



Ireland



Background Celtic tribes arrived in Ireland between 600 and 150 B.C. Norse invasions that began in the late 8th century finally ended when King Brian BORU defeated the Danes in 1014. Norman invasions began in the 12th century and set off more than seven centuries of Anglo-Irish struggle marked by fierce rebellions and harsh repressions. The Irish famine of the mid-19th century caused an almost 25-percent decline in the island's population through starvation, disease, and emigration. The population of the island continued to fall until the 1960s, but over the last 50 years, Ireland's high birthrate has made it demographically one of the youngest populations in the EU. The modern Irish state traces its origins to the failed 1916 Easter Monday Uprising that galvanized nationalist sentiment. The ensuing guerrilla war led to independence from the UK in 1921 with the signing of the Anglo-Irish Treaty and the creation of the Irish Free State. The treaty was deeply controversial in Ireland, in part because it helped solidify the country's partition, with six of the 32 counties remaining in the UK as Northern Ireland. The split between pro-Treaty and anti-Treaty partisans led to the Irish Civil War (1922-23). The traditionally dominant political parties in Ireland, Fine Gael and Fianna Fail, are de facto descendants of the opposing sides of the treaty debate. Ireland declared itself a republic in 1949 and formally left the British Dominion.

Beginning in the 1960s, deep sectarian divides between the Catholic and Protestant populations and systemic discrimination in Northern Ireland erupted into years of violence known as the Troubles. In 1998, the governments of Ireland and the UK, along with most political parties in Northern Ireland, reached the Belfast/Good Friday Agreement with the support of the US. This agreement helped end the Troubles and initiated a new phase of cooperation between the Irish and British Governments.

Ireland was neutral in World War II and continues its policy of military neutrality. Ireland joined the European Community in 1973 and the euro-zone currency union in 1999. The economic boom years of the Celtic Tiger (1995-2007) saw rapid economic growth that came to an abrupt end in 2008 with the meltdown of the Irish banking system. As a small, open economy, Ireland has excelled at courting foreign direct investment, especially from US multi-nationals, which has helped the economy recover from the financial crisis and insulated it somewhat from the economic shocks of the COVID-19 pandemic.

Capital	name: Dublin
Government type	parliamentary republic
Area	total : 70,273 sq km land: 68,883 sq km water: 1,390 sq km
Climate	temperate maritime; modified by North Atlantic Current; mild winters, cool summers; consistently humid; overcast about half the time
Natural resources	natural gas, peat, copper, lead, zinc, silver, barite, gypsum, limestone, dolomite
Population	total: 5,233,461 (2024 est.)
Population growth rate	0.93% (2024 est.)
Ethnic groups	Irish 76.6%, Irish travelers 0.6%, other White 9.9%, Asian 3.3%, Black 1.5%, other (includes Arab, Roma, and persons of mixed backgrounds) 2%, unspecified 2.6% (2022 est.)
Religions	Roman Catholic 69.2% (includes lapsed), Protestant 3.7% (Church of Ireland/England/Anglican/Episcopalian 2.5%, other Protestant 1.2%), Orthodox 2%, other Christian 0.9%, Muslim 1.6%, other 1.4%, agnostic/atheist 0.1%, none 14.5%, unspecified 6.7% (2022 est.)
Languages	English (official, the language generally used), Irish (Gaelic or Gaeilge) (official, spoken by approximately 37.7% of the population)
Executive branch	chief of state: President Michael D. HIGGINS (since 11 November 2011) head of government: Taoiseach (Prime Minister) Michael MARTIN (since 23 January 2025)
Legislative branch	legislature name: Parliament (Oireachtas)
Diplomatic representation in the US	chief of mission: Ambassador Geraldine BYRNE NASON (since 16 September 2022)
Diplomatic representation from the US	chief of mission: Ambassador Edward S. WALSH (since 1 July 2025)
Economic overview	high-income, export-oriented EU economy; large multinational business sector contributes to growth and tax revenues but poses volatility risks; high living standards; strong labor market challenged by skill shortages and aging workforce
Real GDP (purchasing power parity)	\$620.544 billion (2024 est.) \$613.056 billion (2023 est.) \$648.943 billion (2022 est.)
Real GDP per capita	\$115,300 (2024 est.) \$115,500 (2023 est.) \$124,500 (2022 est.)
Exports	\$761.876 billion (2023 est.) \$763.233 billion (2022 est.) \$722.655 billion (2021 est.)
Exports - partners	USA 28%, Germany 11%, UK 8%, Belgium 8%, China 7% (2023)

Exports - commodities	vaccines, packaged medicine, nitrogen compounds, integrated circuits, hormones (2023)
Imports	\$580.399 billion (2023 est.) \$536.882 billion (2022 est.) \$500.334 billion (2021 est.)
Imports - partners	UK 20%, USA 17%, France 10%, China 7%, Germany 7% (2023)
Imports - commodities	aircraft, nitrogen compounds, vaccines, packaged medicine, integrated circuits (2023)

Population Pyramid

