

Irish Traditions



Open cloze. Write only one word per blank.

Ireland has always done things differently, we have _____ own Irish traditions and customs that make _____ unique to anywhere else in the world. Our language, music, arts, literature, folklore, cuisine and sports are all special to Irish people.

Much of Irish traditions _____ been influenced by Anglo- Norman, Scottish & English Culture. But of course, the biggest influence _____ Irish traditions and customs have been Gaelic and Celtic culture.

Influence of Irish Traditions

In the 12th century, the Anglo-Normans invaded Ireland, then the 16th/17th century saw the colonisation of Ireland with the arrival of the Anglo-Irish and Scot-Irish (Ulster Scots).

In modern times there are many traditions that are different _____ the two communities, Catholics and Protestants, as _____ as Irish traditions that differ between travellers and the settled population of Ireland.

However, due to the _____ that many people of Ireland have emigrated _____ different parts of the world, Irish traditions and culture have reached a global audience. Festivals _____ as St. Patrick's Day and Halloween are celebrated around the globe.

_____ there are many unique Irish traditions, some aspect of Irish culture is shared with other countries. This includes Britain, some English-speaking countries and mainly Catholic European and Celtic nations.

Let's explore some of the interesting and unique Irish Traditions found here ...

Traditional Irish Festivals

Some sentences have been removed from the text below. Choose from the sentences A-H the one that best fits into each gap. There is an extra option which you do not need to use.

Saint Patrick's Day Traditions



One of the most famous and popular Irish traditions is the feast of Ireland's Patron Saint, St. Patrick. The 17th of March is known and celebrated as St. Patrick's Day, not just in Ireland but all around the world. He is one of the most famous figures to ever come from Ireland, although St. Patrick wasn't Irish himself, as he was born in Roman-occupied Britain. ☐

During his time as a slave, Patrick turned to God, praying often to him and his faith began to grow. Six years later he got a 'calling from God' telling him to head to a port over a hundred miles away and left Ireland. ☐ From then onwards he became an iconic figure associated with Ireland.

Patrick passed away on the 17th of March 461 AD after a lifetime of preaching the word of Christ. The People of Ireland began to celebrate the day in remembrance of him. Also, during the 19th century when the Irish immigrated to American and other parts of the world, the celebration of St. Patrick followed. From that moment onwards, the patron Saint of Ireland became a global celebration of Irish culture.

Irish traditions associated with Patrick's Day include wearing the colour green, wearing a Shamrock as well as a day full of festivals and parades.

Halloween Traditions



For those that don't know the popular festival of Halloween originates from the Celtic pagan festival called 'Samhain' (Ending of Summer) that took place in Celtic Ireland.

Over a thousand years ago, Irish Ancestors celebrated the beginning of winter with the Festival of Samhain on the 31st of October. They believed this was the best time to link

between our world and the mortal world, allowing the dead to return to Ireland on this night.

Many of our Halloween traditions such as dressing up and pumpkin lights come from this Irish Celtic festival. During the festival of Samhain people would disguise themselves with animal skins to protect from any evil spirits. They would also light fires to guide the good spirits during the Samhain. ☐

Traditional Halloween customs in Ireland include children disguised in many different costumes going from door to door in hope of getting treats.

Many of these Irish traditions can still be seen in today's celebration of Halloween. Of course, Halloween became a huge festival with parades and events happening all around the globe like St. Patrick's Day. You can thank the Celtic Irish for that!

Irish Christmas Traditions



In Ireland, Christmas is a very important celebration, just like it is in the UK and the United States. Christmas in Ireland usually runs from the Christmas Eve (24th of December) until the Feast of Epiphany (6th January) and with it come many Irish traditions. Irish people have their own unique traditions and customs when it comes to Christmas.

There was an old tradition in some Irish homes at Christmas, a tall thick candle would be placed on the sill of windows after sunset on Christmas Eve. ☐ There are still people in Ireland that practise this tradition.

In the Irish language, Christmas is referred to as 'Nollaig' and Santa Clause is referred to as 'San Nioclás'. Like most places, Irish children go to sleep on Christmas Eve and hope to wake up in the morning with presents left from Father Christmas.

Christmas Traditions



In Ireland, the day after Christmas is called St. Stephen's Day also known as Boxing Day in parts of the UK. It's a day dedicated to Saint Stephen, the first Christian Martyr. ☐ Historically it was a day about 'Going on the Wren' related to ancient Celtic Mythology that remembers the day after Christmas when the robin (representing the new year) killed the wren (presenting the old year).

In Modern Ireland, it's a day which most will spend with friends and family. There is usually a variety of horse racing events taking place on this day in Ireland.

☐ Holly was a plant that flourished at Christmas time in Ireland and was given to the poor population to decorate their homes.

Other Irish traditions of Christmas include putting up festival decorations, although usually taken down on the 6th of January. It's considered bad luck to remove the decorations before this.

Bloomsday



The Irish people have a whole day dedicated to James Joyce, who is considered as one of the most famous literary masters from Ireland. Bloomsday takes place on the 16th of June, in reference to one of Joyce's novels "Ulysses", where the day takes place. Bloomsday was first celebrated in Ireland in 1954.

☐ In Dublin, where James Joyce was from, they hold a variety of events leading up and on the day of Bloomsday at the James Joyce Centre.

A One of the popular traditions of putting a ring of holly around your door was started in Ireland.

B People would carve out scary faces on turnips and leave them at their doors to ward off evil spirits.

C When he was 16 years old, he was kidnapped by Irish pirates and was forced into slavery in Ireland.

D However, it has now turned into a global event with people celebrating the incredible writer far and wide.

E The candle would be left all night as a welcoming symbol for Mary and Joseph.

F People would celebrate this occasion with a hearty feast.

G However, the Irish celebration has very little to do with him.

H However, he returned to Ireland after a vision convincing him to bring Christianity to the Irish people.

Transformations. Rewrite the second sentence so that it has a similar meaning to the first sentence, using the word given. Do not change the word given. Write between two and five words, including the word given.

1. I can't wait to open the Christmas presents. **FORWARD**

I'm _____ the Christmas presents.

2. People from other religions don't celebrate Christmas – only Christians do. **BY**

Christmas _____ Christians.

3. It was surely a hard time for St Patrick in slavery. **HAVE**

St Patrick _____ time as a slave.

4. I didn't come because you didn't ask me. **IF**

I would _____ asked me.

5. Our pumpkin lantern is too small! **WISH**

I _____ bigger!

6. Do not let the children handle the fireworks. **MUST**

Under no _____ allowed to handle the fireworks!

7. I'll probably be late, so start the meal without me. **MIGHT**

I _____ time for the meal, so don't wait for me.

8. Whenever they celebrate, our neighbours play really loud music. It's so annoying! **ONLY**

If _____ down the music when there's a celebration!

9. I expect to finish the costumes before October 31st. **FINISHED**

Hopefully I _____ by October 31st.

10. St Patrick's Day Parade will be cancelled in stormy weather. **OFF**

St Patrick's Day Parade will not _____ there's a storm.