

An unforgettable trip around the Emerald Isle



Kinvara castle

We present our experience in Ireland, one of the most beautiful countries in the world. As you know, Ireland is located in the North Atlantic, integrated within the islands of Great Britain. It is divided into the Republic of Ireland, which covers six parts of the island, and Northern Ireland, a small area depending on the United Kingdom. The population of Ireland is over 6 million, whose work mainly consists in the first

and third sectors. Irish people have a rich culture: ancient language called Gaelic; traditional music, songs, instruments and dances; tasty food; a lot of types of beers and, of course, marvellous landscapes!

Discovering the Emerald Isle

Ana Esther, Juan Rafael and I, José Antonio, travelled there in summer, 2012. Firstly, we spent a week in Dublin, the capital of the Republic of Ireland, participating in a training course for teachers called 'Play to learn. Play to teach'. In this course, we met with teachers from different countries and we also enjoyed interesting and fun drama activities. We could develop our English



Cliffs of Moher

communicative skills, not only with the performance practices, but also with the cultural and social programme, of course. However, our real experience of Ireland began when the course finished. We rented a car and started an amazing trip that lasted four days. Just like a road-movie, we drove in a large car around the West, South and East of the island. Always on the left!

On the first day, we left Dublin and took the motorway to Galway, the main town in the



Galway harbour

West of Ireland. The weather was sunny, something unseen in such a wet country. The blue sky contrasting against the green fields full of sheep was a sight for sore eyes, while we listened to Irish traditional music in the car: Molly Malone's song, Whisky in the jar, Galway girl!

The first stop was near Athlone, halfway to Galway. We parked in the shore of a wide lake

delimited by dramatic hills. Some couples were sitting on blankets on the grass, taking a rest or eating sandwiches. What a country picture! Then, we continued our trip until Oranmore, a fishing village very close to Galway. We stayed in a charming Bed and Breakfast located in a beautiful place full of gardens and flowers. After lunch, we drove toward the South East. Thirty minutes before, we stopped for a few minutes in Kinvara to take pictures of its ancient castle surrounded by a calm lake. We continued our trip through a narrow road close to the coast. It took an hour and a half to reach the Moher area, impressive cliffs emerged 200 metres above sea level. We spent two hours admiring the natural monument. It left me speechless.



Dolmen

After that, we came back to Galway, stopping at Poulnabrone Dolmen, a prehistoric burial building made in 4000 B.C. There, we saw how the sunset entered between the old stones. So, we understood that the place must have been magic for the first inhabitants of these lands! We finished the trip in our Bed and Breakfast in Oranmore.

On the second day we devoted ourselves to discovering Connemara National Park, a place recommended by a friend of ours. The friendly Bed and Breakfast owner suggested to us one of the most beautiful ways to go to Connemara. We drove close to wild beaches, rivers, green fields, forests, lakes, before arriving at Kylemore Abbey, in the heart of the National Park. We visited the neo-gothic castle and chapel in front of a lake that seemed like a large mirror. This palace was a gift from a millionaire to his wife, who died due to the flu. A very sad and romantic story! During that evening, we travelled to Cong, a small village where the celebrated film 'The quiet man' by John Ford was filmed.



Kylemore Abbey



Blarney castle

On the third day, we woke up early because we were going to Cork, the most important city in Southern Ireland. Halfway there we stopped in Limerick. It was raining a lot, so we only saw its big and grey castle from inside our car. When we arrived at Cork the weather changed and it was sunny. Our bed and breakfast was near the University College of Cork. We visited the city center and ate in a typical bar. After lunch we visited the Blarney castle located 8 kilometers from Cork. We were very interested to visit it because the legend says that people who kiss the Blarney stone win oral eloquence, of course, in English! After kissing the stone at the top of the castle with all our strength, we could not verify the legend, but we felt the vertigo from that height! Our trip continued in Cobh, a very



nice village with its scenic houses, famous for being the last harbour where the Titanic set off from. We stayed at the door of White Star Line Office, the company owner of the Titanic, and also the Cathedral, with a fantastic view of Cobh harbour. We could almost imagine the Titanic at the entrance of the port! At night we enjoyed the nightlife of Cork, with live music in its crowded bars. There, we shared good moments with 'El Paqui', an alternative musician from Almansa who lives in Cork and plays in 'The Painkillers'. It was ironic that we travelled all the way to Ireland just to listen to a local singer from Almansa!

On the last day, we were at University College of Cork before coming back to Dublin. On the motorway, we stopped in Kilkenny, where we visited the castle and took a rest on the green grass! We were really tired. In a few days, we had lived very fast, but we had enjoyed ourselves so much. Therefore, Ireland, the Emerald Isle, will be an unforgettable place for us.

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