Great Irish Famine 1845 to 1852: 
Origins Devastation Consequences Beyond
Rudy Ray Seward, Professor Emeritus of Sociology, UNT OLLI

Best Overview:
Cíarán Ó Murchadha, The Great Famine: Ireland's Agony 1845-1852. London, Bloomsbury, 2011. (Draws on eyewitness accounts, official reports, newspapers and private diaries, focus rests on the experiences of those who suffered and died during Famine, and on those who suffered and survived.)

Best Fiction coverage:
Brendan Graham, The Whitest Flower. London, Harper Collins, 1998. (Historical fiction set against the backdrop of the Great Famine. Story of the triumph of one woman amidst Ireland's despair. Ellen O'Malley loses her husband, is duped into going to Australia to lead a better life, leaving three of her beloved children behind. She travels aboard a coffin ship and arrives emaciated and ill with her new baby. But Ellen, a woman with an indomitable spirit, rises above her oppression and eventually returns to wreak revenge on those perpetrators of her misery.)

Other primary sources:
Cormac Ó Gráda, Black '47 and Beyond: The Great Irish Famine in History, Economy and Memory. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1999. (Broad scope concentrates on new insights based on interdisciplinary and comparative methods including several economic and sociological features previously neglected.)

John Crowley, William J. Smyth and Mike Murphy (eds.), Atlas of the Great Famine. Cork, Cork University Press, 2012. (Includes over 150 original maps of population decline, analysis and examples of poetry, contemporary art, written and oral accounts, numerous illustrations, and photography, which help paint a fuller picture of the event and to trace its impact and legacy.)

Related Books
Thomas Gallagher, Paddy’s Lament, Ireland 1846-1847: Prelude to Hatred. New York: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 1982. (Journalist account of Ireland immediately before and during famine; difficulties in finding passage to America and then the hell-like conditions of the “coffin ships”; and problems faced by first Irish immigrants to land in large numbers in a country decidedly Anglophile.)

Enda Delaney, The Great Irish Famine: A History in Four Lives. Dublin: Gill and Macmillan, 2014. (History of this great tragedy through the testimonies of four key contemporaries: John MacHale – the Catholic Archbishop of Tuam; John Mitchel – the radical nationalist; Elizabeth
Smith – the Scottish-born wife of a Wicklow landlord; and Charles E. Trevelyan – the assistant secretary to the Treasury.)


Other Media:
Edward T. O’Donnell, Making Sense of the Great Irish Famine, 2007. (PPT slide presentation used in part with permission from Dr. O’Donnell, Ph.D., a professional historian, author, and speaker: https://www.edwardtodonnell.com/about.html)

Eavan Boland, Quarantine, in Ilan Stavans’ And We Came Outside and Saw the Stars Again, 2020. (The poem about an Irish couple’s famine related death in 1847 along with other poems, stories, essays, and artwork detail harrowing realities of pandemic; while pointing toward a more connected future: https://poets.org/poem/quarantine.


Irish Genealogy Sources:
Irish Central, A plethora of Irish genealogy records were made available online thanks to a joint initiative from the Department of Culture, Heritage, and the Gaeltacht and the Department of Employment Affairs and Social Protection, in 2019. A wealth of historical registers of marriages, births, and deaths are available to view for free on the website Irish Genealogy and covers births
from 1864 to 1918, deaths from 1878 to 1968, and marriages from 1864 to 1943. Sign up to IrishCentral's newsletter to stay up-to-date with everything Irish! Subscribe to IrishCentral
https://www.irishcentral.com/roots/genealogy/irish-genealogy-resource-free

Family Search: Genealogy Zoom classes are available on FamilySearch.org. Must register for new classes but over 2000 webinars recorded since 2015, including 12 on Ireland sources, including one on potato famine.
https://www.familysearch.org/wiki/en/Classes_in_the_Learning_Center General Overview of all Family Search Information:
https://www.familysearch.org/wiki/en/Family_History_Library_Classes_and_Webinars#Past_Webinars_26_Handouts