



*Fresh Eire Adventures*

# IRELAND - CONNEMARA CASTLE & MANOR

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BIKE TOUR

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# IRELAND CONNEMARA CASTLE AND MANOR TOUR



Discover Ireland's Co Galway & Co Mayo. Connemara is a dream guided biking vacation. Fresh Eire Adventures includes local guides, van support, bikes, hotels & most meals. Connemara is our most popular tour for a very good reason. It boasts a unique glacial landscape which is stunningly beautiful and we use charming inns and hotels that serve outstanding meals using ingredients often fresh from the rivers, lakes and seas you are overlooking while having dinner.

It is an area of breathtaking beauty; the Twelve Bens mountain range are visible at all times, the Maumturks in the distance, Sky Road, Roundstone (in our opinion Ireland's prettiest village), Kylemore Abbey, Lough Inagh Valley, the majestic Killary Fjord (Ireland's only fjord), Lough Corrib, 13th century Ashford Castle...it's just breathtaking. The back roads we use are quiet and are mostly flat although there are a few rolling hills. Sky Road (optional) is probably the biggest challenge.





### Day 1, Sunday

On Sunday we meet in Galway city centre (your choice of hotel, train station or bus station) and transfer to Maam Cross, just beyond Oughterard, the gateway to Connemara. We'll bike towards the sea, along bog rivers and enormous granite boulders, wild flowers and gorse. You won't be alone of these quiet roads however - you'll be sharing them with sheep! We bike along Cashel Bay and onward to Roundstone; the prettiest village in Ireland where we'll check into our first hotel. Luxury Package guests won't ride as far as Roundstone today; they'll check into their hotel on the Owenmore River, the magnificent Ballynahinch Castle - spiritual home to the ancient and wild O'Flaherty clan! Classic guests will continue to Roundstone where they will stay in the cozy family-owned Roundstone House Hotel. Tonight we'll all dine together in a fantastic local restaurant in Roundstone village.

**Classic Hotel: Roundstone House Hotel**  
**Deluxe Hotel: Ballynahinch Castle**

### Day 2, Monday

After a 'Full Irish' on your second day, those on the Luxury package will start biking at 9 am and continue to Roundstone where they will join the rest of the group. Together we'll leave Roundstone and cycle towards the capital of Connemara, Clifden, where we will have lunch in this buzzing market



town. Clifden is one of Ireland's newest towns founded by John Darcy in the mid-19th century. Home to the Connemara Pony Show and a thriving arts scene, this unique, brightly coloured town has something for everyone. In the afternoon we'll take the bog road home to our respective hotels. Dinner tonight is at your hotel.

**Classic Hotel: Roundstone House Hotel**  
**Deluxe Hotel: Ballynahinch Castle**

### Day 3, Tuesday

After breakfast on our third day, Tuesday, the Classic group will depart at 9.30 am to meet the Luxury group at 10am at Ballynahinch. We will rendezvous at Ballynahinch Castle and take a brief tour of the gardens together. Afterwards, we'll enjoy a coffee in the Castle Pub before we take off together towards Dan O'Hara's Heritage cottage. We'll enjoy a visit of a Famine-era cottage and learn about the skill involved in preparing turf; the local fuel made from dried peat. Then we'll cycle on a bike path into Clifden. You're free for lunch today and we recommend Mitchell's restaurant, the best in Clifden. This afternoon, we'll ride up Sky Road and enjoy breathtaking views before continuing our ride to a lovely Manor House in Letterfrack, Rosleague Manor, where we all will stay together for two nights and enjoy an exquisite meal.

**Classic & Deluxe Hotel: Rosleague Manor**

## Day 4, Wednesday

The next morning, we'll ride around the Renvyle Peninsula, passing the ruined castle of Grace O'Malley the Pirate Queen, before having lunch in Kylemore Abbey. You'll have time to explore the magnificently restored Victorian Walled Garden, the Abbey itself and visit the ornate mini cathedral. Afterwards, we'll take wonderful hike up Diamond Hill - the views are spectacular! Those with a hankering for a real challenge in the saddle can go on an extra 8-mile loop; Creggs is not for the faint-hearted and extreme caution is advised! Returning to Rosleague Manor, you can relax in the Conservatory or take a seat on on the lawn overlooking the calm water of Ballinakill Bay...the view is even sweeter with a delicious pint of Guinness in your hand. Dinner tonight will be on your own. We'll transfer the group to Clifden where you can choose from a wide variety of restaurants to suits all tastes. Afterwards we'll all meet up and go to a 'trad session" - in an authentic (locals only) pub



where traditional Irish musicians gather to play tunes. Be sure to bring your camera as some of the performances are not be missed.

**Classic Hotel: The Leenane Hotel**  
**Deluxe Hotel: Lough Inagh Lodge**





### **Day 5, Thursday**

After another wonderful breakfast on Thursday morning, you'll be sad saying goodbye to Mark and Loretta at Rosleague but another great adventure awaits. We'll ride our bikes through Tully Cross and along the Atlantic coast one last time, passing Lettergesh Beach, famous for the horse racing scenes from the movie *The Quiet Man*, and alongside the tranquil shores of Lough Fee and Lough Muc. We'll sample the finest mussels for lunch in Leenane - you'll know they are fresh as they are harvested daily in the waters of Ireland's only fjord, Killary Harbour, right across the street. We'll then work off our lunch with a fantastic bike ride towards Maam and Lough Na Foey before reaching our final destination, Cong. Tonight Classic guests will stay at the super stylish *The Lodge at Ashford* on the Ashford Castle estate, while Luxury guests will stay in the historic and sumptuous surroundings of the 5-star, 800-year-old Ashford Castle. We'll all dine together one last time in the charming Cullens at the Cottage, a gorgeous thatched cottage overlooking Lough Corrib.

***Classic Hotel: The Lodge at Ashford Castle***

***Deluxe Hotel: Ashford Castle***



### **Day 6, Friday**

After one final breakfast on Friday we'll meet for an early morning bike ride around the estate and through the forest completing a short ten mile ride. Alternatively, Luxury guests are free to enjoy a complimentary round of golf. You may book an extra activity such as falconry, archery or horseback riding at 9am. You could also just amble around the estate and appreciate the majestic beauty of the parkland setting overlooking Lough Corrib, or take a stroll through the picturesque village and historic Abbey. We will meet at 11am for a transfer to Galway city where we will, reluctantly, say our goodbyes. You can check out this fantastic city or take a train to Dublin or a bus to Limerick or Shannon.

**Average daily biking is 25 miles. Pedal on!**

"RIDING BICYCLES WILL NOT ONLY BENEFIT THE INDIVIDUAL DOING IT, BUT THE WORLD AT LARGE."

UDO E. SIMONIS

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### Included Connemara

- Use of 2015 Trek FX7.2 Hybrid bike, Bell or Giro Helmet, Zixtro Capsule rear mounted carrier bag, route notes & maps
- Fresh Eire Adventures Water bottle
- Transfers from Galway on start/end day
- 4 exquisite dinners & wine
- 3 gourmet lunches & wines
- Admissions to all included attractions & tastings
- Baggage transfers
- Tips for hotels/restaurants
- Healthy snacks, water, full guiding services, support vehicle.
- 5 nights B&B in 3 & 4 star (Classic), 4 & 5 star hotels (luxury) with Full Irish or Continental breakfast daily

### Extras Connemara

- Upgrade to a Cube Peloton Race (or similar) alu/carbon road bike (available at extra cost).
- Upgrade to an electric hybrid bike (available at extra cost)
- Self-Guided Extension packages available in Galway, Dublin.
- Gratuities for Guides
- Golf Club hire (you are welcome to bring your own of course!)

**Fresh Eire Adventures**

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# FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

## **How can I contact Fresh Eire Adventures?**

You can reach us through our CONTACT PAGE on our website, by phone, Skype, email or even snail mail! We're also available through our social media pages; Twitter, Facebook and Instagram.

## **Do I need to be very fit to enjoy a Fresh Eire Adventures tour?**

Not at all! This is not bootcamp - this is an active vacation! We offer a wide variety of tours to suit all abilities. Most of our tours can be easily adapted to facilitate more energetic riders as well as novices; our expert local knowledge and resourceful guides know when to add in an extra loop ride or climb to satisfy even the most athletic of riders on our easiest tours. We also offer electric-assist bikes. If you are used to staying fit through enjoying walking, cycling, golfing or any other light aerobic activity then you'll be in fine fettle for our trips. You always have options with Fresh Eire Adventures; bike only part of the day, take a shuttle ride back to the hotel pool for a Margarita; you set the pace, not us! Remember the support vehicle is always nearby and the guide on the bike is always in touch with the driver.

## **What should I pack for a Fresh Eire Adventures tour?**

We encourage our guests to approach packing with care. Airlines charge more for checked luggage now than ever before so it might be sensible to try travel with carry on luggage only. We have a comprehensive Bike Tour Packing list in our Blogs.

## **Which kind of tours does Fresh Eire Adventures offer? Are they fully guided?**

We offer a boutique bike tour experience; small groups (8 people or less typically) to ensure the best customer service and attention to detail in the industry, beautifully curated hotels (two categories; Classic 3 & 4 star properties and Deluxe 4 & 5 star properties) and outstanding meals including top quality wines, beers and soft drinks. We strive for authenticity in every experience.

All our scheduled tours are fully guided and supported by expert local guides who have the knowledge, expertise and training to ensure your trip is flawless. While we can facilitate self-guided requests we specialise in sharing our local knowledge and introducing our guests to local contacts and our friends.

Remember the support vehicle is there to offer fresh water, offer local tastings, to repair the rare puncture (we haven't had a puncture since 2015), carry your sweater if it gets warm, pick up your purchases should you indulge in some shopping at a winery or a market, as well as offering some respite from the occasional drizzle or searing heat. The van is there to sweep; go from the front to the back of the group checking in with our riders at all times and, on smaller roads, positions itself at strategic rendezvous points to check in with guests. The van is also used for setting up tastings, picnics. On a guided tour you have the assurance of knowing your guides are only a phone call away at worst, a shoulder tap at best.

# FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

## **Who is a typical Fresh Eire Adventures guest?**

Fresh Eire Adventures attracts guests from all walks of life; from teachers and CEOs, lawyers and doctors, students to retirees. While over 90% of our guests are from North America we are seeing an increasing number of guests from Brazil and Australia. While some of our guests are new to bike tours, we see over 85% of our guests return for another Fresh Eire Adventure within 2 years. We have several guests who have booked every year with us since we began operations. Another 40% of our guests are referred to us by their friends and colleagues.

Typically our guests have an average age of 60 years, are moderately fit, are interested in food, wine, culture, history and are seeking an active, authentic vacation with an independently owned and run boutique outfit knowing that they are supporting local industry and small business.

At Fresh Eire Adventures we have been charmed by guests as old as 18 months to Silver Cyclists as young as 82. We do not age-discriminate; we ran a tour once for a lady whose trip was cancelled by her first choice operator; they chose to “not run the tour” after she revealed her age.

We appeal to singles, couples and families. We have run multi-generational family trips, themed Mother & Daughter / Father & Son trips, gay interest trips, Jewish heritage trips, literary interest trips, Genealogy trips, College Reunions trips, Corporate trips, and even Biking & Sailing trips. We are very flexible and open to suggestion - let us know what your dream trip would be and we'll do our very best to make it happen.

## **What experience do you have with guided bike tours?**

Padraic, the founder and Managing Director of Fresh Eire Adventures, has been biking since he was a child. In the early 2000s, while a law student, he went to work for an American bike tour company as a guide and saw many ways in which the bike tour experience could be improved upon. He then went on to work with four other bike tour companies lending his expertise and know-how but saw that he needed to start his own company to offer guests true authenticity and unparalleled excellence. Padraic is very “hands on” and, when he is not in the office, he is found on nearly every bike trip ensuring guest experience is of the highest quality and guest expectation is exceeded. Local guides are trained to very high standards.

## **Does Fresh Eire Adventures accept kids on tour?**

Yes! We encourage families with children under the age of 15 to consider a Family Tour; we adapt one of our regular tours and ensure that all activities are family friendly with less of a focus on late dinners, wine tours and instead offer multi activity features like movie nights, canoeing, falconry, water sports, high ropes courses, zip-lining, kayaking, fencing lessons, language lessons, art classes. We have all the required equipment; from child seats for the vehicles and bikes. tag-along bikes, bike trailers, kids helmets etc. We also can provide nanny services and babysitters. We also offer substantial discounts to families with small children especially where the parents are sharing family rooms and family suites with their children.



# FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

## **Does Fresh Eire Adventures accept pets on tour?**

We love pets at Fresh Eire Adventures. However, we can only accept pets on a private tour from our Bespoke programme - we very carefully consider your requirements and only reserve properties who accept pets, and we also have a pet sitter at your disposal to take excellent care of your pet while you enjoy our outstanding tour features. Unfortunately, we cannot accept pets on a scheduled, public bike tour owing to safety concerns, potential allergies of other guests and hotel policies. Sorry.

## **Which kind of documents are required for international travel? Do I need a Visa?**

Every passenger should travel with a valid in date passport with an expiry date no sooner than 6 months from the date of the tour departure. It's a good idea to scan a copy of this and email it to yourself. Each country has different visa requirements so we advise our guests to check with the Embassy or Consulate of the country in which your bike tour is being run.

## **Why should I book a Fresh Eire Adventures tour and not one with another company?**

We offer small groups, excellent customer service, stunning locations, carefully curated hotels and restaurants, a boutique experience and an unparalleled authenticity at a fair price (much lower than our competitors). Plus we offer wines with our meals; good wines, carefully paired. As a small operator we get to know all our guests preferences and frequently match up like-minded couples, singles and groups so they arrive on tour as adventurers and leave as life-long friends determined to ride together in a new destination the next year (and the year after that, and the year after that).

## **What's the difference between your Classic & Deluxe tours?**

The only difference lies in the category of hotel. Classic offers 3 & 4 star properties while Deluxe offers 4 & 5 star properties. On most of our tours we can offer both Classic and Deluxe levels even on the same departure dates. Frequently we use the same hotels for both Classic and Deluxe tours; the difference then lies only in the room category.

## **We would like to do one of your tours but the dates are not corresponding to our availabilities; is it possible to request an unpublished date?**

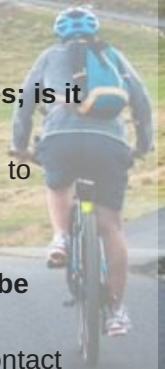
Yes, we can offer tours on most dates. Please contact us and let us know the destination you'd like to visit and on which date and we'll do our very best to run a trip for you.

## **We would like to do one of your tours but we don't know exactly which one; is it possible to be advised?**

Of course. Please contact us to discuss your interests and we shall have one of our expert team contact you.

## **Is it possible to do a longer trip?**

Yes. We offer organised trip extensions in exciting destinations to maximise your vacation time. We can also extend trips beyond the typical 5 nights / 6 days. We're very flexible in our approach.



# FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

## **How do I reserve a trip?**

Unlike other bike tour companies we want to make sure that before committing to a bike trip, which we recognise as a considerable expense, you are purchasing the trip which is right for you. We communicate directly with our potential guests to make sure they are fully informed before signing on the dotted line.

While it has never happened on a Fresh Eire Adventure, it is Padraic's experience that where someone is having a below par trip it is frequently the case that they have been misinformed about the nuances of taking a bike trip in the first instance. This is why it is paramount that we communicate effectively and honestly with all our potential guests even if this means not getting the sale.

To book a tour, get in touch by email or through the Contact page and let us know if you'd like us to schedule a call, or we can answer any questions you might have through email. We also now have an Instant chat facility on our website.

## **Do you offer group discounts?**

Yes. Any group booking of 6 persons or more qualifies for a group discount. With a group size of 8 we can make the trip private at no extra cost and remove it from general sale.

## **What is included in the price of my Fresh Eire Adventures cycling tour?**

We offer unparalleled customer service, authentic experiences, top quality bicycles, exquisite meals, excellent wines, carefully curated hotels, all included itinerary visits and a boutique experience which ensures your Fresh Eire Adventures vacation is memorable for all the right reasons.

## **What is not included?**

Very little; typically we allow for one dinner "on your own" so guests can have some private time away from the group or guides, and one or two lunches during the week. We try to include as much as possible so that guests know exactly how much their vacation will cost and budget accordingly. On each tour page we have a comprehensive list of what is included and what is not.

## **Which payment methods do you accept?**

We prefer to accept payment by bank wire / transfer as it offers the best combination of security, speed and low cost. We can facilitate credit card payments subject to a 3.75% surcharge (4.5% American Express).

## **How much do people generally tip the tour guides?**

We encourage guests to use their discretion and to tip their guides according to the level of service received. As a guideline we suggest \$100 per guest, per guide on a Classic level tour; \$150 per guest, per guide on a Deluxe or Private tour; or \$250 per guest, per guide on a Bespoke tour.

# FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

## **When do I have to pay for my tour?**

We usually request a deposit at the time of reservation with the balance payment due three months before trip start date. Please see our Reservations Policies page for more information.

## **Will I have to carry my own luggage?**

No. We take care of your luggage from day one; once you hand it over to our team you will only ever see it in your bedroom of each hotel. When checking out of each hotel, please leave your labelled bags in your room and our team will transport it to the next hotel - your luggage will be waiting for you when you arrive at the next hotel as if by some form of wizardry!

## **How far in advance do I need to make my reservation?**

We can offer some discounts during traditional sales periods with the most attractive being available around US Thanksgiving (late November each year). We appreciate early bookings so we can plan our schedule around your needs.

## **Where can I find additional details & information for my airline luggage allowances?**

Check with your airline for your included allowances. Fresh Eire Adventures is not licensed to arrange air travel so we cannot get involved in your airline reservations and allowances.

## **Do I need to pay a deposit when I book my tour with Fresh Eire Adventures?**

Yes. To confirm your departure we require a small deposit with the balance falling due three months prior to trip start date. If your tour is booked within three months of the trip start date then we require full payment.

## **Is it possible to personalise a Fresh Eire Adventures tour?**

Absolutely! This is something we specialize in; we get to know our guests interests in advance of the tour and, even on scheduled public tours, we can feature some personalised elements to meet your expectations.

## **Can I bring my own bike on tour?**

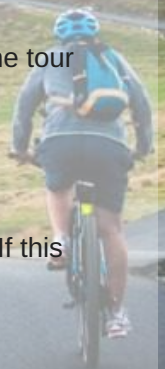
Yes, of course! This is a bike tour and we're here to make sure you have the best ride of your life! If this means riding your own gorgeous bike on one of our stunning rides then we are more than happy to facilitate you. Pedal on!

## **Can I bring my own pedals, saddle, GPS/Odometer and helmet on tour?**

Yes, we encourage it in fact. While we provide everything necessary for a flawless tour, and offer top quality equipment, you might find that you prefer your own saddle or helmet. If you're used to riding with clip in pedals then we encourage folks to bring them along. Otherwise we offer flat or hard-cage (strapless) pedals.

## **How should I train for my bike tour?**

We encourage guests to prepare for their bike tour according to their fitness level and the type of bike tour their reserve. A spin class is ideal if you can't get out during inclement weather.



# FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

## **Should I purchase insurance for my tour?**

We encourage folks to purchase trip insurance and to discuss with their insurer how to protect their trip in the event that they need to cancel.

## **How many people can I expect to be with on my tour?**

We are proud to offer a maximum guest to guide ratio of 4:1 on our scheduled tours - the lowest in the industry. This is how we can offer such outstanding personal service.

## **What is the difference between Fresh Eire Adventures and other Bike tour companies?**

We are a small boutique operator, privately owned and operated and, as such, we can personalise your experience with an attention to detail like no other company.

## **How many miles will I bike each day?**

Each tour offers different routes and daily mileage. While our Holland tour offers an average daily mileage of 35 miles, the terrain is mostly quite flat so the rides are very easily accomplished. Our Costa Brava tour offers a daily mileage of 28 miles but the terrain is much more challenging. We rate our tours EASY, MODERATE and ADVANCED for clarity. Remember our support vehicle is always available and you can choose to ride only a portion of the day if you so desire.

