

St. Louis Group Travel **ODYSSEY CLUB**



Presents the
Enchanting
land of
Ireland

July 14 - 23, 2008

Visiting Shannon, Killarney, Waterford, Cork, Dublin,
region of Connemara, Moycullen and Galway





Monday, July 14 UNITED STATES TO SHANNON

Depart your hometown and take an overnight flight across the Atlantic. Dinner and continental breakfast are served en route. (D,B)

Tuesday, July 15

SHANNON ARRIVAL & GALWAY (D)

After landing at Shannon Airport, we will complete customs and immigration formalities. Then your driver/guide will welcome you to Ireland and escort you and your luggage to the coach.

After all introductions are made and everybody is ready to begin we will make our way to **Galway City**, known as the "City of the Tribes". On route we will visit **Bunratty Castle Folk Park**, a formidable castle built in the 15th century. Its most important residents were the O' Brien's, Earls of Thomond, who lived there from around 1500 to the 1640's. Before we check in to our hotel, we will have a tour of Galway City including Galway Cathedral & the Spanish Arch.

Dinner: Tonight we will enjoy dinner in the Imperial Hotel Galway, which is on Eyre Square in the heart of Galway City. After dinner you might take a ramble down Quay Street with its many great pubs including "The Quays" and "Ti Neachtain" a town house which belonged to "Humanity Dick", an 18th century MP who promoted laws against cruelty to animals..

OVERNIGHT: IMPERIAL HOTEL, GALWAY

Wednesday, July 16

TOUR TO THE ARAN ISLANDS (B)

After an early breakfast we will travel to Rossaveal Pier in South Connemara where we will go by ferry to **Inishmore, the largest of the Aran Islands**. Today visit the Aran island of Aran Mor, which is located in Galway Bay 30 miles west of Galway city. Irish is still the vernacular in this isolated setting and the islanders retain many traditional ways of farming and fishing. The land is extremely stony and the islanders have formed dry stone walls to protect the windswept fields. The popular hand-knit aran sweaters evolved from unique patterns used by each family and the oiled wool repelled the rain. On arrival on the island we will meet with our local mini - coaches & guide's and go exploring Inishmore with its landscape crisscrossed with dry stone walls, stunning coastal views and several large prehistoric forts including **Dun Aonghasa**. This Iron or Bronze Age Promotory fort has four concentric stonewalls and is protected by a chevaux de fries, a ring of razor-sharp pointed stone stakes. After a day exploring this fascinating island we will get back on board our ferry and return to Galway. **Dinner is on your own** this evening in any of Galway's many fine restaurants.

OVERNIGHT: IMPERIAL HOTEL, GALWAY

Thursday, July 17

CLIFFS OF MOHER & KILLARNEY (B,D) KATE KEARNEY'S IRISH NIGHT

After our full Irish breakfast, bright & early we will head down the Atlantic seaboard via the west coast of Clare to **Killarney**. Our journey will take us through the villages of Ballyvaughan, Dunguaire Castle at Kinvarra, Ennistymon, Kilkee & Kilrush. We will see the Burren, which is Gaelic for rocky land – an apt name for this vast limestone plateau. In the 1640's Cromwell's surveyor described it as "a savage land, yielding neither water enough to drown a man, nor tree to hang him, nor soil enough to bury".

Continuing on down the coast we will visit the dramatic 650ft **Cliffs of Moher**. At Tarbert we will cross the Shannon River by Ferry to Killimer and if we are really lucky we might just see some dolphins that regularly visit this part of the Shannon Estuary. This evening enjoy **dinner and entertainment** at *Kate Keamey's Cottage*, which is picturesquely situated at the entrance to what must be the most beautiful glaciated valley in Ireland, the Gap of Dunloe. The Irish night consists of a superb meal and traditional entertainment, which includes songs and musicians playing a wide array of instruments along with costumed dancers doing the jig and other traditional sets. Continue on to Killarney

OVERNIGHT: KILLARNEY TOWERS HOTEL, KILLARNEY

Friday, July 18

RING OF KERRY TOUR (B)

After breakfast, this morning we will take an old-fashioned **horse drawn jaunting car** which will bring you through the Killarney National Park, which is closed to motorized vehicles. Drive along the shores of Lough Leane to **Muckross House** where you will visit this elegant 19th century mansion set beside the tranquil Muckross Lake. We will then set off on the world famous **Ring of Kerry** (Iveragh Peninsula) Tour the Ring of Kerry via Killarney, Killorglin, Glenbeigh, Cahersiveen, Waterville, Coomakesta Pass with its magnificent views over Derrynane, home of Daniel O' Connell, know as "The Liberator", Castlecove & Sneem Ladies View, Moll's Gap and along the Lakes of Killarney. **Dinner:** Dinner is on your own tonight so you can experience the pubs of Killarney. Take a ramble down to the local pubs where sessions of spontaneous traditional Irish music often take place.

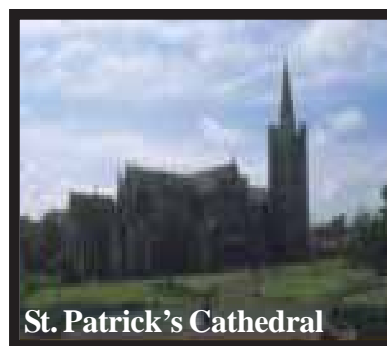
OVERNIGHT: KILLARNEY TOWERS HOTEL, KILLARNEY



Celtic Cross



Local Pub



St. Patrick's Cathedral



Blarney Castle



Sunday, July 20

(B,D)

CORK CITY, WATERFORD, KILDARE

This morning we will travel along the south coast via the towns of Youghal & Dungarvan to **Waterford City**, which was founded in 853 by the Vikings and later extended by the Anglo-Normans. We will visit the **Waterford Crystal Glass Factory** for an insight into the city's special process of glass making. We will travel on to **Kilkenny** considered by many to be Ireland's loveliest inland city. It rose to prominence in the 13th century, when the Irish Parliament often met at Kilkenny Castle. We will visit **Kilkenny Castle**, which, has been an important site since Strongbow constructed the first building a wooden tower in the 12th century. William the Earl Marshall built the first stone castle on the site in 1260. We will continue on to **Castledermot in Kildare** to where our castle awaits. **Dinner:** Tonight we will have **dinner in Kilkea Castle**, which is was built in 1180 and is the oldest continuously inhabited castle in Ireland. The immediate builder and the first occupier was one Sir Walter de Riddlesford, a young knight who had accompanied the first invasion party of Anglo/Normans in 1170

OVERNIGHT: KILKEA CASTLE, CASTLEDERMOT

Monday, July 21

(B,D)

CASTLEDERMOT - DUBLIN

After a hearty full Irish breakfast we will travel south to the rolling Wicklow Mountains, which will offer us some delightful vistas. We will make a visit to **Powerscourt Gardens**, rated among the finest in Ireland, both for their design and for their dramatic setting at the foot of the Great Sugar Loaf Mountain. After a leisurely morning in Wicklow we will make our way to **Dublin** for an afternoon at your leisure in the bustling capital of Ireland **Dinner:** After **dinner in the Gresham Hotel**, you might like to explore Templebar, which has some of Ireland's best pubs. The Gresham Hotel is on O'Connell Street in the heart of Dublin City.

OVERNIGHT: GRESHAM HOTEL, DUBLIN

Tuesday, July 22

(B,D)

DUBLIN CITY TOUR

This morning after breakfast we will pay a visit to **Christ Church Cathedral**, which was commissioned in 1172 by Strongbow, the Anglo-Norman conqueror of Dublin. It replaced an earlier wooden church built by the Vikings in 1038. We will visit **St Patrick's Cathedral** founded beside a sacred well where St. Patrick is said to have baptized converts around AD450. Our tour will also include many of the city's finest 18th century Georgian terraces & squares including Merrion Square, Dublin's largest and grandest Georgian square. This afternoon we will visit the **Guinness Storehouse at St. James Gate** and enjoy a complimentary pint of Guinness in the Sky Bar. **Dinner:** Tonight we will have a **farewell dinner** and a mighty evening of Irish music, song & dance at the **Merry Ploughboy Pub**. After a late night we will make our way to the Gresham Hotel to get a good nights rest for our journey across the Atlantic in the morning.

OVERNIGHT: GRESHAM HOTEL, DUBLIN

Wednesday, July 23

(B)

RETURN TO THE UNITED STATES

Sadly, today your Irish vacation has come to its final day. Transfer to Dublin Airport in good time to check in for your flight. You may do some last minute shopping at the duty free stores. Then clear customs and immigration before boarding your aircraft and flying across the Atlantic Ocean back to the United States.

Saturday, July 19

(B,D)

BLARNEY CASTLE , BLARNEY WOOLEN MILLS, COBH HERITAGE CENTER, CORK

After a hearty Irish breakfast we will depart for **Cork City** on the banks of the River Lee, home of Murphy's Original Irish Stout, and considered by many including myself to be the real capital of Ireland!!! Our journey will take us over the Cork/Kerry Mountains via the Irish speaking villages of Ballymakeery and Ballyvourney to the old market town of Macroom, where you will see **Macroom Castle**, once home of Sir William Penn, whose son was later to found the state of Pennsylvania.

We will continue along the valley of the river Lee via **Blarney** to Cork City. In the picturesque village of **Blarney** we will visit **Blarney Castle** and have an opportunity for shopping at **Blarney Woollen Mills**. This afternoon we will visit **Cobh heritage Centre** where the history this small maritime town played in the mass emigration to the United States and Canada and the ransportation of convicts to Australia is recalled.

Dinner: Tonight we will have dinner in the Imperial Hotel, which is on the South Mall in the heart of Cork City. The South Mall was a waterway up to late 18th century. If you look carefully you will see a series of steps outside many of the buildings that line this famous Cork Street which were once used to moor boats.

OVERNIGHT: IMPERIAL HOTEL, CORK CITY



Our ten day eight night Irish program includes the following:

- Round trip flights from St. Louis to Shannon, Ireland and return from Dublin, Ireland.
- Sightseeing by luxury coach throughout
- Services of a professional Irish driver/guide
- Superior first class hotels with private bath/shower for 8 nights at the following hotels (or similar)

| | |
|-------------------------------------|----------|
| Imperial Hotel, Galway | 2 nights |
| Killarney Towers, Killarney | 2 nights |
| Imperial Hotel, Cork | 1 night |
| Kilkea Castel, Castledermot Kildare | 1 night |
| Gresham Hotel, Dublin | 2 nights |
- Full Irish breakfast daily (B)
- Six dinners (D)
 - Traditional Irish dinner and entertainment at Kate Kearney's Cottage
 - Farewell dinner and entertainment at the Merry Ploughboy Pub
 - 4 Table d'hote dinners
- Boat trip and bus tour to the Aran Islands
- Horse drawn jaunting car ride in Killarney
- Guided tour of Dublin
- Visits and admissions to Dun Aengus, Cliffs of Moher, Muckross House, Blarney Castle, Cobh Heritage Centre, Waterford Crystal Factory, Shannon Ferry, Kilkenny Castle, Powerscourt Gardens, St. Patrick's Cathedral, Christ Church Cathedral, Guinness Brewery
- Deluxe flight bag, ticket wallet, & luggage tags
- All local taxes, hotel service charges & portage for one suitcase per person
- Medical trip cancellation insurance included
- Tipping of driver and guide throughout Ireland included
- Flight bags, ticket wallets, baggage tags and identifying strap
- Escorted by St. Louis Group Travel



TOTAL COST PER PERSON:

Double \$3495.00 Single \$4395.00

Call St. Louis Group Travel at
636-271-2300 or 1-866-951-3232