

What makes Ireland's national symbol the harp so special?

Anyone who knows that St. Patrick's Day is on March 17 knows of Ireland's tricolor flag but what about Ireland's national symbol of the harp? Ireland is the only country in the world to have a musical instrument as its's national symbol.



Ireland's national [symbol is the harp](#), which has a rich history and cultural significance in the country. The harp has been associated with Ireland for centuries and is prominently featured on the coat of arms, the [national flag](#), and various government seals. The harp has been a symbol of Ireland since the Middle Ages, when Irish kings and chieftains were depicted in manuscripts and artwork playing the instrument. The harp also played a prominent role in Irish folklore and mythology, with legendary figures such as the blind harpist, Turlough O'Carolan, composing beautiful melodies that are still remembered today.

In the 18th and 19th centuries, the harp was adopted as a symbol of Irish nationalist movements and was used as a symbol of resistance [against British rule](#). The harp was also a symbol of the Irish literary revival, with poets and writers such as [W.B. Yeats](#) and James Joyce referencing the instrument in their works.

The harp device has also been synonymous with Guinness beer since 1862 when it was used as a symbol on the first bottle label for GUINNESS®. It was registered as a Guinness company trademark in 1876. That is why there is a difference between the Irish government harp and the Guinness harp. As Guinness had trademarked the harp symbol in 1876, the Irish Free State Government of 1922, had to turn the official government harp the other way to differentiate between the trademarked Guinness harp and the official State emblem. The distinguishing feature between the two harps is that the Guinness Harp always appears with its straight edge (the sound board) to the left, and the government harp is always shown with its straight edge to the right.

Today, the harp continues to be a symbol of Ireland and is often featured in traditional Irish music. Many Irish musicians have made a name for themselves playing the harp. The harp is also featured in Irish dance and theater performances and is often played at national events and celebrations.

In conclusion, the harp is a national symbol of Ireland, with a rich history and cultural significance. It has been associated with Ireland for centuries and continues to be an important part of [Irish culture](#) today.