

# Travel & Driving Guide

# Ireland



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# Touring Ireland by Car

Breathtaking scenery and stunning natural beauty along with some of the worlds friendliest people, make Ireland the perfect holiday destination. While you're there visit ancient castles and historic houses, heritage towns and coastal villages, quaint pubs and fantastic restaurants, cosmopolitan cities and vibrant urban cities. Enjoy traditional attractions while you discover some of Irelands unique treasures.

Ireland's roads bring back the joy of touring by car – so close, so easy, so much to see and do. This guide is aimed at the traveler who wants to see all that Ireland has to offer, particularly with the comfort and freedom of your own vehicle. We've included all the information you'll need for a self drive vacation in Ireland, from renting a car, rules of the road, even signposts, to some great ideas for touring the different and unique regions of this wonderful island.

## Ireland Driving Laws

- Driving in Ireland is on the left hand side of the road and seat belts must be worn at all times in the front and back of the vehicle.
- Motorcyclists and their passengers must wear helmets.
- There are very strict laws on drinking and driving and those found to be breaking these laws will be heavily penalized. Drive with blood alcohol level of over 0.08% and you could face imprisonment. So don't drink and drive!
- In both the Republic of Ireland and Northern Ireland, speed limits are 30mph/50kph in built-up areas, 60mph/100kph on the open road and 100mph/110kph on the motorway.
- Children under 12 cannot ride in the front seat.
- Horns are not to be used between 11:30pm and 7:00am.
- Do not use your mobile phone when driving – it's illegal and unsafe.
- Cars already on a roundabout always have the right of way. At unmarked crossings, give way to vehicles approaching from the right.
- In the Republic of Ireland, yellow signs with black markings will give instructions at marked crossings - a graphic approximation of the layout with thick lines denoting the right of way, thinner lines representing roads that have to give way.

## Parking in Ireland

Yellow lines indicate parking restrictions.

Double yellow lines means no parking at any time.

Single yellow line means no parking from 8.00am to 6.30pm Monday to Saturday.

Broken yellow lines means there are few restrictions, so check the nearest sign for details.

Pay-and-Display - normally found in major towns and cities: enter the money for the required amount of time, collect the ticket and display the ticket clearly on the dashboard.



# Tips on Driving in Ireland

Driving in Ireland is similar to driving in the UK as you are on the left hand side. There are a few rules to follow to enjoy your holiday, so when you collect your car rental, try to adhere to the following rough guide to make your driving holiday in the Emerald Isle as good as it should be.

- Familiarize yourself with the rental car and its controls: The same as getting into any new or different vehicle, recognize the location of all the car's controls.
- Drive on the left side of the road.
- Get a good map or a GPS with appropriate map.
- Get to know the road signs.
- Respect the right of way.
- Don't run out of gasoline! In rural areas, few gas stations exist and are distant between each other, so try to keep the tank full.
- Avoid illegal parking. There are particularly 'efficient' parking control companies in Ireland that are more than happy to clamp or even tow your illegally parked car, only to be released with rather hefty fines. Any fees or damage will most often not be covered by insurance, so make sure your car is parked legally.
- Expect the unexpected. The majority of driving you'll do in Ireland is in rural countryside, so don't be surprised by the unexpected farm machinery or herd of sheep on the road. Remember to drive cautiously.



# Cross Border Fees

## Traveling between Republic of Ireland & Northern Ireland

Travel from the Republic of Ireland to Northern Ireland is extremely popular with tourists, however, depending on the supplier, car rental companies will sometimes charge a cross border fee. Drivers are required to attain written permission from the rental company to travel into Northern Ireland as well as Wales, England and Scotland, and may face substantial fines to travel to other countries without permission. The cost to travel from Northern Ireland to the Republic of Ireland will vary depending on the car rental supplier and often depends on the length of the time spent abroad. Check the details of your car rental before you book to ensure that you're aware of any additional charges.

## One Way Car Rentals

There may be additional charges to collect from one city and drop off in another within the same country, depending on the cities involved. Some companies will not permit international one way rentals from Republic of Ireland to Northern Ireland, and for one way rentals from Northern Ireland to Republic of Ireland fees vary anywhere from £100-£300, so before you book find out any other additional charges from your car rental supplier. Remember that you may not be covered by insurance if you travel to another country without the car rental company's permission.

## Road tolls & E tags

Tolls are payable at two points in the Dublin area – M50 Ring Road between the N4 and N3 interchanges only and on the R131 East Link Bridge. Tolls are being introduced on some new motorways, e.g. the E1 (M1) route which connects Dublin and Belfast. Expect to pay anywhere from €1.00 to €2.70 for tolls, so keep some spare change handy on the major routes.

## Car Ferry Tolls

With many rivers winding across Ireland, there are a few car ferry crossings that you'll come across. Expect to pay anywhere between €4 and €35 for foot passengers, cyclist and cars.

## Road Sign Definitions

- Direction signs will be in blue for Freeways/Motorways, green for national roads and white for local roads.
- Tourist drives and places of interest are indicated with signs in brown with white writing.
- Traffic calming – speed bumps ahead.
- In the Republic, signs denoting distance are now in kilometres per hour. All signposts and place names are displayed in both Irish (Gaelic) and English. In Northern Ireland all signs and limits are in miles per hour and place names are displayed in English.



# Minimum & Maximum Age Requirements

**Min age: 21**

**Max age: 70**

Out of age fees may apply depending on the car rental supplier. In some cases, drivers over the age of 70 may be able to rent a vehicle with a letter from their GP stating they are healthy and fit to drive. Check with Auto Europe for further details.

# Child Safety Rules

- Children must be restrained at all times.
- Children under 12 cannot travel in the front seat.
- Children under 150cms or 36kg must use a booster seat that raises them to the optimum height at which their seat belt work.
- Ensure that the baby seat is suitable to the child's weight and height, according the United Nations standard ECE Regulation 44-03 which will be marked with an 'E' sign.

Type of Restraint	Weight	Approx Age
Group O: forward facing seat	>10kg	Birth to 6-9 months
Groups O+ : rearward facing seat	>13kg	Birth to 12-15 months
Group 1: forward facing seat	9-18kg	9 months—4 years
Group 2 : booster seat	12-25kg	4-6 years
Group 3 : booster cushion	22-36kg	6-11 years

# License Requirements

North American drivers do not require an international driver's license to drive in the Republic of Ireland and Northern Ireland. Drivers will normally be required to have held a full license for at least two years.

# Insurance

Third Party insurance is compulsory and will be included in your car rental rate. This covers you for other people's injury and damage to their vehicle. Rental companies will normally also include:

- **Collision Damage Waiver: (CDW):** This limits your financial liability for damage to the rented vehicle, and is normally included in prepaid car hire rates. Rentals are normally subject to liability excess, which can be reduced at the time you collect your rental car.
- **Theft Loss Cover:** This limits your financial liability for the loss or theft of the rented vehicle and is generally included in prepaid car rental rates.
- **Fire and Liability:** This limits your financial liability for bodily injury or death, and is normally included in prepaid car rental rates.
- **Personal Accident Insurance:** This covers the driver for personal injuries and is generally not included in your car rental rates. It is considered an optional extra that you can take upon collection of the car.

# Car Rental FAQ's:

**What kind of car should I rent for my stay in Ireland?**

Unless you're traveling with a large number of people, or you feel confident in any size car, it's better to rent a smaller car that is easier to maneuver around the narrow winding roads of Ireland.

**How do I figure what car is right for me?**

You can use the ACRISS system to show you which car will suit your needs.

**What's the ACRISS system?**

The ACRISS is a car coding system used to identify the features of a car so that you can be sure to get the same standard of car wherever you rent your car in the world. Use the matrix below when deciding which car is right for you:

Class	Fuel Capacity	Type	Transmission	Fuel/Air Cond.
M = Mini	0.8 - 1.0	B = 2 Door	M = Manual	R = Yes
E = Economy	1.0 - 1.4	D = 4 Door	A = Automatic	N = No
C = Compact	1.2 - 1.6	C = 2/4 door	N = Manual 4WD	D = Diesel Air
F = Full size	2.0 - 3.2	L = Limousine	C = Manual AWD	Q = Diesel No Air
P = Premium	2.0 - 4.2	S = Sports Car	B = Auto 4WD	H = Hybrid Air
L = Luxury	2.0 - 4.2	T = Convertible	D = Auto AWD	I = Hybrid No Air
X = Special	1.2 - 3.0	J = All Terrain		E = Electric Air
		R = Recreational		C = Electric No Air
		F = 4 Wheel Drive		
		X = Special		
		K = Commercial Van/Truck		
		P = Ute		
		X = Special		



**Is it cheaper to rent a manual or automatic car in Ireland?**

In the majority of cases, it's much cheaper to rent a manual car rather than an automatic.

**Can I collect my rental car from any airport in Ireland?**

Yes, most car rental suppliers have desks at the both Dublin and Belfast international airports, as well as the domestic and local airports in most larger towns.

**I'm traveling into Ireland by ferry. Do you have car rental stations at the ferry ports?**

Absolutely! You can collect your car from Dun Laoghaire ferry port.

**What about collecting my rental car from downtown Dublin?**

Auto Europe has car rental suppliers in convenient downtown locations. If you'd rather avoid driving in the city center, you can collect your car from Dun Laoghaire ferry depot.

**I drove my car rental through the M50 road toll without paying the toll – what do I have to do?**

Most car rental suppliers have direct accounts with toll operators. You should advise the car rental company when you drop off the car that this has occurred, and then pay the supplier the fee, otherwise you may be slapped with a pretty large administration fee onto your credit card as well as the original toll.

**Should I hire a GPS for driving in Ireland?**

GPS hire is available from Auto Europe. The GPS is delivered directly to your home before you depart. GPS units can also be requested with some suppliers, however this will be at their own rates. If time is short though, or you would simply prefer to collect your GPS unit together with your rental, then this may be an option for you.

**Should I take out additional insurance on my car rental?**

Rental rates will include basic insurance: Collision Damage Waiver (CDW), Third Party Liability and Theft Protection. In the event that your rental vehicle is accidentally damaged, regardless of who is at fault, or stolen, the Insurance deductible is the maximum amount you are liable for. In Ireland, the base amount of the deductible begins at £600.

# Dublin

Situated on Ireland's east coast, Dublin lies on the banks of the River Liffey. The capital of Ireland, Dublin is a vibrant city, full of trendy bars, luxury hotels, fine restaurants and high end shopping, yet still maintains a unique, down-to-earth spirit. Dublin is home to some of Europe's most remarkable historical sites and heritage, boasting some of Ireland's best Georgian architecture. This fantastic blend of modern, energetic lifestyle, culture and history mixed along with a good dose of Irish *craic* make Dublin one of the world's most visited and enjoyed cities.

## Best Things to See & Do

**The National Gallery, Library & Gallery** – See fine Irish art, works by Yeats, bounty of relics and treasures from the Bronze Age, Vikings and Ancient Egypt.

**The Dublin Writer's Museum** – Huge collection of books, poetry and portraits from Ireland's literary greats.

**Trinity College** – Built in 1592, Ireland's oldest university and home to the Book of Kells.

**Dublin Castle** – Originally built in 1204, it now houses the Major Irish governmental complex with only the Record Tower

surviving the original building.

**Malahide Castle**– Beautiful castle set on a 260 acre estate.

**Tour St Patrick's Cathedral** – Visit one of Ireland's earliest Christian sites, built in 1191, and home to the Living Stones.

**Visit the Temple Bar** – Meander the cobbled streets of Dublin's Cultural Quarter, and visit the myriad of pubs, bars, street markets and restaurants.

**Tour the Guinness Storehouse** – Take a tour of the brewery that produces Ireland's signature drink.

**Visit Croke Park** - See a game of Hurling and get a taste of traditional Irish sport.

**Relax at Phoenix Park** – Take a break from the buzz of the city and visit Phoenix Park, 12 hectares of landscaped gardens and nature trails. Also home to Dublin Zoo.



Dublin Castle

## What's On...

**January:**

- Temple Bar Traditional Festival of Irish Music and Culture.

**March:**

- St Patrick's Festival—on and around 17 March.

**April:**

- Colours Boat Race—Rowing race between Trinity College and University College Dublin.

**June:**

- Dublin Writer's festival.

**September:**

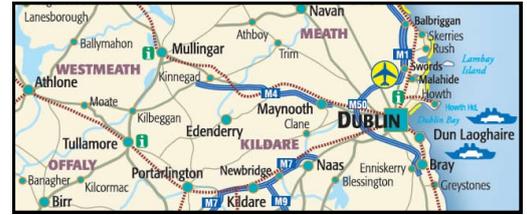
- Dublin Fringe Festival.
- The Liffey Swim—swimmers race from Rory O'More Bridge to Customs House.

# Self Drive Tours around Dublin

## Midlands Historic Houses and Castles

To see the best historic houses, castles and religious foundations, travel from Dublin along the N4 to the university town of Manooth, then continue on the N4 to Mullingar, where you can visit Belvedere House and Gardens. Travel further on to the bustling town of Althone on the banks of the River Shannon. Visit the ancient Celtic foundations of Clonmacnoise, and see ruins from the 13<sup>th</sup> century.

Drive along the N6 to Moate, joining the N80 to Tullamore and visit the home of the famous Whiskey, Tullamore Dew. With your designated driver at the wheel, head south along the N52 to the heritage town of Birr and visit its enchanting castle also stopping off at the castle in Kinitty. Drive through the Slieve Bloom Mountains onto the gorgeous town Portlaoise where you can see an 800 year old castle at Dunamase. Visit the Irish National Stud and Gardens on the return to Dublin via the N8.



Clonmacnoise, Co. Offaly

## Coastal Route: North and South Coast:

Take the Navan Road out of Dublin and head northwest for Tara, the site of a former royal acropolis in an area that is rich in ancient monuments. Continue north to Navan and Slane, and visit the Bronze Age cemeteries of Bru na Boinne, Kings William Glen, Melifont Abbey and Monasterboice. Drive through Drogheda to Dunleer and Dundalk, where you can explore the surrounding countryside. Head further north and drive a loop along the rugged Carlingford Peninsular around Omeath, Carlingford and Ballymascanlon, and back down to Dundalk.

Head back south, through Castlebellingham, Clogher and Baltray, with a great beach and golf course, then on to Drogheda on the River Boyne. Follow the coast road and enjoy a pleasant drive through Balbriggan, Skerries, Rush, Lusk, detour to Newbridge House in Donabate. Stop by at Howthe and take in the magnificent views from the rocky hill of Howthe. Drive back to Dublin via Sutton.

Head south from Dublin toward the Wicklow Mountains, and stop at the pretty village of Enniskerry. See the highest waterfall in Ireland at the Powerscourt Estate and Gardens. Drive through the Sally Gap towards Glendalough, one of the most picturesque valleys in county Wicklow, then through Rathdrum and Avoca towards the resort town of Arklow. From here, head north towards the town of Wicklow where you can enjoy great views of the bay, then stop by at Mount Usher Gardens near Ashford just north of Wicklow. Drive on to Greystones and Bray and through the rugged Devils Glen and the Great Sugar Loaf Mountain. On your return into Dublin, drive through Kilkee and Dalkey to enjoy the views of Dublin Bay and the city beyond.



# Belfast

This beautiful Victorian city is a city reborn; where old and new stand proudly side by side creating charm and character that is truly unique. Belfast's areas can be divided into quarters: the Cathedral quarter is the oldest part, with cobbled streets, historic pubs and fantastic restaurants; the Titanic Quarter has an incredible maritime & industrial history and is home to the magnificent Belfast Waterfront Hall; the Gaeltacht Quarter where you'll see the city's descriptive wall murals and is home to Irish language and culture; and finally the Queen's Quarter that houses some of the best eateries and pubs in Belfast.

## Best Things to See & Do

**St Anne's Cathedral** – This magnificent cathedral was built in 1776, with an incredible black & white marble maze inside.

**Belfast City Hall** – This is the home of Belfast City Council from Portland Stone, and is also home to the Belfast Wheel, offering fantastic views across the city.

**Belfast Castle** – Belfast Castle is located 400 feet above sea level and offers breathtaking views of the Belfast Lough from its position on top of Cave Hill.

**The Odyssey Arena** – This is fast becoming Belfast's premier entertainment and leisure venue for international artists and exhibitions.

**Visit Zoological Gardens** – Belfast Zoo is home to over 1,200 animals, where the focus is on conservation and education.

**Belfast Botanic Gardens** – These gardens were established in 1895 next to the Queen's University, and are home to Belfast's most historical landmark, the Great Palm House.

**St George Market** – Operating as Friday market since 1604, the markets running at the St George site where you can taste & buy almost any local or regional produce.

**Titanic Boat Tour** – Take a tour of the shipyard of Harland & Wolff, which is the birthplace of the infamous Titanic.

**Visit the Crown Liquor Saloon** – Enjoy a Pint of Guinness in the National Trust-owned Crown Liquor Saloon.

**W5** – A science and information attraction where you can partake in interactive exhibits to learn about science and animation.



## What's On...

**April:**

- **Titanic Made in Belfast** – The week long festival that celebrates the majestic Titanic and the craftsmen of Belfast that helped to create her.

**May:**

- **10 Cathedral Quarter Arts Festival** – Held over two weeks, this is a celebration of life and art.

**July:**

- **Rose Week** – Held in Sir Thomas and Lady Dixon Park, this is an amazing horticultural showcase.

**August:**

- **Belfast Maritime Festival** – This is a festival for all the family, including music, children's exhibitions, boat tours and water sports.

# Self Drive Tours around Belfast

## Belfast to Dublin

Drive from Bangor near Belfast along the A2 coast road to the seaside town of Ballywater, head west to Greyabbey, then south on the A20 to Portaferry. Take the car ferry over Strangford Lough to Downpatrick to visit St Patrick's grave on Cathedral Hill.

Drive through Clough and on to Newcastle where the Mourne's 'sweep down to the sea', then on to the fishing port of Kilkeel. Follow the A2 along the coast to Rostrevor, Warrenpoint and along to Newry. From Newry, travel south toward Dublin, through Dundalk and stopping off at Drogheda to see the prehistoric tombs at Newgrange, Knowth and Dowth. You can see where St Patrick lit the first paschal fire at Slane before returning on to Dublin.



St Patrick's Grave, Co Down

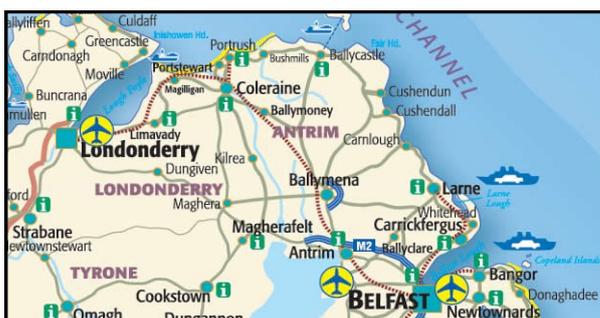


## The Causeway Coastal Route

This is rated as one of the top 5 scenic drives in the world, running from Belfast Lough to Londonderry with an incredible mosaic of fishing villages, quiet beaches, rugged coastlines, mountains and magnificent scenery. Leave Belfast and join the Causeway Coastal Route at Newtownabbey. Enjoy the view of Belfast Lough to the right as you head further west toward the seaside town of Carrickfergus, which is home to the well-preserved 12<sup>th</sup> century Norman castle. Drive on through Kilroot and to Larne, the gateway to the beautiful Glens of Antrim, and follow the Antrim Coast Road where you can enjoy the breathtaking scenery. Take some time to explore any of the nine glens, particularly Glenarm with its fabulous walled garden and beautiful harbor.

Drive on through to the lovely town of Cushendun and Torr Head, along to Ballintoy where you can walk across the Carrick-a-Rede rope bridge spanning a 24 metre chasm. If you veer inland you can visit the world's oldest licensed distillery in the village of Bushmills. From there you can head back to the coast to the UNESCO World Heritage listed site of the Giant's Causeway, which are 40,000 interlocking basalt columns that, according to folklore was created by legendary giant Finn McCool as a causeway to Scotland.

See the romantic ruins of Dunluce Castle near Bushmills, and drive to Portrush and Portstewart, lively seaside resorts, then to the beautiful Bann Valley and market town of Ballymoney. Visit Mussenden Temple along by Castlerock towards Limavady, then take a walk on the remote beaches at Benone or Downhill. You can then travel on through the lovely Roe Valley, through Limavady and on to Londonderry, which is the only completely walled city in the British Isles.



Carrick-a-Rede Bridge, Co. Antrim

# Northern Ireland

Discover the delights of Northern Ireland, with its unique blend of ancient heritage, unspoiled landscapes and cosmopolitan cities. Explore famous sites such as Giant's Causeway and the birthplace of the Titanic while witnessing some of Northern Ireland's best rivers, loughs and majestic coastlines that decorate the landscape to small, quaint villages and cosy pubs – there is something in Northern Ireland to see and do, for the young and young-at-heart.

**Counties:** Antrim, Armagh, Down, Fermanagh, Londonderry and Tyrone.

## Best Things to See & Do

**Belfast City** – see Belfast guide.

**The Giant's Causeway, Co. Antrim** – One of Northern Ireland's most famous landmarks, the Giant's Causeway is made up of thousands of interlocking basalt columns, the result of an ancient volcanic eruption.

**The Walled City of Derry, Co. Londonderry** – Situated on the banks of the River Foyle, Derry is the only fully walled city in Ireland.

**Ulster American Folk Park, Co. Tyrone** – An open air museum illustrating the story of emigration from Ulster to the US during the 18<sup>th</sup> & 19<sup>th</sup> Centuries.

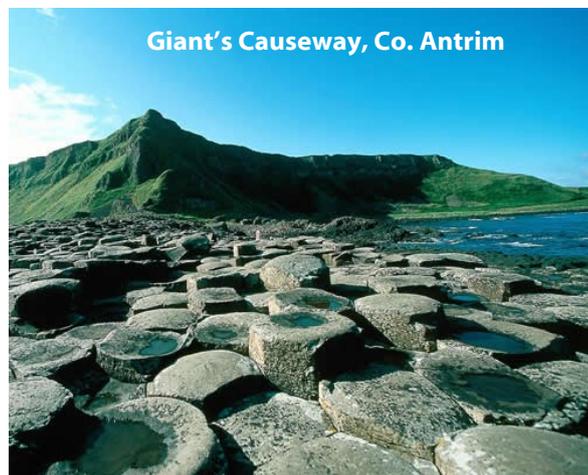
**Drive the Causeway Coastal Route, Co. Antrim** – see the Belfast Guide

**Tour the Lakelands, Co. Fermanagh** – The Lakelands are a haven for both wildlife and sports enthusiasts, and offering spectacular scenery & woodlands.

**Discover the Mourne Mountains, Co. Down** – Believed to be the inspiration behind CS Lewis' Chronicles of Narnia, Majestic mountains, natural beauty and native wildlife.

**Round of Golf, Co.'s Antrim & Down** – Pack the clubs and take a swing on such famous fairways as Royal Portrush, Co. Antrim and Royal County Down, Co. Down.

**Visit the Bushmills Distillery, Co. Antrim** – Built in 1608, this is Ireland's oldest operating distillery.



## What's On...

**May:**

- Carnival of Colours, St. Columb's Park, Co. Derry.

**July:**

- Lady of the Lake Festival, Co Fermanagh.

**August:**

- Hillsborough International Oyster Festival, Co Down.

**September:**

- Appalachian and Bluegrass Music Festival, Co. Tyrone.



# Self Drive Tours around Northern Ireland



## The Inishowen, Co. Derry

Discover the beauty and charm of the northern most peninsular in Ireland. Begin your tour at Buncrana with its long sandy beach and ruins of Buncrana Castle that dates back to the 16<sup>th</sup> Century as well as Doherty Castle. Head north along the R238 to Mamore Gap and take in the magnificent view of the steep, northerly coastline, and onto the seaside town of Dunaff. Here you can see the Fort Dunree Military Museum that overlooks Lough Swilly, as well as the Old Fort Hospital. Driving east, you'll see fantastic beaches, and stunning scenery as you travel through Clonmany and Ballyliffin, where there is a unique outdoor museum showcasing life in the area from 1840-1970.

Further on the R238 you'll come to reach Carndonagh with its great ancient monuments, including the 10 arch stone bridge that crosses Trawbrega Bay in Malin. Stand on Ireland's most northerly point at Malin Head, and further east you'll find the Wee House of Malin, a hermit's rock cell cut into a cliff beside a cottage ruin. Drive further south east to the resort village of Culdaff, and enjoy the seascape as you head along down to Greencastle, home to the Inishowen Maritime Museum and Planetarium. Follow the R241 onto Moville, then through Redcastle, Muff and down to the walled city of Londonderry.



## St Patrick's Tour, Co.'s Down & Armagh

Delve deep into Ireland's history and Saint Patrick. Begin the tour in the city of Armagh, and see both the Anglican and the Roman Catholic St Patrick's Cathedrals, the County Museum and Saint Patrick's Trian. Take the Darkley Road through 'the Fews' and scenic woodlands of Keady and Newtownhamilton to Newry, where you can visit Bagenal's Castle, the Killeevy Old Churches founded in 517AD and Kilnasaggart Stone.

Follow the Newry Road through Rathfriland, Castlewellan and Clough, through to the town of Downpatrick. Here you'll find the Struell Wells, the first holy wells in Ireland, the remains of the Inch Abbey that date back to 1180, the Saul Church, Down Cathedral and St Patrick's grave. Head to Strangford and take the car ferry to Portaferry, then follow the Portaferry Road to Greyabbey where you'll find the splendid ruins of a Cistercian Abbey. Heading north drive on to Newtownards and see the Movilla Abbey, then follow the N21 for Bangor where you can visit the north Down Museum and Bangor Abbey.



Armagh City, Co. Armagh

# Ireland's West

The west of Ireland is a unique and enchanting place, facing the Atlantic Ocean with beautiful landscapes, charismatic towns and villages, long stretches of coastline, rugged sea cliffs, and rough barren landscapes with heritage and history in spades.

**Counties:** Clare, Donegal, Galway, Leitrim, Limerick, Mayo, Offaly, Roscommon, Sligo and Tipperary

## Best Things to See & Do

**Cliffs of Moher, Co Clare** - These amazing cliffs rise majestically 214 meters above the Atlantic Ocean and stretch 8km across the Clare Coast.

**The Burren, Co Clare** - Stretching over 160km, this remarkable landscape looks pretty bleak on the surface, but scratch a little deeper and you'll find amazing treasures, such as megalithic tombs, ancient Celtic crosses, and a wide variety of native wild flowers.

**The Connemara National Park, Co Galway** - This spectacular part of Ireland consists of forests and heath lands and great areas of blanketing bogs, alongside the Twelve Pins (or Bens) and mountain ranges of the Maumturks.

**Glenveagh National Park, Co Donegal** - This beautiful area covers over 14,000 acres and houses Glenveagh Castle with its fabulous park and gardens.

**King John's Castle, Co Limerick** - Located on the banks of the River Shannon this incredible building was built around 1200.

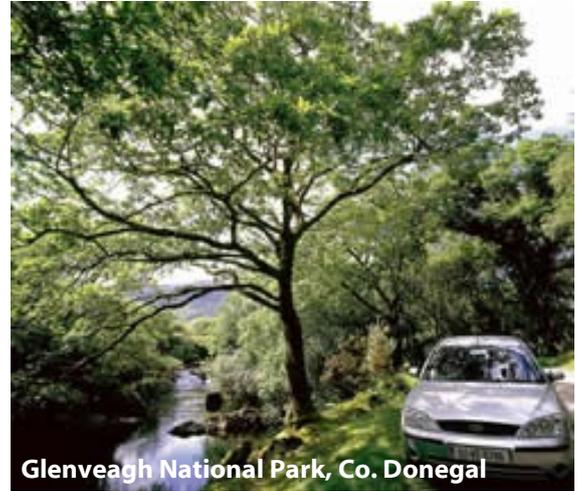
**County Galway, Galway City** - Said to be Ireland's fastest growing city, Galway is a lively, artsy city partly populated by university students and filled with great pubs, clubs and plenty of famous Irish *craic*.

**Climb Croagh Patrick, Co Mayo** - Ireland's Patron Saint spent 40 days and nights fasting and praying on the conical shaped mountain of Croagh Patrick, and today its one of the most climbed mountains in Ireland.

**Visit Knock Shrine, Co Mayo** - This is the sight of the apparition of St John the Evangelist and St Joseph in August 1879, and is visited by over half a million visitors each year.

**Visit Achill Island, Co May** - This is the largest island off the coast of Ireland and is linked to the mainland via a bridge, and is worth seeing for its wild, rugged and windswept beauty.

**Ballyhoura Mountains, Co Limerick** - Discover the Stone Age monuments, museums, parks and gardens in the beautiful Ballyhoura Mountains.



## What's On...

**May:**

- Volvo Ocean Race, Co Galway – Vessels competing in the Volvo Ocean Race, the Premier Round-The-World yacht race.

**July:**

- Galway Arts Festival, Co Galway – Artists and musicians from all across Ireland converge on Galway for its annual arts festival.

**August:**

- Galway Race Festival, Co. Galway: One of Ireland's premier horse racing events, fun for punters and non-punters alike.

**September:**

- Galway International Oyster Festival, Co Galway – Galway City comes alive as thousands of people flock from all over the globe to celebrate the oyster, known for its luxury and passion.
- Matchmaking festival, Lisdoonvarna, Co Clare – Annual festival held to find that perfect match for the lovelorn.

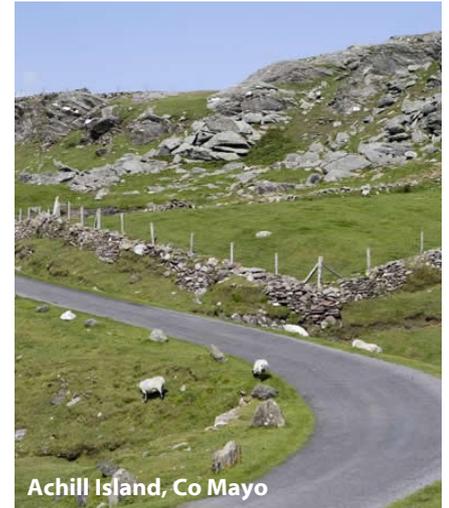
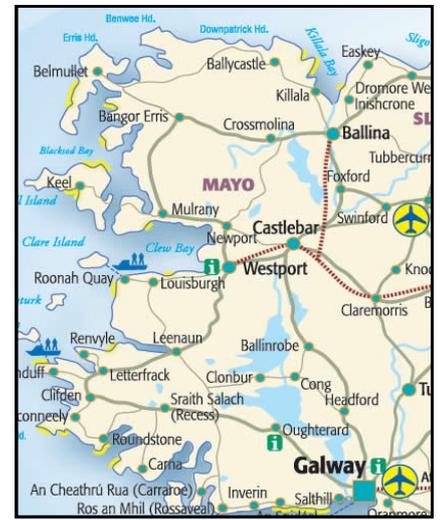
# Self Drive Tours around Ireland's West

## Coast and Country Tour

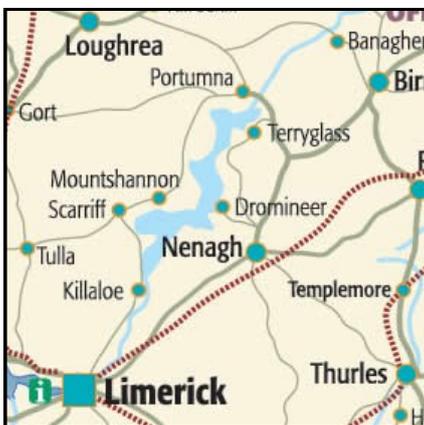
Begin your tour from Galway city toward Connemara on R336 West, driving through towns of Spidda, Inverin, Costello Cana and Clifden. From there, head north on N59 to Leenaun in Co. Mayo at the head of the Killary harbour and the Fjord. Enjoy the mountains, Doolough Lake and the Delphi Valley as you head further north to the town of Louisburgh. On the road east to Westport, make sure you stop at Croagh Patrick, Ireland's holy mountain and place of Christian pilgrimage.

From Westport you can take a trip out to Achill Island by driving through Newport then Keel and then up to Dooagh. After you've explored the island, head back towards Mulranny and drive north to Bangor Erris to visit Ballycroy National Park. Visit the picturesque Erris peninsular in the Mayo Gaeltacht.

Take the coastal road R314 towards Ballycastle and admire in the wild coastal views to Sligo and Donegal. Visit the Céide Fields in Co. Mayo, a five thousand year old farm settlement. On the return trip, drive through the towns of Castlebar, Claremorris and Tuam, and enjoy the views over Lough Conn.



Achill Island, Co Mayo



## Lough Derg Drive, Co Clare

This is one of Ireland's less traveled routes, a 95-mile circuit around the largest lake of the River Shannon. The drive passes an assortment of charming marina villages and scenic delights along the way. Travel through twin towns Ballina and Killaloe at the southern tip of the lake, on to Scarriff Bay, then to Mount Shannon, one of the busiest yachting centers on Lough Derg. Stop by at Portumna at the very north of the lake to see the palatial 17<sup>th</sup> Century castle that overlooks the lake.

From there, head to the lovely village of Terryglass, and then south towards the fishing and boating center of Dromineer. On the way to Nenagh, visit the castle remains that date back to 1217 and the demolished county gaol. From Nenagh, head west to Portroe for the best viewing points of the Lough Derg. Enjoy the final leg of the journey on the gentle road back to Ballina.



# Ireland's South

Often described as 'The Irish Riviera', the South coast of Ireland has been a favorite holiday destination for both local and overseas travelers for years. This is a land of unparalleled beauty, with spectacular coastline that's warmed by the Gulf Stream, with a culture steeped in tradition.

**Counties:** Carlow, Cork, Kerry, Kilkenny, Tipperary, Waterford and Wexford

## Best Things to See & Do

**Dingle Peninsular, Co Kerry** – This is the most westerly point of Ireland with unsurpassed history and heritage to be explored in a wild and beautiful landscape.

**St Finbarre's Cathedral, Co. Cork** – This beautiful French-Gothic cathedral was consecrated in 1870 and built on the site of where Christian worship has been offered since the 7<sup>th</sup> Century.

**The Rock of Cashel, Co Tipperary** – A spectacular group of medieval buildings set on an outcrop of limestone, including towers, a cathedral, chapel and high cross dating back to the 13<sup>th</sup> Century.

**John F Kennedy Park and Arboretum, New Ross, Co Wexford** – Located on the slopes of Slieve Coillte, this incredible plant collection and garden is a tribute to the late JFK.

**Ross Castle, Killarney, Co. Kerry** – Situated in the banks of Lough Leane, this 15<sup>th</sup> Century tower house was built by the O'Donoghue Ross clan.

**Visit Youghal, Co. Cork** – Pronounced 'yawl', this ancient town is situated on the estuary where the River Blackwater meets the sea, and is one of Ireland's remaining medieval walled towns.

**Visit Kinsale, Co. Cork** - A popular holiday resort for both Irish and

foreign tourists, which is renown for its gourmet restaurants and holiday activities, including yachting, fishing and golf.

**Visit the Blarney Stone at Blarney Castle, Co Cork** – Kiss the famous Blarney Stone and acquire the gift of the Irish gab!

**Take a Tour to Skellig Rocks, Co Kerry** – These islands are listed as UNESCO world heritage sites. On Skellig Michael you'll see Gallarus Oratory, a monastic settlement of six beehive shaped huts dating back to the 6<sup>th</sup> Century.

**Climb Mount Brandon, Co. Kerry** – This is one of Ireland's highest mountains and provides magnificent views of the Atlantic ocean and countryside.



## What's On...

### August:

- **Waterford Spraoi, Co Waterford** – 3 day festival incorporating stage acts, music and fun from all over the world.
- **Rose of Tralee Festival, Tralee, Co. Kerry** – A weeklong festival incorporating the young women of Irish ancestry from all over the world.
- **Puck Fair, Killorglin, Co Kerry** – Dating back to 1603, this three day festival is the oldest fair in Ireland.
- **Cobh Peoples Regatta, Co Cork** – one of the oldest Regattas in Ireland with sailing, rowing and watersports.

### October:

- **Guinness Cork Jazz Festival, Cork City** – Cork's annual jazz festival, a celebration of music and performance.

# Self Drive Tours around Ireland's South

## Surf and Turf Route

This route will take you along the beautiful coastline south of Wexford and into the marvellous countryside of Carlow. Begin at Wexford, the town that was originally founded by Vikings in the 800 AD. Here see Johnstown Castle, Wexford Bullring and the Selskar Abbey. Drive north along R672 coastal road to the beaches at Curracloe and Courtown, and then on to Gorey. From there, head back south toward Enniscorthy on the banks of the River Slaney, where you'll find The Enniscorthy Castle, St Aidan's Cathedral and the National 1798 visitor center.

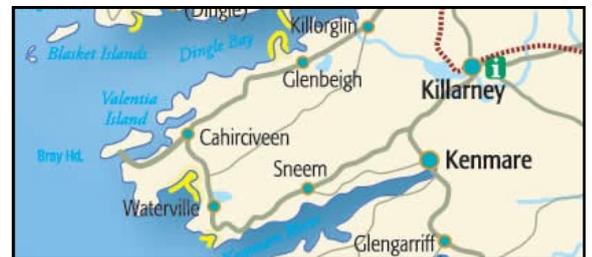
Return 8km back to take the N80 to the market town of Bunclody. Drive on to Kiltaley and the Georgian city of Borris, then east along to Graiguenamanagh at the foot of Brandon Hill in the beautiful Barrow Valley, and home to the 13th Century Duiske Abbey.

Continue through St Mullins to the port town of New Ross, where you can see the Dunbrody Famine Ship, and the Hook Lighthouse, that has been a beacon as early as the 5<sup>th</sup> Century. From New Ross, head back to Wexford via the N25.



## Ring of Kerry and Skellig Ring

This circular route is Ireland's most popular and scenic drives. Beginning at Killarney, take the N70 to Killorglin along the banks of the River Glenbeigh. Follow this cliff section of road, offering unmatched views of the Dingle Peninsula, to the town of Cahersiveen, where you can see the Old Barracks Heritage Center. Further on, head to Renard where in summer you can take the ferry to Valentia Island, or continue along the way to the magnificent gardens at Glanleam. Take the coastal road to Portmagee, and from here you can take a boat trip and tour to discover the World Heritage listed Skelligs Islands. You can enjoy the panoramic view of the Skelligs from Baile an Sceilge at the top of Coomanaspig.



Start heading east on the R567 to the lovely village of Waterville, which is home to one of Ireland's top 5 golf courses. Stop off at the Coomakesta Pass for brilliant views of Kenmare Rover, Scariff and Deenish Islands. Further east on the N70, drive through the Derrynane National Park and Staigue Fort, the remains of a circular stone fort that remains within the national park. Stop at the picturesque village of Sneem, and further along to the Heritage town of Kenmare. On the final leg of the Ring of Kerry, keep driving north, via Moll's Gap and Ladies View for great vistas of the Lakes of Killarney, and at the sixty foot Torc waterfall, before returning to Killarney.



# Ireland's East

Discover the spectacular sights, breathtaking scenery, unsurpassed history and heritage on the beautiful east coast of Ireland. Skirting the capital of Dublin, the east of Ireland is the ideal area to get a taste of both new and old Ireland. With natural attractions, cosmopolitan cities, rich culture and sunny and temperate climate, this region of Ireland is surely one not to be missed.

**Counties:** Cavan, Kildare, Laois, Longford, Louth, Meath, Monaghan, Offaly, Westmeath & Wicklow.

## Best Things to See & Do

**Dublin** – see Dublin guide.

**Newgrange, Boyne Valley, Co. Meath** – Visit the Neolithic monuments in Knowth and Dowth that are a Stone Age Passage Tomb that date back to 3200BC.

**Trim Castle, Co. Meath** – Trim Castle is the largest Anglo-Norman castle in Ireland that was constructed in 1172 under the order of Hugh de Lacy. This is also the site where many scenes from the 'Braveheart' movie were shot.

**Russborough House, Co. Wicklow** – Located near the lovely lakes in Blessington, Russborough has often been described as the most beautiful house in Ireland.

**Clonmacnoise, Co. Offaly** – The Lost City of Clonmacnoise is located on the banks of the River Shannon. Founded in 545AD, it is

Ireland's most renowned monastic site, and boasts some of the most enchanting remains from Ireland's sacred past.

**See History in Boyne Valley, Co. Meath** – visit the site of the Battle of the Boyne, just outside the town of Drogheda in Louth, the site of an important battle in Irish history dating back to 1690.

**Visit Glendalough, Co. Wicklow** – Tour this majestic valley of two lakes, where it's said that St Kevin spent his days in quiet contemplation, and is today a popular area for walkers and hikers.

**Tour the Irish National Stud, Co. Kildare** – Home to Ireland's premier racing thoroughbreds, the Irish National Stud houses the stud, a horse museum, Japanese gardens and St Fiachra's Garden.

**Visit Carlingford, Co. Louth** – This charming harbour village is nestled between Slieve Foy, Carlingford Lough and the Mourne Mountains.

**Visit Jonnie Fox's Pub & Restaurant, Co. Dublin** – located in Glencullen at the top of the Dublin Mountains, Johnnie Fox's is one of Ireland's oldest and highest traditional Irish pubs.

Glendalough, Co. Wicklow



## What's On...

**April:**

- The Irish National Hunt Festival, Co. Kildare – A five day Irish National Racing festival that is buzzing with Irish and international racegoers.

**May:**

- Sleive Bloom Festival, Co.'s Laois & Offaly – Walking festival through the magnificent Bloom Mountains, combined with evening entertainment with music, singing and storytelling.

**September:**

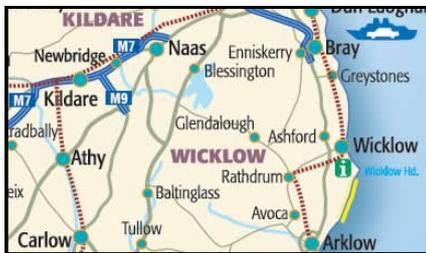
- Irish Bog Snorkelling, Castleblayney, Co. Monaghan – As the name suggests, watch the competitors snorkel along flooded bogs. Lots of fun and good day's craic!

Clonmacnoise, Co Offaly



# Driving Tour Ideas for Ireland's East

Wicklow Mountains, Co. Wicklow



## The Braveheart Drive

This drive takes you through beautiful Co. Wicklow, through wooded glens and marvellous countryside. Here you'll see where some scenes from the movie 'Braveheart' were shot. Ironically, this tour begins in the tiny village of Hollywood on the N81, roughly 30kms south west of Dublin, and sets off in the direction of the Wicklow Gap. Follow the R756 to the junction with R758 and head towards the small towns of Ballyknocken and Lacken, which are both on the edge of the lovely Blessington Lakes, following the lakes onto the town of Blessington. Here you'll also see Russborough House, the magnificent 18<sup>th</sup> Century mansion that is definitely worth a visit.

From Blessington, head along the R759, through the breathtaking West Wicklow Mountains and past the peat bogs at Sally's Gap, to the quiet town of Laragh. Follow the R756 from Laragh to the town of Glendalough where you can see the 6<sup>th</sup> Century St Kevin's Monastic City, which is one of the best preserved round towers in Europe. Head back through the Wicklow National Park along the R756, enjoying the scenery along the way, and finishing off back in Hollywood.

## Tour the Boyne Valley

Begin this tour at Donore, just off the N51 outside of Drogheda at the Bru na Doinne Visitors Center. Here you can visit the burial mound at Newgrange, Knowth and Dowth, and explore the Battle of Boyne site. Then take the R163 through Slane and onto Kells, which was the original home of the Book of Kells. Drive on through to Oldcastle where you'll see ancient burial mounds. Then back on to the N51, and drive toward the agricultural town of Athboy, enjoying the wooded countryside and the lovely Yellow Ford River.

Head toward Navan and explore the Hill of Tara, an archaeological site that houses ancient monuments and was once the seat of the High King of England. Further east along the N51 is the Georgian town of Slane on the River Boyne, where you'll find Slane Castle and the Hill of Slane that contains the ancient cemetery, the ruins of the friary church and gothic tower. Follow the N51 to return back



Hill of Tara, Co. Meath

# Accommodation Ideas

## Motorhomes

All the convenience of accommodation and transport in one! Rent a motorhome from Auto Europe. Contact us for more information!

## Hotels

From all levels of style and luxury, Ireland has many hotel options to choose from. In Irish hotels, you'll be warmly greeted by the friendly people at the front desk who will make sure your room is to your liking. You will receive the best information from the local staff about the closest pub offering traditional Irish fair, best shopping spots, family activities and the best places to enjoy the nightlife.

## Bed & Breakfasts

One of the best ways to experience the true Ireland is to stay at a Bed & Breakfast. Be welcomed by families that open their homes to guests, and who will be more than happy to impart their knowledge of the local areas and customs. The rooms are normally slightly smaller than guest houses or hotels, but this is possibly the cheapest and friendliest way to tour Ireland. Enjoy a home cooked breakfast and true famous Irish hospitality.

## Guest Houses

Guest houses in Ireland are usually larger than B&Bs even though they are still family run. Most have between 5 and 15 guest rooms. Often guest houses are purpose built so that the rooms are generally larger and the facilities are more generous than B&Bs. You can expect to pay about the same as a 3 star hotel but with a more cosy and comfortable atmosphere.

## Resorts

There are a growing number of health farms and spas throughout Ireland, which include spa baths, massage clinics, yoga retreats and beauty salons as well as accommodation.

## Farmhouse Holiday

A farmhouse holiday is a great way to meet the locals, and is especially suitable for children. Leave the hustle and bustle of the big cities and towns behind and enjoy the everyday life on the farm.

## Castles

Experience the splendour and magnificence of staying in an historic castle in Ireland. It's not every day that you get to wake in the grandeur of ancient tapestries, stone columns, high vaulted ceilings, spectacular gardens and lakes, right at your doorstep. Live like a king!



Ashford Castle, Co. Mayo



Ardmore House B&B, Co. Offaly

# More Accommodations

## Self Catering

There is self catering accommodation all across Ireland, suitable for those that would like to come and go as they please, including self contained apartments, houses, cottages and caravans.

## Camping & Caravanning

There are over one hundred caravan and campsites in Ireland, with the majority being open from May to September. Take the opportunity to enjoy the very best of Irish country and outdoors at its best.

## Youth & Backpacker Hostels

There are a total of 24 youth hostels operated by An Oige (Irish Youth Hostel Association), that provide simple dormitory accommodation with comfortable beds and cooking facilities. Usage for the youth hostels is generally limited to members or affiliates of An Oige. Backpacker hostels operate in a similar way to youth hostels – dorm style sleeping accommodation with fully equipped kitchens - but no membership is required.

## Holiday Camps

These centers offer a comprehensive holiday with a wide range of amenities and facilities including self-catering units, indoor heated swimming pool and restaurant facilities. See [www.failteireland.ie](http://www.failteireland.ie) for more details.

## Campus Accommodation

Accommodation is available at many of Ireland's universities and colleges during the holidays.

## Cabin Cruising

Take in the beautiful canals, rivers, lakes and inlets within Ireland by cruising the magnificent waterways of Ireland on a hired barge. Charter a boat for a couple of days or weeks and explore the River Shannon, the Erne System, the Grand & Royal Canals and the Barrow Navigation.



Ballyvolane House, Co. Cork



Lough Oughter, Co. Cavan



Killary Harbour, Co. Mayo



# Getting into Ireland

## Ferry Ports Information

### Ferry Routes

<b>Dublin</b>	<b>Cork</b>
<i>Ferries to/from Dublin:</i>	<i>Ferries to/from Cork:</i>
Holyhead (GB)	Roscoff (FR)
Liverpool (GB)	Belfast
Douglas (GB)	<i>Ferries to/from Belfast:</i>
Dun Laoghaire	Douglas
<i>Ferries to/from Dun Laoghaire:</i>	Stranraer (GB)
Holyhead (GB)	Liverpool (GB)
Rosslare	Isle of Man (GB)
<i>Ferries to/from Rosslare:</i>	Larne
Pembroke (GB)	<i>Ferries to/from Larne:</i>
Fishguard (GB)	Troon
Roscoff (FR)	Cairnryan
Le Havre (FR)	Fleetwood
Cherbourg (FR)	

## Climate and Weather

Ireland has a mild, temperate climate, with an average annual temperature of 10 °C. Although it does have its fair share of sunshine, Ireland is famous for its rain, resulting in the many shades of green within the countryside and earning the title of The Emerald Isle. So for any season it's best to be prepared for any weather.

Summer temperatures generally range from 15°C to 20°C. The weather is warmest in July and August with an average temp of 16°C. Summer days in Ireland are long, with daylight hours from 6am to 10pm. Temperatures in spring (March-May) and autumn (September-November) are generally around 10°C. April and May are the driest months however they can be quite cool (12-14°C). Winter temperatures range between 5°C and 8°C. Snow is rare, but showers can occur at any time of the year. The coldest months are January and February with an average temperature of 7°C. The winter sun sets in winter at around 4pm.



## Airport Information

### Domestic & International

<b><u>Belfast International Airport</u></b> Tel: + 44 28 9448 4848	<b><u>George Best Belfast City Airport</u></b> Tel: + 44 28 9093 9093
<b><u>City of Derry Airport</u></b> Tel: + 44 28 7181 0784	<b><u>Ireland West Airport Knock</u></b> Tel: + 353 94 936 8100
<b><u>Cork Airport</u></b> Tel: + 353 21 431 3131	<b><u>Kerry International Airport</u></b> Tel: + 353 66 976 4644
<b><u>Donegal Airport</u></b> Tel: + 353 74 954 8284	<b><u>Shannon Airport (SNN)</u></b> Tel: + 353 61 471 444
<b><u>Dublin Airport</u></b> Tel: + 353 1 814 111	<b><u>Sligo Airport</u></b> Tel: + 353 71 916 8280
<b><u>Galway Airport</u></b> Tel: + 353 91 75 569	

### Public Holidays Republic of Ireland:

	<b>2011</b>
01 Jan	New Years Day
22 Apr	Good Friday
25 Apr	Easter Monday
29 Apr	Royal Wedding
02 May	May Day
05 June	Spring Holiday
01 Aug	Summer Holiday
25 Dec	Christmas Day
26 Dec	Boxing Day

	<b>2012</b>
01 Jan	New Years Day
06 Apr	Good Friday
09 Apr	Easter Monday
07 May	May Day
04 June	Spring Holiday
05 June	Diamond Jubilee
27 Aug	Summer Holiday
25 Dec	Christmas Day
26 Dec	Boxing Day

### Public Holidays Northern Ireland:

	<b>2011</b>
01 Jan	New Years Day
17 Mar	St Patrick's Day
22 Apr	Good Friday
25 Apr	Easter Monday
29 Apr	Royal Wedding
02 May	May Day
30 May	Spring Holiday
12 Jul	Orangemen's Day
29 Aug	Summer Holiday
25 Dec	Christmas Day
26 Dec	Boxing Day

	<b>2012</b>
01 Jan	New Years Day
17 Mar	St Patrick's Day
06 Apr	Good Friday
09 Apr	Easter Monday
07 May	May Day
04 Jun	Spring Holiday
05 June	Q Diamond Jubilee
12 Jul	Orangemen's Day
27 Aug	Summer Holiday
25 Dec	Christmas Day
26 Dec	Boxing Day

# Health and Safety

## Stay Healthy

Your comprehensive travel insurance will cover any medical costs including medical evacuation, however, make sure that your insurance covers you for the whole time you'll be away and what is not included.

Ireland does have excellent health care; however you should plan the care of pre-existing conditions before you leave. Bring your medications in their original and clearly labelled containers with a declaration from your doctor describing your medical conditions and medicines needed. If you wear contacts or glasses, bring a spare pair or bring a copy of your prescription.

Pharmacies are known as 'chemist shops' and are found right across Ireland. To find a chemist in Ireland, look under 'Chemists- Pharmaceutical' in the local Golden Pages, or for Northern Ireland look under 'Chemist - Dispensing' in the local Yellow pages.

## Stay Safe

Traveling in Ireland is not dangerous, but a level of caution should always be taken when touring in any foreign country. The majority of crimes tend to occur in the larger cities, such as Dublin, where tourists can be targeted for crimes such as purse snatching and pick-pocketing. The best advice is to keep your valuables close to your body and out of reach from potential thieves, avoid lonely streets out of hours and don't flash your wealth and make yourself an obvious target.

Car break-ins, theft, smash and grab and vandalism on tourists vehicles can occur, but can be prevented by keeping valuables or bags out of sight, securely locking cars or using off-street supervised parking. Car-jacking in Ireland is still very rare. As a precaution lock your doors when driving in the larger towns, especially after dark.

Northern Ireland is currently as safe as the Republic of Ireland; however there are areas where the sectarian divide is still prominent, particularly in some parts of Belfast. Try to avoid Northern Ireland around July 12, which is the climax of the Orange marching season, and has been known to bring tension and disruption.

In the unlikely event of theft or loss, be sure to inform all your credit card companies as soon as you discover your wallet has been lost or stolen. Most credit card companies have toll free numbers to call if your cards are lost or stolen, and they may be able to issue an emergency replacement card or wire you an immediate cash advance. Toll free contact numbers from within Ireland for major credit card companies are:

Visa: 1800 558 002

Amex: 01 617 5555

MasterCard: 1800 557 378



### Important Numbers

**Ambulance, Fire Service, Coast Guard or Mountain Rescue:**

The emergency contact numbers are 999 or 112 for ambulance, fire brigade, coast guard and mountain rescue, from either land lines or mobiles.

**Police:**

In the Republic of Ireland, the police or law enforcement officers are called Gardai' (pronounced Gar-dee), members of the 'Garda Siochana', and are known simply as 'the Guard'. In case of an emergency, in both Ireland and Northern Ireland, dial 999 to reach the Gardai.

### Where to Get Help

*US Embassy*

42 Elgin Road

Ballsbridge, Dublin 4.

Tel: +353-1668-8777

Fax: +353 -1668-9946

Email: ACSdublin@state.gov

Website:

[www.dublin.embassy.gov](http://www.dublin.embassy.gov)

### Local Tourist Boards

*Discover Ireland*

345 Park Ave, 17th Floor

New York, NY 10154

Tel: 1-212-418-0800

Website:

[www.discoverireland.com](http://www.discoverireland.com).

# Key Facts

**Location:** Ireland is located in the North West of the United Kingdom

**Area:** 84,420 km<sup>2</sup>

**Population:** 6.1 million

**Population Density:** 73 per sq km<sup>2</sup>

**Capital:** Dublin in the Republic of Ireland, Belfast in Northern Ireland.

**Geography:** The island of Ireland is 486km long and 275kms wide. The Republic of Ireland covers over 80% of the island and is politically separate to Northern Ireland, which covers the remaining 20% of the island. Ireland has a diverse and picturesque landscape, with lush green farmlands, mountainous and rocky regions and quiet sandy beaches alongside rugged coastlines. The River Shannon is the largest river on the island.

**Mobile phones:** Only digital phones with GMS subscriptions and a roaming agreement will work in Ireland. Consult your supplier before leaving home.

**Pay Phones:** Easy to use country calling cards are widely available at many outlets around Ireland.

To call Ireland from the USA, dial 011, then the prefix 353 (44 for Northern Ireland), followed by the area code omitting the initial zero. To call an Irish number from within Ireland: dial all of the digits including the area code. If you are calling from within the area that you're calling, you don't need to use the area code. To call Northern Ireland from within Ireland: replace the prefix code 028 with the code 048.

Directory Information is provided by telecommunications operates using the following codes: 118 50 (conduit), 118 11 (eircom) and 118 90. Call charges will vary depending on what's on offer. To minimize the cost of local and overseas phone calls, a great idea is to purchase an Irish SIM card once you arrive, so that you can pay in-country rather than pay international rates for calls you make and receive. Another option is to purchase or rent a mobile from Ireland; drop into a local mobile phone shop to find the cheapest packages available.

**Internet:** Internet is readily available with internet cafes in almost all towns. To find internet cafes in your location, check [www.cybercaptive.com](http://www.cybercaptive.com) and [www.cybercafe.com](http://www.cybercafe.com). You can get free internet access from most public libraries

## Electricity

220 volts AC, 50Hz. Three-pin plugs are in use

## Measurements

The metric system of measurement is used in the Republic of Ireland

## Shopping hours

Monday to Saturday 9.00am, to 5:30-6:00pm. Most towns have late night shopping on Thursday or Friday until 8:00 or 9:00pm. On Sundays, shopping center and some of the larger department stores are open 12:00pm to 5:00-6:00pm.

## Smoking

Since March 2004, smoking has been prohibited in public areas, including bars, nightclubs and restaurants. The Republic of Ireland and Northern Ireland have both introduced the ban of smoking in all places of work to protect public health and reduce the incidences of smoking related illnesses.

## Toilets

Public toilets are usually marked with the international symbols. In the Republic of Ireland some of the older rest rooms still show Gaelic words FIR (men) and MNA (women). Free toilet facilities are available at most sightseeing attractions, museums, hotels and restaurants, pubs, shops, department stores, theatres and petrol stations.

## Time Zone

Ireland is on Greenwich Mean Time (GMT) and following daylight saving, clocks are put forward one hour mid-March and back one hour at the end of October. During summer it stays light until as late as 11pm, however by mid-December it can be dark by 4.00pm.

## Useful Irish Phrases:

Hello: *Dia duit*

How are you: *Conas atá tú/Cén chaoi ina bhfuil tú*

Please: *Le do thoil*

Thank you: *Go raibh maith agat*

What's your name?: *Cad is ainm duit?*

Excuse me: *Gabh mo leithscéal*

Good times: *Craic*

Cheers: *Slainte*

Goodbye: *Slán*

# Money matters

## Republic of Ireland:

The Euro is the local currency of the Republic of Ireland. EURO (€) = 100 cents. Notes are in denominations of €500, 200, 100, 50, 20, 10 and 5. Coins are in denominations of €2 and €1, and 50, 20, 10, 5, 2 and 1 cents.

## Northern Ireland:

Sterling is the local currency of Northern Ireland. One Pound Sterling (£) = 100 pence. Notes are in denominations of £50, 20, 10 and 5. Coins are in denominations of £2 and £1, and 50, 20, 10, 5, 2 and 1 pence (p).

**Currency Exchange:** Available in airports, banks and bureaux de change.

**Banking – hours of operation:** Banks are open 10am to 4pm Monday to Wednesday and Friday, and 10am to 5pm on Thursday. In Northern Ireland bank hours are 9:30am to 5:30pm Monday to Friday

**ATMs:** ATMs (automatic teller machines) are located at most banks and accept most credit and debit cards.

**Credit & Debit Cards:** Any credit cards that bear the Visa, MasterCard or American Express symbol will be widely accepted in Ireland. Most ATMs allow cash withdrawals on major credit cards and internationally branded debit cards.

**Traveler's Cheques:** Traveler's cheques are accepted throughout Ireland. To avoid additional exchange rate charges, it's best to take traveler's cheques in Euros or Pounds Sterling. Eurocheques can also be cashed in Ireland.

**Tax:** Sales tax is called VAT (value-added tax) and is most often included in the price shown on goods. In the Republic of Ireland, the general rate of VAT is 21%, but there are rates of 13.5% for hotels, restaurants and car rentals. In Northern Ireland the VAT is 17.5% across the board.

**Tipping:** Tips of around 10-15% in restaurants and metered cabs are expected, unless it's already included in the total bill, and porters should be tipped around €1.50 or £1 per bag.



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