

The Very Quick Who, What, Why, When, Where and How of obtaining an Irish Passport

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You are automatically an Irish citizen if one of your parents was born in Ireland. You can become an Irish citizen if one of your grandparents was born in Ireland. If one of your parents was an Irish citizen at the time of your birth, but was not born in Ireland, you can apply for Irish citizenship. There is a fairly well known program that invites the offspring of Irish parents to become Irish Passport holders. I was made aware of this as a teenager, when my father, who was born in Dublin Ireland, explained it to my oldest brother who was going to travel to Europe following college. It took me a while to pursue it since it at first seemed cumbersome. I found that I needed to obtain a copy of my Father's birth certificate to submit along with my own birth certificate (original certified copy).

Fortunately my sister Siobhan decide she wanted to obtain her Irish passport and proceeded to obtain my father's documents and then several of us submitted our applications together.

Once I had our 'familial connection' document (my father's birth certificate) and my own certified birth certificate, the process was simple.

One can obtain, via mail from the Irish Consulate in NYC, a copy of the passport application document (APS2E). It is a four-page form that asks the expected questions and lists the required documents as well as the fees and timing of the process. US Driver's license, proof of name and proof of address are some of the required items. Four standard passport photos available from the typical sources are required. Two of the photos must be 'witnessed'. The photo specifications and the photo representations of what is unacceptable listed in the application are curious and slightly amusing. If you have changed your name since birth, due to marriage for example, a copy of that document is also required.

When I originally applied the fee was \$75 USD. The processing took about 10 weeks (if I recall correctly). I have since renewed my passport in 2012 before the ten-year expiry date at a full cost of \$135 USD. The renewal took about 6 weeks. The fee is now \$108 USD, plus courier fees that change with the applicant's location.

Once you are an Irish passport holder there are no requirements to visit or travel to Ireland. Of course you will want to visit and use your new passport frequently.

I am unaware of any visitor's right to vote in Irish elections or participate in local politics, although, as an Irish citizen, I understand that if one were to reside there one would have all the rights, privileges and responsibilities of any other Irish citizen.

Having dual citizenship with USA and Ireland has no adverse consequences that I have noted.

When travelling out of the USA it is advisable in my opinion to use one's US passport. The same applies when returning to the USA.

When entering Ireland it is handy to use the Irish passport, as the entry process is smooth and simple. Note that there are customs and duty circumstances that must be obeyed based on the passport one uses for entry in any country.

Once in the European Union (EU), your Irish passport allows for easy and smooth passage when travelling by air between EU countries as well as non-EU, but 'EU-friendly' countries (e.g. Norway). When using ground transportation, I have never been asked for either passport. However this may change with the recent immigration and migration circumstances that exist in the EU.

I have used my Irish passport to tour and perform in Ireland and the EU. I will defer any questions about taxes to the appropriate tax professionals.

As a citizen of the EU, one is allowed to travel, work and reside in any EU country. In addition, one's legal spouse (and in some cases legal 'partner') may travel, reside and also work, if that person is a US citizen and has accompanied you. If you visit a non-EU country you may be expected to obtain a visa (apparently simply, and at no cost). If your spouse is from one of about 115 'visa-required' countries, the rules differ.

Note that this information is not 'legal advice' but is simply based on my personal experience in obtaining and understanding the workings of Irish citizenship for foreign-born individuals.

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