

MARITIME GATEWAY IN 5 DAYS



ROUTE: Counties Cork, Waterford, Wexford

OVERVIEW: Trace the adventures of millions before you as you explore Ireland's Maritime Gateway. Speak to people with the sea in their DNA, sample local specialties and appreciate the traditions that have grown up around centuries of seafaring and maritime trade. From whiskey to warfare, wildlife to wanderlust, the memory of these five days will be with you for years to come.



DAY 1

ROUTE: County Cork

OVERVIEW: Since time immemorial, ships have passed through one of the world's largest natural harbours at Cork – and Camden Fort Meagher has watched them all from its protective post at Crosshaven since 1550. The enormity of the site is breathtaking – it took 500 men 40 years just to build the moat. Impervious to the spray of the Atlantic and, it seems, the passage of time, Camden Fort and its warren of underground tunnels transport you to an era of cannons and musketry, when waves threatened to carry enemies to Ireland's shores.



Thankfully, the safety of Cork is a mere 23km drive away and is packed with the cosmopolitan flavour you'd expect of a harbour city built around centuries of international trade. A flourishing remnant of these times comes in the form of the **English Market**, a bustling covered market packed to the gills with fresh fish, meat, fruit, spices, chocolate and endless artisanal produce – the perfect place for a spot of lunch. Any number of downloadable iWalks will guide you seamlessly onward to the 17th century **Elizabeth Fort**, a hulking star fort perched on high ground above the city walls. From here, you can see as far as the **Butter Museum**, and it's an enjoyable walk across the city to this hub of farming, food, folklore and the story of the largest butter market in the world. Pop next door to St Anne's Church and ring the **Shandon Bells** to pay homage to this wonderful city.

IF YOU HAVE MORE TIME:

Visit spectacular **St Fin Barre's Cathedral**, where you might catch a choral recital accompanied by the melodious 19th century organ. And watch out – locals say the golden angel on the rooftop will blow his bugle at the end of time!

SUGGESTED EXPERIENCES:

CAMDEN FORT MEAGHER: www.camdenfortmeagher.ie

ENGLISH MARKET: www.englishmarket.ie

CORK BUTTER MUSEUM: www.corkbutter.museum

SHANDON BELLS & TOWER: www.shandonbells.ie

DAY 2

ROUTE: County Cork

OVERVIEW:

From one harbour to another, your second day takes you east to **Cobh**, a seaport town and the last glimpse of Ireland for many an intrepid (or forlorn) emigrant through the years. On any given day you're likely to see one of the world's massive cruise liners stopping off to give its passengers a chance to indulge in the history, culture and architecture of this friendly town. But it's the one ship that can never return that remains an indelible part of Cobh's legacy: at the **Titanic Experience**, take a ticket and follow the story of the Ship of Dreams that was doomed to a nightmare after casting off from Cobh in 1912.

Of course, there's much more to this town than Titanic, and the **Cobh Heritage Centre** explores it all, from Annie Moore – the first immigrant to pass through Ellis Island in New York – to the convict ships that departed for Australia in 1801.

After all this talk of boats, it's finally time to hop onto one yourself and take to the water en route to **Spike Island**. Hushed and picturesque now, you only have to walk through the solid stone gateway to appreciate how a monastery, fort and prison have all sprung up here over the last 1,400 years. Back on the mainland, it's time for dinner on the dock at the **Quay's Bar and Restaurant**.

IF YOU HAVE MORE TIME:

Step into the silence of **St Colman's Cathedral in Cobh** and hope you'll be there in time to hear it pierced by the joyous jangle of bells from one of Ireland's only carillons.

SUGGESTED EXPERIENCES:

COBH HERITAGE CENTRE: www.cobhheritage.com

TITANIC EXPERIENCE (COBH): www.titanicexperiencecobh.ie

SPIKE ISLAND: www.spikeislandcork.ie



DAY 3

ROUTE: County Cork, County Waterford

OVERVIEW: It's off to Midleton, home of the **Jameson Experience** and what some say is the best whiskey in Ireland. Take a tour and see the original 19th century pot stills that nurture this famous liquid gold. Smack bang in the centre of the East Cork Slow Food movement, Midleton packs a punch of its own with many restaurants making the most of its location and the bountiful local produce on offer.

Just down the road in the Irish Heritage Port of Youghal we have one of the town's more famous residents to thank for an Irish culinary staple: Sir Walter Raleigh lived here in the 16th century and planted Europe's first potatoes. This historic walled town has at its centre Raleigh's impressive Myrtle Grove residence and, metres away, **St Mary's Collegiate Church**: a medieval masterpiece founded by St Declan in 450AD and in continuous use ever since. Secreted in the wall there is a rock bearing the ancient carved outline of a Viking longboat, remnant of the town's chequered history. After a stroll along the vast sandy beach, make your way to **Ardmore**, where the old cathedral and starkly statuesque **Round Tower** stand as testament to what's believed to be Ireland's oldest Christian settlement.

IF YOU HAVE MORE TIME: Delight in the gastronomic spoils on offer at **Sage** in Midleton, where ingredients are sourced close to the restaurant door.

SUGGESTED EXPERIENCES: **JAMESON EXPERIENCE:** www.jamesonwhiskey.com



DAY 4

ROUTE: County Waterford, County Wexford

OVERVIEW: Raiders, warriors, builders of ships – in Ireland the Vikings had a reputation all of their own, leaving a unique imprint on the island and its history. Nonetheless, the imposing fortress of Waterford's **Reginald's Tower** is the only Irish site to still retain its Viking name. This landmark was built in the 10th century for Norse ruler, Reginald (or Raghnaill) of Waterford, and now is one of three remarkable heritage sites known as **Waterford Treasures**. Stroll through the Chorister's Hall at the **Medieval Museum**, or take a tour of **Bishop's Palace**, an exquisite mansion preserving the city's life and history through the years. Stop for a bite to eat at **Bodéga**, which prides itself on using only the best and freshest local produce.



Next, get to Wexford the traditional way with a ferry across the River Suir from Passage East to Ballyhack, where you're only a short drive to **New Ross**. This Norman settlement bore witness to its fair share of civil strife and rebel action through the years, including with neighbouring Waterford city. Find out all you need to know on the **New Ross Historic Walk**. The historical tour also brings you to the **Dunbrody Famine Ship Experience**, a replica of the 19th century original that now serves as an enthralling commemorative museum. You may just discover the brighter side of Ireland's migratory experience at the end, when you arrive at the **Kennedy Homestead**, where the life and legacy of the Kennedys are explored along with their Irish roots.

IF YOU HAVE MORE TIME:

Drive the Copper Coast scenic route (UNESCO Global Geopark) between Dungarvan and Tramore en route to Waterford city, and visit the **Copper Coast Geopark Visitor Centre** at Bunmahon. It's the perfect place to learn about the mining and geological heritage of the area.

SUGGESTED EXPERIENCES:

WATERFORD TREASURES (REGINALD'S TOWER, MEDIEVAL MUSEUM, BISHOP'S PALACE):

www.waterfordtreasures.com

DUNBRODY FAMINE SHIP EXPERIENCE: www.dunbrody.com

THE KENNEDY HOMESTEAD: www.kennedyhomestead.ie

COPPER COAST GLOBAL GEOPARK: www.coppercoastgeopark.com

DAY 5

ROUTE: County Wexford

OVERVIEW:

Sea tales, stormy characters and centuries of history await visitors to the oldest operational lighthouse in the world. **Hook Head** has had its share of colourful residents through the years: from diligent Christian lightkeepers in the 6th century to the ghostly denizens of **Loftus Hall**, which is rumoured to be Ireland's most haunted mansion. And that's not to mention the spectacular ocean views!

Follow the coast to take your pick of **Kilmore Quay's** famously fresh and always enticing seafood restaurants. Don't forget that boat trips can be booked from Kilmore Quay to the **Saltee Islands**, too. These islands are a haven for wildlife and also have a colourful history of their own: in 1956 the aviator, nature enthusiast and Wexford native Michael Neale was crowned their Prince, Michael the First...13 years after buying the islands for himself and his family. Back on the mainland, nature is on dazzling display at **Wexford Wildfowl Reserve**. Scale the observation tower and enjoy the interactive exhibition centre at this remarkable site, dedicated in part to some of the most ancient and abiding sea travellers in the world: the 10,000 White-fronted Geese from Greenland that traverse the Atlantic to settle here each winter. Back in Wexford town, pop in for dinner at **Thomas Moore Tavern**, one of Wexford's oldest pubs

IF YOU HAVE MORE TIME:

Join a Hook Head Safari, taking in **Ballyhack Castle**, a tour of the lighthouse and, of course, incredible cliff walks.

SUGGESTED EXPERIENCES:

HOOK HEAD LIGHTHOUSE: www.hookheritage.ie

LOFTUS HALL: www.loftushall.ie

WEXFORD WILDFOWL RESERVE: www.wexfordwildfowlreserve.ie

BALLYHACK CASTLE: www.heritageireland.ie

PLEASE NOTE: A list of "Storytellers – Ways to engage with the Stories" are available on request.

This itinerary is just one of the many ways you can explore Ireland's Ancient East and should be used as a guide only.

