

# Cycling Safaris

## WEST CORK & KERRY ~ Group Tour 2010



This tour covers some of the most spectacular scenery that Ireland has to offer. Shortly after leaving Killarney you will find yourself cycling between the majestic lakes that have made this area so famous to be shortly followed by a climb up to Molls Gap with its wonderful views of the Macgillycuddyreeks, Ireland's highest mountain range. The rest of the week involves more of the same stunning scenery with a wonderful coastal cycle along Kenmare Bay. We then spend two days exploring the relatively unknown Beara peninsula which we feel offers some of the best scenery you will ever see in Ireland. On the rest day we relax in the fishing village of Castletownbere where you can take a boat ride to Bere Island or cycle out to the ruins of nearby Dunboy Castle. Towards the end of the week we head inland and stay at a beautiful Lakeside retreat at the source of the River Lee. On the final day we cycle up over the wild and isolated hills of the Coolea region before returning to Killarney.

The roads are all tarmaced and the route is designed to ensure that you spend most of the week on quiet back roads, away from the main tourist routes. The emphasis of our cycling holidays is to give you the freedom to fully enjoy Kerry and its beautiful landscape at your own pace whilst having the security of knowing there is a support van there if you might ever need it. During the day you can be an independent traveller, genuinely experiencing all the sights and sounds of hidden Ireland on routes most tourists never get to see, while in the evening over a delicious meal you can share your days experience with a group of like-minded people from all over the world.

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

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

## TOUR ITINERARY

### DAY 1 SATURDAY KILLARNEY

The cycling safari starts with a meeting of the group at 6:30pm in the lounge of the Arbutus Hotel (Tel 064 31037). **This is a meeting point only, you are not actually staying here.** After an introductory talk from the guide, an evening meal is organised in the hotel, while your luggage is transported to our nearby guesthouse(s).

If you get there early you can leave your luggage with the hotel reception and explore this bustling town. If you have time, you could visit Ross Castle a wonderfully restored 16<sup>th</sup> Century Norman Tower House overlooking Lough Leane. You can even hire a boat from here and row out to a 6<sup>th</sup> Century monastic site located on one of the nearby islands. Ross Castle is about 1.5 miles from the town.

If you are unexpectedly delayed please ring our office number (01 2600749) where we will have left your guide's mobile number on our answering machine or alternatively call the Hotel and leave a message for the guide as to when you expect to arrive.

### DAY 2 SUNDAY KILLARNEY TO KENMARE 23 miles / 37 km

The tour starts off by following a cycle track into the beautiful grounds of Muckross House. Located on the grounds is a Franciscan Abbey founded in the 15<sup>th</sup> Century. It is now in ruins but is beautifully situated with a large yew tree rising up through the cloisters. After a stroll around the celebrated Muckross gardens there follows a wonderful cycle along a quiet path between two of the Killarney lakes before we return to the main road. A steady climb up to Molls Gap is rewarded with a delicious lunch in a restaurant with beautiful views of the surrounding mountains. In the afternoon we sweep down to the picturesque seaside town of Kenmare. There are longer cycles available if you fancy stretching your legs this afternoon.

### DAY 3 MONDAY KENMARE TO CASTLETOWNBERE 32 miles / 51 km

We follow a spectacular coast road hugging Kenmare Bay with its wonderful views of the MacGillikuddy Reeks Mountains, before stopping for lunch at a small pub overlooking the bay. In the afternoon you can visit the nearby Dereen Gardens with its amazing variety of flora. Leaving the Gardens you cycle west where you can visit an ancient stone circle or explore the beautiful scenery and quiet back roads of the Beara Way. Castletownbere, where we will spend the next two nights, is nestled at the foot of the Cahas Mountains and is Ireland's largest white fish port.

### DAY 4 TUESDAY C'BERE/EYERIES/ALLIHIES/C'BERE 25 miles / 40 km

Today's cycle is a circular route, taking in the Beara Peninsula, one of the week's highlights, with its twisted mountainscapes and breathtaking coastal scenery. We begin by retracing our route to Eyerries; from here, to our lunch-stop in Allihies, you can really feel you are away from it all, experiencing an undiscovered part of Ireland well away from some of the bustling tourist routes. After lunch you continue cycling around the peninsula with more wonderful views of the ocean. You have the option of detouring off the main route for a scenic bike ride to the crossing point for Dursey Island, which can be reached by catching a ride on the only cable car in Ireland. After this interesting detour you return back to the main road and continue on towards Castletownbere, passing the entrance for Dunboy Castle, which is well worth a visit.

### DAY 5 WEDNESDAY CASTLETOWNBERE TO GLENGARRIFF 22 miles / 35 km

We cycle along the shores of Bantry Bay, one of the deepest natural harbours in Europe. Glengarriff, meaning "Rugged Glen" occupies a beautifully sheltered position, surrounded by mountains which, together with its mild climate, permits a variety of luxuriant plants to grow. Located just outside Glengarriff is Garnish Island, which was transformed between 1910 and 1913 from a bare limestone rock into a luxuriant garden island, known worldwide for its huge selection of plants and its Italian Garden full of exotic plants. A local regular ferry service provides a non-stop ferry service to the island, as well as water tours of Glengarriff Harbour.

**DAY 6 THURSDAY GLENGARIFF TO GOUGANE BARRA 21 miles / 34 km**

Today we head inland and cycle along quiet country roads with rolling fields dotted with grazing cattle and sheep, before arriving at the lakeside retreat of Gougane Barra, Ireland's first National Park and the source of the River Lee. This is a beautiful peaceful place and an ideal setting for your last night in the countryside before you head back to the hustle and bustle of the great metropolis of Killarney!

**DAY 7 FRIDAY GOUGANE BARRA TO KILLARNEY 35 miles / 57 km**

For the last day we cycle up into the Coolea region via remote, peaceful mountain roads where you can really feel you are away from it all. We stop for a cup of tea at Irelands Highest Pub before descending back down into Killarney where we meet for a farewell night on the town together before heading our separate ways the following morning.

There are a number of hills on the route but you have all day to do the cycling. You will be provided with a more comprehensive route description and map at the start of the tour. There is an option each day for a variety of longer routes. With the exception of the roads in and out of Killarney, the traffic on the route should be quite light. You should however cycle carefully at all times, especially when going downhill.

**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
- Support van and tour guide

**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**

(Rest Day Activities)

Dursey island Cable Car €4 approx

Bere Island Ferry €7 approx

Half Day Sea Kayaing Trip €45 approx

Therapeutic Massage - €45 approx

### Are there facilities to change money?

There are banks and cash machines in Killarney, Kenmare and Castletownbere. Banks are open on Monday – Friday: 10.00am - 4.00pm. Credit cards are also widely accepted. Travellers cheques are accepted in banks and post offices.

## WHAT TO BRING

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\*We would seriously recommend that you bring **padded cycling shorts and / or a gel saddle cover** that will definitely make your day's cycling more comfortable. Cycling gloves are also a good investment. You can also bring your own saddle which we should be able 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.

\*Although it is not obligatory to wear a helmet we strongly recommend that you wear one. If you own a **bicycle helmet** please bring it, otherwise there will be helmets available in the van.

\*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 which can be attached to our bikes (the pedals on our bikes do not accommodate toe clips)

Please make an effort to pack lightly. This will make your travels easier and will be much appreciated by the guide when he/she is carrying your bags up a long flight of stairs to your room! Alternatively if you are travelling for a long time and do have a lot of luggage, maybe you could consider dividing your luggage into two bags, we could leave one in your first night's B&B to collect at the end of the week and the other bag to take with you on the tour.

## BIKE & FITNESS

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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. There are a number of hills to climb on this tour so we would recommend that you do try to do some cycling before the tour in order to make your week more enjoyable, if possible do it on varied terrain and include some hill climbin. But don't forget...our guide is always close by to help out if you have any problems.

## ACCOMMODATION

The accommodation is allocated on a twin-sharing basis. We stay in a mixture of B&Bs and small hotels. The B&B accommodation is a combination of two or three guesthouses in each night stop, 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.

### **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](http://www.visitdublin.com)).

Other accommodation websites for Dublin/Ireland

[www.discoverireland.ie](http://www.discoverireland.ie)  
[www.irelandhotels.com](http://www.irelandhotels.com)

[www.dublinhotels.com](http://www.dublinhotels.com)  
[www.goireland.com](http://www.goireland.com) [www.hiddenireland.com](http://www.hiddenireland.com)

## GROUP, GUIDE AND BACK UP SERVICE

The group size varies from 8 to 20 people. A guide driving a support van leads each group. She/He will sweep during the day to check on cyclists. In the afternoon they will be gone for about two hours to leave the luggage off at your accommodation, so may not be on hand to give you a lift, but there is no rush and you have all day to complete the ride. As soon as the guide has delivered the luggage to your accommodation they will sweep back to do a final check on cyclists.

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 a support van is nearby just in case you might need it. Most importantly, our guide is there to help in whatever way possible so that all you have to do is leave your worries behind and enjoy the many wonderful experiences that this cycling holiday has to offer.

## GENERAL INFORMATION

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### 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](http://www.discoverireland.com) – Irish Tourist Board (Failte Ireland) official website providing a wealth of information on all regions of the country.

[www.heritageireland.ie](http://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](http://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](http://www.dublinuncovered.net)

[www.indublin.ie](http://www.indublin.ie)

[www.irishfolktours.com](http://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](http://www.kennys.ie) is a long established Galway bookshop with an enormous online catalogue of books of Irish interest.

[www.celticnote.com](http://www.celticnote.com) is the perfect place to carry out your acoustic research!