

6 DAY DRIFTWOOD ANCIENT IRELAND TOUR

Sample Itinerary

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.

Activities marked 'Tour Option' carry an additional extra cost but are optional. Check the Tour Options table on the final page for exact costs.

Our Sales and Reservation team can advise you further on any aspect of the tour. Email Megan directly at megan@vagabond.ie

HIGHLIGHTS

DIG DEEP INTO IRELAND'S INTRICATE HISTORY

- Explore the beautiful medieval capital of Ireland - Kilkenny
- Encounter Strongbow and the Normans at the Ros Tapestry
- Board a coffin ship to hear the harrowing tale of the famine
- Be a Viking for a day in Waterford city
- Stand in awe at Rathgall - Ireland's largest Celtic ring fort

CUISINE, CRAFTS AND CULTURE IN QUAIN VILLAGES

- Get to know Kinsale, the picture perfect gourmet capital of Ireland
- Chat with friendly traders at Cork's epicurean paradise, The English Market
- Gaze out across the Celtic Sea from tranquil Ballycotton
- Absorb the country charm of riverside Inistioge
- Stop by traditional Irish pubs for local brews, whiskey and traditional music

EXPLORE CASTLES, CHURCHES, HOUSES AND GARDENS

- Revel in two nights of luxury at Waterford Castle Hotel

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- Behold the splendour of 12th century Kilkenny Castle
- See the beautiful mountain monastic site at Glendalough
- Tour Jerpoint Park to hear the legend of Saint Nicholas
- Ramble the Robinsonian gardens of Altamount House
- Dress for battle at the medieval Ballyhack Castle
- Walk in awe around 13th century Tintern Abbey

DELIGHT IN IRELAND'S MOST WORTHWHILE DESTINATIONS:

- Kiss the Blarney Stone and explore Blarney Castle and Gardens
- Visit the world famous House of Waterford Crystal
- Taste Irish whiskey at its true home: the Jameson Distillery in Midleton
- Climb the world's oldest operational lighthouse at Hook Head
- Traverse the wild Wicklow mountains and explore its National Park

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Vagabond Tours of Ireland, Unit 52 Newtown Business & Enterprise Park, Newtownmountkennedy, Co. Wicklow, Ireland.



DAY 1 – DUBLIN TO KILKENNY

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.

We'll float southward, passing the iconic Great Sugarloaf as we enter Wicklow, known as the Garden of Ireland.

Our first stop is the 6th century monastic city of Glendalough, stunningly located in a steep glaciated valley. Hear the story of animal-loving St Kevin with the option of a woodland stroll to the serene lakes that give 'Glendalough' its name.

You'll feel far from civilisation as you cross the Wicklow Mountains, Ireland's largest area of upland wilderness, via the spectacular Wicklow Gap.

Believe it or not, our next stop, the rural hamlet of Hollywood, is the origin for the name of Hollywood, CA. We'll grab lunch here, in the cosy Hollywood Inn, a traditional Irish pub.

Discover the Bronze Age, pre-Celtic Rathgall Hill fort, one of Ireland's largest ringforts but also one of its most ancient.

Wander the gardens of Altamont House in wonder. The ancient Sessile oaks, diverse flower varieties and formal Robinsonian layout are considered a gem among Ireland's ornamental gardens.

Arrive in the historic city of Kilkenny where your guide will recommend some excellent spots for dinner and entertainment.

Your accommodation tonight is at the centrally located Pembroke Hotel in Kilkenny.

The average driving time today is 3 hours 30 minutes.

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DAY 2 – KILKENNY TO WATERFORD

Ireland's Norman heartland

This morning, explore the history of medieval Kilkenny with a choice of tours, or simply relax:

- » Feel the ghosts of Strongbow and the Earls of Ormonde at Kilkenny Castle (Tour Option - 8 per person);
- » Admire hilltop St Canice's Cathedral and Round Tower (Tour Option - €7 per person);
- » Take a tour of Smithwicks, brewing up a storm since 1710 (Tour Option - €15 per person, €13 seniors);
- » Stroll the streets and browse for crafts and other goodies.

We'll see history unearthed and hear amazing stories at Newtown Jerpoint and Jerpoint Park - look out for the purported grave of Saint Nicholas (Santa Claus).

Lunch in the picturesque heritage village of Inistioge, on the banks of the River Nore.

We'll continue on to the historic Norman town of New Ross. Here you'll have the option to:

- » Relive the tragedies of Irish emigration on an exact reproduction of an 1840s emigrant vessel - the Dunbrody Famine Ship (Tour Option - €10 per person, €8 seniors);
- » Or reach out and touch the story of Anglo-Norman invasion at the Ros Tapestry, one of the largest series of embroidered tapestries in Europe (Tour Option - €8 per person, €7 seniors).

Kick off your shoes! Tonight and tomorrow, your accommodation is at the Waterford Castle Hotel, a serene and secluded haven of luxury, reached via ferry on its own private island.

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DAY 3 – RELAX IN WATERFORD OR TOUR WEXFORD

The sunny south east

Today is yours to design. Relax at your hotel with optional activities such as golf, tennis, clay pigeon shooting, croquet, falconry, scenic trail hikes and a spa treatment (or two!).

Alternatively, step back onboard your Drifter for a cruise around the unspoilt Hook Peninsula in nearby Wexford.

We'll start the day with a visit to atmospheric Hook Head. Enjoy a guided tour of the world's oldest continually working lighthouse, and learn the origin of the term, 'by hook or by crook'.

Try not to get too spooked as we pass Loftus Hall, the impressive stately home with a claim to be Ireland's most haunted building.

Enjoy a lunch of the freshest local produce in the fishing village of Fethard-on-Sea.

Walk in awe around 13th century Tintern Abbey, once one of the most powerful Cistercian Abbeys in Ireland (Tour Option - €5 per person).

Experience the excellent guided tour of Ballyhack Castle before crossing back over the River Suir to Waterford Castle for your evening's accommodation and dining.

The average driving time today is 2 hours 30 minutes.

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DAY 4 – WATERFORD TO BALLYCOTTON

Treasures of the Déise

Today is all about Ireland's oldest city, Waterford; established near the strategic confluence of sea and river by Vikings in the tenth century.

While here, don't miss a visit to the iconic House of Waterford Crystal, home to one of Ireland's most renowned craft exports and the world's largest collection of original Waterford Crystal glassware (Tour Option - €14 per person).

Pass through the site of Waterford city gates to enter the Viking Triangle. Touch one thousand year old walls and then immerse yourself in a choice of excellent museums:

- » Step into a real 13th century chamber at the Medieval Museum (Tour Option - €7 per person, €6 seniors);
- » Visit the Viking Museum in Ireland's oldest civic building, 800 year old Reginald's Tower (Tour Option - €5 per person, €4 seniors);
- » Watch history come to life at the 3D King of the Vikings virtual reality experience (Tour Option - €7 per person);
- » It's not all Norsemen! Behold the elegance of 18th century Georgian Waterford at the Bishop's Palace Museum (Tour Option - €7 per person, €6 seniors).

We'll drift southwestward along the gorgeous Copper Coast. This is the unsung hero of Ireland's scenic coastal routes with charming villages, secluded coves and dramatic sea stacks. If there's time, we may even detour up to the stunning Comeragh Mountains.

Gaze out across the Celtic Sea from your lodging this evening at the stunningly located Bayview Hotel in Ballycotton.

The average driving time today is 2 hours 30 minutes.

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DAY 5 – BALLYCOTTON TO KINSALE

Gourmet grub and special spirits

We'll begin today with a countryside amble toward the quaint market town of Midleton.

We'll pass *Kindred Spirits*, a beautiful sculpture to commemorate Native American aid for victims of the Irish Famine.

Taste the water of life, with a visit to the restored 18th century Jameson Distillery. Enjoy a guided tour at the undisputed home of Irish whiskey, before sampling the goods in a traditional Irish pub (Tour Option - €20 per person, €16 seniors).

Just like the Titanic did back in 1912, we may drop into Cobh, a maritime town on an island in Cork Harbour. Once here, we'll visit the Queenstown Story Experience (Tour Option - €10 per person) or take a stroll up a colourful street to Cobh cathedral, a gem of neo-Gothic architecture.

Irish history buffs will appreciate an optional detour to Béal na Bláth. This is the ambush site where Civil War leader, Michael Collins, was assassinated; one of the key turning points in 20th century Irish history.

Seafood fans rejoice! It's back to the coast we go, to explore the picture perfect town of Kinsale. Enjoy a local menu of vibrant restaurants, atmospheric pubs and abundant craft shops in the gourmet capital of Ireland.

Your accommodation is at either the Blue Haven or Actons Hotel in Kinsale.

The average driving time today is 3 hours.

DAY 6 – KINSALE TO DUBLIN

Time to say slán

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

After breakfast, it's time to make a difficult choice:

- » Kiss the famous Blarney Stone and explore the extensive grounds and lush, landscaped gardens of Blarney Castle (Tour Option - €18 per person).
- » Or sample the delights of the English Market in Cork city - proud locals call it the real capital of Ireland!

Your guide will select a lunch stop along the route today.

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. Bittersweet hugs all round for your new friends.

The average driving time today is 4 hours.

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TOUR PRICE: EURO €1,819 (PER PERSON SHARING)

Single supplement: EURO €315

What's Included?

- ✓ A journey of discovery in a super-comfy, slick Mercedes Benz/Volkswagen mini-coach
- ✓ The services of a highly-trained and professional VagaGuide
- ✓ 6 full days on tour
- ✓ 5 nights' accommodation
- ✓ 5 delicious and filling hot Irish breakfasts
- ✓ Most daily activities and visits (see Tour Options below for extras)
- ✓ Entrance fees to Jerpoint Park, House of Waterford Crystal, Jameson Distillery, Dunbrody Famine Ship
- ✓ 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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TOUR OPTIONS

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Details	Cost pp
Blarney Castle	€18
Kilkenny Castle	€8
St Canice's Cathedral & Round Tower	€7
Smithwicks Brewery Tour	€15/€13 seniors
Queenstown Story Experience	€10
Jameson Distillery Tour	€20/€16 seniors
Waterford Medieval Museum	€7
Waterford Viking Museum	€5
3D King of the Vikings Experience	€7
Bishop's Palace Museum Waterford	€7
House of Waterford Crystal	€14

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Tintern Abbey	€5
Dunbrody Famine Ship	€10/€8 seniors
Ros Tapestry	€8/€7 seniors

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BOOKING & CONTACT INFORMATION

Call Megan	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 Megan	megan@vagabond.ie
Book Online	vagabondtoursofireland.com

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