



TARTAN & KILTS

Name five iconic things about Scotland, and chances are one of them will be tartan or a kilt! We're well known for men in kilts, but it's so much more than just something to wear - it's a historic piece of clothing which has stood the test of time.

These days you can find tartan in even designer collections, high street stores or homewares. But it all started here in Scotland, hundreds of years ago.

TARTAN



- It's a fabric made up of horizontal and vertical stripes in different colours, on a coloured background.
- The interwoven stripes are known as a sett.
- It originated in the Highlands.
- The first mention of tartan in Scotland was in 1538.
- Originally, clanspeople used local plants, mosses and berries to dye the wool.

TARTAN IS USED TO MAKE A KILT

A kilt is a piece of tartan, worn around the waist. However, a 'proper' kilt is usually accompanied by:

- A sporran - a small bag worn around the waist, over the kilt. Sporran is the Gaelic word for purse.
- A kilt pin - holds the two pieces together at the front.
- Sgian dubh (pronounced skee-an doo) - a small dagger which sits in the sock.



7 FACTS ABOUT KILTS

- The kilt originated in the Highlands too.
- Originally it was an untailored, 5 metre-long piece of cloth.
- It was known as the féileadh mor in Gaelic (pronounced philamore), meaning the 'big kilt'.
- It was worn around the waist, similar to a modern kilt, but the remaining fabric was also draped over the shoulder and pinned.

- This upper portion could be adjusted according to the demands of weather, temperature or freedom of movement needed.
- It grew in popularity after being chosen by Highland regiments serving with the British Army.
- It quickly became sought after south of the border as the British aristocracy considered all things Scottish a fashion statement. Today it features prominently in Vivienne Westwood designs.

TODAY KILTS ARE OFTEN WORN:

- At weddings, by the wedding party and guests.
- At Highland games, by athletes and spectators.
- At ceilidhs, by dancers and the band.

OTHER WAYS TO WEAR TARTAN:

- A traditional tartan plaid, wrapped over a plain piece of clothing
- A tartan dress or skirt
- A tartan bow tie or tie
- A tartan ribbon
- Tartan shoes
- Tartan bags
- Tartan trousers
- And much more



5 PLACES TO FIND OUT MORE ABOUT TARTAN AND KILTS IN SCOTLAND

- If you're looking for a specific colour of tartan, search through the thousands of designs on the [Scottish Register of Tartans](#)' online collection to find your perfect colour combination and design.
- Try places such as [21st Century Kilts](#) or [Kinloch Anderson](#), which also has a Heritage Room Museum to see the history of the family over 140 years.
- Take a mill tour at the [Lochcarron of Scotland Visitor Centre](#) in Selkirk in the Scottish Borders, or visit the [Lochcarron Weavers Shop](#) in Loch Carron in Wester Ross, Highlands.
- Many tartan companies will also let you commission your own tartan, creating your own style and colour combination. You can even submit it to the Scottish Register of Tartans for approval.

Choose the correct option.

1. Tartan and kilt are the same.

True False

2. Nowadays you can find them in ...

retail stores street markets

3. Tartan has either horizontal or vertical stripes.

True False

4. It originated in the ...

Highlands Lowlands

5. It used to be dyed with ...

thistles berries

6. A kilt is a piece of tartan worn around the ...

neck waist

7. A sporran is worn over the kilt.

True False

8. A kilt pin - holds the two pieces together at the ...

front back

9. Sgian dubh is a ...

sword dagger

10. The kilt used to be known by its ... name.

Gaelic English

11. The remaining tartan of a kilt used to be worn over the ...

shoulder head

12. The upper portion could be adjusted to different uses.

True False

13. Today kilts are often worn at ceilidhs by ---

musicians storytellers

14. You can wear a kilt over plain leggings.

True False

15. You can have your own tartan made to your liking.

True False

