

# Ireland, Not Only About St. Patrick's Day

## TONYA TRAPPE INTERVIEW

Tonya Trappe has answered some questions on Ireland. Read the answers below and guess what questions she was asked.

1. The Irish stereotype is very different from the English one. They are considered to be more friendly, less formal, easy going and talkative. Like all stereotypes there is some truth behind the caricature. . The Irish are, by nature, friendly and curious. They are very sociable and love parties and celebrations.
2. Dublin is a small city by European standards. It used to be the second city of the British Empire so it is architecturally beautiful, with lots of Georgian and Victorian streets and squares. It has lots of interesting museums and the National Art Gallery houses a wonderful collection of international and Irish art. It is a vibrant and lively city. With the recent economic boom it has become more cosmopolitan and also a little stressful. People work very hard. Not necessarily long hours but when they are at the office, they really work. The city has dreadful traffic problems and limited public transport which makes life very difficult for commuters.
3. I love Dublin, for the theatre. The Abbey – The National Theatre, as well as many others have great plays and the Irish are wonderful actors.
4. The Irish **never** wear kilts! This is a Scottish tradition!
5. This is a difficult question! It is so difficult for other Europeans (except the English) to understand but Ireland doesn't have a food culture. We do have a so called national dish – Irish Stew - but there is nothing very different from traditional English cooking – good plain cooking! We eat lots of meat and vegetables and potatoes are always served with the main meal. But what the Irish are most proud of is their whiskey and Guinness (a dark beer).
6. The people! They are so warm and great fun!

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7. Going to the pub! I'm not really joking! There are some other popular activities like golf which is much more democratic than in other countries. There are exclusive clubs of course but there are also cheaper and more accessible clubs so that lots of people can afford to play golf. Young people go to clubs a lot and heavy drinking is a big past time in Ireland!!
  
8. This is an interesting question. For generations the Irish struggled for and fought over political freedom. Obviously, politics was a huge part of daily lives. Nowadays, people are more interested in the economy. They are proud of the economic success and they put it down to wise investment and hard work. They don't like it when people assume that the European Union made it all possible. After all Greece, Portugal and others were given the same grants and benefits as Ireland. They are very nationalistic and patriotic and probably the thing they feel strongest about is being Irish and their national identity!
  
9. Yes lots and in particular a lot of Polish. After Poland joined the European Union in May 2004, the Republic of Ireland was one of just three existing EU members to open its borders and welcome Polish workers (the other being United Kingdom and Sweden). Ireland quickly became a key destination for Poles. During the 2007 Polish general election, Polish parties campaigned in Ireland and three voting locations were set up: Dublin, Cork and Limerick.
  
10. Oh yes, beyond recognition! But this is easy for Polish people to understand. Poland has been undergoing similar changes.
  
11. In the United States and Britain mostly. We are not very good at learning foreign languages!
  
12. It is difficult to say how badly the Irish economy will be hit by the credit crunch but there is a definite downturn. The building industry has been hit the hardest for the moment.
  
13. The south west coast of Cork and Kerry are wonderful as well as Connemara and Donegal, the list is endless really. The landscapes are fantastic!

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### Teacher's Notes

#### Answer Key

#### What are the Irish like?

1. The Irish stereotype is very different from the English one. They are considered to be more friendly, less formal, easy going and talkative. Like all stereotypes there is some truth behind the caricature. . The Irish are, by nature, friendly and curious. They are very sociable and love parties and celebrations.

#### What's Dublin like?

2. Dublin is a small city by European standards. It used to be the second city of the British Empire so it is architecturally beautiful, with lots of Georgian and Victorian streets and squares. It has lots of interesting museums and the National Art Gallery houses a wonderful collection of international and Irish art. It is a vibrant and lively city. With the recent economic boom it has become more cosmopolitan and also a little stressful. People work very hard. Not necessarily long hours but when they are at the office, they really work. The city has dreadful traffic problems and limited public transport which makes life very difficult for commuters.

#### Do you like it?

3. I love Dublin, for the theatre. The Abbey – The National Theatre, as well as many others have great plays and the Irish are wonderful actors.

#### Do the Irish wear kilts every day or just on special occasions?

4. The Irish **never** wear kilts! This is a Scottish tradition!

#### Typical Irish food?

5. This is a difficult question! It is so difficult for other Europeans (except the English) to understand but Ireland doesn't have a food culture. We do have a so called national dish – Irish Stew - but there is nothing very different from traditional English cooking – good **plain** cooking! We eat lots of meat and vegetables and potatoes are always served with the main meal. But what the Irish are most proud of is their whiskey and Guinness (a dark beer).

#### What do you like most about Ireland?

6. The people! They are so warm and great fun!

#### What are the most popular ways of spending free time?

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7. Going to the pub! I'm not really joking! There are some other popular activities like golf which is much more democratic than in other countries. There are exclusive clubs of course but there are also cheaper and more accessible clubs so that lots of people can afford to play golf. Gaelic ( traditional Irish sports) are very popular too. Young people go to clubs a lot and heavy drinking is a big past time in Ireland!!

**What do the Irish people feel strongly about?**

8. This is an interesting question. For generations the Irish struggled for and fought over political freedom. Obviously, politics was a huge part of daily lives. Nowadays, people are more interested in the economy. They are proud of the economic success and they put it down to wise investment and hard work. They don't like it when people assume that the European Union made it all possible. After all Greece, Portugal and others were given the same grants and benefits as Ireland. They are very nationalistic and patriotic and probably the thing they feel strongest about is being Irish and their national identity!

**Are there many immigrants from other countries in Ireland?**

9. Yes lots and in particular a lot of Polish. After Poland joined the European Union in May 2004, the Republic of Ireland was one of just three existing EU members to open its borders and welcome Polish workers (the other being United Kingdom and Sweden). Ireland quickly became a key destination for Poles. During the 2007 Polish general election, Polish parties campaigned in Ireland and three voting locations were set up: Dublin, Cork and Limerick.

**Has Ireland changed much over the past decades?**

10. Oh yes, beyond recognition! But this is easy for Polish people to understand. Poland has been undergoing similar changes.

**Where, in the world, can you find bigger Irish communities?**

11. In the United States and Britain mostly. We are not very good at learning foreign languages!

**How is Ireland doing in terms of economy now?**

12. It is difficult to say how badly the Irish economy will be hit by the credit crunch but there is a definite downturn. The building industry has been hit the hardest for the moment.

**What are the 'must see' places in Ireland?**

13. The south west coast of Cork and Kerry are wonderful as well as Connemara and Donegal, the list is endless really. The landscapes are fantastic!