

# Meaning of irish place names and surnames

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A little bit about the history of Irish place names. It may come as a surprise, but only a small portion of names comes directly from English language. The big majority of names here are anglicisations of Irish (Gaeilge) names and few names come from Old Norse. The name of Ireland itself comes from the Gaeilge name Eire, added to the Germanic word land. In mythology, Eire was an Irish goddess of the land and of sovereignty. My boyfriend's surname is Doyle, the twelfth most common surname in Ireland.

Now we know that the statement that the name is derived from the Irish word Doibh (meaning dark, gloomy, melancholy) can be disregarded as it is generally accepted that the correct derivation is dhubh-ghall, meaning Norse invader or dark foreigner. Its variations in English are Doyelle, Doyley, MacDowell or O Dubhghaill in Irish. One of my best friend's surname is Ruane. It is an anglicized form of the Old Gaelic "\_O'Ruadhain\_", which translates as "the descendant of the red one".

We don't know whether "Ruadhan" (red) refers to complexion of skin or red hair, or to some event relating to the abilities as a warrior but it is a descriptive nickname from the pre-medieval period. I have to note here that my friend Aidan is neither ginger nor a warrior. Overall, all I have to admit is that I had great fun discovering facts about origin of Irish place names and surnames. I have a better understanding about the importance of Irish language and the heritage it brings.

I got to know Irish history better and will definitely keep eyes open even more next time when travelling around Ireland. References: The internet surname database - [www.surnamedb.com](http://www.surnamedb.com) The internet Library database -

<https://assignbuster.com/meaning-of-irish-place-names-and-surnames/>

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