**TBEX FAM Press Tour Preview: PRE-TBEX FAM

Region:** North-West **Dates:** Depart for Donegal on Saturday, 28th September and return to Dublin on Tuesday, 01st October/Wednesday 2nd October
**Duration:** 3 full days’ tour plus travel time

***A Voyage from the Northerly tip of the Wild Atlantic Way through the scenic
wilderness of Donegal and into Sligo known as ‘The Land of Heart’s Desire,’ Iconic cliffs, spectacular, heart-stopping coastline, rich Gaelic culture &’ craic’, surfers’ heaven and then
‘catch-cook’ your own supper (Seriously!)***

*Picture it. A dazzling three-hundred kilometre indented coastline, mysterious stone forts, unspoiled, rugged countryside, miles and miles of beaches and quiet untravelled roads, Donegal, in the remote North West corner, has a different vibe to the rest of Ireland. People connect with its distinctive culture and gentle charm and savour its remote, unspoiled and off-the-beaten track location. A change in tempo and it’s off to Sligo for a full-on day of activity. W.B. Yeats calls Sligo ‘The Land of heart’s desire’ –and it certainly is full of surprises with its untamed beauty and wealth of archaeology. Are you up for a bracing hike to the top of Benbulben Mountain, then some seaweed therapy to re-energise, a seafood feast and a bit of gentle exercise to unwind? Great, let’s get going then…*

**Travel day – Saturday, 28th September**

Pick-up in Dublin city at 12:30 and Dublin airport at 13:00 & Travel to Donegal:
*Late lunch in Tankardstown House in Slane, Co. and continue to Donegal*Early evening Dinner and Overnight in a Local Hotel

**Day One – Sunday, 29th September**

**Welcome to Spectacular Inishowen**, the largest peninsula in Ireland. Once an island itself, it now enjoys a unique location between two sea lakes and the wild Atlantic Ocean

**Visit Grianan of Aileach Ancient Stone Fort (1700 BC)**
Situated on a windy hill top 800 feet above sea level this ancient stone fort at Aileach is a mysterious circular stone structure which dates back to 1700BC. The view of the surrounding countryside and the glistening waters below of Lough Foyle and Lough Swilly is panoramic. Grianan has been a silent witness to the history of Ireland and the ringfort has been identified as the seat of the [Kingdom of Aileach](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Kings_of_Ailech) and one of the [royal sites](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Royal_sites_of_Ireland) of [Gaelic Ireland](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Gaelic_Ireland).

**Doagh Famine Village**

**Rated Number Donegal Attraction on Tripadvisor**

An informative, thought-provoking and at times humorous look at Irish life, the Famine Village is an outdoor museum that tells the story of life in the area from the Famine back in the 1840s, through the 1900s to the present day. Remoteness, isolation and reliance on small plots of land made this a harsh place to live. It depicts life in Ireland as it was, uncommercialised, interdenominational and interspersed with humorous anecdotes of Irish life.

**Circle the dramatic seascape of Ireland’s most northerly point - Banba’s Crown**What could be a more a fitting place to start your exploration of the Wild Atlantic Way than dramatic Malin Head – Cionn Mhálanna, the very tip of the Inishowen Peninsula. Mythical queen Banba has given her name to the peninsula’s tip – Banba’s Crown. It’s here that guides from Cycle Inishowen will meet you with an Irish-made bike, for a 45-minute ride to stretch your legs in the fresh sea air, and learn about the area’s wildlife, geology and history. There is no better way to experience this part of the world than on a bike as you can get to areas that cannot be accessed by vehicle. At Banba’s Crown, the most northerly point you may even spot basking sharks on their migration. You can relax here and even enjoy some fab coffee from Caffe Banba and out of curiosity you must try a very unique Donegal treat– ‘Football Special’ (fizzy drink reminiscent of banana, anyone?)

**Day 2 – Monday, 30th September**

***Get a windswept experience of Donegal’s coastline with a boat trip around the iconic Sliabh Liag cliffs.***
Weather dependent - Nuala Star Teelin at Teelin Harbour; an impressive 36ft passenger boat will bring you close to the 600 metre high Sliabh Liag cliffs. Take in the many wonderful sights and a wide variety of sea life including seals, dolphins, whales. You can even go swimming in the crystal clear water of the many coves on the tour. Don’t worry - wetsuits are provided if you think the water might be a bit too refreshing…

**Lunch in Glencolumcille (‘the back of beyond’, as it is sometimes called)**

**Afternoon in Glencolumcille discovering Irish culture**Why would over 2,000 people, from 22 different countries, spend a week or more annually, in a beautiful but remote valley in Southwest Donegal? There’s increasing international interest in the Irish language and Glencolumcille has become the stunning location for Oideas Gael’s Irish language courses & cultural programmes. We’ll whet your appetite with a short Irish language lesson and an Irish dancing lesson so don’t forget your dancing shoes!
**Afterwards explore Glencolumcille Folk Villag. It’s** one of Ireland's best living-history museums. Each [cottage](http://www.glenfolkvillage.com/cottages.htm) is an exact replica of a dwelling used by the local people in each of the 18th, 19th and 20th centuries and is equipped with the furniture, artifacts and utensils of its particular period.

**Dine at the award winning Olde Castle Bar and Red Hugh Restaurant** One of Donegal’s leading seafood restaurants. Catch a traditional Irish music session and a pint at The Reel Inn, Bridge Street, Donegal Town

Overnight in Donegal town

**Day 3, Tuesday, 01st October**

**Travel to Sligo**

**Morning:** Take a guided hike with walking guide John Ryan to the top of iconic Benbulben Mountain, Sligo’s version of Table Mountain, Cape Town, South Africa! Enjoy the panoramic views of the surrounding Yeats Country. Alternatively you can also choose to walk the 4km Gortarowey Looped Walk which takes you beneath the head of Benbulben and guarantees breathtaking views of Donegal Bay, Mullaghmore and Classiebawn Castle.

**Lunch** at Shells Café, Strandhill Shells is the perfect beach cafe, bright and airy with wooden floors and fabulous (organic, fairtrade) coffee. Breakfast is served into the afternoon and includes eggs benedict & freshly baked bread. It’s a great little spot throughout the day, bustling with surfers and visitors exploring the seafront. With wonderful wines and an organic Prosecco, this is a real gem.

**In need of some TLC?- Enjoy some Seaweed Therapy at** award-winning Voya Seaweed Baths at Strandhill**! Revive the body and mind with a traditional seaweed bath.** Take a deep, oily soak, floating in a bath of hot Atlantic-seawater and hand-harvested, freshly gathered seaweed. The therapeutic properties of wild seaweed as an organic cure for stresses and strains – put down to the high concentrations of iodine in the seaweed fronds – have long been recognised in Ireland.

or

**Still feeling energetic? Catch some Giant Waves at surfers’ paradise in Strandhill**Huge Atlantic rollers crash onto surfing strands all the way up Ireland’s wild western seaboard. But it’s off the coast of Sligo that they’ve discovered ‘Prowlers’ – a wave like no other with swells said to be up to 100ft. But it’s best in the winter months, so you’ll want to wrap up warm and then hurry back to that seat by a turf fire in a cosy Sligo pub.

**Early Evening: Catch 'n Cook Your Supper**
Depart Rosses Point on a chartered boat in hunt of your supper! What you catch (from flatties to mackerel!) and you should return with a freakishly fresh dinner. The skipper will take you out to the local fishing grounds where you will catch some fresh fish to either have cooked for you at the nearby restaurant of Austies in Rosses Point, or you can learn to cook it yourself in Source Sligo cookery school.

Return to Dublin evening or next morning