

Exploring Scotland and Ireland a Wee Dram at a Time

May 3-16, 2022 - A tour of distilleries, scenery, and history



OVERVIEW

Whether you love great whiskies or just breathtaking green landscapes of mountains, glens and lochs dotted with romantic castles, Scotland and Ireland will bolster your spirits in every way. Join us for a special two-week luxury exploration of the dramatic and compelling allure of these two Gaelic centers of culture, history and the wee dram. In a friendly group of no more than 12 adventurers we'll visit several of the world's best single-malt whisky distillers such as The Macallan, Balvenie, Glenfiddich and Talisker in Scotland, and Jameson and Bushmills in Ireland. We'll see where ancients crowned their kings and buried their dead, nobles battled and religions clashed. You'll even learn at least one word of Gaelic. *Sláinte!*

ITINERARY

SCOTLAND

Day One – Tuesday, May 3 - Legends of Scotland and Whisky - Edinburgh

- *Edinburgh* – Meet in Edinburgh to begin our trip!
- **The Scotch Whisky Experience** is a terrific, tutored introduction to whisky appreciation with some superb sample drams to taste, and a walk through the world's largest whisky collection
- *Dunfermline* – We explore the ruins of the ancient **Dunfermline Abbey and Palace** which served as Scotland's capital for several hundred years in the Middle Ages, and we visit the grave of Scottish independence hero King Robert the Bruce
- *Pitlochry* – Dinner and overnight at a beautiful 5* castle hotel



Day Two – Wednesday, May 4 - Pitlochry to Speyside



- *Pitlochry* – We visit the smallest distillery in Scotland, lovely and quaint **Edradour**
- *Speyside* - **The Macallan** is one of the top three single-malt producers. We'll tour their spectacular new £100m distillery and visitor center. There is nothing like it anywhere in the world
- *Rothies* – We move to the heart of the Speyside whisky-making region. Fine dining and the first of two 4* overnights

Day Three – Thursday, May 5 - Speyside

- We visit **Glenfiddich**, one of the last independent distilleries in Scotland and maker of the best-selling single malt scotch in the world
- At **Balvenie Distillery** we will see the traditional process of distillery floor maltings, which few distilleries do themselves anymore

Day Four – Friday, May 6 - The Highlands and the Isle of Skye

- *Speyside* – Tour a cooperage to see how casks that once held sherry, port or wine become whisky barrels
- *Loch Ness* – Enjoy the wild countryside of the Scottish Highlands as we make our way to the dramatic Isle of Skye. We'll visit the ruins of ancient **Urquhart Castle** on the shores of Loch Ness. If you've had sufficient whisky, you might catch a glimpse of Nessie
- *Isle of Skye* – First of two overnights at a 4* hotel in Portree with stunning mountain and water views

Day Five – Saturday, May 7 - Isle of Skye

- *Isle of Skye* – We spend the entire day exploring the Isle of Skye's breathtaking scenic wonders with the help of a local guide

Day Six – Sunday, May 8 - Isle of Skye to Glasgow

- *Isle of Skye* - Visit the **Talisker distillery** and experience the subtly peated style of a top island dram
- *Inverlochy* – We enjoy the grand U.K. tradition of High Tea at spectacular Inverlochy Castle before proceeding to Glasgow
- *Glasgow* – Check into Kimpton Blythswood Square Hotel, a stately 19th century Georgian townhouse. Dinner tonight is on your own



Day Seven – Monday, May 9 - Inverlochy to Glasgow

- *Glasgow* – Free day to explore before we meet for a group dinner at a Michelin-starred restaurant

IRELAND

Day Eight - Tuesday, May 10 – Dublin

- Fly from Glasgow to Dublin, Ireland. Farewell to Scotland!
- *Dublin* – At **Guinness** we are taught the proper way to draw a pint – it’s an art! We taste how lagers, ales, and stouts differ from each other, and get to know the stout that Ireland made famous
- Dinner tonight is on your own in Dublin. Then overnight in Dublin at another great 5* hotel

Day Nine – Wednesday, May 11 - Dublin and Brú na Bóinne



- *Dublin* – Visit **Trinity College** to see the incredibly atmospheric **Long Library** and the **Book of Kells**, an elaborately illustrated version of the Gospels of the New Testament, handwritten by monks about 800 AD
- At **Jameson Distillery** we blend our own whiskey from a variety of base styles, and we taste from a barrel
- *Brú na Bóinne* – An hour from Dublin are some of the world’s most extraordinary prehistoric burial tombs. This site (**Newgrange**) is older than the pyramids!
- *Belfast* – Spend the night in the heart of Belfast at historic **5* Fitzwilliam Hotel**

Day Ten – Thursday, May 12 - Belfast and Game of Thrones Country: The Antrim Coast

- *Belfast* – Tour the most important sights of **Belfast**, including “peace walls” surrounding Protestant and Catholic neighborhoods like Shankill Road and Falls Road
- Lunch in a traditional “snug” in the **Crown Liquor Saloon** (an ornate drinking booth in this historic pub)
- *Antrim Coast* – Many scenes of *Game of Thrones* were filmed along this gorgeous coast
- Visit the UNESCO World Heritage site **Giant’s Causeway**, a geological wonder
- *Giant’s Causeway* – Overnight at a 4* hotel directly overlooking the sea



Day Eleven – Friday, May 13 - Derry (Londonderry)

- *Bushmills* – **Old Bushmills Distillery** - Visit the oldest licensed distillery in the world, authorized in 1608
- *Derry (Londonderry)* – After lunch at a brewpub named best gastropub in Ireland in 2017, we take a walking tour of the city where Northern Ireland’s “Troubles” had some of their darkest moments
- *County Mayo* – Driving back south into the Republic of Ireland, we stop for dinner and the night at the grandly impressive 4* **Kilronan Castle Hotel**

Day Twelve – Saturday, May 14 - Connemara

- *Doolough Valley* – In the mid-1800s, the great (potato) famine killed more than a million starving Irish. Several hundred are said to have perished here after the local landowner refused to feed them. We'll contemplate this sad event in the dramatically beautiful setting of the **Doolough Valley Famine Memorial**
- *Connemara* – Drive to a working sheep farm for an impressive **sheep-herding demonstration** with trained sheepdogs plus sheep shearing the traditional way. You can try your hand shearing if you like, or see how to cut peat from a bog
- Stop for lunch in a countryside spot that also provides a shopping opportunity for handcrafted goods
- *Cong* – We drive to what is probably Ireland's most famous lodging, the spectacular 5* **Ashford Castle**, where we will have dinner and stay two nights



Day Thirteen – Sunday, May 15 - Cliffs of Moher, The Burren



- *The Burren* – We drive through the amazing karst landscape of **The Burren National Park**
- *Cliffs of Moher* – Dramatic views of sheer cliffs towering above the sea, one of Ireland's most famous natural landmarks.
- *Doolin* – This village is famed for Irish music. We'll lunch to the tunes of a tin whistle played for us live at a legendary village music pub
- *Cong* – Return to **Ashford Castle** to relax or try one of many offered activities: falconry, fishing, clay shooting or strolling the castle gardens
- Farewell dinner in the elegant George V dining room at Ashford Castle

Day Fourteen – Monday, May 16 - Return to Dublin – the trip concludes

- After breakfast at Ashford Castle, transportation will be provided to Dublin arriving around noon, where the official trip ends with options to be dropped at the airport or downtown. **Your onward flight should not be scheduled until mid-afternoon at the earliest**

TRIP LEADERS



Your guides for this exceptional experience are *Exploring Wine* founder Charles Bennett, CWP, CSW and his wife, Jill Philipson. Charlie has been a wine lover and collector for more than 30 years. He honeymooned with Jill in Burgundy and once lived on a vineyard in Germany. Charlie speaks French and German and has traveled extensively around the world. He is certified as a wine professional by the Culinary Institute of America and the Society of Wine Educators.

As a board member of the Chaîne des Rôtisseurs, the world's oldest and largest wine and food society, Charlie heads the Chaîne's 2,000+ member society of wine and spirit enthusiasts (the Société Mondiale du Vin), runs the Chaîne's national young sommelier competition, and leads the Chaîne's national wine programs.

Charlie holds degrees from Stanford and Tufts. In years past he won three Emmy awards on public television, was a business strategy consultant to CEOs of several Fortune 500 companies, and was VP of Internet Services for a major computer company. Wine is now his primary passion.

Jill is an experienced events and travel planner and a former television director who is *Exploring Wine's* logistics guru, marketing coordinator, and webmaster.

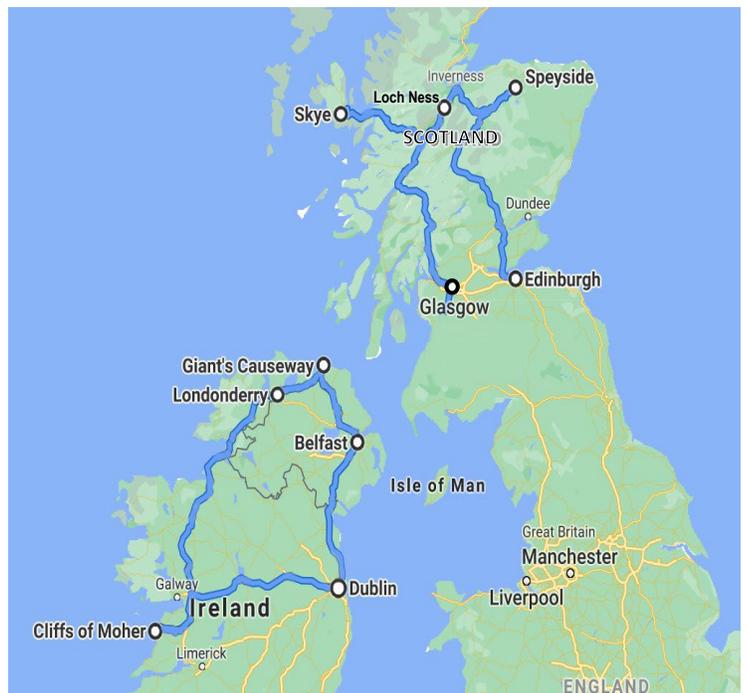
TRIP PRICE

\$12,325 per person, double occupancy
(includes transport during trip, excludes transatlantic air)

CONTACT INFORMATION



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Scotland/Ireland 2022 MEMORABLE MOMENTS



Impressive Whiskies

- * Launch the trip with a brief private discovery course in whisky at The Scotch Whisky Experience in Edinburgh
- * Tour and tasting at the famed Macallan Estate with its fabulous new state-of-the-art distillery
- * Visit Edradour, Scotland's smallest distillery
- * Explore Old Bushmills Distillery in Northern Ireland, said to be the oldest licensed distillery in the world



The Scotch Whisky Experience



The Macallan Estate



Old Bushmills Distillery

History, Culture, and Nature

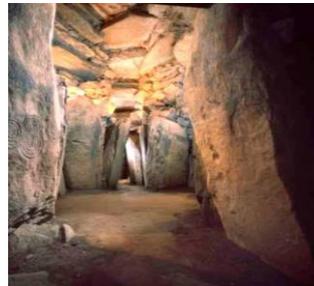
- * View "Peace Walls" dividing historically troubled neighborhoods in Belfast, Northern Ireland
- * Visit Brú Na Bóinne in Ireland, one of the world's most important prehistoric Neolithic tombs 5,000 years old
- * Walk along the spectacular Cliffs of Moher and Giant's Causeway in Ireland



Cliffs of Moher



Giant's Causeway



Brú Na Bóinne Burial Chamber



Peace Wall, Belfast

Magnificent Meals

- * Award-winning dinner at historic Fitzwilliam Hotel, Belfast
- * Lunch at Walled City Brewery in Derry (Best Gastropub in Ireland, 2017)
- * Elegant dinner at George V Dining Room at Ashford Castle

A plush night's sleep in your own castle!

- * Stunning Cuillin Hills Hotel, Isle of Skye
- * Magnificent Kilronan Castle Hotel in Ireland
- * Famed 5* Ashford Castle Hotel in Ireland



Cuillin Hills Hotel, Isle of Skye



Dinner at George V Dining Room, Ireland



5* Ashford Castle