

Directory

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ACCOMMODATION

Sleeping entries are categorised by price and then preference, with our favourites first. Our favourites are selected because they have a little something – or in some cases, a lot of something – that makes that bit more memorable, but we've also endeavoured, where possible, to highlight properties that walk the green walk and are committed to eco-responsibility.

Rates are per *room* per night, unless otherwise stated: budget (under €60/£40), mid-range (€60-150/£40-100) and top end (over €150/£100), and high-season rates are given throughout. Where a range of prices is given,

PRACTICALITIES

- Use the metric system for weights, measures, speed limits and most signposting, except for the old-style black-on-white ones, which still use miles.
- Use the PAL system for video recorders and players.
- Plug appliances into the three flat pin sockets for (220V, 50Hz AC) power supply.
- Get an insight into Irish life with one of the world's best newspapers the *Irish Times* or Ireland's biggest-selling *Irish Independent*.
- Relish Irish political satire in the fortnightly magazine *Phoenix*, or brush up on current affairs in *Magill* magazine.
- Check both sides of Northern Irish current affairs with loyalist tabloid *News Letter* or the pro-republican *Irish News*.
- TV addicts should tune into *Questions and Answers* (RTE 1), a hard-hitting current affairs programme on Monday nights; or catch a great documentary on TG4, the national Irish-language station (subtitles are available).
- Tune into RTE Radio One (88-90 FM or 567/729 MW) for culture and politics; Lyric FM (96-99 FM) for nonstop classical music; or Newstalk 106-108 (106-108 FM) for commercial daytime current affairs and chitchat.

it refers to rates for different rooms during high season. Prices tend to be cheaper off-peak. Room prices in Dublin are disproportionately high and can be double what you would pay elsewhere in the country.

The majority of accommodation providers increase their rates by up to 10% on 'special' weekends, ie bank holidays or during major sporting events. Hotels will often offer packages, especially in low season, for more than one night's stay including dinner, and it's also worth asking for a discount from the quoted rack rate (tourist board-approved

BOOK ACCOMMODATION ONLINE

For more accommodation reviews and recommendations by Lonely Planet authors, check out the online booking service at www.lonelyplanet.com. You'll find the true, insider lowdown on the best places to stay in Belfast, Cork, Dublin, Galway and Kilkenny. Reviews are thorough and independent. Best of all, you can book online.

rate) from Monday to Thursday. Ironically, in city hotels cheaper rates may apply at weekends, when their main corporate clients disappear.

In low season (November to March) you can simply call in or ring ahead in rural areas. In peak season it's best to book ahead. Fáilte Ireland (Irish Tourist Board) or the Northern Ireland Tourist Board (NITB) will book serviced accommodation for a fee of €4 (£2), or self-catering for €7 (£2). Make telephone bookings through their booking system **Gulliver Ireland** (in Ireland ☎ 1850 61 61 61, in UK ☎ 0800 096 8644, in USA ☎ 1 888 827 3028, from everywhere else insert freephone prefix before ☎ 6686 6866).

Much of the accommodation closes during Christmas and New Year, especially in rural areas, and most charge a supplement.

B&Bs

The ubiquitous bed and breakfasts are small, family-run houses, farmhouses and period country houses with fewer than five bedrooms. Standards vary enormously, but most have some bedrooms with bathroom

at a cost of roughly €35 to €40 (£20 to £25) per person per night. In luxurious B&Bs, expect to pay €55 (£38) or more per person. Facilities in budget-end B&Bs may be very limited: TVs, telephones, kettles and the like are the trappings of midrange to top-end establishments. Remember, outside big cities most B&Bs only accept cash.

Camping & Caravan Parks

Camping and caravan parks aren't as common in Ireland as they are in Britain or on the continent. Some hostels have camping space for tents and also offer house facilities, which makes them better value than the main camping grounds. At commercial parks the cost is typically somewhere between €12 and €20 (£7 and £10) for a tent and two people. Prices for camp sites in this book are for two people unless stated otherwise. Caravan sites cost around €15 to €25 (£11 to £15). Most parks only open from Easter to the end of September or October.

Guesthouses

Essentially, guesthouses are much like up-market B&Bs. The difference lies in their size, with guesthouses having between six and 30 bedrooms. Prices vary enormously according to the standard but the minimum you can expect to shell out is €35 (£22) per person (€40 in Dublin), and up to about €100 (£35) in upmarket places. Unlike hotels, the majority of guesthouses are unlicensed but many have restaurants and good facilities, and can take credit-card payment.

WEBSITE ACCOMMODATION RESOURCES

- www.allgohere.com** This website lists accommodation suitable for travellers with (and without) a disability to Northern Ireland.
- www.corkkerry.ie** A useful resource for accommodation and information throughout the southwest.
- www.daft.ie** Online classified paper for short- and long-term rentals.
- www.discovernorthernireland.com** NITB's accommodation-booking site.
- www.elegant.ie** Specialises in self-catering castles, period houses and unique properties.
- www.familyhomes.ie** Lists, you guessed it, family-run guesthouses and self-catering properties.
- www.gulliver.ie** Fáilte Ireland and the Northern Ireland Tourist Board's (NITB) web-based accommodation reservation system.
- www.hostelworld.com** A useful website for comparing hostels and booking beds.
- www.ireland.travel.ie** Fáilte Ireland's accommodation-booking site.
- www.irishlandmark.com** Not-for-profit conservation group that rents self-catering properties of historical and cultural significance such as castles, gate lodges and lighthouses.
- www.stayinireland.com** Lists guesthouses and self-catering options.

SOMETHING DIFFERENT

An alternative to normal caravanning is to hire a horse-drawn caravan with which to wander the countryside. In high season you can hire one for around €800 a week. Search www.ireland.ie for a list of operators, or see www.irishhorsesdrawncaravans.com.

Another unhurried and pleasurable way to see the countryside (with slightly less maintenance) is by barge on one of the country's canal systems. As above, contact Fáilte Ireland for a list of rental companies.

Another option is to hire a boat, which you can live aboard while cruising Ireland's inland waterways. One company offering boats for hire on the Shannon-Erne Waterway is **Emerald Star** (☎ 071-962 0234; www.emeraldstar.ie).

Hostels

The prices quoted in this book for hostel accommodation are for those aged over 18. A dorm bed in high season generally costs €13 to €25 (£8 to £14).

An Óige and Hostelling International Northern Ireland (HINI) are the two associations that belong to Hostelling International (HI). About half of the hostels have family and smaller rooms. An Óige has 23 hostels scattered around the Republic and HINI has six in the North.

An Óige (☎ 01-830 4555; www.irelandyha.org; 61 Mountjoy St, Dublin 7; ☎ 9.30am-5.30pm Mon-Fri)

HINI (☎ 028-9032 4733, area code 048 if calling from Republic; www.hini.org.uk; 22-32 Donegall Rd, Belfast BT12 5JN; ☎ 24hr)

Ireland also has a large number of independent hostels, some excellent, but many high on character and low on facilities. The following associations, with hostels in the Republic and in the North, do their best to offer reliable accommodation:

Independent Holiday Hostels of Ireland (IHH; ☎ 01-836 4700; www.hostels-ireland.com; 57 Lower Gardiner St, Dublin 1)

Independent Hostel Owners of Ireland (IHO; ☎ 074-973 0130; www.holidayhound.com/ih/; Dooney Hostel, Glencolumbkille, Co Donegal)

Hotels

Hotels range from the local pub to medieval castles, and prices fluctuate accordingly. It's

often possible to negotiate better deals than the published rates, especially out of season and online. Payment usually includes breakfast, and most hotels have TV, and tea- and coffee-making facilities and phones. You may find that some offer better rates than guesthouses.

House Swapping

House swapping has become a popular and affordable way to visit a country and enjoy a real home away from home. There are several agencies in Ireland that, for an annual fee, facilitate international swaps. The fee pays for access to a website and a book giving house descriptions, photographs and the owner's details. After that, it's up to you to make arrangements. Sometimes use of the family car is included.

Homelink International House Exchange (☎ 01-846 2598; www.homelink.ie; 95 Bracken Dr, Portmarnock, Co Dublin)

Intervac International Holiday Service (☎ 041-983 7969; www.intervac.com; Drogheda, Co Dublin; ☎ 7-9pm Mon-Fri)

Rental Accommodation

Self-catering accommodation is often rented on a weekly basis and usually means an apartment or house where you look after yourself. The rates vary from one region and season to another. Fáilte Ireland publishes a guide for registered self-catering accommodation or you can check the website (www.ireland.travel.ie).

ACTIVITIES

Activities open up Ireland in a way that can be both cheap and relaxing, and offer a unique experience of the country. See also p565.

Bird-Watching

The variety and size of the flocks that visit or breed in Ireland make it of particular interest to bird-watchers. It's also home to some rare and endangered species. For a description of some birds found in Ireland, see p72.

There are more than 70 reserves and sanctuaries in Ireland, but some aren't open to visitors and others are privately owned, so you'll need permission from the proprietors before entering.

More information can be obtained from the tourist boards and from the following organisations:

Birds of Ireland News Service (☎ 01-830 7364; www.birdsireland.com; 36 Claremont Ct, Glasnevin, Dublin 11)

BirdWatch Ireland (☎ 01-281 9878; www.birdwatchireland.ie; Rockingham Hs, Newcastle, Co Wicklow) Runs bird-watching field courses, all of which take place on Cape Clear in County Cork.

National Parks & Wildlife Service (☎ 01-888 2000; www.npws.ie; 7 Ely Pl, Dublin 2)

Royal Society for the Protection of Birds (RSPB; ☎ 028-9049 1547; www.rspb.org.uk; Belvoir Park Forest, Belfast, BT8 4QT)

Some useful publications on bird-watching are Dominic Couzens' *Collins Birds of Britain and Ireland* and the slightly out-of-date *Where to Watch Birds in Ireland* by Clive Hutchinson.

Cycling

The tourist boards can supply you with a list of operators who organise cycling holidays. For more on the practicalities of travelling round Ireland with a bike, see p720.

Both **Irish Cycling Safaris** (☎ 01-260 0749; www.cyclingsafaris.com; Belfield Bike Shop, UCD, Dublin 4) and **Go Ireland** (☎ 066-976 2094; www.goactivities.com; Old Orchard House, Killorglin, Co Kerry) organise tours for groups of cyclists in the southwest, southeast, Clare, Connemara, Donegal and Antrim.

Fishing

Ireland is justly famous for its generally free coarse fishing, covering bream, pike, perch, roach, rudd, tench, carp and eel. Killing of pike over 6.6lb (3kg) in weight is prohibited, anglers are limited to one pike and killing of coarse fish is frowned upon; anglers are encouraged to return coarse fish alive. Freshwater game fish include salmon, sea trout and brown trout. Some managed fisheries also stock rainbow trout.

The enormous Shannon and Erne river systems, stretching southwards from Leitrim and Fermanagh, are prime angling spots, and Cavan, the 'Lake County', is a favourite with hardcore fishermen. In the west, the great lakes of Corrib, Mask and Conn have plenty of lakeshore B&Bs, good sturdy boats and knowledgeable boatmen. These lakes can be dangerous, as they tend to be littered with hidden rocks and shoals.

While Ireland is a land of opportunity for the angler, intensive agriculture and the growth of towns have brought about a general reduction in water quality in many areas, markedly so in some. Fáilte Ireland

and the NITB produce several information leaflets on fishing, accommodation, events and licences required.

Licences in the Republic are available from the local tackle shop or direct from the **Central Fisheries Board** (☎ 01-884 2600; www.cfb.ie; Unit 4, Swords Business Campus, Balheary Rd, Swords, Dublin).

In the North, rod licences for coarse and game fishing are obtainable from the **Foyle, Carlingford & Irish Lights Commission** (☎ 028-7134 2100; www.loughs-agency.org; 22 Victoria Rd, Londonderry) and from the **Fisheries Conservancy Board** (☎ 028-3833 4666; www.fcni.com; 1 Mahon Rd, Portadown, Co Armagh) for all other regions. You also require a permit from the owner, which is usually the **Department of Culture, Arts & Leisure, Inland Waterways & Inland Fisheries Branch** (☎ 028-9025 8863; 3rd fl, Interpoint, 20-24 York St, Belfast BT15 1AQ).

Golf

Contact Fáilte Ireland, the NITB, the **Golfing Union of Ireland** (☎ 01-505 4000; www.gui.ie; Unit 8 Block G, Maynooth Business Campus, Maynooth, Co Kildare), or the **Irish Ladies Golf Union** (☎ 01-269 6244; www.ilgu.ie; 1 Clonskeagh Sq, Clonskeagh Rd, Dublin 14) for information on golfing holidays.

Green fees, usually based on a per-day basis, start from around €25 (£15) on weekdays, but top-notch places charge up to €300 (£180). Courses are tested for their level of difficulty; many are playable year round, especially links.

Hang-gliding & Paragliding

Some of the finest hang-gliding and paragliding in the country is found at Mount Leinster (p183) in Carlow, Great Sugarloaf Mountain in Wicklow, Benone and Magilligan Beaches (p655) in Derry and Achill Island (p454) in Mayo. Check the **Irish Hang Gliding & Paragliding Association** (www.ihpa.ie) and **Ulster Hang Gliding & Paragliding Club's** (www.uhpc.co.uk) websites for local pilots.

Horse Riding

Unsurprisingly, considering the Irish passion for horses, riding is a popular pastime. There are dozens of centres throughout Ireland, offering possibilities ranging from hiring a horse for an hour (from €25/£15) to fully packaged, residential equestrian holidays.

Recommended outfits are Canadian-based **Hidden Trails** (www.hiddentrails.com) and **Ballycumisk**

Riding School (☎ 028-37246, 087 961 6969; Ballycumisk, Schull, Co Cork)

Walking

There are many superb walks in Ireland, including 31 'waymarked ways' or designated long-distance paths of varying lengths. There are, however, some issues that have made what should be some of the best walking in Europe a frustrating or even disappointing experience. Some trails run through miles and miles of tedious forestry tracks and bitumen roads. The ways are marked with signposts showing the standard yellow arrow and hiker – in theory at least: waymarking is often variable and in some cases totally nonexistent.

Ireland has a tradition of relatively free access to open country but the growth in the number of walkers and the carelessness of a few have made some farmers less obliging. Unfortunately it's not uncommon to find unofficial signs on gateways barring access, or physical barriers blocking ways. If you come across this problem, refer to the local tourist office.

Another problem is with accommodation, which isn't always easily accessible, and some completely bypass the best local scenery.

The maintenance and development of the ways is administered in the Republic by the **National Waymarked Ways Advisory Committee** (NWWAC; ☎ 01-860 8823; www.walkireland.ie; Irish Sports Council, Top fl, Block A Westend Office Park, Blanchardstown, Dublin 15) and in the North by **Countryside Access & Activities Network** (CAAN; ☎ 028-9030 3930; The Stableyard, Barnett's Demesne, Belfast).

Some useful guides are Lonely Planet's *Walking in Ireland*, Michael Fewer's *Irish Long-Distance Walks* or *Best Irish Walks* by Joss Lynam.

EastWest Mapping (☎/fax 054-77835; eastwest@eircom.net) has good maps of long-distance walks in the Republic and the North.

Tim Robinson of **Folding Landscapes** (☎ 095-35886; tandmf@iol.ie) produces superbly detailed maps of the Burren, the Aran Islands and Connemara. His and Joss Lynam's *Mountains of Connemara: A Hill Walker's Guide* contains a useful detailed map.

For mountain rescue call ☎ 999.

ORGANISED WALKS

If you don't have a travelling companion you could consider joining an organised walking group.

Go Ireland (☎ 066-976 2094; www.goactivities.com; Old Orchard House, Killorglin, Co Kerry) Offers walking tours of the west.

South West Walks Ireland (☎ 066-712 8733; www.southwestwalksireland.com; 6 Church St, Tralee, Co Kerry) Provides a series of guided and self-guided walking programmes around the southwest, northwest and Wicklow.

BEARA WAY

This moderately easy, 196km walk forms a loop around the delightful Beara Peninsula (p239) in West Cork. The peninsula is relatively unused to mass tourism and makes a pleasant contrast with the Iveragh Peninsula to the north.

Part of the walk, between Castletownbere and Glengarriff, follows the route taken by Donal O'Sullivan and his band after the English took his castle following an 11-day siege in 1602. At Glengarriff, O'Sullivan met up with other families and set out on a journey north, hoping to reunite with other remaining pockets of Gaelic resistance. Of the 1000 or so men who set out that winter, only 30 completed the trek.

The Beara Way mostly follows old roads and tracks and rarely rises above 340m. There's no official start or finish point and the route can be walked in either direction. It could easily be reduced to seven days by skipping Bere and Dursley Islands, and if you start at Castletownbere you could reach Kenmare in five days or less.

BURREN WAY

This 35km walk traverses the Burren (p388) limestone plateau in County Clare. It presents a strange, unique landscape to the walker. There's very little soil and few trees but a surprising abundance of flora. The way stretches between Ballyvaughan, on the northern coast of County Clare, and Liscannor to the southwest, taking in the village of Doolin, famous as a traditional-music centre. The trail south of Doolin to the dramatic Cliffs of Moher is a highlight of the route. From the cliffs a new path has been developed inland towards Liscannor (older maps may show a route, now closed, along the cliffs).

The best time for this walk is late spring or early summer. The route is pretty dry, but walking boots are useful as the limestone can be sharp.

CAVAN WAY

In the northwest of County Cavan the villages of Blacklion and Dowra are the ends of the 26km Cavan Way. The path runs northeast-southwest past a number of Stone Age monuments – court cairns, ring forts and tombs – through an area said to be one of the last strongholds of druidism. At the midpoint is the Shannon Pot, the official source of the River Shannon on the slopes of the Cuilcagh Mountains. From Blacklion it's mainly hill walking; from Shannon Pot to Dowra it's mainly road. The highest point on the walk is Giant's Grave (260m). You'll need OSNI map No 26 and the *Cavan Way* map guide. The route can be boggy, so take spare socks!

Dowra links up with the Leitrim Way, which runs between Manorhamilton and Drumshanbo.

DINGLE WAY

This 168km walk in County Kerry loops round one of the most beautiful peninsulas in the country (see p284). It takes eight days to complete, beginning and ending in Tralee, with an average daily distance of 21km. The first three days offer the easiest walk but the first day, from Tralee to Camp, is the least interesting; it could be skipped by taking the bus to Camp and starting from there.

EAST MUNSTER WAY

This 70km walk travels through forest and open moorland, along small country roads and a river towpath. It's clearly laid out with black markers bearing yellow arrows, and could be managed in three days, starting at Carrick-on-Suir (p318) in County Tipperary and finishing at Clogheen in County Waterford. The first day takes you to Clonmel, the second to Newcastle and the last to Clogheen. Look out for new signposts between Carrick and Killeshin, where part of the badly eroded path has recently been rerouted.

KERRY WAY

The 214km Kerry Way is the Republic's longest waymarked footpath and is usually walked anticlockwise. It starts and ends in Killarney (p328) and stays inland for the first three days, winding through the spectacular Macgillycuddy's Reeks (p255) and past 1041m Mt Carrantuohil, Ireland's highest mountain, before continuing around the Ring of Kerry (p258) coast through

MORE WALKS IN IRELAND

- The Wicklow Way – Glendalough To Aughrim (p155), County Wicklow
- The Great Sugarloaf (p161), County Wicklow
- Mt Seefin (p239), County Cork
- Reeks Ridge (p257), County Kerry
- Mt Brandon (p292), County Kerry
- Tipperary Heritage Way (p314), County Tipperary
- South Leinster Way (p336), County Kilkenny
- Killary Harbour (p435), County Galway
- Inisheer (p423), County Galway
- Blue Stack Mountains (p509), County Donegal
- Slieve Donard (p628), County Down
- Fair Head (p669), County Antrim
- Causeway Coast (p666), County Antrim
- The Cliffs Of Magho (p686), County Fermanagh
- Cuilcagh Mountain via the Legnabrocky Trail (p688), County Fermanagh

Cahirciveen, Waterville, Caherdaniel, Sneem and Kenmare.

You could complete the walk in about 10 days, provided you're up to a good 20km per day. With less time it's worth walking the first three days, as far as Glenbeigh, from where a bus or a lift could return you to Killarney.

Accommodation isn't a problem, but you need to book in July and August. In contrast, places to eat aren't common, so consider carrying your own food.

MOURNE TRAIL

The Mourne Trail is actually the southeastern section of the Ulster Way, south of Belfast, and runs from Newry (p631), around the Mourne Mountains (p627), to the seaside resort of Newcastle (p625) and then on to Strangford (p624), where you can take a ferry across to Portaferry (p616) and continue north to Newtownards (p618). From Newry to Strangford is a distance of 106km, which could probably be managed in four or five days.

There's gorgeous mountain, forest and coastal scenery along the way and, once you've left Newry, not many built-up areas to spoil the views. Provided you're reasonably fit and well shod, this is not an especially difficult route to walk, although it does climb as high as 559m at Slievemoughanmore, the highest point on the Ulster Way.

SLIEVE BLOOM WAY

Close to the geographical centre of Ireland, the Slieve Bloom Way is a 77km trail through Counties Offaly and Laois. It does a complete circuit of the Slieve Bloom Mountains (p356) taking in most major points of interest. The trail follows tracks, forest firebreaks and old roads, and crosses the Mountrath–Kinnitty and Mountrath–Clonaslee roads. The trail's highest point is at Glendine Gap (460m). The recommended starting point is the car park at Glenbarrow, 5km from Rosenallis.

Camping in state forests is forbidden, but there's plenty of open space outside the forest for tents; otherwise, accommodation en route is almost nonexistent. There is no public transport to the area, although buses do stop in the nearby towns of Mountrath and Rosenallis.

SOUTH LEINSTER WAY

The tiny village of Kildavin in County Carlow, just southwest of Clonegal on the slopes of Mt Leinster, is the northern starting point of the 100km South Leinster Way, which winds through Counties Carlow and Kilkenny. It follows remote mountain roads and river towpaths through the medieval villages of Borris (p352), Graigueamanagh (p336), Inistioge (p335), Mullinavat and Piltown to the finish post at Carrick-on-Suir (p318) just inside the Tipperary border. The southerly section is not as scenic as the rest, but the low hills have their own charm and on a sunny day they offer fine views south over the Suir Valley and Waterford Harbour.

The way leads in a generally southwestward direction but could easily be done the opposite way. It should take four or five days, depending on whether you stop over in Graigueamanagh.

Much of it is above 500m and the weather can change quickly: good walking boots, outdoor gear and emergency supplies are essential.

ULSTER WAY: NORTHEASTERN SECTION

The Ulster Way makes a circuit around the six counties of Northern Ireland and Donegal. In total the footpath covers just more than 900km, so walking all of it might take five weeks. However, it can easily be broken down into smaller sections that could be attempted during a short stay. The scenery along the way varies enormously, encompassing dramatic coastal views, gentler lakeside country and the mountainous inland terrain of the Mourne Mountains.

Some of the most spectacular scenery lies along the 165km northeastern section, which begins unpromisingly in Belfast's western suburbs, then follows the Glens of Antrim (p668) and the glorious Causeway Coast (p666), a Unesco World Heritage site. It can be completed in six or seven days. The stretch of coast immediately surrounding the Giant's Causeway is likely to be busy, especially in high summer, when you should book accommodation well ahead.

Walking this stretch of coast shouldn't be beyond most averagely fit and sensibly equipped people, but rockfalls along the coast can occasionally obstruct stretches of it. While some stretches of this walk can seem wonderfully wild, you're never going to be that far from civilisation.

ULSTER WAY: DONEGAL SECTION

The main Ulster Way crosses into Donegal at the small pilgrimage town of Pettigo on Lough Erne, but then circles straight back to Rosscar in Northern Ireland. A spur – also confusingly called the Ulster Way – cuts north across the central moorlands of Donegal to Falcarragh on the northern coast. In all, if you follow the spur, this stretch of walk is 111km long, which means it can be walked in four or five days. Bear in mind, however, that much of central Donegal is bleak, boggy terrain where walking can be tough, especially if the weather's bad – which it often is! Although the walking-man symbol sometimes appears on markers, in general you'll be looking out for white-painted posts which simply tell you that you're heading in the right direction.

This stretch of the Ulster Way is intended for wilderness lovers. Some of the scenery en route is truly magnificent: you pass the Blue Stack (p509) and Derryveagh Mountains and the 752m Mt Errigal (p529), Donegal's highest peak. The route also skirts the glorious

Glenveagh National Park (p530), where you might want to break your journey. There are few dramatic historic remains to distract you, but plenty of minor prehistoric burial sites.

WICKLOW WAY

Opened in 1982, the popular 132km Wicklow Way (www.wicklowway.com) was Ireland's first long-distance trail. Despite its name, it actually starts in southern Dublin and ends in Clonegal in County Carlow, although for most of the way it travels through Wicklow. From its beginnings in Marlay Park, Rathfarnham, in southern Dublin, the trail quickly enters a mountain wilderness (the highest point is White Hill at 633m). A mixture of forest walks, sheep paths, bog roads and mountain passes join up to provide a spectacular walk that passes by Glenree (p150), Powerscourt Estate (p148), Djouce Mountain, Luggala, Glenmacnass (p151), Glendalough (p152), Glenmalur (p156) and Aghavannagh.

Some sections are desolate, especially south of Laragh, with much of the trail above 500m. The weather can change quickly, so good walking boots, outdoor gear and emergency supplies are essential. There are many worthwhile detours: up Glenmacnass to the waterfall or up to the summit of Lugnaquilla Mountain, for example.

It can be done in either direction, though most walkers start in Dublin. For the entire trail, allow eight to 10 days, plus time for diversions. Breaking the journey at Laragh, just under halfway, would let you visit the monastic site at Glendalough and do some local walks. Because of the way's popularity, walking outside the busy June to August period is advisable. Camping is possible along the route, but ask permission from local farmers. In peak season you should book accommodation in advance, and if you're hostelling you'll need to carry food with you.

Some parts of the route such as the Derrybawn Ridge are badly eroded, and the National Park Service asks walkers to avoid these areas to prevent further damage. **EastWest Mapping** ([fax 054-77835](mailto:fax054-77835); eastwest@eircom.net) produced a new edition of a map guide to the Wicklow Way in 2005, with all changes and updates to the route included.

Rock Climbing

Ireland's mountain ranges aren't high – Mt Carrantuohil in Kerry's Macgillycuddy's

Reeks is the tallest mountain in Ireland at only 1041m – but they're often beautiful and offer some excellent climbing possibilities (see p266). The highest mountains are in the southwest.

Adventure centres around the country run courses and organise climbing trips. For further information contact the **Mountaineering Council of Ireland** ([☎ 01-625 1115](tel:01-6251115); www.mountaineering.ie), which also publishes climbing guides and the quarterly magazine *Irish Mountain Log*, or check www.climbing.ie.

Water Sports

With a staggering 3100km of coastline, and numerous rivers and lakes, Ireland provides plenty of opportunities for water sports.

CANOEING

Ireland's indented coastline makes it ideal for exploring by canoe. The type of canoeing in Ireland and degree of difficulty varies from gentle paddling to white-water canoeing and canoe surfing. The best time for white water is winter, when the heavier rainfall swells the rivers.

Check out the **Irish Canoe Union** ([☎ 01-625 1105](tel:01-6251105); www.irishcanoeunion.com).

SAILING

There is a long history of sailing in Ireland and the country has more than 120 yacht and sailing clubs, including the **Royal Cork Yacht Club** ([☎ 021-483 1023](tel:021-4831023); office@royalcork.com) at Crosshaven, which was established in 1720 and is the world's oldest. The most popular areas for sailing are the southwestern coast, especially between Cork Harbour and the Dingle Peninsula; the Kerry coastline; the coast of Antrim; along the sheltered coast north and south of Dublin; and some of the larger lakes such as Loughs Derg, Erne and Gill.

The **Irish Association for Sail Training** ([☎ 01-605 1621](tel:01-6051621); www.irishmarinerefederation.com) watches over professional schools, and the national governing body is the **Irish Sailing Association** ([☎ 01-280 0239](tel:01-2800239); www.sailing.ie). A recommended publication, available from most booksellers, is *Irish Cruising Club Sailing Directions*. It contains details of port facilities, harbour plans and coast and tidal information.

SCUBA DIVING

Ireland has some of the best scuba diving in Europe, almost entirely off the western coast

among its offshore islands and rocks. The best period for diving is roughly March to October. Visibility averages more than 12m but can increase to 30m on good days. For more details about scuba diving in Ireland, contact Comhairle F6-Thuinn (CFT), the **Irish Underwater Council** (☎ 01-284 4601; www.scubaireland.com), Ireland's diving regulatory body, which publishes the dive magazine *SubSea* (also available online).

Diveology (☎ 028-28943; www.diveology.com; Cooradarrigan, Schull, Co Cork) is a good dive school, with trips to local wrecks.

SWIMMING & SURFING

Ireland has some magnificent coastline and some great sandy beaches: the cleaner, safer ones have EU Blue Flag awards. Get a list from the government agency **An Taisce** (☎ 01-454 1786; www.antisce.org; Tailors' Hall, Back Lane, Dublin 8) or online at www.blueflag.org.

Surfers should visit www.surfingireland.net or www.victorkilo.com for beach reports and forecasts. Women should check out **Surf Honeys** (www.surfhoneys.com), which runs all-girl surfing lessons in Sligo 'to put the girl in the curl!' **Donegal Adventure Centre** (☎ 074-984 2418; www.donegal-holidays.com; Bay View Ave, Bundoran, Co Donegal) is an excellent youth-oriented surf school and **Bundoran Surf Co** (☎ 984 1968; www.bundoransurf.co.com; Bundoran, Co Donegal) conduct surf lessons, kite-surfing and power-kiting.

The best months for surfing in Ireland, when the swells are highest, are September (when the water is warmest because of the Gulf Stream) and October. Some of the best locations are on the south and southwest coasts, for example Tramore (p192) in Waterford, and there are also big surfing schools in Sligo (p441) and Donegal (p511), where you can also have a blast at kite-surfing.

See also p511.

WATER-SKIING

There are water-ski clubs all over Ireland offering tuition, equipment and boats. A full list is available from the **Irish Water Ski Federation** (www.iwsf.ie).

WINDSURFING

The windsurfer has plenty of locations to indulge in this popular sport – even on the Grand Canal in Dublin! The western coast is the most challenging and the least crowded. The bay at Rosslare (see p174) County Wex-

ford is ideal for windsurfing, with equipment and tuition available in summer. The **Irish Sailing Association** (☎ 01-280 0239; www.sailing.ie) is the sport's governing authority and has details of centres.

BUSINESS HOURS

The standard business hours are generally the same for both the Republic and Northern Ireland and are shown below, with any variations noted:

Banks 10am to 4pm (to 5pm Thursday) Monday to Friday
Offices 9am to 5pm Monday to Friday

Post offices Northern Ireland 9am to 5.30pm Monday to Friday, 9am to 12.30pm Saturday; Republic 9am to 6pm Monday to Friday, 9am to 1pm Saturday. Smaller post offices may close at lunch and one day a week.

Pubs Northern Ireland 11.30am to 11pm Monday to Saturday, 12.30pm to 10pm Sunday. Pubs with late licences open until 1am Monday to Saturday, and midnight Sunday; Republic 10.30am to 11.30pm Monday to Thursday, 10.30am to 12.30am Friday and Saturday, noon to 11pm Sunday (30 min 'drinking up' time allowed). Pubs with bar extensions open to 2.30am Thursday to Saturday; closed Christmas Day and Good Friday.

Restaurants Noon to 10.30pm; many close one day of the week.

Shops 9am to 5.30pm or 6pm Monday to Saturday (until 8pm on Thursday and sometimes Friday), noon to 6pm Sunday in bigger towns only. Shops in rural towns may close at lunch and one day a week.

Tourist offices 9am to 5pm Monday to Friday, 9am to 1pm Saturday. Many extend their hours in summer, and open fewer hours/days or close October to April.

CHILDREN

Successful travel with young children requires effort, but can be done. Try not to overdo things and consider using some sort of self-catering accommodation. It's sometimes easier to eat in (or to at least have the option), rather than be restricted by the relatively confined space of a hotel or B&B room. On the whole you'll find that restaurants and hotels, especially in the countryside, will go out of their way to cater for you and your children – with the exception of a few places, generally in the capital, where children aren't allowed after 6pm. Children are allowed in pubs until 7pm.

Most attractions sell cheaper family tickets, and family passes are available on public transport. It's always a good idea to talk to fellow travellers with (happy) children and locals on the road for tips on where to go. For

further general information see Lonely Planet's *Travel with Children* by Cathy Lanigan.

Practicalities

Most hotels will provide cots at no extra charge and restaurants will have high chairs. Car seats (around €50/£25 per week) are mandatory for children in hire cars between the ages of nine months and four years. Bring your own seat for infants under about nine months as only larger forward-facing child seats are generally available. Remember not to place baby seats in the front if the car has an airbag.

Remarkably, nappy-changing facilities are scarce, even in city centres.

Ireland has one of the lowest rates of breastfeeding in the world; nevertheless you should be able to feed your baby in all but a few public places without jaws dropping.

Two great websites are www.eumom.ie for pregnant women and parents with young children, and www.babygoes2.com, which is an excellent travel site about family-friendly accommodation worldwide.

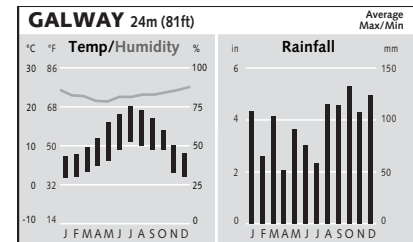
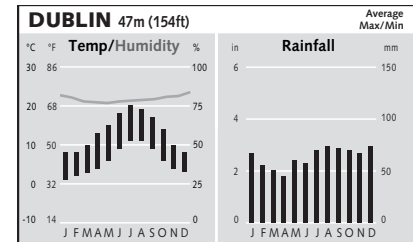
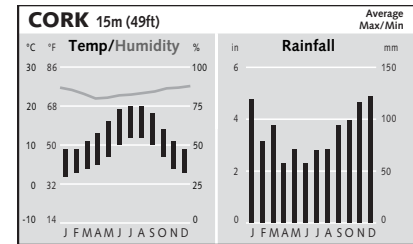
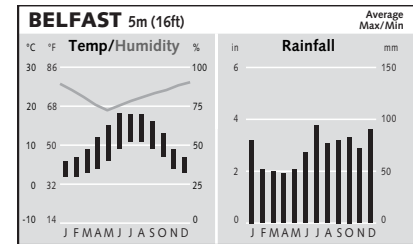
CLIMATE CHARTS

Thanks to the moderating effect of the Atlantic Gulf Stream, Ireland's climate is relatively mild for its latitude, with a mean annual temperature of around 10°C. The temperature drops below freezing only intermittently during winter, and snow is scarce – perhaps one or two brief flurries a year. The coldest months are January and February, when daily temperatures range from 4° to 8°C, with 7°C the average. In summer, temperatures during the day are a comfortable 15° to 20°C. During the warmest months, July and August, the average is 16°C. A hot summer's day in Ireland is 22° to 24°C, although it can sometimes reach 30°C. There are about 18 hours of daylight daily during July and August and it's only truly dark after about 11pm.

One thing you can be sure of about Irish weather is how little you can be sure of. It may be shirtsleeves and sunglasses in February, but winter woollies in March and even during the summer.

And then there's the rain. Ireland receives a lot of rain, with certain areas getting a soaking as many as 270 days of the year. County Kerry is the worst affected. The southeast is the driest, enjoying a more continental climate.

See also p20 for information about when to go.



COURSES

There are a myriad of courses in Ireland, from archery classes to learning how to play the harp. Adventure Centres, where you can do everything from hill-walking to raft-building, are increasingly popular and we have listed them throughout the book. For cookery courses – an increasingly popular pastime – check out the Food & Drink chapter (p69). Below we have included only guidelines to

courses; for greater details, see the relevant sections in the destination chapters or check out www.visitireland.com.

Arts & Crafts

Rockfield Ecological Estate (☎ 043-76025; Rathowen; tour €10, mains €20-25; 📅 by appointment) gives you an inspiring insight into sustainable living as well as traditional Irish culture and crafts. In addition to two-hour tours of the working farm, you can dine on nutritious homemade food utilising organic produce from the rambling gardens (while sitting on a chair fashioned from fallen tree branches); or take part in full-day courses (€100 per person including lunch) such as spinning, weaving, basket making, wood carving and stone sculpting.

English Language

Fáilte Ireland publishes a list of recognised schools for teaching English as a foreign language. Most – but certainly not all – English-language schools are in and around Dublin.

Centre of English Studies (☎ 01-671 4233; www.cesireland.ie; 31 Dame St, Dublin)

Dublin School of English (☎ 01-677 3322; www.dse.ie; 10-12 Westmoreland St, Dublin)

English Language Institute (☎ 01-475 2965; www.englishlanguage.com; 99 St Stephen's Green, Dublin)

Language Centre of Ireland (☎ 01-671 6266; www.lci.ie; 45 Kildare St, Dublin)

Irish Language

There are a number of courses in the Irish language and culture, particularly in the Gaeltacht (Irish-speaking) areas; see www.gaelsoaire.ie or contact Fáilte Ireland for information.

Intercelt (www.intercelt.com) Resource for Irish language-based holidays.

Oideas Gael (☎ 074-973 0248; www.oideas-gael.com; Glencolumbkille, Donegal; 3-7-day courses €95/190;

📅 Mar-Sep) Irish language courses and cultural activity holidays.

Meditation

Jampa Ling Buddhist Centre (☎ 952 3448; www.jampaling.org; Owendoon House, Bawnboy; dm/s/d incl meals €32/39/68) offers meditation courses. See p483 for details.

Music

In July and August, **Dingle Music School** (☎ 086-319 0438; Dykegate Lane, Kerry) offers beginners' workshops in bodhrán (from €12; noon Tues-

day, Wednesday and Thursday, 11am on Saturday) and tin whistle (€25, 11am Monday). Bodhráns are supplied.

Harp workshops are conducted as part of the O'Carolan International Harp Festival & Summer School. See p491 for details.

CUSTOMS

Duty-free sales are not available when travelling within the EU. Goods for personal consumption bought in and exported within the EU incur no additional taxes, if duty has been paid somewhere in the EU. Over certain limits you may have to show that they are for personal use. The amounts that officially constitute personal use are 3200 cigarettes (or 400 cigarillos, 200 cigars or 3kg of tobacco) and either 10L of spirits, 20L of fortified wine, 60L of sparkling wine, 90L of still wine or 110L of beer. There's no customs inspection apart from those concerned with drugs and national security.

Travellers coming from outside the EU are allowed to import duty free 200 cigarettes, 1L of spirits or 2L of wine, 60ml of perfume and 250ml of *eau de toilette*.

Dogs and cats from anywhere outside Ireland and the UK are subject to strict quarantine laws. The EU Pet Travel Scheme, whereby animals are fitted with a microchip, vaccinated against rabies and blood tested six months *prior* to entry, is in force in the UK and the Republic of Ireland. No preparation or documentation is necessary for the movement of pets directly between the UK and the Republic. Contact the **Department of Agriculture, Food & Rural Development** (☎ 01-607 2000) in Dublin for further details.

DANGERS & ANNOYANCES

Ireland is safer than most countries in Europe, but normal precautions should be observed. In Dublin, drug-related crime is quite common and the city has its fair share of pickpockets and thieves (see p90).

Dublin is particularly notorious for car break-ins, and insurance policies often don't cover losses from cars.

Northern Ireland is as safe as anywhere else, but there are areas where the sectarian divide is bitterly pronounced, most notably in parts of Belfast. For the foreseeable future, it's probably best to ensure your visit to Northern Ireland doesn't coincide with the climax of the Orange marching season

on 12 July; sectarian passions are usually inflamed and even many Northerners leave the province.

DISCOUNT CARDS

Heritage Discounts
Heritage Card (☎ 01-647 6587; www.heritageireland.com; Visitor Services, 51 St Stephen's Green, Dublin 2; adult/child & student/family €21/8/55) Entitles you to free access to over 75 sites for one year.

National Trust (☎ 0870 458 4000; www.nationaltrust.org.uk; adult/under 25/family £43.50/19.50/77.50; Membership Dept, PO Box 39, Warrington WA5 7WD, UK) Entitles you to free admission to its 18 properties in Northern Ireland, but only really makes financial sense if you're touring its English sites too.

Senior Cards

Senior citizens are entitled to many discounts in Ireland on things such as public transport and museum admission fees, provided they show proof of age. The minimum qualifying age is usually 60 to 65 for men and 55 to 65 for women. In your home country, a lower age may already entitle you to travel packages and discounts (on car hire, for instance).

Car hire companies usually won't rent to drivers aged over 70 or 75.

Student & Youth Cards

The International Student Identity Card (ISIC; www.isiccard.com) gets discounts on transport, commercial goods and services, and admission to theatres, cinemas, museums and sights. The International Youth Travel Card (IYTC; www.isiccard.com) and European Youth Card (Euro<26 card; www.euro26.org) offer similar discounts for non-students under 26. All these cards are issued by hostelling organisations, student unions and student travel agencies.

EMBASSIES & CONSULATES

Irish diplomatic offices overseas:

Australia Embassy (☎ 02-6273 3022; irishemb@cyberone.com.au; 20 Arkana St, Yarralumla, Canberra, ACT 2600)

Canada Embassy (☎ 613-233 6281; ottawaembassy@dfa.ie; 130 Albert St, Suite 1105, Ottawa, Ontario K1P 5G4)

France Embassy (☎ 01 44 17 67 00; paris@dfa.ie; 4 rue Rude, 75116 Paris)

Germany Embassy (☎ 030-220 720; Friedrichstrasse 200, 10117 Berlin)

Italy Embassy (☎ 06 697 9121; www.ambasciata-irlanda.it; Piazza di Campitelli 3, 00186 Rome)

Netherlands Embassy (☎ 070-363 09 93; www.irishembassy.nl; Dr Kuyperstraat 9, 2514 BA The Hague)

New Zealand Consulate (☎ 09-977 2256; consul@ireland.co.nz; Level 7, Citibank Bldg, 23 Customs Street East, Auckland)

UK Embassy (☎ 020-7235 2171; 17 Grosvenor Pl, London SW1X 7HR); Consulate (☎ 0131-226 7711; 16 Randolph Crescent, Edinburgh EH3 6TT); Consulate (☎ 029-2066 2000; Brunel House, 2 Fitzalan Rd, Cardiff CF24 0EB)

USA Embassy (☎ 202-462 3939; www.irelandemb.org; 2234 Massachusetts Ave, NW, Washington, DC 20008) There are also consulates in Boston, Chicago, New York and San Francisco.

United Kingdom (for Northern Ireland) diplomatic offices abroad:

Australia High Commission (☎ 02-6270 6666; www.britaus.net; Commonwealth Ave, Yarralumla, Canberra, ACT 2600)

Canada High Commission (☎ 613-237 1530; general.enquiries@BritaininCanada.org; 80 Elgin St, Ottawa, Ontario K1P 5K7)

France Embassy (☎ 01 44 51 31 00; www.amb-grande-bretagne.fr; 35 rue du Faubourg St Honoré, 75383 Paris)

Germany Embassy (☎ 030-204 570; Wilhelmstrasse 70, 10117 Berlin)

Italy Embassy (☎ 06 46220 0001; www.britain.it; Via XX Settembre 80a, 00187 Rome)

Netherlands Embassy (☎ 070-427 04 27; www.britain.nl; Lange Voorhout 10, 2514 ED The Hague)

New Zealand High Commission (☎ 04-924 2888; www.britain.org.nz; 44 Hill St, Wellington)

USA Embassy (☎ 202-588 6500; www.britainusa.com; 3100 Massachusetts Ave NW, Washington, DC 20008)

Embassies & Consulates in Ireland

If you're even remotely responsible for any kind of trouble, your country's embassy won't be of any help to you – you're bound by Irish (and in the North, British) law. In genuine emergencies you might get some assistance: a free ticket is exceedingly unlikely but embassies might assist you with getting a new passport.

The following countries have embassies in Dublin:

Australia (☎ 01-664 5300; www.australianembassy.ie; 2nd fl, Fitzwilson House, Wilton Tce, Dublin 2)

Canada (☎ 01-417 4100; 4th fl, 65-68 St Stephen's Green, Dublin 2)

France (☎ 01-277 5000; chancellerie@ambafraance.ie; 36 Ailesbury Rd, Dublin 4)

Germany (☎ 01-269 3011; germany@indigo.ie; 31 Trimleston Ave, Booterstown, Blackrock, Co Dublin)

TRACING YOUR ANCESTORS

Many visitors come to Ireland purely to track down their Irish roots. Success in this activity is more likely if you have managed to obtain some basic facts about your Irish ancestors before leaving home. The names of your ancestors who left Ireland and their approximate dates of birth are essential, but it's also helpful to know the ancestors' counties and parishes of origin in Ireland, their religious denomination, and their parents' and spouses' names.

Good starting points for research in Ireland are the **National Library** (☎ 01-603 0200; www.nli.ie; Kildare St, Dublin 2); the **National Archives** (☎ 01-407 2300; www.nationalarchives.ie; Bishop St, Dublin 8); and the **Public Record Office of Northern Ireland** (Proni; ☎ 028-9025 5905; http://proni.nics.gov.uk; 66 Balmoral Ave, Belfast). Other helpful resources include the **General Register Office** (☎ 090-663 2900; www.groireland.ie; Government Offices, Convent Rd, Roscommon) and **General Register Office Northern Ireland** (☎ 028-9025 2000; www.groni.gov.uk; Oxford House, 49/55 Chichester St, Belfast). These agencies hold records of births, deaths and marriages in Ireland.

There are also numerous agencies and individuals that will do the research for you for a fee. For information on these, contact the **Association of Professional Genealogists in Ireland** (APGI; c/o The Honorary Secretary, 30 Harlech Cres, Clonskeagh, Dublin 14). In the North also contact the **Association of Ulster Genealogists & Record Agents** (Augra; c/o The Honorary Secretary, Glen Cottage, Glenmahan Rd, Belfast BT4 2NP).

Dozens of books are available on Irish genealogy. Tony McCarthy's *Irish Roots Guide* is a good introduction to the subject, and John Grenham's *Tracing Your Irish Ancestors* is an excellent comprehensive guide. North Americans in particular benefit from *A Genealogists Guide to Discovering Your Irish Ancestors* by Dwight Radford and Kyle Betit.

Italy (☎ 01-660 1744; info@italianembassy.ie; 63-65 Northumberland Rd, Ballsbridge, Dublin 4)

Netherlands (☎ 01-269 3444; info@netherlandsembassy.ie; 160 Merrion Rd, Ballsbridge, Dublin 4)

UK (☎ 01-205 3700; www.britishembassy.ie; 29 Merrion Rd, Ballsbridge, Dublin 4)

USA (☎ 01-668 8777; webmasterireland@state.gov; 42 Elgin Rd, Ballsbridge, Dublin 4)

The following countries have consular representation in Northern Ireland:

Germany (☎ 028-9024 4113; Chamber of Commerce House, 22 Great Victoria St, Belfast)

Netherlands (☎ 028-9077 9088; c/o All-Route Shipping Ltd, 14-16 West Bank Rd, Belfast)

USA (☎ 028-9038 6100; Danesfort House, 223 Stranmillis Rd, Belfast)

FESTIVALS & EVENTS

There are literally hundreds of festivals held throughout the year, but the summer months are the most popular; listed is a thumbnail sketch of the major events. Local tourist offices will have additional information. Also, the Association of Irish Festival Events (AOIFE) maintains a very useful website at www.aoifeonline.com; www.art.ie is worth perusing too. For regional festivals, see destination chapters.

FEBRUARY

Jameson Dublin International Film Festival

(☎ 872 1122; www.dubliniff.com) The island's biggest film festival, with local flicks, arty international films and advance releases of mainstream movies, runs during the last two weeks of the month.

MARCH

St Patrick's Day (17 March; ☎ 01-676 3205; www.stpatricksdays.ie) Ireland erupts into one giant celebration on 17 March. The biggest beano is in Dublin, where the streets reverberate to a cacophony of parades, fireworks and light shows for five days around 17 March. Over 250,000 attend. Cork, Armagh and Belfast also have parades; elsewhere festivities are less ostentatious.

APRIL

Irish Grand National (www.fairlyhouseracecourse.ie) The showcase race in the national hunt season takes place at the County Meath racetrack on Easter Monday.

World Irish Dancing Championships (☎ 01-475 2220) About 4000 dancers from all over the globe compete in late March or early April. The location varies from year to year.

MAY

Cork International Choral Festival (☎ 021-421 5125; www.corkchoral.ie) One of Europe's premier choral festivals, with the winners going on to the Fleischmann International Trophy Competition; held over four days from the first Monday of May.

North West 200 (www.northwest200.org) Ireland's most famous road race is also the country's biggest outdoor sporting event; 150,000-plus line the triangular route to cheer on some of the biggest names in motorcycle racing. It is run in mid-May.

Irish Open Golf Championship (☎ 01-505 4000; www.irishopenatadaremanor.ie) Not as prestigious as the European Open, but still manages to attract its fair share of top European names. Played mid-May at Adare Manor, County Limerick, until 2010.

Fleadh Nua (☎ 01-280 0295; www.comhaltas.ie) Absorbing week of traditional music as Ennis, County Clare hosts one of the country's most important festivals during the third week of the month.

Cat Laughs (☎ 056-7763837; www.thecatlaughs.com) Kilkenny gets very, very funny from late May into early June for the country's best comedy festival, attracting the cream of local and international talent.

JUNE

Irish Derby (☎ 045-441205; www.curragh.ie) The best flat race in the country is run during the first week of the month at the County Kildare course; a great occasion for racing fans and people with fancy hats.

Bloomsday (☎ 878 8547; www.jamesjoyce.ie) Edwardian dress and breakfast of 'the inner organs of beast and fowl' are but two of the elements of the Dublin festival celebrating the day in which Joyce's *Ulysses* takes place; the real highlight is retracing Leopold Bloom's daily steps.

Wexford Opera Festival (☎ 053-912 2400; www.wexfordopera.com) Ireland's premier festival of classic art music and opera runs for two weeks in early June in Johnstown Castle.

JULY

All-Ireland Open Dance Championships (☎ 091-632338; www.allirelanddancing.ie) From foxtrots to tangos, the best of Irish formal dancing in Gort, County Galway, over the first weekend of the month.

Willie Clancy Summer School (☎ 065-708 4281; www.setdancingnews.net/wcss/) Six days of intense traditional music workshops, gigs and pub sessions in Milltown Malbay, County Clare; the best players in the world generally show up.

Oxegen (www.mcd.ie) Two-day super-gig in mid-July at Punchestown Racecourse in County Kildare with heavy-weight headline acts.

Galway Film Fleadh (☎ 091-751655; www.galwayfilmfleadh.com) Irish and international releases make up the programme at one of the country's premier film festivals, held in early July.

Galway Arts Festival (☎ 091-509700; www.galwayartsfestival.ie) The most important arts festival in the country sees Galway City go mental for the last two weeks of the month, with lots of music and drama to go with the merriment.

O'Carolan International Harp Festival & Summer School

(☎ 071-964 7204; www.keadue.harp.net) Week-long festival in the Central North celebrating the blind composer of the tune to 'The Star-Spangled Banner'. Late July to Early August. See p491 for details.

AUGUST

Electric Picnic (☎ 01-478 9093; www.electricpicnic.ie) A boutique festival of alternative music in the grounds of Stradbally Hall, County Laois, in late August. Comedy, art, & a strong eco-friendly buzz complement the terrific music.

Feile An Phobail West Belfast (☎ 048-9031 3440; www.feilebelfast.com) Europe's largest community arts festival takes place on the Falls Rd in West Belfast over two weeks.

Fleadh Cheoil nah Éireann (☎ 01-280 0295; www.comhaltas.com) The mother of all Irish music festivals attracts in excess of 250,000 to whatever town is playing host; it usually takes place over a week toward the end of the month.

Galway Races (☎ 091-753870; www.galwayraces.com) The biggest horse racing festival west of the Shannon draws massive crowds for the Irish equivalent of the Cheltenham Festival; it is held the first week of the month.

Mary from Dungloe (☎ 074-952 1254; www.maryfromdungloe.com) Ireland's second-most important beauty pageant takes place in Dungloe, County Donegal at the beginning of the month – it's really an excuse for a giant party but the girls really do want to be crowned the year's 'Mary.'

Puck Fair (☎ 066-976 2366; www.puckfair.ie) Three days of what must be one of the quirkiest festivals in Europe, as Killorglin, County Kerry, celebrates the crowning of a goat amidst plenty of mayhem in mid-August.

Rose of Tralee (www.roseoftralee.ie) The County Kerry town plays host to the Irish beauty pageant which attracts women with Irish links from all over the world. For everyone else, it's just an opportunity to drink, dance and have fun. It's held in the third week of the month.

SEPTEMBER

Lisdoonvarna Matchmaking Festival (☎ 065-707 4005; www.matchmakerireland.com) The County Clare town hosts this famous festival that attracts hopefuls from all over; it's all a bit of fun throughout the month.

Dublin Fringe Festival (☎ 01-872 9016; www.fringefest.com) Comedy and alternative fringe theatre precedes the main theatre festival and is often a hell of a lot more fun. It runs for two weeks from late September to early October.

Ballinasloe Horse Fair (☎ 090-964 3453; www.ballinasloe.com) Europe's oldest horse fair in this Galway town comes with a 10-day family festival that is a highlight of the calendar.

OCTOBER

Dublin Theatre Festival (☎ 01-677 8439; www.dublentheatrefestival.com) The cream of Irish theatre festivals sees all manner of theatrics at most venues in the capital.

Cork Film Festival (☎ 021-427 1711; www.corkfilmfest.org) With a strong emphasis on local and short films, this excellent festival is held in Cork's three cinemas in early October.

Cork Jazz Festival (www.corkjazzfestival.com) Over the last weekend of the month the city goes mad for all kinds of Jazz in what is one of the country's most popular festivals.

All-Ireland Finals (www.gaa.ie) The second and fourth Sundays of the month see the finals of the hurling and Gaelic football championships respectively, with 80,000-plus thronging into Dublin's Croke Park for the biggest sporting days of the year.

OCTOBER-NOVEMBER

Belfast Festival at Queens (in UK ☎ 020-9097 1197; www.belfastfestival.com) Northern Ireland's top arts festival attracts performers from all over the world; on offer is everything from visual arts to dance.

DECEMBER

Christmas This is a quiet affair in the countryside, though on 26 December the ancient practice of Wren Boys is re-enacted, most notably in Dingle, County Kerry, when groups of children dress up and go about singing hymns.

FOOD

Our café and restaurant listings appear in order of price with the cheapest appearing first. We've used the following price ranges: budget (under €10/£10), midrange (€10 to €20/£10 to £20) and top end (above €20/£20). Please note that our hierarchies of favourite places aren't written in stone. As authors, we can crave for caviar on a Monday, and cod and chips on a Friday!

For explanations of peculiarities of Irish menus and further reading on Irish food and drink, see the Food & Drink chapter (p65), and the Irish Kitchen (p269).

GAY & LESBIAN TRAVELLERS

Although Irish laws on homosexuality are among the most liberal in Europe, attitudes toward homosexuals remain fairly intolerant outside of the gay and lesbian scenes in Dublin and to a lesser extent Galway, Cork and Belfast, forcing most to maintain a pretty low profile. There is a common age of consent of 17 (generally the Irish couldn't care less what you do behind closed doors), and neither gays nor lesbians (in the Republic) are excluded

from the armed forces, which is laudable in theory but doesn't mean that openly gay soldiers wouldn't be made to suffer. Although Pope Benedict XVI has seen fit to remind the world that being gay is a crime against God, the Catholic Church here maintains an air of discreet silence on gay and lesbian issues.

The monthly *Gay Community News* (www.gcn.ie), found online and in clubs and bars, is a free publication of the **National Lesbian & Gay Federation** (NLGF; ☎ 01-671 9076; 2 Scarlett Row, Temple Bar, Dublin).

Check out the following online resources for the gay and lesbian community:

Channel Queer (www.channelqueer.com)

Gaire (www.gaire.com)

Gay & Lesbian Youth Northern Ireland (www.glyni.org.uk)

Gay Ireland (www.gay.ie)

Useful organisations:

Northern Ireland Gay Rights Association (Nigra; nigra@dnet.co.uk; ☎ 028-9066 5257; PO Box 44, Belfast)

Outhouse (☎ 01-873 4932; www.outhouse.ie; 105

Capel St, Dublin 1) A gay, lesbian and transgender community centre.

The following helplines can be called from anywhere in Ireland:

Gay Men's Health Project (☎ 01-660 2189) Practical advice on men's health issues.

Gay Switchboard Dublin (☎ 01-872 1055;

☎ 7.30am-9.30pm Mon-Fri, 3.30-6pm Sat)

Lesbian Line Belfast (☎ 028-9023 8668; ☎ 7.30-10pm Thu)

Lesbian Line Dublin (☎ 01-872 9911; ☎ 7-9pm Thu)

Mensline Belfast (☎ 028-9032 2023; ☎ 7.30-10pm Mon-Wed)

HOLIDAYS

Public holidays can cause road chaos, as everyone tries to get somewhere else for the break. It's also wise to book accommodation in advance.

Public Holidays

Public holidays in the Republic, Northern Ireland or both:

New Year's Day 1 January

St Patrick's Day 17 March

Easter (Good Friday to Easter Monday inclusive) March/April

May Holiday 1st Monday in May

Christmas Day 25 December

St Stephen's Day (Boxing Day) 26 December

NORTHERN IRELAND

Spring Bank Holiday Last Monday in May

Orangeman's Day 12 July

August Holiday Last Monday in August

REPUBLIC

June Holiday 1st Monday in June

August Holiday 1st Monday in August

October Holiday Last Monday in October

St Patrick's Day and St Stephen's Day holidays are taken on the following Monday should they fall on a weekend. In the Republic, nearly everywhere closes on Good Friday even though it isn't an official public holiday. In the North, most shops open on Good Friday but close the following Tuesday.

School Holidays

In the Republic, standardised primary and secondary school holidays for 2007-08 are as follows:

Mid term break 29 October to 2 November

Christmas/New Year 21 December to 7 January

Mid term break 11 to 15 February

Easter 14 to 31 March

Summer July and August (June also for secondary schools)

In the North, holidays for primary and secondary schools vary. Visit www.deni.gov.uk/schools/index.htm then click on school holidays for a comprehensive rundown.

INSURANCE

Insurance is important: it covers you for everything from medical expenses and luggage loss to cancellations or delays in your travel arrangements, depending on your policy.

If you're an EU citizen, a European Health Insurance Card (EHIC; available from health centres, or from post offices in the UK) covers you for most medical care. Other countries, such as Australia, also have reciprocal agreements with Ireland and Britain, but many countries do not.

If you do need health insurance, remember that some policies offer lower and higher medical-expense options, but the higher one is chiefly for countries such as the USA that have extremely high medical costs. Everyone should be covered for the worst possible case, such as an accident requiring an ambulance, hospital treatment or an emergency flight home. You may prefer a policy that pays health-care providers di-

rectly rather than you having to pay on the spot and claim later. See p726 for health insurance details.

All cars on public roads must be insured. If you are bringing your own vehicle check that your insurance will cover you in Ireland.

INTERNET ACCESS

If you plan to carry your notebook or palm-top computer with you, remember that the power-supply voltage in Ireland may vary from that at home. To avoid frying your electronics, the best investment is a universal AC adaptor and a plug adaptor, which will enable you to plug in anywhere. Also worth purchasing is a 'global' or 'world' modem, as your PC-card modem may not work outside your home country. For comprehensive advice on travelling with portable computers, visit the World Wide Phone Guide at www.kropla.com. **Teleadapt** (www.teleadapt.com) sells all the gizmos and services you'll need.

Major internet service providers (ISPs) such as **AOL** (www.aol.com), **CompuServe** (www.compuserve.com) and **AT&T** (www.att.com) have dial-in nodes in Ireland. If you access your internet email account at home through a smaller ISP, your best option is either to open an account with a global ISP, like those mentioned above, or to rely on internet cafés. Armed with your incoming (POP or IMAP) mail-server name, your account name and your password, you should be able to access your internet email account from any Net-connected machine in the world. However, the easiest solution is to open a free Web-based email account such as those provided by **Hotmail** (www.hotmail.com) or **Yahoo!** (mail.yahoo.com).

You'll find internet cafés in most major towns in Ireland. You can log on for €4 to €10 per hour in the Republic, or about €4 per hour in the North. Most public libraries have free internet access but it may only be available (to a queue of people) at certain hours when connections may be slow.

LEGAL MATTERS

If you need legal assistance contact the **Legal Aid Board** (☎ 066-947 1000; www.legalaidboard.ie). It has a number of local law centres listed in the phone book.

The possession of small quantities of marijuana attracts a fine or warning, but harder

drugs are treated more seriously. Public drunkenness is illegal but commonplace. Be aware that you will undoubtedly attract police attention if you're any way out of hand. Fighting is treated more harshly – you could easily end up in a cell for the night or worse.

MAPS

Many publishers produce some good-quality maps of Ireland. Michelin's 1:400,000-scale Ireland map (No 923) is a decent single sheet map, with clear cartography and most of the island's scenic roads marked. The four maps – North, South, East and West – that make up the Ordnance Survey Holiday map series at 1:250,000-scale are useful if you want more detail. Collins also publishes a range of maps covering Ireland.

For greater detail, map aficionados and walkers should look out for the Ordnance Survey Discovery series, which covers the whole island in 89 maps at a scale of 1:50,000. They're available at the **National Map Centre** (☎ 01-476 0471; www.mapcentre.ie; 34 Aungier St, Dublin 2), through www.osi.ie and many bookshops around Ireland.

Lonely Planet's *Dublin City Map* has a complete index of all streets and sights, a Dublin Area Rapid Transport (DART) and suburban rail plan and a unique walking tour of the city.

MONEY

To get a general idea of food and accommodation costs in Ireland, see p20 and p694 respectively. Tips of around 10% in metered cabs and in restaurants where the service charge isn't included are expected.

ATMs & Credit Cards

Credit cards make the perfect travelling companions: they're ideal for major purchases and let you withdraw cash from selected banks and ATMs. ATMs are usually linked to international money systems such as Cirrus, Maestro or Plus. Bear in mind, though, that each transaction incurs a currency conversion fee and credit cards can incur immediate and exorbitant cash advance interest rate charges.

Charge cards such as Amex and Diners Club don't have credit limits, but may not be accepted in smaller establishments. Visa and MasterCard are more widely accepted, though many B&Bs and some smaller or remote petrol stations take cash only.

FOR THE RECORD:

- The legal age to vote in Ireland is 18
- You can leave school when you're 16
- The legal drinking age is 18
- Smoking is legal at 16
- The heterosexual and homosexual age of consent is 17
- You can ride a moped when you're 16
- You can drive a car when you're 17

Remember to keep a note of the emergency telephone number to ring if your card is lost or stolen.

Cash & Travellers Cheques

Nothing beats cash for convenience – or risk. It's still a good idea, though, to arrive with some cash in the local currency (both euros and sterling, if travelling to the North) to tide you over.

Amex and Thomas Cook travellers cheques are widely recognised and they don't charge commission for cashing their own cheques. Eurocheques can also be cashed in Ireland. Travellers cheques are rarely accepted outside banks or used for everyday transactions (as they are in the USA).

Take most cheques in large denominations. It's only towards the end of a stay that you may want to change a small cheque to make sure you don't get left with too much local currency.

Currency

The Republic of Ireland adopted the euro in 2002. The euro (€) is divided into 100 cents. The reverse side of coins have a design particular to their country of issue (a Celtic harp in Ireland's case), but are legal tender in all countries that accept the euro (Austria, Belgium, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Italy, Luxembourg, the Netherlands, Portugal and Spain). Remember that the UK is not a participant, so if you're travelling to Northern Ireland you'll have to change euros into UK pounds.

The British pound sterling (£) is used in Northern Ireland, where it is known as the Northern Irish pound. Northern Ireland notes, while equivalent in value to British pound notes, are not readily accepted in Britain, but British banks will swap them for you.

The best exchange rates are obtained at banks. Bureaus de change and other exchange facilities usually open for longer hours but the rate and/or commission will be worse. Many post offices operate a currency-exchange facility and open on Saturday morning. Exchange rates at the time of writing are on the inside front cover of this book.

International Transfers

The most practical way to receive money from overseas is by telegraphic transfer. There are two ways to do this. The first can take up to eight days through the banking system. Your bank sends money to an Irish bank nominated by you. You will need identification, most likely a passport, before the money is paid to you in euros, minus the transfer commission.

The quickest way to receive cash from home is to transfer it through Amex, Thomas Cook or Western Union.

It is not practical to receive money by bank draft. Irish banks are notorious sticklers about drafts and won't allow you to cash them unless you first open a bank account, a small bureaucratic nightmare. Even then, it can take three weeks to clear. If you're not planning a long stay, stick to telegraphic transfers.

Taxes & Refunds

Value-added tax (VAT) is a sales tax of 21% that applies to most luxury goods in Ireland, excluding books, children's footwear and second-hand clothing. Visitors from non-EU countries can claim back most of the VAT on purchases that are subsequently exported from the EU within three months of purchase.

Most shops in the Republic and Northern Ireland operate a taxback scheme – the most popular are Cashback and Ireland Tax Free – which operate roughly as follows: if you're a resident of a country outside the EU and buy something from a store displaying a Cashback or Ireland Tax Free sticker, you'll be given a relevant voucher with your purchase which can be refunded directly on to your credit card or in US, Canadian or Australian dollars, British pounds or euros at Dublin or Shannon airport; one advantage of Ireland Tax Free is that you can reclaim your tax at the nearest Travellex office, usually Thomas Cook.

If you reclaim more than €250 on any of your vouchers you'll need to get the voucher stamped at the customs booth in the ar-

rivals hall at Dublin or Shannon airport before you can get your refund from the Cashback desk.

In Northern Ireland, shops participating in the Tax-Free Shopping refund scheme will give you a form or invoice on request to be presented to customs when you leave. After customs have certified the form, it will be returned to the shop for a refund.

PHOTOGRAPHY & VIDEO

Natural light in Ireland can be very dull, so to capture the sombre atmosphere use faster film, such as 400ASA; but 200ASA should do in most situations. Lonely Planet's full-colour *Travel Photography: A Guide to Taking Better Pictures*, written by internationally renowned travel photographer Richard I'Anson, is full of handy hints and is designed to take on the road.

In regard to taking photos in Northern Ireland, if you want to take photos of fortified police stations, army posts or other military or quasi-military paraphernalia, get permission first to be on the safe side. In the Protestant and Catholic strongholds of West Belfast it's best not to photograph people without permission: always ask first and be prepared to accept a refusal.

POST

Post offices in the Republic are operated by An Post, the Irish Postal Service, and in the North by Royal Mail.

In the Republic, postcards and small airmail letters weighing up to 50g cost €0.48 within Ireland, economy/priority €0.50/0.60 to Britain, and €0.55/0.65 to continental Europe and the rest of the world.

In the North, letters sent by 1st-/2nd-class mail to Britain cost £0.30/0.21 as long as they weigh less than 60g. Airmail letters under 20g cost £0.42 to continental Europe and £0.68 to the rest of the world (under 10g to the rest of the world for £0.47).

For post office opening hours see p702.

SOLO TRAVELLERS

Travelling alone in Ireland is easy. People are extremely sociable, especially in the countryside, and will be more than keen to chat with you in pubs or public places – whether you like it or not! Hostels and internet cafés are always good stomping grounds to meet fellow travellers, or you might consider combining

independent travel with a short course or activity where you have more chance of meeting people. One disadvantage of solo travel is the extra cost of accommodation: many places charge per room, or if they charge per person, they also slap a single supplementary charge (up to 30%) on to the room rate.

TELEPHONE

Eircom is Ireland's largest telephone service provider, although deregulation of the telephone industry has seen the arrival of a number of other providers. In the North most public phones are owned by British Telecom (BT).

Peak per-minute charges for international calls from Ireland to selected countries:

To	Republic	North
Australia	€0.86	£0.22
Canada	€0.19	£0.15
France	€0.24	£0.17
Germany	€0.24	£0.17
Italy	€0.39	£0.20
Netherlands	€0.24	£0.17
New Zealand	€0.86	£0.29
UK	€0.15	£0.05
USA	€0.19	£0.14

Prices are lower in the evening and at the weekend. The above prices are for calls placed from land-line phones to other land-line phones; international calls to mobiles can cost significantly more. Phone calls from hotel rooms cost at least double the standard rate. You can send and receive faxes from post offices (up to €2/£1 per page locally) or most hotels.

Rather than placing reverse-charge calls through the operator in Ireland, you can dial direct to your home-country operator and then reverse the charges or charge the call to a local phone credit card. To use the home-direct service dial the codes in the table below then the area code and, in most cases, the number you want. Your home-country operator will come on the line before the call goes through.

To call home from Ireland, dial the numbers outlined in the table (right).

Local telephone calls from a public phone in the Republic cost €0.25 for around three minutes (around €0.50 to a mobile), regardless of when you call. In Northern Ireland a local call costs a minimum of £0.20.

Pre-paid phonecards by Eircom or private operators, available in newsagencies and post offices, work from all pay phones and dispense with the need for coins.

Mobile Phones

With a penetration rate in excess of 96% and more than four million users, the Irish seem glued to their mobile phones and therefore always on hand to tell their friends that they're on their way. SMS is a national obsession, especially with young people, who communicate mostly by txt.

Ireland uses GSM 900/1800, which is compatible with the rest of Europe and Australia but not with North American GSM 1900 (though some specially equipped North American phones do work here) or the totally different system in Japan. There are four service providers in Ireland. Vodafone is the most popular, followed by O2 Ireland, Meteor and 3. There are three mobile codes – 085, 086 and 087 – but Mobile Number Portability (MNP) allows customers to hold on to their codes whilst switching between providers.

All four service providers are linked with most international GSM providers, which will allow you to roam onto a local service once you arrive in Ireland. This means you can use your mobile phone to make local calls, but will be charged at the highest possible rate for all calls.

For around €50 you will get a Ready-to-Go pre-paid phone, your own number and anywhere up to €25 worth of airtime. As you use up your airtime, you simply buy a top-up card (€10 to €35) at a newsagency or petrol station. The other service providers have variations on this scheme. Similar schemes exist in Northern Ireland.

Phone Codes

When calling the Republic of Ireland from abroad, dial your international access code, followed by 353, followed by the domestic number minus the initial '0'. When calling Northern Ireland from abroad, dial your international access code, then 44 28, and then the local number. To call Northern Ireland from Britain, simply dial 028, then the local number. This changes to 048 when calling from the Republic. The area code for the whole of Northern Ireland is 028, so do-

mestic callers need only dial the eight-digit local number.

To call UK numbers from the Republic dial 00 44, then the area code minus the initial '0', then the local number. Do the same for international calls, replacing 44 with the country code. To call Britain from Northern Ireland dial the area code followed by the local number. To place an international call or to call the Republic from Northern Ireland, dial 00 followed by the country code, then the area code (dropping any leading '0') and the local number.

To	From the Republic	From the North
Australia	☎ 1800 550 061 + number	☎ 0800 890 061 + number
France	☎ 1800 551 033 + number	☎ 0800 890 033 + number
Italy	☎ 1800 550 039 + number	☎ 0800 890 039 + number
New Zealand	☎ 1800 550 064 + number	☎ 0800 890 064 + number
Spain	☎ 1800 550 034 + number	☎ 0800 890 034 + number
UK – BT	☎ 1800 550 044 + number	n/a
USA – AT&T	☎ 1800 550 000 + number	☎ 0800 890 011 + number
USA – MCI	☎ 1800 551 001 + number	☎ 0800 890222 + number
USA – Sprint	☎ 1800 552 001 + number	☎ 0800 890 877 + number

TIME

In winter, Ireland is on Greenwich Mean Time (GMT), also known as Universal Time Coordinated (UTC), the same as Britain. In summer, the clock shifts to GMT plus one hour, so when it's noon in Dublin and London, it is 3am in Los Angeles and Vancouver, 7am in New York and Toronto, 1pm in Paris, 8pm in Singapore, and 10pm in Sydney. See p762 for World Time Zones.

TOILETS

Public toilets – often marked with the Irish *Fir* (Men) and *Mná* (Women) – are rarely seen outside the bigger towns, and even then they're usually only seen in shopping centres. That annoying "Toilets are for customer use only" sign is fairly common in restaurants and pubs but if you ask politely and don't look like you're going to use the toilet to shoot up, most publicans are fairly easy-going. If

the pub is crowded, who'll ever know you're not a customer?

TOURIST INFORMATION

Fáilte Ireland (in the Republic ☎ 1850 230 330, in the UK 0800 039 7000; www.discoverireland.ie) and the **Northern Irish Tourist Board** (NITB; head office ☎ 028-9023 1221; www.discovernorthernireland.com; 59 North St, Belfast) are mines of information.

Both websites include an accommodation booking service, or telephone reservations can be made via the tourist boards' system **Gulliver** (in the Republic ☎ 1800 668 668, in the UK 0800 783 5740, in the USA & Canada ☎ 800 398 4376).

Fáilte Ireland has an office in **Belfast** (☎ 028-9032 7888; 53 Castle St, Belfast) and NITB has an office in **Dublin** (within the Republic ☎ 01-679 1977, 1850 230 230; 16 Nassau St, Dublin).

In the Republic and the North there's a tourist office in almost every big town; most can offer a variety of services including accommodation and attraction reservations, bureau de change services, map and guidebook sales, and free publications. Fáilte Ireland also has six regional offices, which can give more in-depth information on specific areas.

Main Regional Tourist Offices in the Republic

Cork Kerry (☎ 021-425 5100; www.corkkerry.ie; Cork Kerry Tourism, Áras Discover, Grand Pde, Cork)

Dublin (www.visitdublin.com; Dublin Tourism Centre, St Andrew's Church, 2 Suffolk St, Dublin)

East Coast & Midlands (☎ 044-48761; www.eastcoastmidlands.com; East Coast & Midlands Tourism, Dublin Rd, Mullingar) For Kildare, Laois, Longford, Louth, Meath, North Offaly, Westmeath, Wicklow.

Ireland North-West & Lakelands (☎ 071-916 1201; www.irelandnorthwest.ie; Temple St, Sligo) For Cavan, Donegal, Leitrim, Monaghan, Sligo.

Ireland West (☎ 091-537 700; www.irelandwest.ie; Ireland West Tourism, Áras Fáilte, Forster St, Galway) For Galway, Roscommon, Mayo.

Shannon Region (☎ 061-361 555; www.shannonregiontourism.ie; Shannon Development, Shannon, Clare) For Clare, Limerick, North Tipperary, South Offaly.

South East (☎ 051-875 823; www.southeastireland.com; South East Tourism, 41 The Quay, Waterford) For Carlow, Kilkenny, Tipperary, Waterford, Wexford.

Tourist Offices Abroad

Outside Ireland, Fáilte Ireland and the NITB unite under the banner Tourism Ireland, with offices in the following countries:

Australia (☎ 02-9299 6177; info@tourismireland.com.au; 5th level, 36 Carrington St, Sydney, NSW 2000)

Canada (☎ 1800 223 6470; info.ca@tourismireland.com; 2 Bloor St West, Suite 1501, Toronto, Ontario M4W 3E2)

France (☎ 01 53 43 12 35; info.fr@tourismireland.com; Tourisme Irlandais, 33 rue de Miromesnil, 75008 Paris)

Germany (☎ 069-9231 8500; info.de@tourismireland.com; Gutleutstrasse 32, 60329 Frankfurt-am-Main)

Italy (☎ 02 5817 7311; Piazzale Cantore 4, 20123 Milan)

Netherlands (☎ 020-530 6050; info@ierland.nl; Iers Nationaal Bureau voor Toerisme, Spuistraat 104, 1012 VA Amsterdam)

New Zealand (☎ 09-379 3708; info@tourismireland.co.nz; Dingwall Bldg, 2nd fl, 87 Queen St, Auckland)

UK (☎ 0800 039 7000; info.gb@tourismireland.com; Nations House, 103 Wigmore St, London, W1U 1QS)

USA (☎ 212-1418 0800; info.us@tourismireland.com; 17th fl, 345 Park Ave, New York, NY 10154)

TRAVELLERS WITH DISABILITIES

Travelling in Ireland with a disability can be a frustrating experience, as facilities and access are quite poor by European standards. Improvements are being made, but progress is quite slow in some areas. If you have a physical disability, get in touch with your national support organisation (preferably the travel officer if there is one) before you go. It often has libraries devoted to travel and can put you in touch with agencies that specialise in tours for the travellers with disabilities.

Guesthouses, hotels and sights in Ireland are gradually being adapted for people with disabilities. Fáilte Ireland and NITB's accommodation guides indicate which places are wheelchair accessible.

Public transportation can be a bit-hit-and-miss. In the big cities, most buses now have low-floor access and priority space on board, but the number of kneeling coaches on regional routes is still relatively small.

Trains are accessible with help. In theory, if you call ahead, an employee of Iarnród Éireann (Irish Rail) will arrange to accompany you to the train. Newer trains have audio and visual information systems for visually impaired and hearing-impaired passengers.

The **Citizens' Information Board** (☎ 01-605 9000; www.citizensinformationboard.ie) in the Republic and **Disability Action** (☎ 028-9066 1252; www.disabilityaction.org) in Northern Ireland can give some advice, although most of their information concerns disabled Irish citizens' rights. Travellers to Northern Ireland can check out the website www.allgohere.com.

VISAS

UK nationals don't need a passport to visit the Republic, but are advised to carry one (or some other form of photo identification) to prove that they *are* a UK national. It's also necessary to have a passport or photo ID when changing travellers cheques or hiring a car. European Economic Area (EEA) citizens (that is, citizens of EU states, plus Iceland, Liechtenstein and Norway) can enter Ireland with either a passport or a national ID card.

Visitors from outside the EEA will need a passport, which should remain valid for at least six months after their intended arrival.

For EEA nationals and citizens of most Western countries, including Australia, Canada, New Zealand and the USA, no visa is required to visit either the Republic or Northern Ireland, but citizens of India, China and many African countries do need a visa for the Republic. Full visa requirements for visiting the Republic are available online at www.dfa.ie; for Northern Ireland's visa requirements see www.ukvisas.gov.uk.

EEA nationals can stay for as long as they like, but other visitors can usually remain for up to three months in the Republic and up to six months in the North. To stay longer in the Republic, contact the local garda (police) station or the **Garda National Immigration Bureau** (☎ 01-666 9100; www.garda.ie/angarda/gnib.html; 13-14 Burgh Quay, Dublin 2). To stay longer in Northern Ireland contact the **Home Office** (☎ 0870-606 7766; www.homeoffice.gov.uk; Immigration & Nationality Directorate, Lunar House, 40 Wellesley Rd, Croydon CR9 2BY, UK).

Citizens of member states of the EEA do not need a work visa to work in the Republic. Non-EEA nationals are allowed to work for up to one year in the Republic, if they have a specific job to come to and their employer has obtained permission from the Department of Enterprise, Trade and Employment (see *opposite* for Commonwealth exceptions).

Although you don't need an onward or return ticket to enter Ireland, it could help if there's any doubt that you have sufficient funds to support yourself in Ireland.

VOLUNTEERING

Prosperous Western democracies don't afford the same volunteering opportunities as you'd find elsewhere, but that doesn't mean there aren't projects where you can lend a volunteering hand. From painting walls in Wicklow to helping out in hospitals in Gal-

way and guiding visitors in Dublin museums, your time and effort will be put to good use. Check out www.volunteeringireland.ie for all relevant information, including how to sign up and where to go.

WOMEN TRAVELLERS

Except for the occasional wolf whistle from a building site or the ham-fisted attempt at a chat-up by some drunken punter, women will probably find travelling a blissfully relaxing experience. Walking alone at night, especially in certain parts of Dublin, and hitching are probably unwise. Should you have serious problems, be sure to report them to the local tourist authorities.

There's little need to worry about what you wear in Ireland, and the climate is hardly conducive to topless sunbathing. Finding contraception is not the problem it once was, although anyone on the pill should bring adequate supplies.

The phone number for the Rape Crisis Centre is ☎ 1800 77 88 88.

WORK

Low-paid seasonal work is available in the tourist industry, usually in restaurants and pubs. Sometimes volunteer work is available in return for bed and board, for example from the **Burren Conservation Trust** (☎ 065-707 6105; jdmm@iol.ie; Admiral's Rest Seafood Restaurant, Fanore).

Citizens of other EU countries can work legally in Ireland. If you don't come from an EU country but have an Irish parent or grandparent, it's fairly easy to obtain Irish

citizenship without necessarily renouncing your own nationality, and this opens the door to employment throughout the EU. Obtaining citizenship isn't an overnight procedure, so enquire at an Irish embassy or consulate in your own country.

To work in the North, citizens of Commonwealth countries aged 17 to 27 can apply for a Working Holiday Entry Certificate that allows them to spend two years in the UK and to take work that's 'incidental' to a holiday. You need to apply for the certificate, before you travel, to the British consulate or high commission in your country. In the Republic, a similar system entitled the Working Holiday Authorisation allows citizens of Australia, New Zealand and Canada to work casually so they can take an extended holiday, and again you must be apply while still in your own country.

Commonwealth citizens with a UK-born parent may be eligible for a Certificate of Entitlement to the Right of Abode, which entitles them to live and work in the UK free of immigration control. Commonwealth citizens with a UK-born grandparent, or a grandparent born before 31 March 1922 in what's now the Republic, may qualify for a UK Ancestry Employment Certificate, allowing them to work full time for up to four years in the UK.

Visiting full-time US students aged 18 and over can get a four-month work permit for Ireland through **CIEE** (☎ 617 247 0350; www.ciee.org; 3 Copley Pl, 2nd fl, Boston, MA 02116).

Nixers (www.nixers.com) is a useful noticeboard site for those in search of casual labour.

Transport

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GETTING THERE & AWAY

ENTERING THE COUNTRY

An increase in the number of foreign nationals seeking asylum during the last decade has meant a far more rigorous questioning for those from African and Asian countries or from certain parts of Eastern Europe. The border between the Republic and Northern Ireland still exists as a political reality, but there are few if any checkpoints left; for non-EU nationals it is assumed the screening process occurred upon entry to the UK. For information on visa requirements turn to p714.

THINGS CHANGE...

The information in this chapter is particularly vulnerable to change. Check directly with the airline or a travel agency to make sure you understand how a fare (and ticket you may buy) works and be aware of the security requirements for international travel. Shop carefully. The details given in this chapter should be regarded as pointers and are not a substitute for your own careful, up-to-date research.

FARE GO

Travel costs throughout this book are for single (one-way) adult fares, unless otherwise stated.

Passport

EU citizens can travel freely to and from Ireland if bearing official photo ID. Those from outside the EU, however, must have a passport that remains valid for six months after entry.

AIR

Airports & Airlines

There are scheduled nonstop flights from Britain, continental Europe and North America to Dublin and Shannon, and good nonstop connections from Britain and continental Europe to Cork.

Cork (ORK; ☎ 021-431 3131; www.corkairport.com)

Dublin (DUB; ☎ 01-814 1111; www.dublinairport.com)

Shannon (SNN; ☎ 061-712 000; www.shannonairport.com)

Other airports in the Republic with scheduled services from Britain:

Donegal (CFN; ☎ 074-954 8284; www.donegalairport.ie; Carrickfinn)

Kerry (KIR; ☎ 066-976 4644; www.kerryairport.ie; Farranfore)

Knock (NOC; ☎ 094-67222; www.knockairport.com)

Waterford (WAT; ☎ 051-875 589; www.flywaterford.com)

In Northern Ireland there are flights to **Belfast International** (BFS; ☎ 028-9448 4848; www.belfastairport.com) from Britain, continental Europe and the USA.

Other airports in Northern Ireland that operate scheduled services from Britain:

Belfast City (BHD; ☎ 028-9093 9093; www.belfastcityairport.com)

Derry (LDY; ☎ 028-7181 0784; www.cityofderryairport.com)

The main Irish airlines:

Aer Áránn (☎ 1890 462 726; www.aerann.ie) A small carrier that operates flights within Ireland and also to Britain.

Aer Lingus (☎ 01-886 8888; www.aerlingus.com) The Irish national airline, with direct flights to Britain, continental Europe and the USA.

Ryanair (☎ 01-609 7800; www.ryanair.com) Ireland's no-frills carrier with inexpensive services to Britain and continental Europe.

Nearly all international airlines use Dublin as their hub. Airlines flying into and out of Ireland:

Aer Áránn (☎ 1890 462 726; www.aerann.ie)

Aer Lingus (☎ 01-886 8888; www.aerlingus.com)

Aeroflot (☎ 01-844 6166; www.aeroflot.com)

Air Canada (☎ 1800 709 900; www.aircanada.ca)

Air France (☎ 01-605 0383; www.airfrance.com)

Air Malta (☎ 1800 397 400; www.airmalta.com)

Air Wales (☎ 1800 465 193; www.airwales.com)

Alitalia (☎ 01-844 6035; www.alitalia.com)

American Airlines (☎ 01-602 0550; www.aa.com)

Belavia (☎ 061-474 082; www.belaviashannon.com; Shannon)

BMI British Midland (☎ 01-407 3036; www.flybmi.com)

British Airways (☎ 1800 626 747; www.britishairways.com)

City Jet (☎ 01-8700 300; www.cityjet.com)

Continental (☎ 1890 925 252; www.continental.com)

CSA Czech Airlines (☎ 01-814 4626; www.csa.cz)

Delta Airlines (☎ 1800 768 080; www.delta.com)

EasyJet (☎ 048-9448 4929; www.easyjet.com; Knock)

Finnair (☎ 01-844 6565; www.finnair.com)

Iberia (☎ 01-407 3017; www.iberia.com)

KLM (☎ 01-663 6900; www.klm.com)

Lufthansa (☎ 01-844 5544; www.lufthansa.com)

Malev Hungarian Airlines (☎ 01-844 4303; www.malev.com)

Ryanair (☎ 01-609 7800; www.ryanair.com)

Scandinavian Airlines (☎ 01-8445440; www.scandinavian.net)

Tickets

The dogfight on European routes between full-service and no-frills airlines has generally resulted in an all-round lowering of fares, which makes cheap tickets much easier to get than ever before. You can get your ticket from a travel agency (in person or online) or direct from the airline, where the best deals are usually available online. Whatever you do, shop around. Internet travel agencies work well if you're doing a straightforward trip, but more complicated travel arrangements are best handled by a real live travel agent, who knows the system, the options and the best deals. Be sure to check the terms and conditions of the cheapest fares before purchasing.

ONLINE BOOKING AGENCIES

Best Fares (www.bestfares.com) American site offering discounted airfares and hotel rooms.

Cheap Flights (www.cheapflights.com) American- and British-based site that lists discounted flights and packages.

eBookers (www.ebookers.com) Irish, web-based internet travel agency.

Expedia (www.expedia.co.uk) Microsoft's travel site.

Opodo (www.opodo.com) Joint booking service for nine European airlines.

Priceline (www.priceline.com) American, web-based travel agency.

STA Travel (www.statravel.com) International student travel agency.

Travelocity (www.travelocity.com) American, web-based travel agency.

Australia & New Zealand

There are no nonstop scheduled air services from Australia or New Zealand to Ireland; generally it's cheapest to fly to London or Amsterdam and continue from there. Most fares to European destinations can have a return flight to Dublin tagged on at little or no extra cost. Round-the-world (RTW) tickets are another good bet and are often better value than standard return fares.

The Saturday travel sections of the *Sydney Morning Herald* and *Melbourne Age* newspapers advertise cheap fares; in New Zealand, check the *New Zealand Herald* travel section.

Recommended agencies:

AUSTRALIA

Flight Centre (☎ 133 133; www.flightcentre.com.au)

Shamrock Travel (☎ 03-9602 3700; www.irishtravel.com.au)

STA Travel (☎ 1300 733 035; www.statravel.com.au)

NEW ZEALAND

Flight Centre (☎ 0800-243 544; www.flightcentre.co.nz)

STA Travel (☎ 0508-782 872; www.statravel.co.nz)

Canada

Air Canada is the only carrier flying directly to Ireland, from Toronto to both Dublin and Shannon. Your best bet for cheaper fares may be to connect to transatlantic gateways in the USA or to fly to London and continue on to Ireland from there. Check the travel sections of the *Globe & Mail*, *Toronto Star*, *Montreal Gazette* or *Vancouver Sun* for the latest offers.

Recommended agencies:

Canadian Affair (☎ 1604-678 6868; www.canadian-affair.com) Cheap one-way fares to British cities.

Flight Centre (☎ 1888-967 5355; www.flightcentre.ca)

Travel CUTS (☎ 866-246 9762; www.travelcuts.com)

Continental Europe

Price wars have made flights to Ireland from continental Europe more affordable than ever. As far as European connections are concerned, **Aer Lingus** (www.aerlingus.com) is now a no-frills airline in all but name, with highly competitive fares to over 40 European cities. **Ryanair** (www.ryanair.com), which kicked off the price wars, is still very much in the fight, but it has the disadvantage of having to use secondary airports in or around the major cities, which can make for rather expensive and time-consuming transfers. There are also some excellent connections with Belfast. Check before you book.

UK

There is a mind-boggling array of flights between Britain and Ireland. The best deals

are usually available online, and it's not unusual for airport taxes to exceed the base price of the ticket on the lowest fares (generally for early morning or late-night flights midweek).

Most regional airports in Britain have flights to Dublin and Belfast and some also provide services to Shannon, Cork, Kerry, Knock and Waterford.

USA

In the USA, discount travel agencies (consolidators) sell cut-price tickets on scheduled carriers. Aer Lingus is the chief carrier between the USA and Ireland, with flights from New York, Boston, Baltimore, Chicago and Los Angeles to Shannon, Dublin and Belfast. Heavy competition on transatlantic routes into London might make it cheaper to fly there and then continue on to Ireland. The Sunday travel sections of the *New York Times*, *San Francisco Chronicle-Examiner*, *Los Angeles Times* or *Chicago Tribune* list cheap fares.

Some of the more popular travel agencies: **Ireland Consolidated** (☎ 212-661 1999; www.irelandair.com) **STA Travel** (☎ 800-781 4040; www.statravel.com)

CLIMATE CHANGE & TRAVEL

Climate change is a serious threat to the ecosystems that humans rely upon, and air travel is the fastest growing contributor to the problem. Lonely Planet regards travel, overall, as a global benefit, but believes we all have a responsibility to limit our personal impact on global warming.

Flying & climate change

Pretty much every form of motorised travel generates carbon dioxide (the main cause of human-induced climate change) but planes are far and away the worst offenders, not just because of the sheer distances they allow us to travel, but because they release greenhouse gases high into the atmosphere. The statistics are frightening: two people taking a return flight between Europe and the US will contribute as much to climate change as an average household's gas and electricity consumption over a whole year.

Carbon offset schemes

Climatecare.org and other websites use 'carbon calculators' that allow travellers to offset the level of greenhouse gases they are responsible for with financial contributions to sustainable travel schemes that reduce global warming – including projects in India, Honduras, Kazakhstan and Uganda.

Lonely Planet, together with Rough Guides and other concerned partners in the travel industry, support the carbon offset scheme run by climatecare.org. Lonely Planet offsets all of its staff and author travel.

For more information check out our website: www.lonelyplanet.com.

LAND

Eurolines (www.eurolines.com) has a three-times-daily coach and ferry service from London's Victoria Station to Dublin Busáras. For information on border crossings see p721.

SEA

There are many ferry and fast-boat services from Britain and France to Ireland. Prices quoted throughout this section are one-way fares for a single adult on foot/up to two adults with a car, during peak season.

UK & Ireland

FERRY & FAST BOAT

There are numerous services between Britain and Ireland but it's definitely wise to plan ahead as fares can vary considerably, depending on the season, day, time and length of stay. Often, some return fares don't cost that much more than one-way fares and it's worth keeping an eye out for special offers. International Student Identity Card (ISIC) holders and Hostelling International (HI) members get a reduction on the normal fares.

These shipping lines operate between Britain and Ireland:

Irish Ferries (☎ 0870-517 1717; www.irishferries.com) For ferry and fast-boat services from Holyhead to Dublin, and ferry services from Pembroke to Rosslare.

Isle of Man Steam Packet Company/Sea Cat (☎ 1800 805 055; www.steam-packet.com) Ferry and fast-boat services from Liverpool to Dublin or Belfast via Douglas (on the Isle of Man), and from Troon to Belfast.

Norfolkline (in the UK ☎ 0870-600 4321, in the Republic ☎ 01-819 2999; www.norfolkline.com) Ferry services from Liverpool to Belfast and Dublin.

P&O Irish Sea (in the UK ☎ 0870-242 4777, in the Republic ☎ 01-407 3434; www.poirishsea.com) Ferry and fast-boat services from Larne to Cairnryan and Troon, and ferry services from Liverpool to Dublin.

Stena Line (☎ 0870-570 7070; www.stenaline.com) Ferry services from Holyhead to Dun Laoghaire, Fleetwood to Larne and Stranraer to Belfast, and fast-boat services from Holyhead to Dublin, Fishguard to Rosslare, and Stranraer to Belfast.

Swansea Cork Ferries (in the UK ☎ 01792-456 116, in the Republic ☎ 01-427 1166; www.swansea-cork.ie) Ferry services from Swansea to Cork.

The main routes from the UK to the Republic include:

Fishguard & Pembroke to Rosslare These popular, short ferry crossings take 3½ hours (from Fishguard) or four hours (from Pembroke) and cost around £24/114; the



cost drops significantly outside peak season. The fast boat crossing from Fishguard takes just under two hours and costs around £30/130.

Holyhead to Dublin & Dun Laoghaire The ferry crossing takes just over three hours and costs around £24/124. The fast-boat service from Holyhead to Dun Laoghaire takes a little over 1½ hours and costs £30/139.

Liverpool to Dublin The ferry service takes 8½ hours from Liverpool and costs £22/160. Cabins on overnight sailings cost more. The fast-boat service takes four hours and costs up to £35/240.

Swansea to Cork The 10-hour crossing costs around £30/160 but only operates from mid-March to early November.

The main routes from mainland Britain to the North:

Cairnryan to Larne The fast boat takes one hour and costs £19/175. The ferry takes 1¾ hours and costs £14/115.

Fleetwood to Larne The six-hour crossing costs £119; no foot passengers are carried.

Liverpool to Belfast The 8½-hour crossing costs £40/155 (incl meals) during the day and £30/235 (incl cabin and meals) at night.

Stranraer to Belfast The fast boat takes 1¾ hours and costs £20/130. The ferry takes 3¼ hours and costs £16/85.

It's possible to combine bus and ferry tickets from major UK centres to all Irish towns on the bus network, but with the availability of cheap flights it's hardly worth the hassle. The journey between London and Dublin takes about 12 hours and can cost as little as £15 one way. The London to Belfast trip takes 13 to 16 hours and costs £44 one way. For details in London contact **Eurolines** (☎ 0870-514 3219; www.eurolines.com).

France

FERRY

Brittany Ferries (in the Republic ☎ 021-427 7801, in France ☎ 02 98 29 28 00; www.brittany-ferries.com) Weekly service from Roscoff to Cork from early April to late September. The crossing takes 14 hours and costs up to €79/430 without accommodation.

Irish Ferries (in Rosslare ☎ 053-33158, in Cherbourg ☎ 02 33 23 44 44, in Roscoff ☎ 02 98 61 17 17; www.irishferries.com) One to three times a week from Roscoff to Rosslare from late April to late September; the crossing time is 17½ hours. Ferries from Cherbourg to Rosslare sail two to four times per week year round, except in late January and all of February; crossing time is 20½ hours. Both services cost up to €130/575 without accommodation.

GETTING AROUND

Travelling around Ireland is short, simple and sweet – or maddeningly long and infuriatingly complicated. Distances are relatively short and there's a good network of roads, but public transportation can be infrequent, expensive or both and – especially with trains – not reach many of the more interesting places.

Your own transport is a major advantage and it's worth considering car hire for at least part of your trip. Irish roads are markedly better than they used to be. There's a small but growing network of motorways to supplement the huge network of secondary and tertiary roads, although it is still true that smaller, rural roads can make for difficult driving conditions.

If you opt not to drive, a mixture of buses, the occasional taxi, plenty of time, walking and sometimes hiring a bicycle will get you just about anywhere.

AIR

Airlines in Ireland

Ireland's size makes domestic flying unnecessary unless you're in a hurry, but there are flights between Dublin and Belfast, Cork, Derry, Donegal, Galway, Kerry, Shannon and Sligo, as well as a Belfast–Cork service. Most flights within Ireland take around 30 to 50 minutes.

The only domestic carriers are:

Aer Árainn (☎ 1890-462 726, in Dublin ☎ 01-814 5240, in Galway ☎ 091-593 034, in Cork ☎ 021-814 1058; www.aerarann.ie) Operates flights from Dublin to Belfast, Cork, Derry, Donegal, Galway, Kerry, Knock and Sligo; flights to the Aran Islands from Galway and a Belfast to Cork route.

Aer Lingus (information & bookings ☎ 01-886 8844, flight information ☎ 01-705 6705, in Belfast ☎ 028-9442 2888; www.aerlingus.ie) The main domestic airline.

BICYCLE

Ireland is a great place for bicycle touring, despite bad road surfaces in places and inclement weather. If you intend to cycle in the west, the prevailing winds mean it's easier to cycle from south to north. Both **Irish Cycling Safaris** (☎ 01-260 0749; www.cycling-safaris.com; Belfield Bike Shop, UCD, Dublin 4) and **Go Ireland** (☎ 066-976 2094; www.goactivities.com; Old Orchard House, Killorglin, Co Kerry) organise tours for groups of cyclists in the southwest, the southeast, Clare, Connemara, Donegal and Antrim.

Bicycles can be transported by bus if there's enough room; the charge varies. By train the cost varies from €3 to €10 for a one-way journey, but bikes are not allowed on certain train routes, including the Dublin Area Rapid Transit (DART); check with **Iarnród Éireann** (☎ 01-836 3333).

Typical bicycle hire costs are €15 to €25 per day or €60 to €100 per week plus a deposit of around €100. There are many local independent outlets, but several dealers have outlets around the country:

Irish Cycle Hire (☎ 041-685 3772; www.irishcyclehire.com; Unit 6, Enterprise Centre, Ardee, Co Louth)

Raleigh Ireland (☎ 01-626 1333; www.raleigh.ie; Raleigh House, Kylemore Rd, Dublin) Ireland's biggest rental dealer.

Rent-a-Bike Ireland (☎ 061-416983; www.irelandrentabike.com; 1 Patrick St, Limerick, Co Limerick)

BOAT Ferry

There are many boat services to islands lying off the coast, including to the Aran and Skellig Islands to the west, the Saltee Islands to the southeast, and Tory and Rathlin Islands to the north. Ferries also operate across rivers, inlets and loughs, providing useful shortcuts, particularly for cyclists.

Cruises are very popular on the 258km-long Shannon–Erne Waterway and on a variety of other lakes and loughs. The tourist offices only recommend operators that are registered with them. Details of non-tourist-board-affiliated boat trips are given under the relevant sections throughout this book.

BORDER CROSSINGS

Security has been progressively scaled down in Northern Ireland in recent years and all border crossings with the Republic are now open and generally unstaffed. Permanent checkpoints have been removed and ramps levelled. On major routes your only indication that you have crossed the border will be a change in road signs and the colour of number plates and postboxes.

BUS

Bus Éireann (☎ 01-836 6111; www.buseireann.ie; Busáras, Store St, Dublin) is the Republic's bus line and offers an extensive network throughout the south. Private buses compete – often very favourably – with Bus Éireann in the Republic and also run where the national buses are irregular or absent.

The larger bus companies will usually carry bikes for free but you should always check in advance to avoid surprises. **Ulsterbus** (☎ 028-9066 6600; www.ulsterbus.co.uk; Milewater Rd, Belfast) is the only bus service in Northern Ireland.

Bus Passes

Details of special deals and passes are given in the boxed text on p723.

Costs

Bus travel is much cheaper than train travel, and private buses often charge less than Bus Éireann. Generally, return fares cost little more than a one-way fare.

Some sample one-way (single) bus fares include the following:

Service	Cost	Duration (hrs)	Frequency (Mon-Sat)
Belfast-Dublin	£10	3	7
Derry-Belfast	£9	1¾	10+
Derry-Galway	£20	5¼	4
Dublin-Cork	€10.50	4½	6
Dublin-Donegal	€17.50	4	5
Dublin-Rosslare	€16	3	12
Dublin-Trailee	€22.50	6	12
Dublin-Waterford	€11.50	2¾	7
Killarney-Cork	€12.60	2	12
Killarney-Waterford	€17.60	4½	12

Reservations

Bus Éireann bookings can be made online but you can't reserve a seat for a particular service.

CAR & MOTORCYCLE

Ireland's new-found affluence means there are far more cars on the road, and the building of new roads and the upgrading of existing ones just cannot keep pace. Be prepared for delays, especially at holiday weekends. **AA Roadwatch** (☎ 1550 131811; www.aaroadwatch.ie) provides traffic information in the Republic.

In the Republic, speed-limit and distance signs are in kilometres (although the occasional older white sign shows distances in miles); in the North, speed-limit and distance signs are in miles.

You'll need a good road map and sense of humour to deal with the severe lack of signposts in the Republic, and on minor roads be prepared for lots of potholes.

Petrol is considerably cheaper in the Republic than in the North. Most service stations accept payment by credit card, but some small, remote ones may take cash only.

All cars on public roads must be insured. If you are bringing your own vehicle in to the country, check that your insurance will cover you in Ireland.

Bring Your Own Vehicle

It's easy to take your own vehicle to Ireland and there are no specific procedures involved, but you should carry a vehicle registration document as proof that it's yours.

Automobile Association members should ask for a Card of Introduction entitling you to services offered by sister organisations (including maps, information, breakdown assistance, legal advice etc), usually free of charge.

- Drive on the left, overtake to the right.
- Safety belts must be worn by the driver and all passengers.
- Children aged under 12 aren't allowed to sit on the front seats.
- Motorcyclists and their passengers must wear helmets.
- When entering a roundabout, give way to the right.
- Speed limits are 120km/h on motorways, 100km/h on national roads, 80km/h on regional and local roads and 50km/h or as signposted in towns.
- The legal alcohol limit is 80mg of alcohol per 100ml of blood or 35mg on the breath (roughly two pints of beer an hour for a man, one for a woman). Note:

three pints (1½ for a woman) will put you over the limit.

HITCHING

Hitching is becoming increasingly less popular in Ireland, even though it's still pretty easy compared to other European countries. Travellers who decide to hitch should understand that they are taking a small but potentially serious risk, and we don't recommend it. If you do plan to travel by thumb, remember it's illegal to hitch on motorways.

LOCAL TRANSPORT

There are comprehensive local bus networks in Dublin (Dublin Bus), Belfast (Citybus) and some other larger towns. The Dublin Area

Rapid Transport (DART) line in Dublin runs roughly the length of the city's coastline, while the brand new Luas tram system has two very popular lines. Taxis tend to be expensive.

TOURS

If your time is limited it might be worth considering an organised tour, though it's cheaper to see things independently, and Ireland is small enough for you to get to even the most remote places within a few hours. Tours can be booked through travel agencies, tourist offices in the major cities, or directly through the tour companies themselves.

Bus Éireann (☎ 01-836 6111; www.buseireann.ie; 59 Upper O'Connell St, Dublin) Runs day tours to various parts of the Republic and the North.

CIE Tours International (☎ 01-703 1888; www.cietours.ie; 35 Lower Abbey St, Dublin) Runs four- to 11-day coach tours of the Republic and the North, including accommodation and meals. The Taste of Ireland tour (five days) takes in Blarney, Ring of Kerry, Killarney, Cliffs of Moher and region around the River Shannon (€680 in high season).

Grayline Tours (☎ 01-872 9010; www.irishcitytours.com; 33 Bachelor's Walk, Dublin) Located in Dublin and offers half- and full-day tours (€22) from Dublin to Newgrange, Glendalough and north Dublin, and three- and four-day trips to the Ring of Kerry (€295 to €400).

Over the Top & Into the West Tours (☎ 01-869 0769; www.overthetoptours.com) Daily historical and heritage tours of Wicklow (€26), the Boyne Valley (€28), three-day tours of the west of Ireland (€255) and a five-day tour of Kerry and Cork (€370).

Paddywagon Tours (☎ 01-672 6007; www.paddywagon.com) Activity-filled three- and six-day tours all over Ireland with friendly tour guides. Accommodation is in IHH hostels.

Ulsterbus Tours (☎ 028-9033 7004; www.ulsterbus.co.uk) Runs a large number of day trips throughout the North and the Republic.

It's worth checking **Goireland.com** (☎ 1800 668 668; www.goireland.com) for holiday packages.

For train enthusiasts, **Railtours Ireland** (☎ 01-856 0045; www.railtours.ie; 58 Lower Gardiner St, Dublin 1)

organises a series of one- and two-day train trips in association with Iarnród Éireann. A three-day trip from Dublin to Cork, Blarney Castle and Kerry costs €219.

TRAIN

Iarnród Éireann (Irish Rail; ☎ 01-836 2222; www.irishrail.ie; 35 Lower Abbey St, Dublin) operates trains in the Republic on routes that fan out from Dublin. The system is limited though: there's no north-south route along the western coast, no network in Donegal, and no direct connections from Waterford to Cork or Killarney. **Northern Ireland Railways** (NIR; ☎ 028-9089 9411; Belfast Central Station) runs four routes from Belfast. One links with the system in the Republic via Newry to Dublin; the other three go east to Bangor, northeast to Larne and northwest to Derry via Coleraine (see map opposite).

Costs

Train travel is more expensive than bus travel and one-way fares are particularly poor value – a midweek return ticket is often about the same as a one-way fare. First-class tickets cost around €5 to €10 more than the standard fare for a single journey.

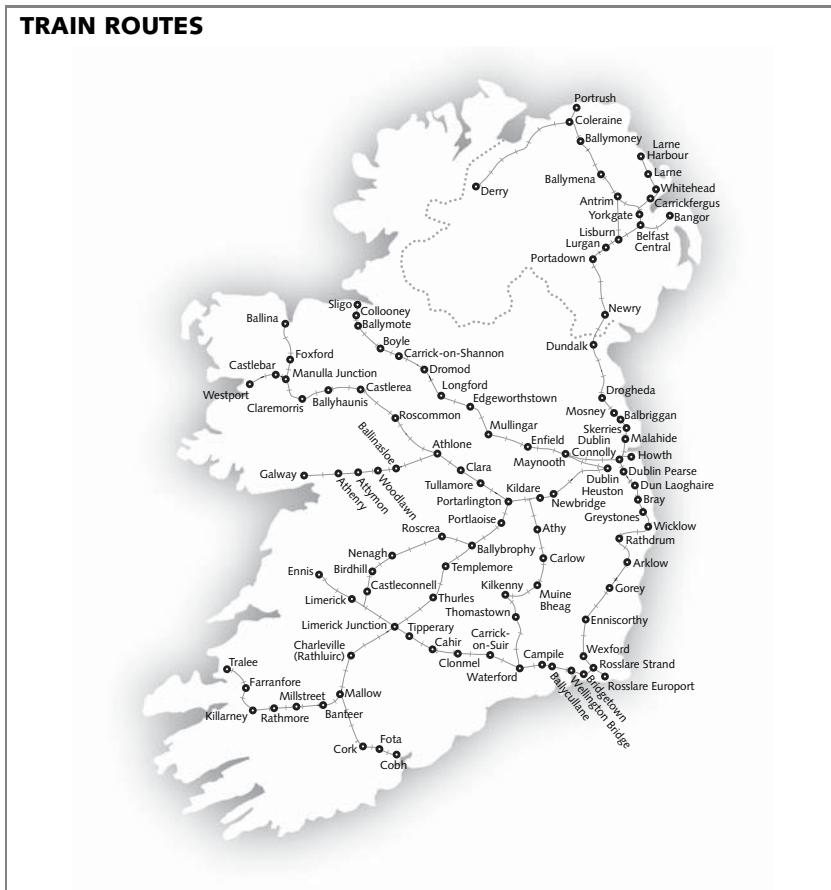
Some sample one-way fares:

Service	Cost	Duration (hr)	Frequency (Mon-Sat)
Belfast-Dublin	£24	2	half-hourly
Dublin-Cork	€56.50	3¼	8
Dublin-alway	€42	3¼	5
Dublin-Limerick	€43	2½	13
Dublin-Sligo	€26	3	3
Dublin-Tralee	€57	4½	8
Dublin-Waterford	€24	2½	7

Reservations

Iarnród Éireann takes reservations for all its train services. You need to fax your details (name, number of passengers, date and time of service, credit-card number and expiry date) to ☎ 01-703 4136.

TRAIN ROUTES



Health

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BEFORE YOU GO

While Ireland has excellent health care, prevention is the key to staying healthy while abroad. A little planning before departure, particularly for pre-existing illnesses, will save trouble later. Bring medications in their original, clearly labelled, containers. A signed and dated letter from your physician describing your medical conditions and medications, including generic names, is also a good idea. If carrying syringes or needles, be sure to have a physician's letter documenting their medical necessity. Carry a spare pair of contact lenses and glasses, and take your optical prescription with you.

INSURANCE

If you're an EU citizen, a European Health Insurance Card (EHIC), available from health centres or, in the UK, post offices, covers you for most medical care. The EHIC won't cover you for non-emergencies, or emergency repatriation home. Citizens from other countries should find out if there is a reciprocal arrangement for free medical care between their country and Ireland. If you do need health insurance, make sure you get a policy that covers you for the worst possible case, such as an accident requiring an emergency flight home. Find out in advance if your insurance plan will make payments directly to providers, or reimburse you later for overseas health expenditures.

RECOMMENDED VACCINATIONS

No jabs are required to travel to Ireland. The World Health Organization, however, recommends that all travellers should be covered for diphtheria, tetanus, measles, mumps, rubella, polio and hepatitis B, regardless of their destination.

IN TRANSIT

DEEP VEIN THROMBOSIS (DVT)

Blood clots may form in the legs during plane flights, chiefly because of prolonged immobility. The longer the flight, the greater the risk. The chief symptom of deep vein thrombosis is swelling or pain of the foot, ankle, or calf, often on just one side. When a blood clot travels to the lungs, it may cause chest pain and difficulty breathing. Travellers with any of these symptoms should immediately seek medical attention.

To prevent the development of DVT on long flights you should walk about the cabin, contract the leg muscles while sitting, drink plenty of fluids and avoid alcohol and tobacco.

JET LAG & MOTION SICKNESS

To avoid jet lag (quite common when crossing more than five time zones) try drinking plenty of nonalcoholic fluids and eating light meals. Upon arrival, get exposure to natural sunlight and readjust your schedule (for meals, sleep etc) as soon as possible.

Antihistamines such as dimenhydrinate (Dramamine) or meclizine (Antivert, Bonine) are quite often the first choice for treating motion sickness. A herbal alternative is ginger.

IN IRELAND

AVAILABILITY & COST OF HEALTH CARE

Excellent health care is readily available and for minor self-limiting illnesses pharmacists can give valuable advice and sell over-the-counter medication. They can also advise

when more specialised help is required and point you in the right direction.

TRAVELLERS' DIARRHOEA

If you develop diarrhoea, be sure to drink plenty of fluids, preferably in the form of an oral rehydration solution such as dioralyte. If diarrhoea is bloody, persists for more than 72 hours or is accompanied by fever, shaking, chills or severe abdominal pain you will need to seek urgent medical attention.

ENVIRONMENTAL HAZARDS

Heatstroke

Heat exhaustion (yes, even in Ireland it can still happen!) occurs following excessive fluid loss with insufficient replacement of fluids and salt. Symptoms include headache, dizziness and tiredness. Dehydration is already happening by

the time you feel thirsty – aim to drink sufficient water to produce pale, diluted urine. To treat heat exhaustion drink water and/or fruit juice, and cool the body with cold water and fans.

Hypothermia

Hypothermia occurs when the body loses heat faster than it can produce it. As ever, proper preparation will reduce the risks of getting it. Even on a hot day in the mountains the weather can change rapidly, so carry waterproof garments, warm layers and a hat, and inform others of your route.

Hypothermia starts with shivering, loss of judgment and clumsiness. Without re-warming, the sufferer deteriorates into apathy, confusion and coma. Prevent further heat loss by seeking shelter, warm dry clothing, hot sweet drinks and shared body warmth.

Glossary

12th of July – the day the Orange Order marches to celebrate King William III's victory over the Catholic King James II at the Battle of the Boyne in 1690

An Óige – literally 'The Youth'; Republic of Ireland Youth Hostel Association

An Taisce – National Trust for the Republic of Ireland
Anglo-Norman – Norman, English and Welsh peoples who invaded Ireland in the 12th century

Apprentice Boys – loyalist organisation founded in 1814 to commemorate the Great Siege of Derry in August every year

ard – literally 'high'; Irish place name

ard rí – Irish 'high king'

Ascendancy – refers to the Protestant aristocracy descended from the Anglo-Normans and those who were installed here during the Plantations.

bailey – outer wall of a castle

bawn – area surrounded by walls outside the main castle, acting as a defence and as a place to keep cattle in times of trouble

beehive hut – see *clochán*

Black and Tans – British recruits to the Royal Irish Constabulary shortly after WWI, noted for their brutality

Blarney Stone – sacred stone perched on top of Blarney Castle; bending over backwards to kiss the stone is said to bestow the gift of the gab

bodhrán – hand-held goatskin drum

Bord Na Móna – the Irish turf board, charged with harvesting peat for use in power plants

boreen – small lane or roadway

Bronze Age – earliest metal-using period, around 2500 BC to 300 BC in Ireland; after the Stone Age and before the Iron Age

B-specials – Northern Irish auxiliary police force, disbanded in 1971

bulllaun – stone with a depression, probably used as a mortar for grinding medicine or food and often found on monastic sites

CAC IRA – Continuity Army Council of the IRA, a breakaway group

caher – circular area enclosed by stone walls

cairn – mound of stones heaped over a prehistoric grave

cashel – stone-walled circular fort; see also *ráth*

cath – literally 'battle'; Irish place name

céilidh – session of traditional music and dancing; also called *ceili*

Celtic Tiger – nickname of the Irish economy during the growth years from 1990 to about 2002

Celts – Iron-Age warrior tribes that arrived in Ireland around 300 BC and controlled the country for 1000 years

ceol – music

cha – slang term for tea, as in a 'cup of cha'

champ – a dish of mashed potatoes with spring onions or leeks

chancel – eastern end of a church, where the altar is situated, reserved for the clergy and choir

chipper – slang term for fish 'n' chips fast-food restaurant

cill – literally 'church'; Irish place name; also known as *kill cillin* – literally 'little cell'; a hermitage, or sometimes a small, isolated burial ground for unbaptised children and other 'undesirables'

Claddagh ring – ring worn in much of Connaught since the mid-18th century, with a crowned heart nestling between two hands; if the heart points towards the hand then the wearer is taken or married, towards the fingertip means he or she is looking for a mate

clochán – circular stone building, shaped like an old-fashioned beehive, from the early Christian period

Connaught – one of the four ancient provinces of Ireland, made up of counties Galway, Leitrim, Mayo, Roscommon and Sligo; sometimes spelt Connacht.

Continuity IRA – anti-Agreement splinter republican group, opposed to any deal not based on a united Ireland
control zone – area of a town centre (usually the main street) where parked cars must not, for security reasons, be left unattended

draic – conversation, gossip, fun, good times; also known as crack

crannóg – artificial island made in a lake to provide habitation in a good defensive position

crios – multicoloured woven woollen belt traditionally worn in the Aran Islands

cromlech – see *dolmen*

cú – dog

culchie – derogatory nickname used by Dubliners for anyone not from the capital

currach – rowing boat made of a framework of laths covered with tarred canvas; also known as *cúrach*

Dáil – lower house of the Republic of Ireland Parliament
dairtheach – oratory, a small room set aside for private prayer

DART – Dublin Area Rapid Transport train line

delft – glazed blue-and-white earthenware from Holland; in Ireland the word refers to any kind of dishware

demesne – landed property close to a house or castle
diamond – town square

dolmen – tomb chamber or portal tomb made of vertical stones topped by a huge capstone; from around 2000 BC

draoicht – enchantment

drumlin – rounded hill formed by retreating glaciers

Dúchas – government department in charge of parks, monuments and gardens in the Republic; formerly known as the Office of Public Works

dún – fort, usually constructed of stone

DUP – Democratic Unionist Party; founded principally by Ian Paisley in 1971 in hard-line opposition to unionist policies as held by the UUP

Éire – Irish name for the Republic of Ireland

esker – gravel ridge

Fáilte Ireland – literally 'Welcome Board'; Irish Tourist Board

Fianna – mythical band of warriors who feature in many tales of ancient Ireland

Fianna Fáil – literally 'Warriors of Ireland'; a major political party in the Republic of Ireland, originating from the Sinn Féin faction opposed to the 1921 treaty with Britain

Fine Gael – literally 'Tribe of the Gael'; a major political party in the Republic, originating from the *Sinn Féin* faction that favoured the 1921 treaty with Britain; formed the first government of independent Ireland

fir – men (singular *feart*); sign on men's toilets

fleadh – festival

fulacht fiadh – Bronze-Age cooking place

Gaeltacht – Irish-speaking

gallery grave – tunnel-shaped burial chamber

gallógáil – mercenary soldiers of the 14th to 15th century; anglicised to gallowglasses

garda – Irish Republic police; plural *gardaí*

ghillie – fishing or hunting guide; also known as *ghilly*

gob – mouth; from Irish word *gob*, meaning bird's beak or bill

gort – literally 'field'; Irish place name

grá – love

Hibernia – literally 'Land of Winter'; Roman name for Ireland (the Romans had confused Ireland with Iceland)

hill fort – a hilltop fortified with ramparts and ditches, usually dating from the Iron Age

HINI – Hostelling International of Northern Ireland

huicéir – traditional Galway vessel; also known as a hooker

hurling – Irish sport similar to hockey

Hunger, the – how the Irish sometimes refer to the Great Famine of 1845–49

Iarnród Éireann – Republic of Ireland Railways

INLA – Irish National Liberation Association; formed in 1975 as an IRA splinter group unhappy at the cease-fire; it has maintained its own cease-fire since 1998

IRA – Irish Republican Army; the largest republican paramilitary organisation, founded 80 years ago with the aim to fight for a united Ireland; in 1969 the IRA split into the Official IRA and the Provisional IRA; the Official IRA is no longer active and the PIRA has become the IRA

IRB – Irish Republican Brotherhood; a secret society founded in 1858 and revived in the early 20th century; believed in independence, through violence if necessary, and was a precursor to the IRA; also known as the Fenians
Iron Age – in Ireland this lasted from the end of the Bronze Age, around 300 BC (the arrival of the Celts), to the arrival of Christianity, around the 5th century AD

jackeen – derogatory nickname used to describe anyone from Dublin; originally used to describe Dubliners who waved Union Jacks during Queen Victoria's visit in 1901

jarvey – driver of a jaunting car

jaunting car – Killarney's traditional horse-drawn transport

knackered – slang for tired or worn out

Leinster – one of the four ancient provinces of Ireland, made up of counties Carlow, Dublin, Kildare, Kilkenny, Laois, Longford, Louth, Meath, Offaly, West Meath, Wexford and Wicklow

leithreas – toilets

leprechaun – mischievous elf or sprite from Irish folklore
loch – lake, long narrow bay or arm of the sea

loyalist – person, usually a Northern Irish Protestant, insisting on the continuation of Northern Ireland's links with Britain

loyalist orders – consists mainly of the Orange Order and the Apprentice Boys committed to the union with the UK

Luas – Light Rail Transit system in Dublin; Irish for 'speed'

LVF – Loyalist Volunteer Force; an extreme loyalist paramilitary group opposed to the current peace process. It has been on cease-fire since 1998

marching season – Orange Order parades, which take place from Easter and throughout summer to celebrate the victory by Protestant King William III of Orange over Catholic James II in the Battle of the Boyne on 12 July 1690, and the union with Britain

Mesolithic – also known as the Middle Stone Age; time of the first human settlers in Ireland, about 8000 BC to 4000 BC

midden – refuse heap left by a prehistoric settlement

mná – women; sign on women's toilets

motte – early Norman fortification consisting of a raised, flattened mound with a keep on top; when attached to a bailey it is known as a motte-and-bailey fort, many of which were built in Ireland until the early 13th century

Munster – one of the four ancient provinces of Ireland, made up of counties Clare, Cork, Kerry, Limerick, Tipperary and Waterford

naomh – holy or saint

nationalism – belief in a reunited Ireland

nationalist – proponent of a united Ireland

Neolithic – also known as the New Stone Age; a period characterised by settled agriculture lasting from around 4000 BC to 2500 BC in Ireland; followed by the Bronze Age

NIR – Northern Ireland Railways

NITB – Northern Ireland Tourist Board

NNR – National Nature Reserves

NUI – National University of Ireland; made up of branches in Dublin, Cork, Galway and Limerick

North, the – political entity of Northern Ireland, not the northernmost geographic part of Ireland

Ogham stone – Ogham was the earliest form of writing in Ireland, using a variety of notched strokes placed above, below or across a keyline, usually on stone

Oireachtas – Parliament of the Republic, consisting of a lower and upper house, the Dáil and Senate

Orange Order – founded in 1795, the Orange Order is the largest Protestant organisation in Northern Ireland with a membership of up to 100,000; name commemorates the victory of King William of Orange in the Battle of the Boyne

Orangemen – members of the Orange Order; must be male

óstán – hotel

Palladian – style of architecture developed by Andrea Palladio (1508-80) based on ancient Roman architecture

paramilitaries – armed illegal organisations, either loyalist or republican, usually associated with the use of violence and crime for political and economic gain

Partition – division of Ireland in 1921

passage grave – Celtic tomb with a chamber reached by a narrow passage, typically buried in a mound

penal laws – laws passed in the 18th century forbidding Catholics from buying land and holding public office

Plantation – settlement of Protestant migrants (sometimes known as Planters) in Ireland in the 17th century

PSNI – Police Service of Northern Ireland

poteen – illegally brewed potato-based firewater

Prod – slang for Northern Irish Protestant

provisionals – Provisional IRA, formed after a break with the official IRA who are now largely inconsequential; named after the provisional government declared in 1916, they have been the main force combating the British army in the North; also known as provos

PUP – Progressive Unionist Party; a small unionist party seen as a political front for the UVF, it is pro the Good Friday Agreement

rashers – Irish bacon

ráth – circular fort with earth banks around a timber wall

Real IRA – splinter movement of the IRA and opposed to Sinn Féin's support of the Good Friday Agreement; the

Real IRA was responsible for the Omagh bombing in 1998 in which 29 people died; subsequently called a cease-fire but has been responsible for bombs in Britain and other acts of violence

Red Hand Commandos – illegal loyalist paramilitary group

Red Hand Defenders – breakaway loyalist paramilitary group formed in 1998 by dissident UFF and LVF members

Republic of Ireland – the 26 counties of the South

republican – supporter of a united Ireland

republicanism – belief in a united Ireland, sometimes referred to as militant nationalism

rí – petty kings

ring fort – circular habitation area surrounded by banks and ditches, used from the Bronze Age right through to the Middle Ages, particularly in the early Christian period

RTE – Radio Telefís Éireann; the national broadcasting service of the Republic of Ireland, with two TV and four radio stations

RUC – Royal Ulster Constabulary, the former name for the armed Police Service of Northern Ireland (PSNI)

sassenach – Irish word for Saxon, used to refer to anyone from England

SDLP – Social Democratic and Labour Party; the largest nationalist party in the Northern Ireland Assembly, instrumental in achieving the Good Friday Agreement; its goal is a united Ireland through nonviolent means; mostly Catholic

seisún – music session

sept – dan

shamrock – three-leaved plant said to have been used by St Patrick to illustrate the Holy Trinity

shebeen – from the Irish *síbin*; illicit drinking place or speakeasy

sheila-na-gig – literally 'Sheila of the teats'; female figure with exaggerated genitalia, carved in stone on the exteriors of some churches and castles; various explanations have been offered for the iconography, ranging from male clerics warning against the perils of sex to the idea that they represent Celtic war goddesses

shillelagh – stout club or cudgel, especially one made of oak or blackthorn

shinners – mildly derogatory nickname of members of Sinn Féin

Sinn Féin – literally 'We Ourselves'; a republican party with the long-term aim of a united Ireland; seen as the political wing of the IRA but it maintains that both organisations are completely separate

sli – hiking trail or way

snug – partitioned-off drinking area in a pub

southernain – underground chamber usually associated with ring and hill forts; probably provided a hiding place or escape route in times of trouble and/or storage space for goods

South, the – Republic of Ireland

standing stone – upright stone set in the ground, common across Ireland and dating from a variety of periods; some are burial markers

tánaiste – Republic of Ireland deputy prime minister

taoiseach – Republic of Ireland prime minister

TD – *teachta Dála*; member of the Republic of Ireland Parliament

teampall – church

Tinkers – derogatory term used to describe Irish gypsies, communities that roam the country; see also *Travellers*

trá – beach or strand

Travellers – the politically correct term used today to describe Ireland's itinerant communities

Treaty – Anglo-Irish Treaty of 1921, which divided Ireland and gave relative independence to the South; cause of the 1922-23 Civil War

trian – district

Tricolour – green, white and orange Irish flag designed to symbolise the hoped-for union of the green Catholic Southern Irish with the orange Protestant Northern Irish

turlough – from the Irish *turlach*; a small lake that often disappears in dry summers

UDA – Ulster Defence Association; the largest loyalist paramilitary group; it has observed a cease-fire since 1994

UDP – Ulster Democratic Party; a small fringe unionist party with links to the banned loyalist UFF

UFF – Ulster Freedom Fighters, aka the Ulster Defence Association; this group is pro the Good Friday Agreement and has been on cease-fire since 1994

uilleann pipes – Irish bagpipes with a bellow strapped to the arm; uilleann is Irish for 'elbow'

Ulster – one of the four ancient provinces of Ireland; a term sometimes used to describe the six counties of the North, despite the fact that Ulster also includes counties Cavan, Monaghan and Donegal in the Republic

unionism – belief in the political union with Britain

unionist – person who wants to retain Northern Ireland's links with Britain

United Irishmen – organisation founded in 1791 aiming to reduce British power in Ireland; it led a series of unsuccessful risings and invasions

UUP – Ulster Unionist Party; the largest unionist party in Northern Ireland and the majority party in the Assembly, founded by Edward Carson; once the monolithic unionist organisation but now under threat from the *DUP*

UVF – Ulster Volunteer Force; an illegal loyalist Northern Irish paramilitary organisation

Volunteers – offshoot of the IRB that came to be known as the IRA

whisht – hush, keep quiet

yoke – general term for 'thing', as in 'would you give me that yoke?'

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