

Northern Ireland

Overview:

Northern Ireland is a constituent of the United Kingdom and one of the Home Nations. The island of Ireland was originally divided into 32 counties. After the Partition of Ireland, 1921, the Republic of Ireland encompassed 26 counties and Northern Ireland six. These counties do not represent any form of local government.

Territory:

It is 14,139 sq km., and is located on the northern corner of the island of Ireland being about one sixth of the island's entire area. Northern Ireland was covered by an ice sheet for most of the last ice age and on numerous previous occasions, the legacy of which can be seen in the extensive coverage of drumlins in Counties Fermanagh, Armagh, Antrim and particularly Down. The largest island of Northern Ireland is Rathlin, off the Antrim coast. Strangford Lough is the largest inlet in the British Isles, covering 150 km² (58 sq mi). Mourne reaching 848 m (2782 ft), is Northern Ireland's highest point.

Location:

Latitude and Longitude:

Coordinate 54° 35' 27.36" N, 5° 50' 24" W Decimal 54.590933°, -5.84°

Time Zone:

GMT -1

Total Land Area:

14139

EEZ:

Climate:

The whole of Northern Ireland has a temperate maritime climate, rather wetter in the west than the east, although cloud cover is persistent across the region. The weather is unpredictable at all times of the year, and although the seasons are distinct, they are considerably less pronounced than in interior Europe or the eastern seaboard of North America. The damp climate and extensive deforestation in the 16th and 17th centuries resulted in much of the region being covered in rich green grassland.

Natural Resources:

The largest fresh water lake in the United Kingdom is Lough Neagh, 151 square miles (392 km²). Lower and Upper Lough Erne in Fermanagh is another large lake system in Northern Ireland. Northern Ireland's largest island is Rathlin, off the Antrim coast. Strangford Lough is the largest inlet in the British Isles, covering 150 km² (58 sq mi).

ECONOMY:

Total GDP:	
2002	33,200,000,000.00 USD

Per Capita GDP:	
2006	19,257.00 USD
2002	19,603.00 USD

% of GDP per Sector:			
	Primary	Secondary	Tertiary
2006	17.6%	12.9%	12.2%

% of Population Employed by Sector			
	Primary	Secondary	Tertiary
2006	17.6%	12.9%	12.2%

External Aid/Remittances:

Growth:

GVA per head in the region in 2005 was £14,196, four-fifths of the UK average of £17,677. The most recent data on the NI economy illustrates that, between 2004 and 2005, Gross Value Added (GVA) grew by 3.8% (nominal terms). The growth placed NI in seventh position in terms of the twelve UK regions and just below the overall UK rate (3.9%). With regard to GVA per head of the population - the most commonly recognised measure of regional prosperity - NI remained at roughly 80% of the UK level and only marginally above the North East (79%) and Wales (78%). The GVA data can also be used to produce measures of productivity which, in turn, highlight regional economic performance. Figure 1 presents two measures of productivity - GVA per filled job and per hour worked. Average labour productivity, as measured by GVA per filled job, fails to take account of any regional variations in part-time / full-time workers. GVA per hour worked is therefore a more accurate measure of labour productivity and, as Figure 1 illustrates, NI remains at broadly 80% of the UK. On this measure, NI displays the lowest labour productivity of all UK regions. In terms of the sectoral composition of GVA, the construction sector was the fastest growing (8.2%), accounting for 7.7% of GVA in 2004. Private services was the largest and second fastest growing component of the economy during 2004, contributing over £10.6 billion (45.0%) and growing at a rate of 7.4% over the year. Although the public sector remained large in relative terms (accounting for 28.4% of output), it grew at a lower rate than the private sector (6.3% over the year). The manufacturing sector has experienced significant changes, particularly in terms of employment, but it grew by 2.8% and accounted for a significant proportion of

regional output in 2004 (16.1%). In the second quarter of 2006 the employment rate (for people of working age) in Northern Ireland was 70 per cent, among the lowest of the UK. This compares to a UK rate of 75 per cent.

Between 2003/04 and 2005/06, households in Northern Ireland had the highest expenditure on food and non-alcoholic drinks, spending nearly £49 per week; £4.40 above the UK average.

In April 2006, average (median) gross weekly earnings for full-time employees on adult rates in Northern Ireland were £423.90 for males and £378.50 for females, 13 per cent and 2 per cent respectively below the UK levels.

Labour Force:	
2007	725,000

Unemployment	
Year:	Unemployment Rate (% of pop.)
2005	4.5%
2006	4.9%
2007	5%

Industry:

In Northern Ireland, manufacturing accounted for 16 per cent of GVA (gross value added) in 2004, compared with 14 per cent for the UK as a whole. Agriculture, hunting, forestry and fishing accounted for 2.7 per cent of GVA compared with 1.0 per cent in the UK overall. This was the highest percentage of any region or country.

Percentage of population by sector: Top three are Skilled Trades Occupations - 17.6%; Administrative and Clerical - 12.9%; and Associate Professional and Technical - 12.2%. Industry, agriculture and tourism jobs are not in the top ten occupations.

Total Sales by manufacturing companies in Northern Ireland (NI) were estimated to be worth £14.8 billion in 2006/07. This represents an increase of 6.2% in current prices and 4.3% in real terms over the year.

Niche Industry:

Tourism:

522,870 tourist vehicles passed through Northern Ireland ports in 2006. Of this, 267,165 vehicles were inward traffic and 255,705 left NI. The majority of tourist vehicles passed through the Belfast Port (62%), while the remainder passed through Larne Port.

Imports and Exports:	
<p>Total Sales by manufacturing companies in Northern Ireland (NI) were estimated to be worth £14.8 billion in 2006/07. This represents an increase of 6.2% in current prices and 4.3% in real terms over the year. Sales made to customers outside Northern Ireland (external sales) accounted for 76.0% (£11.2 billion) of total sales in 2006/07. Growth over the year was 4.0% (£435m) in real terms. Exports (sales outside the United Kingdom) were estimated to be worth £5.1 billion in 2006/07, representing over a third (34.2%) of all sales. Exports growth over the year in real terms (9.6%) was higher than the annual average rate of growth (2.6%) over the period 2001/02 to 2005/06. Since 2001/02 exports have increased by 20.2% in real terms. Great Britain remains the most important single destination for manufacturing sales outside Northern Ireland accounting for just over two-fifths (41.8%) of all sales. Sales to this destination fell by 0.2% in real terms over the year. The Republic of Ireland continues to be the single most important export market with sales accounting for 30% (£1.5 billion) of all export sales. The growth in export sales over the year (15.5%) in real terms was higher than that recorded (4.2%) in the previous annual period (2004/05 - 2005/06). Three quarters (9 out of 12) of the manufacturing sub sectors experienced increases in total sales, external sales and exports over the year.</p> <p>Sales outside the UK (exports) were estimated to be worth £5.1 billion in 2006/07 this represents an increase of 6.2% over the year and a notable increase of 23.1% over the 5-year period 2001/02 to 2006/07. When considered in real terms, there has been an increase in total sales of 4.3% (£611m) and an increase of 4.0% in external sales (£435m) whereas sales to Great Britain declined (-0.2%) over the year. Overall, exports have increased by 9.6% over the year with sales to ROI, Rest of EU and the Rest of the World rising by 15.5%, 7.4% and 7.3% respectively. However the rate of growth in exports is slightly slower than 3 years ago when the annual increase was 12.7%.</p>	
Tot. Value of Imports	0.00 Pound Sterling (GBP) ()
From Eu:	
Import Partners (EU:)	
Partners Outside EU:	
Import Partners:	
Tot. Value of Exports	2147483647 Pound Sterling (GBP) (2006)
	Sales destined for international customers (exports) account for over a third (34.2%) of total sales. Sales to the Republic of Ireland have grown over the year by 16.2% (£212 million) and account for 10.3% of total sales and over a quarter (30.0%) of



To Eu:	exports. Sales to the Rest of EU1 have increased by 8.1% (Â£91 million) over the year. Germany, France and Spain all remain key destinations for sales, accounting for a combined 47.7% of sales to the Rest of EU.
Export Partners:	United Kingdom. In 2006/07, 76.0% of manufacturing sales were made to customers outside NI (external sales). This equates to Â £11.2 billion, representing an increase of 5.7% (Â£610 million) over the year. Top five EU export partners and percentage of 2006/2007 exports sold: Germany - 19.1%; France - 18.2%; Spain - 10.4%; Netherlands - 9.3%; Italy - 8.4%.
Partners Outside EU::	Sales to the Rest of the World2 have risen over the year by 7.9% (Â£170 million). The most significant market for sales outside the European Union in 2006/07 was North America which accounted for 43.9% of total Rest of World sales. Top five export partners outside EU and percentage of 2006/2007 exports sold: North America - 43.9%; Asia - 16.5%; Middle East - 9.2%; Africa - 7.4%; Switzerland - 3.8%.
Export Partners:	
Main Imports:	
Main Exports:	The Food, Drink and Tobacco industry contributes the largest proportion of sales and external sales to the Northern Ireland manufacturing sector, accounting for 44.0% of total sales and 46.5% of external sales. The Electrical and Optical Equipment industry contributes the largest share to exports, accounting for 24.2% of exports but only 10.5% of total sales.

TRANSPORTATION/ACCESS

External:

Number of Airports:

Number of Main Ports: 2

Belfast and Dublin are connected by a good rail line and trains also connect Ulster's capital with Londonderry and the ferry port of Larne, which links with Stranraer in Scotland.

The total tonnage through Northern Ireland ports in 2006 was 24.485 million tonnes, compared to 24.055 million tonnes the previous year. The total tonnage comprised 17.143 million tonnes of inward traffic and 7.342 million tonnes of outward traffic. The majority of total traffic came through the Belfast Port (55%), while 22% of total traffic came through the port of Larne. 522,870 tourist vehicles passed through Northern Ireland ports in 2006. This compared with a figure of 527,831 in 2005 – a decrease of 0.94%.

Internal:

Air

Road:

The main M1 motorway runs west from Belfast as far as Dungannon and there are dual carriageway trunk roads to Londonderry and the Irish border.

Sea:

Other Forms of Transportation:

Economic Zones:

Energy Policy:

Northern Ireland has three major electricity generating stations: Ballylumford Power Station, Islandmagee, Co Antrim (gas fired) (operated by Premier Power Ltd); Coolkeeragh Power Station, Londonderry (oil fired) (operated by Coolkeeragh Power Ltd); and Kilroot Power Station, Carrickfergus, Co Antrim (dual coal/oil fired) (operated by AES Kilroot Power Ltd). NIE manages a network of some 35,000 miles of overhead lines and underground cable (inclusive of LV services), together with the North/South interconnectors.

Year	Total Energy Production (Mwh)	Type			Total Energy Consumption (Mwh)	Sector				
		Thermic (Mwh)	Geothermic (Mwh)	Other (Mwh)		Domestic (Mwh)	Commercial (Mwh)	Public Service (Mwh)	Industry (Mwh)	Public Lighting (Mwh)
2003	0	0	0	0	0	620,000	54,000	0	11,000	0



Banking and Insurance:

Number of Banks and Credit Unions:

Number of Agricultural Credit Unions:

Number of Insurance Companies:

Financial Services:**Communications/E-Commerce:****Public Ownership:****Land Use:****Agriculture/Forestry:**

Main crops are wheat, barley, oats, oilseed rape, potatoes, grass, silage, hay, fruit and vegetables.

The Lower and Upper River Bann, River Foyle and River Blackwater form extensive fertile lowlands, with excellent arable land also found in North and East Down, although much of the hill country is marginal and suitable largely for animal husbandry.

Outside Belfast and Londonderry, Ulster is predominantly rural and has a strong agricultural economy with dairy products and beef both important.

Marine Activity:**Fishing:****Marine Life:****Critical Issues:****JURISDICTIONAL RESOURCES****Capital:**

Belfast is the capital and largest city.

Political System:

Constitutional Monarchy, Consociationalism. Queen Elizabeth, as monarch, is head of the government. The government was originally established in 1920 by the Government of Ireland Act.

The Northern Ireland Assembly was established as a result of the Belfast Agreement of 10 April 1998. The Agreement was the outcome of a long process of talks between the Northern Ireland political parties and the British and Irish Governments. The 1998 Good Friday Agreement for peace in Northern Ireland, backed by the majority of the population in both Northern Ireland and the Irish Republic, led to the creation of a new Northern Ireland Assembly. Northern Ireland Assembly has full legislative and executive authority for all matters that are the responsibility of the Northern Ireland Government Departments and are known as transferred matters. Excepted matters remain the responsibility of the Westminster Parliament.

The Belfast Agreement also led to the establishment of:

A North/South Ministerial Council to bring together those with executive responsibilities in Northern Ireland and the Irish Governments to develop consultation, co-operation and action within the island of Ireland. All Council decisions must be agreed by the two sides.

A British-Irish Council to exchange information, discuss, consult and use best endeavours to reach agreement on co-operation on matters of mutual interest within the competence of the relevant Administrations.

Membership comprises representatives of the British and Irish Governments, devolved institutions in Northern Ireland, Scotland and Wales together with representatives of the Isle of Man and the Channel Islands.

A British-Irish Intergovernmental Conference comprising senior representatives from both Governments to promote bilateral co-operation at all levels on matters of mutual interest.

A consultative Civic Forum, comprising representatives of business, trades unions and other civic sectors in Northern Ireland to act as a consultative mechanism on social, economic and cultural issues.

The First Minister and Deputy First Minister acting together nominate Ministers to attend the North/South Ministerial Council and the British-Irish Council and to report to the Assembly following each meeting of these bodies. They also ensure that the Executive is represented at meetings of the British-Irish Intergovernmental Conference. The First Minister and Deputy First Minister, acting together, also make arrangements for the operation of the Civic Forum. These arrangements require Assembly approval.

From 1921 to 1972 Northern Ireland had its own Parliament but, as a result of the Troubles, direct rule from Westminster was implemented in 1972. The 1998 Good Friday Agreement re-established the principle of home rule and a new 108-member assembly was elected via a proportional system in each of the existing 18 Westminster constituencies. After an initial delay caused by disputes over the appointment of ministers, the Assembly first sat in 1999 in Stormont Castle, Belfast. Assembly members are known as MLAs (Members of the Legislative Assembly).

The government of Northern Ireland is known as the Northern Ireland Executive. The Assembly appoints the First Minister and Deputy First Minister. Each political party in Northern Ireland is allocated a number of government departments, reflecting the size of that party's representation in the Assembly, and the respective Executive ministers are selected by that party. The Executive is accountable to the whole Assembly. The Northern Ireland Assembly consists of 108 elected Members - six from each of the 18 Westminster constituencies. Its role is primarily to scrutinise and make decisions on the issues dealt with by Government Departments and to consider and make legislation. A First Minister and a Deputy First Minister are elected to lead the Executive Committee of Ministers. They must stand for election jointly and to be elected they must have cross-community support by the parallel consent formula, which means that a majority of both the Members who have designated themselves Nationalists and those who have designated themselves Unionists and a majority of the whole Assembly, must vote in favour. The First Minister and Deputy First Minister head the Executive Committee of Ministers and acting jointly, determine the total number of Ministers in the Executive. The parties elected to the Assembly choose Ministerial portfolios and select Ministers in proportion to their party strength. Each party has a designated nominating officer and the d'Hondt procedure is used for the appointment of Ministers. Statutory Departmental Committees are also established to advise and assist each Minister in the formulation of policy for his/her Department and to scrutinise the work of that Department. Committee Chairpersons and Deputy Chairpersons are elected using the d'Hondt procedure. Committee membership is filled based on party strengths in accordance with Standing Order 47. There is also a number Standing and Ad Hoc Committees.

Political Parties:

The four official political parties are: Alliance Party; Democratic Unionist Party; Progressive Unionist Party; Sinn Fein; Social Democratic and Labour Party; and Ulster Unionist Party.

Important Legislation:

Government of Ireland Act, 1920.
Partition of Ireland, 1921
Belfast Agreement of 10 April 1998.

Principal Taxes:**Associated Power:**

United Kingdom of Great Britain

Citizenship:

British Citizenship. People who were born in Northern Ireland on or before 31 December 2004 (and most persons born after this date) are entitled to claim Irish citizenship. First passed in 1956, the Irish Nationality Law was further developed in 2001 as a result of the Belfast Agreement of 1998.

Paradiplomacy:**HUMAN RESOURCES**

Population 1,724,000 (2005 est.) Official 2001 census: 1,685,267. This was 14,100 more compared with mid-2004 and an increase of 11.8 per cent since 1981. Northern Ireland is the second most sparsely populated part of the UK after Scotland, with 122 per square kilometer.

2005			
Island	Area (km sq.)	Population	% of Total Population
Northern Ireland	14,139	1,724,000	%

Births 2006: 23,272.

Population:	
Year	Resident Population

Age of Population:	0-14	15-24	25-49	50-64	65 and up
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Migration:

Crude Birth Rate:	
2006	13.5%

Life Expedtancy:

Crude Death Rate:	
2006	8.4%

Ethnicity:**Class Division:**

The country has been divided along sectarian lines: Protestant/Catholic. Protestants outnumber Catholics although there has been significant inter-marriage. Catholics are in the majority in some parts of Ulster - Derry city, County Fermanagh, County Armagh and parts of Belfast - while making up less than 10% of the population in other areas: Larne and the County Antrim coast, Bangor and North Down, east Belfast. Protestants are overwhelmingly Presbyterian and have religious, cultural and familial links with Scotland.

An important part of the Unionist community's culture are the Orange Lodges - being a meeting place for ordinary Protestant men. The nationalist community is overwhelmingly Roman Catholic.

Languages:

English is the official language and considered to be the language of education and religion. Irish and Ulster Scots also known as Ullans, Hiberno-Scots, Scots-Irish, and sometimes referred to as Lowland Scots is spoken in the areas surrounding Ulster. It is estimated there are 100,000 speakers of Ulster Scots in Northern Ireland.

Religion:

Protestant and Catholic.

Literacy:

The proportion of people of working age qualified to GCE A level/ equivalent in Northern Ireland was around 49 per cent in 2006, compared with a UK average of 51 per cent.

Education System:

Participation in further and higher education is high - 79% of youngsters continue their schooling past the age of 16 - and examination attainment levels are good. Around 30% of Northern Ireland's pupils who stayed on at school after the age of 16 gained two or more A levels, the highest level in the UK. Education historically tends to have been split on a sectarian basis but there are increasing attempts to integrate schools.

Total Pre-schools:()	
Total Primary Schools	



First Level:	
Second Level:	
Third Level:	
Total Secondary Schools:	
Total Professional Schools	
Universities:	

Number of Schools per Island:										
	Pre-school		Elementary			High-school		Prof.	University	
	Pub	Priv	1	2	3	Pub	Priv		Pub	Priv

Students Enrolled:					
Year:	Pre-School	Elementary	High-school	Prof.	University

Teachers							
Year	Pre-School	Elementary			High-School	Prof.	University
		1	2	3			

Working Age Education and Training (2006). 23.4% of the population achieved a NVQ lever 4 and above which is a degree level. Those with no degree and some degree level education are 53.3% of the population. Those employed with no qualifications are 23.4%.

Medical Services:

Northern Ireland had the lowest notification rates of TB in the UK, 4 per 100,000 population in 2005 compared with an average of 13 for the UK.

HISTORY AND CULTURE

History:

1170-1691. The long reign of England over Ireland began in 1170 when the forces of the Anglo-Norman Earl of Pembroke, also known as Strongbow, landed in County Wexford to help the Irish King of Leinster ward off other local kings. In 1171, Strongbow became King of Leinster when Henry II arrived with a large force of men to control his vassal. Norman colonization was established in Ireland. In 1777, Ulster was conquered and it was only in 1315 that the English push was halted and reversed. The 16th Century saw the ascendancy of Protestantism with Henry VIII, who named himself King of Ireland. This was followed by Irish revolts and some reconciliation during the reigns of Elizabeth and James I. The 'flight of the Earls' to France, in 1607, was part of the systematic 'Plantation of Ulster' a colonization of settlers from England and Scotland into Ireland. A civil war ensued, 1641-42, in which 12,000 settlers were killed. British reprisals were carried out by the Scots army general, Robert Monro. The Cromwellian repression in 1649 deported thousands of Catholics and seized their lands. Charles II, restored to the English throne in 1660, left the land seizures largely untouched. The term 'Orangemen' became popular when Catholic James II left his crown in England in flight from William of Orange; who in 1688, was crowned William III of England. The story says 13 apprentice boys closed the gates of Derry in the face of Catholic soldiers. James, landing in Ireland with French troops, laid siege to Derry. His efforts were thwarted. The supremacy of the Protestants in Ulster was assured by the defeat of James at the Battle of the Boyne; after which he sailed to France. The remaining troops were defeated at the Battle of Aughrim in 1691. The Treaty of Limerick in the same year allowed 15,000 Irish soldiers to leave to serve France's Louis XIV with promises of Catholic toleration.

1695-1850. The Penal Laws of 1695-1728 were a series of acts passed by the Irish Parliament against Catholics. These laws restricted education, prohibited the right to bear arms, own horses of value, and prevented the purchasing and inheriting of land. It also banned Catholics from serving in the army, holding public office, entering the legal profession, becoming MPs or voting. Protestant emigration from Ulster to America significantly increased beginning in 1719. The American Revolution in 1776, spurred thousand of Irish, mainly Protestant Volunteers, in the defense of Ireland against a possible French invasion. Due to the Volunteer influence, Henry Grattan's Patriot party won nominal independence for the Irish Parliament from Westminster in 1782 following resolutions passed by a convention of Volunteer companies. From 1782-93 several Catholic Relief Acts restored some rights--inheritance, the right to practice law, and to vote. In 1791, the Society of United Irishmen was formed in Belfast with the intention of Parliamentary reform and religious equality. A skirmish between Protestant Volunteers and Catholic groups at Loughgall in County Armagh, in 1795, led the victors to form the Orange Order. The Act of Union Bill in 1801 joined Ireland to England. Promises of Catholic emancipation upon Union was quashed by King George III. In 1823, the Catholic Association was formed. Shortly thereafter the Unlawful Societies Act of 1825 banned such groups as the Catholic Association and the Orange Order. Both organizations were major bastions of sectarianism. The Emancipation Act of 1829 allowed Catholics to become MPs and the franchise was reformed. The Great Famine, due to the potato crop failure, 1845-49, claimed millions of lives in Ireland. Out of a population of 8 million people, 1.5 million emigrated and another one million died of mass starvation and disease.

1851-1920. A secret society, the Fenians, formed by John Stephens, was active from its inception in 1858 to 1916. Its main tenet was Home Rule for Ireland. Countermanding this organization, in 1910, the Ulster Union Council, opposed to Home Rule, also formed a secret committee and amassed weapons to enforce its views. At that time, many rallies were taking place throughout the countryside and petitions signed for or against Home Rule. The 'Solemn League and Covenant' was a petition signed by 500,000 Protestants vowing to defend against Home Rule. The Home Rule Bill was passed in the House of Commons in 1913, but rejected by the Lords. The Ulster Volunteer Force, also armed, was formed by the Irish Catholics. During a demonstration at Howth, both sides were fired upon by a British regiment, killing three civilians. World War I interfered with the Irish struggle for independence. The Home Rule Bill was shelved for the duration of the War. The Irish Volunteers served in the British Army and many Irish regiments served on the Western Front and at Gallipoli. Although disarmed, constription was never extended to Ireland due to the union of Sinn Fein's Irish nationalists and the intercession of the Roman Catholic Church, in Rome. In the post war election of 1918, Sinn Fein won 73 seats and the Ulster Unionist's won 25 seats in the north. Sinn Fein boycotted Westminster and met in Dublin as the 'Dail Eirann' or Irish Parliament. Simultaneously a group

of Irish Volunteers attacked and killed two policemen escorting a cargo of explosives. This began a new phase in the struggle of independence. Within a year, 14 Irish police were killed and 20 more wounded by the new founded group, the Irish Republican Army or IRA. It was the beginning of 'the Troubles'. With the Troubles surfacing in earnest, the Royal Irish Constabulary also known as "the Black and Tans" because the casual uniform, were formed in 1920. These police reinforcements were recruited in England. The black and tans and the IRA began the increasingly violent struggle over Ireland.

1920. The Government of Ireland Act came into force on December 23, 1920. It is at this juncture that Irish history divides into two separate paths. The island is divided into the Republic of Ireland with its 26 counties and capital in Dublin; and Northern Ireland remaining a part of the United Kingdom with six counties and its capital in Belfast.

Referenda:

Recent Significant Events:

The political situation in Northern Ireland has dramatically improved since the signing of the Good Friday Agreement in 1998, the announcement by the Irish Republican Army (IRA) on July 28, 2005, that it would end its armed campaign, and the agreement to set up a power-sharing government on May 8, 2007. The potential remains, however, for sporadic incidents of street violence and/or sectarian confrontation. Tensions may be heightened during the summer marching season (April to August), particularly during the month of July around the July 12th public holiday.

Music, Dance, Handicraft and Patrimony:

During the late 18th Century, the Rhyming Weaver Poets or Ulster Weaver poets began to submit their poems for publication in the local newspapers. They were known for writing in the local dialect, Ulster Scots. Primarily craftsmen and not formally educated, these poems were of 'common man' themes and very popular.

There are 18 designated historic monuments throughout Northern Ireland, but the 'Sites and Monuments Record', a map-based record has data on 14,500 archaeological sites and historic monuments, ranging from prehistoric tombs to post-medieval settlements.

St. Patrick's Day, March 17th. An annual Catholic celebration that is now embraced by Belfast with a large parade and festival.

The Walled City of Derry, located beside the River Foyle, is one of the longest continuously inhabited places in Ireland. The earliest historical references date from the 6th Century when a monastery was founded and dedicated to the Irish saint Columba/Colmille (521-597).

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