



May the Fourth Be With You in Ireland

May 1-10, 2023

\$2999 per person sharing a double room, land only
(airfare to Shannon Airport additional)
\$999 additional single supplement if traveling solo
(limited to 4 single rooms per tour)
\$500 deposit due December 9, 2022 to hold your space



Whether you are a fan of Star Wars, or just the isle of Ireland in general, this is the small escorted group tour for you! Each year, the beautiful village of Portmagee in County Kerry hosts a May the 4th Be With You Festival celebrating the global phenomenon of the film franchise that has engaged fans since 1977. Why Kerry? Because this is where the last few movies were made along the breathtaking Skellig Coast on the Wild Atlantic Way. In addition to attending the fun film activities at the May the 4th festival, our tour will also feature the best Ireland has to offer in terms of unsurpassed hospitality in 5-Star luxury accommodations, jaw-dropping scenery along the coast, gourmet cuisine, and live traditional music better than any cantina band this side of Tatooine.

Singer-songwriter and author Tara O’Grady will be your guide on this galactic journey of the south of Ireland. As a former teacher of film studies, she has curated an exciting adventure for all you cinephiles and historians alike. Expect a true balance of art, nature, culture and cuisine as you explore Ireland with one of her talented and inspiring native daughters.

HIGHLIGHTS:

- Private escort on a small coach bus where you’ll be “lifted and landed, wined and dined.” Not once will you have to carry your luggage from the moment we arrive at the airport. Full Irish Breakfast included daily, plus five sumptuous dinners. Backstage tour of the Siamsa Tire National Folk Theatre in Tralee where we will meet local artists and experience a private traditional Irish music performance in a ring fort. Explore the Dingle peninsula with local filmmaker Maurice Galway who will show us the exact locations where the recent Star Wars films were made, including access to the famous Beehive huts where the Jedi Luke Skywalker was hiding. Access to the Sci-Fi Film Festival and the many scheduled events during the May the 4th Be With You Fest, including the unveiling of a new Luke Skywalker statue (organizers say we should expect a surprise guest to attend...)
- Castle accommodations – We begin the tour at the luxurious Ballyseede Castle in Tralee, and end the tour at the 5-star Dromoland Castle in Clare where we will experience hunting with hawks. If you’ve never had a bird of prey land on your forearm, this will be a thrilling activity to add to your bucket list! Seaside Resorts – During the festival, we are staying in Waterville at the Butler Arms Hotel, a seaside resort where Charlie Chaplin stayed every summer for ten years of his life. The actor said it was his favorite place in the world, that’s why they have a statue of him on the property and the resort hosts a film fest of his movies each August. On the Dingle peninsula, we also stay at a seaside resort – Dingle Skellig Hotel. So be prepared to have your breath taken away as you wake each morning. Free time to sleep late, wander through castle gardens, schedule a spa treatment, play a round of golf, take long walks on the beach, lunch in quaint towns, shop for Irish wool sweaters, visit local pubs, listen to live music, and meet the locals.

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Monday, May 1 - United States to Shannon

Evening: Depart from your US airport. Sit back, relax, and enjoy your in-flight meal service as you cross the Atlantic.

Tuesday, May 2 - Shannon Arrival & Ballyseede Castle

Morning – Land at Shannon Airport in County Clare, Ireland. Upon arrival we will be greeted by our friendly and culturally knowledgeable driver as we board our private coach bus. Once you hand over your suitcase, you won’t carry it again for the entire journey. Get ready to be lifted and landed, wined and dined!

Afternoon – As we head on our two hour drive south, we will stop for a hearty Irish brunch. We then continue on to our first castle accommodation in County Kerry. Ballyseede Castle in Tralee is a 4-star luxury castle hotel. Here we will relax from our travels on 30 acres of private gardens and woodland. Feel free to explore the grounds or relax in the elegant drawing rooms until dinner.

Evening – Gather by the fire in Pappy’s Bar within the castle before we reunite for dinner in O’Connell’s restaurant renowned for serving beautiful food in magnificent surroundings, using Irish cuisine and the finest locally-sourced seasonal ingredients.

DINNER (7pm) AND OVERNIGHT: BALLYSEEDE CASTLE (B,D)

Wednesday, May 3 - Tralee & Irish Trad Music

After **breakfast** at The Stone Room in the castle (**8-10am**), we head in to the town of Tralee where you will have free time to explore, shop and eat lunch on your own. Tralee, the largest town in Kerry, is famous for the Rose of Tralee International Festival which takes place annually every August since 1950. The town is also home to one of the largest public urban parks in Ireland, Tralee Town Park which spans across 75 acres. The park is adjacent to Kerry County Museum and is the home of Siamsa Tire, Ireland's National Folk Theatre. In the **afternoon**, we visit the Siamsa Tire National Folk Theatre for a backstage tour and private concert with some of the best Irish traditional musicians in the country. The venue is one of Ireland's busiest theatres and arts centers and located in an iconic ring fort style building. After the performance, we get spend time with the musicians to learn more about their melody making.

Come **evening**, we relax again on the grounds of our castle, with dinner in the restaurant.

DINNER (7pm) AND OVERNIGHT: BALLYSEEDE CASTLE (B,D)



Thursday, May 4 - May the Fourth Be With You Festival & Seaside Resort, Waterville

After **breakfast** in our castle, we depart at **10am** to head to the main attraction, the Star Wars Sci-Fi festival in Portmagee and Valentia Island, just over an hour away. The phrase "May the Force Be with You" is just as powerful as the Irish blessing "May the Road Rise to Meet You" referring to your journey in life. The Irish landscape has an energy, or force, that Hollywood recognized when they were location scouting for their latest filmmaking endeavors across the universe. The Kingdom of Kerry is where they found the most breathtaking other-worldly setting. We will be exploring this setting over the next few days, in addition to participating in the numerous activities scheduled by the festival organizers. Be prepared to see all things related to the film, and feel free to bring a themed costume to fit in with the locals who will be dressing up as their favorite characters from Storm Troopers to Jedi Knights to get attention and discounts. The festival website will be updated in April with the exact schedule of events, which in the past included a light saber parade, star gazing, outdoor screenings of the films, Galactic Disco Cantina, Yoda Yoga, and lectures from filmmakers and fans alike. This year they are unveiling a statue of Luke Skywalker and hint that a "celebrity" will be in attendance. This is a festival, and like any other Irish festival, there will be music and merriment in the streets, food trucks, Guinness on tap, and surprises at every corner. Once we check in to our seaside resort, we will take our land cruiser to the center of the action and explore with the locals. Tonight is the opening ceremony and social meet and greet. Most of the festival events are free. For festival schedule updates, visit their website - www.maythe4thbewithyoufestival.com

OVERNIGHT: BUTLER ARMS HOTEL (B)

Friday, May 5 - FREE DAY

Enjoy **breakfast** in our hotel with beautiful views of Ballinskelligs Bay situated on the seafront in Waterville Village on the Wild Atlantic Way. Actor Charlie Chaplin stayed at this hotel every summer from 1959 to 1971, and that's why there is a statue of him out on the beachfront. The Hollywood legend was born in England, but adored this exact location in Ireland. His friend Walt Disney recommended the area for its fly fishing. It was ranked in 2019 as one of the best places to stay in Ireland. The hotel even named the restaurant Charlie after their favorite guest. Waterville is a tranquil and picturesque village with amazing views of the sea and the Kerry Mountains. With a generous helping of friendly Kerry hospitality it is no wonder that the Chaplin family fell in love with it. Apart from Chaplin and Disney, The Butler Arms has also been the accommodation of choice with other well-known celebrities. While filming at the beehive huts on the nearby Skellig Michael, Mark Hamill, Daisy Ridley, JJ Abrams, Kathleen Lucas, along with the crew of Star Wars Episode VII and Episode VIII, stayed at the hotel in 2014 and 2015. Michael Douglas and family, along with sporting stars Dan Marino and Wayne Gretzky have also stayed at this very impressive, family owned hotel. In addition to the Star Wars festival activities in Portmagee and Valentia Island (TBA), we have a free day to explore the area. You may want to walk on the Waterville beach, play a round of golf, or go fishing. We will gather for dinner in our hotel's restaurant this evening.

DINNER AND OVERNIGHT: BUTLER ARMS HOTEL (B, D)

Saturday, May 6 - FREE DAY

After **breakfast** in our hotel, we have another free day to explore the festival or local activities. This evening the festival is hosting the awards ceremony for the Sci-Fi film entries. Since it is a weekend, the towns will be packed with visitors and locals alike. We will go where the wind takes us. As the Irish say, the craic will be mighty!

OVERNIGHT: BUTLER ARMS HOTEL (B)

Sunday, May 7 - DINGLE PENINSULA

After breakfast, we check out of our hotel and head over to the Dingle Peninsula. We'll stop on the way through the town of Kenmare for lunch at the Brew House, wander through this market town, and if the weather is fair, we may even scamper across Inch Beach with its wild and windswept dunes stretching out into Dingle Bay creating a majestic panorama, Be prepared for this Wild Atlantic Way headland in County Kerry to steal your heart. The famous Kerry coastline with its pounding waves, salty winds, dramatic cliffs and wide racing skies will take your breath away. Return in the evening for a scrumptious dinner in our hotel.

DINNER (7pm) AND OVERNIGHT: DINGLE SKELLIG HOTEL (B,D)

Monday, May 8 - DINGLE FILM TOUR

Enjoy **breakfast** in the spectacular setting and unique ambience of the Coastguard Restaurant overlooking Dingle Harbour and Bay and the mountains of the Iveragh Peninsula. At **10:30am** we will meet the director of the Kerry Film Festival in our lobby. Maurice Galway has over 20 years experience in the Film and Animation Festival circuit. He has welcomed actors, filmmakers, animators and other industry experts to Kerry, sharing the stunning Dingle Peninsula with them, including Laura Dern (who called him an “insane genius”), Maureen O’Hara, Cillian Murphy, Gabriel Byrne, Saoirse Ronan, Stephen Frears, Jim Sheridan, Jean Jacques Beineix, Andrew Loog Oldman (Manager of The Rolling Stones ‘63-67) and Gregory Peck’s Family. Maurice will be our private guide throughout the morning as we explore the locations where the Star Wars films were made, including the historic Beehive Huts scattered along the Slea Head drive. In the **afternoon**, you are free to explore the quaint town of Dingle itself, ranked by the Irish as one of the top three towns in the entire country. Bohemian, artistic, and genuinely friendly, Dingle is famed for its hardware pubs (where you can buy a pint and some wellies). Go on a pub crawl, shop til you drop, order the catch of the day, stop in to Murphy’s Ice Cream and try their chocolate whiskey or pink champagne sorbet, discover crafts and weavers, chat with locals, or sit on the dock and watch the boats. In the **evening**, we will return to our hotel for a delightful dinner overlooking the water.

DINNER (7pm) AND OVERNIGHT: DINGLE SKELLIG HOTEL (B,D)

Tuesday, May 9 - HAWK WALK & DROMOLAND CASTLE

After breakfast we head back north (9am) to County Clare to stay at our second castle hotel. We’ll stop for lunch in Adare, Limerick at Bill Chawke’s Pub. Our final destination is Dromoland, a 5-star luxury hotel where every guest is considered royalty. The 450-acre estate will host our last experience of the tour, a Hawk Walk at their School of Falconry. We will get up close and personal with mesmerizing “millennium” falcons, hawks and owls on the Castle grounds learning to hunt with the birds as they land on our forearms. Afterwards, you can explore the walled gardens or the lake at your leisure, or simply sit by the fire and relax with an Irish whiskey. Later in the evening we will meet for our farewell dinner in the castle.

DINNER (7pm) AND OVERNIGHT: DROMOLAND CASTLE (B,D)

Wednesday, May 10 - DEPART FROM SHANNON AIRPORT

After **breakfast**, our driver will get to you the airport with plenty of time to check-in for your flight to clear customs and immigration. There is ample duty-free shopping for any last minute Irish gifts. Safe travels and thank you for exploring Ireland with us! May the Force be with you, and May the Wind be always at your back!

