

ST. PATRICK'S FESTIVAL PARADE

Dublin, Ireland

March 17th, 2011

Standard Parade Tour #4 (7 nights / 9 days)

Thursday, March 12th, 2011

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

Friday, March 11th, 2011 Dublin / Killarney

Arrive in Dublin

Meet your MCI Tour Manager, who will assist the group to awaiting chartered motorcoach for a transfer to Killarney via Bunratty Castle and Folk Park in County Clare. The castle was begun by the Vikings, who built a fortified settlement on a former island surrounded by a moat. Then came the Normans, who built the first stone structure in the 1270's. 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.

Saturday, March 12th, 2011 Killarney

Breakfast at the hotel

Today enjoy a tour of the Dingle Peninsula. This peninsula is famous for its Celtic, pre-Christian monuments and Christian churches and is a place where traditional ways of life are preserved. The road around the Peninsula is truly spectacular. It passes through a chain of Mountains, called Slieve Mish. From Inch, a long beach bordered by dunes, admire the Iveragh Peninsula and Rossbeigh Beach. From Dingle, drive around the coast to Slea Head. Here the blue of the marine landscape surrounds the Blaskets Islands, deserted since 1953. In the distance are the two rocky Skellig islands, where the ruins of an early Christian Monastery can be found. The Dingle Peninsula will charm you with its villages painted in bright colors and dramatic beauty of its landscapes. Visit the Blasket Island Centre. It celebrates the unique literary achievements of the island writers ~ native language, culture and tradition

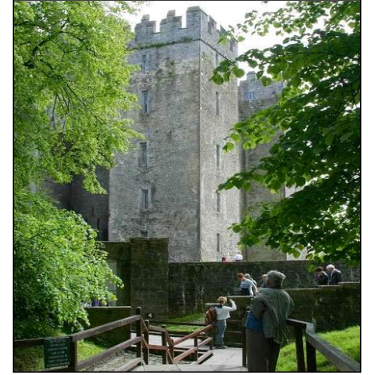
Return to Killarney for overnight

Sunday, March 13th, 2011 Killarney

Breakfast at the hotel

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. Also visit the Muckross House and Gardens. Muckross is a magnificent Victorian mansion built in 1843 and is one of Ireland's leading stately homes. Built on the shores of Muckross Lake, it is beautifully situated amidst the spectacular scenery of Killarney National Park

Possible performances as part of the American Celebration of Music in Ireland



Monday, March 14th, 2011 Killarney / Cork

Breakfast at the hotel

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! Also visit the Blarney Woollen Mills. The presence of the Woollen Mills during the famine shielded Blarney from the worst effects of the famine, due to its employment of local workers. Today the mill is perhaps the largest quality craft shop in Ireland

Afternoon at leisure in cork for shopping or other planned activities

Cork City dates back to the 7th century and features many fine Georgian buildings of which the Grand Parade and South Mall are the finest. The Potato Famine reduced the city to a sorry place, where many emigrants bade farewell to their homeland. Cork also played a key role in Ireland's struggle for independence. Today, it is a thriving and fast growing city.



Tuesday, March 15th, 2011 Cork / Dublin

Breakfast at the hotel

Transfer to Dublin via Rock of Cashel. The Rock of Cashel is one of Ireland's most spectacular archaeological sites. In the middle of a grassy plain, on the outskirts of Cashel a huge lump of limestone bristling with ancient fortifications rises up. Towering over the town of Cashel from its perch on a 200-foot high outcrop of limestone, the Rock of Cashel was once the seat of the Kings of Munster. Today, impressive stone walls enclose a round tower, a cathedral, a 12th-century Romanesque chapel and high crosses

Continue to Dublin for overnight

Dublin is Ireland's capital and its largest, most cosmopolitan city. It wasn't before the Viking raids of the 9th century that Dublin was fully established. The 'boom years' came in the 18th century and the city expanded across the river forming a new Dublin of stately squares, streets and Georgian mansions. Today, with its elegant Georgian streets, gregarious inhabitants and over one thousand years of history, it's little wonder Dublin is a city of writers.



Wednesday, March 16th, 2011 Dublin

Breakfast at the hotel

Enjoy a panoramic tour of Dublin's highlights including Gerneral Post Office, O'Connell Street, Phoenix Park (the largest public park in Europe), Merrion Square where you can see Oscar Wilde's house, Grafton St. etc. Enjoy a tour of Trinity College, which is Ireland's oldest university (founded by Queen Elizabeth I in 1592). The highlight of the tour will be a view of the Book of Kells, written around the year 800 AD and one of the oldest and most beautifully illuminated manuscripts in the world. Also visit Christchurch Cathedral

Afternoon at leisure for shopping, museum visits or other planned activities

Possible performance in Bray as part of the American Celebration of Music in Ireland



Thursday, March 17th, 2011 Dublin

Breakfast at the hotel

March in the world-famous St. Patrick's Day Festival Parade

For two hours you will participate in an awesome display of creative talent as the national St. Patrick's Festival Parade snakes its way through the city center. International and Irish marching bands join performers, dancers and street theatre companies to present a wonderfully entertaining parade. The parade is a piece of moving theatre, complete with its own Creative Director. Colorful costumes, flamboyant performances and outstanding musical talent.

Afternoon at leisure to enjoy the atmosphere of St. Patrick's Day

Evening Farewell Dinner and overnight



Friday, March 18th, 2011 Depart for home

Breakfast at the hotel

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



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