

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS – PRIVATE GROUPS

This document covers the general questions for corporate groups, golf groups, family or any other type of private group. We have a separate FAQ document for weddings.

WHAT MAKES BALLINACURRA HOUSE DIFFERENT

Q: What would you say are the main differences between having an event at Ballinacurra compared to a hotel?

A: We like to say 'Privacy Makes the Difference'. An exclusive use property has a very different atmosphere to a traditional hotel. It's like your own private club. Your guests will immediately feel relaxed in a totally private environment and since they know everybody on the property is part of your group – they make more of an effort to socialise with everybody. Children are also very safe to roam and play as nobody from the public is ever allowed in.

Perfect Location, Total Privacy - The first thing almost every potential client says is that they are looking for something different, something special. And that's what they most certainly get at Ballinacurra. It's not just the historic house and estate, the world-class chef, the facilities we can offer – it's also a lot about where we are placed, just outside Kinsale which already has its own worldwide reputation.

Q: What would you say are the main features of your property compared to other similar exclusive use properties?

A: There are many! But our key points of difference are:

- **Location – Location – Location.** When people book a venue – the destination is important too. We are only minutes from Kinsale – voted Ireland's Best Tourist Town and Gourmet Capital. It has all the local amenities, activities and facilities you would expect from a heritage town. It also offers a multitude of activities for your guests to enjoy – from fishing, sailing, horseriding, surfing – or merely wandering its streets with its many coffee shops, restaurants, bar and shops. So you don't have to worry about trying to keep them entertained.
- **We offer seclusion – but not isolation.** Many similar properties to ours are miles away from the nearest town and transport links. We are only 5 minutes from Kinsale with its myriad of shops and accommodation, 20 minutes from Cork International Airport and 35 minutes from the centre of Cork and Cork Railway Station.
- **Onsite Event Management Expertise** - Our background is event management – we are not hoteliers. So we work with you in creating the event that YOU want.
- **The Best of the Old and the New** - We are not a Castle filled with valuable antiques and stuffy staff – but a beautiful Georgian house built in 1770 and then fully renovated in the early 2000s with all the modern conveniences you expect like flat-screen TVs, wifi etc – with a sophisticated and romantic modern day twist.
- **Our Staff** - When you read our testimonials one of the key elements that stands out is our staff. Our staff approach every event with the same enthusiasm as the last – and they are personable, professional and fun.
- **Modern Approach to Gourmet Food** – David Rice, our Head Chef previously worked at Chapter One (the Michelin star restaurant in Dublin) as well as other Irish country house hotels. And with having done stints with Gordon Ramsay, Jamie Oliver and River Café, you can be sure that he brings a modern twist to the food. Our reputation for our food is highlighted in our testimonials. We are flexible and try our best to meet your individual requirements. Why not come to a cookery class in our onsite cookery school to enjoy it firsthand?
- **And in addition to the privacy, 5-star food and great staff – there's a little bit of the X factor thrown in.** Just ask any of our past clients and read our testimonials.

PLANNING AND COSTS

Q: Do you charge a venue hire charge like a lot of other Exclusive Use venues do?

A: If you take the minimum number of bedrooms to guarantee exclusive use – there are no additional hire charges. Depending on your type of group, our brochures list the minimum number of rooms that must be taken. Alternatively, you tell us how many people are staying, number of nights, sleeping configuration etc and we advise you on the price. You can't compare our per person rate with the price of a hotel room – what you are getting here is an entire private estate versus what you get in a hotel which is a bedroom and access to their public function areas. Also some venues are cutting out Breakfasts and VAT to make the room price seem cheaper and other subtle elements that you will not notice until it is too late. We believe in being very transparent in everything that we do and if you would like to get some sample budgets, just let us know.

Q: What extras do we have to pay for a meeting or conference?

A: We include a basic setup with the equipment that we have in-house – free of charge. We have a projector screen, laptop projector, 2 flipcharts etc. If you need anything else we can hire it and charge the normal rental charges. We also will do the setup in the layout that your group needs. The main extras are F&B and any additional activities or suppliers that we organise on your behalf. You can have breakout sessions, meetings etc anywhere in the house – there's no additional hire charges. If you have additional attendees to your meetings for example, there may be an additional delegate day rate. Just let us know your requirements and we'll give you our best estimate.

Q: What happens to the other rooms that we don't have to pay for?

A: Unlike other exclusive use venues and hotels we don't rent out the unused rooms to another group – they are left empty. This is the only way we can guarantee your exclusive use of the whole property!

Q: Is it possible to not take all the rooms?

A: As you know we are offering exclusive use. We understand that for a lot of groups you do not need to use all 22 bedrooms. So we have prepared special single, twin and triple rates which you can work out based on the numbers in your group. However, there are minimums involved. These are outlined in our Group Brochure and Business Brochure.

Q: Do we have to book for 2 nights, or is one night an option?

A: Yes one night is an option from Sunday – Thursday or where we have a 1-day weekend date available.

Q: What is the situation with the Booking Confirmation Payment?

A: This payment secures the date and starts the planning process. The deposit is non-refundable. We charge €2,000 x for a one day event, €3,000 for a two day event and €5000 for three days or more.

Q: Are there any hidden charges?

A: Well we do our best to be transparent! All our pricing includes service, VAT etc. We do have some additional charges for premium items, but these are optional. The best thing is to ask for an estimated budget for your event which we are happy to prepare based on your requirements. This outlines the very long list of 'What's Included' and highlights the items that you may like to consider for an additional charge.

Q: What event planning services do you provide?

A: We offer a full range – see our Business or Group Brochure. We charge a nominal 12.5% management fee on anything we organise on your behalf – just to cover our own staff administration time etc.

Q: What happens if I need to cancel?

A: If you need to cancel once this Booking Confirmation Payment has been paid, unfortunately we cannot return this payment. This money is forfeited as we have turned business away for the dates that you have secured.

Conditions of booking cancellation

If you are cancelling your event, there is no refund of the Booking Confirmation Payment and there will also be a charge calculated as a percentage of the estimated total booking value (accommodation, food and beverages) based on your latest Rundown or Budget:

- Cancellation within 12 months of the event – 25% of the latest total booking estimate
- Cancellation within 9 months of the event – 50% of the latest total booking estimate
- Cancellation within 6 months of the event – 75% of the latest total booking estimate
- Cancellation within 3 months of the event – 100% of the latest total booking estimate

Cancellation costs of 100% will apply to entertainment such as bands and other suppliers that have been booked by Ballinacurra House on your behalf.

Q: What happens if I need to change the date of my booking?

A: In the unlikely event that you need to change the date of your booking, you must notify us in writing at least 12 months before. If a suitable alternative date is found, then the booking payment will be transferred. Given the nature of our business, it is very difficult to re – sell dates and facilitate date changes.

Date changes or cancellations should only be done in extenuating circumstances and results in a major loss of business for us as we are not a lastminute.com style of business. We work on long lead times as we are selling a 'property' not just room for the night. Your date should be carefully considered for these reasons. Charges may also apply – depending on lead times.

Conditions of Change of Date

- Date changing Fee: €1,000.00 to cover administration and loss of revenue of that original date.
- If date is moved from Peak to Off Peak, the initial higher rate applies.
- If date is moved from Off Peak to Peak, the higher rate applies.
- If the date is moved to a following year, the House Rate for that year will apply.

If an alternative date cannot be found, then the event will be cancelled and charges apply.

If changing your date within 9 months of your event, then the same penalties as cancelling will apply as we are unlikely to resell your date.

Q: Do we sign a contract or do you have a full list of Terms & Conditions?

A: We have our Terms and Conditions on our website under 'Brochures'. In all of our emails, correspondence, website, brochures, budgets etc we advise you that if you pay the non-refundable Booking Deposit Payment then you are accepting these Terms & Conditions. We ask that you sign an acknowledgement to this after booking.

Q: What are the deadlines for the payment of my event?

A: We prepare updated budgets throughout the planning process so that there are no surprises. So your payment schedule is:

- One month before - You give us your 'best estimates' as to final numbers for food, final food and drink choices, what your guests are paying on checkout etc so we can prepare the 'best estimate' budget. We then calculate your part payment which is basically your guaranteed items which include your share of the house rental and the food. This part payment must be paid into our bank account at least 2 weeks before your wedding.
 - Two weeks before – this is the date for you to provide the final guaranteed numbers for food and any last minute changes.
 - On checkout – you pay the balance which is essentially the drinks and any other last minute changes.
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FOOD & BEVERAGES

Q: What are the minimum guaranteed numbers for the meals?

A: The minimum is the number of people in the house. If you have outside guests attending, you have until 2 weeks before your event to guarantee your numbers for dining. Basically, when you book our property, all we ask is that you guarantee to pay the Exclusive Use Property Price and you give us your best guess on the number of people that will attend. We then work with you based on these numbers for budgeting etc. **Two weeks before your event, you give us your guaranteed number.** This is then the number that you guarantee to pay for even if you have last minute drop outs. We can't be fairer than that!

Q: We want to bring in our own favourite food and drinks. Is this possible?

A: Due to the strict Health and Safety Guidelines that we must adhere to, no food is to be brought onto the property to serve to guests without prior approval. If anybody was to get sick, we would be held responsible. Please discuss with us if there is any other special food you wish to have. No beverages may be brought onto the Property without prior approval – either by the Host or their guests. If alcohol is “smuggled” in for personal consumption by guests - corkage will be added to the master bill to cover the revenue shortfall. Drinks will also be confiscated.

Q: Do you offer Corkage?

A: We have an excellent wine list of special selected wines at competitive prices and our House Wine starts at an affordable €27 per bottle and then we have an excellent range of House Selection wine at €29 per bottle. These are premium wines that should be charged at a higher rate, but we have managed to negotiate a bulk discount price which we pass onto you. Just let us know if you haven't already received our wine list.

Offering corkage is a lot of work for us. We have to remove all of our stock, stocktake our wines, stock take your wines, serve, re-stocktake and pack up unused bottles, pay for the disposal of your empty bottles, pay for the broken glasses, and also then pay 23% VAT on the corkage amount. The operating margins for us are very tight. And what's the benefit to you? Very little! You may end up saving €1-2 per bottle, but for the sake of saving less than €100 is it really worth all the hassle?

In addition to this, since you are bringing the wine in, you have to over-estimate the amount needed to make sure we don't run out. It all turns into a false economy. If you would still like to do corkage, we charge €15 per bottle for wine and €20 per bottle for bubbles.

Q: What do we do about feeding the children?

A: We advise everybody to firstly make a decision as to whether the children are sitting with the adults at dinner or whether they are going to be fed separately and then maybe have some babysitters keep them company so the parents can relax and enjoy their own dinner. Either way – we don't mind. Just be aware that 2 and 3 year olds don't tend to enjoy sitting quietly for 2-3 hours whilst adults eat and talk! We can also prepare special children's meal served whenever you wish. Our children's menu is very cost effective at only €20 per child for a 2 course meal and is available to those up to 12 years old.

Q: Do you offer Food Tastings?

A: Given our exclusive use style of operation rather than a hotel – we do not offer individual food tastings as we would have to close the whole property down for a day in order to do this. Our food is specially prepared by award winning chefs and we can send testimonials from our many satisfied clients – which also includes rock stars and royalty that have enjoyed our a la carte standards. Our Head Chef has run chef cookery schools, worked at Chapter One (the Michelin star restaurant in Dublin) and numerous country house hotels. What we do instead is run a number of 'Food Tasting Days' throughout the year and you or an assigned representative can come along and try the food. We also have our event coordinators on hand to answer any questions, discuss your wine with our bar manager and have a look around the property.

Q: Are there vegetarian options?

A: Yes we can accommodate most vegetarian, allergy and other dietary requirements with advance notice.

Q: Do you charge a service charge?

A: No - Most venues (hotels as well as other exclusive use) charge some form of service charge. We don't, even though we provide a lot of personalised service. Additional gratuities are discretionary and appreciated. Just read our testimonials to appreciate the level of service that we offer!

Q: What time does the bar close?

A: We close the bar at 2:00 am. THIS IS THE LEGAL REQUIREMENT. All non-residents must then depart the property and then we can then re-open the bar to residents only until 4:00 am. As you can appreciate common sense does not always prevail at this time and our staff have a difficult job – as guests refuse to leave. Plans need to be put in place to pre-organise a taxi or minibus shuttle to help get your non-residents home because the sooner they are gone, the sooner the bar re-opens! Kinsale is also very busy place and virtually impossible to get taxis at 2am – so pre-plan. While Kinsale is close by – walking isn't much fun (or safe) at that time of the morning.

BEDROOMS

Q: Are there different types of bedrooms available?

A: All our bedrooms are different – with different features, bathrooms etc. They are all themed which makes the house unique and all of your guests will enjoy their experience. They are all ensuite and we have a number of bed configurations. We have double, twin, triple and quad rooms. And if we have to squeeze a few small children in, we have some children's beds available as well. The only room that is slightly different is the smaller double room in the cottage which has their private ensuite across the corridor.

Q: What is the largest room capacity?

A: The largest room can take 4 adults. Also because it is a private estate – people are more relaxed about sharing compared to a hotel.

Q: What size are the beds?

A: They are all different. Most of our 'doubles' are Queen Size or larger. Many of the doubles are zip-and-link which means that they are 6 feet wide or can change into 2 x 3 foot singles. A couple of the smaller rooms have standard double beds – but we can talk you through the configuration.

Q: Do all the rooms come with baths?

A: The majority of our rooms have walk-in showers as well as baths. A few have showers over the baths and our wheelchair accessible room has a wetroom.

Q: Can we book a non-smoking bedroom?

A: All buildings including bedrooms are non-smoking. We do have ample covered areas outside for those who wish to smoke.

Q: Do you have hairdryers in the bedrooms?

A: Yes

Q: Do you have toiletries in the bathrooms?

A: Yes, we supply shower gel, soap, shampoo and conditioner in all bathrooms. If you need anything extra, we may have toiletry supplies through reception.

Q: Can we get breakfast delivered to our bedroom?

A: A full continental selection and hot cooked breakfast is included in the price of the rooms, and is served in our Dining Room. Due to the unique nature of many of our bedrooms, paintwork and furniture, we don't allow food to be taken or served in the bedrooms.

Q: What about Hair & Make Up ?

A: We have a treatment room for this. We don't allow Make-up in the rooms given the individual nature of our furnishings and carpets and the potential damage.

Q: How can you cater for disabled guests?

A: The house was built in 1770 and although it was fully renovated it remains a listed building. As a result, there are certain issues with regards to disabled access. We have however attempted to meet the needs of these guests as best we can. We have a downstairs bedroom with a full wet room and grab rails for the WC and basin. All power points are lowered and the bedroom allows good floor clearance. This room is also interconnecting with another bedroom so if you wish to have a carer or family member close by to help, then it is possible. We have ramps into our Garden Room and a disabled WC in the Bar area. We have portable ramps which can be moved around by either a staff member or family member to help in the other areas. We have had numerous guests use these facilities.

GENERAL HOUSE QUESTIONS

Q: Do you have WIFI ?

A: There is complimentary wifi service through-out the whole property.

Q: Are high chairs and cots available and what is the charge?

A: We have a number of cots and high chairs available – and they free of charge to use.

Q: How much parking space is there?

A: There is adequate available for guests list up to 150 people.

Q: Can we get clothes ironed or dry cleaned?

A: We have a limited number of irons available for use so we usually set them up in one of the communal areas for everybody to use. If you need dry cleaning, we can check with the local dry cleaner in Kinsale, but if you have a tight lead time, it might not be possible.

Q: What are the standard check-in and check-out times?

A: The standard check-in time is 2:00 pm and check-out is at 11:00 am.

Q: Is it possible to check-in earlier or check-out later?

A: It is sometimes possible, however, this depends on availability and cannot be guaranteed. Additional charges apply to cover additional staff costs, utilities etc. As a rule, each additional hour use of the property beyond our standard checkin/checkout times is €250 per hour.

Q: What credit and debit cards do you accept?

A: We accept all types of credit card but a 2% charge applies. Visa, MasterCard and Debit cards are all accepted. Cheques, Bank Transfers and cash works better of course and there are no additional charges imposed by the banks or ourselves.

Q: How do my guests checkout?

A: If you are having your guests pay for their rooms, we have a checkout desk which you guests come to before they leave. And based on your rooming list which you have provided us, which also indicates how much we are to collect from your guests, we offer this service. This amount collected comes off your budget.



Q: Do you have a pet policy?

A: We can discuss this on a case by case basis as we have our own dogs on the property. Ask for our Dog Policy document and we can discuss it with you.

Q: Can you organise babysitters for children?

A: All Children are the responsibility of the guests and have to be monitored and cared for accordingly, especially with our proximity to water and expanse of grounds. Children's Safety and Supervision are the responsibility of the group and Ballinacurra are not held responsible for any negligence.

- If you would like any babysitters, these require advance bookings with a minimum of four weeks' notice. We do not guarantee this service, but we will try to meet your requirements.
- We recommend a ratio of about 3 children per babysitter. This varies depending on the age of the children, where they are staying, if they require a babysitter to stay in the room once they are asleep etc. There can be a lot of work involved and we don't charge for this service, so we appreciate if you can work with us.
- Give us a brief of the number of children, ages, rooms they are staying in etc. and we will give you our advice.
- The charge is Euro 12 per hour per babysitter and can be paid by the parents or on your bill.

KINSALE

Q: What are the directions to Ballinacurra House?

A: See our website for a downloadable map. Also we are on Google. We are only ever private so there is limited road signage. We suggest you tell your guests to bring the map.

Q: Is it possible to play golf while I am in Kinsale?

A: Yes there are 5 courses including the world renowned Old Head Golf Course.

Q: What activities are available in Kinsale?

A: There are many wonderful activities in Kinsale including world class sailing golf, horse riding etc. Look at www.kinsale.ie for a more detailed list.

We are happy to answer your questions, just email us at info@ballinacurra.com or see our website www.ballinacurra.com.



WWW.BALLINACURRA.COM