

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 fantastic town of Schull on the glorious Mizen Peninsula. Enjoy this wonderful small town, stroll along the Atlantic coast or check out one of the local pubs. With luck, there'll be music happening in Hackett's Pub just a short stroll from your comfortable hotel.

Accommodation: Schull Harbour Hotel Phone: 011 353 28 28801
Schull, Co. Cork Website: www.schullharbourhotel.ie

Thursday: Day 3 – Schull to Kenmare

A magnificent day as you travel through some of the most visually stunning parts of Ireland. First, you head to the Mizen Head Signal Station perched on Ireland's most southerly point. Stroll this rugged headland, learn about lighthouses along the coast, and visit the keeper's quarters via a beautiful arched bridge spanning a deep ravine.

Moving northwards leads you to the town of Bantry. Wander its old streets and gaze upon a statue of 6th Century Saint Brendan, possibly the first European to find America! As you leave, you'll have fine views of the beautiful bay and can spot palm trees in this unusually tropical region.

You then follow an amazing route through the Beara Peninsula over countless switchbacks and a high mountain pass for inspiring views and down to your overnight town of Kenmare. This magical Kerry town is full of quaint shops, lively bars, and great traditional Irish music, all close to your beautiful local B&B.

Accommodation: The Lodge Kenmare Phone: 011 353 64 6641512
Kenmare, Co. Kerry Website: www.thelodgekenmare.com

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.

You next take a gentle stroll by beautiful fields and grazing deer as you come to the 15th Century Muckross Abbey. Walk beneath the vaulted cloisters and gaze upon the centuries old yew tree in the central courtyard and imagine life in an abbey 500 years ago.

The views keep coming along coastal roads and sandy beaches flanked by green hills as you make your way to the Dingle Peninsula. You take a trip around the dramatic landscape of the Sleah Headland. This Gaeltacht (or Irish speaking) area is rich in archeological sites including the Gallarus Oratory and is Ireland's most westerly shore.

You'll then make your way back to Dingle town. This charismatic fishing town is filled with colorful buildings and many fine places to dine or shop. Have fun discovering pubs that double as hardware or shoe stores and you'll be staying for two nights in Dingle's best boutique guesthouse!

Accommodation: Greenmount Guesthouse Phone: 011 353 66 9151414
Dingle, Co. Kerry Website: www.greenmounthouse.ie

Saturday: Day 5 – Your Free Day in Dingle

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.

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

Accommodation: Greenmount Guesthouse Phone: 011 353 66 9151414
Dingle, Co. Kerry Website: www.greenmounthouse.ie

Sunday: Day 6 – Dingle to Killaloe/Ballina

You depart Dingle heading over the Slieve Mish Mountains through northern County Kerry and on to Ireland's longest river, the Shannon. This ancient river has moved trade for thousands of years and boarding a ferry, you'll feel its gentle flow and cross to the geological wonders of County Clare.

Passing through seaside towns, where surfers and horses stride grand beaches, you'll head north 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, you'll head east to a fantastic 15th Century Irish Tower House Castle. Explore what it was like to live here in the 1400s by wandering the rooms of its four floors and survey their lands from the stunning roof top vista.

Your overnight town is Ballina (in County Tipperary) along the River Shannon. With its sister town across the river, Killaloe (in County Clare), you have two picture perfect Irish riverside towns with pubs, great restaurants, walkways along the river's edge, and a beautiful 18th Century stone bridge with 13 arches. Your hotel overlooks the river and you can stroll into town for delicious food and stop by Liam O'Riain's pub for a pint and traditional Irish music.

Accommodation: The Lakeside Hotel Phone: 011 353 61 376 122
Ballina, Co. Tipperary Website: www.lakesidehotel.ie

Monday: Day 7 – Killaloe/Ballina to Dublin

Start your day with a relaxing cruise on Ireland's finest waterway, the River Shannon. Hop aboard your privately chartered boat and learn about the history of the area and explore serene Lough Derg and enjoy breathtaking views of Counties Clare and Tipperary.

As you meander back towards Dublin, you have two fantastic stops along the way. First, enjoy lunch at the 19th Century gothic revival Kinnitty Castle in the foothills of the Slieve Bloom Mountains. Marvel at the impressive architecture, the grand rooms, suits of armor, and lovely grounds. If you're lucky, you'll catch sight of The Monk, a benevolent ghost known to roam this castle.

After lunch your next stop is at Ireland's oldest licensed whiskey distillery. You'll take a fascinating tour through over 250 years of production, see its innovative old workings, and get a chance to sample their fine whiskey from the new wing.

