

TRAVCOA
World Leader in Luxury Travel

*2012 Ireland:
Spirit & Lore*



DUBLIN • KILKENNY • CORK • WATERFORD • KENMARE
THE BURREN • GALWAY • CONNEMARA • BALLYFIN

A Travcoa Exclusive Invitational Journey

Ireland: Spirit & Lore

July 15 – 29, 2012



Created and hosted by Travel Director, John Wootton

An exclusive, one of a kind journey that dreams are made of! Hand-crafted by Travcoa's veteran Travel Director, John Wootton, this **Ireland: Spirit & Lore** Invitational Journey features John's favorite destinations, exclusive lodging and rare experiences in the Emerald Isle, curated over his many years of leading Travcoa's Ireland journeys.

Enjoy VIP visits to the formal Italianate gardens of Powerscourt, accompanied by famous gardener Michael Byrne; the artist colony of Cill Railaig; the Waterford Crystal factory; and Ireland's greatest private art and antiques collection. You'll dine with a descendent of the Guinness family in his castle, and learn about his family's beer-making history; and visit an Irish farm, where you will be treated to a traditional meal.

John has arranged for you to take an Irish step-dancing class with the with the famous Cassidy clan, learn the basics of the ancient sport of falconry, watch an Irish cooking demonstration at a Michelin star restaurant and attend a cooking class at Ireland's premier culinary school. You'll stroll through medieval Kilkenny, view the stunning cliffs and beaches of the Ring of Kerry, explore historic Dublin and visit the village of Blarney where you can see (and kiss) the famous Blarney Stone!

Along the way you will be pampered with stays in castles, manor houses and exquisite hotels, dine with Irish aristocracy and so much more! John looks forward to sharing the best of the Emerald Isle with you!

JOURNEY HIGHLIGHTS

- Touring through 1000 years of history in Dublin
- Savoring tasty & traditional Irish cuisine at famed restaurants including Johnny Foxes, Thornton's, Lissyclearigs & Cassidy's
- The incredible and colorful gardens at Powerscourt, Bantry House, Birr Castle, Muckross House
- Kissing the Blarney Stone
- Discovering the stories behind the legends in Irish folklore in an evening with an Irish seanachie
- Staying at historic Dromoland and Ashford Castle
- Taking a "Hawk walk" with a traditional falconer
- Attending an Irish cooking demonstration at Thornton's & Ballymaloe
- The amazing drive along the 40-mile Ring of Kerry
- Admiring the 700-foot tall multi-colored limestone Cliffs of Moher
- Visiting a traditional Irish farm and lunch with the proprietors
- A specially arranged visit to the artist colony of Cill Railaig
- An Irish step-dancing class with the famous Cassidy clan



DAILY ITINERARY

Travcoa journeys are designed to accommodate the most common flight times from the USA. The first and last included accommodation and meals are specified in the itinerary below.

DAYS 1 - 2, Sunday & Monday

July 15 & 16, 2012

Depart for Dublin, IRELAND

Journey accommodations begin with the hotel night on Day 2. Check-in time is approximately 3pm.

Included meal services begin with Dinner on Day 2.

Depart the USA on Sunday and arrive in Dublin on Monday. You are greeted at the airport, and then transferred to your luxury hotel, the Four Seasons.

Dublin is one of Europe's most vibrant capitals. The city is energetic with a captivating and compelling mix of the traditional and trendy. The cobblestone streets are full of museums and historical buildings dating back over a thousand years, with great restaurants, pubs and shopping boutiques nestled between them.

The remainder of today is open for independent exploration or relaxation after your long flight.

In the evening, gather with your travel director and fellow travelers for a Welcome Cocktail Party, followed by a private dinner.

Four Seasons Dublin

DAY 3, Tuesday

July 17, 2012

Dublin

Enjoy a full day tour through this vibrant capital city, with its mix of architecture, from the medieval to Georgian to modern. We travel down O'Connell Street, site of the '1916 Uprising' that led to Ireland's independence in 1922, then head towards the Georgian style Merrion Square, with its impressive granite arches. We stop to view the ancient gold exhibit at the nearby National Museum of Ireland, home to the greatest collections of Irish material heritage, culture and natural history in the world.

Visit Trinity College – See the documents on display in the Long Room, and visit the Old Library to view the historic 8th century Book of Kells, a fabulous example of early Irish manuscript illumination. See iconic Dublin Castle, which holds the magical Chester Beatty Library with its vast collection of gorgeous illuminated manuscripts.

At mid-day, we visit Leixip Castle, built by Adam de Hereford, and full of 17th and 18th century tapestries and furnishings. We enjoy lunch with castle owner, the Honorable Desmond Guinness, descendent to the Guinness Brewery fortune.

Next, enjoy a visit to the modern Guinness Storehouse, where they began brewing their historic libation. Learn about the history of the Guinness family, and their beer-brewing process from its beginning in 1759 to how it has developed through today. Your visit culminates with some sampling and a hands-on "pour-a-pint" lesson!

Tonight we venture to the remote Dublin Mountains where we dine on a traditional Irish Pub meal at the popular pub Johnny Foxes.

Four Seasons Dublin

DAY 4, Wednesday

July 18, 2012

Dublin

After a leisurely breakfast, we depart for the National Gallery of Ireland, for a tour of the museum with an art historian. Opened in 1864, the gallery has an extensive collection of Irish paintings, and European fine art, particular the Dutch masters.

Next, we walk to the nearby and renowned Dublin restaurant, Thornton's. Meet the chef at this Michelin star restaurant, and enjoy a demonstration of how he prepares some of their signature dishes. Enjoy a savory three-course lunch after the demonstration.

The remainder of the day is at your leisure to explore this fascinating city. Meander through some of the other museums - the Dublin Writers Museum or the James Joyce Center. You may also want to visit St. Patrick's Cathedral or perhaps do some shopping along Grafton Street.

Four Seasons Dublin

DAY 5, Thursday

July 19, 2012

Dublin to Kilkenny

This morning we depart the hustle and bustle of Dublin and drive towards the peace and quiet of the plush Wicklow Mountains. Our first stop, just outside the city, is in the town of Enniskerry where we visit the great estate of Powerscourt Gardens. Meet famous gardener Michael Byrne for a tour of the Italianate Gardens, which are considered to be some of the best in the world. From the terrace, admire the delightful panorama of these sprawling, manicured gardens; inside the house, view an interpretation of the history and design of the gardens.

We continue our country drive, stopping for lunch at a simple mountain family farm. Enjoy healthy fare and break bread with the owners, your hosts David and Judith Cosbie.

Our journey continues, traveling through Glendalough, a beautiful hidden valley, and across the emerald-green mountain scenery of Wicklow Way. We arrive at our resort hotel by mid-afternoon, giving you time to relax and enjoy the hotel grounds and amenities at this modern country estate.

Mount Juliet Conrad Hotel

DAY 6, Friday

July 20, 2012

Kilkenny to Waterford & Cork

Kilkenny is a colorful village and charming city with narrow winding medieval streets. This morning we enjoy a tour of the city, including a visit to the noble Kilkenny Castle. Built in the late 12th century, the castle is a picturesque blend of Gothic and Classical styles, with conical topped towers that give it the flavor of a French Chateau. Also noteworthy in Kilkenny is the 13th century St. Canice's Cathedral, the second longest in Ireland.

We depart Kilkenny, and drive to Wexford and the 18th century home of Countess Bernstoff, a distinguished artist who developed the Ros Tapestry. Based on a painting by Ann Griffin Bernstoff, the tapestry is a series of 15 embroidered panels hand sewn by community members to depict the Anglo-Norman arrival into Southeast Ireland. We enjoy a tour of Countess Bernstorff's home, as well as lunch with the Countess.

Next, we head towards County Waterford, arriving in Waterford. Ireland's oldest city, Waterford is a juxtaposition of modern sprawl against centuries old medieval walls, elegant Georgian houses, cobbled alleyways and the wondrous Waterford Crystal Factory. We stop at the famed Waterford Crystal factory for a VIP tour to observe the miraculous transformation of glowing-hot balls of glass into diamond-cut crystal.

We also visit Curraghmore House, the magnificent home of the Marquis of Waterford, and his family residence since the 12th century. The interior of the house contains plasterwork by James Wyatt, as well as a collection of 17th and 18th century art, furniture, porcelain and jewelry. See the outstanding Arboretum and mosaic shell grotto, built in 1754, and a bridge built for King John in 1205.

We continue drive south to the historic city of Cork. Today Ireland's second largest city, Cork was founded in the 6th century, built on a marshy island the middle of the River Lee. It is a city of hills and bridges that give Cork its special Continental character, and its nickname "Ireland's little Venice."

We arrive at our hotel, the delightful Ballymaloe House with time to relax before dinner.

Tonight enjoy a special treat – an evening with an Irish *seanachie*, a storyteller. You will hear Irish fact and fable (*as is the Irish way*), weaved into entertaining and memorable tales.

Ballymaloe House

DAY 7, Saturday

July 21, 2012

Cork

This morning we take a panoramic tour of the historic town of Cork. Learn about Cork's early history - from its position as the center of learning in the early 7th century, to when it became a Norman stronghold in the 12th century. Cork has always played a strong role in the politics and history of Ireland. See St. Anne's Church, a city hallmark, as no matter where you stand in the downtown area, you can see the stone tower, crowned with a gilt ball and a unique fish weather vane. In typical Irish fashion the church is also known by several other names. Revered for its eight melodious bells, the Shandon Bells, the church is called the Shannon Church. And yet another name is "the four-faced liar," because the four clock faces on the outside, each show a different time. You also visit the Cork City Gaol. This restored prison was infamous in the 19th and early 20th centuries, when it housed some of the greatest figures in the revolutionary movement, who are celebrated today with exhibits on display inside.

At noon, we visit Cork's notable English Market; started in 1788 it is the oldest one of its kind. You have a tour of the market and its wares by a member of the Allen family, the owners of Ballymaloe. After your orientation, you will be given instructions and guidance on how to purchase ingredients in preparation for your cooking demonstration to come this afternoon.

After time for lunch, we proceed to the Ballymaloe Cooking School, for an afternoon "hands-on cooking demonstration. Here at one of the best cooking schools in Ireland, you discover how the celebrated head chef elevated Irish county house cooking to gourmet status. Your visit culminates in the using of your market ingredients to prepare a delightful dinner.

We return to the Ballymaloe House by early evening.

Ballymaloe House

DAY 8, Sunday

July 22, 2012

Cork to Blarney & Kenmare

This morning we head west to visit Blarney Castle, one of Ireland's oldest and most historic castles. Explore the castle, and perhaps kiss 'The Stone of Eloquence' (the Blarney Stone), so you can, as tradition says, acquire the "Gift of the Gab." Enjoy time at the expansive Blarney Woolen Mill, located next to the castle. Here you can find some of Ireland's famous high-quality woolen products, and some wonderfully unique souvenirs.

Departing Blarney, we drive the scenic route to the Gubbeen Cheese Farm, where they make a wonderful selection of gourmet cheeses sold in Harrods's and other exclusive retail outlets. Enjoy a tour of the farm, a cheese-making demonstration and a satiable and savoury gourmet picnic lunch with the family.

This afternoon, we visit the Bantry House, one of the finest historic houses in Ireland. Built in the early 1700's, this is a stately mansion overlooking Bantry Bay, and is the ancestral home of the Earls of Bantry. We tour the House and its terraced gardens.

Arriving in Kenmare village by late afternoon, enjoy some time to explore this delightful village before arriving at our hotel, a centrally located Victorian Country house.

The Park Hotel

DAY 9, Monday

July 23, 2012

Kenmare & the Ring of Kerry

Today enjoy a full day of sightseeing through some of the most glorious landscapes in Ireland.

We start this morning, entering Killarney National Park to visit Muckross House and Gardens, a 19th century manor house, situated on the shores of beautiful Muckross Lake. This elaborately restored Victorian mansion was owned by Lord Ardilaun (of the Guinness family) and then by the Bourn Vincents. Surrounded by informal gardens filled with rhododendrons and azaleas, water gardens, and a natural limestone rock garden, the house is best known for its natural beauty and the colorful Irish folklore. Enjoy a tour of the house and time to stroll through the colorful sculpted gardens.

Next, we begin our scenic drive along the famous Ring of Kerry. This nearly 40-mile circular route reveals ever-changing vistas of mountains, cliffs, and beaches, and the hypnotic scenery of the Iveragh Peninsula's crystal blue lakes and rivers. We travel through colorful villages, and make a photo stop at Moll's Gap for a picture-perfect panorama of the valley with its three deep blue mountain lakes. The Ring of Kerry offers insight into Ireland's ancient heritage, with its remnants of Iron Age forts, *ogham* stones and old monasteries.

Late morning we take a break to visit the Skelligs Chocolate factory, for a short tour, taste and the opportunity to make your own chocolate.

Our lunch stop is at the Cill Rialaig Center. Dine with artist colony patron and founder, Noelle Campbell Sharpe. Afterwards, we have a tour this art village to meet some of the artists and see their work – having the time and opportunity to learn about them and their craft.

We arrive back at our Kenmare hotel by late afternoon.

Tonight dinner is a festive affair at Lissyclearig Thatched Cottage. The family hosts us to a traditional Irish supper, while telling stories of local legend and lore. The live Irish pipe and accordion music will keep your toes tapping.

The Park Hotel

DAY 10, Tuesday

July 24, 2012

Kenmare to Adare, Limerick & County Clare

Today we drive north, stopping in the village of Adare, renowned as “Ireland’s prettiest village,” with its pastel colored thatched cottages and glorious gothic churches. Situated on the River Maigue, a tributary of the Shannon River, Adare is steeped in history dating back to the 13th century. You have time to explore on your own, and take some traditional snapshot photos of the classic colorful Irish architecture.

Midday, we stop in Limerick, a city that gained international notoriety through the story of ‘Angela’s Ashes.’ Visit the Hunt Museum – and have a private curator’s tour through one of Ireland’s greatest private collections of art and antiques, including work from medieval times as well as art by Leonardo da Vinci, Picasso and Yeats. Enjoy time to investigate the city on your own before we continue on to our next stop, the Irish Harp Center. Here you are treated to high Irish tea while listening to a performance from famed Irish harpist Janet Harbison.

Late this afternoon we arrive at our hotel for the next two nights, Dromoland Castle. Upon your arrival you are taken on the "Hawk Walk" with a Dromoland falconer who will teach you the natural history of the raptors and the basics of the ancient sport of falconry. Your instructor will introduce you to your hawk and within minutes, you will be having your hawk fly free then return to land on your gloved fist. An unbelievable experience!

Dromoland Castle

DAY 11, Wednesday

July 25, 2012

The Burren & The Cliffs of Moher

This morning, we travel through the rounded hills of The Burren, where the porous limestone has allowed the rain to flow through, creating a network of underground rivers, lakes and waterfalls. There is an abundance of alpine and arctic flora here, along with many prehistoric burial chambers, tombs and Dolmens. We take an archeological tour with State Archaeologist, Dr. Peter Harbison, which includes visits to some of the prehistoric sites, and a stop for tea in a medieval tower house.

We continue to the village of Carron for lunch and a step-dancing demonstration by the delightful Cassidy family. Perhaps they will persuade you to try dancing an Irish jig.

This afternoon is dedicated to viewing one of the topographic highlights of Ireland – The Cliffs of Moher. These multi-colored limestone cliffs drop vertically 700 feet, down to meet the raging Atlantic surf below. The views along this five-mile stretch of coastline are dramatic in any weather. Explore the exhibits and film in the Visitor’s Center, then walk up to O'Brien's Tower for incredible views. On a clear day, you can see the Aran Islands. The Cliffs of Moher are also home to one of the major colonies of cliff nesting seabirds in Ireland, with the area being designated a national ‘Refuge for Fauna’ in 1988.

En route back to Dromoland, we stop to for a tasty visit at the Lisdoonvarna Smokehouse to sample some traditional Irish smoked fish.

Dromoland Castle

DAY 12, Thursday

July 26, 2012

County Clare to Galway

Enjoy another scenic drive this morning as we depart Dromoland Castle and head north. We stop mid-morning at Thor Ballylee, the home of famed Irish poet W.B. Yeats. This restored 16th century Norman tower house served as the inspiration for his poems "The Winding Stair" and "The Tower." Tour the home with a literary historian, and hear an informative lecture on the Gaelic revival.

Lunch is taken at the historic 15th century Oranmore Castle. Overlooking magnificent Galway Bay, the castle is steeped in history, mystery, tradition and eccentricity. Dine with Alec Finn, founder of the traditional Irish music group De Danaan, and enjoy a traditional music performance.

This afternoon, arrive in Galway. Founded in the late 12th century, while under the control of the "tribe" families, Galway developed an extensive trade business with Continental Europe and the West Indies. The city has a medieval network of narrow streets that has expanded over the centuries to include cathedrals, a large university and modern industries. Your city tour of this artsy, vibrant town includes the waterfront and the Galway City Museum, which charts the importance of the local sea trade beginning in medieval times. Visit Spanish Parade, Salmon Weir Bridge and Galway Cathedral, with some time to wander around the tangle of cobblestone streets for a pint of Guinness or some shopping. Take a look in the Thomas Dillon Museum, the original makers of the *claddagh* ring, and see the smallest claddagh ever made, perhaps purchasing one of these Gaelic symbols of love as a souvenir for yourself or a loved one.

Late afternoon arrive at Ashford Castle, a luxurious resort with a history dating back to the 13th century. This is your home for the next two nights.

Ashford Castle

DAY 13, Friday

July 27, 2012

Connemara & County Mayo

This morning it is a short drive north to Connemara, to witness a Sheep Dog demonstration. You will see how these intelligent workmen are vital to any working sheep farm.

We drive through scenic Connemara, with its rugged purple mountains, deep blue lakes, and shimmering seascapes. At midday, we arrive at Kylemore Abbey. Idyllically situated in the heart of Connemara, amidst rivers, lakes and the rolling hills, this 19th century neo-Gothic mansion boasts massive walls and gracious windows. We tour the exquisite chapel, reception rooms and the extensive gardens.

Our next stop is at Errisbeg House, for an entertaining lunch with owner Richard the 7th Duke de Stacpoole. This home is nestled below Errisbeg Mountain, was originally built as a two-story hunting lodge in 1875 by Joseph Clogherly of Roundstone. After lunch, explore the rambling, heather garden with its many varieties of shrubs and rare plants.

We then visit the nearby village of Roundstone, a lovely little harbor town surrounded by the steep mountains of Connemara, known as the "Twelve Pins." This is an artisan's village, and the home of one of Ireland's original Bodran (traditional drum) makers. We visit his studio and learn about this unique Irish instrument.

The Bodhran is the traditional Irish Drum made from a round wooden frame, with an animal skin stretched over it. The Bodhrán (pronounced bow-rah-n) is the heartbeat of Irish traditional music, capable of surprisingly complicated rhythms.

Returning to Ashford Castle, enjoy time to relax before we depart for a delightful evening of dinner and Irish music at Burke's Bar.

Ashford Castle

DAY 14, Saturday

July 28, 2012

Ashford to Ballyfin

This morning we depart Ashford and the West coast, travelling inland towards the center of Ireland. En route, we stop at Birr Castle, a large castle with the largest gardens in Ireland, a restored research telescope from the 1800's and Ireland's Historic Science Center. It is also the home of the seventh Earl of Rosse. Enjoy a tour of the castle and gardens, before having a private lunch with the Earl of Rossein.

At mid-afternoon we reach the Slieve Bloom Mountains and Ballyfin, our home for the night. On arrival, you are greeted by the local foxhounds - red-coated horsemen blowing horns, and their entire pack of hounds. *Ballyfin Demesne* is a 600-acre estate, with a neo-classical mansion built by Sir Charles Coote in the 1820s. The house was considered the most lavish Regency mansion in Ireland. After years as a Roman Catholic teaching order, today it is an elegant small hotel.

Enjoy afternoon tea at Ballyfin, with time to explore the grounds and relax before dinner.

This evening, attend a Farewell Cocktail Party and Dinner at the hotel.

Ballyfin

DAY 15, Sunday

July 29, 2012

Depart Ballyfin for Dublin & Home

Today you will be transferred to the Dublin airport and depart for your home city or on to your next destination.

Journey accommodations end with the hotel night on Day 14. Check-out time is approximately 11am on Day 15.

Included meal services end with Breakfast on Day 15.

NOTE: The Daily Itinerary above is subject to change dependent upon local conditions and/or operational changes or improvements. The specific times and order of inclusions within each destination may also be altered to best accommodate unscheduled closures, special events, weather, traffic, etc. Please contact your Escorted Journey Consultant before scheduling any coinciding appointments. You will receive an up-dated, itinerary approximately 3 weeks prior to your journey's scheduled departure date.

ACCOMMODATIONS

DAYS 2 - 4	Dublin, Four Seasons Dublin
DAY 5	Kilkenny, Mount Juliet Conrad Hotel
DAYS 6 & 7	Cork, Ballymaloe House
DAYS 8 & 9	Kenmare, The Park Hotel
DAYS 10 & 11	Clare, Domoland Castle
DAYS 12 & 13	Galway, Ashford Castle
DAY 14	County Laois, Ballyfin

Dublin, Four Seasons Dublin:

Set in the city's most exclusive enclave, yet just a short stroll from the heart of vibrant shopping, the resort is a peaceful retreat, immersed in greenery. Handsome architecture evokes Irish tradition and contemporary chic, with authentic local character. The hotel offers a variety of facilities and services including a spa, fitness center with swimming pool, a business center, laundry service, a gift shop and salon. There is also a restaurant with an array of culinary choices, and a bar/lounge.

The 197 guestrooms feature premier down duvets and pillows, satellite TV, an in-room safe, minibar, internet access, and a marble bathroom with a deep soaking tub, separate glass-walled shower, bathrobes, and a hairdryer.

Kilkenny, Mount Juliet Conrad Hotel:

The epitome of gracious living, Mount Juliet Conrad luxury hotel is set within 1500 acres of lush gardens and woodlands in the beautiful countryside. A sporting estate, the Mount Juliet Conrad is an award-winning luxury hotel that offers golf on the Jack Nicklaus-designed course, treatments in a luxury spa, river and lake fishing, horseback riding, woodland walks, bike rides through the estate, and more. There are three gourmet restaurants, as well as a relaxing lounge.



There are 58 rooms, 31 luxury hotel bedrooms in the Manor House. Each hotel room is individually designed in keeping with the concept of a private family home, and named, drawing inspiration from the history of the estate and the history of Kilkenny. Room amenities include a balcony or terrace, satellite TV, an in-room safe, minibar, bathrobes, slippers and a hairdryer.

Cork, Ballymaloe House:

Considered to be the oldest hotel in the world, it is also one of the most luxurious. This renowned Irish country house hotel and restaurant has been owned and run by the Allen family for over 40 years. Nestled in a 400 acre estate in rural East Cork, it is 20 miles from the city of Cork, and minutes from the breathtaking south coast. Hotel facilities include beautiful gardens, golf, tennis, croquet and an outdoor swimming pool.



The restaurants' award-winning cuisine celebrates the best of local, seasonal produce.

Ballymaloe House is a building that has evolved and grown with the passing centuries, and the accommodation varies from a 15th century Norman tower to modern luxury rooms. All of the guestrooms are warm welcome, tastefully decorated, providing modern comforts with timeless elegance. Each room has its own name and own distinct character, and all have private bathrooms as standard.

Kenmare, The Park Hotel:

In a palm-tree-lined garden beside Kenmare Bay, sits this imposing 19th-century grand hotel. In the high-ceilinged sitting rooms, fires crackle in the open fireplaces, oil paintings decorate the walls, and there's a full set of armor at the top of the grand staircase surrounded by tapestries and rare antiques. This is a vibrant hotel with wonderful facilities including a deluxe spa, lap pool, intimate 12-seat cinema, 18-hole golf course, croquet, garden walks in Zen gardens and more. There is also a renowned restaurant and cocktail lounge.



The Park Hotel Kenmare offers a total of 46 bedrooms. As in keeping with the traditions of the house, each bedroom is individually decorated with a selection of antiques & objects d'art.

Guest rooms have Georgian and Victorian furnishings and peaceful waterfront or mountain views. Travcoa uses the

Deluxe Rooms - large, with open plans rooms and stunning views over the gardens, Kenmare Bay and Caha Mountains. Each room includes a flat screen TV, complimentary Wi-Fi internet access, bathrobes, slippers, and a hair dryer.

Clare, Domoland Castle:

One of Ireland's finest 5-star hotels, the historic Dromoland Castle is set on plush grounds and woodlands. It offers a vast number of activities including golf at the championship golf course designed by Irish golfing legend, J.B. Carr, horseback riding, fishing, boat rides on Dromoland Lake, and a plethora of treatments at its noted health spa. Other hotel services include archery, clay shooting, tennis, falconry and a swimming pool, as well as a laundry service, business center and barber/beauty shop.

There are several dining venues and lounge areas offering an extensive selection of dining options including a la carte, gastronomic and daily table d'hôte menus.

This luxury castle has 100 bedrooms each individually furnished with luxurious and modern conveniences. Your Deluxe guestroom includes a TV, complimentary internet, plug converter, Tea/Coffee maker, a bathrobe, and slippers and a hairdryer.

Galway, Ashford Castle:

Dating back to 1228 and once the estate of the Guinness family, the luxurious 5-star Ashford Castle first opened as a hotel in 1939. It is a glorious medieval Castle turned luxury hotel. Facilities and services feature horseback riding, hunting, clay target shooting, golf, tennis, river fishing and falconry. There is also a health and fitness center, business center



Enjoy award-winning gourmet meals in the Connaught Room and George V Restaurants, and leisurely afternoon tea in the Drawing Room, or pre-dinner drinks in the Prince of Wales Cocktail Lounge.

The accommodation at Ashford Castle is unique in the spaciousness of rooms, the elegance of the furnishings and the comforts of gracious living. Many of the 83 rooms retain their original features and all are equipped with modern amenities including internet, satellite TV, in-room safe, ironing center, and a hairdryer.

County Laois, Ballyfin:

Set at the foot of the Slieve Bloom Mountains, Ballyfin is a place of history and romance - stone walls enclose 600 acres of parkland, a lake and ancient woods, delightful garden buildings, follies and grottoes. The interiors have long been acclaimed fine representations of the Neoclassical and Empire periods in Ireland. Activities available include biking, boating and canoeing on the lake, coarse fishing, tennis, croquet, and horticultural demonstrations. House facilities include a swimming pool, gym, treatment rooms, a library, saloon and a business center. With just fifteen rooms Ballyfin is a unique hotel offering unparalleled privacy and luxury.

Ballyfin offers a wide choice of dining experiences in delightfully elegant surroundings. The kitchen is run by Fred Cordonnier, formerly head chef at Restaurant Patrick Guilbaud, Dublin.

Every room offers an impressive array of amenities, specially chosen to give a sense of Irish tradition and hospitality. The room refrigerator with complimentary waters, sodas and juices, and complimentary laundry service is provided. All rooms are fitted with a flat screen TV, wireless internet access.



TRAVEL PLANNING DETAILS

2012 Departure Dates & Prices

<u>Dates</u>	<u>Travcoa Select</u>	<u>Select Single Suppl.</u>
July 15 – 29, 2012	\$ 14,995	\$ 2,795

15-Day Itinerary: *Per person price is based upon two people sharing a room. Airfare is additional. Check with Travcoa for special international airfares.*

JOURNEY PACE: ACTIVE

All guests are expected to be in good health. We consider our journeys to be active. Moderate to strenuous exertion, including long walks on rough uneven terrain, climbing stairs and long drives on rough roads are an integral part of your journey.

Please note this journey travels through some remote areas, with limited access to Western-style comforts and facilities.

For a more detailed description of the special requirements for this journey, and to check if this journey is right for you, please speak with a Travcoa representative.

RENDEZVOUS & SCHEDULE POINTS

Following are the times and locations where this journey officially begins and ends. Travcoa is pleased to provide arrival and departure transfers between the designated airport city and the rendezvous location when confirmed flight details are provided with final payment.

- | | | |
|---------------|-------------------|---|
| Day 1 | Sunday
July 15 | Depart Hometown |
| Day 2 | Monday
July 16 | Arrive Dublin, Ireland
<u>Meeting Point</u> - Dublin, Four Seasons Dublin, after lunch
<i>Journey accommodations begin with the hotel night on Day 2. Check-in time is approximately 3pm.</i>
<i>Included meal services begin with Dinner on Day 2.</i> |
| Day 15 | Sunday
July 29 | Depart Dublin, Ireland
<u>Farewell Point</u> - County Laois, Ballyfin, after breakfast
<i>Journey accommodations end with the hotel night on Day 14.</i>
<i>Included meal services end with Breakfast on Day 15.</i>
Arrive Hometown |

INTERNATIONAL AIR FLIGHTS

Airfares vary according to airline, departure city and seat category, and are based on availability and subject to change. Travcoa is pleased to assist you with your air reservations for this journey.

The recommended air carriers for this journey are British Airways. Please check with Travcoa for schedules and rates on our preferred carriers.

If you are arranging your own flights, please take careful note of the Rendezvous Points above. Our office requires flight details 2 months prior to departure to provide your included journey arrival and departure airport transfers.

EXTENDING YOUR STAY

This Travcoa escorted journey is designed to give you an in-depth experience of this region. If you have more time, you may choose to extend your travels and explore more of this region or other nearby areas. Some recommended options on how to extend your travel are listed below.

EXTRA HOTEL NIGHTS:

Many guests choose to add additional hotel nights before and/or after their journey to help acclimate after long international flights or to do some independent exploration. Travcoa is happy to secure those hotel reservations for you. Travcoa still provides airport assistance and journey hotel transfers if you choose to arrive early or depart after the journey.

Call for pre-tour or post-tour rates at the **Four Seasons in Dublin, Ireland** or post-tour rates at the **Ballyfin in County Laois**. Extra hotel nights are subject to availability.

INDEPENDENT JOURNEY EXTENSIONS:

Europe offers countless options for additional travel. Travcoa has a large variety of ready-to-book Independent Journeys from which to choose.

CUSTOM JOURNEY EXTENSIONS:

Travcoa can create customized independent itineraries designed around your special interests and desired travel dates. These can be arranged as extensions either before and/or after your escorted journey.

Contact a Journey Planner for more details.

***NOTE:** If you are connecting this journey with another Travcoa escorted or custom journey, please remember the connecting flights between journeys are NOT included. Please contact Travcoa for the recommended connecting flight schedule.*

YOUR TRAVCOA JOURNEY INCLUDES:

- Deluxe rooms in hotels
- Three meals per day, including our unique Dine-Around program that lets you enjoy any restaurant you choose with à la carte dining, or relax with room service when available
- A professional Travel Director as your personal concierge
- Local sightseeing with professional English-speaking guide with unparalleled knowledge, including entrance fees for places visited
- Active participation and up-close encounters to experience the culture of your journey
- Bottled water, soft drinks, coffee and tea included with meals; bottled water during sightseeing excursions
- All gratuities to hotel and restaurant staff and local guides and drivers
- Group or individual airport transfers on arrival and departure flights
- The *TravcoAssist Travel Protection Plan*, including emergency medical evacuation insurance coverage for injury or illness, and 24-hour Worldwide Live Travel Assistance through Travel Guard Assistance

THE COST OF YOUR JOURNEY DOES NOT INCLUDE:

- Air transportation; airport taxes; passport expenses
- Inoculations and medications
- Visas if required
- Alcoholic beverages (except as noted in itinerary) and caviar
- Expenses of guides, buses or cars for sightseeing not included in the itinerary
- Laundry, expenses of a personal nature and gratuity for any personal services
- Health, accident, baggage and trip cancellation insurance
- Excessive baggage charges imposed by airlines
- TravcoAssist GOLD Protection (*optional additional coverage*)
- Customary end-of-the-trip gratuity to the Travel Director
(Depending on your satisfaction with their services, \$15-\$18 per person, per day is customary.)