Ancient Pathways: A Walking Tour of Southern Ireland

September 1-10, 2023, Trip No. 2352
Leader: Janis Stahlhut | Associate Leader: Christa Ten Cate

This gentle walking and cultural excursion will charm you with rambles in Southern Ireland’s iconic, and the sometimes lesser known historic and natural sites of this lovely region of the Emerald Isle. We will visit Glendalough, Wicklow and Killarney’s National Park, the Dingle Peninsula, the Cliffs of Moher, and wander on the historic Aran Island of Inishmore. Along our journey we will stop to see and explore historic monastic settlements, castles, landmark mansions, ancient ruins, cliff-top and pre-historic fortresses, visit the Guinness storehouse and a whiskey distillery, and sample the delights of Dublin, Kilkenny, Killarney, Dingle, Doolin, and finally Lahinch, where our journey ends. Overnights use smaller towns and villages to showcase the beauty of the countryside, as well as the foods, brews, music, and charms of local hospitality.
**Itinerary**

**Day 1: Arrive Dublin**

Arrive Dublin Airport and transfer to a Dublin city hotel (to be announced). Take the afternoon to recover from your long flights, explore on your own, or just relax at the hotel. We will meet in the lobby of the hotel at 5pm for brief introductions and a trip briefing before breaking for dinner. Please arrange your transfers from the airport to the hotel. We will provide details on this as we begin to learn of your flight arrangements. There is a convenient and inexpensive train from the airport. Or you can pair up to share a taxi.

**Day 2: Dublin**

Morning at leisure. This afternoon, enjoy a guided walking tour of Dublin, covering many of the city’s highlights & historical places of interest. This will typically incorporate a visit to Christ Church Cathedral, Trinity College and the Guinness Storehouse, amongst other spots, in the company of an expert city guide.

In the evening, we will enjoy a group dinner at a pub restaurant accompanied by Irish music and dance.

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<th>Walk Details</th>
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<td>Distance: Up to 6 miles/10km. All paved pathways/city walking.</td>
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**Day 3: Glendalough**

Depart Dublin after breakfast and transfer approx. 1½ hours to reach the beautiful Glendalough, a region famous for its magnificent lakes and medieval monastic settlements.

Today’s walk will start at the Glendalough visitor centre, from where an easy trail takes you to the ‘Glendalough Monastic City’, an early Christian monastic settlement dating back to the 6th century. This is followed by a beautiful lakeside hike to an old miners’ village near the foot of Spinc Ridge. You return along the same lakeside path. For a longer walk, the climb up Spinc Ridge is well worthwhile and will add approx. 1.2 mile/2km to today’s hike.

Following the walk, transfer to Kilkenny City. Evening at leisure.

<table>
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<th>Transfer(s)</th>
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<tr>
<td>Dublin (centre) to Glendalough – 60 mins</td>
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<td>Glendalough to Kilkenny – 90 mins</td>
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<td>Distance: 4.5 miles/7 kms</td>
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<td>Terrain: Gravel pathways, forest tracks &amp; grassy trails. Open mountain with boggy &amp; rocky sections, uneven ground &amp; no tracks. Boots essential.</td>
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**Day 4: Kilkenny to Killarney**

Start the day with a short tour of Kilkenny. Dubbed the “Marble City,” Kilkenny is famous for the black marble mined from the surrounding region, as well as its 12th century castle. Your morning tour will focus on the castle and the surrounding streets, which are bursting with history and culture.

Late morning, depart Kilkenny and journey 3 hours to Killarney, in south-west Ireland.

The town of Killarney enjoys a fabulous location just outside of Ireland’s oldest national park, which will be the focus of your walk this afternoon. After lunch in Killarney town, you’ll drive a short way into Killarney National Park to enjoy an easy hike along a section of the Old Kenmare Road, one of Ireland’s favourite trails, before returning to town.

Killarney is a lively town with plenty of pubs and restaurants.

| Transfer(s) |
|Kilkenny to Killarney – 3 hours |
|Killarney to Hiking trail – 15 mins each way |

| Walk Details |
|Distance: 3 miles/5kms | Total Ascent-Descent: ~150 feet/45m |

Terrain: Gravel tracks with rocky & uneven sections, uneven & wet at times underfoot. Some paved pathways.

**Day 5: Kerry**

After a scrumptious breakfast, and armed with a picnic lunch, you’ll depart Killarney and transfer one hour to reach the beautiful Derrynane House, the starting point for today’s walk, situated on the western tip of the “Ring of Kerry.”

Today’s hike takes you around the coast to reach Abbey Island, with much of the route on pristine beach. After the coastal walk, hike a short distance inland to traverse the Kerry foothills. On a clear day you can expect glorious views across the Atlantic Ocean and the twin peninsulas. There will be time for a rest and to explore the Derrynane House before returning to Killarney for the evening.

| Transfer(s) |
|Killarney to Derrynane – 90 mins each way |

| Walk Details |
|Distance: ~3.5 mile/5.5kms | Total Ascent: 148 feet/45m | Total Descent: 656 feet/200m |

Terrain: Beach, sand-dunes, paved roads, narrow forestry tracks with rocky & uneven sections, can be wet & boggy underfoot. Steps up & down & open hillside with no tracks.
Day 6: Dingle Peninsula
Leaving Killarney and the broader Ring of Kerry behind, you transfer north-west to the Dingle Peninsula, to start a mid-morning hike. Today's walk will quite possibly be the most impressive walk of your holiday, with fabulous views of the sea.

You'll start on a coastal trail around the western tip of Dingle Peninsula. Reaching the southern slopes of Slea Head, you turn inland to climb Mount Eagle. At the top you’ll be greeted with panoramic views across the Wild Atlantic Coast, the Blasket Islands, and all the way back to the Ring of Kerry.

After the climb, you'll transfer a short distance to explore some of the ancient monastic sites that abound on the peninsula, including Gallarus and Reask, both thought to date back to the early Middle Ages.

This afternoon, visit the Dingle Whiskey Distillery for a guided tour of a local working distillery, and a chance to sample the local whiskey (known in Gaelic as Uisce Beatha, or “water of life.”) Afterwards, you'll be transferred to your hotel in Dingle, with the rest of the evening at leisure.

You stay tonight in Dingle town, which is famous for its traditional Irish music and its many pubs! Dingle is also known for its cuisine, especially its seafood.

| Transfer(s) |
| Killarney to Dingle – 90 mins |

| Walk Details |
| Distance: 3 miles/4.5kms | Total Ascent-Descent: ~1400 feet/475m (short steep climb) |
| Terrain: Grassy, Rocky trails, open hillside. Mount Eagle is in places quite steep - up and down |

Day 7: Dingle Peninsula
Driving to the northern side of the Dingle Peninsula, today's route will take you to parts of the peninsula that only walkers discover. Traveling across the open hillside & bogland that typifies this region, it seems that the hills just fall into the sea. With a mix of coastal scenery & inland walking, you will be enchanted by the variety of this walk as you follow an old bog track to complete your hike.
At the end of the walk, transfer to the village of Cloghane to explore and perhaps enjoy a drink before continuing back to Dingle for the night.

**Transfer(s)**
Dingle to hiking trail – 30 mins each way

**Walk Details**
Distance: 5 miles/8kms. | Total Ascent-Descent: ~1170 feet/390m

Terrain: Grassy trails, which have rocky & uneven sections, open hillside – sometimes boggy & wet underfoot. Uneven ground, gravel trails & some paved roads. Some gradual climbs up & down.

**Day 8: The Cliffs of Moher & Lahinch**
Leaving Dingle this morning, you’ll travel north to the Cliffs of Moher, a drive of approx. 3½ hours.

A spectacular series of sea cliffs that run for approx. 9 miles and rise almost 200m above sea level, the Cliffs of Moher are one of Ireland’s great scenic spots, and the focus for today’s hike.

Starting from the Cliffs of Moher information centre, you’ll follow a well-trodden trail along the cliffs that ends in the village of Doolin. Along the way, you can expect impressive views of the Atlantic Ocean and the Aran Islands, especially on a clear day.

You stay tonight at a comfortable hotel in Lahinch, a short drive south from Doolin. If time allows, you can dip your toes or take a swim in Liscannor Bay.

**Transfer(s)**
Dingle to Cliff of Moher visitor centre – 3½ hours

**Walk Details**
Distance: 4 miles/6kms. | Total Ascent-Descent: ~508 feet/155m

Terrain: Grassy trails, which have rocky & uneven sections, sometimes boggy & wet underfoot. Uneven ground, gravel trails & some paved roads.
Day 9: Inishmore, Aran Islands
A 1-hour ferry ride will take you to Inishmore, the largest of the Aran islands. Here you'll enjoy a walk to the famous cliff-stop fort of Dun Aonghasa, on the southern coast of Inishmore. The ruined foundations of Dun Aonghasa are believed to date back as far as 1,500BC, and constitute the largest of the prehistoric fortresses on the Aran Islands. The site occupies a stunning location on a 100m-high sea cliff, overlooking the Atlantic Ocean.
From Dun Aonghasa, you'll hike approx. 1½kms down to ’Poll na bPeist,’ otherwise known as “the Wormhole,” a natural rockpool and blowhole formed in the limestone shore of Inishmore. You’ll then continue to Kilmurvey Beach, one of Inishmore’s most popular scenic spots.
Late afternoon, the ferry returns us to Lahinch for our final overnight. We will have a group farewell dinner at a local eatery to raise a glass and bid adieu.

Day 10: International departure from Dublin or Shannon
After breakfast, you will be transferred to your departure airport for your homeward journey.

Trip Activity & Fitness Level
Each of our daily activities is described in the Itinerary. The activity rating corresponding to this trip is 3-4, Easy to Moderate. The definition for these levels can be found in the Terms and Conditions document linked at the bottom of this prospectus. The activities described require no specific skills other than basic fitness and the ability to walk and lightly hike on gentle but varied terrain, carrying a light daypack, at a leisurely pace for the time and distances specified. This
activity rating is overall a 3 (Easy). However, occasional rocky terrain or a steeper climb may be encountered that encroach into a level 4 (Moderate). The AMC-AT Activity Ratings can be reviewed here.

When you participate in this trip, you should be in proper condition for the activities and aware of the risks involved including quick, unexpected weather changes, minor injuries, or dehydration. We note that Europe has been experiencing hotter than normal summers. You will be expected to come prepared with proper clothing, footwear, hydration strategies, and a fitness level that can accommodate anticipated conditions. No special experience is necessary other than the ability to walk the distance noted in the itinerary, and personal traits that ensure a good “group fit.” These traits include, but are not limited to, an ability to adjust to changing conditions and maintain an amicable nature. Especially if you are unknown to the leaders, or have not previously participated in AMC Adventure Travel or Chapter activities, we may request (and check) references to confirm your fitness level and suitability for participating. While leaders are vigilant to ensure participant safety, each individual is ultimately responsible to keep themselves safe and within their physical capabilities.

**Accommodations & Meals**

We will stay in 3-4 star hotels/small inns, bed & breakfast style (breakfast included). Except for Dublin, we have chosen accommodations in smaller villages and towns to showcase the beauty of the countryside, as well as the foods, brews and libations, music, and charms of local hospitality. The trip is priced based on double occupancy. Bathroom facilities are ensuite. Single supplements may be available at an additional cost. Please inquire with leaders prior to applying for the trip.

Our meals will expose you to the delights and sometimes surprises of Irish cuisine. Breakfasts will be provided at each hotel; lunches will be in pubs or picnic style. Each participant will receive a bank debit card for seven dinners. Except for the welcome and farewell dinners, we will break into small groups to sample pubs and restaurants in our stopover towns. We encourage you to take your evening meals in the company of group members as we give you some space to enjoy the companions and food styles that will enhance your visit. Leaders will provide options for dinners and join groups along way.

Though we try to accommodate a variety of dietary restrictions or preferences, we cannot guarantee that all needs can be met. Please be flexible to the extent possible. You will have an opportunity on your application to specify your preferences, allergies, or medical dictates. But if you have a strong allergy or unusual need, you may wish to bring some staples along with you. Please discuss any extraordinary dietary needs with the leaders prior to applying.

**Trip price:**

*Group size of 15-18: $4,350*. Non-AMC members will be assessed an additional $100 per person. To join the AMC please visit here. The trip price is based on 2022 projections for 2023 travel. If inflation or exchange rates take extreme swings, prices may be adjusted.

**Trip includes:**

- 9 nights’ accommodation in 3-4-star hotels (twin share / double rooms), with breakfast.
- 8 lunches, 9 dinners.
- Experienced AMC-AT leaders, Wilderness First Aid and CPR trained.
- Interpretive local guide accompanying the group on all hikes and walks, +tips.
- Walking tours of Dublin and Kilkenny with city guides +tips.
- Bus and driver from days 3-10.
• Guided tour and whiskey tasting at Dingle distillery.
• Ferry to Aran Islands.
• $5,000 emergency medical and $200,000 emergency evacuation insurance (does not include covid-related expenses, and it is not trip cancellation or interruption insurance).

Trip excludes:
• International flights.
• Airport transfer arriving in Dublin.
• Single room occupancy (+$590, as available; please consult leaders when applying).
• Drinks and snacks.
• Personal items.
• Excursions or entries not stated in trip’s daily itinerary.
• Travel insurance for trip cancellation, interruption, lost or damaged luggage, etc., medical or evacuation insurance above that provided by trip, medical and interruption/separation costs associated with covid19 or other medical condition not covered by AMC or personal insurance.

Application & Deposit
To apply for the trip please complete this online application. At the same time, you must also send a check for the deposit amount of $1,500, $1,600 if you are not currently an AMC member, to Janis Stahlhut, 1465 E Putnam Ave #323, Old Greenwich, CT 06870. Please make all checks payable to the Appalachian Mountain Club, with Ireland Trip #2352 noted on the memo line. Your application is not considered complete until the online form is completed, and your deposit check received by the leader. To join the AMC please click here.

Applications will be screened on a first-in first-served basis. Application screening includes contacting references that you will provide. Once the review is complete, trip leaders may conduct a brief phone (Zoom) interview with you. A spot on the roster is not assured until this process has been completed and you have been notified that you have been accepted.

Once your roster spot is confirmed, your check will be deposited into the trip account. When the trip has reached its minimum number of screened participants to assure financial viability, you will receive a Letter of Acceptance and Trip Go Declaration. At that time, your deposit will be subject to the AMC-AT Cancellation Policy described below. The balance of payment will be due on or before May 1, 2023. Only when we have achieved our minimum and the trip is declared to go as scheduled, we will make deposits to our service providers.

Cancellation Policy, Terms and Conditions
The AMC Adventure Travel cancellation policy is based on the premise that your cancellation may not raise the cost to the other participants or to the leaders. After notification that the trip will run as scheduled, a cancellation, even if a replacement is found, will incur an administrative fee of $200.

Please carefully read the Adventure Travel Standard Terms and Conditions, including the full conditions of cancellation.
Air Travel & Trip Extensions

Though your airfare is not included in the trip price, the leaders will assist you in choosing a flight that fits your needs and delivers you on time for our introductions and trip briefing on Day 1. If you wish to extend your travel before or after the trip dates, you will be responsible for arriving on time on Day. All hotel and travel costs incurred for trip extension periods is your responsibility. Should your departure from the trip fall in a period before the planned bus departures on Day 10, you will be responsible for your own transfer costs.

Managing Expectations

Participants are expected to arrive prepared both physically and materially for the trip. It is important to have the proper clothing and footwear for any trip that can experience a variety of weather conditions such as the Irish climate, and different terrains. Ireland gets a fair amount of rain, so expect surfaces to be wet and even slippery at times. Also, Europe has been experiencing abnormally hot summer temperatures, so a variety of layers and adaptable gear is the best strategy. Waterproof, trail-treaded, and ankle supporting footwear is required, along with rain gear, hydration, etc. (See “What to Bring” below.) We expect everyone to be a team player, engage with the group, and help if needed. It is only through the building of community that the trip can be truly successful and satisfying.

All participants and leaders on AMC trips must be fully vaccinated against covid19 or any other highly infectious disease present in the area at the time of the trip. AMC’s policy is that anyone who exhibits symptoms or tests positive for a coronavirus while on an AT trip must physically separate from the group. This could mean moving into a private room; but in our case, as we are sharing a transportation vehicle, it could also result in the need to remove the participant from the group altogether. The participant can rejoin the group once they meet the health standards of the country we are visiting. In such an event, leaders will assist the participant with arrangements to transfer to a private hospitality or medical facility until they can be cleared to return to the US. Leaders will work with AMC leadership in Boston to help alleviate strain and burden. In addition, the trip insurance provided by AMC has a 24x7 hotline to help you with arrangements and start a claim. We highly recommend you purchase full trip interruption insurance for overseas travel.

Both leaders must ultimately remain with the group. All expenses incurred from such a separation from the group are borne by the participant. We strongly recommend that participants purchase supplemental travel insurance for additional medical coverage and trip interruption that involves a covid, or another emergency incident. Information about insurance options will be made available once the trip is declared a go. Your AMC trip medical insurance does not cover covid-related incidents.

Please review AMC-AT’s Terms and Conditions. By submitting your application and deposit for this trip, you agree to all stated Terms and Conditions.

AMC MISSION

AMC Adventure Travel trips are run in a manner supportive of and consistent with the conservation, recreational and educational principles and mission of the Club. Trip leaders encourage participant conduct consistent with Leave No Trace environmental and conservation principles and local regulations.
Your AMC Leaders

Janis Stahlhut

A lifelong outdoor enthusiast, Janis has been an AMC-AT leader since 2009. She is a Connecticut Chapter hike and bike leader and has led AT hiking, biking, kayaking and cultural/natural exploration trips on five continents: to Cape Cod, New Hampshire, Massachusetts, Sicily, Spain, France, Italy, Finland, Norway, UK, the Netherlands, Belgium, Peru, Argentina, Fiji, New Zealand, and Australia. Janis spent her multi-dimensional work life in community arts, telecommunications, and fitness.

“The only thing I love more than exploring the world is showing it to others!” Read up on Janis’ adventure musings at www.jasjourneys.wordpress.com.

Christa Ten Cate

An Associate Leader with AMC-AT since 2020, Christa co-led a trip to the Canadian Rockies in July 2022. She is also a four-season leader for the AMC NY-NJ Chapter since 2009. Christa has hiked extensively in the Northeast US, completing the NH 48, the Adirondack 46, and the Catskill 3500’ peaks; and the allure of this country’s western destinations has resulted in several trips to the Colorado Rockies, as well as the redwood forests of northern California. Christa has participated in four previous Adventure Travel treks, completing the GR5 in summers 2016-2017, and the Via Alpina in summers 2018-2019. Christa’s professional life is dedicated to children’s mental health services.

For more information about this trip, please contact Janis, 203-820-9275, jstahlhut@icloud.com or Christa, 973-615-8025, ctencate@optonline.net.

What to Bring

Here is a short list of what to bring to ensure a good and safe trip:

Required Gear: sturdy, waterproof/resistant hiking boots, day pack, hydration container(s) and water additives to help prevent dehydration, personal first aid kit (what you think you might need), international activated cell phone, tick and insect repellent. (Yes, Ireland has ticks that carry Lyme Disease.) Please do not assume leaders or others will have what you need!

Optional gear: hiking poles or walking stick (studies show that accidents and injuries are less frequent/severe when a walking stick or pole is used).

Generally: comfortable clothing, layered for versatility in changing weather; rain gear; hat, light gloves, neck gaiter or scarf (with cooling properties if extreme heat expected); enough medication for the trip plus extra; covid-19 or other appropriate home testing kits (at least two); light medical grade face masks (enough for 10 days plus a few extras); sunglasses, binoculars, camera, batteries, spare batteries, chargers, sleeping mask, earplugs.

A word on weather- Ireland can be wet and can cool off in a hurry. Be sure to pack warm layers, waterproof footwear, and hearty rain gear! For a good look at weather trends in Ireland, check out www.weatherspark.com.
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