

Cycling Safaris

WEST MAYO Supported Group Tour 2018 Including the Greenway Cycle from Achill to Westport 280 km | 8 days/7 nights



The Mayo Tour is the quietest of our routes in terms of traffic and offers up a wild windswept landscape full of changing light. This area has a rich archaeological past – you visit the Ceide Fields – the oldest known field systems in the world. It is also the country of Grace O'Malley (Granuaile), a famous female pirate in the 16th Century whose ships attacked fleets all along the coastline and you visit one of her fortress houses. You spend your rest day on Achill Island with its wonderful mountains and white sandy beaches as well as its breathtaking cliff walks. Finally you stop at a wonderful early Christian monastic site situated in a most peaceful setting, before heading back to Westport and the less mystical real world!

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 Mayo and its beautiful landscape at your own pace whilst having the security of knowing that your luggage will be waiting for you at each accommodation. Although the mileage on this tour might seem longer than on other routes the terrain is more forgiving as there are very few climbs.

TOUR ITINERARY

DAY 1

WESTPORT

You meet up with the guide and the rest of the group at 6.30 pm in the harbour area of Westport which is about two miles from the train station

There is an introductory talk from the guide followed by an evening meal.

After dinner you can check into your B&B before perhaps returning to a nearby pub for a drink and a music session



DAY 2**WESTPORT TO FOXFORD****36 miles / 58 kms**

Leaving the town on the Castlebar Road, after a mile you turn onto the Western Way walking route.

The route takes us along quiet backroads passing by lakes and bog land to our lunch stop. After lunch there is some nice lakeside cycling around Lough Conn and then onto Lough Cullin, which brings you to our Hotel in Foxford.

**DAY 3****FOXFORD TO BALLYCASTLE****30 miles / 38 kms**

You start the day by visiting the historic Woollen Mills in Foxford after which you head out on back roads to follow along the eastern shore of Lough Conn before stopping for lunch in a pub.

In the afternoon we again follow quiet roads to Ballycastle.

DAY 4**BALLYCASTLE TO BELMULLET****42 miles / 68 kms**

Heading west on the coast road with wonderful views looking out over the Atlantic, we come to the Ceide Fields, site of an ancient 5000-year-old field system.

It is the largest Stone Age site in Europe and there is an excellent interpretive centre here that outlines the history of the site. Continuing on from the centre there is a dramatic cycle across open bogland with more wonderful coastal views all the way to the town of Belmullet.

**DAY 5****BELMULLET TO ACHILL****45 miles / 72 kms**

Today, the cycle is around the Atlantic Coast through a wild barren landscape, past freshly cut fields of peat, to the village of Mulranney and from there cycle onto Achill Island and the night stop.

**DAY 6****REST DAY IN ACHILL**

There are several dramatic cycling routes around Achill, the most impressive being the Atlantic Drive, with its wonderful coastal views and beautiful landscape.

You can also head to Keem bay for a swim on its white sandy beach. For those feeling energetic you could climb to the top of the nearby cliffs some of the highest in Europe, where you are rewarded with the most breathtaking views of the week.





Leaving the Island via the bridge at Achill sound, we continue on the World Class Great Western Greenway (www.greenway.ie). This is a 43.5km traffic free cycling and walking facility which primarily follows the line of the famous Great Western Midlands Railway, which closed in 1937. Its development has been made possible by agreement of local landowners who have allowed permissive access to users to pass through their lands.

This route offers gentle gradients and some of the most idyllic scenery in the west of Ireland. The route forms part of the National Cycle Network and it is the longest dedicated cycling path in the Country!

2018 TOUR DATES

August 25

2018 TOUR PRICE

€ 840.00 per person sharing

€ 255.00 single occupancy (on request only)

WHAT THE BROCHURE PRICE INCLUDES

- Seven nights twin sharing 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
- Back up service
- GPS tracks available (on request)

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.

Price of other extras (these are only approximate prices and will vary from region to region)

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|-----------------|-------|----------------|------------------------------|
| 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

If you wish to visit the Ceide Fields the entrance fee is approximately €4.

The fishing boat from Blacksod Point to Achill Island costs around €20.00. This may vary depending on numbers.

Are there facilities to change money?

There are banks and cash machines in Westport, Foxford and Belmullet. Credit cards are widely accepted. Probably best to have the cash you need for the week organised at the beginning of the tour

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 2018 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.

We would recommend that you 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 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.

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 Westport 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.irelandhotels.com

www.hiddenireland.com

Accommodation list – subject to availability

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| Day 1 & 7: Westport Waterside B&B watersidebb.com |  | Day 3: Ballycastle Atlantic View ballycastleatlanticview.com |  |
| Day 1 & 7: Westport Rosmo House rosmo-accommodation.com |  | Day 4: Belmullet Drom Caoin drom-caoin.bed-and-breakfast.belmullet.tel/ |  |
| Day 2: Foxford (Dinner included) Mayfly Hotel mayflyhotel.com |  | Day 4: Belmullet Chez Nous cheznousbelmullet.ie |  |
| Day 3: Ballycastle Keadyville B&B keadyvillehouse.com |  | Day 5 & 6: Achill Bervie House bervieachill.com |  |
| | | Day 5 & 6: Achill Roskeel House roskeelhouse.com |  |

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 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.

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

www.mayo-ireland.ie - a website packed full of information on history, news and things to do in Mayo

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.dublinuncovered.net

www.indublin.ie

www.irishfolktours.com