

BEST CONNECTION TRAVEL, INC.~ since 1988
2005-2 West Street, Annapolis, MD 21401

CWF GOES TO IRELAND!

Itinerary

February 12-19, 2010

This early draft is subject to minor changes for content and itinerary prior to the 2010 CIE International brochure printing in September 2009.

- Feb. 12 Depart USA from Dulles Airport on your overnight non-stop flight to Dublin. Sit back and relax with meals and entertainment.
- Feb. 13 Upon arrival at Dublin Airport, go through immigration formalities and pick up your luggage. Go to the CIE Tours desk in the Arrivals Hall to meet your transfer to your hotel. Pick up your vouchers for the Dublin open-top bus tour and your choice of a Guinness Brewery or Jameson Distillery visit (with a wee tasting), which you will enjoy at your own time. (Overnight Stillorgan Hotel, Dublin)
- Feb. 14 At 2:00 pm join your local guide who will show you around central Dublin. Drive through the main streets to see historic buildings such as Trinity College, where the Book of Kells is housed; the evocative figures of the Famine Memorial; Dail Eireann, where the government meets; and rows of Georgian houses with gaily-colored doorways. Stop at Dublin Castle to take a guided tour through the elegant State Apartments, which are filled with elaborate Waterford Crystal chandeliers and portraits of prominent Irish leaders. Return to your hotel for a get-together with your group and a welcome drink. In the evening drive to the Merry Ploughboy Pub for a great dinner of Irish specialties, which is followed by a show of traditional Irish songs and intricate step-dancing. (Breakfast, Dinner, Overnight Stillorgan Hotel, Dublin)
- Feb. 15 Depart Dublin and travel through the center of Ireland, which has many mixed farms. Stop in to view the stately church ruins atop the Rock of Cashel, which rises high above the surrounding plain. Continue your drive south and, just a few miles outside Cork, visit Blarney Castle to kiss the famous "Stone of Eloquence". Also visit the Blarney Woollen Mills where you can find quality Irish-made goods of all types conveniently displayed under one roof. Drive through Macroom, built around a fine castle, and into County Kerry where the scenery becomes more mountainous. Arrive in Killarney, picturesquely set beside lakes with Ireland's highest mountains, the Macgillicuddy's Reeks, forming a backdrop. Check into your hotel and relax before dinner. Afterwards you may like to take a stroll through the compact town center and explore one of Killarney's famous singing pubs. (Breakfast, Dinner, Overnight Killarney Towers Hotel, Killarney)
- Feb. 16 Today embark on Ireland's most popular scenic drive of 100 miles - the Ring of Kerry. This winding route reveals breathtaking sights of the Macgillicuddy's Reeks as well as coastal views of beaches and cliffs. As you travel along, there will be plenty of stops for photos at the best vantage points. Drive through the villages of Cahirciveen and cross to Valencia Island by bridge. Visit the Skellig Experience to

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learn about the nearby rocky islands where early Christian monks lived in austere conditions. Today it is a bird sanctuary. Stop to walk around Sneem, where brightly painted houses are grouped around a central green. Stop at Moll's Gap for a view over the Three Lakes of Killarney with the town in the distance. Visit the charming Muckross Gardens, set on the shores of Muckross Lake and with many fine trees and plants. Return to Killarney and enjoy a fine dinner in your hotel once again. (Breakfast, Dinner, Overnight Killarney Towers Hotel, Killarney)

Feb. 17 Leave Killarney and drive north to Tarbert for a 20 minute ferry ride across the wide River Shannon Estuary. Your tour continues along the Clare Coast to the Cliffs of Moher, a spectacular wall of limestone that reaches to almost 700 feet above the Atlantic Ocean. Drive past Lahinch golf links, one of Ireland's most famous, and through the marketing town of Ennis to Bunratty. Check into Bunratty Castle Hotel, which is located very close to the Bunratty Castle and Folk Park. In the evening head to Bunratty Castle for a memorable experience in a wonderful setting with good food and entertainment. Then take your place in the Great Hall for a medieval style feast of excellent dishes and plenty of wine. During and after the meal, the lords and ladies will serenade you with song and harp music, evocative of the Middle Ages. (Breakfast, Dinner, Overnight Bunratty Castle Hotel, Bunratty)

Feb. 18 Drive past the outskirts of Limerick and through the midland region of Ireland to Kildare. Here you will visit the Irish national Stud Farm and Japanese Gardens. You will learn about horse breeding and see some of the valuable animals before touring the lovely Japanese Gardens, considered the best in Europe. They were laid out in 1908 and represent the "Life of Man" through the selection and placement of trees, shrubs and rocks in classical Japanese manner. Drive back to Dublin and check in to your hotel, Centrally located on the banks of the River Liffey, for the final night of your tour. You are free this evening for independent activities and dining. (Breakfast, Overnight Clarion Hotel IFSC, Dublin)

Feb. 19 Take a group transfer to Dublin Airport. After check-in, you'll have time to shop at the duty-free stores before U.S. Immigration pre-clearance and boarding your flight for the journey home. (Breakfast)