



Packing List and General Information for your trip to Ireland

Travelling to Ireland

Failte ... or WELCOME! All of us at The Institute of Study Abroad look forward to your visit to Ireland. Here is some information to help you prepare for coming to Ireland.

We have two centers for our programs – A city center Dublin hotel, and our ISAI campus in Donegal. We will send you our instructions to meet us closer to your travel date - and we will do this by WhatsApp so please make sure you join the WhatsApp group for your trip. See details below.

Our Campus is located in County Donegal, on the Atlantic Coast. It takes approx 3.5 hours to travel from Dublin to Donegal. This area of Ireland is famous for breath-taking scenery, wonderful history, and the friendliest people in Ireland. Although we are based in Donegal, we travel to many other parts of Ireland, including Dublin City and the counties of Meath, Cavan, Fermanagh, Sligo, Leitrim, and Derry.

County Donegal is one of the most one of the most historic, beautiful, and scenic counties in the Republic. We are in the town of Bundoran, which is famous for surfing and for a traditional Irish welcome. We are very close to the Ocean, known here as 'The Wild Atlantic Way'. Weather is usually a daily mix of sunshine, rain, and wind, and you need to bring appropriate clothing depending on the time of year.

When you are booking your flights, our start date is the day you DEPART THE USA. The end date is the day you return to the USA (Or make your own plans).



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Accommodation

Our ISAI Campus is on the main street of Bundoran, and it is called the Atlantic Apartotel. There are self-catering apartments for your comfort, and within the same building, we have a large comfortable lobby, the 51 Main Street pub, a small pool, hot tub, and sauna. Our classroom areas, and our breakfast area are in the same building as your apartment.

The accommodation has free Wi-Fi and internet access in most of the apartments, and all lobby and public areas. Please note that Wi-Fi quality can vary according to weather conditions, usage, signal strength and other conditions that are beyond our control. Almost all of the indoor places that we will visit will have free Wi-Fi.

Apartments are usually shared between 2-4 persons, and there is a night porter available and reception assistance at all times. Participants can request to stay with friends, if travelling together. Private/Non-shared accommodation can be requested before your trip begins, but please note this may incur a supplemental fee.

If you are on a meal plan, you can expect a continental breakfast of cereal, tea/coffee, breads and pastries, cold meats & fruit, and a two-course restaurant-style dinner most evenings. Vegetarians and Vegans are easily accommodated. Other dietary considerations should be advised in advance when filling out your Trip Forms. You also have your own cooking facilities and access to local stores, and you can stock up on favourite snacks and suppers.



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What to Pack

Irish weather is never extreme- but it is very unpredictable, and very changeable. The norm is for rain at some part of the day, it can be blustery, especially along the Atlantic Coast where we are based.

This trip usually involves some walking, sometimes off-road across grass, bogland and beach areas. You should be able to walk moderate distances comfortably.

You need a sturdy waterproof jacket that is warm and comfortable. Rain boots are highly recommended. You should have comfortable waterproof shoes or rain boots for field trips and comfortable sneakers for indoors. Layers are always good: Irish weather can change a lot in one day! A rain poncho to wear over your jacket can also work. You can get lightweight waterproof pants to wear over regular pants too. A tip- if you don't want to spend a lot of money on weather-proof clothes or shoes, go to your local thrift store. You can donate these thrift items in Ireland if you don't want to bring them back.

T-shirts, shorts, sweaters & comfortable pants are required April-September. October-March add extra layers please. Warm nightclothes (pyjamas) are advised. Bring at least one swimsuit – there are swim and sauna options on site.

Sunblock and sunglasses are recommended, but so is a woolly hat and plenty of socks! Irish summer weather can be quite warm, or quite chilly, (all in the same day). Irish winter weather can be chilly and windy and wet - Please also remember we are never far from stores where toiletries, clothes and other essentials can be easily acquired. We recommend a comfortable, casual wardrobe, suitable for outdoors.

All bed linen is supplied, but we recommend a comfortable pillow or neck support for travel. Sheets, duvets & towels are provided- please bring your own washcloth, bathroom toiletries, and a UK-USA converter for any electric appliances you have. Hair dryers available on request.



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Electrical Appliances

All USA appliances will need a USA-UK/IRELAND converter.

PLEASE NOTE - THERE IS A DIFFERENCE BETWEEN EUROPEAN CONVERTERS AND UK/IRELAND CONVERTERS. IT MUST BE A USA-UK/IRELAND CONVERTER. This includes chargers for laptops, phones, hairdryers etc. Converters can be purchased at the airport. You cannot plug US plugs into Irish sockets- the electrical current is stronger here and will damage your equipment. You can get a useful, cheap converter at the airport when you fly.

PLEASE be advised that we will not take responsibility for the LOSS or the THEFT of your belongings. We also recommend insuring any valuable items for loss, damage, or theft. Make sure that expensive items are tagged, marked, or photographed, with your name.

There is free Wi-Fi in the building. Feel free to bring your laptop or tablet, but please ensure you take care of your valuables, as we cannot take responsibility for your items.

We ask all participants to only use their laptop or iPhone (etc.) during free time, and when it is not antisocial. Please be appropriate and kind in your use of social good to have some euro cash for tips and incidentals.



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Money

The currency in Ireland is the EURO (€). Most USA debit and credit cards work in Irish ATMS (if they have the maestro logo). The exception is American Express - not widely accepted here. Visa and Mastercard are fine. Revolut is fine and recommended. Check with your bank and ask them to make sure your card is valid for international use. Credit and debit cards are the most convenient way to manage your money. Almost everywhere we go has a cashless option, but it is good to have some euro cash for tips and incidentals. It is difficult to change cash dollars to euro once you leave the airport, so if you are planning to convert cash dollars to cash euro, do it in advance in your bank, or at Dublin Airport when you arrive.

Health and Medications

It is recommended for all travellers are the routine immunizations (i.e., MMR, IPV, influenza, etc.) and your Tetanus/diphtheria booster within the past ten years. Please do get your meds together and make sure you have a supply for your trip- there are meds available to you that may not be available here. Take your meds with you in your carry-on luggage, with glasses, lenses, inhalers, epi-pens etc. Please bring a prescription for your meds with you, also in your carry-on luggage. Please do bring an inhaler / epi-pen with you if you suffer from asthma or allergies. We advise you bring a small kit of meds for yourself for sniffles, sore throat, cough, travel sickness if you suffer from it. Sometimes, a combination of the recycled air on the long flight and the change of climate can cause you to have a day or two of what feels like a cold.

It is safe to drink water from the tap in Ireland, and standards of food hygiene are very good. However, due to the nature of the outdoor activities & rural field trips, we advise all participants to have a tetanus booster before they travel.



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Travel Insurance

You must have a personal travel insurance to come on an ISAIreland trip. You must include details of this insurance policy on your application paperwork.

A personal travel insurance is a smart move because it will protect you against any costs you might have in the event of a delay, a cancellation, illness or accidents, early travel home, and lots of other things. You should always have travel insurance, but ESPECIALLY for transatlantic travel, where delays are not unusual, but alternatives can be very expensive. You will be asked to give the details of your insurance policy on your application form. It usually costs from about \$80-\$120, but it can vary; but it is money so wisely spent, and it is compulsory for this trip. Trust us - this will be the smartest eighty bucks you will spend; get as much included as you can, and then you have the peace of mind of knowing that in the unlikely event of anything going wrong, your insurance is set up to take care of it. A visit to the doctor alone here would cost as much as a policy - protect yourself.

You can purchase a travel insurance policy from your own insurance provider, and airlines usually offer you a travel policy when you book flights. There are also many online sellers. If you are a frequent traveller, you may have an annual travel insurance policy, or have a family policy. Please check your cover includes Ireland and includes trip cancellation or trip disruption.

The Institute of Study Abroad can recommend LewerGlobal, and you can connect with them here:

<https://lewerglobal.com/study-abroad-ireland/>

Please note- if you have to cancel your trip for any reason or emergency, or if you miss part or all of your trip due to airline delays, weather, personal circumstances, ISAI will not be able to refund you or compensate you; we will refer you to your travel insurance policy.



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Customs Letter

A letter of invitation is often very useful at Irish Customs, it has the information that they want to know. You will receive this letter when you have fully completed your online application form. Print it off, carry it with you, and keep a version of it with you on your phone.

If you are travelling and are not yet 18 years old, you must also have a letter of permission from your parent/guardian with your customs letter.

Printing and Scanning Documents

It is not unusual for people to have boarding passes, custom letters, and other important info like phone numbers saved on your phone. That's great – until your phone battery dies, and then you can't access it. So, make yourself a wallet with the following documentation – your passport, your customs letter, this phone number:

INSTITUTE OF STUDY ABROAD IRELAND - +353 87 294 1232 (if in Ireland when you call this number it will be 087 294 1232)

The address of the place you will be staying: **Institute of Study Abroad Ireland,
Main Street Bundoran Donegal Ireland F94ER80**

A copy of any prescriptions you use, including meds & glasses.

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What to photograph before leaving

Your passport.

Your luggage – try to make sure you know the size and make of your suitcase, put some original identifiers on it if it's not distinctively patterned, – make sure you have your name label well secured to your luggage, and photos of a few angles on your phone.

Prescriptions of meds that you might need, dated for the duration of your stay, by your pharmacist.

A prescription for eyeglasses if you wear glasses or lenses and might need to replace.

What to bring in your Hand Luggage

Anything you cannot do without: Meds, glasses, phone chargers, cosmetic kit, customs letter, passport, and ticket, kindle, electronic cigarettes must be carried in hand luggage], your outdoor coat, shoes for outdoors, a change of underwear, wipes, hand sanitiser, a couple of masks.

A USA-UK converter for all electronics – please ensure it is USA-UK and not USA-Europe, that's different. Nothing made to plug-in in the USA will work in Ireland without a converter. As the voltage is higher here than in the USA, there's a chance you will damage your equipment if you try to plug it in here, without using the correct converter. You can buy a converter in the airport. You will need it for phone chargers, laptops, hair irons and hairdryers, it is essential.

Laundry

There is a laundry service locally. Bring a laundry bag with your name on it. If you take your laundry to hotel reception before 10am, and it will be returned usually the next day (not available Sunday). There is a fee (by weight) for this service, payable at reception.



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Sustainability

We believe in sustainability at ISAI. Please bring a water bottle and/or hot drink container that you can reuse for your coffees etc. Try to borrow rather than buy new equipment for your trip and pass it on to other travellers when you are done. Bring a lightweight bag for shopping - there is a charge for plastic bags in Ireland, we bring our own bags to the store.

What to Expect in Ireland

Ireland is a friendly country, and American visitors of all backgrounds, ethnicities and cultures are most welcome. We extend a very warm welcome to all our guests, and we create an inclusive atmosphere, which we expect all will respect.

Dublin is a busy, modern city, and especially busy in the summer. Like every city, there are people who will target tourists, with their wallets, phones, cameras etc. Participants should not carry all of their money, passports, cards in one place, and a waist-bag or inside pocket is recommended for money.

The same caution that applies to talking to strangers, making sure you are always with the group, and behaving in a safe and responsible manner applies as much in Ireland as it does anywhere else.

Smoking is banned indoors in all public venues and areas but is more prevalent outdoors and in public areas. The ISAI campus is strictly non-smoking, and there is no smoking on group activities or tours. If you smoke cigarettes, please ask about designated smoking areas and do not smoke in front of non-smoking participants or on the group field trips, or anywhere where smoking is banned.

Drugs are illegal and use thereof is forbidden. Participants who are in possession of or consume any illegal drugs will be immediately expelled from the program, without refund.



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Ireland is different. You cannot travel to an alternative culture and expect that things will be exactly as they are at home. Part of the experience is enjoying – maybe sometimes enduring- these differences! We will always do our best to help you have a wonderful time, but there are things you should know- yes, it rains a lot in Ireland, things work to “Irish time”, buildings are older, so showers, plumbing, heaters, and electrical systems can be full of surprises. Come prepared for difference and bring a positive attitude

Social Media

<https://www.facebook.com/studyabroadireland>

Twitter: @isaireand / Instagram: @studyabroadireland / TikTok: @Irelandglobal
Please follow us & share your social media posts with us.

We blog about our trips – if you’d like to see our posts and blogs, visit us on any of these platforms

Please follow us & share your social media posts with us.

We post on our social media platforms. We ask your permission to use photographs taken during the trip for our blog, and social media platforms. We do not post detailed names, addresses or personal information. If you would prefer not to be photographed or video-ed, please advise us of same in writing.

Group Contact

If your family need to get in contact with you urgently and cannot get through to you on your cell phone, here are some contacts. Please only use in emergency.

Business Office Manager Roisin McGloin admin@isaireland.com

ISA OFFICE NUMBER (in Ireland) 011 353 7198 41205

ISA email info@isaireland.com

Program Directors Dr. Niamh Hamill | John O’Connell | info@isaireland.com



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Whatsapp

Please join the trip WhatsApp Group. You will need to have the WhatsApp app on your phone – please do this, if even just for the duration of the trip.

Text us as soon as you read this at +353 87 294 1232 and tell us your first and last name, and the group you are travelling with. We will include you in the group. We can then communicate and address any questions you have before or during the program.

Finally- this program is one in which everyone is respected and included. We encourage laughter, teamwork, kindness, and fun. We do not tolerate discrimination or bullying of any kind.

If you need to ask any questions or discuss any concerns in advance of the program, please email Niamh at info@isaireland.com

There is no question too 'silly', and we know many people can have anxieties about issues that can be easily accommodated, so talk to us if you have any worries.

Quick Checklist

- Fill out the online paperwork on your institutions trip hub page (please contact info@isaireland.com or your trip coordinator if you have not received access to a trip waiver form)
- Print and save your Customs letter, attached to the email this paperwork came with.
- Double check passport, flight tickets, customs letter, any prescriptions
- Photograph your luggage, documents, and passport
- Have a hard copy of this, and your customs letter
- Text +353 87 294 1232 with your full name and school
- Read this whole document again and double check everything!

Safe travels, and feel free to email us if you need us info@isaireland.com
Niamh & John