

IRELAND FACT SHEET



DOCUMENTS: A visa is not required for U.S. citizens holding a valid U.S. passport for stays up to 90 days. To be valid, your passport must not expire for at least six months after your scheduled return date and have at least one blank page. Non-U.S. citizens must check entry requirements with their respective embassy or consulate, and are responsible for obtaining their own visa(s) and any other required travel documents at their own expense.

CURRENCY: The currency for the Republic of Ireland is the Euro and for Northern Ireland it is the Pound Sterling. Proper currency is required when traveling between the Republic and Northern Ireland. The Euro (€) is divided as follows: bills of 5, 10, 20, 50, 100, 200, 500; coins of 1, 2, 5, 10, 20, and 50 cents. You can exchange your U.S. dollars for Euro or Pounds at airports, banks and local ATM machines. While the Dublin area is reasonably well served with ATMs, the same can't be said for smaller towns and villages where there may be only one ATM in the locality. ATMs accept most debit and credit cards. MasterCard and Visa are the most widely accepted credit cards. It is advisable to notify your bank and/or credit card companies of your planned international travel. Traveler's Checks are no longer widely accepted in Ireland. Check the Internet, Wall St. Journal or the business section of your local newspaper for current exchange rates.

Banks in Ireland generally open around 9:30 a.m. and close about 4:30 p.m. Monday through Friday; 5 p.m. on Thursday. Selected banks may open on Saturday mornings.

WEATHER: In spring (February to April), the average high temperatures range from 46-54°F, with April considered particularly pleasant. In summer (May to July), the average high temperatures are between 64-68°F. The warmest months, July and August, get about 18 hours of daylight and it doesn't get dark until after 11 p.m. In autumn, (August to October) average high temperatures are between 57-64°F. September is considered a mild, temperate month. Winter air temperatures inland normally reach 46°F, while the coldest months are January and February. The temperature drops below freezing intermittently, and apart from a few freak cold snaps, snow is scarce.

TIME: GMT (October-March) and Irish Standard Time (IST) GMT+1 hour (March-October)... five hours ahead of Eastern Standard/Daylight Saving Time. Ireland uses both 12-hour and 24-hour notation.

ELECTRICITY: The electrical current in Ireland is 230V, 50 Hz, AC. The plugs and sockets are different from the USA involving a three-pronged formation, the same as those used in the United Kingdom. To use your electrical appliances in Ireland you should bring both a converter, unless they are dual voltage (110V-240V), and a plug adapter. A travel converter kit including adapters or just adapters can be purchased at most electronic or department stores.

WHAT TO WEAR: Generally speaking, the clothes worn in New York can be worn in Ireland in the same season. See temperatures above. For entry into most cathedrals and churches, shoulders and knees must be covered. Remember to bring comfortable walking shoes, dress in layers, a light raincoat and/or umbrella is always a good idea. Wearing shorts, sneakers or a baseball hat is a dead giveaway that you're an American.

U.S. EMBASSY: 42 Elgin Road, Ballsbridge, Dublin 4, Ireland; Telephone: +(353) (1) 668-8777; Emergency After-Hours Telephone: +(353) (1) 630-6200; Fax: +(353)(1) 668-8056; E-mail: ACSDublin@state.gov

TAXIS: Taxis cannot be hailed in Dublin. Therefore, call for a taxi or go to a taxi station or rank. Some taxis are not metered, so it is advisable to ask your driver how much your trip will cost in advance.

FOOD & DRINK: Dining in Ireland can be an Epicurean delight. Often the food is fresh in all respects. The seafood can especially wonderful. Naturally raised lamb is used in many recipes from Irish Stew to Roast Leg of Lamb. Beef is the traditional Sunday roast, and is still prepared in many homes to this day. Potatoes are still an important part of the Irish diet. Potato in Irish is 'pratai', translated as praties.

The hospitality of the Irish is unsurpassed. This custom goes back to ancient times when the Brehon Laws declared you must share hospitality with the bard or stranger who knocks on your door. If you did not, you were shamed and could be punished. The custom is still prevalent in Irish society today. Often times when visiting with family or soon to be friends, you are treated to 'a taste of Ireland' with a slice of homemade Brown Bread or Soda Bread. There is nothing quite like enjoying a slice of hot baked bread with creamy butter and a dollop of marmalade, washed down with a delicious cup of piping hot tea.

Pubs usually open about 11 a.m. and give last call about 11-11:30 p.m. Monday through Saturday. On Sunday the pubs open around 12 p.m. and may close at 2 p.m. and reopen about 4 p.m.

Restaurants keep various hours. If you want to have dinner it would be a good idea to check their hours in advance. A good rule of thumb is to arrive no later than 8 p.m.

TIPPING: In Ireland a customary service charge of 10-15% may be added to your check. If a service charge is included tipping is not necessary, unless you received exemplary service. If a service charge was not included, a tip of 10-15% would be appropriate depending, on the quality of the establishment and the service. If you are not sure if a service charge was included in your check, don't be afraid to ask. It is not necessary to tip bartenders, but if you receive waiter or waitress services it would be appropriate to tip.

Tip taxi drivers 10% of the fare.

SHOPPING: Shops are generally open Monday through Saturday 9 a.m. to 5:30 p.m. Most shops are open late on Thursday and Friday until about 9 p.m. Some shops and stores close for one hour at lunchtime. Many shops are closed on Sunday.

Some excellent purchase options are: Irish woolens, Waterford Crystal, pottery, linen tea towels, Irish sea salt and marble whiskey stones (don't forget the bottle of Irish Whiskey). Be sure to ask your guide or driver what the local specialties are.

HEALTH: Ireland has great healthcare, but there are a few things to keep in mind before you go. If you're bringing medicines with you into Ireland, carry them in their original, clearly labeled container, along with your prescription from your doctor. Ireland has no medical program covering U.S. citizens, and Medicare and most U.S. health insurers do not provide coverage in foreign countries. Patients are expected to pay all costs up-front at the time of treatment and apply for reimbursement later. We strongly recommend supplemental insurance to cover medical and medical evacuation expenses, such as the optional group protection plan.

While no specific vaccinations are required for travel to Ireland, you should be up-to-date on all vaccinations as recommended by the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, and it is always a good idea to consult your physician regarding your personal health needs whenever you leave the country.

CUSTOMS:

Ireland - See the Official Ireland Tourism website at: www.ireland.com/en-us/

U.S. - See the Know Before You Go Brochure at:

http://www.cbp.gov/linkhandler/cgov/travel/id_visa/kbyg/kbyg_regulations.ctt/kbyg_regulations.pdf

In general, U.S. residents who have been out of the country for at least 48 hours may bring home, for personal use, \$800 worth of foreign goods per person, tax and duty-free. Purchases may include 1 liter of alcohol (must be 21 years of age or older), 200 cigarettes (1 carton), and 100 cigars, tax and duty free. Family members may combine their tax and duty free allowances.