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Rick Steves' Ireland 2013



Synopsis

You can count on Rick Steves to tell you what you really need to know when traveling in Ireland. With this guide, you can explore lively Dublin, quaint Kilkenny, and the moss-draped ruins of the Ring of Kerry. Navigate meandering back roads that lead to windswept crags on the dramatic Dingle Peninsula. Explore Ireland's revered past by following St. Patrick's footsteps to the Rock of Cashel. Marvel at Newgrange, the mysterious mound older than the pyramids; then connect with today's Irish culture by grabbing a pint at the local pub, enjoying the fiddle music, and jumping into conversations that buzz with brogue. Rick's candid, humorous advice will guide you to good-value hotels and restaurants. He'll help you plan where to go and what to see, depending on the length of your trip. You'll get up-to-date recommendations on what is worth your time and money. More than just reviews and directions, a Rick Steves guidebook is a tour guide in your pocket.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

Rick Steves has spent 100 days every year since 1973 exploring Europe. Rick produces a public television series (Rick Steves' Europe), a public radio show (Travel with Rick Steves), and an app and podcast (Rick Steves Audio Europe); writes a bestselling series of guidebooks and a nationally syndicated newspaper column; organizes guided tours that take thousands of travelers to Europe annually; and offers an information-packed website (RickSteves.com). With the help of his hardworking staff of 80 at Europe Through the Back Door in Edmonds, Washington, just north of Seattle; Rick's mission is to make European travel fun, affordable, and culturally broadening

for Americans. Irish-American Pat O'Connor first journeyed to Ireland in 1981, and was hooked by the history and passion of the feisty Irish culture. Frequent return visits led to his partnership with Rick Steves and his work as a tour guide and coauthor of this book. Pat loves all things Hibernian (except the black pudding) and thrives on the adventures that occur as he annually slogs the bogs in search of new Irish travel discoveries.

I have used Rick Steves' travel guides for over a decade now. His unique approach is more visitor and less tourist, showing you how to experience a place as a local would. I find I get so much more out of a place that way. His detailed walking tours are fantastic and he's great about telling you what's worth braving the maddening crowds and what is not. Recommendations for lodging are especially This will be my first trip to Ireland, and I would not leave home without him. I highly recommend his England and Italy guides as well, especially if you venturing beyond the major cities.

It covers the basics for first-timers, and some good recommendations (I agree that Cliffs of Moher, Dingle, and Bru Na Boinne are fascinating). But, beware: The maps are useless, Rick Steves fails to mention that Ireland is a very tricky place to navigate through due to the fact that most places have no street signs, so you don't know where you are at unless you ask someone or memorize the landmarks near you. You will need detailed maps of each city you go to. Furthermore, the freeways have no directional guidelines (Northbound, Southbound, etc.) so make sure you know ahead of time which towns are further ahead in order to follow the posted signs. A compass helps, too. Also, I'd like to mention that my favorite part of visiting Ireland wasn't even in Rick's book! The Cahir Castle (near Rock of Cashel)!!! A 13th Century castle that you can walk all over and inside - even the towers- to explore raw medieval history, unlike other Ireland castles that are strictly monitored and have the dark corridors roped off. Lastly, I would like to suggest avoiding the Dublin airport. Check-in and security took a very long time, plus they segregated the US-bound travelers to a small area of the terminal where there was only one place to eat, and it had very limited options. There is very little to see in Dublin, anyway, compared to the rest of the country.

As a long-time Rick Steves follower, I rely on the RS titles heavily. We've used his guides on Great Britain, Spain, and Italy to enrich our travels and each title came through like a champ. On the whole, this was true for the Ireland guide, too. With it, we found some great pubs, added Kinsale to our itinerary (and loved our dinner at Fishy Fishy), and skipped Blarney Castle. Yet there are a few coverage gaps that keep me from giving it the five I usually award RS guides. Two gaps, in

particular, are worth noting. Rick gives the Beara peninsula an "honorable mention as a distant third choice" (p. 202) to the better-known Dingle and Iveragh peninsulas. Yet Beara is the equal of Dingle in terms of natural beauty and is far less touristy. Even in summer, you can drive Beara all day and pass only a handful of vehicles, giving you ample time and space to explore its sights. We thoroughly enjoyed our two days and one night in Beara and were surprised it is mentioned only in an insert on pp. 202-203. We also found the chapter on County Clare thin. It mentions nothing of the trio of heritage attractions at Bunratty, Dunguaire, and Knappogue Castles. While medieval banquets and open-air folk parks are aimed squarely at tourists, they attract a great many travelers and are conspicuous by their absence in the guide. We went to Bunratty after reading the Trip Advisor reviews. While the dinner show was great fun, the folk park was a waste of an afternoon. I wish Rick had told me so. There are other gaps besides these (e.g., Ashford Castle gets a mention but Dromoland Castle does not even though both are considered two of the best heritage accommodations in all of Ireland). Still and all, the title was a fantastic aid for our family on our holiday in the Emerald Isle.

This is still a worthwhile guide for people looking to do things off the beaten path on a shoestring. However, I was disappointed that it did not include more details about travel in the north (the part that is still under U.K. rule) as previous editions had done. Not sure why. If you are not planning any travel to the northern six counties, then this book may satisfy your needs.

My wife and I recently used this book on my tablet while visiting Ireland. Admittedly, I should have vetted the book before landing in Ireland, but I didn't. All the main attractions are covered, but I was hoping to find some information on more out of the way places and I found the book lacking in this regard. I also was a little disappointed in the depth of coverage for each of the places that were covered. My biggest disappointment however was the lack of hotlinks to the maps that accompany the book (linking text to maps, for example). Also, there is an index that tells you which page a topic is covered on. The display on my tablet does not use pages, however, it uses "location" numbers (so the reader can vary the magnification of the text). Because there are also no hotlinks in the index, it makes it very difficult to look up and find an individual topic. We struck off on our own on the Emerald Isle and had a blast, but a little more effort in putting this digital book together would have made using RS's guidebook a lot easier and much more enjoyable.

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