



**Sunday, September 19<sup>th</sup>.** Evening departure from your chosen US gateway city for the overnight flight to Dublin.

**Monday, September 20<sup>th</sup>.** Morning arrival at Dublin airport. You will be met for the transfer to our hotel, where you'll have time to unpack and relax. There will be an arrival briefing this afternoon followed by a brief walking tour to introduce the neighborhood. A reception and welcome dinner at the hotel rounds out a full day. **(D) Overnight: Dublin**

**Tuesday, September 21<sup>st</sup>.** A list of past Dublin inhabitants reads like a who's who of literature — Jonathan Swift, Thomas Moore, James Joyce, Oscar Wilde, G.B. Shaw, Bram Stoker, W.B. Yeats, John Synge, Sean O'Casey, Samuel Beckett, and Dame Iris Murdoch. We begin our literary tour with panoramic sightseeing that encompasses St. Patrick's Cathedral, the burial place of Jonathan Swift; Christ Church; and Trinity College Library, which houses the celebrated Book of Kells. The afternoon is free to pursue individual interests, which might include a stroll on the James Joyce trail. Oscar Wilde's family home stands on the corner of Merrion Square; Bram Stoker lived on Harcourt Street just off St. Stephen's Green; Shaw's birthplace is at 33 Synge St. This evening we'll take in a play at the Abbey Theatre (Yeats was a founder). **(B) Overnight: Dublin**

**Wednesday, September 22<sup>nd</sup>.** A day's excursion south to Powerscourt House, with its outstanding gardens and Palladian mansion in the process of being restored. Then on to Glendalough, one of the most beautiful of the ancient Irish monasteries. On the way we'll visit James Joyce Tower, erected to withstand Napoleon's invasion; 100 years later, Joyce stayed there as a guest of poet Oliver St. John Gogarty, the model for a character in *Ulysses*. We'll have a free evening in Dublin to explore its literary character. In the evening, raise a pint to toast the legacy! **(B) Overnight: Dublin**

**Thursday, September 23<sup>rd</sup>.** We head north across the border today to the capital of the Republic of Northern Ireland. En route we'll journey to 5,000-year-old Newgrange, one of the most spectacular archeological sites in Europe. Traveling through the Boyne Valley we'll also see the Hill of Tara, location of the palaces of the Celtic High Kings and literary inspiration to a host of writers. We'll continue north, across the border into the "six counties," to Belfast, where we'll check in to our hotel, with time to freshen up and relax before dinner. **(B, D) Overnight: Belfast**

**Friday, September 24<sup>th</sup>.** Our first visit this morning is to the Ulster Folk and Transport Museum, one of the finest collections of vernacular architecture and historic transport in the world. We'll have time for lunch here before visiting nearby Mount Stewart House, now owned by the National Trust, to explore its magnificent gardens. The rest of the afternoon and evening are free. **(B) Overnight: Belfast**

**Saturday, September 25<sup>th</sup>.** Depart Belfast this morning by private coach and travel through pastoral green landscapes of the Antrim Coast and across the north of the island to Sligo on Donegal Bay, famously known as Yeats Country. A short drive north brings us to the Giant's Causeway with its bizarre basalt columns that recede into the ocean which gave rise to the legend of the giant, Finn MacCool, who is said to have laid out the steps to reach his lady love in Scotland. We'll cross into the Republic again at Belleek, in County Fermanagh, and drive along the north side of Lower Lough Erne across Boa Island. Here we'll stop and visit the Caldagh cemetery with its wonderful pre-Christian Janus figures. Just outside Sligo, set on extensive grounds is the 14<sup>th</sup>-century Markree Castle, converted into a comfortable hotel. After time to unpack and explore the castle and extensive grounds, gather for a lovely dinner in the beautiful dining room. **(B, D) Overnight: Sligo**

**Sunday, September 26<sup>th</sup>.** A full day in Yeats Country includes Carrowmore Megalithic Cemetery and the vast cairn reputed to be Queen Maeve's Grave in the shadow of Knocknarea, not to mention the spectacular lake of Lough Gill, with the island of Innisfree where "peace comes dropping slow." After a stop in Drumcliff to pay our respects at Yeats' grave in the shadow of Benbulbin, we'll explore Creevykeel Court cairn, one of the finest in Ireland. We'll also visit the County Art Gallery to see paintings by Jack Yeats and the Yeats Memorial Building. Dinner at the hotel this evening. **(B, D) Overnight: Sligo**

**Monday, September 27<sup>th</sup>.** From Sligo to Galway, a cathedral town that counts Nora Barnacle, wife of James Joyce, among its natives; it is also the final resting place of Lady Gregory and home to "the smallest museum in Europe." We'll have a brief walking tour from the Old Town center at Eyre Square along William Street, at the heart of the historic district, with its medieval buildings. With free time to explore for the rest of the day, we'll gather for dinner at our hotel. **(B, D) Overnight: Galway**

**Tuesday, September 28<sup>th</sup>.** A full day around the Connemara coast takes you through Joyce Country and some of the most beautiful scenery in Ireland. Sampling a range of what the area has to offer, we'll visit Clifden, the main town of Connemara, which attracts artists and fishermen; Kylemore Abbey renowned for its Victoria walled gardens and Gothic chapel; and Ireland's holiest mountain, Croagh Patrick. A stop in Cong takes us to Moytura House, built by Oscar Wilde's father (and the location for John Ford's classic *The Quiet Man*). Below the village is Ashford Castle, originally built for Sir Arthur Guinness, the Dublin brewer. You have a free evening to dine out in Galway. **(B) Overnight: Galway**

**Wednesday, September 29<sup>th</sup>.** Our excursion into the Burren introduces you to one of the most remarkable geological formations in Ireland—a wild, limestone plateau filled with rare flora. This area is also the location of Thoor Ballylee, Yeats' tower house, and Lady Gregory's estate, Coole Park. On to Ennis, for dinner and a reception at the hotel. **(B, D) Overnight: Ennis**

**Thursday, September 30<sup>th</sup>.** Morning transfers to the airport for flights to the U.S. **(B)**