



The United Kingdom

The United Kingdom is a sovereign state in Western Europe. It is made up of four different countries: England, Wales, Scotland and Northern Ireland and also has sovereignty over fourteen overseas territories and three Crown dependencies. At the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, it commanded a world-wide empire as the foremost global power. After suffering severely after the first and second world wars, the empire diminished but the UK remains a strong economic and military power with considerable political and cultural influence around the world. In July 2016, the country voted in a referendum to quit the European Union. The social and economic implications of this political action are still unclear.

### Physical Geography

**Official Name:** United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland

**Region:** Europe

**Size in Square Kilometers:** 243,610 sq km (94,060 sq mi)

**Bordering Countries:** Ireland, France, Belgium, Sweden

**Physical Features:** Most of England consists of low-land terrain with slightly mountainous terrain in the north-west. The main rivers and estuaries are the Thames, Severn and the Humber. Scotland accounts for just under a third of the total area of the UK and includes nearly eight hundred islands! The UK's highest point, Ben Nevis which at 1,343 metres (4,406 ft), is located here. Wales is predominately mountainous terrain, but Northern Island consists mostly of rolling hills.

**Climate:** Regional climates are influenced by the Atlantic Ocean and latitude. Northern Ireland, Wales and western parts of England and Scotland are generally the mildest, wettest and windiest regions of the UK because of their proximity to the Atlantic Ocean. Summers are warmest in the south-east of England, being closest to the European mainland, and coolest in the north. The UK has frequent rainfall, overcast skies and temperature ranges are seldom extreme.

### Cultural Geography

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**Population:** 62.8 million

**Ethnic Groups:** Caucasian (87.1%), British-African (3.0%), British-Indian (2.3%), British-Pakistani (1.9%), British-Chinese (0.7%), British-Bangladeshi (0.7%), other Asian (1.4%) other ethnic groups (3.0%).

**Official Language:** English

**Languages Spoken:** It is estimated that 95% of the UK's population are monolingual English speakers. Other major languages spoken are Punjabi, Urdu, Hindi, Bengali, Tamil and Gujarati, and Polish.

**Capital:** London (7.5 million)

**Other Major Cities:** Birmingham, Glasgow, and Liverpool.

**Average Quality of Life:** Above Average

### Political Geography

**Founded:** May 1, 1707

**Type of Government:** constitutional monarchy with a parliamentary system of governance

**Country Leaders:**

Queen: Queen Elizabeth II

Prime Minister: Theresa Mary May (as of July 16, 2016)

First Prime Minister of Scotland: Nicola Sturgeon

Businessman: Sir Richard Branson

Actor: Sean Connery

Actress: Emma Watson

**Country's Military:** 153,470 active personnel. Budget of 46 Billion British pounds per year.

**Allies:** NATO member states, Israel, Japan, South Korean, India, and Philippines

**Enemies:** North Korea, Russia, Iran, China, and Countries in which ISIS operates

### Economic Geography

**Gross Domestic Product (GDP):** \$2.679 trillion

**Natural Resources:** coal, petroleum, natural gas, tin, limestone, iron ore, salt, clay, chalk, gypsum, lead, silica and an abundance of arable land (livestock and crop agriculture)

**Currency:** British pound sterling

**Exports:** nuclear reactors, boilers, machinery and mechanical appliances (including parts thereof) mineral fuels, mineral oils and products of their distillation, bituminous substances and mineral waxes

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**Imports:** Machines, engines, pumps, electronic equipment, oil, pharmaceuticals, gems, precious metals, medical equipment, plastics, aircraft, spacecraft, clothing

**Biggest Trading Partners:**

**Imports:** United States (\$66.5 billion), Germany (\$46.4 billion), Switzerland (\$32.2 billion), China (\$27.4 billion), France (\$27 billion), Netherlands (\$26.6 billion)

**Exports:** United States (\$32 billion), Germany (\$28 billion), France (\$19 billion), Netherlands (\$18.83), Irish Republic (\$14 billion)

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