

## Go South Tour Itinerary

### Monday: Arrival in Dublin, Ireland

Welcome to Ireland! You arrive in Dublin and check in to your first night's accommodation\*.

If you have time, check out some of the excellent tours of the city and sample some of Dublin's unique bars and restaurants. Then off to bed with you for a good night's sleep, for tomorrow begins what we hope will be one of your best experiences yielding a lifetime of happy memories!

\* We will contact you prior to your departure date with your Dublin hotel details.

### Tuesday: Day 1 – Dublin to Dungarvan

Meet your guide and the rest of your trip participants and begin your wonderful and exciting travels in Ireland. Leaving Dublin and heading south, you'll experience the rugged and wild beauty of the Wicklow Mountain's peat bogs, lakes, and valleys along the old and twisty military road. For years, early rebels evaded British troops and monks founded places of learning and worship over a thousand years ago. After many stops to enjoy the sights, you'll stop for lunch with time to explore on your own.

In the afternoon, you head further south through Counties Carlow and Kilkenny to visit a restored 13<sup>th</sup> Century Cistercian Monastery. Next you discover forgotten 1,300 year old stone Celtic Crosses intricately carved with complex designs and an ancient stone tomb ~6,000 years old. Onwards to County Waterford and your final stop for the night, the lovely harbor town of Dungarvan on Ireland's southern Atlantic shore. The night is yours to relax, eat, drink, and be merry!

**Day 1 Highlights:** Wicklow Mountains, Restored 13<sup>th</sup> Century Monastery, 7<sup>th</sup> Century Stone Crosses, Ancient Stone Tomb, Dungarvan

### Wednesday: Day 2 – Dungarvan to Baltimore

Great views as we drive the scenic southern coast to see Ireland's finest example of a medieval Round Tower. Multi-story stone towers like this were built over a thousand years ago by pious monks and endured a long and turbulent history. Your next stop is a tour of the impressive Barryscourt Castle - a fine example of a 16<sup>th</sup> Century Irish tower house castle. You then break for lunch and enjoy free time in Kinsale, known for its many restaurants and excellent food.

Continuing on, you find a mystifying solar alignment held within a tranquil Stone Circle. This secluded site was of great importance to the early Irish and was timed to the setting sun of the winter solstice.

You then head to your final stop for the night, the colorful town of Baltimore, one of the southernmost towns in Ireland! Enjoy this wonderful small town, take a walk to the solitary and enigmatic beacon tower on the end of the headland, or take in the great views of the harbor right from your room.

**Day 2 Highlights:** 9<sup>th</sup> Century Round Tower, Barryscourt Castle, Kinsale, Ancient Stone Circle, Baltimore

### **Thursday: Day 3 – Baltimore to Kenmare**

A magnificent day as we drive through some of the most visually stunning parts of Ireland. First, you head to the Mizen Head Signal Station with its excellent interpretive center and Ireland's most southerly point via a beautiful, slender arched bridge spanning a deep ravine.

Moving on northwards you come to the fantastic town of Bantry and learn about Saint Brendan who may have been the first person to discover North America! As you leave, you'll have fine views of the beautiful bay and then continue on through the unusually tropical town of Glengarriff.

We then follow an amazing route through the Beara Peninsula to County Kerry over the countless switchbacks of the Healy Pass and down to your overnight town of Kenmare. This magical and festive town is full of quaint shops, lively bars, and great traditional Irish music.

**Day 3 Highlights:** Mizen Head Signal Station, Bantry, The Beara Peninsula, Kenmare

### **Friday: Day 4 – Kenmare to Dingle**

Saying goodbye to Kenmare, your route takes you to the MacGillycuddy's Reeks, the largest mountains in Ireland, and home to the spectacular Killarney National Park. A photographer's dream...you may well wish for an extra pair of eyes! You'll make your way over the pass at Moll's Gap and work your way down by Killarney's captivating lakes, waterfalls, and panoramic vistas.

The views keep coming along coastal roads and sandy beaches flanked by green hills as you make your way to the Dingle Peninsula and Dingle town for lunch. After lunch, you take a trip round the dramatic landscape of the Sleat Headland. This Irish speaking area is rich in archeological sites including the Gallarus Oratory and is Ireland's most westerly shore.

Afterwards, you'll make your way back to town for a fun-filled night. This charismatic fishing town is filled with colorful buildings and many great places to dine or shop and you'll have fun discovering bars that double as hardware or shoe stores.

**Day 4 Highlights:** Killarney National Park, Sleat Head Drive, Gallarus Oratory, Dingle Town

### **Saturday: Day 5 – Free Day in Dingle!**

Your free day! There are many fun and interesting things to do in and around the town such as great shops, biking, golfing, fishing, horseback riding, and hill walking. Take a walk to see Dingle's wild mascot, "Fungi the Dolphin" who is almost always found in the mouth of the harbor making new friends and showing off.

Alternatively you could simply find a nice bar or coffee shop to while away the hours and strike up a conversation with some of the interesting and friendly characters to be found in Dingle. Enjoy another great night in this enchanting and fun town!

**Day 5 Highlights:** Gaelic culture, Fungi the dolphin, Free time to explore Dingle!

### **Sunday: Day 6 – Dingle to Ballyvaughan**

You depart Dingle heading over the Slieve Mish Mountains through northern Kerry and onto Ireland's largest river, the Shannon. This wide and navigable river has been an important trade route for thousands of

years. At the small town of Tarbert, you'll hop aboard a ferry for a ride across the breadth of the river and arrive on the other side in the geological wonder of County Clare.

Stopping along the way in wonderful towns like Lahinch, where surfers and horses share its grand beach, you'll head to one of the world's most spectacular sights, the Cliffs of Moher. Looming over 700 feet above the smashing force of the Atlantic Ocean, these sheer and majestic cliffs are simply not to be missed!

From the cliffs heading north, you pass through the amazing Burren landscape, designated a Special Area of Conservation. Often likened to lunar rock, the Burren's large and seemingly barren area is remarkably full of life and has an impressive cache of archeological sites. Once a seabed of carboniferous limestone, it rose up and eroded over thousands of years to form a vast array of cracks and fissures. These provide hidden shelter for a unique range of flora, with Alpine and Arctic plants living alongside Mediterranean plants. One more stop...visit an Irish tower house castle hidden down a country lane along the shores of the Atlantic.

Moving north, you'll arrive at the small town of Ballyvaughan. Set amongst the Burren's rocky rolling hills, this harbor town is our home for the night. Try their renowned local chowder or sample one of the many varietals of whiskey to be found at O'Loclainn's bar.

**Day 6 Highlights:** The Slieve Mish Mountains, River Shannon, Cliffs of Moher, The Burren, Irish Tower House Castle, Ballyvaughan

### **Monday: Day 7 – Ballyvaughan to Dublin**

Start your day following the coast road to the town of Kinvarra and Dunguaire Castle stunningly set within the natural moat of Kinvarra's shallow bay. This medieval castle gets its name from the ancient King Guaire whose right arm grew longer out of generosity.

You continue on and again meet up with the River Shannon and make your crossing at the aptly named town of Shannonbridge. From here we work our way through the extensive peat bogs of the area to Clonmacnoise, Ireland's most important early Christian site. Set serenely along the banks of the River Shannon, it holds some of the finest examples of Celtic crosses in the country in addition to the fine carvings on a 15th Century gothic doorway.

Afterwards you continue to follow the Shannon north to lunch in the city of Athlone. Located on a strategic crossing of the river for over a thousand years, it has endured many battles and sieges. Wander along the river bank and explore its many cafes and restaurants. And no trip to Athlone would be complete without a visit to Sean's Bar, founded in the 9th Century making it Ireland's oldest pub!

Alas you head back to Dublin and your last night in the Emerald Isle. Enjoy a meal in one of the many fine restaurants, walk the busy streets, and savor your final hours and a lifetime of memories.

**Day 7 Highlights:** Clonmacnoise, Athlone, Dublin

### **Slan Beo!! Irish for "Goodbye, live life!"**

While it is our intention to adhere to the route described above, there is a certain amount of flexibility built into the itinerary and on occasion, it may be necessary, or desirable, to make alterations. The information in the itinerary has been compiled with care and is provided in good faith. However, it is subject to change, and does not form part of the contract between the client and Inroads Ireland.

© 2012 Inroads Ireland, LLC