

Cycling Safaris

WEST CORK & KERRY

Self guided tours 2024

260 km | 8 days/7 nights



This tour covers some of the most spectacular scenery that Ireland has to offer. Shortly after leaving Killarney you will find yourself cycling between the majestic lakes that have made this area so famous to be shortly followed by a climb up to Molls Gap with its wonderful views of the Macgillycuddyreeks, Ireland's highest mountain range. The rest of the week involves more of the same stunning scenery with a wonderful coastal cycle along Kenmare Bay. You then spend two days exploring the relatively unknown Beara peninsula which we feel offers some of the best scenery you will ever see in Ireland. On the rest day you relax in the fishing village of Castletownbere where you can take a boat ride to Bere Island or cycle out to the ruins of nearby Dunboy Castle. Towards the end of the week you head inland and stay at a beautiful Lakeside retreat at the source of the River Lee. On the final day you cycle up over the wild and isolated hills of the Coolea region before returning to Killarney.

The roads are all tarmaced and the route is designed to ensure that you spend most of the week on quiet backroads, away from the main tourist routes. To experience the majestic scenery of this area the route does have a number of climbs, so it is worth getting a few weekends training on a bike in varied terrain before coming thus ensuring that you can fully enjoy the week.

TOUR ITINERARY

DAY 1

ARRIVE IN KILLARNEY

On arrival in Killarney you should make your way to your accommodation. If you get there early the rooms in the B&Bs will not usually be ready until early afternoon so you can leave your luggage at the guesthouse and explore this bustling town.

If you have time you could visit Ross Castle a wonderfully restored 16th Century Norman Tower House overlooking Lough Leane. You can even hire a boat from here and row out to a 6th Century monastic site located on one of the nearby islands. Ross Castle is about 1.5 miles from the town.



DAY 2 KILLARNEY TO KENMARE

22.5 miles / 36 km

The day starts off by following a cycle track into the beautiful grounds of Muckross House. Located on the grounds is a Franciscan Abbey founded in the 15th Century. It is now in ruins but is beautifully situated with a large yew tree rising up through the cloisters. After a stroll around the celebrated Muckross gardens there follows a wonderful cycle along a quiet path between two of the Killarney lakes before you return to the main road.



A steady climb up to Molls Gap is rewarded with a delicious lunch in a restaurant with beautiful views of the surrounding mountains. In the afternoon you sweep down to the picturesque seaside town of Kenmare. There are longer cycles available if you fancy stretching your legs this afternoon.

DAY 3 KENMARE TO CASTLETOWNBERE

32 miles / 51 km



You follow a spectacular coast road hugging Kenmare Bay with its wonderful views of the MacGillikuddy Reeks Mountains, before stopping for lunch at a small pub overlooking the bay.



In the afternoon you can visit the nearby Dereen Gardens with its amazing variety of flora. Leaving the Gardens you cycle west where you can visit an ancient stone circle or explore the beautiful scenery and quiet back roads of the Beara Way. Castletownbere, where you will spend the next two nights, is nestled at the foot of the Cahas Mountains.

DAY 4 CASTLETOWNBEREBERE / EYERIES / ALLIHIES

25 miles / 40 km



Today's cycle is a circular route, taking in the Beara Peninsula, one of the week's highlights, with its twisted mountainscapes and breathtaking coastal scenery.

You begin by retracing our route to Eyerries; from here, to your lunch-stop in Allihies, you can really feel you are away from it all, experiencing an undiscovered part of Ireland well away from some of the bustling tourist routes.

After lunch you continue cycling around the peninsula with more wonderful views of the ocean. You can detour off the main route for a scenic bike ride to the crossing point for Dursey Island, which can be reached by catching a ride on the only cable car in Ireland. After this interesting detour you return back to the main road and continue on towards Castletownbere, passing the entrance for Dunboy Castle, which is well worth a visit.

DAY 5 BANTRY - SHEEPHEAD LOOP

43 miles / 70 km or 30 miles/ 50 km

In the morning you will get a transfer from Castletownbere to Bantry

You cycle along the shores of Bantry Bay, one of the deepest natural harbours in Europe. You will then make our way down the sheephead peninsula. This is one of the most remote places in Ireland.

The Peninsula offers fantastic views of the open Ocean and rolling landscape that gives a feel that you really are on a small island on the edge of the Atlantic. There is also an option to walk around the very end of the Peninsula.



DAY 6 BANTRY TO GOUGANE BARRA

30 miles / 50 km



Today you head inland and cycle along quiet country roads with rolling fields dotted with grazing cattle and sheep, before arriving at the lakeside retreat of Gougane Barra, Ireland's first National Park and the source of the River Lee.

This is a beautiful peaceful place and an ideal setting for your last night in the countryside before you head back to the hustle and bustle of the great metropolis of Killarney!

DAY 7 GOUGANE BARRA TO KILLARNEY

36 miles / 58 km

For the last day you cycle up into the Coolea region via remote, peaceful mountain roads where you can really feel you are away from it all.

You can stop for a cup of tea at Ireland's Highest Pub before descending back down into Killarney for a final night on the town.



There are a number of hills on the route but you have all day to do the cycling. You will be provided with a more comprehensive route description and map at the start of the tour. There is an option each day for a variety of longer routes. With the exception of the roads in and out of Killarney, the traffic on the route should be quite light. You should however cycle carefully at all times, especially when going downhill.

Please note that due to limited accommodation options in Gougane Barra area we may offer you a reverse tour of West Cork and Kerry. This gives us more flexibility to accommodate you on your selected dates. The reverse route follows the same roads but in the opposite direction.

2024 TOUR DATES

Our Self guided tours can start any day from 15th April to 4th October.

WHAT THE PRICE INCLUDES

- Seven nights accommodation with full Irish breakfast.
- Route details in the form of GPS Tracks plus one set of printed details and maps per booking (not per person)
- Luggage transfer each day
- 24 Hour service hotline

Meal expenses

All breakfasts are included in the tour price. Clients buy their own lunches and dinner throughout the trip. You should budget between €15 and €20 for lunch each day and an evening meal each night costing somewhere between €20 and €30.

Are there facilities to change money?

There are banks and cash machines in Killarney, Kenmare and Castletownbere.

Banks are open on Monday – Friday: 10.00am - 4.00pm. Credit cards are also widely accepted.

BACK UP SERVICE

Our aim is to allow you feel like an independent traveller, free to cycle each day at your own pace while at the same time having the security of knowing that everything has been organised and your luggage will be waiting for you in your next accommodation.

If for any reason you are unable to cycle please contact our Dublin office (+353 1 2600749) so we can liaise with the luggage transfers to organise the transfer of bike(s) and person(s). Please note that you will be charged for any additional runs made on your behalf.

Our bikes are serviced before each tour so they should be humming perfectly! If you experience small problems with the bike (i.e., a puncture) you will have a spare tube, pump and tyre lever. You can of course phone our office if you experience any major problems (+353 1 2600749).

WHAT TO BRING

*We would seriously recommend that you bring **padded cycling shorts and / or a gel saddle cover** which will definitely make your days cycling more comfortable. Cycling gloves are also a good investment. You can also bring your own saddle which should be possible to attach to our bikes.

*We provide small **pannier bags** (not waterproof) in which you can keep your day-to-day items. Otherwise you may prefer to use a daypack and there are back carriers on each bike for this purpose.

*We do not provide **rain gear** so be sure to bring your own light weight waterproofs.

*Don't forget **sun cream, sunglasses, sun hat** as well as a bathing suit for that refreshing dip in the Atlantic Ocean.

*Our rental bikes don't have **lights** - no problem on the long summer evenings, but if you are travelling in May or September, please bring your own light or high-visibility vest.

*Finally if you wish to use **toe clips** please bring your own pedals with toe clips (and spanner) which you can attach to our bikes (the pedals on our bikes do not accommodate toe clips).

BIKE RENTAL

In 2024 we will be renting Hybrid Focus Crater Lake bicycles for our tours starting in Killarney.



Bikes come in different sizes and in gents and ladies style frames.

It is very important you give us your height on booking so that we can allocate the correct bike to you.

There are a number of hills to climb on this tour so we would recommend that you do try to do some cycling before the tour in order to make your week more enjoyable, if possible do it on varied terrain and include some hill climbing.

Weather

Because we are an island located near the gulf stream Ireland has a very mild climate making it ideal for cycling. We recommend that you bring your rain gear as well as your sun hat as a day that starts with rain can end with glorious sunshine! The temperature range during the summer is between 15 and 22 degrees centigrade (60 to 72 degrees Fahrenheit)

Visa requirements

If you hold an EU passport you only need to make sure your passport is valid for the period of your stay.

All other nationalities require a passport that is valid for 3 months beyond the intended length of stay. Most nationalities including the USA, Canada, Australia and New Zealand do not require visas for Ireland and receive an automatic 90 day visitor's visa on arrival. If your nationality is not mentioned here you should check with your travel agent or consular office.

Electrical current/Mobile Phone

The standard electrical supply is 220 volts AC (50 cycles). To use small appliances mainland European visitors may require a plug adaptor to fit our 3-pin flat or 2-pin round wall sockets. The mobile phone system in use is a digital GSM 900 system.

Websites on Ireland

Some recommended websites on Ireland that might help you organise your trip if you are planning to spend more time in the country before or after your holiday with us.

www.discoverireland.com – Irish Tourist Board (Failte Ireland) official website providing a wealth of information on all regions of the country.

www.heritageireland.ie info on historical sites

If you plan to spend some extra time in **Dublin**, the following will give you some more ideas of things to do

www.visitdublin.com (Dublin Tourism)

Recommended Reading & Listening

Ireland has a rich literary and musical heritage, some of which you will experience first hand on our tours. Should you like to do a little advance research the following websites should help you...

www.kennys.ie is a long established Galway bookshop with an enormous online catalogue of books of Irish interest.

www.celticnote.com is the perfect place to carry out your acoustic research!

ACCOMMODATION

The accommodation is allocated on a twin sharing basis. We stay in a mixture of B&Bs and small hotels, where we hope to fuse the best standard we can get with the warmest welcome. We ensure en suite facilities. We do reserve the right to change the accommodation around during the tour, but we will always endeavour to provide a high standard.

Accommodation typically used – subject to availability

Day 1 & 7: Killarney

[Killarney Inn](#)



Day 1 & 7: Killarney

[Castle Lodge](#)



Day 2: Kenmare

[Brass Lantern](#)



Day 2: Kenmare

[Cahas B&B](#)



Day 3 & 4: Castleownbere

[Seabreeze B&B](#)



Day 3 & 4: Castleownbere

[Cottage Heights](#)



Day 5: Bantry
[Maritime Hotel](#)



Day 6: Gougane Barra (Dinner included)
[Gougane Barra Hotel](#)



What happens if I am delayed on the first night?

Please contact the guesthouse to let them know if you are arriving late.

What if someone needs to contact me during the tour?

If you have a mobile phone which operates on the GSM 900 system, this will be compatible with the Irish system. We will send you a full list of where you are staying on the tour before departure

Looking for extra accommodation at the beginning or end of the tour?

We would be happy to help you organise extra accommodation in Killarney for the start or the end of the week. If you would prefer to organise it yourself please see the websites below. If you are planning to spend a few days in Dublin at the end of the tour, we recommend that you book accommodation well in advance as the capital is very busy on weekends. We do not actually organise accommodation in Dublin but there are a huge range of websites offering a reservation service. A good starting place is www.booking.com or Dublin Tourism (www.visitdublin.com).