

Cycling Safaris

CLARE & THE BURREN Self-Guided Tour 2010



If you want to experience some of Ireland's musical heritage you could not have picked a better tour. Clare is the music centre of Ireland and on this tour you are sure to have your feet tapping to traditional tunes nearly every night of the week. The Burren region is also an amazing limestone moonscape, famous around the world for its wonderful variety of botany. The area is rich in ancient and early Christian historical sites and offers some beautiful coastal cycling overlooking Galway Bay. Finally Clare is home to the breathtaking Cliffs of Moher, one of the best-known images of Ireland.

The roads are all tarmaced and the route is designed to ensure that you spend most of the week on quiet backroads. Occasionally it will be necessary to ride on busier roads which is unavoidable as there may be no minor roads on certain stretches of the route. To experience the majestic scenery of this area the route does have some climbs, so it is worth getting a few weekends training on a bike in varied terrain before coming thus ensuring that you can fully enjoy the week.

On our self led tours, you can relax while we organise your seven nights accommodation, bike hire, daily luggage transfer between your different locations and of course route details.

The following details will help you in planning your holiday.:

- ❖ Tour Itinerary
- ❖ Tour expenses
- ❖ What to bring
- ❖ Bikes & level of fitness
- ❖ Accommodation
- ❖ Back up service
- ❖ General information

TOUR ITINERARY

DAY 1 ENNIS, CO. CLARE

On arrival in Ennis you should make your way to your B&B. Check in is after 2.00pm on your day of arrival. We will send you on full accommodation details closer to your departure date. A folder containing your route details and information on collection of your bikes will be at the guesthouse.

Ennis is a fantastic town for music and entertainment so you can relax for the rest of the day and take in the atmosphere.

DAY 2 ENNIS TO SPANISH POINT 30 miles - 48kms

In the morning you head out towards West Clare, cycling along quiet country roads through rolling green fields to the Coast. You stay the night in a comfortable Hotel at Spanish Point. The area gets its name from those Spanish Armada Ships which sank here in 1588 during their retreat home to Spain.

DAY 3 SPANISH POINT TO DOOLIN 29 miles - 46 kms

Cycling along quiet country roads you meander your way to the popular holiday town of Lahinch where you stop for lunch. In the afternoon we visit the Cliffs of Moher rising a spectacular 660ft up from the Atlantic waves below. You can stroll along the cliff face and watch the birds gliding in the updraft. After visiting the cliffs you head to the village of Doolin. That night you can have a pub meal and enjoy the wealth of traditional music for which the village is famous.

DAY 4 DOOLIN TO BALLYVAUGHAN 31 miles - 50 kms

In the morning you begin to see the first hints of the limestone landscape of the Burren and visit the monastic site at Kilfenora and its stone high crosses. Kilfenora is also home to the Burren Heritage Centre which gives you an excellent insight into the formation and history of the Burren. Later you can stop off for lunch at the matchmaking town of Lisdoonvarna.

The afternoon's cycle is a beautiful run where the road hugs the coastline with Galway Bay and the Aran Islands on your left and the limestone cliffs of the Burren on your right. You stop for two nights in our comfortable Hotel in the seaside village of Ballyvaughan.

DAY 5 REST DAY IN BALLYVAUGHAN

The day can be spent doing a wide variety of activities. There is a wonderful four hour walking tour of the Burren with a local man who is a very entertaining character and an encyclopedia of knowledge on the area. There is also an optional short cycle to the impressive ruins of a Cistercian Abbey or you could visit the nearby Ailwee Caves. Alternatively the day could be spent relaxing in this attractive village.

DAY 6 BALLYVAUGHAN TO KINVARA 24 miles - 38 kms

The cycle heads straight into the heart of the Burren where you can visit the Burrens most famous historical sight, the Poul nabrowne Dolmen a small ancient burial site dating back to 2500BC.. Veering off the beaten track you can stop at the village of Carran for lunch in an old police barracks. In the afternoon you cycle through quiet backroads to visit the Burren Perfumery which makes a wide variety of perfumes using the local flora and has a wonderful slide show illustrating the beautiful and unique botany of this region. You then descend through a limestone lunar landscape to the pretty seaside village of Kinvarra where you spend the night.

DAY 7 KINVARRA TO ENNIS 31 miles - 49 kms

For the last day you head back into the Burren through another limestone moonscape, passing Lough Buny and the impressive Mullaghmore before stopping for lunch in Corafin. In the afternoon you can visit a 16th Century Tower House and an even older monastic sight. This is also the site of the famous battle of Dysert O'Dea where the Irish Chieftains defeated the Normans and kept them out of Clare for another 200 years. You then cycle back into Ennis for a final night on the town.

This is not an arduous tour however there are some hills on the route but you have all day to do the cycling. With the exception of the roads in and out of Ennis, the traffic on the route should be quite light. You should however cycle carefully at all times, especially when going downhill or during any rain showers.

WHAT DOES THE BROCHURE PRICE INCLUDE

- Seven nights twin sharing accommodation with full Irish breakfast
- One evening meal
- 24 speed touring bike with front handlebar bag.
- Route maps and details
- Luggage transfer each day
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Meal expenses

All breakfasts are included in the tour price. Clients buy their own lunches and dinner throughout the trip. You should budget between €7 and €10 for lunch each day and an evening meal each night costing somewhere between €15 and €25.

Price of other extras (these are only approximate prices and will vary from region to region)

Coffee/tea	€2.00	Glass of Beer	€2.80 (this is half a pint!)
Soft drink	€2.00	Pint of Beer	€4.80 (this is a full pint!)
Bottle of water	€1.70	Bottle of wine	€18.00+

Are there facilities to change money?

There are banks in Ennis (open Monday - Friday, 10.00am - 4.00pm) and cashpoint machines in Lahinch. Credit cards are also widely accepted. Travellers cheques are accepted in banks and post offices.

WHAT TO BRING

*We would seriously recommend that you bring **padded cycling shorts and / or a gel saddle cover** which will definitely make your days cycling more comfortable. Cycling gloves are also a good investment. You can also bring your own saddle which should be possible to attach to our bikes.

*We provide small **pannier bags** (not waterproof) in which you can keep your day-to-day items. Otherwise you may prefer to use a daypack and there are back carriers on each bike for this purpose.

*We do not provide **rain gear** so be sure to bring your own light weight waterproofs.

*We do not provide **helmets** on our self led tours. **It is very important you wear one, so please bring your own.**

*Don't forget **sun cream, sunglasses, sun hat** as well as a bathing suit for that refreshing dip in the Atlantic Ocean.

*Finally if you wish to use **toe clips** please bring your own pedals with toe clips (and spanner) which you can attach to our bikes (the pedals on our bikes do not accommodate toe clips) .

BIKE & FITNESS

In 2010 we will be using the new version of the **GIANT CRS 3.0 City** bicycle for our tours. To see the specification for this you can visit the website <http://www.giant-bicycles.com/en-GB/bikes/lifestyle/2464/32854/> (gents model) <http://www.giant-bicycles.com/en-GB/bikes/women/2585/32844/> (ladies model)

Bikes come in different sizes and in gents and ladies style frames. It is important you give us your height on booking so that we can allocate the correct bike to you

The advantage of a cycling safari is that because you have your own map and route details you can enjoy each day's cycle at your own pace. This is not a difficult route however there are some climbs so we would recommend that you do try to do some cycling before the tour in order to make your week more enjoyable. There is the climb up to the Cliffs of Moher which is about 5 kms in length so try to get out for a few hours cycling during the weekends coming up to your trip and if possible do it on varied terrain and include some hill climbing.

ACCOMMODATION

The accommodation is allocated on a twin sharing basis. We stay in a mixture of B&Bs and small hotels, where we hope to fuse the best standard we can get with the warmest welcome. We ensure en suite facilities almost all of the time however in some of the more remote spots one might occasionally have to share a bathroom.

We do reserve the right to change the accommodation around during the tour, but we will always endeavour to provide a high standard.

What happens if I am delayed on the first night?

Please contact the guesthouse to let them know if you are arriving late.

What if someone needs to contact me during the tour?

If you have a mobile phone which operates on the GSM 900 system, this will be compatible with the Irish system. We will send you a full list of where you are staying on the tour before departure

Looking for extra accommodation at the beginning or end of the tour?

We would be happy to help you organise extra accommodation outside of Dublin for the start or the end of the week. If you would prefer to organise it yourself please see the websites below. If you are planning to spend a few days in Dublin at the end of the tour, we recommend that you book accommodation well in advance as the capital is very busy on weekends. We do not actually organise accommodation in Dublin but there are a huge range of websites offering a reservation service. A good starting place is Dublin Tourism (www.visitdublin.com).

Other accommodation websites for Dublin/Ireland

www.discoverireland.ie
www.irelandhotels.com

www.dublinhotels.com
www.goireland.com www.hiddenireland.com

BACK UP SERVICE

As this is a self led trip you do not have the back-up of a guide and support van. Our aim is to allow you feel like an independent traveller, free to cycle each day at your own pace while at the same time having the security of knowing that your luggage will be waiting for you in your next accommodation.

If for any reason you are unable to cycle please contact our Dublin office (01 2600749) so we can liase with the luggage transfers to organise the transfer of bike(s) and person(s). Please note that you will be charged for any additional runs made on your behalf.

Our bikes are serviced after each tour so they should be humming perfectly! If you experience small problems with the bike (i.e., a puncture) you will have a spare tube, pump and tyre lever. You can of course phone our office if you experience any major problems (01 2600749).

GENERAL INFORMATION

Weather

Because we are an island located near the gulf stream Ireland has a very mild climate making it ideal for cycling. We recommend that you bring your rain gear as well as your sun hat as a day that starts with rain can end with glorious sunshine! The temperature range during the summer is between 15 and 22 degrees centigrade (60 to 72 degrees Fahrenheit)

Visa requirements

If you hold an EU passport you only need to make sure your passport is valid for the period of your stay. You will need photo identification travelling between Britain and Ireland.

All other nationalities require a passport that is valid for 3 months beyond the intended length of stay. Most nationalities including the USA, Canada, Australia and New Zealand do not require visas for Ireland and receive an automatic 90 day visitor's visa on arrival. If your nationality is not mentioned here you should check with your travel agent or consular office.

Electrical current/Mobile Phone

The standard electrical supply is 220 volts AC (50 cycles). To use small appliances mainland European visitors may require a plug adaptor to fit our 3-pin flat or 2-pin round wall sockets. The mobile phone system in use is a digital GSM 900 system.

Websites on Ireland

Some recommended websites on Ireland that might help you organise your trip if you are planning to spend more time in the country before or after your holiday with us.

www.discoverireland.com - Irish Tourist Board (Failte Ireland) official website providing a wealth of information on all regions of the country.

www.enniswalkingtours.com - guided walking tours of Ennis that give a lively and entertaining way to appreciate this historic medieval town.

www.heritageireland.ie info on historical sites

If you plan to spend some extra time in **Dublin**, the following will give you some more ideas of things to see and do:

www.visitdublin.com Dublin Tourism, Tourism Centre, Suffolk Street, Dublin 2

Calling within Ireland - 1850 230 330 Calling within the U.K. - 0800 039 7000

Calling from any other country - 00353 66 979 2083

www.dublinuncovered.net

www.indublin.ie

www.irishfolktours.com

Recommended Reading & Listening

Ireland has a rich literary and musical heritage, some of which you will experience first hand on our tours.

Should you like to do a little advance research the following websites should help you...

www.kennys.ie is a long established Galway bookshop with an enormous online catalogue of books of Irish interest.

www.celticnote.com is the perfect place to carry out your acoustic research!