# Dictionary of Irish Mythology

*Peter Berresford Ellis*

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**Dictionary of Irish Mythology** Peter Berresford Ellis
Ireland boasts one of the Europe's oldest and most vibrant mythologies, a tradition as powerful and compelling as that of ancient Greece. This dictionary, the latest addition to the Oxford Reference series, offers hundreds of fascinating entries covering everything from legendary beings, events, and places to topics and concepts of historical importance. They range from brief definitions of words such as "Fé" (an aspen rod used for measuring corpses and graves) to multi-page explanations of terms like "Druid" and "Celt."
Between the covers of this book we meet some of the most celebrated of Irish heroes and heroines, such as Fionn Mac Cumhail (Finn MacCool in English) and the beautiful and tragic Deirdre of the Sorrows. We visit Fec's Pool (where dwelt the Salmon of Knowledge), witness the Battle of Tailltinn, feel the awesome power of the ocean-god Lir, and find ourselves lost in a wonderful world of fairies, dragons, magical weapons, and mystical charms. We learn too about the Fenian Cycl (a group of tales that achieved great popularity in the Middle Ages), the practice of ancient Irish medicine, and the poets thought to have composed many of the surviving myths (such as Neide, a bard whose poetry was reputedly revealed to him by talking waves at the seaside).
*A Dictionary of Irish Mythology* also includes an invaluable introduction that places the subject in historical context, tracing the influence of Irish mythology through the ages. From the attempts of early Christians to make it conform to New Testament tenets, through the revival of interest among the Romantics of the early 19th century, to the poems of W.B. Yeats a century later and the fantasy literature still popular today ("Conan the Barbarian" is a direct descendant of the Irish tradition), Ellis reveals Irish mythology in all of its rich and varied manifestations.
With its lively and absorbing entries, its easy accessibility, and its abundant cross-referencing, this guide offers readers an immediate reference to the many aspects of Irish mythology that make it as as enjoyable and exciting today as it was in the Irish Dark Ages.

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