



Farquharson on a clear winter's day

Scottish Heritage USA

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NOLLAIG CHRIDHEIL AGUS BLIADHNA MHATH UR

(Merry Christmas and Happy New Year)

Trees, tinsel and turkey all abound north of the English border at Christmas, yet the festive period in Scotland isn't quite the same as the rest of the UK. It's a much younger celebration for a start, the British Father Christmas goes under a different name and there's a real penchant for all things fiery. In addition, the Scots have their own name for New Year and it's celebrated like nowhere else.

Well into the 20th century, the Scottish Presbyterian Church upheld the Reformation's ban on Christmas so intensely that it discouraged festivities around the 25 December. Christmas was always a very low-key event and celebrated behind closed doors until 1958 when Christmas Day became a national holiday in Scotland. But even then, the Scots had to wait until 1974 to have an official day off on Boxing Day too.

Father Christmas in Britain and around the continent is just plain Santa in Scotland. Scottish Santa has plenty of help on hand too since the only reindeer in the UK live in Scotland. The 150-strong herd roam the Cairngorm Mountains and can be visited all year around. Weather statistics show that Scotland has more than 50% probability of a white Christmas. Plus, the top three cities in the UK most likely to see snow this year are in Scotland.

As in the rest of the UK and around the world, turkey will make an appearance on most dinner plates in Scotland. Also expect some of the following to show up:

Black Bun Fruitcake



Caboc Cheese



Scotch broth – a hearty and warming concoction of pearl barley in lamb or mutton stock.

Cock-a-leekie – if it's not broth in your bowl, it'll be this soup made with chicken and leek with pearl barley or rice.

Salmon – as home to some of the world's best salmon (and the UK's biggest food export) Scotland eats plenty of this fish at Christmas.

Cloutie dumpling – the Scottish answer to Christmas pudding and remarkably similar. Cloutie packs in raisins, cinnamon, spices and apples, but is boiled in a *clout* (cloth).

Black bun – more of a New Year tradition but black bun sometimes appears on Christmas dinner tables too. The rich, dark fruit cake comes wrapped in pastry and is served in slices, perhaps the ultimate winter comfort food.

Scottish cheeseboard – to tip you right over the edge, a board packed with some of the best cheeses in the UK. (*Creamy Caboc, the oldest cheese in Scotland and covered in toasted oatmeal; Lanark Blue, made with sheep's milk; Isle of Mull Cheddar; or the soft Bonchester cheese. All served with Bannock (oat) cakes.*)



Scottish Christmas

A Scottish Christmas may not always be white, but a real nip in the air is a given. So, it's no surprise to discover that many Scottish Christmas traditions involve fire. The **Yule log tradition** dates back to Viking times in the 8th century. The legend goes that those sitting round the fire while the Yule log burnt would enjoy prosperity and protection for the coming year.

To keep evil spirits away, **the Cailleach**, the 'Old Woman Winter' totem (*a piece of wood carved to represent the Cailleach*) would be tossed on the fire on Christmas Eve as a symbol of the destruction of winter.

A Burning a branch of rowan tree chases away bad feelings among friends and family.

Scottish homes traditionally keep a candle burning in their window during Christmas to welcome strangers.

Fires burn brightly outdoors too:

The **traditional torchlit parade in Edinburgh** on 30 December.

Stonehaven in Aberdeen hosts the Fireballs Ceremony held every New Year's Eve for over a century. With a piped band at the head of the parade, participants swing giant fireballs over their heads.

Europe's largest fire festival marks the end of Yuletide in Scotland. Taking place in Lerwick on the Shetland Islands, the torchlight procession ends with the symbolic burning of a replica Viking longship.

Christmas might not have been around for long in Scotland, but New Year's has. Known as Hogmanay, this is the country's biggest party. Celebrated throughout Scotland with a bang – fireworks, bonfires and plenty of whisky – Hogmanay starts towards the end of December and lasts officially until 2 January, giving the Scots two full days to recover.

The best-known Hogmanay tradition is probably the midnight singing of Auld Lang Syne (*Robbie Burns 1788*) to bring in the New Year.



THINKING ABOUT THE FUTURE AND A LASTING LEGACY

Planning for the future is something we mean to do, but don't always get around to doing. Setting up an endowment in your will is a good way for you to leave a personal legacy and support a cause that has meaning to you. Donating to a charity in your Will can:

- **Help sustain charities and touch people's lives.** Charities and non-profit organizations have limited budgets and often depend on private funding to continue doing their work. Leaving a legacy gift in your Last Will can help maintain a charitable organization and touch people's lives for years to come.
- **Leave a personal legacy.** Planned giving is an opportunity to contribute to a cause that's meaningful to you. An endowment to a foundation that made a difference in your life will allow your memory to live on.
- **Offer financial benefits.** Depending on the type of gift you make, you or your estate can enjoy certain tax advantages. For example, *to lower your tax burden during your lifetime, you can create a life insurance policy with a charity as the beneficiary and claim the annual cost as a charitable donation.* If you'd like to reduce your estate tax burden after your death, you can make a monetary donation in your Last Will.



Please contact our office if you wish to include Scottish Heritage in your Estate Planning.



RECIPE CORNER

CULLEN SKINK is a traditional Scottish smoked haddock recipe. It is a fine Scottish soup of great taste and simplicity. This Cullen Skink recipe was provided by Kris Burrin, the exceptional English chef of The Seasons Restaurant in Stonington, Maine.

Serves 4

- 2 medium onions
- 2 pints full-fat milk
- 1 bay leaf
- 1 pound Finnan Haddie
- 2 ounces butter
- 24 ounces potatoes cut into 1-inch cubes
- 85 milliliter (2.8 ounces) heavy cream
- Salt and fresh-ground black pepper
- 2 tablespoons chopped fresh parsley

1. Peel one of the onions, cut in half and put into a pan with the milk and bay leaf; bring just to the boil, then simmer gently for 5 minutes.
2. Add the Finnan haddie and simmer for 4 minutes. Lift the fish out onto a plate and pour the liquid into a jug. When the Finnan haddie is cool enough to handle, remove skin, flake into large pieces and set aside.
3. Peel and finely chop the remaining onion. Melt the butter in a large pan, add the onion and cook over a gentle heat for 5 minutes, until softened but not brown. Add the reserved milk and diced potatoes. Bring to the boil, then simmer gently for 10 minutes, until the potatoes are cooked but still just firm.
4. Spoon out about half the potatoes, mash and return to thicken. Add the heavy cream and Finnan Haddie chunks, season with a little salt and pepper and warm through for 1-2 minutes. **DO NOT BOIL.**



NOTE: *Finnan Haddie and a number of other Scottish foods can be found at the Scottish Grocer www.thescottishgrocer.com*

FINNAN HADDIE SONG

Young Tom was a red haired Findon lad,
He worked out of the harbor,
At night when he lay down in his bed,
He dreamt of kippers an' beer.

At dawn when the mist lay o'er the ground,
Young Tom would go out fishin',
He'd dry his catch out in the sun for all the laddies to see.

Chorus:

Finnan Haddie was a fav'rite dish;
Made of milk an' made of fish.
Codfish taken from the briny sea
An' we'll all eat Finnan Haddie.

Now, Tom had his eye on many things
An' first of these was Maddie.
She came from the village wearin' green attractin' all the ladies.
So, Tom went an' bought a brand-new coat,

In hopes of 'tractin' Maddie.

But when she saw him, she replied "Can I buy some Finnan Haddie?"

Chorus

Heavin' the nets up, Heigh ho, feelin' the North wind blow
Feelin' the sting of sea spray high an' low.
Heavin' the nets up, Heave ho, codfish again to show.
Load up the catch an' ride, it's home we go!

Now Tom was convinced of one sure thing,
He had to marry Maddie.

He proposed on one knee but she replied
"You smell like Finnan Haddie!"

Chorus

NB: *Several renditions can be found on YouTube*

The Board of Scottish Heritage USA send all our members our very best wishes for the Holidays especially during these exceptional times.

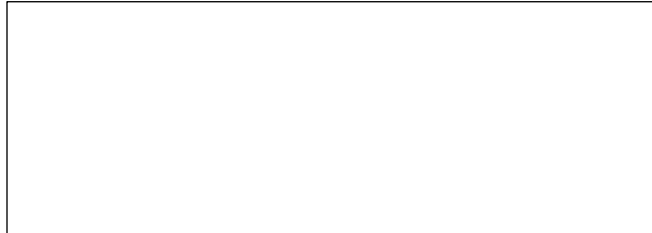
We thank you for your continued support.

Let us hope that 2021 will be a better year for all of us!





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SCOTTISH KNOWLEDGE QUIZ

1. What is set alight during the Shetland festival of Up-Helly-Aa? (if you read this newsletter, you will know this answer).
2. What was Flora Macdonald's husband's name?
3. Which castle is the largest in Scotland?
4. Which university in Scotland was the first to have a chair in medicine?
5. Who scored the first hole-in-one recorded in the British Open?
6. Where was the first 18-hole golf course in Scotland?
7. When was the first Edinburgh Military Tattoo?
8. In what year was the island of St. Kilda abandoned?
9. What is Scapa Flow famous for?
10. Where did the Black Dinner of 1440 take place?

Bonus: When was universal male suffrage granted in Scotland?

1. Viking Longship 2. Allan Macdonald of Kingsburgh 3. Edinburgh castle 4. Aberdeen university 5. 'Young Tom' Morris 6. St. Andrews 7. 1949 8. 1930 9. A sunken German fleet 10. Edinburgh Castle

BONUS: 1918



Scottish Heritage now has a presence on facebook – just look for Scottish Heritage USA or follow the link below:

<https://www.facebook.com/groups/698401680928383>

ODD SCOTTISH LAWS

The 'unofficial' flag of Scotland, the **Lion Rampant** is historically a belonging of the King or Queen of Scotland. As such, according to an Act of Parliament passed in 1672, it is an offence to fly the flag unless on a royal residence or with the permission of a monarch.

A whale's head: Keeping in the theme of the royals, the head of any whale washed up on a Scottish beach is supposed to become the possession of the King – with the Queen taking possession of its tail.

Fishing on Sunday: Confirmed by the Salmon Fisheries (Scotland) Act of 1862, it is illegal to fish for salmon on a Sunday in Scotland. It is also illegal to "be found handling a salmon in *suspicious circumstances*."

Gambling in a library: The Library Offences Act in 1898 has outlawed gambling in a library. The act, which prohibits gambling in the venues, also includes banning obscene or abusive language – with fines reaching up to 40 shillings

