

Desktop Traveler / St. Patrick's Day

I F YOU THOUGHT *St. Patrick's Day festivals were as ancient as the Blarney Stone itself, think again.* Today's iconic parades and green beers aren't so much a product of the Emerald Isle, but in fact were born of an Irish diaspora clamoring for respect. In the 19th century, immigrant communities from Boston to Chicago were the target of bigotry and responded with parades as a show of solidarity. Ire-

land itself only began celebrating the day in earnest in 1996—having taken note of its popularity abroad. This year's festival in Dublin features fireworks, marching bands—and a symposium dedicated to finding out if the Irish are as great as they think they are. (After a few jars next Monday, odds are the consensus will be “yes.”) These sites will help you celebrate the big, green day.

—Hannah Kate Kinnersley



SITE	DESCRIPTION	EASE OF USE	COMMENT
TheWildGeese.com	A virtual community devoted to sharing Irish heritage world-wide.	Erin's far-flung exiles can find the nearest parade in a special section on the home page.	✓ Top Choice: For serious fans of Ireland's contribution to world culture. Don't miss the article on that well-known dermatologist, revolutionary and 1/16th-Irishman, Che Guevara.
St-Patricks-Day.com/index.asp	Online resource for Irish business and expatriates.	Extensive listings of Web sites devoted to everything Irish, from parades to family names. Get details of this year's Hoolie in Seoul, South Korea.	Useful for everything from genealogy research to creating your own verse on the limerick-generator page.
SavannahGeorgia.com/stpat.htm	Tourist-info site for the city that hosts the second-biggest U.S. parade (500,000 revelers expected).	Plenty of information on lodging, dining and drinking.	This port city has hosted a parade since at least 1824, thanks to Irish sailors passing through. Detailed map and calendar of events.
StPatricksDay.ie	Official site of Dublin's weeklong festival.	Printable event guide and online reservations. Plus a whiskey-tasting giveaway.	Images of last year's festival will whet your appetite for this one (think Carnival in Rio—except everyone is wearing sweaters).
IrishFestivals.net/	Catalog of “anything and everything Irish.”	Very little information about festivals—and less about Irish history and culture.	Don't expect enlightenment here: Under “Where is Ireland,” the map doesn't even show the capital, or neighboring countries.