

United kingdom

A good start to gaining some understanding of the lives of people living in a country is to look at their cherished customs and traditions.

What is a custom?

A custom is the usual way of behaving or acting

What is a tradition?

A tradition is a custom, opinion or belief handed down from generation to another, often orally or by practice.

Customs and Traditions in Britain

Britain is full of culture and traditions which have been around for hundreds of years. British customs and traditions are famous all over the world. When people think of Britain they often think of people drinking tea, eating fish and chips and wearing bowler, but there is more to Britain than just those things.



FAST FACTS

Official Name: United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland

Form of

Government: Constitutional monarchy with parliamentary government

Capital: London

Population: 60,020,000

Official Language: English

- **Money:** Pound sterling

Facts about UK:

GEOGRAPHY

The United Kingdom, also called the U.K., consists of a group of islands off the northwest coast of Europe. It is a unique country made up of four nations: England, Wales, Scotland, and Northern Ireland. England, Wales, and Scotland also make up Great Britain.

Much of the north and west of the U.K. is covered in high ground, knife-edged mountain ridges separated by deep valleys. This terrain was shaped in the last Ice Age, when thick glaciers covered the land. In the south of England, the countryside is mostly rolling hills.

In northwest England and the Scottish Highlands are dozens of lakes, called lochs. These were left behind when the Ice Age glaciers melted. They tend to be long and narrow, and some are very deep. Legends say that a giant monster called Nessie lives in Loch Ness in Scotland.

HISTORY

The first Britons (people who live in the United Kingdom) were the **Picts**, who arrived about 10,000 years ago. In the eighth century B.C., the **Celts** arrived from Europe and pushed the Picts north into Scotland. In A.D. 43, the **Romans** invaded and ruled for nearly 400 years. They built roads, bathhouse, sewers, and large villas.

By the sixth century A.D., German peoples known as **Angles, Jutes, and Saxons** were moving into Britain. The Angles gave their name to England, and English people became known as Anglo-Saxons. From the 900s to the 1400s, England was ruled by **Viking**, Danish, and Norman invaders.

In 1485 the Welsh noble Henry Tudor claimed the English crown and became Henry VII, the first of five Tudor monarchs. Several important lines of kings and queens followed.

By the 1800s, Britain was one of the most powerful nations in the world.

PEOPLE AND CULTURE

The British are the creation of waves of invaders and migrants, including Celts, Romans, Anglo-Saxons, Vikings, and Normans. In the 1950 and 1960s, people from former colonies in the Caribbean, Africa, and Asia came to the United Kingdom to work.

Sports and literature are among the United Kingdom's cultural claims to fame. Soccer, rugby, cricket, boxing, and golf were all invented in Britain. And the U.K. has produced many great writers, including William Shakespeare, Charles Dickens, and Virginia Woolf. J.K. Rowling, the writer of the *Harry Potter* books, is British.

UK food

The food you can buy in the UK reflects the many ethnic influences in British society. Most supermarkets sell ingredients from Asia, Africa, the Caribbean and Latin America, as well as food from many other parts of the world. The British are increasingly healthy eaters and there is a very wide range of organic produce available in shops and supermarkets.

Of course, you'll still find the famous English breakfast and fish and chips, but you'll also see a very diverse range of meals and menus while you're studying in the UK. Families in the UK often eat a traditional 'Sunday roast' on Sundays, but those same families are also likely to enjoy anything from Italian pizza to Singapore Noodles.

SYMBOLS OF ENGLAND

The three national symbols of England are the St. George's cross (usually seen as a flag), the red rose and the Three Lions crest (usually seen as a badge).



St George's Flag, the England Flag



Three Lions Emblem



The red rose is widely recognized as the national flower of England.



The red rose is on the badge of the English Rugby Union team.

The Royal Family



Queen Elizabeth



Prince Charles



Prince William

Royal Guards (Find out about the Queen's Guards)



Life Guard



Foot Guard



Life Guard on Horseback



Beefeater

On the Street



Red Double Decker buses



Black taxi cabs



Pillar Box (Post Box)



Telephone box

Famous People



Winston Churchill

Why?



Queen Victoria

Why?



David Beckham

Why?

Famous Landmarks



Buckingham Palace



London Eye



Big Ben