



CLASSIC JOURNEYS

THE WORLD'S FINEST WALKING TOURS

Ireland

Killarney Lakes & Ring of Kerry



“

*Classic Journeys
provides unbeatable
access to experiences
around the globe.”*

TRAVEL + LEISURE

The Best of the Emerald Isle

The Ring of Kerry. Ross Castle. The Killarney Lakes. You may have heard of them, but that's just where Classic Journeys begins. We also take easy walks on the high peninsulas and wild seashores. You'll get a not-very-useful but absolutely fascinating lesson in how farmers cut peat. There's optional golf on spectacular links. And for the name alone—MacGillycuddy's Reeks—we love Ireland's highest mountain range, and we'll show you why. Maybe you can tell: Ireland makes us happy. It's stunningly beautiful and the people are even warmer and more good-humored than the cliché. Join us from sheep-clogged country lanes overlooking the sea for a complete and memorable taste of Irish life.



DAY 1 »

Killarney

- [Walk on the Old Kenmare Road, pedestrian-only since 1860](#)
- [Explore the remarkably preserved Muckross Abbey](#)

Your Irish adventure begins in Killarney, a picturesque town cradled by the majestic MacGillycuddy's Reeks Mountain range, verdant landscapes, and the sparkling waters of the lakes. Immerse yourself in this emerald oasis as you set out on a countryside path in Killarney National Park with your expert local guide. Wander through ancient woodlands to the magnificent Torc Waterfall, where a 65-foot cascade tumbles over moss-covered rocks in an enchanting, wooded glen. Approach the base of this natural wonder, tucked away like a hidden oasis, and let the soothing sounds of the falls envelop you.

Later, you'll get the chance to savor a delightful treat at the shop of local artisans who have mastered the art of crafting world-renowned ice cream, trying to pronounce the delightful Gaelic names of the flavors before indulging in the decadent homemade desserts. Then stroll through grand oak woods on a forest footpath that brings you to the remarkably preserved Muckross Abbey. Get up close to these 15th-century ruins and take in the commanding views of Lough Leane.

After dinner in Killarney town, you can retire to your hotel or join your guide for a visit to a local pub, where the lively atmosphere and traditional music offer a true taste of Irish culture.

MEALS: L, D OVERNIGHT: KILLARNEY

DAY 2 »

Killarney's Lakes & Cottages

- [Cruise on a skiff across fabled Killarney Lakes](#)
- [Visit 15th century Ross Castle](#)

Today's explorations begin at Kate Kearney's Cottage, a historic pub named after the colorful character who sold her illegal homebrew to thirsty travelers in the 1800s. Stepping into this quaint cottage is like entering a piece of Irish folklore. A horse-drawn jaunting car transports you to the start of a scenic trail, where you embark on foot, winding through the breathtaking Gap of Dunloe. This spectacular valley is a tapestry of lakes, streams, meadows, waterfalls, and the famed Wishing Bridge, all nestled beneath the towering peaks of MacGillycuddy's Reeks, Ireland's tallest mountain range.

Refreshed from lunch, approach the shimmering shore on foot for a leisurely cruise on a wooden skiff across the fabled Killarney Lakes. As your captain navigates the waters, you'll follow in the footsteps of generations of fishermen and adventurers who have explored these lakes throughout the centuries. Along the way, you'll also hear vivid tales from your boatmen amid the scenic beauty of the national park and its scattered islands. The stories offer insight into the local Irish heritage and their treasured fables. Keep your eyes peeled for wildlife that includes swans, herons, and even red deer, that are often spotted along the shores of the lakes.

Then, step back in time at the 15th-century Ross Castle, an impressive stronghold that once guarded an Irish chieftain. As you wander the rooms adorned with 16th and 17th-century furnishings, your guide regales you with tales of the castle's storied past, while the serene views of Lough Leane provide a picturesque backdrop.

MEALS: B, L, D OVERNIGHT: KILLARNEY

DAY 3 »

Ring of Kerry

- [Visit a working sheep farm and meet our local friends](#)
- [Board a scenic ferry to Valentia Island](#)

Begin your day with a morning walk along the quiet countryside paths, before journeying to a nearby sheep station. Here, you'll meet a family who has proudly bred a flock of nearly 1,000 mountain sheep for almost 150 years. Experience their rural life firsthand as you stroll through the fields, meeting their prized sheepdogs and gaining insights into their time-honored traditions.

A scenic ferry ride transports you to Valentia Island, where you'll ascend to the Skellig Interpretive Centre. Perched on the cinematic southwest coast, these rugged islands were once home to a small group of men seeking religious solitude and isolation, earning the nickname "the island on the edge of the world." Immerse yourself in the magic and mystery of these famous rocks, visiting the iconic lighthouse and keeping a watchful eye for the puffins and gannets that call this remote outpost home.

After lunch, embark on 'The Mass Path,' a historic beach walk that follows the shoreline of Derrynane Bay, also known as the 'pilgrim path.' Your journey culminates at Derrynane House, the ancestral home of Daniel O'Connell, a lawyer, politician, and statesman who was one of the great figures in modern Irish history. Later, return to the mainland to relax at your hotel before indulging in a dinner of local specialties.

MEALS: B, D OVERNIGHT: KENMARE

DAY 4 »

Kenmare

- [Sample award-winning chocolates with a local after a chocolate-making lesson](#)
- [Enjoy an afternoon walk that leads you to a fascinating stone circle](#)

Begin your day with a visit to our friend Benoit, a Frenchman who migrated to Ireland and brought with him a passion for crafting award-winning chocolates. Led by your own personal Willy Wonka, wander through his factory (formerly a tiny country post office), learning the secrets behind his creations and savoring some of his favorite confections. Then, roll up your sleeves for an 'only with Classic Journeys' chocolate-making lesson alongside the expert himself.

Afterward, stretch your legs on a walk to a local farm, where you'll gain an insider's look at rural life in the Irish countryside. Stroll the grounds with your hosts, who will share their treasured traditions of peat cutting and moonshine making. Learn how potatoes or barley are first fermented with sugar and baker's yeast in large barrels, then heated over an open fire to distill a potent whiskey called "poitin."

Following lunch, an afternoon walk leads you to a fascinating stone circle. Built during the Bronze Age, this 3,000-year-old monument is composed of 15 boulders, believed to be used for burial or ceremonial purposes, though its true purpose remains a mystery. With your guide, pitch your own theory for the construction and purpose of this site, the largest in County Kerry. From there, stroll through the quaint Kenmare town before returning to your hotel for the evening.

MEALS: B OVERNIGHT: KENMARE

DAY 5 »

Beara Peninsula

- [Enjoy a fascinating hawk walk and falconry session](#)
- [Set out on a guided exploration of the Gardens of Derreen](#)

Begin your day at your hotel's beautiful estate with a guided hawk walk and falconry session. Witness the unique bond formed between these impressive birds of prey and their handlers, and even have the opportunity to handle and fly these majestic creatures yourself.

Then, venture to the Beara Peninsula on Ireland's incredibly scenic southwest coast. Set out on a nature walk in Gleninchaquin Park, where breathtaking landscapes unfold at every turn. Explore on foot, past streams with log bridges, through rock passages, along wooded glens, and across picturesque meadows. Soak in the views overlooking lakes and at the base of waterfalls, while your guide shares insights into the local flora and fauna. The tranquility of the park makes it a haven for wildlife, including red deer, foxes, and the occasional Irish hare darting across the grasslands. Keep an eye to the skies for the abundance of birdlife, including robins, thrushes, and finches, that call this natural oasis home.

Pause for a lunch of local specialties (fish and chips, perhaps?) before a guided exploration of the Gardens of Derreen. This magnificent 19th-century woodland garden is a stunning estate that was once home to the Marquis of Lansdowne, a descendant of Kenmare's founder Sir William Petty. Now, it boasts a luxuriant display of rhododendrons, camellias, tree ferns, and many colorful semi-tropical shrubs and verdant trees that flourish all around you. Take your time strolling through the gardens, admiring the views of the surrounding sea and mountains.

MEALS: B, D OVERNIGHT: KENMARE

DAY 6 »

Muckross House

- Visit the historic Muckross House
- Part company in Killarney

Following breakfast, visit Muckross House, a magnificent mansion that offers a glimpse into Ireland's Victorian past through its manicured gardens and expansive lawns. The elegant estate, with its opulent rooms, also plays host to a community of craft workers who demonstrate skills such as weaving, bookbinding, and pottery making.

This afternoon your Irish walking adventure comes to a close as you part company at the Killarney rail station.

MEALS: B

Tour Hotels



Great Southern

Built 160 years ago, this grand Killarney hotel has hosted demanding guests from Jackie Kennedy to the Duchess of York. The gracious rooms are a modern take on classic elegance. At breakfast, you'll appreciate that the hotel has its own in-house bakery.

NIGHTS: 2 nights



Sheen Falls Lodge

Located near the village of Kenmare and overlooking picturesque Sheen Falls, this upscale property welcomes guests to its collection of luxury cottages and villas. Sheen Falls Lodge was rated the #1 hotel in Ireland by Conde Nast Traveler's Gold List.

NIGHTS: 3 nights

Arrival & Departure

→ ARRIVAL DETAILS

LOCATION: Great Southern Killarney
lobby
CITY: Killarney, Ireland
TIME: 12:00 PM

→ DEPARTURE DETAILS

LOCATION: Rail Station
CITY: Killarney, Ireland
TIME: 1:00 PM

The Classic Journeys Difference

- ▶ **CURATED WALKS THAT LEAD TO 'ONLY WITH CLASSIC JOURNEYS' EXPERIENCES**
 - Immerse and connect you across cultures as you explore on foot
- ▶ **EXCEPTIONAL LOCAL GUIDES**
 - Bring authentic experiences to life
- ▶ **ENCHANTING ACCOMMODATIONS**
 - Where luxury and local mean you feel at home
- ▶ **EAT LIKE (& WITH) THE LOCALS**
 - Local flavors and time to savor the moments together
- ▶ **SMALL GROUPS, GUARANTEED**
 - Mean deeper, richer experiences while making friends along the way
- ▶ **REGENERATIVE TRAVEL**
 - We take strides to preserve cultures, traditions, and nature

What's Included

- Accommodations for 5 nights
- All breakfasts, 2 lunches, and 4 dinners
- Full-time experienced guide(s) who are with you throughout the trip, handle behind-the-scenes logistics and are there to help with anything
- Admissions to tastings, historic sites and other scheduled events as noted in the detailed daily itinerary
- Gratuities for hotels, meals and baggage
- All land transportation during the trip

Above & Beyond Benefits

- ▶ **PRIVILEGED ACCESS EVENTS**
One-of-a-kind access to remarkable people, places and activities arranged just for you.
- ▶ **INVISIBLE CHECK-IN**
When your group arrives, we whisk you and your bags to your room immediately.

Enhancing Your Journey

We're constantly seeking ways to improve your experience. Count on us to update you with any significant changes before departure. Minor adjustments may be communicated by your guides during the trip to ensure you have the best possible journey.