

South East Ireland, *Wicklow Mountains & Tall Ships*

21 – 27 August



Known as the 'Garden of Ireland', County Wicklow is home to some of the country's most beautiful scenery, a haven of glistening lakes, picturesque villages and undulating hills of green, overlooked by the rugged peaks of the majestic Wicklow Mountains and renowned for its legendary warm Irish welcome. During this tour we discover one of the Emerald Isle's most famous gardens, learn of Ireland's long love affair with horseracing with a visit to the Irish National Stud, and feast our eyes on the bewitching scenery and hidden treasures of the Wicklow Mountains National Park. We also experience the 'Fair City' of Dublin, Ireland's fascinating capital, which stands proudly astride the River Liffey brimming with cultural and historic treasures. Our base for this tour is the historic coastal resort of Bray, 'Gateway to the Garden of England', which enjoys a wonderful setting against the backdrop of the Sugar Loaf and Wicklow Mountains.

TUESDAY 21 AUGUST Departing Oxted and making refreshments stops en route we drive to the Kinnel Manor Hotel, Abergele, North Wales, our overnight stop.

WEDNESDAY 22 AUGUST After an early breakfast we travel to Holyhead for the morning fast ferry sailing to Dun Laoghaire from where we make the short journey to Enniskerry for an afternoon visit to

Powerscourt House and Gardens. Overlooking the Sugar Loaf Mountain, it is considered to be one of the world's great gardens, described as "a sublime blend of formal gardens, sweeping terraces, statuary and ornamental lakes with secret hollows and walled gardens". Following our visit we continue on to our hotel.

THURSDAY 23 AUGUST A half day guided tour of

Dublin by coach with the remainder of the day at leisure to explore the sights and take in the atmosphere of this Capital City straddling the River Liffey at the head of Dublin Bay. Visit Trinity College with its majestic 18th-century buildings and squares, home to the famous 'Book of Kells'; join in the hustle and bustle of the renowned O'Connell Street and Grafton Street – the heart of Dublin's shopping paradise or visit the fashionable Temple Bar area.

FRIDAY 24 AUGUST A leisurely start to the day in Bray where the Victorian Promenade keeps the same style today as that of Oscar Wilde's time, before taking an excursion through the beautiful scenery of the Wicklow National Park. We travel to Glendalough, an ancient monastic site surrounded by forests, then down through the Vale of Clara to Avoca, home of Ballykissangel, before heading back towards Bray along the coast road via the historic town of Wicklow, famed for its fine harbour and captivating gaol.

SATURDAY 25 AUGUST For the first time since 1998, Dublin City is the final host port for the international Tall Ships Races for 2012. Up to 100 Tall

Ships from 15-20 countries, crewed by some 5-6,000 young people are expected to sail up the mouth of the Liffey, and the atmosphere around the Dock area of Dublin promises to be magical. Enjoy a unique opportunity to view the tall ships and enjoy the carnival events.

SUNDAY 26 AUGUST Today we visit Kildare and the Irish National Stud, which is also home to the Japanese Gardens, acclaimed as the finest in Europe, created to symbolise the 'Life of Man'. Here we shall have a tour of the stud and time to visit the museum before viewing the mares and foals along Tully Walk. Experience St. Fiachra's gardens, dedicated to St. Fiachra - the Patron Saint of Gardeners too, with its woodland and lakeside walks. After lunch we journey through the lush Kildare countryside to Blessington Lakes, 500 acres of lakeside scenery set beneath the Wicklow Mountains before returning to our hotel.

MONDAY 27 AUGUST Making an early departure from our hotel we make our way to the ferry for our sailing to Holyhead, during which we shall have breakfast. We then continue our homeward journey, arriving mid evening.

What's included

KINMEL MANOR HOTEL, ABERGELE **North Wales**

The Kinmel Manor is a family run hotel set back within rural surroundings of Abergele.

ESPLANADE HOTEL Bray

A Victorian hotel situated on the seafront.

All bedrooms are en suite with TV, telephone, hairdryer & hospitality tray.

A total of 6 nights Dinner, Bed & Breakfast.

Entry to Powerscourt Estate

Half day guided tour of Dublin

Time to explore Dublin

Scenic tour of Wicklow National Park & Coastline

Viewing of Tall Ships (exclusive of any entry fees)

Visit to Irish National Stud, Horse Museum, Japanese Gardens & St Fiachra's Gardens

£625.00 PER PERSON

Single Room Supp: £104.00