



## TIPS FOR TRAVELLERS

### Time Zone:

Ireland's time zone operates in the Greenwich Mean Time. Remember to change watches and phones etc. upon arrival.

### Language:

Ireland has two official languages; Irish and English, with dual-signage in place nationwide. English is spoken throughout and is the everyday working language, while Irish is generally confined to certain regions in the south-west, west, and north-west coastal areas, areas more commonly known as the Gaeltacht.

### Currency:

Ireland is part of the European Monetary System. The basic unit of currency in Republic of Ireland is the Euro (€), while in Northern Ireland the currency is British Pounds or Sterling Pounds (£)

Euro notes come in denominations of €500, €200, €100, €50, €20, €10 and €5. Coins are available in €2, €1 and 50,20,10,5,2 and 1 cent.

The Pound Sterling bills are £50, £20, £10, £5. Coins are £2, £1, 50p, 20p, 10p, 5p, 2p, and 1p. There are many foreign exchange bureaus available throughout the country in banks, tourist information offices, and airports.

Banks are open 10.00 to 16.00hrs, Monday to Friday. In small towns they may close for lunch from 12.30 to 13.30hrs.

ATM's are widely available in Ireland but your bank will probably charge a fee for using it and the foreign bank may also charge a fee. However, you usually get a better rate of exchange at an ATM than at a bureau de change.

Changing money at hotels is more expensive and should be avoided where possible.

Visa & MasterCard are widely accepted throughout Ireland. American Express is also welcome in most stores. However other cards may not be so widely accepted.

Shops, pubs & restaurants do not exchange dollars so you do need to pay by credit card or in the local currency.

### Climate:

Ireland's climate is known as a temperate climate with mild winters where temperatures in the coldest months are in January and February but rarely fall below freezing. The sunniest months are May and June with daylight often up to up to 16 hours per day. The warmest months are July and August.

Weather can alter dramatically from day to day and even throughout one day. It can change from fair to showery and back again in a matter of minutes. Always pack for rain, bring a raincoat and plenty of layers so you can adjust to the weather as it arrives!



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### Customs & Duties:

You are allowed to bring goods of a certain value back home without having to pay duty or import tax. However Tobacco and liquor are limited. Check with your own custom officials before travelling. Save all receipts for goods purchased in case you may be asked to produce them at customs

Goods that cannot be taken into Ireland include firearms, ammunition, explosives, indecent or obscene books and pictures, oral smokeless tobacco products, meat and poultry products, plants and plant products.

### Taxes:

Non-EU citizens visiting the Republic of Ireland can apply for a refund of the value-added tax (VAT). VAT is not refundable on accommodation, car rental, meals or personal services. Many shops and department stores operate a system called "Cashback" enabling non-EU residents to collect rebates in the currency of their choice at Dublin or Shannon Airport on departure. Forms for the refunds must be picked up at the time of purchase, and the form must be stamped by customs upon departure from the airport. Ask at the store you are in at the time of payment.

If a single purchase exceeds €2,000, you must have Customs verification prior to departure.

### Business Hours:

Most shops are open from 09.00 – 17.30hrs, Monday-Saturday.

There is 'late night' shopping on Thursdays in Dublin and Belfast where stores generally close at 9.00pm.

Many shops open in Ireland on Sundays from around 12.00pm until 5.30pm – 6.00pm

Plastic bags carry a 22 cent government levy in Ireland and cannot be given free of charge to customers, even visitors. Many stores however do use paper bags which are free of charge.

Museums and tourist sites are generally open daily from 10.00 to 17.00hrs and Sunday 14.00 to 17.00hrs. Museums do not open on Bank Holiday Mondays.

Post offices are open weekdays 09.00 to 17.00hrs and Saturdays 09.00 to 13.00hrs; some of the smaller country offices close for lunch.

Pharmacies usually open Monday – Saturday during normal business hours with Thursday late night openings where they are placed in shopping centers. Pharmacies operate a rota for emergency services throughout the country.

### Pubs & Restaurants:

Pubs are open Monday to Thursday 10.30 to 23.30hrs.

Friday and Saturday 10.30 to 00.30.

On Sunday, pubs are open 12.30 to 23.00hrs.

All pubs close on Christmas Day and Good Friday, but hotel bars are open for guests.

Nightclubs open in the late evening and remain open until the early hours.

Restaurants open seven days a week. Prices vary so there is always somewhere to suit your budget. Pub food in Ireland is of a very high standard and is always an option for casual dining during the day or in the evening.



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## TRAVEL SERVICES

There are not many public restrooms in Ireland although they are easy to find in places such as airports, train stations and shopping centers. Your best change is to use the facilities at a pub or restaurant. Restrooms are often labelled in Irish – fir (men) / mná (women).

### **Tipping:**

Tipping in restaurants and pubs is now the norm in Ireland. You tip if you are served. Tipping is generally between 10 – 15 %. If you are paying by card you will need to ask to add the tip on. Many establishments add a service charge to the end of the bill – in these cases it is not necessary to tip.

Taxi driver and cab drivers who make the trip through an app or for a pre-arranged sum don't expect tips but you might round off the amount charged if you are giving cash and if you wish. Tip hotel porters €1.00 minimum per suitcase each way.

Tour drivers & Guides – The general tip is €7.00 - €10.00 per person per touring day

### **PACKING:**

In Ireland you can experience four seasons in one day. It can extremely warm, even quite hot, but evenings can be damp and chilly. Layers are the best way to go. Pack long and short sleeved tops, a sweatshirt, windbreaker and perhaps a waterproof jacket or coat with hood. Bring comfortable shoes for walking and for visiting ancient sites as they were not designed for high heels.

Dressing in Ireland is pretty informal these days however, in deluxe hotels and restaurants you may be expected to dress formally for dinner – gentlemen wearing a shirt and in some of the 5 star castle accommodation gents are expected to wear a jacket and tie to dinner.

Dress is informal in pubs and local restaurants but if you intend to visit a nightclub you may not gain entry if you are too casually dressed and are wearing trainers.

Perhaps bring a small folding shopping bag as there is a government levy of 22 cent on plastic bags so you will have to buy your bag in shops unless they are using paper bags.

### **Electricity:**

The electrical current in Ireland is 220 volts, 50 cycles alternating current (AC). Wall sockets take plugs with 3 flat-pins, as in the United Kingdom.

To use American appliances both a converter and adapter are required except for dual voltage appliances, which need only an adapter. Consider buying a universal adapter.

Most laptops and cell phones are dual voltage and therefore only require a plug adapter.

Check the labels for all electrical equipment and particularly medical equipment of any kind before travelling.

Never use the 110 volt outlets in bathrooms marked 'shaver' for other appliances.

Most hotels provide hair dryers and irons in rooms or by calling reception.

### **Communications:**

The Ireland access code is +353

The US access code is +001

Public phones take either coins or cards. Phone cards can be bought at newsagents. Hotel phone charges can be expensive so ask the rates at reception before you make international calls.



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## **TRAVEL SERVICES**

Going online is routine now in Ireland but is dependent upon access and connectivity issues in some rural parts of the country. There are many internet cafes and free Wi-Fi access in many restaurants and cafes. Hotels also provide internet access both in rooms and in public areas. Some hotels may charge for an in-room service so it is advisable to check upon arrival at the property.

### **National Emergency Numbers:**

In case of emergency dial 112 or 999 and ask the operator for the service required. The police force in the republic of Ireland is called the Garda Siochana (Guardian of the Peace) but referred to as the Gardai. In Northern Ireland the force is called the Police Service of Northern Ireland known as the PSNI.

## **Contact Details**

**Specialized Travel Services**

**80 Carysfort Avenue**

**Blackrock**

**Co. Dublin**

**Ireland**

**Tel: +353-1-2782677**

**e-mail: [info@special-ireland.com](mailto:info@special-ireland.com)**

**or**

**Outside of office hours – (Monday – Friday 9.00am – 5.30pm)**

**& in an emergency**

**Please call:**

**Margaret Cronin at +353-87-2573610**