

ROAD TRIP ESSENTIALS

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Ireland Driving Guide

The motorway system makes for easy travelling between major towns, but the spidery network of secondary and tertiary roads makes for the most scenic driving.

DRIVING LICENCE & DOCUMENTS

EU licences are treated like Irish ones. Holders of non-EU licences from countries other than the US or Canada should obtain an International Driving Permit (IDP) from their home automobile association.

You must carry your driving licence at all times.

INSURANCE

All cars on public roads must be insured. Most hire companies quote basic insurance in their initial quote.

If you are bringing your own vehicle, check that your insurance will cover you in Ireland. When driving your own car, you'll need a minimum insurance known as third-party insurance.

HIRING A CAR

Compared with many countries (especially the USA), hire rates are expensive in Ireland; you should expect to pay around €250 a week for a small car (unlimited mileage), but rates go up at busy times and drop off in quieter seasons. The main players:

Avis (www.avis.ie)

Budget (www.budget.ie)

Europcar (www.europcar.ie)

Hertz (www.hertz.ie)

Sixt (www.sixt.ie)

Thrifty (www.thrifty.ie)

Driving Fast Facts

- ➔ **Right or left?** Drive on the left
- ➔ **Manual or automatic?** Manual
- ➔ **Legal driving age** 18
- ➔ **Top speed limit** 120km/h (motorways; 70mph in Northern Ireland)
- ➔ **Best radio station** Newstalk 106-108

The major car-hire companies have different web pages on their websites for different countries, so the price of a car in Ireland can differ from the same car's price in the USA or Australia. You have to surf a lot of sites to get the best deals. **Nova Car Hire** (www.novacarhire.com) acts as an agent for Alamo, Budget, European and National, and offers greatly discounted rates.

Other tips:

- ➔ Most cars are manual; automatic cars are available, but they're more expensive to hire.
- ➔ If you're travelling from the Republic into Northern Ireland, it's important to be sure that your insurance covers journeys to the North.
- ➔ The majority of hire companies won't rent you a car if you're under 23 and haven't had a valid driving licence for at least a year.
- ➔ Some companies in the Republic won't rent to you if you're aged 74 or over; there's no upper age limit in the North.
- ➔ Motorbikes and mopeds are not available for hire in Ireland.