

Ringling in the Emerald Isle

**2023 International
Handbell Festival
in Ireland**

JUNE 19 - 29, 2023

**Optional Northern Ireland Extension
June 29 - July 3, 2023**

**Deborah Rice, Artistic Director
Keith Cole, Tour Host**


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Handbell ringers and enthusiasts are invited to join leading handbell clinician Deborah Rice and Keith Cole of Witte Tours on a musical adventure in Ireland!



This international festival promises to be a colorful musical pallet of repertoire. Concerts are planned in Galway, Cork or nearby Cobh, and Dublin.

The repertoire will include mass selections representing the cultures of all participating nations, some combining handbells and hand chimes. Don't miss this opportunity to share your talents with the people of Ireland! Open to individuals, partial groups, and non-ringers.

Tour Cost

\$4,995 per person, double occupancy, based on departure from Atlanta, with other departure cities available upon request.

Register online at

bookings.wittetravel.com

use booking code **061923RICE**
or complete and return the printed registration form.



Artistic Director
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- ❶ Cliffs of Moher
- ❷ Clonmacnoise
- ❸ Galway

Cover: Winding Road to Sleat Head, around Dingle Peninsula

Wednesday, June 21

Galway

After a hearty breakfast, we'll have an extended rehearsal in one of the hotel's conference rooms. This afternoon we'll take a guided tour of Galway to learn more about this enticing city. It was named the European Capital of Culture in 2020 due to its music scene, cultural attractions, and many festivals. The rest of the afternoon and evening are at leisure to explore and choose from one of the city's many restaurants for dinner. Galway's cuisine is known for its innovative techniques and fresh, local ingredients. (B)

Thursday, June 22

The Burren > Cliffs of Moher > Galway

This morning we'll take an excursion to The Burren, which means "rocky place" in Irish. This area is known for its limestone, grasslands, woodlands, and turloughs (wetland habitat unique to Ireland). Next, we'll travel to the Cliffs of Moher, one of Ireland's most spectacular sites! The dramatic wall rising out of the Atlantic Ocean stretches for some five miles, forming one of the most breathtaking places in the country. While here, we'll have an opportunity to take pictures and soak up the spectacular view. Upon returning to Galway, we'll have a rehearsal and dinner, and give our first concert performance. (B, D).



Your Tour Includes:

- **Air transportation roundtrip** from Atlanta to Dublin including all taxes and fees (other departure cities will be available upon request).
- **Land transportation** as noted in the itinerary by deluxe, air-conditioned motorcoach.
- **Accommodations** in moderate first-class to standard first-class hotels based on two persons sharing a room with private facilities. A supplement will apply for single accommodations.
- **Breakfast daily and six (6) dinners.**
- **An Irish tour manager** to accompany the group from arrival in Dublin until departure, with Keith Cole as the logistics coordinator and local guides assisting as needed.
- **Sightseeing and admission fees** in accordance with the itinerary.
- **Polo shirts** with a custom logo.
- **Handbell equipment**, including handbells provided by Schulmerich.
- **Tipping and taxes** on all services, including tips to the tour manager and motorcoach driver.

June/July 2023

Monday, June 19

Departure

The day of departure has arrived! The tour cost is based on departure from Atlanta, but participants have the option of departing from their hometown. Our adventure is beginning! (D-in flight)

Tuesday, June 20

Dublin > Clonmacnoise > Galway

Good morning, and welcome to Ireland! We'll meet our Irish tour manager and board the waiting motorcoach. The first drive of our tour takes us west to Clonmacnoise, a celebrated early Christian center of learning that was founded by Kieran in the 6th century. Among the well-preserved ruins we'll see are Ireland's famed High Crosses. After this visit, we'll continue to the vibrant city of Galway on Ireland's west coast. We'll check in for dinner and a three-night stay in lovely Salthill, a suburb of Galway that is located on the Salthill Promenade and overlooks Galway Bay. (B-in flight, D)



Friday, June 23
Bunratty > Tralee

Today we'll visit the interesting Bunratty Castle & Folk Park. The 15th-century castle is the most complete and authentic castle in Ireland and the park, which is set on 26 acres, recreates rural and urban life in 19th-century Victorian Ireland. We'll have time to explore the buildings and learn about traditional jobs and crafts from this time, as well as an opportunity to stop at Mr. O'Regan's Café on site for an independent lunch. Later this afternoon, we'll continue to Tralee to check in for a two-night stay. The evening will be at leisure. (B)

Saturday, June 24
Dingle Peninsula > Tralee

An excursion to the magnificent Dingle Peninsula awaits us today. There's no other landscape in Western Europe with the density and variety of archaeological monuments as the Dingle Peninsula. This mountainous finger of land that juts into the Atlantic has supported tribes and populations for almost 6,000 years. Because of the peninsula's remote location and lack of specialized agriculture, the preservation of over 2,000 monuments is remarkable. We'll relax over dinner at a restaurant, and return to our hotel in Tralee. (B, D)

Performance Schedule

Thursday, June 22

Evening concert in Galway

Sunday, June 25

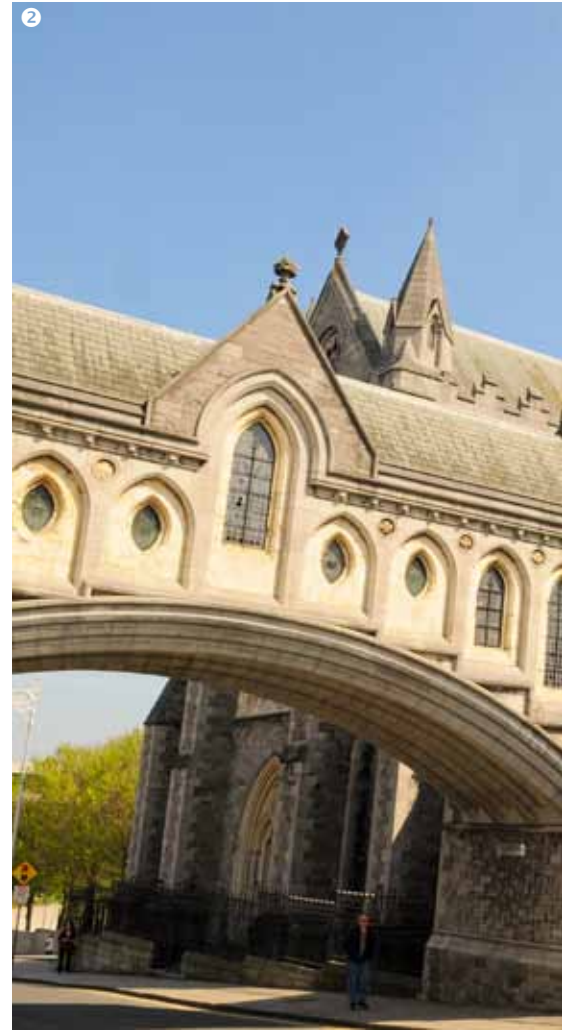
Evening concert in Cork or nearby Cobh

Tuesday, June 27

Concert performance in Dublin

Sunday, June 25
Blarney > Cork

We'll head to County Cork today to visit Blarney Castle. Built nearly 600 years ago, it is one of Ireland's greatest treasures. Those who are feeling ambitious can ascend the castle's tower to kiss the Blarney Stone, which legend has it will bestow the gift of eloquence! The castle gardens and arboretums are also worth discovering. Upon arrival in Cork, we'll take an orientation tour of the city, check in at our hotel, and have an early dinner. An evening rehearsal and concert will take place in Cork or the nearby island of Cobh. (B, D)



Monday, June 26
Cork > Cashel > Blessington > Dublin

Heading northeast, we'll travel to the Rock of Cashel in County Tipperary. Set on an outcrop of limestone, this is perhaps the most impressive cluster of medieval buildings in Ireland, including the round tower, high cross, Romanesque chapel (with the only surviving Romanesque frescoes in Ireland), Gothic cathedral, and an abbey. Our next stop is the stately Russborough House in Blessington, County Wicklow. This beautiful Georgian house contains an astounding collection of art, furniture, silver, and porcelain and has a nearly 200-acre park with lakes, pathways, and gardens. It even has an icehouse and a lime kiln! Our day concludes in Dublin, Ireland's capital, where we'll check in for a three-night stay and have the evening at leisure. (B)



Tuesday, June 27
Dublin

We'll start the day with a guided sightseeing tour of Dublin that includes views of Dublin Castle, St. Stephen's Green, Halfpenny Bridge, the Guinness Brewery, and the elegant Customs House. During our tour, we'll stop to visit Christchurch Cathedral and Trinity College. We hope to see the Celtic-Christian manuscript, the *Book of Kells*, if possible. Trinity College Library is closed for renovations so the *Book of Kells* may be moved elsewhere for viewing. We'll have our final rehearsal and concert performance in Dublin. (B, D)

- ❶ Bunratty Castle
- ❷ Christchurch Cathedral, Dublin
- ❸ Blarney Castle

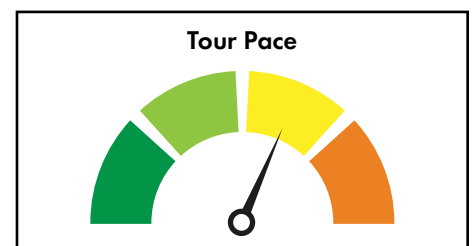


Wednesday, June 28
Boyne Valley > Dublin

We'll take an excursion to the Boyne Valley today to see astounding Newgrange. Constructed over 5,000 years ago by a Stone Age farming community, this large circular monument is older than Stonehenge. Upon return to Dublin, the afternoon and evening will be free for independent sightseeing and shopping for souvenirs, and we'll reconvene for our farewell dinner at a restaurant. (B, D)

Thursday, June 29
Return or Optional Extension

Those returning home today will transfer to the Dublin Airport. Our experiences in Ireland have certainly been rewarding, and a lot of fun! (Meal-in flight)



Optional Northern Ireland Extension

June 29 – July 3, 2023

Extension Cost

\$1,875 per person, double occupancy



June/July 2023

Thursday, June 29
Dublin > Belfast

We'll bid farewell to our friends returning home today and travel north to Belfast, the capital of Northern Ireland since its creation in 1921. Upon arrival, we'll have leisure time to start exploring the city on our own, get settled in at our hotel, and enjoy an included dinner. (B, D)

Friday, June 30
Belfast

A full day in Belfast is on our agenda for today. Our step-on guide will join us for a tour of the city that includes City Hall, St. Anne's Cathedral, and Donegall Square—considered the central hub of Belfast. We will also visit Titanic Belfast, an amazing museum structure near the site where the Titanic was built and set sail. During a self-guided tour of Titanic Belfast, we'll learn more about this iconic ship and its tragic maiden voyage. (B)

Saturday, July 1
Belfast > Giant's Causeway > Belfast

An excursion to Giant's Causeway on the northeast coast awaits us today. This UNESCO World Heritage Site consists of about 40,000 interlocking basalt columns, mostly hexagonal in shape, that are the result of an ancient volcanic eruption. After taking in the unique scenery of the area, we'll return to Belfast for a free evening. (B)



Sunday, July 2
Belfast > Armagh > Dublin

We'll travel to Armagh today, the ecclesiastical capital of Ireland with its narrow lanes, green spaces, and hilly streets. A step-on guide will join us for a tour that includes Armagh's two famous cathedrals. The hilltop site of St. Patrick's Church of Ireland Cathedral was originally founded by Saint Patrick in 445 AD, and there's been a Christian church here since that time. The twin-spired Roman Catholic Cathedral, also called St. Patrick's, was dedicated for worship in 1873 and consecrated in 1904. We'll have time at leisure for an independent lunch and to see some of Armagh on our own, perhaps by taking a walk along the tree-lined Mall or visiting the 300-acre park of Palace Demesne, which was home to the Archbishops of the Church of Ireland until 1975. We'll then travel back to the Republic of Ireland to Dublin, where we'll enjoy dinner at a restaurant with Irish entertainment. (B, D)

Monday, July 3
Return

Transfer to the Dublin Airport to check in for our flights home. (B)

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- ① Belfast City Hall and Donegall Square
 - ② Giant's Causeway
 - ③ St. Patrick's Church of Ireland Cathedral