

From The Shannon To The Thames

Day 1 ARRIVE IN SHANNON, IRELAND–LIMERICK. Céad míle fáilte—a hundred-thousand welcomes! After checking into your hotel, free time to relax and perhaps enjoy the hotel’s leisure amenities or explore the city. Tonight, meet your Tour Director and traveling companions for a welcome dinner at your hotel. (D)

Day 2 LIMERICK. CLIFFS OF MOHER & GALWAY EXCURSION. Your vacation starts in earnest with a drive to the breathtaking CLIFFS OF MOHER, rising 668 feet above the Atlantic Ocean, to savor the magnificent panorama of the Clare coast. Then, visit Galway, a popular seaside destination and a buzzing cosmopolitan center with colorful shops and a busy café and bar culture. And finally, a special treat: at RATHBAUN FARM, [LF] watch the farmer shear a sheep or maneuver a flock with the help of a sheep dog. Then, enjoy a TRADITIONAL TEA in the 150-year-old farmhouse. A suggestion for a unique night out: an optional medieval banquet at an historic castle. Today’s Distance: 159 mi / 255 km (B)

Day 3 LIMERICK–ADARE–RING OF KERRY–KILLARNEY. A day full of splendid scenery. Head south and stop at quaint Adare with its pretty thatched cottages. At Killorglin, join the famous RING OF KERRY for a 100-mile panoramic drive around the island’s southwestern tip. Plenty to focus your camera on here: sparkling seascapes, mountains dotted with brightly colored farmhouses, winding lanes bordered with subtropical vegetation, and the breathtaking panorama of the Lakes of Killarney from Ladies View. Overnight is in the popular resort of Killarney. Today’s Distance: 157 mi / 253 km (B,D)

Day 4 KILLARNEY–BLARNEY–CASHEL–DUBLIN. On the way to Dublin, stop in Blarney, renowned for its castle and magical Kissing Stone, and Cashel to take your photographs of the rock where St. Patrick preached in the 5th century. Later, why not join an optional cabaret evening with dinner, followed by dance, song, and laughter? Today’s Distance: 225 mi / 360 km (B)

Day 5 DUBLIN. The morning’s orientation drive in the “Fair City” includes statue-lined O’Connell Street, elegant Georgian squares, St. Patrick’s Cathedral, and Oscar Wilde’s Trinity College. The afternoon is at leisure to enjoy this vibrant city. Tonight, maybe take in an optional dinner outing to the Guinness Storehouse. (B)

Day 6 DUBLIN–LISBURN, NORTHERN IRELAND–GIANT’S CAUSEWAY–BELFAST. Cross the Boyne River and stop in Lisburn on your way to the awe-inspiring GIANT’S CAUSEWAY. Hear how millions of years ago, erupting lava cooled slowly and evenly to form more than 40,000 interlocking basalt columns, leading from the cliff foot into the sea. Spend the night in Belfast, the capital of Northern Ireland. Today’s Distance: 216 mi / 348 km (B)

Day 7 BELFAST–EDINBURGH, SCOTLAND. First thing this morning, visit the fascinating TITANIC EXPERIENCE and learn about the building of the largest passenger steam ship, its maiden voyage, and the tragic night of April 14, 1912. Next, board your FERRY and cross the North Channel to Cairnryan on Scotland’s southwest coast, and continue through the scenic Scottish border country to Edinburgh. Tonight, enjoy our optional Scottish evening with Highland dancers, bagpipers, and the Ceremony of the Haggis. Today’s Distance: 132 mi / 212 km (B)

Day 8 EDINBURGH. Morning city sightseeing with a local expert introduces you to the 200-year-old “New Town” and the famous scientists, inventors, and novelists who lived there. In the “Old Town,” visit EDINBURGH CASTLE to admire Scotland’s Crown Jewels. The afternoon is

free to enjoy the Scottish capital at your own pace. Later, a unique optional experience: board the former Royal Yacht Britannia, and enjoy dinner at a local restaurant. For departure numbers 0805, 0812, 0819 tickets are included for tonight's performance of the world-renowned MILITARY TATTOO, a vast spectacle of massed Scottish pipe bands that takes place in an arena on the esplanade of Edinburgh Castle. (B)

Day 9 EDINBURGH–ALNWICK, ENGLAND–YORK. This morning at ALNWICK CASTLE, the choice is yours: visit the CASTLE itself, the opulent ancestral home of the Duke and Duchess of Northumberland, featured in Harry Potter and Downton Abbey, or explore ALNWICK GARDEN, with its breathtaking fountains and waterfalls. In York, England's most complete medieval city, follow your Tour Director through a maze of quaint streets, including the narrow Shambles. Today's Distance: 243 mi / 391 km (B,D)

Day 10 YORK–STRATFORD-UPON-AVON–BATH. Head for Stratford-upon-Avon to take your photographs of Anne Hathaway's Cottage, then visit SHAKESPEARE'S BIRTHPLACE, enjoy [LF] a LIGHT LUNCH, and take some time to wander around the historic market town. In the afternoon, drive to elegant Georgian Bath and explore the amazing excavations of the ROMAN BATHS, built nearly 2,000 years ago. Today's Distance: 286 mi / 460 km (B,L,D)

Day 11 BATH–STONEHENGE–LONDON. A drive through Salisbury Plain brings you to STONEHENGE, the most famous monument of prehistoric Europe. First, explore the visitor center with its imaginative exhibitions, then take the shuttle to the stone circle and admire its magnificence up close. In London, your final destination, why not take in a Shownight Theater Evening? Today's Distance: 131 mi / 210 km (B)

Day 12 LONDON. Morning sightseeing with a Local Guide includes all the famous landmarks: the Houses of Parliament and Big Ben beside the Thames River, Westminster Abbey, Whitehall's mounted horseguards and the Prime Minister's Downing Street residence, Piccadilly Circus, and Buckingham Palace. Free time in the afternoon for independent activities or to join an optional excursion to Windsor Castle or the Tower of London with its fabulous Crown Jewels. Later, an optional dinner, followed by a relaxed nighttime cruise on the Thames River, viewing some of the capital's most beautiful illuminated sights, would be an incredible finale to your vacation. (B)

Day 13 LONDON. Your vacation ends with breakfast this morning. (B)