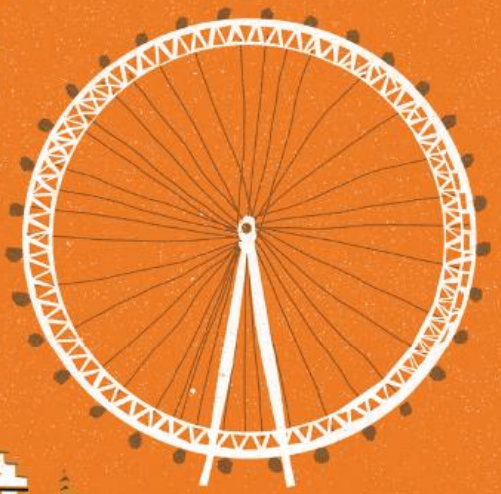
Landmarks, palaces and castles

Thousands of people from all over the world visit Great Britain and Northern Ireland every year to see exciting, ancient and unusual landmarks and monuments. Which ones have you seen? Which ones would you like to see?

London Eye, London, England

Like the wheel of a giant's bike, the London Eye turns slowly on the banks of the River Thames, giving its passengers an amazing aerial view of the city. When it opened to visitors in 2000, the Eye was the tallest Ferris wheel in the world.





Belfast Seahorse, Belfast, Northern Ireland

Seahorses have been printed on coins in Belfast since the seventeenth century, and they are part of the city's coat of arms. This shining, twisted-steel seahorse sculpture stands at the entrance to the port. It's 8 metres tall and was created by the German sculptor Ralf Sander in 2013.



Plas Mawr, Conwy, Wales

The Elizabethan town house Plas Mawr (meaning "Great Hall") belonged to Robert Wynn, a merchant known for being lavish. His old home still bears many colourful plasterwork coats of arms – and you can see how much he loved a party from the size of the kitchen!



Falkirk Wheel, Falkirk, Scotland

The Wheel, the world's only rotating boat lift, connects the Forth and Clyde canal with the Union Canal. Two boats enter – one from the top and one from the bottom – and then they swap places!

Buckingham Palace, London, England

The monarch's official London home has 775 rooms. The palace grew out of the much smaller Buckingham House, bought in 1761 by George III as a home for his wife. George IV then turned it into a palace but sadly died before it was finished, so Queen Victoria became the first monarch to live there.



Dinefwr Castle, Carmarthenshire, Wales

This castle was refortified in the twelfth century by Rhys ap Gruffydd, a powerful Welsh prince. Now ruined and green with ivy, it is still a grand and looming site.

Glamis Castle, Forfar, Scotland

King Malcolm II, the Scottish king, was killed in the turreted castle of Glamis in 1034. His death inspired the events of Shakespeare's murderous play, *Macbeth*.

Carrickfergus Castle, Northern Ireland

Built in 1177 by John de Courcy, Carrickfergus castle has experienced many sieges – the Normans, the Scots, the Irish and the English have all laid claim to it over the years.

St Michael's Mount, Cornwall, England

This tidal island off the coast of Mount's Bay was once home to a medieval monastery and the legend of Cormoran the giant. It is said that Cormoran terrorized nearby towns until Jack, a local young farmer, defeated the giant forever, earning the nickname "Jack the Giant Killer".



Glastonbury Tor, Somerset, England

This is a tall, cone-shaped hill in the Somerset Levels, with strange terraces on its side, topped by the roofless tower of a fifteenth-century church. According to medieval legend, the Tor is actually Avalon, King Arthur's final resting place.



Melrose Abbey, Scottish Borders

The heart of Robert the Bruce, warrior king of Scots, is said to be buried in this half-ruined abbey, where Trappist monks used to live. Sir Walter Scott described the moonlit abbey in his poem 'Melrose Abbey': "Was never scene so sad and fair!"



Unusual place-names

Some towns and villages in Great Britain and Northern Ireland have names that are funny, rude or just plain odd. Have you visited any of these unusually named places?



Strange laws of the land

Most of the laws in Great Britain and Northern Ireland are fairly up-to-date, but some were made so long ago that they have either been forgotten or unofficially replaced by common sense.

You are unlikely to be prosecuted for breaking any of the laws on this page, but it's always interesting to see the strange ways you could be punished for misbehaving:

1313	It is illegal to enter the Houses of Parliament wearing armour.
1322	All beached whales and sturgeons must be offered to the reigning monarch.
1839	It is illegal to carry a plank along the pavement in the Metropolitan Police District.
1839	It is illegal to fly a kite in the street.
1839	You may not fire a cannon within 300 yards of a dwelling.
1839	It is illegal to beat or shake a rug or carpet in the street (although you may shake a doormat before 8 a.m.).
1867	It is illegal to drive cows down the road between the hours of 10 a.m. and 7 p.m. without the permission of the Commissioner of Police.
1986	It is illegal to handle salmon in "suspicious circumstances".
1991	It is illegal to go to the cinema on a Sunday (Northern Ireland).
1998	It is illegal to cause a nuclear explosion.