



Welsh slate was generally named after the ports from which the slate was exported: Bangor, Dinorwic and Caernarfon. Many Welsh slates come from the same Cambrian stone vein, resulting in slates of a similar colour. The slate from Porthmadog, by contrast, is blue-black

IMPORTED SLATE

The development of canal and railway networks across the country from the late eighteenth century onwards ensured not only the widespread use of native slate, but also facilitated the increased use of imported slate. Shipping records indicate that substantial quantities of slate were imported into Ireland during the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, mainly from Wales. During the nineteenth century, the intensification of slate production from the Welsh quarries finally drove many Irish slate quarries, which were less mechanised than their Welsh counterparts, out of business. There is also evidence that Irish builders bought Welsh slate for use on roofs, even in towns such as Nenagh and Ennistymon, both of which were close to several local quarries. Slate was also imported from America and Italy.

Slates from Wales vary from reddish and bluish purple to black to light green. Penrhyn slate (Blue Bangor), the most commonly found Welsh slate, is heather in colour. Some Penrhyn slate has a green olive mark in the heather rock, which is considered its distinguishing feature or characteristic. Caernarfon slates are usually a deeper shade of heather than the Blue Bangors, and vary in intensity to a deep heather colour known as 'plum reds'. A paler heather slate from Cardigan in South Wales was used in Cork and Waterford.

Ballachulish slate was imported from the Highlands of Scotland. It is dark or silver-grey in colour and usually only available in small sizes. Westmorland slate, which is quarried in the Lake District in England, is a thick green or grey slate with a rough surface that shows no grain. Westmorland Greens were used in several restorations of the roof at Christchurch Cathedral, Dublin.