

Irish English: Talking About Heatwaves

Lesson 1 — Level B2

Language Focus

Ireland doesn't get many real heatwaves — so when one does arrive, people have plenty of colourful, informal ways to talk about it. Below are twelve words and phrases you'll hear across Ireland when the temperature climbs. Most are spoken rather than written, so you're far more likely to hear them at a bus stop or in a shop than read them in a formal report.

Word / Phrase	Meaning	Example
Roasting	Extremely hot — used for weather, places or people.	<i>It was roasting out on the pitch, and by half-time three players needed a water break.</i>
Melting	Feeling so hot it's as if you're dissolving.	<i>She stepped off the train melting, after twenty minutes with no shade in sight.</i>
Boiling	Extremely hot — used for people, places or objects.	<i>The office was boiling by midday, since the air conditioning had broken down again.</i>
Sweltering	Uncomfortably, oppressively hot, often before a noun.	<i>Commuters faced a sweltering journey home, packed onto trains with no working fans.</i>
Close	Humid and stuffy, with heavy, still air (a very Irish use of the word).	<i>It's very close this evening; I wouldn't be surprised if there's thunder later.</i>
Scorching	Extremely hot, especially describing strong sun.	<i>The scorching afternoon sun forced the match to be delayed until evening.</i>
Baking	Very hot, especially something that has absorbed heat.	<i>The car had been sitting in the sun all day and was baking by the time we got back.</i>
I'm sweating buckets	I am perspiring heavily.	<i>I'm sweating buckets just walking to the shop and back.</i>
I'm wrecked from the heat	I'm exhausted because of the heat.	<i>I'm wrecked from the heat — I might just lie down for the afternoon.</i>
I'm fried	I feel completely drained or overheated (informal).	<i>By the time the match finished, the players looked absolutely fried.</i>

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Word / Phrase	Meaning	Example
The head's cooked off me	Informal Irish idiom: I feel dazed or overwhelmed by the heat.	<i>Honestly, the head's cooked off me after standing in that queue in the sun.</i>
Jaysus, it's roasting	An exclamation of surprise at intense heat (very informal, spoken Irish English).	<i>Jaysus, it's roasting — I don't think I've ever seen it this warm in Dublin.</i>

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Reading

Context: News report

Heatwave Grips the Country

Ireland sweltered through its hottest day of the year yesterday, as temperatures across Munster climbed above 28°C. Met Éireann has confirmed that the heatwave, now in its fifth consecutive day, is expected to continue into the weekend, with little relief from the humidity overnight.

Commuters described conditions as unbearable. “It's roasting out here,” said one Dublin office worker, fanning herself outside Pearse Street station. “I'm sweating buckets just walking to work.” Public transport has struggled to cope, with several train carriages reportedly boiling after air conditioning units broke down during the morning rush.

Farmers are growing increasingly concerned about the scorching conditions damaging crops, while hospitals have reported a rise in cases of heat exhaustion among elderly patients. “The head's cooked off me by three o'clock most days,” admitted one postman, who has been delivering letters in baking heat since early morning.

Forecasters have also warned that the close, humid air overnight is providing little respite, with many households reporting broken sleep. “Jaysus, it's roasting, even at midnight,” one Cork resident remarked. Health officials are urging the public to stay hydrated and avoid the midday sun where possible, as the heatwave shows no sign of breaking.

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1. Odd One Out

In each set, three sentences make sense. One doesn't fit — the heat word is used illogically. Circle the letter of the sentence that is the odd one out.

Context: Music festival

- A. It was roasting at the festival, so most people stayed close to the water stations.
- B. It was boiling, yet everyone kept their jackets zipped right up to their chins all afternoon.
- C. The main tent was baking by midday, and two stalls had to close early.
- D. It was so sweltering that the queue for ice cream stretched right around the block.

Context: Office

- A. The office was boiling all afternoon, so everyone propped open every window they could find.
- B. I was sweating buckets after the meeting, so I grabbed a bottle of water from the fridge.
- C. The head's cooked off me by three, so I decided to go for a run in the midday sun to cool down.
- D. I'm wrecked from the heat, so I lay down with the fan pointed straight at me for twenty minutes.

Context: Beach day

- A. It was scorching on the beach, so we stayed under the umbrella for most of the afternoon.
- B. The car was baking after sitting in direct sun for three hours.
- C. It was so sweltering by the shore that we wrapped up in heavy coats and scarves.
- D. I'm fried after just twenty minutes outside without sunscreen.

Context: Farm

- A. The farmer said it was roasting in the fields, so the cattle were moved into the shade.
- B. It's been close and humid all week, with barely a breath of wind to cool things down.
- C. The greenhouse was boiling, so the staff propped the door open to let some heat escape.
- D. "Jaysus, it's roasting," said the farmer, before pulling on his winter coat and gloves.

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2. Multiple Choice

Context: Group chat about a summer barbecue

Choose the best word or phrase to complete each message.

1. There's not a breath of wind today — it feels really ____.
A) scorching B) close C) boiling
2. Careful, don't touch the grill, it's ____!
A) close B) sweltering C) boiling
3. By the time we got the food out, everyone was ____ from standing in the sun for so long.
A) fried B) close C) baking
4. I left my drink in the car earlier — it's probably ____ by now.
A) wrecked B) baking C) close
5. Honestly, ____ from carrying all those chairs across the garden in this heat.
A) I'm wrecked B) it's close C) it's scorching
6. ____, I didn't expect it to be this hot in Ireland!
A) The head's cooked off me B) Jaysus, it's roasting C) I'm sweating buckets

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3. Matching

Match each word or phrase (1–12) to its meaning (A–L). Write the correct letter in the blank.

1. Roasting ____
2. Melting ____
3. Boiling ____
4. Sweltering ____
5. Close ____
6. Scorching ____
7. Baking ____
8. I'm sweating buckets ____
9. I'm wrecked from the heat ____
10. I'm fried ____
11. The head's cooked off me ____
12. Jaysus, it's roasting ____

-
- A. Humid and airless, with heavy, still air
 - B. An exclamation showing surprise at how hot it is
 - C. Extremely hot, often said about weather or a place
 - D. I am perspiring a great deal
 - E. Extremely hot, used for people, places or objects
 - F. I feel drained and overheated (informal)
 - G. Extremely hot, especially describing strong sun
 - H. Feeling so hot that you seem to be dissolving
 - I. I am completely exhausted because of the heat
 - J. Uncomfortably hot in a way that makes you feel weighed down
 - K. I feel dazed and overwhelmed by the heat (informal Irish)
 - L. Very hot, especially something that has absorbed heat over time

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4. Gap Fill

Context: Personal diary entry

Saturday, 14 June

Woke up already _____ under the duvet — no need for blankets in this weather. Went for a walk before ten to avoid the worst of it, but even then it was _____ enough to have me reaching for water every few minutes. By the afternoon the whole house felt _____, especially the attic room where I keep my desk. Mam rang to say the garden hose had practically melted onto the patio, so I can only imagine how _____ it got in her garden today.

We tried sitting outside for dinner, but it stayed so _____ well into the evening that nobody could relax. By nine o'clock I was completely _____ and just wanted to lie down somewhere cool. _____ — I don't think I've felt heat like this in Ireland before.

Word bank: melting • sweltering • boiling • baking • close • fried • Jaysus, it's roasting • wrecked • scorching

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5. Error Correction

Context: Community WhatsApp heatwave notices

Each sentence below originally used the wrong heat word (shown in capitals). Write the correct word or phrase on the line.

1. The playground equipment was too CLOSE to touch after sitting in the sun all day.

Correction: _____

2. “MELTING THE HEAD OFF ME with this heat — I need to sit somewhere cool,” she said.

Correction: _____

3. The kitchen was so FRIED by the ovens running all afternoon that we opened every window.

Correction: _____

4. It was so CLOSE out on the pitch that three players needed extra water breaks.

Correction: _____

5. By the end of the shift, I was completely BAKING from being on my feet all day serving food.

Correction: _____

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6. Register Rewrite

Context: A news editor's notes, translating quotes into everyday spoken English

Each formal sentence needs to be rewritten in everyday spoken English. Circle the letter of the option that captures the same meaning — the others use a heat word that doesn't quite fit.

1. The atmosphere was extremely humid and still all evening, with no wind at all.
A) It was scorching all evening, with no wind at all.
B) It was really close all evening, with no wind at all.
C) I was sweating buckets all evening, with no wind at all.
2. By the end of her shift, the nurse felt completely exhausted from the extreme heat in the ward.
A) The nurse was wrecked from the heat by the end of her shift.
B) The ward was roasting by the end of her shift.
C) The nurse felt the ward was close by the end of her shift.
3. The metal railing had been sitting in direct sunlight for hours and was extremely hot to touch.
A) The railing was melting after sitting in direct sunlight for hours.
B) The railing was baking after sitting in direct sunlight for hours.
C) The railing was fried after sitting in direct sunlight for hours.
4. Many passengers appeared visibly startled by how high the temperature had risen overnight.
A) "Jaysus, it's roasting," several passengers said.
B) Several passengers said they were sweating buckets.
C) Several passengers said the carriage was sweltering.
5. The reporter explained that the discomfort was caused by heavy, motionless air rather than direct sun.
A) The reporter said it was scorching, not close.
B) The reporter said it was close, not scorching.
C) The reporter said it was boiling, not baking.

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6. The volunteers said they had never felt so drained after a single afternoon of work in such conditions.

A) The volunteers said they were fried after a single afternoon of work.

B) The volunteers said the afternoon was roasting.

C) The volunteers said the afternoon was close.

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7. Complete the Conversation

Context: Text messages between two friends

Aoife: Are you around later? I need to get out of the house, it's _____ in here.

Cara: Same here, honestly. I've had every window open since this morning and it's still _____.

Aoife: Let's just go to the park then, at least there's some shade.

Cara: Good idea. Honestly, _____ just thinking about walking there though.

Aoife: Bring a bottle of water — you'll be _____ by the time we're back.

Cara: True. Did you hear the forecast? Apparently it's staying _____ right through the weekend.

Aoife: _____ — I don't think I've seen a summer like this in years.

Cara: Same. My car's been sitting outside all day, it'll be absolutely _____ when I get in.

Word bank: roasting • boiling • I'm sweating buckets • wrecked • sweltering • Jaysus, it's roasting • baking • close • fried

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TEACHER ANSWER KEY
Do Not Distribute to Students

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Farmers are growing increasingly concerned about the scorching conditions damaging crops, while hospitals have reported a rise in cases of heat exhaustion among elderly patients. “The head's cooked off me by three o'clock most days,” admitted one postman, who has been delivering letters in baking heat since early morning.

Forecasters have also warned that the close, humid air overnight is providing little respite, with many households reporting broken sleep. “Jaysus, it's roasting, even at midnight,” one Cork resident remarked. Health officials are urging the public to stay hydrated and avoid the midday sun where possible, as the heatwave shows no sign of breaking.

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C. The main tent was baking by midday, and two stalls had to close early.

D. It was so sweltering that the queue for ice cream stretched right around the block.

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A. The office was boiling all afternoon, so everyone propped open every window they could find.

B. I was sweating buckets after the meeting, so I grabbed a bottle of water from the fridge.

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B. The car was baking after sitting in direct sun for three hours.

C. It was so sweltering by the shore that we wrapped up in heavy coats and scarves.

D. I'm fried after just twenty minutes outside without sunscreen.

Context: Farm

A. The farmer said it was roasting in the fields, so the cattle were moved into the shade.

B. It's been close and humid all week, with barely a breath of wind to cool things down.

C. The greenhouse was boiling, so the staff propped the door open to let some heat escape.

D. "Jaysus, it's roasting," said the farmer, before pulling on his winter coat and gloves.

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2. Multiple Choice

Context: Group chat about a summer barbecue

Choose the best word or phrase to complete each message.

1. There's not a breath of wind today — it feels really ____.
A) scorching B) close ✓ C) boiling
2. Careful, don't touch the grill, it's ____!
A) close B) sweltering C) boiling ✓
3. By the time we got the food out, everyone was ____ from standing in the sun for so long.
A) fried ✓ B) close C) baking
4. I left my drink in the car earlier — it's probably ____ by now.
A) wrecked B) baking ✓ C) close
5. Honestly, ____ from carrying all those chairs across the garden in this heat.
A) I'm wrecked ✓ B) it's close C) it's scorching
6. ____, I didn't expect it to be this hot in Ireland!
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3. Matching

Match each word or phrase (1–12) to its meaning (A–L). Write the correct letter in the blank.

1. Roasting (C)
2. Melting (H)
3. Boiling (E)
4. Sweltering (J)
5. Close (A)
6. Scorching (G)
7. Baking (L)
8. I'm sweating buckets (D)
9. I'm wrecked from the heat (I)
10. I'm fried (F)
11. The head's cooked off me (K)
12. Jaysus, it's roasting (B)

-
- A. Humid and airless, with heavy, still air
 - B. An exclamation showing surprise at how hot it is
 - C. Extremely hot, often said about weather or a place
 - D. I am perspiring a great deal
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4. Gap Fill

Context: Personal diary entry

Saturday, 14 June

Woke up already **melting** under the duvet — no need for blankets in this weather. Went for a walk before ten to avoid the worst of it, but even then it was **sweltering** enough to have me reaching for water every few minutes. By the afternoon the whole house felt **boiling**, especially the attic room where I keep my desk. Mam rang to say the garden hose had practically melted onto the patio, so I can only imagine how **baking** it got in her garden today.

We tried sitting outside for dinner, but it stayed so **close** well into the evening that nobody could relax. By nine o'clock I was completely **fried** and just wanted to lie down somewhere cool. **Jaysus, it's roasting** — I don't think I've felt heat like this in Ireland before.

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5. Error Correction

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Correction: baking

2. “MELTING THE HEAD OFF ME with this heat — I need to sit somewhere cool,” she said.

Correction: the head's cooked off me

3. The kitchen was so FRIED by the ovens running all afternoon that we opened every window.

Correction: boiling

4. It was so CLOSE out on the pitch that three players needed extra water breaks.

Correction: scorching

5. By the end of the shift, I was completely BAKING from being on my feet all day serving food.

Correction: wrecked

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6. Register Rewrite

Context: A news editor's notes, translating quotes into everyday spoken English

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A) It was scorching all evening, with no wind at all.

B) It was really close all evening, with no wind at all. ✓

C) I was sweating buckets all evening, with no wind at all.

2. By the end of her shift, the nurse felt completely exhausted from the extreme heat in the ward.

A) The nurse was wrecked from the heat by the end of her shift. ✓

B) The ward was roasting by the end of her shift.

C) The nurse felt the ward was close by the end of her shift.

3. The metal railing had been sitting in direct sunlight for hours and was extremely hot to touch.

A) The railing was melting after sitting in direct sunlight for hours.

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4. Many passengers appeared visibly startled by how high the temperature had risen overnight.

A) "Jaysus, it's roasting," several passengers said. ✓

B) Several passengers said they were sweating buckets.

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5. The reporter explained that the discomfort was caused by heavy, motionless air rather than direct sun.

A) The reporter said it was scorching, not close.

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6. The volunteers said they had never felt so drained after a single afternoon of work in such conditions.

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7. Complete the Conversation

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Cara: Same here, honestly. I've had every window open since this morning and it's still **boiling**.

Aoife: Let's just go to the park then, at least there's some shade.

Cara: Good idea. Honestly, **I'm sweating buckets** just thinking about walking there though.

Aoife: Bring a bottle of water — you'll be **wrecked** by the time we're back.

Cara: True. Did you hear the forecast? Apparently it's staying **sweltering** right through the weekend.

Aoife: **Jaysus, it's roasting** — I don't think I've seen a summer like this in years.

Cara: Same. My car's been sitting outside all day, it'll be absolutely **baking** when I get in.