



# Highlights of Scotland & Ireland: Edinburgh to Dublin with Eastern Illinois University Alumni Association

10 days | 12 days with Edinburgh extension | Nov 03 2026—Nov 12 2026

Warm smiles. Cheeky humor. Miles of undulating landscapes and craggy coastlines. These are the hallmarks of Scotland and Ireland. From quirky, cultured Edinburgh to the lively pubs of Dublin, you'll get a taste of city life. Along the way, you'll visit the smaller, but just-as-bright jewels of Glasgow and Galway. And if it's the feeling of "Is this place real?" that you're looking for, you're in for a treat with stops at the Burren and Cliffs of Moher. We already know you'll want more time to enjoy Edinburgh, so we've arranged an early arrival option that lets you spend three extra days in its medieval nooks and crannies.



## Your tour package includes

- 8 nights in handpicked hotels
- 8 breakfasts
- 3 dinners with beer or wine
- 6 sightseeing tours
- Expert Tour Director & local guides
- Private deluxe motor coach
- 1 on-tour flight

## Included highlights

- Edinburgh Castle
- Stirling Castle
- Kelvingrove Art Gallery and Museum
- Local pub culture
- St. Patrick's Cathedral
- The Burren
- Cliffs of Moher

## Tour pace

You will walk for at least 1.5 hours daily across mostly flat terrain, including paved roads and cobblestone streets, with few hills or stairs.

For more information, contact

<https://groups.goaheadtours.com/tours/edinburgh-to-dublin> | 1-800-438-7672

# Highlights of Scotland & Ireland: Edinburgh to Dublin with Eastern Illinois University Alumni Association

10 days | 12 days with Edinburgh extension

## Overnight Flight → 1 night

### Day 1: Travel day

Board your overnight flight to Edinburgh today. Pronouncing the city's name can be challenging for even the most seasoned travelers—it's ED-in-bruh (or ED-in-buh-rruh if you can roll your Rs)! Remember that you also have the option of arriving three days earlier to soak up what's sure to become your new favorite place.

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## Edinburgh → 2 nights

### Day 2: Arrival in Edinburgh

*Included meals: welcome dinner*

Welcome to Scotland! Meet your Tour Director and fellow travelers at tonight's welcome dinner, served with beer or wine.

### Day 3: Sightseeing tour of Edinburgh

*Included meals: breakfast*

Nestled between the rivers Almond and Esk, Edinburgh emerges from a series of hills and rocky ridges, earning its nickname "the Athens of the North." Get to know the Scottish capital in all its medieval beauty on a tour led by a local expert.

- View the elegant neoclassical and Georgian architecture of the New Town. Its ornate sandstone and granite structures, surrounding oasis-like gardens and green spaces, became a model for European urban planning in the 18th century and beyond.
- Contrast the New Town's grace with the Old Town's rustic Royal Mile, which runs between Edinburgh Castle and Holyrood Palace—the official residence of British monarchs in Scotland. Here, you'll cross moody, narrow streets and alleys (known as "closes") flanked by brooding buildings and timeworn cathedrals.
- Pass the towering Sir Walter Scott monument. Paying homage to the *Ivanhoe* and *Rob Roy* scribe, it's one of the largest sculptural tributes to an author in the world.
- Ascend Castle Rock and enter Edinburgh Castle. Standing on an extinct volcano at the

top of the Royal Mile, it houses the Scottish crown jewels and Stone of Scone—used since the 13th century to coronate the monarchs of England, Great Britain, and the United Kingdom.

Looking to see the city from a different perspective? Add this afternoon's excursion and descend under the Royal Mile as you meander through the Real Mary King's Close, a series of once bustling streets during the 17th-century is now yours to explore. Not enough? Cap it all off with a whiskey tasting at a local tavern, because no visit to Scotland is complete without a wee dram.

Prefer to see more of Edinburgh? Use your free afternoon in the city to go back and wander the winding streets of the Old Town. Of course, there's always the option of tucking into a cozy cafe booth and lingering over tea and shortbread.

*Please note: The order of today's activities is subject to change.*

+ Underground Edinburgh & Whiskey Tasting

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## Glasgow → 2 nights

### Day 4: Glasgow via Stirling Castle

*Included meals: breakfast, dinner*

Travel through the picturesque Scottish countryside and stop for a self-guided walking tour of Stirling Castle, where King James VI once lived. Then, continue to Glasgow for a tour with a local guide.

- Admire the buildings of the University of Glasgow. Founded in 1451, it's the fourth-oldest institution of higher learning in the English-speaking world and one of four Renaissance-era universities still operating in Scotland today.
- View the 18th-century George Square and its monuments and catch a glimpse of the River Clyde.
- Stop outside the city's medieval cathedral—the oldest cathedral on the Scottish mainland and the oldest building in all of Glasgow—for photos of its Gothic spires and facades.

- Visit the Kelvingrove Art Gallery and Museum. Opened in 1870 as Glasgow's first municipal museum, it features substantial exhibitions of everything from European portraiture to Egyptian antiquities.

Tonight, gather with your groupmates for an included dinner, served with beer or wine.

### Day 5: Free day in Glasgow

*Included meals: breakfast*

Two national treasures await you today if you opt to join us in the Scottish Highlands. You'll not only get to visit Inveraray Castle, but you'll also enjoy a scenic drive through one of Scotland's natural wonders: Trossachs National Park.

If you'd rather use your free day in Glasgow to venture off on your own, you can head back to George Square for a closer look at the massive Glasgow City Chambers and a dozen statues of Scottish icons like Robert Burns and Sir Walter Scott. You can also head back to the University of Glasgow area to poke around the Byres Road's lanes—tucked-away cobbled streets home to shops, cafes, and restaurants.

+ Inveraray Castle & Trossachs National Park

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## Dublin → 2 nights

### Day 6: Flight to Dublin

*Included meals: breakfast*

Fly to Dublin, Ireland, today and—if you're in the mood for some quintessential local merriment—join us on an excursion for dinner, complete with a showcase of the thundering rhythms and precise footwork of Irish dance. (You might even pick up some fancy steps yourself!)

Prefer a quieter night? Use your free time this evening to go for a sunset stroll along the River Liffey, or head to Ha'Penny Bridge for a breathtaking nighttime view of the city.

+ Traditional Irish Dinner & Show

### Day 7: Sightseeing tour of Dublin

*Included meals: breakfast*

Settled by the Gaels and disputed over centuries by the Vikings and Anglo-Normans, Dublin traces its history back more than 1,300 years. Today, you'll peel back some of its layers on a comprehensive tour, led by a local expert.

- Stop in Phoenix Park, the largest enclosed

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public park in any European capital city. First established as a royal hunting ground by government decree in 1662, this 1,750-acre green space now houses the country's presidential residence.

- Pass by St. James's Gate Brewery, the legendary 260-year-old brewery behind Guinness dry stout. More than 50 million barrels ship out of the plant each year, making it the world's most prolific producer of stout-style beers.
- Walk through Old Dublin, then step into St. Patrick's Cathedral, the country's largest church. Founded in 1191, it serves as the national cathedral for the Church of Ireland, and its arresting Gothic architecture befits a building of its stature.
- Traverse Dublin's city center, passing 17th-century St. Stephen's Green as you go. Afterward, take some time to admire the Georgian architecture of Merrion Square. Another garden area in the heart of Dublin, it's been called home by some of Ireland's foremost writers—Oscar Wilde and W.B. Yeats among them.
- See the dignified facade of Trinity College—Ireland's oldest university—and embark on a walking tour of its hallowed grounds.

Fill your afternoon with an excursion out into County Wicklow and pay a visit to gorgeous Glendalough, the well-preserved ruins of a once-influential abbey. Or, if you'd prefer some free time, head down to the shores of the River Liffey and breathe in the ambiance of the lively Temple Bar district.

+ Glendalough

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## County Galway → 2 nights

### Day 8: Transfer to Galway & sightseeing tour

*Included meals: breakfast*

Travel west to Galway, Ireland's cultural heart, where your Tour Director will lead you on a walking tour of the city's highlights.

- Stroll past a trio of Galwegian icons: Lynch's Castle, a castle-turned-bank that dates to the 16th century; the rustic home of "Ireland's most prestigious theatre (troupe)," the Druid Theatre Company; and John F. Kennedy Memorial Park, a popular green space better known to locals (and the world) as Eyre Square.
- Get a grasp of Galway's Norman history by

viewing its medieval walls—12th-century fortifications that once encircled the city—and the Spanish Arch. First erected in 1584 as an extension of Galway's defenses, its name alludes to the Spaniards who moored their ships and lived in the area.

- Peruse authentic claddagh (said "CLA-da") rings in a local shop. Steeped in legend and symbolism, these pieces of jewelry have been produced in their current guise—two hands clasping a crowned heart—since at least 1700 and are inextricably linked to Galway.

Wrap up your day with a free evening in the city. Galway's famous for its traditional music scene; for a stomping, clapping good time, head to the nearest pub and let the sounds of Gaelic song wash over you.

### Day 9: The Burren & Cliffs of Moher

*Included meals: breakfast, farewell dinner*

This morning, trace Ireland's Atlantic coast as you detour into County Clare and prepare to be left breathless by its arresting terrain.

- Pass through the Burren. Distinct from the lush greens that typify the rest of the Irish landscape, greys dominate this limestone plateau, punctuated by bursts of wildflowers. Botanists will surely delight in this journey: More than 70% of Ireland's flower species grow here.
- Walk along the Cliffs of Moher. The typifying feature of Ireland's west coast, these weathered promontories extend for about five miles and are marked by jagged rock formations and abundant birdlife. Walking close to the cliffs' edge can be a thrilling, if dizzying experience, but rest assured knowing that the views from their well-maintained hiking trails are just as electrifying.

After a free afternoon, gather with your group for a final toast at your farewell dinner, served with beer or wine.

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## Flight Home

### Day 10: Departure

*Included meals: breakfast (excluding early morning departures)*

Transfer to the Dublin airport for your flight home.

*Please note: Some airport transfers may leave very early in the morning to accommodate return flights.*

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## + Edinburgh extension

With an option to arrive early, begin your journey with two additional days in Edinburgh and see the bustling Scottish capital your way. You'll cherish the extra time to navigate the layers of this historic, hilly city and its narrow, winding closes. As always, count on your Tour Director for expert tips on where to go and what to see before meeting up with the rest of your fellow travelers and embarking on the remainder of your journey through Scotland and Ireland.

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## Overnight Flight → 1 night

### Day 1: Travel day

Board your overnight flight to Edinburgh today.

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## Edinburgh → 2 nights

### Day 2: Arrival in Edinburgh

Welcome to Scotland! Transfer to your hotel, then meet your Tour Director and fellow travelers over a welcome drink this evening.

### Day 3: Free day in Edinburgh

*Included meals: breakfast*

Get a head start on exploring Edinburgh with a free day. You'll get to walk the Royal Mile on a guided sightseeing tour with your group on the main portion of your trip, but if you want to get your bearings ahead of time, you can't go wrong walking this historic stretch. For something off the beaten path, pay a visit to Dean Village—a dreamy hidden gem along the Water of Leith with timeworn stone buildings that date to its 12th-century origins as a milling center.

You can also choose to join us on a curated excursion to St Andrews for a peek into the birthplace of golf and its eponymous university, as well as a hearty pub lunch of a North Sea favorite: fish and chips.

+ Coastal Scotland & St Andrews Pub Lunch

### Day 4: Palace of Holyroodhouse

*Included meals: breakfast, welcome dinner*

Make your way down the Royal Mile to pop by the Palace of Holyroodhouse, the King's official residence in Edinburgh. This 16th-century retreat has been the Scottish home to British monarchs for more than 600 years. Take a self-guided audio tour of the palace and gardens to learn

more about the royal family. You'll walk through the state apartments, throne room, and portrait gallery, before heading outside to stroll along the pathways that wind through the manicured grounds.

Use your free afternoon in the city to go back and wander the winding streets of Old Town. If you're feeling adventurous, perhaps consider a spooky stroll through the tunnels that weave underneath the city. Of course, there's always tucking into a booth in a cozy cafe and lingering over tea and shortbread.

Meet up with the rest of your tour group this evening and get to know everyone during tonight's welcome dinner. (You'll pick up on day 2 of the regular itinerary.)

*Please note: Photography is not permitted inside the palace.*

**For more information, contact**

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# Customize your experience

Customize your tour by adding excursion options. Excursions offered on the same day will occur at different times, so there's no need to choose. Save \$10 when you book your excursion up to three days before your tour departs.\* Excursions requiring advance reservation only list this discounted price. Call or go online to customize your tour: <https://groups.goaheadtours.com/tours/edinburgh-to-dublin> | 1-800-438-7672

## Day 3: Underground Edinburgh & Whiskey Tasting

Visit the link above for pricing info. (Details pending, departs in the afternoon)

Start your afternoon off by descending into the hidden depths of Edinburgh's Old Town at the Real Mary King's Close. This unique 17th-century warren of underground streets and rooms, once bustling with life, now offers a fascinating glimpse into the past. Named after Mary King, a merchant who lived here, the close was sealed off and buried under the Royal Exchange in the 18th century, preserving its eerie charm and historical significance. As you explore, costumed guides will share tales of plague, hauntings, and daily life, making history come alive. After your subterranean journey, head to a nearby tavern for a whiskey tasting. Nestled in the heart of Edinburgh, these cozy establishments offer a warm ambiance and a chance to sample some of Scotland's finest whiskies. Whether you prefer a peaty single malt or a smooth blend, the knowledgeable staff will guide you through the rich flavors and stories behind each dram.

## Day 5: Inveraray Castle & Trossachs National Park

From \$115.00 . Visit the link above for pricing info. (6 hours, departs in the morning)

Admire striking scenery as you spend the day in the Scottish Highlands. Start off by journeying to Inveraray Castle, one of the most famous castles in Scotland. This iconic site has been featured in the popular television show Downton Abbey, and its history as an ancestral home on the shores of Loch Fyne stretches back to the 15th century. Join a local guide for a tour of the castle before enjoying free time for lunch in the town of Inveraray. Then, make your way to Loch Lomond and Trossachs National Park, Scotland's first national park, for a scenic drive. Stop along the way to admire striking lake and mountain scenery before heading back to Glasgow. Please note: This excursion is seasonal and runs from April through mid-October.

## Day 6: Traditional Irish Dinner & Show

From \$109.00 . Visit the link above for pricing info. (5 hours, departs in the evening with dinner)

Enjoy this special evening of Irish food, music, and live entertainment. Dinner will be served first, giving you a taste of the country's traditional dishes. You'll then be treated to a live show of Irish music and dance. Join in the fun as you enjoy a merry and memorable night. Please note: The specific venue and day of the week for this excursion may change due to availability. This excursion is seasonal and runs from April through October.

## Day 7: Glendalough

From \$55.00 . Visit the link above for pricing info. (5 hours, departure time varies)

County Wicklow has some of the wildest and most spectacular mountain scenery in Ireland, as well as many of the country's most important historic sites. Journey through Wicklow's captivating landscapes to Glendalough, which became famous throughout Europe as a center of Christian learning. Saint Laurence O'Toole became the Abbot of Glendalough in 1154 and worked to bring the Irish Church closer to the Roman Church. You'll learn more about O'Toole, who went on to become the Archbishop of Dublin, and his work in Glendalough as you visit St. Kevin's Cross, the remains of the sixth-century cathedral, and the remarkable Round Tower. Your Tour Director will lead you on a tour of the site, and then you'll enjoy free time.

## Extension excursion options

### Day 3: Coastal Scotland & St Andrews Pub Lunch

From \$145.00 . Visit the link above for pricing info. (8 hours, departs in the morning with lunch)

Travel from Edinburgh to the beautiful Scottish coast, stopping to explore the traditional fishing village of Anstruther in East Neuk. Then, join a local guide for a visit to St Andrews, famous for being the birthplace of golf—as well as the location of Scotland's oldest university. When you arrive, sit down to a traditional pub lunch of fish and chips—a local favorite. Then, pass by the 16th-century grounds of St Andrews University, the alma mater of Prince William, who met Kate Middleton here. You'll also enter the ruins of the town's medieval cathedral and 13th-century castle, which overlooks the North Sea. After your tour, enjoy free time to explore the town before returning to Edinburgh.

\*Optional excursions may be purchased up to three days prior to departure or while on tour. Pre-purchased optional excursions cannot be canceled within three days prior to departure or while on tour. Select optional excursions require advance booking and cannot be purchased or canceled after the advanced reservation deadline. Go Ahead Tours accepts payment by cash, Visa or MasterCard for optional excursions purchased on tour. Additional fees may apply for optional excursions purchased on tour. Excursions require a minimum number of participants to operate. Details and prices are subject to change. Due to seasonal hours of operation and availability, some excursions may not operate. If this occurs, you will be refunded any payments made for that excursion post-tour. Learn more at <https://www.goaheadtours.com/about/terms>.