

WILD PHOTOGRAPHY HOLIDAYS



WEST IRELAND

CONNEMARA AND BALLINASLOE HORSE FAIR

HIGHLIGHTS

- Dramatic Atlantic Coastline
- Omey Sands
- Lough Corrib
- Kylemore Abbey
- Pristine beaches
- Rock architecture of Moyrus
- Roundstone Peat Bog landscape
- The Twelve Bens
- Fishing Boats and Galway Hookers
- Connemara Ponies
- Inishbofin Island
- Ballinasloe Horse Fair
- Loch Inagh Valley

INTRODUCTION

Connemara derives from Conmhaicne Mara (meaning: descendants of Con Mhac, of the sea). It comprises a broad peninsula between Killary Harbour and Kilkieran Bay in the west of County Galway or southwest Connacht. Connemara reaches out into the Gulf Stream swells making it one of the wildest parts of Western Europe. There is a constant scenic vista of bogs, valleys and lakes whose spectacular intricate coastline encloses the dramatic Twelve Pins (Na Beanna Beola) and Maamturk Mountains. Quiet little roads wind through the majestic landscape and lead you from village to village. Ireland is awash with greenery, soft light and an adventurous spirit as it faces west into the oncoming Atlantic breakers and nowhere on

the Emerald Isle is this palette of colour, light and bluster more prevalent than in the heart of 'Gaeltacht'.

GENERAL SUMMARY

County Galway and its inner landscape have long entranced poets, painters, writers and much more recently, photographers looking for the wilder frontiers of Ireland. Artists and writers have talked often about the strange and illuminating impression the Connemara landscape has had on them. Many have returned time and again to dig a little deeper into its soul. Both the Gaeltacht culture and ancient landscape are a challenge to visualise. Paul's background as a documentary photographer will be instrumental in both your appreciation and realisation of the



elements, which make up the bigger picture story. One of the highlights of our time in Galway will be visits to the Ballinasloe Horse Fair that will be happening throughout the week. Other than this, tides and weather will dictate our locations on a daily basis. Broadly speaking we will explore the coastal landscape around three main settlements of Roundstone, Clifden and Cleggan. There will also hopefully be an opportunity to visit the Island of Inishbofin, a short ferry ride from Cleggan.

DAILY ITINERARY

Our itinerary will depend on the local weather conditions and state of the tides but we plan to visit as much of the cultural and physical landscapes as is possible and a lot of emphasis will be placed on building your own story about Connemara. Given favourable weather, we will aim to catch dawn and dusk most days. All but the worst conditions will see us out in the landscape, hamlets and villages. There will also be time for viewing and critiquing of the images we take.

ACCOMMODATION

Our main base for five nights will be The Quay House in Clifden. Dating back two hundred years, the Quay House is Clifden's oldest building and was once a Franciscan monastery. It is located beautifully right on the harbour front, just a short walk from the centre of the town centre. From here we will have easy access to many of our photographic locations around Connemara.

The Twelve Bens

Northeast of the village of Roundstone lies the extensive mountain range known as the Twelve Bens or Twelve Pins rising to just over 700m. Its traditional name of 'Na Beanna Beola' refers to Beola, a giant and chieftain of an ancient tribe called, Fir Bolg. Shrouded in sea mist or catching first and last light, these mountains can be seen from just about everywhere in Connemara and provide a wonderful backdrop to the surround valleys, lakes and peat bogs.



Ballinasloe Horse Fair

The Ballinasloe October Fair is one of the oldest fairs in Europe. While now predominantly associated with the horse, in its heyday the October Fair was an agricultural event of much greater significance, serving as a market for the sale of cattle and sheep by the farmers of the West to their counterparts in the East of Ireland. Today, the horse fair still attracts horse sellers, enthusiasts, gypsies and tinkers from across Europe and beyond. The characters and horse-trading on the Green provide a wealth of photographic potential on our last full day of our trip.

Kylemore Abbey

Set at the foot of a wooded hill near the junction of the coast road to Cleggan and north into Co Mayo, Kylemore Abbey is a Benedictine monastery founded in 1920 on the grounds of Kylemore Castle. The Estate includes an extensive walled Victorian Garden.

Strands of Connemara – Moyrus, Gurteen, Ballyconeely

Characteristically white and pristine, the beaches pepper the convoluted coastline of Connemara are a wonderful source of imagery, especially where they merge with rocky promontories and shorelines.

Currachs & Hookers

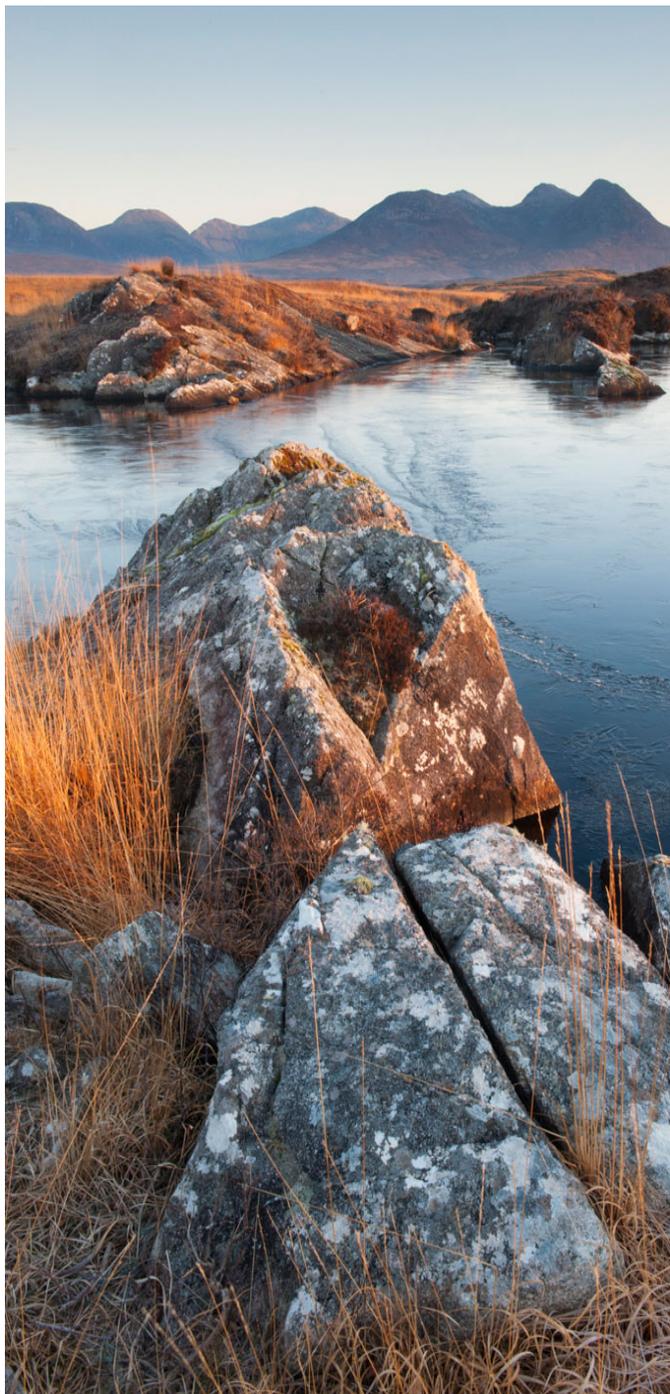
The use of traditional boats is still very much a part of daily life along the coast of Connemara. Once a busy trading and fishing boat between the islands, with its distinct dark red and orange sails, the Galway Hookers now compete in local races from Kinvarra to Clifden. During the great famine of the 1840s, John Bailey stated, “If you owned a hooker you would be classified as a millionaire”.

Cleggan

‘An Cloigeann’ is the Gaelic word for head or skull and generally refers to the nearby coastal headland. It is a traditional fishing village and also the jumping off point for the ferry to Inisbofin Island. It also has one of the most atmospheric pubs in Galway – Oliver’s Bar.

Omey Island

One of the most beautiful strands in Connemara is revealed in its entirety at low tide and enclosed with dark crimson granite rocks allowing foot access to the island. It was the ancestral home of the Connemara O’Toole’s, which moved westward with the O’Flaherty’s in the middle ages. It was also one of the key sites for the monastic order of St Fechin, an important figure in the spreading of the Irish monastic tradition in the 7th Century.



Aughrus Peninsula

About 20 mins drive north west of Clifden lies a dramatic rocky peninsula, one of the most westerly points of Connemara, and indeed of Ireland. The lichen covered rock above the tide line contrasts with seams of quartzite exposed as the tide recedes. On a windy late afternoon, the elements coincide to give a real sense of being on the edge of the world.

JOINING ARRANGEMENTS AND TRANSFERS

The tour officially starts in Westport. The single transfer will be from Knock Airport. There is also a regular bus service from Knock Airport to Westport and Galway to Knock Airport – <http://www.buseireann.ie/> Flybe, Aer Lingus and Ryanair have regular scheduled flights from London, Birmingham, Manchester, Liverpool, Bristol and Edinburgh.

<http://www.flybe.com/>

<http://www.aerlingus.com/en-GB>

<http://www.ryanair.com/en>

N.B. There is a €10 airport tax at Knock Airport.

WHAT’S INCLUDED

- 7 nights Hotel
- All meals
- Photographic tuition
- Transfers to and from Knock Airport

WHAT’S NOT INCLUDED

- Alcoholic drinks
- Travel & medical insurance
- International flights



ACCOMMODATION

7 nights good standard hotel accommodation with en suite bathrooms.

FOOD

Dinner will be at restaurants and pubs at or near our hotel accommodations.

Breakfasts will be at our hotels.

Lunches will depend on our itinerary and location, often they will be packed and eaten as a picnic. This will allow us greater flexibility in our photographic locations. Please let us know when you book if you have any special dietary requirements.

ALCOHOL

For lovers of Guinness, it doesn't get any better!

SPENDING MONEY

It is advisable to bring a small amount of euros, but if not there are plenty of ATM's in and around Connemara.

There are good local arts and crafts on offer locally in Recess, Roundstone and Clifden.

TRAVEL INSURANCE

It is recommended that you take out appropriate insurance to cover personal accident, medical costs, repatriation and loss of baggage. We will need a copy of your travel insurance at the time of booking.

PASSPORT AND VISA REQUIREMENTS

Citizens of the UK do not need a passport to enter the Republic of Ireland but most airlines will require Passport ID. A European Health Insurance Card is Valid in the Republic of Ireland. EU and North & South American Nationals will need a valid passport but do not require an entry visa. Other nationalities please check with your relevant embassy.

LANGUAGE

English & Gaelic



CLIMATE

Connemara's spectacular ragged coastline stretches out into the Atlantic Ocean and therefore is subject to the whims of the Gulf Stream. Temperature extremes are rare and October is a transitional month and so we can expect changeable conditions, diverse and often-beautiful photographic landscape light.

CLOTHING SUGGESTIONS

As we will often be standing around in one location it's important to have some warm clothes. The best solution to temperature control is to have a number of layers available from lightweight thermal underwear through mid-layer insulation to a windproof jacket. A warm down jacket is great for standing around. For the lower body choose a pair of warm trousers. There are numerous makes and types of warm trousers to choose from, just ensure that the cut is generous to allow freedom of movement. A pair of wellington boots can be useful on the beach but these are not essential if space/weight is an issue.

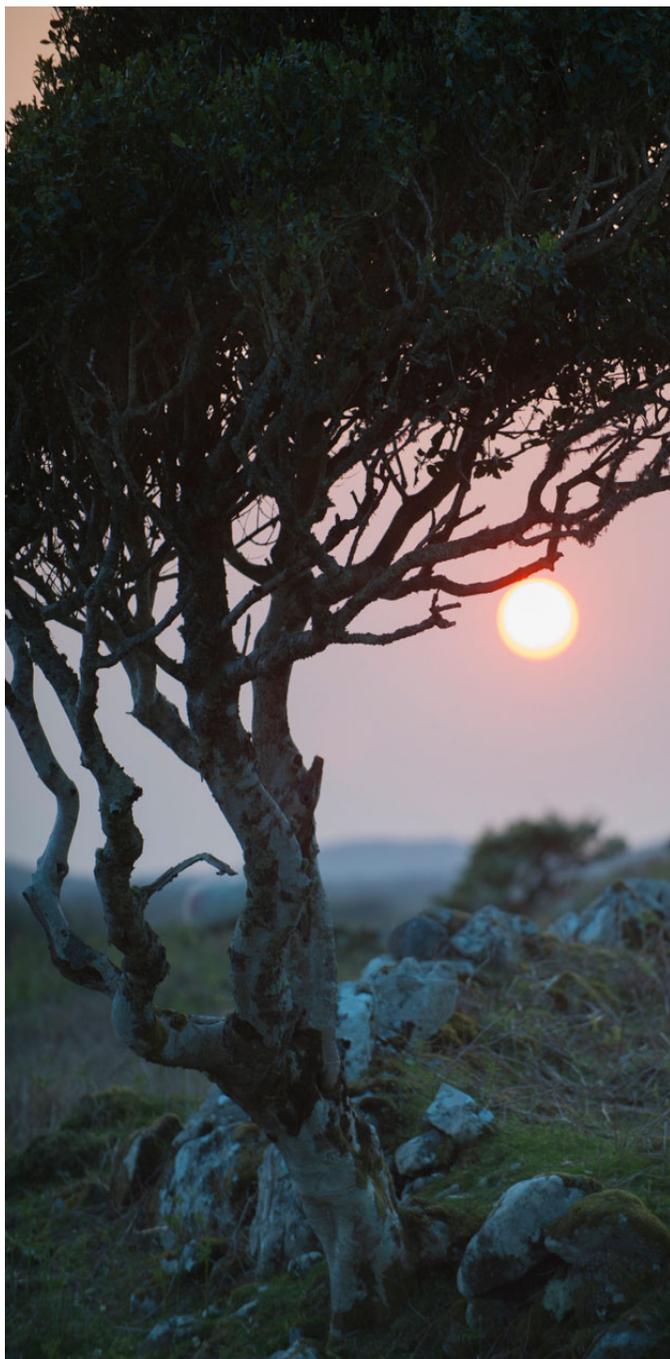
CLOTHING LIST RECOMMENDATIONS

- Backpack to contain camera gear and few spare items
- Pair warm trousers (fleece lined optional)
- Thermal tops e.g. 'smart-wool' (base layer)
- Thermal leggings e.g. 'smart wool' (base layer)
- Light fleece/wool jumper
- Waterproof jacket
- Waterproof trousers
- Quality warm walking socks
- Leather/waterproof walking boots
- Wellington boots
- Warm hat
- Fleece neck-warmer
- Light warm gloves
- Casual clothes for inside wear
- Sun cream, sunglasses
- Head torch
- Small, basic first aid to include plasters, blister repair plus any medication that you normally use.

If you have any questions feel free to contact us at any-time before the trip.

PHOTOGRAPHIC EQUIPMENT RECOMMENDATIONS

- Camera bag or backpack such as the Flipside or Trekker series designed by LowePro.
- Any extra equipment that doesn't fit in your camera bag/ hand luggage will need to go in a hard case that can be put in the aircraft hold.
- Spare camera (optional)
- Sturdy tripod – not only useful for low light photography but also for accurate framing and composition of landscape and close-up images.



- Cable release – mechanical or electronic remote to avoid shake on long exposures.
- Neutral density, graduated filters and polariser, if you use these.
- Lens cloth
- Sensor cleaning device (optional)
- Lightweight 'trekking' absorbent towel for drying cameras and equipment
- Camera rain cover for camera and camera bag.
- Sufficient memory cards for the whole holiday as it may not be possible to buy more during the trip.
- Film users should bring enough film, as it may not be possible to buy in many places.
- A laptop with the image editing applications of your choice e.g. Lightroom or Adobe Camera RAW – essential for checking and presenting images during the trip and for one-on-one sessions with the tutor.
- Backup storage device (optional)
- Spare batteries and chargers
- All the electrical sockets are UK three-pin, so you might need a travel plug adapter.

MAPS AND BOOKS

A variety of local maps and guidebooks will be on hand such as **Rough Guide** and **Lonely Planet**. Please feel free to bring your own.

Ordnance Survey Ireland – Discovery Series (1:50,000) Sheets 37, 38, 44, 45

Connemara Superwalker (1:30,000) – essentially a walking map for the Connemara National Park

The writer, **Tim Robinson** has written a wonderful trilogy of narratives about Connemara.

BOOKING THIS HOLIDAY

Contact us [through our website](#), where you can also fill in the [online booking form](#), or phone +44 (0)1630 647828.

PARTNERS

Non photographer partners will be very welcome although this primarily a photography holiday we also visit some very beautiful and relaxing places. If any participants do not wish to join the walks/photographic sessions they will be able to relax in and around the accommodation. The cost will be the same for photographers and non photographers.

OUTDOOR TRAVEL

This is an outdoor travel holiday and the itinerary is dependent on the weather, local conditions and other variables. Wild Photography Holidays may use their discretion to change the itinerary should conditions dictate this; your health, safety and enjoyment will always be our primary concern when making such changes.

MORE INFORMATION

We hope that this information has answered some of your questions about the holiday, It doesn't hope to answer everything. If you have any questions please get in touch.

LINKS

View more [images and information for this workshop](#) on the website.

Visit tutor [Paul Harris's website](#)

Read about [our approach to teaching photography](#)

