

2011 - IRELAND

20 June 2011



The weather in Ireland is either “raining - or going to rain”. The seasons are pretty much the same - “wet - or expected to be wet”.

Iveragh Peninsula (Kerry)

OVERNIGHT IN CAHERDANIEL

Our Sunday evening at the caravan park was simply divine - no wind, relatively warm and sunny till 8pm, light till 10pm and a view from our van window to die for. The 30 euro fee was a little steep but at least it included a hot shower. We were, all in all, very satisfied with our day yesterday.

This morning it was raining again and continued to drizzle all day. We were keen to see the rest of the Ring of Kerry and were expecting this final bit to be very captivating.

RING(S) OF KERRY

When we consulted our maps we quickly realised that there are numerous interpretations of “The Ring of Kerry”. 3 different maps and each one had different roads highlighted. After traveling about half way along the south coast, through pretty, but not absolutely stunning scenery, we decided to take the inland route to the northern side the peninsula. This was a very good move. The road was narrow but well made. We only met 3 vehicles coming the other way. Bliss. We took our time and unwound as we drove through scenery that reminded us of the Scottish uplands. We stopped a number of times and took snaps and parked and walked around a brook running under the road. The stocks are in full bloom. I think



A backdrop of gorgeous rolling hills



Traffic on the road



Tight squeeze

The 214km Kerry Way is Ireland's longest walking track. It's best walked anti-clockwise and will take a walker 10 days to complete (walking 20km/day).





Food anyone?



Potential farmer's wife?



Tearaway

they are native to the area. They were a beautiful bright contrast against green carpets of grasses and an overcast and misty sky. The tall rolling hills in the distance were draped in mist. Occasionally the mist cleared and the sun behind the mountain ridge reflected on the clouds above. We were grateful that there were no crowds to push us on. It was just us and some sheep.

We drove over the Ballaghbeama Gap and the road got more narrow and winding. We even stopped right next to a sheep resting on a high rocky fence and I told it it was stupid lying so dangerous close to the sheer drop on the other side. The sheep murmured something under its breath as I drove on. Stupid sheep don't listen.

Our wonderful drive finally ended up back at civilisation and it was back to Killarney (where we had been two days ago). We were keen to spend some time in Killarney riding our bikes but since it was still drizzling we thought it would be best to visit local attractions.

MUCKROSS TRADITIONAL FARMS

This centre is very interesting and well done. It aims to recreate farms as they were in the 1920's and 1930's. The 3 farms - small, medium and large - came

complete with furniture, implements and chickens, pigs, cattle and horses. The property is an actual working farm. We particularly liked watching the foal prancing around after being startled by the chooks, and watching the ducks interact with the chickens.

We were shown typical domestic activities by a guide dressed in traditional dress. One lady showed us how she makes the butter. They hand milk their cows and use the butter on their bread they bake over the open fire. This delicacy is freely available to visitors. There was also a livery, ironworks, forge, carpenter's workshop and saddlery. Interesting. Each of the people we talked to had a very broad Irish accent. We wondered whether it was an essential criteria to get a job here! We viewed a man using a draft horse drawn cart to haul timber.

For me it was like walking down memory lane. When I lived in Kyneton as a kid, we ran cows and churned our own butter. We also cut our own hay and had a well in the back yard. I told this to the guide and he told me I was showing my age.



Southwest of Killarney are the Macgillycuddy Reek mountain range - the highest in Ireland. It features 9 of the 12 peaks in the country that are over 900 meters.

Like England there is a tradition here about climbing high mountains - but instead of calling them "Munros", in Ireland they are called "Hewitts".

