



# The Mini Page

**Next Week:**  
Marsupials

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Founded by Betty Debnam



## Welcome to Ireland

Mini Page photo

### Mini Fact:

The famous Cliffs of Moher are on the west coast of Ireland.



### More about Ireland

The Republic of Ireland is an island country in Europe. It shares the island with Northern Ireland. Northern Ireland is part of the United Kingdom.

Ireland is also known as the Emerald Isle because of its lush green hills and fields.

### A long history

Experts believe Ireland has been inhabited by people for more than 8,000 years. Many of the traditions that are still honored in Ireland began with some of these early people.

### The Celtic harp

In the 1500s, King Henry VIII added the image of a harp to the **currency**, or money, of Ireland. Since then, the Celtic harp has been a symbol of that country.



Image courtesy European Central Bank

Today, all Irish currency has the Celtic harp on it. "Eire" (AIR-uh) is the Irish word for "Ireland."

St. Patrick's Day, March 17, is a national holiday in Ireland. It celebrates one of that country's special saints.

It is not a national holiday in the United States, but many Americans celebrate anyway. Even people who have no Irish ancestors like to pretend they're Irish for a day!



### St. Patrick

St. Patrick was a missionary in Ireland during the fifth century. He was taken there as a slave when he was a teenager.

After he returned to his home in Britain, he believed he was called to go back to Ireland and spread Christianity.

### Irish folklore

Ireland is famous for its **folklore**, or traditional stories that are passed down from generation to generation.

A favorite symbol of Ireland is the **leprechaun** (LEP-ruh-kawn). To celebrate St. Patrick's Day, The Mini Page learned about this crafty little fairy.

### Meet a leprechaun

A leprechaun is a mysterious or magical being. According to Irish legend, leprechauns live in the countryside with humans, but they're rarely seen by people.

Most pictures of leprechauns show jolly little elves with pink cheeks and smiles. You might see these on items for sale around St.

Patrick's Day, or on cereal boxes.

Folklore experts say leprechauns are indeed small, but their clothing is usually untidy and old. They might wear an old blue or green coat, short pants, woolen stockings and a wide-brimmed hat or stocking cap.



Illustration by Jean-noël Lafargue

Instead of being happy, leprechauns are more likely to play tricks on humans. In fact, Irish people used to leave milk, cheese, bread or other foods on their doorsteps at night to keep the local leprechaun from making **mischief**, or trouble, at their homes.

Leprechauns are also thought to be **miserly**, or greedy for money. They make their homes in abandoned barns or churches, or in the woods or in caves.

### Leprechauns at work

Leprechauns are thought to be shoemakers. They make and repair shoes for other fairies, who wear out their shoes quickly with all the dancing they do. Some people believe that you can tell when you're close to a leprechaun's home because you can hear the tapping of his little hammer as he works on shoes.

Other legends tell of leprechauns being builders and stonemasons, metalworkers and even bankers. Leprechauns also love music and can remember old tunes that have been forgotten by humans.

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## Try 'n' Find

Words that remind us of Ireland are hidden in this puzzle. Some words are hidden backward or diagonally, and some letters are used twice. See if you can find:



CELEBRATE, CURRENCY, ELF, EUROPE, FAIRY, FOLKLORE, LEPRECHAUN, MAGIC, MISCHIEF, MISERLY, MISSIONARY, MUSIC, MYSTERY, PATRICK, SAINT, SHOEMAKERS, SYMBOL, TRADITION.

M F O C S A L G P M A G I C C  
I O R T R F E I H C S I M M U  
S L P R E G P T S E S D C Y R  
S K P A K G P Y A U Y K I S R  
I L A D A Y E L Q R M Y S T E  
O O T I M R C R J O B D U E N  
N R R T E I H E S P O E M R C  
A E I I O A A S C E L R L Y Y  
R H C O H F U I E L F H Q E T  
Y X K N S P N M I S A I N T C

## Mini Spy Classics

Mini Spy and her friends are planting a flowering apple tree. See if you can find the hidden pictures. Then color the picture.



Mini Spy Classics appear in the first issue of each month.

Based on materials originally produced and/or created by Betty Debnam.

- two bananas
- word MINI
- dog's face
- fish
- pig's face
- ladder
- sailboat
- arrow
- bell
- dragon
- heart
- letter D

## Mini Jokes



**Sean:** What's a leprechaun's favorite music?

**Siobhan:** Shamrock 'n' roll!

**Patty:** Who was Cinderella's date on St. Patrick's Day?

**Phelan:** Pinch Charming!

## Eco Note



Some unusually gifted dogs can learn the names of new objects simply by overhearing their owners talk, according to a study published in the journal *Science*. Austrian and Hungarian researchers found that so-called "gifted word learner" dogs correctly identified new toys after listening to conversations in which humans named the objects without directly addressing the dogs. In tests, these dogs performed at least as well as when they were taught words directly. The behavior closely mirrors language learning seen in human toddlers around 18 months old.

adapted with permission from Earthweek.com

## For later:

Look in your local newspaper for items about St. Patrick's Day celebrations in your area.

**KidSpot** by Dan Thompson 3-7

**THE PUZZLER**

In other words... Can you make new words by rearranging the letters in the names of the objects shown here?

Clue: A watering tube

Clue: You hammer them

Clue: Opposite of first

Clue: A cut of beef

ANS: SHOE, HOSE, SALT, LAST, SNAIL, MILLS, SKATE, STEAK

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