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What to Do on Sunny Days in Ireland

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Journals from National University of Ireland

2010-02-23 What to do on sunny days in Ireland

View of Blaskett Islands from Slea Head, Dingle Peninsula

Well, it is snowing again. We had fairly decent weather for a couple weeks where we finally made it above 50 degrees (10 degrees if you asked anyone here) and the sun was actually out more often than not. Katie OBrien and I took the chance to see the Dingle Peninsula, which really should have been a five hour bus ride from here. Instead, it took almost nine hours since our bus arrived late to Limerick and we missed our connection. We finally made it to our hostel in Annascaul (which probably translates to English as middle of nowhere) around nine oclock and found not only that we were the only people staying there, but we were practically the only people in the entire town. The next morning we rented bikes from a combination bar/hardware store/bike rental shop called Foxy Joes in the town of Dingle and rode a 30-mile loop around the peninsula, following the suggestions of our good friend, the 2009 paperback edition of Rick Steves Ireland. Somewhere between fording a stream that crosses right over the road, standing at Slea Head with a view of the Blaskett Islands, and meeting the unbelievably friendly and helpful locals, I realized that I may have to move to the peninsula and herd sheep for the rest of my life.

In the meantime, my roommates and I have been branching out here in Galway. Several of us have started volunteering at a community organic garden, located a leisurely two and a half miles from here. Despite our complete and utter lack of gardening attire (no gloves, no boots, no old sweatshirts, etc), we have moved our share of soil, weeded, and planted everything from aubergines (eggplant) to rocket (arugula). The best part, however, has been tea time, when the community volunteers stuff us full of homemade soup and soda bread, and then sit around chatting with us, tea in hand.

We have also started rock climbing at the gym on campus as part of the mountaineering club. After tonights session where we learn to belay, we will be ready to get certified so we can climb whenever we want. There has also been mention of the club taking trips to climb outdoors elsewhere in Ireland, or possibly even elsewhere in Europe!

Take care,
Cameron Debois, Applied Physics and Mathematics
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Fun facts o the day:
1. I have come to believe that the Irish subsist largely on four main food groups: curry, soup, soda bread, and potatoes (of course).
2. Dragging a rope through the dew of a neighboring farmers field on the morning of May Day will bring an increase in the butter production of your own farm. Do not get caught doing this, though, as the farmer is likely to be a bit sore that his own farms butter production will decrease as a result.
3. On Halloween Eve, if you pull a cabbage from a field while blindfolded, that cabbage will reveal the physical characteristics of your future spouse. If the stalk is long and lanky, your spouse will be tall and thin. If short and thick, they will be stout and plump. Again, this is done at your own risk because the cabbage farmer may not find the uprooting of his crop as amusing as you do.