

12 DAY VAGABOND GIANT IRISH ADVENTURE TOUR

Sample Itinerary - Counter Clockwise

We are proud that no two Vagabond 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 Gillian directly at gillian@vagabond.ie

HIGHLIGHTS

REVEL AT SOME OF EUROPE'S VERY BEST SCENERY:

- Elevate your mood along the wild and rugged Atlantic Ocean coastline
- See Ireland's highest mountain range, The Macgillycuddy Reeks
- Be mystified by the savage beauty of Connemara
- Behold the lunar limestone landscape of The Burren
- Tour the epic Causeway Coastal Route
- Feel the magic on the world famous Ring of Kerry
- Immerse yourself in the pristine beauty of Glenveagh National Park

ENJOY SOME FANTASTIC ACTIVITY OPTIONS:

- Challenge yourself with rugged hikes through incredible landscapes
- Take a boat trip to see the dramatic sea cliffs at Slieve League
- Ride a horse along a golden Irish strand
- Kayak your way across Dingle Bay to meet a friendly dolphin
- Surf an Atlantic wave
- Bike or hike the wonders of Killarney National Park

- Visit a working sheep farm for a herding and shearing demonstration
- Dare to cross Carrick-a-Rede rope bridge, suspended high above crashing waves

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
- Hike the stunning Antrim coast to the legendary Giant's Causeway
- Discover magnificent Killarney National Park
- Wonder at the iconic Rock of Cashel

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:

- Land on the Skelligs, the dramatic island filming location for Star Wars
- Shout from the battlements of mythical castles
- Peer into portal tombs older than the pyramids
- Stand in awe at ancient 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:

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

Questions? Get in touch with Gillian: gillian@vagabond.ie

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DAY 1 – DUBLIN TO ANTRIM

Adventure awaits

Meet your guide and fellow Vagabonds at reception of the Grand Canal Hotel, Dublin at 8.20am. Board your 4x4 Vagatron and hit the road!

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

Climb Slieve Gullion mountain (573 m / 1,880 ft) to relive the curse of Cailleach Bhéara, the ancient goddess of Ireland's highest passage tomb.

Zoom to 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.

Your accommodation and dining for the evening is at the [Londonderry Arms](#). You're in good company - this quaint former coach house once played host to none other than Winston Churchill himself.

The average driving time today is 4 hours.

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DAY 2 – ANTRIM TO DERRY

Deep breaths, everyone

It's an early start today for a short (but sweet) hike.

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).

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

Your guide will select a lunch stop along the route.

Next up is the challenging but scenic Dunseverick coastal hike. Hikers from all over the world come to experience this steep, often muddy trail, culminating in your arrival at the UNESCO World Heritage Site of Giant's Causeway. Duration: 2 hours 30 minutes.

We hope you're thirsty! There may just be time to 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 DONEGAL

Northward, ever northward!

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 (€).

Your guide will select a lunch stop along the route - or maybe even a picnic.

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

It's all aboard for the short hop to the pristine wilderness of Glenveagh National Park.

Keep an eye out for wild deer and eagles as we pass along lakes and through the glacial, granite-lined, 'Valley of the Birch'. No matter the time of year, dramatic displays of colour await you in the romantic 19th century Glenveagh Castle Gardens.

Arriving in the small country town of Ardara, we recommend a visit to Eddie Doherty. Friendly and informative, Eddie is one of the few remaining handweavers left in Ireland. See a true master craftsman at work in his open studio.

This evening's accommodation is at the family-owned [Nesbitt Arms in Ardara](#). Don't miss a traditional Irish music performance. Musicians perform in the hotel bar regularly, as well as in other venues around the town.

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DAY 4 – DONEGAL TO SLIGO

Sea cliffs, steep hikes and Atlantic sunsets

Look out for rugged mountain sheep and the golden sand of Maghera Beach as we journey up and over the scenic Granny Pass.

At the towering sea cliffs of Slieve League, your guide will offer these options:

- » Get up close and personal with some of the highest sea cliffs in Europe, on a 1 hour 30 minute hike over steep and rugged terrain.
- » If you're in possession of sea legs, take a guided boat trip to gaze up at these dramatic 600m / 2000ft cliffs from below (Tour Option - €20 per person). You'll be on a small boat with 12 person capacity. We can't guarantee it but birdlife and sea mammals make regular guest appearances.

Feeling brave? There may even be time to take a rejuvenating plunge into the Atlantic!

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

A flexible afternoon:

- » Go horse-riding along a stunning beach (Tour Option - €28 per person);
- » Honour Nobel Laureate WB Yeats at his final resting place;
- » Or hike Knocknarea to the tomb of Queen Maebh's grave (time permitting).

Kelp is here to help! Relish the magical restorative properties of a rustic seaweed hot tub session in Enniscrone (Tour Option - €25 per person).

Fan of sunsets? We've arranged a spectacular natural light show in the sky above your accommodation tonight; [Waterfront House in seaside Enniscrone](#).

The average driving time today is 3 hours 30 minutes

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DAY 5 – SLIGO TO CONNEMARA

Time for magical, mystical Mayo

Quick pit stop in 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 it's 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.

Enter the savage beauty of Connemara, a region famous for its misty mountains, wild moorlands and dark lakes.

Hike the spectacular Connemara National Park. Get ready for phenomenal views from the summit of Diamond Hill (442 m / 1,450 ft). The hike (2 hours 30 minutes) starts with boardwalk, graduating to steep, loose and uneven terrain on higher slopes.

There's a quick photo stop at Kylemore Abbey – one of Ireland's most scenic historic buildings.

You'll feel like royalty with a sumptuous dinner and atmospheric overnight stay at [Abbeyglen Castle Hotel, deep in Connemara](#).

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DAY 6 – CONNEMARA TO CLARE

Into the heart of the west

The 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!

Hold onto your hat! It’s the world famous Cliffs of Moher. Of course we’re doing things the Vagabond way, arriving with an awe-inspiring, coast-hugging hike.

Accommodation tonight is at [Spanish Point House](#). This family-owned boutique period guesthouse offers stunning coastal views. It’s a short ramble across the road for dinner at the Armada Hotel.

The average driving time today is 4 hours.

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DAY 7 – CLARE TO DINGLE

Through the gates of the kingdom

We start today with yet more beautiful coastal views, descending southward from Spanish Point towards ‘The Kingdom’ of Kerry.

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 - or maybe even a picnic.

Surf's up! Ride the breakers at Castlegregory this afternoon. Take a surf lesson (Tour Option - €40 per person). Or simply absorb the serenity at one of Ireland's most gorgeous beaches.

Another option is a hike up the glaciated valley of Annascaul. Mingle with ‘sheepish’ locals as the Annascaul river tumbles to the lake below. Prepare for a steep hike of 1 hour 30 minutes with rough, loose terrain and climbs in places.

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 Dig explore this bustling little town. There's a pub for every 40 residents!

Your accommodation tonight and tomorrow will be at either the [Dingle Skellig](#) or [Dingle Bay hotels](#).

The average driving time today is 3 hours 30 minutes

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DAY 8 – DINGLE

Max adventure, minimum driving

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 Sleah Head, Europe's westernmost point.

The afternoon is yours to design. Relax and soak up Dingle's charms, with the option for some quality down time. Or take on the many activities on offer.

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.

Your guide can organise one of the following:

- » Horse ride along a beach or up a mountain (Tour Option - €35 per person);
- » Flip out with local celebrity, Fungie the Dolphin, on a boat trip (Tour Option - €15-20 per person) or sea kayak (Tour Option - €50 per person);
- » Row a traditional Naomhóg boat (Tour Option - €25 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).

Feel free to choose a restaurant or pub for dinner. We'll recommend some of our favourites upon request.

Your accommodation is once again at either the [Dingle Skellig](#) or [Dingle Bay hotels](#).

The average driving time today is 1 hour 30 minutes

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DAY 9 – DINGLE TO PORTMAGEE

On your bike!

It's a swift morning start for a guided cycling tour of Killarney National Park (Tour Option - €30 per person):

- » Admire the striking sandstone facade and charming history of 19th century Muckross House;
- » Wonder at Muckross Abbey and the centuries-old yew tree growing within its 15th century cloisters;
- » Gaze out over idyllic Lough Leane, dotted with tiny islands;
- » Bump into the local herd of rare native red deer, if you're lucky (they can be shy!).

You will be cycling on a mixture of paved road and forest paths for approximately 3 hours, requiring good fitness levels and at least average cycling ability

Even if biking isn't your thing, you're free to roam this magnificent parkland. Hike to the multi-tiered Torc Waterfall. Or, if there are no cyclists on your tour, you'll have the option to visit glorious Inch Beach or take a windswept peek at Ireland's highest road - The Connor Pass.

Your guide will select a lunch stop along the route.

You'll join the Ring of Kerry next. Vaga-tip: give your camera a break here and just let mile upon mile of outstanding scenery wash over you.

Your well-earned rest and dinner tonight is in the comfort of [The Moorings Guesthouse in Portmagee](#).

If it's a clear night, look up! Kerry's night sky is a certified International Dark Sky Reserve and offers crystal clear views of the Milky Way.

The average driving time today is 3 hours 30 minutes

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DAY 10 – PORTMAGEE TO KENMARE

Island adventures

Today is all about the Skelligs – Ireland’s unique island treasures. Land and explore the 1400 year old monastery site on Skellig Michael. Alternatively, take a shorter cruise around both islands. The ocean crossing is seasonal (details below), lasts approximately 60 minutes each way and can be rough. Sea legs are definitely required. Your departure is weather dependent and occasionally subject to late cancellation.

Skellig Landing: Be ready for an early departure from Portmagee harbour, less than a minute’s walk from your hotel. The climb to the summit of Skellig Michael consists of 600 steep stone steps and requires a high level of fitness. This option is extremely popular so please ensure you inform us of your intention to land in advance, to avoid disappointment (Tour Option - €100 per person). Departures are seasonal (mid-May to mid-September).

Skellig Cruise: A 2 hour 30 minute cruise around Skellig Michael and its smaller neighbour, Little Skellig (Tour Option - €40 per person). Enjoy commentary on the islands’ history, their amazing birdlife and fascinating geology. Departures are seasonal (mid-April to mid-October).

Landlubbers! If the Skelligs are not for you, your guide can lead a hike to the historic signal tower on Bray Head. Running to the very edge of Valentia Island, this trail takes 1 hour 30 minutes to hike and combines the well-worn farm track and open hillside.

After the Skelligs, it’s most likely lunch in Portmagee followed by an easy afternoon of relaxed driving. If bad weather kills the Skelligs cruise, we are free to explore Valentia Island, the Skellig Experience and local historic sites. We might even force you to taste some chocolate!

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.

Your accommodation is at the comfortable [Coachmans Townhouse](#) in the centre of town.

The average driving time today is 2 hours.

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DAY 11 – KENMARE TO WEST CORK

Strictly backroads today!

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 Cahahane mountains with a rugged drive up the Healy Mountain pass, Ireland's bendiest road.

Your guide will recommend the best spot for lunch. It could be a scenic coastal picnic at Bullig Bay or a delicious pub grub in cosy Castletownbere.

Diving deeper into the undiscovered Beara, we'll test the VagaTron's all-road abilities at the abandoned copper mines.

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](#).

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DAY 12 – WEST CORK TO DUBLIN

Time to say slán...

Before we say goodbye, there's still time for some of Ireland's 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 Vagatron 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 €3,119 (PER PERSON SHARING)

Single supplement: EURO €529

What's Included?

- ✓ An off the beaten track adventure in 4x4 VagaTron tour vehicle
- ✓ The services of a highly-trained and professional VagaGuide
- ✓ 12 full days on tour
- ✓ 11 nights' accommodation
- ✓ 11 delicious and filling hot Irish breakfasts
- ✓ Most daily activities and visits (see Tour Options below for extras)
- ✓ Entrance fees to Blarney Castle; 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

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TOUR OPTIONS

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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
Slieve League Sea Cliffs Guided Boat Trip	€20
Sligo horse riding	€28
Seaweed bath in Enniscrone	€25
Surf lesson in Castlegregory	€40

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Horse riding in Dingle	€35
Boat trip in Dingle	€15-20
Sea kayaking in Dingle	€50
Rowing in Dingle	€25
Golf in Dingle	Ask your guide for rate
Cycling tour in Killarney National Park	€30
Skellig Michael Landing	€100
Skelligs Cruise	€40

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BOOKING & CONTACT INFORMATION

Call Gillian	Select Option 1 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 Gillian	gillian@vagabond.ie
Book Online	vagabondtoursofireland.com

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