

JOURNEYS

Go Off the Beaten Path in Ireland with This Eco-Friendly, 7-Day Itinerary

Journey the Wild Atlantic Way and Ireland's Hidden Heartlands on a trip that helps preserve and protect the island through epic train journeys, sustainable dining, urban adventure, and the expansive outdoors.



Centuries-old limestone walls on the Aran Islands Courtesy of Jessica Knowlden/Unsplash

From the wild Atlantic coastline to the lush, welcoming heartlands, the island of **Ireland** offers countless immersive experiences for the eco-savvy traveler. On this heart-filling itinerary, find yourself spirited away on an adventure through lesser-known corners of the destination, filled with opportunities to minimize your carbon footprint along the way. Originating in Shannon and taking advantage of easily accessible public transit (including dreamy train trips), this seven-day itinerary combines cityscapes with nature, stylish stays with wild encounters, and fine dining with heart-healthy activities. It's a trip that will leave you feeling good in more ways than one.

ITINERARY

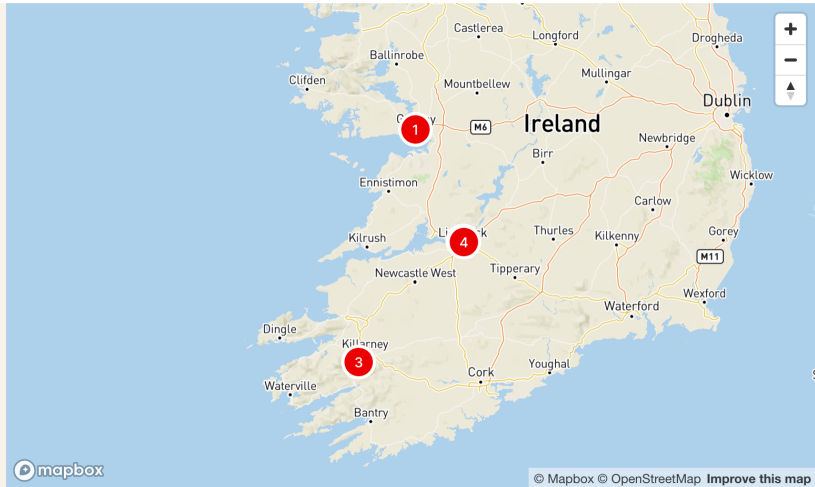
DAYS 1-2: Culture (Including Music) in Galway

DAY 3: Explore the Aran Islands

DAYS 5-6: Outdoor Adventures in Killarney National Park

DAY 7: Journey to Shannon

PLAN YOUR TRIP



TRIP HIGHLIGHT

Michelin Green-Starred Dining

Dive into the island's freshest flavors in Galway at Kai Restaurant with dishes such as Inis Mor crab, hogget rump, and apple tart tatin with whiskey and vanilla ice cream. A focus on locally sourced organic or wild ingredients helped earn a Michelin Green Star.

TRIP DESIGNER

Tourism Ireland

From Ireland's energetic cities to the island's awe-inspiring landscapes, Ireland.com has everything you need for planning a life-changing journey. Discover scenic train journeys, immersive road trips, culture-rich towns and villages, outdoor adventures, and more for the ultimate travel experience.



Middle Street, Galway City Courtesy of Fáilte Ireland

Days 1-2: Culture (Including Music) in Galway

Day 1: Explore Galway (including a day in County Clare)

After arriving at **Shannon Airport** in County Clare, hop on Bus 51 from the airport to the **city of Galway**. Take in the expansive vistas during the two-hour trip, soaking in your first views of Ireland's **Wild Atlantic Way**. Check into **The Twelve Hotel** for a truly local, three-night stay, and head back into the city to get your blood moving.

Walk the city's cobbled Latin Quarter, named for Galway's historic ties with Spain, and discover landmarks like the Spanish Arch, St. Nicholas' Church, and the shop-filled High Street. Breathe in a seaside sunset along the Salthill Promenade, then return to your hotel for a bite at the onsite **West Restaurant** which draws on local food producers to help support the region and give guests an authentic taste of the West of Ireland.

Spend day two touring **Galway's** vibrant street art scene, exploring by bike or foot for an eco-friendly way to get around. You'll find that murals abound, particularly in areas like Newtownsmith near the Hidden Arch, Quay Lane, Upper Abbeygate Street, Salthill Upper, and Father Burke Park. Keep an ear out for live music, both from street buskers and from the many pubs holding traditional music sessions seven days a week. And, if your timing is right, you might just happen upon an event like the Galway International Arts Festival or the Latin Quarter Gin Fest in this celebratory "City of Festivals."

For those seeking historic art, the neo-Gothic **Galway Cathedral** boasts stained-glass windows and a grand organ, while the Hall of the Red Earl showcases over 11,000 artifacts and medieval structures dating back to the 13th century. Top off your day with an award-winning dinner at Michelin Green-Starred restaurant **Kai**, renowned for its deliciously seasonal menu and other sustainable practices.

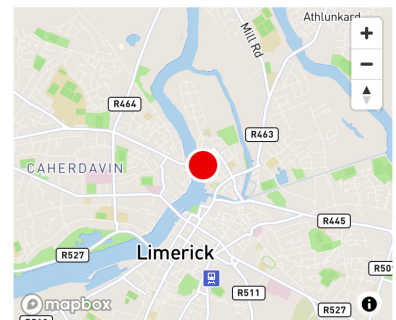


King John's Castle in Limerick Courtesy Cathy Wheatley/Tourism Ireland

Day 3: Explore the Aran Islands

Witness dramatic cliffs, ancient ruins, and a warm Irish welcome with a day trip to Inis Mor, the largest of the **Aran Islands**. After skirting the Cliffs of Moher on your ferry journey there, immerse yourself in Atlantic culture, from live music and traditional handicrafts to awe-inspiring scenery and historic stone forts. From April–September, depart directly from Galway City Decks to Inis Mor on a 90-minute scenic voyage with **Aran Island Ferries**. During the winter months, take a 45-minute shuttle bus between Galway's Victoria Place and Rossaveal Port in Connemara, followed by a 40-minute ferry journey to reach the island.

Reward yourself for a day well-traveled with a meal at sustainably minded **ArdBia at Nimmos**, a restaurant known for flavorful culinary offerings, including whiskey-cured trout and hand-rolled pappardelle with Galway goat cheese, and its charming setting within a two-story townhouse built in the 1600s.





Killarney National Park Courtesy of Tourism Ireland/Hu O'Reilly

Days 5–6: Outdoor Adventures in Killarney National Park

Spending the next two days exploring Ireland's first and largest national park, [Killarney National Park](#). Encompassing more than 25,000 acres of diverse ecology, this wildlife haven offers glistening lakes, dense woodlands, and rugged mountains, including Macgillycuddy Reeks, Ireland's highest mountain range.

Hit the trails on foot or horseback and make a point to visit some of the park's waterfalls like Torc and Innisfallen. If you'd prefer to take to the lakes, enjoy the solitude of nature via boat tour, keeping an eye out for red deer, foxes, badgers, otters, sika deer, and birds along the way. Wrap your day of quietude with a warming meal at The Killarney Park Hotel.

Return to the park in the morning, this time to see its historic sites. Travel to the park by bus directly from Killarney town to Muckross House or pedal there on one of your hotel's classic Pashley cycles. Check out [Ross Castle](#), a 15th-century tower house located on the shores of picturesque Lough Leane, the largest of Killarney's lakes.

Next, head to nearby Muckross Abbey, founded in 1448 as a Franciscan friary, for a glimpse into Ireland's religious history. Finish your tour at [Muckross House and Gardens](#) and admire the 19th-century Victorian mansion as well as its extensive gardens. After the sightseeing, tuck into a meal with a view at the onsite [Muckross Garden Restaurant](#).





Limerick's Milk Market Courtesy of Tourism Ireland

Day 7: Journey to Shannon

Enjoy your final morning in Killarney town and travel back to Shannon Airport via Bus 300 to Bus 34, enjoying the colorful Irish vistas and perhaps a bit more sightseeing in Limerick where you'll get your connecting bus. Or, if you're heading back to Dublin, hop on the Tralee Service train for a straightforward journey back to Dublin Heuston Station.

Prior to returning to the U.S., you'll go through the U.S. Preclearance process at Shannon or Dublin airport, which helps you to complete customs before departure and simply relish in the memories of your trip when you land.



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