

UNIQUE EXPERIENCES

2023



ASHFORD CASTLE

HOTEL & COUNTRY ESTATE
EXCELLENCE SINCE 1228





MEET THE MAKERS: IRISH CRAFT & DESIGN

Ireland has a rich history of artisan craftsmanship, and the west of Ireland in particular has drawn these craftspeople as a place of inspiration and work. This is an exclusive opportunity to be welcomed into the workshops and homes of these artists and craftspeople. Gain an understanding of the amazing skills involved in the use of their hand-tools and try them out for yourself.

We have curated a choice of two itineraries. The day will include three experiences with our craft artisans, privately hosted by Ashford Castle's Experience Ambassador.

SAMPLE ITINERARY 1

Fire & Wood

YOUR ADVENTURE BEGINS...

After a hearty breakfast, meet with your experience ambassador in the foyer of the Castle at 9am. He will ensure your comfort while you discover elemental Irish craft in the exciting day ahead.

THE BLACKSMITH

Visit a working forge and learn how the bars of metal are transformed into the most ornate contemporary artwork by this internationally acclaimed blacksmith. Work the blacksmith's bellows to redden the fire, take up the hammer and work metal on the anvil to make your own piece of artwork.

THE CHEF - FOOD AS A CRAFT

To further enhance your day of craft, enjoy a private lunch inspired by the lush fields, wild mountains, and rich waters of the West of Ireland. Every country has its own culinary interpretation of the craft of cooking, here you will explore and take away some new skills to try at home.



THE FURNITURE MAKER

Follow the journey of our native Irish trees from sawn planks through the workshop to their final iteration as a beautiful piece of furniture. Learn the time-honoured skills of craftsmanship that shape this natural medium, find a real appreciation for the almost meditative qualities of working wood with hand tools.

Alternative experiences in this area: The Irish Soda Bread Baker, The Cheese Maker, The Chocolatier, The Uilleann Pipe Maker, The Storyteller, The Textile Designer, The Aran Knitter.

This itinerary is subject to availability. Alternative experiences will be offered from the above list if unavailable.

COST

€2,950 for 2 guests (*minimum*)

€500 per additional guest

(*maximum 6 guests*)

WHAT'S INCLUDED?

- The services of an experience ambassador as your host for the day
- Three experiences with our curated experience partners including a gourmet lunch and glass of wine
- A private luxury vehicle to transport you throughout your day's adventure
- Snacks and drinks are available in the vehicle throughout the day
- A full day experience from 9am-6pm

CANCELLATION POLICY

Due to the number of experience partners involved, the cancellation policy is 72 hours prior to date of experience. Thereafter there is a 50% charge of the total experience day fee.

SAMPLE IT INERARY 2

Clay & Cloth

YOUR ADVENTURE BEGINS...

Upon meeting your host for the day, you will set off on your adventure along green lanes, into the valleys and mountains of Connemara.

THE WOOL SPINNER

Visit a mountain sheep farm where wool has been the backbone of it's existence for generations. Spend a hands-on morning following the journey of Irish wool, from sheep in the fields to hand spinning on an Irish spinning wheel. Gain a true appreciation for slow fashion and the integrity of this beautiful textile.

THE ORGANIC GROWER - FOOD AS A CRAFT

This organic & biodynamic vegetable grower has a life-time of experience working with nature to produce amazing tasting food. Enjoy a private lunch in the growers home inspired by the bounty of the season.

THE CERAMICIST

Visit a local ceramicist's studio and peruse her collection of stoneware and porcelain inspired by the Connemara landscape. Known for experimenting with smoke-firing techniques and making her own glazes, join our ceramicist at her potter's wheel and get a hands-on feel for throwing Irish pottery.





Alternative experiences in this area:

The Jewellery Maker, The Basket Maker, The Traditional Boat Builder, The Traditional Musician, The Botanical Alchemist, Beekeeper and Distiller.

This itinerary is subject to availability. Alternative experiences will be offered from the above list if unavailable.

COST

€2,950 for 2 guests (*minimum*)
€500 per additional guest
(*maximum 6 guests*)

WHAT'S INCLUDED?

- The services of an experience ambassador as your host for the day
- Three experiences with our curated experience partners including a gourmet lunch and glass of wine
- A private luxury vehicle to transport you throughout your day's adventure
- Snacks and drinks are available in the vehicle throughout the day
- A full day experience from 9am–6pm

CANCELLATION POLICY

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A TASTE OF THE WEST OF IRELAND

Meet the people who are at the forefront of Irish artisan food culture in the West of Ireland. The enthusiasm and passion of these food producers is infectious and all the more intimate when they welcome you into their homes. Leave with a taste of what the lush green fields and clean waters around the West of Ireland have to offer.

We have curated a choice of two itineraries. Each day will include three experiences with our food artisans, privately hosted by Ashford Castle's experience ambassador.

SAMPLE ITINERARY 1

Ireland's Atlantic Flavours

YOUR ADVENTURE BEGINS...

Leaving the hotel, your host for the day will bring you on a culinary adventure along the by-roads and coastal lanes of this beautiful wild corner of the West of Ireland.

THE BEEKEEPER

Meet a second generation beekeeper at his home apiary at the foot of heather clad hills. Don your bee-suit and learn how to open and work a hive of native honey bees. Experience the excitement, sounds, tastes and smells of nature's busiest workers.

THE SEASHORE FORAGER

You will be welcomed by the forager to the breathtaking Aughris Beg peninsula. Take a walk on the beautiful seashore overlooking the Atlantic and learn how to forage for tasty seafood. Return to the kitchen and taste your seashore bounty over a glass of wine.



THE DISTILLER

Walk a small boithrín (country lane), picking wild botanicals, exploring their flavours, aromas and history. Return to the micro distillery where you will infuse and distill your own unique bottle of gin. Distilling spirits has been part of the fabric of the West of Ireland for centuries.

Alternative experiences in this area: The Irish Soda Bread Maker, The Shellfish Farmer, The Oyster Farmer, The Basket Maker, The Wool Spinner, The Traditional Boat Builder, The Traditional Musician, The Archaeologist, The Botanical Alchemist.

This itinerary is subject to availability. Alternative experiences will be offered from the above list if unavailable. The beekeeping and seashore foraging experiences are only available from April to September due to the changing seasons.

COST

€2,950 for 2 guests (*minimum*)
€500 per additional guest
(*maximum 6 guests*)

WHAT'S INCLUDED?

- The services of an experience ambassador as your host for the day
- Three experiences with our curated experience partners including a gourmet lunch and glass of wine
- A private luxury vehicle to transport you throughout your day's adventure
- Snacks and drinks are available in the vehicle throughout the day
- A full day experience from 9am-6pm

CANCELLATION POLICY

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SAMPLE ITINERARY 2

Ireland's Bounty Of Hill & Field

YOUR ADVENTURE BEGINS...

Meet with your experience ambassador in the foyer of the castle at 9am. Heading for your destination under the Sliabh Aughty hills, your host for the day will introduce you to this seldom travelled corner of the west of Ireland.

IRISH SODA BREAD

Spend a hands-on morning learning how to make traditional Irish soda bread. While the bread bakes in the oven, explore the history and recipes of Ireland's favourite staple. Return to the hearth to enjoy tea, warm bread and conversations in the kitchen.

THE CHEESEMAKER

Experience the life of an Irish farming and cheese-making family. Walk the farm's pastures and meet the pedigree herd of Friesian cows that graze these meadows. The cheesemaker will take you





through the fascinating process of how cheese is made before you taste the various cheeses in the maturation room.

THE CHOCOLATIER

Learn the art of chocolate making from a passionate chocolatier. Try one of the best hot chocolates in the world made with local milk, and make your own chocolate bars, tweaking the flavours for your personal taste. Discover the unique tastes and textures of handmade chocolates made with locally foraged wild ingredients.

Alternative experiences in this area: The Blacksmith, The Furniture Maker, The Uilleann Pipe Maker, The Storyteller, The Textile Designer, The Aran Knitter.

This itinerary is subject to availability. Alternative experiences will be offered from the above list if unavailable.

COST

€2,950 for 2 guests (*minimum*)
 €500 per additional guest
 (*maximum 6 guests*)

WHAT'S INCLUDED?

- The services of an experience ambassador as your host for the day
- Three experiences with our curated experience partners including a gourmet lunch and glass of wine
- A private luxury vehicle to transport you throughout your day's adventure
- Snacks and drinks are available in the vehicle throughout the day
- A full day experience from 9am–6pm

CANCELLATION POLICY

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IRELAND'S ANCIENT MUSIC & STORY

Travel back through the annals of time and meet the experts who carry the art forms of ancient Ireland into the present day. These are the stories and music that have been heard by Irish firesides for hundreds of years. This is a rare opportunity to meet some of the leading keepers of the Gael in their own homes and in the magical Irish countryside.



SAMPLE ITINERARY

YOUR ADVENTURE BEGINS...

Begin your day with a warming breakfast before setting off on your adventure southbound for beautiful County Clare. Your host for the day will introduce you to the history and heritage of this stunning county of contrasting landscapes.

THE STORYTELLER

Meet with one of Ireland's foremost living seanacháí (storytellers) and gain an insight into Ireland's oldest oral art-form. Travel the bi-roads and discover the ancient sacred places of fairy trees and forts where magical stories abound.

THE HARPIST

The harp is synonymous with Ireland's age-old music and culture. Meet with Ireland's foremost exponent of the ancient wire strung harp - not only a virtuoso player but also a maker of these beautiful instruments. Relax and enjoy a private recital and lunch in the harper's home.



THE UILLEANN PIPER

The evocative sound of the uilleann/Irish pipes is a sound that reflects the Irish psyche and landscape, from the loneliest slow airs to the rousing energy of lively Irish jigs. Let the pipemaker take you on a musical journey from raw wood to the finest finished instrument.

Alternative experiences in this area: The Irish Soda Bread Maker.

This itinerary is subject to availability. Alternative experiences will be offered from the above list if unavailable.

COST

€2,950 for 2 guests (*minimum*)
 €500 per additional guest
 (*maximum 6 guests*)

WHAT'S INCLUDED?

- The services of an experience ambassador as your host for the day
- Three experiences with our curated experience partners including a gourmet lunch and glass of wine
- A private luxury vehicle to transport you throughout your day's adventure
- Snacks and drinks are available in the vehicle throughout the day
- A full day experience from 9am–6pm

CANCELLATION POLICY

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THE REAL CONNEMARA

Experience the real Connemara, far from the tourist trail. Meet people who have been shaped by this exposed landscape and learn about the skills and crafts that have allowed this resilient race to survive here over the centuries. An intimate experience of one of the last bastions of Gaelic music, language and culture.

SAMPLE ITINERARY

YOUR ADVENTURE BEGINS...

Meet your experience ambassador in the foyer of the Castle before setting off on your adventure together through the dramatic Connemara landscape. Travelling through stunning valleys, your host will contextualise the way of life in this beautiful part of the West of Ireland.

THE BASKET MAKER

Meet the most accomplished custodian of Ireland's oldest craft. Over time his skills have evolved to make both traditional baskets and contemporary art pieces. Learn the skills and patience required as you help to weave a basket under the weaver's personal tutelage.

THE TASTE OF CONNEMARA

Enjoy a lunch of local epicurean delights from the Connemara coast and hillsides. Discover the story of Connemara's food culture from the traumatic potato famine of the 19th century to the evolution of local artisan food in the present day.

THE TRADITIONAL MUSICIAN

Complete your afternoon at a music-filled session in an Irish family pub. Meet the various musicians and hear how they interpret the rich Irish musical tradition. Pull your own pint of Guinness and while away the afternoon to lively jigs and reels.

Alternative experiences in this area:

The Wool Spinner, The Irish Soda Bread Maker, The Botanical Alchemist, The Shellfish Farmer, The Oyster Farmer, The Seashore Forager, The Beekeeper, The Distiller, The Traditional Boat Builder.

This itinerary is subject to availability. Alternative experiences will be offered from the above list if unavailable.



COST

€2,950 for 2 guests (*minimum*)

€500 per additional guest
(*maximum 6 guests*)

WHAT'S INCLUDED?

- The services of an experience ambassador as your host for the day
- Three experiences with our curated experience partners including a gourmet lunch and glass of wine
- A private luxury vehicle to transport you throughout your day's adventure
- Snacks and drinks are available in the vehicle throughout the day
- A full day experience from 9am–6pm

CANCELLATION POLICY

Due to the number of experience partners involved, the cancellation policy is 72 hours prior to date of experience. Thereafter there is a 50% charge of the total experience day fee.



LUXURIOUS WEST – JEWELS & GIN

The West of Ireland has a certain magic that inspires creativity. This wild landscape is juxtaposed against some luxurious craft of incredible finesse and beauty. We have curated a special day where you can spend time with these craftspeople, learn of their inspiration and story.

SAMPLE ITINERARY

YOUR ADVENTURE BEGINS...

Meet with your experience ambassador in the foyer of the castle at 9am. He will contextualise the artisans you will be meeting and where they sit within the tradition, before you set off on your luxurious adventure.

THE GOLDSMITH AND JEWELLERY DESIGNER

Spend a morning with world renowned master goldsmith Nigel O'Reilly. Defined by the blending of ancient and modern jewellery techniques in his own inimitable style. See how O'Reilly pushes the limits of creativity and scale to produce jewellery of stunning perfection. Watch O'Reilly set rare gemstones in his current creation. Try your hand at the bench under the master's guiding eye and immerse yourself in the ancient craft of goldsmithing.

A TASTE OF THE WEST OF IRELAND

Enjoy a private lunch of local epicurean delights inspired by the Mayo coast and hillsides. Every country has its own culinary interpretation of the craft of cooking, discover the story of the West of Ireland's food culture and it's local artisan food. Amazing ingredients, treated with respect and cooked simply.

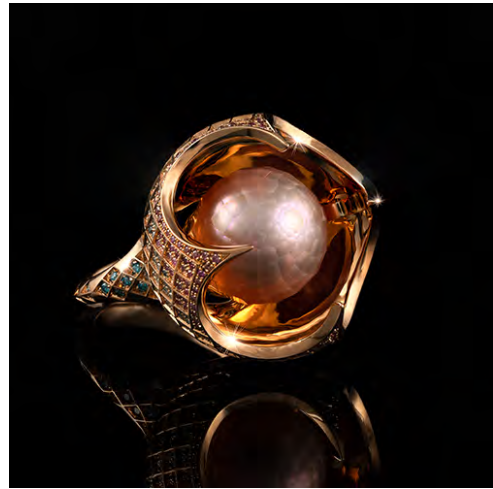
THE GIN DISTILLER

Pick wild botanicals, exploring their flavours, aromas and history. Return to the micro distillery where you will infuse and distill your own unique bottle of gin. Distilling spirits has been part of the fabric of the West of Ireland for centuries.

Alternative experiences in this area:

The Wool Spinner, The Botanical Alchemist, The Basketmaker, The Traditional Musician.

This itinerary is available from Wednesday to Saturday and is subject to availability. Alternative experiences will be offered from the above list if unavailable.



COST

€3,950 for 2 guests (*minimum*)

€500 per additional guest
(*maximum 6 guests*)

WHAT'S INCLUDED?

- The services of an experience ambassador as your host for the day
- Three experiences with our curated experience partners including a gourmet lunch and glass of wine
- A private luxury vehicle to transport you throughout your day's adventure
- Snacks and drinks are available in the vehicle throughout the day
- A full day experience from 9am–6pm

CANCELLATION POLICY

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