

■ **1961:** Born into wealthy Irish farming family

■ **1970s-80s:** Schoolfriends include **Cathal** and **Declan Ryan**, both sons of aircraft leasing magnate **Tony Ryan**. Studies accountancy at Trinity College, Dublin

■ **1985:** Tony Ryan co-founds **Ryanair** with **Christy Ryan** and **Liam Lonergan**. Fledgling airline with two aircraft and single route from Ireland to London Gatwick carries 5,000 passengers in first year

■ **1990:** Despite more routes and rising passenger numbers, high costs push airline to brink of bankruptcy

■ **1991-94:** O'Leary joins airline as deputy CEO, with task of making airline profitable. Visits U.S. to study "low fares-no frills" **Southwest Airlines**

■ **1994:** 1994: Promoted to CEO, O'Leary ditches business class, cuts fares and aircraft turn-around time

■ **1997:** O'Leary takes airline public, uses money raised to expand Ryanair into pan-European carrier. Passenger numbers grow to four million

# Michael O'Leary



■ **1998:** Passenger numbers rise to 5 million, revenues to 231m euros and net profits to 48m euros

■ **2001:** O'Leary takes advantage of downturn in aircraft orders following **9/11 terrorist attacks** on U.S. to order 155 new

Boeing 737-800 series aircraft. Passenger numbers grow to 9 million

■ **2002:** Ryanair launches 26 new routes but is heavily criticised for poor treatment of disabled passengers and no refunds policy

■ **2003:** O'Leary orders 100 new 737-800s. Passenger numbers grow to 21.4 million, revenues hit 843m euros with net profits of 239m euros

■ **2004:** Enlargement of European Union opens way for six new routes. O'Leary marries **Anita Farrell** – has a son, **Matthew**

■ **2005:** O'Leary announces plan to stand down in 2008

■ **2006:** Ryanair is Europe's most profitable airline carrying over 35 million passengers on 362 routes. O'Leary's fortune is estimated at 466m euros. His horse **War of Attrition** wins prestigious Cheltenham Gold Cup

■ **Aug 25:** Threatens to sue British government for compensation following airport security shambles triggered by alleged terrorist bomb plot

