ESSENTIAL

IRISH BOOKS

A LIST OF

WORKS

OLD & NEW

ESRT
Compiled by:

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The New York Public Library
This list is primarily nonfiction and is intended to give readers a good foundation in the areas of Irish history, folklore, culture and tradition, as well as to introduce them to the most important writers, as Ireland's literary output is distinguished around the world. Some of the selections are classics and have been available for 100 years or more in various editions.

_The Aran Islands_, by John Millington Synge.
Originally published 1907. Ireland's best-known playwright paints a portrait of the three rugged islands off Ireland's west coast that provided him with much background material for his plays. Some editions include illustrations by Jack B. Yeats.

Geographically arranged, the sites include court tombs, passage graves, abbeys, and other early monastic sites all spectacularly photographed and paired with a nice balance of text written in a pleasant, conversational style.

Combines Yeats' two major collections of Ireland's folklore: *Fairy and Folk Tales of the Irish Peasantry* (1888) and *Irish Fairy Tales* (1892). Takes you back to the stories which have been passed down through the generations many of which include colorful beings such as fairies, banshees, leprechauns, selchies and pookas.


An assemblage of poems, laments, and street ballads, some traditional and others by known authors. Many are well-known as songs today. The appreciation of the poems is greatly enhanced by endnotes the editor includes for all the poems.

The Great Hunger: Ireland 1845-1849, by Cecil Woodham-Smith.

Originally published 1962. Immensely readable introduction to the cataclysmic potato famine that spurred Ireland's greatest exodus.
In Ireland Long Ago, by Kevin Danaher.

Originally published 1962. A folklorist and author of ten books on Irish culture and customs, Danaher here shows us the everyday lives of the Irish people in centuries past.


An engaging look at Ireland's history dating back to the 12th century. McCaffrey also co-authored In Search of Ancient Ireland: The Origins of the Irish from Neolithic Times to the Coming of the English (2002) and served as series consultant for the PBS/RTÉ program of the same title.


Excerpts from the works of several dozen of Ireland's greatest writers chronologically arranged from William Butler Yeats (1865-1939) to Conor McPherson (b. 1971). Thoughtful introductions to the selections tell how each author has helped to shape Ireland's literary landscape besides giving biographical facts.
The Story of the Irish Race: A Popular History of Ireland, by Seumas MacManus.
Originally published 1921. This classic work gives a storyteller's perspective of Irish history, from the legends of the ancient inhabitants of Ireland—the Firbolgs and the Tuatha de Danaan—through the centuries of British occupation.

This central epic of Irish legend, which dates back to the 12th century, tells the story of Cú Chulainn and The Cattle-Raid of Cooley. Also see Thomas Kinsella's translation in an illustrated edition of 1969.

Step-by-step instructions and a comprehensive listing of census, county and parish records available in print and online make this the most useful book currently in print on the subject.

Shaw-Smith, a renowned independent documentary filmmaker, presents more than 40 crafts ranging from those formerly widespread like thatching to the refined glassblowing techniques used in Waterford's famed glass factory. Abundant illustrations are accompanied by texts from history and folklore.

**A Traveller's History of Ireland**, by Peter Neville. 5th ed. Interlink Publ., 2007.

Concise guide gives the reader--whether a traveller or not--an overview of Irish history and important personages from the pre-Celtic Tara of the pagan high kings to the present time. Includes a chronology of major events, listing of rulers & monarchs, historical maps, a gazetteer, and accompanying sketches and other illustrations.
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