

20 Things People ask me about Living in Ireland

Interview with Myself

Living in Ireland comes with more than just [practical things to consider](#). People often ask me what brought me here and how I like living in Ireland – what I miss, enjoy or prefer compared to my home country Germany. In this interview with myself I answer the most frequently asked questions.



1. Why Ireland?

When I came to Ireland for a work placement as a student in 2008, it was pretty much a last minute deal. Scotland hadn't worked out and I had to fall back on the connections of my university which led me to Dublin. Despite some initial struggles I fell in love with Ireland. By the time I left, a desire had manifested – to come back one day and stay for good.

2. Did you emigrate for love?

No, I did not come to Ireland because of a man. Just out of love to the country, which had grown stronger over the years after my Erasmus stay. For years I came back to Dublin for the October bank holiday weekend to meet up with friends, and to get my annual Ireland fix. At a time of change in my life,

around my 30th birthday, I decided to make my dream of living in Ireland come true.



3. What did you like most about Ireland when you first came in 2008?

I could say something cliched like the landscape and the traditional Irish music which would both be true. But in fact it was the [Brown Soda Bread](#) and Bulmers that I devoured in abundance. Together with the great craic, it was the full Ireland package that got me hooked.

4. Is there anything you wish you would have known before emigrating to Ireland?

Nothing came as a big surprise. But whatever you think a good financial buffer is, add more to it! Living in Ireland is expensive.

4. Did you have a job when you came to Ireland?

Yes I did. Having a signed work contract was the ticket to my new life in Ireland. Without that I probably wouldn't have risked moving here. No matter how much living in Ireland mattered to me, I needed the security of a steady income right from the start.

5. Do you feel homesick at times?

I never feel homesick as such. Sometimes I am upset that

family get-togethers are so complicated to organise and therefore don't happen very often. On birthdays or during the summer I miss being able to drop around to my parent's or sister's for a spontaneous barbeque or a chat.

6. Where do you spend Christmas?



The first couple of years after I had moved to Ireland we spent Christmas with my family in Germany. But when we had our first child, we started establishing our own Christmas traditions. Now, as a family of five, we celebrate an [Irish Christmas](#) on 25th December with German customs and Christmas treats from both countries.

7. How often to you visit Germany?

With each of our three children visits to Germany have become more rare. The kids and I usually go over for two weeks in the summer. It involves a lot of planning and preparation which I find hard to do several times a year. We also have to work around school holidays. So we prefer to go once, but for a longer period of time to make it worthwhile.

8. What do you miss most in Ireland?



Hot summers and snow. I love autumn and spring in Ireland. With their mild temperatures and nature bursting with colours, they are my favourite seasons here. But I do miss consecutive dry days with temperatures over 20 degrees in the summer and cold, snowy winters.

9. Is there anything that you still buy in Germany?

I sometimes ask my parents to send me toiletries and cosmetics, because they are so expensive here. A friend of mine occasionally sends me his homemade Sauerkraut. Other things that you can't get here we make ourselves, like stewed apple, potato dumplings or red cabbage. Last year we brought home some plum butter from vacation. But I am happy enough to have them as treats once in a while.

10. Are your children bilingual?

Yes, our son (7) and daughter (5) are both bilingual. Well, technically. Our eldest was more exposed to German as a baby than our second child and has now a good level of German. He used to be more reluctant to speak German, but that has changed since he was about four years old. Now he switches to German when we are with my parents, but English is still his preferred language. Our five-year old has only recently started mixing some German words into her otherwise English communication. But she understands German 100%. Our 19-months old doesn't talk yet, but understands things in both languages. Our family language is English as my husband doesn't speak any German.

11. Do you speak Irish?

No, I don't. I was under the impression that I would be able to pick it up when the kids learn it in school. I was mistaken! When I hear a word I don't know how to spell it. And when I read it, I have no clue how to pronounce it. Gaeilge is rather complicated and nothing like any other language I have ever encountered. I doubt that I will have the patience and will power to make it to a sufficient level of Irish. I do enjoy listening to the kids talking and singing in Irish though and am proud of how well they are doing with it.

12. Do you dream in English?

Yes, I dream in English and German, depending on where the people in my dream are from.

13. What do you like most about Irish people?

That you can have a conversation about something trivial as the weather for as long as you want, wherever you want. You will never fail to have a chit chat in Ireland as long as you are open to it.

14. What bothers you most about Irish people?

According to my experience Irish people can be a bit flaky when it comes to arrangements – whether private or professional. Often they cancel last minute or don't show up at all. Relationships can be a bit one-sided with me being the one reaching out or keeping in touch. "Let's catch up soon" doesn't really mean anything in Ireland.



16. How do you feel about driving on the left side?

If my old boss from Germany hadn't thrown me into the deep end on a business trip to England many years ago, it probably would have taken me much longer to feel confident driving on the lefthand side of the road (thanks Julia!). Now I don't have any trouble whatsoever driving on either side of the road. It just comes naturally. But it helps having a car with the steering wheel on the respective side for the proper perspective on the road.

17. Is Irish food really that bad?



I have always loved Irish food and the mostly hearty dishes. A full Irish breakfast is an absolute must if you have never tried it before. Be brave and go for the black and white pudding even though they don't seem like typical breakfast items. Tourism traps using low quality products or selling overpriced Guinness Pie and Seafood Chowder can be a letdown. But when done right, Irish classics such as stew, salmon or shepherd's pie are a real delight!

18. How do you cope with the Irish weather?

I often ask myself this question during the wet and dull winter months. But once the smell of spring is in the air, with the first daffodils breaking through the soil, Ireland is turning into one of the most beautiful countries in the world, and I am consoled. Even though I miss more predictable summers and winters, I value the moderate climate without extremes either side of the the zero degree mark. Keeps your wardrobe nice and slim too!

19. What are “Must-Sees” in Ireland?

As interviewee I would have liked to avoid this question. But as an interviewer I think it needs to be answered. The problem is there is not just one answer. There are so many places in Ireland that are worth seeing. When my time as a student in Ireland was limited, I wanted to tick all the travel brochure sites, such as the Cliffs of Moher, Giant’s Causeway, Ring of Kerry and so on. They are all stunning indeed, but don’t necessarily represent Ireland in its most authentic way. Make them part of your itinerary, but take your time to explore and experience the country at a slow pace! Whilst I got to see more places in a shorter period of time before I lived here, I now return to places to actually enjoy them.



20. Are you planning to stay in Ireland for good?

I came to Ireland with the intention to stay and that hasn’t changed since I emigrated in January 2014. Of course I can’t predict what the future holds, but I am happy to spend the rest of my life in Ireland. I think I would find it very hard to reintegrate in Germany after having raised our children here. Leaving [our beloved home](#) would break my heart.

Any more questions about living in Ireland? Pop them in the comments below!

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Emigrating to Ireland? What to Consider

On 1st January eleven years ago I emigrated to Ireland. When people ask me if I would do it again, the answer is yes. I have no regrets whatsoever and consider myself lucky calling Ireland my home and that of my family. Whilst my intuition played a big part in my decision making, I considered a lot of practical things too. Here is what I would advise people to take into account when emigrating to Ireland.



No Vacation can prepare you for that!

We have all had that magical summer vacation that makes you want to pack everything up and move to the place of your dreams. Until the rose-coloured glasses come off and you get a more realistic picture. When I came to Ireland first for a 6-months internship in 2008, I knew very little about the country. Finding an affordable place to live and getting screwed over by one of the first Irish people I encountered in the process, was an eye opener. Especially after I had just

read on the plane how welcoming and



Five years later I made the decision to emigrate to Ireland for good. Despite my initial struggles and disappointments I had fallen in love with the island after all. But I had already seen it from its ugly side. During the long, damp winter with its short days. Living in a cold and shabby apartment with an obnoxious Irish flat mate. Commuting for hours on the bus into Dublin City Centre. Stretching my student budget to barely get by.

No vacation could have prepared me for emigrating to Ireland. Making acquaintance with the bureaucracy and the health system, or being stood up by tradesmen repeatedly, put my love for Ireland to the test. There is no harm in reading up on culture, people and economy. But be aware that guide books often play with stereotypes and not all of them are as romantic as portrayed. And whilst you will never be short of a friendly chat in the pub, the “Let’s keep in touch” is not always a genuine one.



Less dreaming, more preparing!

To many Germans Ireland is the symbol of unspoiled nature, traditional music and hospitality. During my career in the Irish travel trade I was often asked to include a “Traditional Irish Night”, a “Sheep Dog Demonstration” or a “Rural Farm Visit” into the travel itinerary. And whilst those are somewhat part of the Irish culture, they are also very romanticised and one-sided. Great for a 2-weeks holiday, not so much part of the day-to-day when emigrating to Ireland.

When I finalised my plans for emigrating to Ireland, I was well aware of my limitations which were mostly of a financial nature. I had secured a job in Dublin, pursuing my career in Irish tourism. I knew about the risk I was taking, too. Turning my back on a good job and my modern apartment in Hamburg. However, emigrating to Ireland had been on the back of my mind since I had left as a student. I was determined to make it work.

There were a few variables I couldn't plan for. But I was glad I had prepped for those I could. Time, money, language skills. I allowed myself two weeks to find a place to stay before my work contract started. From experience I knew that I would have to be on site to enter the rapid rental game of the tough housing market. Whilst I was under no time pressure and with enough offers available, I had to increase my budget in order

to find an acceptable one-bedroom apartment. (By no means German standard!)

Even though my salary was higher than in Hamburg, I dug into my savings on a monthly basis. Thanks to my German (and English) skills, an unexpected step up the career ladder allowed me to continue my dream, rather than boarding a plane back to Germany.

Know yourself – Adaption & Acceptance



A friend of mine who I used to travel with a lot told me once that she was “too German” to emigrate. She had always been the organised one when we were backpacking together – planning our trips and reading the guide books. She was never fussy about foreign food or basic accommodation. We perfectly complemented each other and were on the same page as globetrotters. But when I emigrated to Ireland, she confessed that she preferred German reliability and standards over living abroad.

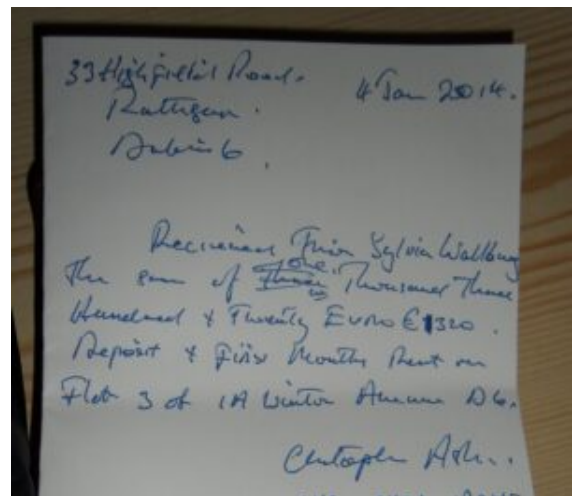
I also lived in Spain for some time. And whilst I am a big fan of the country, language and culture, I learned that there were certain traits and customs I wouldn't want to get used to. If I had only been vacationing in Santiago de Compostela or Salamanca, I would have returned in a heartbeat. No matter how much you feel at home travelling, ask yourself how well you are able and willing to adapt to different circumstances for the rest of your life.

When I first came to Ireland I often caught myself saying:

“This wouldn’t have happened in Germany.”, or “Everything is much more expensive here”. It took me a while to get used to things being different. Over the years I stopped comparing Ireland and Germany altogether. To me an important step of my integration process. Accepting Ireland for what it is with all its ups and downs, and appreciating both.

Practicalities to Consider

Job & Accommodation



Receipt for Apartment Deposit

Foreign natives usually have an advantage on the job market due to their language skills. Ireland is home to many multinational companies, constantly seeking for employees. An up-to-date [LinkedIn Profile](#) helps to create a network and for headhunters to send relevant job offers. Otherwise there are [job search engines](#) to filter by qualifications and region.

Whenever I was looking for accommodation in Ireland (2008, 2014 & 2016), it was difficult. The market is fast-paced and overpriced*, especially in the major cities such as Dublin, Cork and Galway. The standards are catastrophic and rental procedures often unprofessional. You have to be quick once an offer goes [online](#) and ideally bring a cash deposit to the viewing for the landlord to consider you. [Buying a property](#)

might be worth looking into, but is not any easier or cheaper.

Health Insurance

Ireland has no compulsory health insurance like Germany for example. Private providers like VHI or Laya offer health plans to pay privately every month. Some big companies offer health insurance, but this is not a standard. Costs for health insurance depend on the cover, age entered and pre-conditions. I lived without a private health insurance in Ireland for about 4 years and paid for GP and dental visits myself (usually €60 – 80 per visit, consultants are €120 – €150).

Children up to 8 years of age have free [health care](#), but can also be added to a family plan in order to avoid waiting times for public treatments etc. I availed of the public maternity scheme despite longer waiting hours to see the consultant and sharing a room with up to seven women plus babies. Nevertheless, my experience after three deliveries and aftercare in the Coombe Hospital are throughout positive.

Early Childcare & Irish School System

Another hot topic when it comes to emigrating to Ireland (especially from Germany) is childcare. As opposed to Germany, all pre-school childcare in Ireland is private and hence, expensive. Despite the enormous fees of up to €1500 per month for a full-day crèche, spaces are limited. Parents already need to apply during pregnancy and are still not guaranteed a space. Alternatives are childminders or nannies which might be slightly easier to find, but at no lower cost.

The Early Childhood Care and Education Scheme (ECCE) is a free (or subsidised) programme that children can avail of from the age of three. We received three hours per day of state-paid childcare for our children from the age of three to five in an outdoor Montessori (usually 9 to 12 in the morning). From there they transitioned into Primary School which is free of charge and goes up to the age of twelve or thirteen

respectively. Secondary School finishes with the Leaving Certificate at the age of 18 .

Quite a few people come to Ireland to practise homeschooling. I personally like the [Irish education system](#). Easing children into out-of-home childcare from the age of three suits us. So does the school start with Junior and Senior Infants which focuses on the learning of basic and social skills in a flexible and interactive environment. We chose a school with a Catholic ethos and a uniform over the non-denominational Educate Together.



Kitchen in my
Apt. 2014

Emigrating to Ireland – yes or no?

Would I encourage people to emigrate to Ireland today? Yes and no. No one could have stopped me from following my dream. And I appreciated every encouragement I could get. If it is meant to happen, there will be a way.

There is also no denying the challenging circumstances, especially when it comes to affordable living. Thoroughly evaluating your possibilities and resources rather than acting on a gut feeling is what I would have said then and is even more valid now.

***At the moment the average rent per month in Dublin is almost**

40% higher than in [Munich](#) and 70% higher than in [Berlin](#).

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Our Christmas in Ireland



It is the 10th year John and I have been decorating together for Christmas in Ireland. Well, he is decorating and I get veto rights. He loves Christmas and is always super excited when it is time to get out the decorations. The more colourful the better. I would prefer a more natural, red and green colour scheme. I like the idea of it being based on red apples

hung on an evergreen tree to teach the story of Adam & Eve before people could read.

However John and the kids overrule me every year. So flashy lights and tinsel it is. In the end all that matters is the sparkle in the children's eyes. I gladly have our house looking like a landing strip in return. At least I managed to ban John's 1970's Christmas streamers [when we moved into our house](#). Apart from that we compromise – like in every good

marriage and in favour of the festive spirit.



Christmas is where Home is

I have always been traditional when it comes to Christmas. As a child I was very particular of how to celebrate Christmas. Just with family, no changes. My sister and I used to decorate the tree in the morning of Christmas Eve with Russian fairy tales playing in the background. Hot chocolate in the afternoon after a walk through the winter wonderland forest. My grandparents brought us to Christmas Mass before dinner where I mostly enjoyed standing up for the singing as it was freezing cold on the pews. We would then come home to a cosy Christmas room, followed by dinner and a performance for Santa Claus before receiving our gifts.

Well before I spent my first Christmas in Ireland, our family traditions changed. Some changes were big and inevitable like celebrating Christmas without my grandparents. Others were small like the Christmas tree being in a different corner of the room, or my favourite ornament getting broken. As much as I tried to hold on to the Christmas of my childhood, there was no point in making cookies without granny or replacing my favourite decoration. The magic had somewhat disappeared.

It didn't go down without a dispute when I announced that I wanted to celebrate Christmas in Ireland from now on. I, who had always insisted on celebrating Christmas the same way each year, broke the family tradition after all. But when John and I were about to have children of our own, I felt it was time

to establish *our* family traditions.



What Christmas is about

Eight years in we have a good few family traditions ourselves. I took up my granny's job of filling our own advent calendars for the kids which wasn't as popular when I came to celebrate Christmas in Ireland at first. I still remember the smell of oranges and German lebkuchen in the little bags that sweetened up the waiting time for me and motivated me to get out of bed on cold winter mornings.

It is important to us that our kids what we are waiting for in Advent and why we celebrate Christmas. For many families in Ireland it is about an abundance of gifts, elves and an expensive visit to the Santa Grotto. We are proud of the fact that our children know the Christmas story and enjoy playing with our nativity scene. Our clay Baby Jesus starts his journey to 'Bethlehem' at the beginning of December, all the



way through the house. He usually takes a few tumbles off ledges and shelves en route, but we successfully mend him each time. The youngest member of the family gets to put him into the crib on Christmas Day. For us a more genuine alternative to the Elf on the Shelf.

On 1st Advent we get our tree and the kids have free reign decorating it. We make sure soft and non-breakable stuff goes

at the bottom though, and John's ornaments with the original sweets from the 1980's at the top to avoid a trip to the A&E with food poisoning over the holidays.

Christmas in Ireland: Charades & Panto

Of course Christmas is about presents, waking up to a half empty glass of milk, cookie crumbles and a gnawed carrot, too. Unlike in Germany we do gifts on the morning of 25th. This way the children get to play with their toys during the day rather than sitting up all night on Christmas Eve. (The lack of sleep might be the same due to the early rise on Christmas morning though.)

After mass John is getting straight back into food preparations. Every year he is making a feast of turkey, ham and a gorgeous homemade chocolate mousse. We have Christmas crackers with silly toys and jokes, and charades of course! No Christmas in Ireland without charades! Whether you are at your company's Christmas party or at your in-laws, be ready and read up on movie classics and celebrities beforehand!

The Christmas Magic

Obviously we can't predict which part of Christmas will make it into the treasured childhood memories. It could be the tiny toy cars our son still remembers from his very first advent calendar. Or our spontaneous Family Christmas Play we put on during the Corona lockdown. Maybe our annual trip into Dublin City to see the Christmas lights and the very funny, typically Irish [Panto](#).

We won't know until our children try to bring back the Christmas magic for theirs. Having children, and making their eyes sparkle every year, certainly brought back the Christmas magic for me.



What's it with the Germans? A Holiday Review

No Foamed Lattes and Cash Only!

"We only open at half twelve", the woman emerging from the shut kiosk replies harshly. Even though the connected restaurant has just sent me over to get my coffee-to-go here. Awkwardly I check the time on my phone, balancing the baby in my arms. I wait the three minutes to opening time and eventually order my coffee. "No lids or card payment", she

says, as she hands me a small paper cup with black coffee from a percolator. It smells nice and strong and I have to add four plastic containers of coffee cream to make it drinkable. Welcome to Meck Pomm*, I think to myself as I return to our spot by the lake shore of the [Fleesensee](#), waiting for the rest of my family to arrive.



Swimming in Chilly 24 Degrees

The surface of the water is smooth. Just once in a while tiny waves ripple towards the edge when paddle boats pull into the small marina. Ducks and seagulls bob up and down in the water, seemingly enjoying the free ride. I dip my feet into the shallow water, sand squishing through my toes. Behind me, the beach promenade is slowly coming to life. Restaurants are busy taking in deliveries and some joggers are trying to get ahead of the big heat. Back home in Ireland we are spoilt with gorgeous beaches at our doorstep, but not with 24 degrees at 10 in the morning and a water temperature of 23 degrees. Germans don't even bother showing up for a swim at 'chilly' 24 degrees, I was told.



Tourism Hot Spot...

When I walk with the buggy down to the beach again the next day, I notice the well-tended farm-style houses in the red-brick architecture, characteristic for the region. Surrounded by lush gardens and orchards they stick out like gorgeous little islands among the clean, almost sterile, holiday rentals that definitely outweigh them. That makes me wonder what it is like to be one of the 520 residents of [Göhren-Lebbin](#), dealing with ca. 450.000 overnight stays a year. Considering it is the end of the season, it almost justifies the brusqueness we have been experiencing by some locals. But does it excuse an above-average amount of retirees wearing neon pink hair dye or T-shirts with dubious prints? I am not sure.





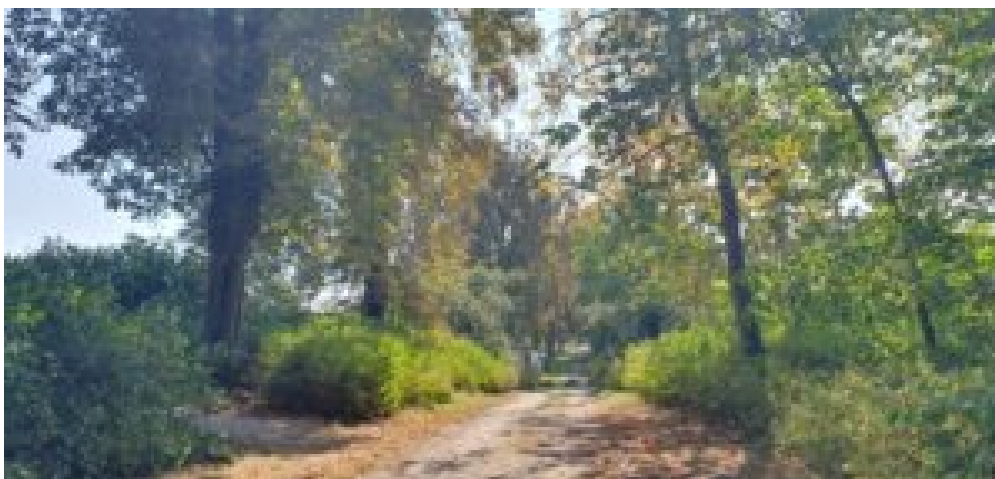
The resort we are staying in has the character of a village onto itself. Consisting of colourful timber-framed houses with self-catering units, restaurants, children's facilities and several adventure playgrounds including water play and a petting zoo. Our apartment on the ground floor is spacious and definitely designed with a family in mind. There is plenty to discover and do for all age groups. Our terrace is facing the fields, lined by a forest in the distance and is a lovely space to unwind. There are kids everywhere on the compound, bustling about on Go-karts or pulled along by their parents in handkarts. We are absolutely comfortable having our 7- and 4-year old roaming around on their own.





...and Unspoilt Nature

Another morning I bring the baby for a walk on the sandy path right behind our apartment. It is hot as I push the buggy through the dust, welcoming every gentle breeze rustling through the trees. I appreciate their shady patches, giving the dirt track an alternating pattern. I truly enjoy those morning walks, focusing on the regular breaths of my sleeping baby, accompanied by the humming of bees. My destination is Kirch Poppentin, a red-brick church from 1882 with its attached cemetery. Surprisingly I don't encounter a single soul, despite of three big hotels based in the neighbourhood. Eventually I meet two well-gearred up cyclists with friendly faces who ask me for directions. Three indicators that they are not local.



English – Nein danke!

For Sunday mass we locate a Catholic church in the nearby town of [Waren](#). When we arrive, the car park is bursting out of its seams. People are welcoming and friendly, but keep their distance once they hear we are speaking English. An older gentleman is brave enough to approach us for a chat, encouraged by the Southern German number plate of our rental car. When I tell him – in German – that we live in Ireland, he nods friendly and swiftly makes his goodbyes.

It surprises me that the region of Fleesensee advertises itself as the largest Golf resort in Northern Europe and yet we stick out as English-speakers everywhere. Even our holiday resort seems to survive on a German-only policy, apart from Reception. I feel for the staff in the shop who had to explain to my husband one morning – using gestures and hand signals – that the pre-ordered chocolate croissants hadn't arrived.

What is it with the Germans?

As we potter through Waren, an old lady with a zimmer frame (but no pink hair dye) peeks into the buggy. I prepare for another shower of compliments on our baby when she tells me assertively that I am to put socks on the poor child. Baffled, I follow her slow movement as she shuffles on without another word. What is it with Germans getting involved in how we handle our kids? Only the other day a parent told our 4-year old to not twist her baby sister's arm when she was playing with her on the beach, and I was standing right beside them. Um, excuse me?



Friendliness in Disguise

On our last day, I stroll down the foresty path to Lake Fleesensee one more time. As I drop into the village store, I open with a comment on the weather as you would when entering a shop in Ireland. Not expecting a huge response, I am all the more surprised when the girl behind the counter pours her heart out to me. When I finally leave, I smile to myself, remembering how curt she was the first day I came in.

Down by the lake I decide to give the woman in the coffee trailer a second chance, too. Judging by her still grim facial expression, I fear to get told off for changing my order half way through. Instead I get a “no problem” and a hint of a smile. Delighted I toddle off with my *Bulette im Brötchen**, excited to introduce this typical German snack to my family.

The Charm of Mecklenburg Vorpommern

I am no stranger to the ‘Nordic charm’ as I would call the ‘friendliness in disguise’ in Mecklenburg Vorpommern. In my

twenties I spent four years in Stralsund, studying Leisure and Tourism Management at the local university. And despite some raised-eyebrow-moments during our vacation, I knew that people weren't intending to be rude. However, having lived in Ireland for over ten years has changed my perception of my fellow countrymen, [to being a tourist in my own country](#).

Fleesensee doesn't strike me as a big international player in the resort business. It rather feels like a rural holiday destination with charming flaws, representing the innate culture it is surrounded by: straight forward and down to earth. I value its authenticity over an all pleasing service industry. Although a few more friendly faces around could do no harm. The all prevelant cash payment adds to the holiday feel and so does not having a stable 4G connection at all times.

The natural beauty of the area and its amenities are great for a fun and activity-filled holiday, complemented by pretty towns with its regional architecture. That is what makes Fleesensee attractive to us as a family of five. The [BEECH Resort Fleesensee](#) is the ideal place to combine all our interests and give each of us their own little space to relax. We will be back for sure!



***MeckPomm = Short for Mecklenburg Vorpommern: One of Germany's**

16 federal states. Located in the North East, it was part of the former GDR. Bordering the Baltic Sea it also features extensive lakelands inland.

*Bulette is the name for a meat snack, similar to a burger patty, in Berlin and the North East of Germany (from French "small ball"). It is usually served in a roll. Its name varies depen.

How to become the Employee of the Month as a Stay-at-Home-Mom

Numerous times I have been awarded Employee of the Month. It usually is a small ceremony. Few words, big emotions. Sometimes even tears. The last time I dressed up for the occassion but unfortunately someone spilled on my top. No big deal, it happens.

For the last two and a half years a young man has been managing the procedure. In September a sweet little lady joined the commitee. Together they monitor me all day long and you never know what's going on in their heads. Sometimes I expect adoration and get shouted at. Other times for no reason at all I receive supportive smiles. They are harsh critics and they don't make a secret out of it. Their expectations are high and occasionally I struggle to meet them. I often have doubts that I am doing my job properly. The more surprised I am when I receive approval for my efforts.

The Challenge

The job itself is popular. Many people want to do it sooner or later. On the other hand you hear a lot of negative things about it. The job description sounds pretty straight forward at first. You'll find out soon enough though that you have to be flexible, able to improvise and multitask. Funny enough these are all skills that I didn't think I had . What I like about it is that I can work from home most of the time. That also means unfortunately that it is not 9 am to 5 pm.

When I took up the challenge in May 2017, I didn't have a clue what to expect. I thought I was well prepared, but in hind sight there was still a lot to worry about. I left my secure office job to jump into something completely new, which I didn't know if I wanted for the long term. Now I am glad that I had the courage to do it. I couldn't think of anything else that I would rather do. Of course there are days when I am fed up with it all, but I had these in my old job too. So I definitely made the right decsion.

More than a Job

By now I am quite passionate about my work and that really helps. Once you got into it, it is hard to go back to a job behind a desk. A very important part of my day-to-day tasks are the people I am dealing with. Different characters and sometimes even multiple personalities in one. This makes it prone to conflicts and it is on me to keep it all under control. This is something I really had to learn. I have always liked a structured and tidy working environment. And this isn't one. You are basically trying to keep the chaos to a minimum most of the time.

My shiny Award

Looks like I am one of those people myself who has a lot of negative things to say about this mysterious job. So I should mention at that stage that the reward I am getting makes all

the stress and overtime worthwhile. And I presume it is also time to tell you what this 'Employee-of-the-Month thing' is all about if you haven't already guessed.

Instead of a gold-plated plaque to hang on the wall I receive colourful scribbles on paper. I get handcrafted cards with Thank-you-stamps and random animal stickers on it. Muddy little fingers bring me in daisys from the garden. I get cuddles and hugs, accompanied by heartwarming smiles and loud laughter. After a long day I am served 'homemade', imaginary meals. When I lie exhausted on the couch someone leans his tiny head against my shoulder without saying a word. With sparkling innocent eyes looking at me I get told "Mammy I love you". Then I know that I have the best job in the world and that for two little people I will always be the Employee of the Months. No shiny award needed.

How child-friendly is Ireland?

(This article is neither referring nor in any way related to the abortion debate. Please check out my blog post [Life is Life](#) on that topic.)

When I moved to Ireland about 4 1/2 years ago this question wasn't relevant to me. Now it is. Though it can no longer affect my decisions, as my little one runs around my feet as I write this. However I am still interested in the topic. In the following article I share my personal experience throughout

and after my first pregnancy in Ireland. Starting with the medical care up to child-minding options. Hopefully my evaluation can be of use to those considering having children here. As well as for people with kids thinking about emigrating to Ireland. I am also interested to hear how others feel about parenthood in Ireland.

Medical Care during Pregnancy

The first thing that came to my mind when we were about to have a baby were child-minding costs. When I did a bit of research on that I was shocked. I knew straight away that having a child and pursuing my career at the same time were close to impossible. However I was only at the beginning of my pregnancy at that stage. All that mattered to me then was proper medical care.

I never had any worries about Ireland in regard to medical care. I also didn't know what to expect. I wasn't familiar with the health care for mothers-to-be in my home country Germany either. Coincidentally a friend of mine in Germany was pregnant at the same time. Not only could we exchange our joys and fears, but also compare the quite different health systems.

Shared Maternity Care

Compared to Germany where your GP (gynaecologist) would look after you throughout the whole pregnancy, the maternity care in Ireland is divided between the GP and a maternity clinic of your choice. This has the upside that come D-day (delivery day), you are already familiar with the place where you are going to have your baby. Instead of just getting a show-around, you are in touch with the medical staff in the hospital and know where everything is. No harm in getting a hang of the "labyrinthal" floor plan well before the big day.

Well prepared, theoretically

At the time of my pregnancy I didn't have private health insurance. I could still avail of several public healthcare courses in preparation of birth and parenthood. Apart from the classic Antenatal Class (including a funny nappy challenge for the daddies-to-be), I took part in a physiotherapy course to hear all about the physical joys of childbirth. I felt like an expert myself afterwards. Well, in theory at least.

I was an absolute newbie when it came to small babies. I had never changed a nappy in my life nor minded kids when I was younger. My husband used to mind his nephews and had a clear advantage over me. Anyway, we both attended as many courses as we could. Why not take the opportunity when given.

I am not going to go into much more detail here. But I would like to point out how pleasantly surprised I was about the variety of classes provided by the hospital. From baby safety to alternative birth methods there was not a thing that wasn't covered in the programmes.

The Midwife is Part of the Deal

The midwife owns a huge part of the prenatal care in Ireland. I didn't have to find one myself (like in Germany) nor did I have to pay extra for her service. During the check-ups in the hospital everything discussed was neatly recorded and there was always enough time for questions to be answered. So even if it wasn't the same midwife every time, I always felt well looked after. I can't really say much about the midwife that was on duty the night I had our son. I am sure she was great, but my mind was kind of focussed on something else I am afraid.

Why reinvent the Wheel...

As soon as I was discharged from hospital, the regional health nurse was informed. She came to the house a couple of days

later to check that the baby and I were doing well. She was very supportive. Easing our worries and helping us with questions. In addition to the home visits and being available over the phone, she held a weekly clinic. I proudly told my parents about this great institution they invented in Ireland. My mam smiled and said that they used to have exactly the same service in the GDR and she gladly availed of it as well when I was born. Unfortunately it is not available as standard in Germany anymore. I think this is something which should be reconsidered.

Support when needed

When I heard about a breastfeeding support group for the first time, I thought the name was a bit inappropriate. Support group to me sounded like something you need when you are in trouble. I couldn't possibly think how these two could go together. I know now. Though I was one of the lucky ones who didn't have any difficulties at all with breastfeeding.

I was also lucky that people made it easy for me and even in public I never felt uncomfortable breastfeeding or looked at in a strange way. One time I had to feed in a mall and one of the shop owners brought me a glass of water. I still tell people about this thoughtful and kind gesture.

First Child, what now

I was convinced I wasn't the type for "mammy friendships". And for sure I wasn't going to have coffees after going for a walk in a convoy of baby buggies. Sure as hell I was never ever going to exchange recipes for sugar free baby muffins. I was wrong. I am now part of a nice and small group of mummies and their cute little babies. And yes, we do talk about healthy cooking and all the other stuff I thought I never would be interested in. As a stay-at-home parent our weekly meetings have become an important part of my life. And the same way it was recommended to me, I am going to pass it on to other mothers-to-be: Get out and build yourself a "mammy-network".

Clap Hands till Grumpy is gone...

I am not a morning person. I like to start my day slowly and above all quietly. Why on earth do all musical playgroups start before 10 in the morning? I should probably mention that our little one is not exactly a morning person either. We don't know if it is genetic or just rubbed off. Anyway, when I open the blinds before 8 a.m. all I get is a dissatisfied grunt. With the cuddly toy on his face to shield it from the incoming light, he rolls over in disbelief wondering what made me come in so early. He should know by now though that Thursday is playgroup time and we all have to make sacrifices to attend. At the latest when my mammy-friend and her always smiling daughter are waiting for us at the gate, we both overcome our morning grumpiness and are ready to clap along.

Let me entertain you

There are a good few playgroups and activities for kids of several age groups in our area. They are all focussed on community, meeting new people (and the kids each other of course) as well as exchange of information (such as healthy cooking recipes). The organisers – some of them volunteers – are very enthusiastic and welcoming. I cannot speak for all of Ireland, but for what I know there is no shortage of mother and toddler activities. Not all of them are for free. Some of them can be rather expensive. In our neighbourhood it is the Church Parish and the town library that host activities for small or no money. Social media is probably the easiest way to find out what's on in which area. Alternatively, word of mouth (or should I say mothers) has never failed.

Horrendous Childcare Costs

Childcare is probably the most delicate topic when it comes to my initial question "How child-friendly is Ireland?" Only recently I read an article in The Irish Times titled ["High childcare costs keeping women out of workplace."](#) Indeed it is not worthwhile going back to work when the costs for full-time

crèche are approximately €1000 per month. When I enquired about childcare when I was still pregnant the lowest offer I got was €950 a month. It came with a significant wait list. The most expensive one was €1650. Another 2 or 3 crèches were somewhere in between.

Career vs. Full-time Parenting

To us it became clear very quickly that I would put my career on hold whilst minding the baby. Apart from personal reasons it was financially and logistically absolutely not viable for me to go back to work. I think I am not an exception among women with a low or medium income. In order to drop off my child at the crèche and pick him up on time I would have needed to work less than full-time. The monthly ticket for the commute would come out of my already reduced salary. To be able to spend the little time left with my son, we might have hired a cleaner for the house – extra costs again. At the end of the month I would have worked for the childcare costs and some pocket money at the cost of being away from my son for over 40 hours a week. To us this was a quite simple equation.

Demand for Cheaper Alternatives

However, some people might not want to give up their careers or simply need the extra money, no matter how little it may be. And obviously they want to know their child is in safe hands while they are working. I have heard quite a lot of grandparents or other family members taking over the role of a full-time carer for the child. Also au pairs and private childminders are a more reasonable alternative compared to a crèche. Nevertheless, it seems to become more and more obvious that women drop out of the workforce due to the above mentioned reasons.

It's getting (slightly) better

With older children, the financial outlook regarding childcare is slightly more positive. From 3 years of age children are

entitled to a state-funded preschool place with the [ECCE programme](#). However it doesn't help the mother to re-integrate into work life since it only covers mornings from 9 am – 12. Whilst primary education starting at 4 or 5 years of age is free, there are costs that parents have to face during that time. The average cost for a primary school kid in 2018 is €830 per year (Source: [Zurich.ie](#)). For a child in secondary school an average annual cost of €1,495 has to be covered by the parents (Source: [Zurich.ie](#)).

Childcare or Caring for your Child?

I think we can all agree that the maternity support in Ireland is pretty decent. So Ireland ticks the box regarding child-friendliness in that regard. It looks slightly different when it comes to costs for childcare. Does that mean affordable childcare would make Ireland more child-friendly? I disagree. Me staying at home with our little one only has upsides for both of us. We get to spend precious time together. I am there for his first big milestones. I can teach him things the way I want to. I can comfort him when he is upset. I think this is the best for our son. The first 3 years of his life, that are financially not worthwhile for me going back to work, are also the most significant in our child's development. To be there for him 100% during that time is pretty child-friendly, isn't it?

Dublin's Beautiful Beaches...

...and what they mean to me

Well before I was roaming Dublin's beautiful beaches, I ended up living by the water many times. Growing up over four hours

away from the nearest sea, it was a privilege attending university with the Baltic Sea at my doorstep. Living in Hamburg afterwards, by the mouth of the river Elbe, and so close to the North Sea was another significant period in my life. A coincidence each time, like my journey that eventually brought me to Ireland.

The Beach that changed my Life

I remember sitting in a hotel room in Dublin on the October bank holiday weekend. That was usually reserved for meeting up with my Dublin girls who I had met when I came to Ireland for the first time in 2008 for a 6-months internship. The five of us had hit it off straight away and had spent the time of our lives together in Dublin. What would have been the fifth anniversary of our reunion, didn't happen for various reasons.



But I needed my annual Ireland fix and had taken the trip on my own. That morning in the hotel room I hit a low, wallowing in self-pity over our busted get-together. I had wandered the city plenty over the past few days and didn't fancy another stroll through drizzly Dublin.

But I certainly did not want to waste my precious last hours in Ireland in a hotel room. Hence I gave myself a kick in the

butt and jumped on the Dart before I could talk myself out of it.

No turning back

It only took minutes on the train before the scenery changed from busy office fronts to the most amazing beach promenade. Even in the mist and with the rain drumming against the window, it was beautiful. The last time I had been to Killiney Beach, it was warm and sunny, nothing like this day. But still, the prospect of the fresh sea breeze lifted my spirit. I was a bit reluctant to step off the train and into the dampness, but I was here now and nobody else seemed to be. The beach was absolutely deserted and I stood sheltered for a moment, watching the choppy ocean. 'No turning back now', I thought to myself, not knowing how symbolic this would become for the walk.



For by the end of it the seed of moving to Ireland had been planted. It didn't need a pleasant, lighthearted experience surrounded by friends. Just me, out there in inhospitable conditions, on the verge of loneliness, to show me that I can do it. I could emigrate to Ireland and be happy, despite rough waters and in the pourings of rain. All I needed was a kick in the butt.

Collecting Shells and Memories

It didn't take me long to put my plan into action. Back home I applied for just one job in Dublin. Two weeks later I flew over for an interview. And by November I had decided that I

was going to leave Germany for good and follow my heart to Ireland. As all new beginnings it was challenging. But once I was in Ireland, everything fell into place. And here I was again, exploring Dublin's beautiful beaches once more.



One of the first beach memories I made as an expat in Ireland was my visit to North Bull Island. Together with a friend I met on my first day in work, I walked the small peninsula in the north of Dublin City. Wrapped up against the icy wind, it was one of those autumn walks that I will treasure forever.

And North Bull is a true treasure island indeed. Never in my life have I seen more, bigger and prettier shells than there. I just couldn't resist stuffing my pockets until they were hanging down, heavy with shells and dripping wet. Against the backdrop of the ferry slowly pulling into the harbour, surfers on the water, and kites in the sky, one of my favourites amongst Dublin's beautiful beaches.

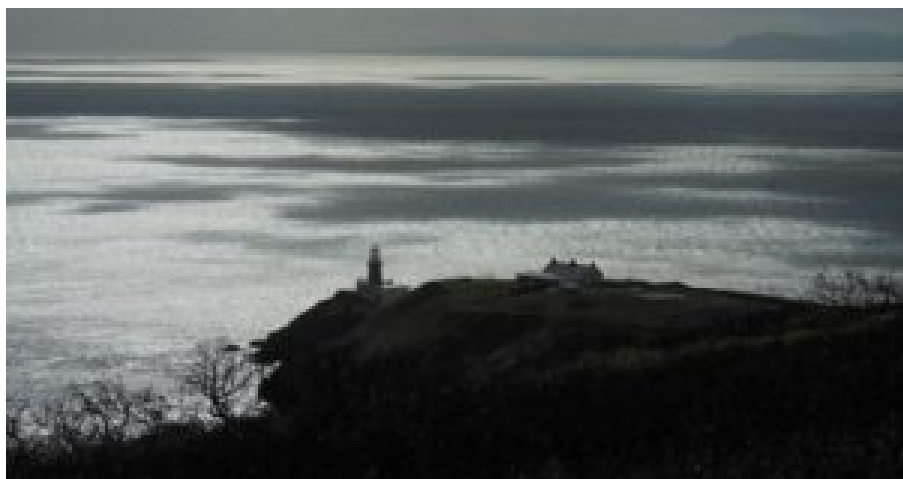


My Slightly Different Hen Party

Within the first year in Ireland, I found happiness. An unexpected step up the career ladder secured my future in expensive Dublin. And even before that I met my soon-to-be husband. We got engaged on our first anniversary and started [planning our wedding](#) soon after. With friends and family coming over from Germany and America, we wanted to show them some of our favourite spots, including Dublin's beautiful beaches. [Howth](#) already held a good few memories for me from previous visits. So we picked the peninsula with its gorgeous seafood restaurants for our rehearsal dinner. Up to then nothing had gone according to plan with our wedding. But the lovely meal in Howth, surrounded by our dearest, helped us to centre ourselves for the big day ahead.



After dinner we rushed up to the Summit with its lighthouse at the tip of the headland, before it disappeared in the dusk. Enjoying one of the most scenic views in Ireland with a good friend by my side was a worthy ending to a wonderful evening. I was bursting with emotions. Excited about getting married the very next day. Nervous what else might go wrong. Proud to have family and friends over to show them my home of choice. And joyful over the turn my life had taken within a few months. "Welcome to your belated hen party, my dear", my friend said as she was giving me a tight hug.



A New Year's Day Tradition

Sandymount is another one of Dublin's beautiful beaches and an iconic one too. At least its two [red and white chimneys](#) are as a substantial part of Dublin's skyline and landmark. Ever since my husband John and I got our feet soaked in ice-cold water on New Year's Day, Sandymount found a place in our memory lane. It was great fun walking through squishy sand, jumping puddles and trickles once the tide was out. But we didn't notice the water slowly creeping up on us. Reluctantly I took off my winter boots and cosy socks as John was already wading through freezing water, laughing.





The photograph of our bare feet on Sandymount Beach on our first New Year's Day together became a well treasured one. So much that we went back on 1st January 2024, re-creating it with the additional feet we had grown in the meantime. Not surrounded by water this time, I was even more hesitant to expose my feet to the wet and cold. But it was worth it for having a keepsake of *that* day on Sandymount Beach too. More aware of the danger of the incoming tide this time, we safely got off the beach. Just in time to watch a coast guard helicopter coming in, and scooping up a family who had not been that lucky.



An Abundance of Beaches

Of course there are many more beautiful beaches in and around Dublin. Portmarnock for example where I have watched spectacular sunsets. Forty Foot in Sandycove is probably the most popular spot for swimming in the Dublin Bay, and the Martello Tower with the James Joyce Museum worth a visit. Skerries in the north of Dublin is great for walks along the promenade, with its little harbour and plenty of cafes and restaurants.

We live in Wicklow now and I can't wait to write about my favourite beaches there. Email me or leave a comment about your favourite beach in Dublin. And subscribe to my Blog for

more personal stories and travel tips!

First published 18th June 2018. Edited 05th November 2024.

Need or Greed? Mass Tourism in Ireland



Two news articles caught my attention and slightly bothered me as a tourism professional living in Ireland:

“According to a survey of the US Magazine Condé Nast Traveler, Dublin was voted 3rd and Galway 6th friendliest city in the world.” (Source: Tourism Ireland, Press Release, August 2016)

“According to the Hotel Reservation Provider HRS, Dublin is the 2nd most expensive place in Europe with regard to accommodation. The average room rate was given with €188 per night which is reflecting the continuously growing demand.” (Source: [Irish Times](#))

Visitor numbers in the first half of 2016 have increased by

14% compared to the same period in 2015. This is an increase of 420.000 within 6 months. (Source: Tourism Ireland, SOAR July 2016.) It is an achievement to be proud of indeed. The economy is back and the recession finally seems to be over.

So why am I concerned?

Every travel workshop I attend, I hear about the latest positive developments in Irish tourism. Industry partners are patting each other on the back, cheering to the upwards trend. Rightly so, as it is their hard work and apparently good marketing that brings more and more visitors to the Green Isle every year. And whilst I am part of this proud crowd, promoting travel to Ireland, I also have my concerns. First and foremost, I am too selfish to share my country of choice with large numbers of tourists, queuing at my favourite places during the summer.

And where are these extra guests are going to stay anyway? Whilst everybody seems to be celebrating increasing visitor numbers, accommodation is limited and already at a record high in cost. We live on an island after all with a limited infrastructure. Of course we can build more hotels, open more visitor centres, invent more exciting attractions to please the rising figures in 2017. But that is exactly what I am concerned about. An unproportionally growing infrastructure solely to accommodate mass tourism in Ireland.



Higher, Faster, Further

I somehow feel like I am in a time loop. Does that not all sound familiar and very much like the construction mania during the Celtic Tiger? Blinded by a potential gain, reasoning seems to go out the window in many places. That makes me think no lesson was learnt during the barely overcome crash of 2008 and its aftermath. There are still unfinished housing estates lying derelict while plans for new hotel developments are already being made again. Whilst demand is high and supply needed, building inconsiderably left, right, and centre is not my idea of a solution.



Pressure from both sides

Lately I am experiencing a very unpleasant shift in the group travel sector that I have been working in for years. The usually positive and very cooperative industry has become a daily struggle with long established business partners and suppliers over availability and fair prices.

Clients on the other hand are extremely price conscious, looking for an authentic Ireland experience at minimum costs. I am more and more disheartened in my job of promoting Ireland as a travel destination, and compromising on quality or service all the time. I find it extremely tiring being under pressure from both sides. This way I am not able to show people the real beauty of Ireland as I have come to experience it, nor to sustain positive working relationships with fellow

tourism providers.

What Ireland is about

Despite poor quality food and mass tourism in group hotels, visitor numbers to Ireland are sky-rocketing. The country is ranking high in friendliness and hospitality. So nothing has changed, has it? My husband, born and bred in Dublin, believes otherwise. "People hardly engage in chit-chats in shops anymore or have time for a bit of a banter in the streets", he finds.



Everything has become so fast-paced and even I roll my eyes when people are taking too long at the check-out in the shop. The other day a woman almost fainted on the bus and got off at the next stop. No one – including myself – felt obliged to assist her. Especially in Dublin, crowds are rushing past each other, head down, ear phones in. Definitely not the positive vibes and easy-going lifestyle the Irish are known for. And after only a few years of living in Ireland, I might have become part of this homogeneous mass of Dubliners minding their own business myself. Surely this not how the Irish capital defends its title as 3rd friendliest city in the world.

Not what I came for, this is why I leave



I still appreciate the Irish way of life. Otherwise I wouldn't have [moved here three years ago](#). And because Ireland is going to be my forever home, I feel our 'relationship' can handle some criticism. And whilst I do enjoy the cosmopolitan atmosphere in Dublin and all the hustle and bustle, I prefer rural Ireland whenever I want to experience true "Irishness".

Mass tourism is not an appropriate way of exploring Ireland. To travel Ireland you need time. Time to stop in places that originally weren't on your itinerary. Time to make alternative plans in case the rain does not stop for days. You need time to talk to locals, and to listen to their stories.

Mass tourism might show you the iconic sites of Ireland. It will give you a staged synopsis of food, culture and tradition in a dense time frame. It is in line with the restless crowds I described above, that don't have time or don't want to take a closer look. But it is not the way to get to know Ireland for what it really has to offer. I truly hope the country won't destroy its real assets and attractions in order to gain from the short-lived mass tourism trend.

Either way I won't be part of the industry anymore. Partly because of what I wrote about in this article. But mainly because I am expecting our first child and will be focusing on a different chapter in my life.

First published 25th January 2017. Edited 11th March 2025.

Why Ireland? An Emigration Story

When I emigrated to Ireland, I mainly got two types of responses:

1. Why Ireland? Can you not go to Spain where it is warm?
2. Wow Ireland! Green Hills and sheep everywhere.

And indeed, I could have easily ended up in Spain where I lived as a student and loved it! Although neither in Santiago de Compostela, where I spent 3 months working with the Pilgrim's Office, nor in Salamanca where I studied for 6 months, was it all that warm. Both cities had a great vibe. They are full of history, magnificent buildings and were perfect for enjoying the delicious Spanish food and Tapas Bars. And I am the "mañana type of person", preferring late nights over early mornings. So how did end up in Ireland and not Spain?



Why Ireland – Pro and Con List

After a close analysis I actually asked myself why Ireland had won over Spain. According to my very rational pro and con

list, I should be sitting in some Plaza on the Iberian peninsula, sipping affordable wine rather than overpriced Bulmers in a pub. Why Ireland when on paper Spain seemed so much more suitable for me?

My question was partly answered during my approach to Dublin on the plane. I had a clear view of the Peninsula of Howth, with its distinct lighthouse and the small, rocky island "Ireland's Eye". It lay there, as it had each time I came to visit. Watching Ireland draw me in over the years. The minute I spotted it from the air, my heart began beating faster and I felt a warmth inside of me. This time I wasn't here as a visitor. I was starting my biggest adventure. And still, it already felt like coming home. Mentally I tossed my pro and con list which contained nothing but facts and embraced the new start in my country of choice.



First steps in the heart of Dublin

The bus ride from the airport to the city centre was familiar. When I came to Dublin the first time in 2008, I lived in Ballymun in the North of the city and had taken pretty much the same journey every day for six months on my commute into town. I used to love sitting on the bus in the morning, still sleepy, seeing the very different parts of the city pass by.

There was the rough and industrial neighbourhood of Ballymun with derelict estates at the time, followed by the gorgeous red brick buildings of Glasnevin and Drumcondra. Dublin with its many sides, condensed into a one and a half hour bus journey through slow moving traffic.

The journey into the city centre was going to be long too today. But I had taken the 16 for a reason instead of the Airport Express Coach. The rattling of coins when people dropped their bus fare into the slot beside the driver's cabin brought me right back. I was looking forward to hearing the Irish accent around me, which definitely would be on my pro list, if I still had one. Winding through Dublin's suburbs, with a million stops on the way, was exactly what I wanted today.



The bus left me off at O'Connell Street, the main artery of the northern inner city. When I stood there with my two suitcases, I paused for a moment to take in the hustle and bustle. Tourists in rain jackets and hiking boots, with big cameras, rushing past. The faint guitar sound of a street

musician, a language cacophony from the Hop-on Hop-off busses. I felt excited and overwhelmed at the same time. I was finally here, with all my belongings that I needed for my fresh start in Dublin. For so long I had been dreaming of [emigrating to Ireland](#) and on this New Year's Day in 2014, I made it come true.

Fond Memories vs. Reality

There was no guarantee this was going to work out. I had a job secured and some savings, but other than that just my euphoric memories from student days. Fond recollections of nights

danced away in [Whelan's](#), often accompanied by way too many pints of apple cider. Road trips all over the island, taking in Ireland's remotest spots and beautiful scenery. Memories of joyful after work drinks in Ireland's oldest pub, the [Brazen Head Pub](#), right beside the office where I did my placement. All these memories were connected to people I shared those experiences with, above all four German girls who became friends for life.



But now I was here on my own. And whilst my gut told me I had made the right decision, there was also the fear of failure. A bit of me wanted to prove to my family that I could make it, despite the risk I was taking, leaving my established life in Hamburg behind.

My German Dublin Girls had always predicted that I was going to end up back in Ireland, marrying a shepherd, and [living in a cottage by the Sea](#) with lots of red-headed babies. Whilst this was just a joke between us, I would have loved to see it come true. Or at least some version of it.

Not a Tourist anymore



Well, for now I wasn't *all* by myself. Two of my friends from Hamburg had accompanied me for moral support. I envied them when they left our hotel the next morning to go sightseeing, whilst I hunkered down on the bed, nervously calling around in

search of an affordable apartment.

How much would I have preferred roaming touristy Dublin together, which wasn't too busy at that time of year. And probably one of few cities not covered in residues from New Year's Eve, as private fireworks and drinking in the streets were not allowed in Ireland. Something that would go on my pro list, now that I was not here as a tourist or student anymore.



That morning I would have gladly mingled with the tourists in Temple Bar though. I didn't care it was Dublin's tourist trap with rip off prices for a pint. For me it was laced with memories of countless nights out, live music and great craic. Irish musicians with their sense of easiness, playing familiar tunes and spreading good vibes. In a way I wanted to treasure those memories, keep them pristine. On the other hand I couldn't wait to experience it all anew. Sadly for now, it was all about finding a place to live or my adventure would be over before it began.

Just a Feeling

The answer to "why Ireland" remains a complex one. The feeling I get – and always have when I returned to Ireland – can't be reduced to a simple pro and con list. Like with a new love, the initial magic of gorgeous green hills and cute sheep will fade. It is a deep sense of belonging that makes a relationship sustainable. What I found in Ireland completed my life like a missing piece of a jigsaw. I spread my wings and found new roots.



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