

Cycling Safaris

WEST CORK COASTLINE Self-Guided 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 backroads. The emphasis of our cycling holidays is to give you the freedom to fully enjoy this beautiful landscape at your own pace whilst knowing that your luggage will be waiting for you in your accommodation each night.

Unlike our group tour our self led tour of West Cork starts and finishes in Cork City.

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

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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. Don't forget to bring all this with you as there will not be a copy in the guesthouse. 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 GOUGANE BARRA 42 miles (67 kms)

After being fitted out with your bicycles, you head out by the banks of the Lee and travel along quiet back roads to a lunch stop in the market town of Macroom where you can stop for lunch. In the afternoon you continue up the Lee Valley through rolling countryside to the wonderfully peaceful Lakeside retreat of Gougane Barra, the source of the River Lee and Ireland's first National Park.

DAY 3 GOUGANE BARRA TO AHAKISTA 27 miles (43 kms)

You cycle down to the coast past fields of grazing cattle and sheep to the coastal town of Bantry for lunch. After lunch you can then visit Bantry House, home of the earl of Bantry, where you can stroll around the gardens. In the afternoon you head out to the beautiful Sheeps Head Peninsula and cycle along quiet coastal roads with stunning views of the surrounding landscape. That night you have a home cooked dinner in your guesthouse.

DAY 4 AHAKISTA TO BALTIMORE 16 miles (26 kms)

In the morning you cycle to the fishing village of Schull where you can stop for lunch. In the afternoon you cycle to the busy market town of Skibereen before heading South to the small fishing village of Baltimore.

DAY 5 REST DAY IN BALTIMORE

The day can be spent in rest and relaxation or you can take part in a variety of activities including a visit to Cape Clear Island with its stunning views looking back at West Cork. You can hike through the beautiful forest which overlooks the unique Lough Ine, the only salt water lake in North Western Europe. For those who want to experience a unique part of Irish rural life you can take a bus to the local town of Skibereen for the weekly cattle market.

DAY 6 BALTIMORE TO CLONAKILTY 36 miles (57.5 kms)

In the morning you cycle along quiet backroads to the peaceful Lough Ine and then follow the West Cork coast to the village of Glandore where you have lunch overlooking the beautiful Glandore Harbour with its two islands, Adam and Eve. In the afternoon you can visit a 3,000 year old stone circle, one of the best examples of its kind in the country, before following another scenic coastal cycle to the bustling town of Clonakilty. You stay overnight in a family run Hotel.

DAY 7 CLONAKILTY TO CORK 43 miles (70 kms)

In the morning you cycle to the village of Timoleague, where you can visit a 15th Century Franciscan Friary. You continue to hug the coastline all the way to the historic town of Kinsale, site of the Battle of Kinsale in 1601, where you can stop for lunch. In the afternoon you cycle back into Cork for your final night on the tour

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. An evening meal each night costing somewhere between €20 and €30.

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

Ferry Baltimore to Cape Clear Island €20 approx (rest day option)

Are there facilities to change money ?

There are banks/cash machines in Cork City, Macroom, Bantry, Schull, Skibbereen, Baltimore and Clonakilty (banks open Monday - Friday: 10.00am - 4.00pm). 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

We would recommend that you do try to do some cycling before the tour in order to make your week more enjoyable. 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 which includes 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.dublinhotels.com

www.goireland.com

www.irelandhotels.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 liaise 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!