



Otázka: The British Isles

Jazyk: Angličtina

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The British Isles

- The United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, The Republic of Ireland
- **Area:** 240 000 km²
- **Population:** 66 million
- **Head:** Elisabeth II. (longest monarch on the throne)
- **Form:** constitutional monarchy
- **Government:** unitary parliamentary constitutional monarchy
- **Prime minister:** Theresa May
- **Capital:** London
- **Flower:** Rose
- **Patron:** St George

GEOGRAPHY

Great Britain is formed of

- England - London
- Scotland - Edinburgh
- Wales - Cardiff

BRITISH ISLES

The UK occupies major part of the British Isles. It is separated from the continent by the North Sea and the English Channel, which, at its narrowest point, the **Strait of Dover**, is only 34 km wide. The largest island Great Britain (also the largest one in Europe) is separated by the **Irish Sea** from the second largest island Ireland, the northern part of which belongs to the UK.

Besides these large parts there are about **5,000** smaller **islands** belonging to the UK: the **Hebrides**, the **Orkney** Islands, the **Shetlands**, the **Isle of Wight**, the **Isle of Man**, and the **Channel Islands** (the last 2 have their own parliaments).

The main mountain regions are the **Cambrians** in Wales, the **Pennines**, which make the backbone of England.

The highest mountains are the **Highlands of Scotland** with the highest peak **Ben Nevis** that is

1,343 m high. The highest mountain of **Wales** is **Snowdon**.

Rivers in the UK are quite short – the longest rivers are the **Severn** (354 km) and the **Thames** (346 km).

The UK is locally divided into **counties**.

THE CHANNEL TUNNEL (Eurotunnel)

- a long underwater tunnel between England and France that runs under the **English Channel** at the **Strait of Dover**.
- only for trains, opened in **1994**,
- 50 km (31 miles) long and its deepest point is 75 m (250 feet) beneath the surface.
- It connects **Folkestone**, Kent to **Calais** in France.

POPULATION

The population is about 60 million inhabitants, of which England has 50 mil.



- Scotland 5 mil.
- Wales 2.9 mil.
- N.I. 1.7 mil.

The population **density** is 1 of the **highest** in the world – 232 people/1 km². But they are distributed very unevenly.

About 93% inhabitants live in urban areas.

British society is multicultural, there are many ethnic groups.

FLAG

The flag is officially called the Union Flag. It is also commonly known as the **Union Jack**. It is made up of the crosses of the patron saints of England (**St George**), Ireland (**St Patrick**) and Scotland (**St Andrew**) and has existed in its present form since **1801**. Wales is not represented because when the flag first appeared (**1801**) it was already united with England.

The British national anthem „God Save the Queen“ was first performed as „God Save the King“ in London in **1745**. Only the first verse of the traditional version is usually sung.

CURRENCY

1 pound = 100 pence (1 penny)

ECONOMY

The UK is a producer of **oil** and **natural gas**.

Britain was the first country in the world to have a **public supply of electricity**.

There is a **decline in heavy industry** but the rapid development of **electronic** and



microelectronic technologies and a **rise** in the **service** industries (e.g. *tourism*).

SYSTEM OF GOVERNMENT

The UK is a constitutional monarchy. The present monarch is Queen Elizabeth II from the **House of Windsor**, the 7th woman-ruler. Her husband is **Prince Philip**, the *Duke of Edinburgh*.

The oldest son **Charles**, the **Prince of Wales**, is the heir to the throne. (When a monarch dies, the oldest son, or if there is no son, the oldest daughter, inherits the throne and gets it at the age of 21.)

The Queen represents the state. She is:

- 1) the head of **judiciary**
- 2) the **commander-in-chief** of all the **armed forces** (the army, navy and air force)
- 3) the **temporal governor** of the established **Church of England**

The monarch, of course, does not really rule. She is only a formal, symbolic head of the state. She holds **receptions, dinner parties, garden parties**, she visits various parts of the UK every year, attends various national and **charitable events** and she **appoints the Prime Minister**.

She has to read and sign a large number of documents and she must be continually informed and consulted. However, she can act only on the advice of her ministers and for every act of the Queen one of the ministers must be responsible.

The country is in fact governed by **Her Majesty's Government** in the name of the Queen. The Government is formed by the **political party** (either the **Conservative Party** or the **Labour Party**) which has the majority in **Parliament**. He appoints a team of **20** leading **ministers** as **Cabinet**, which is the **executive** organ (most important part) of the Government.



The residence of the Queen in London is **Buckingham Palace**, British Prime Ministers always live at **10, Downing Street**.

The supreme law-making body of the state is Parliament that is a very old institution. It consists of the **House of Lords** (older of the 2 Houses, the head is the Queen) and the **House of Commons**.

The Lords shares the task of **making** and **shaping laws** and checking and challenging the work of the government. There are currently 791 lords (peers). Spiritual (archbishops) and Temporal. They need to be appointed.

In the House of Commons there are **650** members of **Parliament** (MP) elected every **5th year** and paid a **salary**.

HISTORY

- 2 invasions:

- 1st by Romans (**43 AD**)
- 2nd by William the Conqueror, Duke of Normandy (**1066**), he beat the English King Harold at Hastings

- Under Queen Elisabeth I. Britain become a major sea power (colonial power)

- During reign of Queen Victoria large parts of Asia and Africa added to the Empire

NORTHERN IRELAND

Capital: Belfast

Area: 14 000 km²



Patron: St. Patrick

Flower: clover

1921 – the greater part of the population in this region wanted to be connected with Great Britain

– NI was made due to the conflict between 2 communities in Northern Ireland,

Catholics and Protestants

– Northern Irish Protestants (about 60% of the population) did not want to be included in self-governing Ireland dominated by Catholics

– Ireland was divided into the Republic of Ireland and Northern Ireland

It offers many attractions for tourists (7 areas of outstanding natural beauty, **5 national forest parks**).

In these parks there are the largest lakes in the UK – **Lake Neagh** and **Lake Erne**

Belfast – one of the **youngest capital** cities in the world

– **400,000 inhabitants**

. it used to be a village

– well-known for **shipbuilding** (the **Titanic** was built there)

Londonderry – the 2nd most important city



The Giant's Causeway – the 8th wonder of the world

– a mass of stone columns standing very near together

The Glens (Valleys) of Antrim – 9 glens, together they form a romantic area of rivers,

waterfalls, wild flowers and birds

– according to a legend there live fairies who take terrible

revenge on anyone who cuts down a thorn tree

Scotland

- Flower: Thistle
- Patron: St. Andrew

Wales

- Flower: Leek
- Patron: St. David

THE REPUBLIC OF IRELAND

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