

Ireland 2015

Magical, Mystical, Musical Pilgrimage Tour

with Denise and Gerry Dignan

Email: dignansong@aol.com — Website: gerrydignan.com -- 815-439-3701

July 7-17, 2015 — The West of Ireland

Counties Galway-Kerry-Clare



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“A traveler moves through a place. A pilgrim allows the place to move through them.”

We will be leading **our ninth pilgrimage tour** through Ireland this coming summer. Come join us as we explore the soulful West of Ireland — that land that is always magical, full of mystery and music and mystical moments.

Our tours are unique, wholistic experiences of Ireland. We weave together many strands of the enchanting facets of Ireland — from 5,000 year old stone circles and cairns to thousand-year-old castles and abbeys to the remains of emigrants' stone cottages our own ancestors lived in just a few generations ago — we explore it all with great heart and soul and Ireland never fails to meet us face to face, heart to heart, soul to soul, in a close encounter — it is **a deeper experience of Ireland.**

We braid **our own beautiful Celtic knot** through experiencing **the folklore** — the folk stories of the country people, the ancient myths of the legendary heroes whose memory lives still in Ireland's place names, mountains, healing wells, & faces and spirit of the Irish people. We'll have musical sessions with **extraordinary traditional Irish musicians**, time in the pubs getting to know the locals, times of reflection at the **ancient sacred sites**, exploration of **Celtic spirituality** through meditative **poetic readings & ceremony**, as well as our own **high-spirited song and dance sessions(!)** and perhaps sharing of the poetry (and limericks!) that bubble up as we travel along.

One of the very special aspects of our trips is the people who companion us on these journeys. We draw great seekers who contemplate the mystery of Life as Life reveals itself to us in the living of each day. Ireland is a unique place where one feels a closeness to this Intimate Beyond that blesses us and fills us as we continue to awaken to the amazement of it all. Deep sharing takes place among us who share this time and journey together.

We keep our groups small — maximum of about 20 — our bus is a smaller size, so we are able to travel down country roads that larger buses cannot manage, which allows for *a more inside view of the “real Ireland”*.

We also like to let ourselves ease into the Irish day. None of this “on the bus at 8am. sharp!” As the publican in Tralee said to me, “*Slow down, man! You’re in Ireland now!*” And so we do make it a point to synchronize our daily timing with the more settled Irish pace in the countryside.

We focus mainly on three counties. We greatly appreciate a deeper exploration in each county rather than trying to cover the entire nation at a surface level. There is so much to see in each part of this small enchanting island!

We do have an itinerary scheduled for each day, but it IS Ireland and sometimes as we travel along, the fairies and leprechauns play with us, and the lines of time shift and we find ourselves staying longer in a beautiful place than we had planned, or engaged in a mesmerizing conversation with Irish elders who *remember the Ireland of days gone by*, or we discover an entrancing old pub with young & old-timers playing their fiddles or or or ... these serendipitous moments beg us to stay on a little longer. It is often these most unexpected moments in Ireland — *the land of the unexpected* — that become very *treasured memories*. And so, we travel with an openness to this ever-changing (like her skies) real Ireland full of her charm, welcome, humor, & heart-warming surprises.

In 2015 we dive into the dramatic, soul-stirring West of Ireland where the ancient is ever present and the spirit of the Irish people is ever youthful and unpredictable!

We will begin by gathering for one day and night in Bunratty Village, then spend 4 nights in the Connemara region of County Galway, three nights in County Kerry, & to County Clare for our final 2 nights — this way we are not packing our bags and schlepping luggage back on to our bus each morning! Also, it gives you the option to *spend the day on your own*, away from the group, and meeting us “back home” at the end of the day.

Our first official day is July 7th in Bunratty Village, just a 15 minute ride from Shannon International Airport. Within walking distance is the famous Bunratty Castle & Folk Park along with some nice shops and a fine selection of restaurants and pubs. It will be a relaxing day to acclimate ourselves to the time change.

We will then head north to the stunning region of Connemara in County Galway. It is a “Gaeltacht” region, meaning that Irish (Gaelic) is still commonly spoken. Connemara is situated at the very edge of Europe and is one of the most beautiful, unspoiled places that one can find. Connemara has long been regarded as the real emerald of Ireland.

From Connemara, we will head south to what is, by many, also considered to be Ireland’s most picturesque county (though it’s hard to beat Connemara!) — our destination is County Kerry. Our home base for three nights will be in Dingle Town on the one and only Dingle Peninsula, filming location of “Ryan’s Daughter”. Dingle is also a Gaeltacht region.

Dingle is a very special place where traditional language, music, arts & crafts are highly revered. The isolation and the natural beauty of Dingle make her a place apart from the rest of the world. Dingle locals have also made a significant contribution to the literary field with iconic works of Irish literature.

From Dingle, we will head north to her neighbor, the beautiful, wind-swept, and musical county of Clare. Clare, with its Burren region, the mighty cliffs of Moher, the scenic coastal drive, its plethora of megalithic sites and holy wells, is rich in ancient lore, and a feast for both the eyes and soul. And did I mention the ears and feet? -- Clare is home to some of Ireland’s finest traditional musicians and many consider Clare to be THE county for the best traditional Irish music!

In Ireland, our own inner world opens up to us richly as we open ourselves to the Deep Presence we encounter in the land herself, in the megalithic sites that stand 5,000 years later connecting us still to the “Great Seekers” (as my Great Aunt Ellen would say) of the Ancient Times, the pristine beaches, the stalwart cliffs that rise from the sea, the hidden coves, the mystical misty vistas, the invigorating coastal winds, the rays of sunlight that burst through clouds and illuminate shimmering green fields and mountain silhouettes on the horizon, the peace of the evening light — so many awe-inspiring moments are ours to receive and hold on to in our journeys through Ireland!

Galway/Kerry/Clare Tour – Travel Dates:

Arrival: Shannon Intl. Airport ~ July 7 (**departing USA on July 6!!!**)

Departure: Shannon Intl. Airport ~ July 17 (arrive USA same date)

Some of our **fellow travelers often like to add time on** to either the beginning or the end of our tour, to expand the adventure, visit family & friend connections, or just have a few more “drops o’ the Pure” (aka: Jameson/Guinness/etc...) with friends on the old sod before departing!

Cost: \$2299 -- includes accommodation--double occupancy (Single Supplement - \$500), moderate-size hotels, coach transportation in Ireland, all breakfasts, three dinners, all pre-arranged performances, entrance fees, tour guides, & return transportation on Paddy’s bus back to Shannon at tour’s end.

Not included: Airfare, taxi from Shannon Airport to Bunratty B&B upon your arrival, Guinness(!), lunches, tips and remaining dinners, and --because we are subject to the whims of the fairies – magical things that happen to materialize right where we are(!) such as -- a play, a concert, a late-night bus ride to a small village pub for an impromptu musical session with local old-timers. We just never exactly know what Ireland’s “little people” may be conjuring up for us!

Attention!!! We need a minimum of 12 people for our tour to be viable, so please do not purchase your airline tickets until you get word from us that we have our minimum number of fellow travelers!

Let Us Know ASAP: To ensure your place on our magical, mystical, musical visit to Ireland please let us know asap that you might happily be coming along with us!

PURCHASING TRAVEL INSURANCE -- A MUST!!!

Travel Insurance is required and it is not included in the price of the tour. As we all know, Life happens...In the past few years, we have, regretfully, had six people have to cancel because of unforeseen events in their lives, and four others had sudden serious medical situations occur within days of their departure. Because of Life’s unpredictable nature, we ask that you **commit to purchasing travel insurance if you travel with us - it is for everyone’s benefit.** Life Experience has taught us that in this situation, it really is for both your and our protection and happiness. It proved to come in very handy for those who actually did end up having to cancel their trip or delay their departure date. We will provide travel insurance recommendations. Also, **our travel agent can help you get the kind of travel insurance plan that will work best for you.**

*Please remember that because of our tour's **smaller group experience and smaller bus**, space on the bus is limited. We ask you to **reserve your space ASAP** with a non-refundable \$500 down payment.*

*In addition, because our tours draw people from different parts of the country, not to mention -- the world — it is best if you **arrange your own air travel**. We will be working with our travel agent who, for a reasonable fee, will **help in booking your flights**, if you would like to take advantage of her expertise in the travel industry. She will also gladly arrange for your travel insurance.*

***If you think you might join us** and/or would like more information, please let us know, and we will keep you updated as we confirm further details. Also, you are welcome to tell any friends or family you think would enjoy this unique and personally meaningful way to experience Ireland.*

Slán agus beannacht! (Bye for now & blessings!)

Denise and Gerry Dignan

815-439-3701 — Email: dignansong@aol.com — Website: www.gerrydignan.com

***PS - If you know you'll be traveling with us**, please fill out the registration form included below, and **send a hard copy of it to us along with your deposit - \$500 per person** - the sooner the better:*

Denise and Gerry Dignan — 4205 Bunratty Lane — Plainfield, IL 60586

PPS -- Please let us know if you are thinking about joining us.

*What awaits us in Ireland is, ultimately, always beyond our knowing.
We do hope you will join us on this deep and deeply personal journey of Ireland...*



Recollections & Reflections from fellow Travelers to Ireland
with Gerry & Denise:

Wasn't that a wonderful trip we all shared? I'm still amazed by the variety, wonder, people and splendors that we experienced! It was really magical!

Kathy B.

There is such a powerful positive energy from this year's trip that I feel it still, and it seems that feeling may last for a long time. ~~~ Jim H.

What a fun, inspirational, and educational trip that was! Thank you, Gerry and Denise, for fabulous planning and execution of all details. ~~~ Margaret B.

I have missed you all and am still basking in the glow and soul of Ireland. Thank you all for making my trip so memorable. ~~~ Barbara D.

I sat on the plane looking over all my pictures, remembering where I've been, the people I met, and the things I did. What a trip! What an experience! What a place! Thank you again, Gerry and Denise, for your kindness, love and guidance. Thanks to all of you, for being a part of my awesome journey. ~~~ Christine M.

I had both a spiritual and physical healing in Ireland and am so grateful for the opportunity for this, and meeting you both, and the rest of the group — and bus driver! ~~~ Sandhya

A wonderful time in Ireland upon which to reflect, laugh, smile and cherish. ~~~ Pam & Doug S.

“Ireland 2015 - Magical, Mystical, Musical Pilgrimage Tour”
Galway-Kerry-Clare -- July 7-17, 2015

Registration Form – Deposit Deadline: Jan. 15, 2015

Please send hard copy to:

D&G Dignan – 4205 Bunratty Lane – Plainfield, IL 60586

Name (**as it appears on your passport**) -- Please Print:

Address: _____

_____ Zip code _____

Phone: _____

Email address: _____

Date of birth: _____

Roommate's Name: _____

____ If I have no roommate, (whether by choice or by circumstances that are not avoidable) I understand that I am responsible for the Single Supplement of \$500 for a single room.

____ Check Enclosed - Deposit of \$500 per person - (Please make check payable to: Denise Dignan)

____ I agree to purchase Travel Insurance (unless my age does not allow it.)

Signature _____ Date _____

After we receive your initial registration form, we will send you further information and registration details for ***our much anticipated time together*** in Ireland.