

How we found our Dream House in Ireland

Finding our dream house in Ireland was one of many *meant-to-be's* that happened to me since I had emigrated to Ireland in 2014. After [John and I got married](#) in May 2016, we slowly started keeping our eyes out for a new home. We bought a car, so we would be flexible to attend house viewings, and were aware we would need it once we moved out of Dublin City.

It was more or less coincidence that we ended up in Co. Wicklow, right by the sea and surrounded by the gorgeous [Wicklow Mountains](#). We had been looking for our dream house in a child-friendly environment and close enough to Dublin, but didn't have a specific location in mind. In hindsight we couldn't be happier with our choice. So here is our story of how we found our dream house in Ireland.



The Online House Search

For about a year I was looking for houses online. I set up alerts with the main [property search engines](#), specifying our budget and criteria. During that time we didn't attend any viewings as such, but just got a feel for what was out there. It became part of my daily routine to filter through viable

offers and send on to John what I considered worth looking at. For me half the fun was daydreaming about remote cottages before discarding them as impractical when John came in with a reality check. Thanks to the extensive online research, we soon had a clear picture of what we wanted and above all, what we could afford. Now we just had to bring the two together.



Speed up the Process

Suddenly there was an urgency to move house when we found out that I was pregnant. Up to then there had been no pressure whatsoever, just the desire to leave busy Dublin and settle in a forever home somewhere quiet. In prospect of being a family of three soon, I was even more determined to speed up the

process. Our two-bedroom apartment in Rathgar with the worn carpet and furniture had been acceptable for us as a couple, but was a no-go to live in with a baby.

When I got the alert that a bungalow was for sale in the attractive seaside town of Greystones and well within our budget, I was instantly hooked. Even more so when I saw the photos and its surroundings on Google maps. It almost looked too good to be true. A detached house with a spacious garden in vicinity of the commuter train to Dublin. What was the catch? I couldn't find any. Could that possibly be our dream house? I arranged a viewing for the next available date and for the first time in over a year our house hunt became tangible.

On the Journey to find our Dream House in Ireland

On a dull morning at the beginning of September 2016 we headed to County Wicklow for our first house viewing. Despite all the excitement and anticipation, we approached the appointment with low expectations. The house had already been on the market for quite a while and we were sure that there was a reason for it. We were about to find out. We were only starting out on our journey to find our dream house in Ireland after all and looking forward to some inspiring viewings. We were certainly not going to buy the first house we viewed. Or were we?



Mixed Feelings

The local real estate agent greeted us with a warm smile. He showed sympathy for we got lost on the narrow country roads, but implied that we would have to get used to it if we wanted to live out here. I liked the location and the outside of the house and couldn't wait to get inside. He led us into a spacious hallway that was filled with a strong smell of air freshener. As positive sensations go, we were not off to a good start. It rather gave me the impression that something needed to be covered up.

As the agent walked us from room to room, he was the only one talking. John and I took everything in silently. John had put on his poker face, so even I couldn't tell what he was thinking. The house had three bedrooms, most of them in urgent need of modernisation. The wood panelling in the living room and the turquoise appliances in the bathroom were obviously sins of the 1970's. The two fire places in the front and living room were rustic and cosmetic repairs were long over due all over the place. My hopes sank as we came towards the end of the viewing.

Putting our Heads together

I was dying to hear John's opinion when we finally got back to the car. Almost certain that John would see too many flaws with the house, disappointment was building up inside me. I had somewhat fallen in love with [the big palm tree in the front garden](#). The rooms, even though in neglected condition, were cosy and a decent size. The big windows let in lots of light and opened onto a gorgeous view of the ocean in the distance (even though it wasn't visible on that foggy day). The country kitchen with its dark beams, pots and pans dangling down from them, was exactly my style. I loved the cottagey feel as opposed to a modern open plan layout.

I was delighted and surprised to see a big smile on John's face once the real estate agent was out of sight. The whole time John had been walking through the house, picturing changes and running price negotiations in his head. He was as enamoured with the house as I was. Were we really going to own our dream house in Ireland soon?



Sealing the Deal

Somewhat shocked we realised that we were both in favour of buying the house. It wasn't perfect by far, but it was perfect for us. We never thought that we would find a detached house in a location like Greystones at a price we could afford. And

here we were, on the verge of buying a property that provided all our must-haves and with lots of potential to change. The wrap-around garden was sizable and not overlooked by any neighbours. It had gorgeous plants and trees, as well as a little patio. It wasn't hard to picture children running and playing around in it.

And still, as we were sitting in a pub in Greystones town we were trying to talk ourselves out of buying the first house we viewed. What if our dream house was still out there? On the other hand, the bungalow met all our requirements and wishes – a kitchen with good cooking space; a bathroom with a tub; enough space for children and not too much if we only had one. There was no need to argue any longer. Our house search had come to an end before it really began. Before long John was punching numbers into his calculator and preparing the first bid for our dream house in Ireland.



Home sweet Home

When we moved into our new house on 12th December 2016, it didn't take us long to feel at home. It had been love at first sight and our gut feeling hadn't betrayed us. Despite all the work the house needed, we mostly saw the upsides of it. We

would have the chance to transform it into our personal dream house, tackling one project after the other. But it already was our safe haven and most likely our forever home.

We still feel the same after having lived in it for eight years. Our three children have all been born into this house and value it as their beloved home as much as we do. We have definitely put our own stamp on it and will continue to do so in the future. Not once have we doubted or regretted our decision to buy this house. We are more than grateful that we were able to do so at the time and couldn't imagine a better home for our family.

House Prices in Ireland over the Years

When we bought our house in 2016, the average asking price for a 3 bed semi-detached house in Co. Wicklow was at €269,000. Compared to Co. Dublin with €314,000. The national average house price was €221,000, whereas Co. Longford came in lowest with €65,000.

In 2019 the average house price in Co. Wicklow had risen to €322,000. Countrywide the average had climbed to €265,000, headed by Co. Dublin with €368,000. Co. Longford came last again with €96,750 which was still a remarkable increase in only three years (Source: myhome.ie).

In the second quarter of 2024 the average price for residential real estate in County Wicklow was €431,437. That makes it the priciest county in all of Ireland for buying real estate at that moment in time. Even Dublin City Centre came in lower at an average of €385,089. The lowest house prices are now in County Leitrim with an average of €198,869. House prices were about 0.6% higher in 2024 than at the peak of the Celtic Tiger in February 2007. (Source: statista.com).



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