

Cycling Safaris

WEST CORK COASTLINE Self-Guided Easy Tour 2010



The tour covers all types of landscape, from rolling green fields to spectacular coastal rides. West Cork is also best known for its colourful villages, all of which are brightly painted in a wonderful array of vibrant colours, with wonderful hanging baskets brimming with flowers out the front of every pub and shop.

The roads are all tarmaced and the route is designed to ensure that you spend most of the week on quiet back roads. On our self-guided 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.

Our easy tours are designed for those who still want to explore Ireland by bike but fancy spending less time in the saddle than on our regular tours. With this in mind we have kept the distances lower and thrown in an extra rest day for good measure, giving you the chance to cycle at a leisurely pace and still have plenty of time to stop for coffee/photographs or simply relax and enjoy the countryside.

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 CORK CITY

Our guesthouse is located near the Western Road some 15 minutes walk from the centre of the city. We recommend that you take a taxi from the station or airport and check into the guesthouse as soon as you arrive so that you are then free to explore the city. Cork is a very lively town with plenty of music and entertainment and all the major points of interest are within walking distance. If you are arriving early the rooms may not be ready till midday but you can leave your bags here and head into town for a stroll.

We will send you on a copy of your accommodation and contact details closer to the tour start. Your bikes, route details and maps will be waiting for you in your guesthouse and our bike mechanic will meet you at 7.00 p.m. to fit you out with your bikes.

Please note that the guesthouse owner is not an agent for Irish Cycling Safaris and simply provides the accommodation.

DAY 2 CORK TO MACROOM 31 miles / 49kms

After being fitted out with your bicycles, you head out by the banks of the Lee and travel along quiet back roads to the picturesque village of Blarney. Stop here for lunch - and a chance to explore the castle with its world famous "stone of eloquence". In the afternoon the route continues to the market town of Macroom in the valley of the Sullane River where you spend the evening.

DAY 3 MACROOM TO GOUGANE BARA 19 miles / 30 kms

Today you will cycle through the rolling countryside of the Lee Valley to the wonderfully peaceful lakeside retreat of Gougane Barra, the source of the River Lee. Your accommodation for the next two nights is in the heart of the Gougane Barra Forest Park.

DAY 4 REST DAY GOUGANE BARRA

The day can be spent in rest and relaxation or you can get on your walking shoes and explore one of the 6 trails of the Gougane Barra Forest Park.

DAY 5 GOUGANE BARA TO BANTRY 16 miles / 26 kms

Today's cycle brings you along the coast to the bustling coastal town of Bantry. You will have plenty of time to visit Bantry House and with its beautifully restored Gardens and tasty tearooms. The house overlooks the famous Bantry Bay - if you want to see the Bay from a different angle, why not take the short ferry trip to Whiddy Island.

DAY 6 BANTRY TO SCHULL 16 miles / 26 kms

The route brings you through the little village of Durrus located at the head of the Sheep's Head and Mizen Head Peninsulas. From here you pedal up to a gap in the side of Mount Gabriel and down to Schull, your home for the next two nights.

DAY 7 REST DAY IN SCHULL

Schull is a lively town with plenty of activities to choose from. The village has numerous busy pubs and interesting restaurants, a good book shop and several arts and crafts shops. There is a watersports centre which rents dinghies, diving equipment and arranges kayaking trips. Another popular option is to take the ferry to Cape Clear which you can explore by bike or foot.

You are free then to make your own way back to Cork anytime on Saturday. We do not arrange this transfer but there is a public bus service (www.buseireann.ie) from Schull to Cork city.

A more comprehensive route description and map will be provided at the start of the tour. With the exception of the roads out of Cork, the traffic on the route should be quite light. However, you should cycle carefully at all times, especially when going downhill or during rain showers.

WHAT THE BROCHURE PRICE INCLUDES

- Seven nights accommodation with full Irish breakfast.
- One evening meal (Gougane Barra)
- 24 speed touring bike with a pannier bag.
- Route maps and details.
- Luggage transfer each day.

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.

Most people enjoy coming together each evening to discuss their adventures during the day over dinner, your guide will prebook and arrange a suitable venue for you each night. Nearly all restaurants in Ireland now cater for vegetarians but please inform the guide if you are vegetarian so that he/she can organise something for you in more remote places.

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

Extra Expenses

The ferry from Schull to Cape Clear €18 approx.

Bus from Schull back to Cork is €15 approx.

Are there facilities to change money?

There are banks/cash machines in Cork City, Macroom, Bantry, Schull, and Skibbereen (banks open Monday - Friday: 10.00am - 4.00pm). Credit cards are also widely accepted. Traveller's 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 mileage on this tour is quite low and you have all day to do the cycling, however we would recommend that you do try to get out on your bike before the tour in order to make your week more enjoyable, 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 week, but we will always endeavour to provide a high standard.

What if someone needs to contact me during the week?

If you have a mobile phone which operates on the GSM 900 system, this will be compatible with the Irish system. Alternatively someone can call our office during the day and we will be able to contact anyone on the tour.

Extra Accommodation

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.dublinhotels.com

www.irelandhotels.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.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!