The Land of Saints and Scholars

Faité 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.

THE B&R DIFFERENCE
“I have never seen so many shades of green and trying to count them all eventually proved impossible. We did try to capture all the beauty Ireland has to offer and again this proved to be impossible but we brought home the memories of this amazing country.”
Linda Moudry, Ireland Biking

Other questions?
Call us at 800 678 1147
The three most famous symbols of Ireland are the green Shamrock, the harp, and the Celtic cross.

the journey

Days 1 & 2  
Coastal Connemara & Clifden

We rendezvous this morning in Galway City, the bustling capital of its namesake county, and drive west into the heart of Connemara. In less than an hour we arrive to a little village, where we meet our bikes and begin our first ride north through dramatic, remote landscapes of granite and bog, with many small lakes, inlets and gorgeous mountains in the distance. En route we’ll stop for lunch at the remote Screebe House, a rustic and elegant fishing and hunting lodge with lovely gardens and a view of the water. Our ride then continues into the heart of Connemara, getting closer to the mountain ranges, through some wild, treeless, open bogland. Arriving at our fairy-tale castle, tonight we’ll enjoy classic Irish specialties in the gorgeous hotel dining room overlooking the river and the dramatic foothills of the nearby Twelve Bens, with perhaps a tune or two to round out the day.

The next morning, our ride takes us past a bodhran (traditional Irish drum)-making shop in the charming port of Roundstone for a brief demonstration of how they are made and played. The route then rolls beautifully along the coast into the town of Clifden, the unofficial capital of Connemara, where you’re free to explore on your own for lunch. The afternoon’s optional ride along the Sky Road affords an absolutely spectacular view of Clifden Bay and the Atlantic, while the regular route simply meanders back on peaceful country roads. Join our local friend and historian John tonight for a pint and a bit of an introduction to Irish and Connemara history, before tucking in to some delicious pub fare in our hotel’s very own, very lively public house.

HOTEL
Ballynahinch Castle, Recess
From its serene surroundings to its newly renovated dining room overlooking the Owen river, this 16th C castle is a Connemara gem you may never want to leave.

THE BIKING
Day 1: A 53 km (33 mi.) rolling ride through the spectacular bogland and granite-dotted hills to Recess.
Day 2: A 52 km (32 mi.) undulating coastal loop to Clifden, with a breathtaking (in more ways than one!) optional loop adding another 16.5 km (10 mi.)

Other questions?
Contact us 800 678 1147
info@butterfield.com
Days 3 & 4
Saint Patrick & County Mayo

After a typical hearty Irish breakfast, today brings another glorious route across the windswept landscape between the Maumturk Mountains and the Twelve Bens. If you get an early start, you can opt for a detour to the superb Kylemore Abbey. On a lough of the same name, Kylemore is the only Benedictine community in Ireland, and worth a short free-flow visit to its rooms and, especially, gardens. But don’t miss our rendezvous with some woolly friends! At the Killary Sheep Farm we’ll meet Tom Nee and his dog Sweep, who show us how sheep herding is 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. Bidding Tommy goodbye, it’s a quick downhill ride to the shores of Killary Fjord, where our friends and shellfish farmers Kate and Simon Kennedy will treat us to an al fresco seafood feast (alternatives will be available if shellfish isn’t your thing). After lunch, Simon will show us all about the cultivation and harvest of oysters and mussels. A boat then awaits to whisk us across a brilliant shortcut, landing just a few clicks from Delphi Lodge, though if your legs are itching for more clicks we have a gorgeous long option around the fjord for you too.

Tonight we’ll shuttle together into Leenane for a pint at the pub with lots of local colour, then savour a delicious dinner at our favourite local restaurant the Blackberry.

After a delightfully peaceful night, we’ll set off today into County Mayo, between the Mweelrea Mountains and the Sheefry Hills en route to Louisburgh, perfect for a coffee stop. Our route then takes us into the shadow of Croagh Patrick, the highest peak in the region, which towers over the beautiful blue-green of Clew Bay. At the head of the bay we’ll roll into Westport, a vibrant market town, via its bright little port. Lunch options abound, then you might decide to pop in for a visit of the Westport Historic House, an 18thC construction built upon the foundations of one of Pirate Queen Grace O’Malley’s castles and one of Ireland’s most attractive 17thC homes. In the afternoon you can hop a shuttle back to the hotel, or challenge yourself with a gorgeous winding road back through the Sheefry Hills. Tonight our host Mick will regale us with a bit of famine history, sharing some of the context behind the 19thC disaster which forever changed Ireland, particularly the west coast. Dinner tonight will be at the hotel, gourmet fare around their convivial wooden table.

HOTEL
Delphi Lodge, Delphi
An 1830s country house, Delphi Lodge sits on a silent lough amid spectacular natural beauty. Delphi prides itself on being an experience more than a hotel, and truly the options to be active beyond biking are legion. Try your hand at snooker or grab some tackle to engage in its legendarilly good fishing.

THE BIKING
Day 3: A 35 km (21.5 mi.) rolling ride between lakes and valleys to Killary Fjord; a long option around the Fjord adds 19 km (12 mi.)
Day 4: A 40 km (25 mi.) ride up the valley and along the coast below Saint Patrick’s mountain; the optional afternoon ride offers a challenging additional 32 km (20 mi.)
Day 5
Joyce Country

Today’s route brings us back around the still waters of Killary Fjord, before we strike out for the lovely, wild remoteness known as Joyce Country after a ruling Welsh family who settled there in the late Middle Ages. Dramatic sweeping views abound as we ride past Loughs Na Fooey and Corrib. We’ll stop in a cozy pub for some chowder or soup and good brown soda bread, then it’s just a wee bit further to our spectacular castle home for the evening. We’ll gather to toast our week before dinner in the beautiful dining room, with a spot of music to round out the fun. Slainte!

HOTEL
Ashford Castle, Cong
Set amidst 140 hectares (350 acres) of private woodland on the shores of Lough Corrib, the 13thC Ashford Castle belonged to the Guinness family in the 19th C and its recent renovation has restored its legendary luster.

THE BIKING
Day 5: A 52 km (32 mi.) of sweeping vistas with a few good climbs and quiet road through Joyce country.

Day 6
Farewells

After breakfast this morning we’ll transfer you just over an hour back to Galway in time for the Dublin train. Your guides would be happy to help you arrange a private transfer to Dublin or Shannon airports.
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” 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 Seattleite, 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**

*Signature Hotels*

Hotels on our Signature trips are unique expressions of the region. Oftentimes that means they've had a previous life as a monastery or a castle, but in every case it means they offer both an exceptionally comfortable stay and a taste of the region’s culture. Best of all, we’re friends with our hoteliers. (Translation? Preferential treatment for you.)

**LEVEL OF ACTIVITY**

*Enthusiast*

The terrain is generally up or down, with rare flat sections until the final two days. That said, the climbs (and descents) are generally neither long nor steep. Daily distances average around 46 km (28.5 mi.), with a couple of challenging longer options available.

**WHAT’S INCLUDED**

- All hotel accommodation
- All breakfasts, three lunches and three dinners, including wine
- Services of B&R guide(s) and support van
- All special events, private tours, guest experts and entrance fees
- Use of a customized hybrid or a racing bike with drop bars, equipped with handlebar bag and helmet.
- Detailed maps, route suggestions and water bottle
- 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 five trains daily to Galway’s train station, just off Eyre Square (from €29, 3 hours). 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.

---

**2016 Price:**

From $4,995

($500 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
9:00am

**Finish**

Galway city
Train Station
10:30am

---

The itinerary information may vary slightly for your specific departure as we continuously research and develop each trip. Inclement weather may also necessitate minor alterations. Prices are per person and in USD. © 2016 Butterfield & Robinson Inc.

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.
  1-800-678-1147 / info@butterfield.com
• 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.

FIND US ON FACEBOOK
www.facebook.com/ButterfieldandRobinson
Like B&R on Facebook and get the latest news and photos from the road, updates from guides and more.

YOUR BIKE
We pride ourselves on having the very best equipment for each activity and locale, maintained by expert staff and custom tweaked just for you. To learn about our biking equipment and see pictures of what you’ll be riding, visit us at butterfield.com/about/equipment/bikes. And don’t forget that we will modify your bike to accommodate most special gear requests. Just ask.

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.

STAY IN TOUCH!
Sign up to receive The Slow Road our e-newsletter that is full of travel news, unique offers and B&R insider info.

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.