

EUROPE · ROAD TRIPS · HIKING · HISTORY · CULTURE · CITY BREAKS

 Ireland

Ireland's west coast delivers the drama: the Cliffs of Moher above the Atlantic, the mountains and lakes of Kerry, Connemara's bogs and the Aran Islands. Dublin adds Georgian squares, literary pubs and the Book of Kells, and Newgrange's passage tomb is older than the pyramids. Pack waterproofs in any season, and leave evenings free for music sessions in country pubs.

 Before you go, read the UK government's travel advice for Ireland and entry requirements (visas, passport validity). Last updated by FCDO 4 September 2026.

 CAPITAL Dublin	 CURRENCY Euro (EUR) £1 ≈ €1.19	 LANGUAGE English, Irish	 BEST TIME May-Sep
 DAILY BUDGET £70-£320 £££ Expensive	 PLUGS Type G 230V · UK plugs fit	 FLIGHT FROM LONDON 1h 10m direct ~£40-£160 return	 TIME ZONE UTC+0 standard time

Ireland is small enough to drive coast to coast in a morning, but its pleasures are in the detail, so most first trips combine Dublin with a stretch of the west coast. A classic route runs from Dublin to Galway and Connemara, south through the Burren and the Cliffs of Moher in County Clare, then on to Killarney, the Ring of Kerry and the Dingle Peninsula, returning via Cork or Kilkenny. The Wild Atlantic Way, a signed coastal route of around 2,500 km, ties the western counties together, while Brú na Bóinne and Glendalough are easy day trips from the capital.

Ireland is expensive, Dublin especially, where hotel rates in summer and on big rugby or concert weekends rival London's. Beyond the capital, B&Bs and pub food keep costs reasonable. The weather changes by the hour and you will want a waterproof even in summer, but June evenings stay light until around 10pm. Narrow, winding rural roads make journeys slower than distances suggest. The country suits walkers, drivers, music lovers and anyone tracing family roots, and the welcome in small-town pubs lives up to its reputation.

Top 5 highlights

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NATURE

Cliffs of Moher

These sandstone and shale cliffs rise to 214 m above the Atlantic on the Clare coast. Walk the coastal path south towards Hag's Head for quieter views, and visit early or late in the day to miss the coach tours.
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NATURE

Killarney and the Ring of Kerry

The 179 km Ring of Kerry loops around the Iveragh Peninsula from Killarney, past beaches, stone ring forts and mountain passes. Start early to stay ahead of the tour coaches, and save time for Killarney National Park's lakes and Muckross House.

3

NATURE

Connemara

West of Galway, Connemara is a landscape of bog, lakes and the quartzite Twelve Bens, edged by white-sand beaches. Climb Diamond Hill in the national park, visit Kylemore Abbey, and stay in Clifden or Roundstone.

4

HISTORY

Brú na Bóinne

Newgrange, Knowth and Dowth are Neolithic passage tombs older than Stonehenge and the Pyramids of Giza. Newgrange and Knowth are visited only by guided tour from the visitor centre; at the winter solstice, sunrise lights Newgrange's inner chamber.

5

HISTORY

Glendalough

St Kevin founded a monastery in this glacial valley in the Wicklow Mountains in the 6th century. Its round tower, ruined churches and two lakes make a superb walk about an hour south of Dublin.

Biggest cities

LARGEST CITY

Dublin

≈ 1.3 million people

Give it two or three days: Trinity College's Book of Kells, the National Museum's bog bodies, Kilmainham Gaol and the Guinness Storehouse, then pubs away from Temple Bar's inflated prices.

2ND LARGEST CITY

Cork

≈ 222,000 people

Ireland's second city has the covered English Market, trading since 1788, the bells of Shandon and excellent pubs, and makes a handy base for Kinsale, Blarney and Cobh, the Titanic's last port of call.

3RD LARGEST CITY

Limerick

≈ 102,000 people

Often overlooked, Limerick has King John's Castle on the Shannon, the Hunt Museum's art collection and a fierce rugby culture, with Shannon Airport and the Burren within easy reach.

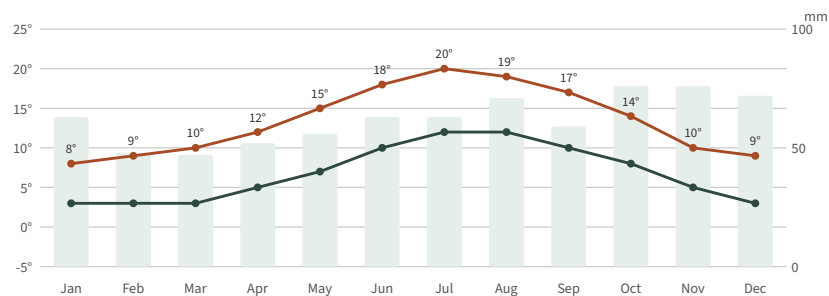
Ranked by urban-area population where available. Figures are rounded estimates, and sources define city limits differently, so rankings of similar-sized cities can vary.

When to go to Ireland

Best time: **May–Sep.**

**Average climate in Dublin**

— High °C — Low °C — Rain (mm)



Festivals & events

Mar	St Patrick's Festival Dublin's festival around 17 March brings a big parade, céilís and music; smaller towns hold their own parades, which are often more fun and far less crowded.
Jul	Galway International Arts Festival Two weeks of theatre, music, visual art and street spectacle in July, followed by the Galway Races, when the city's hotels fill and prices soar.
Aug	Fleadh Cheoil na hÉireann The world's largest festival of Irish traditional music moves between towns each August, with competitions, céilís and impromptu sessions in pubs and on street corners.

How much does Ireland cost?

SHOESTRING £70 per person / day ≈ €83.33 hostels, street food, buses	MID-RANGE £160 per person / day ≈ €190 3-star hotels, restaurants, some taxis	COMFORTABLE £320 per person / day ≈ €381 4-star+, guided trips, private transfers
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Estimates per person per day, excluding flights. Prices vary by season and city.

Food to try

Irish stew Lamb or mutton simmered slowly with potatoes, onions and carrots, thickened by the potatoes themselves and served in pubs with a slab of soda bread.	Full Irish breakfast Rashers, sausages, black and white pudding, eggs, grilled tomato and mushrooms with soda bread, the standard start to a day in a B&B.	Seafood chowder A creamy soup of smoked and fresh fish, mussels and prawns, served with buttered brown soda bread in pubs along the west coast.
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Getting around

Irish Rail runs intercity trains from Dublin to Cork, Galway, Limerick, Killarney and Sligo, while Bus Éireann's Expressway and private coaches such as Citylink are cheap and frequent. The west coast is easiest with a hire car, but rural roads are narrow and you drive on the left. In Dublin, a Leap card works on buses, Luas trams and DART trains. FreeNow is the main taxi app.

Practical information

PLUGS & VOLTAGE  G 230V — UK plugs fit	EMERGENCY NUMBERS Telephone: 112 or 999 (ambulance, fire, police) if you are a victim of crime. Telephone: +353 (0)1666 93 54 Source: FCDO “Getting help”
DIALLING CODE +353	TIME ZONE UTC+0 (standard time)

TAP WATER

Generally safe to drink

DRIVING

On the left

TIPPING

Tip 10–12.5% in restaurants with table service if no service charge has been added. Nobody tips for drinks at the bar; round up taxi fares.

ETIQUETTE

In a group at the pub, join the round system and buy your turn. Never describe Ireland as part of the UK or 'the British Isles', and steer clear of casual jokes about the Troubles.

MAIN AIRPORTS

Dublin Airport (DUB), Dublin; Cork Airport (ORK), Cork; Shannon Airport (SNN), Shannon

Visas & entry for Ireland

Shown for a British passport.

No visa needed

You can visit and remain indefinitely in Ireland under the Common Travel Area rules. British nationals do not need a visa or residency permit to live, work or study in Ireland.

Although Ireland is in the EU, it is not part of the Schengen area, and Schengen rules do not apply.

From the UK government's FCDO entry requirements for British passport holders — read the full page for passport validity, permits and exceptions.

Health & vaccinations



See a travel health nurse, GP or travel clinic **6–8 weeks before you go**. Make sure routine UK vaccinations (such as MMR and diphtheria-tetanus-polio) are up to date.

RECOMMENDED FOR MOST TRAVELLERS

Tetanus

SOMETIMES ADVISED — DEPENDS ON YOUR TRIP, ACTIVITIES AND HEALTH

Bat Lyssavirus

YELLOW FEVER CERTIFICATE

No yellow fever certificate is required to enter.

MALARIA

No malaria risk

Source: TravelHealthPro (National Travel Health Network and Centre), checked 21 October 2026. This is a summary, not medical advice.

Public holidays in Ireland

The next 12 months. Banks, offices and some sights may close, and transport and hotels get busy around these dates.

Mon 26 Oct 2026

October Bank Holiday

Fri 25 Dec 2026

Christmas Day

Sat 26 Dec 2026	Saint Stephen's Day
Fri 1 Jan 2027	New Year's Day
Mon 1 Feb 2027	Saint Brigid's Day
Wed 17 Mar 2027	Saint Patrick's Day
Mon 29 Mar 2027	Easter Monday
Mon 3 May 2027	May Day
Mon 7 Jun 2027	June Bank Holiday
Mon 2 Aug 2027	August Bank Holiday

National holidays only. Dates based on lunar calendars can move by a day or two depending on official announcements.

Know before you go

Dublin's M50 has a barrier-free toll between junctions 6 and 7. Hire firms may charge it to your card with a fee; otherwise pay online at eflow.ie by 8pm the following day.

The OPW Heritage Card covers a year's entry to state-run sites including Kilmainham Gaol, Brú na Bóinne and the Rock of Cashel, and soon pays for itself.

Weather turns quickly, so pack a waterproof and layers year-round. In pubs, ask when the trad session starts; most get going around 9pm or later.

Visa, health and safety rules change. Before you book or travel, check the FCDO travel advice (gov.uk/foreign-travel-advice) and TravelHealthPro (travelhealthpro.org.uk). Costs are estimates. © 2026 Pick My Trip.