



## 9 Night Kerry, Kilkenny and Aran Islands Irish Knitting and Craft Tour

### Tour Dates:

31<sup>st</sup> May 2020

## Tour Overview

For this 9 night knitting and craft tour, the focus of your itinerary will be historic Kilkenny, the Burren area in County Clare including the Cliffs of Moher and the Aran Islands and scenic Killarney in county Kerry. Your exploits will include a panoramic tour of Dublin where you will pay a visit to Epic Ireland, one of Dublin's newest museums. The next day we travel Kilkenny and meet Anita Marnell and Helena Kelly Maye for an intensive knitting and felting workshop. Your touring in Kilkenny does not end there however as we will also visit Zwartables Ireland Sheep Farm and Cushendale Woollen Mill. Continuing to Killarney you will visit two historic Castles on route, the impressive Cahir Castle and the famous Blarney Castle & Woollen Mills store. In Kerry we undertake another knitting workshop, this time with experienced designer and teacher, Ann Spillane. Ann will teach you how to make your own fancy/textured yarns and a variety of techniques to build texture and colour. Before you leave Kerry, we will explore the Lakes of Killarney, Molls Gap and the magnificent Dingle Peninsula, visiting Kerry Woollen Mills along the way. For the final leg of your tour travel to Doolin where we pay a visit to the famous Cliffs of Moher, visit Ekotree Knitwear and take a day trip to the Aran Islands for a knitting workshop with Una McDonagh.

## 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 9 nights
- Irish breakfast daily
- 5 hotel table d'hote dinners
- 3 lunches
- 1 Farewell Meal in Dublin
- Entrance to the following attractions: Epic The Irish Emigration Museum, Cahir Castle, Blarney Castle & Kilkenny Castle

## Workshops/Knitting Activities Included in This Tour

- Knitting & Felting Workshop with Anita Marnell and Helena Kelly Maye in Kilkenny
- Yarn Development & Knitting workshop with Liz Spillane in Kerry
- Aran Knitting workshop on the Aran Islands with Una McDonagh
- Zwartables Ireland Sheep Farm Visit

- Cushendale Woollen Mill Factory Tour
- Kerry Woollen Mills Factory Tour
- Dingle Peninsula Guided Tour
- Visit This is Knit Yarn Store

***(Wool and patterns are included in all workshops, you need to bring your own needles, sizes will be advised)***

## Overnights for this Tour

- Camden Court Hotel (or similar), Dublin, 1 Night
- River Court Hotel (or similar), Kilkenny, 2 Nights
- Lake Hotel (or similar), Killarney, 3 Nights
- Lahinch Golf & Leisure Hotel (or similar), Lahinch, 2 nights
- Camden Court Hotel (or similar), Dublin, 1 Night

*\*Should you wish to upgrade to a lake view room in Killarney the supplement will be €90 for the 3 nights.*

## 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 on start day of tour). At 2pm visit Epic, The Irish Emigration Museum. One of Ireland's newest museums, you can make your way through twenty themed galleries and find out why people left Ireland, how they influenced the world around them, and experience the connection between their descendants and Ireland today. If time permits we will also pay a visit to "This is Knit", an independent, family-owned yarn shop where the shelves are filled with high quality, natural-fibre yarns, from top Irish and international brands. Overnight in Dublin, Dinner, Bed & Breakfast included.

### Day 2: Travel to Kilkenny, Knitting, Spinning & Dyeing Workshop with Anita Marnell and Helena Kelly Maye

Check out of your hotel and board your touring coach. Travel to Highbank Orchard, Kilkenny and meet Anita Marnell and Helena Kelly Maye where the day starts with tea and coffee and an introduction to your activities, Anita will show you different fleeces, both raw and washed, along with other natural fibres which are used in yarns. Your day at the studio also includes some

knitting techniques with Helena where the honeycomb, blackberry, diamond and cable stitch can be learned, practiced and perfected. After lunch nearby (included), you will learn how to felt a flower using Merino fleece and decorating it with silks, to create a Stunning Brooch. After almost a full day at the studio, we travel onward to Kilkenny and check into your hotel. Long renowned as Ireland's Medieval Capital, the city's origins date back more than 1,500 years. Kilkenny, from the Gaelic "Cill Ceannaigh", derives its name from a 6th century monk called Saint Canice. Characterised by beautifully restored old buildings and covered slipways, Kilkenny City is small and compact enough to explore on foot, yet full of fascinating, historical buildings, and contemporary shops, design galleries, cafés and restaurants. Overnight in Kilkenny, Dinner, Bed & Breakfast included.

### **Day 3: Craft in Kilkenny – Cushendale Mill & Zwartbles Farm**

We start the day with a visit to Kilkenny Castle, a 12th century castle remodelled in Victorian times and set in extensive parklands. There will also be time to visit Kilkenny Design Centre which offers a fantastic selection of Irish handcrafted gifts including Jewellery, Knitwear, Celtic Gifts, China & Crystal, Pottery & Glass, Home & Fashion Accessories and contemporary design pieces. Next, we travel outside Kilkenny city and stop at Zwartbles Ireland Sheep Farm to meet Suzanne and her family who breed and rear Zwartbles Sheep. Tour the farm, meet the sheep and chat with the family who will tell you all about their unique yarn which you can buy direct from the farm if you wish. After lunch (included), your final stop for today is Cushendale Mill where products made on site are crafted using natural-fibre textiles made with mohair, Irish wool and merino lambswool. Enjoy a tour of the mill and see the spinning mule in action. You might even spot some of the wool from the sheep at Crampton farm! Return to Kilkenny where the remainder of the evening is free. Dinner is not included tonight so that you can sample one of Kilkenny's many fine restaurants if you wish. Overnight in Kilkenny, Bed & Breakfast included.

### **Day 4: Cahir Castle & Blarney Castle and Woollen Mills Store**

Today we make our way to Killarney with a few stops along the way, the first one being Cahir Castle in county Tipperary. Cahir Castle, one of the largest castles in Ireland, is sited on an island in the river Suir. It was built from 1142 by Conor O'Brien, Prince of Thomond. After a tour of the castle board your coach and travel to Cork and the village of Blarney. Cormac MacCarthy, a great Irish chieftain constructed Blarney Castle nearly 600 years ago and since then this remarkable fortress and its 'stone of eloquence' has been attracting thousands of curious visitors every year. Legend has it that if you kiss the stone you will never be lost for words and have, as the Irish say, 'the gift of the gab'. Built in 1823, Blarney Woollen Mills was originally known as Mahoney's Mills and provided valuable employment to the people of Blarney and nearby areas. Today Blarney Woollen Mills is Ireland's largest Irish Gift & Craft Store. Continue to Killarney and check into your hotel where dinner will be waiting for you. Overnight in Killarney, Dinner, Bed & Breakfast included.

### **Day 5: Knitting Workshop with Liz Spillane & Kerry Sightseeing**

After breakfast travel to Kenmare to meet knitwear designer and textile artist, Liz Spillane. Liz has over 30 years' experience teaching knitting classes and even worked as a tutor in the fashion department in the Limerick School of Art & Design. Your workshop with Liz will include creating fancy/ textured yarns, using a single smooth yarn as a base and a variety of techniques to build the texture and colour. The yarn is then knitted with standard knitting needles. After your class we will travel to Kenmare for lunch (included) and afterwards you will have some time to explore Kenmare at your leisure. We return to Killarney via the mountain road to Moll's Gap and Ladies View where you will be treated to unrivalled views of the Killarney Valley. With its three famous lakes and majestic mountain ranges, Killarney has been the inspiration of poets and painters over many centuries. The Killarney National Park is internationally renowned both for its scenic beauty and scientific interest. Overnight in Killarney, Bed & Breakfast included.

### **Day 6: Kerry Woollen Mills & Dingle**

After breakfast travel to Dingle, visiting Kerry Woollen Mills along the way. This 17th century establishment has been crafting fine fabrics and yarn from wool for over 300 years and on your tour you will see truly skilled craftspeople at work. Continue to Dingle where after a few hours to explore the town and have lunch at your leisure we will explore the peninsula. The peninsula itself is ringed by sandy beaches and craggy cliffs and inland you will find rolling hills and mountains, including the 952m Mount Brandon which towers overhead. Return to Killarney where the remainder of the evening is free for your personal sightseeing or shopping. Overnight in Killarney, Bed & Breakfast included.

### **Day 7: Travel to Doolin via Adare & Visit the Cliffs of Moher and Ekotree**

After breakfast board your touring coach and travel to Adare in County Limerick. Situated in the south west of Ireland, Adare is one of Ireland's prettiest and most picturesque villages and is a haven for those wishing to escape and unwind, taking in its medieval surroundings. After some free time to explore the village and attractions continue to Doolin where we visit the dramatic Cliffs of Moher! Following your visit, you will have the option to visit Ekotree Knitwear, a local knitwear centre where products are designed and produced using the highest quality natural yarns including cashmere, superfine alpaca, lambswool merino, mohair, linen & organic cotton. The owner Diarmuid will talk to you about his designs and you can see the production processes first hand. Overnight in the Burren Area, Dinner, Bed & Breakfast Included.

### **Day 8: Day trip to the Aran Islands**

Depart your hotel in time to get the early morning ferry to Inis Oirr (Inisheer), one of the famous Aran Islands located at the mouth of Galway Bay off the west coast of Ireland. On arrival you will be collected by your Aran Island Knitting Instructor Una McDonough and taken to the Café Una where you will be welcomed with tea or coffee and scones. Enjoy a Knitting Workshop where you will learn traditional methods and stitches the Aran Island way. In your class you will learn the

Sharry Chain Link Stitch. The Sharry family, like many of the island families, has a long-standing connection with the sea and the women of the family celebrate that connection in their choice of stitches when they knit traditional Aran sweaters. After some time to enjoy the Art Exhibition at the centre take a guided tour of the Island. This evening take the return ferry back to the mainland and return to your hotel. Overnight in the Burren Area, Dinner, Bed & Breakfast Included.

#### **Day 9: Return to Dublin via Tullamore D.E.W. Heritage Centre**

Check out of your hotel and make your way back to Dublin via 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. After sampling some of this fine whiskey, continue to Dublin where the afternoon is free for your personal sightseeing or shopping. This evening meet back at the hotel and we will travel together to a local restaurant for a final farewell dinner in a local Dublin restaurant. Overnight in Dublin, Bed & Breakfast included.

#### **Day 10: Tour Ends**

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**

**31<sup>st</sup> May 2020:** €2849 per person sharing/€839 supplement if single room required/€90 supplement for lake view room in Killarney if required.

#### **Pre Tour Arrangements (Additional)**

##### **Package A**

2 x Pre-Nights at Camden Court (or similar)

Arrival Transfer

2 Day Hop-On Hop-Off Sightseeing Ticket

Per person sharing one room € 349

Supplement if single room is required € 89

##### **Package B**

1 x Pre-Night at Camden Court (or similar)

Arrival Transfer

1 Day Hop-On Hop-Off Sightseeing Ticket

Per person sharing one room € 219

Supplement if single room is required € 49

## 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.