

Ireland

A small country with big reputation and with ever-changing scenery, Ireland is an addictive place to explore. It is an island in the North Atlantic separated from Great Britain to its east by the North Channel, the Irish Sea, and St George's Channel. Within a few miles you can travel from plunging cliffs to breathtaking ancient landscapes, from towering mountains to gloomy peat bog and lose yourself totally in the diverse beauty. You can spend the night in ancient castles or state-of-the-art spa hotels, dine on fine Irish cuisine or snack on fish and chips served in a paper bag. The sheer number of sights, small villages, attractive pubs, and chic restaurants and shops is overwhelming.

A comfort zone

Ireland has been given the poetic name 'Emerald Isle' due to its green countryside. Throughout your travel, the cultural choices will besiege you. Immortalized in poetry and prose, in painting and in tourist literature too, Ireland with its historic cities and the legendary warmth and hospitality of its people is an attractive destination as more and more travellers visit year after year. Yes, for an island as small as it is, Ireland is a place where you would certainly feel at home with the fascinating and friendly people.

History & Culture

The culture of Ireland includes customs and traditions, language, music, art, literature, folklore, cuisine and sports associated with Ireland and the Irish people. For most of its recorded history, Ireland's culture has been primarily Gaelic. It has also been influenced by Anglo-Norman, English and Scottish culture. The Anglo-Normans invaded Ireland in the 12th century, while the 16th/17th century conquest and colonization of Ireland saw the emergence of the Anglo-Irish and Scots-Irish. Today, there are notable cultural differences between those of Catholic and Protestant background, and between Travellers and the settled population.

Top must see sights in Ireland

Dublin – The capital of Ireland is the most popular arrival city for international visitors. The city is always invigorating with Viking histories, exciting food, vibrant nightlife, friendly local, real pubs and a wide range of tourist attractions. The Guinness Storehouse is the major attraction for the most famous brewery in the world.

Galway – Located on a wide, arcing bay on Ireland's west coast, Galway is an excellent base for trips to the windswept Aran Islands and the remote, rugged Connemara region. It is a city that has kept the traditional customs and culture of Ireland alive in the form of Folklore, music, and dance in the many festivals held here.

Belfast – It is the capital city of Northern Ireland which has established itself as a popular weekend-break destination. It is a vibrant city where you find burgeoning restaurant alongside lively pubs, bars and clubs. Attractions such as the Titanic Quarter and Belfast Cathedral are must-visit places.

Cork city – The city also referred to as the “Real Capital of Ireland” is set on an island in the River Lee, surrounded by interesting waterways and packed with grand Georgian avenues. You can also find snug pubs with live-music sessions, restaurants with excellent quality food, and a genuinely proud welcome from the locals.

Killarney National Park – Located beside the town of Killarney, County Kerry, Killarney National Park is the first park established in Ireland. The unique combination of mountains, lakes, woods, and waterfalls under ever changing skies gives the entire place a special scenic beauty.

Cliffs of Moher – Ireland’s most visited natural attraction, the entirely vertical Cliffs of Moher in County Clare are 5 miles (8 km) long and soar over 700 feet (200 metres) above the crashing waves. On a clear day the views are stupendous that you come face-to-face with the ageless and savage power of nature.

Giant’s Causeway – Between Belfast and the walled city of Derry/Londonderry in County Antrim, Northern Ireland, the Giant’s Causeway is a UNESCO-listed geological wonder that looks like it belongs on another planet. The tops of the columns form natural stepping-stones that lead outwards from the cliffs and eventually disappear under the sea.

Dingle Peninsula – The Dingle Peninsula, on Ireland’s southwest Atlantic coast, offers a countless variety of whirling green landscapes, rocky hills, long sandy beaches and staggering cliff edges. It has streets with art and craft shops, old-fashioned pubs and sublime seafood restaurants.

The Rock of Cashel – The Rock of Cashel also known as Cashel of the Kings and St. Patrick’s Rock, is a historic site located at Cashel, County Tipperary. Standing proudly on a green hill, it’s a historic treasure trove of ancient religious structures including a 12th-century Romanesque chapel and a 13th-century Gothic cathedral.

Best time to visit Ireland0064

Ireland is favourable for travel almost throughout the year. Most areas renowned for their scenery remain beautiful all through, and their charm does not diminish in off-peak times.

Do remember, though, that some places - the lesser known attractions are closed down during the winter (October to March), but this is also the period when accommodation is likely to be at its cheapest. The tourist season peaks between June and September, when the weather is at its best.

How to reach Ireland

Flights from Europe, Asia, North America, Australia and South America regularly operate to Ireland. Dublin and Belfast are main points of arrival for flights. Biggest carrier is Ryanair, which offers lowest rates and cheap prices, if booked early. Ferries by Stenaline are available from Britain to Ireland, while buses can be taken from Eurolines.

Traveller's Tips – Do's and Don'ts

Don't forget that the roads are narrow, and you drive on the left!

Don't try to mimic the accent.

Do bring lots of layers and waterproof clothing.

Do go to a small pub.

Do learn few words of Irish.