

Wales is a part of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland. Its capital is Cardiff.

Wales is a country of hills and mountains, deep rivers and valleys. The highest mountain of Wales is Snowdon. It is Britain's second highest mountain. Snowdonia is a large national park.

Wales is a small country. Its population is about three million people. The Welsh are a nation and they are proud of it.

In 1292 the English king Edward invaded Wales and built 14 huge castles to control the Welsh people. His son, Edward, became the first prince of Wales. Since then all the kings and queens of England have given their eldest sons this title, Prince of Wales. Prince Charles became the 21<sup>st</sup> Prince of Wales.

The castles of Wales are magnificent sights. Their stone walls keep many secrets. The most famous are Cardiff Castle, Harlech Castle, Caerphilly Castle, Conwy Castle, Caernarfon Castle and others.

Welsh is an official language in Wales as well as English. Children learn it in schools and some TV programs are broadcast in Welsh. However, only about 20% of the population speak Welsh.

One of the symbols of Wales is the red Welsh Dragon. You can see it on the national flag of Wales. Some say, it is the oldest national flag still in use. The flag is not included into the Union Jack.

The two floral symbols of Wales are leek and daffodil.

St. David is the Patron Saint of Wales. On the 1<sup>st</sup> of March the Welsh celebrate St. David's Day having a carnival with all sorts of fiery performances from giant dragons to theatrical groups.

Wales is often called "the land of songs". The Welsh people are fond of poetry and singing folk songs. There are a lot of choirs in Wales. The harp is the national instrument of Wales.

The most popular sport in Wales is rugby. Golf is also extremely popular and there are many old golf clubs here.