

American Celebration of Music In Ireland

Standard Tour #1 (6 nights / 8 days)

Day 1

Depart from USA via scheduled air service, including full meal, beverage service and in-flight entertainment. The destination is Shannon, Ireland.

Day 2 Shannon / Killarney

Arrive in Shannon. Meet your MCI Tour Manager, who will assist the group to awaiting chartered motorcoach for a transfer to Killarney via Bunratty Castle. The castle was begun by the Vikings, who built a fortified settlement on a former island surrounded by a moat. The present castle is the fourth or fifth to occupy the location beside the River Ratty and was built in the early 1400's. Continue to Killarney for Welcome Dinner and overnight

Renowned for its beauty, famed for the splendor of its scenery, Killarney is one of the world's best-loved tourist spots. Killarney (Cill Airne - The Church of Sloes) became a magnificent town around 1750 when the local magnate, Lord Kenmare, developed the tourist business and four major roads were built to the outside world. Killarney's present population is around 9,000 and the main economic base is tourism.

Day 3 Killarney

Full-day excursion along the Ring of Kerry, a 179 km road circuit around the Iveragh Peninsula. It has captivating mountain and coastal scenery, dotted with slate-roofed fishing villages. The Ring is one of Ireland's premier tourist attractions. ***Performance in Killarney as part of the American Celebration of Music in Ireland.***

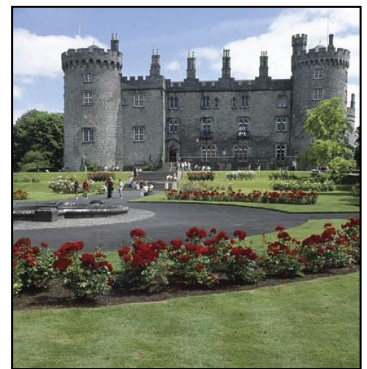
Day 4 Killarney / Cork / Waterford / Kilkenny

Transfer to Cork where we will visit the Blarney Castle and Stone. The castle dates from 1446 and is built on solid limestone in beautiful grounds. The sacred stone is found at the top of the castle and when you catch a glimpse of it, you may well feel compelled to bend over backwards and kiss it! Continue to Waterford for a walking tour of the city given by Jack Burtchaell. Jack Burtchaell has for years now charmed and informed visitors on his historic tours. A walled city of Viking origins, Waterford retains much of its medieval character together with the graceful buildings from its 18th century expansion. Reginald's Tower marks the city's Viking heart and the surrounding area is particularly attractive. Also visit the Waterford Glass visitors center to see the famous hand cut crystal. Finally reach Kilkenny for overnight.

Kilkenny is considered by many to be second only to Dublin in its attraction for visitors. Its narrow winding streets lend it an atmosphere of old world charm; its terraces of handsome Georgian houses give it elegance; and with all this it is a busy modern town and market center for a fertile agricultural area.

Day 5 Kilkenny

Morning sightseeing in Kilkenny. Enjoy a tour of Kilkenny Castle, begun by William de Marshal in the 13th century. From 1391 to 1931 the castle was the principal seat of the Butler family. Finely situated on the high river bank and surrounded by gardens, the castle is now open to the public. Some of the rooms have been restored; particularly charming is the Victorian Great Hall. ***Performance in Kilkenny as part of the American Celebration of Music in Ireland.***



Day 6 Kilkenny / Dublin

Transfer to Dublin. This morning's touring includes visits to Dublin Castle and Trinity College. Beyond Dublin's City Hall stands Dublin Castle, the main entrance of which is on Cork Hill. The hill now occupied by the Upper Yard was probably the site of a Celtic and later a Danish fort. In 1204 King John began the construction of a castle (completed 1226) of which little survives, and then much altered, in the present building. From the reign of Elizabeth I to the establishment of the Irish Free State in 1921 the Castle was the seat of the Viceroy and the headquarters of British administration. Next, enjoy a tour of Trinity College, which is Ireland's oldest university. It was founded by Queen Elizabeth I in 1592 on grounds confiscated from a monastery. Trinity College's official name is the University of Dublin, although it is popularly known by the name of its sole college. The highlight of the tour will be a view of the Book of Kells, which dates from AD 800, making it one of the oldest books in the world.

Dublin - originally a Viking settlement, Dublin sits on the banks of the River Liffey, which divides the city north and south. The liveliest round-the-clock spots, including Temple Bar and Grafton Street, are on the south side, although a variety of construction projects on the north side are helping to reinvigorate these areas. Dublin, Europe's most intimate capital, has become a colossally entertaining, engaging city, astonishing considering its general size, and all of the city's main attractions are within a short walking distance of each other.

Day 7 Dublin

Afternoon excursion to Glendalough and the Wicklow Mountains. The steep wooded slopes of Glendalough the "valley of the two lakes" harbor one of Ireland's most atmospheric monastic sites — established in the 6th century. Here we visit the Round Tower, Cathedral, St. Kevin's Cross and Kitchen, and Gatehouse. ***Performance in Dublin as part of the American Celebration of Music in Ireland.*** Farewell Dinner and overnight.

Day 8 Depart for home

Transfer to Dublin's International Airport for return flight to USA. Arrive home in the evening of the same day.

