



Back Roads of Northern Ireland

9 Days and 7 Nights

Many of you have enjoyed our Classic Ireland program with Philip Duffy or Tom O'Toole. Now come and share a different part of this beautiful area with these same driver/guides as we explore Northern Ireland!

Travel with TRIPS and discover a revitalized Northern Ireland teeming with pride and optimism.

With stunning landscapes and the friendliest of welcomes, Northern Ireland is beautiful, wonderfully scenic and packed with historic attractions. From Saint Patrick to the birthplace of the Titanic, from the Giant's Causeway to the Mountains of Mourne and the Walled City of Derry, there are unique stories waiting to be heard. As you travel the Causeway Coastal Route, you'll see why it is rated as one of the Top Five Road Trips worldwide. The ever-changing tapestry of scenery and colors, set against a dramatic coastal backdrop will take your breath away! Travel through picturesque villages as well as Northern Ireland's major cities. Londonderry features one of Europe's best preserved walled settlements, standing since 1618. The Titanic Belfast, housed in an iconic six-floor building tells the story of the ill-fated ship in a fresh and insightful way.

Join TRIPS as we travel to a new and exciting Northern Ireland!

Day 1 - Your Journey Begins!

Depart the United States for your overnight flight to Dublin.

Day 2 - Dublin: When Irish Eyes are Smiling!

On arrival in **Dublin**, you'll be met by your driver/guide and begin your Irish holiday! Start with a **city tour** of this charming and colorful capital city with its harmonious blend of Victorian pubs, rows of elegant Georgian town houses and glittering modern buildings. Then, enjoy time on your own discovering **Grafton Street** teeming with cafes, shops and buskers galore! From musicians and poets to mime artists, you'll experience a true taste of Dublin! Later this afternoon, transfer to your hotel for check-in and dinner!

Overnight: Dublin

(D)

Day 3 - Belfast: St. Patrick and Mountains!

After a hearty Irish breakfast, you'll depart Dublin bound for **Belfast** traveling through the **Mourne Mountains** with its spectacular vistas and the charming villages of Newry and Newcastle. The scenic coastal route takes you to **Downpatrick** one of Ireland's most ancient and historic towns. **Saint Patrick**, the patron saint of Ireland is buried here and of course Saint Patrick's Day is observed on March 17th, the date of his death. You'll visit the **Saint Patrick Visitor Centre** featuring interactive displays telling the story of his life. Legend has it that St. Patrick taught the Irish about the doctrine of the Holy Trinity using a shamrock to illustrate the Christian teaching, and today of course it is widely associated with Ireland and St. Patrick's Day. You'll have time on your own for lunch here before continuing on to the heart of Belfast later this afternoon. Check into the world famous Europa Hotel located in the heart of the city centre, where you're just a short walk from top attractions and local shops. You'll have some time to explore on your own before enjoying dinner in the hotel this evening.

Overnight: Belfast - Europa Hotel

(B/D)

Day 4 - Belfast: The Titanic!

This morning, set out on a **tour of Belfast City**. You'll see wide ranging architectural styles such as the Edwardian City Hall and the grand Ulster Bank as you tour Northern Ireland's capital city. Dominating the Belfast skyline are the twin shipbuilding cranes named Samson and Goliath situated in the shipyard of Harland & Wolff where the RMS Titanic was built. You'll tour the **Titanic Belfast**, with interactive galleries including recreations of the ship's cabins, the underwater exploration theatre and a moving evocation of the ship's catastrophic and untimely demise. Opened in 2012 on the centenary of the sinking, it has become the most popular attraction in Northern Ireland. You might choose to enjoy lunch on your own at Bistro 401 offering a range of Titanic inspired heritage dishes. You'll return to the hotel this afternoon with the remainder of the day at leisure. Perhaps visit the historic **Crown Liquor Salon**, the oldest pub in Northern Ireland or see the famous Belfast Opera House. There is plenty to see and do in Belfast City Centre!

Overnight: Belfast - Europa Hotel

(B)

Day 5 - Derry: Glens, Giants and Bushmills!

After breakfast this morning, check out of your hotel, traveling through the **Nine Glens of Antrim**, a scenic route with beautiful views of mountains, valleys and coastline. You'll stop along the way at **Giant's Causeway**, which has inspired artists and stirred scientific debate for centuries. According to legend, nearly 40,000 columns of basalt are the remains of a causeway built by the mythical giant Finn McCool! Discovered in 1693, it has often been described as the Eighth Wonder of the World, and was declared the country's first UNESCO World Heritage site. You'll have time for lunch on your own here as well as browsing in the gift shop before departing for **Bushmills Distillery!** The oldest distillery in the world, King James I granted a license to distill in 1608! You'll see how they turn water into Golden Irish Whiskey and of

course you'll be able to taste the beautifully smooth Irish Whiskey! A great gift for yourself would be a bottle of Bushmills 1608, a special 400th Anniversary whiskey available only in the **Whiskey Shop** at the distillery! You'll then continue on to the walled city of Derry, officially Londonderry. On arrival, check into your hotel, perched on the banks of the River Foyle. You'll have free time before enjoying dinner at the hotel.

Overnight: Derry - City Hotel

(B/D)

Day 6 - Donegal: Peace Bridge and Murals!

After breakfast, check out of your hotel and travel to nearby **Derry** for a city tour. Visit **Bogside** and see the 12 famed outdoor murals depicting the events surrounding sectarian violence and civil rights protests in Northern Ireland during what is now known as "**the Troubles**". In addition, you'll have the opportunity to walk on the **Derry Peace Bridge**, spanning the River Foyle and bridging a 400 year old physical and political gap between two sides of a once bitterly divided community. This impressive piece of architecture symbolizes the unification of two communities. Next, visit the **Ulster American Folk Park** and immerse yourself in the story of Irish emigration as you journey from the thatched cottages of Ulster to the log cabins of the American Frontier. Meet an array of costumed characters with traditional crafts to show, tales to tell and food to share. Lunch is on your own, before departing for **Donegal**. On arrival, check in to your hotel for the next two nights, located a short 10 minute walk from Donegal Town. You might opt to visit the **Donegal Craft Village**, a showcase for contemporary arts and crafts before returning to the hotel for dinner.

Overnight: Donegal - Mill Park Hotel

(B/D)

Day 7 - Donegal: Cliffs, Crafts and Thatched Roofs!

After breakfast travel to **Slieve League Cliffs**, twice as high as the Cliffs of Moher and twice as dramatic! With twirling seabirds flying overhead and nothing but crisp blue ocean before you, it will feel as though you're at the edge of the world! Stop at the **Slieve League Cultural Centre** where specially arranged mini-buses will take you right to the Cliffs for views that will leave you breathless! Next, visit the remote village of **Glencolumbkille** and the "**Famine Village**" where an entire hamlet of houses seems to have been abandoned. The majority of the village's population left during the Irish Famine of the mid-1800's and the only inhabitants you'll find here today are sheep. This area is also where **Colmcille**, one of the greatest of early Irish Saints was born. He founded monasteries shaping the culture of Ireland and which produced the Book of Kells. You also visit **Father McDyer's Folk Village Museum** consisting of thatched houses complete with furnishings and artifacts. You'll find a craft shop, school, shebeen (illegal drinking establishment) and a tea house. This is an authentic look back into Irish history! You'll return to Donegal late this afternoon.

Overnight: Donegal - Mill Park Hotel

(B)

Day 8 - Dublin: Belleek and Dublin!

Check out of your hotel after breakfast and travel through the village of Ballyshannon toward Belleek and the famed **Belleek Porcelain Company**. Established in 1857, discover the secrets of the 16 hands that have made Belleek Pottery one of the most enduring success stories of Irish Craftsmanship. Be sure to stop in the Tea Room for a snack on your own, naturally served on Belleek tableware! Depart and return to **Dublin**, check in to your hotel and freshen up before enjoying a delightful farewell dinner featuring Irish entertainment!

Overnight: Dublin

(B/D)

Day 9 - Farewell to Northern Ireland!

After breakfast, depart for the airport and your flight back to the United States, with arrival on the same day. **The wonderful memories of days in Northern Ireland will surely last a lifetime!**

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Inclusions

- Round trip international airfare to Ireland (checked baggage fee is not included)
- 7 nights twin bed accommodations with private bath
- 7 full Irish breakfasts
- 5 dinners, including a special farewell dinner with Irish entertainment
- Admission to Belfast Titanic Museum, St. Patrick Visitor Center, Ulster American Folk Park, Bushmills Whiskey Distillery, Belleek Porcelain and more!
- Enjoy Mourne Mountains, Belfast city tour, Giant's Causeway, sightseeing tour of Derry, Slieve League Cliffs and more!
- Private transport by deluxe motor coach throughout the itinerary
- Services of a professional Irish driver/guide
- All admissions as listed in the detailed itinerary
- Portage of 1 full sized suitcase per person
- All airline and hotel taxes and surcharges

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