

South East Ireland 21-31 May 2005

This is a moderate tour of the driest and sunniest corner of Ireland in the driest month. Set against the backdrop of the Blackstairs, Comeragh, Galtee and Knockmealdown Mountains the route passes through the picturesque Slaney, Barrow and Suir valleys before returning along the dramatic and rugged coastline. Averaging 40 miles a day and with two optional rest days, there will be time to take in the scenery and many of the area's main historic and cultural sights and attractions. For those who want a challenge there will be an optional ascent to the top of Mt Leinster.

Itinerary

Sat 21 May Cycle 29km

Travel by Irish Ferries from Pembroke to Rosslare departing at 1430 and arriving at 1815. Cycle to Wexford. Stay one night.

Sun 22 May Cycle 62km

Cycle to Graiguenamanagh via Enniscorthy Stay two nights.
Optional visits to Irish National Heritage Park and the 1798 Visitor Centre.

Mon 23 May Cycle 80km

Rest Day or cycle around the Blackstairs Mountains with optional ascent of Mt Leinster (at 795m the highest tarmac road in Ireland!)
Shorter routes possible.

Tues 24 May Cycle 62km

Cycle to Waterford via New Ross and Passage East. Stay
One night. Optional visits to SS Dunbrody Famine Ship & Waterford Treasures or Waterford Crystal.

Wed 25 May Cycle 67km

Cycle to Cahir via Carrick-on-Suir and Clonmel. Stay three
nights. Optional visits to Tipperary South Riding County Museum & Swiss Cottage

Thurs 26 May

Rest Day or optional self-led rides of varying distances.

Fri 27 May Cycle 88km

Cycle around Galtee Mountains to Tipperary and beautiful Glen of Aherlow with shorter route option. Optional visits to Cahir Castle and Mitchelstown Caves.

Sat 28 May Cycle 62km

Cycle to Dungarvan via Lismore with optional extension
(16mils/26kms) to An Rinn peninsula. Stay one night. Optional visits to Lismore Museum and/or Castle.

Sun 29 May Cycle 38km

Cycle to Tramore. Stay one night. Short day with time to
explore the many coves and beaches of the 'Copper Coast'.

Mon 30 May Cycle 87km

Cycle to Rosslare via Passage East and Kilmore Quay Stay one night.

Tues 31 May

Travel by Irish Ferries from Rosslare to Pembroke departing at 0845 and arriving at 1230, where tour ends.

Mileage Average of 40mils/64kms per day.

Accommodation and meals

Accommodation is in 3 star hotels, on a half board basis, based upon sharing rooms. Two of the hotels (4 nights) have a leisure club with indoor swimming pool.

Rides and rest days

Mileages on the tour have been kept short to enable plenty of time for sightseeing and/or so the tour can be adapted to meet individual and group interests. Typically we will be cycling for four to five hours per day with the group meeting up for morning and afternoon breaks and lunch. We will lead a group ride on all but the sixth day at a pace of around 12/13mph on the flat, slower on the hills. People are not expected to ride as a group, but are free to find their own riding companions each day to suit their pace and riding style. We will ensure that someone waits for the back markers at points where route finding is difficult.

Travel and parking

The tour starts at Pembroke Dock. The railway station is very close to the port. If arriving by train you will need to book in advance and check that your bicycle can be carried. Long stay parking is available at the ferry terminal. We will arrange to meet in/by the café at the ferry terminal. The hotels on tour have agreed to provide safe storage for the bicycles, but this will not always be under cover, and you are strongly advised to bring a sturdy lock.

Accommodation / Meals

All the hotels we will be staying at are three star. The hotels at Wexford and Cahir have their own Leisure Clubs with indoor heated swimming pools that we will be able to use. Accommodation has been booked on a half-board basis with breakfast and dinner being provided in the hotel. Rooms will be allocated on a shared basis. With the exception of the hotel at Graiguenamanagh (where some triple bedded rooms will be used) all rooms will be twins or doubles. Subject to availability, single occupancy may be available at extra cost.

Group information

The maximum group size will be 20 (including the leaders). Smokers are welcome on the tour provided they agree not to smoke in shared bedrooms. It is now illegal to smoke in all public places in Ireland including restaurants and pubs.

Weather and clothing

The South East is the sunniest and driest corner of Ireland and May is usually the driest month. However, Ireland's climate is unpredictable and we cycle close to mountains and an exposed coastline. You should therefore carry clothing to ensure that you can remain warm, protected from the wind and reasonably dry. Suncream is recommended in case we do have sunny and warm weather.