

● Where is Ireland?

Ireland is an island in the north-west of Europe separated from Great Britain by the Irish Sea, and covers an area of about 84,421 km squared (km²). It's the 20th largest island in the world. There are two countries on the island of Ireland. The Republic of Ireland is an independent country with a green, orange and white flag. It is part of the European Union and uses the euro as its currency. Northern Ireland is part of the United Kingdom, flies the Union Jack, and their currency is the British pound.

● What are the most important cities in Ireland?

In the south it's Dublin, the capital of the Republic of Ireland. The Greater Dublin Area holds nearly one-third of the entire population of the country. The North's capital is called Belfast. Belfast is just under half the size of Dublin in terms of population. Both Belfast and Dublin are beautiful cities, but for very different reasons.

● What is Dublin famous for?

Dublin is sometimes known as the Fair City. The name 'Fair City' comes from a popular song about Dublin called 'Molly Malone'. Over the years, 'Molly Malone' has come to be regarded as the unofficial anthem of the city. Molly is a fictional character. In the song she is described as a beautiful fishmonger (= person who sells fish) working in the streets of Dublin who tragically died while still very young. There is even a famous statue of Molly at the bottom of Grafton Street, which is the city's main pedestrian shopping street. There are about one and a half million people living in Dublin. The most popular part of the city is Temple Bar, where all the good pubs, bars and restaurants are located. The pubs in Temple Bar play live music almost all the time.

● What else can you see in the Irish capital?

Just across the road from Molly Malone's statue is Trinity College, a very old and highly-respected university. It is also known as the place where the Book of Kells is kept. The book is an illuminated biblical manuscript which is considered as a masterpiece of Western

calligraphy. Tourists often come to see it. St Patrick's Cathedral in Dublin is the largest church in Ireland.

● Can you name some other tourist attractions in Dublin?

The most visited site in the city is the Guinness Storehouse, where you can learn all about how a pint of this famous drink is made. Guinness is a type of beer – a dry Irish stout, and one of the most successful brands of alcohol in the world. There is the Gravity Bar on the top floor where you can enjoy panoramic views of the city.

● What do you know about Belfast?

Belfast has some very impressive architecture. There are some beautifully preserved Edwardian and Victorian buildings and it's home to Queen's University.

● Apart from architecture, what else has Belfast to offer?

One of Belfast's unique features is the colourful murals (= paintings) that are painted on walls throughout the city. West Belfast has some of the finest house-sized political murals you are likely to find anywhere.

● Can you name some other interesting cities?

Galway is known as the cultural heart of the West of Ireland and is also on the doorstep of an area of natural beauty known as Connemara. Cork is the gourmet capital of the country, and West Cork especially is known for its seafood dishes. There's also Waterford City in the so-called 'Sunny Southeast'. This part of Ireland enjoys the best weather.

● Can you think of any famous landmarks in Ireland?

Blarney Castle is one of the best preserved medieval castles in the country and is a favourite tourist destination; people come to kiss the Blarney Stone which is supposed to give you the gift of eloquence (= ability to speak well). Newgrange, or Brú na Bóinne, is older than Stonehenge and the Pyramids of Giza. This ancient tomb and place of worship is over 5,000 years old.

01 Irish symbols



02 Dublin

03 Dublin



04 Belfast



05 Belfast



06 Galway



07 Newgrange

08 Blarney Castle

