



## Island Trail

Weight limit: 90 kilos  
Nearest airport: Dublin/Knock  
7 days/6 nights/5 days riding



This six night trail ride is perfect for small groups of experienced and adventurous riders, allowing you to explore some of the most spectacular scenery on the west coast of Ireland as well as your host's private island.. Explore quaint villages, sandy beaches and rocky coastline

and immerse yourself in the lush splendour of the north west of Ireland known as the Wild Atlantic Way. This region packs as much scenery, myth and folklore into its borders as any visitor could hope for and you'll be hosted by the O'Connor family who have lived here for generations.

## The Riding

Explore sandy beaches, a tidal lagoon, a private island and the rocky coast line of Mullaghmore Headland. The Gleniff Horse Shoe Mountain ride and the rural trails at the foot of Benbulbin Mountain invite for a hack through the wonderful west of Ireland countryside. On the stopovers during your day ride, you will have a picnic or a pub lunch. Each day's riding starts at the farm and returns back to base. There is plenty of opportunity to enjoy some brisk beach riding.



## Level of riding and fitness

Riders need to be comfortable at all paces, able to mount and dismount unaided and in control of a responsive horse when riding in open country or on the beach. You should be fit enough to enjoy 5 days of riding with around 4-6 hours in the saddle each day.

## Guides & Groups sizes

Your hosts are the O'Connor family who have been running this farm and stables for countless generations. Your guides are friendly and experienced adults and experienced horse riders. The group size is between 2-10.

## Horses & Tack

All the horses at this destination are Irish-bred. A lot of them have been born, reared and trained on the farm, your hosts see their horses as lifelong partners and all the horses are selected primarily on the basis of their good temperament. All the horses get solid foundation training, based on a combination of natural horsemanship and the German training scale. Elements of the philosophy of ease (*école de légèreté*) are incorporated into the horse's schooling.

All the horses lead a life as close to nature's way as possible, living in a herd on 100 acres of summer pasture. They know each other well and are familiar with their place in the pecking order, which makes them even safer and easier to ride. After the day's work, the horses go out to the fields and can be horses, have a roll in the mud, have a bit of horseplay and a social life with their friends. Horses have to prove they are safe in traffic, sound, dependable and trustworthy before they can be ridden by customers. All horses are seen regularly by the horse dentist and chiropractor if needed. Saddles are checked and fitted every year by a master saddler. The horses and ponies come in all shapes and sizes. There are plenty of animals to choose from ranging from a patient easy-going cob to a challenging sport horse.

## Accommodation and Dining

You'll be staying at a local hotel close to the stables. Situated right beside Mullaghmore Harbour, the traditional family run Pier Head Hotel enjoys a fantastic view of Donegal Bay. The Pier Head Hotel is a modern three star hotel complete with en-suite rooms, restaurant, two bars, a swimming pool and spa. Transfers between the stables and the hotel are included.

Breakfast is provided by the hotel and you can choose between a full cooked breakfast or continental options, accompanied by tea, coffee and juice. Lunch is either a pinci at a picturesque spot on the trail or sometimes a pub lunch at a local free house on the trail. Dinner is provided by the hotel and there are many traditional Irish or European options. Traditional Irish food includes hearty roasts of local lamb, beef or pork, plenty of seasonal vegetables and traditional local cheeses and breads. Mullaghmore's close proximity to the coast means that

seafood and fresh fish is abundant and excellent. One evening's dinner is not included and we highly recommend you experience a meal in the local seafood restaurant in Mullaghmore.



## Itinerary

The daily itinerary will vary according to the tide times but each day you will do one of the following rides.

### **Day 1**

Arrive at your hotel accommodation situated right beside **Mullaghmore Harbour** on the west coast of Ireland and check in. Meet your fellow riders and hosts over dinner before settling in for the night.

### **Day 2**

After breakfast, transfer to the stables and meet the horses. There will be a short assessment session. This session is not so much a lesson but an opportunity to get to know your horse in the confines of the arena before heading out to the beach. It gives our partners an idea of which horse will work best for you and occasionally they may change the assigned mount after this

session. After you've been paired up with your horse, it's time for lunch before heading out in the afternoon on a 2-3 hour ride.

The Beach & Bog Ride combines the coastal and the rural experience: riding by the sea and riding in the Irish countryside. The first part of your ride takes you along sandy Trawalua beach. Then you will follow quiet lane ways and century old bog tracks at the foot of rugged Benbulbin Mountain. You will experience a great variety of scenery in just 3 hours and will give you a chance to get to know your horse in various terrain and paces. This ride is especially beautiful in the month of May when the rhododendrons are in full bloom.

### **Day 3-6**

Each morning after breakfast you will be collected from your hotel and transferred to the stables where you'll head out on one of the following rides, depending on the tide times that week. Lunch is a picnic while on the trail and dinner each day is served at your hotel.

#### **Dernish island ride**

Dernish Island was once home to 6 families. This little island is now only a weekend home and populated by cattle and wildlife mostly. Get a sense of island life in a by-gone era. See Donegal bay, Trawalua beach and Classiebawn castle from across the channel. Seals and migratory birds can often be spotted in the estuary. Depending on weather, tides and subsequent departure times this ride is with either packed lunch or a stop over in the cafe on route. Advanced riders will have opportunities for a hearty gallop.

#### **Mullaghmore Ride**

The Mullaghmore Coastal Ride starts with an exhilarating ride on Trawalua beach. You will then follow the boundary of Classiebawn Estate to Mullaghmore. This little fishing village boasts a picturesque 19th century stone built harbour. The ride takes you along the headland with some breathtaking views of majestic sea cliffs and the Castle, a signature viewpoint of the Wild Atlantic Way. It was here that Lord Mountbatten, great grandson of Queen Victoria, was killed by a bomb planted on his boat by the IRA in 1979. On days with serious swell, top surfers from all over the world come here to take on the huge waves. On this trail you'll take a break in the Pier Head pub overlooking the harbour.



### **O'Connor's Island Ride**

For many riders this is the highlight of the week; discovering the unspoilt and expansive Irish beaches of the Wild Atlantic Way on horseback. Feel the thrill of crossing the Atlantic channel to your host's private island and the ancient homestead of the family. Your horse can enjoy the salty island grass while you relax, have a snack and explore the sites of ancient farm life on the island. A group of young horses and our dry stock cattle herd roam the islands. Seals and migratory birds can often be spotted in the lagoon. This ride combines some brisk riding on the strand and a scenic stroll over the island with a picnic amongst the horses or a stop off in the village cafe for some sumptuous food.

### **Gleniff Horse Shoe Ride**

Gleniff Horseshoe Ride takes you just a few miles inland from the coast. You will ride in the barren Gleniff Horse Shoe valley nestled beneath Benwisikin Mountain. The valley is steeped in history and legend. Set in a spectacular cliff face is Diarmuid and Grainne's cave. Legend has it that this was the lovers' hiding place on their flight from Fionn Mac Cumhaill. Barium Meal had been mined in the Dartry Mountains until the middle of the 20th century. You will have your break and snack at the old barytes mill site (voted one of top picnic places for families in Ireland) at the base of the Gleniff Horseshoe before you return home along quiet country

laneways. Whilst more sedate from a riding point of view, this ride offers breathtaking views of 10 townlands and the Atlantic Ocean. Don't leave Ireland without a visit to this famous landmark.

### **Day 7**

Departure after breakfast

### Prices 2021

Adults : £1269

Children: £1099 (15 years and under)

Single room supplement: £180

### Price includes

- 6 nights in en suite room in 3 star hotel
- Breakfasts
- Tea, coffee
- Lunches (packed lunch or pub lunch while on the trail)
- Dinners x 5 (one night dinner is not included and we recommend you visit one of the fantastic seafood restaurants in the area.)
- 5 days riding
- Transfers each day between the hotel and the stables

### Not included

- Airport transfers
- International flights
- Tips
- Dinner on one of the nights

### Flights & Airport transfers

Do not book flights until you have received the Booking confirmation email from saddletravel.com.

Please plan your flights to/from as follows:

Please aim to arrive in the afternoon on the first day. Check in at the hotel is available from 3pm.  
Please book your departure flight on the last day after 11am

## Airport Transfers

Bus No. 30 offers an around-the-clock direct connection from Dublin airport to Ballyshannon. Bus No 23 offers a connection from Dublin Airport to Sligo. A taxi from either Ballyshannon or Sligo to the hotel costs around €30 euros.

## What to bring

We recommend wearing your riding boots when travelling and carrying one set of riding clothing and your helmet in your hand luggage, so should your luggage not make it to the destination you'll still be able to ride.

Please use the packing list as a guideline, bearing in mind the time of year you are riding.

- Riding hat
- Long riding trousers/jodhpurs
- Long-sleeved shirts
- Riding shoes/boots with a heel
- Casual wear for evenings
- Swimwear (the hotel has a pool)
- Sweater/warm layers
- Sunglasses
- Suncream
- A waterproof jacket
- Reusable water bottle
- Camera

## Climate

The best time to visit is from June until September, when you will have a warm temperature, but limited rainfall. The highest average temperature in Sligo is 18°C in July. Bring waterproofs as rain is common.

## Health

For health and vaccine recommendations, please consult your healthcare provider at least 8 weeks before your trip.



Country specific information can also be found at the National Travel Health Network and Centre website: <https://travelhealthpro.org.uk/countries>.

## Travel documents

For entry requirements to Ireland for UK citizens, please visit the Foreign Travel Advice website: <https://www.gov.uk/foreign-travel-advice/ireland/entry-requirements>

For any other nationalities, please contact your local embassy to check entry requirements.

Having the correct travel documents is entirely your responsibility.

## Currency & Tipping

The local currency in Ireland is the Euro. You should bring enough spending money to cover dinner on one of the nights and any drinks you may want to buy in the evening.

## Riding Declaration

“I am an experienced rider and able to mount & dismount unaided. I have a firm seat and I’m confident and in control at all paces over rough terrain (including rising trot, light seat canters and gallops) and have a good level of current riding fitness. I do not suffer from any illness or disability that could prejudice my safety or that of others.”

## Cancellation policy

Payment & Cancellation Terms [saddletravel.com](http://saddletravel.com)

Holidays are confirmed with a 20% non-refundable deposit. The full balance is due 56 days before the start date.

If you cancel your booking less than 56 days before the start date of your trail we are entitled to receive full payment, less refunds as follows:

42 days or more before booking date - 50%

30 days or more - 30%

less than 30 days - nil

***Book with confidence – Covid Guarantee:***

***If the ride operator is closed or you are unable to travel due to lockdown:***

*1/ The deposit is reissued as a rebooking voucher to rebook anytime.*

*2/ Any balance payment will be refunded to you in full within 1 week of departure date.*

## Insurance

All saddletravel.com customers are required to take out appropriate travel insurance that covers horse riding and holiday cancellation. Proof of insurance details will be required during the booking process.



## Contact details

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