NAT HAB
CULTURAL JOURNEYS

Vibrant Traditions & Personal Connections



The Spirit of Ireland

Explore Living Heritage & Enchanting Landscapes of the Emerald Isle

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Trip Details:

Days
10 Days / Apr–Oct

Price
From $12995

The Spirit of Ireland

Explore Living Heritage & Enchanting Landscapes of the Emerald Isle

Few countries capture the heart and soul like Ireland. And few journeys bring its people, stories, music, art and nature together as irresistibly as this lively adventure does. From the cobbled lanes of old Dublin to the Wild Atlantic Way hugging the windswept west coast, each day of discovery reveals a new layer of Irish identity. Our itinerary spans millennia as we wander ancient sites like the cliffside fort of Dún Aonghasa, explore the Aran Islands where Gaelic is still spoken, stand atop the nearly 2,000-foot-high Slieve League sea cliffs, forage for native culinary plants and seaweed, and trace the history of the Troubles in Derry. In the evenings, cozy up in convivial pubs for fiddle reels and storytelling as we meet Ireland's keepers of tradition, sharing their heritage in word, song and whisky. *Sláinte!*

Trip Highlights

Meet the People Who Keep Irish Traditions Alive

Enjoy personal connections with farmers, fishermen, foragers, cheesemakers, musicians and storytellers who share their lives with us

Experience the Aran Islands When Day Trippers Are Gone

Most visitors hop over on the ferry to spend a few hours—we slow down for a two-night immersion in enduring Gaelic culture and language

Explore Less-Visited Nooks on the Wild Atlantic Way

Find evocative windswept coast, tall sea cliffs and traditional villages off the tourist track as we trace Ireland's rugged western edge

Ready to Book? Call an Adventure Specialist at 800-543-8917



The Spirit of Ireland Itinerary

Explore Living Heritage & Enchanting Landscapes of the Emerald Isle

Itinerary at a Glance

Day 1	Trace Ireland's history through the stories of Dubliners
Day 2	Experience Dublin through its language, history and local voices
Day 3	Hear Ireland's bardic traditions before ferrying to the Aran Islands
Day 4	Experience ancient history and enduring traditions in the Aran Islands
Day 5	Cross from Inis Mor into the wild landscapes of Connemara
Day 6	Visit Kylemore Abbey and explore coastal life in Connemara
Day 7	Experience foraging and farming traditions en route to Donegal
Day 8	Listen to personal stories of conflict and reconciliation in Derry
Day 9	Walk the towering sea cliffs of Slieve League with a storyteller guide
Day 10	Depart Ireland after your journey from Dublin to Donegal



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Day 1

Trace Ireland's history through the stories of Dubliners

- Walk through Glasnevin Cemetery with a local guide to hear stories of revolutionaries and political leaders
- Stop for a pint at the historic Gravediggers Pub
- Gather for a welcome dinner at your Georgian hotel in coastal Malahide

Arrive in Dublin, where our Emerald Isle journey begins. Over the next two days, we explore both history and contemporary life in Ireland's urban capital. This afternoon, the past unfolds as we walk with a local guide through Glasnevin Cemetery, where the graves of political leaders, revolutionaries and generations of Dubliners are testament to nearly two centuries of Irish history. Hear the stories behind the names and monuments, from figures central to the struggle for independence to citizens whose lives are woven into the enduring social fabric of the city. Afterward, we stop for a pint at the nearby Gravediggers Pub, so named for the cemetery workers who once drank here after their shifts. Then it's time to head to the coastal village of Malahide, just outside the capital, where our Georgian period hotel awaits. Here, we gather with our Expedition Leader and fellow guests for dinner and an introduction to all that lies ahead.

Day 2

Experience Dublin through its language, history and local voices

- Learn Irish words and expressions in preparation for our time in Ireland's Gaelic-speaking west
- Take a private tour of a Georgian townhouse tracing nearly 200 years of Dublin life
- See present-day Dublin through the eyes of a local guide on a personal walking tour

Begin the day with an informal introduction to the Irish language, learning words and expressions we'll hear again when we reach the Gaeltacht—the Gaelic-speaking district—in the west. It's an early reminder that Ireland's cultural identity lives not only in its history, but in oral tradition and the traditional language still spoken today. Another portal into Irish culture opens as we step inside a Georgian townhouse whose rooms chart nearly 200 years of Dublin life. Built for an affluent family in the 18th century, the house was later divided into tenements. Our private visit traces the changing city through the generations of people who lived here. The afternoon winds up with a walk led by a local guide who shares the city from personal experience. Rather than a conventional landmarks tour, we meet present-day Dublin through personal observation and places that carry meaning for our host. Return to Malahide for dinner.

Day 3

Hear Ireland's bardic traditions before ferrying to the Aran Islands

- Meet storyteller Aindrias de Staic for a private performance combining folklore, music and the Irish language
- Walk a woodland trail past waterfalls along the River Inagh
- Ferry across Galway Bay to Inis Mor, where spoken Irish remains part of daily life

Leave Dublin this morning to head west across Ireland toward County Clare and the Atlantic coast. In Ennistymon, meet storyteller and performer Aindrias de Staic, who draws on Ireland's bardic tradition through storytelling, music and the Irish language. He offers us a private performance, connecting old forms of oral expression with stories of life in the west of Ireland today. Continue on the Glen Walk, a serene woodland trail passing waterfalls along the River Inagh, then travel to the coast to catch the ferry across Galway Bay to Inis Mor, largest of the three Aran Islands. As we approach, fields divided by dry stone walls come into view. We land at Kilronan, the main town on Inis Mor, where we spend two nights. Once ashore, we begin to hear conversations in lilting Gaelic, rarely spoken in Ireland anymore other than in Gaeltacht pockets in the West.

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Day 4

Experience ancient history and enduring traditions in the Aran Islands

- Explore Dun Aonghasa, a 3,000-year-old stone fort perched above a 300-foot Atlantic cliff
- Join a local farmer and cheesemaker to learn about rural life on Inis Mor
- Taste locally made goat cheese flavored with seaweed harvested from the island

This morning, choose among relaxing activities that give you a feel for life on this island outpost of 800 residents. Wander the white sand beach on your own or follow one of the nature trails, spend time exploring Kilronan, the picturesque port village that is the main hub of Inis Mor, or join our Expedition Leader for a guided walk.

In the afternoon, join a local guide—a farmer and cheesemaker—who leads us through small settlements and fields enclosed by the island's characteristic stone walls, learning about rural life in one of Ireland's most traditional regions. A highlight is the UNESCO World Heritage Site of Dun Aonghasa, a late Bronze Age stone fort perched on the edge of a sheer 300-foot-tall Atlantic cliff. More than 3,000 years old, the Celtic fort's massive dry stone walls comprise the largest such prehistoric fortification in the Aran Islands. Conclude the afternoon at a working goat farm, where our farmer-guide explains how cheese is made with local ingredients. Taste cheeses flavored with seaweed from the island, and meet the goats that supply the milk.

This evening, enjoy an opportunity to hear traditional Irish music in one of Inis Mor's classic pubs, accompanied by the sound of the spoken Irish language as we join locals in this convivial setting.

Day 5

Cross from Inis Mor into the wild landscapes of Connemara

- Travel through the glacier-carved Inagh Valley between the Twelve Bens and Maumturk Mountains
- Follow a stretch of the 1,600-mile Wild Atlantic Way along Ireland's rugged west coast
- Arrive at Renvyle House, set on a 150-acre estate with private shoreline, lake and woodlands

Spend a final morning on Inis Mor before our ferry departs for Rossaveel. Take a last stroll through Kilronan, stop for coffee with a view of the harbor, or join our Expedition Leader for a morning outing. Back on the mainland, travel north through County Galway into the glacier-carved Inagh Valley, one of the most scenic spots in Connemara. Flanked by the quartz peaks of the Twelve Bens rising on the west side and the Maumturk Mountains on the east, the valley floor is covered in open bogland and cradles the trout-filled waters of Lough Inagh. Continue into Connemara National Park, a wild nexus of mountains, vast expanses of bog, heath, grasslands and forest.

As we reach the village of Letterfrack at the head of Ballynakill Bay, dominated by the high profile of Diamond Hill, we're following a portion of the Wild Atlantic Way, a 1,600-mile coastal route that weaves among rugged headlands along Ireland's west coast. Continuing north, we arrive at the Renvyle Peninsula and our destination, Renvyle House Hotel, surrounded by a 150-acre estate with its own private shoreline, lake, woodlands and gardens. There's time before dinner to walk the peaceful grounds or wander down to the sandy beach.

Day 6

Visit Kylemore Abbey and explore coastal life in Connemara

- Tour Kylemore Abbey and its Victorian Walled Garden on a 1,000-acre lakeside estate
- Learn how oysters are cultivated on a small-scale Atlantic aquaculture farm, followed by a tasting
- Explore the shoreline and tidal pools with your Expedition Leader before dinner at a local pub

This morning, visit Kylemore Abbey, a 1,000-acre private estate centered on a lakeside castle built in the 1860s as a grand romantic gesture by English politician and industrialist Mitchell Henry to his wife, Margaret, after they fell in love with the area on their Irish honeymoon. Outside, the Victorian Walled Garden features formal flowerbeds and glasshouses. Kylemore Abbey was established on the site in 1920, when Benedictine nuns fleeing Belgium during World War I purchased the estate for a monastery. They also ran a school for girls from 1923–2010.

Next, we head to an oyster farm to see how oysters are cultivated in the cold Atlantic waters of Connemara. We'll get a close-up look at the small-scale aquaculture enterprise, from growing and tending the oysters to harvesting them, with a tasting included. Later this afternoon, return to Renvyle House, with time to explore the shoreline and tidal pools with our Expedition Leader. Or, choose an optional activity on your own, such as fishing or boating. This evening, we're off to a local pub for dinner and an opportunity to enjoy storytelling and music.

Day 7

Experience foraging and farming traditions en route to Donegal

- Gather native plants and seaweeds with the family behind a regenerative farm
- Watch a working sheepdog respond to whistles and commands as it gathers a flock
- Arrive at Lough Eske Castle, a restored castle on the historic lands of the O'Donnell clan

Continuing north, we stop at a family-run regenerative farm for a fascinating foraging experience called "Nourished in Nature." With our hosts, we explore coastal and upland habitats to collect native plants and seaweeds used for food and medicine. We also have a tour of the farm, learning about sustainable agricultural practices, visiting the market garden and saying hello to the free-range organically raised livestock, including hens, pigs and cattle. Then, at another farm, we watch a working sheepdog demonstration, observing how the dog responds to whistles and commands as it gathers and moves a flock across the fields. The precision is evident behind this human-canine partnership that remains central to sheep farming in western Ireland.

Continue into County Donegal, the northernmost county in the Republic of Ireland, which is known for its strong traditions and enduring heritage, including a Gaeltacht region where the Irish language is spoken. Our destination is Lough Eske Castle, where we spend our last three nights. Set among dense woodland, this luxury lakeside hotel occupies a restored castle on the site of the original castle where the O'Donnells, a powerful 14th-century Donegal clan, were based.

Day 8

Listen to personal stories of conflict and reconciliation in Derry

- Visit the Museum of Free Derry to learn about Bloody Sunday and the history of the Troubles
- Take part in a Theatre of Witness workshop with people whose lives were affected by the conflict
- Walk within Derry's 400-year-old city walls along the River Foyle

County Donegal shares a longer border with Northern Ireland, part of the United Kingdom, than it does with the Republic of Ireland, and today we cross over it to reach Derry. In this city on the River Foyle, enclosed by 400-year-old rampart walls, history comes alive among 18th-century architecture, cobbled lanes, and museums that tell its difficult stories. At the Museum of Free Derry, we learn about Bloody Sunday in 1972, the darkest and most pivotal event during the Troubles, and the history that led to it. We then take part in a Theatre of Witness workshop, hearing directly from people whose lives were affected by conflict. Their stories give us a lens on Ireland's sectarian conflict through individual experience—what happened to families and communities, and how reconciliation became possible. We return to Lough Eske Castle in Donegal this evening.

Day 9

Walk the towering sea cliffs of Slieve League with a storyteller guide

- Follow a local storyteller-guide to viewpoints atop the nearly 2,000-foot Slieve League cliffs
- Hear myths, legends and maritime stories tied to Donegal's Atlantic coast
- Toast your journey with a whisky tasting in the cellar at Lough Eske Castle

On our last full day in Ireland, we visit one of its most dramatic natural sights: Slieve League, where sheer granite sea cliffs rise nearly 2,000 feet above the Atlantic Ocean—the tallest in Europe, and three times higher than the Cliffs of Moher. These rugged headlands on the Donegal coast are one of the most impressive highlights on the Wild Atlantic Way. A local storyteller-guide accompanies us, sharing tales from myth and legend and maritime history connected with this coast, as we walk to dramatic viewpoints over the cliffs and Donegal Bay below. Return to Lough Eske Castle this afternoon for a final night, with time to go angling on the lake, take a horse-drawn carriage ride or relax on the tranquil grounds of the estate. Before dinner, we'll gather in the castle cellar for a whisky tasting, with non-alcoholic options available, to toast our Irish adventures together.

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Day 10

Depart Ireland after your journey from Dublin to Donegal

- Drive from Lough Eske Castle to Dublin Airport for homeward flights

After an early breakfast, we depart Lough Eske Castle and drive to Dublin Airport to meet homeward flights.



The Spirit of Ireland Accommodations

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The Grand Hotel, Malahide

Once a railway stop with wartime history, this Art Deco-inspired hotel on Ireland's east coast overlooks Malahide Estuary, a short walk from Malahide Village and 12th-century Malahide Castle.



Aran Islands Hotel

On Inis Mor, where Irish remains part of daily life, private seaview chalets overlook the Atlantic, while traditional music and cuisine celebrate the culture of the Aran Islands.



Abbeyglen Castle Hotel

Set in lush, coastal hills, this historic castle estate features ivy-clad stone walls, turrets, stately furnishings, cozy fireplaces and manicured gardens, with traditional Irish music and local seafood.



Lough Eske Castle

Between Lough Eske and the Bluestack Mountains, this sandstone castle pairs stained glass, soaring turrets and fireside drawing rooms with lakeside trails and a garden spa.

For detailed descriptions, visit nathab.com/cultural-journeys/ireland-history-heritage-tour/accommodations.

What Makes Cultural Journeys Different?

The Spirit of Ireland

You'll find plenty of guided tours of Ireland out there. But we are pretty sure none is as novel and distinctive as this one. Our itinerary is crafted to give you unusual access to Irish life as it's lived by everyday people. See what's in store:

1 **Tap Our Local Relationships for Special Access**

When you join us, you'll meet people you wouldn't be likely to encounter on a more conventional tour or on your own — farmers, foragers, cheesemakers, oyster producers, storytellers, musicians, community leaders and more.

2 **A Small Group—No More Than 12—Allows for Genuine Exchange**

Most Ireland tours involve big groups aboard motorcoaches. Not here. With just 12 guests, we're small enough to have access to private spaces, intimate experiences and personal conversations. You'll feel like an honored guest, not an anonymous tourist.

3 **A Slower Pace Enhances Your Encounters with Real Irish Life**

We deliberately focus on fewer places, with more time in each, so you are able to linger and soak up the experience and the ambience. We're based in just four locations, so no rushed one-night stays and tiring, long drives. You'll find a more meaningful encounter with Ireland as a result.

4 **Experience Living Irish Culture as It Exists Today**

While we don't forego special highlights, our focus is beyond the typical tourist sites. You'll meet people where they live, work, eat, drink and celebrate. Travel through traditional Gaeltacht regions to hear the ancient Irish language spoken. Your journey becomes about Ireland's people, more than its monuments—although we don't miss those, either. It's an unusual blend of experiences and activities you won't find elsewhere.

5 **Enjoy a Rare Stay in the Aran Islands**

Very few Ireland itineraries offer an immersion in one of its most traditional outposts, the Aran Islands. We cross Galway Bay by ferry to spend two days meeting the hardy islanders, hearing their stories, learning about their enduring ways of life, and hearing the Irish language spoken in this region where it remains the primary voice.

6 **Discover Fresh, Windswept Nature on the Wild Atlantic Way**

Just because we highlight Ireland's culture, we don't leave nature out—in fact, Irish heritage is deeply tied to it, from traditional sheep farmers in the Aran Islands to storytellers sharing myths steeped in wild sea cliff settings. On this itinerary, you'll follow a lengthy stretch of the rugged west coast on the Wild Atlantic Way, a showcase route for some of Ireland's most dramatic scenery.

7 **Dip into Northern Ireland & Its History in Derry**

Many Ireland trips don't take you over the border into Northern Ireland, which is part of the United Kingdom. On our day trip to Derry from Donegal, we explore the history of Irish nationalism and sectarian divisions, getting an intimate view of the Troubles, and the sensitive reconciliation since, through a personal witness storytelling event.

8

Travel with a Top Expedition Leader & Insightful Local Guides

You'll be with a highly capable Expedition Leader from start to finish, whose deep knowledge of Ireland's past and present ties together your diverse experiences. And you'll also meet a diverse slate of characters along the way, local people who share their lives and stories with us, revealing personal dimensions of place that only a local guide can offer.



Dates & Pricing Summary:

Price
From $12995

Group Size
Limited to 12 Travelers

The Spirit of Ireland Dates, Pricing & Info

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2028 Departures

Departure – Return	Pricing	Notes
May 1 - May 10, 2028	**$12995**	
May 15 - May 24, 2028	**$12995**	
May 29 - Jun 7, 2028	**$12995**	
Jun 12 - Jun 21, 2028	**$12995**	
Jun 26 - Jul 5, 2028	**$12995**	
Jul 10 - Jul 19, 2028	**$12995**	
Jul 24 - Aug 2, 2028	**$12995**	
Aug 7 - Aug 16, 2028	**$12995**	
Aug 21 - Aug 30, 2028	**$12995**	
Sep 4 - Sep 13, 2028	**$12995**	
Sep 18 - Sep 27, 2028	**$12995**	
Oct 2 - Oct 11, 2028	**$12995**	

2029 Departures

Departure – Return Prices and dates not confirmed for 2029	Pricing	Notes
Apr 30 - May 9, 2029	**From $13695**	
May 14 - May 23, 2029	**From $13695**	
May 28 - Jun 6, 2029	**From $13695**	
Jun 11 - Jun 20, 2029	**From $13695**	
Jun 25 - Jul 4, 2029	**From $13695**	
Jul 9 - Jul 18, 2029	**From $13695**	
Jul 23 - Aug 1, 2029	**From $13695**	
Aug 6 - Aug 15, 2029	**From $13695**	
Aug 20 - Aug 29, 2029	**From $13695**	
Sep 3 - Sep 12, 2029	**From $13695**	
Sep 17 - Sep 26, 2029	**From $13695**	
Oct 1 - Oct 10, 2029	**From $13695**	

See https://www.nathab.com/cultural-journeys/ireland-history-heritage-tour/dates-fees for the latest pricing details.

Included

Accommodations, services of Nat Hab's professional Expedition Leader(s) and local guides, all transportation from Day 1 through final day, all meals from dinner on Day 1 through breakfast on final day, some alcoholic beverages, most gratuities, airport transfers on Day 1 and final day, all activities and entrance fees, all taxes, permits and service fees.

Not Included

Travel to and from the start and end point of your trip, some alcoholic beverages, some gratuities, passport and visa fees (if any), optional activities, items of a personal nature (phone calls, laundry, etc.), airline baggage fees, airport and departure taxes (if any), required medical evacuation insurance, optional travel protection insurance.

Mandatory Insurance

Since the areas we travel to are remote and wild (that's why we go there!), we require that all guests have, at minimum, medical evacuation insurance for this program. This is for the safety of all guests. We require that your chosen independent insurance plan includes at least $250,000 in medical evacuation coverage.

To protect your investment and to provide peace of mind while you travel, we also strongly recommend purchasing comprehensive travel insurance. Plans may cover everything from medical treatment to trip cancellations and delays and lost luggage. Please contact our office if you would like more information about the medical evacuation and comprehensive travel insurance policies we offer by calling 800-543-8917.

Getting There & Getting Home

This trip begins in Dublin, Ireland, and ends at Dublin Airport. On Day 1, guests are met on arrival and transferred to the Grand Hotel in Malahide before the first scheduled experiences in Dublin. **Arrive at Dublin Airport by 12 pm on Day 1** to join the group activities.

For guests who prefer to arrive early, an optional pre-trip night is available in Malahide, with an airport transfer available and time to settle in before the journey begins.

You may depart Dublin any time after 11 am on the final day. Nat Hab will provide one group transfer from Lough Eske Castle to Dublin Airport, typically departing early in the morning. Please keep this in mind when booking flights, as later departures may result in additional waiting time at the airport. The transfer is approximately 3½ hours, and a packed breakfast is provided.

Our Natural Habitat Adventures Travel Desk can best assist with your travel reservations, as our staff is familiar with the specific requirements of this program and can help arrange the most efficient itinerary. Please call us at 800-543-8917. While we offer the best available rates to us on airfare and additional nights accommodations, you may occasionally find special web rates or lower fares online.

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