

UK CULTURE

Traditional clothes

11

In many countries there are traditional clothes that people wear for special occasions, such as national holidays and popular folk festivals. The United Kingdom includes four different countries – England, Wales, Scotland and Northern Ireland – and each country has its own history and special **customs**.



One of the most traditional items of clothing in the UK is the kilt. There are many versions, but the most famous ones are the kilts that men wear in Scotland on special occasions. Traditional Scottish kilts are made with five metres of tartan, which is a **fabric** with vertical and horizontal lines in different colours. Many Scottish families have a tartan with their own special colours. At the front of their kilts, Scottish men usually wear a small bag called a sporran to carry money and personal **items**. Scottish women wear a tartan skirt with a blouse and a tartan cloth on their shoulders called a shawl. They may also wear tartan dresses.

England hasn't got a national folk costume, but some people wear special clothes for traditional events, such as Morris dancing shows. Morris dancers can wear many different things, but they typically have white or black trousers or breeches. Some people also wear hats and short jackets called waistcoats, with long, colourful ribbons that move when they dance. It's quite **spectacular**!

In Northern Ireland, traditional Irish step dancing is very popular, and the dancers usually wear special clothes for their **performances**. Women and girls typically wear a short dress so they can kick up their feet quickly and easily. They sometimes wear tights on their legs, especially when the weather is cold. Men and boys usually wear simple clothes to step dance, such as black trousers, a shirt and a colourful jacket.

In Wales, some women wear a traditional costume on important **occasions**, such as St David's Day, on 1st March. On those special days, many women wear a long dress with a red shawl over their shoulders. However, the most unusual part of the costume is a tall, black hat. It looks like the very formal hats that men wore in the past. Welsh men haven't got a special costume for festivals, but they often wear old-fashioned trousers called breeches.



Match the **highlighted** words in the text to the meanings.

1. material for making clothes
2. very exciting to see and watch
3. special days or moments
4. normal habits in a culture
5. things or objects
6. shows for an audience

Are the sentences true or false?

1. The kilt is traditionally a clothing item for Scottish men.
2. A sporran is a cloth that women wear on their shoulders.
3. Welsh men and women wear tall black hats for special events.
4. Breeches are trousers that some men wear to festivals.
5. There's an official costume for all Morris dancers in England.
6. Irish women must wear tights when they do step dancing.