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Making Ireland Irish: Tourism and National Identity since the Irish Civil War (Irish Studies)

By Eric Zuelow



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Making Ireland Irish: Tourism and National Identity since the Irish Civil War (Irish Studies) By Eric Zuelow

From the dark shadow of civil war to the pastel-painted tourist towns of today, *Making Ireland Irish* provides a sweeping account of the evolution of the Irish tourist industry over the twentieth century. Drawing on an extensive array of previously untapped or underused sources, Eric G. E. Zuelow examines how a small group of tourism advocates, inspired by tourist development movements in countries such as France and Spain, worked tirelessly to convince their Irish compatriots that tourism was the secret to Ireland's success. Over time, tourism went from being a national joke to a national interest. Men and women from across Irish society joined in, eager to help shape their country and culture for visitors' eyes. The result was Ireland as it is depicted today, a land of blue skies, smiling faces, pastel towns, natural beauty, ancient history, and timeless traditions.

With lucid prose and vivid detail, Zuelow explains how careful planning transformed Irish towns and villages from grey and unattractive to bright and inviting, sanitized Irish history to avoid offending Ireland's largest tourist market, the English, and supplanted traditional rural fairs revolving around muddy animals and featuring sexually suggestive ceremonies with new family-friendly festivals and events filling the tourist calendar today. By challenging existing notions that the Irish tourist product is either timeless or the consequence of colonialism, Zuelow demonstrates that the development of tourist imagery and Irish national identity was not the result of a handful of elites or a postcolonial legacy, but rather the product of an extended discussion that ultimately involved a broad cross-section of society, both inside and outside Ireland. Tourism, he argues, played a vital role in "making Ireland Irish."



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About the Author

Eric G. E. Zuelow is assistant professor of modern European history at the University of New England. He is coeditor of *Nationalism in a Global Era: The Persistence of Nations*.

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