesta Pass into Waterville. This hike has arguably the most beautiful vistas in all of Ireland (although the folks at our next stop, Portmagee, make similar claims for their area). The views include Kenmare Bay, the Atlantic Ocean, offshore islands, scattered thatch-roofed cottages, green fields sloping to the sea, and stone-walled pastures filled with grazing sheep—all simply breathtaking.

- Tours of Staigue Fort and Derrynane House [1-1/2 hours]
- Hike the Mass Path and Kerry Way over Coomakesta Pass [6 miles, 900 feet of elevation gain/loss, 4 hours]

#### **Day 5. Boat Trip to and Hiking on Skellig Michael, Beach Cove B&B** (011-353-66-9479301 / private bath)

Today, weather and seas permitting, we depart by boat for a fascinating trip to The Skelligs. These two magnificent (and very different) slate islands lie eight miles off the coast. Craggy Little Skellig is a bird sanctuary upon which you can't land. From a distance it looks like someone battered the island with a feather pillow that burst. Close up you realize that you're looking at a colony of 20,000 pairs of breeding gannets (seagull-like birds), the second largest colony in the world.

Skellig Michael (Archangel Michael's Rock) rears more than 600 feet out of the sea and is a World Heritage Site. It looks like the last place on earth that anyone would live. Yet Christian monks survived here from the 6<sup>th</sup> until the 12<sup>th</sup> or 13<sup>th</sup> century. On the summit of this awe-inspiring rock you will find a remarkably well preserved sixth century monastic settlement of oratories and beehive stone huts.

The Skelligs rival the Galapagos Islands as a sanctuary for nesting sea birds. On Skellig Michael are found diminutive storm petrels, yellow-headed

gannets (with a wingspan of 43 inches), kittiwakes, snub-nosed fumars, black-and white-guillemots and razorbills. From May to early August, Skellig Michael is inhabited by thousands of delightful puffins with their multicolored beaks, waddling gait and "chainsaw" call.

In the event of rough seas or inclement weather, the option today will be a hike at Annascaul Glen en route to the Dingle Peninsula.

Following our trip to the Skelligs or our optional hike, we transfer to the community of Dingle. It feels so traditionally Irish because it's a *Gaeltacht*, a region where the government subsidizes the survival of the Irish language and culture. We spend the next two nights in the lovely Coastline Guesthouse and the warm hospitality of Vivienne O'Shea.

- Boat trip to and hike on Skellig Michael [600 vertical feet of uneven stone stairs with no handrails—and spectacular every step of the way; 5 hours for the boat trip and time on the island]
- Inclement weather hiking option at Annascaul Glen [6 miles, 2350 feet of elevation gain/loss, 4 hours] or half-day of kayaking. Don't worry if you're a first-timer—expert guides will teach you the technique and you'll be paddling about in no time.

#### **Day 6. Biking the Dingle Peninsula, Coastline Guesthouse, Dingle** (011-353-669152494 <http://www.coastlinedingle.com/> / private bath)

The Dingle Peninsula is 10 miles wide and 40 miles long, is topped with Brandon Mountain—at 3,130 feet, the second tallest in Ireland—and is home to 500,000 sheep. Today we bike the Sleah Head Loop. Discover the many archaeological ruins (Dunbeg Fort, beehive huts or *clochans*, 1300-year old Gallarus Oratory, 12<sup>th</sup>-century Irish Romanesque Kilmalkedar church) and eat lunch in one of the many pubs along the way. Parts of this ride are reminiscent of and rival Highway 1 in California south of Carmel...biking along cliff tops that fall away to the sea, viewing of the Blasket Islands and Dunmore Head, and resting at sandy beaches set within turquoise-watered coves.

Tonight is free for dinner on your own in one of Dingle's many fine restaurants followed by a traditional Irish music session.

- Biking Sleah Head Loop [29 miles, rolling terrain, 5-6 hours]

#### **Day 7. Hiking on the Blasket Islands, Coastline Guesthouse, Dingle**

A wonderful day of walking awaits on the famous Blasket Islands, a rugged group of six islands off the tip of the Dingle Peninsula. The population of Great Blasket Island peaked at 160 in the 19<sup>th</sup> century and dwindled until the government moved the last handful of residents to the mainland in 1953. Life here was hard. Each family had a cow, a few sheep and a plot

of potatoes. They cut their peat from the high ridge and harvested fish from the sea. There was no priest, pub, or doctor.

From this primitive but proud community came three writers of international repute whose Gaelic work is translated into many languages. Our guided walk on Great Blasket Island will take you back to a harder time and give you a feel for the land that inspired their literature and poetry. A picnic lunch will cap off our visit to this remote and uninhabited island.

On return from the Islands we will take a drive over the Connor Pass to show you the northern side of

the Dingle Peninsula. Our farewell dinner is at one of Dingle's famous restaurants.

- Boat trip to and hiking on Great Blasket Island [8.5 miles of hiking, 5 hours for the boat trip and hiking time on the island]

### **Day 8. Departure Day.**

After an early breakfast and goodbyes to the Murphys, we transfer to Shannon Airport for flights home.

- Shuttle to Shannon Airport [2-1/2 hours]

## **Trip Details**

**Trip Type:** Inn

**Trip Length:** 8 days / 7 nights

**2012 Departure Dates:** May 19-26, June 09-16, September 1-8

**Price:** \$3898

**Single Supplement:** \$400

**Group Size:** Minimum 3 / maximum 12; The vehicle will change depending on group size: for 3 guests we use a large car; for 4 – 6 guests we use a 9-seater Caravell Minibus and for 10-12 it will be a 14-16 seater Transit minibus.

**Trip Rating:** Moderately Easy

**Activities:** Hiking (two full and three 1/2 days), biking (one full and one 1/2 day), horseback riding (1/2 day), optional sea kayaking (1/2 day), boat ride (two 1/2 days), historic tours (1/2 day)

**Gateway City:** Shannon, Ireland

**Meeting Time & Place:** Shannon Airport on arrival at 11.00am

**Trip Conclusion:** Shannon Airport in time for flights to the U.S. departing at 1:00 p.m. or later

**Trip Fees Include:** All meals (lunch Day 1-breakfast Day 8) with the exception of dinner on Days 2 and 6, accommodations, activities as described in the itinerary, bicycles, sea kayaks and instruction if you choose this rather than the trip to the Skelligs, ground transportation, park entrance fees, and the services of a local guide

**Trip Fees Exclude:** International airfare to and from Ireland, personal expenses, dinner on Days 2 and 6, soft drinks and alcoholic beverages, and guide gratuities (both the tour guide and guides for individual activities). Please note that bicycle helmets are not provided for hygiene reasons so you should bring your own.

## **The Next Step...**

**References** Don't take our word for it that The World Outdoors trips are the finest in the adventure travel industry. Ask our past guests. *Call about any of our trips and we'll be happy to refer you to someone who's been there with us.*

**The Best Value in Active Travel Guarantee:** *We commit to you that all of our trips are of the highest quality at the best value.* If you find a trip of equal quality that matches our itinerary and inclusions at a lower fare within 30 days of booking your trip with us, we will gladly refund the difference. A simple guarantee that assures you of the best trip at the best fare!

**How do I join this trip?** Call The World Outdoors at (800) 488-8483 and a Trip Consultant will reserve your space(s) or register online at [www.TheWorldOutdoors.com](http://www.TheWorldOutdoors.com). Your travel agent can also book your trip at no extra cost and provide other helpful assistance.

**Special Requests:** If you have any special dietary needs or any special request that will make your trip more enjoyable, please be sure to notify your Trip Consultant or travel agent upon booking.

**For Reservations and Information call 800-488-8483 or Reserve 24 hours a day at [www.TheWorldOutdoors.com](http://www.TheWorldOutdoors.com)  
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Then Leave the Rest to Us... Before you go, we provide you with extensive pre-departure information, including your reservation payment receipt and confirmation, travel insurance application, suggestions for preparing for your trip, a packing list, information on pre- and post-trip arrangements, a guest questionnaire and a liability release agreement.

Travel Protection: To make your trip with The World Outdoors even more carefree, we strongly recommend the purchase of our travel insurance plan. Offering comprehensive coverage and peace of mind, our travel insurance plan is designed to protect you in case of lost or damaged luggage, a sudden illness or death in the family, emergency medical expenses and transportation costs, and flight delays. We'd be happy to arrange travel insurance coverage for you, so contact us at (800) 488-8483 with any questions.

How do I book airfare for this trip? Call our in-house travel agent, Sherry Malanify, at 800-488-8483 from 8:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. Mountain Time Monday through Friday or you can email her at [sherrym@theworldoutdoors.com](mailto:sherrym@theworldoutdoors.com). Sherry is also available to assist you with pre- and post-lodging needs. If Sherry is unavailable and your needs are urgent, please call James TravelPoints, a local travel agency, at 800-538-7461 and ask for Georgia (ext 251) or email her at [GeorgiaT@travelpoints.com](mailto:GeorgiaT@travelpoints.com). Be sure to tell her you are traveling with The World Outdoors. Alternatively, you are welcome to book your airfare online, directly with the airline or through your personal travel agent.

## **General Information, Questions & Answers**

What weather conditions can I expect? For our May trip the weather in western Ireland has typical highs in the upper 50s to low 60s and lows in the mid 40s. For our July trip, expect highs in the upper 60s and lows in the low 50s. For our September trip, expect highs in the upper 50s and lows in the upper 40s. July is the driest month but you can expect to see some rain in all months of the year. But you can always take comfort in an old Irish saying: "It doesn't rain in the pub!"

How difficult is this trip...Really? No experience is required for any activity, but this is an activity-oriented trip. We will spend three to six hours a day of moderately easy exercise.

Tour Operator: This tour was designed by The World Outdoors and is conducted by a local Irish tour operator selected for their reputation, service and reliability.

Emergency Contact Information: Our office in Boulder, Colorado is open Monday to Friday from 8:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. Mountain Time 1-800-488-8483. For emergencies outside of our normal business hours call Bill Marriner at 720-289-0460, Sherry Malanify at 303-915-9660, Darcie Carr at 303-595-8561 or Eric Wagner at 303-324-7795.

*Go Ireland* is open Monday to Friday from 9:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m. GMT (1p.m.-10p.m. EST). They can be reached from the U.S. at 1-800-721-4672, from outside Ireland +353-87 2355293 or within Ireland 0872355293. After hours, call from the U.S. 011-353-87-2355-293, from outside Ireland +353-87-2355-293 or within Ireland 87-2355-293. + means you need to dial the appropriate international calling code for the country you are calling from before the rest of the number. Ask local information for the correct code.

In general, what are the accommodations like?

- *Victoria House Hotel*, Killarney, [www.victoriahousehotel.com](http://www.victoriahousehotel.com) (nights 1 and 2): Small and intimate and located at the edge of the national park, Victoria House Hotel is owned and managed by the Courtney family and offers the ambience of a country house with first class personalized service and a friendly staff. The bedrooms offer comfort and luxury and are maintained to an exceptionally high standard.
- *The Lodge*, Kenmare, [www.thelodgekenmare.com](http://www.thelodgekenmare.com), (night 3): The Lodge is a newly-built luxury 4-star guesthouse directly opposite Kenmare's golf course, surrounded by its own private gardens and within three minutes walk of shopping and restaurants.
- *Beach Cove B&B*, near Portmagee, [www.stayatbeachcove.com](http://www.stayatbeachcove.com), (nights 4 and 5): Beach Cove B&B is situated in St. Finian's Bay between Ballinskelligs and Portmagee on the scenic Skellig Ring. The house overlooks a secluded beach with magnificent views of the Skelligs Rock and Puffin Island and Birdie O'Connor, the owner and innkeeper, is delightful. There are frequently surfers in view from your bedroom window.
- *Coastline Guesthouse*, Dingle, [www.coastlinedingle.com](http://www.coastlinedingle.com), (nights 6 and 7): The Coastline Guesthouse is situated on the shore of Dingle Bay just five minutes walk from the town center.

Passport & Visa Requirements: Visitors need a passport that is valid for at least six months after the date of your arrival. You should always carry your passport with you during your visit. It is also wise to make a photocopy of your passport and keep it separate from the original. For citizens of the United States and most western countries (Canada, Australia, New Zealand) no visa is required for entry.

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Money: Ireland adopted the Euro as its official currency in February 2002 (the Irish pound or punt is no longer in use). The Euro is divided into 100 cents. There are coins of one, two, five, 10, 20 and 50 cents, as well as 1 and 2 Euro. The notes come in denominations of 5, 10, 20, 50, 100, 200 and 500 Euro. The best exchange rates are generally obtained at banks and it is easy to purchase Euros at ATMs on the street. The rate of exchange is variable but was U.S. \$1.38 per Euro (or U.S. \$1.00 = 0.72 Euro) at the time of this writing. Be sure to check as the rate will change.

Medical Information: Ireland poses no serious threats to health and excellent medical facilities exist. No immunizations are required to travel to Ireland but it is always wise to make sure routine vaccinations such as polio (usually administered during childhood) and tetanus and diphtheria (usually administered together and updated every 10 years) are up to date.

Food & Water: Tap water and ice are safe to drink throughout the country but bottled water is always readily available as well. Be sure to try a pint (or two) of creamy smooth Guinness Stout along the way—it tastes far better than what we can get in the U.S. Irish cooking once had a poor reputation, but things have changed markedly. Readily available high-quality produce, the influence of international cuisines brought over by immigrants, a growing awareness of healthy eating, the culinary experiences of the Irish abroad and the higher expectations of Ireland's numerous visitors have combined to produce what is called by some 'new Irish cuisine'. The lamb and fish throughout the trip are particularly fabulous.

We're Always Improving! While the information presented here details this trip's planned activities, routes, accommodations, departure and conclusion times, we are consistently seeking new opportunities to enhance this itinerary and your experience. Our actual activities and sites may vary due to season, special events, or weather. As a result, we reserve the right to alter the itinerary since unforeseen circumstances that mandate change may arise. Naturally, we will keep you up-to-date on any changes that may affect your arrival or departure times.