



An American in Ireland

Exploring Irish culture through food, drink...and a good craic!



Sat 24
May
2014

From Ireland to Japan

Posted by Clare under [American in Ireland](#), [Expats in Dublin](#), [Japanese in Dublin](#), [Japanese in Ireland](#)
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When I moved to Ireland just over four years ago, I went through my **fair share of culture shock**. There were the big things – like struggling to understand what everyone was saying (to be fair, I was living in Drogheda!) – and a million little ones, like seeing grated cheese in a cold sandwich (so...odd) and realising that you can't buy liquor on Good Friday.

Life was quite different here than what I was used to in Los Angeles, my adopted hometown. I say "adopted" because I was actually born in Japan and lived there until I was five years old. With my mom's entire family still living there, we go back to visit when we can, and a couple of weeks ago I went back again, this time bringing my **Irish husband** along for the first time.

I've heard many describe Tokyo as being like another planet with all its flashing lights and **cosplay** devotees and talking billboards. This is true, but Japan is also one of the most civilised countries in the world: it's extremely clean, incredibly efficient and the people, respectful and polite.



You can literally set your watch by the train timings; if a train is scheduled to arrive at the station at 13:02, it arrives and departs at 13:02. Taxi cabs are nothing like the ones here or in America. Drivers wear full suits and white gloves and doors open automatically via remote (in fact, drivers will insist that you do NOT touch the doors). They are so clean you can eat off them. When you walk into a restaurant or a shop, the employees immediately greet you with *irasshaimase!*, which is “welcome” in Japanese. And when you leave, the entire staff calls out a cheerful *arigato!*

[\(more...\)](#)

Tags: [clare kleinedler](#), [Ireland to Japan](#), [Japanese culture](#), [Japanese in Ireland](#)



Sun 2
Mar
2014

Dublin Je T'aime

Posted by Clare under [American in Ireland](#), [dating in Ireland](#), [Expats in Dublin](#), [Romantic Dublin](#)
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Tracking





When I lived in Los Angeles and worked as a freelance writer, one of my favourite afternoon breaks involved going to the local art house movie theatre for an escape. The **Laemmle Theatre** in Pasadena always featured a good mix of indie and foreign films, plus they'd turn a blind eye when I'd sneak in a cup of good coffee from the cafe at **Vroman's Bookstore** next door.

I typically chose European films for the ambiance. What is it about skirts fluttering against the tailwind of a Vespa that sparks a desire in every woman to live out her own Fellini-esque fantasy? For two hours I'd sit alone in the dark, quietly sipping coffee whilst absorbed in these fanciful flights of imagination.

I'd dream of one day visiting the seedy piano bar in **The Beat That My Heart Skipped** or the muted rouge-hued cafes in **Amelie** – with a dashing European suitor, of course. Like the young schoolgirl who spent her evenings envisaging a new life abroad whilst singing along to **Sur les quais du vieux Paris** in **An Education**, I too would aspire to one day turn my Francophile fantasies into reality.

(more...)

Tags: **Americans in Dublin, clare kleinedler, Romantic Dublin, Romantic things to do in Dublin**

Sun 5
Jan
2014

Why I Run

Posted by Clare under **American in Ireland, Marrying an Irishman, Running in Ireland**
[7] Comments

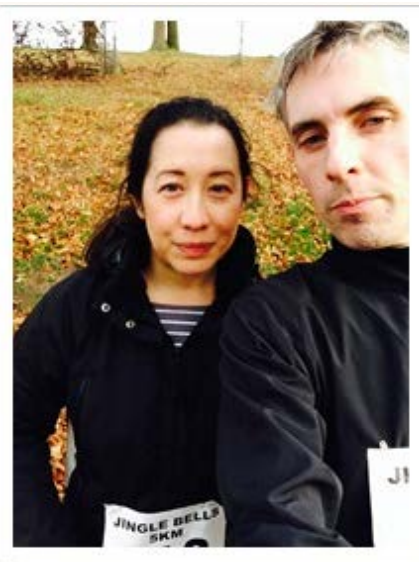
Mountaineering Man is a bona fide runner. He

started about 5 years ago and, countless 10 k's later, has never looked back. Rain, sleet, snow or shine he's out there, pounding the pavement 4-5 days a week.

Me? I've always been one of these sporadic worker-outers. I'll join a gym, religiously hit the cross trainer for several weeks before burning out and quitting. I'll take a few months to decide what to do next, and then do that for a few weeks before taking another extended break.

It was during the last one of these hiatuses that I decided something had to change. I was tired of gyms, particularly as they are SO overpriced here in Ireland (I used to go to one of LA's best gyms for 75% of the price of what I was paying at the mediocre gym in Clontarf I just left). And as I prefer morning workouts, I was also getting tired of the whole gym rigmarole – you know the one that involves packing all your work clothes, makeup, hairbrushes and other girly bits just to realise once you're at the gym that you've forgotten something essential, like your underwear.

(more...)



Tags: **clare kleinedler, New Year's Resolutions, Run with Tina online program, Sinead Dennis**



Sun 1
Dec
2013

Thanking You...

Posted by Clare under **American in Ireland, Expats in Dublin, Expats in Ireland, Thanksgiving in Dublin**
[3] Comments



As my fellow expat and friend **Lily** said during our Thanksgiving dinner yesterday evening, our friends are family to us as we don't have our blood relatives nearby. Whether they know it or not, our mates play a very important role in our lives here – far away from our moms, dads, sisters and brothers back home.

This was the spirit behind what my friends **Bill and Sharon** dubbed Thanksgivingpooza, a three-day weekend away in the midlands of Ireland to celebrate a very American holiday. The idea sprung about a couple of months ago, when **Mountaineering Man** considered who we could invite for this year's Thanksgiving dinner. Every year we have to choose just a handful of friends, as our space in Dublin simply doesn't allow for any more. A hunt for a bigger space was launched.



After some Google searches and Twitter queries I came across **Bishopstown House**, a beautifully-restored Georgian estate with multiple bedrooms, two sitting rooms, a roof deck and a massive kitchen. There's also a private pub and more bedrooms next door in a converted stable house. There is some **interesting history** behind the building; Michael Jackson chose it to be his Irish estate but he passed away before the refurb was completed. It is now rented out as a holiday home. Sad for the King of Pop, but lucky for us! After a few group emails, I booked it and on Friday we all met up at the property with food, drink and supplies

and hunkered down for the weekend. Thanksgivingpolooza 2013 was on!

(more...)

Tags: **Americans in Ireland, Bishopstown House, Michael Jackson Ireland estate, Thanksgiving in Ireland**



Wed 23
Oct 2013

A Real-Life Come Dine with Me!

Posted by Clare under **Expats in Dublin, Irish Food Culture, Kellogg's Europe, Working in Ireland**

1 Comment



Jenny, Joe, Diarmuid, me, Ruanne & Chef Denise

Food brings people together, and there's no better evidence of this than the daily lunchtime meal at my office. I'm very lucky to work at a company that provides its employees tasty, inexpensive and healthy food for lunch every day, prepared for us by a staff of dedicated chefs. There is a different menu every day, each featuring a hot main course (always with a vegetarian alternative) and side dishes as well as a daily salad bar with plenty of variety.

Last week the **Q Café** at **Kellogg's** featured some very special menus, one that I had a hand in creating. It was the much-anticipated **Come Dine With Me** competition: a representative from each department was chosen to create a full meal menu (starter, main course, dessert) with recipes, which the canteen cooks would make for the entire staff at our Kellogg's European headquarters. I was putting my best recipe skills forward on behalf of the Marketing department. No pressure, right?



Of course there was a kicker to the normal CDWM rules: We were each given a star ingredient that we had to feature in our main dish, and I – ever the unlucky one – drew FISH. I say unlucky because, in my experience, a lot of Irish people don't like fish unless it's battered and fried, and our kitchen doesn't use a deep fat fryer. The others received relatively tame main-dish ingredients: Jenny (Nutrition) got chicken; Joe (Sales/Procurement) got beef; Diarmuid (Supply Chain) got ham/bacon and Ruanne (HR) had to feature pork in her main course.

[\(more...\)](#)

Tags: [Asian Nachos](#), [Come Dine with Me](#), [Crunchy Nut Baklava](#), [Kellogg's Europe](#)



Fri 27
Sep
2013

One Year Ago Today...

Posted by Clare under [American in Ireland](#), [Irish guy cooking](#), [Marrying an Irishman](#)
[\[11\] Comments](#)



Someone recently asked me how I have found the first year of marriage. When this question is posed to newlyweds, I think the answer varies wildly depending on who you ask; some will

speak of an extended honeymoon that just seems to keep on going while others will express surprise at how it wasn't what he/she expected it to be (this could be good or bad, depending on the cause(s) of the surprise. Of course there are a million other answers in between.

For me, the first year of marriage to **Mountaineering Man** has continued to solidify the bond that was initiated on our first date just over three years ago. I've always wanted a partner in life, someone who truly accepts me – wobbly bits and all – and who shares similar values but also inspires new perspective and change. Someone I feel secure with; a person who can stand his ground but also considers there's a different way to look at something.



Our first year hasn't been easy; as you read in my **previous post**, his mother is unwell and we've spent a number of weekends staying with his family who live two hours away. We're always rushing to get basic chores done like cleaning the house (which we get to every few weeks these days!) and the worry of the situation has led to many sleepless nights – insomnia is rampant in our house lately! Some days we're like two grumpy toddlers who desperately need a nap, but instead of throwing ourselves on the ground in a heap of tears we'll snap at each other and slam a few doors to make a point (ahem, that would be more me than MM, I must admit).

(more...)

Tags: **Americans in Ireland, marrying an Irish man, Newlyweds in Ireland**



Wed 25
Sep
2013

Win a Signed Copy of Like Mam Used To Bake!

Posted by Clare under **Irish food, Irish Food Blog, Irish Food Culture**
[19] Comments

When I first moved to Ireland in March 2010, I only knew a handful of people. Because I was working from home and living in the (new-to-me) town of **Drogheda**, I turned to food blogging as a way to pass my free time and to make new friends.

Roseanne was one of my very first **food blogging** friends, and since she lived not too far from me I invited her to my house for dinner one night along with a few other bloggers I'd met online. Since then we've become good friends, going on double dates with our respective hubbies (usually at **L Mulligans**



or **Eastern Seaboard** – two of our faves), meeting up at blog events or just chilling out and having a good gossip session over tea and cakes.

The last time I was at Roseanne's place, she showed me the print-outs of **her book pages** and we reviewed them together whilst stuffing our gobs with her famous **pavlova**. If you read her blog, you know Roseanne's obsession with pavlova; she makes one nearly every week for her [very lucky or long-suffering, depending on which one of them you ask!] husband, J.



You can find the recipe for this incredible dessert – the perfect combination of crunchy/chewy meringue topped with beautiful heavy cream and a truckload of fresh fruit – in her newly released book **Like Mam Used to Bake**. The book is full of mouthwatering treats like Caramel Macaroons, Chocolate Peanut Butter Pie, Coconut Cake and so much more (there are even some bread recipes in there like Farmhouse Rolls and Wholemeal Soda Bread).

To celebrate the launch of the book, I have one signed copy to give away. Just name your favourite dessert and why you love it so much in the comments section below, and on Friday morning I'll do a random draw for the winner. Best of luck to

everyone – and congratulations to Roseanne on this incredibly impressive accomplishment!

Competition open to anyone in the island of Ireland!

**Photo of pavlova from LikeMamUsedToBake.com*

Tags: **irish food bloggers, Like Mam Used To Bake book, likemamusedtobake.com, Roseanne Hewitt-Cromwell**



Sun 15
Sep
2013

The Comfort of Food

Posted by Clare under [American in Ireland](#), [Expats in Dublin](#), [Irish Food](#)

[Culture](#), [Irish produce](#)

[\[2\] Comments](#)



It seems that in every second blog post of late, I promise to blog more often. These days I just can't seem get a handle on my writing schedule so I'll omit the usual promise and simply do the best I can to post more frequently.

The last few months have been tough for **Mountaineering Man** and me; his mother is ill and we're spending every weekend at his parents' home, which is about two hours away from Dublin. In order to protect the family's privacy I won't go into too much detail here, but suffice to say the illness came rather suddenly. It has been an incredibly difficult time for the whole family.

But even during this dark time, there are a

few glimmers of light. It's nice to spend some quality time with the family, who before this we'd see every third or fourth week. It's been a real treat to see my little one-and-a-half-year-old niece, who – totally unbeknownst to her – has been our comic relief and welcome distraction with her funny antics and ever-developing personality.

I feel lucky to be able to see her every weekend, and am grateful that she is getting to know me too. She is a smart little girl, always up for a dance (last weekend her daddy put on some serious '70s disco music and away she went!) and loves for us to read to her from her many books. Mind you, we don't always agree; she loves her mom's old Judy doll, which regularly scares the crap out of me with her blank-yet-piercing stare - she reminds me too much of the **Talking Tina doll** from the Twilight Zone. And since my niece leaves her all around the house, Judy seems to pop up at every turn (particularly in my nightmares).



We also have at least one dinner with MM's dad, sister and her family every weekend, sometimes two if we don't have to rush back to Dublin for work. I've become the cook along with my brother-in-law; he's the fry-up expert and will make the mid-day eggs, sausages, rashers, potato waffle, beans and tomato plate for anyone who is hungry. It looks so tempting I think I'm going to have to ask him to do one up for me next weekend. I usually cook the Saturday dinners and Sunday lunches, and despite my father-in-law's protests that it's too much work, I genuinely enjoy it.

[\(more...\)](#)

Tags: [clare kleinedler](#), [Cooking with Cornflakes](#), [irish cuisine](#), [Oven-fried](#)

Cornflake Chicken



Mon 2
Sep
2013

And the Winner of the Stand Mixer is....

Posted by Clare under [Moving to Ireland](#)

Comments Off



Val says:

August 29, 2013 at 11:05 am (Edit)

The smell of fresh-baked bread reminds me of home...the Christmas at my grandmother house when she was making fresh bread in the morning with all her grandchildren "helping" ...what a fantastic way to remember it...



Reply

As promised, I closed the competition at midnight last night and did a **Vine video of me selecting the winner**. There were 68 comments in total (made complicated by the fact that my blog template counts "newer" and "older" comments and splits them up: 1-18, then 1-50. So I had to reconfigure them to be numbered 1-68, and then put that figure into a random number generator. The first winner wasn't qualified (she's based in the U.S.) so I did a second draw and the winner is....VAL!

Congratulations – you will receive your beautiful new stand mixer in the next two weeks! Thanks for everyone who entered – I loved all the comments, what memories!

Tags:



Wed 28
Aug
2013

Bread Basics & A Chance to Win a Stand Mixer!

Posted by Clare under [American in Ireland](#), [Competition](#), [Irish Food](#)

[Blog](#), [Irish Food Culture](#)

[72] Comments



If you follow me on **Instagram** or **Twitter**, you know that in the last few months I've really gotten into making my own bread. The seed was sown last year when I became addicted to the Great British Bakeoff, and was nurtured by a steady diet of Paul Hollywood's Bread episodes and various River Cottage shows, which frequently sees the curly mopped-topped Hugh Fearnly Whittingstall whipping up batches of fresh baked breads and cakes.

There's just something so satisfying about the process of making your own bread: the mixing, the kneading, proofing and of course watching the pale ball of dough transform into a golden, crusty loaf. That said, I have found it difficult to find the time to bake bread regularly and up until now it's been an every-second-weekend hobby. Mixing the dough by hand means making a goopy mess of the bowl and your fingers, and the kneading process requires a clean worktop (meaning you need to sanitise it first!), 10-12 minutes of pushing and pulling the dough and then of course the clean-up afterward.



Sometimes during this laborious process, I'll think of my beloved stand mixer, which is still sitting in a dark storage space in my hometown of Los Angeles. Put simply, when it comes to breads and cakes (and a million other edibles), it does the work for you and makes it easy to have homemade baked goods without having to schedule a chunk of time in your diary.

(more...)

Tags: **Americans in Dublin, clare kleinedler, hifi tower, klar stein mixer**



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