

# Traditional Music in Scotland

Scotland is a country with many traditions, such as Celtic music, also known as folk music. Some of the instruments played in Scottish traditional music are quite unusual, but Scottish music has influenced many different types of music around the world.

In Scotland, there are many children and adults who have started playing an instrument because members of their families play one. The skill learned by one family member is often passed on to the younger generations. Of course, lots of people play an instrument just because they like the sound it makes!

Scottish folk music has traditionally included a number of unusual instruments like the bagpipes.

## Bagpipe Facts

- It is thought that the bagpipes were introduced by the Gaels of Ireland.
- The Great Highland bagpipe is known as the 'pìob mhó' in Gaelic.
- Bagpipes are made of a bag filled with air which sits under the player's arm. There are pipes that come out of the bag and a pipe that the player blows into.
- Bagpipes come in different sizes and shapes.
- There are many Scottish bands today who use bagpipes, like Skerryvore, Skipinnish, Tidelines and The Peatbog Faeries.



The tin whistle is made from metal. The player blows into it and covers the holes with their fingers to make different notes. People who play the bagpipes or the flute can often play the tin whistle too.

The accordion is another wind instrument but it uses bellows to make sound. It has one side which looks like a small piano and one side which has up to 120 buttons on it!



Stringed instruments are also used in traditional Scottish music. A harp is plucked with your fingers, and is so large that a harpist has to sit down to play it! The fiddle has four strings and is played with a bow. The fiddler places their fingers in different places on the strings to make different notes.

# Traditional Music in Scotland

## Did You Know...?

- The harp can take many years to learn to play because it has so many strings.
- The fiddle can also be called the violin, depending on the kind of music it is playing.
- Violin bows are usually made out of real horse hair!

Many of these instruments are played as part of a ceilidh band. A ceilidh is a special event where a band plays well known traditional tunes and people dance to the tunes. A ceilidh band often includes a guitar, a fiddle, an accordion and drums.



# Questions

1. What is another name for Scottish folk music?

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2. Who brought the bagpipes to Scotland?

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3. What are the Great Highland bagpipes known as in Gaelic?

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4. Can you name two Scottish bands who still use the bagpipes?

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5. What is the tin whistle made from?

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6. Which other name is the fiddle called?

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7. How many strings does a fiddle have?

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8. What is a ceilidh?

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# Answers

1. What is another name for Scottish folk music?

**Another name for Scottish folk music is Celtic music.**

2. Who brought the bagpipes to Scotland?

**The bagpipes were introduced by the Gaels of Ireland.**

3. What are the Great Highland bagpipes known as in Gaelic?

**The Great Highland bagpipes are known as the 'piob mhó' in Gaelic.**

4. Can you name two Scottish bands who still use the bagpipes?

**Any two answers from: Skerryvore, Skipinnish, Tidelines and The Peatbog Faeries.**

5. What is the tin whistle made from?

**The tin whistle is made from metal.**

6. Which other name is the fiddle called?

**Another name for the fiddle is the violin.**

7. How many strings does a fiddle have?

**A fiddle has four strings.**

8. What is a ceilidh?

**A ceilidh is a special event where a band plays well-known Scottish songs and people dance to the songs.**

# Traditional Music in Scotland

The country of Scotland has many traditions that people relate to. Scotland is well known for the long tradition of Celtic (folk) music and playing musical instruments. Some of the instruments played in Scottish traditional music are quite unusual and rare but Scottish music has influenced many different types of music around the world.

On many of the Scottish islands and on the Scottish mainland, there are children and adults who have taken up playing an instrument because members of their families play one. The skill learned by one family member is often passed on to the younger generations. Of course, lots of people take up an instrument just because they like the sound it makes!

Scottish folk music has traditionally included a number of unusual instruments, such as the bagpipes. It is thought that the bagpipes were introduced by the Gaels of Ireland in the 6th century, over 1400 years ago. The earliest recorded mention of bagpipes in Scottish history is from the 15th century.

The Great Highland bagpipe, known as the 'pìob mhó' in Gaelic, was developed in Scotland. Bagpipes are made of a bag filled with air which sits under the player's arm, some tall pipes that come out of the bag and a pipe that the player blows into. This pipe looks similar to a recorder, with holes in it to create the different notes. Bagpipes come in different sizes and shapes and they can produce very different sounds depending on what kind they are. There are many Scottish bands today who use bagpipes. Some examples are Skerryvore, Skipinnish, Tidelines and The Peatbog Faeries.



The tin whistle is another traditional Scottish wind instrument which looks like a recorder. Despite its name, today it is usually made from brass, nickel, aluminium or plastic, with six finger holes and a mouthpiece. The player blows into it and uses their fingers to cover holes to make different notes. People who play the bagpipes or the flute can often play the tin whistle too.

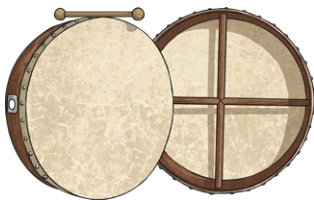


The accordion is another wind instrument but it uses bellows to make sound. Many Scottish islanders play this instrument. It has one side which looks like a small piano and one side which has up to 120 buttons on it!

Stringed instruments are also used in traditional Scottish music, and have been used for a long time. Some examples are the guitar, the harp and the fiddle. A harp is plucked with your fingers, and is so large that a harpist has to sit down to play it! The fiddle is played by sitting the instrument under your chin. It has four strings and is played with a bow, which has lots of fine hairs that brush against the strings to make a noise. The fiddler places their fingers in different places on the strings to make different notes.

### Did You Know...?

- The harp can take many years to learn to play because it has so many strings.
- The fiddle can also be called the violin, depending on the kind of music it is playing. 'Violin' is used for classical and jazz music, while 'fiddle' is used for folk, country and bluegrass.
- Violin bows are usually made out of real horse hair!



Another Scottish instrument is the bodhran. It is a hand-held drum, played with a special wooden beater with two ends.

Many of these instruments are played as part of a ceilidh band. A ceilidh is a special event where a band plays well known traditional tunes and people dance to the tunes. A ceilidh band often includes a guitar, a fiddle, an accordion and drums.



# Questions

1. What is another name for Scottish folk music?

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9. What is a ceilidh?

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# Answers

1. What is another name for Scottish folk music?

Another name for Scottish folk music is Celtic music.

2. Why might people often take up a Scottish instrument?

People often take up a Scottish instrument because members of their family have played one, or because they like the sound it makes.

3. When were the bagpipes brought to Scotland?

It is thought that the bagpipes were brought to Scotland in the 6th century, over 1400 years ago.

4. Who brought the bagpipes to Scotland?

The bagpipes were brought to Scotland by the Gaels of Ireland.

5. What are the Great Highland bagpipes known as in Gaelic?

The Great Highland bagpipes are known as the 'piob mhó' in Gaelic.

6. Can you name two Scottish bands who still use the bagpipes?

Any two from: Skerryvore, Skipinnish, Tidelines and The Peatbog Faeries.

7. What is the name of the instrument which uses bellows to make sound?

Tin whistles are usually made from brass, nickel, aluminium or plastic.

8. What is the name of the instrument which uses bellows to make sound?

The accordion uses bellows to make sound.

9. What is a ceilidh?

A ceilidh is a special event where a band plays well-known Scottish songs and people dance to the songs.



# Traditional Music in Scotland

The country of Scotland has many traditions that people relate to. Scotland is well known for the long tradition of Celtic (folk) music and playing musical instruments. Some of the instruments played in Scottish traditional music are quite unusual and rare, but Scottish music has influenced many different genres of music around the world.

On many of the Scottish islands and on the Scottish mainland, there are children and adults who have taken up playing an instrument because members of their families play one. The skill learned by one family member is often passed on to the younger generations. Of course, lots of people take up an instrument simply because they like the sound it makes!

Scottish folk music has traditionally included a number of seemingly unusual instruments, such as the bagpipes. It is thought that the bagpipes were first introduced by the Gaels of Ireland in the 6th century, over 1400 years ago. The earliest recorded mention of bagpipes in Scottish history is from the 15th century. Most people think of the Great Highland bagpipe when thinking about Scottish music.

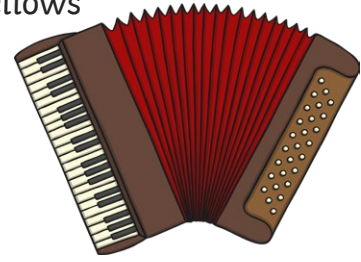


The Great Highland bagpipe (or the 'pìob mhó' in Gaelic) was developed in Scotland, along with other styles. Bagpipes are comprised of a bag filled with air which sits under the player's arm, some tall pipes that come out of the bag and a pipe that the player blows into. This pipe looks similar to a recorder, with holes in it to create the varying notes. Bagpipes come in different sizes and shapes; they can produce very different sounds depending on what kind they are. There are many contemporary Scottish bands who use bagpipes. Some examples are Skerryvore, Skipinnish, Tidelines and The Peatbog Faeries.

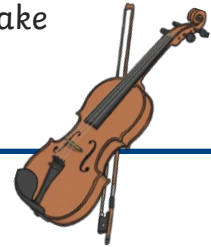
The tin whistle is another traditional Scottish wind instrument which bears a resemblance to the recorder. Despite its name, today tin whistles are usually made from brass, nickel, aluminium or plastic, though the cultural history of the whistle does owe a lot to tin. It has six finger holes and a mouthpiece, also known as a fipple. The player blows into it and uses their fingers to cover holes to make different notes. It makes a higher-pitched sound than the bagpipes and is often used in Celtic or Scottish folk music. People who play the bagpipes or the flute can often play the tin whistle too.



The accordion is another wind instrument but it uses bellows to make sound, rather than someone blowing into it. Many Scottish islanders play this instrument. It has one side which looks like a small piano and one side which has up to 120 buttons on it!

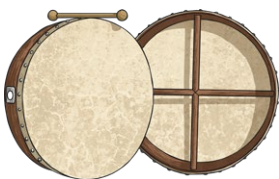


Stringed instruments are also used - and have been used for a long time - in traditional Scottish music. Some examples are the guitar, the harp and the fiddle. A harp is plucked with your fingers, and is so large that a harpist has to sit down to play it! In contrast, the fiddle is played by sitting the instrument under your chin. It has four strings and is played with a bow: the bow has lots of fine hairs that brush against the strings to make a noise. The fiddler puts pressure on the strings with their fingers in different places to make different pitches of note.



### Did You Know...?

- Due to the number of strings on the harp (up to 47), it can take many years to learn to play.
- The fiddle can also be called the violin, depending on the kind of music it is playing. 'Violin' is used for classical and jazz music, while 'fiddle' is used for folk, country and bluegrass.
- Violin bows are usually made out of real horse hair!



Another Scottish instrument is the bodhran. It is a hand-held drum, played with a special wooden beater with two ends.

Many of these instruments are played as part of a ceilidh band. A ceilidh is a special event where a band plays well known traditional tunes and people dance to the tunes. A ceilidh band often includes a guitar, a fiddle, an accordion and drums.



# Questions

1. What is Scottish folk music called?

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2. What is a 'tradition'?

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5. What are the Great Highland bagpipes known as in Gaelic?

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6. Can you name two Scottish bands who still use the bagpipes?

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7. What are tin whistles made from? Why do you think they are no longer made from tin?

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8. What is the name of the instrument which uses bellows to make sound?

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9. What is a ceilidh?

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10. Which of these instruments would you choose to play? Explain your answer.

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# Answers

1. What is Scottish folk music called?  
The name for Scottish folk music is Celtic music.
2. What is a 'tradition'?  
A tradition is a pattern or event that has happened for a long time and still happens today.
3. Why might people take up a traditional Scottish instrument?  
People often take up a traditional Scottish instrument because members of their family have played one, or because they like the sound it makes.
4. When were the bagpipes introduced to Scotland?  
It is thought that the bagpipes were introduced in the 6th century, over 1400 years ago.
5. What are the Great Highland bagpipes known as in Gaelic?  
The Great Highland bagpipes are known as the 'pìob mhó' in Gaelic.
6. Can you name two Scottish bands who still use the bagpipes?  
Any three from: Skerryvore, Skipinnish, Tidelines and The Peatbog Faeries.
7. What are tin whistles made from? Why do you think they are no longer made from tin?  
Tin whistles are usually made from brass, nickel, aluminium or plastic. Any reasonable answer such as: that these materials might make whistles stronger, cheaper or easier to manufacture.
8. What is the name of the instrument which uses bellows to make sound?  
The accordion uses bellows to make sound.
9. What is a ceilidh?  
A ceilidh is a special event where a band plays well-known Scottish songs and people dance to the songs.
10. Which of these instruments would you choose to play? Explain your answer.  
Children's own responses.