

HISTORICAL SOCIETY OF TALBOT COUNTY TOUR OF IRELAND

September 14 – 23, 2012

Fri,
Sept. 14

UNITED STATES TO DUBLIN

Depart Philadelphia and take an overnight flight across the Atlantic.

Sat,
Sept. 15

DUBLIN ARRIVAL & KILKENNY

After landing at Dublin Airport, travel south to Kilkenny. Enjoy a guided tour around Kilkenny Castle, home of the Butlers, Earls and Dukes of Ormonde. The castle was first built in 1192 and is now restored to 1830's splendor. Check into your hotel and enjoy some time to explore on your own. You may like to browse around the Kilkenny Design Centre, housed in the former Castle stables. St. Canice's Cathedral has stood on a site of Christian worship since the 6th century. Or, tour the Black Abbey to see the impressive Rosary Window representing the Fifteen Mysteries of the Holy Rosary and the alabaster carving of the Holy Trinity dating from 1264. This evening enjoy dinner in the hotel.

DINNER & OVERNIGHT: RIVER COURT HOTEL, KILKENNY

Sun,
Sept. 16

ROCK OF CASHEL, 'TITANIC TRAIL' TOUR & COBH HERITAGE CENTRE

Head west from Kilkenny and travel through rich farming areas and bustling towns. Stop at the Rock of Cashel for a guided tour of these majestic church ruins. Of particular note are the highly decorated Cormac's Chapel, built during the 12th century, the large cruciform cathedral from the 13th century and a round tower. Continue to Cobh, the last port of call for the "Titanic" and many ships that carried emigrants to the New World. Enjoy a guided walking tour, the Titanic Trail, revealing locations and incidents directly connected to the Titanic. The actual building in which the White Star Line Office was located will be visited. St. Colman's Cathedral, the Holy Ground, and the site of the landing of Lusitania victims are all pointed out to the visitor. Visit the Cobh Heritage Centre, which depicts the varied history of emigration from Ireland and many European countries to the United States over the past 150 years. Journey west to Killarney and check into your hotel. You may like to browse in this busy little town before dinner.

DINNER & OVERNIGHT: MALTON HOTEL, KILLARNEY

Mon,
Sept. 17

MUCKROSS HOUSE, MUCKROSS TRADITIONAL FARMS & DINGLE PENINSULA

This morning travel along the shores of Lough Leane to Muckross House, a 19th century mansion. Enjoy the elegant rooms and rich furnishings. Next visit Muckross Traditional Farms, which is a real working farm, but in the style of the 1930's before the advent of mechanical and electrical assistance. You can watch the reaping of crops and the blacksmith and carpenter at work. Then travel to the scenic Dingle Peninsula, made famous by the movie, "Ryan's Daughter." Travel along the south shore of the peninsula with vistas of heathery mountains, sandy stretches of beach and rocky headlands with frequent stops at strategic locations. Stop in Dingle before continuing to the western tip of the peninsula. Visit the Blasket Centre in Dunquin to learn about the Blasket Islands, inhabited until 1953 by hardy families who eked out a living by farming and fishing. Return to Killarney for a free evening.

OVERNIGHT: MALTON HOTEL, KILLARNEY

Tue,
Sept. 18

CLIFFS OF MOHER & BURREN

Depart Killarney and travel north to take a 20-minute ferry ride across the River Shannon. Travel along the coastline of County Clare to view the Cliffs of Moher, one of the country's most magnificent rock formations that rise to heights of almost 700 feet. Pass through the Burren country, a region of rounded limestone hills, and stop to visit Poul nabrone Dolmen, one of the most dramatic stone grave markers built about 4000 years ago. Travel around Galway Bay before arriving at your hotel in Galway. Enjoy some time to relax or take a stroll before dinner.

DINNER & OVERNIGHT: HOTEL MEYRICK, GALWAY

Wed,
Sept. 19

MUSEUM OF COUNTRY LIFE, DRUMCLIFFE & BELLEEK CHINA

Set out to visit the Museum of Country Life, situated on the grounds of Turlough Park House and Gardens which was built by Charles Lionel Fitzgerald in 1865. The exhibits portray the lives of ordinary people who lived in rural Ireland in from 1850 – 1950. The museum is also home to the National Folklife Collection. Drive into County Sligo, called “Yeats’ Country”, as the poet spent time there. Visit the Drumcliffe Visitor Centre to see his grave and a display about his life. Continue along the shores of Donegal Bay to the Belleek China Factory. Here you can find clay formed by highly skilled craftspeople into decorative pieces. A short drive will take you to Donegal town where you will check into your hotel for dinner and overnight stay.

DINNER & OVERNIGHT: MILL PARK HOTEL, DONEGAL

Thurs,
Sept. 20

SLIEVE LEAGUE CLIFFS & HANNA HATS

This morning enjoy sightseeing in Donegal, with its windswept hills where only sheep can thrive. The area is renowned for woolen production and tweeds. View the Slieve League sea cliffs, where the highest point reaches 1,972 feet, the highest in Europe. Return to Donegal town and visit Hanna Hats, world famous maker of tweed hats, which was founded by David Hanna in 1924. After your visit enjoy the balance of the day free for independent sightseeing and shopping. Tonight travel a short distance to Ardara for dinner and entertainment at Nancy’s Pub.

OVERNIGHT: MILL PARK HOTEL, DONEGAL

Fri,
Sept. 21

MALAHIDE CASTLE & GARDENS DUBLIN

Depart Donegal for the east coast. Travel through the lake-studded region of Cavan and on to Malahide, an upscale suburb of Dublin. Upon arrival visit Malahide Castle, first built in 1185 by the Talbot family who lived there until 1973. The Castle is filled with medieval artifacts and family portraits. Stroll around the delightful gardens. Then check into your nearby hotel where the balance of the day is free for independent activities. This evening enjoy dinner and a lively show of storytelling, folklore and musicians with your fellow travelers at The Brazen Head Pub in Dublin. Established in 1198, the Brazen Head is the second oldest pub in Ireland. Return to Malahide for your overnight stay.

OVERNIGHT: GRAND HOTEL, MALAHIDE

Sat,
Sept. 22

DUBLIN’S HIGHLIGHTS

This morning set off with a local guide who will show you around the prominent historic buildings and monuments of Dublin. Founded by the Vikings in the 9th century, the city has been molded through the centuries with many architectural styles, reflecting economic, political and artistic influences. Visit Kilmainham Gaol which operated from 1796 to 1924. Learn about political prisoners, especially from the 1916 Rising, detained here because of their efforts to shape Ireland’s history. Stop at Trinity College to see the Book of Kells, an 8th century illuminated manuscript of the gospels and see the Old Library. Spend the afternoon exploring Dublin.

OVERNIGHT: GRAND HOTEL, MALAHIDE

Sun,
Sept. 23

RETURN TO THE UNITED STATES

Your vacation in Ireland has too swiftly come to the end. Transfer to Dublin Airport in plenty of time to check in for your flight, clear security and claim your VAT refund. You may do some last minute shopping at the duty free stores before boarding your aircraft to fly home.