

GETTING TO KNOW IRISH CULTURE BEFORE THE VISIT: 4 THINGS TO KNOW



Ireland is fast becoming one of the world's hottest holiday destinations. It is a nation steeped in history, culture, and tradition, with fantastic tours and cultural experiences available throughout the country. This isn't all Ireland has to offer by any means, it also has a thriving and vibrant music and arts scene that is sure to appeal to younger visitors.

If you're planning on taking a trip to Ireland, it's worth educating yourself on the country's culture and traditions before you go. This will help you learn what to expect when you get there and can help you make the most of your trip and enjoy your time on the emerald isle. Keep reading to find out more.

Prepare for the Language Barrier

While Irish is the official language of Ireland, you won't encounter much day-to-day, with most people speaking English. However, as with any place, Ireland is home to a range of accents and dialects, some easier to understand than others, and all with phrases and words unique to that particular region. Learning what some of these are can prevent you from getting into any confusing situations or misunderstandings, while using them yourself will certainly endear you to the locals.

One phrase you'll hear among young people in particular is 'craic'. Pronounced 'crack' and often spoken of as 'the craic' this is an all-encompassing word that generally means fun, good times, or enjoyment. It can also be used in a question: 'what's the craic?'. This simply means 'what's up?' or 'what's happening?'.

Some other commonly used words and phrases are 'grand' which is often used in place of 'good' and 'the guards' which means the police, or Gardai as they're called in Ireland. Whatever you do, don't say 'top of the morning', or you'll get called an 'eejit'.

Read up on the language before your trip and you'll be having a craic with the locals in no time.

Not Everything is Green

The legend and stories from the emerald isle have inspired countless forms of art and media, including music, film, and books. When you arrive, you'll realise why soon enough, the country has undeniable and irresistible magic and charm that make it feel exciting but also somehow familiar. You can see Ireland's influence everywhere, from the cinema to the theatre, entertainment such as dancing, song genres and folklore. Talking of folklore, Irish legends such as Leprechauns and lucky shamrocks have even entered into gaming culture; there are many different [online slots inspired by Irish culture](#). However, this has led to the development of some stereotypes that you should avoid mentioning on your trip.

Don't assume everyone wears green and has red hair, stereotypes can be harmful, and nothing will make you seem like an obnoxious tourist faster than assuming the country will reflect how it is represented in popular media.

One of the most prevalent and damaging Irish stereotypes is that they are drunks. While there is a

culture of drinking in Ireland, it isn't much different to what you'd see over in the UK, Europe, or in the US. In fact, around [97% of Irish people](#) consider themselves to be light drinkers or even completely teetotal.

Food is Big

Food might not be the very first thing that comes to mind when you think of a holiday in Ireland. However, the country has a vibrant culinary scene and foodie culture is definitely on the rise.

As Ireland is such an old country, food traditions are still adhered to and treated with respect. Irish stew, shepherd's pie and soda bread are all classic Irish dishes that you should definitely sample in your time there.

While traditional meals are still commonplace and will be offered in many pubs and restaurants, Ireland also has an excellent gourmet food scene with a number of stylish, award-winning restaurants. The prestigious Michelin guide has bestowed stars on an [impressive 18](#) Irish restaurants as of this year, featuring eateries offering cuisines including Mediterranean, Chinese, Indian, and Italian.

The Weather is Unpredictable

While Ireland can be no stranger to warm comfortable summers, its climate has an unpredictability that travelers should be aware of before they make the trip. Weather can be a [major factor](#) in choosing to go somewhere for a holiday, so it's worth educating yourself about the climate of your destination.

Ireland is exposed to the Atlantic Ocean on the west, which has a major influence on its weather. Sunny days can turn into downpours in the blink of an eye. The wind can be substantial, particularly in the northwest of the county.

The best time of year to visit Ireland is generally between March and May or between September and November. This way, you'll miss the busiest tourist months while also avoiding the more extreme weather conditions.

Conclusion

Ireland is an incredible country and has so much to offer visitors. No matter your age, interests, or preferences, you'll be sure to find something to appeal to you on the emerald isle.

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