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EXTENSION SERVICE

From Britain with Love

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Great Britain is based on a constitutional monarchy, which is a form of government where sovereignty is vested in a single person. The individual's right to rule is generally hereditary, and the person holds office (power) for life.

Can you recall where you were the day Princess Diana died on August 31, 1997? Or did you tune in to watch the marriage of Prince William to Catherine Middleton on April 29, 2011? Have you watched a British television show, such as *Keeping Up Appearances* or *Downton Abbey*? If you answered "yes" to any of these questions, you may be interested to learn more about the country of Great Britain.

Great Britain

Great Britain (also known as the United Kingdom) is an island country located to the northwest of mainland Europe. It is comprised of England, Northern Ireland, Scotland, and Wales. London serves as the capital and is the home of the British monarchy. Great Britain has a population of more than 64 million; whereas, London has a population of more than 8 million. Its currency is the pound sterling (£).

The British form of government is a constitutional monarchy, which means the country's head of state is the reigning king or queen. The primary political power lies with the head of government, which is the prime minister.

The British Monarchy

Great Britain is based on a constitutional monarchy, which is a form of government where sovereignty is vested in a single person. The individual's right to rule is generally hereditary, and the person holds office (power) for life. Since 1952, Queen Elizabeth II has been head of the British monarchy. Royal titles start with king and queen, followed by prince and princess. The lesser known titles are explained below in order from most significant to least significant.

- ***Duke/Duchess:*** The word means "leader" in Latin and refers to a military commander without an official rank. The wife of a duke is called a duchess.

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- ***Marquess:*** This title, used for both males and females, is derived from the name "march," which is the land that borders another country.
- ***Earl/Countess:*** Earl means "chieftain," particularly one set to rule a territory in a king's stead. The wife of an earl is called a countess.
- ***Viscount/Viscountess:*** The word means "non-nobility, deputy, or sheriff."
- ***Baron/Baroness:*** The baron is the lowest rank in the British peerage.

Prince Charles's marriage in 1980, Prince William's marriage in 2011, the Queen's Diamond Jubilee in 2012, and the birth of Prince William's son George in 2013 are recent joyous milestones for the British monarchy. While the monarchy has enjoyed some recent celebratory events, there have also been equally sad occasions in recent years, such as Prince Charles's divorce in 1996, the death of Princess Diana in 1997, and the death of Queen Elizabeth in 2002.

America's Fascination with Great Britain

America's fascination with Great Britain started in the 1960s. Below is a list of a few things that have proved to be of interest to Americans:

- **Films** – It all began with *James Bond 007*. In 1962, *Dr. No* made its debut; since then, there have been 23 *James Bond* films produced. Other notable films include *Four Weddings & A Funeral* and the *Harry Potter* series.
- **Music** – The "British Invasion" in 1964 brought the Beatles and their music to the United States. Other British groups that have found popularity in America include the Rolling Stones and the Who from the 1960s, and Duran Duran and Culture Club from the 1980s.
- **Literature** – Great Britain has many notable authors, including William Shakespeare, Charles Dickens, Emily Brönte, Jane Austen, J.R.R. Tolkien, and J.K. Rollins.
- **Television** – British television shows, such as *Keeping Up Appearances, As Time Goes By,* and *Downton Abbey* are regularly featured on PBS.
- **Cuisine** – British cuisine is defined by traditional favorites, such as tea and scones, fish and chips, beef wellington, fish pie, and various puddings.
- **"Keep Calm & Carry On"** – This was a poster produced in 1939 as part of a propaganda campaign to encourage the British public during war time.

Conclusion

There are many ways to learn more about Great Britain.

- Many of the great literature works by Jane Austen and others have been made into films.
- There are travel documentaries that explore the cities and countryside of Great Britain.
- The Internet has numerous recipes for scones – have a few friends over for tea and scones.
- Check out the website that the British Broadcasting Corporation (BBC) created to honor British food – *http://www.bbcgoodfood.com/recipes/collection/british*.

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