Northern Ireland: the Basics

Northern Ireland’s greatest strength has always been the warmth, hospitality, and humor of its people. It is also one of the world’s most physically beautiful regions.

Comprising 5,460 square miles, it is only slightly larger than the state of Connecticut. Its population is approximately 1.7 million. In addition to Belfast, its capital, and Londonderry (or Derry), its second largest city, it boasts charming towns, lovely villages, and unspoiled rural areas.

Part of the United Kingdom, it shares its verdant island with the Republic of Ireland and is comprised of six of the nine counties of the ancient province of Ulster—Antrim, Armagh, Down, Fermanagh, Londonderry, and Tyrone. Traditionally, three languages are spoken in Northern Ireland—English, Irish, and Ulster-Scots.

Few regions of the world have contributed more to the formation of modern America. Since the seventeenth century, a succession of immigrants has enriched American music, politics, education, science, religion, agriculture, and industry. Many famous Americans, including seventeen of the United States’ forty-three presidents, are claimed to have Northern Irish ancestors.