

AICF
Association of Irish and Celtic Festivals
CONFERENCE



Wild Atlantic Way

AICF Pre-Conference Tour

October 17-24, 2023

8 DAYS | 7 NIGHTS • CLARE | MAYO | DONEGAL | GALWAY

Join us for an 8 day-spectacular tour of the Wild Atlantic Way, visiting unique cultural and historical sites and breathtaking landscapes.

DAY 1 | OCTOBER 17

Overnight Killaloe Hotel & Spa | Light lunch and dinner included

Arrive in Ireland and travel to County Clare | Whether arriving in Dublin or Shannon, you will be picked up and transported to Killaloe. After a light lunch at noon at the hotel, we will visit Brian Boru's Fort (seat of the High King of Ireland) and take a walking tour of the beautiful heritage town of Killaloe. Included is a tour of the 13th Century St. Flannan's Cathedral and Bell Tower in the heart of town, next to the famous 18th century bridge. The Bell Tower offers fabulous views of the surrounding counties – along with a chance to ring the bell! Dinner at the hotel with entertainment is also included.



DAY 2 | OCTOBER 18

Overnight Killaloe Hotel & Spa | Breakfast and dinner included

Highlights of the Burren | The vast, moon-like Burren in County Clare is one of Ireland's most compelling landscapes. The Burren has a poetic beauty that has captivated the hearts and minds of poets, painters, artists and writers. Experience the Burren, its people, its heritage and its music at the Burren Visitor Centre in Kilfenora. A full day includes visiting the Michael Cusack Centre, founder of the GAA; a guided tour of Caherconnell, a fort dating to the 10th Century; and a visit to GeoFoods Showcase.

Caherconnell will give insight into life thousands of years ago and share the importance of this ancient structure. Providing special fun afterwards is Clare's only sheepdog demonstration. Lunch is on your own in Kilfenora.

Dinner is at Peppers Bar & Restaurant in Feakle, followed by a traditional Irish music session. Nestled in the foothills of the Sliabh Aughty mountains, the village of Feakle is synonymous with Irish traditional music. Established in 1810, Pepper's Bar is considered the cultural centre of East Clare.



DAY 3 | OCTOBER 19

Overnight West Coast Hotel | Breakfast, lunch and dinner included

County Mayo | Depart Killaloe heading for Mayo, towards Connemara for a visit to Padraig Pearse's Cottage.

Teach an Phiarsiagh, Pearse's Cottage, is a small restored cottage used by Patrick Pearse (1879 - 1916), leader of the 1916 Rising, as a summer residence. The interior, although burned during the War of Independence, has been reconstructed and contains an exhibition and a number of mementos of Pearse.

We'll then make our way to Kylemore Abbey. Nestled in the heart of Connemara, Kylemore Abbey is a haven of history, beauty and serenity. Home to a Benedictine order of Nuns for the past 100 years, Kylemore Abbey welcomes visitors from all over the world each year to embrace the magic of the magnificent 1,000-acre estate. We will be treated to a tour and lunch as special guests of the Abbey, compliments of the Sisters.

Depart Kylemore Abbey for Westport for check-in and dinner.

DAY 4 | OCTOBER 20

Overnight West Coast Hotel | Breakfast and lunch included

Achill Island | Ireland's largest offshore island is Achill. Joined to the mainland by a bridge at Achill Sound, half of the island is a Gaeltacht region. The island has some of the highest and most spectacular sheer cliff faces in Europe. We will visit the Deserted Village at Slievemore, containing of 80 – 100 stone cottages located on the southern slopes of the mountain. We will stop at sites where *The Banshees of Inisherin* was filmed, so be sure to view the film before our trip! Stop at Nevin's for lunch.

Free time in Westport for dinner, followed by the famous Matt Molloy's Pub for an evening of entertainment.

DAY 5 | OCTOBER 21

Overnight Radisson Hotel Letterkenny | Breakfast and dinner included

County Donegal | Leave Westport and head for Donegal. Carrowmore Megalithic Cemetery is the oldest and the densest concentration of Neolithic tombs in Ireland. The site is on Ireland's Tentative List of World Heritage Sites, together with the other monuments that comprise 'The Passage Tomb Landscape of County Sligo'.

We will stop in Donegal town for lunch on your own and a bit of sightseeing before heading on to the wild and beautiful Glencolumbkille, famous for its immersion program of teaching Irish to thousands, including government Ministers. The day will end on Slieve League, one of the highest sea cliffs in Europe. Slieve League is almost three times the height of its Clare cousins, the Cliffs of Moher.

Relax after checking in with a group dinner at the hotel.



DAY 6 | OCTOBER 22

Overnight Radisson Hotel Letterkenny | Breakfast and lunch included

Donegal & Glenveagh National Park | Sunday can be a day for church – or sleeping in. A later departure will take us to Glenveagh National Park, in the heart of County Donegal, among the wild and rugged landscape of the Derryveagh Mountains. Its pristine habitats and protected wildlife, and its trails taking in the stunning Victorian Castle and Gardens along Lough Veagh, make Glenveagh the ideal escape for lovers of the natural world. Lunch will be at Leo's Tavern, known for its lively music scene. Dinner is on your own in Letterkenny.



DAY 7 | OCTOBER 23

Overnight Galway Bay Hotel | Breakfast and evening refreshments included

Northern Ireland and Strokestown | Crossing the border into Northern Ireland, we will visit The Ulster American Folk Park, which tells the story of Ulster's emigration to North America in the 18th and 19th centuries. You experience the history by boarding a ship and disembarking in the US.

As we head south to Galway, we stop in Strokestown, Co. Roscommon. The National Famine Museum explores the parallel lives of the landed gentry and the workers supporting the "Big House". During An Gorta Mor, hundreds were evicted and many travelled on coffin ships to the US and Canada. The owner, Major Denis Mahon, had the distinction of being the first landlord assassinated during the famine. Strokestown Park House was built on the site of a Norman castle belonging to the previous landlords, the O'Connor Roe Gaelic Chieftains.

Depart for Galway and check-in. A special and unique evening Galway welcome awaits us there!

DAY 8 | OCTOBER 24

Galway City

Galway City | Galway City offers multiple activities and attractions. Options will include a cruise on a Galway Hooker, a visit to Claddagh Arts Centre, the Galway Museum, or a Connemara cottage. Sign-ups will be available during the tour, with some having a limited number of spaces. You can also choose to do some shopping on Shop Street! The coach will deliver guests in the morning to Galway City and pickup will be at 2:30pm to return to the hotel to prepare for the conference.



AICF Conference
October 24 - 27

View next page for a list of tour inclusions and information about booking.



October 17-24, 2023

TOUR OVERVIEW AND BOOKING DETAILS

WHAT'S INCLUDED

- 8 days and 7 nights at a selection of beautiful hotels
- Luxury motorcoach exclusively for the group + tour guides
- Breakfasts, lunches and dinners as listed
- Entertainment and all entrance fees for included tours
- Hotel portorage (where available)

WHAT'S NOT INCLUDED

- Airfare to and from Ireland
- Gratuities for the driver and guides
- Travel insurance
- Non-included meals and drinks



Notice | Please ensure that your **passport** is up to date. Your passport must be valid for the duration of your stay in Ireland. We strongly encourage you to get travel insurance.

REGISTRATION

- \$1795 per person (based on double occupancy)
 - + \$525 up-charge if single occupancy (traveling solo)
- \$450 deposit per person due by July 21st
- Remainder due by September 1st

Cancellation policy | Your deposit will be refundable* if you cancel prior to September 1, 2023. No refunds will be accepted after September 1, 2023.

**No refund will be available on incurred processing fees.*

BOOK YOUR TRIP!

Book at celticmke.com/aicf | Email us at aicf@irishfest.com