

## **Squiz the World goes to... Ireland**

Each week, we give the world globe a spin, and see where we land. Then we take the kids of Australia on an audio excursion to visit that country and its people.

I'm Amanda Bower, and today on Squiz the World we're visiting a country known for leprechauns, potatoes, and the colour green. Can you guess?

Strap yourselves into the Squiz Kids Super Fast Supersonic Jetliner as we take off and take a squiz at Ireland.

### **JUST THE FACTS**

The Republic of Ireland (that's i-r-e-l-a-n-d) is located on an island (i-s-l-a-n-d) off the coast of Europe.

"That one island has two different governments, each with its own territory. Northern Ireland, is, unsurprisingly, located in the north part of the island, and is a part of the United Kingdom.

Meanwhile, the Republic of Ireland, the focus of today's episode, takes up the rest of the island. "

The republic was also ruled by England until 1922, when it was finally granted independence after a long fight. It was during that fight that different rebel groups flew green flags, or wore green... so Ireland is associated with the colour green not because of its rolling green hills, but for political reasons.

There's a part of Irish history that happened almost 200 years ago that has a strong connection to Ireland. Starting in 1845, Ireland suffered a terrible famine when their potato crops failed ... famine meaning that there isn't enough for a population to eat. Many people think that Britain, which was ruling Ireland at the time, didn't do enough to help the starving Irish... and that the English are responsible for the one million deaths that occurred.

During that terrible famine, many hungry people left Ireland in search of a better life—including to Australia. By 1914, fully one third of the Australian population reported having Irish ancestry. My family does... how about yours?

Nowadays, 5 million people live in Ireland. The capital, and biggest city, is Dublin. That's also where the president and houses of Parliament are.

Whenever you travel, it's important to learn a few words in that country's language. It's a great way to show respect. So, let's....

### **LEARN THE LINGO**

Before the English took over Ireland, people there spoke Irish, which is also often called "Gaelic". The last known person who spoke ONLY Irish - meaning that he spoke no English - died in 1988, but there is a big push in Ireland to revive Irish.

We're very lucky to have Squiz Kid Amy here to teach us some Irish. Amy, take it away!

audio

Goodbye in Irish sounds a bit like "so long", doesn't it? Thanks so much, Amy.

Now that we can communicate a little bit, it's....

## TIME FOR SCHOOL

Kids in Ireland go to primary school for eight years. The first two years are called "junior infants" and "senior infants".

In Australia, the word "infant" mostly refers to a tiny baby... imagine how the prep and kinder kids at your school would react if you called them babies! Not. Happy.

One big difference between Australian and Irish schools is that in Ireland, more than eight in ten primary schools are controlled or managed by the Catholic church. 3.7 million Irish people - out of 5 million total - are members of the Irish Catholic Church, so religion plays a much bigger role in public life than it does here. Only 5 percent of primary schools are not religious.

I mentioned earlier that there was a big push in Ireland to revive, or bring back, the Irish language... so another big difference is that there are a growing number of Irish Immersion schools.

If you "immerse" something in a lake, then you surround it with water... and an immersion school is a school where everything is taught in the new language. You go to school, and you do maths in Irish, science in Irish, history in Irish, art in Irish... you get the idea. It's tricky at the start, but if you think about it, being immersed in a foreign language is exactly what happened to us all as babies, and we managed to learn pretty quickly!

The final big difference between school in Ireland and Australia is what kids do during PE. I think it might be...

## SPORT TIME

I don't know about you, but when I was in primary school, we spent time playing netball... AFL... (rugby if you grew up in NSW or Queensland...)... hockey...

But in Ireland, the most popular sport is Gaelic football. I'll put some links in your episode notes, but for now, imagine a rugby goal, with a net below the crossbar. There are 15 players on each side, and they can throw, bounce, and kick the round ball.

It's a high scoring game, unlike soccer, and the players need to be fast, strong, nimble, and also able to handle a few bumps and knocks. They get three points if they kick the ball into the goal, and one point if they kick or fist the ball between the posts, and over the crossbar.

Another extremely popular Irish game, hurling, uses the same goals and field dimensions as Gaelic football. But instead of a round ball that bounces, they use a hard ball that looks a bit like a baseball, but is called a sliotar (slee-oh-tar). You hit the sliotar with a wooden stick, that looks a bit like a hockey stick, but is called a hurley.

Players move the ball by hitting it off the ground with the hurley... picking it up and hitting it out of their hands with the hurley... bouncing it on the hurley while they run... or catching and slapping it with their hands. And yes, they all wear helmets.

I'm starving after all that sport! I think it might be...

## DINNER TIME

Before the potato famine in Ireland, the Irish were some of the tallest, and healthiest, people in Europe. That's because they ate potatoes, and drank buttermilk, which gave them just about all the vitamins and minerals they needed.

But even though everyone associates potatoes with Ireland, they're not actually native crops. In fact, they're were only brought to Europe from the Americas in the 16th century.

If you want a really authentic Irish meal, you can't go much further than a stew... a delicious meal consisting of lamb, carrots, onion, parsley... and of course, once they were introduced to Ireland, potatoes as well. All the ingredients can be substituted for others, allowing the stew to feature whatever meat or veggies might be available at the time.

My Irish Nanna would recommend that you serve it with crusty bread, so you can soak up all the sauce. Mmmmmm...

## THE S'QUIZ

This is the part of the podcast where you get to test how well you've been listening.

Question 1. Which colour is associated with the Irish fight for political independence?

Question 2. What is the name of the most popular sport in Ireland? (Gaelic football)

Question 3. What are Irish kids called during their first two years of primary school?

That's all we have time for today. Thanks for staying curious about the world, and joining me on this incredible trip to Ireland.

Now get out there, and have a most excellent day. Over and out.