



# Irish Art and Culture Through the Ages



Folklore, archaeology, history  
and culture in

The Kingdom of Kerry

&

In Dublin

Secrets of the Stones Tours, LLC

Led by Siobhán Molloy Slack

May19-29, 2012



You are invited to join us in a rich and varied tour in Ireland, including the Kerry coastal areas, and ending with sites in and around Dublin. The Kingdom of Kerry is one of the most spectacularly scenic places in the world, that is also rich with deep layers of the past. The arts of the ancient people who lived here will come alive

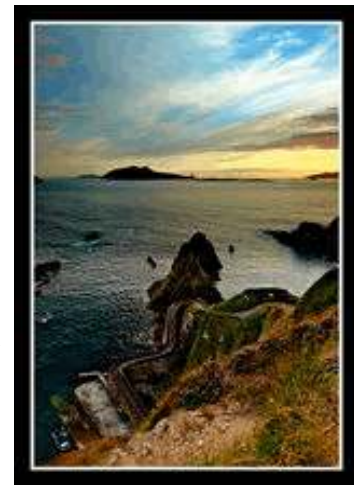
through the stories in the landscape, and what still remains from the people who have gone before, reflecting the history, culture and beliefs of this place from the earliest

inhabitants through this century. The theme

of this tour is art and culture. We shall see the artwork as it evolved over time: from

Neolithic stone carvings and structures, to medieval sculpture and intricate metalwork, to contemporary jewelry, painting, ceramics and sculpture. We will trace the symbols and designs used through the ages, looking at rock

art, Celtic high crosses, gold and silver engraving, amazing stone sculptures, and illuminated manuscripts, weaving history and legend as we go.



This rich history will be revealed through:

- learning about Irish history, heritage, folklore and mythology as we visit villages, heritage sites, museums, galleries, and artist's studios.

-visiting ancient sites, villages and structures such as stone circles and alignments to the sun- absorbing the landscape and breathtaking scenery as we imagine the people who lived along these coasts, in these mountains, and established these villages

-visiting the World Heritage site, Neolithic Newgrange, as well as the Book of Kells exhibit and several Dublin museums and historical places of interest



What makes this trip different is the in-depth experiences we provide, and the unusual places we visit Unlike other tours that speed through place after place, our goal is to go deeper, get “ into” the landscape, and learn how history was shaped. You will gain an intimate appreciation and

understanding of the history and landscape- its flora, fauna and numerous archaeological and historical monuments We will experience Irish culture first hand through meeting local people, musicians and artists as we visit the Iveragh, Dingle and Beara peninsulas. We hope to provide you with a sense of the real Kerry- its nature, culture and heritage. We'll do this by going off the beaten track... on remote mountain passes...along the windswept coastal cliffs at Culloo ...in valleys nestled beneath the MacGuillycuddy Reeks and in sheltered coves and sandy beaches, that all hide a myriad of secrets. Local guides will transform the experiences into lifelong memories. Expect to see some of the most spectacular places and be drawn into an Ireland most people never experience!



### Trip Overview:

We will begin this journey in the southwest of Ireland, arriving at Shannon airport, and spend the first part of the tour with the Iveragh Peninsula as our base. We will be lodging in Ballinskelligs, a rural area next to the sea, full of enchanting lanes, sandy beaches, and mountain views in most directions. Each day will be a mix of visits to historical



and archaeological sites, with plenty of time for discovering the unique bird life along the coasts, taking photographs, and absorbing the atmosphere of the landscape. We will stop for tea and lunch in different villages, with time to wander and visit local heritage sites and art galleries. Some evenings we will visit pubs and restaurants in the area, to hear Irish music and possibly take part in ceili dancing. Other evenings we will make a meal at our lovely seaside guesthouse, which has a fireplace and large living room. After a train ride to Dublin, the latter part of the trip will include amazing sites near Dublin, and staying right in the city center. At this time our plan is to stay at Trinity College apartments, based upon availability. If not available, we will stay at a guesthouse near St Stephen's Green,



just at the end of fabulous Grafton Street, full of shops, musicians, wandering poets, and street theater. We'll walk the area the Vikings had settled, and talk about the political uprising in this century as we see the sites where it all happened. Departure will be from Dublin airport. We hope that the arrangements will give you a wonderful balance of the ancient landscape and rural Ireland, mixed with the lively beat and interesting history of Dublin. Our primary local guide in Kerry will be Dan O.Meara. He is an archaeologist, has worked and traveled extensively in Asia, North Africa, South America and Europe. Now settled in Ballinskelligs, he operates "Hidden Kerry" tours, guiding visitors to the lesser seen but beautiful attractions Ireland has to offer. Outside of travel, his other passions include kayaking, photography, anything prehistoric and a few pints of the black stuff after a good days hiking.

A typical day will involve orientation, perhaps some background and history of the sites on the itinerary after breakfast. We are often out for the entire day, stopping for lunch, tea or coffee, and



doing a variety of things in a given day. Some free time will be built into the schedule, for special interests such as photography, shopping, birdwatching, and stops at artist's studios and galleries. Kayaking and deep sea fishing, as well as a golf game, are also possible ideas for free time! Some evenings we will stop at a restaurant or pub on the return trip; other nights we enjoy aperitif (wine, cheeses, snacks, tea, etc.) and recap the day's events, discuss the next adventure, and perhaps have a meal at our guesthouse or walk to the local seafood restaurant.

A detailed itinerary will be sent upon registration (please call if you have any questions regarding the itinerary). One can expect to be outdoors much of the time, with as little time on the mini-bus as possible! Walks will be moderate in pace and terrain. You should be in good physical health, and able to walk on uneven terrain for short distances. The size of these tours is limited to groups under 14 people, a perfect size for ease of travel, camaraderie, and a more one-to-one atmosphere. Since space is limited, we encourage you to register early.

Comments from past tour participants:

"My travel experience with Joan leading the group was above and beyond my expectation. Joan's research into so many areas of interest about the sites and folklore made the trip stimulating and insightful without being overloaded. She is a seasoned guide with great in country connections and a sincere love of the land she travels. I highly recommend Joan Slack as a tour guide. You will have a wonderful, memorable time. I did." Jean Harper, artist/educator

"Joan organizes her trips like she creates her art: beautiful, practical, and full of meaning. I'd never been on a group trip before. Joan's voyage to Orkney was a joy, every day. It's one of the very best adventures of my life." Catherine P.



### **Accommodations and Food**

We will be staying in the beautiful, historic and quaint village of Ballinskelligs, near the Ring of Kerry, in the Ballinskelligs Cottages, which are lovely large homes overlooking the ocean. We'll begin each day with filling breakfast which is included in the trip cost, complete with coffee and tea, fruit and an assortment of choices both hot and cold. For lunches we will stop at a pub or café for soup and sandwiches. Evening meals will be at various restaurants and pubs in the area, some evenings with the option of fixing a meal at "home" in our large kitchen. Lunches and dinners are not included, but snacks and "aperitif" will be. Rooms are shared, with 2-3 people per room. In Dublin, we will be staying at Trinity College apartments, which have single and double beds and private baths, or a nearby guesthouse with shared rooms, single beds for those wishing one. Breakfast is included each day, lunch and dinner is not.

Every effort has been made to keep the cost for this trip affordable, yet with all the amenities. **The price for this trip is \$1995 per person**

### **What is included in the price:**

-Full time tour guide services, coordination of all day trips and events, pre-trip preparation and planning

- Transportation in mini-bus after arriving at Shannon airport (be sure to coordinate with leader before booking airfare)
  - all ground transportation throughout the trip in a comfortable mini-bus with local driver  
Included is one way train fare to Dublin from Killarney and airport shuttle to Dublin airport
  - Lodging for the entire trip. Price is based upon 2-3 sharing an en-suite room with your own bed.  
If a single room is required, a supplement of will be charged. Please ask about the cost.
  - Snacks and aperitif      -Breakfast every day
  - All tour guides and admission fees, heritage cards, admission and fees for demonstrations and special events in itinerary
- \*please note: We will arrive at Shannon (SNN) airport, and depart from Dublin (DUB) airport. There are often fare sales in the next few months, especially from hub cities, and once the trip is full we hope to watch carefully for good deals. At the last check, airfare from Chicago was approximately \$850

**Price does not include:**

- lunches and evening meals (allow about \$8-10 for lunch and \$10-20 for dinner. Note: kitchen facilities are available at our lodging)
- personal items
- tips for guides and meals (We usually pass-the-hat at the end of the week for the bus driver and guides, of course, at your discretion)
- travel to and from Ireland and any travel outside of tour dates
- insurance for health, luggage, transportation, cancellation/interruption
- any extra sightseeing, taxis, or tickets/transportation for optional events

**About your Tour Leader:** I am the owner, artist and teacher at Riverrun Center for the Arts ([www.riverrunarts.com](http://www.riverrunarts.com)) in northern Wisconsin, and hold degrees in Art, Ceramics, English and Education. I have taught at all levels, and currently offer classes and national level workshops in Pottery, Tile-making, Sculpture, and Felt-making. I sell my artwork in my own gallery and at many others in the Midwest, and lead international tours annually.



I have been leading study tours for several years, both through our local college and independently. We have traveled to Mexico, Scotland, Ireland and France, and the focus of my trips is a blend of culture, archaeology, art, nature, and engaging with the people and history of the place. While in graduate school I began to study the archaeological sites of Ireland and Mexico from a potters perspective. This has led me down a fascinating path, visiting and learning from the incredible sites that still exist, such as the prehistoric painted caves of the Dordogne Valley in France, the cairns and solar passage structures of Ireland, the exquisitely engineered pyramids of Mexico, and the prehistoric stone circles of Scotland. Mysteries still abound with these places, and the journey of discovering more about them is a fascinating one, one that I hope you will share with me. I hold dual citizenship as an Irish- American and have a long held love for the people and culture, past and present, of Ireland, and have many connections with family and friends in Eire, which lends to creating a unique tour for you. My goal as your tour leader is to

bring the knowledge of art, history and culture that I have gained in my studies and travel to create an intimate and unforgettable experience in Ireland. I will provide you with a safe, comfortable and inspiring trip...one that you will deeply enjoy and never forget. As many who have taken tours with me know, I do not repeat the same trip twice, so if you are yearning to see deeper and go into a new world of experiences in one of the most beautiful, mysterious, and [fascinating places on Earth, please join us! Find out more about Kerry at www.discoverkerry.ie or www.dinglepeninsula.ie](#)

**About our Philosophy:** In these times, we all need to be cognizant of sustainability, ecology, global warming issues, and making travel responsible. I try to extend the length of the trip rather than make it short to offset air travel. Every effort is made on my trips to work with local people, patronize small businesses, and use sustainably grown, local products and foods. Costs for you are kept as low as possible by staying in guesthouses, rather than large chain hotels-this supports the local economy and allows for a much more “real” experience. Going deeper and traveling fewer miles also supports this philosophy. My trips also include walks and learning about the local flora and fauna, what issues face them, and what can be done to protect and preserve the natural world of the places we visit. By doing this, it is our hope that you return with a deep respect and reverence for other places, feel your connection to them, and bring that to the place you call home. We also encourage you to register for tracking your carbon footprint as you travel, and plant a tree whenever you take a trip via airplane! You can do that at many web sites such as [www.climatepath.org](#) [www.earthlab.com](#) [www.carbonfootprint.com](#)

### **Registration information**

Space is limited for this tour, and the spaces will be filled on a first come-first served basis. Usually the trip fills by early January, so do not delay in sending your deposit! The tour is based upon 10 people minimum, with a maximum of 14, and may be cancelled if that minimum is not met with a full refund. You can reserve your space by sending a \$500 deposit and the registration form as soon as possible. Please do not book airfare until I confirm the tour is full and have coordinated dates and times with you. The balance of your payment will be due March 1, 2012. Once full, a waiting list will be developed. Please send your deposit to:

Joan Slack  
P.O, Box 95  
McNaughton, WI 54543

Please feel free to call Joan with any questions at:  
715-277-4224 -Work 10-5 cell: 715-550-0858  
715-277-2773- Home evenings

### **Refund and Cancellation Policy:**

All cancellations must be in writing. There is no refund for partial or unused land arrangements. The following policy applies toward refunds: Up to 3/1/12, deposit less \$100 per person handling fee, plus any unrecoverable deposits for lodging, busses or staffing; period of 3/1/12-4/14/12, \$500 deposit plus any unrecoverable payments as stated above April 15, 2012 or after – NO REFUND.

The tour cost is per person based on tariffs and currency valuations as of November 2011, requires a minimum of 10 people, and is subject to confirmation. Once we attain the required number of people, confirmation will be sent to all registered. Do not book air travel until the

confirmation is received. If the trip needs to be cancelled, deposits will be returned in full, unless the problem is beyond our control, in which case, unrecoverable deposits may be deducted from the refund. While we will do everything possible to maintain the listed price and/or itinerary, they are subject to change due to circumstances beyond our control. This price is based upon quotes from lodging, guides and rental services in November 2011, and based upon an exchange rate of \$1.45/ Dollar equaling 1.00/ Euro. Since the exchange rate and quotes from vendors and guides can fluctuate, and prices may have to be adjusted at the time of the trip in to reflect the changes if considerable. Single rooms may have limited availability and are on a first-come, first served basis only, and will require an extra charge. To register for the tour please fill out the form, sign the waiver of responsibility, and mail with your deposit to Joan Slack, address above. Please feel free to share this brochure with people who may be interested in this type of travel experience.

### Registration Form

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Telephone #:home \_\_\_\_\_ work \_\_\_\_\_

Cell phone#: \_\_\_\_\_

E-mail address: \_\_\_\_\_

Roommate preference: \_\_\_\_\_

Food allergies, special diet or concerns:

Are you in good health? Do you have any health issues we should know about? Please list prescription medications you are using .or healthcare instructions (strictly for safety should you require hospitalization)

Emergency contact information: please give name, relationship and phone numbers

Additional comments ? (Use the back side if needed)

## **WAIVER OF RESPONSIBILITY**

The Course Instructor (hereafter referred to as “CI”), Joan Slack, gives notice that all arrangements made by her as agent upon the express conditions that she shall not be responsible for any damage, injury, loss, accident, delay or irregularity which may be occasioned either by reason of any defect of vehicle, or through the acts of default of any company or person engaged in conveying the passenger, or in carrying out the arrangements of the study tour, or otherwise in connection therewith, nor does she accept responsibility for losses or additional expenses due to delays or other changes in means of transportation or other services, due to sickness, weather, strikes, or other causes.

The right is reserved to make such alterations, deletions, additions, or modifications in the itinerary, program, or accommodations as may be found necessary by the instructor.

The CI, and agents of the CI will not be acting in a supervisory capacity during the study tour and accordingly do not accept responsibility for the activities or safety of participants. In addition, CI shall bear no responsibility for medical expenses resulting from illness, injury, or accident which occurs on the tour. Participants are encouraged to be adequately insured, both for health and travel.

Participants are expected not to deviate from the established itinerary without prior approval from CI. If for any reason a participant must leave the tour before completion, no refunds will be allowed. CI reserves the right to ask a participant to leave the tour due to behavior that may endanger the safety of the group.

My signature certifies that I have read the “Waiver of Responsibility” and that I agree to the conditions thereof.

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Signature of participant

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Date