

Viking towns in Ireland



Where did the Vikings settle?



The chief Viking towns are now some of our main cities:

Dublin
Cork
Limerick
Waterford
Wexford

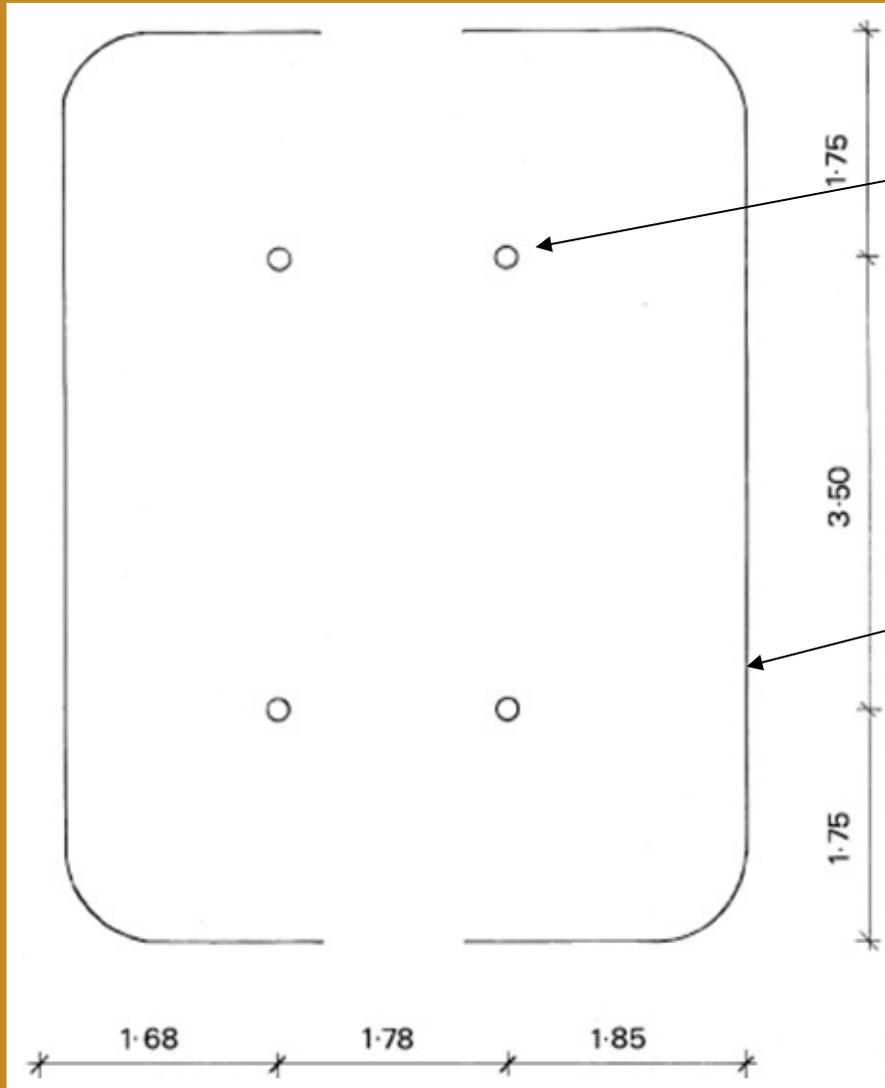
What similarities can you see in the location of all these Viking towns?

How did the Vikings build houses here?

The remains of many Viking houses have been found in Dublin, Waterford and Cork.



Let's build a Viking house



First we put in four large posts.

These will hold up the roof.

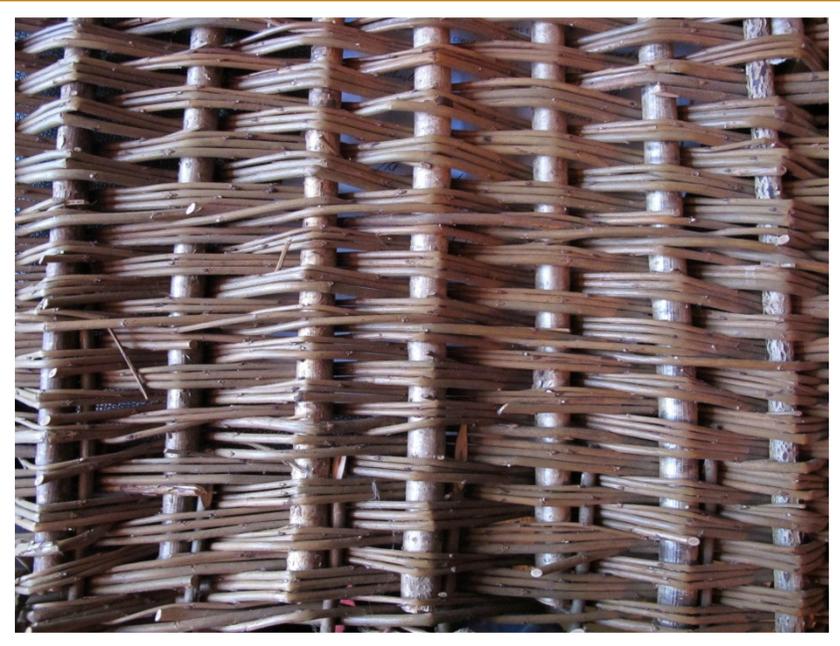
Then we put in a line of stakes for the walls.

We weave willow or hazel around these stakes to make the walls, using a strong basket-weave.

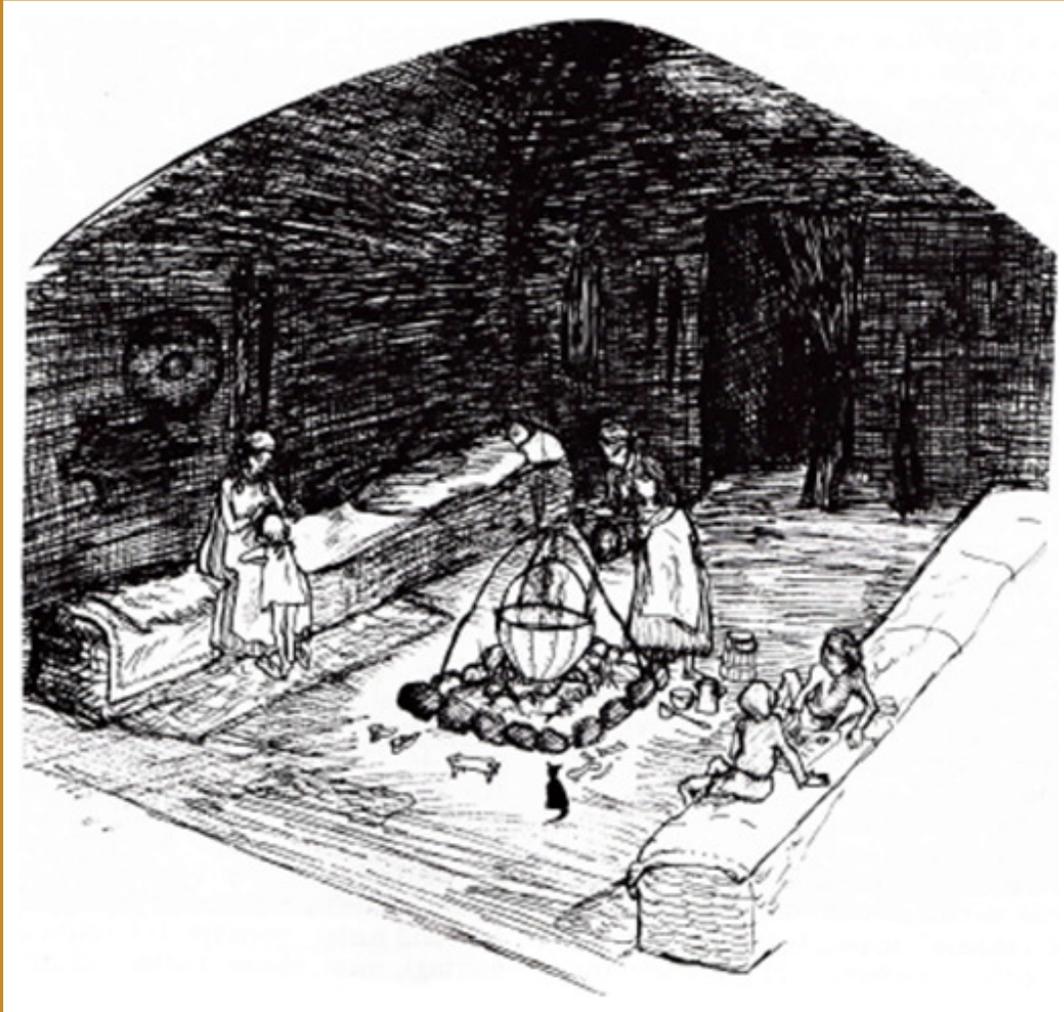
Well-built houses have two sets of basket-weave walls.

The Vikings put heather and moss between them to act as insulation.

They learnt this technique from Irish builders.



We don't need much furniture:



A raised bench down both sides serves to sit or work on, and for sleeping, too.

Chairs are only for very special people.

These are statues of kings and queens. It was really important people like this who sat in chairs.



The remains of a very ornamental chair and some decorated benches were found in Dublin.

People like the Maic Giolla Mocholmóg kings from Wicklow, who had a house in Dublin, may have sat on them or maybe Viking kings of Dublin.

It is rather dark inside the houses.

The floor is warm and sweet-smelling.

Dried straw and rushes thickly cover a floor of wood chips and planks, keeping it cosy. They also means the floor does not have to be swept as often.

Light is provided by the fire and also by candles made from melted sheep fat and rushes.

A fire in the middle serves for cooking, for heat and for light.



The fireplace is rectangular so that there is room for ashes and embers as well as flame.

This means there are both hotter and cooler areas for cooking different things.

Outside there
might be a path
and outbuildings
for pigs, goats, or
some hens.

The family might
also grow beans
and other
vegetables.



Viking Towns



The houses are ranged along streets, just like today.

One area of town is the merchant's quarter.

Another is where the cobblers make shoes.

A wall encircles everything.



Down at the harbor are the ships and many vendor's stalls.

In the centre of Dublin the Vikings built a church.
It has been rebuilt several times.
We call it Christ Church Cathedral today.

