



## 7-Night Itinerary

### Day 1: Welcome to Belcarra

Campsite facilities at Belcarra include toilets, metered showers (€ 1 = 4 minutes), laundry facilities (€ 1 per 20-30 min.), camper's kitchen and lounge area. Our village amenities include – supermarket (deli counter, breads, hot beverages), post office, fishing area, Flukie's Cosy Bar serving excellent evening meals (Advance notice necessary!). Fishing rods and bicycles are available for your use. On your first evening you should try our way-marked Riverside Walk (a leisurely 50 minutes). Belcarra (population 200) has in the past been awarded the tidiest village in Mayo. The seven flower-beds in the village date from 1966 and are in memory of the seven signatories of the Proclamation of the Irish Republic at Easter 1916. Ireland's independence from Britain was eventually secured in 1921.

Explore other aspects of the village: visit the Fishery beside the Community Centre; walk over to the 'Common'. You can shore-fish for pike at Cloonagh Lake (2 km). The village shop is open from 8 am to 9 pm (Monday – Saturday) and 2 pm on Sundays. Stock up with food for the next few days. Keep milk, butter, meats, etc. in your small fridge. Additional cooler bags can be provided. The two pubs in Belcarra are worth visiting at night. The National Museum of Country Life and Horkan's Lifestyle Centre at Turlough, Castlebar (10 km) are well worth a visit on your last evening in Belcarra. Admission is free. All-day restaurant onsite. Knock Shrine is about 20 km away.

On the evening of your arrival we normally meet our guests at 6.45 pm in our reception area (red door) to talk about the history and landscape of the area, about the route you will take and the places you will visit with your horse and caravan. You will spend the first and last night of your holiday at Belcarra. Tomorrow morning you will be introduced to your horse and instructed in grooming, harnessing and driving.

Please note that at the overnight stops you must pay € 30 per night to the farmer for your pitch. Hot showers cost € 1 and should be paid to the owners. Most taxis charge about € 1.50 per kilometre. Tents (max 4 persons) are € 16 per pitch per night.

### Day 2: Belcarra to Ballintubber (9 km)

Today we will accompany you until you feel at ease driving your horse and caravan. You will follow a lovely route through Carramore bog. The green hills to the right and left of you are 'drumlins' carved out by glacial movements during the last ice age. On top of some of them you'll notice circular enclosures called 'ringforts' or 'fairyforts'. These are the remains of 2,000-year-old farmsteads. Until about 60 years ago they were used as children's burial grounds. It is unlucky to interfere with fairy-forts because they are reputed to be the homes of the 'slua-sí' – the fairy hosts. To your right you'll notice Croagh Patrick, Ireland's holy mountain peeping over the drumlins.

The map you are using is an Ordnance Survey map (2 cm = 1 km). Note the names of the townlands through which you pass engraved on stones at road junctions. At Ballintubber, you'll be welcomed by the Dempsey Family at their farm. This afternoon enjoy a tour of Ballintubber Abbey - built by an Irish King, Cathal of the Wine Red Hand O'Connor, 750 years ago and still in use. Walk part of the 'Tochar Phadraig', the old pilgrim road to Croagh Patrick – St Patrick's pyramid-shaped mountain in the West. Or just walk to Castleburke – a picturesque ruin about 2 km away. On Thursdays in August you can attend a night of Irish music and dance in the "Scioból" near Ballintubber (1 km). The Abbey pub and restaurant (1-3 pm daily) is near your overnight stop and the Mace Supermarket, with 'Coffee Shop' restaurant serving French fries, eggs, sausages, beans, bacon etc. all day is just 1 km away.



### **Day 3: Ballintubber to Carrownacon (10 km)**

Leaving Ballintubber at about 10 am you travel along a lovely lakeside route to Burriscarra. You can see Castlecarra, (1 km) built by Adam Staunton, a Norman baron about 1238 A.D. - an imposing ruin! There's a natural swimming area here. Maybe come back and visit Burriscarra Abbey built by Adam Staunton for the Augustinian Friars in 1295. There are beautiful country paths to the lakeshore. Continue to make your way through beautiful Moorehall to Carrownacon. Here you will stay at Hughes' Pub with Kevin and Marie Hughes. You will be within walking distance of Moorehall House and Forest Park. George Moore, the renowned writer, was born here. His ashes are scattered on Castle Island in the lake. Visit Kiltome, the burial place of the Moores, deep in forested Ballycally headland. Here you can catch the best of trout. Have a drink in Hughes pub (open nightly from 9 pm). A small shop for your essentials is across the road.

### **Day 4: Carrownacon to Bloomfield, Hollymount (12 km)**

Brace yourself for a longer trek to-day! You will travel for 12 km to the home of Sean and Ron Stagg. The Stagg family run a stud farm and breed and train Connemara ponies. Hollymount, nearby, is a picturesque village. Corrigans, in Hollymount village, is the local pub. The river Robe near your stop is rich in trout. There's generally a fishing rod available free for your use. Ballinrobe Golf Club is just a few miles away. Ask Ron about packed lunches.

### **Day 5: Bloomfield, Hollymount to Carrowbrack, Ballyglass (10 km)**

Today you will travel along a very interesting track through Derryfad Bog en route to the old Gilligan out-farm at Carrowbrack, Ballyglass near the Old Ground Pub. You're on your own here! Feel free to ramble on this farm - but always lock gates after you. Remember, also, that the wire fences are lightly electrified. And do not climb on the silage bales *please*. This afternoon you should use the bikes (or walk) to Mayo Abbey (3 km), the village which gave its name the county. It was here that St. Colman of Lindisfarne founded his monastic university in the seventh century. The sons of the Saxon king, Alfred the Great, studied here - hence its name 'Mayo of the Saxon'. Tonight you should relax around the turf fire at the beautiful Old Ground pub nearby. The Abbey Tavern in Mayo Abbey is also a fine option.

### **Day 6: Carrowbrack, Ballyglass to Carrownacon (5 km)**

Today you make your way back to the Hughes family in Carrownacon for one last night away from our base with your horse and caravan. Again an interesting route has been chosen for you for quiet rural roads. Once you have passed the Old Ground Pub, follow the makings to turn left and head straight through the next crossroads and continue along this road until to arrive to the familiar junction in Carrownacon beside the church and Hughes pub.

### **Day 7: Carrownacon to Belcarra (9 km)**

All good things come to an end. And now you must make your way home to Belcarra where you will spend your last night. The pyramid shaped mountain on the western horizon is Croagh Patrick, Ireland's Holy Mountain. Here St. Patrick spent 40 days in prayer at the end of his mission in Ireland. Soon you will be home again, in your familiar surroundings at the base in Belcarra.

### **Day 8: All good things must come to an end**

Today you have the morning to pack-up, relax and take one last stroll through this buzzing little village before heading home or on to your next holiday destination.