

# IRELAND - ÉIRE



Area: 27,133 sq. Mi. (118<sup>th</sup>); Population 5.2m (122<sup>nd</sup>)  
Official Language: Irish and English  
Religion: Roman Catholic -73%; Protestant -4.2%;  
GDP (ppp): \$353b (51<sup>st</sup>);  
Per Capita GDP (ppp): \$73,200 (10<sup>th</sup>)  
Exports to US: \$28.4b; Imports from US: \$7.85b  
Human Development Index: .942 (3<sup>rd</sup>)  
Life Expectancy: Male 79.9 - Female 83.6  
Government: Unitary Parliamentary Republic  
President: Micheal D. Higgins (since 2011)  
Prime Minister: Michael Martin T.D. (since June 2020)  
Memberships: UN, UN System Organizations, EU, EU system Organizations. Neutral Country

Celtic tribes arrived on the island between 600 and 150 B.C. Norman invasions began in the 12th century and set off more than seven centuries of Anglo-Irish struggle. In 1921 the country gained independence from the UK for its 26 southern counties; six northern (Ulster) counties remained part of the UK. Deep sectarian divides between the Catholic and Protestant populations erupted into “The Troubles”.

Relations between the US and Ireland have long been based on common ancestral ties and shared values. The US involved itself as an intermediary during the Northern Ireland peace process in 1995. Ireland pursues a policy of neutrality through non-alignment and is consequently not a member of NATO. However, on many occasions Ireland has provided tacit support to the United States and its allies.

Ireland is a small, modern, trade-dependent economy within the European Union. As a “Celtic Tiger”, its economy grew at 6% per year from 1995-2007. The greatest risk to Ireland’s economy is the UK’s scheduled departure from the European Union (“Brexit”).

In recent years, Ireland has attempted to act as a diplomatic bridge between the United States and the European Union<sup>1</sup>

Currently, there are more than 600 U.S. subsidiaries operating in Ireland, employing in excess of 100,000 people. Irish firms are now beginning to provide a lot of employment in the U.S., for example indigenous Irish companies, particularly in the high tech sector have provided in excess of 80,000 jobs to date for American citizens.<sup>1</sup>

Ireland ranks fifth in the world in terms of gender equality and was ranked the most charitable country in Europe.

Tourism in Ireland contributes about 4% of GDP and is a significant source of employment. Tourists enjoy the Blarney Stone, the pubs of Dublin and many beautiful and historic sites in between.

## **FUN FACTS:**

- *St. Patrick was not Irish!*
- *The White House was designed by Irishman James Hoban in 1792.*
- *Muckanagherdauhaulia – longest place name in English – a small village in Co. Galway*
- *There are more than 3,000 castle and ruins on the island*
- *More Guinness beer is drunk in Nigeria than in Ireland*