

The Irish Potato Famine also known as the great hunger, began in 1845 when a fungus like organism called Phytophthora infestans spread rapidly throughout Ireland. The infestation ruined up to one half of the potato crop that year and 3 quarters for the next seven years

Great hunger begins

When the crops began to fail in 1845, as a result of *P. infestans* infection, Irish leaders in Dublin petitioned Queen Victoria and Parliament to act—and, initially, they did, repealing the so-called “Corn Laws” and their tariffs on grain, which made food such as corn and bread prohibitively expensive.

In the early 19th century, Ireland’s tenant farmers as a class, especially in the west of Ireland, struggled both to provide for themselves and to supply the British market with cereal crops. Many farmers had long existed at virtually the subsistence level, given the small size of their allotments and the various hardships that the land presented for farming in some regions. The potato, which had become a staple crop in Ireland by the 18th century, was appealing in that it was a hardy, nutritious, and calorie-dense crop and relatively easy to grow in the Irish soil. By the early 1840s almost half the Irish population but primarily the rural poor had come to depend almost exclusively on the potato for their diet. The rest of the population also consumed it in large quantities. A heavy reliance on just one or two high yielding types of potato greatly reduced the genetic variety that ordinarily prevents the decimation of an entire crop by disease, and thus the Irish became vulnerable to famine. In 1845 a strain of *Phytophthora* arrived accidentally from North America, and that same year Ireland had unusually cool moist weather, in which the blight thrived. Much of that year’s potato crop rotted in the fields. That partial crop failure was followed by more-devastating failures in 1846–49, as each year’s potato crop was almost completely ruined by the blight.

Facts

1. A million Irish died and another million left the island before the famine lifted in 1852.
2. The Great Famine of Ireland killed almost one-eighth of the population. It proportionally caused more destruction of human life than most modern famines.
3. The Great Famine destroyed the means of survival of more than one-third of the population for five years in a row.
4. Some of the British elite viewed the famine as an act of Providence meant to punish the perceived shortcomings of Irish agriculture and the Irish people.

Legacy of the potato famine

The role of the British in the potato famine and the famines after that whether the British ignored the plight of Ireland’s poor out of malice, or if their collective inaction and inadequate response could be attributed to incompetence is still being debated

What I think

I personally think that it wouldn't have been a famine if the British didn't interfere during the time that the phythophothora struck. I feel bad for the families that had to deal with this horrible time there children left to be safe they had nothing and the lack of food left people dying of starvation