



# Travel Experience Club

## **Scotland & Ireland**

**Aug 9-22 2012**

**14 days 12 Nights**

**\$4499 pp. dbl. occ.**

The TE will be repeating a much requested trip to Scotland & Ireland during the summer of 2012. We chose the August dates because the world renowned Edinburgh Arts Festival and the Military Tattoo Show at Edinburgh Castle only take place at that time. The "Tattoo" has been a highlight of previous trips. If you are interested in this trip you must act immediately. It is extremely difficult to secure hotel space and get tickets to the Military Tattoo Show. Tickets often sell out in a few days. The cost of this trip will include 4 star or superior tourist class hotels, all flights, taxes, and fuel charges as of time of printing, tours as indicated, all breakfasts and dinners as indicated. Tips for drivers and guides are also included.



**Thursday Aug. 9<sup>th</sup> Depart for Edinburgh from JFK. Movies, meals and drinks in flight.**

**Friday Aug 10<sup>th</sup> Arrival in Edinburgh. The afternoon will be free to explore the city and experience the festival. The Edinburgh International Festival is a festival of performing arts. It takes place in the city of Edinburgh, Scotland over three weeks from around the middle of August. By invitation from the Festival Director, the International Festival brings top class performers of music, especially classical music, theatre, opera and dance from around the world to perform. The festival also hosts a series of visual art exhibitions, talks and workshops. The Edinburgh Festival Fringe (The Fringe) is the world's largest arts festival. Established in 1947 as an alternative to the Edinburgh International Festival, it takes place in Scotland's capital during four weeks every August**

# EDINBURGH ARTS FESTIVAL



The Fringe mostly attracts events from the performing arts, particularly theatre and comedy although dance and music also figure significantly. Theatre events can range from the classics of ancient Greece, William Shakespeare and Samuel Beckett to modern works, and in 2009 37% of shows were world premieres. However, there is no selection committee to approve the entries – it is an un-juried festival – so any type of event is possible; the Fringe often showcases experimental works which might not be admitted to a more formal festival. In addition to ticketed events included in the program, there is an ongoing street fair, particularly on the Royal Mile. The organizers are the Festival Fringe Society who publish the program, sell tickets and offer advice to performers from the Fringe office on the Royal Mile. The TE will help you get the festival schedule so you can plan to use your free time in the best possible way.

Saturday Aug 11<sup>th</sup>. After your Scottish breakfast, there will be a morning guided tour of Edinburgh sights. Included will be a visit to the palace, if the Royal Family is not in residence. There will also be visits to Edinburgh Castle and other sites along the Royal Mile. An expert local guide will point out the most important sights. The afternoon will be free to explore Edinburgh and see the Arts Festival events. Tonight we include admission to the fabulous Military Tattoo Show at Edinburgh Castle. This is an event that will be remembered for a lifetime. You will experience singers, dancers, and spectacular bag pipe bands from around the world, in the esplanade of the Edinburgh Castle, as the show unfolds into an amazing experience.



Sunday Aug. 12<sup>th</sup> We have provided a full free day in Edinburgh. It will be possible to get tickets to the many shows and events that are first presented at the Festival. Many shows that open in London and New York are first seen at this event. You will be able to get the full schedule at the event office and plan your day. The last time we did this trip some travelers enjoyed two shows during their free day. The biggest problem is that there are so many events to choose from.



**Monday Aug 13<sup>th</sup>.** Today we travel to Inverness (“Mouth of the River Ness”). Our first stop along the way will be at famed St. Andrews. An expert local guide will guide you through St. Andrews Castle, before we see the most famous golf course in the world. There will be time to have lunch and explore this historic old town. When we arrive in Inverness there will be free time to get acquainted with the town which is the capital of the Scottish highlands. Inverness, many times ravaged and burned by Highland clans competing for dominance, today seems designed for the tourist with its ever expanding range of restaurants and pubs. Dinner will be included at the hotel this evening.



**Tuesday: Aug 14<sup>th</sup>** Today we will explore Inverness & Fort Augustus which is located at the southern tip of Loch Ness. There will also be an included boat ride on Loch Ness. You may be surprised what lurks beneath the surface of the Loch. You’ll have free time in Fort Augustus to see the locks of the Caledonian Canal in action as boats rise from Loch Ness via a series of locks.



**Wednesday Aug 15<sup>th</sup>** We drive to Aviemore, the main town in the Cairngorms National Park, in the heart of the Scottish Highlands. The “Ring Cairn – Stone Circle” (c. 2400-2200 BC) is located at the end of the town. Aviemore services quite a wide area and has many shops and pubs. Perhaps, if it’s not too early when we arrive you can taste one of many award winning beers such as, “Sheepshaggers Gold” or “Tradewinds”. In the afternoon there will be a visit to the Eilean Donan Castle or Island of Donan Castle, named after a 6<sup>th</sup> century Irish saint, Bishop Donan who established a small religious community there. Situated on an island at the point where three great sea lochs meet, and surrounded by some majestic scenery, the castle is one of the most visited attractions in the Scottish highlands. Later in the day we will have a guided tour of the Ben Nevis Whisky Distillery followed by a tasting. Ben Nevis Distillery (1825) is one of the oldest licensed distilleries in Scotland. It’s nestled at the foot of Britain’s highest mountain, Ben Nevis at 4,406’ above sea level. There is a free evening in Inverness to enjoy at your leisure.



**Thursday Aug 16<sup>th</sup>** We depart Scotland via the short ferry ride from the Scottish port city of Stranraer to Belfast, Northern Ireland (Ulster). Our new Irish bus driver/guide will point out the most important sights. You will experience the beautiful landscapes before our visit to the spectacular Giant's Causeway, where an estimated 37,000 basalt columns, most hexagonal, extend from the cliffs to the sea. It took Mother Nature 61 million years to create it according to geologists. Local legend credits giant Finn McCool with laying the causeway as a pathway across the sea to his lady love who, lived on the island of Staffa in Scotland, where similar columns are found. Our hotel is in Londonderry (Derry). There will also be a stop today or tomorrow morning, depending on time, to explore and walk the famous Derry City Walls which are 30 feet thick. The walls go only 1 mile around yet pack centuries of history in their grey-stone ramparts. Dinner is included at the hotel this evening.



**Friday Aug 17<sup>th</sup>** We depart Derry and head for Sligo in the Irish Republic. It's the largest town in Northwest Ireland, which rose to prominence under the Normans, but its appearance is mainly the result of growth during the late 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> centuries. Its appeal is linked to being the birthplace of WB Yeats, Ireland's best known poet. Entrances to Sligo Abbey, the town's lone surviving medieval building and a visit to Yeats Memorial Building are included. We will be staying in Ballina this evening. Ballina, home of the famous River Moy, is County Mayo's largest town, the home of the past President of Ireland, Mrs. Mary Robinson, and the famous Ridge Pool, the salmon angler's paradise in the center of town. Its salmon fishery produces thousands of salmon to the rod annually. There is a rich mixture of pubs, restaurants and nightclubs featuring a variety of music in the town, which is famous for its hospitality. The impressive St. Muredach's Cathedral stands imposingly on the banks of the River Moy. You will have free time upon arrival.



**Saturday Aug 18<sup>th</sup>**. We visit the Connemara region of Ireland today. Connemara is the peninsula of Western Galway. It has long been regarded as one of the most beautiful places in the world. Its barren windswept landscape is compelling and inspiring. The blanket bog covering the region houses some beautiful and varied flora, and provides a contrast to the more green and fertile land of the midlands and south. Glaciers left patches of grey granite jutting outwards, and potato rows are still visible from the Great Famine. The fields are divided by hand-made stonewalls, often collapsed. Irish or Gaelic (Gaeltacht) is widely spoken in Connemara and is the native language of all the locals. A person who asks "Do you have any Irish?" is inquiring whether you speak Gaelic, but you don't have to because English is understood by everyone. There will be several stops along the way. We arrive in Galway in the afternoon. There will be time to shop and explore or visit a pub in this beautiful city.



**Sunday Aug 19<sup>th</sup>** There will be a short coach tour of Galway before we depart for a day trip to the Aran Islands. Galway is the center of the Irish-speaking region and a lively university town. The city tour should cover Eyre Square, Lynch's Castle, The Quays, Cathedral of St. Nicholas, the Spanish Arch and the Claddagh area. The Aran Islands experience will show you what life was like in the past on this desolate area and how today, some people are still able to live in this rugged place. Our tour takes us to Inishmore, the largest of the three Aran Islands. The attractions of the islands are their austere landscape, crisscrossed with dry stone walls, stunning coastal views and several large prehistoric stone forts, like Dun Aonghasa from the Iron or Bronze Age. It's thought that these islands were once a part of the Burren but were cut away and left isolated over the millenniums by the erosion of the waters that formed Galway Bay.



**Monday Aug 20<sup>th</sup>**. We depart Galway after breakfast and head eastbound for Dublin, capital of the Irish Republic. A guided tour will be taken upon arrival. Included is the entrance to Trinity College, home to the *Book of Kells*, the most richly decorated of Ireland's medieval manuscripts and St. Patrick's Cathedral, Ireland's largest church located beside a sacred well where legend claims St. Patrick baptized converts. Considered the "peoples' church", it is today the national cathedral of The Protestant Church of Ireland. Jonathan Swift, famed satirical author of *Gulliver's Travels* and once a Dean of the church is buried here.

**Tuesday Aug 21<sup>st</sup>** Full free day to explore Dublin's "Fair City". Aside from shopping on Grafton Street with its statue of Molly Malone or pub crawling, in the Temple Bar area, you may want to visit the country's National Museum or National Gallery. Or like many Dubliners, you may want to escape the city's hustle and bustle and seek the sanctuary of St. Stephen's Green, which is overlooked by fine Georgian buildings with their famous colorful doors or perhaps a walk over to Merrion Square, one of Dublin's largest and grandest Georgian squares might appeal to you.. Maybe you'd like to walk across the Liffey on the Ha'penny Bridge to explore north Dublin's O'Connell Street and see the historic General Post Office, the celebrated Abbey and Gate Theaters, the Anna Livia Fountain or the statue of James Joyce. There is certainly plenty to do and since our hotel is centrally located, it will be easy to get around to do as little or as much as you like.



**Wednesday Aug 22<sup>nd</sup>**. We will transfer to the airport after our Irish breakfast for the return trip home.

# Reservation Form

**Scotland & Ireland**  
Aug 9-22 2012  
14 days 12 Nights  
\$4499 pp. dbl. occ.  
Single rates upon request.

Name(s) as they appear on your passport \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

Phone number \_\_\_\_\_ Email: \_\_\_\_\_

\$100 non-refundable deposit pp. Amount enclosed \_\_\_\_\_

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