

Let's Get Dressed!

The history of the kilt goes back over 400 years to the end of the 16th century. The Scottish word *kilt* means to **tuck up the clothes around the body**. Originally the kilt was a large piece of wool material (up to 7 yards or two loom widths sewn together). The fabric was gathered by hand into pleats and then belted around the waist to secure it in place, forming a skirt of sorts. The upper half of the fabric could then be worn as a cloak which draped over the left shoulder and tucked into the front or it could be brought



over the shoulders and head when the weather was colder. Some of the fabric could also be tucked into the belt to form pockets. The kilt was usually worn over a long sleeved shirt. Depending on the temperature, the kilt length would be adjusted--longer in the winter and above the knees in the summer. The kilt also served as a handy blanket for wrapping up in when sleeping outside.

Scotsmen in the Highlands were the first to wear this, but over time, other Scotsmen adopted this type of wear. Clans began to color the wool to identify which region of Scotland they came from. In 1746 King George II imposed the the Dress Act, outlawing all Highland clan dress, including the kilt, in order to suppress the rebellious, independent spirit and culture of the Highlanders. Punishment for wearing the kilt included imprisonment and transportation. The ban lasted for 35 years. Once the ban was lifted, the kilt became a more popular and romantic choice of dress.

With the 1822 visit of King George IV of England to Scotland, the kilt was worn by both Highlanders and Lowlanders in pageant form. The widespread appeal of the kilt picked up momentum after King George, convinced by Sir Walter Scott, wore one. Later on Queen Victoria dressed her sons in kilts. Soon all of Scotland was identified with the wearing of the kilt.

Today, the kilt is worn in military ceremonies, in celebration of Celtic culture, and in pipe bands. The modern kilt has sewn pleats requiring much less fabric. There is no skirting the fact that it continues to be a fascinating and striking part of Scottish culture.



Modern Dress Kilt

Right: David Wilkie's 1829 portrait of King George IV wearing a kilt. The painting portrayed the king as more slender and with bare knees. He actually wore pink tights with the kilt in order to hide his swollen and gouty legs.





Make Your Own Sporran

craft idea taken from: www.activityvillage.co.uk/sporran-craft

You will need:

Brown craft foam
Brown embroidery thread
Embroidery needle
Button
Brown thick cord
Sporran template



Instructions:

Use the template to cut out the two pieces of the sporran from the craft foam.

Lay the smaller piece on top of the larger piece, matching up the edges, and use blanket stitch to sew them together.

Make three tassels by wrapping the embroidery thread around four fingers about 8 times. Slide the thread off your fingers. Tie a piece of thread about $\frac{3}{4}$ of an inch from one end to form the top of your tassel. Trim the loops at the bottom. Make another two tassels in exactly the same way.

Stitch the three tassels and the button to the front of your sporran. On the top flap make a small loop of thread by threading it through the foam and tying two firm knots. Use the loop to hook around the button and close the loop.

Thread some thick cord through the fold at the top. Tie the cord around your waist to wear your sporran!

Did you know...

- Sporran is Scottish Gaelic for "purse" and is a traditional part of the Scottish Highland Dress.
- · It is a pouch that is used as a pocket or wallet.
- The first sporrans were circles of leather threaded and drawn up by a leather thong.
- Later sporrans were decorated with animal fur and fancy leather and silver work and hung by chains or a leather strap in the front over the groin area.
- · The sporran is shifted to the hip if it gets in the way.



