



# The Thistle & the Shamrock

June 17 - 26, 2007

## The Celtic Lands of Ireland & Scotland

**F**rom the Rose of Tralee to Dublin's fair city, Ireland is an almost mythic land of lyrical folk song, romantic poetry, turbulent history and deep green fields. And few people travel to Scotland without leaving at least a part of their heart in the Highlands. This summer, join Discover Europe for an adventure spanning these two contrasting Celtic countries.

From the pre-Celtic hillforts punctuating the island to her dramatic seascapes and picturesque farms and hedgerows, Ireland is a land of gracious discoveries. Our itinerary offers an introduction to Ireland for travellers who want to see beyond the tourist façade and explore the deeper issues that face this small and complex island.

We visit Dublin, Europe's most recent success story, which has emerged from post-manufacturing doldrums to recreate itself. The city is introduced in panoramic sightseeing and free time allows you to explore one of its superb museums, or wander through Temple Bar and the revitalized riverfront.

From here we'll travel to Edinburgh, the capital of Scotland, with its intriguing Old Town, an area steeped in atmosphere, history, and winding streets. The backbone of the Old Town, the Royal Mile, leads from Edinburgh Castle down to the Palace of Holyroodhouse, and in addition to taking in the well-known sites, we'll take excursions from Edinburgh and head through the Trossachs, along the banks of Loch Lomond, and visit Stirling Castle, the gateway to the Highlands.

Along the way there will be unexpected stops and detours, and plenty of time for individual exploration as we take an unforgettable journey through the lands of the Thistle and the Shamrock.

The cost of this itinerary, per person, double occupancy is:

Washington Area Departure:	<b>\$2280</b>
Land Only (no airfare included):	<b>\$1480</b>
Single supplement:	<b>\$480</b>

The following services are included:

<b>Airfare:</b>	Roundtrip air to Shannon in Ireland, returning from Edinburgh in Scotland. All customs fees and airport taxes included.
<b>Hotels:</b>	8 nights accommodation in tourist class hotels. All hotel taxes and service charges included.
<b>Coaching:</b>	All ground transportation as detailed in the itinerary.
<b>Meals:</b>	Full breakfast daily, 3 dinners (3-course, set menu).
<b>Guides:</b>	Discover Europe tour director throughout. Local guides for sightseeing in Dublin & Edinburgh.
<b>Entrances:</b>	Entrance fees to all sites included in the itinerary.
<b>Insurance:</b>	Complete travel insurance including cancellation coverage.



Newgrange Passage Tomb



Edinburgh Castle





**Sunday, June 17<sup>th</sup>.** Departure from your US gateway city for the overnight transatlantic flight to Ireland. **Overnight: Flight**

**Monday, June 18<sup>th</sup>.** Morning arrival at Shannon airport where we will be met by our tour escort and touring coach. A pleasant drive through the beautiful scenery of southwest Ireland brings us to our hotel in Killarney. There will be time to unpack, rest, relax and have a leisurely lunch before an afternoon visit to nearby Muckross House, an imposing Victorian mansion with elegant rooms full of period furnishing including a museum of Kerry Life. The landscaped gardens are especially beautiful in the spring when the rhododendrons and azaleas are in bloom. And there is the Muckross farm, still using traditional farming techniques, to tour. Dinner is included at the hotel this evening. **(D) Overnight: Killarney**

**Tuesday, June 19<sup>th</sup>.** A full day excursion today around the scenic Dingle Peninsula that will blend magnificent views of coastal scenery with fascinating antiquities ranging from Iron Age stone forts to inscribed stones, early Christian oratories and beehive huts. We'll head straight out to Slea Head for

the breathtaking views over to the Blaskets and continue around, to visit the Oratory of Gallarus. We'll stop for lunch in the town of Dingle. Just outside Dingle we stop in Ballintaggart to view a collection of nine Ogham Stones in a circular burial ground and then cross over to the north coast of the peninsula. We visit the largest working windmill in Europe at Blennerville and return to our hotel via Tralee. This evening is free to sample local food and entertainment. **(B) Overnight: Killarney**

**Wednesday, June 20<sup>th</sup>.** We head east today to the second city of Cork. Just outside Cork is Blarney Castle, where you can climb the ruined tower and kiss the Blarney Stone. We then drive northeast to Dublin, stopping on the way at the Rock of Cashel, an imposing ruined cathedral atop a rocky hill. Dinner is included this evening at the hotel in Dublin. **(B, D) Overnight: Dublin**

**Thursday, June 21<sup>st</sup>.** Panoramic sightseeing this morning with a local city guide introduces this dynamic city that has undergone such growth and regeneration over the last twenty years. We'll visit St. Patrick's Cathedral, the national cathedral of the Church of Ireland and the burial place of Jonathan Swift. Then on to Christ Church, a drive through Phoenix Park, and a visit to Trinity College for an opportunity to view the celebrated Book of Kells. This afternoon we take an excursion north of Dublin. The Boyne Valley is the most important archeological site in Ireland, with the Megalithic Passage Tomb at Newgrange, built around 3200 BC. The kidney-shaped mound covers an area of more than an acre. The passage and chamber are illuminated by the winter solstice sunrise, and the image of the tri-spiral design inside the chamber is probably the most famous Irish megalithic symbol, often referred to as Celtic art carved at least 2500 years before the Celts arrived. A free evening in Dublin, where you may want to take in a play at the Abbey Theatre. **(B, D) Overnight: Dublin**



**Friday, June 22<sup>nd</sup>.** This morning we take a flight from nearby Dublin Airport to Prestwick in Ayrshire. We'll be met for the drive through "Robbie Burns' Country" to our hotel in Edinburgh. On arrival we'll check in to our hotel and have a free afternoon to begin exploring before dinner (included). **(B, D) Overnight: Edinburgh**

**Saturday, June 23<sup>rd</sup>.** The elegant city of Edinburgh is the political and cultural capital of Scotland. Set atop seven volcanic hills, it brims with historic treasures, but its finest is surely Edinburgh Castle, a towering fortification that dominates the skyline. Morning sightseeing with a local guide includes St. Giles Cathedral, a drive down the Royal Mile to Holyrood House and a visit to the historic castle, where you can admire the Honours of Scotland, her crown jewels. You'll have a free afternoon and evening to explore the city and sample one of its many fine restaurants. **(B) Overnight: Edinburgh**

**Sunday, June 24<sup>th</sup>.** A full day excursion to Stirling and Perth. After visiting Stirling Castle there will be time for lunch and a visit to the William Wallace (Braveheart) Memorial before we continue to Perth. At Perth we visit Scone Palace, legendary coronation site of the kings of Scotland, before we return to Edinburgh for a free evening. **(B) Overnight: Edinburgh**



**Monday, June 25<sup>th</sup>.** This morning there will be an excursion to the Trossachs, an area of outstanding natural beauty. We'll drive around the shores of Loch Lomond and stop to visit Rob Roy's cave before our mid-afternoon return to Edinburgh. The rest of the day is free for individual exploration. **(B) Overnight: Edinburgh**

**Tuesday, June 26<sup>th</sup>.** This morning brings our transfer to Edinburgh Airport for the return flights to the USA. Alternatively you might like to take the train to London for a few days in the capital. **(B) Overnight: Home**