

IRELAND PHYSICAL

Ireland is often described as a low central plain surrounded by coastal mountains. However, it has a long geological history, having been glaciated at least twice, and there are many glacial valleys and rocks ground down by ice, along with deposits of sand, gravel and clay, and the central plain has many lakes and large boggy areas as a result. There is a variety of different geology over the island too. In the south, the mountains are of Old Red Sandstone, while between them, the east-west dark green river valleys are limestone. In the northeast, there is a basalt plateau and much of the rest of the island has mountains of granite.

The image used here to show the topography of Ireland was created using both shading and colour-coding of topographic height. The shading has been created so that the northwest slopes are light and the southeast slopes are dark. The colour is related to the height of the land, changing from green at the bottom then moving to yellow, then tan, and finally becoming white at the top to give a three dimensional effect to the view. Some physical features have been named to assist interpretation.

FACTS

- The geographical centre of Ireland is in the eastern part of the county of Roscommon, 3 km (2 miles) south of the town of Athlone.
- Ireland's tallest waterfall is Powerscourt Falls in county Wicklow, with a drop of 106 m (350 ft).
- The highest sea cliffs in Ireland are at Croaghnaun, on Achill Island, and are 668 m (2192 ft) high.
- The largest island in Ireland is Achill Island in county Mayo, with an area of 148 sq km (57 sq miles).

HIGHEST MOUNTAINS	metres	range
Carrauntoohil	1 041	Macgillycuddy's Reeks
Beenkeragh	1 010	Macgillycuddy's Reeks
Caher	1 001	Macgillycuddy's Reeks
Brandon Mountain	952	Brandon Mountains
Lugnaquilla	926	Wicklow Mountains
Galtymore	919	Galty Mountains
Bautregaum	852	Slieve Mish Mountains
Slieve Donard	852	Mourne Mountains

LARGEST LAKES	Area		Length		width	
	sq km	sq miles	km	miles	km	miles
Lough Neath	381	147	29	18	18	11
Lough Corrib	176	68	43	27	16	10
Lough Derg	118	46	39	24	13	8
Lough Ree	105	41	25	16	7	4

LONGEST RIVERS	km	miles
Shannon	360.5	224
Barrow	192	119.5
Suir	184	114.25
Blackwater	168	104.5



Conic Equidistant Projection 1:1 300 000 MILES 0 20 40 60 0 200 400 600 800 1000 KILOMETRES © Collins Bartholomew Ltd