

With its lush green vistas, the Blarney Stone and a pint (or two), those charms will magically turn your vacation into fine memories. Take this Inside Scoop with you.

travel: delighting in the spirit of adventure • a vacation from home to explore places that are not your home • knowing life is different, knowing this is a joy of travel • enjoying the journey, not just the destination • a privilege best used with patience, humour and curiosity • fun • coming home with great tales •

Póg dom mé Gaeilge...

...is a way to say “kiss me I’m Irish.” In the Celtic language family, Irish is related to Scots Gaelic, Welsh and Breton. Since Ireland’s independence, Irish is the first official language, English second. Early writers and poets preserved traditional stories weaving myth and history. With Oscar Wilde, James Joyce, G.B. Shaw and Samuel Beckett setting the stage for modern writers (Maeve Binchy), Ireland remains on the world stage of literature and culture.

Your Counsellor

Our knowledge and experience help turn dreams into first-rate vacations. Ask your counsellor about any details, including:

- advance seats and upgrades
- cancellation/interruption and medical insurance
- airport and ferry transfers
- information on area sites and specialties.

Maritime Travel
We Know Travel Best.™

Maritime Travel

Inside Scoop: IRELAND

Know before you go: travel isn’t just your destination, it’s also the journey

Canadians are in the top ten visitors by country to Ireland—no surprise—they tend to stay longer than the average visitor and travel more throughout. No surprise again, approximately 4.5 million Canadians claim some Irish ancestry (or maybe they want to be...). Some tips to help you:

- Have a valid passport that will not expire six months before the end of your trip. www.cic.gc.ca/english/passport/index.asp
- You must show your passport if you are entering Ireland from the United Kingdom.
- Currency is the Euro. Canadian credit cards are generally accepted (log the dates you’ll be away with your company). Use debit cards for cash advances at banks/ATMs but be aware of withdrawal fees.
- The climate is temperate: much like Canada, colder months are January and February while July and August are the warmest.
- Smoking bans include restaurants and pubs.
- For cell phone use, check with your provider (beware of roaming charges). Internet access is widely available.
- The electrical supply is 230v 50hz; you will need a power converter and plug adapter.
- We strongly recommend Maritime Travel insurance, including cancellation/interruption and medical insurance. It’s an investment in your peace of mind.

Above all, travel with a positive attitude—having patience and a spirit of adventure can carry you through any experience!

The **Canadian Air Transport Security Authority** controls security risks; see “Can I bring it on the plane?” www.catsa.gc.ca/home (credit card knives are illegal—besides being seized, police will be called). New security measures mean preparation and allowing more time to go through security (have your boarding pass out and bag of liquids ready for the tray).

Pack Strategically

The world is overrun with black bags so put coloured tape or ribbon on your luggage to spot it quickly. Put your name outside and inside and remove old tags. In your carry-on, pack valuables such as jewellery; over-the-counter and prescription drugs in original containers with a list, dosage and your doctor’s phone number and documents on medical conditions.

Pack most liquids/lotions/gels in checked bags (inside plastic bags)—due to carry-on restrictions, the maximum size container is 100ml (3.4oz). All must fit in 1 clear/resealable plastic bag of no more than 1 litre (often available at the start of airport security), then place the bag in the tray. You may take baby formula, food or milk for a child younger than 2 years old (0-24 months).

In carry-on pack pens/notebook, hand wipes, munchies (no fruit, meat or veg). Items permitted in carry-on include: cell phones, laptops, disposable razors, canes, umbrellas and nail clippers. Items you can’t take on include knives (an obvious no-no), corkscrews and sports gear. Check your airline for their restrictions.

Getting Around

If you rent a car, you drive on the left and cannot turn at red lights. If you need an automatic, reserve well in advance as most rentals are standard. Before you go, get an International Driving Permit. You can’t use a cell phone (or text) while driving unless it’s hands-free. The penalties for drinking alcohol and driving are strict. Some motorways have tolls and on rural narrow roads, reduce your speed.

Speaking the Language

While everyone you meet will likely speak English, Irish (also known as Irish Gaelic) is widely spoken so learn a few words and phrases—go online to listen to pronunciations.

Speaking of Getting Around...

...out of this world, “When Commander Hadfield tweeted a shot of Ireland from space with the message Tá Éire fíorálainn (Ireland is very beautiful) he was on to something.” www.ireland.com/en-gb/articles/chris-hadfield.

Your Airline

Sign up online for your airline(s) email or text flight notifications as your flight could be delayed (the plane might be flying in). CATSA notes “*Travellers should arrive at the airport earlier than usual, exercise patience and contact their airline for further information on their flight(s).*” Airline staff are on duty some 3hrs prior: due to staffing and security, check-in closes 1hr before departure. If late, you’re not entitled to board (or a refund). Unless booked ahead, seats are first-come first-served. Many airlines have reciprocal “code-shares;” your ticket for one airline, you travel on another airline’s plane.

Check-in and carry-on baggage allowances, see your airline’s website.



Get Packing Checklist and General Planning & Packing Tips

at www.maritimetravel.ca/inside-scoops

- Your sense of adventure & humour!

Special Spots

Newgrange: this ancient tomb also acts as a calendar—that keeps perfect time, www.newgrange.com

The Long Room Library, Trinity College www.tcd.ie/library/old-library/long-room

Victor’s Way Indian Sculpture Park, <http://victorsway.eu>

Brigit’s Celtic Garden, a fanciful sanctuary, www.brigitsgarden.ie

The Blarney Stone: Ages ago, you had to be held by your ankles and lowered to kiss it. Although you lean backward now, it’s safer. While it’s the main tourist draw at the 600yr-old **Blarney Castle** in **Munster**, see the curious variety of gardens (bog, poison, ferns, ice), www.blarneycastle.ie.

Exploring the wilderness might not be the first thing you think of, but if you’re a cycling fan, talk to your counsellor about the 7-day Donegal From Cliffs to Coast tour that goes to the northernmost point. In 2016, Donegal was voted the #1 Coolest Place on earth by National Geographic Traveller. www.wildernessireland.com

Tip: asking to see leprechauns is like asking a Canadian to see their toque. Don’t.

Websites and emails in blue are hyperlinked; just click!

Canadians: Emergency? The Embassy of Canada is at 7-8 Wilton Terrace, Dublin 2, tel: 353 (1) 234-4000. Or call Global Affairs (collect if needed) 613-996-8885 consul.dublin@international.gc.ca, www.ireland.gc.ca.

While You’re There...

Ireland’s four provinces and 32 counties each have distinctive attributes and local traditions. While some counties might be more widely known—perhaps **Galway** and **Antrim**—others such as **Sligo**, in the western province of **Connacht**, is well-known to surfers. Unless you can stay a few weeks, you’ll need to put areas and activities in priority.

Crave cities? Go to **Limerick** and **Cork** (in **Munster** province) and **Belfast** (**Ulster**, to the north), taking a side trip to the mountains of **Mourne** (to see a few of its 28 peaks) that truly do, as in the song, sweep down to the sea. **Dublin** and **Kildare** are in the eastern province of **Leinster**. The **Burren** (from *boireann*, meaning rocky place) in **Clare** is a limestone plateau formed some 340 million years ago at the bottom of a sea, home now to walking trails with flora, fauna and archaeology. www.burrennationalpark.ie

Fancy a trip to **Winterfell, Vaes Dothrak** or **Dragonstone**? Then you must be a Game of Thrones fan. Ask your counsellor about a special 3-day tour: www.ireland.com/en-ca/itineraries/northern-ireland/got-itinerary. A Vikings fan (the show)? See **Wicklow**—and yes, you can be an extra, check its Facebook page. Intrigued by Titanic history? Visit the **Titanic Belfast** galleries, near **Thompson Dry Dock**.

Fine (and Famous) Souvenirs & Gifts

The Claddagh Ring shows two hands holding a heart, a traditional ring given as a token of friendship, love, or marriage and perfect for all ages. Another fine buy is an **Aran sweater** which will last a lifetime. Other gifts are **Irish Soda Bread** mixes, whistles and harps. **Irish linen** is known around the world for its quality. While the flax fibre from which it’s made is imported, weaving is done for bedding and clothes, damask at the high end. Look for the Irish Linen Guild logo, confirming your purchase is Irish (because cheaper products made in other countries are also sold). Especially decadent (and comfy) are white nightgowns and bed linens. www.irishlinen.co.uk

Whiskey or Whisky? It’s both—spirits are spelled as to their country of origin so if made in Scotland it’s “whisky.” Made in Ireland? “Whiskey” (an easy way to remember is its “e” as in “Ireland”).

Tip: for purchases, it’s fine to buy items in more touristy stores, but check prices and offerings in small local stores and/or department stores. Planning on bringing back some of that fine Irish whiskey? Know your limits and exemptions, www.cbsa-asfc.gc.ca/travel-voyage/bgb-rmf-eng.html such as on duty free alcohol and tobacco. With connections, unless it’s in checked luggage (that special whiskey?), buy duty free alcohol before your last flight into Canada.

Our 24/7 Emergency Service

We constantly survey airlines, local tour companies and hotels to ensure they meet our customer service standards, so don’t let a problem ruin your holiday. Nearly all issues can be handled quickly on site—first seek help from the venue’s local staff. Otherwise, call our Emergency Travel Service at 1-888-551-1181. Deposits are non-refundable and non-transferrable. Schedule changes can occur and airlines and tour operators have the right to change flight and/or tour times, alter, combine services or substitute accommodations. Your counsellor will work with you to ensure you receive information as soon as possible and ensure satisfaction. For details, see your brochure and ticket terms and conditions.

Go For Stroll...or Out On the Town

With more than 3,000kms of coastline and many waterways, activities involving water abound—sailing, fishing, canoeing, wind-surfing and swimming, depending on the area(s) you’re visiting. Terrific tours and at-your-leisure opportunities abound for walking, hiking and horseriding. If sports involving grass is your thing, there’s Gaelic football, soccer, rugby, golf and hurling (more than 3,000 years old, a native game using a wooden stick to hit a small ball); camogie is a version played by females.

• **Football Association of Ireland** www.fai.ie, **Irish Rugby Football Union** www.irfu.ie, **Gaelic Athletic Association** www.gaa.ie

Music is central to the culture; you’ll hear it in pubs, at festivals and town squares, a bit of dancing springing up. Besides music with historical roots and world renown rock musicians, there’s three orchestras and a **National Opera Company**. **National Concert Hall** www.nch.ie

• **Irish Museum of Modern Art** www.imma.ie

• **National Gallery of Ireland** www.nationalgallery.ie, **National Museum of Ireland** www.museum.ie

• **National Library of Ireland** www.nli.ie

Tourism Ireland www.ireland.com/en-ca
Consider downloading apps (android and/or iPhone) such as Discover Ireland, Belfast Music, Literary Belfast, Visit Dublin.

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www.maritimetravel.ca