

Understand Dublin

DUBLIN TODAY180

Dublin is finding ways to thrive in the face of a crippling economic crisis.

HISTORY182

Dublin's fortunes were long defined and dictated by its nearest neighbour, but in recent decades it has cast off Britain's influence.

LITERARY DUBLIN195

A Unesco World City of Literature, Dublin's literary credentials are renowned and constantly being renewed.

MUSICAL DUBLIN 200

Dublin's deep well of musical genius continues to quench the thirst, from traditional to techno and all styles in between.

ARCHITECTURE 203

The dominant architectural style is Georgian, and Dublin is one of the world's best cities in which to find it.

Dublin Today

Times are tough and austerity – a catch-all term for the unforgiving program of forced cuts and revenue increases that Ireland has been dealing with of late – is neither an abstract concept nor a temporary inconvenience. Dubliners, steeled by centuries of tough times, have adjusted accordingly, but the pain is profound and ongoing.

Best on Film

Adam and Paul (2004; Lenny Abrahamson) Mark O'Halloran and Tom Murphy put in compelling and convincing performances as two junkies from the inner-city projects desperate for a fix. It's funny, pithy and occasionally silly, but a great debut for Abrahamson nonetheless.

The Dead (1987; John Huston) Based on a short story from James Joyce's *Dubliners*, *The Dead* focuses on a dinner party in Dublin at the end of the 19th century and specifically the thoughts of one of the party goers. A difficult task for Huston in his last film, and he pulls it off with aplomb.

Best in Print

Dubliners (1914; James Joyce) In our humble opinion, one of the most perfectly written collections of short stories ever; 15 poignant and powerful tales of Dubliners and the moments that define their lives. Even if you never visit, read this book.

New Dubliners (2005; edited by Oona Frawley) The likes of Maeve Binchy, Dermot Bolger, Roddy Doyle, Colum McCann and Joseph O'Connor lend their respective talents to creating short stories about modern-day Dublin.

Economic Bailouts

Ever since the infamous bank guarantee of October 2008 – when the six Irish pillar banks left dangerously exposed by the Global Financial Crisis were given a blanket guarantee of all their liabilities (totalling €440 billion) by a panicked government – Ireland has been mired in a profound economic crisis. The guarantee expired in 2010 and the government was forced to turn to the EU, the European Financial Stability Fund and the International Monetary Fund (IMF) – commonly referred to as the 'troika' – for a bailout, totalling roughly €85 billion. This money has to be repaid, and the terms set by the troika – who show up every three months for a progress report – have resulted in one draconian budget after another.

Political Rhetoric

A change of government in 2011 – which saw Fianna Fáil decimated and the election of Fine Gael in coalition with the Labour Party – was initially greeted with cautious hope, but that hope soon gave way to despair when the pre-election rhetoric about creating jobs and making 'Ireland the best small country in the world to do business in' was revealed to be just that – rhetoric.

Doing More with Less

Spend any length of time in a Dubliner's company and you'll soon hear their version of what went wrong, who's to blame and what the future holds, but no matter which version you get, you'll quickly recognise how frustrated most people are. Unemployment is at a 20-year high, and with more than 3000 people leaving Ireland every month, emigration is now at its highest point since the Famine. Mortgage distress – the horrendous by-product of the burst property bubble – is a