

Ireland: The Land of Meat, Dairy

Ireland was once considered a most unlikely place for veg*nism. Tod

 FULL TEXT

 EXTERNAL STUDY

SUMMARY BY: SARA STREETER | ORIGINAL STUDY BY: WRENN, C.L. (2019)



Ireland is often stereotyped as unsympathetic to the ethics of plant-based carnivorous and uninspired, and it is true that the Irish economy depends on Ireland's history of invasion, emigration, and trade created a culture of specific values and a knowledge of alternatives. Now, concerns are growing about the impact of animal foods. Indeed, the Irish seem more receptive than ever to animal

Ireland's relationship with non-human animals is complex. During the animal husbandry era, animals were viewed almost as equals. Diets were heavy with grains and legumes, and included only small amounts of meat, but dairy had a prominent role, prized for its nutritional value. As the British began to colonize Ireland in the 1500's, the suffering of both humans and animals increased greatly. Meat and dairy produced by the Irish was sent to feed the British, while the Irish subsisted on a plant-based diet because they had to. Large swaths of land were taken for animal foods they themselves produced. They found themselves without proper food security.

Later in this period, during the 18th and 19th centuries, the Irish became reliant on their pigs depended on them for sustenance. Disastrous blights left a million people evicted from their homes. Many more left Ireland if they had the means. At the end of the period, the population sank from 8.2 to 6.6 million. Over the next 50 years, an additional 1.5 million left through emigration. Irish culture today has its roots in that period of oppression. Irish people recognize a kinship with their animals as subjugated beings.

Today, increasing prosperity and economic security is leading to a change in eating habits. In 2010th globally in meat consumption in 2003 and was also quite high in dairy consumption. The seafood industry employs 39,000 Irish workers. To capitalize on this sector, the government is intensifying efforts to expand meat, dairy and seafood production for export. At the same time, Ireland is also moving into local and sustainable agriculture. The Irish economy is strong, and a Love Irish Food survey found that 75% of Irish people are shopping locally.

But even with an economy still centered around animal agriculture, Irish people are changing their narrative. Ireland is starting to play a key role in the development of the non-animal food sector. Advocates are promoting veganism and fighting against speciesism. And the food industry is bringing attention to new options for plant-based eating. The industry is growing in the world and so far, accounts for 3,000 Irish jobs. Vegan alternatives are sold in grocery stores and restaurants. A variety of animal welfare and rights organizations are working towards progress towards social justice for all beings.

So, what is the takeaway for animal advocates? This essay demonstrates the various ways in which animal advocacy is taking place. A wide variety of groups, from professional organizations to grassroots activism, are working to change the status of animals in Ireland. Most large Irish cities now have vegetarian restaurants, and many smaller towns are starting to see them, too. All major grocery chains now sell specialty vegan foods. And at the same time, people are sharing food and socializing. It is through these efforts, both large and small, that change is being born.

**External Link:**

<https://animalstudiesrepository.org/cgi/viewcontent.cgi...>

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Wrenn, C.L. (2019). The land of meat and potatoes? Exploring Ireland's vegetarianism.

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