

Ireland Tour -v4

Co. Limerick and Clare area (Shannon Airport is close to the border for both)

- Bunratty Castle and Folk Park
 - On the main road between Shannon Airport and Limerick; about 30 minutes east of Shannon and 30 minutes west of Limerick city. The castle is just off the main road on the north side (on what used to be the main road). The turn off is ½ mile west of the castle, there should be signs. If you miss the turn off, just turn back at the next exit, which isn't far.
 - Bunratty Castle Hotel is just across the street. Very nice, if running out of daylight and don't want to travel further onward.
- Durty Nelly's pub (adjacent to the Bunratty Castle).
 - It has decent pub-grub and good pub ambience. Across the street (South), is a small shopping complex with a buffet type place to eat.
- Limerick city. Don't bother with it. Little there.
- Cliffs of Moher
 - Head NW from Bunratty to Ennis, then Ennistymon, then Lahinch. The cliffs are on the coastal road as you head north from Lahinch, about 8 miles.
 - Stop at Unglert's Bakery in Ennistymon. On the left, just as you enter the village from the south. A mustard color building. There's a small car park just before the building you can use.
 - Great pastries. Tell Stephan and Mary that Phil says "hi". (I've known them for over 20 years. I used to stop by with students nearly every June for 17 years.)
- Doolin
 - O'Connor's Pub. Great traditional Irish music (Trad) performed by locals on weekends. Music doesn't start until 9ish. The dinners there are great. I love their salmon, my coach driver is sold on their steak, and my students have loved their Guinness Irish Stew.
 - Don't forget the Pitch & Putt golf course past the pub about 1/2 mile. It overlooks the ocean and you can say that you golfed in Ireland. For about \$10 they rent you a pitching wedge and putter, plus two golf balls. Great fun. It would be classified as a links course, and the greens are challenging. They level the playing field for us non-golfers playing with avid golfers.
 - Lots of B&Bs in the area. (Google Doolin B&B Ireland). Or Paddy Maloney's Hostel, if looking for something less expensive and "rustic". Ask to stay in the Fisherhouse if stay at the hostel. It's the better of the two buildings. (Paddy Moloney's Hostel <http://www.doolinhostel.com/>) (011 – 353 – 65 – 707 – 4421). This place is tailored for backpackers, so if you want something closer to "adult" standards, the Seaview House is next door – a 4-minute walk to O'Connor's Pub. I haven't stayed there, but got a good report on it from a student's parents.
- Galway city
 - About an hour north of Doolin driving along the coast. Very pretty drive, if you have the time.
 - College town of about 60,000.
 - Great live music in the city-center pubs.
- Cliffs of Moher to Tralee to Dingle
 - Follow the road along the coast from the Cliffs (N67) heading south to Dingle. It's not the best road, but hey – it's Ireland. You want to use the Tarbert ferry to cross the Shannon River; otherwise you have to go all the way back to Limerick. The ferry is east of Kilrush about 5 miles. The ferry will save you a lot of time. PLUS, you can get out of your car and to up the steps and watch for dolphins. Odds are low, but I've seen them. And, you can stretch your legs and get some fresh air.
 - Once off the ferry, head to Tralee on the N69, which you will hit in Tarbor, shortly after leaving the ferry. Make sure you head southwest to Tralee, not east to Limerick. You will go through Tralee on the way to Dingle. There is a great rose garden on Denny Street on the left, just before you leave the city. You'll enter Tralee on the east side of town, head west on the main street (also N70), then

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turn left on Denny Street. Then head southwest to leave Tralee. After leaving Tralee, take the N86 to Dingle. It takes you over a mountain. Before you get to the top, stop at one of the overlooks for a great view back to the north. Or watch for R560, just after West Inch, and take it over the highest part of the mountain, through Connor Pass. It makes for a pretty view overlooking Dingle.

- Dingle
 - After you enter Dingle, you will want to go around the Dingle Peninsula on a clockwise basis. That will let the passengers look out the car window and straight down to the sea in places. ☺
 - Watch the signs and you will eventually loop back to Dingle. I don't know any good hotels or B&Bs in Dingle. Sorry. There are good seafood restaurants there.
 - Depending on the time, you might want to continue on to Killarney. There are more shops to explore there. It's about a 2-hour drive from Dingle to Killarney.
 - Head east out of Dingle to Killarney, but look for signs for Inch and Kilorgin. Also look for the R561, which saves time and brings you along the coast to a great beach at Inch. You can rent surfboards, if you're so inclined. Be prepared for cold water. The R561 runs into N70, head south to Kilorgin, then take the N72 east to Killarney.

Co. Kerry area

- Killarney
 - Restaurants are pretty good. There are a number of them on the main drag. Good ones on the right side of the road (east side), but I can't remember the names. I've had good salmon there. 😊
 - There are some good pubs. If looking for live music, try Scott's. In the summer, it usually has a band playing on their patio. My only complaint is that it's become more bar-like vs a pub. It's about a block from the Great Southern Hotel. Ask anyone and they should be able to direct you. The B&Bs should have a little map of the city that gets handed out everywhere.
 - An inexpensive lodging option is Neptunes Hostel, ask for Juliett. (011 – 353 – 64 – 633-5299) <http://www.killarneyhostel.com/>. This is for backpackers, so if you're looking for "adult" accommodations, a nice hotel is the Great Southern Hotel. It's on the high street, what we call the main street.
 - The Muckross House is about 5 minutes southeast of the city on the N71 to Kenmare. As you get close, you will see pony carts on the road to take you to the house. I think both the pony carts and the house are over-priced. Look at the pony carts as a cultural experience and the house as an option to see how the rich lived 100+ years ago.
 - About 5 minutes past Muckross House is Torc Falls. Worth a stop. It's on the left, just before you start going up the mountain. If you go up the stone steps to the side of the falls, you can get a great view of the area. It's a bit of a hike going uphill for about 15 minutes, but then levels off and worth the effort, IMHO. My students always enjoyed it.

County Cork area

- Stay on the N71 and drive up the hill from Torc Falls, heading for Moll's Gap and Kenmare. Going to Cork via Kenmare will add about an hour to the drive, but the scenery going up and over the mountain into Kenmare is some of the best in Ireland. Make sure you stop at Lady's View on the way up the mountain. Great photo op. There is a shop/restaurant (Avoca Restaurant) nearly at the top of the mountain where you can stop for coffee or a buffet meal. Good place for a brunch. Nice little shop with Avoca woolens.
- Kenmare
 - Small village, nice but not much there other than a Quill's (sells woolens, etc) in the city center, across the street from a city park .
 - Two options when leaving Kenmare. Either stay on the N71 heading south for a longer, but pretty drive over mountains to go to Cork or head northeast on the R569 to the N22 then east to Cork.

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- I personally wouldn't recommend the Ring of Kerry. You'll catch part of it on your way to Kenmare and on to Cork. If you do the whole ring, it gets repetitive in what you see – and takes about 3 hours.
- Cork city (yes, both the county and the city have the same name, so it can be a bit confusing)
 - If you want a nice B&B, the Garnish House is good and has a full, traditional Irish breakfast (aka, Irish fry). The web site is <http://www.garnish.ie/>. It is just across the street from the main college gates and about 1 mile to the city center.
 - About 5 miles east of the city is a village called Ballincollig. Just west of the village is a great hotel called Oriel House. Great rooms for a good price. And only about 1 mile from the White Horse pub. Check to see if they are having live music. You'll likely end up sitting 10 feet or less from the musicians.
 - There is a good restaurant on McCurtin Street in the city center called Isaacs and Rosinni's in the city center is also good.
 - Ballymalou House is about 40 minutes east of Cork. It's an old farmhouse with a French cooking school attached, run by Dorina Allen -- the Julia Child of Ireland. She has a series of cookbooks, etc. GREAT food, but pricey. The dinners are set price, about 75 Euros for a 4-course dinner. They have accommodations there, if you want to eat and then sleep there and not have to drive back to Cork city.
 - Make sure you get directions for taking our equivalent to the 494 loop around the south of Cork city. That will also take you through a tunnel under the Lee River and save you a bunch of time. Getting to this road from the Garnish House is very easy.
 - Blarney Castle and Woolen Mills is about 10-15 minutes from the city. The Woolen Mills is a one-stop place for your shopping -- crystal, woolens, China, sweaters, you name it. And they ship everything for you. And visit the castle (a 5 minute walk from the shop) and kiss the Blarney Stone. A must if you are in Cork. FYI, if you see Waterford crystal that you like, the prices within Ireland are fixed, so you won't get it cheaper at the factory. When they opened the store at the factory, that was a promise my friend Paddy Hayes (then Waterford Chmn and CEO) made to shops. The potential advantage of waiting for the factory is they often have an engraver there who engraves what you buy for free.
 - Don't miss walking through the wooded grove just to the east of the castle (To the left as you are facing the castle). Very pretty, and there are the Wishing Steps. According to Irish myth, if you stand at the bottom, make a wish, then close your eyes and go up the steps backwards and back down the steps backward, keeping your eyes closed the whole time – and your wish will be granted. Don't be a skeptic, be a believer. 😊
- Kinsale.
 - A fishing village about 30 minutes south of Cork past the Cork airport. Great restaurants there, particularly if you love fish. The Vintage and Man Friday's are very good. Fresh caught salmon -- as in caught in the morning for that evening's meals.
- Waterford City and Crystal Factory
 - The city is about 90 minutes East of Cork. Again, make sure you get directions for taking our equivalent to the 494 loop around the south of Cork city. That will also take you through a tunnel under the Lee River and save you a bunch of time. Getting to this road from the Garnish House is very easy.
 - The crystal blowing and cutting tour.
 - Waterford Crystal declared bankruptcy in January 2009. An investment group bought the company and shifted the remaining production at the plant to plants they have in Eastern Europe, where the labor costs are cheaper. In June 2010, they opened a "tourist trail" in the city center where you can walk through a mini-factory and see a few workers blowing and cutting the crystal. Very interesting to watch them blow and cut the crystal. Open all day. Cost is about 15 Euros.

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- http://www.waterfordvisitorcentre.com/Factory_Tour
- Between Cork city and Waterford is a small town called Middleton. If you have whiskey lovers in the group, on the way to Waterford, you'll go through a small village called Middleton. It has a Jamison Whiskey plant there and you can do a tour. It's not the greatest tour, since it's more of a museum than an operating plant, but it's interesting and there's a whiskey tasting at the end. And if you're a whiskey aficionado, you can buy a bottle of Middleton Reserve, the Ferrari-level for Jamison. But make sure you get it wrapped and sealed for traveling, since it obviously violates the 3-ounce liquid limit for bring on an airplane. It would be a tragedy to spend \$140 and then have security take it away from you. Safer to taste it there and then buy it when you get home.
- Cobh (pronounced Cove, the "bh" in Gallic gets a "v" sound.)
 - Small city (about 30 minutes east of Cork city) with an Irish Cultural Center that is worth seeing.
 - One of the largest natural bays in the world.
 - The Titanic made its last port of call there before sinking.
 - The Lusitania stopped there and then was sunk by a German U-boat about 20 miles off the SW coast of Ireland.
 - Most of the Irish leaving Ireland during the potato famine in the 1860s sailed out from there.

Dublin city area

- Trinity College
 - In the heart of the city. Very pretty. Go to the Long Room and see the Book of Kells.
- St Michan's church
 - Has the organ on which Handel 1st publicly played the "The Messiah". Keyboard is in the nave of the church. Still use the organ.
 - Ask to see the basement. The combination of sandstone and limestone naturally mummifies bodies. There is a nun carbon dated to be 400 years old and the Shears Brothers memorial who were "hung, drawn, and quartered" (literally) for protesting British rule.
- There's an Irish history museum in the heart of Dublin, not far from O'Connell Street. If you're in the mood for a museum, stop by.
- Trucadero's restaurant. It's been decades since I've been here, so likely has changed considerably.
 - In the theater area. Good food. If someone is a steak lover, order the pepper steak. Then let me know if it's still a great meal.