

Irish Dancing

This lesson will be a brief introduction to Irish dancing. Participants will learn some basic steps that are the foundation to many Irish dances. By the end of the lesson participants will use these steps to do a traditional group dance. If you attend this lesson you should wear comfortable sports clothes and bring some water. You can dance in your socks or runners. No high shoes.

Irish dance is a very old tradition and not much is known about it before the 1700's. In the 1700's dance masters travelled from village to village in Ireland teaching dance. Many villages are known for a certain type of dance with certain steps. Irish dance grew in popularity along with Irish music and a Ceilí would have been a popular form of entertainment. Irish dance can be divided in two, social dance and performance dance. Social dance, known as a ceili involves group dances while performance dance such as Riverdance is very quick with rigid upper body. Riverdance brought a new life to Irish dance in 1994 and solo performance dancing has grown worldwide since then.

Most Irish children learn basic steps when they are 6 years old in school but many take dance lessons outside of school and learn to compete as an Irish dancer. When you start dancing your costume is a simple dress or skirt but as you progress you have a very decorative dress and often wear a wig. Boys wear a shirt and trousers with a decorative waistcoat.



My name is **Nuala O'Donovan**. I am from Dublin, **Ireland**.

Currently I study in Belgium in the Erasmus Mundus Master in Adapted Physical Activity at KU Leuven

I studied Irish dance for 9 years as a child and danced competitively during that time. I also danced as part of a group to perform at weddings and other events. During my time as a competitive dancer I won many solo competitions and championships and was also part of very successful teams. I gave up solo dancing competitively but remained ceili dancing with friends. Today my interest in Irish Dance is mainly in the music and I often play music for dancers. I dance recreationally when the opportunity arises.