



Bank Holidays In The UK

National public holidays are called “bank holidays” in the UK. The expression dates back to the late 19th century when banks (the financial buildings) would officially close for the day to catch up on bookkeeping and accounts. The name has stayed to the present day.

The UK only has 8 official bank holidays per year and only a couple of them land on a specific date. These are;

- New Year’s Day, 1st January
- Good Friday
- Easter Monday
- May bank holiday, first Monday of May
- Spring bank holiday, last Monday of May
- Summer bank holiday, last Monday of August
- Christmas Day, 25th December
- Boxing Day, 26th December

In Scotland, 2nd January is a holiday too and the Patron Saint of Scotland, St Andrew, is also celebrated with a bank holiday on 30th November. In Northern Ireland, St Patrick's Day is celebrated on 17th March as well as The Battle of The Boyne on 12th July.

Most of our bank holidays celebrate particular events, including Christmas, Easter and New Year. The three bank holidays in May and August don't celebrate anything in particular – it's a well-needed break and a chance to enjoy the weather! The final bank holiday of the year is 26th December, Boxing Day. This is the British equivalent of Black Friday when all the shops offer great discounts to get rid of their stock post-Christmas.

With only 8 bank holidays, the UK falls very close to the bottom of the list for national public holidays. Norway has the fewest with only 2 public holidays but the UK isn't far behind. There are many people who call for extra bank holidays, especially to celebrate the patron saint of England, St George, on 23rd April, but this hasn't gained much traction in the last few years.

Every few years we get extra bank holidays to celebrate huge events. The most recent was in 2020 to celebrate the 75th anniversary of VE Day. We also had bank holidays in 2011 to celebrate the wedding of Prince William and Catherine Middleton and in 2002 and 2012 to celebrate the golden and diamond jubilees of our Queen, Elizabeth II. Our next "extra" bank holiday will be in 2022 to celebrate the platinum jubilee.

Considering we have so few bank holidays in the UK, we certainly know how to take advantage of them and with most being during the spring and summer months we tend to have good weather. The beaches are always packed, the pubs are always full, the supermarket aisles with BBQ and picnic food are empty and we all travel away for the weekend – so there's a high chance you could be sitting on the motorway in traffic for the most part of the weekend!