

'NOW IS THE TIME TO GO WEST' writes Town and Country Magazine



**West Coast Extravaganza Guided Tour
9 days / 8 nights**

Castle Hotels and Country Houses – Luxe



CycleWest Ireland
Ireland: 353-91- 877323
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'NOW IS THE TIME TO GO WEST' writes Town and Country Magazine

INTRODUCTION

This extraordinary Irish biking adventure has been designed with escape, elegance and an overall terrific experience in mind! We offer you the opportunity to explore and contemplate life to its fullest, away from all the hustle of everyday life. Our West Coast Adventure offers you a biking trip through the spectacular vistas of Galway Bay, the historical Burren, the Aran Islands and scenic Connemara. Immerse in the history, the culture and the pure magic of the West of Ireland

Introduction

This trip is one of Ireland's surprises for the discerning traveller. Explore the limestone plateaus with breathtaking views over the mystical Burren mountain's and Galway Bay, onward to the Aran Islands and we continue to Connemara where we cycle through remote mountain passes, by majestic mountain lakes and through moors and bogs, by waterfalls and alongside rivers and the rugged Atlantic shore.

Come join us on this terrific West Coast adventure and let your imagination do the rest.....

Our trip was fabulous!. You really know how to organize a tour for the greatest scenery and wonderful accommodations.the little lanes we spent the majority of our time on were so relaxing and fun to ride on. They also got us into the wilderness and I often felt we were a hundred miles from anywhere!"

Dan Peters & Family, Superior, Colorado

'We still talk to one another often and with great pleasure about our trip. We have so many wonderful pictures of our trip. As wonderful as our week in Ireland was, it was hardly enough time to fully capture the depth and breadth of your beautiful country and we all hope to find ourselves back on your roads sometime in the future. ...Thanks again to you for all the effort and attention you gave us.'

Michael Riddell and family, Millburn, New Jersey

**West Coast Extravaganza Guided Tour
DETAILED ITINERARY: 9 Day / 8 Night Journey**

GUIDED TOURS INTRODUCTION

Our West Coast Adventures offer a selection of terrific biking tours through the spectacular vistas of Galway Bay, the historical Burren, the Aran Islands and scenic Connemara. Immerse in the history, the culture and the pure magic of the West of Ireland.

This extraordinary bike tour has been designed with escape, adventure and an overall terrific experience in mind! Our West Coast bike tours offer an immersion of rich and vibrant culture; fun filled sightseeing, great routes and physical interaction with the landscape: the perfect blend for all.

In the Burren, 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.

Crossing by ferry from the Aran Islands, you will know immediately that you have arrived in Connemara by the light that constantly changes the mood and tone of the landscape!

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

"I have decided that Ireland is my favorite 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

Trips Includes:

Breakfasts on tour days
Evening dinners
Experienced tour guides
Support vehicle and luggage transfer
Courtesy fruit & snacks
Guided tours of select locations
Daily briefing on tour routes,
Quality 21 speed Gary Fisher bikes,
helmets, water bottles
and front handlebar panniers
Detailed maps and tour directions
Custom Miles for children & families



Trip Highlights:

Cliffs of Moher
Aran Islands
Aughanure Castle
Roundstone Musical Centre
Patrick Pearse's Cottage
Cong Abbey (optional extension)
Ashford Castle Grounds (optional extension)
Croagh Patrick
Kylemore Abbey
Cruise on Killary Fjord

ITINERARY

This is one of CycleWest Ireland's most popular tours in Ireland. We have been offering this biking trip for the past 12 years and our guests, young and old alike, are inspired!

Day 1: Welcome to the Emerald Isle!

Here we begin our celebrated tour of the West Coast of Ireland: the Burren region, the Aran Islands and Connemara. We meet in Galway City and transfer by coach to our tour start point. The tour starts with a tour of the spectacular Cliffs of Moher and then descend to the at seaport village of Ballyvaughn, County Clare. Evening dinner and welcome to the West Coast of Ireland! We will spend the next two nights here in Ballyvaughan.

DAY 2: Castles and Caves

Today we explore medieval Newtown Castle before setting off on our day's adventure. This day is designed a leisurely day to bring you into the heart of the Burren, explore Ailwee Caves and the Wild Bird sanctuary where we watch the falcons fly. A day of history and scenery, of ancient ring forts and dolmens. Onward to the environmental initiative of The Burren - the Burren Interpretative Centre in Kilfenora. Discover a world of wildlife, folklore, ancient archaeology and wonderful plant life. Explore Kilfenora Cathedral and Celtic High Crosses. Overnight in Ballyvaughan.

Daily Miles: Minimum mileage of 15 miles with extensions. Total possible miles: 42.

DAY 3: Moonscapes and Music

Having viewed Newtown Castle, a 12th Century tower house, we continue with today's biking. 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 this morning. An afternoon ferry ride from the village of Doolin will take us to the historical Aran Islands, where Gaelic is the spoken language. Visit the historical Dun Aengus Hill top fort towering 700 ft above the ocean. Enjoy the vistas of white washed cottages and the intricate network of stone walls. This is a visit you will treasure long after your visit to Ireland.

Transfer by ferry and overnight on the Aran Islands.

Daily Miles: Minimum mileage of 19 miles with extensions. Total possible miles: 30.

DAY 4: Ferries and Foxes

Mid Day departure from the Aran Islands to the Rosaveal ferry port. We traverse a route bordered by heather and bracken, through scenery that is wild and barren. Lunch at Screebe House followed by a bike ride through the Rugged Twelve Bens mountains towards the rugged coastline. Evening cocktails and dinner at a local restaurant, where the food and produce are all sourced in the West of Ireland. Overnight in Clifden.

Daily miles: Minimum mileage of 25 miles with extensions. Total possible miles: 45

DAY 5: Seascapes and Sandcastles

Early morning start to Roundstone village, the most picturesque fishing harbour in Connemara where traditional Galway Hooker, lovingly cared for over the years, can be seen on Bertraghboy Bay. We visit Malachy Kearns Musical Instrument workshop, the home of the traditional Bodhran. Departing Roundstone to Ballyconneely village via stunning beaches at Dog's Bay and Gurteen Bay, we follow the rugged coastline to Ballyconneely, taking time to visit the Connemara Smokehouse, perched on the water's edge. Here the Roberts' family run Connemara's longest established smokehouse, are one of the few specialists in wild smoked salmon. We bike to the Alcock and Brown monument, dedicated to the first transatlantic flight in 1919 from New Foundland. Returning to Ballynahinch Castle hotel by way of the scenic bog road where sheep are our only distraction. Tonight we dine at a nearby award winning, family run restaurant where the seafood is truly the 'catch of the day'. Overnight in Clifden.

Daily Miles: Minimum of a 19 loop, with longer routes from 22 - 45 miles.

DAY 6: Rest and Relaxation

Today is a day with splendid opportunities to explore the little antique stores and galleries of nearby Clifden town. There are optional activities today including Horse back riding along the shores of Omey Island from the village of Cleggan; Golfing at the Connemara Golf Club at Ballyconneely or Fly fishing at Ballynahinch Castle. We bike the Sky Road. 'C'est Magnifique', I heard one day as we absorbed the island vista before us. We make our way to Connemara National Park and Letterfrack village, arriving at the splendid neo-gothic, Kylemore Abbey, nestled between the cliffs of Doughruagh and Poulacappal Lough. Tonight we recap our day's adventure at Recess.

Daily miles: Minimum of 15 miles, with the average miles to day covering 32 miles. Extensions available.

DAY 7: Wild Connemara

Today our route will take us through the Lough Inagh Valley, one of the finest valleys in Ireland. On this morning's bike ride you'll see a stunning vista of peatlands, lakes, and forests. Today we take a cruise on the Killary Fjord, Ireland's only fjord, on 'the Connemara Lady'. We then continue biking around Killary Fiord surrounded by Maamturk and Mweelrea mountains. Through the village of Leenane, the setting for the Oscar winning film "The Field" with Richard Harris. Ease into the evening as you watch the sunset and enjoy some local gourmet delights and shared tales of the day's adventure. Overnight in Leenane.

Daily miles: Minimum 18 miles. Day's average 35miles with extensions.

Day 8: Coastline and Clew Bay

Immerse yourself in your surrounds this morning. We spin onward through the mountain pass between Mweelrea, Connemara's highest mountain and the Sheefry Hills. Pedal by Doolough, spectacular in its dark beauty. This route is often referred to as the Famine Trail, dating back to tragic local events during the famine years of the 1840's. We reach Louisburgh, which translates to the delightful name of 'Meadow of the Buttercups' a quiet, traditional village and continue westward along Clew Bay. We arrive at Croagh Patrick, the west of Ireland's pilgrim mountain. Explore Murrisk Abbey, hike part of the Holy Mountain - or climb to the summit (2300 ft). Onward to the lively heritage town of Westport, a charming planned town with a unique blend of the old and new. Walk along the tree lined river at 'The Mall' and enjoy a late afternoon drink to unwind from your day. We enjoy an evening of traditional, local fare, followed by traditional Irish Music where the lass faint hearted can join in and sing or dance should you so desire! Overnight in Westport.

Overnight at Knockranny House Hotel.

Daily miles: Minimum 22 miles with a challenging extension climb of the Sheefry Hills (two 700ft climbs in quick succession).

DAY 9: Castle Extension or Departure

Today, sadly, today we bid you farewell. This morning you depart from Westport to your next point. We can assist you with any planning, be it rail, flight or car hire. Please also see our 'trip arrival and departure' instructions' for transport options.

You also have the option of extending your bike trip by one further day. Transfer or bike from Westport to Cong, and stay overnight at the historical, five stars, Ashford Castle Hotel. This is a magnificent opportunity to visit Ballintubber Abbey, the 13th century abbey and continue to the historic village of Cong, most famed as the setting for the John Forde movie 'The Quiet Man' starring John Wayne and Ireland's famed Maureen O'Hara. Ashford Castle, perched on the edge of Lough Corrib, was built in 1228 and in later years home to Sir Benjamin Lee Guinness, of the famed Guinness family. Avid gardeners, Sir Guinness and his son, Lord Ardilaun created the beautiful gardens and surrounding acreage of woodlands. Nearby, the 12th century ruins of the Augustinian Abbey stand as a legacy to this fine castle.

Activity options include: horseback riding, falconry, fishing, golf in lieu of biking. These activities as options are costed as extras to your trip but can be booked on your behalf on advance. You may also elect to take a leisurely cruise on Lough Corrib from Ashford Castle. This option includes a visit to historical Inchgoill Island, where the remains of 5th Century St. Patrick's church lies nestled in the woods. Outside is a memorial stone with the inscription 'Lie Luguaedon maci Menueh' (the stone of Luguaedon, son of Menueh), one of the oldest inscribed stones in Ireland dated to 500 A.D.

Enjoy an evening dinner overlooking the castle grounds, often accompanied by music from the Drawing Room's grand piano.

Transfer next day to Galway Airport or Rail Station for departure to your next point.

Overnight at Ashford Castle Hotel

Daily miles: chose between a private castle transfer or bike ride. Minimum miles: 22 miles. Extension through Tourmakeady and Clonbur: 42 miles.

**West Coast Extravaganza
DETAILED ITINERARY: 9 Day /8 Night Journey**

Option 1: Award winning Castle Hotels and Country Houses.



Gregans Castle Hotel

The ideal location for exploring this rich floral landscape. Limestone valleys and ancient ring forts await your discovery. Award winning culinary delights and breathtaking garden landscapes. Luxury in the making.
(2 nights)



Kilmurvey House B&B, Inishmore

A historical farmhouse and one of the best guesthouses on the Aran Islands, with home cooking and genuine Irish charm. The accommodations are basic and pleasant! AN ISLAND RETREAT!



Ballynahinch Castle Hotel, Connemara

One of the most renowned castle hotels in Ireland. Ballynahinch Castle hotel has a charm and an elegance which can best be described as 'Country Elegance' which few forget and most return for. Savor the rich ambience that makes Ballynahinch the Jewel in the Crown of Connemara. (2 nights).



Lough Inagh Lodge, Recess, Connemara

Set in the heart of the stunning Inagh Valley between the mountains and the lake, Lough Inagh Lodge offers all the comforts of an elegant modern hotel with an Old World ambience amid the ruggedness of the

Connemara countryside.



Delphi Lodge, Leenane, Connemara

Located in a valley of unsurpassed beauty, Delphi Lodge is one of Ireland's hidden gems. Built in the 1830's and carefully and lovingly restored, Delphi Lodge is one you will return to time and time again. Relax in surrounds of unparalleled beauty.



Knockranny House Hotel, Westport

Open log fires and antique furniture are the hallmark of Knockranny. Combined with modern comforts to provide guests with relaxing accommodations and wonderful spa facilities. A great place to unwind at the end of your trip.

Option 2: Charming Inns, Private Hotels and Guesthouses

Our Charming Inns Bike Tour Options are renowned for their unique and quality guesthouses and small private hotels.



Drumcreehy Guesthouse, Ballyvaughan

A stylish, spacious and custom built guesthouse offering warm and gracious hospitality, Drumcreehy Guesthouse overlooks Bishops Quarter and scenic Galway Bay.



Ard Einne Guesthouse, Inishmore

A personable guesthouse and one with the best ocean views on the Aran Islands, with home cooking and genuine Irish charm. The accommodations are basic and pleasant! AN ISLAND RETREAT!



The Quay House, Connemara

The Quay House is Clifden's oldest building, dating from the 1820's. Originally the Harbour Master's house but later became a Franciscan monastery and is now run as a town house by the Foyle family, whose forebear's have been entertaining guests in Connemara for nearly a century.



Ballynahinch Castle, Connemara (optional upgrade at extra cost)

One of the most renowned castle hotels in Ireland. Ballynahinch Castle hotel has a charm and an elegance which can best be described as 'Country Elegance' which few forget and most return to. (2 nights).

Euro 300.00 per person sharing for a two night stay



Renvyle House Hotel, Renvyle, Connemara

Renvyle House is an historic country house hotel, situated in the wild splendor of Connemara on the shores of the Atlantic Ocean. The hotel is located on 200 acres which include a private lake, a 9-hole golf course, a beach, woodlands, gardens and numerous activities on site



Portfinn Lodge, Leenane, Connemara

Set amidst the beautiful scenery of Killary Fjord, Ireland's only fjord; Portfinn Lodge offers warmth and personal charm. The lodge & restaurant is renowned for its local seafood and gourmet fare. Enjoy the guesthouse and its hospitality.



Atlantic Coast Hotel, Westport

The Atlantic Coast Hotel is one of the best known Westport Hotels, carefully restored from an 18th Century mill. The hotel embodies the best that Irish traditional hospitality has to offer. Located in the relaxed surrounds of Clew Bay and Westport Harbour.

Optional Adventure Activities

Kayaking

Kayaking is a fantastic way to explore the water around us. We use individual watercrafts, propelled with a double paddle, with the option of open top or closed cockpit design. Our Kayaking takes place on the shores of Killary harbour, Irelands only fjord.



Surfing

Nothing quite beats the thrill of catching your first wave and shooting along back towards the beach. After a soft landing, it's paddle out again for the next great wave. It won't be long before you're hooked for life.



Spa and Wellness

A place where time stands still... we want you to relax, unwind, and take time to yourself. As all our treatments include complementary access to our Thermal Suite and Relaxation Room, please take the time to reflect and enjoy these areas while taking in our inspirational views.



Horse Back Riding

Horse riding options available in Roundstone, Clifden and Westport during the trip. Half day and full day alternatives – beach riding tide dependant. Omey Island adventure is my favorite route by horse back in this region.



Fly fishing

Enjoy the very finest of fly fishing that Ballynahinch Castle Hotel Estate or Delphi Lodge has to offer. Superb surrounds and stunning vistas.



West Coast Adventure

9 days / 8 nights

GUIDED TOUR

TRIP NOTES:

2012 DATES:

West Coast Adventure

9 days / 8 nights

GUIDED TOUR

TRIP NOTES:

2012 DATES:

June 07-15

July 05-13

July 12-20

Sept 13 - 21

LUXE Option: Castle Hotels & Country Lodges

Euro 2595.00 pps
9 Days & 8 Nights

Euro 1995.00 pps
6 Days & 5 Nights

Option: Charming Inns

Euro 1995.00 pps
9 Days & 8 Nights

Euro 1450.00 pps
6 Days & 5 Nights

OUR GREEN FOOTPRINT

We have arrived at an incredible moment in the history of travel. This is a time for us to show stewardship and leadership by embracing a new, greener set of principles, and by extension, the growing number of customers who now follow us. We know that, increasingly, international travellers are looking for unique, authentic experiences that are sustainable. Consumers today care about the environment, local communities and locally-produced food when they travel.

We have been integrating sustainable practices into our business operation as well as into our trips. By incorporating change into the areas of heating, lighting, water usage, printing and paper usage we have incorporated a green strategy into our business practise.

When you travel with CycleWest Ireland you will be supporting local Irish communities, local food producers and artisans, local business and by doing so, you creating your very own rewarding experience! At CycleWest Ireland, we celebrate the authenticity, the diversity and quality of Irish country homes and hotels. Each location has been selected for its personal and charming qualities. Typically family owned and run, we offer a superior selection of Bed and Breakfast guesthouses, country houses and hotels have been tried and tested on your behalf!

A wonderful breakfast made of home grown, organic or locally sourced produce is provided at the beginning of each day's cycling. At the end of each day, we have selected a variety of restaurants, many award winning, that are known for the finest Irish ingredients: local seafood, freshwater fish, vegetables and farmhouse cheeses all featured, often from their own gardens, farms and rivers.

CycleWest offers cycling tours in Ireland that combine authenticity and ambiance by emphasizing small groups, a relaxed cycling pace and charming accommodation. In this way, we hope to deliver a unique biking experience amidst the legendary countryside of Western Ireland. By travelling by bike we introduce a greater immersion into local communities and families on our trips. You get to meet and engage with local villagers and learn more about local Irish culture. Our guided tours are designed for individuals from all walks of life and of varied interests and abilities. We usually limit the number of participants to a small group: 8 – 10 persons in each group. This way we can offer a uniquely personalized experience to each of our guests. We provide vehicle support and luggage transport. By travelling as a small group we can truly have a positive interaction and social exchange with the people we meet and visit.

We give you the opportunity to learn some of the Gaelic language. By learning a few phrases and greetings in the Gaeltacht (Irish Speaking areas) you visit shows that you have an interest in the Irish history and culture.

Many places have special environmental and historical significance. We like to give you the opportunity to learn about places you visit and their impact upon our lovely country, areas of natural focus and our heritage here in Ireland.

CycleWest Ireland is a member of the Ecotourism Ireland Network and we are currently preparing for Eco Tourism Certification. Ecotourism Ireland is among the first labels in Europe to be formally recognised by the Global Sustainable Tourism Council.

ADDITIONAL NOTES:

250.00 Euro deposit pps
Single Supplement Euro 450.00 (Luxe trip) & Euro 350.00 (Charming Inns Trip)

Single Supplement Ashford Castle Optional Extension: Euro 75.00

Additional dates available by request.
Family Specific dates also available. Please contact us for more information

TRIP NOTES

- **Deposit**
€250 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.**

Terrain: Intermediate

- Average Daily Mileage: 25 Miles (40 km)
- Average Daily Extensions with Optional Alternatives: 42 Miles (68 km)

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

Arrival to Ireland – Dublin Airport is the 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. See the below links.

Start Point: Galway City with transfer to

Departure Point: Westport

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.

Coach Service: www.citylink.ie
 www.gobus.ie
 www.buseireann.ie

Rail Service: www.irishrail.ie

Internal Flights: www.aerarann.ie for more information

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. A Dublin Airport to Galway City flight is available.