

Giant's Causeway

Northern Ireland: Culture, History Landscapes and Cuisine

25–29 July 2027

AITO
The Specialist Travel Association

JON BAINES TOURS

Level 2
GENTLE



Titanic, Belfast

Northern Ireland sits firmly at the table of cultural, stunningly beautiful and vibrant destinations. Explore Belfast, County Down and County Antrim, where Titanic history, poignant murals, art deco elegance and old-world charm meet magnificent landscapes.

Discover Belfast's proud industrial heritage with a tour of the historic Harland and Wolff shipyard and the immersive Titanic Experience Museum. Gain a deeper understanding of the politics during and after the Troubles, reconciliation, the Good Friday Agreement and the peacebuilding process.

Venture beyond Belfast to Killyleagh, the birthplace of Sir Hans Sloane, and to Derry, a city best explored on foot with a guided walking tour of its 17th-century walls.

Drive on one of the world's great touring routes, the Causeway Coastal Route, which hugs the road between Belfast and Derry.

Local guides and academics bring the spectacular North Antrim coast to life through fascinating talks and visits. Enjoy world-class local cuisine and historic accommodation at the Titanic Hotel.

"In true JB style the visits met all my expectations and more. Particularly interesting to see areas involved in 'The Troubles' in Belfast and Derry and very good to have perspectives from both 'sides'."

Joan Higgins, *Northern Ireland: Culture, Landscapes and Cuisine*, September 2022

THIS TOUR IS CLASSED AS:

Level 2 | Gentle

Easy walking at a mostly leisurely pace. Slightly more daily activity and travel.

Steven Patterson

Steven Patterson is a Belfast man who has been a self-employed tour guide for three years, following a career in the active travel charity sector.

He specialises in and is passionate about the Titanic story and the past, present and future of Belfast's maritime heritage, as well as the world-famous Causeway Coast. He is keen to provide a balanced, informed view of the political Troubles period and focusses on the lead up to the establishment of Northern Ireland, the 30 years' civil war from the mid-1960's through to the peacebuilding process that is still ongoing today. He is also very passionate about Belfast and keen to show off the best of the city.





Dunluce Castle (Heiko Schuff, Unsplash)

Itinerary: 25– 29 July 2027

B = Breakfast L = Lunch D = Dinner

4 nights Belfast



Day 1: Belfast (Sun, 25 July) D

Pm: Arrive in Belfast and check in to the Titanic Hotel. Take a short- guided walking tour around the site of the old Harland and Wolff ship yard, including the slipways where the Titanic was built. Continue the tour inside the hotel (the former Harland and Wolff Head Offices) and visit the old drawing offices.

Eve: Drinks in the Drawing Offices Bar, followed by a welcome dinner in the Wolff Grill.

Day 2: Belfast (Mon, 26 July) B D

Am: Explore Belfast, including the City Hall. Continue to visit the Political Murals and a community exhibition on the Falls Road to hear stories of Belfast during the early days of the Troubles. Continue to the Shankhill Road and visit an exhibition sharing the experiences of Loyalist 'Political' Prisoners and their contribution to the peace process.

Pm: Take part in a guided culinary tour, beginning with a visit to a foodie's treasure trove – a deli dating back to 1897. Enjoy a selection of Northern Irish artisan produce, including the hand-rolled butter served at Claridge's, smoked salmon from a local smokehouse that has been in business for over 100 years, and more, paired with a small glass of wine. The next stop is home to Ireland's best blue cheese, where you will meet the maker and sample his multi-award-winning cheese. Then head underground to visit one of the world's top chocolatiers for a hot chocolate and a brownie. Head to a traditional bar dating back to 1720, pour your own glass of stout (white wine or beer are also an option) and enjoy the best Irish stew in Belfast.

Eve: Walk down a narrow and atmospheric passage, steeped in Victorian history. Climb the stairs and step into a secret, speakeasy-style setting, where you can enjoy a tasting of a local spirit.



Stormont Parliament Buildings

Day 3: Belfast / County Down (Tues, 27 July) B L

Am: Take a self-guided tour of the Titanic Experience with commentary. Drive to Killyleagh via Stormont Parliament Buildings (where the Good Friday Agreement was signed in 1998) and enjoy lunch at the Dufferin Arms, which is a James Joyce Award pub.

Pm: Visit Killyleagh Castle and the Rectory, once home to the Assyriologist Reverend Edward Hincks, one of the scholars who deciphered Mesopotamian cuneiform. See the memorial to Vice-Admiral Sir Henry Blackwood before visiting the Sir Hans Sloane Centre, where you will meet the Director, Elizabeth Crilly, and hear about the life of Sir Hans Sloane. Learn more about the Centre and the legacy of the Hamilton family before returning to Belfast.

Day 4: Belfast / Derry (Wed, 28 July) B D

Am: Drive along the north Antrim Causeway Coast and walk to the dramatic World Heritage Site of the Giant's Causeway. Take photos of the dramatic cliff top ruins of Dunluce Castle.

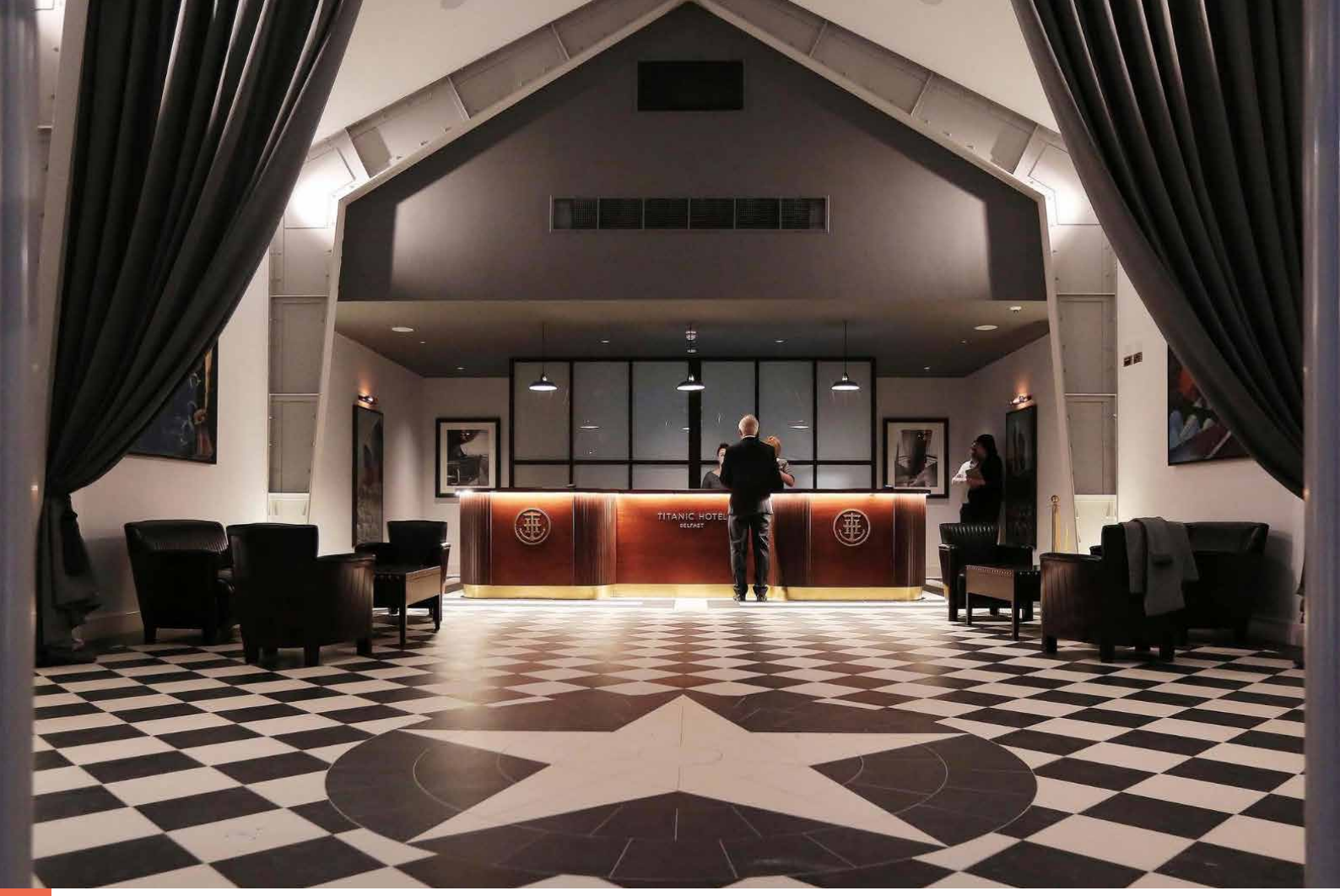
Pm: Visit Derry, starting with a walk along the City Walls and enjoy views of the Guildhall and Peace Bridge. Continue to the Bogside area and the People's Gallery to see the iconic murals from the Troubles including Bloody Sunday and the Free Derry Wall. Walk over the Peace Bridge to Ebrington Square and finish with a visit to the beautiful historic Guild Hall. Return to Belfast for a farewell dinner.

Day 5: Belfast (Thur, 29 July) B

Am: Depart Belfast.



Visit the striking Killyleagh Castle



The hotel reception area

The Titanic Hotel

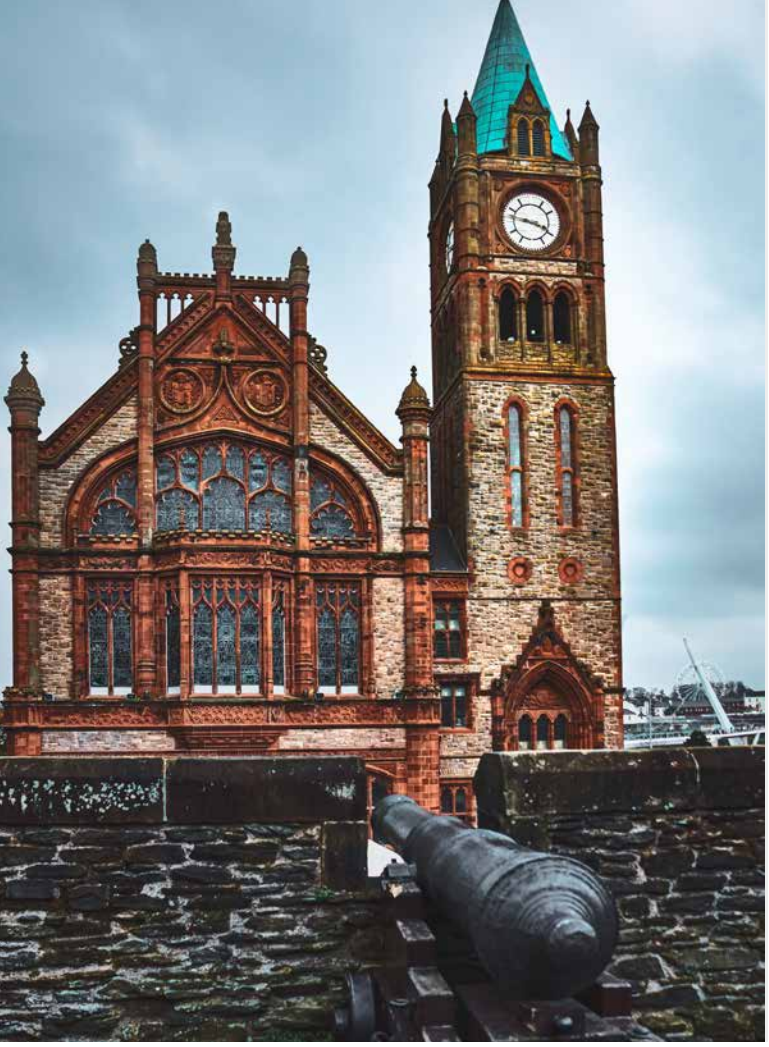
This stylish hotel is located in the heart of Belfast's Titanic Quarter in the legendary Harland & Wolff Headquarters and Drawing Offices that were once the nerve centre of the largest shipyard in the world.

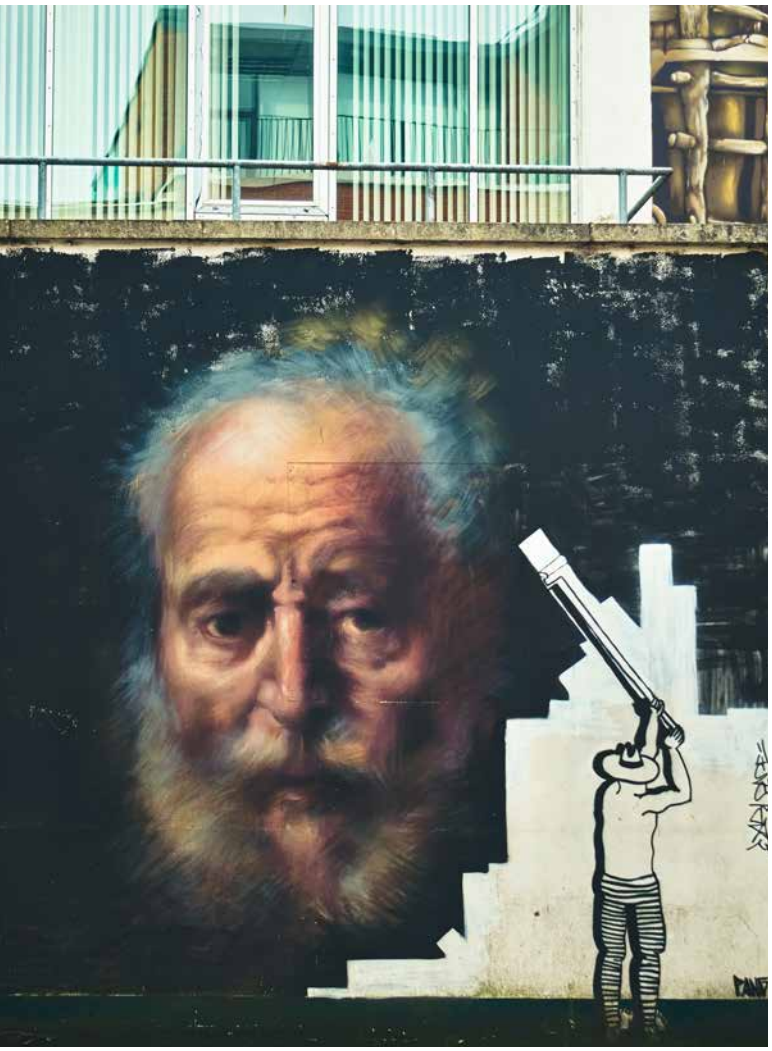
The building is listed due to its special architectural and historical importance. The magnificent dual Victorian Drawing Offices, with their three-storey-high barrel-vaulted ceilings, are the only surviving example of this type of shipyard architecture in the world. The entire White Star Line fleet was designed in the Drawing Offices and constructed on the slipways outside, including the legendary liners Olympic, Titanic and Oceanic and the naval warship HMS Belfast. The hotel was designed in close consultation with conservation architects, incorporating as many original features as possible and retaining art deco and nautical elements throughout.

The hotel features airy, elegant bedrooms with an art deco inspiration. Dining options include a cocktail bar and a stately restaurant, which is a destination in its own right. With a painstaking restoration completed in September 2017, the heritage-listed building is now a glamorous symbol of Belfast's golden age.



Drawing Office Two





A cannon atop the Derry City Walls points toward the Guildhall (top); A mural in Belfast's Cathedral Quarter (above)

The cost of the tour per person sharing a double or twin room is €1470

The cost of the tour with a room to yourself is €1800

The cost includes:

- Four nights' accommodation in twin-bedded rooms with private facilities in the Titanic Hotel
- The services of a tour leader, Steven Petterson
- The services of specialist local guides
- A full programme of cultural visits, excursions and activities as detailed in the itinerary
- Comprehensive briefing notes
- All breakfasts, and lunch or dinner as per itinerary
- All internal transport services
- All admission fees, tips and taxes

The cost excludes

- International flights and airport transfers
- Meals not mentioned
- Drinks with meals except with welcome and farewell dinners
- All optional excursions, tours and visits; all personal extras such as porterage, laundry and inoculation fees; travel insurance and visas, if applicable

NB: All itineraries are subject to change according to local conditions.

About Us

To travel with us is to dig below the surface, revealing the deeper destination. Of course, you will visit the great historical sites; marvel at the wonders of architecture and engineering; be moved by the riches of culture and art; and experience the most spectacular landscapes in the world. We also ensure that you see the country as it is today, giving you privileged access that independent travel and other tour companies rarely get close to.

From the sublime to the humble, we provide a variety of experiences in the company of intelligent, curious, like-minded people. And while we can be worthy, we also make sure that you have a lot of fun!

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The Crown Liquor Saloon (also known as The Crown Bar), Belfast's most famous pub, and a Victorian gin palace (top); A mural for Peace Day on the "Peace Wall" in West Belfast; Landscape photo from inside Dunluce castle; Irish coffee, Ireland's most famous export (above)

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