

Ten interesting facts about Ireland

- 1 Kissing the Blarney Stone (Cloch na Blarnan) to gain the gift of eloquence doesn't seem to work.
- 2 One of Ireland's oldest festivals is Aonoch an Phuic (Fair of the he-goat, or Puck Fair), held in Killorglin. A goat is crowned King Puck and the celebrations last three days. An exasperation for the local gardai is that the pubs remain open until 3 am.
- 3 McGillicuddy's Reeks, commonly, and mistakenly, thought to be a complaint about a smelly pub, is actually a relatively odourless mountain range in Kerry. Reeks are stacks, or ricks.
- 4 Four is the number of Irish winners of the Nobel Prize in Literature – William Butler Yeats (1923), George Bernard Shaw (1925), Samuel Beckett (1969) and Seamus Heaney (1995).
- 5 Ireland is the third largest island in Europe and the twentieth largest in the world.
- 6 Ireland is the only country to have a musical instrument as its national symbol (the harp).
- 7 The title of longest town name in Ireland is shared by Muckanaghederdauhaulia, Co. Galway (in Irish Muiceanach idir Dhá Sháile, "pig shaped hill between two seas") and Illaungraftanavrankagh in the Burren, Co. Clare (Irish derivation and meaning unclear).
- 8 The current president of Ireland, Michael D. Higgins, politician, poet, sociologist and broadcaster, inspired the Saw Doctors' song 'Michael D. rockin' in the Dáil'.
- 9 In the 19th and early 20th century American Wakes were held for those emigrating to the USA – they were on a one-way ticket and would never see their families again.
- 10 In Ulysses James Joyce has Leopold Bloom muse that it would be a good puzzle to 'cross Dublin without passing a pub'.



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