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Green Mountain Fibers & Friends presents

**Knitters Tour of Ireland's West Coast**

November 9-18, 2012

**Day 1 Friday November 9<sup>th</sup> 2012**

Arrive in Shannon airport and meet with your professional friendly driver/guide who will transport you to your first hotel. En-route and to break up your journey, stop at **Spiddal Craft & Design Centre** where you can visit Maire Ni Thaidh's Handweaving studio or one of the many other craft shops at the centre. Here lunch will be pre-arranged for you in the Bulin Blasta Café. Arrive in Westport by late afternoon and visit the **Carraig Donn Knitting Factory** where you can see some of their knitwear in the making. In the evening, check into your hotel where you will have time to relax before a group welcome dinner. Overnight in Westport DBB.



**Day 2      Saturday November 10<sup>th</sup> 2012**

This morning travel to Castlebar where you will visit the **Museum of Country Life**. This fascinating museum is an open-plan building which houses collections of domestic goods, once used as part of daily life from 1850 to 1950. Exhibits and a movie explain how Irish people made a living from the soil before the machine age. You may choose to purchase lunch at the restaurant here before continuing to the next attraction. In the afternoon visit the award winning **Foxford Woolen Mills** where your guided tour of the working mill will show master craftspeople at work on the pieces that Foxford deliver to customers all over the world. On arrival back in Westport, participate in a **Walking Tour of Westport Town** (see Description below) & visit the Clew Bay Heritage Centre. Dinner on your own at one of Westport's many restaurants. On a Saturday night you are sure to find an Irish music session in one of the towns many old-style pubs. Overnight in Westport BB.



**Clew Bay Walking Tour Description:** Start at Clew Bay Heritage Centre where you will learn about the historic town of Westport. Pieces on display in this museum include a scale model of Westport Town and Quay as well as a hoard of interested memorabilia collected throughout the years. From the Heritage centre you will travel to Westport Town for a historical walking tour. Participants of the walk are taken on a journey back in time, to when the O'Malley Clan (Grace O'Malley) ruled the area. The walking route goes through the early part of the town and you will hear the story of Westport, the 1798 Rebellion and the hanging of the rebel Johnny Gibbons. The Holy Trinity Church is visited and the tree lined Georgian malls along the Carrowbeg River are explored.

**Day 3      Sunday November 11<sup>th</sup> 2012**

After breakfast, time will be allowed for those that want to attend church services. Depart your hotel by late morning and travel to **Croagh Patrick** a place of pilgrimage for 1500 years. The mountain is renowned for its pilgrimages dating back to the time of Saint Patrick's fast on the mountain for 40 days and 40 nights in 441AD. In the late morning or afternoon, travel to your needle felting workshop with Suzie Sullivan in her charming studio **Derryaun Crafts** in rural County Mayo outside of Westport. Suzie will introduce the basics of felt making – a fascinating craft that has endless possibilities. Learn all about wool fibre and how to turn it into a strong piece of felt or work of art. We will focus on simple projects including flat woolly pictures for wall hangings and greetings cards and 3D felting for flowers, beads, and pixies using basic techniques. Susie will also explore how to add surface colour and texture using inclusions such as hand dyed silk, raw fleece and wool knops. After your activities you will be transferred back to Westport where you can have dinner on your own. In the late evening, county Mayo resident and internationally-recognized author **Kate Kerrigan** will read from her book *Ellis Island* and speak about Ireland in the 1920s and the immigrant experience. Overnight Westport BB.



**Day 4 Monday November 12<sup>th</sup> 2012**

Depart your hotel and begin your journey to Galway, stopping first at the **Connemara History & Heritage Centre**. Here you will be introduced to the history of the area from prehistoric times to the foundation of the Irish Free State. Also whilst here visit Dan O'Hara's homestead and experience turf cutting and much more. Our next stop will be **Joe Hogan Basket Studio** in County Galway for a demonstration of traditional Irish willow basket weaving techniques and an introduction to modern basket designs and production. This stop includes tea or coffee with a traditional scone. Before arriving at your hotel we will stop at **Kylemore Abbey** which is home to the Benedictine Nuns. Lunch on your own in the Kylemore cafeteria. Here you can visit their walled garden and Gothic church whilst enjoying the tranquility of the estate. This evening is free to enjoy some of the local fare in one of Galway's lively pubs. Overnight Galway BB.



**Day 5 Tuesday November 13<sup>th</sup> 2012**

Depart your hotel in time to get the early morning flight to **Inis Oirr**. You will be collected by your Aran Island Knitting Instructor and taken to today's venue where you will enjoy welcome tea coffee and scones. Next, enjoy a knitting workshop where you will learn traditional method and stitches the Island way, next enjoy a guided tour of the Island before stopping for lunch at Ni Ted which includes a traditional music performance. In the late

afternoon, you will be taken back to the airstrip for your flight back to the mainland. Dinner on your own and overnight Galway BB.

**Day 6      Wednesday November 14<sup>th</sup> 2012**

Today we will be treated to a rare intensive **Knitter's Workshop** with one of Ireland's best known Aran knitters and designers, Mrs. Anne O'Maille. The class will be held at Ard Bia Restaurant near the Spanish Arch and includes lunch. Local knitwear designer Tess Holland will join the O'Mailles in teaching the class. Our day will also include shopping at Ó'Máilles of Galway, a wonderful store specializing in Aran knits. Established in 1938, this shop became famous in the 1950s for outfitting the entire cast of the film *The Quiet Man* and has done a fabulous business ever since in Irish tweeds, knitwear, and Aran knits. Anne O'Maille employs 170 knitters from a number of rural Irish counties. The remainder of the day is free for you to explore this colourful city. Dinner on your own and overnight in Galway BB.



**Day 7      Thursday November 15<sup>th</sup> 2012**

Check out of your hotel after breakfast and make the journey to County Kerry, possibly stopping along the way at the home of William Butler Yeats **Thoor Ballylee\*** (presently closed for renovations and may not reopen by the time of our visit) and arrive in Killarney by late afternoon. Visit **Kerry Woolen Mills**, this 17th establishment situated on the beautiful Ring of Kerry, has been creating fabrics and yarn from fine wool for over 300 years. Dinner on your own and overnight Killarney BB.

\*If Thoor Ballylee has not yet re-opened a visit to Bunratty Castle and Folk Park will be arranged in its place at no additional cost.

**Day 8      Friday November 16<sup>th</sup> 2012**

This morning after breakfast you will be collected by **Jaunting Car** (horse & carriage) and taken on a magical ride through Killarney National Park. Return to your hotel for lunch and a **Knitting Class** with Carol Feller, popular Irish knitter and author of the new book *Contemporary Irish Knits* which is included in the workshop. This evening enjoy a **Farewell Traditional Irish Dinner & Show** of traditional music song and dance in Kate Kearney's Cottage. Overnight in Killarney BB.

**Day 9      Saturday November 17<sup>th</sup> 2012**

After your final Irish breakfast depart for Shannon Airport arriving in good time to complete the check in formalities and that last minute duty free shopping.

**Hotels**

- ❖ Mill Times Hotel, Westport.
- ❖ Forester Court Hotel, Galway
- ❖ The International Hotel, Killarney

### Included in your package:

- Transfers on arrival and departure by private coach
- Sightseeing as per itinerary in a luxury coach with professional driver/guide
- 8 nights accommodation in rooms with private facilities
- 1 table d'hote hotel dinner (Welcome)
- Full Irish breakfast daily
- 5 Sit Down Lunches:
  - Builin Blasta
  - The Mill Times Hotel
  - The International Hotel
  - Ard Bia
  - Ni Ted
- Workshops, supplies, materials, books, and patterns at: Suzie's (Sun.), with Mrs. O'Maille (Weds.), and with Carol Feller (Fri.). \*
- Demonstrations, presentations, readings: Kate Kerrigan (Friday or Sunday.), Joe Hogan Basket Studio (Mon.), and Aran Island knitters (Tues.).
- Use of conference room at The Mill Times Hotel and Killarney International Hotel
- Irish night including dinner and entertainment at Kate Kearney's Cottage
- Jaunting car ride through Killarney National Park
- Entrance fees to the following attractions: Kylemore Abbey, Museum of Country Life, Foxford Woolen Mills, Connemara History & Heritage Centre & Dan O'Hara's, Thoor Ballylee (or Bunratty Castle & Folk Park), Kerry Woolen Mills
- Walking tour of Westport Town with an experienced local guide
- Return flight from Connemara airport to Inis Oirr
- Porterage of one piece of luggage per person at each hotel
- Service charges and tax at hotels (at current rate)
- Gratuity for Driver/Guide