



As the Gateway to Europe, this modern, English speaking country, whose vibrant Celtic origin continues to regulate the pulse of the nation, offers a truly rewarding experience for a visiting student.

The Republic of Ireland has a population of four million people, over 40 percent of whom are under the age of 25. Almost 60 percent of Irish people live in urban areas, with 1.2 million living in or around the capital city Dublin that is located on the east coast the island. Dublin is a young, vibrant and cosmopolitan city where many nationalities are represented. A large variety of cultural attractions, musical entertainment venues, museums, art galleries, theatres, clubs and restaurants can be enjoyed in Dublin and in Ireland's other major cities; Cork, Waterford, Galway, Limerick and Belfast.

English is the predominant language spoken in Ireland today. The Irish use it so effectively that it is said that better English is spoken in Ireland than anywhere else in the world!

Ireland is beautiful – much of the countryside remains unspoilt providing an excellent natural habitat for a flourishing flora and fauna. Ireland's landscape provides a rich environment for the many outdoor leisure pursuits for which it is famous. Water sports, hill walking, rock climbing and caving are just a few of the many activities, which can be enjoyed when taking a break from study.

Ireland enjoys a temperate climate influenced by the relatively warm waters of the Gulf stream in whose path the island lies. During the winter months the temperatures rarely drop below freezing and snow is uncommon. The coldest and wettest months are December and January, which have mean temperatures of between 4 and 7 degrees Celsius. July and August are the warmest months with mean temperatures of between 14 and 16 degrees Celsius, rarely rising above 20 degrees. We get many rain showers, one of the main reasons why our landscape is so green!

Travel within Ireland is easy and all areas of the country are accessible through train or bus services. The main airports in the country are in Dublin, Shannon, Cork or Belfast, but there are also a number of regional airports. All offer very regular (and often low cost) services to and from most European cities. Ferry services operate from several ports on the East and South coasts to England, Scotland, Wales and France. Students holding an International Student Identity Card (ISIC) can generally avail of discounts on public transport. For further details contact USIT at www.usit.ie The Gaelic Athletic Association – Cumann Luthchleas Gael is Ireland's sporting and cultural organisation that has a presence on all five continents. It is a volunteer led, community based organisation that promotes the indigenous teams of hurling and Gaelic football and also promotes ladies football, camogie, handball and rounders.

The association has its headquarters at Croke Park in Dublin. Croke Park stadium, which was redeveloped between 1993 and 2003, has a capacity of 82,300 and hosts some of the highest profile events in the Irish sporting calendar.



CONTACTS & LINKS – Ireland

Websites Providing General Information on Ireland:

- ❑ Ask Ireland – Irish Government directory for Ireland – www.ask-ireland.com
- ❑ Browse Ireland – Directory of websites on Ireland – www.browseireland.com
- ❑ DORAS - Directory of websites on Ireland and Irish subjects – www.doras.ie
- ❑ Go Ireland – General Information on Ireland – www.goireland.ie
- ❑ Irish Government Websites – www.gov.ie
- ❑ Online access to Irish Government information and support – www.oasis.gov.ie
- ❑ The Irish Independent – Major Irish daily newspaper – www.independent.ie
- ❑ The Irish Times – Major Irish daily newspaper – www.ireland.com