Basic Facts Republic of Ireland

Source-CIA World Factbook

https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/geos/ei.htmTop of Form

Bottom of Form

Page last updated on May 13, 2014

[Background](https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/docs/notesanddefs.html?fieldkey=2028&alphaletter=B&term=Background):



Celtic tribes arrived on the island between 600 and 150 B.C. Invasions by Norsemen that began in the late 8th century were finally ended when King Brian BORU defeated the Danes in 1014. Norman invasions began in the 12th century and set off more than seven centuries of Anglo-Irish struggle marked by fierce rebellions and harsh repressions. The Irish famine of the mid-19th century saw the population of the island drop by one third through starvation and emigration. For more than a century after that the population of the island continued to fall only to begin growing again in the 1960s. Over the last 50 years, Ireland's high birthrate has made it demographically one of the youngest populations in the EU. The modern Irish state traces its origins to the failed 1916 Easter Monday Uprising which touched off several years of guerrilla warfare resulting in independence from the UK in 1921 for 26 southern counties; six northern counties remained part of the UK. Unresolved issues in Northern Ireland erupted into years of violence known as the "Troubles" that began in the 1960s. The Government of Ireland was part of a process along with the UK and US Governments that helped broker what is known as The Good Friday Agreement in Northern Ireland in 1998. This initiated a new phase of cooperation between Irish and British governments. Ireland was neutral in World War II and continues its policy of military neutrality. Ireland joined the European Community in 1973 and the Eurozone currency union in 1999. The economic boom years of the Celtic Tiger (1995-2007) saw rapid economic growth, which came to an abrupt end in 2008 with the meltdown of the Irish banking system. Today the economy is recovering, fueled by large and growing foreign direct investment, especially from US multi-nationals.

**Geography ::Ireland**

[Location](https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/docs/notesanddefs.html?fieldkey=2144&alphaletter=L&term=Location):

Western Europe, occupying five-sixths of the island of Ireland in the North Atlantic Ocean, west of Great Britain

[Geographic coordinates:](https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/docs/notesanddefs.html?fieldkey=2011&alphaletter=G&term=Geographic%20coordinates)

53 00 N, 8 00 W

[Area:](https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/docs/notesanddefs.html?fieldkey=2147&alphaletter=A&term=Area)

total: 70,273 sq km

country comparison to the world: [120](https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/rankorder/2147rank.html?countryname=Ireland&countrycode=ei&regionCode=eur&rank=120#ei)

land: 68,883 sq km

water: 1,390 sq km

[Area - comparative:](https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/docs/notesanddefs.html?fieldkey=2023&alphaletter=A&term=Area%20-%20comparative)

slightly larger than West Virginia

[Land boundaries:](https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/docs/notesanddefs.html?fieldkey=2096&alphaletter=L&term=Land%20boundaries)

total: 360 km

border countries: UK 360 km

[Coastline:](https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/docs/notesanddefs.html?fieldkey=2060&alphaletter=C&term=Coastline)

1,448 km

[Climate:](https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/docs/notesanddefs.html?fieldkey=2059&alphaletter=C&term=Climate)

temperate maritime; modified by North Atlantic Current; mild winters, cool summers; consistently humid; overcast about half the time

[Terrain:](https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/docs/notesanddefs.html?fieldkey=2125&alphaletter=T&term=Terrain)

mostly level to rolling interior plain surrounded by rugged hills and low mountains; sea cliffs on west coast

[Elevation extremes:](https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/docs/notesanddefs.html?fieldkey=2020&alphaletter=E&term=Elevation%20extremes)

lowest point: Atlantic Ocean 0 m

highest point: Carrauntoohil 1,041 m

[Natural resources:](https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/docs/notesanddefs.html?fieldkey=2111&alphaletter=N&term=Natural%20resources)

natural gas, peat, copper, lead, zinc, silver, barite, gypsum, limestone, dolomite

[Land use:](https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/docs/notesanddefs.html?fieldkey=2097&alphaletter=L&term=Land%20use)

arable land: 15.11%

permanent crops: 0.01%

other: 84.87% (2011)

[Irrigated land:](https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/docs/notesanddefs.html?fieldkey=2146&alphaletter=I&term=Irrigated%20land)

11 sq km (2003)

strategic location on major air and sea routes between North America and northern Europe; over 40% of the population resides within 100 km of Dublin

**People and Society ::Ireland**

[Nationality](https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/docs/notesanddefs.html?fieldkey=2110&alphaletter=N&term=Nationality):

noun: Irishman(men), Irishwoman(women), Irish (collective plural)

adjective: Irish

[Ethnic groups:](https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/docs/notesanddefs.html?fieldkey=2075&alphaletter=E&term=Ethnic%20groups)

Irish 84.5%, other white 9.8%, Asian 1.9%, black 1.4%, mixed and other 0.9%, unspecified 1.6% (2011 est.)

[Languages:](https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/docs/notesanddefs.html?fieldkey=2098&alphaletter=L&term=Languages)

English (official, the language generally used), Irish (Gaelic or Gaeilge) (official, spoken mainly in areas along the western coast)

[Religions:](https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/docs/notesanddefs.html?fieldkey=2122&alphaletter=R&term=Religions)

Roman Catholic 84.7%, Church of Ireland 2.7%, other Christian 2.7%, Muslim 1.1%, other 1.7%, unspecified 1.5%, none 5.7% (2011 est.)

[Population:](https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/docs/notesanddefs.html?fieldkey=2119&alphaletter=P&term=Population)

4,832,765 (July 2014 est.)

country comparison to the world: [123](https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/rankorder/2119rank.html?countryname=Ireland&countrycode=ei&regionCode=eur&rank=123#ei)

[Age structure:](https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/docs/notesanddefs.html?fieldkey=2010&alphaletter=A&term=Age%20structure)

0-14 years: 21.4% (male 529,140/female 506,857)

15-24 years: 11.9% (male 292,962/female 283,127)

25-54 years: 44.1% (male 1,070,875/female 1,061,396)

55-64 years: 12.4% (male 245,913/female 244,345)

65 years and over: 12.1% (male 275,114/female 323,036) (2014 est.)

[Median age:](https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/docs/notesanddefs.html?fieldkey=2177&alphaletter=M&term=Median%20age)

total: 35.7 years

male: 35.4 years

female: 36.1 years (2014 est.)

[Major urban areas - population:](https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/docs/notesanddefs.html?fieldkey=2219&alphaletter=M&term=Major%20urban%20areas%20-%20population)

DUBLIN (capital) 1.084 million (2009)

[Literacy:](https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/docs/notesanddefs.html?fieldkey=2103&alphaletter=L&term=Literacy)

definition: age 15 and over can read and write

total population: 99%

male: 99%

female: 99% (2003 est.)

**Government ::Ireland**

[Country name](https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/docs/notesanddefs.html?fieldkey=2142&alphaletter=C&term=Country%20name):

conventional long form: none

conventional short form: Ireland

local long form: none

local short form: Eire

[Government type:](https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/docs/notesanddefs.html?fieldkey=2128&alphaletter=G&term=Government%20type)

republic, parliamentary democracy

[Capital:](https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/docs/notesanddefs.html?fieldkey=2057&alphaletter=C&term=Capital)

name: Dublin

geographic coordinates: 53 19 N, 6 14 W

time difference: UTC 0 (5 hours ahead of Washington, DC during Standard Time)

daylight saving time: +1hr, begins last Sunday in March; ends last Sunday in October

[Administrative divisions:](https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/docs/notesanddefs.html?fieldkey=2051&alphaletter=A&term=Administrative%20divisions)

29 counties and 5 cities\*; Carlow, Cavan, Clare, Cork, Cork\*, Donegal, Dublin\*, Dun Laoghaire-Rathdown, Fingal, Galway, Galway\*, Kerry, Kildare, Kilkenny, Laois, Leitrim, Limerick, Limerick\*, Longford, Louth, Mayo, Meath, Monaghan, North Tipperary, Offaly, Roscommon, Sligo, South Dublin, South Tipperary, Waterford, Waterford\*, Westmeath, Wexford, Wicklow

[Independence:](https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/docs/notesanddefs.html?fieldkey=2088&alphaletter=I&term=Independence)

6 December 1921 (from the UK by treaty)

[National holiday:](https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/docs/notesanddefs.html?fieldkey=2109&alphaletter=N&term=National%20holiday)

Saint Patrick's Day, 17 March

[Constitution:](https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/docs/notesanddefs.html?fieldkey=2063&alphaletter=C&term=Constitution)

previous 1922; latest drafted 14 June 1937, adopted by plebiscite 1 July 1937, effective 29 December 1937; amended many times, last in 2013 (2013)

[Legal system:](https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/docs/notesanddefs.html?fieldkey=2100&alphaletter=L&term=Legal%20system)

common law system based on the English model but substantially modified by customary law; judicial review of legislative acts in Supreme Court

[Suffrage:](https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/docs/notesanddefs.html?fieldkey=2123&alphaletter=S&term=Suffrage)

18 years of age; universal

[Executive branch:](https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/docs/notesanddefs.html?fieldkey=2077&alphaletter=E&term=Executive%20branch)

chief of state: President Michael D. HIGGINS (since 29 October 2011)

head of government: Taoiseach (Prime Minister) Enda KENNY (since 9 March 2011)

cabinet: Cabinet appointed by the president with previous nomination by the prime minister and approval of the lower house of Parliament

(For more information visit the [World Leaders website](https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/world-leaders-1/EI.html) )

elections: president elected by popular vote for a seven-year term (eligible for a second term); election last held on 29 October 2011 (next to be held in October 2018); taoiseach (prime minister) nominated by the House of Representatives (Dail Eireann) and appointed by the president

election results: Michael D. HIGGINS elected president; percent of vote - Michael D. HIGGINS 39.6%, Sean GALLAGHER 28.5%, Martin MCGUINNESS 13.7%, Gay MITCHELL 6.4%, David NORRIS 6.2%, other 5.6%

[Legislative branch:](https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/docs/notesanddefs.html?fieldkey=2101&alphaletter=L&term=Legislative%20branch)

bicameral Parliament or Oireachtas consists of the Senate or Seanad Eireann (60 seats; 49 members elected by the universities and from candidates put forward by five vocational panels, 11 are nominated by the prime minister; members serve five-year terms) and the House of Representatives or Dail Eireann (166 seats; members elected by popular vote on the basis of proportional representation to serve five-year terms)

elections: Senate - last held in 27 April 2011 (next to be held 2016); House of Representatives - last held on 25 February 2011 (next to be held probably in 2016)

election results: Senate - percent of vote by party - NA; seats by party - Fine Gael 19, Fianna Fail 14, Labor Party 12, Sinn Fein 3, independents 12; House of Representatives - percent of vote by party - Fine Gael 36.1%, Labor Party 19.5%, Fianna Fail 17.5%, Sinn Fein 9.9%, United Left Alliance 2.6%, independents and others 14.4%; seats by party - Fine Gael 76, Labor Party 37, Fianna Fail 20, Sinn Fein 14, United Left Alliance 5, independents 14

[Judicial branch:](https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/docs/notesanddefs.html?fieldkey=2094&alphaletter=J&term=Judicial%20branch)

highest court(s): Supreme Court or Court of Final Appeal (consists of the chief justice and 7 judges)

judge selection and term of office: judges nominated by the prime minister and Cabinet and appointed by the president; judges serve till age 70

subordinate courts: High Court, Court of Criminal Appeal; circuit and district courts

[Political parties and leaders:](https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/docs/notesanddefs.html?fieldkey=2118&alphaletter=P&term=Political%20parties%20and%20leaders)

Fianna Fail [Micheal MARTIN]

Fine Gael [Enda KENNY]

Green Party [Eamon RYAN]

Labor Party [Eamon GILMORE]

New Vision

Sinn Fein [Gerry ADAMS]

Socialist Party [Collective Leadership]

The Workers' Party [Michael FINNEGAN]

United Left Alliance

[Diplomatic representation in the US:](https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/docs/notesanddefs.html?fieldkey=2149&alphaletter=D&term=Diplomatic%20representation%20in%20the%20US)

chief of mission: Ambassador Anne Colette ANDERSON (since 28 August 2013)

chancery: 2234 Massachusetts Avenue NW, Washington, DC 20008

telephone: [1] (202) 462-3939

FAX: [1] (202) 232-5993

consulate(s) general: Atlanta, Boston, Chicago, New York, San Francisco; note - Ireland will open a consulate general in Austin by the end of 2014

[Diplomatic representation from the US:](https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/docs/notesanddefs.html?fieldkey=2007&alphaletter=D&term=Diplomatic%20representation%20from%20the%20US)

chief of mission: Ambassador (vacant); Charge d'Affaires Stuart DWYER (since 5 September 2013)

embassy: 42 Elgin Road, Ballsbridge, Dublin 4

mailing address: use embassy street address

telephone: [353] (1) 668-8777

FAX: [353] (1) 668-9946

[Flag description:](https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/docs/notesanddefs.html?fieldkey=2081&alphaletter=F&term=Flag%20description)



three equal vertical bands of green (hoist side), white, and orange; officially the flag colors have no meaning, but a common interpretation is that the green represents the Irish nationalist (Gaelic) tradition of Ireland; orange represents the Orange tradition (minority supporters of William of Orange); white symbolizes peace (or a lasting truce) between the green and the orange

*note:* similar to the flag of Cote d'Ivoire, which is shorter and has the colors reversed - orange (hoist side), white, and green; also similar to the flag of Italy, which is shorter and has colors of green (hoist side), white, and red

[National symbol(s):](https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/docs/notesanddefs.html?fieldkey=2230&alphaletter=N&term=National%20symbol%28s%29)

harp, shamrock (trefoil)

[National anthem:](https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/docs/notesanddefs.html?fieldkey=2218&alphaletter=N&term=National%20anthem)

name: "Amhran na bhFiann" (The Soldier's Song)

lyrics/music: Peadar KEARNEY [English], Liam O RINN [Irish]/Patrick HEENEY and Peadar KEARNEY

*note:* adopted 1926; instead of "Amhran na bhFiann," the song "Ireland's Call" is often used in athletic events where citizens of the Republic of Ireland and Northern Ireland compete as a unified team

[Agriculture - products:](https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/docs/notesanddefs.html?fieldkey=2052&alphaletter=A&term=Agriculture%20-%20products)

barley, potatoes, wheat; beef, dairy products

[Industries:](https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/docs/notesanddefs.html?fieldkey=2090&alphaletter=I&term=Industries)

pharmaceuticals, chemicals, computer hardware and software, food products, beverages and brewing; medical devices

[Labor force - by occupation:](https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/docs/notesanddefs.html?fieldkey=2048&alphaletter=L&term=Labor%20force%20-%20by%20occupation)

agriculture: 5%

industry: 19%

services: 76% (2011 est.)

[Exchange rates:](https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/docs/notesanddefs.html?fieldkey=2076&alphaletter=E&term=Exchange%20rates)

euros (EUR) per US dollar -

0.7634 (2013 est.)

0.7752 (2012 est.)

0.755 (2010 est.)

0.7198 (2009 est.)

0.6827 (2008 est.)