



Ireland

A Woolly Weaving & Knitting Odyssey

A Luxurious Weaving and Knitting Sojourn Along the Road Less Traveled



Come Explore the Wild Atlantic Way,
one of the longest and most breathtaking coastal routes in the world

May 9 – 27, 2027

Trip Highlights

- Visiting Dingle Peninsula exploring the Sleat Head Drive, one of Ireland's most scenic routes through historic sites and Irish speaking villages
- Meandering through Connemara with its raw, natural beauty where Celtic roots still run deep
- Walking along the majestic Cliffs of Mohr, one of Ireland's most spectacular natural wonders
- The lunar-like limestone landscape of the Burren where megalithic tombs and rare Arctic-to-Mediterranean flora thrives
- Wandering for a day around the smallest of the Aran Islands
- Exploring Yeat's Country
- Tapping your feet in Doolin, renowned as the traditional music capital of Ireland
- Discovering Wild Donegal filled with Ireland's most beautiful and unspoiled landscapes
- Accommodations in castles, Victorian inns, and 18th century grand manor houses
- Castles, sheepdogs, whiskey, ancient ruins, history and culture
- Includes all breakfasts, 3 lunches and 8 gourmet dinners

A Sample of our Extraordinary Accommodations



Ballyseede Castle Hotel, County Kerry

where history and luxury are interwoven on 30 acres of enchanting private gardens and woodland. We'll begin our journey by stepping back in time into a majestic castle; a sanctuary of elegance and tranquility. It even has friendly resident Irish Wolfhounds.



Ballinalackin Castle Country House Hotel, County Clare

Perched high on a hilltop, set against the wild and rugged beauty of the West of Ireland, sits a special sanctuary from the world. An historic 15th century castle watches over this exclusive country house, with bay windows offering views of the Cliffs of Moher and Aran Islands.



Abbeyglen Castle Hotel, Connemara

Built in 1832, this romantic castle is set in beautiful gardens overlooking scenic Clifden Bay in the heart of Connemara. The gracious, yet unpretentious, hotel offers a unique beautiful blend of history, luxury, friendliness and the dramatic rugged beauty of Connemara. The restaurant is widely recognized for its delicious dining with the very best local seafood.



Harvey's Point Lakeside Resort, Donegal

Set in the mystical shadow of the Blue Stack Mountains on the shores of Lough Eske, Harvey's Point has developed into the leading destination hotel of the Northwest. Specializing in top-class accommodation, exquisite cuisine and genuine Donegal welcome, it has been named TripAdvisor's #1 Hotel in Ireland' for the fifth year in a row, 10th best in Europe, and features an AA two rosette restaurant.



Coopershill Estate, Yeat's Country

Coopershill Estate is a gorgeous 18th century Georgian country mansion where we will have the entire house to ourselves. It has been home to the O'Hara family for 250 years and is surrounded by 500 acres of ancient woods, deer pastures and views of the pastoral Sligo countryside. Open fires and original antique furniture contribute to the cozy and historic atmosphere.

Meet Our Irish Weaving Teacher...

Margaret Cunningham and the Organization, Taipéis Gael

Since the mid-1700s sheep rearing and the associated domestic industries of weaving and knitting have been an important part of Gleann Cholm Cille's economy. As in other isolated areas, these industries provided an additional income to many families without which they would have been forced to emigrate. Weaving, which together with fishing was once the mainstay of the local economy, has been revitalized through the medium of tapestry art by the inspirational artists at Taipéis Gael.

As part of the Taipéis Gael program from 1993-1995, local artist-weavers from Glencolmcille in Donegal were trained in the skills of preparing and dyeing wool using local materials, carding and spinning, designing tapestry and weaving on specially fabricated wooden frames. The original Taipéis Gael creations are now exhibited all over the world. Glencolmcille, where we will weave, has long been known for the excellence of its weavers and hand-knitters and the production of high-quality tweed garments.

In our workshop, Margaret Cunningham from Taipéis Gael and Manager of the Glencolmcille Folk Village will teach the skills acquired from the community's older practitioners who are generously passing on their skills from earlier generations. Margaret was brought up in the foothills of Sliabh Liag and her people were all fishermen, weavers, spinners, knitters and teachers. In her words, "I am a fiddler, guitarist, a traditional singer, tapestry weaver, photographer and have a great love for where I come from and our native language."



Meet Our Irish Knitting Mentors...

Edel MacBride

"When you cross pollinate fashion with the skill of craft you get originality, something with my stamp on it – something exciting. Like all stories worth telling, it starts with a good yarn." Irish Designer Edel MacBride has been creating and selling innovative knitwear since the establishment of her eponymous label in 1987. Having studied fashion design at Limerick School of Art and Design Ireland, it was the early childhood love of knitting and yarns that has provided inspiration for her collections. Edel has traveled extensively, and she finds travel the greatest stimulus to the design process. However, it is the Irish Aran that will always have her heart. Edel started KNITFIELD in 2010 to bring her skills to others via workshops. Read more about Edel on Page 21...

Una McDonagh

Una McDonagh was born and raised on Inis Oirr (Inisheer), the smallest and in her opinion the most beautiful, of the three Aran Islands! Una comes from a long tradition of knitters and crafts people. Islanders had to be very resourceful and self-sufficient to survive on this barren rock throughout the ages. The work was laborious and never ending and had a major influence on life as is portrayed in both music, song and local customs but also in the Aran stitches such as the honeycomb, the diamond, cables and blackberry to name just a few. Una grew up very much immersed in those traditions, so it was only a matter of time until she would return to crafting and knitting on the island, where she teaches Aran Knitting using the traditional Aran methods. All skills are handed down from generation to generation visually (no patterns in those days however do not fear as she uses patterns for her classes!)



Sunday, May 9

An Ancient Stone Circle and Charming Adare



We meet today in town of Bunratty not far from the Shannon Airport**, a much less crowded option in the western half of Ireland verses the Dublin Airport in the east. Our van will depart from the town of Bunratty at 10AM bound for our castle accommodation near Tralee. En route, we'll begin with a little Irish magic. Our first stop is at Grange Stone Circle. This is a 4,000-year-old circular enclosure and is the largest of its kind in Ireland and is made up of 113 contiguous standing stones.

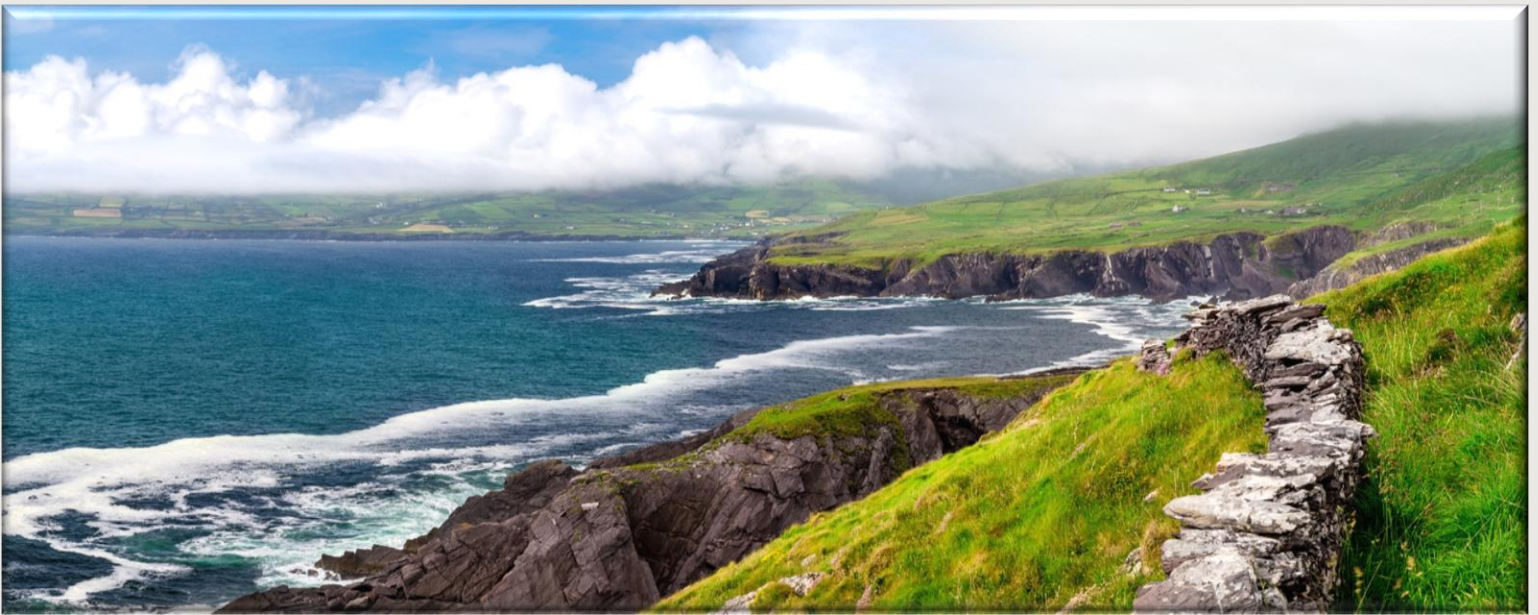
Our next stop will be Adare, often referred to as "Ireland's prettiest village." It is the quintessential Irish hamlet dating from the Norman Conquest with picturesque thatched-roof houses and ivy-covered medieval churches. Set on the banks of the River Maigue, there are plenty of shops to browse, historic sites to explore and a Heritage Center. Built in the 19th century, Adare Manor was the former seat of the Earl of Dunraven. The estate, with its neo- gothic architecture, is set on 840 acres of gardens and parklands along the banks of the river. One can walk along to the

banks of the river where the remains of priories built by medieval monks still stand. We will have time to explore the town and enjoy lunch at one of the charming eateries (not included).



Our destination is about an hour's drive from Adare to a lovely property outside of Tralee where we'll be staying for the next three nights. Ballyseede Castle, located on 30 acres of private gardens and woodlands, has a history dating back to the 1590's. It was wonderfully transformed into a four-star hotel in 1965 and boasts elegant and charming rooms with antiques and modern amenities. We will enjoy dinner as a group tonight in the hotel's outstanding restaurant that is popular with both locals and guests alike. Overnight at Ballyseede Castle. (D)

****You will need to be in Ireland prior to our group departure at 10AM from the town of Bunratty. You may wish to fly in a day or two early to rest and stay close to the airport or in the charming village of Bunratty. We will be happy to make recommendations for hotels close to Shannon or in Bunratty. If you choose to stay in Bunratty, we will meet you there.**



Monday, May 10 Kerry Woolen Mills and Ring Forts along the Ring of Kerry

Today we have a full day of scenic treats and adventures. We begin with a visit to Kerry Woolen Mills which has been producing wool since the 17th century and remains family owned. Here we'll go behind the scenes to see how raw wool becomes the finished product, from dyeing, blending, carding and spinning into Aran knitting yarn to weaving and finishing. Their guides walk us through every step, just as it has been done here in Beaufort since 1760. We'll also learn about the history of Irish wool production, and browse beautifully crafted textiles, from scarves and blankets to traditional Aran jumpers.



From here, we hop on the road along the north end of the Ring of Kerry, avoiding the masses of tourists in Killarney. We will meander through some of Ireland's most hauntingly beautiful landscapes with craggy mountain passes, sleepy villages and windswept coasts. The road rises gradually as you approach the coast, and soon you're treated to panoramic views of golden sandbars, rolling surf, and the distant silhouettes of the Slieve Mish Mountains across the bay. We'll stop at Rossbeigh Beach Overlook, a hidden gem in County Kerry, offering stunning views of Rossbeigh Beach and the sea.



Next, we make our way outside of the town of Cahersiveen to two of Ireland's best-preserved stone ringforts known as Cahergall and Leacanabuaile. These ancient circular enclosures were built from dry stone without mortar, and their thick walls have stood silently for over a thousand years. Ringforts, or *ráthanna* in Irish, date back from 500 to 1000 AD. Here, farming families kept their livestock enclosed by earthen banks or stone walls. This kept intruders out, animals in and their inhabitants safe from the elements.

We'll return to Cahersiveen for the freshest seafood lunch at Quinlans and Cooke before returning to Ballyseede Castle the way we came. Dinner is on your own tonight. Overnight at Ballyseede Castle. (B)



Tuesday, May 11 Exploring the Dingle Peninsula



Today we spend the full day exploring Dingle Peninsula. We will immerse ourselves in what we consider one of the most beautiful routes in Ireland. Its wild rugged scenery, archeological ruins, undulating hills and fragrant woods make it incredibly special indeed. Here “everything moves a little slower.” The government subsidizes the survival of the Irish language and culture. The 30-mile loop around the peninsula reveals hidden Celtic forts, mysterious stone tombs and castles, all with sweeping sea views. An interesting stop is the Gallorus Oratory, built approximately 1,300 years ago. It is one of Ireland’s best preserved early-Christian churches. The Sleah Head Drive boasts stunning coastal scenery of opal blue waters with

rocky islands as well as the greatest concentration of ancient sites in County Kerry, if not the whole of Ireland. Dingle Peninsula culminates in Europe’s westernmost point.



You will have some time to explore the many shops found on the Dingle Peninsula. Three worthwhile stops include **The Weavers Shop** where Lisbeth Mulcahy creates fabrics and tapestries inspired by the local landscape on a 150-year-old loom. **The West Kerry Craft Guild** is a co-op selling the work of 14 local artists and there are a couple of jewelers that offer fine handcrafted works in Celtic designs. **A local potter** produces sophisticated wares out of local clay. In the late afternoon, we return to our hotel. Overnight at Ballyseede Castle (B)





Wednesday, May 12

To County Clare, Doolin and the Cliffs of Moher

This morning, we travel north into County Clare where the rugged natural beauty and the timeless ocean meet on coast. This is a rather long travel day so be sure to bring along something to entertain yourself if you can drag your eyes away from the scenery (i.e., knitting, etc.). We carry on heading up the coast to see one of Ireland's most iconic sights, the Cliffs of Moher. For over 350 million years, these amazing cliffs have stood in rugged beauty over the sea. They are Ireland's most visited attraction for good reason. Our destination is Ballinalacken Castle Hotel, our accommodation for the next

three nights. Perched on a hilltop with the wild and rugged beauty of western Ireland as a backdrop, views of the Cliffs of Mohr and the Aran Islands lie outside the windows of this country house hotel with its own 15th century castle.

The famous O'Brien clan, descendants of the High King of Ireland Brian Ború, owned the original house. In the 1930's, the hotel was frequented by the gentry as a luxury hotel and haven for relaxation. We will dine as a group tonight in the hotel's beautifully appointed restaurant. Overnight at Ballinalacken Castle Hotel. (B,D)



Thursday, May 13 Knitting and History with Una McDonagh

What a treat we have today! Una McDonagh will begin the all-day workshop by introducing us to the traditions of island life; its clothing and knitting and the influence this has had on women's lives in the Aran Islands. Aran sweaters, with their unique patterns, have become the ultimate symbol of Irish Clan heritage. The distinctive "fisherman's sweater" known as Aran originated in this area was knitted from the islands' native sheep. As explained on the website for the Aran Sweater Market, "From its origins, the Aran sweater has been intimately linked to clans and their identities. The many combinations of stitches seen on the garment are not incidental, far from it. They can impart vast amounts of information to those who know how to interpret them. Aran sweaters were, and remain, a reflection of the lives of the knitters and their families."

On the Aran islands, sweater patterns were zealously guarded, kept within the same clan throughout generations. These Aran sweaters were often used to help identify bodies of fishermen washed up on the beach following an accident at sea. An official register of these historic patterns has been compiled and can be seen in the Aran Sweater Market on the Aran Islands."

© <https://www.aransweatermarket.com/history-of-aran-sweaters>



Una will teach us Aran knitting in a full day workshop using the traditional

Aran stitches and methods that have been handed down through the generations, mostly visually. Don't worry if you don't consider yourself a proficient knitter. Una can teach all levels, or you might just enjoy listening to her stories.

Tonight, for those that wish, we will take taxis (additional cost) to nearby Doolin, considered the Traditional Music Capital of Ireland. Here you can have dinner in one of the local restaurants followed by music in one of the town's pubs. We defy you not to find your toes tapping and your body wanting to do a jig! Overnight at Ballinalacken Castle Hotel. (B)





Friday, May 14

Explore Aran Island of Inis Oirr

Today we visit Una at her home on Inis Oirr, we will spend the day on the smallest of the Aran Islands. A 20-minute ferry ride brings us to Inis Oirr. An outpost of Gaelic culture and language, many of the inhabitants still live a traditional life on these deeply isolated islands.



Upon arrival, Una will meet us and we'll walk up the pier to Café Una where tea, coffee and homemade scones await us. Una will fill us in on the unique nature of the island and its rich knitting history. After this, we will walk or get to experience the unique island transport known as a Wanderly Wagon for a two-hour guided tour of the island taking in the highlights before returning to Café Una for a homemade lunch. You'll have a little time to walk on the beach or have some refreshments before taking the afternoon ferry back to the mainland. Overnight at Ballinalacken Castle Hotel. (B)



Saturday, May 15

To Connemara via The Burren: Ancient Dolmans, Forts and Sheepdogs



Today we travel to the Connemara region of Ireland, famous for its Connemara ponies and wild scenery. Connemara is one of the most beautiful and mysterious regions in Ireland with endless mountains, lakes and a wild landscape. Sparsely populated, Connemara is one of the only places in Ireland where sheep have the right of way over cars on the road!

Shortly after departing Ballinlacken, we'll drive a short way to the lunar-like rocky landscape of the Burren. Here we find the oldest dated megalithic monument in Ireland, and one of Ireland's most iconic archaeological monuments. Built by Neolithic farmers, Poul nabron Dolman is classified as a

portal tomb with two large portal stones standing on either side of an entrance capped with a massive sloping capstone. It is a moving sight indeed!



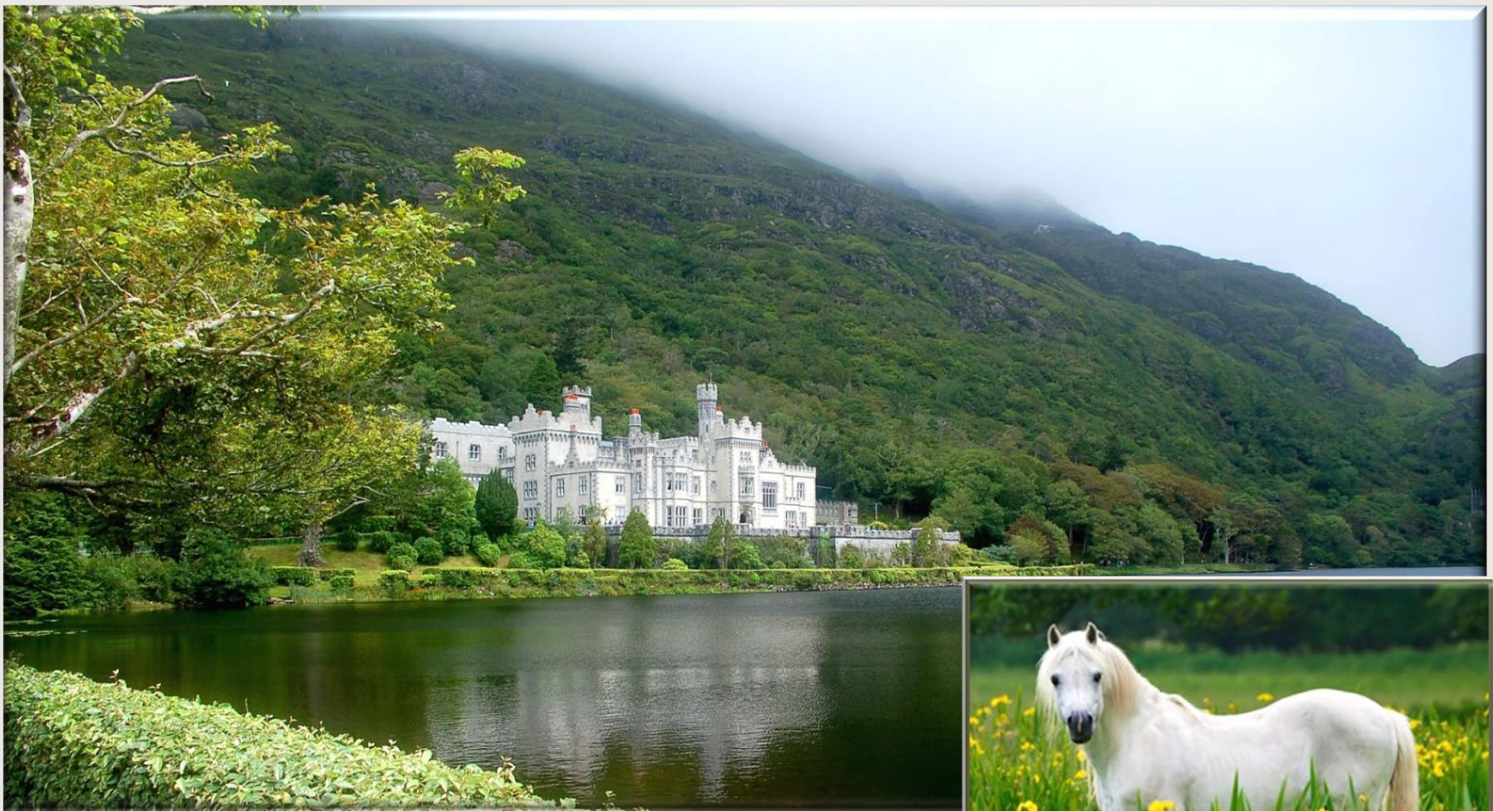
Next, we have a treat in store with a visit to Caherconnell Fort which is a site of enormous archaeological importance and is over 1,000 years old. It is remarkably well preserved and is one of the finest examples of forts in the area. Caherconnell Fort dates to the 10th century. We'll tour the fort with a local guide.



The tour will be followed by a sheepdog demonstration with the working farm's border collies. They are renowned for the talent, agility and skills of their dogs and shepherds.

Our destination is Abbeyglen Castle Hotel, where we stay for the next three nights. Located in the heart of Connemara overlooking the quaint village of Clifden and Clifden Bay, it was built in 1852 by John D'Arcy of Clifden Castle. The Abbeyglen Castle hotel enjoys a romantic setting in the Twelve Mountains. While the castle hotel is surrounded by trees, hills, and scenic vistas, it is only a short 11-minute walk to the bustling village of Clifden where we can enjoy lively pubs, great shopping and gregarious locals. The town, located at the edge of Clifden Bay, is chock full of excellent craft shops, art galleries and pubs and is considered the prettiest town in Connemara. You'll have time to wander the town on your own. We dine as a group each night in their acclaimed restaurant. Abbeyglen Castle has been awarded two Rosettes from the AA for its gourmet food, and offers the absolute best local seafood, live lobster, and fresh catch of the day. Overnight at Abbeyglen Castle Hotel. (B,D)





Sunday - Monday, May 16 - 17

Exploring Connemara: Castles, Sheepdogs, Sheep and Wool Centre



These two days are filled with fun stops in various areas of Connemara! We will visit the Sheep and Wool Centre in Leenane where their mission is to foster awareness of the traditional sheep and wool industry in Connemara. Here we learn the history of sheep farming and wool craft in the west of Ireland at their museum. We may even have some time to try carding, spinning, weaving and other wool crafts. There's a lovely gift shop where we can browse through a selection of clothing, blankets, wool and crafts.

We will also enjoy a private visit to the lovely Killary Sheep Farm, a traditional working mountain farm with approximately two hundred ewes and lambs roaming freely in the mountains overlooking Killary Fjord. It is an absolutely beautiful setting. They run mainly Blackhead Horny sheep which can survive the harsh winters. Here, we'll get to experience a sheepdog demonstration and a chance to step back in time and learn about turf cutting using the *slean*.

Switching gears, we head further west to visit the gothic Kylemore Abbey, the iconic and most photographed castle in Ireland. It is the oldest of the Benedictine Abbeys in the country. Here we can enjoy access to the beautiful Abbey, tea rooms, gift shop, surrounding grounds and wonderfully restored Victorian walled gardens. We dine as a group again this evening at the castle. Overnight at Abbeyglenn Castle Hotel. (B,D daily)





Tuesday, May 18

A 100-Year-Old Woolen Mill, an Amazing Needle Felting Artist and Old Irish Goats

We hop in our van this morning and continue north along the Wild Atlantic Way. This part of the coastal route features some of the most dramatic and picturesque coastal scenery in Europe. Nestled along Clew Bay in County Mayo, this region blends rugged mountains, sandy beaches, and thousands of years of history.

We drive about an hour and 45 minutes to Foxford Woolen Mills which was established to service the village of Foxford more than a century ago. Our drive takes us through the wonderful, varied colors of Ireland including emerald green pastures where sheep lazily graze, high valleys of amber and purple heathers

and the deep blue of the many loughs. These colors are found in the beautifully woven goods at Foxford. We will see their collection of the finest wool throws and blankets that have been produced for over 130 years.





What comes next is quite a unique experience! We will visit the Old Irish Goat Centre in their last remaining stronghold in Mulranny Co. Mayo. Here, we learn about the goats' imprint on history and culture. With our guide, we'll hear about these remarkable beings through the ages, tracing their roots back to their arrival 5,000 years ago. The species is the only indigenous breed to the Emerald Isle. We'll delve into their rich symbolism within Irish pagan culture, exploring how they have influenced farming practices, art, and literature throughout the centuries. The goats known as Gabhar Fiáin' or the wild goat, were considered symbolic of wisdom, resistance and rural life. They had a vital role in supporting Irish families during The Great Hunger, providing sustenance and hope in times of dire need. Today, they continue to inspire unexpected heroism as they tackle pressing environmental challenges, reminding us of the deep connection between nature and humanity. At the Centre, their mission is conservation grazing, education and advocacy. As a team, the folks at Old Irish Goat Centre are committed to building a sustainable future for the Old Irish Goat for the betterment of nature and biodiversity

as they pave a new path as heroes of Ireland's landscape. This is our chance to enjoy a unique opportunity to meet these beautiful elusive creatures and experience these charismatic and intriguing characters up close!

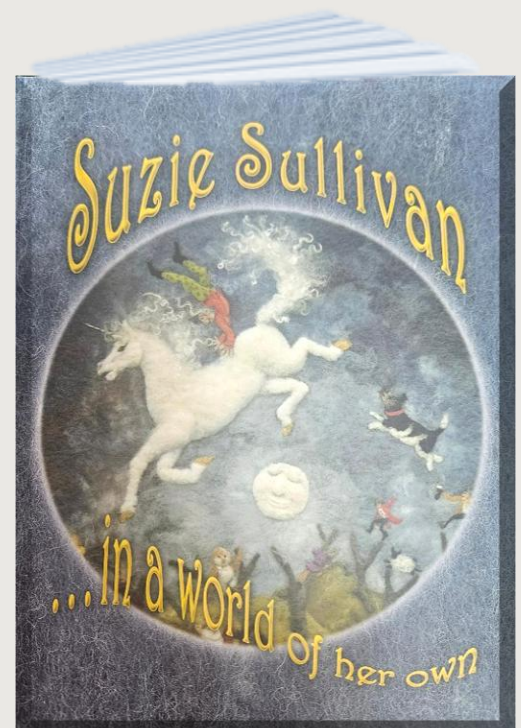
Close by is a new gallery on the Mulranny Arts Campus where we meet up with renowned needle felting artist, Suzie Sullivan, to see her work. She is an amazing fiber artist and author of a wonderful book.



To break up the drive today, our destination tonight is the small seaside town of Enniscrone where our hotel is situated on the waterfront of the spectacular Killala Bay. Waterfront House exudes a sense of peacefulness and relaxation, where we can unwind



from the day and relax to the soothing sounds of the Atlantic reaching the Irish Coast. The seafront restaurant at Waterfront House is the heart and soul of the property. With panoramic views, we can admire the stunning landscape. Dinner is on your own here. Overnight at Waterfront House. (B)



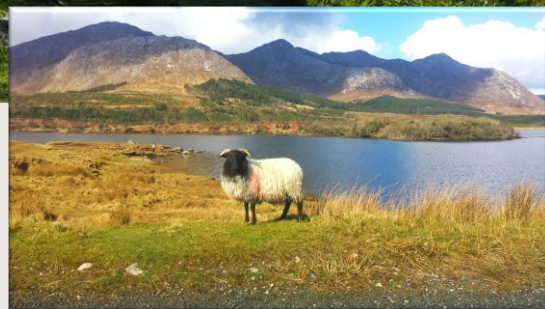


Wednesday, May 19 To Donegal

"Where you can see the sheep in the clouds."

~Quoted by Knitter Carol Feller's 4-year-old son

This morning, we continue to head up through north Sligo County entering dramatic Donegal, a landscape of fierce beauty with dramatic headlands and a rugged hinterland. Lonely Planet once awarded Donegal the "Coolest Place on the Planet." It really is another world full of wild scenery and lots of sheep!



We'll make a stop at Abbey Mills and House of Craft; an award-winning shop located inside a restored portion of the Cistercian Assaroe Abbey in Ballyshannon in South Donegal. This town is thought to be the oldest town in Ireland created in 1613. Archeological sites have been discovered here dating back to between 4000 and 2500 BC. A museum was created by the Abbey Mill Restoration Project with the goal of bringing back to life Ireland's 12th Century heritage.

On our way north lies Carrowmore Megalithic Cemetery, the largest and oldest collection of Neolithic tombs in Ireland. Over thirty surviving monuments date back almost 6,000 years. It is one of the most significant prehistoric landscapes in all of Europe.

Our accommodation in Donegal for the next four nights is at Harvey's Point Lodge offering lakeside tranquility, natural beauty and calm seclusion. The lovely hotel features large, luxurious bedrooms, award-winning cuisine and turf fires all with wonderful views of the mountains and Lough Eske. Harvey's Point was awarded #1 Hotel in Ireland by TripAdvisor Traveler's Choice Awards for five straight years. We will dine as a group tonight. Overnight at Harvey's Point. (B,D)



Thursday, May 20 Donegal

A Weaving Workshop with Margaret Cunningham

We travel about an hour today to Glencolmcille located on the Slieve League Peninsula at the southwest point of Donegal, a landscape of staggering beauty. Since the mid 1700's, the rearing of sheep and the related industries of weaving and knitting have been an important part of the lives of this area and have created an international reputation. This proud tradition of weaving and spinning has been revitalized and embodied by a small group of weavers known as Taipéis Gael, whose art captures Donegal's landscape and history using naturally dyed and handspun local yarns (see page 2).

Perched on a rocky hillside overlooking the sandy curve of Glen Bay Beach in Southwest Donegal, the Folk Museum offers us an intimate experience of a past way of life. It is one of Ireland's best living history museums offering the chance to experience life as it was in the 1700's, 1800's and 1900's. The thatched cottages, called a "clachan," are exact replicas of those belonging to that era and are furnished accordingly. Local people regularly donate time, expertise, artifacts, stories and photographs.

Margaret Cunningham, Museum Manager of Glencolmcille Folk Village, weaver and tapestry artist will teach our workshop here. She will begin with an informal talk about Taipéis Gael and her own work. We will also learn about the important history of the tradition of weaving and spinning in Glencolmcille. We then spend two days weaving a sampler using all the techniques that Margaret uses in her work, with examples of where the stitches are used in practice. All materials will be provided including frame, warp and weft, etc. Margaret will also give a spinning demonstration on a traditional Donegal spinning wheel. We are welcome to try our hands at spinning and carding as well. Overnight at Harvey's Point. (B,L)



Friday, May 21 Weaving Workshop at Harvey's Point

Our hotel is so special that we just don't want to leave it today. Thus, Margaret will come to us so that we can enjoy another full day weaving workshop held at our exquisite hotel. If you wish to stretch your legs, Harvey's Point offers an easy-to-follow multi-level hiking system around the property. You can meander past quaint farms and babbling brooks to take in the sweeping views. Overnight at Harvey's Point. (B)





Saturday, May 22

Exploring Donegal & Donegal Tweed

We'll spend today exploring the delights of Donegal, both its natural beauty as well as its weaving heritage. We visit *Ard an Rátha* (Ardara) which is one of the five designated heritage stone villages in Donegal and is a center of weaving and the production of Donegal tweed. In the 1870's, this trade became a cottage industry with home spun and hand dyed woolen and tweed items being created. Ardara Heritage Centre offers us the opportunity to learn the story of Donegal tweed from the shearing of sheep to the manufacture of woven cloth.



We'll visit the studio of Eddie Doherty, a well-known handweaver based in Ardara who produces a wide range of traditional handcrafted products from tweed using 100% Irish wool. Eddie still creates tweed by hand using natural woolen yarns on his 60-year-old machine. He's been handweaving since the late fifties. In hand weaver Eddie Doherty's own words, "I am now one of a dying breed." He strives to create weavings that "reflect the beauty of our landscape." We will also stop at Donegal Tweed Visitor Center and

Triona which boasts five generations of hand weavers.

A stop to admire the views at Slieve League, a spectacular mountain on the Atlantic Coast, is a must! Towering almost 2,000 feet about the wild Atlantic Ocean (almost three times higher than the Cliffs of Moher), it is one of the highest sea cliffs in Europe. The area is also deeply rooted in Irish heritage. Overnight at Harvey's Point. (B)





Sunday, May 23 To Sligo and an 18th Century Grand Irish Country Estate

Today we head south to Yeat's Country. What an idyllic setting we have for Irish traditional knitting with renowned Irish knitting and textile designer, Edel MacBride. We have the entire Coopershill Estate to ourselves for three nights with a private chef providing our meals each day. Inspired by the textural contrasts of Donegal with its rich textile history, Edel's design collections have been sold to Liberty of London, Henri Bendel New York and Isetan Mitsukoshi Japan. The label is recognized for its dedication to the crafting of the finest hand knit goods handmade in Ireland. Edel will lead us in a class in Aran Cables knitting which is undergoing a revival in Ireland and around the world. Historically, Aran traditional chunky sweaters were knitted by the women of the Aran Islands for their menfolk to wear out to sea. Each family had a different pattern which was the chief way to identify the men who drowned in the treacherous sea. Edel assures us that we will be "cabling without cable needles in no time!" We'll have two and half days to knit with Edel. (D)



Monday-Tuesday, May 24 - 25

Knitting with Edel MacBride or Weaving with Cari*

We will continue knitting with Edel surrounded by the splendor of Coopershill House

"I am passionate about preserving and enjoying our rich textile heritage. Having enjoyed three decades as a commercial knitwear designer, it is my pleasure to share my trade, skills and stories with fellow enthusiasts."

~ Edel MacBride



Here's a little bit more about Edel (because we just love her and had so much fun in 2014 and 2022!)... As an established designer and knitter, Edel MacBride brings a love of textile, craft, and a deep connection to cultural tradition to her collections. She has managed her eponymous label since the late 1980's. She values traditional technique highly while embracing modernity in design and business practice. Knitwear has won her many awards and television appearances. While dedicated to the Northwest Region and her artisan business model she has designed for industry and exhibited extensively abroad. Edel has sold or been worn by Hillary Clinton, both Irish Lady Presidents and actresses Sarah Jessica Parker, Jane Seymour, Olivia Newton

John, besides creating work for films. Edel is passionate about wool, especially local and Irish spun products. She prefers to work with natural yarns of all kinds.

*Note: We highly encourage you to try your hand at knitting with Edel as she can work with any skill level and this is the opportunity of a lifetime. However, if you prefer to weave for these days, you will have the opportunity to weave on a small frame loom (you will need to bring it with you) with Cari Sample Malver, owner of Loom Dancer Odysseys, side by side with the knitters. You will also have time to explore the beautiful grounds of Coopershill with delightful path through the woods. This is a haven for wildlife with daily sightings of red squirrels, pine martens, fallow deer, jays, tree creepers and regular sightings of otters, Irish stoats & woodpeckers. You can even participate in a Hawk Walk where, like a High King with a hawk on your arm, you cast your hawk into trees and recall it to land on your gloved fist as you walk through the ancient woods among the grandeur of the 500 acre private estate. Overnight at Coopershill Estate. (B, L, D daily)

Wednesday, May 26

Return to Shannon Area

This morning, we bid farewell to Coopershill House and travel south. Along the way, we will stop in the vibrant city of Galway.

Our accommodation for the last night is at Carrygerry, a charming "Old World" country house which was originally built in 1793. Located near Shannon, in the scenic countryside of County Clare, we will be less than ten minutes from Shannon International Airport (no generic airport hotels for us!). Our last night offers us a gracious atmosphere of peace and tranquility, with antique furnishings and glowing fires. We can dine as a group here tonight (not included). Overnight at Carrygerry Country House. (B)



An exquisite creation by Edel MacBride, and Rufus modeling his handknit Irish booties



Thursday, May 27

Flights Home

This morning, we sadly bid farewell to the Emerald Isle. You transfer on your own to the airport for your flights home. (B)



As with all true adventures, this itinerary is subject to change without notice based on a variety of factors. Although Loom Dancer Odysseys will do our best to adhere to the scheduled itinerary and accommodations, we are all at the mercy of Mother Nature and varying weather conditions. This itinerary should be considered an approximation of activities only. The itinerary or accommodations may be changed subject to unexpected and/or worthwhile opportunities, weather, group desires, and circumstances beyond our control, etc. Loom Dancer Odysseys and its guides reserve the right to alter the itinerary without prior notice. Also please be aware that any voluntary changes on your part to your itinerary while in Ireland will be made at your own expense.

There is no refund for any unused portion of the itinerary including hotels, activities, etc.

Land Costs Include:

- 18 Nights in luxury 4- and 5-Star unique accommodations based on double occupancy (all individually atmospheric - no large impersonal chain hotels!). Single accommodation available at additional cost
- Meals: All breakfasts, 3 lunches and 8 gourmet dinners from fine chefs featuring local produce and seafood and traditional Irish cuisine
- 6 Days of Fiber Arts Workshops/Special Events including 2 Days of an exclusive weaving workshop with Taipéis Gael; and 2 Knitting workshops/events with renowned Irish Knitters
- Private van and local expert guide
- Private visits and demonstrations with talented knitters, weavers, spinners, jewelers and textile designers
- Admission fees for included tours/boats and activities with visits to castles, distilleries, museums, mills, etc.

Land Costs Exclude:

- Any air transportation
- Meals not designated on the itinerary
- Gratuities for your guide, drivers, hotel porters and other service staff
- Additional insurance of any kind. **WE HIGHLY RECOMMEND TRAVEL INSURANCE!**

Cost: \$7,795 Per Person Based on Double Occupancy** (Limited to three rooms)
\$7,395 Per Person for Non-Fiber artist, based on Double Occupancy

For those wishing single accommodations, we offer a single room upgrade. As the hotels in our itinerary charge the same amount for a room whether there are one or two occupants, the **Single Supplement of \$2,195 is unavoidably rather steep. We offer this rate at our cost.



Save Your Spot!
Please call our office for details or questions!

800-369-3033 (US Only) ~ 970-728-6743 ~ 970.708.1181 cell

PO Box 2154, Telluride, CO 81435 ~ loomdance@aol.com ~ www.loomdancerodysseys.com

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Loom Dancer Odysseys

does not believe in large group, bargain or "ordinary" tours. Instead, we strive to immerse the discerning and adventurous traveler into the wondrous world of global fiber arts with quality cultural encounters. Our typical group size is limited to 12-16 participants to allow for a more hands-on, relaxed and intimate travel experience.

We invite you to join us;
be a creative traveler,
not a tourist.

