



Irish-American Heritage Month was first celebrated by proclamation of the President in 1991. It seemed natural to choose March for the month-long recognition of the contributions that Irish immigrants and their descendants have made to U.S. society. Virtually every realm of American endeavor, from steelworking to biotechnology to literature, has seen improvement through Irish-descended hands and minds.

Most people know the basic facts of the influx of Irish families to the shores of the United States during the 19th century, with the image of the Irish immigrant being conscripted into the Army minutes after stepping off the boat. What is less talked about is the anti-immigrant sentiment that was often faced by new Irish-Americans, largely a result of their Catholicism, which clashed with the predominantly Protestant backgrounds of the majority of families whose members had been among the original colonists. Irish-Americans faced bitter competition, even slanted legislation, in their search for good jobs and a place to call home.

This month we recognize not only the overcoming of those obstacles by Irish-Americans but also the incredible breadth and depth of their contributions to American society, from the Union's edge over the Confederacy in the Civil War to the intellectual contributions that have kept our country on the top tiers of accomplishment.

Where Irish Eyes Are Smiling in America

Metropolitan Areas With the Largest Irish Population Reporting Irish as Single Ancestry

(In thousands)



Irish Immigration in American History

1720—1820 468,400
1820—1860 1,956,557
By 1910: There was 4,787,580
By 2019: 32 Million (9.7% of Population)

Famous Irish-Americans Who Changed the World

1. George Washington, President of U. S.
2. Walt Disney
3. Billy The Kid, Outlaw
4. Eileen Marie Collins, Pilot—USAF
One of the first female pilots in USAF
5. Nellie Bly, Investigative Journalist
6. Maureen O’Hara, Actress
7. William J. Brennan, Jr. , US Supreme Court Justice

To learn about Irish-American’s that changed America:
https://www.aoh61.com/history/ir_american.htm

St. Patrick Patron Saint of Ireland

Saint Patrick is the patron saint and national apostle of Ireland. He is credited with successfully spreading Christianity throughout Ireland—hence the Christian celebration of his life and name.

Was There Really a St. Patrick?

Definitely. However, there are many legends about him that mix with the truth. Did he play a large role in spreading Christianity to Ireland? Yes, absolutely. Did he really drive all the snakes out of Ireland? Probably not, since snakes weren't native to Ireland to begin with!

In any case, St. Patrick's impact was significant enough to warrant our modern-day celebrations. Here's a bit about St. Patrick himself.

The man who would eventually become St. Patrick was born in Britain (part of the Roman Empire at the time) as Maewyn Succat in the late 4th century. His family was Christian, but it's said that Maewyn himself was an atheist throughout his childhood.

That would change at age 16 (around A.D. 400), when Maewyn was kidnapped from his home on the west coast of Britain by Irish pirates, who proceeded to carry him off to Ireland and force him to work as a shepherd herding sheep. After six years, he escaped his captors, walking nearly 200 miles through the Irish landscape and convincing a ship to carry him with them back to Britain. This harrowing experience certainly had an effect on Maewyn, who was convinced it was the Lord who protected him and delivered him safely home.

Upon returning home, Maewyn received his call (in a dream) to preach the Gospel—in Ireland, of all places! He spent the next 15 or so years in a monastery in Britain, preparing for his missionary work. When he became a priest, his name was changed to Patricius, and he returned to the land of his captors to begin his teachings.

Although some Christians already lived in Ireland at the time, the country was largely pagan, so spreading a foreign religion was not an easy task. Patricius traveled from village to village to share the teachings of the Lord, and was successful enough to eventually found many churches there.



Symbol of St. Patrick

Shamrock

Legend says, St. Patrick used the shamrock's three leaves to explain the Holy Trinity in his teachings.

(The Father, the Son, and the Spirit .)

St. Patrick's Day observes of the death of St. Patrick, the patron saint of Ireland. The holiday has evolved into a celebration of Irish culture with parades, special foods, music, dancing, drinking and a whole lot of green.

The Catholic Church first recognized March 17 as a feast day commemorating Ireland's best-known and most beloved patron saint, Saint Patrick, in 1631. With rare exception, March 17 always fell during the Christian holy season of Lent, when alcohol consumption was prohibited by the Church. On Saint Patrick's feast day, the ban on alcohol was lifted, presumably because it was a feast day, and feasting usually included alcohol. Saint Patrick's feast day in Ireland remained a traditionally pious religious day. Irish laws eventually curtailed the use of alcohol during the feast on March 17 by mandating that all pubs remain closed on that day. This was Irish law until it was repealed in the 1970s. The day continued to be and still is observed as a feast day by the Church of Ireland, the Catholic Church, the Anglican Communion, the Eastern Orthodox Church and the Lutheran Church. However, when the Irish government became aware of a growing interest in St. Patrick's Day by American tourists in the mid-1990s, they launched a national campaign to convert America's fascination with St. Patrick's Day and Irish culture into tourist dollars.

The Irish faced oppressive discrimination in America, leaving most unemployed and living in severe poverty in New York City tenements. As their numbers grew, the Irish discovered strength in unity and rallied together to celebrate their beloved patron saint with a parade every March 17. The practice of St. Patrick Day parades and festivals followed Irish immigrants as they made their way across America's heartland and into the deep south. The largest celebration of the holiday takes place in New York, where the annual St. Patrick's Day Parade draws an average of two million people. The second-largest celebration is held in Boston. The South Boston Parade is one the nation's oldest, dating back to 1737. Savannah, Georgia, also holds one of the largest parades in the United States.

St. Patrick's Day - March 17th



The flag of Ireland is tri-colored. The green represents the Catholics, orange represents the Protestants, white represents the "peace" between the groups.

Initially a day to honor patron saint St. Patrick of Ireland, over time the holiday has evolved into a fun and festive celebration of Irish culture.

It is NOT a good idea to wear orange on St. Patrick's day. Orange is the color of the Protestants, and Protestants don't celebrate the saints. Therefore they don't celebrate St. Patrick's day.

In 1952 was the start of the annual St. Patrick's Day shamrock ceremony, in which the U.S. president receives a cluster of Ireland's most famous greenery on the feast day of Ireland's patron saint. The small box containing a few sprigs of shamrock evolved into a custom-made Waterford crystal bowl full of sprouts, specially flown in for the event.

As presidential holiday traditions go, it may not be as prominent as lighting the National Christmas Tree, hosting the Easter Egg Roll or even pardoning the Thanksgiving turkey. But it's just as routine and reliable as other rituals, and it has a unique history. To learn more about this ceremony...

[Presidential shamrock ceremony had inauspicious beginning - CNN.com](https://www.cnn.com/2017/03/15/politics/st-patricks-day-shamrock-ceremony/index.html)

St. Patrick's Day Facts

1. Dublin's first official celebration of St. Patrick's Day did not occur until 1931.
2. The first St. Patrick's Day parade took place in America—not in Ireland.
3. Chicago began its annual tradition of turning the Chicago River green on St. Patrick's Day in 1962. It takes over 40 lbs of green vegetable dye to do this.
4. The Feast of Saint Patrick is another name for St. Patrick's Day.
5. In Ireland, St. Patrick's Day had been viewed mostly as a religious observance, and up until the 1960s, they even had laws that forbid bars from being open that day.
6. Each year, 5.5 million people visit New York's St. Patrick's Cathedral.
7. The NYC St. Patrick's Day parade takes over five hours.
8. According to legend, during one of St. Patrick's sermons on the Irish hillside while he was speaking, all of the snakes were driven out into the sea.
9. The proper nickname for St. Patrick's Day is St. Paddy's NOT St. Patty's. It goes back to the translation behind the original name. Patrick is an English-made version of the Irish Gaelic name Pádraig.



In the 1900s, green became the de facto color associated with Irish culture, and eventually spread to leprechauns. This "dubious legend" comes from the idea that only those wearing the holiday's signature color are invisible to the mischievous fingers of leprechauns, who enjoy pinching and playing pranks.

Irish Americans introduced foods like soda bread and colcannon to American cuisine. Colcannon is an Irish dish that traditionally pairs mashed potatoes with cabbage. The famous Irish American meal of corned beef and cabbage was developed by Irish immigrants who adapted it from the traditional Irish recipe for bacon and cabbage. In Ireland the more traditional St. Patrick's Day dish is often lamb or bacon and contains some shepherd's pie.

March 11, 2021—Based on COVID-19 Pandemic:

ANYONE FOUND participating in a St Patrick's Day party this year will face either a fine or criminal prosecution, the Irish Government has warned.