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## What's it like moving from Moscow to Dublin?

**Ekaterina Voznesenskaia was an English teacher in Moscow until one day she decided to change career and move to Dublin. This is her story of spontaneous change and how she experienced Ireland for the first time.**

Nothing can be more natural and spontaneous than changing your life in just three months.

After working as a children's teacher of English and German and as a lecturer of English at the University in Moscow, I suddenly realised that I really want to do something different.

I decided to study marketing and wanted to get an international education in an English-speaking country.

Having visited Ireland as a tourist, before moving here, I was impressed by Trinity College, Ireland's oldest university and one of the seven ancient universities of Britain and Ireland. And this was my choice – the Trinity College, MSc in Marketing.

In September 2017 I moved to Ireland to begin my studies.

My year at the university was exhilarating and challenging. I was in a minority of students who did not have a business background. For me everything was new. This, however, made it even more exciting, and the whole year of study was a huge challenge.

Even though it was difficult at first, I now realise how important every step of your life is. Every small step leads to more significant results.

Currently, I am working as a consulting analyst at Accenture, conducting research and analysis of customer services and providing recommendations for our high tech software client.

### **What was your experience like moving from Russia to Ireland?**

Moving to Ireland is the most significant and spontaneous decision I have ever made in my life.

I have never regretted this decision, despite the challenges it brings. I must admit it took me a while to adapt to such a new country.

My first impression of Dublin was that the life here is not as hectic as in Moscow. Even though

Dublin is a European capital, it is still much less crowded and busy, and it was very unusual for me.

Dublin also looked gloomy and felt a bit pessimistic with the constant rain and windy weather. The only thing I thought during the first half of the year was that I was lucky not to be alone. I cannot imagine how I would have stayed optimistic if not for my close friends and colleagues, who supported me all this time.

### **What were the 'cultural shocks', the things that surprised you about Ireland?**

I really struggled to get used to the Irish weather. Here in Ireland, the climate is mild, moist and extremely changeable with abundant rainfall. In the first year of living in Ireland, I was upset and gloomy about the weather.

Now I am used to the Irish climate and love walking in the rain, catching this very special calmness and purity of rainy weather.

### **What do you miss about Russia?**

Something that I really miss about Russia is the Russian winter, and snow in particular. For me, winter is associated with cosy evenings at home, with the sparkling snow outside. These are frosty sunny mornings when you go to work enjoying a magnificent winter fairy tale. And this is real winter with lots of snow, playing snowballs, making snowmen, catching snowflakes, and sledging. This is what I really miss.

### **Are there any similarities between Russians and Irish people?**

Definitely. Both nationalities have a lot in common. The first thing that is noticeable for me is a very keen sense of patriotism in both Russian and Irish people. The Irish are very proud of their history, their rich culture and traditions. I can say the same about Russian people.

Another thing that unites Russian and Irish, to my mind, is their unique hospitality and openness to people. There is a common saying about a Russian person: 'Man with a generous large soul'. I would say about an Irish person: 'Man with a big kind heart'.

What also unites Irish and Russian people is their passion for socialising. Here in Ireland, there is, first of all, the traditional pub culture, that makes it common for families, friends and all people, in general, to get together in the pub for a friendly chat. In Russia, it is a common tradition to invite family and friends to a country house at the weekend, where we spend a fantastic time together. Sometimes we go to the Russian banya - a traditional Russian sauna - which is just amazing in

winter.

### **What more would you like to find out about Ireland?**

I would like to learn more about Irish culture and traditions. Shortly, I am going to travel around Ireland and visit small Irish towns and counties.

This first will be Galway. 'Galway is a truly Irish town' – my Irish friends have told me. Then there is County Kerry. It is interesting that there are many small Gaelic-speaking villages in County Kerry, and I would like to discover the unique Irish heritage of this county. I will go to County Clare with its beautiful landscapes, lakes, cliffs, caves and traditional Irish music. I was also told to visit County Donegal, as, apart from its spectacular scenery of mountains, lakes and woodlands, it is also famous for climbing, hillwalking, scuba-diving, surfing and kite-flying.

### **Is there a Russian ex-patriot community in Dublin?**

It is interesting that the Russian speaking community in Ireland has been growing since the end of the 20th century. And while in 1998 the community numbered just a few hundred, by 2008 it had become one of the most prominent non-national diaspora groups growing to c. 100,000 people.

It is noticeable that the Russian speaking community in Ireland, and in Dublin in particular, are highly interested in developing the Russian cultural life and education.

One of the most significant events in the Russian community's cultural life is the Festival of Russian Culture, this started in 2010. The festival celebrates the end of winter and beginning of spring with Pancake Week (Maslenitsa), accompanied by traditional Russian songs, folk groups coming from Moscow, dancing, concerts and tea parties.

There is a number of Russian schools for Russian speaking children in Dublin, for example, Raduga Russian School and Russian School of Music. The Department of Russian and Slavonic studies in Trinity College provides Undergraduate and Postgraduate Degree Programmes, and also evening and short courses of a Russian language.

### **Are the supports for students and startups good in Ireland, or could they be better?**

Career support for students and business people here is really impressive. As a graduate of Trinity College, I can say that the university provided excellent career support to the students, organising individual and group career sessions. Moreover, there were exciting coaching sessions, for example, on mindfulness and leadership. Even after graduating we are continually getting relevant

information on different career opportunities in Dublin.

Above all, Ireland, and Dublin, in particular, can boast an exciting startup ecosystem. There are a significant number of innovation centres, business accelerators and startup incubators, which help entrepreneurs to bring their ideas into life and develop their business.

For example, Trinity's Launchbox - a competitive summer programme open to early-stage startups, provides student entrepreneurs with funding, access to networks of investors and mentors. It is a fantastic opportunity for students to progress their idea and get an invaluable transformative experience in a startup ecosystem.

### **What's the best thing about Dublin?**

What I consider especially unique and precious about Dublin is its social culture. Dublin is exceptionally international, open and hospitable. I feel at home in Dublin, because you never feel alone here. There are lots of people from different countries, who might have similar challenges while adapting to the country, looking for a job and a place to live. You feel united with people here and feel like you are part of the Dublin family.

The Irish pub culture adds a lot to the Dublin social life. Just imagine, there are 772 pubs in Dublin, with one pub for every 1,649 people in the county. People go to the pub with families, and even with kids, as the pub is more about socialising, rather than drinking.

### **What's the worst?**

The Irish rainy weather. I like rain, as I have mentioned before, but when it is pouring in winter, I start missing the Russian snow.

### **What are your ambitions now?**

I have just started working in a global business environment, and for now, I want to develop as a consulting analyst, get invaluable experience, meet interesting people and grow as a professional.

In the future, when I get enough skills and experience for this role, I would like to become a management consultant. The most important thing for me is to truly love what I am doing, as this determines success.