


# IRELAND & SCOTLAND: SAINTS, SAVIOURS AND SECRETS CRUISE

Welcome to Aurora Expeditions' Saints, Saviours and Secrets Guinness estimates that on Ireland's national day, St Patrick's Day, a staggering 13 million pints of their renowned brew are savoured worldwide. Intriguingly, St Patrick himself is not canonised, nor did he hail from the Emerald Isle. Therein lies the essence of Irish storytelling - an art form that elevates every narrative into legend. Our quintessentially Irish journey pursues many an Irish tale, from the pious to the irreverent, tracing the footsteps of saints, strugglers, saviours, and the unsung heroes and heroines who have shaped Ireland's history. From the harrowing trails of famine-stricken families to the poignant exodus of the two million Irish who sought solace in the New World. From political prisoners who waged a battle for independence, to literary luminaries who captured the spirit of their homeland in timeless prose. Though over 80 million descendants worldwide proudly claim Irish ancestry, the true essence of Ireland's story resonates most profoundly within the streets of its cities and the laneways of its villages. Across the 26 counties of the Republic and neighbouring Northern Ireland, each day unfolds a new chapter, brimming with tales that echo through the ages. Join us as we revel in the vibrant narratives of the Irish who crafted the story of Ireland, with a book-end journey to the streets of Edinburgh for a taste of Scotland's own saints, saviours and secrets.




## ITINERARY

Day 1 Dublin, Ireland

Welcome to Dublin. On arrival at Dublin airport make your way to the Arrivals Hall to meet our representative, followed by a transfer to our group hotel. At the hotel, visit our hospitality desk in the lobby to meet our team who will provide you with useful information regarding pre-embarkation procedures and about your time in Dublin. You will also receive cabin tags for your luggage. Please clearly label the tags with your name and your cabin number on the ship.

This evening offers time to relax in preparation for our 'day out in



Dublin' tomorrow. Our group hotel has a popular restaurant and is close to plenty of corner pubs and cosy restaurants should you wish to 'share a jar' or try some local cuisine.

Accommodation: Dublin Hotel

### Day 2 Dublin

Dublin, the vibrant capital of Ireland, is a city brimming with energy and resilience. Once under British rule, Dublin has emerged with a distinct sense of identity, leading Ireland as a proud member of the European Union and reflecting its evolving role in modern Europe. The city has been home to some of the world's most influential literary figures, including Oscar Wilde, James Joyce, W.B. Yeats, and George Bernard Shaw. Iconic landmarks such as Trinity College, home to the esteemed Book of Kells, highlight its storied past, while the city also serves as a hub of artistic and cultural expression, with global musicians like U2, whose impact resonates from their Dublin roots, having invigorated its creative scene. Dublin's vibrant pub culture offers a lively social fabric, where traditional and contemporary influences merge to create a city to explore both day and night.

Choose your favourite 'Your Choice' experience this morning to meet Dublin's saints, spirits and saviours. This afternoon you will be able to explore Dublin independently, before joining us for a celebration of all things Irish as we kick up our heels at an authentic Irish dancing evening.

Personalise your exploration with our included 'Your Choice' experiences.

**Option 1 - Morning experience: Dublin Walking Tour**

The size of Dublin makes it an ideal one for a leisurely walking tour. This morning, our local guides entertain us with tales of the city's character-filled history. We will hear stories of Ireland's emotional past through the eyes of its many artists, manic lord mayors and rebellious citizens whilst following the park-side alleys of Dublin's 'backyard', St Stephen's Green, to the grand Georgian buildings of Ireland's first university, Trinity College. Founded by Queen Elizabeth I, the grounds of the college offer 40 acres of academic seclusion from the hustle and bustle of downtown Dublin. Our path slows to hear quotes from Dublin's most flamboyant son, Oscar Wilde, passing the historic Huguenot cemetery enroute to our hotel.

**Option 2 - Morning experience: The Dead Centre of Dublin**

Join a locally guided tour of Glasnevin Cemetery, where the stories of 1.6 million souls are meticulously preserved. This historical Victorian cemetery, adorned with statues of shamrocks, high crosses, and harps, offers a window into Ireland's rich past and psyche. Discover the final resting places of notable figures such as Michael Collins, a leader in the struggle for Irish independence, and Éamon de Valera, a key political figure and former president of Ireland. You may also visit the graves of Brendan Behan, the influential playwright, and Thomas Kinsella, a celebrated poet. Look out for final resting places of Countess Markievicz, a revolutionary and the first woman elected to the British Parliament, and Daniel O'Connell, the great emancipator. Glasnevin is a testament to Ireland's deep-rooted belief in spirits and saints, reflecting the nation's spiritual heritage. Each monument and grave not only tells the



story of its occupant, but also offers insights into the Irish psyche, where reverence for historical figures and a connection to the spiritual world are intertwined.

**Option 3 - Morning experience: The Lock Up - Kilmainham Gaol**

Your morning begins with a visit to Kilmainham Gaol, a historical prison in Dublin now serving as a museum. One of the largest unoccupied gaols in Europe, Kilmainham opened in 1796 and closed as a prison in 1924. It played a crucial role in Ireland's struggle for independence, housing leaders from numerous rebellions, as well as prominent figures from the Irish War of Independence.

The gaol's history is marked by harsh conditions and notable executions. Leaders of the 1916 Easter Rising, including James Connolly and Patrick Pearse, were executed here, symbolising the dire costs of Ireland's fight for freedom. The prison also housed many political prisoners under severe conditions, highlighting the brutal treatment they endured. The guided tour provides a detailed look into the prison's dark past, including its role in shaping Ireland's path to independence. You'll see the stark cells and hear poignant stories of sacrifice and struggle, offering a profound insight into the nation's history and the personal stories of those who fought for its freedom.

Accommodation: Dublin Hotel

Meals: Breakfast, Welcome Event dinner

Day 3 Embark Belfast, Northern Ireland, UK (Port: Belfast)

Today, we journey north to Belfast, with a significant stop in County Down to pay homage to Ireland's most iconic patron, St Patrick. Originally hailing from Wales, St Patrick was a teenager when he was captured and brought to Ireland as a slave. Known as the 'Apostle of Ireland', he is credited with bringing Christianity to Ireland and is a central figure in Irish heritage. Our journey includes a brief stop at the site reputed to be St Patrick's final resting place. Here, alongside the remains of two other revered saints, St Brigid and St Columba, we pause to reflect on their enduring legacies. This sacred site not only honours the memory of St Patrick, but also celebrates the profound spiritual heritage that he, along with St Brigid and St Columba, bestowed upon Ireland.

It is fair to say Belfast has had its share of turbulent times. Famines, disease, invasions and recessions paint a picture of a tough town, but it is in the city's more recent times, known aptly as 'The Troubles', which tarred it with the brush of division. Images of barbed wire, armed soldiers and constant searches for bombs kept tourists away. Today, thanks to open political dialogue and foreign investment, Belfast has a new air about it. It appears lighter somehow, as if a heavy burden has been lifted from its shoulders.

Our day in Belfast is filled with stories of the workers who toiled for 14 hours a day to build the world's most glamorous ship, the Titanic, the employment it created, and the race to finish her. Had they taken their time, would things have been different for the Titanic? Located on the site where the ship was built, the dockyard's Titanic Experience may answer a few of our questions. From the dockyards, our tour skips ahead to the days of 'The Troubles' as we are guided through Unionist and

Nationalist neighbourhoods. The occasional security gate is a reminder that the island is still contested, but nowadays the city is split into seven virtual quarters, or cultural zones; Cathedral Quarter, Titanic Quarter, the Gaeltacht Quarter, Smithfield Market and Library Quarter, Linen Quarter, Market Quarter and Queen's Quarter. rather than walled ones. We take a peek at Belfast's 'quarters' before we board the Douglas Mawson.

Once on board, we meet our team and crew and enjoy a Welcome Dinner as we set sail west along Northern Ireland's rugged coastline.

Meal: Breakfast, Dinner on board

Day 4 Londonderry~Derry, Northern Ireland, UK (Port: Londonderry~Derry)

Our overnight sailing takes us to Northern Ireland, and the fascinating city of Londonderry~Derry. Simply known as Derry to the Nationalist (Catholic) population but still referred to as Londonderry by the Unionist (Protestant) population, this 'border' town has seen it all. The sectarian 'Troubles' of this predominantly Nationalist city may have blemished its reputation, but in recent years these tensions have eased, and although some suburbs retain their sense of division, strolling the streets is safe and the general population are happy to share stories of their stormy past and ambitious future. We come alongside on the river Foyle, the now open, natural border between the United Kingdom and the Republic of Ireland.

Personalise your exploration with our included 'Your Choice' experiences.

**Option 1 - Half-day experience: Londonderry~Derry - Past, Present, Future**

Our local guides interpret the story of Londonderry~Derry in this excursion, which is a combination of a walking and coach tour. Having lived through the tumultuous times of 'The Troubles' as the locals refer to it, their first-hand experiences immerse us in the era when a word to the wrong person, a stroll on the wrong side of the street, or a misplaced glance, could cost you your life. In recent years, the artists and youth of Londonderry~Derry have painted emotive murals on walls around the city. We pass several of these as our guides explain the city's tumultuous past. Several monuments in the Bogside neighbourhood shed even more light on key events, such as the hunger strikes that marred the city.

**Option 2 - Full-day experience: Dunluce Castle, Giant's Causeway**

Northern Ireland is blessed with impressive natural scenery: vast valleys, glittering lakes and cliffs hoisted up from the Atlantic. We visit its most famous natural attraction, the Giant's Causeway. Listed as a UNESCO World Heritage Site, the Giant's Causeway consists of some 40,000 interlocking basalt columns lifted from the ocean by volcanic activity over 60 million years ago. Of course, according to legend, giants strode across columns over the sea from Scotland, creating what looks like a giant pathway of stepping-stones that start on land and disappear into the ocean. After lunch at a local restaurant, we follow the Scenic Causeway Road to Dunluce Castle. Once the headquarters of the MacDonnell clan, the castle fell victim to a violent storm and was abandoned. Its ruins and spectacular backdrop have been popular recently, after it was used as the



Castle of Pyke in the famous series Game of Thrones. Returning to Londonderry~Derry, we enjoy a short driving tour before returning to the ship.

Day 5 Killybegs and Slieve League Cliffs, Ireland (Port: Killybegs)

The fishing village of Killybegs is the gateway to the rugged beauty of Slieve League Cliffs and the dramatic backdrop of Ireland's own Table Mountain, Ben Bulben. Jutting out of Sligo's northern edge, the peninsula of Mullaghmore pokes into the North Atlantic. Land and sea meet in confluence along the coast of County Sligo, a landscape of jagged mountain peaks that inspired the work of Nobel-winning poet William Butler Yeats.

We'll start the morning in Killybegs, where you can either explore the dramatic cliffs and enjoy the scenic cliffside walk or delve into sustainable whiskey production at the family-owned Adara Distillery. After returning to the ship for lunch, we'll set sail south along the rugged coastline, heading towards the picturesque natural bay of Galway.

Personalise your exploration with our included 'Your Choice' experiences.

**Option 1 - Afternoon experience: Slieve League Cliffs**

Slieve League is Ireland's ultimate sea cliff experience and a signature point on the Wild Atlantic Way. Believed to be Europe's highest accessible sea cliffs, they rise 600 metres from the ocean below. The lookouts here offer unspoiled views of the Atlantic as it slams the coastline of Donegal. Slieve League boasts a raw landscape and challenging lifestyle for those who call County Sligo home. We meet some of these stoic characters at the Ti Linn cafe and craft shop for a hot drink and scones. The Slieve League Cliffs Centre supports local artisans by selling their handmade specialties including items from the Donegal Tweed company and Triona, a company located only a few kilometres away at Adara.

**Option 2 - Afternoon experience: Adara and the Adara Whiskey Distillery**

For those who would prefer to hear about the most popular 'spirits' of the region, we visit the friendly folk of Adara. One of the five designated heritage towns in County Donegal, Adara has built itself a reputation as a village of craftsmen and women. The movement towards uniquely Irish goods is a growth market for the villages scattered throughout Ireland's isolated peninsulas. It provides work for young people and whole families are typically involved in the production. As home to the popular Triona Design, visitors enjoy weaving demonstrations based on traditional methods. Steeped in tradition the Adara Distillery operations produce An Dulaman Irish Maritime Gin and Sliabh Liag Whiskeys. Established by two 'scatterlings', James and Moira Doherty, who returned to the Sliabh Liag peninsula to build a legacy, the distillery employs 30 people in the village of 700. We tour the distillery to appreciate a sustainable, boutique side of Irish whiskey making. One inspired by the almost lost tradition for a smoky style of spirit, brought up to date with the best distillation know-how. We will learn about the history of Donegal's distilling heritage and see skilled workers breathing new life into it. All tied together by a tasting of this unique brew.

Day 6 Galway and Cliffs of Moher (Tender port: Galway)




Arriving at Galway, we anchor in its natural bay and tender ashore. This popular west coast seaside town of Galway attracts a steady flow of local visitors. The Irish come here to walk its mile-long promenade and as tradition dictates, kick the walls end for good luck, enjoy fish and chips straight from the newspaper and, of course, 'go on the gargle' in its cosy pubs.

Join one of our morning, or full day experiences, to hear stories varying from poverty to excess, fame and fortune to famine and despair, before we set sail for a sunset over the Cliffs of Moher.

Personalise your exploration with our included 'Your Choice' experiences.

**Option 1 - Morning experience: Dunguaire Castle**

Laundered as Ireland's 'most photographed castle' Dunguaire Castle sits on a rocky outcrop on the shores of Galway Bay. Built by the dubious O'Hynes clan in the 16th century, this tower-households many secrets. Famed in song and story even to this day, Dunguaire flaunted its heyday in the 1920's when it was bought and renovated by Oliver St John Gogarty, the famous surgeon and literary figure. Under his patronage a great Celtic revival in Irish literature encouraged literary revivalists such as W.B. Yeats, his patron Lady Gregory, George Bernard Shaw, Edward Martin, and J.M. Synge. Yeats believed strongly in the Celtic tradition and set about reviving the ancient oral customs incorporating them into his plays and poetry. Thirty years later Dunguaire found a new owner. Originally a London fashion house socialite Christobel Lady Ampthill escaped her scandalous past when she fled to Dunguaire - a story unto itself. A visit to Dunguaire Castle offers a morning full of tales of eccentricity. On return to Galway, we enjoy a short orientation tour. Explorers wishing to stay on in Galway can experience this popular town independently, with tender shuttles to the ship available at Galway pier.

**Option 2 - Full-day experience: Galway and the Poor Souls of 'The Workhouse'**

We join a guided exploration of Galway upon our arrival mid-morning. Galway City is rich in culture, art, and history, and has many boutique shops offering the best of Irish crafts, literary works, and artwork. Home to two of the leading colleges in Ireland, Galway has a vibrant culture and is a town for walking. We view The Spanish Arch, that, being Irish, has no connection to Spain whatsoever, before boarding our coach for an hour or so drive through the open countryside of County Galway, where we find a testament to Ireland's dark days.

Wracked with poverty and famines, Ireland struggled throughout the 17th - 19th centuries. Many Irish emigrated, but those who could not were often forced to enter institutions simply known as 'The Workhouse'. As the name suggests, inmates were made to work long hours for meagre food and lodgings in terrible conditions. One of the cruellest aspects of the workhouse was that it split families, segregating them into separate living areas of women, men, girls and boys. Often family members would never see each other again. We visit a new museum, located in a former workhouse, which aims to show the plight of those who made the ultimate decision in hopes they, and their families, would survive. The museum displays artefacts that are relevant to workhouse life, some of which are the only remaining link to the people who once lived there. After our visit we return to





Galway and tender to the ship.

**Option 3 - Full-day experience: Kylemore Abbey**

In the heart of Connemara, within the Archdiocese of Tuam, stands a beacon of spiritual devotion and monastic life: Kylemore Abbey. Since arriving on 4 December 1920, the Benedictine nuns at Kylemore have been committed to the Gospel of Jesus, following the Rule of St Benedict. Their lives are dedicated to prayer, work and community, anchoring them in the spiritual, social, educational and cultural fabric of Connemara and Ireland.

Our drive to the abbey takes us via Oughterard and Maam Cross, through the rugged and breathtaking landscape of Connemara. Nestled at the base of Doughruagh Mountain on the northern shore of Lough Pollacappul, this iconic structure is regarded as one of Ireland's most romantic buildings. The Visitor Experience at Kylemore Abbey brings its rich history to life through historical photographs, audio-visual presentations, displays of artefacts from the Kylemore archive, historical costumes, and beautifully restored period rooms. Visitors can also explore the Victorian walled garden, a testament to the nuns' meticulous dedication to maintaining the abbey's original gardens. A visit to the abbey is a mainstay of travel in Connemara and one that will remain with you long after you return home.

Departing Galway, we sail past the fabled Cliffs of Moher. Towering over the West Clare coast, the Cliffs of Moher are best seen in the early morning from the sea. Visually spectacular, they sit astride the striking landscape of the Burren on one side and the Atlantic Ocean on the other. At a height of over 200 metres at O'Brien's Tower, and following the coast for almost 13 kilometres, these ancient cliffs were formed over 320 million years ago, and today form part of the Burren and Cliffs of Moher UNESCO Global Geopark. Dusk captures us as we sail south towards the Dingle Peninsula.

### Day 7 Dingle and the Skellig Islands (Tender port: Dingle)

Once described by National Geographic Traveller as 'the most beautiful place on earth', Dingle is away from the general 'tourist route', affording us exclusive access to the wild west coast. Traditionally a fishing port, Dingle Harbour is where we anchor and tender into town. Known for its rugged scenery, dramatic cliffs and sandy beaches, the surrounding promontory is the coastal heart of County Kerry, while Dingle itself has a bohemian flair and is famous for its hardware pubs where you can enjoy a brew and buy wares. We enjoy lunch onboard before tendering ashore to experience a slice of Ireland's rural lifestyle, while viewing the wild side of the country and the Irish who call County Kerry home.

Personalise your exploration with our included 'Your Choice' experiences.

**Option 1 - Morning experience: The Saintly Sites of the Dingle Peninsula**

Journey today to the Dingle Peninsula, the northernmost of the five fingers projecting into the Atlantic Ocean. This area is steeped in Christian heritage, with numerous sites dedicated to Saint Brendan the Navigator, who was born nearby in Tralee in c. 484. Saint Brendan is celebrated for his legendary sea



voyages and is a significant figure in Irish spirituality.

Our journey takes us along the scenic coast road, past Inch to Slea Head, the most westerly point in Europe. We follow in the footsteps of ancient pilgrims and visit the 12th-century church at Kilmalkedar, a traditional assembly site for those who journeyed along Saint Brendan's Road northeast to Mount Brandon.

We also visit the renowned Gallarus Oratory, the most impressive early Christian monument on the Dingle Peninsula. This oratory, built in the shape of an upturned boat, has withstood the test of time for over 1200 years. It was part of a larger monastic site and served as a place of prayer and reflection. The Irish cherish visiting these saintly sites, finding solace and inspiration in their deep spiritual and historical significance.

**Option 2 - Morning experience: Life on the Land - Past and Present**

We hear tales of 'life on the land' this afternoon as we visit 'famine cottages' and meet the shepherds and the sheep dogs of the Dingle Peninsula. Our scenic drive follows a route along the dramatic cliffs of the promontory, before heading inland to the farmlands of Dingle.

This land is sheep country. Generations of farmers have survived here through wild weather, outbreaks of disease and, of course, famine. The Kavanagh family is one of them. In the 19th century, the densely populated, western counties of Ireland were poverty stricken. The people in these areas were hugely dependent on the potato crop, and when the potato blight arrived in the 1840s, West Kerry experienced severe hardship. Neglected by the ruling classes, people endured horrific conditions, forcing many to emigrate, while those who remained, starved. We hear tales of extreme poverty and struggles for survival as we visit the family's 19th-century cottages, which remain as they were during the great famine.

The story of this land continues in a lighter vein as we enjoy a sheepdog demonstration. The shepherds' 'best friends' take instructions in native Irish as they show off their skills and win our hearts with their cunning ability to herd even the most determined of sheep. Off the coast we see the deserted Blasket Islands: an unenviable place to live. The islands were evacuated in 1953 due to a dwindling, ageing population, but the islanders' stories live on, thanks to the Blasket Centre. This interactive museum tells tales of the islanders who survived in often unliveable conditions. We hear their stories, learn some 'real Irish' and marvel at their tenacity, before returning to the ship.

**Option 3 - Full-day experience: Dingle Peninsula and Tralee**

As the Atlantic carves the coast, we watch its waves from our clifftop drive to Slea Head. Our route weaves and twists as we follow the peninsula, with stops to take in its dramatic scenery as the road narrows, and we literally drive to the edge of the ocean. An unforgiving land, this peninsula attracted medieval monks, who lived in beehive-shaped, stone clochans, which we visit at the Fahan Beehive. On the horizon we see the deserted Blasket Islands; an unenviable place to live. The islands were



evacuated in 1953 due to a dwindling, ageing population, but the islanders' stories live on, thanks to the Blasket Centre. This interactive museum tells tales of the islanders who survived in often unliveable conditions. We hear their stories, learn some 'real Irish' and marvel at their tenacity, before heading onto the famed town of Tralee for a stroll of its quaint streets.

We sail late afternoon, to bask in the last rays of sunlight as we slow to pass the Skellig Islands. Off the coast of County Kerry, two rocky pinnacles rise from the Atlantic Ocean. The Skellig Islands are world-renowned for their ornithological and archaeological significance. Skellig Michael is the site of a well-preserved monastic outpost of the Early Christian period and is now designated a UNESCO World Heritage Site. Little Skellig is equally renowned in matters of ornithology. As the home of 27,000 pairs of gannets, it is the second largest colony of such seabirds in the world.

Some 1,400 years ago a congregation of monks were searching for a place to practice their religion in complete solitude and isolation. Determined to build a monastery on these remote islands, generation after generation of monks hand-carved 600 stone steps with the simplest tools to build a hilltop monastery 180 metres above the pounding waves. The survival of the terraces, oratories and six corbel stone beehive huts are to this day a testament to their skill and dedication. The archaeological remains show the dramatically spartan conditions in which the monks lived; however, after enduring several Viking raids, the monks eventually left the island in the 13th century. The site has subsequently become a place of Christian pilgrimage.

Note: The Office of Public Works (OPW) manages the Skelligs, and they no longer allow cruise ship passengers to land on Skellig Michael. Visitor numbers to Skellig Michael in recent years have reached the maximum permitted by UNESCO and any violation of UNESCO criteria will affect the future UNESCO status of the island. From the elevated height of our vessel, we will enjoy a cruise of the islands.

Day 8 Bantry (Tender Port: Bantry)

We arrive at Bantry Bay and tender to shore. The harbourside town of Bantry is the gateway to the touring route known as the Wild Atlantic Way. It is easy to see why Ireland's colour of choice for everything is green, from its national sporting uniforms to its flag, as we drive the famed Ring of Kerry, tread the trails of Whiddy Island or explore Bantry, surrounded by the lush grass-covered hills and dales of the Emerald Isle. For those choosing a morning excursion, Bantry itself is small enough for a comfortable stroll in the afternoon, with shops, cafes and, of course, plenty of pubs.

Personalise your exploration with our included 'Your Choice' experiences.

**Option 1 - Morning experience: Meet the Mayor of Whiddy Island**

A 15-minute ferry crossing takes us to one of Ireland's 80 islands - Whiddy Island, with a population of 30. A former World War I US Navy seaplane base known as Bantry Bay Station, Whiddy Island offers an insight into 'island life in Ireland'. At just 5.5 x 1.6 kilometres in size, it is an island that is ideal for walking. It is famous for its red and purple hue provided in summer by an extensive planting of fuchsias and birdlife, as



Whiddy is also home to kingfishers, little egrets and shags. But it is the story of its people that we have come to hear about, and we could not ask for a more local guide to show us around. He is the local publican, local postal worker, and he is locally known as the King of Whiddy Island. We learn about traditional baking and mussel farming and, of course, we wash it down at his pub with a local brew.

**Option 2 - Morning experience: The Beara Peninsula**

The Ring of Beara, located on Bantry's neighbour, the Beara Peninsula, is one of the region's top three scenic drives, known for its rugged and less touristy charm. This 128-kilometre route, including the renowned Beara Way, offers a journey through some of Ireland's most striking landscapes. We encounter a dramatic coastline where the Atlantic Ocean crashes against steep cliffs, creating breathtaking views. The route is flanked by sharp-featured mountains and intricate rock formations, with exposed and contorted strata presenting a geologist's dream. Scenic detours lead to hidden gems such as ancient stone circles, secluded beaches, and picturesque villages like Eyeries, known for its brightly painted houses. Time permitting, we visit the quaint village of Allihies, famous for its copper-mining history, offering stunning vistas of Beara's lakes and valleys. With its wild beauty and diverse scenery, the Ring of Beara promises an unforgettable adventure for those seeking a turly authentic and rugged Irish experience.

**Option 3 - Full-day experience: Ring of Kerry**

No, this is not a real ring, although its presence is gold for the local economy, as a day spent driving the Ring of Kerry is the touchstone against which all other beauty spots in Ireland are measured. The Iveragh Peninsula is a magical place full of myths and legends. This landscape of sandstone hills, wooded valleys and pristine lakes has inspired poets and authors to pen many a lament. A photographer's dream, the region is dotted with quaint towns and villages. Its lands have been carved into a series of mountain passes that whisper their story as we follow the trail of the Ring of Kerry.

### Day 9 Cork (Port: Cork)

Our shore excursions offer you the opportunity to 'get the gift of the gab' or follow those Irish who left their homeland for foreign shores. On return to the Douglas Mawson enjoy lunch, while this afternoon we are in for a true Irish treat, when we discover the heart and soul of Irish whiskey with a private onboard tasting. A local expert expounds their passion behind every drop as we immerse ourselves in a world of rich heritage, craftsmanship, and unforgettable stories all pertaining to this amber treasure.

Personalise your exploration with our included 'Your Choice' experiences.

**Option 1 - Morning experience: The Queenstown story**

A half-hour drive brings us to Cork's second port at Cobh. We join a tailormade guided walking tour tracing the story of Irish emigration, with a self-guided audio tour of 'The Queenstown Story' at the Cobh Heritage Centre. Seeking a better life, or simply hoping to survive starvation, hundreds of thousands boarded vessels bound for foreign lands at Cobh including Annie Moore, a teenager who was the first immigrant to be processed at the newly opened Ellis Island in New York City.

Sadly, in 1912, Cobh, known as Queenstown at that time, also boarded passengers on the ill-fated Titanic.

This port town, a crucial departure point for over 3 million Irish people, tells the poignant story of their quest for a better life. The 'Queenstown Story' traces Irish emigration since the 1600s, including the transportation of convicts to Australia and the impact of disasters like the Titanic and the Lusitania. The exhibition, housed in Cobh's restored Victorian railway station, features personal tales, such as Jeremiah Burke's message in a bottle from the Titanic and Margaret Drury's convict voyage to Australia. Discover these moving stories and more, reflecting the hardships and hopes of Irish emigrants across the globe.

**Option 2 - Morning experience: Blarney Castle and the Blarney Stone**

If every myth, legend and limerick associated with Blarney Castle's indomitable 'stone' were true, the world would be asking it to solve all our problems. Where the stone came from and how its modern-day reputation was conceived is a matter of contention, but there is no doubt that the thousands of travellers who kiss it every week receive 'the gift of the gab'. Thought to endow all those who kiss it with eloquence and the skill of flattery, the Blarney stone is shrouded in stories. Was it a witch who was saved from drowning that revealed its power? Was it the Lord of Blarneys eloquent reply to the land title demands of Queen Elizabeth I? Was it the Goddess Cliodhna's hinted reply to a love-lost Cormac McCarthy? Today we will find out the truth.

**Option 3 - Morning experience: The Colourful Coastal Enclave of Kinsale**

We drive to the coast and the picture-perfect town of Kinsale, where we hear stories of naval battles, foreign invasions and shipwrecks. Once a garrison town embroiled with invading navies, Kinsale became the natural landfall for ships sailing from the continent and the Americas. It is in these waters where two of the world's greatest ocean liners were last seen. In the early hours of 7 May 1915, the Cunard liner Lusitania was struck, only a mere 11 nautical miles off the coast of Kinsale, by a single torpedo shot from a German U-Boat. The people of Kinsale rallied to assist, but within 18 minutes she sank, with only 764 of the 1959 souls on board surviving. There is time to enjoy a stroll around this colourful coastal enclave before returning to Cork for lunch onboard.

### Day 10 Waterford (Port: Waterford)

Known as the city where culture meets the 'craic' (that is Irish for a good time), Waterford is a modern city with a layered history. Invaded by the Norsemen in 914 CE, Waterford became a Viking settlement, which is reflected in its people even today. It emerged from the Middle Ages as a trading port with the wealth from goods that came from as far away as Newfoundland, the profits of which funded the construction of the many Georgian mansions that line the city's streets. A town for those who enjoy a good stroll, Waterford is easy on the eye, offers plenty to see and as its reputation suggests, is full of fun.

Enjoy one of our morning experiences before returning to the ship for lunch. This afternoon a shuttle coach provided by Aurora Expeditions will transfer you into / out of town should you wish to explore Waterford independently.




Personalise your exploration with our included 'Your Choice' experiences.

**Option 1 - Morning experience: Rock of Cashel**

Perched on a dramatic limestone outcrop in the Golden Vale, the Rock of Cashel, often referred to as 'the Devil's Bit', is one of Ireland's most 'saintly' sites. According to Irish legend, the devil, flying home in anger, bit off a piece of the Slieve Bloom Mountains and hurled it into the Tipperary Plain, creating the Rock of Cashel. Legend also has it that St Patrick preached here in the 5th century, converting King Aengus around 450 CE. St Patrick later established Cashel as a bishopric, claiming it as a seat of power long before it became the seat of the high kings of Ireland.

In the 12th century, St Patrick's Cross was erected to commemorate 800 years since his visit. Although weathered, the cross still displays the crucified Christ and possibly St Patrick. The Rock of Cashel also featured in Brian Boru's coronation in 978 CE and became a major ecclesiastical centre in 1101 CE. Cormac's Chapel, featuring unique Romanesque frescoes, reflects Ireland's rich religious and artistic heritage. For many Irish, the Rock of Cashel symbolises a sacred heritage and national identity, embodying the enduring legacy of Ireland's spiritual beliefs.

**Option 2 - Morning experience: Kilkenny Castle**

Considered Ireland's best preserved medieval city, Kilkenny mixes small town intimacy with a big city buzz. The former home to the seat of the medieval Irish parliaments, it rivalled Dublin in importance which is evident in its imposing Norman buildings and marble-clad facades, even today. Few buildings in Ireland can boast a longer history of continuous occupation than Kilkenny's monolithic castle and few have a more fascinating family story. Kilkenny Castle's 800 years of history is associated with the rise and fall of the Marshal and Butler families who rose in nobility from Earls to Dukes. In more recent years they were known for their marriages to famous personalities like Winston Churchill's cousin, and Ellen Stager, an American heiress who brought quite a fortune into the Butler family. However, by 1922 Kilkenny Castle was embroiled in political problems when it was occupied by Republicans and besieged by troops of the Free State. In 1967, the family sold the castle to the Kilkenny Castle Restoration Committee for a mere £50\. If you love a good riches-to-rags story, you will enjoy the story of Kilkenny and its powerful peerage on a self-guided tour of the castle and its grounds.

**Option 3 - Morning experience: Guided visit to the House of Waterford**

Explore Waterford's famed glassworks with a tour of the Waterford Crystal Factory - the House of Waterford. The House of Waterford is the factory of the famous glass creations named after their hometown. Opened in 1783, this fine-cut glass is exported worldwide and is beloved in every Irish home. We will watch the master blowers, crystal cutters and engravers in action as we follow the story of the crystal masterpieces, from the initial design right up to the final engraving.

Day 11 Isle of Man, UK (Port: Douglas)




We sail into Douglas harbour having enjoyed lunch on the ship, ready to explore the unique island of the Isle of Man. In the heart of the Irish Sea sits the tax-free haven of the Isle of Man, an island steeped in ancient mythology. Its name, 'Man', is believed to be derived from 'Manannan mac Lir', a figure from Celtic mythology who was the god of the sea and the island's legendary first ruler. In the 21st century, the island's captivating blend of rugged coastline, medieval castles, and rolling hills is a self-governing British Crown dependency, offering an insight into island life under British rule. With its own parliament, Tynwald, claimed to be the oldest continuous parliamentary body in the world, the Isle of Man has a rich history, having been passed from the Celts to the Romans, to the Vikings, and finally to the British 'Lords of Mann'. Self-governing since 1866, when it was granted limited home rule due to its unique cultural identity and historical ties, the Isle of Man is particularly famous for the annual TT (Tourist Trophy) motorcycle races. This exhilarating event attracts enthusiasts from around the globe and transforms the island into a hub of high-speed excitement. Although only 570 square kilometres in size, and with a population of 85,000, the Isle of Man's eclectic history makes it a fascinating destination.

Personalise your exploration with our included 'Your Choice' experiences.

**Option 1 - Afternoon experience: Highlights of the Isle of Man**

Our morning features two of the Isle of Man's top attractions. We visit the Castle Rushen in the island's former capital, Castletown. Developed by successive rulers between the 13th and 16th centuries, its towering limestone walls once dominated the southern landscape, symbolising the power of the island's Kings and Lords. The castle's long and eventful history reflects the Isle of Man's strategic importance during the medieval period as a key possession on Britain's western seaboard.

Following your exploration of the castle, head to the Manx Museum in Douglas. This popular museum brings the island's history to life with interactive exhibits and films. Discover the Viking Gallery, showcasing impressive artifacts from the Viking and Celtic eras, and the Natural History Gallery, offering insights into the island's natural environment. The National Art Gallery features notable works by Archibald Knox, William Hoggatt, and John Miller Nicholson, alongside evocative wartime pieces. Together, Castle Rushen and the Manx Museum provide an engaging journey through the Isle of Man's fascinating past.

**Option 2 - Afternoon experience: More Than a Bike Race - the Isle of Man TT story**

For many motorcycle racing fans, legends like Conor Cummins and John McGuinness are revered as saints, their dedication earning them a place in the bike racing hall of fame. Dive into their world with our exhilarating Isle of Man TT course tour, paired with a visit to the Isle of Man Motor Museum.

Begin with a drive along a section of the world-famous TT Course, where your guide will immerse you in the race's storied history, from its origins in 1907 to its current record-breaking feats. Discover the iconic spots where racers achieve speeds exceeding 200mph and average lap speeds over 136mph.




On a section of the course, you'll visit the Isle of Man Motor Museum, home to over 500 unique vehicles. Admire everything from the groundbreaking Ford Model T to TT heroes' bikes like Cummins' Kawasaki ZX-10R and McGuinness' Honda RLR 400. This tour promises a thrilling journey through the Isle of Man's motoring legacy. Get ready to rumble!

Day 12 Disembark Troon, Scotland, UK (Port: Troon) - Edinburgh

After breakfast, we disembark the Douglas Mawson in Glasgow's seaside suburb of Troon and start our journey from coast to coast, ending our drive in Edinburgh.

We head east to the William Wallace National Monument. Possibly the second most famous man to be 'hung, drawn, and quartered' after Guy Fawkes, Sir William Wallace was a knight who led the Scottish rebellion against Edward I of England. In 1297, he killed the English sheriff at Lanark, igniting a full-blown revolt. Wallace's notable victory at the Battle of Stirling Bridge severely weakened English control but on returning to Scotland from France in 1303, he found that Robert the Bruce and John Comyn had made truces with Edward I. Excluded from these terms, Wallace was captured near Glasgow. Despite denying charges of treason, claiming he never swore allegiance to the English king, Wallace was executed, becoming a lasting symbol of Scottish patriotism and resistance.

Continuing our 'saviour theme', we visit Dunfermline Abbey, the final resting place of Robert the Bruce. This revered site honours the king who secured Scotland's independence from England. Known for his pivotal role in the Battle of Bannockburn in 1314, Bruce's leadership restored Scottish sovereignty and re-established its monarchy. After his death, 'the Bruce' was buried here, with his grave symbolising his enduring legacy and the profound respect he still commands throughout Scotland.

Your evening is free to enjoy Edinburgh. This vibrant city boasts more pubs, restaurants and whisky-tasting venues than anywhere else in the United Kingdom, guaranteeing an eventful night out.

Accommodation: Courtyard by Marriott Edinburgh (or similar)

Meals: Breakfast onboard

Day 13 Edinburgh

Edinburgh, Scotland's capital, is more than just a city of castles and royal connections; it is a place where the stories of saints and heroes who saved Scotland echo through its ancient streets. Perched dramatically on volcanic hills and dominated by the iconic Edinburgh Castle, the city has been a strategic stronghold for centuries. Renowned for its connections to Scottish heroes like Robert the Bruce, Mary Queen of Scots, who took up residence at Holyrood Palace as a widow at 18 years of age; and St Giles, the patron saint of Edinburgh; the city holds secrets including hidden underground tunnels beneath the Royal Mile, and tales of ghostly apparitions that haunt the ancient vaults.

Beyond its imposing fortifications, Edinburgh was a centre of political intrigue, and a gathering place where clan leaders negotiated, celebrated, and sometimes clashed, leading to dangerous liaisons and hidden nooks and crannies scattered



throughout the city. Today, visitors are encouraged to explore Edinburgh's royal residences, museums and galleries to uncover these stories and witness firsthand the secrets that have shaped its unique identity. Edinburgh stands as a living testament to Scotland's resilience and spirit, where the legacies of saints and national heroes merge with the city's enduring royal heritage in a puzzle of history and legend.

Our experiences this morning showcase a myriad of classic sites, gifting you an afternoon to enjoy the city independently, before we gather this evening for a Farewell Event of Scottish proportions.

Personalise your exploration with our included 'Your Choice' experiences.

**Option 1 - Morning experience: The Royal Mile and Edinburgh Castle**

Scotland's most famous mile awaits us this morning, promising a fascinating journey as our guide shares quirky tales and local gems. Immerse yourself in the rich Scottish history woven into the medieval labyrinth of cobblestone alleyways and tenements. Along the Royal Mile, discover the captivating St Giles' Cathedral, the historical Parliament Square, and the storied John Knox House. This UNESCO World Heritage Site is brimming with secrets and unforgettable stories, offering an experience you won't want to miss.

At the pinnacle of the Royal Mile, follow in the footsteps of kings, queens, soldiers and prisoners as you explore the historical Edinburgh Castle. This former royal residence is brimming with fascinating stories from its past. Perched high on a volcanic rock, the castle had a strategic advantage over invaders and has witnessed many sieges, often switching hands between Britain and Scotland. An iconic UNESCO World Heritage Site, Edinburgh Castle holds many historical treasures, including the Honours of Scotland - the oldest Crown jewels in Britain. Created during the reigns of James IV and James V, these jewels were first used together for the coronation of Mary, Queen of Scots, in 1543. During World War II, the Crown of Scotland was cleverly hidden in a medieval latrine closet in David's Tower! Our audio tour of the castle is stacked with fascinating facts about this stoic fortress, making it both factual and enjoyable.

**Option 2 - Morning experience: The Underground World of Edinburgh and Edinburgh Castle**

Explore Edinburgh's hidden underground world on our exclusive tour, delving into the fascinating history of the city's subterranean spaces. Beneath the bustling streets of the Old Town lies a labyrinth of vaults and passages, built in the 18th century primarily for storage and commercial purposes. These underground areas, originally constructed to accommodate the city's growing needs, were used for storing goods, housing taverns, and even as living quarters for the city's poorest residents.

As you journey through these shadowy chambers, your guide will reveal how the vaults became home to Edinburgh's destitute, offering a glimpse into the city's past struggles. Discover why these vaults were built, their varied uses over the centuries, and the hidden stories of those who lived and worked in Edinburgh's



dark corners.

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**Option 3 - Morning experience: The Royal Yacht Britannia**

A Royal residence for over 40 years, the Britannia enchants us with an audio tour of her decks, apartments, bridge and engine room. Launched on 16 April 1953 from the John Brown & Company shipyard in Clydebank, Scotland, the Royal Yacht Britannia served the royal family for over 44 years. It sailed more than a million nautical miles, becoming one of the world's most famous ships. To Queen Elizabeth II, Britannia was the ideal royal residence for state visits, official receptions, royal honeymoons, and family holidays. For Great Britain, it was a symbol of the Commonwealth and a proud ambassador, generating billions in trade deals. For the royal family and its 220 dedicated crew members, Britannia was a cherished home. When she was decommissioned in 1997, it marked the end of a long tradition of British royal yachts dating back to 1660 and the reign of Charles II.

Accommodation: Courtyard by Marriott Edinburgh (or similar)

Meals: Breakfast, Farewell Event canapes

### Day 14 Depart Edinburgh

After breakfast, we take our leave, carrying with us the vibrant tales of Ireland's and Scotland's saint's, saviours and uncovered secrets. An airport transfer shared with your fellow explorers is included for your onward flight.

Meals: Breakfast

### Please Note:

In the spirit of 21st century travel, we encourage you to adopt a flexible and adventurous attitude when joining our voyages. This itinerary is a guide only and is subject to change due to weather, sea state, government rules, and other conditions beyond our control.

Most walks on this tour are easy to moderate, complemented by coach rides to key sights. However, many venues lack lifts due to preservation rules, and we'll explore busy locations with narrow cobbled streets, ancient roads, and uneven steps, therefore this voyage is not suitable for passengers with walking difficulties or wheelchairs.




# YOUR SHIP: DOUGLAS MAWSON

**YOUR SHIP:** **Douglas Mawson**

**VESSEL TYPE:**

**LENGTH:**

**PASSENGER CAPACITY:**

**BUILT/REFURBISHED:**

Douglas Mawson was launched in 2025. Named after the legendary Australian geologist and explorer, this new small ship embodies Mawson's pioneering spirit and is designed for global discovery. Featuring the revolutionary Ulstein X-BOW® and purpose-built with enhanced sustainability features, it takes a maximum 154 adventurers to the world's wildest places in smooth, quiet comfort. It boasts our most extensive range of cabins yet, including a range of single cabins. The Douglas Mawson features a host of amenities to help you connect with like-minded travellers and elevate your time onboard this floating base camp for adventure. After a long day of exploring, head to the back deck to swim in the heated outdoor swimming pool, find a sun bed to read on, or soak in one of two Jacuzzis. Work up a sweat in the gym before unwinding in the sauna, resolve to learn something new in the Citizen Science Centre, then enjoy a delicious meal with new and old friends in one of two restaurants. Or, with multiple observation areas throughout the ship, simply relax in comfort while you keep watch for wildlife or incredible landscapes unfold before you. While enjoying the luxurious amenities onboard, you can rest assured that the aim is to get you off the ship to explore the natural environment as much as possible to enjoy some unique activities remains unchanged. Newest Ulstein X-BOW ® The Douglas Mawson features the newest streamlined Ulstein X-BOW®, designed for global discovery. The revolutionary design cuts through the swell, offering unrivalled stability on ocean crossings and helping to reduce fuel consumption. It's just one of the many sustainability features that helps make travel more responsible. Heated Pool, Jacuzzis & Sauna In between landings, enjoy access to the onboard gym or unwind in the sauna. Or head to the back deck to swim in the heated outdoor pool, enjoy a drink at the pool bar, or soak in one of two Jacuzzis, watching the world go by. Leading Technology The Douglas Mawson is at the cutting edge of nautical technology, fitted with industry-leading technology including world-class return-to-port equipment. The ship also features a medical clinic designed for use in remote areas. Built for Adventure The Douglas Mawson features Zodiac access points and an activities platform, making boarding the Zodiacs as quick, efficient and safe as possible, minimising wait times and getting you closer to the action for longer. In our mudroom you will have access to lockers to store gear & boots and rapid drying areas for clothing. More Cabin Choices The Douglas Mawson features 11 different types of cabins, including a range of spacious single berth cabins - all adorned with elegant Nordic interior design features. Multiple Observation Areas As you explore the ship you will find indoor lounge areas with floor-to ceiling windows, and multiple open decks with expansive 270-360 degree views. The Glass Atrium Lounge inside the bow is a fantastic place to sit and watch for wildlife - with a drink in hand. There is no shortage of



spaces to take in the majesty of the incredible world outside! Lecture Theatre On all expeditions you will meet naturalists and local specialists, who offer presentations on their area of expertise to enhance your appreciation of the destination you are exploring. Join the team in the lecture theatre for presentations covering a broad range of topics to suit every interest, from history and culture to biology and climate change. Regardless of the topic, they all have one thing in common: they all aim to engage, educate, entertain and turn you into an ambassador for the planet. Citizen Science Center & Lounge Learn more about the world and the unique destinations Aurora visits by visiting the onboard naturalist and Expedition Team in the world-class Citizen Science Center. You will be rewarded for your thirst for knowledge with one of the best views on the ship. Library With floor-to-ceiling windows, the library is a peaceful sanctuary where you can find non-fiction books to read up on the day's destinations, use a public laptop to organise your photos or play board games with newfound friends. Choose from our range of informative non-fiction titles, wildlife guidebooks, travel journals, novels and a selection of children's books and board games. Wildlife guides, books and binoculars can also be found on the observation lounge on Deck 7. Mudroom No need to take your wet expedition gear back to your cabin to dry. Keep your cabin warm and cosy by leaving your outer jackets and pants in the mudroom. The mudroom is your launchpad for all shore excursions and activities. Here, you will have access to a locker when you can hang your gear up to dry, and store your boots between excursions. Swimming Pool & Jacuzzis There are two Jacuzzis on the top outside deck which offer amazing views of the world outside, a heated outdoor pool surrounded by sun beds you can relax on after a long day of exploring, and a pool bar. Gym & Sauna During your voyage, enjoy complimentary access to the gym or visit our sauna, which we highly recommend after the Polar Plunge! Restaurants One of the most important parts of any expedition is the food! Whatever adventures the day holds, you will be fuelled-up with hearty meals and delicious morning/afternoon teas cooked by our onboard chefs. Meals are a great time to soak up the expedition camaraderie in our open seating dining area. Share stories with your fellow travellers and ask our expedition team questions that may have come up during the day. Tea, coffee and snacks are available 24 hours a day, and our chefs offer different menu options and courses for each meal. Enjoy the range of house wine, beers and soft drinks included with dinner after a long day in the wild. We also invite you to join your captain and expedition team for informal Captain's Farewell drinks, with complimentary beverages and cocktail appetisers, followed by a 3 course meal. Bars & Lounges Communal meeting areas have always played a major role in fostering the warm camaraderie on board our ships. They are the heart of the expedition, where people meet to share tales from the day, swap photos, keep an eye out for wildlife and watch the sun go down. The bars and lounges on board are refined yet inviting places to gather, with floor-to-ceiling windows offering stunning views, and of course friendly bartenders to shoot the






breeze with.

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# INSIDE YOUR SHIP

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Balcony Stateroom Category B



Balcony Stateroom Category C



Balcony Stateroom Superior






# PRICING

**24-Jun-2027 to 07-Jul-2027**

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| Balcony Stateroom Category C | £13398 GBP pp |
| Balcony Stateroom Category B | £14098 GBP pp |
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