

The five best places to hear traditional Irish music every week in Colorado

By [A.H. Goldstein](#) Wed., Mar. 12 2014 at 6:43 AM



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Comparing a traditional Irish music session to a typical jam session is more than misleading; it's just plain false. A casual jam session could easily consist of an unplanned meeting of friendly musicians who just happen to be carrying around instruments, and it could feature extended riffs on any number of improvised or cover tunes. The Irish session (more accurately, *seisún* in Irish Gaelic) is much different.

Sure, there's an element of spontaneity to the tradition of Celtic fiddlers, pipers, guitarists and other musicians meeting to play live music, but it's far from casual. Traditionally, the Irish session has stood as a connection to a musical tradition that spans centuries. The players stick to a very specific set of tunes, whether they're ballads, jigs, reels, hornpipes or polkas. A musician's chops have to be consummate -- there's not piddling around on a serious jig played in a breakneck tempo. The Irish session is a tradition unto itself, and it's alive and well in several

Celtic bars in the Denver metro area. If you've got faith in your skills as a player, you're welcome to show up and try your luck. As we prep to casually become Irish for a weekend of drinking and abandon, we've rounded the top five local sessions that are liable to connect a Coloradan to the storied musical ritual of the Irish session.

4. Jack Quinn's Irish Alehouse and Pub

21 S. Tejon St., Colorado Springs

Sundays, 3 p.m.

The owners of Jack Quinn's tout the bar and restaurant as the definitive home for Irish culture in Colorado Springs. The claim may feel a bit bombastic, but the bar's respectable weekly session proves that it's not entirely bluster. Considering the limited options for sessions south of Denver, the weekly meeting of musical minds at Jack Quinn's is impressive for its consistency, skill and variety. You're liable to get dirty looks if you request "The Unicorn" or "Danny Boy," but otherwise the format is fairly free. Singers of Irish sea chanteys, players of popular ballads and serious fiddlers are all welcome in the mix, and the result is one of the greatest Celtic cultural draws in Colorado's second-largest city.

