

Around 4000 BC - the arrival of the first farmers.

Around 600 BC - the arrival of the Celts

- the Celts come to Ireland from central Europe.
- They are organised into different tribes with tribal chiefs as their leaders.
- Very important members of the society are also the priests or Druids who belong to a warrior class. The Druids cannot read or write. Their role is to memorise all information important for the tribe. They know a lot about the tribal laws, history, medicine and religion.
- The Celts divide the country into provinces. Each province is ruled by an elected king. Five kingdoms grow in Ireland: Ulster in the north, Munster in the south, Leinster in the southeast, Connaught in the west and Meath (with the Hill of Tara) as the seat of high kings in Ireland.



the 5th century - the arrival of Christianity

- 430 AD – The Pope sends the first Christian missionary, Palladius, to Ireland.
- 432 AD – Saint Patrick arrives to Christianize the Irish.
- 430 – 800 – Christian missionaries build lots of monasteries which become important educational institutions. Unlike the Druids, Christian monks can write and read. The Irish culture flourishes.

the 8th century – the arrival of the Vikings

- 800 – 1100 AD - The Vikings arrive from Scandinavia. At first they plunder and burn local churches and monasteries. However, many of them become farmers and gradually assimilate with the original population. They develop Irish economy and trade.
- Dublin and Cork are founded by the Vikings.

12th century - the arrival of the Normans.

- 1169 – the King of Leinster invites the Norman nobles from England to help him in his war with the local kings.
- The Normans stay in Ireland and the British colonization of Ireland starts.

- The Anglo-Normans bring an entirely different culture and society. They introduce feudalism.
- Dublin becomes the center of the country.
- The Normans build towns, castles and churches.

16th century - the beginning of the Anglo-Irish conflict

- 1534 - King Henry VIII declares himself head of the Church of England. England breaks with the Catholic Church..
- 1541 - The Irish Parliament declares Henry VIII King of Ireland. He forces Ireland to break with the Catholic Church and confiscates the land that the Church possesses. The Irish Catholic population is persecuted. Irish families are expelled from their land.

17th century - Protestant domination of Ireland

- Over 75% of land is owned by Protestants.
- The English Crown introduces the so-called Penal Laws 1691-1793 against the Catholics. According to these laws the Catholic majority in Ireland cannot :
 - enter military service
 - hold public office
 - produce/print books, newspapers etc.
 - own land

18th century – Irish nationalism

- Throughout the 18th century tension between the British rulers and the Irish population continues.
- Irish nationalism manifests itself for the first time.
- The United Irishmen arises. These are both Catholics and Protestants united in the name of freedom, equality, and brotherhood. They demand freedom for Ireland.
- 1798 - The United Irishmen starts the rising against the British. The rising is crushed by the British army and the leaders are hanged in public. The rising of the United Irishmen is commemorated in the Irish folk song „The Rising of the Moon”.
- 1801 - Kingdom of Ireland is annexed to Great Britain under the Act of Union.

19th century – the Great Famine

- 1845-1848 – The Potatoe Famine - The potato crops fail in successive years. Consequently, lots of people starve as potatoes form the stable of the diet of the poor Irish farmers. 1 million Irishmen starve to death, another million emigrate to America and other places.
- The island’s population falls by a quarter.
- Use of the Irish language declines catastrophically.

20th century - the struggle for independence

- 24th April 1916 – Easter Rising begins. A group of Irish nationalists occupies the General Post Office in Dublin and declares Ireland’s independence. The British react very strongly to this rising. The Post Office and large parts of Dublin are bombarded and destroyed. The rising is suppressed.
- 1919-1921 - the War of Independence between the Irish nationalists and the British.

- 1921 - Under the Anglo – Irish agreement, Ireland is divided into Northern Ireland (Ulster), which remains part of Britain, and the Irish Free State within the Commonwealth.
- 1925-1998 - The IRA (Irish Republican Army) carries out guerilla activities against the British in Northern Ireland.
- 1949 - Ireland becomes an independent republic, The Republic of Eire.