I'm not a bot



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From the 16th century onwards, tartan was increasingly used as an expression of Scottishness. This was particularly observable during the Jacobite rebellions, when tartan was worn to show support for King James VII of Scotland and II of England after the Glorious Revolution. Certain tartans in particular - such as the Jacobite pattern designed in
Edinburgh in 1713 - could be used to broadcast allegiances without fear of repercussion. As Pittock explains, "If a Jacobite wore tartan, they couldn't be prosecuted under English treason legislation because they were merely wearing an item of clothing. They weren't saying anything out loud. This posed a massive problem for the British
government."On the podcast | Murray Pittock on Scottish clansIn an attempt to curtail such obvious defiance, tartan was later banned under the Dress Act of 1746, as part of the Act of Proscription. This made wearing highland dress illegal in Scotland, with exception to those who were in the British Army. The law, however, wasn't strictly followed.
"It was recorded by one observer that 90 per cent of the women in Edinburgh were still wearing plaid in 1747," explains Pittock. The Act was later repealed in 1782, by which point highland dress had become less common. While often associated with wider Scottish identity, tartans were used to signify clan allegiances from very early on. However, the
colours we associate with familial clans today are perhaps more modern than might be expected - and not necessarily accurate. Many stem from the weaving industry formed by the Sobieski Stuart brothers during the 1830s
and 1840s. These English brothers had taken on new identities in Scotland and falsified their claim to descent from a royal line, but wrote two fantastical - and inaccurate - histories that were later widely used as source material for the Scotland and falsified their claim to descent from a royal line, but wrote two fantastical - and inaccurate - histories that were later widely used as source material for the Scotland and falsified their claim to descent from a royal line, but wrote two fantastical - and inaccurate - histories that were later widely used as source material for the Scotland and falsified their claim to descent from a royal line, but wrote two fantastical - and inaccurate - histories that were later widely used as source material for the Scotland and falsified their claim to descent from a royal line, but wrote two fantastical - and inaccurate - histories that were later widely used as source material for the Scotland and falsified their claim to descent from a royal line, but wrote two fantastical - and inaccurate - histories that were later widely used as source material for the Scotland and falsified their claim to descent from a royal line, but wrote two fantastical - and inaccurate - histories that were later widely used as source material for the Scotland and falsified their claim to descent from a royal line, but wrote two fantastical - and inaccurate - histories that were later widely used as source material for the Scotland and falsified their claim to descent from a royal line, but wrote two fantastical - and inaccurate - histories that were later widely used as source material for the scotland and falsified their claim to descent from a royal line, but wrote two fantastical - and inaccurate - histories that were later widely used as source material for the scotland and falsified their claim to descent from a royal line widely used as source material for the scotland and falsified their claim to descent from a royal line widely used as source widely used as source material for the sco
only by the clan chief and his immediate family or retinue. To produce such vibrant colours such as red and yellow was expensive, as the dyes had to be imported. They would only be worn by an elite few, as not everybody could afford them. You wouldn't have seen a regimented clan all wearing the same tartanProfessor Murray Pittock"You wouldn't
have seen a regimented clan all wearing the same tartan," comments Pittock. "The conventional argument would be that this was because there weren't really any 'clan tartans'. But that's just not true. There were patterns which were associated with clans, but only people of the officer class could have possibly afforded the brightest colours." Read
more | 10 things you probably didn't know about Scottish historyThe associated with particular families and there was a growing perception that you were not supposed to wear a certain tartan unless you were a member
of that family (with exception of a few patterns such as the Black Watch and Royal Stewart, which were widely accessible). Pittock argues that this was "a way of creating an ethnic identity for Scots within the wider British empire" and was often linked to military identity. To this day, formal dress for men who wear the kilt looks quasi-regimental with
epaulettes and metal buttons." From made-up histories to common misconceptions, the history of tartan can be a confusing one. "We are still struggling out from under some of the mythology that's accumulated around the clans," explains Pittock. "Although tartan was often linked to families historically, it was much more broadly linked to allegiance,
identity and association." Professor Murray Pittock is Bradley Professor at the University of Glasgow and a Member of the European Academy: his book, Scotland's most iconic cultural symbols, representing a deep and fascinating history
that dates back centuries. This distinctive woven pattern of intersecting stripes and colours has evolved from a simple Highland tradition to a global emblem of Scottish heritage. The earliest evidence of tartan dates back over 3,000 years, with fabric remnants found in Central Europe. However, the tartan we recognise today became closely
associated with Scotland around the 16th century, when different regions and clans began adopting unique patterns. By the 17th and 18th centuries, tartan became a key part of Highland culture. Various Scottish clans adopted their own tartan designs, distinguishing themselves by unique colour patterns and weaves. Wearing a clan tartan became a
badge of pride and loyalty. Following the Jacobite Rebellions in 1745, the British government saw Highland culture as a threat and passed the Dress Act of 1746, making it illegal to wear tartan. This ban lasted nearly 40 years, until it was lifted in 1782, allowing tartan to flourish once again. The romanticism of Scotland in the 19th century,
particularly by King George IV's visit in 1822, helped revive tartan's popularity. Queen Victoria further embraced Scottish traditions, making tartan a symbol of Scottish pride but also in fashion, military uniforms, and even sports. The Scottish Register of Tartans,
established in 2008, officially records new tartan designs, ensuring the tradition continues. Looking for your family tartan? Use our Tartan Finder Tool to explore historic and modern tartans and their significance. From ancient Highland warriors to modern tartans and their significance. From ancient Highland warriors to modern tartan designs, ensuring the tradition continues.
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necessary for your intended use. For example, other rights such as publicity, privacy, or moral rights may limit how you use the material. Predominantly Scottish cloth pattern For other uses, see Tartan (disambiguation). It has been suggested that this article be split into a new article titled History of tartan. (Discuss) (April 2025) This article may be
too long to read and navigate comfortably. When this tag was added, its readable prose size was 33,000 words. Consider splitting content into sub-articles, condensing it, or adding subheadings. Please discuss this issue on the article's talk page. (June 2023) Three tartans; the left and right are made with the "modern" dye palette; the middle is made
with "muted" colours. Tartans come in a wide variety of colours and patterns. 1970s Missoni tartan knit jumper (sweater) and skirt set Part of a series on the Culture of Scotland History Timeline Prehistoric Roman times Middle Ages Kingdom High Middle Ages Carly Middle Ages Kingdom High Middle Ages Carly Middle Ages 
Renaissance Early modern Reformation Colonisation of the Americas Glorious Revolution Treaty of Union Jacobitism Enlightenment Lowland Clearances Industrial Revolution Romanticism Modern People Languages Scottish Gaelic Broad Scots Scottish Gaelic Broad Scottish Gae
of the Clavie Burns supper Common Riding Crofting Saining Scots law Scottish clan Skalk Up Helly Aa Units of measurement Mythology and folklore Cuisine Festivals St. Andrew's Day Hogmanay Burns supper Tartan Day Lanimer Day Imbolc Bealltainn/May Day Lùnastal Samhainn Religion Art Literature Music and performing arts Folk music
Scottish highland dance Scottish country dance Scottish sword dances Mod Keening Waulking song Opera Puirt à beul Border Ballad Media Radio Television Cinema Sport Golf Curling Football Haggis hurling Hailes Highland games Horse racing Rugby sevens Rugby union Shinty Shot put Monuments World Heritage Sites Symbols Flag Coat of arms
National anthem Lion Rampant Thistle Tartan Celtic cross Celtic knot Scottish inventions and discoveries Scotland portalvte Tartan or plaid (/plæd/; Scottish Gaelic: breacan ['priexken]) is a patterned cloth consisting of crossing horizontal and vertical bands in multiple colours, forming repeating symmetrical patterns known as setts. Originating in
woven wool, tartan is most strongly associated with Scotland, where it has been used for centuries in traditional clothing such as the kilt. Historically, specific tartans were linked to Scottish identity, especially from the 16th century
onward, despite bans following the Jacobite rising of 1745 under the Dress Act 1746. The 19th-century Highland Revival popularized tartan globally, associating it with Highland dress and the Scottish diaspora. Today, tartan is used worldwide in clothing, accessories, and design, transcending its traditional roots. Modern tartans are registered for
organisations, individuals, and commemorative purposes, with thousands of designs in the Scottish Register of Tartans. While often linked to Scottish heritage, tartans exist in other cultures, such as Africa, East and South Asia, and Eastern Europe. They also serve institutional roles, like military uniforms and corporate branding. Tartan patterns vary
in complexity, from simple two-colour designs to intricate motifs with over twenty hues. Colours historically derived from natural dyes, such as lichens and alder bark, are now produced synthetically. The English and Scots word tartan is possibly derived from French tiretaine meaning 'linsey-woolsey cloth'.[1][2][3] Other hypotheses are that it derives
from Scottish Gaelic tarsainn or tarsuinn, meaning 'across' or 'crossing over';[2][3] or from French tartarin or tartaryn (occurring in 1454 spelled tartyn)[4] meaning 'Tartar cloth'.[1] It is unrelated to the superficially similar word tartaryn (occurring in 1454 spelled tartyn)[4] meaning 'Tartar cloth'.[1] It is unrelated to the superficially similar word tartaryn (occurring in 1454 spelled tartyn)[4] meaning 'Tartar cloth'.[1] It is unrelated to the superficially similar word tartaryn (occurring in 1454 spelled tartyn)[4] meaning 'Tartar cloth'.[1] It is unrelated to the superficially similar word tartaryn (occurring in 1454 spelled tartyn)[4] meaning 'Tartar cloth'.[1] It is unrelated to the superficially similar word tartaryn (occurring in 1454 spelled tartyn)[4] meaning 'Tartar cloth'.[1] It is unrelated to the superficially similar word tartaryn (occurring in 1454 spelled tartyn)[4] meaning 'Tartar cloth'.[1] It is unrelated to the superficially similar word tartaryn (occurring in 1454 spelled tartyn)[4] meaning 'Tartar cloth'.[1] It is unrelated to the superficially similar word tartaryn (occurring in 1454 spelled tartyn)[4] meaning 'Tartar cloth'.[1] It is unrelated to the superficially similar word tartaryn (occurring in 1454 spelled tartyn)[4] meaning 'Tartar cloth'.[1] It is unrelated to the superficially similar word tartaryn (occurring in 1454 spelled tartyn)[4] meaning 'Tartar cloth'.[1] It is unrelated to the superficially similar word tartaryn (occurring in 1454 spelled tartyn)[4] meaning 'Tartar cloth'.[1] It is unrelated to the superficially similar word tartaryn (occurring in 1454 spelled tartyn)[4] meaning 'Tartar cloth'.[1] It is unrelated to the superficially similar word tartaryn (occurring in 1454 spelled tartyn)[4] meaning 'Tartar cloth'.[1] It is unrelated to the superficially similar word tartaryn (occurring in 1454 spelled tartyn)[4] meaning 'Tartar cloth'.[1] It is unrelated to the superficially similar word tartaryn (occurring in 1454 spelled tartyn)[4] meaning 'Tartar cloth'.[1]
tartan") and a count noun ("12 different tartans"). Today, tartan refers to coloured pattern at all, as it referred to the type of weave; as late as the 1820s, some tartan cloth was described as "plain coloured ... without pattern".[5][6] Patterned cloth from the Gaelic-speaking Scottish Highlands
was called breacan, meaning 'many colours'. Over time, the meanings of tartan and breacan were combined to describe a certain type of cloth.[6] The pattern on a certain type of cloth.[6] The patter
term setting is occasionally used.[7] Sett can refer to either the minimal visual presentation of the complete tartan pattern or to a textual representation of it (in a thread count).[6] Today tartan is used more generally to describe the pattern, not limited to textiles, appearing on media such as paper, plastics, packaging, and wall coverings.[8][6][9][10]
In North America, the term plaid is commonly used to refer to tartan.[11][12][13][a] Plaid, derived from the Scottish Gaelic plaide meaning 'blanket',[16][b] was first used of any rectangular garment, sometimes made up of tartan,[c] which could be worn several ways: the belted plaid (breacan féile) or "great kilt" which preceded the modern kilt; the
arisaid (earasaid), a large shawl that could be wrapped into a dress; and several types of shoulder cape, such as the full plaid and fly plaid. In time, plaid was used to describe blankets themselves.[12] In former times, the term plaiding[20] or pladding[21] was sometimes used to refer to tartan cloth. Visualisation of 2/2 twill weave: the black weft
threads go two over then two under the orange warp threads, staggered by one thread each pass (resulting in a diagonal pattern). In the actual cloth, the white gaps would be closed. The Scottish Register of Tartans provides the following summary definition of tartans:[22] Tartan (the design) is a pattern that comprises two or more different solid-
coloured stripes that can be of similar but are usually of differing proportions that repeat in a defined sequence. The majority of such patterns (or setts) are symmetrical, i.e. the pattern repeats in the same colour order and
proportions in every direction from the two pivot points. In the less common asymmetric patterns, the colour sequence of warp and weft remain the same. Close-up view of traditional tartan cloth, showing pattern of diagonal "ribs" of colour; this is a five-colour
tartan, in scarlet red, black, yellow, azure blue, and crimson red. In more detail, traditional tartan cloth is a tight, staggered 2/2 twill weave of worsted wool: the horizontal weft (also woof or fill) is woven in a simple arrangement of two-over-two-under the fixed, vertical warp, advancing one thread at each pass. [15] As each thread in the weft crosses
threads in the warp, the staggering by one means that each warp thread will also cross two weft threads. The result, when the material is examined closely, is a characteristic 45-degree diagonal pattern of "ribs" where different colours cross.[6][23] Where a thread in the weft crosses threads of the same colour in the warp, this produces a solid colour
on the tartan, while a weft thread crossing warp threads of a different colour produces an equal admixture of the two colours alternating, producing the appearance of a third colour halftone printing, or cross-hatching in coloured-pencil art.)
[6] Thus, a set of two base colours produces three different colours produces fifteen blends and a total of twenty-one different perceived colours. [6][25][d] This means that the more stripes and colours used, the more blurred and subdued the
tartan's pattern becomes.[6][24] Unlike in simple checker (chequer) or dicing patterns (like a chessboard), no solid colours may touch at their corners).[26] James D. Scarlett (2008) offered a definition of a usual tartan pattern (some types of tartan deviate from the
particulars of this definition - see below):[6] The unit of tartan pattern, the sett, is a square, composed of a number of rectangles, square and oblong, arranged symmetrically around a central square. Each of these elements occurs four times, at intervals of ninety degrees, and each is rotated ninety degrees in relation to its fellows. The proportions of
the elements are determined by the relative widths of the stripes that form them. The sequence of thread colours in the sett (the minimal design of the tartan, to be duplicated [6] - "the DNA of a tartan"), [27] starts at an edge and either reverses or (rarely) repeats on what are called pivot points or pivots. [28] In diagram A, the sett begins at the first
pivot, reverses at the second pivot, continues, then reverses again at the next pivot, and will carry on in this manner horizontally. In diagram B, the sett proceeds in the same way as in the warp but vertically. The diagrams illustrate the construction of a typical symmetric [29] (also symmetrical, [27] reflective, [27] reversing, [30] or mirroring) [31] [e]
tartan. However, on a rare asymmetric[33] (asymmetrical,[27] or non-reversing)[33][f] tartan, the sett does not reverse at the pivots, it just repeats at them.[g] An old term for the latter type is cheek or cheek pattern.[35] Also, some tartans (very few among traditional Scottish tartans) do not have exactly the same sett for the warp and weft. This
tartan is recorded by counting the threads of each colour that appear in the sett.[i] The thread count (or threadcount, thread-count) not only describes the width of the stripes on a sett, but also the colours used (typically abbreviated).[27] Usually every number in a thread count is an even number[42] to assist in manufacture. The first and last thread-count
of the thread count are the pivots. [28] A thread count combined with exact colour information and other weaving details is referred to as a ticket stamp[43] or simply ticket. [44] Tartan weaving in Lochcarron, Scottish Highlands There is no universally standardised way to write a thread count, [37] but the different systems are easy to distinguish. As a
simple example: The thread count "/K4 R24 K24 Y4/" corresponds to a mirroring pattern of 4 black threads, 24 red threads, 24 black threads, 4 yellow threads, in which the beginning black and ending yellow pivots are not repeated (after Y4/, the colours are reversed, first K24 then R24); this is a "full-count at the pivots" thread count.[28] An
equivalent notation is boldfacing the pivot abbreviations: K4 R24 K24 Y4. The same tartan could also be represented as "K/2 R24 K24 Y/2", in markup that indicates that the leading black and trailing yellow are duplicated before continuing from these pivot points (after Y/2, the colours are reversed as Y/2 again, then K24, then R24); this is a "half-
count at the pivots" thread count.[27] In the older and potentially ambiguous style of thread-counting, without the "/" (or bold) notation, a thread count like "K4 R24 K24 Y4" is assumed to be full-count at the pivots, unless the author clearly indicates otherwise.[28][37][j] In all of these cases, the result is a half-sett thread count, which represents the
the way of a colour swap;[45] but this is not a common style of thread-counting. An asymmetric tartan, one that does not mirror, would be represented in a full-sett thread count with "..." markup, as "...K4 R24 K24 Y4..." (after Y4, the entire pattern would begin again from K4).[27] Various writers and tartan databases do not use a consistent set of
colour names (see § Colour, palettes, and meaning, below) and abbreviations, [46] so a thread count at the pivot with the colour name (or abbreviation) that is first in alphabetical order (e.g. if there is a white pivot and a blue one, begin
with blue),[27] but this is actually arbitrary. Though thread counts are quite specific, they can be modified depending on the desired size for kilts)[27] may be too large to fit upon the face of a necktie. In this case, the thread count would be reduced in proportion (e.g.
to 3 inches to a side).[37] In some works, a thread count is reduced to the smallest even number of threads (often down to 2) required to accurately reproduce the design;[28] in such a case, it is often necessary to up-scale the thread for
the weft that was up to 1/3 thicker than the fine thread used for the warp,[6] which would result in a rectangular rather to square,[23] or make it non-square on purpose, as is still done in a handful of traditional tartans.[h] Uneven warp-and-weft thread
thickness could also contribute to a striped rather than checked appearance in some tartan samples.[47] The predominant colours of a tartan (the widest bands) are called the under-check, 
dominant colour. Thin, contrasting lines are referred to as the over-check[51][50] (also over-stripe or overstripe).[52] Over-checks are sometimes bordered on either side (usually both), for extra contrast, by additional thin lines, often black, called guard
bagpiper's full plaid (royal Stuart tartan), showing the purled fringe style typical for such garments An old-time practice, to the 18th century, was to add an accent on plaids or sometimes kilts in the form of a selvedge in herringbone weave at the edge, 1-3 inches (2.5-7.6 cm) wide, but still fitting into the colour pattern of the sett;[57][58] a few
modern weavers will still produce some tartan in this style. Sometimes more decorative selvedges were used: Selvedge marks were borders (usually on one side only) formed by repeating a colour from the sett in a broad band (often in herringbone), sometimes further bordered by a thin strip of another colour from the sett or decorated in mid-
on household tartans (blankets, curtains, etc.), and on two opposing sides of the fabric.[60][57] The very rare total border is an all-four-sides selvedge of a completely different sett; described by Peter Eslea MacDonald (2019) as "an extraordinarily difficult feature to weave and can be regarded as the zenith of the tartan weaver's art",[57] it only
survives in Scottish-style tartan as a handful of 18th-century samples (in Scotland[61] and Nova Scotia, Canada, but probably all originally from Scotland).[62] The style has also been used in Estonia in the weaving of suurrätt shawls/plaids. 18th-century tartan with a herringbone selvedge at the bottom (detail) Black Watch tartan with a selvedge mark
at the bottom (also herringbone) (detail) Wilsons 1819 blanket tartan with a selvedge pattern on the right Bottom-right corner of blanket with total border selvedge; approximation based on photo of real blanket discovered in Nova Scotia, but probably Scottish, c. 1780s Tartan is usually woven balanced-warp (or just balanced), repeating evenly from a
pivot point at the centre outwards and with a complete sett finishing at the outer selvedge; [7][63][64] e.g. a piece of tartan for a plaid might be 24 setts long and 4 wide. An offset, or unbalanced weave is one in which the pattern finishes at the edge in the middle of a pivot colour; this was typically done with pieces intended to be joined (e.g.
for a belted plaid or a blanket) to make larger spans of cloth with the pattern continuing across the seam;[7][64] if the tartan had a selvedge mark or selvedge pattern, it was at the other side of the warp.[65] The term hard tartan refers to a version of the cloth woven with very tightly wound, non-fuzzy thread, producing a comparatively rougher and
denser (though also thinner) material than is now typical for kilts.[66][67] It was in common use up until the 1830s.[47] There are extant but uncommon samples of hard tartan from the early 18th century that use the more intricate herringbone instead of twill weave throughout the entire cloth.[68] While modern tartan is primarily a commercial
enterprise on large power looms, tartan was originally the product of rural weavers of the pre-industrial age, and can be produced by a dedicated hobbyist with a strong, stable hand loom.[69][70][71] Since around 1808, the traditional size of the warp reed for tartan is 37 inches (94 cm), the length of the Scottish ell (previous sizes were sometimes 34 inches (194 cm), the length of the Scottish ell (previous sizes were sometimes 34 inches (194 cm)).
and 40 inches).[72] Telfer Dunbar (1979) describes the setup thus:[72] The reed varies in thickness according to the texture of the material to be woven. A thirty-Porter (which contains 20 splits of the reed) or 600-reed, is divided into 600 openings in the breadth of 37 inches. Twenty of these openings are called a Porter and into each opening are put
two threads, making 1,200 threads of warp and as many of weft in a square yard of tartan through a 30-Porter reed. Splits are also referred to as dents, and Porters are also referred to as dents, and Porters are also referred to as dents, and Porters are also referred to as dents, and Porter reed. Splits are also referred to as dents, and Porters are also referred to as dents, and Porter reed.
of one or more other colours). A variant on this splits one or more of the bands, to form squares instead of just big, solid squares; a style heavily favoured in Vestiarium Scoticum. A complexity step up is the superimposed check, in which a third colour is placed centrally "on top of" or "inside" (surrounded by) one of the base under-
check colours, providing a pattern of nested squares, which might then also have thin, bright and/or black over-checks added. Another group is multiple checks, typically of two broad bands of colour on a single dominant "background" (e.g. red, blue, red, green, red - again possibly with contrasting narrow over-checks). The aforementioned types can
be combined into more complex tartans. In any of these styles, an over-check is sometimes not a new colour but one of the under-check colours "on top of" the other under-check is sometimes not a new colour but one of the under-check colours "on top of" the other under-check is sometimes not a new colour but one of the under-check colours "on top of" the other under-check is sometimes not a new colour but one of the under-check colours "on top of" the other under-check is sometimes not a new colour but one of the under-check colours "on top of" the other under-check is sometimes not a new colour but one of the under-check colours "on top of" the other under-check is sometimes not a new colour but one of the under-check is sometimes not a new colour but one of the under-check is sometimes not a new colour but one of the under-check is sometimes not a new colour but one of the under-check is sometimes not a new colour but one of the under-check is sometimes not a new colour but one of the under-check is sometimes not a new colour but one of the under-check is sometimes not a new colour but one of the under-check is sometimes not a new colour but one of the under-check is sometimes not a new colour but one of the under-check is sometimes not a new colour but one of the under-check is sometimes not a new colour but one of the under-check is sometimes not a new colour but one of the under-check is sometimes not a new colour but one of the under-check is sometimes not a new colour but one of the under-check is sometimes not a new colour but one of the under-check is sometimes not a new colour but one of the under-check is sometimes not a new colour but one of the under-check is sometimes not a new colour but one of the under-check is sometimes not a new colour but one of the under-check is sometimes not a new colour but one of the under-check is sometimes not a new colour but one of the under-check is sometimes not a new colour but one of the under-check is sometimes not a new colour but one of the under-check is some
grouped, "on" a single ground colour, usually white.[74] M. Martin (1703) reported that the line colours were typically blue, black, and red.[75] Examples of this style do not survive, [76] at least not in the tartan databases (there may be preserved museum pieces with such patterns).[m] Some tartan patterns are more abstract and do not fit into any of
these styles,[78] especially in madras cloth (see § Indian madras, below). Most basic check - MacGregor red-and-green
with a wide green band split into three to form a "square of squares", then laced with a white over-checks. Multiple checks - Davidson, a green ground with equal blue and black bands, then with red, blue, and black over-checks. Multiple checks - Davidson, a green ground with equal blue and black bands, then with red, blue, and black over-checks.
checks. Complex example - Ross, combines split-check and multiple-check styles, with one blue and two green split checks on red, with blue and green over-checks. There are no codified rules or principles of tartan design, but a few writers have offered some considered opinions. Banks & de La Chapelle (2007) summarized, with a view to broad
general tartan use, including for fashion: "Color - and how it is worked - is pivotal to tartan design.... Thus, tartans should be composed of clear, bright colors, but ones sufficiently soft to blend well and thereby create new shades." James D. Scarlett (2008) noted: "the more colours to begin with, the more subdued the final effect",[50] or put more
precisely, "the more stripes to the sett and the more colours used, the more diffuse and 'blurred' the pattern".[6] That does not necessarily translate into subtlety; a tartan of many colours and stripes can seem "busy".[79] Scarlett (2008), after extensive research into historical Highland patterns (which were dominated by rich red and medium green in
about equal weight with dark blue as a blending accent - not accounting for common black lines), suggested that for a balanced and traditional style:[6] any basic tartan type of design should have for its background, a "high impact" colour and two others, of which one should be the complement to the first and the other a darker and more neutral
simple check with a few lines of contrasting colours scattered over it. Scarlett (1990) provided a more general explanation, traditional styles aside:[80] Colours for tartan work require to be clear and unambiguous and bright but soft, to give good contrast of both colour and brightness and to mix well so as to give distinctly new shades where two
colours cross without any one swamping another. Further, Scarlett (1990) held that "background checks will show a firm but not harsh contrast and the overchecks will be such as to show clearly" on the under-check (or "background") colours.[50] He summed up the desired total result as "a harmonious blend of colour and pattern worthy to be looked
upon as an art form in its own right".[81] Omitting traditional black lines has a strong softening effect, as in the 1970s Missoni fashion ensemble (top right) and in many madras patterns (see § Indian madras, below). A Scottish black-less design (now the Mar dress tartan) dates to the 18th century;[82] another is Ruthven (1842, above), and many of
the Ross tartans (e.g. 1886, above), as well as several of the Victorian-Edwardian MacDougal[1] designs, [83] are further examples. Various modern tartans also use this effect, e.g. Canadian Maple Leaf (1964, at § Regional, below). Clever use of black or another dark colour can produce a visual perception of depth. [84] See also: Traditional dyes of the
Scottish Highlands The brighter of the MacLeod tartans, known affectionately as the "loud MacLeod", in the saturated modern palette. There is no set of exact colour standards for tartan hues; thread colour varies from weaver to weaver even for "the same" colour.[85] A certain range of general colours, however, are traditional in Scottish tartan.
These include blue (dark), crimson (rose or dark red), green (medium-dark), black, grey (medium-dark), purple, red (scarlet or bright), tan/brown, white (actually natural undyed wool, called lachdann in Gaelic),[86][n] and yellow.[45][6][o] Some additional colours that have been used more rarely are azure (light or sky blue), maroon, and vert (bright), tan/brown, white (actually natural undyed wool, called lachdann in Gaelic),[86][n] and yellow.[45][6][o] Some additional colours that have been used more rarely are azure (light or sky blue), maroon, and vert (bright or sky blue).
or grass green),[45] plus light grey (as seen in Balmoral tartan, though it is sometimes given as lavender).[89] Since the opening of the tartan databases to registration of newly designed tartans, including many for organisational and fashion purposes, a wider range of colours have been involved, such as orange[90] and pink,[91] which were not often
used (as distinct colours rather than as renditional list, with additional tartans.[p] The Scottish Register of Tartans uses a long list of colours keyed to hexadecimal "Web colours", sorting groups of hues into a constrained set of basic codes (but expanded upon the above traditional list, with additional options like dark orange, dark yellow, light
purple, etc.).[92] This helps designers fit their creative tartan into a coding scheme while allowing weavers to produce an approximation of that design from readily stocked yarn supplies. In the mid-19th century, the natural dyes that had been traditionally used in the Highlands[24][93][94][q] (like various lichens, alder bark, bilberry, cochineal,
 heather, indigo, woad, and yellow bedstraw) began to be replaced by artificial dyes, which were easier to use and were more economic for the booming tartan industry,[95] though also less subtle.[96] Although William Morris in the late-19th-century Arts and Crafts movement tried to revive use of British natural dyes, most were so low-yield and so
inconsistent from locality to locality to locality (part of the reason for the historical tartan differentiation by area) that they proved to have little mass-production potential, despite some purple dye (cudbear) commercialisation efforts in Glasgow in the 18th century.[95] The hard-wound, fine wool used in tartan weaving was rather resistant to natural dyes, and
some dye baths required days or even weeks.[95] The dyeing also required mordants to fix the colours permanently, usually metallic salts like alum; there are records from 1491 of alum being imported to Leith, though not necessarily all for tartan production in particular.[97] Some colours of dye were usually imported, especially red cochineal and to
some extent blue indigo (both expensive and used to deepen native dyes), from the Low Countries, with which Scotland had extensive trade since the 15th century.[98] Aged human urine (called fual or graith) was also used, as a colour-deepener, a dye solubility agent, a lichen fermenter, and a final colour-fastness treatment.[99] All commercially
manufactured tartan today is coloured using artificial not natural dyes, even in the less saturated colour palettes. [100][101] The hues of colours in any established tartan can be altered to produce variations of the same tartan. Such varying of the hues to taste dates to at least the 1788 pattern book of manufacturer William Wilson & Son of
Bannockburn.[102] Today, the semi-standardised colour schemes or palettes (what marketers might call "colourways")[103] are divided generally into modern, ancient, muted, and weathered (sometimes with other names, depending on weaver). These terms only refer to relative dye "colourfulness" saturation levels and do not represent distinct
tartans.[104][105] Modern Also known as ordinary; refers to darker tartan, with fully saturated colours.[101][105] In a modern palette, setts made up of blue, black, and green tend to be obscured because of the darkness of the colours in this scheme.[101] Ancient Also known as old colours (OC); refers to a lighter palette of tartan. These hues are
ostensibly meant to represent the colours that would result from natural-dyed fabric aging over time. However, the results are not accurate (e.g., in real examples of very old tartan, black often fades toward khaki[101] or green[106] while blue remains dark;[101] and natural dyes are capable of producing some very vibrant colours in the first place,
though not very consistently).[105][80][107] This style originated in the first half of the 20th century.[108][105] This ancient is not to be confused with the same word in a few names of tartans such as "ancient is not to be confused with the same word in the first half of the 20th century.[108][107] This ancient is not to be confused with the same word in a few names of tartans such as "ancient is not to be confused with the same word in a few names of tartans such as "ancient is not to be confused with the same word in a few names of tartans such as "ancient is not to be confused with the same word in a few names of tartans such as "ancient is not to be confused with the same word in a few names of tartans such as "ancient is not to be confused with the same word in a few names of tartans such as "ancient is not to be confused with the same word in a few names of tartans such as "ancient is not to be confused with the same word in a few names of tartans such as "ancient is not to be confused with the same word in a few names of tartans such as "ancient is not to be confused with the same word in a few names of tartans such as "ancient is not to be confused with the same word in a few names of tartans such as "ancient is not to be confused with the same word in a few names of tartans such as "ancient is not to be confused with the same word in a few names of tartans and "ancient is not to be confused with the same word in a few names of tartans and "ancient is not to be confused with the same word in a few names of tartans and "ancient is not to be confused with the same word in a few names of tartans and "ancient is not to be confused with the same word in a few names of tartans and "ancient is not to be confused with the same word in a few names of tartans and "ancient is not to be confused with the same word in a few names of tartans and "ancient is not to be confused with the same word in a few names of tartans and "ancient is not to be confused with the same word in a few names with the same word in a fe
[105] This style was invented in the late 1940s.[108] Muted Refers to tartan which is between modern and ancient in vibrancy. Although this type of colouring is very recent, dating only from the early 1970s, these hues are thought to be the closest match to the colours attained by natural dyes used before the mid-19th century.[105] Some particular
tartan mills have introduced other colour schemes that are unique to that weaver and only available in certain tartans. Two examples are Lochcarron's antique,[104] dating to the 1940s and claimed to be based on 18th-century samples.[109] A
general observation about ancient/old, weathered/faded, and muted are that they rather uniformly reduce the saturation of all colours, while actual natural-dyed tartan samples show that the historical practice was usually to pair one or more saturated colours with one or more pale ones, for greater clarity and depth, a "harmonious balance".[110]
 [105][104] According to Scarlett (1990): "The colours were clear, bright and soft, altogether unlike the eye-searing brilliance or washed-out dullness of modern tartans".[81] The same tartan in the same palette from two manufacturers will not precisely match; there is considerable artistic license involved in exactly how saturated to make a hue.[101]
Tartan-generation software can approximate the appearance of a tartan in any of these palette Scottish examples below are all the "Prince Charles Edward Stuart" tartan:[111] Modern palette D. C. Dalgliesh-style reproduction palette Scottish
tartans that use two or more hues of the same basic colour are fairly rare. The best known is the British royal family's Balmoral[112] (1853, two greys, both as under-check and sometimes rendered purple), MacBean[114] (1872, two reds
one as over-check and sometimes rendered purple), Childers Universal regimental [115] (1907, two greens, both under-check), Gordon red [116] (recorded 1930-1950 but probably considerably older; two blues and two reds, one of each used more or less as over-checks), Galloway district hunting/green [117][118] (1939/1950s, two greens, both under-check).
check), US Air Force Reserve Pipe Band[119] (1988, two blues, both under-check), Isle of Skye district[123] (1992, three variants, all under-check), Isle of Skye district[123] (1992, three variants, all under-check), Isle of Skye district[123] (1992, three variants, all under-check), Isle of Skye district[123] (1992, three variants, all under-check), Isle of Skye district[123] (1992, three variants, all under-check), Isle of Skye district[123] (1992, three variants, all under-check), Isle of Skye district[123] (1992, three variants, all under-check), Isle of Skye district[123] (1992, three variants, all under-check), Isle of Skye district[123] (1992, three variants, all under-check), Isle of Skye district[123] (1992, three variants, all under-check), Isle of Skye district[123] (1992, three variants, all under-check), Isle of Skye district[123] (1992, three variants, all under-check), Isle of Skye district[123] (1992, three variants, all under-check), Isle of Skye district[123] (1992, three variants, all under-check), Isle of Skye district[123] (1992, three variants, all under-check), Isle of Skye district[123] (1992, three variants, all under-check), Isle of Skye district[123] (1992, three variants, all under-check), Isle of Skye district[123] (1992, three variants, all under-check), Isle of Skye district[123] (1992, three variants, all under-check), Isle of Skye district[123] (1992, three variants, all under-check), Isle of Skye district[123] (1992, three variants, all under-check), Isle of Skye district[123] (1992, three variants, all under-check), Isle of Skye district[123] (1992, three variants, all under-check), Isle of Skye district[123] (1992, three variants, all under-check), Isle of Skye district[123] (1992, three variants, all under-check), Isle of Skye district[123] (1992, three variants), Isle of Sk
green). The practice is more common in very recent commercial tartans that have no association with Scottish families or districts, such as the Loverboy fashion label tartan have a specific meaning is purely a modern one, [126] notwithstanding a legend that
red tartans were "battle tartans," designed so they would not show blood. It is only recently created tartans, such as Canadian provincial and territorial tartans (beginning 1980s), that are stated to be designed with certain symbolic meaning for the colours used. For example, green sometimes represents
prairies or forests, blue can represent lakes and rivers, and yellow might stand for various crops.[127] In the Scottish Register of Tartans (and the databases before it), colour inspiration notes are often recorded by a tartan's designer. However, there is no common set of tartan colour or pattern "motifs" with allusive meanings that is shared among
designers.[r] More abstractly, from an art criticism perspective, design historian Richard Martin (1988) wrote of tartans as designs and tartan as a textile class having no truly endemic or objectified meanings, but being an art that "has the property of being a vessel or container of meaning, a design form that exists not only in history but through
history", capable of conveying radically different, even contradictory, contextual meanings "ever changing and evolving" through socio-cultural transmutation of the fabric's use. Thus tartan could veer from symbol of anti-union and Jacobite Highland rebellion to emblem of pan-British loyalty to empire in the space of two generations, or serve different
fashion markets in the same recent decades as both a sartorial status symbol of traditional values and a punk and grunge rebel banner.[130] Today, tartan is mostly associated with Scotland; however, the oldest tartan-patterned twill cloth[131] ever discovered dates to a heterogenous culture of the Tarim Basin, c. 2100 BC through the first
centuries AD[131][132][133] in what today is Xinjiang, China, southeast of Kazakhstan. The tartan fabric (along with other types of simple and patterned cloth) was recovered, in excavations beginning in 1978, with other types of simple and patterned cloth) was recovered, in excavations beginning in 1978, with other types of simple and patterned cloth) was recovered, in excavations beginning in 1978, with other types of simple and patterned cloth) was recovered, in excavations beginning in 1978, with other types of simple and patterned cloth) was recovered, in excavations beginning in 1978, with other types of simple and patterned cloth) was recovered, in excavations beginning in 1978, with other types of simple and patterned cloth) was recovered, in excavations beginning in 1978, with other types of simple and patterned cloth) was recovered, in excavations beginning in 1978, with other types of simple and patterned cloth) was recovered, in excavations beginning in 1978, with other types of simple and patterned cloth) was recovered, in excavations beginning in 1978, with other types of simple and patterned cloth) was recovered, in excavations beginning in 1978, with other types of simple and patterned cloth) was recovered, in excavations beginning in 1978, with other types of simple and patterned cloth and the patterned cloth are the patterned cloth and the patterned cloth are the patterned cloth are
naturally preserved by the arid desert rather than intentionally mummified. The most publicised of them is the Chärchan Man, buried around 1,000 BC with tartan-like leggings in the Taklamakan Desert.[137][134] Other twill tartan samples (with differing warp and weft) were recovered in the region from the site of Qizilchoqa in 1979, dating to
around 1,200 BC; the material was woven with up to six colours and required a sophisticated loom[131][138] (of a type that seems to have originated in the West).[134][s] Victor H. Mair, an archaeologist and linguist involved in the excavations wrote: "The ancient inhabitants ... undoubtedly had vibrant interactions with peoples of West Central Asia
and even further west, since their magnificent textiles possess motifs, dyes, and weaves that are characteristic of cultures that lie in that direction. "[131] Textile analysis of that fabric has shown it to be similar to that of ancient Europe. [139] According to textile historian Elizabeth J. Wayland Barber, the late Bronze Age to early Iron Age people of
date as early as 1200 BC, and Wayland Barber says of them that: "The overall similarities between Hallstatt plaid twills and recent Scottish ones, right down to the typical weight of the cloth, strongly indicate continuity of tradition. The chief difference is that the Hallstatt plaids contain no more than two colors".[140] Similar finds have been made
elsewhere in Central Europe and Scandinavia.[6] Classical Roman writers made various references to the continental Gauls, south of Britain, wearing striped or variegated clothing; Latin seems to have lacked an exact word for 'checked'. For example, Virgil in the Aeneid (29-19 BC, book VIII, line 660) described the Gauls as virgatis lucent sagulis (or
one of these words, or something like it, was used, tartan was intended."[145] It might have been intended sometimes, or the writer might have been intended sometimes, or the writer might have been intended. "[145] It might have been intended sometimes, or the writer might have been intended." [145] It might have been intended sometimes, or the writer might have been intended.
running around in clan tartans, [145][141] The Romans particularly wrote of Gauls as wearing striped braccae (trousers). E. G. Cody in remarks in his 1885 edition of John Lesley's Historie of Scotland hypothesized that this was actually a Gaulish loanword and was cognate with Gaelic breacan, [144] This is one of many "tartan legends" that is not well
accepted; rather, braccae is considered by modern linguists a cognate of English breeches, Gaelic briogais ('trousers'), etc.[146] The earliest documented tartan-like cloth in Britain, known as the "Falkirk tartan",[147] dates from the 3rd century AD.[148] It was uncovered at Falkirk in Stirlingshire, Scotland, near the Antonine Wall. The fragment, held
in the National Museum of Scotland, was stuffed into the mouth of an earthenware pot containing almost 2,000 Roman coins.[149] The Falkirk tartan has a simple "Border check" design, of undyed light and dark wool.[u] Other evidence from this period is the surviving fragment of a statue of Roman Emperor Caracalla, once part of the triumphal arch
                        eted in 217 AD. It depicts a Caledonian Pictish prisoner wearing tartan trews (represented by carving a checked design then inlaying it with bronze and silver alloys to give a variegated appearance). [150][v] Based on such evidence, tartan researcher James D. Scarlett (1990) believes Scottish tartan to be "of Pictish or earlier origin
[151] though Brown (2012) notes there is no way to prove or disprove this.[152] Early forms of tartan like this are thought to have been invented in pre-Roman times, and would have been popular among the inhabitants of the northern Europe such as Jutland, where the same pattern
was prevalent,[155][156][157] and Bronze Age Sweden.[158] That twill weave was selected, even in ancient times, is probably no accident; "plain (2/2) twill for a given gauge of yarn, yields a cloth 50% heavier [denser] - and hence more weather-proof - than the simple 1/1 weave."[6] According to Scarlett (2008):[6] [T]here are sound reasons why
such a type of pattern-textile should have developed almost automatically in isolated, self-sufficient ... Stripes are unlikely to possess large dye-vats, and so cannot piece-dye woven cloth; such processes as batik and tie-dye are unavailable. ... Stripes are the practical solution, since they use small quantities of a colour at a time
and are interspersed with other colours, but the scope is limited ...; stripes across both brighten the colours and add many mixtures. From there on it is really only a matter of getting organised; the now-geometric pattern reduces to a small unit, easier to remember and to follow in a world where little was written down; it is further simplified by being
medieval era. Tartan use in Britain between the 3rd-century Falkirk tartan and 16th-century samples, writings, and art is unclear. [159][160] Cosmo Innes (1860) wrote that, according to medieval hagiographies, Scots of the 7th-8th centuries "used cloaks of variegated colour, apparently of home manufacture". [161] Based on similarities of tartans
used by various clans, including the Murrays, Sutherlands, and Gordons, and the history of their family interactions over the centuries, Thomas Innes of Learney estimated that a regional "parent" pattern, of a more general style, might date to the 12th or 13th century, [162] but this is quite speculative. The cartularies of Aberdeen in the 13th century
barred clergymen from wearing "striped" clothing, which could have referred to tartan. [163] In 1333, Italian Gothic artists Simone Martini and Lippo Memmi produced the Annunciation with St. Margaret and St. Ansanus, a wood-panel painting in tempera and gold leaf. It features the archangel Gabriel in a tartan-patterned mantle, with light
highlights where the darker stripes meet, perhaps representing jewels, embroidery, or supplementary weaving. Art historians consider it an example of "Tartar" (Mongol) textile influence; it likely has no relation to Scottish tartan.[w] "Tartar" (Mongol) textile influence; it likely has no relation to Scottish tartan.[w] "Tartar" (Mongol) textile influence; it likely has no relation to Scottish tartan.[w] "Tartar" (Mongol) textile influence; it likely has no relation to Scottish tartan.[w] "Tartar" (Mongol) textile influence; it likely has no relation to Scottish tartan.[w] "Tartar" (Mongol) textile influence; it likely has no relation to Scottish tartan.[w] "Tartar" (Mongol) textile influence; it likely has no relation to Scottish tartan.[w] "Tartar" (Mongol) textile influence; it likely has no relation to Scottish tartan.[w] "Tartar" (Mongol) textile influence; it likely has no relation to Scottish tartan.[w] "Tartar" (Mongol) textile influence; it likely has no relation to Scottish tartan.[w] "Tartar" (Mongol) textile influence; it likely has no relation to Scottish tartan.[w] "Tartar" (Mongol) textile influence; it likely has no relation to Scottish tartan.[w] "Tartar" (Mongol) textile influence; it likely has no relation to Scottish tartan.[w] "Tartar" (Mongol) textile influence; it likely has no relation to Scottish tartan.[w] "Tartar" (Mongol) textile influence; it likely has no relation to Scottish tartan.[w] "Tartar" (Mongol) textile influence; it likely has no relation to Scottish tartan.[w] "Tartar" (Mongol) textile influence; it likely has no relation to Scottish tartan.[w] "Tartar" (Mongol) textile influence; it likely has no relation to Scottish tartan.[w] "Tartar" (Mongol) textile influence; it likely has no relation to Scottish tartan.[w] "Tartar" (Mongol) textile influence; it likely has no relation to Scottish tartan.[w] "Tartar" (Mongol) textile influence; it likely has no relation to Scottish tartan.[w] "Tartar" (Mongol) textile influence; it likely has no relation tartan.[w] "Tartar" (Mongol
robe in the same painting); patterns of this sort were influential especially on Italian art in the 14th century. There are several other continental European paintings of tartan-like garments from around this era (even back to the 13th century), but most of them show very simple two-colour basic check patterns, or (like the Martini and Memmi
Annunciation example) broad squares made by thin lines of one colour on a background of another. Any of them could represent embroidery or patchwork rather than woven tartan. There seems to be no indication in surviving records of tartan material being imported from Scotland in this period. In the second half of the 14th century, the artist
known only as the "Master of Estamariu" (in Catalonia, Spain) painted an altarpiece of St Vincent, one of the details of which is a man in a cotehardie that is red on one half and a complex three-colour tartan on the other, which is a man in a cotehardie that is red on one half and a complex three-colour tartan on the other, which is a man in a cotehardie that is red on one half and a complex three-colour tartan on the other, which is a man in a cotehardie that is red on one half and a complex three-colour tartan on the other, which is a man in a cotehardie that is red on one half and a complex three-colour tartan on the other, which is a man in a cotehardie that is red on one half and a complex three-colour tartan on the other, which is a man in a cotehardie that is red on one half and a complex three-colour tartan on the other, which is a man in a cotehardie that is red on one half and a complex three-colour tartan on the other, which is a man in a cotehardie that is red on one half and a complex three-colour tartan on the other, which is a man in a cotehardie that is red on one half and a complex three-colour tartan on the other, which is a man in a cotehardie that is red on one half and a complex three-colour tartan on the other, which is a man in a cotehardie that is red on one half and a complex three-colour tartan on the other tartan on 
that records showed the wearing of tartan in Scotland to date as far back as 1440.[164] However, it is unclear to which records he was referring, and other, later researchers have not matched this early date. The Glen Affric tartan (c. 1500-1600 AD), discovered in a peat bog in the 1980s Escossois sauvage ('Savage Scotsman') by Lucas de Heere,
c. 1567-80 The oldest surviving sample of complex, dyed-wool tartan (not just a simple check pattern) in Scotland has been shown through radiocarbon dating to be from the 16th century; known as the "Glen Affric tartan", it was discovered in the early 1980s in a peat bog near Glen Affric in the Scottish Highlands; its faded colours include green,
brown, red, and yellow. On loan from the Scottish Tartans Authority, the 55 cm × 42 cm (22 in × 17 in) artefact went on display at the V&A Dundee museum in April 2023.[148][165][166][167][x] The earliest certain written reference to tartan by name is in the 1532-33 accounts of the Treasurer of Scotland: "Ane uthir tartane galcoit gevin to the king
be the Maister Forbes" ('Another tartan coat given to the king by the Master Forbes'),[4] followed not long after by a 1538 record of clothing made by Thomas Arthur for King James V of Scotland, which includes "heland tertane to be hoiss" ('Highland tartan to be hose'),[168][170][y] Plaids were featured a bit earlier; poet William Dunbar
(c. 1459 - c. 1530) mentions "Five thousand ellis ... Of Hieland pladdis".[171] The earliest surviving image of a Highlander in what was probably meant to represent tartan is a 1567-80 watercolour by Lucas de Heere, showing a man in a belted, pleated yellow tunic with a thin-lined checked pattern, a light-red cloak, and tight blue shorts (of a type also
seen in period Irish art), with claymore and dirk.[172] It looks much like medieval illustrations of "Tartar" cloth and thus cannot be certain to represent true tartan. By the late 16th century, there are numerous references to striped or checked plaids. Supposedly, the earliest pattern that is still produced today (though not in continual use) is the
Lennox district tartan,[173] (also adopted as the clan tartan of Lennox)[174] said to have been reproduced by D. W. Stewart in 1893 from a portrait of Margaret Douglas, Countess of Lennox, dating to around 1575.[175] However, this seems to be legend, as no modern tartan researchers or art historians have identified such a portrait, and the earliest
known realistic one of a woman in tartan dates much later, to c. 1700.[176] Extant portraits of Margaret show her in velvet and brocade.[177] Tartan and Highlands by everyone from high-born lairds to common crofters,[183] at least by the late
16th century. The historian John Major wrote in 1521 that it was the upper class, including warriors, who wore plaids while the common among them wore linen, suggesting that woollen cloth was something of a luxury. [184] But by 1578, Bishop John Lesley of Ross wrote that the belted plaid was the general Highland costume of both rich and poor,
with the nobility simply able to afford larger plaids with more colours.[181] (Later, Burt (1726) also wrote of gentlemen having larger plaids than commoners.)[20] If colours conveyed distinction, it was of social class not clan.[185] D. W. Stewart (1893) attributed the change, away from linen, to broader manufacture of woollen cloth and "the increased
prosperity of the people".[181] Many writers of the period drew parallels between Irish and Highland dress, especially the wearing of a long yellow-dyed shirt called the leine or saffron shirt (though probably not actually dyed with expensive imported saffron),[186] worn with a mantle (cloak) over it, and sometimes with trews.[187] It is not entirely
certain when these mantles were first made of tartan in the Highlands, but the distinctive cloth seems to get its recorded mentions first in the 16th century, starting with Major (1521). In 1556, Jean de Beaugué, a French witness of Scottish troops at the 1548 Siege of Haddington, distinguished Lowlanders from Highland "savages", and wrote of the
latter as wearing dyed shirts "and a certain light covering made of wool of various colours".[188][189][190] George Buchanan in 1582 wrote that "plaids of many colours" had a long tradition but that the Highland fashion by his era had mostly shifted to a plainer look, especially brown tones, as a practical matter of camouflage.[191][aa] Fynes
Moryson wrote in 1598 (published 1617) of common Highland man and woman in tartan, c. 1603-1616, by Hieronymus Tielsch. The crude attempt to represent tartan shows a blue and green pattern with red over-check, but did not blend the colours.
[ab] Its dense weave requiring specialised skills and equipment, tartan was not generally one individual's work but something of an early cottage industry in the Highlands - an often communal activity called calanas, including some associated folk singing traditions - with several related occupational specialised skills and equipment, tartan was not generally one individual's work but something of an early cottage industry in the Highlands - an often communal activity called calanas, including some associated folk singing traditions - with several related occupational specialised skills and equipment, tartan was not generally one individual's work but something of an early cottage industry in the Highlands - an often communal activity called calanas, including some associated folk singing traditions.
winder, weaver) among people in a village, part-time or full-time, [196] especially women. [197][ac] The spinning wheel was a late technological arrival in the Highlands, and tartan in this era was woven from fine (but fairly inconsistent) hard-spun yarn that was spun by hand on drop spindles. [6] The era's commerce in tartans was centred on Inverness,
the early business records of which are filled with many references to tartan goods. [200] Tartan patterns were loosely associated with the weavers of particular areas, owing in part to differences in availability of natural dyes, [95][201][93][202] and it was common for Highlanders to wear whatever was available to them, [9] often a number of different
tartans at the same time.[203][ad] The early tartans found in east-coastal Scotland used red more often, probably because of easier continental-European trade in the red dye cochineal, while western tartans were more often in blues and greens, owing to the locally available dyes.[175] (See also § Colour, palettes, and meaning.) The greater expense
of red dye may have also made it a status symbol. [205] Tartan spread at least somewhat out of the Highlands, but was not universally well received. The General Assembly of the Kirk of Scotland in 1575 prohibited the ministers and readers of the church (and their wives) from wearing tartan plaids and other "sumptuous" clothing, [206] [207] while the
council of Aberdeen, "a district by no means Highland", in 1576 banned the wearing of plaids (probably meaning belted plaids).[208] A 1594 Irish account by Lughaidh Ó Cléirigh of Scottish gallowglass mercenaries in Ireland clearly describes the belted plaid, "a mottled garment with numerous colours hanging in folds to the calf of the leg, with a
girdle round the loins over the garment".[209] The privately organised early "plantations" (colonies) and later governmental Plantation of Ulster brought tartan weaving to Northern Ireland in the late 16th to early 17th centuries.
gallowglass and other immigrants. In 1956, the earliest surviving piece of Irish tartan cloth was discovered in peaty loam just outside Dungiven in Northern Ireland, in the form of tartan trews, along with other non-tartan clothing items. [211] It was dubbed the "Dungiven tartan" or "Ulster tartan". [212] The sample was dated using palynology to
c. 1590-1650[213][214] (the soil that surrounded the cloth was saturated with pollen from Scots pine, a species imported to Ulster from Scotland by plantationers).[215][19] According to archaeological textile expert Audrey Henshall, the cloth was probably woven in County Donegal, Ireland, but the trews tailored in the Scottish Highlands[215][216]
at some expense, suggesting someone of rank,[217] possibly a gallowglass.[213] Henshall reproduced the tartan for a 1958 exhibit;[215][19] it became popular (and heavily promoted) as a district tartan for Ulster[19] (both in a faded form, like it was found,[218] and a bright palette that attempted to reproduce what it may have originally looked like)
[219] and seems to have inspired the later creation of more Irish district tartans. [19][220] (see § Regional, below). There is nearly nothing in period source material to suggest that the Irish also habitually wore tartan; one of the only source at
least the 1607 edition) that "Highlandmen ... wear after the Irish fashion striped mantles".[221][222][ae] The earliest image of Scottish soldiers wearing tartan belted plaids and trews; 1631 German engraving by Georg Köler. The earliest image of Highlandmen ... wear after the Irish fashion striped mantles".[221][ae] The earliest image of Scottish soldiers wearing tartan belted plaids and trews; 1631 German engraving by Georg Köler. The earliest image of Highlandmen ... wear after the Irish fashion striped mantles".[221][ae] The earliest image of Scottish soldiers wearing tartan belted plaids and trews; 1631 German engraving by Georg Köler. The earliest image of Scottish soldiers wearing tartan belted plaids and trews; 1631 German engraving by Georg Köler. The earliest image of Scottish soldiers wearing tartan belted plaids and trews; 1631 German engraving by Georg Köler. The earliest image of Scottish soldiers wearing tartan belted plaids and trews; 1631 German engraving by Georg Köler.
1616 and rediscovered in the late 20th century, by Hieronymus Tielsch or Tielsch or Tielsch or Tielsch or Tielsch. It shows a man's belted plaid, and a woman's plaid (arisaid, earasaid) worn as a shawl or cloak over a dress, and starting in 1603, the British
government itself mustered irregular militia units in the Highlands, known as the Independent Highland Companies (IHCs).[224] Being Highland mercenaries certainly were, and the ICHs were in tartan in 1709[224] and actual uniforms of tartan by 1725).[225][226][227] Tartan was used as a
furnishing fabric, including bed hangings at Ardstinchar Castle in 1605.[228] After mention of Highlanders' "striped mantles" in Camden's Britannia of 1607,[221] poet John Taylor wrote in 1618 in The Pennyless Pilgrimage of "tartane" Highland garb in detail (in terms that generally match what was described and illustrated even two centuries later);
he noted that it was worn not just by locals but also by visiting British gentlemen.[af][ag] The council of Aberdeen again cracked down on plaids in 1621, this time against their use as women's head-wear, [208] and the kirk in Glasgow had previously, in 1604, forbidden their wear during services; [230] similar kirk session rulings appeared in Elgin in
1624, in Kinghorn in 1642 and 1644, and Monifieth in 1643, with women's plaids more literarily censured in Edinburgh in 1633 by William Lithgow.[231] In 1627, a tartan-dressed body of Highland archers served under the Earl of
Morton.[233] More independent companies were raised in 1667.[224] The earliest image of Scottish soldiers in tartan is a 1631 copperplate engraving by Georg Köler (1600-1638); it features Highland mercenaries of the Thirty Years' War in the forces of Gustavus Adolphus of Sweden.[234][235] Not long after, James Gordon, Parson of Rothiemay,
wrote in A History of Scots Affairs from 1637 to 1641 of the belted plaid as "a loose Cloke of several Ells, striped and party colour'd, which they gird breadthwise with a Leathern Belt .... "He also described the short hose and trews ("trowzes").[236] A 1653 map, Scotia Antiqua by Joan Blaeu, features a cartouche that depicts men in trews and belted
plaid; the tartan is crudely represented as just thin lines on a plain background, [237] and various existing copies are hand-coloured differently. Daniel Defoe, in Memoirs of a Cavalier (c. 1720) wrote, using materials that probably dated to the English Civil War, of Highlanders invading Northern England back in 1639 that they had worn "doublet,
breeches and stockings, of a stuff they called plaid, striped across red and yellow, with short cloaks of the same".[238] Besides the formerly often-chastised wearing of head-plaids in church, women's equivalent of the belted plaid
was the arisaid (earasaid), a plaid that could be worn as a large shawl or be wrapped into a dress. Sir William Brereton had written in 1634-35 (published 1844) of Lowland women in Edinburgh that: "Many wear (especially of the meaner sort) plaids ... which is [sic] cast over their heads and covers their faces on both sides, and would reach almost to
the ground, but that they pluck them up, and wear them cast under their arms." He also reported that women there wore "six or seven several habits and fashions, some for distinction of widows, wives and maids", including gowns, capes/cloaks, bonnets with bongrace veils, and collar ruffs, though he did not address tartan patterns in particular in
such garments. [240] While tartan was still made in the Highlands as cottage industry, by 1655 production had centred on Aberdeen, made there "in greater plenty than [in] any other place of the nation whatsoever", [21] though it was also manufactured in Glasgow, Montrose, and Dundee, much of it for export. [21] In Glasgow at least, some of the
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trade was in tartan manufactured in the Highlands and the Hebrides and brought there for sale along with hides and other goods.[21] Impressed by the trade in Glasgow, Richard Franck in his Northern Memoirs of 1658 wrote that the cloth was "the staple of this country".[241] In 1662, the naturalist John Ray wrote of the "party coloured blanket

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which [Scots] call a plad, over their heads and shoulders", and commented that a Scotsman even of the lower class was "clad like a gentleman" because the habit in this time was to spend extraordinarily on clothing, [242] a habit that seems to have gone back to the late 16th century. [243] A Thomas Kirk of Yorkshire commented on trews, plaids, and
possibly kilts of "plaid colour" in 1677;[244] more material by Kirk was printed in the 1891 Early Travellers in Scotland edited by Peter Hume Brown, recording "plad wear" in the form of belted plaids, trews, and hose.[246] In 1689
Thomas Morer, an English clergyman to Scottish regiments, described Lowland women as frequently wearing plaids despite otherwise dressing mostly like the English. [247] Mungo Murray, c. 1683, by John Michael Wright (Scottish National Portrait Gallery version), featuring a very complex tartan The earliest known realistic portrait in tartan
Highland dress is a piece (which exists in three versions) by John Michael Wright, showing a very complicated tartan of brown, black, and two hues of red;[248] it is dated to c. 1683 and is of Mungo Murray, son of John Murray, Marquess of Atholl.[249][ai] In 1688, William Sacheverell, lieutenant governor of the Isle of Man, wrote of the tartan plaids
of the women of Mull in the Inner Hebrides as "much finer, the colours more lively, and the squares larger than the men's .... This serves them for a veil, and covers both head and body."[251] In the 1691 poem The Grameid,[252] James Philip of Almerieclose described the 1689 Battle of Killiecrankie in terms that seem to suggest that some clan
militias had uniform tartan liveries, and some historians have interpreted it thus.[253][254] It is not until the early 18th century that regional uniformity in tartan, sufficient to identify the area of origin, is reported to have occurred.[159] Martin Martin, in A Description of the Western Islands of Scotland, published in 1703, wrote, after describing
trews and belted plaids "of divers Colours ... agreeable to the nicest Fancy", that tartans could be used to distinguish the inhabitants of different places.[aj] Martin did not mention anything like the use of a special pattern by each family. In 1709, the Independent Highland Companies were wearing everyday Highland dress, not uniforms of a particular
tartan, to better blend in with civilians and detect Jacobite treachery.[224] In 1713, the Royal Company of Archers (a royal bodyguard unit first formed in 1676),[257] became the first unit in service to the British crown who adopted a particular tartan as a part of their formal uniform. The militiamen of Clan Grant may have been all in green-and-red
tartan (details unspecified) as early as 1703-04[258][175] and wearing a uniform tartan see Regimental tartan Pre-regiment military use.) An account of the Highland men in 1711 had it that they all,
including "those of the better sort", wore the belted plaid, [261] A 1723 account suggested that gentlemen, at least when commingling with the English, were more likely to wear tartan trews and hose with their attendants in the belted plaid, [261] which Burt also observed; [262] trews were also more practical for horseback riding, [263] Also around
1723, short tartan jackets, called in Gaelic còta-goirid, sometimes with slashed sleeves and worn with a matching waistcoat, made their first appearance and began supplanting, in Highland dress, the plain-coloured doublets that were common throughout European dress of the era; the còta-goirid was often worn with matching trews and a shoulder
plaid that might or might not match, but could also be worn with a belted plaid. [264][ak] Rachel Gordon of Abergeldie, c. 1700 - the earliest known formal portrait of a woman in tartan M. Martin (1703) wrote that the "vulgar" Hebridean women still wore the arisaid wrap/dress, [265] describing it as "a white Plad, having a few small Stripes of black,
blue, and red; it reach'd from the Neck to the Heels, and was tied before on the Breast with a Buckle of Silver, or Brass", some very ornate. He said they also wore a decorated belt, scarlet sleeves, and head kerchiefs of linen. [266] Martin was not the only period source to suggest it was primarily the wear of the common women, with upper-class
Highland ladies in the 18th century more likely to wear tailored gowns, dresses, and riding habits, often of imported material, as did Lowland and English women. [176] From the late 18th century, as the arisaid was
increasingly set aside for contemporary womenswear, while Highland men continued wearing the belted plaid.,[268] the ladies' plaids were reduced to smaller "screens" - fringed shawls used as headdresses and as dress accessories, [267] "a gentrification of the arisaid".[176] (Wilsons continued producing these in the first half of the 19th century.)
[176] John Macky in A Journey Through Scotland (1723) wrote of Scottish women wearing, when about, such tartan plaids over their heads and bodies, over English-style dress, and likened the practice to continental women wearing black wraps for church, market, and other functions. [247] Edmund Burt, an Englishman who spent years in and around
 Inverness, wrote in 1727-1737 (published 1754) that the women there also wore such plaids, made of fine worsted wool or even of silk, that they were sometimes used to cover the head, and that they were also worn, with ladies indicating their Whig or
Tory political stance by which side they wore long (though he did not remember which side was which).[269] In Edinburgh, perennial disapproval of the "barbarous habitte" of women wearing plaids over their heads returned in 1753 writings of William Maitland. Women first appear in known painted portraits with tartan c. 1700, with that of Rachel
Gordon of Abergeldie; more early examples are found in 1742 and 1749 paintings by William Mosman,. They show plaids (in tartans that do not survive as modern patterns) worn loosely around the shoulders by sitters in typical European-fashion dresses. [270] Some entire dresses of tartan feature in mid-18th-century portraits, but they are
uncommon.[176] In the Jacobite period, tartan was sometimes also used as trim, e.g. on hats. Plaids were worn also as part of wedding outfits. The monied sometimes had entire wedding dresses of tartan, some in silk, and even devised custom tartans for weddings, typically based on existing patterns with colours changed.[267] Highland soldier and
family, the woman in an arisaid; by Martin Engelbrecht c. 1717-1754[al] Portraits became more popular among the Highland elite starting in the early 18th century. [272] Similar cloth to that in the c. 1683 Mungo Murray portrait appears in the 1708 portrait of the young John Campbell of Glenorchy, attributed to Charles Jervas; and the c. 1712
portrait of Kenneth Sutherland, Lord Duffus, by Richard Waitt.[273] This style of very "busy" but brown-dominated tartan seems to have been fairly common through the early 18th century, and is quite different from later portraits and surviving cloth and
clothing samples. By the early 18th century, tartan manufacture (and weaving in general) were centred in Bannockburn, Stirling; this is where the eventually dominant tartan weaver William Wilson & Son, founded c. 1765, were based. [275][am] Judging from rare surviving samples, the predominant civilian tartan colours of this period, in addition to
white (undyed wool) and black, were rich reds and greens and rather dark blues, not consistent from area to area; where a good black was available, dark blue was less used.[6] The sett of a typical Highland pattern of the era as shown in portraits was red with broad bands of green and/or blue, sometimes with fine-line over-checks.[6][an] Oil
portraiture was the province of the privileged, and "Sunday best" tartans with red grounds were commonly worn in them as a status symbol, from the early 18th century, the dye typically being made from expensive imported cochineal.[176][277] Green and blue more generally predominated owing to their relative ease of production with locally
available dyes, with more difficult yellow[ao] and red dyes commonly being saved for thin over-check lines[279] (a practice that continued, e.g. in military and consequently many clan tartans, through to the 19th century - see Regimental tartans). However, even local-dyestuff blues were often over-dyed with some amount of imported indigo for a
richer colour.[49] The Treaty and Acts of Union in 1706-07, which did away with the separate Parliament of Scotland, led to Scottish Lowlanders adopting tartan in large numbers for the first time, as a symbol of protest against the union.[280][281] It was worn not just by men (regardless of social class),[282] but even influential Edinburgh ladies
[280][283] well into the 1790s.[284] By the beginning of the 18th century, there was also some demand for tartan in England, to be used for curtains, bedding, nightgowns, etc., and weavers in Norwich, Norfolk, and some other English cities were attempting to duplicate Scottish product, but were considered the lower-quality option.[261] Charles
Edward Stuart, "Bonnie Prince Charlie", in tartan and blue bonnet with Jacobite white cockade; portrait by William Mosman c. 1750 The most effective fighters for Jacobitism were the supporting Scottish clans, leading to an association of tartan and Highland dress with the Jacobite cause to restore the Catholic Stuart dynasty to the throne of
England, Scotland, and Ireland. This included great kilts, and trews (trousers) with great coats, all typically of tartan cloth, as well as the blue bonnet. The British parliament had considered banning the belted plaid after the Jacobite uniform, [284] [286] even worn by
Prince Charles Edward Stuart ("Bonnie Prince Charlie") himself by the mid-18th century, [287][ap] mostly in propaganda portraits (with inconsistent tartans) but also by eyewitness account at Culloden. [293] By this period, sometimes a belted plaid was worn over tartan trews and jacket (in patterns that need not match). [294] A pattern from a coat
(probably Jacobite) known to date to the period of the 1745 uprising Burt had concurred c. 1728, as did his 1818 editor Robert Jamieson, with Buchanan's much earlier 1582 observation that tartans were often in colours intended to blend into heather and other natural surroundings. [295] This may just represent prejudices of English writers of the
period, however, at least by the mid-18th century. Extant samples of Culloden-era cloth are sometimes quite colourful. One example is a pattern found on a coat (probably Jacobite) known to date to around the 1745 uprising; while it has faded to olive and navy tones, the sett is a bold one of green, blue, black, red, yellow, white, and light blue (in
diminishing proportions). While an approximation of the pattern was first published in D. W. Stewart (1893), the colours and proportions were wrong; the original coat was rediscovered and re-examined in 2007.[296][297] Another surviving Culloden sample, predominantly red with broad bands of blue, green, and black, and some thin over-check
lines, consists of a largely intact entire plaid that belonged on one John Moir; it was donated to the National Museum of Scotland in 2019.[298] There is a legend that a particular still-extant tartan was used by the Jacobites as an identifier even prior to "the '15". This story can be traced to W. & A. Smith (1850) in Authenticated Tartans of the Clans
and Families of Scotland, in which they claimed that a pattern they published was received from an unnamed woman then still living who in turn claimed a family tradition that the tartan dated to 1712, long before her birth, but for which there is no evidence.[32] This hearsay tale was later repeated as if known fact by other books, e.g., Adam Frank's
What Is My Tartan? in 1896,[299] and Margaret MacDougall's 1974 revision of Robert Bain's 1938 Clans and Tartans of Scotland.[aq] Even the often credulous Innes of Learney (1938) did not believe it.[302] The pattern in question does date to at least c. 1815-26, because it was collected by the Highland Society of London during that span.[32] But
there is no substantiated evidence of Jacobites using a consistent tartan, much less one surviving to the Hanoverian monarchy during 1725-29.[303][ar][304] This time they wore uniform tartans of blue, black, and green, presumably with differencing over-check
lines.[305][304][225] They were all normalised to one tartan during 1725-33[225][227][226][306] (a pattern which probably does not survive to the present day).[175] The uniform tartan appears to have changed into a new tartan, known today as Black Watch)
regiment in 1739. (See Regimental tartan.) After the failure of the Jacobite rising of 1745, efforts to pacify the Highlands and weaken the cultural and political power of the Larsan Highland dress was so strongly symbolically linked to the
militant Jacobite cause,[309] the act - a highly political throwback to the long-abandoned sumptuary laws[309] - banned the wearing of Highland gentry[at] and the Highland regiments of the British Army.[311] The law was based on 16th
century bans against the wearing of traditional Irish clothing in the Kingdom of Ireland by the Dublin Castle administration. [312] Sir Walter Scott wrote of the Bress Act: "There was knowledge of mankind in the prohibition, since it divested the Highlanders of a dress which was closely in association with their habits of Clanship and of war." [313]
Tartans recorded shortly after the act (thus probably being patterns in use in the period before proscription) show that a general pattern was used in a wide area, with minor changes being made by individual weavers to taste.[234] E.g., the tartan today used as the main (red) Mackintosh clan tartan,[314] recorded by the Highland Society of London
around 1815, was found in variants from Perthshire and Badenoch along the Great Glen to Loch Moy.[234] Other such groups can be found, e.g. a Huntly-centred Murray/Sutherland/Gordon cluster analysed as clearly related by Innes of Learney (1938)[162] - distinguished from a different Huntly/MacRae/Ross/Grant group identified by Scottish
Register of Tartans and tartan researcher Peter Eslea MacDonald of Scottish Tartans Authority.[315][316] But Scarlett (1990) says that "the old patterns available are too few in number to permit a detailed study of such pattern distributions" throughout the Highlands.[234] Portraits of the era also show that tartan was increasingly made with
identical or near-identical warp and weft patterns, which had not always been the case earlier, and that the tartan cloth used today for kilts.[254][272] Although the Dress Act, contrary to popular later belief, did not ban all tartan[317] (or bagpipes, or Gaelic), and women, noblemen
and soldiers continued to wear tartan,[318] it nevertheless effectively severed the everyday tradition of Highlanders wearing primarily tartan, as it imposed the wearing of non-Highland clothing common in the rest of Europe for two generations.[311][319] (While some Highlanders defied the act,[320][321] there were stiff criminal penalties.)[322] It
had a demoralising effect, [au] and the goal of this and related measures to integrate the Highlanders into Lowland and broader British society [312] was largely successful. [309][324] By the 1770s, Highland dress seemed all but extinct. [325] However, the act may also ironically have helped to "galvanize clan consciousness" under that suppression;
[326] Scottish clans, in romanticised form, were to come roaring back in the "clan tartans" run of the Regency (late Georgian) to Victorian period. Jacobite women continued wearing tartan during the proscription (1749 portrait of Flora MacDonald by Allan Ramsay and Joseph van Aken; the tartan is a Tullibardine area pattern, later the Murray of
Tullibardine clan tartan).[327] In the interim, Jacobite women continued using tartan profusely, for clothing (from dresses to shoes), curtains, and everyday items.[328][318] While Classicism-infused portraiture of 18th-century clan nobles (often painted outside Scotland) typically showed them in tartan and "Highland" dress, much of it was loyalist
regimental military stylings, the antithesis of Jacobite messaging; [329] it foreshadowed a major shift in the politics of tartan (see § Late Georgian, below). Nevertheless, this profuse application of tartan could be seen as rebellious to some extent, with the reified Highlander becoming "a heroic and classical figure, the legatee of primitive virtues." [330]
And by the 1760s, tartan had become increasingly associated with Scotland in general, not just the Highlands, especially in the English mind.[331] Helen Murray of Ochtertyre, daughter and eldest child of Sir Patrick Murray of Ochtertyre, daughter and eldest child of Sir Patrick Murray of Ochtertyre, and are not surviving
patterns.[332] After much outcry (as the ban applied to Jacobites and loyalists alike), the Dress Act was repealed in 1782, primarily through efforts of the Highland Society of London;[333] the repeal bill was introduced by James Graham, Marquis of Graham (later Duke of Montrose).[334] Some Highlanders resumed their traditional dress,[335] but
overall it had been abandoned by its former peasant wearers, taken up instead by the upper and middle classes, as a fashion.[336] Tartan had been "culturally relocated as a picture peasant wearers, taken up instead by the upper and middle classes, as a fashion.[336] Tartan had been "culturally relocated as a picture peasant wearers, taken up instead by the upper and middle classes, as a fashion.[336] Tartan had been "culturally relocated as a picture peasant wearers, taken up instead by the upper and middle classes, as a fashion.[336] Tartan had been "culturally relocated as a picture peasant wearers, taken up instead by the upper and middle classes, as a fashion.[337] R. Martin (1988) calls this transmutation "the
great bifurcation in tartan dress",[338] the cloth being largely (forcibly) abandoned by the military and consequently by non-Highlander civilians. During the prohibition, traditional Highland techniques of wool spinning and dyeing, and the weaving of tartan, had sharply declined.[95][310][104]
Commercial production of tartan was to become re-centred in the Lowlands, in factory villages along the fringe of the Highlands, [342] among companies like Wilsons of Bannockburn (then the dominant manufacturer), [340] with the rise of demand for tartan for military regimental dress. [341] Some tartan weaving continued in the Highlands, [342]
[343] and would even see a boost in the late Georgian period. [342] Tartan by this era had also become popular in Lowland areas including Fife and Lothian and the urban centres of Edinburgh and Stirling. [317] From 1797 to 1830, [275] Wilsons were exporting large quantities of tartan (for both men's and women's clothing), first to the British colonies
in Grenada and Jamaica (where the affordable, durable, and bright material was popular for clothing enslaved people),[339] and had clients in England, Northern and Central Europe, and a bit later in North and South America and the Mediterranean.[344][345] However, by the end of the 18th century, Wilsons had "stiff competition" (in civilian
tartan) from English weavers in Norwich.[346] Because the Dress Act had not applied to the military or gentry, tartan gradually had become associated with the affluent, rather than "noble savage" Highlanders,[347][348][349] from the late 18th century and into the 19th,[350] along with patriotic military-influenced clothing styles in general;[351]
tartan and militarised Highland dress were being revived among the fashion-conscious across Britain, even among women with military relatives.[352] The clans, Jacobitism, and anti-unionism (none of them any longer an actual threat of civil unrest) were increasingly viewed with a sense of nostalgia,[183][353][354][349] especially after the death of
Prince Charles Edward Stuart in 1788,[355] even as Highland regiments proved their loyalty and worth.[349] Adopting the airs of a Tory sort of tartaned "Highlandism"[356] provided a post-union and resigned sense of national (and militarily elite) distinction from the rest of Britain, without threatening empire.[357] Even the future George IV donned
Highland regalia for a masquerade ball in 1789.[358] By the 1790s, some of the gentry were helping design tartans for their own personal use, according to surviving records from Wilsons.[183] Jane (Maxwell) Gordon, Duchess of Gordon, was said to have "introduced tartan to [royal] court ... wearing a plaid of the Black Watch, to which her son had
just been appointed", in 1792; she triggered a fashion of wearing tartan in London and Paris, though was not immune to caricature by the disapproving.[359] R. Martin (1988) wrote, from a historiographical perspective, that after the Dress Act:[338] the idea of Highland dress was stored in the collective historical attic; when it was revived in the
years leading up to 1822, it had been forgotten by some two or three generations in civilian dress and could be remembered, however deceptively, however deceptively, however naively, to have been the ancient dress of the Highlands, not that so recently worn as the standard peasant dress before 1746. The ban on tartan was hugely successful, but so inimical to a natura
historical process, that it promoted the violent re-assertion of the tartan, sanctioned by a spurious sense of history, in the next century. The tumultuous events of 18th-century Scotland led to not just broader public use of tartan cloth, but two particular enduring tartan categories: regimental tartans and eventually clan tartans. Main article:
Regimental tartan Soldiers from a Highland Companies (IHCs), over 100 battalions of line, fencible, militia, and volunteer regiments were raised, between c. 1739 and the end of the Napoleonic Wars in 1815, in or
predominantly in the Highlands, [360] a substantial proportion of them in Highland dress. Of these units, only some had distinct uniform tartans, and of those, only a small number were recorded to the present day. The Sword Dance by David Cunliffe, 1853, depicting men of the 42nd and 93rd. The dancer in the centre wears the 42nd's red band
tartan. The IHCs were amalgamated in 1739 to become the 43rd (later 42nd) Regiment of Foot, [361] twas the first proper governmental Highland regiment, part of the British Army, and they wore the belted plaid ("great kilt") for dress, and the tailored small kilt for undress uniform. [363] [304] [364] For the former
garment,[365] they used a distinctive tartan, which was designed for the unit.[366] It was originally called the "42nd in 1749.[225] It seems likely that the tartan was based on those used by the IHCs earlier, but with double black "tram line" over-checks added.
[225][367] The Black Watch pattern was used by various other regiments, and it has been estimated that to clothe them all, some 30-40 miles (48-64 km) of the tartan had to be woven before 1750 alone.[59] It became the basis of various later regimental (and eventually clan) tartans.[225] It remains popular in general-public use under the names
 "Black Watch", "Government", and any of "old Campbell", "hunting Grant", or "hunting Grant", or "hunting Munro",[225] but today officially called "Government No. 1" by the military. (See illustration in § Popular designs, below.) The 42nd had separate tratans for its small kilt until c. 1814[365][368] (also used for grenadiers' belted plaids),[365] for pipers,[369][370] and
for drummers.[371] After the Jacobite uprisings, raising a regiment in service to the king was, for many Scottish lairds, a way of rehabilitating the family name, assuring new-found loyalty to the Hanoverian crown, and currying royal favour (even regaining forfeited estates).[372] Exempt from the Dress Act, men in these Highland regiments of the
empire were given Highland dress, and the "kilts and pipes that were once considered barbaric were now seen as 'safe' nationalism" within the army.[373] From c. 1770 onward into the 19th century, virtually all the regimental tartan was produced by the company William Wilson & Son of Bannockburn, the dominant tartan weaver.[340] Regimental
uniforms, including tartans, were left - usually within the general Black Watch-based colour scheme of black, blue, and green - to their commanders. [374][375] 72nd Duke of Albany's Own Highlanders during a trews-wearing period, c. 1844, in the tartan named for Prince Charles Edward Stuart Some surviving early regimental tartans include:
Loudoun's Highlanders (64th, raised in 1745), used a tartan similar to Black Watch, but with over-checks of red and yellow, and lacking the two black "tram lines" of Black Watch, but with over-the and yellow, and lacking the two black "tram lines" of Black Watch, but with over-the and yellow, and lacking the two black "tram lines" of Black Watch, but with over-checks of red and yellow, and lacking the two black "tram lines" of Black Watch, but with over-checks of red and yellow, and lacking the two black "tram lines" of Black Watch, but with over-checks of red and yellow, and lacking the two black "tram lines" of Black Watch, but with over-checks of red and yellow, and lacking the two black "tram lines" of Black Watch, but with over-checks of red and yellow, and lacking the two black "tram lines" of Black Watch, but with over-checks of red and yellow, and lacking the two black "tram lines" of Black Watch, but with over-checks of red and yellow, and lacking the two black "tram lines" of Black Watch, but with over-checks of red and yellow, and lacking the two black "tram lines" of Black Watch, but with over-checks of red and yellow, and lacking the two black "tram lines" of Black Watch, but with over-checks of red and yellow, and the original Seaforth Highlanders (73rd, lacking the two black "tram lines" of Black Watch, but with over-checks of red and yellow, and the original Seaforth Highlanders (73rd, lacking the two black "tram lines" of Black Watch, but with over-checks of red and yellow, and the original Seaforth Highlanders (84th, lacking the two black "tram lines" of Black Watch, but with over-checks of red and yellow, and the original Seaforth Highlanders (84th, lacking the two black "tram lines" of Black Watch, but with over-checks of red and yellow, and the original Seaforth Highlanders (84th, lacking the two black "tram lines" of the two black "tram lines
(78th, later 72nd, raised 1778)[av] first used Black Watch, then in 1787 adopted a variant of it with thin over-checks of red and white.[378][380] It eventually became the Clan Mackenzie tartan, [379] and it remains used as an official British military tartan, designated "Government No. 5A". A slight variation, with yellow in place of white, became
one of the Clan MacLeod tartans. [381] The 74th (Highland) Regiment of Foot (raised 1787) [aw] used another variant of the Black Watch, and black on a lack Watch tartan with a black-quarded white over-check. [382] Also in 1787, the 75th (Highland) Regiment, later 75th (Stirlingshire), probably used a more distinct tartan, not based on Black Watch, of purple and black on a
green ground, with thin white and black over-checks; it was later called "No. 64 or Abercromby/Abercrombie clan tartan, variants of it became two unrelated clan patterns. [383] The Gordon Highlanders (100th, later 92nd, raised 1794) also wore an altered Black Watch, this time
with a thin yellow over-check. [384] [385] In a rare show of competition to Wilsons, the pattern was designed in 1793 and supplied by weaver William Forsyth of Huntly, Aberdeen. [386] This pattern became the main tartan of Clan Gordon. [387] [388] Something nearly identical (perhaps with the yellow over-check in a different width) was also used by
the 8th (Rothesay and Caithness) Fencibles.[389] The Cameronian Volunteers (79th, later Queen's Own Cameron of Erracht branch of Clan Cameron.[56][390][391] It is structurally much like Black Watch, but without black over-checks and with a
number of yellow and red over-checks. It has been said to have been designed by the unit leaderor a family member. [56][392] The Fraser Fencibles (raised 1794-95) used a tartan with a red ground and green and blue bands, unrelated to the Black Watch style. [393][394] The Sutherland Highlanders (93rd) raised 1799, and later the Argyll and
Volunteers (raised in 1803) had its own uniform tartan, which was later adopted as the hunting Robertson/Donnachie/Duncan clan tartan. [399][400] The Duke of Albany's Own Highlanders (formerly Seaforth's 72nd), during a trews-wearing period of 1823–1881, wore a tartan called Prince Charles Edward Stuart, similar to royal Stewart, [111] ass
 shown in a period painting. Identified in surviving cloth samples from the mid-18th century[63] (before the regiment) it is one of the oldest setts in continuous production.[63] For more detail, and an image gallery of these setts, see Regimental tartan. An Italian woman inspects the kilts of two pipe majors in Rome, 1944, toward the end of kilts as
undress uniform in Highland regiments By the turn of the 18th and 19th centuries, women in Scotland were especially "desirous to dress in the uniform plaids of their husbands", in particularly fine-quality cloth, according to records of Wilsons of Bannockburn.[359] After the Highland regiments proved themselves fearless and effective in various
military campaigns, the glory associated with them did much to keep alive, initially among the gentry and later the general public, an interest in tartan and kilts, which might have otherwise slipped into obscurity due to the Dress Act's prohibition.[401] The belted plaid was abandoned in favour of the small kilt, around 1814.[348][365] After the "clan
tartanry" rush of the early to mid-19th century (see below), various later Highland regiments adopted some of the recently minted clan tartans for their uniforms (reversing the original regiments (dating in some form to 1633 and never before
dressed in Highland garb but in a variant of regular army uniform) were outfitted in tartan trews in 1881. This both linked them with and distinguished them from the tartan-kilted Highland regiments were again assigned
new tartans that were clan tartans rather than unit-specific ones, into the early 20th century. [303] Today, about a dozen more unofficially between all of the surviving historical Scotland, part of
the Scottish, Welsh and Irish Division.[403] These tartans are only worn in dress and pipe-band uniforms, after the practical uniforms. (For further information on these tartans and the modern units using them, see List of tartans § UK
military or government tartans.) Some military units in other countries also have their own tartans. In all, there are at least 38 documented tartans that have at one time or another been associated with regiments, though many of them also with clans.[ax] Further information: List of tartans § Scottish clan tartans With an exception dating to
1618[405] and another to c. 1703-1715[259] (neither of which appear to have survived), it is generally regarded that tartans associated by name with Scottish clans mostly date to the early-to-mid 19th century, [9][408][410] some few to the late 18th at the earliest, [93][411][349] depending on how one defines "clan tartan". The
belief that the clan tartans are an "ancient" system of symbolic family differentiation is pervasive, even passionate, but lacks substantive evidence even as it is overwhelmed by counter-evidence. It is what J. C. Thompson (1992) called "the Great Tartan Myth",[141] and James D. Scarlett (1990) "the Tartan Cult".[256] Lt.-Col. M. M. Haldane (1931)
called it an assumption, which "has acquired such a formidable weight from mere reiteration" without "critical examination of evidence".[412] Barnes & Allen (1956) observed:[93] There is no doubt that many 'setts' had been traditional to certain districts for centuries, but the theory that they were a sort of Clan uniform seems now to have been quite
discredited. Responding to the claim that clan tartans have "an ancient political significance", Richard Martin, curator of the Fashion Institute of Technology museum and later the Costume Institute at the Metropolitan Museum of Art, wrote (1988): "[This] assertion about history is wrong and can be demonstrated to be perniciously wrong".[413]
 According to National Galleries of Scotland curator A. E. Haswell Miller (1956):[409] To sum up, the presumed heraldic or "family badge" significance of the desire of the desire of the potential customers, the manufacturer and the salesma
Although the antiquity of the "clan tartans" is exaggerated, what might be termed their unofficial registration took place during the nineteenth century, and if we are prepared to accept the fait accompli as a pleasant - and perhaps not entirely useless -
national vanity. Highland-dress researcher and curator John Telfer Dunbar added:[414] The desire to give to relics of all kinds greater antiquity than they truly possess is manifold. It is a pity that tradition should be degraded in this way and the acceptance of such claims by later students has been a constant obstacle to research. The more difficult
task of searching back to original sources has often been avoided in favour of easy acceptance. Just that sort of research was performed by Peter Eslea MacDonald of the Scottish Tartans Authority, who - using every available surviving company record and sample - reconstructed and traced the history of tartan patterns from the leading weaver of these surviving company record and sample - reconstructed and traced the history of tartan patterns from the leading weaver of these surviving company record and sample - reconstructed and traced the history of tartan patterns from the leading weaver of these surviving company record and sample - reconstructed and traced the history of tartan patterns from the leading weaver of these surviving company record and sample - reconstructed and traced the history of tartan patterns from the leading weaver of these surviving company record and sample - reconstructed and traced the history of tartan patterns from the leading weaver of these surviving company record and sample - reconstructed and traced the history of tartan patterns from the leading weaver of these surviving company record and sample - reconstructed and traced the history of tartan patterns from the leading weaver of the surviving company record and sample - reconstructed and tartan patterns from the leading weaver of the surviving company record and sample - reconstructed and tartan patterns from the surviving company record and 
late Georgian through Edwardian eras, a company instrumental in the actual design, spread, and acceptance of clan tartans. His conclusion:[410] Today, books and shops dealing with Highland dress will be mainly, if not exclusively, concerned with clan tartans. They may seek to suggest that these are the actual patterns worn by the Scottish clans
throughout history, up to and including the Battle of Culloden in 1746. This is not the early 19th century and to the famous weaving firm of William Wilson & Son of Bannockburn, near Stirling. The notion of clan tartans has been called "an astonishingly continuous weaving firm of William Wilson & Son of Bannockburn, near Stirling. The notion of clan tartans has been called "an astonishingly continuous weaving firm of William Wilson & Son of Bannockburn, near Stirling. The notion of clan tartans has been called "an astonishingly continuous weaving firm of William Wilson & Son of Bannockburn, near Stirling. The notion of clan tartans has been called "an astonishingly continuous weaving firm of William Wilson & Son of Bannockburn, near Stirling. The notion of clan tartans has been called "an astonishingly continuous weaving firm of William Wilson & Son of Bannockburn, near Stirling. The notion of clan tartans has been called "an astonishingly continuous weaving firm of William Wilson & Son of Bannockburn, near Stirling."
successful marketing story"[406] and an example of an invented tradition, [415] though one that became very well-accepted by the clans to whom it pertained and by the weaving industry starting in 1815, as well as by the general public from around 1822 - "adopted enthusiastically by both wearer and seller alike". [416] Precursors of clan tartans were
regionally distinctive tartans (since at least the early 18th century, perhaps even the 16th), regimental uniform tartans of nobles (dating to perhaps even the 16th), regimental uniform tartans of nobles (dating to perhaps even the 16th), regimental uniform tartans of nobles (dating to perhaps even the 16th), regimental uniform tartans of nobles (dating to perhaps even the 16th), regimental uniform tartans (from 1725 onward), and personal tartans of nobles (dating to perhaps even the 16th), regimental uniform tartans (from 1725 onward), and personal tartans (from 
(some officially, some not, and in a few cases one tartan is shared between multiple clans). Clan tartans may not have actually been traditional, but they became conventional. John Campbell tartans are predominantly blue, green and black.[417] Various writers on tartans have
supported or opposed the idea of clans long using distinctive tartans as an identifying badge, interpreting the scarce evidence as suited their viewpoint.[ay] Where one saw a militia uniform, or an individual noble's plaid, another saw a clan identifier. The 19th-century Celtic scholar John Francis Campbell of Islay was certain that while tartans in
general were quite old, "uniform clan tartans are no older than clan-wide dress; a distinction in that era is difficult
to be certain of today, because troops then were led by landed gentry and a unit was raised largely on its commander's land from his clansmen.[az] Such definitional uncertainty could be reinterpreted as supporting an early notion of
clan tartans, if one wanted to define that as 'what most of the men of a clan were wearing into battle'; Scarlett (1990) confirms that there has been "fiery argument" in favour of a clan tartans interpretation. [254] However, Robert Jamieson (1818) reported that the "field dress" plaids of Highland men, for war and hunting, were different from their
everyday dress - made of coarser material and using patterns intended to blend into natural surroundings, the cath dath or cath dath or
19th century or the late 18th in a few cases, when they did at all) were variations on the dark, green-based Black Watch tartan, as detailed above. J. C. Thompson (1992) noted "a typical Victorian inclination to cite previous authors with little or no attempt to evaluate their statements .... Modern analysis cannot afford to be so uncritical."[421] Scarlet
(1990) relatedly observed: [422] Wishful proofs are found in profusion in the literature of tartan, early and late, and consist of stating an opinion as a fact and adding some more or less relevant historical reference in support, either implying or stating that this proves the point. That it proves nothing at all is neither here nor there, so long as the
manner of the presentation is sufficiently authoritative; given this treatment the wildest theory will be accepted, copied from one book to the next and so enter tartan lore. It is almost axiomatic that the wilder the theory will be accepted, copied from one book to the next and so enter tartan lore. It is almost axiomatic that the wilder the theory will be accepted, copied from one book to the next and so enter tartan lore. It is almost axiomatic that the wilder the theory will be accepted, copied from one book to the next and so enter tartan lore. It is almost axiomatic that the wilder the theory will be accepted, copied from one book to the next and so enter tartan lore. It is almost axiomatic that the wilder the theory will be accepted from one book to the next and so enter tartan lore. It is almost axiomatic that the wilder the theory will be accepted from one book to the next and so enter tartan lore. It is almost axiomatic that the wilder the theory will be accepted from one book to the next and so enter tartan lore. It is almost axiomatic that the wilder the theory will be accepted from one book to the next and so enter tartan lore. It is almost axiomatic that the wilder the theory will be accepted from one book to the next and so enter tartan lore. It is almost axiomatic that the wilder the theory will be accepted from the next and so enter tartan lore. It is almost axiomatic that the wilder the theory will be accepted from the next axiomatic that the wilder the next axiomatic that the next axiomatic 
existing before the 19th century, wrote:[423] Some ... assure us that the antiquity of the so-called clan patterns is very great, and many writers allege in general terms that these designs were used as a clan distinction from the earliest period. ... The halo of romance surrounding the Jacobite struggle inclined many, and still induces others, to accept as
authentic and reliable, statements which in different circumstances would be more closely sifted. Thus it is that the tartans ... have won much favour, and those who find one represented as bearing their name accept it as their ancient clan pattern without the inconvenience of investigation, or of posing any awkward questions. The Victorians also
engaged in some imaginative invention. Aside from the outright forgery of the "Sobieski Stuarts" (see § 19th century broad adoption, below), another extreme case is Charles Rogers, who in his Social Life in Scotland (1884-86) fantastically claimed that the ancient Picts' figural designs - which were painted or tattooed on their bodies, and they went
into battle nude [424]- must have been "denoting the families or septs to which they belonged" and thus "This practice originated the tartan of Celtic clans."[425] Another asserted that tartan was invented around a thousand years ago by Saint Margaret of Scotland.[425] Aside from the unreliability of early writers (and later copiers of them), part of
the confusion and debate about clan tartans comes down to definitions. Sir Thomas Innes of Learney, writing in 1938 and described as "immensely keen on [tartan] codification and the importance of it",[426] was one of the firmest proponents of the idea of very old clan tartans (in the particular sense of 'patterns consistently used for a period by
certain clans', not 'patterns named for certain clans and septs thereof) over time; [427] clan territories had mostly become stable by the 16th century. [428] D. W. Stewart's 1893 reference shows various cases of old district
tartans later sometimes being identified for a time with specific families before 19th-century adoption of their own (usually different) clan tartans. [bd] Innes of Learney wrote of clan tartans that (notwithstanding the unusual 1618 case covered below) "the tendency was rather to insist upon a similarity of general hue than on similarity of detail,"[431]
vague sense that is not what "clan tartan" usually refers to. He also reasoned that "it was not until about the 18th century that the clan tartans became conscious and acknowledged badges of identification".[432] However, the surviving period source material lacks this "acknowledged badges of identification" that "it was not until about the 18th century that the clan tartans became conscious and acknowledged badges of identification".
tartans (with clan names, particularity of detail, and a symbolic, identifying intent) until the early 19th century. The "Sobieski Stuarts" (1842) and later D. W. Stewart (1893) made much of some changes to the feu duty paid in woven cloth by locals of Noraboll on the island of Islay to their lords. In 1587, under the Macleans, the cloth was to be white,
black, and green; in 1617, under the Mackenzies, the demanded cloth-rent changed to white, black, and grey. These writers were sure, without any further evidence, that this represented a change of clan tartans.[433][be] The only clear instance of a clan-based and specific livery tartan to an early date, rather than simply regional and later regimental
uniformity, is found in a 1618 letter from Sir Robert Gordon of Gordonstoun (in the employ of the Earl of Sutherland) to Murray of Pulrossie, chieftain of the Murray branch in Sutherland but subordinate to the Earl of Sutherland (in turn recently become subordinate to the Gordon earls). The letter (rediscovered in 1909)
requested Pulrossie "to remove the red and white lines from the plaides of his men so as to bring their dress into harmony with that of the other septs" of Sutherland. [405] The letter does not specify the tartan to which to conform; there have been sharply conflicting interpretations, and it is not even certain that it was a tartan that survived to the
present.[bf] This 1714 portrait, by Richard Waitt, of the piper to the chief of Clan Grant does show a broad green-ish and red tartan, but it does not match any modern Grant pattern.[439][bg] A case of general colour-matching: In 1703-04, the chief of Clan Grant ordered that his "fencible" men obtain clothing in red and green tartan[258] (vaguely
described as "broad springed"[258] but not specified in detail).[175] The material seems not to have been provided by Grant for them in a centralised way, but left to each man to furnish by his own means (on penalty of a fine).[258] "He did not order them in a centralised way, but left to each man to furnish by his own means (on penalty of a fine).[258] "He did not order them in a centralised way, but left to each man to furnish by his own means (on penalty of a fine).[258] "He did not order them in a centralised way, but left to each man to furnish by his own means (on penalty of a fine).[258] "He did not order them in a centralised way, but left to each man to furnish by his own means (on penalty of a fine).[258] "He did not order them in a centralised way, but left to each man to furnish by his own means (on penalty of a fine).[258] "He did not order them in a centralised way, but left to each man to furnish by his own means (on penalty of a fine).[258] "He did not order them in a centralised way, but left to each man to furnish by his own means (on penalty of a fine).[258] "He did not order them in a centralised way, but left to each man to furnish by his own means (on penalty of a fine).[258] "He did not order them in a centralised way, but left to each man to furnish by his own means (on penalty of a fine).[258] "He did not order them to be a fine of a fine 
Some of the modern Grant tartans also use red and green; one was designed by Wilsons of Bannockburn in 1819 as "New Bruce" and shortly adopted by both Grant of Redcastle[442] and Clan Drummond;[443] one was reconstructed from an 1838 portrait;[444] another first appeared in the dubious Vestiarium Scoticum of 1842[445][446] (see below)
and so on - none with pre-19th-century history. Nevertheless, D. W. Stewart (1893) proclaimed on this thin material that here was "a complete chain of evidence ... of the existence of a uniform clan pattern at the very start of the eighteenth century" - despite his own observation that portraits of leading members of the Grant family in this era do not
show them wearing consistent tartans, [258][254] much less ones that "had the men of Strathspey been accustomed to wearing uniform tartans it would not have been necessary to order them to do so"[254] (twice
over). He also observes that the lairds of Grant in this period were unusually bent on uniformity, one of them even issuing moustache regulations for clansmen; [254] the Grant in this period were unusually bent on uniformity, one of them even issuing moustache regulations for clansmen; [254] the Grant in this period were unusually bent on uniformity, one of them even issuing moustache regulations for clansmen; [254] the Grant in this period were unusually bent on uniformity, one of them even issuing moustache regulations for clansmen; [254] the Grant in this period were unusually bent on uniformity, one of them even issuing moustache regulations for clansmen; [254] the Grant in this period were unusually bent on uniformity, one of them even issuing moustache regulations for clansmen; [254] the Grant in this period were unusually bent on uniformity, one of them even issuing moustache regulations for clansmen; [254] the Grant in this period were unusually bent on uniformity, one of them even issuing moustache regulations for clansmen; [254] the Grant in this period were unusually bent on uniformity, one of them even issuing moustache regulations for clansmen; [254] the Grant in this period were unusually bent on uniformity, one of them even issuing moustache regulations for clansmen; [254] the Grant in this period were unusually bent on uniformity, one of the even issuing moustache regulations for clansmen; [254] the Grant in this period were unusually bent on uniformity, one of the even issuing moustache regulations for clansmen; [254] the Grant in this period were unusually bent on uniformity, one of the even issuing moustache regulations for clansmen; [254] the Grant in this period were unusually bent on uniformity, one of the even issuing moustache regulations for clansmen; [254] the Grant in this period were unusually bent on uniformity, one of the even issuing moustache regulations for clansmen and the even issuing moustache regulations for clansmen and the even issuing moustache regulations for clansmen an
independent Highland chieftains restraint of any kind was irksome and unbearable, and to impose any rigid military discipline on their followers ... [was] found to be impossible."[448] Nevertheless, Mackay (1924) corroborates Grant militia wearing a livery tartan in 1715.[259] In 1718, Allan Ramsay (the writer, father of the artist by the same name
published the poem Tartana, which combined colours with Latinised family names: "... If shining red Campbella's cheeks adorn .... If lin'd with green Stuarta's Plaid we view ... Or thine Ramseia, edg'd around with blue ...." This has sometimes been taken as evidence of early clan tartans, despite possibly just referring to the edging and lining of
garments (coloured facings were common on jackets of the time).[449][bi] Worse for this hypothesis, the Campbell tartans are predominantly green, Stuart/Stewart red, and Ramsay red and green. The extant red Campbell tartans are predominantly green, Stuart/Stewart red, and Ramsay red and green. The extant red Campbell tartans are predominantly green, Stuart/Stewart red, and Ramsay red and green. The extant red Campbell tartans are predominantly green, Stuart/Stewart red, and Ramsay red and green. The extant red Campbell tartans are predominantly green, Stuart/Stewart red, and Ramsay red and green. The extant red Campbell tartans are predominantly green, Stuart/Stewart red, and Ramsay red and green. The extant red Campbell tartans are predominantly green, Stuart/Stewart red, and Ramsay red and green. The extant red Campbell tartans are predominantly green, Stuart/Stewart red, and Ramsay red and green. The extant red Campbell tartans are predominantly green, Stuart/Stewart red, and Ramsay red and green.
tartans with significant green date to the early 19th century [454] [455] [456] [457] [458] or much later; [459] [450] [457] [458] or much later; [459] [450] [457] and the Ramsay blue hunting sett dates to 1950. [462] A Victorian volume, Old and New Edinburgh (1884) by James Grant, [463] stated that one Rev. Joseph Robertson MacGregor "attired himself in a full suit of the MacGregor tartan'
in 1782, upon repeal of the Dress Act. But it misquoted the original source (and contained other errors). The original Portraits and Caricature Etchings (1842) by John Kay, read: "dressed himself in the Highland costume peculiar to his clan", and says nothing of tartan, much less a suit of clan tartan. [464] While 1782 is within the
late-18th-century range accepted by some researchers for some informal early clan tartans, this is not clear evidence of one. John Lesley, bishop of Ross, in 1578 wrote a great deal about Highland customs, including dress, but did not include clan tartans (despite later being claimed to have been the original keeper of the Vestiarium Scoticum clan-
tartans manuscript, now known to be a 19th-century forgery).[465] In 1688, William Sacheverell, a Manx politician, described Hebrideans of the Isle of Mull all wearing plaids, but the women in a different style of colour and pattern - not a consistent "clan" tartan.[251] Rev. Thomas Morer in 1689 described Highland garb in some detail, including
tartan plaids and hose (made from the same cloth), but mentions no clan patterns.[466] Daniel Defoe (c. 1720) wrote also in considerable detail of Highland warriors of the prior century, and noted that the men were organised into "companies, all of a name", each led by "one of their own clan or family", yet he never mentions any distinction between
tartans of these different groups, instead describing them all as wearing tartan with red and yellow over-checks, [238] strongly implying a regional style. This pattern of 17th- through 18th-century writings providing specifics of tartan and Highland dress, but nothing about clan tartans, is consistent. Contemporary portraits show that although tartan is
of an early date, the pattern worn depended not on the wearer's clan, but rather regional style and personal taste. They frequently depict subjects wearing multiple tartans at once. [432] Nor do the tartans shown match current clan tartans shown match current clan tartans.
William Mosman but sometimes to Jeremiah Davison, shows them wearing five different tartans, and they are not surviving patterns (except as later reconstructions from the painting).[bj] Period tartans were also often of differing warp and weft (giving more of a striped than checked appearance), unlike modern symmetrical patterns.[470] Sometimes
the portraits were copied, but with tartans that do not match, as if the designs were up to artistic whim.[471] As Scarlett (1990) put it:[472] "[T]hese portraits have one thing in common: in no case does the tartan shown bear any close resemblance to the modern 'Clan' tartan. ... There is a great lack of evidence to show that the pattern of a tartan had
any important significance in the early eighteenth century D. W. Stewart (1893) had also noted this, about both portrait tartans and "examples of tartan fabrics which can be proved to date from the risings of 1715 and 1745".[423] Many of the portraits by Allan Ramsay the younger show the same shoulder plaid but with colours changed, suggesting it
was the artist's own studio prop and used for modelling purposes by his clients who apparently did not care about the tartan previous to the 19th century is limited to a comparatively small number of the tartan previous to the 19th century is limited to a comparatively small number of the tartan previous to the 19th century is limited to a comparatively small number of the tartan previous to the 19th century is limited to a comparatively small number of the tartan previous to the 19th century is limited to a comparatively small number of the tartan previous to the 19th century is limited to a comparatively small number of the tartan previous to the 19th century is limited to a comparatively small number of the tartan previous to the 19th century is limited to a comparatively small number of the tartan previous to the 19th century is limited to a comparatively small number of the tartan previous to the 19th century is limited to a comparatively small number of the tartan previous to the 19th century is limited to a comparatively small number of the tartan previous to the 19th century is limited to a comparatively small number of the tartan previous to the 19th century is limited to a comparatively small number of the tartan previous to the 19th century is limited to a comparatively small number of the 19th century is limited to a comparatively small number of the 19th century is limited to a comparatively small number of the 19th century is limited to a comparatively small number of the 19th century is limited to a comparatively small number of the 19th century is limited to a comparatively small number of the 19th century is limited to a comparatively small number of the 19th century is limited to a comparatively small number of the 19th century is limited to a comparatively small number of the 19th century is limited to a comparatively small number of the 19th century is limited to a comparatively small number of the 19th century is limited to a comparatively small number of the 19th century is limited to a co
contemporary portraits, and is negative so far as it provides any suggestion of heraldic significance or "clan badge" intention. David Morier's An Incident in the Rebellion of 1745. The tartans shown generally do not resemble modern ones. According to Trevor-Roper (1983):[473] contemporary evidence concerning the rebellion of 1745 - whether
pictorial, sartorial, or literary - shows no differentiation of clans, no continuity of setts.... Tartans were a matter of private taste, or necessity, only. David Morier's well-known mid-18th-century painting of the Highland charge at the 1745 Battle of Culloden shows eight Highlanders wearing over twenty different tartans which have been analysed in
detail;[474] very few of the setts painted resemble today's clan tartans,[305][313] though they are similar to existing samples of tartan cloth from the era.[475][bk] The method of identifying Highlander friend from foe was not through tartans but by the colour of the bonnet's cockade or ribbon, or perhaps by the different plant sprigs worn in the
cockade of the bonnet. [185] [141] [bl] [bm] In particular, the government Highland militia forces wore a badge in the form of a black cockade with varied tartans, with the only uniform part being the 'Hanoverian' cockade and large coloured cross on the
bonnet."[482] A 1745 letter on the Jacobite troops at Culloden describes "all ye Forces as well Horse as foot were in Highland Dress except ye body Guards wh. wore Blue bound wth Red"; i.e., only the bodyguards were wearing a uniform, and it was not of Highland Dress except ye body Guards wh. wore Blue bound wth Red"; i.e., only the bodyguards were wearing a uniform, and it was not of Highland Dress except ye body Guards wh.
Dress Act was enacted because tartans were used as clan-identifying symbols or uniforms, but not a trace of this idea can be found in period sources. To the contrary, Burt (1727-37) was explicit that English objection to Highland dress (since perhaps 1703-04)[339] was general, because the garb served to distinguish the Highlanders as a people
apart from the Lowlanders and other British (not distinguish Highlander from Highlander from Highlander from Highlander from Highlander apart from everyone else, not each other [238] Similarly, in an account of Jacobite trials, it was asked whether defendants had worn "Highlander from Highlander from 
cloaths" in general, with no mention of clan-identifying patterns. [485] Extant MacDonald tartan fragments from the Battle of Culloden do not match each other or any current clan tartan named MacDonald. [481] Lord President Duncan Forbes of Culloden, keen on punishing the Jacobites with disarmament and other penalties, wrote a detailed letter
laying out pro and con points (mostly con) regarding the proposed Highland-dress ban before Parliament to address. [486] C. C. P. Lawson (1967) raised a point of logic: "Remembering the continuous clan feuds and the consequent state of more
or less perpetual hostilities, a recognisable clan plaid would have been a positive danger to the wearer outside his own territory."[487] This may explain why the handful of early apparent examples of groups of men in similar tartan seem to have the nature of militia uniforms and are mentioned in the context of "fencible" bodies or outright battle
(possibly aside from the 1618 case).[bo] Lawson also states: "The '45 supplies no evidence that tartans were used as clan insignia .... Relics of those tartans which were worn at Culloden or of the pre-1745 period bear no resemblance to any known modern tartan."[487] The Lord Lyon King of Arms in 1948, Sir Francis James Grant, wrote that pre-1745
 tartans were qualitatively different from those of the 19th century and later.[488] Scottish United Services Museum curator Dunbar (1979) notes this as well.[489] The Jacobite poets wrote much about the rousing appeal of Highland clans and Highland dress, even tartan specifically, but never mentioned clan tartans.[490] Similarly, multiple large
volumes of traditional Highland folklore were collected and published by John Francis Campbell in 1860-62 (revised 1890-93), and Alexander Carmichael (who also collected tartan samples) in 1900, but the period materials in them are devoid of any recorded references to clan tartans[490] (despite post-dating the popularisation of the notion among
city-dwellers and the upper class). The idea of groups of men wearing the exact same tartan as an identifier is thought to originate (aside, again, from the odd 1618 case) from Highland regiment units in the 18th century, starting with the Black Watch in 1739/1749.[305][225] According to Trevor-Roper (1983):[491] [I]t was probably their use of it
clan. Particular regiments were often dominated by men raised from the same clan lands, and this may have blurred the line between regimental uniform and clan-identifying tartan. (And several tartans of extinct regimental uniform and clan-identifying tartan.)
been the inspiration for the 'clan tartan' system as we now know it."[225] Telfer Dunbar (1979), on the idea of the early Independent Highland Companies using distinct uniform tartans: "I feel sure that here we have much of the 'clan tartan' origin."[492] The end of the 18th and beginning of the 19th centuries brought an unprecedented level of
influence of military clothing styles, including Highland regimental, on civilian attire (even for women), especially among the social elite connected to regimental tartans appear to have been named after their commanding officers, and this may be how they came to be associated with family/clan names over time.[493][379]
Banks & de La Chapelle (2007):[334] the notion of differentiation of tartan by clans might have evolved from this desire to distinguish on Highland regiment uniform from another. Certainly, its classification for military use laid the groundwork for many subsequent designs and the movement toward uniformity. Scarlett (1990) also observed the
 connection to regional or "district" tartans:[256] [B]asic patterns prevailed over wide areas and were modified by local weavers for their own ends. It can easily be seen that a local pattern of this kind, made for a captive clientele, might have become identified with the people of that locality who were themselves predomi
group and its adherents and, when the belief grew up that Clan tartan of that group. There is no evidence that the Highlanders themselves looked on tartan in that light, however .... Unknown Jacobite lady in Tullabardine tartan, c. 1740-1750, attributed to
Cosmo Alexander Haswell Miller (1956) similarly noted: "We can ... readily accept that certain dyes would prevail in different regions and that traditional types of pattern might be followed in various parts." [409] Martin Martin in 1703 had described tartans as being identifiably specific to particular regions, but not clans. [255] There are numerous
cases of tartans loosely associated with districts later becoming clan tartans. The best-documented case[7] is the Tullibardine pattern, one of the few modern clan tartans that can be traced (at all, not as a clan tartan) to the pre-proscription period. [327][7] It was long associated with Perthshire, and later adopted as the Murray of Tullibardine clan
tartan, but sold by Wilsons as simply "Tullibardine" as late as c. 1830-40, and it was found for sale in a market by W. & A. Smith around 1850, who also said it was worn then by Charles Murray, Earl of Dunmore; [327] the first record of the pattern as "Murray of Tullibardine" is in their 1850 book. [7] It appears in at least five early portraits; four date
to c. 1740-1750, the first of an unknown female sitter attributed to Cosmo Alexander, [bp] and three by Allan Ramsay (with the cloth painting completed by Joseph van Aken) which are not of any known Murray is painted wearing it (John Murray, Earl of
Dunmore, by Joshua Reynolds),[327] which still does not necessarily make it a "clan tartan" at that early a date ("evidence for its historic use by that branch [of Clan Murray] is circumstantial at best").[7] The oldest version of it differs slightly as to colours and sett from the modern clan version.[7][bq] Similarly, according to the Scottish Register of
Tartans, the district tartan for Huntly,[315] originating in more complex form as the personal tartan of a Marchioness of Huntly, and worn at Culloden by clansmen of Brodie, Forbes, Gordon, MacRae, Munro, and Ross, "which gives a strong indication of the
greater antiquity of the 'District' setts compared to the Clan tartans." [495] Some surviving early records of tartan manufacture are those of the Orphan Hospital Manufactory and Paul's Work, in Edinburgh, for the period 1734-37 and 1751-52; tartans were not named but given numeric designations such as "No. 2nd". [169] In 1745, the Caledonian
Mercury of Edinburgh carried an advertisement for a "Great Choice of Tartans, the newest Patterns" - not clan or even district tartans, but newly devised ones, suggesting a fashion market driven by novelty not supposed "heraldic" traditions. Even clan-tartans booster D. W. Stewart (1893) conceded: "This advertisement, it may be urged, is a
stumbling-block in the way of those who argue for the antiquity of clan patterns; for it seems peculiar that, when the city was filled with Highlanders of all ranks and many clans, they should be offered not their ancient setts ...."[496] Other advertisements for tartan from 1745 to the early 19th century did not mention clans, or focus on the patterns at the city was filled with Highlanders of all ranks and many clans, they should be offered not their ancient setts ...."
all, but rather on the forms in which the cloth could be ordered. [497] Even immediately after the repeal of the Dress Act in 1782, the demand was for "latest patterns and bright colours", [498] with no hint of a family heraldry aspect. William Wilson & Son of Bannockburn, just south of the dividing line between the Highlands and Lowlands, [499] were
the first large-scale commercial tartan producers;[105] founded c. 1765,[9] they had become the foremost supplier of tartan to the military by around 1770, and the dominant tartan weaver in general.[340] It was an endeavor that required the introduction of tartan recording, of standardisation of setts and dyes, and of consistency and quality control
[9][500][499] Wilsons corresponded with their agents (especially the son, James Wilson)[102] in the Highlands to get information and samples of cloth from the various districts to enable them to reproduce "perfectly genuine patterns". Wilsons recorded over 200 setts in addition to ones they designed in-house, collected in their 1819 Key Pattern Book
of around 250 setts[9] (among earlier in-house volumes to the 1770s). These tartans were numbered, named after places, or given fanciful names such as "Rob Roy", later sometimes family names (after prominent members), sometimes foreign names like "Coburg", but usually not those of clans, [275][399][501][141] nor, when they did, often matching
present clan patterns.[502][br] A large proportion of the modern clan tartans, however, can be traced to this work - just often originally with numbers or unrelated names.[399] The evidence of direct adoption from Wilsons happening frequently completely overwhelms "ancient clan tartans" sentiment.[bs] The Scottish National Dictionary, in providing
an unusually discursive definition of tartan, includes: "[T]owards the end of the 18th century and largely through the enterprise of Messrs Wilson, weavers in Bannockburn, a series of tartans, each ascribed to a certain clan, was devised and is now accepted as authoritative, though almost entirely unhistorical."[515] Analysing the direct and strong
influence of Wilsons' Key Pattern Book (KPB) on the later adoption of clan tartans (see next section), Eslea MacDonald (2012) concluded: [516] Some of the 1819 KPB setts no longer retain their original names, others were altered or were the basis for a number of variations which were named or simply numbered .... Whatever their origins, these
patterns gave rise to the idea of clan tartans as we know them today. In a very few cases a pattern's origins may have indeed been a lot older than the 1819 KPB but their contemporary names were almost always the work of Wilsons or subsequent writers. The Cockburn Collection of 56 tartan samples (some of them duplicates) was put together
between 1810 and c. 1825 (most likely 1816-25)[517][399] by Lt.-Gen. Sir William Cockburn, and is now in the Mitchell Library in Glasgow.[399][518] This collection does ascribe particular family names to many of these setts (probably naming them after prominent individuals),[517] but only sometimes corresponding to current clan tartan
associations (indeed, some patterns that are today associated with particular clans were given multiple different names in the Cockburn Collection).[bt] There are many conflicts in name-to-pattern associations between this collection and that of the Highland Society of London around the same time.[517] Even David Stewart of Garth, who was to
become one of the chief proponents of the idea of clan tartans, observed in 1814 only that various heads of families seemed to have selected personal tartans from chiefs in 1815 (see below), Col. Alexander Robertson of Struan, Chief of
Clan Robertson/Donnachaidh/Duncan, wrote back: [521] It does not appear to be appertained, either by tradition or by authentick history, that the different Clans in the Highlands of Scotland, wore any distinctive pattern or tartan. It is well known that they all had particular Colours, or Standards, emblematical of some of their most honourable
attachments, but as far as I have been able to discover, they wore no uniform Garb. At the beginning of the 19th century, a letter from an Inverness tailor to Wilsons of Bannockburn requested fine tartans). [359] In 1829, responding
negatively to the idea of Lowland and Borders "clans" wearing their own tartans, Sir Walter Scott - who was instrumental in helping start the clan-tartans fervour in the first place - wrote "where had slept this universal custom that nowhere, unless in this MS. [the draft Vestiarium Scoticum, published ultimately in 1842] is it even heard of? ... I would
rather suppose that the author had been some tartan-weaver zealous for his craft, who wished to extend the use of tartan over the whole kingdom."[522] Also in the same year, he wrote: "The idea of distinguishing the clans by their tartans is but a fashion of modern date in the Highlands themselves".[523] Another of the tartan legends has it that
Alexander Gordon, 4th Duke of Gordon, commissioned the design of a clan tartan based on Black Watch in 1793, kept one of three designs, then passed the other two on to cadet branches of the family. [524] This tale can be traced in unembellished form to 1793 records of weaver William Forsyth of Huntly which do not say this at all, only that Forsyth
provided three potential designs for a regiment tartan, with yellow over-checks in various configurations, of which the Duke selected no. 2 for the unit, the 92nd Gordon Highlanders. [386] Scarlett (1990) surmises that there must have been some informal clan tartans - a confluence of district tartans that had become associated with particular
families, and adoptions of regimental uniform tartans by them - by the late 18th century, otherwise there is no explanation for where Stewart of Garth got the idea. [525] Scottish United Services Museum curator Maj. I. H. Mackay Scobie (1942), [411] Haswell Miller (1947), [526] and Barnes & Allen (1956), [93] also zeroed in on this timeframe. Eslea
MacDonald (2010-11) observes, for example, the Murrays using the common Tullibardine regional pattern in portraits and in bed hangings at their clan seat, Blair Castle, 1770 - c. 1780 and possibly earlier. [327] Telfer Dunbar (1979), considering the 1703-04 Grant proclamation and the early regiments, suggests that "any uniformity of tartan was
only to be found in an organised body of troops, or the 'tail' or following of a chief."[441] These possible comparatively early, informal clan tartans of the late-18th-century simply cannot usually be identified (when they survived) until the early 19th century. It has been suggested by a modern chief of Clan Campbell and another of the clan executives
that the clan had informally adopted what is now known as old Campbell or Black Watch tartan by the early 19th century, because so many of their men were already wearing it as part of regiment in 1739-1751 were Campbell units).[492]
Some time in or after 1806, when he became clan chief, the city-dwelling politician George Campbell, 6th Duke of Argyll, created his own personal tartan, of Black Watch with a thin over-check of white and yellow added, [527] "to differentiate himself from the rest of the Campbells", i.e. because they were already so often wearing Black Watch. [417]
This essentially may have been one of the earliest attested surviving clan tartans (and the duke's variant was an early declared personal tartan of a noble).[bu] Maj.-Gen. David Stewart of Garth, c. 1820, in royal Stewart tartan The idea arose among Scottish expatriates (especially in the Celtic societies, which encouraged members to wear
 "appropriate" tartans),[528] eager to "preserve" Highland culture,[9][528][529] that tartans had traditionally been named and that the names represented clan affiliations.[9] Among them was Maj.-Gen. David Stewart of Garth, a Black Watch veteran and vice-president of the Highland Society of London[530] (founded 1778).[399] He and fellow
dukes, among various itinerant actual Scots[535] - including James Macpherson of "Ossian" fame (or infamy).[536] Elizabeth Gordon (née Brodie), Duchess of Gordon, c. 1813-1814 by Alfred Edward Chalon; she appears to be wearing Black Watch (42nd regiment) tartan, as it lacks the yellow over-check of 92nd Regiment, which became the Gordon
clan tartan. This was only about a year before the Highland Society solicited clan patterns. On 8 April 1815, the society resolved that the clan chiefs each "be respectfully solicited to furnish the Society with as much of the Tartan of his Lordship's Clan as will serve to Show the Pattern and to Authenticate the Same by Attaching Thereunto a Card
bearing the Impression of his Lordship's Arms."[537] Many had no idea of what their tartan might be or whether they had one,[534] But plenty were keen to comply and to provide authentic signed and sealed samples;[537][534][539] many (possibly most) turned to
Wilsons of Bannockburn for a design, [528][504] while some directly adopted a regimental tartan as their own, [399][9][bw] and still others adapted designs from old portraits of clan nobles. [534][bx] Alexander Wentworth Macdonald, Baron Macdonald, wrote back to the society: "Being really ignorant of what is exactly The Macdonald Tartan, I request
you will have the goodness to exert every Means in your power to Obtain a perfectly genuine Pattern, Such as Will Warrant me in Authenticating it with my Arms."[537] Finding no agreement within his clan on a pattern, Robertson of Struan ended up adopting the regimental tartan of the Loyal Clan Donnachie (Robertson) Volunteers; being based on
the Black Watch pattern, it could not pre-date the late 18th century. [542] On the other hand, Sir John Macgregor Murray of Clan Gregor, who had spent most of his clan's tartan by December 1818. [543] In 1819, Wilsons were engaged in correspondence to "send ... specimens of all
coloured Tartans used by these Clans ...said to exceed thirty in number", to a writer in Italy preparing a book on clan tartans; [544] the same year, they also produced their Key Pattern Book of over 200 tartans (representing only a fraction of their total tartan output, presumably the most marketable designs, and not always under the same names as
found in contemporary collections of Wilsons' tartan samples such as the Cockburn collection and that of the Highland Society of London by 1819; the former saw a great marketing opportunity, and the latter provided a veneer of respectability as
Wilsons helped the society pin tartans to clan names. [546] Banks & de La Chapelle (2007) concur: "The Wilson firm worked in tandem with the Highland Society, preparing tartan samples for the latter to certify as belonging to one clan or another."
tartan was or should be)[548] were apparently also "ready to adopt changes at the mere dictation of fancy" to improve designs.[549] From the "authentications" they received 1815-26, the society built up a clan-tartan collection (now in the National Museum of Scotland), with 34 authenticated specimens and about 40 others.[534][550][by] Other such
societies generated more interest, belief, and demand. [551] According to the analysis by Eslea MacDonald (2012), "Most of the pieces sealed [by clan chiefs] and deposited with the Society at that time were patterns woven, and in the majority of cases appear to have been designed, by Wilsons. This obviously means they could not have existed prior to
c1765 when William Wilson started his business."[542] So many of Wilsons' stock tartans from their Key Pattern Book of 1819 were being renamed for clans that J. C. Thompson (1992) wrote: "Clearly the naming of tartans was just getting started in 1819",[141] and: "There was nothing people wanted more than an ancient clan tartan system, and they
were determined to have one."[552] By 1821, advertisements for tartan cloth had shifted to include language like "true", "warranted", and began to stress antiquity and family connections. [553] The 1822 visit of George IV to Scotland, in Highland garb and with a great deal of tartan-festooned public ceremony (arranged by Stewart of
Garth and romanticist writer Sir Walter Scott of the Celtic Society of Edinburgh), had a profound tartans to have clan names),[9][555] (or renaming of old tartans to have clan names),[9][556] as clan chiefs had been asked to attend in clan tartans.[9] It caused a boom in the tartan-weaving
business,[503] and a broader public notion that tartans should be named for families.[399][9] "When these two [Scott and Stewart of Garth] stage-managed the King's visit ... they fixed the Clan Tartan idea in the public mind."[556] Wilsons' pattern book in 1822 had expanded significantly with tartans named for clans, in addition to all their numbered
setts.[514] According to R. Martin (1988). Wilsons and other weavers were made aware of the king's planned visit three or four years in advance, and had all that time to pad their catalogues with additional designs and to assign clan names to patterns often "probably picked entirely out of the air."[557] He added that "anyone looking at the tartan
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pattern books of 1819 to 1822 would have realized the cacophony of different names for the same [pattern], the chaos of clan attributions, and the complete capriciousness of that association."[558] A telling letter from a tailor, archived among the Wilsons papers, to the company in 1822 asked: "Please send me a piece of Rose tartan, and if there isn't
one, please send me a different pattern and call it Rose. [505] By 1824, an invitation to the Atholl Gathering, one of the earliest of the modern Highland games festivals, made it clear that participants should arrive "in the plaids or Tartans of the modern Highland games festivals, made it clear that participants should arrive "in the plaids or Tartans of the modern Highland games festivals, made it clear that participants should arrive "in the plaids or Tartans of the modern Highland games festivals, made it clear that participants should arrive "in the plaids or Tartans of the modern Highland games festivals, made it clear that participants should arrive "in the plaids or Tartans of the modern Highland games festivals, made it clear that participants should arrive "in the plaids or Tartans of the modern Highland games festivals, made it clear that participants should arrive "in the plaids or Tartans of the modern Highland games festivals, made it clear that participants should arrive "in the plaids or Tartans of the modern Highland games festivals, made it clear that participants should arrive "in the plaids or Tartans of the modern Highland games festivals, made it clear that participants should arrive "in the plaids or Tartans of the modern Highland games festivals, made it clear that participants should arrive "in the plaids or Tartans of the modern Highland games festivals, made it clear that participants should arrive "in the plaids or Tartans of the modern Highland games festivals, made it clear that participants are the modern Highland games festivals, made it clear that participants are the modern Highland games festivals, made it clear that participants are the modern Highland games festivals, made it clear that participants are the modern Highland games festivals, made it clear that participants are the modern Highland games festivals.
spurious, modern [tartans] which are every day manufactured, christened after particular names, and worn as genuine",[560] and also of "clans ... at this moment ignorantly disputing for the right to the same tartans which in fact belong to none of them but are merely modern inventions for clothing Regimental Highlanders".[561] Scott himself was
backpedalling away from what he had helped create, and was suspicious of the recent claims about "ancient" clan tartans: "it has been the bane of Scottish literature and disgrace of her antiquities, that we have manifested an eager propensity to believe without inquiry and propagate the errors which we adopt too hastily ourselves."[562] The Scott
tartan invented by the "Sobieski Stuarts" around 1829, eventually published in the 1842 Vestiarium. Based on the c. 1819 MacGregor, the tartan was rejected (along with other Lowland family tartans) by Walter Scott, but remains the most popular Scott tartan. [563] A wave of highly dubious books were published, all purporting to reveal true clan
histories and tartans; they presented little in the way of evidence, but they caused enthusiastic adoption of clan tartans. The first of these, in 1831, was The Scottish Gaël or Celtic Manners, as Preserved Among the Highland Society of London, and other
sources he alleged but did not name, plus some he collected or devised himself); the author ignored advice from Wilsons on which were actually old tartans, and included untenable assertions about the designs' antiquity; "Logan took the line that everything Highland was a function of the line that everything Highland was a functi
rooted impossibly far in the past", and was mocked in The Pall Mall Gazette for it.[556] Meanwhile, Wilsons and other weavers simply adopted some patterns from his book due to demand, [568] The archived
correspondence of Wilsons in the 1830s shows that the company was frequently pressured by merchants for the "truest" and "real" clan patterns.[569] Logan, despite himself being involved in sham clan tartanry, observed that "fanciful varieties of tartan ... were being passed off as genuine" by Wilsons and other weavers.[505] Logan was followed in
1842 by Vestiarium Scoticum by the so-called Sobieski Stuarts, purporting to contain 75 centuries-old clan tartans, illustrated in great detail but from vague textual descriptions. [570] Although it is now known to have been largely a forgery, [571][572][ca] many of the visual tartan designs in this "final - and fantastic - codification" [572] of clan tartans, illustrated in great detail but from vague textual descriptions.
were nevertheless adopted and still survive as accepted tartans of clans, [576][577] especially for Lowland clan names (which had hitherto never been associated with tartan or Highland garb at all). [399][183][578][579] Starting in 1822, Borders families had been redefining themselves as clans, and the book encouraged more of them to take on clan
tartans and open clan societies.[580] Modern critics have even praised the lasting socio-cultural accomplishement of the Sobieski-Stuarts' works in helping establish a systemic clan-tartans legend while recognizing the bogus nature of their material.[cb] (The socio-political background of these events and their overall impact on tartan in general are
presented at § Late Georgian and § Victorian, below.) Trevor-Roper (1983) believed that the Sobieski Stuarts had been in direct communication with manufacturers like Wilsons, and were advising clan chiefs on which tartans to choose, from as early as 1819;[582] J. C. Thompson (1992) agreed.[552] Dick Lauder certainly said they were doing so by
1829, and that Wilsons were already weaving many Sobieski Stuarts in 1845;[566] the company's own records the same year confirm orders for designs from the Sobieski Stuarts in 1845;[566] the illustrations it provided, allegedly
based on portraits, have proven to be largely a mixture of error and invention. [585] By 1849, John Sobieski Stuart was in discussion with a publisher to produce a new, cheaper edition of Vestiarium, in a series of small volumes "so that it might be rendered as available as possible to manufacturers and the trades in general concerned in Tartan ... and
it was for the[ir] advantage and use ... that I consented to the publication." The same letter also proposed binding the manufacturers by contract to produce tartans that conformed exactly to the Sobieski Stuarts' specifications. [586] Weavers like Wilsons were complicit, not passive, in the tartan boom. They had lost much of their military and export
markets after major wars ended and colonies in the Americas and elsewhere had become more self-sufficient. [509] "The concept of differentiated clan tartans, newly popularized, was codified and developed by canny manufacturers .... Since the repeal of the [Dress Act], these tartan makers saw the prospect of a vast new market. "[276] According to
Alastair Campbell of Airds:[416] One factor which has been decisive throughout the history of the development of the modern system [of clan tartans] has been the influence of the tartan manufacturers .... As with any marketing organisation it was important to maintain a steady flow of "new products", and every year new patterns were produced ....
The idea of individual tartans providing a clan or family identity was a most attractive one, which was adopted enthusiastically by both wearer and seller alike. "Maclachlan", a romanticised Highland warrior image from Logan and McIan's The Clans of the Scottish Highlands, 1843 This heavy promotion for decades of the clan-tartans idea has been
described as "inciting a rush to lay claim to the tartan to which one's family was 'entitled'".[587] Other 19th-century clan-tartan works followed.[576] Logan (by then president of the Highland Society of London)[582] returned, with illustrator Robert Ranald McIan, with The Clans of the Scottish Highlands in several volumes 1843-1849, which had
inconsistently hand-coloured portraits of chiefs in clan tartans, which he stated were "acknowledged by the present chiefs and clans".[399] The Clans of the Highlands of Scotland in 1850 by Thomas Smibert drew heavily on Wilsons' patterns and on Logan.[588] In the same year, Authenticated Tartans of the Clans and Families of Scotland by William
& Andrew Smith was based on trade sources such as Wilsons, competing mill Romanes & Paterson of Edinburgh, and army clothier George Hunter's pre-1822 collection of setts (and some consultation with historian W. F. Skene).[588][421] Also in 1850, Gen. James Browne published History of the Highlands and the Highland Clans, another
Vestiarium knock-off.[582] In 1871, Gaelic folklorist and Highland dress fancier John Francis Campbell of Islay wrote in Clan Tartans:[589] I have come to the conclusion that Sir Walter Scott and my friends the Editors of the Vestiarium Scoticum and Scotch Manufacturers of tartans are together responsible for the present flourishing and luxuriant
crop of brilliant clan tartans .... I do not believe that the distinctions which are now made as to Clan Tartans ever prevailed at all, till Tartan became an important manufacture in Scotland in the reign of George the 4th J. Claude produced the tartan pattern sample book Clans Originaux in Paris c. 1880, and some tartans were adopted from it,[cc]
though its 185 samples were mostly of already-known tartans. [19] A second edition of The Costume of the Clans was published in 1892. [592] Another influential book was Donald W. Stewart's Old & Rare Scottish Tartans (1893), which included swatches of fabric; several accepted clan tartans date to this work. [593] Books of this era also introduced
lists of alleged clan septs, families of different surnames (often of English, Norman, or other non-Gaelic derivation) supposedly linked to particular clans as "extended family". It was a means of greatly increasing tartan sales by attaching many more names to extant tartan designs, but not well-grounded in any historical reality.[594][595][412] Two
such works, both published by W. & A. K. Johnston were: Tartans of the Clans and Septs of Scotland by James Grant in 1886, revised by Henry Whyte in 1906 in more of a picture-book format (three tartans make their first appearance in the 1886 edition, [597] and What Is My Tartan? or,
The Clans of Scotland, with Their Septs and Dependents by Adam Frank in 1896.[399] The romanticised notion of clan tartans had become deeply embedded in the public mind and the myth of tartan as a kind of heraldry became established, not only in the eyes of outsiders,
even the Clansfolk believed it".[599] On the cusp of the Scottish Renaissance and Gaelic Revival, most clans (including major Lowland families) had been assigned and had generally accepted one or more tartans by the late 19th century. Charles E. N. Leith Hay, 1905 portrait by John Ernest Breun, in Edwardian daywear Highland dress, kilt in a dark
rendition of the Hay and Leith tartan. Most clan tartans were settled by the turn of the 19th and 20th centuries. The first Edwardian book on the subject (aside from a larger 1906 "library edition" of Whyte as The Scottish Highlands, which
remains in print today (though in drastically edited form, by Sir Thomas Innes of Learney).[399][600] A variety of books, with colour plates, had been affordably and widely published about clan tartans by the mid-20th century. Three popular ones were The Clans and Tartans of Scotland by Robert Bain, 1938 (the first to use photographic halftone
prints; revised and updated many times through 1983);[601] The Tartans of the Clans and Families of Scotland by Innes of Learney (later to become the Lord Lyon predecessor Sir Francis James Grant considered "humbug"
 [600] and The Scottish Clans & Their Tartans published by W. & A. K. Johnston, 1945 (later editions re-titled The Scottish Tartans with Historical Sketches, edited by Innes of Learney), and based on previous works by Grant and Whyte. Many others followed in successive decades. [399] 400 clan and district tartan samples at the headquarters of the
weaver Lochcarron of Scotland The mass-market books (some with over 200 tartans illustrated) did much to cement the idea of clan tartans to particular clans. And the works were in more general agreement with one another than had been the Victorian "authorities".[cd]
They also simultaneously increased the number of clans with their own assigned tartans, and reduced the number of tartans claimed to be those of certain clans to a more manageable number, probably after consultation with clan society officers. They did, however, typically include sept lists, which today are widely regarded as
bogus[594] (though many present-day clan associations still use them, as a means of attracting larger membership). Almost every extant clan (with or without a chief) had at least one tartan associated with it by this era. Many clans have several well-accepted tartans. Sometimes they represent different branches of the family; e.g., there are separate
tartans for Campbell of Breadalbane, Campbell of Cawdor, and Campbell of Loudoun, in addition to the general "old" Campbell tartan. In other cases, they are (at least ostensibly) for specific purposes such as hunting, mourning, formal dress occasions, or Highland dance competition; e.g., the MacFarlane dress[604] and hunting tartans[605] are
different. (See § Tartans for specific purposes, below.) An important, more scholarly work was 1950's The Setts of the Scottish Tartans by Donald C. Stewart[606][ce] (son of the aforementioned D. W. Stewart).[399] The younger Stewart has been hailed as "the founder of serious tartan research"; originated now-standard methods for indexing tartans.
and would go on to help expose the Vestiarium Scoticum as a fraud, in Scotland's Forged Tartans, co-authored with J. Charles Thompson in 1980.[399][608] In the late 20th century to present, clan and other tartans also have been catalogued in databases. (See § Registration, below.) A small number of new official clan tartans (mostly specific-purpose
"side" tartans, like dance tartans) were registered in tartan databases in the 21st century.[cf] Regarding modern misrepresentations of clan tartan myths been spread that any script- or guide-book writer will, in complete ignorance, write the most
arrant nonsense and never think that it might not be true. ... Once false information has been disseminated by a supposedly authoritative body it is virtually impossible for anyone to create a tartan and assign it any name they wish, the
only person with the authority to make a clan's tartan "official" is the chief. [399] Some clans have had no chiefs for some time, while only a majority subset of those with living chiefs in the modern era made direct proclamations as to their clan tartans and registered them with the Lord Lyon. [cg] Some time after the launch of the Scottish Register of
Tartans (SRT) in 2009, the Lord Lyon stopped recording clan tartans, deferring to SRT for this purpose. (See § Registration, below.) Some of the clan tartans were simply adopted by custom, [ch] and have remained rather consistent into the 21st century. A clan booth at a Highland games event is likely to proudly display at least their best-known clan
tartan, regardless whether a chief has declared it official. However, some chiefs have been quite adamant about what their clan's legitimate tartans are. Some time prior to 1890, George Campbell, 8th Duke of Argyll, chief of Clan Campbell, is said to have specified the main Campbell tartan, as distinct from that of the Campbell of Cawdor sett, after a
portrait had depicted him in the latter and also supposedly at the prompting of the War Office, perhaps with regard to Argyll and Sutherland Highlanders uniforms. [613] Ian Campbell, 12th Duke of Argyll, Clan Campbell chief in the latter and also supposedly at the prompting of the War Office, perhaps with regard to Argyll and Sutherland Highlanders uniforms.
tartans (and specifically rejected the personal-variant tartan of the 6th Duke).[417] Similarly, Sir Malcolm MacGregor, chief of Clan Gregor, wrote in 2012 that only four MacGregor tartans (plus a newer dance tartan) are legitimate, out of 10 or more alleged ones found in a tartan database, which he blamed on "indiscriminate commercialisation ...
disingenuous and lead[ing] to confusion".[614] In at least one instance, a clan tartan of the clan: The crest of the chief and is considered by the Lord Lyon as the "proper" tartan of the clan Maclennan.[615][ci] Some chief-authenticated
clan tartans are quite late arrivals. In 1961, the Clan Davidson main tartan was replaced (and registered with the Lord Lyon) by one of multiple disputed chiefs, Sir David Davidson of Allt Dinnie, with a design dating to 1893, in place of an older white-striped version. [616] Chief Charles Shaw of Tordarroch in 1971 replaced the old Shaw tartan (a Black
Watch variant based on a misprinted image in Logan & McIan (1847))[617] with a new pair (dress[618] and hunting)[619] designed in 1969 by D. C. Stewart based on more historical sources. [620] Clan Mar had no approved tartan until Chief Margaret of Mar registered one in 1978 (from a design that may pre-date 1850);[621] their dress/red tartan
was not adopted until 1992 (from a design dating to the 18th century).[82] The MacLeod of MacLeod of MacLeod of MacLeod in 1982, to join much longer-standing yellow and blue tartans of the clan; it was based loosely on what appears in a 1748 portrait of Chief Norman MacLeod by Allan Ramsay and Joseph van Aken.[622]
Baron David Lumsden of Cushnie-Lumsden in 1996 approved the Clan Lumsden hunting sett by Peter Eslea MacDonald[623] (though technically the baron was just the chieftain of the Cushnie-Lumsden hunting sett by Peter Eslea MacDonald[623] (though technically the baron was just the baron was just the baron was just the chieftain of the Cushnie-Lumsden hunting sett by Peter Eslea MacDonald[623] (though technically the baron was just 
of that Ilk registered a new main Lumsden tartan with the Lord Lyon, [625] based closely on that of a c. 1790 Lumsden family waistcoat. [626] Also in 2005, a pattern for Duncan of Sketraw was approved by Chieftain John Duncan of Sketraw approved 
MacDowall tartan (the clan previously used MacDougall or Galloway district); he registered it with the Lord Lyon and Scottish Tartans Authority in 2008.[629] The Cochrane hunting tartan was approved by Chief Simon Peter
Carruthers of Holmains in 2017.[631] Aside from regimental and clan usage, tartan has seen broad (and sometimes highly politicised) use by the general public in the modern era. By the 19th century, the Highland romantic revival, inspired by James Macpherson's "Ossian" poems and the writings of Sir Walter Scott, led to wider interest in tartan and
other things felt to be Gaelic and Celtic. Clubs like the Celtic societies welcomed Lowlanders, and tartan was rapidly appropriated [557] as part of the Scottish national identity [632] [633] (and part of broader British dress as a familiar exoticism). [634] [635] "The New Fashion, or The Scottsman in Paris", from a series of Parisian fashion prints, 1815 The
period of widened public interest in tartan and Highland dress after the repeal of the Dress Act in 1782 has been called the Highland Revival.[32][cj] While tartan had already seen more nationwide use from 1707, as a Scottish nationalism symbol against union with England, [281] it was turned on its ear to become a romanticised symbol of union
loyalism in the early 19th century,[183][637] an era in which prominent conflicts caused a patriotic influence of military (including Highland) style on civilian clothing,[ck] even among the common people more broadly, there was a
renewed interest in tartan and Highland dress, despite the long period of prohibition - largely due to the glory associated with the Highland regiments' exemplary service in various military campaigns. [401] "Highlandism" [643] became a romantic, mythologised (even fictionalised) and colourful escapism [644] [349] even as Lowland Scotland itself was
becoming one of the most industrialised places on earth, and the entire nation was undergoing the social upheavals of union and empire, of large-scale warfare, of urbanisation, and of modernisation during the Scottish Enlightenment. [645] The bloody French Revolution of 1789-1799 had also helped inspire a British setting aside of old Stuart and
Hanoverian rivalry.[646] Before the clan tartans rush began in 1815, tartan was already being aggressively marketed to the general public as "fancy" cloth with names that commemorated famous events and people, even fictional characters from books and songs, e.g. "Waterloo", "Flora MacDonald", "Sir Walter Scott", "Wellington", "Maggie Lauder"
and "Meg Merrilees". This inspired a novel perception that tartans should be named.[647] Some of the designs by leading weaver Wilsons of Bannockburn by this period were considered recognisable on sight.[648] In 1822, Maj.-Gen. David Stewart of Garth, who was with both the Highland Society of London and the Celtic Society of Edinburgh, [649]
[532] published Sketches of the Character, Manners, and Present State of the Highlanders of Scotland, the first of a number of 19th-century books lionising the Highlanders, the clans, and the tartaned regiments. [641][539] The various Celtic/Highland societies throughout Britain had already been driving a rise in tartan demand since the late 18th
century.[650][375] The societies liked wearing Highland dress - in their own assimilated, urban idiom,[cl] such as tartan frock coats[355] - and devising new tartans; it has been suggested that they were engaging in a sort of "internal colonisation", imposing what they wanted to see rather than simply recording what was traditionally Highland.[651]
Aside from tartan fabric's increasing use in non-Highland styles of clothing, Highland dress itself had already become highly stylised, quite removed from the simplicity of its peasant origins; [652] this was a trend that would continue throughout the later Victorian period. George IV in Highland Dress. David Wilkie's idealised depiction of George IV, in
full Highland dress, during the visit to Scotland in 1822[cm] The popularity of tartan was greatly increased by the royal visit of King George IV of the United Kingdom to Edinburgh in 1822[cm] The popularity of tartan was greatly increased by the royal visit of King George IV of the United Kingdom to Edinburgh in 1822[cm] The popularity of tartan was greatly increased by the royal visit of King George IV of the United Kingdom to Edinburgh in 1822[cm] The popularity of tartan was greatly increased by the royal visit of King George IV of the United Kingdom to Edinburgh in 1822[cm] The popularity of tartan was greatly increased by the royal visit of King George IV of the United Kingdom to Edinburgh in 1822[cm] The popularity of tartan was greatly increased by the royal visit of King George IV of the United Kingdom to Edinburgh in 1822[cm] The popularity of tartan was greatly increased by the royal visit of King George IV of the United Kingdom to Edinburgh in 1822[cm] The popularity of tartan was greatly increased by the royal visit of King George IV of the United Kingdom to Edinburgh in 1822[cm] The popularity of tartan was greatly increased by the royal visit of King George IV of the United Kingdom to Edinburgh in 1822[cm] The popularity of tartan was greatly increased by the royal visit of King George IV of the United Kingdom to Edinburgh in 1822[cm] The popularity of tartan was greatly increased by the royal visit of Kingdom to Edinburgh in 1822[cm] The popularity of tartan was greatly increased by the royal visit of Kingdom to Edinburgh in 1822[cm] The popularity of tartan was greatly increased by the royal visit of Kingdom to Edinburgh in 1822[cm] The popularity of tartan was greatly increased by the royal visit of Kingdom to Edinburgh in 1822[cm] The popularity of tartan was greatly increased by the royal visit of tartan was greatly increased by the royal visit of tartan was greatly increased by the royal visit of tartan was greatly increased by the royal visit of tartan was greatly increased by the royal vi
[554] The pageantry invented for the event, which was nicknamed "the King's Jaunt", brought a sudden consumer-driven demand for tartan cloth[503] and made it the national dress of the whole of Scotland.[554][655][632][656] The 21 days of festivities were organised by the Jacobitism-romanticising but staunchly unionist[183] Walter Scott, who
was another co-founder of the Celtic Society of Edinburgh, and military officer David Stewart of Garth. [530] They urged Scots (most of whom were Lowlanders) to attend "all plaided and plumed in their tartan array" [657] in "complete national costume". [655] One contemporary writer sarcastically described the pomp that surrounded the celebrations
as "Sir Walter's Celtified Pageantry", [657] [658] and another as a "plaided panorama". [655] Clan chiefs, expected to be kilted, had little choice but to take the event seriously, and arrived to show their loyalty in something of a panic, with tartaned retinues of half a dozen[276] to up to 50 per clan[659] (equipped at great expense, and with only about a
month's official notice), in a city overflowing with Highlanders, Lowlanders, and English spectators decked in tartan, [600] Thousands of spectators attended the many events arranged for the visit. [276] The formal ball, reserved for the
gentry, required Highland dress for admittance, and some 300 tailors were employed to supply it.[659] The royal endorsement of tartan and Highlands[661] (or the region's bands of mountain bandits, for that matter).[659] Because Scott had
 become "the acknowledged preserver of Scotland's past" through his historical novels, the legend he helped create of tartan and Highland dress as a Scotland-wide tradition rooted in antiquity was widely and quickly accepted, despite its ignoring and erasing of cultural diversity within the country [652] (of Gaels, Norse-Gaels, Scoto-Normans, and
Lowlanders of largely Anglo-Saxon extraction). "A bogus tartan caricature of [Scotland] had been drawn and accepted, even by those who mocked it, and it would develop in perspective and loyalty to Stuart ideology and
pride[663] - has been described in by Angus Calder (1994) as the catalyst by which "a Union of practical convenience became a Union of practical propaganda and, eventually imperialism".[664] R. Martin (1988) added: "it would seem that this visit presages the acts of orchestrated political propaganda propaganda and fears, sublimated in militarism, tartanry, royalism and, eventually imperialism".[664] R. Martin (1988) added: "it would seem that this visit presages the acts of orchestrated political propaganda and fears, sublimated in militarism, tartanry, royalism and, eventually imperialism."
that we have come to know very well in the 20th century."[557] Portrait of John Crichton-Stuart, 2nd Marquess of Bute, by Henry Raeburn, c. 1829, showing adaptation of tartan to Regency-era clothing styles, like this red-lined cloak Following the royal visit, the tartan industry boomed, [665] and the number of available tartans increased tenfold; [666]
in 1822, Wilsons' pattern book had numbered setts in the hundreds, and introduced many more with proper names. [514] Scarlett (1990) writes that "Tartan was no longer the dress of northern barbarians or political dissidents; it had become respectable and the garb of loyal subjects. [667] Books which documented tartans began to appear and added
to the "tartanry" craze. James Logan's romanticised work[567] The Scottish Gaël (1831) was the first such publication, and led the weaving industry to adopt new patterns, even Logan's romanticised work[567] The result of these flurries of attention has been described as an "astonishing frenzy of excitement into which [patronage of
tartanry] threw the citizens of Edinburgh and much of the rest of Scotland".[668] From the 1820s, Georgian and then Victorian portraiture of clan nobles continued the earlier theme of regimentally re-styled Highland dress, with jewels, gold, and other symbols of aristocracy - a "synthetic Gaelicism".[669] The funerals of Sir John Macgregor Murray
and Alasdair Ranaldson Macdonell of Glengarry, in 1822 and 1823 respectively, were marked by tartan, baggipes, and "wailing" of clansmen - "a feudal sight in an increasingly industrial age". [670] A large public tartan affair was the 1824 Atholl Gathering [559] (an annual event that, after a period of abeyance, continues to the present). From the end
of proscription through the Georgian promotion, "distrust of the Highlands became fascination", [672] Tartan, no longer the everyday traditional dress of Highland "barbarians", had become, in
altered form, all the rage among the Scottish upper and even middle classes as formal attire.[673] This popularisation of tartan increased its marketability in the Lowlands, in England, and in the colonies, and provided a boost to the Scottish textile industry.[342] French tartan fashions from Costumes Parisiens, 1826 Tartan had begun making
appearances in civilian Georgian fashion throughout Britain and into continental Europe, as illustrated in publications such as London's Gallery of Fashion (1787) and La Belle Assemblée (1808), and (after Paris was famously occupied by Highland regiments during the Waterloo campaign and the fall of Napoleon in 1815)[674][641][675] in the French
 societies, to commemorate events, in honour of famous persons, and designed simply to personal aesthetic taste. [680] Manufacturers struggled to keep up with demand. [681] By 1819, dominant tartan weaver Wilsons of Bannockburn [340] (also a carpet and ribbon weaver) [682] was keenly interested in exploiting the civilian market, due to a
reduction in regimental demand, and introduced many more patterns, providing cloth in various grades. [683] By 1820, the company had access to 132 looms; [684] they experienced a four-fold increase in output in 1821, leading up to George IV's visit, [655] after which they acquired 40 more looms [505] [666] in an add-on building, [681] named the
Royal George after the king,[505] and expanded into a new mill in 1822, mechanising more and more to keep up with demand.[684] They stopped weaving muslin to focus on tartan,[681] and produced it in a range of qualities from finest merino wool to cheap linsey-woolsey blends, demonstrating that whatever high-class associations tartan had taken from finest merino wool to cheap linsey-woolsey blends, demonstrating that whatever high-class associations tartan had taken from finest merino wool to cheap linsey-woolsey blends, demonstrating that whatever high-class associations tartan had taken from finest merino wool to cheap linsey-woolsey blends, demonstrating that whatever high-class associations tartan had taken from finest merino wool to cheap linsey-woolsey blends, demonstrating that whatever high-class associations tartan had taken from finest merino wool to cheap linsey-woolsey blends, demonstrating that whatever high-class associations tartan had taken from finest merino wool to cheap linsey-woolsey blends, demonstrating that whatever high-class associations tartan had taken from finest merino wool to cheap linsey woolsey blends, demonstrating that whatever high-class associations tartan had taken from finest merino wool to cheap linsey woolsey blends and the finest merino wool to cheap linsey woolsey blends and the finest merino wool to cheap linsey woolsey blends and the finest merino wool to cheap linsey woolsey blends and the finest merino wool to cheap linsey woolsey blends and the finest merino wool to cheap linsey woolsey blends and the finest merino wool to cheap linsey woolsey blends and the finest merino wool to cheap linsey woolsey blends and the finest merino wool to cheap linsey woolsey wo
on, there was significant working-class demand. [685] In 1829, a merchant wrote to Wilsons that "We are like to be torn to pieces for tartan; the demand is so great we cannot supply our customers", and there was great demand for the newest patterns. [569] Illustration of Victorian women weaving at power looms in a textile factory (this one in
Denmark, but the scene in Wilsons of Bannockburn at its peak would have been very similar). Georgian and later Victorian entrepreneurs not only created new tartans, but new tartan objects called tartanware, starting as far back as the proscription period in the form of wine glasses decorated with tartan and enamel Jacobite portraits.[313] Tartan
decorated an assortment of common household objects, such as snuffboxes, jewellery cases, tableware, sewing accessories, desk items, and even doorknobs and furniture - a tartan knick-knack market for tourists that continues through the present in the Highlands. [686] Visitors to the Highlands went home with tartanware, and Scotland-based
businesses sent tartanware out as gifts to customers. Some of the more popular tartans used were the Stewart, MacDonald, MacGregor, MacDuff, MacBeth, and one fancifully named "Prince Charlie".[687][688][689] Today, tartanware is widely collected in England and Scotland.[690] There was a symbiotic relationship between tartanware production
and interest in tartans generated by books on the subject: a tartanware manufacturer from 1820 onward was W. & A. Smith, of Mauchline, also incidentally the publishers of Authenticated Tartans of the Clans and Families of Scotland (1850).;[691] tartanware was sometimes more specifically called Mauchlinware.[692] Leading up to the beginning of
Queen Victoria's reign in 1837, tartan was a brisk trade in London, Manchester, and other English cities and towns. [693] In 1839, the Eglinton Tournament, a medieval re-enactment featuring jousting and a ball, was organised in North Ayrshire by Archibald Montgomerie, Earl of Eglinton; it drew some 100,000 spectators, who had been asked to
attend in plaids, and included George Murray, Duke of Atholl, arriving with an entire regiment in tartan, his newly re-formed Atholl Highlanders of the Duchess of Bedford and Duke of Gordon (in various tartans), by Edwin Landseer, 1825
The Highlands were being cleared of native people, for deer hunting preserves and sheep pastures The first publication showing colour plates of an array of tartans was the Vestiarium Scoticum (meaning 'wardrobe of the Scots'), published in 1842,[576] and it included a first: tartans for Lowland families. It was the work of two brothers: John Carter
Allen and Charles Manning Allen, from Surrey, England, who used a variety of assumed names. The two implied they were grandsons of Prince Charles Edward Stuarts". They claimed further that the Vestiarium was based on a 1571 manuscript on
clan tartans - a manuscript which they never managed to produce. It was not known at the time, but many of the tartans were simply invented by the brothers, and others were taken from early-19th-century sources like the Cockburn and Wilson collections. [695][399] The brothers heavily favoured basic checks, or crudely divided checks, with thin
over-checks added; they had an identifiable style of tartans, assessment of which has varied from "few can be called inspired"[50] to "quite novel and singularly gorgeous".[696] The books, which "added mystery, romance and some spurious historical
documentation to the subject",[572] triggered another wave of interest in tartans, and the enthusiasm generated by these publications led the way for numerous tartan books in the later 19th century.[657][576][cn] The sudden availability (and almost unquestioning acceptance) of Lowland tartans helped spread tartan further in popularity. "The
[tartan] cult was gathering strength and tartan was no longer 'Highland', it had become 'Scottish'."[599] A silk and velvet late-Victorian young woman's tartan dress, 1878, probably made in England Twenty years after her uncle's royal visit to Scotland, Victoria and her husband Prince Albert made their first trip to the Scottish Highlands in 1842; she
was the first monarch to set foot in the Highlands since Mary, Queen of Scots, in the 16th century. [697] The visit involved her large royal party being met with several theatrical tartan-kilted welcomes by Highland nobility and their retinues, with much sycophantic newspaper fanfare (while the common people were experiencing considerable misery)
the Queen wrote: "It seemed as if a great chieftain in olden feudal times was receiving his sovereign".[698] The monarch's early trips to Scotland were seen as a royal endorsement and had a transformative effect on the image of the country, as a now-loyal land of tartan, pipers, and kilted martial display.[699] Victoria and Albert leased Balmoral
Castle, in Aberdeenshire, in 1848 (and bought it in 1852)[700] as a private royal demesne and hired a local architect to re-model the estate in feudalised Scots baronial style, starting a "sham-castles" trend.[701] Prince Albert personally took care of the interior design, where he made great use of tartan. He used the royal Stewart (red) and the
hunting Stewart (green) tartans for carpets, while using the dress Stewart (red and white) for curtains and upholstery.[577] Prince Albert (who often wore the kilt at Balmoral) is said to have created the Balmoral tartan, still used as a royal tartan today.[702] (See illustration at § Family and individual, below.) They even decorated their carriage with
tartan.[703][704] Their adoption of a showy form of Highland dress inspired adoption by subject "who would have previously left Highland dress to the festivals of the Scots."[692] The royal couple spent a considerable amount of time at their Scottish estate (nearly 7 years in total),[705][co] and in doing so hosted "Highland" activities. Victoria was
attended by pipers,[707] and her children were attired in Highland dress.[708] Prince Albert himself loved watching the Highland games[709] and the pair became patrons of the Braemar Gathering.[710] (Support from and attendance by various nobles may have helped preserve such events to the present, but it also "tartanised" them permanently,
all the way into the 21st century.)[711] The royal enthusiasm for and patronage of Highland things generated more early tourism to the Highlands,[587][712][cp] and a boost to business in the region as far as Perth and Edinburgh.[714] It also spread tartan-wearing to other northern British lords and ladies, who began to invent complicated etiquette
rules of dress for Highland garb, which had the effect of increasing the sense that it was upper-class attire.[183][715][599] (See § Etiquette, below.) Adoption of tartan continued to spread into England; Thomas Osborne, Duke of Leeds, in West Yorkshire, devised a livery tartan for his men in 1848.[716] Tartan, though a "pseudo-Caledonian"
masquerade",[717] had become "the stuff of loyalty to the crown",[718] with "a spurious royal and aristocratic cachet".[719] This royal promotion was also noted abroad, with the effect that tartan became one of the widest-recognised cultural-identity symbols for the entire British country.[720] Despite their considerable devotion to charity (up to 20%) and aristocratic cachet [717] had become "the stuff of loyalty to the crown",[718] with "a spurious royal and aristocratic cachet".[719] This royal promotion was also noted abroad, with the effect that tartan became one of the widest-recognised cultural-identity symbols for the entire British country.[720] Despite their considerable devotion to charity (up to 20%) and aristocratic cachet [718] the country [720] Despite their considerable devotion to charity (up to 20%) and aristocratic cachet [720] Despite their considerable devotion to charity (up to 20%) and aristocratic cachet [720] Despite their considerable devotion to charity (up to 20%) and aristocratic cachet [720] Despite their considerable devotion to charity (up to 20%) and aristocratic cachet [720] Despite their considerable devotion to charity (up to 20%) and aristocratic cachet [720] Despite their considerable devotion to charity (up to 20%) and aristocratic cachet [720] Despite their considerable devotion to charity (up to 20%) and aristocratic cachet [720] Despite their considerable devotion to charity (up to 20%) and aristocratic cachet [720] Despite their cachet [72
of their Privy Purse income),[721] Victoria and Albert, along with their friends in the northern gentry, have been accused of using their "Balmorality" - a term coined by George Scott-Moncrieff (1932) to refer to upper-class appropriation of Highland cultural trappings, marked by "hypocrisy" and "false sentiment" - to trivialise and even fictionalise
history.[722] According to Fiona K. Armstrong (2017), they engaged in long-term, tartan-blanketed escapism from the uncertainties of modernising, industrialised society and from pressing British societal problems, while worsening those problems in the actual Highlands.[722] The queen's Balmoral residency also had another detrimental effect on
the Scottish Highlands; inspired by her residency, aristocrats who lived outside the Highlands began purchasing estates in the region, resulting in land-ownership disparities that persist into the present day.[723] The Highlands during Victoria's reign also became more accessible by road, rail, and boat.[709] A late Victorian style, this two-piece tartan
suit dates to about 1875-1880 As the tartan and "romantic Highlands" craze swept over Scotland, the real Highland population suffered grievously from the Hungry Forties as well as the Highlands (often the very men who would have been
their clan chiefs) to make way for sheep[657][724] and for expansive deer-hunting preserves. [725] Scots were also largely disenfranchised from voting, and the Highlands were running out of young men, in great regimental demand to fight and die in foreign wars for the empire, and many emigrating otherwise, [726] with Victoria and Albert directly
patronising emigration societies.[727] Nearly 2 million Scots moved to non-European destinations during the Victorian era (more than half the native-born Scottish people of the period), and took a measure of Highlandism with them[728] - "many of the generally understood images of the Highlands were held to be 'real' by people at the time".[729]
 This would have strong tartan-promoting results among the Scottish diaspora later;[730] Scarlett (1990) calls it a "tartan hunger that has been abroad from late Victorian times to the present day".[731] Thomas Babington Macaulay wrote in 1848 of the romantic reinvention of Highland customs as somehow generally Scottish: "Soon the vulgar
imagination was so completely occupied by plaids, targets, and claymores, that, by most Englishmen, Scotchman and Highlander were regarded as synonymous words."[732] In 1849, Sir John Graham Dalyell asserted that "forty years ago no reputable gentleman would have appeared in a kilt in the streets of Edinburgh."[733] Scott-Moncrieff (1932)
likewise wrote of tartans being "misconceived" and worn all over Scotland (and even England) in the Victorian era as a part of the Queen's influence.[734] Increasingly-urban Scotland was putting on a "rural face"[735] (a trend that would continue with "kailyard" literature). Tartanry and Highlandism were popular in part as a counter to a sense
(especially among the aristocracy) that Scotland was losing its separate national identity in the Georgian to Victoria era, being ever more Anglicised as just "North Britain" amid empire-wide modernisation.[736] Kenneth MacLeay's 1866 portrait of a MacLachlan, a Graham, a MacFarlane, and a Colquhoun, for Victoria's Highlanders of Scotland book
project. In an 1849 letter to a publisher about a planned second edition of Vestiarium Scoticum, John Sobieski Stuart noted that tartan had become "extensively worn and manufactured" on the continent, as far away as France, Germany, Bohemia, and Hungary; he also expressed an interest in working directly with tartan ware and tartan book makers
W. & A. Smith of Mauchline.[737] The same year, the Duke and Duchess of Atholl (whose entire estate was prescribed tartan livery)[738] hosted a Highland-dress affair in London, the Royal Caledonian Ball, the first known charity ball (still a sold-out annual event today).[739] The 1859 opening of the massive Loch Katrine waterworks (to pump fresh
water to Glasgow, running out of well water) was attended by Queen Victoria, with the Atholl Highlanders (cannon in tow), the Celtic Society of Glasgow, and an honour-guard unit called the Glasgow Volunteers putting on a tartan- and piper-laden display for the newspapers; it was a confluence of modern engineering and romantic-patriotic tartanry.
[740] When the Prince Consort died in 1861, Victoria commissioned a tartan-kilted statue of Albert at Balmoral by William Theed. [741] According to Jonathan Faiers (2008), Victoria had actually intentionally made tartan more popular for the benefit of the British textile industry. [742] By the 1860s, tartan was not only as popular in London as in
Scotland,[743] leading weaver Wilsons of Bannockburn produced £80,000 of product per year, and employed 500-600 people. (It amalgamated with another of the family businesses, a carpet-weaving operation, in 1867, which continued to 1924.)[275] Around 1860, new synthetic aniline dyes allowed for production of tartans in vivid colours at more
affordable prices, and their lower cost translated into more consumption of tartan by the middle class. [707] The first permanent colour photograph, by Thomas Sutton in 1861, was of a tartan ribbon. As modernisation marched on, the world's first permanent colour photograph, by Thomas Sutton in 1861, was of a tartan ribbon. As modernisation marched on, the world's first permanent colour photograph, by Thomas Sutton in 1861, was of a tartan ribbon. As modernisation marched on, the world's first permanent colour photograph, by Thomas Sutton in 1861, was of a tartan ribbon.
Scottish physicist James Clerk Maxwell) in 1861, was of a tartan ribbon. [744] It was created by using red, blue, and yellow filters to create three was a confluence of unrelated technological "junctions and serendipities" in the mid-19th century that together
broadly promoted tartan, including photography, consistently bright and more economical artificial dyes, affordable colour book printing, mass-products like tartanware - all "far-removed from the true peasant history of tartan."[745] Ian Brown (2012), and applicability of printed patterns to middle-class products like tartanware - all "far-removed from the true peasant history of tartan."[745] Ian Brown (2012), and applicability of printed patterns to middle-class products like tartanware - all "far-removed from the true peasant history of tartan."[745] Ian Brown (2012), and applicability of printed patterns to middle-class products like tartanware - all "far-removed from the true peasant history of tartan."[745] Ian Brown (2012), and applicability of printed patterns to middle-class products like tartanware - all "far-removed from the true peasant history of tartan."[745] Ian Brown (2012), and applicability of printed patterns to middle-class products like tartanware - all "far-removed from the true peasant history of tartan."[745] Ian Brown (2012), and applicability of printed patterns to middle-class products like tartanware - all "far-removed from the true peasant history of tartan."[745] Ian Brown (2012), and applicability of printed patterns to middle-class products like tartanware - all "far-removed from the true peasant history of tartan."[745] Ian Brown (2012), and applicability of tartan.
professor with a focus on Scottish literature and culture, has written that while George IV and Victoria (not to mention business interests in their wake, like the Wilsons of Bannockburn and the Smiths of Mauchline) seemed to have been "the winner taking over the loser's tokens", the renewed public interest in tartan within and beyond Scotland was
not entirely owing to them, especially given the international interest in Highland-romantic works of Walter Scott and "Ossian". The acceptance of and even enthusiasm for tartan among the post-proscription upper class can be seen as a necessary attempt at reconciliation within a culturally diverse country, and the influence ran both ways, with old
Scottish nationalism transmuting into a new unionism that demanded recognition of Scottish interests and institutions. "In short, it is an open question whether they are being appropriated and subverted." [746] Even the 1822 "King's
Jaunt" had been stage-managed by two Scots with a keen interest in romanticising and promoting Gaelic and broader Scottish culture (historico-traditional accuracy notwithstanding),[652] and the Atholls' deep and tartan-arrayed involvement in Victoria's activities in the north can be viewed in the same light.[747] Both George IV[748][750] and
 Victoria,[751] primarily of German House of Hanover stock, came to identify strongly with their quite thin Scottish House of Stuart genealogy. Prince Arthur dressed up as Bonnie Prince Charlie for the 1871 Waverley Ball The 1866-1870,
Victoria and the Duchess of Atholl commissioned artist Kenneth MacLeay in Edinburgh to produce a series of watercolours of statuesque men in tartan Highland gear, representing common people from ghillies to shepherds and fishermen, "as they now are". Prints were published in 1870 as Highlanders of Scotland: Portraits Illustrative of the
Principal Clans and Followings, and the Retainers of the Royal Household at Balmoral, with text by Amelia (Emily) Murray MacGregor, an attendant of Victoria as well as another exercise in "Highlander as noble savage", the art book necessitated canvassing
Scottish aristocrats for outfits and suitable models ("specimens"), as the everyday people did not look the hyper-masculine part, were not able to afford such Highland-dress extravagances as were to be illustrated, and were more likely to be wearing trousers than kilts.[753] The resulting book is the most detailed record of the "proper", codified
Victorian-era Highland dress and accessories, which "removed tartan from its blustery nonchalance to an ordered set of adornments" [743] - most of which survive to the present, Highland dress being remarkably resistant to further major stylistic changes, Victorian styles having become "traditional". Tartan had also become more established
throughout the 1850s and 1860s as a textile for European-fashionable rather than Highland women's clothing, from bodices and dresses to sashes and shawls (the never-extinguished ladies' plaids).[743] The tartan sash in particular was a favourite of the Queen,[743] and remains a common womenswear option, worn several different ways in modern
Highland dress, [754] though it has little to do with original Highland clothing before the 19th century; it is an adaptation of the plaid to a style of the European nobility. In 1871, at the Waverley Ball, a fancy dress affair in London, the Prince of Wales (the future King Edward VII) and his brother Prince Arthur, long accustomed to Highland dress,
arrived tartaned out as an old-time Lord of the Isles and as Bonnie Prince Charlie, respectively. [755] In 1872, ethnologist Jacob Falke wrote that "In Scotland indeed the plaid has still some importance, but it is an object of manufacture, and ... its motives have long ago become the common property of fashion, and indeed have become so permeated by
it that what is genuine and old in it is scarcely to be recognised".[756] Since its 1880 re-opening, the Gaelic Society of Perth in the Lowlands held festivities that involved much piping and tartan-wear, into the early 20th century, despite the language-preservation organisation having nothing to do with Highland dress or pibroch; being swathed in
tartan had somehow become vital to such events.[757] By 1883, Highland dress as proper courtly attire had become highly regulated, aristocratic, and formal, but "inclusive" in one sense - the tartan-wear was permitted at court for essentially anyone claiming Highland origins or land-ownership (even if natively English), not just the gentles of the
well-established clans.[758] In the Victorian era, tartan garments for women as well as men continued to be featured in fashion catalogues, in styles not derived from Highland costume, such as everyday suits and dresses.[587] Tartan had also become popular for children's clothing in continental Europe,[759] inspired by the royal children of Victoria
[760] In the United States, tartan was similarly worked into schools.[761] The late 19th century saw tartan (sometimes in silk) in fashion throughout Europe, including in France (e.g. Paris, Lyon, and Alsace) and Italy,[762] and as far from Britain as Russia.[763] (See c. 1855 French master weaver's illustration of
complex tartan-making.) Founded in 1898, Walker's Shortbread has long been sold in royal Stewart tartan necktie, 1945 In the Edwardian era, tartan had become less a component of men's clothing (with the decline in kilt-wearing) but
more an important part of women's fashion, [76] including fanciful haute couture designs from Paris that had no connection to Highland style, [587] and many accessories such as petticoats, stockings, and blouses; masculine accessories included braces (suspenders), neckties, cummerbunds, and socks. [76] Edward VII himself had grown up wearing
Highland dress frequently.[708] There was also in this period into the era's "dress sense" of decorum and class[426] (see also § Etiquette, below). Because of its associations with the British aristocracy, Scottish clans, and Highland military, tartan had developed an air of dignity
and exclusivity. [765] Because of this, tartan was to make periodic resurgences in the world of fashion. The tartan uniforms of the Scottish Regiments were an important recruiting tool during World War I; as Archibald Primrose, Lord Rosebery, put it: "there is nothing so magnificent in our army as the swing of a kilted regiment". [766] Tartan's
Georgian re-orientation as a symbol representing unionism and empire continued well into the first half of the 20th century, [767] though outright tartanry and Highlandism on the part of the upper class waned, especially after about 1920. [768] Nevertheless, Edward VIII, later Duke of Windsor, was a life-long devotee of tartan, often wearing more
than one at a time.[587] Catholic school uniform skirts, using a wide variety of tartans Tartan patterns (often simple, unnamed ones) remained commonly used for skirts and private schools in New Zealand. The style spread to
many other places, including South America, Japan[685] (which sometimes imports tartan directly from Scotland),[769] and Hong Kong. Harry Lauder in one of his Highland outfits, 1922 Harry Lauder (properly Sir Henry - he was knighted for his war-effort fundraising during World War I) became world-famous in the 1910s and 1920s, on a dance
hall and vaudeville entertainment platform of tartan Highland dress, a thick Scots accent, and folksy songs about an idealised, rural Scotland, like his hit "Roamin' in the Gloamin'". At one point, he was the highest-paid performer in the world, and toured the United States, Australia, South Africa, and of course the UK to sold-out audiences. A
Lowlander himself, Lauder has been credited with (and blamed for) keeping alive a tartanry-and-Highlandism image of Scotland, with critics calling him a "kilted clown" who promoted the idea of Scotsmen "clothed like the chieftain of Clan McCrazy".[770] By the mid-20th century,[771] annual Highland games events, modelled on the traditional
events in Scotland, had been established not just in Scotland but throughout the United States, Canada, Australia, New Zealand, and South Africa, among other places with a notable Scottish diaspora, which totals about 50 million people worldwide.[772] There are dozens of such events in Scotland,[773] and at least 260 annual Highland games
events worldwide as of 2000,[774] more than 100 of them in the US alone, and dozens more in Canada.[773] They are closely intertwined with bagpipe band competitions (which date to 1781), a lasting source of tartan imagery in their regiment-inspired Highland uniforms.[775] Massed bands at the Glengarry Highland Games, Maxville, Ontario,
Canada, 2006 The games' rather flamboyantly [776] tartaned subculture is sustained outside Scotland primarily by multi-generational Scottish descendants rather flamboyantly [776] tartan Day, an annual symbolic ethnicity holiday among the Scottish
diaspora, is a growing affair celebrated on 6 April, the date on which the Declaration of Arbroath was signed in 1320. Tartan Day was first declared in Nova Scotia in 1987, and was essentially nation-wide in Canada by the 1990s. It has since spread to Australia (with varying levels of official recognition, 1989-1996), the US (1998), and other places
including New Zealand,[779] and even Argentina[780] and Paris, France.[781] In New York City, it has turned into an entire Tartan Week since 1999, with honorary "grand marshals" that are usually Scottish celebrities.[781] In New York City, it has turned into an entire Tartan Week since 1999, with honorary "grand marshals" that are usually Scottish celebrities.[782] The term tartanism (as distinct from tartanism) has been coined by Ian Brown (2012) for this international tokenisation of tartan
mythical family origin for those seeking roots".[784] The Scottish Tartans Museum and Heritage Center was opened by the Scottish Tartans Society in 1988 in Highlands, North Carolina; in 1994, it moved to nearby Franklin. The museum, which runs independently of STS, features over 600 tartans on display, including specimens dating to c. 1725.
and Highland dress examples to ca. 1800.[785] (STS also operated a Scottish Tartans Museum in Edinburgh, [786] but it closed when STS did in 2000.) A major exhibition on tartan was produced by the Fashion Institute of Technology in New York 1988-89, and another was created for the Edinburgh Festival in 1989.[787] Others followed in Italy in
2003, and Japan in 2018.[788] In April 2023, the Victoria and Albert Museum of Dundee (V&A Dundee) opened a design exhibit (running until January 2024) about tartan is, whether that be from a historical sense or fashion sense".[789][790] D. Gordon Teall of
Teallach, of the Scottish Tartans Society, observed in 1994:[791] Tartans have always formed part of Scotland's historic heritage and it is a compliment to their country that they have ever been because they have come to
symbolise the spirit of families, clans and districts and, more recently, corporate institutions. Even as tartan has been bent to the commercial intents of fashion, tourism, entertainment, and other industries, tartan's reception
by native Scots in Scotland has been less favourable for decades, even the last century or so. Reasons include a feeling that it is not really a symbol of broad Scottish national identity because of its specifically Gaelic and Highland origin; the "Highlandist" and imperialist foisting of it on the entire country as national costume in the late Georgian
through Victorian eras; distorted views of Scottish people promulgated by Lauder and other tartaned entertainers of a century ago; an academic view of tartary and Lowland kailyard literature as two halves of a low-brow, romanticising vulgarity (reinforced in recent decades by the "Tartan Army" fandom of the Scotland national football team
reinvigorating a working-class attachment to kilts and tartan); and historically inaccurate portrayal of Scotland by tartan-heavy Hollywood productions like Brigadoon (1954) and Braveheart (1995).[792] Brancaz (2016) argues that "looking at tartan through the lens of the intelligentsia fails to account for its enduring appeal and resilience. ... [T]heavy Hollywood productions like Brigadoon (1954) and Braveheart (1995).[792] Brancaz (2016) argues that "looking at tartan through the lens of the intelligentsia fails to account for its enduring appeal and resilience. ... [T]heavy Hollywood productions like Brigadoon (1954) and Braveheart (1995).[792] Brancaz (2016) argues that "looking at tartan through the lens of the intelligentsia fails to account for its enduring appeal and resilience. ... [T]heavy Hollywood productions like Brigadoon (1954) and Braveheart (1995).[792] Brancaz (2016) argues that "looking at tartan through the lens of the intelligentsia fails to account for its enduring appeal and resilience. ... [T]heavy Hollywood productions like Brigadoon (1954) and Braveheart (1995).[792] Brancaz (2016) argues that "looking at tartan through the lens of the intelligentsia fails to account for its enduring appeal and resilience argues that "looking at tartan through the lens of the looking at tartan through 
wearing of kilts and tartans at weddings, funerals, and cèilidhs in Scotland has increasingly been interpreted as a form of cultural reappropriation."[793] In 2006, the British Ministry of Defence sparked controversy when it allowed foreign woollen mills to bid for the government contracts to provide the tartans used by the Scottish troops (newly
amalgamated as battalions into the Royal Regiment of Scotland), and lowered the formerly very high standards for the cloth.[225] Following a bill submitted in the Scotland would set up a national register of tartans.[795]
The announcement stated that "Tartan's importance to Scotland cannot be overestimated. It is deeply embedded in Scottish culture and is an internationally recognised symbol of Scotland."[795] This was later reiterated in 2013 through the BBC.[796] The ministry cited an industry report indicating that "the tartan industry is a significant contributor
to the overall Scottish economy; and larger ... than suggested by previous industry estimates", and is the basis for some 200 businesses, 4,000 jobs, and £350 million in annual GDP in Scotland.[795] The bill passed in October 2008, and the Scottish Register of Tartans launched in February 2009.[794] (See § Registration, below.) General tartan-pattern
clothing shot up in popularity again starting around 2010 The Observer reported in 2010 that tartan clothing had become more popular than ever before, crossing subcultural, social-class, and age-group lines, and showing in that year a 540% sales increase in Britain from only two years earlier. [797] Around the same time, there began a resurgence in
tartan kilt wearing among Scottish young people "as a mark of a vibrant, modern Scotland".[798][800][801] This has interrupted a generations-long trend of native Scottish young people "as a mark of a vibrant, modern Scotland".[798][800][801] This has interrupted a generations-long trend of native Scottish young people "as a mark of a vibrant, modern Scotland".[798][800][801] This has interrupted a generations-long trend of native Scottish disaffection toward tartan as stereotyping kitsch.[802][803] An online survey by BBC in 2012 found that 52% of respondents strongly or very strongly disagreed with the
premise "Walter Scott's re-branding of all Scots as tartan-wearing Highlanders has been a hindrance to Scotland's cultural development", and only a third agreed. [804] Tartan in mainstream, international fashion experienced another resurgence starting in 2019. [805] Contemporary Scottish nationalism has been said to be "fed, in part, by tartan and
Jacobite nostalgia".[806] After avoidance of tartan since the 1970s (especially by Scottish liberals),[807] the cloth has been politicised again as a nationalist symbol (as it was in the early 18th century), especially during the 2014 Scottish independence referendum and in the Scottish National Party's 2015 campaign.[800] (Perhaps owing to this
messaging shift, the VisitScotland agency around the same time changed its tourism advertising to minimise, though not eliminate, tartan imagery.)[808] Murray Pittock (2002) writes that the neo-Jacobitism is "both irritating kitsch and a language of identity" for modern Scots.[809] After several decades of intellectual hostility toward tartan (e.g. in
Tom Nairn's 1977 The Break-up of Britain: Crisis and Neo-nationalism, and Hugh Trevor-Roper's posthumous 2008 The Invention of Scotland), an "academic re-assessment of tartan" began in the early 21st century, relying on a wider range of early and modern source material,[810] in historiographical, multidisciplinary edited volumes including
Scottish History: The Power of the Past (eds. Edward J. Cowan and Richard J. Finlay, 2002) and From Tartan to Tartany (ed. Ian Brown, 2010). Major commercial weavers (tartan mills) of traditional tartan cloth that are operating today include Lochcarron of Scotland[811][812] in Lochcarron and Selkirk; Ingles Buchan in Glasgow; [399][812] House of
Edgar (also a Highland dress vendor, and a subsidiary of Macnaughton Holdings) in Perth; [399] Johnstons of Elgin (also a wool clothing maker), [399] Strathmore Woollen Co [813] in Forfar, [399] and D. C. Dalgliesh in Selkirk, [105] all three of which are now part of the Edinburgh-based Scotweb, under the trade name Clan; [814] Prickly Thistle (also a
women's clothing maker) in Evanton and Edinburgh; [815] The Tartan Weaving Mill (also a weaving museum, and a subsidiary of Gold Brothers) in Edinburgh; [816] Andrew Elliot Ltd in Selkirk; Stevens & Graham (specialising mostly in tartan rugs and carpet) in Rutherglen; Marton Mills in West Yorkshire, England; Cambrian Woollen Mill, in Powys,
Wales; West Coast Woollen Mills in Vancouver, British Columbia, Canada; [817] GK Textiles in Port Moody, BC (formerly Fraser & Kirkbright, Vancouver); [818] and Pendleton Woolen Mills in Portland, Oregon, US. [216] The modern trade in wool tartan fabric has three principal markets: Highland dress, high fashion (with significant business from
France and Italy), and furnishing.[819][19] Popular tartans (including for kilts and other Highland dress, as well as for school uniforms) have increasingly been manufactured, primarily in the UK, in poly-viscose (PV),[820] a blend of the artificial materials polyester and viscose (rayon), typically in a 65% polyester to 35% viscose ratio.[821][822] PV is
promoted as washable, durable, crease-resistant but heat-settable for permanent pleating, shrinkage-resistant, colour-fast, low-pilling, hypoallergenic, not attractive to clothes moths, more "breatheable" than polyester (thus good for athletics), lower cost than wool, and lighter weight than wool, but said to have a wool-like texture. [823]
[824][825][826][827] It also does not rely on animal industry, so it appeals to vegans. [823][824] Large-scale global manufacturers of tartan-patterned cloth in a variety of cotton, polyester, viscose, nylon, etc., materials and blends include Başkan Tekstil in Istanbul and Bursa, Turkey; and Jeen Wei Enterprises in Taichung, Taiwan; while a leading
maker of tartan ribbon is Satab in Saint-Just-Malmont, France. [828] Tartan designs have long been produced in low-cost cotton in large quantities in China. [817] Carol Craig (2003) writes: "Like it or not, tartan is a very sophisticated branching and marketing tool for Scotland." [829] In a tartan-as-marketing analysis, Paterson (2001) observed that
continued internationalisation of tartan manufacture, design, and consumption has diluted the associative "Scottishness" of tartan and its value as a national identifier. He blames this in part on Scottish weavers' failure to adapt to market demands for a wider range of fabric applications, as well as the businesses' own complicity in broadening tartan's
perceived cultural identity, e.g. in creating tartans for non-Scottish families, places, and organisations. [830] (For particular 20th-century to present-day tartans, see also § Corporate and commercial and § Fashion, below.) Scene from 1954 Brigadoon film, with kilts and tartan trews In 1947, the tartan-laden Broadway musical Brigadoon (followed by a
film version in 1954 and a television adaptation in 1966) renewed an excessively romanticised notion of the Highlands and Highland dress. A critical review called it a "whimsical dream-world" that was "overloaded with Hollywood-Scottish trappings".[831] (The production is generally not well received by actual Scots.)[832][833] Tartan suits were
popular in the mod subculture of Great Britain of the early to mid-1960s and its late 1970s revival. "Tartan Army" Scottish football (soccer) team have been collectively referred to by the nickname "Tartan Army", with fans often sporting tartan
clothing (including kilts) at matches. The Bay City Rollers in the Netherlands in 1976, sporting some tartan shirts and a tartan-trimmed jacket Popular in the mid-1970s, Scottish teeny-bopper band the Bay City Rollers were described by the British Hit Singles & Albums reference book as "tartan teen sensations from Edinburgh".[834] A German punk
wearing a piece of the royal Stewart tartan, 1984 Tartan became a common element of punk subculture starting in the late 1970s. Punk music was a way for youth in the British Isles to voice their discontent with the ruling class and with modern society. The unorthodox use of tartan (especially the royal Stewart), which had long been associated with
authority and gentility, was then seen as an expression of that discontent. In this way, tartan - worn unconventionally - became an anti-establishment symbol. This was entirely on purpose according to Vivienne Westwood, a designer deeply involved in early punk fashion; [765][835] the idea was "to seize the very fabric of the Establishment in order to
reverse its meaning and perhaps to challenge society's design."[836] American punks often wore tartan skirts, a "subversion" of the Catholic school-girl uniform, and kilts have also been worn in the punk scene since the late 1970s, especially in the UK.[801] Baggy tartan pants later proved popular among pop-punks and skate punks, and tartan-lined
jackets among ska punks. (For further information, see Punk fashion.) From the late 1990s, kilts (mostly modernised "utility kilts" but sometimes traditional ones) have become relatively popular even in North American post-punk subculture (e.g. the goth-industrial, emo, and steampunk scenes), though often in black rather than tartan. After the
1970s, Westwood, who continued to work extensively with tartan, was joined by other big-name couturiers. These included Ralph Lauren and style" for both women and men; [811][836] Stephen Sprouse, [836] credited with a 1980s
combination of "uptown sophistication in clothing with a downtown punk and pop sensibility";[837] and later Alexander McQueen,[838] who was "consciously repoliticising the cloth".[319] Others have included Jean Paul Gaultier, Tommy Hilfiger (who made tartan central to his fall 2000 collection), Christian Lacroix, Yves Saint Laurent, Giorgio
Armani, and Gianfranco Ferré.[839][836] A tartan outfit designed by Westwood featured on a commemorative UK postage stamp issued by the Royal Mail in 2012 celebrating "Great British Fashion".[840] Tartan/plaid flannel shirts, emblematic of the working class, re-entered mainstream fashion through a series of subcultural adoptions, originating
primarily in the western United States. First, the style became a staple of cholo style in and around Los Angeles, from the 1970s. From there, the style later became adopted by hip hop fashion in the 1990s, especially the West Coast hip hop fashion in the 1990s, especially the West Coast hip hop fashion in the 1970s. From there, the style later became adopted by hip hop fashion in the 1990s, especially the West Coast hip hop fashion in the 1970s.
scene (starting in Seattle) of the late 1980s to 2000s.[842] There was fashion cross-pollination between these youth-culture movements, [843] and the fashion industry has found this confluence very marketable. [844] A resurgence of interest in tartan and kilts (and even Scottish tourism) [833][845] has been generated in recent times by major
Hollywood productions [846] like the Highlander franchise (1986-2007), [847] [852] Brave (2012), [853] and the television series Outlander (2014-, with a follow-on travelogue documentary series, Men in Kilts). [854] Many of these featured
custom-designed tartans.[847][855] Tartan clothing has appeared frequently in Doctor (Colin Baker) wore a Wallace tartan scarf on Terror of the Zygons,[856] and his robot-dog companion K9 had a tartan collar.[855] The Sixth Doctor (Colin Baker) wore a Wallace tartan scarf on Terror of the Zygons,[856] and his robot-dog companion K9 had a tartan collar.[855] The Sixth Doctor (Colin Baker) wore a Wallace tartan scarf on Terror of the Zygons,[856] and his robot-dog companion K9 had a tartan collar.[855] The Sixth Doctor (Colin Baker) wore a Wallace tartan scarf on Terror of the Zygons,[856] and his robot-dog companion K9 had a tartan collar.[855] The Sixth Doctor (Colin Baker) wore a Wallace tartan scarf on Terror of the Zygons,[856] and his robot-dog companion K9 had a tartan collar.[855] The Sixth Doctor (Colin Baker) wore a Wallace tartan scarf on Terror of the Zygons, [856] and his robot-dog companion K9 had a tartan scarf on Terror of the Zygons, [856] and his robot-dog companion K9 had a tartan scarf on Terror of the Zygons, [856] and his robot-dog companion K9 had a tartan scarf on Terror of the Zygons, [856] and his robot-dog companion K9 had a tartan scarf on Terror of the Zygons, [856] and his robot-dog companion K9 had a tartan scarf on Terror of the Zygons, [856] and his robot-dog companion K9 had a tartan scarf on Terror of the Zygons, [856] and his robot-dog companion K9 had a tartan scarf on Terror of the Zygons, [856] and his robot-dog companion K9 had a tartan scarf on Terror of the Zygons, [856] and his robot-dog companion K9 had a tartan scarf on Terror of the Zygons, [856] and his robot-dog companion K9 had a tartan scarf on Terror of the Zygons, [856] and his robot-dog companion K9 had a tartan scarf on Terror of the Zygons, [856] and his robot-dog companion K9 had a tartan scarf on Terror of the Zygons, [856] and his robot-dog companion K9 had a tartan scarf on Terror of the Zygons, [856] and his robot-dog companion K9 had a tartan scarf on Terror of the Zygons, [856] and his robot-dog compan
tartans, and also typically wore a tartan waistcoat in a fourth sett under it.[857] The Seventh Doctor (Sylvester McCoy) wore a crimson and black tartan scarf on Time and the Rani. Clara Oswald (Jenna Coleman), the companion of the Eleventh Doctor (Matt Smith) and the Twelfth Doctor (Peter Capaldi), wore a Campbell tartan dress on "The Name of
the Doctor" and a Wallace skirt on "The Time of the Doctor" and "Deep Breath".[858] Annabel Scholey as Claire Brown, in the Thirteenth Doctor (David Tennant) wore a brown tartan suit in the 60th anniversary specials.[860] 1980s Doctor Who
patchwork costume of the Sixth Doctor, with at least three tartans involved Royal Stewart again, as a mod/ska-punk jacket lining, 2007 Rita Ora performing in Glasgow in 2018, wearing a tartan trench coat made of at least five different setts Grunge fashion still alive and well in 2019, featuring a lot of tartan/plaid shirts A rather impractical tartan
gown by Christopher John Rogers, 2020-21, on display at the Metropolitan Museum of Art Costume Institute's exhibit In America: A Lexicon of Fashion One of the most popular tartans is the royal Stewart, ostensibly the personal tartan of the British monarch, since George IV declared it his own (though it was probably designed by the Sobieski
Stuarts, [700] albeit based on mid-18th-century pattern called "Prince Charles Edward Stuart"). [111][63] The "royal" sett was first published in 1831 in the book The Scottish Gaël by James Logan. In addition to its use in clothing, such as skirts and scarves, royal Stewart tartan has also appeared on biscuit tins for Scottish shortbread, [861] and it has
also long been favoured by the British punk scene. Another tartan in very common use by the general public is Black Watch (also known as old Campbell, Grant hunting, and Government).[127] This tartan, a dark variant (and ancestor) of the main Clan Campbell tartan, has long been used by military units in the British Army and other Commonwealth
forces. Early manufacturer Wilsons of Bannockburn made many "fashion", "fancy", or "national" tartans with catalogue numbers or fanciful names, without any association with particular families, districts, or organisations; two popular ones still in use are both usually called "Caledonia". Wilsons No. 3 is found in their 1819 Key Pattern Book and is
comparatively simple, [862] while No. 144 is more complex, though of a similar colour scheme, and seems to date to the late 18th century, [863] (The numbering suggests the other does as well.) Some other tartans in this "Caledonia" group were later claimed by clans; e.g. Caledonia No. 43 or "Kidd" became one of the MacPherson tartans. [864] [862]
Royal Stewart tartan Black Watch tartan Wilsons' No. 3 tartan, named Caledonia Wilsons' No. 155, also often called Caledonia Wilsons' No. 155, also often called Caledonia In the general fashion industry, various patterns, the oldest of the Clan
Gregor setts (though named after Rob Roy in the Victorian period),[865] is also in broad use (often with changed colours) as one of the most common patterns used in flannel cloth for clothing and bedding; in the US, it is often called "buffalo plaid",[866] a term of uncertain derivation.[867] When the Rob Roy sett is changed to a white ground with any
other colour this forms the most common gingham cloth style. Gingham is often given a wider setting, to form a lattice appearance (sometimes called "windowpane plaid" or "windo
flannel patterns, "buffalo plaid" is just Rob Roy MacGregor tartan (originally red and black) rendered in any of various colours Rob Roy changed to white and any other colour becomes gingham Windowpane g
LGBT-themed modern "fashion" tartans In addition to clan tartans, many tartan patterns have been developed for individuals, families, districts and towns, institutions, corporations, and events.[9] They have even been developed for individuals, families, districts and towns, institutions, corporations, and events.[9] They have even been developed for individuals, families, districts and towns, institutions, corporations, and events.[9] They have even been developed for individuals, families, districts and towns, institutions, corporations, and events.[9] They have even been developed for individuals, families, districts and towns, institutions, corporations, and events.[9] They have even been developed for individuals, families, districts and towns, institutions, corporations, and events.[9] They have even been developed for individuals, families, districts and towns, institutions, corporations, and events.[9] They have even been developed for individuals, families, districts and towns, institutions, corporations, and events.[9] They have even been developed for individuals, families, districts and towns, institutions, corporations, and events.[9] They have even been developed for individuals, families, districts and towns, institutions, and events.[9] They have even been developed for individuals, families, districts and towns, and events.[9] They have even been developed for individuals, families, districts and towns, and events.[9] They have even been developed for individuals, families, districts and towns, and events.[9] They have even been developed for individuals, families, districts and towns, and events.[9] They have even been developed for individuals, families, districts and events.[9] They have even been developed for individuals, families, districts and events.[9] They have events.[9] They h
had a long history with the military, and today some military units - particularly those within the Commonwealth - have tartans or government tartans. Many districts, cities, and towns in Scotland have their own tartans, mostly dating to the 20th century (though some few district tartans are quite
old),[cr] and not always official; many were just created for marketing to tourists,[878] They are intended primarily for those to whom a clan tartan does not seem to apply (see § Etiquette, below). At least two local government councils in Scotland have official tartans.[878] They are intended primarily for those to whom a clan tartan does not seem to apply (see § Etiquette, below).
tartan, designed in 1964,[879] has been an official symbol of Canada since 2011.[880] In addition to the traditional district and modern geographic tartans are officially recognised by the government bodies of the places the designs represent. The
pan-Celticism movement has inspired the creation of "national" (in the sense of Celtic nations) and sometimes regional tartans "to emphasise the ... bonds with other Celtic countries" [881] outside of Scotland; none of these appear to have any official recognition. There are tartans of Cornwall, long a part of Devonshire in England (the designs date
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from 1963 to the 1980s);[cs] Wales (from 1967 onward[ct] - sometimes with false claims of antiquity by marketers);[cu] Brittany in France (from 2002);[cv] Galicia in Spain (from 1946, many by D. G. Teall of the Scottish Tartans Society, and several asymmetric);[cu] Brittany in France (from 2002);[cv] Galicia in Spain (from 1946, many by D. G. Teall of the Scottish Tartans Society, and several asymmetric);[cu] Brittany in France (from 2002);[cv] Galicia in Spain (from 1946, many by D. G. Teall of the Scottish Tartans Society, and several asymmetric);[cu] Brittany in France (from 2002);[cv] Galicia in Spain (from 1946, many by D. G. Teall of the Scottish Tartans Society, and several asymmetric);[cu] Brittany in France (from 2002);[cv] Galicia in Spain (from 1946, many by D. G. Teall of the Scottish Tartans Society, and several asymmetric);[cu] Brittany in France (from 2002);[cv] Galicia in Spain (from 2002);[cv] 
discovery of the "Dungiven tartan" (see § 16th century, above) and its marketing as a district tartan for Ulster, Scottish weavers (and in two cases English, and in another American market by introducing a profusion of national, province, and county tartans for Ireland and Northern Ireland,
generally based on established Scottish tartans with some colour changes.[19][216] These geographical tartans, which (aside from the Dungiven/Ulster reconstruction of 1956) date to 1970 and later, [220] do not have any official recognition, and are purely a product of the industry.[19][214] One weaver even introduced a competing set of Irish
national and county tartans in 1996, different from the previous offerings. [214] "The influence of native Irish people, either as suppliers or consumers of Irish tartans, with the first dating from 1956. Neither Quebec nor Nunavut,
Canada's newest territory, have formally adopted patterns. Alberta, meanwhile, has two official tartans, including a dress one. All but Quebec's were registered with the Court of the Lord Lyon in Scotland. [909] Canada has an official national tartan that was originally designed to commemorate the introduction of its new maple leaf flag, and was made
an official national emblem in 2011.[880] Various Canadian regions (like Labrador and Cape Breton Island), counties, municipalities, and institutions also have official tartans.[cx] Tartans have been created for Australia; its capital city, Canberra; each of its states; and some of its local government areas; but only some of those tartans have been
officially adopted or recognised by the relevant governments in Australia. US states have official tartans, with the first dating from 1988. Highland dancing, at a 2008 Highland dancing from 1988.
mourning, dress, or dance. The first three of these ideas are the result of Victorian fondness for dress etiquette and show[912] (and weaver marketing);[66] the last is more recent. Hunting tartans with camouflague to be made up of subdued colours, such as dark blues, greens, and browns.[913] Although there is some evidence of early tartans with camouflague to be made up of subdued colours.
colours going back to the 16th century, hunting tartans, despite the name, have very little to do with actual hunting.[12] Mourning tartans, though quite rare, are associated with death and funerals. They are usually designed using combinations of black and white, or by replacing bright colours such as reds and yellows in a traditional tartan with
black, white, or grey.[914] Dress tartans are usually special tartans for formal-dress occasions[915] (e.g. dress Stewart[916] is distinct from both the main royal Stewart tartan and the hunting Stewart[917] among several other tartans attributed to Stewart[918] is distinct from both the main royal Stewart[918] is distinct from both the main ro
that do differ from main clan tartans are sometimes entirely different (e.g. MacMillan (36] and MacMillan dress[922] are unrelated designs), while in most cases they are based on the main tartan but with colour differences (e.g. Stewart). Some dress tartans are very modern, [82][624] but some date back to the era of the Vestiarium Scoticum. [923]
Dance tartans, intended for Highland dance outfits, for either sex, are inspired (like most dress tartans thought to have been worn by Highland women in the 17th and 18th centuries, which often featured white as a major colour, as do typical dance tartans today (most or all of which date to the 20th
century or later). Some dance tartans are named "arisaid" rather than "dance", e.g. Fraser arisaid.[924][cz] There has been some confusion between dress and dance tartans, including some of the oldest, also have white in them, and have been used for dance
competition in lieu of a dance-specific tartan, so are easy to mistake for dance tartans, which almost invariably have white in them.[927][db] A large proportion of non-clan tartans in all of the modern tartans in them.[927][db] A large proportion of non-clan tartans in the late 20th century for family names that are not clans or listed as septs
of clans. These are usually Scottish surnames, but the Scottish Register of Tartans (SRT) database increasingly includes new family tartans for names that are not Scottish or even British. Most family tartans for names that are not Scottish or even British. Most family tartans for names that are not Scottish or even British.
together with clan tartans in a "clan/family" category if they are newer and lack such imprimatur. The British royal family's own Balmoral tartan (designed c. 1852). It is incidentally one of the few
long-established tartans with multiple hues of the same colour (two greys, in this case). A few non-clan family tartans have an older pedigree. The best known is Balmoral tartan, reserved for the British royal family and personal pipers thereof, since its creation by Prince Albert c. 1852.[dc] (See also further discussion under § Etiquette, below.) Some
clans recognise tartans for specific family branches and septs that are not themselves generally regarded as clans. For example, Clan Robertson/Donnachaidh/Duncan acknowledges separate, established tartans (some of them quite old) for Inches, MacGlashan, MacInroy, MacLagan, MacPhee, MacWilliam, Reid, and Robinson, [929] and they are all
registered in the SRT. Since the late 1960s, various weavers have marketed (primarily to Irish family members.[216] There had also been a legend that the rare Clans Originaux (1880) contained Irish family tartans, but this was finally disproven in 2003.[19][dd] There is
one case of a formal Irish clan/family tartan, however: The Clan Cian Society commissioned a tartan for Cian of Ely, and registered it with the Chief Herald of Ireland in 1983.[19][216] (Even this has an Irish-American connection, as the chief resided in California, and the society is US-headquartered.)[931] Similarly, a commercial operation in Cardiffe
named Wales Tartan Centre (supplied by Cambrian Woollen Mill) has since the early 2000s promoted a long series of tartans named for common or prominent Welsh family names; they are unusual in often having odd-numbered thread counts, and having a different warp and weft (producing rectangular rather than square patterns), probably to
distinguish them from the Scottish style.[892][932] For the much narrower sense of family, the SRT registers also as "name" tartans those that are created by individuals for only themselves and their immediate-family members, often for weddings; these usually have a copyright claim. One of the earliest tartans named for a specific person[de] is the
"Janet Wilson sett", entered into the late 1770s records of Wilsons of Bannockburn and believed to refer to the company founder's wife or daughter-in-law, though made as one of their publicly available patterns. [317][df] Numerous Scottish brands use tartan, and some have unique tartans. Various not-for-profit organisations also have corporate
tartans. Probably the earliest case was that of the Ancient Caledonian Society of London (founded in 1786 and defunct since 1837), which used what is believed to have been a consistent tartan [935] for its members' frock coats (which, unusually, featured brocade woven into the tartan, of Jacobite white roses - it may be what 1767 advertisements
called "flowered tartan"); only one known example of the coat survives. [355] [936] Scottish airline Loganair in its tartan livery. Including on the tails of its own tartan. [938] Scottish regional airline Loganair in its tartan livery.
planes, and has two registered corporate tartans. [939] "Racing Stewart" [940] is a pattern created in 1995 for the Jackie Stewart Formula One car-racing team. [941] "DunBroch", a tartan devised by Disney/Pixar for fictional characters in the animated film Brave The "corporate" category is one of the fastest-growing in the official Scottish Register of
 Tartans (SRT) database, with a large number of Scottish (and American and other) companies and societies registering organisational tartans. These are generally protected by copyright and sometimes trademark law. These tartans vary in purpose from general corporate livery, to special event tartans, to tartans for fictional characters. Two examples
of the latter are Sanrio's 2004 creation of a predominantly pink tartan for Hello Kitty;[91] and the 2011 creation by Disney/Pixar of the DunBroch tartan for the family of the main character, Mérida, of the animated Highland fantasy/adventure film Brave.[942] Handbag in Burberry check An early example of a tartan created by and for the fashion
industry, and surely the most famous, is "Burberry of London, but has been used for all manner of clothing and accessories since 1967[943] (with another major marketing push in 2001) and is emblematic of the company and its upscale product line.[944] (For
additional information, including a legal dispute, see § Legal protection, below.) A fast-growing category in the SRT is that of "fashion" tartans, created by companies and individual designers simply for aesthetic reasons, without any association with a particular clan, family, region, etc. Like organisational tartans, most of these have a copyright claim
attached to them. A prominent example: In 2017, Scottish fashion designer Charles Jeffrey designed a signature tartan for his Loverboy label, registering it in the SRT.[125] Manufacture and use of tartan and its association, if any,
with a particular family, organisation, person, event, etc.); legal protection of a tartan as intellectual property (trademark, copyright); and etiquette (socio-cultural norms regarding the use of tartan as intellectual property (trademark, copyright); and etiquette (socio-cultural norms regarding the use of tartan as intellectual property (trademark, copyright); and etiquette (socio-cultural norms regarding the use of tartan as intellectual property (trademark, copyright); and etiquette (socio-cultural norms regarding the use of tartan as intellectual property (trademark, copyright); and etiquette (socio-cultural norms regarding the use of tartan as intellectual property (trademark, copyright); and etiquette (socio-cultural norms regarding the use of tartan as intellectual property (trademark, copyright); and etiquette (socio-cultural norms regarding the use of tartan as intellectual property (trademark, copyright); and etiquette (socio-cultural norms); and etiquette (socio-cultural norms) are socio-cultural norms.
Highland Society of London solicited clan tartan from clan chiefs. Following recognition by a clan tartan as a clan tartan from clan tartan as a clan tartan as a clan tartan from clan tartan fr
Committee on Tartan, the clan tartan was then recorded in the Lyon Court Books.[305] However, leading up to the launch of the Scottish Register of Tartans in 2009 (see below for details), the office of the Lyon Court Books.[305] However, leading up to the launch of the Scottish Register of Tartans in 2009 (see below for details), the office of the Lyon Court Books.[305] However, leading up to the launch of the Scottish Register of Tartans in 2009 (see below for details), the office of the Lyon Court Books.[305] However, leading up to the launch of the Scottish Register of Tartans in 2009 (see below for details), the office of the Lyon Court Books.[305] However, leading up to the launch of the Scottish Register of Tartans in 2009 (see below for details), the office of the Lyon Court Books.[305] However, leading up to the launch of the Scottish Register of Tartans in 2009 (see below for details), the office of the Lyon Court Books.[305] However, leading up to the launch of the Scottish Register of Tartans in 2009 (see below for details), the office of the Lyon Court Books.[305] However, leading up to the launch of the Scottish Register of Tartans in 2009 (see below for details), the office of the Lyon Court Books.[305] However, leading up to the launch of the Scottish Register of Tartans in 2009 (see below for details).
tartans can be created and registered by anyone, with the Scottish Register of Tartans. Modern registered tartans include ones for Scottish and other districts, cities, and towns; for Irish counties (devised since the 1990s)[105] and families (for example, the surname Fitzpatrick has two registered tartans include ones for Scottish and other districts, cities, and towns; for Irish counties (devised since the 1990s)[105] and families (for example, the surname Fitzpatrick has two registered tartans include ones for Scottish and other districts, cities, and towns; for Irish counties (devised since the 1990s)[105] and families (for example, the surname Fitzpatrick has two registered tartans include ones for Scottish and other districts, cities, and towns; for Irish counties (devised since the 1990s)[105] and families (for example, the surname Fitzpatrick has two registered tartans include ones for Scottish and other districts, cities, and towns; for Irish counties (devised since the 1990s)[105] and families (for example, the surname Fitzpatrick has two registered tartans include ones for Scottish and other districts).
even for specific events or individuals. Tartans are also being created in record numbers among the Scottish diaspora in the United States, Canada, Australia, New Zealand, etc., especially for places, military divisions, pipe bands, and individuals and their immediate families. Until the late 20th century, instead of a central official tartan registry,
independent organisations located in Scotland, Canada, and the United States documented and recorded tartans. [946] In 1963, an organisation called the Scottish Tartans Society (now defunct, and originally named Scottish Tartans Information Centre)
All Publicly Known Tartans (RAPKT) contained about 2,700 different designs of tartan. [948] Registration of new designs was not free of charge. The society, however, ran into financial troubles in 2000, and folded. [949] Former members of that society formed two new Scotland-based entities - the Scottish Tartans Authority (STA, 1996 - before
STS closed) and the Scottish Tartans World Register (STWR, 2000 - the trade name of a private company, Tartan Registration Ltd).[399] Both of these organisations initially based their databases on the RAPKT. STA's database, the International Tartan Index (ITI) consisted of about 3,500 different tartans (with over 7,000, counting variants) as of
2004.[948] The online ITI was later rebranded The Tartan Ferret. STWR's self-titled Scottish Tartans World Register database was made up of about 3,000 different designs as of 2004.[948] Both organisations were registered as Scottish Charities and recorded new tartans (free in the case of STA and for a fee in the case of STWR) on request.[950]
[951] In the interim, a jointly Scotland- and US-based organisation, International Association of Tartan Studies and Tartan Educational & Cultural Association (IATS/TECA) emerged in 1984[399] and published its own TartanArt database in the early 1990s as Microsoft Windows software which was much used in the North American kilt-making trade
IATS/TECA was absorbed by STA by 2005.[399] The Scottish Register of Tartans (SRT) is Scotland's official tartan register, and was established in 2009.[952] SRT is maintained and administered by the National Archives of Scotland (NAS), a statutory body based in Edinburgh.[953] The aim of the register is to provide a definitive and accessible
resource to promote and preserve tartans. It is also intended to be the definitive source for the registration fee is paid). The database itself - also named simply Scottish Register of Tartans, and sometimes called TartanRegister from its domain name - is made up of the pre-existing
registers of STA and STWR as they were at the time of SRT's launch (preserving the STA's and STWR's register new tartans, and request their thread counts, and receive at the time of SRT's launch (preserving the STA's and STWR's register new tartans, search for existing tartans and request their thread counts, and receive at the time of SRT's launch (preserving the STA's and STWR's register's website, users can register new tartans, search for existing tartans and request their thread counts, and receive at the time of SRT's launch (preserving the STA's and STWR's register's website, users can register new tartans, search for existing tartans and request their thread counts, and receive at the time of SRT's launch (preserving the STA's and STWR's register).
notifications of newly registered tartans. [952][954] STWR became defunct some time after 2008. STA later closed the ITI/Tartan Ferret to new registrations, and in late 2022 removed the search feature from the STA website (pending a site redesign), deferring to the Scottish Register of Tartans, which now appears to be the only operating tartan
registry. STA continues offline work on the ITI database, correcting errors, importing new SRT additions, and recording historical patterns newly discovered in museum holdings, etc. Some modern tartans are protected by trademark law, and the trademark proprietor can, in certain circumstances, prevent others from selling that tartan.[127] An
example is the "Burberry check" of the English fashion house, an instantly recognisable tartan that is very well known around the world. [955][dh] Unlike trademark registration and copyright registration, the Scottish Register of Tartans (SRT) and its authorising Tartans Bill do not create any new or enhanced intellectual property rights through the
act of registration (nor provide any enforcement mechanism other than removal of infringing entries from the registry).[959] SRT, however, permits registrants optionally to assert and record copyright and/or trademark claims over their new tartans, for designs that are eligible for such protection under other established law[960] (such as the
Copyright, Designs and Patents Act 1988; and the Scotland Act 1998, which took over copyright and trademark registration "provides evidence of the existence and date of [the] design",[962] which helps establish the copyright date under the Berne Copyright
Convention. Such legal protections apply only to comparatively recently created tartans; old clan, regimental, and district tartans are outside the protection periods of such intellectual property laws.[43] SRT also permits the listing of intended use and manufacture restriction preferences, but has no enforcement capability, [963] and also includes a
statement that "No other rights can be conferred." [962] British tartan weavers, such as Lochcarron and D. C. Dalgliesh, generally will not produce material in an SRT "restricted" tartan without written evidence of permission from the copyright/trademark claimant. In additional furtherance of intellectual property concerns, the SRT also refuses to
register a new tartan that is confusingly similar to any existing one (as determined by an SRT review process).[964] The application of copyright, concerned with designs printed on fabric, is Designer Guild Ltd v Russell Williams (Textiles) Ltd (2000), finding for fairly
broad copyright protection in textile works that involve creative originality. [965] In 2008, two tartan pattern copyright holders, Rosemary Nicolson Samios and weaver Lochcarron of Scotland, took legal action for infringement of an Isle of Skye district sett (designed 1993) and the Princess Diana Memorial sett (designed 1997), respectively, against
the Gold Brothers firm of Surinder, Galab, Malap, and Dildar Singh, who operate dozens of stores in Scotland and online that sell primarily Chinese-made tartan was considerably profitable for Samios, after the pattern was popularised by
Queen Elizabeth II wearing it in 1999. The Princess Diana sett was designed by Alistair Buchan of Lochcanrron and of the Scottish Tartans Authority as a charity fundraiser. A British court on 2 July 2008 issued an interim interdict (preliminary injunction) against Gold Brothers' sale of Isle of Skye goods, after a police search found hundreds of metres
of the pattern in Chinese-made cloth in the company's warehouse.[877][966][967][968] Both cases may have been settled out-of-court because published news regarding them ceases in 2008. A more recent case, Abraham Moon & Sons Ltd v. Thornber & Others (2012), actually involved tartan. It held that the textual ticket stamp (a detailed set of
weaving instructions, i.e. a thread count with additional information on precise colours, etc.) used to produce a tartan designed in-house by the claimant had been infringed, was protected as a literary work, and also constituted a "recording" of the graphical work of the tartan and thus was independently protected as a work of artistic craftsmanship
[43][969] As of 2020, [update] the decision was being appealed, as it conflicted with previous caselaw, e.g. Hensher v Restawile (1976), holding such instructions to be uncopyrightable. [970][43] While tartan arguably could be classified as a form of intangible cultural heritage, [971] and its value to identifying Scottish products both in Scotland and
internationally has been recognised and exploited for a long time, [941] tartan is not protected by either geographical indication (protected designation of origin) law, nor sui generis legislation specific to that kind of product. [972] Harris tweed, another textile associated more narrowly with Scotland, does have such protection. In 1998, Keithner to the contract of the contra
Lumsden, research officer of the Scottish Tartans Society, proposed that the word tartan be prohibited for use to market a textile, unless the design was accepted in an official governmental tartan registry (which did not then exist). [941] When the Scottish Parliament finally authorised the Scottish Register of Tartans in 2008, it did not include
anything like this sort of trade protection. According to Michael B. Paterson (2001): "No mechanism exists to protect [traditional Scotland's interests", though the tartan registries "play an important, if weak, role in asserting Scotland's cultural rights in relation to tartan.
[973] Scottish actor Sean Connery at a Tartan Day celebration in Washington DC. When knighted by Queen Elizabeth II in 2000, he wore this green-and-black hunting-tartan kilt of his mother's Clan Maclean. Since the Victorian era, authorities on tartan have claimed that there is an etiquette to wearing tartan, specifically tartan attributed to clans or
families. In the same line of opinion, some tartans attributed to the British royal family have been claimed to be "off limits" to non-royalty.[974][975] Even so, there are no laws or universally accepted rules on who can or cannot wear a particular tartan. (Some writers have nevertheless asserted their existence anyway, e.g. Alexander Campbell in
1890, regarding different Campbell tartans.)[976] The concept of the entitlement to certain tartans has led to the term universal tartan, or free tartan, which describes tartan which can be worn by anyone without controversy. Traditional examples of such are the Black Watch, Caledonia, hunting Stewart, and Jacobite tartans, shepherds' check, and
district tartans.[977][799][978] The published marketing of tartans for simple fashion purposes without any association to a place or body dates back to at least 1745,[496] and much of Wilsons' output through the 19th century consisted of "fancy" patterns for the general public.[979] Some recently created designs intended for everyone (though some
are exclusive to particular weavers or Highland-dress outfitters) have names including Braveheart, Clansman, European Union, Highlander, Independence, Pride of Scotland, Stone of Destiny, and Twenty First Century, [980] Books on Scottish Clansman, European Union, Highlander, Independence, Pride of Scotland, Rainbow, Rainbow, Scotland, Rainbow, Rainbow, Scotland, Rainbow, Scotland, Rainbow, Scotland, Rainbow, R
list guidelines,[127] but are not always in agreement. One such opinion is that people not bearing a clan surname, or surname claimed as a sept of a clan, should not wear the tartan of their mother's clan. [981] This opinion is reinforced by the fact that in the Scottish clan system, the Lord Lyon states that membership to a clan technically passes
through the surname. This means that children who bear their father's surname belong to the father's clan (if any), and that children who bear their mother's surname (her maiden name) belong to the father's clan (if any), and that children who bear their mother's surname (her maiden name) belong to the father's surname (her maiden name) belong to the father's clan (if any), and that children who bear their mother's clan (if any).
Some clan societies even claim that certain tartans are the personal property of a chief or chieftain, and in some cases they allow or deny their clansfolk "permission" to wear that tartan should not be worn by anyone who is
not part of the British royal family. Even so, some weavers outside of the United Kingdom ignore the "longstanding convention" of the British royal family's "right" to this tartan industry. [985][dj] Generally, a more liberal attitude had
been taken by those in the business of selling tartan, holding that anyone may wear any tartan they like. Under the liberal view, claimed "rules" are mere conventions (some of which are recent creations), with different levels of importance depending on the symbolic meaning of the tartan on some particular occasion. The Standing Council of Scottish
Chiefs has also taken a fairly flexible position (organisationally; some specific individual chiefs may have a narrower or looser take, and not all chiefs are members). Aside from opposing the creation of a new tartan using a clan's name without the chief's permission, their website states (adopting more loosely some ideas from the Lord Lyon view):[988]
There are no strict rules on who has the right to wear a particular tartan. People normally wear only the tartan (if any) of their surname, or a "district tartan indicates that the wearer bears an allegiance to the chief of that clan. Some Highland-dress
historians have taken a dim view of regulatory intents and proclamations with regard to tartans; Scottish National Portrait Gallery curator A. E. Haswell Miller wrote that "to claim special entitlement to a tartan in the same manner as heraldic arms is certainly absurd", because evidence suggests that the idea was just invented by writers of the late
18th to mid-19th centuries.[989] Sir Thomas Dick Lauder expressed similar views as far back as 1829, right in the middle of the "clan tartans and attempts by clans to claim regimental ones.[561] While tartan has been most closely associated with Scotland, and dating back to the
Roman period was perhaps associated with Northwestern Europe in general, it is likely that the idea of using patterns of rectangles and lines has independently occurred many times, in any cultures with weaving. [990] Basic tartan "is almost as primitive a weave as it is possible to make ... probably the earliest form of patterned fabric anywhere. [2]
Surviving pre-modern historical examples seem sparse, however. Modern tartan-style cloth in a wide variety of materials and patterns from simply as a style of cloth and without any association with Scotland. Further information: Maasai people § Clothing Maasai men c. 1906-
1918, one wearing a tartan shúkà; photo by Walther Dobbertin Among the Maasai people of Kenya and Tanzania, the shúkà is a cotton blanket-like garment (what Scots would call a plaid) worn as a wrap, and very commonly in a tartan pattern, though sometimes
seen in blue and other colours. Maasai men in shúkà; Narok County, Kenya, 2018 Shúkà were originally of painted (typically red) leather, but Maasai have had access to plain-weave cotton fabric for some time, imported to the region by Americans since the 1860s.[991] Joseph Thomas Last, a British missionary, in 1883 described the Maasai as
particularly fond of red and white cloth, to be worn by higher-status men (though he did not mention tartan in particular);[992] a 1903 report also had them typically wearing red blanket-like garments, after a time of favouring blue.[991] The Maasai were loosely allied with the British, 1895–1904,[993] and the latter made heavy use of Scottish
regiments in African conflicts, bringing tartan with them. However, "Guinea cloth" (mostly produced in India), sometimes red and blue checked, was a common commodity in 18th-century western Africa, pre-dating British West Africa; whether it relates at all to shuka is unknown.[994] Shuka patterns usually lack the thin black lines common in
materials.[996] The Maasai approach has been to resist yet assimilate colonial and post-colonial influences.[997] Although there is evidence of tartan usage among the Maasai to at least the period 1906-1918, when Walther Dobbertin photographed a tartan shúkà in what was then German East Africa, the current bright tartan and striped style of
shúkà appears to have been adopted primarily in the 1960s[994][998] (partly in response to national-level clothing modernisation pressure), supplanting leather but keeping the same form-factor.[997] The shift in outward form without affecting function led one writer to quip that Maasai dress "has undergone dramatic changes while not changing at
all".[999] Tartan-patterned cloth is not typically used for other Maasai garments besides shúkà. The shúkà has become so emblematic of the Maasai that there is some discussion (driven by the Maasai that shúkà patterns, at
least at one time, conveyed particular meanings,[dk] and there historically have long been weaving operations in various Africa. [994] The earliest-discovered tartan fabric in the world was discovered in Western China, in the context of
the Tarim mummies, dated to c. 2100 BC through the first centuries BC (See § Pre-medieval origins, above). Today, tartan is still woven in China, both as a traditional hat of silk tartan with wool pompons, 2008 Historical brocade of the Zhuang people in Yunnan
China (photo 2011). It is often very complex material, but sometimes simple tartan like this. A tartan cheongsam (gipao) at a Hong Kong, 2022 A simple three-colour tartan pattern being woven on a hand loom in Pilikula heritage village, India
2016 Indian sari in a two-colour tartan pattern with highlights at the crossings of the black lines, which may be embroidery or supplementary weaving A modern, elaborate koshijima dress from Japan's lolita fashion subculture, 2018 Four Bhutanese men, 2012, in gho robes, with four different mathra patterns, from vary narrow to quite broad In
Bhutan, traditional men's robes (gho)[1002] and knee-stockings (omso, similar to argyle socks),[1003] and women's dresses (kira)[1004] are traditional national costume styles that are largely mandatory for public dress since 1963.[1007][dm]
among other names for specific patterns) is among the many common textile styles for these garments, some much more elaborate (generally called yathra)[1009] than tartan. The tartan cloths are woven traditionally in yak and sheep wool, but today also in cotton and raw silk.[1010] Gira dress featuring "X" patterns where the white stripes meet,
produced by supplementary weaving Mathra is woven primarily with a red ground. Some specific tartan/plaid styles of Bhutan are: broad-checked thra bom; narrow-checked thra bom; narrow-checked thra charuru; sethra ('golden pattern'), an orange or rust ground with yellow and sometimes black checks (with black, it is more specifically called sethra dokhana, and without,
dalapgi sethra); red, blue, and black patterns on a white ground, in at least four varieties called pangtsi (specifically red and black on white),[1011] Decheling kamtham, and other names;[1012] and another style is named burai mathra.[1013] Some of these fabrics feature supplementary weft decorative patterns on a white ground, in at least four varieties called pangtsi (specifically red and black on white),[1011] Decheling kamtham, and other names;[1012] and another style is named burai mathra.[1013] Some of these fabrics feature supplementary weft decorative patterns on a white ground, in at least four varieties called pangtsi (specifically red and black on white),[1011] Decheling kamtham, and other names;[1012] and another style is named burai mathra.[1013] Some of these fabrics feature supplementary weft decorative patterns on a white ground, in at least four varieties called pangtsi (specifically red and black on white),[1011] Decheling kamtham, and other names;[1012] and another style is named burai mathra.[1013] Some of these fabrics feature supplementary weft decorative patterns on a white ground, in at least four varieties called pangtsi (specifically red and black patterns on a white ground, in at least four varieties called pangtsi (specifically red and black patterns on a white ground pangtsi (specifically red and black patterns on a white ground pangtsi (specifically red and black pangtsi (specifica
an embroidered or brocaded appearance, generally called pesar ('new pattern'); one such style is more specifically called sethra metho chen, the yellow-orange pattern with flowers added. There are also patterns of simple linear stripes that do not cross each other (generally called adha[ng] mathra or aikapur), with various names for specific styles.
[1014] Main article: Madras (cloth) Samples of tartan madras (cloth, showing its muted look Madras is a patterened, light-weight, breatheable, cotton thread, and coloured with natural dyes which may bleed together upon
 washing to create a more muted pattern than typical tartan, as well as a rougher texture.[1016] Madras also has a "softer" look because it typically lacks the black lines found in most Scottish tartans. Madras cloth dates to at least the 16th century, produced in a variety of patterns, including religious designs and floral prints.[1016] It is unclear if
tartan patterns were among the original designs, though they became very popular later. Weaving, primarily for export, in Madras/Chennai became a large-scale commercial enterprise after the British East India Company came to control the area in the mid-17th century. [1017] Major production of this style of cloth also took place in Cambay State
(present-day Gujarat).[1018] Madras, ideal for warm-weather wear, became popular in the Philippines (where it is known as cambaya)[1018] and the Caribbean; [1016] mainly in undyed form, it was also exported to Europe.[1016] Tartan madras reached America by 1718, and appeared in the 1897 Sears catalogue. [1016] It was popular in the United
it thus, when viewed up close, features a "pepper and salt" colour mixture where colours cross[6] (a dot matrix, technically), not staggered diagonal lines (see detail image). It also usually lacks black lines. Woodcut image of Japanese kabuki actor Iwai Hanshiro IV dressed in koshi, 1780s In Japan, tartan patterns called koshi 格子 (also koushi or
goushi, literally 'lattice') or kōshijima 格子縞 date back to at least the 18th century,[409] possibly the 17th[1019] in the Edo period (1603-1867), and were popular for kabuki theatrical costuming, which inspired general public use by both sexes, for the kimono), the obi, and other garments.[1020] The name is a reference to the
details of shoji room dividers, the grid pattern said to stand for strength, with larger stripes representing more power.[1020] Koshi range from simple checked patterns to complex multi-colour weaves. Ikat thread-dyeing techniques were sometimes employed before the weaving, such that a colour in the pattern was mottled,[1020] and parts of the
design may sometimes have been embroidered, supplementary-woven, or dyed-over for additional highlight or contrast.[1020] Some styles have particular names, such as misuji-koshi ('three-striped lattice').[1021] A pattern with larger squares is more generally called ogoshi or with smaller squares kogoshi
[1022] It is unclear whether there was a Scottish tartan influence on the development of koshi. The Edo period pre-dates the Perry Expedition of 1853–1854 and its opening of Japan to outsiders in 1639 under the sakoku isolationist policy.
 Nothing suggests that particular patterns have been associated with specific families or Japanese clans. Today, koshijima is the general Japanese word for 'tartan/plaid, checked pattern'.[1023] Tartan is popular in present-day Japanese
department store chain Isetan has used an emblematic tartan as a marketing tool (e.g. on all its shopping bags); the pattern is based on some MacMillan tartans. [1024] Japan hosted a major museum exhibit about tartan in 2018. [1025] Tartan-style patterns are common throughout Southeastern Europe. John Francis Campbell (1862) described the
native weaving of the Sami (Lapps) of northern Europe as being hand-loom tartan. [990] Considerably to the southeast, the Tatars[dn] and Chuvashia, respectively, in the Russian Federation, have worn tartan, striped, and other patterns since at least the 19th century. Detail of Serbian tartan folk dress,
densely pleated, 2017 Tartan patterns used in a Bulgarian folk costume Simple shepherd's check tartan being woven by Pomaks in Greece, 2007 Example of 1920s tartan cloth from Belarus, in a complex non-twill damask weave Silk tartan cloth of white, grey, and golden thread from Lithuania Estonian woman wearing a tartan suurrätt (plaid/shawl)
Another Estonian suurrätt, with a total-border pattern of more complexity than the simple central pattern Tatars in Kazan in 1870, wearing tartan, stripes, and other patterns Chuvashian example, c. 1870 Robert Jamieson, writing in 1818 as editor of Edmund Burt's 1727–37 Letters of a Gentleman in the North of Scotland, said that in his era, married
women of the north-western provinces of Russia wore tartan plaids "of massy silk, richly varied, with broad cross-bars of gold and silver tissue".[94] This seems quite distinct from Scottish-style construction. Alexander Pushkin wearing a tartan cape; by Orest Kiprensky, 1827 The Russian poet Alexander Pushkin (1799-1837), who was influenced by
the romantic-Highlands writings of Walter Scott,[1026][1027] posed for one of the most famous paintings in Russia, the 1827 portrait by Orest Kiprensky. Pushkin wears what looks at first like a Scottish-style tartan shoulder plaid, but is more probably a sleeveless "Almaviva" cape/cloak, a style in fashion at the time and known to have been worn by
Pushkin.[763] Tartan was commented on in the Moscow Telegraph in 1826 as being in broad fashion in Russia as women's wear for a space during the mid-to-late 19th century, a style picked up from stage productions;
some 19th century Russian paintings illustrate use of plaids as shawls.[763] Tartan (and plain-striped) shawls were also common among the Volga Germans and Bessarabia Germans in Russia; a mixture of hand-woven (originally as bedclothes and other household goods) and mass-produced in Russia, the shawls became emblematic of the German-
from-Russia diaspora in North and South America from the nineteenth century to the mid-20th.[1028][1029] Around the end of the 19th century, the Russian equivalent of Regency and Victorian British tartanware objects, such as decorative Fedoskino boxes with tartan accents in a style called Shotlandka Шотландка (literally 'Scotlandish'), were
produced by companies like the Lukutin Manufactory on the outskirts of Moscow.[1030] Today, shotlandki шотландки are simply Russian words for 'tartan/plaid' generally.[1031] 1839 portrait of Maria Arkadievna Bek by Pimen Orlov may illustrate one of the Russian words for 'tartan/plaid' generally.[1031] 1839 portrait of Maria Arkadievna Bek by Pimen Orlov may illustrate one of the Russian words for 'tartan/plaid' generally.[1031] 1839 portrait of Maria Arkadievna Bek by Pimen Orlov may illustrate one of the Russian words for 'tartan/plaid' generally.[1031] 1839 portrait of Maria Arkadievna Bek by Pimen Orlov may illustrate one of the Russian words for 'tartan/plaid' generally.[1031] 1839 portrait of Maria Arkadievna Bek by Pimen Orlov may illustrate one of the Russian words for 'tartan/plaid' generally.[1031] 1839 portrait of Maria Arkadievna Bek by Pimen Orlov may illustrate one of the Russian words for 'tartan/plaid' generally.[1031] 1839 portrait of Maria Arkadievna Bek by Pimen Orlov may illustrate one of the Russian words for 'tartan/plaid' generally.[1031] 1839 portrait of Maria Arkadievna Bek by Pimen Orlov may illustrate one of the Russian words for 'tartan/plaid' generally.[1031] 1839 portrait of Maria Arkadievna Bek by Pimen Orlov may illustrate one of the Russian words for 'tartan/plaid' generally.[1031] 1839 portrait of Maria Arkadievna Bek by Pimen Orlov may illustrate one of the Russian words for 'tartan/plaid' generally.[1031] 1839 portrait of Maria Arkadievna Bek by Pimen Orlov may illustrate one of the Russian words for 'tartan/plaid' generally.[1031] 1839 portrait of Maria Arkadievna Bek by Pimen Orlov may illustrate one of the Russian words for 'tartan/plaid' generally.[1031] 1839 portrait of Maria Arkadievna Bek by Pimen Orlov may illustrate one of the Russian words for 'tartan/plaid' generally.[1031] 1839 portrait of Arkadievna Bek by Pimen Orlov may illustrate one of the Russian words for 'tartan/plaid' generally.[1031] 1839 portrait of Arkadievna Bek by Pimen Orlov may illustrate one of th
Carl Peter Mazer, 1839, shows him in a red and green tartan dressing gown. [763] Tatyana Petrovna Musina-Pushkina, Princess Kropotkina (1800–1865), portrait c. 1840s by unknown artist Potatau Te Wherowhero, the first Maori king, adopted a particular house tartan with design elements symbolizing his ancestry, such as inner stripes representing
migration canoes that first arrived in Aotearoa New Zealand; this tartan was presented by his descendant Tuheitia Paki to Charles III in the former's visit to Buckingham Palace in May 2023.[1032] His following tribes concentrated around Northland have also adopted green tartans.[1033] Clans of Scotland portalContaining portal Visit to Buckingham Palace in May 2023.[1032] His following tribes concentrated around Northland have also adopted green tartans.[1033] Clans of Scotland portalContaining portal Visit to Buckingham Palace in May 2023.[1032] His following tribes concentrated around Northland have also adopted green tartans.[1033] Clans of Scotland portalContaining portal Visit to Buckingham Palace in May 2023.[1032] His following tribes concentrated around Northland have also adopted green tartans.[1033] Clans of Scotland portal Visit to Buckingham Palace in May 2023.[1032] His following tribes concentrated around Northland have also adopted green tartans.[1033] Clans of Scotland portal Visit to Buckingham Palace in May 2023.[1032] His following tribes concentrated around Northland have also adopted green tartans.[1033] Clans of Scotland portal Visit tartan was presented by his descendant portal Visit tartan visit ta
Drugget, a coarse and often linearly striped cloth that was common in the Scottish Western Isles Flannel, a type of fuzzy cloth often produced in tartan pattern Hodden, a non-tartan cloth of undyed wool, sometimes also used for kilts, especially for non-Scottish pipe bands List of tartans Mackinaw cloth, a dense woollen cloth often produced in tartan
patterns Madras (cloth), cotton cloth of India often woven in tartan patterns Tartan Day, a day of celebration, in Canada, Australia, the US, and some other countries, recognising the influence of Scottish immigration Tartan Day, a day of celebration, in Canada, Australia, the US, and some other countries, recognising the influence of Scottish immigration Tartan Day, a day of celebration, in Canada, Australia, the US, and some other countries, recognising the influence of Scottish immigration Tartan Day, a day of celebration, in Canada, Australia, the US, and some other countries, recognising the influence of Scottish immigration Tartan Day, a day of celebration, in Canada, Australia, the US, and some other countries, recognising the influence of Scottish immigration Tartan Day, a day of celebration, in Canada, Australia, the US, and some other countries, recognising the influence of Scottish immigration Tartan Day, a day of celebration, in Canada, Australia, the US, and some other countries, recognising the influence of Scottish immigration Tartan Day, a day of celebration, in Canada, Australia, the US, and some other countries, recognising the influence of Scottish immigration Tartan Day, a day of celebration, in Canada, Australia, the US, and some other countries, recognising the influence of Scottish immigration Tartan Day, a day of celebration and the US, and
or chequer Gingham (Vichy check) Glen plaid Harlequin print Herringbone (cloth) American; in 1808, the London publication La Belle Assemblée referred to
"plaid scarfs".[14] Also, it has sometimes been claimed that plaid refers to all such patterns generally, and tartan only to patterns of Scottish clans,[15] but there is no support for this idea in works of tartan scholarship. ^ MacBain (1911), p. 277. Cognate words in other languages are the Luwian pldtmn and later Latin paludamentum for 'cloak'. The
paludamentum was a cloak put on by Roman officers in time of war.[17][18] ^ Solid-colour, non-tartan kilts were often thought to be an Irish invention of the late 19th century, but an example of a belted plaid or "great kilt" from Scotland was found in a 1635 portrait of Sir Duncan Campbell of Loch Awe,[19] among other Scottish examples. ^ The two
Scarlett sources provide two exact formulas which seem at first to be contradictory, but one is for number of blends and the other for number of blends and 
different colours."[32] ^ The term repeating[27] has also been used, as distinct from mirroring, but is so ambiguous that sometimes the same patterns are referred to as non-repeating.[33] Neither term will be used further in this article. ^ A well-known example is the main Buchanan tartan.[34] ^ a b An example is the most popular MacMillan tartan.
in which the warp and weft are different, though similar; the largest blocks of colour are green rectangles instead of squares.[36] ^ Early collectors of tartan, like Logan in 1831, recorded on little "pattern sticks" has been
dispelled as a "telephone game"-style progressive, willful misunderstanding of an early description of the warp as wrapped on a warp beam/roller for the loom. It was poorly described by Martin Martin in 1703 as "an exact Pattern of the Plad on a piece of Wood", which Logan (1831) misunderstood as a small stick used as a perpetual "record" of the
tartan pattern on it, after which the "Sobieski Stuarts" in 1842 blatantly falsified a supposed 16th-century description of "pattern sticks", and Archibald Campbell (1890) repeated the story again as factual. No such artefact has ever been found by modern researchers, and the idea has been described as impractical because the threads would not stay
put indefinitely, and it would make much more sense to simply write or draw the pattern on paper, or keep a strip of the woven material.[39][40] Mackay (1924) claimed he had seen some examples and appeared to describe warp beams, but then claimed they were used as a long-term record of "clan tartans" of the area.[41] Eslea MacDonald (2015)
points out that Mackay had a tendency toward "manipulating the evidence" when advancing his ideas about very old clan tartans, and that he made up a fake-Gaelic name for the alleged pattern sticks.[40] ^ For example, Stewart, D. C. (1974), Scarlett (1990), and Scottish Register of Tartans (2009-) all use full-count-at-pivots "bare" thread counts,
 without slash or bold notation, while Eslea MacDonald (2012) uses them to represent half-count-at-pivots, but states this explicitly. ^ Ground in this sense dates to at least 1895. Telfer Dunbar (1979), pp. 112-113, quoting 1895 letter: "... dress Stuart tartan on a white instead of on a red ground .... the 'Stuart hunting-tartan' on a green ground".
However, ground has a different meaning at the thread-dyeing stage, where it refers to a first layer of colour which is then over-dyed with another, either to deepen the hue or make a new ones, e.g. purple from blue over red.[49] ^ Wilsons, the near-exclusive producer of Georgian through Victorian regimental tartan, produced different grades of
cloth for officers, sergeants, and enlisted.[56] ^ Scarlett (1990) provided a reconstruction of what 17th- to early 18th-century arisaid tartans probably basically looked like, based on the appearance of later wider-banded "bar blanket" tartans which evolved from the arisaid setts. His sample is modernised in being simplified, symmetrical, mirroring,
and not having a decorative selvedge.[77] ^ The French term écru has also been applied,[87] but is ambiguous, as it technically refers to the colour of undyed linen not wool, and has been taken to indicate a richer, sandy range of hues in English usage than in French.[88] ^ The Lord Lyon's colour-coding system actually had three reds:
"gules/scarlet", "red" (a dull red), and "crimson".[45] But it is not entirely clear what the difference between them is. ^ Multiple hues of pink appear in Wilsons' colour lists around the early 19th century, which included colours for wool and other weaving, but orange does not.[87] ^ For lists of such natural dye materials and their preparation, see
Kok, Annette (1979) [1962]. "Appendix: Early Scottish Highland Dyes"". In Dunbar, John Telfer (ed.). History of Highland Dress. London: B. T. Batsford Ltd. pp. 222-240. Some additional such information is available in: Mackay (1924), pp. 59-64; and Eslea MacDonald (2012), pp. 76-77. See also: Campbell, J. F. (1893), p. 335. ^ A romantic legend
about such a thing goes back quite a way, however. According to Innes of Learney (1971): "The late J. G. Mackay, like Lord Archibald Campbell, claimed that clan tartans were not only deliberately arranged, but formed an elaborate system of identification by dress, as technical as armorial bearings .... [T]artans were never intended to, and did not,
have the precise distinctions and ready recognisability of armorial bearings. Mr Mackay gives much interesting information ...; he does not, however, succeed in adducing evidence that there was a scientific system of arrangement, and circumstances are against the existence of a science."[128] In summary, Mackay believed that lines of various
colours formed a heraldic system of cadency (differencing) between related family branches.[129] The argument depends on the Victorian-era clan tartans having been used in the 17th-18th centuries, but all modern tartan scholarship shows this idea to be broadly false. ^ For a photograph of one of the Tarim cloth fragments and a reproduction of
what the fabric may have originally looked like, see: Spada (2019).[138] ^ For a photograph of one of the Salzburg cloth fragments, see: Belfrage.com. Retrieved 10 June 2023. ^ For a photograph of the Falkirk cloth fragment, see: "Record: Cloth (Fragment) - found at Falkirk
Stirlingshire". NMS.Scran.ac.uk. National Museums Scotland. 2015. Retrieved 3 June 2023. ^ For a photograph of the Caracalla statue fragment, see (about 1/3 down the page): Lamley, Hamish (21 February 2022). "Pictish Fashion". PictaviaLeather.co.uk. Retrieved 10 June 2023. ^ Nor any relation to the modern Tatar people (see § Russian
shotlandka). ^ This historic Glen Affric tartan is not to be confused with various competing modern district tartans named "Glen Affric" available from some vendors such as Clan/Scotweb, Stevens & Graham, and Spoonflower. ^ There are possible mentions earlier, to the 14th century, in both Early Scots and Middle English using the French-borrowed
terms tiretain and tartarin in various spellings, but they do not clearly refer to tartan, either the cloth or the pattern, but rather seem to refer to valued cloth in general.[4] ^ There is a legend that during some period there was a "caste" system by which chiefs were entitled to up to seven colours in a tartan, fewer colours were allowed for clansmer
according to position in the social hierarchy, and just single-coloured cloth for servants. Barnes & Allen (1956)[93] attributed the idea to Frank Adam (1908). He did indeed write that "it is said" there was such a system, but cited no evidence.[143] The fancy is from Logan (1831), who cites nothing but an ancient "Achy Edgathach" of Ireland.[178]
That was a legendary ancient Irish king in the Lebor Gabála Érenn, said to have passed a sumptuary law limiting clothing colours by social status, during his very short reign of only four years (some time between 1537 and 1155 BC).[179] It is old Irish folklore and nothing to do with history of Scottish tartan. Scarlett (1990): "it is difficult to allow
such a tale any credibility".[145] No modern Highland-dress scholars repeat it seriously (the last one to do so seems to have been Mackay (1924) who said it applied to "Druidical times"),[180] and the idea is contradicted by existence of old regional tartans of complexity, and by chiefs adopting tartans of marked simplicity. Practically, the extra dye
and weaving-labour expenses of complicated tartans meant that they cost more and so were more often worn by monied persons,[145] as clearly reported by John Lesley (1578)[181] and Robert Heron (1799).[182] ^ Buchanan (1582): "They delight in marbled cloths, especially that have stripes of sundrie colours; they love chiefly purple and blue;
their predecessors used short mantles or plaids of divers colours, sundrie ways divided, and among some the same custom is observed to this day, but for the most part they are brown, most near to the colour of the hadder [heather], to the effect, when they lie among the hadders, the bright colour of their plaids shall not bewray them."[192]
(Buchanan's wording was recycled in 1603, in the anonymous Certayn Mattere Concerning Scotland.)[193] ^ a b The attempt to depict tartan is fairly crude, done as divided stripes, instead of a staggered pattern of blending rectangles, though it is possible it represents a weave with differing warp and weft, which could produce more of a striped
pattern. The exact details shown in the image are open to other question, because the artist illustrated an imaginative sword that is a combination of a Scottish claymore hilt with the blade and quillions of a German Landsknecht sword of a type more familiar to the German (Silesian) artist. Also, Telfer Dunbar (1979) called the colours yellow, blue,
and red (not green, blue, and red), so the palette accuracy of the photo could be in doubt.[195] The original art is in Huntington Library MSS: HM 25863, f. 28r. ^ There is a recurrent legend running through Victorian works on tartan that the tartan cloth for each Highland man was usually made at home singly by his wife or mother,[198] but this
proves to be an impractical idea,[199] for which there is no evidence against, including rich folk tradition of (mostly women's) group labour. ^ Innes of Learney (1938/1971) believed that Highlanders wore multiple tartans because some were personal (perhaps inherited), some geographical, and some clan-specific,[204] but
 presented no real evidence for this hypothesis. The idea can be traced to Lord Archibald Campbell (1890), who asserted (with no evidence at all) that a Highlander wearing multiple tartans at once could be explained by him donning the pattern of his commander, his own paternal clan, and maternal clan. [198] ^ Even this, however, is ambiguous, and
could mean that the Highlanders wore striped mantles, and worse their mantles in the same fashion that the Irish wore their own mantles, striped or not. And "striped" does not necessarily mean tartan. The Camden material is also contemporaneous with the Plantation of Ulster. ^ Taylor: " ... all and every man in generall in one habit .... For once in
the yeere, ... many of the nobility and gentry of the kingdome (for their pleasure) doe come into these Highlandmen, who for the most part speake nothing but Irish [i.e. Gaelic] .... Their habite is shooes, with but one sole apiece; stockings (which they call short hose)
made of a warm stuff of divers colours, which they call tartane; as for breeches, many of them, nor their forefathers, never wore any, but a jerkin of the same stuff that their hose is of; their garters being bands, or wreathes of hay or straw; with a placed about their shoulders, which is a mantle of divers colours, much finer and lighter stuffe than their
hose; with blue flat caps on their heads ...."[229] ^ Adam (1908/1970) makes the surprising claim that in Taylor's original material. Taylor simply
said that visitors wearing Highland dress would be "conquered with kindnesse, and the sport will be plentifull". ^ E.g. in the revised 1707 edition of Rev. James Brome's Travels over England, Scotland and Wales, is material partly adapted from Buchanan (1582): "They go habited in Mantles striped, or streaked with divers colours about the Shoulders
which they call Plodden, with a Coat girt close to their Bodies, and commonly are naked up their Legs, but wear Sandals upon the Soles of their Feet, and their Women go clad much after the same Fashion."[239] This suggests a span of at least 1582-1707 of Highland fashion being rather consistent and unisex. ^ The same artist earlier painted a
three-in-one portrait of actor-playwright John Lacy, in 1675, which featured trews and belted plaid, [250] but the tartan there is very casually represented as simple red and blue lines on white. ^ Martin Martin (1703) wrote: "each Isle differs from the other in their fancy of making Plaids, as to the Stripes in Breadth and Colours. This Humour is as
different thro the main Land of the Highlands, in-so-far that they who have seen these Places are able, at the first view of a Man's Plaid to guess the Place of his Residence ...."[255] Scarlett (1990) says some earlier writers used this to just assume "a fully organised system of District tartans at that time" though Martin said nothing of the sort.[256]
Scarlett considered Martin's account to have "a rather sweeping style that suggests some exaggeration", but generally plausible on other evidence of particular patterns, with minor variations, being common across wide areas. [256] ^ These tartan jackets are not to be confused with the later short regimental Highland doublet styles, borrowed
directly from the military Highland regiments starting in the late 18th century; these are also of plain colour, not tartan. Sources conflict sharply on the date. Telfer Dunbar (1979), relying on Mackay Scobie, says 1717-1739;[271] while Eslea MacDonald (2016), relying on R. W. Munro's Highland Clans & Tartans (1977), says 1754.[176] Banks &
de La Chapelle (2007) give an implausible 1724 date for the founding of Wilsons, [276] which does not agree with other scholarship, and they cite no source for the assertion. ^ Scarlett (2008): "Red, blue and green have been recorded as the first colours to appear in all primitive art, so there may be some deep physiological or psychological reason for
 the predominance of these colours."[6] A Britain has many native plants that can produce at least a thin yellow, but they seem not to have been favoured, except as a ground-colour for over-dyeing with blue to create green. [278] A small piece of tartan believed to be from a plaid of Bonnie Prince Charlie, given in 1746 to Lady Anne Mackintosh of
Clan Farquharson, survives in the National Records of Scotland. [169] The prince apparently had a habit of giving out plaids as thanks for hospitality, and several recorded (but quite different) tartans are said to have come from these plaids, e.g. SRT 4220, [288] 4421, [289] 4422, [290] and 4423. [291] According to Telfer Dunbar (1979), various
museums and other collections hold at least 40 pieces of tartan claimed to have been worn by "the Young Pretender", eight at the Battle of Culloden, and they cannot all be genuine. [292] One sample in particular is more likely than the others to be legitimate. [64] ^ There are several other tartans called "Jacobite". One dates to c. 1850, [67] or might be
a bit older and is probably a Wilsons design,[32] and the others are more recent commercial inventions of c. 1930[300] and the late 20th century.[301] ^ Telfer Dunbar (1979) says the correct year is 1725 and that 1729 was an error introduced by Stewart of Garth (1822) and copied by later authors.[224] ^ Specifically, as defined in an earlier act of
Parliament, north of the "Highland line" running from Perth in the east to Dumbarton in the west.[310] ^ The Dress Act per se did not enumerate exceptions for the nobility, but the enclosing Act of Proscription did. ^ Lt.-Col. Sir John MacGregor Murray, newly chief of Clan Gregor and later vice-president of the Highland Society of London, wrote of
the difficulty of raising a new regiment, in 1803: "It will require much to rekindle the martial spirit of our ancestors, which has, unfortunately, been systematically broken down - we were so long degraded by the privation of our arms and dress, and so much unmanned by being converted into manufacturers".[323] ^ Not to be confused with the
second Seaforth's Highlanders, also raised as the 78th, in 1793. The original Seaforth Highlanders were amalgamated with other units under the Childers Reforms to become the 1881 Seaforth Highlanders. ^ Not to be confused with other units under the Childers Reforms to become the 1881 Seaforth Highlanders. Also raised as the 78th, in 1793. The original Seaforth Highlanders were amalgamated with other units under the Childers Reforms to become the 1881 Seaforth Highlanders.
a list of those that they supply, and it includes a mix of obscure tartans from defunct regiments, ones still used today for surviving regiments, tartans of overseas units that were "Highland" only in name, some that are now only associated with clans, and a number that are/were reserved for military pipe-band use and were not used in regular dress or
undress uniforms. [404] ^ As one example, in The Lockhart Papers, first published in 1714, is a passage describing how opposing battatlions of MacDonalds from different places could only tell each other apart by colour of bonnet cockade. D. W. Stewart (1893) leapt to the conclusion they must have worn the same tartan, despite the material saying
nothing of the sort[418] (they could have been wearing whatever tartans they happened to have, not uniforms, making tartan meaningless for distinguishing units of men).[141] ^ D. W. Stewart (1893) sometimes leaned toward the uniform interpretation: "It appears from the regulations issued to the retainers of the Clan Grant anent the wearing of a
uniform tartan that distinctive patterns were in use, at least for military purpose, or on occasion of great gatherings".[261] The Grant case is covered in detail later. ^ D. W. Stewart (1893) again came down on the "uniform" side, despite otherwise being a booster of the idea of early clan tartans;[253] so did Scarlett (1990).[254] ^ Adam (1908/1970)
confirmed that there were two different grades of tartan worn, [190] as did Logan (1831), but both are sources of dubious quality. Scarlett (1990, 2008) also observes that there were thicker than the warp, [6] and a finer equal-twill weave, seen often in
portraits, that is more like the kilt cloth produced today. [272] (But he does not describe one as being specially intended for war.) Such a fineness split seems to have continued for a long time; Wilsons of Bannockburn manufactured regimental tartan in both coarse ("hard tartan") and fine qualities as late as 1819, [420] perhaps as an undress and dress
distinction, or enlisted and officer. ^ Innes of Learney's motte-and-bailey tactic when it comes to what "clan tartan" means is exemplified by his supposition that similar tartans used in lands of Murray, Murray of Athol, and Sutherland must mean they went back to a common tribal tartan "from the twelfth century" (which is not attested), and that: "It
was no doubt 'the Murrays' tartan' without being 'The Murrays' tartan' without being 'The Murray tartan' without being 'The Murrays' tartan' wit
named Gordon all date to 1798 or later (and that earliest one was adopted from a 1793 regimental tartan).[430] ^ However, not only is it not certain that a single cloth of mixed colours was intended, rather than three cloths of distinct colours, Stewart contradicted himself: When the lands in question were restored to the MacLeans in 1630, the grey
did not revert to green but remained gras, i.e. grey. Nevertheless, Stewart asserted: "The explanation is simple enough. White and black and green are the only colours in the oldest authenticated Mac Lean tartan."[434] But that design dates only to the fraudulent 1842 Vestiarium Scoticum and is not "authenticated" by anything;[435] several other
(red-based) MacLean tartans date to at least 1819 (STR reference nos. 2603, 2605, and 2606). The Scottish Tartans Society seemed to think it was something very similar to Black Watch, with the red-and-white-striped Murray of Pulrossie version somehow, despite its 1618 prohibition, eventually becoming the primary Sutherland tartan.[436] Innes
of Learney also supported the interpretation that it was a dark Black Watch-style tartan, related to others used in the region. [405] On the other hand, House of Gordon USA, a clan society, proclaims: "It was a Red Gordon!", [437] referring to a primarily red and teal tartan, also known as old Huntly, recorded in 1819, [438] and appearing in a "strippey"
variant, with differing warp and weft, in the 1766 painting of William Gordon. The society does not publish any basis for their assertion. ^ The piper's name was William Cumming. Telfer Dunbar (1979) describes this tartan, and that of a companion portrait of Alastair Grant Mòr "the Champion", as also showing thin yellow over-checks which are not
really visible in this photo. He also describes the green as "grey".[440] ^ This problem of no consistent tartans in old family portraits recurs in other clans, such as Murray and MacDonald, going back to the 18th century.[407] Trevor-Roper (1983) also notes this inconsistency among Highland portraits, [185] as does Haswell Miller (1956).[409] ^
Willie Scobie, in 2012, railed against "an influential and determined body of opinion set against the idea of clan tartans, found no correspondences aside from the Royal Company of Archers (supposedly using a Stuart tartan, which in reality they did
not,[257] and not being a clan anyway) having green edging on their jackets, and nevertheless decided: "we have in this piece of literature strong (one is almost tempted to say irrefutable) evidence of the existence of clan tartans in the year 1718."[450] ^ Thompson (1992)[141] said none of them survive; but the coat of the older boy is in what is now
known as "MacDonald, Lord of the Isles", though the sett was reconstructed from the painting not the original, is that in his words: "No more conclusive proof of distinctive clan colours has been exhibited and it silences all dispute on the
question at once and for all time."[476] Modern researchers do not take this seriously. E.g., J. Telfer Dunbar's evaluation: "This is an extraordinary claim as the tartans are clearly and accurately shown and not one of them agree with any claim as the tartans are clearly and accurately shown and not one of them agree with any claim as the tartans are clearly and accurately shown and not one of them agree with any claim as the tartans are clearly and accurately shown and not one of them agree with any claim as the tartans are clearly and accurately shown and not one of them agree with any claim as the tartans are clearly and accurately shown and not one of them agree with any claim as the tartans are clearly and accurately shown and not one of them agree with any claim as the tartans are clearly and accurately shown and not one of them agree with any claim as the tartans are clearly and accurately shown and not one of them agree with any claim as the tartans are clearly and accurately shown and not one of them agree with any claim as the tartans are clearly and accurately shown and not one of them agree with any claim as the tartans are clearly and accurately shown and not one of them agree with any claim as the tartans are clearly and accurately shown and not one of them agree with any claim as the tartans are clearly and accurately shown and accurate
Campbell himself claimed, later in 1899, that the models for the painting were Jacobite prisoners. [477] If that were the case, they could be wearing whatever they were told to put on, even material supplied by the painter; i.e. the tartans depicted would be accurate representations of the cloth of the period but could not signify anything, even if they
did match. The Jacobite Relics and Rare Scottish Antiquities Exhibition of 1946 agreed that the models were prisoners. [478] ^ James Ray, who served in the government forces at the Battle of Culloden, wrote in 1752: "In their flight I came up with a pretty young Highlander, who called out to me, Hold your Hand, I'm a Cambell. On which I asked him
Where's your Bonnet? He reply'd, Somebody have snatched it off my Head. I only mention this to shew how we distinguished our loyal Clans from the Rebels; they being dress'd and equip'd all in one Way, except the Bonnet; ours having a red or yellow Cross of Cloath or Ribbon; theirs a white Cockade".[479] Telfer Dunbar (1979): "If it had been
possible to distinguish a Campbell by a 'Clan Campbell' tartan, either Ray would have done so or else remarked on the fact that the man was not wearing an identifiable tartan. "[480] ^ A Journal of the Expedition of Prince Charles Edward in 1745, by a Highland Officer provides this account: "We M'Donalds were much preplex'd, in the event of ane
ingagement, how to distinguish ourselves from our bretheren and nighbours the M'Donalds of Sky, seeing we were both Highlanders and both wore the same tartan, surely the writer would have mentioned this rather than
the heather which they wore in their bonnets. A common tartan would have been much more confusing than a sprig of heather."[481] Also, this particular case does not demonstrate that all the clans had different emblematic plants. Clan plants, like clan tartans, were solicited from chiefs in the early 19th century by the Highland Society of London,
and there is no evidence of widespread assignment before then - only this single-clan mention in one period source. ^ And because the belted plaid in particular, as very practical for outdoor wear but not as work clothing, was believed to be conducive to a life of idle shirking and outright banditry. [484] ^ Even the Sutherland/Pulrossie letter of 1618
referred specifically to "the plaides of his men",[405] which is suggestive of his militia, not his entire clan. Sometimes said to be Jean "Jenny" Cameron, without conclusive evidence; there are five other identity candidates.[494] Another legend, started by James Grant (1886), has it that the tartan goes back to "Charles, first Earl of Dunmore,
second son of the first Marquis of Tullibardine", but this was just a bad mis-reading of the Smith brothers (1850), from whom Grant plagiarised, referring to the then-current Earl of Dunmore. [327][7] ^ E.g., Telfer Dunbar (1979) provides this example: Wilsons' popular "Gordon" was green, purple, and black with over-checks of seven colours, and
"unlike the present clan pattern".[442] ^ One example is today's Macpherson, adopted in 1817, which was originally "Caledonia" then "No. 43", "No. 155", or "Kidd" in Wilsons' pattern books.[399][503] (There is no "Clan Kidd"; the Kidd in question was a bulk orderer who used the tartan to clothe slaves in the West Indies.[504] Confusion seems to
have arisen when Wilson also assigned the pattern the name "Macpherson" after another West Indies customer by that name. [505] Another is Campbell of Cawdor, originally "No. 230" or "Argyll", after the county. [506] [507] A complex example is the case of Abercrombie or Abercr
name, but he modified it[509] from an 1805 Wilsons tartan record for "No. 64" or "Abercrombie" in the early 18th century changed names somehow[509] to Graham then later became today's Graham of Montrose tartan.[511] Wilsons' "Abercrombie" in the early 18th century changed names somehow[509] to Graham then later became today's Graham of Montrose tartan.[511] Wilsons' "Abercrombie" in the early 18th century changed names somehow[509] to Graham then later became today's Graham of Montrose tartan.[511] Wilsons' "Abercrombie" in the early 18th century changed names somehow[509] to Graham then later became today's Graham of Montrose tartan.[511] Wilsons' "Abercrombie" in the early 18th century changed names somehow[509] to Graham then later became today's Graham of Montrose tartan.[511] Wilsons' "Abercrombie" in the early 18th century changed names somehow[509] to Graham then later became today's Graham of Montrose tartan.[511] Wilsons' "Abercrombie" in the early 18th century changed names somehow[509] to Graham then later became today's Graham then later became today is a supplication of the properties of the proper
with yellow"[509] is today's Campbell of Breadalbane[512] after also being used by a fencible regiment.[513] The main Buchanan tartan until the 1830s.[34] "Logan" was invented by Wilsons, named after a merchant, and changed
several times until it sold well.[514] "Drummond" was originally Wilsons' "Perth".[514] Wilson's 1819 pattern "Regent" turned into the MacLaren clan tartan by 1830, with a shift from purple to blue.[96] Scarlett (1990) and the Scottish Register of Tartans provide numerous other examples of modern "clan" tartans actually just being renamed
generic/fashion/fancy, regimental, and famous-individual tartans from Wilsons, when they were not taken from the later forgery Vestiarium Scoticum. ^ A prime example is the Black Watch tartan, which Cockburn collected four times and assigned the names "Campbell Argyll", "Grant", "Munro" and "Sutherland".[519][517] ^ According to a
documentary, Clan Gregor, the Gordons, and a MacDonald branch might also have had early informal clan tartan in 1815, and the tartan that was the subject of the MacDonalds indicated not knowing of a clan tartan in 1815, and the tartan that was the subject of the MacDonalds indicated not knowing of a clan tartan in 1815, and the tartan that was the subject of the MacDonalds indicated not knowing of a clan tartan in 1815, and the tartan that was the subject of the MacDonalds indicated not knowing of a clan tartan in 1815, and the tartan that was the subject of the MacDonalds indicated not knowing of a clan tartan in 1815, and the tartan that was the subject of the MacDonalds indicated not knowing of a clan tartan in 1815, and the tartan that was the subject of the MacDonalds indicated not knowing of a clan tartan in 1815, and the tartan that was the subject of the MacDonalds indicated not knowing of a clan tartan in 1815, and the tartan that was the subject of the MacDonalds indicated not know in the tartan that was the subject of the MacDonalds indicated not know in the tartan that was the subject of the MacDonalds indicated not know in the tartan that was the subject of the MacDonalds indicated not know in the tartan that was the subject of the MacDonalds indicated not know in the tartan that was the subject of the MacDonalds indicated not know in the tartan than the tartan that was the subject of the MacDonalds indicated not know in the tartan that was the tartan than the tart
had financial motivations for promoting an aristocratic "tartanry" or "Highlandism" and attaching his name to it prominently - like many other Scottish lairds, he was in dire fiscal shape. [533] ^ At least six at once claimed the Black Watch regimental tartan, [517][534] and "Several chiefs were asked to resubmit a different tartan in order to be seen to
be different and thus support the idea of historical clan tartans."[517] In some cases, minor alterations were made, e.g. Forbes was devised in 1822 by adding a white over-check to Black Watch.[540] ^ There are numerous examples, but a prominent case is that two of the Lord of the Isles tartan variants were taken from portraits dating to the third
quarter of the 18th century. [541] This practice, incidentally, has contributed to confusion about the age of clan tartans; a tartan adopted officially by a clan in 1850 from a painting dating to 1750 might misleadingly be said to be "a clan tartan adopted officially by a clan in 1850 from a painting dating to 1750 might misleadingly be said to be "a clan tartan adopted officially by a clan in 1850 from a painting dating to 1750 might misleadingly be said to be "a clan tartan adopted officially by a clan in 1850 from a painting dating to 1750 might misleadingly be said to be "a clan tartan adopted officially by a clan in 1850 from a painting dating to 1750 might misleadingly be said to be "a clan tartan adopted officially by a clan in 1850 from a painting dating to 1750 might misleadingly be said to be "a clan tartan adopted officially by a clan in 1850 from a painting dating to 1750 might misleadingly be said to be "a clan tartan adopted officially by a clan tartan adopted officially by a clan in 1850 from a painting dating to 1750 might misleadingly be said to be "a clan tartan adopted officially by a clan tartan adopted offic
such authentications were sealed by society secretary George Wedderburn.[56] The society collected tartans in general as well, and amassed 586 by 1987.[534] ^ Some faulty (according to Wilsons) clan patterns included in Logan (1831) were those for Abercrombie, Douglas, and Graham, but there were more.[564] ^ In fairness, only most of the
tartans in Vestiarium were made up; almost a dozen had previously appeared in collections like those of Cockburn and Wilson. [573] Telfer Dunbar (1979) also considered that the Sobieski Stuarts' more general material on the history and then-present of Highland dress was of considerable value, at least when its sources could be traced. [574] Of the
tartans material, Walter Scott fairly charitably wrote that the brothers had "an exaggerating imagination, which possibly deceives even themselves".[575] ^ R. Martin (1988): "I would like to excuse the prevarications of the Sobieski-Stuart brothers with a nod to Baudrillard; they lied and they cheated, but they did something quite extraordinary in
ascribing a meaning to textile design that has more or less stuck: false as it is, the Sobieski-Stuarts fostered a myth of textile identification and implication that has served a continuing and compelling social need for well over a hundred years. They may have been factually wrong, but culturally very right. [581] ^ E.g., the usual tartan of Clan Home
dates to Clans Originaux.[590] Another is Brodie hunting; [591] it was also later included in Old & Rare Scottish Tartans. A third is MacBean. [114] ^ See Scarlett (1990), chapter "The Setts of the Tartans", most of them traceable to Wilsons, Logan, or the Sobieski Stewarts. [603] For a
quick visual example of conflicting claimed clan tartans, many of them dating to the Victorian to Edwardian periods, see the "MacDougal" search results in the Scottish Register of Tartans; [83] the list for that name is not much polluted by recent individual and "fashion" entries. ^ Revised in 1974, D. C. Stewart's The Setts of the Scottish Tartans has
been further updated and expanded by James D. Scarlett in 1990 as Tartan: The Highland Textile, [607] perhaps the most definitive work on tartan published so far (though by no means the largest in terms of number of tartans illustrated; it is a book of research not of pictures). ^ E.g. the red variant of the 1975 MacGregor dance tartan dates to 2005
[609] ^ Electric Scotland published an annotated list of clans and their tartans' Lord Lyon registration status. The list is much shorter than some other clan lists, because it omits clans that have not applied to the Lord Lyon for tartan registry at all; it lists only those with Lyon-recorded tartans or those then in process of such registration. [611] ^
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Example: The Clan Watson tartan dates to c. 1932 and appears to have been created by one of two ministers (sources disagree), based on the MacRae hunting and Gordon tartans. [612] ^ The Highland MacLennans use the same tartan as the Lowland Logans. Clan Logan is without a chief. ^ Eslea MacDonald (2022) defines this "Highland Revival"
period as the 1782 end of the Dress Act to the beginning of Victoria's reign in 1837.[32] The utility and accuracy of this term when constratined to Victoria's accession is questionable, because revival has been used, with
 essentially the same meaning, though without closely prescribed dates.[636] ^ In this era, soldiering, especially as an officer, was the "aristocratic profession par excellence",[638] and this had a strong effect on fashion. In Highland dress of the period, sometimes civilian and military styles were commingled.[639] ^ Not to universal approval. The
chief of Clan MacDonell of Glengarry wrote of a Celtic Society of Edinburgh gathering: "I never saw so much tartan before in my life, with so little Highlands." [539] ^ David Wilkie's portrait of George IV depicts the king as being much slimmer than he actually
was. Wilkie covered up the fact the king's kilt was too short - sitting well above the king wore to hide his bare legs. [653] ^ A detailed summary of the 19th-century tartan books can be found in D. W. Stewart (1893), pp. 57-61. ^ Queen Victoria wrote of her time in Scotland: "... I feel a sort of reverence in
going over these scenes in this most beautiful country, which I am proud to call my own, where there was such devoted loyalty to the family of my ancestors - for Stuart blood is in my veins, and I am now their representative, and the people are as devoted and loyal to me as they were to that unhappy race".[706] ^ There were "tartanitis"-infused
 travel books of the era to go along with the tourism, e.g. A Tour in Tartan-land by Rev. Edward "Cuthbert Bede" Bradley (1863).[713] ^ As examples, modern tartans have been created for Chinese, Jewish,[870] Muslim,[871] and Sikh[872] communities, as well as Italian Scots.[873] ^ Wilsons of Bannockburn created several of the comparatively old
 last of these is inexplicably assigned a date of 1863 in SRT, but with a note that seems to indicate it was designed by D. G. Teall of STS in 1981. A Breton "national" examples: [781][904][905] An example of a Canadian municipality with an official tartan.
tartan is Beauport, Quebec City.[911] ^ E.g., Matheson dress[918] is also known simply as Matheson, and is distinguished from a Matheson hunting tartan designs named "Matheson dress[918] but the only two recognised by the Clan Matheson Society
are Matheson [dress] and Matheson hunting, [921] Similarly, Shaw of Tordarroch dress[618] is the main tartan, and is distinguished from a hunting variant, [619] with the old, erroneous "Shaw" tartan being retained only as a memorial tartan for a particular family figure, [617] A photo in Adam (1908/1970) confirms that tartans with white stripes
were used for Highland dance outfits at least as far back as the Edwardian period, though the style of female dance-competition dress has notably changed toward kilt-length instead of mid-calf skirts since then. [925] ^ Some writers have confused them as late as the 1980s (which suggests that dance tartans as a conventional category unto
 themselves may date to the 1990s and later, though some specific dance tartans date to at least the mid-1970s), [926] E.g., J. C. Thompson (1989) conflates dance and dress tartans of considerable age do not have white in them, e.g. Matheson
dress from c. 1850.[918] ^ The white-heavy MacGregor dance tartan (in three colour variants dating to 1975-2005) is confusingly listed in the Scottish Register of Tartans as both dance and dress, [926] but the chief of Clan Gregor insists it is for dancers only, [614] so it is demonstrably not a general dress-wear tartan. Several other dance tartans are
 listed also as dress tartans in the SRT, but most appear to be "fashion" inventions by individuals or by woollen mills and are not associated with clans or districts. [927] ^ Possibly as early as 1850, and based on the Hay Stewart tartan or on royal Stewart, both probably by the Sobieski Stuarts. [700] It is often misdated to 1853. [928] ^ An example of a
  writer uncritically perpetuating the story can be found in M. B. Paterson (2001).[930] As noted above, an early regimental tartan of 1787 was for a while called "Mackenzie-MacLeod" after two commanders, but this was a troop uniform tartan, not one for the named individuals. The sett actually survives in two variants in the SRT, created for an
 1880 wedding; they are now sometimes used as Wilson family tartans.[933][934] ^ The Lord Lyon would only accept formal clan tartan registrations from tartan registrations from clan chiefs; this excluded chiefless armigerous clans from tartan registration with the Lord Lyon, whether or not they had latter-day clan associations/societies. However, many now-armigerous
 clans were able to register tartans with the Lord Lyon before they became chiefless, and these registrations remain in the Lyon Court Books. The Lord Lyon did not do any registration of family tartans, i.e. those for non-clan surnames), though
a statement by the Lord Lyon on this matter in 2002 is not as clearly worded as it could have been.[611] ^ In 2003, Burberry claimed this tartan was confusingly similar to their Burberry check and that it thus infringed their registered
trademark.[957] Burberry took legal action again in 2013 to protect its tartan trademark in China.[958] ^ For example, the Clan Cameron Association website states that the Cameron of Lochiel tartan trademark in China.[958] ^ For example, the Clan Cameron Association website states that the Cameron Association website states that the Cameron of Lochiel tartan trademark in China.[958] ^ For example, the Clan Cameron Association website states that the Cameron of Lochiel tartan trademark in China.[958] ^ For example, the Clan Cameron Association website states that the Cameron Association website states that the Cameron of Lochiel tartan trademark in China.[958] ^ For example, the Clan Cameron Association website states that the Cameron Association website states are the cameron Association website states and the cameron Association website states are the cameron as a c
permitted by the British royal family to wear the Balmoral tartan are the monarch's own personal piper and pipers at the royal family members only wear it with the permission of the monarch of the mona
 Oyange-Ngando (2018): "the intentional and specific arrangement of colour where each bears a certain meaning, for example a colour arrangement could represent age, clan or marital status of an individual". Oyange-Ngando's paper cites many sources, but cites none at all for this claim. Modern photos of Maasai show members of the same tribe/claim.
 wearing a wide variety of shuka patterns, seemingly to taste. ^ They are prescribed dress in at least in the more populous places. Remote areas, inhabited largely by ethnic minorities, still exhibit local traditional dress of pattern.[1008]
^ Not to be confused with the Mongols, who were called "Ta[r]tars" by medieval Europeans, and supplied patterned cloth among other trade goods (see § Medieval, above). ^ a b Harper, Douglas. "tartan (n.)". Online Etymology Dictionary. Archived from the original on 5 August 2017. Retrieved 4 March 2018. ^ a b c d Banks & de La Chapelle (2007),
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 and what that means for your visuals. Download Our Latest VisualGPS ReportData-backed trends. Generative AI demos. Answers to your usage rights questions. Our original video podcast covers it all—now on demand. Watch Now Tartan is a fabric that resonates with the heart and soul of Scotland. More than a pattern, tartan embodies centuries of
history, the identity of Scottish clans, and the artistry of traditional craftsmanship. For anyone who cherishes the culture of Scotland, understanding "What is tartan?" opens a door to a vibrant world of heritage and symbolism. At Tartan Clothing
With this article, we bring our expertise and passion for tartans to help you explore their origins, significance, and modern relevance. What is Tartan? Tartan is a woven fabric characterized by crisscrossed horizontal and vertical bands in multiple colors. Made traditionally from wool, the distinct patterns of tartan are referred to as "setts." Each settle.
carries its unique sequence of colors and thread counts, symbolizing specific Scottish clans, regions, or historical events. The term "tartan" originates from the French word tiretain, meaning "woven cloth," but the roots of tartan lie firmly in Scotland. While tartan patterns have evolved over centuries, they remain an iconic representation of the
 culture of Scotland, serving as a connection to the Scottish Highlands, its clans, and their proud traditions. The History of Tartan in Scotland The earliest evidence of tartan in Scotland dates back to the 3rd century AD. Archeological findings, like the Falkirk Tartan discovered in Stirlingshire, reveal simple checkered patterns made
 using natural dyes from plants and minerals. These primitive tartans were functional garments designed to withstand the rugged climate of the Scottish Highlands while showcasing the creativity of their makers. As clans began to emerge as the dominant social structure in Scotland, tartans took on a deeper significance. Each clan developed its own
 tartan pattern, becoming a badge of kinship, loyalty, and territorial identity. Tartans provided an immediate visual marker of allegiance during times of war or celebration. The Dress Act of 1746 Tartan's association with Scottish clans and the Highlands drew the attention of the British government during the Jacobite uprisings. After the defeat of the
 Jacobites at the Battle of Culloden in 1746, the British Crown sought to suppress Highland culture, which was viewed as a threat to the monarchy. The Dress Act of 1746 prohibited the wearing of tartans and Highland dress, criminalizing this essential element of Scottish identity. For nearly 40 years, tartan was relegated to ceremonial use and
 clandestine defiance. The repeal of the Dress Act in 1782 marked a revival of tartan, which became an emblem of Scotland's enduring spirit. Tartan in the Modern Era The 19th century saw tartan transition from a local tradition to a global phenomenon. Queen Victoria and Prince Albert's love for Scotland and their residence at Balmoral Castle
popularized tartan among British nobility and beyond. This period also saw the codification of tartans into official patterns tied to clans, regions, and organizations. Today, tartan remains an integral part of the culture of Scotland. It is celebrated during Highland games, weddings, and global events. Modern technologies and registries, such as the
 Scottish Register of Tartans, ensure the preservation and documentation of traditional and contemporary designs. How Natural Dyes Shaped Traditional Tartan Patterns In its early days, tartan was colored using natural dyes derived from the Scottish landscape. Plants like woad and indigo provided blue hues, while lichen and heather created earthy
greens and browns. The availability of these natural resources influenced the color palette of regional tartans. The skill of dyeing played a critical role in tartan production. Clans were often recognized by the unique shades and patterns of their tartans, which reflected the natural environment of their tartans. The skill of dyeing played a critical role in tartan production.
replaced natural ones, the revival of traditional dyeing techniques is an important effort among enthusiasts and artisans to keep tartan heritage alive. Looking for your clan's unique tartan represents the Scottish clan system At its core, tartan represents the Scottish clan system At its core, tartan and the Scottish clan system At its core, tartan and the Scottish Clan System At its core, tartan represents the Scottish clan system At its core, tartan represents the Scottish clan system At its core, tartan represents the Scottish clan system At its core, tartan represents the Scottish clan system At its core, tartan represents the Scottish clan system At its core, tartan represents the Scottish clan system At its core, tartan represents the Scottish clan system At its core, tartan represents the Scottish clan system At its core, tartan represents the Scottish clan system At its core, tartan represents the Scottish clan system At its core, tartan represents the Scottish clan system At its core, tartan represents the Scottish clan system At its core, tartan represents the Scottish clan system At its core, tartan represents the Scottish clan system At its core, tartan represents the Scottish clan system At its core, tartan represents the Scottish clan system At its core, tartan represents the Scottish clan system At its core, tartan represents the Scottish representation of the Scottish representation 
A Scottish clan is a kinship group descended from a common ancestor, often linked to a specific region or territory. Each clan has its own tartan to Scottish clans cannot be overstated. Wearing one's clan tartan is a way of honoring ancestry, connecting with history, and fostering
a sense of community. Even today, Scots and descendants of Scots around the world proudly wear their clan tartans during celebrations and family gatherings. The Role of the Scottish Tartans Authority The Scottish Tartans Authority (STA) is a key organization dedicated to preserving and promoting tartan. Established in 1996, the STA works to
 maintain the historical and cultural integrity of tartans while supporting research and innovation in the field. From documenting ancient patterns to helping modern designers create new tartans, the STA plays an important role in ensuring that tartan remains a living, evolving tradition. It also provides resources for individuals seeking information
about their clan tartans, making it an invaluable institution for Scotland's cultural heritage. Register of Tartans is the official database for recording and cataloging tartans. Established by the Scottish Parliament in 2008, the register holds thousands of tartans, from ancient clan
 patterns to modern creations. Designers, clans, and organizations can submit new tartan designs to the register, ensuring that their patterns are formally recognized and preserved for posterity. For enthusiasts and researchers, the register serves as a treasure trove of information about tartan's past and present. Tartan in Contemporary Fashion E
 tartan's roots are deeply tied to Scotland, its appeal has transcended borders. From haute couture to streetwear, tartan clothing, from traditional kilts to modern accessories. Our decade-long experience has taught us
 that tartan is not just a fabric—it's a statement. Whether you're honoring your heritage, expressing individuality, or simply appreciating its timeless charm, tartan holds a special place in fashion and culture. Why Tartan Matters Tartan is much more than a design it is a living history, a tapestry of stories woven into the fabric of Scotland's identity
 From its humble beginnings in the Scottish Highlands to its place on global fashion runways, tartan embodies resilience, creativity, and pride. Ready to embrace tartan's timeless charm? Shop our collection now to celebrate your Scottish heritage. Share — copy and redistribute the material in any medium or format for any purpose, even
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 license permits. You do not have to comply with the license for elements of the material in the public domain or where your use is permitted by an applicable exception or limitation . No warranties are given. The license may not give you all of the permissions necessary for your intended use. For example, other rights such as publicity, privacy, or
 moral rights may limit how you use the material. What does your Clan tartan look like? See it here, and connect with your Scottish family heritage. You can order fabric, or swatch samples, all in traditional 100% pure new wool, from this list of tartans. Scots Connection operate a strict policy of only selling material that are woven in Scottish woollen
mills. Our customers can rest assured that they are getting genuine high quality fabrics, accessories and gifts at the best prices. It's extremely disappointing when we see retailers/vendors deserting the country to whose heritage they owe their living — just to increase their profit margins. In this increasingly homogenised world there's a growing niche
market for the genuine article - real Scottish-woven tartan textiles. A heritage product that hasn't been churned out in substandard foreign mills where issues of health, wages and environmental protection are largely ignored in favour of the unscrupulous retailers and kilt-makers making those few extra bucks and hastening the demise of Scotland's
 iconic tartans.Our images of authentic Scottish woven 100% wool tartans from surnames Abercrombie to Young are photographed from our own swatch books to provide the most accurate colours can vary, depending on your computer, tablet, or smart phoneer, it's worth noting that the appearance of tartan colours can vary, depending on your computer, tablet, or smart phoneer, it's worth noting that the appearance of tartan colours can vary, depending on your computer, tablet, or smart phoneer, it's worth noting that the appearance of tartan colours can vary depending on your computer, tablet, or smart phoneer tartan colours can vary depending on your computer, it's worth noting that the appearance of tartan colours can vary depending on your computer, it's worth noting that the appearance of tartan colours can vary depending on your computer, it's worth noting that the appearance of tartan colours can vary depending on your computer, it's worth noting that the appearance of tartan colours can vary depending on your computer, it's worth noting that the appearance of tartan colours can vary depending on your computer, it's worth noting that the appearance of tartan colours can vary depending on your computer, it's worth noting that the appearance of tartan colours can vary depending on your computer, it's worth noting that the appearance of tartan colours can vary depending the appearance of tartan colours ca
 display settings. If you want to be absolutely sure of the true depth of colour and the texture of a fabric, order a sample. Samples are great for colour matching and material can be used by tailors, seamstresses, crafters, upholsterers and furnishers. The smallest size of fabric that we offer is the half-metre/half-yard. These versatile, double-width,
  pieces of material are perfect for smaller projects, offering three times the quantity of a traditional fat quarter, but with much less outlay than buying a full vard or metre. Read about tartan colours and the history of tartan So you've always been intrigued by Scotland and its rich cultural heritage, and now you want to learn more about one of its icon
symbols - clan Tartans. Look no further, as this beginner's guide is here to give you a crash course on Scotland's clan Tartans, providing you with a glimpse into the fascinating world of Kilts, Celtic dress, and the colorful patterns that represent various Scottish clans. Whether you have Scottish ancestry or simply appreciate the beauty of Tartan
designs, this article will unravel the history and significance behind these beloved fabric patterns, allowing you to truly appreciate the depths of Scottish heritage. Tartan is a pattern that consists of crisscrossing horizontal and vertical lines of different colors. It is often associated with Scottish heritage and culture. The word "Tartan" also refers to the
fabric that features this distinct pattern. Tartan is a textile pattern that is characterized by its intricate checkered design. It is created by weaving different colored threads together in a specific sequence. The colors and order of the threads are what give each Tartan pattern its unique identity. Every Tartan pattern holds a significant meaning,
representing a specific clan or family in Scotland. Each clan has its own unique Tartan that is passed down through generations, serving as a visual representation of their identity, history, and heritage. Tartan patterns can also be associated with regions, institutions, or organizations, further showcasing their significance in Scottish culture. Tartan
patterns are meticulously designed and woven by skilled artisans. The process involves selecting the specific colors of thread and determining the sett, which is the repeating pattern of the Tartan. The thread is then woven together in a specified order to create the desired Tartan design. The creation of Tartan patterns requires careful attention to
detail and a deep understanding of color combinations and traditional weaving techniques. The rich history of Scotland's clan Tartans dates back centuries of these Tartans growides insight into the cultural significance they hold today. The origins of clan Tartans can be traced back to the Celtic tribes of
Scotland, known as the Picts and Gaels. The practice of wearing Tartan fabric as a form of identification and allegiance to tribes and clans is believed to have started as early as the 2rd century BC. Tartan patterns were initially made in natural wool colors, derived from the sheep reared by the clans. As Scotland's clans grew in number and influence,
so did the variety and complexity of Tartan patterns. Tartans became more intricate, using a wider range of colors and variations, as the British government attempted to suppress Highland traditions, including the wearing of
Tartans. This led to a decline in the popularity and visibility of Tartans until the ban was eventually lifted in the 19th century. Today, Tartans are proudly worn by individuals to showcase their familial ties and honor their ancestors. Tartan patterns have also expanded
beyond clan associations and are used in various fashion and design applications. Modern Tartans are often creatively designed to represent regions, sports teams, or organizations, reflecting the continued evolution and adaptability of this iconic pattern. Tartan holds a significant place in Scottish culture and is deeply embedded in various aspects of
 Scottish life, both past, and present. One of the key roles of Tartan is to symbolize clan identity. Each clan's unique Tartan serves as a visual representation of their heritage, history, and familial connections. Wearing one's clan Tartan serves as a visual representation of their heritage, history, and familial connections. Wearing one's clan Tartan serves as a visual representation of their heritage, history, and familial connections.
becomes a powerful symbol of kinship and unity among the members of a particular clan. Tartan plays a significant role in traditional Scottish ceremonies, such as weddings, funerals, and Highland gatherings. It is often seen adorning the attire of participants, signaling their connection to a specific clan or family. In weddings, the bride and groom
may choose to incorporate their respective Tartans into their outfits, symbolizing the merging of their families and heritage to these important occasions. Throughout Scottish folklore and legends, Tartan holds its own mythical charm.
Legendary figures and heroes are often associated with specific Tartans, further deepening the connection between Tartans and Scottish folklore. These tales and legends add a layer of intrigue and mystique to the already captivating world of Tartans, reinforcing their importance in Scottish culture and storytelling traditions. Clan Tartans come in a
 wide variety, each with its own distinguishing factors and unique characteristics. Each clan Tartan is carefully designed to represent the history, heritage, and geographic region associated with the clan. One of the distinguishing factors of different clan Tartans is the choice and arrangement of colors. The setts, or specific patterns of lines and
squares, also contribute to the unique identity of each Tartan. Some Tartans are more intricate and vibrant, while others are simpler and more understated, reflecting the individual characteristics and preferences of each clan. Certain clan Tartans have gained widespread popularity and recognition due to their historical significance or association
with influential clans. Tartans such as the Royal Stewart Tartan, and the MacGregor Tartan are among the most well-known and widely worn Tartans enjoy prominence and popularity, there
are also numerous Tartans that are lesser-known or considered rare. These Tartans may be associated with smaller clans or families, specific regions, or even newly created Tartans. Discovering these rare or less well-known Tartans can be a fascinating journey, allowing individuals to explore lesser-known aspects of Scottish history and heritage
Identifying specific clan Tartans can be a captivating endeavor, as it allows individuals to connect with their clan or family. Clan society websites, Tartan databases, and books on Scottish heritage are excellent starting points. These resources provide
comprehensive lists and descriptions of various Tartans, making it easier for individuals to find their respective clan Tartans. The Scottish Register of Tartans is the defacto resource for finding or registering a clan Tartans. The Scottish Register of Tartans is the defactor resource for finding or registering a clan Tartans.
meaning and represent the natural surroundings or history associated with the clan. Understanding the significance of different colors used in Tartans can provide valuable insights into their origins and symbolic representation. In many cases, simply knowing the name of one's clan or family can help in identifying the associated Tartan. The link
between clan name and Tartan is deeply ingrained in Scottish culture and tradition, making it easier for individuals to find and wear their appropriate Tartan. Online resources and experts in Scottish heritage can assist in confirming the correct Tartan based on clan or family names. Wearing Tartans comes with its own set of rules and etiquettes,
ensuring that the tradition is respected and honored. Traditionally, each clan Tartan is reserved for members of the respective clan or family. This exclusivity is aimed at preserving the heritage and identity associated with specific Tartans. However, modern practices have become more flexible, allowing individuals with Scottish ancestry, regardless
of clan affiliation, to wear Tartans that hold personal meaning to them. It is important to respect the traditions and sensitivities surrounding specific Tartans are often worn at formal occasions, such as weddings, ceremonies, or highland gatherings. When wearing Tartan in formal settings, it is
essential to observe the appropriate etiquette. This includes wearing the Tartan correctly, ensuring that it is the appropriate attire. Following these etiquette guidelines helps maintain the dignity and respect associated with Tartans in formal Scottish settings. The widespread popularity and
global recognition of Tartans have led to debates and controversies surrounding non-Scots wearing Tartans. Some argue that wearing Tartans should be celebrated and embraced by anyone with an appreciation for Scottish
 heritage. Understanding the perspectives and sensitivities surrounding this issue can help individuals make informed decisions when wearing Tartans. Tartans have woven themselves into the fabric of Scottish history, folklore, and mythology, becoming intertwined with captivating tales and legends. Throughout history, Tartans have been present at
significant events in Scottish history. From battles fought on the Highland terrain to royal ceremonies and coronations. Tartans have witnessed and adorned pivotal moments in Scottish history. These events have contributed to shaping the narrative of Tartans and their enduring place in Scottish culture. Legendary figures, both real and mythical, are
often linked to specific Tartans. Heroes, warriors, and influential personalities have their own Tartans, which become synonymous with their identity and the tales associated with them. Whether it is the Tartan of a renowned Scottish monarch or a legendary warrior, these associations add layers of intrigue and myth to the already fascinating world of
Tartans. Tartans continue to inspire modern tales and myths. From stories of hidden clan Tartans to the enduring fascination and allure that Tartans hold in the hearts
and minds of Scots and enthusiasts worldwide. Tartans have adapted to the changing times and continue to play a vibrant part in various aspects of modern Scottish fashion. From clothing to accessories. Tartans are a vibrant part of the
Scottish fashion scene. Designers incorporate Tartan fabrics and patterns into modern designs, blending tradition with innovation. This infusion of Tartans in fashion keeps the tradition alive while creating exciting new possibilities for exploration and creativity. Scottish celebrations and festivals are perfect occasions to showcase the beauty and
significance of Tartans. Events such as Highland Games, Burns Night, and St. Andrew's Day celebrations feature the energetic display of Tartans. Tartans adorn performers, bagpipers, and dancers, creating a visually stunning spectacle that celebrates Scottish culture and heritage. Festivals dedicated to Tartans, such as the Tartan Week, bring
 together enthusiasts from around the world, fostering a deep appreciation for this iconic pattern. Tartans have also made a significant impact in the realm of art and media. From paintings and sculptures to photography and film, Tartan patterns find their way into various artistic expressions that capture the essence of Scottish culture. The use of
Tartans in contemporary art and media not only pays homage to tradition but also brings forth new interpretations and perspectives, keeping the spirit of Tartans alive in the modern Scottish heritage, purchasing and wearing their own clan Tartan can be a meaningful and enriching experience.
Authentic Scottish Tartans can be purchased through various channels, both online and in physical stores. Numerous Scottish retailers specialize in Tartans that adhere to traditional quality and standards. The quality and
pricing of Tartans can vary depending on several factors. The authenticity of the Weave, and the reputation of the weavers all influence the quality of the Tartan. Pricing can also depend on the exclusivity and demand for a particular Tartan. Understanding these aspects can help individuals make informed choices when
 selecting and purchasing their own clan Tartan. For those seeking a more personalized experience, it is possible to design one's own Tartan. Custom-designed Tartans offer the opportunity to showcase individuality and create a unique connection to Scottish heritage. This process involves working with skilled weavers or companies specializing in
Tartan design. Creating a custom Tartan garments should be stored with care to protect them from damage
and preserve their quality. It is recommended to store them in a cool, dry place, away from direct sunlight and excessive moisture. Fold garments carefully, preferably with acid-free tissue paper, to prevent damage from
insects. Cleaning and maintaining Tartan fabrics require certain precautions to avoid damaging the delicate fibers. In general, it is crucial to consult the care instructions provided by the manufacturer or seek professional advice. Avoiding exposure to harsh
chemicals, excessive heat, and aggressive scrubbing are essential to minimize the risk of damage while cleaning Tartan fabrics. Over time, Tartan garments may require mending and repair to address small tears, loose threads, or general wear and tear. It is advisable to seek professional assistance or a skilled tailor experienced in working with
Tartan fabrics. By employing the correct techniques and using matching threads, these experts can effectively repair Tartan garments, ensuring that their beauty and integrity are preserved for years to come. As intricate as the patterns they showcase, Tartans embody the rich history and vibrant culture of Scotland. From their origins in ancient
tribes to their enduring presence in modern Scottish life, Tartans continue to captivate and inspire. Whether worn as a symbol of clan affiliation or appreciated as a fashion statement, Tartans weave themselves into the very fabric of Scottish heritage, keeping tradition and legacy alive in every colorful thread. It is through the understanding and
celebration of Tartans that we can truly appreciate the depth and beauty of Scottish culture. Travellers to Scotland over the past several hundred years have noted the Tartan worn by its inhabitants. These records refer to it as 'mottled', 'marled' and 'sundrie coloured', but perhaps the best description comes from the Gaelic word breacan, meaning
chequered. For it is that description which best defines a tartan... a check-like arrangement of a tartan was worn in other parts of Scotland, it was in
the Highlands that its development continued and so it became synonymous with the symbol of clan kinship. Tartan was used to make the items of clothing which are today considered traditional Scottish dress, including the philabeg, or kilt, and of course the trews. These would be worn with shoes of untanned hide and the cuaran, a knee length boot
also made from hide which was shaped to the leg and kept in place by thongs. A hat, or bonnet of knitted wool sporting a badge of the clan wore a
curraichd of linen over their heads which fastened under their chin. The tonnag was a small square of tartan worn over the shoulders, and the arasaid was a long self-coloured or tartan garment, which reached from the head to the ankles, pleated all round and fastened at the breast with a brooch and at the waist by a belt. Early tartans were simple
checks of perhaps only two or three colours. The colours were extracted mainly from dye-producing plants, roots, berries and trees local to a specific geographic area. These simple checks or tartans were worn by the people of the district where they were made, and as such became the area or clan tartan. It is said that the weavers took great pain to
give exact patterns of tartan by identifying each colour of every thread upon a piece of wood known as a maide dalbh, or pattern stick. An account from 1572 records how a housewife gave coloured wool to a weaver to make into cloth. In suing him before the magistrate she accused him of making the cloth to his 'awin fasoun', or own fashion, and not
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according to her instructions. She won her case and the naughty weaver was punished. With the evolution of chemical dies, weavers were able to introduce more elaborate patterns including more vivid and varied colours. As clans grew and branched through birth, death or marriage, the newer clans evolved tartans of their own by adding an overstripe onto the basic pattern of the parent clan. One of the earliest references to the use of tartans by royals was by the treasurer to King James V wore tartan whilst hunting in the Highlands in 1538, and King Charles II wore a ribbon of tartan on his coat at his marriage in 1662. It is known that through the 16th and 17th centuries, tartan was exported from the Highlands to the south at prices fixed in order to prevent overcharging, the prices being determined by the number and shades of colour in the cloth. Clan MacDonald Tartan and Clan Campbell Tartan It was after the Battle of Culloden in 1746 that the government in London attempted to purge the Highlands of all unlawful elements by seeking to crush the rebellious clan system. An Act of Parliament was passed which made the carrying of weapons and the wearing of tartan a penal offence. The Act was rigorously enforced. So much so it seems that by the time the Act was repealed in 1785, Highlanders had lost all enthusiasm for their tartan garb, content to wear the same type of dress as other Scots. By 1785, tartan was a thing of the past, many of the weavers had died and with them the details of the old patterns were lost as their wooden patterns sticks had rotted away. Fragments of the old tartans had also rotted and perished leaving little evidence for future generations. The great tartan revival started in 1822, when George IV visited Edinburgh and suggested that people attending the official functions should wear their respective tartans. The loss of the day. Today the confusion of the past has gained some semblance of order as tartans now require registration in the Registers at Lyon Court. Several variations of one tartan may be worn and these tend to take their name from the purpose for which they were intended. Clan tartans – for general use by the clans people. Dress tartans – originally worn by the women of the clan, generally with a white background and lighter-coloured patterns. Mourning tartans - generally of black and white. Hunting tartans - dark in colour and worn for sport, especially suitable when a clan possessed a brightly coloured tartan, making it unsuitable for hunting. Chiefs' tartans - for the personal use of the chief and his immediate family. Tartan has now gained international popularity with people selecting and sporting a design of his or her family and woe betide anyone who dares to break with this tradition! The tradition isn't ancient at all. Many people today are somewhat obsessed with plaid patterns. The first plaid fabrics were made by intricately weaving together threads that had been dyed different colors. These early plaids were often made of wool, and were worn in particular by men of the Highlands of Scotland, having no need of pants because they didn't have a culture of riding horses. The earliest known tartan from Europe dates from around the 3rd century AD and was found in Falkirk, Scotland. The faded specimen took the form of a scrap of plaid fabric plugging a jar of coins- clearly a high status person was associated with this fabric. But, what of the clan associations with tartan? As it turns out, this storied fabric traditionally had little to do with which clan a person belonged to. Via/ Unsplash When talking about tartan it's not uncommon to hear people discussing the clan affiliations with different patterns and colors of plaid. While these associations are firmly in place now, the idea that they are based on a long history of clan delineation is actually a myth. While tartan does have a long history, in the old days clans were not identified by their tartan. They generally wore the tartans that were available to them, that were proper to their class, and that appealed to the person choosing the fabric. Often made of wool, these warm swaths of fabric (long lengths of which were called plaids) were used in shawls, kilts, other garments and became a symbol of Highlander rebellions. Via/ Library of Congress Under British rule, the Dress Act of 1746 made it illegal to wear tartan (more specifically "highland clothes" were prohibited), as a way to crush the Highlanders sense of independence. The law was repealed in 1782 along with the proclamation to Highlanders that, "You are no longer bound down to the unmanly dress of the Lowlander." But, by that time the tartans of yore were largely out of fashion. Instead of relying on traditional tartan patterns, cloth manufacturers took the chance to capitalize on the no-longer-contraband plaids by creating a whole new set of patterns. The firm of William Wilson & Sons of Bannockburn began to mass produce tartans in the late 1700s, and helped to standardize certain patterns. At first they were given numbers to identify each one, but this soon changed to using clan names instead. And, thus a tradition was born. In the 15th century it was recorded that different colors of tartan were not worn to differentiate the clans, but to denote status within a clan. Chiefs were said to wear brighter colors (presumably made from costlier dyes) and those below them wore brown tartans (made from cheaper dyes). Illustration of the Early 1800s when the Highland Society of London wrote to various clan leaders asking what their tartans were, many had to ask around to their clansmen to see if any particular tartans had been no precursor. For the visit of King George IV to Edinburgh in 1822, clan leaders were asked to appear in their formal tartans, something many clans still did not yet have. The 1831 book, The Scottish Gaels, sought to immortalize Scottish customs and outlined the exact quantities of colors needed for each clan's special tartan, something which would have been unthinkable only a few decades before since clans had no special tartans at that time. Via/ Library of Congress During her reign Queen Victoria fell in love with Scotland, and after buying Balmoral Castle, Prince Albert kitted out the Highland estate with carpets and fabrics of tartan. Queen Victoria fell in love with Scotland, and after buying Balmoral Castle, Prince Albert kitted out the Highland estate with carpets and fabrics of tartan. Queen Victoria fell in love with Scotland, and after buying Balmoral Castle, Prince Albert kitted out the Highland estate with carpets and fabrics of tartan. made up, such as the Balmoral Tartan which was created in 1861 and a variation of the Stuart tartan with a red stripe added. The royal family and variation of the 19th century royal Balmoral tartan created exclusively for royal use in 1970. Via/ Scottish Register of Tartans The influence of the royals on the usage of tartan cannot be understated, and soon tartans were incorporated into formal attire for the upper classes of Ireland, Scotland, and England. Tartans have also become quite the fashion statement, having been associated with dandies, punks, and even haute couture fashion over the years. While tartans serve important functions today the truth is that these brilliant fabrics have only been associated with clan identity for about 200 years. Subscribe to Dusty Old Thing Is This the Most Beautiful Gas Station in the World? Connie Francis Gained Popularity Again Just Before She Passed AwayWhat Dating Was Like in the 1950sIn 1963 Jimmy Page Wanted to Become an Artist8 Features of Acadian-Style HousesHow Many Colors of Depression Glass Are There? How Anne Boleyn Got a Surprise When Was Asked to Star in a Bond FilmWhat Sleeper Sofas Looked in the Old DaysHow Butter Became an Everyday StapleThe Surprising Prices of Great Depression Secondhand StoresSKM: below-content placeholderWhizzco for DOT Travellers to Scotland over the past several hundred years have noted the Tartan worn by its inhabitants. These records refer to it as 'mottled', 'marled' and 'sundrie coloured', but perhaps the best description comes from the Gaelic word breacan, meaning chequered. For it is that description which best defines a tartan until the desired length of cloth is produced. For several centuries, tartan remained part of the everyday garb of the Highlander. Whilst tartan was worn in other parts of Scotland, it was in the Highlands that its development continued and so it became synonymous with the symbol of clan kinship. Tartan was used to make the items of clothing which are today considered traditional Scottish dress, including the philabeg, or kilt, and of course the trews. These would be worn with shoes of untanned hide and the cuaran, a knee length boot also made from hide which was shaped to the leg and kept in place by thongs. A hat, or bonnet of knitted wool sporting a badge of the clans man. The highly ornamented leather sporran worn in front of the kilt served as a purse completed the ensemble. The women of the clan wore a curraichd of linen over their heads which fastened and fastened at the breast with a brooch and at the waist by a belt. Early tartans were simple checks of perhaps only two or three colours. The colours were extracted mainly from dye-producing plants, roots, berries and trees local to a specific geographic area. These simple checks or tartans were worn by the people of the district where they were made, and as such became the area or clan tartan. It is said that the weavers took great pain to give exact patterns of tartan by identifying each colour of every thread upon a piece of wood known as a maide dalbh, or pattern stick. An account from 1572 records how a housewife gave coloured wool to a weaver to make into cloth. In suing him before the magistrate she accused him of making the cloth to his 'awin fasoun', or own fashion, and not according to her instructions. She won her case and the naughty weaver was punished. With the evolution of chemical dies, weavers were able to introduce more elaborate patterns including more vivid and varied colours. As clans grew and branched through birth, death or marriage, the newer clans evolved tartans of their own by adding an overstripe onto the basic pattern of the parent clan. One of the earliest references to the use of tartans by royals was by the treasurer to King James V wore tartan whilst hunting in the Highlands in 1538, and King Charles II wore a ribbon of tartan on his coat at his marriage in 1662. It is known that through the prices fixed in order to prevent overcharging, the prices being determined by the number and shades of colour in the cloth. Clan MacDonald Tartan and Clan Campbell Tartan It was after the Battle of Culloden in 1746 that the government in London attempted to purge the Highlands of all unlawful elements by seeking to crush the rebellious clan system. An Act of Parliament was passed which made the carrying of weapons and the wearing of tartan a penal offence. The Act was rigorously enforced. So much so it seems that by the time the Act was repealed in 1785, Highlanders had lost all enthusiasm for their tartan was a thing of the weavers had died and with them the details of the old patterns were lost as their wooden pattern sticks had rotted away. Fragments of the old tartans had also rotted and perished leaving little evidence for future generations. The great tartan revival started in 1822, when George IV visited Edinburgh and suggested that people attending the official functions should wear their respective tartans. The loss of the original patterns meant it was necessary for many 'original' tartans to be reinvented by the tailors of the day. Today the confusion of the past has gained some semblance of order as tartans now require registration in the Registers at Lyon Court. Several variations of one tartan may be worn and these tend to take their name from the purpose for which they were intended. Clan tartans - for general use by the clans people. Dress tartans - originally worn by the women of the clan, generally with a white background and lighter-coloured patterns. Mourning tartans - dark in colour and worn for sport, especially suitable when a clan possessed a brightly coloured tartan, making it unsuitable for hunting. Chiefs' tartans - for the personal use of the chief and his immediate family. Tartan has now gained international popularity with people selecting and sporting a design of his or her fancy. A word of warning however, the Royal tartan is for the exclusive use of the royal family and woe betide anyone who dares to break with this tradition! A B C D E F G HIKLMNOPORSTUVWYHELP & ADVICE Not all Scottish names are Clan names or have a clan connection. Traditionally Clans really only operated in the North-West of Scotland. Other areas such as the Borders had large powerful families that have come to be known as clans for the sake of convenience. With the revival of interest in Scotland's clan traditions many more names are either recognised as clans or connected to clan in some way. Knowing that your branch of the name dates back to specific Clan lands in Scotland during Clan times can be near impossible. With the advancements of DNA testing and sharing of information you may be lucky and find a cluster of ancestors from the specific area of Scotland. Uncovering the story. So lets start... Firstly look through the A-Z and see if your surname is a single Clan name but you may find: There may be a close match. If so please see 'Spelling Differences' below. You name may be connected to a Clan as in a Sept. So a family name. How do you know if this is fact? Spelling Differences among names are usually trivial no matter how much pride a person has in a particular version. Most Gaels were not taught to read or write their own language. In contrast with English, Gaelic speakers place more emphasis on the spoken form, Irish in 1948 and Scottish Gaelic in 1982. However, there are constantly being modified to match the spoken form, Irish in 1948 and Scottish Gaelic speakers did not need nor use family names until they began to interact with the English speaking culture. The Gaelic naming system is quite different and either shows a person's lineage or some personal attribute. "Donald of the race of Donald". "Donald of the race of Donald". "Corriemony", "Keppoch". Most persons first had their names written for them by others — ministers, school masters, government officials or ship captains. These people wrote as they heard the second part of the surname capitalised or in lower case, "MacDonald" and "Macdonald". This style was adopted in the nineteenth century to distinguish between a person who was actually the son of a man named Donald (Mac Donald) or one of the general clan surname (Macdonald). This soon lost its meaning. More than one choice? This is quite common, people often have connections with a combination of clans. Can't find a Scottish Connection - What to do next Try your Mother's maiden name, if not try looking further back at the surname in your family's history. My ancestors are Scottish but their surname isn't in the list? This is guite common and we touch on this at the top of the page. Many Scottish names are 'occupational' such as 'Cooper' and can pop up in all areas in Scotland so would not have the same territorial connection of a clan. In the 19th century there was a fashion to connect many Scots names with clans as 'Septs', sometimes the evidence is vague at best. I can't find a Clan - what can I do? If you have traced back your ancestry to Scotland, wearing the district tartan of the area your family lived could mean more to you than just a general tartan.

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