United kingdom

The United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland. A single [Kingdom of Great Britain](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Kingdom_of_Great_Britain" \o "Kingdom of Great Britain) resulted from the union of the [Kingdom of England](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Kingdom_of_England" \o "Kingdom of England)  and the [Kingdom of Scotland](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Kingdom_of_Scotland" \o "Kingdom of Scotland). In 1801, Great Britain [united](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Acts_of_Union_1800" \o "Acts of Union 1800) with the neighbouring [Kingdom of Ireland](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Kingdom_of_Ireland" \o "Kingdom of Ireland), forming the [United Kingdom of Great Britain and Ireland](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/United_Kingdom_of_Great_Britain_and_Ireland" \o "United Kingdom of Great Britain and Ireland), which was renamed the "United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland" after the [Irish Free State](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Irish_Free_State" \o "Irish Free State) seceded in 1922. The United Kingdom is a [unitary](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Unitary_state" \o "Unitary state) [parliamentary democracy](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Parliamentary_democracy" \o "Parliamentary democracy) and [constitutional monarchy](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Constitutional_monarchy" \o "Constitutional monarchy). The current[monarch](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Monarchy_of_the_United_Kingdom) is Queen [Elizabeth II](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Elizabeth_II" \o "Elizabeth II), who has reigned since 1952, making her the world's [longest-serving current head of state](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/List_of_current_state_leaders_by_date_of_assumption_of_office" \o "List of current state leaders by date of assumption of office). The United Kingdom's capital is [London](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/London" \o "London), a [global city](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Global_city" \o "Global city) and [financial centre](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Financial_centre" \o "Financial centre) with an urban area population of 10.3 million.



The national flag of the United Kingdom is the Union Jack, also known as the Union Flag. The current design of the Union Jack dates from the [Act of Union 1801](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Act_of_Union_1801" \o "Act of Union 1801) which united the [Kingdom of Great Britain](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Kingdom_of_Great_Britain" \o "Kingdom of Great Britain) and the [Kingdom of Ireland](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Kingdom_of_Ireland" \o "Kingdom of Ireland) (previously in [personal union](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Personal_union" \o "Personal union)) to create the [United Kingdom of Great Britain and Ireland](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/United_Kingdom_of_Great_Britain_and_Ireland" \o "United Kingdom of Great Britain and Ireland). The flag consists of the [red cross](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/St_George%27s_Cross" \o "St George's Cross) of [Saint George](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Saint_George" \o "Saint George) ([patron saint](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Patron_saint" \o "Patron saint) of [England](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/England" \o "England)), edged in white, superimposed on the [Cross of](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Saint_Patrick%27s_Flag" \o "Saint Patrick's Flag)[St Patrick](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/St_Patrick) (patron saint of [Ireland](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ireland" \o "Ireland)), which are superimposed on the [Saltire](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Flag_of_Scotland" \o "Flag of Scotland) of [Saint Andrew](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Saint_Andrew" \o "Saint Andrew) (patron saint of [Scotland](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Scotland" \o "Scotland)).[Wales](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Wales) is not represented in the Union Flag by Wales's patron saint, [Saint David](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Saint_David" \o "Saint David), as at the time the flag was designed Wales was part of the [Kingdom of England](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Kingdom_of_England" \o "Kingdom of England).

