

# U.S. Census Bureau News

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## Irish-American Heritage Month (March) and St. Patrick's Day (March 17) 2006

Although not an official "federal" holiday in the United States, St. Patrick's Day has a long history of being celebrated with parades and general goodwill for all things Irish. The day commemorates St. Patrick, believed to have died on March 17, who introduced Christianity to Ireland in the fifth century. Because many Americans celebrate their Irish lineage on St. Patrick's Day, March was picked as Irish-American Heritage Month. The month was first proclaimed in 1995 by Congress. Each year, the U.S. president also issues an Irish-American Heritage Month proclamation.

### Population Distribution

#### **34.5 million**

Number of U.S. residents who claim Irish ancestry. This number is almost nine times the population of Ireland itself (4.1 million). Irish is the nation's second most frequently reported ancestry, trailing only those of German ancestry. (The ancestry estimates exclude people living in group quarters.) (Source: American FactFinder and <http://www.cso.ie/releasespublications/documents/population/current/popmig.pdf>)

#### **24%**

Percentage of Massachusetts residents of Irish ancestry — about double the national percentage. (The estimate of people of Irish ancestry excludes people living in group quarters.) (Source: American FactFinder)

#### **3**

Number of states in which Irish is the leading ancestry group: Delaware, Massachusetts and New Hampshire. Irish is among the top-five ancestries in every state but two (Hawaii and New Mexico).

[http://www.census.gov/Press-Release/www/releases/archives/census\\_2000/001870.html](http://www.census.gov/Press-Release/www/releases/archives/census_2000/001870.html)

U S C E N S U S B U R E A U

## **54**

Number of counties where Irish is the largest observed ancestry group. Forty-four of these counties are in the Northeast, with 14 in New York, 11 in Massachusetts and five in New Jersey. (The number of people of Irish ancestry in a county may not be significantly different from the number of people of other ancestries in the county.) (Source: unpublished data)

## **348,978**

Number of Middlesex County, Mass., residents who are of Irish ancestry. Among the 54 counties where Irish is the largest observed ancestry group, Middlesex had the highest population of Irish-Americans, with Norfolk County, Mass., second, with 203,285. (Source: unpublished data)

## **31%**

Percentage of the population of Plymouth County, Mass., and Norfolk County, Mass., that is of Irish ancestry. Among the 54 counties where Irish is the largest observed ancestry group, these two counties had the highest rate. (Source: unpublished data)

## **The Mother Tongue**

### **25,870**

The number of U.S. residents who speak Irish Gaelic at home.

<[http://www.census.gov/population/www/socdemo/lang\\_use.html](http://www.census.gov/population/www/socdemo/lang_use.html)>

## **Coming to America**

### **128,000**

Number of U.S. residents born in Ireland. (The estimate excludes people living in group quarters.) (Source: American FactFinder)

## **4.8 million**

Total number of immigrants from Ireland lawfully admitted to the United States for permanent residence since fiscal year 1820, the earliest year for which official immigration records exist. By fiscal year 1870, about half of these immigrants were admitted for lawful permanent residence. Only Germany, Mexico, Italy and the United Kingdom have had more immigrants admitted for permanent residence to the United States than Ireland. (Source: Department of Homeland Security at <<http://uscis.gov/graphics/shared/statistics/yearbook/YrBk04Im.htm>>. See Table 1.)

### **1,518**

Total number of immigrants from Ireland lawfully admitted to the United States for permanent residence in the 2004 fiscal year. (Source: Department of Homeland Security at <<http://uscis.gov/graphics/shared/statistics/yearbook/YrBk04Im.htm>>. See Table 2.)

## **Trade With the “Old Sod”**

### **\$24.0 billion**

The value of U.S. imports from the Republic of Ireland during a recent 10-month period (January-October 2005). Meanwhile, the United States exported \$7.5 billion worth of goods to Ireland. <<http://www.census.gov/foreign-trade/www/>>

## **Places to Spend the Day**

### **4**

Number of places in the United States named Shamrock, the floral emblem of Ireland. Mount Gay-Shamrock, W.Va., and Shamrock, Texas, were the most populous, with 2,623 and 1,821 residents, respectively. Shamrock Lakes, Ind., had 162 residents and Shamrock, Okla., 126. (Statistic for Mount Gay-Shamrock is from Census 2000; the other statistics in this paragraph are 2004 estimates.)

(Source: American FactFinder and

<<http://www.census.gov/Press-Release/www/releases/archives/population/005268.html>>)

### **9**

Number of places in the United States that share the name of Ireland’s capital, Dublin. Since Census 2000, Dublin, Calif., has surpassed Dublin, Ohio, as the most populous of these places (36,995 compared with 34,301, respectively, as of July 1, 2004).

(Source: American FactFinder and

<<http://www.census.gov/Press-Release/www/releases/archives/population/005268.html>>)

If you’re still not into the spirit of St. Patty’s Day after stopping by one of the places named “Shamrock” or “Dublin,” then you might consider paying a visit to Emerald Isle, N.C., with 3,648 residents, of which a ratio of 1-in-6 are of Irish descent. (Source: American FactFinder and <<http://www.census.gov/Press-Release/www/releases/archives/population/005268.html>>)

## **The Celebration**

### **41.5 billion & 2.5 billion**

U.S. beef and cabbage production, respectively, in pounds, in 2004. Corned beef and cabbage is a traditional St. Patrick’s Day dish. The corned beef celebrants dine on may very well have originated in Texas, which produced 7.3 billion pounds worth of beef, while the cabbage most likely came from California, which produced 558 million pounds worth.

<<http://www.nass.usda.gov/index.asp>>

### **21.6**

The number of gallons of beer consumed per capita by Americans annually in 2003. On St. Patrick’s Day, you may be able to order green-dyed beer at one of the nation’s 48,050 drinking places, some of which may be Irish pubs.

See Table 201, *Statistical Abstract of the United States: 2006*

<<http://www.census.gov/prod/www/statistical-abstract.html>> and

<<http://www.census.gov/prod/2005pubs/03cbp/cbp03-1.pdf>>.

## 389

Number of breweries in 2003. The nation's breweries are the source for the domestic beer that is often an integral part of St. Patty's Day celebrations.

<<http://www.census.gov/prod/2005pubs/03cbp/cbp03-1.pdf>>

## \$75 million

Value of potted florist chrysanthemum sales at wholesale in 2004. Lime green chrysanthemums are often requested for St. Patrick's Day celebrations. <<http://www.nass.usda.gov/index.asp>>

## 8 million

Number of St. Patrick's Day cards Americans exchanged last year, making this observance the ninth-largest card-sending occasion in the United States. (Source: Hallmark research.)

## 93.3 million

Number of people who reportedly planned to wear green last St. Patrick's Day. (Source: National Retail Federation, via Hallmark.)

Following is a list of observances typically covered by the Census Bureau's *Facts for Features* series:

African-American History Month (February)	Labor Day (Sept. 4)
Valentine's Day (Feb. 14)	Grandparents Day (Sept. 10)
Women's History Month (March)	Hispanic Heritage Month (Sept. 15-Oct. 15)
Irish-American Heritage Month (March)/ St. Patrick's Day (March 17)	Halloween (Oct. 31)
Asian/Pacific American Heritage Month (May)	American Indian/Alaska Native Heritage Month (November)
Older Americans Month (May)	Veterans Day (Nov. 11)
Mother's Day (May 14)	Thanksgiving Day (Nov. 23)
Father's Day (June 18)	The Holiday Season (December)
The Fourth of July (July 4)	
Anniversary of Americans with Disabilities Act (July 26)	
Back to School (August)	

**Editor's note:** The preceding data were collected from a variety of sources and may be subject to sampling variability and other sources of error. Questions or comments should be directed to the Census Bureau's Public Information Office: telephone: (301) 763-3030; fax: (301) 457-3670; or e-mail: <[pio@census.gov](mailto:pio@census.gov)>.