

The best MARCO POLO Insider Tips

Our top 15 Insider Tips



INSIDER TIP Smelling salts...

To see the spectacular natural wonder of the Cliffs of Moher (up to 656 ft high) from the boat is a particularly intense experience. An added bonus of this trip, buffeted by the waves of the Atlantic: you can observe puffins and other sea birds nesting at other inaccessible sites → p. 76

INSIDER TIP Teatime in the park

Lunch or afternoon tea at *Muckross Garden Restaurant* in Killarney: the large terrace with views of the old greenhouses and the Victorian landscaped park of the manor house is unique → p. 60

INSIDER TIP Peninsula in the rough Atlantic

At some 60 miles, the *Ring of Beara* is a great alternative to the better-known (and oh, so busy) Ring of Kerry; also, the Beara Peninsula boasts lush vegetation and a dramatic coastline → p. 62

INSIDER TIP A pub in the far west

Small, unpretentious and famous with all fans of Irish folk: the owner of the *Matt Molloy's* pub in Westport is Matt Molloy, no less, who's been playing the flute with the Irish band The Chieftains for over 30 years → p. 78

INSIDER TIP Over Dublin's rooftops

Croke Park stadium is not just for playing football – the *Skyline* tours take you up onto and around its roof → p. 36

INSIDER TIP B & B in the castle

The classiest B&B in all of Ireland, without a doubt: reside between antiques in the wings of historic *Bantry House* – some rooms even have a view of Bantry Bay (photo right) → p. 55

INSIDER TIP And the eagle flies...

In *Eagles Flying* in County Sligo, you can experience up close birds of prey in flight → p. 83

INSIDER TIP Look to the stars

Once used to determine the temperature of the moon, this ancient telescope is still working perfectly – get a closer look at Birr Castle → p. 92

INSIDER TIP Shopping in the manor house

Jams in Victorian terracotta pots, sugar rock in luminous colours: the products for sale at the *Avoca Store* in Powerscourt House are a visual treat → p. 45

INSIDER TIP By cable car onto the lonely island

Nothing for scaredy-cats: the dramatic 30 m/100 ft cable-car trip leads across the spectacular Dursley Sound to the rocky Atlantic islet of Dursley Island → p. 62

INSIDER TIP Whiskey tasting

The Old Jameson Distillery counts amongst the oldest and most important in Ireland. Visit the distillery in Dublin and taste some excellent whiskey → p. 36

INSIDER TIP For lovers of Irish folk music

Find out how a bodhrán drum is hand-made the traditional way from goat skin in Malachy Kearns' workshop *Roundstone Music and Crafts* → p. 76

INSIDER TIP Amongst dolphins and seals

Captain Raymond Ross knows where to best observe marine mammals. Joining his *Seafari* guarantees a close encounter with nature and typically Irish humour (photo left) → p. 114

INSIDER TIP Souvenirs, souvenirs

Ceramics from Nicholas Mosse, magnificent aquarelles: At *Courtyard Crafts* in Schull, you can buy splendid works of arts and crafts and be inspired for free → p. 57

INSIDER TIP Jazz & folk

The finest pub culture: Traditional Irish music to sing along to several times a week in Sligo at *Sheela-Na-Gig* → p. 84



BEST OF...

GREAT PLACES FOR FREE

Discover new places and save money

● Ormond Castle

Nearly all of Ireland's castles charge an entrance fee. The pretty Renaissance-era *Ormond Castle* in Carrick-on-Suir is a pleasing exception → p. 93

● Old Masters

An oasis of calm and the arts, Dublin's *National Gallery of Ireland* is the place to enjoy European masterpieces and to have arts students guide you through the exhibition rooms – for free → p. 36

● James Joyce live!

In *Sweny's Pharmacy* in Dublin, where Leopold Bloom (main protagonist of "Ulysses") purchased his lemon soap, you can browse through the volumes of poems, read literature journals, drink tea and listen attentively to inimitable readings → p. 37

● Local history in a contemporary setting

Housed in modern architecture on the banks of the Corrib, the *Galway City Museum* takes you on a journey into the past → p. 71

● Art at the customs house

The small charming *Crawford Art Gallery* in Cork is off the beaten tourist track. Enjoy the calm, stylish atmosphere, take in paintings and precious artefacts found in the region – no charge! → p. 49

● Street parades for St Patrick

On 17 March, as well as the days before and after, the *St Patrick's Festival* in Dublin lets you experience how the Irish celebrate their patron saint: with street parades, dance and colourful events (photo) → p. 116

● Art in neoclassical surroundings

Free of charge: at the *Royal Hospital Kilmainham* in Dublin, Ireland's largest neoclassical building, beautiful rooms are given over to the *Irish Museum of Modern Art (IMMA)* as well as an arts centre → p. 36

●●● Dots in guidebook refer to "Best of..." tips

ONLY IN IRELAND

Unique experiences

● Ireland's rough beauty

To experience the wild side of Ireland, head for the Aran Islands off the west coast. Discover *Dun Aengus*, an Iron Age fort perched on the edge of a cliff above the Atlantic, buffeted by the wind for over 2,500 years now (photo) → p. 74

● Pubs: places of inspiration

Ireland's greatest writers had a stool with their name on it, and Irish musicians played their first gig in pubs. The *Dublin Literary Pub Crawl* and the *Musical Pub Crawl* through the nightlife hub of Temple Bar allows you to follow in their footsteps → p. 41

● Celtic high crosses

Come real close to Celtic spirituality: the high crosses standing in the grounds of the ruined monastery of *Monasterboice* are the highest – at over 6 m/19.7 ft – and arguably the most beautiful in all of Ireland → p. 44

● Gone to the dogs

At the dog races, at the *Greyhound Stadium* in Cork for instance, you sit next to betting harbour labourers and fishermen, students and housewives. Cheer on the greyhounds with them, and indulge in the passion of the common man, which today runs through all social levels → p. 57

● Folk music with country folk

Every year in August, folk music lovers meet at the *Fleadh Cheoil na hEireann*. Do as the Irish fans do: make music and have a dance at the many small festivals in villages and small towns → p. 116

● Garden delights

For two weeks in June, garden owners who have come together under the *West Cork Garden Trail* umbrella open their gates, giving insights into the fantastical world of wild flowers, orchids, rhododendrons, tropical trees and Himalayan cedars → p. 58

● Round tower in the ruined monastery

Mystical Ireland: to admire the most beautiful of the country's nearly millennial freestanding round towers, head for *Glendalough*. The tower belongs to the crumbling monastic settlement of the same name, one of the most mysterious places in the country → p. 44



ONLY IN



DISCOVERY TOURS

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IRELAND AT A GLANCE

START: ① Dublin

END: ⑰ Sligo

Distance:

→ approx. 1,200 km/756 miles

10 days

Driving time
(without stops)

40 hours

COSTS: approx. 1,400 euros (train, bus, accommodation, Ring of Kerry circular route, hire car, bicycle hire, admission, food)

WHAT TO PACK: swimwear, hiking shoes, rain jacket

IMPORTANT TIPS:

⑥ **Ring of Kerry:** book the circular route by bus in your hotel or travel agency beforehand!

⑪ **Cliffs of Moher:** car hire from e.g. **Enterprise Car Hire** (Park Street / Limerick | www.enterprise.ie)

⑭ **Connemara:** bicycle hire from **Bike Hire Ireland** (Seamus Quirke Road / Galway | tel. 091 5250 07 | www.bikeireland.com)

Every corner of the earth has its own special charm. If you want to explore all the many different facets of this region, head off the beaten track or get tips for the best stops, breathtaking views, hand-picked restaurants or the best local activities, then these customised discovery tours are just the right thing. Choose the best route for the day and follow in the footsteps of the MARCO POLO authors – well-prepared to navigate your way to all the many highlights that await you along the tour.

Although this tour takes you to some of Ireland's most splendid landmarks, it also offers unusual insights into the country and its people.

The tour kicks off in ① **Dublin** → p. 32. Discover the city centre by foot and take a **trip on the Liffey:** Ships from **Dublin Discovered Boat Tours** → p. 34 harbour at **Bachelors Walk**. Take a break sitting high above this vibrant city's rooftops at the roof-terrace bar on the **Guinness Storehouse** → p. 35. Then visit the **Trinity College Library** → p. 38, to see the centuries old long room and

DAY 1

① Dublin

