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**Performance Tour Group (High School/University Age)**

**4 Day Itinerary to Wild Atlantic Way (North)**

**Galway to Donegal**

**We’re delighted you have chosen Ireland for your Performance Group. Here is a selection of** [**performance venues**](http://staging.failteireland.ie/Supports/Business-development-support-tools-for-buyers.aspx) **in Ireland and along the Wild Atlantic Way.**

Arrive Dublin or Shannon Airports and depart for Galway (journey time

2hrs-2hr 30mins).

Check into your Galway accommodation – click [hotels](http://www.discoverireland.ie/CMSPages/PortalTemplate.aspx?aliaspath=%2fSearch%2fResults&lcid=5&catid=10021&countyid=23&locationid=143&classid=4,3&reftype=0) for a range of 3 & 4 star hotel options in Galway city or [campus](http://www.campusaccommodation.ie/) for university accommodation options.

**DAY 1**

**Morning** Depart for Spiddal (journey time 30mins)

Discover Irish culture, traditional Irish music and the native Irish language at [Cnoc Suain](http://www.cnocsuain.com/) in Spiddal. Located in the Connemara Gaeltacht, experience thatched cottage customs, stories and traditions, learn ceili dancing and a ‘cupla focal’ (couple of words) of Gaelic. Learn about Connemara’s ancient bog lands and its thousand years old preserved bog bodies. Try your hand at making Irish soda bread and explore the culinary delights of seaweed pudding!

CnocSuain, Spiddal, Co Galway, [www.cnocsuain.com](http://www.cnocsuain.com), info@cnocsuain.com,

T: +353 (0) 91 555 703, Contacts: Charlie & Derval Standun.

Allow 2-3 hours for this experience

**Lunch**  Tigh Giblin Pub, Food & Music Venue, Bruach na hAbhainn, Spiddéal, Conamara, Galway,

 [www.tighgiblin.com](http://www.tighgiblin.com), E: tighgiblin@gmail.com, T: 353 (0) 91 504 787.

**Afternoon** Visit the [musical instrument workshop of Malachy Kearns](http://www.bodhran.com/visit.html), who made the stage drums for the world famous River Dance Show. In Roundstone, Malachy works at his craft of making Ireland’s oldest musical instrument, the Bodhrán, a one sided drum made by goatskin and treated by a traditional process.

 Roundstone Musical Instruments, Monastery Road, Roundstone, Co Galway, [www.bodhran.com](http://www.bodhran.com), E: bodhran@iol.ie, T: 353 (0) 95 35808

 Contact: Malachy Kearns

 Allow 1hr30mins for this experience

 Continue to Westport and check into your 3 star hotel. Click [here](http://www.discoverireland.ie/CMSPages/PortalTemplate.aspx?aliaspath=%2fSearch%2fResults&lcid=5&catid=10021&countyid=21&locationid=305&classid=3&reftype=0) for suggested 3 star hotel options in Westport.

**Dinner** Suggest [An Port Mor](http://anportmor.com/the-restaurant/), 1 Brewery Place, Westport, [www.anportmor.com](http://www.anportmor.com), E: bookings@anportmor.com, Tel: 353 (0) 98 26730, Contact: Frankie Mallon

 Overnight Westport

**DAY 2**

**Morning** Depart Westport for [Achill Island](http://www.discoverireland.ie/places-to-go/achill-island/0/21/657) (journey time 1 hr)

Perched on the southern slopes of Sliabh Mór (Slievemore Mountain) are the ruins of 80 to 100 stone cottages that make up Achill Island’s ‘Deserted Village’. While some of these dwellings were occupied within living memory as ‘booley’ homes (‘booleying’ being the summer grazing of cattle on lower mountain slopes), the area itself is rich in archaeological artefacts including striking 5,000-year-old megalithic tombs. Keem Bay is a sheltered rural beach surrounded by cliffs at the head of a valley between the cliffs of Benmore and Croaghaun Mountain. In the past, this area was a key location for the Achill Basking Shark Fishery.

 Allow 2hrs hours for this experience.

**Lunch** [The Beehive Irish Handmade Crafts & Coffee Shop](http://achilltourism.com/item/the-beehive-craft-coffee-shop-achill-island-tourism/), Keel, Achill Island, T: 353 (0) 98 43134; 353 (0) 98 43018; M: 353 (0) 86 854 2009. (Opens Feb-March)

 Return to Westport (journey time 1hr)

**Afternoon** Spend an action packed afternoon visiting [Westport House](http://www.westporthouse.ie/), the ultimate in old world heritage. The beauty of the house, itself, is complemented by its natural parkland and lakeland setting with its superb, land and water activities. Westport House has been the home to the Browne family for nearly 400 years and its roots can be traced back to Grace O’Malley, the Pirate Queen of Connaught. Learn about the 14th great-grandmother of the current owners and her swashbuckling tales of ruling the seas from Scotland to Spain.

 Westport House, Quay Road, Westport, Co Mayo, [www.westporthouse.ie](http://www.westporthouse.ie), info@westporthouse.ie, T: +353 (0) 98 27766, Contact: Biddy Hughes.

**Dinner** Suggest Cronin’s Sheebeen Pub & Restaurant, Rosbeg, Westport, Co Mayo

[www.croninssheebeen.com](http://www.croninssheebeen.com), E: reservations@croninssheebeen.com, T: 353 (0) 98 26528

 Overnight Westport

**DAY 3**

**Morning** Continue northwards to the [Céide Fields](http://www.museumsofmayo.com/ceide.htm) in Co Mayo, a 5,000 year old Stone Age monument with the oldest known field systems in the world. Stone Age man created an early farming community complete with megalithic tombs, stone walled fields and houses surrounded by garden walls. The remains are all preserved beneath a blanket of bog. They tell a story of the everyday lives of a farming people, their organized society, their highly developed spiritual beliefs, and their struggle against a changing environment beyond their control.

 Céide Fields, Ballycastle, Co Mayo, [www.heritageireland.ie/en/west/ceidefields/](http://www.heritageireland.ie/en/west/ceidefields/),

E: ceidefields@opw.ie, T: +353 (0) 96 43325.

Photo stop at [Downpatrick Signature Discovery Point](http://www.discoverireland.ie/Arts-Culture-Heritage/downpatrick-head/91303) overlooking Dun Briste sea stack with its myriad coloured layers of rock and nesting sea birds.

**Lunch** [Crockets on the Quay](http://www.crocketsonthequay.ie/facilities/restaurant/), Ballina, Co Mayo, [www.crocketsonthequay.ie](http://www.crocketsonthequay.ie), E: info@crocketsonthequay.ie, T: 353 (0) 96 75930

**Afternoon** Head for Gurteen, Co Sligo and the [Coleman Traditional Irish Music Centre](http://www.colemanirishmusic.com/). The centre is a celebration of Irish music and heritage as played by Michael Coleman and other musicians of his time. Michael Coleman, born in Killavil, Co Sligo was a locally renowned fiddle player. At the beginning of World War I when he was 23 he moved to New York, beginning his recording career in 1921. Coleman’s Records were to have a major impact on musicians back in Ireland. Try your hand at banjo playing or even traditional singing because the centre is dedicated to ensuring that the tradition of Irish music lives on and continues to be played by all ages and nationalities.

 Coleman Traditional Irish Music Centre, Gurteen, Co Sligo, <http://www.colemanirishmusic.com>, E: info@colemanirishmusic.com,

 T: +353 (0) 71 918 2599.

 Continue to Sligo Town and click [here](http://www.discoverireland.ie/CMSPages/PortalTemplate.aspx?aliaspath=%2fSearch%2fResults&lcid=5&catid=10021&countyid=12&locationid=348&classid=4,3&reftype=0) for 3 & 4 star hotel options.

**Dinner**  Suggest [Davis’s Restaurant @ the Yeats Tavern](http://yeatstavernrestaurant.com/), Drumcliff, Co Sligo, <https://yeatstavernrestaurant.com>, E: info@yeatstavernrestaurant.com,

T: 353 (0) 71 916 3117

 Overnight Sligo Town

**DAY 4**

**Morning** Visit [Lissadell House and Gardens,](http://lissadellhouse.com/) the childhood home of Constance Markievicz and her sister Eva Gore Booth. Constance was one of the leaders of the 1916 Rising and a suffragist. Check out the 1916 Exhibition and the manuscript plans for the Rising written by Countess Markievicz in a Polish copybook; photographic records of the immediate aftermath and the anguish of the Countess in Kilmainham Gaol as she listened to the dawn executions of her comrades! The poet WB Yeats was friendly with both sisters and immortalised Lissadel in his poetry.

 Lissadell House, Ballinful, Co Sligo, [www.lissadellhouse.com](http://www.lissadellhouse.com), E: info@lissadellhouse.com; angela@lissadellhouse.com T: 353 (0) 71 916 3150.

 Allow 1hr30mins for this experience.

**Lunch** [Eithna’s by The Sea](http://www.eithnasrestaurant.com/), Harbour Road, Mullaghmore, Co Sligo, [www.eithnasrestaurant.com](http://www.eithnasrestaurant.com); E: info@bythesea.ie, T: 353 (0) 71 916 6407, Contact: Eithna. This harbourside mecca has daily changing menus of everything fresh from the sea including seaweed and sea vegetables. Eithna has an Honours Degree in Culinary Arts with a thesis on Seaweed as an Artisan Food Product.

**Afternoon** Depart for Donegal Town with a visit to [Donegal Castle,](http://www.heritageireland.ie/en/north-west/donegalcastle/) the principle residence of the O’Donnell Chieftains, who ruled the Kingdom of Tir Chonaill fom 1200 until 1601. Check out the Tower House which rises above the unroofed English Manor House and the Trip Stairwell with its uneven steps deliberately built to trip the enemy swordsman. Notice the stairs ascend to the right because the O’Donnells were right handed and this gave them more room at the turn of the stairs to strike down at their enemies!

 Donegal Castle, Castle St, Donegal Town, [www.heritageireland.ie/en/north-west/donegalcastle/](http://www.heritageireland.ie/en/north-west/donegalcastle/) E: donegalcastle@opw.ie, T: 353 (0) 74 972 2405.

Allow 45 minutes for this experience.

*Or tides permitting,*

Explore the coastline by [Donegal Bay Waterbus](http://www.donegalbaywaterbus.com/). The cruise explores the history, environment and wildlife of this unique estuary. Watch out for The Hassans, the embarkation point of emigrants to Canada and North America during the Famine Years; the old booking office of the White Star Line (Titanic) who ran the ships and a natural seal colony of approx. 200 Harbour and Atlantic Seals. Last year was the first time on record that twins have been born in the wild. Enjoy the ‘craic’ of a singalong with the Captain on the way back.

Allow 75 minutes for this experience.

Donegal Bay Waterbus, Quay St, Donegal Town, [www.donegalwaterbus.com](http://www.donegalwaterbus.com); E: info@donegalwaterbus.com, T: 353 (0) 74 23666.

For suggested 3 & 4 star hotels in Donegal Town click [here.](http://www.discoverireland.ie/CMSPages/PortalTemplate.aspx?aliaspath=%2fSearch%2fResults&catid=10021&areaid=2678&lcid=5)

**Dinner** Suggest [The Olde Castle Bar & Restaurant](http://www.oldecastlebar.com/), Tyrconnell St, Donegal Town, [www.oldecastlebar.com;](http://www.oldcastlebar.com) E: info@oldecastlebar.com, T: 353 (0) 74 972 1262.

 Overnight Donegal Town

**DAY 5**

 Depart to Shannon or Dublin Airports for return flights home.