



***A tour guide was showing a tourist around Washington DC. The guide pointed out the place where George Washington supposedly threw a dollar coin across the Potomac River. "That's impossible," said the tourist. "No one could throw a coin that far!" "You have to remember," answered the guide. "A dollar went a lot farther in those days."****(unknown source)*

Are you looking for ways to make your dollar go further on your trip to Ireland? Well, you are among friends. Holidaying is expensive so why not try to save a few dollars here and there whenever possible. I hope my list below helps you minimize your expenses.

### 1. Tipping

Tipping in Ireland is not as commonplace as it is in other parts of the world. In the USA leaving a tip at a bar, or after a cab ride has become a standard, and is very much expected. While in Ireland, feel free to tip when you consider it to be appropriate, such as after a waiter or waitress gives you great service, but hold on to your spare change at the bar.

### 2. Currency

I worked out that withdrawing Euros from an Irish ATM was the cheapest way for me to get Irish currency from my US bank account. You will generally get the best rate, avoid major

transaction fees, and you won't have to carry around large amounts of cash on your trip. Check with your bank though. It worked well for me, but all banks will have their own policies.

### 3. WIFI

Most decent hotels these days offer free WIFI as part of your room rate. Look into this when booking your hotel because if daily internet access is a priority for you, then this could be a big saving point. If your hotel doesn't offer free WIFI, then take a look at the cafes and shopping centers nearby to connect to the web.

### 4. Movies

Being a tourist certainly is not cheap if you're traveling with your family. One way to save a few dollars while entertaining the kids is to take them to a [drive-in movie theater](#) (commonly called cinema in Ireland). Not only will you save on admission, but you can also load up the car with whatever sweet treats will be needed. Arm & leg saved : )

### 5. Coupons

Ireland is keeping up with its big cousin the USA by overloading people with coupons and online discount sites. A great way to get a deal on a restaurant meal is to browse [Groupon Ireland](#).



## 6. Cellphones

If you're planning on picking up some 'disposable' mobile phones be careful of the associated costs! Ireland can have some very expensive usage charges associated with cellphones. There are many pay-as-you-go type cellphone options available, but be sure to research which one fits your need best. Some offer free text messages or in-network calls, but generally calls to other networks and landlines will eat up your phone credit quite quickly. If you're considering buying more than one for your family, then stick to the same network to minimize cost.

## 7. Entertainment

If traditional Irish music sessions are on your "to-do" list, then all you should need is a few Euro for a couple of pints. 'Trad' sessions are oftentimes impromptu, or are played by the locals in the pubs, so you probably won't need to budget for admission tickets. From time to time, there will be special occasions where there may be a door fee, but this shouldn't happen often.

## 8. Haggle!

Where possible try to bargain on prices. This will generally work in market-type environments (farmer's markets etc), but forget about it if you're in any type of regular retail establishment.

## 9. Meals

One thing that the Irish love, that's not so common in the United States, is the multi-course meals. Three, four and even 5 course meals are common, but from my own personal opinion, they include a lot of food/drink items I may not even want. I guess this one's a personal choice but if you wouldn't normally have a 5 course meal, don't feel like you have to just because you're in Ireland.

## 10. VAT

Value Added Tax (VAT) is added to most goods and services in Ireland. You can reclaim a lot of this money if you're a non-EU resident by being prepared when you are doing your shopping. You will pay VAT in most EU countries and it makes simple sense to reclaim what is yours. [Rick Steves](#) gives a pretty good explanation about how you can reclaim the VAT you paid.

## 11. Book ahead!

If you know for certain that you'll be taking flights, hotels, tours etc, then generally these will be cheaper when booked in advance. This one probably applies no matter where in the world you're headed to.

## 12. Car Rental

If you're renting a car, my advice is to choose the manual transmission option if you are familiar with how to drive that type of car. Cars



with an automatic transmission are not as common in Ireland, and therefore the rentals are much more expensive. It must be some form of informal tourist tax (hate those!).

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