

Scotland

Living in Scotland

Many people are drawn to Scotland by the career opportunities but also by the appeal of enhancing their quality of life. House prices can be cheaper than elsewhere in the UK, the commuting is easier and the countryside offers a wide range of activities from skiing and white-water rafting, to mountain biking and walking in some of the most spectacular scenery you will find anywhere in the world. From the remote countryside of the Highlands to the vibrant, cosmopolitan streets of Glasgow, Scotland's cities and regions are great places to live and work.



School

Children start primary school aged between 4½ and 5½, depending on when their birthday falls. Pupils usually attend primary school for seven years. Then, aged eleven or twelve, they start secondary or high school for a compulsory four years with the following two years being optional. Pupils sit National 4/5 exams at the age of fifteen/sixteen, for normally eight subjects, including compulsory exams in English and Mathematics.

It is now required by the Scottish Parliament for students to have two hours of physical education a week. The school leaving age is generally sixteen (after completion of National 4/5s), after which students may choose to remain at school and study for Higher and/or Advanced Higher exams.

Government-funded schools are free for children aged 5–19, they are owned and operated by the local authorities which act as Education Authorities. Schools are supported in delivering learning and teaching by Education Scotland. There are also private schools across the country, although only about 4% of children are educated in private schools. Home education is also legal in Scotland.

There are fifteen universities in Scotland and three other institutions of higher education which have the authority to award academic degrees. All of the Scottish universities are public universities and funded by the Scottish Government.

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Work

The economy of Scotland is closely linked with the rest of the United Kingdom and Europe. Scotland was one of the industrial powerhouses of Europe from the time of the Industrial Revolution onwards, being a world leader in manufacturing. Scotland produces lots of goods today, including textiles, whisky, shortbread, jet engines, buses, computer software, ships, avionics and microelectronics.

Scotland has seen a decline in the importance of manufacturing industries. This has, however, been combined with a rise in the service sector of the economy, which has seen significant rates of growth over the past decade and is now the largest sector in Scotland. This has, however, been combined with a rise in the service sector of the economy (no goods are produced in this sector but a service is provided e.g. tourism services). The service sector has seen significant rates of growth over the past decade and is now the largest sector in Scotland.

Benefits and Taxes

There are various benefits and taxes involved in living and working in Scotland. Benefits such as maternity and sick pay, child benefit and state pensions are paid for by taxes such as personal income tax and national insurance.

Transport

It's easy to commute and travel in Scotland, as the transport system in Scotland is generally well-developed. Scotland has an extensive railway network using cross-country links across Scotland, and good connections to England. The Glasgow Subway is the only underground system in Scotland. The Edinburgh Tram Network opened on 31st May 2014. It is the only system currently in operation in Scotland. Scotland is covered by a large bus network throughout many towns, cities and rural areas. Scotland also has an extensive road network throughout the country. Scotland has four international airports with scheduled services, operating to Europe, North America and Asia, as well as Northern Ireland and also England and Wales.



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Sport

Sport plays an important part in Scottish life and the Scots are famed for their passion and competitiveness. Scotland boasts the invention of many popular international sports including tennis, golf and rugby. Hockey, curling, shinty, and the Scottish Highland Games also play an important role in the history of Scottish sport.

One of the nation's most popular sports is football. William McGregor, a Scotsman, set up the first English football league, and the first international football match was played in Scotland in 1872, in Partick, Glasgow. Today, football is played throughout Scotland by amateurs and world-famous professionals alike.

Scotsmen have been playing golf as far back as the 15th century. It has since grown into a multi-billion dollar industry and holds the title of the biggest amateur sport in the world. Today there are over 550 golf courses in Scotland.

In the 2012 London Olympic Games, 55 Scottish Olympians and 27 Scottish Paralympians were selected to compete. Team GB won an unprecedented 185 medals in total at the Olympics, exceeding all expectations. The 24 medals won by Scotland were in a range of events including judo, rowing, cycling, athletics, sailing, swimming, slalom canoeing and tennis.

Scotland is home to state-of-the-art facilities, including the Edinburgh International Climbing Arena at Ratho, as well as many dry slope and real snow ski centres, and world-acclaimed mountain biking trails.

The more traditional Scottish sports, including tossing the caber, tug o' war, cross-country running and hammer throwing, are all celebrated at over 60 Scottish Highland Games events across the country each year. The Highland Games are a host of fun for both spectators and participants, and they are a major event in Scotland's summer sports calendar.



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Culture and Tradition

Scotland has been handing down its traditions for close to a thousand years now, since the earliest days of the clans in the 12th century. Scottish traditions are constantly growing and evolving, and every generation adds the thumbprint of its own particular Scottish culture to the whole. Take, for example, the 60 Highland Games that still take place across Scotland annually - those are a uniquely Scottish mix of culture, sports, music and community.

Scottish Food

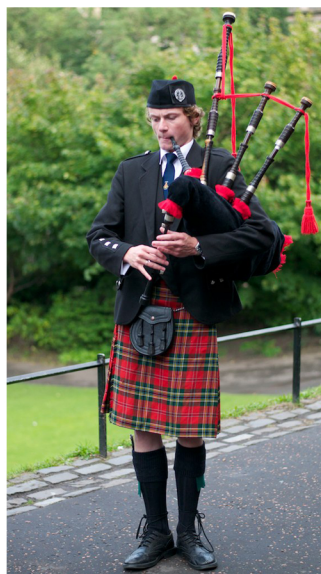
We all know the stereotypical notions of traditional Scottish fare - haggis, porridge and whisky. Not anymore! Scotland's new elite of super-chefs like Gordon Ramsay, Nick Nairn and Andrew Fairlie are taking the country's incredible natural produce – its beef, venison and seafood – and elevating them to Michelin-starred levels.

Traditional Dress

The term Highland dress describes the traditional dress of Scotland. It is often characterised by tartan patterns in some form. Male highland dress includes kilt, sporran, sgian dubh and ghillies. Ghillies, or ghillie brogues, are traditional thick-soled shoes with no tongues and long laces. The laces are wrapped around and tied above the ankles so that the shoes do not get pulled off in mud. The ghillie brogue is named after the ghillie, the traditional Scottish gamekeeper and outdoorsman.

Female highland dress includes women's shoes, also called ghillies, that are tied in the same way but have thin soles for indoor wear and dancing. Traditionally, women and girls do not wear kilts but may wear ankle-length tartan skirts. A tartan sash or shawl may also be worn.

The kilt is making a comeback on the catwalk as designers like Jean Paul Gaultier, Vivienne Westwood and Glasgow's own Jonathan Saunders take traditional Scottish dress to places the clan chiefs never dreamed of.



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Scottish Festivals

The traditional Burns Supper, Hogmanay and St. Andrew's Day celebrations are still very much a part of Scottish culture but the Scots are now joined on these special days by Scots at heart across the globe. "Auld Lang Syne", a traditional Scottish song first written down by Burns, is the second most popular song in the world after "Happy Birthday".

Tourism

Scotland is a well-developed tourist destination, with tourism generally being responsible for sustaining 200,000 jobs mainly in the service sector. Tourist spending averages £4bn per year. Scotland is generally seen as a clean, unspoiled destination with beautiful scenery which has a long and complex history, combined with thousands of historic sites and attractions. These include prehistoric stone circles, standing stones and burial chambers, and various Bronze Age, Iron Age and Stone Age remains. There are also many historic castles, houses, and battlegrounds, ruins and museums. Many people are drawn by the culture of Scotland. The cities of Edinburgh and Glasgow are increasingly being seen as a cosmopolitan alternative to Scotland's countryside, with visitors year round.

Religion

As in any country, religion forms a vital part of the culture in Scotland. The majority of the country practises Christianity. Even though Christianity is the largest religious group in Scotland, there are various other religions being practised, each with their own history and connection to Scotland.

Christianity not only has the largest following in Scotland but is also one of the oldest religions, with its presence dating as far back as the second century. Other denominations include the Roman Catholic Church, Presbyterians, Pentecostals, Baptists and Episcopalians, along with Methodists, Jehovah's Witnesses and Congregationalists. Over the years, as immigrants and travellers began to arrive on the shores of the country, different religions were established. Visitors to Scotland will find that religions such as Hinduism, Buddhism, Islam and Sikhism are also practised. There is also a percentage of the population in Scotland that have no ties with religion.

Comprehension Questions about Scotland

Read the information sheet about Scotland carefully. You might want to use a highlighter to highlight important points and facts.

Then answer the following questions, answer with as much detail as you can.

1. Why are people drawn to live in Scotland?

2. At what age in Scotland do children start primary school and leave high school?

3. What sector of the economy is now the biggest in Scotland?

4. Which country does Scotland's rail network connect to?

5. Where is the only underground transport system in Scotland?

6. Which popular sports were invented in Scotland?

7. Give an example of a Scottish tradition.

8. Name some of Scotland's natural produce.

9. What are the shoes worn as part of traditional dress called?

10. Which Scottish song is the second most popular song in the world after Happy Birthday?

11. How much do tourists spend on average per year in Scotland?

12. Which religions are practised in Scotland today?

1. Career opportunities and the appeal of enhancing their quality of life; house prices, commuting, countryside.
2. Aged 4 ½ - 5 ½ and aged 15/16.
3. The service sector.
4. England.
5. Glasgow.
6. Tennis, golf and rugby.
7. Highland Games.
8. Beef, venison and seafood.
9. Ghillie brogues or ghillies.
10. Auld Lang Syne.
11. How much do tourists spend on average per year in Scotland?
12. Which religions are practised in Scotland today?