

15 Things You Should Never Say to a Scottish Person



Despite what you may have heard, the Scottish temperament is not *that* fiery, but there are certain things that can irritate or annoy those who live here. If you are visiting Scotland and wish to avoid causing unintentional offence, here we list 15 things not to mention (not entirely seriously and some with tongue firmly in cheek)!



'Irn Bru? No thank you!'

The nation's soft drink, this super-sweet orange-coloured concoction is so deeply engrained in Scotland's psyche that it has even taken a front seat (or stand!) in political campaigning. So to refuse a glass just won't do. Many Scots also swear by its amazing ability to cure a hangover, and somehow manage to overlook the fact it stains anything it touches bright orange, or that it contains enough sugar to rot the Loch Ness Monster's fangs. Which leads to...

'Of course, Nessie doesn't exist!'

Haud yer wheesh! (Shut up!) Every Scot knows the Loch Ness Monster exists. This is an indisputable fact; after all, even Saint Columba saw the beast. Loch Ness is huge, definitely big enough to hide a large and very shy monster. Nessie brings people from all over the world to the shores of the loch, all eager to snap definitive proof of the monster's existence, and spend their money at the local souvenir shops...



'Oh, you live in Inverness, do you know my friend Craig?'

Admittedly, Scotland is a wee country, but that does not mean we all know each other! Inverness is a city, home to tens of thousands of people, and Scotland as a whole has a population of nearly 5.5 million — more than Norway! (However, it should also be added that there is a real chance we *do* know Craig!)

'It always rains in Scotland, right?'

Actually, no, it doesn't. We *do* get a lot of rain, but this is mostly concentrated in certain regions, such as the west coast, with other areas getting substantially less. What sets Scotland apart from the rest of the UK is the fact the nation lies further north, which means considerably more daylight hours in summer and, therefore, the chance of even more sun. The weather in Scotland is a fickle thing, and it is entirely possible that you may experience all seasons in one day, so don't forget the sunscreen! (As an extra bonus to your Scottish education, in Glasgow this is known as 'Tapps-Aff' weather — literally 'tops off'.)

'Freeeeedom!'

For some reason telling someone you are Scottish often brings out a terrible Mel Gibson *Braveheart* impression. With the thorny independence issue never far from the surface, and a population politically reinvigorated following the 2014 Independence Referendum (also known as IndyRef), you may find such a cry sparks a lively political debate!



'You Scots are all tight-fisted and miserly.'

It's definitely a stereotype, the thrifty Scot, carefully hoarding their last penny. However, the truth is quite the opposite. Being careful with money does not equate to not being generous and there are traditions of welcome and sharing stretching back hundreds of years. This stereotype has actually made many Scots nervous of being called a miser and you may well witness a hilarious bar room discussion where people argue over whose turn it is to buy the drinks — not because they don't want to pay, but because they *do*, and thus avoid the tight-fisted label!



'Is this money real?'

Yes, we have different banknotes to England, yes, they are legal tender, no, they are not 'funny money'! Scots use the Bank of England notes too, but also have different designs from three other banks; The Royal Bank of Scotland, The Bank of Scotland, and the Clydesdale Bank.

'What do you wear under your kilt?'

This is similar to asking someone what underwear they are wearing and, as such, is not really in good taste. Everyone has their own preference when it comes to kilt-wearing, some wear underwear, others prefer not to. Despite what you may have heard about kilts flying up in the wind to expose their wearer, this is also unlikely, given the weight of wool involved in most modern kilts.

'Andy Murray, British tennis champion/Andy Murray, losing Scot'

This is a big issue for many Scots, who watch as the tennis star from Dunblane is claimed by Britain when he wins, then discarded when he loses. He has even been called English on occasion. Can we Scots not have him all the time, winning or losing? The Scots have a few other sporting stars, but not as many as bigger nations and they're rightly proud of Andy's achievements, title or no title. Admittedly, this also raises the topic of explaining the differences between Britain, the UK, The British Isles, England, and Scotland, but perhaps that's best left for another day.



'Scotchman'

No. Scotch is the whisky, 'Scots' is the woman. Or man. Don't call them Scotch! If you are unsure, 'Scottish' is best.



'Isn't all your food deep-fried?'

Look, yes, we did indeed invent the deep-fried battered Mars bar, and potentially several other deep-fried delicacies, but Scottish cuisine is actually rather special. Scotland has exceptional produce, from shellfish to soft fruits and beef to foraged fungi, so it is no wonder the restaurant scene is so exciting right now. We've come a long way from beige platefuls, as has the UK as a whole.

'Aren't you all stuck in the past?'

Some people still believe Scots have no electricity, or running water, let alone internet, but this is simply not true. In fact, Scotland has a long and distinguished history of invention and innovation, with many of the things we take for granted today actually being invented here. This tradition continues today, with world-leading green energy initiatives for example, such as the record-breaking tidal array off Orkney.



'You're Scottish? I bet you like a drink?'

Yes, Scotland has a reputation as a nation of heavy drinkers, but this is a reputation based on the past. These days Scots prefer quality over quantity and, as they produce the best whisky in the world, outstanding gins, and superb craft ales, this is a good thing. Add to this a rise in wonderful coffee shops and tasty non-alcoholic alternatives and you can see why the idea of the drunk Scot is no longer accurate.



'So is Scotland a part of England?'

This is a question that all Scots dread! No, Scotland is an entirely different nation to England. To call a Scottish person English is not the best idea in the world; they have many similarities with their cousins south of the border and love them dearly, but are also extremely proud of their own identity and heritage. Listen to the accent, or play it safe and assume every local you meet in Scotland is Scottish, as not all were born here; Scotland is a welcoming wee nation.

'Och aye the noo.' * (Oh yes, just now)

No. Just don't. Stop right there. Thanks.

*(This is one of those Scottish phrases that **can** be heard in countless parodies aimed at poking fun at the Scots' dialect and accent.)

Match the two parts of each sentence.

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| 1. Irn Bru, Scotland's soft drink, _____ | as elsewhere. |
| 2. People from all over the world expect to _____ | "Scotch" – that's the whisky. |
| 3. The chances of a Scot knowing _____ | due to the weight of the wool used in its manufacture. |
| 4. Even though the weather in Scotland is changeable _____ | Scotland and England are two different nations. |
| 5. The mention of William Wallace's "Freedom" cry in <i>Braveheart</i> , _____ | is claimed to cure a hangover, but it surely stains. |
| 6. Scots are said to be stingy, _____ | as well as tasty non-alcoholic beverages. |
| 7. Scottish banknotes have different designs _____ | are deep-fried. |
| 8. It is unlikely for a kilt to be blown up by the wind _____ | get evidence of Nessie's existence. |
| 9. The English only praise Andy Murray when he wins _____ | brings forth a political debate. |
| 10. Never call a Scot _____ | there are more daylight hours in summer than in the rest of the UK. |
| 11. Not all Scottish dishes _____ | an acquaintance of yours are low. |
| 12. Scotland is as technologically advanced _____ | according to the bank that issues them. |
| 13. Scotland produces the best whisky in the world, gin and craft ale _____ | however, they are just careful with money. |
| 14. Despite their similarities _____ | whereas the Scottish support him no matter what. |

