

When you go to Ireland there are three things that will immediately come to mind. And I do not mean the gruesome state of its religions. As my friends Steph; Ulrike and I figured out these things were: Presbyterian Churches, sheep and sea wheat. Well, that is exactly what Ireland has to offer: something venerable, something idyllic and something typical.



Dublin's Trinity College

When you pass the gates of Trinity College it is like going back in time. Nothing has ever impressed me more than the old library of this place. The hall where it is located is way beyond huge looking almost like an ancient gothic cathedral. There are hundreds of books lining the old wooden shelves, each one appearing to turn to dust the very moment you touch it. The floor is cast in dark wood and the panels moan under each step you take. It felt like being at the edge of a long gone century or, as a matter of fact, at the scene of a Harry Potter movie.

Belfast City Hall

Taking a closer look at Belfast quickly leads to the impression that the religious war has exhausted the very heart of the city itself. To me it looked like it was dying, abandoned by the inhabitants, a city that holds no future. You could almost feel breath flowing away. And when you take a turn at a street this one comes like Phoenix from the ashes, the Belfast City Hall as the central point of the city and a pretty sight to see as well. Here the old splendour is still present. This tremendous building is British architecture at its best.



Idyllic and typical – The Irish cottage

Driving along the paths near the sea is more than just beautiful. Here nature has not yet yielded to men and hotels and large tourist centres with thousands of people are nowhere to be seen. Peace and silence is a real treat for the eye and the ear. And this one blends in perfectly well: The typical Irish cottage. Lovely, small, and natural.

Giant's Causeway – More than just idyllic
Needless to say more. Let the sight speak for itself.



Celtic spirit

You can hardly believe the fascinating power of these places. If you are a romantic spirit they can take you back to the times of myth and magic breathing life into your imagination like wind in the willows. As idyllic as they may be, these cemeteries are also typical for this landscape. And believe it or not despite the ruins and historical value they possess they are still *present*.

Shop until you drop

Now, speaking of what is typical for Ireland one can find these little streets behind almost every corner. This is no Disneyland constructed for adults but the real face of the original Londonderry. And here you can find some of the finest second hand bookshops which are also typical for Ireland. Why buy new volumes at market price when you can have it all second handed at low cost. If you are looking for the stores, well, the smaller the lane the better the chance.





Wall town

Walls seem to be *very* typical for Ireland literally as well as obviously. This is a *kind* and *civilized* version of the "PeaceLine". When you keep walking along the ancient city wall of Londonderry you can see these barriers running through the place to separate the one side from the other. It is a strange feeling looking at it knowing that it divides what should be a whole.

Sorry guys, but this is a special treat that is *not* typical for Ireland

London Tower Bridge

Shortly after the excursion to Ireland I was in London. I was lucky because this is one of the rare occasions when the bridge is opening to let big ships pass through its gate. Did you know that, until now, it has only failed once in all its history? Funnily enough, it was on the bridge's grand opening ceremony when a ship collided with the gateway. They must have heard *this* rattle even in Ireland.



What else is there to say? Ah, yes, I was amazed by the friendliness of the Irish (and English) people. They talk to you just like that, about the weather, the offers of a grocery store, asking if you need help, when you look lost. One Irish woman wouldn't believe me when I told her I was German. She thought I had a heavy British accent. Well, she was as surprised to hear me speaking German as I was surprised I sounded British to her. I think I need to thank my old English teacher after all...

Oh, and *YES*, the grass is green!