

## 2025 Ireland Prepare to Travel Zoom Agenda/Meeting Notes

Wednesday, August 19, 2025. 7:00 p.m. Central

**CHECK YOUR EMAIL DAILY!!!!**

### Care Package Contents and Explanations

- **Name tag.** Contact me ASAP if any info on the nametag is incorrect. I will bring a corrected one.
- **Luggage tags from CIE.** One is for your large suitcase and the other for your carry-on. They are two different colors. It doesn't matter which color you use on each suitcase. Do NOT put your address on your luggage tags!
- **Luggage strap from CIE.** These go around your large suitcase to make your bags more easily identifiable to the porter and coach driver. Begin using it when we check out of our Dublin hotel.
- **Hotel and local contact info.** *Please note that the dates for each hotel are incorrect on the form, but the itinerary will be correct.* If I receive a list with corrected dates, I'll post it on the tour webpage. Note that emergency contact information is on the back of the hotel list, in addition to instructions for calling in or out of Ireland.
- **Flight companion list.**
  - Please take a taxi to the Ashling Hotel after you arrive in Dublin. Use the flight list to facilitate sharing. My best guesstimate is a cost of 40-50 Euros. Most taxi drivers take credit card, but be sure and ask your driver if you plan to use a card.
  - Those arriving on the flight from MSP, DL 258, I will arrange a private transfer for our larger group. Cost will be about \$25 per person, payable to Deb in U.S. dollars.
- **Packing list.** Most is self-explanatory. A couple of things that need to be stressed:
  - Heed the advice to place everything in your carry-on that you will need should your checked luggage get delayed!!! You don't want all your medications and clean undies landing in Spain when you are in Dublin! 😊
  - Please be sure you have TWO pair of shoes. It rains often in Ireland and most activities will be held rain or shine. You don't want to walk around in sloshy shoes! Have a spare. (I bring my nice walking shoes for the day and a second pair of street shoes that I change into for dinner and use as my spare.)
  - Please don't overpack...you'll regret it when you start accumulating treasures you collect throughout our trip. We expect to see everyone in the same clothing for multiple days!
  - You do not need to dress for our group dinners. Casual is fine. I usually change into street shoes and maybe grab a shawl or sweater.
  - For those who are new to international traveling, I have put some links at the end of these notes for some items I use for efficient packing.
- **CIE Go-To Guide/Booklet.** Contains some good general information about the country, including info on weather and time zone. Be aware that not all of the information applies to our tour because we are a private customized group. (e.g. the info on airport arrivals and transfers). If you have any questions about information in the guide, please email me.

- **Hotel vouchers (for those arriving early).** Please give the voucher to reception when you arrive at the Ashling hotel to check in. Those arriving on Sept 14 do not need vouchers to check in.
- **Hop-on, Hop-off bus passes.** Everyone will receive a voucher good for touring throughout Dublin on you arrival. You will give the voucher to the driver the first time you board one of the buses. The first time you use it begins your 48 hour time clock that you can use is. Hotel those arriving prior to Sept 14. You may begin using your bus pass at ANY time, despite the 9/14 date on the vouchers.
- **Electric outlet adapter.** These change the shape of the outlets so you can plug a U.S. electronic device into them. They are NOT a voltage converter!!
  - Be sure and check your electronics to make sure they are dual voltage (110/220) before you plug them in! Most computers, phones etc. are dual voltage, but you need to check.
  - If you travel with a CPAP machine, check if its dual voltage.
  - Do NOT bring hairdryers (they will be in the hotel rooms), curling irons, hair straighteners. You will ruin them because most are not dual voltage. If you must have one of these items, either purchase one at the airport or in Dublin, or bring a voltage converter that you will need to purchase.
  - If you have received one of the adapters I provide to the Shetland (and Wales) groups, I'd suggest you bring it along in addition to, or instead of, the CIE adapter. It has more options for charging.
- **Luggage scale.** This might come in handy to weigh your suitcases on the return home! 😊
- **Water bottle.** Provided by CIE. You can bring it along or bring one of your own. But have something to carry water in throughout the tour.
- **Rain jacket.** If you are unable to wear the jacket you receive, please gift it to someone who can use it or donate it. Please do not trash it to a landfill. Note that there is not a budget to reorder if your jacket does not fit. BUT...you can email Deb and let her know. It's possible we can do some swapping. The other option is that Deb can order you another one at your expense.

### Itinerary Notes:

- There is NOT an itinerary in your care package. CIE is still confirming a couple of stops. Once it has been finalized, I will post it on the tour webpage. Note that there are very few changes from the draft itinerary you already viewed when you registered for the tour. AND, itineraries are always subject to change.
- Sunday evening, Sept 14. We will have a traditional Irish group dinner a short walk from our hotel at Nancy Hands. *I will send out a message via WhatsApp on what time to meet in the lobby that evening.* Because we will not have a private room at the restaurant, we will meet early in the hotel lobby for introductions and some announcements to get us started on our tour!
- Monday, Sept 15, we will have a city tour in the morning. In the afternoon, we are meeting the lovely Aoibhe Ni (pronounced "Ava Knee") who will be doing a beginning tunisian crochet class with us! I selected the beginning shawl class for us because you can "grow" your shawl as big as you wish throughout the tour after the class if you enjoy the process. If Aoibhe Ni wants us to bring Tunisian hooks, I will purchase them for everyone and bring them so you don't need to hassle finding one. If there is anything you do need to bring, I'll send it out in a newsletter.

- Tuesday, Sept 16. Our first stop will be at Zwartbles Farm. Suzanna has wonderful “travel rugs” (a throw or blanket to us). If she has them available for purchase at her farm, she will probably require payment in cash. She’s in a very rural area and on our last trip, did not have the ability to process credit cards. I have a message in to her to see if she will have her blankets available and, if so, if she needs cash. If so, I will let you know via a newsletter. Cost for the travel rugs is 350 Euros. Check out her website for other products she might have available.
- Wed Sept 17 we will visit Blarney Woollen Mills which is actually a large Irish shopping mall. This is a wonderful place to stock up on Irish gifts for everyone on your list. They also ship promptly and your purchases will be waiting for you when you get home or arrive shortly thereafter.
- Sat Sept 20 is our trip to Inisheer, the smallest of the three Aran Islands. We will have a short (two-hour) class with Una on Aran knitting. Una asks that we bring a pair of short single point needles size 4mm (U.S. size 6). I don’t see any reason why you can’t bring a short circular needle if you typically use circulars for straight knitting. If you do not have knitting needles, you do NOT need to purchase them. Una will have some extras and all remaining supplies we will need. If there are some non-knitters in the group, you might enjoy hanging out with us anyway enjoying your coffee/tea or you can enjoy a beautiful hike on the island.

### **Money Matters: Currency, Credit Cards, Gratuities**

- **Currency is Euros.** You can get Euros before you leave home or upon arrival in Dublin. Once you are in Ireland, the best exchange rate will be at a bank ATM. There should be plenty of ATM’s throughout Dublin. You can exchange currency at a U.S. airport or at the Dublin airport, but there will likely be a higher exchange rate along with some fees.
  - Check with your bank to see if they do currency exchange. Larger banks often provide this service and rates are reasonable.
  - You can order currency online for home delivery at decent rates.
  - Since you won’t need a lot of cash (except perhaps at Zwartbles), the airport exchange desks or airport ATMs are probably the most convenient, but most expensive, option.
- **How much in Euros to get?** You will be able to pay for most everything on credit card...and it’s recommended you do so. You might start with €200-300 and use an ATM along the way if you need additional cash. (I will try and let you know in advance if Suzanna needs cash at Zwartbles.)
- **Credit cards:**
  - You should plan to pay for most everything with your credit card! This is safer than carrying a lot of cash and most credit card companies are good at spotting potential fraudulent transactions.
  - MasterCard and VISA are widely accepted. Discover not. AMEX sometimes...usually at the larger businesses. Be sure you have at least two different MC and VISA credit cards with you in case something happens to one of them!!
  - Some credit card companies charge you an international transaction fee for international payments. Check the rules of your card and be sure you will not be charged a fee for making foreign transactions!

- Check with your card company to see if they need you to alert them that you will be traveling outside of the U.S. They will put a travel alert on your card so your transactions will not be flagged for fraud.
- **Gratuities:**
  - All gratuities have been included in your tour fee. These include our coach driver/guide and all gratuities for local guides. Deb will have the cash to pay our gratuities. Yay!! 😊 We will pass a card around mid-tour for everyone to sign for our driver/guide and present with the gratuities at the end of the tour.
  - Hotel. Since the pandemic most hotels provide housekeeping only by request. If you want to leave a gratuity in your room at the end of your stay, feel free to do so. Tips are not expected. If you do leave a tip, two Euros would be sufficient.
  - All gratuities for our group meals have been paid. Service charges at restaurants are usually included in your bill and nothing additional is expected. Tipping is not typical in pubs.

### Requirements to enter Ireland...and beyond

- You will need your passport good for at least six months prior to your return home. Make a copy/photo on your phone!! Should you lose your passport, having a photo will make it much easier to get a replacement. Keep your passport in your carry-on...do not accidentally pack it in your checked bag!
- You do not need any other documentation to enter Ireland. But...
- ***If you have planned to extend your stay*** after our tour ends, AND you plan to visit Northern Ireland or any other country in the UK, you will need an ETA. (UK Electronic Travel Authorization.)
- If you have a flight that connects through a UK airport, it is recommended you have an ETA.
- Information on the ETA can be found at <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/apply-for-an-electronic-travel-authorisation-eta>. You can apply on-line or through the app. Using the app is recommended and easy. It says to allow 2-3 days to receive your ETA, but our recent experience is that receipt occurred almost immediately. There is no paperwork. The ETA is connected to the chip on your passport. Cost is about \$20 and good for two years. Here is the icon for the ETA app so you know you have the right one:



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### Health:

- All travel regulations related to COVID vaccination and testing have expired and there are no additional regulations.
- Mask-wearing is your choice unless you begin to show signs of ANY illness. Then, wearing a mask at ALL times, and eating meals separated from the group, is expected as per the terms and conditions you signed to join this tour. N95 or KN95 masks.
- You are strongly advised to wear a mask in the airports and on the aircraft until the circulation system is on.

- Please come prepared with items/OTC medications to keep you comfortable should you become ill while we travel. Do not count on being able to find a pharmacy...travel prepared!! May want to speak with your primary care practitioner to see if they advise traveling with any medications in case of illness.
- ***Any dietary or health issues you did not indicate when you registered...let me know ASAP.***

### **Travel Insurance.**

- If you purchased insurance through me, there is a wallet card you should print and bring with you. Bring two cards and put one in your checked bag and carry the other one with you. With the RoamRight policies (not sure about Travel Guard), on the page following your wallet cards, you will find a letter to print and bring with you. This letter is to be given to a health care provider if you need medical care while traveling. You will find your wallet cards at the link to your policy on your insurance purchase confirmation. If you can't find the confirmation of your insurance purchase, [email Deb](#) and she will send it to you.
- If you did not purchase through Deb, please send me a copy of your insurance info...policy number and insurance company contact info if you have not already done so.
- If you are traveling without any insurance, please provide Deb with the contact information for your health insurance provider who will be covering any medical or accident costs should an unfortunate situation occur.

### **Airline Info and Getting to Dublin**

- Save ALL information from the airline, including info on any of your flights that change schedules or flight cancellations. You will need this documentation of your original flights and new flights if you need to file an insurance claim. You will NOT be able to get your original flight information off the airline website if the flights change. Save everything!!
- E-tickets bring a printed copy, even if you are using an airline app. Also get a *paper* boarding pass for your flight...it can serve as documentation for insurance.
- Check your flights!!! Recommend you have the airline app on your phone for receiving up-to-date alerts about your flights.
- Hotel check-in begins at 3:00, but rooms might be ready earlier. If you cannot check in when you arrive, the hotel will store your luggage and you can take your hop-on/off bus pass and start exploring the city.
- Keep Deb updated via WhatsApp or email of any flight changes on your way to Dublin. And please let me know when you have safely landed in Dublin or have arrived at the hotel.
  - U.S.-based airlines allow knitting needles and crochet hooks on their flights. If you are flying a non-U.S. carrier, please refer to their website for information.

### **Group communications during tour:**

- We will use WhatsApp on the tour for communications within our group. Please download the app if you don't already have it. Note that you can uninstall the app after the trip if you are not comfortable keeping it after the trip.



- ***After you download WhatsApp, open it and message me at 715.220.9279. (Only use this number for texting!) Be sure and tell me your name when you message me through WhatsApp!*** I will add you to our Ireland group.
- This is only for first-timers traveling with the Fiber Garden. For everyone else, I should already have your phone # and I have added you to the group. You only need to contact me if your cell # has changed since your last trip with me.
- Once I have everyone in our WhatsApp group, I will send out a message asking you to check in with your name and where you are from. I will explain why we do this when we meet for our first gathering on Sunday night in Dublin.

#### **Odd and ends:**

- If you purchase items you want to ship home, ask the merchants to do the shipping. (The larger ones usually offer international shipping.) *Please do not plan on shipping anything home through the postal or shipping services.* Come with extra room in your suitcase or pack an extra expandable bag so you have lots of extra room to pack your purchases to bring them home.
- Phones/wifi/communications. Deb will have a phone you can use if you need to make a call. *Check with your cellular provider as to the settings to use on your phone so you don't get charged international roaming fees!!* You will be able to do most all of your communications using the available WiFi throughout the tour.
- Join our [Facebook travel group!](#)
- Will be taking photos and doing a daily photo journal on the Fiber Garden Facebook business page. Let me know if you do not want your picture posted. (No names are ever used.)

#### **Links to items Deb uses:**

Note that I'm not promoting Amazon via these links. It's just the easiest way to show you the products. I am not an Amazon affiliate.

- [Compression bags](#) are great for creating extra room in your suitcase and bring extra compression bags to pack your purchases in to bring home! (Note that the link is not to the bags I purchased years ago. But it will help you get your search started. I like the sets that come with multiple sizes of bags.)
- Another good packing tool is packing cubes or compression packing cubes. [These are the ones I've tried and like.](#)
- [Phone lanyard.](#) I never worry about losing my phone and my hands can remain free for other things. Highly recommended if you use your phone to take photos. This is not the one I have, but looks very similar.
- [KN95 mask that I wear.](#) These are the masks I travel with and always use. Comfortable, FDA approved high filtration efficiency, and they were one of the few masks given EUA for use in medical settings during the pandemic before the U.S. could produce adequate N95 masks.

**Your Questions!** A few questions were emailed to me today when I sent out the note about the potential that I wouldn't be able to conduct the live Zoom.

- **Are shared rooms all twin beds?** Yes! Two beds in all shared rooms except for our married couple who will have one bed.

- **Can we bring snacks in our checked luggage?** Complete information is at <https://www.tsa.gov/travel/security-screening/whatcanibring/food>
- **Do any of the hotels have laundry service?** Most hotels will have a pay service to have the laundry done overnight. Upon check in at the hotels, ask the front desk about their laundry services and rates. Laundry would need to be done at hotels where we are staying for two nights. Give them your laundry upon arrival at the hotel and it will be returned to you the following day.
- **Is distilled water for CPAP's available?** The Go-To Guide and previous advice I've received is that you should not plan on having distilled water available. It's best to travel with your water. We can contact hotels in advance of our arrival to check if they can have water available for you upon your arrival for which there would be a fee. But best to bring your own to be safe.

**CHECK YOUR EMAIL AND WHATSAPP DAILY!!!!**