

# *Celebration* · ESCAPES ·

— TRANSFORMING DREAMS INTO MEMORIES —

## 7 Day Rambles in Ireland's Marvelous County Kerry & The Midlands



Relish the artistry of a stone wall. The warmth of a wool sweater. The charm of a centuriesold footpath. The pleasure of an afternoon pint. The laughter of strangers. Discover that a beautiful day can be cloudy with a chance of rain. And that vacations don't need to be measured in tan lines. Find your bliss in Ireland. A Backroads Tour.

### **CUSTOM ITINERARY – YOUR FLEXIBLE INCLUSIONS DATES – 7-10 DAY ITINERARY**

#### **Day 1 Arrival Ireland: US – Shannon – Cork**

**Upon arrival** at the Shannon Airport, you will meet your private driver in the arrival hall after customs to escort you through the airport to baggage claim and then transfer you to Hayfield Manor.

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**Upon arrival at the hotel**, you will receive a VIP check-in experience with the concierge. Your luggage will be delivered to your room and waiting for you upon your return.

You will be joined in the lobby by your professional local guide and you all will head out for a morning tour of Cork, while your room is being readied.

**This morning tour** will be a driving and walking tour and will highlight key sites in the city of Cork.

Lunch is on your own today. You may choose from a lunch in town, where your guide will offer suggestions for dining in Cork or you can return to the hotel and have lunch in their bar.

**After lunch** you are at leisure to relax in the hotel or continue exploration on your own.

**Dinner is on your own tonight in the hotel.**

## Day 2 Ireland: Cork – County Kerry



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## **Breakfast in your hotel.**

**After breakfast**, you will meet your backroads Leader in the lobby of your hotel with the other travelers. Please arrive dressed in your hiking clothes and bring your luggage and a daypack with your rain gear and anything else you may want for today's hike. Your luggage will be transported to our first night's accommodations.

## **Shuttle to Caragh Lake 2 Hours**



## **Walking & Hiking Options:**

1. Caragh Lake Route: 3.7 Miles \* (400' elevation gain) *\*with shuttle*
2. Caragh Lake Loop: 8 Miles (600')
- 3.

Welcome to Ireland, where spectacular natural settings, incredible history and lively village culture combine to make a terrific week of walking, hiking and exploring. After meeting in Cork, we shuttle to Caragh Lake in County Kerry.



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**Weather permitting, we're treated to a signature Backroads picnic in the gardens of the Carrig Country House** before heading out on our first hike.

Though we don't expect rain, there's a reason Ireland's hills are so charmingly green. Not to worry; we're prepared for a wonderful week rain or shine.



Today's route follows paved country roads under old growth trees for stunning views of Caragh Lake and the Dingle Peninsula. It's a great introduction to the scenery you'll see throughout the week.

Returning to the comfortable Carrig Country House, we're greeted by owners Frank and Mary Slattery, whose personal attention makes any stay special.

The restaurant here, where we dine tonight, is a local favorite, garnering rave reviews for its excellent "country-house cooking," and offers wonderful views of Caragh Lake ringed by the Kerry Mountains. *Lodging: Carrig Country House*

## Day 2 Ireland: Cork – County Kerry

**Breakfast in your hotel.** Start the day with a traditional Irish breakfast, or keep it simple and go with a local favorite: porridge.

### Walking & Hiking Options:

1. Glenbeigh Route: 6.2 Miles \* (1,200' elevation gain) *\*with shuttle*
2. Rossbeigh Route: 10.3 Miles \* (2,000') *\*with shuttle*

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**After breakfast** and a brief shuttle, we set out on the famous Kerry Way, Ireland's longest marked footpath. Climb the northeastern slope of Seefin Mountain along the secluded Glencar Valley up to Windy Gap where incredible views of Caragh Lake and Dingle Bay await.

**After a pub lunch** in the quaint town of Glenbeigh, shuttle to stunning Rossbeigh Beach or continue on foot along a path that takes you through lush forest, down quiet back roads and above dramatic coastal cliffs.

Otherwise, head back to our remote country house and enjoy a cup of tea, wander around the gardens, or just relax.



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Tonight, we will be joined by a *seanachie* (SHAWN-a-keey), a rare breed of storyteller, a spinner of tales who was once responsible for passing Irish history and legend from generation to generation.

**Then sit down to another fantastic dinner at our inn's restaurant**—we recommend the fresh fish, caught daily from the lake.

Before retiring, unwind by the fireplace with an Irish coffee or hot whiskey.  
*Lodging: Carrig Country House*

## Day 3 Ireland: County Kerry – Killarney

**Breakfast in your hotel.** Start the day with a traditional Irish breakfast, or keep it simple and go with a local favorite: porridge.

**After breakfast, check out of the hotel.** You will meet in the lobby of the hotel for your **Shuttle to Trailhead** 45 Minutes.



### Walking & Hiking Options:

1. Ross Castle Walk 2.7 Miles\* (minimal elevation gain) *\*with shuttle*
2. Muckross Estate Interpretive Walk 3 Miles\* (minimal)

Today, local guide and Irishman Michael Murphy joins us for a hike into beautiful Killarney National Park. Michael has been opening doors to the Irish countryside for us for more than 2 decades—he's practically family! After a shuttle to the serene Muckross Abbey, our interpretive walk proceeds

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through the Muckcross Estate and gardens to the impressive Torc Waterfall.

**Following the hike** we shuttle into Killarney for a look at its traditional craft shops and elegant boutiques. There are plenty of restaurants, cafés and pubs to choose from for lunch on your own.

If you're feeling energetic after lunch, walk on paved trails to Ross Castle on the shore of Lough Leane, where you can take a tour of the 15th-century restored tower, surrounded by a *bawn* (a fortified enclosure).

Otherwise, sit back and enjoy the luxurious Killarney Park Hotel, which welcomes us for the night. Lounge by the indoor pool and hot tub or indulge in a massage, facial or body treatment. (Spa treatments are not included in the trip price. Advance reservations are recommended.)

**After tonight's scrumptious dinner**, if you're not ready to settle in, head into town and get to know Killarney's lively Irish pub scene. *Lodging: Killarney Park Hotel.*

## Day 4 Ireland: County Kerry - Killarney

**Breakfast in your hotel.** Start the day with a traditional Irish breakfast, or keep it simple and go with a local favorite: porridge.

### **Walking & Hiking Options:**

Killarney-Derrycunihy Church Route: 7 Miles \* (1,500' elevation gain) *\*with shuttle*  
Park Hotel Kenmare Route: 13.2 Miles (2,400')

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**After a hearty breakfast** and brief shuttle to the top of Torc Waterfall, joined again by our friend Michael Murphy, we begin hiking the remote Old Killarney-Kenmare Road.

Once upon a time this was the only road connecting the two cities. The moderate but invigorating climb up Torc Mountain reveals 360-degree views of the surrounding moss-colored hills.

The route winds past the remains of abandoned houses dating to the time of the Irish Clearances, a period when landlords evicted tenants in order to clear land for deer hunting.

Eventually, the path descends through an oak forest to

Derrycunihy Church.



From here you can hike or shuttle to Kenmare and our home for the next two nights, the Park Hotel Kenmare, one of Ireland's finest places to stay. If you'd like to relax this afternoon, enjoy a spa treatment at Sámas, the Gaelic word for "indulgence of the senses." Or perhaps you'd like to play a round of golf. (Greens fees are not included in the trip price and reservations should be made several weeks in advance.)

Otherwise, feel free to spend the afternoon in town, exploring craft shops, clothing stores and cafés. You might also want to peruse the menus at Kenmare's many restaurants, since you'll be on your own for dinner this evening.

*Lodging: Park Hotel Kenmare.*

### Day 5 Ireland: Kilarney - Kenmare

**Breakfast in your hotel.** Start the day with a traditional Irish breakfast, or keep it simple and go with a local favorite: porridge.



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## **Walking & Hiking Options:**

Glen Inchiquin Route: 5 Miles \* (700' elevation gain) *\*with shuttle*

Waterfall Loop: 7.2 Miles (1,400')

**After breakfast, Shuttle to Trailhead 45 Minutes.**



Our local guide joins us on another journey through the countryside, this time to the rugged coast of the sparsely populated Beara Peninsula, named for a Spanish princess who fell in love with an Irish warrior.

According to legend, Beara, one of Ireland's warmest areas, is the land of fertility. The majority of the peninsula is still undeveloped and probably looks today like it did to the ancient Celts.

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**After a shuttle to the trailhead**, hike along the Beara Way and up to Mount Knockagarrane for views of the peninsula, bay, lakes and glacier-carved mountains. At the ridgetop, enjoy sweeping views of Lough Inchiquin and the Inchiquin Valley.

Stop at a stone circle, then **continue along paved roads to our picnic spot at the base of a waterfall.**

**After lunch**, weather permitting, hike on a trail overlooking the waterfall or wander around Kenmare.

An afternoon at the spa or on the golf course is again an alluring option.

On our last night together on the Emerald Isle, we gather for cocktails with John Moriarty, our resident whiskey aficionado, who conducts a private tasting of Ireland's finest spirit. Raise your glass and wish your neighbor *sláinte!* (good health!).

**Dinner in the hotel's highly regarded restaurant is sure to be a treat.**

*Lodging: Park Hotel Kenmare*

## 6 Ireland: Kenmare -

**Breakfast in your hotel.** Start the day with a traditional Irish breakfast, or keep it simple and go with a local favorite: porridge.

After breakfast, you will take a **Woodland Walk & Stone Circle Loop** 2 Miles (minimal elevation gain)

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There's time this morning for an easy walk through Reenagross Park. Passing old-growth trees, exotic plants and saltwater marshes, continue past the pier to the Stone Circle, one of the largest in southwest Ireland. At the center of this Druid's circle, which dates from 2000 BC, lies a dolmen, a megalithic tomb topped with a capstone.

**The walk ends in downtown Kenmare,** where you can fit in last-minute shopping,

check out the heritage center or return to the hotel for some downtime.

**After a tasty brunch at the hotel, we say our goodbyes.**

## **Shuttle to Cork 2 Hours**

On the last day of the trip, we shuttle by coach from Kenmare to Cork, arriving at the Cork Airport at about 1 p.m., the train station at about 1:30 p.m., and the Hayfield Manor at about 2 p.m.

**\*\*If you plan to use this airport shuttle, please schedule your flight out of Cork for after 3 p.m.**

Once you arrive at the Cork airport, take the shuttle flight to Shannon or Dublin. You will be met at the airport by your private driver who will transfer you to your hotel for the evening (TBD).

## **Dinner is on your own tonight.**

**\*\*If you need to get to the airport or train station earlier, the hotel can arrange car service from Kenmare to Cork for about \$215, and the ride takes about 1½ hours. Or, you can use coach service from Kenmare to the airport (with a connection in central Cork). Please consult the Bus Éireann website ([www.buseireann.ie](http://www.buseireann.ie)) for the most current schedules and fares. If you're flying out of Shannon Airport, your leaders can help arrange transportation. A taxi from Kenmare takes about 2½ hours and costs approximately \$320.**



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## Day 7 Ireland: **Kenmare** -

**Breakfast in your hotel.** Start the day with a traditional Irish breakfast, or keep it simple and go with a local favorite: porridge.

**After breakfast,** you will check out of your hotel and meet your private driver in the lobby of the hotel for your transfer to the airport to meet your international flight back to the US and Home.

**End of Services.**

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**Ready to plan your journey? Contact us today ! 678-500-9548**

**Schedule Your Creative Planning Session Now!**