

# 11 DAY DRIFTWOOD DISCOVER IRELAND TOUR

## Sample Itinerary - Counter Clockwise

We are proud that no two Driftwood tours are the same. Your own preferences, your guide and the famous Irish weather mean that the following itinerary should be understood as a framework only. Accommodation options are fixed. We then base each tour around the list of daily stops below.

Your guide will discuss options with you throughout your tour and plan accordingly. If there is something that you particularly want to do or see on your tour, mention it to your guide. We will do our best to match your choice with the preferences of your Vagabond group.

Please note, this tour has stops in both the Republic of Ireland (EU eurozone) and Northern Ireland (UK). You will require both Euro (€) and Sterling (£) cash.

Our Sales and Reservation team can advise you further on any aspect of the tour. Email Ciara directly at [ciara@vagabond.ie](mailto:ciara@vagabond.ie)



## HIGHLIGHTS

REVEL AT SOME OF EUROPE'S VERY BEST SCENERY:

- Elevate your mood along the wild and rugged Atlantic Ocean coastline
- Experience the savage beauty of Connemara
- Tour the epic Causeway Coastal Route
- Feel the magic on the world famous Ring of Kerry

RELISH SOME OF IRELAND'S MOST WORTHWHILE TOURIST DESTINATIONS:

- Stand in awe at the towering Cliffs of Moher

- Kiss the Blarney Stone at Blarney Castle and Gardens
- Step onto the legendary Giant's Causeway
- Discover magnificent Killarney National Park

#### VISIT IRELAND'S GREAT HOUSES AND GARDENS

- Blarney Castle and Gardens
- Bantry House and Gardens
- Kylemore Abbey and Gardens
- Garnish Island Gardens

#### SOME FUN LITTLE SIDE TRIPS

- Visit a working sheep farm for a sheep herding and shearing demonstration
- Take a boat trip to see Dingle's famous Fungie the Dolphin
- Test your fear of heights at the Carrick a Rede rope bridge
- Meet master weavers, craft brewers and artisans of crystal carving

#### EXPLORE THREE DIVERSE SOUTH WESTERN PENINSULAS:

- Majestic Iveragh - better known as the Ring of Kerry
- Rugged Beara - the 'undiscovered peninsula'
- Knife edge cliffs and patchwork fields of the Dingle Peninsula

#### WONDER AT SOME OF IRELAND'S HISTORICAL TREASURES:

- Peer into portal tombs and visit mythical castles
- Stand in awe at Neolithic stone circles and Celtic ring forts
- Dig into Belfast with a Black Cab tour or a visit to the Titanic Experience
- Walk the ramparts of Derry, Ireland's only complete walled city

#### ...AND AT NIGHT:

- Overnight in comfort at quality local guesthouses and boutique hotels, located in small, friendly communities
- Live traditional music in some of Ireland's best pubs
- Delicious fresh and locally sourced food from Ireland's clean waters and green farms
- Live like lords and ladies with a stay in a castle-style country home

**Questions?** Get in touch with Ciara: [ciara@vagabond.ie](mailto:ciara@vagabond.ie)

**Call Toll Free** from: USA - 833 230 0288; Canada - 833 681 6903; Australia -1800 985 642

## DAY 1 – DUBLIN TO ANTRIM

*Buckle up!*

It's a prompt start in the reception of Grand Canal Hotel Dublin at 8.10am.

Greet your guide, meet your fellow Driftwooders and board your super-comfy, slick Mercedes Benz/Volkswagen mini-coach for the adventure of a lifetime.

Cross the border into Northern Ireland (remember, UK £ sterling required).

Your first stop is guaranteed to be historic. Revel at the medieval tower and monastic ruin of Monasterboice, with its beautiful Celtic high crosses - the most impressive examples in Ireland of this unique form of sculpture.

We'll roll into Belfast, the vibrant capital of Northern Ireland.

Enjoy lunch in the Titanic Quarter of Belfast.

You are then free to choose from the following options:

- » The highly recommended Black Cab Tour of Belfast, explaining the origins of the Troubles era (Tour Option - £10 per person);
- » Self-guided visit to the Titanic Centre, the world's largest Titanic visitor experience (Tour Option - £18.50 per person);
- » Or free time to explore Belfast's shopping and cultural attractions.

Cameras at the ready! You're about to begin one of the world's most spectacular coastal drives, the Causeway Coastal Route.

You don't have to go far to the beach from your accommodation tonight. The [17th century castle tower and hotel at Ballygally](#) is situated directly on the beautiful Antrim coast.

The average driving time today is 3 hours 30 minutes

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## DAY 2 – ANTRIM TO DERRY

*In the footsteps of giants...*

It's an early start today!

Brave Carrick-a-Rede rope bridge, suspended over the ocean and reached via a steep descent. Enjoy views to Rathlin Island and, on a clear day, even Scotland (Tour Option - £7 per person).

We continue along the Causeway Coastal Route, soaking up all the incredible natural scenery.

Next, it's time to experience the natural phenomenon that is The Giant's Causeway. Walk in the footsteps of mythical Irish figure Finn McCool, by stepping onto 40,000 wave-washed hexagonal basalt columns.

Game of Thrones fan alert! Look out for Theon Greyjoy stepping ashore at tiny Ballintoy harbour. There's an added chance to visit a former GoT set in an abandoned lime quarry.

We hope you're thirsty! Visit Bushmills, the oldest whiskey distillery in the world (Tour Option - £7 per person), followed by a sneaky photo stop at the iconic clifftop stronghold of Dunluce Castle.

Your accommodation and dining tonight is at the Georgian-era [Beech Hill Country House Hotel](#).

The average driving time today is 3 hours

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## DAY 3 – DERRY TO MAYO

*Arise and go now!*

We'll pass historic city gates to enter Derry.

Walk the ramparts of Ireland's last remaining walled city on the excellent historic guided tour of Derry (Tour Option - £4 per person).

Cross the border into the Republic of Ireland, and the euro currency zone (€).

Look behind you! Panoramic 360° vistas await you at the beautifully preserved Celtic stone ringfort at Grianán of Aileach.

We'll stop at Donegal town, with the option for a guided tour of 15th century Donegal castle.

Honour Irish poet and Nobel Laureate, WB Yeats, at his final resting place.

Accommodation tonight is at the luxurious [Mount Falcon Estate](#). Enjoy delicious food, a romantic woodland setting and a wealth of history.

The average driving time today is 3 hours 30 minutes

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## DAY 4 – MAYO TO CLIFDEN

*Westward ho!*

Discover Ireland's rich rural heritage at the Museum of Country Life's modern exhibition space and Victorian landscaped gardens.

Relax and explore the picturesque town of Westport, with its vibrantly painted streets and grand setting on Clew Bay.

It's time to soak up one of the most beautiful vistas in Ireland from the holy mountain of Croagh Patrick. Lose a sin with every step! We may also take a peek at the ruined 16th century Murrisk Abbey, and pay our respects at the nearby National Famine Memorial.

Drive through the breathtaking Doolough Valley, with its fascinating famine history and historic links to the Choctaw tribe.

On the mountainous shores of Killary fjord you'll experience a hands-on visit to Tom's sheep farm including a sheepdog demonstration.

Accommodation tonight and tomorrow night is in the wonderful Connemara town of Clifden. Get comfortable at the [centrally located Station House Hotel](#) before savouring the many dining options and lively traditional Irish music scene.

The average driving time today is 3 hours

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## DAY 5 – CONNEMARA DAY

*Witness the savage beauty*

We'll dive deeper into Connemara today. You're in good company! Oscar Wilde described this 'wild mountainous country' as, 'in every way magnificent'.

Take a self-guided tour of Kylemore Abbey – one of Ireland's most scenic historic buildings. You will also have the chance to wander Kylemore's wonderful landscaped gardens.

What's the classic postcard image of Ireland? We think it's the mirror lakes, stark mountains, and magical wilderness of the Inagh Valley. You're headed there now.

Time permitting, we'll stop to learn about peat bogs and their role in Irish myths, history, literature and daily life

Your Drifter will drop into the colourful village of Roundstone for lunch.

How did we end up in the Caribbean?! Time to be amazed at the pure white sands and crystalline water quality of Dog's Bay / Gurteen beach.

Accommodation tonight is once again at the [centrally located Station House Hotel](#) in Clifden.

The average driving time today is 2 hours.

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## DAY 6 – CLIFDEN TO CLARE

### *Ancient enchantment*

Your first option today is to take a guided tour of the storied 16th century Aughnanure castle tower, ancestral home to the ferocious O’Flaherty clan.

Then we aim for ‘the city of the tribes’ - Galway; it’s atmospheric, it’s buzzy and it’s full of tasty food options.

Look out for traditional black-hulled Hooker sailing boats as we circumnavigate Galway Bay.

We’ll have a perfect photo opportunity at coastal Dunguaire Castle, just outside the pretty village of Kinvara.

Next is the bewitching beauty of the Burren region, with its limestone lunar landscape, and uniquely rich flora.

Marvel at the Poul nabrone Dolmen, one of Ireland’s great archaeological treasures. It’s older than the pyramids!

Fan of sunsets? We’ve arranged a spectacular natural light show in the sky above your accommodation tonight; the [Wild Atlantic Lodge in beautiful Ballyvaughan](#).

The average driving time today is 3 hours 30 minutes

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## DAY 7 – CLARE TO DINGLE

### *Cliffs and kingdoms*

Hold onto your hat! It's the world famous Cliffs of Moher. Stand in awe atop these magnificent 700ft high sea cliffs.

Watch out for dolphins as we take a ferry across the mighty mouth of the Shannon - the longest river in Ireland or Britain.

Your guide will select a lunch stop along the route.

We move onward, to Tralee. The largest town in Kerry is home of the Rose of Tralee festival and a beautiful rose garden.

Refresh yourself with an ice cold pint at the South Pole Inn. Hear the extraordinary tale of endurance suffered by its one time Antarctic explorer landlord, Tom Crean.

Dingle awaits... Revel in a wealth of dinner and entertainment options, with plenty of free time to explore this bustling little town. There's a pub for every 40 residents!

Enjoy traditional Irish warmth and comfort at the centrally located [Dingle Benners Hotel](#) tonight and tomorrow.

The average driving time today is 3 hours 30 minutes

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## DAY 8 – DINGLE DAY

*And... Relax...*

This morning is yours to design. Relax and soak up Dingle's charms, with the option for some quality down time.

Or enjoy one or more of the following activities:

- » Taste authentic locally-distilled whiskey and gin on a tour of Dingle Distillery (Tour Option - €15 per person);
- » Meet Fungie the Dolphin, resident in Dingle Bay since 1983, on a boat trip (Tour Option - €15-20 per person);
- » Keen golfers can take advantage of Dingle's excellent links course. This is an all day activity (Tour Option - Ask your guide about cost).

Get ready! You're about to experience some of the most beautiful sights in Ireland. Rugged beauty and knife edge drops are guaranteed on the route around Sleat Head, Europe's westernmost point.

Look out for the Blasket islands, a visit to the Dingle Crystal workshop, the holy Mount Brandon as well as picture perfect patchwork fields and cottages.

Whatever you do in Dingle, don't miss an Irish traditional music session or a stroll around the town's plentiful art galleries and craft shops.

The average driving time today is 1 hour 30 minutes

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## DAY 9 – DINGLE TO KENMARE

### *Jaunts and jolly japes*

Enjoy a scenic drive along the southern coast of the Dingle Peninsula, with a photo stop and perhaps a stroll along the beach at Inch Strand.

Next we'll pay a visit to the stunning Killarney National Park. Take a horse drawn 'jaunting car' around this magnificent parkland (Tour Option - €15 per person).

You can also admire the charming 19th century Muckross House Gardens and visit the nearby 15th century Muckross Abbey.

A short hop on your bus and there's a scenic walk and photo stop at the multi-tiered Torc Waterfall.

After lunch, your Drifter will join the world famous Ring of Kerry scenic route. Prepare to have your socks knocked off! You'll get the chance for at least one mountain top photo stop and even some craft shopping, if time allows.

We hit lively Kenmare in the early evening. Catch authentic traditional Irish music and outstanding local food in the town's many pubs and restaurants.

The [Lansdowne Arms](#) is located at the very heart of picturesque Kenmare and is your accommodation for the night.

The average driving time today is 3 hours

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## DAY 10 – KENMARE TO WEST CORK

### *A place apart*

This morning we head out onto the Beara. This peninsula is truly off the beaten track. Expect rugged roads, superb scenery and livestock-induced traffic jams a-plenty.

One of our favourite pastimes here in Ireland is dancing around ancient stone circles. Luckily, the Beara peninsula has a plethora to choose from. No one truly knows what the circles were used for. So let your imagination run wild!

We'll gaze out over the cloud-wrapped Cahahalee mountains with a rugged drive up the Healy Mountain pass, Ireland's bendiest road.

We'll board a boat to Garnish Island and the wonders of its Italian formal gardens (Tour Option - €16 per person). Look out for cheeky seals in and around the harbour area of Glengarriff.

Visit stately Bantry House, one of the few grand Irish homes still in private hands; owned by the same family since the 18th century.

There's one more drive today, a coastal ride that snakes along Bantry Bay before cutting inland.

Random snapshots of beauty appear and disappear - a black stallion behind a stone wall; a mute swan on a misty lake; an elderly farmer outside his brightly painted cottage. We hope you'll understand West Cork's mantra, 'a place apart'.

Accommodation and dinner tonight is at the family-owned [Gougane Barra Hotel](#), or [Seaview House Hotel in Bantry](#).

The average driving time today is 3 hours.

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## DAY 11 – WEST CORK TO DUBLIN

*Time to say slán...*

Before we say goodbye, there's still time for some of Ireland's top highlights.

We'll trace the River Lee, passing through scenic countryside filled with charming cottages and typical Irish agriculture.

Then it's time to kiss the famous Blarney Stone. Afterwards, explore the extensive grounds and lush, landscaped gardens of Blarney Castle.

We'll grab lunch either close to Blarney or near our next stop, the monastery at the Rock of Cashel.

A self guided walking tour of the epic Rock of Cashel is a fitting way to end our odyssey. This is one of Ireland's most iconic sights; its story combines elements you'll have noticed everywhere on your tour: a deep and complex history; a stunning natural setting; marvelous architecture; and a heartfelt human aspect.

You'll disembark your Drifter back at the Grand Canal Hotel in Dublin between 5-6pm. Farewell hugs all round for your new friends.

The average driving time today is 4 hours and 30 minutes.

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TOUR PRICE: EURO €2,959 (PER PERSON SHARING)

Single supplement: EURO €509

### What's Included?

- ✓ A journey of discovery in a super-comfy, slick Mercedes Benz tour vehicle
- ✓ The services of a highly-trained and professional VagaGuide
- ✓ 11 full days on tour
- ✓ 10 nights' accommodation
- ✓ 10 delicious and filling hot Irish breakfasts
- ✓ Most daily activities and visits (see Tour Options below for extras)
- ✓ Entrance fees to Blarney Castle; Bantry House; the Rock of Cashel; a working sheep farm experience; Giant's Causeway; Aughnanure Castle/Donegal Castle
- ✓ Shannon ferry tickets
- ✓ All relevant taxes
- ✓ Guaranteed tour departure and price from the moment you make your deposit
- ✓ Loads of laughs and fun along the way!

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Details	Cost pp
Black Cab Tour of Belfast	£10
Titanic Centre	£18.50
Carrick-a-Rede rope bridge	£7
Bushmills Distillery Tour	£7
Dunluce Castle	£5.50
Derry Walking Tour	£4
Dingle Distillery	€15
Boat trip in Dingle	€15-20
Boat trip to Garnish Island	€16
Horse drawn carriage ride in Killarney National Park	€15

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## BOOKING & CONTACT INFORMATION

Call Ciara	Select Option 2 when prompted
From the USA (Toll Free)	833 230 0288
From Canada (Toll Free)	833 691 6903
From Australia (Toll Free)	1800 985 642
From Anywhere	+353 156 34 358
Email & Web	
Email Ciara	<a href="mailto:ciara@vagabond.ie">ciara@vagabond.ie</a>
Book Online	<a href="http://vagabondtoursofireland.com">vagabondtoursofireland.com</a>

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