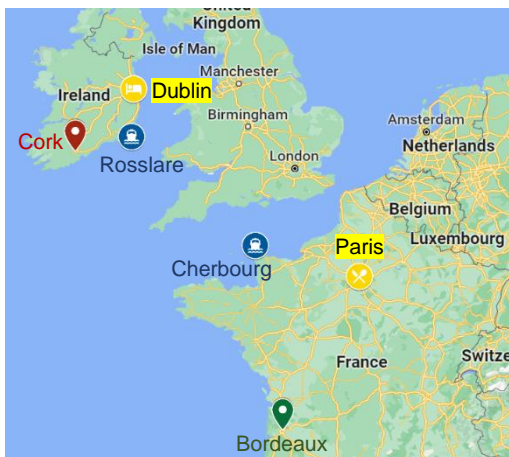# CORK
or Corcaigh ?

There is more than one way to get to Rome and so it is to get from France to Ireland or more precisely from Bordeaux to Cork. The first possibility is by plane – obviously the most common way. However, I had the chance to experience a more interesting, more adventurous way of travelling.

First of all, let's get a quick overview of what Ireland is about.
With a length of 450 km and a width of 260 km, Ireland is the second biggest island in Europe. Interestingly the northern part, Northern Ireland, is part of the United Kingdom of England, whereas the southern part, the Republic of Ireland, is independent.
The island is split in 32 counties, 6 belong to Northern Ireland. Cork is the capitol of the corresponding county Cork. It is the biggest county all over Ireland and has around 160'000 inhabitants.
Even if it seems unbelievable, The majority of the approximate 6 million strong population's mother tongue is English and not Irish. To keep the Irish language alive, people learn it at school from the age of 5 years. So to answer the question in the title, Cork and Corcaigh are the same city/county. One is the more common English name, the other one the Irish translation.

Our journey started on the 28th of January 2022. 3 people, 3 suitcases and 1 bicycle. First, we travelled by train from Bordeaux to Paris. After a rushed change at the train station (from Paris Montparnasse to Paris Saint Lazare) we got on the train which brought us further to Cherbourg. In Cherbourg we got on the ferry called "Horizon" (from Stenaline) with mainly truck drivers as fellow passengers and started our 15 hour journey.

You ask yourself if we got seasick? Fortunately, the sea wasn't too rough considering the time of the year, but we noticed a huge difference between the swell when we went to bed and when we got up. We were no longer protected by the continent and were at that moment really on the open sea.

On the 29th of January we finally arrived in Ireland. At Rosslare Harbour we experienced for the first time what the public transport is about. Due to the delay of our ferry, we missed the train to Dublin and spent more than 5 hours waiting for it.
At around 10pm we finally arrived in the hotel where we planned to stay. Exhausted, but excited to explore Dublin, we went for a stroll through the Irish capital.
After a short night sleep, our Dublin discovery continued before we took the train at 4pm to start off Cork.

As in France, we started our stay in Ireland with an intense language course. The school building is situated in the middle of Cork City, so it was not too difficult for us to discover our new home.
The change of culture and language was a little challenging in the beginning. Fortunately I got a lovely host family with a lot of patience and enthusiasm to help me get to know the Irish culture and improve my English-skills.

On the 14th of February I eventually started my internship. I am working in a 4-star-hotel called "the Kingsley", in the Food and Beverage-Department. Of course, it is a tough job and I am usually very tired when I return to my host family's home. Nevertheless, for me it is worth it. I am in touch with staff members of all over the world and having a chat with the customers is very interesting too. You never know what a day will be like, but it is always different, for sure.

My main tasks are serving customers, taking orders, polishing cutlery and glasses, setting up tables and preparing coffees. It is very much different from what I was doing in Switzerland, but what I enjoy the most is definitely the direct contact with all the different customers.
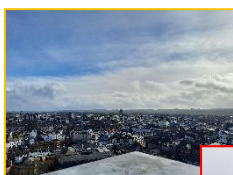
At present we are hosting a group of 30 Ukrainian refugees in the hotel. Interacting with them makes me much more aware of what's happening in their home-country and how it affects all of us.
We are trying our best to make them feel welcome, to talk to them or at least to make them smile for a moment in this tough time. To sum up this experience I can say, that I have even learnt some Ukrainian vocabulary.

In my free time I try to discover Ireland, which slightly different from how I expected it to be like. A lot of places are not or very badly connected to the public transport system and if there is a bus, it usually doesn't come very frequently.

After all, most often I figure out a solution and every trip turn into a small adventure.
You want to know more about Irelands treasures? Following a few of my favourite spots around Cork:

Cork city itself is a visit worth. There are gorgeous places like the Shandon tower, from where you have a great overview around the city, Fitzgerald's Park, where you can go for a nice walk or the "lough", a nice little lake to find some calm.

Around 30 minutes away from Cork is Cobh. A town, especially well-known for being the last anchorage of the "titanic". Apart from the very in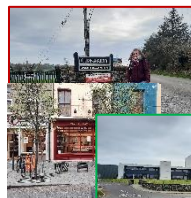teresting "Titanic Experience", a museum dedicated to this famous ship, there are also the so called "Deck of Cards Houses". A great point to take a memorable picture!

If you would like to experience a part of Irish culture, I recommend the Jameson Whiskey Distillery in Midleton.
Trough a guided tour you get an insight of the production of traditional Irish Whiskey.

But the Irish culture is not just about drinking. In Clonakilty you discover the secret of the famous Clonakilty black and white pudding production.
With Ireland's only "model railway village" and the lovely town centre, Clonakilty is definitely worth a day trip.

For all nature and sea lovers, I recommend going for a walk at the Ballynamona beach, the Ballycotton Cliffwalk or the Scillywalk in Kinsale.