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MANAGEMENT OF TOURISM AND SPORTS

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TOURISM OF THE REPUBLIC OF IRELAND AND ITS IMPACT ON THE ECONOMY

FINAL PAPER

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HRVOJE FUNDA

TURIZAM REPUBLIKE IRSKE I NJEGOV UTJECAJ NA GOSPODARSTVO

ZAVRŠNI RAD

MENTOR: Marija Miščančuk

ČAKOVEC, 2017.
Abstract

The Republic of Ireland is a country that is located in northwestern Europe and it is located on the Island of Ireland (Irish: Éire). It occupies approximately 80% of the Irish island. According to the 2011 census, the Republic of Ireland is home to a 4.5 million inhabitants. The capital of the Republic of Ireland is Dublin (Irish: Baile Átha Cliath). Dublin is also the largest city of the Republic of Ireland and centre of the political scene in Ireland.

Ireland is one of those places that attract tourists with their rich history and tradition but also with their modern approach to tourism. There is really a lot to see in Ireland, from ancient Celtic remains, green fields, steep cliffs, medieval castles, churches to the most modern hotels and tourist attractions. Even though tourism is not the main branch of the Irish economy, it grows rapidly and it's becoming important to the economic growth of the nation. In demographic view, it is interesting that the birth rate is positive. Ireland is one of the few nations in Europe that is experiencing population growth. Although, one of the reasons for population growth is immigration, the birth rate is positive and the population is growing. Ireland is a very desirable nation to live and the percentage of foreign citizens is 10%, which is a very high ratio to local population.

Keywords: attractions, economy, the Republic of Ireland, tourism, tourist
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1. INTRODUCTION

This final paper describes the tourism of the Republic of Ireland and its impact on the economy. Today, tourism is one of the strongest and most important industries in the world because of its complexity and profitability. The Republic of Ireland is a country that is fairly “new” on the tourism market and is slowly gaining its importance on this market. Although, the tourism in Ireland was present in 18th century, it has not been revitalized since the late 20th century. Since then, tourism has become one of the most important parts of Irish economy. It is very important to understand most important factors for tourism progress, and this information will be provided in the first part of this paper. Geography is very significant for tourism, so this information is critical for understanding the main thesis. Also, economic data like GDP, employment and unemployment will be provided in this paper.

In the second part of this paper, general tourism terms will be provided for better understanding of the terminology used later in the paper, where actual Irish bed nights, accommodation, purpose of travels, and tourism revenue will be presented. Irish tourist attractions will be divided in two parts; 5 most popular paid attractions and 5 most popular free attractions. Irish attractions are really diverse because they are mix of natural attractions and some of the most interesting man-made buildings or artefacts. Finally, facts and numbers about tourism importance for economy will be provided at the end of the paper.

The main thesis of this paper is the importance of tourism in Irish economy, how it affects the economy and how tourist attractions work under certain circumstances.
2. GENERALLY ABOUT THE REPUBLIC OF IRELAND

The Republic of Ireland is a country that occupies the central and southern part of the Irish island. By the end of the 1980s it was an economically poorly developed country with many social problems. After a series of reforms of the economic and social system, it soon entered into a group of the most developed European countries. General economic development also positively reflected the development of tourism in Ireland, which was primarily based on attractive social factors. Particularly important is the specific culture due to its popularity in the world, which is the result of the preservation of Celtic heritage. It can best be experienced in rural areas where many traditional elements of everyday life, including the Gaelic language, have been preserved. Cultural and historical monuments are little less important for tourism. Attractive natural factors have secondary significance, and geomorphologic phenomena and plant cover are the main ones. They give a basic feature to Irish landscapes, which are recognizable by long grassy surfaces (which is why Ireland is called the green island or the Emerald Isle). The shore of the Atlantic Ocean is marked by numerous attractive bays and cliffs which are attracting tourists to the west and south coasts (Čurić, Glamuzuna, Opačić, 2012).

2.1 GEOGRAPHIC DATA

It is very important to cover geography because the landscape, relief, climate and socio-political data are very important for tourism of the Republic of Ireland.

2.1.1 LOCATION

Ireland is an island in northwestern Europe in the north Atlantic and is the third largest island in Europe. The Republic of Ireland is a country that occupies approximately 80% of the Island and is 120th largest country. Total area is 70 273 square kilometres.
2.1.2 RELIEF AND CLIMATE

The climate of Ireland is classified as western maritime. The major influence on the climate is the Atlantic Ocean which is only 113 kilometres distant from mainland. Ireland does not suffer from the extremes of temperature experienced by many other similar countries. Average air temperatures lie mainly between limits 4 and 7 °C in January and February, the coldest months of the year. In July and August, the warmest months, temperatures usually range between 14 and 16 °C, although occasionally considerably higher readings are recorded. The sunniest months are May and June, when there is sunshine for an average duration of 5.5 and 6.5 hours a day (https://www.met.ie/climate-ireland/climate-of-ireland.asp).

When speaking about relief and landscape, Ireland consists of a mostly flat low-lying area in the midlands ringed by mountain ranges. The major mountain ranges include the Blackstairs, Bluestack, Comeragh, Derryveagh, Macgillycuddy's Reeks, Nephin Beg, Ox, Silvermines, Slieve Mish, Twelve Pins, and Wicklow. The highest peak in the Republic of Ireland is Carrauntoohil, which is 1038m high. On the western part of the island, there are
many sea cliffs. The most famous are Cliffs of Moher. The main river in Republic of Ireland is River Shannon which is 386 kilometres long. Also, River Shannon is the longest river on the Irish island. Besides the Shannon, additional rivers of size are the Barrow, Blackwater, Boyne, Finn, Lee, Liffey, Nore, Slaney and Suir. (http://www.worldatlas.com/webimage/countrys/europe/ireland/ieland.htm).

2.1.3 DEMOGRAPHY

The population of Ireland, according to 2016 data, is 4,952,473. The age structure is following: 0-14 years: 21.51% (male 544,506/female 520,934), 15-24 years: 11.8% (male 297,025/female 287,512), 25-54 years: 43.52% (male 1,082,577/female 1,072,721) 55-64 years: 10.33% (male 256,353/female 255,155), 65 years and over: 12.84% (male 256,353/female 255,155). Total median age is 36.4. Median age for males is 36.1 and for females is 36.8 years. What makes the Republic of Ireland different is population growth. The Republic of Ireland is one of the few countries in Europe that has positive population growth. So according to 2016 data, Republic of Ireland records 1.2% growth. Also, the ratio between natality and mortality is positive. The birth rate is 14.5 births/1,000 population and the death rate is 6.5 deaths/1,000 population. Life expectancy is 80.8 years for total population. Males have a slightly lower life expectancy which is 78.5 years and females' life expectancy is 83.2 years. As it was stated before, the Republic of Ireland is the country with a high number of immigrants. Ethnic group numbers are following: Irish 84.5%, other white 9.8%, Asian 1.9%, black 1.4%, mixed and other 0.9%, and unspecified 1.6%. The official language in the Republic of Ireland is English and Irish1 (https://www.indexmundi.com/ireland/demographics_profile.html).

2.2 BRIEF HISTORY OF THE REPUBLIC OF IRELAND

Ireland has a long history and the Irish people have a long tradition that goes back to 6000BC. First traces of population are related to Celts which were tribal people that lived on the British Isles and who built a lot of prehistoric monuments that are still preserved today and

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1 Gaelic or Gaeilge, spoken by approximately 38.7% of the population as a first or second language
are used for tourism purposes. The legacy of Celts is still popular even today which will be described later in this paper. Ireland, as a western European country, is connected with adopting the Christianity in 5th century AD. Legend says that Saint Patrick was the one who brought Christianity to Ireland. Patrick was a shepherd who, according to legend, baptised locals using a clover. The clover has represented the holy trinity and is today the main symbol of Ireland and Saint Patrick is the patron saint of Ireland. Saint Patrick's Day is celebrated on 17 March every year. In medieval age, the island of Ireland was divided into many estates which led to its annexation to England. Ireland has tried to earn its independence for 3 centuries and it finally accomplished it on 29 December 1937. But Ireland was still a member of the British Commonwealth. In time of great economic crisis during World War II, Irish people organized series of strikes and syndicates who were promoting independence from Commonwealth. Finally, in 1949, Ireland left the British Commonwealth and declared the Republic of Ireland (http://www.livinginireland.ie/en/culture_society/a_brief_history_of_ireland/).

2.2.1 CELTS
Celts were Indo-European people that used to live on the territory of today’s Great Britain, Ireland, Belgium, France and Switzerland but their main territory was today’s Germany and France. They seem to have moved into Ireland in two waves, one directly from the continent into the west of the country and the other through Britain into northeast Ireland and have left many marks on Ireland and its people that have remained. There are thousands of habitation sites dotting the landscape, graves, monuments and other relics that are very valuable today. Some of the most famous Celtic remains are The Rock of Cashel, Newgrange, Glendalough, Skellig Michael and Carrowmore megalithic cemetery. Those sites are very popular for tourism and they are a part of the tourism offer of Ireland (https://www.proud2beirish.com/Celtic-Ireland.htm).

2.3 ECONOMY
During the period 1995-2007, the Irish economy experienced rapid economic growth. The growth had one of fastest rates in the EU and Ireland was described as the ‘Celtic Tiger’.
After being one of the poorest European country in the early 1980s, by 2008, Ireland had become one of the top 10 richest countries in the Europe. One of the main reasons of this rapid economic growth is foreign investors who were attracted to Ireland because of the low taxes and skilled labour. Even today, some of the major multinational companies are still operating in Ireland. For instance, Google still operates from Ireland. The period after the rapid economic expansion had positive impact on other economic branches such as the construction sector. However, the economic crisis in 2008 has left a huge impact on the Irish economy which lasted nearly 6 years. The Irish debt in 2011 was 120% of its GDP. The Irish economy began to recover in 2014, making Ireland the fastest growing economy in the European Union (http://www.economicshelp.org/blog/7344/economics/irish-economy-summary/).

Today, Ireland is the 27th largest export economy in the world and the 15th most complex economy according to the Economic Complexity Index\(^2\). In 2015, Ireland exported $154B and imported $74.7B, resulting in a positive trade balance of $80B. The top exports of Ireland are packaged medicaments ($31B), nitrogen heterocyclic compounds ($21.2B), human or animal blood ($14.2B), scented mixtures ($8.22B) and orthopaedic appliances ($5.77B). Its top imports are planes, helicopters, and spacecraft ($9.1B), packaged medicaments ($3.67B), computers ($2.93B), cars ($2.57B) and refined petroleum ($2.31B).

The top export destinations of Ireland are the United States ($34.3B), Belgium-Luxembourg ($19.5B), the United Kingdom ($18.9B), Germany ($11.5B) and Switzerland ($7.41B). The top import origins are the United Kingdom ($21.1B), the United States ($12B), Germany ($6.37B), France ($6.2B) and China ($4.4B) (http://atlas.media.mit.edu/en/profile/country/irl/).

### 2.3.1 GDP

According to the World Bank data for 2016, GDP of Ireland is 294.054 billion dollars. GDP per capita is $62,100 and GDP growth is 5.2%. Picture 2 below shows the Irish GDP from 1960 – 2015. The period when GDP was below 250 billion dollars was the outcome of the

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\(^2\) holistic measure of the production characteristics of large economic systems
financial crisis that caused recession in the whole world. Also, it is visible how quickly GDP has stabilized and returned to its growing trend.


**Figure 1** Irish GDP from 1960 – 2015

2.3.2 EMPLOYMENT

Employment is one of the most important indicators of healthy economy. The Republic of Ireland, as stated before, is one of the fastest growing economies in the world because of the skilled labour. As the economy of Ireland was growing, unemployment has decreased to the “golden percent“, and is still decreasing to this day. According to CSO\(^3\) of Ireland, in July 2016 there were 176,900 (8.1%) unemployed people. As for July 2017, this number dropped to 141,100 (6.4%). In July 2014, the monthly unemployment rate was near 12.5% which is almost 6% less than today. When speaking about employed people, numbers have

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\(^3\) Central statistics office
Tourism of the Republic of Ireland and its impact on the economy

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The number of employed in Ireland has dramatically risen since 2014. In July of 2014 there were 1.9 million employed, while in January of 2017 this number rose to 2 million (http://www.cso.ie/en/statistics/labourmarket/).

![Unemployment Rate Chart](http://www.cso.ie/en/releasesandpublications/er/mue/monthlyunemploymentjuly2017/)

Figure 2 Monthly unemployment rate from July of 2014 to July of 2017.

Source:


3. GENERALLY ABOUT TOURISM

Today, tourism has become very important industry to most countries around the world. It is often described as one of the largest, most dynamic and most complicated phenomenon of socio-economic interactions of the modern age. It is interesting that tourism is part of social and economic growth but is also incorporated in everyday life. Also, tourism is very interdisciplinary, so history, law in tourism, psychology, agriculture, sociology, geography, politics and lots of other disciplines are present in it. In this chapter, main tourism terms will be explained, such as the definition of tourism, tourist, tourist supply, tourist demand, tourist market etc.
3.1. DEFINITION OF TOURISM

There are many definitions of tourism and there are many authors that have studied tourism and tried to explain its purpose. Tourism is most simply defined as the travel and associated activities of persons away from their usual home environment (Smith, 1994). The World Tourism Organization defines tourism as „the activities of persons traveling to and staying in places outside their usual environment for not more than one consecutive year for leisure, business and other purposes.” Medlich and Middleton (1973.) describe tourism as a bundle of activities, services and benefits. From these definitions, 5 common points are visible.

- There is no tourism without traveling and circulation of tourists outside of their home environment.
- Travel and stay must be outside the tourist’s usual environment
- Tourism is based on circular travel (Domicile – Tourist destination – Domicile) which has a defined time interval in which it is happening (not longer than 12 months)
- Purpose of tourist stay is never permanent stay or employment
- In a tourist destination, tourists spend but they do not earn (Čavlek, Bartoluci, Prebežac, Kesar 2011).

3.2 DEFINITION OF TOURIST

It is very important to differentiate between a few different terms: tourist, traveller, visitor, travel group and travel party. All definitions provided in this part of the paper are official definitions from the World Tourism Organization.

„Visitor: A visitor is a traveller taking a trip to a main destination outside his/her usual environment, for less than a year, for any main purpose (business, leisure or other personal purpose) other than to be employed by a resident entity in the country or place visited (IRTS 2008, 2.9)“.

„Tourist (or overnight visitor): A visitor (domestic, inbound or outbound) is classified as a tourist (or overnight visitor), if his/her trip includes an overnight stay, or as a same-day visitor (or excursionist) otherwise (IRTS 2008, 2.13)“.
“Travel / traveller: Travel refers to the activity of travellers. A traveller is someone who moves between different geographic locations, for any purpose and any duration (IRTS 2008, 2.4).”

“Travel group: A travel group is made up of individuals or travel parties travelling together: examples are people travelling on the same package tour or youngsters attending a summer camp (IRTS 2008, 3.5).”

“Travel party: A travel party is defined as visitors travelling together on a trip and whose expenditures are pooled (IRTS 2008, 3.2).”


3.3 DEFINITION OF TOURISM MARKET, TOURISM DEMAND AND TOURISM SUPPLY

In this part, some of the most important terms in tourism will be explained. Terms like tourism market, tourism demand, and tourism supply are core for every research in tourism.

3.3.1 TOURISM MARKET

Tourism market is core to the tourist circulation and every country must be familiar to the type of the tourist that it is being visited by. The simplest definition of tourism market would be the “place” where tourism demand meets tourism supply.

3.3.2 TOURISM DEMAND AND TOURISM SUPPLY

A tourist market consists of buyers and sellers. As stated before, two most important elements of tourist market are tourism demand and tourism supply. Cooper (2004) defines demand as “a schedule of the amount of any product or service that people are willing and able to buy at each specific price in a set of possible prices during some specified period of time”.

The tourism supply represents the amount of goods and services offered to tourists on a particular tourist market, at a specific time and at a certain price. In the widest sense, the term "tourism supply" implies all economic and social participants of a country that directly or indirectly contribute to the expansion and diversity of the total supply and thereby the
increase in tourist consumption as the economic result of the temporary residence of domestic or foreign tourists. There are many factors influencing the tourism supply such as:

- Society (values and norms, social order, leisure time, cultural and historical offer)
- Economy (degree of economic development, foreign exchange needs, prices and foreign exchange rates, infrastructure, jobs and production conditions, etc.)
- Environment (climate, landscape, geography, flora and fauna)
- Influences of demand (motives, tastes, fashion, etc.)
- States (legislation, foreign exchange, customs, border regulations, international relations)
- Enterprises (development of entrepreneurship, degree of technology and technology development, labour supply, production costs, etc.) (Freyer 1988).

Picture 2 Supply and demand tourism system
Source: https://www.slideshare.net/mellormurray/the-economic-value-of-tourism
4. TOURISM IN THE REPUBLIC OF IRELAND

With economic growth, the Republic of Ireland has experienced growth in tourism sector as well. After the economic crisis, Ireland has invested a lot of funds to tourism infrastructure, transportation and telecommunication sector which has proved very worthy in the tourism sector. Today, tourism in Ireland is slowly becoming one of the most important branches of the Irish economy. Apart from modern tourism infrastructure, tourists are attracted by magical landscapes, numerous castles, cliffs, Celtic remains and culture that is widely known around the world.

4.1 HISTORY OF TOURISM IN IRELAND

Tourism before 20th century was not significant because of the poor transport in mainland of the island, so most of the travels to Ireland were mainly by water and around the coast. Still, there were a few travellers that were traveling to mainland in search of the lost Celtic treasures. Tourism as we know it today goes back to early 20th century when the Irish Tourism Association was established. The Irish Tourism Association has changed its name through the years; in 1952, the association became Fógra Fáilte. In 1955, the Bord Fáilte Eireann was established under the Tourist Traffic Act to develop and promote tourism in the Republic of Ireland, both at home and abroad. Today, those associations are merged under the name Fáilte Ireland. Fáilte Ireland was formed in May 2003 under the National Tourism Development Authority Act as Ireland’s national tourism development authority, responsible for supporting Ireland’s tourism industry and sustaining Ireland as a high-quality and competitive tourism destination (http://www.failteireland.ie/Footer/What-We-Do/Our-History.aspx).

4.2. TOURISM NUMBERS 2013 – 2016

2016 was a record year for Irish tourism, according to the Irish Tourist Industry Confederation. Figures show the number of international visitors increased to 8.8 million - up 10% on the previous year. The most important tourists that come to Ireland are the British. In 2016, there were 3.6 million tourists from Britain. In 2013, there were 2.8 million tourists from Britain, and that number rose to 3 million in year 2014 and to 3.3 million in 2015.
Europe mainland is the next source of tourists. In 2016, there were 3.1 million tourists from Europe. Leading countries are Germany (624 000 visitors), France (494 000 visitors), Spain (370 000 visitors) and Italy (326 000 visitors). Britain and Mainland Europe recorded respective growth of 8.5% and 7.7%. North America market also performed very strongly, increasing by 14.2%. There were 1.4 million tourists from North America (1.2 million visitors from USA and 183 000 from Canada). See table 1. (http://www.failteireland.ie/FailteIreland/media/WebsiteStructure/Documents/3_Research_Insights/3_General_SurveysReports/Tourism-Facts-2016-Preliminarydocx_1.pdf?ext=.pdf).

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<th>Numbers (000s)</th>
<th>2013</th>
<th>2014</th>
<th>2015</th>
<th>2016</th>
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<td><strong>Britain</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2,870</td>
<td>3,007</td>
<td>3,346</td>
<td>3,632</td>
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<td>520</td>
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<td>All Other Europe</td>
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<td><strong>North America</strong></td>
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<tr>
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<tr>
<td>Australia, New Zealand &amp; Other Oceania</td>
<td>431</td>
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<td>516</td>
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<td>Other Areas</td>
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Table 1 Tourism numbers in Ireland 2013 – 2016
Source: CSO/Fáilte Ireland/TSB, NISRA

4.3 TOURISM REVENUE AND SEASONALITY 2013 - 2016
As stated before, year 2016 was record for tourist industry in visitors but also in profits. Tourism industry has generated over 8 billion euros to Irish economy which is 10 % more than the previous year. Visitors that spent the most came from Europe mainland - they spent 1.6 billion euros in the year of 2016. North American visitors spent 1, 3 billion euros and visitors from Britain spent 1.1 billion euros. Other overseas countries spent around 533
The rest of the Irish tourism revenue is from total foreign exchange earnings, which was 6.5 billion euros. Foreign exchange earnings refer to the monetary gain made by selling goods and services or by exchanging currencies in global markets. See table 2. Also, it is important to know when the most tourists arrive. Tourism in Ireland is most active in the months of June, July and August. In 2016, 10% of total overseas tourism took place in June, 11% in July and 12% in August. See table 3 (http://www.failteireland.ie/FailteIreland/media/WebsiteStructure/Documents/3_Research_Insights/3_General_SurveysReports/Tourism-Facts-2016-Preliminarydocx_1.pdf?ext=.pdf).

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<th>2014</th>
<th>2015</th>
<th>2016</th>
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<td>890.9</td>
<td>926.7</td>
<td>1,017.9</td>
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<td>1,301.2</td>
<td>1,555.3</td>
<td>1,657.5</td>
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<td>North America</td>
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<td>Other Overseas</td>
<td>367.7</td>
<td>428.1</td>
<td>492.6</td>
<td>533.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TOTAL OVERSEAS</td>
<td>3,315.7</td>
<td>3,596.4</td>
<td>4,265.3</td>
<td>4,638.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Northern Ireland$^4,5$</td>
<td>304.5</td>
<td>334.4</td>
<td>338.2</td>
<td>366.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TOTAL OUT-OF-STATE</td>
<td>3,620.3</td>
<td>3,930.7</td>
<td>4,603.5</td>
<td>5004.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Carrier receipts$^6$</td>
<td>976.0</td>
<td>1,166.0</td>
<td>1,322.0</td>
<td>1,479.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Overseas same-day visits</td>
<td>35.0</td>
<td>41.0</td>
<td>38.0</td>
<td>48.0</td>
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<tr>
<td>TOTAL FOREIGN EXCHANGE EARNINGS</td>
<td>4,631.3</td>
<td>5,137.7</td>
<td>5,963.5</td>
<td>6,531.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Domestic trips$^7$</td>
<td>1,533.0</td>
<td>1,713.5</td>
<td>1,725.3</td>
<td>1,776.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TOTAL TOURISM REVENUE</td>
<td>6,164.3</td>
<td>6,851.2</td>
<td>7,688.8</td>
<td>8,308.0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 2 Tourism revenue in Ireland 2013 – 2016
Source: CSO/Fáilte Ireland/TSB NISRA/Central Bank of Ireland
Table 3 Seasonality of tourism
Source: Fáilte Ireland estimates based on CSO

4.4 OVERSEAS TOURISM

Overseas tourism can be defined as visits to Ireland by overseas residents. Most preferable type of transport of overseas tourists in year 2016 was air transport which makes 88% of the oversea arrivals. Sea transport makes 9% of the arrivals and via Northern Ireland 2% (http://www.failteireland.ie/FailteIreland/media/WebsiteStructure/Documents/3_Research_Insights/3_General_SurveysReports/Tourism-Facts-2016-Preliminarydocx_1.pdf?ext=.pdf).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>(%)</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Air</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>From Britain</td>
<td>38</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>From Mainland Europe</td>
<td>38</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Transatlantic</td>
<td>1.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Asia/Middle East</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sea</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>From Britain</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>From Mainland Europe</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Via N. Ireland</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 4 Type of tourist arrivals
Source: CSO

As for distribution of bed nights, in 2016 the number of tourist nights was 67.9 million. The most popular types were staying in self-catering objects (25%) and staying at friends or family (25%). Hotels make 18% of total bed nights.
There were 5 most popular activities of tourists in 2016 in Ireland. The first and most popular was hiking or cross walking. There were 2,077 million participants in this activity in 2016. The following activities are cycling (399 000 participants), golf (193 000 participants), angling (131 000) and equestrian type of tourism (98 000 participants).

Table 6 Activities of overseas tourists in 2016.

Source: CSO and NISRA

The main reason for travel of the overseas tourists were holiday trips with total number of 4.6 million. Following reason is visiting friends or family, worth total 2.6 million participants. Business travels had 1.3 million participants and other purposes had 385 000 participants.
Tourism of the Republic of Ireland and its impact on the economy

Table 7 Purpose of travel of the overseas tourists in 2016.

Source: CSO and NISRA

4.5 DOMESTIC TOURISM

Domestic tourism is also present within the borders of Ireland. There were over 9 million trips within the borders of Ireland. Domestic travellers have generated 1.75 billion euros of profit. The most popular type of domestic travel purposes were holiday trips which makes 4.8 million trips. Other popular types of travel were business trips (425 000 trips), visiting friends or relatives trips (3 000 000 trips) and other trips (994 000 trips). Most profitable type of travel were holiday trips which generated 1.1 billion euros. The following types of travel by expenditure were visiting friends and relatives trips (294 million euros), business trips (104 million euros) and other trips (253 million euros). As for accommodation, the most popular type of accommodation were staying at friends or relatives (34%) and staying in a hotel (28%). Domestic tourists were mostly engaged in the following activities: hiking/walking (25%), visiting houses/castles (24%), national parks (23%), visits to spas (20%)

Table 8 Domestic tourism 2013 – 2016 by purpose of travel
Source: CSO Household Travel Surveys 2013-2016

5. MOST POPULAR TOURIST ATTRACTIONS IN THE REPUBLIC OF IRELAND

There are lots of attractions that you can see in Ireland, from ancient Celtic ruins to most modern tourist infrastructure. Diversity is what makes Ireland attractive and its culture is what makes it special. In this part of the paper, most popular tourist attractions will be described.

5.1 MOST POPULAR PAID ATTRACTIONS

Most visited paid attractions in year 2016 were:

- Guinness storehouse (1 647 408 visitors)
- Cliffs of Moher (1 427 166 visitors)
- Dublin zoo (1 143 908 visitors)
- National aquatic centre (1 037 992 visitors)
- Book of Kells (890 781 visitors)

5.1.1 GUINNESS STOREHOUSE

Ireland is known for its supreme "Guinness" beer, so one of Dublin's most important tourist attractions, the "Guinness Storehouse", has to be mentioned. The Guinness story begins in 1759, when Arthur Guinness hired a beer inn for 9,000 years for which he paid 45 pounds a year. The tour starts right there, where you can see a copy of the contract on the glass floor.
The entire 7-storey complex resembles a large glass pint\(^4\), which, if filled, would fit 14.3 million pints. At the beginning of the story, tourists are acquainted with the 4 main ingredients of which are Guinness beer, namely water, yeast, barley and hops. Then you can learn something about the founder Arthur Guinness. On the other floors you can see various old advertising materials through which Guinness beer was promoted, the whole process of creating Guinness, and learning how to properly drink Guinness beer. The best part, as with any brewery, is the Gravity bar located on the seventh floor, where tourists can sip their Guinness beer and enjoy a 360° panoramic view of Dublin. The price for the entry to the Guinness storehouse is 25 euros for adults, 16 euros for children (13 – 16 years) and children under 12 years of age can enter for free. Guinness storehouse was the most popular tourist attraction in Ireland in 2016 with 1,647,408 visitors. (http://www.putoholicari.rtl.hr/pivovara-guinness-u-dublinu-15182/)

![Guinness storehouse](http://www.discoveringireland.com/vacations/the-guinness-storehouse/)

5.1.2 CLIFFS OF MOHER

The Cliffs were named after the old fortress that stood on their southernmost part until the end of the 18th century, when the fort was destroyed during the Napoleonic wars to make room for the construction of a new Scout Tower. That is why the name of the cliff in the

\(^4\) form of drinkware made to hold 473ml of fluid
translation from the Irish Gaelic language denotes "cliffs of a ruined fortress," because the word "Moher" means the mentioned fortress. Today, visitors can reach the cliffs on either side and pass the pedestrian path in a day. From Cape Hag's Head in the south, where they are about 120 meters high, cliffs gradually grow to the north where they reach the highest altitude, and there is a viewpoint with a magnificent view. The cliffs are very popular in the media, mostly in filmography. The cliffs have appeared in several films including The Princess Bride (1987), Harry Potter and the Half-Blood Prince (2009) and Leap Year (2010).

As for accommodation, there is no hotel accommodation at the Cliffs of Moher, however Doolin (the closest town) is a good base from which to visit the cliffs of Moher as it has a good supply of hotels, bed and breakfasts, pubs and restaurants. In 2016, 1 427 166 tourists visited the Cliffs of Moher. Tickets for the Cliffs of Moher are pretty cheap so adults pay 6 euros, the senior citizens, disabled citizens, and students ticket costs 4.5 euros and children under 16 are free of charge (http://www.putoholicari.rtl.hr/klifovi-mohera-ravnodusni-strazari-irske-9380/).

![Picture 4 Cliffs of Moher](http://www.aranislands.ie/cliffs-moher-wild-atlantic-way/)

### 5.1.3 DUBLIN ZOO

The Dublin ZOO is one of the oldest zoos in Europe and it is the biggest in Ireland. It was opened by the Zoological Society of Ireland in 1831 on the land of the Phoenix Park. Today, the Dublin ZOO is one of the most popular family attractions welcoming over 1 million
visitors. Dublin ZOO is home to 600 animals from all around the world. The Zoo is divided into a few theme parks like the “African plains“, where animals like ostriches, giraffes, and zebras can be seen. The “Fringes of the Arctic“ is an area where aquatic or cold climate animals are inhabited, the “Reptile House“ features reptilian animals like crocodiles, lizards and turtles. The “Roberts house“ is an area with a free flying aviary consisting of flying animals. In the area called the “Asian Forests“, tourists can see the Asian lion. Other areas are the “Kaziranga Forest Trail”, the “South American House”, the “World of Primates”, the “Family Farm”, and the “Sea Lion Cove”. For tourists, Dublin ZOO is easily accessible by car or public transport and open all year round from 9.30am daily. Tickets for adults are 17.50 euros, for seniors citizens 13.50 euros, and for children 13 euros. Family tickets range from 49 to 57 euros (http://www.discoverireland.ie/Arts-Culture-Heritage/dublin-zoo/30341).

5.1.4 NATIONAL AQUATIC CENTRE

The national aquatic centre is an indoors aquatic complex in Dublin. The Centre was opened in 2003 and successfully hosted the swimming events of the 2003 Special Olympics World Summer Games, the first time this event was held outside the United States. The national
aquatic centre is one of the largest indoors water centres in the world. The centre includes an international standard swimming pool, an international standard diving pool and the AquaZone. The AquaZone is one of the most technically innovative water parks in Europe. The facilities include: The Master Blaster, The Dark Hole, The Green Giant, The Flow Rider, The Wave Pool, The Lazy River and The Pirate Ship. The next facility is the ToneZone gym. ToneZone gym is a top class Health club and gymnasium which features all the latest cardiovascular and resistance equipment, fitness studio and a dedicated Spinning room. It also incorporates sauna, steam room and spa relaxation. Above all, it is staffed by a team of committed professionals with years of experience in the Health and Fitness industry (https://www.nationalaquaticcentre.ie/facilities).

![Picture 6 National Aquatic Centre](http://www.bamireland.ie/divisions/bam-building/building-projects/leisure/national-aquatic-centre.htm)

5.1.5 BOOK OF KELLS

The Book of Kells is one of the most famous Irish artefacts. It is a manuscript containing the Four Gospels and it is Ireland’s most precious medieval artefact. The Book of Kells was probably made in a monastery on the Isle of Iona, Scotland, to honour Saint Columba in the early 8th century. After a Viking raid, the book was moved to Kells, Ireland, sometime in

![The Book of Kells](https://www.thoughtco.com/the-book-of-kells-1788410)

**Picture 7 The Book of Kells**


### 5.2 MOST POPULAR FREE ATTRACTIONS

Most popular free attractions in 2016 were:

- The National Gallery of Ireland (755,577 visitors)
- Irish Museum of Modern Art (584,856 visitors)
- National Botanic Gardens (583,539 visitors)
- Doneraile Wildlife Park (480,000 visitors)
- National Museum of Ireland - Archaeology, Kildare St (479,261 visitors)
5.2.1 THE NATIONAL GALLERY OF IRELAND

The national gallery of Ireland is a facility that houses the national Irish and European art. The National Gallery houses an impressive range of masterpieces by artists from the major European schools of art whilst also featuring the world's most comprehensive collection of Irish art. Most popular Irish works of art are The Marriage of Strongbow and Aoife by Maclise and The Meeting on the Turret Stairs by Burton. Other celebrated Irish artists include Hone, Barry, Hamilton, Osborne, O’Conor, Orpen, Leech and Henry. European highlights include Spanish works by Velázquez, Murillo and Goya; Italian masterpieces by Titian, Caravaggio and Guercino; French paintings by Poussin, Chardin and Bonnard; works by eminent British artists including Hogarth, Gainsborough and Reynolds; and Dutch masterpieces by Rembrandt, Vermeer and Van Gogh. Entrance to The National Gallery of Ireland is free and it was most popular free attraction in 2016 with 755 577 visitors (https://www.nationalgallery.ie/).

Picture 8 The National Gallery of Ireland
Source: https://www.carhire.ie/aboutnationalgallery.php

5.2.2 IRISH MUSEUM OF MODERN ART

The Irish Museum of Modern art is Ireland’s most important institution for gathering and presentation of modern and contemporary art. The Irish Museum of Modern Art is located in the Royal Hospital Kilmainham, one the finest 17th-century buildings in Ireland. As the museum, it was established by the Government of Ireland in 1990 but it was officially opened a year later on 25 May 1991 by Charles J Haughey. Since then, the museum has become the leading place for modern and contemporary art. IMMA is home to the National Collection of modern and contemporary art, with over 3,500 artworks by Irish and international artists.
The museum became a tourist attraction in 2016, when it was visited by 584,846 visitors (http://www.imma.ie/en/nav_15.htm).


5.2.3 NATIONAL BOTANIC GARDEN

The Irish National Botanic garden is popular for its collection of plants. Over 15,000 plants from all around the world are held within the gardens which make this garden very popular among tourists. The National Botanic gardens were founded in 1795 by Dublin society which makes it a historic and architectural monument, too. Visitors can enjoy features as the Herbaceous borders, rose garden, the alpine yard, the pond area, rock garden and arboretum. Apart from plants, gardens are also famous for their preserved glasshouses. The most popular glasshouses are the Turner Curvilinear Range and the Great Palm House. The National Botanic Gardens was third most popular tourist attraction in 2016 with 583,539 visitors (http://www.heritageireland.ie/en/dublin/nationalbotanicgardens/).
5.2.4 DONERAILE WILDLIFE PARK

The fourth most popular non-paid attraction is the Doneraile Wildlife Park. This park was not really popular until 2014 when the promotion of this attraction started. The Doneraile Wildlife Park is located in the Cork County which is known for its nature and parks. The Park's size is approximately 166 hectares and the majority of the garden design and architecture of the park was built in the early 18th century, when it was home to the St Leger family. Today, it is the fourth non-paid attraction in Ireland with almost 500 000 visitors (http://www.thejournal.ie/failte-ireland-top-tourist-attraction-ireland-cork-doneraile-park-3430593-Jun2017/).
5.2.5 NATIONAL MUSEUM OF IRELAND - ARCHAEOLOGY, KILDARE

The fifth most visited free attraction in Ireland is National Museum of Ireland located in Kildare Street. In this museum, tourists can see most valuable Irish and world archaeology artefacts. Exhibition of the museum consists of exhibits from prehistoric Ireland, medieval Ireland, and Viking Ireland. Also, there are lots of artefacts from ancient Egypt and Cyprus. In 2016, the museum was visited by 479,261 visitors (http://www.museum.ie/Archaeology/Exhibitions/Current-Exhibitions).

Picture 12 Interior of National Museum of Ireland - archaeology, Kildare
6. TOURISM IN THE ECONOMY OF THE REPUBLIC OF IRELAND

Tourism is one of the most important sectors in the economy of Ireland and has a significant role in further economic growth. In year 2016, the tourism revenue in Ireland was 8.3 billion euros which makes 5.8% of total GDP. The government earned the estimated profit of 1.8 billion euros through taxation of tourism, of which 1.3 billion euros was generated from foreign tourism. In 2015 the tourism industry generated 3.5% of all tax revenue. In 2015 the value of exported goods and services was estimated at 295.4 billion euros of which 6 billion euros can be directly connected to tourism, accounting for 2.0% of export earnings. Being largely service based, tourism goods have low import content in comparison to other exports.

One of the main impacts of tourism on economy is employment so according to the Central Statistics Office’s official count of direct employment in ‘Accommodation and food service activities’, a category which includes hotels, restaurants, bars, canteens and catering, was 139,900 in 2015 (7.1% of total employment). However, the total employment in tourism is estimated as 220,000 (http://www.failteireland.ie/FailteIreland/media/WebsiteStructure/Documents/3_Research_Insights/3_General_SurveysReports/Failte-Ireland-s-tourism-facts-2015.pdf?ext=.pdf).

![Picture 13 SWOT analyses of Irish tourism](http://www.itic.ie/YE16/index.html)
7. CONCLUSION

With all information provided in this paper, it is obvious that Ireland has a very great potential to become one of the top tourist destinations in Europe. Ireland has all what it takes to create a quality tourism product and place it on the market. Ireland’s geographic location and rich history is becoming more attractive to visitors, so numbers in tourism are rising with every year. These numbers showed that tourism can take place in countries that do not offer only “sun, sea and sand” but in countries with rich cultural heritage and natural attractions like Ireland.

In economic view, tourism is always great source of revenue, so it is important to invest in tourism and monitor its development. Irish tourism revenue in 2016 showed promising results and it is expected to grow in the following year. One of the positive forecasts for tourism revenue in Ireland is the strong US dollar that might boost income from the United States visitors due to foreign exchange earnings. The positive fact in Irish future tourism is also development of new long – haul markets and an increasing number of air – companies. Even though most of forecasts are positive, there are few threats to Irish tourism like Brexit because United Kingdom is Ireland’s biggest emissive market. Even though, it is important to mention strong domestic tourism and tourism from Northern Ireland which is also expected to grow in following years.

In short, tourism is a very important industry in Ireland with almost 6% of its total GDP, generating over 200 000 jobs in tourism. It can be concluded that tourism will be one of the initiators of powerful Irish economic growth in the future.

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5 Type of travel that consists of vacations on beaches
6 Long overseas travels
Hrvoje Funda

Tourism of the Republic of Ireland and its impact on the economy

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