

Gwynedd Mercy High School Alumnae Family and Friends

Ireland - June 15 to 24, 2020



Visit the Emerald Isle, where you will encounter magical moments, memories to treasure and experiences that you will want to return to again and again... When you explore Ireland, you will wander through lush, green lands, tales of feuding dynasties hide behind crumbling Gothic architecture; ghostly tombs predate the pyramids; and knights, kings, monks and Vikings loom large in incredible stories. Few coasts have seen such comings and goings as this one. The Irish cliffs, harbors and beaches have been besieged by Vikings, visited by Titans of the sea, and have welcomed world leaders and the Irish diaspora home. Track inland and you'll find fascinating histories, too, in the shape of isolated monasteries, riverside castles and some of the most beautiful gardens in the world. World renowned for our warm welcome and genuine sense of fun, Ireland boasts the best of both worlds, where history, culture and breathtaking scenery meets top standard facilities, wonderful entertainment and friendly people.

Day 1 - Monday, June 15th - Depart the USA on your Trans-Atlantic flight to Dublin, Ireland (Flight details to be advised)

Day 2 –Tuesday, June 16th – Welcome to DUBLIN – Ceád Mile Fáilte – “One Hundred Thousand Welcomes” to Ireland! Arrive into Dublin Airport. Collect your luggage from the baggage claim area and make your way out to the arrivals hall where you will meet your driver guide & escorted to your awaiting motor coach. Depart the airport and stop for Tea/Coffee and scones with cream and jam (Venue to be advised). Visit Malahide Castle & Gardens – Malahide Castle and Gardens is one of the oldest castles in Ireland and is set on 260 acres of land. This magnificent & historic 12th century castle has been home to the Talbot family for over 800 years. Explore the history of Malahide Castle and Gardens by looking at the lives, experiences and adventures of the Talbot Family. An interactive exhibition area is located on the ground floor of the Castle. Upon entering visitors will enjoy meandering their way around the caverned exhibition where the history of the Talbot Family is retold, not forgetting their ghostly residents, before embarking on a guided tour throughout the reception rooms of this magnificent landmark! The ornamental gardens adjoining the castle cover an area of about 22 acres and were largely created by Lord Milo Talbot. He was an enthusiastic plant collector and brought specimens from around the world to create the gardens. Travel into Dublin City to check into the hotel for overnight - The capital of the Republic of Ireland sits on a splendid bay at the mouth of the River Liffey with the foothills of the Wicklow Mountains rising from its southern suburbs. It is internationally noted for its writers, Georgian architecture, witty natives and the production of Guinness! Enjoy some free time to explore the city before dinner at the hotel. Visiting Dublin is like taking a great big breath of fresh air. Always invigorating, this Viking city is at once modern and historic, exciting and relaxing. But how will your Dublin adventure begin? With a walk through the grounds of Trinity College & a visit to the Book of Kells? Aboard the Jeanie Johnston Tall Ship on the River Liffey? With a pint of Guinness in a local pub? Alongside the wild deer in the Phoenix Park? With a visit to the medieval crypt in Christ Church Cathedral? Or walking through 1,000 years of story-filled history? Take a walk around the city and you'll stumble upon ancient history at every turn. Maybe you'll find yourself charmed by picture-postcard villages along the coast. Or you could simply ignite your passion in a good old Dublin pub, frequented by the wordsmiths who called and call this UNESCO City of Literature home. We can't tell you how your Dublin adventure should unfold. But we can suggest this: take a deep breath and let Dublin do its thing. Dinner & overnight at the Ashling Hotel Dublin City or similar (D).

Day 3– Wednesday, June 17th - DUBLIN CITY & GUINNESS After breakfast this morning visit the Mercy International Centre, 64A Lower Baggott Street, Dublin 2 – Catherine McAuley's first house of Mercy - On June 22nd 1824, Catherine McAuley leased from the Earl of Pembroke property at the corner of Baggott Street and Herbert Street, in southeast Dublin, at a cost of £4,000, and an annual rent of £60 for the purpose of building a large house for various kinds of religious, educational, and social service of poor women and children. The house was restored in 1994 and is now the Mercy International Centre and home to the Mercy Family from all over the globe. People from many countries come to visit Catherine's original foundation. The house is a centre of hospitality to all who come. It is a place of pilgrimage and renewal for those who want to spend time and touch into the spirit of Catherine. Her chapel, room and grave are special places of pilgrimage. It is a Heritage Centre and holds many precious memorabilia belonging to Catherine. As well as representing the origins of the Sisters of Mercy and its links with the past, the Centre calls and challenges the Mercy family of today to hear the cries of the poor. In the afternoon meet a local guide for a half day panoramic tour of the city. View some of the city's scenic highlights on a narrated drive through Dublin City, including the River Liffey, the Customs House, O'Connell Street, the GPO (General Post office), the Four Courts, Christchurch Cathedral, St. Stephen's Green and Leinster House. Visit the Guinness Storehouse - Located in the heart of the legendary St. James's Gate Brewery in Dublin, this production site has been home to the Guinness Brewery since 1759, when Arthur Guinness signed a lease for 9,000 years. The Guinness Storehouse building dates back to 1904 and is built in the style of the Chicago

School of Architecture. It was once the fermentation plant of the brewery and is now a seven-story visitor experience dedicated to the history of the making of this world-famous beer. The Guinness Storehouse is the Home of Guinness, where you will discover what goes into the making of each, and every pint and learn about the incredible brand history stretching over 250 years. The tale unfolds across seven floors shaped around a giant pint, which, if filled would contain 14.3 million pints of Guinness. As you make your way through the impressive storehouse, discover the age-old art of brewing that makes Guinness so distinctive; visit the Tasting rooms, a multisensory tasting experience designed to help you appreciate the distinctive taste of the iconic stout, from the very first velvet sip to the last lingering drop. The highlight for many visitors is the Gravity Bar, symbolically the 'Head of the Pint', where visitors can enjoy unparalleled panoramic views of Dublin city – views that are all the better with a complimentary pint in hand. See the Phoenix Park which is the largest enclosed public park in any capital city in Europe. It was originally formed as a royal hunting Park in the 1660s and opened to the public in 1747. A large herd of fallow deer still remain to this day. The Park is also home to the Zoological Gardens, Áras an Uachtaráin (where the president of Ireland resides), the U.S Ambassador's residence, Ashtown Castle and Victorian flower gardens. The Phoenix Park is only a mile and a half from O'Connell Street. Overnight at the Ashling Hotel, Dublin or similar (B)

Day 4– Thursday, June 18th– Kildare, Cashel & Cork This morning after breakfast the group will travel to County Kildare to visit the Irish National Stud & Japanese Gardens. Nowhere better symbolizes all that is great about County Kildare, the beating heart of Ireland's thoroughbred industry, then the stud, a unique attraction of outstanding natural beauty that is home to some of the most magnificent horses and sumptuous gardens to be found anywhere in the world. The Irish National Stud & Gardens is the only stud farm in Ireland open to the public offering daily tours. On the grounds are the world-famous Japanese Gardens, a horse museum and St. Fiachra's Garden, created to celebrate the Millennium. Continue to the town of Cashel (meaning castle or fortress) in County Tipperary. Possibly have some free time for refreshments in Cashel (Lunch not included – pay directly) before visiting one of Ireland's great historical sites - the Rock of Cashel. Towering over the town from its perch on a 200-foot-high outcrop of limestone, the Rock was once the seat of the Kings of Munster. It was visited by St. Patrick in 450 and Brian Boru was crowned King of Ireland here in the 10th century. Granted to the church in the 1100s by the O'Brien clan king, the Rock became the seat of the archbishop and it was at this time that Cormac's Chapel was built. In 1647 the Rock was ransacked by Cromwellian forces under the leadership of Lord Inchiquin. Today the impressive stone walls enclose a round tower, the cathedral, a 12th century Romanesque chapel, high crosses and other structures. The gothic cathedral dates back to the 13th century and includes a central square tower and living quarters. The steps of the tower lead to the summit roof walk. The smaller structure of Cormac's Chapel displays some typical Romanesque features while the Hall of the Vicar's Choral at the entrance to the Rock is a 15th century house which has been recently restored. Dinner & overnight at the River Lee Hotel, Cork City or similar (B,D).

Day 4 – Friday, June 19th – Blarney & Killarney. This morning after breakfast travel to Blarney village. Visit Blarney Castle - Situated 8km from Cork City, this historic castle is most famous for its stone, which has the traditional power of conferring eloquence on all who kiss it. The word "Blarney" was introduced into the English language by Queen Elizabeth I and is described as pleasant talk, intended to deceive without offending. The stone is set in the wall below the battlements, and to kiss it, one has to lean backwards (grasping an iron railing) from the parapet walk. In the grounds of the castle the Rock Close, and its surroundings, is a curious place of ancient trees and far more ancient stones, by legend a garden of druidic origin and a centre of worship in pre-Christian days. The place has an aura of magic and mystique with Wishing Steps, Witch's Kitchen, Druid's Cave and many other delights telling a story of centuries past. Blarney Castle Estate offers visitors the chance to stroll in one of the country's most spectacular gardens. Blarney Castle & House are set in acres of parkland filled with rare and unusual trees and plants. Continue the tour to Killarney, County Kerry – Killarney (meaning "church of the slopes"). The town is on the northeastern shore of Lough Leane, which is part of the Killarney National Park. The town and its hinterland is home to St Mary's Cathedral, Ross Castle, Muckross House & Gardens, the Lakes of Killarney, MacGillycuddy Reeks, the Gap of Dunloe and Torc Waterfall. Owing to its natural heritage, history and its location on the Ring of Kerry, Killarney is a popular tourist destination. The group will then have a Jaunting Car tour - No visit to Killarney would be complete without taking a Jaunting Car Tour of Killarney National Park. Renowned for their wit and charming storytelling, a local jarvey will guide you through the park on a horse drawn cart regaling you with local history, stories of old and Irish legends. The Jaunting Car is an absolutely unique way of touring the National Park. Dinner & overnight at the Great Southern Hotel Killarney or similar (B, D).

Day 5 – Saturday, June 20th – Killarney & Mini Ring of Kerry this morning after breakfast the group will visit the world renowned Muckross House & Gardens, situated amidst the spectacular scenery of Killarney National Park. The elegantly furnished rooms portray the lifestyles of the landed gentry, while downstairs in the basement one can experience the working conditions of the servants employed in the house. The gardens of Muckross House are renowned worldwide for their beauty. They are noted for their fine collection of Azaleas and Rhododendrons, an extensive water garden, and an outstanding rock garden hewn out of natural limestone. Explore "the Mini" Ring of Kerry - The Ring of Kerry (or Iveragh Peninsula) is a tourist trail and part of the mystical & unspoilt region of Ireland that has attracted visitors for hundreds of years. While touring the Ring of Kerry, gain an amazing insight into the ancient heritage of Ireland - see the Iron Age Forts & Ogham Stones, Old Monasteries and a landscape carved out of rock by the last Ice Age 10,000 years ago. Pass through parts of the Killarney National Park on a journey that takes you on steep and narrow roads through Ireland's highest mountain range, the MacGillycuddy Reeks. Travel over Moll's Gap before you stop for a photo at the scenic point at Ladies View with magnificent panoramic views of the three Lakes of Killarney and primary mountains. - Queen Victoria's ladies-in-waiting visited here during the royal visit in 1861. They were so enraptured with the view that it was named after them. Overnight at the Great Southern Hotel Killarney or similar (B).

Day 6 – Sunday, June 21st – Clare & Galway. This morning after breakfast travel to Tarbert Co. Kerry for a 20 minute passage across the beautiful Shannon Estuary to Killimer, Co. Clare. A gateway between the South and Mid-West', Shannon Ferries offer an unrivalled ferry service between counties Kerry and Clare, saving travelers a huge 137 kilometers and an hour and a half of driving while taking you directly into the heart and soul of Ireland's Wild Atlantic Way! Visit the Cliffs of Moher - Ireland's most visited natural attraction with a magical vista that captures the hearts of up to 1 million visitors each year. The Cliffs rise up to 214 (700 feet) at the highest point and range for 8km over the Atlantic Ocean on the Western seaboard of Co. Clare. Visit the eco-friendly visitor centre which operates using environmental best practices & features a state-of-the-art Cliff's

exhibition. Travel further through County Clare and into an area known as the Burren - The Burren, in County Clare is a region of outstanding significance in terms of its geology, geomorphology, natural history and archaeology. The Burren encompasses 360km² of gently inclined plateau with a further 200km² of lowland to the east of the plateau. The limestone also has a landscape in miniature etched into exposed slabs of rock. The bare surfaces are fretted with hollows and channels where acidic rainwater has selectively dissolved the rock. An extreme example of these micro landforms occurs on the coast. Continue to Galway - Galway City at the mouth of Galway Bay is both a picturesque and lively city with a wonderful avant-garde culture and a fascinating mixture of locally owned specialty shops, often featuring locally made crafts such as hand knits, pottery, glass, jewelry and woodwork. See Eyre Square, the centre piece to Galway City, which was officially presented to the city in 1710 by Mayor Edward Eyre, from whom it took its name. In 1965, the square was officially renamed "Kennedy Memorial Park" in honour of US President John F. Kennedy, who visited here shortly before his assassination in 1963. The Spanish Arch was originally a 16th century bastion, which was added to Galway's town walls to protect merchant ships from looting. At this time, it was known as Ceann an Bhalla (Head of the Wall). Its current name "Spanish Arch" refers to former merchant trade with Spain, whose galleons often docked here. Dinner & overnight at Ardilaun Hotel Galway or similar (B,D).

Day 7 – Monday, June 22nd - CONNEMARA After a full Irish Breakfast this morning you will have a tour of Connemara, one of the most beautiful and mysterious regions in Ireland. Its endless mountains, lakes and wild landscape will stay with you forever. Travelling through the Connemara rugged landscape, the stacks of turf, the Connemara ponies and the crannogs begin to unfold. Many of the inhabitants of Connemara are Gaelic/Irish speaking. The Irish language (Gaelic) is the everyday spoken language in large areas of Connemara known as the 'Gaeltacht'. The people are warm, friendly and extend a hospitality which is the essence of Ireland. Visit the 1000 acre estate of Kylemore Abbey and Gardens, home to Ireland's only Benedictine community of nuns since 1920. Experience the Victorian atmosphere of the restored rooms in Kylemore Abbey and stroll along the lakeshore walk to see the miniature Gothic Church. Explore the magical 6-acre Victorian walled garden where only Victorian varieties of flowers and vegetables are grown and take a look around the Head Gardener's House. Vegetables and herbs from the garden are used in the café where they offer traditional home cooked food made to the recipes of the Benedictine nuns. Continue your scenic tour of Connemara, where in 1951 John Ford's greatest movie "The Quiet Man" starring John Wayne, Maureen O'Hara and Barry Fitzgerald was made. It was set in the beautiful west of Ireland with filming being centered in the village of Cong on the Mayo-Galway border. Time permitting visit Pat Cohan's Pub, which featured as part of a scene in the film. Return to Galway City for the rest of the evening at your own leisure and to overnight at the Ardilaun Hotel or similar (B,D).

Day 8 – Tuesday, June 23rd – Dromoland & Bunratty Enjoy a leisurely morning in Galway. Travel southwards to Dromoland Castle for afternoon tea - A long-standing tradition at Dromoland Castle. Named for a long-standing member of their staff, Mrs White's Afternoon Tea, is a feast fit for royalty. You'll enjoy the prettiest selection of treats: scrumptious finger sandwiches, warm scones with clotted cream and homemade jams, delicate pastries, their signature tea brack and the sweetest confections. Of course, their specially selected loose-leaf teas from around the world are served in sparkling silver teapots, alongside the prettiest china. Travel back towards Ennis for some free time. Ennis derives from the Irish word 'Inis' ('island') and was first founded on an island between two courses of the River Fergus. Throughout the town, you'll find oddities like a Jacobean chimney stack above a modern business on Abbey Street and several jostle stones designed to protect carriage wheels and corners - like those at the intersection of Kilrush Road and Carmody Street. A full history of Ennis and indeed County Clare, can be gained at Clare Museum on Arthur's Row. Original artefacts here tell the tale of Clare over the millennia, with recent displays ranging from a 19th-century well, to Daniel O'Connell and Eamon De Valera – local parliamentarians both. O'Connell, the 19th-century patriot and great Catholic Emancipator, also keeps vigil over the town from his Doric column on O'Connell Square. From here, you can explore in several directions, along narrow streets, a lively market square and bridges crossing the fleetly-flowing Fergus. The Gothic-Revival Cathedral of SS Peter and Paul, with its imposing belfry, is another landmark. Ennis friary was founded in 1240, when Franciscans were befriended by the O'Brien King of Thomond. Its church and limestone cloisters are crawling with medieval carvings (don't miss the image of St. Francis with stigmata on the nave) and the east window is a real show-stopper. Sliced by five tall and narrow lancets, it pours light into a chancel riddled with the tombs of bygone aristocrats. Dinner & overnight at the Old Ground Hotel, Ennis, Co. Clare or similar (B,D).

Day 9 – Wednesday, June 24th - Depart Shannon Airport after breakfast this morning, a coach will transfer the group from the hotel directly to Shannon Airport in time to check in for their departure flight (Flight details to be advised). (B)

\$2588.51 per person / Land tour double occupancy

Single Room Supplement **\$1036.86** supplement per single (Max 5 Single rooms)

The above price is inclusive of: Accommodations, hotel tax, Full Irish breakfast daily. Dinners as noted, Tea/Coffee and Scones on day of arrival Touring motor coach with driver guide as per the itinerary, inclusive of driver's overnight accommodation & meals. One Group airport transfer included on day of arrival & departure. Half Day Dublin panoramic tour with a local Dublin city guide, Entrance fee to Malahide Castle & Gardens; Guinness Storehouse; Irish National Stud & Japanese Gardens; Rock of Cashel; Blarney Castle; Muckross House & Gardens; Jaunting Car Tour; Cliffs of Moher; and Kylemore Abbey & Gardens. Porterage of max one Suitcase/Bag per person is included at the hotels – Any additional bags are paid directly to porters if required. Service charge & local taxes.

Comprehensive Travel Insurance Coverage available (cancellation due to legal or medical reasons)

Trip Cancellation - up to amount of trip cost

Trip Interruption - up to amount of trip cost

Emergency Medical/Dental – PRIMARY up to \$25,000.00

Emergency Medical Transportation - up to \$500,000.00

Baggage Loss/Damage - up to \$1,000.00 Baggage Delay - up to \$300.00

Travel Delay - up to \$800.00 (up to \$200.00 per person/per day)

Missed Connection - up to \$800.00

*Insurance premium is based on travelers' age:

Age up to 35 \$151.00 / Age 36-45 \$145.00 / Age 46-50 \$154.00 / Age 51-60 \$186.00 Age 61-65 \$206.00

Age 66-70 \$236.00 Age 71-75 \$298.00 / Age 76-79 \$376.00 – under age 18 traveling with adult FREE

(please ask for insurance premium for ages over 80)

Additional insurance available to cover cost of airfare – please ask for details.

Payments: – check or credit card (one per room)

Group size: Group rate is based on 20 passengers, rate may change if group size falls below 20 passengers

Cancellation penalty:

Date of deposit to 120 days prior: \$100.00 per person

119 to 90 days prior: \$500.00 per person

89 to 31 days prior: 50% penalty

30 to 00 days prior to departure: 100% penalty no refund

Not Included: Meals, beverages, and sightseeing other than that which is listed in the specific itinerary, passport fees, visa fees and bank charges, any item of a personal nature including dry cleaning and valet services, additional baggage fees.

Passport: A valid U.S. Passport is required for all U.S. Citizens traveling to Ireland.

Health Requirements: Travelers must be medically and physically fit for this tour. This tour requires significant walking, as motor coaches are not permitted to pick up and drop off in front of major attractions.

Responsibility: Spring House Travel and its affiliates, associates, employees or any other person or company utilized by Spring House Travel in any country are not responsible for events beyond their control such as injury, damage, loss, accident, delay or irregularity which may be occasioned either by reason of defect, through the acts or defaults of any company or person engaged in conveying passengers or in carrying out the arrangements of the tour, or as a direct or indirect result of acts of God, dangerous incidents in the air, sea, land, fire, breakdown of machinery, acts of Government or other authorities de jure or de facto, whether declared or not, hostilities, civil disturbances, strikes, riots, theft, epidemics, quarantines, medical or customs regulations, or from any loss or damage resulting from improper passports, visas or other documents. Spring House Travel will not be held responsible for loss or additional expense due to delay or changes in schedule or other causes and shall not be liable for any inconvenience, annoyance, property loss and/or damage or injury arising in connection with such services. Spring House Travel shall not be responsible for the clients failure to follow instructions, including but not limited to check-in and delay nor will Spring House Travel and its affiliates be responsible for any person(s) missing any part of the program due to negligence, delay or absenteeism for any time during the tour nor for any additional expenses for the participant to rejoin the tour. Moreover, no changes or upgrade in the program chosen will be honored after departures as well as no refund will be given for any services not utilized. The operator reserves the right to decline to accept or retain any person as a member of any tour at any time, and a refund for the unused portion of the tour is the limit of its liability in such an instance.