



Dublin

POP 1.27 MILLION / AREA 921 SQ KM

Includes ➔

Sights.....	65
Tours.....	97
Festivals & Events.....	98
Sleeping.....	99
Eating.....	103
Drinking & Nightlife.....	113
Entertainment.....	120
Shopping.....	125
Around Dublin.....	132

Best Places to Eat

- ➔ Chapter One (p112)
- ➔ Da Mimmo's (p111)
- ➔ Restaurant Patrick Guilbaud (p110)
- ➔ Musashi Noodles & Sushi Bar (p112)
- ➔ Fumbally Cafe (p111)

Best Places to Stay

- ➔ Aberdeen Lodge (p103)
- ➔ Isaacs Hostel (p102)
- ➔ Merrion (p101)
- ➔ Number 31 (p101)
- ➔ Radisson Blu Royal Hotel (p100)

Why Go?

Sultry rather than sexy, Dublin exudes personality as only those who've managed to turn careworn into carefree can. The city has seen its fair share of triumph and disaster in recent years, but it treats both as imposters and continues to grind out the good times, which have finally become that bit easier after the crash and burn of the recession. They do so through their music, their art and their literature – things which Dubs often take for granted but which, once brought to mind, generate immense pride.

There are fascinating museums, mouth-watering restaurants and the best range of entertainment available anywhere in Ireland – and that's not including the pub, the ubiquitous centre of the city's social life and an absolute must for any visitor. And should you wish to get away from it all, the city has a handful of seaside towns at its edges that make for wonderful day trips.

When to Go

- ➔ March brings the marvellous mayhem of St Patrick's Festival, with 600,000 parade viewers.
- ➔ The Taste of Dublin and Forbidden Fruit festivals are in June, featuring the best of food and music.
- ➔ The last two weeks of September host the Dublin Fringe Festival, which is followed by the main theatre festival in October.
- ➔ Although impossible to predict, the best weather is often in September, to make up for a regularly disappointing August!

History

Dublin's been making noise since around 500 BC, when a bunch of intrepid Celts camped at a ford over the River Liffey, which is the provenance of the city's tough-to-pronounce Irish name, Baile Átha Cliath (*Bawl-ya Aw-ha Klee-ya*; Town of the Hurdle Ford). The Celts went about their merry way for a thousand years or so, but it wasn't until the Vikings showed up that Dublin was urbanised in any significant way. By the 9th century raids from the north had become a fact of Irish life, and some of the fierce Danes chose to stay rather than simply rape, pillage and depart. They intermarried with the Irish and established a vigorous trading port at the point where the River Poddle joined the Liffey in a *dubh linn* (black pool). Today there's little trace of the Poddle, which has been channelled underground and flows under St Patrick's Cathedral to dribble into the Liffey by the Capel St (Grattan) Bridge.

The Normans arrived in the 12th century, and so began the slow process of subjugating Ireland to Anglo-Norman (then British)

rule, during which Dublin generally played the role of Anglo-Norman, later British, bandleader. By the beginning of the 18th century, the squalid city packed with poor Catholics hardly reflected the imperial pretensions of its Anglophile burghers. The great and the good – aka the Protestant ascendancy – wanted big improvements, and they set about transforming what was in essence still a medieval town into a modern, Anglo-Irish metropolis. Roads were widened, landscaped squares laid out and new town houses built, all in a proto-Palladian style that soon became known as Georgian after the kings then on the English throne. For a time, Dublin was the second-largest city in the British Empire and all was very, very good – unless you were part of the poor, mostly Catholic masses living in the city's ever-developing slums.

The Georgian boom came to a sudden and dramatic halt after the Act of Union (1801), when Ireland was formally united with Britain and its separate parliament closed down. Dublin went from being the belle of the imperial ball to the annoying

EASTER RISING CENTENARY

Amid the tumult of Dublin's WWI centenary commemorations, the marking of the centenary of the Easter Rising in 1916 is undoubtedly the most important, and the most fraught with social and political tensions.

In Easter week 1916, rebels took over landmark buildings in the city centre and declared an independent Irish republic, only to be defeated by British troops; the leaders of the rebellion were then executed. The events were not just a defining moment in Ireland's struggle for freedom; their significance and interpretation remain the subject of contentious debate today.

As Dublin geared up to mark the centenary with a year-long program of events, there was plenty of discussion as to how best to pay tribute, what it all meant and – most controversially – who should be commemorated. There were contentious calls to invite members of the British royal family so as to acknowledge both Britain's role in the events and, more importantly, Ireland's positive relationship with its nearest neighbour today. Despite an immensely popular and successful visit by Prince Charles in 2015, the government decided not to extend an official invitation to the events.

Less controversial was the call to make it an all-inclusive event, which meant commemorating not just the rebels of 1916 but all those Irish men and women who died during this time, whether fighting against British rule or for the British in the fields of France and Flanders; in excess of 350,000 Irish enlisted to fight for Britain in WWI, and more than 30,000 died. Ireland's war dead have largely been ignored since independence – it's long been an uncomfortable historical incongruity that so many Irish gave their lives for Britain while at the same time others sacrificed theirs for independence from her. Most Irish schoolchildren learned about the sacrifices of Pádraig Pearse, James Connolly and other leaders of the rising, while never learning that Ireland suffered three times as many fatalities during the exact same period on the battlefields of WWI.

Both the government and the Sinn Féin political party planned a series of events throughout 2016; see www.ireland.ie and www.sinnfein.ie for more information.