



# The Road to McCarthy: Around the World in Search of Ireland

*Pete McCarthy*

[Download now](#)

[Read Online](#) 

# The Road to McCarthy: Around the World in Search of Ireland

*Pete McCarthy*

## **The Road to McCarthy: Around the World in Search of Ireland** Pete McCarthy

Pete McCarthy established one cardinal rule of travel in his bestselling debut, *McCarthy's Bar*: "Never pass a bar with your name on it." In this equally wry and insightful follow-up, his characteristic good humor, curiosity, and thirst for adventure take him on a fantastic jaunt around the world in search of his Irish roots -- from Morocco, where he tracks down the unlikely chief of the McCarthy clan, to New York, and finally to remote Mc-Carthy, Alaska. *The Road to McCarthy* is a quixotic and anything-but-typical Irish odyssey that confirms Pete McCarthy's status as one of our funniest and most incisive writers.

## **The Road to McCarthy: Around the World in Search of Ireland Details**

Date : Published February 1st 2005 by Harper Perennial (first published 2002)

ISBN : 9780007162130

Author : Pete McCarthy

Format : Paperback 384 pages

Genre : Travel, Nonfiction, Cultural, Ireland, Humor, Biography

 [Download The Road to McCarthy: Around the World in Search of Ire ...pdf](#)

 [Read Online The Road to McCarthy: Around the World in Search of I ...pdf](#)

**Download and Read Free Online The Road to McCarthy: Around the World in Search of Ireland Pete McCarthy**

---

## **From Reader Review The Road to McCarthy: Around the World in Search of Ireland for online ebook**

### **Sorenconard says**

This book has all my favorite qualities. Travel, humor, reflection, and completely random facts. Pete's time as a travel memoir writer was short but his legacy is lasting.

I gave this 5 stars because I found this book even better than his first one. I recommend it to people who enjoyed McCarthy's Bar or enjoys humorous memoirs along the lines of Bill Bryson and A.J. Jacobs, have an interest in Irish or cultural history, enjoy humorous books, among other qualities.

If you are looking for a book that is all about being 100% relevant, this isn't the book for you.

---

### **Rhea says**

Turns out I only liked this guy's other book because it was set in Ireland. He's just so smug! The superior traveler to everyone- I don't buy it.

---

### **Cheryl Schibley says**

What a wonderful, fun book to read. Pete takes us all over the world searching for the McCarthy clan name. Great insights into historical sites. I also recommend all his other books about the McCarthy name and Ireland, all written with great humor. Sadly, Pete died of cancer in 2004. Still his wonderful writings live on.

---

### **Candace Rollins says**

While enjoying 'McCarthy's Bar' I ordered 'The Road to McCarthy', because I just could not get enough of Pete McCarthy's wit and tales. In this book he expands on the stories he heard in McCarthy pubs in Ireland and traces his clan near and far around the world, from Morocco, to Alaska to an Australian penal colony to visiting the 'Unrepentant Fenian Bastards' in none other than NYC. I learned Butte, Montana at one time had the highest (by percent) Irish immigrants in the country. New Yorkers and Bostonians may ignore this Irish trivia, but it's a fact. The island of Montserrat also boasts a complicated Irish history, where surnames and customs of the old country still endure. I have so enjoyed Pete McCarthy's travels, but they will be my last as Pete passed on after his second book.....

unfamiliar words:

pg. 10 poppet- an endearingly sweet or pretty child or young girl

pg. 10 stropiness- being bad tempered or bad tempered

pg. 23 fin-de-siede- relating to or characteristic of the end of a century, especially the 19th century:

pg. 29 welter- move in a turbulent fashion

pg. 34 urbs- A walled city in Ancient Rome

pg. 35 rove- travel constantly without a fixed destination; wander

pg. 45 tanistry- the heir apparent to a Celtic chief, typically the most vigorous adult of his kin, elected during the chief's lifetime.

pg. 46 ville nouvelle- A planned urban community designed for self-sufficiency and providing housing, educational, commercial, and recreational facilities for its residents.

pg. 47 djellabahs- a loose hooded cloak, typically woolen, of a kind traditionally worn by Arabs.

pg. 71 shuftly- British slang for a look or a peep

pg. 76 boquerones- Spanish; fresh anchovies, floured and joined together by making a small incision at the tail of one and slipping the tails of 3 or 4 others through. Fried in the shape of a fan.

pg. 76 pogged- when you have eaten too much, and are really full.

pg. 78 agitprop- political (originally communist) propaganda, especially in art or literature:

pg. 130 uilleann- an Irish bagpipe with air supplied by a bellows held under and worked by the elbow

pg. 137 barmy- another term for balmy.

pg. 159 kedgerree- no sure which definition fits....  
an Indian dish consisting chiefly of rice, lentils, onions, and eggs.  
a European dish consisting chiefly of fish, rice, and hard-boiled eggs.

pg. 162 abstemious- not self-indulgent, especially when eating and drinking

pg. 183 coulized- A liquid or sauce made with ingredients, such as fruits or vegetables, that have typically been puréed and strained to create a thick sauce-like consistency

pg. 191 tussocky- adjective form of tussock- a small area of grass that is thicker or longer than the grass growing around it.

pg. 242 spangly- adjective form of spangle- a small thin piece of glittering material, typically used in quantity to ornament a dress; a sequin.

pg. 253 dross- something regarded as worthless; rubbish

pg. 272 oleaginous- rich in, covered with, or producing oil; oily or greasy.

pg. 308 poppadoms- n South Asian cuisine, a fried or roasted plate-sized wafer made from bean flour, eaten as an appetizer or a side dish

---

## **Alan Michael Wilt says**

This review applies to both of the late Pete McCarthy's books, *McCarthy's Bar* and *The Road to McCarthy*.

"If you travel in hope rather than with certain knowledge," writes Pete McCarthy, "something interesting usually happens." On the evidence of his first two books, McCarthy is an infinitely hopeful traveler; wherever he goes -- a pub in a small Irish town, an Irish bar in a big American city, or a sparsely populated Alaskan burg that bears his name -- something interesting indeed happens. And McCarthy has the storytelling chops of a seasoned raconteur, liar, or sage (choose your term; they're interchangeable) and the willingness to take us as his companion. We do well to go along with him on his spirited and hilarious journeys.

McCarthy's first book, *McCarthy's Bar*, begins with the eighth rule of travel: "Never Pass a Bar That Has Your Name On It." Born to an English father and an Irish mother, and with an upbringing in England punctuated by extended visits with his mother's family in Cork, McCarthy wonders, "Is it possible to have some kind of genetic memory of a place where you've never lived, but your ancestors have? Or am I just a

sentimental fool, my judgment fuddled by nostalgia, Guinness, and the romance of the diaspora?"

He may well be an accidental mystic or a fool, but he is above all a pilgrim in search of roots, a sense of home and history; and his stories range well beyond bars named "Pete's" or "McCarthy's." The cast of McCarthy's Irish adventures include keepers of public houses, fellow McCarthys who treat him as family, tourists from around the world, and people like Mr. Goggin ("surrounded by sixteen or seventeen of his children," he has "the look of a man who lives in constant dread of being asked if he plans on having any more kids") and an unnamed "little lady" with "some kind of mystical Tír-na-nÓggish vibe going on" who seems to appear from the mist to offer advice, tea, and biscuits, and then fades into the mist again.

Early in his journey, McCarthy focuses on St. Patrick's Purgatory, Lough Derg, as a particular destination. There, at a "unique centre of Celtic spirituality," he will participate in a three-day pilgrimage of sleep-deprived fasting and barefoot devotion to the Stations of the Cross. But first he will climb Croagh Patrick (a.k.a. The Reek), a Mayo feature:

Its near-symmetrical pyramid form is like the blueprint for an archetypal mountain, the resonant shape of a fairytale peak from a children's story book. It is here that St Patrick is said to have issued the exclusion order banishing all snakes from Ireland when, in 441, he spent forty days and forty nights fasting at the summit.

McCarthy's account of the climb includes the touristically ridiculous:

The final ascent to the summit is a steep one, scrambling over loose rock and shale that's been badly eroded by the constant passage of pilgrims. As I'm taking a breather and munching on a life-enhancing apple, a woman comes bounding down the precipitous slope at a tremendous pace. . . . It's Vicki, the Kiwi hitch-hiker I picked up a few days ago, timing herself in some kind of masochistic speed trial against the mountain. New Zealanders will never walk up or down anything if there's a chance it will hurt more to run instead. Theirs is not a country so much as a fitness camp. Why look at something, they reason, when it will toughen me up if I charge at it with my head?

. . . and the sublime:

My hips and knees are aching from the impact of walking down, which always hurts more than walking up, but I'm feeling good for having done it. And it's not just the physical buzz from working off the squid and black pudding. There's a spiritual element too, and it comes not from any inherent power or magic the mountain possesses, but from what's been bestowed on it by the people who have gone there every hour, every day, for millennia. And for once, my delight in a place has been enhanced by having lots of people around, knowing that they're all still furthering that process.

Lough Derg and its three-day fast and pilgrimage have been written of poetically by some of Ireland's greats, notably Patrick Kavanagh and Seamus Heaney ("Lough Derg" and "Station Island," respectively). McCarthy, with what is, by this point in the book, his trademark wit, can be counted on for a rather different sort of view:

As the boatman welcomes me with a steely glare, I feel like Edward Woodward as the doomed policeman heading out the island at the beginning of *The Wicker Man*.  
Except, of course, that he didn't know how *The Wicker Man* ended. I do.

His account alternates between seriousness and humor as he counts up the prayers prayed and examines the good priest/bad priest dynamic utilized by the retreat leaders. By the end, though, he is not afraid to admit that there was something to it:

The lake is shimmering like the Mediterranean under a bright sun as we cross back to the mainland. If it were a film, this would be a grotesque cliché, sin and gloom transformed into grace and sunlight by the redemptive magic of the pilgrimage. As it's actually happening, I'm doing my best to ignore its symbolic significance, and just enjoy the weather. I can't deny, though, that I'm feeling good. There's a crispiness and clearness to things that has nothing to do with the sunlight. This has been powerful medicine. If it can do this to me, what must the true believers be feeling?

The reader can be excused for hoping that Pete McCarthy never quite figures out who he is; that way, he will need to keep looking. In his second book, *The Road to McCarthy*, the search continues. This time he ranges farther afield -- to Morocco, Tasmania, Montserrat, New York, Montana, and Alaska -- each time on the scent of a McCarthy trail that begins in Cork and follows one of the many directions of the Irish diaspora. As might be expected by now, it is not the achievement of certain knowledge, but the pleasure of the chase, that keeps McCarthy going and keeps the reader enthusiastically turning pages.

Right from the start of *The Road to McCarthy* we know that *McCarthy's Bar* was no fluke. Describing two of his fellow passengers as a flight to Gibraltar experiences turbulence and other troubles, he writes, "They have taken on the haunted look of men who are about to plummet from 36,000 feet and don't know whether to use their last seconds to proposition the hostess or order more gin and port." In Tangier, we share his anxiety as he tries to learn a difficult city and contact the McCarthy brothers who were supposed to meet him at his day-late plane and whose phone number and address he has left on a piece of paper in England. In New York, his wild tale of a series of coincidences that leads to several good ends, including a free ticket to a sold-out play by an up-and-coming Irish playwright and a friendship with a musician who plays Irish republican hip-hop, is almost too much to believe, but too good to disbelieve. He can break our heart in Tasmania, where a site of brutal imprisonment of the Irish by the British Empire became a place of tourist massacre at the hands of a "sane" gunman in 1996. And his trip to the tiny, isolated town of McCarthy, Alaska will have fans of the old TV series *Northern Exposure* feeling a sense of *déjà vu*, only better.

As McCarthy regales us with his travel tales, we grow less concerned with the actual upshot of all of his exploration, and more and more taken by the sense that his stories themselves are the thing. One of the objects of his travel is to track down Terence McCarthy, the purported chief of the McCarthy clan whose

claim to the title has been discredited. Another McCarthy, in New York, says of the scandal surrounding Terence,

“Here’s the way I see it. I’ve read Terence’s books and I thought they were great stories. I read ’em, I close ’em, and I put ’em back on the shelf. And d’you know what? I don’t want to know whether they’re true or not.”

He takes a drink and a pause for thought.

“It doesn’t actually matter whether they’re true, or whether his claim to be prince of Desmond was true. The point was, it brought people together. It was a fraternal organization. C’mon! We knew we weren’t really related. So what? It was a starting point. It’s shot to hell now with this scandal.”

The McCarthy story is perhaps the human story writ small. Put in headline form it might read: “Claims that Unify Trumped by Divisiveness.” It’s time to let the stories do their stuff for the human race, absent of politics and power claims. Pete McCarthy knows how to tell a story. Here’s a good place to once again find that groove.

---

### **Anne Sharkey says**

I was biased in favor of this piece of writing before I had even read the first page. Like many sequels though, it paled in comparison to its predecessor [McCarthy's Bar] ~ don't get me wrong. It was still full of wit and hilarious description. It was more of an editorial problem with a tendency to go off on tangents and a rambling style of writing. I am still, and always will be a fan of the late great Pete McCarthy. Who else would come up with gold like this: [pg369] The cook working at the griddle is a star. With a ponytail poking through his baseball cap, sunken cheeks, and pallid, cadaverous skin, he looks like Iggy Pop when he was scary but not yet really terrifying. His sinewy arms look powerful, not showy gym muscle but lean and taut, strength that he uses every day. He moves with speed and grace along the range, cooking six or seven orders at once, beating eggs with half a dozen flicks of his left hand as he shapes sizzling grated potato into hash browns with his right, breaking away to flip two eggs over in a pan with the barest suspicion of a wrist movement, then throws an omelette, turns a steak, and spins on the spot to retrieve bacon from an enormous glass-fronted fridge. It's like watching a class variety act: you're waiting for the spinning plates to fall, the house of cards to tumble, but they never do.

---

### **James Lang says**

Picked this up in a bookstore in Galway and it kept me thinking of Ireland for a while after my journey. If you like drinking, travel writing, and humor, then you will enjoy this book. The sequel to McCarthy's Bar, a hilarious travelogue in which the author vows never to pass a bar with his name on the front, this one involves McCarthy following the trail of Irish immigrants around the world. from Tasmania to Montana. It's a fun and funny book--the only flaw is that it's too long. 450+ pages runs a little thin for a book that consists of one long and drunken travel adventure. Still worth the read, though.

---

## **Ray Richard says**

McCarthy's prose reads like Mark Twain's on his best day. I enjoyed this travel adventure full of Irish with. I'd read McCarthy's Bar first as some of the story melds with this book. A shame Peter died so young.

---

## **Kallia says**

"I drive out to Allihies, through the village, past the signs saying 'Caution - Old Mineshaft,' and sit on the hilltop above the last of the stone and brick ruins that are all that remain of the mines, temples to copper on an island of saints. I try and imagine how it must have been when this empty mountainside, swaying today with wildflowers, was teeming with industrial life; but I can't. It hardly seems possible. So instead I turn my gaze on the Atlantic, a glacial shade of turquoise-meets-emerald where it pounds the cliffs, and think of the millions who traveled, or were sent, with nothing but hope. And I know what I must do. I will go across the mountain, to my favorite bar in the world, and raise a glass in their memory.

Or two. Maybe I'll have just the two."

With this book, Pete McCarthy might have just made my list of top 5 favorite authors. The stories he weaved in this novel - the stories of Terrence McCarthy, the Young Irelanders (John Mitchel, Francis Meagher, and William Smith O'Brien) and the mysterious James McCarthy - while unrelated, speak measures of the tenacity and spirit of man.

McCarthy treats every topic he tackles with the respect that it deserves. Whether it's the possible defrauding of people by Terrence McCarthy, the horrors suffered by transported prisoners in Tasmania, the volcanic eruption on Montserrat, or the hard living chosen by hundreds in Butte, Montana and McCarthy, Alaska - you can tell this is a man who respects not just the topics at hand, but the people that are wrapped in the subjects. He blends the historical stories with the modern stories to create a picture of these countries you can't truly get when you focus on one or the other.

This is a truly brilliant book, and my platitudes don't give it half the respect it deserves.

---

## **Bex says**

Like listening to your grandad tell you his stories this is an affable, aimiable, easy read with no real reason for existing except to make you smile occasions. McCarthy takes you round the world looking at the history and the people behind his surname but with no logic to the tale he seems to follow the path he was led to one drunken St Patrick 's night and he does it well.

---

## **zespri says**

Did you know that the island of Montserrat is the only country in the world apart from Ireland that has a



public holiday on St Patrick's day? Neither did I! This and all sorts of other interesting and unusual bits and pieces have found their way into this very amusing book by Pete McCarthy. The premise of the book is his search for the hereditary Gaelic chief of the McCarthy clan, this takes him to various different countries and into many hilarious adventures. I loved his quirky observational style and the sheer nerve of the man to give anything a go!

---

### **Larry says**

The late, great Pete McCarthy went searching for his Irish/McCarthy roots in the unlikeliest of places. On the road to McCarthy, Pete delved into the cultures in Morocco, New York City, Tasmania, the Caribbean, Butte, Montana and McCarthy, Alaska. He mixed his travel observations with generous helpings of history, the kind you'll never find in a history book. But Pete's real genius was the humor he could find in any situation; it's there on every page. And unlike some other travelers, he wrote about every uncomfortable circumstance and every unusual person or persons, finding the funny without making fun. A great guy to share a pint with, no doubt. Gone too soon.

---

### **Chris Bloom says**

Very funny in places, I was crying tears of laughter several times. Overall though I felt the dialogue was a bit cluttered and disjointed, I often had to reread paragraphs to reaffirm my bearings.

---

### **Ryan says**

I savored this because there isn't another one.

McCarthy is back on the road, searching for his Irishness or Ireland, or just a great pub. I love his travel methodology and wish I could be as relaxed in my approach to life. He followed the Irish diaspora to Van Dieman's Land, Montana, Monserratt, and even ventured to Alaska. I love most his enjoyment of the unexpected. He heads out to see or do one thing, but the real delight of the journey is all the stuff that he wasn't expecting.

This tale is a bit darker - he was clearly disturbed by the horrors of the prisons and not surprising. That much pain in one place has to linger for generations.

I was sad to find out Pete McCarthy died. His books are funny and fun and a joy to read. Hopefully there is a most excellent selection of pubs wherever he is.

---

### **Neil says**

I rarely give five stars. I'd have given this six.

This is beyond doubt one of the funniest travel books I've ever read, but it's also packed with glorious trivia, and the guy has that rare gift of being able to have you laughing out loud with a sentence, and gulping with

emotion the next.

I now really NEED to visit Tasmania and Montserrat, with a possible side-trip to Tangier, before the bucket-list is complete. GREAT book!

p.s. I just found out that Pete died eight years ago, and way too young. Proving that God has no sense of humour, but is a master of irony.

---