

Ireland's Ancient East three-day itinerary from Dublin

Ireland's Ancient East – your own immersive journey of discovery of 5,000 years of Europe's history.

Welcome to Dublin, a city steeped in history with stories hidden and untold. See our greatest illuminated manuscript, the Book of Kells and then, later on your journey, you will visit the amazing monastic sites that inspired the creation of this and other treasures. Get up close to the stones and stories of Ireland's prehistoric past at Brú na Bóinne, recognized by UNESCO as one of the world's most important collection of prehistoric ceremonial sites. Discover also the stories of eighteenth and nineteenth century Ireland, a time of contrasts, when culture, science and industry flowered in places like Birr and Tullyally Castles.

Feel the ancient past as it echoes in the lives of the vibrant towns and villages of this lush landscape, especially at the festivals and events. Here you can recharge and taste the harvest of this ageless land.

It's easy to take it all in. To meet great people and to enjoy unique places that have inspired for thousands of years. You will leave not only refreshed but illuminated by these many ancient wonders and the stories of how they came to this rich land and how Irish life today has been shaped by their immensely powerful influence.

Time	Accommodation/Activity/Attraction	Details
Day 1		
AM	<p>The Authenticity Guided Tour of Trinity College takes in the four major historic squares of the College, provides an insight into the history of the College and also gives an introduction to the Old Library and the Book of Kells.</p> <p>The Book of Kells is Ireland's greatest cultural treasure and the world's most famous medieval manuscript. The ninth century book is a richly decorated copy of the four Gospels of the life of Jesus Christ.</p> <p><i>Travel distance & time to National Museum: 1km/10minutes</i></p>	<p>Trinity College, Dublin. Address: College Green, Dublin 2. Email: AuthenticityTours@csc.tcd.ie www.tcd.ie/Library/bookofkells/trinity-tours/ Direct Tel: 00353 86 8117773 (Joseph O'Gorman) FIT rate €12 Group rate – available on request Coach Parking: N</p> <p>Trinity College, Dublin. Address: College Green, Dublin 2. Direct Tel: 00353 1 8962320 Email: adiffley@tcd.ie www.bookofkells.ie FIT rate €12 Group rate – available on request</p>



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Day 1		
AM	<p>Discover more about life in Ireland 2,000 years ago through fascinating finds from Irish bogs on the Kingship & Sacrifice: Bog Bodies Tour.</p> <p>Come face to face with a 2,000 year old bog body. Discover why these people may have been placed in the bogs, what their role might have been in society and even what their last meal was!</p>	<p>National Museum of Ireland Address: Kildare Street, Dublin 2. Email: bookings@museum.ie (<i>Tues-Fri 10-1pm</i>) www.museum.ie Direct Tel: 00 353 1 6486453</p> <p>FIT Rate: Free Group rate – available on request (2 weeks advance notice required for groups of 10+) Coach Parking: N</p>
Lunch	<p>Popular with locals for lunch would be Café Joly and Fallon and Byrne which will give you a good insight into the Dublin scene.</p>	<p>Café Joly National Library of Ireland www.nli.ie/en/cafe-and-shop.aspx Tel: 00353 1 603025</p> <p>Fallon and Byrne 11-17 Exchequer Street www.fallonandbyrne.com Tel: 00353 1 4721010</p>
PM	<p>Founded c.1028, Christ Church Cathedral is the spiritual heart of the city, and one of the top visitor attractions in Dublin. Step inside and soak up the cathedral's beautiful interior and fascinating medieval crypt.</p> <p>Follow the steps that bring you beneath the cathedral and explore the medieval crypt, one of the largest in Britain & Ireland, and the earliest surviving structure in the city. Visit the 'Cat & the Rat'! A mummified cat & rat are the most unusual inhabitants of the crypt, but also the most popular. Mentioned by James Joyce in <i>Finnegans wake</i>, they are known locally as 'Tom & Jerry.'</p> <p><i>Travel distance & time to Marsh's Library: 1km/10minutes</i></p>	<p>Christ Church Cathedral Address: Christchurch Place, Dublin 8. Direct Tel: 00 353 1 677 8099, Email: welcome@christchurch.ie www.christchurchcathedral.ie</p> <p>FIT rate: €10 Book tickets on line: http://entertainment.ie/tickets/christ-church-cathedral-dublin.asp Group rate – available on request Coach Parking – N</p>
PM	<p>Step into the eighteenth century in Marsh's Library, Ireland's first public library. Unchanged for three centuries, this perfectly preserved library of the early Enlightenment, with its original oak bookcases, houses more than 25,000 rare and fascinating books. James Joyce read in Marsh's Library in October 1902, and the Library appears in <i>Ulysses</i> and <i>Finnegans Wake</i>. Closed Tuesdays, Sundays and bank holidays.</p>	<p>Marsh's Library Address: St Patrick's Close, Dublin 8 Direct Tel: 00353 1 4543511 Email: osin.marsh@marshlibrary.ie www.marshlibrary.ie</p> <p>FIT: Adult €3, Students/Senior Citizens €2 Group Rate: N Coach Parking: N</p>
Dinner	<p>Dublin has an exciting and vibrant nightlife and a vast array of diverse dining options. Here is just a selection.</p>	<p>The Winding Stair 40 Lower Ormond Quay www.winding-stair.com Tel: 00353 1 8727320</p> <p>Fade Street Social Fade Street www.fadestreetssocial.com Tel: 00 353 1 6040066</p>



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Day 2		
AM	<p>The award-winning gardens at Birr Castle are a garden lover's dream, housing an array of botanical marvels. The gardens are also home to the Great Telescope (dating from the 1840s and was once the largest in the world), Ireland's largest treehouse and an adventure area. The science centre transports you back to a time when Birr was a discovery hub, with galleries dedicated to early photography, engineering and astronomy.</p> <p><i>Travel distance & time to Birr from Dublin: 1 hr 45 mins/ 140 km</i></p>	<p>Birr Castle Address: Birr, Co Offaly Email: booking@birrcastle.com www.birrcastle.com Direct Tel: 00 353 5791 20336</p> <p>FIT rates: Guided tour – Science Centre, Great Telescope and Formal gardens €9. Guided tour of the castle during May, June and July €18 Group Rates: Y Coach parking: Y</p>
Lunch	<p>Wander into Dooley's Hotel in Birr for some lunch before your cruise on the Shannon.</p> <p><i>Travel distance & time from Birr to Shannonbridge: 33 mins/ 28 km</i></p>	<p>Dooleys Hotel Birr Emmet Square Email: info@dooleyshotel.ie Tel: 00353 57 91 20032</p>
PM	<p>Enjoy a river cruise from Shannonbridge/ Clonmacnoise on board the River Queen, taking in the spectacular natural beauty of the Shannon waterway. This is a wonderful chance to view and visit Clonmacnoise by river, Europe's most highly regarded monastic site. View the many ruins that exist from early Christianity, explore and learn of the many violent and destructive episodes in its history. The River Queen, enclosed with all round visibility, has full bar facilities and live commentary on board.</p> <p><i>Travel distance & time from Shannonbridge to Clonmacnoise: 10mins/ 7 km</i></p>	<p>River Queen Address: Shannonbridge, Co Offaly Email: info@silverlinecruises.com www.silverlinecruisers.com Direct Tel: 00353 57 91 51112</p> <p>FIT rate is: €12 one way, €14 return (Available July and Aug) Group rate: Y (minimum of 25) Coach parking: Y</p>
PM	<p>Founded by St. Ciarán in the mid-sixth century, Clonmacnoise is situated on the eastern bank of the River Shannon. The site includes the ruins of a cathedral, seven churches (tenth–thirteenth century), two round towers, three high crosses and the largest collection of Early Christian grave slabs in Western Europe. The original high crosses and a selection of grave slabs are on display in the visitor centre. The long and varied history of Clonmacnoise is recounted in an audio-visual presentation shown in the visitor centre.</p> <p><i>Travel distance & time to Kilbeggan from Clonmacnoise: 48 mins/ 48 km</i></p>	<p>Clonmacnoise Address: Clonmacnoise, Shannonbridge, Athlone, Co. Offaly. Email: clonmacnoise@opw.ie www.heritageireland.ie/en/midlandseastcoast/clonmacnoise/ Direct Tel: 00353 90 9674195</p> <p>FIT: €7.50 Group Rate: €5 Coach parking: Y</p>
PM	<p>From our creaking timber water wheel to our giant steam engine, you will be transported back two centuries. But then you will hear, see, smell and taste Ireland's oldest distillery still producing their world famous Kilbeggan whiskey. This is no 'visitor centre'; it's an experience you'll never forget!</p> <p><i>Travel distance & time to Mullingar from Kilbeggan: 30 mins/ 30 km</i></p>	<p>The Kilbeggan Distillery Experience Address: Lower Main Street, Killbeggan, Co Weatmeath Email: denise.heslin@beamsuntory.com www.kilbeggandistillery.com Direct Tel: 00353 57 933 2134</p> <p>FIT: €8.50 Group Rate: €7 Coach parking: Y</p>



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	Overnight in Mullingar and dining options include the Mullingar Park Hotel, Annebrook House Hotel or Oscars before exploring the nightlife of this market town.	<p>Mullingar Park Hotel Marlinstown Mullingar www.mullingarparkhotel.com Tel: 00353 44 937500</p> <p>Annebrook House Hotel Pearse Street, Mullingar www.annebrook.ie Tel: 00353 44 9353300</p> <p>Oscars Oliver Plunkett Street, Mullingar www.oscarsmullingar.com Tel: 00353 44 93-44909</p>

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Day 3		
AM	<p>The Hill of Uisneach in Co. Westmeath has played a part in just about every significant Irish event, be it political, cultural, religious, mythological and geographical. The centre of Ireland in many ways, the enigmatic hill is one of the most sacred and historic sanctuaries in the world.</p> <p><i>Travel distance & time to from Mullingar to Hill of Uisneach: 14km/15mins</i></p> <p><i>Travel distance & time to from Hill of Uisneach to Tullynally Castle: 34km/50mins</i></p>	<p>The Hill of Uisneach Address: 14km from Mullingar, Co. Westmeath Email: info@uisneach.ie www.uisneach.ie Direct Tel: 00353 87 718 9550</p> <p>FIT Rate €8.50 Group Rate: Adult €5 Coach Parking: Y</p>
AM	<p>Tullynally Castle was built by the Pakenhams (later Earls of Longford) around 1650 and three generations still live here as their family home. The magnificent gardens date from the early 1800s and have been recently enriched by the present owner, Thomas Pakenham, with many rare plants and trees. There is a delightful tearoom in the castle courtyard and the splendid family coach is also on display.</p> <p>Lunch at Tullynally</p> <p><i>Travel distance & time from Tullynally Castle to The Boyne Valley: 1hr 25mins/68 km</i></p>	<p>Tullynally Castle & Gardens Address: Castlepollard, Co. Westmeath. Email: tullynallycastle@eircom.net www.tullynallycastle.ie Direct Tel: 00353 44 9661159</p> <p>FIT Rate: €6 (garden) Group Rate: Tour of castle & gardens: €12 (groups of 20+only) Coach Parking: Y</p>
PM	<p>The Boyne Valley was once Ireland's ancient capital and its most sacred and mythical landscape. Discover the valley's most famous attraction Brú na Bóinne, a UNESCO World Heritage Site, with Newgrange being the most famous of its megalithic tombs. But go off the</p>	<p>Brú na Bóinne Address: Brú na Bóinne Visitor Centre, Donore, Co Meath Email: brunaboinne@opw.ie http://www.heritageireland.ie/en/brunaboinnevisit/orcentre</p>



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	<p>beaten track and find yourself interweaving and being surrounded by the tombs at Knowth and Dowth which are equally as impressive. Take time to wonder at how they could have been engineered and constructed, based on the surrounding landscape, sun & stars.</p>	<p>Direct Tel: 00353 41 9880300 FIT rate is: €5 Do they offer group rates: Y Group rate available on request: Y Coach parking: Y</p>
	<p>Before your return journey to Dublin, groups could call into Causey Farm to try any of the following cultural activities:</p> <p>Speak Gaeilge (Irish): pick up a few words of Irish to make you really feel at home.</p> <p>Dance a Jig: learn a few steps of Céilí dancing in the old stone barn.</p> <p>Play a Bodhrán: beat out the rhythm of the jigs and reels on an Irish goatskin drum.</p> <p>Enjoy a Traditional Irish Céilí: the highlight of the day – and what an atmosphere! Lively instruments, furious music, insights into Irish life and history, ancient airs and songs, spirited dancing, pulsating bodhráns, newly acquired skills exhibited, elated faces – everyone always wants to stay.</p> <p>Experience Hurling: try Ireland’s national game – the fastest ball sport in the world – which attracts crowds of up to 80,000 people for the national finals!</p>	<p>Be Irish at Causey Farm Address: Causey Farm, Fordestown, Co Meath Email: info@Causey.ie www.causey.ie Direct Tel: 00353 46 9434 135</p> <p>FIT Rates: N Group Rates: Y Coach Parking: Y</p>
	<p><i>Travel distance & time from Brú na Bóinne to Dublin: 50mins/52 km</i></p>	