

The Northern Illinois University Alumni Association

Presents



Treasures of Northern Ireland and Scotland

May 3 - 13, 2017

\$4,065 Per Person, Double Occupancy from Chicago



This is an exclusive travel program presented by the Northern Illinois University Alumni Association

Day by Day Itinerary

Wednesday, May 3 – CHICAGO / EN ROUTE (I)
We depart Chicago's O'Hare International Airport this evening by scheduled service of Aer Lingus on the overnight transatlantic flight to Dublin, Ireland.

Thursday, May 4 – DUBLIN (I,HD)
Shortly after the sun rises on the Irish coast, we arrive in Dublin where we'll meet our Driver-Guide who will introduce us to the capital city of Dublin and Northern Ireland. A panoramic tour of this famous city on the Liffey River will take us along imposing O'Connell Street, the city's main thoroughfare, and introduce us to the Bank of Ireland, built in 1729 and formerly the Irish Parliament, the National Museum, Dublin Castle, and Four Courts built in the 18th century and now housing the High Courts of Justice. We'll also see the famous Georgian squares and elegant townhouses that are very much the postcard image of Dublin today. Following our tour, we'll check-in at our downtown hotel where the remainder of the day is at leisure.

Friday, May 5 – DUBLIN (B)
Our day will begin with a visit to St. Patrick's Cathedral, Ireland's largest church. Built in honor of Ireland's patron saint between 1220 and 1260, Saint Patrick's Cathedral is one of the few buildings left from medieval Dublin. Then we'll make our way to Trinity College's Old Library where we'll view the Book of Kells, the most richly decorated of Ireland's medieval illuminated manuscripts. Our sightseeing comes to an end following a tour of the Guinness Hop Store where we'll witness the brewing process before finishing with a sampling of their wonderful stout in the Visitors Bar. Afterward, the remainder of the day is at leisure to explore Dublin on your own. Be sure to stroll pedestrian Grafton Street where you'll find energetic street musicians and theater artists, plenty of shopping and Bewley's Café Theatre, a city landmark. If you're looking to escape the hustle and bustle of the city, St. Stephens Green is the ideal destination. Ireland's best known Victorian public park is located just steps from Grafton Street. Whatever you choose to do, Dublin has something for everyone.

Saturday, May 6 – DUBLIN / BELFAST (B,HD)
This morning we depart Dublin and set our sights on Northern Ireland and the city of Belfast. We'll see the grounds of Queens University and travel along the Golden Mile to Donegall Square where we'll take in the ornate Victorian buildings that include the Grand Opera House and the Crown Liquor Saloon, before stopping to visit the imposing City Hall. Completed in 1906, the richly decorated interior contains stained glass portraying Belfast's principal industries. Afterward, we'll see both St. Anne's Cathedral and the Albert Memorial Clock

Tower, as we make our way out to Shankhill and Falls Road, the main Catholic and Protestant areas that were home to the bloody battle grounds of the "Troubles." Today these areas are commemorated with wall murals, memorials and gardens. Our tour will come to an end following a visit to the Titanic Belfast Museum, a fresh and insightful way to explore the shipyard, travel to the depths of the ocean and uncover the true legend of Titanic, in the city where it all began.

Sunday, May 7 – BELFAST (Giant's Causeway)(B)
Today we explore the Causeway Coastal Route that covers eighty miles of coastline across two counties. Our first stop of the day will take us to the Old Bushmills Distillery, the only operating distillery open to the public, to see how they've handcrafted Bushmills Irish Whiskey. We'll also have an opportunity to enjoy a sampling session in the Potstill Bar. Then we'll travel by way of 13th century Dunluce Castle, before stopping to explore the Giant's Causeway, a mass of 40,000 hexagonal basalt columns formed over 60 million years ago. The sheer strangeness of this World Heritage Site is the subject of numerous legends, the most popular of which involves the giant Finn McCool, a hardy Ulster hero. Afterward, we'll have an opportunity to cross the Carrick-a-Rede Rope Bridge - not for the faint of heart! On our return to Belfast we'll travel through a corner of Northern Ireland where fairies and folklore are part of daily life. Famed in legend and song, each glen has its own distinct character and charm but all remain unspoiled and unexploited.

Monday, May 8 – BELFAST / EDINBURGH (B,HD)

This morning we depart Belfast and say farewell to our Irish Driver-Guide as we board a ferry for the crossing of the North Channel to Cairnryan, Scotland. On arrival, we'll meet our Scottish Tour Escort and travel across the gentle hills of the Southern Uplands on our way to Edinburgh. As we'll soon find out, the historic status of Edinburgh is beyond question, with ancient buildings scattered across the city, and the seat of Scotland's new parliament lying close to the royal residence of Holyrood Palace.

Tuesday, May 9 – EDINBURGH (B)
Our day will begin with an introduction to Scotland's capital city. We'll drive through the heart of the city along Princes Street, famous for its shops on one side and gardens on the other. We'll see the 18th century New Town with its broad streets, spacious squares and elegant town houses. Then we'll drive along the Royal Mile and view the Palace of Holyroodhouse, the official Scottish residence of Her Majesty The Queen, before stopping to visit imposing Edinburgh Castle, perched high above the

city on volcanic rock. Our visit will reveal an assemblage of buildings dating from the 12th to the 20th century, reflecting its changing role as fortress, royal palace, military garrison and state prison. Following our tour, the remainder of the day is at leisure to explore Edinburgh on your own. Central Edinburgh is compact, so walking is an excellent way to explore the city.

Wednesday, May 10 – EDINBURGH / GLENCOE (B,HD)

This morning we depart Edinburgh and travel to Stirling to visit the Bannockburn Heritage Centre, where on the nearby battlefield King Robert the Bruce routed the forces of King Edward II to win freedom for the Scots from English domination. Then we'll be on our way to the charming village of Aberfoyle where we'll visit the Scottish Wool Centre to learn the full story of wool - from sheep to the shops, through live sheep shows and a hands-on demonstration of spinning and working sheepdogs. Leaving Aberfoyle, we'll set our sights on Scotland's most famous valley, Glencoe; stunningly beautiful, with dramatic cliff faces and steep slopes.

Thursday, May 11 – GLENCOE (Jacobite Steam Train & Isle of Skye) (B,HD)

This morning we travel to the bustling town of Fort William located at the base of Ben Nevis, Britain's highest mountain, where we'll jump aboard the Jacobite Steam Train for a magical journey as we rail past vast mountain corridors made famous in the Harry Potter films on our way to the town of Mallaig, the departure point for our ferry to the Isle of Skye. The largest of the Inner Hebrides, the Isle of Skye is saturated with 4,000 years of myth and history. On

arrival we'll visit the Clan Donald Centre, a museum in a restored section of Armadale Castle detailing the history of the Macdonalds and the Lords of the Isles, and also allow free time to explore the magnificent gardens. Returning to the mainland, we'll cross the Skye Bridge and stop to view the most photographed castle in Scotland, the famous stronghold of Eilean Donan Castle, on our return to Glencoe.

Friday, May 12 – GLENCOE (Loch Ness) (B,L,HD)

A leisurely day on tour will take us to Loch Ness, known around the world for Nessie the fabled Loch Ness Monster, but famous also for its beauty and history. We'll begin with a visit to Urquhart Castle, which remains an impressive stronghold despite its ruinous state. Then we'll stop in nearby Drumnadrochit to tour the Loch Ness Visitors Centre. Afterward, we'll enjoy lunch followed by a Loch Ness cruise, one of the best ways to enjoy some of the Highland's stunning scenery. In the spring, the hills surrounding Loch Ness are bursting back into life with the fresh vibrant green of new growth and the early blossom of the whins and wild cherries in bloom. Following our cruise, we'll once again wind our way down the Great Glen on our return to Glencoe.

Saturday, May 13 – GLENCOE / CHICAGO (B,I)

This morning we depart Glencoe and travel to Glasgow Airport in preparation for the return journey home. No better time to reflect on memories of our vacation to last a lifetime and celebrate the beginning of new friendships made along the way!

*** * * Welcome Home * * ***

Visit myniu.com to make your reservation.

The Tour Price Includes:

- Pre-trip assistance.
- Informational packet.
- Alumni staff assistance for a worry-free travel experience.
- Economy-class air transportation by scheduled service of Aer Lingus.
- Transportation by deluxe private motor coach with accompanying Irish Driver-Guide and Scottish Tour Escort.
- Accommodations in first-class hotels.
- All meals as shown in the Day by Day Itinerary.
- Sightseeing as detailed in the Day by Day Itinerary including applicable entrance fees.
- Luggage handling and portage charges for one suitcase per person at the hotels.
- Taxes for included ground services, **and airline taxes and fuel surcharge of \$460 per person.**

The Tour Price Does Not Include: Items of a personal nature such as passport fees; gratuities to the Irish Driver-Guide, Scottish Tour Escort and motor coach driver, and all local guides; luggage handling at airports; personal and baggage insurance; and meals other than those stated above.

TOUR CONDITIONS

Tour Deposit and Payment: Reservations may be made by check or credit card (Visa, MC, or Discover). Tour prices do increase every year and it is possible that increases could occur after the printing of this brochure in advance of your tour's departure.

Tour Pricing: This is a package tour in which land tour costs and special group airfares have been combined in the most advantageous way. Should you wish to make any deviation from the package tour by changing your departure and/or return dates, the advantages of the package tour price may be eliminated and additional charges will be assessed.

Travel Insurance: Travel insurance is very important and can be purchased through USI Travel Insurance Services. This insurance is designed to cover you and your trip investment from trip cancellation/interruption penalties and provide medical expense, medical evacuation, baggage and personal effects loss, and accidental death coverage, as well as emergency assistance. There is an advantage to early enrollment in this travel insurance program. Purchasing coverage within 21 days (Plus and Elite Options) of your initial trip deposit can make you eligible for 1) Pre-existing Medical Condition Exclusion Waiver, and 2) Optional Cancel for Any Reason Coverage (Elite Option). If you wish to take advantage of the special above provisions, you must enroll within 21 days of the date your initial trip deposit is received. Contact Travel Insurance Services at 1-800-937-1387.

RESPONSIBILITY

THE NORTHERN ILLINOIS UNIVERSITY ALUMNI ASSOCIATION and/or any travel agency and/or supplier of services pursuant to or in connection with this itinerary shall not be responsible or become liable for any delay incurred by any person in connection with any means of transportation; nor for any loss, damage or injury to person or property by reason of any event beyond the control of any agency or supplier, or occurring without the fault or negligence of such agency or supplier. The right is reserved to substitute the airline to be used; the type of aircraft; and to alter the dates of the tour; the tour routing; or to cancel the trip if a minimum number of bookings is not reached for either the air or land portion of this itinerary. The right is also reserved to substitute hotels for other hotels in available categories. Further, the right is reserved to decline to accept or to retain at any time any person as a participant on any tour or to cancel any tour. No refund will be made for voluntary absence from the tour unless arrangements are made at the time of booking. The schedules contained herein are subject to change without notice. All rates are based on current Tariff and Exchange rates in effect at the time of the printing of this itinerary and are subject to adjustment without prior notification in the event of changes therein or in changes in the number of participants on which the rates are based. The carriers concerned are not to be held responsible for any act, omission or event during the time passengers are not on board their plane or conveyance. The passage contract in use by carrier concerned, when issued, shall constitute the sole contract between the carrier and the purchaser of this tour.

For more information contact the NIU Alumni Association at 815-753-1512 or visit the Travel section at myniu.com to make your reservation.

\$100 of the trip cost is tax-deductible as a charitable donation.

**Alumni Association
Barsema Alumni & Visitors Center
Northern Illinois University
DeKalb, IL 60115**