



Holidays i Scotland



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HOLIDAYS AND FESTIVALS IN SCOTLAND

Most of us adore holidays because they provide us with new interests, new outlets of our energies, a break from work, and a good chance to have a rest. For centuries a holiday was simply considered to be a Holy Day, usually dedicated to one of the saints, on which no work was done. If the weather was fine everybody went out of town to the country for archery, wrestling, dancing and other out-door activities.

In 1834 four Bank Holidays were officially introduced instead of the many odd Holy Days. Nowadays, there are six Public holidays in the UK Known as Bank Holidays, due to the fact that the banks were to be closed on those days. These are Good-Friday, Easter Monday, the last Monday in May – or the first Monday in June (Spring Bank Holiday) the last Monday in August or the first Monday in September (the Summer Bank Holiday), Christmas Day and Boxing Day (the day after Christmas Day). Though most of the holidays are of religious origin, for many people they are simply days, on which people have a rest, relax and make merry.

The majority of the public holidays are movable, that is they do not fall on the same day each year and the particular dates are fixed annually.

Besides Bank Holidays, there are many other festivals, anniversaries and simply days, such as a Pancake Day or Guy Fawkes Day Night, on which certain traditions are observed, but they are ordinary working days.

BELTANE

Beltane or Beltaine is the festival held on the first day of May.

Beltane was an ancient Gaelic festival celebrated in Ireland, Scotland and the Isle of Man.

It marked the beginning of summer. It is a cross-quarter day, marking the midpoint in the Sun's progress between spring equinox and summer. The astronomical date for this midpoint is nearer to 5 May or 7 May.

Beltane regained popularity during the Celtic Revival and is still observed as a cultural festival by some people in Ireland, Scotland, the Isle of Man and among their diasporas. Today, Beltane is also observed as a religious festival by Celtic neopagans. Wiccans adopted the name Beltane for their May festival.



HOGMANAY

Hogmanay is the Scots word for the last day of the year and is synonymous with the celebration of the New Year (Gregorian calendar) in the Scottish manner. It is, however, normally only the start of a celebration which lasts through the night until the morning of New Year's Day (1 January) or, in some cases, 2 January which is a Scottish Bank Holiday.



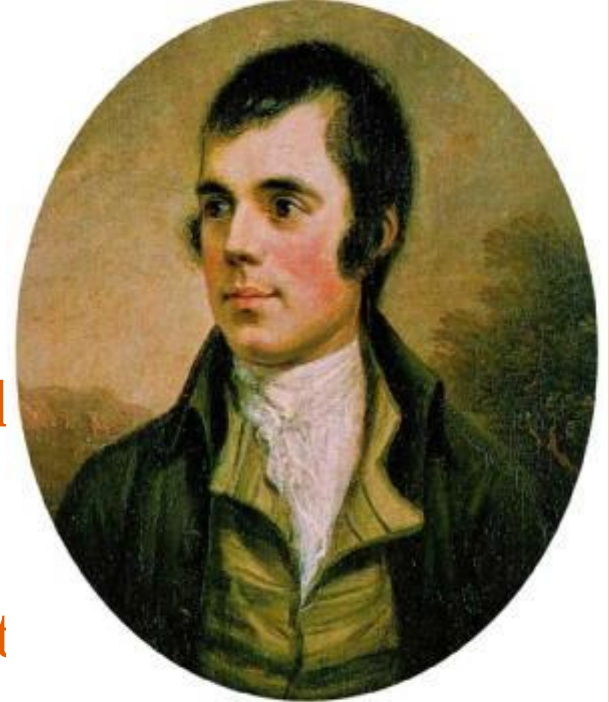
FIRST FOOT

In Scottish and Northern English folklore, the first-foot, also known in Manx Gaelic as quaaltagh or qualtagh, is the first person to cross the household of a home on New Year's Day and a bringer of good fortune for the coming year. Although it is acceptable in many places for the first-footer to be a resident of the house, they must not be in the house at the stroke of midnight in order to first-foot (thus going out of the house after midnight and then coming back in to the same house is not considered to be first-footing). The first-foot is traditionally a tall, dark-haired male; a female or fair-haired male are in some places regarded as unlucky. In Worcestershire, luck is ensured by stopping the first carol singer who appears and leading him through the house. In Yorkshire it must always be a male who enters the house first, but his fairness is no objection.



BURNS NIGHT

There are hundreds of Burns Clubs all over the world, and on 25th January they all have Burns Night celebration to mark the birth of Scotland's greatest poet. The first club was funded at Greenock in 1802. The traditional menu at the suppers is cock-a-leekie soup (chicken broth), boiled salt herring, haggis with turnips and mashed potatoes. The arrival of the haggis is usually heralded by the music of bagpipes. Then follows dancing, pipe music and selections from Burns's lyrics.



HIGHLAND GAMES

Highland games are events held throughout the year in Scotland and other countries as a way of celebrating Scottish and Celtic culture and heritage, especially that of the Scottish Highlands. Certain aspects of the games are so well known as to have become emblematic of Scotland, such as the bagpipes, the kilt, and the heavy events, especially the caber toss. While centred on competitions in piping and drumming, dancing, and Scottish heavy athletics, the games also include entertainment and exhibits related to other

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