

DUBLIN

ENCOUNTER

FIONN DAVENPORT

Dublin Encounter

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FIONN DAVENPORT

Half Italian and a lifelong supporter of Liverpool Football Club, Fionn is the perfect Dubliner, in love with the city of his birth but one eye forever on somewhere else. He's left his city many times – for years at a stretch – but always he returns, because it's the only place on earth that treats gallows humour as high art; why look for a straight answer when a funny one is far more satisfying?



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Bringing portraiture to the masses in Grafton St (p38)

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THIS IS DUBLIN

Definition of a top class city: a place that makes virtue out of vice, knows exactly where to find fun, and doesn't worry about getting any sleep. Welcome to Dublin, contender for greatest European city.

Dubs can be brutally unsentimental about their city, which mightn't come across as quite so sexy or sultry as other European capitals, but Dublin, they'll tell you, has *personality*, which is way more important than good looks and will last far longer.

So, what is it that makes Dublin so special?

One, it's small. The city centre is bordered by two canals, north and south, and you can get anywhere on foot (or, as Dubliners might say, at least anywhere that's worth going). Two, it's lively. With one of the youngest populations of any city in Europe, Dublin is alive with bars, restaurants and nightlife and full of people who know how to live it large. Three, it's friendly. Lift a map to waist-level and you'll attract a host of locals who'll show you where to go and will probably walk part of the way with you. Four, it's cosmopolitan. Gone are the days when avocados were considered exotic and olive oil was only available from chemists. With a healthy and sizeable influx of foreign nationals over the last decade, Dublin has become a proper multicultural hub, something that has given the city's arts and culinary scene a good kick in the pants.

Oh yes, and there's the sights – although you'll be having such a good time you might not get to experience the wonders of the city's many museums and galleries, or take in the diverse architecture of its elegant Georgian squares and modernist docklands.

Dublin oozes character: it is a city whose sociability and soul will stay with you long after you travel home, and will guarantee that you'll soon be booking tickets for your return.

Top left Just me and my guitar – street musician in Temple Bar **Top right** Peacock fanlights, elegant columns and coloured doors epitomise Georgian Dublin **Bottom** Ornate iconography in the *Book of Kells* housed at Trinity College (p40)