



In 1949 The Republic of Ireland was declared an independent country after separating from the United Kingdom. However, six counties in Northern Ireland remained a part of the United Kingdom.

These six counties are still considered part of the United Kingdom today and the people are considered U.K Citizens.



If ever you want to explore a truly unique place in Ireland check out Lambay Island, off the coast of Dublin. Lambay Island is home to a thriving colony of Wallabies. Wallabies are not native to Ireland and were introduced to the island through human influence.



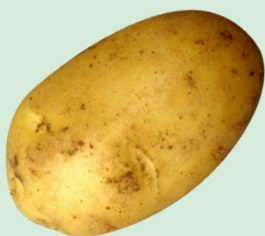
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Interesting Facts About the Country of Ireland and its Culture

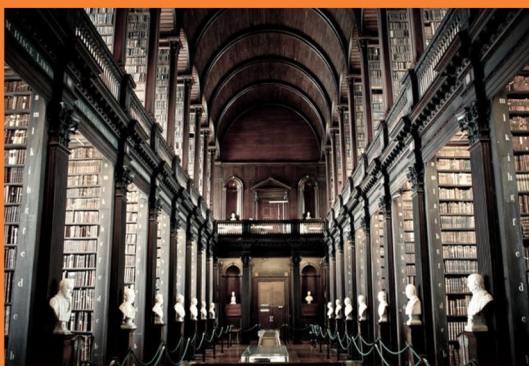




During the Potato Famine, The Choctaw Nations people pooled together \$170 which was sent to Ireland to help with relief efforts. The \$170 would be worth around \$5,000 in today's economy. In honor of the Choctaw people's gift, Irish artist, Alex Pentek created an outdoor sculpture titled *Kindred Spirits* (pictured above). The sculpture is a stainless steel structure of eagle feathers forming a circle and represents the gift of a bowl of food.



The harp is the official symbol of Ireland, making it the only country in the world with an instrument as its national symbol.



If you love books then Ireland has an amazing place for you to visit. Named the Long Room, Trinity College's Library is home to over 200,000 of the oldest books still around today. One of the most famous books in the library, is titled the *Book of Kells*, and dates back to 800 AD.



Due to Ireland's history with famine, The country and its people make huge donations to the World Food Programme (WFP). In one, three year period the country of Ireland donated around 60 million Euros. The WFP Feeds around 80 million people in 75 of the most malnourished countries in the world.

One of the most iconic buildings in American history was actually built by an Irishman. James Hoban was selected by George Washington to design and construct the very first white house. During the war of 1812 the White House was set afire and again James Hoban was asked to rebuild it. While many presidents have made changes over time much of James Hoban's original design can be seen when visiting today





Elephants are the national animal of Laos and are very important in Laos culture, as they represent prosperity and the strength of the nation. Sadly the numbers of wild elephants in Laos is only around 400 with another 400 in captivity.



Laos is famous for its traditional handmade silk weaving. These traditional practices have been passed down for years by the women in the villages. Laos villagers will cultivate their own silk worms for the process of making silk. Laos silk is highly prized for its patterns, color and Individuality as no pattern can ever truly be duplicated.



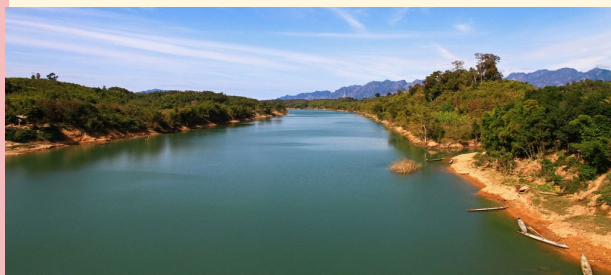
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Interesting Facts About the Country of Laos and its Culture





The Mekong River is home to 60 Irrawaddy dolphins. This pod of dolphins is known as the smiling faces of the Mekong. One of the most interesting things about these dolphins is their relationship with the locals. According to *Marinebio.org* these dolphins have developed a relationship with the locals and will herd fish into the nets of fishermen and in return the fisherman on the local river will split their catch with them.



Coffee is Laos' biggest agricultural export. The country of Laos ships out 31,000 tons of Arabica and Robusta varieties of coffee beans yearly.



The people of Laos consume more sticky rice than anyone else in the world. Each person consumes on average 155 kilograms of sticky rice per year. That's roughly 341lbs!



One interesting place in Laos is known as the Plain of Jars. These large stone jars are spread throughout the Xieng Khouang plain in the Laos Highlands. Made of sedimentary rock, the stone jars can be as large as 10 feet in height and weigh upward of 14 tons. Archaeologists are unsure of the age or what the jars were used for, their best guess today is they were used for food storage but that remains uncertain.

Laos legend however claims these jars were created by Khun Cheung, the ancient king of giants who lived in the highlands.

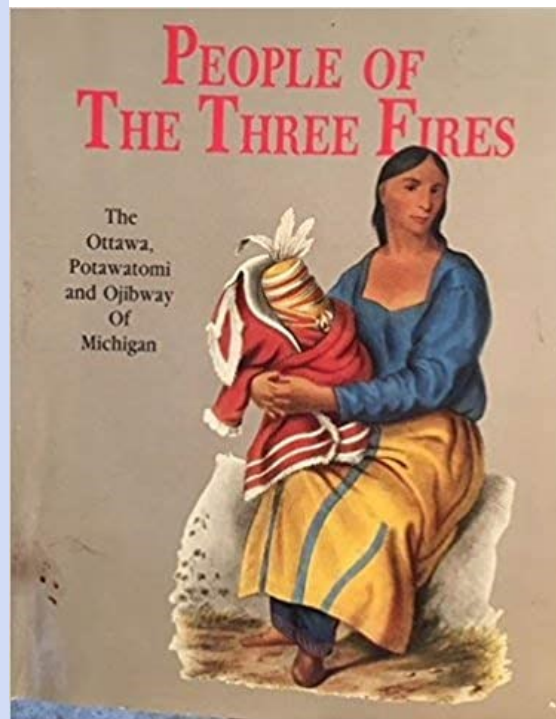




Ojibwe people built dome-shaped homes called wigwams. These wigwams were covered in woven mats and birch bark and provide shelter. These wigwams were home not just to single families but the extended families as well. Often extended family, such as grandparents, would share these homes as well.



Michigan had three indigenous tribal nations of people who inhabit Michigan the Ottawa, Potawatomi, and Ojibwe. The Ojibwe are also known as the Chippewa.



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Interesting Facts About the Culture of the Ojibwe People





The Ojibwe people have four sacred medicines. Tobacco, Sage, Cedar, and Sweetgrass. Tobacco is used to communicate with the spirit world and is used during prayer. It also is given as a gift to elders, healers and medicine people when seeking advice or help.

Sage, cedar and sweetgrass are used in many ceremonies and teaching. All are used in cleansing rituals.

The sage used by Ojibwe people is not the sage you cook with, it is a white sage. White Sage is difficult to grow and is deeply respected and sacred to the Ojibwe people.

The Ojibwe people are known for their skilled craftsmanship and artistry. They are extremely well known for their beading ability. Many Ojibwe people sell their beadwork at cultural and craft events. It is also beautifully sewn on traditional regalia often seen worn during important ceremonies and Pow Wows.



Central Michigan University has been housing, "The Celebrating Life Pow Wow" for the past 31 years. Pow Wows are the Indigenous people's way of coming together to dance, sing, visit, & share. One of the best ways to experience Indigenous culture is at a Pow Wow.

Sanilac Petroglyphs Historic State Park near Cass City is home to Michigan's largest known collection of early Native American teachings. These carvings are called Ezhibiigaadek Asin, "written on stone," In 2019 the Ojibwe people joined the Michigan Department of Natural Resources, in helping preserving this site for future generations to come.

The Ojibwe people used the turtle shell as a calendar. The shell of the turtle has thirteen large central plates (called scutes), surrounded by twenty-eight smaller plates. The large plates represent the 13 Lunar moons and the small surrounding plates represent the 28 days between each moon.





The Dutch people consume more liquorice than any other group of people in the world. They roughly consume 5lb of liquorice per year. The people of the Netherlands love liquorice so much that most sweet shops carry upwards of 80 flavors. Their most famous flavor is called black liquorice, both salted and unsalted varieties. Many compare the flavor to that of cold medicine.



The Neatherlands are known for their windmills currently there are over 1,000 windmills covering the Netherlands. These windmills are used to harness the renewable energy of wind. The country's electric train system serves around 600,000 passengers every day, and every train runs on 100% renewable wind energy.



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Interesting Facts About The Netherlands and the Dutch Culture





The Dutch own more bicycles than any other country in the world with nearly 22 million bikes in the country. Biking is the most common mode of transportation with about 9,320 miles of bike lanes throughout the Netherlands. Cycling is a necessary part of life in the Netherlands and is part of the reason the country consistently ranks as one of the healthiest in the world.



The tulip turned the Netherlands economy upside down. "Tulip Mania" as it has been called, occurred between November 1636 till the crash in May 1637. Tulips became so popular during this time that almost everyone began growing them. Many wealthier Dutch people began spending what equated to nearly a full year's wages gambling on growing tulips in hopes of making a high profit. It did not end well and when the market crashed many Dutch people lost significantly causing the economy to take a nose dive and leading to some tough years economically for the Netherlands.



The Netherlands is the only country with a national dog. The Keeshond is a hardy, nimble-footed dog, bred to be a guard dog, as well as, a companion on Dutch vessels that sailed the manmade waterways of the Low Countries.



The Dutch are known for their wooden shoes called clogs. Surprisingly, they are not as popular among the Dutch people as people think. Clogs are now seen more as a tourist souvenir than standard footwear, but you can still see villagers and farmers rocking these wooden shoes.

