



# MEJDI TOURS

## MEJDI Tours Group Departure

**Tour:** A Country Divided: A Dual Narrative of Ireland

**Dates:** April 21-30, 2021; October 20-29, 2021

### Itinerary:

#### **Day 1: Arrival - Belfast, Northern Ireland**

Arrive in Belfast. Visit the innovative and engaging Titanic Belfast Museum, an exploration of emigration, the shipyards, and maritime industry that shaped this historic city. Continue on to Belfast Castle, for a scenic city view and discussion with a historian about the Plantation of Ulster and the history of the Troubles of Belfast. Enjoy a welcome dinner with a local historian at your hotel this evening.

*Hotel: Clayton Hotel, Belfast (D)*

#### **Day 2: Belfast: A Dual Narrative**

Today, hear competing political narratives of Ireland's national history from two guides, one Catholic and the other Protestant. Explore the Crumlin Road Gaol and walk through the history of the Penal Laws and War of Independence. For lunch, head to a traditional Irish pub and meet with former fighters, followed by a visit to the Healing Through Remembrance museum. This afternoon, check out the Botanical gardens and the C.S Lewis room at Queen's University. Then, meet with a journalist to learn about current affairs in Northern Ireland before enjoying dinner on your own.

*Hotel: Clayton Hotel, Belfast (B, L)*

#### **Day 3: Today's Belfast**

Continue on today to tour the Loyalist monuments and colorful political murals of Shankill Road. Visit a local Protestant church, and learn about the issues facing the Unionist community. After lunch, learn about the many efforts to end the conflict. Start with a walk down the Peace Wall, an ever-changing message board of political slogans and graffiti and a litmus test for current sentiments in the surrounding neighborhoods. Take time for reflection at the Art of the Troubles gallery in the Ulster Museum, and meet with a local organization that has been working toward Catholic-Protestant reconciliation. This evening, unwind at a local pub in town, share a pint with new friends, and tap your foot to some live Irish music.

*Hotel: Clayton Hotel, Belfast (B, D)*

#### **Day 4: Dunluce Castle, Bushmills Distillery, & Giant's Causeway**

Today, take a trip up the Antrim Plateau, past the Glens to the northern coast of Ireland. Start with Dunluce Castle, one of the most impressive in Northern Ireland. For lunch, stop at Bushmills Distillery, the world's oldest licensed whiskey distillery in the world. Afterwards, enjoy brisk coastal breezes at the swaying Carrick-a-Rede Rope Bridge (weather permitting) and visit Giant's Causeway, whose hexagonal volcanic formations have earned it's distinction as a UNESCO World Heritage Site. There, hear charming tales of the Celtic giant for whom the site was named. learn about Northern Ireland's economy and the efforts for joint ventures with Catholics and Protestants.

*Hotel: Maldron Hotel, Derry (B, L)*

#### **Day 5: Diving Deeper into the Troubles**

In Derry, learn about the harrowing events of the Battle of the Bogside and Bloody Sunday. See the Free Derry Corner, and walk through the People's Gallery, a series of political murals dedicated to the victims of the Troubles and local civil rights efforts. Meet with families of victims of the Troubles and hear their stories. Then, walk the ramparts of Derry's walls, constructed during the Plantation of Ulster to defend the English and Scottish settlements. In the afternoon, meet with an expert on conflict resolution and learn about how the good Friday agreement came to fruition. Enjoy dinner on your own and rest of the evening at your leisure.

*Hotel: Maldron Hotel, Derry (B)*

#### **Day 6: Derry to Galway**

This morning drive towards Sligo, meet with a local expert to learn about the author W B Yeats and Irish literature, then continue to visit the Tobernalt Holy Well, a tranquil place of reflection used for religious ceremonies. Afterwards, continue to Galway for an evening cultural tour of the city.

*Hotel: Menlo Park Hotel, Galway (B)*

#### **Day 7: Gaelic Culture & The Beauty of Connemara**

Visit Cnoc Suain where you will partake in their cultural and natural history program, followed by a home-cooked lunch. Then visit Kylemore Abbey, located in the Kylemore Pass in Connemara. The house is one of the most photographed and admired properties in the west of Ireland. Return to Galway for dinner on your own.

*Hotel: Menlo Park Hotel, Galway (B, L)*

#### **Day 8: Galway to Dublin**

Arise early this morning and depart for Dublin. Upon arrival, dive deeper into Irish history at the Kilmainham Gaol museum. Then, continue on to explore Trinity College on a student-led tour of campus. Visit Long Library, where you will learn about the legacy of Catholicism in Ireland and set eyes on the renowned Book of Kells, an illuminated manuscript of the Gospels.

*Hotel: The Gresham Dublin (B)*

**Day 9: Modern-Day Dublin**

Depart to Glasnevin to visit Glasnevin Cemetery and Museum to hear the stories of Michael Collins, Daniel O'Connell, and other foundational figures in modern Irish history. Visit the EPIC Emigration Museum to learn about the Irish diaspora and emigration to other countries. Free time this afternoon to explore the city further. This evening, meet the group for a farewell dinner and traditional Irish evening of music and storytelling at the Merry Ploughboy Pub.

*Hotel: The Gresham Dublin (B, D)*

**Day 10: Departure**

Depart for home today. *(B)*