

# Ancient Ireland

Headings		Notes and Key Facts
<b>MESOLITHIC IRELAND</b> (8000 BC - 3500 BC)		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Evidence of the <b>first human life</b> in Ireland was found at <b>Mount Sandal, Co. Derry</b>.</li> <li>Their houses were <b>round huts</b> covered in animal skins with a hearth in the middle.</li> <li>They were <b>nomadic hunter-gatherers</b> who used tools made from <b>flint</b>.</li> </ul>
<b>NEOLITHIC IRELAND</b> (3500 BC - 2000 BC)		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Evidence of the <b>first farmers</b> has been found in the Céide Fields, Co. Mayo.</li> <li>Their houses were made from <b>wattle and daub</b> with thatched roofs while stone was polished.</li> <li>New burials were used such as: <b>Portal Dolmens – Poul nabrone, the Burren, Co. Clare; Court Cairns – Creevkeel, Co. Sligo; Passage Tombs – Newgrange, The Boyne Valley, Co. Meath</b>. 5,200 years old; the sun illuminates the burial chamber on the <b>Winter Solstice</b>. Magnificently decorated entrance kerbstone</li> </ul>
<b>BRONZE AGE IRELAND</b> (2000 BC - 500 BC)		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The arrival of <b>metal</b> to Ireland came with the Bronze age with the <b>alloy</b> of <b>copper</b> and <b>tin</b> smelted together to create <b>Bronze</b>. Food was cooked in the <b>fulacht fiadh</b>.</li> <li>Houses remained <b>wattle and daub</b> houses with thatched roofs.</li> <li>More people meant smaller burial tombs were used such as <b>Wedge Tombs</b> and <b>Cist Graves</b>.</li> </ul>
<b>IRON AGE IRELAND – THE ARRIVAL OF THE CELTS</b> (500 BC – 500 AD)		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The Celts arrived in Ireland from <b>Central Europe</b> and brought iron with them.</li> <li>First evidence of writing was used by the Celts in Ireland using <b>ogham stones</b>.</li> <li>Their houses were more defensive with the inventions of: <b>Raths (Ring forts)</b> – the <b>Hill of Tara</b>; <b>Co. Meath, Promontory Forts – Dunbeg Fort, Co. Kerry; Crannógs – Clonmacnoise, Co. Offaly</b></li> <li>The Celts were an <b>organized, warrior society</b> with a clear hierarchy in society. The land was organized by <b>tuaths</b> (kingdoms) which were ruled by a <b>Rí</b>. The Rí was supported by the <b>Aos Dána</b> which were made up of <b>brehons</b> (judges), <b>druids</b> (priests), <b>filí</b> (poets) and <b>craftsmen</b>.</li> <li>The Celts were <b>pagans</b> who believed in many gods such as <b>Daghda</b> and <b>Lug</b>.</li> <li>Some of their past times included <b>báire</b> and <b>ficheall</b>.</li> <li><b>The Táin</b> is evidence of how important <b>cattle</b> were to the Celts.</li> <li>Jewellery and coloured clothing was used by the Celts.</li> <li>Their art style is named after the area in Switzerland where the Celts originated from: <b>La Tene</b></li> </ul>
Keywords		Summary
Nomads	Ogham Stone	<p><b>Ancient Ireland</b> covers the periods of the Stone Age right up to the Iron Age. Most of our knowledge from this time depends on archaeology. The <b>Mesolithic</b> people were <b>nomads</b> who <b>hunted</b> and <b>gathered</b> to survive while the <b>Neolithic</b> people started to settle and form permanent settlements. The burial tombs of the Neolithic Era (<b>Portal Dolmens, Court Cairns</b> and <b>Passage Tombs</b>) can still be seen all over Ireland. The <b>Bronze Age</b> saw the first use of metal on the island of Ireland with the <b>alloy</b> of <b>Bronze</b> being used. They also started to use smaller burial tombs with <b>Wedge Tombs</b> and <b>Cist Graves</b>. The arrival of the <b>Celts</b> saw the arrival of iron and writing to Ireland with <b>ogham stones</b>. As a warrior society, the need for defensive houses were needed (<b>raths, promontory forts</b> and <b>crannógs</b>) was needed to protect <b>tuaths</b> by the <b>Rís</b> and <b>Aos Dana</b>. They introduced the <b>Brehon Laws</b> which remained for over a millennium.</p>
Hunter-gatherer	Raths	
Wattle and daub	Promontory Forts	
Portal Dolmens	Crannóg	
Court Cairns	Tuaths	
Passage Tombs	Rí	
Alloy	Aos Dana	
Wedge Tombs	Pagans	
Cist Graves	Brehon Law	

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Keywords	Definitions
<b>Aos Dána</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The warriors and nobles who supported the Rí</li> </ul>
<b>Brehons</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Judges who knew the complex law of the Celts.</li> </ul>
<b>Bronze Age</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The period of time when people made tools and weapons using bronze.</li> </ul>
<b>Cist Graves</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Bodies buried in a crouched position.</li> </ul>
<b>Court Cairns</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Open space (court) at the front and a chamber covered in stones for burials (cairn).</li> </ul>
<b>Crannógs</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Built on man-made lakes to protect themselves from enemies.</li> </ul>
<b>Druids</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A pagan or Celtic priest. Druids believed in many gods and had great influence over Gaelic Chieftains.</li> </ul>
<b>Filí</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Poets who preserved the history of the Celts.</li> </ul>
<b>Fulacht Fiadh</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Stone-lined pit filled with water where heated stones were placed in to boil the water for cooking meat.</li> </ul>
<b>Grave goods</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Items buried with the dead.</li> </ul>
<b>Hunter-gatherers</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Someone who hunted animals for food and gathered berries and nuts.</li> </ul>
<b>Iron Age</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The period of time when people made tools and weapons using iron.</li> </ul>
<b>La Tène Style</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Celtic art style</li> </ul>
<b>Megalithic</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Large stone</li> </ul>
<b>Mesolithic</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Middle Stone Age</li> </ul>
<b>Neolithic</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• New Stone Age</li> </ul>
<b>Nomadic</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Moved from place to place, never settling for long.</li> </ul>
<b>Ogham stones</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Standing stones marking boundaries or burial sites with letters carved as lines on the side</li> </ul>
<b>Paleolithic</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Old Stone Age</li> </ul>
<b>Passage Graves</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A huge mound built over a central passage which led to a burial chamber; e.g. Newgrange.</li> </ul>
<b>Portal Dolmens</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Two or more standing stones and a huge capstone with remains buried between.</li> </ul>
<b>Promontory Forts</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Built on the side of a cliff, surrounded by fosses and chevaux de frises.</li> </ul>
<b>Raths (Ring-forts)</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A settlement on land, surrounded by risen earthen mounds and wooden fences.</li> </ul>
<b>Rí</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• King; ruled a tuath</li> </ul>
<b>Smelting</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Melting metal at a high temperature to separate from core before combining with another metal to make a stronger one.</li> </ul>
<b>Souterrain</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Underground passage used as storage for food or protection.</li> </ul>
<b>The Celts</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A warrior-society from central Europe (Austria and Switzerland) who came to Ireland during the Iron Age.</li> </ul>
<b>Tuath</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Kingdom</li> </ul>
<b>Wattle and Daub</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Woven mesh plastered with a mixture of mud, dung, sand and straw.</li> </ul>
<b>Wedge Tombs</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A Bronze Age smaller version of portal dolmens.</li> </ul>