

Explore the Land of the Scots

Living and Learning in the UK

What do the Loch Ness monster, a six day old infant queen named Mary, and the inventor of the television have in common? They all hail from the enchanting land of Scotland! Known for its breathtaking beauty, perhaps best left for artists and poets to describe, this small, almost hidden, country on England's northern border is a place we ought to explore. Let us take a few moments to envision living, and even home educating, in the land of the Scots.



The Location

Scotland is about half the size of England, or just over 30,000 square miles in size. Its coastland is so jagged that its total length is estimated at nearly 6,200 miles. Besides the mainland, there are about 790 islands belonging to Scotland, of which only 130 are inhabited. The best known are the Orkney and Shetland Isles, as well as the Inner and Outer Hebrides.

Roughly 2/3 of the country consists of mountains and moorland, but only 10% of its population dwells in these highland areas situated to the north. Most of the population is based further south in and around the cities of Glasgow, Dundee and Edinburgh, its capital.

The natural beauty of Scotland's landscape is said to be spectacular. And yet how can the pen paint an accurate picture of its gentle coastal pastures, quaint fishing villages, rolling farmland, mighty mountain peaks,

tranquil trossachs, sparkling blue lochs, and islands jutting up from the sea? The place sounds almost magical, but Scotland is, of course, more than just a beautiful country. It has a rich and varied history and has made its mark strongly upon the rest of the world.

Winston Churchill once said, *“Of all the small nations on earth, perhaps only the ancient Greeks surpass the Scots in their contribution to mankind.”* This writer believes that his words could not be truer. Although a land of only 5 million inhabitants (while 40 million people around the globe claim Scottish descent), its people have unmistakably changed the world by spreading their values abroad for higher education, invention and technology.

A few of the things the Scots have given the world...

- Logarithms
- The decimal point
- The compass
- Street lighting
- The pedal bicycle
- The locomotive
- The bus
- The telegraph
- The thermos flask
- The telephone
- Color photographs
- The lawnmower
- Television
- The fax machine
- The photocopier
- Video
- The kaleidoscope
- Helium
- Radar
- Neon
- The hypodermic syringe
- Anesthesia
- Morphine
- Insulin
- Penicillin
- The thermometer
- Golf
- Curling
- Tennis courts
- The bowling green
- Marmalade
- The fountain pen
- Postcards
- Suspenders
- Encyclopedia Britannica
- Documentary films
- The traffic cone
- Sherlock Holmes

The People

Scotland's history dates back 5000 years when Neolithic peoples built astronomical observatories or temples in the Orkney isles. Its long and colorful history boasts of such well known figures as King Macbeth, William Wallace (more popularly known as Braveheart), Mary Queen of Scots, King James I (namesake of Jamestown, Virginia), Sir Walter Scott, Robert Louis Stevenson, Sir Arthur Conan Doyle and, let us not forget Nessie, the mysterious



monster-like creature whom many witnesses adamantly claimed to have seen gliding through the waters of Loch Ness. Perhaps Dolly, the cloned sheep, is its most famous personality of recent years, but this "contribution" to society is a controversial and heated topic at best and may be worth some further investigation on your own.

Homeschooling

Perhaps a lesser known fact of Scottish history is that Scotland was the very first country to introduce compulsory education back in the year 1496. This early resolution must certainly account for the fact that Scotland is known throughout the world for its superior universities and highly educated citizens, resulting in the many innovations that Scots have provided to our society at large. Education continues to be highly valued in Scotland and its people take it very seriously. And although education is compulsory, school is not. Home education is indeed legal in Scotland.

The Education Act of 1980 (Section 30) states...

It shall be the duty of the parent of every child of school age to provide sufficient education for him suitable to his age, ability and aptitude either by causing him to attend public school regularly or by other means.



Thousands of parents all over the UK, and specifically Scotland, are choosing to take full responsibility for their children's education and are schooling them "by other means" at home. Approximately 1% of all school aged children are learning from home under the guidance of their parents. Parents do not need to

have any teacher training and may even receive support from the authorities, who are not obligated to, but may provide, access to learning resource centers, discounted rates for educational materials, sports facilities and/or other public school resources. Home educators, however, are not entitled to any financial support from the government.

Parents, whose child has previously attended public school, must seek consent from the authorities before withdrawing him from his classroom. This is not a prerequisite if the child has never attended public school. Moreover, home educated children are not required to take exams, but may certainly choose to. In fact, the local education authorities are willing to arrange exams for home educated students.

James Haram, one of the leaders of a national homeschool association in Scotland, reports that homeschooling in Scotland is still largely a secular movement, but is gaining some popularity among

Christians as well. Home Service, an organization founded in 1992 by a group of Christian home educators, exists to provide help and advice for those who are treading the same road of Christian home education or thinking of doing so. Since that year, the number of families educating their children at home in the UK has grown considerably including many Christians who want their children to be brought up in "the nurture and admonition of the Lord." Many others are considering such a move but are uncertain as to its legality and practicality and that is where Home Service comes in. This organization provides information on legal issues and other information that would be of interest to home educators.

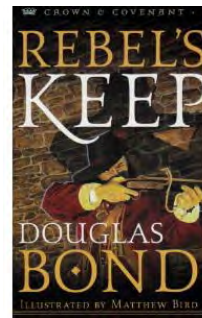
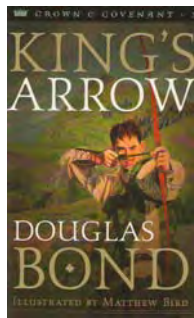
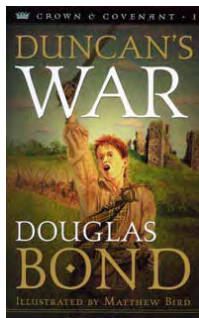


Predictions are that homeschooling will continue to gain momentum in Scotland as it has in the rest of the UK. Our Scottish homeschooling brothers and sisters do have freedom to choose their means of education; nevertheless they do not have a vast amount of support or companionship at this point in time. Keep them in your thoughts as you do your school work today and during the days to come.

Unit Study

Now that you have read the chapter, it's time to dive in for some hands-on learning to cement your student's growing knowledge of this small but fascinating country.

- 1. READING SELECTIONS** - Let's start with some extra reading. You can find some wonderful history books, travel books and picture books about Scotland at your local library. Check out several. Also, I would like to introduce you to a fictional series titled the Crown and Covenant, which I believe is a must-read set of books. The links below will take you to Amazon.com for more information, but you may be able to find these at your local library as well. These books are perfect for your family read-aloud time.



- [Duncan's War](#) by Douglas Bond
- [King's Arrow](#) by Douglas Bond
- [Rebel's Keep](#) by Douglas Bond

My husband and children wrote a book review on the first book, [Duncan's War, which you can read it here](#) to get some more information about the series.

- 2. HISTORY & TIMELINES** - Learn more about Scotland by compiling historical facts and events from Scotland's exciting history and adding them to your timeline. If you do not have a timeline already started, you can construct one by following these directions - [How to Make a Timeline Easily](#). Here is a link to a wonderful and exhaustive resource for timeline entries about Scotland (click on a time period) - <http://www.geo.ed.ac.uk/scotgaz/timeline.html>.

3. MAPWORK - A unit study would not be complete without taking a good look at the lay of the land. Pages 27 and 28 include both a labeled and unlabeled map of Scotland. Have your students mark some of the major cities, the larger islands and the seas, at the least. For older students, have them use your teacher's map and fill in the rest.

4. RECIPES - This is my favorite part - the food from the land! If you do the above activities on Monday, Tuesday and Wednesday, then take some time on either Thursday or Friday to whip up some authentic Scottish cuisine in the kitchen.

Scottish cuisine has much in common with food from other parts of the British isles, but has some distinctive attributes and recipes all its own. There are certain foods that automatically come to mind when we think about the cuisine of the Scots - for example, Angus Beef, Scottish Oatcakes (or Bannocks), Scotch Broth and Haggis. Haggis, you ask? Never heard of them? Well, it's time to find out about this uniquely Scottish dish.

Haggis is one of those national dishes of Scotland that is both beloved and reviled by natives, and sometimes horrifies people who hear it described for the first time. Haggis is



made from the inner parts of a sheep - the lungs, stomach, liver and heart - parts that are unavailable by FDA ruling here in the States. If you would like to read more about this unique dish, do a Google search on Scottish cuisine or Haggis and many recipes will turn up, but I will not describe it in detail here.

It may be difficult to pull off the above, but here are three more recipes of local Scottish food that can be attempted in your own kitchen. Enjoy!

Scottish Oatcakes

1 1/2 C scottish oats
1/2 C all purpose flour
3/4 t sugar
1/4 t salt
1/4 t baking powder
1/4 C melted butter (1/2 stick)
1/3 C hot water

Preheat oven to 325 degrees. Grease a baking sheet. Combine flour, sugar, salt, baking powder and oats. Stir until combined. Add butter until evenly distributed. Fork in hot water until evenly moistened. Roll dough out 1/4 inch thick. Cut with round cutter 2 1/2 or 3 inches in diameter. Bake 25 minutes until golden brown. Cool on rack. Store at room temperature in air tight container for two days.

One of the great aspects about this recipe is that there are no eggs in the batter, so if our little girls snatched the dough, there was no harm done. Our children enjoyed rolling out the dough and using cookie cutters to make fun shapes. We love these served with butter and jam. Also wonderful with cream cheese! Yum! Give them a try.



Scotch Broth

Scotch broth is a filling soup, originating in Scotland but now obtainable world wide. Its principal ingredients are usually barley, a cut of beef or lamb, and vegetables such as carrots, cabbage and leeks. The proportions and ingredients can vary according to the recipe. Dried peas, split peas, and lentils are often added.

- 3 pounds Breast of Lamb w/bone, or whole chicken
- 8 cups Cold water
- 1/2 cup Pearl barley
- 2 tablespoons Butter
- 2 Carrots, peeled and diced
- 1 White turnip, peeled and diced
- 2 Ribs celery, diced
- 1 Onion, diced
- Salt & pepper to taste

In a large stockpot or Dutch oven, cover the lamb with cold water; bring to a boil. Add the barley, partially cover the pot, and simmer until the meat and barley is tender, about 1 1/2 hours. Add more water to adjust for any evaporation; skim the surface of the soup as necessary.

Remove meat from broth; cut meat from bone and cut in small pieces. Discard the bones and return the meat to the soup. Continue simmering. In a skillet, melt the butter over medium heat. Add the carrots, turnip, celery, and onion and cook stirring often for 10 minutes.

Add the vegetables to the soup. Simmer for about 10 minutes, or until the vegetables are tender. Season with salt and pepper to taste.
Serves 8.

Finish your delicious meal of Scotch Broth and Oatcakes with some **Scottish Shortbread**. This is the easiest recipe in the world to make. I personally started making these after school when I was a pre-teen. They are not good for you, but they are delicious!

Scottish Shortbread

Simple classic shortbread cookies with butter and sugar and flour.

- 1 cup butter
- 1 cup granulated sugar
- 3 cups all-purpose flour

Thoroughly cream sugar and butter. Add 2 1/2 cups of the flour and mix thoroughly. Turn out onto a surface floured with remaining 1/2 cup of flour. Knead dough until it cracks on surface. Roll out 1/4-inch thick and cut out with cutters.



5. **CRAFTS** - Finally, it is craft time!

This craft was chosen as a quick and simple one that represents Scotland, its people and environment. The polar fleece scarf can be made easily without any sewing. Make sure to choose a plaid "tartan" print fabric to achieve the Scottish look.

First, [click on this link](#) to "weave" your own tartan fabric and then purchase something similar at your local fabric store or online.

Fleece Scarf

http://www.ehow.com/how_14292_make-polar-fleece.html



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