



Otázka: Ireland

Jazyk: Angličtina

Přidal(a): h.vu

Geography

Éire (the national name of Ireland) is an island in the Atlantic Ocean, separated from Great Britain by the Irish Sea. It is divided into two major political units – Northern Ireland, which is part of the United Kingdom, and the Republic of Ireland. Ireland resembles a basin, a central plain surrounded by mountains. The longest river is the Shannon. The climate is mild, with frequent rains which are responsible for the brilliant green grass of the „Emerald Isle“.

History

Ireland was originally inhabited by the Celts. St. Patrick brought them Christianity in the 5th century, and from then on Irish missionaries spread the Christian religion throughout Europe. From the twelfth century onwards Normans from England moved to Ireland, at first peacefully, then confiscating the land and imposing English law on Ireland. A long series of revolts were crushed (for example by Oliver Cromwell), the country was devastated by famines, and many people emigrated to the US. In the Easter Rising in April 1916, the nationalists proclaimed independence, but the revolt was suppressed by the British army. An independent Irish state was established in 1921 but the six northern counties remained a part of the United Kingdom. The struggles between the Catholics (led by Sinn Féin) and the pro-British Protestants continued in Northern Ireland until the Good Friday Agreement was signed in 1998.

Political system

The Republic of Ireland is divided into 26 counties. It has a Parliament consisting of an upper house (Senate) and a lower house (House of Representatives). The head of the government is the prime minister, the chief of state is the president. Since 1973 Ireland has been a member of the EU. The 6 counties of Northern Ireland are ruled from London.

People and culture

Although Irish Gaelic is the official first language and it is a compulsory subject at school, English is the language used in everyday life. Ireland is the homeland of writers such as Jonathan Swift, James Joyce, Oscar Wilde, Samuel Beckett and W. B. Yeats, and Irish music is known worldwide, from traditional music to modern artists such as U2 or Sinéad O'Connor.

Holidays

The most typical Irish holiday is St. Patrick's Day (March 17), which remembers St. Patrick, the patron saint of Ireland. The celebrations include parades, concerts, theatre productions, fireworks, and of course drinking and feasting. Today the holiday is celebrated worldwide and not only by Irish people.

Flag

The three stripes on the Irish flag illustrate the Irish political situation: orange represents the Irish Protestants (this dates back to the protestant King William of Orange), green symbolises the Irish Catholics and their nationalism, and white symbolises the peace between them.