

# SOUTHERN IRELAND: GREAT HOUSES & GARDENS

10 – 14 MAY 2027

FROM  
**£2,595**  
PER PERSON

Tour Leader: Tania Illingworth

  
**The Ultimate**  
TRAVEL COMPANY



Following on from the success of Tania Illingworth's tours of Great Houses and Gardens in Northern Ireland and subsequently in and around Dublin, this tour focuses on visits to some of the finest castles, houses and gardens of Southern Ireland, namely Cork and Waterford. Stay for four nights at the comfortable, luxury 4\* Ballmaloe House Hotel in in East Cork, an ideal location for the visits, some of which are only by special permission.

Highlights include private tours with the head gardeners at Lismore Castle, Curraghmore Estate, Mount Congreve Gardens and Anne's Grove Gardens. Visit Tourin House with owner Kristin Jameson and Cappoquin House with Sir Charles Keane. Enjoy a private lunch at Dromana House hosted by owner Barbara Villiers-Stuart.



*Lismore Castle overlooking River Blackwater*



*Ballymaloe House Hotel*

## 5-DAY ITINERARY, DEPARTING 10 MAY 2027

### 10 May London / Cork

Suggested flight (not included in the cost of the tour) Aer Lingus EI 715 departing London Heathrow at 14.00 hrs arriving Cork Airport at 15.25 hrs.

Group transfer by coach to Blarney Castle for a private guided visit around its spectacular gardens. The historic castle, owned by Sir Charles Colthurst, is famous for its stone which, legend has it, confers eloquence on all who kiss it. The extensive gardens feature a prehistoric Fern Garden, a Poison Garden with deadly and dangerous plants from around the world, a Rock Close with ancient Yew trees and druidic stones and beautiful arboretums. Continue by coach and check into the 4\* Ballymaloe House Hotel where four nights are spent. Nestled on 300 tranquil acres, this famed country house hotel is family owned and run with a restaurant serving seasonal food straight from the Ballymaloe kitchen garden. Dinner at the hotel.

### 11 May Cork & Waterford

Depart by coach for a tour of Tourin House and Garden, situated on the banks of the River Blackwater, home to the famous Jameson Whiskey family. There are 15 acres of walled gardens, rock gardens, formal gardens and a woodland walk. The owner Kristin Jameson will lead the visit.

Lunch at nearby Barron's Bakery Café. Continue by coach to Lismore Castle for a private guided tour of the gardens with the head gardener. Overlooking the River

Blackwater, Lismore is possibly the most breathtaking castle in Ireland. Originally built in 1185 by Prince John, later King of England, since 1753 it has been the Irish home of the Dukes of Devonshire. What we see today is the mostly the work of the sixth Duke with the help of his architect Sir Joseph Paxton. The cultivated 7-acre garden lies within 17th century defensive walls commanding dramatic Blackwater Valley views. The Upper Garden is a complete example of the 17th century walled garden, whilst the Lower Garden is mostly 19th century and informal, featuring massive magnolias, rhododendrons and camellias. Return drive to the hotel and dinner under own arrangements.



*Lismore Castle Gardens*

### 12 May Waterford

Depart by coach for Dromana House and Garden for a tour with the owner Barbara Villiers-Stuart, whose family has lived here for more than 800 years. Perched high above the River Blackwater, Dromana was originally a castle, then a 17th century house and finally an 18th century house

with the most important interiors and contents remaining intact.

Private lunch at Dromana with Barbara Villiers-Stuart. Drive to Cappoquin, home to the Keane family since their ancestors bought the estate in the 1770s and built the house above the River Blackwater. It survived until burnt in 1923 during the Irish Civil War. However, Sir John Keane – who had wisely removed all furniture and pictures before the fire – immediately embarked on a rebuilding programme and today it is impossible to tell that Cappoquin had ever been damaged. Our host, Sir Charles Keane, will lead us round his home. The gardens were restored by Lady Olivia Keane in the 1970s and the head gardener will lead our garden tour. Return to the hotel. Dinner under own arrangements.





Curragmore Estate



Mount Congreve Gardens Waterford

### 13 May Waterford

Depart by coach for Curragmore Estate for a tour of the house (not normally open to the public) and the world-famous gardens with the head gardener. The estate is Ireland's largest private demesne and is in the same family since the 13th century. Now home to the ninth Marquess of Waterford and his wife, at the core of the building is a mediaeval tower, the first floor of which now contains spectacular plasterwork created by the Lanfranchini brothers in the 1740s. Most of the rest of the house was designed some thirty years later by James Wyatt whose interiors are the finest in Ireland. As expected, Curragmore is complete with treasures. The vast gardens consist of 2500 acres of formal gardens and woodlands. Also see the enchanting 18th century shell house, decorated in 1754 by Catherine, Countess of Tyrone.

Depart by coach for Mount Congreve, one of the 'Great Gardens of the World'. Lunch at Mount Congreve's Stables Café. Afternoon visit to Mount Congreve Gardens with the Estate Director. Mount Congreve House, home to six generations of Congreves, dates from 1760 by John Roberts and the famous gardens were created by the industrialist / passionate gardener Ambrose Congreve from the 1960s onwards. The estate comprises seventy acres of intensively planted woodland garden and a four-acre walled garden with one of the largest private plant collections in Europe, earning 13 Gold Medals at Chelsea Flower Show. The countless horticultural varieties display over three thousand different trees and shrubs, over two thousand rhododendrons, six

hundred camellias, three hundred Acer cultivars, six hundred conifers, two hundred and fifty climbers and fifteen hundred herbaceous plants. This unique estate is now held in Trust for the Irish State. Return to the hotel. Dinner at the hotel.

### 14 May Cork / London

Depart by coach for a visit to Anne's Grove Gardens led by one of the gardeners. Anne's Grove is an historic estate, previously home of the Annesley Family. The 18th-century house has largely early twentieth century gardens which include woodland areas with stunning rhododendrons, valley scenery along the Awbeg River, a pretty wild-flower meadow and lily pond.

Lunch under own arrangements at Anne's Grove. Group transfer to Cork Airport. Suggested flight (not included) Aer Lingus EI 718 departing Cork at 16.05 hrs arriving London Heathrow at 17.20 hrs.

### TOUR PRICES PER PERSON

|                   |        |
|-------------------|--------|
| Tour Price        | £2,595 |
| Single Supplement | £725   |

*Please note we have not included the cost of the flights in the tour price. Please contact us for prices should you wish to book them through us.*

### PRICE INCLUDES

- Accommodation throughout as shown in the itinerary
- Breakfast daily; 3 lunches; 2 dinners
- All entrance fees, visits, excursions and
- Group arrival and departure transfers and transportation as per the itinerary
- Gratuities in restaurants for included meals; gratuities to guides/s; gratuities to driver/s; portorage
- Local guides
- The services of your tour leader throughout

### PRICE EXCLUDES

- International flights
- Travel insurance
- Items of personal expenditure (e.g. telephone calls / laundry etc.)
- Government levies or taxes introduced after costing and publication of this programme on 24/03/2026





## Tania Illingworth

Tania Illingworth (nee Tolstoy) has a degree in Russian Language & Literature, with Byzantine Art. Tania is one of our most long-standing, experienced and popular tour leaders and has led tours widely throughout Western, Central and Eastern Europe. Tania's interests are history, architecture and the arts. She speaks Spanish and French.

YOUR TOUR  
LEADER

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