



## West Coast of Ireland

**June 5- 12, 2017**

The trip to the West Coast of Ireland begins in Bunratty (near the Shannon airport) and ends at the Shannon airport. You can fly to Shannon and then take a taxi to the B&B in Bunratty. We will meet you with a van to transport you to the starting point for our walks on the morning of June 5. After the minimum of 10 reservations is reached we will advise you to make your air travel reservations.

Trip Start: June 5, 2017 – B&B in Bunratty, Ireland 9:00AM

Trip Finish: June 12, 2017 – Shannon Airport – 9:30AM

Trip Length: 8 days, 7 nights

Trip Cost: \$3,500 per person sharing a room  
\$3,950 for a single room

(Trip cost includes everything except airfare, 2 dinners, 1 lunch, beverages, and tips.)

## Day by Day Overview

**Tuesday, June 5** – We meet at your B&B in Bunratty and drive to the Burren Region of County Clare (Drive Time 1.5 hours). We will hike at Slieve Elva, the highest point of the Burren, with great views over Galway Bay. The Burren (“a stoney place”) is a strange, lunar-like region of bare carboniferous limestone which occupies around one hundred square miles of County Clare. Below the surface of the Burren is the most remarkable assemblage of spectacular caves, streams, potholes and “turloughs”(vanishing lakes). After our walk, which takes in wonderful views of Galway Bay, we will make our way to the coastal village of Ballyvaughan (Drive Time 20 mins). We will have dinner together in a local pub in Doolin which also has traditional Irish music.

Distance: 4 miles; elevation gain: 300'; Total Drive Time 1 hr 50 mins.

Overnight: Drumcreehy House, Ballyvaughan, County Clare - <http://www.drumcreehyhouse.com/>

➤ Meals Included: Lunch and Dinner.

**Wednesday, June 6** - We will hike at Black Head on the coastal Burren overlooking the sea at a village called Fanore. We will be accompanied by Shane Connolly a well-known local guide. Our first walk is fairly short (2-3 miles) but Shane will have a lot to tell us about the area, so we will be hiking for 3-4 hours. Our afternoon walk is longer at approximately 6 miles: we will follow a beautiful track through the rocky landscape and be rewarded with fine, expansive views of the Burren. The area supports Arctic, alpine and Mediterranean flora side-by-side, and the mild winter temperatures ensure a long growing season. The blue flower of the Spring Gentian, an alpine plant, is the region's best-loved flower - hopefully we will see them along the way. Dinner will be provided in a local pub.

Distance: 9 miles; elevation gain: 600'; Total Drive Time 1 hr 10 mins.

➤ Meals Included: Breakfast, Lunch and Dinner.

**Thursday, June 7-** Today we take a guided hike with Pat Sweeney, a local farmer and guide, from Doolin to Cliffs of Moher. We take the coastal path from Doolin all the way to the Cliffs. Towering 660 feet above the wild Atlantic, these cliffs are noted for abundant birdlife including puffins (between June and early August). We can also hope to see and hear fulmars, guillemots, kittiwakes, and if we're really lucky, peregrine falcons. We will then have time then to visit the Cliffs of Moher Interpretive Centre. Afterwards we can make time to visit the Rock Shop at Liscannor.

Distance: 5 miles; Elevation gain 600'; Total Drive Time 1 hour.

- Meals Included: Breakfast, Lunch and Dinner.

**Friday, June 8 -** Depart Ballyvaughan to drive to the Dingle Peninsula. We will take a ferry across the River Shannon to shorten the journey: look out for dolphins! On arrival, we will hike the coast path out of Dingle Town past the old lighthouse and beside the mouth of the harbour. The views of Dingle harbour are magnificent. We will make our way out across a track to higher points where we can look down on various small coves and beaches. We will then return to Dingle and check in to Greenmount House, Dingle Town.

Distance: 4 miles; Elevation gain: 700'; Total Drive Time 3 hours 30 mins.

Overnight: Greenmount House, Dingle, County Kerry - <http://www.greenmounthouse.ie/>

- Meals Included: Breakfast, Lunch and Dinner.

**Saturday, June 9 -** Today is officially a "free day". There will be an option of a morning walk. You're free in the afternoon to explore the town of Dingle.

- Meals Included: Breakfast.
- Lunch and Dinner on your own

**Sunday, June 10 -** We will drive across the highest road pass in Ireland, the Connor Pass to reach the spectacular green valley of Magha na Bo. Our path leads through a beautiful steep-sided valley towards the pass at Beenbo Mountain. We climb gently beside the river and on to open heathland where we can find the elusive sundew and butterwort (insectivorous plants of the bog) and the feathery white flags of the bog cotton. We cross over the pass and follow a track beside beautiful Annascaul Lake (Annascaul - "mountain of the shadows") to Annascaul village. We can visit the South Pole Inn: once owned by Tom Crean, one of the heroes of the famous Shackleton expedition to the South Pole.

Distance: 10 miles; Elevation gain: 1200'; Total Drive Time 1 hour 30 mins

- Meals Included: Breakfast and Lunch.
- Dinner on your own

**Monday, June 11 -** We travel today to the western tip of the Dingle Peninsula to walk at Ballydavid Head, for one of the best walks in Kerry. We climb gently through moorland grass to reach a fine vantage point with expansive views of the surrounding hills, fields, mountains, sea and cliffs. This area could be described as a "photographer's paradise". We will take our time to take pictures, relax, and enjoy the views. On our way back to town we can visit the Blasket Museum - recording the history of the Great Blasket Island, its residents, and their evacuation for good in 1954.

Distance 6 miles; Elevation gain 800'; Total Drive Time 1 hour 20 mins.

- Meals Included: Breakfast, Lunch and Dinner.

## **Tuesday, June 12 -**

After breakfast we will have an early departure for Shannon Airport to arrive there by 9:30AM.

Total Drive Time 2 hrs 50 mins

Meals Included: Breakfast.

**Please Note: The above schedule is subject to change due to weather or other circumstances beyond our control.**

## **Flight and Airport Info**

**Getting to Shannon, Ireland** —Fly from the U.S. to Shannon Airport then taxi to the B&B in Bunratty. If you are taking the Dublin city tour pre-trip extension: fly from the U.S. to Dublin, take the Dublin Bus Airlink Express (#747) from Dublin airport to O'Connell Street/Parnell Square and walk 10 minutes to your hotel. After the Dublin city tour we will take a bus from Dublin to Bunratty to start the walking tour.

## **Meals**

Packed lunches will be provided on our hiking days and dinners as indicated on the itinerary.

**Weather:** Mild spring weather with some rain likely.

## **Helpful Websites:**

**Dublin Airport bus:** <http://www.dublinbus.ie/en/Your-Journey1/Timetables/Airport-Services/>

**Hotels in Ireland:** <http://www.drumcreehyhouse.com/>  
<http://www.greenmounthouse.ie/>

**Dingle Peninsula:** <http://www.dingle-peninsula.ie/>

**The Burren:** <http://www.burrennationalpark.ie/>  
[http://www.doolinireland.net/burren\\_clare\\_irland.html](http://www.doolinireland.net/burren_clare_irland.html)

**Dublin Bus:** <http://www.dublincoach.ie/timetables-fares/M7-bus-ennis-tralee-killarney-limerick-dublin-city.php>

**Dublin Pre-trip hotel:** <http://www.belvederehoteldublin.com/>

## **Reading:**

**Rick Steves Ireland** has good information for travelers

**A Brief History of Ireland** - Richard Killeen (non-fiction) - 2012

**How the Irish Saved Civilization** - Thomas Cahill (non-fiction) - 1995

**The Dingle Peninsula** - Steve MacDonogh (non-fiction) - 1993

**A Day in Our Life** - Sean O'Crohan (non-fiction about Blasket Island) - 1992

**Ryan's Daughter** - movie filmed in Dingle (1970) - (at your library or Netflix)