

DISCOVER CONNEMARA

Self-guided cycling & walking in Connemara 2008



For independent travellers we offer the option of Discovering Connemara while enjoying cycling in fantastic settings, and exploring the many attractions in the area at your own pace and leisure. In the evenings you enjoy traditional Irish hospitality in Charming Hotels where you can relax and take it easy in your hotel surroundings.

Your route will take you both inland and along the coastal region, giving a glimpse of some dramatic scenery in Connemara - the western wonderland of Europe, where rugged mountains soar above wild Atlantic beaches. Here there is a peace no longer found in the populated areas, and purity so refreshing in contrast to the pollution of the cities. It is also a land of great contrast from mountain to sea.

With this tour you will discover the delights of Clifden, the capital of Connemara as well as the raw beauty of South Connemara and as you perch on the edge of the West of Ireland you can watch one of the many glorious sunsets, on the Renvyle Peninsula.

Duration: 8 days (7 nights)
Tour Dates 2008: ANY DATE (April - Oct)
Level: Moderate cycling days with average of 40km a day with longer and shorter options available on most days.

Bicycle: Touring Bike
Equipment: CANNONDALE Hybrid €100extra
Helmets, front handlebar bag, water bottles, bicycle repair-kit.

Accommodation: Charming Hotels
Meals: Irish breakfasts, 2 dinner's

Transfers: Luggage transfers

Miscellaneous: Detailed route notes and maps.

Meeting Point: A Killary Tours representative will meet you at your first nights accommodation in Clifden.

Departure Point: You depart from your last night's accommodation in Clifden. There is a direct bus service daily from Clifden to Galway.



PRICE 2008:

Price per adult €1025.00 per person sharing

All prices are in EURO, and based on per person sharing. Per person sharing means two people in one room. Single Room supplement is applied when people require a room for themselves as part of a booking of two or more. This is €195.00pp.

If you book for a group of 4 the rate is €975.00



DAILY ITINERARY

DAY 1 - Arrival to Clifden

Arrive to your hotel in Clifden. Clifden, the capital of Connemara, is surrounded by majestic mountains nestled in a valley, which overlooks a picturesque harbour. Clifden has attracted countless visitors, many of whom return again and again to enjoy the 'craic' in one of the most scenic areas and unique areas in Ireland. Steeped in history, this sleepy town is undoubtedly one of the true last treasures in Western Europe and you will be staying here for your first two nights. Warm welcome and chance to settle in. You will be given your route pack and general information to study overnight. If there is time a Killary Tours representative will meet with you and allocate bicycles and equipment.

DAY 2 - Clifden

You will stay the night again in Clifden, and therefore you can choose to have a leisurely day in the town in Clifden. If you want to cycle, there is the possibility of a short circle on the Sky-Road (25kms) offering fabulous views over the Atlantic and its islands. Alternatively turn to the road running alongside hundreds of tiny Loughs towards Maam Cross, visit Dan O'Hara's Homestead (Connemara Heritage and History Centre) or sip a cup of tea in Ballynahinch Castle before returning to Clifden (50kms). There are many restaurants in Clifden for you to have your evening meal.

DAY 3 - Clifden to Carna

Leave Clifden to day heading for Carna. Your route is along the shores of Mannin Bay, with its coral strand composed of myriad bleached fragments of corallines interspersed with smooth rock as you reach Roundstone, a picturesque small fishing village offering beautiful views over the Twelve Bens. In the Franciscan monastery there is a small bodhrán (Irish hand held drum) making industry well worth a visit. Continue on from Roundstone to Cashel and Glynsk before reaching Carna, where you will stay in a small family hotel (45kms).

DAY 4 - Carna to Leenane

Today is possibly your longest cycling day as you leave Carna today and make your way to the small village of Leenane. As you leave Carna you will pass Lough Skannive where there are two islands closely resembling crannogs (fortified lake dwellings). This area is still Irish speaking and you can listen to the local Fishermen in Kielkieran, speaking Gaelic. You cycle away from the coast back towards the mountains on a road through lake-strewn moorland to Maam Cross, the meeting point of the roads, and a local sheep market place. Continue on over a low mountain pass to enter the Maam Valley, with fantastic views of the Maam Turks mountain range back to the little village of Leenane. Stay the night in Leenane and you can have dinner in one of the village restaurants (60kms).

DAY 5 - Leenane to Renvyle

You will leave the village of Leenane today and make your way back to the Renvyle peninsula. Your cycling route meanders along the coastline to Tullycross (23km), or alternatively you can take a route by Kylemore, passing Kylemore Abbey, home to the Benedictine Nuns, and world renowned visitor attraction with visitor centre and Victorian walled gardens (20km). You stay tonight in a hotel and your dinner is included tonight at your hotel.

DAY 6 - Renvyle

A change to day to relax and enjoy your surroundings, maybe take a walk around the Renvyle Peninsula and climb Letterhill, or take a cycle around the coastline to Lettergesh and Glassilaun and returning to Renvyle. Renvyle Peninsula is steeped in history and archaeological sites. From a Bronze Age Solar Calendar, one of the finest 4,000 year old forests entombed in peat in Europe, the O'Flaherty Castle which was once home to the Pirate Queen Grace O'Malley (Granuaile). Renvyle House was once home to the Blake Family and then to poet, statesman and surgeon Oliver St. John Gogarty and was a favourite retreat of poet W.B. Yeats at the time. Dinner this evening is at your hotel.

DAY 7 - Renvyle House to Clifden (Via sky road)

You leave the Renvyle peninsula today and return to Clifden the starting point of your Discover Connemara route. As you pass through Letterfrack you can make a visit to the Connemara National Park, 1 of six National Parks in Ireland. The Park grounds are open all year round and the Visitor Centre is open from mid-March to mid-October. In the Park's Visitor Centre there are 3-D exhibitions of the Connemara landscape, audio-visual show, tearoom, nature trails, and an annual summer programme. From Letterfrack you can take a route via the small fishing village of Cleggan and through Claddaghduff to Clifden, and don't forget to include the Sky Road (an additional 10km) which offers you wonderful views over the Atlantic and the islands lying in it. You arrive back to your hotel in Clifden for your last night.

DAY 8

Breakfast, followed by departure!

Please be aware that the programme given for this tour is strictly intended as a guide only and may not be fully adhered to. Climatic conditions, safety regulations and travel options may subject the programme to changes and/or modifications without due notice, at any time. In such case, Killary Tours reserves the right to make any necessary decisions.

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