**THE REPUBLIC OF IRELAND**

LOCATION:

In the North Atlantic, the Celtic Sea in the south, separated from Britain by the North Channel, Irish Sea and St Georges´Channel

GEOGRAPHY:

About 5/6 (70,273 km²) of the island of Ireland (total area 84,421km²)

Cliffs, hills and mountains in the west and southwest (Carrauntoohil 1,038m), central lowlands with deposits of clay, sand and peat

The river Shannon (386km),lakes: Lough Corrib, Lough Neigh (in Northern Ireland)

About 12% of the country forested – ideal soil conditions, high rainfall and a mild climate

CLIMATE:

Temperate oceanic climate influenced by the Atlantic Ocean and the Gulf Stream with high rainfall makes the island nicely green – Emerald Island

PEOPLE:

4.6mil inhabitants in 2011, an increase of 8.2% since 2006 (the highest birth ratre in the EU)

12% of non-Irish nationals (Polish, UK, Latvian, Lithuaninan, Nigerian)

Language : Irish Gaelic the official first language, a compulsory subject at school, English spoken in everyday life

Culture: literature (Swift, Wilde, Joyce, Shaw, Beckett), dance, music, folklore…

ECONOMY:

Until 1980s predominantly agricultural, 1990s-2007 rapid economic growth (knowledge economy focused on high technology industries and services), rise in consumer spending, construction and investment known as the Celtic Tiger , ended by a recession (Irish banking crisis)

Agriculture (10% of labour) – fishing, cattle breeding, barely, wheat, sugarbeet, potatos

Services (60% of labour) - tourism, finance

EU in 1973, Euro in 2002

HISTORY:

The Celts – from the 6th century B.C.

5th century – St Patrick

9-10th cent, - the Vikings, seamen and warriors, also tradesmen, helped to develop cities (Dublin, Cork)

12th cent. Norman invasion, England claimed sovereignity over Ireland

16 – 17th cent. – Tudor conquest, colonisation by settlers from Britain, system of Protestant English Rule

1801 - Act of Union – Ireland became part of the United Kingdom

1840s – potato famine (1mil people died, 1mil emigrated to the USA)

Early 20th cent. – war of independence

1916 – Easter rebellion

1921 – partition of Ireland – the Irish Free State

1949 – the Republic of Ireland

GOVERNMENT:

Democratic state, devided into 26 sounties, with the president in its head, legislature represented by 2 chambers of the parliament (the Senate and the House of Representatives), the head of executive is the prime minister

SYMBOLS:

Flag (the green stripe represents the Catholics, the orange stripe represents teh Protestants, the white field represents the peace between them)

Shamrock, green colour, harp

HOLIDAYS:

St Patrick´s Day

INTERESTING PLACES:

The capital city of Dublin

Other cities: Cork, Limerick, Galway, Kilkenny, Drogheda

Castles: Blarney (the legend of Blarney Stone – if you kiss it, you get „gift of the gab“)

Nature: Cliffs of Moher. Slieve League (not so famous, but even higher than Moher), Mourne Mountains, Wicklow Mountains

**Newgrange** is a [prehistoric](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Prehistory) [monument](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Monument) located 8 kilometres west of [Drogheda](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Drogheda) on the north side of the [River Boyne](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/River_Boyne).[[3]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Newgrange#cite_note-3) It was built during the [Neolithic](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Neolithic) period, around 3200 BC, best known for the illumination of its passage and chamber by the winter solstice sun. New Grange has been designated a World Heritage Site by UNESCO.