



West of Ireland, Optional Pre-Trip

May 10-14, 2027

Galway • Aran Islands • Cliffs of Moher •
Doolin • Connemara



Before our main Ireland journey begins, venture west with us for five days of dramatic scenery, traditional music and the stories that shaped Ireland.

From an Irish-speaking island off the Atlantic coast to an evening of music and storytelling, from the Cliffs of Moher to the cottage of a tenant farmer whose life came to symbolize the hardships of 19th-century Ireland, this extension is designed for travelers who want to understand **the people behind the places**.

You'll stay four nights in the heart of Galway at the 4-star Hardiman Hotel before we travel across Ireland for one night in Dublin.

Detailed Itinerary

Day 1 | Welcome to Galway



You will arrive at Shannon Airport on Monday, May 10th and travel through Ireland's green countryside to **Galway**, a lively university city on the Atlantic known for its music, colorful streets, and independent spirit.

After settling into the historic Hardiman Hotel, gather for a welcome dinner and our first taste of Irish hospitality.

Overnight: Galway – The Hardiman

Included Meals: Dinner

Day 2 | The Aran Islands: Ireland at the Atlantic's Edge

Today we cross Galway Bay to **Inis Mór**, the largest of the Aran Islands—a place where stone walls, small villages and centuries-old traditions create a landscape unlike anywhere else in Ireland. Today we cross Galway Bay to **Inis Mór**, the largest of the Aran Islands—a place where stone walls, small villages and centuries-old traditions create a landscape unlike anywhere else in Ireland.

Inis Mór is part of the **Gaeltacht** regions of Ireland where the **Irish language**, or Gaeilge, remains part of everyday community life. A local driver-guide will introduce us to island history and culture and to the generations who have made their living in this beautiful but demanding environment.

Those who wish may visit **Dún Aonghasa**, the spectacular prehistoric stone fort perched high above the Atlantic. Dating in part to around 1100 BC, it is one of Ireland's most remarkable ancient sites. The visit requires an uphill walk of about one kilometer over increasingly uneven terrain, so it is very much an optional adventure.

There will also be time to explore, shop for island crafts or enjoy lunch independently before returning across Galway Bay.

Overnight: Galway – The Hardiman

Included Meals: Breakfast

Day 3 | Cliffs, Wartime Ireland & Music in Doolin

Stand atop the magnificent **Cliffs of Moher**, where sheer cliffs rise dramatically above the Atlantic and views stretch toward Galway Bay and the Aran Islands.

Along the Wild Atlantic coast, we'll stop at **Black Head** to see one of Ireland's surviving **ÉIRE markers**. These huge stone signs were created during World War II to identify neutral Irish territory to aircraft flying overhead—a fascinating reminder of Ireland's distinctive position during the war.

Then we continue to **Doolin**, a village synonymous with traditional Irish music. Rather than attending a large stage show, we'll be welcomed into the private home of musicians **Christy and Sheila Barry** for music, conversation and storytelling. Christy's musical career has taken him from Ireland to New York and Chicago, giving us the chance to hear not only Irish music but some of the stories behind it.

Overnight: Galway – The Hardiman

Included Meals: Breakfast, Lunch

Day 4 | Connemara: The Story of the Land

We travel into **Connemara**, a rugged region of mountains, bogs, lakes, and Atlantic coastline where geography has profoundly shaped how people lived and worked for centuries.

We'll stop at the **Doon Hill WWII Lookout Tower**, where Ireland's wartime history is literally built into the landscape, before continuing deeper into Connemara.

At the Dan O'Hara Heritage Centre, we will understand the story of the land and the 19th Century Irish emigration to the U.S. and around the world.



Here, history becomes wonderfully tangible. We'll learn how the bog itself was formed, see how peat—or "turf"—was traditionally cut for fuel, and even have an opportunity to try cutting a sod ourselves. Then, beside a turf fire inside Dan's restored cottage, we'll hear the story of rural life, land ownership, emigration, and survival in 19th-century Ireland.

The Heritage Centre's hilltop rises roughly 300 meters above sea level and overlooks a landscape dotted with more than 100 lakes.

“ The Story of Dan O'Hara

A carriage takes us across the hillside toward the restored cottage of **Dan O'Hara**, a 19th-century tenant farmer whose story became part of Irish folklore.

Dan and his family struggled to survive on this beautiful but unforgiving land. Eventually evicted, they joined the enormous tide of Irish men, women and children who left their homeland for America. During their Atlantic crossing, Dan's wife and three of their children died. His story was later preserved in song and has come to represent the experiences of countless ordinary Irish families.

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Overnight: Galway – The Hardiman

Included Meals: Breakfast, Lunch

Day 5 | Across Ireland to Dublin

Leave Galway behind and travel east through Ireland's heartland.



We'll stop in **Athlone**, a historic town on the River Shannon, Ireland's longest river, with time to enjoy its compact center and riverside setting before continuing to Dublin.

Tonight we'll celebrate our arrival in Dublin with a lively **traditional Irish music and dance dinner** before joining the rest of the group for the start of our main Ireland program the following day.



Overnight: Dublin – Camden Court Hotel

Included Meals: Breakfast, Dinner

What's Included and What's Not

	
5-nights hotel accommodations	International Flights
Private transportation to all locations	Meals outside of those included
Airport transfers	Hotel incidentals
English-speaking Guide for duration	Gratuities for local guide, bus driver, hotel portage, housekeeping staff
Tours and presentations as outlined	Personal expenses
Daily breakfast, 2 group lunches, 2 group dinners	

Registration: \$2,299 per person, double occupancy; add \$400 for single room.

Call Nanda (888-747-7501) or log into your Nanda account online and add the extension. Space is limited, so don't wait!

Questions? Send them to info@nanadajourneys.com or to Judy Tilton at tiltonjd@eckerd.edu.