

Cycling Safaris

WICKLOW~ GARDEN OF IRELAND

New Wicklow Group Tour 2018

This tour has it all - from the beautiful golden beaches and coastal views to the ordered old estate towns and show gardens and back in time to an early Christian monastic city.

These are contrasted with the sylvan splendour and wild remote mountain scenery of the Wicklow Mountains. An added advantage is two nights in each of three centres so it's not necessary to pack up your bag each morning!



Day 1 Saturday **Arrive in Wicklow Town**

Meet with your guide in Wicklow Town, the county capital, whose name originates from its Viking history dating back to 795AD when Viking settlers established a base here taking advantage of its natural harbour. Today Wicklow is a bustling, compact town with a population of around 7000 with plenty of friendly pubs and restaurants.

Wicklow Gaol, which dates from the 18th Century is worth a visit – telling the story of many of those incarcerated there and said to be one of the most haunted buildings in Ireland!

There is an hourly bus service from Dublin Airport to Wicklow Town with a journey time of approximately 90min.

There are also trains from Dublin City Centre to Wicklow town

Day 2 Sunday **Wicklow Loop 42 km or 64 km**

Both routes head out of Wicklow town along the beautiful Murrough coastal road with views across sea and Broadlough lake to the Wicklow mountains looming the background. Gardens could be a theme of this route as we soon arrive in the village of Ashford which is home to Mount Usher gardens dating from 1880 and top rated by UK Good Gardens Guide – well worth a visit. Climbing gently through Sylvan landscape on quiet roads our route skirts Carrick Mountain before descending again to follow the river bank through Deputy's Pass Nature Reserve.

We arrive at our second important garden where we can have lunch - The National Botanic Gardens at Kilmacurragh, a 52 acre site, which was once the centre of a 5000 acre 18th century estate.



Our route takes us on wonderful quiet roads with constantly changing vistas from wooded hills and farm land to the expanse of the Irish sea before we descend back into Wicklow town.

The longer route continue to the mysterious Motte Stone, a granite erratic, said to possess supernatural powers but located on a hill top with super panoramas of the nature all around. We descend from here passing through the Village of Avoca which for many years was the setting for the BBC series Ballykissangel. Turning East the route has spectacular views over the rolling farm land out to sea as we return to Wicklow.



Day 3 Monday Wicklow to Aughrim 47 km or 56 km

Both routes set out heading south along the coast passing the golden sandy beaches of Brittas Bay before arriving at the Seafaring town of Arklow.

Both routes make an excursion into County Wexford -the short route contouring around the eastern spurs and valleys of Croghan Mountain where the views back across the Aughrim Valley and the Vale of Avoca are sublime on the descent to Aughrim village where we stay tonight.

Meanwhile the longer route ventures a little deeper into Wexford before crossing the Old Wicklow Gap and descending on wonderful quiet roads to the pretty village of Aughrim whose past as a quarrying and stone working centre is obvious in its old granite buildings.



Day 4 Tuesday Aughrim Loop 52km / 767m or 56km / 1000 m

Setting out along the forested banks of the Derrywater River our routes head up stream climbing gently to give reveal a panorama of pastoral rolling landscape. The route descends to the centre of the village of Tinahealy which has some very nice cafes, but no church strangely for an Irish village.

Ahead of us are Wicklow's highest peaks as we ride through the village of Knockanna and on to the hamlet of Aughavanagh. Here the longer route heads over the climb of Sliabh Maan, a 3.7km climb with an average grade of 6.9%. taking you over to the picturesque Glenmalure valley where you can join the hikers of the Wicklow Way in a well earned refreshment in the local Inn before the final push for Aughrim.

The shorter route avoids the climb of Sliabh Maan by turning south east into the heavily wooded Ow River Valley and then skirting Croghan Moria mountain on a tiny road which emerges from the forest to reveal extensive views over countryside around Croghan Mountain. A winding descent returns both routes to Aughrim.

Day 5 Wednesday Aughrim to Laragh 33 km or 45 km

Our routes diverge at the start of the day, the longer one descending the Valley to follow the course of the river on a scenic winding road with the opportunity to visit the renowned Avoca Woollen Mills en route to rejoining the shorter route at Avondale House and Forest Park– an 18th century Georgian estate house which was home to one of Ireland's most influential figures, Charles Stewart Parnell.

After our visit both routes climb gently through mature woodland along the banks of the Avonmore River and its Nature Reserve. This gives us stunning views over the Vale of Clara and Derrybawn Mountain before we descend into Laragh. A short ride up the valley brings us to the 7th Century Monastic Settlement founded by St Kevin this is a “must see” before returning to Laragh where we spend the night.



Day 6 Thursday Laragh Loop 52 km

Today's ride takes us high into the heart of the Wicklow Mountains National Park.



The wonderfully remote Military Road was installed by the British rulers in the early 19th century to allow troops and artillery access to the strong holds of the rebel clans. This remote road climbs through forest passing tumbling waterfalls to the open peat bogs and granite of the uplands. Turning east at Sally Gap, one of Ireland's highest roads, the road descends towards the pleasant village of Roundwood, passing the breath taking Guinness doppelganger, Lough Tay on the way.

Riding along the Roundwood lakes we take to some tiny roads passing Castle Kevin, once home to actor Daniel Day Lewis, before returning to Laragh.

Day 7 Friday Laragh to Dun Laoghaire (Dublin) 50 km

Our final day is predominantly descending as we leave the mountains to return to the coast. But first we have a steep pull out of Laragh on a backroad lined by amazing granite walls and with views out to the Irish Sea. On a clear day it is possible to see the mountains of Snowdonia in Britain.

Our route keeps to the foot of Djouce Mountain where the busiest traffic is hikers, mountain bikers and other cyclists before plunging down to the picturesque village of Enniskerry with its many cyclists friendly cafes. Powerscourt House and Gardens lie just at the edge of the village. This Palladian Mansion dating from the mid 18th century is open to the public and well worth the short diversion.

Soon we are into the salubrious seaside suburbs of Dublin City riding by the houses of actors, film directors and members of rock bands on our way to our final night's accommodation and a celebratory night out.



Day 8 Saturday

After breakfast you can make your way home or take in some of the many attractions that Dublin City has to offer.

2018 GROUP TOUR DATE

21st JULY 2018

2018 TOUR PRICE

€840.00 per person sharing

€255.00 single occupancy (on request only)

WHAT THE TOUR PRICE INCLUDES

- Seven nights accommodation with full Irish breakfast
- 1 dinner (Laragh)
- 24 speed touring bike with small pannier bag for day to day items
- Route maps and details
- Luggage transfer each day
- 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 €10 and €15 for lunch each day. An evening meal each night should cost 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+

Are there facilities to change money?

There are banks in Dublin (open Monday – Friday: 10.00am - 4.00pm). There is also a cash point machine in Wicklow, Aughrim & Enniskerry. Credit cards are also widely accepted.

GROUP, GUIDE AND BACK UP SERVICE

Wicklow is a hilly part of Ireland we would recommend that you 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!

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 Irish Sea!

*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).

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.

The advantage of a cycling safari is that because you have your own map and route details you can enjoy each day's cycle at your own pace. This is a moderately difficult route as there are hill climbs 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.

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 tour, but we will always endeavour to provide a high standard.

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

Extra Accommodation.

If you are planning to spend a few days in Dublin at the beginning or end of the tour, the following websites will give you some good ideas about accommodation and things to see and do while visiting our capital city

(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

Other accommodation websites for Dublin/Ireland

www.discoverireland.ie

www.dublinhotels.com

www.irelandhotels.com

www.goireland.com

www.hiddenireland.com

www.booking.com

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

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!