

Polynesian and irish culture



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When comparing the Polynesian and Irish cultures, there are many similarities as well as several differences. From the origin of each culture, religion, traditional dance, and ceremonies/customs including local cuisine along with climate and traditional folklore/mythology and language, there are many interesting facts to learn. The Polynesian culture originated in South Pacific Polynesia, a triangular group of Central and South Pacific Ocean islands that were settled by indigenous people from parts of Southeast Asia including those of Taiwan, commonly referred to as Polynesian or South Pacific Islanders (Wikipedia). Although there are many islands that form Polynesia, the best-known islands are Hawaii, Tonga, Samoa, Fiji, Cook Island, and Tahiti.

The islands were formed from volcanoes that erupted from the floor of the Pacific Ocean, now most of which are dormant. In comparison, the Irish culture originated on the island of Ireland that lies in the Atlantic Ocean, it is composed of the Republic of Ireland (known as Ireland) and Northern Ireland (part of the United Kingdom); Ireland is known as the third largest island in Europe. Although now an island, Ireland was mostly-ice covered and connected by land to Britain and Europe during the last ice age (Wikipedia). Likewise, in both Polynesian and Irish culture, religion is a very big part of life with Christianity being the dominant religion. Although, in ancient times Celtic Polytheism was the most common religion practiced in Ireland, today nearly 85% of the population is Roman Catholic. St.

Patrick was said to introduce Irish people into Christianity. He? was kidnapped at the age of 16 and used as a shepherd;? however, at age 22,

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he escaped and began to spread the word of Christianity in Ireland (Ireland Story). On the contrary, in Polynesia, only 30% of the population practices the Roman Catholic religion, while 54% are Protestant (Bolin). In ancient Polynesia, before the influence of western civilization, the native people worshiped gods and goddesses ranging in degrees of importance, in addition some still worship ancestral spirits. This traditional worship involved sacrifices (some human), chants, dances, feast and other elaborate rituals (Wikipedia). Although many traditions in each culture have faded in modern times, traditional dance has remained a very strong part of life today. Most dances in the Polynesian culture seem to be fast, erotic, and hip swaying such as the Tamure of Tahiti; although the Fiafia, a slow and graceful dance of Sonoma is common as well. Finally, another example in Fiji, the Meke is a dance that is made up of a large group of people tells the stories of ancient legends and is accompanied by spears, chants, hand clapping and drum beating (Pacific Travel Guides).

Similarly, the Irish River Dance is an up tempo dance that takes a long time to reach a fast pace dancing routine.? There are many different forms of the dance such as step dancing, set dancing and ceili dancing.? This dance was performed as early as the 16th century for crowds with guests such as Queen Elizabeth (Ireland Eye). Irish and Polynesian cultures are both rich with traditional ceremonies and/or customs.

In both cultures alike, many customs and/or ceremonies revolve around food and drink. The Irish traditionally use beer (or porter) as a tool of celebration to bring together friends and family. These alcohols are not only to drink, but additionally used to cook with as well. Breakfast is a very big meal in the

Irish culture; the 'fry-up' as breakfast is known includes foods such as fried eggs, bacon, sausage, fried tomatoes, toast and hot tea. Irish cuisine has many meals that date back to the 12th century; corn beef and cabbage, the national dish of Ireland, is the most famous of all (Lavery and Briscoe). In addition, Ireland is renowned for their belief in superstitions including the bad luck you will bring by putting shoes on a table or chair, placing a bed to face the door, bringing lilac into the house, cutting your fingernails on Sunday or giving a knife as a gift (Irish Culture and Customs). In the same way, many Polynesians ceremonies and/or customs involve eating and drinking with the Luau's, or traditional feasts, where whole pigs, wrapped in banana leaves and covered in coconut cream, are slow cooked in a large pit.

In some areas of Polynesia, the larger (in size) the person is, the greater his or status is in the community (Wikipedia). The Kava ceremony is held to welcome and initiate guests, it includes consuming the traditional Ava drink that is extracted from the roots of a pepper tree and mixed with water. Other customs in Polynesian culture involves ceremonial fire walking; this tradition involves a person walking barefooted across a bed of hot coals and the rhythmic drumming involving the use of many drums with different pitches on Cook Island (Pacific Travel Guides).

Located close to the equator, the climate in Polynesia is tropical year round. November through April is considered to be the hot, humid period with an average temperature of 89 degrees Fahrenheit; also deemed to hurricane season. During the months of May though October it is somewhat cooler and dryer with an average temperature of 75 degrees Fahrenheit (Pacific Travel

Guides). In contrast, Ireland is a mostly cold climate with very short summers. The climate is greatly influenced by the Atlantic Ocean; during January and February the average temperature in Ireland is approximately 42 degrees Fahrenheit, while July and August are normally the warmest months of the year with an average temperature around 60 degrees Fahrenheit (Ward). The folklore and/or mythology in both cultures prove to be very interesting.

The most common Irish folklore evolves around the Leprechaun, an old-fashioned shoemaker that guards the treasures of the Danes. These little ??? people??? dress in green with red caps and wore leather aprons, they are often intoxicated from their homemade brews and can be very sneaky to help them remain hidden; in addition, they are said to be able to vanish into thin air or to grant wishes so that their pots of gold stay hidden at the end of the rainbow (Joseph). On the other hand, the Polynesian mythology usually evolves around geographic features on the island that the tale originated. In addition, some of the mythology was shared though out several of the islands such as the story of the islands being pulled up from the bottom of the sea by a magic fishhook, or thrown down as rocks from Heaven (Wikipedia). Other mythological tales involved stories of voyage and migration, a variety of animals, religion, and humans among other things.

Finally, likewise, both Ireland and Polynesia primarily use the English language today. However, in ancient Polynesian times the most common languages spoken were Tahitian, Samoan, Tongan, Maori, and Hawaiian; while in Ireland, Irish was the most common language used (Wikipedia). In conclusion, although there are many similarities and differences in the

Polynesian and Irish cultures, one thing makes each person the same in both cultures; they are all of the human race, equal in every way and should be treated as so. Works Cited Bolin, Anne, Ph. D. 5 April 2006.

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