



Itinerary for the
The Houston Choral Society
Performance Tour of
Ireland
June 13 – 23, 2011

Day 1:

Overnight Flight

Today board your transatlantic flight from Houston to Dublin, Ireland

Day 2:

Dublin

Welcome to Ireland! Upon arrival you will pass through Passport Control Customs after collecting your bags. There you will meet your Tour Escort and drivers who will assist you to your coaches. They will remain with you throughout the concert tour.

Dublin has a historical perspective that stretches back to the Bronze Age. It was victimized by ancient Viking raids and has always played a major role in the Irish independence movement.

After departing the airport you will transfer to the center of the city where you will enjoy lunch on your own followed by a guided visit of Dublin Castle. The construction began in 1204 when King John ordered the castle to be built. For 700 years until 1922 the Castle represented British rule in Ireland.

Late afternoon check-in at your hotel and enjoy some free time.
Enjoy a welcome dinner at a local restaurant in the city center.

Overnight in Dublin.

Day 3:

Dublin

After breakfast, a local guide will show you the highlights of Dublin including a visit of Trinity College including the Book of Kells. Start your tour at the impressive Four Courts, which houses the Supreme Court. Continue on to Christ Church Cathedral, dating from 1038. You will see St. Patrick's Cathedral, and later Trinity College, Dublin's ancient university founded by England's Queen Elizabeth I. After a stroll through the college library, stop at the Royal Irish Academy and view the collection of priceless manuscripts. Continue to the National Museum, which houses relics from antiquity, including Bronze Age ornaments.

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End the tour with a drive through Phoenix Park with its 1760 acres of green lawns, playing fields, zoo, and international racecourse.

Afternoon/Evening possible performance at St. Patrick's Cathedral or Christ Church Cathedral. Dinner on your own and overnight in Dublin.

Day 4:

Dublin – Waterford

Following breakfast depart by coach to Waterford, the oldest city of Ireland founded by the Viking's in 914. There should be time for a stop en route in Kilkenny, the Marble city of Ireland.

Upon arrival in Waterford, you will have an orientation tour including a visit of the world famous Waterford Crystal factory.

Possible afternoon concert at Waterford Cathedral.

Group dinner at the hotel or local restaurant.

Overnight in Waterford.

Day 5:

Waterford – Killarney

Breakfast at your hotel –

This morning your coach will take you to Killarney with a stop at Blarney Castle. Blarney Castle was built nearly six hundred years ago by one of Ireland's greatest chieftains, Cormac MacCarthy. Be sure to visit the Blarney Stone, the legendary Stone of Eloquence, found at the top of the castle Tower. Kiss it and you'll never again be at a loss for words....

Continue on to Killarney for dinner on your own and overnight in Killarney.

Day 6:

Kerry/Killarney

Breakfast at your hotel –

The highlight today is the breathtaking drive around the "Ring of Kerry". The scenic views include plunging cliffs, the lush lake land, granite mountains and sandy beaches on County Kerry's largest peninsula. Wild and mountainous, County Kerry has long attracted tourists in search of magnificent scenery. Known as "the Kingdom" on account of its independence and disregard for Dublin rule, Kerry's dramatic landscapes and wealth of prehistoric and early Christian sites make it a 'must' destination.

Enjoy the town of Killarney and its romantic lakes. Three lakes are contained within Killarney National Park. The ever changing light and color on the lakes is breathtaking, and the area has long attracted artists and writers. The established scenic route around the

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county's Iveragh Peninsula is known as the Ring of Kerry. Take a day to experience its enchanting mountain and coastal scenery interspersed with charming fishing villages.

Group dinner at the hotel and overnight in Killarney.

Day 7:

Killarney, Adare, Limerick

Leave Killarney after breakfast. Drive through the charming countryside of County Limerick. You will stop en route to admire the quaint thatched cottages in Adare and visit Tipperary Glass known for its slender and elegant vases and drinking vessels. Continue to Limerick with its historical center and medieval architecture. Limerick flourished as a result of bacon curing and the milling of grain.

At the end of the afternoon or evening it may be possible to have a performance in St Mary's Cathedral or a possible joint performance with a local band and/or chorus.

Following the concert, enjoy a visit to Bunratty Castle and Folkpark, an intriguing trip back in time. The Castle is the most complete and authentic medieval fortress in Ireland. Built in 1425 it was restored in 1954 to its former medieval splendor and now contains mainly 15th and 16th century furnishings, tapestries, and works of art, which capture the mood of those times.

Here you will enjoy a Group Medieval Banquet with music and costumes of the period.

Overnight in Limerick.

Day 8:

Bunratty Castle - Cliffs of Moher-Galway

After breakfast you will travel to the Cliffs of Moher which stand over 700 ft. above the sea below. A good place to view the cliffs is from O'Brien's Tower, built in 1835 by a descendant of Irish High King Brian Boru. The cliffs stretch along the coast for five miles.

In the afternoon continue to Galway, check in upon arrival.

It may be possible to sing at a Mass at Galway Cathedral in the evening

Dinner at a local restaurant and overnight in Galway.

Day 9:

Galway

Galway had important trade links with continental Europe and Spain in particular. The busy port area once saw large sailing ships bound for the Americas - Christopher Columbus was one of its first European tourists. Today Galway is a center for the high-tech and medical industries.

After breakfast you will have a guided walking tour of Galway (special taxi arrangements available for those who would find walking difficult). You will see sights such as Eyre Square, St. Nicholas' Church, and Lynch's Castle.

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You will have time on your own for shopping, visit the Galway city museum or perhaps the Salmon Weir Bridge, built in 1818.

An afternoon/evening performance at the St. Nicholas Collegiate Church is a possibility. The church was dedicated to St. Nicholas of Myra, the patron saint of sailors.

Dinner on your own and overnight in Galway.

Day 10:

Galway – Dublin

Breakfast at your hotel -

Today you will leave for the capital again (140 miles). En route make a stop at Clonmacnoise, one of the foremost monastic sites in Ireland and burial place of the Kings of Connaught and Tara.

Continue to Dublin and upon arrival check into your hotel.

In the evening you will enjoy a farewell dinner with live Irish music and dancing!
Overnight in Dublin.

Day 11:

Departure

After breakfast, load your coach and head for the Dublin Airport where you will depart for the USA.

Slán agus beannacht leat ! (Celtic for 'Goodbye and blessings be with you.')