

A FRESH LOOK DUBLIN ANCIENT & MODERN

SUNDAY 27 APRIL – SATURDAY 3 MAY 2025 (7 DAYS)

LECTURER: TOM DUNCAN

£3335

- **Introduction to Irish history & the seminal role of Dublin from Norman times onwards**
- **New itinerary features sites & collections not included in previous tours**
- **Full day spent exploring the Boyne Valley with its remarkable group of early historic monuments to include Newgrange & Tara**
- **Comprehensive guided visits to Dublin's major museums & art galleries**
- **6 nights in comfortable 4* city centre hotel**



Dublin Castle

OVERVIEW

It is thirty years since Tom Duncan took his first group to Dublin, and this tour has remained a regular feature of our programmes. Over those years much has changed both in Ireland more broadly and indeed, in its capital city. A combination of material prosperity and a mature sense of shared history with the United Kingdom has transformed the manner in which its heritage is presented. Consequently, the time seems right to re-think the itineraries of past tours, and we have designed a fresh look at Ireland and more specifically Dublin. New visits have been added while some of the major cultural institutions and sites of past tours will continue to be included.

Ireland has a complicated history: Celts, Christians, Vikings, Normans, Tudors and many others besides have all crossed the Irish Sea to find a new home. Ancient Ireland is best understood by visiting some of the most important pre-historic sites in Co Meath. The Neolithic passage tomb at Newgrange in the Boyne Valley of about 3200 BC is world renowned and the nearby Celtic site at Tara is equally moving. Not far away is Kells, an important site in the evolution of early Christianity, once home to the eponymous Gospel book in Trinity College.

Founded by Viking explorers, Dublin has been the centre of administration since Norman times and we shall focus on its history throughout the week. Dublin Castle was built for King John, the focus of English and then British rule in Ireland, its military origins absorbed within the later pomp of Georgian splendours. Nearby there are two medieval cathedrals, Christchurch and St Patrick's, their present appearance due to Victorian interventions of varying qualities. Little else survives of Medieval and Tudor Dublin but from the mid-17th century onwards, fine public buildings and monuments have added lustre to the city, such as the Royal Hospital at Kilmainham.

The 'long 18th century' was the backdrop to two parallel strands in Irish history. There was the emergence of 'ascendancy' Ireland, an elite Protestant group who controlled public life and whose buildings and collections reflect their dominant role. Equally important were the growing calls for political reform to allow the excluded Catholic and Presbyterian communities access to basic rights, a struggle which gained pace in the 19th century, dominated by two giants of the period, Daniel O'Connell and Charles Stewart Parnell.

The fraught struggles which form the emergence of modern Ireland are captured in a series of museums and sites which we shall include: Kilmainham Goal, the General Post Office (GPO) where the 1916 Rising began, the Memorial Gardens designed by Lutyens to mark the sacrifice of Irishmen, north and south, who fell in the Great War. Ireland's two National Museums, the Library of TCD with its Book of Kells exhibition, the National Gallery of Ireland and the Chester Beatty Library will all be included.

Led by CICERONI's founder, Tom Duncan, we stay for six nights at the 4* **Davenport Hotel**. Ideally situated close to Merrion Square in the city centre it's well placed for all we shall visit, either on foot or by coach transfer.

ITINERARY OUTLINE

Day 1: Sunday 27 April – We fly from Heathrow to Dublin, arriving mid-afternoon, continuing to the city centre. We have an **Introduction to Dublin** via a bus tour before continuing to the 4* **Davenport Hotel**, near Trinity College for a six-night stay. Later that evening we have dinner at the Davenport's nearby sister hotel – wine, water and coffee are included with all group lunches and dinners.

Day 2: Monday 28 April – We travel by coach to spend a day in Co Meath's **Boyne Valley** area. The Neolithic passage tomb at **Newgrange** of about 3200 BC is world renowned and the nearby Celtic site at **Tara** is equally moving. Not far away is **Kells**, an important site in the evolution of early Christianity, once home to the eponymous Gospel book in Trinity College. Lunch is included today and we return to Dublin and a free evening.

Day 3: Tuesday 29 April – We begin our exploration of medieval and later Dublin at **Dublin Castle**. Medieval in origin, this was the centre of English and later British rule in Ireland and its Georgian state rooms are well preserved. Within the castle's walls there is the unexpected bonus of the **Chester Beatty Library**, a remarkable collection of manuscripts and works of art from India and the Far East. After some free time for lunch, not included, we continue to visit the city's two medieval cathedrals, **Christchurch** and **St Patrick's**. They are fine examples of English building styles introduced by the Normans and 'St P's' is forever associated with the towering figure of Jonathan Swift, who was its Dean. We return to our hotel and a free evening.

Day 4: Wednesday 30 April – We continue our introduction to Irish History with visits to the two branches of the **National Museum of Ireland** beginning at the **Kildare St** branch which specialises in the material culture of Pre-historic, Celtic, early Christian, Viking and Medieval Ireland, especially rich in gold metalwork. After some free time for lunch, not included, we continue to the 'other' National Museum site at **Collins Barracks** where the emphasis is on Georgian and modern Ireland. We conclude the day with a visit to the **Royal Hospital at Kilmainham**, Ireland's earliest classical building and now home to a series of museums. There will be a group dinner in a local restaurant.

Day 5: Thursday 1 May – The **Kilmainham Goal Museum** is a poignant talisman of the often tragic consequences of Ireland's struggles against British rule in the 19th and 20th centuries, the place where many Irish revolutionaries were executed. Nearby is the no less moving **Memorial Garden** designed by Lutyens to commemorate the sacrifice of Irishmen, north and south, who fell in the Great War. After some free time for lunch, not included, we visit **Trinity College** to see the **Book of Kells** exhibition. 'Trinity' was founded by Queen Elizabeth I and the college is grouped round a series of quadrangles with some impressive buildings from over three centuries. We return to our hotel and a free evening.

Day 6: Friday 2 May – We spend the day on foot in and around two of the city's finest Georgian squares. Our first visit will be to two houses on St Stephen's Green, both with superb plasterwork, now joined together as **Newman House** commemorating the role of Cardinal Newman who helped create the first Catholic university in Ireland in the building. We continue to the 18th century **City Assembly Rooms**, now the headquarters of the Irish Georgian Society. After some free time for lunch, not included, we meet in Merrion Square to visit the **National Gallery of Ireland**. For its size, it 'punches above its weight' with masterpieces by, for instance, Caravaggio and Vermeer. We return to our hotel and later that evening we walk to a local restaurant for our final dinner.

Day 7: Saturday 3 May – There will be some free time this morning to explore independently after which we leave the hotel for Dublin Airport and the return flight to the UK.

PRACTICALITIES

Price £3335

Deposit £475

Price without flights £3135

Single Supplement £695 (Double for Sole Use)

Hotel 6 nights with breakfast at the 4* Davenport Hotel

Flights Aer Lingus

Outward: **EI163** Departs London Heathrow **1325** (Terminal 2) arrive Dublin **1450**

Return: **EI176** Departs Dublin **1700** arrive London Heathrow (Terminal 2) **1820**

Price includes 3 dinners & 1 lunch with water, wine & coffee, all local transfers, entry fees & gratuities, the services of Tom Duncan

Not included Travel to/from Heathrow, 3 dinners & 5 lunches



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