

IRELAND TOURS

DUBLIN WALKING TOUR

Friday, May 15th

Today we will enjoy a morning walking tour of Dublin with our guide after which you will have the afternoon free. This is included in your package.

WICKLOW AND GLENDALOUGH

Saturday, May 16th

Today we'll enjoy a wonderful scenic day starting with our drive from Dublin into the heart of Wicklow's stunning countryside

The stops on our tour will include the Powerscourt Estate where we will explore the gardens of the estate including the Italian gardens, Japanese gardens and pet cemetery. This is one of the most visited tourist destinations in Ireland. We will also visit Powerscourt Waterfall, the highest waterfall in Ireland.

We'll visit the pretty Wicklow village of Avoca (where the famous TV show, Ballykissangel was filmed). Leisure time at Avoca (60 minute stop) where you can drop into Fitzgerald's pub for a pint of Guinness. Visit the famous Handweaver's craft shop, considered the oldest weaving mill in Ireland

From there we'll visit the 6th century monastic settlement in Glendalough (105 minute stop). Enjoy a guided tour of this mystical site. See the famous 10th century Round Tower and St Kevin's Kitchen. Enjoy the fresh country air of the Wicklow Mountains. Glendalough is famed for its beautiful scenery and historic monuments, but has also been a centre for pilgrims and visitors from the time of St. Kevin, (from whom the bus service took its name).

This is where St. Kevin, descendent of one of the ruling families in Leinster, founded his monastery in the sixth century. As a boy he studied while in the care of three holy men. During this time he went to Glendalough and lived, we are told, "in the hollow of a tree". He left the valley, only to return later with his small group of monks to found the monastery where, as the earliest versions of his life tell us, "the two clear rivers form a confluence". His fame as a holy man spread and he attracted numerous followers.

The valley of Glendalough contains a series of carved and plain stones and crosses, some of which have marked stations on the pilgrim's route.

KILKENNY

Sunday, May 17th

Once the capital of Ireland in the middle-ages, Kilkenny is renowned for its magnificent Norman Castle dating back to 12th century. With its narrow street and colorful shops and buildings, Kilkenny is unique as a city and a mecca for those who choose to visit. You will have plenty of time to enjoy a pint of Kilkenny beer in Kilkenny





Kilkenny's rich medieval heritage is evident in the city's treasure trove of historical buildings and landmarks, exemplified by the magnificent Kilkenny Castle. Kilkenny is arguably the pre-eminent medieval city in Ireland, with the current layout of the city clearly grounded in the city's medieval roots.

We will plan to visit [Kilkenny castle](#) which is a self-guided tour. Kilkenny castle stands dramatically on a strategic height that commands a crossing on the River Nore and dominates the 'High Town' of Kilkenny City. Over the eight centuries of its existence, many additions and alterations have been made to

the fabric of the building, making Kilkenny Castle today a complex structure of various architectural styles.

The original Anglo-Norman stone castle was built for William Marshal, 4th Earl of Pembroke (c.1146-1219) during the first decade of the thirteenth century. Kilkenny Castle later became the principal Irish residence of the powerful Butler family for almost 600 years.

FREE DAY
Monday, May 18th

SCOTLAND TOURS

**EDINBURGH
CASTLE**
**Wednesday, May
20th**

Our hotel is an easy 15 minute walk to this iconic castle which is a must see. We will not need a bus or a guide. I have set up a reservation for our entire group for this morning.



ST ANDREWS & THE HIGHLANDS

Thursday, May 21st



Today we will visit Highlands, featuring Scotland's most characteristic and romantic scenery.

Visit the university town of St Andrews on this private trip. Famous for being the 'home of golf,' St Andrews is known for attractions like the Old Course and Swilcan Bridge, part of St Andrews' prestigious golf legacy and not to be missed. which you'll see on this tour with a private guide. Walk around town and enjoy time to buy lunch and shop a bit, if you like.

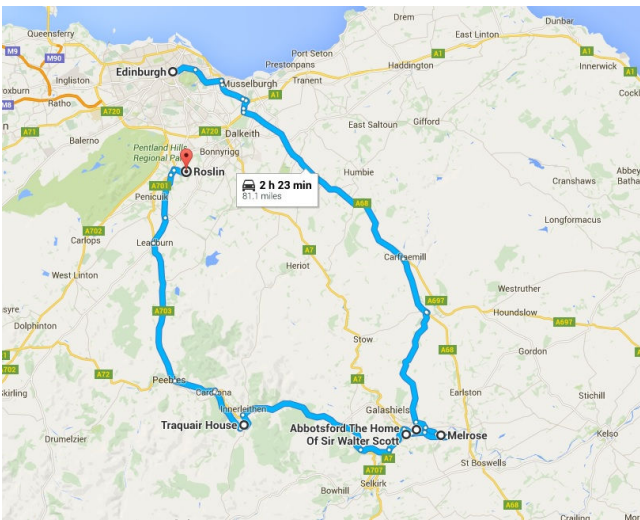
We'll have time to take photos and play a round on the [Putting Club Course](#), probably better known to visitors from around the world as **The Himalayas** which is an apt description for this unique facility found in St Andrews, the home of golf (cost 4 pds). There is the option to have your photo taken on the Swilcan Bridge. You can also visit the British Golf Museum or

the Castle ruins and Cathedral (own expense). Before stopping at the Old Course you will be given a short driven tour around St Andrews to get your bearings. For those not interested in putting on the Old Course there is an option to stay in town and shop.

From there we will venture further into the highlands with a visit to [Glamis Castle](#). Glamis has been the family home of the Earls of Strathmore since 1372 when Sir John Lyon was granted the thaneage by King Robert II. In 1376 Sir John married the King's daughter and since then Glamis has been visited and lived in by many members of the Scottish and British Royal Families. The present owner is Simon Patrick Bowes Lyon, 19th Earl of Strathmore and Kinghorne who succeeded his late father on the 27th of February 2016. The castle is famed as being the childhood home of [Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth The Queen Mother](#), birthplace of HRH The Princess Margaret and the setting for Shakespeare's 'Macbeth'. It is situated in the fertile valley of Strathmore, only 5 miles from Forfar and 12 miles from Dundee.



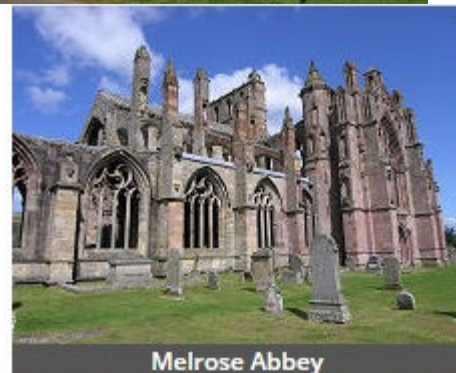
SCOTTISH BORDERS



Friday, May 22nd

Journey through the majestic Scottish Lowlands on this 7.5-hour tour that will include Melrose Abbey, Abbotsford House, Traquair House and Roslyn Chapel.

Take the scenic route along Scotland's border to Melrose Abbey — believed to be the



Melrose Abbey



Abbotsford

burial site of King Robert the Bruce's heart — and enjoy lunch at your leisure. Admire panoramic views over the Scottish countryside and the Tweed River from Scott's View

The triple peaks of the Eildon Hills are the most distinctive single landmark in the Scottish Borders. At their feet in the valley of the Tweed lies [Melrose](#). From the rolling hills and moorland in the west to the gentle valleys and picturesque Berwickshire coastline in the east, it is easy to see why Sir Walter Scott was so enamored with this peaceful region that he chose to build his beloved house, [Abbotsford](#) here which we will visit. Here at Abbotsford he worked tirelessly, writing book after book in his wood-paneled study. Scott looked far and wide across Scotland for decorative elements to embellish his house; he rescued architectural fragments from houses, and took casts from existing houses to create copies that reflected Scotland's architectural heritage. The result was a very 'Scottish' building, inspired by Scotland's heritage and containing pieces from a variety of dwellings across the country. This very nationalistic pride in Scottish heritage was typical of Scott and his work. The result was almost universally popular, and Abbotsford became a very popular place for sightseers almost immediately.



Next up on this tour is a visit to Traquair,, Scotland's Oldest Inhabited House. Visited by 27 Scottish Kings and Queens Traquair dates back to 1107 and has been lived in by the Stuart family since 1491.

Originally a royal hunting lodge, Traquair played host to Mary Queen of Scots and later as staunch Catholics they supported the Jacobite cause without counting the cost.

Our last stop is [Roslyn Chapel](#). One of Scotland's most remarkable buildings, Rosslyn Chapel has been in the ownership of our family

since its foundation in 1446 and is still used today as a place of worship.

Rosslyn Chapel came to worldwide prominence through The Da Vinci Code, a novel written by Dan Brown, which was published in 2003. In the story, the main characters, Robert Langdon and Sophie Neveu, investigate a murder in the Louvre and, in doing so, follow a set of clues to unravel a mystery, taking them to London and then to Rosslyn Chapel. *'When I decided to write The Da Vinci Code, I knew that its finale would have to take place at the most mysterious and magical chapel on earth — Rosslyn.'* Dan Brown

FREE DAY

Saturday, May 23rd

It's always nice to put in a free day on these trips and there's plenty of things to do and see. One recommended tour is to see the [Royal Yacht Britannia](#). It's a very nice tour. You might also consider getting on of the Hop on/ Hop off buses which is always a nice way to see different things. Here's a link to some more ideas: https://www.tripadvisor.com/Attractions-g186525-Activities-Edinburgh_Scotland.html