

Scotland

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Scotland is a country that is part of the United Kingdom. It contains nearly one-third of the United Kingdom's land area, consisting of the northern part of the island of Great Britain and more than 790 adjacent islands, principally in the archipelagos of the Hebrides and the Northern Isles. In 2022, the country's population was about 5.4 million. Its capital city is Edinburgh, whilst Glasgow is the largest city and the most populous of the cities of Scotland. To the south-east, Scotland has its only land border, which is 96 miles (154 km) long and shared with England; the country is surrounded by the Atlantic Ocean to the north and west, the North Sea to the north-east and east, and the Irish Sea to the south. The legislature, the Scottish Parliament, elects 129 MSPs to represent 73 constituencies across the country. The Scottish Government is the executive arm of the devolved government, headed by the first minister who chairs the cabinet and responsible for government policy and international engagement.

The Kingdom of Scotland emerged as an independent sovereign state in the 9th century. In 1603, James VI succeeded to the thrones of England and Ireland, forming a personal union of the three kingdoms. On 1 May 1707, Scotland and England combined to create the new Kingdom of Great Britain, with the Parliament of Scotland subsumed into the Parliament of Great Britain. In 1999, a Scottish Parliament was re-established, and has devolved authority over many areas of domestic policy. The country has its own distinct legal system, education system and religious history, which have all contributed to the continuation of Scottish culture and national identity. Scottish English and Scots are the most widely spoken languages in the country, existing on a dialect continuum with each other. Scottish Gaelic speakers can be found all over Scotland, but the language is largely spoken natively by communities within the Hebrides; Gaelic speakers now constitute less than 2% of the total population, though state-sponsored revitalisation attempts have led to a growing community of second language speakers.

The mainland of Scotland is broadly divided into three regions: the Highlands, a mountainous region in the north and north-west; the Lowlands, a flatter plain across the centre of the country; and the Southern Uplands, a hilly region along the southern border. The Highlands are the most mountainous region of the British Isles and contain its highest peak, Ben Nevis, at 4,413 feet (1,345 m). The region also contains many lakes, called lochs; the term is also applied to the many saltwater inlets along the country's deeply indented western coastline. The geography of the many islands is varied. Some, such as Mull and Skye, are noted for their mountainous terrain, while the likes of Tiree and Coll are much flatter.

Scottish

language family native to Scotland Scottish English Scottish national identity, the Scottish identity and common culture Scottish people, a nation and ethnic

Scottish usually refers to something of, from, or related to Scotland, including:

Scottish Gaelic, a Celtic Goidelic language of the Indo-European language family native to Scotland

Scottish English

Scottish national identity, the Scottish identity and common culture

Scottish people, a nation and ethnic group native to Scotland

Scots language, a West Germanic language spoken in lowland Scotland

Symphony No. 3 (Mendelssohn), a symphony by Felix Mendelssohn known as the Scottish

Edinburgh

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Edinburgh is the capital city of Scotland and one of its 32 council areas. It is located in southeast Scotland and is bounded to the north by the Firth of Forth and to the south by the Pentland Hills. Edinburgh had a population of

506,520 in 2020, making it the second-most-populous city in Scotland and the seventh-most-populous in the United Kingdom. The wider metropolitan area had a population of 912,490 in the same year.

Recognised as the capital of Scotland since at least the 15th century, Edinburgh is the seat of the Scottish Government, the Scottish Parliament, the highest courts in Scotland, and the Palace of Holyroodhouse, the official residence of the British monarch in Scotland. It is also the annual venue of the General Assembly of the Church of Scotland. The city has long been a centre of education, particularly in the fields of medicine, Scottish law, literature, philosophy, the sciences and engineering. The University of Edinburgh was founded in 1582 and is now one of three universities in the city. The financial centre of Scotland, Edinburgh is the second-largest financial centre in the United Kingdom, the fourth-largest in Europe, and the thirteenth-largest in the world.

The city is a cultural centre, and is the home of institutions including the National Museum of Scotland, the National Library of Scotland, and the Scottish National Gallery. The city is also known for the Edinburgh International Festival and the Fringe, the latter being the world's largest annual international arts festival. Historic sites in Edinburgh include Edinburgh Castle, the Palace of Holyroodhouse, St Giles' Cathedral, Greyfriars Kirk, Canongate Kirk and the extensive Georgian New Town built in the 18th and 19th centuries. The Old Town and the New Town are together listed as a World Heritage Site by UNESCO, and the site has been managed by Edinburgh World Heritage since 1999. The city's historical and cultural attractions have made it Britain's second-most-visited tourist destination, attracting 5.3 million visits, including 2.4 million from overseas, in 2023.

Edinburgh is governed by the City of Edinburgh Council, a unitary authority. The City of Edinburgh council area had an estimated population of 514,990 in 2022, and includes outlying towns and villages which are not part of Edinburgh proper. The city is in the Lothian region and was historically part of the shire of Midlothian (also called Edinburghshire).

United Kingdom

Europe, off the coast of the continental mainland. It comprises England, Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland. The UK includes the island of Great Britain

The United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, commonly known as the United Kingdom (UK) or Britain, is a country in Northwestern Europe, off the coast of the continental mainland. It comprises England, Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland. The UK includes the island of Great Britain, the north-eastern part of the island of Ireland, and most of the smaller islands within the British Isles, covering 94,354 square miles (244,376 km²). Northern Ireland shares a land border with the Republic of Ireland; otherwise, the UK is surrounded by the Atlantic Ocean, the North Sea, the English Channel, the Celtic Sea and the Irish Sea. It maintains sovereignty over the British Overseas Territories, which are located across various oceans and seas globally. The UK had an estimated population of over 68.2 million people in 2023. The capital and largest city of both England and the UK is London. The cities of Edinburgh, Cardiff and Belfast are the

national capitals of Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland respectively.

The UK has been inhabited continuously since the Neolithic. In AD 43 the Roman conquest of Britain began; the Roman departure was followed by Anglo-Saxon settlement. In 1066 the Normans conquered England. With the end of the Wars of the Roses the Kingdom of England stabilised and began to grow in power, resulting by the 16th century in the annexation of Wales and the establishment of the British Empire. Over the course of the 17th century the role of the British monarchy was reduced, particularly as a result of the English Civil War. In 1707 the Kingdom of England and the Kingdom of Scotland united under the Treaty of Union to create the Kingdom of Great Britain. In the Georgian era the office of prime minister became established. The Acts of Union 1800 incorporated the Kingdom of Ireland to create the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Ireland in 1801. Most of Ireland seceded from the UK in 1922 as the Irish Free State, and the Royal and Parliamentary Titles Act 1927 created the present United Kingdom.

The UK became the first industrialised country and was the world's foremost power for the majority of the 19th and early 20th centuries, particularly during the Pax Britannica between 1815 and 1914. The British Empire was the leading economic power for most of the 19th century, a position supported by its agricultural prosperity, its role as a dominant trading nation, a massive industrial capacity, significant technological achievements, and the rise of 19th-century London as the world's principal financial centre. At its height in the 1920s the empire encompassed almost a quarter of the world's landmass and population, and was the largest empire in history. However, its involvement in the First World War and the Second World War damaged Britain's economic power, and a global wave of decolonisation led to the independence of most British colonies.

The UK is a constitutional monarchy and parliamentary democracy with three distinct jurisdictions: England and Wales, Scotland, and Northern Ireland. Since 1999 Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland have their own governments and parliaments which control various devolved matters. A developed country with an advanced economy, the UK ranks amongst the largest economies by nominal GDP and is one of the world's largest exporters and importers. As a nuclear state with one of the highest defence budgets, the UK maintains one of the strongest militaries in Europe. Its soft power influence can be observed in the legal and political systems of many of its former colonies, and British culture remains globally influential, particularly in language, literature, music and sport. A great power, the UK is part of numerous international organisations and forums.

Great Britain

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Great Britain is an island in the North Atlantic Ocean off the north-west coast of continental Europe, consisting of the countries England, Scotland, and Wales. With an area of 209,331 km² (80,823 sq mi), it is the largest of the British Isles, the largest European island, and the ninth-largest island in the world. It is dominated by a maritime climate with narrow temperature differences between seasons. The island of Ireland, with an area 40 per cent that of Great Britain, is to the west – these islands, along with over 1,000 smaller surrounding islands and named substantial rocks, comprise the British Isles archipelago.

Connected to mainland Europe until 9,000 years ago by a land bridge now known as Doggerland, Great Britain has been inhabited by modern humans for around 30,000 years. In 2011, it had a population of about 61 million, making it the world's third-most-populous island after Honshu in Japan and Java in Indonesia, and the most populated island outside of Asia.

The term "Great Britain" can also refer to the political territory of England, Scotland, and Wales, which includes their offshore islands. This territory, together with Northern Ireland, constitutes the United Kingdom.

Scotland Yard

Scotland Yard (officially New Scotland Yard) is the headquarters of the Metropolitan Police, the territorial police force responsible for policing Greater

Scotland Yard (officially New Scotland Yard) is the headquarters of the Metropolitan Police, the territorial police force responsible for policing Greater London's 32 boroughs. Its name derives from the location of the original Metropolitan Police headquarters at 4 Whitehall Place, which had its main public entrance on the Westminster street called Great Scotland Yard. The Scotland Yard entrance became the public entrance, and over time "Scotland Yard" came to be used not only as the common name of the headquarters building, but also as a metonym for the Metropolitan Police Service (MPS) itself and police officers, especially detectives, who serve in it. The New York Times wrote in 1964 that, just as Wall Street gave its name to New York's financial district, Scotland Yard became the name for police activity in London.

The force moved from Great Scotland Yard in 1890, to a newly completed building on the Victoria Embankment, and the name "New Scotland Yard" was adopted for the new headquarters. An adjacent building was completed in 1906. A third building was added in 1940. In 1967 the MPS consolidated its headquarters from the three-building complex to a tall, newly constructed "New Scotland Yard" building on Broadway in nearby Victoria. In 2013, it was announced that the force would move again to the Victoria Embankment at Westminster's Curtis Green Building, which following tradition was renamed "New Scotland Yard". This move to the latest New Scotland Yard was completed in 2016.

Patricia Scotland

Patricia Janet Scotland, Baroness Scotland of Asthal, PC, KC (born 19 August 1955), is a Dominican-British barrister and politician who served as the

Patricia Janet Scotland, Baroness Scotland of Asthal, (born 19 August 1955), is a Dominican-British barrister and politician who served as the sixth secretary-general of the Commonwealth of Nations from 2016 to 2025. She was the first woman to hold that post.

After working as a barrister in London, she was appointed as a life peer in 1997 and, as a British Labour Party politician, served in ministerial positions within the UK Government, most notably as Attorney General for England and Wales and as Advocate General for Northern Ireland. She is a dual citizen of the United Kingdom and Dominica, where she was born.

Scottish people

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Scottish people or Scots (Scots: Scots fowk; Scottish Gaelic: Albannaich) are an ethnic group and nation native to Scotland. Historically, they emerged in the early Middle Ages from an amalgamation of two Celtic peoples, the Picts and Gaels, who founded the Kingdom of Scotland (or Alba) in the 9th century. In the following two centuries, Celtic-speaking Cumbrians of Strathclyde and Germanic-speaking Angles of Northumbria became part of Scotland. In the High Middle Ages, during the 12th-century Davidian Revolution, small numbers of Norman nobles migrated to the Lowlands. In the 13th century, the Norse-Gaels of the Western Isles became part of Scotland, followed by the Norse of the Northern Isles in the 15th century.

In modern usage, "Scottish people" or "Scots" refers to anyone whose linguistic, cultural, family ancestral or genetic origins are from Scotland. The Latin word *Scoti* originally referred to the Gaels, but came to describe all inhabitants of Scotland. Considered pejorative by some, the term *Scotch* has also been used for Scottish people, now primarily outwith Scotland.

People of Scottish descent live in many countries. Emigration, influenced by factors such as the Highland and Lowland Clearances, Scottish emigration to various locales throughout the British Empire, and latterly industrial decline and unemployment, have resulted in the spread of Scottish languages and culture. Large populations of Scottish people settled the 'New World' lands of North and South America, Australia and New Zealand. The highest concentrations of people of Scottish descent in the world outside of Scotland are in Nova Scotia and Prince Edward Island in Canada, Otago and Southland in New Zealand, the Falkland Islands, and Northern Ireland in the United Kingdom. Canada has the highest level of Scottish descendants per capita in the world and the second-largest population of Scottish descendants, after the United States.

James VI and I

1625) was King of Scotland as James VI from 24 July 1567 and King of England and Ireland as James I from the union of the Scottish and English crowns

James VI and I (James Charles Stuart; 19 June 1566 – 27 March 1625) was King of Scotland as James VI from 24 July 1567 and King of England and Ireland as James I from the union of the Scottish and English crowns on 24 March 1603 until his death in 1625. Though he long attempted to get both countries to adopt a closer political union, the kingdoms of Scotland and England remained sovereign states, with their own parliaments, judiciaries, and laws, ruled by James in personal union.

James was the son of Mary, Queen of Scots, and a great-great-grandson of Henry VII, King of England and Lord of Ireland, and thus a potential successor to all three thrones. He acceded to the Scottish throne at the age of thirteen months, after his mother was forced to abdicate in his favour. Although his mother was a Catholic, James was brought up as a Protestant. Four regents governed during his minority, which ended officially in 1578, though he did not gain full control of his government until 1583. In 1589, he married Anne of Denmark. Three of their children survived to adulthood: Henry Frederick, Elizabeth, and Charles. In 1603, James succeeded his cousin Elizabeth I, the last Tudor monarch of England and Ireland, who died childless. He continued to reign in all three kingdoms for 22 years, a period known as the Jacobean era, until his death in 1625. After the Union of the Crowns, he based himself in England (the largest of the three realms) from 1603, returning to Scotland only once, in 1617, and styled himself "King of Great Britain and Ireland". He advocated for a single parliament for England and Scotland. In his reign, the Plantation of Ulster and English colonisation of the Americas began.

At 57 years and 246 days, James's reign in Scotland was the longest of any Scottish monarch. He achieved most of his aims in Scotland but faced great difficulties in England, including the Gunpowder Plot in 1605 and conflicts with the English Parliament. Under James, the "Golden Age" of Elizabethan literature and drama continued, with writers such as William Shakespeare, John Donne, Ben Jonson, and Francis Bacon contributing to a flourishing literary culture. James was a prolific writer, authoring works such as *Daemonologie* (1597), *The True Law of Free Monarchies* (1598), and *Basilikon Doron* (1599). He sponsored the translation of the Bible into English (later named after him, the Authorized King James Version), and the 1604 revision of the Book of Common Prayer. Contemporary courtier Anthony Weldon claimed that James had been termed "the wisest fool in Christendom" (wise in small things, foolish otherwise), an epithet associated with his character ever since. Since the latter half of the 20th century, historians have tended to revise James's reputation and treat him as a serious and thoughtful monarch. He was strongly committed to a peace policy, and tried to avoid involvement in religious wars, especially the Thirty Years' War that devastated much of Central Europe. He tried but failed to prevent the rise of hawkish elements in the English Parliament who wanted war with Spain. The first English king of the House of Stuart, he was succeeded by his second son, Charles I.

Scottish Gaelic

Scottish Gaelic (/ˈkæl?k/, GAL-ik; endonym: Gàidhlig [ˈkaːl?kʲ]), also known as Scots Gaelic or simply Gaelic, is a Celtic language native to the Gaels

Scottish Gaelic (, GAL-ik; endonym: Gàidhlig [ˈkaːl̪ˠkʲ]), also known as Scots Gaelic or simply Gaelic, is a Celtic language native to the Gaels of Scotland. As a member of the Goidelic branch of Celtic, Scottish Gaelic, alongside both Irish and Manx, developed out of Old Irish. It became a distinct spoken language sometime in the 13th century in the Middle Irish period, although a common literary language was shared by the Gaels of both Ireland and Scotland until well into the 17th century. Most of modern Scotland was once Gaelic-speaking, as evidenced especially by Gaelic-language place names.

In the 2011 census of Scotland, 57,375 people (1.1% of the Scottish population, three years and older) reported being able to speak Gaelic, 1,275 fewer than in 2001. The highest percentages of Gaelic speakers were in the Outer Hebrides. Nevertheless, there is a language revival, and the number of speakers of the language under age 20 did not decrease between the 2001 and 2011 censuses. In the 2022 census of Scotland, it was found that 2.5% of the Scottish population had some skills in Gaelic, or 130,161 persons. Of these, 69,701 people reported speaking the language, with a further 46,404 people reporting that they understood the language, but did not speak, read, or write in it.

Outside of Scotland, a dialect known as Canadian Gaelic has been spoken in Canada since the 18th century. In the 2021 census, 2,170 Canadian residents claimed knowledge of Scottish Gaelic, a decline from 3,980 speakers in the 2016 census. There exists a particular concentration of speakers in Nova Scotia, with historic communities in other parts of North America, including North Carolina and Glengarry County, Ontario having largely disappeared.

Scottish Gaelic is classed as an indigenous language under the European Charter for Regional or Minority Languages, which the UK Government has ratified, and the Gaelic Language (Scotland) Act 2005 established a language-development body, Bòrd na Gàidhlig. With the passing of the Scottish Languages Act 2025, Gaelic, alongside Scots, has become an official language of Scotland.

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