

THE UNITED KINGDOM OF GREAT BRITAIN AND NORTHERN IRELAND

GENERAL INFORMATION

| | |
|--------------------|---|
| Official Name | United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland |
| Population | 66.98 Million (2019) |
| Total Area | 242,495 km ² |
| Capital | London |
| Form of Government | Parliamentary Democracy under a Constitutional Monarchy |
| Head of State | Queen Elizabeth II |
| Head of Government | Prime Minister Boris Johnson |
| Official Language | English |
| National Day | St George's Day April 23rd |
| Monetary Unit | Pound Sterling |
| National Anthem | God Save the Queen |

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

The area of the United Kingdom is around 242,000 square kilometres. The capital is London, situated on the River Thames in the south-eastern part of England.

The names United Kingdom, Great Britain, and England are often confused, even by United Kingdom inhabitants. Great Britain consists of England, Wales, and Scotland, while the United Kingdom also includes Northern Ireland.

The political system of the United Kingdom has provided stability since the 19th century. It is a unitary system centred on London, with some responsibilities devolved to local governments. The United Kingdom is a parliamentary democracy dominated by the monarchy. Although almost all responsibility is deferred to the government and both Houses of Parliament, the monarch and the royal family symbolize unit and power. In Parliament the House of Lords still consists mainly of hereditary or appointed peers, while members of the House of Commons are elected.

The United Kingdom is the member of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO).

GEOGRAPHY

The British Isles are a group of islands in the North Atlantic off the north-western coast of continental Europe. It consists of the islands of Great Britain, Ireland, the Isle of Man, the Hebrides and over 6000 smaller islands. The total area of the British Isles is about 315,159km². And a combined population of around 72 million people. It includes two sovereign states (the Republic of Ireland, covering 5/6ths of Ireland; and the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland).

The islands of Alderney, Jersey, Guernsey, and Sark, and their neighbouring smaller islands, are sometimes also taken to be part of the British Isles, even though they do not form part of the archipelago since they are located off the coast of France.

There are about 136 permanently inhabited islands belonging to the United Kingdom.

The island of Great Britain is to the east and covers 83,700 square miles (209,331km²). It is the largest island of the British Isles, and is the world's ninth biggest island. Most of Scotland, England and Wales are on this island. A maritime climate prevails here. The island is part of the European continental shelf. The English Channel and the North Sea separates the island from the rest of continental Europe to the east. The world's longest tunnel below the sea, the Channel Tunnel connects the island to mainland Europe.

The island of Ireland is Europe's third biggest island, and second biggest in the British Isles archipelago. The island is 81,638 square km in size. The island is politically part of Northern Ireland of the UK and the Republic of Ireland. Ireland has a central plain surrounded by low-lying mountains and several rivers. Like Great Britain the island also experiences a mild climate. The landscape here is covered by lush vegetation that is supported by favourable climate conditions. 26 species of mammals call this island their home.

Part of the archipelago of the Outer Hebrides, the island of Lewis and Harris is the third largest island of the British Isles by size. The island covers an area of 2,179 square km. Politically, the island is part of Scotland of the UK and is the largest Scottish island by both size and population. The names Lewis and Harris apply to the northern and southern parts of the island, respectively. The landscape of Harris is highly hilly with over 30 peaks that are taller than 1,000 feet. Lewis however, is relatively flat.

Skye has an area of 1,656 square km. It is the fourth largest island in the British Isles, and is part of the Inner Hebrides archipelago where it is the northernmost and the largest island. The central part of this island is dominated by the landscape of the Cuillins, a range of rocky mountains. Peninsulas of the island radiate out from the centre.

Mainland is the main island of the Shetland archipelago in Scotland. It is the fifth largest island in the British Isles by size. It has an area of 969 square km. It is also the third biggest island in Scotland.

The Largest Islands In The British Isles

| Rank | Name | Area (km ²) |
|------|----------------------------------|-------------------------|
| 1 | Great Britain | 209,331 |
| 2 | Ireland | 81,638 |
| 3 | Lewis and Harris | 2,179 |
| 4 | Skye | 1,656 |
| 5 | Shetland Mainland | 969 |
| 6 | Mull | 875 |
| 7 | Anglesey (including Holy Island) | 714 |
| 8 | Islay | 620 |
| 9 | Isle of Man | 572 |
| 10 | Orkney Mainland | 523 |

The Isles of Scilly, also called Scilly Isles, are a group of about 50 small islands and many more islets lying southwest of Cornwall, England, 25 to 36 miles off Land's End.



To the South of England lie the Isle of Wight. It is a county and the largest and second most populous island in England. It is in the English Channel, between 2 and 5 miles off the coast of Hampshire, separated by the Solent. The island has resorts that have been holiday destinations since Victorian times, and is known for its mild climate coastal scenery and verdant landscape of fields, downland and chines. The island is designated a UNESCO Biosphere Reserve.

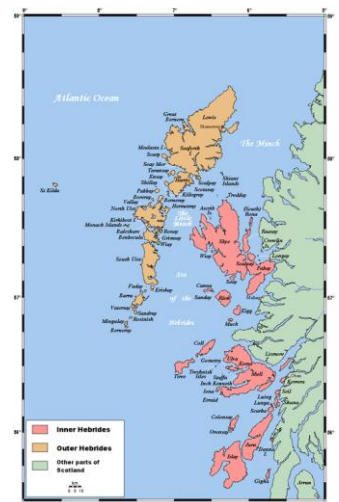


The Northern Isles are a pair of archipelagos off the north coast of mainland Scotland. They comprise of Orkney and Shetland. The climate is cool and temperate. There are a total of 26 inhabited islands with landscapes of the fertile agricultural islands of Orkney contrasting with the more rugged Shetland islands to the north, where the economy is more dependent on fishing and the oil wealth of the surrounding seas. Both have a developing renewable energy industry. Tourism is important to both archipelagos, with their distinctive prehistoric ruins playing a key part in their attraction. They are connected to mainland Scotland by regular ferry and air.



The Hebrides are a diverse archipelago off the west coast of mainland Scotland. There are two main groups: the Inner and Outer Hebrides.

The Hebrides are the source of much of Scottish Gaelic literature and Gaelic music. Today the economy is dependent of crofting, fishing, tourism, the oil industry and renewable energy. The Hebrides have lower biodiversity than mainland Scotland, but there is a significant presence of seals and seabirds.



Off north-western Wales are the island of Anglesey and the Isle of Man. The neighbours of the United Kingdom are the Irish Republic to west and France to southeast.

Anglesey Island has an area of 260 square miles. It is the largest island in Wales, seventh largest in the British Isles. It is the largest by area in the Irish sea, and second most populous after the Isle of Man.

Anglesey is a low lying island with low hills spaced evenly over the north island. The highest is Holyhead Mountain (220metres).

To the south and south east, the island is separated from the Welsh mainland by the Menai Strait, which at its narrowest point is about 250 metres wide. In all other directions, the island is surrounded by the Irish Sea. At 714km², it is the 51st largest island in Europe, and just 5 square kilometres smaller than Singapore.



The only land border is between Northern Ireland and the Irish Republic because the United Kingdom is surrounded by sea. To the south of England, and between the United Kingdom and France, are the English Channel and the Strait of Dover. The North Sea lies to the east. To the west of Wales and northern England is the Irish Sea, while western Scotland and the north-western coast of Northern Ireland face the Atlantic Ocean. The coast is heavily indented, especially on west.



The land area of the United Kingdom is divided between lowlands and uplands. England is mostly rolling land. It has three mountainous regions in the north, west, and southwest and two lowland regions in the southeast and east.



Woodland covers 2.8 million hectares, or 12% of the UK land area, with two thirds in Scotland where it occupies 17% of the land area. Over three quarters (78%) of Scottish woodland is in the uplands, whilst in England and Wales, only one fifth is in the uplands.



The northern mountain region includes the north-south Pennine Range, which peaks at Cross Fell (893m). This mountain range is also called "the Backbone of England". The Cheviot Hills are on the border between England and Scotland. England's highest point, Scafell Pike (978m), is in the Cumbrian Mountains of the Lake District. The Cornish Heights can be found in southwest England.



The countryside connecting these five regions is composed mainly of rich agricultural plains.

The principal rivers in England are the Thames (336 km) and the Severn (354 km).

Look at the images on the right. Can you determine which is lowland, upland, rolling land, mountainous land and woodland?



Scotland has three distinct areas: the Northern Highlands, with Ben Nevis (1,343 m), the highest mountain in the United Kingdom, then the Central Lowlands and the Southern Uplands. The main rivers in Scotland are the Clyde, Spey, and Tweed.

There are many lakes in Scotland - they are called "lochs", e.g. Loch Lomond, Loch Ness, etc.

Most of Wales is occupied by the Cambrian Mountains, and much of the land is suitable only for pasture. The highest point of Wales is found in Snowdonia. The important rivers are the Dee, Tywi, and Teifi.



Northern Ireland consists mainly of low flats and hills. The largest freshwater lake of the United Kingdom is Lough Neagh, situated in the centre of Northern Ireland. The main rivers are the Bann, Erne, and Foyle.

CLIMATE

In general, the UK has warm summers and cool winters. The climate of the United Kingdom is temperate maritime. This means that it is mild with temperatures not lower than 0°C in winter, and not much higher than 32°C in summer. The UK is warmed by the North Atlantic Current and by southwest winds. This means the weather can be unpredictable. It can be sunny one day, and rainy the next. Average temperatures range from 4°C to 6°C in winter in the north and from 12°C to 17°C in summer in the south.

February is normally the coldest month on the coast. The best months to travel in England are May, June, September and October. These months have little rain and the temperatures are pleasant. August is the warmest month and it is also the wettest. The sunniest parts of the UK are along the coast of England.

The driest period is between February and March. The wettest is October to January.

The main influence on climate is UK's proximity to the Atlantic Ocean, its northern latitude, and the warming of the waters around the land by the Gulf Stream (a warm current of the northern Atlantic Ocean).

FLORA AND FAUNA

With a mild climate and varied soils, the UK has diverse natural vegetation. It is thought that originally oak forests covered the lowlands, except for the areas of fens (low, marshy or frequently flooded area of land) and marsh areas) and pine forests and patches of moorland covered the higher or sandy ground.

Forests cover less than one tenth of the total area of the United Kingdom and are concentrated chiefly in north-eastern Scotland and south-eastern England. The most common trees are oak, elm, beech, pine, and birch.

Fauna include many small animals and a few large mammals.

Amphibians such as the great crested newt, smooth newt, palmate newt, common toad, natterjack toad, common frog and the pool frog are native to England.

Reptiles such as the European adder, grass snake, barred grass snake and the smooth snake can be found in Great Britain. Lizards found in England include slowworms, common lizards, sand lizards, European green lizards (introduced species), and the common wall lizard (introduced from mainland Europe and now found in the Isle of Wight). rTurtles found off the English coast include the leatherback sea turtle, green sea turtle, hawksbill, loggerhead sea turtle, Kemp's ridley visit the seas around Britain in more numbers every year due to warming of the seas caused by climate change.

Birds of Great Britain include the avifauna bears, the crest lark and puffins.

Mammals of Great Britain include semi feral horses such as the Dartmoor pony, the Exmoor pony, the European bison, as well as the naturalised (introduced) deer commonly found in other parts of Europe. Scottish red deer, muntjac deer can also be found mostly in Scotland.

Smaller mammals and insects include the mole, shrews, pipistrelle bat, brown rat, grey squirrel, red squirrel, brown hare and mountain hare. There are many introduced species of rabbit from mainland Europe.

There are a variety of carnivores in the UK, especially from the weasel family. Badgers, otters, minks can be found mostly in the Welsh Marches. There are many red foxes in the UK because the wolf and brown bear have become extinct in the area. There is an ongoing debate about whether badgers should be culled or vaccinated due to the spread of bovine tuberculosis.

POPULATION

People have settled in the British Isles from many parts of the world and for various reasons: some of them want to avoid political or religious persecution; others look for a better life. The Irish have long made their homes in Britain, as have Jews. They arrived toward the end of the 19th century and in the 1930s. After 1945 large numbers of other European refugees settled in the country. The large communities from certain parts of India or Asia arrived in the 1950s and 1960s.

There are also large groups of Americans, Australians, and Chinese, as well as various other Europeans, such as Greeks, Russians, Poles, Serbs, Estonians, Latvians, Armenians, Turkish, Cypriots, Italians, and Spaniards. Since the early 1970s, immigrants from Latin America, Southeast Asia, and Sri Lanka have looked for asylum in Britain.

The United Kingdom has nearly 60 million inhabitants. The density is one of the highest in the world - 232 people to one square kilometre. About 92.5 per cent inhabitants live in urban areas. The English make up the majority of the population (81.5 per cent), Scots (9.6 per cent), Irish (2.4 per cent), and Welsh (1.9 per cent) also make up significant proportions. Life expectancy is 72 years for males and 78 years for females.

LANGUAGES

English and its varied dialects are the major languages throughout the United Kingdom. There are also minority languages; Welsh in Wales, Scottish and Gaelic in Scotland, Irish and Ulster Scots in Northern Ireland, and Cornish in Cornwall, England.

There are 14 indigenous languages across the British Isles: 5 Celtic, 3 Germanic, 3 Romance, and 3 sign languages.

In London, there are over 300 languages spoken due to immigration, tourism, business and foreign students who made London their home.

FOOD

The most popular food in the UK are:

1. Fish and chips



2. Eccles cake: small, round cakes made with flaky pastry and filled with currants.



3. Black pudding:
A blend of onions,
pork fat, oatmeal
and blood.



4. Laverbread: A traditional Welsh dish. Boiled seaweed that is minced or pureed and sometimes rolled in oatmeal before being fried.



5. A thick Scottish soup made from smoked haddock, potatoes and onions.



6. Scotch egg. Classic British picnic food of hard-boiled eggs wrapped in sausage meat, coated in breadcrumbs and baked or deep fried.



7. Steak and kidney pie:
Traditional pie with salted
beef thickened with
flour or cornstarch.



8. Yorkshire pudding: A batter
dish made with eggs, flour
and milk or water and eaten
with gravy.



9. Shepherd's pie: A meat
(usually beef or lamb) pie
with a mashed potato
crust. Also called 'cottage pie'.



10. Toad in the hole:
Sausages in Yorkshire
batter, often served with
vegetables and onion gravy.



11. Bread and butter
pudding: A pudding made
layering slices of stale
buttered bread, raisins and
egg custard mix. Originally
called 'whitepot' and used
butter or bone marrow.



12. English breakfast:
Usually includes bacon, by
sausages, eggs, toast,
mushrooms, beans,
tomatoes and tea or coffee.



13. Haggis: A savoury
dish of minced sheep's
Heart, liver and lungs with
onion, oatmeal suet, spices
and salt. Scottish national
dish.



14. Lancashire hotpot: A dish
made from lamb and onion,
topped with sliced potatoes
and left to bake in the oven on
low heat. A Northern classic.



15. Bubble and squeak:
Usually leftover vegetables
from a traditional roast
dinner (potato cabbage
carrots, brussels sprout)
fried in a hot pan.



16. Mincemeat pies: A mix of
dried fruit, peel and suet) and
baked with spices. Served as
a Christmas dessert.



RELIGIONS

The official religion of the UK is Christianity, and churches from all denominations can be found throughout the UK. such as Catholic, Protestant, Baptist and Methodist. The main other religions are Islam, Hinduism, Sikhism, Judaism, and Buddhism.

A British Social Attitudes survey in 2017 shows that more than half of the UK population has no religion. Only 3% of adults under 24 describe themselves as Anglican, fewer than the 5% who identify as Catholic. Almost three out of four 18-24 year olds say they have no religion.

Only 5% of those aged 25-34 identify as Anglican, and 9% say they are Catholic. Among all adults in Britain, only 15% consider themselves to be Anglican, compared to almost one in three people at the turn of the century. 9% identify as Catholics, 17% as 'other Christians', and 6% say they belong to non Christian religions.

53% of all adults describe themselves as having no religion, compared to 31% who said they had no religion in 1983.

HISTORY

BCE

- * 6000 - The British Isles are formed as water levels rise separating them from mainland Europe.
- * 2200 - The construction of Stonehenge is completed
- * 600 - The Celtic people begin to arrive and establish their culture
- * 55 - Roman leader Julius Caesar invades Britain, but withdraws

CE

- * 43 - The Roman Empire invades Britain and makes Britannia a Roman province
- * 50 - The Romans found the city of Londinium (which later became London)
- * 410 - The last of the Romans leave Britain
- * 450 - The Anglo Saxons begin to settle Britain. They rule much of the land until the Vikings arrive
- * 597 - Christianity is introduced by Saint Augustine
- * 617 - The kingdom of Northumbria is established as the dominant kingdom
- * 793 - The Vikings first arrive
- * 802 - The kingdom of Wessex becomes the dominant kingdom
- * 866 - The Vikings invade Britain with a large army. They defeat Northumbria in 867
- * 871 - Alfred the Great becomes king of Wessex
- * 878 - Alfred gathers an army and defeats the Vikings at the Battle of Edington
- * 926 - The Saxons defeat the Vikings and retake the Danelaw
- * 1016 - The Danish conqueror England and King Canute of Denmark becomes King of England
- * 1066 - The Norman Conquest occurs. William of Normandy becomes king
- * 1154 - Henry II becomes king. This is the start of the Plantagenet line of rulers
- * 1297 - William Wallace leads the Scots in their defeat of the English. He is defeated a year later at the battle of Falkirk
- * 1337 - The Hundred Years' War with France begins. It will last until 1453
- * 1415 - The English defeat the French at the battle of Agincourt
- * 1453 - The Hundred Years' War comes to an end
- * 1455 - The War of the Roses begins between the families of the Plantagenets and the Lancastrians for the right to rule England
- * 1485 - The War of the Roses ends with the crowning of Henry Tudor as King Henry VII the House of Tudor begins its reign
- * 1508 - Henry VIII is crowned king
- * 1534 - Henry VIII forms the Church of England
- * 1536 - England and Wales are joined by the Act of Union
- * 1558 - Elisabeth I becomes queen. The Elizabethan Era begins
- * 1588 - The English fleet led by Sir Francis Drake defeat the Spanish Armada
- * 1591 - William Shakespeare begins writing and performing plays
- * 1600 - The East India Company is established
- * 1602 - James I becomes king and rules over England and Scotland. He is the first of the Stuart family to rule
- * 1605 - Guy Fawkes fails in his attempt to blow up Parliament
- * 1620 - The Pilgrims set sail for America aboard the Mayflower
- * 1666 - The Great Fire of London destroys much of the city
- * 1689 - The English Bill of Rights is established giving more power to the parliament
- * 1707 - England and Scotland are united as one country called Great Britain
- * 1756 - The Seven Year's War begins
- * 1770 - The Industrial Revolution begins in England
- * 1776 - The American colonies declare their independence from Britain
- * 1801 - The British and Irish parliaments are joined by the Act of Union to create the United Kingdom
- * 1805 - The British fleet defeats Napoleon at the Battle of Trafalgar

- * 1837 - Queen Victoria is crowned queen. The Victorian Era begins
- * 1921 - Ireland is granted independence
- * 1952 - Elizabeth II is crowned queen
- * 1979 - Margaret Thatcher becomes the first female prime minister of the United Kingdom
- * 1982 - The Falklands War occurs
- * 1997 - Britain gives control of Hong Kong to China
- * 2003 - The Iraq War occurs
- * 2020 - Brexit

GOVERNMENT TYPE AND ADMINISTRATION

Great Britain is a constitutional monarchy with the King or the Queen as the head of state. Britain is divided into four parts: England (London capital), Wales (Cardiff), Scotland (Edinburgh) and Northern Ireland (Belfast).

In the UK, the Prime Minister leads the government with the support of the Cabinet and ministers.

The Prime Minister is the leader of Her Majesty's Government, and is responsible for all policy and decisions. The Prime minister also:

- oversees the operation of the Civil Service and government agencies
- Appoints members of the government
- Is the principal government figure in the House of Commons

The Cabinet

The Cabinet is made up of senior members of government. Every week during Parliament, members of the Cabinet (secretaries of state from all departments and some other ministers) meet to discuss the most important issues for the government.

Ministers



Ministers are chosen by the Prime Minister from the members of the House of Commons and House of Lords. They are responsible for the actions, successes and failures of their departments.

Government departments and agencies

25

Ministerial departments

20

Non-ministerial departments

300+

Agencies & other public bodies

Government departments

Some departments, like the Ministry of Defence cover the whole UK. Others don't (e.g. Department of Work and Pensions doesn't cover Northern Ireland). This is because some aspects of government are devolved to Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland.

Legislation

Laws go through several stages before they are passed by Parliament. The House of Commons and the House of Lords work together to make them.

They can include:

Acts of Parliament

These are bills which have been approved by the Commons, the Lords, and The Queen. The relevant government department is responsible for putting the act into practice.

Visit www.legislation.gov.uk

Draft legislation

White papers outline proposals for new laws. Green papers ask for public comments before the white paper is published.

Bills are proposals for new laws or changes to existing ones. Once agreed by Parliament, they have to be approved by The Queen before becoming law.

BRITISH POLITICAL SYSTEM

THE HEAD OF STATE AND THE CONSTITUTION

The United Kingdom is a constitutional monarchy and a parliamentary democracy. Its constitution is partly unwritten and is flexible. It is also based on customs and traditions.

The constitution's basic sources are legislative acts of Parliament and decisions made by courts of law. The head of state is a reigning monarch. But he/she can act only on the advice of his/her ministers.

At present, the head of the United Kingdom is Queen Elizabeth II. She was born on April 21st 1926, but the official birthday celebration takes place during June. She got married on November 20th 1947 and accessed to the throne on February 6th 1952. The coronation took place on June 2nd 1953.



If you'd like to learn more about the Queen and her life, please visit <https://www.goodhousekeeping.com/life/a26133707/queen-elizabeth-ii-father-king-george-vi/>

PARLIAMENT

The Parliament is the supreme law-making body in the country. It consists of the monarch, the House of Commons and the House of Lords. British parliamentary system is one of the oldest in the world, it developed slowly during 13th century after King John's signature of Magna Carta in 1215.

The House of Commons has 651 elected and paid Members of Parliament (MPs) - 524 from England, 72 from Scotland, 38 from Wales and 17 from Northern Ireland. They are elected for 5 years but the Prime Minister can call general elections at any time. The House of Lords is made up of the hereditary and appointed peers (Lords Temporal), 2 archbishops and 24 bishops of the Church of England (Lords Spiritual). The major part of Parliament's work is revising the Government's work.

On the first day when the Parliament session is opened the Queen reads a speech that outlines the Government's policy. This opening ceremony takes place in the House of Lords. From Monday to Thursday all ministers must answer MPs' questions for one hour (questioning time).

Two days a week the Prime Minister must answer the MPs' questions. Another important parliamentary task is law-making. A proposal of a new law - a bill - must pass through both Houses and then is sent to the Queen for Royal Assent. The royal right of veto has not been exercised since the 18th century, and the legislative power of the House of Lords was reduced in 1911. The main function of the House of Lords is to revise legislation but it has just the right to delay legislation.

GOVERNMENT

The Government is the supreme executive power and is formed by the party which has the majority in the House of Commons. The Queen appoints its leader as the Prime Minister. The Prime Minister appoints his/her Cabinet (a group of main ministers) and also about 25 ministers outside the cabinet, as well as 50 junior ministers. The Cabinet takes decisions on major policy, plans and lays before Parliament all important bills. The second largest party forms the official Opposition with its leader and a "shadow cabinet"- an alternative government, ready to take office at any time. The leader of the Opposition is paid an official salary.

NATIONAL SYMBOLS



The British national flag is sometimes called "Union Jack". It symbolizes the Union of England, Scotland, and Ireland. It dates back from 1801. The origin of the name is uncertain. "Jack" was first used in the British Navy as the name of the flag at the main masthead. Each country has its cross in the flag:

England has St. George Cross (white oblong and red cross)

Scotland has St. Andrew Cross (blue with white diagonal)

Ireland has St. Patrick Cross (white with the red diagonal).

Each part has also its own symbol: England has the red rose, Wales has the leek and the daffodil, Scotland has the thistle and Ireland has the shamrock.

The National Anthem is "God Save The Queen!":

God save our gracious Queen
Long live our noble Queen!
Send her victorious,
Happy and glorious,
Long to reign over us,
God save the Queen!

ECONOMY

The United Kingdom belongs among the top industrial countries. It is economically connected with the Commonwealth countries. It is also a member of G-7.

The UK is one of the most globalised economies, and is composed of England, Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland. The service sector is the most important economy, contributing around 80% of GDP.

The range of mineral resources in the United Kingdom is limited. Metals of great importance are tin and zinc. Other adequate supplies of non-metallic minerals are sand and gravel, limestone, dolomite, chalk, slate, barite, talc, clay, kaolin and gypsum.

Sand, gravel, and limestone are used in construction. The United Kingdom has larger energy resources than any other European country, including oil, natural gas, and coal.

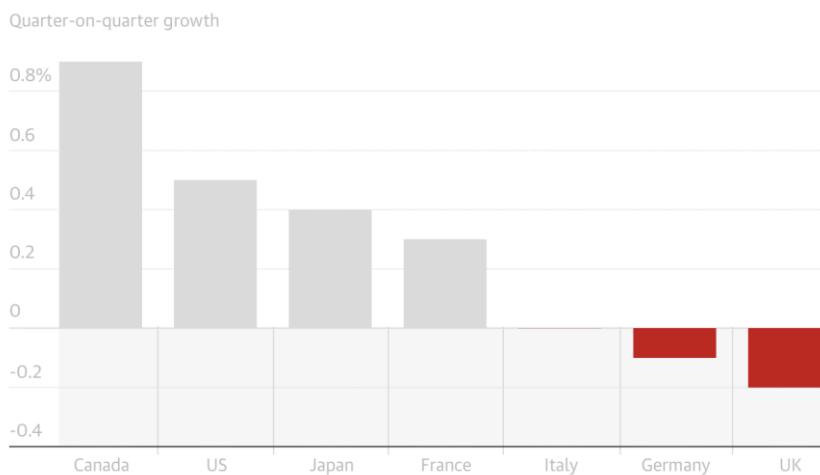
Power stations are the major customers for coal.

The agricultural system is very well developed. The main products are oats, hay, wheat, barley, sugar beet, fruit and vegetables. Cattle, sheep, pigs and poultry are the most important farm animals in the United Kingdom.

The country's role as a major world financial centre and its discovery of natural gas in 1965 and oil in 1969 in the North Sea and their commercial exploitation reduced the dependence on more traditional sources of energy and were major influences on the health of the internal economy and on national economic policies.

Because of the limitations of its natural resources, The United Kingdom has been forced to export more. Products that the country sells abroad are machinery, automobiles and other transport equipment, computers, aerospace equipment, electrical and electronics goods, and oil. The main industries are steel, metals, vehicles, shipbuilding, shipping, banking, insurance, textiles, chemicals, electronics, aircraft, machinery, distilling.

UK GDP shrinks by 0.2% in second quarter



Today (Friday 30 August 2019), the UK has fallen to the bottom of the G7 growth league table after Brexit uncertainty held the economy back in the spring. If the UK will not return to growth in the third quarter of 2019, it will fall into recession. Economic prospects beyond 31 October 2019 depend entirely on Brexit. "If there is a no-deal Brexit, there will probably be a recession at the turn of the year" Ruth Gregory, senior UK economist at Capital Economics said.

TRANSPORT

Transport in the United Kingdom is facilitated with road, air, rail and water networks.

The national rail network has 10,014 mile tracks in Great Britain (a reduction from 19,471 miles in 1950), and 189 mile tracks in Northern Ireland. The rail network carries over 18,000 passengers and 1,000 freight trains daily.

There are many regional and international airports, with Heathrow Airport in London being one of the busiest in the world. Sea ports received over 558 million tons of goods in 2003-2004 alone!

In 2015, 27% of distance travelled was by car or taxi, 42% by bus and 10% by rail. Air, bicycle and motorcycle accounted to 1% each.

INTERESTING PLACES



The Giant's Causeway: Famed around the world for its columns of layered basalt, the Giant Causeway is Northern Ireland's only UNESCO World Heritage site. These natural features were created by a volcanic eruption 60 million years ago.

Address: Causeway Road, Bushmills, Antrim, N. Ireland.



Dunluce Castle: A ruined medieval castle. It's perched precipitously on the cliff edge, the kitchen having plunged into the thrashing waves below one terrible night many centuries ago. The only survivor was the kitchen boy who as perched on the windowsill and had to be rescued.

Address: Causeway Road, 10 minute drive west of Bushmills, N

Ireland.



Lake Grasmere, The Lake District, England: The small lake and village are perfect for exploring, shopping and dining. The place is positively inspirational, so take plenty of selfies!



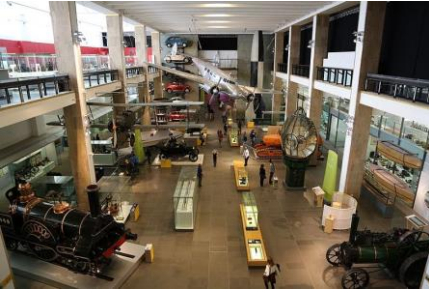
Edinburgh, the second most popular spot in the UK has the historic old town charm as well as raucous festivals and striking landscapes. A place that cannot be missed!



Conwy, North Wales: A glorious harbour town you must visit! Just look at that sunset! There's a castle, a quay and a medieval walled town...what else could you ask for?



The Scottish Highlands, Scotland: Stunning natural scenery. A lot to do, or do nothing but bask in the serenity of it all, it's beautiful!



The Science Museum: A great place for kids to discover civil engineering, robotics or vacuum technology. There's an IMAX theatre that enhances the senses :)



Warner Bros. Studio (and tour): Don't miss this stop on your way through the UK. Visit the Great Hall or board the Hogwarts Express from the Harry Potter series. There are lots of places to go, things to see, and you can go behind the scenes to see how special effects and animatronics work.



Camera Obscura and World of Illusions: There are 6 floors of puzzles, special effects, games and other interactive craziness at one of Britain's oldest attractions.

The whole thing started in 1835 with the Camera Obscura, a live projection of a bird's eye of Edinburgh from atop a tower.

Kids can be gods and pick people up or smooch them into the ground! Lots of optical illusions, light and magic, smoke and mirrors too! If

you're a kid, or a kid at heart, you have to go!



Eden Project: A journey into landscaped worlds with futuristic domes, surrounded by lovely botany.

The best bit is the Canopy Walkway - a raised platform above the treetops in the rainforest biome.

If you like extreme sports, why not have a ride on England's longest

zip line, the SkyWire!



Forbidden Corner: If you're into spooky or enjoy brainteasing fun, you can't miss this place of discovery!

Tunnels, mazes a creepy mausoleum, hidden passages will surely get you lost! But getting lost is part of the fun!

Complete your checklist of things to track down (without a map!)

Solve problems, have fun, explore secret nooks and crannies while parents enjoy the gardens.

For more fun adventure type activities and places to see in the UK, visit:

<https://www.thecrazytourist.com/40-places-uk-see-kids-grown/>

Interesting websites:

<https://easyscienceforkids.com/all-about-the-united-kingdom/>

<http://projectbritain.com/climate.html>

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Fauna_of_England

https://www.ducksters.com/geography/country/united_kingdom_history_timeline.php

<https://www.theguardian.com/world/2017/sep/04/half-uk-population-has-no-religion-british-social-attitudes-survey>

<https://www.theguardian.com/business/2019/aug/30/uk-falls-to-bottom-of-g7-growth-league-in-second-quarter>

<https://www.planetware.com/tourist-attractions/northern-ireland-ni.htm>

https://www.huffpost.com/entry/uk-other-than-london_n_5474852?guccounter=1&guce_referrer=aHR0cHM6Ly93d3cuZ29vZ2xlLmNvbS8&guce_referrer_sig=AQAAALgUExrQ4hEWhdSXIBu2VStC_F4c2hKBzlVKz8kevCn6S9jL8oHrdSqCxuB7-Vw7Nj-6PhYH2K7XO6zl0qDsAxnz8zATxM5M9RP1xFyiaWsZlbnSngfwR1T-V0fRtkqr2lGEhoZi6RvRK_9SVtCvTa8OQqBARWHuRu6lnmcgJudgp

* Please note: The websites linked to above may be out of date with regard to statistics. If you would like to find statistical information (2018), please refer to the Office of National Statistics (ons.gov.uk)