

YOUR SAFARI

Tracing the Heart of Our Celtic Christian Roots:

An Educational Pilgrimage to Scotland and Ireland

Pilgrims on this trip will explore the ancient sites of Celtic Christianity in Scotland and Ireland to gain a better understanding of the Celtic roots at the heart of the English speaking churches.

DAY 1

Transatlantic flight Minneapolis to arrive Glasgow International Airport. Transfer by bus to Edinburgh.

DAY 2

Arrive this morning into Glasgow International Airport where you will be met and transferred to Edinburgh. On arrival check into the centrally located Roxburghe hotel. This afternoon time will be allowed for some rest and relaxation, or perhaps some independent sightseeing. Return to your hotel early evening where a welcome reception will be served followed by dinner and tour briefing in your hotel.

DAY 3

This morning enjoy a tour of the beautiful city of Edinburgh, which will include a visit to Edinburgh Castle via the Royal Mile. The Castle dominates the skyline and gives stunning views of the city and countryside and houses the Scottish Crown jewels, the Stone of destiny and Mons Meg. Next you will visit St Giles, the High Kirk of Scotland which dates from the 12th century and is central to Scotland's turbulent history. The balance of the day will be yours to spend at leisure in Edinburgh. Dinner this evening will be by independent arrangement.

DAY 4

Leave Edinburgh behind this morning as you head south towards Durham. On arrival in Durham you will receive a special tour of the glorious Norman cathedral here, a World Heritage Site and burial place of the Venerable Bede and St. Cuthbert. The tour will include the Treasury Museum, which represents 900 years of history from the time of St. Cuthbert to the present day. Late afternoon an opportunity for those who wish to attend choral evensong, before returning to your hotel. Early evening transfer to Ramside Hall hotel, your base for the next 2 nights. Dinner arrangements this evening will be made independently.

DAY 5

Enjoy a visit to Bede's world in Jarrow this morning, where you can learn about the life and times of this great scholar and visit the monastery where he died. After time for an independent lunch you will then be transferred to Auckland Castle, which has been the principal country residence of Bishops of Durham since Norman times and is now the official residence of the present day Bishop. Parts of the building date back to 12th century and an exhibition in the medieval kitchens explores the life of St Cuthbert. Return to your hotel in Durham this evening where on arrival dinner will be served.

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DAY 6

Board your coach this morning for an excursion to Holy Island to view Lindesfarne Priory. This site was one of the most important early centres of Christianity, established when Bishop Aidan was sent from Iona to spread Christianity through northern England. These evocative ruins, with the decorated rainbow arch curving dramatically across the nave of the church, still attract pilgrims today. There will also be an opportunity to visit Lindisfarne Castle, which was built in 1550 to protect Holy Island harbour from attack. Late afternoon board your coach as you are transferred to Carlisle, pausing en-route to visit Hadrian's wall. On arrival in Carlisle check into the Cumbria Park hotel your base overnight. Lunch and dinner today are to be spent on your own.

DAY 7

Today will be spent visiting Whithorn Priory, originally founded as 'Candida Casa' the "Shining White Place" which now houses the shrine of St. Ninian. This is the site of the earliest recorded Christian Mission to Scotland, founded by St Ninian who came to Whithorn while it was still a province of the Roman Empire. This evening continue your journey to Stranraer, where on arrival you will check into the North West Castle hotel, your base this evening. Dinner arrangements will be made independently tonight.

DAY 8

This morning take the ferry from Stranraer to Larne in Northern Ireland. On arrival board your coach once more as you are transferred via Belfast to Armaugh, where St. Patrick founded his first church. Here you can trace the history of the city from pre-Christian times, to the arrival of St. Patrick and the Celtic Church. This afternoon there will also be the opportunity to enjoy a tour of the glorious Patrick Museum and the two magnificent cathedrals. Overnight this evening will be spent in Dublin. Lunch and dinner arrangements will be made independently today.

DAY 9

Join your guide and coach for a tour of this Celtic City. On completion the balance of the day will be yours to spend at leisure on independent activities, perhaps to enjoy some shopping or sightseeing. Return to your hotel in Dublin this evening for overnight. Lunch and dinner will be on your own.

DAY 10

Board your coach, as you are transferred to Dublin's University at Trinity College. This working College houses the prestigious Book of Kells. Written in 800 AD, it is one of the most beautiful illuminated manuscripts in the world. It was given to Trinity College in the 17th Century as a gift, and has been on display in the great library since the 19th Century. There will also be some time here to enjoy one of the themed exhibitions on display. This afternoon there will be time for an independent lunch before a visit to the Old Jameson Distillery. There will be a chance hear to view how this traditional whisky is distilled, followed by time afterwards for a "wee dram" before spending the balance of the day in Dublin. Dinner arrangements this evening are to be made independently. Overnight to spent in Dublin.

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DAY 11

Enjoy an excursion to the Boyne Valley today. Subject to confirmation there will be a visit to either the Tomb at Newgrange (circa 2500 BC) or alternatively the lesser known Tomb at Knowth. Time for an independent lunch before continuing to Mellifont Abbey the first Cistercian Abbey in Ireland. Late afternoon board your coach for the transfer to the early Christian site of Monasterboice, famous for its high crosses. Dinner arrangements this evening will be made independently. Overnight Dublin.

DAY 12

Visit Clonmacnoise, founded by St. Ciaran in 548 AD and one of Irelands most celebrated Holy Places. Here there are numerous Celtic artefacts, including the Clonmacnoise cross, and gravestone. Lunch and dinner today are on your own.

DAY 13

Board your coach as you transfer by ferry to the Aran Islands also known in Gaelic as Arana Naomh. These magical islands of the coast of Galway have many historic landmarks including the ruins of ancient fortifications, churches and monasteries constructed in the early Christian era. On arrival in Inishmore you will be met by your bus for a mini tour of the island. Here there will also be a visit to the majestic Iron Fort at Dun Aonghas before spending the rest of the day at leisure. This evening return to mainland Eire, where on arrival you will check into your hotel in Galway. Dinner arrangements tonight will be made independently.

DAY 14

Join your guide and coach today for a full day your of Connemara. A magnificent wilderness populated by sheep and dotted with hundreds of small lakes. The stone walls, tiny farms, and isolated thatched cottages are surrounded by coastline. Here also visit Kylemore Abbey, once a former private house, and now home to the Benedictine nuns the newly restored Gothic Church is the jewel in the crown. Lunch arrangements today will be by independent arrangements. On your return to your hotel in Galway a farewell dinner will be served to commemorate the end of this special tour.

DAY 15

Board your motorcoach this morning for the transfer to Shannon Airport in time for your return flight to the United States at 5:55PM

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