THE BRITISH CULTURE

WARNING: THIS MATERIAL MAY CONTAIN TRUE FACTS

If you’re reading this paper sheet you’re a lucky person. Why? Because you’re attending one of the best Reuniões Culturais ever made by a mortal man. Brace yourselves, British is coming!!!

BASIC STUFF YOU MUST KNOW

We’re about to discover some geographical facts about UK. So, if you are not really keen on learning geography you can go straight ahead the next topic. No, seriously don’t do that. Pay attention and everything will be okay!

FULL NAME

United Kingdom of Great Britain

LOCATION

UK is an island placed in the western Europe. It’s made up of four countries: England, Wales, Scotland and Northern Ireland. It’s separated for 22 miles from France and its capital is the city of London.

You must know the difference among England, United Kingdom and Great-Britain:

- England: the country;
- United Kingdom: the union of England, Wales, Scotland and Northern Ireland.
- Great-Britain: the island made of England, Wales and Scotland.

The terms ‘English’ and ‘British’ do not mean the same thing. ‘British’ denotes someone who is from England, Scotland, Wales or Northern Ireland. ‘English’ refers to people from England. People from Scotland are 'Scots', from Wales ‘Welsh’ and from Northern Ireland ‘Irish’. Be sure not to call someone Welsh, Scots, or Northern Irish ‘English’.

CLIMATE

The prevailing Winds come from the southwest and the Temperature is fairly Temperate, just as the rest of Europe.

DEMOGRAPHY

The population is approximately 55 million:

- 46 million in England
- 5 million in Scotland
- 2.5 million in Wales
• 1.5 million in Northern Ireland.

92% of the population is white

**POLITICS**

The United Kingdom is a constitutional monarchy. The monarch is chief of state and the prime minister is head of government. There’s the Parliament which is composed of the House of Lords (hereditary) and the House of Commons (elected). And the reigning monarch is Elizabeth II whom main residence is located in the Bunckham Palace in London.

The monarch reigns, but does not rule the nation per se, acting only with the approval of Parliament. The prime minister holds the executive power and is traditionally the leader of the majority party in Parliament. The primary parties are the Labour Party, the Conservative Party, and the Liberal Democrats.

**HABITS**

**THE STIFF UPPER LIP**

You must be thinking ‘What the hell does that mean?’ Actually, one who has a stiff upper lip displays fortitude in the face of adversity, or exercises great self-restraint in the expression of emotion.

As a nation, the Brits tend not to use superlatives and may not appear terribly animated when they speak. This does not mean that they do not have strong emotions; merely that they do not choose to put them on public display. Kissing is most often reserved for family members in the privacy of home, rather than in public. You’ll see that the British prefer to maintain a few feet of distance between themselves and the person to whom they are speaking. If you have insulted someone, their facial expression may not change.

The British are very reserved and private people. Privacy is extremely important. Even close friends do not ask pointedly personal questions, particularly pertaining to one’s financial situation or relationships.

Friendships take longer to build; however, once established they tend to be deep and may last over time and distance.

**THE CLASS SYSTEM**

Although in the past few decades, people from varied backgrounds have had greater access to higher education, wealth distribution is changing and more upward/downward mobility is occurring, the British class system is still very much intact although in a more subconscious way. Within 10 seconds of any British person opening their mouth to speak to another British person, each mentally deduces the following about the other: likely
UNDERSTATMENT

Brits have made understatement an art-form. Desperate situations other nationals would call a life-threatening crisis are softened into just “a bit of a pickle”. And no matter how bad their life really is, a true Brit will respond to well-being queries with “Mustn't grumble”.

WEIRD SPORTS

Forget the Olympics. Put the Brits in charge and they'd replace boring old sports with Great British traditional alternatives. We offer the 200m downhill cheese chase, 400m egg & spoon race, tin bath rowing and 100m bog snorkelling for starters.

Bog Snorkelling: What is bog snorkelling? Yes indeed, you read correctly, bog snorkelling. A bog is an expanse of marshland (it's also slang for toilet, but in this case we're talking about wet land) and snorkelling is the act of swimming using a snorkel. **So, bog snorkelling is swimming through a bog using a snorkel to breath.** If any of you ever doubted that us Brits are mad, this should make up your minds for you. Basically participants dive into a bog in Llanwrtyd Wells, Wales, wearing goggles, a pair of flippers and a snorkel, they then proceed to race each other along a 120ft trench filled with mud. Held every year the participants come from all over the world and raise lots of money for charity.

IMPERIAL UNITS

Metric shmetric. Old-school Britons prefer measures based on far more interesting numbers than 10. Weight? That'll be stones, each of 14 lbs. Height in feet plus inches. Horse races are run over furlongs of 220 yards - equal to 40 rods, of course.
SORRY!

Do the British really blurt out apologies far more than anyone else? Afraid so. Sorry. A recent survey found the average Briton says sorry an average of eight times a day – and some up to 20 times.

BRUSH TEETH

The big question: Do Brits brush their teeth? We’re so used to watch that traditional grey teeth character in films we just assume it’s true. Actually, contrary to popular belief, British people’s teeth aren’t as bad as many people make them out to be. Seriously, the United Kingdom is not a nation of Austin Powers overbites and newspaper-grey teeth. In fact, when it comes to the frequency of tooth decay among children, British youngsters actually have the least amount of dental problems of anyone in the world.

The problem is in general the adults. Almost half of British adults report not brushing their teeth at night because they’re too exhausted. Yes, that’s right — the 60 seconds that it takes to wet the toothbrush, apply the toothpaste and insert it into your mouth is taxing enough that it warrants a national warning.

Of the 10,000 adults surveyed, 40 percent said they don’t brush at night because they’re too tired, 30 percent said it’s because they’re too lazy and 28 percent said they simply just forget. Oh, and it gets even worse. One in five said they don’t use toothpaste when brushing, and 14 percent said they brush with their finger.

THE BRITISH HUMOUR

The key to understanding British humour is knowing not to take yourself too seriously. Their default humour is to highlight their own flaws. They make light of their failures so as to appear more humble, approachable and relatable. There is no room for egos in British humour. Awkward encounters, clumsiness and embarrassing moments are all well-established self-deprecation material.

“I’m so bad at cooking- I could burn water.”
Combine self-deprecation with a dose of understated sarcasm and you have the key ingredients of British humour. Brits are famous for being very, very polite, but a surefire sign that a Brit likes you is if they happily ‘offend’ you with the occasional witty, tongue-in-cheek comment. “I can’t be friends with someone who doesn’t drink tea!”

EXCHANGE

We all dream living abroad for a while, and the best way was our lovely Science without borders or how some would call it Tourism without borders. Therefore, I’ve gathered some of the best universities in UK in a list, check it out!

CAMBRIDGE
Founded in 1209

Cambridge has produced 90 Nobel Prize winners across all categories – more than any other institution.

OXFORD
Oxford University is the oldest university in the English-speaking world (founded at least in 1096)

Oxford has a world-class reputation for academic excellence and courses have an academic rather than vocational focus.

LONDON SCHOOL OF ECONOMICS AND POLITICAL SCIENCE
LSE has produced 35 world leaders and heads of state, and 16 Nobel Prize winners in economics, peace and literature.

LSE is a specialist university with an international intake and a global reach. Its research and teaching span the full breadth of the social sciences, from economics, politics and law to sociology, anthropology, accounting and finance.

BRITISH FOOD

You may think brits survive only drinking teas (You must be mad thinking that! Go read some Biology book mate!). Or maybe, their food is a little bit weird or even disgusting. (I’m afraid some of them really are). Below we have some traditional meals:

Nowadays, their main meals are quite the same divided as ours. They have breakfast, lunch and dinner (could be called Supper). But the traditional meals consist of breakfast, dinner (the main meal) and tea

BREAKFAST
Consists of eggs, bacon, sausages, fried bread, baked beans and mushrooms.

LUNCH
Many children at school or adults at work will have packed lunch, which consists of a sandwich, a packet of crisps, a piece of fruit and a drink.
DINNER
A typical British meal for dinner is meat and vegetables (two veg). It consists of roast meat and almost always potatoes and another vegetable.

Now I present you some traditional foods:

ROAST BEEF
Typical meats for roasting are joints of beef, pork, lamb or a whole chicken. More rarely duck, goose, gammon, turkey or game are eaten.
Beef is eaten with hot white horseradish sauce, pork with sweet apple sauce and lamb with green mint sauce.

YORKSHIRE PUDDING
This dish is not usually eaten as a dessert like other puddings but instead as part of the main course or at a starter.
Yorkshire pudding, made from flour, eggs and milk, is a sort of batter baked in the oven and usually moistened with gravy.

FISH AND CHIPS
Fish deep fried in flour batter with chips (fried potatoes) dressed in malt vinegar. This is England's traditional take-away food. Fish and chips are not normally home cooked but bought at a fish and chip shop ("chippie") to eat on premises or as a "take away".

We must know the difference between Afternoon tea and High tea.

AFTERNOON TEA
The traditional 4 o'clock tea is a small meal not a drink. It consists of tea (or coffee) served with either Scones (with cream or jam) or sandwiches.

HIGH TEA
The British working population did not have Afternoon Tea. They had a meal about midday, and a meal after work, between five and seven o'clock. This meal was called 'high tea' or just 'tea' (Today, most people refer to the evening meal as dinner or supper).

MUSIC
I've gathered with the most famous British bands and singers.

Michel Teló
Just kidding, go ahead!

Bellow we have a little list:

- Amy Winehouse (2003 and 2006 with back in black)
- Led Zeppelin
- David Bowie (1970)
- The sex pistols
- Radiohead
• The Beatles (formed in 1960)
• The Rolling Stones (formed in 1962)
• Queen (formed in London 1970)

Now it’s time to listen my playlist!! Yes, I’m a dictator here

• Ed sheeran
• Adele
• The smiths
• Years & years
• Coldplay
• The cure
• Pink floyd

FILMS

I’ve found in the Imdb website the best british films between 1989 and 2011. We must be a bit sceptical about this evaluation once it can be different in another website.

• Henry V (1989)
• The witches (1990)
• Chaplin (1992)
• The Crying Game (1992)
• Much Ado about Nothing (1993)
• Remains of the day (1993)
• Shadow lands (1993)
• Four weddings and a funeral (1994)
• Shallow Grave (1994)
• 007 GoldenEye (1995)

Again I’ve made a list of my favourite ones. And yes, I know most of them are romantic ones, so piss me off! (These are not necessarily made in UK, but involve the universe of the country).

• About time
• Harry Potter
• Man Up
• Me before you
• The imitation Game
• Theory of Everything
• The cornetto trilogy (The world’s end, Hot fuzz and Shaun of Dead)
• Love Actually

We have some series too. The three most famous: Dr. Who, Sherlock and Downton Abbey.
BOOKS

Here we have some popular books made by brits.

- Pride and Prejudice (1813)
- Jane Eyre (1847)
- Harry Potter and the philosopher’s stone (and all the rest) (1997)
- 1984 (1949)
- Sense and Sensibility
- The hobbit (1937)
- The hitchhiker’s guide of the galaxy
- Macbeth
- A midsummer night’s dream
- Narnia
- Lord of the Rings

HOW I PRACTICE MY ENGLISH

First of all, the process demands time and dedication! Here are some tips that I strongly recommend for making your English better!

- Get into the culture. It includes music, films, art and whatever you like in some country you want to learn the language;
- Read a lot! Reading is just the best way to get vocabulary as well as practicing your habit of thinking the language;
- Practice whenever you can! You need to talk and listen as much as possible, this will show you what you need to focus on and make your pronunciation closer to a fluent speaker;
- Think in English!
- Travel!! I strongly believe this is the best way to test all your skills once it’ll get you out of your comfort zone.