



UK & Ireland 2019 Farm Tour

The Isles Have it!

Date	Activity	Overnight
DAY 1 Thur, Jul 25	<p>Depart Australia from various Australian capitals and arrive into Dublin around lunchtime the following day.</p> <p>Some people may choose an earlier departure to enjoy some of your own touring in the UK or Ireland before the main group arrives.</p>	IRELAND
DAY 2 Fri, Jul 26 (L)	<p>We are met at the airport and transferred to our downtown Dublin hotel for check-in and a chance to freshen up before a light buffet lunch. Then you are free this afternoon to relax and unwind, and if you like, have an early night.</p> <p>Those hardy travelers wanting to tackle jetlag head-on might choose to step out on the town tonight with options including the Dublin theatre, a comedy show, live music or maybe even a guided bar-fly or James Joyce pub tour. The options are many and varied.</p>	Dublin Ashling Hotel 10-13 Parkgate St, Dublin 8 Ph: +353 (0)1 6772 324
DAY 3 Sat, Jul 27 (B,L,D)	<p>This morning we enjoy a guided tour of early Viking Dublin taking in the Liffey River and waterfront areas, Trinity College and the Book of Kells (one of the oldest books in the world), St Patrick's Cathedral, Temple Bar and other sights. Lunch is at Ireland's oldest pub – the Brazen Head. No tour of Dublin is complete without a visit to the beautiful St James's Gate Guinness Brewery and the enjoyment of a 'perfect pint' in the magnificent Sky Bar with 360 degree views over Dublin.</p> <p>The rest of the afternoon is yours to relax, shop or maybe take in some of the many cultural attractions at your own leisure. This evening we are off to the famous Merry Ploughboys for dinner and to enjoy some of Ireland's best traditional entertainment.</p>	Dublin Ashling Hotel
DAY 4 Sun, Jul 28 (B,L,D)	<p>Today we travel to the south-west of Dublin and into some of Ireland's best grain growing country. We enjoy an arable farm visit in Tipperary – one the major grain producing counties. Our farmer host grows wheat, canola and oats across 500 hectares. Thanks to good soils, a favourable climate and lots of daylight hours during the growing season, Irish tillage farms have some of the highest average cereal yields in the world.</p> <p>We will also visit The Rock of Cashel. This was the seat of medieval kings and bishops which flourished for 900 years until the early 17th century.</p> <p>Onto Killarney for overnight. Killarney, located on the northeastern shore of Lough Leane, is rich in history and culture and one of Ireland's most picturesque towns.</p>	Killarney Randles Hotel Muckcross Road, Killarney, Ph: +353 (0)64 6635 333
DAY 5 Mon, Jul 29 (B,L)	<p>Today we tour the world famous Ring of Kerry via Killorglin, Glenbeigh, Cahersiveen, Waterville and Coomakesta Pass with its magnificent views over Derrynane – home of Daniel (The Liberator) O'Connell. Lunch today is at The Blind Piper Pub, Caherdaniel.</p> <p>We will also visit a mountain coastal farm near Castlecove. Agriculture is particularly trying in this region but our farmer host plays an important role turning off weaner calves from his "suckler cow" enterprise. Beef production from grass is one of Irish farming's greatest strengths. Ireland's 1.1 million beef suckler cow herd is kept on about 80,000 individual farms!</p> <p>Return to Killarney for a free evening.</p>	Killarney Randles Hotel

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DAY 6 Tue, Jul 30 (B,L)	<p>This morning we visit a farm near Limerick before heading northwest to the spectacular Atlantic west coast. We visit the magnificent Cliffs of Moher. We also travel through the famous limestone barren outcrops of the Burren region. Towns along the way include Lisdoonvarna, Ballyvaughan and Kinvarra before we arrive at Galway – the “City of the Tribes” where the River Corrib meets the Atlantic Ocean.</p> <p>We have a brief walking tour of the historic centre to get your bearings. The city’s hub is the 18th-century Eyre Square, a popular meeting spot surrounded by shops and traditional pubs offering live Irish folk music. Stone-clad cafes, boutiques and art galleries line the winding lanes of the Latin Quarter, which retains portions of the medieval city walls. Then it’s a free evening.</p> <p>You might like to check-out some of the many great pubs including The Quays or Ti Neachtain, which once belonged to “Humanity Dick”, an 18th-century MP who promoted laws against cruelty to animals.</p> <p>We are also in town during the famous Galway Races Summer Festival. Galway Racecourse plays host to what many consider as one of the greatest race meetings in the world. The Festival boasts seven days of superb racing, hospitality, entertainment, stunning fashion and an electric atmosphere. Today is the second day of the Festival and the first race is not until 5.40 pm. So for those interested, there’s plenty of time to head out to the racetrack and join the fun.</p>	Galway Menlo Park Hotel Terryland, Headford Road, Galway Ph: +353 (0)9 1761 122
DAY 7 Wed, Jul 31 (B,D)	<p>We travel into the Connemara region today with its landscapes ranging from seaside hamlets, rusty bogs, lonely valleys, mountains ranges and shimmering black lakes. We are now in Gaeltacht country where traditional Irish (Gaelic) is the local tongue. Sheep and wool production is also carried on by the local and hardy farmers of Connemara.</p> <p>We continue onto Kylemore Abbey and its magnificent walled garden, nestled majestically at the base of Duchruach Mountain on the northern shore of Lough Pollacappu. We also visit Joyce Country Sheepdogs which is part of a family-run Connemara hill-farm. Joe and Mary Ann Joyce grow Connemara Blackface sheep and train (and sell) Border Collie sheepdogs – which we will see hard at work. We continue onto the beautiful city of Westport on the shores of Clew Bay.</p>	Westport Wyatt Hotel The Octagon, Westport Ph: +353 (0)9 825 027
DAY 8 Thu, Aug 1 (B,D)	<p>We continue northeast towards Sligo this morning with an arable farm visit on the way. We then cross into Northern Ireland to visit the historic and famed Belleek Pottery Centre. In 1849 John Caldwell Bloomfield inherited the Castlecaldwell Estate, which encompassed the village of Belleek. Mindful of the plight of his tenants in the aftermath of the potato famine he sought to provide some form of worthwhile employment. An amateur mineralogist, he ordered a geological survey of his land. The survey revealed the necessary raw materials to make pottery – feldspar, kaolin, flint, clay and shale. Nestling on the banks of the River Erne, John Caldwell Bloomfield built the imposing Belleek Pottery, home to the world famous Belleek Fine Parian china.</p> <p>It’s then back into Ireland and Donegal County. Donegal’s motto is “Up here, it’s different”. The county’s interior is spectacular and rugged, making farming a particular challenge. But it is the precipitous cliffs, golden beaches and rugged peninsulas of Donegal that no other Irish county can boast in such number and beauty.</p> <p>Our accommodation this evening is nestled amid all this majestic scenery. Lough Eske Castle has been meticulously restored to recreate the glamour, style and elegance it had once known combined with all the modern amenities of a 5 star resort/spa.</p>	Donegal Lough Eske Castle Donegal Town, Co. Donegal Ph: +353 (0)7 4972 5100
DAY 9 Fri, Aug 2 (B,L,D)	<p>North this morning through the magnificent Glenveagh region and onto the spectacular north Antrim coast. We visit Giant’s Causeway, the home of many legends and where an estimated 37,000 basalt columns extend from coastal cliffs down into the sea. We also visit a farm near Armoy. Here we see the complex intermingling of farm subsidies and programs such as “Countryside Management Schemes” and “Northern Ireland Beef Quality Initiatives”. Pasture fed pedigree Belgian Blue and Hereford beef herds are the major enterprises with some cereals and silage.</p> <p>We continue south via Ballymoney and Ballymena and into Belfast. In many ways this is a brand-new city. Once lumped with Beirut, Baghdad and Bosnia, in recent years Belfast has pulled off a remarkable transformation to be a very happening destination.</p>	NORTHERN IRELAND Belfast, Europa Hotel Great Victoria St. Belfast Ph: +44 (0)28 9027 1066
DAY 10 Sat, Aug 3 (B)	<p>The head of the slipway where the world’s most (in)famous ocean liner – the Titanic – was built is now occupied by the gleaming new, angular edifice of Titanic Belfast. This is one of the most popular tourist attractions in the world and an unmissable multimedia extravaganza that charts the history of Belfast and the creation of the Titanic. After a guided city tour this morning to get our bearings – and a visit to this fantastic Titanic exhibit – it’s a free afternoon and evening in Belfast.</p>	Belfast Europa Hotel

Date	Activity	Overnight
DAY 11 Sun, Aug 4 (B,D)	<p>Depart Belfast early this morning and travel north to Ballycastle where we board our ferry bound for Port Ellen, one hour to the north on Islay – just one of the majestic western isles of Scotland’s Inner Hebrides.</p> <p>These rugged, lush isles are made even more dramatic with a mixture of hills, moors, farmlands and sea lochs. While on Islay and nearby Jura we will visit farms and of course one of the whisky distilleries expertly transforming the local barley farmers’ produce into the world famous Islay single malts. Time has stood still in these venerable institutions, where methods have changed little for generations.</p>	SCOTLAND Port Ellen, Islay The Islay Hotel Charlotte St, Port Ellen Isle of Islay Ph: +44 (0)14 9630 0109
DAY 12 Mon, Aug 5 (B,L)	<p>On fine, sunny days there are few places in the world that can match the dazzling beauty of the western isles of Scotland. Let’s hope for good weather as we further explore Islay and Jura and soak in the atmosphere of these remote, sparsely inhabited isles. This isolation sinks in when you consider that George Orwell chose a remote Jura croft house to write his classic novel, 1984. He was originally going to call the book The Last Man in Europe, such was his sense of isolation. Jura is among the wildest and most rugged fragments of coastal Britain. There are stags on the hills, otters by the shore and golden eagles among the crags – and barely 200 people living by its only single-track road.</p> <p>Free evening in Port Ellen.</p>	Port Ellen, Islay The Islay Hotel
DAY 13 Tues, Aug 6 (B,D)	<p>This morning we catch our ferry from Port Ellen and sail east through the Hebridean Isles to Kennacraig on the west coast of the Scottish mainland. Kennacraig is at the northern end of Kintyre Peninsula. The peninsula stretches about 50 km from the Mull (mount) of Kintyre in the south to Tarbert in the north.</p> <p>Kintyre Peninsula is long and narrow, at no point more than 20 km across. The central spine of the peninsula is mostly hilly moorland. But the coastal areas and hinterland are rich and fertile making Kintyre a long-prized area for settlers. These settlers included the early Scots who migrated from Ulster to western Scotland and the Vikings who conquered and settled the area about 1000 years ago.</p> <p>On arrival at Kennacraig, we meet up with our coach and head north into a region called Knapdale. This area is bounded by sea to the east and west (Loch Fyne and the Sound of Jura). Knapdale gives its name to the Knapdale National Scenic Area – a region of exceptional beauty.</p> <p>Our overnight destination is Oban, around 100 km north of Kennacraig. Here we are in the heart of the Scottish Highlands and in the shadows of Ben Nevis. At 1344 metres, Ben Nevis is the highest peak in the British Isles. This is a truly inspirational setting.</p>	Oban Alexandra Hotel Ph: +44 (0)84 5468 0164
Day 14 Wed, Aug 7 (B,L,D)	<p>This morning we’ll do some monster spotting as we continue to the northeast and travel along the shores of Loch Ness. Loch Ness is the second largest Scottish loch in area (56 sq km) but due to its great depth (230 m at the deepest point), it is the largest by volume. We leave Loch Ness and enter the fertile Scottish Lowlands. We visit the site of the famous Battle of Culloden Field – the final confrontation of the 1745-46 Jacobite Rising – and the last pitched battle fought on British soil. The Hanoverian (British loyalists) victory at Culloden stopped the Jacobite army’s (House of Stuart nationalists made up largely of Scottish Highlanders) attempts to overthrow the House of Hanover and restore the House of Stuart to the British throne.</p> <p>We have a farm visit in the Lowlands before re-entering the Highlands where we will follow the full production trail from on-farm nurturing of malt barley through to the distilling of single malt whisky.</p> <p>Built in 1893, where the rivers Fiddich and Spey come together, our 26-room Craigellachie Hotel stands at the very heart of Speyside and its whisky trail. Speyside is the largest whisky region in the world and with over 900 whiskies lining its walls, the Quaich Bar at the Craigellachie is widely regarded as the world’s leading whisky bar.</p> <p>From wild Scottish berries, to Aberdeen Angus beef and Isle of Mull scallops or Shetland mussels, Speyside boasts a wealth of beautiful fresh produce.</p>	Craigellachie The Craigellachie Hotel Victoria Street, Craigellachie, Speyside Ph: +44 (0)13 4088 1204
Day 15 Thu, Aug 8 (B,L)	<p>More touring of this magical region, including a farm visit, before a free afternoon and evening... perhaps a spot of golf, salmon fishing, canoeing, bike riding or a stroll along the Spey ... or just relax at our grand hotel with a good book and a wee dram.</p>	Craigellachie The Craigellachie Hotel
Day 16 Fri, Aug 9 (B,L)	<p>We travel south through magnificent scenery this morning before arriving at Edinburgh. To get our bearings, we have a guided tour of this wonderful city including sights such as Edinburgh Castle, the famed Royal Botanical Gardens and Giles’ Cathedral. This evening we have some of the best seats in the house at the spectacular Edinburgh Military Tattoo.</p>	Edinburgh Marriott Edinburgh 111 Glasgow Rd, Edinburgh Ph: +44 (0)13 1334 9191

Date	Activity	Overnight
Day 17 Sat, Aug 10 (B,L,D)	<p>We travel south and into England this morning with a farm visit on the way to the famed Lake District of Cumbria. Here we find out for ourselves what inspired people like William Wordsworth when surrounded by the spectacular hills, lakes, woodlands, villages and farms of this beautiful area. The Lake District measures about 70 km from north to south and is 50 km wide.</p> <p>Our accommodation tonight is the Whitewater Hotel & Spa – situated in the picturesque village of Backbarrow, just one mile south of the world famous Lake Windermere. Nearby is the historic market town of Ulverston. The hotel building itself is steeped in history. It was formally a Dolly Blue pigment factory making the world famous “Dolly Blue” and was also a Victorian cotton mill. Many artefacts have been preserved and the blue pigment is still evident throughout the building.</p> <p>It's the perfect location for exploring the many historic, cultural and contemporary attractions within the Lake District including Beatrix Potter's 'Hilltop'.</p>	ENGLAND Lake District, Cumbria Whitewater Hotel & Spa Lakeland Village, Newby Bridge Ph: +44 (0)15 3953 1133
Day 18 Sun, Aug 11 (B,L,D)	<p>Free time this morning before boarding our coach bound for the nearby Yorkshire Dales. All Creatures Great and Small becomes real life as we meander through this spectacular undulating countryside. This is “James Herriott country”, the area where he lived, worked and wrote his books. We visit a Dales’ dairy sheep and arable farm before continuing onto Harrogate.</p> <p>Our accommodation – The Old Swan – is one of the most famous hotels in Harrogate, with a history going back nearly 200 years. Surrounded by lawns and gardens, and just a short walk from the town centre, the hotel combines Victorian splendour with contemporary luxury.</p> <p>From its revolving doors to its famous glass-ceilinged Wedgwood Restaurant, the Hotel exudes romance and mystery. It was to this tranquil haven that Agatha Christie famously disappeared in 1926, resulting in a public furore over the 11 days that she could not be traced.</p>	Harrogate The Old Swan Swan Road, Harrogate Ph: +44 (0)14 2350 0055
Day 19 Mon, Aug 12 (B,L)	<p>Harrogate is a beautiful Victorian spa town in North Yorkshire. It is home to the famous Betty’s tea rooms, Harlow Carr Gardens and Harrogate Spa Water and charming floral displays.</p> <p>We will explore some of the magnificent countryside around Harrogate before a free Friday evening and a chance to try some of the town's many eateries and nightspots.</p>	Harrogate The Old Swan
Day 20 Tues, Aug 13 (B,L,D)	<p>We continue to the southwest this morning and into the English Midlands. We visit Chatsworth House, a working farm estate and one of Britain’s grandest country homes. Chatsworth is home to the Duke and Duchess of Devonshire, and has been passed down through 16 generations of the Cavendish family. The house is renowned for the quality of its art, landscape, gardens and hospitality, and it has evolved through the centuries to reflect the tastes, passions and interests of succeeding generations.</p> <p>We tour both the House and farm before continuing south into the Cotswolds – a spectacularly beautiful region of rural England with its traditional drystone walls and thatched roof cottages. We continue onto Cheltenham for overnight.</p> <p>This unique regency town was specifically designed in its 18th and 19th century heyday as a pleasure health resort for wealthy visitors – today the town is often referred to as Cheltenham Spa. Many of the regency, architectural and heritage features remain, with the town maintaining much of its original culture.</p>	Cheltenham, The Cotswolds The Cheltenham Regency Hotel Gloucester Road, Cheltenham Ph: +44 (0)14 5271 3226
Day 21 Wed, Aug 14 (B,L)	<p>We're off to Old London Town this morning, about two hours drive to the east. On the way, we will stop for lunch and a guided tour of the hallowed grounds of Oxford.</p> <p>We check into our hotel in the leafy and relaxed area of Central London's northern fringe. This is a fashionable residential area that contains some of London’s finest parks, buildings and grand garden squares – Russell Square, Bedford Square, Bloomsbury Square, and Coram Fields. We are in a great location with easy access to the British Museum, and a leisurely 5 to 10 minute walk to London’s theatre-district and the shopping mecca of Covent Garden. There are also Tube stations a short stroll away.</p> <p>We have an afternoon guided tour of just some of the many city highlights including Buckingham Palace and the Palace of Westminster. The tour will include a cruise on the Thames before a free evening to do your own exploring of this wonderful city. There's also a great range of theatre and musical opportunities with scores of West End and other London theatre-district shows very near to the hotel. Most evening shows start at 7.30 pm.</p>	London The Montague on the Gardens 15 Montague Street, Bloomsbury, London Ph: +44 (0)20 7637 1001
Day 22 Thur, Aug 15 (B,D)	<p>A free day in London before we enjoy a farewell dinner this evening at the hotel.</p>	London The Montague on the Gardens
Day 23 Fri, Aug 16 (B)	<p>Transfer to the airport for our flight/s home.</p> <p>Some group members may like to stay on for extra days in London or additional European travel.</p>	On plane