

## DESTINATIONS

UK & IRELAND | ST PATRICK'S DAY



### ST PATRICK'S DAY TRIPS

Enjoy the luck of the Irish with these trips timed around St Patrick's Day, writes **Alice Barnes-Brown**



#### PARTY PEOPLE

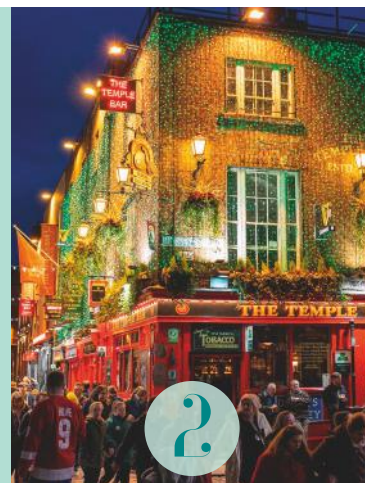
For many younger travellers, St Patrick's Day is about celebrating until the wee hours, meeting new people and sipping a Guinness – and Contiki's St Patrick's Day tour in Dublin ticks all those boxes. Clients arrive a couple of days before March 17 and visit the Guinness Storehouse, where they can have their face printed onto the head of a pint. On the day itself, they'll watch the parade then revel in the atmosphere with live music at popular pubs.

**Book it:** Contiki offers a three-night St Patrick's Day tour from £785 departing March 15, 2027. Includes breakfast and a visit to the Guinness Storehouse, but excludes flights. [contiki.com](http://contiki.com)

#### ANCIENT RITES

A road trip is one of the best ways to combine Ireland's rolling scenery with its city sights. On Shearings' St Patrick's Day itinerary, the journey begins in Waterford, Ireland's oldest city, where clients learn about the island's Viking past, before carrying on to Dublin for the parade. After all the frivolity, the tour heads to the Wicklow Mountains to marvel at the ancient, mist-shrouded monastic towers of Glendalough.

**Book it:** Shearings' five-night St Patrick's Day in Dublin and Ireland's Ancient East tour costs from £879 per person, based on two sharing. Includes coach travel and half-board accommodation, departing March 15, 2027. [shearings.com](http://shearings.com)



#### GIFT OF THE GREEN

For a flight-free escape, suggest an Irish Ferries sailing to Ireland's south coast. By basing themselves near Cork, clients can taste Irish whiskey at Jameson's Midleton Distillery, enjoy the city's multicultural parade and stroll through Blarney Castle's gardens, with the building lit up in green.

**Book it:** Two nights at Cork's Vienna Woods Hotel, including return ferry for two adults with a car, costs from £534 per person, based on two sharing with breakfast, departing March 16, 2027. [irishferries.co.uk](http://irishferries.co.uk)

#### BEST OF THE WEST

"I show guests St Patrick's Day parades and traditional Irish music in pubs. It's Ireland on high octane," says Marcus Howlett, a driver-guide for Rabbie's. The small-group operator has a tour that sees in St Patrick's Day on the Ring of Kerry. After a day discovering forts and fishing villages, clients spend the night in Killarney to see its colourful St Patrick's Festival.

**Book it:** Rabbie's four-night Escape to the South West itinerary costs from £1,744 per person, based on two sharing. Includes ground transport and accommodation, but excludes flights. [rabbies.com](http://rabbies.com)



#### BIG UP BELFAST

St Patrick's Day is big in Belfast, with several days of celebration. Besides a float-filled parade, expect a free music festival in the Cathedral Quarter as well as thousands of runners on the streets for a 10K race through the city centre. The Merchant Hotel, set in the former headquarters of Ulster Bank, gets into the spirit with creative cocktails at The Cloth Ear pub.

**Book it:** Kirker Holidays sells a five-night stay at The Merchant Hotel from £1,969 per person, based on two sharing, with breakfast, flights from Heathrow on March 13 and private transfers. [kirkerholidays.com](http://kirkerholidays.com)