

Cycling Safaris

CONNEMARA ~ BEST OF THE WEST

Self-Guided Tour 2024

202/235/260km | 8 days/7 nights



This tour continues to take in the best of our existing Connemara route but to add to this the fantastic Great Western Greenways Cycle. At 42km, this is by far, the longest dedicated cycling route in the country. The route connects the picture perfect town of Westport to the stunning Achill Island utilising the old railway line. The cycle provides great views of Clew bay and the surrounding mountains in a traffic free environment. Since it was opened this route has proved very popular with cyclists and walkers alike and won several awards.

As with our other Connemara tour we will start and finish in Galway, one of Ireland's most lively cities. The route will take in the Partry Mountains en route to a nights stop in the village of Leenaun as well as the un-missable cycle through the Delphi Valley. Our rest day is in the beautiful town of Westport. At the end of the week we visit the wonderful Achill Island with its magnificent beaches and labyrinth of quiet roads. The tour finishes up in the "Museum of Country Life" in Castlebar.

This tour does not involve any major climbs and it is a good option for those looking to take it a bit easier.

TOUR ITINERARY

DAY 1

GALWAY CITY

When you arrive in Galway make your way to your accommodation anytime after 2.00pm.

You can then explore this bustling medieval city. We will send you on full accommodation details and the necessary contact details for your tour closer to your departure date.



DAY 2 GALWAY/ CONG TO LEENANE (35kms)

In the morning a local taxi operator will also meet you at the guesthouse at 9.30 am and then transfer you to Cong where the tour proper starts and you get on your bikes!

You head north along quiet back roads through rolling green fields full of grazing sheep. You cycle along beautiful backroads via Lough Nafuoey, en route to our overnight accommodation, the small village of Leenane looking out over Killary Harbour, Ireland's only fjord.

There is an option in the afternoon of cycling to the beautiful Kylemore Abbey or else relaxing in the spa in our hotel!



DAY 3 LEENANE TO WESTPORT (52 kms)



In the morning you head north through one of the highlights of the tour, the stunning Delphi Valley with its beautiful lakes overlooked by Ben Bury the highest mountain in Connemara.

Your lunch stop is the charming village of Louisburgh before we continue on our journey between Croagh Patrick and the beautiful Clew Bay with its many small islands to the town of Westport where you are staying two nights

DAY 4 REST DAY IN WESTPORT

The town is beautifully located at the top of Clew Bay, it is one of the few towns in Ireland that was formally planned and it has a great beauty and charm about it. You can spend the day relaxing in the town, visiting Westport House www.westporthouse.ie, or there is golf and horse-riding available nearby. For something a bit different you could visit Clare Island (you would need to take a taxi for 14 miles to Roonagh Quay. In the summer, there are numerous ferry sailings from Roonagh to Clare Island during the day. The boat crossing takes about 20 minutes

DAY 5 WESTPORT TO ACHILL ISLAND - Greenway Cycle (54kms)



Another highlight to the trip is today's cycle.

The day is spent on the "Greenway Cycle", a route that offers gentle gradients and some of the most idyllic scenery in the west of Ireland. The cycle forms part of the National Cycle Network and it is the longest dedicated cycling path in the Country!

The route brings you all the way to Achill Sound, the gateway to Achill Island (via a bridge) where we are spending the night.



DAY 6 ACHILL ISLAND ROUND TRIP

(14km, 47km, 72kms - different options!)

You spend your day exploring Achill Island where there are so many options for cycling.

There 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.



DAY 7 ACHILL ISLAND via "MUSEUM OF COUNTRY LIFE" IN CASTLEBAR - GALWAY

47kms



The first 17km of our day we head back on the Greenway cycle (there is only one way realistically in and out, which is lucky it is so lovely!), before you make a detour to Lough Beltra in the heart of Mayo.

The final part of our tour will take you to the Museum of Country life of Castlebar where there is nice coffee shop and where you can visit the museum (www.museum.ie/en/list/overview-tp.aspx). A taxi will meet you here mid-afternoon and bring us back to Galway city for a final night on the trip

2024 TOUR DATES

Self guided tours can start any day from mid April to early October.

2024 TOUR PRICE

- € 1125.00 per person sharing off peak
- € 50.00 per person sharing high season supplement July & August
- € 350.00 single occupancy (if travelling with others)
- € 280.00 solo traveller / an additional charge if travelling on your own to cover the costs of transfers

Note that for 2024 bike hire is separated out of the tour price

- €100.00 24 speed touring bike with bag carrier, water bottle carrier, lock, helmet and a small pannier bag
- €250.00 E-bike

WHAT THE BROCHURE PRICE INCLUDES

- Seven night's accommodation with full Irish breakfast
- Route details in the form of GPS Tracks plus one set of printed details and maps per booking (not per person)
- 24 hour emergency helpline
- Luggage transfer each day
- Transfer from Galway to Cong at the tour start
- Transfer from "Museum of Country Life" to Galway at the tour end

Meal expenses

All breakfasts are included in the tour price. Clients buy their own lunches and dinner throughout the trip. You should budget between €15 and €20 for lunch each day and an evening meal each night costing somewhere between €20 and €30.

Are there facilities to change money?

There are banks in Galway and Westport (open Monday – Friday: 10.00am - 4.00pm). Credit cards are also widely accepted. Cashpoint machines are available in Galway and Westport. It is probably best though to have any cash you might need for the week organised before you leave Galway.

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 lightweight waterproofs.

*Don't forget **sun cream, sunglasses, sun hat** as well as a bathing suit for that refreshing Atlantic Ocean.

*Finally if you wish to use **toe clips** please bring your own pedals with toe clips (and spanner) which can be attached to our bikes (the pedals on our bikes do not accommodate toe clips).

BIKE & FITNESS

Bike Rental is not included in the tour price.

In 2024 we will be renting hybrid Cannondale 5 in Connemara

They will be equipped with a kick stand mudguards and back carrier. Helmets are available on request.



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

<https://www.cannondale.com/en/bikes/active/fitness/quick/quick-5>

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.

ACCOMMODATION

The accommodation is allocated on a twin-sharing basis. We stay in a mixture of B&Bs and small hotels, where we 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.

Typical Accommodation list – subject to availability

Day 1 & 7: Galway City



In Galway we stay in guesthouses Just a short walk into the heart of Galway but in a peaceful location!

Example Guesthouse : Consilio B&B consiliobandb.com

Day 2: Leenane



Leenane Hotel

leenanehotel.com

Day 3 & 4 : Westport



We stay down by the harbour in this attractive town

Example Guesthouse: Boffin Lodge www.boffinlodge.com

Day 5 & 6 Achill Sound



Achill Island Hotel

achillislandhotel.com

What happens if I am delayed on the first night?

Please contact the guesthouse to let them know if you are arriving late. If you are seriously delayed and may not even make it in till the next day please also call your taxi transfer to let them know so that you can arrange a new time to meet

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

Looking for extra accommodation at the beginning or end of the tour?

We would be happy to help you organise extra accommodation in Galway 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.

BACK UP SERVICE

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 everything is looked after and your luggage will be waiting for you in your next accommodation.

If for any reason you are unable to cycle please contact our Dublin office (+353 1 2600749) so we can liaise with the luggage transfers to organise the transfer of bike(s) and person(s). Please note that you will be charged for any additional runs made on your behalf.

Our bikes are serviced after each tour so they should be humming perfectly! If you experience small problems with the bike (i.e., a puncture) you will have a spare tube, pump and tyre lever. You can of course phone our office if you experience any major problems (+353 1 2600749). You will also be given a mobile number when you arrive in Ireland that you can contact 24 hours a day in case of any problems or emergencies en route.

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 official website providing a wealth of information on all regions.

www.connemara.ie - a good source of information on the region you will be exploring

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)