The Land of Saints and Scholars

_Failte Romhat!_ This region of Ireland is steeped in history, with thousands of years of endurance and evolution recorded in the very landscape. The mountains dip down and level out into the lunar landscape of the bog, pocked with small lakes and golden ponds, and all of this runs right into the Atlantic. The diversity of nature, coupled with the constantly changing weather, breeds a character all its own, and this week will be full of such encounters. In the numerous villages and towns we’ll bike through, one can’t help but feel the true Irish welcome.

RECOMMENDED AGE: 8+

We don’t simply allow kids on trips designed for adults, we design unique trips just for families. The activities on our Ireland Family Biking trip are recommended for children age 8 years and older. Please call us for more information.

THE B&R DIFFERENCE

“Ireland is a must see for outdoor enthusiasts! The trip was relaxing and fun for kids and families. We had fabulous guides, and really felt a part of the culture of Ireland. The people were all so nice and the views were mystical and amazing. A very special place indeed!”

_Timothy Lindenfelser, Ireland Family Biking 2013_

Other questions?
Call us at 800 678 1147
The Journey

Days 1 & 2

Connemara

We rendezvous this morning in Galway City, county capital, and drive west into the heart of the stunning peninsular region known as Connemara. An hour and a quarter later we arrive at our bikes, and families ride together around the rugged contours of Cashel Bay, with constant views out to the North Atlantic. After lunch in a cozy haunt, the younger set is whisked off for a fun round (or two) of pitch ‘n’ putt golf on a real miniature 18-hole course – mind you don’t hit a sheep! – while the parents pedal inland between the Maumturk Mountains and the Twelve Pins. Along the way there is the opportunity to stop and admire the gardens and architecture of Kylemore Abbey overlooking its namesake lough. After the generations meet back up and settle in to our charming family-run hotel, teen Sean-nos (traditional Irish dance) champion John Joyce joins the younger set to teach them some fancy steps! After a little performance for their parents, we’ll all sit back with a pint or apple cider as John and his musician friend plays a session of lively Irish tunes. Later, we move into the dining room, windows overlooking the bay, for dinner right at the hotel.

After a typically hearty Irish breakfast the next morning, everyone bikes through the quiet, verdant landscape near the sea. In the late morning, the generations part ways, with adults riding on to charming Clifden, Connemara’s main market town for an on-your-own lunch and some browsing time. Their return ride loops out the jaw-dropping cliff-top loop known as the Sky Road, where castle ruins jut up against the grey, green and blue of land, sea, and sky. Meanwhile, the kids will have a cozy lunch in Cleggan and then go for a pony and horse trek along the beach! For dinner this evening, we’ll head to nearby Letterfrack to The Bard’s Den, one of the oldest pubs in town and fun for adults and kids alike.
Day 3
Killary to Delphi

Today we leave Connemara, with one last glorious morning pedal taking the adults through Letterfrack and Tully Cross, while the kids play or colour Celtic illuminated letters at the hotel. The generations meet this morning at the Killary Sheep Farm, where Tom Nee and his dog Sweep will show how sheep herding’s done. We’ll then walk into “the mountain,” with stunning views of Killary Fjord, where we’ll learn a bit about peat and try our hand at peat cutting. Back at the barn, we’ll see how old-fashioned scissor-shearing is done, then bid Tom goodbye. It’s a quick downhill cruise for everyone on the bikes to the lovely village of Leenane, where families can go their own way for lunch together among the pubs and tea rooms. Parents then remount the bikes for the afternoon ride around the head of Killary Bay, while kids go off ahead with a B&R guide to the hotel to do some secure climbing on their rock wall. (Children under age 7 can play at the hotel’s wonderful Kid’s Club). Dinner tonight will be at our hotel.

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Days 4 & 5
County Mayo and Westport

The next morning the kids stay put at the hotel to practice their archery aim (children under age 7 can play at the hotel’s wonderful Kid’s Club), as the grown-ups bike a glorious route across the verdant, windswept landscape to Louisburgh. Everyone meets up for a picnic lunch featuring deliciously fresh Irish cheeses, weather permitting, or for a fun diner lunch with the famous “Louis Burger.” Our afternoon ride then brings us into the shadow of Croagh Patrick, towering over the beautiful blue-green of Clew Bay. At the head of the bay we’ll roll into Westport, a vibrant market town. After check-in and some time to freshen-up – the hotel spa is a good option here – we’ll shuttle into town where you and your family are free to explore and find a restaurant for dinner among the town’s numerous options.

HOTEL
Delphi Mountain Resort, Delphi
The perfect spot for active families, DMR prides itself on offering experiences, not stays. Organized on-site activities are the resort’s forte, with options galore for children of all ages. Adults will appreciate their relaxing Delphi Spa.

THE BIKING
Day 3: A 43 km (27 mi.) rolling ride on the Connemara Loop and around Killary Fjord. Kids bike 16 km (10 mi.).

Other questions?
Contact us 800 678 1147
info@butterfield.com
The final day reserves a treat: a morning jaunt along the Great Western Greenway, a new bicycle-only path born of a long-defunct railway line. Leading north, the Greenway uses both old trestles and newer bridges as it crosses rivers and traverses glens and farms. Depending on our pace, we can stop for independent lunches in either Newport or at the path’s terminus in Mulranny if you choose to go that far. Either way, after lunch we say goodbye to our bikes as we transfer back to Westport where, after some freshen-up time, we walk or shuttle down to the Westport House and Pirate Adventure Park for some history and fun. Then, it’s back to the hotel for a celebratory dinner together with, weather permitting, tremendous views of Croagh Patrick on the horizon. It makes for a perfect final image of a great trip.

**HOTEL**

*Westport Plaza Hotel, Westport*

This comfortably chic four-star property boasts a warm Irish welcome and spacious, understated rooms. With a spa, bistro and popular bar which draws the locals, it’s located steps from the heart of lively Westport town.

**THE BIKING**

**Day 4:** A 44 to 52 km (27 to 32.5 mi.) rolling ride to Louisburgh and then on to Westport. Kids ride 21 km (14 mi.).

**Day 5:** A 13 to 21.5 km (8 to 13.5 mi.) up-and-down ride for everyone along the Greenway dedicated bike path, with the option to extend another 18 km (11 mi.) all the way to the end of the path in Mulranny.

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**Day 6**

**Farewells**

After breakfast this morning we’ll drive you down to the Westport station in time to catch the Dublin train.
Fáilte roimh Éirinn!

By Marya Valli

Travel is fun, rewarding and energizing. Beautiful landscapes of sea, moor and mountain, rich history traced in stones and towers, and fresh local cuisine all feed the soul. But what makes some places shine is the local people and how much they enjoy life, and how much they share that fun with us travellers. By that measure, Ireland tops the list!

From a coffee chat which leaves you giggling, to a pint at the pub with the local sheep farmers (who won’t let you go after just one glass…), to the joyous and easy chat with which every waiter cheers you, the Irish are naturally and unpretentiously welcoming. They might tease you for your “Yankee” accent, but that’s the extent of the language barrier. Everyone has a cousin in the States or an uncle in Canada, and everyone wants to share a tale and to hear yours.

The Irish have known more than their share of strife, so they take the recent economic downturn with irony and in stride. Especially in wild, beautiful Western Ireland, in the Connemara and County Mayo of loughs and hills, life has never been easy but ready smiles and “it’s no bother”s do make it sweeter!

Perhaps it’s the contrast of the windy, every-changing skies with this bright human warmth that’s so appealing. The lonely, dramatic landscapes where you feel small in nature’s shadow are yin to the warm pub and lively music’s yang. Laughter comes easily here, with gentle irony, and joy bubbles up like the frothy head of a Guinness. That’s the craic. And the more you soak it in, the less you want to leave!

B&R TRIP PLANNER
Marya Valli
A native Seattlite, Marya traded in her rainy days and a career with Microsoft to explore the world as a B&R guide. An avid cyclist and master of four languages (or so), she has led over 140 trips for us around the globe and is a whiz at joie de vivre and rare wine varietals (often found together in one smiling glass!) Between planning trips in the corners of Europe, her heart has finally settled in Corsica, the Isle of Beauty. A little French, a little Italian, with a strong character all its own.
the details

HOTEL TYPE
Bistro Hotels
Hotels on our Bistro trips are stylish 4-star properties that offer a casual and comfortable place to relax and reflect on the day. Often without a 24-hour concierge or room service, these properties tend to be smaller family-run hotels that work perfectly for experiencing the region.

LEVEL OF ACTIVITY
Enthusiast
The terrain is generally up or down, with rare flat sections. That said, the climbs are generally neither long nor steep. Daily distances average around 42 km (26 mi.) for adults, with a couple of challenging longer options available. The kids’ average ride is about 16.5 km (10 mi.) Please be advised that on this trip only adult hybrid bikes are available, in both men’s and women’s styles, as well as e-bikes and a range of children’s equipment. Please call for details.

RADISSON BLU HOTEL & SPA, GALWAY CITY
radissonhotelgalway.com
Located on Lough Atalia, steps from Eyre Square but peacefully facing the water, the Radisson Blu’s inspiring views, lovely terrace and understated chic décor make it the perfect base for exploring Galway.

WHAT’S INCLUDED
• All hotel accommodation
• All breakfasts, two lunches [three for kids] and four dinners, including wine and Guinness
• Services of B&R guide(s) and support van
• All special events, private tours, guest experts and entrance fees
• Use of a hybrid bike fitted to your personal specifications, and equipped with handlebar bag and helmet
• Detailed maps, route suggestions and water bottle
• All transportation from rendezvous to drop-off
• All gratuities for baggage, porters and hotel service

MORE INFO
How do I get to Galway City?
Your likely point of arrival into Ireland will be either Dublin Airport or Shannon Airport, served by domestic and international carriers including Ryanair. From Dublin’s Heuston Station, there are up to 8 trains daily to Galway’s train station, just off Eyre Square [from €15, 2 hours 20 min. See www.irishrail.ie]. Be sure to arrive at least half an hour early as many trains are popular and seats are not guaranteed. From Shannon, your Travel Advisor can help to arrange a private transfer to Galway City, taking about 1.5 hours.

2015 Price:
From $4,495
($300 single supplement)

Single supplement is based on the most affordable rooms within B&R’s allocation. Upgrades often available.

Duration
6 Days / 5 Nights
Please see our website for list of departures.

Start
Galway City
Radisson Blu Hotel & Spa
9:30am

Finish
Westport
Train Station
10:30am

Other questions?
Contact us 800 678 1147
info@butterfield.com
your next steps

At Butterfield & Robinson, the guiding starts while you’re still at home. We make sure you know everything you need to know before you’ve even left your living room.

READY TO BOOK?
- Call or email a Travel Advisor (or your travel agent) with any remaining questions, and to reserve your space.
- Reserve your flights to and from the region.
- Book your night before hotel.
- Make sure your passport is up to date.
- Enquire after travel insurance.

Once you are confirmed on a B&R trip, you will receive a Confirmation Email that links to tons of information to help you prepare for your trip. Then, about a month before you leave, we will send you a list of your fellow travellers, final rendezvous instructions and your hotel contact numbers.

ROOM UPGRADE
If you would like to upgrade your accommodation on this trip, please enquire at time of booking to learn cost and availability.

EXTENDING YOUR TRIP
Dublin is one of the great cities in the world, so chances are you will want to spend time there either before or after your trip. There are several recommendations for where to stay and what to do while in Dublin included in the Confirmation Email you will receive upon booking. We’ll also happily recommend a city guide if you want an insider’s tour of Dublin.

PHOTO CONTEST
While on your trip, keep in mind you can win some great prizes with the B&R Photo Contest. We’ve created three categories that capture the true spirit of B&R adventure: Faces, Places and Moments. Submit your top shots and show us how you see the world with B&R. Full details are at www.butterfield.com/photocontest.

In the meantime, if you have any questions about your B&R experience—big, small or downright quirky—please call a Travel Advisor, or contact your travel professional. We are always happy to help.