
Ireland in Depth

LAND TOUR

Plus optional extensions in

Northern Ireland; Dublin

EID/EIP 2014

Grand Circle Travel

Ireland in Depth

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1. PASSPORT, VISAS AND TRAVEL DOCUMENTS

Passport Required

U.S. citizens need a passport for this itinerary. Please take a moment to check if your passport meets all of these requirements. If not, you could be refused entry into a country. And if that happens, you might be required by that country to return to the U.S. immediately, **which would be at your own expense**.

Your passport should meet these requirements for this itinerary:

- It should be valid for at least 6 months after your scheduled return to the U.S.
- It should have the recommended number of blank pages (see below for details).
- The blank pages must be labeled “Visas” at the top. Pages labeled “Amendments and Endorsements” are not acceptable.

Recommended number of blank pages:

This recommendation is based on a “worst case” scenario. When you are on this adventure, you might use fewer pages, depending on the whims of the Immigration official on duty that day. Since the consequence of having too few pages can be severe—you could be denied entry into a country—we feel that it’s better to be safe than sorry, and we strongly recommend that you follow these guidelines.

- **Main trip only:** 2 blank “Visa” pages.
- **Optional pre-trip extension to Northern Ireland:** One additional page, for a total of 3.
- **Optional post-trip extension in Dublin:** Same as the main trip.
- **Both a pre- and a post-trip extension:** A total of 3 pages.

If you need to renew your passport or get extra pages:

Contact the National Passport Information Center (NPIC) at **1-877-487-2778**, or visit their website at **www.travel.state.gov** for information on obtaining a new passport, renewing your existing passport, or for additional pages. You may also contact our recommended visa service company, PVS International, at **1-800-556-9990** for help with your passport.

NOTE: When updating your passport, it is worthwhile to check the prices on all the different services that might apply to you. For example, it might be less expensive to renew your passport than to have pages added, depending on the number of pages you need.

Visas not Required

U.S. citizens do not need a visa for entry into Ireland or Northern Ireland (optional extension).

No U.S. Passport?

Non-U.S. citizens or non-U.S. passport holders: If you are **not** a U.S. citizen or if you possess a passport from a country other than the U.S., it is your responsibility to check with your local consulate or embassy about possible visa requirements. Or, contact PVS International who can also assist non-U.S. citizens:

PVS International
Passport & Visa Services
1700 N Moore Street
Rosslyn Center, suite 310
Arlington, VA 22209
Telephone: 1-800-556-9990

Backup Photocopies

The smartest security precaution you can take is to make photocopies of your passport's personal information pages, your air tickets, your traveler's check serial numbers (if you're using them), and your credit cards. Also, bring extra passport-sized photos. Make a list of the phone and fax numbers for reporting lost credit cards, your travel protection plan company (if you have an optional travel protection plan) and medical emergency network. Keep these documents separate from the originals, and they can save you immeasurable time, money, and trouble if your originals are lost or stolen as you travel. In addition, scan these photocopies and email them to your email address; you can then print out replacement copies if necessary.

2. YOUR HEALTH

Keep Your Abilities In Mind

We've worked closely with our local Program Directors and regional associates to identify the aspects of this adventure that you should be aware of, from physical requirements to cultural factors. **Please carefully review the information below prior to departing on this trip.**

Pacing

- 5 locations in 14 days

Physical Requirements

- Not accessible for travelers using wheelchairs or scooters
- Travelers using walkers, crutches, or other mobility aids must travel with a companion who can assist them throughout the trip
- You must be able to walk 2 miles unassisted and participate in 1.5-2.5 hours of physical activities each day, including stairs
- Agility, balance, and stairs are required to kiss the Blarney Stone

Climate

- Daytime temperatures range from 48-67°F during touring season
- June-August are the warmest months
- February and November-December weather can be unpredictable and change quickly within a short period of time
- Rain is common and should be expected

Terrain

- Travel over uneven walking surfaces, including unpaved paths, hills, stairs, and cobblestones

Transportation

- Travel by 45-seat motorcoach

Cuisine

- Meals will be based on the local cuisine

Health Check and Inoculations

If you have any ongoing medical conditions or concerns about your health, we highly recommend that you schedule a checkup with your personal physician at least six weeks in advance of your departure date. Discuss with your doctor any aspects of your international itinerary that may affect your health and be guided by his or her advice. A loose filling or developing cavity would be difficult to remedy while you are traveling. You may want to have a dental exam before your trip.

If you have a condition that requires special equipment or treatment, you must bring and be responsible for all necessary items related to your condition. If you take medications regularly, be sure to pack an ample supply that will last your entire trip, as obtaining refills of your medication can be difficult during your trip. Pack these medications in your carry-on bag, and keep them in their original, labeled containers. To be prepared for any unforeseen loss of your medications, you should also bring copies of the prescriptions, written using the generic drug name rather than a brand name.

Vaccinations:

Check with the CDC: To ensure you receive any needed vaccinations we suggest that you check the current recommendations of the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) for your destination. You can contact them at:

On-line — if you have access to the Internet, we suggest you visit the CDC's Web site at **www.cdc.gov/travel**, where you will find comprehensive information about preventing illness while traveling.

By phone—at the CDC's Hotline toll-free at **1-800-232-4636** 24 hours a day. Please note that automated information may be arranged topically by disease, rather than by country or region.

Consult your doctor: After checking the CDC's recommendations we strongly suggest that you consult your family physician (at least 6 weeks prior to departure) concerning any vaccinations or medications that you may need on this trip. At the time of print there were no specific vaccinations required for entry into any of the countries on your itinerary.

3. LUGGAGE REGULATIONS

Size, Number and Weight Restrictions

MAIN TRIP LIMITS	
Pieces per person	One checked bag and one carry-on bag per person
Weight restrictions	Varies by airline. The current standard is 50lbs for checked bags and 15 lbs for carry-on bags .
Size restrictions	Varies by airline. Measured in linear inches (<i>length+width+depth</i>). Generally, 62 linear inches is the checked bag limit; carry-on limit is 45 linear inches .
Luggage Type	A sturdy, fabric-sided suitcase with built-in wheels and lockable zippers is recommended.
TRIP EXTENSION(S) LIMITS	
The extensions have the same luggage restrictions as the main trip.	
REMARKS / SUGGESTIONS	
<p>One suitcase and one carry-on bag per person: Due to the space limitations on bus transfers, you'll be restricted to one suitcase and one carry-on bag per person. This is to ensure that we have room for everyone's luggage. We ask that you abide by this limit to avoid inconveniencing your fellow travelers and prevent additional airlines luggage fees (which are your responsibility). Most airlines now charge to check more than one suitcase per person for flights to Europe and other international flights.</p> <p>Note: Enforcement of published restrictions by countries and airlines is a matter of governmental and corporate policy. Enforcement may include spot checks and may be inconsistently applied. Expect penalties and fines to be imposed immediately, however, when and if enforced. Before you choose to ignore the published restrictions you should ask: <i>Do I feel lucky?</i> And, even if you answer yes, you should make sure that you have the ability to pay the fine.</p>	

Should I confirm luggage restrictions with my U.S./international airline(s) before departure?

Absolutely, confirm current restrictions about a week or so before your departure. You should take this step no matter if your vacation has a lower limit than the average international flight or not, because there may be recent changes, such as new security regulations, or an update to the standard weight/size allowances. For your convenience, we maintain a list of the toll-free numbers for the most common airlines on our webpage in the *FAQ* section.

You should also check with the airlines on luggage fees—many airlines charge to check luggage, sometimes even on international flights. Others may charge a fee for a second carry-on item, like a purse or a laptop. **These fees are not included in your trip price;** they are payable directly to the airlines. If you are making a connecting flight, you should confirm if your luggage can be checked through to your final destination. For more information, see the *Air Travel* section of the Important Information booklet.

Luggage Suggestions

Consider a duffel bag or soft-sided suitcase for your checked luggage. Due to space limitations on our motor coaches, you are allowed one piece of checked luggage per person. Portage at airports and hotels is provided for **one** bag per person. All bags should have luggage tags.

Consider a daypack or small backpack as your carry-on bag. It will do double duty during excursions and walking trips. A daypack leaves your hands free and distributes its weight onto your back. Packed with daily travel needs (sweater, camera, rain/wind jacket, water bottle, etc.), it will compress to fit the storage space of foreign motorcoaches, and yet still have room for an impulse buy at a local street market.

***Tip:** Bring a second, empty lockable bag folded into your main suitcase, with a luggage tag and small lock. Use this to carry souvenirs home – but remember that you may incur extra luggage fees. If you're traveling with a companion we recommend "cross-packing," i.e., pack 2 outfits of your clothing in your companion's luggage and vice-versa, in case one bag is delayed.*

Airport Security/TSA

Restrictions on what can be included in your carry-on luggage may change. To avoid inadvertently packing restricted items in your carry-on, we suggest that you consult the Transportation Security Administration website at www.tsa.gov/public, which keeps a current list of restricted items. From the main website click on *Our Travelers*, then *Air Travel*, and then you will see a link for *Prohibited Items*.

Also, carry-on restrictions may vary on your return from Ireland. Please check with the Dublin Airport website for details: www.dublinairport.com.

Liquids and your carry on: Per the TSA's **3-1-1 rule**: Liquids must be in a 3.4 ounce or less (100ml) bottle (by volume); all bottles must be in a 1 quart-sized, clear, plastic, zip-top bag; 1 bag per passenger placed in screening bin. One-quart bag per person limits the total liquid volume each traveler can bring. The 3.4 ounce (100ml) container size is a security measure. Note that this rule is used increasingly in Europe, as well.

Locking your luggage:

To reduce the risk of damage to your luggage, *either* do not lock your bags when checking in for flights that originate in the U.S. *or* use TSA-approved locks. (These are locks that TSA screeners can open and relock with a special tool, avoiding damage to your luggage or lock if a physical inspection is required. Look for the words "TSA" or "TSA-approved" on the lock's packaging.) Outside of the U.S., we strongly recommend that you lock your luggage as a preventative measure against theft.

4. WHEN YOU ARRIVE

Your GCT Program Director

During your Grand Circle Land Tour, your group of up to 42 travelers will have reliable assistance available at all times from an on-site Grand Circle Travel Program Director. Your Program Director is a resident of Ireland who is fluent in English and can give you an inside perspective on your destinations. Your Program Director is supported along the way by local tour guides, who guide you expertly through particular sites and cities.

Many Grand Circle Program Directors are graduates of professional education programs for travel guides. In addition, they receive specialized training directly from Grand Circle, training that is based on what we've learned from thousands of past travelers about how to make the trip most enjoyable. Your Program Director offers both a deep knowledge of the region and a commitment to make this a very pleasant, informative, and rewarding travel experience for you.

Your Program Director will provide sightseeing trips, handle all travel details, reserve optional tours you choose to take, oversee your Discovery Series events, and provide any other assistance you may need. You will be in the company of the Program Director throughout your Land Tour. If you choose to take the optional extensions, you'll enjoy the services of Grand Circle Hospitality Desk Representatives at your hotel during regularly scheduled hours.

GCT Air Travelers

U.S. Departure: If you are among a group of ten or more GCT travelers who depart the U.S. from your international gateway city, it is our goal to have a GCT Representative assist you at the U.S. airport with the check-in of your flight. Unless there are extenuating circumstances beyond our control, the Representative will be at the check-in counter three hours before your departure time. If you are flying domestically before your international flight, the representative will be stationed at the check-in counter for your departing international flight, not at the domestic arrival gate.

Important note on porters: Airport porters are NOT allowed in the customs hall area. On arrival, you must take your luggage off the baggage carousel and load it onto a cart, which you will then move through customs. When you exit customs, you'll handle your cart until reaching your motor coach. Your motor coach driver will load your luggage onto your motor coach.

Arrival A GCT Representative will meet you outside the customs area and assist you to your hotel.

U.S. Return: At the end of your program or post-trip extension, you will be transferred to the airport in a motorcoach for your return flight to the U.S. If you are among a group of ten or more GCT travelers who return from Europe into the same U.S. gateway city, a GCT Airport Representative will meet you as you exit customs and help you find taxis, buses, hotel accommodations, or connecting flights. Again, it is our goal to have a GCT Airport Representative waiting for your group. In rare instances, unforeseen circumstances may prevent this service.

Flying with a Travel Companion

If you're traveling with a companion from a different household, and both of you are beginning and ending your trip at the same airport on the same dates, let us know you'd like to travel together and we'll make every effort to arrange this (please note, however, that this is not always possible). If you request any changes to your flights, please be sure that both you and your companion tell us that you still want to fly together.

Please note: *If you plan on booking your own international flights or arranging with our air department to arrive/depart on an earlier/later date than standard for your program, airport transfers will NOT be included in your program price. Transfers must be purchased separately, as an optional add-on, and are subject to availability. To learn more, or purchase airport transfers, please call our Traveler Support team at 1-800-321-2835. For more information, please see your Important Information booklet.*

5. MONEY MATTERS

How to Carry Your Money

The European financial infrastructure is as developed and modern as America's – sometimes even better developed. Currencies vary and banks have different names, but most are allied with global institutions and offer the same services you use daily. You can expect to have ready access to ATMs (to get local currency from your account), to have major credit cards accepted at most popular tourist sites, restaurants, and major stores, and to exchange US dollars for local currencies. There will be localized exceptions and perhaps some limitations on availability and amounts, and don't forget the fees. However, a little forethought can make juggling currencies a fairly painless process.

While there is no need to obtain local currency before your trip, many travelers do exchange \$50 to \$100 or so into the currency of their first destination. This can smooth your arrival should you run into closed banks/exchanges or broken ATMs. Otherwise, rely on a mix of credit/debit cards and ATM use (for ready access to cash) as the best way to manage your money as you travel. U.S. cash should be mixed into the blend, but it's wise to minimize how much you carry. Just as at home, carrying large amounts of cash can be risky. It's generally wise to have spending money in the local currency rather than to rely on American dollars.

You can exchange money at banks, some hotels, and money exchange offices (to do so, you'll likely need your passport). Be aware, however, that torn, dirty, or taped U.S. bills will *not* be accepted for exchange. **New** (in terms of use *and* issue date – post 2004) and large bills (\$100) will *usually* be accepted by banks and onboard ships; **old** \$100 bills (again, in age and condition) will *not* be accepted. Money in smaller denominations is much more universally accepted, but even there, new bills are preferred. Note that U.S. currency is not an accepted form of currency in Europe.

Traveler's checks—*not recommended*: We urge you *not* to bring traveler's checks for your personal expenses. They are nearly impossible to use in Ireland—stores and restaurants generally do not accept them, and even banks will not cash them.

U.S. dollars have an advantage. Cash is more readily exchanged than traveler's checks, and sometimes commands a better exchange rate. **Do not bring U.S. \$100 bills as these are not readily exchanged, even at banks.**

Credit Cards

Though Visa and MasterCard credit cards are readily accepted abroad (and American Express to a lesser extent), always inquire if your type of credit card is accepted before deciding on your purchase. It is also wise to notify the credit card company that you will be using your cards abroad so that they may remove any security block. When using a major credit card you may receive a different exchange rate than if you pay with cash; inquire about the rate first. Please be aware that credit cards might not be accepted for small purchases or in the markets. Note that the Discover credit card is not widely accepted outside the U.S. Keep your receipts in case you have questions about the conversion or exchange rate. Also, keep your receipts as proof of purchase for items to be shipped home.

TIP: Many credit card companies and banks have fraud alert departments that will freeze your card if they see suspicious charges—such as charges from another country. To avoid an accidental security block, it is a good idea to notify your credit card company or bank that you will be using your cards abroad. You can do this by calling their customer service number a week or two before your departure. You should also double-check what phone number you should call if you have a problem with a card while you are abroad. Don't assume you can use the 1-800 number printed on the back of your card—most 1-800 numbers don't work outside of the U.S.!

IMPORTANT NOTE: European countries have been phasing in a new type of credit card technology, called a “smartcard” or a “chip-and-PIN” card. These cards have an embedded computer chip instead of a magnetized strip, and the card owner authorizes a purchase by entering a four digit numerical PIN (Personal Identification Number) instead of signing a slip. Some businesses in Europe have already switched to the new system completely; some can process both smartcards and regular cards; and some haven't switched at all.

This new technology is not common in the U.S., so occasionally there may be machines that can't read U.S. cards. Or the machine can read the card, but asks for a PIN. Although it is not common for U.S. credit cards to have PINs (and some providers will not even be able to provide one at all), requesting one prior to your departure is recommended. In some shops you will still be able to sign a slip as usual if you inform the vendor at the point of sale. And if the shop in question requires a smartcard, you can always try a different form of payment, like a debit card or cash. (U.S. debit cards usually have a PIN, so sometimes they work when credit cards don't.) Since there is no way to predict in advance what each shop will do, we recommend that you bring more than one type of payment when you go shopping. For example, a mix of a couple different credit cards, a debit or ATM card, and some cash is ideal—you'll be prepared for anything.

Please note: Optional tour payments made by credit card may take up to 3 months to process. For this reason we ask that you use a credit card that will not expire until three months following your trip. Because our headquarters are in Boston, charges may appear to be from Boston or might be labeled as "OPT Boston" (depending on your credit card company).

ATMs and Debit Cards

Debit cards give you a reliable payment method and ready access to local currency. We recommend you use a debit card for withdrawals at ATM machines when you need cash, as it will allow you the flexibility of accessing money at your convenience without relying on bank hours for money exchanges. When traveling, typically PLUS, Cirrus, and other bank networks are available throughout large cities and small towns. (**NOTE: You will need your PIN – Personal Identification Number -- for all transactions.**)

Always notify your bank before you leave home that you are going abroad so that they may remove any blocks on your account and also ask them about the number of withdrawals you may make abroad. For cash withdrawals, don't forget to memorize the actual digits of your card's 4-digit PIN (Personal Identification Number), as many keypads at foreign ATMs do not include letters on their numeric keys, they only display digits.

Note on ATM use: Many banks have begun imposing a fee ranging from \$1 to \$5 every time you use an ATM in a foreign city. You may want to limit the number of withdrawals that you make. Your Program Director/Hospitality Desk Representative can advise you on locations, but when to exchange money is left to your discretion.

Currency in Ireland

Ireland's official currency is the euro. Euro banknote and coin denominations are as follows:

- Banknotes: 5, 10, 20, 50, 100, 200, and 500
- Coins: 1, 2, 5, 10, 20, and 50 cents; 1 and 2 euro

Because currency exchange rates fluctuate daily, your Program Director will advise you of the exchange rate upon your arrival. Daily exchange rates can also be found on the web sites listed under "Foreign Exchange Rates" at the end of the Handbook.

Banking Hours

Generally, banks are open Monday through Friday, 10:00 am – 4:00 pm; banks are closed on Saturdays. To exchange cash and Traveler's Checks you will need to have your Passport with you.

PLEASE NOTE: We recommend you bring a debit card if possible, this will allow you the flexibility of accessing money at your convenience, you will not have to rely on bank hours for the exchanging of money.

In Belfast (Northern Ireland)

The official currency of Northern Ireland is the British *pound sterling* (£), made up of 100 *pence*. Banknote and coin denominations are as follows:

- Banknotes: £5, £10, £20, and £50.
- Coins: copper (1p, 2p); silver (5p, 10p, 20p, 50p, and £1); and silver/gold (£2)

Note: Though Northern Ireland is a member of the EU, it is not adopting the euro for its currency. Its currency will remain the pound sterling.

Shopping

There is **no** requirement to make a purchase during stops at local shops or markets, and any purchase made is a direct transaction with the shop in question, subject to the vendor's terms of purchase. **Grand Circle Travel cannot be responsible for purchases you make on your trip or for the shipment of your purchases.**

You will have no trouble finding wonderful gifts and mementos to bring home from Ireland. Nice things to buy are the local crafts or some traditional Irish items such as: knitwear, lace, linen, porcelain, pottery, glass and jewelry, often in Celtic motifs. In the larger cities you will find such renowned department stores as Dunnes Stores, and Marks & Spencer, which carry a variety of items.

Dublin

Items to buy: Traditional and modern crafts can be found in stores across the city. One of the most popular Irish souvenirs is the highly prized white wool Aran sweaters and hats. Other commonly sought items include hand-woven Tweeds, earthenware, handmade jewelry, pearly Belleek china, luminous Waterford crystal, and Irish lace.

Main shopping areas: The principal shopping areas south of the Liffey are Grafton Street, and Nassau Street; north of the river, shopping is best on Henry Street. The tourist board issues an excellent free booklet called "Shopping in Dublin" that will help you find anything you could possibly want to buy in the city. It also contains a good center-city map.

Store hours: Shops are generally open between 9:30 am and 5:30 pm, Monday through Saturday. Larger stores stay open later and might be open on Sundays.

If you plan a major purchase, we strongly recommend that you research the prices and quality available at home before your trip. Just one visit to an import shop or gold dealer will put you way ahead when you go shopping. This is the only way to know if you are getting a good price.

U.S. Customs Regulations and Shipping Charges

For all things related to U.S. Customs, the ultimate authority is the U.S. Bureau of Customs & Border Protection. Their website, www.cbp.gov has the answers to the most frequently asked questions. Or you can call them at **1-877-227-5511**.

The top three points to know are:

- At time of writing, your personal duty-free allowance is \$800 for items brought with you. Items totaling more than \$800 are subject to duty fees.
- **Items shipped home are always subject to duty when received in the U.S.** Even when the shop has offered to include shipping and duties in the price, this typically means shipping to the nearest customs facility and payment of the *export* duties—not door-to-door shipping or payment of the *import* duties. All additional duties or shipping charges would be your responsibility. Unless an item is small enough to send by parcel service (like FedEx), chances are you will need to arrange shipping or pick-up once the item is in the U.S. and will need to pay customs duties.
- It is illegal to import products made from endangered animal species. U.S. Customs & Border Protection will seize these items, as well as most furs, coral, tortoise shell, reptile skins, feathers, plants, and items made from animal skins.

Problem with a Purchase?

The best way to address a problem with a purchase is to not have one in the first place! So don't forget to examine merchandise before paying for it, check contracts or agreements before signing, and review your receipt before leaving the shop. For major purchases, don't hesitate to ask in advance about the return policy—local practice may vary from U.S. standards, so don't assume that you have a certain number of days after the purchase to speak up.

But what if you do discover an issue with an item later on? In that case, your best recourse is to contact the vendor directly. For this reason we recommend that you keep a copy of all your receipts, invoices, or contracts, along with the shop's contact information. Expect that any resolution will take longer than it would in the U.S. due to delays in communication, the complexities of international shipping/customs duties, and even cultural differences in how business is conducted.

To Tip or Not to Tip

Sometimes *that* is the question. The good news is twofold: we're fresh out of Shakespearean soliloquies, so no thesauri will get hurt here; and the answer the question “**to tip or not to tip** (and how much to tip if you so choose)” is *always* a personal decision. Tipping is a common practice both at home and abroad and we offer these guidelines to answer requests for appropriate tipping amounts. It can be useful to have this information on site – when the question *must* be answered – and ahead of time for travel budgeting purposes. Tips below are quoted in U.S. dollars; tips can be converted and paid in local currency (usually preferred) or in U.S. dollars (personal/traveler's checks should *never* be used for tips).

GCT Program Director: It is customary at the end of your trip to express a personal “Thank You” to the Grand Circle Program Director or the hotel Hospitality Desk Representative, especially if he or she has provided you with individual assistance. We recommend \$4-\$6 per person, per day. Please note that tips for our Program Directors can only be in the form of cash, and local currency is appreciated.

Airport/Hotel/Pier Porterage & Transfers: If you are using GCT transfer services, tips to hotel, airport, and pier porters are included in the cost of your trip.

Local tour guides and drivers: \$2 per person for each half-day tour; \$3 per person for each full-day tour.

Included Group Meals: Your Program Director will tip waiters for the included meals when the group dines together.

Hotel Housekeepers: At your hotels, your housekeepers will appreciate a tip equivalent to one dollar per person, per day.

6. PACKING FOR YOUR TRIP

In General

Travel light: A good rule of thumb is to gather together everything you want to bring; then take half of that. Eliminate all but the essentials and start packing a few days before you leave. That way, you'll have time to think—not fret—about what you might be forgetting. To have a varied travel wardrobe, yet keep your luggage light, we recommend you select a color scheme and pack color-coordinated clothing items that can be mixed to create different outfits.

Pack casual clothes: Comfortable, informal apparel is perfectly acceptable at each of your destinations. Basic pants, shirts, walking shorts (seasonal), sportswear, everyday dresses/skirts, supportive shoes, and functional outdoor clothes that are relatively easy to care for are recommended. At dinner, you will not need to don "dressy" clothing; men do not need jackets or ties and women do not need fancy dresses. Only at deluxe city restaurants is nicer dress required; if you plan to dine at one, bring something respectable to wear. Otherwise, a small selection of your favorite everyday outfits is fine for all activities. If you prefer to dress with a little style, of course, it's your choice. But please, don't overdo it. Be sure all your travel outfits are comfortable to wear and relatively easy to care for and pack.

Packing for all seasons: Weather in Ireland is unpredictable, and can feature warm and cold temperatures at any time of the year. The most practical travel wardrobe consists of items that you can wear in layers. Then you can easily add or remove a layer according to any fluctuations in temperatures. If you are traveling during winter months, you should include clothes for moderate temperatures, but also take some cold weather gear—warm pants, socks, turtlenecks, fleece top or wool sweater, rainproof jacket (ideally with a zip/out insulation layer), gloves, and hat. Your outer jacket should be roomy enough to comfortably fit over your sweater or fleece top. If you are traveling during the summer months, pack an assortment of seasonal garments: short-sleeve shirts and comfortable slacks or shorts for daytime; the evenings, however, can be chilly, so bring along a cotton sweater and a fleece jacket. For travel during the spring and fall, pack an assortment of seasonal garments: light pieces and cotton sweaters for daytime; and slacks, long-sleeve shirts, warmer dresses, and a heavy sweater or fleece jacket for evenings. Remember, **it can be warm or cold any time of the year so pack many layers no matter when you're traveling in Ireland**

Rain gear: Regardless of your month of travel, rainfall is certainly a possibility. We suggest you bring a folding umbrella and waterproof shell—preferably one that falls to your knees, or you may want rain pants as well. Water-resistant walking shoes are advantageous in case heavy downpours pass through.

Comfortable, supportive walking shoes are essential: The country's magnificent archaeological sites, churches, museums, markets, and shops truly invite exploration by foot. But negotiating the cobblestone streets and rather uneven sidewalks can be a challenge—even for the most surefooted traveler. For your comfort and safety, you'll need supportive walking shoes.

Packing Your Carry-On

Using a daypack as a carry-on bag for your flights is a smart solution. We **strongly urge** you to pack your carry-on with at least one full change of clothes, your camera gear, medications, changes of socks and underwear, your important travel documents, and other irreplaceable items, in case your checked bags go astray. Store camera gear and important papers in plastic bags to protect them from dirt and moisture. With a daypack you can then remove these items on arrival and load your bag with the gear you'll need on walking tours and excursions.

What not to pack: do not pack aerosol cans, as they tend to leak during air travel. Avoid packing glass bottles; use plastic containers instead. Leave at home checkbooks and any credit cards not essential for your trip, valuable jewelry, and anything that you would hate to lose.

Clothing Options

The luggage weight and size restrictions imposed by travel realities today have made traveling light an absolute necessity. With modern fabrics – Gore-Tex, Polarfleece, polypropylene, etc. – lightweight packing for comfort and protection through a wide range of weather is easy. A visit to any on-line or local sporting goods/outdoor stores (L.L. Bean, REI, EMS, etc.) will yield a treasure trove of lightweight, specialized, and fashionable clothing and gear that is readily adaptable to your itinerary.

Travel Gear Suggestions

Though it's often fun to do things as the locals do, it can be frustrating when daily necessities or conveniences from home aren't available. To travel wisely these days you must juggle your personal needs and preferences against the physical constraints of your transportation—whether it's an international airplane, a transfer motorcoach, a small ship or a day-long trek on a camel. You'll have to distinguish between what you **must** have, what you'd *like* to have, whether you can zip your suitcase closed, and what you can reasonably expect to wrestle through airport hallways and security checkpoints. Consult the following items to create your personal checklist – ignoring what you don't need and making the tough decisions over borderline cases. Remember that many airlines today will charge you extra for added luggage.

Consider ...

- Daily essentials: toothbrush, toothpaste, floss, hairbrush or comb, shaving items, deodorant, shampoo/conditioner, shower cap, body soap, etc.
- Spare eyeglasses/contact lenses and your prescription
- Sunglasses with a neck strap
- Sunscreen, SPF 15 or stronger.
- Insect repellent with DEET
- Travel money bag or money belt
- Moisturizer, lip balm
- Compact umbrella
- Wide-brim sun hat or visor
- Pocket-size tissues
- Moist towelettes (packets) and/or anti-bacterial "waterless" hand cleanser
- Photocopies of passport, air ticket, credit cards
- Extra passport-sized photos
- Washcloth (not always provided in Ireland)

Medicines

- Your own prescription medicines
- Vitamins
- Cold remedies: Sudafed/Dristan
- Pain relievers: Ibuprofen/naproxen/aspirin
- Laxatives: Senokot/Ex-Lax
- Stomach upset: Pepto-Bismol/Mylanta
- Anti-diarrheal: Imodium
- Band-Aids
- Moleskin foot pads
- Antibiotic: Neosporin/Bacitracin

Optional Gear

- Travel alarm (or request wake-up calls)
- Compact binoculars
- Hanging toiletry bag with pockets
- Hair dryer (this may not be provided in all hotels)
- Handkerchiefs
- Basic sewing kit
- Hand wash laundry soap (Woolite), clothespins/travel clothesline/stopper
- Reading materials
- Swimsuit
- Electrical transformer & plug adapters — see “Regional Electricity” below.
- Travel journal/note pad
- Home address book
- Photos, small gift for home-hosted visit
- Water bottle for land excursions
- Collapsible walking staff
- Pocket calculator for exchange rates
- Reflective vest/band: useful for evening walks - sidewalks are rare in Ireland

7. REGIONAL CLIMATE INFORMATION

We can't predict what the weather will be during your travels, but you'll find historical averages and general information on the climate of your destinations below. As your departure nears it's a good idea to visit the *My Account* feature of www.gct.com, where you'll find monthly temperature averages for the countries you'll visit as well as a current 10-day forecast of local temperatures and conditions. Or check Internet weather sites (www.wunderground.com is very comprehensive) for those forecasts.

Irish weather is traditionally fickle, even in summer—when temperatures usually range from the low 50s to the upper 60s, though over the last decade, the spring and summer seasons were often glorious with many sunny days in the 70s. Nonetheless, chilly east winds may blow through, so come prepared for anything. Autumn generally comes early, bringing mist, showers, and brisk weather in the 40s. Except for a strip along the east coast, the country receives some rain at least 200 days a year. This wet climate is responsible for Ireland's verdant beauty.

Note on Air Conditioning: In general the climate in Ireland does not necessitate air conditioning. As a result, the *hotels you stay in during your tour do not have air conditioning.*

Here is the data from the weather observation stations closest to our destinations.

WHAT'S THE TEMPERATURE?								
Average highs (taken at 2 pm) and lows (taken just before sunrise) in °F.								
	APR	MAY	JUN	JUL	AUG	SEP	OCT	NOV
Galway								
High	53	58	61	65	64	61	56	50
Low	41	46	51	55	54	51	46	41
Cork								
High	52	57	61	65	64	60	55	50
Low	40	45	50	53	53	50	46	41
Dublin								
High	52	57	62	66	67	61	55	50
Low	41	45	50	54	53	50	46	41
Belfast (optional extension)								
High	51	57	60	63	63	59	52	47
Low	44	49	53	56	55	52	47	42

Please note: The data cited here reflect *climate* as opposed to *weather* conditions, and serve only as general indicators of what can reasonably be expected. A 60 degree *average* high temperature means that days may be as warm as 80 or as cool as 40 – but it's most likely you'll encounter temperatures in the 50 to 70 degree range.

8. TRAVEL AND TECHNOLOGY

In General

Smartphone, tablet, digital camera/camcorder, MP3 player: travel today can involve technology that didn't exist even five years ago. The usefulness of digital devices is enormous: smartphones can keep you connected and offer up-to-the-minute information via your cell plan or a local Wi-Fi connection. With a tablet (or smartphone) you can store multiple country guidebooks, access maps and connect to the internet in a small, lightweight device. (*Tip: you can download **this** document from the Grand Circle Travel website and import it into your tablet or e-reader, many of which can display PDF files.*)

Compact and lightweight, digital camcorders and cameras take high definition movies and still images of the people you meet and places you visit. For robust use a laptop may be effective; for occasional use it's wiser to rely on Internet cafes or a tablet and hotel Internet access rather than shoulder the heft and size of a laptop.

To use these devices you should first consider the services available at your destinations. You'll encounter a range of electrical standards, varied plug configurations to access the local current, erratic availability (electricity and internet access), and differing technological standards.

You'll need to assess your power and data storage needs, and the accessories required to recharge/connect/use these devices. Finally, it's smart to read the owner's manual *before* you depart. Pay particular attention to electrical, power and storage requirements to ensure that you understand exactly what you need. Thorough preparation is the best guarantee that your devices will work up to their potential.

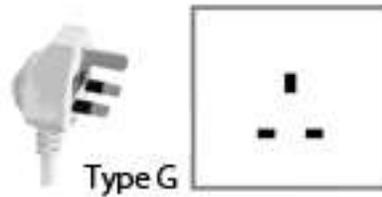
Regional Electricity

The standard U.S. electrical system — 110V 60Hz current and flat two- or three-pronged polarized plug system — is rare elsewhere. The overwhelming choice for the rest of the world is 220-240V and 50/60Hz current with a variety of plug shapes, sizes, and configurations. Some plugs will work with multiple receptacles, while others won't. Europe is largely standardized to the Type C "Europlug" -- but, Ireland and Britain use the Type G plug, as below, not the Europlug – so you'll need an adaptor.

Plugging a 110V U.S. appliance into 220/240V 50/60Hz service will ruin the motor. We suggest that you bring *dual* voltage appliances (widely available) that work on both 110 and 220/240 voltage. Dual voltage appliances are inexpensive and need only plug adapters.

If you bring 110V appliances, such as a hair dryer (note that hotels often supply hairdryers and coffee makers) or shaver, you'll need a transformer (to halve the 220/240V current) in addition to plug adapters. Regional transformer/adaptor kits can often be found at hardware or online stores but transformers tend to burn out, so it might be better to leave those larger items at home.

The electric current in Ireland is 220/240 volts AC, 50 Hertz. Electrical outlets take a Type G plug.



Even though you'll only need a Type G plug adapter on this trip, it may be a good idea to invest in an all-in-one, universal adapter/converter combo. Versatile and lightweight, this item will ensure that you are prepared for your current trip as well as future vacations. If you use multiple digital devices—cell phone, digital camera, and MP3 player for instance – it's also handy to have a travel power strip, perhaps with a surge suppressor and USB-style port for charging cell phones, MP3 players or e-readers without the use of device-specific plugs.

Smartphones

It will require some effort to get the most out of your smartphone when you travel. Even with an international roaming plan, costs can add up quickly – those handy apps often pile up download fees. The simplest solution is to shut down all cell phone functions, automatic data feeds and roaming options, and take advantage of the apps via available Wi-Fi. With an Internet VOIP app (like Skype) you can make inexpensive calls. If necessary, turn international roaming back on and your phone will work as usual – albeit at some cost. If your phone doesn't support international roaming (most smartphones do), some carriers offer loaners.

Cell Phones

If you want to use a standard cell phone while traveling overseas, be sure to check with your service provider (www.verizon.com, www.t-mobile.com etc.) to see if your phone will work outside the U.S. or whether you're better off renting an international phone. The websites www.travelcell.com and www.globalcellularrental.com have good information on rentals. Or, consider buying an inexpensive local phone for your stay.

Phone Calling Cards

If you don't carry a phone, you can use a prepaid calling card to call the U.S. with minimal additional charges. Besides the prepaid long distance charges, you might have a local fee of a few cents and possibly a connection fee if you are using your card at a hotel. Check with the reception desk prior to using it to avoid unexpected charges.

Calling cards purchased locally are usually less expensive than those purchased in the U.S. and are more likely to work with the local system. Note that dialing a U.S. 1-800 number outside the continental United States will incur costly long distance fees, since 1-800 does not work outside the U.S.

Photo Gear

For many people, capturing the highlights of their travel experiences in photographs or movies and sharing them is one of the most enjoyable aspects of the journey. Remember, however: some individuals and cultures are less tolerant of photography than others. It's always best to respect local customs. And in some places you may be charged for photography at specific sites, or restricted from any photography at all.

Digital cameras and camcorders are excellent travel companions—and many do dual duty by recording movies *and* still images. Fist sized camcorders can capture HD movies and high quality still photos; cameras the size of a deck of cards are great for snapshots and casual movie clips. With an ample supply of high-capacity memory cards you can record your whole trip with a small, lightweight package.

But you must remember the batteries. Recharging batteries is sometimes impossible, cameras can drain batteries *very* quickly, and replacements may be unavailable. Whether you need standard or proprietary batteries, it's good to have spares. Be sure your charger will work with the local electrical system, and bring more than enough memory cards—they may be hard or impossible to find. Memory cards are small, thin and light: you can never have too much storage.

Compact cameras are impractical for distant subjects. Some models have a zoom lens of up to 120mm, which is good for middle distances. For distant subjects a *megazoom* (with a zoom lens of at least 300mm) or a single lens reflex (DSLR) camera with up to a 300mm telephoto lens are good choices. With a DSLR you can use multiple lenses, though your gear can quickly get complex, weighty and cumbersome. Cameras or lenses that need a tripod are impractical for travel photography. A single mid-range telephoto lens coupled with a small, fast prime lens (for low light/no flash situations) is an effective, flexible and compact kit. Consider mirrorless interchangeable lens cameras (MILC), which combine small bodies and multiple, small lenses with high quality for both still and HD movie images.

If you use a DSLR or MILC camera, protect the lenses with a UV filter and bring lens caps, covers, cleaning paper and a waterproof bag (a heavy duty Ziploc-style bag is good) to protect your gear. Be sure your camera has a flash that you can turn off, and if it's detachable, remember to pack it. (At many sites and museums, flashes are *not* permitted.)

Consider disposable cameras, as well. They are inexpensive and capable of acceptable photos as long as the light is not too dim *or* bright. X-rays do not damage the data of digital cameras (in any media format), and so pose no problems for travelers using digital cameras.

9. ABOUT YOUR DESTINATIONS

We're including some handy practical details and a brief introduction to the places you'll visit on your Land Tour. If you expect to explore in depth on your own, we recommend that you consult one of the many available book-length guides to your destinations. If you have one or two specific sites, museums or features that you're interested in, an Internet search is the ideal way to get-up-to-date information and details. And of course your Grand Circle Travel Program Director or Hospitality Desk Representative will be able to assist you with suggestions and arrangements of activities you wish to participate in during your stay.

Accommodations

As is common with hotels in Ireland, none of our hotels feature air conditioning, though all feature heating. In general you'll also find that most European hotel rooms are smaller than what you may be used to in the U.S.

Ice Machines: Please note that Ice machines may not be available at the hotels.

Laundry Service

Your Program Director or concierge can assist you with making arrangements for this service

Cuisine

There are many Irish dishes involving potatoes. Colcannon is a dish made of potato and cabbage. Champ is a combination of mashed potato into which chopped scallions (spring onions) are mixed.

Other examples of simple Irish meals are Irish stew, and also bacon and cabbage (boiled together in water). Boxty is another traditional dish. A dish mostly particular to Dublin is coddle, which involves boiled pork sausages. Ireland is famous for the Irish breakfast, consisting mainly of pork, and, particularly in Ulster, soda bread farls.

Seafood has never been a mainstay of the Irish diet, despite the country being an island, but many dishes have developed nonetheless, and it has gained popularity, especially due to the high quality of shellfish-- e.g. Dublin Bay Prawns, Galway Oysters (an oyster festival is held in Galway every September where oysters are often served with Guinness). Salmon and cod are perhaps the two most common types of fish used. Hotels might also serve oysters and mussels.

Traditional Irish breads include brown bread, soda bread, wheat bread, and soda farls.

Drinking Water

Water in Ireland is safe to drink. If you wish to use bottled water for drinking, it is readily available.

Dublin in Brief—Main Trip & Optional Extension

City Layout

Compared to other European capitals, Dublin is a relatively small metropolis and easily traversed. The city center -- identified in Irish on bus destination signs as AN LAR -- is bisected by the River Liffey flowing west to east into Dublin Bay. Canals ring the city center: The Royal Canal forms a skirt through the north half, and the Grand Canal the south half. True Dubliners, it is said, live between the two canals.

The focal point of Dublin is the River Liffey, with 17 bridges connecting its north and south banks. The most famous of these is the O'Connell Bridge. The Millennium Bridge is a footbridge erected in 1999 to link Temple Bar with the Northside. The newest bridge, the Samuel Beckett Bridge, opened in December 2009.

On the north side of the river, the main thoroughfare is O'Connell Street, a wide, two-way avenue that starts at the riverside quays and runs north to Parnell Square.

On the south side of the Liffey, Grafton Street is Dublin's main shopping street. It is home to Ireland's most exclusive department store, Brown Thomas. Restricted to pedestrians, Grafton Street is the center of Dublin's up market shopping area, surrounded by a maze of small streets and lanes that boast a terrific variety of shops, restaurants, and hotels. At the south end of Grafton Street is St. Stephen's Green, the city's most beloved park and an urban oasis ringed by rows of historic Georgian town houses, fine hotels, and restaurants.

At the north end of Grafton Street, Nassau Street rims the south side of Trinity College. The street is noted for its fine shops and because it leads to Merrion Square, another fashionable Georgian park surrounded by historic brick-front town houses. Merrion Square is also adjacent to Leinster House, the Irish House of Parliament, the National Gallery, and the National Museum.

Local Transportation

Bus: Dublin Bus offers public transportation services within the Dublin city limits, as well as in the surrounding area. Several routes are available throughout the city. Daily, weekly, monthly and annual passes are available for purchase. Service generally runs from 6am to 11:30 pm (10 pm on Sundays) and later on weekends.

Belfast in Brief—Optional Extension

City Layout

Donegall Square, dominated by the landmark of Belfast's grand City Hall, is at the heart of the city's compact historic center. Fine buildings from the city's prosperous Victorian Era surround the square. The Northern Ireland Tourist Board has an office here with ample information on the city and all of Ulster. Belfast's main shopping area is an easy walk north from Donegall Square along Donegall Place and Royal Avenue.

Great Victoria Street, where the Grand Opera House and Crown Liquor Saloon are located, is a short walk to the west from Donegall Square. Within walking distance to the northeast, narrow allies called "The Entries" run off High and Anne Streets in a pedestrian-only shopping district. Here you can find a number of interesting pubs at which to share food and drink with the famously friendly local people.

To the south of the Donegall Square area, Great Victoria Road and Dublin Road lead to University Road and the area called the Golden Mile. The Ulster Museum, Queen's University, and the city's Botanic Gardens are in this area, as well as many restaurants and the city's best nightlife.

Local Transportation

Bus: Getting around Belfast by public transportation is relatively easy. The Metro is the name of the city's bus service with routes that run from the city center outward along the spine roads. The system operates more than 12 busy arterial routes, in addition to branch routes in and around the capital and nightlink services from Donegal Square West.

For shorter stays the **Metro Day Ticket** may be the best bet. It costs approximately £3.50 and allows you to travel anywhere, anytime on the Metro network for one day, Monday through Saturday. Belfast has three main bus stations located at Europa Buscentre at Great Victoria Street, Laganside Buscentre and Newtonabbey

Taxis: There is a plating scheme that helps visitors recognize legitimate companies. Yellow license plates identify public hire in the city; white identifies outside the city; private hire is green; and blue identifies bus taxis.

The famous Black Taxi is an alternative to traditional taxicab service. These London-style hackney cabs run along the spine roads picking people up and dropping them off as requested. More like a small bus or van than a taxi, be prepared to share the cab with five or six other people. Compared to traditional taxi service, the Black taxi is inexpensive; however, their routes are more limited, servicing only the arterial road and city center.

10. DEMOGRAPHICS & HISTORICAL OVERVIEW

Ireland

Area: 27,136 square miles

Capital: Dublin

Location: Ireland is situated in the Atlantic Ocean and separated from Great Britain by the Irish Sea. Half the size of Arkansas, it occupies the entire island except for the six counties that make up Northern Ireland.

Geography: The ocean is responsible for the rugged western coastline, along which are many islands, peninsulas, and headlands. The main geographical features of Ireland are low central plains surrounded by a ring of coastal mountains. The highest peak is Carrauntuohill (Irish: *Corrán Tuathail*), which is 1041 m (3414 ft). There are a number of sizable lakes along Ireland's rivers, with Lough Neagh the largest in the British Isles. The island is bisected by the River Shannon, at 259 km (161 miles) with a 113 km (70 miles) estuary the longest river in Ireland (and the longest in the British Isles if the estuary is included), which flows south from County Cavan in the north to meet the Atlantic just south of Limerick.

Languages: English, Irish Gaelic

Population (2010 estimate): 4,580,000

Religions: Roman Catholicism 93 %, Anglican 3%, none 1%, unknown 2%, other 1%

Time zone: Ireland is five hours ahead of Eastern Time: when it is 6 am in New York, it is 11 am in Ireland.

Holidays:

01/01	New Year's Day
03/17	St. Patrick's Day
04/21	Easter Monday
05/06	May Bank Holiday
06/03	June Bank Holiday
08/05	August Bank Holiday
10/28	October Bank Holiday
12/25	Christmas Day
12/26	St. Stephen's Day

Celts are traditionally thought to have colonised Ireland in a series of waves between the 8th and 1st centuries BC, with the Gael, the last wave of Celts, conquering the island and dividing it into five or more kingdoms.

History maintains that in AD 432, St. Patrick arrived on the island and, in the years that followed, worked to convert the Irish to Christianity. The druid tradition collapsed in the face of the spread of the new faith. Irish Christian scholars excelled in the study of Latin learning and Christian theology in the monasteries that flourished, preserving Latin learning during the Early Middle Ages. The arts of manuscript illumination, metalworking, and sculpture flourished and produced such treasures as the Book of Kells, ornate jewellery, and the many carved stone crosses that dot the island. This era was interrupted in the 9th century by 200 years of intermittent warfare with waves of Viking raiders who plundered monasteries and towns. Eventually they settled in Ireland and established many towns, including the modern day cities of Dublin, Cork, Limerick and Waterford.

In 1172, King Henry II of England gained Irish lands by the granting of the 1155 Bull Laudibilter to him by then English Pope Adrian IV, and from the 13th century, English law began to be introduced. English rule was largely limited to the area around Dublin, known as the Pale, and Waterford, but this began to expand in the 16th century with the final collapse of the Gaelic social and political superstructure at the end of the 17th century, as a result of the Tudor re-conquest of Ireland and English and Scottish Protestant colonisation in the Plantations of Ireland, which established English control over the whole island. After the Irish Rebellion of 1641, Irish Catholics were barred from voting or attending the Irish Parliament.

In 1800 the Irish Parliament passed the Act of Union which, in 1801, merged the Kingdom of Ireland and the Kingdom of Great Britain to create the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Ireland. The whole island of Ireland became part of the United Kingdom, ruled directly by the UK Parliament in London.

The 19th century saw the Great Famine of the 1840's, a tragedy caused by the mis-administration of the British Government of the time, in which one million Irish people died and over a million were forced to emigrate. The pre-famine population of over 8 million was reduced by half as a result.

The late 19th and early 20th century saw the survivors of the famine mount a vigorous but unsuccessful campaign for Irish home rule, which was brutally suppressed. This resulted in the eclipse of moderate nationalism by militant separatism. In 1922, following the Irish Rising of 1916, and the subsequent Anglo-Irish War, twenty-six counties of Ireland won freedom from the United Kingdom as the Irish Free State. The remaining six, in the north-east, remained within the Union as Northern Ireland. This British-backed partition of Ireland led directly to the Civil War, as militant nationalists who favoured a united Ireland fought with moderates who were willing to accept the establishment of the Irish Free State as a stepping-stone to the eventual goal of a completely free Ireland.

It is worth noting that throughout its long history, Ireland has never declared war on any other nation or people.

The state was neutral during World War II but offered some assistance to the Allies, especially in Northern Ireland. In 1949 the state declared itself to be a republic and that henceforth it should be described as the Republic of Ireland. The state was plagued by poverty and emigration until the mid-1970's. The 1990's saw the beginning of unprecedented economic success, in a phenomenon known as the "Celtic Tiger". By the early 2000's, it had become one of the richest countries (in terms of GDP per capita) in the European Union, moving from being a net recipient to a net contributor and from a population with net emigration to one with net immigration.

Northern Ireland

Area: 5,450 square miles

Capital: Belfast (regional); Northern Ireland is part of the United Kingdom, whose national capital is London

Location: Consists of the six counties of Ulster, occupying the northeastern corner of the island of Ireland.

Languages: English

Population (2005 estimate): 1,685,267

Religions: Protestant (mostly Presbyterian) 51%, Roman Catholic 38 %, none or unknown 11 %

Time zone: Same as the rest of Ireland, five hours ahead of Eastern Time

Holidays:

01/01 New Year's Day

03/17 St. Patrick's Day

04/01 Easter Monday

05/06 Early May Bank Holiday

05/27 Spring Bank Holiday

08/26 Summer Bank Holiday 12/25 Christmas Day

12/26 Boxing Day

FROM ITS CREATION IN 1921 until 1972 Northern Ireland enjoyed limited self-government within the United Kingdom, with its own parliament and prime minister. However the Protestant and Catholic communities in Northern Ireland each voted almost entirely along sectarian lines, meaning that the government of Northern Ireland (elected by "first past the post") was always controlled by the Ulster Unionist Party. Consequently, Catholics could not participate in the government, which at times openly encouraged discrimination in housing and employment.

Nationalist grievances at unionist discrimination within the state eventually led to large civil rights protests in 1960s, which the government suppressed heavy-handedly, most notably on "Bloody Sunday". It was during this period of civil unrest that the paramilitary Provisional IRA, who favoured the creation of a united Ireland, began its campaign against what it called the British occupation of the six counties. Other groups, legal and illegal on the unionist side, and illegal on the nationalist side, began to participate in the violence and the period known as the "Troubles" began. Owing to the civil unrest the British government suspended home rule in 1972 and imposed direct rule.

In 1998, following a Provisional IRA cease-fire, the Good Friday Agreement was concluded and attempts began to be made to restore self-government to Northern Ireland on the basis of power sharing between the two communities. Violence has greatly decreased since the signing of the accord.

In 2001 the police force in Northern Ireland, the Royal Ulster Constabulary, was replaced by the Police Service of Northern Ireland. On July 28, 2005, the Provisional IRA (PIRA) announced the end of its armed campaign and on September 25, 2005 international weapons inspectors supervised the full disarmament of the PIRA.

11. ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

Books, Maps, and Movies

Frommer's Ireland, with coverage of Northern Ireland by Suzanne Rowan Kelleher. (Guidebook) This 590-page guidebook includes a foldout map and details on Ireland's small towns, natural wonders, castles, literary landmarks, ancient ruins, and nightlife

Fodor's Citypack Dublin by Fodor's staff. (Guidebook)

This two-in-one travel resource is perfect for the traveler who only needs the highlights in brief. Covers Dublin's top 25 attractions; features suggested walking tours; capsule reviews of restaurants, shops, and nightlife spots; and offers concise facts about the public transport system and neighborhood layouts.

Atlas of Irish History by Sean Duff (History). From Celtic times to the Viking Wars to Cromwell to the Great Famine, Ireland's distinctive past is summarized in this 144-page book with period art, photos, and maps. Published as a companion to a past PBS series on Ireland.

Malachy McCourt's History of Ireland by Malachy McCourt (History). This *New York Times* best seller offers a unique glimpse into Ireland's rich history by weaving together myth, folklore, culture, music, cuisine and more from the country's past and present.

Ireland: A Cultural Encyclopedia by Brian DeBreffny. (History)

A three-volume guide to Irish culture.

The Great Hunger by Cecil Woodham-Smith.(History)

The authoritative book on Ireland's potato famine during 1845-1849.

The Big Fellow by Frank O'Connor. (Literature)

A classic on the life of Michael Collins, a key figure in the fight for independence and in treaty negotiations.

Irish Sagas and Folk Tales by Eileen O'Faolain. (Folk Tales)

The most comprehensive one-volume collection of Irish mythology.

Angela's Ashes by Frank McCourt. (Literature)

McCourt's Pulitzer Prize-winning memoir about his impoverished childhood in Limerick, Ireland. Basis for the 2000 film.

44: *Dublin Made Me* by Peter Sheridan. (Memoir) Theater director Peter Sheridan--brother of film director Jim Sheridan (*My Left Foot*, *In the Name of the Father*)—offers a bracing, lyrical memoir about growing up in Dublin amidst a boisterous family.

Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man by James Joyce (Literature)

Joyce is Dublin's most famous writer. A semi-autobiographical work of fiction that offers a portrait of the coming of age of a young man surrounded by an Irish upbringing, the Catholic Church, Irish politics, and problems with art and morality.

Dubliners by James Joyce. (Literature)

For a more accessible James Joyce read, try this acclaimed collection of his short stories

***Trinity* by Leon Uris. (History)**

A mighty saga of glories and defeats, triumphs and tragedies, which re-creates the Emerald Isle's fierce struggle for independence.

***Circle of Friends* by Maeve Binchley (Fiction)**

A coming-of-age novel set in 1950s rural Ireland. Most of the book centers on the lives of three friends—gentle Benny, bravely honest Eve, and class-conscious Nan—as they grow up and enter college. The book was made into a film starring Chris O'Donnell and Minnie Driver.

Guidebooks:

Your Program Director will be happy to provide recommendations and suggestions during the trip, so a guidebook is not a necessity. But a good one can be invaluable as a one-stop reference, so for those travelers who have asked for suggestions, we offer these guidelines. Since different guidebook series each have their own target audience and structure, it is well worth your time to browse your local library or bookstore to find the one(s) you like best. To get you started, here is some general information on the most popular series:

Culture Smart! – Focuses on local customs and etiquette instead of sights, dining, etc.

DK Eyewitness – Innovative visuals make these books easy to use and a nice souvenir once the trip is over. The focus is primarily on the sights and activities.

Fodor's – A classic guidebook with strong information on activities, shopping, and dining. Good mix of upscale recommendations and budget suggestions.

Frommer's – A comprehensive guide series that is known for its restaurant recommendations.

Insight – Offers more information on history and culture than usual, nice visuals, good maps.

Lonely Planet – Practical guides geared towards a more adventurous traveler on a budget.

National Geographic – From the same company that publishes the magazine. Excellent photographs, good information on history, nature, and culture.

Rough Guides –For the independent traveler on a budget. Particularly known for their maps.

Maps:

Most hotels will provide maps free of charge at the reception desk or in your room. These maps are usually sufficient for our travelers, but if you plan on any independent exploration, you may wish to consider purchasing a map before your departure. This can be especially useful in a country that doesn't use the Roman alphabet as the hotel maps may only be printed in the local language.

Some recommended map series include: Rand McNally international maps (especially the StreetWise series), Insight's FlexiMaps, and Rough Guide's destination maps. We suggest that you visit your local bookstore or library to get a better sense of which type of map is best for your needs before making a purchase.

Suggested Movies

Here are few of our favorite movies that are about, or set in, or from the region you'll be traveling. Most are available at movie rental stores and websites—or even your public library. Sometimes films produced outside of the US may be hard to find, but they are usually available online. Lists are highly subjective – if your favorites are missing, start a chat with fellow travelers and you'll likely find even more treasured movies to share.

The Secret of Roan Inish starring Jeni Courtney, Mick Lally, and Eileen Colgan (1994, color) A charming fairytale about family and homeland, *Secret* follows 10-year-old Fiona's quest to return her family to their home on Roan Inish, an island off the coast of Ireland. But will she find her missing baby brother, who some say was stolen by Selkies (magical beings who sometimes appear as people, and sometimes as seals)?

In the Name of the Father starring Daniel Day-Lewis and Emma Thompson (1994, color) The true-life story of Gerry Conlon, one of the "Guildford Four"—four Irish youths who were falsely convicted of blowing up an English pub in the 1970s. Although only partly set in Ireland (the trial and jail time are in England), the film does a good job at exploring the tensions between the Irish and the English at the time.

Circle of Friends starring Minnie Driver and Chris O'Donnell (1995, color) Set in the 1950s, this film follows three friends—smart but self-conscious Benny, feisty Eve, and beautiful social climber Nan—as they start their university studies in Dublin. Based on a Maeve Binchy novel by the same name.

My Left Foot starring Daniel Day Lewis, Brenda Fricker (1989, color) A true tale about a man who becomes a painter, poet and writer. It documents the life of Christy Brown (Day-Lewis), a working class Irishman born with cerebral palsy. With the help of his mother (Fricker) he learns to write and draw with his one working limb - his left foot.

Waking Ned Devine starring Ian Bannen and Fionnula Flanagan (1998, color) Set in a tiny rural Irish town, this is the tale of lottery winner Ned Devine – who is found dead, with a winning ticket in his hand. The townsfolk band together to fool the authorities into thinking Ned is still alive so they can cash the ticket in and share the prize.

Grand Circle Community & Useful Websites

If you have access to the Internet, the following sites offer a wealth of information:

Visit the Grand Circle Community website for a world of travel news and information:

www.gct.com/community

Government websites:

International health information: CDC (Centers for Disease Control)

www.cdc.gov/travel

U.S. Customs & Border Protection: traveler information

www.cbp.gov/xp/cgov/travel

Transportation Security Administration (TSA): agency responsible for screening luggage in U.S.

www.tsa.gov/public

National Passport Information Center (NPIC): for passport information

www.travel.state.gov

General travel information websites:

Travel books

www.amazon.com

www.barnesandnoble.com

World weather

www.intellicast.com

www.weather.com

Foreign languages for travelers: basic terms in more than 80 languages

www.travlang.com/languages

Travel tips: packing light, choosing luggage, etc.

www.travelite.org

Net café guide: 100s of locations around the globe

www.cybercafes.com

Electric current and plug types

www.kropla.com/electric2.htm

Foreign exchange rates

www.oanda.com/converter/classic

ATM locators

www.mastercard.com/atm for **Cirrus** ATMs

www.visa.com/pd/atm for **PLUS** ATMs

Country information:

www.ireland.ie/ **Ireland Tourist Board**

www.visitdublin.com/ **Dublin**

www.discovernorthernireland.com/ **Northern Ireland**

www.gotobelfast.com/ **Belfast**

visiteurope.com/ **Links to countries**

www.inyourpocket.com/free-instant-city-guides.html