Abercrombie & Kent



BEST OF SOUTHERN IRELAND

Explore the Emerald Isle from east coast to west. From the Georgian architecture of Dublin to Cork and its Titanic heritage, the scenic Ring of Kerry and the Irish Lake District.

Tailor-Made Journeys, Suggested Itineraries

Europe, Ireland

9 days from AU$20,115 pp

Private

Journey Overview

Explore the Emerald Isle from east coast to west. From the Georgian architecture of Dublin to Cork and its Titanic heritage, the scenic Ring of Kerry and the Irish Lake District. You'll be captivated by the raw landscapes and wild coastlines, quaint villages and country pubs, the folk music and dance and of course the whiskey – best drunk out of Waterford crystal.

Journey Highlights

- Wander through the famous sub-tropical gardens of Ilnacullin
- Get an insider's introduction to crystal at the world-famous Waterford factory
- Journey along the famous Ring of Kerry coastal road
- Indulge in a chocolate tasting at the family owned Skelligs chocolate factory
- Stay in country manor houses, a Georgian townhouse hotel and an 800-year-old castle



Itinerary

Day 1: Arrive Dublin

On arrival in Dublin you will be met and transferred to your elegant hotel in the heart of Georgian Dublin.

The Merrion Hotel

Day 2: Dublin

Embark on a city adventure beginning with the impressive Trinity College; Ireland's oldest university. Here you see the world-famous Book of Kells; a fabulous example of early Irish manuscript illumination. Hand-crafted by monks, it contains the four gospels and has been resident at Trinity College since the 17th century. Explore the Old Library, which houses 200,000 antiquarian texts and the oldest surviving harp in Ireland. Continue to St. Patrick's Cathedral, the largest church in Ireland, where you have the opportunity to see a memorial to Jonathan Swift, the author of 'Gulliver's Travels', who became Dean of St. Patrick's in 1713. Afternoon at leisure.

The Merrion Hotel | Meals: B

Day 3: Dublin – Waterford – Cork

This morning you head out of town to Kilkenny, Ireland's best-preserved medieval town, where you visit the castle and St. Canice's Cathedral. There’s an opportunity to also visit the renowned Kilkenny Design Centre, home to a flourishing school of pottery and textile design. Next stop Waterford City, for a tour of the Waterford Crystal Factory. This is the largest cut-glass factory in the world, producing many fine commemorative pieces every year. Discover the various processes involved from mould-making to engraving, watching master craftsmen plying their trade. Continue to Cork and your hotel.

Hayfield Manor | Meals: B

Day 4: Cork

Begin your day with a city tour of Cork, Ireland’s second largest city. Explore its compact city centre, which is set on an island in the River Lee, before taking in old Cork City Gaol and St Fin Barre’s Cathedral, an impressive example of Gothic Revival architecture. From here, drive east to Cork Harbour, which is overlooked by the picturesque town of Cobh. It was here that the Titanic was last seen before its fateful maiden voyage across the Atlantic; the maritime heritage of the area is vividly portrayed in the Queenstown Story exhibition. Nearby, in Midleton, is an enormous distillery where many brands of spirit are produced, including Jameson's whiskey. At the Old Distillery, visit the heritage centre where the process of producing Irish whiskey is explained.

Hayfield Manor | Meals: B

Day 5: Cork – Killarney

Journey into the region known as West Cork. The route takes you via the picturesque town of Kinsale, well known for its quaint streets and seafood restaurants. Continue along the coast road though Clonakilty and Skibbereen, eventually reaching Bantry Bay. Later, at Glengarriff, board a ferry that takes you to Garinish Island, home to the famous sub-tropical gardens of Ilnacullin. Spend time here admiring the Italian-style garden where a wide variety of shrubs and plants have been cultivated using the warming influence of the Gulf Stream. Return to the mainland and drive over the very picturesque Caha Mountains that form the heart of the Beara peninsula. Then drive through the wild and windswept landscape following the waters of the River Sheen on to your next hotel.

This evening, you are welcomed into the home of a local family. Nothing brings people together more than sitting down to a home cooked meal and this is your chance to experience a traditional Irish dinner with your hosts in a relaxed and friendly atmosphere. Later, you may be joined by other family members who further add to the merriment and engaging conversation. As the evening draws to a close return to your hotel with a lasting memory of your visit to Ireland.

The Europe Hotel & Resort | Meals: BD

Day 6: Ring of Kerry

Explore the Ring of Kerry today, one of the best-loved coastal drives in Europe. The road follows the shoreline of the Iveragh Peninsula, passing some of the most beautiful mountain and moorland scenery in the whole of Ireland. To the south of Portmagee runs the Ring of Skellig, a quiet, scenic, though often steep, route around the most westerly point of the Iveragh Peninsula, via wild and exposed St Finian's Bay. This is the unlikely home of the small but high-quality, family run Skelligs Chocolate Factory where you may wish to enjoy a sample or two and watch the chocolates being made in their 'open plan' production area. From the highest point of the road between Portmagee and St Finian's Bay, you can climb the hill for the most magnificent views out to the Skellig Islands, across to the Dingle Peninsula and the Blaskets and inland to the Iveragh Mountains.

The Europe Hotel & Resort | Meals: B

Day 7: Killarney – Lower Shannon

Continue your journey today, stopping first to explore the charming village of Adare, with its thatched cottages, quaint coffee houses and antique shops. Next continue to Limerick, the third largest city in the Republic of Ireland, located at the head of the Shannon estuary. Of interest here is the Hunt Museum which has a wonderful collection of antiquities, ranging from the Neolithic period to the present. There is an important collection of Irish archaeological material ranging from Neolithic flints and Bronze Age material, including a Bronze Age shield and cauldron. After a leisurely lunch (payable locally) you reach Killaloe where a short river cruise reveals the best wildlife and scenery along the River Shannon. Continue to your hotel for an evening at leisure.

The Shannon region extends from the wild Atlantic coasts of County Clare to the equally dramatic lowlands of the Shannon Valley with its lakes and wetlands. As the river tumbles down to its deep estuary on the Atlantic coast, it provides a natural border for the three counties that form this lower region: Limerick, Tipperary and Clare. This is a region of great charm and natural beauty, ranging from the rich grasslands of the east, to the dramatic Burren landscape in the north - a quirk of geology exposing the huge ‘cracked pavement’ of ancient limestone - to the towering cliffs and golden beaches of the west, and the vibrant cosmopolitan city of Limerick in the south.

Dromoland Castle | Meals: B

Day 8: Lower Shannon - Cong - Lower Shannon

Travel north today to the Irish Lake District. Crossing the Shannon River, you drive through County Clare to the dramatic Cliffs of Moher. Standing at a height of over 180 metres these sandstone cliffs are Ireland's highest. They are exposed to the fiercest of Atlantic storms and large colonies of birds can be spotted here. Venture though The Burren, the largest karst landscape in Europe on what promises to be a very dramatic drive, with the lunar-like backdrop displaying unusual rock formations. The coast road then takes you around Galway Bay, famed for its oysters.

Dromoland Castle | Meals: B

Day 9: Depart Lower Shannon

Your journey ends with a private car transfer to Shannon Airport.

Meals: B

Map


NORTHERN IRELAND
IRELAND
Dublin
Cong
Shannon
Killarney
Cork
ARRIVE/DEPART
ROAD

Accommodation

The Europe, Killarney



The Europe Hotel & Resort is beautifully located overlooking the world-famous lakes of Killarney and the scenic McGillycuddy Reeks mountain range. A luxury resort boasting some of Ireland’s finest amenities, beautiful, contemporary décor evokes a warm, cosy feeling more bed and breakfast than lavish resort. A wide range of leisure activities is on offer including golf, horse riding, boating and fishing, walking and hiking, tennis, swimming, gym activities and spa treatments.

Hayfield Manor, Cork



Hayfield Manor is Cork’s first 5 star hotel. Located within a period manor house in the heart of the city, it is a member of Small Luxury Hotels of the World. Proudly family owned and managed service is personalised and professional. The hotel’s 88 rooms and suites are well proportioned, decorated in tasteful muted colours with beautiful antique furnishings and exquisite fabrics. Sink into a comfy leather Chesterfield in the library, enjoy an indulgent afternoon tea in the drawing room, a spa treatment in the elegant spa facility or a private dinner in the hotel’s wine cellar.

The Merrion Hotel, Dublin



Situated in the heart of Dublin, this elegant hotel encompasses four meticulously restored Georgian townhouses flavoured with a special touch of Irish history and understated refinement. It boasts the largest private collection of 19th and 20th century art in Ireland and is well positioned for the city’s major attractions. Rooms and suites are light and airy, decorated in colours and fabrics selected from a subtle palette inspired by Paul Henry’s Irish landscape paintings.

Dromoland Castle



Experience the royal treatment at one of Ireland’s finest hotels, Dromoland Castle. Built in the 16th century, it was once the home of the O’Brian family, direct descendants of Brian Boru, one of the last High Kings of Ireland.

Dromoland Castle gives you a warm Irish welcome and the highest level of service. Gastronomes will revel in the incredible award-winning cuisine served by Executive Head Chef David McCann, who has been impressing guests for over 20 years with his elegant and delicious cooking. Scouring the countryside for the finest artisan producers and growers, his menus are a roll call of Ireland’s very best ingredients., Leisure opportunities abound, relax in the intimate spa, stroll through the breathtaking scenery surrounding the hotel, tee off on the world class golf course, have a clay shooting lesson or indulge in one of the other many activities Dromoland Castle offers. A stay at Dromoland delivers a fairy tale experience you will never forget.

Abercrombie & Kent

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