

ON THE RECORD

Execs at Ireland specialist CIE talk about expansion

By Brinley Hineman | Mar 02, 2026

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Ireland specialist CIE Tours has expanded outside of Great Britain in recent years to destinations like Italy. Tours editor Brinley Hineman sat down with chief commercial officer Rosanne Zusman and Conor Wall, head of product, contracting and sustainability, to discuss the brand's expansion into new places and products.

Q: *CIE only expanded outside of Great Britain and Ireland less than a decade ago and **launched Spain** last year and is going into Portugal in 2027. Why does the company want to grow its destination portfolio?*



Rosanne Zusman

RZ: Less than 10 years ago, CIE Tours was only Ireland, and Britain was the first [destination we expanded to.] In 2018, we expanded beyond Ireland and Britain. Back in 2018, it was part of a revamping and reimagining of the company strategy. We had a new CEO, and he had developed a business plan that talked about diversification. As fabulous as Ireland is – and we do have a couple who will be going on their 18th tour of Ireland with us – there's also people who love the CIE Tours experience, but they'd like to experience it

elsewhere. So it's helped with our repeat guest rate. It's broadened the product offering that we have.

CW: All these people love traveling with CIE Tours but have been to Ireland, been to the U.K. Where else are you going to go? So when you look at the data for Italy, Iceland and Spain, you'll see that there is a huge interest. But we need to get that message out there that Ireland is still a core business, as is the U.K.

Q: *CIE expanded to Spain last year after launching **tours in Italy in 2024**. What's coming this year?*

RZ: We actually have two new tours in Italy. One is a 13-day tour called the Grand Tour from Italian Lakes to the Amalfi Coast. And the other one is a 10-day tour, and it's from the Amalfi Coast to Rome. What I find interesting is not only that both tours are selling well, but the longer, more expensive tour is probably selling two-to-one, really. We also have two other tours, which are walking and hiking.

We've actually expanded quite a bit, and we're going to take a pause.

Q: *Walking and hiking tours seem to be having a moment. I know several operators offer them, and some specialize in the travel style. Why the decision to break into the active space?*

RZ: It's light-active. It's a really nice balance of some light hikes, active walking, but then you're still seeing the classic sights that you've come to Ireland to see.

CW: I was at a conference in Ireland where all these adventure walking, hiking operators, they were so impressed to have someone like ourselves coming on board, just to promote the whole thing. But it's definitely new to us. We are very excited about it.



Conor Wall

Q: *What will be your approach to operating active itineraries?*

CW: They're small groups, which is great. It's really intimate. It's a brilliant way to do [travel.] I'm lucky enough to have done some of these already, and I have to hike the 15 miles one day -- or whatever it is -- but the next day is a down day. It's a great balance. What you will find is that people who are drawn towards this product, they're very active people -- but you don't need to be too active, by the way.

<https://www.travelweekly.com/On-The-Record/Rosanne-Zusman-Conor-Wall-CIE-Tours>