Touring Ireland: Recommendations from Barb Waronek

Dublin provides many historic sites for exploration. During your visit, look for some of the lesser known spots such as the Little Museum of Dublin or St. Audoen’s Church.

One Day Tours

Cliffs of Moher

If you are not able to take the Sunday tour, consider visiting on another day using one of the local bus tour company one-day options. The cliffs provide many of the famous shots used in movies and are breathtaking. Leave time to walk around both sides and see the exhibits in the Visitor Center. Make sure you take time to see O’Brien’s Tower also!

Many of these tours include a stop in the harbor city of Galway which sits where the River Corrib and the Atlantic Ocean meet. An 18th century Eyre Square, surrounded by shops and traditional pubs, is the hub of Galway. You’ll find stone-clad cafes, boutiques and art galleries along the streets of the Latin Quarter. Portions of the medieval city walls also remain.
Glendalough

Founded by St. Kevin in the 6th century, this is one of Ireland’s most beautiful attractions. The ‘Valley of the Two Lakes’ was an early Christian monastic settlement. You need time to explore the trails and history of this venue.

Northern Ireland including Belfast, Carrick-A-Rede, Giant’s Causeway and King’s Road

Belfast is the capital of Northern Ireland and where the RMS Titanic was built. There are many city sites and opportunities to learn more about the Titanic, including Titanic Belfast.

Carrick-A-Rede has the famous rope bridge which connects the mainland to the tiny island of Carrickarede. Even if you elect not to walk the bridge, there are awesome views from the coast line as you walk around the area.
Giant’s Causeway, created by Finn McCool or an ancient volcanic eruption? You need to see and climb some of these 40,000 interlocking basalt columns and make your own decision. I’m interested to hear which method you choose!

King’s Road, known by locals as Dark Hedges, is a must-see for any Game of Thrones fans! (You will even find special tours dedicated to this popular show.) Not a fan – seeing some of these sites is still amazing. While you have plenty of time to see these intertwined beech trees, this feature will be gone in the next 20 or so years as younger trees will not yet be mature enough to replace this feature.
**Additional Highlights from Southern Ireland – More than a day trip!**

**Cobh**

Known as Queenstown from 1849-1920, Cobh is a seaport town in County Cork. Home to Ireland’s only dedicated cruise terminal, visitors are drawn to the area for the maritime and emigration legacy of the area. This includes the connection to the RMS Titanic as the last port of call in 1912. Explore the Cobh Heritage Centre and learn about Cobh’s history as an embarkation point during the mass emigrations. If you have extra time, visit Fota Island and the wildlife park.
Cork (Blarney Castle)

If you need the gift of gab, then kissing the Blarney Stone at the castle is your stop! Reaching the top requires climbing the narrow, winding stairs and provides perspective on life circa 1440. There are beautiful panoramic views from the top and many other areas on the grounds to explore. Stroll through the Poisonous Garden and see what plants you have in your gardens at home. For Australians with Irish heritage, stop at the 1824 Cork City Gaol and see exhibitions on your possible connections to this area.

Foynes

Interested in aviation? Visit this village and major port in County Limerick for an opportunity to see the world’s only full-size replica of a B314 flying boat. It is a major port located at the edge of hilly land on the southern bank of the Shannon Estuary. In the 1930’s and ‘40’s, Foynes played a pivotal role in establishing commercial transatlantic passenger flights and invented the famous Irish Coffee. Cross the River Shannon, Ireland’s longest and most famous river on a ferry while in the area.
Ring of Kerry

The best description I’ve read is, “Rugged islands, white-sand beaches, dramatic mountain passes and a royal goat”! There is also an opportunity to see filming sites used in Star Wars VII or be blown off the mountain by gale force winds! If you visit on the 10-12 of August, participate in the Puck Fair which is the goat connection. While you can travel the ring in a day, you might want to take more time and enjoy some of the towns at a more leisurely pace. Stop in Waterville, Charlie Chaplin’s favorite vacation spot or visit the Kerry Bog Village. Leave time to spend a day in Killarney and tour the national park and Torc waterfall. There are beautiful panoramic views around the lakes.
Waterford

Founded by Vikings, Waterford is a seaport in southeast Ireland. Tour Waterford Crystal and watch the glass masters in action during a tour of the plant. See beautiful pieces and possibly hold a trophy in your hands. The tour ends in the sales area so have your wallet ready to take home a souvenir! Take time to enjoy the town and see Reginald’s Tower and learn about Vikings!