

Dublin Gay Theatre Weekend May 10-14, 2018

If you're looking for a break from all that hard work of Making America Great Again, we have just the thing for you...a gay theater weekend in Ireland!

Ireland recently became the first country in the world to endorse gay marriage by referendum and followed that up by electing an openly gay Taoiseach (prime minister). The capital city of Dublin is a haven of tolerance and open mindedness, and from May 7 to 20 it will be hosting the 15th annual International Dublin Gay Theatre Festival. Oscar Wilde Tours will be there, and we'd like you to join us.

We're teaming up with the *Gay & Lesbian Review* for a long weekend in Dublin, a singularly charming city with a fascinating history, and only a short flight away from the Northeast. With eminent gay historian Professor Andrew Lear and his team of Dublin guides, we'll show you the best of this charming, ever-chatty metropolis and its gay side. Walking tours of Dublin...a gorgeous excursion into Ireland's lush countryside...a truly splendid afternoon tea...several plays at Dublin's theaters...and private meetings with the founder of the Festival and the Irish Senator who led the fight to overturn the law that led to Oscar Wilde's downfall—what better way to escape Big Brother Mike Pence and the slow-motion collapse of our Republic? Book now, before it's too late!

Day 1. After time to rest from your international flight, we take a first walking tour in the center of the city, exploring the Dublin of the great gay icon and playwright Oscar Wilde. We will see Wilde's birthplace, his elegant house where he grew up, and Trinity College, where he completed his first university studies. We'll also take in Dublin Castle and the city's Oscar Wilde statue, and discuss several sex scandals and colorful characters of Wilde's time—including the Dublin hustler Jack Saul, who was possibly the author of the first gay pornography novel in the English language. Our walk will conclude at a row of grand 18th-century homes (including one where the Duke of Wellington was born) where we will enjoy a sumptuous afternoon tea. And what a tea! Our setting is one of Dublin's grandest hotels, and our delights are sandwiches, scones, and special pastries designed in imitation of the hotel's splendid collection of modern Irish art.

Day 2. This morning we set out on a second walking tour of Dublin, to learn about the 1916 Easter Rising. The seminal event in the founding of modern Ireland, the Rising is a tragic story that is of particular interest to us for featuring a number of gay and lesbian heroes. We've designed a customized tour for you by collaborating with Brian Merriman, the Founder of the International Dublin Gay Theatre Festival and author of *Eirebrushed*—the story of the sexual identities of Ireland's heroes. After some free time for lunch, we will meet gay hero (and charmer!) Senator David Norris, who will give us a tour of Leinster House, the grandest mansion of 18th century aristocratic Dublin. In addition to its historical interest, it is also today the seat of the Oireachtas, Ireland's

parliament, and what better guide than a sitting Senator? We round out the day with an evening of two plays at this year's Festival.

Day 3. Today you have a free morning to explore the city on your own, but be sure to ask us for advice about options like the James Joyce Center's walking tours. In mid-afternoon, we gather for a visit to one of the city's best-known tourist sights, the Guinness Storehouse. Attached to the historic St. James's Gate Brewery, founded in 1759 and still today the world's largest brewery of stout, the Storehouse is now a multi-story museum explaining the science and history of beer. We will pour and taste our own pints before going back across the city to dinner at one of Dublin's inventive restaurants, which created a gourmet version of Ireland's traditionally simple fare. After our meal we head to the famous Abbey Theatre—a keystone of Irish culture that nurtured the theatrical talents of such playwrights as Yeats, O'Casey and Synge—for another delightful evening of theater.

Day 4. It would be folly to visit Ireland and not visit her stunning countryside, so our itinerary for today features an excursion to Eastern Ireland, a land of lakes and castles. You will see right away why the country is nicknamed The Emerald Isle. We'll visit the picturesque island city of Enniskillen and take a boat trip on the surrounding lake, Lough Erne—one of the loveliest of Ireland's many beautiful lakes. Then it's time for a gourmet picnic! We will enjoy the best of local food and beer in an idyllic setting, followed by a visit to the boarding school that Oscar Wilde attended—where we will see, among other things, the Bible prize he won in high school (who would have thought?). We return to Dublin for the evening, where those who can't get enough theater will still be able to catch a late play at the Festival.

Day 5. Our tour ends with one last hearty Irish breakfast before we bid each other farewell, to head back home to America or continue on to other points in Europe. We can help you with any further travel plans and would be delighted to see you again on one of our other European tours.

Our hotel

The brand new Iveagh Gardens Hotel, on Harcourt St., is set in a 19th century bank building, right by St. Stephen's Green, Dublin's central greenspace. It has been built to the latest green standards and will provide a comfortable base for our exploration of Dublin.