



## 7-Day Ashford Castle



## Itinerary

### Day 1

Arrival into Galway airport to be greeted by your chauffeur for your private transfer to Ashford Castle. Once home to the Guinness Family, a warm Irish five-star luxury awaits you at this grand, 800-year-old Castle. You will be welcomed by the wonderful staff who will check you in and take you to your room, which represents tradition elegance and finesse.

Take time to relax and enjoy your room or take a stroll around the Castle and extensive grounds to familiarise yourself before getting ready for dinner at one of Ashford Castles many restaurants.

After dinner, why not discover the traditional elegance of the Billiards Room, where you can enjoy a game, sink into a comfy chair with a glass of your favourite tipple or relax with a newspaper and catch up on the day's affairs. Take a visit to the rooftop corner of the castle and discover the Cigar Terrace with fantastic views overlooking the river Cong and beyond. With a feature awning, locally made in the village of Cong and low glass tables with wrought iron chairs, the Cigar Terrace is a beautifully designed space with a flagstone floor in which to relax and enjoy a whiskey, cognac or cigar, or simply to enjoy relaxing in a wonderful setting.



### Day 2

This morning, enjoy breakfast in the famous George V dining room, followed by a walk in the magnificent grounds of the Ashford Estate amidst the bounding company of the resident dogs and their handler, James. As you meander through the sumptuous woodlands and rolling hills of Kinloch Woods, Junior Irish Wolfhound Mulligan, Labrador Dubh and Irish red and white setter Shay will guide you with affectionate enthusiasm. Their playful nature, the exquisite views back onto the Castle and the wealth of tales offered by James will ensure the perfect start to your day.



This afternoon you can enjoy one of Ashford Castles wonderful 'Meet the makers' experiences. Ireland has a rich history of artisan craftsmanship, and the west of Ireland has drawn these craftspeople as a place of inspiration and work. These experiences will take you into the workshops and homes of these artists and craftspeople. Get an understanding of the amazing skills involved in the use of their hand-tools and try them out for yourself. You have the choice of enjoying itinerary 1 - Fire & wood, meeting The Blacksmith, the furniture maker & The Chef or itinerary 2 - Clay & Cloth, the textile designer, The ceramicist & The organic Grower, both offering you a glimpse into the special world of these ancient skills.



### Day 3

Today enjoy a game of golf on the impressive and picturesque parkland course. Offering wonderful views over the 350-acre site, you will be able to enjoy a picturesque 9-hole round after a hearty traditional Irish Breakfast.

After a day on the course, you will have worked up an appetite just in time for a special afternoon tea. The long-established tradition of Afternoon Tea has been wonderfully preserved at Ashford Castle since 1868 - you'll notice the original silver tea set displayed in the Connaught Room, which was presented to Lord and Lady Ardilaun (Sir Benjamin Lee Guinness' son) to celebrate their 25th wedding anniversary in 1896. With spectacular views from the comfort of the Castle's elegant interior, take your time to savour every delicious moment.

### Day 4

Today you will leave the Castle for a full day private luxury driver guided tour of the beautiful surrounding area, exploring the west coast of Ireland in all its splendour. Departure from the Castle, passing Mount Gable and Lough Mask. Driving towards the town of Westport you can enjoy a luminous view of the dominating Croagh Patrick, known as 'The Reek' by the locals. An important site of pilgrimage in County Mayo and associated with Saint Patrick, who reputedly fasted at the summit for forty days, the mountain is now climbed by thousands on the last Sunday of July, which is known as 'Reek Sunday'. Arriving in Westport itself there is the opportunity to stretch your legs and take time to ramble around the tree-lined Mall and the stately Georgian buildings along the Carrowbeg River; or you can browse in the cheerful miscellany of traditional shops and pub fronts. Famed as the home of the pirate Queen Grace O'Malley in the mid to late 16th century, Westport is a true heritage town with a captivating mix of traditional and modern. Westport frequently takes Ireland's Tidiest Town award and in 2012 it was named the Best Place to Live in Ireland – so it is worth finding out what all the fuss is about. Before departing from Westport, why not stop at the famous Matt Molloy's Pub for a pre-lunch pint? It is an intimate bar whose publican enjoyed an illustrious career as part of traditional Irish group The Chieftains, a precursor to much acclaimed solo success. And if you're lucky, you might just get to meet the man himself.

Your day will end with a private wine tasting and food pairing evening in the Castles 16th century tunnels. The old servants' entrance was originally a coal bunker and walkway underneath the castle where the servants used to come in and get their coal buckets to take up to the rooms. A Coravin system is used, allowing some of the world's most exclusive wines to be sampled without having to take the cork out. This keeps the wine fresh, preserving this for weeks and allows the last glass to taste the same as the first. The extensive wine list has been carefully curated by their





knowledgeable Head Sommelier, where you can sample a fine selection of vintages and a choice of new and old-world wines in a remarkable setting. Food pairing will be provided alongside the tastings, to complement the wine selection.

## Day 5

A morning that will really hit the mark, experience more of the castle's wonderful activities. The Ashford sporting clay range features targets that simulate the game typical of this region. Beginners enjoy a pleasant introduction to the sport and a thorough grounding in the safety and etiquette of shooting in general. Then try archery, an ancient sport played by Kings and Lords for centuries, get ready to take aim.

After such an active morning the afternoon can be a more relaxing affair at the Castles award winning Spa – 'Ireland's Best Hotel Spa' in 2021. The spa has remarkable features including three exquisite seashell chandeliers and a mesmerising Tree of Life mural stretching the length of the relaxation pool. State-of-the-art facilities include five exceptional treatment rooms, an invigorating Hammam, a relaxing steam room, and a beautiful terrace area with serene views over the tranquil waters of one of Ireland's largest lakes.

## Day 6

A quiet start to the day before you enjoy the fresh air with a wonderful history cruise. Boarding from 10.30am at Ashford Castle Pier, join local historian and boat captain Patrick Luskin as he takes you on a fascinating journey through time. Enjoy breathtaking scenery on Lough Corrib, with its 365 islands and surrounding Connemara Mountains. Highlights include The Old Steamers Quay and views of Lord Ardilaun's Obelisk.

On your return to the castle an afternoon on a one-hour private Hawk Walk gives you the incredible opportunity to fly your very own Harris Hawk under the guidance of your instructor. After you have been introduced to your hawks, you'll set off into the magnificent woodlands to fly your hawks, as they follow you from tree to tree through the woods before swooping down to land on your gloved fist. Your instructor will explain the hawks' exceptional eyesight, their speed and agility, and how they were trained by the Falconry School themselves.

## Day 7

Enjoy your last breakfast at the Castle and a final walk around the grounds in time for your private transfer to the airport to catch your flight home and ready to book your next adventure.

