

IRELAND: GREAT HOUSES & GARDENS

19 – 23 MAY 2025



FROM
£2,250
PER PERSON

Tour Leader: Tania Illingworth


The Ultimate
TRAVEL COMPANY



Following on the success of Tania Illingworth's tours of Great Houses and Gardens in Northern Ireland and Scotland, this tour focuses on Great Houses and Gardens in and around Dublin. Stay for four nights at the comfortable 4* Barberstown Castle Hotel in County Kildare, just 40 minutes from the centre of Dublin, an ideal location for the visits, some of which are only by special permission.

Highlights include a tour around the 18th-century landmarks of Dublin City before venturing to County Wicklow to visit Russborough House, Powerscourt Gardens and Charleville House and Gardens plus a private lunch at Killruddery House with the Earl and Countess of Meath. In County Kildare visits include Burtwon Gardens, Leixlip Castle, where owner Mrs Penny Guinness will greet the party. Enjoy private drinks and lunch at Lodge Park – the home of Mr and Mrs Robert Guinness.

The tour will be accompanied once again by Mark Donnelly (Fine Art and Antiques Consultant and Lecturer).



Russborough House



Powerscourt Gardens

5-DAY ITINERARY, DEPARTING 19 MAY 2025

19 May London / Dublin / Kildare

Suggested flight (not included in the cost of the tour) British Airways BA 834 departing London Heathrow at 11.00 hrs arriving Dublin Airport at 12.25 hrs. Lunch under your own arrangements (please buy or bring a sandwich before departure from London as complementary food is no longer served on the flight).

On arrival drive into Dublin and stop en route to visit the Casino at Marino, said by some to be the finest small Neo-classical building in Europe. Built by 1775 by James Caulfield, the 1st Earl of Charlemont, it was used as an entertaining pavilion in the grounds of his estate overlooking the sea north of Dublin. Designed by Sir William Chambers (of Somerset House fame) who never actually visited the site, this 'folly' is testament to the skill and craftsmanship of the local builders.

Continue to Dublin for a tour by coach. In the 18th century Dublin was described as the second city in the British Empire. It had its own independent parliament and for a hundred years was the beating heart of Ireland. The Wide Streets Commission was established in 1758 to reshape the thoroughfares of the old medieval city so great avenues and handsome squares were constructed to ease the congestion of bovine and horse-drawn traffic, as well as to house the growing population as the country prospered at this time. Drive by the Four Courts and the magnificent Custom House designed by Sir James Gandon,

Trinity College and the former parliament buildings on College Green. The imposing townhouses of the Irish aristocracy take pride of place on many of the squares, the most famous being Leinster House on Merrion Square, built 1745-48 for James Fitzgerald, Earl of Kildare, later Duke of Leinster and now used as the Irish parliament building Dail Eireann.

In the late afternoon, drive to County Kildare and check into the 4* Barberstown Castle Hotel, a country house hotel ideally located for the houses and gardens on the tour. The hotel has adapted the original medieval castle keep and the later Elizabethan additions to a splendid guesthouse with extremely comfortable bedrooms and a choice of three restaurants, all surrounded by 20 acres of beautiful gardens. Dinner at the hotel.

20 May Wicklow

Full day excursion to County Wicklow beginning with a visit to Russborough House, an architectural gem in a magnificent setting in the Wicklow mountains near the Blessington Lakes. This historic treasure house was built between 1740-1750 for Richard Leeson, the first Earl of Milltown. Russborough was bought in 1952 by Sir Alfred and Lady Beit with vast personal inherited wealth. Together, with a love and understanding of the arts and culture, they became among the most important collectors of their time. The house contains fine 18th-century French furniture,

superb stucco ceilings by the Lafranchini Brothers, tapestries, carpets, porcelain, silver and much of the Beit Collection of paintings (Gainsborough, Oudry and A. Van Ostade). Today, the Alfred Beit Foundation maintains Russborough with its superlative contents - all bequeathed to the Irish Nation for the advancement of the Fine Arts in Ireland.

Continue to Powerscourt Gardens. Named by National Geographic as the third finest landscaped garden across the entire globe, Powerscourt Gardens is its own world of wonder set in a glorious valley cradled by the Wicklow Mountains and the Great Sugar Loaf – a triumph of restoration completed in 1996. Lose yourself in 47 acres of carefully curated and maintained gardens originally dating back to 1731 when the imposing house was built for the first Viscount Powerscourt. Time permitting enjoy the Japanese and Italian gardens, the herbaceous borders, the charming walled garden, the intact 18th-century statuary and the (19th-century) terraces linking the house to the lake.

Lunch (at your own expense) on the Terrace of Powerscourt House overlooking sweeping terraces and formal 'French' gardens.

Return drive to the Hotel. Optional dinner at the K Club located close to the hotel, an interesting and smart hotel with a noted collection of 20th century Irish art on view (estimated cost €100 per person).



Lodge Park

21 May Wicklow

Depart by coach to visit Killruddery House in County Wicklow – home to the Brabazon family (the Earls of Meath) since 1618. The gardens are rare examples of late 17th-century and early 18th-century French formal gardens designed by a disciple of Andre le Notre. See the impressive water features, wooded areas and distinctive outdoor ‘rooms’. The house has elegant interiors of the Regency period. Tour of the house with the Earl of Meath, a member of the Brabazon family (subject to confirmation).

Private lunch in the Orangery at Killruddery House. Drive to Charleville, a two-storey, nine-bay mansion in the Palladian style, built in 1797 to designs by Whitmore Davis for the First Viscount Monck. The house sits in its original demesne and has been lovingly maintained by its current owners Mr and Mrs Kenneth Rohan. It boasts finely proportioned rooms superbly decorated to the highest standard. The Rohans have filled the house with a superb collection of fine and decorative arts. The gardens, in full glory in May, are lovingly cared for and immaculately tended.

Return to the hotel. Dinner under own arrangements (there is a choice of restaurants at the Hotel).

22 May Kildare

Depart by coach to visit Burtown, an early Georgian villa surrounded by 12 acres of lush flower and woodland gardens with 180 acres of remaining farmland from the former 2000-acre estate. May and June are peak months for variety and colour so expect to see irises, roses, peonies and clematis. See the shrubberies, large herbaceous borders and a

profuse collection of candelabra primulas, hostas, and ferns.

Lunch in the famed Green Barn Restaurant overlooking the walled kitchen garden (which has been in continuous production for over 150 years).

Continue to Leixlip Castle. Built on a rock at the confluence of the River Liffey and the Rye Water, the central part of Leixlip Castle was built soon after 1172 by Adam de Hereford, a follower of Strongbow, the Norman invader of Ireland. It has passed through many hands but was most attractively ‘georganised’ in the mid-18th century. It is one of the oldest continuously inhabited homes in Ireland and has been owned by Mr Desmond Guinness and his family since 1958. Desmond Guinness was famously instrumental, almost single handedly, for saving and preserving many of Ireland’s Georgian heritage. Mrs Penny Guinness will be on hand to greet our party (subject to confirmation).

In the Front Hall see the 17th century Brussels tapestry depicting Theodotus offering the head of Pompey to Caesar. The Dining Room is furnished with Chippendale Chairs and Bavarian tapestries. The plasterwork in the Library dates from the mid-18th century and the carpet is French Savonnerie. A treat in the Drawing Room is the huge, completely fabulous 18th-century Dolls’ House (originally from Newbridge House) and drawings of the six Mitford sisters by the anglo-italian painter William Acton. The garden has an 18th-century Gothic conservatory and temple. Also see the walled vegetable garden.

Return to the hotel. Dinner under own arrangements.

TOUR PRICES PER PERSON

Tour Price	£2,250
Single Supplement	£420

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; 1 dinner
- All entrance fees, visits, excursions and transportation as per the itinerary
- Gratuities in restaurants for included meals; gratuities to guides/s; gratuities to driver/s; portage
- Local guides and visit coordinator
- 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 10/05/24.

23 May Kildare / Dublin / London

Morning visit to Lodge Park and Gardens in County Kildare. Overlooking a fine stretch of the River Liffey the house was built by Hugh Henry who married his cousin, Lady Anne Leeson from Russborough. Lodge Park was completed circa 1776 and with its curved quadrants, both attached to two further pavilions by curtain walls, it is considered the most extreme example of Irish Palladian architecture. Mr and Mrs Robert Guinness bought the house 1948. Enjoy a mid-morning walk through the beautifully restored Victorian walled gardens followed by drinks and an early private buffet lunch in Lodge Park.

Transfer to Dublin Airport. Suggested flight (not included) British Airways BA 837 departing Dublin at 15.20 hrs arriving London Heathrow at 16.40 hrs.



Custom House, Dublin

YOUR TOUR LEADER



TANIA ILLINGWORTH

Tania Illingworth (nee Tolstoy) is three quarters Russian by birth, all her grandparents having fled the Russian Revolution in 1918. She 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.



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