

REPUBLIC OF IRELAND



Longitude -10.48 to -5.99

Latitude 51.45 to 55.38

Area (sq. km) (CR) 70,273

Population (CSO) 5,149,139

Female (CSO) 2,604,590

Male (CSO) 2,544,549

Median age (CSO) 38.8

Ireland is situated in the Atlantic Ocean, to the north-west of the continent of Europe.

Although the island comprises 32 counties, there are **two countries** on the island – the Republic of Ireland (*Éire* in Irish) and Northern Ireland, part of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland.

LANGUAGE

There are two official languages in Ireland – Irish or *Gaeilge*, and English or *Béarla*.

All road signs and place names are identified in both languages, with the exception of a limited number of Irish-only regions, known as *Gaeltachtaí* or gaeltachts.

Very few people speak Irish fluently but everyone has the so-called “cúpla focal” or couple of words.

EMERGENCY AND HEALTH

Emergency numbers

999

112

An Garda Síochána locator

<https://www.garda.ie/en/contact-us/station-directory>

Hospital locator

<https://www2.hse.ie/services/hospitals>

There are TWO emergency phone numbers which can always be called, free of charge:

999

112

These numbers are connected to all the emergency services – *An Garda Síochána* (The Guardians of the Peace, or the police, known generally as The Guards). The ambulance service, the fire service, and the Coast Guard.

The police in Ireland are unarmed and are very much a community service.

Health

There are pharmacies located everywhere if medicines are required, and the hospital locator above will enable a local hospital to be found.

For EU citizens a valid E 111 card is usually sufficient to cover most medical care.

FINANCE

The currency of Ireland is the Euro (€).

The vast majority of Irish businesses accept debit and credit card payments, with contactless (tap) payments common in all retail outlets.

Credit cards and charge cards

Almost all retailers accept credit cards (MasterCard, Visa) and debit cards (Revolut, etc...) but charge cards (Amex, Diners) are not widely accepted.

Banks

The major high-street banks and opening hours are:

| | | |
|-------------------------------|--|---------------|
| Allied Irish Banks Locator | Mon - Fri https://aib.ie/ways-to-bank/branch-banking | 10:00 – 17:00 |
| Bank of Ireland Locator | Mon - Fri https://www.bankofireland.com/branch-listing | 10:00 – 17:00 |
| PTSB Locator | Mon - Fri https://www.ptsb.ie/contact-us/find-a-branch | 10:00 – 17:00 |

Post office

There are post offices in most major communities – they offer some restricted Bureau de Change facilities, and are usually also open on a Saturday, unlike the banks.

| | | |
|-------------|---|--------------------------------|
| Post Office | Mon - Fri Sat | 09:00 – 18:00 09:00 – 13:00 |
| Locator | https://www.anpost.com/Store-Locator | |

ADMINISTRATION AND POLITICS

The island of Ireland comprises 32 counties, divided into four provinces.

| Provinces | Counties | |
|-----------|---------------------------|--------------------|
| Connacht | Galway Leitrim Mayo | Roscommon Sligo |

| | | |
|--------------|--|---|
| Leinster | Carlow Dublin Kildare Kilkenny Laois Longford | Louth Meath Offaly Wexford Westmeath Wicklow |
| Munster | Clare Cork Kerry | Limerick Tipperary Waterford |
| Ulster (RoI) | Cavan Donegal | Monaghan |
| Ulster (UK) | Down Armagh Derry | Down Fermanagh Tyrone |

The Republic of Ireland is governed by *An Oireachtas*, the Government of Ireland.

An Oireachtas has two branches, *An Dáil* – the Parliament – and *An Seanad* – the Senate.

The head of state is *An Uachtarán* – the President, who is elected by the people and serves for seven years.

The government is led by *An Taoiseach* – the Prime Minister – and *An Tánaiste* – the Deputy Leader.

The *Dáil* comprises 174 members, who are elected by the people and referred to as *Teachta Dála*, or Member of Parliament (always referred to as “TDs”).

There are 43 constituencies in Ireland, and the electoral system is the Single Transferable Vote (STV) method of Proportional Representation. This is a fascinating system and requires a cool head when trying to understand how it actually works. It is worth noting that not since 1977 (48 years at the time of writing) has any party won a majority in a General Election.

The Senate has 60 members who are elected, not by the general public, but by various administrative bodies, as well as the Universities; there are also some who are nominated by *An Taoiseach*.

Sources:

CR -Country Reports:

<https://www.countryreports.org/country/Ireland/geography.htm>

CSO – Central Statistics Office:

<https://www.cso.ie/en/census/>