



Return to the cradle of Celtic civilization and celebrate Samhain Halloween in Ireland with Ken O'Malley this year.

Samhain is the pagan religious festival originating from an ancient Celtic spiritual tradition. In modern times, Samhain (a Gaelic word pronounced "sow-win") is usually celebrated from October 31 to November 1 to welcome in the harvest and usher in "the dark half of the year." Celebrants believe that the barriers between the physical world and the spirit world break down during Samhain, allowing more interaction between humans and denizens of the Otherworld; the days when the veil between the dead, undead, and the living is at its thinnest.

Around the 6thC, Pope Gregory had the bright idea to fuse the old Celtic customs and beliefs with Christian celebrations and it actually worked for the missionaries in Ireland at the time. Samhain became All Hallows Eve, hallowed meaning sacred, and the next day became All Saint's Day. Halloween had arrived.

October 27th: Our group will meet in the morning at Dublin Airport, unless other arrangements are made with individual travelers. Our tour this time will be a little different as we are spending the first three nights in Dublin. We will board our luxury coach to the Harding Hotel on Fishamble St, at the edge of Temple Bar in the heart of the city. Our driver, Paul, is a terrific character and a gentle giant of a man.

October 28th: We will board our luxury coach and drive to the town of Kilkenny, the once upon a time medieval heartland of Ireland. In 1642, a self-proclaimed Capitol of Ireland was set up here in defiance of the English in Dublin, by the Irish nobles, clergy and military leaders of the Rebellion of 1641; it lasted for several years. We will visit Kilkenny Castle, once the stronghold of the famous Anglo Irish Butler family, now open to the public in all its splendor. After lunch we will drive out to Jerpoint Abbey, founded in the early 12th Century, and see the beautiful stonework and unique carvings in its tower and cloister. We then return to our hotel for dinner.

October 29th: As we are staying in Dublin's city center, we will do some walking to the nearby one thousand year old Christchurch Cathedral, the beautiful Saint Patrick's Cathedral, only 830 years

old, once led from 1713 to 1745, by famous author Dean Jonathan Swift "Gulliver's Travels". We will also visit St. Michan's across the river Liffey and see the famous mummies. Lots of shopping areas near our hotel are available for browsing later that day.

October 30th: Our tour will take us north to the City of Derry in British Northern Ireland and its famous Halloween Festival, which runs for three days through Halloween night; we will enjoy the extravaganza of events while we are there.

October 31st: We will have a private guided tour of the historic Walls of Derry and their history, from the Siege of Derry in 1689 when the Apprentice Boys held back the forces of Catholic King James for months and were victorious, to the story of Bloody Sunday in 1972 when 14 Catholic civilians were killed and 12 more wounded by British Paratroopers during a peaceful Civil Rights march.

November 1st: We will drive into Donegal and visit a 6thC stone ring fort built by the Clan O'Neill overlooking Derry and Donegal Bay. The view is spectacular, and the fort is really impressive.

November 2nd: Our journey continues with a drive across the northern coast of Ireland, into Belfast, the second largest city on the island of Ireland.

November 3rd: We will visit the Titanic Museum, a must see for any fans of the great liner's story. Built and launched in Belfast, the museum holds many original artifacts and gives us a look into shipbuilding in Belfast's past. In the afternoon, I will have a friend of mine join us on the coach and give us a guided tour of the city and its troubled history, "Up the Catholic Falls Road and down the Protestant Shankhill Road", visiting the Peace Walls, historically dividing neighborhoods.

Nov 4th: We will drive back to Dublin for one final night before many of us will travel home to the US. This tour promises to be a very exciting and spiritual return to the All Hallows Eve and All Saints Day (Day of the Dead) that were the celebrations of the ancient Celts and their Druid priests. There will be more trick or treats on this tour than you can imagine. Join me, Ken O'Malley, if you dare!!!

Nov 5th: Return to the US for those not traveling further or staying on in Ireland.

I will be happy to assist and answer any questions regarding traveling to Ireland prior to the beginning of the tour or any travel plans after we return to Dublin at the end of the tour. Hotels, destinations, travel arrangements etc. Due to Covid, site visits are subject to change. ----Ken O'Malley