

Ireland: Cork, Killarney & Dingle

Tour-Only Itinerary

Is there a better way to greet the day? Mist rises over rock-strewn pastures and smoke billows from the chimneys of whitewashed cottages near Killarney. Slinging your backpack over a shoulder, you stride outside onto the country lane. A stream rushes by as you climb the green glacial valley towards the Gap of Dunloe. Come afternoon, you'll be crossing the arched stone bridge at Lord Brandon's Cottage for a picnic, then boating over to Ross Castle. But you're in no hurry. This is a week for savoring tales—and fresh-baked scones—in an Irish storyteller's home, walking windswept beaches and the legendary Kerry Way. Breathe deeply and admire the peaks of Macgillycuddy's Reeks reflected in mountain lakes. You're on a walking tour in Ireland, and taking things slowly is a way of life.



Highlights

Share a pint of local brews over conversations about the Irish way of life.

Relax at the gorgeous Derrynane Dunes, cooling your toes in the clear water or strolling barefoot through more than a mile of golden sand.

Meet with an Irish storyteller for a personalized tour of his childhood home.

Stop for tea and scones in true Irish fashion.

On a jaunty horse-drawn cart (or by foot if you prefer), enter the narrow Gap of Dunloe – a rugged mountain pass with beautiful scenery.

Beneath the ever-changing skies of Killarney National Park, view elegant mountains and stunning lakes as you walk along the scenic Kerry Way.

Embark on a cruise to Ross Castle while learning of Ireland's most well-known visitors.

On all Guided Adventures you can count on ...



Expert local guides to introduce you to the best of your destination.



Gracious accommodations that are a clean, comfortable home away from home.



Off-the-beaten-path places you'd never find on your own.



Experts to handle all the details.



A maximum of 18 fun-loving fellow travelers to share the journey.



Flight + Tour Combos include plane tickets, airport car service, and pre- and post-tour accommodations.



Delicious, authentic multi-course meals—virtually all are included.

Activity Level

This tour is one of our Guided Walking Adventures and features a combination of paved roads and easy terrain, mixed with moderate hills, moorland and uneven footpaths. Due to Ireland's climate, the footpaths can often be wet and muddy. Ideal for enthusiastic beginners and experienced walkers. Several of the walks require a transfer from our hotel to the start of the walk. Our Trip Leaders often use this time in the van for our morning route review, so we can enjoy a more leisurely morning at breakfast. Please note you will need to climb over a variety of pasture gates and stiles. As one of our Guided tours, some days offer options for self-exploration, cultural visits, or free time to relax on your own.

DAY 1

Join your Ireland: Cork, Killarney & Kenmare tour

Muckross park gate to Muckross House; 2 miles, easy. Muckross House to Old Weir Bridge; 4 miles, easy

After breakfast on your own, meet one of your guides at Cork's Imperial Hotel at 9:00 a.m. (South Mall, Cork, Republic of Ireland; Tel: +353 21 427 4040). To reach the hotel you can take a taxi from Cork airport into the city (approximately 20 euros), or travel on Bus Eireann, which provides frequent and direct coach service between Cork airport, Cork City Center, and Cork Bus Station (approximately €5; travel time is around 25 minutes, depending on traffic; for more details go to buseireann.ie).

Accommodation: Loch Lein Country House Hotel

Included Meals: Breakfast (for air and Pre-Tour Extension guests), Lunch, Dinner

DAY 2

Discover the Gap of Dunloe. Independent exploration of Killarney

Kate Kearney's Cottage to Lord Brandon's Cottage; 7 miles, easy to moderate

This morning, you'll transfer to Kate Kearney's Cottage, the site where the legendary 19th-century beauty made and sold an illicit brew "very fierce and wild, requiring not less than seven times its own quantity of water to tame and subdue it." Now a popular shop and pub, it's also the starting point for today's walk. You ascend a steady paved incline and traverse a spectacular glacial valley, known as the Gap of Dunloe. Your trail parallels a mountain stream over rugged terrain lined with massive boulders until you reach the pass between Macgillycuddy's Reeks—Ireland's tallest mountain range, at 3,414 feet—and the Purple Mountains. Then you'll descend into the Black Valley. Throughout your journey, you'll have a horse-drawn jaunting cart at the ready if you want a break.

A lakeside picnic awaits you at Lord Brandon's Cottage. From here, you'll board open boats and cruise to Ross Castle, a 15th-century tower house, as your boatmen regale you with tales of Napoleon, King Brian Boru, and others who have passed this way.

This evening, shuttle into Killarney for dinner on your own. Perhaps you'll mingle with locals over a pint of Guinness in one of Killarney's lively pubs.

A vibrant town surrounded by the stunning beauty of the National Park, Killarney is home to historical sites and lively pubs. It's also an ideal base for exploring the nearby mountains and lakes.

Guided – Flex Options include:

- Visit Killarney House and Gardens and enjoy a tour of the historical rooms and breathtaking landscape.

An interpretive exhibition invites you to discover everything about Killarney National Park and the landscape of Country Kerry. Open seven days a week, free admission.

killarneynationalpark.ie/explore/house-gardens/killarney-house-gardens/.

- Discover “the legend that is in the brew” on a visit to Killarney Brewing Company in downtown Killarney. The brewery specializes in what is claimed to be Ireland's finest range of small-batch craft beers. All of their beers are named after local myths and legends, evoking the spirit of all things Killarney.

killarneybrewing.com/

- Step back in time and enjoy a guided tour of Muckross House and Traditional Farms, regarded by many as the focal point of Killarney National Park. Staged to represent Ireland in the 1930s and 1940s, the tour will visit three separate working farms, as well as the 19th-century Victorian mansion on the shores of Muckross Lake. Advanced reservations required. muckross-house.ie/index.html

Accommodation: Loch Lein Country House Hotel

Included Meals: Breakfast, Lunch

DAY 3

Glenbeigh and the Kerry Way

Start of walk to meet minibus; 3 miles, easy or Start of walk to Glenbeigh; 5 miles, easy to moderate.

Afternoon Glenbeigh to Curra Hill; 2 miles, easy

Today's walk brings you to the northern part of the Kerry Peninsula. After a short drive, your bus will leave you at the trailhead—a quiet, paved country road circling Seefin Mountain. As you walk, enjoy spectacular views over Lough Caragh. At the end of the road, you have the option of rejoining the minibus and meeting the group in Glenbeigh or walking to Glenbeigh up the mountain on a footpath through Windy Gap. This path is part of the Kerry Way, a 135-mile walking route over old droving paths and coach roads.

Upon reaching Glenbeigh, enjoy free time for lunch on your own in this quaint town.

After lunch, you have two options: You can shuttle two miles to Rossbehy Creek and take a short walk along White Strand, a beautiful sandy beach on a small peninsula stretching into Dingle Bay. Or you can walk along the banks of River Behy and follow the Kerry Way through the sloped woods of Curra Hill, then shuttle down to Rossbehy Beach.

Tonight, before an included dinner, you'll meet Denis Kissane, a local friend who will give a nostalgic presentation about his childhood in "The Old Bohareen."

Accommodation: Loch Lein Country House Hotel

Included Meals: Breakfast, Dinner

DAY 4

Walk through Killarney National Park into Killarney and Ross Island. Visit the home of Denis Kissane

Castle Ross Hotel to Killarney; 2 miles, easy. Loop walk around Ross Island; 2 miles, easy

After breakfast, pack your luggage, as today you depart Killarney for Kenmare. First, though, you'll take a very short drive to Castle Ross Hotel for a walk in Killarney's beautiful parklands. You can stop at Killarney Cathedral, then venture into town for shopping or join your guides for a walk around Ross Island. More of a peninsula than an island, Ross Island is heavily wooded with a network of paths leading to attractive viewpoints overlooking Lough Leane. Also visible are remains of former copper mines throughout the ages—some remains date back 4,000 years to the prehistoric Bronze Age, and others are from the 19th century.

You'll have free time for lunch in Killarney on your own, then regroup to visit your newfound friend, Denis Kissane. He has invited you to see both his childhood home (featured in his talk yesterday evening) and his current home, where he will entertain you over tea or coffee and freshly made scones. Afterward, continue to Kenmare.

Tonight is free for you to explore the town, a four-minute walk away along a footpath directly opposite the

hotel. Dinner is on your own.

Accommodation: Brook Lane Hotel

Included Meals: Breakfast

DAY 5

Gleninchaquin Park. Independent exploration of Kenmare

Various options from 2 miles, easy to 4 miles, moderate

Start your morning with a leisurely breakfast, then set off to explore Kenmare Market, where vendors sell everything from cheese to soda bread to antique tools. Afterward, you'll shuttle 15 miles to Gleninchaquin Park, located at the end of a beautiful valley. Here you meet the park's groundskeepers, whose ancestors have lived in the valley for more than 130 years. Then, choose from a variety of walks, from gentle farm or river strolls to a more challenging walk above a 448-foot waterfall (well worth the effort for the amazing views). Make sure you visit the Heritage Site to see the reconstructed 19th-century cottage that was typical in this area.

You leave the park to ride to a nearby pier overlooking Kenmare Bay where you'll enjoy a special lunch of freshly prepared Irish salmon.

This afternoon, shuttle back to Kenmare, where you'll have free time to experience this pretty town on your own. Choose from among Kenmare's many pubs or restaurants for dinner on your own this evening.

The town of Kenmare, located on Kenmare Bay, has a reputation for gourmet restaurants, stunning scenery, and historical homes and cottages.

Guided – Flex Options include:

- Visit the ancestral home of Irish statesman and prominent figure Daniel O'Connell, now preserved as the Derrynane House, a public museum under the management of National Historic Properties of the Office of Public Works. The €5.00 entrance fee includes access to the house, beach, and nature trail.

derrynanehouse.ie/

- Explore the charming village of Kenmare, whose name was anglicized from "Ceann Mara," meaning "head of the sea." Visit the downtown farmers market and connect with local farmers and craftsmen who

enjoy sharing their stories with visitors from near and far.

- Take an optional walk from the hotel in Kenmare to Cromwell's Bridge and the Holy Well, located just steps from the Kenmare Heritage Center. Continue through town to the Pier and Reenagross Park and enjoy views overlooking Kenmare Bay and the hills beyond.

Accommodation: Brook Lane Hotel

Included Meals: Breakfast, Lunch

DAY 6

Kerry Way to Caherdaniel and Derrynane Bay

Derrynane House to Abbey Island and back; 2 miles, easy or walk to Derrynane House; 4 miles, easy to moderate

Today you'll take in spectacular scenery as you walk along the southwestern section of the Kerry Way, with views of tiny islands, towering cliffs, and some of the finest beaches in Europe.

For those who would like a slightly more challenging option, the morning trailhead begins along a single-track road. Follow this path along another section of the Kerry Way, known to the locals as the Old Butter Road. This walk leads you along farm tracks and then into open moorland. There is a slight incline before you drop down into Caherdaniel, where you're met with one of the best views in Ireland, overlooking Derrynane Bay.

Once in Caherdaniel, a pretty coastal village on the bay's shores, you transfer by bus to Derrynane House. The ancestral home of Daniel O'Connell, "the Liberator" or "the Emancipator" of Ireland, today Derrynane House is a public museum.

If you'd prefer the easier option, you may shuttle directly to Derrynane Bay and enjoy a lovely walk with one of your guides across to Abbey Island. Here you'll view the remains of a 10th-century abbey and a local cemetery.

You meet for an included lunch in the café at Derrynane House, followed by a tour of the museum.

Derrynane House is furnished with a variety of items belonging to Daniel O'Connell, including the dueling pistol he used to kill rival John D'Esterre in 1815, the black glove he wore in remembrance of that day, and the fabulous gold chariot he rode through Dublin to greet jubilant crowds upon his release from prison. A

video presentation outlines the life and times of the man who inspired many leaders from Mahatma Gandhi to Martin Luther King.

You'll also have time at leisure to explore the gardens behind the house, walk around the Derrynane Dunes nature trail, or simply relax on one of the most beautiful beaches in the country, with more than a mile of golden sand. Regroup at the Keatings Bar, a cozy pub located in a small room in a private house. After an included drink, you'll shuttle back to Kenmare.

This evening, you'll enjoy a farewell dinner in your hotel and bid goodbye to your Country Walkers guides.

Accommodation: Brook Lane Hotel

Included Meals: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

DAY 7

Your Ireland: Cork, Killarney & Kenmare tour concludes

Your tour finishes at the hotel after breakfast. Please note: The hotel will help you book a taxi, at your own expense, to either Killarney railway station (travel time 50 minutes) or Cork airport (travel time two hours)., You are also welcome to join the motorcoach transfer to Kinsale if you wish, departing at 8:45 a.m. The drive takes approximately 2.5 hours.

Included Meals: Breakfast

What's Included

Tour Only

Exceptional boutique accommodations	✓
14 on-tour meals: 7 breakfasts, 4 lunch, 3 dinners	✓
Local guides with you throughout tour	✓
Entrance fees and special events as noted in the itinerary	✓
Travel assistance available 24/7 provided by Allianz	✓