



The Great
Canadian
Travel Group
Inc.

1349 Portage Avenue
Winnipeg, Manitoba
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1-800-661-3830

www.greatcanadiantravel.com

Northern Ireland General Information

Northern Ireland is located on the northeast corner of the island of Ireland and shares a border in the south and west with the Republic of Ireland. It was created in 1921 when Ireland was partitioned between Northern Ireland and Southern Ireland by the Government of Ireland Act 1920. Northern Ireland consists of 6 counties of the total of 32 counties on the island and is part of the United Kingdom. Its largest city is Belfast, with Derry being the second largest urban center. Northern Ireland is known for its magnificent green scenery, wealth of folklore, traditional music, lively pubs and Norman castles.



Documentation

Canadian passports are required for travel to Northern Ireland. Your passport must be valid for the expected duration of your stay. You do not need a Visa for visits up to 90 days. You may be required to show proof of a return ticket and sufficient funds for your stay.

Airports

The largest airport in Northern Ireland is Belfast Airport (BFS). It is located about 23 kilometers northwest of Belfast's city center. There is also Belfast City Airport (BHD), just 5km from the city centre. These two airports connect Belfast with the rest of the UK and Europe, with some other international flights and charters.

Location and Geography

Northern Ireland occupies about 17% of the total area of the island of Ireland, which sits west of Great Britain between the Irish Sea to the east and the Atlantic Ocean to the west. The topography of Northern Ireland consists of relatively flat, inland plains and coastal highlands, including the beautiful Glens of Antrim along the Causeway Coastal Road. The coastline is indented with many bays, some lined with wide strands and sandy beaches.



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Population

The population of Northern Ireland is approximately 1.9 million people. About 295,000 people live in Belfast city proper with the Belfast Metropolitan Area being home to about 585,000 (nearly 1/3 of the country's total).



People and Culture

Northern Ireland is known as a welcoming country. Many of its residents identify as Ulster Scots, descendants of Scottish people that emigrated into Ireland. The Northern Irish maintain a vibrant folk culture with many people participating in traditional dancing, music, storytelling and artisan hobbies. Irish Pubs are the focal point for many small villages and urban centers and are hotspots for Irish culture with traditional music and world-famous Irish beers, whiskeys and other spirits being served.

Language

The official language of Northern Ireland is English, with many people speaking Irish (Gaeilge). English is the universally spoken language in Ireland.

Economy

Northern Ireland's economy has traditionally been industrial based, most notably in shipbuilding, rope manufacture, textiles (linen) and pottery. Agriculture still plays a significant role, especially the dairy industry, potatoes, barley and wheat, along with areas of fruit production. Most heavy industry has been replaced by services, including the tourism industry. Popular places to visit include the Titanic Museum in Belfast, the Causeway Coastal Road, Giant's Causeway, Bushmills Whiskey Distillery, the walled city of Derry and the Royal Portrush Golf Course (host to the 2019 Open).





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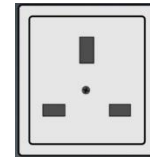
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Climate and Weather

Northern Ireland has a maritime climate influenced by the Atlantic Ocean. Temperatures are mild and have little variation based on season. The average temperatures in January and February range between 4°C and 7°C and between 14°C and 16°C in July and August. Snow is rare and appears mostly in the mountain ranges and temperatures in winter barely drop below freezing.

Electricity

Voltage is 230V. Frequency is 50Hz and power socket type is G.



Currency

The official currency of Northern Ireland is the Pound Sterling (the British Pound). One Pound is equal to 100 pence (penny). Pounds are available in 4 denomination bank notes and 8 denomination coins. Currency exchanges are available at banks, exchange offices, some airports and at ATMs.

Credit Cards

Visa and Mastercard are widely accepted across Northern Ireland. American Express is accepted at some places but not all. Northern Ireland uses chip and pin or chip and signature systems for card transactions and swipe only cards are not always accepted.

Business and Banking Hours

Banks are generally open Monday to Friday 9:30am – 4:30pm. Some banks are open on Saturdays as well. Shops and business are generally open Monday – Saturday 9:00am – 5:30pm or 10:00am-8:00pm with some shops staying open until 10:00pm. Sunday hours are generally 1:00pm-6:00pm.

Tipping

Tipping is not mandatory in Northern Ireland but leaving a 10-15% gratuity for good service is recommended. Some restaurants will automatically add a service charge to your bill as a predetermined gratuity, usually 12%, so in those establishments a further tip would not be given. Many service providers factor tips into their prices.

Telephone and Emergency

The international dialing code for Northern Ireland is +44. To dial Canada or the United States dial 00 1- (area code)-phone number.

Emergency Services

In an **emergency** dial 999 for fire, police and ambulance.



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Health Information

Northern Ireland's healthcare is provided through the National Health Service (NHS), used by the vast majority of people, although a private healthcare sector exists. Travel insurance is recommended for all travel to Northern Ireland. Remember to take all prescription and over the counter medications you may need with you.

Tourist Information Centers

There are tourist information centers located in major cities. Some are in smaller towns and villages as well. They offer local and reliable advice on attractions, must-sees, directions and provide other information for tourists.

National Holidays

January 1st – New Year's Day

Celebrating the start of a New Year. Some villages hold parades and celebrations. It is a day off for the general population and most businesses and schools are closed.

March 17th – St. Patrick's Day

Celebrating the Irish Saint Patrick and Irish culture. Parades and festivals celebrating Irish Culture take place throughout Ireland. Some festivals can last for the week. It is a day off for the general population and most businesses and schools are closed.

Date varies – Good Friday

Good Friday is an occasion for Christians to commemorate the crucifixion of Jesus. It is a traditional day of rest and worship but not a public holiday.

Date varies – Easter Sunday

Easter Sunday is an occasion for Christians to celebrate Jesus' resurrection. It is not a public holiday and most businesses operate on normal Sunday hours.

Date Varies – Easter Monday

The day following Easter Sunday. It commemorates the Easter Uprising of 1916 and people attend sporting events and local fairs. It is a day off for the general population and most businesses and schools are closed.



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First Monday in May - May Day

Celebrating worker's rights and having a traditional Celtic Festival on the first Monday of May. It is a day off for the general population and most businesses and schools are closed.

Last Monday in May – Spring Bank Holiday

July 12 – Battle of the Boyne (Orangemen's Day)

On the night of the 11th huge bonfires are lit in Protestant areas. "The Twelfth" is marked by marches by the Orange Order across Northern Ireland and is, undeniably, a contentious holiday between Protestant and Catholic citizens.

Last Monday in August – Bank Holiday

Falling on the first Monday of August. It is a day off for the general population and most businesses and schools are closed.

December 24th – Christmas Eve

Marking the start of the Christmas and New Year holiday season. Most businesses operate on normal operating hours.

December 25th – Christmas Day

Celebrating the birth of Jesus with special church services and festival meals. It is a day off for the general population and most businesses and schools are closed.

December 26th – Boxing Day

The day after Christmas is a day off for the general population and most businesses and schools are closed.

December 31st- New Year's Eve

Celebrating the beginning of a New Year. Most people attend parties lasting late into the night. Business operate on normal operating hours.