

A Celtic Journey: A Family Adventure
Self Led Tour

Charming Inns Option



CycleWest Ireland

Toll free USA: 800 - 204 -1452 Ireland: 353-91- 861001

www.cyclewest.com

INTRODUCTION

Nothing could adequately describe the resplendent rock garden that is the Burren, with its abundance of exotic flora, bird and wildlife. Dotted with megalithic stone tombs, some representing the regions earliest monuments (from about 3,800 BC) including Poulnabrone Dolmen. There is an abundance of Christian and pre-Christian monuments, along with medieval settlements - castles, ring (fairy) forts, wishing wells and ancient churches spanning the centuries of time.

You will enjoy the stone forts, monuments, alpine and arctic flowers and plants that grow side by side, the seeds having been deposited by glacier millions of years ago. This is the mystical land of disappearing rivers and lakes, closed valleys, caves and limestone pavements. You may even find a real fairy fort!

The Aran Islands, three timeless islands in an endless sea showcase weathered monuments on awesome cliffs, great labyrinths of limestone, meandering walls, patchwork fields, quiet beaches and a welcoming island people.

For this rewarding bike trip, we have chosen a wonderful variety of charming, select accommodations that offer a blend of comfort, location and personal hospitality. You will enjoy the delights of stunning settings and vibrant culture.

Experience the Irish welcome: "Cead Mile Failte" (A Hundred Thousand Welcomes!) and small village life as you travel the winding roads of the West.

"I have decided that Ireland is my favourite place on Earth! I can't tell you how much I enjoyed the bike tour. It was so beautiful and amazing! I really want to go again".

Kelly Christensen, Colorado

A Celtic Journey: A Family Cycling Adventure
DETAILED ITINERARY: 7 Days / 6 Nights

Charming Inns, Private Hotels and Guesthouses.

Trip Highlights:

- Towering Cliffs of Moher
- Falcon and Hawks Flying
- Island Safari – the Aran Islands
- Ring Forts and 4,500 year old Dolmans

Day One: Your Adventure Begins!

Meeting point at the seaside village of village Kinvara. Transport from Galway City by cab or by bus. Spend the afternoon exploring Dunguaire Castle and strolling by the village harbour. Learn about the 'Galway Hooker', a local fishing boat used by local fishermen for more than a century. Bike fit out and briefing before Dinner. **Overnight at the Merriman Inn Hotel.**

Day Two: Kinvara to Corofin

You begin today's biking with a warm up ride through winding country roads and farmland to Kilmacduagh Monastic site, where present day church buildings and round tower date back to the 13th and 14th centuries. See one of Ireland's last remaining ancient Round Towers, an 111 ft tall leaning tower. You may cycle onward to a picnic site where you can have lunch. This is a unique area steeped in ancient history and dotted with ancient archaeological sites, which you may take time to explore. Onward to the village of Corofin, where you overnight at **Corofin Country House.**

Day Three: Corofin to Ballyvaughan

You cycle onward through the heart of the remarkable Burren hills to your lunchtime stop at Kilfenora. Visit the Burren Interpretative Centre and the ancient Kilfenora Cathedral. This is a unique area steeped in ancient history and dotted with ancient archaeological sites, which you may take time to explore. A short trip to the Caherconnell Ring Fort followed by the

ancient 4500 year old Poulnabrone portal dolmen. A downhill ride to Ballyvaughn – a lovely seaside village overlooking Galway Bay.

Overnight at Drumcreehy Guesthouse in Ballyvaughan.

Day Four: Ballyvaughan to Doolin

Today's biking is a leisurely ride along one of the most scenic coastal routes. The flaggy shoreline, Fanore Beach and Blackhead Lighthouse are amongst just some of the points of interest you view along the route today. The village of Doolin is a Mecca for traditional music, designer crafts and Irish seafood. Evening of traditional Irish music where the less fainthearted can join in and sing or dance should you so desire!

Overnight at Ballyvara Guesthouse in Doolin

Day Five: Doolin Loop

This morning you continue en route to the towering 700 ft. high Cliffs of Moher. From here, it is a downhill ride past Doonagore castle to the pretty fishing village of Doolin, home to one of the finest craft shops in the West of Ireland. You go deep underground to visit Doolin Cave – this rustic cavern is impressive in that it holds the second largest stalactite in the world!

Overnight at Ballyvara Guesthouse in the heart of Doolin.

Day Six: Doolin to Aran Islands (8 Miles on islands plus ferry)

Step back in time and enjoy the traditional and cultural flavors the islands have to offer. Early morning ferry ride to the Aran Islands from Doolin to the Island of Inishmore, the largest of the Aran Islands. Witness the tranquility, the whitewashed cottages and the intricate network of stone walls built by generations of island inhabitants. The island offers several ancient sites to visit, including the hilltop fort, Dun Aengus, one of Europe's oldest forts. Return to Galway City on the evening ferry.

Overnight at the Herons Rest in the historical quarter of Galway City.

Day Seven: Departure

Sadly we must bid you farewell. Transfer by rail or coach to Dublin or by coach to Shannon Airport.

We highly recommend spending some additional time to explore the city of Galway. The heart of Galway City is an intertwining of small winding streets, Quay Street and High Street; the city's 'left bank' area is perennially popular and full of character. Nearby is the medieval Spanish Arch and O'Brien's bridge leading out of town to the Salthill Promenade, a walk with stunning view of Galway Bay. Perhaps an additional overnight before departing this charming town?

Tour highlights:

Explore Doolin cave
The Cliffs of Moher
The Burren Centre
Dun Aengus Hilltop Fort
The Aran Islands
Burren Wild Bird Sanctuary
Kilmacduagh Monastery
Kilfenora Cathedral



Tour Include:

Accommodation on tour days
Breakfasts on tour days
First Day meeting and briefing on tour routes,
Luggage Transfers
Quality 21 speed Trek bikes,
helmets, water bottles
front handlebar panniers
Rear panniers
Kids bikes & Tagalong Trailer bikes as needed
Detailed maps and tour directions
Details for restaurants & points of interest
Toolkit & repair kit
Emergency phone contact numbers

CHARMING GUESTHOUSE ACCOMMODATIONS: Private Inns and Charming Guesthouses
**** All rooms are ensuite: private bathrooms**



Merriman Inn Hotel, Kinvara

A small and friendly hotel located in renowned Kinvara, a picturesque fishing village, on the Southern Shores of the famous "Galway Bay".



Corofin Country House

Corofin Country House is a warm and friendly guesthouse located in the quaint town of Corofin in County Clare. The family run B&B takes pride in offering the best service and renowned hospitality.



Drumcreehy Guesthouse, Ballyvaughan

This is a Charming, custom built, family run country style guesthouse overlooking Galway Bay and the surrounding Burren Landscape. Award winning breakfasts and great hospitality.



Ballyvara House, Doolin (two nights)

Doolin is a luxury 4 star registered guesthouse only half a mile from the picturesque seaside village of Doolin in County Clare, renowned world-wide as the traditional music capital of Ireland and home of the annual Micho Russell Festival.



Herons Rest, Long Walk, Galway City

The Herons Rest boutique bed & breakfast strives to afford you the luxury of a hotel with the intimacy and personal welcome of a boutique bed & breakfast.



A Celtic Journey: Family Adventure

Charming Inns Option 7 days / 6 nights

SELF LED TOUR

TRIP NOTES

**Charming Inns Option
Euro 795.00 pps
7 Days & 6 Nights**

10% Discount for children under 16 years

*Deposit: Euro 200.00 pps
Single Supplement: Euro 350.00*

**2010 Dates:
Start Any Day, March to September**

- **Deposit**
€200 per person. Final payment due 60 days prior to your tour (Money Order, Euro Bank Draft, Credit Card - Visa, MasterCard)
- **Cancellation Policy**
If you cancel:
61 days or more, prior to your tour we will return your tour payment, less your tour deposit. 60 days or less from the date of the tour you must pay the full tour price.

We strongly recommend you purchase Trip Cancellation Insurance as soon as possible. See www.insuremytrip.com for trip insurance or visit your local travel agent. **Please see our Terms and Conditions attached.**

Please limit your luggage to 15kg - Mark your luggage clearly with your name, address and phone number.

Arrival to Ireland - Shannon Airport is the closest and most convenient International airport to our tour starting points. Dublin Airport is often a less costly alternative for flights into Ireland. From Dublin we recommend a coach transfer directly from Dublin airport to Galway City. Coach and rail services are readily available and frequent to Galway City. Flights are also available with Aer Arann from Dublin to Galway. Low cost fares can be purchased in advance – check the website for details (see below)

Departure from Ireland - Departure from Westport to Dublin is available by coach and also by rail. Departure from Westport to Shannon is available by coach only.

Air Service: www.aerarann.ie
Coach Service: www.citylink.ie
 www.buseireann.ie
Rail Service: www.irishrail.ie

CycleWest Ireland can offer assistance with private transport arrangements to and from the airport as well as car hire for those of you who wish to avail of this service.