

Wexford Opera Tour

Sat, 24 October: Aer Arann mid-morning flight Luton to Waterford

At Waterford Airport your driver will be awaiting you to transfer you to Whites Hotel. Waterford is a tiny airport, and yours will be the only coach there.

This evening walk to the Opera House from Whites - it is 5 minutes and the city is en fête

Sun, 25 October: : *Full day of coach touring with lunch, a visit to Kilkenny and more.*

9 am Meet your guide, David Wardell, in the hotel lobby and set off for Kilkenny.

10.45 am Arrive Kilkenny. A 15 minute overview of the town and then tour the 12th century castle. It was remodelled in Victorian times and is set in extensive parklands. It was the seat of the Butler family, Marquesses and Dukes of Ormonde. The central block includes a library, drawing room, and bedrooms decorated in 1830's splendour, as well as the beautiful Long Gallery. A suite of former servant's rooms is the Butler Art Gallery, which mounts frequently changing exhibitions of contemporary art.

12.15 pm Walk down High Street past the medieval Rothe House, Kytler's Inn and Quirk's Castle to St Mary's Abbey where your coach awaits to take you along the River Nore's banks, past Bishop Berkley's birthplace to Berkley Forest, a mid 18th century classical house that was the ancestral home of the Berkley family (as in George B the philosopher after whom Berkley, Ca is named). Lunch here as the guests of The Countess Bernstorff with a chance to see her collection of antique costumes, Victorian toy collection and wonderful garden. Anne Bernstorff is a distinguished artist and is best known for her imaginative and idiosyncratic works.

2.40 pm Depart Berkley Forest, and return to Wexford via New Ross to be back at the hotel by approx 3.30 pm.

This evening another opera.

David Wardell, your guide is in his late 40s. He ran a successful restaurant in Kildare for many years and is married to a member of Ireland's Three Day Event team.

Monday 26 October

9 am Peter Pearson will meet you in the lobby of Whites at 9am.

Peter Pearson is an historian, conservationist and noted artist with a lifelong commitment to the protection and enhancement of Ireland's architectural heritage. He has attended demolitions of many great houses, rescuing their decorative period features, in the process amassing a vast body of knowledge on the crafts, social and economic history of places throughout Ireland. He has written many books on Irish design, architecture and social history. He is a founder member of the Dublin Civic Trust, a member of the Heritage Council and an honorary life member of the Dun Laoghaire Historical Society.

This afternoon enjoy a musical recital.

7.00 pm Your coach will be awaiting you outside Whites Hotel to take you dinner in a private castle in the village of Clonegal with entertainment from traditional dancers.

10.30 pm Your coach will be awaiting you to bring you home to Whites.

Tuesday 27 October

9.45 am Your driver guide and coach will be awaiting you outside Whites Hotel to take you Dublin. Make sure that all your baggage is loaded and you will depart at 10 am. Your route is mostly highway, and to the right you will see the Irish Sea. At 11.30 you reach Powerscourt House. Located in a stunning natural setting at Enniskerry, Co. Wicklow, it is a magnificent period home dating from mid 18th century, overlooking wonderful terraced gardens and an ornamental lake. The house was partially destroyed by fire in 1974. A long restoration project ensued during which the ballroom and the garden rooms were rebuilt. On site at Powerscourt is also Ireland's premier shopping emporium "Avoca Hand Weavers" which is where lunch awaits after you have toured the gardens.

At 2.00 pm you check into The Merrion Hotel, and while your luggage is being taken to your rooms you will be taken on a 2 hour walking tour of Dublin's Georgian core. Dublin has long been a centre of art and culture. Stroll through the elegant Georgian streets of Merrion and Fitzwilliam Squares, shop in the elegant emporiums of Grafton Street and Powerscourt Townhouse, explore the collections of the National Museum and National Gallery. The range of art and artefacts is enormous, and you will have no problem spending many hours enthralled.. The city is over a thousand years old, and many of the towns and settlements that surround it are equally ancient. Successive centuries have left their distinctive overlays of character and architecture which means that Dublin has a wealth of historically significant and fascinating sights to explore such as Dublin Castle, where the Normans ruled from the 12th Century, and Trinity College founded in the 16th Century by Queen Elizabeth I.

At 7.30 pm gather in the Cellar Bar of the Merrion Hotel for dinner and entertainment. The Merrion was built as his private home in the 1700s by The Earl of Mornington, a remarkable child musician who grew into a man of genuine musical learning and became Professor of Music at Trinity College, Dublin. His lasting fame as a composer comes from his glees. Like his more famous son, the Duke of Wellington, he was a man of cool courage, for he is reputed to have been the first member of the aristocracy who dared to walk through the streets openly and unashamedly carrying a violin case.

Wed: 28 October : 7 am Depart hotel for morning coach transfer to Dublin airport.