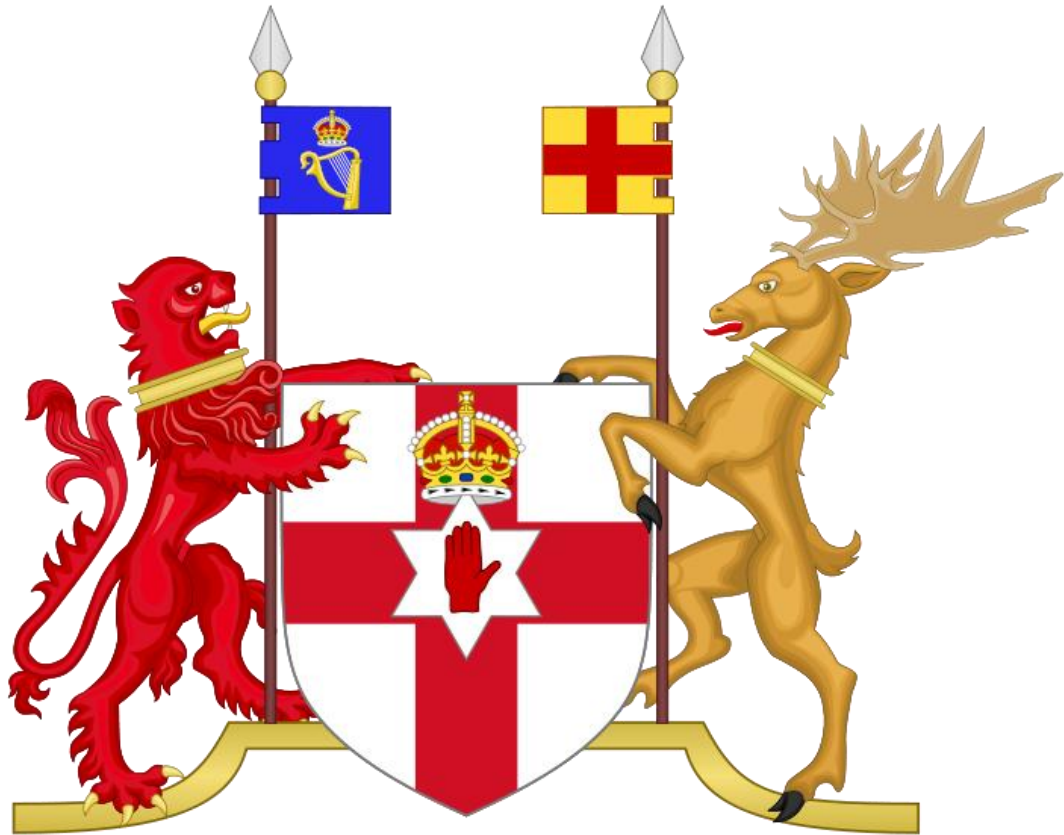


ALL ABOUT NORTHERN IRELAND





GEOGRAPHY

Northern Ireland is composed of 26 districts, derived from the boroughs of Belfast and Londonderry and the counties of Antrim, Armagh, Down, Fermanagh, Londonderry, and Tyrone. Together they are commonly called Ulster, though the territory does not include the entire ancient province of Ulster. It is slightly larger than Connecticut.

BASIC FACTS

Northern Ireland is one of the four countries of the United Kingdom. Situated in the north-east of the island of Ireland, it shares a border with the Republic of Ireland to the south and west. At the time of the 2001 UK Census, its population was 1,685,000, constituting about 30% of the island's total population and about 3% of the population of the United Kingdom. It was created as a distinct division of the United Kingdom on 3 May 1921 under the Government of Ireland Act 1920, though its constitutional roots lie in the 1800 Act of Union between Great Britain and Ireland. For over 50 years it had its own devolved government and parliament.

The official languages in Northern Ireland are English, Irish and Ulster Scots. The capital and also the largest city is Belfast which is the fourteenth largest city in the United Kingdom and second largest on the island of Ireland.



PEOPLE

Northern Irish people or **people of Northern Ireland** are "all persons born in Northern Ireland and having, at the time of their birth, at least one parent who is a British citizen, an Irish citizen or is otherwise entitled to reside in Northern Ireland without any restriction on their period of residence,"¹ by joint agreement of the British and Irish Governments.

According to the Northern Ireland Life and Times Survey, individuals from Northern Ireland identify as (best preference choice):

35% British

32% Irish

27% Northern Irish

2% Ulster

4% Other

Ethnic groups in Northern Ireland

99.15% White (91.0% Northern Ireland born, 8.15% other white)

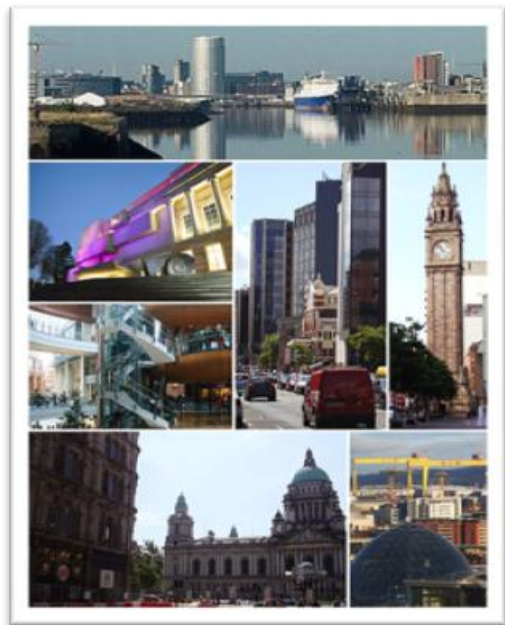
0.41% Asian

0.10% Irish Traveller

0.34% others.

CAPITAL CITY

Historically, Belfast has been a centre for the Irish linen industry (earning the nickname "Linenopolis"), tobacco production, rope-making and shipbuilding: the city's main shipbuilders, Harland and Wolff, which built the well-known *RMS Titanic*, propelled Belfast on to the global stage in the early 20th century as the biggest and most productive shipyard in the world. Belfast played a key role in the Industrial Revolution, establishing its place as a global industrial centre until the latter half of the 20th century.



Today, Belfast remains a centre for industry, as well as the arts, higher education and business, a legal centre, and is the economic engine of Northern Ireland. The city suffered greatly during the period of conflict called the Troubles, but latterly has undergone a sustained period of calm, free from the intense political violence of former years, and substantial economic and commercial growth.

FLAG

The official flag of Northern Ireland between 1953 – 1973 was the Ulster Banner. In common with other British flags, any civic status of the flag was not defined in law. When the Parliament of Northern Ireland was dissolved by the British government under the Northern Ireland Constitution Act 1973, the flag ceased to have official standing but remains the only flag to date which represents Northern Ireland at international level in sport.



The contemporary flag is based on the flag of England and the flag of the province of Ulster with the addition of a crown to symbolise the loyalty of Ulster unionists to the British Monarchy. As with the flag of the province of Ulster, it contains the Red Hand of Ulster at the centre. The points of the star represent the six counties that make up Northern Ireland.

ANTHEM

The United Kingdom national anthem of "**God Save the Queen**" is often played at state events in Northern Ireland. At the Commonwealth Games, the Northern Ireland team uses the Ulster Banner as its flag and **Londonderry Air** (usually set to lyrics as *Danny Boy*) is used as its national anthem. The Northern Ireland football team also uses the Ulster Banner as its flag but uses "God Save The Queen" as its national anthem. Major Gaelic Athletic Association matches are opened by the Republic of Ireland national anthem, "**Amhrán na bhFiann**" (The Soldier's Song)", which is also used by some other all-Ireland sporting organisations. Since 1995, the Ireland rugby union team has used a specially commissioned song, "**Ireland's Call**" as the team's anthem. The Republic of Ireland national anthem is also played at Dublin home matches as a courtesy to the host country.

"Londonderry Air"

*Would God I were the tender apple blossom
That floats and falls from off the twisted bough
To lie and faint within your silken bosom
Within your silken bosom as that does now.
Or would I were a little burnish'd apple
For you to pluck me, gliding by so cold
While sun and shade you robe of lawn will
dapple
Your robe of lawn, and you hair's spun gold.
Yea, would to God I were among the roses
That lean to kiss you as you float between
While on the lowest branch a bud uncloses
A bud uncloses, to touch you, queen.
Nay, since you will not love, would I were
growing
A happy daisy, in the garden path
That so your silver foot might press me going
Might press me going even unto death.*

ATTRACTIONS IN NORTHERN IRELAND

CASTLES AND MONUMENTS



Northern Ireland has some of the finest castles on the island. The earliest are from Norman times, but fortified homes continued to be built well into the 17th century - much of Derry City dates from this era, including its encircling walls. Centuries of war, siege and expansion, have left a well-preserved legacy which is still there to be explored!

MUSEUMS



The range and diversity of themes is enormous - from maritime history and mythology to transport and trade; Irish language and Ulster linen to militaria and music; old schools and old mills to cutting-edge art and science.

Many have a community focus providing fascinating insights into a locality's character and history. Others have specialist appeal, such as the remarkable choice devoted to regimental history, agriculture, ancient crafts and old vehicles. Where else on earth would you find exhibits devoted to; vintage bicycles; antique lace; eel-fishing; canals; Victorian education; the Plantation of Ulster; retail

drapery; ancient sewers; Gulliver's Travels: even potato crisps!?

BEACHES



Within Northern Ireland you will find some of the most spectacular beaches in Europe. The naturally stunning formations of the coastline provide long stretches of golden sand and impressive sand dunes.

Several of our beaches have been awarded with the prestigious Blue Flag award. The beaches had to satisfy numerous criteria, including litter-free sands, quality bathing water, safety facilities and cleanliness.

CURIOSITIES

- HMS Titanic ship was built in Belfast, the capital of Northern Ireland.
- Famous People of Northern Ireland
 - ✓ C S Lewis 1898-1963 Writer
 - ✓ Kenneth Branagh 1960- Actor and film director
 - ✓ James Nesbitt 1965- Actor
 - ✓ William Burke 1792-1829 Grave robber and murderer
 - ✓ George Best 1946-2005 Footballer
 - ✓ James Galway 1939- Musician

CONTESTS

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