

History

The name Cork comes from the Irish *Corcach Mór Mumhan*, which means the “great marsh of Munster.” The center of Cork is built on marshy islands and many of the main roads today (Grand Parade, St. Patrick’s Street and South Mall) were once channels of the River Lee.

The earliest settlement in Cork was the monastery, built on the south bank of the River Lee (the present-day location of Saint Fin Barre’s Cathedral). The earliest mention of the monastery dates back to 682. It suffered many Viking raids before the two communities came to a truce and became trading partners.

In 1169 the Norman conquest of Ireland began. By 1177, King Henry II of England had taken the city of Cork for himself. Trades and crafts flourished over the next few centuries, but the city was hit hard by the Black Death in 1349 and a bad fire in 1354. At the time, it was also struggling to fight off the rebellious Gaelic population outside its walls.

In the 1600s, power shifted several times between the Protestants and the Catholics. In 1690, during the siege of Cork, the city once again fell to British rule. During the following century of political stability, Cork was built up and prospered economically. In the mid-1800s, the city suffered from the Great Famine and disease, much like the rest of Ireland.

During the War of Independence, Cork was one of the main centers of resistance to British rule. In December of 1920, British forces deliberately set fire to several buildings along St. Patrick’s Street. Despite eyewitness accounts that British forces had set the fire, the British Army blamed renegade members of the Auxiliaries and the Black and Tans, paramilitary units made up of former soldiers. Unfortunately, the library and City Hall were burned down at this time and many historical documents were lost.

Gone are the days when Cork closed its gates to strangers. Today, Cork is a vibrant city that welcomes visitors from around the world.



Across the River Lee

To the north, Shandon is dominated by **St. Anne’s Church**, built in 1722. It is known as the Four-Faced Liar because each of the tower’s four clocks used to tell a different time. Here you can ring the bells on the first floor and then climb to the top for 360° views of the city.

Cork once had the largest butter market in the world and you can still spot dairy motifs throughout Shandon today. The history of the Cork Butter Market is covered in the **Butter Museum** just down the road from the church.

To the south, is the Protestant **St. Fin Barre’s Cathedral**, built in a neo-gothic style. The interior features beautiful stained-glass windows, marble mosaics, a colorful ceiling over the sanctuary, an ornate pulpit and even a cannonball from the Siege of Cork in 1690.

Off of Abbey Street, between Mary and Dunbar, stands **Red Abbey Tower**. It is Cork’s only surviving medieval building, and all that remains of a 14th-century Augustinian priory.

Walking Tour of the City Center

From the **Clarion Hotel**, follow **Lapp's Quay** west along the southern portion of the River Lee. You will see the **Cork City Hall** across the river. It was built in 1936 after the previous building was burned down by renegade British forces. When you get to **Parnell Place**, if you continue west you will be on **South Mall**, Cork's business district. Like many of the other streets, South Mall was once a channel of the River Lee and some of the older buildings still have the steps leading up to the main door where boats were docked in the 1800s. If you head north one block on Parnell Place, you will come to Oliver Plunkett Street.

Oliver Plunkett Street is a vibrant trade street that offers a relaxing atmosphere for shoppers. Here you can find a variety of food and clothes shops, pubs, cafés, restaurants and bookstores. At the end of the street, where it meets **Grand Parade**, you can see the **Berwick Fountain**. It was built in 1860, refurbished in 2006, and is a popular gathering place for young people, especially after the nightclubs close. Beyond that is **Bishop Lucey Park**. Just inside the gates to the park, part of the old city walls are visible. The walls ran around the entire city center to defend against piracy or attack and date back over 800 years. Outside the park on the corner of Grand Parade and **Tuckey Street**, there is an old **cast-iron cannon** stuck vertically in the pavement. The canon's presence is a bit of a mystery. It could have been used as a mooring post for boats and then moved here to serve as a street ornament.

At the south end of Grand Parade, the **National Monument** commemorates the rebellions of 1798, 1803, 1848 and 1867. It was unveiled on St. Patrick's Day in 1906, but the foundation stone was placed in 1898 for the centennial of the 1798 rebellion.

If you follow Grand Parade north, you will come across **Washington Street** on your left. It is a 15-minute walk to the **Court House**, the beautiful campus of **University College Cork**, and **Fitzgerald's Park**, which was home to the International Exhibition in 1902.

Grand Parade runs into **St. Patrick's Street**. Just before the road curves to the right you will see a building called **Queen's Old Castle**. This was the

location of both the Queen's Castle and the King's Castle which are depicted on Cork's coat of arms. Tall ships would sail up what is now St. Patrick's Street and dock within the castle walls.

You will see a mix of new and old buildings on St. Patrick's Street, because many of the buildings had to be rebuilt after the fire in 1920. The many side streets off of St. Patrick's Street are good for shopping.

On the left, **St. Peter and Paul Place** takes you to **Saints Peter and Paul's Church**, architecturally one of the finest churches in the city.

You will pass the **English Market** on your right. It dates back to 1788 and is decorated with ornate vaulted ceilings and columns. Here vendors sell some of the region's best local produce, meats, cheeses and carry-out meals. Selections range from traditional Irish food to exotic specialties from all over the world.

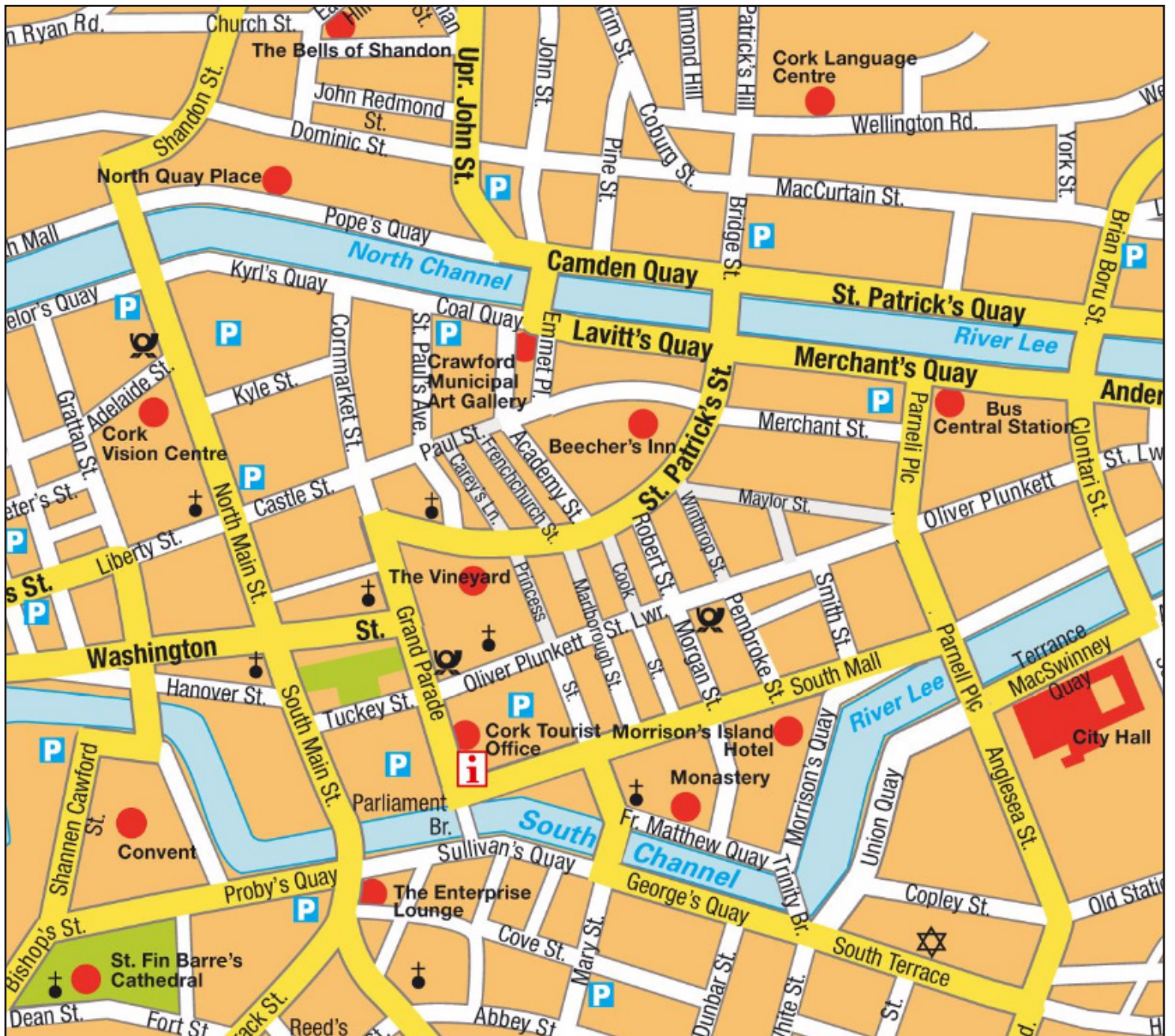
French Church Street, also on the left, was named after the French Huguenots who came to Cork in the mid-1700s after being driven out of France. The area is known as the Huguenot Quarter and there is a small graveyard on the street.

If you look down **Winthrop Street** on your right, you may catch a glimpse of the **General Post Office**, on Oliver Plunkett Street.

Before you reach the River Lee you will see the **Statue of Father Matthew**, the Apostle of Temperance, who was very influential in social life in cork in the first half of the 19th century. He was so successful in his crusade against the ills of alcohol that a quarter of a million people took the 'pledge' and whiskey production was cut in half. On the right is the **Merchants Quay Shopping Center**. In front of the statue is the **St. Patrick's Bridge**. It first opened in 1789, but the original was destroyed by a flood in 1853. Before the bridge was constructed, citizens were ferried back and forth by boat. Beyond the bridge you will see **St. Patrick's Hill**, which affords good views of the city if you are up to the steep hike to the top.

If you follow the River Lee east, you will arrive back at Parnell Place.

Map of Cork



The Parade

This year, the Cork St. Patrick's Day Parade celebrates the theme "1916-The Legacy." It starts at 1 PM.

The parade route runs west on the South Mall, up the Grand Parade, along St. Patrick's Street and finishes at Merchant's Quay.