ICAEF Presents:

Céad Míle Fáilte:

An Irish Discovery Journey

September 15-23, 2021

8 nights/9 days

ica educational foundation

building better caterers...one scholarship at a time

céad míle fáilte:
an Irish discovery journey

Ireland has a reputation for being a friendly destination, and we will sense their welcoming spirit the moment we arrive. The Irish greet most guests to their country with the moniker "céad míle fáilte"- which translates to "100,000 welcomes". That is why we couldn't be more excited for this carefully curated CLJ that will showcase some of Ireland's very best.

When it comes to food on the island of Ireland, we need to start at the very beginning. The purity of the natural produce has made the island one of the most talked-about food destinations in Europe, with emphasis on artisan cheese, exceptional beef and lamb and fresh-off-the-boat seafood.

The green pastures, deep valleys and abundant waters surrounding the island have helped create outstanding natural flavours that we won't get anywhere else. From sublime smoked salmon to the creamiest butter imaginable, Ireland's food boasts an impeccable provenance and can be the best enjoyed here – in the very place it comes from! With such a prestigiously stocked natural larder, it's no wonder that the island's most creative chefs make full use of the great produce on their doorstep. Whether we're dining in an esteemed Michelin-starred restaurant or a top gastro pub, we'll find homegrown ingredients dominating the menus!

We will be staying at fantastic properties in Dublin (2 nights) Wicklow (2 nights), Kilkenny (1 night) and Galway (3 nights) and exploring points in between. From modern local cuisine and famous whiskeys, to charming castles, ancient ruins, and lush green landscapes, we will fully embrace the Irish culture and generations-old and many traditions throughout our 8-day tour.

We'll start the journey at lunch on the Wednesday, September 15th and hit the ground running to kick off the start of this amazing week! We'll only have two nights in Dublin, so if you want to explore Dublin further, or if you like to arrive ahead of the group to beat the jet lag, please consider arriving on the 14th of September or earlier. We'll be staying at the Dylan Hotel, and accommodations for additional nights can be arranged for you, if desired.

Our trip begins in Dublin and ends in Galway, so you have two choices of airports to depart from. We encourage flying in to Dublin and out of Dublin or Shannon Airport. Most flights from the USA arrive Dublin very early in the morning and our agent will greet you there upon arrival to ensure you are able to get a taxi or transport to the hotel (not included in the journey price). If rooms are available upon arrival at the hotel, we will do our best to get you checked in so you can freshen up. Otherwise, please enjoy breakfast at the hotel prior to the start of our journey at 11:30am.

If you plan on leaving Ireland on the 23rd, we will have early morning shuttles (included in the price) that will depart the hotels to either Shannon or Dublin Airports, but please book a flight that departs after 12pm or you may need to hire a private car or taxi (not included in the price and you can expect to pay 250EU additional) or stay an additional night in your departure city (also not included in the price). Shannon Airport is 1.5 hours from Galway and Dublin is 2.5 hours away.

Day 1 – Dublin

Wednesday, September 15

Today's lunch will be enjoyed at The Vintage Kitchen, a cozy establishment that will just fit our group for the midday meal. We will BYOB, but don't worry… beer and wine will be picked up for us at a local off-license to enjoy. Following lunch, we will have a couple of options to work off a hearty lunch before we go back to the hotel prior to dinner. You can choose a walking tour of Dublin City, a whiskey tour of some key local distilleries, or spend some time on your own shopping and exploring the city. Dinner will be a bit lighter and very casual as we enjoy our meal at a local pub for a great Irish experience.

The Vintage Kitchen

"A pop down to restaurant nestled in the old part of Dublin -an intimate setting, delicious food and great fun sum up this charming eatery."

Option: Walking Tour of Dublin City Highlights

Visit iconic Dublin sites such as Trinity College and the Book of Kells, St. Patrick's Cathedral and the Guinness Storehouse – as well as visiting some of the hidden gems of the City. With a wealth of attractions, many within walking distance of each other, Ireland's largest city provides a sense of history, culture, music and a bustle that is truly unique.

Option: Dublin City Whiskey Tour

Led by a professional whiskey connoisseur, visit three distilleries and receive an interesting introduction to Dublin's whiskey drinking culture while strolling to the first venue. Learn about its rise to glory, its dramatic fall and of course, its current revival while you also pleasure your palate with samples of a range of excellent Irish whiskies.

Option: Shopping on Own

We'll point you to Grafton Street, which boasts some of the finest shopping opportunities in Dublin's City Center and you are able to shop until you drop!

Searsons of Baggot St. (dinner)

Searsons of Baggot Street is notably one of Dublin's favourite party spots because of its high-quality produce, value for money, extensive menu choices, friendly staff and fantastic atmosphere (whether it's during sporting events, Fridays after five or when the live music sessions are in full swing ~ you just never know!

Dylan Hotel (5 Star)

Stunning chic decor and spacious rooms with Italian marble bathrooms are offered at this 5-star boutique hotel. Located just outside of the central part of Dublin, the Dylan is an easy walking distance to fabulous shopping The Dylan bar overlooks the restaurant and has a fine selection of cocktails, wines and an outside terrace area.

Day 2 – Dublin

Thursday, September 16

After a lovely Irish breakfast at the hotel, we will enjoy a guided electric bike tour northeast of Dublin to Howth Village, where we will be able to see the breath-taking views of the Irish Sea. If you would prefer not to cycle, we will have the coach available to take you to the top of the cliffs or into the lovely village. While in Howth, we will have an opportunity to visit a fish monger, known for smoking salmon over open fire and will have a take-away fish & chips lunch from a popular eatery, Beshoff Bros (don't worry…options will always be available for non-fish eaters and vegetarians!). Following our return to our hotel in Dublin, we will enjoy an amazing beer pairing experience at Open Gate Brewery, which is a testing location to the famed Guinness Storehouse. Here the brew makers get to experiment with brews and see how they are received by the public. We'll have the place to ourselves and will enjoy a beer pairing experience with gastropub fare by the Guinness Chef.

Electric Bike Tour to Howth Village

Enjoy a fully-guided tour with a local guide on one comfortable electric bike. Learn interesting facts as well as some great stories about Dublin and the coast. Explore the peninsula breath-taking views, wonderful wildlife and fabulous wilderness of Howth on a comfortable electric bike.

Beshoff Bros.

Beshoff provides their customers with the tastiest, highest-quality fish n' chips in Dublin at the best prices. In the little village of Howth, nothing better than a take away lunch to enjoy in the park or up on the cliffs with a stunning view of the Irish Sea.

Nicky's Plaice

The only Open Fire Smokehouse in Dublin and one of a handful remaining in Ireland. Scenting the air with oak as we tend to the fire and balance its power with the rise and fall of the sea winds. It takes time and real commitment to smoke the finest salmon over an open fire the traditional way, but the result is a taste like no other salmon.

Open Gate Brewery

The Open Gate Brewery is the Guinness brewer's licence to experiment and dream in beer. They use different types of Irish grain in the brewing of their beers to create and share the most varied versions of beers. They also have their specialist Guinness chef who produces their seasonal menu, designed to pair perfectly with their rotational beers!

Day 3 – County Wicklow

Friday, September 17

Enjoy breakfast at the hotel before checking out as we depart Dublin and make our way to BrookLodge Hotel in Co. Wicklow. It is a relatively quick forty-five-minute coach ride to our first stop for the Meet the Makers tour, where we will visit a Winery, a Brewery, an elegant estate called Kilruddery House and Gardens and of course a whiskey distillery.

Kilruddery House is a lovely property that is still occupied by the descendants of the original owners, and don't be surprised if we have the pleasure of meeting them! We will have lunch at the estate, picnic style after selecting a menu produced from the land. There will be quite a few tastes and bites served throughout the day, as well as a visit to a local castle in ruins.

We will then finish our day as we arrive at BrookLodge Hotel and Macreddin Village, an amazing property located in the very green, rolling hills of the Irish countryside. We'll meet in the pub on the property for a pint or a wee dram of whiskey prior to dinner, and then will enjoy a simple Italian meal (yes, Italian) under a grape arbour outdoors. After dinner, feel free to retire or continue on at the traditional pub on site for another pint or nightcap!

Meet the Makers Tour

We've teamed up with other innovative food and drink producers in Wicklow for a new 'behind the scenes' Food and Drink tour around the Garden of Ireland. This experience will connect we with the real people behind some of the fantastic innovations happening in Ireland's food and drink scene today. We will visit:

Wicklow Way Wines

Killruddery House and Gardens

The Powerscourt Distillery

Wicklow Wolf Brewery

BrookLodge Hotel (4 star)

BrookLodge Hotel is a stunning lodge style hotel, set in the spectacular Co. Wicklow countryside. Celebrated as a key and influential food destination, the BrookLodge & Macreddin Village is home to the Strawberry Tree, Ireland's only certified organic restaurant, serving the finest of freshest artisan, wild and organic foods prepared by expert chefs.

Momma's Table

Macreddin Village's second restaurant, La Taverna Armento, features a full Southern Italian menu, based on the magnificent foods available from the countryside surrounding the Village of Armento in the province of Basilicata. Momma's Table at La Taverna Armento offers a group dining experience like no other. Guests are encouraged to help serve the person on both sides of them, helping to add to the conviviality and atmosphere of the table.

Actons Country Pub

Enjoy a creamy pint in the lively surroundings of Actons Country Pub. That is conveniently located on property! The pub makes the most of its picturesque surroundings in Wicklow and pays homage to the traditional Irish pub with its homely interior and hospitable bar tenders.

Day 4 – County Wicklow

Saturday, September 18

Enjoy a delicious Irish Continental breakfast at the hotel and get ready for a culinary adventure! Today we will stay on property and learn about how the staff of BrookLodge Hotel have utilized the ingredients of the Irish countryside to stock their wonderful pantry with amazing vinegars, cocktail mixers, and much more. We will take a Wild Foods Master class and learn about the ingredients available on the land as we forage for our own food to enjoy later in the day. Included with today's experience will be an Irish Brown Bread making demonstration as well as other tidbits for us to take home for the recipe bank. Following our day of foraging, we will have some free time to relax and wander around this beautiful property. For dinner, we will enjoy a family style dinner at the stunning Big Table in the Strawberry Tree Restaurant and dine on dishes that include the ingredients foraged earlier in the day.

Wild Foods Master Class

After a welcome tour of Macreddin Village including The Kitchens and The Wild Foods Pantry we will be exposed to an in-depth tuition that will take us through a full calendar of natural Wild Foods that are available along 327,000km of the Irish Hedgerows.

Strawberry Tree Restaurant

The ultimate dining experience! The Big Table Dinner provides a unique opportunity for the Strawberry Tree Kitchen to prepare foods and a Menu that simply cannot be served in a normal restaurant setting.

day 5 – kilkenny

sunday, september 19

After breakfast at the hotel we will pack up our bags and head to Kilkenny. This is another relatively short bus ride of only 75 minutes before our first stop. Today we will experience the culture of Ireland and the products for which they are famous! Our first stop will be a chocolate workshop at the Chocolate Garden of Ireland. Following that, we will have a lovely tour of Kilkenny Castle, one of the landmark castles of Ireland. Then it is on to Smithwick's Brewery for a tour of the facilities and a taste of their products. Lunch will follow at the Left Bank, a bank turned pub for some delicious Irish fare. After lunch, we'll have a tour of the Nicholas Mosse Pottery, an iconic pottery producer in Ireland and the Jerpoint Glass Studio. We won't be able to see the glassblowing (since it is a Sunday) but we will have the opportunity to purchase at both locations if desired.

A day of experiences will culminate at the Mount Juliet Hotel, where we will have an elegant dinner at The Lady Helen, a Michelin star rated restaurant located on the hotel's property.

Chocolate Garden of Ireland

The Chocolate Garden of Ireland is Ireland's only chocolate and ice cream factory, all under one roof. We will indulge in their range of delicious Award-Winning products in their chocolate and ice cream café. But it isn't just about tasting the goods! We will participate in a chocolate workshop and learn about the process of cocoa to chocolate; a chocolate making demonstration and of course, tasting!

Kilkenny Castle

One of the most instantly recognized buildings in Ireland, Kilkenny Castle has been an important site since Strongbow constructed the first castle, probably a wooden structure, in the 12th century.

Smithwick's Experience

Harvested from the land, seasoned by history, Smithwick's has been brewed in Kilkenny since 1710. Enjoy a delicious Smithwick's Ale while revelling in the tales of the local staff as we tour through time!

Left Bank, Kilkenny

Left bank is arguably Kilkenny's most popular pub, located in the centre of Kilkenny city. A recently renovated Bank of Ireland branch, Left Bank features a beautifully designed main bar with a lively atmosphere and friendly staff and a large covered and heated (when necessary) outdoor area with its own bar and an outdoor fireplace.

Nicholas Mosse Pottery

Nicholas is one of Ireland's most well-known potters and has been in business for over 50 years. His mission was to produce beautiful, functional pottery in the style of Irish Spongeware. Irish spongeware was the traditional pottery of Ireland used in the 18th Century. It was mainly made in simple honest shapes with a decoration applied with a cut sponge.

Jerpoint Glass Studio

Jerpoint Glass Studio is home to the magic of mouth-blown, hand-made and hand-finished glassware. The story of this family-run glassblowing studio began more than 40 years ago. True to its roots, today, Jerpoint Glass Studio continues the craft of glass making with family, friends and the spirit of Ireland at its heart.

Mount Juliet Hotel

Mount Juliet is Ireland's leading country estate and is one of the most luxurious hotels in County Kilkenny. Aside from the main house, Mount Juliet have undergone a major renovation in the Hunters Yard area, created from the estate's hunting stables which still retain the architectural appeal of the original courtyard.

Lady Helen Restaurant

Just like the former Lady of the house after whom is named, The Lady Helen restaurant is an iconic part of the Mount Juliet story and lives long in the memory of all who visit. Take a seat in the Michelin-starred Lady Helen dining room of The Manor House, and the first thing you take in will likely be its stunning pastoral views. It is a fitting setting of the scene, given that many of the dishes are made using the highest-quality produce, sourced from the estate and the nearby farms that stretch out just beyond the running river and rolling pastures that lie beyond the windows. These carefully and seasonally chosen ingredients provides the starting point for a culinary experience that could only be created through the visionary lens of Executive Head Chef, John Kelly. Across varied tasting menus and a carefully composed table d'hote, Kelly balances an intense commitment to the traditional flavours and components of local Irish cuisine with the more adventurous instincts he has honed while working in some of the world's most renowned restaurants. The result is something truly special and designed to delight all discerning diners. Every dish is part of an evocative event that will transport you to a truly timeless place; part of an unforgettable fine-dining experience that could only be enjoyed in The Lady Helen. *This will be an elegant dining experience and a good night to dress up just a tad, but nothing too fancy is required!*

Day 6 – Galway

Monday, September 20

Again, a lovely Irish Breakfast at the hotel, then we are moving on! Departing earlier today, our first stop will be the Crosse Sheep Milk Company, where we will learn how two brothers have created a successful company that supplies many purveyors in Ireland with local sheep milk. One of which is the Cashel Blue Farmhouse Cheese, and naturally, this will be our second stop. At Cashel, not only will we get to taste their extraordinary flight of cheeses, but we will also get to learn about the production process and distribution. Following Cashel, we will make our way northwest to The Cliffs of Moher with a stop at Bunratty Castle and Folk Park for coffee "and a bite at Dirty Nelly's Pub.

We then proceed to the iconic Cliffs of Moher! After enjoying the wonderful views from 120 metres above sea level, we will transfer to Leahy Beekeeping for a lesson in making honey, keeping bees and the importance of bees to our eco-system. Rumour has it we will be able to don bee suits for an up-close and personal interaction with the bees!

Crosse Sheep Milk Co.

Brothers, Michael and Brendan Crosse, lease a sheep farm under the eye of the historic Rock of Cashel in Co. Tipperary. Michael is the farmer. As a child, he was never indoors. Brendan is the foodie. His appetite knows no bounds. Together, they think they are the perfect match to take on sheep milking in Ireland.

Cashel Blue Farmhouse Cheese

When Louis & Jane Grubb set out to make Cashel Blue in the early 1980's, their ambition was to create a farmhouse cheese that "truly represents the outstanding quality of Tipperary grass-fed milk. Today, more than 30 years later and in the hands of the 2nd generation, Cashel Blue is still made by hand on the same 200-acre farm.

Bunratty Castle & Folk Park

Bunratty Castle is the most complete and authentic medieval fortress in Ireland. Built in 1425 it was restored to its former medieval splendour in 1954. At Bunratty Folk Park you'll experience a living reconstruction of the homes and environment of the Ireland of over a century ago. Set on 26 acres, the impressive park features over 30 buildings in a 'living village' and rural setting.

Cliffs of Moher

Rising to over 600 feet (200 metres) in places, they are among the highest sea cliffs in Western Europe, and stretch for about for 2 miles (3km) along the Atlantic coast. From its exceptional vantage position, you will enjoy spending views over Galway Bay, including the Aran Islands. You will also enjoy stunning views of the mountains in Connemara, Co. Galway. All weather permitting.

Leahy Beekeeping

The mountain range of Sliabh Aughty, which stretches through Galway and Clare, provides the perfect backdrop for the production of Sliabh Aughty Honey. This honey is produced a few miles away from Loughrea in County Galway, by Noel Leahy. In this bee tour we will see the inner workings of a hive, the process of honey making and sample our quality products. Learn about the importance of the bees in the eco-system and food chain.

Tartare Restaurant

Snug, intimate and endearing, with a rustic feel; this sweet neighbourhood café is a hit with one and all. Sit at multi-level wood-topped tables beneath bright oil paintings and dine in delicious small plates. Simplicity is key: top seasonal ingredients are well-sourced and carefully prepared by Chef JP McMahon.

Glenlo Abbey

Glenlo Abbey is Galway's newly re-established 5 Star hotel set overlooking the panoramic views of Lough Corrib. Enjoy delicious food in one of the hotels many dining options. The River Room restaurant is a magnificent dining room open for breakfast, dinner, Sunday lunches and special events. The Oak Cellar bar has a wide variety menu, lively atmosphere and cosy surroundings.

Day 7 – Galway

Tuesday, September 21

Today's agenda will be a tad lighter on the activity so that we can have a bit of time to enhance the Ireland economy with souvenir purchases, but it won't be lighter on the food. Enjoy breakfast at the hotel but don't eat too much as today we will be exploring Galway City and will be able to taste the local fare from artisan producers. This is a 3-hour tour, so be sure to wear your comfy walking shoes. You bet no lunch is required after this tour! Today, we will also visit a working Oyster farm, where they will explain the whole process of how the farm brings the oysters from seeds right through to your plate. In the afternoon, those that are interested will have time to explore the city on their own for shopping and site seeing for a couple of hours. If shopping is not your bag, then you can enjoy an afternoon of rest at the hotel. Our hotel is on a golf course, so if you are dying to hit the sticks while in Ireland, today may be a good day. Dinner will be special aboard a stationary train dining car that was used on the Orient Express… truly a unique experience!

Galway Food Trail

This is a 3-hour culinary walking tour of Galway. It gives a great overview of the passionate people and beautiful produce which combine to make Galway one of Ireland's gourmet jewels. During the tour we will meet artisan producers and sample their products with experienced local guides, giving us insights to the local favourites' and treasured ingredients.

Oyster Farm Visit

Ireland and the Wild Atlantic Way are renowned for its delicious seafood delights. In this tour, you will see the farm crew working hard in the water to grow the most perfect meaty oysters. Shuck your own oyster or take a punt at the weighing of oyster, again learning more about the work put in to create the most perfect oysters. And of course, finish your tour with a taste of a beautiful fresh oyster.

Pullman Restaurant

Comprising of two original Pullman carriages, beautifully restored and set on the grounds of the Glenlo Abbey hotel with spectacular views overlooking the hotel and Lough Corrib. And there's the Leona Carriage ~ Leona was built in 1927 and was used in Agatha Christie's *Murder On The Orient Express* (you sit there and wonder, did Ingrid Bergman actually sit on these seats). Also, the Leona Carriage was part of Winston Churchill's funeral cortege. These actual carriages transported first class passengers through Europe to Istanbul and later took the elite, including Laurence Olivier.

Day 8 – Galway

Wednesday, September 22

Our final full day together and it promises to be a special one! Enjoy an early breakfast at the hotel before we head to the coast to board a ferry for Inis Mór, one of the Aran Islands. We'll have a good amount of time on the island today to explore and possibly buy those fabulous Aran Sweaters, if interested. Here we will have a wonderful lunch in a local pub, and we have a couple of surprises lined up for today, so you'll just have to wait to experience it! Upon our return, we'll visit another pub or two so that we all can get the local flavour and enjoy some bites of fresh seafood, Guinness and oysters and other pub fare. Once we return to the hotel, we have a special final night in store for us on the property, which will make it convenient for you to return for your room early for packing, or stay up and reminisce about the wonderful week we have had together in Ireland!

Cruise to Inis Mór

The cruise sets out from Rossaveel Harbour –a port 23 miles west of Galway -on to the Aran Islands, three of the most unspoiled islands in the Atlantic. The Islands seem to defy their size by all they have to offer: breath-taking scenery, ecclesiastical ruins from early Christian times, medieval castles, cliffs, prehistoric stone forts (including the famous Dún Aonghasa), sandy beaches, unique flora and fauna and a rich folklore that the islanders are proud to recount.

Inis Mór, The Aran Islands

Inis Mór, the largest of the three Aran Islands is 9 miles long and about 2 miles wide and is mostly made of Burren limestone rock and small fields which are surrounded by stone walls. The islanders use the language of Irish every day and is one of the last places in Ireland where the ancient Celtic language is preserved.

Progressive Lunch Pub Crawl

The ultimate bar-hopping experience in Galway and our private guide will take us to the best places around were we can enjoy good food, good music and, of course, a few good pints of preferred beer. But don't worry… it is not just about the beer on this trip. We will experience some lovely local bar fare as well as experience the local culture.

Joe Watty's Bar

Joe Watty's is one of the Islands oldest and most traditional pubs, located at the cross-roads that lead to Dún Aengus Fort and the Seal Colony and only 300 metres from the Pier. With a menu that offers 'Traditional Island Bar Food' of locally caught Lobster, Crab Mussels, Fresh Fish and a variety of Meat and Vegetarian dishes, as well as delicious home-made desserts, Joe Watty's is also famous for its live music sessions!

An Chistin

An Chistin is the pub right in the centre of Carraroe. There's a medium sized bar in the front with several tables in the windows. If you walk back, you'll find a good-sized bar with a couple of dining rooms where lunch and dinner are served. After dinner there's often good live traditional music. And the people of Carraroe in Connemara are the best on earth.

Final Night Dinner

We have a special treat for you that will remain a surprise! Tonight, is time to celebrate our trip with our friends as we reminisce about the great week we had before we have to say goodbye tomorrow!

Day 9 – Departures

Thursday, September 23

Sadly, it is time to say goodbye today. Many of you will have plans to extend your trip within Ireland or Europe and others will be heading home. As previously mentioned, Shannon is the closest airport to Galway and is the easiest airport to get to, but flights may be limited. If you want to take advantage of the shuttle to your departure airport on the 23rd, you must book your return/ongoing flight after 12pm so that we can take advantage of the group rates. Private shuttles will not be included for earlier flights.

A nice perk of travelling to Ireland is the ease of clearing customs. You will clear customs as you depart Ireland in the Dublin and Shannon airports vs upon your arrival in the States.

CUSTOMIRELAND
DESTINATION MANAGEMENT CONSULTANTS

DMC NETWORK
IRELAND AFFILIATE

Our tour is thoughtfully curated by Custom Ireland

Itinerary is accurate at the time of this printing, but the producer in conjunction with the travel operator reserves the right to make any changes they feel will enhance the trip or make it more enjoyable for the group