



2019 Ireland Sheep-to-Shawl Tour

Frequently Asked Questions

You are about to embark on a wonderful travel experience that will take you from "sheep to shawl" as you travel throughout the spectacular Emerald Isle! Friends and family who have not yet become yarn lovers are also welcome! Whether you are a first-time international tourist or a more experienced traveler, these FAQs have been assembled in hopes of providing you with answers to questions that might be on your mind. This is not an exhaustive list of information but is intended as a guide in helping you plan for your trip and avoid unexpected "surprises". I am here to help and am happy to answer other questions you may have. E-mail me at deb@fibergarden.com, or phone 715.284.4590. I look forward to traveling with you!

Pre-trip:

- **Are the reservation and payment dates negotiable?** It is VERY important that you adhere to all stated deadlines for making reservations and payments. These deadlines are set by the tour company. In addition, there are a limited number of spaces available and they will be confirmed on a first-come, first-served basis.
- **Can the price of the trip ever increase?** Land prices include local government value added taxes (VAT). Any additional costs resulting from a tax increase prior to travel may result in an increase in trip price, payable before travel, even if the booking is paid in full.
- **What do I need to include when planning my budget for the trip?** Trip cost is of interest to most of us. I am providing some guidelines here of some known and optional costs to assist you in developing a realistic budget for the trip.
 - Let's start with the basic trip costs. If you plan to share a room with another traveler, the tour price is \$3,500. If you want single accommodations, the cost will be \$4,335. You will get a lot of value for this price! Take a look at the tour flyer for a complete listing of what's included. Please also note that once on the tour, all of the fees for the stops we will be making are included. It is the policy of the tour company that they never try to "upsell", meaning they will not try to sell you additional cost tours, etc. during the trip. This trip cost also reflects that the group size will be limited to 25 travelers, insuring a more intimate and "up close and personal" tour.
 - Meals. Included in the prices listed above are all breakfasts, 1 lunch, and 6 dinners! The only meals you need to plan for are the additional lunches and dinners, plus any meals during your travel to and from Ireland. We have found on past tours, that because of the hearty breakfast and dinner meals, most of us don't want a big, expensive lunch. Often, we are more interested in a light snack at one of the tea rooms.
 - Travel insurance. Travel insurance is recommended but not required. You should consider how it may help protect your investment and provide peace of mind should an unfortunate situation occur during your trip or if something outside of your control forces you to cancel your trip. You may request the Fiber Garden provide you with a price quote which varies by the age of the traveler and the state of residence. Insurance premiums typically average 5-8% of the trip cost, more if you are over the age of 70. After receiving your quote, if you have specific questions regarding the policy and its coverage, please contact Travel Guard directly at 1.800.826.1300. Insurance is non-refundable.

- Air transportation and airport parking. In order to get the best prices for airfare, it is important that we book early. It is important to submit your trip reservation as early as possible to expedite flight planning. For budgeting purposes, you can estimate \$1,500 round trip. Airfare has been significantly lower than this recently, but you want to budget adequately! Actual airfares may be higher or lower.
 - Be sure and budget for those treasures you'll want to purchase to remember your trip. There will be lots of fiber shops to explore all throughout our trip.
 - Gratuities. There are some suggested gratuities for the exceptional local team that will be guiding us throughout our eleven days. We will have a motor coach driver and a tour director. Suggested gratuities are \$5.00 - \$7.00 each to the driver and director per day. Any guides we have for walking or city tours have a suggested gratuity of \$2.00. Gratuities are always at your discretion, both in terms of whether or not you offer a gratuity and the amount. Our driver and tour director will be with us for the entire duration of our trip, so we will get to know them well! Most hotels and restaurants include a service charge in your bill. Ask if it has been included and if not, it is at your discretion with a recommended amount of between 10% and 15%. Tipping is not usual in pubs. If someone performs a special service for you, a gratuity is a nice way to say "thanks". Gratuities are not expected for hotel housekeeping staff, but they are appreciated.
 - Consider budgeting for the trip throughout the year:
 - First payment will be \$250 upon notification by the Fiber Garden that the minimum group size has been met. (Remember...book early!)
 - Travel insurance, if elected, can be paid within two weeks of deposit to receive the extra early purchase coverages or any time up until 24 hours prior to departure for your trip.
 - Airfare booked and paid soon after we reach our minimum group size and bookings are complete.
 - If you want to avoid a large lump sum payment, consider making monthly payments toward your trip. This option will be offered through the reservation process.
 - Final payment of the remainder of your trip balance will be due on July 15, 2019.
 - This list is not all-inclusive, but should provide the major expenses you need to consider when planning the budget for your trip.
 - **What forms of payment can I use?** All payments for tour costs must be paid by credit card. (MasterCard, VISA, AmEx. Discover is not always accepted in Great Britain, although it may be used to make payments on the main tour.) All travelers will have a credit card on file that will be used for payments. All payments will be made on your behalf by the Fiber Garden and paid directly to the tour companies. The Fiber Garden cannot accept any payments.
 - **What is the refund policy if I need to cancel my trip?** The following schedule applies to individuals who must cancel their trip reservation:
 - Land cancellations (\$3,500 or \$4335):
 - Cancellations 100 or more days prior to travel. Full refund less a \$50 administrative fee
 - Between 99 and 65 days: Cancellation fee is \$300
 - Between 64 and 21 days: Cancellation fee is 25% of trip cost
 - Between 20 and 8 days: Cancellation fee is 35% of trip cost
 - Between 7 and 1 days: Cancellation fee is 50% of trip cost
 - October 10, 2019 (day of departure): Cancellation fee is 100% of trip cost
 - Air cancellations. Cancellation penalties will apply based on the policies of the airline your flight is booked with.
- Reservations may NOT be transferred to another individual if you need to cancel. If you purchased travel insurance, check your policy for trip cancellation coverage.
- **Is there a minimum group size to conduct the tour?** Trip price is based on a minimum group size of 20. If this minimum is not reached, those registered will have the option to either cancel their reservation and receive a full refund (except insurance which is not refundable) or pay an additional \$200 to travel with a smaller group of 15-19.

- **Do I need a passport?** Yes, you will need a passport that is valid for at least six months past the date of your trip. If you need to apply for a passport or renew your passport, you can do so through the [U.S. Department of the State](#).
- **What if I have a criminal conviction?** You may be denied entry into your chosen destination as a result of any prior criminal convictions. It is your responsibility to check with the appropriate embassy to assess your situation.
- **I have some limited mobility and difficulty walking. Will this be a problem for me?** Please be advised that travel in Ireland can sometimes involve uneven terrain, rough walking surfaces, short to medium walking distances during tours, and some stairs which can be challenging for those with mobility issues. Motor coaches do not have wheelchair lifts, so travelers must be able to mount steps into the coach. Tour company guides and drivers are unable to provide Individual mobility assistance to passengers. Please contact the Fiber Garden prior to registering for the tour to discuss any concerns.
- **What should I pack?** Several weeks prior to the trip, you will receive a packet of information that includes a comprehensive guide to help you prepare for your trip. The information here is just to get you started.

You are limited to one suitcase weighing less than 50 pounds. In addition, CIE International will provide you with a carry-on backpack for your flight and tour. Casual clothes are fine for the day, with smart casual attire acceptable for evening dinners. Don't overpack!! Plan your wardrobe so you can wear a few shirts and pants in multiple outfits. (After all, you need to have room left in your luggage to stash all those treasures you'll be bringing home!!!) Comfortable walking shoes are a "must". Other items that you might want to tuck in your suitcase include a travel alarm, converter/adaptor plugs for your electronics. Leave expensive jewelry or other valuables at home!

- **What is the weather in Ireland?** Average lows of 43 and highs of about 58 degrees in October in Ireland. Weather patterns are influenced by the Atlantic Ocean, creating very unpredictable weather.
- **How will air be booked? Do I need to book my own air to Ireland?** The Fiber Garden will review where travelers will be coming from throughout the United States. Two primary gateways will be selected in regions of the country where the most passengers are from and air will be booked for travelers out of these two airports. You will fly to Dublin with many others in the group, and the Fiber Garden will book these flights. You will be responsible for getting to one of the departing airports by arranging ground transportation or booking air to one of these two airports. (Make sure you book your flights to arrive in plenty of time to make your connection to our group flight!) The Fiber Garden will also be happy to book these extra flights for you. If you plan to arrive in Ireland in advance of our group, or extend your stay following our tour, you will need to book your own flights or request the Fiber Garden book these separate flights for you.
- **How do I get from the airport to our Dublin hotel?** We will have one group transfer provided by CIE Tours from the airport to our hotel. This transfer will also include a tour of the city. Once you arrive at the airport, you will go to baggage claim to get your luggage. Instructions for connecting with the rest of the group will be sent prior to the trip. Every effort will be made to get people flying from the same U.S. airports on the same transatlantic flights so you will have travel companions to help pass the time once you arrive in Ireland and before our group transfer. (*All the more reason to reserve a space on the tour early so we can get the best airfare and flight schedules!!*) In the rare event where someone's flight schedule is such that it is not feasible for them to be included in the group transfer, we will advise you on getting transportation to the hotel.
- **What else do I need to know to prepare for the trip?** There is a lot of information that could be shared here, but these are the very basics. As mentioned above, you will be receiving a comprehensive guide to assist you in preparing for the trip. The Fiber Garden will work with you every step of the way guiding you through the pre-trip preparations, tour documents, etc. Once you make your reservation for the tour, please be sure to thoroughly read any information e-mailed or sent to you by Deb and the Fiber Garden.

In Ireland:

- ***Can I use my cell phone?*** It depends. You will want to check with your cell phone provider to see if your phone can be used when traveling internationally, and what the rates are. Personally, I purchased an inexpensive unlocked smart phone and a T-Mobile account. It is very cost-effective and provides reliable service while traveling in Europe. It will be far more economical to rely most heavily on Wi-Fi for communications as it is more available and less expensive. Another option is to purchase a cheap cell phone once in Ireland that includes pre-paid minutes to get you through the trip. [Some good information](#) for traveling in Europe with your cell phone can be found in the linked article.
- ***Is there internet access?*** Yes! Our motor coach may have free Wi-Fi so you can keep in touch back home as we travel the highways and byways of Ireland. All of our hotels also have Wi-Fi, most of them free. There are also numerous local cafes where you can access Wi-Fi. Internet speeds can be unreliable at times, but should be available in most of the locations we will visit.
- ***Currency.*** Ireland's currency is the Euro. It is advisable to have some Euros with you prior to your trip to get you through the first couple of days of the tour. You can also exchange currency at your U.S. airport or at the airport on arrival in Ireland. ATMs will also dispense cash in the local currency. Once in Ireland, there will be other opportunities to exchange currency if needed. It is best to carry smaller denominations of U.S. dollars as most places will not accept \$100 bills for exchange.

Post-tour:

- ***How do I get from our hotel to the Dublin airport?*** We will have a group transfer just as we did when arriving in Dublin. Because the entire group will transfer to the airport at the same time, be sure you have plenty of reading material or a knitting project to help pass the time if you have a long wait prior to your flight. As in the transatlantic flights at the beginning of the trip, every effort will be made to get group members on the same flights headed home.

Please contact me if there are other questions that you need answered. I'm here to help you have the best of travel experiences! I will continue to update this document and will remain in communication with each traveler as the date of our trip approaches.

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