

Cycling Safaris

RING OF KERRY & DINGLE PENINSULA GROUP TOUR 2010



This tour offers the most spectacular scenery in the country and is home to Ireland's highest mountain range. Each day presents you with even more stunning scenery as you cycle through majestic mountain ranges and beautiful lakes coloured by the yellow gorse and purple heather that grows everywhere. This is one of our hillier tours, but all effort is greatly rewarded with wonderful scenery and colourful night stops.

The roads are all tarmaced and the route is designed to ensure that you spend most of the week on quiet backroads, 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 day's 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 Bar of the Killarney Royal Hotel 064 31853. **This is just a meeting up point and not where you are actually staying.** 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 16th Century Norman Tower House overlooking Lough Leane. You can even hire a boat from here and row out to a 6th 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 SNEEM 29 miles / 47kms

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 15th 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 cyclepath between two of the Killarney lakes before we return to the main road. A steady climb follows to our lunch stop at Molls Gap where you are rewarded with delicious food in the restaurant with its beautiful views of the surrounding mountains. In the afternoon we cycle to Sneem looking out over panoramic views of the surrounding landscape.

DAY 3 MONDAY SNEEM TO GLENBEIGH 32 miles / 51 kms

Avoiding the main Ring of Kerry road we cycle across the peninsula. Passing along quiet country roads with stunning views of the surrounding mountains, we climb up to the beautiful Gap of Ballaghbearna and descend the other side into another valley with views of Carrauntoohil, Ireland's highest mountain. After lunch there is a wonderful cycle through quiet fields and over old stone bridges before coming to Caragh Lake. Following the lakeside we then head west to the seaside village of Glenbeigh where we spend the night in a comfortable hotel.

DAY 4 TUESDAY GLENBEIGH TO DINGLE 30 miles / 47 kms

We start the day with a short coach trip to Dingle where we are basing ourselves for two nights. After getting back on the bikes we then follow the Sleah Head Route around the tip of the Dingle peninsula. This is one of the highlights of the tour with a wide variety of archaeological sites to visit along the route and some of the most breathtaking coastal scenery in the country.

DAY 5 WEDNESDAY REST DAY IN DINGLE

A variety of activities can be organised from the town. You can join an archaeological bus tour of the peninsula or you can swap your bike saddle for a horse saddle and go horse riding. There are boat trips to the largest of the Blasket Islands with its wonderful walking trails offering the most magnificent views of Dingle Bay. You can also take a boat trip to see "Fungi", the Dingle Dolphin or simply potter around the town with its many shops and aquarium. Finally for those with stiff limbs there is also a massage centre in which to pamper yourself.

DAY 6 THURSDAY DINGLE TO KILLORGLIN 43 miles / 69 kms

The morning starts with a long steady climb up to the Conor Pass with its stunning views of Mount Brandon and the coastline in the distance. There follows a wonderful descent and then a nice flat cycle along the coast to the village of Camp where we stop for lunch. In the afternoon we head straight into the mountains and traverse the peninsula heading up over one side of the mountains to magnificent views of the other side of the peninsula with Dingle Bay and Ireland's highest mountain range stretching out in front of you. We then descend down the other side and cycle the final stretch to our night stop in Killorglin.

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WHAT TO BRING

*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 we can attach 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 nights B&B to collect at the end of the week and the other bag to take with you on the tour.

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 days 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. 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. 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 there are a huge range of websites offering a reservation service. A good starting place is Dublin Tourism - their website (www.visitdublin.com).

Other accommodation websites for Dublin/Ireland

www.discoverireland.ie

www.dublinhotels.com

www.goireland.com

www.irelandhotels.com

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

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.

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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!