



2024 Ireland IFHE Pre-Congress Tour Frequently Asked Questions



You are about to embark on a wonderful travel experience that will take you throughout the indescribably beautiful countryside of Ireland! The perfect way to enjoy some time to appreciate Ireland before your Congress begins. 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. **Please note that email is my preferred method of communication.** It's not that I don't want to talk with you! It is simply easier to reach me via email and I can respond more promptly. I look forward to serving you!

Pre-tour:

- **Are the reservation and payment dates negotiable?** It is VERY important that you adhere to all stated deadlines for making reservations and payments to avoid your space being canceled. Payment deadlines are set by CIE Tours International, the tour company operating your tour. A *non-refundable* \$250 deposit will be due shortly after you submit your reservation. *Final payment for the tour will be due on April 1, 2024.* You will receive reminders of all payments due in advance of the deadlines.
- **Can the price of the trip ever increase?** Stated prices for this tour are guaranteed.
- **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 for the land tour. If you plan to share a room with another traveler, the tour price is \$2,900. If you want single accommodations, the cost will be \$4,019. You will get a lot of value for this price! Look at the tour itinerary for a complete listing of what's included. Please also note that once on the tour, all the fees for the stops on the itinerary are included.
 - Meals. Included in the prices listed above are all breakfasts, one lunch, and four dinners! The only meals you need to plan for are the remaining lunches and the additional dinners, plus any meals during your travel to and from Ireland.
 - Travel insurance. Please review the insurance information posted on the tour webpage at <https://fibergarden.com/2024irelandifhe>. There is a price chart included on the page.
 - Air transportation and airport parking. For budgeting purposes, estimate \$1,500 for air. This is dependent on prices at the time of booking and your selected air gateway. Airfare can be much lower (or higher) than this, but this is a reasonable amount for conservative budgeting!
 - Be sure and budget for those treasures you'll want to purchase to remember your trip. There will be lots of shops to explore all throughout our trip.
 - Gratuities. You will receive more about gratuities prior to your tour. Add about \$150 to your budget for gratuities.

- 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 and how are payments made?** All payments for tour costs must be paid by credit card. (MasterCard, VISA, AmEx.) AmEx, although it may be used to make payments for the tour may not be widely accepted once in Ireland. MasterCard and VISA are the cards you should travel with. 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 CIE Tours. The Fiber Garden cannot accept any payments directly.
- **What is the refund policy if I need to cancel my trip?** The following schedule applies to individuals who must cancel their pre-Congress tour reservation:
 - Land cancellations (does not apply to air reservations):
 - Cancellations between 99-66 days prior to departure: Cancellation penalty is forfeiture of \$250 deposit.
 - Between 65 and 16 days: Cancellation penalty is 30% of your tour cost
 - Between 15 and 8 days: Cancellation penalty is 50% of tour cost
 - Between 7 and 1 days prior to travel: Cancellation penalty is 90% of tour cost
 - Day of departure: Cancellation penalty is 100% of tour cost.

Air cancellations. Cancellation penalties are 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.

- **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](https://www.state.gov).
- **What if I have a criminal conviction?** You may be denied entry into your chosen destination because 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 Europe, including Ireland and the British Isles 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. Travelers must be able to mount steps into the coach unassisted. 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, including a packing list. The information here is just to get you started.

You are limited to one large suitcase. Consult your airlines as to size and weight restrictions. You will also want to bring a small carry-on (something that would fit under the seat of an airplane) for our days we are out touring. You will receive a very nice backpack from CIE tours that makes a perfect carry-on. Casual clothes are fine for day and evening. 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 to pack will be provided with your tour documents.

- **What is the weather in Ireland?** Average lows in the upper 40's to low-50's during the evening and highs in the mid-50's to low 60's in June in Ireland. Be prepared for rapidly changing weather from rain to sunshine to wind to ??? 😊
- **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 and your preferred home air gateways and will recommend flights that will coordinate your arrival into Dublin and departure out of Shannon with others in the group. Although The Fiber Garden can book your flights, during this time of airline industry challenges, it is recommended that travelers book their own flights directly through the airlines (*NOT* through a third party!) so you have direct access to your air

reservations. A resource on tips for booking air can be found on your tour webpage and is also discussed in the Welcome video.

- **How do I get from the airport to our Dublin hotel?** Travelers are on their own to make their way to the hotel. The Fiber Garden will provide a list of air “travel companions” so you know who will be on your same flights. You can coordinate your transportation from the airport together.
- **Can I arrive early and spend one or more extra nights in Dublin?** Please indicate when you register if you would like to arrive one or more nights early. (Or email deb@fibergarden.com as soon as you decide to come early.) The additional cost per night is \$194 per person for a shared room and \$374 for single occupancy per night. *Please note that additional nights lodging at the group hotel is on a space-available basis. Make your request early. No guarantees can be made that space will be available.*
- **What else do I need to know to prepare 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. In addition to the Welcome video, approximately 4 weeks prior to your tour, Deb will post a Prepare-to-Travel video to walk you through all the final details and answer questions. 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:

- **Who is the tour operator?** Your tour services will be operated by CIE Tours International. A company with a long history in Ireland and an excellent reputation. The Fiber Garden has been partnering with CIE for many years on custom group tours. You’ll be in good hands!
- **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. It will be far more economical to rely most heavily on Wi-Fi for communications as it is more available and less expensive. WhatsApp is one communication app we often use on Fiber Garden tours. You can also use it to make voice and video calls back home using WiFi. Skype and Facebook messenger are two other apps that you can use for calling without using a cellular signal. And of course, Zoom has become very commonly used since the pandemic!
- **Is there internet access?** Yes! The motor coach *may* have free Wi-Fi so you can keep in touch back home as you travel the highways and byways of Ireland. The 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 you will visit.
- **Currency.** Ireland's currency is the Euro. You can exchange currency at your U.S. airport or at the airport on arrival in Ireland. You will get a better exchange rate if you wait until you arrive in Ireland. ATMs will dispense cash in the local currency. Once in Ireland, there will be other opportunities to exchange currency if needed.
- **What happens after our pre-Congress tour ends?** You will be on your own June 24. Breakfast will be included that morning with your lodging. Then you can enjoy the rest of the day doing your own explorations until your Congress activities begin.

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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