**WHAT ARE BRITS KNOWN FOR?**

**Stereotypes of British people** are found in several cultures.Some stereotypes relate to many specific ethnic groups of Britain while others are directed at British nationals in general.

**Positive**

**Politeness and charm**

Both historically and in the present day, the British have often been associated with good manners by many people around the world.In countries such as the United States, there is a widely-held belief in the concept of a "fancy British man" who is charming, suave, and well-dressed with an attractive accent.Perhaps the most famous fictional example of this is [James Bond](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/James_Bond_(literary_character)), with the stereotype being bolstered by other fictional characters such as [Lucifer Morningstar](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Lucifer_Morningstar_(Lucifer)). There is also a preference for American media (usually Hollywood movies) to portray villains as British, with some studies suggesting that the British accent unconsciously leads audiences to believe the character possesses superior intelligence, thus making it easier to [buy into the idea](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Suspension_of_disbelief) that the character's evil plan is plausible.English actor [Alan Rickman](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Alan_Rickman) garnered a reputation as Hollywood's favourite villain during his career.

**Queueing**

[](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/File:Mourners_waiting_in_long_line_to_see_Queen_Elizabeth_II%27s_lying_in_state.jpg)London's [queue for the lying-in-state of Elizabeth II](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Queue_for_the_lying-in-state_of_Elizabeth_II)

The act of queueing (standing in line) holds a significant place in British culture and is often viewed as a quintessential British activity. Historically rooted in the British values of fairness, orderliness, and respect for social norms, not only is the adherence to queues seen in day-to-day activities such as waiting for public transport or purchasing goods in a store, but it also symbolises deeper cultural ideals about patience and propriety.

This penchant for forming and respecting queues has become a commonly referenced stereotype in both domestic and international media. While some scholars and commentators argue that the stereotype may be exaggerated, it remains an enduring symbol of British cultural identity. It has also been a source of self-deprecating jokes, with the British often acknowledging their habit of forming orderly lines even in the most informal settings. The social implications of [queue-jumping](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Cutting_in_line) are profound in Britain, and such actions are often met with silent disapproval, [tutting](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Dental_click) or direct confrontation, underlining the cultural importance of this unspoken rule.

**Sense of humour**

[British humour](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/British_humour) is well known for its use of [absurdity](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Surreal_humour), [awkwardness](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Cringe_comedy), [dark comedy](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Black_comedy), [self-deprecation](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Self-deprecation), [dry comedy](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Deadpan), [innuendo](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Innuendo), [irony](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Irony), [sarcasm](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sarcasm), [satire](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Satire), [wit](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Wit) and [word play](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Word_play).[Monty Python](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Monty_Python) was a famous British comedic group, and some of the most highly regarded comedies worldwide, such as [*Fawlty Towers*](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Fawlty_Towers) and [*Mr. Bean*](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mr._Bean), are British. Banter and mocking in a friendly manner is commonplace in British culture. Making fun of one another is considered a form of bonding, particularly in working class environments.

**Stoic nature**

The British are often seen as reserved and unemotional, but in a pragmatic sense rather than an overtly negative one. This perspective has been bolstered by numerous popular British phrases such as "[stiff upper lip](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Stiff_upper_lip)", which means displaying an emotionless and determined exterior in the face of hardship; "[keep calm and carry on](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Keep_Calm_and_Carry_On)", which was taken from a motivational poster produced by the British government in preparation for the [Second World War](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/World_War_II); and "[always look on the bright side of life](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Always_Look_on_the_Bright_Side_of_Life)", a popular [Monty Python](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Monty_Python) comedy song about persevering in the direst situations.

**Pluckiness**

British athletes are stereotypically described as "plucky", meaning brave and determined, especially when success is unlikely. The term is used in popular culture. Success in the [2012 Summer Olympics](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/2012_Summer_Olympics) challenged the stereotype of the British plucky loser. [Chris Hoy](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Chris_Hoy) stated "I think the Brits historically have got used to being the plucky losers. The attitude has been we'll support our lads and our lasses but we don't expect them to win anything. The teams go to the world cup in football and there are the usual tales of woe – losing penalty shoot-outs. It's like inevitable that the Brits are going to get beaten at some point. But I think that's there's a change in that culture in sport."

**Tea**

Drinking tea, specifically [black tea](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Black_tea), is seen as a [key part of British culture](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Tea_in_the_United_Kingdom).Originally introduced as a luxury product in the 17th century, cheap imports from [colonial India](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Colonial_India) allowed its consumption to increase significantly during the second half of the 19th century.

Surveys in 2017 showed that the United Kingdom had the 12th largest tea consumption per capita in the world, and that almost 75% of British people who drank tea daily had at least two cups a day.Other hot drinks, especially [coffee](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Coffee), have become as popular as tea.

**Negative**

**Anti-social behaviour abroad**

In Spain, Greece, Latvia and Malaysia,British tourists have been associated with [antisocial](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Anti-social_behaviour) and violent behaviour in some countries, sometimes related to [binge drinking](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Binge_drinking). [Barcelona](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Barcelona) blamed British tourism for an 18.5% rise in complaints to police from 2015 to 2016, with offences including [street drinking](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Drinking_in_public) and [public nudity](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Nudity#Public_nudity).[Amsterdam](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Amsterdam) launched a tourism campaign in 2023 discouraging British tourists from antisocial behaviour, following years of complaints from locals about [public urination](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Urination#Urination_without_facilities) and drunken fights.

Similarly to Americans and other English speaking nationalities, British tourists have also been stereotyped as preferring to shout and talk slower in English when interacting with foreigners instead of making an effort to learn phrases in the local language.

**Food**

Jokes are often told about [British food](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/British_cuisine) being either low-quality or inedible. While it is true that British cuisine was historically quite bland in the post-Second World War period, globalisation and immigration have since made it more diverse; in modern times, lists of the most popular cuisines in the United Kingdom usually include imported cuisines such as [Chinese](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Chinese_cuisine), [Indian](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Indian_cuisine), [Italian](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Italian_cuisine), [Spanish](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Spanish_cuisine), [French](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/French_cuisine), [Japanese](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Japanese_cuisine), [Mexican](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mexican_cuisine) and [Brazilian](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Brazilian_cuisine).

**Football hooliganism**

[Football hooliganism](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Football_hooliganism_in_the_United_Kingdom) has a worldwide association with Britain; so much so that it is often dubbed the "British" or "English disease".In 1985, [Prime Minister](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Prime_Minister_of_the_United_Kingdom) [Margaret Thatcher](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Margaret_Thatcher) established a "war cabinet" to combat football hooliganism.Football hooliganism has been linked to such events such as the [Heysel Stadium disaster](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Heysel_Stadium_disaster). However, the British government has led a widespread crackdown on football-related violence since the 1980s, and British football fans now have a better reputation abroad. At the forefront of English football violence in Europe was [West Ham United's](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/West_Ham_United_F.C.) [Inter City Firm](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Inter_City_Firm), who became well-known for their strategy of [steaming](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Steaming) foreign home supporters out of their own ends and trying to dismantle the stadium.

**Monolingualism**

There is a common stereotype that the British are only able to speak [English](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/English_language). This has some truth to it as levels of [bilingualism](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Multilingualism) are relatively low, but this is also the case in the majority of English-speaking countries.Additionally, the number of people who speak a language other than English as their first language is reasonably low, especially among those who were born in the United Kingdom—even among those with immediate immigrant ancestry.However, British schoolchildren receive compulsory lessons in one or more of [French](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/French_language), [German](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/German_language), [Spanish](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Spanish_language) and other modern languages.This used to happen during the first years of [secondary school](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Secondary_school),but teaching foreign languages at an earlier age has been viewed as increasingly important.

**Teeth**

Americans often joke about the British having bad teeth.This stereotype appears to stem from a particularly American view of dental health in which artificially straightened and [whitened teeth](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Tooth_whitening) (sometimes referred to as "[Hollywood](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Cinema_of_the_United_States) teeth") are the healthiest,but this primarily affects only the outer appearance of teeth and some evidence has shown that artificial whitening actually has a negative effect on dental health.In reality, British teeth are tied with Swedish teeth for the rank of fourth healthiest in the world, with American teeth behind in ninth place.

Jokes about British teeth appear in American popular culture. In [*The Simpsons*](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/The_Simpsons) episode "[Last Exit to Springfield](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Last_Exit_to_Springfield)", a strict dentist scares [Ralph Wiggum](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ralph_Wiggum) into brushing his teeth by showing him a fictional book titled *The Big Book of British Smiles* that depicts a [Queen's Guard](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/King%27s_Guard) member and Prince Charles (now [King Charles](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Charles_III)) with exaggeratedly crooked teeth.A [Rimmel](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Rimmel) cosmetics television advertisement featuring [Georgia May Jagger](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Georgia_May_Jagger) became an [internet meme](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Internet_meme) in 2014. In the advertisement, Jagger says "get the London look" and viewers ultimately associated the "London look" with the [gap between her front teeth](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Diastema).

**Weather**

British weather is often associated with rainand fog, although London's reputation for foggy weather dates from before the passing of the [Clean Air Act 1956](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Clean_Air_Act_1956), which was brought in after the [Great Smog of London](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Great_Smog_of_London) in 1952.

British people are often stereotyped for frequently discussing the weather, with a 2010 study finding that 94% of British respondents said they had discussed the weather in the previous six hours. British weather is noted for its unpredictability, and historically, with the United Kingdom's agrarian roots, the weather was important for farmers, making it a staple topic of discussion. Over time, this frequent dialogue about weather has evolved into both an ice-breaker and a cultural touchpoint, sidestepping potentially controversial subjects and fostering communal connections.

This cultural phenomenon is reflected in various aspects of British culture, from literature and art riddled with references to rain and fog to traditional attire like [trench coats](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Trench_coat) and [Wellington boots](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Wellington_boot), which are tailored to combat the unpredictable British weather.