**Luck of the Irish Travel for St. Patrick’s Day**

St. Patrick’s Day is a great time to take in a parade, delve into Irish and Irish-American history and, of course, raise a pint of Guinness in honor of the Emerald Isle’s patron saint.

In Ireland, the third week in March has become a celebration of Irish culture, making it an exciting time to visit. Dublin, capital of the Republic of Ireland, naturally puts on big celebrations, with the St. Patrick’s Festival taking place throughout the city from March 17-20. Highlights include a huge parade on the day itself, March 17, performances by some of Ireland’s finest musicians, dancers and theater troupes, as well as and walking tours that will take you in the footsteps of St. Patrick. After all of that activity, you can quench your thirst at the Irish Beer and Whiskey Village.

About two hours north of Dublin is Belfast, the capital of Northern Ireland, where St. Patrick’s Day festivities include a parade and free outdoor concert. St. George’s Market, one of the city’s oldest attractions, is known for its food vendors and lively atmosphere. The 19th-century market is also the setting for a St. Patrick’s Day celebration that lasts through the weekend, with music and activities for all ages. Belfast is also home to a relatively new – and quite impressive – museum that tells the story of the ill-fated Titanic, which was built and launched from a city shipyard.

Of course you don’t have to be Irish, or even in Ireland, to celebrate St. Patrick’s Day in grand style.

New York City’s St. Patrick’s Day Parade, dating to 1762, is one of the city’s oldest and most popular annual traditions, with thousands of marchers making their way up Fifth Avenue. Among the landmarks along the route is the Neo-Gothic St. Patrick’s Cathedral. It’s a serene and magnificent spot to contemplate the contributions of the city’s Irish immigrants, whose pennies helped build the cathedral in the 19th century. For another taste of history, try McSorley’s Old Ale House, the oldest Irish tavern in New York City, which opened its doors in 1854.

Boston holds a grand St. Patrick’s Day parade on March 20, but that’s only the beginning of places to celebrate the city’s Irish heritage. There are numerous Irish pubs where St. Patrick’s Day revelers can listen to live music, get Guinness on tap and try some authentic Irish cuisine. To explore the contributions that Irish-Americans have made to Boston, take a walk along the Irish Heritage Trail, which includes the John F. Kennedy Presidential Library and Museum.

Chicago’s St. Patrick’s Day parade kicks off at noon on March 12. But the festivities begin earlier with an annual tradition that goes back generations. At 9 a.m. on parade day, 45 pounds of vegetable dye are poured into the Chicago River, turning the water an emerald green, a process that attracts thousands of onlookers. Cap off the afternoon with a cruise along the river, complete with a traditional lunch of corned beef and cabbage.

For help planning a St. Patrick’s Day trip, contact us at Travel Leaders of Colorado Springs.