



GROUP TRAVEL Planning Guide

Grow &
Prosper with Celtic Tours
2024





Welcome

Celtic Tours Vacations has been a leading tour operator to Ireland, Scotland and Europe since 1972. Let our experts guide you when planning your group, from inception to planning to execution and completion, let us help you take the guess work out of your next group!



Let's Make Your Group Better

Here you will find important steps in bringing your group to a reality and how to make it successful without the stress!

We understand. Organizing group travel can be a lot of work. But we are here to help. From defining your group and getting started, to your time line, price points, benefits, marketing and the destinations we service, Celtic Tours is here to take the stress out of it, so your group and your growth is a success!



Found Inside



- General Info
- Choosing The Right TO
- Creating your group
- Leading your group
- Time line
- Price points
- Marketing
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About Our Company

Started in 1972 by Dublin native Mr. Noel Murphy, Celtic Tours has been delivering quality, service and support to our travel partners throughout the United States from the beginning. We stay true to the travel industry and remain a small, but significant, family owned and operated business. A member of the USTOA Tour Operators Association and preferred tour operator to Cruise Planners, NEXION, MAST, Outside Agents and Oasis just to name a few!

Choosing your TOUR OPERATOR

Choosing a tour operator can be a difficult process. Who do you choose? What questions do you ask? How can you be sure that this tour operator will give you the right vacation at the right price with the right level of service?

By asking the right questions, you will find out all you need to know in order to choose the right tour operator. To get a more complete picture of how well a tour operator can meet your expectations, you should consider the following questions:

What is the tour operator's reputation? Do they have a preferred membership with your host?

Is the company a member of a reputable trade organizations such as USTOA?

How long has the company been in business?

Companies that have a solid reputation with excellent memberships and have been in business for a considerable time are more than likely more stable and better connected within the industry.

What are the policies of the TO? What are their deposit

and cancellation policies? What happens if you do not reach your numbers?

Choosing a tour operator with clear terms and policies makes it easier for you to manage.

Celtic Tours waives deposits on scheduled tours for up to 65 days, limiting your risk.

Can your Tour Operator customize an itinerary to suit your needs? Celtic Tours, having over 50 years in the industry works the industries best hotels, suppliers and companies to bring you the best possible itineraries for your group!

Why work with a **TRAVEL AGENT**

Celtic Tours has always believed you will receive the best service and support by working with your travel agent. Whether it is a small vacation for yourself or a group trip, your travel agent will save you time, money and hassle. Planning a vacation or group trip can be an exciting prospect. But when you really get into it there are logistics you might not know about. A good travel agent will help to guide you through all aspects of planning your vacation, leaving no stone unturned. Travel agents do their research and have often traveled to the place you are going to. They know how to get the most out of your vacation. Having a top travel agent can also make you an instant VIP with free room upgrades, hard to get restaurant reservations, cutting lines, access to otherwise closed stores and exhibits and private guides. And after you have planned everything, they provide a safety net during your trip that you simply won't get by booking yourself or buying insurance.

Celtic Tour's **TOP TEN**



What sets Celtic Tours apart? Here are Celtic Tour's Top Ten reasons to travel with us!

CELTIC ASSURANCE

All Celtic Tours travelers advanced payments are backed by a \$1 million USTOA TRAVELERS ASSISTANCE BOND, NOW THAT IS ASSURANCE!

CELTIC EXPERIENCE

Established in 1972, providing quality and affordable tours with expert guidance. You know you are in good hands!

CELTIC GUARANTEE

Celtic Tours World Vacations always offers a "No Hidden Costs" policy and "Guaranteed Prices" will not increase under deposit!

CELTIC SERVICE

Celtic Tours Vacations is proud of its top customer service with professional, yet personal customer care and never a concierge fee.

CELTIC OPTIONS

Beyond Ireland, Celtic Tours has a wealth of travel options for you and your clients to choose from. Explore beautiful Italy or scenic Scotland. Limited only by your imagination!

CELTIC 24/7

No matter where you are, Celtic Tours is always in reach, with a 24/7 Celtic Hotline available for emergencies. Always here for you!

CELTIC SUPPORT

Your group comes with our key marketing support, with opportunity for co-op funding, free color-flyers and a free booking link for you to easily share with your customers.

CELTIC PARTNERS

Celtic Tours works only with the best partners in the industry, from top hotels to destination management companies.

CELTIC SPECIALS

Celtic Tours sends out weekly deals direct to the travel industry, to provide you with even more savings! Join our list today!

CELTIC PROMISE

Celtic Tours has always stood by the travel industry and your customers. During the most horrific time in the travel industry [during the Global pandemic], Celtic Tours was one of the few Tour Operators that returned deposits to passengers when travel was not possible and did not force future travel credits (FTC) on those that could not travel. While we hope to never see a travel disruption again, know that Celtic Tours would continue to provide the best possible support at all time!

Ireland FUN FACTS

Ireland is home to over 408 Golf Clubs, 53 of them links courses, choosing can be difficult. Our golf expert has played the courses and has tailored itineraries to suit the average and the expert golfer alike. We would be delighted to customize an itinerary for your golf groups needs. Give us a call at 1-800-833-4373 to start planning your group Golf Trip today!



Here at Celtic Tours Vacations, we have the experience necessary to plan groups of any type or size. From 20 to 300 or more, we will help you through the process from start to finish to ensure your group has a spectacular time!



Group Travel Creates Community

The human being is a social animal. And what a better way to socialize than through the joined experience of travel! We prefer to share both our joys and sorrows with relatives, friends, neighbors or other individuals with interests similar to our own.

People are happiest when they can visit new places and enjoy new experiences when surrounded by people with whom they know that they will be comfortable. Surely part of this situation can be attributed to a wish to remain safe and secure whenever venturing into new territory (the “safety in numbers” phenomenon), whether conscious or not. Let Celtic Tours be the tour operator to deliver this to your clients.

Let your group community grow by bringing together those that share this great desire to experience the world of travel. Where you might bring customers together that started as strangers, they will depart as friends as they experience the great joy of travel and community on your next great adventure!





Group Travel
makes an
amazing
Family Reunion!

Where to start

Tap into unlimited group potential

There are so many types of groups. Whenever you have “like minded” people who share an interest, hobby or affiliation, traveling together is fun. Here, at Celtic Tours Vacations we have been catering to virtually every conceivable type of group to world-wide destinations for over 40 years! Here are some of the different types of organizations and activities that offer rewarding group travel experiences:

AARP
Alumni
Associations
Animal Enthusiasts
Artists
Bands and Musicians
Bowling
Brewery Tours
Business Professionals
Churches

Community Events
Cooking/Culinary
Educational
Family Reunions
Fire Departments
Fraternities
Garden Clubs
LGBTQIA
Golfers
Heritage Tours

Incentive Groups
Libraries
Literary Guild
Medical Groups
Meetings
Micro Beers/Breweries
Museums
Photography Clubs
Police Unions
Retired Teachers

Organizations
Schools and Colleges
Shopping
Singles Clubs/Groups
Sporting Events
Tennis
Wedding Groups
Wine or Whiskey
Women's Clubs

Just to name a few

Leading your group

What it takes

Celtic Tours Vacations has worked with travel agents leading their group or those that have enlisted a group leader for over 50+ years. We know first hand what works when it comes to putting your group together, staying organized and sane.

When you work with Celtic Tours Vacations, we work with you on every detail of the trip, provide recommendations, make reservations, give you tips on how to market to your group members and be sure that your group trip goes off without a hitch.

Give us a call to start planning your group trip 1-800-833-4373

Keys for success...

- Be organized
- Be responsive
- Be open minded
- Communicate
- Know the T&C's
- Know the inclusions
- Check and re-check dates and passenger names
- Remain calm if there is a hiccup
- Listen to the experts
- Ask questions
- Keep it fun

Words of wisdom from previous group leaders...

“

I find it works best when I stay continued and up to date communication of all details of trip to all members of the group. Staying in close contact with Tour Company. ~EF, Group Leader

”

Who Can Be
a Group
Leader? YOU

“

Knowledge of, and enthusiasm for subject/ places ; ability to meld types of personalities into a congenial group; good organizational skills ~MH, Group Leader

”

“

First and foremost communication skills, and the old adage to “keep your head while all others are losing theirs,” is something to aspire to. Relaying to your group the feeling that you are in control so that they can relax and enjoy. Knowledge of the country you are touring, know things they may not easily read in a book or find on wikipedia. And always remember they are on vaca!! ~KM, Musician and Group Leader

”

Once you have selected the destination for your group, it's time to settle on an itinerary. When doing so, there are some things to consider;

Can you see all you need to see in the time allotted? While a country may seem easy to see all of in a week's time, much of the time (due to rough roads and travel time) it is not. So decide on the "key" must haves. Work with your TO to determine the best amount of time to see all that you must.

What is your groups budget? Sometimes adjusting the travel dates or utilizing space a TO is already holding will help reduce the cost of your group and providing you with immediate confirmed hotel space to boot.

Does your group have any special needs? This may affect what hotels and sights are selected and included with your group. Be sure to discuss this when building your itinerary.

Is there a complete "must have" for your group? If so, start with that, to make sure the balance of the itinerary falls around your must have!

Consider booking into a scheduled tour. While it may not have all the bells and whistles you were looking for, it may deliver most. Often you can add pre/post nights on to a scheduled tour or if you are taking a full group, admissions can also be changed to suit.

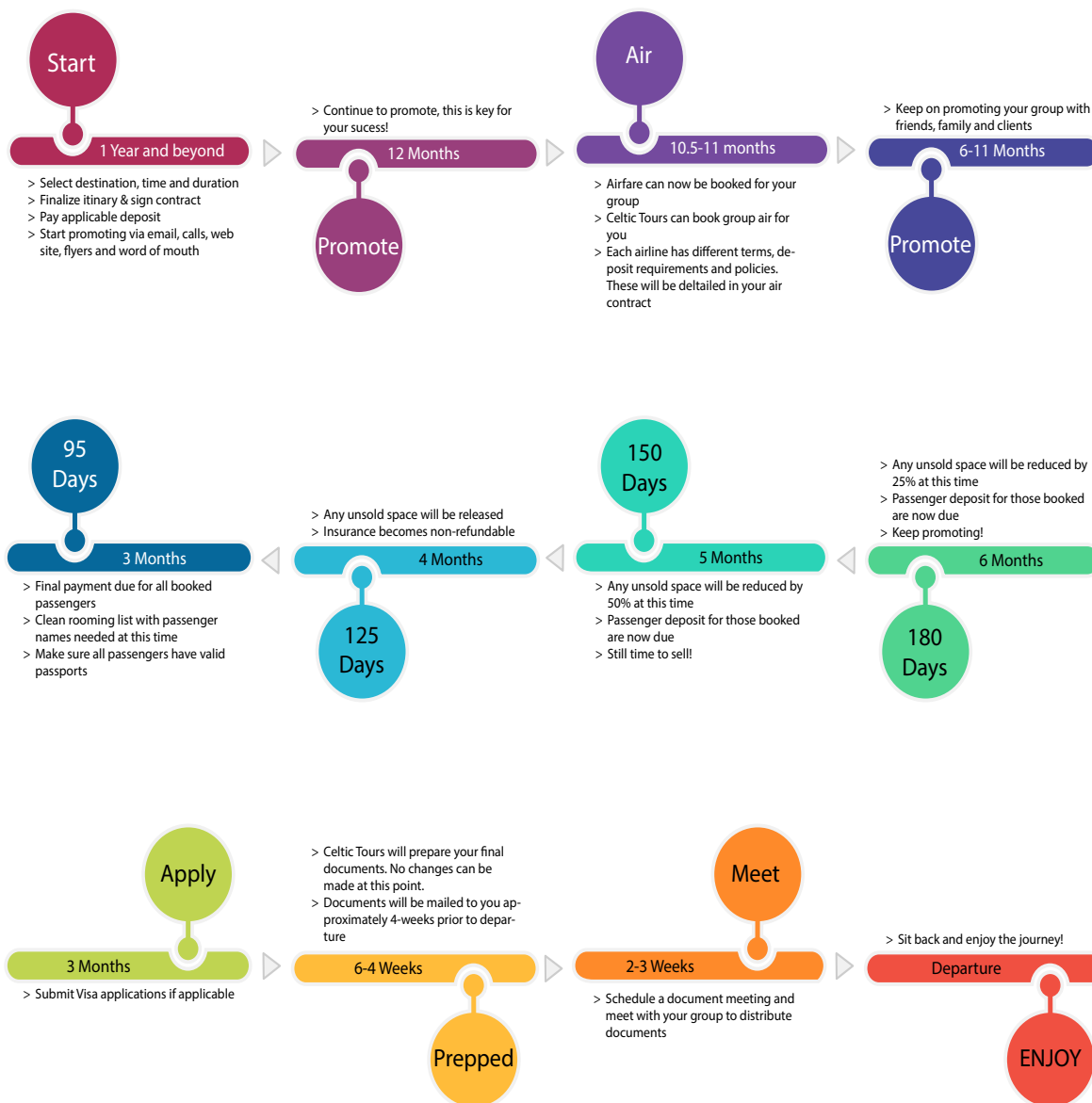
Wales FUN FACTS

Wales is a country in southwest Great Britain known for its rugged coastline, mountainous national parks, distinctive Welsh language and Celtic culture. Cardiff, the capital, is a refined coastal city with a night-life scene and a medieval castle with ornate Gothic Revival interiors. Did you know, there are four times the amount of sheep than there are people in Wales. Wales has the most castles in one country than any other in the world (641 to be exact). Wales has miles and miles of protected Heritage Coast (870 miles!). All can be explored thanks to the Wales Coast Path, the world's first continuous national coastal walking route! You won't find K, Q, V or Z letters in the Welsh language, but you will find a town with the longest name in the world; Llanfairpwllgwyngyllgogerychwyrndrobwlllantysiliogogoch - can you pronounce it?

Yaki Da

Group Time Line

With this suggested time line, you will find success with selling your group in a timely manner. This is of course a suggestion, and adjusting this time line may be necessary for your groups success. Make sure no matter what your time line is, make sure to seek out every avenue to advertise your group. Celtic Tours provides free color flyers, online booking links and our sales team is always ready to assist with zoom meetings and more!



Beyond Ireland

While we definitely have a love for Ireland and it truly is a magical place, Celtic Tours offers an extensive tours and packages through the United Kingdom and much of Europe as well.

We are currently working with the THE NORDICS, a cooperation between the tourist boards of Denmark, Finland, Greenland, Iceland, Norway and Sweden to bring you these fabulous destinations. While we have not yet added this destination to our website, we are now taking group requests for this region!

One of most popular destinations beyond Ireland is Italy! We can customize the perfect package for your next Italy group! We can organize all the transfers, touring, hotels and meals within your budget. We work with a fantastic Tuscan Villa as well!



Price Points

Planning The Price

There are many different formulas that are used for pricing tour programs, but the specific process employed is not nearly as important as the tour planner simply making 100% sure that he or she has all the “bases” covered when calculating selling prices.

While some costs will remain the same regardless of the number of participants, others can be affected by your final numbers. The per person share of fixed costs, however, can vary substantially depending on the number of tour guests. As a result, it is **very important** to have a good idea of how many travelers can reasonably be expected, as well as how many people constitute the “break even” point. Fixed costs can include such items as the motorcoach charter, minimum group size for hotels to receive group rates and expenses for any “complimentary” fares, and “per coach” fees such as parking, tolls or National Park admissions. Celtic Tours will provide a detail pricing structure for you to follow when booking a group with us.

Other items that need to be considered somewhere in the equation include: desired profit margin (if any); contribution (usually a percentage or per-person amount) to a sponsoring organization; projected promotional, printing or mailing costs; finally, an allowance for miscellaneous expenses or unexpected cost increases. One must certainly also keep in mind the prices being charged by others for competitive tours.

Keep expectations real. Check out www.celtictours.com and our scheduled tours to see where our tours are currently priced. This will give you an idea of what to expect.

Whatever your budget, Celtic Tours will do everything possible to reach your goal!

Group Travel is a spectacular way to raise money for a cause. You can easily build a small donation into the price of your group trip. Give us a call for more information
1-800-833-4373



Scheduled Tours

Book into a scheduled escorted tour for the best package price, commission and free spaces. Celtic Tours offers guaranteed departures and no hidden extras on all tours! We can offer tours as on a shared or private basis and if your numbers drop, your price remains the same!

Travel Insurance

Protect your investment

Encountering the unexpected is often a part of travel; ranging from the inconvenient to a truly serious emergency. ARCH Insurance Services offers comprehensive travel protection coupled with extensive 24-hour emergency assistance services to meet the challenges of today's travel and help you enjoy a worry-free trip.

Consider these reasons to purchase a plan before departing, for a true sense of security on your journey.

Travel Investment: You work hard for the money and time invested in planning your vacation. Unfortunately even the most careful preparation doesn't avoid life's surprises if you need to cancel or interrupt your trip. Purchasing a travel protection plan will help make sure you don't walk away empty-handed.

Peace of Mind: *Whether you lose your job, a hurricane blows through your destination, or you get scheduled for jury duty, our comprehensive plan benefits help get you back on track and find the peace of mind your trip deserves. (*with cancel for any reason insurance)

Credit Card Shortfalls: Chances are your credit card may not protect you in cases of travel delay, trip cancellation or emergency medical coverage overseas. These plans tend to have highly limited benefits - always do your research to ensure you're fully protected.

PLUS...Medical Expenses, Emergency Transportation, Personal Belongings, Travel Assistance & Concierge Services AND MORE...



Benefits Of Group Travel

We've already seen how group travel addresses an individual's social needs, but several studies conducted by industry organizations have also shown that those who travel regularly gain measurable health benefits. Travelers as a whole are statistically happier, healthier and live longer than those who "stay put."

There are special extras for those that lead the group as well. Although the planning, promotional and administrative work required could never be characterized as "easy," there are advantages for those individuals willing to accept the challenge. If nothing else, having the opportunity to travel to exotic (or at least very attractive) destinations free of charge, or at a greatly reduced rate, can prove highly attractive. Furthermore, depending on the individual or organization involved, it can also be possible to earn a modest amount of income for your efforts.

Group travel can also make a lot of financial sense for your fellow travelers. Many packaged tours include elements such as hotel stays, meals and transportation, sold together at a discounted price that individuals could not get if they were traveling alone. Group travel harnesses the power of buying in bulk, and spreads the cost of guides, ground transportation and other items across the whole group, giving people more experience for each tourism dollar that they spend.



Italy FUN FACTS

While Italy is one of Western Europe's youngest countries, Rome has been inhabited for much longer, making it a major human settlement for almost three millennia and one of the oldest continuously occupied cities in Europe. Italy's last king ruled for just 36 days. Tourists throw €1,000,000 into the Trevi Fountain each year! Italy is home to Europe's only three active volcanoes; Etna, Stromboli and Vesuvius! And thanks to Italians for batteries, eyeglasses and pizza!

Italy is the fifth most visited country in the World! Consider it for your next group!

Prego!



More Benefits

When you book your group with Celtic Tours Vacations, you will get even more perks. We offer customized, experienced, personal service which is why we pride ourselves on our excellent customer service. We make sure everything is set and taken care of before you travel and while you are traveling. If there is ever a need, you can give us a call and we will be sure to help. We have a 24/7 help line staffed by a Celtic Tours employee in the off hours. Beyond that, we offer generous bonus commissions and free places (varies by group size and destination). Give us a call to find out what extras we are currently offering 1-800-833-4373!



“

Traveling – it leaves you speechless, then turns you into a storyteller. Ibn Buttuta

”

Croatia Cruise

Consider chartering a Croatian Cruise for your next group. Celtic Tours and our Croatian cruise partners can delight your next group with a dedicated small charter, cruising the Croatian coastline.

These small cruise ships are unlike traditional cruising as they hold only 36-38 passengers + crew, rewarding you with a unique and unforgettable experience. These smaller ships have the ability to navigate the islands and overnight in port each night, so you can hand with the wonderful local Croatian people.



Celtic Tours Vacations can cater multi-country groups as well!

Marketing Keys to Success

Okay, so you have put together a stellar tour with an amazing theme, your price is right—what now? Now it is time to get the word out. Remember these 4 Keys when marketing your group.

Brand yourself!

Whether it is your first group or your 50th, people will want to join your group because of you. Remember you are the reason people will want to join your group. Let people know with you leading the group, it is in great hands! Plus you have picked the perfect partner in Celtic Tours. Your group success is ours.

Give yourself ample time to advertise

Another big key to marketing your group is to give yourself ample time to advertise and get the word out. We recommend giving yourself at minimum a year. But even before that, let people know that you are planning a group trip, to start building the excitement. Then when you have an itinerary set, just give them a call or drop them an email to let them know.

Connect and Communicate

Studies show that the more times and ways someone sees your advertising, the more likely they are to purchase. Advertising to the same group of people in a couple different ways is the most effective way to advertise. Post your booking link on your website. Hand out your free color-flyers at events. Email your booking link. Share on Social Media. Share information about the destination too to grow the excitement.

Network, network, network

Tell EVERYONE you meet about the fantastic trip you are planning. Find ways to drop it into the conversation, or add it to an email or post it on Facebook. Even if the person you tell about it doesn't want to go on the trip, they know people who might.

Get the Word Out!

Create a buzz!

Make sure as many people know about your group as possible

send emails

write a blog

Facebook: Start an event, page or group for your trip. Invite your friends. Post pictures of your destination, informational tidbits and so on. If you start a page, you can continue to use the same page for every trip.

display posters

Send flyers, proposals, emails and call groups in your area. Start with senior citizen centers, Mom groups, alumni associations, adult recreational sports leagues, businesses and churches. Focus your flyer on your niche. Post flyers at recreational centers, day cares, libraries, support groups and community centers and pubs!

.....
: Partner with local organizations like museums and libraries or
: churches
.....

Advertise in your local paper

20 | www.celtictours.com / 800.833.4373 / groups@celtictours.com

Scotland FUN FACTS

Scotland, known for its wild and nature beauty is an epic destination to visit. The myths and legends, like Loch Ness, the fairy pools on Skye and Fingal's Cave on the Isle of Staffa are very much alive! The official animal of Scotland is the Unicorn. Home to approximately 790 islands (some say it's closer to 900) and home to the one of Europe's oldest trees, the Fortingall Yew!

Golf was invented here, but playing the Old Course at St. Andrews is still primarily done by lottery. Don't worry, there are plenty of other courses to play!

Consider Scotland for your next group. The landscapes are perfect for photography groups!

Fáilte



Destinations So many places

When looking to book your next great group, we hope you consider booking with Celtic Tours. In addition to our amazing Ireland packages, we offer great touring and group options to so many wonderful destinations. While you may not see exactly what you are looking for on our website, give us a call at 800-833-4373. We are happy to guide you with the best place to suit your groups needs and price point.

- Ireland
- Italy
- Scotland
- Wales
- England
- Germany
- Poland
- Spain
- Portugal
- Croatia
- Czech Republic
- Austria
- Hungary
- Montenegro
- Greece
- Macedonia
- Lithuania
- Latvia
- Estonia
- Denmark
- Norway
- Sweden
- Finland
- Iceland

Please note, while we have may have tours online to these destinations, what is online may not work in a group capacity. Additionally, not all destinations are available for individual bookings and only for group sales. Please give us a call with any inquiries you may have.





Contact Us.



800-833-4373



518-862-0042



groups@celtictours.com



www.celtictours.com

1860 Western Ave
Albany, NY 12203