

Would I emigrate to Ireland again?

Personal Review and Practical Advice

Quite a few people have been asking me lately if I would emigrate to Ireland again, if I had to make the decision today. Looking back over the last 4 years and considering everything that has happened and how well things are going for me (see my article [About God, Destiny, Luck or what else it may be called](#)), I would answer with an emphatic yes! However, people who are currently thinking about moving to Ireland need a more unbiased and objective picture which I will try and give in this article.

Vacations ain't living

It helps when you have been to Ireland before you chose to emigrate. I think however a joyful holiday trip does not really prepare you for the day-to-day challenges you have to face when actually living in a foreign country. Searching for a place to live, finding a job you can survive on and making acquaintance with the bureaucracy and the health system are the things you will be dealing with to find out whether a country is suited for you. No vacation can prepare you for that. So before settling down and burning bridges in your home country, give yourself a "trial period" to see how you get on. Also, some research about culture, people and economy might save you from disappointments. Reading this blog article is a good start :-).

It's good to know yourself

Knowing yourself is an advantage when thinking about living somewhere other than your home country. How well do you adapt to other circumstances and living conditions? Are you someone

comfortable with the unknown and the possibility of failure or do you thrive only with consistency? When I first came to Ireland I would often catch myself saying: “This wouldn’t have happened in Germany” or “Everything is much more expensive here”. By now I have accepted that certain things are just different in Ireland, but not necessarily worse than in Germany. There is hardly anything that I still “import” or that I miss so badly that I couldn’t live without it. This was an important step for me – to realise that Ireland is my home now without constantly comparing it to Germany or pointing out things that might not be as good or just different. I value what I have here and I wouldn’t want it any other way.

Moving to Ireland = Making your dream come true?

You will have your reasons for emigrating, they might be push or pull factors. Some just want to get away, no matter where to and others deliberately pick Ireland as an emigration destination. Either way I am sure there is some expectation involved of how you picture your future. If you are considering Ireland as a place to spend the next couple of years or even the rest of your life, you should ask yourself what the probability is that Ireland will become the place your dreams are met.

I had my difficulties with a pro and con list (as described in my article [Why Ireland](#)) since emotions and the feeling of being drawn towards something don’t translate very well into a plain list. Nevertheless, away from all the dreaming of a fresh start, you should be realistic about what you can do by carefully evaluating your resources.

The Essentials – Earnings and a Place to stay

After completing the “emotional part” I recommend to start the practical preparations by looking for a job *before* you move to Ireland. For me personally it would have been too risky to get here without a signed work contract. Or let’s put it that way – I couldn’t have survived very long on my savings. Apart from

that it is good to know what kind of jobs are available and if they suit your skills. Speaking a foreign language always gives you a head start. Best to have a look for specific offers on www.jobs.ie which I found very handy for vacancies across all industries. Compared to Germany the net income is slightly higher in Ireland at the same gross salary which I thought was great at first. But I soon found out that higher costs of living made that advantage disappear. Going easy on drinks and cigarettes as well as using German discount supermarkets helped me to get by though ;-).

To afford accommodation – particularly in Dublin – is a different story altogether and the rent situation a real dilemma. Since 2013 rents in County Dublin have increased by 10% every year (except in 2015 when they only rose by 8.2%; Source: [Irish Rental Price Report](#)). In the midlands house prices and rental apartments are significantly cheaper, but most of the jobs are in Dublin Metropolitan Area. This brings me back to what I mentioned earlier about expectations and taking your resources into account: If you are fantasising about a nice home in a pleasant environment – be prepared to put up with losing a couple of hours a day on the commute. In case you are you planning on spending more quality time with your family after work, it is helpful to have connections to a real estate broker and a good bit of cash at hand. If you want to be right in the middle of the buzzing Irish capital without spending a fortune – welcome to a shabby basement apartment. To get an idea what's out there have a look at www.daft.ie and www.myhome.ie. Viewing appointments are usually arranged at quite short notice and might involve queuing.

FAQ – Frequently Asked Questions

Often people ask me about health insurance in Ireland. There is no compulsory health insurance like in Germany, but private providers where you can acquire different health plans. The annual costs vary depending on the provider and services included. Touch wood I have been living okay without any

health insurance the past 4 years. I pay as I go for GP visits, dentist etc. –between €50 and €80 per consultation, children under 6 years are free. If you get referred to a specialist the treatment is free too. However, waiting times for an appointment might be horrendous and a health insurance would definitely help with that. In case of an emergency you pay a fee of currently €100 and a daily lump sum for a hospital stay. All maternity services in the public sector are free of charge. This information applies to EU-citizens and is without any guarantee. More detailed information on that topic can be found [here](#).

Childcare can be another important decisive factor when considering emigrating to Ireland. Only recently it became relevant for us too and I did some research on it. My husband and I decided that I was going to stay at home with our little one. Even though this is what I wanted, it wouldn't have been financially viable for me to go back into my old job. Crèches and private childminders are quite expensive in Ireland. For full-time care (ca. 40 hrs/week) I was given rates between €850 and €1650 a month in the Wicklow area. Between commute and opening times of the crèche I would have been forced to go part-time which means less money and hence an even higher financial burden. Again, if you have been dreaming of having an extended family and climbing up the career ladder at the same time – Ireland might not be the place for it.

With regard to education there is free primary and secondary schools run by the state or private schools where you pay a fee. Kids start school at 4 or 5 years respectively. From 3 years you can avail of a free pre-school place for a couple of hours a day. Studying at a State University currently costs €3,000 p.a. A summary of the Irish education system can be found [here](#).

Ireland – yes or no?

When people ask me if I would recommend emigrating to Ireland

my answer is a bit ambiguous. I love living here, I still value all the things that brought me here: the lovely people, the stunning landscape, the language. However, the way the economy is going at the moment – back to “good” old Celtic Tiger times – I find it very hard to rule in favour of my dream country from the financial point of view. I guess I was lucky that I came here when I did. I probably would emigrate again today, but if I could afford it is a different story.