

WHAT MAKES IRISH CULTURE SO SPECIAL?

Ireland is a country of 5 million inhabitants. It is often known through various symbols like clover, harp, the orange, white and green flag and Leprechauns. The official languages are English and Irish (Gaelic). Irish culture includes customs and traditions, language, dance, music, art, literature, folklore, cuisine and sports associated with Ireland and its people.

Dance

Here are six Irish dance styles specific to Ireland:

- Traditional Step Dancing : it consists of dances on traditional music with a fast tempo on which the dancers must perform series of steps. Only feet and legs move in horizontal position
- Modern Step Dancing: unlike traditional step dance, it is performed under modern music using the technique of ballet
- Set Dancing: performed in sets using the Flat Down technique
- Ceili Dancing: a traditional Irish dance performed in pairs with the Ballet Up technique under traditional music
- The Sean-Nos Dancing is the only one performed solo and is distinguished from other Irish dances by the freedom of arm movements.
- Two-Handed Irish Dance: performed in the same way as Set Dancing, but only on polkas, Irish bagpipes, waltzes and jigs



Riverdance is not really a type of Irish dance, but rather a theatrical performance that has brought this Irish cultural art to a global audience.

In Ireland, there is no real traditional costume. However, the kilt made of real wool cloth was worn by the Irish because it was a traditional Gaelic piece of clothing and during Irish step dancing competitions, the dancers wear elaborate dresses and wigs.

Music

Traditional Irish music has existed for centuries. The oldest music known in Ireland is that of the harpists of the Gaelic clans dating from the ninth century. The harp has been the emblem of the country for at least the 13th century.

Bodhrán is a traditional Irish instrument, it is a large drum covered with a stretched beast's skin and struck with a stick. It is used in traditional music to give rhythm and encourage dancing.

Uilleann pipes is a bagpipe that has bewitched the public since the 5th century. Mastering this popular instrument (whose name means "neck pipe") takes years.

Celtic harp is a traditional Irish instrument, it is even featured on the euro coins of Ireland and even inspired a bridge of the city (the Samuel Beckett in Dublin). In 1792, the Belfast

harp festival saw the best players compete in a competition. Today, Brian Boru's beautiful decorated ancient harp can be admired in The Long Room Library at Trinity College in Dublin.

Food

Ireland has many recipes of its own that add to the list of symbols that make the image of the country.

Irish



stew is the unmissable Irish specialty. It is a lamb stew served with many vegetables, such as potatoes, onions and carrots. For seasoning, parsley is widely used. The particularity of this recipe comes from its Guinness-based sauce and butter.

pie
to

Shepherd's pie, contrary to what its name suggests is not a pie that we are dealing with but a lamb's hash, the reference to the shepherd indicating the type of meat. In the case of beef, it is called cottage pie. This dish from England spread very quickly in Ireland and became a classic of the local cuisine.

As a seafaring nation, Ireland could not forget to celebrate the products of the ocean and make them traditional recipes, consumed everywhere and by everyone, whatever the season. The most beautiful and common example is the seafood chowder, a typical fish soup prepared with fresh vegetables (potatoes, celery, carrots) and fish of the day (salmon, haddock, hake, etc.).

If there's anything the Irish love, it's beer so it's commonly included in recipes, e.g. the Guinness pie, a meat and beer pie.

Known as the Dublin pot, the coddle is a traditional Dublin dish consisting of sausage, bacon, onions and potatoes, cooked in stew in chicken broth. It is usually served on Saturday evenings, accompanied by a few beers.

It would be an insult to Ireland not to mention salmon! Whether it's fresh, smoked, dried or filleted, it's probably the most iconic fish in the country.

The Colcannon, a thick purée made with potatoes, kale, milk and onions. Some variants include ham, even bacon. This is the traditional Halloween dish, where a coin, button or ring is hidden...

Whether for breakfast, tea time or even as an accompaniment to a meal, scone is a pastry resembling a round roll sometimes accompanied by jam and a piece of butter.



Sport

Sport occupies a huge place in Ireland. The most popular sports on the island are Gaelic sports, e.g. Gaelic football or hurling.

Hurling is a collective sport that has been practiced for 3000 years and is one of Ireland's traditional sports. Its female version is called camogie. The game is played 15 to 15 on a Gaelic football field and with a lacrosse stick like field hockey. Hurling is very popular: all schools and colleges in Ireland have their own teams. As for Gaelic football, the competitions involve teams from counties.

Gaelic football is the most popular sport in Ireland, attracting more than 80,000 spectators to the finals in Croke Park. Unlike football, Gaelic football is played at the national level with teams representing the counties. And the main competition is the All-Ireland Senior Football Championship.

Rugby XV is one of the main sports in Ireland. However, it is well ahead of Gaelic sports and football. Rugby has a very strong academic tradition. Ireland's most famous rugby school is Blackrock College in Dublin.

Football is the most popular of the non-Gaelic sports. Despite a slow and low-level local championship, the Irish are very fond of football matches. They refer to the English championship where all the best Irish players play. Golf is also very popular in Ireland. There are several hundred golf courses on the island. Golf is very present on Irish television, both for local and international competitions. The most famous golf courses are those of Portmarnock, Ballybunion and the Royal Golf Club of Portrush.



Artefacts



The Celts have left very few written traces of their civilization, they have duly assimilated the unique motifs of the ancient Danubian tradition.

The works left are mainly small metallic objects that most often accompany known and important persons such as precious metal or bronze adornments, decorated weapons, metal trimmings of tanks of combat or parade, elements of beverage services, etc.

Stone sculptures are few in number, but are very important, indeed, they can only be representations of a religious character. They must be representations of (anonymous) deities of the Celtic pantheon.

Since Celts did not use writing, their objects are also means of communication, composed of bones, pottery, iron, stones, etc.