

This is a 19 day 'moving on' holiday of the beautiful Republic of Ireland and Northern Ireland. It visits many small market towns and villages and passes through pleasant farmland following the coast clockwise from Galway to Dublin. There are many sights to see with beaches, castles, Giants Causeway and the Carrick a Rede Bridge to name just a few. This holiday is for the fit rider, able to tackle hills with panniers, and for whom riding daily distances of around 80km, with a maximum of 100km, is no problem and at a pace that would normally allow time for stops for food and photos.

Itinerary

Sat 28 May	Meet at the ferry terminal at Holyhead for independent travel to Dublin. Stay 1 night in guest house.	
Sun 29 May	Spend time in Dublin sightseeing and take the afternoon coach to Galway. Stay one night in hotel.	24km
Mon 30 May	Cycle heading west on minor roads along the coast and over moorland to Clifden. Stay one night in hotel.	97km
Tue 31 May	Cycle along the coast on minor roads generally north east to the pretty town of Westport, Co Mayo. Stay one night in hotel.	100km
Wed 1 Jun	Cycle north through Castlebar, past Torlough Tower and alongside Lough Conn to Ballina, Co Mayo. Stay one night in hotel.	75km
Thu 2 Jun	Cycle east along the coast around Ballysadare Bay to Sligo. Stay one night in hotel.	85km
Fri 3 Jun	Cycle alongside Donegal Bay through Bundoran and Ballyshannon to Donegal. Stay two nights in guest house	88km
Sat 4 Jun	Rest day in Donegal.	
Sun 5 Jun	Cycle west along the peninsula to Malinmore, then east across to Ardara, Co Donegal. Stay one night in hotel.	79km
Mon 6 Jun	Cycle north east around the Glenveigh National Park on minor roads, often with grass centre, to Downings on Sheephaven Bay, Co Donegal. Stay one night in hotel.	84km
Tue 7 Aug	Cycle eastwards taking the ferry at Rathmullan to Buncrana. Ride to Quigley's Point and take the ferry across Lough Foyle to Magilligan Point, Co Londonderry. Cycle past Mussenden Temple to Portstewart. Stay one night in guest house.	109km
Wed 8 Jun	Cycle along the coast through Portstewart, Co Antrim to Portrush and past Dunluce Castle to the Giants Causeway, then to Carrick a Rede rope bridge and return to Ballintoy. Stay two nights in hotel.	43km
Thu 9 Jun	Rest day in Ballyintoy area.	
Fri 10 Jun	Cycle to Ballygally near Larne on the east coast of Co Antrim. Stay one night in hotel.	69km
Sat 11 Jun	Cycle south along the coast past Carrickfergus Castle to the capital city of Northern Ireland, Belfast in Co Down. Stay one night in hotel.	48km

Sun 12 Jun	Cycle away from the coast past Hillsborough Castle and Gardens to Banbridge. Stay one night in hotel.	49km
Mon 13 Jun	Cycle through Newry and past St John's Castle at Carlingford and on to Dundalk. Stay one night in guest house.	75km
Tue 14 Jun	Cycle along the coast through Drogheda and past the Skerries to Dublin, taking in several cycleways into the city. Stay one night in guest house.	113km

Accommodation and meals

Accommodation is on a bed and breakfast basis, sharing rooms, with three nights in guest houses and fifteen nights in good quality 2/3 star hotels. Evening meals will be taken at the accommodation where available, otherwise at a local pub or restaurant.

Price £1350

The price is based on a minimum number of 8 participants taking part in the tour. If there are insufficient bookings by 19 March 2021, we will contact you and return all monies paid.

Price includes:

- 15 nights hotels, bed and breakfast, sharing rooms
- 3 nights in guest houses, bed and breakfast, sharing rooms
- Bikexplore costs

Price does not include:

- Travel to and from the start point in Dublin
- Lunches or refreshments during the day
- Evening meals
- Drinks with evening meals
- Entry fees at any attractions
- Local ferry crossing charges - approx 10 euros.
- Any other personal expenses
- Travel Insurance
- Single occupancy supplements, which are subject to availability.

Payment schedule

A deposit of £300 per person must accompany the Booking Form, with the final balance of £1050 per person to be paid before ten weeks prior to departure, by 19 March 2022. Cheques should be made payable to **Richard Dugdale**. Internet payments can be made by contacting the leader.

Cancellations

Should you be forced to cancel your booking for any reason you must notify us in writing. Cancellation charges are as follows:

Written notice received:	Cancellation charge:
19 March 2021	Deposit (£300)
19 March through to departure	100% (£1350)

To make a booking

Read the section on 'Booking a Holiday' on the Bikexplore website and then contact the leader for further details.



Leaders Information Sheet

The area covered by the Tour

RD211

Ireland The North 1

The holiday is classed as **Grade 5 - Moderate Energetic**

28 May - 15 June 2022

The information below is given by the tour leader to help enquirers decide if the tour is suitable for them.

The area covered by the holiday is very varied and has something to keep the rider interested every day. The holiday starts in Dublin where we take the bus to Galway before heading around the coast of Ireland in a clockwise manner going through the counties of Galway, Mayo, Sligo, Leitrim, Donegal, Londonderry, Antrim, Down, Louth, Meath and Dublin. Most of the roads are minor ones and occasionally have grass down the centre; we also follow cycle routes to avoid busy roads which can take us alongside rivers and the coast. There are just a few places where the roads are busy in towns and cities, where they cannot be avoided. As with most coastlines the routes can be a bit lumpy in places but this is compensated for by the spectacular views. The average ascent is 740m per day with just two days over 1000m.

Rides

Each day will be different, moving from one type of terrain to another. Steady climbs, flat sections and very hilly sections will all be present. The roads are mostly well surfaced with low volumes of traffic and some cycleways will be used. There are two rest days. The scenery is stunning and varied, especially in bright clear weather, which we can expect at this time of year.

Detailed route notes will be provided before the tour, along with GPS tracks for those who want them.

Most of each day will be spent cycling. People will be expected to ride at their own pace and often in loose groups, at around 10-12 mph on the flat, slower up hills, usually meeting up at cafes for lunch and refreshment breaks. You will be notified of the two or three recommended refreshment stops each day. It is expected that you may want to stop for photographs, or look at the view or some local object and this is okay. You are on holiday.

Inevitably, parts of the route are hilly, and as there is no back-up vehicle to carry your luggage, you do need to be fit to get the most out of this tour. Therefore, it is essential to get out on your bike and do some 60-mile rides before the tour starts. There are some steep descents too, so you should be able to negotiate these safely.

Please note it may not always be possible to follow the itinerary exactly due to roadworks or weather, as things do not always go as planned. In these circumstances, we will make alternative arrangements.

The Tour Leader will not always be at the front of the group but may be anywhere within it, as circumstances require, so you will need to be aware of the route each day. This information will be given to you before, or at the beginning of the holiday, and again at daily briefings.

Travel and Parking

Clients must make their own way to the accommodation in Dublin. However, we can all meet up in Holyhead for the ferry, where there is long stay parking by the port. Trains also run to Holyhead station which terminates at the ferry terminal and are scheduled to match up with the ferry timetable. NB; Cycle places are limited on trains.

Accommodation / Meals

The holiday price includes accommodation in guest houses and hotels including breakfast and is based on two people sharing a room. A supplement is made for anyone requiring their own room, by negotiation, if available. The hotels used are of 2/3 stars and are of good standard with some meals in-house.

Group information

The maximum group size will be 12 (including the leader).

Weather and clothing

The weather is unknown, as anywhere in the British Isles, so you must be prepared to ensure that you can keep warm and reasonably dry. It will rain at some point, although it usually dries up late in the morning.

Lightweight waterproofs/windproofs will be needed and also warmer clothing for the evenings.

Cycling clothes. Two sets of clothing are recommended as you can wash each evening; two short sleeved tops, a long sleeved top, or arm warmers, shorts, longies or leg warmers, two pairs of socks, a cap or helmet cover and two pairs of short gloves with a pair of finger gloves for rain and cold and cycling shoes. Clear riding glasses. Everyone is expected to wear a helmet for their own safety and to minimise problems for the leader in case of a fall.

Sun cream, lip balm and sun glasses are recommended along with insect bite cream/spray. Evening Dress. You will not need too much; Two T-shirts/shirts, one pair of lightweight trousers, maybe a pair of shorts, two sets of underwear, two pairs of socks, light pullover/top and lightweight shoes. The lightweight cycling windproof top can be used in the evening if extra warmth is required. A floppy hat can be useful if the sun is hot. Trunks if there is the chance of a swim in the sea or a pool, but cycling lycra will do.

Toiletries; These can be kept to a minimum by bringing small toothpaste tubes, shampoo bottles etc. A very basic first aid kit of plasters and pain killers etc are always recommended. Some places supply shampoo, but this is not guaranteed, and a small hotel size bottle is always useful to take and use for clothes washing, which can be done whilst showering. Shaving can also be done using shampoo, as can face washing. A piece of string is useful for hanging washing in the absence of coat hangers.

Beware of taking too much as every kilogram has to be carried by you. I usually keep between 10 and 12kg including panniers and bags.

Cycles / Equipment

A tandem, touring cycle, hybrid or lightweight ATB is suitable for this tour, but your machine must be in good working order, especially the brakes. A triple chainset would be best since there are some long steep hills. For suitably low gears, the largest rear sprocket on the cassette should be the same size as the smallest front chainring if you are strong, otherwise it should be bigger (No kidding - check this). Mudguards should also be fitted. Please ensure that you have suitable, strong and waterproof panniers for carrying everything required for over two weeks on the road. You should have ridden your cycle fully laden before the tour to ensure you are happy with its handling. Lights should not be necessary for riding, although it is good to have a removable front light for night time wandering. Each participant will be expected to bring/carry sufficient spares and tools to deal with punctures and minor repairs. Two spare inner tubes are recommended, spare spokes, brake blocks, split link, gear cable and a few cable ties are useful. A bike lock should be carried. You are advised to use 28mm tyres, or larger, to suit the variable terrain. A rack-top pack or bar bag will be useful for carrying a camera and maybe some emergency food rations and things you may need quickly.

Maps

In case you become separated from the group, or wish to spend some time cycling apart from the group, you should carry a suitable map such as the Motoring and Tourist Michelin map of Ireland, 712 National, at a scale of 1:400,000, price approximately £8. A briefing will be given each day and maps issued for each day before we start the holiday. Carry this and the Information Booklet provided at all times.

Travel Insurance

Travel insurance is compulsory, as we will be outside the UK for part of the time, and also you need your EHIC card for local health care(or GHIC, if you have renewed your card recently).

About the leader

I am a retired engineer, married with four grown children and nine grandchildren. I have been cycling regularly since 1999, and in this time I have covered over 100,000 miles touring Britain and 25 other countries including India, China, Australia, New Zealand, USA, Cuba, Balkans, Europe and most Nordic countries. I like good scenery, mixing with local people and exploring other cultures. I collect old bicycles and tractors, ride motorcycles and carry out voluntary charitable work through Rotary. I am also a keen photographer.

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Version; July 2021

