

# Food & Drink

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## The best Irish pubs

Embrace the St. Patty's Day spirit on this borough-hopping tour of the city's standout taverns. By **Sarah Bruning**

### Molly's Pub and Shebeen

287 Third Ave between 22nd and 23rd Sts  
(212-889-3361)

**THE CRAIC** Thickly accented bartenders tend to off-the-clock Manhattanites at this rustic East Side retreat. Pastoral touches—a whitewashed facade,

sawdust-covered floor and Celtic crosses—make this tavern feel like it's been transplanted from the Irish countryside.

**COST OF A GUINNESS** \$7

**NOTABLE FOOD AND DRINK** Regulars swear by the stew (\$18), a rib-sticking combination of lamb,

carrots and potatoes, paired with a pint of Murphy's Stout (\$7), a creamy swig brewed in County Cork using a 150-year-old recipe. If none of the four Irish beers on tap appeal, opt for one of the dozen-plus whiskeys, including the peppery Powers Gold Label (\$8).

### Ceol

191 Smith St between Baltic and Warren Sts,  
Cobble Hill, Brooklyn (347-643-9911)

**THE CRAIC** Dublin native Loretta Heaney helms this cozy homage to the Emerald Isle, where you'll find neighborhood folk mingling with expats hankering for a sense of home. Heaney obliges: Vintage distillery signs and Irish blessings grace the walls, European football plays on four flatscreen TVs, and

traditional tunes performed by live bands replace classic rock on alternating Sundays. Wednesdays are dedicated to singer/songwriter showcases (the bar's name means "music" in Gaelic).

**COST OF A GUINNESS** \$7

**NOTABLE FOOD AND DRINK** Wash down a traditional shepherd's pie (\$13), a mix of seasonal vegetables and ground beef topped with fluffy mashed potatoes and cheddar cheese, with one of four Irish drafts. We like Smithwick's (\$6), a malty and easy-sipping red ale.

### The Wicked Monk

8415 Fifth Ave between 84th and 85th Sts, Bay Ridge, Brooklyn  
(718-921-0601)

**THE CRAIC** There's quite literally a piece of Éire in this jolly pub—in fact, there are several: When owner Michael Dorgan heard that a church in Cork, Ireland, was being demolished, he shipped over a few pieces (the wooden pews, pulpit, confessional, statues and stained-glass windows) to incorporate into his bar. The trimmings may skew sacred, but the older neighborhood crowd here is plenty rowdy—look for the faces of abiding regulars immortalized in the mural above the bar.

**COST OF A GUINNESS** \$6.50

**NOTABLE FOOD AND DRINK** The staff here takes its Guinness very seriously—if Dorgan spots incorrectly poured suds, he'll toss them down the drain without hesitation—so request a pint of the roasty stout with confidence. You can also throw back a dram of that old Irish standby, Jameson (\$7).

### An Beal Bocht

445 W 238th St between Greystone and Waldo Aves, Bronx  
(718-884-7127)

**THE CRAIC** The name is Gaelic for "the poor mouth," which is also the title of a novel by Irish writer Flann O'Brien, but that's not the only artistic influence at this congenial hang, which serves as a gathering place for Riverdale's Irish-American, art and theater communities. Posters and sketches depict literary heroes like James Joyce, and five nights a week, live bands play everything from old-world ballads to contemporary hits from U2.

**COST OF A GUINNESS** \$6

**NOTABLE FOOD AND DRINK** Comfort foods abound on the lengthy menu, which stars bangers and mash (\$10) and a classic Irish breakfast (\$12) with traditional meats (Irish bacon, Irish sausage, and black and white puddings from the Butcher's Fancy in Woodlawn) and Batchelors beans. Whether or not you're breaking bread, ask for a pint of the smooth house amber ale, Lecheile (\$4), brewed upstate.

### Veronica's Bar

34-04 36th Ave between 34th and 35th Sts,  
Astoria, Queens (718-729-9744)

**THE CRAIC** Owners Eddie and Veronica Devine, who hail from Counties Limerick and Fermanagh respectively, put a premium on old-fashioned hospitality, which keeps their modest spot packed with regulars. Despite the everyone-knows-everyone vibe, newcomers are warmly welcomed into the fold—especially if you're willing to belt out classic-rock tunes, warbling from a digital jukebox, with the rest of the bar.

**COST OF A GUINNESS** \$6

**NOTABLE FOOD AND DRINK** No food is served, but you can still say *sláinte* (Gaelic for "cheers") with five different types of homeland hooch: Jameson, Powers, Paddy, Tullamore Dew and Bushmills (\$6).

### Sean Ogs

60-02 Woodside Ave at 60th St, Woodside, Queens  
(718-899-3499)

**THE CRAIC** You're never far from a lilting laugh or brogue at this lively spot, where more than half of the staff is Ireland-born. A seat at the sleek wooden bar best positions you to hear stories from the bartenders, but it's hard to resist a table next to the stone hearth.

**COST OF A GUINNESS** \$6

**NOTABLE FOOD AND DRINK** Hunker down with a glass of toasty, mild Paddy Old Irish whiskey (\$6), distilled and bottled in County Cork, and a mixed grill (Irish sausage, black and white puddings, a pork chop and eggs any style; \$14.95).

ILLUSTRATIONS: PHILIP HEANEY