

What are the British like?





The history of creation



The Romans were the first to invade us and came to Britain nearly 2000 years ago. They changed our country. The Roman Empire made its mark on Britain, and even today, the ruins of Roman buildings, forts, roads, and baths can be found all over Britain.

Britain was part of the Roman Empire for almost 400 years!

By the time the Roman armies left around 410 AD, they had established medical practice, a language of administration and law and had created great public buildings and roads.

Many English words are derived from the latin language of the Romans.

Anglo-Saxon Britain



The Roman army left Britain about AD 410. When they had gone there was no strong army to defend Britain, and tribes called the Angle, Saxon, and Jute (the Anglo-Saxons) invaded. They left their homelands in northern Germany, Denmark and northern Holland and rowed across the North Sea in wooden boats.

The Anglo-Saxons ruled most of Britain but never conquered Cornwall in the south-west, Wales in the west, or Scotland in the north. They divided the country into kingdoms.

Viking Britain

- The Viking Age in Britain began about 1,200 years ago in the 8th Century AD and lasted for 300 years.



The Middle Ages - Medieval Britain (Normans)



The Middle Ages in Britain cover a huge period. They take us from the shock of the Norman Conquest, which began in 1066, to the devastating Black Death of 1348, the Hundred Years' War with France and the War of the Roses, which finally ended in 1485.

The Normans built impressive castles, imposed a feudal system and carried out a census of the country.



Nowadays

- 31% of British said they were British and gave no other answer
- 50% described themselves only as English, Scottish, Welsh or Irish and 13% said both of these.
- In Scotland 80% said they were Scottish and 20% said they were British.
- In Wales 62% said they were Welsh and 35% mentioned British.
- In England 57% said they were English and 48% British.

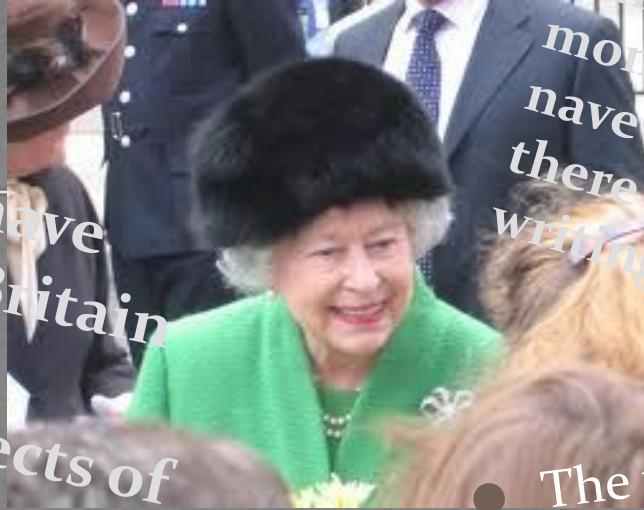
Languages



Most British people speak English, but Gaelic is also spoken in the west and north of Scotland and in Northern Ireland . Welsh is spoken by over half a million people in Wales.

Amazing facts

Other countries have “citizens”. But in Britain people are legally described as “subjects of Her Majesty the Queen”. And criminals are sent to one of “Her Majesty” prison.



Britain is a constitutional monarchy but it doesn't have a constitution, there is no single writing document.

- The present queen of the UK is universally known as “Elizabeth the Second” although Scotland and Northern Ireland have never had an “Elizabeth the First”



Stereotypes

Brits drink tea all the time



When the Sons of Liberty tipped 45 tons of tea into the sea during their Boston Tea Party, Britain was mortified. Not because of the lost tax but because, well, it was such a waste. They consume a whopping 2.3kg of tea per person each year. Most native Britons would hook themselves up an IV drip of the stuff if they could. That doesn't mean you'll struggle if you don't like it, though: global coffee chains and fruit/herbal/green teas are available everywhere.

Brits talk about weather all the time



If you live in Morocco, it doesn't make much sense to indulge in chit-chat about the weather: "Isn't it sunny?" "Yes, just like yesterday." But in Britain are not the most socially confident people, and with around 120 days of rain fall and over 1,300 hours of sunshine a year, our weather offers us rich and varied opportunities to make safe talk with strangers.

British are football hooligans



If you are in town that has a team, you'll find that fans are visible and vocal. But, while a tiny minority gets very drunk, or has fights with other fans, the sport more usually unifies, bringing strangers together in victory or (more often) defeat. The social Issues Research Centre suggest that English fans are most commonly associated with violence because of the "unlimited column inches" our newspapers devote to it. To those publication, we say: "Oo are ya? Oo are ya? Oo are ya?"

Brits eat bland food



People say that the Brits cannot cook, but they are wrong: they have perfect art of stodge. From their doughy breakfast of crumpets and marmite (“We couldn’t even imagine how varied are the British toasts,” says one unintentionally hilarious Polish website) to their fatty fish-and-chip supper, they revel in bland, heavy foods. Outsiders are usually less keen, but their history of invading more interesting countries means our restaurants are cosmopolitan

Brits will form a queue in any situation



If standing in line was an Olympic sport, Great Britain would take gold, silver and bronze. They queue politely at bus stops and airports, in shops, and even at bars. No, they were not standing in line at the bar, but they all know in which order they arrived, and woe betide any bar staff who try to serve customers in the wrong order.