

Cycling Safaris

HIGHLANDS OF DONEGAL

Supported Group Tour 2017

Guide in a van | 285 km | 8 days/7 nights



Donegal is one of the undiscovered gems of Ireland. There is a wonderful mix of coastal cycling and a highland landscape where you can feel completely away from it all, before returning back to the coast and the most beautiful beaches in the country. The light is amazing here, with a landscape full of browns, greens and purples constantly altering their tone with the changing light. Traditional music is very strong here and the people have a wonderfully gentle nature.

The roads are all tarmaced and the route is designed to ensure that you spend most of the week on quiet backroads. Occasionally it will be necessary to ride on busier roads which is unavoidable as there may be no minor roads on certain stretches of the route. To experience the majestic scenery of this area the route does have some climbs, so it is worth getting a few weekends training on a bike in varied terrain before coming thus ensuring that you can fully enjoy the week.

TOUR ITINERARY

DAY 1 SATURDAY DONEGAL

The group meets up with the guide at 6.30pm in the centre of Donegal Town.

After an introductory talk, an evening meal is organised in the hotel bar while your luggage is being transferred to our central guesthouse accommodation in Donegal that night. There is a chance later on this evening to meet again in a local pub to hear some music.

DAY 2**SUNDAY****DONEGAL TO GLENCOLUMKILLE****39 miles/62km**

After being fitted out with your bike you then begin the tour with a cycle out of Donegal town towards the wonderful coastline where we continue to our lunch stop in village of Carrick.

After lunch we cycle up to a viewing point of the spectacular Slieve League Cliffs one of the highest marine based cliffs in Europe. In the afternoon we head to our night stop in the village of Glencolumcille passing freshly cut peat drying in the surrounding bogs.

**DAY 3****MONDAY****GLENCOLUMKILLE TO DUNGLOE****38 miles/60km**

Today we head up into wild highland country along quiet back roads with a wonderful open landscape. There follows a wonderful descent down the dramatic Glengesh Valley to the beautiful Maghera beach. The beach is well worth stopping at for a walk across its wonderful white sands to explore the caves of Maghera. You can also go for a swim in the lagoon here and pretend you are in the Caribbean (!) before heading to the village of Ardara for a pub lunch. In the afternoon we continue along a quiet bog road before heading to the coastal town of Dungloe where again we stay in local guesthouses.

DAY 4**TUESDAY****DUNGLOE TO DUNFANAGHY****39 miles/63km**

We continue through a rolling landscape through quiet sleepy villages and can visit Leo's pub where Enya and Clannad first sang. Later we cycle toward the spectacular Mount Errigal and stop for lunch at the base of this mountain.

In the afternoon we cycle up to take in a view of the Poison Glen and then descend through an empty mountainscape towards Dunfanaghy. You also have the option of visiting Glenveagh National Park in the afternoon.

DAY 5**WEDNESDAY****REST DAY IN DUNFANAGHY**

The village overlooks Portnablagh Beach and dunes where you can swim, swing a golf club or take a change of saddle, to gallop down the beach.

DAY 6**THURSDAY****DUNFANAGHY TO RAMELTON / RATHMULLAN 39 miles/62km**

The morning's cycle takes you through isolated highland country roads with a worthwhile detour to Doe Castle. We stop for lunch in Downings on the Rosguill Peninsula.

A roller coaster ride around the coast affords spectacular views of white sandy beaches as we wind our way down to our evenings accommodation in the town of Ramelton.



DAY 7

FRIDAY

CIRUCULAR TOUR OF AREA - DONEGAL

23 miles/38km



Today we cycle the beautiful and remote Fanad Peninsula stopping for lunch in Port Salon. We continue along the shores of Lough Swilly through Rathmullan from where the last Earls of Ireland fled to Europe in 1607, thus ending the old Irish Order.

The final leg of our cycle brings us to Rathmelton where our coach will then transfer you back to Donegal town for a farewell night on the town together before heading our separate ways the following morning

2017 TOUR DATES

July 1

2017 TOUR PRICE

- €810.00 per person sharing
- €245.00 single occupancy

WHAT THE TOUR PRICE INCLUDES

- Seven nights accommodation with full Irish breakfast
- One evening meal
- 24 speed touring bike with bag carrier, mudguards, water bottle carrier and a small pannier bag.
- Route maps and details
- Luggage transfer each day
- Guide in a support van
- Transfer from Ramelton to Donegal

Meal expenses

All breakfasts are included in the tour price. Clients buy their own lunches and dinner throughout the trip. You should budget between €10 and €15 for lunch each day and 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

Rest Day Activities (All approximately €30)

- Surfing lessons/sea kayak trips
- Horse riding
- Green fees at golf course

Are there facilities to change money?

There are banks/cash machines in Donegal Town, Dungloe and Dunfanaghy (banks open Monday - Friday: 10.00am - 4.00pm). Credit cards are also widely accepted.

GROUP, GUIDE AND BACK UP SERVICE

This is not a difficult route however 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.

The group size varies from 10 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.

What happens if not enough people book on the group tour?

We require at least 8 bookings on the tour to organise a guide to accompany you. On rare occasions we may have to cancel the guide if there are not enough clients booked on, but you have a number of options in this case:

We can still organise the tour on a self guided basis. We still organise all your accommodation, bike rental, your route details, advise you on all the best places to eat and visit and we organise for your luggage to be transferred locally each day. We are also at the end of a phone line in case of any problems, but you head off without a back up guide.

Alternately on most occasions we can offer another guided tour in Ireland for you to join instead.

Or of course we will fully refund you any payments already made if neither solution above works for you.

We don't envisage this happening but always good to be prepared for every scenario!

BIKE & FITNESS

In 2017 we will be using the **GIANT CITY** bicycles for our tours.



To see the specification for this you can visit the website:

www.giant-bicycles.com/gb/escape-city (Gents model)

www.giant-bicycles.com/en-ie/bikes/model/alight.2.city/28581/99470/ (Ladies model)

Bikes come in different sizes and in gents and ladies style frames.

It is very important you give us your height on booking so that we can allocate the correct bike to you.

ACCOMODATION

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.

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 in Donegal 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) or www.booking.com

Other accommodation websites for Dublin/Ireland

www.discoverireland.ie

www.dublinhotels.com

www.irelandhotels.com

Accommodation list – subject to availability

<p>Day 1 & 7: Donegal</p> <p>Eske Villa eskevilla.com</p>		<p>Day 4 & 5: Dunfanaghy (Dinner included)</p> <p>Arnolds Hotel arnoldshotel.com</p>	
<p>Day 2: Glencolmcille</p> <p>Millstone B&B gleanncholmcille.ie/bb.htm</p>		<p>Day 6: Ramelton</p> <p>Ardeen House milfordinndonegal.com</p>	
<p>Day 3: Dungloe</p> <p>Ardcrone B&B thebandbdirectory.co.uk/bed_breakfast/ireland/co_donegal/8190</p>	<p>no image available</p>	<p>Day 6: Ramelton</p> <p>Crammond House bnb-booking.com/bed-breakfast/ramelton/crammond-house.html</p>	

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.

*We do provide **helmets** on our group tours. It is very important you wear one, so please bring your own if you prefer.

*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)

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.

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

www.dun-na-ngall.com - an interesting website with local facts and up-to-date Donegal news

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 - +353 66 979 2083

www.dublinuncovered.net

www.indublin.ie

www.irishfolktours.com