

Ireland Guide



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TRAVEL TIPS

- Before leaving for the airport make sure you have your passport, airline tickets, and credit cards. Also, be sure your travel documents are easy to get to, as they will be requested several times at the airport.
- Wear comfortable clothes and shoes – nothing too tight.
- A small easy trick that helps the Pure Adventures staff: drink a lot of water. You get quickly dehydrated in airplane and dehydration causes tiredness.
- Earplugs can be very useful, both on the plane and in a hotel at night. They are light and easy to carry. Every traveler should have some.

Suitcase:

You are allowed to check 2 suitcases and take 1 carry-on bag. We advise you to use heavy-duty suitcases, which won't "explode" if roughly handled by the baggage handlers at the airports. Also, we suggest you use suitcases that are waterproof, as luggage is sometimes left out on the airport tarmac before they are stowed in luggage compartment of the airplane, and if it rains...

Arrive early for flights:

International flights require you to be at the airport 2 to 3 hours in advance of your flight. Also, for return flight, the airlines prefer that you confirm 72 hours in advance of your flight. This is not critical, but good information to ensure your preparations to meet your flight time.

Jet Lag:

When traveling to Ireland from North America you will arrive the day after you left, generally in the morning. You will be somewhere between 5-8 hours ahead of North America. There are several methods to overcome the change and many suggestions. None may work for you, but trying to sleep on the plane will help you. Also, plenty of rest prior to departure will help. Upon arrival in Ireland it will become difficult, as the first day goes on, to continue without sleep. If you cannot go on, take a short nap, with emphasis on short! Then go to bed early. Upon return, you will no doubt remain jet-lagged for a few days. You will arrive home (if you travel to North America) in the evening on the same day you left Ireland.

Insurance:

Though not mandatory, insurance is strongly suggested when traveling. Check with your own insurance company for best deal or Pure Adventures recommends Travel Guard Company they can insure all different aspects of your trip: www.travelguard.com. Credit cards can be useful insurance alternatives for rental cars. Also, double-check each insurance policy for lost or stolen luggage, airplane cancellation by airline, car rental (car rental companies offer their own insurance for an extra cost, though it is rarely the best deal).

IRELAND: GENERAL INFORMATION

Documentation:

U.S citizens only need a valid passport, roundtrip airfare and health insurance to travel to Ireland. You are required to carry identification with you at all times when traveling in Ireland. If you lose your passport, contact:

-American Embassy

42 Elgin Road, Dublin 4
Tel: 01 668 8777 or 01 668 7122
Fax: 01 668 9946

- Canadian Embassy

65 St Stephen's Green, Dublin 2
Tel: 01 417-4100
Fax: 01 417-4101

For other country residents, ask your government for information before departure. It is strongly recommended that you make two photocopies of your passport and other important documentation, including your list of phone numbers that Pure Adventures provides you in your pre-departure package, before leaving home. Leave one copy at home with family or friends, and keep another with you but separate from the actual documents

Passport:

Valid passport required by all to visit Ireland.

Note: it is advised that passengers hold return or onward tickets and proof of financial means, although this is not an absolute requirement.

Our suggestion: Keep your passport in a safe place as much as possible and just keep a photocopy with you.

Visas:

Required by all except nationals who do not require a visa to visit a country, which is a signatory to the Schengen Agreement: includes USA, Canada, all EU countries, among many others, check with your government.

Customs:

Customs operate green and red channels at most ports and airports. If you need to declare goods over the duty and tax-free allowances for non-EU visitors you must use the red channel, pass through the green channel if you have nothing to declare.

U.S. visitors can take home US\$400 worth of goods per person including 200 cigarettes or 50 cigars, 2 liters of wine or 1 liter of spirits.

Canadians are allowed up to Can\$750 worth of goods per person, including 200 cigarettes and 1.4 liters of spirits or wine.

Did you know that Ireland is the only country in Europe with full U.S. immigration pre-clearance capabilities? If you fly back to North America from Shannon or Dublin, you won't have to clear immigration once you arrive home (only non-stop travel to the U.S.).

Value Added Tax (VAT):

To be able to claim a tax refund you must be a non European Community visitor to Ireland. Look for the ‘Tax Free Shopping’ signs in windows of participating stores. You will need to fill out the form, which the sales assistant will give you, keep the goods in your carry on and show both the goods and the forms to the VAT desk at the airport. You may receive the refund on the spot (if available) or by mail. Refunds cannot be processed after you arrive home. Not all shops in Ireland participate in the VAT program.

Mail:

The cost of sending a standard letter or postcard is 57 cents to countries outside the European Union, 44 cents within the European Union and 41 cents within Ireland and Britain.

Telephone:

When calling the Republic of Ireland from abroad, all telephone numbers must be prefixed with +353 (drop the first 0). For pay phones, pre-paid phone cards are widely available, convenient and cost effective to use. Phone cards are sold in denominations of €6.35 or €12.70.

Cell Phones:

For mobile phones, only digital phones with GSM subscriptions and a roaming agreement will work in the island of Ireland. You should contact your cell phone supplier before departure.

If your phone isn’t equipped to work in Europe, you might want to rent a phone. We recommend Cell Hire, who makes it convenient since they deliver the phone to your home before your departure: www.cellhire.com

Emergency telephone numbers:

Emergency Police, Fire & Ambulance: 999 or 112

This number is free of charge but should only be used in cases in genuine emergency. On answer, state which service you require, wait to be connected to that service, then clearly state the location of where the assistance is required.

Personal Safety: 01 478 5295

Should you be unfortunate enough to be a victim of crime in the Republic of Ireland, contact the Tourist Victim support.

Public Holidays in the Republic of Ireland

New Year’s Day	January 1 st	August Bank Holiday	August 5 th
St Patrick’s Day	March 17 th	October Bank Holiday	October 28 th
Easter Monday	April 1 st	Christmas Day	December 25 th
May Bank Holiday	May 6 th	St Stephen’s Day	December 26 th
June Bank Holiday	June 3 rd		

Good Friday, although not officially a public holiday is observed as such in parts of the Republic of Ireland

E-Mail:

Some libraries have an e-mail service available free of charge, but generally Internet cafes can be found in most large towns throughout Ireland.

Electric current:

The standard electricity supply is 220 volts AC in the Republic of Ireland and 240 volts AC in Northern Ireland. You may require a transformer and a plug adaptor if bringing your razor, cell phone chargers or other electric device.

A plug adaptor is necessary to convert 2-pin plugs to the standard 3-pin plugs and these can be bought at any airport or electrical supplier.

€ / \$ MONEY \$ / €

Currency:

As of January 1, 2002, the Euro is the official currency in the Republic of Ireland and the other countries currently participating in European currency union. The Euro paper currency will be the same in all 12 countries, in denominations of 5, 10, 20, 50, 100, 200 and 500 Euros. The coins however, will bear a different face according to the country. There are 8 coins: 1, 5, 10, 20, 50 cents, €1 and €2. Check before departure the equivalent of the Euro compare to the U.S Dollar.

In Northern Ireland (as in the rest of the United Kingdom), Sterling is the local currency. One STG£ consists of 100 pence. The notes consist of £5, £10, £20, £50 and £100. The coins are 1p, 2p, 5p, 10p, 20p, 50p, £1 and £2.

The currencies of the Republic of Ireland and Northern Ireland are not interchangeable.

Credit Cards:

Any credit card that bears the Visa, MasterCard or American Express “badge” will be widely accepted in Ireland. If you have other cards, you should ask in advance or see if that card is on display where you wish to use it.

Banks / Shopping:

Banks in Ireland are generally open around 9:30am and close about 4:30pm from Monday to Friday and to 5pm on Thursday. ATM (cash) machines are located at most banks and accept most credit and debit cards. Most banks are closed Saturday and Sunday and all holidays.

Stores are usually open from Monday to Saturday from 9am to 6pm with late-night shopping until 8pm or 9pm on Thursday at many larger stores.

On Sunday, main shopping centers and some of the larger department stores open from midday until 5pm or 6pm. Many smaller supermarkets in towns and villages also open.

Tipping:

Almost all restaurants include tax and a 15% service charge with the bill. If you really appreciate the service and/or the meal, an additional tip is customary. About 3 euros or small change left from your bill. If service is not included, 10-15% of the bill is appropriate. In hotels, 75 cents for each piece of luggage is the norm for porters. Taxi drivers should receive about 10% of the fare. Bus drivers and tour guides get tipped after an excursion. In pubs, tipping bar staff is at the customer's discretion.

Safety tips:

Because we are 'talking' about money, passport, etc... we should remind you that your vacation will feel much more successful if these items stay with you!!

You needn't worry about crime or theft anymore than at your home, however take no chances. Our suggestions: Employ a secure method of transporting your money and documents. A money belt works great, you could also keep the paper money in "Ziploc bags" inside your money belt to avoid any damage by rain for example.

- If the belt does not appeal to you, try to use bags that can't be pulled easily from your shoulder – try a backpack for example. Nowadays, backpacks come in so many shape, size and color that you will find one you like! Small one can also be carried in the front in places like crowded metro trains.

- Leave in the safe box of your hotel or in your suitcase locked: your passport, airplane tickets, train tickets, part of your money / traveler checks, etc...

- Only take with you what you need for the day: keep only a photocopy of your passport on you, 1 credit card, some traveler checks and some cash.

- Try to get used to the currency in a safe place like your hotel room and don't show a lot of cash in the street.

- Be prudent when you withdraw cash at ATM machines, do not let anybody you don't know distract you.

TRANSPORTATION

The main airports in Ireland are: Dublin, Cork, Belfast and Shannon

There are also a number of regional airports: Belfast city, Aran Islands, City of Derry, Carrickfinn in Donegal, Galway, Kerry, Knock, Sligo and Waterford. These airports are well services with flight connections.

Public Transportation

Ireland has a good network of both bus and rail services but mainly from and to large towns. If you are traveling around Ireland by public transportation, you should always enquire about special discounted fares or Emerald Card / Irish Rover tickets, which offer unlimited bus / rail travel for 3, 5, 8 or 15 days.

Taxis

There are metered taxis in Belfast, Cork, Dublin, Galway and Limerick, but in other areas you will have to agree on the fare beforehand.

Taxis generally tend to wait at ranks in central locations and do not usually cruise the streets.

DRIVING IN IRELAND

Traffic laws:

An American or Canadian driver's license is sufficient to drive in Ireland. Have another ID document with you like your passport.

Driving in Ireland is on the left and seat belts must be worn at all times in the front and the back of the vehicle; likewise, motorcyclists and their passengers must wear helmets.

In both the Republic of Ireland and Northern Ireland, speed limits are:

- 30mph (50km/ph) in built-up urban areas
- 60mph (100km/ph) on the open road
- 70mph (110km/ph) on the motorway

In the Republic, the majority of signposts denoting distances are now in kilometers but speed limits are still denoted in miles per hour. All signposts and place names are displayed bilingually in both Irish (Gaelic) and English.

Car rental

Most of the major rental companies have desks at airports, ferry terminals and cities across Ireland. In general, they do not rent to those under the age of 21 or over 70 years old. All intending drivers need to hold valid licenses. For terms and conditions, always check with the company.

Rentals tend to be more financially favorable if you make your booking prior to arriving in Ireland. It is advisable to book in advance if you are traveling during the high season. The majority of rental cars are manual transmissions. If ordered in time, automatic cars are available for an additional charge. A child's seat should also be requested in advance.

Advise the rental company if you are planning to travel between the Republic of Ireland and Northern Ireland.

NEVER leave objects of value in your car – anywhere you travel. At the very least, keep them out of sight and in the trunk. However, your rental car will have a license plate that is common to rentals and will be a recognizable beacon to thieves, therefore leave nothing to chance.

DUBLIN

Dublin, the capital city of the Republic of Ireland, is a cosmopolitan, bustling city, which literally buzzes with energy and excitement. However the great thing about Dublin is that if you fancy something quieter, half an hour drive outside the city center will take you to mountain walks, stately homes and gardens and fishing villages.

The city is a great center for culture and you'll be spoilt for choice with fine museums, art galleries and theatres. Dublin is also home to a great literary tradition; its native sons include Shaw, Yeats, Joyce, Wilde and Beckett. You can't talk about Dublin without mentioning the architecture; walking around the city you'll see everything from medieval and Georgian architecture to more modern buildings.

Dublin is a shopper's delight; you can buy anything from the latest fashion arts and crafts. If you are looking for a gastronomic experience, Dublin boasts a vast array of restaurants serving haute cuisine to traditional pub grub menus.

If you are spending a few days in the City, here are a few places you may wish to visit:

- **Trinity College**: the oldest university in Ireland founded in 1592. The college is also famed for its exhibit of the Book of Kells (most richly decorated of Ireland's medieval manuscripts and contains four gospels of Latin).
- **Phoenix Park**: spanning 1,752 acres, the park is the largest urban park in Europe.
- **Dublin Zoo**: set in the grounds of Phoenix Park where over 700 animals and tropical birds from around the world can be seen.
- **The Irish Museum of Modern Art**: The museum offers an exciting and innovative range of international and Irish art of the 20th century.
- **Old Jameson Distillery**: follow the fascinating craft of whiskey making at the Old Jameson Distillery.
- **Dublin Castle**: at the heart of historic Dublin.
- **James Joyce Tower and Museum**: museum devoted to the life and works of James Joyce.
- **The Guinness Storehouse**: discover how Guinness is made and sample some while enjoying spectacular views of Dublin from the gravity bar.
- **The GAA Museum**: biggest sports museum in Ireland
- **Christchurch Cathedral**: dating back to the 11th century it reflects 1,000 years of worship in Ireland.

GEOGRAPHY / TERRAIN

Connemara is the name given to the western part of County Galway that lies between Lough Corrib and the Atlantic Ocean. This is land formed through the glaciations of the ice ages, the rise of flora and fauna during the ensuing thaw, and by the people who have inhabited it for nearly 10,000 years. Western Ireland is breathtaking and solitary. Dominated by brooding granite peaks and rugged hills surrounding the uncultivated wilderness of a gently rolling interior plain covered by blanket bog and wet heath vegetation. Stream-fed lakes reflect the mysterious and beautiful light of an enormous sky. All along the intricately carved coastline tiny villages cling to a wildly beautiful shoreline of rocky inlets and sandy bays.

CLIMATE:

Though having a temperate maritime climate Ireland is famous for its unpredictable and wet weather. Changeable and very localized, it can be sunny one minute and raining the next. Prevailing southwesterly winds create temperate summers and mild winters. Also, the Gulf Stream, a current of warm water and air that flows from the Gulf of Mexico towards Europe is what allows the people of Europe to live more easily in the northern latitudes. This latitude also means that in December daylight may last only 7 hours, while a typical June day could be 18 hours long. During some summer nights the level of light never falls below twilight.

- Summer low 50-60F (10-15C)
- Summer high 70-80F (21-27C)

FOOD / BEVERAGE

The life of the medieval Irish determined what food they ate and this has carried over to present day Irish cuisine. Wealth was determined by how many head of cattle a person had so their cattle were raised for dairy not meat. However, pigs and sheep were raised for their meat and venison and wild boar were hunted. Being surrounded by ocean and inundated with [hundreds] of lakes and rivers fish have had a significant role in the Irish diet. Many types of vegetables were grown and root crops were always popular but it wasn't until the end of the 16th century that the potato was introduced and Ireland's holy trinity of food was born Meat-Vegetable-Potato. The national dish of Ireland is Lamb Stew. Of course traditional favorites also include: Corned Beef and Cabbage, Shepard's Pie, Gaelic Steak (beef fillet cooked in Irish whiskey,) and Soda Bread.

In recent years there has been a renewed interest cheese making with several dairies producing specialty cheeses: Blarney, St. Killian (Camembert-style with mushrooms,) cheddar Bandon Vale, blue-veined Cashel and Millens, a soft raw cow's milk cheese.