



## Ireland Full Year Forecast - 2019

### Current Climate

- Ireland has a stable political environment currently led by the Fine Gael party who has been in power since 2011. Under Fine Gael leadership, Ireland has been the first European country to emerge from EU austerity measures and has repaid IMF debt ahead of time, a sign of a strong economic recovery. Ireland remains aligned with the European Union in its Brexit negotiations with the UK which is not expected to have major implications on International travel out of Ireland.
- Ireland was the fastest growing economy in the European Union last year and is expected to remain strong in 2018 with GDP growth estimated at 4.4%. The unemployment rate of 6% is the lowest in 10 years boosting consumer confidence.
- The outlook from Irish travel industry is optimistic with the Irish Travel Agents Association (ITAA) reporting a strong start for 2018. Irish travel agents are seeing an increase in bookings 20% up over that same period last year.
- The early booking trends also identify the US as one of the top 3 destination choices behind long-time favourites Spain and Portugal.
- The airlines have also responded to the strong Irish economic and travel growth. There are now more than 51 direct flights out of Ireland to New England during high season. Aer Lingus has significantly increased their routes and flights into the US including a daily flight into Hartford, CT and continuing their 21 flights a week out of Ireland into Boston. Delta Air Lines will recommence their seasonal daily Dublin to Boston flight in May. Norwegian Air has also increased their flights out of Ireland to TF Green, Providence, RI from 12 to 16 flights a week commencing March 2018, however, it has been reported that Norwegian are considering paring back their schedule for the winter months.

### Forecast & Trends

- The full year 2019 forecast sees the political environment remaining stable with continued economic growth. Consumer confidence should remain high with low unemployment that will bolster spending across all sectors of the economy including travel.
- Irish travelers are looking for new US destinations and experiences. New England is attractive to many experienced travelers with particular interests in outdoor activities, the New England coastline and the many island and lake destinations.
- Guided/dynamic packaged holidays are making a comeback. Package holidays are particularly popular and useful for multi-destination holidays. New England will have a large appeal to both these trends.
- Cruising continues to be a big seller with Irish holidaymakers and is increasingly becoming an attractive option for the millennial generation.