

## Get in Touch:

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## 10 Night Aran Islands, Donegal & Causeway Coast Knitting Tour

### Tour Dates:

11<sup>th</sup> May 2019

6<sup>th</sup> July 2019

7<sup>th</sup> September 2019

## Tour Overview

Begin your knitting tour of Ireland in Dublin where you will visit the historic Trinity College and Library. Also you will have free time to have lunch in the Grafton Street area, Ireland's premier shopping district before you head to the Constant Knitter to meet a local craftsperson for a short demonstration and informal chat. On your second day in Dublin you will meet Lisa Sisk for a knitting workshop following the Moebius Knitting technique. Spend some time on Inis Mor which is the largest of the three Aran Islands. Here you will meet Aran Knitting enthusiast, Una McDonagh for a workshop and tour. Continue to Mayo via the Museum of Country Life, you will then meet Ciara Ní Reachtnín for another workshop. The Northern part of your tour includes Studio Donegal, a hand-weaving and clothing manufacturing business, the amazing Slieve League Cliffs, Glencolmcille Folk Village and a workshop with Irish Designer Edel MacBride. The next day discover Ireland's famous Causeway Coast, visiting the Giant's Causeway and Dunluce Castle. See Belfast City and visit the famous Titanic Belfast and visit Mourne Alpacas outside the city. Before you return to Dublin for your final overnight visit Aine Dunne's studio for a spinning and tapestry workshop and pay a visit to Thomas Ferguson Linen Factory for a guided tour.

## Included in This Tour

- Transfers on arrival and departure by private coach (for arrivals prior to 11am on tour start date and departures on tour end date)
- Sightseeing as per itinerary in a luxury coach with an experienced driver and accredited guide
- Accommodation in rooms with private facilities for 10 nights
- Irish breakfast daily
- 5 hotel table d'hote dinners
- 5 lunches
- 1 Farewell Dinner
- Entrance to the following attractions: Giant's Causeway, Dunluce Castle, Slieve League Cliffs, Dún Aonghasa
- Return ferry to Inis Mór, Aran Islands
- Inis Mór Guided Tour
- Mourne Alpaca Farm Visit
- Studio Donegal Weaving Demonstration

## Workshops/Knitting Activities Included in This Tour

- Spinning & Tapestry Workshop with Aine Dunne
- Knitting Workshop with Edel MacBride from Knitfield
- Knitting Workshop with Ciara Ní Reachtnín
- Knitting Workshop with Lisa Sisk from This is Knit
- Meeting with local designer at the Constant Knitter

## Overnights for this Tour

- Camden Court Hotel or similar, Dublin, 2 Nights
- Aran Islands Hotel, Inis Mor, 2 Nights
- Sligo Park Hotel, Sligo, 1 Night
- Donegal, 2 Nights
- Tara Lodge Hotel or similar, Belfast, 2 Nights
- Camden Court Hotel or similar, Dublin, 1 Night

## Itinerary

**Important Note:** Attractions, Workshops and Demonstrations May Change According to Availability and Scheduling

### Day 1: Dublin Sightseeing

Begin your knitting tour of Ireland with a transfer to your hotel (for arrivals prior to 11am). At 1pm you will meet in the hotel lobby before you will discover Trinity College and Library and visit the Constant Knitter where you will meet a local craftsperson for a demonstration and informal chat about their craft topic. The remainder of the evening will be free for you to explore the city at your leisure before meeting back at the hotel for your welcome dinner. Overnight in Dublin, Dinner, Bed & Breakfast included.

### Day 2: This is Knit Workshop & Guinness Storehouse

This morning meet Lisa from 'This is Knit' for a workshop which includes an informative talk on the developments in the Irish Hand Knitting scene over the past ten years as well as a two hour

'Moebius Knitting' workshop following the 'Glenties Cowl' pattern, designed by Lisa Sisk. For this class you will be using Soft Donegal yarn from the mills of Studio Donegal in Kilcar. After your workshop we continue with our panoramic tour of Dublin and will stop at Dublin's Guinness Storehouse for a guided tour. Located in the heart of the iconic St. James's Gate Brewery in Dublin, this production site has been home to the Guinness Brewery since 1759, when Arthur Guinness signed a 9000 year lease! This evening dinner is not included so that you can sample one of Dublin's many restaurants and bars at your leisure. Overnight in Dublin, Bed & Breakfast included.

### **Day 3: Travel to Aran Islands & Tullamore D.E.W.**

After a leisurely breakfast, board your touring coach and travel to Tullamore D.E.W. Heritage Centre where you will discover how Daniel E. Williams went from stable boy to distillery manager to creating the whiskey which still bears his initials today. There will be time for some lunch before continuing to Rossaveal in County Galway for your ferry to Inis Mór (Also spelled Inishmore), the largest of the three Aran Islands. On arrival, meet with Aran Island locals for an introduction to Aran life with special attention to history of Dun Aonghasa in preparation for your visit the next day. Dinner will be served at the hotel accompanied by your hosts and after, enjoy a quick traditional Irish dancing lesson or if your tired feet are not up to the task, you can watch the instructor display some simple steps! Overnight on Inis Mor (Inishmore), Dinner, Bed & Breakfast included.

### **Day 4: Another Day & Night on Inis Mór!**

This morning, enjoy a Knitting Workshop where you will learn traditional methods and stitches the Aran Island way. Then it's off for a tour of Inis Mór with your local guide. The island has more than 50 different monuments of Christian and pre Christian history and you will pay a visit to the impressive fort of Dún Aonghasa. The fort consists of three terraced walls surrounding an inner enclosure containing a platform on the edge of a three hundred foot high cliff. *Please note that the walk to the fort is up a sharp incline and suitable footwear should be worn and is not recommended for those who may have walking difficulties.* The views from it are breathtakingly spectacular. On your tour you will also visit some of the local knitwear shops that are on the island and enjoy a delicious lunch at Teach Nan Phaidi! Overnight on Inis Mor (Inishmore), Dinner, Bed & Breakfast included.

### **Day 5: Museum of Country Life & Knitting Workshop with Ciara Ní Reachtnín**

Begin your day with the early ferry back to the mainland. From there travel through Connemara to the Museum of Country Life. After lunch (included), enjoy a knitting workshop with Ciara Ní Reachtnín. During your time with Ciara you will learn how to make the Deirdre na nDólás

(Deirdre of Sorrows) Shawl pattern, one of Ciara's own Celtic Mythology Designs. Techniques taught in this class will include constructing the garter tab, adding beads to your knitting, the unique cables and lace design of the main body of the shawl and attaching the beaded lace edge. Finally travel the short distance to Sligo where you will check into your hotel. Overnight in Sligo, Dinner, Bed & Breakfast included.

### **Day 6: Travel to Donegal**

Leaving Sligo we journey to Donegal on Ireland's Northwest Coast. First visit Studio Donegal, a hand-weaving and clothing manufacturing business committed to preserving and promoting traditional Irish hand-weaving. Here you will see the process of hand-weaving from start to finish including the spinning, warping and weaving of the wool. Next it's on to Slieve League Cliffs, one of the highest cliffs in Europe to enjoy some amazing views. After lunch (included) at the cliffs we will travel the short distance to Glencolmcille, an area famous for its wealth of traditional Irish culture, music and prehistoric settlements. Take a tour of Glencolmcille Folk Village, a collection of several small cottages, called a 'clachan', resting on a hillside that overlooks the stunning Glen Bay Beach. Designed, constructed and conserved by local people, the Folk Village is one of Ireland's longest running living-history museums. Overnight in Donegal, Dinner, Bed & Breakfast Included.

### **Day 7: Edel MacBride Knitting Workshop & Free time in Donegal Town**

Today meet one of Ireland's finest knitwear designers, Edel MacBride, for an intensive Aran knitting workshop. Enjoy a core workshop including yarn pack, working the best of Irish moss, cable and Edel's favourite Aran stitches. After your class and some lunch we take an optional trip to the nearby Donegal Craft Village where time will be allowed for you to peruse the craft shops at your leisure or have a coffee at the cafe. Of particular interest to you may be the Weaving and Felting studios. Return to Donegal where the afternoon is free for your personal sightseeing or shopping in Donegal town. Donegal has lots of nice craft shops and Magee Tweed is well worth a visit or you may like to visit Donegal Castle which was built by the O'Donnell chieftain in the 15th century. Overnight in Donegal, Bed & Breakfast Included.

### **Day 8: The Causeway Coast**

The Causeway Coast is rated as one of the top five road trips worldwide and when you experience it you will see why! The road meanders around a narrow strip of coastline between stunning sea views and majestic high cliffs. Visit the Giant's Causeway where around 60 million years ago, three great lava flows were laid down, cooling the basaltic plateau that makes an interesting photo opportunity today! On your journey you will also visit the remains of Dunluce

Castle which is perched dramatically close to a headland that plunges directly Sea! Your day tour today ends in Belfast City where the remainder of the evening is free to check out the local bars and restaurants. Overnight in Belfast, Bed & Breakfast included.

#### **Day 9: Belfast Sightseeing, Titanic Belfast & Mourne Alpaca Farm**

This morning enjoy a panoramic tour of Belfast and visit Titanic Belfast, one of Belfast's newest and most popular museums, built on the site of the former Harland & Wolff shipyard where the Titanic was originally constructed. Galleries reconstruct scenes from Belfast at the time of its construction, the launch, the maiden voyage, the sinking and the aftermath. This museum is extremely interactive, with technology bringing each period to life. Time permitting, we will also pay a visit to Mourne Alpacas outside Belfast, a family managed herd of Alpaca and pedigree angora goats that produce high quality fleeces, so much so that their motto at the farm is "We breed for heat, not for meat!" Once you have been up close and cosy with the alpacas, and had a chance for plenty of photos and questions, we will move onto the fleece. While enjoying a cuppa after all your hands on with the alpacas and the fleece, you can get a chance to see, feel and purchase quality alpaca yarns and some blend yarns, in many natural colours of the alpaca and some stunning seasonal colour ranges created from natural dyes as well. Mourne Alpacas have all their fleeces processed professionally at a dedicated mill and raw fleeces are also available for purchase for anyone who is keen to take some for home spinning. Return to Belfast where the remainder of the evening is your own. Overnight in Belfast, Bed & Breakfast included.

#### **Day 10: Thomas Ferguson Linen & Spinning and Tapestry Workshop**

Linen was an important industry in Ireland, particularly in the North of Ireland. So much so that its capital Belfast was fondly known as 'Linenopolis'! Today we will learn more about the linen industry in Northern Ireland by the Thomas Ferguson Linen Factory. On your guided tour of the factory you will witness first hand all elements of Linen production from the design, weaving and hemming to the final finishing touches and ornamentation. Leaving Belfast we travel to Drogheda to meet Aine Dunne a tapestry weaver and artist, resident and working from the Boyne Valley. With Aine and her team, you will enjoy a Spinning & Tapestry Workshop; here you will be introduced to hand spinning sheep's wool by using a drop spindle and try your hand at weaving a sample piece on a four-sided tapestry frame loom. During your time with Aine you will gain insight into her designs, weaving methods and work schedule. Return to Dublin where this evening your final farewell dinner will be served in a local restaurant. Overnight in Dublin, Bed & Breakfast included.

#### **Day 11: End of Tour**

After your final Irish breakfast depart the hotel for Dublin airport arriving in time to complete

check-in formalities and that last minute duty free shopping.

## Prices

**11<sup>th</sup> May 2019:** €2549 per person sharing/€529 supplement if single room required

**6<sup>th</sup> July 2019:** €2599 per person sharing/€529 supplement if single room required

**7<sup>th</sup> September 2019:** €2599 per person sharing/€529 supplement if single room required

Please note we charge in Euro

## Booking Requirements & Cancellation Information

A deposit of 20% of the total tour price is required to hold your booking. The balance of the tour is due 60 days before arrival and can be made in instalment payments on request.

Cancellation Policy:

- 4 weeks or longer prior to start date                      deposit will be forfeit and non-refundable.
- 4 weeks - 2 weeks prior to start date                      50% is forfeit
- 2 weeks or less prior to start date                              100% of all money paid is forfeit

Postponements:

Should you wish to change your tour to one of our other tours or to a different date, an amendment fee of €250 per person will apply. Within 4 weeks cancellation fees will apply.