

THE REPUBLIC OF IRELAND

- **Capital:** Dublin
- **Population:** About 5 million people
- **Official languages:** English and Irish (Gaelic)
- **Currency:** Euro (€)
- **Political system:** Parliamentary republic
- **President** (head of state): **Catherine Connolly** (The role is mostly ceremonial, he represents Ireland at official events and promotes Irish culture
- **Prime minister** (head of government, called Taoiseach): **Micheál Martin** (He is responsible for running the country and making political decisions)


Flag

- The flag of Ireland is a **tricolour**:
 - **Green** – represents Irish Catholics and nationalism
 - **White** – stands for peace
 - **Orange** – represents Protestants and followers of William of Orange

National Anthem

- The national anthem is **Amhrán na bhFiann** (*The Soldier's Song*). It is usually sung in the Irish language.

National Symbols

- **Shamrock** () – symbol of Ireland and associated with Saint Patrick
- **Harp** – the official national symbol, used on coins and government emblems
- **Celtic cross** – an important cultural and religious symbol

THE MOST IMPORTANT CITIES

DUBLIN (Capital City)

Dublin is the largest and most important city in Ireland, known for its rich history and lively atmosphere.

Top attractions:

- Trinity College Dublin – home to the famous Book of Kells
- Guinness Storehouse – learn about Ireland's iconic beer
- Dublin Castle – a symbol of British rule in the past
- Temple Bar district – famous for nightlife, pubs, and live music

CORK – is Ireland’s second largest city, important cultural center , Located in the south of Ireland, Known for food, markets, and festivals , often called the “real capital” by locals

Top attractions:

- English Market – a historic indoor market
- Blarney Castle – kiss the famous Blarney Stone
- Cork City Gaol – explore Irish history

GALWAY– Located on the west coast, famous for arts, music, and culture,,hosts many festivals, especially in summer, known for a friendly and youthful atmosphere

Top attractions:

- Eyre Square – central meeting place
- Spanish Arch – a remnant of medieval walls
- Street performances and festivals, especially during summer

LIMERICK – historic city located on the River Shannon and has a strong medieval history

Top attractions:

- King John's Castle – well-preserved Norman castle
- St. Mary's Cathedral – one of the oldest buildings in the city
- Riverside walks along the Shannon

WATERFORD – the oldest city in Ireland, founded by Vikings.

Top attractions:

- Waterford Crystal – famous worldwide
- Reginald's Tower – historic landmark
- Viking Triangle – area full of museums

CULTURE

Famous Irish Writers

1. James Joyce

- **Key Works:** *Ulysses*, *Dubliners*, *A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man*, *Finnegans Wake*
- A central figure in modernist literature; known for innovative writing techniques like **stream-of-consciousness**; his work often explores the life of Dublin and Irish identity.

2. Oscar Wilde

- **Key Works:** *The Picture of Dorian Gray*, *The Importance of Being Earnest*, *De Profundis*
- Famous for his wit, satire, and flamboyant personality; one of Ireland’s most celebrated playwrights and novelists of the late 19th century.

3. W.B. Yeats

- **Key Works:** *The Tower*, *The Winding Stair*, *The Second Coming*
- Nobel Prize in Literature (1923); a key figure in the Irish Literary Revival; explored Irish mythology, mysticism, and nationalism.

4. Samuel Beckett

- **Key Works:** *Waiting for Godot*, *Endgame*, *Molloy*
- Nobel Prize in Literature (1969); known for **absurdist theater** and existential themes; wrote in both English and French.

Famous Actors

- Cillian Murphy – known for *Oppenheimer* and *Peaky Blinders*
- Saoirse Ronan – Oscar-nominated actress
- Liam Neeson – famous for action films
- Pierce Brosnan – played James Bond

Famous Musicians

- U2 – one of the biggest rock bands in the world
- Bono – singer and activist
- Enya – known for calm, atmospheric music
- Hozier – famous for *Take Me to Church*

GEOGRAPHY

- Ireland is known as the “**Emerald Isle**” because of its green landscapes. It has many hills, rivers, and a rugged coastline.

Location (Polożenie)

- Ireland is located in **Western Europe**.
- It lies on an island in the North Atlantic Ocean.
- It is west of the United Kingdom.
- The island is divided into the Republic of Ireland and Northern Ireland (part of the United Kingdom)

NATIONAL PARKS (Parki narodowe)

- Ireland currently has **7 national parks** (including Wild Nephin National Park in County Mayo).
- All parks are managed by the National Parks and Wildlife Service (NPWS).
- They are protected areas, preserving biodiversity, landscapes, and cultural heritage.
- Most parks are free to enter and open year-round.

Killarney National Park

Located in County Kerry, Killarney National Park is the oldest national park in Ireland (established in 1932). It is famous for:

- Stunning lakes known as the Lakes of Killarney
- Native oak and yew woodlands
- The only remaining herd of native red deer in Ireland
- Historic sites like Muckross House

Wicklow Mountains National Park

Situated south of Dublin, Wicklow Mountains National Park is the largest national park in Ireland. Key features:

- Rolling mountains and deep valleys
- The scenic Glendalough, an early Christian monastic site
- Popular for hiking, cycling, and nature photography

Connemara National Park

Found in County Galway, Connemara National Park is known for its rugged beauty. Highlights include:

- Mountains such as the Twelve Bens
- Vast boglands and grasslands
- Wildlife like Connemara ponies
- Coastal views of the Atlantic Ocean

Burren National Park

Located in County Clare, Burren National Park has a very unusual landscape. Important facts:

- Limestone pavements with cracks called “grikes”
- Rare combination of Arctic, Mediterranean, and Alpine plants
- Rich archaeological heritage, including ancient tombs

Glenveagh National Park

Situated in County Donegal, Glenveagh National Park is one of the most remote parks. Key features:

- Wild mountains and pristine lakes
- Glenveagh Castle and its gardens
- Habitat for golden eagles, which have been reintroduced to Ireland

Highest Peak (Najwyższy szczyt)

- The highest mountain is **Carrauntoohil** (1,038 m), located in County Kerry, it is the central peak of the Macgillycuddy's Reeks range.

Longest River (Najdłuższa rzeka)

- The longest river is the **River Shannon**.

Lakes (Jeziora)

- **Lough Neagh** – the largest lake in Ireland and the UK (this lake is located in Northern Ireland which is the part of the United Kingdom)
- **Lough Corrib** – one of the biggest lakes in the Republic of Ireland
- **Lough Derg** – popular for tourism

EARLY HISTORY

- Ireland has been inhabited for thousands of years.
- The Celts arrived around 500 BC and influenced Irish culture, language, and traditions.

Christianization

- Christianity spread in the 5th century.
- Saint Patrick played a key role in converting the Irish to Christianity.

Saint Patrick – Patron Saint of Ireland

Saint Patrick is the most important patron saint of Ireland. He lived in the 5th century and is credited with bringing Christianity to the island. He was actually born in Britain, not Ireland. He was kidnapped and brought to Ireland as a slave when he was young. After escaping, he later returned to Ireland as a missionary. He used the shamrock (a three-leaf clover) to explain the concept of the Holy Trinity. Over time, he became a symbol of Irish culture and faith.

Saint Patrick's Day

- Saint Patrick's Day is celebrated every year on **March 17th**, the traditional date of Saint Patrick's death. It is both a religious and national holiday, it celebrates Irish identity and culture .

How it is celebrated:

- Parades in cities like Dublin and around the world
- People wear green clothes and shamrocks
- Traditional Irish music and dancing
- Festivals, food, and celebrations in pubs

English Rule

- Ireland came under English control in the 12th century.

- Over time, England (later Great Britain) ruled most of the island.

The Great Famine (1845–1849)

- The Great Famine caused mass starvation and emigration.
- About one million people died and many emigrated, especially to the USA.

Fight for Independence

- In 1916, the Easter Rising took place in Dublin.
- This led to the War of Independence (1919–1921).

Independence and Division

- In **1922**, most of Ireland became independent as the Irish Free State.
- The island was divided, and Northern Ireland remained part of the United Kingdom.

The Troubles (1960s–1998)

A conflict in Northern Ireland between **Unionists /Loyalists** (mostly Protestant), who wanted Northern Ireland to remain part of the UK and **Nationalists/Republicans** (mostly Catholic), who wanted to unite with Ireland. Ended with the **Good Friday Agreement**.

Modern Ireland

- Ireland joined the European Communities (now EU) in 1973.
- Today it is a modern, democratic country with a strong economy.

CASTLES



Blarney Castle

Blarney Castle is one of the most popular tourist attractions in Ireland, located near Cork. It was built in the 15th century.

- It is famous for the **Blarney Stone**, which visitors can kiss to receive the “gift of eloquence” (the ability to speak well).
- The castle is surrounded by beautiful gardens and walking paths.
- Climbing to the top gives great views of the countryside.



Kilkenny Castle

Kilkenny Castle is a large and well-preserved castle in the city of Kilkenny.

- It was originally built in the 12th century by the Normans.
- The castle has been restored and now includes elegant rooms and art collections.
- It is surrounded by a large park, perfect for relaxing walks.



Bunratty Castle

Bunratty Castle is a fully restored medieval castle in County Clare.

- It dates back to the 15th century.

- Inside, you can see how people lived in medieval times.
- Next to the castle is a folk park showing traditional Irish village life.
- It is also known for medieval banquets with music and entertainment.

Rock of Cashel

The Rock of Cashel is one of Ireland's most important historical sites.

- It sits on a high rock and includes a group of medieval buildings.
- It was once the seat of the Kings of Munster.
- The site includes a cathedral, a round tower, and a chapel with ancient frescoes.
- It offers spectacular views of the surrounding landscape.

Tourist Attractions & Landmarks

- **Cliffs of Moher** – famous high sea cliffs
- **Trinity College Dublin** – home of the Book of Kells (**The *Book of Kells*** is one of the most famous and beautiful medieval manuscripts in the world. It was created around the year **800 AD** by Celtic monks; a richly decorated copy of the **four Gospels** of the New Testament written in Latin,)
- **Ring of Kerry** – beautiful tourist route
- **Giant's Causeway** – unique rock formations ((this lake is located in Northern Ireland which is the part of the United Kingdom)
- **Aran Islands** – Traditional Irish culture, stone forts, and scenic landscapes.
- **Glendalough** – Ancient monastic site surrounded by lakes and mountains.
- **Dingle Peninsula** – Charming coastal village with stunning scenery and marine wildlife.
- **Slieve League Cliffs** – Some of Europe's highest sea cliffs, less crowded than Moher.