

## Exploring the Heart & Sole of Dingle Peninsula & Wicklow.

*With a day trip to Dublin while in Wicklow.*

**Date: June 8<sup>th</sup> to 17<sup>th</sup> 2012 (Sat to Sun).**

With Maeve Kelly, Director of Walking Boots Tours, Ireland.

Assisted by Louise Dillon.

Tour Leader-Gary Walth, Professor of Music, University of Wisconsin, La Crosse.

### **Suggested Itinerary:**

**Day 1 (8th):** Travel to Ireland

**Day 2 (9th):** Pick-up at **Shannon airport by Minibus with Maeve** and drive to your guesthouse in Dingle. Louise will join the group on route for a vigorous hike on magnificent Inch Beach. Time to breath the fresh Atlantic air looking out across Dingle Bay. Continuing to Dingle, time to relax before dinner; after dinner a short briefing from your guide, Maeve about the tour. Time to ask questions and chat about the week ahead!

Hike: 2-3 hours out the beach and return via amazing high sand dune systems with wildflower meadows. 2 -3 miles

**Overnight Dingle, evening meal included. Lunch Not included**

**Day 3 (10th):** After breakfast we will drive over the Conor Pass to the north side of the Peninsula to the quaint village of Brandon. Starting from the village we will follow beautiful country lanes to the end of the road at Brandon Head. Fine views await us north to Kerry, Clare and if we are lucky the Aran Islands. From here we will gradually ascend to the spectacular cliffs above Sauce Creek. A truly breathtaking lunch spot. From here we descend through turf cutting fields via the bog road to Teer village and return for welcome refreshments at Murphy's pub in Brandon.

Hike: 4-5 hours, 4-5 miles.

Ascent: 400m

Terrain: Asphalt, trail, open rough cross-country, bogland, tracks.

**Overnight in Dingle, evening meal Not included.**

**Day 4 (11th):** Weather permitting we will take the short ferry crossing to one of the most spectacular islands off the West Coast of Ireland the Blasket

Islands.

A place steeped in history and stories of the people who once inhabited the island until their evacuation in 1953. This is a wonderful chance to lose yourself along the wild Atlantic Ocean. Passing Gannets, Cormorants, Shags, and you never know what over overseas visitor might just pass by.

***Book to read recommended by Maeve (Hungary for Home by Cole Morton).***

***Or Twenty years a growing by Miuris O'Sullibhain***

\*\*\* We will be joined by a newly appointed local guide on the Blasket Island.

Hike: approximately 3 hours, 3-4 miles.

Terrain: Grassy track to back of the island.

Ascent : 280m.

**Overnight in Dingle and evening **Not** meal included.**

**N.B. Optional concert in St. James, in Dingle (at own cost)**

**Day 5 (12th):** After a hearty Irish breakfast we will depart at 9.00am from the beauty of Dingle as we drive east across the island of Ireland. On the way we will stop at the magnificent site once a place of great spirituality and High Kingship, The Rock of Cashel in Tipperary.

We have time to tour this site and have lunch in one of cashels many great pubs.

Time to soak up rural life in one of Irelands key midland towns.

Transfer to the village of Ashford in Wicklow.

Tinakilly Country House Wicklow.

Driving approximately 5 hours with stops.

**Lunch Not included.**

**Overnight & evening meal included in Wicklow.**

**Day 6 (13th):**The magnificent monastic valley of Glendalough.

Glendalough, which was founded by St. Kevin in the sixth century and became a hub of learning in Europe. Today, history lives in the ruins of Glendalough. Its imposing round tower overlooks a scene of tranquil beauty - a valley of two lakes (Gleann Da' Loch) We will have a guided tour of the monastic ruins. Our walk takes us into the valley and out onto an area known as the Spinc. From here we will have sweeping views over the lakes, the Monastic City and surrounding countryside. The day finishes in the valley as we descend an old miners path.

**Overnight & evening meal included in Wicklow.**

**Day 7 (14th):** *The Vale of Clara and Avoca* .Today our walk takes us to one of the finest nature reserves in Wicklow, situated in the Vale of Clara, home to the smallest village in Ireland. The natural reserve contains the largest area of semi-natural woodland in Co. Wicklow We will have lunch on the banks of the Avonmore River beside the romantic church of Clara (1799) Then we will continue on to visit the Woollen Mills in Avoca, which are the oldest working woollen mills in the country.

Distance: 9 km/5.5 miles, Ascent: 220 m/660 ft .

**Overnight & evening meal **Not** included in Wicklow.**

**Day 8 (15th):** City Day trip to Dublin to visit some well known sites in the morning.

An early start will have us in the city to visit the Book of Kells and Trinity College or National Museum of Ireland.

Following this we will stroll through Georgian Dublin and St Stephens Green. Then we will join one of Dublin's famous walking tours of the city to get the inside story, like a snapshot of times past.

Also time on your own to browse and regroup for dinner.

**Evening meal in the city followed by Theatre?**

**Very dependent on availability.**

**Overnight in Wicklow.**

**Day 9 (16th):** *Knockree to Roundwood* Continuing on the Wicklow Way, we walk down into peaceful valley of Lackandarragh, along by the Glencree river. Onto Crone Forest where we will have towering views of Powerscourt Waterfall, Ireland's longest waterfall. The trail takes us onto the side of Djouce Mountain, stopping at our highest point on White Hill at 630m, on towards the end of our day at Roundwood.

Distance: 18 km/11.3 miles, Ascent: 550 m/1650 ft

**Overnight & evening meal included in Wicklow.**

**Day 10 (17<sup>th</sup>):** Time for farewell, one drop off time to Dublin airport at 10.00am

**NB:** Make flights reservations according to this time.

**Costings Included:** All accommodation, most meals & lunches, breakfasts, boat trips, entrances, theatre in Dublin, transport/collection at airport,

**Not Included:** Airfare, laundry, some meals & lunches, alcohol, gratuities to guides/ driver Maeve Kelly & Louise Dillon.