Ireland

Packing and Traveling  Back to Top

1. Specifically, what kind of linens did you need to bring?
   - Shower towel, lies for the beds are provided
   - None. Sheets, three blankets, and two pillows are provided. Towels are also provided.
   - Technically none, but a towel and a small blanket may be helpful. I have used my blanket more than I care to count.

2. What are you glad you packed from home?
   - Peanut butter…and my blanket 😊
   - My winter coat and rain boots. It is a lot colder here than we expected.
   - Power strip, converter, rain jacket, sandals.
   - Warm, thick socks. Of course, waterproof clothing, get everything waterproof!

3. What do you wish you had left at home?
   - Perhaps some of my dresses.

4. Do you have any travel tips to pass on (planning advice, safety considerations, guidebooks, train vs. bus, etc.)?
   - Don’t get into an unmarked Taxi. That sounds like an obvious given, but you’d be surprised how many unmarked taxis there are. Book spring break and long weekend trips as soon as you possibly can. Plane tickets and hostels only get more expensive the longer you wait. Some hostels can fill up and it’s difficult to find a room. Most hostels and train stations have secure luggage storage that you can use for days when you travel late in the day but have to check out of your room early. When traveling outside of Ireland, most restaurants charge for water, so make sure you carry your own bottle. A lot of places also have cover and service charges that are put in small print at the bottom of menus. Watch out for these. Also, some taxi drivers and shuttle services in Europe won’t give you change for your fare, so be sure to have as close to exact change as you can get.
   - Definitely make sure you have enough spending money, take the bus into the city during the day if you can instead of a taxi, if you take an extra check on (not a bad idea since many people were going over the weight limit on the way home) don’t be shy to put in shower supplies, and nonperishable foods, it’ll help save money.
   - Read the itineraries. Have motion sickness pills on hand, buses and ferries can get to a lot of people.
   - Plan your Spring Break well…as in planes, how you are going to get around, book your hostels, and make sure you know where they are located.
5. What places would you advise future students to see and why?

- Go to the pubs and listen to the live music. It is a great experience and a wonderful way to meet the locals.
- The Cliffs of Mohr, Blarney Castle, Kylemore Abby, and Dun Angus were my favorite places to visit in Ireland because they were extremely beautiful and different from anything we’ve ever seen back home. In the rest of Europe, I would definitely advise going to Italy because it is simply beautiful and much easier to get around than other European countries.
- We traveled through Ireland and we saw a lot! One thing I wish I had seen was a live Gaelic football game or any sporting event, just because it is so popular in this country.

Social Life

1. How did you meet other students?
   - At the pubs, best place to meet them! And no, you do not have to drink at the pubs; the social life is so fun!

2. How did you like to spend your free time and why? Is there anything you regret not doing more of in your free time?
   - Getting to know our group members, because that is what made the trip worthwhile. I also spend a lot of time walking around the area and enjoying the scenery.

3. What opportunities for social, recreational, and cultural events that the host university or program offered did you like best? Why?
   - Going into town for St. Patrick’s day was probably the best time I have had and I got to interact with a lot of Irish people. Whenever a band or an event was going on at the Hotel, we were usually offered to joining which was nice as well. I got a good feel for traditional Irish music because of the trips into town and all of the music events hosted by the hotel.

4. What piece of advice would you give future students regarding their non-academic life while abroad?
   - Take every opportunity that comes at you with open arms, you are only here once. So live it up while you can! The real world will come soon enough.
   - Do as much as you can while you have time. Don’t be afraid to try new or strange things. Be adventurous and active while you’re here, you might not have the opportunity again.
   - Make sure you talk to people when you can. Get out of your comfort zone and talk to people at the pubs or on the street. You won’t regret it.

School Work

1. How did your academic experience abroad differ from your U.S. experiences concerning:
The Irish professors don’t give as strict guidelines for writing papers. You will be writing quite a few papers. Don’t be afraid to give feedback, the Irish professors’ love when you ask questions. The classes are fairly easy, but don’t put the work off for too long. Gaelic is the hardest language I have ever had to learn so don’t be too hard on yourself.

Classes were really laid back compared to the usual grueling premed classes that I take. The professors were kind, humorous, and understanding. While they are aware that you are studying abroad and want you to have fun, they still want you to put forth effort, as they should. It was an excellent breather from the typical routine back home.

2. Relations with professors/classroom instruction

- The professors were very kind and funny. They care more about class participation more than anything and try to make the material as interesting as possible. Dr. Marley did a spending job at relating each History class to our field trips, which helped give us a better understanding of why different parts of Ireland are the way they are today.
- The professors are very funny; however, sitting in a class for 3 hours can be boring. They are very realistic though and their stories are great. The professors are extremely friendly and love telling stories.

3. Grading?

- Each professor graded fairly. They were really understanding and would switch due dates accordingly to our field trips, always giving us plenty of time to complete each assignment. As long as you show that you are truly trying and do the assignments then you will be fine.
- Grading is sort of the same in comparison to 100 and 200 level courses at UNK.

4. Study habits?

- We were never given tests, so we didn’t ever have to study for anything. We were assigned 4 or 5 papers the entire semester, 1 oral presentation, and daily assignments every class period. The daily assignments were usually reading and, depending on the subject, took anywhere from 1-4 hours.
- I studied Gaelic with others and just went over it. Other than that, I didn’t study much besides preparing for the papers and the final exam in history.

5. Library?

- There is no library. All the materials are provided for the students on this program. But if you fancy a bit of leisure reading you can always walk the two miles to Spiddal and visit the library there.

6. Computer access?

- Everyone brought his or her own computer.
- You supply your own computer on the trip. But they do have two desktop computers in the lobby at the Park Lodge Hotel that you can use. The internet is rarely available in the cottages though, but is fairly reliable in the lobby.
7. What enabled/hindered your successful academic experience?
   - Probably the wifi not always working, it got frustrating sometimes when trying to do an assignment. At other times it was refreshing.

Money and Communications [Back to Top]

1. How much money in U.S. currency would you recommend students have at their disposal for their whole time abroad?
   - I suggest the minimum being $3,000, if you plan on traveling to other countries then 4 to $5,000. Ireland is expensive and although everyone likes to believe that accidents won’t happen to them, they just might and it is good to have some extra money.
   - I would recommend approximately $4,000 dollars for groceries, supplies, entertainment, spring break costs, etc...I would also recommend over-estimating the cost just in case of an emergency.

2. How much money did you have in foreign currency when you left for your program? Was it enough?
   - I didn’t have any foreign currency when I arrived at the airport. An ATM is available at the airport for when you arrive. I would just withdraw from your account then.
   - 300 Euro. Plenty. I recommend not exchanging currency in the airport...wait until you find an ATM to withdraw.

3. How did you manage your money (credit cards, traveler’s checks, bank accounts etc.)? How and where did you access your money?
   - I used mostly cash and used the abundance of ATM’s that are around, but looking back, I wish I had used my debit and credit cards more. The foreign transaction fees from using my debit card would have added up to much less than the foreign transaction fees I incurred from using the ATM’s.
   - I used my credit and debit card and never had any issues. It is cheaper to just use your card for larger purchase or wherever you can really. Taking money out of ATM’s is a tad more expensive but it is always nice to have cash on hand.

4. How much money did you spend on:

Books?
   - None, included in the program fee.

School Supplies?
   - None-used my laptop and brought a pen
   - None, I brought two notebooks and some pens from home.
Food?
- Not counting spring break, I spent about $1,250 on food. That includes common groceries and all the eating out we had to do on our field trips.
- Approximately 600-700 dollars.
- Probably around 800 Euros since many field trips you had to eat out.

Local transportation?
- 90 Euro, which is about $120.
- Taxis are around 20 Euro, buses are about 9 Euro.

Travel?
- Spring Break cost probably about 800-1,000 Euros.
- For the weekend trip to London (not including food, hostels, or airfare) I spent $120. For spring break (Rome, Venice, and Prague) (including food and hotels, but not airfare) I spent $1,700.

Personal items (toiletries)?
- I brought most of my toiletries from home, so I only spent a couple of euro on a box of Kleenexes and some cough medicine.
- $20, brought most of mine.

Entertainment?
- $1,000
- Approximately 400 dollars

Postage?
- 90 cents of Euros per stamp
- I spent 15 Euros on postage for postcards to my friends and family.

Airfare?
- My round trip plane ticket cost $730
- $1,100

Laundry?
- 6 Euros per load of laundry.
- It cost 6 Euros to wash and dry your clothes.

5. How did you communicate with the U.S.? What would you recommend to future students (e.g. calling card, set up e-mail account and where, etc.)?
- I used my UNK iPad and messaged or Facetime with other apple users, otherwise I just used Facebook or email. Personally, I don't think you should be glued to your technology the entire time Skyping, Facetiming, etc. this is a time to grow and experience new things.
• I sent postcards occasionally. Otherwise I got a texting app before I left the United States and Skype. Get a texting app BEFORE you leave the U.S. and show your parents how to use it 😊

• I have apple devices, as do the majority of my family and friends, so I just used Facetime and iMessages to communicate whenever I had wifi access. This worked pretty well as long as the internet was working. I also used email and Facebook to keep in touch. Other people on the trip used Skype Accounts and purchased Skype credit to call their families’ landlines and cell phones, and this worked too, when the internet was working.